

THE WHITE JESSAMINE.

BY JOHN B. TABB.

I KNEW she lay above me,
Where the casement all the night
Shone, softened with a phosphor glow
Of sympathetic light,
And that her fledgling spirit pure
Was pluming fast for flight.

Each tendril throbb'd and quicken'd
As I nightly climb'd apace,
And could scarce restrain the blossoms
When, anear the destined place,
Her gentle whisper thrill'd me
Ere I gaz'd upon her face.

I wait'd, darkling, till the dawn
Should touch me into bloom,
While all my being pant'd
To outpour its first perfume,
When, lo! a paler flower than mine
Had blossom'd in the gloom!

THE DAKOTAS.

BY JULIAN RALPH.

IN entering upon a study of the newly admitted States, and beginning with those of the Northwest, we are confronted by new scenes, new peoples, and new conditions, in which we shall find far fewer reminders of our Eastern life than greet us in some regions which we regard as quite foreign, as in old Canada, for instance. We are putting a new slide into the American magic-lantern. We are opening a new volume added to our own history, and we are to read of new characters moving amid surroundings quite as new; to them almost as new as to us.

Beginning with the Dakotas, we enter the vast plains country—monotonous, all but treeless, a blanket of brown grass almost as level as the mats of grass that the Pacific coast Indians plait. It is only a little wrinkled in the finishing—at the top edge and down in the southwest corner. On its surface the houses and the villages stand out in silhouette against a sky that bends down to touch the level sward. Here we find the western edge of the lands which the Scandinavians who have come among us prefer to their own countries. Here we come upon the yellow

wheat-fields that turned their kernels into millions of golden dollars last year. Here, also, we see the more than half savage cattle whose every part and possession, except their breath, is converted into merchandise in Chicago. The hard-riding cowboys are here "turned loose," and the not less domesticated Indians in their blankets are cribbed in the national corrals. A great thirst would seem to overspread the Dakotas, for the lands are arid, while the people possess prohibitory liquor laws, and water that is poisoned with alkali.

In the Black Hills we prepare ourselves for Montana by a first glimpse of mining. In Montana, where the very first merchant's sign-board announced "pies, coffee, and pistols for sale," we now see the legend "licensed gambling saloon" staring at the tourists, who may walk into the hells more easily than they can into the stock exchanges of the East. In Montana we feel an atmosphere of speculation. Every store clerk hoards some shares in undeveloped mines for his nest-egg. It is natural that this should be. The stories of quick and great fortunes that daze the mind are supported

by the presence of the millionaire heroes of each tale. Moreover, the very air of Montana is a stimulant, like champagne. Perhaps it gathers its magic from the earth, where the precious metals are strewn over the mountains, where sapphires, rubies, and garnets are spaded out of the earth like goober nuts in the South, and where men hunt for the diamonds which scientists say must be there.

Montana is a land of ready cash and high wages. Lumbermen and miners get as high as seven dollars a day, and the very street-sweepers get twice as much as politicians pay to broom-handlers in New York to keep in favor with the poor. Here we find wealth, polish, and refinement, noble dwellings, palatial hotels, and numerous circles of charming, cultivated folk. Their mistake has been to despise agriculture. They know this, and with them, to see an error is to repair it.

The mining camps and California-colored characteristics of the mountainous half of Montana spread over into Idaho, a baby giant born with a golden spoon. The cattle ranges and cowboy capitals of Montana's grass-clad hills are repeated upon the gigantic but virgin savannas of Wyoming. In Washington all is different again. The forests of Maine and of the region of the Great Lakes are here exaggerated, the verdure of the East reappears, and passes into semi-tropic and incessant freshness and abundance. Here flowers bloom in the gardens at Christmas, small fruits threaten California's prestige, and the aborigines are bow-legged, boating Indians who work like longshoremen. Cities with dozen-storied buildings start up like sudden thoughts, and everywhere is note of promise to make us belittle our Eastern growths that startled the older world.

With surprise we find the New England leadership missing. Here is a great corner of America where the list of the *Mayflower's* passengers is not folded into the family Bibles! The capitals of the older Northwest are dominated by the offspring of Puritans, but we must journey all across the Dakotas and Montana, among a new race of pioneers, to have New England recalled to us again only in Spokane and Tacoma—and but faintly there. The new Northwest is peopled by men who followed the Missouri and

its tributaries from Kentucky, Indiana, Iowa, Arkansas, and Missouri. Others who are among them speak of themselves as from California and Utah, but they are of the same stock. Broadly speaking, they founded these new countries between the outbreak of the rebellion and the end of the reconstruction period in the Southern States. They are not like the thrifty, argumentative, and earnest New-Englander, or the phlegmatic Dutch and hard-headed English of the Middle States. These new Americans are tall, big-boned, stalwart folks, very self-assertive, very nervous, very quick in action, and quicker still in forming resolutions. If it would be fair to treat of them in a sentence, it could be said that they act before they think, and when they think, it is mainly of themselves. Their European origin is so far behind them that they know nothing of it. Their grandfathers had forgotten it. They talk of Uter, Coloraydo, Illinois, Missourer, Nevadder, Ioway, Arkansasaw, and Wyóming. The last two names are by them pronounced more correctly than by us. In a word, they are distinctly, decidedly, pugnaciously, and absolutely American.

Because it is impossible to picture the novelty—to an Eastern reader—of life in the Northwest, and because it nevertheless must be suggested, let me tell only of four peculiar visitations that the new States experience—of four invasions which take place there every year. In May there come into the stock ranges of Montana shearers by the hundreds, in bands of ten or twenty, each led by a captain, who finds employment and makes contracts for the rest. These sheep-barbers are mainly Californians and New-Yorkers, and the California men are said to be the more skilful workers. To a layman, all seem marvellously dexterous, and at ten cents a head, many are able to earn \$6 to \$8 a day. They lose many days in travel, however, and may not average more than \$5 on that account. Their season begins in California in February, and they work through Oregon, Washington, and Montana, to return to a second shearing on the Pacific coast in August. Some come mounted and some afoot, and some are shiftless and dissipated, but many are saving, and ambitious to earn herds of their own.

