

EAST
MOUNTAIN
VALLEY

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"THE FLOWER GARDEN OF SASKATCHEWAN"

1910-1911

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CANADIAN HISTORY

THE LAKE AND THE LAND OF
THE LAST MOUNTAIN VALLEY

ILLUSTRATED

Within the vale a lakelet, lashed with flowers,
Lay like a liquid eye among the hills,
Revealing in its depths the fulgent light
Of snowy cloudland and cerulean skies.
And rising, falling, fading far around,
The homeless and unfurrowed prairies spread
In solitude and idleness eterne.

—Charles Mair.



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"Child lips have called the wild meadow
land, Home"

Last Mountain Valley

"Softly the shadows of prairie-land wheat
Ripple and riot adown to her feet;
Murmurs all nature with joyous acclaim,
Fragrance of summer and shimmer of flame:
Heedless she hears while the centuries slip;
Chalice of poppy is laid on her lip.

Hark! from the east comes a ravishing note,—
Sweeter was never in nightingale's throat,—
Silence of centuries thrills to the song,
Singing their silence awaiting so long;
Low, yet it swells to the heaven's blue dome,
Child lips have called the wild meadow land, Home."

—Emily McManus

ONE evening late in the summer of the year 1902 a traveller drew up at a small farm house near the foot of Last Mountain Lake, in what is now the province of Saskatchewan. He asked shelter for the night and was very heartily received by the hospitable Canadian farmer. The evening meal over and pipes lit, they entered into conversation, when it was soon known to the host that the visitor was prospecting for land suitable for farming, not with a view to locating upon it himself, but for the larger purpose of establishing a colony of settlers. This traveller was Wm. Pearson, of Winnipeg, a man who has had a great deal to do with the opening up of Western Canada to settlement, an Englishman, tall and wiry, with all the Englishman's thorough-going ways and the push and enterprise of an American. It did not take the host long to see that this was no ordinary visitor with whom he was dealing, and he began to dilate upon the beauties and attractions of the Last Mountain Valley country,

SILTON DISTRICT



"Near the Foot of Last Mountain Lake"



" Wm. Pearson, of
Winnipeg."

which lay to the north of his homestead. He expatiated until long after his usual bed time on the mildness and equability of the climate, the strength and richness of the soil, the plentiful nature of the rainfall, the game, the fishing, and the pleasure possibilities of the lake which lay upon the western boundaries of the district. His enthusiasm was contagious, and the visitor determined to visit this district, and if it seemed suitable to make more thorough examination.

The following morning at an early hour he commenced the journey north. Slowly the physical features of the country unrolled themselves to the vision. Broad, undulating prairie lands stretched for miles in one vast ripple of verdant wind swept landscape. Here and there could be seen groves of trees, small in the perspective of illimitable space, but covering in reality a country vast enough to hold an empire. On the east the high elevation known as Last Mountain, bounded the horizon, while on the west the shimmering waters of Last Mountain Lake shone in the morning sunlight like a sheet of silver. A day's exploration ended with Mr. Pearson more enthusiastic than the settler whose glowing descriptions of the night before had set his imagination on fire. From the first the lake attracted his attention, and much time was spent in exploring its vast reaches, in sounding its depths and taking note of the qualities of the water, the stock of fish, its suitability for navigation, and the prospect for good town and camping sites upon its shores.

An earlier explorer who had visited this region on a surveying expedition for the Canadian

NEAR STRASSBURG



"Broad Undulating Prairie Stretched for Miles "

