

water," or "things wherein is no profit." They lay it out wisely in useful articles, such as clothing, food, and household conveniences. Yet the Indian is indubitably on the road to extinction. He has run against the sharp point of destiny. His brain and nerve are too soft for our highly complex civilization, and so he shrivels. Disease, hereditary and acquired, indolence, disappointment and starvation, are decimating them rapidly. Whiskey, too, is doing its deadly work. The Indian Commissioner at Winnipeg reports increasing drunkenness on the Reserves. He says that in all the small towns that are springing up near Reserves, intoxicants are sold, and in some way, either directly or through middlemen, the Indians secure liquors. Traders can sell on the Reserves essences and pain-killer, which contain such a large percentage of alcohol as to render them intoxicating, and this in spite of all the agents and mounted police can do. An Indian will not inform against the ringleader in illegal practice.

One of the most interesting people I met in Winnipeg was Chief Ashman, a full-blooded Cree from St. Peter's Reserve. There was no doubt whatever of his being a converted Indian, for in walking he allowed me—only a white squaw, after all—to take the lead on the crossings. He is a fine looking man, with a massive head and chest, and is the possessor of a stately, reserved manner that would grace any position. His clothing was modish and well carried. It would be impossible for me to describe the unique eloquence of this Cicero of the wilds, his flexible, sonorous voice, copious in vowel sounds, and his quaint language and similes, as he told us of the burdens, hopes, and tragedies of his people. As we listened to the story, we felt never could nobler lance be lifted than in the redressing of the wrongs which our countrymen have brought on the Red Man.

Crossing the Norwood Bridge at Winnipeg to the French village of St. Boniface, we dropped back another century

and to another country. With the sweet bells that Whittier made famous ringing in our ears, we wander through the cemetery, billowy with graves, and pluck bright blooms from the sleeping place of Louis Riel.

As night falls, it softens the grim harshness of the great crucifix that towers over the tombs. The outstretched figure of the Nazarene, with its pierced hands and thorn-stung brow, lifts its burden and hurt from our hearts. All is still but for the soft chant of the vespers, the drowsy chirp of the broodlings overhead, and the grey-clad nuns stealing through the dusk. Gradually we melt into it all

"And leave the vain, low strife  
That makes men mad—the tug for wealth and  
power,  
The passion and the cares that wither life,  
And waste its little hour."

### CHAPTER III.

#### ON THE PRAIRIE.

An outlook over the prairie is like an invitation into boundless space. Its immensity is almost terrifying. It is an illimitable expanse with madness in the heart of it. The cottages loom up like white sails in a green ocean. In the clear atmosphere the natural range of vision is materially extended. There are no objects in the middle ground, no perspectives, and so you are unable to estimate relative size or distance. A cow may be a bird, or *vice versa*.

Emerson says in every landscape the point of astonishment is the meeting of the sky and earth. This is particularly true of the plains. Nature has few lines. She is either round or moving, except in a dead calm, but here the horizon line is hard. The sun apparently rises out of the ground and sets in it at night.

From the train, the monotony is maddening. One feels like getting out on the platform to recite "Excelsior," but to know the spell of the prairies you must get out and away from the railway. From the swiftly-moving express the plains are a spiritless mass of color, but on the land one