The GLAMOUR of BRITISH COLUMBIA

H. GLYNN-WARD

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"MORE SALT IN THAT STEW!" ON SMOKY RIVER IN THE ROCKIES.

THE GLAMOUR OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

BY

H. GLYNN-WARD

ILLUSTRATED WITH
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
THE AUTHOR

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TO ALL THOSE
WHO LOVED BRITISH COLUMBIA
WELL ENOUGH TO FIGHT FOR IT
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

INTRODUCTION

Canada, for tourists and many others who ought to know better, is divided into six parts, viz., the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, the "Golden Prairies," the Rockies, and the Coast. Few people realize that, once they are over "The Great Divide," there is a whole empire between the Rockies and the Coast, which is British Columbia.

The English come out and travel through, knowing all about everything beforehand, as the English always do; and, having set standards, they compare the Fraser to the Thames (former too wide) and the Selkirks to the Cotswolds (former too high). They get out to spend a day or so at Lake Louise or Jasper, then get into the train again and stay there till they reach Vancouver. Then they go back to England and give vague lectures in town halls, about "great open spaces" and "the need for a population." But they know nothing of the real British Columbia.

The Americans come, with plenty of money, and stay at the much-advertised hotels, gulping down the Rockies in predigested doses, then race through in a Pullman car to the next big hotel on the coast.

And how can they know anything of the province?

The little Jap who, laughing up and down his sleeve, goes cheerfully about his business in a gas-boat up the coast, or picks out the best small-fruit land in the country; the ubiquitous Chinaman, steadily cornering all the loose cash in the land—of a surety these two know more of British Columbia than most white men!

And no one knows less of their own province than the British Columbians themselves. The real people, those who support the country by their hard manual work or their initiative, are either too busy or too poor to travel about. The others, most of whom dwell in the two big towns and have money enough to travel, are usually content with a visit to Seattle or a trip to the Old Country.

The Province of British Columbia is in some ways the richest country in the world, and the surface of it has hardly been scratched. Southern B. C. is but sparsely settled; Central B. C. is comparatively unknown; Northern B. C., that part which lies between the fifty-sixth parallel and the Yukon, is scarcely mapped with any accuracy and is entirely unpeopled. If, therefore, the following account of travels in the province serves to enlighten the reader as to the size and possibilities of this unknown West, it will not have been written in vain. We hope it

may help to dispel the fatal "Lady of the Snows" illusion; to answer the old lady in London who asked me if my nearest shops were in Montreal when I lived in Vancouver; to illuminate the mind of the Oxford undergrad who asked me how I liked "living amongst Red Indians."

As to size, British Columbia is twenty thousand square miles larger than the combined areas of Great Britain and Ireland, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Denmark, and Sweden. Or as big as the whole of Texas and Arizona combined. Vancouver Island alone is as long as Ireland and as wide as Wales. But whereas in Europe the average population is 212.16 per square mile, in British Columbia it is only 1.41 per square mile.

I herewith make acknowledgment to the following magazines in which have appeared articles of mine akin to these chapters, though in rather different form: "The Badminton Magazine," "The Field," "Chambers's Journal," and "Canada To-day," all of London; "Field and Stream," "The World Traveler," and "The Sketch Book Magazine," of New York; "Touring Topics" of Los Angeles, and "MacLean's Magazine" of Toronto; also, for permission to reprint the verse, to "The Canadian Bookman" of Toronto.

H. Glynn-Ward.

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ALONG THE ROAD TO HAZELTON

Along the road to Hazelton
The trafficking traders ride,
With their stack of furs for Hazelton
And their rifles by their side:
Wolf and beaver and silver fox,
Mink and marten and bear,
Muskrat pelts for the orthodox
And ermine for the fair.

Along the road the Indians pass,
In fringed and beaded leather,
There 's a potlatch down to Moricetown,
Where all the tribes foregather.
And down they travel from Kispiox,
And east they come from Usk,
And up they ride from Kitwangar,
From shadowy dawn till dusk.

Along the road from Hazelton
The galloping outlaw flies,
The cañons ring to his clattering swing,
The spruce-trees tell the skies.
The herder lost in a cloud of dust
Saw more than he dared have seen
When Gun-a-noot of the Kiskagaas
Took the trail to Fort Babine.

Along the road to Hazelton,
The patient squaws go by,
With salmon roe from Hagwelgit
And berry fruits piled high.
And long-time glories, half forgot,
Are told to the rustling trees,
By the scented breath of cottonwood
And winds from the far-off seas.

THE GLAMOUR OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

CHAPTER I

THE LURE OF THE CARIBOO

IT was on a fresh and shining morning that I caught the early boat from Vancouver to Squamish, with the sun glittering on the snow-peaks across the harbor and the water like a looking-glass below. And there is ever a bit of a stir round the busy little docks of the Union Steamship Company, even on the comings and goings of their coast boats: loggers going up country, prospectors, settlers returning from a rare visit to town, various government servants, drummers—all those who have learned something of the secrets of the heart of British Columbia.

I went up the gangway and sniffed hemp and tarred rope, sacking, seaweed, dried fish, and lumber—familiar, welcome odors to those who love the waterfront. It is down along the waterfront that you find the soul of Vancouver, where the fingers of

the vast interior reach out to meet the fingers of the outside world, where there is always a cosmopolitan life and where the vital business is done that keeps the wheels of British Columbia spinning.

We were ahead of the Victoria boat, that had yet to cast her moorings, so we had the harbor strangely to ourselves as we sped across it, followed by slippery seals with surprised eyes, that came up to look after us and dived below again without a splash. Now and again water-fowl called to one another, and, overhead, sea-gulls drifted and screamed. We waved to the man up in the signal station at Prospect Point as we slipped through the Narrows, and waved to the women shaking their table-cloths out of the doors of the jolly little bungalows at West Vancouver, on the other side. So we skirted the shore out to where the sea was all ripples and took "a bone in our mouths" as we rounded Point Atkinson and turned up into Howe Sound.

Here, curiously enough, we ran into fog, just a mood of the temperamental North-Pacific coast, and we moved stealthily along in a wet, white world, shut in by silence, broken ever and anon by the mournful wailing of our fog-horn. Out of the distance came other warnings, pitched in different keys. There is a touch of the spiritual about these ghostly communings of the coastwise boats.

Then suddenly the fog lifted, as if it were a the-

ater curtain drawn aside by an unseen hand, and Bowen Island loomed before us, the sun shining upon its rocks and trees and green clearings and red-roofed houses. Like a scene on a stage—and we in the front row watching it.

Howe Sound is one of the most beautiful of all the million waterways that cut into this coast. It is a wide passage, leaving room for the snow-tipped mountains that wall it in to be reflected in the water, and at every turn one comes on a new panorama, breath-taking in its loveliness.

Brant flew away from us across the inlet, black and white shadows close over the rippling blue. At times our prow came perilously near to a flock of butterballs or divers sunning themselves on the water; they scuttled away with a whirr of many wings and called musical curses after us from a safer distance.

I lunched with the skipper, a burly man bred on haggis and Scotch, who spoke with a burr that language intelligible to the generality of ships' engineers. Good company he was and full of yarns. And so to Squamish, a flat place of swamps and eternal wind, chiefly known as the starting-point of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway. (Who added on the last of the three names and why, nobody knows.)

If you were to tell provincial taxpayers that their

railway passed through scenery far and away more beautiful than anything else on the North American Continent, and that it had every possibility in its adjacent country for lumbering, mining, cattle-ranching, small-farming, and hunting, they would stare at you open-mouthed, for it is strangely true that only about five per cent of British Columbians know anything at all of their own province.

The train was waiting for the boat. I remember the parting words of the manager of the railway as he bade me good-by, "Now mind, there are n't hotels and restaurants at every corner up this way; they 're mighty few and far between. My advice is: *eat whenever you see food"!* I did, with the result that my friends scarcely knew me on my return to Vancouver. For whatever else they may suffer from in the interior, it is certainly not from a lack of food or hospitality.

We were in the Coast Range almost at once: Mount Garibaldi, topping the other peaks from various angles, the Cheakamus Cañon, where the traveler instinctively leans to one side, away from the window, to balance the train, as it were, lest it topple over into the swirling depths of the Squamish River far below.

We passed through many miles of forest—Douglas fir, red cedar, and hemlock chiefly—with logging-camps every here and there. There was a delay of

an hour or so, occasioned by the engine dropping a pin and waiting to look for it, I was told, and we were late getting to Pemberton, where I left the train and walked up to the little inn in company with three or four male passengers who had business in the valley.

There was a parlous state of affairs at the inn. Mine hostess, who ran it by herself without any help whatever, was ill in bed, and the fire-warden of the district, who had happened along that day, was in the kitchen, desperately trying to cope with supper. I went to relieve him and between us we produced a meal that satisfied everybody, even the hostess herself.

But for one beautiful farm that belonged to a former tailor who had since turned out one of the most successful farmers in the province, the land around the station gives no hint of the fertile twenty miles of valley they call Pemberton Meadows. This is reached only by a stretch of tortuous road running alongside the Lillooet River, sometimes impassable when the river is in spate and at all times dangerous from falling rocks on the other side.

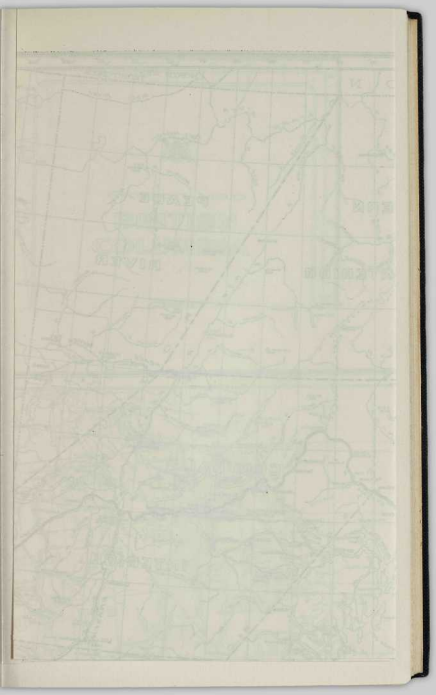
The only means of getting up the valley was by the mail-cart which gave me a lift next morning. For miles the river is fringed with great cottonwood trees and I shall always connect the Meadows with the scent of them, passing sweet in May. It

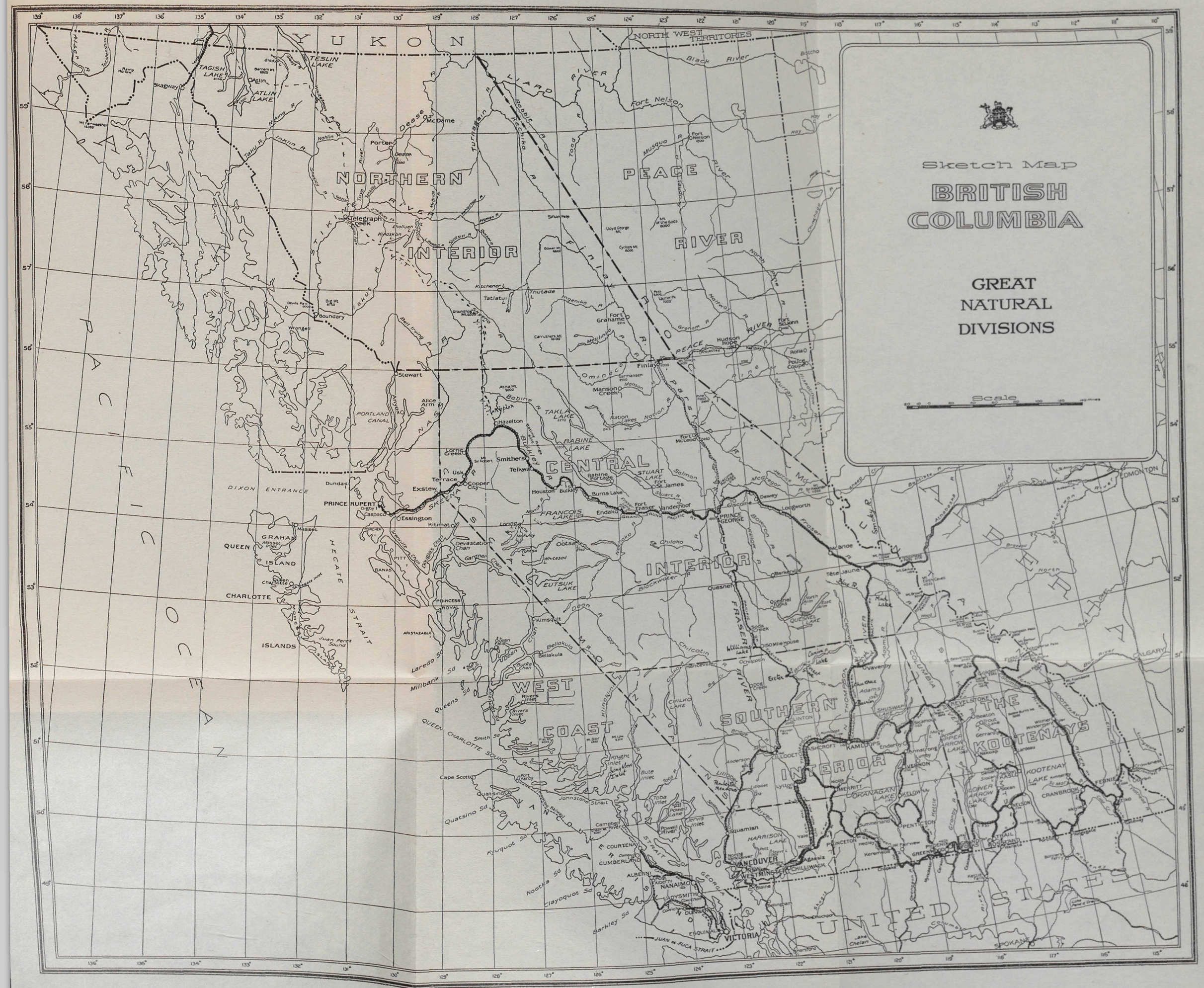
has been found possible to float cottonwood logs down the river and through the Skookum Chuck into Lillooet Lake, down-stream again to Harrison Lake, out into Harrison River, and so into the Fraser itself and to New Westminster, where panneling, piano-cases, and such like are manufactured.

The settlers are all pioneers, up the valley, several of the families violently Irish; they had been there ten or fifteen years, having gone to prospect and, finding that rare combination of light clearing and fertile soil, stayed. But they very soon found that their heaven had its drawbacks. All their stock—indeed, every living creature in the valley developed goiter!

However, it was too good a place to leave without a struggle, so one of them wrote to doctors and chemical laboratories in various parts of the world and finally was advised by a professor of a university in the States to try iodine, raw iodine administered in doses of a few drops periodically. They experimented on the animals and the result was magical; the goiter disappeared! The drug had the same happy effect upon human beings, and now the valley is entirely free from goiter.

One settler had a large apiary. With no other bees nearer than Vancouver and with plenty of willow-flower and fireweed and the meadows full of blossoms all around, he had honey in the mass, both




Sketch Map
BRITISH COLUMBIA
GREAT NATURAL DIVISIONS
Scale
YUKON
NORTH WEST TERRITORIES
NORTHERN INTERIOR
PEACE RIVER
CENTRAL INTERIOR
WEST COAST
SOUTHERN INTERIOR
THE KOOTENAYS
PACIFIC OCEAN
UNITED STATES
DIXON ENTRANCE
HECATE STRAIT
QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS
GEORGIA STRAIT
JUAN DE FUCA STRAIT
PORTLAND CANAL
TESLIN LAKE
TAGISH LAKE
ATLIN LAKE
BABINE LAKE
STUART LAKE
FRANCOIS LAKE
EUTSUK LAKE
TAKLA LAKE
QUESNEL LAKE
CHILKO LAKE
HARRISON LAKE
SHUSWAP LAKE
OKANAGAN LAKE
KOOTENAY LAKE
ARROW LAKE
Skagway
Atlin
Dawson
Whitehorse
McDame
Porter
Telegraph Creek
Boundary
Wrangell
Stewart
Alice Arm
Hazelton
Smithers
Terrace
Exstew
Copper City
Usk
Lorne Creek
Dundas
PRINCE RUPERT
Essington
Kitimat
Masset
Queen Charlotte
Kimsquit
Bella Coola
Rivers Inlet
Cape Scott
Quatsino
Port Alberni
NANAIMO
LADYSMITH
DUNCAN
VICTORIA
ESQUIMALT
VANCOUVER
NEW WESTMINSTER
CHILLIWACK
Squamish
COURTENAY
CUMBERLAND
Houston
Burns Lake
Endako
Fort Fraser
Vanderhoof
PRINCE GEORGE
Quesnel
Williams Lake
100 Mile House
Lillooet
Ashcroft
KAMLOOPS
Kelowna
Vernon
Penticton
Princeton
Merritt
Revelstoke
Nelson
Trail
Rossland
Grand Forks
Greenwood
Cranbrook
Kaslo
Fernie
Golden
Invermere
Radium Hot Springs
Fort Nelson
Fort St. John
Hudson Hope
Fort Graham
Finlay
Mansons Creek
Fort McLeod
Fort St. James
Fort Fraser
Prince George
McBride
Tête Jaune
Barkerville
Quesnel
Ashcroft
Kamloops
Vernon
Kelowna
Penticton
Nelson
Cranbrook
Fernie
EDMONTON
CALGARY
SPOKANE

in the comb and out of it, and was doing very well.

Two boys, both returned soldiers, had come with their parents straight from England, to settle there. The river had flooded out their first attempt at crops, so they were spending their time making a dam at a certain point. It semed to me a tremendous work with pathetically little chance of success, but I have thought of them often, those dauntless boys, and have so hoped they succeeded.

The whole valley was much excited about a grizzly of stupendous size that had just been shot, one that had worried them for several years, killing calves and pigs and always escaping unscathed. Rumors of its huge form "as big as a Clydesdale" seen in the twilight, and of its tracks "as big as a meat-dish" had struck terror into many hearts, but now the monster was laid low.

In the spruce little up-to-date house he had built himself I had an evening meal with the farmer who had been a tailor. The windows looked out upon his rich pastures where sleek Holsteins grazed under shade-trees; and farther in the distance a man was driving three horses to a harrow, over an illimitable stretch of plowed field. The setting sun glowed pink on the snow-peaks far beyond and it all made a picture that even now never fails to bring peace to my soul when I am prisoned in a hot and dusty town.

He had difficulty in getting help, of course; every

one has. He sometimes hired the Indians from the neighboring rancheree across the railway line. One of them was unreliable because his wives had a habit of "dying on him." "My wife, she die *another time,*" he had explained with irritation. "I go marry her *again!* Fine skookum wife I find; she no die!" Which, being interpreted, meant that two wives had died and he intended to find a really strapping one for his third.

I boarded the train again that evening, deciding to go straight through to Williams Lake, which was at that time rail-head, and stop off at Lillooet and other places on the way back. We passed along the shores of two beautiful lakes, first Anderson, then Seton—both of a marvelous shade of peacock blue by reason, they say, of their bottomless depth.

Then Lillooet, and we were in that great district known as Cariboo, as different a country from the coast as Africa is from Switzerland. Leaving the mountains behind us, we crept slowly up into the dry belt, through ravines unbelievably vast and covered with sage-brush that gleamed silver in the moonlight. Past MacKinnon, Glen Fraser, and Pavilion, names made historic by memories of the bygone gold-rush days. And all that night I slept not a wink, being entranced by the great, silent country that I saw.

At dawn, into forest country again and by Lone

Butte, where there is a strange rock rising high up out of the trees, making a landmark for many miles round. Farther on we looked across a sea of varying shades of green and saw Lac la Hache, whose name is a reminder of those French *coureurs* who first discovered it. And so to Williams Lake, that frontier settlement of an ever-advancing railway.

It is a place of mushroom growth and has no history like Lillooet; its one "street" winds upward from the station and is dusty from the hoofs of many cayuses, for no one walks in Cariboo, not even the school-children. There were two hotels of unpainted clapboard, one kept by a Chinaman, the other by a German, and round the steps of each clustered a motley company of Indians, breeds, and white men with nothing better to do for the moment than watch the world go by and, as they would express it themselves, "chew the rag."

Every now and then one saw a Chinaman hurrying round a corner, very busy making money out of nothing. A well-known bank had already started a branch here, in a two-room shanty, and another had set up office in a tent. There was scarce a woman to be seen.

I had arranged to visit a cattle-ranch up at Deep Creek, so had to go off almost at once in the caboose of a construction train, meaning to come back in the same way that night, but that train never came back

at all,—no one ever seemed to know what had happened to it,—so I had to stay the night at the ranch. Old-time, big-hearted hospitality is a distinctive feature of the Cariboo; the people offer you anything from a horse to a tooth-brush, and I believe that if you dropped in casually at a strange ranch, saying that you had come to stop for six months, they would say, "Oh, must you go so soon?"

The lay of the country is such that you can see for miles across the rolling brown of bunch-grass and sage-brush, dotted with scrub-pine, and every here and there irrigated ranch-lands startlingly green. The Hargreaves ranch stands high on the up-lands above the Fraser River; it is one of the oldest in the country and the old mill is still there that was built by the first owner to grind flour for the gold-seekers coming into the country roundabout 1860, some of them coming due north from the California gold-rush.

Several thousand head of cattle are raised here (on free range all the summer), and the Australian Ranch, farther north, has even more. There are still bigger ranches in Chilcotin, the district to the west, between Cariboo and the coast.

The Hargreaves house is unusually well established for this part of the country, two-storied and surrounded by a garden so well kept that I might

easily have believed myself back in an Old-Country manor-house had it not been for the wild grandeur of the scene beyond. I dined in solid British comfort, slept on frilled pillow-cases in a room with a bay-window, woke to the song of birds, and jumped from my bed to look out on standard rose-trees and gay flower beds.

Mr. Hargreaves was to motor me back to Williams Lake the next day, round by Soda Creek and the old Cariboo Road. We were to start early, but I started earlier still and walked to Soda Creek on my two solid legs. I had seen that trail the day before! It is rough and rocky, scarcely wider than the car, and the surface of it has a distinct slope away from the towering precipice on one side, toward the outer edge which crumbles sheer down to the Fraser, hundreds of feet below. Moreover, there are hair-pin twists and turns that would take skilled negotiating on a natural road. But that walk has ever been held against me, even to this day!

The main Cariboo Road itself, when we got on it, was just as bad, if not worse, in places. It zigzagged up the face of the ravine, mounting higher and higher, until we were right up on top, speeding along on rolling country at a height of nearly three thousand feet. The morning air had a tang of frost in it and slapped our faces exhilaratingly, so that my

spirits went sky-high and I could have shouted aloud at sight of the wide open country and of a deer that bounded across the road in front of us.

We sped on through meadow-land like the prairie in spring, with Brown-eyed Susans and pink wild roses among the grass. There were thickets of birch and poplar, and every now and then we passed a lone ranch or a historic road-house, the owner of which waved to us from the door—for everybody knows everybody in Cariboo.

The very name is so redolent of romance and adventure that it always thrills me. *"Cariboo gold! Cariboo gold!"* How the clink of it reëchoed across the world and back, half a century ago, how the clang of it resounded through the vast void spaces of Cariboo until Nature hid her secrets again and the noise of men was gone, forgotten as a dream!

The world has spun round a plenty since Nigger Pete drove his stage up and down the Cariboo Road. Few have traveled the great road since, that greatest road the world has ever seen, built of men and money and blood—yea, blood for the lives it cost in the making. Few travel it now save local cattle-ranchers or government servants who must.

Gone are the stage-coaches; gone the freight-wagons that at times took all of twenty-four horses to draw them; gone the pack-trains, laden to the last straw, winding their painful way through the moun-

tains; and gone the streams of men setting forth in search of gold and returning empty of pocket and full of wisdom. Forgotten are the lurid glories of the road-houses where one stopped for the night, and the 150-Mile House as it used to be, a welcome oasis —or, as the vulgar called it, "a regular bucket of blood"—on that long, long road from Yale to Barkerville.

The few who remember see again the ghosts of those who traveled the road in days gone by, dim as fleeting dreams. They see the shadows of Indians streaking past on half-broken cayuses, taking the hair-pin bends at a pace which made the spine freeze, and leaning forward over a thousand-foot drop into the river below with the loose rubble crumbling beneath their horses' hoofs.

They hear again the raucous voice of Dutch August, the trader, as he swore over his bargaining; the clink of glasses and the cries of men gambling in a road-house; the thud of golden nuggets as they rattled on the table in a fast and furious poker game. They hear the gabble of Chinese cooks in the kitchen and the stampeding of the horses at the distant howling of wolves on a cold, still night.

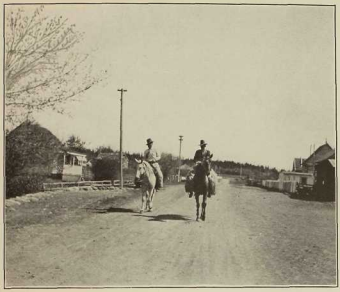
They see once more a shadowy stage creaking and groaning up the hill after the sixteen horses that draw it, with the ghost of Nigger Pete sitting on the box: they listen for the cries they knew so well:

"Now, Moll! Come, Beauty! work away! Gid-up, Hetty! *Go to it, Spot! All together! Hey-up!*" . . . The picture fades and all they hear is the wind moaning in the pine-tops, the coyotes howling on the bluffs; and all they see is the long, white, dusty road stretching out like a string through the mountains for five hundred weary miles, lonely, deserted, forgotten. . . .

Now, a lifetime afterward, the murmur of gold is heard again; there are new strikes in the secret mountains, and once more some follow the road, but, living in a softer era, they mostly go by rail. We stopped at Crosina's for lunch, a famous old road-house, some seven miles north of the 150-Mile, wide-eaved, built of great spruce logs neatly dovetailed together. Its door is seldom shut and the steps to it are worn by the feet of countless guests.

Mr. and Mrs. Crosina—he an Austrian—sat one at each end of the table and the farm-hands ate with us. I remember a table groaning with the best the farm could produce. The kitchen at Crosina's is built on a large scale, as everything is in Cariboo; the logs inside are whitewashed, with gleaming pans hanging on the walls, many hams suspended from the rafters, and a wide stone fireplace where they were smoked. Real old-timers, the Crosinas, and known all over the country.

The 150-Mile itself is one of the most beautiful



ON THE CARIBOO ROAD AT THE 150-MILE HOUSE.

of all lovely spots in the province and of a type by itself. No mountains to be seen except on a clear day, far to the southeast; to the west, a great vista of country looking away to the Chilcotin, across the valley of the Fraser; to the east, an uninterrupted expanse of natural meadow-land where cattle may range free, knee-deep in pea-vine and vetch, stretching right away to Horsefly Lake, nearly thirty miles distant. Few habitations in either direction; only the road-house itself and a cluster of dwellings roundabout, a broad blue sky overhead, and the clean, scented summer wind in your face. But it is very cold in winter here.

We took the trail that branched off to Williams Lake and found that townlet just emerging from its daytime cloak of somnolence. In the saloon at the corner a mouth-organ and a concertina were playing simultaneously, while a crowd of cow-boys, half-breeds, men from the construction-camps, section-hands, and others danced together, for lack of women. Of which latter there were but a few, drifted in from God knows where, dressed in their gayest blouses, with ribbons in their hair. Williams Lake was painted red regularly every night in those days.

But the whole of the Cariboo was vermilion red in the old mining days. Gold-diggers used to band together and charter a whole pack-train to serve their own exclusive and nefarious needs. There is a story

of one gang who stood waiting for their pack-train and when at last it arrived it had brought forty cases of whisky and two of biscuits. *"Now, what in creation for did ye bring so many biscuits?"* growled the leader of the gang. But he did n't put it mildly like that.

CHAPTER II

MORE OF THE CARIBOO

EXETER station, on the Pacific Great Eastern Railway, consists or consisted then of a wooden platform, a covered shanty, and a section-man's cabin farther down the line. A few miles away there is a road-house on the Cariboo Road kept by Chinamen, then nothing else for fifteen miles until you come to Forest Grove, a scattered little settlement. It had been arranged that I was to be met at the station by one Lester McNeil, a rancher who lived at Canim Lake, thirty miles distant, but he might not have had my letter and the train passes through at eleven o'clock at night. So I had visions of being dropped off the train and left to die of loneliness or be devoured by bears, spiders, and what not.

However, he was there on time and all was well. A cheery soul, McNeil, an Irishman with a joke at every turn. He had a Ford car that he had trained to take tree trunks in its stride, and even houses if need be. Shall I ever forget that ride through the moonlight? Thirty miles as the crow flies (and cer-

tainly we flew at times, though it was rather a bumpy flight), in the crisp, cold night, over a trail that I could not discern, though the car seemed to know it, mysteriously, like a homing packhorse.

The moon made eery patches through the trees and little animals scuttled away into the bush at our approach; owls hooted overhead and sometimes a coyote yapped in the distance. Whenever we came out into the open a world of lonely valleys appeared before us, bathed in moonlight and quiet as death. We passed through Forest Grove, a sleeping settlement of log cabins, and after that the trail grew still worse.

It was like being aboard a small steamer on a rocky sea and I hung on first to one side and then the other as that car buzzed round side hills and over boulders, sometimes rearing on its hind wheels or careering on two side ones, but ever righting itself somehow to Lester McNeil's jolly laugh. He had a name through the country for doing all his traveling at night. We passed through an Indian rancheree and drew up at last before McNeil's own gate, with Canim Lake shimmering in the moonlight at the bottom of the fields, and the last thing I heard before I went into the house was the plaintive cry of loons over the lake.

By all the laws of nature I should have been dead

to the world, having been traveling hard—on foot, by car, by train, and then car again—since six o'clock in the morning. It was now half-past two of the second morning, but, as I have said before, fatigue in this wondrous air is impossible. I was sleepy, my bones ached a bit; that was all except that I was desperately hungry.

But presently I was sitting at the kitchen table before a loaf of newly baked bread, dewy butter, and preserves. Said McNeil, "I sure am sorry that I can't offer you a glass of milk, but it 's all been skimmed and fed to the calves!" I told him not to mind a bit, that water would do nicely. He brought it and said with some hesitation, "Pity, now, you can't drink *cream:* there 's a plenty of that!"

I very quickly disillusioned him as to my inability to drink cream and he hastily brought a whole glass of it. Oh, superfluous advice— *"Eat whenever you see food"!* So unnecessary in the Cariboo!

Mrs. McNeil, who waked me in the morning, was originally from Oregon. Her husband had pre-empted land here and she came up to join him some fifteen years ago, long before the railway was ever thought of, taking the stage from Ashcroft up the Cariboo Road, carrying her baby in her arms, and bringing her household goods with her. At one of the road-houses where she put up for the night fire broke out and she was just able to escape with the

baby and the few clothes they had on—and it was away-below-zero weather!

A simple tale with much behind it. The explanation of how empires are made—built up on plain grit that knows no turning back, on an unbreakable spirit that is stronger than fire and flood and such adversities, on a courage that cringes not in a losing fight but plays on gamely to the end. You come on many of these folk in the far forgotten spaces of British Columbia, working hard and steadily, folk to whom the country owes its life.

This province is a very great country, greater perhaps in riches and possibilities than any other on earth. But,—apart from these people who are developing it by the labor of their hands,—it is at present encumbered by a very small people, too small by far to be intellectually capable of realizing its greatness.

Here at Canim Lake I walked through meadows of tall hay and green fields of coming grain where once all had been forest, and in the garden I saw vegetables such as I had seldom seen outside a seed-growers' catalogue. An ice-house had been built where were stored blocks of ice from the lake in winter, and so it was possible to keep fresh all the summer the fish, venison, and meat that was killed on the farm. To say nothing of ice-cream, which we had for every meal.

The McNeils were of course, as most of the ranchers are, entirely self-supporting. The only provisions they were obliged to buy were tea, sugar, and flour; everything else was produced on the farm. There were two or three other settlers round the lake and Lester's brother Joe at the opposite end of it.

