

FERGUS FALLS.

It has the Best Water Power in the Country.

Already a Great Railroad and Industrial Center.

It is Destined to Become one of the Most Important Manufacturing Points in the Northwest.

Preparations for Illuminating the Streets by the Electric Light.

A TYPICAL AMERICAN CITY.

[Special Correspondence of the Globe.]

FERGUS FALLS, MARCH 15, 1882.—The wonderful Red River valley is a land of such unparalleled richness, and is filling up so rapidly with sturdy settlers that, although its fame is world wide, and it is a theme upon which so much has been written, it offers such material for newspaper writing that the true journalist visiting the region feels a demand made upon his pencil that is almost impossible to resist. For much as has been written upon the subject, it is of that nature that it can never be exhausted. Every few months the changes taking place within its limits are so marked, the development of its great resources so impressive, that the record of to-day affords but a slight insight into the progress in the future, and this holds true with particular force with regard to certain localities. Take Fergus Falls for instance. After a long and wearisome ride on the cars, the writer selected that point for the purpose of resting. In obedience to the instinct of reportorial inquisitiveness, after recuperation he was impelled to investigate the present condition and future prospects of the place. It requires no special gift of prevision to predict that the future of Fergus Falls is one of commanding eminence. The conditions are such as must inevitably produce a great city. To enumerate fully these conditions a complete circle of agencies would have to be traversed. The three most important agencies of this transformation are its situation in the heart of such a fertile country as surrounds the town, its prominence as a railroad center, and its possession of a water power. Besides these permanent impulses which are the internal main-springs and the external pressure, there is the acquired momentum, which is represented by its present position as a manufacturing and mercantile city.

Fergus Falls is the judicial seat of Otter Tail county, and is the center of the celebrated "PARK REGION." In so calling this region it is no mere figure of speech, for it is naturally one of the most beautiful places on the continent, where lakes, timber and prairie are so commingled as to make the locality merit the appellation of "garden spot of America."

For purposes of raising beef cattle and conducting dairies profitably, it is a country without any equal. There are already a large number of these factories in successful operation, which make an excellent quality of cheese, all of which is marketed at Fergus Falls and vicinity. Corn grows well, as is proved by crops that have been grown for the past ten years successively, without a single failure of crop and an uniform heavy yield. The soil is so fertile that one of the reasons for this is that there are no rocks, and the cold in the fall is moderated by the many large bodies of water that are found in this region. It should likewise be noted that these fertile possessions are one of the reasons why the land is so cheaply obtained. While, of course, all the government lands are now taken, there are yet plenty of good chances for securing good farms. It is remarkable that fine land can be obtained cheaper than in many places where there is a rush of immigration, and a consequential excitement in prices.

Adjacent to Fergus Falls is one of the largest bodies of fine hardwood timber in the state. It consists of a heavy belt that projects, as it were, out into the open prairie for hundreds of miles. Besides this there are on the upper reaches of the Red river, large tracts of pine lands. Logs from these are brought down the river and manufactured into lumber at Fergus Falls.

A RAILROAD CENTER. Fergus is an important railroad center. It is on the main line of the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba road, about half-way between St. Paul and St. Vincent. The Northern Pacific, Fergus Falls and Black Hills railroad has its line completed from Wadena to Fergus Falls, thus giving the latter place direct outlet to the seaboard, via Duluth. An extension of this line is already graded and bridged, and the iron will be laid as soon as spring opens westward to the state line, on its way to the Black Hills, 175 miles of which the company contemplates building this season. This will open out a vast market to the products of the four mills and other industrial enterprises of the same road also has a branch graded and bridged, and ready for the iron twenty-four miles north to Pelican Rapids. The Manitoba road has likewise a branch to the same place.

There is also projected an extension of the Wabasha and Wabasha and Milwaukee systems, which combinations are anxious to reach out for the carrying business of the Red River valley. Fergus Falls is also the division point of both the Manitoba and Black Hills roads, and as therefore the round houses, machine shops and division offices. The general offices of the Fergus Falls and Black Hills road are also located here.

Fergus Falls is the point where the Red river leaves the high rolling lands and makes a descent to the Red river valley proper. This descent it is which forms the finest water power north of Minneapolis. The power is all concentrated at Fergus, or a mile or two on each side of the town. One great feature of the water power is that it is constant in quality. There are never any freshets, the level is always uniform, the flow being steady without variation. Let this may appear strange to those used to the periodical fluctuations experienced by nearly all the other water powers on the river. This is explained that the physical laws produce this happy result. The river flows through more than twenty lakes just before it reaches Fergus, and these

that since the settlement of this region there has never been a single bridge or dam washed out or damaged. There is also no danger to be apprehended from ice, as invariably goes out during the summer, when the ice is cut into pieces in a half rotten condition. There are now three improved dams erected within the limits of the city, which are capable of furnishing 6,000 horse power. This will be more than doubled this summer, when some Boston parties and James J. Hill's power will be improved and utilized.

Up and down the river there are also other eligible points that will be utilized in time. When these other powers are improved there will be more than sufficient power to turn all the machinery now in existence in Minneapolis. The total amount of power capable of development may be inferred from the fact that the fall in seven miles is one of 300 feet, the fall within the city limits being eighty feet alone. This power goes so well distributed over such a large area of ground, mills need not be crowded together, as is the case in Minneapolis.

