

the crash of the steam-hammers used in crushing the ore.

The scenery along the shore is interesting though not very remarkable. The ground rises to a moderate height from the water with but few irregularities in outline, the whole being densely wooded. Towards the western end there is a number of islands; one group, about twenty in number, is known as the Apostles. Two days after leaving Sault Ste. Marie, we find ourselves coming within sight of Duluth, "the Zenith City of the unsalted seas." The city is built on a hill, which slopes rapidly from a considerable height down almost to the water's edge. The harbour is large and commodious. The great elevators, the piers stretching far out into the bay, and the many fine buildings, together with the extent of ground the city covers, although it is not closely built up as yet, all unite to give an air of decidedly western enterprise to the place. However, I found business men complaining that everything was terribly dull there at present. St. Paul and Minneapolis and other centres have no intention of giving up their hold on the grain trade without a struggle, and at present I think they have the upper hand.

From Duluth we travelled by the Northern Pacific Railway. Between Duluth and Brainerd, a distance of one hundred miles, we pass through the "lake and forest" region. Here are the headwaters of the Mississippi, of the St. Lawrence, and of rivers flowing north into Hudson's Bay. Settlement here is very sparse, and the country is heavily timbered, and is I believe an excellent place for hunting and fishing. After leaving Brainerd, which is situated on the Mississippi River, we enter on the great prairie region, and a strange appearance it presents to the new-comer, especially when he gets his first glimpse of it, as we did, after night-

fall. In the gloom it was hard to distinguish between the distant prairie and the sky, and occasionally it became difficult to escape the notion that we were passing along the shores of some great lake. When daylight appeared the country was seen to be simply an unlimited, slightly rolling grass field, and we were surprised to notice that we could not find a place where houses were not to be seen here and there in the distance. Over a very large part of the West this has been a season of unusual drought, and while we left the farmers of Ontario praying that the rain would stop, we found the denizens of the prairie in an agony of suspense, waiting for the rain to come. The rain did come in time to save the crops in Minnesota, Eastern Dakota, and corresponding parts of Manitoba; but for a thousand miles west, right to the Pacific Slope, the drought has been very destructive. When we passed through, the country had a rather bare and barren looking appearance, as is naturally the case in a dry summer. But at no time does the country at all resemble the East. There are no trees, no fences, no hills, nothing to give one an estimate of height or distance. The air too is very clear, and distances are deceptive. The *mirage* is a common phenomenon in spring and fall. I must qualify my assertion as to the trees and hills, for there are usually a few trees along the larger rivers, which however are a long way apart. There are also certain hilly districts of considerable extent passing across the prairie, especially as we approach the Rocky Mountains. These usually represent a rise to a higher level of prairie land, and are the edges, so to speak, of what are called in Montana "bench lands."

In my next letter I shall give some account of Dakota, its prospects and its people, and shall also describe a short trip in Montana.