

prairie spreads out on every side. The streams, however, are all bordered more or less with wood; a heavy growth of oak, elm, basswood, &c., extends in many places for a mile or two from the banks of the Assiniboine.

Proceeding by the road from the Red River to Manitoba Lake, the country for the first twelve miles or so presents the appearance of an unbroken level with clumps of trees rising here and there like islands in an otherwise boundless ocean. Further on, the wood becomes more frequent, and sometimes the prospect seems bounded by forests; on approaching these, however, other prairies open up, and other woods appear, and in this way wood-land and prairie alternate all the way to Manitoba Lake; although the ground seems level it is not precisely so, but slightly rolling or undulating. The elevations are of every width, from half a mile upwards, and run in a direction from north-west to south-east; between them in most places the ground is more or less marshy and covered with low bushes and willows, or presenting ponds growing bulrushes and rank grass. The road is, however, sufficiently dry to be travelled by wheeled vehicles at all times during the summer season. Sometimes little stony ridges occur, marking what at one time has been the shore of a shallow lake.

At the terminus of the road on Manitoba there is a small settlement, and the settlers are of opinion that their land is superior even to the soil at Red River, while it is not, like it, subject to be overflowed. My own opinion is, that, as regards the soil, it is precisely of the same character.

The north-eastern shore of Manitoba Lake, the coast by which we passed, is low, and of a character so uniform that the same description will apply throughout. By the action of the water, or ice, or both combined, a high beach of shingle has been thrown up, consisting of water-worn fragments of limestone mixed with occasional boulders of granite. On the top of this ridge there is generally a dense growth of wood, while, between it and the main land, an open marsh, varying in width from half a mile to two miles, extends along the whole coast, broken only by occasional points of higher land, which run down to the Lake. When we passed, the marsh was covered with withered bulrushes and long grass, which, although of last year's growth, still evinced the rankness of the vegetation peculiar to this region. The stems of some of the bulrushes on being measured were found to be an inch and three quarters in diameter. From the marsh, the main land, a rich alluvial soil gradually rises to a moderate elevation, and is not subject to be inundated. The country bordering on the lower end of Winnipeg Lake and the Singuisipi River, the stream which connects it with Manitoba, is of the same description; but about the middle of Winnipeg Lake the land becomes slightly higher and the marshes disappear. The limestone rock then shows itself for a short distance, rising in horizontal strata to an elevation of 30 feet or so above the Lake. At the Mossy Portage a comparatively barren ridge separates the waters of Winnipeg Lake from those of Lac Bourbon.

From the latter Lake to the Grand Rapid of the Saskatchewan the country has not a very inviting appearance. In many places the bare limestone rock appears on the surface, in others a thin coating of vegetable mould over it, scarcely supports a stunted growth of cypress, spruce and aspen. Some of the islands however, and there are many of them, appear to be fertile, especially at a little rapid just above Cross Lake. There the wood is of a large growth, and, although it was so early in the season (the 30th of May) when we passed that ice was still visible on the shores of Lac Bourbon, the foliage at these Islands was almost fully developed.

The Grand Rapid is about three miles in length, varying in width from 1800 feet at the head to about $\frac{1}{2}$ of a mile at the lower end. On the south side a perpendicular cliff of limestone rock rises abruptly from the water's edge and extends along the whole rapid. On the north side the banks rise precipitously, but present a face of rock only in certain places. For the first mile or so the water, confined in a channel so narrow for a river of such volume, rushes down with great impetuosity. The current then gradually moderates, and two miles farther on the Saskatchewan is lost in Lake Winnipeg. The total descent at the Grand Rapid may be safely estimated at upwards of 60 feet.

Canoes and batteaux can easily be run down, and even towed up a part of the way. But, of course, in its present state, this rapid, with such a descent, must be regarded as forming an absolute break in the navigation, that is, to vessels of a considerable size.

Between the Grand Rapid and Lac Bourbon there are two little rapids which present obstructions of a less serious nature, but which could not yet be navigated in their present state by vessels of large size. From Lac Bourbon upwards, the navigation of the Saskatchewan is unimpeded for a long distance. On the 4th of June, having examined the Grand Rapid and ascertained the difference of level between Winnipeg Lake and Lac Bourbon, I divided the party, as already explained, and crossed over to Swan River.

The country bordering on the western extremity of Winnipeg Lake is, in general, of a fair elevation, and the land appears to be remarkably fertile; between Red Deer River and Swan River a level country extends to the base of the Porcupine Hills. It is well wooded, and upon the whole I should think this tract well adapted for settlement. Mineral springs occur in various places near the mouth of Swan River. One of these we visited, and found some people engaged in the manufacture of salt. At this place, in a bare flat of about 20 acres in extent, but slightly elevated above the level of the Lake, numerous springs bubble up, all of them emitting more or less gas. Some are exceedingly briny, while others taste exactly like the St. Leon water of Lower Canada, and on being drunk produce the same effect.

From Winnipeg Lake to Swan Lake the distance is about six miles. The stream which connects them, here appropriately enough called Shoal River, varies in width from 150 to 300 feet. It is shallow and has a very swift course.

About Swan Lake the country is highly interesting. Numerous islands appear in the Lake: to the north an apparently level and well wooded country extends to the base of the Porcupine Range, while to the south the blue outline of the Duck Mountain is seen on the verge of the horizon.

Ascending from Swan Lake for two miles or so the banks of Swan River are rather low. In the succeeding ten miles they gradually become higher, until they attain a height of nearly 100 feet above the river. The current is here remarkably swift, and the channel much embarrassed by round boulders of granite mixed with fragments of limestone, which latter is the rock proper to the country, although it does not crop out so far as we could see on any part of Swan River. Land-slips occur in many places where the banks are high, exposing an alluvial soil of great depth resting on drift clay or shale, of a slightly bituminous appearance.

About 30 miles above Swan Lake the prairie region fairly commences. There the river winds about in a fine valley, the banks of which rise to the height of 80 or 100 feet. Beyond these an apparently unbroken level extends on one side for a distance of 15 or 20 miles to the Porcupine Hills, and for an equal distance on the other, to the high table-land called the Duck Mountain. From this south-westward to Thunder Mountain the country is the finest I have ever seen in a state of nature. The prospect is bounded by the blue outline of the hills just named, while, in the plain, alternate wood and prairie present an appearance more pleasing than if either entirely prevailed.

On the 10th of June, the time at which we passed, the trees were in full foliage, and the prairie openings presented a vast expanse of green sward.

On approaching Thunder Mountain, which seems to be a connecting link between the Porcupine range and the Duck Mountain, the country becomes more uneven. Some of the ridges on the shoulder of the Thunder Mountain even show sand, but there are wide valleys between them.

On leaving Swan River to cross to Fort Pelly the land rises rapidly to a plateau elevated about 250 feet above the level of the stream. The road then follows for some distance a tributary of Swan River, which runs in a beautiful valley, with alternate slopes of wood land and prairie. Numbers of horses were quietly feeding on the rich pasture of this valley when we passed, and what with the clumps of trees on the rising grounds, and