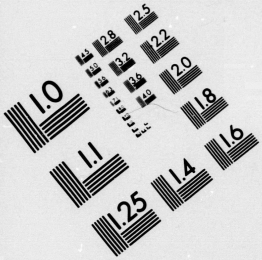

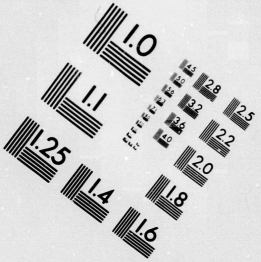

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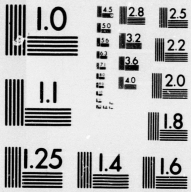

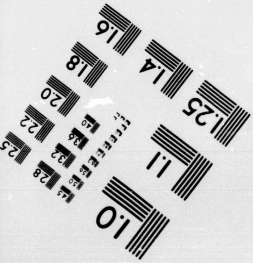

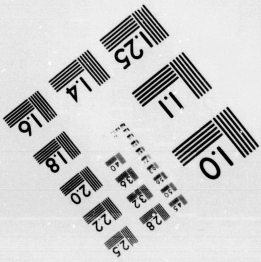

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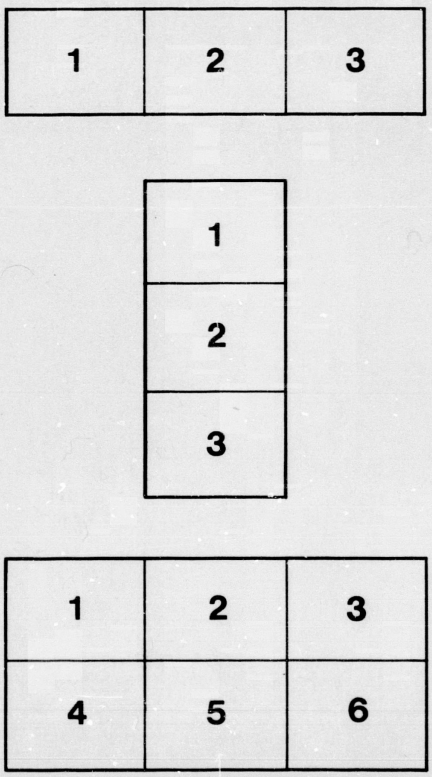
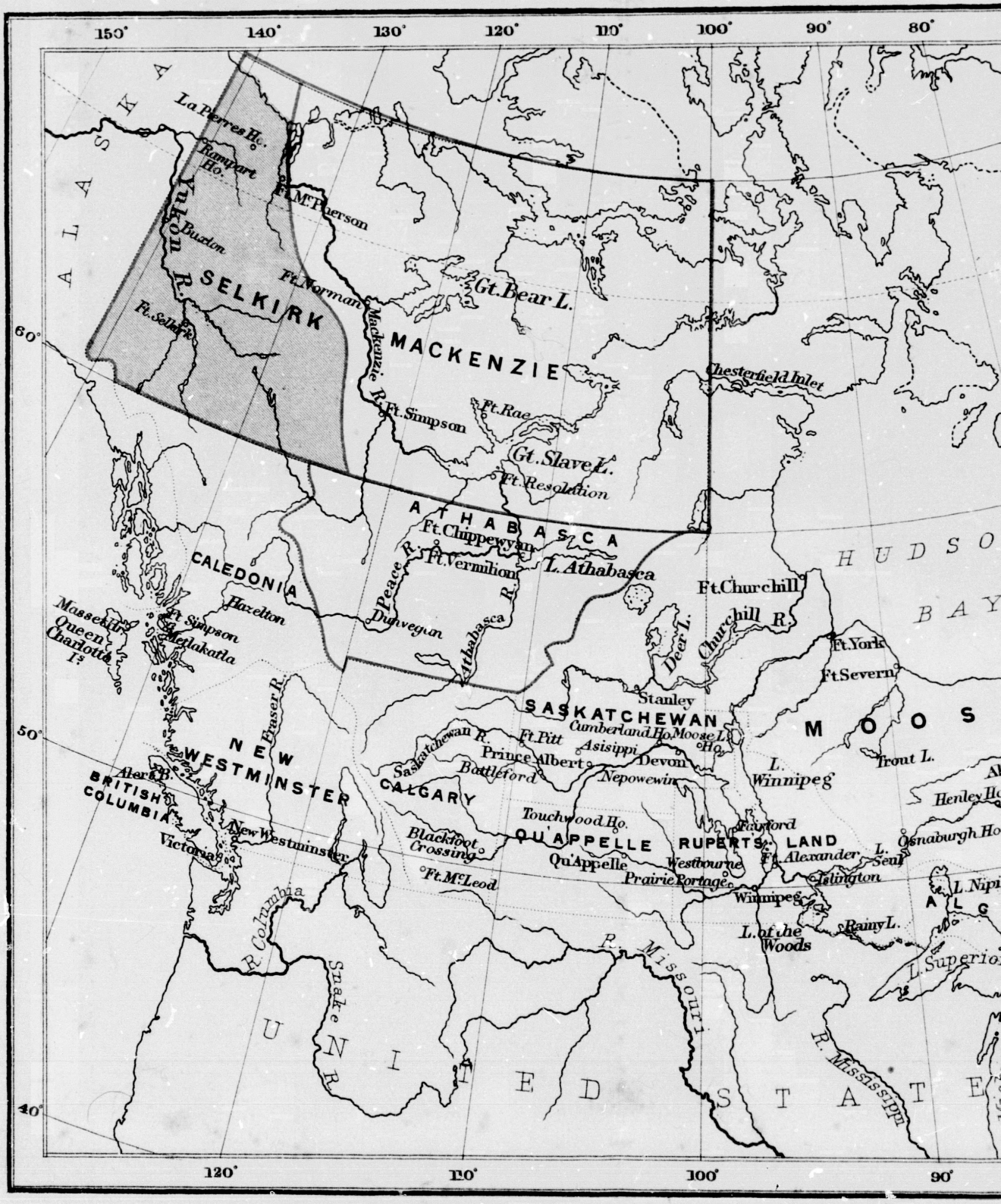


NORTHERN LIGHTS

ON

THE BIBLE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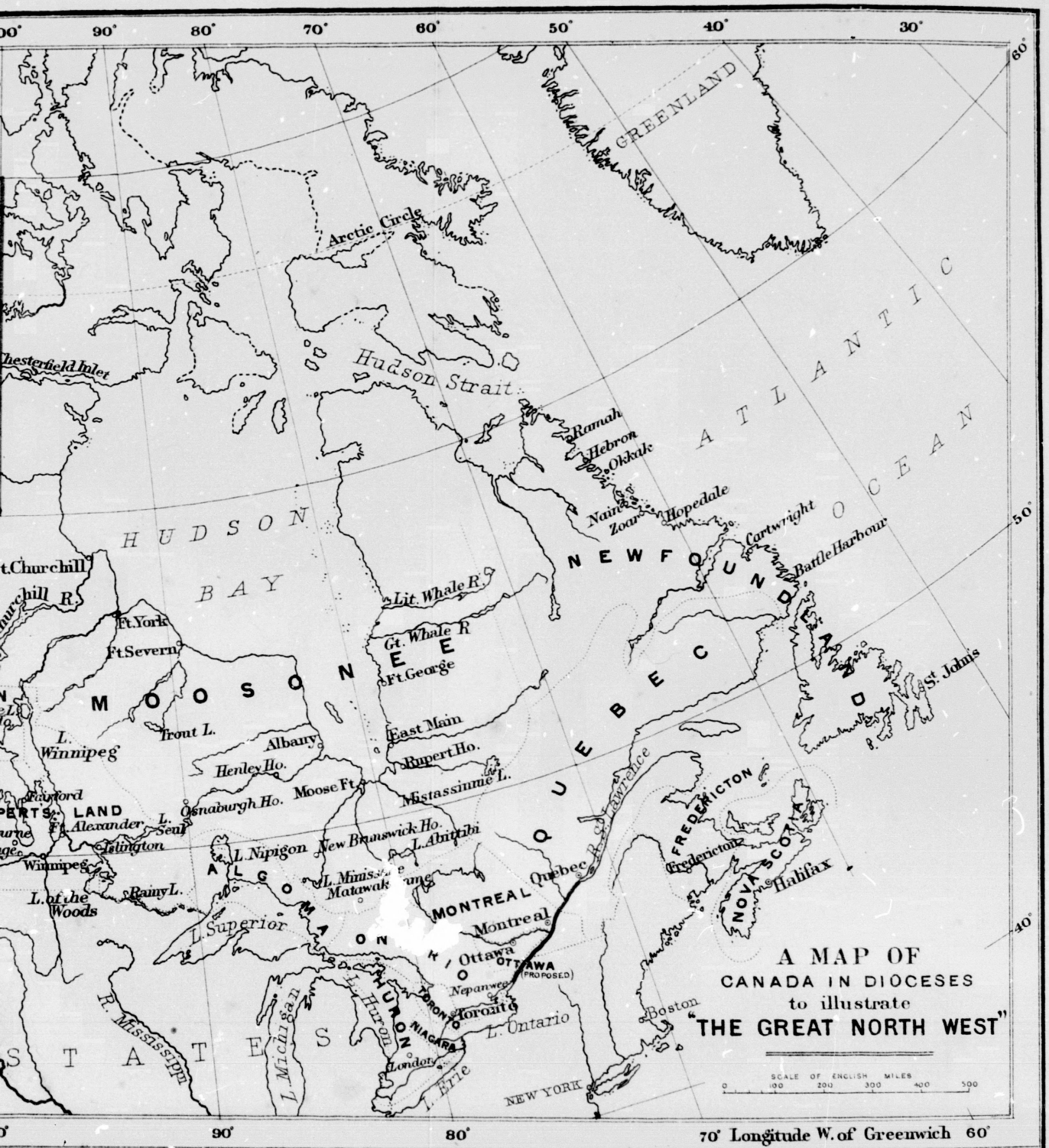

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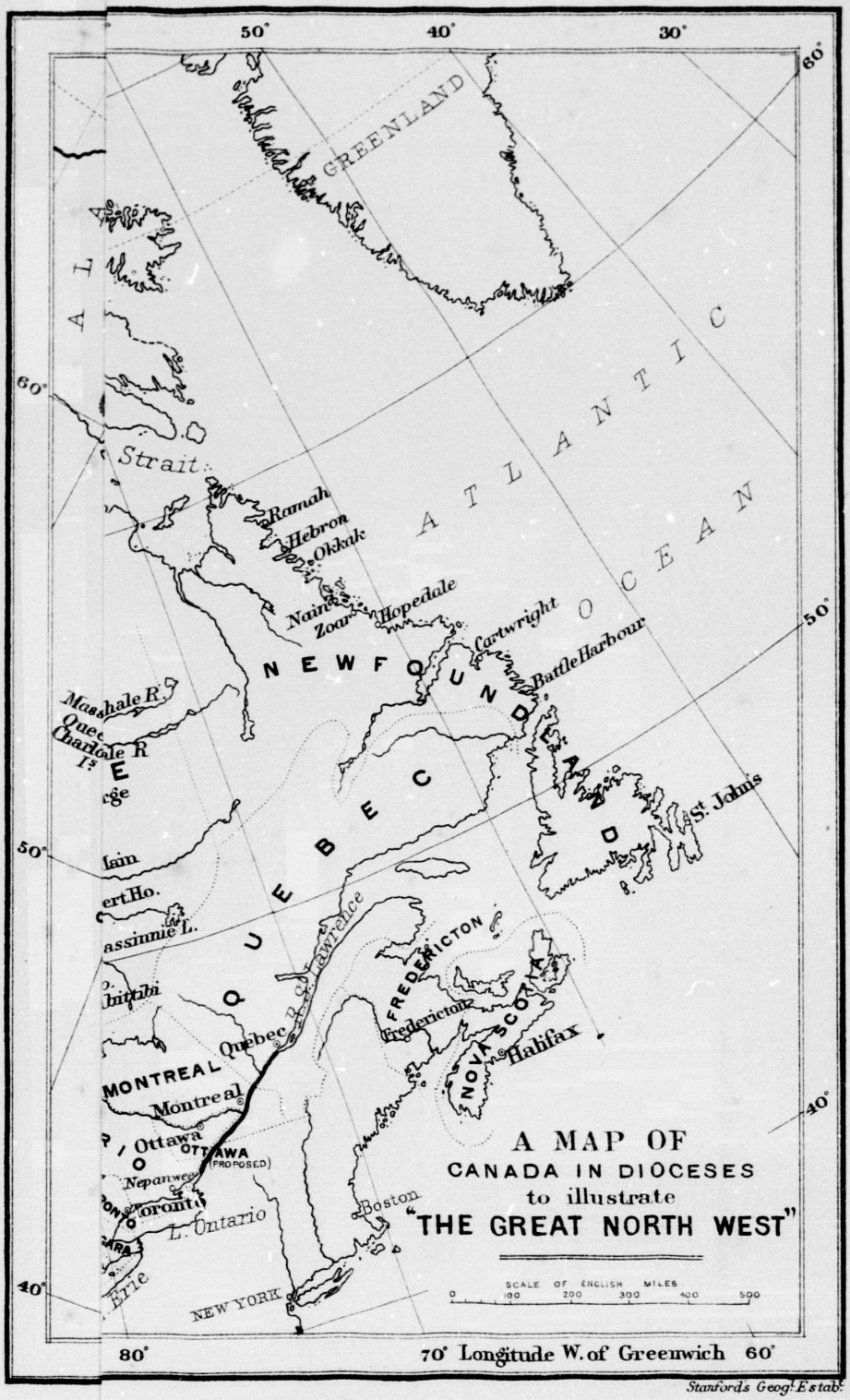
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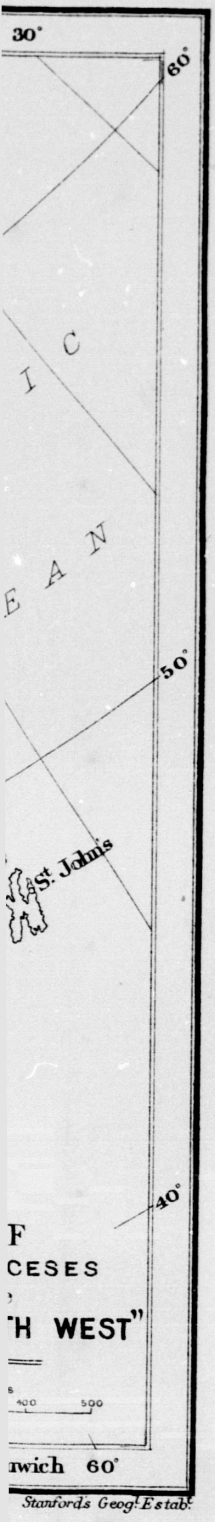

NORTHERN LIGHTS

ON

THE BIBLE

DRAWN FROM A BISHOP'S EXPERIENCE DURING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS IN THE

GREAT NORTH-WEST

BY

WILLIAM CARPENTER BOMPAS, D.D.

BISHOP OF SELKIRK, NORTH-WEST TERRITORY
CANADA

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I.

LIGHT.

"And God divided the light from the darkness."—GEN. i. 4.

IT appears plain that by the borderland, here stated to exist between light and darkness, is meant the twilight season that intervenes between day and night, and which is expressed in the next verse as "the evening and morning."

Though in the tropics the twilight is short, yet it suffices to make a separation between glaring day and black night. In the temperate zones the morning and evening twilight are more prolonged, and make an agreeable interval between the occupations of the daylight and the darkness.

In a northern winter the twilight is the chief part of the day, and sometimes we may apply to those regions the description in Job of the place where the light is as darkness (chap. x. 22).

We may turn these facts to a spiritual view, and say that between the Gospel light of pure Christianity and the gross darkness of heathenism there is much twilight intervening. When there is morning twilight among peoples on whom the light of truth is just dawning, as in our missionary fields, we have the

encouraging hope that this will shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

When it is the evening twilight of countries where Gospel daylight fades, and becomes shrouded with obscurity, through infidelity, superstition, or worldliness, there is less to cheer.

It may be of such a time (perhaps of our own time) that Zechariah prophesies in the words: "It shall come to pass in that day that the light shall not be clear nor dark; but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night; but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light" (chap. xiv. 6, 7).

We Protestants are accustomed to attribute to the Church of Rome an intermixture of light and darkness, derived either from the corruption of Christianity by Pagan rites since the time of Constantine, or from the gradual secularisation of the Church from the time of Charlemagne. The Romanist in return classes Protestants with Mormons, Jews, Mahometans, and Sceptics, as all in semi-darkness or worse.

It is, however, God's will that, in heavenly as in earthly things, there should be a boundary land between light and darkness, of souls that are in a twilight, whether of doubt, superstition, or error. Such is at present the condition of the natives in the extreme North, as well as in many other parts of the world.

It is of the brighter termination of such a season that the prophet speaks, saying, "Unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. iv. 2). When the mists of ignorance and error are all cleared off, and the frozen

heart of man is thawed before the warmth of divine love, then there shall be no more winter twilight, but an everlasting spring.

We may use here the words of Isaiah, and say: "If one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof" (chap. v. 30). "Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (chap. ix. 2).

An Arctic land is a land of darkness and death shade, yet upon her has shone the light of Gospel truth, and though its lamp may yet burn dim, there can never again be such gloom as was before the message of salvation reached her. The same may probably be said of many another country.

So speaks the prophet Joel of "a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains" (chap. ii. 2). "The sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining" (ver. 10). "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come; and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered" (vers. 31, 32).

Division is the divinely constituted state of the earth. Half day and half night. Half ocean and half land or ice. Half winter and half summer. Half earth and half sky.

So in religion, half Pagan and half Christian. Half Papal, half Protestant. Half virtue, half vice. Half

upward and half downward, and ever a borderland between. But in the borderland a tendency to merge either in the one extreme or the other.

Few contrasts are more marked than between the glowing heat and nightless sunlight of an Arctic summer, and the sunless gloom and freezing cold of a northern midwinter; but there is much borderland between. Such again is the contrast between a heathen sunk in heathenism and savagery, and a pious, instructed, and enlightened Christian; but in our imperfect humanity we must expect much borderland.

Let us say with the prophet, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isa. lx. 1). Or with the apostle, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Rom. xiii. 12). "For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee" (Isa. lx. 2).

II.

FISH.

"And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly."
—GEN. i. 20.

EVERYWHERE the waters are prolific of life, and a blessing this is to the human race. The poor especially often seek their living from the deep. The mention of fish in the Bible is frequent.

Israel in the desert remembered the fish which they did eat in Egypt freely (Num. xi. 5), and one of the Egyptian plagues was when God turned their waters into blood and slew their fish (Ps. cv. 29).

The men of Tyre and other seaboard places brought so much fish to Jerusalem for sale (Neh. xiii. 16), that one of the city gates was called the Fish-gate from this fact (Neh. iii. 3). In prophetic vision a time is foreseen when even the waters of the Dead Sea shall teem with fish (Ezek. xlvii. 9). Some think this will be fulfilled by the Jordan valley canal scheme.

In the New Testament our thoughts are still more directed to fishing, from the apostles being several of them fishermen (Matt. iv. 18). It is there lake fishing that is brought before us, and in this respect the habits of the great North-West may be used in illustration.

In the North-West the boats used for conveying fish remind us of those mentioned in the Gospels that were

ready to sink with their loads. Five thousand fish is the usual boat-load in the North, and one hundred and fifty-three large fish mentioned to have been caught in one net (John xxi. 11) would not be an excessive haul in the lake fisheries of the North.

The mode of fishing described in the Gospels, so far as we can gather it from the name of the net, and the particulars given, was to make fast one end of the net to a pole or anchor with a buoy near shore, and then to pay out the other end from the boat, which was pulled round in a wide circle to meet again the first end of the net, and so enclose the catch of fish. The whole was then dragged ashore.

In the North both ends of the nets are made fast to poles or to stones with buoys, and the nets are then left in the water and visited twice daily. They are also changed and washed every three days. The skiff or canoe with which the nets are visited is often filled nearly to sinking, and a double visit may be necessary.

The nets gather fish of various kinds, and when these are brought ashore the good ones are preserved, and the bad ones cast to the dogs (Matt. xiii. 48). With a large catch of fish the net may be broken (Luke v. 6).

It was on fish as well as on bread that our Lord fed the hungry multitudes (Matt. xiv. 17 and xv. 34), and He Himself partook of broiled fish after His resurrection, perhaps in order that the fish bones, with the wax of the honeycomb, might remain as proofs that it was no shadowy phantom the disciples had seen (Luke xxiv. 42).

Though our Lord's miracle of finding a coin in a fish's mouth has stumbled some, nothing is incredible about it. The miracle was needed to fulfil the

prophecies of Ps. viii. 8, 9, quoted in Heb. ii. 8 and 1 Cor. xv. 27, that all things, even including the fishes of the sea, should be in subjection unto Christ. It is well known how much some fishes are attracted by bright metal, so that they are angled for in the North-West with no other bait than a fragment of bright tin, and an instance has been mentioned as occurring in the North of a coin being found in a fish's stomach. The miracle then is one, like many others, that could easily be wrought by natural agencies under supernatural direction.

The frequent mention of fishing in the New Testament is no doubt intended to keep in our minds the resemblance to this occupation of the great work of evangelising, and that this needs equal patience, perseverance, and prudence. The shape of a fish was a frequent symbol of their faith among the early Christians, both because the letters of the Greek word for fish were found to be the initials or monogram of Jesus Christ, God's Son, the Saviour; and also because each Christian viewed himself as one of the fishes taken in the Gospel net, and each minister in holy things as a fisherman. "Henceforth ye shall catch men," said our Lord to Peter (Luke v. 10); and such is still the work of a missionary.

We may admire the patience of an Esquimaux, watching motionless for hours over the blow-hole of a seal in a temperature nearly 100 degrees below freezing point; and such should be the perseverance of a watcher for souls. "Lord, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net" (Luke v. 5).

In Great Bear Lake in winter nights the herring are attracted by a torch held over the clear ice, and then speared through the opening that has been cut through it.

The Esquimaux preserve herring taken in the autumn in cakes or masses for their winter diet, and they not only eat these raw, but seem to enjoy them when partly decayed.

The trout which are caught with hooks in the larger lakes of the North weigh commonly from 30 to 50 lbs. This lake trout is of course a different sort from the brook or speckled trout of England. It more resembles the salmon.

On the coast of British Columbia the salmon are so numerous that it is a usual stipulation by a servant in his contract of engagement that he shall not be dieted on salmon more than four days in the week. Otherwise he is likely to be fed on it week in and week out, *usque ad nauseam*. The salmon canneries on that coast are a growing industry, in which fresh salmon are boiled and potted for consumption in any part of the world.

The Oolikum fish on that coast ascend the Naas River in such masses at one season as to be pursued by crowds of eagles, sharks, porpoises, and whales, as well as by fishermen, both whites and Indians.

III.

WHALES.

"God created great whales."—GEN. i. 21.

THE discoveries of modern science, though often represented as antagonistic to Scripture, are really, so far as they are true, the best commentary on the Bible. The closest illustration of the above text, for instance, may probably be found in the gardens of the Crystal Palace, where modern science has resuscitated in effigy specimens of primeval *mastodon megatherium*, and other bygone monsters. The Hebrew word rendered whale may include all such ancient and gigantic animals, but it seems to point specially to monsters of the deep, or to those of an amphibious or reptilian class. It is just such that modern science has chiefly unearthed, and thus appears a noteworthy correspondence between the Word of God and its natural interpreter, His works.

The only certain survivor of the ancient giant animals is the whale, which is therefore a sufficiently good translation of the original word for a popular version of the Scriptures. Only it is amusing to notice how often critics charge the Bible with contradictions to technical science, or with a superficial adaptation to popular ignorance, when such ignorance

or superficiality rests only with the translators or interpreters of Holy Writ.

Why should the sole remnant of the gigantic mammals of a former age be left chiefly in the frozen waters of the Arctic and Antarctic oceans? Is it because in these oceans alone the human race have hardly yet exercised their promised universal sway? Or that the unwieldy bulk of very large creatures in temperate zones might impede navigation?

Or may we not rather recognise here a principle of compensation by which God in His kind providence has made the most bountiful provision for those who are most needy? Who are so indigent as the inhabitants of an Arctic shore? For whom is there so bountiful supply for all his need as the Esquimaux finds in the huge bulk of the slaughtered whale?

The meat and fat not only supply him with heat-giving food, but also with lamp oil and fuel through the dark and dreary Arctic winter. And the whalebone is applied to many a seemingly unsuitable purpose. It is made into fishing nets, and snares for birds and beasts, and many another implement, so that a single whale captured will form a winter's supply for a considerable encampment.

It is rather a singular instance of the universal indebtedness of the English language to foreign languages for its enrichment, that we have borrowed one word at least from the Esquimaux. Our word harpoon is Esquimaux for fish-spear.

It may be asked whether the description of the Leviathan in Job (chap. xli. 1) is to be taken as applicable to the whale or to some such marine

monster. The answer will be in the negative. The Hebrew word Leviathan appears to mean a wreathing or coiling monster, and seems to apply to such an animal as a boa constrictor, or some more gigantic primeval specimen of that class, or else of the alligator tribe.

Jonah's whale (Jonah i. 17) has been supposed by some to have been a fish of the shark kind, because these have larger gullets than the whale, and are more frequent in the Eastern Mediterranean. But those who deny the miraculous will probably deny the truth of Jonah's history, and those who are less incredulous will think it a small miracle for the throat of a whale to be enlarged to admit a man. The small aperture to the throat may be just that provision of nature which enables the animal to retain enough atmospheric air in its stomach to float his huge bulk on the water, and this might enable a human being with less miracle to support life in its stomach.

It is singular that in historic times a whale's ribs were exhibited at Joppa.

IV.

ANIMALS.

"Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind."
—GEN. i. 24.

THE great North-West is pre-eminently a land of animals. These are of course in their wild state, and not domesticated. Yet the Arctic clime is remarkably free from animals of a ferocious sort.

Where man has to contend with a severe climate, and one of God's sore judgments, that is, famine or starvation, is never very remote, the other three, the sword, the wild beast, and the pestilence, seem by a compensating providence to be mercifully averted. And it is better to fall into the hand of God than into the hand of man or beast. The grizzly bears are dangerous to attack, but these are mostly in the mountains, and the polar bear is wholly on the Arctic ice. The musk ox is rather dangerous when wounded, and a mad wolf may occasionally attack a person, and its bite be fatal; but casualties from all the above are rare, and there are few countries where a traveller needs less protection from man or beast than in the far North.

How different this was and is from life in Palestine is shown by the vision of the prophet, as of a halcyon future, that "they shall dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods" (Ezek. xxxiv. 25). In the North-

West neither are firearms or weapons carried as a defence against man, nor even a fire or watch maintained against animals. The howlings of wolves are frequently heard, but pass unheeded. The track of a bear may be observed, but it is only the signal for a chase after it, and it is the same if footprints of a moose or reindeer are seen. These comprise the usual larger animals of the North-West, as the range of the musk ox is limited to the barren grounds near the Arctic coast, and the wood buffalo to a few spots toward the South. The moose is a solitary animal, and is hunted very warily and stealthily on account of its fine scent. The deer are gregarious, and are hunted by fast running, as the deer with a sort of curiosity will run to and fro around the hunter who seeks to cross their track.

Of the smaller animals, the most numerous are foxes, marten, and rabbits; also minx, otters, lynx, hares, and wolverines or gluttons, beaver and musk rats, and in the Rocky Mountains are wild sheep and goats. These are all vigorously hunted either for their skins or meat. In fact, so universally is the Indian of the North-West addicted to the chase, that it seems to be a sort of natural instinct with him to kill if possible every living thing that comes within his sight, even though the slaughter be quite useless and uncalled for. This habit exists without any special cruelty of disposition, or any desire for taking human life. The only domestic animal of the native Indian is the dog, which is used both as a beast of draught and of burden, so that all the tribes of Indians have named the horse the big dog, because anything strange to them they name according to its use; and they see the horse put to the

same use as their dogs, except that of course their dogs are not ridden with the saddle.

Some texts of Scripture relating to animals might be illustrated in the North-West. "Many dogs have compassed me, strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round" (Ps. xxii. 16), might be exemplified in the dogs of the Indians and in the buffalo bulls. "Thy prophets are like the foxes in the desert" (Ezek. xiii. 4). "The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats" (Ps. civ. 18).

The quadrupeds of the North-West that are mentioned in the Bible are the bear, wild bull, dog, deer, fox, wild goat, hare, porcupine, wild sheep, weasel, wolf. The wolf is several times referred to in the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments for its rapacious and predatory habits. The wolves are great enemies to the reindeer, and even to the larger moose.

The hunter's toils are often mentioned in the Bible—the net, snare, pitfall, and trap. "The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; yea, and set traps in my way" (Ps. cxl. 5). "Fear, and the pit, and the snare are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth" (Isa. xxiv. 17). "I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands" (Eccles. vii. 26). "For they have digged a pit to take me, and hid snares for my feet" (Jer. xviii. 22), and many such like passages. Reindeer and moose are often snared in the North-West by a strong noose of sinew set in their path to strangle them.

