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An Indian Summer Day

To D.R.K.

Brown flushed with red, grey-green, and gold,
And flaming crimson above,
And birds that still of love
Sing drowsily in nooks that hold
A vision of Summer with garments bright, but
old.

She, with unhasting feet,
And face so sweet, so sweet,
Doth pause, ere down the slope of the world
She fares. Her eyes a mist
Doth dim. Her face (love list!)
Doth smile of hope. A haze lies curled
Around the purple height,
And steeps the fields in light.

The woods, the air doth keep
A stillness deep, so deep,
As of a sweet Sicilian noon,
When shepherd to his friend,
Who listening ear doth lend,
Pipeth till loosing-tide a tune.
They twain forget the flock
Panting beneath the rock.

Haunted by whispers sad,
See love! the woods a lad
Views listless, leaning on his plough,
With pomp of dying decked.
A little chipmunk flecked
With light sits dreaming on his bough,
The Great Spirit smokes, they say,
His calumet to-day.

'Mid crickets' tiny din
Come murmurs sweet and thin,
That with a strange, sad longing fill
Lone chambers of the soul.
She would with us condole,
Summer that must be gone, yet still
Lingering, softly saith,
These are but shows of death.

Think, love! so dying this might be!
(In Western altar fire
Old earthworn hopes expire
In rosy flames). So from His crystal sea
Were blown this peace, enfolding you and me.

—M.



The Roving Rector of Assiniboia

It was a drizzly day on the Alkaline flats, when I first met the roving rector. The soft Chinook that usually fanned the plains at Walsh, had given place to a mist which isolated the little hill-girt place from its view of snow-capped Cypress Hills, so majestic and so quiet, forty miles to the south. He had sent word to Mrs. Nesbitt, the wife of the section-boss, that he would be up

on Sunday to administer the communion. The letter bore the stamp of Josephburg, which one of the ranchers declared he knew was in Assiniboia, or thereabouts.

I happened to be in Grant's store when he came in—with one of the Nesbitt youngsters, trudging, hand in hand. A long, lank figure, with a sort of graceful awkwardness, he bowed slowly to those present. His gingerly actions seemed to apologize that he had presumed to enter. "They tell me," began Steve Mount, "that ye'se goin' to show us picters and things in the Hall tonight. I sort o' reckon I'd go if I thought ye wouldn't talk politics." Steve worked on the C.P.R. as a section-man, but he was laid up with a boil, and wasn't in a mood to talk about anything but his boil, and the "p'litical sitooashun." That Steve should eschew politics was too much for the crowd that had gathered, and the very incongruity of Steve's suggestion that the rector would deliver a political harangue, raised a loud laugh. The rector flushed but assured them, that he was absolutely ignorant of such matters. "Guess, it's not practical enough for him," was Steve's final thrust as the rector sidled off to buy some candy for the Nesbitts. "These blanked preachers ain't practical, sure enough," rejoined Jim Mitchell, King of bronco-busters; but sometimes they kind of make you think of home and the East; and I'll be consarned if I don't like to chip in collection for their keep," and then he added, "If a feller like us gets in a creek, I sort of reckon the old chap would fasten your rope to his saddle-horn, pretty quick"—this, thinking of the cattle which were often mired as they went down to drink.

The lecture was in the Public Hall, which stood a little off the trail to Walsh, and rested up against the hill. He was to show some views of the Holy Land. When I arrived he was busied with the lantern, trying to focus it in the centre of a sheet he had borrowed from the Nesbitts. At the last, he succeeded, then blew out the only lamp in the room. I have never seen anything more weird. The fitful glow of the lantern cast our figures in vague outlines against the scantlings of the wall, and made us look like spectres. Some smoke was playing around the rafters. The rector spoke in a voice, low, monotonous, sepulchral, yet kindly, and with a kind of cadence which is heard only once in a single generation. He thanked us for coming out. He wished to show us some pictures of the Holy Land. I sat on a bench behind the stove. This heater had been brought to its knees by some rude cattle of the ranches which had appropriated the building for a whole day, much to the pollution of the hall, and the damage of the stove's legs. I didn't look at the pictures, but I watched the man, and it did me good. I do not care to forget the rector as I saw him. There are no barbers in