The trail we had come by was the only trail to Canim Lake. Across it and up into the Clearwater country is a trail known to prospectors and trappers and used only by them. North, east, and south of it is country scarcely explored.

The McNeils' house was used by trappers as a stopping-off place on the way in and out from their trap-lines, and several of them came in one evening and sat round the stove in the front room, telling tales. Mostly they were of the old coaching days on the road, when Lester himself used to drive a freight-wagon.

Great days those, when men lost a fortune at poker at one road-house and made it up at pinochle at the next! When a man once left a barrow full of nuggets and gold-dust by the side of the road, with a tarpaulin over it, for days together, and no passer-by took the trouble to look inside; and the owner came back from his enforced visit to the bar to find it intact, just as he had left it. But he had his throat cut before he finally got it to the bank.

I heard how Lester McNeil had once won a bet of fifty dollars with his wonderful horse the Kid, famed all along the road for its strength. How one time in Quesnel the Kid moved three wagons coupled together and loaded with thirty-two thousand pounds of freight, which ordinarily it would have taken twelve horses to move. The Kid moved them ten feet at his master's word and won the bet!

The McNeils told of the ball at Clinton that has been given annually for fifty-six years, to which folk come from all over the country, from Lillooet and Ashcroft, from Dog Creek and the Lac la Hache Valley, even from Kamloops and Spence's Bridge, just like a big reunion of pioneers and old-timers. The dancing goes on for three or four days, sometimes for a week, and all meals and horse-feed are free; there is always good music, too, procured from somewhere, and at times there might be all of two hundred people there.

They told the story of the tracking of Moses Paul and Paul Spintlum, outlawed for the killing of a white man and of a Chinaman who bore witness against them; and how it took the provincial police eight months to run them down, with some Shuswap Indians to help with the tracking, the Shuswaps being known as the best trackers in the country.

It was a great and dramatic story of narrow shaves and murders and thrillsome adventures.

For after a constable called Kindness had also been killed, the police were hard on the heels of the fugitives "to the death." The pursuers came once to a lake with a little island in the middle upon which all were agreed that the criminals must be, seeing that their tracks led up to the lake and none from it; and it fell to Chief-of-Police Fernie and another to paddle across that lake on a raft, exposed to the full fire of the criminals and no sort of shelter! And when they came to the island there was nobody upon it, the fugitives having swum across to the mainland on the other side and ridden their horses up a little stream which hid their tracks. It all resulted in the killing of three white men and a Chinaman before the Indians were caught, and Spintlum was hanged and Moses Paul died in jail.

The McNeils had a gramophone which Lester had bought one Christmas as a surprise. Now, the Indians near had never listened to one in their lives and I was told how two squaws came down to see if this thing they had heard about was true. They looked up at the ceiling and round the floor to see where the music came from, and watched every one in turn closely, trying to discover who was producing it.

And there was among the records an old French-Canadian boat-song, one that had been sung by the original *coureurs-de-bois* and passed westward by

pioneer priests and fur-traders, handed down through the centuries, heard whenever a potlatch was in progress, crooned to little papooses on the trail and in the rancheree. A monotonous, singsong thing with the beat of the drum in it. The familiar music was too much for the squaws. They rose and danced, solemnly, stamping time to the music and clapping their hands until the tune came to an end.

We had two callers one day. An Indian (Modest Charlie was his name) came in from the rancheree to tell of a bear he had just killed; he was dressed in sheepskin chaps died pink, and wore a yellow shirt, with a magenta handkerchief fluttering about his neck. He gave me some of the bear's teeth for luck.

A trapper, who had a preëmption up near Forest Grove and whom we will call Smith, came in to show some great-lake trout he had just caught.

"I 'm going to smoke these," he said, "but they taste fine fresh. Pity now you won't be there to taste them!"

"Don't you be too sure I sha'n't!" I laughed and asked him where he lived. He told me and I said I 'd be there to tea with him next day.

"Well, gosh!" he protested, "I 've never had a woman in my shack!"

"Then you had better be prepared," I said, "for I 'm coming!"

I kept my word. That night I slept at Forest

Grove and as there is nothing there in the way of an inn, I accepted the hospitality of a log cabin, curtained off in the middle to make two rooms. It was a mercy I did n't have to sleep under a tree, as I woke to hear the scream of a cougar in the night, like the piercing shriek of a child in pain. The wild animals in these parts have yet to learn a fear of man, for in the morning a near-by rancher, he who kept the post-office, told us that he had seen a moose nosing about outside his barn when he went out to milk the cows.

My hostess and I set off at noon to find the cabin of Mr. Smith. It was on a hillock overlooking the patches of forest and green clearings that made up his estate and there was a silver river winding through it, all of which filled the eyes with a beauty hard to believe, harder still to describe. He had made tentative preparations, never really thinking that I would come.

His cabin was spotless and the furniture home-made; there were black bear-skins over the chairs and on the floor, one great hide that I could not identify, dark gray and smooth, yet thick enough to bury one's hands in. Caribou.

Our host made a fire and mixed biscuits for us—light as feathers they turned out—and he did his work with an unhurried efficiency that many women might envy. We ate the biscuits with the trout fried

in butter, while he told us of his life and his ambitions.

After tea he showed us his season's catch of furs and shyly presented me with the only beaver-skin he had. It was closed season for beaver, so the pelt was of no use to him, and there had been so much talk and scandal about beaver-catching out of season that the police everywhere had orders to be on the strict lookout for offenders and to bring them to justice without any excuse. It was dangerous in those days to mention beaver.

The end of this incident I mention here as a secret. I managed to get the skin safely to Vancouver, wrapped in many papers to prevent it from crackling. After a week or so I was taking it, as an innocent brown-paper parcel, to a furrier friend of mine to ask if he could possibly make it up for me, unbeknown to any one. But on the way whom should I meet but the provincial game-warden himself, and of course he must needs stop to converse with me.

"And how long before you lift the ban on beaver?" I asked him casually.

"Not for another year or so," he replied with decision; "we 've had too much trouble. My orders are very definite: *any one caught with a beaver-skin in his possession is sent to prison without the option of a fine!*"

"Quite right!" I approved, with equal decision.

"Nothing like firmness. Good afternoon!" and I walked quickly home to stow away my parcel in the lowest corner of my trunk.

On the evening of my visit to "Mr. Smith" Lester McNeil picked me up and drove me to the station to catch the train for Lillooet. It had rained since I first went over the trail, but we negotiated it safely, except for breaking all the springs and losing the skid-chains of that miraculous Ford.

Lillooet was in the height of its glory nearly seventy years ago, being the starting-point and distributing center for the various gold-rushes of the central and northern interior, but since then it has cried "Ichabod!" and gone to sleep, never to wake again.

Lovely, sleepy Lillooet, dreaming in the sun of its half-forgotten glories, lost in the middle of vast brown sage-brush slopes and gulches, with the muddy Fraser River gleaming here and there, shut off from the world by ramparts of eternal snows! Now and then one sees patches of verdant green and gardens which show what can be done through irrigation.

The town itself consists of one street three blocks long, wherein the children of the all-too-numerous Chinese residents play hop-skip-and-jump with the Indian papooses; cayuses stand outside the stores, with hanging heads, waiting patiently for their

masters who loll against the doorways in buckskin waistcoat and sheepskin chaps, passing the time of day.

In some future day, maybe, this thing they call Progress will advance as far as Lillooet and divide it up into squares and straight streets, with apartment blocks and oil-stations and ice-cream-soda counters. But may I never be alive to see it so! I prefer Lillooet as it has been and is now, a place of brooding peace and memories; of leisurely Indians and of old-timers always ready to sit down in the sun and tell you stories of days gone by. They say its name is a corruption of L'Allouette, "the swallow," given it by some early French-Canadian pioneers.

Three miles out of Lillooet, down at Seton Lake, is Craig's Lodge, the best little inn I know of anywhere in the province, an up-to-date place with spick-and-span rooms. Here is where shooting parties stay before and after their trips, and always, they stay just a day or so longer than they need, vainly endeavoring to break away from the insidious comfort of a place where there are plenty of hot baths, and you have real cream with your porridge and real honey with your hot cakes. You can snuggle down with a book, in an easy-chair by the big stove in the hall, or listen to hunters "swapping lies," and like as not Mrs. Craig hurries in from the

kitchen to see what she can do to make you feel still more at home.

I went to see one of the gardens that supplies the inn. It was on a farm belonging to an old lady called Mrs. Foster, and she farmed that thirty-two acres all by herself, only hiring a man to do the plowing and help with the hay. She had several horses, some cows and pigs, and many chickens, and she raised feed for them all on the farm. In her garden she grew not only every kind of vegetable, but also every kind of fruit I had ever heard of—tree-fruit, berry fruit, peaches, apricots, and grapes, and she had a ready market for everything up and down the railway line.

Sitting at lunch at my table at the Lodge were two rich men from Detroit, just going off on a three weeks' big-game hunt with Billy Manson, the most famous guide of the district. Evidently they had never been out before, for they spoke in bated breath of "last messages home" and "final preparations for our departure," as though they fully expected to be shortly in a better world.

They were taking with them a dozen pack-horses with supplies that included a moving-picture apparatus, a medicine-chest, and books of first aid, five pounds of chocolates, five pounds of other candies, three changes of raiment, a generous supply

of boots and shoes, innumerable novels and magazines, and plenty of tinned asparagus. I suggested the addition of a Victrola, but here the guides hastily made a move.

The hunters themselves took a gas-boat to the other end of the lake, unwilling, I suppose, to leave civilization and trust to the pack-train until the ultimate moment. I watched them set off from the shore and saw the boat halt in mid-water and turn back. One of the men landed and came running to the lodge, a sheepish look on his face; they had quite forgotten the guns and ammunition!

I carried away pleasant memories of these spoon-fed hunters and hope they took back plenty of tales of "derring-do" and hair-breadth escapes to tell in the clubs of Detroit.

That was the last time I ever saw Billy Manson, whose name is known to big-game men all the world over. He passed away soon after that; so also did Donald Craig, that kindly Scot, but his wife and son are still there and I hope they will be next time I go that way.

All through the Cariboo and Chilcotin districts there are roving herds of wild horses, and these do so much damage among the domestic stock that of late years organized round-ups have been held so as to rid the country of them. But although it is estimated that over two and a half thousand of them

YOUNG HOWARD MCNEIL WITH A BROTHER TRAPPER AND SOME GREAT-LAKE TROUT OUT OF CANIM LAKE.

have been corraled and killed up to date, this seems to have made little difference and still ranchers bring in reports of large herds. They are such a menace and nuisance that the Minister of Agriculture is getting quite worried, trying to concoct schemes for their annihilation.

Four years ago there were only two trains a week to the coast from Lillooet. At a pinch it was possible to motor up to the Cariboo Road and follow that south as far as Ashcroft, which is on the main line of the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National railways. But there are parts of this road where it is necessary to get out and tie a log to the back of the car, to act as an extra brake. So I gave up this route.

In passing, may I call attention to the fact the famous Cariboo *Road* is often erroneously called the Cariboo *Trail?* There is a trail following much the same route that was originally made and used by pioneers and packers, but this has long since fallen into disuse and is in nowise to be confused with the historic road that was built in the days of the gold-rush at such cost of money and lives.

It was on a Tuesday that I found myself without any money left and no train out till Thursday. Something had to be done. I called up the superintendent of the line, who happened to be in Lillooet, and told him so.

"Awfully sorry, but there 's no train out till Thursday!" was the answer.

"Equally sorry, but my presence is imperative in Vancouver to-morrow," I said.

"Quite impossible! We can't *make* trains! There 's no way of getting you out till Thursday, unless you walk."

"Kindly see that a special emergency is arranged to take me to the coast *to-day,* Mr. R. That is my ultimatum!"

Chuckles at the other end.

"Very well, Mrs. H.! Be down on the line by the Lodge at twelve noon and take the consequences!"

The consequences were—a motor-speeder propelled by the superintendent, with the resident engineer behind him and I behind the engineer, clutching him round the waist! We fled down that line at a speed that would have put the Flying Scotchman or the Century Limited to shame, with a throb and a rattle that still ring in my ears.

I dare say that as a means of locomotion an aëroplane is more exhilarating and exciting than a motor-speeder on a railway line. I have yet to try an aëroplane. But I can never believe that there can be anything more full of thrill than was that journey. My friends did not fail to tell me that a small stone on the line was quite enough to overturn the machine and hurl us to our deaths. So I

kept one eye on the line ahead and the other on the marvelous peacock-blue of the two lakes that skimmed past us, wondering if I should prefer their bottomless depths to the cruel rocks on the other side. On Anderson Lake some Indians in a canoe made a picture which was reflected in the water, and they waved to us as we tore madly past.

We came safely to D'Arcy, but there we heard that there was an extra freight-train on the line and we must make Pemberton in record time or run the risk of crashing into it round a sudden turn. So on we hurried, faster and yet faster, till the scenery raced past my giddy eyes like a kaleidoscope. At every turn we slackened, held our breath and listened—then sped on again like fury.

Pemberton at last, and there was the freight-train drawn up on a siding! Here the two gods of the line sternly refused to take me any farther. It was cold going through the cañon at night, and dangerous; so, being too tired to argue, I allowed myself to be put aboard the caboose of a work-train for the rest of the way. Here, I fancy, I must have gone to sleep, for I remember little about that journey until the lantern of the engine-driver woke me at Squamish, and it was past midnight.

CHAPTER III

A SEASON ON THE TRAP-LINE

ONCE I found myself waiting at some little flag-stop siding in the back of beyond for a train that was several hours late. There was another who waited also, and as we sat on a shady bank we talked of many things, and this is something of what he told me. . . .

"I have a friend, self-buried in the hinterlands of this province for reasons of his own. They call him Slim Baker, the trapper, and I have been spending a whole year with him. It is not a difficult matter to lose oneself in that wild interior that lies between the Cariboo Road and the line of the Canadian National. Many have done it.

"Slim takes no interest in the affairs of the outside world except in a big, wide way; his life is utterly bound up in the primitive doings of Mother Earth. He has preëmpted a quarter-section down in a valley which he ranches during the summer in a casual kind of way, producing more than enough hay to pay his year's expenses. But the winter he spends on his trap-line up among the mountains in

the Clearwater country, and here he has built himself three log cabins, a dozen miles apart.

"To say he lives a 'retired life' is far from the mark: in the course of a year he sees not more people than you can count on your fingers and it would n't be too much labor to count the words he speaks to those few. No one ever comes to see him except 'Johnny the Baptist,' an Indian from the rancheree ten miles off, who sells him a litter of pigs in the spring which Slim sells again, large and heavy, in the fall. Or Spunkie, the ten-year-old son of a family of Swedes who have taken up a preëmption five miles away and from whom Slim hires a cow every summer.

"When I came, my intention was to stay just a week or so to say 'Howdy,' and yarn a bit about old times, but the weeks drew out and Slim laughed at 'Good-by.' Also, the intoxicating scent of the British Columbian bush—moss and bracken, broken cedar and bursting balsam bark, cottonwood buds and all the leafy greenness of the forest—these and the sunny mornings got into my blood and held me there. And when once the scent of this bush has got into a man's blood, even though Fate may call him to the other ends of the earth, he is never really happy until he is back in it once more! It is always either homesickness or the smell of the bush.

"Spring gave place to summer; I felt I could n't

go and leave Slim to harvest his second crop of hay alone, and I stayed on till summer melted into fall—and yet I could not drag myself away.

"Then came that time when every tree is a mass of color and all the forest is a blazing garden; when the mornings sparkle with frost and the tang in the air makes you shout aloud in gladness that you are alive. And at night the hunter's moon shows up in a dark-blue sky: you hear the dim, far howl of the wolf-pack gathering strength, the throbbing *whoo-hoo-hoo* of a hunting owl, and all the little noises of the living night, and—what wonder that I stayed?

"I got off the train at midnight, at a station on the Pacific Great Eastern, and Slim was there to meet me with a couple of cayuses; said he 'd been waiting there for five hours. The section-man put us up a cup of tea and some grub before we set off on our twenty-six mile ride, and we were glad enough of it, for although it was mid-May the night was frosty and very cold. I had n't realized till then that we were twenty-seven hundred feet above sea-level.

"Our trail led through fairly open, rolling country, thickly timbered in parts with fir and pine, cottonwood and poplar, with little or no undergrowth—very different from the dense giant forest of the coast. Once our horses' ears went forward and they threw up their heads uneasily as a little gray form

slipped across the trail in the patchy shadows ahead.

" 'Coyote!' remarked Slim, and a few minutes after we heard a yapping behind, over a new kill. There are plenty of coyotes here, but not many timber-wolves, as the mule-deer are getting scarce; in other parts of the province, where the deer are more plentiful, you find both the black and the gray timber-wolf. Slim says there is a pack in a valley northeast of Canim Lake; he saw the tracks last winter.

"Dawn was breaking as we rode through a stretch of larch and jack-pine, dark as ink, which made it seem all the lighter when at last we came out of it to find ourselves on a bluff overlooking a magnificent vista of rolling country. Directly beneath us lay a valley with a thin white creek threading through meadow-land and thicket. We stopped with one accord, drinking in the beauty of it all.

" '*Look!*' Slim exclaimed suddenly, leaning forward and pointing to certain dark spots moving in a clearing in the valley below. There, walking in a leisurely way through Slim's pet patch of alfalfa, were two great dark shapes. My first impression of them in that dim light was that of cart-horses on stilts.

" '*Moose!*' whispered Slim. Greatly excited, we rode down as silently as possible to the lower levels. We were actually within two hundred yards of them

when one threw up his huge, heavy head and we could plainly see the 'bell' hanging from his neck. In a trice they were trotting off at the speed of an express-train for the nearest timber.

" 'Keenest-scented things living, bar a Canada goose,' Slim explained. 'No, good as moose-steak would have tasted to me, I 'd have had to let them go this time of year. The main lot range way over on the other side of those hills. Both bulls, these. Cast their horns four months ago and the new ones are only half grown. You should see the head I got two falls back—five and a half feet across between the points and sixty-six inches long; enormous webbed things!'

"Slim lived in a cozy little cabin, rat-proof and frost-proof, the real Yukon type. The inside walls were whitewashed and the floor was covered with pelts, a couple of wolf and one big black bear. Very soon a fire was blazing away in the stove and the fragrant scent of coffee filled the cabin.

"Trout from the creek, soda biscuits, and honey from his own bees—breakfast, with the risen sun pouring in at the open door, the distant tinkle of a cow-bell, the song of a robin, and the bubbling clatter of the creek below!

"During that first week I was initiated into some of the mysteries of milking, plowing, and seeding, of snaring and skinning jack-rabbits, of the best pools

SWEDISH PREEMPTORS UP AT FOREST GROVE STANDING IN FRONT OF THEIR ICE-HOUSE.

for trout and the best spots to lie in wait for wild duck in the marshes. At the end of a month I found I was so busy with the real things of life that I had hardly time to remember the artificial ones—banks and libraries, clubs, directors' meetings, newspapers, theaters, and such like.

"We had a visit from Johnny the Baptist one morning. He stalked into the cabin while we were breakfasting and without a look or a word in our direction he went straight to where my brand-new Winchester 'thirty-two special' was hanging on the wall and began to examine it.

"In his own good time he turned to Slim and began to talk, taking no notice whatever of me.

"'*Hiyu Skookum*[1] grizzly down again! Him killum calf belong Jo Josef two sleeps back. Maybe you catch?'

"They exchanged more talk, half pidgin-English, half Chinook, which I found it difficult to follow, but the gist of it was this: a certain mighty grizzly, of a size and weight before undreamed of, moved and had his being among the hills above the rancheree where the Indians lived. Every spring he was wont to come down and make a trip from one end of the valley to the other, taking toll, as he passed, of beasts belonging to the Indians. None had ever seen him except once at dusk, but most had seen his giant

[1] *Hiyu skookum:* a huge, enormous.

spoor and from the depth of it vowed that his weight must be such 'you could follow him over rock.'

"Now, no Indian cares to kill or even follow a grizzly, for therein is wrapped the spirit of departed chiefs, and woe betide the luckless one who lets this spirit free to eat him alive! So Slim promised to keep his weather eye open and Johnny the Baptist unhitched his cayuse and rode away in peace.

"Several days afterward we strolled down to the creek in the cool of the evening, pleasantly weary after a hard day's work in the fields, with intent to catch some trout for breakfast. Scarcely had we reached the water when a fearful whiff of tainted flesh came wafting to our noses, and we both looked up in disgust.

" 'Something dead hereabouts,' said Slim. 'Say, look at those flies! That 's where it is; let 's go over and see what 's there.'

"We walked up-stream and crossed over on some boulders, making our way through the rank grass and willows to the spot where millions of flies buzzed. A black bear lay there, stretched full length on the ground, slit open from end to end—a horrible sight!

" 'Hm! Johnny's *skookum* grizzly can't be far off! This is his doing. Blackie must have shown fight, silly fool! Yesterday's kill, too. Shall we track him down now? Are you game? He 'll have slept since this and be just waking up now. The

light 's going, but I 'll wager we 'll get a shot at him before dark!'

"We ran back to the house for guns and then set off down-stream, following the big bear's tracks, and far above our heads the young branches were broken where he had snapped them off to get a tit-bit of budding leaves.

"We had not far to go. We sighted him at about the same moment that he did us; he was making his way back toward his kill, a mountainous, dark-brown form towering, even on all fours, above the scrub willows and birches round him. About fifty yards away he looked, to my astonished and unaccustomed gaze, in that half-light, as big as a Clydesdale stallion; and, truth to tell, he was heavier in weight, not far short in height, and just as long.

"'Gosh, Tom! Ain't he a dandy?' Slim murmured, lowering his gun again. 'I 've a notion to let him go, after all!'

"But a sudden movement on my part—backward, if you must know; please to remember that I was not yet on speaking terms with grizzlies—made him rear on the instant and with a roaring *whoof* he charged. Slim fired simultaneously, or I should not be here to tell the tale.

"It took two shots to kill him, and even then he kicked so ferociously in his death-struggle that we dared not go within yards of him for some time.

His pelt was in grand condition, a real dark brown silver-tip, and so large that we had to make a special frame to stretch it upon, as none used for previous bearskins were big enough.

"Bear-steak made a welcome change in our diet, though it was in this case a bit strong and coarse. In some mysterious way the Indians got wind of our kill and held a special jamboree in honor of the event.

"And so the summer wore itself away all too quickly. The day came when all the hay and the grain were garnered and sold and Slim and I sat in unwonted leisure and looked at each other. It was then he began to talk of preparations for his trap-line and made a list of such stores as would be needed for two during the winter.

"In late September we made our first trip down to Canim Lake with a couple of pack-horses, then seventeen miles along its banks, picking our way amongst boulders and scrub where there was no trail at all. I had the luck to shoot a Canada goose which we skinned and roasted over our camp-fire, and we dined deliciously off it.

"The nights were cold and broken by the wild cries of the loons calling to one another across the water, and when morning came everything was white with hoar-frost, so we were glad to be on the move.

"After leaving the lake we struck northeast, up

into the mountains and valleys of the Clearwater country, some of the byways of which scarcely anybody but Slim knew; on and still upward, until we came at last to the first of his little cabins. It was snug and dry as a bone, full of various traps, a pair of snow-shoes hanging on the wall, stores from last year exactly as he had left them six months before.

"From the door was a wild and wondrous view of valleys and plateaus stretching up to tier upon tier of snow-capped peaks.

" 'The Selkirks!' Slim announced. 'Now, keep your eye on that spot above where the timber-line thins, just below snow-line. See anything moving?'

"In the clear air each crevice and cranny stood out distinctly, even at that distance, and after a time I made out certain yellowy white dots moving about.

" 'Goat, mountain goat!' said Slim. 'I was back of that mountain last fall and came on a big flock of them grazing on a slope. I counted fifty-three of them altogether.'

"We made a trip up to the other two cabins and left some stores in each; in one we found that bush-rats had broken in and wrought havoc, so we had to repair it, but as a rule Slim's cabins were rat-proof and mouse-proof.

"On our return home it was decided that I should journey to Lillooet or Clinton in order to buy certain supplies; Slim hated strangers, so, as I wanted to see

that famous center of big-game hunting de luxe, I went to Lillooet.

"In late October we said good-by to Slim's ranch home and made our way, laden with packs, to his trap-line beyond the lake. Some days after we had settled in, he took me out, promising to show me a sight that I had never seen before and probably shall never see again—the annual migration of the caribou from their summer ranges on the higher levels above timber-line to the low levels of the valleys for the winter.

"They band together in great herds before they migrate and follow much the same route every spring and fall, year after year. We came at last to a point wherefrom we looked down into a pass which had in bygone ages been a river-bed, but was now strewn with loose boulders covered partly with the flurry of first snow that was all over the land. It was still as death and not a sign of any living thing.

" 'They pass this way every year at the same time to within a few days,' Slim said. 'We 'll wait for them.'

"So we camped on the spot for two nights, and at noon of the third day we saw, far off at the head of the pass, several dark-coated forms moving down toward us.

" '*Here they come!*' exclaimed Slim. 'Let 's climb down lower. They won't take any notice of us

now, even if they do wind us; they never do when they 're migrating.'

"We climbed down and hid behind a boulder just as the first of them passed us about a hundred yards below—a great bull with his head up, sniffing the air, his coat sleek as moleskin and magnificent antlers.

"He was trotting along as though eager to get the journey over and behind him came several others, smaller than he. Close on their heels came a dozen more, with young calves among them, and presently the world about us was full of the noise of trampling hoofs, of coughs and grunts and the occasional belling of the bulls as they shoved their way forward among the females.

"Thicker and thicker they came, until the whole pass was a mass of moving mole-gray forms from which a forest of branched antlers sprouted, clashing and clicking together as they pressed onward. Every now and then some stragglers would step aside to nibble grass and leaves, until the rush of others coming on behind carried them forward willy-nilly.

"For two hours and a half we watched them passing us. It was impossible to count them; we could only guess at their hundreds. It was dusk before all the loiterers at the rear were out of sight and it was only then that I questioned why neither of us had fired a shot. But Slim was a keeper of the law—

where game was concerned—and the season for caribou was not.

"In the following month we bagged a fine bull in a distant valley, whose hide I have to this day, but unfortunately we left the head with its antlers outside the cabin for the night, and that devil of the woods, the wolverine, demolished the head and gnawed the antlers almost beyond recognition. However, we lived on caribou steak, both fresh and smoked, for many a day, and the rest of the meat provided bait for our traps for some time.

"By the time winter had set in good and hard, I was fairly expert on snow-shoes and got about from trap to trap nearly as swiftly as Slim himself, and certainly with as keen an interest. But we did not always hunt in couples; often we took different routes, and it fell to the one who reached home first to prepare the meal for the later comer.

"I don't know just what I look back upon with the greatest pleasure. Perhaps upon the nights on which I returned first to light up the stove and mix hot biscuits or flapjacks by a roaring fire, to fry bacon and cook perhaps a grouse or a ptarmigan—any game I had had the luck to get—and then to hear Slim's cheery cry '*Ahoy there!*" in the distance; to open the door on a pale sky, star-spangled, with the tops of the ragged firs standing out stark black against it, and a white ground adazzle with crystal

sparks; the swish of his snow-shoes coming nearer and nearer and the draft of clear, cold forty-degrees-below air as he came in, ruddy and chill, banged the door to, and threw his burden of pelts in the corner. Then the tale of the day's doings while we satisfied ravenous appetites . . . pipes . . . and sleep till the morrow's dawning woke us again.

"Or did I love best those nights which found me late on the trail, dog-tired but buoyed up with the pleasure of a lucky catch, a wolverine, a lynx, perhaps a weasel (ermine) or a marten? On and on, with the snow creaking like satin beneath me, swishing through the spaces of a white, moonlit world, so still and silent that I seemed to be the only thing alive in it; moving so fast that the keen air cut my face like a knife, froze the breath in my nostrils, and made a solid mass of ice of my mustache. Then at last that welcome little square of yellow light in the distance, shining out upon the snow. I would shout at the top of my voice, the door would open, and a waft of coffee and sizzling bacon would reach me. Slim, warmth, a meal and . . . bed!

"We made a great catch of muskrat that season. Muskrat fur is almost invariably dyed and dignified by such names as 'musquash' or 'Hudson seal,' although left alone it is far more beautiful. All our wolverine pelts were sent to the Yukon, as the fur of the wolverine is the only one that does n't mat in

those frosts. Fisher, fox, marten, and weasel were always good catches, but coyote we reckoned as hardly worth carrying, until we remembered the nose-in-the-air pride with which otherwise well-dressed women walk the streets when they have a coyote-skin (which they have probably bought for fox) to fling over their shoulders.

"But there are also memories that make me shiver still. At times we had to sleep in the open, sometimes by accident, sometimes by intent. We used to make a fire, and beside it a bed of spruce branches on the snow, and sleep as warmly as in a central-heated hotel and a lot more healthily. I remember once waking to find myself covered with two feet of snow and the smoldering ashes of my fire in a hole eight feet below me, having melted its way through to the ground in the night.

"And I remember the afternoon when a timber-wolf followed me and howled for others of the pack at dusk. And all night long five of the brutes sat watching me and my fire, knowing somehow that I was mighty short of shells and waiting till my eyes should close from sheer inability to keep them open. . . . Their little red eyes in the darkness! Nearer and nearer they came with every hour, licking their chops and sometimes letting out that blood-curdling howl of theirs . . . until dawn, when they

gave it up and slunk away. A long, horrible night, that!

"And once Slim's snow-shoe broke and his feet froze while he was trying to mend it, and I had to half drag, half carry him three miles back to the cabin and rub his feet till the circulation came.

"In the fulness of time the breezes began to lose their sting and there was no more need to put canned milk in our tea by the lump. The chipmunks came out and chattered to us as we passed, and the slopes of the valleys began to look mangy with big bare patches of tufted brown grass where the snow had melted.

"One by one we closed the doors of all the little cabins on the trap-line and packed the last of our loads of pelts home.

"There came a day when the calls of the outside world grew so insistent that I could ignore them no longer, and with a sinking heart I packed my grips and turned my face to the trail that led to the railway.

"We spoke scarcely at all on that long ride, remembering the joy of that other ride a year before; even now the scent of cottonwood buds brings back all those other bush scents to me as I drank them in for the last time that night.

"I still see Slim, as I saw him last from steps of the receding train, sitting erect as a statue on his horse, his face hard-set and drawn with the pain of parting, his arm held high in token of farewell."

CHAPTER IV

SOME TRAILS AND WATERWAYS OF CENTRAL BRITISH COLUMBIA

HISTORY in that part of British Columbia which lies north of Latitude 52 dates back about one hundred and twenty years, no more, and is marked only and entirely by the coming of Simon Fraser, that doughty explorer; by the erection of certain Hudson's Bay Company forts and trading-posts; by several gold-rushes; by the building of the Cariboo Road; by the laying of the Yukon Telegraph Trail, and, in recent years, by the coming of two railways.

It is but nine years since the first train ran right through, along the Grand Trunk Pacific, from the Rockies to the coast, and less than half that time since the Pacific Great Eastern Railway stretched its painfully expensive length as far as Quesnel, after coming up through much tribulation and the most marvelous scenery in the world all the way from the head of Howe Sound down near Vancouver.

It is only along the railway belts that the country is known—and that but superficially. Go back a few miles and, except for a lone ranch or so, you strike

only mountains that have no name, rivers whose source is vague, regions known to no one but prospectors, where the caribou and moose graze undisturbed.

When Simon Fraser, an officer of the North West Fur Company of Montreal, made his way over the Rockies and established in 1807 one of the very first fur-trading posts in British Columbia, at Fort George, he had no idea of the significant position in which future days would find his little fort. Later the North West Company failed and Fort George, taken over by the Hudson's Bay Company —which now possessed all the trading-posts from Halifax to the Behring Straits, and from Alaska to San Francisco—became what it still is, the biggest fur-trading center in the Northwest.

