

A NEW SETTLEMENT: MANITOBA AND THE NORTH-WEST OF CANADA.

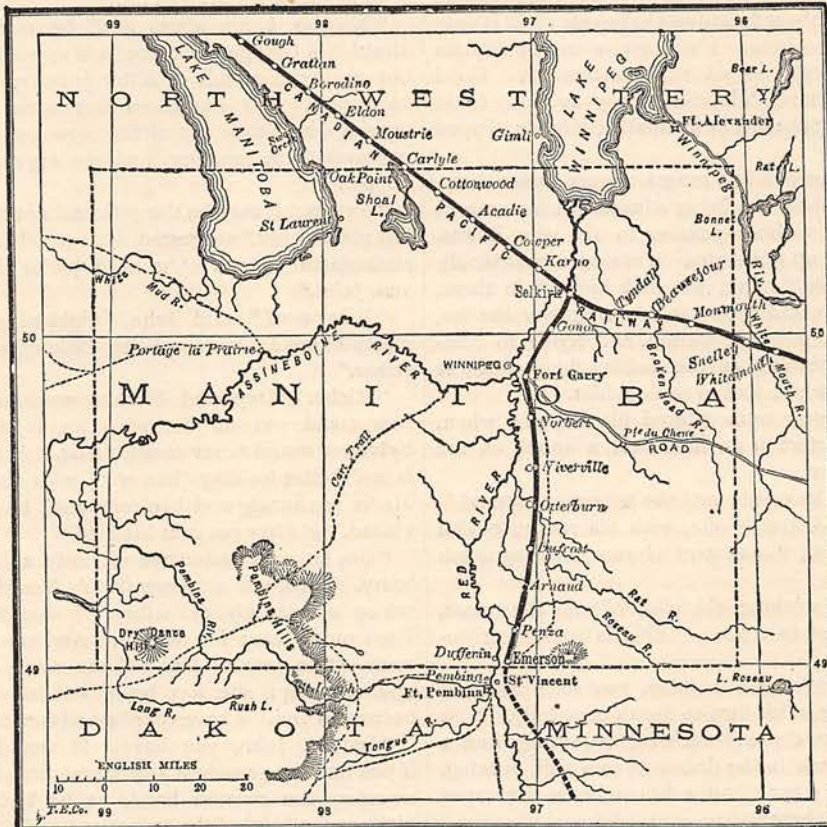
BY ONE WHO HAS BEEN THERE.



ANY Englishmen doubtless read with interest and astonishment the able paper in a contemporary on "Our New Wheat-fields in the North-West," and it may be that some farmers who have failed to keep their money together, are anxiously turning their attention to that vast territory comprising

up by actual settlers or is in the hands of speculators, some of whom have acquired, at prices ranging as low as thirty cents per acre, blocks comprising 50,000 and even 70,000 acres, situate for the most part in the rich and fertile valley of the Red River of the North.

As one instance of the richness and excellence of the soil, it may be here stated that near Sel-



some 3,000,000 square miles, lying between the Lake of the Woods and the Rocky Mountains, and which, until its comparatively recent acquisition by the Dominion Government from the Hudson's Bay Company, seems to have been but little known to the world at large.

The same writer informed us that to the 31st October, 1877, the total land sales in the province of Manitoba amounted from its commencement to 1,392,368 acres to 8,648 applicants; and that in April, 1878, the Emerson Land Office alone disposed of 52,960 acres; and in the first week in May, as many as 30,400 acres were appropriated.

