

Easily tamed, it soon becomes attached to its master, but is not docile. The flesh is occasionally eaten, but not prized by the Indians. The females are smaller than the males, go with young about six weeks, and produce from four to seven at a time, about the end of April. When caught in traps this species is often devoured by its near relation the Fisher. Pennants marten (*Mustela Canadensis*.)

As an article of commerce and of luxurious and ornamental dress, the fur of this animal is well known. It is said that 100,000 skins are annually taken to Britain. Yet as the species is very prolific, it is still a common animal in the large forests. In the settlements, however, it soon becomes exterminated. The fox lingers around among the agriculturists, and pays his attentions to the farm-yard long after the marten has left the scene of advancing civilization.—*From the Canadian Naturalist & Geologist.*

THE CANADIAN NATURALIST AND GEOLOGIST.—B. DAWSON, Montreal.

We take the foregoing from the December number of this excellent periodical. The following notice of its utility and object, we take from publisher's notice.

The utility of such a publication as the present is admitted on all sides. The scarcity of large libraries, and the small number and high prices of books noticing the Natural History of Canada, have long called for it. Hitherto Canadians, for the most part, have been more thoroughly acquainted with the Natural History of other countries than with that of their own.

In aiding the studies of the youth of the Province it is considered that this Magazine is of great value. The young Zoologist or Botanist will find described and classified here objects which he has met with in his rambles, of which the notices in books are scanty and often beyond his reach. His knowledge will thus acquire a distinctness which it could not have had, and the pursuit of his favorite science will be rendered much more pleasant and profitable.

Purely Canadian in its objects and aims, this Magazine has peculiar claims to Canadian support. While other countries not more advanced have many periodicals devoted to the extension of knowledge concerning their natural resources, those attempted in Canada have generally languished for want of support. Surely the time has arrived when a Canadian non-political literature ought to commence.

But it is not on this ground alone that the Naturalist stands. The quality of the matter is such as would command attention anywhere. The late Hugh Miller in reviewing some of the earlier numbers in the columns of the *Witness*, speaks of it as "an interesting and useful periodical admirably suited to direct and give consistency to the curiosity excited by the productions of the country, and exactly such a work as will aid the student to systemize his knowledge."

This volume contains 500 pages, prepared by some of the first talent of the country, illustrated (though by a Canadian) in a manner which would not disgrace a foreign Magazine; and for subject matter what can be more interesting than the inhabitants of our own lakes, woods and streams, the productions of our own soil, and the qualities of our own mines and minerals?

X. Papers on British North America.

I. BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN EXPLORING EXPEDITION.

Three very important reports to Mr. Labouchère, the Secretary of State, on the progress of the North American Exploring Expedition, under Mr. Palliser, were lately brought before the Royal Geographical Society. They were dated Saulte Sainte Marie, June 10th; Fort Garry, July 16th; and Fort Pembina, July 27th.

The portion of the British Empire the North American Exploring Expedition has been sent out to investigate is likely to attract so much attention in connection with the Hudson's Bay Company during this session of Parliament, that we present our readers with an abstract of Mr. Palliser's communications to the Government. Mr. Palliser left England May 16, and landed at New York on the 28th. On the 2nd June he started for Detroit. On the 10th Mr. Palliser reached the Saulte Sainte Marie, where he found two birch canoes and sixteen rowers awaiting him. He then made an arrangement with the captain of the steamer to take him with his men boats, &c., to Isle Royale, in Lake Superior.

On the 12th of June the island was sighted, when Mr. Palliser and his party left the steamer in their canoes. They reached the mouth of the Kaministiquia at nightfall, and arrived at Fort William at 10 P. M. the same evening. Starting on the 13th, they encamped some miles from the fort, and arrived on the 14th at the mouth of the White Fish River. The mouth of this river might readily be passed unobserved by those travelling in canoes on the Kaministiquia, owing to its taking a sudden bend before flowing into that river. The White Fish River is from 40 to 60 yards broad and 5 feet deep at its mouth. Rapids render it unfit for navigation. For the first day's journey up the