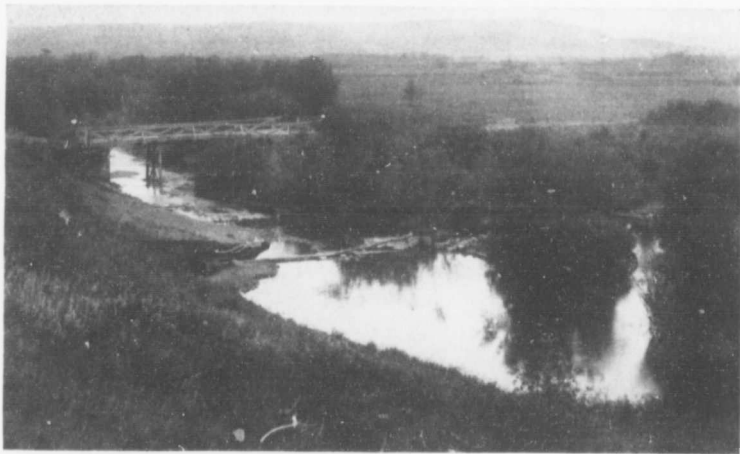
Government (Prof. Macoun), has left a splendid description of its resources which the observation of this later visitor showed to be well within the mark upon all points. Prof. Macoun says : " Long or Last Mountain Lake lies in a region that has a general descent from the east extending over at least ten miles. The waters of the lake are sweet and pleasant to the taste and of great depth. Multitudes of fish are caught every fall by the Indians who come down from the Touchwood Hills for the purpose of fishing. Before many years steamboats will be plying upon its waters, and the lovely land bordering on its shores will be dotted with farm houses. One of the richest tracts in the Qu'Appelle Valley lies east and north from Last Mountain, and when known will be speedily taken up by farmers, as the much dreaded frosts of the Saskatchewan Valley are unknown. While encamped near the head of the lake in 1879, we had ample opportunity to examine this portion of the country. We were particularly charmed with its soil, productions and position. Multitudes of pelicans, geese, ducks and waterhens, besides innumerable snipe and plover were everywhere in the marshes at the head of the lake, or along its shore, or on small islands lying to the south of the camp. Abundance of good water is found on every part of this tract and future settlers will find that good permanent wells can be obtained at a reasonable depth on any part of the prairie."



First Steamer Welcome,
Launched 1905

Speaking of the tract of country lying south of the Touchwood Hills, the same keen explorer

NEAR CRAVEN



"Murmurs all Nature with Joyous Acclaim"

says: " There is a block of 16,000,000 acres that has to my knowledge over 90 per cent. fit for agricultural and pastoral purposes. No alkaline soil is known on any part of it excepting a narrow strip extending from the head of Last Mountain Lake towards Quill Lake."

It did not take our traveller long to decide that here he had happened upon the district he was looking for. Settlement had not yet commenced to any extent, there being only about fifteen families in all located between the lake and the mountain. As a result of this visit and of the splendid business enterprise which has since been brought to bear upon the work of opening up the rich district discovered, Last Mountain Valley is now one of the most widely known and popular of all the regions open to settlers in Western Canada. Mr. Pearson's purchase of lands in the district and the steady influx of settlers since, is one of the romances of the history of Western Canada.

Returning to Winnipeg, he lost no time in making known the attractions of the new found paradise. The story of what he has done is best shown in the present state of things in the Last Mountain Valley country. Lawsuits, which previous to this visit had held these fine lands closed against the coming of the settler, were decided and put out of the way. Transportation facilities were improved by the inauguration of a steamboat service upon the lake which connects with important railway centres, and steps were taken to have lines of railway pushed into the district itself. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company has a road constructed, known as the Kirkella branch, which passes from a point upon its transcontinental line through the Last Mountain country to Saskatoon and Edmonton, and the same company has projected a line from Regina, via Craven and McKillop's Landing—at the foot of Last Mountain Lake—to connect with the Kirkella branch at Bulyea. This will be constructed this year. The Grand Trunk

NEAR BULYEA



" We Drive no Starvelings, Scraggy Brown "

Pacific is also to be a competitor for the traffic of this rich country, its main line having already been surveyed through the northern portion. From this branch lines will in due course be constructed into the southern parts of the valley. When all the projected roads are built, Last Mountain Valley will have connection with the outside world by four different routes—enough to satisfy the most exacting demands.



FOOT OF LAST MOUNTAIN



"Sheltering Bluffs Liberally Interspersed"

CHAPTER II.

" We drive no starvelings, scraggy brown,
Loose lerge'd, and ribbed and bony,
Like those which grind their noses down
On pastures bare and stony.
Lank oxen, rough as Indian dogs,
And cows too lean for shadows,
Disputing feebly with the frogs
The crop of saw-grass meadows.

