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## Red Lake Notes

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Maker. All that is God-like,—freedom, civilization and culture, has spread from them in all ages, and from the development of their resources will come the dawn of a new day for the South.

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## RED LAKE NOTES.

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BY MISS FRANC E. BABBITT, OF LITTLE FALLS.

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A lady begs leave to submit to the attention and keeping of the Minnesota Academy of Natural Sciences, a small box of pottery fragments collected, for the most part, from various points upon the shores of Red Lake, Red Lake Odjibwa reservation, Beltrami county, Minnesota. These objects have been secured through the good offices of resident sub-agent Mr. Jonathan Taylor, and of his family; a considerable share of them having been obtained directly from the soil through the personal efforts of Mr. Taylor's son, Elmer Hamilton. Rev. Fred Smith, native missionary at Red Lake sub-agency, has also kindly contributed groups of broken pottery herewith transmitted, which were collected at Black Duck Creek, and on lands between the mouth of that water-course and the agency.

These earthen remains are put into the keeping of the Academy, not in virtue of the purely historical interest attaching to them, but on account of their scientific aspects and uses, and, in particular, because of the aid which they may be expected to afford archæology, in fixing a distinct line of demarkation between the workmanship of living aborigines of the Northwest, and that of prehistoric peoples.

The value of the rude fragments presented is due almost exclusively to the circumstance that they have been distinctly traced to their source, as to race, as to place, and approxi-

mately as to time. Specimens of clay wares are no doubt destined to figure in the future, in the work of deciding the tribal origins of our Northwestern tumuli and kindred remains, as prominently as the ceramic arts of the old world have done in defining the superimposed civilizations of Asia and Europe. In point of fact, we may look for a scientific study of the historic and prehistoric pottery relics of America, and the objects associated with them, to develop, in the archæological field, results precisely analagous to those effected in the domain of geology, by research among the fossil remains of plants and animals. I have thought it might serve scientific purposes, therefore, if the accompanying sherds could be widely exchanged for specimens from other places, both in the state and out of it. To this end, I forward to the Academy many more fragments than would otherwise be of use. Of the whole collection, about fifty pieces appear to be from the edges of vessels, and as quite a portion of these preserve interesting traces of ornamentation, sometimes elaborate, though simple in style, it has been decided to place them in the State Museum for general examination.

RED LAKE POTTERY.—The accompanying packet marked *Fragments*, will, it is hoped, illustrate the variations in the thickness, composition, color, etc., of the Red Lake ware, better than could be done by any mere description, however elaborate; besides supplying material for possible experiment and mineralogical analysis.

It is proper to explain that the forests about Red Lake generally descend in a dense body to the rocks and sands of the beach, and render the shores largely unfit for tillage and habitation. However, at the various points where small streams enter the lake there exist little terrace-plains, more or less unwooded, which are appropriated by the Red Lakers as the seats of their rude husbandry and of their settlements. Naturally, many of these miniature prairies become, at length, centers of social reunion, in the dance-houses of which public

dances are occasionally held, and feasts made. It is precisely in the situations indicated that the pottery sherds are known to abound.

The accompanying sketch by Messrs. Taylor and Hamilton outlines Red Lake, and correctly indicates the relative position of the mouths of the streams named, entering South Red Lake; but it does not undertake to represent the course and relative length of these tributaries on a precise scale.

The mode of pottery distribution above indicated is such as we ought to expect from an indigenous population about equally diffused among the small creek openings, commanding everywhere good and abundant components for their wares, and, finally, practicing the pottery art as a household craft. Thus conditioned, the Indian molders would no doubt carry on their ceramic industries upon the levels edging their native streams; because the current would ensure a ready water supply, while the banks would afford accessible exposures of subsoil.

Under other circumstances, such work might be centralized at large kilns, as appears to have been done at the American Bottom, in Illinois, and as will possibly be found to have been the case at Lecch Lake, of our own state. A favorite outlook at some convenient site of manufacture; an exceptionally fine deposit of clay, mica, shells, or other essential of earthen-work; or a large settlement of natives about the given point, with other conditions imaginable, and perhaps unimaginable, would strongly tend to produce a centralized development of the handicraft in question.

