

THE NEWER PARTS OF CANADA.

BY CYRUS C. ADAMS.

WHEN Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson Bay Company, testified in a British court that the prairies of Manitoba were unfit for human habitation, few people ventured to differ from this sage conclusion. The Canadian North-West was the congenial stamping-ground of hunters and trappers, for most of the finer furs of commerce were found there; but no one supposed a large part of this vast region could produce the best of wheat, fatten cattle and sheep by the million, and support a numerous and prosperous people.

The fact is, the exploration of the northern half of this continent is still in its early stages. Until a few years ago there had been in Canada no scientific exploration north of Great Slave Lake except along the Arctic Coast. Each annual report of the Canadian Minister of the Interior, every map and volume 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 labour 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 Athabaska. 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