

PEOPLE AND PLACES

LITTLE STORIES BY LAND AND SEA, CONCERNING THE FOLK WHO MOVE HITHER AND THITHER ACROSS THE FACE OF A BIG LAND.

Musk rats and Flour Sacks

NOW that the muskrats of Isle a la Crosse are numerous there is a large trade in flour in that region. This muskrat land is hundreds of miles north of Prince Albert. The staple article of production is muskrat pelts. The principal article of import is flour. When the muskrats are plenty the flour sacks are shipped in by the cart trails and the York boats in large numbers. When muskrats are scarce flour fails also. Thus far beyond the realm of high finance there is a primitive cycle of trade that is as scientific in its economy as the commerce of Montreal and Toronto. Revillon Freres, who are keeping tab on most of the pelts of the north land, bought eighteen thousand muskrat skins in one week at posts tributary to Prince Albert. The place where most of the flour comes from is the big mill of Mr. Joseph Kidd of Prince Albert; and so as the scribe says in his native fashion: "the unexpectedly large fur harvest is thickening the bouillon in ten thousand camp kettles in the great lone land."

Last Wolf Hunt in Old Ontario

THE last timber wolf in southern Ontario has just been killed by a farmer near Glencoe. About ten years ago when a reporter told about a lynx being shot in Rosedale, Toronto, some of the anti-nature-fakirs said it must have been somebody's pet cat that had taken to the woods. So, many folk around Glencoe when they heard about the yellow dog seen by some children—the yellow dog that killed the sheep—said it must be someone's dog that had got lost and gone wild. But the animal was a real timber wolf; one that for years had been mysteriously hanging about some of those swamp lands of second growth in that flat country, probably the last of his race—though rumour says there is another left. So the old relics are disappearing. They might at least have left a wolf or two.

An Historic Old Timer

THERE is a man living in Prince Albert who was one of Riel's prisoners in the Rebellion of 1871. His name is James Stewart. Mr. Stewart came out in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company—away back in 1851. He spent his first year at York Factory. He was sent in charge of an expedition to Regent's Inlet, taking provisions to Dr. Roe, who was in search of traces of Sir John Franklin's party. A few years later he drifted down to Fort Garry and took charge of the Company's stores. Twelve years and he went teaching school at St. James. When the Rebellion broke out he was keeping books for Dr. Schultz. He was taken prisoner by Riel. He saw the shooting of Scott. After the Rebellion he bought the drug store of Dr. Schultz, and for several years ran the business; was also appointed meteorological observer. Nineteen years ago, suffering from rheumatism, Mr. Stewart went to Prince Albert for a dryer climate. He still lives there—much of an invalid, but one of the most interesting citizens of that northern city.

Metlakahla Indians Sing Handel's Messiah

THE Mendelssohn Choir has a serious rival in the far north-west. The Tsimpsian Indians of British Columbia have been hearing Handel's Messiah. This notable event took place at Port Simpson, which place may be said to have the most notable musical season of any place in the known world. Fifty full-blood Indians were in the chorus. They are a choral society. The audience was mostly Aborigines. Port Simpson has about a thousand people; a beautiful spot on the northern shore line of British Columbia. Most of the populace are Tsimpsians— from whom, of course, the place gets its name. The singers were from Metlakahla, Alaska, and they came down by the C. P. R. steamer Princess May to give their cousins of Port Simpson a taste of choral art.

The occasion of this upheaval of native art among the Tsimpsians was a laudable desire to celebrate the life and labours of old William Duncan, the missionary. For some years now the Metlakahla Indians have had a choral society. On January 9th the musicians, with books, instruments, and all the paraphernalia of art came down—just as the Mendelssohn Choir goes to New York and Chicago—to Port Simpson. They were met by a large municipal delegation of Tsimpsians; for these folk have a municipal organisation of their own. The visiting musicians are the descendants of these. They stayed two weeks in the town and gave three performances. A most graphically entertain-

ing description is given by an eye-witness, who speaks thus concerning the Messiah concert:

"The old building is profusely decorated with evergreens and British flags and emblems. On the platform are the singers and orchestra. The girls are dressed in plain white silk. The young men plainly show that they come from a plain and working people. We find none of the operatic adornments around the singers. The five soloists including the trumpeter, cannot be distinguished from the rest. The soloists did their parts very well, and considering their very limited opportunities to acquire any musical education, much less voice culture, they compare well with professional singers anywhere. The organist, as is the case with more than half of the singers, has been to elementary

