

up before the traveller. It is true that the cañon valley of the North Thompson lies open, but to follow this outlet, is to face still more imposing obstacles where the Thompson River unites with the Frazer at Lytton, some 250 miles nearer to the south-west; here, along the Frazer, the Cascade Mountains lift their rugged heads, and the river for full sixty miles flows at the bottom of a vast tangle cut by nature through the heart of the mountains, whose steep sides rise abruptly from the water's edge: in many places a wall of rock.

In fact, it is useless to disguise that the Frazer River affords the sole outlet from that portion of the Rocky Mountains lying between the boundary-line, the 53rd parallel of latitude and the Pacific Ocean; and that the Frazer River valley is one so singularly formed, that it would seem as though some superhuman sword had at a single stroke cut through a labyrinth of mountains for 300 miles, down deep into the bowels of the land.

Let us suppose that the mass of mountains lying west of the Tête Jeune has been found practicable for a line, and that the Frazer River has been finally reached on any part of its course between Quesnelle and the Cascade range at Lytton.

What then would be the result?

Simply this: to turn south along the valley of the river, would be to face the cañons of the Cascades, between Lytton and Yale. To hold west, would be to cross the Frazer River itself, and by following the Chilcotin River, reach the Pacific Ocean at a point about 200 miles north of the estuary of the Frazer. But to cross this Frazer River would be a work of enormous magnitude,—a work greater, I believe, than any at present existing on the earth; for at no point of its course from Quesnelle to Lytton is the Frazer River less than 1200 feet below the level of the land