

its realization was found to be a political necessity. Then the Government of the new Dominion of Canada set about the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway, a work of such vast proportions that the richest empire of Europe might well have hesitated before entering upon it.

"Much of the country through which the railway must be built was unexplored. Towards the east, all about Lake Superior, and beyond to Red River, was a vast rocky region, where Nature in her younger days had run riot, and where deep lakes



WINNIPEG OX-TEAM.

and mighty rivers in every direction opposed the progress of the engineer. Beyond Red River for a thousand miles stretched a great plain, known only to the wild Indian and the fur trader; then came the mountains, range after range, in close succession, and all unexplored. Through all this, for a distance of nearly three thousand miles, the railway surveys had first to be made. These consumed much time and money; people became impatient and found fault and doubted. There were differences of opinion, and these differences became questions of domestic politics, dividing parties, and it was not until 1875 that the work of construction commenced in earnest.

"But the machinery of Government is ill adapted, at best, to the carrying on of such an enterprise, and in this case it was blocked or retarded by political jealousies and party strife. Governments changed and delays occurred, until finally, in 1880, it was decided almost by common consent to surrender the work to a private company.

"The explorations and surveys for the railway had made known the character of the country it was to traverse. In the wilderness east, north, and west of Lake Superior, forests of pine and other timber, and mineral deposits of incalculable value were found, and millions of acres of agricultural land as well. The vast prairie district between Winnipeg and the Rocky Mountains proved to be wonderfully rich in its agricultural resources. Towards the mountains great coal fields were discovered, and British Columbia beyond was known to contain almost every element of traffic and wealth. Thousands of people had settled on the prairies of the Northwest, and their success had brought tens of thousands more. The political reasons for building the railway were lost sight of and commercial reasons took their place, and there was no difficulty in finding a party of capitalists ready

and willing to relieve the Government of the work and carry it on as a commercial enterprise. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company was organized early in 1881, and immediately entered into a contract with the Government to complete the line within ten years.

"The railway system of Eastern Canada had already advanced far up the Ottawa valley. The company undertook the building of the remaining nineteen hundred and twenty miles, and for this it was to receive from the Government a number of valuable privileges and immunities, and twenty-five million dollars in money and twenty-five million acres of agricultural land. The entire railway when completed was to remain the property of the company.

"The end of the third year found them at the summit of the Rocky Mountains, and the fourth in the Selkirks, nearly a thousand and fifty miles from Winnipeg.

"While such rapid progress was being made west of Winnipeg, the rails advancing at an average rate of more than three miles each working day, for months in succession, and sometimes five and even six miles in a day, armies of men with all modern appliances and thousands of tons of dynamite were breaking down the barriers of hard and tough Laurentian and Huronian rocks, and pushing the line through the forests north and east of Lake Superior. The forces working towards each other met at Craigellachie, in Eagle Pass, in the Gold or Columbian range of mountains, and there, on a wet morning, the 7th of November, 1885, the last rail was laid in the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

"The close of 1885 found the company, not yet five years old, in possession of the longest continuous line in the world, extending from Quebec and Montreal all the way across the continent to the Pacific Ocean, a distance of three thousand and fifty miles; and by the midsummer of 1886 all this vast system was fully equipped and fairly working throughout. Villages and towns and even cities followed close upon the heels of the line-builders; the forests were cleared away, the prairie's soil was turned over, mines were opened, and even before the last rail was in place the completed sections were carrying a large and profitable traffic. The touch of this young Giant of the North was felt upon the world's commerce almost before his existence was known; and, not content with the trade of the golden shores of the Pacific from California to Alaska, his arms have already stretched out across that broad ocean and grasped the teas and silks of China and Japan to exchange them for the fabrics of Europe."



AN INDIAN LODGE IN THE NORTH-WEST.

PRAIRIE MEMORIES.

A wide o'er-arching summer sky;
Sea-drifting grasses, rustling reeds,
Where young grouse to their mothers cry.
And locusts pipe from whistling weeds;
Broad meadows lying like lagoons
Of sunniest water, on whose swells
Float nodding blooms, to tinkling bells
Of bob-o'-linkums' wildest tunes:

Far west-winds bringing odors fresh
From mountains' rayed as monarchs are

In royal robes of ice and snow,
Where storms are bred in thunder-jar;
Land of corn and wheat and kine,
Where plenty fills the hand of him
Who tills the soil or prunes the vine,
Or digs in thy far canyons dim—

My western land! I love thee yet,
In dreams I ride my horse again,
And breast the breezes flowing fleet
From out the meadows cold and wet,
From fields of flowers blowing sweet,
And flinging perfume to the breeze.