

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Little Stories by Land and Sea, concerning the folk who move hither and thither across the face of a Big Land.

FROM FLAT-BOAT TO PRIVATE CAR.

THIRTY years ago one day last week Mr. D. D. Mann arrived in Winnipeg on a flat-boat via the Red River. The day before that the railways built and owned and operated by Mackenzie and Mann west of Lake Superior hauled 412,000 bushels of western wheat towards the lakes. Mr. Mann got in Winnipeg when there were less than a hundred thousand people west of and including Winnipeg. He estimates the present population of that territory as not less than a million and a quarter with at least a million bushels of grain a day being handled on railroads whose aggregate mileage is more than ten thousand miles. Mr. Mann knows how a few thousand miles of these roads have been built. He helped build a good many hundreds of miles of the C. P. R. before he went into partnership with Mr. Mackenzie to begin the Canadian Northern—which in its inception was a little bit of a spur line running up into the Dauphin country from the C. P. R.; now three thousand miles of road in the West.

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A MUSK-OX MYSTERY.

DR. COOK relates as part of his Polar story how that he and his men after some hours of fasting came across and killed over a hundred musk oxen. Any one who knows anything about musk oxen will be inclined to inquire first why did he kill so many; and second, how on earth—or ice, or water—did he do it? The musk-ox is an animal two-thirds the size of a buffalo. It is found only in the Arctic circle. Its southernmost habitat in Canada is north of Great Bear Lake. Travellers up in that country tell how shy and exclusive the musk oxen are and how hard to shoot. They herd in small herds remote from camps, and so difficult to approach that the Indians have to resort to strategy to get them where it is possible to shoot them. They regard them with such pious veneration that they have been even known to pray to the brutes when in the act of trying to corral them, in order that they might not in their superior wisdom and cunningness take a notion to turn back and scatter away.

But Dr. Cook with his Eskimos managed to slay more than a hundred of these inaccessible animals. How he did it is a mystery. Why he needed so much beef is another mystery—unless it was for the dogs. Dr. Cook may be a great scientist; and he may be a great hunter; but if he is as much of a scientist and a hunter as he would seem to be, he surely would not set out trying to exterminate the musk oxen for the sake of one glorious battue.

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PRAIRIE CHAPELS ON WHEELS.

CHAPELS on wheels are to become a feature of religious life in the West. So many towns have bobbed up along the old trails and the new in that vast land of the wheat, that to build churches fast enough to get all the people to church is not possible. It is usually hard enough to get the average man to church when the church is just across the road, although church life in the west is quite as active in some ways as anything else in that progressive land. One little town of slightly more than a year old with a population of five hundred people had four congregations not long ago. There is hardly a town without some sort of church, whether the people meet in a school-house or in a hall over a store or in a tent. But there are many of the new crude little places where the church has to wait its time, and to get the people to church in these scattered communities it is necessary to take the church to the people. Hence the chapel on wheels. This is about to be inaugurated by the Roman Catholic Church in the West and is a scheme in which Archbishop McEvay, President of the Catholic Extension Society, is much interested. The church on wheels has never been tried in Canada before. It has been for some years, however, a feature in the Western States. Two years ago the Catholic Church there put a chapel on wheels for the use of the bishops. Years before that the Anglican Church had one of its western bishops in a cathedral car. This was the first cathedral car in the world. The chapel cars of the Canadian West will make it possible for the outpost man to get to church at least once in a while.

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A VISION OF MONTREAL.

WITH the Hudson celebration in New York State and the unusual amount of polar peregrinations brought to light of late, it is of interest to a scribe in Montreal to imagine what kind of place Montreal will be ten years from now when railroads have been put through to Hudson's Bay and Montreal holds another celebration. In an easy poetic outline a prophet in the Montreal Standard draws a picture. He may have

been stimulated by the recent election of the ratepayers in that city to clean up municipal affairs by inaugurating a Board of Control—although the vision was penned before the vote was cast.

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IMPERIAL FREE TRADE IN BRAINS.

THE number of Imperial globe-trotters is increasing. A few years ago Sir Charles Dilke was the best-informed Imperialist in the House of Commons. His book on the Empire was regarded as a classic and the last word of an observant man. Most other Englishmen stayed in England. This man travelled and saw the Empire with his own eyes. Nowadays there are many hundreds of Imperialising globe-trotters. Most of them come to Canada, which receives hundreds every year. They usually cross the continent and get a notion of our vast distances as contrasted with little England. They see our crops and our busy people. They make speeches at Canadian Clubs and give interviews to reporters. Usually they manage to differ about as widely regarding the present condition and manifest destiny of Canada as we differ ourselves in politics. They observe that we are prosperous and that we are not altogether savage. We are expected to be somewhat uncouth by comparison. But it is remarkable to most of these observant Englishmen how nearly we approximate to Old Country standards considering that we are so near the United States with whom we do most of our foreign business. Our loyalty to the flag and the British throne is to them all a spectacle for profound admiration—Kipling and Beresford, Milner and even Stead; scores of others, even the shrewd and commercial Northcliffe, have noted the signs of the times and are free to acknowledge that Canada is the greatest colony. Then, of course, most of them go home and proceed to forget most of it. Our Governors-General have been chief of the Canada-advertising agency among British nobility. Invariably they carry back a good story. They have a good time here. They make good speeches here. We listen well; no better listeners anywhere than Canadians—and certainly we know how to applaud almost anything that sounds good, especially if it comes from a man we know and that the world knows too.

One of these days some of these super-clever Britishers will be coming to Canada to live. Some time this century we shall see a migration not only of British labour and capital, but of British brains as well. When that movement gets under way, Canada will begin to materialise Earl Grey's prediction that this country is destined to be the effective centre of Empire, not financially perhaps, certainly not in politics, but in commerce and life.

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THE GOOD OLD THRESHING TIME.

THRESHING season is on. Clean from the oat fields of Prince Edward Island to the gardens of Victoria, B.C., they are threshing; though what they thresh in gardens besides sweet peas may best be explained by the old-time back-concession query: "Well, got y'r pumpkins thrashed yet?"

Threshing time in Canada is the most important season of the year. It is the season which produces Thanksgiving and puts money in circulation. It was so in the old days when Canada produced 15 million bushels of wheat and winter wheat at that; down on the Ontario farm, and down in Nova Scotia, threshing day was the time the farmer found out what sort of business farming was anyway, and whether he might not better have rented his farm and gone on out west or struck to the lumber woods. Threshing time put cash in circulation from the town banker to the farmer, and from the farmer to the storekeeper, and from him back to the wholesaler, and so back to the bank again; and if the wheat happened to be half chaff, or the oats were cut by grasshoppers, or the barley spoiled by the wet, or the peas full of bugs, the circulation of that life-giving cash was obstructed and people felt the pinch all round.

So it is in the country at large when Canada produces 150 million bushels of wheat in a year, and when more than half of it comes from Saskatchewan. The banks in the east have been sending out wads of money to buy wheat and the money has gone to the farmer, then to the storekeeper, and then to the wholesaler and—well we hope that's the way of it, although bank managers have a habit of telling us lately that in the circulation our money very often gets astray, and to find the reason you have to ask the real estate man and the speculators.

Just the same, the season of the threshing machine's hum and the early toot of the whistle is the time that gladdens the heart; when the pitchfork brigade turn out in the dew and pull pocketfuls of apples as they pass the orchard—and from seven a.m. till dusk in the barn or on the open prairie, wealth rolls out of the spout to the farmer and the country.



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