

production, as it is to persuade a white lover of the *fungi* to forego a single one, out of a neat little mushroom patch. In addition to the "snake root," we have the inner bark of a wild plum tree, the *prunus virginians*, and the Indians often use this as a decoction to decrease the cough of consumptive patients. It has not however the medical strength which the plant possesses in the middle states, and consequently is not exported from here. We have also where heavy woods are found, the *ginseng*, but whether the Chinese, who are the sole users of it, owing to the belief that it produces long life, have ceased to have that faith in it, or whether the large production of it in Minnesota and Wisconsin has affected the price, certain it is that it is now no longer gathered for export from this province.

A Journey to the Youcan.

WRITTEN THIRTY YEARS AGO.

THE packet from the far north, brought in 1862 the following interesting and valuable communication, from the Rev. W. W. Kirby, who shortly before left the Red River settlement on a missionary tour to the far north:

"As you are interested in the spread of the gospel among the Aborigines of the country, a few remarks therefore, may not be out of place or unwelcome to you, upon a journey I have just made to the Youcan, with short descriptive sketches of the character and habits of the Indian tribes of that part of the country. Should incidents apparently trifling in themselves be noticed, it will not be without design, for in savage life they often prove the truest indices to character, and help us to understand much that we might otherwise fail to comprehend.

I left home on the 2nd of May,

in a canoe paddled by a couple of Indians, belonging to my mission here. We followed the ice down the noble Mackenzie, staying a while with the Indians wherever we met them, and remained three or four days at each of the forts along the route. On the 11th of June I left the zone, in which my life had hitherto been passed, and entered the genial arctic one. Then however, it was pleasant enough. The immense masses of ice piled on each side of the river sufficiently cooled the atmosphere, as to make travelling enjoyable, while the sun shed upon us the comfort of light nearly the whole twenty-four hours. And as we advanced further northward he did not leave us at all. Frequently did I see him describe a complete circle in the heavens.

Between Point Separation and Pool's River we met several parties of Esquimaux, all of whom from their thievish propensities gave us a great deal of trouble, and very glad we were to escape out of their hands without loss or injury. They are a fine looking race of people, and from their general habits and appearance I imagine them to be much more intelligent than the Indians. And if proof were wanting I think we have it in a little girl, who was brought up from the coast, little more than three years ago, and who now speaks and reads the English language with considerable accuracy. The men are tall, active, and remarkably strong, many of them having a profusion of whiskers and beard. The women are rather short, but comparatively fair, and possess very regular and by no means badly formed features. The females have a very singular practice of periodically cutting the hair from the crown of their husband's head (leaving a bare place precisely like the tonsure of a Roman Catholic priest) and fastening the spoil to their own, wear it in bunches on each side of their