

place; both were three thousand miles away. Nor did he distinguish between Vancouver city, situated on the mainland, and the island of the same name of which Victoria is the capital. At Victoria Sybil lived, and, after traversing a continent, he could not fail to find her.

But having time on board the train to study the "annotated timetable" of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Tom discovered that it would be scarcely possible—if possible at all—for him to get even a peep at Victoria before taking up his duties on the *Empress* steamer. His train was due at Vancouver at one o'clock on the sixth day after leaving Montreal. Then the steamer, starting almost immediately, was timed to reach Victoria at six in the evening. The return voyage was made in the early morning, the steamer leaving Victoria at 2 A.M., and reaching Vancouver city at about eight. That same afternoon the *Empress* steamer was timed to sail for Yokohama.

The question that Tom Playfair debated hour after hour, as the train thundered along through the region of rock and lake and forest that lies to the north of Lake Superior, was as to the likelihood of his discovering or coming on Sybil in the course of a single evening. He speculated as to the sort of place Victoria was. Was it a straggling place, or was there some one principal street, or it might be a park, where everybody was sure to turn up of an evening? Would there be any use inquiring at the post-office, or should he just demand of this person or of that if they knew a young lady called Jessop?

Well, these dreams and speculations served to occupy a good deal of time, and from morn till even, and all night long, the train was speeding on towards the western ocean. Lover-like, Tom was happy, in that each hour brought him nearer to the loved one.

Awaking rather late on the morning of the third day after leaving Montreal, Tom could have fancied himself at sea again. The whole aspect of the country had been transformed since the previous evening. Neither lake nor tree, rock nor hill, was to be seen. In every direction the rolling prairie stretched away till, sea-like, it melted into the natural horizon. Tom looked round him with interest, nor had he grown weary of the novel spectacle when the train ran into Winnipeg.

Here there was a rest of two or three

hours, and Tom had sufficient time to explore the capital of which Manitoba is so proud. And, indeed, Winnipeg is a wonderful place. A busy, thriving town, with no doubt a magnificent future, it was, but a generation ago, a poor village of a hundred inhabitants, that had grown up round the old Fort Garry of the Hudson Bay Company. But our young traveller was impatient to get on. He was convinced that there was no place in the New World—if, indeed, in any world—to compare with Victoria; so he rejoiced when, after many delays, the train got away from the busy, crowded platform, and rushed forth into the vast solitudes of the open prairie once more.

But Tom Playfair was heartily sick of the prairie country before he was done with it. All the rest of that day, and till the darkness gathered, the landscape was of the same monotonous character. The sun rose, and the train might have been running through the identical district that had been traversed the previous evening. A long day followed, and to the impatient traveller the train seemed to be merely creeping across a limitless expanse. True, the surface of the country was no longer flat; the track was gradually rising through an undulating region, and, after a time, the Cypress Hills were visible, breaking the uniformity of the western horizon. Occasionally a flourishing stock-farm was passed; then would follow a long stretch of desolate country, dotted here and there with lakes of bitter alkaline water. The bleached bones of the now extinct buffalo littered the plain; and the antelopes fled from the approaching train; while the funny little prairie-dogs came out of their holes, and stood erect and absolutely motionless, gazing with fearless curiosity at the intruding and clamorous monster.

In the course of the day the train stopped frequently at small stations; but between Regina, which is passed at half-past five in the morning, and Medicine Hat, which is not reached till seven in the evening, there is no town of any importance.

At Medicine Hat there was a pause of half an hour, and Tom amused himself by watching and conversing with the Indian women that frequent that station, selling polished buffalo-horns, beadwork, and other specimens of native industry. After leaving Medicine Hat the train made but few stops, and as the darkness