They come upon the Montanan hills ahead of another and far stranger proces-

sion—that of the cattle that are being driven across the country from Texas. This is a string of herds of Texas two-year-olds coming north at middle age to spend the remaining half of their lives fattening on the Montana bunch-grass, and then to end their careers in Chicago. The bands are called “trails,” and follow one another about a day apart. With each trail ride the hardy and devil-may-care cowboys, led by a foreman, and followed by a horse-wrangler in charge of the relays of broncos. A cook, with a four-horse wagon-load of provisions, brings up each rear. Only a few miles are covered in a day, and the journey consumes many weeks. These are enlivened by storms, by panics among the cattle, by quarrels with settlers on guard at the streams and on their lands, by meals missed and nights spent amid mud and rain. That is as queer and picturesque a procession as one can easily imagine.

Then there is the early autumn hop-picking in the luxuriant fields of the Pacific coast in Washington. Down Puget Sound and along the rivers come the industrious canoe Indians of that region in their motley garb, and bent on making enough money in the hop-fields to see them through the rainy and idle winter. They are not like the Indians of story and of song, but are a squat-figured people, whose chests and arms are over-developed by exercise in the canoes, which take the place of the Indian ponies of the plains, as their rivers are substituted for the blazed or foot-worn trails of the East. To the hop-fields they come in their dug-outs from as far north as British Columbia and Alaska. When all have made the journey, their canoes fret the strand, and the smoke of their camp fires touches the air with blue. Women and children accompany the men, all alike illuminating the green background of the hop-fields with their gay blankets and calicoes, themselves lending still other touches of color by means of their leather skins and jet hair. They leave a trail of silver behind them when they depart, but the hops they have picked represent still more of gold—a million last year; two millions the year before.

Again, a fourth set of invaders appears; this time in Dakota. These are not picturesque. They come not in boats or astride horses, but straggling or skulk-

ing along the highways, as the demoralized peasantry made their way to Paris during the French Revolution. These are the wheat-harvesters, who follow the golden grain all the way up from Texas, finding themselves in time for each more and more belated ripening in each more and more northerly State, until, in late autumn, they reach the Red River Valley, and at last end their strange pilgrimage in Manitoba. The hands and skill they bring to the dense wheat-fields of eastern North Dakota are most welcome there, and these harvest folk might easily occupy a high niche in sentimental and poetic literature, yet they don't. As a rule, they are not at all the sort of folk that the ladies of the wheat lands invite to their tea parties and sewing bees. On the contrary, far too many of them are vagabonds and fond of drink. In the Red River country the harvesters from the South are joined by lumbermen from Wisconsin and Minnesota, who find that great natural granary a fine field for turning honest pennies at lighter work than felling forests.

In area, the half-dozen new States in the Northwest are about the size of Alaska, and they are larger than France, Germany, Italy, and Holland combined. One of the States is greater than Great Britain and Ireland, and one county in that State is larger than New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. The population of those six States is about like that of little New Jersey, yet it is thought that at least half as many persons as are now in the entire country could maintain life in that corner of the nation. Three of the names the new States took are criticised. There are many persons in the Dakotas who now realize that a foolish mistake was made in the choice of the names North Dakota and South Dakota. Both fancied there was magic in the word Dakota, and wanted to possess it. By succeeding in that purpose they ridiculed the noble word, which means leagued or united.

To the traveller who crosses North Dakota in the thoroughly modern and luxurious easy-rolling trains of the Northern Pacific Railroad, the region east of the Missouri seems one dead-level reach of grass. It appears to be so level that one fancies if his eyesight were better he might stand anywhere in that greater part of the State and see Mexico in one di-

rection and the north pole in the other. Everywhere the horizon and the grass meet in a monotonous repetition of unbroken circles. As a matter of fact, there is a slight slope upward from the Red River of the North at the eastern edge of the State, there is a decided valley south of Jamestown, and for fifty miles before the Missouri River is reached the land begins to slope slightly towards that stream. There are hills, too, called by the French the "Coteau du Missouri," and never yet rechristened, to mark the approach to the river. The country west of the Missouri is more attractive to the sight-seer, though far less so to the farmer. It looks like a sea arrested in a storm, with all its billows fixed immutably. It is partly a mass of softly rounded, grassy breasts; and beyond them, in the Bad Lands, the hills change to the form of waves that are ready to break upon a strand. Farther on, the change is into buttes, into peaked, columnar, detached hills. On the light snow that merely frosted this broken country last winter, when I crossed it twice, there seemed not a yard of the earth's surface that was not tracked with the foot-writing of wild animals and birds—that kitchen literature which the red men knew by heart—the signs of coyotes, jack-rabbits, prairie-chickens, deer, and I know not what else besides. It is a 350-mile journey to cross the State from east to west, a 210-mile trip to cross it from the north to the south.

It has been a one-crop State, and the figures that are given of its yield of that crop are not what they pretend to be, for four-fifths of the wheat is usually grown on the eastern edge, in the Red River Valley. In the rest of the State the crops have failed year after year, and even the grazing of stock, for which alone the critics of the State say it is fit, has been attended with some serious reverses. The most extravagant lying indulged in to boom the State has failed to alter nature—just as it failed in Canada, where it was followed by even greater hardship and disappointment. The lying on behalf of North Dakota took the form of applying the phenomenal figures of the rich Red River Valley to the whole State, quoting the earnings of Red River farms and the experiences of Red River settlers as applicable to all Dakota.

