

of British America—Lake of the Woods, Winnipeg, Athabaska and Great Slave Lake. The shores of these lakes and a strip of country to the westward of them, widening rapidly to the north, are covered with inhospitable rocks, desolate Arctic forests and fathomless swamps. This region is most familiar north of Lake Superior and on the shores of Lake Winnipeg, but it has been traced to Churchill river, and certainly preserves the same character to Athabaska and beyond. But it forms the boundary eastward of a region of spreading prairies or rolling plains, and wooded river valleys, stretching from the Lake of the Woods 1,200 miles west to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and from the international boundary as far north as Peace River valley, 48° north latitude. Throughout this whole region the rocks are Cretaceous, and most of the surface alluvial deposit. The southeastern part has suffered extensive denudation by ice, leaving isolated escarpments, like the Pembina, Duck, Riding and Turtle Mountains, and making place for marvelously fertile and inexhaustible alluvial prairies of the Red and Assiniboine valleys. West of these and between the international boundary and the line of the Qu'Appelle and South Saskatchewan, the plains are higher and dryer, and, like those of the Missouri valley, in the United States, have been called arid and uninhabitable. But the enterprising farmers along the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad are raising splendid wheat in the country pronounced by Gen. Hazen, Prof. Powell and Prof. Henry, unfit to sustain animal or vegetable life, and it will do to suspend judgment upon the fitness of the arid plains north of the boundary to sustain a population until the present promising experiment is concluded in the south. Certainly the northern section enjoys the advantage of a lower elevation and more ready accessibility to the warm and moisture-bearing winds from the Pacific.

There is no room for doubt of the character of the belt of country north of this. It is the fertile belt of the North Saskatchewan, stretching from the Red River country to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, embracing 250,000,000 acres of rich agricultural lands, and capable of sustaining a population of millions of people. North of the Saskatchewan belt is the wooded country, extending back to the chain of northern lakes, unfit for cultivation, but capable of supplying timber for a continent. At its