

## Our Young Colonists in the West

SOME boys like writing, others do not. Our experience goes to show that those who like letter-writing, and will write for the satisfaction and pleasure of so doing, are distinctly in the minority. When, therefore, we desired to obtain from a goodly number of our boys throughout the Western Provinces an account from themselves of their individual experiences, and of their impressions of the country generally, we realized that we must offer some inducement in order to get them to take their pens in hand and to set their brains at work. We exercised ourselves for some time as to what we could offer in the shape of a premium that would be within reach of our very limited resources, and at the same time would really induce an appreciable number of our youngsters to comply with our request. It came to us at length as an inspiration that in a country so abounding in game as the North-West, and where every boy and man is more or less a sportsman, a shot-gun would be an article that everyone would appreciate and would make considerable effort to secure. Of course, we knew that some excellent folk would hold up their hands in horror at the idea of offering a boy a gun, and would expect to hear forthwith that the boy had emptied its contents either into his own head or someone else's, but we ourselves are strong believers in the special providence that watches over boys and sailors, and we know enough of our boys in the North-West to feel certain that there are but very few of them who have not already handled a gun, or are in very early expectation of doing so. They are very up to date young gentlemen in all matters connected with the field and we have felt no serious misgivings in holding out the offer of a double-barrelled English shot-gun, to be given as a prize

to the writer of the letter containing the best account of personal experiences in the West, and of the surroundings amongst which he is living, and his plans and prospects for the future. The result of our making this offer has quite equalled and, indeed, far exceeded our expectations. The fish rose eagerly to the bait, and, now that the time has come for making the award, we find ourselves confronted with an enormous pile of manuscript matter, from which the duty devolves upon us to not only select the most deserving composition, but to choose out for the benefit of the readers of *UPS AND DOWNS* the letters that we think will be most representative and best worthy of a place in our columns. The undertaking is one that we approach with considerable reluctance. There are so many letters that have distinct merits of their own, and the writers have evidently taken great pains with, what is to them, an unaccustomed and, probably in some cases, an uncongenial task. We shall have, we know, to disappoint many, inasmuch as our space will not permit of our publishing a tenth of the letters that we should like to reproduce. Those for whose contributions we can find no place will, we are afraid, feel themselves slighted and aggrieved. We are sorry for them, but we cannot help ourselves, and they must be content with our assurance that the non-appearance of their letters is simply owing to the hard force of circumstances, and not from any want of appreciation of their industry and ability.

We now address ourselves to the pile before us, and in doing so we must abandon any attempt at classification, simply taking them as they come and leaving the writers to speak for themselves. The announcement of our award we leave to a later page.