For beaver alone this is one of the best districts of the province and all kinds of furs come in here, marten, mink and fisher, black, silver and cross fox, black and grizzly bear. They come from the famous Peace River district, from the basins of the Parsnip, Nation, and Mesilinka Rivers, from all the great lake regions of northern Omineca, scarcely known and sparsely peopled by Indian tribes who still follow their time-honored occupation of hunting for a livelihood.

They tell you nonchalantly in Prince George (as they call it now) that one hundred thousand dollars'

worth of fur goes through in the year on an average, "but this is a small matter," they say, "considering the record year of nineteen-eighteen and nineteen-nineteen, when four hundred thousand dollars' worth came in." In fact, they are a bit shy of talking about fur at all, being still sore at divers grievances anent game-laws and licences and game-wardens.

I walked into an unpretentious little store with a great pile of raw beaver-pelts filling the window and ranging in color from black to sand. The man with Indian eyes and hair sitting behind the counter took little notice of me or my attempts at conversation until I asked him the value of his year's buy.

"What do you want to know for?" he asked sharply, and then, "I don't care to tell you!" I appeased him by apologizing for my curiosity and humbly enquiring the value of the heap of skins in the window.

"Two thousand seven hundred dollars," he said casually and went on smoking. "They 're Gun-a-noot's catch."

I guessed at the story that lay behind that bit of information, knowing of the wild races over hundreds of miles on snow-shoes, in the depth of winter, between the runners for the Hudson's Bay and runners for individual buyers, when the object is the season's catch of some well-known trapper to be re-

lied upon for several thousand dollars' worth of pelts. And Gun-a-noot is a notorious Indian.

It is a dusty little town, Prince George, very proud of itself and full of French Canadians who have come west after their deity, lumber. Most of the place looks horribly new, considering its history, and it has a Chinatown much too big for its size; all the restaurants are run by Chinamen, so I had to eat rhubarb-pie in mid-July—for which there is no excuse with any quantity of wild fruit in the neighborhood.

One rancher's wife told me she had put up five hundred quarts of wild fruit last season, ninety-eight of which were strawberries. Up till now the inhabitants have been so absorbed in the unlimited lumbering in these parts that they have quite forgotten there is such a thing as soil beneath the timber and they are only just beginning to find out its value. Some of them are doing pretty well with mixed farming and some with good herds of pure-bred Holsteins.

The Indians around here make a specialty of the making of moose- and caribou-hide into gloves, moccasins, coats, rugs, and trappings for their horses, all beautifully embroidered. Moose are so common that most ranch-houses have their pair of moose-horns over the door, and frequently one comes on moose antlers in the bush, half-gnawed by coyotes.

THERE IS MANY A VAST DISTRICT IN B. C. THROUGH WHICH THE TRAIN ROARS EVERY DAY, LEAVING NOTHING BUT A TRAIL OF WHITE SMOKE TO DISTURB THE PRIMEVAL FOREST.

Geographically, Prince George stands as the hub of the railway systems of Central British Columbia, but will be so in fact only when the Pacific Great Eastern completes its promise of coming up from Quesnel, and then there is the future hope of extending the line up into the Peace-River country. Now Prince George is linked to Quesnel by means of little gas-boats that sail down the Fraser, shooting the Fort George and Cottonwood Rapids on the way, a thrilling trip and dangerous.

The most remarkable and the longest piece of natural transportation in Canada is that chain of waterways which has its origin in little Summit Lake, about thirty miles due north of Prince George. Crooked River drains Summit Lake and flows into McLeod Lake, whereby you come to the Parsnip River, and thence, after seventy-five miles or so, into the great Peace River itself. It is easy sailing down the broad Peace all the way into Alberta, and far on till you come to the MacKenzie River, and by this at last to the far North and the cold waters of the Arctic. As it has been, so it shall be with these waterways, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

The first explorers—Simon Fraser, John Stuart, and Jules Quesnel, with a crew of nineteen men—used the waterways for their momentous journey that secured for Britain her hold on the Pacific. They called Fraser the Jackanut River then. The

earliest pioneers of the Hudson's Bay Company used the waterways to get north into the fur-famous Peace-River district; you may still hear tales of "Plug-hat Charlie" and of "Twelve-foot Davies," he who used to dam the river in front of his scows to gather enough water to carry him over the shallows with a rush when he broke his dams. It is still so.

Will it be the same, I wonder, a hundred years hence? Will the spirit of "Twelve-foot Davies" look back across the Styx and see future generations of Britishers still damming up the river in front of their scows to gather enough water to enable them to get away into the wonderful, fertile, unknown Peace-River country, or will he see an alien race journeying thither in ease and safety on roads and railways built by faith and enterprise?

East of Prince George you have passed through some of the greatest stands of uncut spruce in the world; to the west the country opens out again into the valley of the Nechako River. There is something Rhine-like about it, particularly round Vanderhoof, nestling in a curve of the river. In the length and breadth of this valley are three hundred thousand fertile acres and only an odd thousand population to take advantage of them!

There are far too many bachelors at Vanderhoof and the day I called round being Monday, many of them were pathetically at home doing their own

washing. However, they seem to have a good enough time. They show the visitor their public tennis-ground first, then, as a second thought, their creamery, which makes Vanderhoof the technical dairying center along the Grand Trunk Pacific. They gave me a dish of ice-cream to taste and told me that in one year they had sold sixty thousand pounds of butter, shipped out all along the railway. All of which shows that there are some fine dairy herds, besides tennis-courts, in this district.

A little to the west of Vanderhoof, the Stuart River flows into the Nechako and you may go up this to Stuart Lake, and so begins a chain of waterways tremendously important in the exploitation of that wild northern Omineca country, so full of mineral wealth and so jealously guarded by Nature that men's hearts fail them for the very inaccessibility of it.

You may travel out of Stuart Lake up the Tatchi River into Trembleur Lake, and on in a straight line, by way of Middle River, into the forty-mile-long Tatla Lake, and so into Driftwood River, which flows between the Firepan and Omineca ranges. And all this way with only a short portage here and there.

When the winter snows make the high divides through the mountains impassable, the waterways are still open and will be until they freeze over, and then the *voyageur* takes to sleighs and dog-teams.

Recently, the Dominion Government, which has jurisdiction over all waterways in Canada, granted a certain sum for improvements in parts of the Tatchi River which will lessen the difficulties of navigation and make it possible for the larger supply-boats to use these waterways.

This will make all the difference to those parties of pioneer prospectors who have hitherto set out from Vanderhoof on snow-shoes on their many-hundred-mile journeys into the interior and had to pack their grub-stake for the whole season along with them. It will open that great, hard, unknown region to the north to those who venture in to look for lode gold, silver, and other minerals of even greater value.

At the inn where I stayed, the hostess was one of those intrepid women who had been wont to accompany their husbands, prospectors, on wild winter trips into the north. Even when the baby came, it was taken along, strapped papoose-like to her back, and she on snow-shoes for months at a time! She told how she and her husband had depended on their guns for meat, and of the times when luck failed them and they went weak with hunger and not even a snow-shoe-rabbit or a ptarmigan had shown up. Then their joy when they came on moose-tracks, the kill, and the heavenly odor of moose-steak roasting over the open fire!

She told of an occasional white settler up there in northern Omineca, with none but a few Indians for hundreds of miles around. There was one old Irishman she remembered particularly, whose cabin they had passed as they went in and came out; he had seen no whites but herself and her husband for two years. They had left him some tobacco, wished him a good winter and hoped he would n't be too lonely.

"Och! and why would I be lonely and meself the grand company it is?" he had asked. "And why would n't I have the best o' winters wid a whole sack o' spuds and a brace o' smoked salmon?"

I met a man who was a sort of super-prospector, that is to say, if ever he heard of a strike, or even a rumor of a strike, that promised well, in any part of the country, he would trek thither to see if it were worth looking into for some of the big mining syndicates.

Once he wanted to go up Fort Nelson way, which is in the topmost northeast corner of the province, but he knew of only one man, a breed by the name of Johnnie Copper, who was familiar with the Sikanee-River country and the many-tributaried and tortuous Muskwa. So he went to one of these settlements along the line to find him.

Now, Johnnie Copper was a notoriously bad lot, always up to mischief and in trouble of some sort.

And this time he was locked up in prison. So straight went the prospector along to the magistrate.

"Look here," he said, "what 's Johnnie Copper doing in quod? I want him to go along with me; he 's the only man that knows the Muskwa!"

"Oh," said the magistrate, "Johnnie Copper 's a darned bad egg and I 'm afraid it 'll be a hanging matter this time."

"But man alive! *You can't hang Johnnie Copper! He 's the only man that knows the Muskwa!*"

And the magistrate, he pulled at his beard and looked sideways at the other and said:

"Well, well, take him along! Take him along! But for the love o' Mike, Bob, don't ever say you *asked* me! And I tell you what," he added confidential-like, "if you so happen as to *mislay* Johnnie Copper up in those parts, nothing will be said and we 'll shake hands on it, too!" . . .

It is hard for a traveler, locked up in a Pullman car and racing through the country for days on end without stopping, to realize that in spite of the great distances, nearly every one in the North knows or knows of nearly every one else. This is, I suppose, because the population is so sparse. Particularly amongst the old-timers there is the strong common bond of memories, of hard times and adventurous days come through together, and though they may

never meet afterward, these memories hold through life.

At Prince George, for instance, a local magnate may give me a letter to Bill Skinner, say, of Hazelton. And when I present the same, Mr. Skinner's face lights up and he clasps my hand warmly.

"So you 've seen old Charlie Muldoon, eh? Well, well, just think of that, now! I knew Charlie when we worked together on a section-gang in construction days! Great days they were, too! And to think of old Charlie now being boss of the ——, eh! Come in, come in!"

And Bill Skinner in his turn would give me a letter to Tom Macdonald of Prince Rupert.

"And you ask Tom if he 's forgot that suet pudden he threw at the cook's head that time we were working in a lumber-camp down at François Lake!"

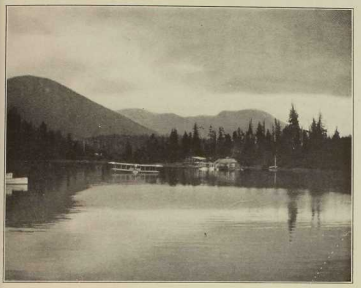
I find that Tom Macdonald is a very important personage in Prince Rupert, one of its leading citizens, in fact, but when I mention Skinner, his face relaxes and he is a youngster again, eager for all I can tell him about Bill and his wife.

"Why, it was Mrs. Skinner who came all the way on horseback from Hazelton to Telkwa to nurse my wife when the baby came! You must come up to the house!"

Traveling west, you come to a happy little settlement, and prosperous too, on Burns Lake. Here there are several stores and at one you may buy Indian rugs made of plaited rabbit-skin, and fur foot-warmers and other things the Indians make and trade in for groceries. Away to the north lies the great Babine Lake, over a hundred miles long and set 2200 feet high among mountains of 8000 and 9000 feet, unnamed and half explored. The country is hard, inaccessible, but filled with mineral wealth.

To the south you come by Tchesinkut Lake to the larger François Lake, seventy miles by three, which has a ferry across it and several ranches round. South of this you are in the "Grassy Plains" country, open, rolling park-lands at an elevation of 2500 feet, with miles upon miles of natural meadow-land of pea-vine, vetch, and grasses, stretching out to the horizon as far as one can see on every side, dotted here and there with copses of birch and poplar, scrub-fir and white pine.

And along that lovely trail that winds through Grassy Plains all the way to Ootsa Lake and a lone ranch where we feasted on corned venison and a pie of wild raspberries with thick yellow cream. Here we were told tales of the long winters and how those that dwell round the lake—they may be counted on your fingers—drive across it in sleighs when it is frozen solid and up on to the Big Eutsuk, which we



SEAL HARBOR, PRINCE RUPERT, SHOWING THE HYDROPLANE THAT WENT UP TO MEET STUART McLAREN ON HIS FLIGHT ROUND THE WORLD.

could see snow-covered even now, right among caribou feeding there on their winter range, many hundreds strong.

Out of Ootsa, also, is a chain of waterways. Two hundred and fifty miles one can go by lake and river with some short portages between: either out of Ootsa to Natalkuz Lake, and from there to Enchu, Tatachuck, and Eutsuk lakes, or up the Entiako River to Natuza. Or down the other way you come to Cheslatta Lake, which drains into the Nechako River. There are, besides, Takysie, Spencha, Skins, Tatalaska, and Spud Lakes; say them all and they ring with the lilt of an Indian song. Some have a ranch by them, but most of them lie utterly alone, covered with water-lilies such as the moose love, wrapped in peace and dreaming of a future civilization that may come to disturb their waters.

West from Burns Lake the railway follows the course of the Bulkley River, but go by road if you can, for this is one of the most beautiful valleys in all British Columbia. In June, pink and red dog-roses everywhere fill the air with their scent; in July, the country on every side is covered with a pink haze of fireweed, nature's healing balm for land ravaged by forest fires.

You go through avenues of birch and poplar and the sun makes chequered shadows through their leaves on the rank green growth beneath, with

clumps of wild peacock-blue delphinium standing tall against the black and white of their dainty, dappled trunks. Dotted about are the misty white flowers of the giant celery, and by the trail's edge are wild sunflowers, dashes of blood-red Indian paint-brush and yellow Brown-eyed Susans; also, if you stay to look, wild strawberries a plenty.

But for a stray Indian on a cayuse, or a government road-gang, you may travel a hundred miles and more without meeting a soul in this wide, lonely land.

CHAPTER V

UP THE COAST TO PRINCE RUPERT

FAR up among the creeks and inlets and myriad islands of the British Columbian coast, where the great forest grows right down to the water's edge, men of world-wide vision ply their industries. Little gas-boats chug up and down and in and out among the creeks, towing booms, taking supplies to logging-camps, feeding the big lumber-mills, fishing ever and always, playing go-between on the most indented coast-line in the world, where the only means of communication between points is by water.

One meets the stately passenger-boats now and again on their run between Vancouver and Prince Rupert, keeping sedately to the *Inside Passage,* and the solid, sea-wracked Canadian Government Merchant Marine boats carrying freight from the little unknown pockets of wealth on the coast out to every port in the world.

Lumber is the presiding god of the British Columbia industries; his devotees are of all nationalities under the sun and his products are as numerous as the facets of a diamond. Cedar, Douglas fir, hemlock, balsam, Sitka spruce and Engelmann spruce,

larch, poplar, and pine—they all have their various values. On this coast there are three great pulp-and-paper mills, at Powell River, at Ocean Falls, and at Swanson Bay, and, outside the timber limits owned and operated by these, there is still timber enough to make room for other plants.

Threading that labyrinth of inland seas on the mainland side of Hunter Island, one comes by Fitz-Hugh Sound and Fisher Channel to Ocean Falls, a very wide-awake townlet clustering round the pulp-mills, clinging limpet-like to the side of the mountain towering above it like a somber green wall.

The Pacific Mills Company (a United States corporation) dammed up Link Lake with a concrete dam 646 feet across and 50 feet high to get their water-power. Then they filled in the tide flats and covered them with thirty acres or so of buildings. Here, relentless machinery, working at full speed night and day, turns white spruce into news-print, good timber into pulp.

Out at the wharf are booms upon booms of logs outlining the beaches, towed in from the company's logging-camps at different points up and down the coast, lying there patiently awaiting their turn for the slaughter-house. A hundred yards or so away there is a C. G. M. M. boat loading up with "Kraft pulp"—bales of paper in the raw—or rolls of news-print for the States.

You may see the half-amphibious loggers—who step about among the floating logs as nonchalantly as though certain death did not await them if they slipped—getting the logs into line for the shoot.

The logs come up out of the boom, along the shoot, like great animals entering a stock-yard, and plunge into the sawmill to be manhandled. Here they are cut up by a band-saw that goes through them as if they were bread, sent on to be split into eights, on farther to be barked and thrown into a traveling conveyance to the flume which takes them over to the other buildings for the next process. The various kinds of timber are sorted and sawn up in the mills as required for the different processes and sent along, each to its own building.

In the next group of buildings you pass through warehouses stacked to the roof with sulphur from Texas, salt-cake from San Francisco, and lime from wherever it is obtainable. You may see the vast "digesters," where the chips of wood are reduced to pulp by steam at high pressure, and see where it is mixed and ground until at last it comes out a seething mass of cream of wheat or porridge that does not remind you in any way of trees, nor yet of paper. But it was one and will shortly be the other, and this you can believe only by going right through the mills and being struck deaf and dumb by the noise and suffocated by the smell.

With a population of two thousand, all dependent directly or indirectly upon the mills, Ocean Falls is a busy place. The bungalows are built and everything in the town is worked out with the same eye to detail as are the fireproof doors in the concrete walls of the mill buildings, and the notices here and there which tell where is the nearest stretcher, in case of accidents.

There are tennis and badminton and ever and anon dancing; there are boy-scouts, and clubs and societies for the grown-ups; there are fishing and shooting, swimming and boating and cruising about in the placid waters of the inland channels. But the real events of the week are the coming of the mail-boats, and whenever the weird siren calls of the big "Princes" (the Grand Trunk Pacific mail-boats) are heard echoing and reëchoing, back among the mountains, all the able-bodied population of Ocean Falls scurries down to the wharf to meet them.

Sailing up the coast along the *Inside Passage,* boats meet, nine times out of ten, with a glassy calm. I have known it possible to lie out on the boat-deck in the sun in mid-December and watch the green-timbered mountains glide by on each side and the frothy wake of the ship disturbing a rippleless sea. So that, when the boat leaves the shelter of Vancouver Island and comes out into the open Pacific at Queen Charlotte Sound for a three-hour stretch

before she dives into the shelter of more islands, the passengers feel the difference immediately, to the extent that the wise usually retire to their cabins.

Prince Rupert, the port where passengers disembark for the cross-country railway, or where new ones come aboard for the Portland Canal or the Alaskan run, is a little seaport as unusual in its way as New Orleans or Bahia Blanca. It rains here, more or less, about three hundred and sixty days in the year. Not that the aggressively loyal inhabitants would call *that* raining: they would acknowledge the fact only if it rained both ways; that is, if the rain splashed up again from the sidewalk so high as to make it advisable to wear umbrellas on one's boots.

Prince Rupert stands looking out toward the sunset, over green islands in a wondrous blue harbor, clinging to the sheer rock with its feet in muskeg, intensely proud of itself for defying Nature, who certainly never intended man to build a town there. The port ships between twenty and thirty million pounds of halibut and several million cases of tinned salmon during the year, which is doing more than all the other fishing-ports on the Pacific coast.

It is a busy little world, this, sufficient unto itself. Go down on the waterfront, past the Grand Trunk Pacific docks, and no one has time to speak to you, but you hear much wise talk about "whales" and

"mediums," "chickens" and "sharp rooms"; why the Yakutat Banks should be closed for spawning-grounds; the preponderance of American over Canadian boats in yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow; the need for more and yet more freight-cars on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, and so on.

Go up into the town and you find gangs of men doggedly blasting and hewing broad roads out of the solid rock, and building still more roads up on fifty-foot piles over utterly impossible muskeg country, for such is their proven faith in the harvest of the sea.

There are six different halibut-shipping companies in Rupert, each of which will assert that it is doing a bigger business than the rest; and all except one, the Canadian Fish and Cold Storage Company (which is entirely British in ownership and operation), are owned by American interests.

In spite of the fact that halibut, like the salmon and the herring, is steadily but surely decreasing every year,—or so they say,—the shipments of halibut through Prince Rupert continue to grow year by year.

Every day an auction is held at the fish-market in Rupert. You may come upon it unawares if you wander round back of the waterfront and in at an unassuming door to a modest little room where some men sit in a row at a desk, another is listening seri-

SALMON BOAT HOMING—AT THE MOUTH OF THE SKEENA.

ously at a telephone, and a few more are waiting by the wall. The ones at the desk and the telephone are all buyers, bidding in a jargon unintelligible to the uninitiated.

The skippers of the fish-boats in port have written up their "hailings" on a blackboard, listed with catches and dates, for all to see; and so the auction proceeds, sounding something like this:

"Thelma ninety-six!" . . . "June sixty!" . . . "Over the fence!" . . . "Your turn, Fred!" . . . [A lull, in which the man at the telephone grows impatient.] "Come on! Come on! Get busy!" . . . "Skookum eighty-six!" . . . "Gee, Bill! You're on easy street!" . . . "Thelma ninety-one!" . . . "Guess I'm satisfied!" . . . "Everybody satisfied?" . . . And half a million pounds of fish have found a market.

Each refrigerator car holds from 20,000 to 25,000 pounds of fish, all packed in artificial ice, which is colder than real ice. Some of the packing companies frequently handle 250,000 pounds of fish a day of all sorts,—herring, black cod, witch, brill, and other flat fish, besides halibut and salmon,—and 75 per cent. of it all goes direct to Chicago.

There appears to be no time at all to lose when there is a boat in, or a whole queue of boats, each waiting to discharge its cargo in front of a company's wharf. Men are down there wallowing in

fish with poles and peevies and hooks, floundering and slipping about waist-deep in fish, weighing fish on gigantic scales, shouting the tally, shoveling ice into boxes, shooting fish into elevators to be carried away for mild-curing, for salting, or to be frozen for storage.

Of the glistening monster halibut that were hurled up with grunts and groans, I picked out one that dwarfed the others. He looked like a wet white feather mattress for an out-size double bed and he turned the scales at 313 pounds. His head was slashed off with one turn of the wrist by the man with the knife, and he was dragged off to his coffin, where he was packed in ice with two other giants. The lid was hammered down, "3 whales" were scrawled on it, and *his* day was done. The packers always call these monster halibut "whales," the next size "mediums," and the small ones "chickens."

Back in the body of the building they are just as busy. Where the salmon is being mild-cured there is usually a German standing by, picking out the best of it for his own particular firm of Jews in Seattle, and the pick of the halibut goes the same way.

The Cold Storage Company's plant out at Seal Harbor is half a dozen stories high, and most of its storage-rooms are filled with fish waiting to be shipped in the winter season, when the market is slack. All rooms under twenty below zero are

"sharp rooms," and after the fish have spent a certain time in these they will keep for months in a less Arctic zone. There are rooms full of herring for bait (the company stores something like three million pounds of herring every year for bait alone); rooms full of salmon, packed like sardines, yards deep around the walls, red and silver, headless, gaping bodies; rooms full of halibut, the big ones propped against the walls, stiff white corpses, some many moons old. A cold and somber charnel-house, with a pervading odor of intensified essence of cod-liver oil that permeates your brain long after when you are a thousand miles inland.

But every one seems quite happy. I came on a man feeding a pet seal—a baby, but old enough to know where easy food came from, as it returned to its little inclosure every afternoon after spending the morning out and about in the harbor. It was a relief to find somebody in Prince Rupert with enough spare time to say endearing things to a baby seal.

In the North Pacific are by far the richest halibut grounds in the world, but unfortunately they are being fished out. Where one boat fished a few years ago there are now twenty. These days there are no fish to be had in British-Columbian waters, in any paying quantities, between the first of October and the first of January.

Also, the scientists, always a meddlesome lot,

know more now than they should concerning the habits of the halibut—when, where, and why they spawn, what they like best to eat, and other things, so that the fishermen are able to make a bee-line for their spawning-grounds just at the very time when the poor fish want to be left alone to make good last year's depredations.

All the way from Cape Flattery in the south to Kodiak Island and the Aleutian Islands in the north, halibut are found in varying quantities, in any seas from twenty-five to two hundred fathoms deep, but boats dealing with Prince Rupert fish chiefly in the Hecate Straits off the west coast of the Queen Charlotte Islands, and away south as far as the famous Goose-Island grounds where the best halibut are caught from early May to mid-July.

The old steam trawlers are a thing of the past and little gasolene boats of from five to one hundred tons are now used. They provision for two or three weeks and usually sign on the same three or four men as crew throughout the season. A good life and few worries. The very best of food; and if the cook be poor, one can always pitch him overboard, the way dead bottles go! If the luck be bad and the fish shy, there is ever the hope of better luck next trip. A cozy cabin when the day's work is done, with the lights lit and strange yarns to spin, and the wash of the waves to lull a man to sleep.

They use cotton lines for halibut, two miles long; the main or buoy-lines may go two hundred fathoms down, and from these the ground-line lies anchored, with a ganging-line every thirteen feet. On these last are the hooks. From two to four thousand pounds is reckoned a very good day's catch.

You may see three old trawlers from Grimsby, that came all the way out from the Old Country, fishing out of Rupert, and they frequently use the English style of trawling for flat fish.

The Oriental demand for dry-salt herring and salmon is increasing yearly, and "chum" salmon, the poorest of the species, is packed to meet it. Most of the Kamchatka salmon catch is dry-salted for the Chinese market.

Speaking of salmon, if you happen to be in Prince Rupert, take a trip up to the Naas River or down to the Skeena River, on which latter there are no less than fifteen great salmon canneries and where no one thinks or talks or eats anything but salmon. On April first the canneries start their preparations for the year's rush, and in mid-June, as soon as the "sockeye" run begins, they start canning. By the middle of August operations cease. The hurry and the bustle of the canneries die down, the temporary, cosmopolitan population of these, each a small town in itself, drifts away, and by the end of September the river is still and lonely once more, awaiting the

great ice-floes and the hush of the long winter.

Most valuable of all the salmon is the "sockeye," clear, pale blue above and glistening silver beneath, though the color changes after the fish has entered the rivers for spawning. At regular periods the sockeye run is heavy; for instance, the Fraser River down south sees big runs of sockeye every fourth year, following leap-year.

The Indians catch them chiefly by trolling; no Japanese (of whom there are far too many in these waters, busying themselves at this industry) are issued trolling licences. Gill-nets are the only nets permitted for sockeye; for other species purse-seines and drag-seines are used.

After the sockeye comes the "coho," green and silver, with a few black spots, then the "spring" salmon, and last of all in the season the "humpback" runs. The hump-back is the smallest of the lot, blue and silver dotted with black spots, named so because the males develop a hump in the fall. No doubt some nosy scientist will discover one day the reason for this annual pessimism on the part of the males.

Like the halibut fisheries, the salmon fisheries are being depleted, though the Dominion Government, realizing that salmon-fishing is one of their most valued industries, have established certain hatcher-

ies in the lakes of the interior and turn out something like fifty million of salmon fry in a year.

But the blockading, by fishermen, of some of the principal salmon rivers, a few years back, the all-too-prevalent use of nets, the presence of the far-too-successful Japanese fisherman—all these constitute a threatened extermination of the salmon unless the strongest measures are taken by the powers. A closed season for salmon, for four or five years, would be about the only measure likely to safeguard the situation adequately. To quote some illustrating figures: The pack of sockeye on the Fraser River system (which includes that of the State of Washington) was in 1921 only 142,598 cases as compared with 559,702 cases in the previous fourth year (when the big run was on), and 2,385,524 cases in the preceding eighth year. This proves how completely the big runs of sockeye on the Fraser are being destroyed.

The Tower of Babel lives again in a Skeena-River salmon cannery. The fishermen consist of Japanese, Indians, Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, Scotchmen, a few English, Americans, and Canadians from all parts. Inside, the cannery, though managed by white men, is operated largely by Indian women packers and the ubiquitous Chinaman.

The Indians come from far and near to put in their summers at work and make enough to carry them at leisure through the winters. There are the Hyders, who come in little gas-boats or big canoes all the way from the Queen Charlotte Islands, the remnants of that once mighty tribe who were known as the "Terrors of the Pacific" in bygone days. There are those from Matlakatla, famous for their seal-catching, the Tsimpseans and the Getikshans and all the tribes of the fish-Indians from up and down the coast. They have their own quarters, are entirely and haughtily exclusive, and, the squaws especially, utterly refuse to be photographed for fear of being smitten by the Evil Eye.

At the canneries on the north banks of the river, the amusement of the day for the whole population is to turn out and watch the transcontinental train go by from Prince Rupert with its freight of fish, rushing eastward via Edmonton and Saskatoon for Winnipeg, where the bulk of the freight will be discharged for Chicago and New York.

Just about one quarter of an hour elapses between the time the salmon are picked up off the float—where a man stands knee-deep in fish, sorting them out and sending them up to the shoot—and the time when they are packed in cans ready for cooking. In methodical and mechanical procedure they are be-headed and de-tailed, cleaned, cut up into even pieces

PICKING OUT THE COHO AND THE ROCKEYE AT A SKEENA-RIVER CANNERY.

by the "Iron Chink," and sent along by overhead rails to the tables where the squaws, gloved in rubber, are presiding and packing them into "talls" and "flats." Nothing but salt is put into the cans besides, and they are thoroughly and scientifically sterilized and cooked for an hour and a quarter before being finally soldered down and turned out to be lacquered and labeled.

Out on the wharf I watched, fascinated, a Japanese standing in a sea of blue and silver and green fish on the float, wallowing about among the slippery things, sorting with lightning speed sockeye from coho, spring from steelhead.

A twenty-ton gas-boat was drawn up alongside the wharf, throbbing to be off. She was the *Tillicum* of Seattle, bound for Wrangel, in Alaska, to buy salmon from the Stikine River. She was expected to bring back all of seven thousand fish. Her crew were buying bait at the cannery and were going to ice at Prince Rupert before going north to Ketchikan, where they would provision. Presently they loosed her painters, and as though glad to be off, like a fresh and frisky horse let out of the stable, she sped on her long way to the far northern seas.

In the distance, a mosquito fleet of trolling boats was being towed out to sea by a fast tow-boat. Several little sailing-boats manned by Indians were homing on the incoming tide. And I stood on the banks

of the smooth, swift Skeena, green with the waters of melted snows, on that balmy afternoon, and thought about the awful battle for existence that a myriad million salmon were fighting just below. Salmon returning after years of sea-life to spawn in the selfsame pools that gave them origin, with an infallible instinct for locality, swimming countless miles, leaping almost impossible rapids and falls, fighting desperately all the way against their natural enemies, but fighting hardest of all against their threatened annihilation by man with his thousand weapons.

There is, hovering like a cloud in the air over Prince Rupert, something called "The Jones Bill." It originated in Seattle and has to do with the interests of certain shipping firms and the prohibiting of the carrying of freight to and from Alaska on anything but ships of American ownership. It has had far-reaching effects and would appear to have hit Alaska a good deal harder than Prince Rupert.

The power of it, whether for good or evil, is mysteriously strong and the mention of the Jones Bill in certain quarters acts like the pass-word of a secret society of anarchists. Ask most innocently for information about it and the face of your interlocutor undergoes a subtle change. His eyebrow twitches and "What do *you* want to know about the Jones

Bill for?" he asks sharply and suspiciously. Important officials, both American and Canadian, have begged me to write about it. Important officials, both Canadian and American, have begged me with equal fervor *not* to write about it. The last word came from a Canadian in eastern Canada, who said, "Leave it alone; it 's *dynamite,* international dynamite!" And as he is a friend of mine, though he is a well-known government official, I have left it alone —so far.

But if you are kicking your heels in Prince Rupert with nothing to do and life is a little dull, just stand in the middle of the hotel, whisper, "*Jones Bill,*" and see what happens!

CHAPTER VI

STOPPING OFF THROUGH THE CENTRAL INTERIOR

FROM Prince Rupert there is no road out through the mountains. One must leave either by boat or by train. The folk who dwell here at the mouth of the Skeena are apt to regard that mighty river only as a provider of fish and noisy canneries and mosquito fleets of trolling-boats; then of cracking ice-floes; and then again of yet more fish. They know little of the Upper Skeena, hidden from them by the snow-peaks of the Coast Range, where there are thousands upon thousands of fertile acres crying out for settlers to come and till the soil and reap their harvest.

The train follows the Skeena. Wide at her mouth, with great salmon canneries like embryo towns dotted every here and there along her banks; then narrower and narrower as she comes through the mountains, winding her way through rocky gorges in a never-ceasing rush to get to the sea. A wild and glorious valley.

Ninety-four miles east of Prince Rupert lies Terrace, a thriving little settlement showing more prom-

TWO WOMEN FARMERS WHO ENTIRELY MANAGE THEIR OWN FARM, UP AT TERRACE, B. C.

ise than any other place in the interior, scattered over rolling open country at the mouth of the Kitsumgallum Valley. The roads are excellent and numerous and there are seventy thousand acres of arable land within eight miles of the station.

