

grain supply sustenance for an army of grasshoppers.

His neighbour, however, sees in its sunny, though frosty winters, its bracing air and its dry, unpacked snow, a pleasing contrast to the blowing, drifting, freezing, thawing, raining season in Ontario. He is delighted to find, instead of the oppressive sultriness of a Canadian summer, a day tempered by the prairie breeze and a night sufficiently cold for a heavy blanket, and a sound sleep. He regards the prairie as smiling for the husbandman; its "muskegs"* as offering the choicest food for his stock; while its lawn-like evenness fits it at once for improved machinery, and tells him to dispense with muscle and farm with brains. When, at a depth of six feet, he finds the frosts of centuries, it may be, he is pleased to know that the shallowest wells may have an icy coldness, while on the surface his crops grow with surpassing luxuriance. He sees no scarcity of fuel, or fencing, or timber in general, when he contrasts the bluffs of Dakota and the sparse woods of flourishing Minnesota with those of the Assiniboine, in some places twelve miles deep on one bank; the deeper and denser still, on the White Mud; the forests of the Dauphin Mountains; and the area stretching from Pointe des Chenes to Fort Francis, and thence, for aught he knows, to the North Pole. The half-breeds he regards as an inoffensive people; the Indians as cheap, though by no means unprofitable servants; the Hudson Bay Company as a boon to the country, in that though they have the power to monopolize, still they ask but reasonable rates for their stores, allowing at the same time a fair price for produce, and dealing liberally with industrious immigrants, not as in the early settlements in Ontario, where the petty store-keepers, charging two prices for inferior goods and worse whiskey, became the mortgagees, at usurious rates of interest, of the chattels of the struggling settler, and too often a sheriff ended the tale. He will tell you that the old settlers and half-breeds never dreamed of trying fruit trees, but that the young orchards of the Canadians* give abundant promise, a matter of no surprise in a land where plums, peas, blueberries, and (cheering fact for the Mennonite and lager-loving Ger-

man), even hops grow wild; where onions are as large as fair-sized turnips here, with beets and potatoes in the same proportion, while the average yield of cereals so far exceeds ours, that even if the grasshoppers ate every third crop clean, the garnerers of the Manitoba husbandman would still be fuller than those of his Ontario cousin.

That pictures so unlike should be drawn will not seem so surprising when we consider the natures of the observers. The one, before he is satisfied, must thoroughly inspect the whole country; he takes nothing second-hand: if to-day disappoints, he hopes for a better to-morrow; he can dress with the best or travel the day long in his shirt-sleeves, with a pair of old trowsers and older boots, wading to the knees and even to the waist through marshes and "muskegs," his muddy and wet clothes drying with the sun as he marches on; then without undressing he rolls himself in his blanket and sleeps in the shelter of a willow-bluff, through the cold Nor-Western night, defended by veil, gloves, and smudge from the ubiquitous mosquito, to awake with chattering teeth and stiffened joints, whose suppleness returns only with the warmth of the sun and the exercise of his onward tramp. He can enliven a social gathering with his presence, or ride, tailor-fashion, in a Red-River cart, dig for subsoil, or examine the survey stakes. He will dine on the best when it is at hand, but when he is on the prairie, on pemican and bread of his own baking. He prepares for every emergency. Immediately on his arrival in Fort Garry, he procures an Indian pony and cart, tent, frying-pan, camp-kettle, pemican, tea, and flour. Then with a few companions who share his expenses, off he starts on something like a grand pic-nicing excursion through a land where, at a trifling cost, he combines an extensive business-prospecting with a marvellous array of novel sights and charming scenes.

His gloomy neighbour, accustomed to the quiet of rural life, or to contented ease in a country town, or pampered, it may be, as a son of luxury—at all events his thinking never out of the routine-rut of the little circle in which he moved—is quite unprepared for the annoyances of extensive travel. The hardships of the Dawson Route sour him against the country before he sees it. On his arrival he finds money slipping through his fingers on every hand. Nobody knows

* Muskeg, a swampy spot on the prairie.

‡ Settlers from Ontario and Quebec are called by the natives 'Canadians.'