For the smaller animals, as foxes, steel traps are set; and for the marten, wooden traps, with trip-stick or trigger, called in the Greek *skandalon*, the original of our English word scandal. This word, *skandalon*,

literally a trip-stick or trap, is usually rendered in our Authorised Version "offence," by which translation the reference to the hunter is lost.

The whole subject of persecution also, so frequently alluded to in the Bible, is only an adaptation to religious matters of the phraseology of the hunt or chase, for such is the original sense of the word persecute. In some cases, as in that of Nimrod (Gen. x. 9), there is even ambiguity, and it has been doubted whether he is designated as a mighty hunter, or a grievous persecutor; but as his name means "leopard-tamer," we may incline to the first explanation.

The familiar expression of Ps. xlii. 1, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks," brings to view the excitement of a deer hunt, to which the Psalmist may be comparing his own persecutions.

The hares or rabbits are caught by the Indians in snares of twine with a swing pole, but by the Esquimaux with whalebone.

The Mosaic distinction of clean and unclean meats is little heeded in the North, and nearly every animal is eaten when hunger demands, but such as the wolf, fox, marten, and dog only under pressure.

The bear, lynx, musk-rat, and beaver are commonly used for food as well as the moose, deer, buffalo, and rabbit. The blood of the larger animals was formerly much relished, until it has of late been partly superseded by the increased use of tea, and this change seems to have led to improved health.

The prohibition of blood found in Scripture may be deemed as much in the interest of health as of virtue, for the diseases of animals are more readily communi-

cated by their blood than by their meat. The use of blood as a beverage may produce in men a certain blood thirst, as in the dog or other animals, and just as human flesh once tasted is said to kindle a craving for cannibalism.

V.

KNOWLEDGE.

"The tree of knowledge of good and evil."—GEN. ii. 9.

THE picture presented to us in Eden of the trees of life and of knowledge side by side, and loss of life through thirst after forbidden knowledge, is to a certain extent repeated for us at the close of Holy Writ. We have again shown us on the last leaf of the Bible the Tree of Life in the heavenly Paradise bearing twelve kinds of fruits, and yielding its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree for the nations' healing (Rev. xxii. 2). We have also a strong warning in 1 Tim. vi. 20 against the profane and vain babblings and contradictions of knowledge falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith. "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. viii. 2). "Whether knowledge, it shall vanish away, for we know in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. xiii. 8). Now we know in part, but then shall we know even as we are known (ver. 12).

An untutored and savage race may be said to be without either spiritual life or knowledge, in the darkness of ignorance, and dead in trespasses and sins.

When the Gospel is presented to their acceptance it

is as though they are invited to eat of the tree of life. "Whoso eateth of this bread shall live for ever" (John vi. 51). But, alas, as civilised races intermix with those barbarous and rude, there are offered also large tastes of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and these are greedily devoured, and perhaps greatly preferred.

It is pitiful to see the comparative simplicity of the savage imbibe the allurements to vicious pleasure which he learns from more civilised races, without possessing that self-restraint which enables those of a higher intellectual grade to moderate their indulgence even in vice.

This applies especially to the introduction of strong drink among rude races by those more civilised, but also to other irregularities.

We may well suppose that all this is foreseen and permitted by Divine Providence, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19).

This partaking of the knowledge of good and evil has still somewhat the same result as in Eden. The savage too may have to learn to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow (Gen. iii. 19), instead of roaming in unchecked freedom and idleness over the wastes of the desert; and sickness and disease, want and privation will be suffered that have been unknown before.

Even a fiery sword of persecution may bar the way to the tree of life (ver. 24), yet leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations will still be strewn over a sin-stricken world.

That the fear of the Lord is the beginning of know-

ledge (Prov. i. 7), that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. ii. 3), are the lessons that must be learned before the fruit of the tree of life can be won once more in heaven above. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Rev. ii. 7).

Our first father Adam could have been no savage while he held communion with his Creator, and drank draughts from the wisdom of God; but through the painful process of his fall he was lifted at last from a frail and dangerous simplicity into a more stable and experienced self-restraint. Thus we trust it may be at last with savage nations educated in the Gospel as well as civilised in mind.

To paint the life of an untaught Indian as innocent and pure is a mistake, whether wilful or undesigned. "The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. xvii. 9). "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isa. liii. 6), and each race has its own sins and vices.

The Indian of the far North-West is not addicted to deeds of violence, but falsehood and impurities are deemed by him no crime, while gambling and conjuring or pretended incantations are his fond amusement, his best religion. Hard-heartedness toward the sick and decrepid and to the widow and orphan are frequent crimes.

Dancing and card-playing are the lessons they soonest learn from a European; also the love of dress and finery, and the wish to pose as a master. Life in the

wilds is far from being a life in Eden, as it is subject to want and privation, famine, accident and neglect. Especially the loss of friends and relations causes acute suffering, and this without the Christians' hope of a hereafter to mitigate the grief. "Ye are not to sorrow," says the apostle, "even as others that have no hope" (1 Thess. iv. 13).

On the whole the savage seems to have much less enjoyment, and that of a more sensual kind, than the cultivated and civilised man, let alone the Christian. "That the soul be without knowledge is not good" (Prov. xix. 2).

The instability of the savage when taught is perhaps the greatest difficulty in his education. It is like writing in the sand, instead of graving in the rock—easier, but not lasting.

To what extent the rude races of men are to dwindle away and merge in the more civilised, and to what extent they are to be reclaimed, God only knows. Our part meanwhile is to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark xvi. 15).

There seems no possibility of keeping men long out of reach of temptation to sin in this world. They must all pass more or less through the same gateway of downfall and bitter proof of their own insufficiency to resist the evil one, before they are led to seek help from one that is mighty (Ps. lxxxix. 19), our Saviour Christ, who alone has power to bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15; Rom. xvi. 20). And then will come the season of separation as described by John in his Epistle (1 John iii. 10), "In this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth

not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." "And in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him" (Acts x. 35). "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. x. 13).

VI.

GOLD.

"And the gold of that land is good."—GEN. ii. 12.

No one would wish to claim for the great North-West that it is an earthly paradise, though it has planted in it the tree of life of a preached Gospel, and a tree of knowledge of good and evil in sensual vices.

It has also a magnificent river, the great Mackenzie, which from thence is parted and becomes four chief heads, the Athabasca, the Peace, the Hay, and the Liard Rivers. The Rocky Mountains border this territory to the west, running the entire length of North America from the Arctic Ocean to Mexico, and at intervals through the whole chain gold is discovered.

The difficulty of profitably working mines in the North lies in the length of the cold season, so that labour is impeded by frost and snow for more than half the year. The usual place of searching for gold is among the sand and shingle which are brought down by the spring freshets, and, as the water falls, form banks in the river, called by the Americans bars, and by the French battures. In the mountains sometimes a small stream is diverted from its course into a new channel dug for it, in order that its bed may be searched for gold.

The course of proceeding is simply that of washing, shaking, and rinsing the sand, dirt, or gravel in a proper utensil until the heavier gold collects at the bottom, after which it is massed or conglomerated with quicksilver.

Sometimes a hole in the rock is found in which Nature herself has carried on such a washing operation in the flowing stream, and the gold lies almost pure at the bottom of this natural cavity, which is technically called a pocket.

Where the proper expensive and ponderous machinery has been erected, it is possible to pound up in a mill the masses of quartz rock in which particles of gold are sparsely scattered, and thus anticipate the action of the rivers in gradually washing down these rocks, and washing the gold far down the channels by the rapid currents.

The force of the water in spring, on the sudden melting of the snows on the mountains, is something surprising, and almost forests of trees as well as boulders of stone are carried down the stream among the floating ice. The bed of the river is rapidly altered by the force of the shingles, which are heard rolling at the bottom. The abrasion of soft muddy banks, and even of hard rocks by the spring ice is something considerable.

The presence of a black tinge in the sand is considered favourable for the presence of gold, and this is usually found in the mountains in association with quartz in the rock.

We see how well this accords with the situation of the gold described in Gen. ii. This was found in the land of Havilah, that is, the Sandy Land, and apparently

at the mouth of the Euphrates, which with its tributaries takes its rise in the mountains of Armenia. It would appear that the gold dust was found on the sand bars washed by the rivers from the mountains. It is mentioned also in conjunction with the onyx, which is a kind of agate or quartz.

The description of the processes of mining given in Job xxviii. is very graphic, and gold is several times named as the most precious of the metals sought for. "Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for the gold where they fine it" (ver. 1). "The earth has dust of gold" (ver. 6). "Wisdom cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and crystal cannot equal it, and the exchange thereof shall not be for jewels of fine gold" (vers. 15–17).

We have here the precious metal described in three or four different aspects, and distinguished in the original with different words—perhaps as gold-dust, nuggets, bullion, and coin.

The mention of gold is frequent in Scripture. From the lavish use made of this metal in the construction of the Tabernacle and Temple, and for vessels and ornament, it would seem that gold was less rare formerly than now. The ancient sources of its supply in the East appear now exhausted, and men have to search for it in the far south-east of Australia or the extreme north-west of America. When this is finished, where next?

Other metals are found in the far North-West, but are not precious enough to transport from so remote

a position. Iron is found, and copper. Silver is reported of, and lead. Sulphur and salt are plentiful. Petroleum springs are not wanting. Alum and ochre, potter's earth and pipe-clay, are found in places.

The life of a gold-miner does not appear to the onlooker a happy one. Hard toil and doubtful returns is their lot. The gain is mostly spent as soon as won, and is liable to be lost by robbery or violence.

The attraction of the life consists probably in the chance or hazard, as in a gambling game or lottery in which there are a few large prizes though many blanks. The quieter and less speculative walks of life seem safer and happier.

The gold, however, often won with little ultimate profit to the miner, is of great convenience to the world at large. The advantage of current coin as a medium of exchange, can only be fully realised by such as feel the want of it, as in the great North-West, where the circulation of coined money is wholly unknown.

The necessity of keeping a selection of goods for barter as the means of any sort of exchange or purchase, as of provision, is inconvenient and embarrassing. The introduction of a currency would be hailed as one of the blessings of civilisation.

"The love of money is truly a root of every evil" (1 Tim. vi. 10), and "riches make themselves wings, they fly away as an eagle toward heaven" (Prov. xxiii. 5). But the want of coin does not diminish but rather increases expense and waste; and it is doubtful how far the experiment would answer if repeated in modern times, of teaching the Spartans to abhor luxury by giving them none but iron coin.

VII.

SKINS.

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them."—GEN. iii. 21.

IT has been probably argued that the skins above mentioned were those of animals which our first parents were taught by God Himself to sacrifice for their sins.

In such case the sacrifice would be doubly typical of our Saviour Christ, both the expiatory blood poured on the altar foreshadowing the sacrifice of Calvary, and the covering transferred from the innocent animal to cloak the sinner's shame, being emblematic of the spotless robe of righteousness wrought by the Saviour's blameless life, and left by Him as a legacy at His death for the behoof of every believer.

The skins that made clothes for Adam and his wife were probably those of sheep and goats' wool, such as are described in the Epistle to the Hebrews to have been worn by the ancient prophets. "They wandered in sheepskins and goatskins, in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb. xi. 37). So the prophet Elijah is described as wrapped in a hairy cloak (2 Kings i. 8), though the animal is not mentioned, and this same cloak descended on the prophet Elisha. It was laid on his shoulders at his installation into the prophetic office (1 Kings

xix. 19), and afterward in wonder-working power dropped for him from his master's fiery chariot on his ascent to heaven (2 Kings ii. 13). This too was very probably of sheepskin with the same emblematic reference as above mentioned.

John Baptist we know dressed in camel's hair (Matt. iii. 4). It is possible that our Saviour Christ Himself may have worn a lamb's skin mantle, and thus the Baptist's saying may have received a visible illustration in contrast to himself: "Behold the Lamb of God" (John i. 36). The Baptist himself may have worn a goatskin girdle.

We have some other Scripture notices implying the use made of skins for clothing. In Lev. vii. 8 we read that of every burnt-offering the priest that offered it should retain the skin for himself, to be used probably as a cloak or coverlet; and in the directions regarding a garment or skin fretted with a plague in Lev. xiii. 49, we trace evidence that skin was applied in common with wool and flax to domestic use.

The great North-West still retains the habits of a primitive world as a land of skins, and these are still used for purposes of clothing. It is true that the finer sorts of fur are now too valuable in trade to be so much used as formerly by the natives for dress. When the fur trade began with the Indians, the marten and beaver skins were frequently traded from the Indians when already sewn up into a coat for themselves, but which they were persuaded to barter for a woven fabric from Europe.

Nothing made by the loom, however, at all equals for warmth the original fur dress of the Indian. The

natives now, so far as they are unprovided with European clothing, mostly dress in moose or deer skin; the more northern tribes using in winter the deerskin with the hair on for their clothes, lodges, and blankets, and in such use the warmth afforded is surprising.

For bed-covering a robe of dressed deer hide, or skin of a smaller animal, even down to the rabbit, is warmer and lighter than anything woven. The rabbit skins are also used as dress by the Indians, being cut in strips and laced together as a sort of matwork, and these will defy any cold.

A group of Indian children nestling in their camp enveloped in their rabbit-skin coats show little difference except in size from the animals themselves.

We may well reflect on the contrast between the simplicity both of material and construction of the first dress of skin mentioned above, and the lavish waste of pains and expens spent upon vanities of dress in after days.

It may be asked why was there necessity for God Himself interposing to clothe our first parents, when their own skill might have sufficed for this. We may well believe that our Lord in this wished to show His condescension, and to teach that the whole human race represented by Adam as their head must look to Him to be clothed in righteousness (Isa. lxi. 10).

God does not seem to have withdrawn altogether from intercourse with men even after their expulsion from Eden, and He could not look with such complacency on them girt with the tattered fig-leaves of their own invention, as when robed in the warm garments of His own handiwork, whose material man can never equal.

This is testified by the price still paid for furs even in a civilised market.

We admire the condescension of Him who was at last to become incarnate as a Carpenter, prefiguring this beforehand in the minute directions and measurements given to Moses on Sinai for each board and curtain in the construction of the Tabernacle (Exod. xxv.–xxix.).

We can adore also the same condescension in that He who was to wear up to Calvary the seamless robe (John xix. 23), seamed their first habiliments for Adam and Eve.

If it be asked what process is required to prepare raw hide for a garment, the reply is that the chief necessity consists in suppling or softening the skin by scraping or currying it.

This work is laboriously performed by the Indian wives with a scraper or currying knife of bone or stone or metal, the skin having been previously washed or soaked in water. Of course no tanning is required, which would have rather the reverse effect of hardening the skin.

The Apostle Peter was doubtless secreting himself from observation and persecution, when lodged at Joppa with a tanner or currier, among the unclean hides which were counted polluting by the Mosaic law. He was thus prepared by Providence for the vision that was to teach him to unlock the offers of God's salvation to the whole heathen world (Acts x. 6).

We still devoutly admire the divine condescension that provides for the wants of earth's remotest tribes, and warmly clothes the wandering Indian in the skins of those animals, whose carcases form his only diet.

VIII.

PINE-TREES.

"Make thee an ark of gopher wood."—GEN. vi. 14.

FROM the connection of this Hebrew word gopher with the word used for brimstone, we conclude that a resinous wood is intended, as melted sulphur and melted rosin are not very dissimilar. We suppose then that the ark was built of pine, and it is likely therefore that it was built among pine forests on some mountain range.

This wood is not elsewhere mentioned in the Bible, but the kindred woods of the fir and cedar are frequently referred to.

The pine and the fir are the trees of the far North, and we admire the wisdom of Providence that has adapted the tapering stem and narrow spines of the pine to withstand the Arctic blasts, while its sombre but evergreen tint forms the best contrast to the dazzling snow, and is a relief to the wearying eyes.

The resinous nature of the pine wood doubtless protects it from being killed by frost, and is also the means of rendering it better fuel for the cold regions in which it grows.

It is the forests of the North that in God's Providence supply lumber for more temperate climes. So we read

in Ezekiel of the ship boards of Tyre being made from fir-trees of Senir or Mount Hermon (chap. xxvii. 5).

The pine branches form the carpeting or floor of all Indian tents and lodges in the North, and the same make the encampment and bed of every winter traveller.

In approaching the confines of the Arctic Ocean the pine-trees become more and more stunted, till at last about fifty miles from the coast they disappear altogether, unless along the banks of rivers. Then succeed the "barren lands" which stretch across the extreme north of the American continent. These form the summer home of the migrating reindeer, which remind us of the description given in Job of the wild ass, "whose house thou hast made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwelling" (chap. xxxix. 6).

The fir-tree is found in a more southern latitude than the pine. There is no cedar mingled with the pine of the far North-West until you reach within about one hundred and fifty miles of the Pacific coast, when you may first notice a few straggling cedar-trees among the pine forest. A few miles further west the pine is wholly replaced by the cedar, and the latter forms the main part of the forest on the coasts of British Columbia.

The cedar is more graceful in its form, and lighter and more agreeable in its tint than the pine.

The change of the forest trees is coterminous with a change of climate to the moister and milder temperature of the western coast.

The ocean shore on the coast of British Columbia is ramparted by numerous rows of rocky islands, densely covered with cedar groves to the water's edge, so that

the trees bend to the bosom of the ocean and form a charming fringe.

The cedar of the North is of course a different sort from the cedar of Lebanon or that of English gardens, but the facility with which it is used for carpentering and building may illustrate the frequent reference to cedars in Scripture both for building and carving (1 Kings vi. 9, &c.).

The cedar wood is split roughly into boards, and with these are built the villages of the Indians. The trunks of the cedars are so large and so easily hollowed out that canoes are formed from a single tree to hold fifty men. These canoes are elegantly shaped and ornamented with carving, and they are so accurately and evenly hollowed that their sides may be only an inch thick. The natives take so much pride in having light canoes that these are sometimes broken with fatal result, only by rising and falling in the ocean waves.

The cedar wood split into light boards forms also boxes and utensils.

The Pacific coast is so wet on the shores of British Columbia that three days out of four are rainy, and the woods are generally drenched with moisture. There is not much dead wood, and the traveller might have difficulty in kindling a forest fire, at which to warm and dry his soaked and chilly frame, had not Providence made ready there one sort of cedar so full of rosin, that chips cut out of its green wood in a storm of rain will ignite and blaze at once on applying a match to them.

There is also a small fish on that coast, found in enormous numbers at one season of the year, called the

Oolikum or Candle-fish. This is so full of oil that if lit at the tail it will burn like a candle in its own fat.

Ash and poplar are also found in the North-Western forests, but mostly not so far north as the pine and cedar. Both of these are mentioned in Scripture.

The Bible, in its universal adaptation to the life of man, pictures vividly in numerous passages the associations of the forest with its thickets, its wild animals, its axe-men, its clearings and its fires.

The forest is called upon by the prophet Isaiah to share in the universal joy of redemption. "Break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein" (Isa. xliv. 23). "I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof" (Jer. xxi. 14).

The solitudes of a mighty forest are awe-inspiring, and calculated to draw the mind upward to the great Creator. Among giant trees whose age may probably be counted by centuries, man is led to feel his own insignificance.

The cedar and fir in their evergreen permanence are made emblematic in the Bible of the security and renewed freshness of the righteous. "He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon" (Ps. xcii. 12). "I am like a green fir-tree" (Hos. xiv. 8). The lonely forester may thus find a reminder in the trees around him of Divine presence and care.

IX.

COLD.

"Cold and heat . . . shall not cease."—GEN. viii. 22.

IN the far North extremes of temperature are much greater than in the temperate zones. In subarctic latitudes a single day may afford greater variations of temperature than between summer and winter in England. At sunrise the temperature may fall to 30° below zero Fahrenheit, and in the afternoon it may rise to 40° above zero, or the thermometer may mark 100° in the sun while it is yet freezing in the shade.

Great varieties of temperature, however, are not so inconvenient in the North, because the cold from the dryness of the atmosphere does not appear so chilly or immediately penetrating. Should any one remain long outside in winter without wraps or motion it would end in his being frozen to death, but to leave a warm room and stand without for a few minutes in a temperature of say 30° below zero will occasion no inconvenience or unpleasantness, nor will a greatcoat be required for warmth in walking briskly at that temperature.

The winter is generally preferred to the summer in a subarctic clime on account of the absence of the summer flies. The mosquitoes are very numerous and

troublesome in the heat of summer even up to the Arctic coast. These remind us of the plague of Egypt (Exod. viii. 24). These gnats will collect in a cloud around the head of a pedestrian, and without the protection of a veil are exasperating and fatiguing.

Many matters will, however, abate for a time the vehemence of the flies' attack. A fresh breeze will disperse them. Very hot sun subdues them. Smoke is a thorough preventive, and a dry summer may be nearly free from them. The morning is much more free than the evening. In fact, the Hebrew word for evening probably means the swarming time, and the word for morning implies emptiness or freedom from these annoyances.

An uncleared and unsettled forest, especially when marshy, is most infested with insects. In ancient times they may have been as troublesome in the East as they are now in the West.

The question has been raised as a matter of science, whether the Arctic regions were always of their present temperature. It is the general belief that even recently the difference between summer and winter there has become less extreme than formerly. The Pacific coast is quite mild from a warm equatorial current both of air and water. A deflection of this warm current to the eastward causes a mild season over the whole North-West.

Either a change in the inclination of the earth's axis or in atmospheric and oceanic currents has probably varied the temperature in most parts of the earth, and the tendency may have been to equalise the seasons; for it appears that anciently summer's heat would ripen

grapes in Northumberland, and winter's cold produce snow in Vesuvius.

The Esquimaux recognise the elephant when shown to them in a picture, and say that this animal has not been long extinct in their country, the skeleton, it is said, being found complete; and in Siberia their bodies have been found embedded in ice, with the hair on. But they might be preserved in that frozen state for thousands of years.

Leaves of tropical plants are said to have been found in northern latitudes, but no authenticated case of the kind has been traced in the North-West.

Astronomers tell us that if the inclination of the earth's axis varies, it returns after a cycle of years to its original angle. This accords with the promise to Noah that the seasons shall never be obliterated. Still these may be modified. It is generally believed that the settlement, clearing and cultivation of a country reduces the severity of its winter, and this is a benign provision.

The position of the North Pole and of the earth's axis may be varied by secular changes, while its inclination remains steadfast, as we know the position of the magnetic pole is always changing.

It is singular what a short distance of travel may in some parts quite change the climate. On the coast of British Columbia snow hardly lies on the ground in winter for a day, while one hundred miles inland the country may be buried in ice and snow for nearly six months.

Only a few feet below the surface there is no change of temperature from summer to winter, but the general

average temperature of the year is maintained throughout it. Within or near the Arctic Circle, where the average temperature is below freezing point, the under ground is permanently frozen; but further south, by digging low enough, ground is reached that never freezes unless by admission of external air. There vegetables, by being deeply buried, can be preserved unfrozen throughout winter.

After reaching the neighbourhood of the Arctic coast or even a latitude of 65°, it does not appear that the winter temperature becomes more severe in approaching the North Pole. In fact, the temperature of the Arctic Ocean would seem to be somewhat milder than that of the land to the south of it. This we might expect from the general experience that the temperature of water is more equable than that of land.

The temperature of Western America is much warmer than that of Eastern America in the like latitudes, and the temperature of Europe is warmer than America. Canada, in the latitude of Italy, is buried under months of winter snow.

When the Arctic temperature has stood for a few days at 60° below zero, a rise to 30° below zero seems for the time like mild weather, though in contrast to a milder temperature preceding the latter figure might be found cold enough.

X.

LANGUAGES.

"Babel, because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth."—GEN. xi. 9.

THE study of North American languages offers many points of interest. These languages have in common many peculiar distinctions from European languages, and are classed as a separate variety of human speech.

The original confusion of tongues is narrated almost as if it had been a curse or punishment, but it is plain that God's good Providence has turned the curse into a blessing. The confusion of tongues effected the dispersion of the human race, and it is clear that the continuance of this dissimilarity of language has operated to keep each race to its own country and home.

This is especially visible in the case of the roving Indians in the North-West. Almost every tribe uses a dialect somewhat dissimilar to that of the next tribe, but yet sufficiently like for them to be understood in intercourse with each other. In passing to a third tribe the difference in tongue is so increased as to prevent them from understanding the first race.

In a wide country, where little human forethought is exercised, probably nothing but this diversity of speech would keep the Indians sufficiently dispersed to cover

the whole territory, and thus enable all to find adequate means of support.

It would seem that the first confusion of tongues has been increased by natural causes, so far as concerns the branching off of languages into various dialects or uses.

Even one family, or the dwellers in one county, if somewhat isolated, will use distinctive words and phrases, or acquire a patois of their own; and this isolation is much greater in the sparse population of the North-West than elsewhere in the world.

There have thus come to be some hundreds of Indian dialects, but careful study can reduce these to a few main branches. It is a suggestive hint for the science of etymology to notice how the words of the most remote tribes of one great family of Indians have at last become so dissimilar, that only the faintest resemblance can by careful scrutiny be detected between them. Yet the likeness, though faint, being systematic and general, proves a common stock.

Thus the great Chipewyan race of Indians can be traced in some of its branches from the eastern to the western shores of North America, but the dialects spoken on the Pacific coast bear only a faint shadow of resemblance to those on the east. Just so a family cast of countenance may be noticed as appearing slightly in one who is no very near relation.

It is remarkable to find the most rude and uncultivated tribes of Indians in possession of languages of symmetry and beauty; and one is led to the conviction that there is something heavenly and Divine in the gift of human speech.

The Tukuth language, for instance, which is spoken in its purity by only a few hundred families, and these located within the Arctic Circle, yet possesses forms of conjugation of its verbs at least as complicated as those of the Greeks, and in some respects more diffuse. The lamp of religion burned very dim among this race when found by the missionary, yet they had a germ of piety embedded in their very language, in that they used a form of expression in speaking of the works of God in Nature different from that used for human handiwork, and implying awe and reverence.

These Indian races may indeed be now in a state of decay, and may exhibit in their language a relic of the pristine culture they possessed in Asia, whence they seem originally to have migrated. Yet even so these languages can hardly be deemed of human construction or invention. In their symmetrical involution and perfect organisation they betray the same Divine hand that we view in the works of Nature, rather than the clumsy fabrication of human handiwork.

Languages, too, have periods of rise, growth, vigour, effloresence, and decay, and may be likened to the living trees of the forest in their varied genera and species, more than to the lifeless minerals, though these too possess crystalline symmetry and beauty.

It seems probable that the confusion of tongues at Babel was not total, but only sufficient for the purpose intended, namely, to cause inconvenience and misunderstanding, and the differences may have widened afterwards. We are therefore still permitted to trace etymological resemblances between the different languages of earth, and may be allowed to suppose that

some bond of union may be found between each and all of them with the Hebrew, which the Mosaic record strongly implies to have been the original tongue from the Creation, because of the significant names occurring in it even from antediluvian times.

Thus the pronouns are generally considered a test of connection between languages, and these in the Cree Indian are remarkably like the Hebrew. The Cree possessive pronoun may be written *ni, ki, u, my, thy, his;* and the Hebrew *ni, k, u.* The radical form of the verb *to do* or *make* in the Cree "ose" is identical with the Hebrew. Yet the structure of the language has now become so different that a full paradigm of a Cree verb will fill a volume, while the Hebrew verb would hardly occupy a page.

This change arises from the agglutination of particles, for the Cree was plainly, like the Hebrew, originally monosyllabic. The Cree word "pime," meaning fat, and which forms the first part of the Anglicised word "pemmican," may be found in the Hebrew Lexicons with the same meaning.

Of the American Indians it would seem that the more northern tribes reached the continent by way of Behring's Straits, and that they have languages resembling those of Northern Asia. Others to the south came from the Malay peninsula and the Sandwich Islands, and in their speech and appearance are like southern Asiatics. A part of the natives on the coast of British Columbia seem to have been shipwrecked there from Japan.

XI.

WANDERERS.

"He will be a wild man."—GEN. xvi. 12.

THERE seems little occasion to change the rendering of this text to a "wild ass man" as suggested in the Revised Version, because the wild ass seems to have gained its name from its wildness, rather than the epithet wild being derived from the wild ass. Heb. *pare*, wild ass. Greek *pher*, wild beast. Latin *ferus*, wild.

A certain part of the human race may still be called wild men in the sense of being almost untameable, and this is especially the case with those resident in the wilds, such as the North American Indian. It is, however, happily to a part of these races only that the rest of the description in Genesis will apply: "His hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him." The more northern Indians are mostly mild and tractable, and some cringing and cowardly.

Wild habits are fostered by the almost constant movement inseparable from a life supported by the chase, and they are difficult to eradicate. One brought up in the open air is apt to become consumptive when confined to the closer atmosphere of a house, and for a consumptive patient a camp life would be a better

remedy than all the doctor's stuff. The careless and disorderly ways of those constantly shifting their home are inconsistent with a fixed residence indoors, and many an Indian builds a log house only to weary of it, and return again to a skin tent.

