



ND now for the last stage of our journey. The beautiful sleeping car in which we came up from Montreal kept on its way westward whilst we were "doing" Winnipeg, but we find another awaiting us, differing from the first only in name. Looking through the train, we find but few of our fellow passengers of yesterday. Nearly everybody stops at Winnipeg for a longer or shorter time, some to remain permanently, others to visit the land offices of the Government or of the railway company; others to purchase supplies or materials for their new prairie homes; and still others only to see the town, as we have done.

We find among the new passengers representatives of all grades of society—gentlemen travelling for pleasure, sportsmen, merchants and commercial travellers, high-born young men seeking fortunes in large farms or in ranching, keen-looking Japanese, pig-tailed Chinamen, sturdy English, Scotch, German and Scandinavian immigrants, land-hunters in plenty, their pockets stuffed with maps and with pamphlets full of land lore, gold and silver miners for the mountains, coal miners for the Saskatchewan country, and professional men of all descriptions. There is not a sorrowful visage in the party; every face wears a bright and expectant look, and the wonderfully clear sky and the brilliant sunshine add to the cheerfulness of the scene.

The Rocky Mountains are yet nearly a thousand miles away. A few short years ago this was a six-weeks' journey, under the most favorable circumstances, and it was counted a good trip when the old-time ox-trains, carrying goods and supplies to the distant trading-posts, reached the mountains in three months; but our stages will be numbered by hours instead of days.

Leaving Winnipeg, we strike out at once upon a broad plain as level and green as a billiard table, extending to the north and west apparently without limit, and bordered at the south by a line of trees marking the course of the Assiniboine River. This is not yet the prairie, but a great widening of the valleys of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, which unite at Winnipeg. To the left, and skirting the river, is a continuous line of well-tilled farms, with comfortable farm houses peering out from among the trees. To the right is a vast meadow, with countless cattle half hidden in the grass. The railway stretches away before us without curve or deflection as far as the eye can reach, and the motion of the train is hardly felt as we fly along. As we proceed westward we imperceptibly reach higher ground, and the country is checkered with fields of grain, and dotted far into the distance with farm houses and grain-stacks.