In our good droves, so sleek and fair,
No bones of leanness rattle ;
No tottering, hide-bound ghosts are there,
Or Pharaoh's evil cattle.
Each stately heave berpeaks the hand
That fed him unrepining ;
The fatness of a goodly land
In each dun hide is shining."

—Whittier.

The traveller of this story and every other observer who has ever visited the Last Mountain Valley has remarked its splendid suitability for the business of stock raising. The sheltering bluffs with which the country is so liberally interspersed in many parts, give protection when it is needed against the chilly north winds of the winter season, the abundance of small lakes gives an ample supply of water, and the luxuriance of the natural growth of grass, peas, and other fodders is such that no labor need be spent in finding food for the cattle. In the summer there is more than they can eat, and in the winter their foraging needs only to be supplemented by letting them have access to the stacks of straw which remain from the threshing of the previous fall. This is a consideration which weighs heavily with every farmer who is familiar with the business of raising cattle on the prairies. There are some other places where many precious hours of time are taken up in finding water and



Ample Supply of Water

ALEX. DALE'S WHEAT, 1906



"Other Grains are no less Successfully Grown"

hay for the stock. Because cattle are so easily raised in the Last Mountain Valley, this district is likely to become the favorite in the west for mixed farming.

Settlers already there have found that grain crop failures are unknown. The average yield of wheat in the province of Saskatchewan in successful years is 25 bushels to the acre, whereas in this particular portion of the province, the average is 29.54 bushels to the acre. Individual yields, where the farming has been good, quite frequently have been known to reach 45 and even 50 bushels. The average yield of oats is from 50 to 60 bushels to the acre and the quality and weight of these is so high that they are eagerly sought after by buyers. Other grains are no less successful.

To those who are more particularly interested in dairying, the Last Mountain Valley offers special attractions. Dairy cows do quite as well here as the beef animals, and the quality and abundance of the water removes a difficulty which is a standing one in many other parts of the prairie country.

There has been a great deal of discussion amongst experts and amateurs, as to whether Western Canada will ever become in even a small degree a fruit raising country. The question



"Eagerly Sought After by Buyers"

NEAR DUVAL



"The Shelter Afforded by the Mountain on the East"

is by no means settled yet, so far as the ordinary prairie lands are concerned, but the conditions in Last Mountain Valley are such that there seems little doubt of its ability to produce abundant crops of all kinds of hardy northern fruits. The tempering influence of the lake which bounds the western side of the valley on the climate, coupled with the shelter afforded by the mountain on the east and the trees which dot the whole surface of the country, makes it possible for comparatively tender trees and shrubs to survive the winter frosts. The future will no doubt witness the establishment here of a more or less extensive fruit growing industry. Wild berries are found in abundance in the wooded part of the country, especially along the slopes of the mountain.

An important necessity in a country such as Western Canada is fuel. Where this is scarce and difficult to get at the settlers sometimes experience inconvenience. In the Last Mountain Valley the slopes of the mountain afford an abundant supply. Wood is plentiful and all that the farmer has to do is to cut and haul it to his home.

Other physical features of interest are the absence of hot winds, which sometimes in other places wither and spoil the crops, the richness and depth of the soil—a black vegetable loam, with chocolate colored subsoil of clay—which gives splendid crops with almost absolute regularity, the freedom of the country from weeds and insect pests, and the frequency of the rainfalls induced by the proximity of the mountain and lake. It is a well established fact that drought is never known in this district, the influences mentioned seeming to keep the rainfall even and regular.

As a result of careful organization by Mr. Pearson and his associates, Last Mountain Valley has a perfect system of local self-government, with good schools and public institutions. These are all managed by the people themselves and at a minimum cost. Taxes are an almost negligible quantity in any consideration of what it will cost to live in the country. About \$10 per year represents the sum paid by the ordinary farmer. There are good postal facilities, and telegraphic communication may be found at the towns.

