

Editor's Table.

The February number of *Woman*, the new monthly magazine for the ladies, was on the Table last week. *Woman*, as its name implies, is a home journal, devoted to the interests of womankind. It is the only magazine of the kind published, and the number received indicates that it will fill this high sphere of journalism in a praiseworthy manner. It is interesting in matter, chaste in tone, and nicely illustrated. The bill of fare for February presents a long list of articles, each of which should furnish a few moments of pleasure for the refined, intelligent and cultured womanly intellect. *Woman* has undoubtedly entered upon a worthy and apparently successful career. *Woman Publishing Co.*, 122 Nassau St., New York.

Copies of the Manchester, England, *Courier* have been laid on the Table, containing a series of able letters on Commercial Union, from the pen of Major Bolton, of Russell, Man. The question is argued at length, and conclusions are drawn favoring free trade between all portions of the British Empire, as an offset against a high tariff compact with the United States. Major Bolton favors the appointment of an Imperial Commission, to visit British colonies and gather trade information, which would be of value in throwing light upon the subject. The ultimate object of this commercial union in the Empire would be the conversion of the world to free trade principles, leading to a commercial union of the world.

Volume one, number one, of *Den Skandinaviske* has reached the Table. This is a monthly journal published at Winnipeg, by Emanuel Ohlen. Being interpreted the name of the paper is *The Canadian Scandinavian*. It is the first and only Scandinavian paper published in Canada.

The Allan Steamship Line has issued a little book called *A Handbook of Information and Advice for Emigrants*. The book deals principally with Western Canada, giving the experience of settlers, an article on the Harvest of 1887 in Manitoba, etc. Its circulation throughout the United Kingdom will no doubt produce good results. Allan, Bros. & Co., Liverpool.

From Britain to British Columbia, or, Canada as a Domain for British Farmers, Sportsmen and Tourists, by Professor J. P. Sheldon. This is a neat little work, published by the Canadian Government, giving the observations of the able author during his recent trips and studies in Western Canada. The cover gives lithographic views of Winnipeg, Montreal and Vancouver, B. C.

The special number of the *Victoria Colonist*, which reached the Table some time ago, is worthy of more than passing notice. Such a handsome work of art coming from Victoria, will be a surprise to the people of Eastern Canada. The number was prepared throughout in the *Colonist* building, including the many excellent lithographic engravings of Victoria and British Columbia scenes. Two large engravings of Victoria in 1860 and in 1887, are attractive. The letter press is exceptionally fine. A number of interesting articles are given, descriptive, historical, trade and commerce, re-

sources of the province, etc. Anything approaching this number in excellence has never been attempted in Winnipeg. Messrs. Ellis & Co., of the *Colonist*, have reason to feel proud of their effort, and the people of Victoria can share in the same feeling.

The *Leather Gazette*, of St. Louis, Mo., has just celebrated its fifth birthday. The *Gazette* is a welcome weekly visitor to the Table, particularly owing to its spicy editorials, which are usually the essence of common sense. In the field of special trade journalism the *Leather Gazette* is one of the brightest lights.

Farm Lands Around Winnipeg.

It is a matter of astonishment to new arrivals in Winnipeg to learn, that while the population of the city exceeds that of all the other cities and towns of Manitoba put together, the lands around it are more sparsely settled, and a smaller proportion of them under cultivation, than is the case with the lands around any other town of any prominence in the Province. The astonishment increases, when the fact is learned, that among all the fertile lands of the Canadian Northwest, none are richer from an agricultural point of view, and in few districts are they more fertile as are these same sparsely settled and almost unbroken prairie lands around Winnipeg.

It requires a little study of the history of Manitoba, to learn the reason for this sparsity of settlement around the Manitoba capital. It is necessary to go back to shortly after Manitoba and the Northwest Territory were added to the Dominion of Canada. One of the conditions upon which the Government at Ottawa assumed control of this vast country and its lands was, that every white and half breed resident of the country at the time of its being embraced in Confederation, should receive a free grant of 240 acres of land. Thus every man, woman and child was entitled to this grant, and so eager was the Ottawa Government to secure the peaceful possession of the country, that the grant to every one was unconditional beyond their being residents at the time stated.

The bulk of the lands thus granted were located near the city of Winnipeg, or Fort Garry as it was formerly called, and in the days when people looked forward to long years of waiting for railway communication, it could not be expected that they would be considered of great value. There being no conditions of cultivation attached to the land grants, and the recipients being largely a people whom generations of isolation from the outer world had deprived of enterprise, as might be expected very little in the way of cultivation was done, and thus the virgin prairie sod was but little broken, when railway construction connected Winnipeg with the eastern world.

In the interval a crowd of far-seeing speculators had been gradually gaining possession of these lands which their first owners did not cultivate, and the prices paid for them were never very high. There are those here who remember of many a half-breed claim to 240 acres being traded off for a pair of blankets. By the year 1880 the majority of these lands were in the hands of speculators living in this Province and the East, and when the "Boom"

of 1881 was at its height, no class were so greedy in their extortions for high figures for these lands, as the men who had secured them for the price of a song. In fact they overreached themselves, and all the immigration of 1881 and 1882, which was larger than during all the balance of the history of Northwestern settlement, passed on westward where free lands could be had from the Government, or where improved farms could be bought at reasonable figures.

Towards the close of 1883 the speculative holders of lands around Winnipeg began to discover that they had been killing the goose that would lay the golden egg. Many of them were in a bad fix financially. Mortgages on these lands were falling due, and to sell in time to meet these they found it impossible. It was scattered broadcast over the eastern provinces and in Europe that lands around Winnipeg were held at fabulous prices. Offers to sell at reasonable figures were folly, and would not bring any one to make enquiry about such lands. The settler looking for lands flew through Winnipeg as he would through a city struck with an epidemic, and gazed at every land agent much as he would at a card sharper or one he suspected of being a confidence man. The evil work had been done through greed, and it has taken years of time to clear away only partially the reputation no longer merited.

Extremes always bring a reaction, and one came with a vengeance in connection with the price of lands around Winnipeg. In 1884-5 and 6 the foreclosing of mortgages, and other work of closing out margin land speculators went on at a lively rate, and those unable or unwilling to hold longer had to let go and loose heavily by so doing. The consequence is that at the present time lands in the vicinity of the Manitoba Capital are now as far or almost as far below their natural value, as they were above it six years ago, and to agricultural settlers they furnish at the present time, probably the best opportunity to secure what can in a few years be made a valuable farm, that ever was offered in the history of any new country.

The inquiries of the committee of the Winnipeg board of trade and the committee of the Winnipeg city council working in conjunction with each other bring out the fact, that within 30 miles of the city from 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 acres of the most fertile land in the world can be had by settlers at unprecedentedly low figures. At least a quarter of a million of acres of the low lying and wet portion of these lands can be bought for \$2.50 an acre, or less. Another quarter of a million of a better quality comprising mixed prairie and grazing lands can be bought for \$4 an acre or lower, and another quarter of a million of the best of the lands, where settlers can commence breaking sod at once, can be had at from \$5 to \$7 an acre.

These prices we are prepared to demonstrate to intending settlers are correct, and during the coming spring it is the intention that maps of land for sale shall be placed in the Board of Trade rooms, where intending land purchasers will be able to see that these statements are not misleading. These arrangements will be under the supervision of the Secretary of the Board, and as the officer of the Board and the City Council he will have power to look after the interests of intending settlers, and protect them from any fraud that unscrupulous parties might try to practice upon them.

There can be no doubt, but during the present year there will be opportunities of securing valuable farm lands around Winnipeg, such as will never occur again in the history of the province.