

realities, we should have less to do in keeping up appearances.

There is an aspect of the Concord philosopher's doctrine of simplicity that ought to be studied by every tired, toiling housekeeper. He makes one see very plainly the folly of over-furnishing and over-ornamenting, so that the best part of one's time goes in the care of these furnishings and ornaments. One beautiful picture, and one beautiful vase with a wealth of roses, or even a cluster of marguerites, would be worth the whole miscellaneous clutter of ornaments, so called, in many a room, and not require a tenth part of the care in arranging and dusting. If we would come face to face with the question, How much is there in our houses that we really do not need? (that is, that does not minister to our well-being, comfort or pleasure) I fancy a pretty effective clearance would be in order, provided we had the courage to follow our convictions. Of course, these arguments are not applicable in the same way to people whose wealth permits them to hire other hands to arrange their tidies and Japanese fans, and dust their Dresden china. They may indulge their taste for bric-à-brac to their hearts' content, provided they make sure that, when they buy an ornament, it is in the true sense an ornament, and not merely "something to put in a bare place." That sort of thing is not much better than Mrs. Parvenu's action in going to buy a globe for her library and insisting that it should be square, so as to fit into the corner. But the people to whom Thoreau's message appeals most directly are those who are exhausting themselves with a round of petty cares, half of which might be avoided. The function of an ornament is to give pleasure, and when, by their multiplicity, they give the housekeeper more pain in the care of them than pleasure in the contemplation, it is high time they were dethroned.

Hundreds of weary men and women might gain a reprieve from the deadly work of worry if they would but heed the voice of the wise naturalist and accept thankfully his gospel of emancipation.

Montreal.

HELEN FAIRBAIRN.

MISS BAKER AND SIR JOHN.

Miss Hulda Baker, the elocutionist, arrived home. says the *Syracuse Standard*, from Thousand Island Park last evening. Miss Baker is the fair Syracusan who made herself famous at Kingston, Ont., by accosting Sir John Macdonald, Premier of Canada, and assuring him that in case he came to the United States he would be heartily received. Miss Baker gives this account of an incident which is international in character:

"I am much mortified at being heralded over the country, and had no thought of anything only saying in as private a way as I could what I did, after having my patriotism aroused by the Premier and his suite (especially the Premier) saying such hard things of the United States. I had a position on the grand stand where I could hear all that was said. When they had finished speaking and were about to leave, the Premier happened to turn and pass me, and, quick as thought, I extended my hand and bowing and smiling said to him: 'Excuse me, sir, but I am a loyal American, and we open our doors wide to you and you shall come in and dwell peacefully with us if you will.' Amid great applause he laughingly replied, as he shook my hand: 'Of course you would let such a good-looking old fellow as I in?' To which I replied: 'Certainly, and I will stand in the door.' Then more laughter and applause, and Sir John immediately offered himself as my escort and introduced me all round, and, in the company of the Premier and his suite, I was escorted through the buildings and into outside attractions. When it was time for me to take the boat for Thousand Island Park he very gallantly placed me in a carriage and I was gone, not expecting anything from it but a little pleasantries. But as I learn the press has made much of it, and the reporters did not always get it as it was, I gladly tell you the whole proceeding just as it occurred."

PEACE RIVER COUNTRY.

Now that the Federal Government has announced the intention of opening up that wonderful region by roads, treaties with the Indians and Mounted Police, any facts are valuable and this very interesting account of a trip into it, given the *Battleford Herald* by Mr. Emil Richard is full of information.

Separated from the prairie region of the Saskatchewan by two hundred miles of wooded country, this land has remained to this day a practically unexplored region.

Before any extensive settlement can be made, a cart road has to be opened through thick woods and numerous swamps, from some point on the Athabasca River to the Hudson's Bay Co.'s posts of the Peace River, which are supplied by way of Athabasca Landing, with York boats pulling up stream the Athabasca and Lesser Slave Rivers. Numerous rapids make the navigation available and certain for two months only, June and July, and it is a hard and expensive job at best. The distances are, sixty-three miles on the Athabasca, forty-one on the Lesser Slave River, and seventy-five on Lesser Slave Lake. From the west end of the Lake to the Peace River, a good cart road has been made by the Hudson's Bay Co.

I left Battleford in the beginning of June. To avoid pulling up stream from the Athabasca Landing I made my way west of Edmonton to the Pembina River, which empties into the Athabasca about thirty miles above the mouth of the Lesser Slave.

The Pembina is a stream of fair size, but exceedingly crooked and full of rapids. It will never be made navigable for steam boats unless at high water. Its length from this point in a straight line is about seventy miles, but it must be six or seven times as much by following the tortuous course of the stream. The country is wooded all the way, with small prairie patches on the east side, and the soil is generally good. Just before entering the Athabasca my companion killed a bear from the boat, but a succession of dangerous rapids forced us to leave our booty untouched.

