

much space as four ordinary soda biscuits and as hard as a piece of wood. Whatever may have been said about this action of the Government, it is not doubted by anyone who has been on a western reserve that the measure has been a positive blessing. It provides a daily ration of food for a portion of the community that most needs it without in any way bringing in a sense of pauperism; it has built up the attendance of the schools, helped to keep the people on the reserves and has educated the taste for civilized, vegetable food, which the meat-consuming western Indian did not have.

The children are out, playing at various games on their way home, showing that the redness of the skin makes no difference in the childish spirit. One boy volunteers to take us to the hayfields, where the greater part of the community are now busily employed. For in truth the Indians here take more readily to cattle-raising than grain producing, and so a great deal of hay is required to keep their stock through the winter. Hay is plentiful and cattle grow fat running free in the summer, so that by instinct and environment the Indian becomes like Abraham, or like the nomadic Kirghiz of Asia, a man of flocks and herds. Sheep have also been tried, and spinning wheels sent in to spin the wool, which effort has proved successful in whatever reserves teachers could be found to teach the women spinning, so that there seems to be room for development in this line, especially as the Indian women greatly need indoor employment.

Under the guidance of the boy we pass down along the river clearing, seeing various herds of cattle lying in shady places, and then, turning our backs to the water, we plunge into the woods. At first we pass through a growth of silver poplar, but as we get in further the foliage changes and we are in the midst of a forest of sweet-scented spruce. About two miles of walking bring us to a little plain about five miles in diameter, with a little lake lying to one side. Beside the path the thick wild grass grows up breast high, not all head as our cultivated grasses, but with stalks lost in leaves and branches and entangled with the vines of a species of blue flowered wild pea. No wonder the cattle thrive on such royal grasses. In the plain, men, boys and a few women are busy at work. There are many swinging scythes, while their sons and wives are turning over the hay, putting it into cocks or stacking it. Some of the most energetic have saved sufficient money to purchase mowers and horse-rakes and these are now adding to the wealth of their owners by the increased quantity of hay they can put up. There are hay waggons of the usual pattern, creaking Red River carts and low broad sleighs slipping over the soft stubble. There is also a hay sleigh of a pattern seen perhaps nowhere else than on an Indian reserve, and reminding one strongly of the pictures of Indians moving their camps across the plains. The horse stands between shafts of two long poles whose ends rest on the ground behind him; on these poles, near where they touch the ground is built up a sort of staging, from which springs the rack. The load is partly supported on the ground, partly on the horse, and while it may not be quite as hard on horses as it seems, every other vehicle on the field is probably an improvement on it. The hay is being stacked here on the plain until winter, when it will be brought into the stables near each house as required. Each family is cutting the grass in its own particular circle and there is plenty of room so that the circles do not encroach upon one another. The horses are all of the Indian pony stamp and seem tough, hardy little things and very patient, even under the tormenting stings of clouds of mosquitos and sandflies. Here too we learn the use of the ring of veiling which at this season of the year is to be seen curled up on the brim of every hat. Where the mosquitos are bad the veiling is no longer left up but brought down and the lower edge tied closely about the neck, thus protecting the wearer from the attacks of these troublesome insects. The horses suffer from them severely, even though their owners strive to alleviate their troubles by smearing them over with rancid grease. We defend ourselves vigorously by constantly beating the pests off with handkerchiefs, but find it impossible to stay very long watching the haymakers, and so return to the village. The season is too late for raspberries, which we had met with in abundance a fortnight before, but wild currants, white and black, and gooseberries hanging in yellow clusters tempt us as we pass, and we cannot refrain from an occasional excursion to one side to pluck handfuls of blue saskatoons, the most delicious of them all. Some enterprising fruit canner will yet put his factory down in these northern Manitoban wilds and make his fortune. From the time the strawberry comes in until the frost has spoiled the last wild plum and cranberry his plant will be kept in vigorous operation.

As we approach the mission-house the missionary, in his workday suit of "pepper and salt," invites us in. The house is of squared logs like the rest, but two storeys high and considerably larger, with a little verandah in front. The garden before it has some beds of homelike flowers and many kinds of useful vegetables, all properly set out, hoed, staked and so forth, for this is an object-lesson for the sharp-sighted red man. The house is very plainly furnished, as it needs must be, considering the roads over which everything must be brought, and a good many of the things are of home manufacture. The white floor is covered with rush mats or mats of grass and rushes ingeniously woven by native women; there are specimens of bead work about, and there is the shelf of books, comforters in weary hours. Missionaries are sometimes seen at missionary conferences

and like gatherings in the cities, so we were prepared for the kindly, undemonstrative man, who was none the less preacher because he preached through his hands, his garden and his barns as well as in the pulpit of the mission church. But we were just a trifle curious to see a real live missionary's wife, in her own home, and were perhaps a trifle startled to find that she was not essentially different from good wives in general, and quite capable of being the source (as indeed she was) of whatever sweetness and light we had observed in the Indian houses.

