

fingers of a man's big hand. A piece of bacon or pork, some hardened bread, and a paper bag of dried-up tea, are his main materials: a frying-pan and boiling kettle his main methods of caring for the sustenance of the master of the farm.

But in winter, after having driven back for miles after delivering the

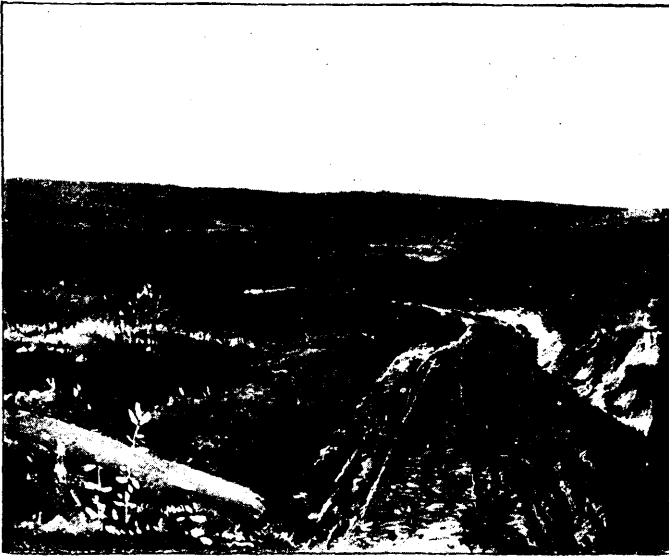
ride and herd the cattle: the boy of ten is a man and drives a team, and the lad of fourteen can take his place on the top of the stack at threshing-time, and hold his own with any of the country side. The harvest had been early: the grain was resting in the stack, and "threshing bees" were frequent: on not a few farms the crop

had already been taken to market, or was on the way in daily loads. What feasts were laid out at the mid-day meals for the "threshing hands!" The condition of the children told of plenty—no want of food, no sign of scantiness. What though their clothes were misfitting, or mended, their cheeks were healthy, and their bodies robust. There was plenteousness in every home.

I roamed about over the rolling

table lands on either side the Pembina valley, or along the rich level bottoms, where the river winds between the spreading hills set from one to three miles apart. Ten years ago, the river abounded with fish, but the Americans south of the boundary lines, placing their mill-dams across it, have left no fish-ways, and thus the sturgeon can no longer come up from the Red River and the lakes.

Duck were wild and geese "onsarting." One night spent by a friend under the chill covering of a "hide," by which he it known is not meant the comforting shelter of a buffalo robe, but only the concealment of a circle of boughs cut and set on end, was rewarded at daybreak by the chagrin of seeing the lines of early morning geese streaming everywhere



THE PEMBINA VALLEY—SOUTHERN MANITOBA.

load of grain, he enters a cold-stricken room, and with stiff, numbed fingers relights the fire. To fill the kettle with chunks of ice, and thaw out the food before getting his supper, makes it hard for a man to call such a surrounding "home." Wherever was seen an empty house, it was one that had been left by an unhappy "bach" who had abandoned, not his ample fields, but the cold ashes of a silent fireside. Until wives are found for such as he, there will be vacated farms in the most favored places in the North-West. The maidens and widows of Canada have a great duty to fulfil.

What a contrast were the family households where wives enlivened it and children abounded, and how these latter do abound—cheery, chubby youngsters! The six-year-olds can