

margins, each year forming a deposit there on the lake bottom and gradually thus increasing the encroachments of the land upon the water.

There is strong evidence which seems to point to the fact that about the close of the drift period, or immediately after it, when the glaciers, probably, were slowly retreating, the central portions of the continent formed the bed of a vast fresh water inland sea, of which Lakes Winnipeg, Manitoba and Winnipegosis, are now the mere remnants. The outlet of this sea to the ocean was probably at that time by way of the Mississippi Valley. Into this sea the glaciers from the Rocky Mountains and from the country north and east of the Saskatchewan, perhaps for long periods of time, flowed, and huge icebergs freighted with boulders, debris and earth were continuously floated off to wend their way at the will of winds and currents. It was not the first time during the drift period that this part of the country had been under water. The resemblance to the Polar Seas of to-day was probably very striking, except in these points that the icebergs would be more deeply sunken, for the water was fresh, and that this inland sea was more vast, covering not merely our North-West prairies, but extending probably as far south as Iowa and Illinois. Boulders were thus scattered at random over the bottom of the sea hundreds of miles away from their point of origin. Huge masses were carried enormous distances. Dr. George Dawson mentions one of the Huronian quartzite, lying near the Waterton River, which measured forty-two feet long, forty feet broad and twenty feet high, and which must have come from east of Lake Winnipeg or the Red River.

The very uniform nature of the deposits over very great areas would indicate quiet waters, at least in later periods of the occurrence of this inland sea, probably ending, as the land rose, in the creation of vast marshes, like the existing great grass swamps at Westbourne, and on the Boyne River in Manitoba, but on an immense scale. The successive annual growth and decay of sedges and grasses in these marshes gave rise to deposits of vegetable loam which have gone on increasing since the rise of the land to its present level, by