

From Winnipeg to the Coast.

To the Editor of the Colonist.

DEAR SIR,—Agreeable to a promise given you some time ago, I will endeavor to say a few words about a flying visit to the coast. As observations taken in such hurried transit are but superficial, too much weight must not be placed upon the correctness of the ideas conveyed. It was "a cold day" when we began the journey, but a far more Arctic morning when we peeped out on Regina, with the frost hanging like a shroud over the town. And as we ventured out on the platform and felt our nose tingle, we did entertain for the Mounted Policemen on duty our warmest sympathy, and our outing for that day was short. After leaving the Royal city of the plains, we passed the time of a slowly dawning January morning watching the screams of light that promised the sunrise, and that whole day was taken up in crossing, for the most part an uninhabited prairie of rolling land with no trees, and the sun set as he rose glittering across the great wide stretch of country, home of the coyote and antelope. Our arrival at Medicine Hat was also an introduction to a warmer climate, with but little snow. Nestling among the banks of the South Saskatchewan, with coal, natural gas and a fine climate, this ought to become a fine town. From this place to Calgary the run is made in the night, but a glance at our Canadian Denver in a bright moonlight gives an observer an idea of prosperity and solidity while the general talk of those who visit or do business there confirms the impression that a splendid future is in store for the capital of Alberta.

Being born among mountains and having dreamed and longed for a sight of the "Rockies," the scene of so many blood curdling tales and hair-breadth escapes, perused in early youth, one may imagine the feelings that were on the strain for a first glance of "the mountains." But we were doomed to disappointment, as the morning mist enshrouded them, and we were fairly at Canmore before their great, massive proportions were first displayed. A couple of days at this point prepared the mind for grander scenery and greater peaks, but we think it is also due to say something of this divisional point. Canmore is in a level (Bow River) valley of about 3 miles wide shut in, of course, (seemingly) by mountains, the peaks of some rising six and seven thousand feet high. The principal ones being a rocky mass with three tops called the three sisters. Our first introduction to these maidens of antiquity was at the unseemly hour of five-thirty a.m. And they were modestly garmented in their early morning attire, but, as our acquaintance ripened, they gradually emerged in their stateliness. I can hardly apply the term "beauty," and I will thoughtfully refrain from using "rugged" in this case instance.

The most stately sister, who, presumably might be the oldest, and certainly the most angular was also the most reticent, but, at last, even her bald—beg pardon—her snowy head appeared cleaving the very sky. Canmore is quite a mountain town, with definite mountain habits, Chinese cooks, strange oaths and poker. Two mining camps, the Cochrane and Anthracite mines, supply about a hundred and fifty men with labor and the C.P.R. with coal.

Some big hearted fellows work in coal mines, the danger that all are liable to seems to make a fellowship peculiar to themselves. "How much do I owe you Aleck," said one to another, "I am leaving and want to square up." "Ten dollars," said the person addressed, but the fact was over twelve. "Well, here is a twenty dollar bill, take it, you were good to me when I required assistance, now I have lots. Good bye, old chap." One seldom finds this happen outside the rugged honesty of the mountaineers.