The population is less than eight hundred, but it supports a coöperative store and four or five other stores, a semi-weekly picture-show, a weekly paper, two inns, and two restaurants. By reason of its position between salt water, up the Kitimat Arm to the south and up the inlet which receives the broad Naas River to the north, the climate of Terrace is modified by warm winds. Summer frosts are entirely unknown, the zero mark is sometimes untouched for years together, and the thermometer seldom falls lower than sixteen degrees above.

Delphiniums and strawberries! That is Terrace in July. The bungalows hide between masses of delphiniums twelve feet high, dark blue, light blue, peacock blue. There are acres of strawberries along the roads; crates of them at the doors, waiting to be shipped to ready markets along the railway and to logging- and mining-camps up and down the coast; mounds of them on the verandas, waiting to be bottled; and then some!

The Provincial Government has recently put a concrete bridge across the Skeena, near here, and this will throw open another sixty thousand acres

of the best land in the Lakelse Valley, where there are settlers who have been patiently waiting for that bridge for years. The first time I was there, the bridge was not, and we crossed by means of an ancient cable ferry, whose course in a five-minute trip across stream was an exaggerated half-moon, so strong is the current of the treacherous Skeena. The ferry was an uncertain quantity for seven months in the year, and the ice for the rest of the time more uncertain still. One family told me how they were returning home one New Year's night after a revel, cantering over the Skeena in their sleigh, when one woman found she had dropped her muff and a man went back to look for it. Gone was the ice they had crossed on a moment before, and in its place a channel of rushing green water! Even the Indians pack a canoe along when they travel the frozen Skeena with their dog-teams in winter, so that they may take to the canoe whenever the ice gives under them.

Lakelse Lake itself, fed by the glacier waters of Williams Creek, is filled with a plenitude of sporting fish—the sort that leap from the water to take the fly out of your hand and then keep you twelve hours fighting for it. This, and its spring of hot lithia water,—ninety feet across and registering 180° F.,—and all its wondrous beauty should bring Lakelse into its own some day.

From here you can see Thornhill Mountain, out of which two Swedes took thirteen and a half pounds of gold in two days. Roundabout in the mountains are gold and silver, coal, copper and molybdenum, and many other minerals besides. Last time I was in Terrace, every one was agog with the news that the place had been able to finance the development of its own gold-mine.

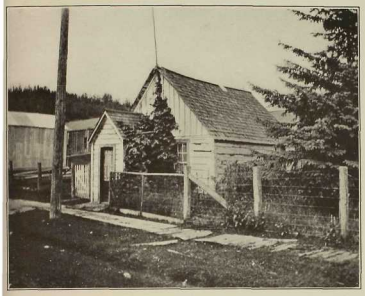
I am told there is a saying in Seattle that if Vancouverites found a gold-mine in their own back yard, they would hurry across the border and beg Seattle to come and finance it for them. Such is the lack of faith in their own assets that causes a spoon-fed and scary population to pray daily for government help, even when it comes to concrete certainties like elevators. It was refreshing, therefore, to find that there are still places in Canada like Terrace, where the people prefer to stand up on their own legs rather than crawl around looking for props.

When Charles A. Smith, a prospector, came in from Kitsumgallum Lake one day, announcing that he had staked some gold claims and, having sunk a shaft, had found them good, and that he was going to Seattle to form a company to finance further developments, the people of Terrace, having faith in Smith and their mountains, said: "But why go to Seattle? We 'll finance you right here!"

Three years before, Smith was walking round the lake during a Chinook wind which was thawing out a very heavy fall of snow, and he picked up a piece of ore which had broken loose in a slide. He did not think much of it at the time, but he went back there in the summer with tools and started trenching. He found the ledge, but classed it as unimportant, so he cached his tools and went away.

Now, fortunately for Mr. Smith, he was married. And when he and his wife rowed across the lake, later on, to fetch the tools, Mrs. Smith, being of a more optimistic disposition than her husband, began searching round until she came on a very valuable piece of gold. The Smiths had started housekeeping at Cripple Creek in Colorado, so she knew ore when she saw it. It is not often that one can say, "*Cherchez la femme,*" regarding the discovery of a gold-mine, and it is to be hoped that this mine will yield Mrs. Smith's weight in golden dollars.

Up on the heights outside Terrace, there is a thirty-six-acre farm belonging to and run entirely by two ladies who had been music mistresses in the Old Country. They have a couple of cows, some pigs, some chickens, and quantities of vegetables and fruit. They have developed the place from virtually nothing and do every scrap of the work themselves, except the plowing—and even take a hand in that when labor is short. Above all this, they have



THE ORIGINAL HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY TRADING-POST AT HAZELTON.

time to take in visitors who come from Prince Rupert in the summer, attracted thither by the lavender-sweet, dimity-fresh little house, the yellow butter and home-made bread, the luscious strawberries with thick cream to pour over them.

Last time I lunched with them, it seemed that their place was, to their own surprise and quite without intention, being turned into a sort of amateur nursing home. They had gained a reputation for imparting health to their visitors in a magical way and now their house was never without some ailing woman or child, getting well. All they did was to put the visitor on a régime of plenty of fresh air, cold water, and exercise, and a diet. In vain they deprecated their reputation and told people they were no nurses and had little knowledge of doctoring; but people believed what they saw and insisted on coming. So their fame as healers of mysterious ailments is spreading abroad throughout the land.

A few hours east of Terrace by train you come to Hazelton, where the Bulkley joins the Skeena. (And ever I must restrain myself when I write about lovely, leafy Hazelton, my favorite spot in all the last, great West, lest I say overmuch about it and mention it too often.)

Set over a thousand feet high in the mountains, guarded from the world to the south by the massive

heights of Rocher Deboulé, in the distance toward the sunset the peaks of the Seven Sisters, and to the east the grim Babines. It seems as though the world has forgotten Hazelton, that was, fifty years ago, the gateway into the North, the distributing point for the Omineca and Cassiar gold-fields, and later the inland route to the Klondike.

Even the railway treats Hazelton with respect, coming up from the south in a great loop to place a station, gingerly, three miles off, perhaps fearing to awake that dreaming village. Here you may see the old creeper-covered cabin that was used by the original Hudson's Bay factor forty years ago, as a dwelling-house (since then it has been a prison, a school, and Heaven knows what, but now it is again a dwelling-house) and the still older stone cellar that was used for storing the rum.

You may see the cabin where the clergyman lived, not so long ago, and refused even to lock the door when there was fear of an Indian raid and all the other white folk begged him to come inside the fort they had put up. And the Indians never troubled him at all.

This is still the home-ground for all the neighboring Indian tribes, and they have strange totem poles here, on the side of a hill, put up in some bygone age. Also a cemetery, standing in the midst of the leafy greenness that is such a feature of

Hazelton, where the graves are decorated with photographs of the deceased, bicycle wheels, sewing-machines, and such-like relics showing the all-too-common effect of missionary teaching on the savage mind—that of sacrilegious superstition.

I went to a dance in the town hall and there were more Indians there than whites. The Indians did not dance, but they provided the band, and an excellent one it was, too; the band-master had donned a Paisley-patterned dressing-gown to make himself extra smart. The musicians, who were of the Kispiox tribe, had the best instruments obtainable, bought by mail-order from a big firm in the East. All Indians are naturally musical, up to a certain point.

It would be impossible to write of Hazelton without mentioning the hospital, which is bound up with the place and which stands out as a very great achievement in itself. It was over twenty years ago that Dr. Wrinch went there and with the help of the Methodist Mission Board, the Indian Department at Ottawa, and the Provincial Government, bought three hundred acres of land up on the hill behind Hazelton. A few acres of the property were part of an Indian reserve, but these were donated by the Indians themselves.

Dr. Wrinch cleared the land little by little and made of it a productive farm that now keeps the

hospital entirely in garden and dairy produce. The buildings are set in thickets of feathery birch and cottonwood, in the middle of park-like meadows, and the whole place has the look of a well-kept country estate in England. Within the grounds is a thirty-five acre lake, in the summer covered with water-lilies and in the winter with ice which is cut and stored for the year's use in the hospital.

The main building has twelve wards, with room for thirty-three patients, and is central-heated and all wired for electricity. There is a Fairbanks-Morse gasolene-engine electric power-plant, especially built for steady power to operate the X-ray, so it will be seen that the doctor is an engineer as well as a farmer. Down in the basement are rows and rows and shelves and shelves of canned chicken and chicken broth, of every sort of canned vegetable and fruit, all produced on the farm and canned under the personal supervision of the doctor.

And if you want to know about the doctor, you must ask the mothers of Hazelton who has brought all the babies roundabout into the world these last twenty years: ask them who drove out to meet them on the trail on bleak winter nights when they had driven endless miles and could not make the hospital in time, and would have died right there in the road,—they and their babes,—but for Dr. Wrinch.

Ask the Indians brought in mauled to pieces by a

THE HAGWELGIT CAÑON ON THE BUCKLEY RIVER SHOWING THE REMAINS OF THE OLD INDIAN BRIDGE BELOW.

grizzly—or blinded by disease—who it was that healed their hurts and sent them away with new hope in their hearts. The history of the hospital is the history of a fight well fought against every sort of hardship and difficulty.

If you know folk in Hazelton, it does not do to hurry through, because their hospitality is insistent, overwhelming, and not to be refused. I well remember the last day of one of my visits there. I was staying with friends and came in to a hearty Roast-Beef-of-Old-England midday Sunday dinner at two o'clock in the afternoon. After that I was due up at the hospital, but went first to see some friends living near, who insisted on my taking tea with them as they had made a cake specially for me. It was half-past five when I reached the hospital and Dr. Wrinch remarked that there would be time for a good talk before supper. "But I really *can't* stay for supper," I said. "I 've promised the C——s [the local constable and his wife] that I would have dinner with them at half-past seven!"

"I can't help that," said the doctor. "I 've asked people in to meet you and you must stay."

After supper I went forth to keep my next appointment and at half-past seven o'clock, sat down (feeling rather faint) to a steaming joint and vegetables; it was as much as my life was worth to refuse anything that had been prepared with so much

trouble. But—"the subsequent proceedings interested me no more!"

Farther East along the Bulkley, there is the Hagwel-git Cañon, where the salmon leap the rapids in July: first the sockeyes, then the cohoes, and lastly the hump-backs. The Indians catch them with a hook, spear them, lowering themselves over the gorge in baskets to do it.

Across the river, farther on, is one of the longest, single-span, steel suspension bridges in the world, 600 feet long and 250 feet above the water. And from it, looking down, you may see the remains of the old Indian bridge, built on Cantilever pattern, of logs and stolen telephone wire. This was some of the wire that was abandoned along the roadside by the builders of the Yukon Telegraph Trail, long years ago when that project was given up in favor of a transatlantic cable. The Indians appropriated it and put it to excellent use. It is said that when the men had finished the bridge, before they crossed it themselves, they gathered together all the squaws of the tribe and sent them to stand thereon and test its strength. Very wise. Though what the squaws said is not handed down to history.

At New Hazelton, the road is high up on a plateau where one is face to face with that majestic mass of mountains that is Rocher Deboulé, and where men mined for copper in days gone by. The peaks look

like a thousand million cathedrals towering one above the other, and the lights and colors change with every minute.

An old Chinaman who lived here, in a bit of a cabin more open air than not, used to dole out coffee and sandwiches to wayfarers. He was as old as time, so ancient that he looked not like male nor female but like a materialized soul, and his voice crackled like parchment. I don't know whether or not he is still there, but he is assuredly not dead, for if he had been of the dying sort he would have died centuries ago.

After this the valley widens out into great stretches of peaceful farming land, green and fertile, with the Bulkley meandering through it like a silver ribbon. Contrast enough to the wild gray mountains behind. The train sees little of the beauty, and even if you go by car along the road you wish you were walking so that you might stop at every turn, for the loveliness of this valley brings tears to your eyes.

About thirty miles on from New Hazelton is Smithers, which is, of course, pre-damned by its name. There is some talk of changing it to "Omineca," and when the place is renamed I shall go there again. There is excellent dairying country roundabout, but Smithers is a smug, self-satisfied little settlement that somehow has managed to wrest

all the plums—in the shape of headquarter offices—from its older and more worthy neighbors. But there is a clean and comfortable inn there (and that is a landmark in these parts), though you have to remind the proprietor of "the excellent dairying country" when you are offered canned milk for your tea.

Just a few miles run from here to Telkwa, a village of vine-covered houses and log cabins set each in its own garden, right on the banks of the river. It has a church and a baby post-office whose door can scarcely be seen for creepers. Across the road from the river, just at the spot where the green snow-waters of the Telkwa River come bubbling and hurrying to join the dignified waters of the Bulkley, stands the inn where you stay.

Now, as the train passes through Telkwa, from both east and west, at unearthly hours of the night, when all God-fearing folk are asleep in their beds, it is well to let the people at the inn know that you are coming. But if you arrive without warning, walk right in. On the counter is the register and hard by it a piece of paper.

On the latter you will find directions: "Numbers One, Five, and Six empty. Help yourself. Don't make a noise."

Acting on this, you will tiptoe upstairs and creep into one of the empty rooms, wherein you will find

that sparkling cleanliness that all the luxury of towns cannot produce. You waken to the sound of the bubbling river, with the sun streaming in at the window and the breeze blowing back the white muslin curtains. Some one outside is calling to some one else, "A bright and shining morning, Tom, and the trout are leppin' like mad!" Down you go to breakfast and if you are in luck, you have grayling or rainbow-trout fresh from the river and crackling crisp.

Telkwa is unknown to tourists, so there are none but the residents to disturb the fishing, and they can never cope with all the many lakes and rivers around. But consult them as to the best bait to use for Dolly Varden or the black-speckled cut-throat, for char or salmon. When I went fishing I took an old-timer along with me to beguile the hour.

He showed me an overgrown footpath that passed through the backs of the gardens on the slope behind the village and went wandering up into the hills beyond. It was the "Trail of '98." Through his eyes I saw again the pack-trains winding their way along the trail to the gold-fields of the far Yukon, and heard the shouts of the packers as they galloped hither and thither keeping their horses and mules in line.

I heard that a barbecue is held in Telkwa every summer, and there are buck-jumping, and a round-up

of steers, and Indian races. A great oven is built in the ground, lined with rocks, and therein three or four hind quarters of beef are roasted, to be carved up for the merrymakers. That is the time loaves of bread by the hundred are given away, to fix Labor Day in people's minds. When night falls, all repair to the dance-hall and foot it right merrily into the next morning, ceasing only when it is time to go home and milk the cows.

The week I was there some one shot a black wolf on Jack Sealy's ranch, far up along the Snake Road: there are so many deer in these parts that wolves are not uncommon, although the black wolf is unusual.

Going east along the road, look out for that landmark they call Barrett's Hat, the highest of the hills in a rolling country, for close by is Barrett's ranch, the "Diamond D," twenty-five hundred acres in extent and the largest in this part. It is renowned for its timothy hay which has taken prizes all over Canada and was on exhibit at Wembley. The seed of this timothy is shipped from the ranch by the carload and sold to all parts, even unto far Japan. It is a beautiful and fascinating place, with waving timothy and grain on all sides as far as the eye can see and a great old-fashioned barnyard where calves and young foals chase one another around corners and which has the very newest con-

traption for unloading hay. The ranch-house itself is creeper-covered and entirely up-to-date inside, with long cool rooms that look out on a most wondrous view.

The trail from here runs high up along the side hill, and from it you may look down and see the Bulkley winding through the valley, and in time you pass the spot where you can see the Morice coming in from the mountains to the south, to join the larger river. Silvery waters set in shades of green. The last summer I was up there (in 1924) a party of provincial surveyors had gone up to the head-waters of the Morice—a mysterious river penetrated by few hitherto except Father Morice, for whom it is named—to survey it for the very first time for mapping purposes.

Then to Houston, a tiny settlement, and beyond this to a ranch down in a valley with no near neighbors at all. Here I had tea and heard the tale of how they first came there, long before the railway, by boat up the Skeena to Hazelton and thence by wagon.

"And this is Maggie," said the mother, proudly, turning to the eldest daughter of a big family. "My Maggie was born on the trail, and there was no one but an Indian woman to help me through!"

Of such are empires made.

CHAPTER VII

IN FORGOTTEN PLACES

I CAME in midwinter through the northern Rockies into British Columbia, and by way of that pass they call the Tête Jaune Cache—or, commonly, "the T-John"—into wild, bleak lands, and then to endless spruce forests and Prince George. I followed wide rivers,—the Fraser, the Nechako, the Bulkley,—day and night, for several hundred miles, until the railway makes a northward bend, up beyond the Fifty-fifth Parallel, and when I came to the most northerly point, and the most beautiful of all, Hazelton, I left the train.

The conductor was astonished. Few but those with actual business to do there ever get off at Hazelton; the "hotel" is a nondescript sort of place without modern conveniences and more accustomed to prospectors than tourists. The place lives on fur-trading, on the breath-taking beauty of its ragged, snow-capped peaks, its shaded rivers and its lazy lakes, and—on memories. Such memories! Of the lurid glories of the gold-rush days seventy years ago; northeast into Omineca, and later north to the Yukon; of troubles with the Indians, not so long

AT TELKWA.

ago, and of those outlawed ones who took to the wild Babine Mountains where no man cared to follow; of the fun the settlers had in the days before the railway, when the mail was brought by dog-team, in the winter, all the way up the frozen Skeena or the trail alongside from Port Essington at the coast.

A jolly little town those days, reëchoing to the beat of a muffled Indian drum somewhere up a river, to the clink of glasses in the cozy cabins, to the howling of the huskies answering the wolves far up in the heights of Rocher Deboulé.

I came to the moss-covered little police court and found a boot-legging case in full swing: long-faced men in mackinaws sitting round a table covered with bottles of illegitimate whisky, the walls lined with interested Indians, three deep, so that there was scarcely room for the Crown Prosecutor to rise up and throw more wood on the stove.

Late that night I found myself again at the inn. All was quiet. By the light of a smoky oil-lamp, at a table in the corner, a notorious criminal lawyer, he who had never lost a murder case, was playing poker with Black Roger MacKay, the trader, the man whose name is known from the Fifty-fifth north to the border and from Prince George to the Queen Charlottes. They drew up their chairs to the stove, threw on more logs till it blazed and crackled, and began telling me tales of other days.

How that Billy O'Leary and his dog-team were bringing the mails up one time and came by night to Usk, which was Indian Reserve, and where old man Bidot lived. Now, old man Bidot was a strict old son of a gun and had got religion and a powerful hold on the Indians, so when O'Leary asked him where he could put the registered mails in safety for the night, he said, "The band stand 's as safe a place as any, but you must give me the key!"

So O'Leary, he put the registered mail inside the band stand, but he kept the key. And old man Bidot, he sent for his Indian police for to turn him off the reserve, him and his mails—all except the registered lot.

Then did O'Leary take off his mitts and his mackinaw and bared his arms and said:

"Lookee here, this is His Majesty's mail and he 's a friend o' mine and I 'm agoin' to stand right by his mail! The key 's in my vest. Now d ' you want it?"

And O'Leary's eyes and his jaws and his fists, they looked so much like business that His Majesty's mails went through in safety to their destination.

They told how Lizzie Kincaid down at The Crossing would n't marry her lover till he found her a Simpson's catalogue to show what the fashions were, so that she might know how to make her trous-

seau. So he went all the way to Prince Rupert and rummaged till he found one; it was three years old, but he thought that would n't matter so long as she did n't know, and he tore off the cover and brought it back to her. Well, they went on a trip to Vancouver for the honeymoon and when Lizzie saw every one staring at her clothes, she got suspicious and asked him the date of that catalogue. In his inexperience he told her true, and she up and left him and came home alone.

I heard again the famous story of Gun-a-noot of the Kiskagaas (more correctly, Gam-ā-noot), who was outlawed for a killing and hid for thirteen years in the Babines in spite of what all the king's horses and all the king's men could do to find him.

To begin with, a half-breed had disturbed the peace of Gun-a-noot's home—"a bad Injun, this other"—and he had been warned to keep away. He offended again and Gun-a-noot told him:

"If I catch you yonder round my squaw another time, your face will be cold before morning. This time I tell you; next time I kill you!"

He was as good as his word. The killing took place right there in Hazelton and Gun-a-noot was advised to get out of the town with all speed before the Mounties were after him. He took the road up the hill that leads past the hospital and was just turning into that narrow by-trail, little used now,

that comes eventually by a difficult and devious route to Fort Babine, far up at the north end of that great lake, when he looked back and saw a cloud of dust.

He knew then that he was being followed, so he shot back at random and galloped on, hell for leather. That shot of his, it killed a herder, for the cloud of dust was raised by the hoofs of a bunch of cattle. But the killing was the second that day in Hazelton, and both attributed to Gun-a-noot, so now the Mounties were after him in deadly earnest.

They reckoned without the Indian's knowledge of the mountains and those wild, vast, inaccessible places that have never yet been properly mapped or surveyed, and without that strange means of communication between the Indians that is unknown to white men. For thirteen years Gun-a-noot roamed at large in the Babines, wandering hither and thither among those secret fastnesses; moreover, he had along with him his squaw and children. For thirteen years the Royal Northwest Mounted Police looked for him in vain, spending, they say, over fifteen thousand dollars in the search.

They tell strange tales of those days. How one time Gun-a-noot lay hidden behind a log close by a trail where two Mounties stood talking about him, and heard all they said. How he and those of his

THIS IS THE WAY WE RIDE TO SCHOOL AT TELKWA

kin arranged a series of signals that could be seen from mountaintop to mountaintop, so that he might know the news and know where to get supplies.

A prospector, a white man, told me once how he had been up roundabout Bear Lake and had no knowledge of any other human within hail; but on an evening, as he was fishing, a great tall Indian suddenly stood beside him and asked for some tobacco. When the white man had given it, they talked and the Indian showed that he had watched every movement the other man had made since the latter appeared in that neighborhood. "You tellum police you see Gun-a-noot," the Indian said with a smile and vanished.

There were those beside the Indians who were in touch with the outlaw, notably George Beirnes (of whom mention elsewhere in this book), and to him, as time wore on, Gun-a-noot confessed that he was weary of outlawry; that his brother Indians who traded his furs for him took advantage of his state and cheated him; that his squaw was ill and would see a doctor.

So Beirnes sent for the notorious criminal lawyer and arranged secret meetings between him and Gun-a-noot in the woods. This was not done in the time it takes to write it. An Indian has an instinctive and deep-rooted distrust of the white man (perhaps not ill-founded), and it needed many months and many

meetings before the defense was all prepared and the outlaw definitely agreed to give himself up.

The three of them turned up in Hazelton one morning and walked into the police court, to the overwhelming astonishment of the local constable, who could n't believe what he saw. Beirnes and the lawyer are tall men, but Gun-a-noot topped them both, and they made a striking trio for Hazelton to remember. He was taken down to Vancouver to be tried at the assizes, and the long and short of it was that he was acquitted, with a rare mercy and a lack of proof and witnesses.

In the early days, the boom days of Hazelton, most of the floating population used to take their meals at the inn wherein we were now sitting, and I had noticed the rusty old triangle hanging outside.

"The cook used to go out and beat that before every meal to summon the village to table. He could n't abide the late-comers! And as soon as they heard it, every husky in the place would start howling, knowing the bones would come to them soon after. I mind the time some of us were sitting there on the bench outside, listening to the triangle and the huskies, and John Bigger, the dourest guy that ever went prospecting, he gave a grunt and said: 'Hmph! What are *they* howling for? *They* ain't got to eat here!'

"Mind the night that C. B. limped in here, broke

to the wide, after coming down the Telegraph Trail and losing all his outfit, both horses and dogs, in the snow?''

And that was the best story of all. Here it is:

Before the Grand Trunk Pacific (now part of the Canadian National Railway System) went through between Prince Rupert and Prince George (about 1915 the first train ran right through) the interior of British Columbia was a network of pack-trains that supplied all points of importance and all the Hudson's Bay trading posts.

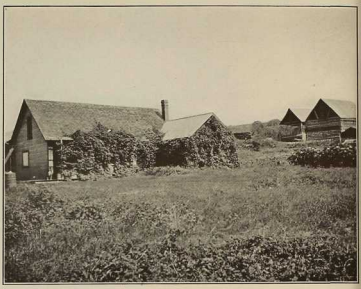
It was C. B. who owned the biggest pack-train, of perhaps a hundred horses and mules, and he used to start out from Ashcroft, way down south on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, in early spring, not returning till late October. His route lay up the Cariboo Road to Quesnel and from there west to where Vanderhoof is now and sometimes on due north to Fort St. James on Stuart Lake, which is the very oldest Hudson's Bay Company post in all British Columbia, built in 1806. Or west from Vanderhoof and then along the valley of the Bulkley, past Telkwa to Hazelton. And long before they began to build the railway, when they were making a trail through from here north to the Yukon for telegraph wires, after the '98 gold-rush, it was C. B. who undertook the contract to supply the operators

up the trail who lived in cabins thirty miles apart, two to a cabin.

Story has it that he returned to Hazelton, once, after a trip up the Telegraph Trail, and there he found out that he had missed the farthest cabin of all, over two hundred miles away, and there were two men up there left without supplies for the winter. Either the Government had not made the tale of the cabins clear or C. B. himself had miscalculated. However that may have been, the plain fact remained that these two men had to be supplied—and it was getting late in the autumn.

So C. B. at once set off north again with a pack-train of sixty-eight horses. He had no very great hope of being able to make his destination before the hard weather came on, but he traveled with all the speed possible, to get over the worst places on the trail before the first snow fell. But as ill-luck would have it, it began to snow one night just as he came to the rock ledges where the going was bad at the best of times. It snowed all next day and the following night without any let-up.

Every now and then a horse would miss its footing and go over, sometimes into the rushing river below, to be lost forever. Then it froze and the going was hopeless. One by one the horses slipped and went down until it was impossible to go onward. C. B. shrugged his shoulders and altered his plans.



THE RANCH-HOUSE OF THE "DIAMOND D."

Those supplies had to be delivered to the men patiently waiting for them at the far end of the trail. So he cached the supplies, hoisted as many carcases of the dead horses as possible into trees where the wolves could not get them, and went all the way back to Hazelton to get dog-teams.

Again he started out, this time with a hundred and twenty-eight dogs, and when he came to the place where he had turned back, he was able to feed the dogs on dead horse-meat and so get through to the cabin where the two men were waiting. But on the return trip the going was heavy and slow and he found that the wolves had reached the cache of horse-meat and finished it up, so the dogs were short of food and though he killed one after another to feed the rest, they weakened and died on the trail.

So it was that C. B. returned to Hazelton afoot, limping into the hotel one snowy night in midwinter "broke to the wide," but otherwise unconcerned.

"Oh, well, I had the contract and I had to fill it!" And that was all he said.

The logs in the stove fell with a crash and I sat looking into the red-hot embers, thinking of that hard, painful journey through the snow, the thudding of the hoofs of sixty-eight horses and the cries of men calling to them—all bent on carrying supplies to two men in a far, lonely cabin, anxiously waiting, wondering if they had been forgotten. . . .

It would have been so very simple not to do it! I knew that trail and the awful rocky parts where a false step means death, and I knew that deep, green river swirling below. I thought of the treacherous snow covering the stepping-places and I heard the terrible slip of a willing horse . . . the swish of a falling body. . . . I saw the men working through the night in the blinding snow, heaving, hoisting, lifting; caching supplies, roping up dead bodies to high branches. . . . And then I could hear that most terrifying sound that the North knows, the howling of a wolf, long-drawn, threatening, merciless, and the answering howls of the pack. . . . The huskies straining at their leashes, mad with hunger; the yelping howl of huskies growing fainter when they weakened of starvation. . . . The wolves following behind, little red eyes glowing in the black night. . . . No time to sleep; the men must push on day and night so that they may carry those supplies to the cabin and get back before the food gives out. . . .

And I bethought me of other men—townsmen, soft-living, white-handed, the sort who preen themselves on the surplus they have made out of government contracts—and how much better it would be for the country if there were more men in it like C. B.! But in these parts such men as C. B. are not uncommon.

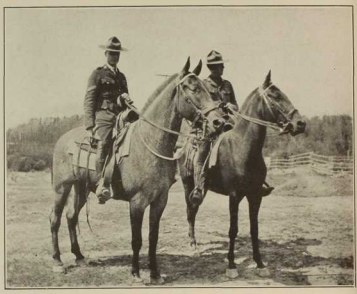
I do not know at which season of the year Hazelton fascinates me most: in the spring, when the air is scented with dog-roses and bursting cottonwood buds, when the silver Skeena sings placid songs of hope to the listening trees on her banks, when the cows are out grazing in the lush pastures and down any trail you may meet a horseman trotting along with his winter's catch of furs on the saddle behind him, when the floor of the little back room of the Hudson's Bay Company post is covered with furs waiting to be shipped; or in the winter when the Skeena, swiftest and most treacherous river in the world, is frozen still and silent, when the heights of Rocher Deboulé show white and jagged against a clear blue sky, when every twig on every tree is outlined in sparkling crystal and the crisp, keen air goes to one's head like champagne.

I drove in winter, in a sleigh with two fast horses and tinkling bells, out over the snow to Kispiox, which is entirely Indian, where white men come only on sufferance, and which looked to me like a village of the dead but for the curs hanging about every door and an occasional face peeping stealthily from a half-boarded-up window. And this time the braves were all out on their trap-lines and only the old men with the squaws and children were left in the village.

I stood alone among the strange totem poles grow-

ing in the street, looking like attenuated black ghosts from another age, and I heard an Indian singing the "Wolf-song," down by the river. He was fishing through the ice and the high bank concealed my presence from him.

And deep the snow was on the ground and the river silent, so that the weird, spasmodic singing seemed to break through the stillness out of another world, telling of ancient, half-forgotten glories, savage, sorrowful, and long since departed forever.



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE AT HAZELTON, B. C.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ROMANCE OF THE YUKON TELEGRAPH TRAIL

ROMANCE, they say, died with King Arthur, with the Crusaders, with the Mayflower, with any big achievement performed before our time. But if you hold romance to be the story of any great undertaking, accomplished and sustained under difficulties hard to believe, then I can show you romance in the making, all colored with the afterglow of Bret Harte's day, spiced with happenings from the pages of Fenimore Cooper, flushed with memories of the golden Klondike, yet keeping you spellbound with a difference all its own.

I can show you where, every midsummer, a packtrain of horses and mules, seventy-five of them all told, winds its way undeviatingly through the green forest and across rivers that you have never heard of; round precipices on trails so narrow that you never see them until you are upon them; on, day after day, week after week, for two hundred odd miles, with aparejos creaking under their load of freight.

I can show you nine log cabins built along these two hundred miles, thirty miles apart, with no other human habitation between them, wherein dwell the men who guard this particular portion of the Telegraph Line that is the only means of communication by land between Dawson in the Yukon and the outside world. It is to the men who live in these nine log cabins, two by each, that the coming of the pack-train means life; its coming in midsummer means the only thing that happens in the course of the year. For the rest of the twelve months the men see nobody except perhaps a stray prospector or so, perhaps an Indian now and again, going through to his trap-line and his hunting-grounds.

Construction of the Yukon Telegraph Line was begun in 1864, at Yale in southern British Columbia, and in charge of operations was Colonel Bulkley whose name is perpetuated in the beautiful Bulkley River. The line was run right through Cariboo as far as Quesnel, and there, two years later, it was taken over by the Collins Overland Telegraph Company, under the name of the Western Union Extension.

At that time no one know whether the cable across the Atlantic was going to work or not, so the intention was to have an alternating route by land, via Siberia. Accordingly, in 1866 the line was extended from Quesnel across-country to Fraser Lake,

where even then was a fifty-year-old Hudson's Bay Company post, the oldest in all British Columbia, at Fort Fraser. Along by the Endako River it went, to Decker Lake, one of those peaceful inland waters so numerous hereabouts and fringed with spruce and poplar. Then northward, closely following the glorious valley of the Bulkley to Hazelton.

