

conspicuously the theatre of inland commerce and continental development.

This new system of inland distribution is by so much the more effective means of progress than maritime intercourse, as it brings a greater number and variety of physical districts into reciprocal relation, as these relations are more intimate and complete, and their interchanges more rapid, frequent, and energetic. The ocean, even in the deeply indented coast of Europe, touches only a few points of deportation in its contour. Its mountainous surface makes railroad transit difficult and expensive. Its rivers afford but short reaches of steam navigation. On the other hand, by the application of steam to inland locomotion on the rivers and plains of North America, the points of commercial contact, the centres of relation, are susceptible of infinite multiplication. The rivers and lakes alone, of this interior plain, afford a greater extent of shore-line than the sea-coast of all the other continents combined. These inland waters form a vast system of ducts and arteries ramifying through the whole body of the continent, touching and vitalizing every part of its immense surface, and uniting all its diverse climates and belts of production. Now, Minnesota is the centre of this inland civilization, even as London is of the maritime—if it be true that the age of maritime ascendancy is passed, and the age of internal development is succeeding.

The contiguous basins of the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, and of Lake Winnipeg, form an immense triangular plain, throughout which every diversity of soil and vegetation covers an uniform geology of sedimentary rocks. This vast interior basin, enclosed by the mountain chains of the ocean coasts, with an area of 2,500,000 square miles, culminates in Minnesota, as the apex from which its great divergent valleys slope to their ocean outlets—the common source and centre from which these three great rivers radiate to the ocean.

The Mississippi River, originating in Northern Minnesota, gives 900 miles of its waters to its mother State, of which 400 miles are navigable, with only two interruptions, before it reaches the head of continuous navigation, below the Falls of St. Anthony; whence, starting at a more majestic pace, and gathering in its bosom the commerce of fifteen States, it empties into the Gulf of Mexico, at a distance, by its course, of 2,187 miles from St. Paul, embracing in its basin an area of 1,217,562 square miles, a population of 13,000,000, and an aggregate shore-line of 35,644, of which seven-eighths belong to its navigable tributaries.

Thus we turn from the United States in general to the particular one already indicated, as affording the finest and most inviting field for emigration in the world; and, in so doing, we cannot do better than quote the following passage from a speech delivered by the Honourable William H. Seward, Secretary of State for the United States, in Saint Paul, Minnesota:—