NEAR McKILLOP'S LANDING

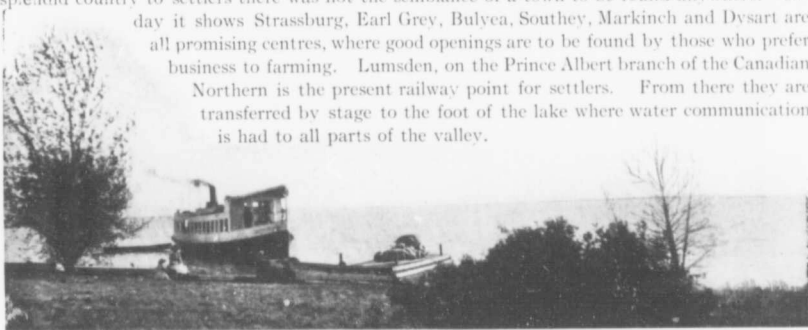


"By Stage to the Foot of the Lake"

CHAPTER III.

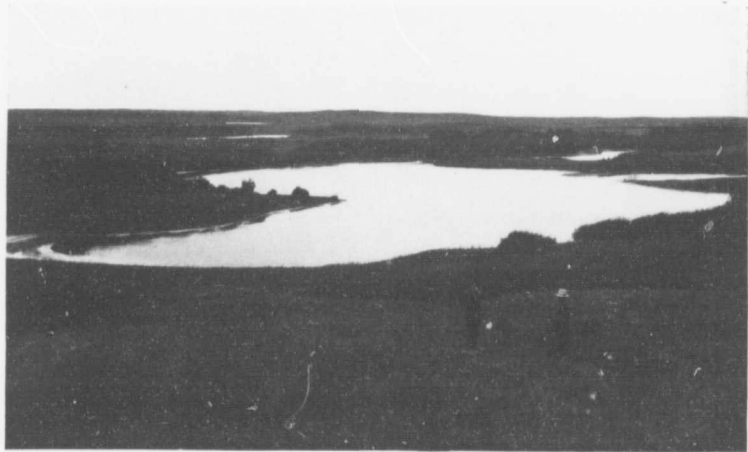
"It's common to sneer at the country town,
With its quiet streets and its peaceful air,
Where the little river meanders down
To be lost in the broad, blue sea somewhere.
As we who think we are wise are lost
In the roaring city, that like a sea,
Has its ebb and flow, with its millions tossed
As bubbles robbed of identity."—*Anon.*

Last Mountain Valley has within its borders some exceedingly promising towns. At the time of the visit of the traveller whose subsequent efforts resulted in the opening up of this splendid country to settlers there was not the semblance of a town to be found anywhere. Today it shows Strassburg, Earl Grey, Bulyea, Southey, Markinch and Dysart are all promising centres, where good openings are to be found by those who prefer business to farming. Lumsden, on the Prince Albert branch of the Canadian Northern is the present railway point for settlers. From there they are transferred by stage to the foot of the lake where water communication is had to all parts of the valley.



Lewisport is Four Miles Across the Lake

ON THE MOUNTAIN, NEAR STRASSBURG



"Fresh Air, Fine Sport, Good Companionship"

It is the intention of the Wm. Pearson Co. Ltd., to construct elevators at a number of points on the lake for the convenience of settlers in getting out their grain. It has already placed contracts for the building of a large new steamer and barges will be furnished for transporting the grain down the lake to be assembled in a large terminal elevator at the lower end where the Canadian Pacific line from Regina to Bulyea is expected to receive it. Water Town, Arlington Beach and established on the business oppor-

Strassburg is most important. It is at the end of extension of the Railway, 400 miles nipeg. It is charming altogether such a who loves country to live in. It affords the town, sport, good companionships, and

plenty of opportunities to make money. While it conforms quite closely in description to the lines with which this chapter opens, it is by no means a slow or sleepy place. On the contrary it is one of the liveliest towns of its size in Western Canada. There are over fifty places of business, three grain elevators, a flour mill, and other industries. An excellent newspaper, "The Strassburg Mountaineer," has done much to make the fame of this valley known to the outside world.



