

Westward

but always it has rolled in and smothered its erst-while victors. Try to hold a handful and the task is well-nigh impossible. It slides through your fingers and causes your palm to open involuntarily. It wearies a man to hold wheat tightly for long. Oats may be held and other cereals, but not wheat. Its tendency is to fall to the ground and reproduce. Thus, it is age-old but still eternally young. It is the true Isis and no one has lifted its veil. I tell you men, there is something uncanny and almost wicked about a thing that refuses to die, and it so small as a grain of wheat.

As a whole, this country is not beautiful, but now and then, there come striking pictures. Here are pleasing lakelets a-flush with ducks; tall cotton-woods which I name "the maidens" because of their fluffy hair—these, and lush meadows, over which range regiments of asters, sunflowers, and yarrow. It is a magic lantern fantasia with an occasional muskeg to represent the waits between views. On the muskegs the trees are so thin and straight they fairly scratch your eyes.

Oh! but it is hot this day, and every leaf seems a green tongue thrust out with thirst. The sun is making amends for his insulting reticence of last winter. The Indians call him "Great Grandfather Sun," but why, I do not know.

The houses of the homesteaders are built of poplar lumber, weather-stained and ugly. Others are of logs chinsed with mud and moss. All are small and favourable neither for hospitality nor reproduction. Some day, when a larger acreage is under crop, pretty bungalows with brave red