No prairies, small or large, are to be seen on the Athabasca down to the Lesser Slave. This latter river is about two hundred feet wide and from two to five deep, with numerous rapids in the first eighteen miles, but none above to the lake. The valley, which is one mile wide, is partly open and covered with luxuriant grasses, but these prairie patches do not extend beyond the rim of the banks, and have likely been caused by the fires of the Hudson's Bay Co.'s boatmen. All the region along the Pembina to the west end of Slave Lake, nearly two hundred miles, may be considered as thickly wooded with poplar and spruce of all sizes, but with a considerable proportion large enough for sawing and building purposes.

The population of the Peace River country is very sparse. The largest settlement is at the west end of Lesser Slave Lake, where there is a Hudson's Bay post, two or three small traders, and Catholic and Protestant mission.

There are very few Indians at this post. Most are Cree-speaking Half-breeds, descendants of French and Iroquois voyageurs who settled there long ago. They speak neither French nor English, though their names are French, but they must have been nick-named or re-named according to their peculiarities of mind or body, Indian fashion, in witness thereof such names as Etienne La Douceur, Baptiste La Malice, Michel Courte Oreille. The last named, though, must have retained his father's name, as Michel Les Grand Oreilles would be much more appropriate.

All are living by fishing and hunting. The lake is teeming with excellent fish, and as all kinds of luxuries are totally unknown, very little exertion is needed to procure the few necessities that can be had. Their hunting grounds are around the lake. As fish is their principal article of food, and easy to procure, they seldom venture away from the lake shores. There is north of the lake, between the Peace and the Athabasca, a wooded country two hundred miles square, which is never hunted and which is said to abound with beavers.

No farming is done, with the exception of a few small potato patches; no farming implements are to be seen; and no cattle, except a few owned by the Hudson's Bay Co. There are quite a number of horses, but dogs are used, and every family possesses a half-a-dozen or more. They would fain be thought spoon-fed dogs, as in our absence they swam to our boat and carried away spoons, knives, cups, etc., leaving nothing but a bag of flour in a demoralized condition.

The prairie country may be said to begin at the west end of these prairies which are of small extent. Extensive "brulés" are to be seen in places, showing that the country is undergoing a rapid process of denudation by successive fires. Forty miles west of Lesser Slave Lake the Smoky River is crossed. It is a stream of considerable size, with grassy banks four hundred feet high. On its west side begins the "Grande Prairie"—a beautiful plain with luxuriant vegetation and a rich soil, gay with a profusion of wild flowers, and dotted with small groves of spruce and poplar. This "Grande Prairie" is bounded on the south by the Wapita River, and extends north all the way with few interruptions to near Dunvegan, on the Peace. This extensive country has all the necessary requirements to make of it a prosperous settlement, and no doubt it will be the first to be occupied. Before reaching Dunvegan a belt of wood six miles wide, mostly composed of large spruce trees and poplars, is crossed, when we unexpectedly emerge on the high banks of the Peace River—the great Unjaga of the Beaver Indians—flowing in a broad tranquil stream in a valley two or three miles wide, and with banks seven hundred feet high.

The great prairie country, however, begins at Dunvegan and extends west to near the foot of the Rockies, and north past Fort Vermillion towards the Hay and Liard Rivers and Great Slave Lake, or about three miles north of Dunvegan. The Peace is a deep, broad tranquil stream, navigable at all times for large steamboats from Fort St. John, near the foot of the Rockies, to within seventy-five miles of Lake Athabasca. Such is not the case, however. Some insignificant channels find their way to the lake, but the main body, reinforced by a powerful auxiliary from Lake Athabasca, pursues its straight course to Great Slave Lake, and even to the ocean; the Mackenzie itself being considered as a continuation of the same.

Lake Athabasca is 225 miles long, lying east and west. If a short canal were built at the fall above mentioned, there would be an uninterrupted easy navigation of 600 miles, from the foot of the Rockies to the east end of Lake Athabasca, whence a railway 350 miles long, through flat and rocky country, would lead to Fort Churchill on Hudson's Bay. Such a railway would open and give easy access to the whole northern country, and is one of the certainties of the not far distant future. I may add that 400 miles more of railway, from Fort St. John to Port Essington, on the Pacific coast or 760 miles in all—would (with 600 miles of navigation) form a complete transcontinental route from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific coast.

The Astor Library contains among its historic relics a copy of a letter of Columbus, of which only six are known to be in existence. One of these copies sold for \$700 at auction sale in London in 1872. This letter was written by Columbus at Lisbon, and is addressed to Raphael Sanchis, Treasurer to the King of Spain. A Latin version of the letter was printed in Rome. The letter is descriptive of his travels and discoveries. It was presented to the library by Mr. W. W. Astor.

Cost of electric lighting in Canadian cities and towns:—

	Cost per lamp per night.
Galt	29 cents.
Aylmer	25 "
Paris	26 "
Chatham	30 "
Ingersoll	25 "
Toronto	55 "