

CANADA AND THE GREAT NORTH-WEST.

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[Delivered before the members of the Society at the Salford Town Hall, on Monday, April 20th, 1885.]

I take it that two of the principal functions of our Society consist in the first place in encouraging new discoveries and in recording them when they are made, and in the second place—and in my opinion it is by no means an unimportant section of our duties—in bringing before the public what is already known. I am here this evening not to add anything new to our knowledge, but to put before you as shortly as I can the general impressions made upon my mind during two visits to the British Dominion of Canada. I should like to say that those impressions are mere impressions of a traveller passing swiftly on his way through a land which will be the home of millions of our race. We will begin our story on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean (Fig. 1) and work our way steadily westward, making out as we go the physical character of the country, till we arrive at the Pacific. The traveller, as he gets nearer and nearer to the coast of North America, and arrives near the straits of Belle Isle, some 2,234 miles from Liverpool, is, as a rule, in the summer, confronted by fleets of icebergs, and as many as forty have been counted in the straits which are bounded on the north by the inclement shores of Labrador. We will suppose that the traveller has run the gauntlet of the bergs and finds himself inside the great estuary of the St. Lawrence—one of the most magnificent estuaries in the world. The steamer takes him rapidly and swiftly a distance of something like 700 miles, until he arrives at the royal city of Quebec. (See maps.) As he goes up the estuary there rise on the northern shores the rounded and ice-worn hills which in the interior arrive at an altitude of 3,600 feet, and may be dignified by the name of mountains. If he happens to pass along the coast in the autumn he will be struck by the beautiful tints of the foliage, bright red and bright yellow, the yellow almost shining like gold, and the whole looking in the far distance like a brilliantly-coloured Turkey carpet. There are nestling in the borders of the lower St. Lawrence a village here and a church there, and here and there a clearing, showing what a very small impression man has made upon that vast country. There are small villages and homesteads studding the great rocky and inclement region north of the estuary, and far away to the north, beyond the inhabited border, there is a comparatively unknown