WITH THE HINTERLANDERS



Ojibways on the Pack Trail



Drying Moose and Deer Meat



A Family of Ojibways

school only, and for a short time early in life; yet he reads and speaks good English, as well as being able to read any musical composition both classical and modern. The director has had better advantages; and although an Indian, yet he possesses a collegiate and university education. The oratorio was performed from the beginning to the end, with the usual omissions, by the Metlakahla Choral Society, with the grace and dignity of a professional organization. Not a single false note was sounded; not a single passage was carelessly handled. The theme of the author was correctly interpreted and put to correct execution. When the Hallelujah Chorus was sung, the audience rose to its feet and

stood gazing upward as if they were actually witnessing something in the skies! After listening to the rendering of the Messiah, the Port Simpson Indians exclaimed, "What grand music! What a grand theme! How well the Metlakahla Choral Society sings!"

Wild Horses on Spirit River

WILD horses are up in the Spirit River country, which is in the Peace River valley. There used to be wild horses in British Columbia. But even the horses are receding from the frontier. These wild steeds are not ordinary foot-hills bronchos, which are wild enough; but they are the descendants of some ancient cobs introduced up in that remote region by the Hudson's Bay Company. Travellers in the Great Bear land, much farther north, tell of dogs up there which are descended from the dogs taken in by the explorer, Sir John Franklin; when that outposter lost his life and left everything behind him. These dogs intermarried with the native wolves and the descendants are as fine a lot of wolf dogs as can be found anywhere. One of these days some frontiersman, who wants to become celebrated in fiction, will get a pack of those wild borean dogs and round up the wild horses of the Spirit River.

Canadians in Massachusetts

THE number of Canadians in and around Boston is almost beyond belief. Exact figures for Massachusetts show that there are in that state 283,302 Canadians, of which nearly half, or 118,247, are French Canadians, 24,715 are from New Brunswick, 10,583 from Newfoundland, 66,131 from Nova Scotia, 13,648 from Prince Edward Island, and 49,978 from other parts of Canada. Living within the limits of the city of Boston there were, in 1905, 49,169 Canadians, 2,105 of them French. The province of Nova Scotia contributes 18,064; Prince Edward Island, 4,550; Newfoundland, 4,326; New Brunswick, 7,219. Most of these Massachusetts Canadians are labouring men. There are not many high financiers and educationists. They are people who know what hard work means, because they were born in a country where the idler gets pushed out. They are good peaceable citizens and are regarded as a valuable asset to the country; much more so than a large percentage of a certain kind of Britishers who come to Canada. There are, however, a few public figures among these expatriates. Police Commissioner Stephen O'Meara is from Prince Edward Island; Henry D. Yerna, chairman of the Charles River basin commission, is from Fredericton, New Brunswick; William Whitman, president of the National Association of Woollen Manufacturers and of the Arlington Mills, comes from Nova Scotia.

Poetry of the Barren Grounds

PERHAPS the first accredited poet to write about the great Barren Grounds of Canada is Mr. Arthur Stringer, who in a recent issue of *Everybody's Magazine*, has this almost pastoral elegy on that subject:

DUSK IN THE BARREN GROUNDS.

The hills lie black and low against the west,
Far northward stretch the valleys of the dead—
Here where Life weary grew and sighed for rest,
And God put all His worn-out world to bed.

For this the silence is where some last word
Was whispered and earth's twilight tale was told,
And Emptiness and Sorrow only were heard
The ghastly cry of ashen things and old.

And through the pallid light three dead pines crown
The plain that lies so like a yellowed page,
And wide and dark the blood-red sun burns down
Beyond each iron hill that aches with age.

Now as Mr. Stringer has never seen the Barren Grounds it is quite likely these charming verses are "pure" poetry. These sombre lands of no trees lie above and about Great Bear Lake, almost inaccessible by any but trained explorers; the hunting grounds of the Yellow Knives and the haunt of the musk-ox and the caribou. Indeed, there are a good many things in that land which the poet has not deigned to notice. Doubtful if any of the pathfinders in that part of the world would recognise anything familiar in the description. Similar verses may be written of almost any vague land, untenanted by crowds of people. Still, there is nothing untrue in the description. The poet has at least escaped the odium of "Canada-faking."