The Indians have mostly a superstitious dread of staying on in a place where any one has died. In the woods they always shift their camp on the occasion of a death, and if they have built a house with a view to a settled life they generally vacate it after the first death that occurs in it.

Wild animals and all game become scarce after a time round a settled residence, while a shifting camp can always be placed in an advantageous position for hunting, and can be removed to a place where a large animal has been killed, instead of the heavy meat being carried over a rough country for many miles to a fixed home.

Wild men, like wild animals, may no doubt be tamed and domesticated, but the task is not an easy one. The Gospel of Christ has power to change the nature and the heart, and its softening influence is the best for reducing the savage to a state of culture. It seems, however, to be the intention of Providence that some races should be dwellers in tents, and some in settled habitations. In fact, Israel of old seem to have dwelt partly in tents as a pastoral people, as well as in cities.

In the severe climate of the farthest North it seems needful that at present the native tribes should live by the chase, but as the first command of God to man to subdue the earth becomes more and more fulfilled, the unsubdued part that remains wild and uncultivated

becomes constantly narrower in its bounds, and the uncultivated races are replaced more and more by those of settled habits and superior civilisation.

A residence among a wild and untutored race yields the strong impression, that one lives there among the ruins of a bygone civilisation, rather than among men in their pristine and original condition. A savage race appears in a state of decay and degeneration, nor do we see any evidence of a tendency in untutored races to rise above themselves.

In Europe it may appear at first sight, that the Western races, such as the English, have risen from savagedom to civilisation and intellectual attainment; but, when the matter is investigated, it is found that each stage of improvement has been caused by a sort of inoculation with a civilisation already existing further to the East.

Thus in England the advent of the Romans, Saxons, and Normans were each stages of advancement to the ancient Britons, while the dispersion to the westward of learned Greeks by the Turks was a cause of advancement of learning at the time of the Reformation. All these causes of improvement were mingled with the renovating influence of Christianity.

The Ishmaelites, to whom the text above quoted refers, became a widely spread nation, and their habits being those of wanderers, as stated in the context, it may be that more of the wandering races of the world are connected with Ishmael than might be supposed. Even the gipsies, of whom the name implies that, like Hagar, they are of Egyptian origin, may be Ishmaelites.

The life and habits of the gipsies have much in

common with those of the Indians of the North-West.

It was promised to Abraham that he should be the father of many nations. Now the Israelites and Arabians are but two. What if the North American Indians should be some of the many. The Cree races possess the red colour of the skin which was characteristic of the ancient Edomites. The more northern Chipewyans are sallow like their own willows—that is, the grey willow; for there are red and grey willows as there are red and sallow Indians.

The Esquimaux are as fair as Europeans, though more coarse featured.

The mingling of a superior and intellectual race with the savage ought to be for the improvement of the latter, but alas, it is not always so. The Indians are quicker at learning vice than virtue, while the restraints of civilisation may be laid aside by those who know better, after a life in the wilds.

A European entering on a forest life is supremely conscious of his own superiority to the aborigines; but this is not quite so clear to the natives, who have no eyes for mental worth, and may be disposed to ridicule the want of skill in a white man in the chase, or his lack of dexterity in the everyday duties and necessities of a forest life, such as the kindling a forest fire on a wet night, when everything is soaked with rain.

XII.

HOSPITALITY.

"He ran to meet them from the tent door."—GEN. xviii. 2.

THE habits of the far East are of course in many respects different from those of the extreme West; but still many illustrations of Scripture can be gathered from Western lands. The extreme East and West adjoin, and beside this the Indians of the North-West have their own traditions, that they arrived from Eastern lands by way of Behring's Straits.

The habits of some tribes, especially of the Crees, are so similar in many respects to those of the Hebrews, that some have thought these Indians to be of Israelitish origin. In their language there is some similarity.

Tent life has some analogies in all parts of the world, and patriarchal hospitality especially may be matched in the Indian camps of the North-West. The running to meet a stranger indeed is not quite the Indian etiquette. Some prefer to remain seated in their tent till a stranger enters, and they will then be far from profuse at first in their expressions of welcome.

They will, however, expect the stranger to seat himself in the best, that is, the warmest, place in the

tent, and they will soon begin preparing the best repast their tent offers, and for this and the night's rest that follows they do not expect to be paid.

Life in the dense forests of the far West is so primeval in its habits, that it cannot but illustrate patriarchal ways; and even in religion one seems thrown back to patriarchal simplicity, for outward rites and ordinances must needs be scanty, and a pilgrim's life of faith, obedience, and dependence, such as that of Abraham, is the chief internal mark of the religion of the forest.

Abraham's hospitality appears to be referred to in the New Testament, first in our Lord's address to Zaccheus: "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham" (Luke xix. 9). Indeed it is generally believed that it was our Lord Himself that accepted in angelic form the hospitality of Abraham, as in the human form He did that of Zaccheus. Both incidents may be referred to in the apostle's admonition: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. xiii. 2).

We see still in use among some of the North-West Indians those rude implements and utensils which are supposed by some men of science to betoken a mythical or pre-Adamite antiquity. Stone hatchets have indeed given place to those of steel for felling trees, but the former are still employed for grubbing roots, and for such a purpose are of the rudest make.

Flint arrow and spear heads are still quite common, and the shape and workmanship of these, so far from being, as antiquarians suggest a test of their age and

date, are chiefly dependent on the question whether they were made by a man or a boy. A well-worn gun-flint, on the other hand, might be taken for an instrument as old as Methuselah, though used yesterday.

The Esquimaux are good carvers in the ivory of the walrus tusk, and of these they make needle cases and other small articles.

The mention that Abraham took fire in his hand and a knife, on his journey from Beersheba to Jerusalem, seems to imply that he had difficulty in making fire when required. If his knife had been of steel, he could have struck fire with it and a flint, for such is a very common mode of making fire with the Indian.

We read of instruments of brass and iron being manufactured before the flood, and by Abraham himself the precious metals seem to have been weighed for trade. His knife was probably not of stone like those of Joshua, but of copper or bronze.

One tribe of Indians dwelling near the Coppermine River are called the Yellow Knives, from their knives being made of copper; and bone knives are also seen among the Indians. Especially the women's knives used for scraping skins are often of bone.

In the absence of manufactured iron, fire might be struck with a piece of meteoric iron, as was frequently done till recently by the Esquimaux, and they would collect to use with this iron pieces of flint from a mountain called Flint Mountain.

In the absence of all iron, fire was and may be still made by Indians and Esquimaux by twisting a point of hard wood rapidly as a pivot in a small hole or dent made in a piece of soft, dry, friable wood, so as to

produce as much friction as possible. The pivot is twisted in a small bowstring and twirled like a drill used by watchmakers and others.

If both iron and wood of a suitable kind for making fire were absent from Beersheba, this would account for Abraham carrying fire along with him, perhaps in a small charcoal brazier which could be frequently replenished by the way.

It is, however, possible that a sacred fire was kept constantly burning on the altar at Beersheba, and that it was thought most agreeable to convey a flame from this sacred fire to kindle the sacrifice on Moriah, and that after all steel was at hand to kindle a common fire when required (see Lev. vi. 13 and x. 1).

If this explanation is received, the antiquarian interest of the incident vanishes.

In reference to the use by Joshua of flint knives, as mentioned in Josh. v. 3 (marg.), it may be mentioned that for a bleeding lancet a chip of flint is preferred to steel by the Indians of the North.

Some regulations similar to those enacted in Lev. xii. and xv. in reference to purification are generally observed by the Indians with much superstition.

Most of the Indian tribes have some tradition of the Deluge, and the Esquimaux seem to have taken the whites, when they first saw them, for descendants of Cain. They had a tradition, that in the first family on earth the sons quarrelled, and one killed his brother, and had to leave his home, and they thought the white men might be the posterity of this wanderer returned once more.

XIII.

PROVIDENCE.

"Jehovah-Jireh."—GEN. xxii. 14.

THE simplest interpretation of this name is, "The Lord will provide," in reference, as it would seem, to the significant assurance given by the patriarch Abraham to his son Isaac in their mysterious ascent of Mount Moriah, "God will provide for Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering, my son." This assurance was signally fulfilled by the ram caught in a thicket by its horns, and which Abraham offered up for an offering instead of his son.

"As it shall be said this day," adds the inspired historian, "In the mount the Lord will provide." This we are at liberty to take as a comfortable assurance of the constant continuance of God's good providence. Such again is the confidence expressed by David in Ps. xxiii. 6, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, even to rest me in the Lord's house for length of days;" or in Ps. cxxviii. 6, "He will provide sons for your sons; peace over Israel."

In the civilised countries of modern days, where for the most part abundant provision is made by human agency for every bodily want, the interposition of the Supreme is less plainly visible. One surrounded by

thousands of shops full of food may have more difficulty in lifting his thoughts from earth to heaven while repeating the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread."

In such a country as the great North-West, where food is scarce, and human industries are lacking, the dependence of the creature on the daily bounty of the Creator is more marked and evident.

It is generally but day by day or week by week that the supply of nature's wants is afforded, and often the source of supply is uncertain or unexpected. Yet it is but seldom that a pressing want of food is felt. "God provides for the wanderers in the deserts as for the ravens that call upon Him" (Ps. cxlvii. 9). In fact, in Hebrew the same word will express both the raven and the Arabian, and the same sentence may assure us of God's care for both. So it has been questioned whether the ravens or the Arabians were the actual providers for the prophet Elijah's wants by the brook Cherith. Whichever were the agents, God was the giver (1 Kings xvii. 6).

How easy for Him is the supply of our every want. "Thou openest Thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing" (Ps. cxlv. 16). "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread" (Ps. xxxvii. 25).

It is strange to contrast in this respect the providence of God with the improvidence of man. The wandering Indian has little more thought or care for the morrow's sustenance than have the birds or the animals. He is so accustomed to reckon on the day's supply coming

with the day, that he has little regard to prudence or economy, but feasts while there is plenty, and fasts when there is lack.

He will share his last mouthful with a passing traveller or an accidental guest, and is spared the anxiety which a civilised person would feel with a bare cupboard.

The supply of animal food greatly fluctuates. The migratory reindeer change their course of travel in different years, so that one district is plentifully stocked with these one season, and another season a different part. Wind, storm, or cold, and the burning of the forests by running fires, may occasion these alterations.

The elk or moose deer, being a very nervous animal, may almost entirely forsake a particular district for a time, either from being attacked by wolves, or from being over hunted.

The rabbits and other smaller animals, as foxes, marten, and lynx, have periodical times of increase and decrease in number. The rabbits after a gradual increase reach their maximum about every eight or ten years, after which they diminish again till they are few and scarce.

The fish also are more abundant in a favourable season than at another, and so with bears and birds.

But as the old proverb speaks: "When one door closes another opens." By a heavenly care, when one source of food fails, another may take its place. When meat is scarce fish may be plentiful. When fish fail, rabbits may be numerous, or birds may abound.

It seems to us surprising to read of Israel in the

desert being fed for a whole month on quails arriving from the sea, but a large band of Esquimaux with their families may subsist in the spring on nothing but a similar bird, the Arctic grouse, caught in whalebone snares, of which material they make also excellent fishing-nets.

The Indian will make his nets either of sinew or of roots, or long grass twisted with twine.

Where a failure of provision occurs in a district, it may sometimes be viewed as a Divine chastisement for the vicious lives of the natives. Sometimes it seems to be the hand of Providence summoning the wild Indian from his entire dependence on the chase, and alluring him to attempt more settled and provident habits, by the cultivation of the soil or other industry.

Every commodity (except food) which an Indian requires for common use is provided even for every scattered band of the wide North-West by European traders, in exchange for the one marketable produce of the country, the skins of its fur-bearing animals.

We can hardly fail to recognise even in this the care of a heavenly Providence for these forest roamers, though human agency and worldly interests are involved. For the extent of country is such that each individual man and woman and child of the inhabitants might have about 100 square miles of territory to himself, if the country were divided among them.

It is pleasant to be able to add that the good Lord has added to these temporal provisions the message of salvation, on behalf of all who will listen to it for the life of their souls.

XIV.

BURIAL.

"Bury thy dead."—GEN. xxiii. 6.

THE anxiety, which Scripture shows to have existed from the earliest times, for the suitable interment of deceased relations, is a natural one, especially in places where unclean animals prowling for prey are likely to disturb the remains.

In the great North-West, where the ground throughout the long winter is frozen to a considerable depth, the interment of the dead is no easy matter. The grave has to be chopped, rather than dug, either with the axe or pick, if the latter tool is at hand, which is seldom the case. The work is laborious, and sometimes beyond the power of the relatives of the deceased Indian.

Probably for this reason, the original custom of many tribes of Indians, before the introduction of Christianity among them, was to suspend their dead on high stages elevated on poles from the ground, and thus beyond the reach of predatory animals. By this means the need of hewing the frozen ground was avoided.

It was customary also to place with the body of the deceased the articles he required for daily use in life, his bow and arrows, or in later times his gun and

hatchet, his pipe and fire-bag. These customs have waned before the light of the Gospel, but it is still difficult to wean the Indian from all superstition regarding the dead, or to convince him that the corpse does not retain some life or consciousness, that it is no longer the dwelling, but only the forsaken shell of a spirit, that has winged its flight elsewhere.

The wailings of an Indian over his lost relative, and especially of a mother over her lost children, are piercing and heartrending; but it is pleasant to see the contrast in this respect between those who are still ignorant of the Gospel, and such as have received it. The Christian converts have now learned to accept their bereavements as from God's hand in silence and submission, and their mute grief is more impressive than the loud lamentation of the heathen.

If a conversation is begun with an elderly Indian female, she will generally turn the subject to the number of children she has lost, and these she will count on her fingers. It often takes the whole ten to number her little ones deceased. The severe climate and constant removals, with uncertain food, are very fatal to infant and child life in the North, and the only comfort is to trust that such little ones are gathered by our gracious Saviour to His arms, before they have become the prey of vice and sin, either among heathen, or what is perhaps worse, among only nominal Christians.

The question we read in Job xxxviii. 32, "Canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?" might be translated, "Wilt thou comfort the Great Bear over her young

ones?" If we take the northern constellation of the Great Bear to figure the Arctic clime, we might apply the question to the need of cheering the mothers in the far North over their many lost infants.

However this may be, we are justified in using for such a comforting object the words of Jeremiah (xxxi. 16) of Rachel's children: "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy."

In some instances the Indian mothers literally cry their eyes out; and if you ask a blind woman how she lost her vision, she may answer that it was by weeping too hard for her lost relatives, and dimness of sight is attributed to the same cause.

Some Indians cling tenaciously to a love of life. Others exhibit great indifference about it. If a sick Indian despair of recovery, he may die of mere hopelessness. A medicine man may also take the life of an Indian by telling him that he is going to die. The Indian may go home and sicken, and expire from the very expectation of it.

Sometimes an Indian will carry about with him the corpse of a deceased child half the winter, waiting for the thawing of the ground in spring to bury it suitably. It is, however, more common to notice unseemly haste in disposing of the remains of one deceased. In Scripture we have instances of hasty interment, as in Acts v. 6–10, where the burial followed immediately upon the death. With the Indian, what is termed in that chapter the winding up of the dead, or the wrapping round of the body, sometimes takes place before the

breath has left it. The relatives may have a superstitious fear of touching a corpse after death. There is no fear of resuscitation in a climate where the frame is stiffly frozen as soon as removed from the camp fire.

On the Pacific coast it is the custom for the chiefs to be buried each at the door of his house, and they are careful not to disturb the remains. An Indian in the North is often buried under the place occupied by his camp fire, because the ground there has been softened by the heat. The Indians will remove at once from a place where one of their camp has died, and will avoid the place in future.

As the natives have such a superstitious dread of a place of burial, it does not seem well to follow in that country the European custom of placing the graves round the church.

A body interred in the constantly frozen ground of the extreme North might remain unchanged till the world's end, so complete is the action of frost in arresting the decay of substances congealed by it. It is possibly this idea that makes the Indian more superstitious about the place of his dead.

XV.

BOWMEN.

"Take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow."
—GEN. xxvii. 3.

THE Scriptures are full of references to archery, for the hunter's weapons in old times were those named above. In this and in many other cases the transition to more modern appliances (in this instance to weapons of precision) tends to make the Bible seem an antiquated book, and may account for the Scriptures being regarded in some quarters as little more than a storehouse for the antiquary.

One remedy for this may be to point out that the Bible expressions by Divine foresight are made equally applicable to the present as to any past age, and sometimes the phrases used find their best illustration in modern days.

The original word for bow is literally a fowling-piece, and without any wresting may be applied correctly to the modern gun as well as to the bow of David's time, which was made, it would seem, of the same material —steel. The word for arrow includes every missile, and will apply even more forcibly to the modern bullet than to the ancient shaft, because the root of the term is swiftness. The word for quiver means anything hanging by the side, and may be explained of

a cartouche as of a quiver. Even the word artillery is used of the old archer's weapons as of others of our own day, and the chariots of old become the gun-carriages of modern warfare.

"Is there anything," asks the wise man, "of which it is said, See this is new, behold it has been already in old time that was before us," and the sharpshooter dates from before the time of gunpowder.

In the great North-West some of the habits of primitive days are still familiar, and in this respect it offers some material for Bible illustration. The bow and arrow are in the hand of the Indian boy from his earliest years, and though these may be exchanged by an adult for the gun, yet the bow is often carried by them also, to be used for such game as is not worth the expense of ammunition.

The bows of the Esquimaux, a powerful race, are very strong, and are made of wood strengthened with sinew. These bows remind us of the bow of steel, which David boasted that his arms were strengthened to bend (Ps. xviii. 34).

The arrow heads are of various materials, whether of metal, either copper or iron, or of ivory, bone or stone. Pointless wooden arrows with heads like hammers are used for small birds.

In one respect the old arrow was preferable for the hunter to the modern bullet—that is, in its noiselessness.

It is very characteristic of the practical David, that, while lamenting in the most beautiful elegy ever written over the death of Saul and Jonathan and the flower of Israel's youth at the hand of the Philistine archers, he

bade them teach Israel also the use of the bow, that such a disaster might not occur again.

The other weapon used by David, the sling and stone, is also seen in the hands of Indian boys.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual (2 Cor. x. 4), and the only reference to the bow in the New Testament is in a spiritual sense. We read in Rev. vi. 2, "I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer." This figures the triumphs of our Saviour and of His holy Gospel.

These are also referred to in Ps. xlv. 5, where we read, "Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee." But after all our Saviour's bow is that rainbow of peace, which is bent upward to the sky, and His arrows of conviction, which reach the conscience like the thrusts of the Spirit's sword, are but the precursors of salvation. "He woundeth, and His hands make whole" (Job v. 18).

Of the poor Indian of the far North it may be said also, that his bow is the bow of peace, being used in the chase and not in war. It is to be desired that God's arrows may reach his heart not as the lightning flash of punishment, but as that of conviction and conversion.

The prophet complains that "the turtle, the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord" (Jer. viii. 7). He implies that the regular return of the spring birds at their appointed season shames the backwardness of sinful men to return to the Lord,

even when the beams of the Sun of Righteousness cheer them with spring.

The return of the spring birds is the harvest time of the fowler in the far North. Large flights of geese, swans, and cranes pass through the country in spring to spend the summer in the Arctic coasts, and return south in the fall with new broods already on the wing.

The unwearied flight of these strong-winged fowls is surprising. Ducks, grouse, and many smaller birds have also their migrations, but with less sustained and distant flights. Swallows or swifts during the short summer nestle in banks or cliffs of sand or mud. King-fishers skim the rivers in pursuit of fish, and plovers and sand-pipers are common.

On the Pacific coast a small sort of eagle perches on many a tree, and the larger kind is met with in other parts, and hawks and owls pursue their smaller prey. Most of these kinds of birds are mentioned in the Bible. In some places pelicans are numerous, and the wide stretch of their wings is remarkable.

"I am like a pelican of the wilderness," writes the Psalmist (Ps. cii. 6). To this it has been objected that the pelican is a sea bird; but, as usual or always, the mistake here is that of the critic and not of the inspired writer, for pelicans are found in the interior deserts of the wide North-West hundreds of miles from the sea.

In fact it is remarkable to notice that the North-West being emphatically a desert or wilderness land, its birds very much agree with those mentioned in the prophets as denizens of the lands adjudged by God to perpetual desolation. Thus in Isaiah xxxiv. 11, "The

pelican and the bittern shall possess it; the owl and the raven shall dwell in it." Also vers. 14–16, "The screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. There shall the great owl make her nest, and hatch and gather under her shadow. There shall the vultures also be gathered every one with her mate. Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read; none of these shall fail, none shall want her mate."

XVI.

TRAVEL.

"Then Jacob went on his journey" (marg., lift up his feet).
—GEN. xxix. 1.

THE great business of the North is travel. In the short summer this voyaging is by boats on the rivers, and during the long winters on snow-shoes and over the snow.

When the habit of winter travelling is acquired, long journeys can be accomplished without much fatigue, but, to one of sedentary life or unused to travel, there is great weariness in the repeated daily tramp of twenty-five or thirty miles, for a week or two or three, as the case may be.

There is some consolation to the voyager in thinking over this description of Jacob's journey that he lifted up his feet. The process is after all a simple and mechanical one, and however stiff and heavy the limbs may become through fatigue, when lifted up the feet are sure to fall again each in advance of the previous step.

In walking over a rough country in tangled brush-wood, over trunks of trees, or in deep snow, or among hummocks of broken ice, the lifting the feet to a considerable height is a very needful precaution in walking.

To cross a freshly ploughed field will give the best idea of it to one untravelled.

Very different is this to skimming the feet, without raising them, over smooth pavements. The only travel resembling that in the North is over clear ice, before the snow falls on it, or after it is blown away again by winter gales from parts of the larger lakes. In walking over clear ice it is safest not to lift the feet, but to slide them as in skating, to avoid danger of falling.

Snow-shoe walking requires care to avoid troubles. If the snow-shoe lashing or any other bands are too tight on the limbs, or if the feet are held too stiffly, a very painful affection of the muscles of the shank supervenes, known as the snow-shoe sickness. This sickness sometimes causes the legs to swell like those of an elephant, and renders them so powerless that the feet may have to be lifted with the hand by lines attached to the front of the snow-shoe. Such an accident when the end of the journey may be one hundred miles off, and no provision nearer, and hence no chance of resting, is not pleasant. If the snow-shoe lines cramp the toes, these are usually frayed and painful and bleeding on the march, and should the feet happen to tread upon a watery place and so to freeze, the toes may mortify, and in the end fall off.

Sufficient foot-covering is a needful protection from the cold. Two or three thicknesses of blanketing are generally wrapped round the feet in winter under the moose-skin shoes.

The nightly camp is made on pine branches spread on the open ground from which the snow is first shovelled. A pine log fire makes the camp comfortable.

The most necessary adjunct to winter travelling in the North is a dog-sled, for dogs alone are there used for hauling both provisions and fuel over the winter snows. The strength and endurance of a train of three or four dogs is wonderful. Each dog is expected to haul a weight of 100 to 150 lbs. This weight is fatiguing to a man to haul, unless on a good track. Hard blows and unfeeling usage are too often the experience of the dogs in the North, and hence their temper is snappish, and their intelligence and affection but small.

A deerskin coat and deerskin blanket are the best covering for an Arctic traveller. These are warmer and lighter than wool. The deerskin is warmest with the hair worn inside. When the traveller's hands are then encased in large bags of leather lined with blanketing, and euphemistically called "mits," and his head is enveloped in a fur cap, he is ready to start on his winter's voyage.

For the body, but little addition is made to the ordinary European dress, so that the person may not be too much weighted or embarrassed in walking or running. By the merciful arrangement of Providence, which causes cold to quicken the circulation, exercise is sufficient to maintain the animal heat, even in severe cold; and unless a strong wind is blowing, no inconvenience is felt in walking in a temperature 30° below zero.

At 50° below zero, the mouth and face may, after a time, be inconveniently clogged with ice and rime from the breath, and sometimes at last on a bearded face, but a small rounded aperture may remain unfrozen for the breath to issue by.

Jacob's journey to Haran was in a more temperate, though rugged and lonely, and perhaps dangerous country as the land was then doubtless infested by wild animals, and perhaps then, as now, by marauding men. His pilgrimage was, however, a pattern of that of all God's servants afterwards.

In the North-West travelling is singularly free from danger, whether from wild animals or men, and the promise is already realised, that "they in the wilderness shall dwell safely, and sleep in the woods" (Ezek. xxxiv. 25).

Though the distance from Beersheba to Haran is only about two hundred miles, it seems to have been enough to prevent much intercourse at that time for twenty years.

In modern days of increased travel, and on the large scale of colonial distances, two thousand miles hardly represents the same space as two hundred in Palestine of old. Yet Palestine was a sacred world in miniature, and its lessons suffice for teaching every clime.

XVII.

VOYAGING.

"These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies."—NUM. xxxiii. 1.

IN this chapter we have the names given us of about forty encampments of the Israelites during their forty years' wandering in the desert. There is no reason to conclude that these were all their camps, but rather the chief halting-places.

We read in Deut. i. 2, that it was but eleven days' journey from Mount Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea, and as this was about half the distance from Egypt to Canaan, by way of Sinai, we may suppose that the whole distance might have been accomplished by them in a month, instead of forty years, had there been no interruption or detention by the way.

Life in the great North-West being one of constant journeyings and delay, may illustrate Israel's sojourn in the wilderness. Travelling in the North-West is mostly on foot in winter, but in summer almost exclusively by boat or canoe. The average distance accomplished in a day's journey, whether in summer or winter, is from twenty-five to thirty miles, with many delays in summer, either by rain or contrary winds, sometimes involving detention in one spot for days together.

When this travelling is done by steam, a voyage

of months' duration is reduced to as many weeks, and a journey of weeks to one of days, or even of hours.

The travel is tedious and monotonous. In summer, the day's voyage begins about 3 A.M., and is continued to 7 or 8 P.M., with a halt of about an hour twice a day for breakfast and dinner. The progress in boat voyaging is either by tow-line, hauled by four men on the river bank, or by eight or ten heavy oars, unless a fair wind permits of hoisting a sail. The canoes are propelled by the Indian paddles. Any impediment to the navigation in the way of rocks, causing an impassable rapid, occasions delay, and the boats have to be hauled over the land till the obstruction is passed. In other places, the cargoes only have to be carried by land.

An accidental breakage of the boat on the stones obliges the steersman to insert a piece of wood by way of a patch, which causes a detention of some hours. The breakage of a canoe by a stick or stone is more frequent, as the canoes are constructed of tender birch bark. This, if torn, is patched with a piece of fresh bark, sewed with roots, and cemented with gum or pitch.

As the trading posts are mostly from two hundred to three hundred miles apart, houses are generally seen on a summer's voyage about once a week. Between these a few Indian tents may be passed, but on most days no human being is encountered. Yet so incessant is travelling, that it is hardly possible to land in any spot along the river bank, without traces appearing of some person having been there previously, who is betrayed by a chopped stick, or by his long extinguished fire.

Winter travelling offers still less incident, and is uninterrupted by the weather, unless through a blinding tempest. The provisions are seldom more than adequate to reach the next post, so that much detention is not admissible. The monotony of the route is increased by the fatigue of snow-shoe walking, and the cold nights may disturb the rest.

If the traveller has the means and preference for being hauled by his dogs, instead of proceeding on foot, he embarks in his train wrapped in blankets or deerskin robes. If the track is tolerably smooth, and the weather not specially severe, the conveyance is pleasant enough, though the sense of being indebted to dogs for locomotion hardly gratifies feelings of self-conceit.

Indians travelling in the woods often find it convenient to proceed without dogs, carrying their bundles of blanket and provision on their shoulders. In this way they make thirty or forty miles a day. When, however, a band of Indians are shifting their camp, accompanied by wives and children, their day's march may not be more than about six miles.

Such may have been about the day's march of the Israelites, with their families and flocks, in the wilderness. The contrast between such an impeded journey and an untrammelled one may be seen clearly described in Gen. xxxiii. 13, on the occasion of the meeting of Esau and Jacob.

In all lands, travelling is a special characteristic of our modern days, which well fulfil the prophecy of Daniel of the time when many shall run to and fro (chap. xii. 4). Modern facilities of locomotion, however,

seem to rob the traveller of any resemblance to the patriarchal pilgrim. The very word pilgrimage has now become almost obsolete, except as applied to superstitious or fanatical devotion at favourite shrines.

It is only now in such primitive lands as the Indian country, that a voyager can still be called a pilgrim in our usual acceptance of the term, but in the North-West, though the pilgrim's staff is not carried, yet life has still much the character of a pilgrimage, and the application of the word pilgrim, which was made in the case of the first American colonists, "the pilgrim fathers," may be preserved as designating those whose lot is cast in the extreme North-West.

It would be difficult indeed to view any place in that waste wilderness as a home or permanent residence, and it is the custom of the country to speak of England as "home," even in the case of those who have never seen it.

Happy are they who, like the patriarch of old, seek the "better country, that is, the heavenly one" (Heb. xi. 6); and are looking "for the city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God" (ver. 10).

XVIII.

CLOTHES.

"Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years."—DEUT. viii. 4.