From here it ran due north by Kispiox to Telegraph Creek and across the Stikine River, to Atlin, Whitehorse, and Dawson, by which time the transatlantic cable was proving satisfactory. So after being carried 1777 miles the Yukon Telegraph Line was abandoned.

For many a long year the trail lay idle and forgotten, until it was suddenly opened up again by the great gold-rush to the Klondike in 1898. Most of the stampeders used the coast route, but there were still a few left of those doughty old Forty-Niners who had come up from California to try their luck in Cariboo and later in Omineca and Cassiar—just a handful of them now—who preferred pack-trains to boats, and these with a great following of old-timers and *cheechakos* pushed through from Cariboo and by way of Hazelton to where the Telegraph Trail, that was the only route by land to the Yukon, had grown faint with time and difficult to follow.

They were in an awful state, those *cheechakos,*

even by the time they arrived at Hazelton, and one hears how they threw away their outfits, sold their horses for the price of a meal, and worked their way down the Skeena by river-boat to the coast, vowing to eschew gold and gold-rushes forevermore. But the old sourdoughs pushed through to the Yukon by the old trail, though many there were that died by the way or turned back broken-hearted.

However, if they served no other purpose than to open up the trail again, they did well, for in the following year, 1899, the Dominion Government decided to complete and wire the line right through to Dawson.

The great task of supplying the operators and linesmen on the 1670 odd miles between Ashcroft—on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, where the wires tapped the main cross-continent wires—and Dawson had to be undertaken by sections, with pack-trains from various centers, and the first man to take on the contract for the nine cabins on the 200 miles north of Hazelton was Charlie Barrett, he who now owns the big ranch down near Barrett's Hat, the "Diamond D."

Now, when the Forty-Niners came up from California into this country, there came with them the packers with their mules and their pack-saddles, which, having Spanish names for everything connected with a pack-train, they called "aparejos,"

and their "double diamond hitch," and all their special knowledge and slap-up military ways of managing a train of horses a hundred long, all laden to the last straw but never a straw beyond.

Along with these came one Cataline, a Mexican, to spend the rest of his life among pack-horses in British Columbia and to leave memories behind him that will never die. And it was he who took over the contract from Barrett to drive the pack-train up the Telegraph Trail every midsummer.

By this time Cataline was eighty years old, shaggy of hair and defiant of eye and magnificently wiry of body: he who had never known a day's sickness in his life; Cataline who had never slept on a bed, who never took his clothes off when he slept, with one eye open and a sharp little Mexican knife ready in his boot for all emergencies; Cataline who took his baths in the river, broke the ice to do it when winter set in.

And with him, like a black and faithful shadow, was Darkie Dave, the colored man. Dave Wiggins, to give his name in full, came from heaven at the tail end of a pack-train and will most certainly go back at the head of one, knowing no other way, though he will assure you he was born at New Westminster, down near Vancouver, on the Fraser River.

Each summer now found Cataline's mighty strength ebbing away from him. Ninety years

found him none so limber at riding the trail to see that seventy or eighty pack-horses got safely across a river in flood or manœuvred a turn in the cliff where the foothold had broken away as he had been at forty.

His packers got drunk on the trail and got away with it; they lost horses, lost government packs and rigging; and when they had lost or ruined the greater part of his outfit, the old man bowed his head and sold what remained to George Beirnes, who was the third man to take on the contract for the Yukon Telegraph Trail and who still has it.

So Cataline lived on in a little log cabin that Beirnes built for him on his own ranch. This is about twenty-two miles north of Hazelton, a great green clearing bordered by the forest, in the valley between the Kitwancools and the Kiskagaas Mountains. The forest is light here and there is an undergrowth of many flowers all the spring and summer long, so that the air is scented from the bursting of the cottonwood buds and the balsam till it is sweet with dog-roses and honeysuckle, and so on to the autumn and the damp brown bracken and moss.

Here it was that Cataline ended his days, where he could keep an eye on his beloved horses and mules, remnant of those that he had brought with him from California, he who knew no other means of transit, never having seen a railway train. When his

ninety-second June came round and the Telegraph Trail was gay with masses of roses, pink and red, sweet with honeysuckle and all aflutter with shy bluebirds and huge black and yellow butterflies, old Cataline hobbled out for the last time to watch the pack-train start. When the last horse was out of sight round the bend, he turned away.

"When the leaves fall, I die," he said.

And so it was. He was taken to the hospital at Hazelton, bowed with the weight of ninety-two years and hard work, and there he died. But his soul lives on in the trails that he loved and in the hearts of his friends.

The spring that George Beirnes took over the pack-train is remembered in the district by reason of a certain incident characteristic of the man. That was the spring the Skeena was in flood—the terrible racing Skeena—and the bridge was out. Beirnes kept his horses down at Hazelton then and there was no way of getting them across the river but to swim them over. Time was flying and the Y. T. T. must be supplied. The men in those far-away cabins might be running out of their year's supply of flour or matches or tobacco.

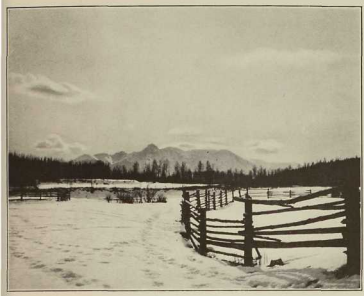
So the whole country-side turned out to witness the riskiest thing they had seen in a land where risks are a part of everyday life. They watched Beirnes take to the water on the bell-mare and swim

across the Skeena, and they watched the seventy-five other horses all plunge into the water after their leader, fighting the turbid gray waters, their heads looking like black specks in the distance. And they saw Beirnes land, dripping wet and laughing, on the opposite bank and wave his hand to them. For he lost never a horse that time!

When he bought up the remainder of old Cataline's outfit, Beirnes took on, also, Dave Wiggins as a sort of heirloom, and as Dave has been following pack-trains most of his life he was made foreman. So Dave follows in Cataline's footsteps, perpetuating, in the remotest heart of central British Columbia, Mexican names for the ways and parts of a pack-train, and old Mexican customs, even unto the point of eating black beans three times a day with chili and half a tin of red pepper over them to give them a fillip.

I came on Dave sitting under a canvas in the sun, mending *coronas,* which are the blanket pads that go on the horses' backs under the heavy aparejos, a different pad for each of the sixty-five horses, each according to his fat. And Dave knows to a nicety how well covered are the bones of his army. He was working in the middle of a big corral with the sixty-five aparejos ranged in a circle round the fence.

"This 'ere 's Nancy's," he explained, re-thread-



I STOOD ALONE IN KISPIOX VILLAGE IN MIDWINTER AND HEARD AN INDIAN SINGING THE "WOLF SONG" DOWN BY THE SKEENA. THIS SHOWS ROCHER DEBOULÉ MOUNTAIN IN THE DISTANCE.

ing his needle. "She wants a bit more paddin' than the others. Won't never put on no fat, won't Nancy; she 's nervous as a kitten. Nex' one 's Siwash. I always take 'em in the same order every year. . . . No, no names on 'em, but I know, and the hosses know their own aparejos every time! Take Siwash: he 's been footin' that trail for nineteen year an' he knows the turns better 'n me, an' he whinnies comin' near every feedin'-ground from Burnin' Camp to Little Summit! . . . See that there cover wi' all the fal-de-rangle stitchin' on it? Well, that there 's Mexican—de good Lord only knows how old. Cataline brought it up along wi' himself. . . . That las'-of-all aparejo belong President McKinley."

"President McKinley?" I queried in bewilderment.

"Sure! Oh, he 's only a mule; Cataline called him that. Been packin' for twenty-six years, used to pack three hundred and thirty pounds clear to Ninth Cabin! Now he 's gettin' on, only takes two hundred and twenty pounds. Gimme mules, every time! I known one pack four hundred and twenty pounds at a pinch, as far as Fifth Cabin. One time a hoss lost his footin', goin' round the rock there, and fell over two hundred and twenty feet down into the river an' was drownded dead. But ye cain't get no more mules now."

How he keeps the figures in his head, Heaven knows, for Dave can neither read nor write, but he can tell to a fraction of a pound just exactly how much each one of his sixty-five steeds is able to carry. He begins weeks ahead, mending every scrap of harness and outfit, and arranging it in order against the great day of their setting out up the trail.

The freight, sent up from the big wholesale merchants in Vancouver by ship and train to Hazelton and thence by wagon to Beirnes's ranch, is sorted in the yard and divided into heaps according to the cabin it is destined for, every parcel weighed and marked with its weight; there are usually about two tons to a cabin, which it takes all of seventeen horses to pack.

There are sugar, tea, flour, brush-hooks, cartridges, old magazines, and dried fruits; kerosene tins full of matches; clothing, candles, and coal-oil. An amazing diversity of articles and supplies; enough of everything to last the year round, until the pack-train goes up again next June.

Awful thing it would be, for instance, if Ninth Cabin ran out of matches before the year was up! He might walk to Eighth, thirty-odd miles away, or telegraph to the linesman there to meet him halfway; but he must go no farther than Eighth, which, after all, might be suffering from a like shortage.

If he sent to civilization for matches, it would take a month to get them—if the trail was passable—and cost something like two years' pay. In the dead of winter the trail might be blocked with fifteen feet of snow and utterly impassable.

There are two men to each cabin, an operator and a linesman, and their term of service is three years at a stretch. Some government official with sympathy enough to realize that one's best friend may get on one's nerves if one lives with him for three years and sees no other soul, decreed that there should be two separate cabins at every post after the first, which is supposed to be well within the pale of civilization, being only thirty miles north of Hazelton.

But, even so, one can imagine the taut nerves. Think of White, who might be of a serious turn, moody and a rare talker, shut up for three years with Black, who is facetious and never stops talking! We can sympathize with the operator who sent a telegram to headquarters to say that he couldn't stand the way the linesman sniffed. He had stood it for two years and three hundred days, but was blessed if he could stand it for another minute. Then he walked away into the bush and never came back. Was never heard of again.

After the pack-train has come and gone in midsummer—and there is rarely a white man with it;

only old Dave Wiggins and seven Indians or breeds to exchange the time of year with—after this nothing! Perhaps a couple of prospectors may go through in the late summer, in the autumn maybe George Beirnes himself, taking a hunter out after big game. Then when the first snows have fallen and frozen, making it possible for a dog-team on the trail, a few Indians may pass by going in to their trap-lines for the winter.

The men of the cabins have nothing more to look forward to then but the return of these few. Beirnes and his man may not come back the same way. The Indians will not be out till late spring or even summer. The prospectors probably will never return, or they may push right through to Telegraph Creek and go out by Atlin and down the coast.

In the summer the mail is passed by hand along the trail. The linesman from First Cabin meets the linesman from Second half-way, and so on. It takes some weeks to reach Ninth Cabin. In winter it takes months.

Every morning at nine o'clock the time is wired through along the Y. T. T., and directly after that each cabin must send in a weather report. From 'way down south at Ashcroft, on the main line, press despatches are wired through to Dawson, so that although they may not see a newspaper for months at a time, the cabins can keep themselves posted in

the affairs of the outside world. But only too frequently they lose interest.

There was one operator who became certain that he was being charged with electricity by the crows. When wires came through from his cabin to report: "Crows worse this morning. . . . Big one on dead spruce won't leave me alone. . . . Two very high-powered crows affected my spine, sitting on wires now," the other cabins sat up and took notice.

Little by little the poor man was cajoled down the trail, until at last he came to Beirnes's ranch, where the patrol-wagon was waiting to take him to Hazelton and thence to an asylum. But years afterward he turned up again on the Y. T. T., drawn thither by an irresistible longing to see again those crows that had surcharged him.

A man must be more than moderately well balanced to withstand the loneliness of the Y. T. T. And if it is not madness that results, it may still be suicide. They tell of a linesman far up in one of the distant cabins, who came running to meet the pack-train. His partner, it seemed, had been ticking off the days till its coming, had fallen into the habit of watching for it, gradually forsaking meals and sleep and work while he stood at the door, straining his eyes down the trail for the first sight of the bell-mare. And the pack-train was several days late.

"Ride on, man, and tell him they 're coming," the

linesman implored Dave. "He 's been getting worse these two days past!"

And Dave galloped on. But, nearing the cabin, he saw no figure at the gate nor yet at the doorway, and they found him, later, hanging from a tree behind the shed.

Some there be, however, who love the life and come out at the end of three years for a two months' holiday, with all their savings and a nice little wad besides that they have made by trapping, and they go cheerfully back for another three years on the trail.

It was a great day when Sourdough Sawyer came out on leave. He had wired to Hazelton to an old pard who went up as far as Beirnes's ranch to meet him with a bottle of rum; and when the last toast had been quaffed in that hospitable kitchen and the bottle was dry, they rolled down the trail together, those two, perfectly happy and beautifully blind.

I stopped at Beirnes's ranch when preparations were being made for the departure of the pack-train. We sat down to meals a cosmopolitan crew. There were George Beirnes himself, his sister and her husband from the prairies, a Swede, Dave Wiggins the colored man, one or more Indians, and I.

He is an early bird, is George; in fact I doubt that he ever goes to bed at all. The nights are short up there in the summer and scarcely has darkness

fallen when it is high dawn again. I rose at seven and thought I had done well, but I was greeted with jeers.

"How do you expect me to show you the country if you lie abed the best part of the day? Here I have shod a horse, mended that gate, and done a hundred chores while I 've been awaitin' for you!"

There was a horse at my disposal and I rode up as far as First Cabin several times. We lunched with the occupant thereof, who was carrying on temporarily as operator and linesman both, with twenty-five miles of line to the south and some twelve to the north to keep in repair. This much walking for a man suffering, as he was, from internal trouble was something of a heroic feat. He was to be relieved on July first, and he had been ticking off the long June days on a large calendar, having been up there for six years without a break and never having been out even as far as Hazelton.

"Well, you have company to-day, anyway," I said.

"Been a sight too much traffic up this way lately," he grumbled as he took down the poles in the fence for the horses to enter, "a man don't get no rest! Last week the advance pack-train went through to look to the bridges, and yesterday two squaws from Kispiox to meet Peter Haimadam. They 're camping down there by the river. Makes me feel kind

o' crowded out. Peter 's expected out some time this week with his winter's catch; they say he 's got a powerful lot o' beaver!"

Peter Haimadam is rather a notorious Indian hereabouts. He was outlawed for many years for a killing, but eventually he was arrested, tried, and acquitted. He has a great reputation as a guide and Beirnes sometimes sends him out with hunters.

First Cabin has a wonderful garden. The soil is of the richest, and the radishes and potatoes we had for lunch were of a size and a lusciousness past telling. There are so many wild berry fruits in these parts that it is hardly necessary to grow any The operator's wife had lived up at First Cabin with him until the children were of school age, and she had put up rows of bottles full of fruits and vegetables and pickles.

When the pack-train is on the move there is very little rest for the packers or the horses either. Says Dave Wiggins: "I start in t' holler roun' two o'clock mornin's," and holler he does, till every one of his seven men is up and about his appointed task. The order of the day is carried out with the military precision of a well-drilled army. Dave learned much from old man Cataline.

Breakfast is at half-past four o'clock, but before that the cook, who rides the bell-mare in front of the train, rings the bell as a signal for her and

KISPIOX, NEAR HAZELTON; THAT SILENT INDIAN VILLAGE WITH STRANGE TOTEM POLES GROWING IN THE STREET.

she comes trotting up to take her place in front of her aparejo. All the other horses and mules follow her and stand waiting in their places. Then breakfast, and after this begins the packing. One man saddles the horses, another follows to put the packs on the saddles. The foreman and another come next to inspect and cinch the packs with the double-diamond hitch, the truest and safest hitch known and used by packers from time immemorial.

When all is ready the bell is rung again, and off they go with the cook on the bell-mare leading—the whole cavalcade of sixty horses, with a man on a saddle-horse to every ten pack-horses. The foreman rides up and down the whole length of the train to see that all is well and none switch off.

When the bell-mare comes to a bad bridge or a windfall or a swift river to be forded, the cook rings the bell and calls a halt. Then Dave rides ahead and stands by till they are all past the danger safely. Sometimes it is a creek in flood and he has to swim the horses over one by one; at times it is a turn on the narrow rock path where the footing has crumbled away. The mules step over unconcernedly, but the younger horses stand shivering and snort their horror at the rushing river far below.

Nearly every year a horse goes down at some point along the trail, even though an advance-guard

is sent out—a small pack-train with several men to open up the trail, repair bridges, and cut away deadfalls in preparation for the main outfit.

Every night a halt is called at one of the various spots along the trail where there are natural feeding-grounds, where the wild pea-vine and vetch grow knee-deep and there is the young fireweed and plenty of succulent green plants and mountain grasses. The horses know the feeding-grounds well, just as they know the trail even when it is so overgrown as to be almost indistinguishable to the men, having followed it, most of them, for fourteen and fifteen years, some of them for more.

So the first night out they halt at "Burning Camp," the next at "Big Flat," then "Old Kildo," and on to "Poison Mountain," "Wire Cache," "Totem Pole Camp," and past others to "Blackwater," which is near the hunting grounds of the Kiskagaas Indians. It is near here that one of the forks of the old "Grease Trail" crosses, coming east and south from the coast. More of this in another chapter.

Past Sixth Cabin and the trail runs through the Ground-Hog Country, of unexplored wealth in coal and other minerals, now occupied solely by the bighorn, the goat, and the grizzly, and ranging herds of caribou and moose.

So right away north, following the Naas River

with a turn to the west to "Quarterway" and "Little Summit," till at last they come to the end of the journey and camp at Ninth Cabin, which is away down in a hollow right beside the roaring Naas. It is stiff going and steady going, with no rest for man or beast till the evening halt is called, generally six, seven, and eight miles a day, depending on the location of the feeding-grounds, except for the long thirteen-mile stretch between Sixth Cabin and the Naas, which is easy going.

When the halt is called, the bell-mare is tied up and all the others bunch round her. Every man again to his task: one loosens the packs, another takes them off and lays them on the ground behind the horses in a great circle; meanwhile still another is busy cutting firewood and the cook goes about his own particular job. After supper the horses are turned loose to forage for themselves. Only about three hours' sleep for the men before Dave "starts in t' holler" and they are up and on the trail again.

One wonders what it will be like twenty years hence, this scarce-known Yukon Telegraph Trail; whether the tinkling of the bell-mare will still break up the silences of those lonely valleys once a year; whether the moose and the caribou will still come to sniff suspiciously at the dead camp-fires in the feeding-grounds; whether the goat will stand atop of the crags at snow-level and watch that long train

of horses winding its way like a slow caterpillar round the rocks on the other side of the river, far down below.

Or will a greedy outside world come to hear of the wealth in the mountains, and bring its mining engineers and its derricks and its high-powered Holt tractors to shatter the story of the Yukon Telegraph Trail?

It may be, it must be, that in time enterprising farmers will push their way north, little by little, from Hazelton, as even now they have come into the Kispiox Valley, attracted thither by the lush, green, prodigal fertility of the land along the rivers, the tranquil, unbelievable beauty of that unknown virgin land that has slept, untouched, through all the centuries.

And what of the telegraph men who live in the nine cabins? Will they still be there, twenty years hence, straining their eyes at the gate for the coming of the pack-train in midsummer? Those men who never strike, who shout no shout, who wave no flag, who have no other intent but to do their duty in those lonely places: to keep the line in good repair so that the Yukon may communicate with the world, though it means trudging many weary miles in the heat of the longest day, or digging themselves and their cabins out of the snow in the depth of winter. Worse still, it means living in deadliest

ALL THE APAREJOS RANGED IN A CIRCLE ROUND THE CORRAL AND DAVE SITTING UNDER A SHELTER IN THE MIDDLE, MENDING THEM.

monotony, monotony to the point of madness, year in and year out.

In the words of Kipling's immortal song, "Let us now praise famous men, Men of little showing. . . . For their work lives after them, Greater than their knowing. . . ."

CHAPTER IX

THE INDIANS OF CENTRAL BRITISH COLUMBIA

IT is curiously difficult to obtain accurate information about the Indians of central British Columbia. It is impossible to find any that is definitely authentic in detail. Much has been written about the Indians of southern British Columbia, of Vancouver Island and the North-Pacific coast, but the central interior, which has been neglected while these other parts have been developed, has yet to find its reliable historian.

All the data that one has to go upon are the writings resultant from the travels of Father Adrien G. Morice, explorer, and of a few fur-traders and the reports of the government Indian agents, all of which are vague and confused and flatly contradict one another in fundamentals. There is no other source of reference.

The earlier reports of government commissions held to enquire into Indian affairs, roundabout 1870, divide the central-interior Indians into just two large divisions, the Takalies, otherwise Chilcotins, otherwise Carriers, which were those between the

Rockies and the Coast Range,—roughly, between the fifty-second and fifty-fourth parallels,—and the Sicanees, all those north of the fifty-fourth parallel. The Tsimpsean Nation comprised all the coast tribes (except the Haidas, who stood alone) between Bella Coola and the Alaskan boundary and those living on the Skeena River.

At a slightly later date, Father Morice again makes more subtle distinctions. He divides the central interior into four great nations: (1) the Sicanees "on the west slope of the Rockies and throughout adjacent territory to the 53rd. Parallel"; (2) the Babines, round Babine Lake and along the Bulkley Valley, whose women used to wear a bit of bone between their lower lip and their teeth, so that French-Canadian fur-traders came to call them "the Lippy People"; (3) the Carriers, from Stuart Lake to Alexandria on the Fraser; and (4) the Chilcotins, inhabiting all the great plain lands of that district which is still called Chilcotin.

According to Father Morice these all belonged to the same ethnic group. But the fact that the territories he assigns to them overlap one another considerably and run from north to south and from east to west in a confused jumble, makes one inclined to doubt his opinions. He has, however, collected a great many interesting historical facts about them.

The latest Dominion Government report, in 1924, sums up the central and northern-interior Indians as the Athabascan tribes, with a contempt for detail that is economical but unconvincing and is a tabulation that one can scarcely take seriously coming as it does from a department that has allowed so many changes in historic names.

All reports are agreed upon two points, that the Sicanees to the north are a nomadic tribe about whom very little is known at all. They are still, one supposes, the wildest and least civilized of any Indians on the North-American continent. Also, that the Chilcotins were the most warlike of all the interior tribes and the terror of all to the north and south of them. As late as 1863 they massacred a party of men employed, under a Mr. A. C. Waddington, in making a road from the coast to Cariboo, through Chilcotin. By their neighbor Indians to the south I have been shown the very trails by which the Chilcotins used to come down on the warpath.

According to local information,—and this perhaps is the most reliable source of all,—we find that the Babines are the same as the Hagwelgits under another name (Hag-wel-git meaning "the well-dressed people"), whose chief centers are Moricetown, so named by Father Morice, Fort Babine at the north

end of Babine Lake, which consists of a small but lucrative Hudson's Bay Company post, and Hazelton, at the confluence of the Bulkley and Skeena Rivers.

Just a few miles east of Hazelton is the Hagwelgit Cañon on the Bulkley River, which is the exact traditional point of division between the meat-eating Indians of the interior and the fish-eating Indians of the coast. The latter were known as the Getikshans, "the people of the Skeena," and these, with the Metlakatlas, Kwakiutls, and others, formed part of the great Tsimpsean Nation, according to Father Morice.

There are many tales about the Hagwelgit Cañon. How the river at one time got blocked up so that the salmon could not pass up inland to spawn, and the Father of all the Salmon took a rock from the top of the great mountain behind and rolled it down into the river so that it smashed through the blockade and made a chasm for the salmon to pass through. Hence the name of that ragged mass of mountain behind Hazelton, the Rocher Deboulé.

A still earlier traditional point is a few miles down the Skeena at Dum-bath-an, which Indian legend says is the original birthplace of the human race, of the almost sacred salmon,—the food of man,—and of snow.

The Hagwelgits are rather bigger people than the coast Indians, coarse of feature but with well-opened eyes. They are great horsemen and their gala dress is of moose- or caribou-hide embroidered by the squaws, who are expert at beadwork and the making of gloves and moccasins. And their chief food is meat.

The amount of meat that an Indian of the interior will devour is almost incredible. I have known two of them acting as guides for a hunting-party to put away more moose-steak inside of them in one day than three white men could eat in two weeks. They would eat a hearty supper with the rest and an hour or so afterward would be seen over a camp-fire of their own, busily roasting enormous cuts of moose as a snack before turning in. The Indians kill for food as a natural instinct, and not for pleasure, as the white man in the pride of his boasted but questionable civilization.

Almost the only form of vegetable that custom allows them is a jelly-like substance found just under the bark of the young jack-pine in early summer when the sap is flowing strong. Then you may see among the young growth within a radius of miles around an Indian village, the small pines stripped on one side (so as not to hurt their growth) of a bit of bark three or four inches wide and per-

haps half a yard long, from beneath which the squaws have collected this jelly and stored it in barrels.

Any kill near home provides an Indian village with an excuse for a pow-wow, so that every member of the tribe may partake of the meat. Some miles from Vanderhoof, which is about fifty miles west of Prince George on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, there is a village of the Stony Creek Indians that is perhaps the largest remaining stronghold of the nation spoken of by Father Morice as the Carriers.

I came one day upon two elderly Indians from this reserve, making a great todo about a couple of bear cubs that they had treed in the bush close by the road. The little ones were plainly to be seen swaying about in the tops of two tall poplars, and we knew that the mother was not far off. The doughty warriors chopped down the trees, caught one cub alive and killed the other, and then insisted on my taking their photographs in every possible position. Eventually they also killed the poor old mother bear and we heard that the whole village had a grand pow-wow at which every man, woman, and child had their fill and to spare of bear-steak.

Strange how variously the Indians regard the camera! Most of those of the coast object strenu-

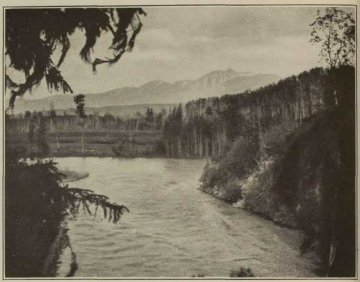
ously to being photographed. At a salmon cannery on the Skeena, whither the Indians come year after year from far and near, they would have none of it, being mortally afraid of its evil effects, and plead I never so politely they would always turn their backs at the crucial moment.

On the other hand those of the interior are only too pleased to possess a likeness of their faces, however amateurish, to put over their graves when they themselves are no more. I was once traveling over the road from Hazelton to Telkwa and met with one, Antoine Jimmy of Houston, riding along in great style, with a spare horse, to a potlatch at Moricetown. I passed the time of day with him and enquired tentatively if he would care to have his portrait taken.

"No tankyou please," he drawled in his soft Indian voice. "I no likum very!" And only the fact of his broad smile and the way he sat up and pushed his hat back on his forehead gave me the clue to his meaning.

"You send me one, no?" he asked anxiously when the deed was done. "Me Antoine Jimmy of Houston."

I promised and when I got back to Vancouver I sent him one by post and in due course received the following letter:



THE KISPIOX RIVER, SHOWING THE KISKAGAAS RANGE IN THE DISTANCE.

Der Sir Mrs. H:

I *Leren* yous latta at 3. I get yous big mark *Lep Bay* of yous latta. Tangyou Mrs. H.

Your struly
Antoine Jimmy
Houston P. O. By By.

The italicized words are unintelligible to anybody but himself. The "By By" at the end is an affectionate touch of his own.

The potlatch, so firmly forbidden by law to the south, is more or less winked at farther north. The chiefs or the big heads of the clans hold their potlatches, each in turn, every year. A chief can hold his chieftainship only according as he is able to give away more than his rival. So great feasts are held, attended by all the Indians of the tribe from all over the country, at which the host gives away all his worldly goods, blankets, furs, guns, canoes, horses, and so on. But the unit of value is a blanket—in old days those woven by hand and since the coming of the trader, Hudson's Bay blankets.

This is by no means so generous as it sounds, for the recipient is obliged to repay these gifts with interest at the earliest possible date! The ancient "blanket-dance" is still danced at times even now, when the squaws sit around in a circle and clap to keep time and the chief hurls the blankets, knotted

together, into the ring of braves who twist them each around his body till the men are all bound so tightly together that the chief has to come and cut the blanket between every couple. He who has been quickest and most expert in twisting gets the largest portion of blanket.

It was in Hazelton that I first heard of the Grease Trail, a trail now long deserted, half forgotten, but used as a highway by the coast Indians coming to trade with those of the interior through the centuries before ever white men came to Canada. It stretches from the village of Ayance on the Naas River for about fifty miles southwest, across-country, to Kitwanga on the Skeena.

The extracted grease of oolichans (a fish peculiar to the northern Pacific coast) was the most precious of all the commodities the coast Indians had to offer; hence the name of the Grease Trail. Other commodities were sea-lion whiskers and abalone shells; cakes of dried seaweed, which were used medicinally; smoked oolichans; herring-roe dried on kelp; cakes of dried blueberries and saskatoon berries, and receptacles full of jellied berries: woven mats and carvings in stone and wood, and woven basket-work. The last-named is a specialty of the coast Indians; those of the interior make baskets of birch-bark.

These things they traded to the Hagwelgits in re-

turn for furs, moose- and caribou-hide, and marmot robes. But no one uses the Grease Trail now, except a random prospector or very occasionally government surveyors in the course of their map-making. One of these told me that in all the miles between Ayance and the Jackpine Flats above Kitwanga he met not a single soul on the trail.

The trail to the north of Kitwanga, a little Indian (Getikshan) village on the Skeena about thirty miles southwest of Hazelton, runs slightly to the west of the Kitwancool Range, which is the undisputed territory of the Kitwancool Indians (also Getikshan), the most difficult of all in these parts and best left alone. It was only last spring that they turned back a man and his wife who were adventuring into that little-known country and escorted them to Skeena Crossing with a hint that trespassers would be prosecuted.

Last autumn a timber-cruiser penetrated into Kitwancool country with a companion. The two men suddenly found themselves surrounded in some mysterious way by Indians, who took them to tribal headquarters at the point of guns. The braves of the tribe were summoned by signals and the chiefs held a solemn consultation over the two whites, who were made to promise to depart anon from the district without interfering with Kitwancool timber limits. After which ceremony they also were es-

corted back to less dangerous country—at the point of guns.

Last summer when I was in Prince Rupert I found one of the Kitwancool chiefs in the back fastnesses of a store belonging to a friend of mine, a fur-trader whose name is known to every Indian between the Tête Jaune Cache and the Queen Charlottes. They were both deep in trade while I occupied myself with admiration of the festal robe of some bygone high Shimawgut which was hanging there. It was full-length and cape shape, made of the fleece of mountain goat and cedar bark, hand-woven over the knees of squaws, colored with dyes made from mosses, lichens, and ammonia, and inlaid with pieces of copper and abalone-shell; and the pattern of it was the history of the tribe. It must have been handed down for generations, from father to son, until the family became extinct with the ravages of white men and civilization and there was no one to inherit it.

The head-dress hung beside it, silent symbol of a bygone glory, made of forty-five ermine skins, decorated with the whiskers of the sea-lion and the downy feathers of the sea-puffin. It had a carved wooden face, the teeth of which were abalone shells.

Everywhere were the carvings of the Haidas, those famed inhabitants of the Queen Charlottes, once known as the Terror of the North. Their mighty war-canoes were a dreaded sight to all the

A FAMILY FROM THE STONY CREEK RESERVE NEAR VANDERHOOF, CENTRAL B. C. (OF THE CARRIER TRIBE). THE MOTHER HAD A PAPOOSE ON HER BACK, BUT IT WAS TERRIFIED OF THE CAMERA AND DUCKED WHENEVER IT SAW IT.

lesser coast tribes of half a century ago. The relic chest of another chieftain stood by, one of the Tungas, once of Alaska, now extinct; it was carved all over with symbols and stories of the whale, the fin-backed whale, the crest of his family. And over the little store, where the leisurely Indian comes to trade and the pale-face comes to look at curios, there hangs the sadness of the departed glory of a once mighty race.

