

time issuing from the Geological Survey, is to a considerable extent, a record of original discovery. Many a page is as entertaining as any book of travels and many a year will yet elapse before Canada and Alaska will cease to give us fresh geographical news.

Few people realize the immense labor involved in the thorough study of a new country. Mr. Herbert Ward, who was here from the Congo recently, said that though several hundred white men have lived for ten years past in various parts of the great basin, very little is yet known of the Congo region. When a committee of the Canadian senate, two years ago, gathered all the information they could collect of the great Mackenzie basin, they reported that much of the northern and eastern portion was as little known as the interior of Africa. What a rich opportunity this little-known country is affording to the able and enthusiastic explorers of the scientific bureaus at Ottawa! Here is one of the interesting surprises to which they have treated us.

Some old maps used to show a low range of mountains stretching east and west for hundreds of miles west of Lake Athabasca. If you happen to visit that region on a vacation tour you will look in vain for those mountains. You will find instead an almost illimitable prairie stretching away to the horizon, not in gentle undulations as in Minnesota but as level as a floor. Suddenly a surprising thing will occur. A moment before, you saw nothing but the boundless, verdant sward; the next, without the slightest warning you find yourself standing on the edge of a mighty gorge. Seven hundred to a thousand feet below flows a water-way, a half-mile wide, and the old trappers, paddling up the noble Peace River, looked at the sandstone cliffs far above and called them mountains. If they had had the spirit of the explorer they would have climbed to the top and seen at a glance that they were in a prairie land through which this great chasm has been cut. Some day steamers will float on this wonderfully crooked water-way and they will carry tourists for seven hundred miles from the foot of the Rocky Mountains along this very deep and narrow valley, through which meanders the great stream that is unique among all the rivers in the world.

There are a number of novelties for North American tourists that must be sought alone in Canada. Our alpine regions among the

Rocky Mountains where great glaciers descend for thousands of feet to the lower valleys can be found only north of the international boundary. In time, when the tourist wants the exhilaration of a trip through the Rockies by small boat, he will make his way to the head waters of the Peace River west of the mountains, and for nearly seventy-five miles he will float down the stream, amid the grandest of scenery, the mountains towering above him 5,000 feet on either hand, and all the way he will meet with only one or two small rapids to add a little excitement to the trip. He will not, however, venture into the rapids by which the river, emerging from the mountains, drops to the plain below; for in ten miles the river tumbles a thousand feet and is very grand and turbulent before it enters its narrow gorge and assumes a placidity befitting its name.

By using the steamers which the Hudson Bay Company within a few years has launched upon the Athabasca and Mackenzie Rivers, one may now travel from New York City to the Arctic Ocean along interior routes, carried all the way by steam except for about 335 miles. He will travel by rail to Calgary on the Canadian Pacific, thence 270 miles by wagon to Athabasca Landing where he can take a steamer for over 200 miles to the Grand Rapids of the Athabasca River where sixty miles of land portage are required. At Fort McMurray, the foot of the rapids, a steamer has been running for six years down the river to Lake Athabasca and into the Slave River, to the second and last obstruction, five rapids close together. Below these rapids another steamer has been plying for six years and there is no further interruption of navigation in the 1,037 miles down the Great Mackenzie River to the sea.

In all this vast country from the the Saskatchewan River to the Arctic Ocean our knowledge is confined chiefly to the rivers and the great lakes. Explorers, missionaries, and agents of the Hudson Bay Company know very little of the enormous areas stretching between the water courses. The future will fill the maps with numberless details now wholly lacking; but in broad outline we know the characteristics of the country and they may be very briefly described.

Draw a line from near Cape Bathurst on the Arctic Ocean, almost exactly south-east to Fort Churchill on Hudson Bay. All the country east of this line is barren ground,