WE are taught in the above chapter that Israel's life in the desert was designed to humble them, and to teach them lessons of daily dependence on God's good providence for supplies of food and clothing. They learned also to live without bread, and thus to trust heaven, and not earth, for their wants.

These same lessons are probably intended to be learned from a residence in the wilderness everywhere, and in no part of the earth probably is a wilderness life so isolated and extreme in its desolation as in the great North-West.

Once only each year an allowance of clothing is there meted out to each individual, while at the trading posts his daily ration of food, or "prey," as it is called, is given him by weight; and this is not bread, but meat, or fish, so that the lesson is still literally inculcated, that man shall not live by bread alone (ver. 3).

Life in the desert thus becomes precarious in the true sense, that is, dependent on prayers, and an opportunity is given of observing the resources and kind attention to the wants of all of a watchful Providence.

It does not seem implied in the above text that

Israel wore the same clothes for forty years, but that, as one supply failed, another was provided in the room of it, so that neither nakedness for want of clothing, nor feet swollen with travel for lack of shoes, were the lot of God's people.

God is still the great and good Provider; and were the same question put now to God's people as was asked the apostles of old, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything?" the answer would still be, "Nothing" (Luke xxii. 35).

The word manna signifies portion or ration, and is connected with the Hebrew word for faithfulness, as we read in the margin of Ps. xxxvii. 3. To feed on God's provided portion is to feed on faithfulness; and this is echoed again in the 25th verse of the same Psalm—"I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

The apostle, in 1 Cor. x. 6–10, teaches that there are special cautions to be observed, and dangers to be guarded against, in a wilderness life. Discontent, and murmuring, and desires for better food, and temptations to fleshly indulgence, are referred to as the besetting sins of the wilderness, and also a mingling and partaking with idolatry, superstition, and heathenism.

One especially going from a civilised land to the wilds, is apt to lay aside the restraints of artificial life, and at the same time to relax morality and religion. The apostle conjures us to think not only of ourselves, and how far we can go without danger to our souls in mingling with idolatry or superstition, but rather to regard the influence of our conduct on others, and for

the sake of example to stand aloof from all countenance of, or indifference to sin of any kind.

It is surprising and gratifying to observe how many promises of special blessing are made to the wilderness in Scripture. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" (Isa. xxxv. 1). "Judgment shall dwell in the wilderness" (Isa. xxxii. 16). "They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him" (Ps. lxxii. 9). "The wilderness shall become a fruitful field" (Isa. xxxii. 15). "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, and the acacia, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together" (Isa. xli. 19). "He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody" (Isa. li. 3). "All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God" (Ps. xcviii. 3; Isa. lii. 10). "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree" (Isa. lv. 13). These and other passages show God's purposes of mercy to bless in spiritual things those who have niggard supplies of temporal blessings. Christian missions have prospered in the wilds. In the very sparse population of the far North-West, more provision is made in God's providence for the hearing of the Gospel, than might seem to be the share of these countries, if compared by population only with other lands.

It is a matter for thankfulness, that the denizens of the wilds do not in the main resist or oppose the

Gospel. They may be tardy in bringing their lives into conformity with its precepts, but they are ready to listen to the news.

On the whole, a wilderness life need not be distasteful to one habituated to it. David longed for it, and said, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest. Lo then would I wander away far off, and remain in the wilderness" (Ps. lv. 6, 7). And yet in the wilds again he longs for Jerusalem, and the society of God's house and people (Ps. lxxxiv. 2).

Solitude is more dangerous than advantageous to the soul, and the greatest privation in the wilderness is that of congenial society, and especially, to God's servant, the want of His people's fellowship.

Where, however, the desert life is not self-chosen, but the appointment of Providence, our Redeemer can compensate by His special presence for the absence of every earthly friend. Manna for the soul is provided in the study of God's Word, and from the riven Rock of Christ's wounded side pour forth the graces of His Divine Spirit, as the Comforter of the lonely.

The experience, however, of an enforced hermit life, will show the mistake of choosing such a life voluntarily, in the expectation that it will conduce to greater sanctity. In this respect we trace our Saviour's caution. "If they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: Behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not" (Matt. xxiv. 26). Christ, and His fellowship, and His service, can be found everywhere, and He may be followed as acceptably to the busy mart, as to the solitary waste.

XIX.

MOCK SUNS.

"Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon."—JOSH. x. 12.

WITHOUT the slightest wish to invalidate the miracle here recorded, or to diminish its stupendous character, it may not be uninteresting to suggest some modes in which it may have pleased the Almighty to accomplish the effect without a suspension of the laws of Nature.

It may be rightly held to enhance the power and glory of the Almighty God, if it can be shown that He is able to compass the most surprising results without travelling outside of the ordinary routine of His work.

It appears most unreasonable to attempt a denial, that the Author of what are called Nature's laws can dispense with them on occasion, but it may be more allowable to suppose, that He may have seldom occasion to do so, in order to effect His every volition.

To use common and unworthy illustrations, the owner of a watch can move its hands at will without disturbing its works; the master of a power-loom may introduce a new pattern without arresting the machinery; or the driver of an engine may reverse its action on an incline without retarding the train.

In Arctic regions it is well known that the cold and

mists of the air produce singular appearances of displacement of the sun and moon by reflection or refraction in the air, which are not easily explained.

By refraction the Arctic sun may remain visible above the horizon for some time after that calculated for its setting; and by a parhelion, or mock sun, it may be seen in mid-heaven when near its setting.

Now, it would appear from the account in Joshua, that through some deflection of the polar current of the upper atmosphere, an Arctic temperature was produced for the time in the region of the clouds, and not far above the surface of the earth. This is implied in the congelation of the atmospheric vapours so suddenly into huge hailstones, before the moisture had time to be shaped into drops.

This cold, adjacent to the almost tropical heat of a Syrian sun, must produce such evaporation and mists as would be highly conducive to the formation of a parhelion, and all the phenomena of a highly refracting atmosphere, if not to an actual reflection, as seen in the mirage.

It does not seem useless to suggest that any who find their faith stumbled by Joshua's surprising miracle, from being unable to imagine the means by which it was wrought without subversion of astronomical science, may find a stumbling block removed from their way, by being reminded how often without miracle an Arctic sun is apparently displaced.

Hailstones of dangerous size, as described by Joshua, are not unusual in the Western Saskatchewan. In Arctic regions hail is infrequent, as the cold of the

upper air forms the vapours into snow before they condense into water.

It is singular that in Arctic latitudes the winter temperature on a mountain height is milder than on a lower level. This, again, may be owing to upper equatorial currents of air.

Mild weather is associated in Arctic climes, as elsewhere, with a cloudy sky, and intense frost with a clear atmosphere, but it is not so certain how they are connected.

It seems most probable that the casual deflection downward of a warm current in the upper air, both deposits its moisture in the form of cloud, and raises the temperature on the earth's surface. A clear sky, on the other hand, shows that the air is dry and deficient in moisture, the suction of which by evaporation intensifies the cold.

The old explanation of the nightly radiation to a clear sky of the heat acquired by the earth the previous day, appears quite inapplicable to polar regions, where, in the sun's absence, there is no daily accession of heat to be radiated, and the covering of snow and ice seems impervious to radiation from below.

Somewhat similar considerations may apply to the surprising miracle recorded in 2 Kings xx. and Isa. xxxviii. 8, as have been ventured on in regard to that of Joshua x. In the case of Hezekiah's miracle, we have also a hint of an unusual rarefaction of the air. For the miracle of the sun-dial appears to have immediately preceded the deadly simoom by which 185,000 of the Assyrian army were slain in one night. It may be thought that an apparent elevation of the sun, either

by refraction or reflection, produced, in obedience to the fiat of the Almighty, the stated effect on the sun-dial; and the agent employed may have been a mist or fog in connection with that peculiar state of the atmosphere which presages a coming storm. In Hezekiah's time, it would seem to have been the rising, and in Joshua's case, the setting sun, that was apparently retarded for a time; though it is not definitely stated in either case that the day was in the end actually lengthened.

XX.

NAMES.

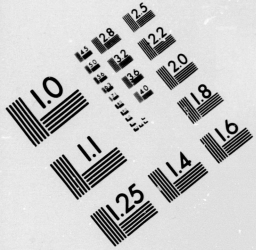
"Oreb and Zeeb."—JUDGES viii. 3.

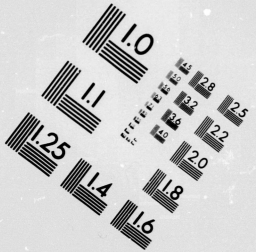
THESE two marauding chiefs of the Midianites come before us in the history of the Judge Gideon. They were truly dwellers in the wilds, and came up with their numerous bands to prey upon the harvests and stores of the defenceless Israelites.

Such forays have been often made in modern times by wild tribes of North American Indians, but the natives of the extreme North are at present inoffensive.

It may be worth while to notice how well the names of the Midian chiefs would befit a modern Indian brave. Translated they are the Raven and the Wolf. The reference is to the feasts provided for birds and beasts of prey by these plundering chieftains, who almost exhibited the same spirit as those greedy animals. Many a modern Indian has a similar appellation. The Crow or the Fox, and other such names, borrowed from animals, are frequent among present Indian chiefs.

Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings or leaders of Midian, had similarly significant names. These may be rendered "Slaughter" and "Wandering Shade." So a recent Indian chief in the Saskatchewan plain was called





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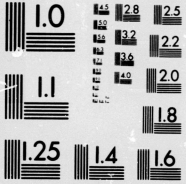

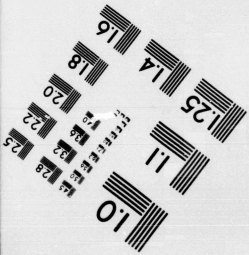

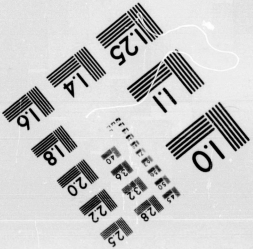

"Wandering Spirit," an idea very similar to that of Zalmunna, both implying the consignment to the shades of death of the victims of their fury.

It may be noted also that it is now generally the custom to translate into English the native Indian names, both for the preservation of their significance, and for avoiding the uncouth syllables of a barbarous tongue.

It might be well if the Hebrew names, which are all significant and appropriate to the occasion of their occurrence, were also translated for a like reason.

Places in the North-West have also generally their Indian names translated into English when spoken of by Europeans, such as Flint River, Axe Lake, or Stony Mountain. Scripture names are similar, only buried for us in unattractive Hebrew, as, for example, the rivers of Paradise might be called Spreading, Coiling, Glad-sound, and Fertile (Gen. ii. 11–14).

In England, names of persons and places have either lost their significance, or this has become disconnected from the object named, so that it would be a strange mistake to associate Mr. Baker or Mr. Smith with the trades whose names they bear. This fact has perhaps caused less notice to be taken of the sense of Biblical names. But it seems to have been as much the custom anciently in the East, as at present in the far West, to name both persons and places by some characteristic mark or attribute, which is at once associated with them when they are spoken of.

Even an inanimate object, when seen for the first time by an Indian, will be named readily, according to its use. So, a table is a thing to eat on; a chair, a thing to sit

on, and so forth. These become the permanent designations of those objects in the Indian tongue.

Not to enter here on an extended disquisition on Scripture names, it may suffice to refer to a few of a similar character with those of Oreb and Zeeb to illustrate the subject. Such chieftains were especially careful to use stirring names. The first devastator we read of was Nimrod, the Leopard-tamer (Gen. x. 9). A name equally significant was that of the first child born after the Deluge, Arphaxad or Heal-waste (Gen. xi. 10).

The four kings from the east, who invaded the south of Palestine in Abraham's time, may be rendered Slay-lamb, Lion-killer, Lift-sheaf, and Draw-nail (Gen. xiv. 1, 2), in reference to the attacks on the flocks, tents, and harvests of their neighbours. The kings of the Amorites in Moses' time were called Sweeping and Round (Num. xxi. 33, 34). The five kings of Midian at the same date were Desire and Braiding and Rock and Cave and Crouching (Num. xxxi. 8), with Waster, the King of Moab, and Swallowing, the son of Consuming, his soothsayer (Num. xxii. 4, 5).

The names of the Hebrews appear to have been mostly given to them at birth, and to have been bestowed by the mother in commemoration of her joy and gratitude at the birth of offspring. The names of the kings above-mentioned may have been possibly assumed in after life.

The Indian children are also generally named by the mother, and called from some characteristic of the infant, or from some circumstance attending the birth. They have not been taught, till recently, the feeling of gratitude to God on such an occasion, and the Christian

converts, of course, give their children usual Christian names.

Among the Hebrews many names were patronymics, that is, the son is called by his father's name, as Bartimæus, the son of Timæus (Mark x. 46). In the far West, somewhat strangely, the habit is just the contrary, and as soon as a son is born both father and mother drop their previous names, and are thenceforth known by the name of the son, as William's father, or John's mother.

An Indian has great shyness in mentioning his name, and if he wishes you to know it, he will ask his friend to tell you. If you wish to know an Indian's name, it is needful to ask this, not of himself, but of his companion, when you will obtain a ready answer.

Modern critics are apt to indulge in some display of learning, by deciphering from the hierolygphics of some ancient Egyptian papyrus a name which is supposed, by its similarity, to illustrate some Scripture appellation, or even to be its source or derivation.

A readier match for the Hebrew names might be found among the present Indians of the North-West. The father of King Saul was named Fowler or Snarer (1 Sam. ix. 1). A modern Esquimaux chief was named Grouse-snare. An Indian chief's name, Large-foot, may be compared with the patriarch Israel's first name, Heel. More exact parallels might be found, for there is hardly a common object or a living animal, but what has furnished a name to a Hebrew of the Old World, or to an Indian of the New.

XXI.

JEALOUSIES.

"Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim."—JUDGES xii. 4.

THE above is an instance of inter-tribal jealousies among the Israelites, of which we find many examples in the historical books of the Old Testament. These remind us of the text in Proverbs: "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle" (Prov. xviii. 19).

This may perhaps be somewhat illustrated by the comparative contempt and disdain, in which almost each tribe of Indians in the North-West holds its neighbours. Among the peaceably disposed Indians, this breaks out in nothing worse than expressions of reproach and contumely, but, among warlike Indians, it gives rise to depredation or massacre.

It is singular that almost each race of Indians arrogates to itself the supposed superiority of being the original race, or the first people. The same ambition to be the first clings to some of the European races, as the Welsh think themselves the earliest people, though, if all nations are descended from a single pair, it is hard to understand how one race can boast of greater antiquity than another, except so far as they may be earlier or later inhabitants of particular countries.

It seems probable that the North American Indians arrived at successive times from Asia by way of Behring's Straits, and each fresh arrival pressed the others forward. We might expect, therefore, to find the earliest arrivals farthest south; but of this there is no certainty, as later arrivals may have pressed past their neighbours. It is supposed that there has been afterwards a reaction by pressure from the south, the northern tribes being turned back possibly through the arrival of other Indians by way of the south from the Malay peninsula.

There is much difference in the dialects of language. Some dialects show a primitive simplicity, others a fuller development, and some a degeneration or decay of construction; but the cause of all this is hard to explain, as the Indians have no reliable history. Generally, each tribe is jealous of another encroaching on its hunting grounds, and there is also some jealousy of inter-marriage between the tribes, which is unfavourable to their health. At last all the members of the tribe come to be brothers-in-law, or some such relation to each other, the distinction between brother and cousin being only slightly drawn among the Indians, as among classical nations.

There is also some jealousy existing on the part of the Indians toward Europeans, as, for instance, they are very shy of giving their children to Europeans to be brought up by them, seeming to fear that they will thus be lost to the native race.

They show some jealousy of supplying what they deem too much provisions to Europeans, for fear of denuding their country of wild animals. They are

shy also in surrendering their own superstitions and habits.

The tribes to the west of the Rocky Mountains are indeed eager to acquire the English tongue, chiefly with the view of obtaining profitable employment from miners and others, that frequent the Pacific coast. All the tribes are glad to purchase English articles of dress, and to exchange for this, as far as may be, their native costume.

An Indian congregation, worshipping in the Mission Church on the coast of British Columbia, would not be distinguished from an English congregation in their outward dress and demeanour, and the natives are there very careful of their clothes, preserving their Sunday suits so successfully in cedar-wood boxes, that they seem to be always new.

To the east of the Rocky Mountains, the Indians of the forests are very careless of their clothes, and a native may purchase a suit of fine black cloth, and in a few weeks tear it to rags in travelling through the woods.

When fire-arms were first brought to the North-West, each tribe in succession, as they became possessed of them, took the opportunity, as they could do it with safety, of repaying old grudges against the tribes next beyond them, thus occasioning much slaughter and after heartburnings, which in some cases are even yet hardly healed. This was especially the case as between Indians and Esquimaux, and these races still meet only with some caution and suspicion.

The Esquimaux are, however, not yet generally practised in the use of fire-arms, but are universally armed with large knives, which they carry everywhere

in their hands unsheathed, and as they are a very passionate and thievish race, some care is needed in intercourse with them.

The conversion of the neighbouring Indians to Christianity has been the means of softening the feelings of hostility between these and the Esquimaux, and may have saved much bloodshed in later years. The Indians have learned now to befriend those whom formerly they might have sought to slay, and the Esquimaux have learned to appreciate and respect this change of feeling.

XXII.

DOGS.

"Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?"
—2 KINGS viii. 13.

IT has been remarked that when the dog is referred to in Scripture, it is nearly always with contempt or reproach, which is explained by the wild and neglected condition of the dogs in the East.

There would seem to be an exception to this if, as explained in the dictionaries, the name of the high-minded Caleb means a dog. It is more probable that the name should be interpreted a fruit-basket (Num. xiii. 6).

Yet some good qualities of the dog are referred to in Scripture, as their wariness of a hidden foe (Judges vii. 5), and their compassion on the sick, in the story of Lazarus the beggar (Luke xvi. 21).

In the North-West the dogs have their share of contempt and ill-treatment as elsewhere, and by these have lost much of the intelligence and affection, which they might exhibit if well trained and cared for. Still there are few parts of the world where the dog is so useful and essential as in the North-West.

Being the only beast of draught and burden used in the Arctic regions of the American continent, it is by the

strength of the dog only that winter provisions and fuel are collected there. The force and endurance with which the dogs will haul heavy loads on their sleds over or through the snow is marvellous. They proceed onward day by day for hundreds of miles, with sometimes but scanty food, and will on a smooth track haul their master or driver on the sled in addition to a 300 to 400 lb. load for a train of three or four dogs.

In the summer the Indians sling parchment bags over the dogs' backs, and transform them to beasts of burden, and a strong dog will carry 30 to 40 lb. in this way. When there is no snow to smooth the track, the dogs are not used for purposes of draught.

Much pride or zeal is shown in the North in decking the sled dogs in gay trappings with ribbons, beads, and coloured cloth, and with numerous jingling bells. A number of dog trains together form an animated scene.

The Indians also train dogs to assist them in their hunting, and a number of dogs will keep a moose at bay, by jumping and yelping at its nose, until the hunter comes up with his gun.

The Esquimaux dogs are a hardy race, and have very warm hair. A single dog will there draw his master with speed over the smoothly frozen Arctic snow. The friction of the sled is reduced by coating its runners with ice.

The logs used in house-building are all hauled from the forest by dogs, unless at the more southern posts where cattle are kept, and the dogs even haul hay for the food of the oxen. The usual food of the dogs is two fish every evening, or 2 or 3 lbs. of meat when this is plentiful.

That dog travelling does not always suffer, by being

compared with other more civilised modes of conveyance, may appear by the following true history.

A voyager, proceeding from the North-West to England, travelled, in the first instance, about two thousand miles by canoe. After this he was hauled in dog trains about six hundred miles, some days making forty or fifty miles a day, and that without any mishap or inconvenience, and without any suffering from the cold, being able to disembark from the train and take a run in the snow for warmth whenever it was more pleasant to do so.

From Manitoba the dog train was exchanged for the stage-coach. In this the cold was piercing and freezing, even though the travellers were wrapped in buffalo skins. The four horses were utterly exhausted in drawing the vehicle about fifteen miles through the snow, and though changed thus often, yet at last the journey had to be suspended during a storm, and in the end the horses, though changed every stage, occupied a week in performing the same distance as that travelled by the dogs in four days more easily and pleasantly, that is, 160 miles.

The journey was next continued by railway train, but from the fires not being lighted in the cars, the cold was intense, and the train was shortly brought to a standstill in a snow-drift. Though two locomotives were tugging at it, no progress could be made till the guards, with shovels, disengaged the carriage wheels from the snow which entangled them.

In Canada the journey by stage-coach was resumed. This was shortly after overturned in a ditch by the road-side while scaling a snow-drift. The outside passengers

were deposited in the adjoining field, where to be sure the deep snow provided them with a sufficiently soft bed to fall on. The inside passengers had a more uncomfortable shaking.

The journey was next proceeded with by train to Montreal, before approaching which the cars left the rails, causing some apprehension and delay, which might have been increased had not the guard been provided with a powerful winch for the purpose of replacing the carriages on the track.

Lastly, the voyage to England was completed by ocean steamer from Portland. At starting, the masts, yards, and deck of the steamer presented a woeful appearance from being thickly coated and hung with ice, yet two hundred miles were made the first day. By the constantly increasing head wind, however, the daily speed was decreased daily down to one hundred miles per day, at which point the Captain thought it prudent to shut off half the steam and diminish the speed to a minimum, for fear that something should give way in the plunging vessel.

Considering the inconvenience of travelling in a vessel that assumes every angle alternately in the waves, it is thought that, on the whole, the dogs may be counted to hold their own in competing with horse-flesh or steam whether on land or water.

XXIII.

FROST.

"Cold out of the north."—Job xxxvii. 9.

Some curiosity may be felt to know the amount of inconvenience occasioned by the severe cold of a sub-arctic clime, and it may be well to satisfy such an inquiry. It may be stated generally, that God's good providence has so attempered the world's climate, that no extremes of heat or cold are found beyond human endurance, when the person is properly protected; and in this, as in other cases, we may say, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tried above that ye are able" (1 Cor. x. 13).

For outside travelling, it is possible to keep warm on the coldest day without heavy clothing by walking very fast, which pace is often alternated with running by a good voyager. A strong wind is apt to freeze the face, but the circulation can be restored by rubbing with snow or by applying a warm hand.

It is the hands and feet which require the most careful covering of blankets and leather, the covering of the hands being locally termed mittens, and of the feet moccasins. Should the hand or foot become frozen, little trouble may be felt at the time beyond loss of sensation; but when the journey's end is reached, or a

fire made, the restoration of the circulation occasions great agony.

Should the freezing process have proceeded too far, it may be impossible to restore life to the part affected, which will then blacken and mortify, and in the end slough off. In slighter cases an open sore will result, which is slow to heal.

Indoors, one of the minor inconveniences of the frost is the freezing of the ink when writing. If the house be cold, the ink will often freeze on the table, and it may be necessary to suspend the ink-bottle by the fire-side. Even then the ink will probably freeze at night when the fire quenches, unless the ink-bottle is taken to bed with the writer. Unfortunately, all ordinary inks turn pale after being frozen, so that the writing becomes dull and indistinct though the ink be thawed again. A black ink that would not pale with freezing would be a boon to the North. The coloured inks or dyes seem to be more free from this objection.

Water kegs are generally frozen up with severe frost, unless kept near the fire, and covered at night. Meat and other provisions are usually frozen hard, and must be cut with an axe, or thawed before the fire for use. The advantage of this, however, is that all provisions, and even fish, butter, and milk, will remain perfectly fresh when frozen, from autumn to spring.

Wine and medicines do not seem to lose their strength when frozen and thawed, though the process of congelation acts as a sort of distillation or concentration, the watery part being the first to freeze. Seeds are not injured by frost.

A house properly built and warmed with a good

stove, can be kept at an equable temperature in winter as in summer.

Iron lying outside and grasped with the bare hand will freeze the fingers, the sensation and effect being much the same as being burnt with hot iron. If the fingers are wet, they will adhere to the frozen iron, and an attempt to disengage them will detach the skin. It is a common trick for one freshly arrived in the North to be told to lick his axe, on a winter's day in the wood, when the novice, unsuspicious of harm, may leave the skin of his tongue on the tool. The handling of an outside door-latch needs caution in cold weather.

Sometimes a resident in the North, after visiting England, will return, saying that he felt the cold more in England than in the North. This will be owing to the houses in the former place being less secured from draughts, and less sufficiently warmed by a small coal fire compared with the blazing pine logs of the North.

Moreover, the raw, damp cold of England is more penetrating than the dry, bright cold of the North-West. In the North, also, the chilliness of the fall and spring may be more disliked than the bracing severity of the winter. A well-secured house and a sufficiency of fuel are the great desiderata of the North.

The building of the houses is entirely of pine logs. These are well packed between with stiff earth or clay, and the better houses are ceiled inside with boards. The roofs are of pine bark, or the better houses may be roofed with shingles or wooden tiles. The chimneys and hearths are built with stones and earth.

The buildings of a trading post mostly consist of about half a dozen such wooden houses, with a couple

of storehouses, and these will probably be the only buildings or habitations, beside Indian tents, for a circle of two hundred miles.

It is true that some few of the Indians erect wooden houses for themselves in imitation of the Europeans, and this they are quite competent to do; but their habits are hardly settled or cleanly enough to make a restriction to one spot for residence convenient, and they soon tire of their houses, and resume a roaming life in the woods. In the more southern districts, where the animals of the chase are becoming scarce, the Indians are driven perforce to put up houses for themselves round the lakes, and to pass the winters there, living on fish, and potatoes planted in the spring.

This may be the case with all the tribes in the end, or with the survivors of them, for the Indian population seems to be rather diminishing as a whole, though not with any marked rapidity, unless in the case of a sudden epidemic; but the mortality among both adults and children is always high, and the health of the race far from sound.

XXIV.

DAWN.

"Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place?"—JOB xxxviii. 12.

ONE peculiarity noticed in a subarctic residence is the rapidity with which the days lengthen and shorten. About the Arctic Circle each week in the year the days are an hour longer or shorter than in the previous week. This involves an equally rapid change in the place of the sun's rising and setting, which in six months compass the entire circle of the horizon.

In midwinter the sun does not rise at all, though it makes, as it were, an attempt to do so. The usual phenomena of approaching sunrise are seen in the red and golden clouds, only these appear not in the east, but in the south, and at noonday.

So in midsummer, though the sun does not actually set, yet it approaches the horizon, only not in the west, but in the north, where the usual appearances of approaching sunset are visible. Thus the varying place of the dayspring determines the season of the year. In winter the midday sun, even when visible, scarcely rises above the tree tops, while at midsummer it rises as high as in England in April.

The Arctic twilight is very long, fully three hours in

winter both morning and evening, that is, six hours in all. The suddenness with which daylight quenches in the tropics would be a new experience in the far North.

In summer time it is pleasant to be able to read by daylight all night, and the annoyance may seem as great when, at the approach of autumn, the reader has to close his book for want of light at 11 P.M., as in midwinter when the darkness may prevent a book from being opened till 11 A.M.

The heat of the summer's sun in the Arctic coasts is said, by those who have experienced both, to be more scorching than that of the tropics. This is probably owing to the air of the North being so much drier, and the damp air of the tropics modifying the heat. In the North, too, the heat accumulates from the sun being never wholly withdrawn day or night, while in the tropics it is absent for nearly twelve hours out of the twenty-four.

In spring-time the thermometer may register 100° Fahrenheit in the sun, before the heat has any perceptible effect in melting the snow and ice. The effect of the heat is counteracted by evaporation.

The daystar accompanies the dayspring throughout its annual changes, preceding the dawn, whether this occurs soon after midnight or nearer midday. Only in summer, when the sun is always up, no stars are visible for about four months, so that the Esquimaux name for autumn is the time when the stars appear.

The constant daylight of summer is fatiguing, and the eyes long for darkness, as more inviting to sleep and repose; so that experience teaches there would be

little gain could we antedate in this world the time when "there shall be no night there" (Rev. xxi. 25).

The motions of the Arctic moon are more strange to watch than those of the sun, for the place of the moon's rising and setting changes every month, to the same extent and in the same way, as that of the sun in the whole year, that is, the place of the moon's rising and setting circles the whole horizon every month. At one time of her monthly course the moon will either not rise at all or will appear only in the tree-tops, as does the winter's sun; while at another period of her course the moon will circle, like the summer sun, the whole heaven without setting.

And here comes in a benign arrangement of Providence. In the Arctic summer, when the sun is constantly visible and moonlight not required, it is the full moon that does not rise or is scarcely seen, while the new moon circles the heaven without setting. In midwinter, on the other hand, when the sun is withdrawn and moonlight much called for to supply its place, it is the new moon that hardly rises, while the full moon circles the whole heaven in unsetting splendour, and compensates for a time for the scanty daylight. The Arctic stars too shine with surprising lustre, and the planets are frequently observable. The aurora also contributes its share in illumining the darkness, so that here, as everywhere in nature, the provision of a compensating alleviation is found in circumstances of special rigour; and we may well adopt the Psalmist's expression and say, "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord" (Ps. cvii. 43).

