



A SNAP SHOT.

interesting as the recital would be, that you would not be able to give me sufficient space to relate all the interesting adventures Mr. Johns went through, so I will come to Mr. Pike's arrival in the country. Mr. Pike arrived in the north in July, 1889, for the purpose of hunting musk-ox, amongst other big game. He started, accompanied by several Indians, from Fort Resolution on the Slave Lake, and had a very successful expedition, killing quite a number of musk-ox, and going as far north as Fish River. Mr. Johns declares, the stories about Lord Lonsdale and others, notwithstanding, that Mr. Pike is the first white man who has ever killed a musk-ox. Mr. Pike put in the winter of 1890 at Fort Resolution, and hunted during the following spring and summer. Mr. Pike travelled as far north as that inhospitable country, well named the Barren Lands, where there are absolutely no trees or shrubs of any description, and all wood for fuel purposes has to be "packed." Here for some six months in the year the sun never shines. At Vermillion, where Mr. Johns has been living, the winter commences in November and the rivers do not break up till May. The glass constantly goes down as low as 60 degrees below zero. I learned from Mr. Johns that moose is gradually being exterminated, but in the extreme north musk-ox and deer are wonderfully plentiful.

On September 24, 1890, Messrs. Johns and Pike

left Vermillion for British Columbia, which trip, from its dangers and hardships, will probably be remembered by them both for many a long day. They were accompanied by two guides and another Indian and travelled by canoe, carrying with them food, guns and ammunition. They passed Battle River on Oct. 3rd., Dunvegon the 15th, St. Johns the 23rd, reaching Hudson's Hope on November 1st. Here the canoes were left and a portage of twelve miles through the mountains made. The party stopped here for several weeks, hoping for the river to freeze, so that the journey could be continued by ice. On the 26th, however, the weather was so remarkable fine that a start was made for Macleod Lake, and on December 2nd they passed through the Finlay Rapids in the ice, which had rapidly formed,—a most dangerous proceeding, and on the following day the river was blocked. They cached their food, guns, etc., and started to walk to Macleod River, which they thought was about a four day's trip, taking enough food for that period. They journeyed on, day after day, for twelve days. Owing to being sparing with their "grub," they had something to eat so far, but on December 8th they had their last bannock for breakfast, which, divided amongst five healthy men, made a precious poor meal, especially as on the two previous days their meals had consisted of the same miserable fare. On the 9th they arrived at a river, which, instead of being the Macleod River, turned out to be the Nation. On the 10th they started to retrace their steps, but about their terrible experiences Mr. Johns refused to tell me anything. "If I were to tell you what we went through during that time," said Mr. Johns, "nobody would believe me." Suffice it to say, that after what must have been terrible tortures, they reached Finlay Rapids on the 17th, not having had a bite of food since that, what must have been to them very delicious bannock on the 8th. As the novelists say, when they are at a loss for a description, their feelings may better be imagined than described when they came in sight of their cache at the rapids. Another such day as they had experienced, and their cache would not have benefitted them much. The party rested for some days and got up their strength again, making a start on the 18th, the Rocky Mountain portage being reached on the 27th. Here they made another stop until January 14th, when Mr. Johns returned alone to the Peace River landing. On February 18th they met again at Lesser Slave Lake and travelled to Edmonton via Athabasca Landing.

Mr. Johns entertained me for another hour with his experiences in Africa, Australia and Canada. Until he arrived at Edmonton the other day, he had not seen a piece of money for seven years, all the trade in the north being carried on by a "skin" currency,—a skin being valued at 50 cents.

Mr. Johns left for the east on Monday, en route for his home in the old country which he has not visited for nearly 20 years. He intends taking a year's well-earned rest, and I sincerely trust he may have a pleasant time after his life of hardships and dangers in the far north.

SCRIBBLER.