The Matchman and Southron.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 11, 1895.

On Snow-Shoes to the Barren Ground.

Far to the northwest, beginning ten day's journey beyond Great Slave Lake and running down to the Arctic ocean, with Hudson Bay as its eastern and Great Bear Lake and the Coppermine River as its western morn until late into the night. Hemboundaries, lies the most complete ing took his pencil and scratch pad and extended desolation on earth. That is the Barren Grounds, the land to see the New Year's day arrivals whose approximate 200,000 square miles (for its exact area is unknown) northerly part are withstood the year round by no living creature save the musk ox. There is the timberless with hurricane and ceaseless fury that bid your blood stand still and your breath come and go in painful stinging gasps; where rock and lichen and moss replace soil and trees and herbage; and where death by starvation or freezing dogs the footsteps of the explorer.

There are two seasons and only two methods of penetrating this great lone land of the North-by canoe, when the watercourses are free of ice, and on snow-shoes during the frozen period, which occupies nearly nine of the year's twelve months. The deadly cold of winter, and greater risk of starvation, make the canoe trip the more usual one with the few Indians than hunt the musk-ox. But, because of the many portages, you cannot travel so rapidly by canoe as on snow-shoes, nor go so far north for the best of the musk-ox hunting, nor see the Barren Grounds at their best, or worst, as you care to consider it. That is why I chose to make the attempt on snow-shoes.

Arthur Heming, the artist, and I found ourselves, December 27, 1894, at Edmondton, the end of the railroad. We had traveled on the Canadian Pacific via Winnipeg and Calgary, and through the land of the Crees, Blackfeet and Sarcee Indians, without seeing anything so picturesque in the way of costuming as the Winnepeg dragoon and a Sarcee young woman resplendent in beads and glittering tinsel. I really ought to include the mounted policeman, for he jacket and yellow-stripped breeches, is young, unattractive and attractive, deserving of greater attention. But the mounted policeman has that which is far worthier of comment than uni form He has the reputation of being the most effective arm of the Canadian Interior Department And he lives up to it. These "Riders of 'the Plains," as they are called. patrol a country so large that the entire force may lose itself within its domains and still be miles upon miles apart. Yet this comparative handful maintains order among the lawless white men and stays discontentment among the restless red men in a manner so satisfactorily and so unostentatiously as to make some of our United States experiences read like those of a tyro

The success of the Northwest Mounted Police may be accredited to its system of distribution throughout the guarded territory. Unlike our army, it does not mass its force in forts adjacent to Indian reservations. Posts it has, where recruiting and drilling are constantly going forward, but the main body of men is country riding hither and tither-a This is the secret of their success, and a system it would well repay our own government to adopt The police are ever on the spot to advise action until an outbreak has occurred; they are always in action. They constitute a most valuable peace assuring corps, and I wish we had one like it.

A NEW YEAR'S DANCE IN THE NORTH-

Half-breeds-French and Creeconstitute the larger share of population at La Biche, if I may class as its population those scattered over the immediately surrounding country, and where the settlement cousists of just three cabins besides the Hudson Bay Company's. But, after all, the French blood reveals itself chiefly in a few Christian names and in the more fanciful coloring and use of some articles of wear, for there is little French spoken, the children of mixed parentage almost invariably adopting the mother tongue, Cree. There are not more than one hundred Crees who come into LaBiche, which is the most northerly post where treaty money is given, and they are not thriving to any great extent, nor increasing. The annuity of about five dollars a head is not sufficient to support and just enough to interrupt keen hunting; they plant a few potatoes, which grow here fairly well, but are making no progress towards self-support, as are those of the same nation more to the South.

After what I had seen the night before of the preliminaries to the annual feast day, I did not expect on BROWN CHEMICAL CO. BALTIMORE, MD. & preparation for our further progress. Long before we had turned out of our blankets the house was literally packed with Indians, and by ncon time the fiddle was going and the to him. Office on Court House Square, in dancers had entire possession of the Balnding office.

floor. I doubt if I ever saw outside of some of the Chinese dens in San Franciseo, so many crowded into the same space. I lacked the heart to talk business with Gairdner, who, I divined from some of his remarks, costs cotton planters more had not accomplished, in the way of making ready of our dog brigade, all I had expected of him. I simply pitied nually. This is an enormous him for the unpleasant and malodo- waste, and can be prevented. rons fullness of his home, and I pitied his half breed wife and her daughters, who were kept cooking for and feed bama Experiment Station show ing half starved Indians from early and I my camera, and we went out and the dogs and the Indians

is the dwelling place of no man, and gossiping groups that grew with disease. its storms and sterility in its most each fresh arrival, while scattered all about the enclosure, just where their drivers had left them, were the dog trains of the Indians who had come

Our pamphlets are not advertising circulars booming special fertilizers, but are practical works, containing the results of latest experiments in this line. Every cotton farmer should have a copy. They are sent free for the asking. waste where ice-ladened blasts blow to fill Gairdner's house and eat the Hudson Bay Company's meat. There was no stabling nor feasting for these dogs; in a 24 below zero atmosphere they stretched out in the snow and waited, without covering, and many cases without food. The Indians with their blankets, coats or capotes, and the dogs and sledges and "jumpers." made a picturesque whole against the unbroken background of snow, but, like all Indian pictures, its attractiveness faded away on the close inspection that discovered the dirt of the man, and the scraggy, half-starved condition of the beast. These people had never before seen a camera, and many of my plates show them scurrying away or turning their backs. It was only after the most elaborate descriptions to Gairdner, who instructed the interpreter, who explained to the Indians, that we induced one or two "types" to sit in our presence while Heming sketched them. They thought we were making "medicine" against them, but were won over by Heming drawing the moose and caribou. while they watced the animals they knew so well develop under his pencil.

When we returned to the house the dance was still on; it was always "on" during the first thirty-six hours of our stay at LaBiche. Formerly the Hudson Bay Company officers merely "received" on New Year's day; but as the Indians have a custom between sexes of kissing on meeting, and as it did not become an impartial officer to distinguish in this too has a uniform which, with scarlet respect between old women and the least was substituted: so now the women are fed and danced instead of being kissed.

I hope that New-Years' night will not be recorded against me. Those Indians danced until four o'clock in the morning, and they danced to my utter demoralization. We sat around and watched the "gymnastics" and pretended we enjoyed them until about one o'clock; then we retired. We all three slept in Gairdner's office, a tiny apartment cut from the main room by a thin board partition, of which a good quarter section in the centre was removed to admit of the two rooms sharing a single stove There was a piece of loosened sheet-iron tacked to the partition to protect it from the heat, and my head was against that partition, and our blankets on the same floor upon which those Indians sprinted and jumped and shuffled !by Casper W. Whitney, in Harper's Magizine for December

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