The Red Lake pottery specimens forwarded have all been picked up upon the south margin of the southern section of this lake, at and between Little Rock Creek on the west and the Black Duck on the east, at spots where as above described a strip of open ground intervenes between forest and beach. The mouth of every tributary of South Red Lake, except perhaps Battle Creek, has at one time or another been pointed

out to me by resident Odjibwas as bearing similar relics along its banks.

The Odjibwas cultivate the terrace-soil of the shore in considerable patches which they call *gardens*, and which they plant to potatoes, corn, wheat, etc. In these gardens, where the earth has been turned up by the government plow, and noticeably in corn plats, after hoeing, and after driving rains, bits of pottery come to the surface in considerable numbers. Probably the articles represented were in many cases, perhaps in *most* cases, manufactured in the very fields where the sherds now occur. A large proportion of the specimens submitted, have been collected from the corn-gardens of the agency, which are situated upon the lake shore at points where it is easy to reach, not only the clay of the subsoil, but also the other requisites, water, sand, lime-rock when wanted, and finally, mica.

MRS. BIG BIRD'S GARDEN.—A certain garden at the agency, bordering at once on Pike Creek to the east and the beach of the lake to the north, has proved particularly rich in remains of clay ware. The place was the present season in corn, planted and cultivated, according to Odjibwa custom, by a woman. This person, a Mrs. Dick Big Bird, speaks a little English, and from her I learn that, many years ago, much larger sherds were gathered here than those in my collection. These have undoubtedly been broken up by agricultural processes, and still further by weathering. Mrs. Big Bird mentions having herself picked up large pieces of pottery in this field, one of which was, according to description, eight to ten inches in width, but not so wide as long. This relic, unfortunately, she threw away, having no interest in its preservation. Such other Odjibwas as I have been able to consult in the matter, confirm Mrs. Big Bird's statement concerning the former abundance and size of these sherds.

The Red Lake Pottery is soft; much of it appears to be merely sun-baked. It seems to belong to the general class

described by Dr. Rau in his little tract upon the native pottery found in the American Bottom, a strip of land extending "about one hundred miles along the Mississippi, in Illinois." Unlike the Illinois pottery, however, none of this has been glazed; and the pieces which I have undertaken to clean up, all leave traces of clay on the drying cloth, even after the most thorough washing and brushing. Vessels designed for cooking purposes may possibly have been hardened by fire applied to the inner surface, since many of the bits show a hardened and blackened interior, while certain of these have likewise an appearance as if messes had been prepared in them, which had been suffered to adhere to the sides, and burn there.

The accompanying packets marked respectively *Soil*, *Sub-soil*, and *Miscellania*, are from Mrs. Big Bird's garden.

The first of the above is taken from among the corn-hills, and represents the average surface soil of the field. Certain of the ruder, softer, *black* fragments appear to have been prepared from this material, without great admixture of other matter. These last are many of them so soft that they sometimes melt to a mud paste, if, on cleaning them up, they are left a little too long in the water. Vessels of this description were perhaps specially designed for depositories of dry articles, such as we ourselves commit to the keeping of boxes, bag, barrels, and the like; and they may also have been thus rudely wrought with a view to their possible abandonment whenever the exigencies of aboriginal life should call on their possessors to migrate from point to point—which would very often indeed be the case. The Odjibwas are accustomed, even yet, to abandon the residence in which a death has taken place. They also shift their dwellings from spot to spot according to the demands for fuel, food, shelter, etc., made by the season: and the same needs would doubtless initiate something like the same system of life among their savage

neighbors, the Sioux, who are supposed to have produced the wares under discussion.

The second packet encloses samples of subsoil from the same garden. At the spot whence this was taken, the white settlers formerly manufactured their domestic supplies of brick, and near it, they also burned lime.

The third packet contains lumps of mica-bearing stone picked up upon the surface among the pottery fragments in Mrs. Big Bird's field. There is abundance of disintegrating micaceous rocks in the immediate vicinity, and these bits may, or may not, have been brought to the place for manufacturing purposes; but as it has appeared desirable to forward samples of mica, such as constantly occurs in Red Lake pottery, it has seemed best on the whole to select it from the lands where the work of manufacture is believed to have been carried on. Associated with these lumps, are bits of bone, or horn, together with fragments of flint, worked and unworked, and pieces apparently derived from the concave shell of the turtle, which the Odjibwas, and probably the Sioux preceding them, were accustomed to use as drinking vessels.

