

stood face to face with representatives of that strange race they had often heard of in England, associated with daring deeds and bloody massacres. Enough was seen here to whet their curiosity for further observation where poor Lo appeared in wilder and more primitive costume. As we now threaded our way over the prairie a new feature appeared. The "runs," or paths, of the buffalo of the past, and every few moments the bleached remains of them were seen. This was a great treat to my companions, who now, becoming exceedingly desirous to hear of the almost extinct buffalo, watched with eager eyes the innumerable paths and bones scattered over the whole country to the Rocky Mountains.

New plants were continually observed, and there was every indication that we had passed into a district with climatic conditions differing from those of regions to the east. We were now approaching the third prairie steppe, and entering a district more subject to drought.

After a three hours' run the monotony of the plains became broken by lakes which appeared from time to time as the journey progressed. Many of these were covered with game, and as the engine steamed along thousands of birds—pelicans, ducks, geese, plover and snipe—rose from the water near the track to seek a spot beyond the shot of sportsmen, who even ventured to shoot from the train at the living mass apparently within gunshot.

C. P. R. EXPERIMENTAL FARMS.

At Secotan the eye, which for many miles had seen no sign of settlement, was relieved by observing a portion of land under cultivation. This is the first Canadian Pacific railway experimental farm; and is one of ten under cultivation this year for the purpose of testing the agricultural capabilities of a vast district, which by some writers has been condemned. No wiser method could have been adopted than that undertaken by the Land Commissioner, Mr. J. H. McTavish, who, by having a portion tilled, sought an answer from nature herself. If the results of 1884 can be received as evidence, the fertility of this western soil is established beyond a doubt. We observed particularly the farms passed during the day, and were surprised at the appearance of both grain and root crops upon them. Swift Current was reached about midday and a stop made for lunch. Here we learned some buffalo had been killed a few days before. The head of one was for sale, and one of our party would fain have made the purchase, but being on the way out he had to content himself with hoping to secure it on our return. Passing westward, alkali lakes appeared at intervals, and as we neared Maple Creek in the evening several were observed. In the distance the white rings of alkali around them, bordered by a distinct band of red formed by innumerable alkaline plants found in these vicinities, presented a peculiar weird-like appearance. Two days had been spent traveling at fair speed and yet we were crossing a prairie country.

THIRD PRAIRIE STEPPE.

This is on the third prairie steppe, which is said to begin at Moosejaw and extend to the foot of the mountains, with an average elevation of 3,200 feet above sea level, 485 miles wide, and embracing an area of 184,000 square miles. At Maple Creek the grass was excellent and seemed well fitted to afford superior pasturage for cattle. Here we took an evening meal, and while waiting to start, the passengers were entertained during their short stay by Indian boys, vying with each other in striving to knock, with bow and arrow, a nickel from the stick on which it had been placed. The successful marksmen kept the money.

At this place my English companions had a good opportunity to see Indians in primitive costume and highly painted faces. One of the party was rather surprised to find these aborigines attempt to speak to him. What was the subject of the abortive conversation we did not know, but were left to conjecture.