A TRIP TO MICA MOUNTAINS.

By D. C. McArthur.

PART I.

Last summer I was spending my vacation at a sawmill, on the north-eastern arm of Lake Manitoba. Not two miles from the mill is the mouth of Fairford river and it is through this river that the combined overflow of Lake Winnipegoosis and Lake Manitoba finds its outlet into Lake St. Martin. The river is twelve miles long and is almost a continuous series of rapids, and for the first three miles it rushes over the solid bedrock.

I had often heard the Indians and others tell about a strange part of the country, less than two days' journey from the mill, which abounded in steep hills, full of caverns, and containing vast deposits of minerals, of unknown nature. Accordingly I was filled with an ardent desire to examine this mysterious region and forthwith began to enquire for a suitable guide. One day an Indian came to me and said: "I heard you wanted a man to take you to the strange mountains. But I am the best guide. My father who de-de-ceased, was the best guide, but he is dead. I know more than all the Indians. I taught school three years at Sandy Bay. I can amuse you. I can tell plenty of war stories and ghost stories." I swallowed the hook baited so cleverly with "stories," and a bargain was immediately concluded, although the mill hands assured me that he was an inveterate sponger and a bland cajoler, an accomplished liar, a dexterous thief, etc. The Indian name of my sombre friend was, Na-tisa-ka-gook, (chip-munk on a stump), but he was better known in the Fairford settlement as "Old Jake the sponger," and he can speak better English than any other Indian whom I have known.

At 5.10 a.m. on the 22nd day of August, 1892, all was ready and we started down the river. Jake sat in the stern of the canoe. "Now," said he. "I'll steer and you've got to shove her nose from the rocks." I immediately had a violent attack of the qualms, because I had never been in a birch canoe before. Then there came a confused vision of foaming water and flying boulders and we were at the foot of the first rapid. The next hour was occupied in shooting rapids and dodging boulders; then the river broadened into a marsh and soon Lake St. Martin "burst on our view, and myriad wavelets glistening in the morning sun." The wind, though in our favor was light, and as we paddled along, Jake was the first to speak. "Boy," said he, "I'm going to call you Nitchie, that means friend, and you must call me Swapsah, that means warrior. Now, Nitch, I allus have some snack about this time of day." I gave him some bannock and then he told me some facts in connection with the history of his tribe. It seems that his great-great-grandfather had led the first band of Ojibways from Lake Superior to Fairford. The Ojibways drove out the Sioux, who then occupied the surrounding country, and consequently there has been a "bitter feud" between these two tribes ever since. The Muskago Indians, who afterwards settled quietly among them, were introduced from the Nelson River district by the Hudson's Bay Company. Jake then told me about a raid in which he took an active part, but it would have to be "spiced" before the public would appreciate it.

"Shall I sing you a war-song Nitch," said he. "All right, Jake—I mean Swaps—sing away." He placed his paddle in the canoe. Then swaying gently from side to side he trilled out the first verse, "Hi-yah, hi-yah, hi-yah, hi-yay"—at times, bringing in the plaintive refrain, "Yi-i-si, yi-i-i," etc. The other verses were identically the same as the first; this musical exudation being accompanied by the music of his hunting knife tapped against the paddle blade. After ten minutes of this infliction, I remarked that I would like to hear the rest some other day and that as the wind was increasing a sheet would probably assist us on our way a little faster. Old Jake got excited. "Nitch, that cloth too small. I can paddle, fast, fast. But I can't swim Nitch." Notwithstanding his urgent appeals the sheet was rigged out on two paddles and "the frail barque bounded forward, urged madly over the foaming billows by the ever freshing gale." The motion was very exhilarating. Suddenly a rattling against the bottom of the canoe was heard, the bounding motion ceased, and the next moment we were gliding swiftly and smoothly along in a vast expanse of water as white as milk. This startling phenomenon is easily explained. Lake St. Martin is on an average not more than eight feet deep and the long water weeds, just touching the surface, detained the foam, of which great quantities are cast up by the waves. Moreover there were hundreds of balls of fluffy foam tumbling and skating along beside the canoe, adding to the scene the excitement of a race. For nearly an hour we plowed this snowy flood, then as we turned sharply past a reedy point, Sandy Bay, our destination hove in sight. Around the bay was a line of Indian houses but the village was at that time completely deserted, being used for the purpose of hibernation only. When we were close to the shore we jumped out into the water and lifting the canoe over the foam-colored boulders, deposited it safely upon the gravelly beach. We immediately began to prepare our mid-day repast upon the top of the steep embankment that overlooked the beach. This ice-reared rampart was formed of huge boulders and was about fifteen feet high. As I showed Jake the provisions, viz., flour and bacon, he expressed in eloquent and violent language his entire disapprovel of the "grub" which I had furnished, contrasting it very unfavorably with the biscuits and canned fruits that he had enjoyed while guiding a party of government geologists. I explained that when people are spending their own money they generally try to be economical. But Jake vowed that he was going to have something more to his taste and disappeared from view, returning presently with his handherchief full of potatoes. The esculent tubers were extracted from a neighboring potato patch, which had been planted by the Indians before leaving for their summer fishing grounds. He evidently upheld the theory that there should be no property in the sense of things to which the possessors have the exclusive right. Upon questioning him concerning this application of ethical truth, he gave me to understand that he grasped these problems much more readily in the concrete than in the abstract.