ARROW POINTS.—The same garden has also yielded a number of arrow points, varying from vague forms to finely finished weapons. These I have retained in my own cabinet, for purposes of comparison. Four finished points have been found here. One of these is probably a child's toy; one is of the triangular pattern so common about the margins of the small lakes in the southern part of the state; a third and fourth correspond in form with arrow points in my collection from Lake Winnibigoshish, imputed by Odjibwa authorities to Sioux handicraft. One of the two latter has a bit broken from the extremity; the other is a perfect and well finished specimen, very closely resembling the Winnibigoshish points.

AUTHORITIES AND HISTORICAL FACTS.—The Odjibwas teach that the Sioux bands, formerly occupying the shores of Red Lake, made, and left behind them, the relics under con-

sideration. The case can only be clearly viewed in the light of certain historical facts, which, therefore, I have ventured to submit herewith, even, perhaps, at the risk of extending the present paper to an undue length.

The Red Lake band of Odjibwas now numbers about twelve hundred individuals—as indicated by government pay-rolls; and it consists of seven chieftaincies under the control, respectfully, of the leading chief, May-dway-ga-no-nind, (He-who-is-spoken-to), and of Little Rock, Leading Feather, Little Thunder, Red Robe, Crooked Arm, and Praying Day. May-zhuck-ke-osh, (Falling Wind), now captain of the Reservation police, was formerly *head brave* of the band.

The responsibility and intelligence of these Odjibwas is evidenced by the circumstance that they are all, except the very youngest, persons to whom the work of making treaty with the United States has at one time or another been delegated by their people. Certain among these chiefs are authority for much of the material contained in this report; and to them, therefore, as also to Rev. Fred Smith, and likewise to sub-agent Taylor and family, I desire, in the interest of science, to render my grateful acknowledgments.

The peculiarities of the country, it is to be premised, make all these people *lakers*. The vast wildernesses of the region immediately surrounding them being ill-stocked with large game, families are driven to depend mainly for animal subsistence upon fish, wild-fowl, and the like. They therefore naturally found their settlements upon the habitable spots along the shores of currents, or sheets, of water. The Odjibwa Red Lakers claim to have permanently usurped the fisheries here about a century ago. Their story is that they descended hither from Rainy Lake, to which region they had migrated at some time indefinitely past, from the Great Odjibwa, (Lake Superior). Red Lake was at this period the seat of a Sioux band, which, after desperate and protracted resistance, was forced to succumb to the superior arms of the invaders.



These latter impute their success to the fact that they had previously associated themselves with white traders, through intercourse with whom they had obtained fire-arms, while the Sioux, further removed from trading posts and the great lines of Indian travel, had only the indifferent weapons of their own construction to fight with. The Rainy Lakers, to the number of about sixty, established settlements at the fisheries, and were eventually joined by scattering parties from Leech Lake, Cass Lake, and other points in the north. They furnish a most interesting illustration of the way in which savage races melt away at one place to re-crystallize under new forms at another.

It is evident that the old men of the Red Lake Odjibwas would naturally have had the history of the foregoing events, from witnesses directly participating in them. Such is really the case; and hence the testimony of these persons to the Sioux origin of manufactured articles found upon their grounds is entitled to special respect. Every Odjibwa to whom I have exhibited these specimens has unhesitatingly pronounced them to be the production of the vanquished Sioux.

As a representative instance, I may be allowed to cite May-dway-ga-no-nind, the venerable head-chief mentioned by Bishop Whipple in a series of letters published a few weeks since in the St. Paul Dispatch, relating to the Indian churches upon the Minnesota Odjibwa reservations. May-dway-ga-no-nind examined the little collection before you with care and interest. In reply to questions, he stated that when a young lad, he had been instructed in the traditions and history of his tribe by his aged grandmother, who had once been taken captive by the Sioux, but had afterward escaped. He added that his opinion concerning the pottery was in accordance with the teachings of the well-informed of his band, and the current of tradition; but that, besides, he had at a former period seen pottery of a description similar to this, in actual use among modern Sioux Indians.