river the barometer indicated a proximate ascent of 75 feet in 12 miles; for the second, a rise of 100 feet in six miles. Here, a tree falling on one of the canoes and disabling it, Mr. Palliser and Dr. Hector determined to start on foot through the thick larch woods to the falls of the Kakibies. From his experience of the country between the White Fish and Kaministiquia rivers, Mr. Palliser apprehends there would be little difficulty in connecting them either by a rail or common road. On the 23rd they reached the height of land, and next morning crossed the Savannah Portage into the Savannah river, and commenced the descent of the watershed towards Lake Winnipeg. Fort Frances on Lac la Pline was reached on the 1st July. Here they met with a deputation of the Lac la Pline nation of Indians, headed by their old chief. The Indians had heard a rumour of Mr. Palliser's arrival. The tone of the chief was bold and dignified. He said:—"I do not ask for presents, although I am poor, and my people are hungry; but I know that you have come straight from the great country, and we know that no man from the great Queen ever came to us and lied. I want you to declare to us truthfully what the great Queen of your country intends to do to us when she will take the country from the Fur Company's people. All around me I see the smoke of the white man to rise; the Long Knives, (i. e., the Americans), are trading with our neighbors for their lands, and they are cheating them and deceiving them; now we will not sell or part with our lands." Mr. Palliser assured the chief that he had no desire to purchase their lands, and that if they conducted themselves peaceably with the white faces, as they had hitherto done, the Queen would never send soldiers to take away their land by force.

An Indian of a friendly tribe requested the chief to obtain this promise in writing. He refused, saying he could trust the white man's word. The poor old chief complained that their animals grew scarce, the Company would give them no goods except in exchange for skins, they had no implements for cultivating the land, and no one to show them how to use them if they had; they had nothing to subsist on except the few fish they could take, and therefore many of them starved and died. Mr. Palliser promised to write the old chief's words to the big men who were in the habit of giving good advice to the Queen, and so parted good friends with the Indians.

The expedition camped on Sturgeon Lake, at the mouth of what has been hitherto called the Sturgeon River, on 5th July. From this point Dr. Palliser and Dr. Hector started to explore back again in a southeastern direction towards the White Fish River. What appeared to be a river turned out to be a passage to a very large lake; crossing this in an easterly direction to search for an outlet, they discovered a fine water fall. Walking through the woods for a mile and a half they found another lake nearly as large as the other.

The whole country between the watershed and Sturgeon Lake appeared to be a mass of lakes and islands. Should the country hereafter become inhabited, by means of a little engineering it would enjoy much facility for steamboat communication. On the 8th of July the island portage was reached, from whence there is uninterrupted communication by water across Lake Winnipeg to lower and upper Fort Garry, and as far as Fort Pembina on the other side of the frontier.

Four miles from Lower Fort Garry, on Sunday, the 12th, Mr. Palliser found a large attentive congregation of Scotch people and half breeds of various shades of color. The summer was warm, and the crops by their rapid growth seemed to make up for the long dreary winter of the country. On the 21st July, Mr. Palliser having engaged additional men and horses, leaving Fort Garry, crossed the river Assiniboie, proceeded up the Red River nine or ten miles, crossed the River Sale (which is not in the maps) nine miles from Fort Garry, and emerged on the open prairie. Over the prairie was a well defined road, indicating considerable traffic. The wood on the right bank of the river consisted of oak trees, and the country through which Mr. Palliser passed indicated agricultural resources superior to those of the Red River Settlement.

The Rivière-qui grise was passed over in pontoons on the 22nd, 38 miles south of Fort Garry; on the 23rd Fort Pembina was reached. Upon the Pembina River, 23 miles from the fort, Mr. Palliser heard that there was a flourishing American town, called St. Joseph, which is not to be found on any of the maps, in consequence of its recent establishment.

At Pembina a meridian altitude of the sun was taken to determine the position of the 49th degree of latitude, but as Mr. Palliser's observations differed from a post driven into the ground by an American gentlemen to mark a similar observation by 370 yards, Mr. Palliser adopted the latter, as it was in favor of Her Majesty. From Fort Pembina Mr. Palliser forwarded his last despatch, together with the astronomical observations on the boundary line, and other matters, made by the officers of the expedition.

At a later meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, a paper was read containing "Further Particulars of the British North American Exploring Expedition, as far west as lon. 109 on the Lower Saskatchewan, by Captain Palliser." The gallant officer in his despatch states that on the 27th of July he had reached St. Joseph, an American town,