After dinner we concealed the canoe in some rushes and started off in a northerly direction. We had not proceeded a mile before we came to what was undoubtedly the bed of a shallow river which emptied at one time into Lake St. Martin. Right across the widest part stretched a colossal beaver dam. "By Jove, Nitch," exclaimed Jake, "but this is the biggest beaver dam I have seen." It was 250 feet long, 23 feet wide and (at one time) 7 feet high; moreover, instead of running up stream, it zig-zagged irregularly across This grass-grown river bed led directly to Mica Lake. The afternoon was very hot and we looked for water, but could find none. Signs of game became very frequent as we travelled onward, especially moose tracks, and once we caught sight of a family of bears, feeding on the red currants that grew in immense quantities under the tamaracs. "Are you a good shot, Swaps?" I enquired. "Ah, yes, boy; I can shoot splendid," he answered. "But I'm so 'customed shooting bear, I don't have to shoot him by sight, I allus shoot him by smell.', And then he chuckled for eight minutes over this aboriginal joke of his. At sundown, having gone several miles out of our course in an unsuccessful search for water, we dug a small hole in the centre of a dried up swamp. The hole quickly filled up with muddy water, which we strained through a folded cloth, and made into tea. But the tea was simply nauseous. So we swallowed large quantities of eyeberries and skunkberries, which grew about us in "elegant profusion, loading the dewy air with their delicate perfume," etc. As night drew on, we made a large fire, and prepared for rest. Just as I was going to "roll myself up in my blanket," Jake grabbed his gun, and whispered excitedly: "Lie town, lie town." I immediately assumed a horizontal posture, my feverish imagination conjuring up dread visions of bears, lynx, Sioux and other reptiles, which were wont so often to disturb the noctial slumbers of "Three-fingered Dick, the terror of the Texan plains." Too bad, its gone," said Jake, disappointedly laying down his gun. "What's gone, Swaps?" "Lie town, is gone," he replied, "that's white owl, you know, when you cook him he's num-num." I was disgusted. Jake and I were sick that night and it was day-break before we got to sleep. Early next morning, we started in search of water. After two hours' hard tramping, we found some water and plenty of it. Right before us was a vast muskeg, stretching as far as Mica Lake, five miles away. Around by the side of the lake were the hills that we were going to explore. "The beautiful scene spread itself before our entranced vision, like a magnificent panorama." Englishman would like shoot here," remarked Jake, as we surveyed the animated scene before us. He was right, anybody would for that matter. The ponds and marshes were filled with thousands of ducks of every size. Dignified cranes stalked about, towering far above the snipe and bitterns. Timid swans and geese flew up on every side, and far away in one corner of the muskeg three moose were trotting lazily along while the air around us was filled with hordes of voracious mosquitos, clamouring lustily for blood.

PART II.

