

THE CANADA PACIFIC RAILWAY.

WHAT tempted the people of Canada to undertake so gigantic a work as the Canada Pacific Railway? The difficulties in the way were great, unprecedented, unknown. Had they been known beforehand, the task would not have been attempted. We were under the inspiration of a national idea, and went forward. We were determined to be something more than a fortuitous collocation of provinces. That the difficulties were faced and overcome as they emerged, great temptations to halt or retreat being quietly set aside, proves that we, like our neighbors and progenitors, are not easily discouraged. Our ultimate destiny will be none the worse because we have — not unwillingly — made sacrifices in order to make ourselves a nation.

Roughly speaking, the new country through which the great railway runs consists of three sections,—about a thousand miles of forest from the upper Ottawa to the Red River of the North; then a thousand miles of alluvial; and then five or six hundred miles of mountains, from the first chain of the Rockies to where the waters of the Pacific are sheltered by the breakwater of Vancouver Island. The total length of the line from Montreal to the Pacific terminus is 2895 miles. The first section was long considered impracticable for a railway, and the expense of construction has been enormous. The rocks at the back of Lake Superior are the oldest known to men of science and the toughest known to engineers. But dynamite, if there be enough of it, can do anything. This part of the line was opened last spring most dramatically, it being used before actual completion to transport our militia to put down the half-breed and Indian rising in the North-west. No amount of champagne-drinking and of driving last spikes of gold could have called the attention of the country so emphatically to its importance. The second section runs through what promises to be the great granary of the world. The third is being pushed across a sea of mountains. Thousands of navvies of all nationalities are swarming in the valley of the Columbia, and thousands of Chinese are working on the grade easterly. When this section is completed, and the shortest of all transcontinental railways opened for traffic from ocean to ocean, Canada will have attained to unification, so far as links of steel can unify.

The work is so completely a political necessity that — along with the Intercolonial Railway, which binds the Atlantic provinces to

old Canada — it may be called the symbol of our national existence. Whether it will pay the company financially or not is a question on which experts differ. That it will develop the country, and thus at any rate pay indirectly, seems to me unquestionable. The Intercolonial was run for a time at a cost to the Dominion of over half a million dollars annually. It now pays its way; and though shorter through lines are to be built, the increasing local traffic, the best indication of the real value of the road to the country, will keep it running. So, too, the first section of the Canada Pacific pierces a wilderness that wise men said would not furnish business to pay for greasing the wheels; but it gets freight enough in the shape of lumber alone to pay for the wheels as well as the grease. It is revolutionizing the mode of lumber transportation on the upper Ottawa and to the West. The lumber kings find that time is money. It is more profitable to send on logs to market by rail than to continue the tedious plan of floating them, from the banks of far-away lakes and nameless streams in the interior, down countless rapids and slides to unbroken waterways. The danger now is that our timber limits, which constitute an essential part of the national capital, may be exhausted within a measurable time. With regard to the rugged Laurentian regions to the north of Lake Superior, unexplored as yet by men of science, there are grounds for believing that they will turn out to be as rich in mineral wealth as the southern shores of the lake; and no business pays a railway so well as that which a mining community supplies. Then, the fertile plains of the North-west are certain to yield harvests that will tax to the utmost the carrying capacity of branch as well as trunk lines.

These plains extend for eight hundred miles west of Winnipeg. Originally a north-western instead of a western route from Winnipeg had been chosen for the railway, because every one said that the only "fertile belt" was in that direction. This "belt," or rainbow, of fertile land swept semicircularly round a supposed great wedge of the American desert. But the company came to the conclusion that the plains west of Winnipeg had been belied, and that the rainfall was sufficient for the growth of cereals or root crops. Singularly enough, their faith has been vindicated; it turns out that we have no desert. This fact is a physical reality of the greatest importance with regard to the area in the North-west available for

settlement. That area is now known to be practically illimitable. The waves of a great human sea will in a short time roll steadily on, without break, from the boundary line to the prairies of the mighty Peace River. That new North-west of ours will a century hence have fifty millions of people, and they will raise enough to feed themselves and the rest of the world, if need be.

Manitobans, it may be said here, have also great expectations of being able to export directly to Liverpool by Hudson's Bay, and of being thus independent of Chicago and Montreal alike. Should such an alternative route prove a reality, it would serve the whole Red River valley, as well as the Saskatchewan. Last year the Dominion Government sent out a well-equipped vessel to ascertain definitely for how many months in the year the Hudson's Bay Straits are navigable, and other facts bearing on the question at issue. Parties were left at different points along the coast to winter, and make all needed observations. We shall soon know whether it is worth while constructing a railway to Fort Churchill. Dr. Robert Bell, Assistant Director of the Dominion Geological Survey, is sanguine that the produce of the North-west will have a new outlet in this direction. If so, it will be a potent factor in the development of those far inland fertile wildernesses. But this line to Hudson's Bay is as yet in the air. For years to come the North-west must be served by the Canada Pacific Railway. But how came it that the greater part of the country directly west from Winnipeg to the Rocky Mountains was once supposed to be semi-desert? Captain Palliser, who was sent with a well-organized expedition by Her Majesty's Government, in 1857, to explore the country between Lake Superior and the Rocky Mountains, found it rainless and condemned it. Superficial observers who visited it subsequently, and looked only at the short russet-colored grass that covered its illimitable, treeless, terribly lonely plains, had no hesitation in confirming his opinion. But five or six years ago Mr. John Maccoun, an accomplished practical botanist, after exploring it lengthways and crossways and thoroughly examining soil, flora, and fauna, gave testimony of an entirely opposite character. He was derided as an enthusiast or worse, but his opinions had probably something to do with determining the new route taken by the Canada Pacific Railway; and in 1881 and 1882 settlers, ignoring the proved fertility of the "fertile belt," or postponing its claims to a more convenient season, took up land along the railway almost as fast as it was constructed. They found that the soil was actually better for their purposes than the heavy tenacious loam of the Red River

valley, just because it was lighter. Population flowed for some four hundred miles west of Winnipeg to the little towns of Regina and Moosejaw. There the masses of drift that constitute the "Coteau" of the Missouri show themselves, and there it was then said the good land ceased. The railway was built in the early part of 1883 four hundred miles farther west, and soon after Mr. Sandford Fleming and myself had sufficient opportunities of examining the nature of the soil. Far from being barren, "it resembles," says Mr. Fleming, "in color and character that of the Carse of Gowrie in Perthshire," notoriously the most productive district in Scotland.

But why, then, had those vast plains been condemned? Because there is very little rain in the summer months; and because observers could not fail to notice that the grass was light, short, dry, and apparently withered. To their eyes it contrasted most unfavorably with the luxuriant green herbage of the well-watered belt along the North Saskatchewan. It did not occur to them that the grass of the plains might be the product of peculiar atmospheric conditions, and that what had been food in former days for countless millions of buffaloes, whose favorite resorts these plains had been, would in all probability be good food for domestic cattle. The facts are that spring comes early in these far western districts, and that the grass matures in the beginning of June, and turns into nutritious hay. If burned, there is sufficient moisture in the soil to produce a second growth. We saw at different points, towards the end of August, green patches where little prairie fires had run some weeks previously. If there is enough moisture for such a second crop, it seemed clear to us that there must be enough for cereals. The fact is that the roots of wheat penetrate to a great depth in search of moisture or nutriment. The intense cold of winter, instead of being a drawback, acts in the farmer's interest. The deeper the frost goes, the better. As it thaws out gradually in the summer it loosens the sub-soil, and sends up the needed moisture to the roots of the grain. Coal, too, of cretaceous age, being abundant, no one who is at all robust objects to the intense dry cold. Sufficient moisture being all but certain, the lack of rain makes harvesting sure, while the purity and dryness of the air and the continual breeziness render the climate most healthful and pleasant. But, notwithstanding these facts, the impression was general that, at any rate from *le grand Coteau du Missouri* to the Rocky Mountains, the country was worthless. The company, therefore, determined to try experiments that would be conclusive. Late in the autumn of 1883 men were sent

out with instructions to plow up a few acres at intervals of about twenty miles along the line. This work was done, necessarily, in rough-and-ready fashion. The sod was turned up, and then the teams, put on board the next train, were moved on to another point. The following March seeds of various kinds were sown on the plowed sections and roots planted. No attempt at cultivating, cleaning, or protecting could be made, and yet the result was a magnificent crop on the experimental "farms." Every one who knows anything of prairie farming will acknowledge that a more rigorous test could not have been tried. The south of the beautiful Bow River is the chosen country of our cow-boys, a race—from Texas to the North—free, fearless, and peculiar, to whom all the rest of the world are "tenderfeet," and in whose eyes horse-stealing is the unpardonable sin. The transport to England of cattle from this district, and ultimately from the adjoining territories of Montana and Idaho, is certain to supply steady business to the railway; and the transport of coal on a large scale to Manitoba from the vast deposits which are being opened up near Medicine Hat and the head-waters of the Saskatchewan is still more certain. The Bow River, which takes its name from its repeated windings and doublings like an ox-bow, guides the railway into the mountains. The wide valley, inclosed by foot-hills, not very long ago the favorite haunt of the buffalo, is divided into ranches. These and all other industries in southern Alberta converge at Calgary, an enterprising little town, once a Hudson's Bay fort, on a site of ideal beauty. It fronts the illimitable plains; snow-peaked mountains, Devil's Head preëminent, tower up behind; and two impetuous glacier-fed streams meet in the natural amphitheater that has been scooped out of the surrounding hills to give it ample room to spread itself. Forty miles farther up the river, and so much nearer the best hunting-grounds in the mountains, two villages of Stonies have gathered round the Methodist Mission of Morley,—a brave and hardy tribe of mountaineers who, like their white neighbors, are taking to stock-raising, as they can no longer live by hunting. The railway climbs the valley of the Bow, crossing and recrossing, past Morley, past the mass of rock five thousand feet high called Cascade Mountain, where anthracite coal has been discovered, past the chiseled turrets of Castle Mountain, and into the core of the range, till within six miles of the summit, where it abandons the river and strikes up the bed of one of its tributaries.

The railway terminus in September, 1883, being Calgary, tourists generally stopped

there; but our party determined to push on to the Pacific. Four ranges of mountains intervened—the Rockies, the Selkirks, the Gold, and the Cascades. One engineer told us that it was problematical whether we should get through. Another said that we should not. We determined to try, and we now congratulate ourselves that we were the first to cross from one side of the four ranges to the other side, on the line on which the railway is constructed.

It was a journey to be remembered. I have seen many countries, but I know none where there are such magnificent rock-exposures for a hundred miles continuously as up the valley of the Bow, from Calgary to the summit of the Rockies. The general elevation of the valley is between four and five thousand feet, and the mountains on each side are only from one to six thousand feet higher; consequently, the beauty does not consist in the altitude of the mountains. Beside the Andes or even the Alps they are hardly worth speaking about; but nothing can be finer than the distinct stratification, the variety of form and clearness of outline, the great masses of bare rock standing out as if piled by masons and carved and chiseled by sculptors. Photography alone could bring out their amazing richness in detail. Scenes of gloomy grandeur present themselves at every point for several miles along the summit; and down the western slope the views at times are even more striking. But our journey down the Kicking Horse should be read in the "England and Canada" of the distinguished engineer with whom I traveled, by those who wish to know more of our experiences.

When we crossed the Rockies the hitherto unconquered Selkirks rose before us. To understand the position of this range, take a map and look for the springs of the Columbia. This greatest of salmon rivers rises in Canada, and runs north-west so persistently that it appears doomed to fall into the Fraser. But, reaching the neighborhood of Mounts Brown and Hooker, it seems to have had enough of us, and accordingly, sweeping right round in a "Big Bend," it makes straight for Washington Territory, cutting through all obstacles, the *Dalles* with the significant *Dalle de Mort*, and then spreads out into long, broad, calm expanses known as the Upper and Lower Arrow Lakes. Within that great loop which it makes on our soil are inclosed the Selkirks. As they extend only to the Big Bend of the Columbia, our engineers had no concern with them when it was supposed that the Canada Pacific Railway was to run farther north; but when the company decided that they must have as nearly as possible an air-line from Winnipeg west to the ocean, the question of whether a pass

could be found across the Selkirks became important. If no pass could be found, a *dé-tour* must be made away to the North by the Big Bend. Passes were known to exist through the other three ranges that rise between the plains and the Pacific. The Rockies proper, the backbone of this continent, are cloven north of the boundary line by half a dozen rivers, along the valley of any one of which a railway could be carried with ease to a summit where another stream is generally found beginning its course down the western slope. Then, the two ranges nearest the Pacific have also open gates wide enough for a railway. But between the Gold Mountains and the Rockies rose the Selkirks, apparently without a break. When asked about a pass here, the Indians shook their heads; so did the engineers, Mr. Walter Moberly excepted. He knew something about the Selkirks; but though he pointed out the way, to another fell the honor of solving the problem.

Moberly had discovered a first-rate pass in 1865 through the Gold Mountains, greatly to the satisfaction of himself and all British Columbia. Gold had been found by enterprising prospectors at the Big Bend, and the provincial government, anxious to have a trail cut from the navigable waters in the heart of the colony to the new Eldorado, sent Moberly, then assistant surveyor-general, to explore. One day, not far from Shuswap Lake, among tangled mountains choked with dense underbrush and fallen timber, valleys radiating to every point of the compass, but leading nowhere, he saw an eagle flying to the east up one of the valleys. Accepting the omen, he followed and discovered the pass which he called after the eagle, though it might more fitly be called by his own name. Previous to this the Gold range had been supposed to be "an unbroken and impassable wall of mountains," but, thanks to Moberly, a wagon-road could now be made from the settled part of the province to the Columbia, to be followed—he was convinced—by a railway that would in due time extend to the fertile plains of the North-west. If a pass could only be found across the Selkirks, he felt that his work would be completed. He sent one and then another of his staff to explore, but their reports were discouraging. His Indians knew nothing, except that they could not take their canoes that way. When they wished to get to the other side of the range, they descended the Columbia, and then crossed over to its head-waters by the Kootenay River. To them time was no object. Indians will go a hundred miles in a canoe, or ride across a prairie for the same distance, rather than cut through a mile of brush. In a forest they will walk for a hundred yards round a fallen tree, and others will continue

for years to follow the trail, rather than be at the trouble of cutting through the obstruction. Moberly did not despair. He saw a fracture in the range, almost corresponding to the fracture of the Eagle Pass in the Gold range. Crossing the Columbia, though it was late in the season, and entering the mouth of this fracture, he forced his way up the banks of a stream called the Ille-Cille-Waet, chocolate-colored from the grains of slate it holds in solution. Twenty or thirty miles from its mouth the Ille-Cille-Waet forked. Trying the north fork, it led him into the slate range, intersected by innumerable veins of promising-looking quartz that prospectors have yet to test, but to nothing like a pass. His Indians then struck. He used every means to induce them to go with him up the east fork, but in vain. The snow had begun to fall on the mountains, and they said that they would be caught and would never get out again. Reluctantly Moberly turned back, and as the colony could afford no more explorations, the Big Bend diggings not turning out as had been anticipated, he had to content himself with putting on record that the easterly fork of the Ille-Cille-Waet should be examined before a route for a transcontinental railway was finally determined on.

Thus it happened that up to 1881 no man had crossed the virgin range. It was covered with heavy timber almost up to the snow-line. Without let or hindrance herds of noble caribou trotted along ancestral trails to their feeding-grounds or to water. Bears—black, brown, cinnamon, and grizzly—found in sheltered valleys exhaustless supplies of the berries on which they grow fat. From the opposite flanks of the range, east and west, short swollen streams rush down to join the Columbia, their sands often indicating gold; while on the south, where the drainage flows into the Kootenay Lake and River, which also feed the Columbia, rich mines of argentiferous galena are now being worked. But no one knew of a pass.

In February, 1881, the Syndicate appointed Major A. B. Rogers, C. E., engineer of the Mountain Division of the Canada Pacific Railway. He seemed about as unlikely a man for the work of ascertaining whether the Selkirks problem was soluble as could have been chosen. He knew little or nothing of mountains; his previous experiences had been in States where there is no counterpart to the characteristic scenery and difficulties of British Columbia. But Major Rogers, like a true descendant of the Pilgrim or Puritan fathers, is a man who goes to the particular wilderness to which he may be appointed, asking no questions. Naturally intense, self-reliant,

and scornful of appearances, the opposite schooling of an old-fashioned Down-East training, the rough experiences of engineer and frontier life have made him so downright that he is apt to be appalling to ordinary mortals. Though between fifty and sixty years of age, hair and beard now white, no youngster in his party will plunge into the grimmest mountain ranges with as little thought of commissariat or as complete a contempt of danger, and no Indian will encounter fatigue or famine as stoically. Hard as nails himself, he expects others who take service with him to endure hardness; and should there be shirking, he is apt to show his worst side rather than be guilty of what he has scorned as hypocrisy in others. He fitted out at Kamloops for his first attempt on the Selkirks. The wonder is that he did not start with rifle on shoulder and a piece of pork in his pocket, two or three Indians perhaps carrying blankets and a few fixings; for at that time he thought that a gun ought to feed a party. He does not think so now. Man can have but one paradise at a time. If he goes into the mountains to hunt, he can do that; if to prospect, he can do that, with a slightly different outfit; if to discover a pass or to get through to a given point by a given date, he may or may not succeed,—but it is quite certain that he cannot combine the three characters, or even two, on the one expedition. A bear or caribou may lead you miles from your course; and if you shoot him, your Indians have a capital excuse for delay, while they regard the meat as simply so much "kitchen" to their stock of pork and bacon.

The Major and his nephew, Mr. Albert Rogers, hiring at Kamloops ten Shuswap Indians from the Roman Catholic Mission to carry their packs, started in April to force their way to the east. They succeeded in reaching the core of the Selkirk range, by following the east fork of the Ille-Cille-Waet; but, like Moberly on the north fork, they got only to a *cul de sac*, and their packs having become ominously light, they—heavy with the consciousness of failure—came to the conclusion that retreat was inevitable. Before retracing their steps, however, they climbed the divide to see if any break could be detected in the range. Yes; a valley appeared in the direction of an unexplored little affluent of the Ille-Cille-Waet, and, apparently connected with it, a depression extending to the east. Everywhere else, all around to the horizon, nothing but "snow-clad desolation." The result of five or six weeks' endurance of almost intolerable misery was this gleam of hope.

Our journey enabled us to understand what they must have suffered. The underbrush is

of the densest, owing to the ceaseless rain. Black flies or mosquitoes do their part unweariedly. What with fallen timber of enormous size, precipices, prickly thorns, beaver dams, marshes full of fetid water to be waded through, alder swamps, lakelets surrounded by bluffs so steep that it would almost puzzle a chamois to get over or around them, we had all we wanted of the Ille-Cille-Waet and the Eagle Pass. But they had started too early in the season. The snow was not only deep, but it was melting and rotting under spring suns and rains, and therefore would not bear their weight. Down they sank at every step, and often into the worst kind of pitfalls. At first their loads were so heavy that they had to leave part behind, and then, after camping early, return wearily on their tracks for the second load. The Indians would have deserted them a dozen times over, but the Major had arranged with the Mission that if they returned without a certificate they were to get a whipping instead of good pay. Nothing but pluck kept them pegging away; but in spite of all they failed that year. The following May the Major made his attack from the other side of the range, and again he was unsuccessful. Swollen torrents and scarcity of supplies forced him back to his base, at the point where the Kicking Horse River joins the Columbia. On this occasion, had it not been for the discovery of a canoe, he and his party would have starved. Sorely against their will he had put them on half rations, but he gladdened their hearts one morning by announcing that it was his birthday, and producing a little sugar to sweeten their tea.

Nothing daunted, he started again the same summer, in the month of July, from the same base, and succeeded. Proceeding up the valley of the Beaver, a large stream that enters the Columbia through an open cañon, and then following the course of one of its tributaries appropriately called Bear Creek, he at length found the long-sought-for pass. He saw the mountain from the summit of which the year before he and his nephew had noticed the depression extending to the east. Not content while anything remained undone, he made for the Ille-Cille-Waet, and following it down to the north fork, ascended it too, to ascertain if its head-waters would connect with a tributary of the Beaver, and so perhaps afford something better; but nothing better, or rather nothing at all, was found. The Selkirks have only one pass, but it is better than the western slope of the main chain by the Kicking Horse. And an American has had the honor of finding that one on behalf of Canada! All honor to him!

Compared with our experiences down the

Kicking Horse, the ascent of the eastern slope of the Selkirks was remarkably easy. The valley of the Beaver contracts near its mouth, so it is no wonder that observers from the outside formed an incorrect idea of its importance. The Ille-Cille-Waet on the other side of the range ends its course in the same way. The two streams by which the Selkirks are overcome are thus something like two long bottles with their narrow necks facing and ending in the Columbia. The trail up the Beaver led through forests of great cedars, and then of noble spruce, hemlock, and pine, so dense that it was impossible to get any views of the range before reaching the Rogers Pass. Our first evening was spent with a pleasant, fit-looking lot of fellows, who were working down from the summit under the leadership of Major Critchelow, a West Point graduate. They did all they could for us, sharing tents and blankets, as well as porridge, as if we had been life-long comrades. Major Critchelow's party had been at work for three months, and, besides caribou and other large game, had seen about fifty bears, chiefly black and grizzly. I can, with a reasonable measure of confidence, assure sportsmen that the bears are still there, for the engineers were too busy to do much hunting. We saw on our ride to the summit next morning why the place was such a favorite bear center. On both sides of the trail grew an extraordinary profusion of high bushes laden with delicious wild fruits, blackberries and gooseberries as large as small grapes, and half a dozen other varieties, that we could pick by handfuls without dismounting. The rowan-tree drooped its rich red clusters over the bushes, and high above towered the magnificent forest primeval, one cedar that we passed having a diameter of nine feet. It was like riding through a deserted garden. Emerging from the forest, after a leisurely three hours' ride, into a saucer-shaped open meadow covered with tall thick grass, Major Rogers, who had kindly joined our party at the mouth of the Kicking Horse, pointed to a little stream, saying, "That is Summit Creek, and there," pointing to the opposite end of the meadow, "is the summit where our yew stake is planted." We gave a hearty cheer in his honor, and taking our seats on a moss-grown natural rockery, heard him recount the story of the discovery of the pass. A scene of more mingled grandeur and beauty could not be desired. "Such a spot for a summer hotel!" would, I think, be the first cry of an American tourist. Snow-covered mountains, glaciers accumulating in lofty comb, and high above the snow, the looser shales of the peaks having weathered off, fantastic columns of rock giving to each mountain form an individual-

ity that stamps it permanently on the memory; while we in the sunny valley at their feet dined on wild fruit, and our horses rolled contentedly among the deep succulent grasses! Syndicate, the distinctive peak among the mountains at the summit, is a veritable Canadian Matterhorn, but it is not seen till you begin the western descent.

The Selkirks did not let us off so easily as we had hoped from our experience of the ascent. Where the trail ended the Major gave us his nephew as a guide and half a dozen athletic, obliging young men to carry our packs to the second crossing of the Columbia. I shall never attempt to pioneer through a wilderness again, much less to carry a pack; and of all wildernesses, commend me to those of British Columbia as the best possible samples to test wind and limb. It would simply weary readers to go into details of struggling through acres of densest underbrush where you cannot see a yard ahead, wading through swamps and beaver dams, getting scratched from eyes to ankles with prickly thorns, scaling precipices, falling over moss-covered rocks into pitfalls, your packs almost strangling you, losing the rest of the party while you halt to feel all over whether any bones are broken, and then experiencing in your inmost soul the unutterable loneliness of savage mountains. Those who have not tried would not understand. It took us five days to make seventeen miles, and we did our best. Right glad were we to see the Columbia again, a river now twelve hundred feet wide, full from bank to bank, sweeping past this time to the south with a current of six or seven miles an hour. We struck it nearly opposite the Big Eddy, and one or two tents and a group of Indians among the aspens on the bank a little farther down comforted us with the thought that we could at any rate get what man considers the one thing needful in the wilderness—a supply of food. It might have an evil smell, but it would be food; and starvation, at any rate, was now out of the question. Back a little from the noble river rose the Gold Mountains, cloven almost to the feet by the Eagle Pass.

The Indians came across in their canoes and ferried us over; and we spent the night on the river bank, well to windward of Camp Siwash. Under a half-moon shining in a blue, cloudless sky, a great glacier on our right reflected a ghostly light, and every peak came out clearly defined in the pure atmosphere. The rush of the great river and the muffled roar of the distant falls of the Ille-Cille-Waet alone broke the perfect stillness. Four or five camp-fires seen through the trees, with dusky figures silently flitting about, gave life to the scene. Reclining on spruce boughs, softer and more fragrant than beds of down, we felt the

charm of frontier or backwoods life. Two or three hours after, awakened by rain first pattering on tent and leaves and then pouring down in earnest, the charm was forgotten. One had left his boots outside, another had hung his clothes near the camp-fire, and we knew that the men were lying on the ground, rolled in their blankets, and that to-morrow every pack would be fifty per cent. heavier to carry. We were still in the rainy region. Every night but one since leaving the summit of the Selkirks there had been rain with thunder and lightning; and yet, in spite of the discomfort, not a man showed a sign of discontent. Sybarites still growl over their crumpled rose-leaves, but the race is not deteriorating.

Before leaving Winnipeg Mr. Fleming had telegraphed to Hudson's Bay officials in British Columbia to send a party from Kamloops to meet us with provisions at some point on the Columbia near the mouth of the Eagle Pass. When we saw the Indians every one was sure that the Kamloops party had reached the rendezvous before us. Our disappointment was brief, for the same evening half a dozen men were heard hallooing and struggling through the pass. This was our eagerly expected party, and great and natural was the delight at making such wonderfully close connections in a trackless wilderness; but our countenances fell when, asking for the provisions, the leader simply handed us a large sheet of foolscap on which was inscribed in fine legible hand a list of supplies *cached* at a distance of some days' journey! They had been able to carry barely enough for themselves, and had we not wisely husbanded our pork and flour, they and we might have starved.

Next morning we started up the Eagle Pass, with our sheet of foolscap and the Kamloops men. They brought us good news at any rate. In three or four days we should get to horses and supplies, and in a day or two thereafter to a wagon-road that had been commenced from Lake Shuswap by the company that is working the silver-bearing galena mines on the Kootenay. It turned out as they said. We found the horses, and a wealth of good things; cups and saucers of crockery were included, to our infinite amusement. The horses were of little use except to carry the packs, for better speed can be made walking than riding, and walking is safer and much more pleasant—if there can be pleasure on a trail along the Eagle River. We reached the wagon-road, Mr. G. V. Wright, in the center of a canvas town, superintending its construction, and ready to do anything for us. We sat luxuriously stretching our legs in the spring wagon in which he sent us on the

beautiful star-shaped Lake Shuswap—last of a series of lakes strung like beads on the river that drains the western slope of the Eagle Pass. There the Hon. Mr. Mara, having heard of our approach, had kindly kept the steamer *Peerless* waiting for us. The dangers and the toils of our journey were over.

With regard to the scenery in the Selkirk and Gold Mountains little need be said. Rain or snow falls almost unceasingly. The clouds from the Pacific shed some of their contents on Vancouver Island and the Cascades; then, rising high above these coast mountains, they float easterly over a wide intervening region, and empty their buckets most bountifully on the Gold range. A moss carpet several inches thick covers the ground, the rocks, the fallen timber, in every direction—mosses exquisitely delicate, as thickly and uniformly sown as if green showers had fallen silently from the heavens to replace the deep white snow of winter. From the branches of the trees hang mossy streamers. Softer than velvet is the coating of every bank. Dense underbrush and ferns from four to six or seven feet high fill the narrow valleys, save where the prickly devil's-club and enormous skunk cabbage dispute the ground with the ferns. Emerging from the dark-blue waters of Lake Shuswap and sailing the South Thompson, the air, the soft outlines of the hills, the park-like scenery recalling "the upper portions of the Arno and the Tiber," we come upon the intervening region of elevated broken plateau that extends from the Gold range west to the Cascades. Its physical character is the exact opposite of the humid mountains left behind. Low rounded, russet-colored hills, and benches covered with bunch-grass, or, where that has been too greedily cropped, with sage and prickly pear, take the place of lofty, rugged peaks and valleys choked with heavy timber. This intervening region that extends to the Cascades has everywhere a dry, dusty, California look, except where some little creek has been made to do duty in the way of irrigation. Then we have a garden plot, a field, or a ranch converted into a carpet or ribbon of freshest green contrasting beautifully with the surrounding gray or russet. These bits of green are like oases in the desert. They yield abundantly every variety of fruit or grain. Tomatoes, water- and musk-melons, and grapes ripen in the open air. Wheat, as in the most favored spots of Oregon and Washington Territory, yields from forty to seventy bushels to the acre. At Lytton the Fraser comes down from its long circuit round the far north country, through gorges inclosed by snow-crested mountains, to receive the tribute of the united Thompson. The clear blue Thomp-

son flows into the turbid Fraser, and the swollen torrent, deep, narrow, swirling, eddying, resistless, cuts its way through the granite of the Cascades to the sea. In this mountainous region, again, the farmer is no longer dependent on irrigation, and wherever there is soil anything can be raised. The Lower Fraser or New Westminster district is not only the most valuable in British Columbia, agriculturally, but the river is full of salmon and sturgeon, the country abounds with game, and the timber along the coast would furnish masts for all the admirals in the world.

But what will a railway get to do in this great sea of mountains? For along those five hundred miles of road on the mainland, constructed at so enormous a cost, the population, not counting Indians and Chinamen, is less than ten thousand. The British Columbians claim that a portion of the Asiatic trade will come their way, especially as the company that is building the road has announced its intention of putting on steamers to connect the Pacific terminus with the ports of Japan and China; and they also point to their fish, their mines of silver and gold, and their forests, as the complement of the prairies of the North-west. All their hopes and dreams cluster around the railway, and those whom it does not enrich will feel that they have a right to be disappointed. They ignore the fact that the people of the North-west or any other country can afford to pay only a certain price for fish or flesh, galena, gold, or anything else, and that if it cannot be supplied at said price it must be for them all the same as if it were non-existent. They fancy that the difficulty the province has to contend with is not the comparatively small amount of arable land, or the necessity for irrigation in districts otherwise good, or the intervening mountains, or the cañons that prevent river navigation, or the cost of transportation, or the great distances, but simply the presence of some thousands of industrious Chinamen. If Chinamen could only be kept out white people would come in, and wages would go up and keep up. Good prices would then be obtained for everything, and every one could live comfortably.

A most obliging merchant in Kamloops informed me that it would be as well for him to shut shop, because it was impossible to do business any longer. A few Chinamen had come to the place, and beginning as cooks, waiters, barbers, washermen, had at length opened some small shops, and were fast getting hold of the entire trade of the country. Nobody else had a chance with them, he said. I asked

why. "Oh," was the answer, given in perfect simplicity, "they are satisfied with small profits and quick returns, and they make no losses, for they refuse to give credit." He had not so learned business. His former customers, who were now buying goods at reasonable rates, agreed with him that it was a shame. I am sorry to seem to reflect on any of my British Columbian friends, or rather to reflect on their notions of commercial or political economy. They were kindness itself to me, as they are to all travelers. "They are a real nice people," said one of the engineers we fell in with; "they do cheerfully what you want, either for nothing or for an enormous price." That hits the mark. Their hospitality is beyond praise; but when they charge, you are likely to remember the bill. Three of us hired a wagon one afternoon. The boy drove us twenty-three miles in four hours, and the charge was thirty dollars. On another afternoon we engaged a man to row us in his little boat to a steamer on Burrard Inlet. It took him an hour, and we had to pay four dollars for the use of his boat and the pleasure of his company. A friend wished to negotiate for the removal of some lumber. Finding that the cost of a team was fifteen dollars per day, he preferred to do without the lumber. That such costs and charges put a stop to industrial development, that they are equivalent to total prohibition of intercourse or exchange, does not occur to the average politician. Abundance of labor is the one thing absolutely indispensable in British Columbia. Pretty much the only labor attainable on a large scale for many a year is that of Chinamen. Far from welcoming the labor, almost every one's face is set against it, even when necessity forces him to take advantage of it for the time. But this is not the place to discuss the Chinese problem. I have alluded to it simply because the railway has forced it upon our attention, and it presses for solution.

Since the Dominion was constituted the political life of Canada has centered about the Pacific Railway. Now that it is on the eve of completion, we see how great was the task that three millions of people set themselves fourteen years ago to accomplish. The work is imperial in meaning as well as magnitude, though the cost has been wholly defrayed by Canada. It is our contribution to the organization and defense of the empire. It has added to our public burdens, but our credit is better than when it was commenced. When we are told that it has cost fifty, sixty, or a hundred millions, what need one say but that it was a necessity, and that it is worth the cost?