

A WESTERN JOURNEY

Rainy River, June 18th, 1908.

WHEN an editor goes travelling he is expected to record the impressions of the journey. The difficulty is that one gets so surfeited with impressions that unless one is skilled in the work of recording them and has the attitude of mind necessary for the purpose, the writing is supremely difficult.

The writer was the first journalist to travel over the new C. P. R. short-line from Toronto to Fort William. A pleasant experience it proved to be. Two trains had gone before I was ready, but I caught the third. It landed me in Fort William in exactly twenty-five hours. So far as the smoothness of the road is concerned, there is nothing to indicate that the route is new. A little extra dust was the only indication, if we except the inability of the trainmen to answer all the questions the passengers asked about the stops, the names of the stations, and the progress we were making. The new road seems to have been so well built that the train rides as smoothly as on the older parts of the line. The eleven million dollars which the C. P. R. expended on the new line from Toronto to Sudbury was apparently well spent.

The C. P. R. is not like a little railway near Port Arthur about which a resident of that town was telling me. He said it had a tri-weekly service. A train ran over it one way each week and tried to get back the next week. The C. P. R. now has reached a point in its development where it can compare with any other railway in the world. It is the only real transcontinental railway in North America—the only one which reaches from the Atlantic to the Pacific. I met four men travelling over it who were going from Philadelphia to Portland, Oregon. I asked them why they came up this way, and they stated that the route was not much longer and was more pleasant. The scenery was grander and the weather was cooler. I must confess the answer somewhat surprised me.

That long reach of the C. P. R. from Sudbury to Port Arthur is as indescribable and as hopeless as ever. In 500 miles there are three railway villages, an odd sawmill, a few fishing streams and the rest is rock, lake and muskeg. There is no farming community. It is a peopleless waste. It will not even grow trees. What nature ever intended it for remains an unsolved riddle. Our train showed the sublimest contempt for it. In one run without a stop we made 60 miles; in another 72 miles; and in a third 119 miles. Just think of 250 miles with only two intermediate stops. Truly this is a district of magnificent distances.

There is some exquisite scenery, without doubt, especially where the railway skirts the island-bounded shore of Jack Fish Bay. The brakeman told us about the curved tunnel, where the passenger looking out of the rear window of the rear car of a ten-car train may see the engine emerging at the other side of the rocky puncture. He also drew our attention to the portion of the road which goes eight miles around a deep inlet of the lake to make only one mile of progress. That the country is not all rock, we were told of a hill which flowed down upon the track not long since and covered it fifteen feet deep for a distance of "three pole-lengths," or about 450 feet. This reminded the writer of a similar occurrence which held him up once on the Crow's Nest Pass branch in the Selkirks.

I was sorry I could not finish the 36-hour trip to Winnipeg at one sitting, but the claims of Lake Superior's twin harbours were not to be overlooked. Hence I broke journey at Fort William. Next morning I went down to Westport, a little village which antedates Fort William and which was once the divisional point for the C. P. R. Here I saw the Grand Trunk Pacific's Lake Superior terminus. The present terminus is temporary on the north side of the river; the real terminus is to be on the other bank of the Kaministiquia. Until the partially constructed bridge is completed, the development work on the old Indian Reserve cannot be carried on. This bridge is to be about 400 feet wide, to accommodate street-cars, foot passengers and vehicles as well as trains, and is to have a swing span at one side. From this point the G. T. P. runs fifty miles west parallel with the C. P. R. and Canadian Northern, and then turns north 150 miles to its junction with the main line of the National Transcontinental. Of this 200 miles, 150 miles is now being ballasted; beyond there is trouble with clay hills and muskeg. But that is another story.

Returning to Fort William, I made a tour of inspection and then took the inter-urban street-car over to Port Arthur, where I did likewise. Afterwards I sat down and cursed the real-estate agent—the whole race of him. They have spoiled both town sites almost irretrievably. The two sites combined are about as large as New York, and if completely built up would accommodate a population of a couple of millions. They have so scattered the population of both towns that the sewage and water-supply problems are almost impossible. They have induced workmen to buy lots and build houses on land which is only eighteen inches above the lake level and which can never be drained. The municipal fathers who aided and abetted these real estate boomsters ought to be impeached at the bar of the Legislature for conduct unbecoming to Canadian citizens. Their attitude has been almost criminal. Mr. Whitney should appoint a commission to investigate the situation and its history, and if possible punish the guilty. If this cannot be done, then such wrongs as are possible of being righted should be righted and possible future wrongs provided against.

