

THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN

A TRAVELLER IN THE BARREN LANDS.

Back from a long and adventurous trip through Canada's "Farthest North" is Ernest Thomson-Seton (formerly Ernest S. Thompson, of Toronto), bringing with him hundreds of interesting animal photographs and curios, and a store of valuable material for more "nature faking." Perhaps the word "adventurous" gives a false impression of the trip, although the very fact of such a long journey might well be reckoned an adventure, even without mishaps. As a matter of fact, Mr. Seton, so he says, had foreseen every emergency, such as leaving caches of food along the route, and the little expedition, the best prepared that ever went into the Barren Lands, occupied only seven months in an undertaking that usually consumes a year and a half. It went in and out between snows.

The Great River.

Edmonton, which Mr. Seton located for the interviewer of the New York Times as "north of Winnipeg," was the jumping-off place. From there the party, which consisted of Mr. Seton, Mr. Preble, of Washington, and guides and porters, drove to Athabasca Landing, thence going down the river to Fort Smith. About Fort Smith he found the last herd of wild buffalo on the North American Continent. The herd numbers several hundred, but is being reduced by poachers. The Government, however, owing to Mr. Seton's representations, is likely to take steps to protect the buffalo, and if so the natural increase would in time result in re-stocking part of the Far North with the noblest big game that ever shook the prairies of America. Leaving the buffalo to take care of themselves for a little while, the party headed for Great Slave Lake, a body of water 500 miles long. As the explorer said, people have little idea of the vastness of the lakes and rivers in this district. The Mackenzie River, for example, is the third longest and the second broadest in length by only the Nile and the Mississippi, and in breadth by the Amazon. So wide is the Mackenzie at some points that sky and water meet between its banks.

In an Unmapped Land.

Crossing the Great Slave from Fort Resolution to Fort Reliance, the party, now reduced to the two white men and two half-breed guides, struck out through a country whose lakes and streams have never been mapped. The objective was Lake Aylmer, a spot which only four previous expeditions have reached in the past century and a half, the last one being the Warburton-Pike outfit in 1889. Their track lay through the wonderful Barren Lands, where there is absolutely no timber, but, as the traveller says, it is by no means a desert. It is all rich prairie, and sooner or later will be growing and exporting its millions of bushels of grain every year. Just now it is a sportsman's paradise, literally alive with game. Caribou and musk-ox were hardly ever out of sight, and, of course, the attendant wolves were in evidence. The thing that impressed Mr. Seton most was the beautiful scenery of the Barrens. "Time and again," he said, "we waded waist deep in flowers and mosses."

The Northern Indians.

The region is not inhabited, even by Indians, except along the great rivers. On the banks of the Mackenzie there are probably 2,000 or 3,000 Indians and half-breeds. The Indians are Chippewas, but many of them speak some French and a little English. The Indians are described as big, tall men, but lacking the chest proportion of the whites of equal bulk. They are wonderful runners, "being able to trot for

hours with enormous loads, without showing fatigue." The Indians in the Far North are what their ancestors since time immemorial have been—fishers and hunters. Some of them are employed about the trading posts as carriers, or what Mr. Seton calls "the mocassin telegraph." They cultivate no soil, and any vegetables they eat are either found wild or in the canned form sold at the trading stations.

The Trading Posts.

Since 1871, when the Hudson's Bay Company was bought out by the British Government, the great company has not enjoyed a trading monopoly. At nearly every good post there is trade competition; but at hundreds of remote stations the old company maintains its ancient prestige. In fact, if not in name, it is the great protector of the Indian, at once his bank, his court of law and his soup kitchen. Mr. Seton was greatly aided in his scientific work by the traders; but he foresees a time when the farmer will have crowded the traders far into the Arctic circle, and over the great empire it ruled for 250 years the wheat fields will wave. The returned traveler reports encountering old prospectors, who were boring with good chance of success. He saw, too, much natural gas. In the Peace River district, which ten years ago seemed almost as remote as the Barren Lands, there is no longer a single shred of "woolliness" remaining. It is a farming country, and by the thousand new farmers are going in each year. About Fort Liard, Mr. Seton said, the world would see its greatest wheat country. As for Alberta, those Americans who have entered think it is the Promised Land.

WINNIPEG AND WEST.

Rev. Dr. Duval of Winnipeg conducted anniversary services at Roland last Sabbath. The Rev. Doctor combines with a deep learning and age of experience a youthful vigor and optimistic outlook. The evening sermon was on Church Union. The church was crowded and next day exhibited a spirit of union worthy of emulation by accepting the kind offer of the Methodist body here who brotherly lent their church for the anniversary concert. A lecture was delivered by Rev. J. A. Beattie of Miami, and the whole evening was much enjoyed. Rev. F. J. Hartley, the pastor, begins his eleventh year with bright prospects.