One Who Loves Country Life

other points to be lake will offer great tunities.

the largest and centre in the valley. the Pheasant Hills Canadian Pacific distant from Winnipegly situated and place as any one life might be glad ords all the advances with fresh air, fine

SMALL LAKES IN LAST MOUNTAIN




"Views which Extend for Miles"

The town has an energetic board of trade, of which Wm. Pearson is honorary president and Duncan Pierce, local manager of the Wm. Pearson Co. Ltd., vice-president. An exhibition is held every year and in all respects the place is thoroughly up-to-date. It will undoubtedly always be the chief town of the Last Mountain Valley. It has all the regular public institutions,

besides sporting organizations, clubs, etc. Mr. Pierce, vice-president of the board of trade, takes a lively interest in these and is a


generous contributor to their funds, besides arranging with the company for trophies for sporting competitions and helping in such ways to maintain public interest in their affairs. In this he has the sympathy and support of the secretary-treasurer of the company at Winnipeg, Geo. H. Perkins, an American, from Minneapolis, who has had wide experience in the land business, and who has entered very heartily into the spirit which is making the work of the Company so conspicuous in Western Canada. At their suggestion the company has contributed school sites and shown in many other ways its interest in the welfare of



"Duncan Pierce,
Local Manager"

the community. Although Strassburg is not yet three years old, its population is now in the neighborhood of 600. These

are chiefly English, Irish, Scotch, German, United States and Canadian people. They make a fine community and no more flourishing town is to be found anywhere in the west.



"Geo. H. Perkins,
Sec.-Treasurer"

GLEN HARBOR



"Good Boating, Fishing, Bathing and Driving all the Summer Months"

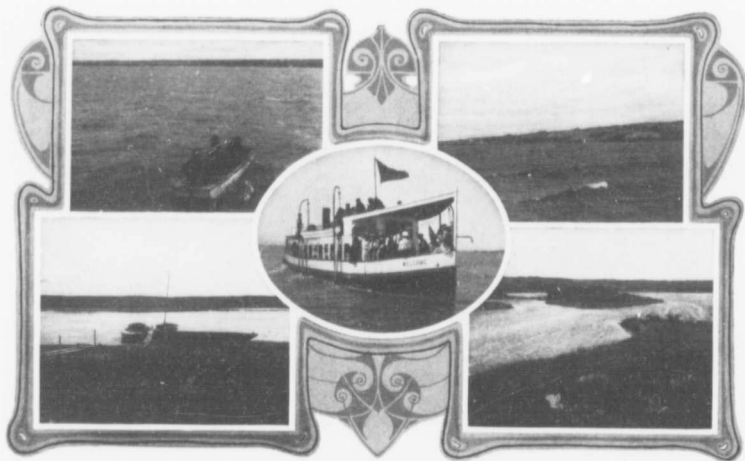
One of the most promising points in the Last Mountain Valley country is Glen Harbor, a beautifully situated place, which is destined to become an important summer resort. It is located on the lake, has a fine stretch of sandy beach, lying at the edge of a deep and well-wooded dale three-quarters of a mile long, and behind it the park country stretching away to the mountain on the east. The drive from this place to the mountain is a particularly fine one. The scenery resembles that of England rather than anything to be found in Canada. It is the intention of the Pearson Company to establish a summer hotel at Glen Harbor in the early future where tired city people may find rest and comfort coupled with good boating, fishing, bathing and driving during all the summer months. Summer cottages will also be erected which will be let at nominal rentals. In the mountain a shooting lodge, or chateau, will be located for the benefit of visitors. A delightful drive *via* Strassburg to Last Mountain through the beautiful park country (where cosy farm houses will be noticed nestling in the clumps of trees) will add to the summer visitor's interest and he will thus get the variety of both lake and mountain scenery in a prairie country.

Arlington Beach has also fine bathing features. A cosy little hotel has been provided at this point through the enterprise of P. Curtin. Many visitors from surrounding towns will arrange to stay with mine host Curtin.



ARLINGTON BEACH

LAST MOUNTAIN LAKE



"Tired Inhabitants of Cities and Towns Will Flock to these Resorts"

CHAPTER IV.

" Away to the brook,
All your tackle out-look,
Here's a day that is worth a year's wishing ;
See that all things be right,
For 'tis a very spite
To want tools when a man goes a fishing."

-Cotton.