After camping here for more than half an hour, in order to thoroughly refresh ourselves, we started to cross the muskeg, and it is one of the most extensive and treacherous in Manitoba. I will confess that I was filled with a certain sense of alarm and apprehension upon beholding for the first time the yielding sod roll off in heavy undulations at every foot fall, shaking the down from trembling bullrushes fifteen feet away, but the feeling soon wore off for I had implicit confidence in my guide, whom I knew would not risk his life; no, not for all the tobacco and flour in Fairford. Hitherto the long grass and burnt timber had rendered our journey both slow and toilsome, but we would keep up quite a rapid pace over the thin tough sod of short rushes that covered a great part of the surface of the muskeg, which presented the appearance of complex network enclosing a vast number of small lakelets, not one being more than a hundred yards across. The Indian, his eyes steadily fixed on the ground, followed the track of a moose, which led us with unerring precision through that intricate maze of marsh and muskeg until we reached the other side. While crossing over, a striking phenomenon occurred which is worth recording. About nine o'clock the breeze dropped into a calm and marsh flies began to ascend from their haunts in the reeds and rushes, rising in swaying columns to the height of 60 or 100 feet. Upon the slightest breath of wind, however, they descended to the ground, shortly afterwards rising in countless millions, until as with rolling banks of vapour the entire landscape was blotted from our view. Our line of march for the next two miles was through a forest of lofty spruce trees. Nothing could be more impressive than the total silence that everywhere prevailed under the sombre shadows of the ever-greens; no voice of bird or beast or insect broke the stillness of the air and even our footfalls were rendered noiseless by the thick carpet of springy moss which covered the ground and climbed ambitiously for two or three feet up the tree trunks. About twelve o'clock we arrived at Mica Lake and found that it was an exceedingly shallow sheet of water, about four miles across, with a circular outline, and faced along its northeastern shore by a series of low, yellow cliffs. Directly in the centre of the lake a large boulder rested, litting its shining apex some 35 to 40 feet above the surface of the water, while surrounding its base there clustered a score of smaller boulders. The sea-gulls, which are represented by eight or nine species, seemed to be the only living creatures visible, but Jake informed me that in the early morning great number of swans and pelicans could be seen here. Soon the spicy odor of frying bacon mingled with the fragrant fumes of boiling tea, ascended in the spreading branches of the venerable birch under which we were reclining.

I asked the Indian why he threw a stone out into the lake immediately after reaching its shore. "Well Nitch,—fact is—I dawn't knaw much about it," he replied with some embarrassment, "but all the Indians give something; skins or tobacco something. When they not got nothing like me they chuck them a stone." "Yes, I know, but why do they do so." "You see Nitch, its jes' this way, when these wendigos -you say gawsts—when they come to scare you some dark night—well they won't come if you have been good to them and give them plenty things. They live in the big stone and they live in the mountains here." "Well, but Swaps, why don't you throw the stones at them when they come to scare you," I suggested as we reshouldered our packs. "Don't you think, that if you hit them rather hard you would drive them away?" But Jake shook his head and marched on in silence. After a while he remarked with the tone of one who has meditated deeply on what he is saying. "Boy, there's plenty things I dawn't knaw, but I would like you to tell me, how do you say con-stit-chew-shinal, and where is Javion Island? I think it is at Africa and Asia or near there." I replied that he had answered the questions, as well as I myself could have possibly done, at which he was immensely delighted and informed me that he always took prizes when he went to school.

Presently we arrived at the first of the low steep hills, which compose an area of about 15 square miles. At one time the entire surface of the country had been clothed with a dense growth of thrifty birch trees, but a recent fire had killed every one of them, and when the delicate rootlets, which held them in the shallow soil of decomposed rock, were dry and brittle, they were overturned by the wind, and now lay piled one on the other in bewildering confusion, making it not only difficult but rather dangerous to travel in that region. The hills were composed of gypsum throughout and were pierced by holes and caverns in every direction, some of which were filled with ice, and others with water; very often these caves descended for fifteen or twenty feet in a perpendicular direction, or nearly so, and then taking a sharp turn would reappear in the bottom of a ravine some distance away. Into one of these holes the direct rays of the sun entered, and through the limped water there could be seen capacious caverns extending under the hill, while the alabaster walls were lined with clusters of glittering crystals. Indian hunters upon viewing this phenomenon had brought back the report, and three or four expeditions had gone to this place in the expectation of finding silver ore, but they discovered nothing but gypsum and "mica," as they called the cleavable gypsum crystals.

