

of waters consisting of Cedar Lake, a portion of the river Saskatchewan, Fine Island Lake and Beaver Lake, for a distance of 800 or 900 miles westwards to the Rocky Mountains. It is divided into numerous plains and valleys by the river Saskatchewan, its two great branches, and its numerous tributaries, which rising for the most part, in the vast mountain range, rush down the innumerable vales and glens on its eastern slope, giving life, beauty and fertility to a region which would otherwise be a rugged and forbidding wilderness.

The travellers who have visited this region bear ample witness to the fertility of the soil. The scenery they describe as "magnificent," and the banks of the rivers on either side, as luxuriant beyond description. "Vast forests," says Lieutenant Saxon, "cover the hill-tops and fill the valleys. The climate is mild, and cattle keep fat in winter as well as in summer on the nutritious grasses."

Sir George Simpson who had been for thirty years Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, in his very beautiful and interesting book (*Voyage round the world*), informs us that "the rankness of the vegetation between the forks of the Saskatchewan, savoured rather of the torrid zone with its perennial spring than of the northern wilds." He speaks of himself and his fellow-travellers as "brushing the luxuriant grass with our knees, and the hard ground of the surface was beautifully diversified with a variety of flowers, such as the rose, the hyacinth and the tiger lily."

"Towards the foot of the Rocky Mountains," says the same impartial writer, "lies a country capable of being rendered the happy home of millions of inhabitants, when facilities of communication shall be offered which can lead to it."

Dr. King, in his evidence before the select committee of the House of Commons, (1857,) gives a very interesting account of a colony which was endeavouring to establish itself near Cumberland House, between Fine Island Lake and the river Saskatchewan. This colony occupied and had in a high state of cultivation some fifteen hundred acres, on which they raised excellent wheat. When asked by Mr. Christy whether the cultivation was successful, Dr. King replied, "quite successful; the wheat was looking very luxuriant." Were there any other kinds of crops? "There were potatoes and barley, also pigs, cows and horses." In this small settlement, each man had his own particular allotment, and everything, according to the evidence of Dr. King, was in the most flourishing condition. The learned witness, however, further states—"When I was going away they said: 'cannot you help us? You are a government officer; the Company have ordered us to quit, and we shall be ruined.'" Of course agriculture and colonization were not the objects of the Company; and, *la raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure*. What became of this interesting little colony deponent said not. The day may not, perhaps, be far distant, when colonization will be undertaken on a greater scale and under more fostering auspices.

But it has been stated that owing to periodical inundations which, every spring, lay the whole country under water, for nearly 200 miles from the junction of the river Saskatchewan with the lakes, cultiva-