Having gone to Dakota because of the marvellous yield of wheat in the Red

River Valley, the unfortunate settlers put all their holdings in wheat. It is customary in Dakota for people to say that these poor fellows bought their experience dearly, but they did not pay as much for it as the two Dakotas have paid for the carnival of lying that began the business. A succession of extraordinarily bad seasons followed, owing to lack of sufficient moisture to grow the grain. In one year there was not enough to sprout it. There were five years of dire misfortune, and they brought absolute ruin to all who had no means laid by. Many were ruined who had money, and thousands left the Territory, for it was a Territory when the wholesale lying was at its height.

The soil in the Red River Valley is a thick vegetable deposit, while that of the remaining nine-tenths of the State is of a mineral character, lime being a notable factor in the composition. It is very productive if water can be got to it. In that case the Red River country would be no better than all the rest. And there is the rub. With irrigation, North Dakota will become a rich farming State. Without it, the State has enjoyed one rich harvest in six years. The irrigation cannot be accomplished by means of any waters that are now on the surface of the State; it must be by means of wells, or by "bombs bursting in air," or by Australian alchemy. And yet it is not fair to the State to say that it can do nothing without irrigation. We shall see that the belief is that its worst misfortunes have come from its dependence upon a single crop, and that by diversified farming the wolves can be kept from the doors when the wheat crop fails.

Last year came a change of luck and a year such as North Dakota has not enjoyed in a long while. Between 50,000,000 and 55,000,000 bushels of wheat were harvested; and if the Red River Valley's yield was 35,000,000, it is apparent that the rest of the State must be credited with from 15,000,000 to 20,000,000 of bushels. Of corn, 300,000 bushels were raised; of oats, 10,000,000 bushels; of cattle, a million dollars' worth; and of hay and potatoes, a very great deal. This was good work for a population of 200,000 souls. It is estimated that the money product of the entire harvest was sufficient to pay off the indebtedness of the farmers, and leave an average of \$250 to each farming family. At the beginning

of 1892 it was prophesied that the farmers would free themselves of only those debts upon which they had been paying a high rate of interest, so as to be in a position to borrow at lower rates and to improve their farm buildings. They have been paying all the way from 12 to 24 per cent. a year for loans. They have also been obliged to give bonuses to the loaning agents at renewal times, getting \$180, say, when they were charged with \$200. These agents are terrible sharks, and there are crowds of them in the State, calling themselves real-estate and loan agents, getting money from the East, paying the capitalists 6 and 8 per cent. for it, and then exacting as high as 24 per cent., and these stiff bonuses besides. They have made a fine living upon the misery and distress and upon the bare necessities of those around them. An organization of capitalists to loan money at reasonable rates would be a godsend there, and full security for their money could be obtained by them.

How the poor victims lived through these exactions is a mystery. Many did not. They abandoned their farms and the State. A great many came back last year on hearing of the likelihood of a good season. But the best news is that last year nearly all the farmers began to turn their attention to diversified farming and to stock-raising in conjunction with agriculture. North Dakota was always a good cattle State at least three years in five, and the manner in which the farmers are going into the business ought to make the industry successful every year. Those who can afford it are acquiring herds of from 50 to 300 head. In the winter, when the beeves need attention, the farmers will have nothing else to attend to. They calculate that they can raise a three-year-old beef at an expense of from \$12 to \$15, and market it at from \$30 to \$40. At the least, they figure on a profit of \$5 a head each year. It would appear that cattle thus looked after, with hay in corrals for the winter, may some day be rated between stall-fed and range cattle. In the summer these farmers are advised to put into wheat only that acreage which they can handle without hired help, for help is hard to get in the western part of the State. The mysterious nomads of the wheat belt do not go there.

On the Missouri slope, where most of the corn was raised last year, that crop never was a failure. It has been culti-

vated there for twenty years. In fact in some Indian mounds above Bismarck corn-cobs are found along with the pottery and trinkets for which the mounds are constantly ravaged. Potatoes also grow well on the Missouri slope. Starch is being made from them at a factory started by a New England man at Hankinson, in Richland County. From eight to ten tons of starch is being made daily at that place.

The range land for cattle is in that district which may be roughly described as the last three rows of counties in the western end of the State. Dickinson, on the Northern Pacific Railroad, is the shipping-point for the stock. In order to exact a revenue from the cow-men, the people have agreed to reconstruct into five organized counties the whole country west of the Missouri and the extreme northwestern counties. By the time this is published, the change will, in all probability, have been accomplished. There are thirteen counties west of the Missouri on the present maps, and only four of these have county governments. The new arrangement will complete the political machinery for assessment and taxation in the grazing lands. The cattlemen are supposed to be taxed for their cattle as upon personal property, but they have heretofore evaded the impost. The cattle business in these counties is rapidly being revolutionized. All the stockmen agree that the most return is gotten from small holdings with winter corrals. There are five horse ranches west of the Missouri. At one point Boston capitalists are raising thoroughbreds from imported stallions. The rest of the stock is of the common order, herded loose on the ranges.

But there is some farming even west of the Missouri. Corn, wheat, and oats are successfully raised in Morton County. Mercer County produced a splendid quality of wheat at 25 bushels to the acre, and across the river, in McLean County, a farmer succeeded in getting 31 bushels to the acre. In these two counties we come upon that vast bed of coal which underlies parts of eleven counties in North Dakota. In Mercer County this coal crops out on the riverbank, and a company backed by Chicago capital has been organized to build barges and ship the coal to points down the river. It can be sold at wholesale in Bis-