Upon the surface of the hills were strewn in great profusion granite and limestone boulders, the latter being of a rich yellow color and clayey texture and containing a great variety of fossils. There was also a small percentage ordinary Lake Manitoba limstone boulders. After wandering about for a few hours Jake called my attention to the fact that "We got to make tracks, if we want to git to the lake camp to-night." We accordingly made tracks, but darkness had reached the lake shore, and Jake insisted that we should camp beside the bleached skeleton of an abandoned Red River cart. He evidently derived a certain sense of security from the presence of that ancient vehicle, and I suggested that if any wendigos were to come to terrify us from their rightful stamping grounds, we would turn one of the wheels, a couple of creates from which being enough to cow any ordinarily constituted spook. In preparing supper we had some difficulty about the water, as the lake was without an outlet, the action of the wind during the afternoon had disturbed the fine sediment, which in the form of impalpable dust was now suspended in the water. There was comfort, however, in knowing that the extraneous material in this case was strictly mineral. After the meal, Jake began to show symptoms of profound meditation, for twenty minutes he sat gazing earnestly into the campfire, and then with grave deliberation, uttered the following words: "Boy—I know some strange, strange things—about these mountains.—I dawn't tell nawbody much—queer things.—I hunted here long ago—to kill bear—it was nearly winter—the leaves were coming off the trees—I heard a strange noise—'Too-too-too'—very loud—jes' like a whistle of the mill—it came from a hole in the ground.—I tell you, boy, that noise came from under the earth—in the waters under the earth—don't you remember the first comman'ment, about animals under the earth?—Some Indians heard the noise after—I tell you, even wise people dawn't understan' everything.

There followed a great deal more in the same strain, and as I crawled under the cart for the night, I noticed that the framework was rather loose. I never fully realized the looseness of the framework, until I suddenly woke up with 325 pounds of timbers (in a much looser condition) on top of me. Jake laughed heartily over my misfortune, but his unseemly cachinations ceased, when we discovered that our provisions, utensils, and the gun had disappeared. I have no doubt that the disaster of the cart was in some way connected with the disappearance of these goods. Old Jake was frantic upon perceiving the loss of his gun, which had been his faithful companion for more than 35 years, and without which he could neither earn a livelihood nor purchase another! and even before daylight he had discovered the track of the thief, and had ascertained that he was an Indian, and alone. The chase which followed was short, sharp and decisive. The marauder in order to throw us off the scent, had made for that part of the country, which was most difficult of access by reason of fallen trees, but the best moose hunter in Fairford was on his trail, hungry for breakfast, and thirsting for revenge, presenting to the world the most active and energetic spectacle that human circumstances can well produce; the spectacle of an Indian fully aware that his chances for breakfast are in direct ratio to his activity. Jake rushed ahead, traversing huge piles of fallen trees, leaping chasms, and dashing through brushwood at the pace that was truly wonderful, and I was half a mile behind when he reached the cave, into which the fugitive had fled. We had a short consultation, and it was decided that Jake should make a smoke at the mouth of the cave, while I watched the other end, which was at the top of the hill, and about 70 yards distant. I had my baggage with me, also about 30 feet of stout cord, to form a noose at the end was the work of a moment, and to throw the loop over the narrow aperture, making the other end fast to a log, took even less time. Soon the smoke poured out in a dense brown stream, and after a few minutes, a black head appeared indistinctly visible in the smoke. I jerked the line the noose slipped tightly around his neck, but the next instant it was snatched forcibly from my hands, and snapped in two, while a dull leaden thud betokened the sudden arrival of something at the bottom of the hole. I immediately hurried off to the ravine where Jake was, and while I was shouting to him, an Indian rushed out of the smoke, violently colliding with him, and they both fell to the ground together. The stranger was the first to rise and he soon disappeared in the bushes. My guide was quite unhurt and the first thing he did was to secure the gun and the other things which were left a short distance within the cave. When I again told him what had happened, he was sure that it was a bear I had trapped. We shortly found that this was the case, and Jake came with the cart the next week and secured the meat. Upon returning to the lake shore, I was fortunate enough to come across a vertical section of rock, the discomposed face having been cracked off by the proceding winter's frost; it showed that the gypsum had been deposited in mounds, as well as horizontally, and that there was a regular stratification in either case. The region that I have described contains nearly every variety of gypsum; the most valuable and most abundant being alabaster.

