

There is something very remarkable about the navigation of Red River. At ice level the fall from the city to the crossing at Selkirk is 13 feet, and at the flood for weeks this season the water rose over 20 feet at Winnipeg, while at the crossing it rose only four feet. The fur trade overshadows all others. It is not now, as formerly, confined to the Hudson Bay Company, but scores of independent traders, with large trains, are seen almost daily going or coming into the city from the far west. The poor untutored Indian receives but a paltry pittance for his share. I understand that a few pounds of shot, flour or pork, will purchase a buffalo robe. Thousands are purchased for less than \$1 each, principally in trade, the real intrinsic value of which would not represent 50c. in Ontario. I heard a trader who had just arrived from the plains say that he had brought in 4,000 robes, and had offered the entire lot at \$2.50 each and could not find a purchaser. A few years ago traders from the States, and even our own traders, would take a gallon of high wines, dilute it with probably 20 gallons of water, tobacco juice, &c., and often impose upon the natives with a mixture of drugs, pepper and pain-killer, defrauding them out of valuable furs for an article that has a tendency to make them still more savage and undermine their constitutions. The law abolishing the sale of intoxicating liquors in the North-West, aided by the Mounted Police, has effectually put a check to this traffic.

Owing to the state of the roads the merchants and lumbermen are complaining of dull times, but, judging from the hundreds of Red River carts loading and unloading along the streets and warehouses, etc., I would imagine that a very extensive business was done. The hotels are overflowing with strangers; many have come for an excursion merely to see the country; others intend to invest and remain in the North-West. One gentleman shipped yesterday 600 bushels of wheat, intending to dispose of it for seed next spring. The change, no doubt, will prove advantageous.

Hotel accommodation in this city is much improved of late years.

LETTER IV.

Travelling Under Difficulties—A Rainy Season in the Prairie Province—Productiveness of the Country—Mennonite and Icelandic Settlements—Good Prospects for frugal, industrious Settlers—The Rain-fall at Winnipeg, &c., &c.,

The readers of the *Beacon* will, I hope, excuse my apparent negligence in not furnishing them earlier with a sketch of the continuation of my travels in Manitoba and the North West. The only apology I can offer is that I found it utterly impossible to write while under