These two towns ought to be among the finest in Canada. They

will be among the largest. Fort William especially has great prospects, though Port Arthur has the finer site. However, they will be unsanitary, illy-served by public utilities and conveniences and breeding places of fever and disease, if some strong power does not step in and reorganise both municipalities. Moreover, the Government should act quickly, since every month that passes will make a solution of the difficulty more difficult and more expensive.

Last night I left for Winnipeg on the Canadian Northern, but of that there will be another chapter.

J. A. C.

THE BATTLEFIELDS FUND

AS the twentieth of July draws near, the claims of the Quebec Battlefields Fund are being pressed upon public consideration with an enthusiastic belief that Canadians will rise to the patriotic occasion, open their pocket-books in the month of Confederation and show that "we also are a people" with a pride in our own places of heroic achievement. It can hardly be repeated too often that the Tercentenary and the Battlefields Park undertaking are entirely distinct. Those careful souls who are reluctant to contribute to pyrotechnics and pageantry may be assured that their money goes direct to the commissioners for the national park, who have been chosen with the utmost discretion and are gentlemen with a fine historic sense of the fitness of the movement. Names of France are on the committee, as well as those of the British Isles and the appeal to the Canadian people is made to the descendants of the Ste. Foye victors, as well as to those whose forefathers celebrated the triumph of Wolfe.

The West has shown its appreciation of the national character of the movement after a fashion in keeping with a land of broad, sunlit space. Edmonton was one of the first to send in a handsome cheque from the Canadian Club and the Legislature of Alberta is contributing ten thousand dollars to the fund. The City of Toronto is also on the patriotic move and is likely to show that the capital of Ontario is entirely undeserving of the unpleasant nickname occasionally whispered in the agricultural province, while Mr. Whitney, with a vaster majority than has been, is to be one of the rejoicing premiers at the Tercentenary. The July of 1867 saw four provinces united in a Confederation which seemed of doubtful strength; the July of 1908 will see a stalwart Dominion of nine provinces confident in the power and hope of youth and proud to keep sacred for the generations to come the spot where Canadians of old proved "the mettle of their pasture."

The part which England is taking in this movement is significant of historic ties. From the school-children of Great Britain to the distinguished noblemen who have represented the Sovereign in this country, a practical appreciation of the meaning of Battlefields Park is being manifested, for the people of those little islands do not forget those who made "the dominions beyond the seas."

ENGLISH FICTION IN CANADA

THE publication, *The Author*, known as the organ of the Incorporated Society of Authors, recently discusses the question of colonial sales of English fiction. The editor of this English publication has received a letter from a Toronto publisher in which the latter states that in Great Britain the publishers do not give as much attention to getting the book up attractively as we do. The Toronto correspondent concludes: "Our book market follows very closely that of the United States, and books that are big sellers in the United States are sure to be so in Canada. Why? Because of the advertising."

It needs only a glance at the counters of Canadian book-shops to discover that the works of United States writers of fiction are presented in much more attractive form than those of Great Britain. The New York publisher knows that the public is, as Dr. Chalmers once impatiently exclaimed, a "great baby" and advertises accordingly. Pretty pictures, arresting posters and all the expedients of the great modern art are employed in order to sell mediocre yarns of cheap sentiment and these books fairly flood the street-cars, the boats, the verandahs and the lake shores. It is true that the serious student will not look for attractive covers nor be seduced into buying a "best seller" which is positively the most charming love-story which ever captivated two continents; but the serious student, who regards Dr. Crozier as the greatest writer whom Canada has produced, is hardly to be counted in estimating sales of current fiction. The English publishers, if they wish to increase Australian and Canadian sales, must devote practical attention to the market and be willing to make use of modern methods in advertising the latest thing in a Zenda imitation.