About forty years ago, according to the narrative of this chief, he made a journey to the Missouri river, where dwelt a branch of the Sioux nation with whom the Red Lakers were at the time friendly, and accustomed to exchange visits. These Sioux manufactured earthen wares of great variety as to size, form, and use. They possessed, and made, earthen vessels designed for cooking purposes, and also for receptacles. They manufactured very small vases, and likewise very large ones for general storage, jars and pots of different sorts, handled dishes of various patterns, and, in fine, rude clay wares of every style suggested by their needs, or savage fancy. The Missouri Sioux exhibited to Mid-way-ga-no-nind the processes of their art, which he described briefly as follows.

They used as a basis of manipulation, a particular species of clay to which they had free access. With this, they mixed a component produced by burning limestone to a certain degree, and afterward beating it to a powder. The whole was then kneaded to a paste with water, and to this, other substances were added, or not, as dictated by the purpose and inclination of the molder. Finally, the vessel was shaped by the hands, figured, if desired, and eventually dried. The ornamentation was usually effected by whatever came conveniently to hand, as a hollow reed, a bit of bone, a notched stick, or the like.

LEECH LAKE POTTERY.—Mr. Lyman Ayer of Belle Prairie, son of the well-known missionary, Rev. Fred Ayer, has recently kindly informed me that a surprising quantity of pottery fragments existed a few years ago, at a particular locality upon the margin of Leech Lake. With its general mode of distribution, he is not precisely acquainted. He states, however, that missionary Wright once pointed out to him a spot situated upon a certain prong of Leech Lake, which had evidently been the site of ancient pottery works of considerable pretension, and about which, earthen pieces were strewn in profusion. The place yielded vessels in an almost or quit<sub>e</sub>

entire state. One of these shown to Mr. Ayer, was a pot or jar, having a capacity of about two quarts, which was still perfect, except a nick at the top.

It is not at present known whether the wares of Leech Lake originated with Sioux or Odjibwa bands ; but local history may safely be trusted to clear up the subject. Personally, I have as yet had no time for the minute study of Leech Lake origins, a matter with which Minnesotian members of this Academy are doubtless not unfamiliar. If, like the Red Lakers, the Odjibwas of Leech Lake sought the fisheries under the guidance of white traders, it is very strongly probable that they came to their new home provided with domestic utensils of outside manufacture, and hence would be unlikely to make aboriginal pottery here, except in case of emergency.

ODJIBWA POTTERY. — In connection with this subject I should mention the fact that the Odjibwas of Red Lake do not, so far as I can learn, preserve a recollection of the practice of the ceramic art among themselves, nor in their own tribe. However, Mr. Wm. Warren, who is high authority certainly, tells us that previous to the advent of the whites, the Odjibwas of Lake Superior used fishing nets made of the sinews of animals, or of bark, and cooked their food in clay pots. Miss Mary Warren, sister of the lamented author just quoted, assures me that bits of crockery occur plentifully upon the lands constituting the old seat of the Odjibwas in the Lake Superior region, where they are known as "dishes of the ancients." No doubt these latter were Odjibwa productions, and belong to a period preceding, and ending with, the appearance of white traders in the tribe.

Odjibwa pottery is chiefly confined, probably, in the Minnesota district, to the region of Lake Superior and the chain of waters bordering our state on the north ; since the tribe in question had in general not descended thence, when they began to hold intercourse with the whites. As our Odjibwas ceased to make pottery long before the Sioux, their newest

clay wares must be proportionately less modern than those of their rivals.

Minnesota pottery pieces found upon sites now occupied by Odjibwas, but formerly peopled by Sioux bands, may safely be referred to the latter race, whenever it is found that the resident Odjibwas had, previous to their incursion, established relations with the whites. All such pottery must, as a matter of course, date back to a time preceding the Odjibwa invasion, and ending with it. Doubtless many of our northern lakes and streams abound in Indian relics as yet unsuspected; and they present the seeker after truth with an ample field of research. Minnesota obviously affords at least three distinct groups of clay ware,—the works of the Sioux, of the Odjibwas, and of the mound-builders,—and each of these leads up to a distinct line of historical investigation.

LITTLE FALLS POTTERY.—With the Red Lake pottery, are enclosed fragments of similar ware taken from the west shore of the Mississippi, in Morrison county. They were picked up near the ferry landing, by Mr. N. Richardson. This person has also found, in the same vicinity, a number of handsome specimens quite different from these, into the composition of which the greenish incipient kaolin, reported in the geology of the district, appears to enter largely.