The tide of emigration from that time to the present has steadily flowed in, and much of the best land between Pembina and Winnipeg is either taken

by actual settlers or is in the hands of speculators, some of whom have acquired, at prices ranging as low as thirty cents per acre, blocks comprising 50,000 and even 70,000 acres, situate for the most part in the rich and fertile valley of the Red River of the North. As one instance of the richness and excellence of the soil, it may be here stated that near Sel-

kirk one farmer has grown 44 crops of wheat in 45 years without putting an ounce of manure on the land. Notwithstanding, however, the strength and quality of the soil, in certain parts it is often under water when farming operations should be commenced. At comparatively trifling cost this land could be drained; but further west, in the Little Saskatchewan valley, and in the neighbourhood of Shoal Lake, Bird-tail Creek, and south-west near Rock Lake, rolling land of equal fertility can be obtained from the Government on terms more favourable than those demanded by land speculators; those, therefore, intending to become actual settlers would do well to inspect lands in the districts named, where free homesteads of 160 acres are given, and the pre-emptive right to 160 more to be paid for in three

years, at a maximum price of two and a half dollars, according to proximity to the line of railway now in course of construction, and which will be completed beyond the Little Saskatchewan during the year 1881.

There can scarcely be a doubt that, ere many years are over, there will be branches leading from the Canadian Pacific Line, which is to run through the vast territory lying between the north and south branches of the Great Saskatchewan river and the fertile belt stretching to the Rocky Mountains and British Columbia.

Settlers are needed to occupy the country and cultivate the soil, and railway systems to transport the produce to the markets of the world.

Farming operations are commenced early in April, immediately on the disappearance of the snow, and in August the grain ripens and is harvested. In a country where growth is so rapid that everything is compressed within five months, wet land must be a serious drawback, and not only retard but at times utterly ruin crops sown too late to come to maturity. Wheat and oats are magnificent, both ear and grain being larger and fuller than in Lower Canada, and the yield greater.

Vegetables, and of great excellence, are easily produced; and potatoes are especially large, floury, and of fine flavour. The natural grass which grows on the margins of ponds and swampy places, although coarse, is highly nutritive and sweet; and this can be cured, and is sufficient fodder on which to winter cattle.

The winters, though cold, are drier than in Ontario and Lower Canada, and the snow does not fall to the same depth, and except in blizzards or heavy snowstorms with wind, the lower the thermometer the stiller the air, which is exhilarating and health-giving. Early in spring the prairie is carpeted with flora, and the most delicious wild strawberries and raspberries abound, as also cranberries and plums. Though the appetite requires no tempting with dainties, the sportsman may add to his larder, for prairie chickens are plentiful, and every pond is covered with wild ducks.

The industrious working man with a little money can be his own landlord, and in a few years may hope to make himself independent; and each son on attaining eighteen years of age can have his 320 acres on the same terms as his father before him.

The intending emigrant, however, must be fully prepared to encounter accidental and other difficulties, and must not be led to imagine he is setting out on a royal road to wealth and ease.

The emigrant arriving at Quebec should go to Montreal or Toronto, whence he may proceed either by the all-rail route *viâ* Detroit, Chicago, and St. Paul; or *viâ* Sarnia by Lakes Huron and Superior to Duluth, thence by rail to St. Vincent and Winnipeg, the capital of the Prairie province of Manitoba. The scenery by either route is extremely interesting and picturesque. The steamers call at many of the ports in the County Bruce, Ontario, and at Sault St. Marie

in the United States, where the canal connecting the two lakes is entered. At this place a new canal with locks built with large blocks of granite is in course of construction, where the traveller may have the opportunity of shooting the Rapids in the frail bark canoes which the Indians readily supply. The white fish caught in the Rapids are particularly good and firm from their being constantly in motion.

It seems almost incredible that Lake Superior is large enough to hold the British Isles, but everything in America is on a gigantic scale that strikes the Englishman who for the first time visits this great continent.

The steamers of the Transportation Company are particularly comfortable, and where time is not so much an object the lake route is perhaps the more pleasant and economical.

Vast sources of mineral wealth lie buried on the shores of this beautiful lake, waiting for the time when English capital will unveil the hidden treasures of gold, silver, lead, and copper.

On the other hand, the traveller may pursue the rail route without fatigue in Pullman cars, breakfasting and dining as comfortably as if in his hotel; and a glance at Chicago, St. Paul, and Minneapolis will not be without interest. The two latter towns on the Mississippi are especially beautiful, and both of equal size.