marck at \$2 40 a ton, and in Pierre, South Dakota, for \$3 50 a ton. In Bismarck soft coal now sells for \$8 and \$8 50, and anthracite for \$11 a ton. The Dakota coal is a lignite—an immature coal—but it serves well for ordinary uses, making a hot fire, a white ash, and no soot. Its worst fault is that it crumbles when it is exposed to the air. Dakota coal from Morton County is already marketed. There seems to be an inexhaustible supply of it in that county. The veins that are now being worked are between eight feet and fourteen feet in thickness, and they crop up near the surface. It is in use in the public buildings of the State, in the flouring-mills, and in many hotels and residences. It sells in Mandan for \$2 50 a ton. It is said that there are 150,000 acres of these coal beds east of the Missouri, and the coal area west of the river is almost as great. The veins vary in thickness from half a dozen to thirty feet. Farmers find it on their lands close under the surface, and with a pick and shovel dig in one day sufficient to last them all winter. It is a most extraordinary "find"—a bountiful provision of nature. It greatly alters the former view of the future of North Dakota—and of South Dakota also, since there is enough for both States. It adds to the comfort of life there, it provides a coal at least half as good as anthracite at one-quarter the cost, and it would seem that it must become the basis of manufacturing industries in the near future. A good terracotta clay in great quantities is found near the coal in many localities.

In showing that the future of the State depends upon diversified industries, and in calling attention to the newly exerted efforts of the people to meet this condition, I have omitted to mention the fact that many capitalists who had loaned money to farmers west of the Red River country are now supplying sheep to their debtors. Between 75,000 and 100,000 sheep were put upon farms in the State in that way last summer in herds of from 50 to 100 head. The plan generally adopted is for the farmer to take care of the sheep for five years, taking the wool for his pains, and at the end of that term for the farmer and the capitalist to divide the herd between them, increase and all. I do not find it to be the general opinion that this will turn out well in most cases. Sheep require constant at-

ention, and the raising of them is a business by itself, not to be taken up at haphazard by men who are not experienced. Moreover, the land east of the Missouri is said not to be the best sort for that use.

The proportion of unoccupied land in the whole State is one-third. The western grazing counties form a third of the State, but much of their land is taken up by farmers—along the streams and the railroads. In all probability one-quarter of it that is not taken up is arable land, but until railroads reach it there will be no profit in tilling it. The land yet obtainable is part railroad and part government land. It fetches from \$1 25 to \$4 an acre. Two railroads cross the State from east to west, and two new ones are in process of construction across the State from the southern border over to Canada.

North Dakota is a prohibition State; that is to say, the making and selling of alcoholic stimulants are forbidden there. One effect of the operation of this law was the driving of thirty-six saloons out of Fargo across the Red River into Morehead, Minnesota. Another effect was the transformation of a brewery in the Red River Valley into a flouring-mill. Yet another effect was the semi-prostration of business in Bismarck, the capital of the State, where the electric-light plant was shut down, for one thing, because of the loss of the saloon custom. The prohibitory clause was put into the new State Constitution and the whole measure was carried with a rush. The clause was asked for more earnestly by the Scandinavian element than by any others, and their votes, especially in the Red River Valley, greatly assisted in making it the law; but intelligent men, who are in a position to know whereof they speak, assert that hundreds of votes were cast for the clause by men who had no idea that it would become a law—men who promised to vote for it, or who voted for it because they thought nothing would come of their action. The Scandinavians are alcohol-drinkers, and many who serve as spokesmen for them frankly declare that their countrymen need prohibitory laws because they are not mild and phlegmatic beer-drinkers like the Teutonic people, but are fond of high-wines, and are terribly affected by the use of them. If an attempt be made to alter the law or repeal it, the process will consume five years.

his business can make \$6 to \$8 an acre on wheat at its present price, and, considering that he buys his land at about \$25 an acre, that is an uncommonly good business proposition, in view of the intellectual ability that is invested in it. I use these figures because the average crop of the valley is 19 or 20 bushels to the acre. That they told me on the ground, where they said, "There's no use lying when the truth is so good." There are higher yields. One large farm near Fargo returned above 30 bushels, and others have done better in the past year, but the average is as I have stated. And this brought a profit of \$9 to the acre last year. One man with 6000 acres cleared \$40,000; one with 3500 acres made a profit of \$25,000. Many paid for their farms; scores could have done so, but wisely preferred to put some of their money in farm betterments.

There has never been a failure of crops in the valley. It sometimes happens that men put in their wheat too late, and it gets nipped by frost, but there is no excuse for that. Barley is what the prudent men put in when they are belated. They raise good barley, and a great deal of it, in the valley, the main products being wheat, oats, barley, some flax, and some corn, the latter being the New England flint corn. Such corn has been raised near Fargo seven years in succession without a failure. Irrigation is not needed or employed in the valley, but artesian wells are very numerous there, as well they may be, since the water is reached at a depth of 20 feet and a cost of \$100.

To go to the valley is not to visit the border. It is a well-settled, well-ordered, tidy farming region, of a piece with our Eastern farm districts, with good roads, neat houses, schools, churches, bridges, and well-appearing wooden villages. The upper or northern end of the valley is the finer part, because there the land was taken up in small plots—quarter sections of 160 acres each, or at the most whole sections. Therefore that end is the most populous and prosperous, for it is the small farms that pay best. The southern end of the valley was railroad land, and as much of it was sold when the railroad needed money, an opportunity for big holdings was created and embraced. These so-called bonanza properties do not pay proportionately, and are being diminished by frequent sales. In one year

(1888) no less than twenty-four thousand acres on one of these farms were sown in wheat.

