

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY
AND MONTHLY RECORD OF GEOGRAPHY.

On the Athabasca District of the Canadian North-West Territory.

By the Rev. ÉMILE PETITOT.*

Map, p. 688.

SOME nine years ago, I wrote a short paper on the Fur District of Athabasca, which was inserted in the Bulletin of the French Geographical Society for July-September 1875, and was also twice published separately. My subsequent journeys on the Upper Athabasca river and a stay of some months on the lake of the same name, have enabled me to collect fresh topographical, statistical, and historical material on this great district of the Canadian North-west; so that I have had to recast my former account in order to interpolate these recent acquisitions as well as my personal observations.

It will be needless to refer to the works of the first explorers of the region, such as Hearne, Mackenzie, Franklin, Back, Richardson, and others, or even to the more recent 'Wild North Land' of Captain Butler, as the commercial district of Athabasca, which takes its name from the river and lake, has undergone so many modifications during the last decade. In 1879, the Hudson's Bay Company joined a considerable portion of the Lesser Slave Lake and Mackenzie districts to the old Athabasca district, and its boundaries were defined by the dismembered and modified Mackenzie district on the north, the Churchill district on the east, the English River on the south, the Upper Saskatchewan on the south-west, and British Columbia on the west.* From the Buffalo

* It should be observed that since M. Petitot's return to France, Athabasca has been re-defined as one of the four districts of the Prairie Section of the North-West Territories, by order of the Privy Council of Canada dated the 8th May, 1883, in the following words:—"1th. Athabasca. The district of Athabasca, about 122,000 square miles in extent, to be bounded on the south by the district of Alberta; on the east by the line between the 10th and 11th ranges of Dominion Lands townships before mentioned [i.e. the line dividing the 10th and 11th ranges of townships numbered from the fourth initial meridian of the Dominion Lands system of survey, or about 111° 30' W. long.] until in proceeding northward that line intersects the Athabasca river; then by that river and the Athabasca Lake and Slave River to the intersection of the last with the