Some time since, a son of Mr. Richardson also obtained from a plowed field near Little Falls, a considerable fragment of pottery which had clearly once formed a portion of the cover of some small vessel, a part of the edge remaining intact. It was not hard-baked, as it crumbled into pieces while being conveyed home. This sherd was much like the Red Lake ware, the single exception being, that it was impressed with the outline of a leaf, as represented upon the reverse of this page. I mention the figure, as the only delineation of an organic object upon the pottery of northern Minnesota which has yet come under my observation.

In conclusion, I beg leave to say that I have been thus explicit in reporting a matter which, in itself considered, is sufficiently unimportant, because I have had the hope that such a record might aid in testing future finds of similar remains in Minnesota, and likewise, as hereafter indicated, furnish a key for the scientific grouping of the earth-works of the north-west. I have also ventured to suppose that the publication of these isolated ethnographic facts may suggest investigation in new quarters, and help to bring under archæological generalization, material which must otherwise soon be lost to the world forever.

ORIGIN OF THE NAME OF RED LAKE.—Mr. Pond, in an article published last March in one of our Minnesota periodicals, says of the waters of Red Lake, that "they have so often drunk blood from battles on its shores, as to have gained the ensanguined cognomen, which we mildly translate *red*." Mr. Pond here refers, in all probability, to the Dakota cognomen, since nothing of the sort is true, so far as the Odjibwa dialect is concerned. On the contrary, the Odjibwa name of this lovely sheet of water is exactly expressed, as I am informed on all sides, by the English equivalent, Red Lake. The prefix *Misk-wa* belonging to it, is one which is applied equally to the Red River, the Red Sea, a red stone, etc. The actual designation of one of the chiefs, now residing upon the reservation, is also *Misk-wa-ka-ko-ni-a*, RED ROBE, or SCARLET ROBE.

The lake really receives its name from the purplish red tint assumed by its waters when agitated by storms, a phenomenon due, it is believed, to a peculiar purplish-colored sediment, which is churned up by the waves at such times, and which, under favorable circumstances, is drifted shoreward and laid down in thin dribblets on the beach. This reddish purple deposit is, in character, a fine powder altogether different in appearance from the coarse, tawny-yellowish sand of the lake margin. It is pushed along the landward edge of the wave,

in broken lines, and when slight obstacles intercept its return to the lake bed, it is left behind in little patches, varying from one or two inches in length and breadth to two or three feet or more, and frequently having a thickness not greater than that of a knife-blade. It occurs always in small, but perfectly appreciable quantities.

At points where the beach is smooth, this sedimentary substance is drifted backward and forward upon it with each advancing and retreating wave, without, however, perceptibly penetrating into the layer of sand underneath—much as a little pulverized chalk or charcoal might be washed hither and yon, on the surface of a smooth rock.

The lake, when reddened by agitation, is not at all uniformly tinged; the central portions where the water is deepest, longest retain their natural azure, and sometimes undergo no change whatever in hue. The old men of the band assert that the waves had formerly a more pronounced color tone than now, and that the area of reddish surface was also, in general, greater.

It has been suggested in certain quarters that the purplish sediment above described, may possibly prove to be a metallic ore of some sort—perhaps one of copper. I regret being unable to forward a specimen of it with this paper. A sample from the beach at Red Lake Agency, obtained with some pains for this purpose, was unfortunately spoiled in detaching it from the underlying stratum of sand; and circumstances prevented the procuring of another satisfactory one.

· BEAR'S PAW, AN OJIBWA MEDICINE.—A curious substance, the precise nature of which is quite unknown to me, is herewith commended to the notice of the Academy of Natural Sciences. It is a favorite medicine among the Red Lake Ojibwas, and is by them named *Bear's Paw*, probably receiving its appellation from some resemblance, fancied or actual, to the paw of a real bear. This mysterious natural production is said by the medicine men to be found "in woods

and under ground." It is believed to act powerfully, under certain regulated conditions, in the way of a charm for injuring or killing an enemy, whom it may for any reason be considered desirable to put quietly out of the way.