Happy are we, if we can apply all these things spiritually to the rise of the true Day Star, Christ, in our hearts, and the illumination of the Gospel light, and the rise of the Sun of righteousness to set no more.

We may then re-echo the inspired words of Zacharias, "Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high has visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke i. 78, 79).

In Arctic regions only, do we see a literal fulfilment of the text in Job ix. 7, "He commandeth the sun, and it riseth not," and of the words of the prophet Amos (viii. 9), "I will cause the sun to go down at noon," together with a foretaste, on the other hand, of the promise of Isa. lx. 20, "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself."

XXV.

SNOW.

"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?"—Job xxxviii. 22.

In Job and the Psalms are found copious references to a cold climate. "He saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth" (Job xxxvii. 6). "He sealeth up the hand of every man" (ver. 7). "Cold cometh out of the north" (ver. 9). "By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened" (ver. 10).

"Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen" (xxxviii. 29, 30).

"He giveth snow like wool, He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes. He casteth forth His ice like morsels: who can stand before His cold? He sendeth out His word, and melteth them: He causeth His wind to blow, and the waters flow" (Ps. cxlvii. 16–18). "Praise the Lord: snow, and vapours" (Ps. cxlviii. 7, 8).

So in Isaiah we read of the rain that cometh down and the snow from heaven, and fructifies the earth (lv. 10). From 1 Chron. xi. 22 we gather that a snowy day, though matter of remark, was not unknown in Palestine.

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This all serves to remind of the promise to Noah, that while the earth remains, cold and heat shall not fail (Gen. viii. 22).

The "treasures of the snow" may be looked for, we may suppose, in Arctic latitudes. At the Arctic Circle the ground is under snow for about eight months out of the twelve. The average depth may be about four feet, though the depth varies according to the season. The snow which might at first be thought a great separation, forms really, like the ocean, an advantageous means of communication.

Any one, who has tried walking in the rough country of the Arctic region in summer time, will readily admit the increased facility of movement in winter, over the smooth snow in snow-shoes.

The ground is mostly marsh, clothed with a coarse grass, which eats out the soil into high tufts or lumps, on or between which the ankles of the pedestrian twist and writhe. These tufts are locally known as women's heads, being, from the long grass pendent from them, like dishevelled hair. Certainly, to walk over them, may be compared to what it would be to walk over the heads and shoulders of a crowd.

If locomotion is difficult in summer, much more so is the conveyance of goods and provisions, which, unless transported by water, have all to be carried on the back.

To calculate the weight or volume of the snowdrift, spread over the surface of the ground in winter, would be appalling—perhaps some three hundred thousand tons to the square mile. Yet the gentle touch of spring noiselessly dissipates all this as with a breath.

The facility, with which the wide rivers of the North

are crossed when frozen, may be referred to in the expression above quoted, "The breadth of the waters is straitened;" or it may refer to the shrinking of the currents in their narrowing channel, as the cold of winter approaches.

The breaking up of the ice in spring in the large rivers, like the Mackenzie, is sometimes a fine sight. The ice may pile in masses along the banks to the height of forty feet, or be carried far into the woods. When any check occurs to the drifting of the broken ice, so as to back the stream, the water may suddenly rise to the height of fifty feet or more, and flood the country.

The rivers and lakes freeze in winter to a depth of from six to ten feet, and the force and impetus of large masses of ice of this thickness, when hurled along the rapid current of a mighty river, are enormous. Few exhibitions of the power of the Great Creator are more imposing than when, in the graphic expression of the text quoted above, "He causeth His wind to blow, and the waters flow."

It must, one would think, puzzle a sceptical critic who would doubt the reality of the address of the Almighty to Job, to explain the expression, "the face of the deep is frozen." It must have been a very early predecessor of the modern Arctic explorer, that could be imagined to have crossed the Arctic circle in Job's time, and brought back tales of a frozen ocean. Where outside the Arctic circle is the face of the deep frozen? To seek a human author for such a phrase would need more credulity, than it requires faith to hear in it the voice of God.

The glare of the reflection of the polar icebergs is visible perhaps thirty miles off. The iceberg is as radiant as any earthly object, and its cold brightness is as dangerous as it is attractive. We need not wonder at the glare of Arctic ice being visible at a considerable distance, when it is said to be detected in another planet, at a distance of about one hundred million miles.

A first walk on the ice of the Arctic Ocean is not unaccompanied by a strange sensation, or with a sort of feeling of having caught a lion asleep.

The comparison of snow to wool is not inapt in respect to its warmth as a covering, which in both snow and wool is owing to the amount of air entangled in its texture. An Arctic traveller, by burying himself in snow, will sleep more warmly than in any other wrap, and even a slight fall of snow over his blanket serves as a warm coverlet.

On the earth and water the coating of snow has the same effect; and neither land nor river will freeze nearly so far under deep snow, as if bare, probably to only half the depth.

XXVI.

CHARACTERS.

"He fashioneth their hearts alike; He considereth all their works."
—Ps. xxxiii. 15.

Of many passages of Scripture we have to rest content without being quite sure of the precise intention. The word "alike" in the above clause is rendered in the Latin and Greek versions "severally." This is nearly followed by our Prayer Book version, "All the hearts of them."

The meaning of the text cannot be that all men's dispositions are the same, unless it be that by nature all are evil; but possibly the sense is that these hearts can only be brought into unison by the operation of the Divine Spirit.

Among the nations and tribes of men, we generally find a special disposition or temper characterising each, and these are much moulded by the circumstances of their dwelling. Thus dwellers on mountains or along the seashore are generally more lively and high-spirited than those located in a plain or valley, and this is found to hold good in the Great North-West. The tribes inhabiting the basin of the Mackenzie and its feeders, being far inland, are mostly of a sluggish disposition; while the races located on the Rocky Mountains, and

westward down to the Pacific coast, and the Esquimaux at the Arctic sea, are more intelligent, sprightly, and active.

The Esquimaux are passionate and dangerous to offend. One of them, asked by his neighbour for tobacco, and giving a point blank refusal, might receive in return a thrust through the body with a sword knife always in hand. But they have a convenient word constantly on their lips, "unakunna," or "presently," which gives no offence, but is accepted contentedly, involving as it does a promise, which it might be dangerous afterward to ignore.

The Indian mountain tribes are warm hearted and affectionate, and form pleasant companions. Those on the Pacific coast evince a great desire to learn, and are patient in study. The Mackenzie River Indians, while more stolid, are less easily offended or angered.

The reception of the Gospel does indeed fashion and remodel all these hearts alike; and it is a happy thing to find Christian obedience in so distant a clime, and to hear similar testimony from each, that the Spirit of God has inclined them to cast away their heathen vices, and rejoice in a Saviour's service.

The employments and avocations of each tribe vary; but, as the above text assures us, all are arranged by God. The Esquimaux shows skill and hardihood in the pursuit and capture of the monsters of the Arctic Ocean—the whale, walrus and seal. He will ride the waves in his small skin-covered canoe, with as much ease as a horseman with a curvetting steed on dry land. The Tsimæan on the Pacific coast will provide his winter stores in the salmon or oolikum fishery, and will

brave ocean storms in his frail but admirably shaped canoe.

The forest Indian, inland, will light his lonely camp fire, engaged with his trapping or his chase, and will fear no harm, though solitary in the vast forest. These may, alas! be unmindful of their great Creator and His watchful providence, but it is glaringly plain that He is not unmindful of them. Nothing can be more conspicuous to an observing eye, than the separate and distinct provision of an all-seeing care for the wants of each and all, and the adaptation of the habits and skill of each tribe to their position.

It seems almost with a similar instinct to that by which the bird builds its neatly woven nest, or the bee its geometrically constructed honey-comb, that the coast Indian shapes his cedar-wood canoe, and the river Indian his different one of root-sewn birch-rind. A mountain Indian will be quite helpless at that craft, but will emulate the goat for agility in climbing the mountains in search of prey.

Each tribe has its own pattern of snow-shoes and of dog-sled especially adapted to the nature of the country over which they travel; and their knowledge and skill suffice for the daily duties they are called on to perform.

God's own argument with the patriarch Job, to humble him into owning the wisdom, truth, and love of the Divine government, is chiefly drawn from His beneficent distribution of their various qualities and powers to the animal kingdom (Job xxxix. 1). The argument rises higher when we view with consideration the separate endowments and provisions ordained for each race of the great human family. Each will alike

have to own, that there was nothing lacking in the arrangements made for his needs and welfare according to his position.

We read, that all nations are in God's eyes as a drop of a bucket, and are counted by Him as less than nothing and vanity (Isa. xl. 15, 17). Yet this may be taken as only a comparison of the littleness of earth, beside the vastness of the further Universe, and to point the contrast of God's superior care for His own people. "Behold, the eye of the Lord is on them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy" (Ps. xxxiii. 18).

In the case of Nineveh we read of God's special care for the preservation of 120,000 persons that could not discern between their right hand and their left, that is the children (Jonah iv. 11), as worthy of more regard than they who, being wise and instructed, chose the path of sin.

It is possible that, in a similar view, God's special regard may rest on the simple and untutored races of the distant North, who are in their minds and feelings like children, even in their ignorance and in their docility, for they offer mostly no objection to revealed truth.

The more polished and populous nations of heathendom, educated and civilised only for idolatry and vice, may possibly alienate with more displeasure an all-wise and impartial Judge.

XXVII.

CATARACTS.

"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts."—Ps. xlii. 7.

THE word here rendered not very euphoniously "waterspouts," and in the Prayer Book "waterpipes," seems rightly rendered in the Greek "cataracts," or waterfalls. The Psalmist seems to have indited the psalm in his flight from Absalom beyond Jordan, while lodged among the mountain torrents, and drenched with the storms of the rainy season.

A cataract, or waterfall on a large scale, is a mighty exhibition of the powers of nature. When it is considered what a tiny stream will set in motion all the machinery of a large water-mill, how shall we estimate the force and momentum of a large river pouring over the edge of a rock some hundred feet high?

The Falls of Niagara are generally considered peerless as a cataract, but the great breadth of the river detracts from the apparent height of the fall, unless on a close inspection. A near view of the fall is to some minds rather magnificent as a spectacle than attractive in beauty, except when the sunbeams play rainbows in the towering spray.

A very attractive waterfall exists in Hay River, Great Slave Lake, in the North-West Territory of

Canada. The width of the river is about three hundred yards, and the height of the fall about three hundred feet. A mile lower down the river is another fall of nearly equal dimensions, but broken in two by a ledge of rock in the middle. The colour of the water in the river is a sort of amber, caused by the vegetation in Hay Lake, in which the river rises. The appearance of the fall suggests golden dishevelled tresses falling in ringlets from the height named.

The cataract has been seen by but few Europeans, and from one who saw it about the time of the Prince of Wales' marriage, it received the name of the Alexandra Falls. When better known, it will probably be of world-wide fame for its beauty.

Though the above is the chief cataract of large dimensions in the Great North-West, turbulent rapids are found in the rivers and streams, and to sleep near one of these may remind of a like sound in the ceaseless roar of traffic pouring at all hours over London Bridge.

The Hay River falls are frozen up in the cold of winter. The formation of the ice begins at the foot of the falls, and rises higher and higher, through the freezing of the water and spray falling on it. At last the ice reaches the head of the fall, and becomes a sheath or coat enclosing the whole torrent. The falls are distant only about three days' journey from Great Slave Lake by canoe; and by steamer, if there is depth of water, the falls would be reached within a day.

What is termed in the North a rapid, or by Americans a ripple, is an interruption to navigation occasioned by a shallow or rocky point in the river, where the water is

hurried turbulently among stones or in eddies, sometimes with small cascades, till it gains a less confined channel.

The test of skill in the Canadian boatman is the passing these rapids, especially in the descent, when the boat (mostly lightened of its cargo), is often urged with headlong speed down the swift waters, trusting to the coolness and skill of the helmsman and bowsman to avoid the stones. It is needful to urge the boats more rapidly than the hurrying current, in order to have headway enough for steering, and a quick eye and ready hand are quite essential.

The boat's cargo is generally carried past the obstruction by a land track, technically termed a portage. There are sometimes as many as fifty to one hundred of these interruptions in a single voyage, so rocky are the channels of these northern rivers, and so impeded their navigation.

Such, however, is not the case with all the rivers. The great Mackenzie has no obstruction for about fourteen hundred miles from the sea. Then, after one long rapid of about fifteen miles, the navigation is again undisturbed for about three hundred miles more.

The Peace River has only one obstruction in about eight hundred miles of its course. Were these obstructions bridged by tramways, with steamers in connection between them, commerce might be carried on with facility.

When David was taking refuge in the fastnesses beyond Jordan, if in the rainy season, he was doubtless surrounded by mountain torrents full of rapids and cataracts, and swollen till too dangerous to ford. The Psalmist appears to have found such disturbance of

nature only too apt a reflection of the harassed and agitated state of his own mind and feelings. His expression, "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me," we may apply both literally and figuratively.

David was indeed soaked and drenched in fording the mountain torrents, and was still more nearly overwhelmed by the distresses, which flooded his soul. The following Psalm (xliii.) points beautifully to the calm which succeeded his storm, both in nature and in providence, and such is the usual experience of the Christian.

"He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so He bringeth them unto their desired haven" (Ps. cvii. 29, 30).

"Then He arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm" (Luke viii. 24).

XXVIII.

EARTH'S BOUNDS.

"God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him."—Ps. lxvii. 7.

It is remarkable, how often in Scripture God's blessings are stated to reach to earth's extremities. This may be on purpose to represent forcibly God's world-wide dominion, and to intimate that, under His perfect sway, the remotest parts do not suffer from neglect, or want of oversight, as under imperfect human government.

So Christ's kingdom is promised to extend to the remotest land. "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession" (Ps. ii. 8). "They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at Thy tokens: Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice" (Ps. lxv. 8). "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Ps. cxxxix. 9, 10).

We have our Lord's own assurance that "as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of Man be in His day" (Luke xvii. 24).

At His return His chosen ones shall be gathered "from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven" (Mark xiii. 27).

It may be objected that the world being a round globe has really no extremity, and that consequently the above expressions are unscientific and inaccurate; but it is rather such an objection that is erroneous, and mistaken. The earth always has a centre of light, knowledge, and civilisation, refinement and religion, though such spot may be a shifting one. Those who are farthest removed from this spot are dwelling in earth's extremity.

It is hardly too much to claim that England is such a centre at present, at least so far as relates to the dissemination of the light of the Gospel. As we approach the point of 180° to the eastward or westward, we may be said to arrive at the earth's extremities.

These papers relate to the country which for convenience has been termed Corus, forming the North-western portion of the Dominion of Canada. The region intended specially to be comprised in the term Corus is that which forms the basins of the three great rivers, Athabasca, Peace, and Mackenzie Rivers. This region is nearly as large as the countries of China, Hindostan, or Arabia, containing at least a million square miles. It is so sparsely populated that 10,000 may nearly comprise the whole inhabitants, being one to 100 square miles of land.

Some reference is made in these papers to the countries of Alaska and British Columbia, and also to the Saskatchewan plains, but these are not to be

included in the region styled Corus, or the Great North-West.

The distance to the westward of this country from England may be best realised by considering the difference of time. In this there is about eight hours' difference, so that when in England it is eight o'clock in the evening, in Corus it is noon still; or when men are rising from sleep at 7 A.M. in England, they are retiring to rest at Corus at eleven the previous evening.

For the same reason, the stars appear in like positions in the early morning in Corus to what they do in the winter evening in England. A traveller starting early for his winter's voyage in Corus, will be reminded of home by seeing the constellations in the same directions to which he has been accustomed in evening walks in England, only with the Pole star more nearly overhead.

Again, it will be still Saturday evening in Corus when in Europe early Sabbath services are already held; and it will be Monday morning in Europe when Sunday evening prayers are yet being conducted in Corus. This shows the futility of discussing or questioning the propriety of the Christian Sabbath being changed to Sunday from the Jewish Saturday, because the Sunday of the far East is still Saturday in the West.

When the American troops first went to Alaska (the neighbouring country to Corus) to take possession, on its cession by Russia, they found the Russians there, who, of course, hailed from the eastward, keeping the American Saturday as Sunday, and the day had to be

changed. This shows on what a slender balance hangs even the correct notation of our days of the week. Sunday in Alaska must always be Saturday on the opposite shore of Kamskatka.

From the first home of man in Eden, or even from the Holy Land of Palestine, Corus may be said to be distant just a hemisphere to the west, yet an attempt is made in these pages to offer some illustrations of the text of Scripture from so remote a region. United with this object is that of gratifying intelligent inquiry or curiosity for some information regarding a far-off land, which is linked to England by being comprised within the bounds of the British Empire. Of that empire Corus contains the finest river, the most extensive forests, some of the largest lakes, one of the most beautiful waterfalls, and a little visited domain.

XXIX.

AXE-MEN.

"Lifted up axes upon the thick trees."—Ps. lxxiv. 5.

THE notices in the Bible of hewers of wood come home more closely than any others to the experienced of the North-West; and these notices are not few. We read of Solomon that he had 80,000 hewers of wood in the mountains, besides the Tyrian workmen, at the time of his building the Temple and his palaces (1 Kings v. 15). This seems a large number. It might probably be matched by the number of lumber-men in the Canadian forests, though it much exceeds the whole population of the far North-West.

In ancient times the forests in the East were doubtless much more extensive than at present, which accounts for so much hewing being mentioned in the Bible. In fact, the sacred narrative reminds us more of Western life now, in this respect, than of Eastern life as reported by modern travellers. But, even in Scripture, we have notice of broom roots and cattle dung being in use for fuel in the absence of timber (Job xxx. 4; Ezek. iv. 15).

In the wilderness, we read of the strangers employed as hewers of wood and drawers of water being gathered with Israel in their assemblies (Deut. xxix. 11,

and we find provision made in the Law for such an accident as the axe-head striking a neighbour accidentally by slipping from the helve.

Such an accident is indeed recorded to have happened, in 2 Kings vi. 5, but with only the result of the temporary loss of the axe-head in the water. At that time the axe-head was probably bound to the handle with thongs, as in native stone-axes now, instead of the handle being passed through an eye in the axe-head.

We read of the Gibeonites being doomed to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, for the Congregation and for God's house, as a penalty for their deceit in making peace with Joshua by false pretences (Josh. ix. 21).

The same is literally the ordinary duty of a servant hired in the North-West now, namely, to cut and haul wood for fuel, and to carry water for culinary use from the adjoining river or lake.

We are told of Abimelech cutting down wood in Mount Zalmon (Judg. ix. 48), and we read of several woods and forests in Palestine (1 Sam. xxii. 5; 2 Kings xix. 23; 2 Chron. xxvii. 4).

Happily no wood is cut down now in the North-West for a purpose of which we read much in the prophets, namely, for making idols with it, nor for building altars, nor for warlike attack.

The comparative plenty of wood and liberty of using it in Palestine, is shown by the complaint in the Lamentations at the time of the Exile, "Our wood is sold unto us" (Lam. v. 4). It is a great boon in Arctic regions to be able to take dry timber in any

quantity, without let or hindrance, or price to pay for piling the blazing camp-fire.

There is a wondrous time foretold by the prophet Ezekiel, when there will be no need to cut wood from the forests for seven years, because of the burning up of the weapons of war, in preparation for everlasting peace (xxxix. 10).

The lack of forest trees in Palestine in after times is expressly foretold by Isaiah: "The rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them" (x. 19). Part of the process, by which man gradually subdues the world as commanded by God, is by clearing the forests, and thus dislodging the wild animals.

The meaning of the verse quoted from the Psalms at the head of this article, appears to be that the spoilers of God's Temple raised their axes against the costly carvings thereof with the same freedom and vehemence as one felling a tree in the forest.

The North-West is eminently the land of the axe and hatchet. A man armed with this can build his own house, provide his own fuel, shape his own canoe, and perform every necessary duty for a living.

Probably the most important benefit to the Indian of western civilisation was the providing him with iron axes. The appearance of a tree that has been felled with a stone axe is similar to that of one that has been nibbled down with the teeth of a beaver, for both work in much the same way, chipping gradually downward and all round the tree, as with a blunt adze or pick.

The axes of Israel, however, were not of stone but of iron (2 Sam. xii. 31), and sharpened with a file, as at present (1 Sam. xiii. 21); but at the time of the Philistine oppression the broken axes had to be taken to the Philistines' land to be reforged, as no smith was allowed in Israel (1 Sam. xiii. 20).

Nor is it only in the Old Testament that we read of the axe and of the felling of trees for fuel, for both the Baptist and our Saviour make this the striking figure of impending judgment: "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matt. iii. 10 and vii. 19). The same warning is enforced still more strongly in the parable of the barren fig tree (Luke xiii. 7).

In the North-West there are no fruit trees: all are barren. But it is mostly the dead sapless tree that is cut down for fuel, and a leafless tree may be first struck with the axe to ascertain by the dull or hollow sound whether it is green or dry.

This distinction of the green and dry wood is referred to by Christ, when He says, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke xxiii. 31). He meant that if such lawless cruelty was practised against Himself while yet the withered tree of the Jewish nation retained some sap of life, how much worse horrors might unfold when the race was yet more sapless and ripe for destruction.

The axe formed a special part of the insignia and authority of the Roman Prætor, and the vengeance of the Romans might be easily interpreted by a sagacious Jew as one explanation of John Baptist's caution, "Already the axe is lying at the root of the trees"

(Matt. iii. 10). But neither John the Baptist nor Christ hesitate (with the effeminate spirit of some in modern days) to warn men freely of the danger of falling into everlasting and infernal fires (Matt. iii. 12; Mark ix. 43–48).

XXX.

SUMMER.

"Thou hast made summer and winter."—Ps. lxxiv. 17.

As there is a time for everything (Eccl. iii. 1), so we may say also there is a place for everything. As there is a time when winter reigns, so there is a place where winter reigns almost unchallenged; there is a place also of almost uninterrupted summer. Thus we may describe the difference between the Arctic and Torrid zones on the earth's surface.

In Temperate climes the winter is neither long nor dreary, and for each winter there are three other seasons, spring, summer, and autumn, which more than counterbalance it.

As we approach the Arctic Circle the spring and fall are but scanty, and summer and winter make up the year, and of these winter holds the largest share. Further north again there are but three or four months of summer to eight or nine of winter, and summer and winter exchange more rapidly.

The willows and alders are so late in donning their summer dress, that they are almost immediately stripped again. It is but about two months that these and the birch and poplar are in leaf.

The cranberries appear already in bloom when their

tufts are uncovered from the snow, while last year's berries still remain, and in a few weeks' time the fresh berries are ripening.

In these northern climes the winter is rightly regarded as the main part of the year, and as the measure of time, so that an Indian will count his age by the number of winters he has weathered, while in other countries we hear more often of the number of summers any one has seen.

We conclude that, in the words quoted above, there is a reference to the different regions of the earth, from the context in which they stand. This we may render, "Yourself fixed all earth's bounds, summer and winter yourself designed." The word for summer is connected with the plucking of summer fruits. That for winter appears connected with a root meaning to be slack, referring to the slackness in winter of the works of husbandry or of the powers of nature.

We are accustomed to think of winter as an emblem of the icy grasp of death, and certainly an Arctic land in winter has the silence of death, in comparison with the bustle of summer in a warmer clime.

The contrast between the duties and occupations of summer and winter in the far North is so great, as to seem like two alternating lives in one. In summer almost all locomotion is by water, and boating or canoeing are the main business of the time. When the ice supervenes, these are laid aside for six months or more, and snow-shoes and dog-trains and sled-bells take their place, and occupy all thoughts and interests.

Yet all these things have their pleasures to the voyagers who are inured to them, and we accept, in

reference to this, the Psalmist's expression, "They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at Thy tokens: Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice" (Ps. lxv. 8).

It is plain that the Arctic clime has the same providential care over it as the Torrid Zone. God has designed both the summer and winter. In the far North there is no harvest-time intervening between summer and winter, yet the autumn time, when the summer flies have ended, and the rigorous cold not yet begun, is the pleasantest season of the year. On the shores of the large lakes, indeed, a harvest of fish is gathered in the late fall, when these are most readily obtained, and are most useful, as they keep all winter when frozen. In summer, meat can only be collected by canoe, unless it is carried on the back; but in winter, the dog-trains are always collecting the carcasses of the moose and deer killed by the hunters.

It is singular, that in two instances when we read in Scripture of a fire kindled for winter cold, it is in connection with hearts too that had become already chill. First, when King Jehoiakim cut up and cast into the fire a page of holy writ (Jer. xxxvi. 23), and again when the apostle Peter, warming himself before the winter's fire, denied with oaths his faithful Master (John xviii. 18, 25). These were fires within doors, or at least within the precincts of a house.

We have a pleasanter instance brought before us of the open camp-fire outside, when our Lord Himself kindled the breakfast fire for His chilled disciples, in the spring morning at the shores of Galilee (John xxi. 9), and also when the apostle Paul amassed the

fagot of brushwood to warm the shipwrecked crew, on that wet night in late autumn in the island of Malta (Acts xxviii. 3).

The blazing log-fire is the most cheering accompaniment of winter in the far North. Within doors the billets of wood are cut in lengths of about two feet, and are placed upright together in the open chimney. Out of doors the fire is made of large logs of six or twelve feet, laid above one another in a heavy pile.

It seems strange that the Esquimaux, who live in the most extreme cold, kindle no fire in their habitations, but this is for want of fuel. In place of fire they have lamps of whale oil. A circle of moss, of perhaps a foot in diameter, is ignited in a shallow trough, and fed with oil from a lump of melting blubber suspended over it. This affords a good deal of heat, in a manner not unlike our own gas-stoves.

When the house is built of snow, it is not admissible to raise its temperature above the freezing-point, or the building would dissolve, but, assisted by the lamps, the warmth of an inhabited snow-house is generally not far below freezing-point.

XXXI.

FLIES.

"He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies."—Ps. cv. 31.

SEVERAL of the plagues of Egypt may receive illustration in the North-West, but especially those of insects.

In the frosty fogs we have sometimes a darkness that may be felt, or as perhaps we should understand it, a groping darkness. These fogs are at times so dense as to obscure every object, and boats in such a fog have been found rowing up stream on one of the large rivers, when the crew supposed they were descending the current.

The crops are not unfrequently attacked and consumed by grasshoppers, which resemble the eastern locust.

Boils and blains are one of the most frequent maladies of the country.

The mortality of children is so great among the Indians, that it would be little exaggeration to say, as in Egypt, that there is not a tent where there has not been one dead.

But the flies of the North are so characteristic a pest, that they seem specially to illustrate the sufferings of ancient Egypt.

An African traveller, who passed down the Mackenzie

River, stated his experience to be that the flies of the North were more virulent than the insects of Africa.

And these are of "divers sorts." Early in spring appear the large blue horse-flies, which bite a piece out of the skin. These are succeeded by the mosquitoes, the summer infliction, which are at times so numerous as to cover the clothes, and fill the mouth and plate at meal time.

In some travellers lately arrived with a soft skin, the mosquito bites produce a kind of fever, and greatly disfigure the face and neck. They may be warded off by the application of Macassar oil, carbolic oil, rock oil, or other substances.

As summer wanes, so do the mosquitoes, which are partly thinned by large dragon-flies, known in the country as mosquito-hawks, which devour great numbers of them.

To the mosquitoes succeed in autumn the sand-flies and midges, which prove at times very annoying. Of the vermin belonging to the next following Egyptian plague it is most agreeable to say nothing.

In reference to the Scriptural accounts of the flies, it may be noticed, as a special addition to the miracle, that in the land of Goshen there were no flies. For the land of Goshen seems to have been a moist and rainy district near the great marshes, and a place therefore where the gnats and flies would, in ordinary circumstances, be most abundant.

We read also of the Egyptian fly in Isa. vii. 18: "The Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt." In Eccl. x. 1, we have also an emphatic notice of their corrupting intrusion: "Dead

flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour." The picturing of the houses filled with the swarms of flies, and their corrupting everything is very vivid in the account in Exodus. No fish or meat can be left exposed for any time in the North-West without its being corrupted by the swarms of flies.

It would seem that the low moist land of Philistia was greatly infested with this plague of flies, so that they offered worship to the deity supposed to be master of these insects, to deprecate the infliction of his plagues. This was Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, literally the master of flies (2 Kings i. 2) called in the gospels, by way of derision, Baal-zebul "lord of the dunghill," because the dungheap is the prolific source and resort of the flies. This heathen god was called by the Pharisees the chief of the demons, which evinces the horror with which these insect plagues were regarded in the East.

In Egypt insects were also worshipped, probably with the same idea of deprecating their ravages by prayer.

When our Lord was charged with casting out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, it seems to have been connected with the accusation that He was a Samaritan (Luke xi. 15; John viii. 48).

It is singular that in the Old Testament we should have the same connection of messengers sent from Samaria to inquire of Baalzebub (2 Kings i. 2). It seems probable that the Samaritans, who had associated heathen rites with the worship of Jehovah, may have practised exorcism by the supposed aid of their false gods, of whom Beelzebub was one.

The only other reference to flies in the New Testament is in our Lord's expression, "to strain out the gnat

and swallow the camel" (Matt. xxiii. 24). This would imply that gnats were numerous enough to infest the drinking vessels.

