

THE CANADIAN SARATOGA.



JUST as the New Englanders boast of their Newport, and the Empire State its Saratoga, so do our Eastern Canadians exalt to the skies, the scenic grandeur and picturesqueness of their Thousand Isles. Favored though they be with such beautiful and inviting places of retirement during the hot summer months, still they are not the only people on this continent who may boast such havens of enjoyment. For in Western Canada there are watering places rapidly rising in prominence, which bid fair to even surpass in popularity, their better-known eastern rivals.

One need only mention the name of Banff, to conjure up before the imagination, the vision of stupendous cliffs and rocky bluffs, coursed by rushing torrents and leaping cataracts. But the place which I shall endeavor to describe, is one not characterized in the main by nature in her wildest and most uncultivated grandeur, such as one beholds on ascending the noble Saguenay, or the mighty Colorado. But it is a place where numberless isles, scattered in picturesque profusion, stud the placid waters of a lovely lake, making in all, a scene of entrancing beauty, of special interest to the botanist, and captivating to admirers of landscape beauty. The Lake of the Woods, sometimes known by the rather inappropriate name of Rat Portage, compares very favorably with any of the eastern watering places. True, it has not the salt water of Newport, nor the costly summer cottages of the Thousand Islands and Muskoka; still, what is lacking in the aids of art, is more than compensated for by the innumerable beauties of nature, as yet untouched by the hand of man. After all, in seeking a few weeks vacation from the din and toil of business, is it not preferable to "rough it" a little, as the saying goes; for, if one has all the accommodations and luxuries of city life within easy reach,

Does not the romance and novelty of "camping out" soon fade away?

It is only within the last four or five years that this Western Saratoga has been spoken of as a summer resort; but the increasing numbers who annually spend their holidays there, afford eminent proof of its growing popularity. Situated on the boundaries of Ontario and Manitoba, one hundred and thirty-three miles east of Winnipeg, the lake is just far enough away from the western city, to afford visitors an entire change of scenery and occupation. As this splendid resort is very little known, except in the West, a few words about the nature of the surrounding country might not prove uninteresting. It is especially a mining region, and of late, gold has been discovered and extracted in considerable quantities. The most important mines are known as the Sultana Gold Mines, situated some forty miles from Rat Portage. The Lake is reached by the Canadian Pacific Railway, which passes through the flourishing town of Rat Portage. The mineral wealth of the whole region is virtually unknown, but the prospects of large discoveries are continually becoming more encouraging. The lumber trade alone annually amounts to a large sum, the mills owned in Rat Portage, Kewatin and Norman, being the largest in the Northwest. Judging from the rapid progress the three sister-towns have made within the last few years, there is no doubt that a great future awaits them.

Especially are there reasons for believing that Rat Portage will become an important city, since, besides being a mining and lumbering centre, it is the headquarters for all the tourists and visitors who spend their holidays at the Lake of the Woods.

Once at the Lake, the visitor finds no end of interesting places to visit, among which might be mentioned the Falls, one of the most picturesque cascades a person could wish to look upon. Hedged in by a massive perpendicular wall of rock, on