

Literary Notices.

THE WILD NORTH LAND.—Being the Story of a Winter Journey with Dogs across Northern North America, by Captain W. F. Butler, F.R.G.S., author of the "Great Lone Land," with illustrations and route map. Montreal, Dawson Bros.

Captain Butler tells us how being disappointed in his desire for African explorations he turned his attention to the American frigid zone, and how he spent several winter months in crossing on foot from the Red River to Lake Athabasca; then up the Peace River through the Rocky Mountains, and southward to the Frazer River. His style is vivid and his record is of great interest from several points of view. We would like to quote many things from the book, but the following passages must suffice :—

SOLITUDE.

He who rides for months through the vast solitudes sees during the hours of his daily travel an unbroken panorama of distance. The seasons come and go; grass grows and flowers die; the fire leaps with tiger bounds along the earth; the snow lies still and quiet over hill and lake; the rivers rise and fall, but the rigid features of the wilderness rest unchanged. Lonely, silent, and impassive; heedless of man, season, or time, the weight of the Infinite seems to brood over it. Once only in the hours of day and night a moment comes when this impassive veil is drawn from its features, and the eye of the wanderer catches a glimpse of the sunken soul of the wilderness; it is the moment which follows the sunset; then a deeper stillness steals over the earth, colors of wondrous hue rise and spread along the western horizon. In a deep sea of emerald and orange of fifty shades, mingled and interwoven together, rose-colored isles float anchored to great golden threads; while, far away, seemingly beyond and above all, one broad flash of crimson light, the parting sun's last gift, reddens upwards to the zenith. And then, when every moment brings a change, and the night gathers

closer to the earth, and some waveless, nameless lake glimmers in uncertain shoreline and in shadow of inverted hill-top; when a light that seems born of another world (so weirdly distant is it from ours) lingers along the western sky, then hanging like a lamp over the tomb of the sun, the Evening Star gleams out upon the darkening wilderness.

It may be only a fancy, and conceit bred from loneliness and long wandering, but at such times the great solitude has seemed to me to open its soul, and that in its depths I read its secrets.

CAMPING OUT ON A WINTER NIGHT.

When the light begins to fade over the frozen solitude, and the first melancholy hoot of the night owl is heard, the traveller in the north looks around for him "a good camping-place." In the forest country he has not long to seek for it; a few dead-trees for fuel, a level space for his fire and his blanket, some green young pines to give him "brush" for his bed, and all his requirements are supplied. The camp is soon made, the fire lighted, the kettle filled with snow and set to boil, the supper finished, dogs fed, and the blankets spread out over the pine brush. It is scarcely necessary to say that there is not much time lost in the operation of undressing; under the circumstances one is more likely to reverse the process, and literally (not figuratively as in the case of modern society, preparing for her bath) to *dress* for the night. Then begins the cold; it has been bitterly cold all day, with darkness; the wind has lulled, and the frost has come out of the cold, grey sky with still, silent rigor. If you have a thermometer placed in the snow at your head the spirit will have shrunken back into the twenties and thirties below zero; and just when the dawn is stealing over the eastern pine tops it will not unfrequently be into the forties. Well, then, that is cold if you like! You are tired by a thirty-mile march on snow shoes. You have lain down with stiffened limbs and blistered feet, and sleep comes to you by the mere force of your fatigue; but never goes the consciousness of the cold from your waking brain; and as you lie with crossed arms and up-gathered knees beneath your buffalo robe, you welcome as a benefactor any short-haired,