Persons competent to speak in the matter, assert that the Odjibwas hold Bear's Paw in high favor as an antiscorbutic; but it is proper to include in this statement the accompanying fact, that the doctor administering the remedy, grades the degree of its efficacy by the amount of his fee. For example, the payment of a blanket to the officiating medicine man ensures to the dose a certain potency, while the presentation of, let us say a handsome coat, gives to the medicament a virtue as much greater as the fee is more valuable. In case no payment is tendered, no remedial effect need be looked for. It is vaguely rumored that Bear's Paw is commonly administered in the form of a tea; but whether or not this is fact, the writer is unable to say.

We are not only in ignorance respecting the origin of the accompanying curative *what-is-it*, but we are also unacquainted with its geographical limits of production, and tribal limits of use; and it is to be desired that persons conversant with Indian medical methods may throw additional light upon the various aspects of the subject.

TOTEMŞ OF RED LAKE ODJIBWAS. — Herewith is subjoined, in the hope that it may be of use for future reference, a list of the totems of the Red Lake band of Odjibwas. They were named to the writer by the old chief, Little Rock, who is a leading medicine man belonging to the *grand medicine*, as it is called, and who was pointed out as authority in the matter under investigation. Miss Mary Warren, to whom Odjibwa and English are alike mother tongues, kindly undertook to act as interpreter in the case. This cultivated lady is thoroughly conversant, not only with the purely theoretical range of the totem system, but likewise with its practical workings, and she has taken especial pains to ensure a precise translation in the present instance.

## TOTEMS OF RED LAKE OJIBWAS.

Bald Eagle,	Eagle,	Lynx,	Snake,
Bear,	Eelpout,	Marten,	Sturgeon,
Catfish,	Elk,	Mermaid,	Wolf,
Crane,	Loon,	Moose,	Woodpecker,
	Rabbit,	River.	

A Rabbit totem, or clan, and also a River totem, are found among the Odjibwas; but it is the belief of Little Rock that no representatives of these totems are at present living at Red Lake.

The Bald Eagle totem, and the Eagle totem, represents each, a clan altogether distinct from the other and independent of it.

The Loon clan was formerly a large one here. Mr. Warren tells us concerning it, that in olden times, when the civil policy of the tribe was much mixed up with their religious and medicinal rites, "the totem of the Mong (Loon) ruled over them, and Musk-wa, or Bear totem, led them to war." May-zhuck-ke-osh, former head brave of the Red Lake band, is of the Bear totem.

The Martens, and next below them in point of numbers, the Bears, are held to be the two largest of the lake clans.

The term Mermaid stands out in such bold relief, as embodying an idea naturally foreign to an aboriginal, and especially to an inland tribe of savages, that, at first, I hesitated to accept it as a correct exponent of the thing meant. However, I was assured by both Little Rock and Miss Warren, that the Odjibwa totem name under consideration is really properly translated by this word, and further, that the word signifies with the Red Lakers what it does with us; but I could get no clue to the origin of the myth thus curiously brought forward. I have since learned that these people formerly believed their lake to be haunted by mermaids.

While a Red Lake Odjibwa will never name himself to a



second person if he can avoid the necessity, he is always quite willing to mention his "family mark" or totem. The latter trait is prominently exhibited at the government school, where the pupils are prompt to exchange genealogical confidence with their friends, and to assert the ties of clanship as well as consanguinity.

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## THE FAUNA OF NORTHERN MINNESOTA.

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### ITS TRAVERSES AND ROUTES OF MIGRATION.

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BY CHARLES HALLOCK, OF HALLOCK, MINN. LATE EDITOR  
OF "FOREST AND STREAM."

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The address of Prof. N. H. Winchell, of the Minnesota Academy of Sciences, at its last annual meeting, refers to "an almost unexplored region lying west of Lake Superior, within the borders of Minnesota, whose precincts are filled with undisturbed and unknown species of animal life, and sprinkled with beautiful lakes which have not yet been ruffled by the footfall of either the hunter or explorer."

Two years ago I became associated with others in a farming and sporting location near the western border of this same wilderness tract, just where the prairie meets the timber and the outlook becomes illimitable. A beautiful river, vocal with the gossip of the woods, emerges from the forest into the open plain, and winds lovingly among the stately oaks and elms which adorn its banks. Aimlessly following this sylvan avenue of exit, strange creatures are often tempted out from the sombre forest, to peer with timid and inquisitive look into the unobstructed sunlight; and if an observing naturalist were handy to the spot, he would readily discover creatures unfa-