Within a few miles of Minneapolis are the falls of Minnehaha (Laughing Water) and the lakes from which this great river, which empties itself into the Gulf of Mexico, takes its rise.

At St. Vincent the journey may be continued to Winnipeg by rail or by the Red River, but as its course is so tortuous, time will be saved by adopting the former route. Arrived in the capital, preparations must be made for the further journey, and here it may be remarked that every requisite can be obtained, and settlers would do well to bring as little as possible with them from England beyond their wardrobes. Even in clothes, things suitable to the climate and country can be better obtained here than at home, though wearing apparel in America is higher in price. For the first year it is not necessary and very unadvisable to invest more than is absolutely required in agricultural implements, but far better to keep capital in reserve, as a knowledge of actual requirements will very speedily be acquired, and the articles purchased with facility at prices scarcely exceeding those demanded at Winnipeg.

The most essential thing to which attention should be turned on the emigrant's reaching his farm is the immediate construction of a comfortable house, which need not necessarily be large at first, as additions can always be made to add to the comfort of the family when once fairly settled on the land.

In the early spring, as soon as possible, a few acres should be ploughed and potatoes put in, as well as green vegetables, and oats may be sown, which will be a better crop for the first year than wheat. The land put under cultivation should be fenced as soon as time will permit, and the more land which can be



VIEW OF QUEBEC.

turned up in June and July the better. The sap at this period being in the grass, it rots more quickly; it is back-ploughed in the fall, and after being harrowed in the following spring it is ready for the seed.

Hay should be cured in ample quantity for any cattle the settler may decide on keeping through the first winter, and adequate shelter should be provided for the cattle before the approach of the cold season. For the first year and before oats can be grown, oxen are universally preferred and recommended to horses, unless the farmer can afford to buy oats, in which case horses would undoubtedly be preferred by those unaccustomed to the management of oxen. In selecting land it is essential to have enough timber for fuel and fencing, a collection of which for necessary purposes should not be neglected. Another very important matter it is well to name. As prairie fires are common in the fall, when the grass has been withered by frost, the homestead should be protected without delay. This is effected by ploughing round it to a sufficient breadth, say from six to a dozen furrows, and leaving some little space, again ploughing in like manner, and burning the grass between the portions ploughed.

These fires are sometimes very destructive and many are the instances of people being burned out, but only when the necessary precautions have been neglected. Prairie fires will, however, as the country becomes cultivated cease to exist, or be of rare occurrence.

Some fifty miles beyond the western frontier of Manitoba is a settlement called Rapid City, which bids fair to assume at no distant period very considerable dimensions, and which will probably intercept a fair share of the trade from the west.

About two years ago, the Dominion Steam Ship Company acquired from the Government two townships, Nos. 12 and 13, Ranges 19 and 20 West, and embracing an area of seventy-two square miles, or 46,080 acres, for the purpose of colonisation; and in

September, 1879, the last of a series of parties left England for this district, to take up and occupy the remaining portion of the land in this reserve not previously settled.

The members of this party had for the most part a moderate capital, which is well calculated to insure success, and in this settlement on the Little Saskatchewan or Rapid River are collected many of the elements most desirable for the development of a new colony.

Already have the new-comers built themselves comfortable houses, and are awaiting the coming spring to commence in earnest farming operations not always in the power of the ordinary emigrant with limited means. Those who arrived six and twelve months earlier on the scene are all comfortably located on farms, which in a year or two will, by dint of hard work and good management, secure independence. Contentment is written on every face; here there is neither want nor poverty: no wearing anxiety for the provision of rent, and as yet there are no taxes.

Although the larger portion of this community are fresh arrivals from England, there are some happily from Ontario, who having sold their improved farms, have gone west to start anew with a nice capital, for the benefit of their families. Their experience of pioneer life, and their general knowledge of the best way of doing things in Canada, make them valuable as citizens. To those who have left the old farm in Ontario, attached though they might be to the place made by their fathers or by themselves, this new western home will give many advantages. In few instances did the farm consist of more than 150 or at most 200 acres, cleared little by little from the forest, and in cases where families consisted of four or five children the farm could scarcely be expected to do more than keep the family; whereas in the rich country of the west, with its larger yield and ready for the plough without a tree to be felled, each son, as he

attains eighteen years of age, without payment may possess a farm of like extent, and the family become large landed proprietors.