This old proverb of straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel, applies well to such as stumble over the miracles of the Bible, while their own hypotheses are so improbable as to require a much larger credulity to gorge them.

XXXII.

AURORA.

"Nor the moon by night."—Ps. cxxi. 6.

In expounding this text, commentators have been at some pains to discover tradition and examples of the injurious effect of the moon's rays on a sleeper exposed to their glare. The words lunatic, mooned, moonstruck, betray the same idea. On the other hand all travellers in the North are accustomed constantly to sleep exposed to the moonbeams without being conscious of any injurious effects from them. It may be suspected that night-dew and malarious vapours are more noxious than moonshine.

But without controverting the contrary opinion, it may be doubted whether the text above quoted implies it. In the Hebrew there is no negative, so that we may well render the words, "And by night there is moon." Thus the moonlight will be referred to as a blessing, and not as a curse, and the meaning will be, that for the Lord's people the scorching sun by day will be tempered by the shadow of a cloud, and the blackness of night irradiated by the silver moonbeam.

Regarding the fulfilment of the promise, it may be objected that moons wax and wane, and it is not always

moonlight. The answer may be given that the Hebrew word for moon here is the same as brightness, and will be satisfied by any sort of illumination, so that we may translate, "It shall be bright by night." So that a reference may be supposed to that pillar of fire which lighted the camp of Israel by night throughout their gloomy march in the desert.

The promise of the text may also be held to have a fulfilment to the Arctic traveller in that Aurora or Northern Light, which, when there is no moon, frequently tempers for him the midnight darkness.

Of Arctic regions we may well use the expression of Job, "The light is short because of darkness" (Job xvii. 12), but there are many compensations. 1st. The Arctic full moon in winter never sets, but circles the [illegible] throughout the whole twenty-four hours at such [illegible] as the sun never rises. 2nd. The mighty Creator has placed in the Arctic Ocean monster whales, whose unwieldy masses are largely composed of many tons of oil, with which in lamps the darkness may be artificially illumined. 3rd. The Aurora for the most part streams nightly across the sky, not specially in the north, but high overhead, with a bluish lambent or fluctuating flame something like that of a spirit-lamp.

The shape and apparent height of the Aurora varies much. It does not seem to appear without some kind of a cloud, mist, or vapour on which to exhibit itself. It seems often, therefore, to follow vaguely the course of some river or frozen lake, or the direction to which the wind may drive the exhalations rising from such a source. After a brilliant display of the Aurora, as morning dawns, a slight cloud will mostly be seen

remaining in the position from which the chief coruscations appeared to emanate.

At times the Aurora descends till it is very close overhead, just as clouds sometimes do. The movements of its gleams are then very rapid, and resemble the foldings of a great fiery pennon waving in a strong breeze. It is, however, hard to compare the Aurora's display to anything earthly, unless indeed to the "brush" from an electrical machine.

It has been much questioned whether the Aurora is audible. Those who think they have heard it, describe the sound as being like the rustling of silk drapery. This calls to mind the expression of St. Peter, that when the heavens, being on fire, shall dissolve, they shall pass away with a rustling noise (2 Pet. iii. 10).

In severe frost the listening ear will always detect some sound caused by congealing moisture, and even the human breath makes a sort of sawing sound in condensing and freezing from the lips. These sounds may have been attributed by some to the Aurora.

Certainly a vivid display of the Aurora over the whole sky helps us to picture the day when the heavens shall be on fire, as the blazing of an extensive forest feebly portrays the day when the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.

Most of the Arctic winter travelling is made at night-time, because the day is so scanty, and the Aurora is then a pleasant and salutary guide and companion. It cannot fail to remind a devout Christian of Israel's pillar of fire of old, which may have resembled the Aurora in its flash.

When the light of the Aurora breaks out in the

night-time with a cloudy sky, it is difficult to distinguish the light from daybreak, and an unwary traveller may thus be deceived in the hour. We may then say with David, "The Lord my God will enlighten my darkness" (Ps. xviii. 28).

It may be remarked that in the snowy regions of the North, the winter nights, even without the Aurora, are by no means of pitchy darkness. The reflection from the white carpet of snow is enough to make visible trees, rocks, &c., for some short distance, and the traveller needs not to grope his way in the forest, though care is requisite that his face be not cut at night with a random branch.

The twilight also is so long, that even when the sun does not rise at all, a slight streak of day dawn will be visible in the south-east, in a clear sky, soon after 7 A.M., and the last streak will not expire till nearly 5 P.M.

The constant displays of the Aurora are associated in the North with a highly electrical state of the air, so that clothes, blankets, and furs will crackle and sparkle at night when removed or disturbed, and the human hair scintillates in the dark.

The force of the earth's magnetism is also strong, but the use of a mariner's compass needs care, as within the Arctic circle the compass may point as much east as north, until in approaching the magnetic pole the attraction is so nearly perpendicular as to render the compass useless as a guide for direction.

XXXIII.

STORMS.

"Stormy wind fulfilling His word."—Ps. cxlviii. 8.

THE word here used for "stormy" implies those gyrations of the tempest which have been the subject of modern discovery and attention. The phrase is connected with snow in the clause preceding, and with mountains and hills in the verse following. It seems then fair to connect the notice with the mountain storms of the far North.

The force of the Arctic storm in the mountains is greater and less endurable than elsewhere, not because the winter temperature is more severe on the mountain than below, for it is milder on a height; but because the wind is more violent, and the snow is whirled with blinding fury and freezing bitterness in the face of the traveller.

Happily, in the mountains, there is generally some angle of rock or jutting crag where shelter can be had from the blast till the storm is past, and if fuel is found at the same point wherewith to kindle a fire, the voyager is comfortable.

The effect of the sharp frozen snow-drift, blown from the mountain top in the traveller's face, is first to make

his eyes water, and then effectually to seal these up, through the freezing of the exuding moisture. Frost-bites on the cheeks soon follow, and if the travel is continued these will be running with blood. It is in such a case that the expression of the Almighty is recognised, "Who can stand before His cold?" (Ps. cxlvii. 17).

When a storm is blowing on the mountains, the appearance of these from the distance is as if they were fringed with hair, the snow-drift blown in heavy clouds from the ridge having such an aspect.

In the mountains of the far East the like appearance may arise from the sand or dust blown from the mountains by a tempest. Hence a like word in Hebrew means storm and hair. Indeed a bristling storm is a poetical epithet in many languages.

If the traveller on winter snows is overtaken by a storm on a large lake or a wide plain, the drift soon obscures every object more than a few feet distant, and unless the traveller has a compass, it is hard for him to maintain a straight course, or to be sure in what direction he is moving.

It seems to be a benign provision of Providence that in such a case the voyager is apt unintentionally to describe a wide circle, and perhaps to return upon his own track half a day behind. It is sometimes best for a person so wandering to dig a hole in the snow, and burying himself alive, to await the return of fair weather.

The winds blowing from the ice of the Arctic Ocean are very keen. The Esquimaux are accustomed to hoist their summer boat sails over their winter sleds,

and to sail these over the frozen snow in a long train, attached together like railway cars. Men, women, and dogs together aid the wind in their propulsion.

The sail is hoisted in a similar way on the tramcars of English coast piers, and the Canadians sail ice-boats on their frozen lakes.

The stormy wind is said to fulfil God's word, and few will fail to recognise the hand of the Almighty in a tempest. "He causes it to come, whether for correction, or for His land, or for mercy" (Job xxxvii. 13). It is said that in one storm as many as thirty vessels were wrecked or abandoned, though the crews were saved, that were engaged in the illicit traffic of conveying contraband liquor to the poor Esquimaux. Shall we think that such a storm was fulfilling God's word for correction.

It is generally considered that in the North-West the east wind, rather than the north wind, is the coldest, and the west, rather than the south, the warmest wind. This may be owing to the east coast being the coldest, and the west the warmest part of the country.

A west wind, continued for a few days, may produce a thaw and rain in midwinter even within the Arctic Circle. There do not seem to be any special gales noticed in the North at the time of the equinoxes, but in winter any great change of temperature from mild to severe weather or the reverse, is often ushered in by a gale. These variations of temperature generally take place every week or two, and may be dependent on aerial currents.

In the Lincolnshire dialect a hard frost is called a

storm, which nomenclature would suit well the Arctic clime; but in a tempest in the North, though the wind is severely cutting, the temperature is not really so low as when it is clear and calm.

The coldest time of the day and night in the North is mostly just before sunrise, when a keen breeze is apt to rise that is very liable to freeze the face. In thick woods the wind is but little felt, and a storm is the hunter's glory, for the nervous moose-deer is hunted only when the wind is blowing. In calm weather a frozen twig snapped by the hunter's cautious tread is enough to rouse the moose. This, once started, might run twenty or thirty miles before again seeking repose; but in a storm, when branches are cracking in all directions, and perhaps trees falling with the wind, the hunter's wary approach is less noticed.

In such a view a storm may be said to be "for mercy," and, in times of scarcity of provision, the explanation is often given that there has been no wind.

Though while earth remains, winter storms will never cease, yet we may well believe that in heaven above, when there shall be no more night and no more sea, the surging tempest will sink for ever into an unruffled calm, and the storms of our earthly lives are intended to prepare us to enjoy more fully that haven of repose.

XXXIV.

RETIREMENT.

"Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom."—PROV. xviii. 1.

THE discussion that has arisen about the right interpretation of this text, is a curious token how much men have disagreed as to the advantage or disadvantage of a life of retirement. It has been found easy to translate the above verse so as either to recommend isolation or the reverse, according to the bias of the critic.

In some instances, when a double meaning is found in a passage of the Bible, it seems purposely intended to admit of two interpretations, and some of the ambiguities of Scripture are far more recondite and instructive than those of the boasted heathen oracles.

In the present case we can hardly deem the verse intended both to recommend solitude and the reverse, though certainly Scripture authority might be quoted on both sides. God Himself declared on man's creation, "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. ii. 18). On the other hand, the apostle in 2 Cor. vi. 17 quotes the Lord's word by Isaiah (lii. 11), "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord."

It is obvious that some amount of retirement is

needful for severe study or research, and this is all that the text, as rendered in our common version, need imply. It is open to an objector to deny the benefit of such study, as Solomon himself saith—"In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow" (Eccles. i. 18). And again, "Much study is a weariness of the flesh" (chap. xii. 12).

Yet for all this Solomon himself pursued wisdom in spite of the sorrow it brought, and he recommends it to others. It is likely that Solomon built for himself a palace in the retirement of the forest of Mount Lebanon, that he might pursue there undisturbed his researches in Natural History and other subjects (1 Kings vii. 2; Cant. iv. 8).

If modern experience can cast any fresh light on the gain or otherwise arising from the life of an anchorite or hermit, there can hardly be a better opportunity of trying such an experiment, than by a residence in the distant forests of the great North-West. It is possible that an enforced and not self-chosen abode in such a position may be of use in the way of checking any ardour that modern times may exhibit towards returning to mediæval habits of religious seclusion, whether in cloistered cell, or in the supposed sanctity of a desert home.

Our Saviour Himself tells us—"If they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not" (Matt. xxiv. 26); by which He warns us beforehand not to seek closer communion with Himself in the life of the anchorite or the cloister.

The enemy of souls gains an advantage in assaulting

a Christian in solitude. The fellowship of a Christian family offers truest incentive and purest aid towards progress in holiness and general self-command.

A solitary life is calculated to weaken the moral powers, and to deceive the soul into a supposed superiority to temptation, by keeping aloof from the external allurements of the world. But it may only expose the more the citadel of the heart within, which has to be defended without the support of mutual sympathy or human friendship.

On the other hand, David himself wishes, "Oh had I the wings of a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest. I would hasten away far off, and remain in the wilderness" (Ps. lv. 6, 7). Such as are called by Providence to a life of retirement, instead of repining at their position, may rightly dwell on its advantages.

Among these are such as the following. An immunity from much of the bustle and conflict, the wear and tear of active life. The best boon the world can give is opportunity for peace and tranquillity. This, and leisure to prepare for eternity, undistracted by the pomps and vanities of the world, and more occasions for studying God's word outside the vortex of crowded cities.

When Scripture apparently advises us to contrary courses, it may be taken that a blending of the two is desirable. In the case before us the best advice may be somewhat as follows. If Providence calls to a life of bustle, then seek occasions of retirement with God. Should circumstances oblige a life of isolation, then welcome occasions of social intercourse.

Some say, Never so solitary as when in a crowd; and

others, Never so public as when in a narrow circle; and there is truth in both these views. The dangers to a genial character in a solitary life are manifold. The mind is apt to become warped, narrowed, conceited, gloomy, morose, self-opinionated and obstinate, while intercourse with brethren in the Christian course might sweep away all these cobwebs, and be like a dew of blessing to the soul.

On the other hand, a lengthened retirement may result in a distaste and inaptitude for social intercourse, and an insufficiency to cope with the contests of a crowded arena. The mind becomes undisciplined for sharing in the struggle, and uninterested in viewing the scene.

The spread of civilisation and improvement is now so great, that there may be soon few wastes so distant as to place a man beyond reach of his fellows. It is right that each soldier in the Christian army should be fitted not only for the duty of the solitary sentinel, but also to stand in the ranks and bear the brunt of the battle.

If inquiry be made now, as of old, of the lonely watcher, "Watchman, what of the night?" the answer is still the same, "The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come" (Isa. xxi. 11, 12). "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. xxx. 15). "Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jer. vi. 16).

XXXV.

HOME TRAVEL.

"There is no new thing under the sun."—ECCLES. i. 9.

TRAVELLERS' tales are apt to savour of the marvellous, and the North, which is called in Hebrew the hidden or secret place, excites special curiosity, and is likely the more to originate fabulous prodigies.

One comfort is, that in the North we are brought face to face not with works of man, but with works of God, and whatever is inscrutable or inexplicable is the Divine handiwork.

There is no desire to exhibit in these pages anything novel or unheard of, or to exaggerate the peculiarities of an Arctic clime. In fact, by some research, most Arctic scenes can be pictured or imaged out nearer home.

The almost dayless night of an Arctic winter can be more than realised by descending a coal-mine; and while it may be truly said of an Arctic summer, "There is no night there," it may be said also that there is no real darkness in well illumined English cities, especially within the rays of the electric light.

The population of the North-West and their habits will have much illustration in a visit to a gipsy encampment, and the mode of summer travelling in the North

might be well realised by taking a trip in a canal barge, with detention at the various locks, to correspond with that at the rapids, each of these being in fact a change of level in the waters.

The solitude of the forest can be experienced in any English wood large enough to be lost in, and only the more vividly from the contrast of crowded bustle being so near at hand.

The same stars light the same sky for both eastern and western hemispheres. It is the earth only that revolves beneath it. Perpetual snow can be more readily found by ascending a Swiss mountain than by visiting the Arctic circle. In the latter region, up to the coast line of the frozen ocean, the constant summer's sun clears off all vestige of snow from the land even to the mountain tops.

All the furs of the North can be obtained most easily and in greatest perfection at the London fur shops, and all the animals, up to the polar bear, are found alive at the Zoological Gardens. At the British Museum you may see the jaws of a whale, and the costume and weapons of Indians and Esquimaux.

As much skating can be had in London as in the far North; the snow there soon deeply covering the ice.

The great blessing of England which is missed elsewhere, lies in a Christianity that has been inherited from many centuries, and which has become ripened and deepened and purified in the progress. It is only by living in a rude and untutored or heathen land that these home blessings are fully realised from the lack of them. In a land where religion is just budding the contrast is conspicuous. The dawning light suffices to make the darkness visible.

The Christian poet describes this dearth of religion to its extreme point, in the well-known lines:—

"The sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard;
Never sighed at the sound of a knell,
Nor smiled when a Sabbath appeared."

The worst is when the absence of these things ends in a carelessness or indifference to them.

There are found in God's word promises to meet every lack, such as the following:—"Yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come" (Ezek. xi. 16). "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" (Ps. xxiii. 6). "The Lord shall preserve thy going and coming from this time forth, and even for evermore" (Ps. cxxi. 8). "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Ps. cxxxix. 9, 10). "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20). "No, I will not leave thee; no, no, I will not forsake thee" (Heb. xiii. 5), where every one of the five negatives is needed to sustain the courage and confidence of one battling with the cold of an Arctic winter, or with the chill hearts of unconverted men.

It is well that there should be a country where the Christian is still compelled to a life of faith and dependence on an unseen Providence, as a counterbalance to the modern civilised world, where the increasingly artificial life and humanitarian ideas drag even the Christian from habitual leaning on the care and interposition of a Heavenly Father.

In every clime we are called to be imitators of the faith and patience of those who now inherit the promises, but to an Arctic resident, the earthly pilgrimage more nearly resembles the footmarks of the Old Testament saints. In every land we are called on to renounce the pomps and vanities of the world, but the dweller in the extreme North is severed by his remoteness from such allurements.

The lot of the Arctic voyager may serve to point a moral for others, and like Saladin's winding-sheet, carried through the ranks of his army while he yet lived, may remind the dwellers among the gaieties of a giddy crowd of the vanity of all things earthly. The silence of the tomb to which all are hastening, in the North seems almost to be forestalled to the living.

XXXVI.

RIVERS.

"A place of broad rivers and streams."—Isa. xxxiii. 21.

The great North-West is a land of waters. Some parts of the country, overlooked from a height, present more water than land. Hard rocks of granite or limestone often approach the surface. These hold the water as in a basin, and hence lakes, small and large, are frequent, while the drainage of the Rocky Mountains feeds large rivers, running as well east and west, as north, especially the Saskatchewan, Peace, Mackenzie, and Yukon Rivers.

These are indeed broad rivers and streams, and with swift currents. All these streams have the name of Big River, or something equivalent, in the dialects of their respective countries.

The Saskatchewan, though wide, is not deep, and the navigation therein is somewhat impeded, but the other rivers named are deep as well as wide. The Mackenzie is frequently a mile in width, and sometimes more. The Yukon is at times divided by islands into various channels, and may then measure ten miles between its furthest banks.

The Mackenzie measures about three miles across in a single stream at Point Separation, whence this river

divides into many streams to form its delta. Where it enters the sea in a multitude of outlets it may measure fifty miles between its furthest banks.

The banks of all the rivers are much wooded, especially with pine, though to the southward, as in Upper Peace River, poplar predominates. Almost the only open country visible along the northern rivers is near Dunvegan, on Upper Peace River, where are fine grassy downs suitable for horse and cattle grazing. Along the whole of Peace River spots may be found suitable for agriculture, but the country farther north than this is hardly an inviting one for farming.

All the Indians who inhabit the shores of these northern rivers are mild and inoffensive.

The scenery has generally too much sameness to be picturesque, though at times a bold rock or jutting headland, or a neighbouring mountain, forms a commanding feature.

The population is so sparse that at times the voyager may proceed for hundreds of miles without seeing one human being. At other times he will encounter a few Indians in their skin tents on the river banks, with their fishing-nets set in the eddies. These will gladly barter a few fish, if they have any, for a little tea, tobacco, or other groceries.

Peace River gained its name from Peace Point, where the Indians were persuaded by the traders about a hundred years ago to cease from war and bloodshed, and to bury their weapons. Since that time the tribes have engaged in trade and the chase only, and the peace has been unbroken.

Slave River, and the Great and Lesser Slave Lakes

gained their names from the habit of the Cree Indians, who were first supplied with firearms by the traders, of descending thither for depredations, and for carrying off women and children as slaves. There are other memorials of such conflicts in the names of Dead Islands and Skull Island on Great Slave Lake, and also Battle River.

Though these attacks have ceased for nearly a century, yet so vivid is the tradition of them, that still each spring the Indians are accustomed to scare one another by reports of bad Indians prowling in the woods.

The rivers of the North-West are very numerous, besides those named above. Some few may be mentioned—Athabasca River, Clear Water River, Pembina River, Loon River, Smoky River, Hay River, Liard River, Nahany River, Peel River, Porcupine River. The timber on the first of these is considered valuable.

In the passage quoted above from the prophet Isaiah, the word translated "streams" may be rendered "canals." It need hardly be said that there are none such in the far North-West. The prophecy has of late been thought to presage the opening of the projected ship canal through the Jordan valley. It is curious to observe, in this age of contradictory opinions, that some minds recoil with horror from what they deem the profanation of burying the shores of the hallowed lake of Galilee beneath the flood.

Others deem rather that those hallowed shores might thus be preserved from profanation, not only such as the past has witnessed at the hand of heathen and Moslem, but such as results from idle sightseers hailing even from Christian lands.

Any way, we may rest satisfied that the will of God must occur. If the project be carried out, this will assuredly be in accordance with, and not contrary to, the design of Providence; and if Providence has not designed to favour it, the attempt will be frustrated.

It may be safer to interpret the prophecy, as a promise of God's presence to the earnest seeker in every land and clime. Thus a faithful follower of the Most High, even though exiled in the distant West, will still find a Heavenly Shepherd to lead him forth beside waters of comfort. Everywhere God's name may be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, for liberty and for refreshing.

XXXVII.

HEALTH.

"The inhabitant shall not say I am sick."—Isa. xxxiii. 24.

Health is one of the chief of earthly blessings, and is greatly sought for. Every climate is searched for a place of salubrity or renovation. In this respect the great North-West offers very favourable features.

In this matter there is a great contrast between the far East and the far West. In Africa and the East Indies, the climate is healthy enough for the natives, but fatal to Europeans. In the great North-West, on the other hand, the native races are mostly sickly and unhealthy, and some of them quite in decay, while to the resident Europeans the climate, though severe, is found remarkably healthful.

This is the case even with diseases for which cold has been supposed injurious. More than one person, who appeared to be of consumptive tendency in the South, has quite recovered from this during a residence in the extreme North, and this notwithstanding that the same disease, owing to a scrofulous taint in the race, is common among the natives.

The efficacy of the cold of the North in checking this complaint, may cast a doubt upon the prudence of sending such patients to the South of France or Madeira for a warmer air.

Epidemic diseases are uncommon in the far North. In 1865 a fatal epidemic raged among the Indians, which, though called scarlet fever, may have been measles. It was introduced through some infection attached to the clothing imported from England, and carried off nearly half the population. Since then there has been no fatal epidemic in Mackenzie River, though one has raged in Alaska. Such diseases may be partly checked by the sparseness of the population, but it is probable that the pine forests have a mitigating effect upon the infection of continued fevers.

The small-pox has raged more than once in the Saskatchewan plains, without as yet reaching the North to any fatal extent. It is said that, in the neighbourhood of Prince Albert, that disease seemed arrested by a belt of pine-trees, it having been virulent up to the forest, while no cases occurred beyond.

In England a belt of trees is considered to be a protection to a house from intermittent fever, and the effect of forest growth in this respect may merit further inquiry. It would not be hard to plant pines round a small-pox hospital. The fumes of turpentine, rosin, or balsam might have a good effect. The small-pox was very fatal on the Pacific coast where there is plenty of forest, but the wood there is cedar and not pine.

When epidemic diseases have prevailed in the North-West, it appears that the infection has come with the clothing imported from Europe, the measles or some such disease having been prevalent where the goods were packed. When these were opened and distributed from each trading post to the crowds of waiting

Indians, each tribe, one after the other, was at once plunged into the horrors of a universal mortality.

Even commonly, in unpacking the clothing from Europe which has become damp or musty by the way, a sort of cold or influenza mostly attacks those engaged in opening out the bales. This may suggest some hints as to the propagation of disease.

Of the diseases prevalent among the Indians it is not needful here to speak, as their hereditary taint has been already alluded to. There is no doubt but that cleanly and regular habits would go far to mitigate their sickness, and thus the introduction of Christianity among them is for the behoof of both body and soul.

Many of the regulations of the Mosaic law for Israel in the wilderness appear to have been of a sanitary character, and even the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean would be an effective disinfectant (Numb. xix., Heb. ix. 13).

For native doctors in the North not much can be said, though an Indian wife is said to have operated for cataract, and an Esquimaux will remove a speck in the eye by the adhesion of a piece of calcined bone. Ophthalmia is common among the natives, from which the loss of one eye at least frequently follows.

Accidents, frost-bites, and wounds with axes are not unfrequent in the North, and sometimes the presence of a surgeon would be a great boon. Generally speaking, however, in that healthful climate it is wonderful how little the medical profession are missed in their absence.

Among the heathen Indians sicknesses appear at times like Divine chastisements for their sins, and

medicines might be of little avail without a radical change of habits. Generally speaking, the simplest remedies are the most efficacious for Indian complaints.

Though the text placed at the head of this article may receive slight illustration in the North-West, it is not pretended that either that country or any other in the world is yet a fulfilment of it. The thing most to be desired is that the latter part of the same verse may first be brought about there as everywhere else, namely, that the people that dwell therein may be forgiven their iniquity.

XXXVIII.

THE NORTH-WEST.

"Behold, these shall come from far: and these from the north and from the west: and these from the land of Sinim."—ISA. xlix. 12.

THE above prophecy forms part of the general promise of the ingathering of the Gentiles to the Christian fold. There is here an assurance that some shall come from far, and some from the North and from the West, and it seems fair to read these promises into one, and to claim that some shall come from the far North-West.

Indeed the preaching of the Gospel has not been in vain in the extreme North-West. On the confines of Alaska and down the Yukon the Indian tribes have readily embraced Protestant Christianity. The converts are intelligent and affectionate, and anxious for instruction; and it is pleasant that thus from within the Arctic circle the voice of prayer and praise should ascend to our common Saviour.

The Yukon tribes were wild and superstitious, and given over to conjuring and devilry, but on hearing the Gospel preached they at once with joy accepted it. About 2000 in all have now been baptized, and from these the knowledge of Christ is spreading to the Pacific. Many, both adults and children, have learned to read the New Testament in their own difficult tongue, and to sing hymns in the same language.

The natives have good memories, and before books could be printed for them, they learned much by rote. Eight native catechists are now employed in the mission, and some of these might be ordained as native pastors, if arrangements could be made for their oversight.

Two churches and mission-houses have been erected for the Tukuth converts, but one of the most zealous European missionaries has died at his post, having succumbed to hard work and slender diet.

Efforts at Christian instruction are also made among the Esquimaux of the Arctic coast, but these are not yet converted, though willing to listen.

The land of Sinim, also mentioned in the above quoted text, is thought by some to mean the land of China; and as the translated name would mean the land of bushes, it is applicable to China as the home of the tea-bush.

It is remarkable in this interpretation that Alaska, which is above described, stands opposite to China, so that here the extreme East and West adjoin, and might fitly be brought into connection by the prophet.

On the Pacific coast also the Gospel has been joyfully embraced by the Tsimshean tribe at Metlahcatla and elsewhere. The Indians there evince great facility in learning hymns, not only in their own tongue, but also in English.

In travelling with any of the converts, either on the water in canoe, or over the hills on land, they will awake the echoes with the hymn tunes that we are used to hear in England, and they sing these tunes to English words.

This recalls forcibly to mind the prophecy of Isaiah in a later chapter—"The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing" (chap. lv. 12). Their song perhaps may be in the very words of chap. lii. 7—"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace."

The missionary works his way with different success in different places, and a successful missionary naturally receives much congratulation. The difference, however, between success and the want of it lies often less with the preacher than with the hearers. When we find in one place a bountiful harvest, and in another a failure in the crop, we do not blame the sower or the seed for this failure, but rather the soil.

So in spiritual things we find some tribes or nations ready to accept the Gospel, and others careless or averse to it. Yet in the end the last may be first, and the first last. The seed that sprang up quickly may wither in adversity, or be elated by worldly prosperity, while that which lay longer hid beneath the soil may yield at last the best result.

In the chapter quoted at the head of this article we find the promise made to Christ that He shall be for salvation to the ends of the earth (ver. 6), and in Ps. ii. 8 He is also promised the utmost parts of the earth for His possession. This is encouragement to an endeavour to carry the Gospel to the farthest boundaries.

Moreover, it would appear that our Saviour's return from heaven is delayed until every tribe has heard the message of salvation, for we read that this Gospel of

the Kingdom must first be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come (Matt. xxiv. 14). The great commission was given at our Lord's ascension, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15). And He still awaits the fulfilment of this work.

It is then of the highest importance that the whole world should be girdled with the Gospel, and it is satisfactory that the mission agents sent East and West now nearly meet. Missions are founded along the coast of British Columbia and even in Alaska to the farthest west, while to the east they are already successful on the opposite coast of Japan. Efforts are making to carry the Gospel still further east to the Corea, which is nearly as far as can be reached towards Alaska.

May God's Providence smile upon these efforts, and hasten the time when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9).

At the funeral of the great Duke of Wellington it was considered to be a mark of solemn respect that the obsequies should be attended by one soldier from every regiment of the British army, and it is a part of the Saviour's glory that one jewel be gathered to His crown from every tribe of the lost human race. It is an honour to seek to secure for our Lord one such jewel from even the remotest tribe.

XXXIX.

SNOW-BLINDNESS.

"We grope as if we had no eyes."—Isa. lix. 10.

In several places of Scripture we have a graphic description of those that have eyes to see and see not. By this we are probably to understand figuratively that judicial blindness of heart, by which men sometimes are visited by the Almighty in punishment for their sins.