But we must not delay to speak of the comfortable chairs and the cool, pleasant rooms with their inviting-homelike look; suffice it to say that, situated far away from the comforts and enjoyments of civilization and with very infrequent mails (sometimes once a month or less frequently) each mission house visited proved that out of few materials and in a strange, wild land, a Christian home is a power for good such as no Government money can create, and for which power the heads of the Indian Department should be unfeignedly thankful to the missionary societies.

Contrary to our expectations the Hudson's Bay Company's post consisted of a very generous dwelling-house, and a very ordinary sized store, much smaller than the former, and we were still further surprised by learning, though it seems sensible enough, that the mansion at the post is generally larger than the store. The person in charge requires more consideration and comfort than the goods he sells. The store is a plain log building; inside it contains one large public room, fitted with shelves from floor to ceiling on three sides, windows and door on the fourth. On the shelves are displayed goods of every kind required on a reserve and these appear to be of a much more sensible and civilized kind than in the days of Bullantyne. The Company's officers are trained like those of one of our large banking company's and moved about from post to post as they receive promotion.

Evening is settling down as we leave the reserve. In all directions smudge fires are burning in their little fenced-off enclosures, which prevent the cattle from tramping them out in their eagerness to stand in the smoke. Men and boys just come from haying are playing foot-ball on the village green, the women are milking cows in enclosures beside the houses, smaller boys and girls are playing at different games among the different herds of cattle, love-making is going on too over the milk-pails and across the palings, other boys still are racing about on ponies, yet never seeming to knock over any one or to run into a cantankerous ox. The village is a picture of life and cattle and smoke and dusky evening that can never fade—a picture of this western land, yet so strangely suggestive of the scenes given us of Cossack camps beside old "Mother Volga." Odoriferous smoke, sandflies, bare-headed, black-haired, dark-eyed women; strong well-built men; active children, herds of cattle and droves of ponies; foot-ball, milking-pails. What a strange throng of associations for an Indian reserve! How much of advance it tells! How much of change since the moose and buffalo were the Indian's sole concern—and as we step into our canoes and push out into the broad stream, and feel the cool breeze sweep up from the bend in the river we do not doubt that the present life is better, fuller, than the old, and that despite his many weaknesses and many lapses into barbarism the Indian is nearer to our ideal, and that the work of Agent and Teacher and Missionary has not been in vain.

IOTA NORTH.

THE CRITIC.

THERE is an article in the current number of the *Westminster Review* which has hardly evoked—or provoked—that attention from the Canadian press which it deserves. It is entitled "The Present Position of Canada," and is signed with a name which has already been seen in the *Economist* and elsewhere—that of Mr. Lawrence Irwell. In tone and style it is exemplary: it is rarely indeed that political and economical subjects are treated in a manner so unprejudiced and so dispassionate. It also bears evidence of the careful and conscientious collection of facts, and the facts are put forward in a way at once lucid and attractive. Of the present position of Canada, however, the writer holds the gloomiest views. Throughout the many topics with which he deals the pessimistic note predominates, and this pessimistic note ascends in a sort of *crescendo* till it reaches the concluding sentence, which runs thus: "Great Britain is, I fear, becoming disgusted with Canada, her slow growth and her protectionism, and if the bulk of her population expressed a distinct desire to cut the political cable, it is not probable that there would be any very strong opposition upon the part of John Bull." Qualified and guarded as this definite expression of opinion is, it is doubtful if it would receive the cordial assent of many native-born Canadians. That colony, surely, which placidly accepted the assertion that the feeling with which it was regarded by the Mother Country was one of disgust, would be open to a charge of apathetic, if not of untalial, conduct. But that it has not been widely combatted in the colonial press is probably due, not to our apathy or impiety, but either to the fact that the *Westminster* is not here widely read, or to the fact that the assertion has been regarded merely as the expression of personal opinion, and has been read also with an amount of incredulity that deemed a reply unnecessary. Nevertheless, Mr. Irwell has said in an English magazine of some importance that he thinks

Great Britain is becoming disgusted with Canada, and what is more has led up to that saying with some seven or eight pages of figures and facts—the first certainly not often assailable, the second, perhaps, more open to controversy. With Mr. Irwell's figures and facts, however, the practised politician may be left to deal. The Critic is content to question the alleged disgust with which he thinks Great Britain regards her Canadian colony.