In spite of the advantages offered by the virgin soil of the prairie in this fertile belt, the country at present is not suitable for the poorer emigrant without means; a moderate capital is essential, combined with a willingness to work with patience and perseverance.

To the poorer emigrant, however, who cannot settle on his land without working for a portion of the year for others, the construction of the Canadian Pacific Line will be a boon. With the construction of the railroad will come the rapid development of the riches underlying the whole country.

The Saskatchewan district possesses one of the

largest coal-fields in the world, and nothing, it is admitted, is of such paramount importance to a country's prosperity.

Notwithstanding, however, all these advantages, we would strongly advise the greatest caution in taking so important and unalterable a step as leaving one's native soil. A new settlement may easily become overcrowded, and once the emigrant has "burnt his boats" it will be too late to return. All these considerations should be carefully weighed before any decision is arrived at; remembering also that many who succeed in the country of their adoption could have accomplished as much or even more in the land of their birth, by a similar exercise of industry, enterprise, and patience.



THE BRIDGE OF SAN MARTIN: A LEGEND OF TOLEDO.



THE good people of Toledo are very proud of the Bridge of San Martin, as well they may be, for it is a noble structure, though it has replaced one that was nobler still. It has, too, a special interest from a legend connected with its erection. It was in the year 1368 that Don Enrique, Count of Trastamara, a brother of King

Pedro the Cruel, raised the standard of rebellion and besieged the city of Toledo. The loyal Toledans made a sturdy and valorous defence for a whole year. Many a time did they make desperate sallies across the old Bridge of San Martin and, throwing themselves upon the camp of Don Enrique, in the Cigarrales, inflict sanguinary havoc on the besieging forces. To prevent a repetition of these sallies, Don Enrique determined to destroy the bridge.

Now this bridge was esteemed by the Toledans as one of the most precious jewels in the girdle of their Imperial City, and was especially dear to them as giving access to those delightful gardens with their pretty houses for recreation, and orchards, and groves of beautiful trees and shrubs. One night all these blooming trees were cut down and thrown in heaps on the Bridge of San Martin, and at dawn of day a vivid blaze of light from the bridge illuminated all

the neighbourhood, lighting up the gardens, the waters of the Tagus, the ruins of the palace of Don Rodrigo, and the "Alcoba," or Los Baños de Florina. The blaze came from the burning trees on the bridge, which soon set fire to the bridge itself. Then came a loud and terrifying explosion of the vast, strong blocks of stone that formed the arches and buttresses of the bridge, wrought with all that surpassing skill of chisel and brain which created the marvels of the Alhambra. That dull heavy roar was as the sorrowing complaint of art crushed by barbarism. The Toledans, roused from sleep by this inauspicious splendour, rushed out half dressed to save their beautiful Bridge of San Martin from the ruin which was impending. But they rushed in vain, for a terrific crackling noise, that was reverberated through the valleys and windings of the Tagus, told them too surely that their beloved bridge existed no more. And such indeed was the case, for when the sun had begun to gild the cupolas of the Imperial City, and the maidens of Toledo, as was their habit, went down to the river-side to fill their pitchers with the fresh clear water, they returned quickly with their vessels empty but their hearts filled with indignation and sorrow. And then they told those whom they met, with tears and lamentations, how, when they went down to the water, they saw the rapid current of the river rushing on, turbid and boiling, sweeping along in its furious whirlpools the still smoking ruins of the Bridge of San Martin. Then the indignation of the people knew no bounds; for that bridge, as I have already mentioned, was the only direct way to those hundred paradises the Cigarrales. These gardens they inherited from their Moorish conquerors, and with them they also inherited (for the Toledans intermarried much with the Moors) the passionate love for orchards, and gardens, and flowers of that most poetical people. This outrage had the effect of stimulating the people