

perhaps no less definite than in the case of silver, the relative value of the skins is as above quoted. Of course, if a skin is imperfect, has holes, is cut, or ragged, a deduction is made, just as a silver dollar with a hole punched on one side will pass for only eighty cents.

Outside of Venice, a man who has never seen a horse is a rarity; and nowadays most people have, at one time or another, seen a steam-engine, while everybody is supposed to have seen money. But in Edmonton I saw a man who, previous to that day, had seen neither of these three

converted into money for his support, at Winnipeg, where he intends to settle. This man, old in years, in experience and knowledge of the world is younger than the veriest child. The journey from Fort McPherson to Edmonton had lasted forty days.

"Captain Bell knows this," said Boilon; "knows that we are only half-way to Winnipeg, yet he says we will arrive there to-morrow."

With this the old man shook his head, as though pained to find his old friend, Captain Bell, guilty of such mendacity;



CALGARY, FROM NORTH OF BOW RIVER.

instruments of civilization. He was Boilon, a half-breed French Indian, born in the north, and for thirty-three years interpreter for the Hudson's Bay Company, at Fort McPherson, on the McKenzie river, near the Arctic circle. The only money Boilon knew was the "skin" money of the north. His salary of four hundred skins was paid in hides, with which he could make purchases at Fort McPherson just as easily as one in New York can buy with gold. In addition to the four hundred skin, he received annually two hundred pounds each of flour and sugar. Beyond Smith Portage there is not a drop of spirituous drink to be had; there are no clubs, no operas, no means of squandering wealth, in consequence of which Mr. Boilon, at the end of his thirty-three years' service, finds himself with several thousand skins, to be

for Boilon was incapable of realizing that the "houses on wheels," as he called the cars, could carry him the second half of his journey in as many hours as the first half had required days. When the train started, his face paled; he clutched the arms of his seat, and finally sat down on the ear floor, frightened out of his wits, and declaring he knew that the "house on wheels" was going to shake to pieces.

On first arriving in Alberta, one is apt to fancy the country a trifle to the north. A country that is five hundred miles north of Quebec, in the latitude of Labrador, is *not* in the tropics; yet, only a short stay in Edmonton is necessary to convince the traveler that, if not in the south, he is, at any rate, not very far north. The Hudson's Bay Company officials regard Edmonton as in the far south. Captain