

is true, often more or less alkaline, but generally quite drinkable. One peculiarity of the prairie grass is its extreme richness, and the fact that it keeps its nutriment when withered, so that we saw places in Montana where the cattle were living almost entirely on the dried up grass of the previous year, and yet where they could get at water readily they were in as good condition as could be desired. This remarkable quality is in fact due chiefly to the small amount of rainfall, for in wet seasons the grass is, it is said, not nearly so rich.

A writer on "Dakota" in a late issue of *Harper's*, after stating that the signification of the Indian name "Dakota" is "leagued," remarks that it very aptly characterizes the present population, for one can hardly mention a nationality which does not here offer some representatives. As we all know, our own country has sent out a large contingent, and they are generally doing very well; the almost universal reputation of the Canadians being that they were not afraid of hard work, whether in the rising cities of the west, or on the farms and ranches of Dakota and Montana, or sailing on the great lakes. It is surprising how many of the officers and men on vessels flying Columbia's star spangled banner hail from north of the line. The captains of both the Lake Superior Transit Company's boats I travelled on were Canadians. Of Europeans, the Norwegians and their relatives the Swedes are most numerous. Then there are great numbers of Germans, of Russians, of Irish, of Hollanders, and many others. There are also people from every State and territory of the Union. Of these, very many have come from the neighbouring States, such as Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa, which, in spite of their being very lately colonized themselves, and

not nearly filled up yet, are already sending out emigrants to other parts.

The sum total of this rather heterogeneous mixture is an active, intelligent, hard-working body of men and women. Some of them, notably the European peasantry, are very plain and homespun folks; but again there are educated and cultured people who, fired with the honourable ambition of helping to build new empires in the west, have left behind them such of the comforts of civilization as they could not bring along with their household treasures, and have joined that company of toilers whose energies are bent on the task of turning the unbroken prairies into fertile corn land and pasture. Here, where land is to be had for living on it, or for planting a field of trees, everybody is a farmer, whatever his proper profession may be. All are anxious to secure one of those fabulous crops we sometimes hear of, although the reality is often more modest than the visions the farmer had beforehand. Occasionally there are years when very careless farming gives wonderful returns, but, as in other countries, the price of success is usually hard work and very careful planning.

The practice of granting alternate sections of land to the railway is responsible for making settlement rather scattered, but as nearly everybody rides or drives in the west, this is not so much of an inconvenience as it might seem. The roads are called "trails," and are as the name implies, simply the beaten tracks made by previous travellers over the prairie; they do not go on the square always, but frequently cut across country over ploughed land and through farmers' back-yards at will, while the ploughman drives his plough right across the trail without the slightest compunction.

The chief disadvantage of scattered settlement perhaps is that a large