On Tuesday, Nov. 28th, Rev. G. W. Faryon was inducted into the pastoral charge of Belmont and Alme, the congregation promising \$1,000 and manse. The moderator of Rock Lake Presbytery, Rev. J. Caldwell, of Pilot Mound, presided. Rev. Duncan Fraser preached from I. Thes. 5:12, 13. Rev. J. A. Beattie of Miami addressed the pastor elect, and Rev. Mr. Hutchison of Swan Lake addressed the people. A splendid supper was served by the good ladies of Knox church and ample justice was done by the presbytery and large congregation. Addresses were delivered welcoming the new pastor by Rev. Mr. Hopper, pastor of the Methodist church, and Rev. Mr. Girling, rector of the Anglican Church, and Rev. Mr. Johnston, who has been supplying the Presbyterian church for the past month. At the same meeting of Rock Lake Presbytery the resignation of Rev. Peter Fleming was regretfully accepted on account of Mrs. Fleming's continued ill health.

When the moon comes between the sun and the earth it is no longer beautiful, as all its brightness is gone, and it is an inky blot on the heavens. Even so all beautiful things in life lose their beauty, and become dark and disappointing the moment they come between us and God.

LITERARY NOTES.

Patricia's Promotion, by Olivia Mowell, Gail and Inglis, London, England. This bright story of an English boarding school for girls is just the kind of book that all young girls love to get hold of. School girls' pranks, quarrels between the different sets of girls, jealousies and rivalries—all are written of in the same bright, interesting style which made Miss Fowell's first book, *Her First Term*, so great a success. "Pat," the heroine, is a charming character, bright and honorable, but not goody-goody. A better Christmas gift for a small girl could not be found than this wholesome story.

The November Fortnightly has its usual interesting and varied table of contents. The first article is by Archibald R. Colquhoun, on Francis Joseph, The Man and the Monarch. Then follow: Views on the Anglo-Russian Agreement; A College Head on University Reform; A Defence of Magic; Prince Bulow; The German Imperial Chancellor; Thackeray's Ballads and several other articles, in addition to an instalment of Maurice Hewlett's fine serial, *The Stopping Lady*, and the always clever resume of Foreign Affairs.

A prominent place is given in the November Contemporary, as in all the current magazines, to a review of Queen Victoria's Letters. W. R. Lawson discusses Oxford Finance; Norman Lamont, M.P., The West Indian Problem; Dr. Edward Bernstein, Trade Unionism in Germany; and Professor Henry Jones, Idealism and Politics. Dr. E. J. Dillon gives his usual report on Foreign Affairs, and the Literary Supplement, a new departure, proves most readable. We have mentioned only a part of the subjects treated in this number of the Contemporary.

Probably the first and the last article in The Nineteenth Century, for November, will attract most attention in America. Andrew Carnegie is given the first place with his article on the Second Chamber, which is interesting, more on account of the writer than for what he says. The sixteenth and last article is a clever one by J. A. Sponder on Mr. Shaw's Prefaces. The plays of Bernard Shaw are well known to theatre-goers on this side of the Atlantic and Mr. Sponder's criticism of some of the playwright's views will be of general interest. Other outstanding articles are: The Portent of Yarmouth, by George W. E. Russell; The Anglican Church in America, by Herbert W. Horwill; and Foreign Remedies for English Poor Law Defects.

Blackwood's for November gives us Two Diplomats: I. Talleyrand, II. Metternich, by Charles Whibley, whose recent articles in regard to what he saw on a trip to America have been read with a great deal of interest by readers of "Maga." S. McNaughtan has an excellent little description of Snobs, and Latter-Day Saints are discussed by an inhabitant of an English cathedral town who was shocked to find a band of Mormons holding a mission in his home town. A very interesting description is given by an anonymous writer of his stay at the Pasteur Institute in Kasauli, India, where he was treated after being bitten by a dog which died of rabies. Instalments of two serials is perhaps a little more serial than desirable, in one number, but the one story ends here, and the other a new one, by Katherine Cecil Thurston, author of *John Chilcote*, M.P., promises to be most entertaining.

It may be a dangerous thing suddenly to change physical habits, but there is no danger in suddenly changing bad habits for good ones; the danger is not to change them suddenly. The resolution to put off evil little by little has proved a snare to thousands.