But I persuaded the solemn Kitwancool chief—I and the fur-trader, between use—to don the robe and head-dress of his ancestors and come out into the street, to be photographed. He was rather doubtful of the consequences of the evil eye thus turned upon him.

Kispiox is one of the nearest Indian villages to Hazelton, about twelve miles north, along the Yukon Telegraph Trail. As I was passing through one day, the witch-doctor invited me into his house and showed me some of his treasures. I followed him through the door in to a huge barn-like room with all but boarded-up windows. There were some wooden benches about and a table at the side whereon were bowls of steaming porridge and a billiken of tea.

Dogs lay in various corners (every conceivable variety of dog is used for packing in the winter) and about the floor were rolls of Hudson's Bay Com-

pany blankets, deerskins, bearskins, and wolf-pelts in miscellaneous heaps. It was not until I saw one of the heaps stirring and the bright eyes of a wee papoose peep out that I realized the family were all asleep, or pretending to be, here on the floor under the rugs—uncles and aunts, cousins and brothers, daughters and sons.

These whose ancestors once slept in the open and clad themselves as Nature intended, are now the victims of white "civilization" and the consequent scourges of the whites, tuberculosis and venereal diseases, unknown amongst the red men before the pale-face came.

A trunk, of that type wherein all Indians now keep their most sacred treasures, was dragged out, and the medicine-man's rattle produced, carved in the likeness of a willow-grouse. More festal robes and a head-dress for certain dances, an awesome thing of painted wood, with glaring eyes and a beak that opened as if to swallow you, worked by a string from below.

(And here may I gently hint to rich American tourists that the rattle of the medicine-man loses its mystic value on the mantel-shelf of a New York drawing-room, and the most dignified of totem poles looks ridiculous in the garden of a Californian bungalow!)

I was shown also an ancient stone lately dug up

by the Kispiox Indians, having evidently been buried for countless centuries, with hieroglyphics on it that no one has yet deciphered but which may yet show an unknown race as prehistoric inhabitants of these parts.

The medicine-man uses the rattle with a view to attracting the attention of the evil spirit possessing the person of the afflicted one. Also, songs are sung to charm the spirit out of the sick body, a method which after all has its origin in faith-healing.

But there are no greater herbalists than the Indians, and our own physicians would do well to gather all the lore that the red men will part with on these matters before it is lost to tradition in the march of progress. They have a certain cure for cancer, for pyorrhea, and for other ills, that have been tried and tested by prospectors and fur-traders who have been favored with the secret. One of their salves for an open wound is the inside of the stems of the devil's-club mixed with the powdered leaves of the thimbleberry, all made into a paste with that black mud found on the banks of certain lakes.

None of the Indians hereabouts are treaty Indians; they are all completely independent, living chiefly by fur-trading. Each band has its own well-defined hunting-grounds, and woe be to those of the Kiskagaas if they are caught trapping on the

grounds of the Kispiox people, or to those of Kitseukla if they dare to trespass on Kitwancool lands!

The best hunting-grounds roundabout the Upper Skeena are said to be those round Blackwater Lake, and these are ruled over by Chief Wemun-Osak and his squaw, Mabel Blackwater.

Once and once only did he allow himself to be photographed, being specially dressed for the occasion in a rain-coat with a blue Masonic ribbon over it and a tall hat, that he found Heaven knows where, with a crown painted on the front of it, "all same King George." His squaw wore her most prized possession, a "button-blanket," made in times of yore specially for the squaws by the early Hudson's Bay Company traders and trimmed with the pearl buttons so dear to their hearts. These button-blankets are now very rare and very valuable.

That vast portion of British Columbia to the north of the Grand Trunk Railway line is far too little known to be completely prospected or even accurately mapped. It is not settled at all. Therefore the Indians to the north live more or less as they did before the white man came. And civilization has not yet destroyed that mysterious means of communication known to primitive peoples and known *only* to them.

I know a Mrs. Mc—— who once spent two years out with her husband, a prospector, in northern

British Columbia, in parts where no white woman had ever been seen before. They were camped somewhere about the headwaters of the Finlay River, which is Sicanee country, and she was alone one day when two Indians came to the tent and sat in front of it for a long space, gazing at her in silent admiration.

When they did speak,—and they knew only two or three words, picked up from fur-traders, that were comprehensible to her, and nothing of the Chinook lingo known to their brothers farther south,—they surprised her more than ever she had surprised them. They told her just where her husband was at that hour . . . and would she trade them some tobacco for furs . . . and they had been on the look-out for the McC——s for some time, knowing that they had left Hazelton with six dog-teams, eight moons back!

Now, there are hundreds of miles of unpopulated, trackless country with no visible means of communication over it, even by word of mouth, between the Sicanees and their nearest neighbors the Hagwelgits, who do not speak the same language. So how came these Indians to know that two white people had left Hazelton on such a date, with six dog-teams? The McC——s could never explain the puzzle. They traded the tobacco for a newly killed moose which supplied them with meat for some time

to come, and the Indians kept for themselves the unborn moose-calf, which is regarded as their greatest delicacy.

Yet another case: G. B. was once out prospecting far to the north and he had with him an Indian from Kispiox. They came up with a Sicanee. The two Indians could not understand each other's tongues, though G. B. could speak a little of both. The Sicanee told him to tell the Kispiox man that his house had burnt down two sleeps ago and he had best go home at once. G. B. translated the message, which he himself did not take seriously. To his surprise the man from Kispiox was much upset and fretted about the matter all the weeks they were homeward bound. Sure enough, when they got back to Kispiox they found that the house had been burned to the ground on the very day that the Sicanee had said!

One hot summer noon I sat on the porch of a cottage in Hazelton, when the village was wrapped in post-prandial somnolence, and there was little to disturb the silence but the droning of the children saying their tables, in the school at the other end of the street. Then, from the top of the hill there came a wailing, twenty or thirty folk wailing in unison.

"That is an Indian funeral," explained my host. "It is a baby's funeral. Look, they are all in white!"

And far up on the hillside I saw that white procession of mourners, wailing ceaselessly.

"That funeral is a concession to the white man's religion," said my host, "and the nearest they 'll ever get to it. They love the music and the show, but underneath they are as savage as they were before the white man came—and always will be. You can't tame an Indian. You may pass him in the street one hour, dressed in white man's clothes, speaking our lingo, to all appearances civilized. But the next hour that very man is just as likely to be dressed in war-paint and feathers, shaking rattles, beating drums, singing the war-song or the death-song, in some far secret corner of the woods unknown to the white man. I have heard them, myself. No, you 'll never tame the Indians."

And time has proved his words to me in things I have seen and heard since.

CHAPTER X

A-HUNTING WITH GEORGE

I WENT to stay at George Beirnes's ranch, up the Yukon Telegraph Trail. The train gets to Hazelton somewhere in the wee small hours, and he met me as arranged, in the same old car that he had used the time before. It was the first that Henry ever made, that car—minus hood and bonnet, no floor, steering-gear tied up with wire, cracked windshield held in place with string and half a shingle, innards that groaned and rattled like half a dozen castanets.

But there was George's honest face beaming a greeting. He looked taller than ever in the dim light of the station lamp which showed up the kindly wrinkles of his face like a search-light. And there was the same old battered straw hat pushed back on his fair head and the same disgracefully old pair of overalls pushed into boots that came up to his knees.

We rattled and bounded down the hill, through sleeping Hazelton, and took the familiar trail, that is the Y. T. T. itself, that leads to his ranch, twenty-two miles north. He changed gear as we charged

a hill and the car shivered till part of the remaining glass in the wind-shield dropped out and crashed down in front. Then, going round that rocky corner where there is nothing but luck between you and the racing Skeena whirling madly down below, the wire round the steering-rod gave, audibly.

"Gosh darn it!" he laughed. "I did really intend to fix that before I started out, but you know a fellow has n't time . . ." and so we rattled along faster than ever, northward alongside the hurrying Skeena.

We passed by Kispiox as the moon rose late—that silent Indian village with the weird totem poles growing in its center—and pack-dogs of every size and breed came out to bark at us. On along the Telegraph Trail, which is the only trail there is, fairly navigable if you hit the high spots—and George never worries about the low.

We followed along the Kispiox River, past the seventeen-mile bridge, past the ranch belonging to Davison the Icelander, and on till at last we came to George's own ranch, a great clearing of green meadows, skirted with light groves of poplar, birch, and cottonwood: where you look west toward the peaks of the Kitwancools and east toward the Kiskagaas Range; where the river winds through the clearing and the speckled trout and glistening grayling dart unmolested through its waters.

Up on a hillock are the various log buildings of the ranch and, roaming far and near, are the pack-horses that George uses every midsummer for the pack-train that goes up the Telegraph Trail. In the autumn he uses some of them to take out hunting-parties, when he gets any.

That hospitable kitchen is known far and wide. The Indians look in for a meal on their way out to their trap-lines and their hunting-grounds in the winter, coming along on snow-shoes with their dog-teams and muffled to the eyes in fur. And they stop at the ranch on their way out again in the spring, just to say "Howdy" and tell what sort of a catch they have made that season.

Even the Indians have learned to put faith in the straight blue eyes of George Beirnes; they set great store by his word. If you say you are a friend of his you have a welcome to many a house, many a cabin, and many a teepee, between the Yukon and the line of the Canadian National Railway, between the coast and the far side of the Omineca country. Random prospectors stop at the ranch, looking upon it as the last outpost of civilization.

I heard about the hunting-party that George had taken out the previous autumn. They went north along the Telegraph Trail and up into the Klappan Mountains, then across the South Stikine River, coming home by Tacla Lake and the great Babine

Lake. This is about four hundred and ninety miles in all and usually takes from five to eight weeks. This is the trip he takes hunters who want moose or caribou.

I could imagine them riding day after day in single file through the forest, out among those unmapped mountains, camping at night by virgin lakes alive with trout, the peace of whose waters had never been broken by rod or line; trotting through mountain meadows thousands of feet high, where the air goes to one's head like wine. Even now, in mid-September, there were patches of flaming red and orange yellow among the darker green. The early mornings were chill with the tang of frost, and at dawn there was a crisp whiteness outlining every leaf and blade of grass that turned by breakfast-time into myriads of diamonds glistening in the sunshine. Even around the ranch where the trail was soft it was pitted with deer-tracks, and every once in a while we came on the tracks of black bear.

One of that party, George said, was desirous of getting a black-bear skin for a rug and he used to go out with one of the Indians at unearthly hours of the morning and again uncomfortably late at night, but though they actually came within gunshot of one down by the river on a dark evening, he got buck-fever and missed his shot!

That bear must have been laughing up his paws

and become overbold, for the very next night the cook woke up, where he slept under a tree, to hear a scrambling and a scurrying among the pile of provision boxes and supplies. He ran there to see what it was, only to run away again still quicker and waken them all with a shout: *"Hyu skookum bear eat up alla bacon!"* So when the huge coal-black marauder looked up from the bacon to see what was happening, he found three guns pointed dead at him and the one who desired him got him in the heart with his Mauser, after all.

They killed two deer on the trail, for meat, and the Indians were glad of it, being both of the Hagwelgits, the Indians of the interior, who from time immemorial have lived on meat. They consume meat as a schoolboy gulps cream-puffs.

Through the Ground-Hog Country the hunters went and out again, along by the head-waters of the Skeena, mounting higher and higher up into those lovely open meadows that verge on Summit Lake, and then they were right up on the Height of Land where the mighty rivers have their birth. They camped on the lower slopes of the Klappan Mountains and knew they were in the land of the caribou.

They set off on foot next morning at daybreak and climbed far up and around those vast slopes, then down into a valley, across and up among the rocks again, high above the timber-line. All at once

George, who was leading, turned his head and motioned them to come on without a sound. Soft-footed, they climbed up a bluff on their hands and knees, and it was only then they heard what he had heard long before—a sudden clicking and a clashing, followed by dead silence.

"Bulls . . . fighting!" he whispered, and eagerly they all worked their way to the top of the bluff, to a point where they could look over it between the rocks. There, in a little glade of perhaps a quarter of a mile square, they saw an unforgettable sight: two caribou bulls with their antlers locked in deadly combat! Was it by accident they had met and charged? Or had they come there, away from the herd, to fight out their age-old fight for supremacy?

The watchers, breathless with excitement, saw one of them with a dexterous jerk shake his head free of the other's antlers; then both bulls stepped backward, a slow step, measured and ominous. The men could even see the red light in the animals' eyes, fixed and unblinking as they were; and they could see the way their sandy-white ruffs stood up around their necks and right along their spines.

Again the caribou charged, with a terrible rush and a crash of horns that one might have thought could be heard for miles in the silent mountains. They were evenly matched, those two, and in grim, dead earnest: a battle to the death.

The hunters were so interested in the fight that they had long since forgotten all about their guns and purpose, but George brought them to themselves with a "*Shoot—now or never!* The nearest one. Ye 'll never get a better head or a dandier shot!"

The man who shot said he 'd have it on his conscience all his life that he dared to interfere with nature so as to kill a magnificent bull in one of the proudest moments of his existence, and that thereafter he would shoot only with a camera. But the animal might have been killed in battle a few moments later, after all.

The bull fell dead, there at the feet of his foe, and that other was so surprised by the happening that he stood for a moment, unable to take the thing in. Then he looked up and, scenting danger, plunged sideways and galloped off, up over the top of the bluff with a rattle of loose stones and rock, and was lost to sight forever.

The hunters scrambled hastily down to examine the victim and admire the sleek mottled hide of him and the grand spread of the branching antlers. Some of the points had been broken off in the combat just before, but this was the more lasting evidence of the wonder they had seen.

Late that night the party returned with a packhorse and camped on the scene of the struggle while they skinned the game and cut up the meat into con-

venient portions to carry away. The following day George took them to another vantage-point from where they could see, far on the opposite slopes, certain dark moving specks that were of the main herd. They watched them for hours and counted up to fifty, and later, in another place, double that number, but the thrill of that first sight and kill had been sufficient and they wanted no other caribou heads.

Twice they crossed the forks of the South Stikine and struck due east, making for the Tatlatui and Thutade Lakes, where the Finlay River has its birth. The nights were chill and the men snuggled deep into their sleeping-bags. There were red berries on the rowan-trees and second bloom on the dogwoods that year. "The winter will be hard," the Indians predicted from these signs.

Many a time they came on the big splay-footed spoor of a moose, and once, fording a stream with a sand-bar in the middle of it, George stopped and pointed to a moose-track so fresh that the water was still seeping into the bottom of it.

"That there 's a big fellow," George said. "We 'll see more signs of him before we go much farther." And he looked across to the opposite banks. "There you are! See that!" he said, pointing, but the others could see nothing till he led them up to a birch-tree that had been stripped of bark and branches the whole of its length.

"Must be a big chap; look at the reach he has!" George said again, looking upward to the tuft of branches left on top.

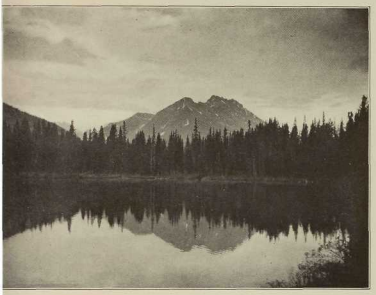
Farther on they saw bushes smashed flat to the ground, branches stripped of their foliage high above their heads, and fresh moose sign.

"If he got our scent," said George, "he 'll be miles away by now, but the wind 's in our favor, if anything, and I guess we 'll go right after him now and chance it."

So they left their horses to go with the pack-train, in another direction, and started off afoot to track their quarry. I cannot remember the whole story of how they followed false scents, redoubled on their path to pick up the true scent again, and of how they never came up with that moose because they came instead face to face with a grizzly when they least expected him!

The hunters excused themselves by saying they thought he was an elephant and when he got up on his hind legs to do business they thought he was two! So it was George, of course, who fired—and apologized afterward. "But you see," he said, "we could n't wait to make arrangements with the likes of him!"

That silver-tip hide made two of the black bear which they had thought large before. They got a moose,—not the one they had tracked but another a



CAMPING AT NIGHT BY VIRGIN LAKES.

week afterward,—by a lake as the beast went down to water one evening at sundown. He stood ten feet at the shoulders, they said, and had a thirty-two-point head on him, with a double shovel left and right. Being an old one, over nine years, he had no bell.

The moose in British Columbia do not yard up as regularly as do their brothers in the east, but in winter-time they go in mortal fear of the big hungry timber-wolves, just the same. And the wolves go about their hunting so strategically that even the gigantic, powerful moose shivers at the sound of their howl, on a dark night when the snow is thick on the ground.

"I 've worked it out from the tracks, time and again," George told me. "I 've seen where the pack has split into three divisions: one part stays behind to yap and howl at his heels so he can't do anything else but move on in front of him. Then there is a division on each side of him, and those close in from time to time, so he 's bound to travel in the direction they want him to, up and out of the valley, higher and higher up the mountain, until they are just out of the timber. And that 's what they want, to get him into an open spot where there are no trees for him to back up against; where there 's no shelter at all and he 's forced to fight for his life on all four sides of him at once, and here they close in and kill.

I 've often come on a moose killed just above timber-line in midwinter."

Another trip on which George takes hunters is north along the Y. T. T. as far as Fourth Cabin, and then east along an old Mounted Police trail, crossing Bear River just north of Bear Lake, on down the Omineca River and back by the Manson Creek trail, across the Babine Lake, and so home. About three hundred miles, taking from four to six weeks.

He has his trips all planned out according to the time the parties want to take and the variety of game they desire. Some men want goat or bighorn and pass by everything else.

There are four varieties of mountain sheep. The real bighorn (*Ovis dalli*) is found farther south, but in the region I am writing about the gray sheep is found (*Ovis Canadiensis*), with horns of a much wider spread though not so massive at the base. Also there is the black or Stone's sheep, and farther north, in the Yukon, another variety still.

The mountain sheep perhaps dies the hardest of all animals, so that even if your stalking has been successful and your aim true, you have not necessarily secured your game. A guide once told me that he hit a ram twice and knew it must have been mortally wounded, yet it got away from him. He came upon it *next day*, tracking it by blood-stains. It had a broken leg and right through its lungs a

bullet-hole! The vitality of mountain sheep is well known to be extraordinary, and it is probably for this very reason that they still exist in such goodly numbers although their enemies are legion.

When the mother sheep has weaned her lambs, high above snow-level where they are safe from marauders excepting the ever-watchful eagle, she has to face the choice of keeping them up there on starvation diet or taking them down to lower levels to feed on the succulent herbs and young growth in the nooks and crannies of the rocks, where they must brave the dangers of prowling bear, wolf, wolverine, and lynx. She usually chooses the latter alternative and stands sentinel with ears alert to every distant crackle of a twig, while her babies frisk and frolic in much the same way as the familiar home field variety.

It is a great life—to come in dog-tired after a long day's trek and hungry enough to eat the hide off a hog's back, as they say. And then to sit round the blazing logs and listen to stories of a life the fringe of which one has only touched. For back there in the inmost heart of British Columbia are wonders scarce to be believed and only a glowing fire in the moonlight and a pipe, hard on a long day's march, will loosen the tongues of chosen men and make them tell what they know.

CHAPTER XI

A WINTER VISIT TO THE HEART OF THE ROCKIES

IN the heart of the Rockies the population is not what you might call thick. There are section-men who plod up and down the railway line to see that all is well with the mighty bridges and trestles, who are there to report land-slides and snow-slides, whose eagle eyes spot a rock on the line nearly as soon as it has fallen, and upon whose infinite vigilance the safety of all travelers depends.

Occasionally you see a trapper's cabin and sometimes, deep in a valley, a lone ranch to whose inhabitants the passing of the two daily trains east- and west-bound is the one event that keeps alive their belief in the existence of a world beyond the mountains. You may see them from the train, coming to the door to wave as it passes.

But these are few and far between. There are leagues upon leagues through the lonely places with no human habitation in sight, where the train pulses cautiously round bluffs and across swift rivers, creeping along narrow ledges cut in snow-topped ramparts with thousands of feet above and a sheer

MOUNT ROBSON, B. C., FROM THE BERG LAKE SIDE.

drop of as many hundreds below: through a magnificent loneliness wherein the long-drawn whistle of the engine becomes a hollow echo flung back and back again among the mountaintops.

There is one wide valley down below the line of the Canadian National which is flanked by mountains so high that they seem to lose themselves in the sky, and which ends in the highest, the most beautiful, the most dangerous mountain in all the Rockies, Mount Robson.

There she stands, a vast pile, glorying in all her 13,068 feet that have been scaled by men with their lives in their hands—first in 1913 by two members of the Alpine Club, and again in 1923 by Jack Hargreaves and Windsor Putnam (though their claim is not acknowledged definitely by the mountaineering clubs), and again in 1924 by members of the Canadian Alpine Club.

There she broods, temperamental as any woman in her varying moods and colors, green glaciers sparkling on her shoulders, a veil of eternal snow over her head, watching through limitless ages the rivers that run from her, on one side into British Columbia and the Pacific, on the other side into Alberta and the Arctic.

And about her stands her court, Mount Mumm, Mount Whitehorn, Mount Resplendent, and other peaks named and unnamed. In summer the tourists

come and do obeisance to her, but in winter, when the passes are blocked and there are four feet of snow on the level, she wraps herself in frozen silence and no one comes, no one but the Hargreaves boys, who live in the ranch down in the valley below.

"Down in the valley" is just a comparative term, for the flag-station that calls itself after Robson is twenty-eight hundred feet above sea-level and the Hargreaves ranch is only a hundred feet or so below it. The Hargreaves and one other family and the section-man who lives at the station are the only inhabitants of the valley.

Here you find a group of log cabins built by the sons three years ago when they homesteaded here, and the ax-work on them is so perfectly finished that you have to stop and admire it. The eldest Hargreaves boy is the best axman anywhere between the Tête Jaune Cache and Edmonton, so they say, just as he is the best shot, and the old man proudly tells the story of how this son once brought down three grizzlies with three successive shots. But George himself would be furious if you mentioned it. He is a hillsman, is George, and as scary of the fair sex as he is of civilization.

He takes his turn with the other brothers, acting guide in the summer, taking parties up to Berg Lake on Robson Summit, to see the "Tumbling Glacier," or showing millionaires from the States where and

how to get the best bighorn, mountain goat, moose or caribou, black bear or grizzly. He also has a certain reputation in the culinary art and can turn out a stew so savory that the bears come for miles around to sniff at it. By this token he is known in the district as "the mulliganest man that ever was."

He and Frank, the second brother, go trapping in the winter; set out on their snow-shoes for supplies and are seen no more for weeks.

"Have you cabins along your trap-line?" I asked Frank, "or do you pack your teepee along?"

"Oh no," he replied casually, "we have our sleeping-bags and sleep out under a tree. It 's a bit chilly at times, but we sleep sound."

This at forty and fifty below! Yes, it surely must be "a bit chilly at times"!

Then comes Roy, more slightly built than the others but born with a speed demon inside of him that makes him a terror on the ice-hockey rink, and that causes men to say, when they see a cloud of dust on the horizon, that they know it for Roy Hargreaves, for he rides like Jehu, son of Nimshi.

And then comes Jack, who has married a wife and is no more scary of the fair sex. Dick brings up the tale of sons; he has more of a bookish turn to him. Over the length and breadth of that land are they known, the Hargreaves boys; men come to them for a house to be built, for a lost trapper to be

located, for a frozen foot to be cured, for snow-shoes to be fashioned; and, because the wild goose has no surer sense of locality than they, the inter-provincial surveyors ask their help in finding the source of rivers, the direction of old Indian trails, and the like. But, with all of this, three of them were overseas and left the best of their health behind them.

We have left till last the guiding spirit of the family, but you would probably meet him first: a wise old man, thin, wiry, and very brisk, with an active alertness that would put to shame most men half his age, with a sadness about his eyes that tells how much his three score years and ten have seen.

So here you have them. And in the summer, tourists come from the uttermost parts of the earth to stay in the biggest of the log cabins, which may house a dozen at a pinch, and bide for a while in that wondrous air, in the shadow, so to speak, of the Queen of the Rocky Mountains.

Here on a summer evening you may sit out on the veranda and listen to the talk of "hunters home from the hills," what time you watch the blue mountains turn to amethyst and their snow caps to a blushing red. If you have keen eyes you may spot goat on the rocks high up above timber-line and make your plans for the morrow's sport.

For myself, I find the Hargreaves ranch just as alluring in midwinter, but few know it then. No

visitors go there in winter, but I was an exception, and I wanted snow-shoeing. For this I was made to put on socks, and yet more socks, until I had on so many pairs I wondered where my feet were. Then my hosts said, "Your toes will freeze; you must put on some more socks!" And when I had on enough socks to set up in business as a hosier, they put moccasins on me and drew a parka of fine oiled silk over my head to keep the wind out. Joined to it was a pointed hood, bordered with fur round the face, and this is the warmest garment that ever was made, invented by the wise Eskimos.

Then my toes were laced into snow-shoes and I was sent forth into the great white snow. After a few somersaults, I found myself skimming over the top of the snow, faster and faster, drinking in that glorious air that goes to your head like oats to the head of a yearling colt.

Way down in the middle of the vast, lonely valley, with the clean blue sky above, and all around eternal ramparts of rock reaching to the top of the world and shutting it out, I saw a train creeping slowly along, half-way up one of the great rock walls. It looked like a tiny black centipede, manœuvering its way round the walls of a castle.

"That 's wheat going to Vancouver," said old man Hargreaves, who was with me, and we counted sixty-two cars of freight. I realized that we were

watching one of the epoch-makings events of the times—the gradual turning of the golden rivers of prairie grain westward instead of eastward; a change which is bringing the eyes of the shipping world to bear on Vancouver as a grain port.

I do not know that summer evenings can hold anything better than the winter evenings around that enormous stove wherein whole birch and spruce logs crackle and roar. Formalities drop off and tongues are loosened. The boys will tell you tales of fights with a moose, a race with black wolves, and how Jack came by the great grizzly pelt he gave his wife for a wedding-present.

But the old man is the best of all. He has a strange medley of memories to offer you—of Clifton College and W. G. Grace; of his boyhood in Yorkshire and of Cardinal Newman; of emigrating to California in 1880; of cattle-ranching in Montana; of Don Pablo and how he snapped his fingers at the United States Government and drove his buffalo into corrals and sold them to the Canadian Government to put in Wainwright Park in Alberta; of lumbering in Oregon and how he finally pushed north into British Columbia because he never could get used to the Stars and Stripes.

Travelers' tales, travelers' tales! A good supper, a smoke, a cold night and a crackling fire—what more can one ask of life?

The boys were waiting for the snow to uncover the passes so that they could go on building more log cabins up at Berg Lake on Robson Pass, which is on the Great Divide between British Columbia and Alberta. These for the convenience of folk who appreciate an altitude of 5500 feet and the adventures of the path thither.

Berg Lake is eighteen miles by pack-horse trail from the ranch, which means six to eight hours' steady riding. You start out through a cedar grove, the last bunch of cedars in the valley,—half a mile of trees like the pillars of a cathedral, some four feet through,—across a bridge over the Fraser in its infancy, and up to what is called Grand Forks.

Another four miles of forest, very dense, and round the north side of a lake called Kinney. When you have reached a height of 3300 feet, you enter the Valley of a Thousand Falls, hemmed in by a shoulder of Mount Robson on one side, Mount Whitehorn and other peaks on the other side. Six or seven miles of this valley, whose walls reach up for 6700 feet, with waterfalls cascading down them all the way along.

Crossing over to the north side, you begin climbing, a switch-back trail, single file, with a steady nerve and a stout faith in your horse's footing, until you reach the level of the Emperor Falls; and from

here you can look perpendicularly down into the Grand Cañon.

Past the Emperor Falls themselves, where the trail is in places hewn out of the solid rock, across the Flying Trestle, which is bolted to the rock with steel rods. This was originally built by Donald Phillips, a Jasper guide (he who is known as "Curly" of that ilk), and rebuilt by the Hargreaves.

And so you come at last to Berg Lake, which, they say, is really a glacial depression, three miles long. The pack-trail comes out opposite the famed "Tumbling Glacier," that you may see miles away sparkling on Robson's shoulder. At times it breaks off into thousands of tons of icebergs and churns up the lake, so no one is allowed on the water without a guide.

It is here, then, that the boys have built a set of cabins of spruce logs, five of them, and the biggest of all is a large dining-room with a lean-to kitchen. The others have all of them four bedrooms and a little hall with a stove in it, and a stream of ice-cold water runs by each. There are times when you may find a bank president from California, schoolmistresses from Boston, and college boys from Harvard gathering together to fill their bedroom jugs with the fresh snow-water.

Now that I have told something of what the trail to Berg Lake is like, you will realize a few of

THEY LACED MY TOES INTO SNOW-SHOES AND SENT ME FORTH INTO THE GREAT WHITE SNOW.

the difficulties to be overcome when all the supplies and furniture are carried up that mountain bridle-trail by pack-horse—everything to make the cabins fit for tourists accustomed to "sleep soft," as it were.

Doors, windows, and fixtures had to be taken up; lumber, cut into short lengths and nailed together for packing; hardware and beds and spring mattresses; curtains; eiderdowns; flour; sides of bacon; hundreds of cases of canned stuff and every other sort of provision; and a cat to frighten away the bush-mice.

Few pack-horses can carry more than a couple of hundred pounds at a time, and they take from eight to ten hours to make the trip. Some might stumble under their heavy packs or try to turn on the narrow trail, and so go down to perdition a thousand feet below. Or some might be swept downstream by the heavy current when they were fording the rivers at high water and so damage the packs they were carrying beyond remedy. Or it might be that the horse-flies and hornets drove them mad, so that they plunged just where the rains had crumbled away the foothold, and they too were lost—or scrambled back to life and safety by the skin of their teeth.

However, all difficulties were eventually overcome by these men who loved the work and laughed at the danger. And so in the summer you may see round

the cabins at Berg Lake the most variously assorted company of men and women it is possible to find anywhere in the world. You may see government officials from the provinces, hobnobbing with businesswomen from San Francisco, and rich globe-trotters from New York cracking jokes with a lady doctor from England or a novelist from Chicago. But over them all is a great and happy camaraderie, for they have left all their cares and troubles far below at the station, with their city clothes.

It fills one with a great satisfaction to have discovered a place where there are no roads, no crowds, and no cars, no hotels (of the sort we know), no telephones, and no newspapers: where one may sleep the sleep of the just at a height of nearly six thousand feet, in the bosom of the tallest mountain in the very heart of the Rockies.

CHAPTER XII

ON THE GREAT DIVIDE AND DOWN THE SMOKY

I WENT camping in the heart of the northern Rockies, following more or less the watershed which decides the boundary line between the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta. This is part of the Great Divide that runs all the way down the continent, from the Yukon to Mexico, and the boundary line between the two provinces runs along it from the United States border line, north to where the 120th meridian intersects the Rockies.

It seemed there had been some little dispute between these provinces as to this boundary line, the maps of these parts being only in the making and heretofore both uncertain and inaccurate, and they could not always depend even upon the watershed because of the glaciers, which have a troublesome habit of shifting a few yards and so changing the course of rivers.

Strange why they should concern themselves over such a trifle, to the point of spending millions of dollars of perfectly good taxes, as the world will have to fill up pretty considerably before towns and

post-offices are built up there on top of the Rockies. However, one can imagine a British Columbia trapper atop a twelve-thousand-foot peak shaking his fist at an Alberta trapper atop another across the valley and shouting, "This is my mountain, and you can't hunt here without a B. C. license!" And the answer: "It 's not your mountain at all, you son-of-a-gun; it 's mine! Come down and fight!"

So to settle questions, and for the making of maps, the little dotted line must be decided. To this end, then, there are parties of surveyors both from British Columbia and Alberta, working up and down this particular piece of watershed; working hard like the industrious creatures they are, for very little pay and no glory at all, living all the summer up near the snow-line on government hard-tack and McConachie rations, and going back to their offices in the winter to change all their knowledge into flat maps comprehensible to cabinet ministers and the people in general.

