

tide of emigration is setting westward. There is a fascination in the wilderness. The bold young American of the north-eastern states chooses a helpmate, collects some clothing, takes up his rifle and hatchet, and, trusting entirely to his own prowess, marches off in the direction of the setting sun. He crosses the Blue Mountains, commits himself and mate to the rivers, and penetrates more than a thousand miles into the heart of the western wilderness. There is something highly exciting and grateful to youthful daring and independence in travelling onwards in search of a future home, and having found some sweet, encouraging spot, in the bosom of the wilderness, in rearing everything by one's own handiwork.

"The superior means of communication in this region, and the absence of natural and artificial barriers, as it is being occupied, with the exception of the slave population southward, by one race speaking one language, dispose it for becoming the seat of one very great empire, perhaps exceeding the Chinese in population, while, from the superior energy of the race, and higher civilisation, it will be incomparably superior to the Chinese in national influence, and in power over the future destinies of man."

Judge Hall, as quoted by Buckingham in his lately-published travels in America, thus describes the eligibility of these prairies for the purposes of the emigrant:

"The settler may always select, on our prairies, land as fertile as the richest river-bottoms, and by settling in the edge of the timber, combine every advantage afforded by the latter. He finds the land already cleared, and has only to enclose it. The labour of bringing it into cultivation is already trifling. A heavy plough and a strong team are required the first year, to turn over the soil. The corn is dropped in the furrows, and covered with a hoe, and no other labour is bestowed upon it until it is fit to gather, because, during that year, the corn cannot be tended in the ordinary way, as the sod, already bound together by the fibrous roots of the grass, is merely turned, and not pulverised so as to admit of tillage. But by turning the grass down, exposing the roots to the sun, and leaving the sod undisturbed, it becomes mellow in one season, and while undergoing the process of decomposition, it affords nourishment to the growing corn. The crop thus raised is not abundant, nor is the grain very good; but something like half the usual crop is raised, which amply pays for the labour of planting and gathering. By the ensuing spring, the roots of the wild grass are found to be completely rotted, and the plough is put into a rich, light mould, fit for all the purposes of husbandry. The ordinary operations of farming may now be conducted in the usual way; and the labour of cultivating a light soil unencumbered with rocks and stumps is so trifling, as to leave time for the farmer to improve his lands and buildings. The plough runs on a level plain of rich mould, and may be managed by a half-grown lad as well as in the other by the strongest ploughman. In timber-lands newly-cleared, ploughing requires both strength and skill: the plough must be sharpened frequently, and is often broken; and at the best the ploughing goes on slowly. The difference, in the greater facility of working prairie lands, the saving in the wear of all implements of husbandry, the economy of time, and of course the greater degree of certainty in the farmer's calculations, the enjoyment of health, are so great as, in our opinion, to outweigh any inconvenience which can possibly be experienced in this country for the want of timber, even under the most unfavourable circumstances. A farmer had better settle in the midst of a prairie, and haul his fuel and rails *five miles*, than undertake to clear a farm in the forest. The farmers of Illinois are beginning to be aware of this, and there are now many instances in which farmers, having purchased a small piece of land for timber, in the woodland, make their farm in the prairie. It is only necessary to make a nice calculation of the time consumed in the transportation of wood for fuel and other purposes, and to observe how small a proportion it bears to the other labours of a farm, in order to satisfy himself, or any one at all acquainted with the subject, that it is really a matter of no importance when brought into competition with the advantages of a prairie country.