The present population of the Red River Valley is of Norwegians, Swedes, Irish, English, and Canadians, all being now Americanized by law. It is strange—to them it must be bewildering—to think that in that valley are women who were once harnessed with dogs to swill-wagons in Scandinavian cities, and yet are now the partners of very comfortable, prosperous farmers. The Scandinavians are spoken of in the valley as being good, steady, reliable, industrious folk, but eminently selfish and lacking in public spirit, and yet they and all the other residents of the valley have been in one respect both prodigal and profligate, for it has been a rule there never to cultivate or make anything that can be bought. In this respect the people are mending their ways. They are learning the lesson taught in the Southern States, where, to put the case in a sentence, the people were never prosperous until they raised their own bacon. So, latterly, these Red River people have been venturing upon the cultivation of mutton, pork, wool, horses, vegetables, and small fruits. But the first efforts at saving are as hard as learning to swim, and so as soon as these farmers learned that Europe was clamoring for wheat, they lost their heads. It is said that they abandoned fifty per cent. of the dairy farming that had grown to be a great source of income there, and in all the towns where the farmers' daughters were at work as domestic servants, the kitchen industries were crippled by a general homeward flight of the girls. "Our fathers are rich now, and we won't have to work any more," they said.

A leading railroad man in the Northwest, who is noted for his luminous and picturesque way of talking, is fond of calling the Red River farmers "the leisure class of the West." He says: "They only attend to their business for a few weeks in the spring and fall, and that they do sitting down, with splendid horses to drag the farming implements on which they ride around. When their grain is ripe, they hire laborers to cut and harvest it, and then they cash it in for money, fill the banks of the valley with money to the bursting-point, and settle down for a long loaf, or go to Europe or New York." Yet they must find a continuance of

their strength and prosperity in diversified farming and in hard work, and this is being taught to the rest by the shrewder ones among them. Such men are making the breeding of fine draught-horses a side reliance, and very many farms now maintain from 1500 to 2000 Percheron, Norman, and Clydesdale horses, as well as pigs, sheep, and poultry. The country is too level for the profitable raising of sheep, however. They need uneven land and a variety of picking; moreover, the soil clogs in their hoofs, and subjects them to hoof rot, and other diseases prey upon them there.

There are nearly 9,000,000 acres in the valley, and one-sixth of it is under the plough. One hundred and fifty million bushels of wheat could be raised there if every acre was sown with seed, but there is no such demand for wheat as that would require to be profitable. As it is, less than a quarter of the valley is cultivated, and only three-quarters of that fraction are given up to wheat, so that last year's yield was about 30 to 37 millions of bushels. That would have brought \$27,000,000 had it been sold, but while this is being written (in the holidays of '91-2), a great many farmers are holding their grain in the firm belief that Russia's needs will determine a rise of 20 cents in the price. Those who sold got 80 cents; those who are holding back want a dollar a bushel.

The climate is, of course, perfect for farming. Some very lively tornadoes go with it, and in the winter it is sufficiently cold to freeze the fingers off a bronze statue. But these are trifles. The windstorms do their worst damage in the newspapers and the public imagination, and the cold of the winter is not as intense or disagreeable as the cold of more southerly States. It is a dry cold, and plenty of glorious sunshine goes with it. There are plentiful rains in the spring and the autumn, with intensely hot weather at midsummer. The moisture is held in the soil by the clay underneath, and in hot summer weather the surface cakes into a crust, still leaving the moisture in the earth.

I am so explicit about this great "breadbasket of America," as it is called, because it is by far the best part of North Dakota—so very much the best that in the valley the people are heard to say that they wish they were not tied to the rest of the

State. "What a marvellous State it would have made to have taken the eastern half of the valley from Minnesota, and put it all under one government!" they cry. And others say that the whole valley should have been given to Minnesota, and North Dakota should have forever remained a Territory. But even in view of the excellence of this Red River region there would be little use in exploiting it were it all farmed and populated. On the contrary, there is room for thousands there—for many thousands. The land now obtainable cannot be purchased for less than \$25 an acre, but not more than \$30 need be paid. Money down is not needed. The system called "paying with half crops" obtains there. The farmer pays half of what the land produces each year until the sum of the purchase price is met, with interest, of course. Under this system the land cannot be taken away from him unless he fails to farm it. He will need to house himself and buy horses and tools. However, one owner of 910 acres came to the valley with nothing but an Indian pony and a jack-knife. A great many others brought only their debts.

All that I have said about the productiveness of the valley applies particularly to the six valley counties of North Dakota. The Minnesota land is not so good.

Here, then, is a region that must feel the greatest increase in population that will come to any part of North Dakota. The river that curves and twists its way between the farms has been rightly nicknamed the Nile of America. In the twelve counties that border upon it in Minnesota and Dakota are 61 banks, with deposits amounting, in last December, to \$6,428,000, or \$65 for every man, woman, and child in the region. The farmers are the principal depositors, and they had this amount to their credit when a very large fraction of their grain crop had not been sold. The valley has two thrifty towns—Fargo, with 7000 population, and Grand Forks, with 6000.

I have spoken of the custom in the valley of relying upon a swarm of nomad harvesters to fall upon the wheat and garner it in the autumn. They make a picturesque army of invaders, led by the men from the Minnesota forests and Wisconsin pineries, in their peculiar coats of checked blanket stuff, but far too many

of them form a hardened lot of vagabonds—"a tough outfit," in the language of the country. They have been in the habit of dictating how much help a farmer shall employ when they are in the fields, their idea being that the fewer the laborers the more work for those who are employed. They will abandon a farm on half a day's notice, and between the laziness and drunkenness of numbers of them there is little chance for either good or hard work. Prohibition gets more praise here than in other parts of the State, because, even with bottles hid in the fields, the harvesters only get a thimbleful where they once got a quart of rum. Another thing that eases the strain of prohibition is the plenteousness of rum just across the river in Minnesota. The system which relies on these harvesters is a bad one, and in time, with smaller holdings, the farmers will mainly harvest their crops with their own hands and neighborhood help.

