

and the varied appearance of numerous islands, gives it, altogether, a very pleasing aspect. On the mainland, also, except in the burnt sections, the landscape has a diversified and pleasing appearance.

"What is the state of the country as to timber?—Much of the country has been burnt over by extensive, sweeping fires, at different periods; but where the original forest is still standing, it consists partly of evergreens and partly of deciduous trees. The commonest species of the former are balsam, white cedar, and spruce, and of the latter, white and black birch, tamarack, poplar, and aspen. There is also, a little grey elm and black ash; some red and white pine is found at a distance from the lake.

"Do you consider the absence of beech and maple an unfavourable sign as regards the quality of the soil?—Not by any means. The distribution of timber is governed by a great many circumstances, besides merely the nature of the soil; and it does not follow, because it happens, in certain sections of Canada, a good soil supports a growth of beech and maple, that such a soil cannot be found without these woods; or again, that they may not be found upon poor soil. On the contrary, where the climatic conditions, such as the comparative heat of summer and cold of winter, and the moisture or dryness of the atmosphere, favour the growth of beech and maple, we find these woods on very poor and rocky soil; whereas, where these peculiarities of condition are wanting, we often find good soil without their being present, and at the same time a climate as well suited for ordinary agricultural purposes as the one which favours the growth of beech and maple. To illustrate this, I may mention, that on the Grand Manitoulin Island, and other localities which I have visited, beautiful beech and maple forests are found growing upon almost bare rocks, while, in the Gaspé peninsula and the maritime provinces, we often find the spruce and balsam woods upon tracts which, when cleared, prove to be excellent agricultural lands, so that the presence or absence of beech and maple does not appear to depend upon either the quality of the soil, or even the mean temperature. In the United States, in latitudes south of any part of Canada, it is well known that good lands exist without the occurrence of either beech or maple; and in the west, both in Canada and in the United States, where no wood at all occurs. There are many interesting facts connected with the geographical distribution of each of the numerous kinds of trees occurring within the limits of Canada, and many of the phenomena are but imperfectly understood, even by scientific men who have made these questions a study. I have endeavoured, however, to indicate a few of the reasons why one should not judge of widely separated portions of the continent by any local rule, which may apply in the particular section with which one happens to be best acquainted.

"How does the rain-fall compare, so far as you can judge, with that of other parts of Ontario?—My personal experience was confined to last summer, which was an unusually wet one in all parts of this Province. While a great amount of rain fell that season in the Nipigon country, we were informed by those who had been long in the territory, that the quantity was larger than usual; still, I believe, the ordinary rain-fall of this section is greater than the average of Ontario; but, from all that I could learn, the snow is generally not deep in winter—so that, perhaps, the average depth of water, precipitated during the whole year, may not be excessive.

"Does the climate appear to you to be sufficiently good to entitle the Nipigon country to be considered, on the whole, favourable to agriculture?—It does appear so. The centre of Lake Nipigon lies in about the same latitude (50°) as Fort Garry. The climate appears to be better than that of the country immediately around Lake Superior, or of the region between that lake and Lake of the Woods. The reason is, probably, the low temperature of the water of Lake Superior exerts a cooling influence on the air in its neighbourhood during the whole summer, and that the greater elevation of the other tract referred to, more than counterbalances its slightly more southern latitude. Next to actual trial, the best means of judging of the climate of a region, with regard to its agricultural capabilities, are its natural *fauna* and *flora*. The semi-alpine character of the latter, immediately around Lake Superior, is not found to continue to any great distance back from the lake. The best illustration of the agricultural capabilities of the Nipigon country, from actual experiment, is the Hudson Bay Company's farm, at Nipigon House, on the west side of the lake. This has been cultivated successfully for a great many years. Wheat is said to ripen well here; but those in charge of the establishment have no object in raising this grain, as a regular crop, since they have no means of grinding it, and flour is not difficult to obtain from outside sources. This is only what might have been expected, as wheat is grown at Fort Garry, Fort Alexander, and Islington Mission, to the west; and at New Brunswick House, on Moose River, to the east; and with less success on the shores of Lake Superior itself. Amongst the numerous garden crops, at Nipigon House, I observed Indian corn; but, perhaps, only the earlier varieties will ripen in this region. Before coming to this establishment, having observed none of this grain in the Indian gardens we had seen, I asked my Indian guide if it did not grow in these parts; he replied, as if astonished at the question, 'certainly it does; but we had no seed this spring.' Indian corn is known to ripen at the Lake of the Woods and along the Winnipeg River; while on the south side of Lake Nipigon, the Indians gave us some good-sized new potatoes, of their own growing, on the 5th of August. From all that I could observe myself, or learn from others, I am of opinion that the Nipigon country, as regards both soil and climate, is suitable for agriculture. Two members of my party, who had been themselves practical farmers, were of the same opinion.

"Did you ascertain when the lake freezes in the autumn, or when the ice breaks up in the spring?—One of the gentlemen in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and who had spent the greater part of his life in the Nipigon country, informed me that they caught their winter's supply of white-fish with nets, in the shallow water, on the north-west side of the lake, between the 15th of October and the 7th of November. They hang them up to freeze in rows, by means of sticks passed through the tails, and when sufficiently solid, fill canoes with them, and bring them to the fort early in November; after which, canoe navigation near the shore is interrupted by a thick skin of ice. The whole lake freezes over, which might not take place were it not for the islands; these also help to retain the ice in the spring, until after the shores are green. It is said to be all melted away from the 15th to the end of May.

"Can you mention any other inducements which the Nipigon country offers to settlers?—