The journey homeward was one of continual interest throughout, the most enjoyable feature being a moonlight sail on Lake St. Martin. I parted with Jake at the mouth of Fairford river, taking a short cut through the timber to the mill.—[Manitoba College Journal.

She—"Do you play cards for money?" He (with recollections of his recent losses)—"I don't think I do."

WEST KOOTENAY.

Some Interesting Information About the Riches of Lardeau.

There is probably no section of the Pacific slope towards which so much attention is directed just now as the mining regions of British Columbia. Any information regarding them is eagerly looked for by almost everyone, and the following points gathered from Mr. J. W. Haskins will have special weight as coming from one who has been a pioneer in many of those rich districts.

"The difficulty so far," said he, "is that the country has suffered to a considerable extent from misrepresentation. Too many of those who have interests in a certain section have endeavored to build up their own portion of the country by pulling down all the remainder, forgetting that in so doing they are only doing something which in the end will result almost as much to the injury of themselves as to that of those of whom they are speaking disparagingly. The country is certainly big enough and rich enough to allow each section to stand on its own merits.

"There can be no doubt but that the West Kootenay country is bound to come to the front. One has only to become acquainted with the immense bodies of ore which extend all through the Lardeau and Slocan districts to be sure of this. I first entered the Lardeau long before the railroad and have been identified with it ever since. During that time I have spoken to many old time mining men and with one accord they agree that in no place they have ever seen were there such outcrops of mineral-bearing ledges as are found in this place. Unlike many other sections of the country, no very deep prospecting is required, as in many instances the claims are really mines from the grass roots down. Although the ores are somewhat richer in the extreme southern portion of West Kootenay, those in the north show as a rule better ore bodies and more clearly defined leads.

"The principal difficulty at present is the lack of proper means of transportation and communication, but this we are overcoming as rapidly as possible. We are now endeavoring to have a wagon road built from Arrow lake to Trout lake, which would be a very valuable improvement, and open up a number of rich claims.

"The C.P.R. will build from Nakusp to the forks of Carpenter creek, a branch line that will pass through Lardeau, and they will also build from Revelstoke to the head of the Upper Arrow lake. These, with a short line from the north arm of the Arrow lake to Trout lake, a distance of about twelve miles, will give that section direct communication with the ore markets of the world. In fact it will give a choice of two routes, either south to Spokane or north over the main line of the C.P.R.

"I have closed out all my claims to an English syndicate, which will begin the active work of developing them in the spring, and, in a short time, I will return to that section in the interests of the C.P.R.

"The Lardeau Pass, which is very level, runs diagonally through the mineral belt of West Kootenay, and will be on the line of teh proposed road. Though the country is comparatively unexplored—so much so that Mr. Stewart, an engineer of the C. P. R., and I have been forced to prepare an entirely new map of this region, so inaccurate were all former ones—the developments are quite sufficient to warrant the building of the railroad, and there is no doubt but that it will go through.

"One point which I think has not been previously mentioned is that West Kootenay has a great future in lumber as well as minerals. Fish creek, Duncan's river and Lardeau are all heavily timbered, and on every hand one meets with extensive growths of pine, fir, spruce and cedar, which in time are bound to be very valuable.

"Several mines have been working during the winter, and there is now some $175,000 worth of ore at Kootenay lake awaiting transportation. There will no doubt be a grand rush to West Kootenay in the spring, and by next fall the country "wont know itself," unless I am much mistaken.

Obeying Instructions.

Mike Welsh had been recommended to Simpson as a fit man to assist in taking care of horses and cows; so Mike was hired, and placed in charge. One morning, Simpson who had made ready to start off with his milk-cart, said to him:

"Mike. You may give the cows some oatmeal this morning; and be sure you give my best milker an extra quantity."