As the traveller, whose visit to the Last Mountain Valley formed the opening theme of this booklet discovered, the country has something more to commend it to the settler than mere suitability for farming and ranching operations: it has that much rarer advantage a splendid navigable lake teeming with fish and whose shores furnish shooting enough to warrant its being called a sportsman's paradise. The particular kinds of fish to be caught here are pickerel, pike, whitefish and trout. They are abundant and afford endless opportunities for whiling away a summer's vacation.

The shooting is no less good. Sportsmen come for many miles in the fall of the year to follow the ducks and geese along the shores of the lake, and parties have even come from the large American cities for this purpose. They also find plenty of grouse shooting when it pleases them to turn their attention to that. In the winter the deer in the mountain fastnesses give those who are expert with the rifle a chance to show their prowess. Earl Grey, Governor-General of Canada, has found the shooting in the country adjacent to this valley so good that he has established a lodge in the Qu'Appelle Valley which he visits in season every year. Wm. Whyte, second vice-president of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, also shoots here.

EVENING, LAST MOUNTAIN LAKE



"When the Summer Heat is on Its Cool and Refreshing Waters"

There are other even more important advantages peculiar to this district by reason of the proximity of the lake. Fishing and shooting are splendid in their places and attract large numbers of devotees, but a very much greater number of the future inhabitants of the country tributary to Last Mountain Lake will bless Providence, when the summer's heat is on, for its cool and refreshing waters. More beautiful camping grounds are not to be found anywhere in the west than those along these shores.

of the cities and of miles around will, these resorts for their and will find in the fishing that touch of that is needed to and mind. There are beaches to be found where tents or cottages may be located. Those who have a taste for sailing may have it gratified to the fullest. At a dozen places there are excellent racing courses. Spectators may by ascending the high banks which intervene between the beaches get views of the lake which extend for miles. In front of Glen Harbor there is one of the finest natural yachting courses to be found anywhere in Canada. Picnics and excursions on the lake may easily be arranged. The Pearson Company has a staunch little passenger boat operating on the lake which is always available for such purposes. More boats are being built to take care of the grain, lumber and freight business, and arrangements are being made to accommodate the largest excursions of Sunday Schools, Societies, etc.



"Splendid Sandy Beaches"

The tired inhabitants of towns for hundreds of years in future, flock to summer vacations, bathing, boating and nature which is all tone up the body many splendid sandy beaches along the lake shore may be located. Those who have a taste for sailing may have it gratified to the fullest. At a dozen places there are excellent racing courses.

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H. DOEGE, LONGLAKTON



"Forty Bushels of Wheat to the Acre"

CHAPTER V.

"To catch dame fortune's golden smile,
Assiduously wait upon her;
And gather gear by every wile
That's justified by honor;
Nor for to hide it in a hedge,
Not for a train attendant,
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent."—*Burns.*

One would make a very great mistake who would assume that the benefits of the opening up of the Last Mountain Valley country to settlers have all accrued to the fortunate men who made the discovery of its richness and whose business ability has brought about the opening up of the country. The settlers themselves have had an extremely prosperous experience. There has been no crop failure since they went in, and there probably never will be. Many of the farmers had little or nothing when they went there; to-day these same men count their wealth by the thousands of dollars. Splendid houses, barns and outbuildings have been erected and the whole country gives an impression of prosperity and wealth. All this has been accomplished out of the returns from the farming and cattle raising operations. Some 1906 experiences with the raising of crops show the following highly satisfactory results:

Peter Ferguson, of Govan, 31 bushels of wheat to the acre.

Alex. Dale, of Silton, 40 bushels of wheat to the acre (on summer-fallow.)

C. Benjafield, of Silton, 49 bushels of wheat to the acre.

H. Doege, of Longlakton, 40 bushels of wheat to the acre.

Average yield furnished by D. McFarlane, of Strassburg, to the government of Saskatchewan, for over 70 farmers, 26½ bushels to the acre.