If by Great Britain Mr. Irwell means the majority of the people of the British Isles, the answer is that the majority of the people of the British Isles do not know enough about their transatlantic colony to be in a position to hold any positive views whatever about it. Apathetic, if not downright ignorant, is the term by which to characterize English interest in Canada. Not so very many years ago, in a highly intelligent city in the north of England, a lecture was delivered upon the subject of the Dominion, in proposing a vote of thanks for which an otherwise quite intelligent speaker expressed the hope that now that the Alabama claims were comfortably settled nothing would intervene to disturb the harmonious relationships between the two countries, a sentiment that was received without comment by the audience. It is well known too that in a printed proclamation issued broadcast by the Privy Council on the subject of the Colorado beetle, Ontario was referred to as a town. And there are few people with connexions beyond the sea who have not over and over again been made ludicrously aware of the extremely hazy ideas held by persons of education and intelligence on our geographical and political position. The bulk of the people of Great Britain could no more be possessed of a feeling of disgust against Canada than they could against the Skager-Rack or the Cattegat, for their knowledge of the one is on a par with their knowledge of the other. No one hates Abracadabra; very few (beyond undergraduates) loath Barbara or Felapton. And this ignorance is excusable; almost, we may say, rational. What do we here know of Ascension Isle; and, but for the tornado, what should we have known of the Mauritius?

But if by Great Britain Mr. Irwell means the Government for the time being in power, or if he means that body of men who interest themselves in affairs of the Empire and are *au courant* with international and inter-colonial relationships, even then not many probably will be found to assent to the use of so strong a term by which to characterize the feelings engendered by Canada's slow growth and her protectionism, even admitting these; for intelligent Englishmen will find causes for the one and will admit reasons for the other. Mr. Irwell loses sight of many obstacles against which the Dominion has to contend. He compares her—much to her disadvantage—with her powerful neighbour to the South—a neighbour the contiguity of which is not altogether an unmixed boon. He forgets that not till 1867 were her provinces confederated; and he forgets that even now there exist not a few elements tending to disintegration: nothing will ever cause a coalescence between the French and the English elements, and the harmonizing of Ultramontanist and Orangeism is further out of the question still. Till the Canadian Pacific Railway was built there was absolutely nothing to bind east and west together, and till that date also our spacious and fertile North-West Territories were left unpopulated and unknown. There is no moneyed and leisure class, and the class that enters Parliament is not the best possible. The climate is not over-genial, and want of transportation facilities have confined production to the belt of the great lakes. Where Australia abounds in harbours and coastline, our outlet has for years been largely confined to the St. Lawrence. No gold fields have attracted to us men and money. Where in the Antipodes the distance between sheep farm and seaboard is a matter of scores, with us the distance between ranch and river is a matter of thousands, of miles. The States were knit together at their birth by alliance against a common foe; we have been mated with an uncongenial twin. Nor has Canada indulged in specious rhetoric by which to tempt unthinking thousands in search of "liberty" to her shores. And alone amongst England's colonies has Canada had ever to contend with a big and blustering nation who if not openly has at least been commercially belligerent.

However, even if we grant the slow growth and grant the protectionism, even if we go so far as to grant the disgust (which God forbid!) still there are those who think it will be a very long time indeed before the bulk of our population express a distinct idea to cut the political cable. And there are some who think that even then it is probable that there will be strong opposition on the part of John Bull.

A DESPATCH from Christiana says that subscriptions are being solicited towards defraying the cost of building and manning the Viking ship, which it is proposed to send to the World's Fair. It is the intention to man the ship with the ablest Norwegian sailors procurable and to navigate it across the Atlantic, although the attempt is regarded as a very hazardous one. When the ship is on exhibition at Chicago, alongside the caravels of Columbus, it is thought the Norwegian flag, floating from mast-head, will bear witness to the intrepidity of Norse seamen, both in olden days and at present. Those having the enterprise in charge will publish two pamphlets, one on the Viking ship and the other on the discoveries of Leif Ericsson.