"The best milker, is it sir?"

"Yes; you know the old cow that gives the most milk?"

"Bedad, I think I do, sir."

"Well, you give her four quarts of the mash."

"All right, sir. I'll do that same."

On the evening of that day, Simpson had occasion to go to the old wooden pump in the yard. He tried the handle, but it wouldn't work. The pump seemed to be entirely choked up. Finally he discovered that all the upper part was loaded with something very nearly resembling oatmeal mash.

"Mike," said he, "what is the matter with this pump?"

"The pump, is it, sir?"

"Yes. How came this oatmeal mash in here?"

"Sure, sir, I put it in meself."

"You stupid blockhead, why did you do that?"

"It was yerself that told me, sir."

"Why, you thick-headed rascal, what do you mean?"

"Don't be in a passion, master. Did ye not tell me to give yer best milker an extra quantity of the mash? And where in all the world is the crathur that gives so much milk to yer cans as does this old pump?"

CRAPE OVER HIS DAUGHTER'S MARRIAGE.

Queer Action of Charles Simons, a Milwaukee Anarchist.

A Milwaukee, Wis., dispatch says:—Charles Simons hung crape, a big rosette, and streamers of white on the front door of the little millinery store at No. 315 Reed street to-day because his daughter, Miss Amanda Simons, had married. The daughter was in charge of the store until yesterday, when she married a man from Marion named Goldberg, a dealer in live stock. Simons commanded his daughter to leave their dwelling this morning. He then placed her trunk in the street. His next move was to visit the establishment of Undertaker Pratt, where he secured the crepe, and with it ornamented the door of his daughter's shop. Then he stood out upon the sidewalk and proclaimed in a loud voice that his daughter was dead. Simons has been known as an eccentric character for many years. He is an Anarchist and with others was arrested for inciting the labor riots of 1886. In his house was found a small-sized arsenal. He was sentenced to the House of Correction and after his release he went to live with his daughter.

PERISHING IN THE DANUBE.

The River Overflows Its Banks and Wipes Out a Village.

A Vienna despatch says:—A terrible calamity has overtaken the village of Gergely, near the town of Paks in Hungary, on the river Danube, about sixty miles south of Budapest. Owing to a sudden rise of the Danube the 1,600 inhabitants of Gergely found the mud huts in which they lived surrounded by a waste of waters. The frail dwellings gradually yielded before the furious current which was continually rising, and the people took refuge in the church and school, which were constructed of stronger materials, hoping that these buildings would be able to hold out against the flood. The people, led by their pastor, offered up earnest prayers for safety, and mothers and children clung to the altar, beseeching the intercession of the saints.

They saw their homes disappearing in the raging stream, and the swelling waters began to beat against the church and school building with such fury that at last they decided that to remain would mean the destruction of all of them, while if they fled, some at least might escape. Opening the doors, they started out into the flood, which surged nearly to the waists of grown-up people. Fathers and mothers carried their children, and the sick and feeble were helped along by those who were stronger. They fled as fast as they could in the direction of Paks, the swift and boiling current pursuing them in their flight. One mother, with five children, sank in the waters and perished. Many others, the number of whom is as yet unknown, were drowned, and the survivors reached Paks in a most deplorable condition.

The people of Paks gave the fugitives all the succor possible, although deeply concerned for their own safety, as the Danube is twenty feet above its normal height. Nothing can be done toward recovering the bodies of those who have perished until the river retires within its usual channel, and it is believed that many have been swept miles away. They is no doubt that the number ad is very large.

A Hen With a Memory.

A well-to-do farmer in a little village in Hertfordshire has a nine-year-old hen on his farm that has a good memory.

The first brood she ever hatched was from a setting of ducks' eggs. She was exceedingly proud of her family, and after they were a few days old she wandered with them through the farmyard towards a neighboring pond. The ducklings no sooner came in sight of the pond than they toddled towards it, unmindful of the calls of their hen mother or her distressed agitation.

They plunged into the water, and at once were in the full enjoyment of their natural element.

The hen ran up and down the sides, calling frantically to her brood, and manifesting her distress is various ways. But the ducklings paid no attention to her, and sported their fluffy bodies about on the water.