NEAR ARLINGTON BEACH



"Into the Heart of the Country He Seeks"



"The New Land of Promise"—Near Strassbrook

of the Canadian Pacific Railway. From there a journey of sixty miles north would bring the traveller into the heart of the Last Mountain Valley district. There need now be no wandering aimlessly upon the prairies such as was the case when this first traveller found it. A brief journey north from Regina will bring the homeseeker to McKillop's Landing, and from there the boat will take him into the heart of the country he seeks. He will discover upon investigation that the valley extends for 25 miles from the eastern shores of the lake and 15 miles to the west of it. It comprises the districts known as Strassburg, Collingwood, Arlington Beach, Watertown, Wilkies Bay, Big Arm, Earl Grey, Southey and Bulyea.

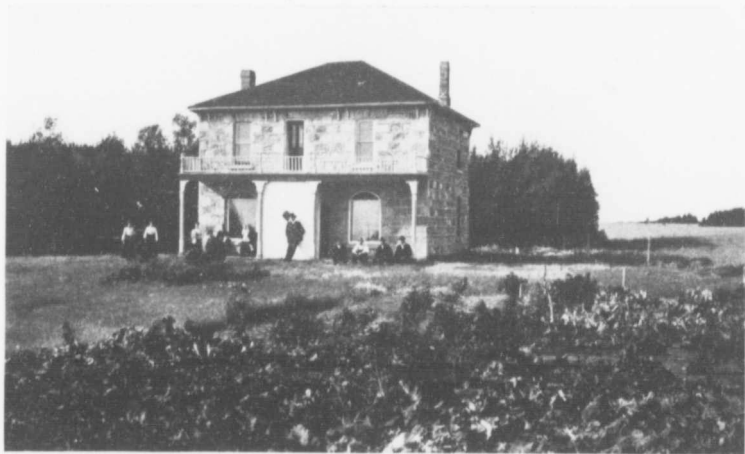
CHAPTER VI.

Such is the story of the discovery and settlement of one of the garden spots of Western Canada—the new land of promise. There is here material for a dozen romances more wonderful than anything that Europe or the older parts of America have to offer. Were one to set out from the east to seek a share of the golden treasures of this valley Regina might well be made the objective point on the main line



"The Boat Will Take Him"

H. BARNES' HOME



" Gives an Impression of Prosperity "



"East of the Head of the Lake Lay the Splendid Country."—Prof. Macom.

Manitoba and Indian Head districts, which they have left for what they declare to be a better country. This is borne out by what Prof. Thos. Shaw, after a personal inspection, said: "This rich and beautiful farming section lying tributary to Last Mountain Lake embraces one of the finest areas in the north-west. The land is undulating in this region, mostly open prairie; the soil is a rich, black vegetable loam from one to two feet deep, overlaid with a clay sub-soil sufficiently porous to be penetrated by deep-rooted plants. Being so highly-favored by nature, it is not surprising that the production of wheat in this region is phenomenally high."

The total length of the valley is 50 miles. He will find that whereas three years ago there were only thirty-five settlers in the whole district, now there are upwards of three thousand. Many of the new people are from the States of North Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin, the best of the north-western parts of the American union. These make good neighbors and are fine farmers. He will also find a goodly number of splendid Canadian farmers some of them from the far-famed Southern



IN THE HEART OF LAST MOUNTAIN



Proposed Site Summer Hotel



Last Mountain Lake by Moonlight

What Prof. Macoun said regarding native flowers growing in the Last Mountain Valley may well be quoted here : "East of the head of the lake lay the rich country which produced the enormous mushrooms already referred to by me.

"The following notes from my journal will illustrate the flora in the vicinity of Last Mountain Lake as seen in July, 1879: Flowers are a most conspicuous feature of the prairie, hedsarum and various astragalæ vieing with the lily and the vetch in loveliness and luxuriance, often whole acres would be red and purple with beautiful flowers and the air laden with perfume of roses, oftentimes tiger

lillies were so abundant that they covered an acre of ground a bright red. "Speaking of these flowers caused me to call this region the flower garden of the north-west."

Consideration of such a history as this may well cause one to believe with a famous Canadian poet that:

*"In the long hereajter this Canada shall be
The worthy heir of British power and British liberty;
Spreading the blessings of her sway to her remotest bounds,
While with the fame of her fair name a continent resounds.
True to her high traditions, to Britain's ancient glory
Of patient saint and martyr, alive in deathless glory;
Strong, in their liberty and truth, to shed from shore to shore
A light among the nations till nations are no more."*

—FIDELIS.



