



## AT THE SIGN OF THE MAPLE THE MAJESTY OF MOUNTAINS

*An appreciation of the Grandeur and the Glory of our great Canadian Rockies*

*"The joy of life is sleepness overcome,  
And victories of ascent, and looking down  
On all that had looked down on us."*

LIKE everyone else, I went West this past summer. Unlike everyone else, I omitted Seattle. I had been to Seattle before, and I had been to exhibitions before. The conjunction did not seem morally binding. Besides, I have reached that age when the mere discovery that any given thing can be left out is in itself a joy.

What I wanted in joining the westbound throng was a good time, and to see the mountains once more. The two things are pretty much synonymous to one who loves colour and splendour, and who has lived long enough under the shadow of mountains to know the unappeasable longing their silent presence creates.

I omitted Banff too, which was reprehensible, or would be if one had never been there. Banff is beautiful, of course, but one is too close to the mountains there. They lose their mystery and illusion, become bold, hard facts, mere aggregations of rock and earth, doffing their veils of glamorous mist. Go to Banff if you will become one of the tourist rank and file, admire the views, investigate the discouraged looking buffalo in the park, explore the hot springs, drive out to Minnewanka Lake, not omitting the launch trip, and when your hour comes pay up without flinching, but don't come home and say you've seen the mountains. You haven't.

I wish I could reproduce a picture of the Rockies as I first saw them years ago. It was about 4.30 a.m. after a storm of several days' duration. With the coming of dawn great billows of vapour were rapidly rolling by, being dissipated into space. In the crimson light of the rising sun they looked like gigantic flowers. Through them gleamed here and there the steadfast forms, white crowned, which seemed to circle half the horizon. They stood midway in purple shadows, looming like vast temples against the melting heavens. I remember the fierce chinook that was blowing so hard we had difficulty in standing our ground. An old mountaineer of the party remarked that scarce in a lifetime might one behold such a scene. For the most part we were silent. There are no words for some things. I had not realised before that of motion and matter could be brought such glory. Perhaps a rather high standard for even mountain scenery was set for me that hour. Forever after I knew that the eternal hills were not merely gigantic upheavals of stone, but altars of the living God. Many indescribably lovely combinations of peak and atmosphere have I beheld since then, but none combining swift motion with such intensity of colour. Our own mountains seem to me especially striking in their richness of colouring. The Alps live in memory sun-crowned, gleaming radiant, a succession of incomparable oil paintings. Our Rockies one recalls as infinitely various, overwhelming in rugged and massive boldness, yet presenting all the shifting tones and tender gradations of the sea. They are plastic as music, answering to every mood, responsive to the subtlest emotion.

I stayed some weeks within range of them this past summer. That is the way to know them—one of the ways—to let them look in through your household windows, become a part of the daily ordinance of life, follow you up in your common tasks, and make a background for your thoughts. You sleepily lift your head from the pillow at 5 a.m. and open an eye to the West. There they glow soft and silent, flushed like the petals of a rose. You consider getting up to see them properly, wondering where you left the field glasses last night, but before you are through considering find yourself snuggled down again with an uneasy sense of having missed the best thought of the day, to say nothing of an outraged conscience and a stony look from Saint R. L. S. When you get up three hours later, your peaks have lost that wonderful flush and exquisite purity of tone, but are still lovely, robed perchance in pale heliotrope. At noon, when you are out roaming the foothills on your host's best mount, breathing an air that exhilarates like wine, you look over the ridge of the wildcat

hills, and there spreads such a panorama of misty blue peaks before you that you take breath sharply. Or again in the soft light of the prolonged twilight, quite up to ten o'clock in June, or early July, they stand sentinel-like, blue-black against the fading topaz sky, a long uneven line of strange forms without detail or definition. Some morning you may get up and there are no mountains. You rub your eyes and look again, but they have vanished—been wiped out altogether, and where they were wont to stand runs the same old flat everlasting prairie as upon the other side stretches away endlessly to the rim of the world. It is uncanny. You must have dreamed they were there yesterday, and you feel as though something has gone from life—some charm, some glory, that had lent your days half their joy. But the next morning, or the one after the next, there they are again, steadfast, luminous, more lovely than ever, like the restored presence of our beloved.

We spent days at closer range, of course. That is a different thing. You try in vain to realise them, but about all you succeed in realising is how frightfully oblivious of you they are. They overwhelm the imagination, and you give up trying to adjust yourself to them, and instead simply take them bit by bit. The mind becomes a storehouse of lovely pictures—sapphire lakes, reflecting great, dazzlingly white glaciers, solitary sun-crowned peaks, cleaving the violet skies at incredible heights, little emerald or jade-coloured tarns rimmed with white, which prove on closer examination to be caused by tiny shells long bleached by the sun, or great slopes on which dark firs climb to the very top, challenging the clouds, a constant succession of superb vistas, stupendous in scale, infinite in variety, of surpassing beauty. Foaming torrents, fleecy, glacier-fed cataracts of "frozen splendour," crags upon whose gigantic shoulders the new fallen snow lies like lacey mantles, and ever beyond peaks that soar into

the blue, invincible and glorious, combine endlessly into scenes that haunt the memory forever.

We camped one night in a little hollow of the hills, so rich with the succulent pea-vine or vetch that our hungry horses were satisfied in an hour or two instead of munching most of the night as they generally did. The sun had dropped behind the dusky forms that circled us, and the early night of the mountains was fast closing in. Hurrying to put up tents, make fires, and get supper while light lasted, we scarcely realised what a panorama of extraordinary splendour was unfolding around us. Happening to glance up from the process of bannock making, my eyes full of smoke, I saw glowing soft in the east a cluster of rosy peaks, ethereal as clouds, amethyst and purple shadows clinging about their base gradually climbing upward, while above, tender as a dream, the luminous cresces seemed to float in mid-air. Slowly they melted, mingling with the dusky mists of space, where Mars finally swung from his violet deeps and hung over the shadowy folds, piercing the night with his ruddy gleam—the imagination with his untold story.

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### The Earl Grey Musical Contest for 1910.

THIS year, the fourth since its inauguration, the Earl Grey Musical Trophies will be competed for in the Royal Alexandra Theatre, Toronto, beginning with the week of April 4th. The scope of the contests has been greatly enlarged this season and it will include prizes for individual competitors as is done at musical festivals in the north of England. The Governor-General and Countess Grey will be in Toronto during the entire week.

The events are divided in the following manner: (1) Choral societies, (2) orchestras, (3) mixed voice choruses of not less than 24 and not more than 60, (4) opera companies.

If there is more than the entry in each class, a special prize will be awarded the winner, and the winners in the various classes will be adjudged for the trophy. It is expected that in the mixed voice chorus section there will be a large entry from church choirs. This is a form of musical effort which has not received much public recognition.

In addition to the trophy contest, the following competitions, with three prizes in each class, are given for young singers and instrumentalists:

- (1) Individual male voices—for amateurs under 23 years of age.
- (2) Individual female voices—For amateurs under 23 years of age.
- (3) Pianoforte solos—For amateurs under 23 years of age.
- (4) Violin solos—For amateurs under 23 years.

Two prizes of \$100 and \$50 each are also offered for the best original musical composition written by a British subject, resident in Canada or Newfoundland.



The Moraine Lake, lying a short distance south of Lake Louise, in the Rocky Mountains.