The Development of the West.

In the genesis of nations there is no chapter parallel with the growth and development of the west. Over two centuries had intervened since the first germ of civilization imbedded itself on our eastern coast, and during this long period the tide of immigration had only reached the Mississippi river. Halted for a short period in the pursuance of its course, with the introduction of more speedy modes of travel and communication, the westward march was again taken up with renewed vigor, and the mighty wave as it swept on increased in force as the mists which had once enveloped the west cleared away and exposed to the home-seeker the true nature of her soils.

Less than fifty years has brought about a change which reduces to comparative insignificance the
"wonderful romances and realities of the State Builders of the past."
The broad prairies are as densely populated as were those of Mexico and Central America when occupied by that class of people, who are only known to us through legends, and the massive ruins that still remain to speak of a race wonderfully skilled in the art of masonry. The rapid settlement was due to the delirium of speculation, but the movements of her people were for the founding and development of prosperous communities.

On every hand providence had prepared the way to wealth and prosperity. The farmers found his ladder waiting for the plow; no pests to fear, no stumps to clear, no rocks to remove. In every pursuit and profession the steady improvement and constant growth was made manifest, and as each new field of labor and occupation
added a new impulse to the tide of immigration. The railroad extended into a vast net-work over the entire country and afforded a ready conveyance for the products of industry. We can look about us and observe the fruits of less than fifty years of sustained increasing labor. The once "Barren waste" has been converted into one of the best agricultural districts of the world. Inconveniences suggested alternatives and improvements grew out of necessity; thus the dugout and sod-house have been displaced by comfortable frame dwellings, the straw shed common among the early settlers has given away to roomy structure for the shelter of both stock and grain, and in a thousand forms wealth has been created by the united energy of a community quickened by a zeal to obtain subsistence.
Early in its history the people explored the idea that the lands of the west were unfit for agricultural purposes. They sowed the seed and witnessed its germination and growth. As the years passed by, and the plow piercing the soil exposed its fertile elements to the air and sunshine, the clouds were noticed to spill their life-giving moisture; broad fields of corn and golden cereals displaced the stunted sagebrush grass that once struggled for existence, and prosperous towns sprang up where utter silence had once reigned.

The period of suspense and fluctuating hopes had passed, and now gently and finelly convinced that benefact the seed lies no more fertile field for the farmer than the prairies of the west we can but note with great interest the effects of her products on the markets of the world and the
improvement and development of his great agricultural interests.

Farming is very far from being the simple concern we are apt to think it. On the contrary, there is no pursuit in life that not only admits but requires for its full development use of the resources of science and art. There is, we must admit, need for as much skill and discipline as much scientific, physical, and mechanical knowledge involved in the successful conduct of the various operations in farming, as is required in any of the arts, trades, or professions. Theory as well as practice enters as a factor in developing the best reservoirs of cultivation; showing the advantages gained from the rotation and cropping, the adaptation of plants to soil, and the forming of laws for governing production and growth in general. This great work has already been taken up by most
of our western states. Colleges have been and are now being established for the practical and scientific education of the farmers, sons and daughters. Cooperating with these are the experiment stations connected in actual contact with and inducing many of our farmers to observe and carry on experiments in connection with their farms. All this is tending toward a higher education and greater foundation, where the farmer may not only observe but reason and understand.

Through experiment it was found that the lands of the arid regions could profitably be made fertile by irrigation. And the effects of this improvement upon nature's course is indeed wonderful. Here lies a desert, a barren plains, whose characteristics show the primitive nature of all the land in this region, yet with watered soil grows nothing, except
The sagebrush and cactus. By its side and made fertile by irrigation are waving fields of alfalfa, grain, and other crops, which speak plainly that irrigation has proved itself to be the great "magic wand of the west." It matters not if the sun rises and sets for weeks in a cloudless sky the work of the farmer goes on demonstrated, the production just as great, and the market for his product vastly increased in demand and price.

The products of our western lands are now watched with an eagle eye by the speculators of the world. As soon as our crops are planted, every acre of every product sow is obtained, all through germination and growth careful observations are being made, and when they are finally matured and harvested the production is carefully estimated and the ruling price the world over is based on these calculations. If some rather sweeping to state that
as small a portion of the earth's
fruit should enter so largely into
the regulation of prices, but when
we consider what in a single year
1884, five states out of this broad
area, (Kansas, Nebraska, Dakota, Min-
nesota, and Iowa), grew 170,000,000
bushels of wheat, which was two-
thirds the entire amount necessary
to feed the total population of the
United States, we must admit that
such enormous productions in a
great degree give the markets of the
world,

As the lands of the West have
furnished new fields for the farm-
seeker, the eastern farmer has ex-
perienced and been compelled to
contend with difficulties of various
natures. His lands have rapidly
decreased in value until now they
command no higher price in the
market than our western lands.
Year after year they have been
neglected with no attention. Whatever,
given to rotation until many of the
most essential elements needed in
the growth of plants have been
exhausted, and he finds that art-
ificial fertilizers must be applied
to restore the elements needed for
production. He has followed out
the old theory that "the loess never
wear out", after now he finds him-
self placed in a position where
he must endeavor to compete
in production with the lands not
yet exhausted if this supply of
productive material. While the
farmer of the west fattens his
bottle for market on natural
supply of good material, the
eastern farmer must grow the food
for consumption, and when his
products are finally ready for
market he must accept in them
the prices fixed by the production
of the west.

However rich or productive the
soil, like the rocks that are con-
tinually wearing away by the force
of nature, it must produce or later,
if not replenished, lose its essential elements, and while the farmer
of the west now prides himself on the richness of his land, let
him profit by the mistakes which and look forward to the immediate
replenishment of the elements exhausted by plant growth.

The industry and enterprise
of our farming population lies
at the foundation of our present
prosperity. It is the agriculturist
that makes the manufacturer,
and to destroy one of these industries
is but to extinguish the prosperity
of the other. Let this most impor-
tant of all branches of national
industries cease but for a short
period face it would interfere
with all improvements and in
progress, resulting in the final
collapse of every department of busi-
ness. The merchant, the manufac-
turer, the teacher, and the professional
men survive only because they
have their unlimited store house
from which they derive their
substance which makes their ex-
istence possible.
Could we live in accordance
with the Bellamy system for a
few short moments and have
unveiled to us these United States
as they will be one hundred years
hence, we should behold an empire
such as the world never before
saw; we should see the farthest
most respected and independent
of all classes of people, and the
richest and most productive part
and the vast empire as well will
have followed the river of the soil
to the regime west of the Missis-
issippi river.

F. R. Smith.