North Dakota has many attractive towns, those that I have mentioned in the Red River country being the largest. Bismarck, the capital, on the Missouri River, has 2500 population. It has more than its share of brick buildings, and in its numerous pretty villas are families of a number and character to form an attractive social circle. By great enterprise it secured the position of capital of the Territory in '83, raising \$100,000 for a capitol building, and adding a gift of 160 acres for a park around the edifice, as well as 160 acres elsewhere "wholly for good measure." Mandan is a flourishing railroad town across the river, with about 2000 population; Jamestown, near the eastern end of the State, is as big as Bismarck; and Devil's Lake, in the northern part of the State, is the same size. North Dakota has 1500 free schools, supported by a gift of 3,000,000 acres of public lands, set apart for the purpose when the State was admitted. As these lands cannot be sold for less than \$10 an acre, the schools would appear to be certain eventually to have the support of a fund of \$30,000,000.

South Dakota is 360 miles long and 225 miles wide. It contains 76,620 square miles, and is therefore larger than North Dakota by 2308 square miles. The population is estimated at 325,000, or more than half as much again as the other half of the old Territory. It is another blanket of grass like North Dakota, a little tattered and rocky in the northeast, and slight-

ly wooded there and in the southeasterly corner. Just as North Dakota has a vastly wealthy strip called the Red River Valley, and triumphing over all the rest of the State in its wealth, so South Dakota has its treasure land, the Black Hills mineral region, a mountainous tract in the southwestern corner of the State, 120 miles long and 35 or 40 miles wide. But North Dakota's bread-basket netted \$27,000,000 last year, whereas South Dakota's precious metals are worth but \$3,000,000 or \$3,500,000 a year. Right through the middle of the State runs the Missouri River, with its attendant hills of gumbo clay and its slender groves of cottonwood to relieve the dreadful monotony of the plains, and to give a beauty that no other settlements in the State possess to such towns as lie along it.

Both States have the same story to tell. The people of South Dakota rushed into exclusive wheat-growing, leaving themselves nothing to carry them along if the crops failed; and fail they did in 1887, '88, '89, and '90. Then came a prohibitory liquor law, which is already set at naught in the cities, and settlers left the State by the thousands. But last year brought great crops, and good fortune was never, perhaps, better deserved. Estimates made before the threshing showed a wheat yield of 31,178,327 bushels, but the editor of the *Dakota Farmer* at Huron, a first-rate authority, told me he believed time would prove that 40,000,000 bushels had been reaped. The other yields were as follows: oats, 33,000,000 bushels; corn, 30,000,000 bushels; barley, 6,000,000 bushels; potatoes, nearly 5,000,000 bushels; flax, nearly 4,000,000 bushels; and rye, 750,000 bushels. This astonishing agricultural success in an arid State was achieved in 50 counties, nearly all east of the Missouri River. Some farming in the western or cattle-grazing half of the State was done in what may be loosely called the Black Hills region in the southwest, where there are railroads and local government and numerous settlements.

But little new sod had been broken to produce these crops. The wheat acreage had decreased by 70,000 acres. The acreage in flax also decreased, but in all the other cereals the acreage was more than in 1890. Notwithstanding the flight of so many farmers, there were only 400 acres less under the plough than during the preceding years. In the middle of the agri-

cultural or eastern half of the State is a fertile, great, and well-watered valley. It is the valley of the James, but is seldom spoken of otherwise than as "the Jim River Valley." It passes through both Dakotas from Devil's Lake in northern North Dakota to the Nebraska border of southern South Dakota. It is watered by artesian wells, of which there is much to be said later on. There are many little streams in the rocky northeastern corner of the State, and here is the best sheep-raising district in South Dakota. Around Sioux Falls, in the southeastern corner, the farmers who had grown flax to rot the sod and to harvest the seed are now growing it for its fibre, and a company proposes to put up a linen-mill in that little metropolis. There is a notable industry in granite there, the stone being pink, red, and flesh-colored, and susceptible of as high a polish as Scotch granite. Hogs, too, are being raised down in that part of the State, and a packing concern is under way. Pierre also has a packing establishment.

Hundreds of thousands of sheep are being taken into central South Dakota. It is called a common thing to keep 95 per cent. of the lambs, because there are no cold rains there to kill them. There are few diseases, and foot rot is unknown. The farmers hope to be able to make from \$2 to \$3 50 a head in the sheep business. I have their figures, but I will spare those readers who know what a complex, delicate, and precarious business sheep-raising is, except where the conditions are exactly right as to climate, ground, and skilled ability on the part of the herders.

I have a friend, a lawyer, who, whenever he visits the farm on which he was born, vexes his father by asserting that there is a higher percentage of profit in farming than in mining or banking. He cites the enormous profit that attends the birth of a colt or a calf, or the sale of a bushel of corn gained from planting a few kernels. It is far easier to figure big profits in the sheep business. A lamb costs \$2 50, yields wool worth 12 shillings a year, sells for \$5, and creates several other sheep of equal value. Unfortunately there is another side to the story—but this is not the place for telling it. It is devoutly to be hoped, however, that sheep-raising may be a success in the Dakotas, as, indeed, it has already proved

with some extra intelligent and careful men there.

The Black Hills are cut off from the rest of the State. I could not find any one to tell me anything about them until I went to them. The Black Hills business is mining, while that of the rest of the State is all transacted on the surface. Between the Missouri and the Black Hills was, until lately, the great Sioux reservation of twenty-three millions of acres, or practically one-third of the State. That was cut in two a little more than a year ago, and eleven millions of acres were thrown open for settlement. But no railroad yet bisects the tract; no governments administer the affairs of the counties; there are no schools or post-offices there.

The newly opened land lies between the White and Big Cheyenne rivers. The land had offered such rich pasturage that the Interior Department found it next to impossible to keep the cattle-men out. Some white men actually were making use of it; but the greater number of men who had cows in there were squaw men, remnants of a band of French Canadians who came thither in the fur-trading era, married squaws, and grew to be more Indian than the Indians. One rich old squaw man in that region, who caches his wealth rather than risk it in a bank, lives close to Pierre, the capital, but has only once visited the town. To-day white men have 50,000 cattle there.