Thus Moses in Deuteronomy, describing prophetically Israel's punishment for their faithlessness, says, "Thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness" (Deut. xxviii. 29); and Job writes of the confusion of the godless, "They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night" (chap. v. 14); and in chap. xii. 25, "They grope in the dark without light."

It is thought to illustrate such texts by the effect of the snow-blindness common in the great North-West.

As the sun rises higher and has more power in the months of March and April, to walk long over the snow in the sunlight becomes distressing to the eyes from the dazzling brightness. This is especially the case in traversing a wide lake or in descending a broad river, where there are no near forests of dark pines to relieve the gaze, but an unbroken expanse of dazzling snow.

The effect of this is to produce after a time acute inflammation of the eyes. These in the end may be so entirely closed as to involve a temporary blindness, accompanied by much smarting pain in the eyes. This is not felt so severely whilst the walking is continued, but on stopping to rest or on entering a warm house after the journey is done, the severity of the infliction is felt to the full.

It generally lasts for at least three days, after which it gradually subsides. In the meantime it may be ameliorated by dropping one drop of laudanum into the eye, though the sensation of this is like an application of liquid fire.

The voyager feels very helpless during the acute stage of snow-blindness, and like Elymas the sorcerer or St. Paul himself he "seeks some to lead him by the hand" (Acts xiii. 11; xxii. 11).

Those who have suffered once from this affection are more liable to its recurrence, and a frequent repetition of it has a tendency to weaken or somewhat impair the vision permanently.

Inflammation of the eyes from other causes than the snow is more dangerous in the North among the natives, as this too often proceeds till the eye turns white or glazed, and the sight is forfeited, or a white speck or film is formed which enlarges till it covers the pupil, and the vision is lost.

A single day's walk in spring-time over the snow of a large lake may produce such total snow-blindness in one of sensitive vision, that for three days he may have to grope for his knife and fork to feed himself at table.

A traveller starting to visit the Esquimaux camps at

the Arctic coast toward the spring in company with an Esquimaux boy was overtaken on the way by snow-blindness. The man he was travelling with deserted him, but not so the boy, who led him by the hand till on the sixth day of his march, hauling a small sled of necessaries, they reached the first Esquimaux camp.

This consisted of a snow hut, and to enter it among strangers with the eyes perforce closed was an awkward introduction. Moreover, the Esquimaux are such arrant thieves, that it is considered needful to keep a watchful eye upon them at all times to check their depredations. This, for one at the time quite blind, was out of the question.

A house whose roof, walls and floor are all of snow does not seem to offer much relief to the eyes from the universal whiteness; but a day's rest in the snow-house restored the vision. The light percolating through the snow walls and admitted by the narrow window of clear ice was sufficiently subdued to check the glare. The pilfering of the host did not extend beyond provisions and sled lines, and the following days being cloudy, the voyage was completed without further return of the eye affection.

The eyes of the Indians are providentially adapted to their peculiar mode of life. In discerning small objects, such as animals at a distance, as is required for the chase, they are superior to a European; but to distinguish minute things close at hand, such as small print in a book, is difficult to them. Moreover, they see well in the dusk, which is an advantage in hunting and travelling.

In proceeding to the extreme West the eyes of the

Indian approach in shape those of the Chinese. This has gained for the Tukuth nation, from the French, the appellation or soubriquet of Loucheux or Squint-eyed, though they are not subject to the infirmity of a fixed squint.

Blind Indians are at times clever and industrious at handy work, and some of them, but not many, are well cared for by their friends.

Regarding the spiritual blindness figured in the words of the text above cited, we trust it may not be to the Indians that these are applicable. We must hope rather to apply to the Indians in matters that concern their souls more encouraging words. "The eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness" (Isa. xxix. 18). "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." (chap. xxxv. 5). "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see" (chap. xlii. 18). "He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind" (Luke iv. 18).

XL.

BEARS.

"We roar all like bears."—Isa. lix. 11.

It is well known that the Arctic regions are so named from the Greek *arktos*, a bear, as being a chief home of these quadrupeds. The name of the bear, *arktos*, again, is derivable from *arktos* sufficed; and perhaps from the Hebrew RGE, lean, in reference to the fasting of these animals during their winter hibernation.

For the whole of the snow season, that is, from six to eight months, the bears hibernate in some hole or cavity found or excavated for themselves in the earth. There the bear remains without food or other sign of life than warmth and breath till spring.

Hardly does the chrysalis and butterfly better exemplify a resurrection from the dead. If life can be thus retained through a polar winter, why not in the case of man through the winter of death and the chill of the grave.

The bear is fattened by feeding on the autumn berries before it retires to its hole, and it retains this fat throughout the winter without partaking of food. At first this appears miraculous, but the marvel may be less inexplicable if it is considered that food is required to replace some loss to the muscles or organs

of the body by exertion or use. Where there can be no loss, as in the case of the sleeping bear, no fresh supply is called for.

Even some of the Indian tribes in Arctic clime find much advantage in an underground residence in winter for its great warmth and shelter. The Esquimaux early in winter live in underground dwellings till these are replaced by houses of caked snowdrift.

The bears of the North are of several classes. First, the common black and brown bear, which is cowardly, and not dangerous to man. Second, the grizzly or mountain bear, which is fierce and dangerous, especially when wounded, or in the case of a female with cubs (2 Sam. xvii. 8; Prov. xvii. 12).

To know the roaring of bears there is little need to go to the Arctic Circle, for any person living within a mile of the London Zoological Gardens may hear their nocturnal howlings.

The strongest and most cruel of all the bears is the white Polar bear, which lives exclusively on the ice of the Polar sea, feeding on fish. It is a singular provision of nature that the fur of the Polar bear is such that no snow can adhere to it, and a mitten of Polar bear skin is used by the Esquimaux as a snow whisk to clear their deer-skins or other furs from any snow that may casually cling to them.

This mitten of Polar bear skin is called in curious similarity to the English name "poalerin."

Of the common bear the flesh is wholesome food though rather coarse. The hide is also of value.

It is singular that not only on earth but in the sky the bear should be connected with the North, for the

northern constellations of the Great and Little Bear are great guides for travellers. When the Great Bear stands exactly overhead, it is often considered a sign that morning is near enough for starting on the day's march, that is about 3 or 4 A.M. For the day's travel has to be finished before the early sunset, which may be at 2 or 3 P.M. or sooner. After this a camp with fuel and food are prepared for the next night. Mention of these constellations in Scripture by the name of Arcturus is changed in the Revised Version to "The Bear."

A distinguishing feature of the Arctic sky is the Pole Star being nearly overhead.

The Hebrew term for the North is that which is hidden, mysterious, or concealed; and as applied to the North Pole this description is still borne out. All the venturesome attempts yet made to penetrate the furthest recesses of the Polar Circle only justify the truth of the Scripture caution, "Who can stand before His cold?" (Ps. cxlvii. 17).

The summer activity and long winter inanition of the bear illustrate the similar characteristics of the whole of nature in the North. As the human writers of the Bible all lived in hot countries, its Divine authorship is betokened by the living description it gives of an Arctic clime, where "the waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen" (Job xxxviii. 30).

It is indeed a popular fallacy that in an Arctic clime there are "days and nights of half a year." Even to the North Pole there exists some alternation of light and darkness every twenty-four hours in winter. At

the Polar Circle, even when at mid-winter the sun does not rise at all, there is some trace of daylight for about nine hours daily, though broad daylight may be for only three hours.

In summer it is true that in all the northern climes there is no night, and in Polar regions no sunset; but the sun dips toward the north, and lowers toward the horizon, so that it is called night or midnight, though without the darkness, for the sake of distinguishing the time from the high blaze of noon. Man still requires repose every twenty-four hours, though sleep is often taken at noon-day in the Polar summer, to avoid the heat and glare. But a division of time into periods of twenty-four hours is thus still maintained, even under a circling and unsetting sun.

XLI.

PEACE.

"Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river."—Isa. lxvi. 12.

This promise to restored Israel stands in beautiful contrast to the expostulations of a previous chapter (xlviii. 18), "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."

The words just above cited will often be brought to the mind of a resident on the banks of the great Peace River, one of the magnificent streams of the wide North-West. Peace River is one of the affluents that feed the large Mackenzie River, unless it should be considered as the source of the latter.

The course of the Peace River extends to about 1500 miles, and it is suitable for navigation, but with some interruptions. The chief of these is what is called the Rocky Mountains Cañon, where the river runs through a narrow defile for about twelve miles, and tumbles over the rocks in a way quite impossible for any sort of craft to surmount. There are rapids both above and below this, but the only other entire barrier across the river is what is called Peace River Falls, in the lower part of the river. This last obstruction might be diminished by blasting. The fall is about six feet high.

The Peace River, as already stated, received its name from Peace Point, one of the angles in its course, where about a century since, the Indians were persuaded by the traders to terminate their former wars and feuds, to bury their weapons, and to devote themselves to peace and commerce. This tranquillity has since been unbroken, and the region now well bears out its name, being undisturbed in serenity.

The banks of Peace River offer many spots suitable for farming, and in parts present stretches of prairie country. In the neighbourhood of Dunvegan, the banks retire from the river, and present to view grassy rounded hills without trees, which form a great relief to the interminable forest elsewhere.

In the lower part of the river, the banks are insignificant, but these rise constantly higher, as the stream is mounted, even up to the Rocky Mountains. The current at the same time increases in rapidity, that is to say, it slackens as you descend the river.

The upper part of the river, near the Rocky Mountains, is strongly impregnated with a mineral solution of lime or magnesia, which is manifested in more than one way. First it afflicts with swollen throat, or goitre, those who habitually drink its waters without boiling. For this affliction the use of iodine is the only relief. The other effect of the mineral is rapidly to fossilise wood or other substance exposed to its action.

When the river is low, in fall, it is common to see part of a tree exposed that has been lying under water. This, being quite petrified, will have the appearance of being thousands of years old; but on examining the remainder of the same stick, which having been buried

in the mud bank has been protected from the action of the water, it may be found quite fresh and sound, and apparently brought down by the spring freshets only a few years back.

Pebbles, agates, ammonites, coprolites, and echini are also found among the shingle of the river bank.

As the river winds among or burrows through the ranges of the Rocky Mountains, a singular appearance is noted on the circumjacent hills in the level terraces which surround them at different heights. It seems difficult to explain these otherwise than as an ancient coast-line, and the hills being of a sandy formation the era of such a shore can hardly be very remote.

Perhaps it is allowable to conjecture that the Pacific coast of British Columbia once bordered on the Rocky Mountains, and that these mountains with the country west of them have since been raised to a higher level by volcanic action.

One large stream of lava, about a mile wide and twenty miles long, is observable on the Naas River; and in the region of the Yukon River slight earthquake shocks are still not infrequent. Mount Elias, on the verge of Alaska, is a volcano only recently extinct.

Some amount of gold is deposited on the sand bars of Upper Peace River, where it has been worked for by Chinese and others.

Large masses of driftwood descend the river from the mountains with the ice in spring, and some of these, lodging along the banks, form drift-piles, not without danger for a passing voyager. His canoe may be wrecked and sunk among the snags, and himself

whirled by the eddying current into mid-stream, or sucked under the boiling rapid.

The banks of Lower Peace River are wooded chiefly with pine, and the upper river with smooth barked poplar, known in the country as cotton-wood.

The temperature of Peace River is not very different from Eastern or Old Canada, as it is now sometimes called, and the soil and productions compare not unfavourably with the eastern country.

Should communication by railway approach Peace River, it may probably become a place of colonisation and settlement. Cereals and vegetables succeed well The summer frosts, which are a drawback to the former, might diminish if the country were settled up, a process that often modifies climate.

Some valuable timber might be found on Peace River if means existed to transport it, and silver has been stated to exist in the neighbourhood.

XLII.

SAFETY.

"Sleep in the woods."—EZEK. xxxiv. 25.

WE read in the Scriptures of many a strange sleeping-place. Jacob slept with a stone for his pillow (Gen. xxviii. 11); Saul slept in the cave at En-gedi (1 Sam. xxiv. 3), and on the hill of Hachilah (1 Sam. xxvi. 7), to the danger of his life. Uriah slept at the door of the king's house (2 Sam. xi. 9); Elijah under a juniper tree (1 Kings xix. 5). Peter slept, bound by chains to the soldiers on either hand (Acts xii. 6); the three apostles slept on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke ix. 32), and in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark xiv. 37). Our Lord Himself slept in tempest on the bolster in the stern-sheets of the fishing craft (Mark iv. 38); and Eutychus slept in a place of danger at the open window (Acts xx. 9).

In the temperate climate of the Holy Land to sleep outside might offer little inconvenience, unless in the rainy season, when the floodgates of heaven are opened. David describes a mountain storm very graphically in Psalms xxix., xlii., and xciii., and elsewhere, as if he had been himself exposed to their fury.

In the great North-West summer voyaging is usually performed with a tent for protection from the weather

at night as elsewhere, but in the winter, though protection might, at first sight, appear more called for, none is taken, and the nightly camp is made under the open heaven. The reason is, that in winter there is no wet, and the forest fire is more easily made in the open.

It may interest some to know the process of nightly camping in the North. As sundown approaches a spot is selected in the woods, where some dead trees are seen standing. The snow is scraped away, by using a snow-shoe for a shovel, from a circular space sufficient to seat the party. This space is next thickly strewn with pine branches lopped down for the purpose, and which are locally termed brush (Heb. BRUS, a pine tree). The axes are then in requisition to fell a sufficient number of dead trees for the consumption of firewood for the night.

With a few splinters of dry wood and shavings cut from them, or with a piece of birch bark which burns like a torch, a fire is started and piled to a sufficient height with logs. Water is procured by melting some of the surrounding snow, and kettles are brought for preparing the evening meal. Dogs are fed with fish, and when supper is consumed, shoes and socks are dried for the next day's travel, and the travellers seek repose wrapped in their blankets on the pine brush before the fire embers, till shortly after midnight, when preparations begin for another day's march.

The matter soon becomes one of routine, and not disagreeable to a hardy voyager. Some of the native Indians use habitually the same open camp, but most of them have some kind of shelter from the snows and

winds of winter, when camped in their woods, either deer-skin tents, or shelters made with branches, or with split wood.

To a stranger it is a pitiable sight to find a sick Indian in the woods, perhaps with consumptive cough, crouching half naked over the embers of his small fire, amid driving wind and snow, and in a temperature below zero.

Yet an offer to remove such a one to the shelter of a house would probably be rejected, and rightly so, though such refusal would seem to a European unreasonable. A healthy Indian may be thrown into consumption by removal from an out of doors life to the confinement of an indoors atmosphere. For one already attacked by the disease such a change would probably accelerate the close.

To sleep in the woods is much easier than to sleep without woods. In the Saskatchewan plains, which are mostly bare, a traveller's life may be lost by his being overtaken with a storm in the open plain, far from water, shelter, or fuel. The fact that the cold is not so extreme there as in the far North may make the danger only greater, for if the snow melts about a sleeper, it will soon freeze him to death. For this reason one falling asleep in the snows of Europe will rarely wake again, whereas, in the far North, a lost traveller overtaken in a storm without fire or shelter, by burying himself in the snow, may probably sleep well and awake in the morning none the worse. In the plain country the snow may be of insufficient depth for this.

Want of fuel in a winter camp is a great trouble,

but a benign Providence arranges that dry wood may be found almost everywhere. The most difficulty in finding fuel occurs in the approach to the Arctic coast. Where dry pines are lacking, a fire can be made of green pines, by felling a number together and igniting them in the heads with the brush or branches upon them.

If there are no pines, fire can be made with dry willows. If these are lacking even green willows are supposed to burn when once ignited, though the theory is rather a difficult one to reduce to practice. Should there be none of these there may probably be no fire, unless as a last resort a sled can be chopped up for the purpose.

There may be inconvenience also in the lack of materials for starting a fire. In the absence of lucifers or sulphur matches, fire is commonly made with flint and steel and a piece of country touchwood, which consists of a fungoid growth or excrescence on the bark of the birch or poplar. A small particle of this touchwood is kindled to a spark with flint and steel. The touchwood is then placed in a handful of shavings cut from dry wood, and the whole is waved together in the air till it bursts into a flame. When a steel is missing a knife may be at hand, or fire may be obtained by snapping a gun. An Indian chief has told of his life being saved at a last emergency, by obtaining fire from a piece of green stone, carried for a whetstone, and an iron buckle from his dog harness.

Should the fingers become benumbed before fire can be struck, the traveller's position is difficult, and his best course is to pursue his journey with haste, until sharp exercise has restored the circulation.

If a traveller in the woods happens to meet with the accident of cutting his foot with his axe while chopping firewood, his position is not an enviable one, and on this account it is not customary in the North, except with natives, for one voyager to travel alone. In case of such a mishap, the lamed one will be carried by his companion on the dog-sled, if they have one, to the nearest house, which may be a hundred miles distant.

As to finding the proper direction to travel through the woods, a native Indian is seldom at a loss, though a stranger may soon lose himself. For one lost in the woods when "neither sun nor stars appear," the best hope of knowing his position, or the direction in which to travel, is by observing the bark and branches of the trees. These in an exposed position may be somewhat blasted toward the north compared with their southern aspect, and hence the points of the compass may be surmised.

XLIII.

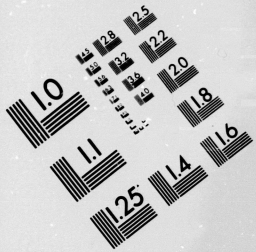
MEAT DIET.

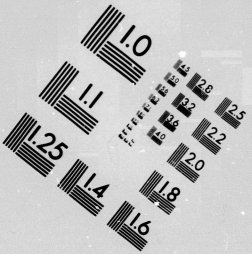
"Prove thy servants I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink."—DAN. i. 12.

THE statement of this narrative is that Daniel and his companions improved more in flesh and fatness when fed on vegetable diet with water beverage, than when feasted on meat and wine.

Health and sickness are especially under the sovereign control of the Almighty, and it might suffice to attribute this result to God's will. But the effect recorded accords with common experience. A meat diet is known not to be fattening. In the North-West the experiment is tried on a large scale, as the diet there is perforce almost exclusively an animal one. The result is that corpulency is a rare exception, while the addition of farinaceous food will make the diet much more improving.

Daniel's objection to the king's meat may have been that it was offered to the king's idols, or because the animals, not being slaughtered according to the Jewish mode, were not sufficiently deprived of their blood to fulfil, in his view, the requirements of the Mosaic Law. This abstinence from blood was inculcated on Noah from the time when animal food was first used and





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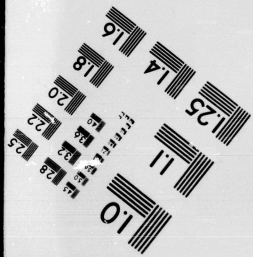

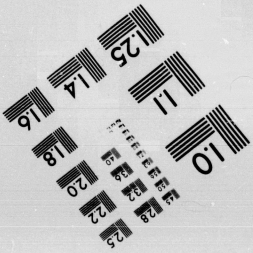

permitted (Gen. ix. 4), also on Moses and the Israelites (Lev. xvii. 10), and lastly by the Apostles on the early Christian Church (Acts xv. 20).

The eating of blood is mentioned in the prophets as a pollution in God's sight. "Ye eat with the blood: and shall ye possess the land?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 25). Heathen Indians mostly consider it a luxury to drink the blood of the animals slaughtered by them, when boiled in a soup. The habit probably tended to infect the Indian with scorbutic diseases contracted from the animals, and better health has followed the extended use of tea in substitution for blood.

Animal diet, as in the North-West, though not fattening, is strengthening. The flesh of the wild animals is not nearly so rich as that of domestic cattle, and flesh is often alternated with fish and fowl. The cultivation of potatoes, when successful, forms an agreeable addition to the animal food, to which the occasional addition of a biscuit or small flat cake is considered a luxury.

When the diet is confined to a single article of food, however good in itself, for a length of time, it naturally becomes unpalatable. Venison or salmon will pall on the taste when there is no variety. This reminds us of the rather fanciful interpretation placed by some modern critics on Luke x. 42, "But one dish is needful." The one dish then commended is, in truth, the Bread of Life.

The necessity of drying the meat in the North-West to preserve it renders it less agreeable, though not less nourishing. Generally only the two ribs of the reindeer are preserved by drying, and as these when dried

form only a ration for one man for a day, each man rationed on dry meat may be treated as costing the life of a deer each day, and these dried deers' ribs are the chief food for voyagers both in summer and winter. They are often the exclusive diet of the establishments at the trading-posts.

The very sparse population that can be maintained on animal food in the North-West, though animals, fish, and birds are all numerous, shows how needful it is that, in more populous places, men should subsist mainly on vegetable diet. A residence in a land, where bread is a luxury and meat the staff of life, shows how soon the value or appreciation of articles of diet is affected by their scarcity or the reverse.

In failure of animal food, the Indian betakes himself to the roots of the wild carrot for his living, together with the hips on the wild rose-bushes, and the cranberries and other ground berries that may be in season.

In rocky districts a lichen called the tripe de roche, proves the last resort of the famished. This, when boiled in soup, is not unpalatable, but when cooked alone it is of a mawkish taste, though sufficing in extremity to preserve life for weeks. Within the Arctic Circle wild rhubarb is found in abundance in summer on the river banks, and is of a pleasant acid taste, though without the flavour of that used at home. Leeks and chives are also found and eaten on the banks of the Mackenzie River, and, in the gardens or fields ploughed for potatoes or barley, a weed thrives known locally as "Fat hen," which when boiled forms a substitute for spinach.

The above are the chief vegetables thought edible. There some medicinal herbs, as bearberry and sarsaparilla, and a bulbous root recommended for affections of the throat and chest.

In the absence of imported tea a decoction is made of a native herb, which, though bitter, becomes by habit not disagreeable. It is known as "miskeg tea." The spring shoots of the birch or raspberry, or of the sascatom berry, may also be boiled for tea.

From the spring sap of the birch a sweet syrup is made, though not in large quantities, which serves as a substitute for imported sugar. The berries known as the sascatom or poire, which are numerous on Peace River, form a passable substitute for dried currants.

Common kitchen vegetables, when carefully tended, thrive well in the gardens, though the potatoes are liable to be cut down by early frost, and the crop thus diminished or lost.

It is remarkable what a contrast there is between the great scarcity of provision in the North-West to the east of the Rocky Mountains, and its great plenty in the not far distant Pacific coast of British Columbia to the west of the mountains. On the Pacific coast the food of the Indians admits of great variety. The salmon are there the staff of life. These are taken in great number in summer, and are dried for winter use. Other fish, such as halibut and herring, are also plentiful. A small kind of deer is also driven to the coast from the mountains by the wolves and easily slaughtered. The natives derive food also from herring spawn collected from the sea, and from numerous shell-fish,

such as winkles and cockles; also from the inner bark of the poplar, of which they make cakes, from an edible seaweed made into cakes, and from berries, while rice, flour and apples are imported from without.

XLIV.

DRESS.

"Their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments."
—Dan. iii. 21.

The name of the Chipewyans, who are the Athabasca Indians of the North-West, was given them by their Cree neighbours, as meaning the race with the pointed coat-tails. This was the native costume of most of the tribes in the far North, till it has been gradually laid aside for European garments, or for those made more or less in European fashion. There is now hardly any tribe that retain their original native costume, besides the Esquimaux.

Of these the wives wear their coats pointed, or nearly so, while the men have them round and shorter. This is the chief distinction between the costume of male and female among the Esquimaux. Of the Esquimaux at the mouth of the Mackenzie, the men are many of them tall and large, but the wives mostly small and below average height. The full dress of an Esquimaux chief is very handsome, consisting of white deer skin ornamented with large blue beads, and trimmed with the fur of the wolverine or glutton.

The native chief's dress of the Tukuth tribe of Indians is ornamented with shells and porcupine quill

work. The dress of a Chipewyan, with all his hunting accoutrements, is also handsome. This consists of mooseskins, much trimmed with white, and coloured seed-bead work.

An Indian may perforce obey the Apostolic injunction, "Having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. vi. 8); but he has a passion for fine clothes, partly from seeing hardly any other object on which he can spend his means.

An Indian's occupations consist chiefly in making canoes in spring, fishing in summer, making snow-shoes and sleds in the fall, and hunting and trapping in winter. His interests centre in these occupations and in his family, with the variety of feasting and gambling when he meets with plenty and with friends. His country offers few resources or productions besides the skins of the furbearing animals, which are valuable for trade, and his talk is usually of the chase.

His country has made but little progress during the past century, and continues to be a hundred years behind the age; but we know not what differences coming years, and especially the introduction of steam, may yet produce.

To a European resident, a source of interest may present itself in the collection of natural history specimens for the museums in Europe or America. This pursuit has been a good deal encouraged by the American Institution of Science at Washington, known as the Smithsonian Institution. The variety of birds breeding on the Arctic coast is large, and a collection of their eggs is valuable.

Sufficient retirement may be found for the pursuit of

any study for which books are at hand, but there is danger of the mind becoming dissipated or unstrung from the desultory character of the pursuits and avocations of the North. The short days of winter drive the student to candle-light, of which there may be an insufficient supply; while the heat of summer, by its contrast, renders the mind torpid in reaction from the quickened circulation of winter. At the latter season the cold, if not too intense, acts as a stimulant to both bodily and mental powers.

Scripture studies may be the easiest and most profitable to pursue in the North, as the Bible is often closer at hand than another book. It is right also that the far North, as well as every other land, should contribute its quota toward the elucidation of the sacred volume.

The attractions of hunting, trapping, or other outdoor occupation may divert the student from his books, and certainly the North-West is adapted mainly for a stirring life.

A philanthropist would desire to find means of elevating and improving the condition of the natives, but attempts in this direction require caution. Any extravagant kindness or presents injure rather than benefit the natives of the North. He will attribute all such favours only to a due appreciation of his extraordinary merits, and not to any generosity on the part of the giver. Consequently by a multiplication of gifts, instead of a feeling of gratitude being excited, his own self-conceit will be proportionately increased.

Each Indian also thinks himself equally entitled to a present with his neighbour. A gift to one involves, therefore, a distribution of presents to all the

rest, or else, while one recipient may be pleased, all the rest of the band will be filled with resentment.

The desire of possessing everything that he sees is natural to an Indian, so that he feels injured by another having more than himself. Of any article that takes his fancy, he may probably ask if you possess a duplicate, implying that, if so, you may spare him one.

All these, and many other traits of Indian character, will doubtless be overborne in time by a fuller reception of the Gospel. We may well pray for a time when all these wandering sheep shall be safely brought home to the fold of the Great Shepherd.

XLV.

DEER.

"He will make my feet like hinds' feet."—HAB. iii. 19.

THE last verses of the prophet Habakkuk receive much illustration from a life in an Arctic climate, for the description given by these verses is there fully realised. There is no fruit on the tree, nor grain in the field; no flock in the fold, nor herd in the stall; yet life is preserved by a kind Providence, and one chief means of subsistence lies in the deer, which are here referred to by the prophet.

The migratory reindeer of the Arctic regions spend their summers in the barren grounds on the coasts of the Frozen Ocean, being driven to seek relief, in an open country and in sea-breezes, from the flies and gnats, which in summer-time infest the forests. In the autumn the deer migrate southward to seek in forest glades some shelter from the too rigorous blasts of the northern shore.

During their migration the deer are not easily turned from their course, and are readily approached by the hunter. A large tract of country is thus providentially supplied with food. The deer are often directed, by barriers raised by the Indians, to enter traps or enclosures formed by felled trees. They are

at other times snared by a hidden noose, or shot in the chase. To liken his feet to deers' feet is a true Indian compliment, and the words quoted above from Habakkuk are another instance of the world-wide sympathy of Scripture with the habits of every race.

The natural food of man is the fruit of the ground, as stated in Gen. i. 29. When this is denied, it is wonderful to see what provision is made by a kind Providence to supply its place.

At best but a sparse and scanty population can be fed by the chase. In the Arctic regions wild animals are numerous. The reindeer are seen in bands of many hundreds; moose and bears, as well as smaller animals, abound; the lakes and rivers are frequently swarming with fish. Yet with all this the subsistence of a northern Indian is uncertain.

In case of a deficiency of animal food, nature supplies many wild berries and edible roots in summer. Some of these, and especially rose hips, are found even in winter, and the lichen on the rocks is edible when all other supplies fail. Still, with such lavish care for the wants of the few inhabitants, starvation does occur.

The natural food of the reindeer is the whitish moss, which in Arctic regions replaces the grass of the Temperate zones as a carpet for forest and rock. In winter, when the country is under snow, the hill-tops are the spots soonest cleared of snow depths by the winds, and these are the favourite resorts of the deer. It is therefore an appropriate expression which we thrice read in Scripture: "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and maketh me to walk upon my high places" (2 Sam. xxii. 34; Ps. xviii. 33; Hab. iii. 19).

The hides of the deer form the principal clothing of the northern Indian, as its flesh is their principal food. The skin is also made into tents, and cut into lines for making snow-shoes, and used for many another purpose. The warmth of a coat of deer-hide is surprising, and while much lighter in weight than a woven or woollen garment, it is much more impervious to wind. For a bed covering also a deer's hide is warmer than a blanket. The meat of the reindeer is very wholesome and palatable, though not so rich or highly flavoured as venison from the park of a nobleman.