CHIEF INSURANCE. And this is a very important desideratum, at present, as the reduction of the fire risk implies a corresponding reduction of insurance rates, which of late have been such a heavy tax upon millers. The fact that here the mills can be isolated is a consideration that is not to be overlooked. In connection with the character of the power furnished, its amount and uniformity, it is no wonder that manufacturers are being attracted irresistibly to such an advantageous situation.

There is no question at all but that in the future such potential developments will take place, that the time will come when the milling interests of Fergus Falls will rival, if they will not eclipse, those of Minneapolis. This is the most important fact in the fact that the power is better. Important as this consideration there is another equally as influential, and that is the proximity to the hard wheat country, and the excellent railroad facilities that exist here, and the fact that the power is better. Important as this consideration there is another equally as influential, and that is the proximity to the hard wheat country, and the excellent railroad facilities that exist here, and the fact that the power is better.

RED RIVER ROLLER MILL. of which Hon. James J. Hill, the vice president of the Manitoba road, is the president. The manager is Mr. Andrew G. Tod, late of Glasgow, Scotland. Mr. Tod is a gentleman of wide experience, and conducts the mill upon the most approved and scientific principles. The productive capacity of the mill is four hundred barrels per day, and it is run at its fullest capacity all the time, so great is the demand for the flour manufactured. The flour is really the finest made in the country, and is sold at a price that is the closest supervision exercised in all the processes of production, and none but the choicest wheat of the Red river valley is used for milling. It is mostly shipped direct to the great cities of the West, where it takes precedence over all other brands. In this connection it might be remarked that Mr. Hill has recently purchased two hundred acres of ground directly west of the mill, on which is one of the finest flouring mills in the city. He is going to improve it this year. A number of Scotch and English capitalists are also interested in its development and are intending to erect thereon mills and houses. Besides the mill, there are already in progress the construction of many other manufacturing industries in existence, a furniture factory, large lumber mills, a sash, door and blind factory, plow shops, and a foundry and machine shops. A party of Boston capitalists are also making preparations to erect and have already the lumber out for a mill which will produce heavy quantities of building paper. Besides this there are many other mills projected, chief of which are a large flouring mill, owned by Hon. James J. Hill, and located at St. Louis, will build and operate on his water power at the east end of town, and a lumber mill, which N. P. Clark of St. Cloud, will erect.

There are many other contemplated improvements of an extensive nature, to be effected during the coming season, including brick blocks, two hotels, residences, churches and schools. For the purpose of getting fuller information regarding these matters the writer sought out Mr. Robert Miller to the interviewing process. This gentleman is a member of the firm of Miller & MacMaster, the principal real estate men in the city. They are also financial agents and have the investment of large sums of money for English and Scotch capitalists. Whenever any one wants to obtain information relative to Fergus Falls, or the Red River valley, the natives always send him to Mr. Miller.

There is also a sort of animated encyclopedia, and being of an obliging disposition, he generally responds to all demands upon his time and patience, even if this results in compelling him to make up for time thus lost by taking it from the hours that should be devoted to rest. It is true that Mr. Miller is probably better fitted for imparting such information than any one else in the place, as he is an old United States government surveyor, and tramped through nearly a mile of Minnesota country long before the city was settled as at present. He has also been identified with the interests of Fergus Falls for the past ten years.

The right man had been found was self evident, as the writer discovered Mr. Hill in his office in the act of reviewing a multitude of plans and specifications of proposed buildings. And it might be remarked, in this connection that the buildings which Messrs. Miller & MacMaster alone propose to erect would be regarded by any one as comprising a pretty good year's record in the way of permanent improvement.

But then Fergus Falls is not an ordinary town. The most important of these new structures will be a hotel which will be completed about \$75,000. It will be erected in the west end of town. Messrs. Miller & MacMaster intend that this hotel shall be kept in the most perfect manner, and in that the writer considers them to be public-benefactors. E. P. Benson of St. Paul is preparing for them the plans for several blocks of handsome brick stores. One of these will be the handsome edifice used for business purposes west of St. Paul and Minneapolis. It is to be a double store, three stories in height above the basement, and will be situated on the Union and Lincoln avenues. The style of its architecture is very striking and ornate. The front will be of St. Louis pressed brick, a material which admirably adapts itself to pleasing the eye. The interior of the building will be occupied, respectively by a grocer and a dry goods merchant. The upper portion will be used for office purposes. Its estimated cost is \$30,000. On the opposite corner, they also intend to erect a somewhat similar building. The third store of this will be fitted up as a Masonic temple. The use of better Masonic quarters is pressing, as there is a chapter and commandery in the city, as well as the lodge in height above the basement, and will be situated on the Union and Lincoln avenues. The style of its architecture is very striking and ornate. The front will be of St. Louis pressed brick, a material which admirably adapts itself to pleasing the eye. The interior of the building will be occupied, respectively by a grocer and a dry goods merchant. The upper portion will be used for office purposes. Its estimated cost is \$30,000. On the opposite corner, they also intend to erect a somewhat similar building. The third store of this will be fitted up as a Masonic temple. 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