

THE GREAT WESTERN COUNTRY.

TWO days of travel over a railway that has much to boast of in engineering skill, but which traverses a desolate wilderness, brings one from Montreal to Winnipeg. Two days on the great lakes, part of which may afford most of the passengers many of the evils of an ocean voyage, deepen the impression of the all-rail journey, that our Dominion is divided into at least two great sections—East and West. Possibly it is inaccurate to speak of even Winnipeg as west, seeing that it stands midway between Montreal and the Pacific coast. But one can hardly be wrong in regarding Winnipeg as the gateway to an immense territory, separated by permanent barriers from the older provinces of the East. As the focus of a railway system radiating ever more widely, as the distributing centre for great wholesale houses, as the clearing exchange for banks, and as the headquarters of the wheat business, Winnipeg is to-day the great city of Western Canada, and its present importance has a great claim on the future. However optimistic the Westerner may be, he seems to be building his castles on solid earth when he stakes out the future of his capital, even though he may have to mortgage coming days.

In every way this new city has set a good standard for the developing life of the great prairie country. Substantially built, well laid out broad streets, lined with handsome places of business, are an index of the great volume of trade that flows through its commercial channels. It may be taken as a good type of a distinctively Canadian city. Numerous and conspicuous school buildings are a witness to the high place that education has held from the very beginning in the esteem of those who wandered westward for their home. Fortunately I have no reputation as a prophet so that I have none to lose, but even if I had, the risk would not be great in venturing to predict that in the not very distant future Winnipeg will be one of the intellectual: