

sportsmen had attempted to reach the musk-ox country, but they had been unsuccessful. "To try and penetrate this unknown land, to see the musk-ox, to find out as much as he could about their habits and the habits of the Indians who go in pursuit of them every year," this, Mr. Pike tells us in his preface, was the "sole object" of his journey. Mr. Pike therefore was a sportsman first and an explorer afterwards. In another place he says that his book was written for sportsmen. As a matter of fact the details of caribou (reindeer) and musk-ox hunting, and of the other forms of sport he enjoyed, are given with scientific accuracy and sportsmanlike directness. To many persons these descriptions will, of course, form the chief attraction of the book; but the general reader will regard them rather in the light of necessary evils.

There is another respect in which Mr. Pike's narrative differs from those of Arctic explorers in general. With the exception of Hearne, who explored the coast region a century ago, and who lived with the Indians, the explorers have been assisted by the most capable white men procurable, and provided with scientific outfits in every way complete. The explorers, in a sense, took their civilisation with them. Mr. Pike, like Hearne, decided to trust himself to the Indians, and, as a result of this decision, he saw the life of the hunters of the North-West in a way which no previous explorer had done. It is in this that the great merit of Mr. Pike's work, both from a literary and a scientific point of view, lies. He is able to present us with a series of pictures of an exceedingly interesting phase of life. These scenes of life in the Barren Ground are instinct with reality. It is not too much to say that Mr. Pike's narrative, at its best, is raised to the level of poetic composition—by a simplicity of diction and a directness of aim—akin to the "high seriousness" of "absolute sincerity," which Arnold made the test of the highest poetic excellence.

Altogether Mr. Pike remained, as already stated, for two years in the north-west of Canada. During this period he made three distinct expeditions in search of the musk-ox, and numerous lesser excursions in pursuit of other game. His first expedition was undertaken in the autumn of the year 1889. Although it was very short, it was so far successful that Mr. Pike is able to write:—"September 27th was a red-letter day, marking the death of the first musk-ox." Naturally this first specimen made a great impression on Mr. Pike's mind, and he describes the appearance the animal presented with great precision:—

"In crossing an occasional piece of level ground he walked with a curious rolling motion, probably accounted for by the waving of the long hair on the flanks; this hair reaches almost to the ground, and gives the legs such an exaggerated appearance of shortness that, at first sight, one would declare the animal to be incapable of any rapid motion. The shaggy head was carried

high, and his neck boss for appearance. This weeks' Christmas to the kinlay, In both caribou victorise Pike f his way Mr. P tragic, For Pike's difficult work. of his breaki making stitutio tures admira though to seiz tially looks "W the Gr unknow similar lay a nearest and de smaller beyond we we for cl pair o look w these portag Mr whom Beau half-