It is a superb range cattle country where it is watered, and the stock keeps seal fat all the time. Shipments from there have gone straight to Liverpool on the hoof. But, on the other hand, other parts are too dry for use; the springs that are there dry up in early summer. The bother of it is, so far as the cattle-men are concerned, that settlers are taking up the land by the streams, and eventually wells must be sunk in the arid country or the stock-men must retire from it. The farms there are fenced, as the law requires, while east of the Missouri there are no fences, and what cattle or sheep are there must be herded and guarded by day and corralled at night.

The government is selling this reclaimed reservation land at \$1 25 an acre for first choice during the first three years, for 75 cents during the next two years, and for 50 cents for all lands not taken after five years. After that the government

will pay the Indians for what remains. The money obtained by the sales goes to the Indian fund, and the plan is designed to help to make the Indians self-supporting. What it means to the white men is that the people who have been the most distressed and unfortunate class in the Northwest are practically subjected to an especial and additional tax for the support of Indians who are not their wards, but the wards of the nation. One small and poor county has already paid the red men \$570,000.

What the Indians think of it and of the entire behavior of the white men is illustrated by the best Indian story I have heard in a long while. An old grizzled Sioux dropped into a bank in Pierre, and upon being asked what he thought of the government purchase of half his reservation, made an attempt to reply in broken English as follows:

"All same old story," said he. "White men come, build chu-chu [railroad] through reservation. White men yawpy-yawpy [talk]. Say: 'Good Indian, good Indian; we want land. We give muz-es-kow [money]; liliota muz-es-kow [plenty money].' Indian say, 'Yes.' What Indian get? Wah-nee-che [nothing]. Some day white man want move Indian. White men yawpy-yawpy: 'Good Indian, good Indian; give good Indian liliota muz-es-kow.' What Indian get? Wah-nee-che. Some day white man want half big reservation. He come Indian. Yawpy-yawpy: 'Good Indian; we give Indian liliota muz-es-kow.' Indian hear fool. He say, 'Yes.' What Indian get? Wah-nee-che. All same old story. 'Good Indian, good Indian.' Get nothing."

What the white men of South Dakota want now is to have the government of the United States spend a little of the muz-es-kow it is getting from the sale of these lands in driving wells in the newly opened lands for irrigation and the support of stock. It is not positively known that there is an artesian basin under the land in question, but wells have been successful at both sides of it, in the east and the west, and many students and experts have declared that water will be found there. As the wells will cost \$5000 each, no one is going to risk the experiment of driving them, unless it be the government. The only arguments that reconcile those who dislike all approaches to Federal paternalism are that the govern-

ment is charging for what should be public land, and that since it seeks to sell the land, it will be a good business proposition to improve those parts of it which cannot otherwise be sold. It is believed that wells will work there, and it is certain that once the fact is proved, the whole great tract will be settled and made to blossom like a garden.

The story of the artesian basin under part of South Dakota seems fabulous. It is even more astonishing than the wealth of coal that underlies the farms of North Dakota. God does, indeed, move in mysterious ways His wonders to perform when to the poor farmer, amid the cold blasts of the Northern winters, He distributes coal that is to be had for the taking of it, and when under the South Dakotan soil, that would be as rich as any in the world were it but moistened, He seems to have placed a great lake or, as some would have us believe, a vast sea.

On a foregoing page I have given the location and dimensions of that basin which the Dakotans affectionately speak of as the Jim River Valley. Under it all, in both States, there is said to lie a vast lake of crystal water. The fact is amply proven in South Dakota, where, between the northern and southern boundaries, there are already more than fifty high-pressure wells, or "gushers," as they call them there. A hundred, or perhaps more, low-pressure wells, reaching a flow closer to the surface, are at the foot of the same basin. In Sanborn, Miner, and McCook counties almost every farmer has his own low-pressure well. But the wonderful wells are the high-pressure, deep ones, wherein water is struck at from 600 to 1200 feet. The pressure in some of these wells is 200 pounds to the square inch. One at Woonsocket supplies 5000 gallons a minute. One at Huron serves for the town's water system and fire protection. One at Springfield has force enough for more than the power used in a sixty-barrel flour-mill. One at Tyndall is expected to irrigate 800 acres. It is calculated that a two-inch well will water 160 acres; a three-inch well, 640 acres; and a four-inch well, 1280 acres or more. Eight miles above Huron a well is used on a farm that produced 53 bushels and 20 pounds in wheat to the acre, as against 15 bushels in the unirrigated land of the neighborhood. Some who profess to know say that the great basin is inexhaustible,

and that the opening of one well near another does not affect the first one. Then, again, I read that this is not wholly true. But, at all events, no one doubts the presence of a vast body of water, and no well, even among those that are five years old, shows any sign of giving out. A law called the Melville Township Irrigation Law, approved on March 9, 1891, authorizes townships to sink wells for public use, and to issue bonds to defray the cost. This aims to make the mysterious basin the property of the people. For farming, the flow of water is not needed during half of each year. It is said that if the subsoil is wet, the crops will need no more water. The water should be turned on to the land after the harvest, and kept soaking into it for four or five months. The drilling of wells goes on apace. In one county where there were eight wells a year ago, there will be one hundred this summer.

The James River Basin is 400 miles long and 40 to 50 miles wide. Well-boring has been a failure to the eastward of it, but to the westward there are several splendid wells, some even as far away as Hughes County, near the Missouri. The boring is very costly, some wells having cost \$5000, and even more. At first a soft shale rock of white sand is pierced, and then there is reached a sticky clay like gumbo. Minnows of brilliant colors and with bright and perfect eyes have been thrown out of these wells, as if to prove that the water comes from surface streams somewhere. The theory is that its course is from the west, and an official of the Department of Agriculture holds that several rivers to the westward lose all or part of their volumes of water at certain places where they meet the outcropping of this same sandstone which is found by boring. The Missouri, for instance, is said to lose two-thirds of its bulk after its flight over the cascades at Great Falls. The Yellowstone diminishes mysteriously in bulk. Three or four streams in the Black Hills run their courses and then disappear in the neighborhood of this outcropping of sandstone. When I was at Great Falls in Montana, I was not able to prove that the Missouri loses the greater part of its bulk below there, but it was said that engineers have investigated the subject, and are to report upon it to the government. I was told, however, that several streams which seem to be heading toward

the Missouri in that neighborhood suddenly disappear in the earth without effecting the junction.