"Shimmering Waters of Last Mountain Lake"

LAST MOUNTAIN VALLEY

SASKATCHEWAN

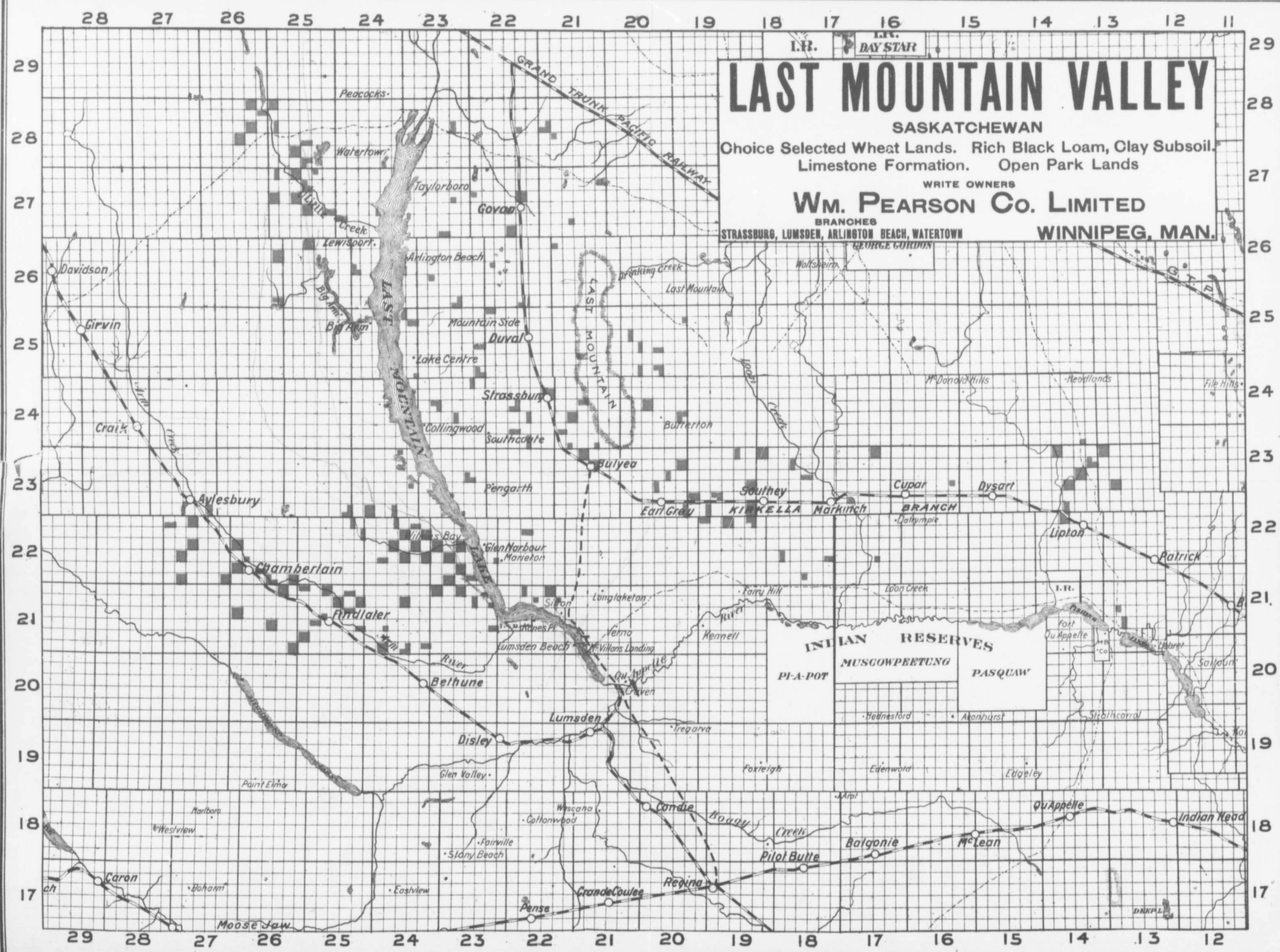
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