

lawn-like prairies dotted with graceful clumps of the Pitch pine (*Pinus Ponderosa*), the only place west of the cascades I ever saw this splendid pine growing: groves of oak (*Quercus garryana*) that would have made a Druid, however ancient, youthful in heart, if not in years, to wander beneath their leafy shelter, stretched away to the right hand and to the left, in lines so regular that one could hardly help thinking that the work of man must have been concerned in planting them. Beautiful lakes of fresh water, glittering in the sunlight like tiny seas of mercury, looked as if they had been purposely excavated for ornamental purposes, an idea rendered the more impressive by the flocks of sheep and herds of domestic cattle browsing peaceably round their grassy margins. Everything about was so suggestive of a fine old English farm, that it was really very hard to resist the illusion that I had not fallen suddenly upon a civilised land, cultivated by man for hundreds of years, and adorned by touches of his highest art. Quite lost in contemplation of the homelike scene I had so unexpectedly come upon, I did not observe the approach of the chief trader, Dr. —, whose name I need not give, but of whom I may be permitted to say, that a kinder friend, more hospitable host, or pleasanter companion, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find. We need not linger round the "trading-post;" there is little worthy of observation, either scenic or architectural, to detain us: our mission is to the Mound Prairies; to visit which, I start with the Doctor as guide, a few days after my arrival. The journey will occupy four days, two to reach the prairie and two to return again to the "trading-post." Mounted on sturdy mustangs, we jog along through such a park-like country that I can hardly believe the Doctor when he tells me nothing has ever been done to improve it. It may be of interest *en passant* to glance very briefly at the general character of the prairies common in North-western America.

The lower level prairies are tide-lands, very analogous to the saline meadows so common on the eastern coast. The salt water overflows them only at its highest periods, which may happen three, or perhaps four, times in a year. If, however, this overflow is prevented by artificial embankment, these lands are rich and fertile beyond description. Their natural herbage is a tall, succulent grass, which grows four and five feet in height; but when cleared of the grass I have seen splendid potatoes and other vegetables grown upon these tidal prairies. On the Fraser, near its mouth, capital examples of these tide-lands may be seen from the steamer by the passenger *en route* to New Westminster; examples are also to be met with at the mouth of the Nainimo river, round Shoalwater Bay, on the banks of the Columbia, and in Puget Sound. Higher up the courses of the principal rivers—I may instance the Columbia, at Fort Vancouver, as one case, and the Sumass prairies, on the Fraser, as another—are examples of lands