But, not content with survey parties from the two provinces, the Dominion Government must needs have a hand in this, too; so they sent along yet another body, called the Geodetic Survey, to look for lines of latitude and longitude by means of what they call triangulations, and, one supposes, to act as a sort of supreme court of justice, a deciding factor between the other two parties.

ON THE WAY TO BERG LAKE.

We came across this august body, fresh from Ottawa, when we were staying at the Lodge in Jasper Park. They were encamped down by the station, "getting ready" to start off. There was a placid repose about their preparations. It seems that the higher up one moves in government circles, the less need there is for rush and hurry. The pages on the floor of the House must run to do the bidding of the Members: the pens of new clerks fly hastily through the ledgers; but promotion brings repose and when one gets to be a whole Geodetic Survey, one moves as slowly as possible, with suitable dignity.

We saw their tents with a neatly stacked pile of provisions in front, one whole ton of food for each of the four parties of six men each, a supply which had to be disposed of by hook or crook within four months. But more of these anon.

Jasper National Park, which is the largest park in the world for the preservation of big game, lies on the Alberta side of the Great Divide, and within its 4400 square miles you may find the utmost contrast in the way of ultra civilization and stern primæval life.

At the Lodge, which is not far from the settlement and the station, set in the middle of lazy lakes and rainbow-colored mountains, you have bell-hops and bejeweled tourists, motor-cars, an orchestra and

dancing, and grizzly bears that come down out of the forest to eat out of the garbage-cans at the cook-house.

But within a day's travel of this you may come on the other extreme, and it takes from four to eight days' travel on horseback to get out of the park from here. There are the few park rangers living their lonely lives in log cabins far from anywhere, much in the fashion of their pioneer ancestors; there are great mountain meadows, miles in extent, where you may find the elk and the caribou and the shy moose, even the wary mountain goat, feeding all together and undisturbed. And there are still unknown parts of the park into which no mortal has ever penetrated.

We decided to make for the less-frequented side of the park, so went down by train to the south-western boundary and entered from the Mount Robson side, riding from the station, up that perilous trail for eighteen miles into the mountains, to Berg Lake, which is hard by the all-important summit or water-shed where the rivers divide.

But even here we found that we had by no means left humanity behind. The Alpine Club of Canada had chosen this spot for its yearly camp, and a hundred and fifty of its members were taking mountains in large concentrated doses, discussing them

as seriously as, in the city, they discussed oil-stock and debentures.

The men automatically became what the movies call "the rough and rugged type" and found their pleasure in young beards and in enormous boots with fearful nails in them; the women went about in baggy bloomers, with blistered lips and raw noses and more big boots, some bigger even than the men's. They walked about ever in single file, with ice-axes and ropes and heavy back-packs, and they talked unceasingly of "crevasses" and "moraines" and "couloirs"; they appeared to be enjoying themselves with grim determination.

More American tourists here, making a tabloid trip of the world in eighty days. There was one lady from San Francisco here who had just done the eighteen miles up from Robson station in one day, strenuous enough even for an accustomed horseman. When I said, "How d' you do," to her, she groaned at me in utter exhaustion and murmured that she was unable even to sit down. I consoled her with the suggestion that now she had got here she could rest in bed all the morrow.

But she only glared at me scornfully.

"I could n't spare the time! I 've got to do the Moose Pass trip to-morrow and the Coleman Glacier the next day, and the day after I start back to the

station. I 'm due in Alaska in ten days and I 've got stop-offs arranged all the way along!''

It is a wild spot, Berg Lake, with an atmosphere of forest-primæval simplicity about it, barren of all convention, that somehow affects the people themselves, even though they stay but for a couple of days. The cabins are sheltered by spruce-trees at the base of Mount Mumm and little streams from the mountain hurry past them in an endless rush. In front are great stretches of gravel flats dotted with scrub willow, probably the bed of a lake in some past age.

All around are the vast gray mountains, snow-topped, with an irregular timber-line ending scarcely higher than Berg Lake itself. Down to the right, over the lake, towers the mighty Robson, smothered in snow, with green glaciers gleaming in her seamy sides. Across the flats in front of the cabins is the main Robson glacier, forbidding in its cold serenity, now, as it has been for countless centuries, complacently indifferent to the fact that it has upset the calculations of the Geodetic Survey.

There is a hitching-post opposite the cabins, usually with a horse or two tied up to it, sometimes a whole pack-train of them ready to start off. Here also you may see lounging those of the cow-boy guides that are not busy taking parties out for camping-trips, or stampeding across the flats

pretending they are at a round-up on the prairies.

Even as they are a law unto themselves, so also are they a type, these cow-boys from Alberta way, and their life is wholly a round-up of joy and risk and a snapping of their fingers at dull routine and slavery and the future. They are magnificent specimens, long, lean, and lithe, with movements graceful and agile as a cat's, with nervous fingers and soft voices. There is a laugh on their lips for enemy and friend, but the enemy had best beware that laugh.

In the evening I found a stampede dance proceeding in the main cabin, to the music of a mouth-organ, for there never was a cow-boy yet who could n't play the mouth-organ and play it well. The rest were dancing, promiscuous like, booted and spurred, with their neckerchiefs making vivid spots of color fluttering behind them.

The cook, who had come from England once upon a time by Heaven-knows-what devious routes, was plump and short and excitably good-natured; she was exactly such as one finds among the pots and pans of the kitchen in thousands of houses in the suburbs in the Old Country. Yet here she was, beaming delightedly, with her arms akimbo, upon a motley Wild-West crew holding a stampede dance in a log cabin on top of the Rockies! One comes on strange conglomerations in Canada.

I entered just in time to see a six-foot cow-boy,

good-looking enough to set the slowest female pulse a-stirring, bend his graceful height in front of Mrs. Cook and sweep off his hat with a flourish worthy of his French-Canadian ancestors, though I should say that the little smile round his mouth was put there by his Iroquois grandsire.

There were three of them there who spent their lives following the stampedes right through Alberta and down into Montana and Wyoming; they were here for a change, acting as guides for wages that would turn a bank-clerk green with envy; yet they were touchy as babes and would have ridden away at the gallop for a word that did not please them.

The guide I took with me down the Smoky was part Cree and part Scotch; his father had been a Hudson's Bay man, a good mixture. He was an expert with the lariat. I was standing one morning at the doorway of the big cabin where we took our meals, and at the other end of the room, which was sprinkled with tables and chairs, he stood, twisting and coiling his lariat idly about his arm.

"Come outside, Joe," I said, "and let 's see what you can do with that." He looked at me with lazy eyes and asked, "Why go outside?" and then "Jump!" he ordered, swinging his rope a little in his hand as if absent-mindedly.

I jumped, perhaps a foot off the floor, but before my feet touched the ground again, there was the

lariat round my waist, come up from below like a live thing, quicker almost than thought.

A day or so before we set off on our camping-trip the Geodetic Survey loomed up again upon our horizon. We saw them where they camped, away across the flats. It may be that their chief had discovered some important lines of latitude and longitude in the dining-tent of the Alpine Club, as he spent much of his time there; he was a ponderous man and he spoke mostly in standardized idioms.

"By Jove!" he said, when his Indian packers told him that some of his horses had strayed so that he could not start back to work until they were found, "is n't that a corker!" and he returned, nothing loth, to the Alpine Club, to have some more meals.

He issued to us a cordial invitation to join his party, and as his way lay in the direction we were going, along the Great Divide, we accepted. He had with him his son and an attaché to the British Legation in Washington, D. C., and an English schoolmaster from Ottawa: they traveled after the fashion of the Great Moguls, with a pack-train of perhaps eighteen horses, and help to match, money—the tax-payers' money, that is—being no object to them.

We discovered that this the high chief of the Geodetic Survey, had difficulty in getting men to work for him in these parts, and the only ones he could get

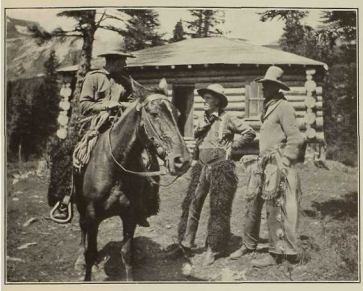
took his pay with their tongues in their cheeks and did what they liked with him and his horses.

Day after day we hung about, waiting for them to move, but their Indians were in no hurry to leave the place; therefore five horses remained "strayed," and the high chief shaded his eyes and looked vaguely round about the tops of the mountains as though he expected to see them grazing on the glaciers thereof.

"Well, if that is n't a corker!" he murmured and once more sent the Indians hurrying in search of them. They galloped hastily off in the opposite direction to where they knew the horses to be. Not having unlimited time and taxpayers' money at our command, we decided to move on ahead of them down the Smoky River, camping at agreed spots where they might catch us up.

On the other side of the gravel flats we were in Alberta again, and half a mile from the Summit the country changed, unbelievably. We passed Adolphus Lake, an emerald lakelet set in green spruce- and birch-trees, with the surrounding hills and snow-peaks making beautiful pictures in its waters. Out of this is born the Smoky, as a baby mountain stream, and we followed along its banks.

We came upon a log cabin, well and soundly built after the Yukon pattern, one of the outposts of the park rangers, and we remembered that we were once



THEY ARE A LAW UNTO THEMSELVES, THESE COW-BOYS FROM ALBERTA WAY!

more within the sacred precincts of Jasper Park, on the western border and traveling north. As luck would have it, the rangers were at home and gave us tea. Splendid, husky fellows, from the Old Country, one of whom had been a Mounty and both had been at the war.

They told us of their life in the park, and how seldom they saw people, and how they found that the more they learned about animals the less they knew, for there was so very much yet to learn. And they had under their charge a district of rather more than seven hundred square miles; they protected it from forest fire and saw to it that no man did harm to the animals therein.

They told of strange things that happened; to wit, how one other of the park rangers stopped on a certain hot summer's night at some far rest-cabin. He went to sleep, leaving the door ajar for the sake of the cool air. Later on he woke up with the uneasy feeling that some one or something was watching him, and, blinking the sleep out of his eyes, he wondered why it was that he could see only a quarter of the doorway.

He looked again and what he saw made his hair stand on end and sent a freezy feeling up and down his spine. *A great grizzly bear was half-way in at the door and coming in still farther!* The man's half-paralyzed movement to get up and shut the bear

out had the effect of startling the bear into closing the door behind him and *shutting himself in!* What nightmare could be more fantastic than this hideous reality of being shut up in a fourteen-foot-square cabin with a grizzly bear as big as a cow?

Shivering, the man got out of bed and sidled along the wall, with some idea of getting the door open again. But the bear objected and lunged out at the man with his paw, giving him a slap that nearly broke his arm and left his skin in ribbons. The man crawled under the bed and measured the distance between this point of vantage and the wall where his gun hung. And the cabin seemed full of bear and the only light there was came from the angry red eyes of him. However, the Lord must have had more use for the man's life than for the bear's, so the man was allowed to reach his gun and pour five shots into the bear, which dropped dead without further fight. But the experience was a hair-raiser that all the thrills of the movies could not equal.

We rode on through the lovely Adolphus Meadows, open glades on the banks of the Smoky, green and lush with mountain grasses, vetch, and blue lupin flowers and walled in by the unnamed Rockies. Joe was riding ahead, seemingly asleep, but all at once he stiffened and pointed to the right across the river. "Caribou!" he said quickly.

Following his gaze, I saw something tawny trot away into the distant undergrowth, and then another, and another.

"Young bulls," explained Joe. "They 're at a low level for the time of year. Let 's ride 'em down!" And with the words he put his horse at the river.

But before we were half-way across we saw them again, far ahead of us down the Smoky, galloping off into the timber, and that was the last of them. We came out of the meadows into the thick bush on the mountainside, riding up and down over rock and rise until we came again to the river and forded it backward and forward to escape the worse going on the banks.

By dusk we made camp, in the trees alongside the singing water, and having put up a "sudden death" teepee, against a tall spruce, we sat down to our supper by the fire.

Our first visitor made his appearance presently, down the trail we had just come: a porcupine, grunting importantly and moving as if he had an appointment with us. We let him come within a couple of yards and then Joe got up to despatch him to a better land. Porcupines round a camp do more damage than rats in a hen-house; they chew to pieces anything that savors of salt, ax-handles,

the most necessary parts of the harness, bridle-reins, everything useful.

Next morning we left a note on a tree for the Geodetic Survey to read in case they passed that way, to say that we had ridden slowly on. It was a fresh and joyous morning and the sun shone on the snows above us and glinted on the rippling river as we rode at our leisure down the gravel-bars of the Smoky. Even Jenny, the pack-horse, felt the glow of the day and she took occasion to lie down, pack and all, and roll, when a bend in the river hid us from sight and she lagged behind.

Joe read the writing in the gravelly ground we rode upon, even as the pages of an open book.

"Look," he said, pointing down beside him where I could see nothing but stones, "there goes Black Baldie, two days back, the darned cayuse! I hope we 'll come up with him, taking time off in mid-season like that! And Winnie, too, along with him; they always run together. . . . Did you see that fresh moose-track way back there? It was so big I never thought you 'd miss it!"

Farther on we saw where a grizzly had been turning the stones over in search of ants, and farther still we saw her cub sitting pathetically alone on top of a rock by the river. We had no gun with us to protect ourselves and could not have used it anyway if

Mother Grizzly had been on the park side of the river. Besides, the horses were showing signs of uneasiness, so we hastened on from there.

We passed Calumet, the river that circles the mountain, passed Carcajouck Creek, hurrying and tumbling down from unknown sources to join the Smoky, and by and by we came to lovely Pamm Creek, winding its way through beaver-meadows and copses of alder and feathery birch.

The day was hot and the horse-flies lively, so at high noon we called a halt, turned the horses loose, and took our lunch there, under a thicket of scrub hemlock high up on the bank whence we could see both ways along the Smoky, now grown into a great river and split up by the gravel-bars in its bed.

We watched a black bear come out on the opposite bank, ambling through the swamp, picking his way slowly over the stones. He paused, lifting up his head to sniff suspiciously. What he smelt evidently decided him to turn back the way he had come.

Far up among the distant peaks facing us we saw the snow avalanche, and presently we heard it, making a thunderous roar like the barrage of many cannons. Later on we saw mountain goat on those gray crags, just under snow-line. They woke up from their midday siesta and began feeding in the

green nooks and crannies on the face of the mountain about six o'clock, and we saw them as dull white dots moving about.

It was chill that night and we made a great campfire and drowsed in its glow while Joe told stories that his grandmother had told him of the days when the Crees had wiped out the Iroquois: strange, weird tales of the days when messages passed from tribe to tribe over the foot-hills and over the pathless prairies by some mysterious means; of the days when each tribe had its sentinel keeping watch day and night from a lookout whence he could see all the country round and give the signal before the enemy surprised them; of the days when friendly tribes paid one another in kind for services rendered.

It might be that one tribe had lost a score of horses and the sentinel would flash the news from his hill by means of a mirror. Some far-distant sentinel would pick up the signal and, if of a friendly turn, he and his kind would restore the lost steeds, benefiting thereby to the extent, perhaps, of two pounds of tea.

"And," mused Joe, looking deep into the red embers as if he saw the past, "two pounds of tea was worth a whole buffalo-hide, them days."

On the morrow at dawn we turned our faces homeward and had ridden up-river for a few hours when

we came upon the whole pack-train of the Geodetic Survey, slowly bestirring after the slumbers of a long night.

"Well, that 's a corker now!" exclaimed the high chief, blinking at us through his spectacles, and he assured us that it would be well worth our while to join his party there and then so that we might reap much benefit from his company and his superior knowledge of the country.

The horse he rode had suffered, like most of his others, from neglect, and was a bad case of distemper, so he had to lead it most of the way. Therefore our pace was a crawl, as befitted the dignity of a government pack-train. He of the Foreign Office sat painfully bestride a very small horse and wished himself at home in his nice safe aëroplane on the other side of the earth.

Thus we rode for half a day, over and around and by the towering Rockies that shut us in on every side. And we came out once on a wild, bleak flat that must have been a lake in the dinosauric age; it was carpeted with enormous boulders over which our horses had to pick their difficult way for about a mile.

To one side was Mount Wolverine, on top of which was just discernible one of the forty stations established by the Geodetic Survey. It looked like a tiny lighthouse on top of the peak. In front of us

loomed the great Mount Chown, on the other side of which was the Bess Pass.

We negotiated the slippery rock trail up the face of Mount Chown and came at last out of the dark trees, upon some mountain meadows which must have been about eight thousand or nine thousand feet above sea-level, and which were blue with lupins and dotted with the red flowers of the Indian paint-brush. Amongst them were the first purple asters of the autumn and the paler mauve of the wild Michaelmas daisies.

When we came to the top of the Bess Pass a halt was called for lunch. This consisted, as far as the wretched packers were concerned, of a cup of milk-less tea, after which they were hurriedly sent on in advance.

But we had grown tired of keeping the government pace and decided to turn back. So we thanked the high chief for our own cup of tea and bade him good-by. I suppose he is still wondering how any one could possibly prefer the company and the manners of a half-breed guide to his own.

Down we climbed again, down the terrible face of Mount Chown, out over the weary waste of boulders, desolate and drear, back on our tracks for the third time that day, riding on till we could go no farther without eating. Then we stopped and made a fire and cooked a lunch to suit our appetites.

I FOLLOWED JOE DOWN THE GRAVEL-BARS OF THE SMOKY.

At four o'clock we came out on that topmost point from where we could see the Smoky, far, far below, like a bunch of silver ribbons threading through the valley. I rested there for a moment, intoxicated by the sense of standing on the roof of the world, with the grim peaks of the Rockies all around, and the whole universe soaked in the dreadful silence of forgotten ages. But the horses knew we were homeward bound and joyfully they dashed ahead, at a full trot through the forest, so that I was obliged at times to lie level with my horse's head or to hold one arm aloft to keep the boughs from sweeping me off the saddle. Logs and windfalls and boulders they jumped in their stride; and even Jenny the pack-horse cantered in line and refused to be left.

The river had risen. The hot sun had melted the snows and glaciers, and the waters were flooding downstream, almost at spate. So when we came to the fords the water was up to our saddle-bags and the horses had hard work to keep their feet. The miles of fords and flooded gravel-bars seemed longer than ever, and in the fast-falling dusk the river that had sung to us so joyously in the morning now roared threatening things in our ears, threats of water-holes and quicksands that might be lurking there before us in the gloom.

The wise pack-horses knew their steps. Never once did they falter and on they sped, faster and

faster, toward home. And when by night we came to the beautiful open of the Adolphus Meadows they galloped "hell for leather" across that velvet sward.

One more ford, one more hill to circumnavigate, one more stretch of forest, and we were out on the familiar gravel flats of Berg Lake . . . and at the hitching-post with the horses at a standstill at last, snorting and steaming from their fifty miles that day; for the way we had doubled on our tracks we had made all of fifty miles, and hard mountain trails at that. Also, we had started from the Bess Pass at two o'clock in the afternoon, and made Berg Lake by nine in the evening, a distance that had taken the Geodetic Survey two days of government time.

A whoop from Joe brought the others to the door of the cabins and let out a flood of the light within . . . and the music of the mouth-organ and the *thud-thud* of spurred boots stampede-dancing on the wooden floor.

CHAPTER XIII

BLUE RIVER AND THE NORTH THOMPSON

THERE is many a vast district in British Columbia through which the train roars once or twice a day, leaving nothing but its own echo and a trail of white smoke to disturb the miles of virgin country on each side of the track that is still sleeping the original sleep of primæval ages, and in which the only sign of civilization is the thin steel line of the railway.

Such a place is Blue River, on the fringe of the Rockies in central British Columbia. There is nothing spectacular just here to be seen from the train and perhaps the passengers wonder vaguely why the place has such a pretty name. They can see only the scrub-fir and jack-pine flats along the track and beyond, rising on each side, the still mountains clad with varied shades of green. That is all. They are told that it is but a humble divisional point on the Canadian National Railway, a hundred and thirty-three miles south of Jasper, and that there is neither village nor settlement; the shacks and shanties round the station belong to men working for the railway.

But two minutes' walk away from the track will take you out through the belt of scrub timber into an undreamed-of land of beauty. There is a little lake, emerald green or turquoise blue according to the day, and as you paddle across it slowly in a canoe, you feel that Alice-through-the-Looking-Glass feeling of seeing into another world, so crystal clear are the mountains and clouds and forests pictured in its depths.

This they call Harrison Lake and its waters are warm, coming in from subterranean sources, so that you may bathe and stay in hour after hour an it please you. Here come all manner of water-fowl, calling to one another across the lake in the evening and early in the morning, the duck, the mud-hen, the sad loon, and sometimes even the rare trumpeter swan.

Looking east from the far side of Harrison Lake, there are vistas of mountains, mostly unnamed, which are the Rockies themselves, stretching from the cloud-tipped Ptarmigan away up the Mud-River Cañon to the glaciers on Turtle Mountain.

I stayed with the Harrisons in their log cabin facing this view and woke to see the snow-peaks shimmering in the surface of the lake, and the birches and saskatoon bushes fringing it all glistening wet with the morning dew.

A mile or so from the station the track crosses

PAMM CREEK ON THE SMOKY RIVER, ALBERTA, WHERE WE CAMPED OUR SECOND NIGHT OUT.

Blue River, just before it joins the North Thompson. There is some atmospheric effect when you see Blue River from certain heights whereby it gets its name; looking down on it from the side of a mountain, you see it as a winding ribbon, intensely blue, threading its way through the forest. It rises far up behind the range that is due west of the railway line, close to where Myrtle Lake stretches its three legs in as many directions, and this is country known only to the chosen, where there are no trails and the adventurer must do his own reconnoitering.

Few people know that high up on the plateau land southwest of Blue River, dipping behind the ridge that may almost be seen from the distant railway, are endless miles of verdant mountain meadow-land, broken up only by little poplar thickets. Here one may ride for forty or fifty miles without dismounting, and this is the very home of the caribou.

You may come on small wandering herds of caribou here and there in the fertile pockets of the mountains,—perhaps three or four cows with their calves, or a group of young bulls,—but if you want to see them in herds several hundreds strong, you must look for them in their real stamping-ground up on this range I have told about, in winter and summer both.

Away to the south end of this table-land, Raft River rises in a rocky cañon that makes a cleft in the

edge of the plateau. Farther on, these rocks become mountain peaks and one of these is one of the three highest points of vantage in the country that the district forest ranger uses as his lookout for forest fires.

It was in the Raft River Range that two trappers went in to their trap-lines last winter, arranging, before they separated on their different trails, to meet again at their base cabin to spend Christmas Day together. And their friendship was such that naught but calamity could prevent either from keeping the appointment.

Thus when only one of them turned up and waited in vain for the other, with a sinking heart, through the whole of that lonely day, and that other came not, he knew that some tragedy must have befallen him, and he made great speed on his snow-shoes down to the nearest point on the railway line from which he could send a telegram to the provincial police in Kamloops to come and help him in the search.

They came upon that other several days later, in his rough little shelter cabin that he had built himself. Apparently he was sleeping peacefully on his bed in the corner, with one arm out as if he had just pulled the blanket more closely over him, but when they touched him, they found he was dead, stone dead, and frozen into a solid mass of ice.

It must have been heart trouble, for there was no

mark of any sort upon him, and there was his diary beside the bed with his last penciled entry made just before he snuffed out his bit of candle, little knowing he was to fall into the Long Sleep. There was nothing for it but to shut the door tight and leave him there to sleep on in peace until the soft Chinook winds of spring should blow and make it possible for one to come and bury him with dignity.

There is big game close to Blue River station. It would be possible for a hunter to get a goat within five hours of it. The railway men are far too busy with their switch-points and their roundhouses and their coaling engines to wander much farther than the cook-house or to bathe in Harrison Lake. No tourists ever come here, because there is nowhere to stop and because no one has ever told them that it is just one of those places they are looking for.

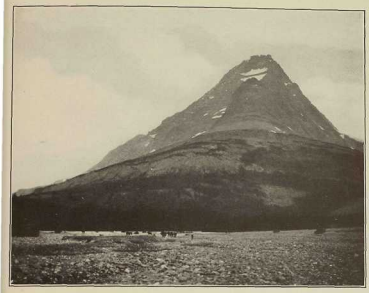
My bedroom in the Harrisons' cabin adjoined the chicken-house, and one night there was a great scurry and commotion among the hens. At dawn Mr. Harrison found all the hens holding their beaks with their claws and crying, "*Skunk!*" But by that time there was no need for the hens to tell us anything. His Odorous Majesty walked out from beneath the hen-house to the side of the tool-shed, where he sat looking at us with contempt and preparing for action at any offensive movement on our part. So we went far afield that day.

We packed the canoe three or four miles down the track on the hand speeder and then took to the water on the North Thompson. It was like paddling into a picture, with the mountains in front framed by the spruce-trees and birches on each bank, purple wild asters, mauve Michaelmas daisies and red Indian paint-brush making patches of color in the foreground.

Presently we turned northward into Mud River and paddled lazily along in the shady reaches, where the current ran slack, and watched the sand-bars for beaver-tracks. We saw where a bear had come out on the bank to fish and where he had stripped the raspberries off the bushes.

Gradually the river broadened out until we came to Mud Lake; and, by the way, these names are descriptive only of the barren imagination and bilious temperament of the prospector who gave them. True, the lake is fed by glacier waters which give it a muddy look at times, but we do not want to go down to posterity in our worst moods.

There are little islands in Mud Lake where one may land and camp: we caught some excellent rainbow-trout and fried them to a brown crispness for tea. Later in the evening we looked through the field-glasses across the dancing water, and there, high up on the gray crags, far above tree-line, we saw white spots moving and knew them for goat;



THE DREARY WASTE OF BOULDERS IN FRONT OF MOUNT CROWN. THE BLACK DOTS IN FRONT ARE THE PACK-HORSES OF THE GEODETIC SURVEY.

they were just waking up from their midday sleep and beginning to feed.

The railway follows the North Thompson south; from the train you may see the river racing through Hell's Gate Cañon far below, a roaring torrent where all the waters of the North Thompson pass through walls of rock only one hundred feet or so apart. There is nothing but mountain scenery until both river and railway make a turn to westward, roundabout Wire Cache and McMurphy, leaving the Rockies and coming out into verdant fertile country.

I got off the train at Birch Island and stopped with a family called Popp, an Austrian-Irish mixture with a bunch of robust young Canadians as a result. The settlement is very small, very young, and very enthusiastic. They are aggrieved because no one takes any notice of them, which is perfectly true: it is difficult to get anybody, even the powers that be, to believe that there is anything but "scenery" up the North Thompson Valley.

Fortunately I came to see for myself and found here the most contented lot of settlers in the whole province, land of the richest to be had for the asking (preëmptions), within easy distance of the stations and the clearing of it very light compared with the heavily timbered coast lands, and plenty of partially cleared land for ten dollars an acre. There is never any fear of drought, with the numerous

streams and creeks everywhere to make irrigation easy if necessary, and much of the land is sub-irrigated. There is plenty of free fuel to hand in the forest all round, and the settlers can generally manage to put in a profitable winter cutting ties for the railway. There is a heavy snowfall here, but the frost is out of the ground by early April and all the gardens are showing a growth by the middle of May.

There were no means of getting about except by riding, so I hired a horse for a dollar a day and borrowed a saddle from some Indians who were camping near. He turned out to be a most amiable horse with an easy rocking-chair canter and I rode all over the country on him. The man I hired him from told me: "There 's only one thing Dandy don't like and that 's *bears!* Not the black bears, he don't mind so much, but he 's kind o'scared at *grizzlies*. So if you should be going the upper trail, you keep a sharp lookout, and if so happen you meet up with a grizzly, you get a holt on Dandy's *ears* and *hang on!* He 'll bring you home—*quick!*"

Now, I liked "meeting up" with grizzlies no more than Dandy did, so we had one point in common from the start. But my fear of bears is nothing at all compared with my fear of spiders and Dandy's sympathy left much to be desired later on when, opening a gate, I nearly put my hand on one of the hairy sort.

We had to take the upper trail because I wanted to

see the oldest ranch in the neighborhood, along that way, belonging to one Jones, who homesteaded here twenty-one years ago and brought his wife to settle on it in 1908. She was the first white woman in the valley.

Their ranch is a 450-acre one up on the bench land looking out over the Peavine Flats, and they keep fifty head of dual-purpose shorthorns, shipping cream every week to Kamloops. The house is almost hidden by a luxuriant flower garden in which hollyhocks and delphiniums, foxgloves, sunflowers, honeysuckle, and tree-peonies all try to outgrow one another and the result is a blaze of color.

But the vegetable garden is the real pride of Mrs. Jones's heart. Every kind of fruit and vegetable that I had ever heard of were there, from tomatoes and cucumbers to pop-corn and sweet corn, which latter she had developed from selected seed into a species of her own that ripens in ninety days. And Mrs. Jones's store-room is in itself an epic poem to the luxuries of country life, though it must have entailed an immense amount of labor. Built of logs and earthed up to make it frost-proof and sun-proof, there are rows of shelves from floor to ceiling, all packed tight with bottles of canned food from the farm: venison, rabbit, chicken, duck, and other meats; mushrooms and every kind of vegetables, besides jars of all the fruits in the garden, canned in

their own syrup. This is the Jones's provision against the winter, and they buy little from the store.

The history of this valley dates back only to railway-construction days, seventeen or eighteen years ago, if that, and there are still to be seen the remains of the old construction-camps at intervals down beside the track. Wild tales are told of those days.

Then it was the customary etiquette of the cook-house to hurry over meals as much as possible in order to give the cook and the bull-cook (his assistant) time to prepare for the next relay of men. Therefore conversation was limited—in his interest—to necessities, such as, "Ketchup this way!" . . . "Tea!" . . . "Bread!" And more often than not signals replaced words and the meal proceeded in dead silence.

But one time there came to a certain camp a talkative man. And the cook of this same camp, he was short of temper and quick of action. At breakfast-time the loquacious one was allowed to talk without let or hindrance, but there was a gleam in the eye of the cook. At lunch-time he went on talking despite the fact that nobody took any notice of him at all. This time the cook hit him over the head with the rolling-pin.

But even this did not silence him. At supper-time he began talking to himself. And the cook came up

AN APIARY IN THE NORTH THOMPSON VALLEY.

behind and cut off his head with one stroke of the carving-knife. After that there was no more trouble. (If you don't believe this story, I can't help it.)

What can man—or woman—desire better than to be riding along on a good horse, on a soft earth trail, on a sunny August afternoon, with a grand view of the surrounding country, no horse-flies about and the air all sweet with forest scents? Perfect hours that leave a glow to be remembered long afterward, in other hours, perhaps, that are none so perfect.

I came anon to another farm that attracted me so much that I tied my horse up at the gate and went in. I found a young woman sitting sewing at the door of the wide-eaved farm-house; there was a trim little garden in front and creepers up the veranda poles; within I saw glimpses of blue plates shining in rows on a dresser, bunches of wild flowers on the table—the look of a home well loved.

She was glad to see me, so I sat down beside her and talked. Strangers are rare in these parts, and visitors few and far between. She had but lately come from the Old Country, but had settled down as though born to the life and said she rejoiced in the grand open-air freedom of it all, after Liverpool.

"Oh, yes; the work 's hard at first, of course," she said, "what with the milking and the churning

and the baking and the young stock to tend, but it has its compensations, plenty of them. See that black mare over there, whinnying with her nose over the gate? Well, next month my husband 's going to start breaking her for me to ride, and he says that no one shall ride her but me, just so long as ever I want her!"

She was one of those happy souls who are blessed with the spirit of contentment.

"It 's an anxious life at times," she went on, "for we 're all dependent on the weather; and however well farmers do, they never make a fortune. But land sakes! what more could you buy with a fortune than we 've got already? We 've got our own house to live in, and is n't just the dandiest one you ever saw? Bill built it! Our own land all round us, and never a fear of being turned out by a landlord! Never any fear about losing our job, neither! That 's more than folk in towns can say! Be it never so cold, we need n't stint ourselves in fuel, nor food. Why, rich folk in towns could envy us our fresh butter and eggs and cream, and roast chicken whenever we fancy one! No, I 'd not exchange with a millionaire, I would n't!"

