

WESTERN CANADA.—CROP PROSPECTS AND CLIMATE ABOUT EDMONTON, N. W. T.

Interesting letter from Mrs. S. A. Brigham, late of
Mason City.

Ross Creek, Alberta, N. W. T., Canada,

Aug. 7th, 1899.

Dear Sir,—I promised, when leaving Mason City, to send you a description of this country at an early date. We are located in the Beaver Hills, 30 miles from Ft. Saskatchewan and 50 miles from Edmonton. To the east of these is an immense area of bottom lands, which furnishes abundance of hay for the settlers. It is dotted with small lakes, the largest of which is called Beaver Lake, 16 miles in length.

There is plenty of small timber and willows which make fine shelter for the cattle and horses now feeding there. Beyond this is a settlement of half breeds (a mixture of Scotch and Indian). Many of them are rich, and have built good houses from the sale of their stock, raised on these lands. They have a church, Presbyterian and Episcopal services are held in it.

The Beaver Hills are covered with small, green willows which are easily gotten rid of before breaking up the land. Here and there poplar, birch and tamarack trees abound. Small meadows are numerous. The soil in these hills is much richer than the bottom lands, being a kind of black leaf mould. There is no tough sod to break, like that of the prairie lands, and it is very productive. Wheat, oats and barley do finely, escaping the light frosts of the bottom lands, and vegetables are the finest that can be grown. Potatoes especially are large and solid, easily producing from 200 to 300 bushels per acre, and best of all never a "taty bug" to wrestle with. Corn is not a success—can only be brought to roasting ears. Tomatoes rarely ripen, owing to the cold nights. Wild fruit—strawberries, gooseberries, saskatoons (or pine berries), raspberries and cranberries, are found on the hills. Small tame fruit does splendidly, the red and white currants in my garden are as large again as common sized ones.

The climate during the summer season reminds me very much of England. We have long days during the months of June and July, one can see to read many evenings until 10 o'clock in the twilight. Some nights less than three hours of darkness, and the birds are singing at 2 o'clock. Then again it rains so easily. You look