

THE FAR WEST

Wallace, Idaho, Aug. 9, 1909.

Dear Mr. Roethe:

We are away out here in a queer country, but interesting nevertheless. Wife and I left Mt. Hope July 27th going via Woodman to Prairie du Chien. At 4 p. m. we boarded a tourist sleeper on the Burlington, and reached St. Paul at 10 o'clock, and next morning were at Fargo, in the famous Red river valley. Fargo is a fine, lively looking town, and the country for several miles west of it is very level, too much so to suit our notion, but crops look fine. Barley and some wheat in the shock. Farther west the country is more rolling, and at Valley City broken and hilly, but it improves as you near Jamestown. From here to the Missouri river the country looks fine, and crops are good, much of it is yet uncultivated. Bismarck is no great looking city but is pleasantly located. Here for the first time we saw and crossed the muddy Missouri. It was decidedly disappointing. We expected to see a great broad river, but as we saw it, it is no larger than the Wisconsin at Woodman. But there is a great display of sand bars. We didn't feel a bit like taking off our hat and making a bow to it, as Horace Greeley is said to have done when he first saw "the father of waters." Mandon is a brisk town on the west bank of the Missouri. Here we struck mountain time and set our watch back about an hour. From the Missouri for a good long distance along the railroad the country is broken and hilly. We don't like it, and wouldn't go there to look for a farm. The best land we saw in western North Dakota is in the extreme western part and it reaches into Montana. We passed from Dakota into Montana just as the sun was setting. If our friend Rev. Vincent of Mt. Hope had been with us, think we would have heard him shouting, "Here we are in old Montana, where there's plenty room and air, where there's cotton-wood and pine trees, bitter-root and prickly-pear, where there ain't no pomp nor blitter, where a shillin's called a 'bit,' where at night the mag-pies twitter, where the injun fights were fit." Well, wish he had been with us.

We saw no more of the country till next morning when we were at Billings in the Yellowstone valley. We went up the valley to Livingston. Between these two cities the valley is not wide, and as we saw it, not very fertile, quite gravelly and little cultivated. Perhaps it was better farther down where we passed in the night. The Yellowstone is a nice little stream, and quite rapid. From Livingston we made quite a rise to Bozeman in the Galatin valley. This valley from Bozeman to Helena is wider than the Yellowstone and more cultivated, and the river less rapid. Twenty miles west of Helena we reached Blossburg,—just a station—where a sign board told us this was the continental divide 5,573 feet above sea level. We made still a steeper climb over the Bitterroot range between Missouri and Wallace. We went down the river seventy or eighty miles from Missoula, then we left the river and made a lunge into a mountain gulch up along a little rapid stream for several miles. Then

we began to leave the little stream below us climbing up higher and higher, two heavy engines working with might and main. Suddenly we made a sharp whirl over a high trestle to the other side of the gulch and down stream but still up mountain. At one place going up along the mountain side we saw two railroad tracks, away above us on the other side of the gulch, one a hundred or two feet above the other. We wondered what roads they could be. We soon found it was our own road. We made another sharp turn over a high bridge along the lower track, and soon had made another turn and were on the higher one, looking down on the one below us, and also on the one still lower on the other side of the gulch where we had been a short time before. It began to look dizzy. We didn't care to go much higher. The railroad in all these places is simply a dug way along the mountain side and not far back from the edge either. In many places you can look down hundreds of feet nearly perpendicular. Then getting down from these giddy heights, makes one feel rather more nervous than going up, but we go over the mountains all safe and sound and thankful. Here we are in Wallace, a busy little city on the western slope of the Bitterroot range, visiting with my wife's brother, H. E. Howes. This is a queer country, so different from at home. It seems to us we don't know anything about anything here, and guess we don't. No farming near here. Mines. Mines. Mining is the beginning, middle, and end of about all you hear. Well, we will quit now and see how we feel about visiting more in a day or two.

—Alex Cairns.

BLOOMINGTON.

(Bloomington Record.)

The I. O. O. F. building in this village, now occupied by F. L. Greer & Son's Store, will be greatly improved in the near future by the addition of thirty feet to the rear end, including the basement and first and second floors. Greer & Son have renewed their lease on it for a period of five years and they will have a much improved store room when the contemplated improvements are completed, which it is expected will be about November 1st. The interior of the building will also be improved and rearranged. Greer & Son will occupy both the first floor and the basement with their large stock of merchandise. The Odd Fellows will use the extra space on the second floor for a dining room in connection with their lodge room, which will then be very convenient, and large enough for gatherings of almost any kind.

Assessors Thos. Baillie of the town of Bloomington, Wm. Morrissey of this village, and George Metcalf of Beetown met at the high school building to equalize the assessment on the property in Joint School District No. 3 of the towns of Bloomington and Beetown. It was decided that the village assessment was 11 per cent lower in proportion than the other parts of the district. Last year the difference was decided to be 17 per cent.

At eleven o'clock Wednesday morn-