

EAST AND WEST OF MANITOBA

To the east of Manitoba, that is to say between Lake Superior and Red River, a certain portion of land is intersected by marshes or rocks and is unfit for cultivation. But we must not suppose that this region is everywhere the same and of no value. Read the remarks of a tourist who had traversed that part of the country :

"A little farther, he says, than the Rainy Lake, the scene changes and one enters into the valley of the Rainy River. Here, there are no portages, no rapids, but a sheet of a magnificent water for more than a hundred miles, flowing between 200,000 and 300,000 acres of vegetable soil, and bordered by the elm, the poplar, ancient oak trees all entwined by climbing plants or the beautiful convolvulus, abounding with flowers. Elsewhere, there are large verdant prairies. Birds innumerable are gathered in this magnificent valley, which we might call a deserted garden, and which one leaves even with regret in order to occupy himself with the beautiful sheet of water of the Lake of the Woods, with its varied islands and the magnificent panorama it presents."

They have discovered here rich gold and silver mines during last summer.

To the west of Manitoba, the prairies and forests are spread out before our gaze until lost to sight. The valleys of the rivers Assiniboine, Saskatchewan and Peace are very fine and capable of providing food for millions of inhabitants. The fertile basin alone of the Saskatchewan, which has its source at some distance from the Rocky Mountains and which flows over a stretch of nearly 1,500 miles, waters a vast country containing, it is said, 90,000,000 acres of land. At about 200 miles from Lake Winnipeg into which this river discharges itself, it divides into two great branches, which extend, one towards the north for a distance of 1,092 miles, and the other to the south for 1,054 miles. The greatest distance which separates these two branches is about 300 miles.

Lord Milton and Dr Cheadle speak of this river in their work as follows :

"The rich prairies of the fertile basin of the Saskatchewan have an alluvial soil of three or five feet in depth and are only awaiting the plough. They provide pasturage without end which in former times fattened innumerable herds of buffaloes as well as domestic flocks.

"The forests, lakes and water courses present a varied landscape, and from them can be procured timber, fish and wild fowls in great abundance.

"Alas! that this magnificent country, capable of relieving the wants of 20,000,000 people, should be completely neglected. However this rich country is, it might be said, only a short distance from our gold fields in British Columbia."