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"The Land of the Dakotas" by Marie Teel, First UND Commencement: June 13, 1889

Marie A. Teel

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“Miss Marie A. Teel next read an essay on ‘The Land of the Dakotas.’ She referred to the time when this region was one immense lake that could boast of nothing that now makes it attractive and followed the development of the land from the ‘Great American Desert’ down to the present time when the land of the Dakotas applies only to North Dakota and South Dakota. The wide extent of our great territory was mentioned and the immense resources briefly described. Speaking of the streams, lakes, and valleys, she said:

‘Not far from us is beautiful lake of salt water, bordered by shady woods. A traveler passing there would be surprised to hear the cries of the sea gull. Salt water fish abound and in their proper season one may see myriads of wild ducks and geese. It seems quite possible that at some time not far distant our Spirit Lake may be a popular summer resort.’

Her concluding words are exactly correct.

When the Dakotas come to be admitted next fall into the mighty sisterhood of states, we shall have just one cause for exultation. Surely we have much for which to be grateful.

‘We love this land of wheat and blushing roses,
This land of azure skies and brilliant sunshine,
This land of wood, green fields and quiet woodland,
Where clinging grape vines, rich with purple clusters,
Wind round the sturdy oak-the forest King,
Where warbling birds pour forth their sweetest carols,
And near at hand the golden rod and fern,
Bend gracefully to catch their gentle strain,
This land of busy, energetic people,
Who still take time for deeds of active friendship,
And after days of thought or earnest labor,
Enjoy the beauty of the fresh, cool evening
When peace and plenty wander hand in hand,
Ah, who can choose but love this glorious land.’”

Grand Forks Daily Herald (evening edition), 13 June 1889, page 4