

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION.

The Province of Manitoba contains about 9,000,000 acres. It is, however, comparatively a speck on the map of the vast Territory, belonging to the Dominion of Canada, out of which it has been formed. It is situated in the centre of the continent of North America, nearly equally distant between the pole and the equator and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The soil is for the most part prairie, of great depth and richness, and covered with grass. Its climate gives the conditions of decided heat in summer and decided cold in winter. The snow goes away, and ploughing begins in April, which is about the same as in the older Provinces of Canada, or the Northern United States on the Atlantic seaboard, or the States of Minnesota or Wisconsin. Crops are harvested in August and September. The long, warm days of summer bring vegetation of all sorts to rapid maturity. Autumn begins about the 20th of September, and lasts till the end of November, when frost sets in. The winter proper comprises the months of December, January, February and March. Spring comes in April. The summer months are part of May, June, July, August and part of September. The days are warm, and the nights cool. In winter, the thermometer sinks to 30 and 40 degrees below zero. But this degree of cold in the dry atmosphere of the North-West does not produce any unpleasant sensations. The weather is not felt to be colder than that in the Province of Quebec, nor so cold as milder winters in climates where the frost, or even a less degree of cold than frost, is accompanied with dampness. The testimony is universal on this point.

Snow does not fall on the prairies to an average greater depth than 18 inches; and buffaloes and horses graze out of doors all winter.