By-and-by, seeing that no harm came to her brood from their contact with the (to her) dangerous water, the hen quieted down, and it was not long before she was enjoying the antics of the ducklings in the pond as much as they were themselves. She watched them intently, occasionally giving low and contented clucks, until the ducks were satisfied with their sport and came out and rejoined their guardian, who led them back home again.

Every day after that the hen took her brood to the pond bright and early, and stood by and watched them sporting in the water with as plain evidences of enjoyment of the scene as actions could give. She continued to take daily pleasure in watching the young ducks in the water until they grew out of her care, and even then she occasionally strolled down to the pond for an hour or so and watched them as they swam.

The next spring this hen was set on eggs of her own kind, and hatched out a fine brood of chicks. The first thing she did when she got around with her new family was to lead the chicks down to the pond.

She seemed to be surprised when they showed no inclination to get in the water, and tried to coax them in. Not succeeding in that, she picked up a chick in her bill and dropped it into the pond. She stood and watched the struggles of the chick in the water until it was drowned. That seemed to be a disappointment to her. She picked up another chicken and dropped it in. That one struggled in the same way, and soon died. This seemed to enrage the hen, and she grabbed another chick, tossed it in the water, then another, and threw it in, and evidently intent on drowning the whole brood in the pond in her disappointed rage, when one of the family, who had noticed the strange action of the hen, ran to the rescue and drove the hen and the rest of the brood to the house and shut them up.

The hen has hatched a brood of chickens every year since, and to test her recollection of her enjoyment of her first brood of ducklings in the pond she has been permitted to run at large with her broods. Not once has she failed to lead them to the pond and try to induce them to go into the water, ending up by grabbing a chick and tossing it in, when she is driven off and shut up again.

If this hen has no memory, what has she got?

A British Polar Expedition.

A British Polar expedition, led by Mr. Frederick G. Jackson, will, if possible, sail for Franz Josef Land this summer, and winter there, inasmuch as it has been demonstrated that the utilisation of Franz Josef Land as a base and line of march for northern advance would be attended with success, either partial or entire. In the first place, Franz Josef Land has been held by the best Arctic authorities to be accessible in any ordinary year; in the second place, it has been shown to be a country of large extent, extending northward; and in the third place, the winter is comparatively mild, and such an abundance of animal life exists as to preclude, in all probability, any attacks from scurvy. The expedition proposes, on reaching the southern coast of Franz Josef Land, to establish a depot which will form its base of future work; to have made before the summer begins to fail a reconnoitre northward, which may enable it to reach a point north of the Austrian limit, 82deg 2min north; and in the following spring to again advance northward and establish a depot in latitude 84deg, or if possible 85deg. Hereabouts the land may cease; if so, it would endeavour either to make direct for its ultimate object, or, having secured itself in more or less comfortable quarters, will prepare to winter in that very high latitude, and make the necessary move in the following spring. If the land continue it is quite possible that the whole distance might be covered in that summer. The expedition will be chiefly accomplished by sledge, and there will not be, besides Mr. Jackson, more than ten men.

1,000 YEARS BEFORE COLUMBUS.

The Tradition of the Chinese Voyages to Mexico and Alaska.

There is a man in San Francisco who would strip not only Columbus, but even Lief, the Norwegian, of his honors as the first and only original discoverer of the American continent. He believes that he has indisputable proof that Chinese monks, inspired by missionary zeal, visited, colonized, and attempted to civilize the western coast of America a thousand years or more before Columbus ever dreamed that he might sail the round world round.

This is the Rev. Frederick J. Masters, superintendent of Chinese Missions of the Pacific coast, who has spent seventeen years—nine in China and eight in this country—in active missionary work among the Chinese. During all that time he has given constant study to the Chinese language and literature until he is almost as familiar with them as he is with the English. Among the first things in the Chinese literature that interested him was the tradition of their discovery of America, and he has studied everything he could find in that tongue bearing upon the subject, comparing with their statements the collateral proofs to be found in this country. The result is that he is thoroughly convinced of the truth of the Chinese claim.

