

The Rush to the Canadian West.

the sightseer it is "a dry and parched land wherein no water is." After the variety of the Crow's Nest Pass route this run seemed very flat, stale and unprofitable. The rainfall has been scanty and the alkali rose in wrath as our train crawled along, and through the car windows and doors came clouds of choking dust. It was by far the most uncomfortable bit of road we saw since we had started. To Edmonton was rough but this was worse for its uncleanliness.

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Our train was losing time steadily owing to the action of the alkali water, used by the locomotives, upon the boiler tubes. A deposit of the solids in the water soon causes the tubes to burn out. Our engine suffered much from this. We stopped for repairs and lost time to such an extent that dark thoughts filled our minds as the dirty dust filled our mouths and had Portal been much nicer than it was when we saw it, the five hours we had dropped would have still made it a cheerless country. We were getting critical and captious we fear. The more good we get the more we groan when some little good is wanting.

At Portal we looked fearful at the time table that read five hundred and sixty miles, prairie miles, to Minneapolis. But the night was coming on and though the dust was busily bothering us we thought of that sweet solace, sleep, and gave ourselves to it, as a new locomotive hooked us to her tender and—made the dust fly still more.

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From Portal to Paynesville the road is a diagonal of the rectangular shaped State of North Dakota. The soil here was still dryer than in Assiniboia and from our flying dust den in the early morning and through the long day and as the shades of night were quickly coming we saw that the farmer was faring ill in North Dakota this year. Wheat is scanty and too far gone to be helped by rain should it come even now. As we went along, the source of the Red River, so large and swift at Winnipeg, was pointed out to me and I found it hard to believe that a river could rise in a swamp that goes dry in July and August of each year but my informant seemed to know whereof he spoke and I note his statement. How small a beginning a river may have and how independent it may be of its source when once it has had its way for a time. That dry swamp that starts the Red River was a sight that set me thinking about "little drops of water, little grains of sand" and other tiny mites that are despised for their