At Banff a visit was made to the cave and pool. Warm sulphur water bubbling up out of the base of a sulphur mountain. At several points close together the water has a different temperature. The weather still continued beautiful and rather mild at this altitude, over four thousand feet above sea level. After leaving this beautiful park, the train, for the whole day, speeds its way through passes and gorges, by rushing torrents and cloud-capped mountains, some of them rising a sheer precipice a mile and a half above the cars. At 8.50 we reached the summit or great divide of the Rockies, where the waters flow east and west, and here our ordinary engine is replaced by a consolidated or "Mogul," to take the train down the big grade, a fall of eleven hundred feet in seven miles. Three safety switches, at which three careful men stand ready on a signal to switch the train out of danger. But so well managed is this as everything in connection with the Canadian Pacific railway, that no accident has yet taken place, and at 9.30 the hungry passengers made their way through a big wind and bigger snow drifts, to the beautiful and picturesque C.P.R. hotel at "Field," where a fine breakfast awaited them. We do not mean to stop to describe all that is seen by the observant tourist, nor can it be done. The train winding about will turn the ideas upside down, but the glacier must be mentioned. This is one of the points on the line that is best worth a visit. We saw more snow and ice here in half an hour than it has been our lot to see in all our past life or likely will in the aggregate of past and future life on this planet. It is impossible to describe a glacier, a photograph will tell more than a volume. Blue as the varying blue of heaven, intense as the frost and moisture of centuries combined, and grand as the hills, there is the power that transforms the arctic to a temperate or even a torrid zone. Near this spot are some of the great peaks of the Selkirk Range, and the home of the grizzly bear. But the bell rings and "on time," despite six feet of indicated snow on the level, the train proceeds, and soon winding round and round on the loop, (a seven mile run for one of progress), we are traversing a perfect panorama. Peak above and beyond, peak as far as the eye can see, in all directions. And we are fain to give our neck a rest, as the exercise of squinting up from a car window has made it stiff. At 5 p.m. we strike the Columbia for the second time, a grand river now, and fully a quarter of a mile wide, with a deep current, and filled at this season with huge floats of ice. After leaving Revelstoke, a fine run of five hours, brings us to Kamloops, a thriving British Columbia town of over 2,000 inhabitants. Darkness having set in, we turn

in, too, wondering at all we have seen, nature wonders in gorge, mountains and rivers, and man's achievement in overcoming almost insuperable difficulties, and the narrowness of mind gave way, the scope of admiration enlarged 'till in some measure, like Byron, we must say,

"Its grandeur overwhelms you not, and why?
It is not lessened, but thy mind,
Expanded by the genius of the spot,
Has grown colossal."

A night spent on the Thompson Canyon, we think, is better than travelling by day, as it enables the traveller to witness some of the most wonderful engineering work by day-light on the Fraser. We "struck" Lytton very early in the morning, where the Thompson and Fraser rivers join their fortunes together, and still threading its way along the bank and a couple of hundred feet above runs the railway. North Bend is reached for an early breakfast, to nerve the timid for the next twenty-seven miles. This, to me, was the most interesting part of the journey, and we hurried from a fine breakfast, through a British Columbia rain—that does not wet you—if you are encased in rubber—to the cosy car, and prepared ourselves to be astonished. To merely say we were astonished would not do, we were astounded. This part of the trip is almost cut into the side of the rock, like a shelf, with tunnels and tressels and occasionally a bracket for support, and as we look away up at the dark rocky masses of mountains and then down to the roaring, foaming torrent beneath, and feel the motion of spring in the car, it feels like floating in the air. Across the river can plainly be seen the old Cariboo trail, now down a few hundred feet from the stream, and again winding like a long thread over a thousand feet up the mountain side and veritably "with only room for one." When we think of the ease and comfort of modern travel as compared with the hardships, trials, difficulties and dangers of thirty years ago, it is a wonder that grumbling and discontent does not die a natural death, but it doesn't. "Dissatisfaction thrives amid luxuriance." But to our tale. We were beginning to think we had enough of the Fraser canyon, when the train arrived at Yale, old-fashioned Yale, moss-grown and soggy with moisture but beautifully situated in a pocket of mountains. The run from here to Vancouver was through country that in time will be cultivated and lots of it will bear fine fruit. Near Nicomen we spied the hoary head of Mount Baker over in the States, to whom it belongs but I guess we Canadians enjoy it as much as our cousins across the line. This grand peak was seldom out of sight, when it was clear, during our brief stay on the coast. He overlooks everything for over a hundred miles on all sides. My modesty and natural love of the truth keeps me within the mark in putting at that distance. As our next stopping place is the youthful but overgrown city of Vancouver and we have drawn this letter out longer than your patient readers will appreciate, we will close, trusting to have the privilege of giving you another on our ideas of the coast itself.

C. N. M.

McNulty Bros general merchants, are moving their stock & Anthracite, Alberta, to Canmore, where they will concentrate their business.