"The Chinese story," says Mr. Masters, "is that about 1,400 years ago—possibly a little more—a party of Chinese Buddhist monks, fired by missionary zeal, set out to spread their religion in other lands. This happened at a period, as is shown by the history of the time, when unusual enthusiasm prevailed over the Buddhist religion throughout China. This party of monks—there were five of them—sailed toward the rising sun, and the description of their trips across the Atlantic is definite enough to enable one to trace their routes across the ocean. They found a continent, and one, at least, of them, Lay Sang by name, stayed in that new country forty years, and then returned to his native land, and wrote such a description of that far-away clime, its people, and their customs as plainly shows that it was Mexico he had visited.

"Several trips across the ocean must have been made, and on one of these their vessels must have sailed further north. The tradition of their visit still remains among the Alaskan Indians, and Chinese coins bearing date previous to the time when these voyages were made have been unearthed upon Alaskan shores.

"It is my opinion that a good many Chinese must have made their way to these shores, for the Indian tribes of this Western coast show so much similarity in appearance, language, and customs to the people of that country that it cannot be dismissed as accidental. Take a Chinaman who has worked several years under the burning sun of the interior plains, let his hair grow down around his neck, and wrap a blanket round him, and it is impossible to select him from a group of native Indians. His features and stature are nearly the same, and a summer or two under the hot sun will make his complexion identical. In native stoicism their temperaments are much alike, and there is much similarity between the Chinese language and the tongue of the Digger Indian. The Indian marriage customs, their method of calculation, and certain phases of their religion bear Chinese marks, as if a stronger civilization had attempted to impress itself upon a tribe weaker physically and intellectually, but had only left traces of itself, because its representatives had been comparatively few in number.

"Then the Aztec and Toltec civilizations show unmistakable proofs of Mongolian communication. There is so much in their architecture, their language, and their customs—as far as it is possible to determine what these were—that is closely similar to the Chinese that no other hypothesis than this of Chinese colonization of this coast will explain it."

Pain.

When pain and anguish wring the brow there is at times the presence of the ministering angel whom the poet so pleasantly pictures. If the report from Vienna should prove true as to the new medical discovery there will be much less pain in the world than there has been. Dr. K. L. Schleich assures us that absolute local immunity from pain even during some protracted operations, may be obtained so that a sufferer may remain perfectly conscious during the amputation of his hand or foot without undergoing the tortures so often inflicted on the battle-field, or exposing himself to the danger of syncope ever present in the operating room. This is welcome news in the world of medical science, and there are, it is said, other discoveries in the same direction. There are all sorts of experiments going on, and if in the end suffering humanity is to have no pain what a great deal more medical men will have to say in their own praise! But pain viewed in one light has been regarded as a blessing. It, as a rule, points to some disease which calls for a prompt remedy. And then as to the sentimental aspect of the question, if pain were altogether banished from the sick room the presence of the ministering angel would lose much of its value and its charm. "I can understand much about religion," said a doubter on one occasion, "but I cannot understand why pain is permitted." If it is as a finger to indicate the seat of a disease it is to be hoped that its banishment will not become universal. But there may not, after all, be half so much in the reported discovery as is supposed.

Destruction of the Slave Trade in Central Africa.

The partition of Africa among the European powers, as will have been seen, was the first effective blow dealt to the slave trade in inner Africa. The east coast, whence a few years ago the slavers marched in battalions to scatter over the wide interior of the continent for pillage and devastation, is to-day guarded by garrisons of German and British troops. The island of Zanzibar, where they were equipped for their murderous enterprises, is under the British flag. Trading steamers run up and down the Tana and Jub rivers are being navigated by British steamers; two lines of stations secure communications inland for 300 miles from the sea. Major von Wissman is advancing upon Lake Tanganyika. Herr Boorchert is marching upon Lake Victoria; Captain Williams is holding Uganda. These results have followed very rapidly the political partition of the continent.

The final blow has been given by the act of the Brussels Antislavery Conference, lately ratified by the powers, wherein modern civilization has fully declared its opinions upon the question of slavery, and no single power will dare remain indifferent to them, under penalty of obloquy and shame,—[Henry M. Stanley, in Harper's Magazine for March.

It won't help your own crop at all to sit on the fence and count the weeds in your neighbour's field.