

of Mexico on the south, and from the highlands of the Alleghany and Cumberland ranges on the east, to the Rocky Mountains far to the westward.

"The greatest labour of Hercules, the noblest deeds recorded of man in ancient or modern history, sink to nought when compared to the doings of Brother Jonathan. It was but as yesterday when he stood on the highest summit of the Alleghany range, and gazing down upon the illimitable western wilderness, boldly resolved to people the whole extent; and already cities, and towns, and villages, and innumerable clearances, are scattered over nearly a million of square miles. True to his purpose, Jonathan is progressing in a ratio of increase never before equalled; and in the course of a century, at the present increment, this great and most fertile field for the extension of the human race will contain a progeny exceeding the whole of the population of Europe.

"This great river-land rises almost imperceptibly from the level of the Mexican gulf at New Orleans, to the neighbourood of the Canadian lakes, where it attains an elevation of nearly six hundred feet above the sea. It is comparatively a level country, with only gentle undulations, and, in some places to the westward, with rounded gravel hillocks relieving the uniformity. A great portion of it, like Upper Canada, consists of limestone strata covered with a pretty thick layer of diluvium, constituting a fertile and manageable soil. The eastern half was, fifty years ago, a continued forest of hard-wood trees, but in which numerous clearances have now been effected by the industry of the settler and the demand for timber-fuel to the numerous steamers. To the west, beyond the confluence of the Mississippi and the Missouri, a considerable portion of the country consists of prairies—extensive fields covered with tall rough grasses, and skirted by portions of forest. The absence of trees in these extensive meads has been variously accounted for; some attributing it to conflagrations (the most probable cause), some to the dryness of the climate. It is also not impossible, that the graminee, though a comparatively small order of plants, may have greater power of occupancy than the trees in the locality, the rank grass smothering the annual shoot rising from the forest-tree seed. These beautiful prairies, frequently wider than the eye can reach across, afford most excellent stations for the settlers who migrate thus far westward. They locate themselves in a circular ring around the margin of these flowery, grassy plains, where the forest belt affords plenty of timber for houses, enclosures, and fuel; they cultivate the nearer portion of the prairie, where not a stone is to be found, and nothing interferes with the ploughshare but the strong roots of the grassy sward; and they drive their herds to pasture a little farther into the interior of what appears like a verdant sea. The pastoral life is far more desirable here than in British America, the winter being only about one-half as long as in the maritime provinces of St. Lawrence, or even in Upper Canada, while the herculean labour of removing the dense forest which covers nearly the whole of America to the eastward, is not required. Immense herds of wild cattle once fed upon these pastures; but they, like the red Indian, have retired westward before the fire-armed European, and are now only to be found towards the base and amid the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains. This fine prairie country, where measures taken to destroy the wild dogs or wolves, might be rendered very productive of wool, the export of which down to New Orleans would be easily accomplished.

"The great distinguishing features of the Mississippi Basin are the vast abundance of fine level land, capable of supporting a very dense population, and the immense system of rivers ramifying through it, a number of the tributaries of the Mississippi flowing a distance of one thousand miles before they join the grand stream, and being conveniently navigable for nearly their whole course by steam-vessels.

"The rivers are the highways, the lines of traffic, the land marks, the connecting medium with the world of civilisation, the system of nerves by which the electric currents of opinion and social sympathy are transmitted from the more vital parts to the extremities. In North America, a strong and constant

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