With water thus apparently plenteous; with cattle-raising, flouring-mills, linen manufacture, wool, and diversified farming, all newly started; with the coal of North Dakota brought cheaply down the Missouri, and with better coal in the Black Hills, to be brought eastward when railroads are built across the State—the prospect is that South Dakota will stride onward to a degree of prosperity that her people cannot have expected, and yet richly deserve.

It is said that there is more mineral wealth in the Black Hills than in any other territory of the same scope in the world. Gold is the principal product, but silver, nickel, lead, tin, copper, mica, coal, and many other valuable sorts of deposits are there. The output of gold has been about \$3,300,000 a year, and of silver from \$100,000 to \$500,000. The Black Hills are so called because the pine-trees which cover them look black from the plains. The numerous villages of the region are agricultural settlements or mining towns, and are connected by two trunk lines among the foot-hills and by three narrow-gauge roads in the hills. These smaller railways turn and curve through the valleys amid very beautiful and often grand scenery. It is wonderful to see the enormous machines at the greater mines, and to know that they, and nearly all the principal appointments of the buildings of every sort, were packed across the plains in ox carts; for the first railroad—the Fremont, Elkhorn, and Missouri Valley Railroad, of the Chicago and Northwestern system—reached the hills less than two years ago. It was in February of last year that the Burlington road came there.

The great gold-mining company, the Homestake, is said to have taken fifty millions of dollars' worth of gold out of the hills. The Homestake Company is the name of a group of five or six corporations, all under the same ownership. Messrs. J. B. Haggin, Lloyd Tevis, and the Hearst estate, all of California, are the principal owners. They have the largest gold-reduction works in the world. For labor alone they pay out \$125,000 a month. Their mills contain 700 stamps. The last year was the first one of notable activity outside the Homestake plants,

and one or two very much smaller ones, because the railroads have only just made it possible to get the ore to the smeltery, or to effect the construction of such works. The ores are all low grade, and will not pay the heavy tolls for wagon transportation. The profits in the free milling Homestake ores have been found in their quantity and the cheapness with which they have been reduced. Five smelteries have been put in within a year, others are projected, and others are being enlarged. It is said that within two or three years no ore will be sent out of the hills, but it will all be reduced there by fifteen or twenty smelteries that will then be operated. It is further predicted that when both reduction works and means of transportation encourage activity in all the districts, the yield of the hills will amount to twenty or twenty-five millions of dollars a year.

The tin in the Black Hills is almost as much a bone of contention there as it is in the columns of the political organs throughout the country. But in the hills all question of the existence of the metal is lifted from out of the controversy, and the only subjects of discussion are the quantity of tin and the reasons why the marketing of it has so long been delayed. There is no doubt that there are surface indications, to say the least, to mark a tin deposit along two great belts. More than 7000 locations have been made, and "development work" (required by law from those who would hold their claims) has been done to the extent of nine miles of drifts, shafts, cuts, and tunnels. The famous Harney Peak Company works as if it had great faith in its future, its work being in the construction of an extensive plant in readiness for the prospective mining. The railroads also, by a rivalry in building spurs to the mines, give signs of perfect faith in the new industry. The local criticism on the situation is best expressed in the pamphlet issued by the merchants of Rapid City: "The reason why tin has not been produced for market is that those who can produce it do not seem disposed to do anything except development work. The men who own ninety per cent. of the valuable claims are poor prospectors, who are unable to erect mills and reduction works. So far, it has been almost impossible to enlist capital in the purchase or development

of Black Hills tin mines. With the exception of the Harney Peak and Glendale companies, no money has been invested in the mines of the Black Hills. Why it is that American capitalists refuse to invest in or to investigate the tin mines is a question that yet remains unanswered."

The Black Hills smelteries are closely connected with the coal of the hills, one mine at Newcastle (in Wyoming) being worked to the extent of 1500 tons a day. It is a soft coal, and makes a high-grade coke. It is coked at the mines. A great field of coal, estimated at 4000 acres in extent has been opened at Hay Creek, in the north. It is said to burn with only seven per cent. of ash. It awaits the railroads, whose lines are already surveyed to the fields. The financial and mining capital of the hills is Deadwood, a very picturesque, active, orderly, and modern city of 3500 souls, caught in a gulch, and obliged to climb steep mountain walls for elbow-room. It has a lively rival in Rapid City, in the foot-hills. Lead City is another place of importance, and Hot Springs is a resort of the character implied by its name. Pierre, the capital, on the Missouri River, is very enterprising and modern, and has a fine district of stores, and a still finer one of residences. Huron is a lesser place, and Sioux Falls is the industrial capital, a lively and promising town of more than 12,000 persons.

South Dakota is diversifying her farm industries, and insuring them by utilizing nature's great gift, artesian water. It is said that central South Dakota has the climatic conditions for the successful cultivation of the sugar-beet, for ripening it while it contains the greatest proportion of sugar. One sample grown in this region last year showed nineteen and a half per cent. of sugar. In 100 samples the sugar averaged above fifteen per cent.; in Germany the average is less.

But the best news about both the Dakotas is that the moisture in the soil last New-Year's day was said to be such as to warrant firm faith in another splendid year like the last. With that to put the people and their industries upon their feet, and with all the new lines of development and maintenance that are being tried or established, the outlook for both States is very encouraging.