

the prairies probably dates its origin within a comparatively recent period. Certainly these prairie fires now prevent the encroachments of the forest upon the plain, as otherwise these forests would in the natural order of things extend themselves westward and southward if allowed to do so. The same is true of the bluffs or stretches of timber found growing in frequent places south of the true forests, though even there the trees are of relatively moderate size proving that these bluffs are of comparatively recent or of very slow growth. There can be no question that as prairie fires cease with the progress of cultivation of the land and with the enforcement of preventive laws, the tendency of these stretches of timber and of the true forests will be to extend themselves further over the prairie. In the meantime, the effect of the absence of timber is to create a drier climate by diminishing the rainfall, and on account of the general flatness of the prairie by exposing every object upon it to constant and unbroken, drying winds. That there is, therefore, a general tendency of trees to skirt the river banks can be readily understood, as there they obtain that moister atmosphere which is absent on the open prairie. Even in the valleys of such great streams as the Assiniboine and the Qu'Appelle, trees are generally found on the southwestern or western sides, the eastern being frequently bare, and this can only be accounted for by the greater protection from drying winds the western and southern banks have, and therefore the greater moisture in the soil there.

Again, only in the river valleys, on and near the lake margins and on the hills or rising grounds are the forest trees of the North-west completely represented, and it is suggestive whether the trees there are not the relics of a larger forest flora which more or less covered the whole country. At present the cosmopolitan poplars are the chief occupants of the plains, their very hardiness, however, constituting them fitting pioneers of new forests some day to appear.

I cannot help thinking that as the prairies become thickly settled and protective laws are properly enforced, prairie