In fact, the flesh of wild animals generally is more digestible, though of less flavour than that of a domestic animal. It is therefore better fitted for an exclusive diet, which it often necessarily becomes in the far North.

Larger than the reindeer is the red-deer, and larger again the moose-deer, while there is again a jumping deer much smaller than the reindeer.

The moose-deer is endowed with a wonderful quickness of scent and hearing, and a nervous vigilance to assist it in eluding the hunter, and, after all, it falls a prey to skill in the chase. It is said that a moose-deer seldom lies down to sleep without first making a circular detour, so that man or animal must in following its track pass to windward, and thus be scented before they approach. The moose is not, like the reindeer, a gregarious, but a solitary animal, and is of the size of a large horse, but the reindeer of that of a pony.

XLVI.

BOATS.

"There came down a storm of wind on the lake."—LUKE viii. 23.

THE word "lake" does not occur in the Old Testament, the words "sea" or "waters" being used to designate the lakes of Palestine. In the New Testament the word lake is used almost exclusively of the Lake of Gennesaret, which by a Hebraism is also called the Sea of Galilee.

In our Authorised Version the boats in use in Christ's time are called ships, which may mislead some as to their size. They may have been so small as to be already overladen by the number of Christ's disciples, thirteen with Himself, so as to be soon in danger of capsizing in a squall, or of sinking with a load of fish.

In the North-West, the large lakes are the scenes of constant transit by boat and canoe, and these often loaded with fish. Both lakes and boats are on a larger scale than those of Palestine, but twelve men form a full crew of rowers for the boats now in use. A sudden storm of wind will place a loaded boat on the lake in danger, and cause the waves to beat into it, so that it may be already filling when it gains a sheltering shore.

The principal lakes of the far North are three, namely, Athabasca, Great Slave and Great Bear

Lakes. Athabasca Lake may be about one hundred and fifty miles long; Great Slave Lake is counted about three hundred miles long; Great Bear Lake is only about two hundred miles long, but as it will measure about the same in width, it probably contains more water than Great Slave Lake.

The northern lakes have not much natural beauty, unless in parts where they are studded with islands. The coasts are deeply indented, the banks largely covered with pine forests, and, where the basin is rocky, the waters are pellucid.

Athabasca was the first of these waters to be disturbed by the wheel of a steamer. Great Slave Lake was next ploughed by a screw. It will be difficult for a steamer to enter Great Bear Lake, as the outlet from it is by a narrow stream, impeded by shallows and rapids. It had long appeared a pity that such magnificent waters as the vast lakes and rivers of the North-West should be navigated only by row-boats or barges.

Great Bear Lake is hardly ever quite free from ice, even in summer. The main ice in it breaks up about the end of June, and forms again in October, leaving about three months of open water. Great Slave Lake is navigable for about four months of summer, from the end of June till late in October. Athabasca Lake is open about five months.

In crossing these lakes on ice in winter, some caution is needed to escape the misfortune of losing the right direction, in case of being overtaken by a storm of drifting snow.

The only other lake mentioned in the New Testament, besides the Lake of Gennesaret, is the lake of fire of the

Book of Revelation (xx. 10). It need hardly be said that there are none such in the North-West. In more than one place, however, along the rivers are natural and perpetual fires that have been burning for a century past without intermission, that is ever since their discovery, and which are fed by underground coal or bitumen.

Large columns of smoke and small jets of flame are seen always issuing from the surface of the ground, which is caked or charred into a sort of natural brick. The leaves of autumn floating down the river, and laid on the charring earth, are baked in impressions on the hardened clay. These have been mistaken for ancient fossils.

It is said that a certain Indian had long refused to credit the missionary's message, objecting that he could never believe that the world would be burnt up. He would try the experiment of casting pieces of earth into the fire, and finding them unconsumed, was confirmed in his unbelief. Coming at last accidentally in his travels on one of these burning banks, his prejudices vanished at once. "Now," he said, "I see with my own eyes the ground on fire." He believed the threat of a judgment to come, and credited the message of salvation.

On the course of the Naas River, on the North Pacific coast, occurs a stream of lava rock which, issuing from a volcano some miles distant, descended in a course about a mile wide to the Naas River, which it deflected from its first channel; nor can the catastrophe belong to a remote age, as the altered course of the stream is still called by the natives the New River.

The local legend of the occurrence is, that some cruel

children, playing on the bank of the Naas River, were catching salmon in their play and slitting open the backs of the salmon, and putting stones in the gash would set the fish at liberty to swim again. This so offended the good spirit that he set the river on fire, burned up the children, and altered the course of the stream.

A fiery stream of lava might be the best help toward realising the picture of the pool of destruction portrayed for us in the Apocalypse.

XLVII.

CONVERSION.

"To turn them from darkness to light."—Acts xxvi. 18.

The change from night to day is one of the grandest contrasts of nature. When the fiat of the Almighty caused the first daylight to beam out of the darkness of chaos, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job xxxviii. 7).

The change from the almost complete darkness of an Arctic winter to the constant sunlight of its midsummer exhibits this contrast to a marked extent. In winter the Arctic daylight is but a hasty visitor, while in summer there is no night. These natural changes of day and night are applied to spiritual things in Scripture. We read respecting believers, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to spread there the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). Of unbelievers we read, and experience bears out the statement, that the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty (Ps. lxxiv. 20).

In the Sub-arctic climes of the North-West we see contrasted, instances of the enlightened and unenlightened. In worldly matters the Indian of the North is necessarily in much darkness. He sees little beyond snow and ice in winter, and pine trees and water in summer. His

wants are few, and are supplied wholly from the chase. Just to name a few things of which he can have no knowledge: he sees no cities, towns, markets, flocks, herds, horses, ships, railways; no money, streets, fruits, or harvests. Thus the very news of matters in other lands is hardly intelligible to him, and some of the stories even of Holy Writ present little interest.

In religion he is also in the dark. The Indian has some slight knowledge of a good and evil spirit, and a confused idea of retribution beyond the grave. This is rather that the souls of bad men will be doomed to haunt the scene of their crimes, so that they say of an evil liver at his death, "He will not go far." Beyond this, their religion is little more than a fear of their medicine-men or conjurers, who can, they think, cause death or sickness by their spells, through being in league with the evil spirit. These conjurers thus obtain a tyrannical power sometimes hard to endure. Indeed, so nervous are some of the Indians, that they may even die through belief in the efficacy of the threat of the conjurer to kill them.

The Esquimaux, though aware that their forefathers had a system of religion, have at present forgotten or abandoned it, though still slaves to a belief in conjuring or Shamanism. These are still a murderous race, and when a young man appears in spring with his face streaked with vermilion, it is a sign that he has had the glory of killing a human being in winter. They have some slight superstitious or supernatural ideas respecting the sun or the heavens, but beyond this their mind is quite dark regarding a future world or things Divine.

The Indians, before the preaching of the Gospel, though in fear of their conjurers, would sometimes turn on these and kill them, on the accusation of having murdered men causelessly by their spells. The conjurers used their power over the people for the indulgence of their own evil lusts and impurities. The neglect and even murder of the sick, the aged and the fatherless was a frequent crime among them, and some of the aged would even beg to be killed, for release from their sufferings and miseries.

The Indians now speak of the times before the Gospel as the days of darkness. These will now seek to tend and nourish in distress those of an alien tribe, whom they would formerly only seek to murder as their hereditary foes. Kindness and affection and other fruits of righteousness spring up in the path of the Gospel. Even the Esquimaux promise to leave off their murders, and acknowledge the evil of these, after hearing the Gospel message. Among the Indian converts, bloodshed or violence is almost unknown. The knowledge of the Gospel inspires with a thirst for instruction, and among the Tukuth tribes adults and children will hasten greedily to school.

The conjurers, when converted, often refuse to perform their old tricks even as an exhibition, confessing that while unconverted they were slaves to the devil, and professing that, since delivered from Satan's power, they have forgotten the way, and are quite unable to practise the deception, in which they formerly delighted. A female Tsimshean conjurer will exhibit the painted green wood, which by sleight of hand she had substituted for the green stone that she pretended to make

float on the water. A Tukuth conjurer will relate how, at the arrival of the first missionary among his tribe, he was in immediate danger of death, through accusation of having murdered by his spells, but, on the reception of the Gospel, all the dark deeds of the medicine-man were blown to the winds and heard of no more.

One indeed, the last of his tribe to refuse the Gospel, was for many years determined to retain his conjuring, and to neglect the truth. He was often kindly urged in vain by the Christian Indians to join their band. He declined to trust to the Saviour, and said his confidence for safety should be in his medicines.

One day he wished to cross a lake in his canoe in a boisterous breeze, and was warned by his friends that the wind was too high. He laughed at their fears, and tying his blanket tightly round his person, as a protection from wind and cold, he set forth. In the midst of the lake his canoe upset, and, though an excellent swimmer, his arms were entangled in his blanket, and he sank to rise no more.

It is not uncommon to hear the Indians say of themselves, that before the arrival of the missionary they were as animals, like deer or cattle, utterly ignorant of the course they were taking, or of the aim and object of their lives. They feel that they are now God's people, and know whither they are going.

At the same time, it is a mistake on the part of Christians at home to suppose that a convert from heathenism is ushered at once into the full blaze of Gospel day. An Englishman little realises, how much he owes to the many centuries of Christianity that have blessed his favoured isle before the birth of the present

generation. It needs a residence among those for whom the Gospel day is just dawning to estimate the difference between their lot and that of others. God grant that the path of the converts in our mission-fields may be that of the just which "shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18).

XLVIII.

TRANSLATION.

"In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."—1 COR. xiv. 19.

THE translation of God's word into foreign languages is one of the most laudable efforts of modern industry; and the capability of the Scriptures for translation into every tongue is an astonishing proof of their Divine origin. It has been found possible to render them as well into the most flexible and copious language as into a deficient and meagre one.

In the far North-West the languages might be described as being of a primitive character, but it would be probably more correct to account them in a state of decay, the effect of which has been to eliminate nearly all abstract expressions from these dialects. Such expressions have fallen into disuse, because the life of these rude tribes has been occupied by a merely animal or external existence, and in fact in little beyond a search after the mere necessaries of life.

Such a result might be deemed an obstacle to Scripture translation, but, in regard to the New Testament at least, the difficulty proves to be far from insurmountable. In fact the translation becomes an interesting and profitable exercise, in that it necessitates a search

after the first and simplest ideas contained in the original expressions of the Greek Testament. When these are sifted out, it is surprising to find that in the Book intended to teach spiritual truth, the terms employed are nearly all derived from, or connected with, the external world of nature.

The language of the mind originates in, or is founded upon objects of sense, which are used in a parabolic or emblematic sense. The parabolic character of our Lord's teaching applies to the very language in which it is couched.

The seats of the various mental emotions and feelings are located by most nations in different organs of the body, from their ignorance of the true habitat of the soul. This is still unknown, unless we understand literally the Scripture expression that the life or soul of the living creature is in the blood.

In English, the heart and brain are almost the only organs which we connect with mental emotions, but in the Latin or Greek or Hebrew the breath, midriff, bowels, veins and gall are also used in the expression of mental or spiritual faculties. An Indian associates a good or bad disposition with the head rather than with the heart, and his language exhibits the same tendency to locate in the bodily organs the mind and its faculties.

As an example of the mode in which abstract or mental ideas may be expressed by outward things when necessary, we may instance a few of the many words in the New Testament which have double meanings, one internal or unseen, and one external or visible. Thus hypocrisy is a mask, to exult is to leap, an angel

is a messenger, agony is a wrestling, sin is a missed mark, deceit is a bait, pleasure is sweetness, and pain a gnawing. Pride is inflation and anger heat; rectitude is straightness, and error wandering.

It will be found that there is scarcely an expression in the New Testament but what may be rendered, without forcing, in a mode comprehensible by the mind of even a rude savage, because conveyed in figures with which he is familiar. Such a figurative or emblematic mode of speech is indeed specially suited to the mind and habits of a rude race. It is employed by them in their own harangues, as also is much repetition, of which we find a good deal in Scripture.

In fine it appears, that a rendering of the New Testament in the most literal and simple manner is after all the most vivid and forcible way. It becomes a question whether it might not be well to make such a translation into English, to be used for occasional reference only, in which abstract terms should be avoided and the words traced back to their radical meaning.

In the Hebrew tongue, the connection of an abstract or mental and outward or material meaning in the words is still more apparent, and most radical words admit such a double sense. Unless by two separate translations, it is hardly possible to convey the entire meaning of Old Testament terms. The Hebrew resembles the Indian languages in having a short vocabulary, where each word serves for many significations, but all branching from a common notion.

Many if not most English words may be traced back to Hebrew roots, but to do so with all languages might be impossible. At the same time the confusion of

tongues at Babel was not so complete but that traces of a resemblance may be found everywhere between one language and another.

As in English we have the same sounding word for hair and hare, so have the Indians in the far North-West, and the word is not very dissimilar, namely, *gha*. The connection between the words in each case may be that the hare is a hairy animal. It seems strange that the Indians of the North prefix to their word for day the same syllable that we do to express to-day; only with them the prefix is clearly significant, being their common word for "now." In the Beaver Indian language the word for star is *sun*, as if they understood the secrets of astronomy.

Though words have been naturalised in English from almost every language, including those of Indians, such as wigwam from the Ojibbaway, pemmican and squaw from the Cree, papoose from the Sioux, harpoon from the Esquimaux, &c., it does not seem that any word has been yet brought home from the Indian language of the far North-West. If such an introduction were wished for, the most characteristic expressions might be *kara*, "wait a little;" or *kulu*, "never mind;" or *lah*, "I don't know;" *nah*, "I make you a present of it;" or *ta* "please give it me;" which might save time and breath, as compared with our English expressions.

The variations in the dialects of the various Indian languages are founded a good deal on interchange of consonants, something like the changes in the Greek dialects, where *s* interchanged with *t* or *x*, as it did also between the Hebrew and Chaldee. We see an example of such an interchange of a letter in the

provincial or local variation of Sibboleth and Shibboleth which is recorded in Judges xii. 6, and which has come to be considered as a type of sectarian bigotry.

To give an example of this permutation of consonants in the Indian tongue we may take the word *madethet* which in an adjoining tribe of Indians appears as *parewe*, altering every consonant. Yet is it undoubtedly the same word, because in every word in the language the same change occurs, *m*, *d*, and *th* always changing to *p*, *r*, and *w*, while the termination drops.

XLIX.

STARS.

"As a vesture shalt Thou fold them up."—HEB. i. 12.

IN Polar latitudes the length of the winter nights makes the stars familiar companions; and it is observable that in winter nights, when alone the stars are visible, they do not rise and set as in lower latitudes, but continue constantly circling round the Pole, which is nearly overhead. This circling or revolution of the heavens seems to be the motion spoken of in the above text, though rendered "fold them up."

The Scripture is often objected to by the ignorant as speaking unscientifically, but it really makes use of the most exact scientific terms, only these are often disguised in the translation. So, in the above text, God's word hints to us that secular revolution of the firmament of the heavens, of which its apparent diurnal revolution round the Pole Star is but the type and figure.

So the word firmament used to be cavilled at, as implying that the Hebrews considered the sky as a solid vault. The original Hebrew word has been explained by better scholars to mean an *expanse*, as noted in the margin of our English Bibles. It is thus a scientifically accurate description of the sky.

Meanwhile the word firmament has been borrowed from the Bible by science, to express one universe or sidereal system of many thousand suns, circulating round a common centre; and of such firmaments there are accounted to be many in the heavens, though mostly appearing to our feeble view as streaks of mist. In this explanation of the word, how beautifully accurate is the expression in Genesis, that God set or appointed the sun in the firmament of the heaven, that is, in its own sidereal system, to which our earth is attached (Gen. i. 17).

So the apostle James (i. 17), speaking, as it would seem, of the throne of the Almighty placed in the innermost centre of circling universes, states that this has no parallax or varying declination, using regular astronomical language. In fact, Scriptural expressions generally could be accurately rendered into the exact terms of science, if it were worth while to do so. But earthly technicalities are, after all, only clumsy handles for tabulating recondite truth.

The sight in Arctic clime of unsetting sun, moon, and stars, circling overhead with continuous motion, may be a help towards realising the continuity of nature, and tend to figure to our minds the cycles of eternity.

So we read in the Prophets, "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory" (Isa. lx. 20).

If it is true that the Pleiades are in the centre of our own sidereal system, these are in full view from a high northern latitude.

The Word of God, though not mixing with astronomy

or astrology, speaks to us no little of the stars. Our Saviour Himself is compared to a star from the prophecy of Balaam (Num. xxiv. 17) to the last page of Holy Writ (Rev. xxii. 16).

So Christ's ministers are compared to stars, both by Daniel (xii. 3) and St. John (Rev. i. 20). The comparison of the ministers is perhaps intended to be made with the seven planets as known to the ancients, including the sun and moon, which gave their names to the days of the week.

The old name of the Pole Star, the Dog's Tail or Cynosure, has been applied to any object of attraction, especially on account of the importance which a sight of the Pole Star had for mariners before the discovery of the lodestone. The unswerving regard of the magnetic needle to the Pole has been used as emblematic of the constancy with which a Christian should direct his course to heaven above.

The Hebrew name for star is literally the "twinkling ones," being compounded of two words meaning to burn and quench. Not many stars or constellations are mentioned by name in Scripture, though we read that God "calleth them all by names" (Isa. xl. 26). In Job, however, we read of the Pleiades and Orion, Mazzaroth and Arcturus (ix. 9 and xxxviii. 31, 32). Though the translation of these Hebrew names is not very secure, we shall hardly err in applying them to the constellations that are emblematic or representative of the four seasons, spring, summer, autumn and winter.

The sweet influences of the Pleiades betoken the genial spring. The dirk of Orion, a more southern constellation, is the summer. "Can you draw the dirk

of Orion?" (Job xxxviii. 31). Mazzaroth, the Sieve or Fan, indicates the stormy blasts and strewn forests of autumn, and Arcturus (or the Bear) and her sons denotes the wintry North. The question, "Can you cheer the bear over her cubs" (A. V. "Canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?") is suitable to the cheerless and inhospitable clime, of the Sub-polar regions. The lamentations of a mother bear over the loss of her cub are well known to be specially affecting.

But the question implies an assumption by the Almighty of a sole power and prerogative to cheer and comfort even the most frozen clime, and indeed few or none are more loath to leave their country, or are more homesick in absence from it than the Esquimaux of the Arctic coasts, so carefully adapted are the tastes and habits of each race to the locality in which they have been placed.

L.

FAITH'S DAWN.

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."
—1 JOHN v. 1.

THE work of a missionary is perhaps less systematic than any other avocation. There is no text-book of a missionary's duties or of counsels for his direction and guidance besides the Scriptures. "Preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15) is the Divine word. As to the mode in which experience has taught that the Gospel has been most winningly presented, there is but little guidance. There is no lesson-book of Divine truth for the heathen to form an introduction to the New Testament. The Church Catechism is specially adapted to the privileges of a Christian land.

As to the amount of instruction or knowledge that should be required before admittance to baptism; whether this should be deferred for evidence of a change of heart; how far converts from heathenism should form a congregation of their own, or unite with the European community—all these and many others are still moot points.

It has been the custom in the North-West to admit infants to baptism, even though their parents remain unbaptized. It is pleasant that a parent, though hesitating to undertake hastily for himself the responsibilities

of a Christian profession, should yet be willing to yield his children without delay to the Saviour's service. On the other hand, there is much danger that the baptized children of unbaptized parents should after all grow up as semi-heathen.

According to the model or pattern of religious enterprise given us in the Acts of the Apostles, the apostle Paul found it possible to found small communities of Christians in only hasty visits to the various cities encountered in his travels, and he returned only at intervals to confirm the converts in their faith. But St. Paul's labours were among civilised races, and it is doubtful whether in modern times, and especially among barbarous peoples, such cursory and itinerant labours will suffice to plant securely the faith of the Gospel.

It appears needful, in order to raise a rude race to an intellectual level sufficiently high for them to appreciate the sublimity of Gospel truth, that the teacher be willing to surrender his life to a permanent residence in the heathen country as an adopted home, and to exhibit the Gospel not only in its doctrines and precepts, but in its fruits and effects also; in a godly life, and some of the benefits and refinements which the Gospel carries in its train.

A rude native learns more quickly by the eye than by the ear, and it is easier for him to follow an example than to obey a rule. Here comes in the sad obstacle, that examples of vice may also be set and be more readily followed than those of virtue. The consistent conduct of a religious teacher may be outbalanced by the careless lives of others professing the same faith.

When natives and Europeans become intermingled,

it is hard to explain to the native community why a higher or stricter code of morals or religion should be required from them, than from their European neighbours. Where the native community is kept quite aloof from others, there is the difficulty of inoculating virtues which they have never seen practised, or securing them from temptations to which they have never been exposed.

In these matters the best resort is to commit the work to God Himself: "Ye are God's tillage, ye are God's building" (1 Cor. iii. 9). Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase (ver. 6).

Two stages have been remarked in the reception of the Gospel by a heathen community. First, when they are willing collectively to accept Christ and His worship, and to abandon their former idolatries and superstitions; and secondly, when the light of Divine Truth in its fulness shines into individual hearts, and warms the affections with the fire of the Spirit. Thus we read in the Acts of baptized converts, who were without the knowledge and influence of the Spirit (Acts xix. 2), and yet we may believe that it was by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit that they had been taught to accept the Saviour.

The statements of Scripture are very broad in this matter. No one can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. xii. 3). The jailer at Philippi must have had very imperfect and hastily acquired knowledge of Christ when he was baptized in the night, and all his straightway (Acts xvi. 33). The Ethiopian eunuch, though acquainted with the Old Testament, must have been ignorant of Christ and

His Gospel before Philip's sermon, which resulted in his conversion and immediate baptism (Acts viii. 28).

May we conclude then that a general knowledge and acceptance of Christ and His religion, with a sincere undertaking of the responsibility of Christian practice, form a claim to the ordinance of baptism, to be followed rather than preceded by fuller and more detailed instruction in Christian duties? Such is the order of events in the words of the great Commission, "Go ye and make disciples of all the heathen, baptizing them and teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

Books of elementary instruction for fresh converts from heathenism, with forms of short devotion for their use, prepared first in English, might be of much assistance to a missionary, who might then commence his work by a translation of these into the various native languages.

When a missionary is struggling with the acquirement of a new language, the task of arranging both the matter and manner of his teaching offers double difficulty. An English Sunday School Primer, or Dr. Watts' Catechism, or some such model, may be at present made use of for want of a better form, but carefully constructed lessons prepared by an experienced missionary, for the express use of fresh converts from heathenism, might be much superior to these.

Should it be objected, that the minds of the heathen in different parts of the world are so variously formed, as that one model could not reach all, it may be true that some adaptation would be needed. But the mind of a heathen anywhere, being viewed as a *tabula rasa*

in respect to religious truth, the object is to convey this in the simplest language, with as few abstract or conventional ideas as possible. The Gospel story, with its fruits and blessings, needs to be brought home, together with its responsibilities, to a heathen mind as distinctly and plainly as possible, for even among the more civilised races of heathen the early converts are mostly from the lower orders of the people.

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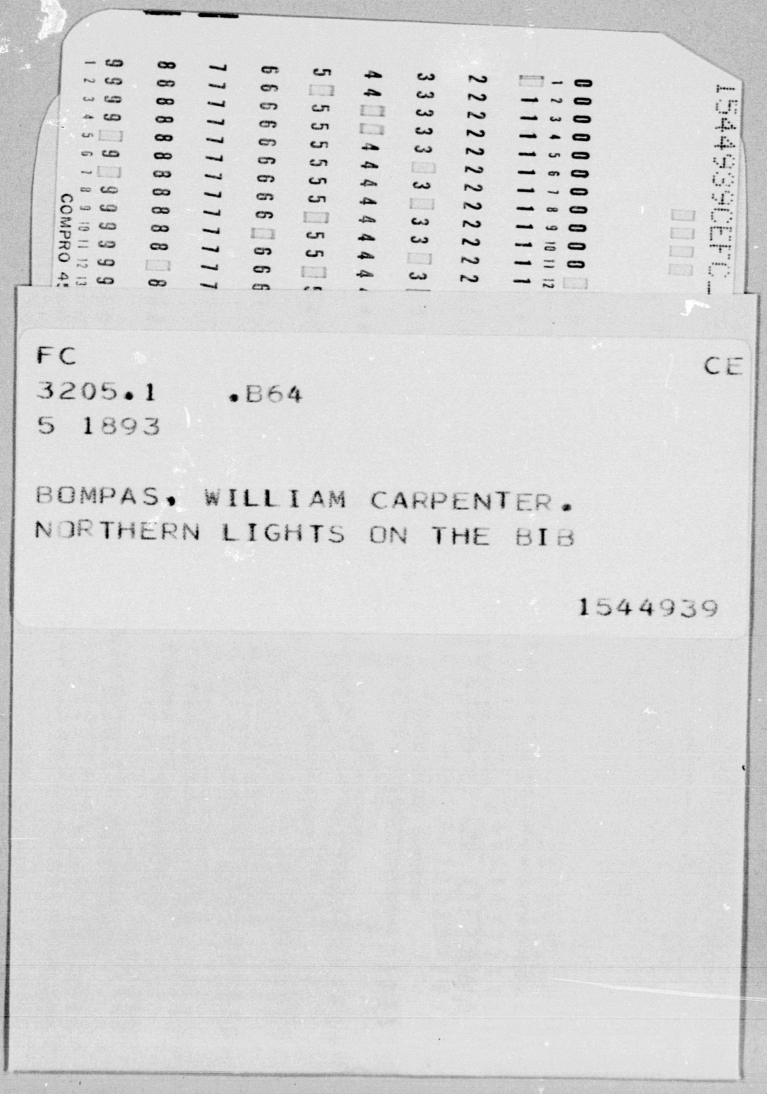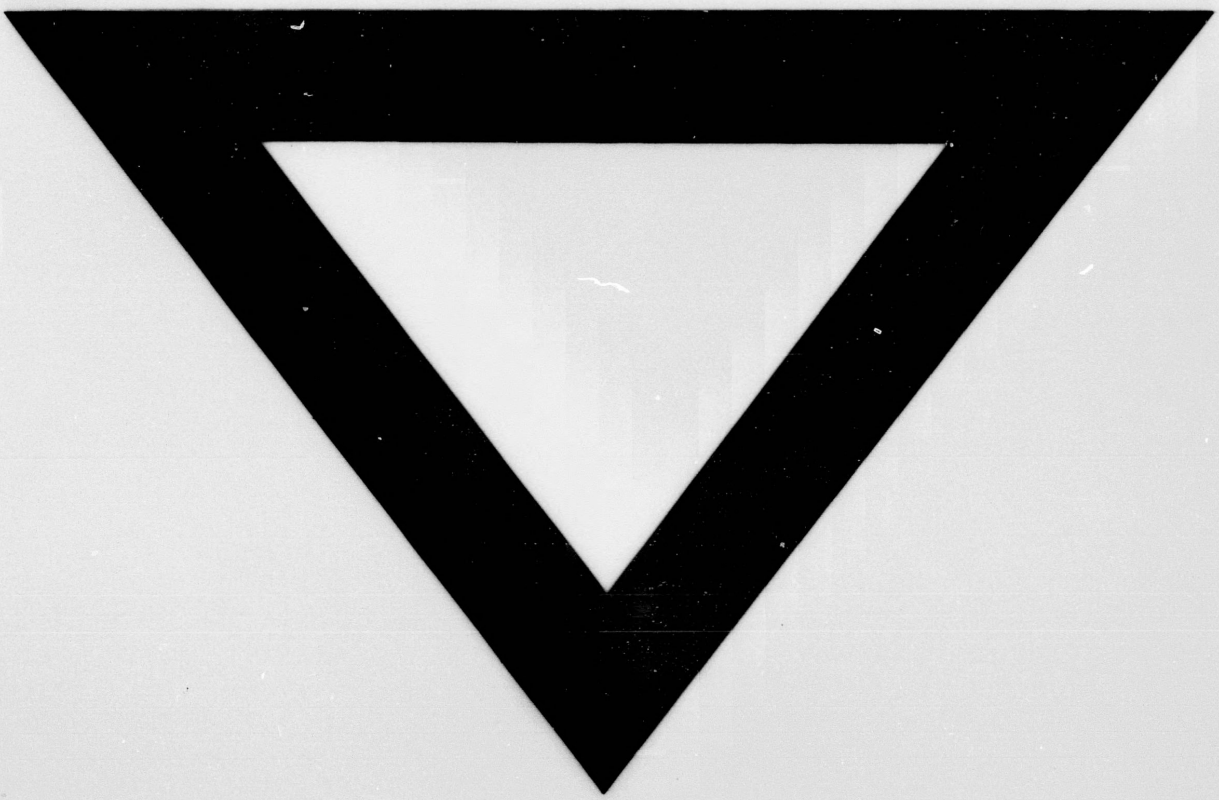
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