The day was drawing to a close and so I left her, waving good-by to me from her doorstep before she went in to prepare her good man's evening meal. I learned afterward that she had come out to him

through the correspondence column of a certain Sunday paper. They had been introduced by mail and carried on their courtship by mail, and thus two lonely folk, the one a bachelor on a far Canadian homestead, the other a probable old maid in a crowded English city, had eventually met and married and were certainly living happily ever after. So this particular Sunday newspaper has at least one happy home and two happy lives to its credit!

It is somewhere about here that the mysterious Tum-tum Valley is located, a strange valley peculiarly full of animal life, and they say that the animals here bear a charmed life and have no fear whatever of mankind: that the bear will come out and grub for roots at a man's feet and that even the stealthy cougar will prowl past in broad noonday. So they say, and so few have been there to see that none can contradict.

The country roundabout Birch Island has marvelous natural attractions for the sheep-farmer. High up in the mountains on the north side of the railway line (which hereabouts runs due east and west), on the Barriere Range, there is open grazing for ten thousand sheep in three different places, several thousand acres of government land which is practically free range.

Some of the farmers combine to drive their sheep up into these mountain meadows every spring and

leave them there for four months in the care of a shepherd; they grow so fat up there, on the wild timothy and fireweed and other luscious mountain grasses, that by the autumn they are in the very best of condition. Indeed, so fat are they that they have taken first prizes over all others in the province, down at the Vancouver Exhibition.

Between Birch Island and Clearwater, farther down the line, are a few farmers specializing in one thing or another. One on a few acres of sub-irrigated land grows magnificent vegetables for shipping up and down the railway line to places where "nothing but scenery" is grown; another has started an apiary and does well with his twenty-one hives.

But old man Grant, down at Clearwater, interested me most. When he had learned all there was to be learned about gardening, in Kent, England, he emigrated to Canada and started fruit-growing near Victoria on Vancouver Island. After he had specialized in strawberries and made a success of them for the best part of thirty years, he said to his helpmate, "This place is getting too crowded for me; let 's get out a bit and spread ourselves!" So he came up and preëmpted land on the North Thompson, uncleared land, and he said, "Here 's where we *really begin to grow strawberries!*"

And grow them he did, with enormous success, finding that the soil and climatic conditions were just

GRANT'S NEW HOMESTEAD ON THE HILLSIDE, NEAR CLEARWATER STATION, SHOWING CULTIVATED LAND WITH STRAWBERRIES; SLASHED LAND WITH A CLEARING FIRE TO THE LEFT, AND IN THE DISTANCE THE VIRGIN FOREST.

right for the purpose, that there was plenty of water for irrigation if necessary, and being close to a station he could ship at noon one day and have the fruit at Edmonton, which is the gateway of the prairie markets, before seven o'clock next morning. Also, his fruit was ready for marketing just after the coast fruit was over, so that he could command top prices again. And in his third year he shipped 1143 crates of berries.

Then he turned his first acreage over to his son-in-law and himself moved higher up on the hillside to experiment with his ideas as to elevation being largely responsible for the flavor of the fruit. From what I saw of his plants and the rest of his—and his wife's—showings for one season's work on uncleared virgin land, he is certain to make the same success of this new venture as he has made of all his former ventures.

The Clearwater River, as wide in parts as the North Thompson itself, flows into the latter at a point near Clearwater station. It comes through some of the most magnificent mountain scenery in the province, unknown except to trappers, prospectors, and forest rangers. The Clearwater rises far up in Clearwater Lake, which is due east of Quesnel Lake and Horsefly Lake, and some day it will be as well known to tourists and big-game hunters as are the Columbia and Athabaska Rivers.

Myrtle River joins the Clearwater about half-way between its source and its outlet and this is a river of falls and cascades. They tell of the Helmcken Falls up this river, with a straight drop of 468 feet, nearly four times as high as Niagara and probably the highest on the North-American continent.

Farther south the railway passes through little places like Chu-Chua, where men are working the Windpass mine for gold up on the side of the mountain that can be seen from the train. There is little else here but an Indian settlement. Then through various settlements of small farms that ship their cream to Kamloops. Gradually the fertile green of the river bottom-lands gives place to the sage-brush and bunch-grass of the dry belt, and along the river you see the familiar firs and cedars among the birches which are a feature of the North Thompson. And so to Kamloops.

CHAPTER XIV

IN THE OKANAGAN VALLEY

KAMLOOPS is the official center for the big cattle-ranchers. Here it is that the great stock sales are held every year, and it is to this station that those cattle are driven that are sold "on the 'oof" to the cattle king of Canada, Pat Burns.

There are still some of the big ranches left, but they are fast being split up into small holdings for farmers, and much of the free range, upon which their profits depended, has been annexed also, so that the ranchers are inclined to regard the newer settler as an alien interloper.

There is, for instance, the Ward Brothers' ranch down at Douglas Lake in the Nicola Valley, consisting of 150,000 acres and a countless quantity of stock. There is T. G. McBride's place out at Stump Lake, Joe Bulman's place out at Grande Prairie, and others too numerous to mention, all of a great acreage.

I came to Kamloops once roundabout election time and drove with one of the candidates (who afterward became Member for Cariboo) out to Grande

Prairie, where he was to make a speech in the schoolhouse. It was something like forty-five miles each way, in an open car, with the roads covered with frozen snow and a below-zero wind blowing.

But if the wind blew right through me, froze the marrow in my bones, and came out at the other side, I remember nothing about the cold and this can easily be explained by the fact that my attention was kept at fever heat by the thrills of that road!

It was cut in places round the face of a mountain, twisting and turning in hairpin bends and curves that shut off sight and sound round each corner like a wall. In many places it was too narrow for two cars to pass, and had we met one, one of us would have been obliged to back to a wider place. Away down on one side was the river and the surface of that road sloped *toward the outer edge!*

Just then it was slippery with ice and snow and every time we turned a corner I could feel the back wheels slide under us toward the outer edge. Sometimes we made the turn with only a few inches to spare outside and I could feel the car right itself shudderingly, like a human thing, under that strong, steady hand at the wheel.

We stopped at Joe Bulman's place for a meal, but when we entered his kitchen we found that he was entertaining royalty: the chief of the Douglas Lake Reserve was there with his squaw and two or three

children. Bulman is a very old-timer and he would take offense if the Indians passed his gate without turning in for a meal, and the Indians know it.

On the way home we came in for another political meeting at some far-off little school-house. They are great diversions in the country, these meetings, and the people come from many miles around, riding, driving, or walking, with their hurricane-lamps and often their babies too, quite prepared to end up proceedings with a dance.

There is another road out of Kamloops, over the bridge across the North Thompson and along that road that leads past Rattlesnake Bluff to the lake called Tranquille. And here is a sanctuary known from one end of the dominion to the other, a great sanatorium for soldiers and others suffering from tuberculosis.

It is an enormous place, like an embryo self-contained town, perfect in every detail, with its own farm and even a race-course. The patients publish their own newspaper, and at election time the cartoons became so violent that all the temperatures went up sky-high and the matron was obliged to "stop the press"! Many there are who, going to Tranquille as almost hopeless cases, find new health on the shores of that lovely lake and depart whole, to take up their life in the world again.

Kamloops is on the main lines of both the Cana-

dian National Railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway, so you may go straight from here to Vernon; or coming in from the east, you would stop and change at Sicamous on the Canadian Pacific, for Vernon. And there you are in the heart of the fruit-growing Okanagan district.

The Okanagan is all that district centering round the Okanagan Lake, it is part of that "dry belt" that runs north and south through the interior of British Columbia. Also it is the *Orchard of Canada.* (What buckets full of wrathful indignation will be poured upon my head by Ontario and the Maritime Provinces for these words! But again I repeat: The Okanagan Valley *is* the Orchard of Canada!) At the last Royal Winter Fair in Toronto, British Columbia apples swept the boards.

This district is thickly populated by (1) retired Indian army people, blissfully happy in the belief that they are heaven-born orchardists, account-books to the contrary notwithstanding; (2) English people who cannot remember that they are not still in England, who never fail to apologize for the climate, the silver, and the lack of servants, and end up by asking you to tea next Thursday; (3) by adult males each of whom tells you proudly that he and he only is the "Real Father of the Okanagan," in that it was he who planted the first apple-tree in the country,

thereby transforming it from a bleak and barren wilderness into a "Smiling Orchard." *Sic.*

Here are fruit farms ranging from five acres to many thousand of acres. Every one grows Macintosh Reds and Jonathans, varied by Winter Bananas, Delicious, Gravensteins, etc. All the growers treat them with the same ring of chemical manure, put the same distance from the trunk at the same time of the year: so as far as farming is concerned, they have nothing left to discuss except the codling-moth and the crimes of the coöperative organizations.

In my young days the word "orchard" had for me a particular attraction; it savored of frolicsome lambs skipping about in green grass and daisies under gnarled old apple-trees, into which one might climb anon with a book and laze away a summer afternoon. Also, visions of milkmaids, placid cows, and proud hens with families; toothsome apples whose name no one ever knew but sweet as the sweetest memory. One shook the tree to bring them down or hit it with the clothes-pole and dipped one's head lest they fall upon it.

I admire but I cannot love the new style of orchard as I did the old. These flapper trees that never dare to grow old and would wither immediately at the idea of ever growing *gnarled,* set in ser-

ried ranks, straight rows everywhere you look, battalions of them—armies of battalions, and miles and miles of armies!

Every tree is exactly the same height as its fellows; all are pruned the same way, according to the latest scientific method, and I could well believe that they all have the same number of leaves. They bear incredible apples and pears and peaches, looking like advertisements from a catalogue, exaggerated, or fancy colored soap. And these are handled by the pickers and packers a lot more gingerly than eggs, graded according to size, wrapped in tissue-paper, and despatched all over the world. They bring big prices and adorn the tables of kings and millionaires, but myself, I would give them all for an apronful of those little old apples whose name no one ever knew!

Vernon is, or looks, prosperous, beautiful and dignified, with many stone houses and several hotels—one with a liquid name, "Kalamalca," very solid and excellent.

It was near Vernon that I came across three brothers, all of whom had been through the war and suffered for it. Town life afterward had nearly finished them, so they had come to settle in the country with their mother and aunt, and though they had known nothing of farming before, here they were making a considerable success of a mixed farm, with a big profit in health and happiness to boot.

They told me all about it as I sat in their drawing-room, drinking tea with wrinkled yellow cream in it, out of dainty cups. Every kind of bird and animal that ever lived on a farm was represented on this one: horses, cows, pigs, turkeys, geese, ducks and hens, besides the inevitable Macintosh Reds and other fruits and vegetables.

It was near Vernon, also, that I came to an old, old couple, spending their last, peaceful years in the home of their dreams that they had built with their savings. It was a trim brick villa on top of a hill and looked as if it had run up there to escape terrace life in some unworthy suburb. It had every sort of room requisite for such a villa, but the "auld wife" sat in her rocking-chair in the kitchen and from that comfortable point of vantage looked out on the world with wise eyes that had seen much. She and her man had emigrated from Scotland in the household of the Aberdeens many years before, and by dint of endless hard work had saved enough for their old age and also managed to educate their son, so that he was now a real college professor.

The old lady was clever, as her life had proved, and it was a pleasure to hold converse with her and see her face crease and wrinkle as she shook with laughter. She read a number of newspapers, was well up in current events, and eager to discuss them. What did I think of Lloyd George? Well, I thought

a good deal of him, seeing that he was a countryman of mine, and if I disapproved of some of his crimes, I had n't been there to prevent them and—one had to put up with something in all that genius.

"A brrrainy chiel!" she commented.

We had lunch in the basement, for some reason to do with the heating (it was midwinter), waited on by the tallest and most superior Chinaman I have ever seen.

Kelowna is the rival of Vernon. The citizens of the town vie with one another as to the number of car-loads of fruit shipped and the number of dances and bridge-parties held in any given month. They hold a regatta on the lake every summer, at which you will find all the jeunesse doré of the Okanagan in their best Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes.

It is said that there dwells in the Okanagan Lake an Awful Monster, prehistoric, eternal and mysterious, like the sea-serpent. Certain ones have seen glimpses of it at odd times and weird tales are told of a long sinuous body, a snout, a gigantic tail, and so on. However, regattas are held and so are bathing parties, fish are fished, and the C. P. R. steamers ply up and down the lake as if there were no such things as sea-serpents to beware of.

And it is from the decks of these little steamers that you get the best and most lasting impression of the Okanagan. Green fields and orchards all along

its shores, orchards everywhere, gay with blossom in the spring, red with apples in the summer; little settlements of clustering, red-roofed houses, and back of it all, sloping upward from the lake, the hills, hazy blue till you are upon them and then you find that they are browny green with springy mountain grass; open, rolling hills where you may ride for miles with only patches of timber here and there to make a shade.

Naramata, farther down the lake, means "The Smile of God," as the Indians say it. In the spring, when the air is soft and scented and you see all the land through a mist of peach and apple-blossom, Naramata certainly looks as if God had smiled upon it.

There is one who goes by the name of "The Cherry King of Naramata," because he has made a goodly nest-egg out of cherries, and he made it just by a sheer cussed belief in his own foresight and originality. When he gave up his trade as a bricklayer and came to settle in the Okanagan with a wee bit capital, he found all the fruit-growers in the country rooting up their cherry-trees and burning them because there was no money in cherries. So what did he do but plant nearly all of his land with cherries! Every one said he was mad, but they changed their minds several years afterward, when his trees were in full bearing and his cherries the

only ones on the market. I tasted them in syrup and I tasted them candied, and I hereby certify that the Cherry King and Queen deserved all the luck they had.

Away on the other side of Naramata you will find the home of the High Arts built, with astonishing ingenuity, not to say faith, over a barn. To come upon a Little Theater in the middle of an Okanagan orchard is so sudden as to be almost unnerving, and to hear that it is the most completely fitted Little Theater west of Chicago, in the way of lighting effects, is overwhelming. But the owner is more of a poet than an apple-grower and far too much of a dreamy idealist to remember the existence of mundane things like manure-forks or pruning-knives.

Here, then, are performed the highest of high-brow plays, chiefly by university students from Vancouver who come up here for their vacation and pay expenses by "working" in the orchard. I suppose they rehearse all day and pick apples all night.

The stage is rather bigger than the auditorium, but little matters like audiences can be dispensed with by artists with the necessary soul. The country folk come, however,—come proudly and depart feeling duly cultured,—but you wonder whether in their secret hearts they would not have come even more gladly and quickly to see Charlie Chaplin, or "Abie's Irish Rose," rather than the most educa-

tional Greek tragedy ever staged, either west of Chicago or east of Suez.

I attended a local meeting of fruit-growers in the Naramata school-house and heard them talking about irrigation ditches and protection, freight rates and taxes, and always and always about coöperation with all its pros and cons, and how on earth the orange-growers of California had solved all their troubles. (But have they?)

A couple of old-timers poured advice and information into each of my ears, most of which went out quicker than it came in, because the meeting had by that time reached the dance stage. One of the bits that stuck was: "If you 're going on to Summerland, you want to get next to R. J. So-and-so. He 'll tell you all about everything!"

But when at last I reached Summerland and Mr. R. J. So-and-so was pointed out to me, I hastily decided that the last thing I wanted in this world was to "get next to him," so I put many another between us and obtained my information from different sources.

These peaceful places round the blue Okanagan have beautiful names: Kelowna, Oyama, Naramata, Peachland, Summerland, Keremeos, Penticton—these are some of them.

Penticton is a sophisticated little town with a grand hotel, notorious for honeymooners. I think

it was somewhere near Penticton that I met with one in blue overalls, leaning over a gate and smoking a pipe. As he was most certainly one of the leisured classes, I passed the time of day with him. He was an erstwhile able seaman, turned by the grace of God into a farmer—self-styled. And he gave me there and then a lecture on agriculture. He had a cow, it seemed.

"Grade or pure-bred?" I asked, with the pedigreed herds of the Chilliwack Valley at the back of my mind.

He turned his wondering eye upon me.

"She ain't neither," he said vaguely; "she's just a *cow*, you know, a plain, honest-to-goodness *cow!*"

He waved back of the fence with his thumb and I saw her where she grazed, in supreme indifference to lineage and pedigree. She was a cow, "just a *cow*," and that was about all that could be said for her. But a lot she cared!

And so from Penticton, back by way of the Kettle Valley line to Vancouver again.

CHAPTER XV

THE TRAPPER

ONCE, for several months, my headquarters were a logging-camp about six miles from the head of Loughborough Inlet, one of the most beautiful of those million indentations that cut into the British-Columbian coast. This inlet stretches inland for twenty miles or so and lies between Bute and Knight Inlets.

A mill for making cedar shingles roared at the camp all day and sometimes all night too when orders were heavy, and one could hear the ear-splitting screech of it for miles off. Our only connection with the outside world was one of the Union Steamship Company's boats that used to puff up the inlet once a week, on Thursdays, with our freight and mail; we were many hours out of the course of any other boats. On one occasion, I remember, they forgot our groceries and there was no canned milk or sugar in the camp for a week.

We were the headquarters, also, for several outlying logging-camps that fed our mill with shingle-bolts, and we in turn took them their mail, groceries, and so on in the company's little gasolene launch.

On these expeditions I always went along, threading through those myriad islands and those tortuous channels, sometimes taking all of a day to get there and all of a night to get back. I became so expert in my knowledge of that part of the coast that it was said I could steer a boat safely anywhere between Loughborough Inlet and Lund, rain, storm, shine, or moonlight. I treasured this as no mean compliment, seeing that it is the most dangerous coast in all the world.

I have memories of hot summer days when I lay out on what little there was of an after-deck and languorously watched the green shores slide past; memories of moonlight nights when I went to relieve the man at the wheel—there were seldom more than three of us aboard—while he cooked a meal, and how they passed beefsteak and onions up to me, which I had to eat spasmodically, with one eye on the course. . . . That shadow a few yards ahead—was it a rock or a floating log that would mean certain disaster if we hit it, or only a shadow, after all, in the moonlit ripples? . . .

I have memories of sudden storms that flung us about like a cockle-shell in waves mountains high; of difficult landings at a floating wharf on some far-off island, and a midnight lunch with the night-watchman and a bookkeeper in the cook-house, by the light of a swinging hurricane-lamp.

HELL'S GATE CAÑON ON THE NORTH THOMPSON, TAKEN FROM THE TRAIN.

The most thrilling memory of all is of the time our engine broke down half-way through the Green-Point Rapids. Now, these rapids are one of the death-traps of the coast and a boat must always wait for slack tide to go through them. At other times they are a boiling mass of green and white whirl-pools that suck things down into their bottomless depths. They say that an English battle-ship went down here and was never seen again.

We had come through at slack water, and our engine had broken down half-way. That there was danger I felt certain, and the serious faces of the men working desperately at the engine confirmed my belief. But it was hard to believe in danger, here in the blazing noonday sun, with the water like rippling silk all round and the shores so close on each side that one could see the needles on the hemlocks.

I took Bernard Shaw ("Arms and the Man," I think it was) and a hunch of bread and marmalade and went to sit with my back against the cabin and my feet dangling overboard. It was nearly half an hour later that I noticed a peculiar line of white breakers forming ahead and moving toward us—the incoming tide. At the same time I heard, dimly throbbing in the distance, the *chug-chug* of another gas-boat. Presently the men heard it, too, and then came the anxious question, would the other boat see

our predicament and would she be in time to venture to our aid?

The long minutes slid by and the sea beneath us woke to an unrestful life: miniature whirlpools appeared here and there, ever widening, then suddenly disappeared and formed again elsewhere. Then the other gas-boat hove in sight round the bend.

"Throw us a line, quick!" shouted her skipper as soon as he was within hail, and in another minute we were being towed out of that danger-spot as fast as a gas-engine could tow us.

"Hmph!" said her skipper grimly when we thanked him; "a few more minutes of that and you 'd have been the best meal the jelly-fishes have had in a long while!"

There was no road out of the camp, not even a trail unless one counted a couple of perpendicular skidways up the mountainside. I spent a good deal of my time in a flat-bottomed dinghy and used to go off exploring by the day, with my rifle and a lunch, fascinated by the silences of the great unknown, always chancing upon some place new and unbelievably beautiful.

At the head of the inlet two rivers opened out, about six miles apart, known to us as East and West Rivers, though since that they have been charted and named otherwise. One tumbled through the

mountains in rapids and thundering waterfalls, the other made a wide and wonderfully fertile valley, wherein were whole orchards of wild crab-apple, swamps and marshes that were a paradise for wild fowl, and several large beaver colonies.

One morning I rowed up to the head of the inlet, tied up my boat near the mouth of East River, and struck off on foot into the bush, hoping to get a better view of the distant marshes where I knew some sheldrake were lying low. Now, it needs a man with a soul of steel and nerves of cast-iron not to be overwhelmed by the extraordinary and tremendous stillness which is peculiar to the British Columbian bush. The very silence of unlimited, unpopulated spaces buzzes round your head, your own footsteps are the only sound in the world, and you are alone with a great loneliness on a strange earth.

Sometimes the silence is broken by the *peep-peep* of a hermit-thrush that harps monotonously on a single note. At times the eagles call to one another and I came to know their various calls: the whimpering of the female, like the yapping of a beaten puppy, and the challenging trumpet of the male. Then the even drumming of a blue grouse and the long drum, followed by a series of short ones, that is the willow-grouse.

Presently I came on a pile of fish-bones high up among the trees and fell to wondering how on earth

they got there. Afterward I knew it was an eagle's work, not a grizzly's, but I climbed speedily down to the river bank again, glad of the friendly quack of a mallard for company, and here I sat me down on a rock to meditate.

Then it was that I looked up and saw a most unexpected sight. Some one in a boat was coming, a man with shaggy hair and beard, standing up and rowing forward, after the manner of the Pacific coast. I am sure that a lion would have startled him far less than the sight of me. I hailed him and he came up. Tom Sullivan was his name and his shack was way down between the two rivers.

"How do you get your mail and your provisions?" I asked.

He looked at me surprised.

"*I* never get no *mail!* And for provisions, I lays in my stock o' flour and sugar and salt. Then I catch my salmon or my gun brings in the rest. Yesterday I boiled a goose with a bunch o' greens and them millionaires in Chicago would ha' been glad to sit down wi' me."

He was going up the river to see to his traps and he would be glad enough to take me if I didn't mind his rough boat and his dogs. Then I feasted on tales of trapping, fights with panthers and bears, face to face in the bush, and the ways and wiles of all the animals. Now and then he asked for news

of the world: did they carry the mail by air nowadays? and was England a republic yet?

I told him all I knew, and he in return told how there had been a shipwreck between Seattle and Vancouver in which his wife and three children had been drowned and his own floating body picked up unconscious. For what purpose, one wonders.

He read the ground like an open book. A piece of fluff on the water meant to him a scuffle upstream between a mink and a coon. There were an otter's tracks on the bank, and a marten's. The otter had slipped climbing up. Some leaves turned back at a certain height from the ground meant that a wolf had been down to drink the day before, though it had left no tracks that I could see on the grassy swamp.

We had to push up some rapids in order to reach the upper marshes where the geese were feeding; and when at last we landed, the trapper laid his finger on his lips.

"They can hear and smell farther than any living thing," he whispered. The four dogs, well trained to every movement, kept close at heel. We crept softly from bush to bush, jumped beaver-dams, and circled deep muddy pools. Sometimes he stopped to show me the trail made by black bear and where one had dug up a skunk cabbage.

He signed for us to double up and we steadily

neared a line of tufted hillocks. Peering through the cranberry bushes, he pointed out the heads of the geese about two hundred yards off. At first sight they looked to me like black twigs amongst the red-topped swamp-grass, but presently I made out their heads and necks uplifted and rigid, for they had already heard us.

It was really too long and close a shot for a rifle, but it was our only chance, so we both took aim, fired simultaneously and—missed! The dogs raced forward; the geese rose with leisurely dignity and, gradually forming a V high up over our heads, were off to other pastures. We watched them till the dreary melancholy of their *honk-honk* had died away in the distance, the loneliest sound in nature, next to the howl of a wolf.

"Well," said Tom, philosophically, "we 'd best be hitting the trail again or we won't make the mouth of the river before the tide falls."

On the way back little Mary Jane put up two willow grouse and each time the trapper gave me the shot—as he ever did, although his own shooting meant his meals—his excitement when I redeemed my character by getting them both in the head was as great as mine.

He gathered me bunches of sweet cyclamen and tall pink dog-tooth violet, and showed me the wild scrub, "Hudson's Bay tea-plant," out of which he

made his tea. He unmoored my boat for me, having packed the flowers in, and we parted, firmly resolved to meet again before long.

So began the first of many wonderful outings which, as I gradually came to see through the trapper's eyes, opened up for me a new and different world. Once we came across a patch of rhubarb in a deserted garden of a little shack that had been put up by some long-gone prospector.

Said Tom: "Now I be main fond o' rhubarbs; puts me in mind o' my wife, it does. But blessed if I know how to cook it!"

So we picked an armful and back I went with him to his shack, a one-roomed log hut with a stove in the corner. His bed in the other corner was a nest for a litter of terrier pups, Mary Jane's offspring. The trapper propped up a chair for me to sit in and then "chivied the derned varmin" out of the cabin with language that could n't hide his real pride in them.

On the walls were various skins stretched out to dry, two or three loon-breasts, and, by way of variety, some fashion-plate ladies cut out of an ancient paper of years long past. I began to look about for a knife and a vessel in which to cook the rhubarb, while Tom lit the fire, but there was only one and that was occupied by flapjacks. These he turned casually out on the dusty table and when I remon-

strated: "Guess it 'll take more than an extry layer o' dust to settle me!"

"Well," he said when I was going, "I be main grateful to ye, eh? I 'll brighten it up a bit 'gainst the next time ye come and have summat good for ye to eat." And he gave me the breast of a loon and an ermine-skin, "for keeps."

The sun was setting as I rowed away down the inlet, and a six-mile row gives time for any scene one happens to be facing to engrave itself deeply on the memory. The trapper stood leaning against the door of his cabin, smoking his pipe as he looked after me. There was a smile on the gnarled old face that had weathered so many storms and a tolerance in the eyes that had been bitter with the sight of many tragedies. Three of the dogs tumbled over the pups, but Judy, his favorite, lay at her master's feet with her head between her paws.

In these inlets there is always an extreme—either a heavy sea or a great calm; generally the later, as the snow-mountains all round prevent the winds from reaching sea-level. So the air was heavy with silence. Not a leaf stirred and the sounds of birds came magnified over the water. There were the querulous gossip of the butterballs, the peculiar cry of the divers, the comfortable quack of several mallard flying past, and just then, the *honk-curonk* of our friends the geese in V-shape across the sky.

IN THE BROODING MOUNTAINS AND IN THE STILL WATERS THERE IS ETERNAL PEACE.

Whereat the trapper shaded his eyes and watched them, knowing well the whence and thence of their flight. Sometimes the musical trumpet of a bald-headed eagle challenging his rival would break up the stillness, and I could see them black against the yellowing sky, circling slowly over the pine tops.

So, as I rowed on, that picture grew dimmer and at last faded altogether into blue distance, leaving only the beautiful memory of a peace that passeth all understanding. Out of the world and its hurry and bustle, time meant nothing to the trapper, money less: the earth was his, as far as he wanted to walk or row, and he had no care but to keep his larder full enough for his needs. Happy, not as the world calls happy, but with a content that only Nature brings to those who live in her and with her. So he bided his time.

On the morrow at dawn he would call his dogs and off up that mountain opposite to look to his traps and see what luck they had brought in the shape of wolverine, mink, marten, coon, or badger. There might possibly be an unwary cougar caught in the big new trap which he had bought with his last black bear's pelt; but most of the bears themselves were still in their winter hiding-places, or were sitting shivering and blinking in the sun, high up on the rocky ledges, not yet waked up enough to move down to the river levels after fish. He had also pur-

posed a climb to the snow-line to get the kid of a mountain goat that we had seen from below, feeding in happy security.

After our next trip we were too late returning and too far from his cabin for me to go there to have a meal with him. He was very much disappointed, poor old man, for in the interim he had made one of his rare trips to Shoal Bay, which was thirty miles south down the coast and boasted a store, the nearest and indeed the only one between this and Lund.

Now, thirty miles in a rowboat is no Sabbath Day's journey through the easiest seas in the world, and along this coast it is anything but child's play. There are the heavy seas around Hole-in-the-Wall, where, apart from the danger of swamping, a boat must keep its course by a hair's breadth or be ripped open by pinnacles of rock in unexpected places. There are also the Green-Point Rapids to negotiate.

All this the trapper had faced, there and back, and only to buy a razor, a looking-glass, and a table-cloth to prepare himself for a visit from me! His sixty-mile row was in vain, after all, for on the return journey he had been caught in a storm and the wind had carried away the table-cloth. Not only that, but as he was making a difficult landing in the

dark, he had dropped the anchor on the looking-glass and smashed it to atoms!

"Seven years bad luck, I guess! Wonder how it 'll take me," he said to me afterward. He little knew how soon and suddenly his luck would end forever. He had made arrangements with a pard to go up a northern inlet to look into a possible gold prospect that the pard had struck, and he would be gone for all of three weeks.

"By the time I 'm back," he said, "the salmon-berries 'll be ripe and we 'll put up a bear, certain sure, up East River. Gosh! I 'd like to see you set your first bear! I 'd sure like to see you do that!"

But that was the last time I saw him, for he never came back. The days and weeks slipped by and I grew keenly anxious about the trapper's return. There was no sign of him. Several times I rowed up to his cabin to see if there were any trace of life, but the door was shut and all was silent and deserted.

In these parts there are no newspapers and the written word is rare, so that tales of occurrences on the coast reach other parts only by means of a chance passer-by, any time afterward; or, more often, never at all. One evening when I walked down to the wharf before turning in, a shaggy gray

dog bounded over to me from the cruiser. It was Judy, the trapper's favorite bear-dog.

"Where has she come from? Is the trapper here?" I cried, delighted.

"We found her howling all alone on one of those rock-islands near Hole-in-the-Wall," said one of the loggers who had just come back in the cruiser. "By the look of her she 's been starving there for days. There was a deserted camp and a dead dog and a water-logged boat on the rocks. So we took her off and brought her back along with us."

I listened with cold horror in my heart. "A deserted camp . . . a dead dog . . . a water-logged boat on the rocks!" Was that all that was left?

"And didn't you hear anything else?" I asked. "No news of her master?"

"An Indian had some tale of the man being drowned as he hauled his anchor up one night. It must have been Lone Tom that lived all by hisself up yon, but nobody knew nothing about him. He won't be missed."

"Won't be missed!" thought I and looked at Judy. She slunk off to a corner, her tail between her legs; a hopeless task to try to vindicate her master's sacred memory for these wooden-headed clods.

The afterglow of the sunset made a bright pathway up the inlet into the distance where a cabin

waited for a master who would never come home. The everlasting mountains brooded over it and the reflections of the stark black trees grew longer in water which was as smooth as glass; so still was it that the wavelets made no sound at all as they lapped against the rocks. I watched the night fall till all I saw was blotted out in an inky blackness, and the stars came out in a pale sky over the outlines of the mountains. All night long the inlet echoed and re-echoed to the howls of a lonely dog.

Men come, live their little lives, and are gone, leaving but a memory behind them. Human things are full of tears and laughter,—mostly tears,—but in the brooding mountains and in the still waters there is eternal peace.

QUIEN SABE?

Lead my feet to the north again,
  Destiny, mother of Chance!
Send that I may go forth again
  Where the mountain dryads dance.

Let me go to the river where
  The silvery trout flash by;
And startled deer aquiver there
  Deep in brown bracken lie.

Grant I come to a lake I love,
  Lonely and far and still,
Where the wolves howl to the moon above
  Over a new-found kill.

Spin thy thread so my feet may tread
  In the ways my heart shall lead:
Take me back ere my youth be dead,
  Mother of Chance, I plead!

California.
December, 1925.

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