

BANFF THE BEAUTIFUL

J. W. Young Was Especially Impressed with the Watery Place of the West.

Another of His Entertaining Letters to the Planet—On the Home-ward Journey.

(Concluded.)

Calgary itself is a rambling city, scattered all over a large hill-side, the hills rise all around the town, so that stand almost any place in the city and look around and you see the hills that circle the town. Time travels back and you imagine that you are in the old walled towns of England. These natural earthworks of defense insinuate into the quiet and peaceful western city quite a martial aspect. Yet, within, there isn't a more peaceful or a busier place of its size in all the Dominion. Here, some 2,000 feet or more above the sea, the sun shines and the wind blows just the same as it does at home, only the air seems more invigorating. There is no war, only the suggestion in the natural surroundings of the town. There are two rivers that meet just below the city and the following standing riddle perhaps holds, too, a good description of Calgary: "Why are the Calgary ladies particularly blessed?" is asked of the guileless tenderfoot from the east. "Because they have the Bow on one side and the Elbow on the other," is the answer, too deep for the innocent easterner. The Bow and Elbow are the two rivers between which the town is built. Their current is swift and fast.

As Calgary, so it is all over the west, Ontario is the password. "Where did you come from?" "Ontario."

"So did I. How is Toronto?" This is the conversation that you indulge in with most everyone you meet, with Toronto changed to Ottawa, Owen Sound, Hamilton, eastern or western Ontario, but otherwise there is no difference. If Ontario is distinguished with her census and wants to know where her population is, let her look through the Canadian Northwest. She will find her stalwart sons at every milestone almost. They are more plentiful than the stars and are all doing well. In Calgary alone there are many Chathamites. There I found Hugh Neilson, once a Chathamite, but now known to Chathamians as owner of the business carried on under the name of the Hugh Neilson Furniture Co. Mr. Neilson is doing an exceedingly large trade both wholesale and retail, and intends next year building a large block to accommodate his business.

Mr. Neilson was glad to meet one from the home-town. He had just returned from a fishing trip of one day down the Bow river. The current in this stream is very rapid and the residents of Calgary go up stream by train and fish down. Mr. Neilson said that he and his friend didn't have very good luck. They only got six green trout.

Mr. Neilson's foreman is J. A. Kenzie, once with Mr. Locke, of Ridge-town, and a right pleasant man to meet. James Linton owns Linton's block and also has a book-store. John Kerr is a merchant tailor with a good business. John Hicklin, brother of Charles Hicklin, foreman of The Planet press department, is one of Calgary's prosperous carpenters. Then the Gallans came into the neighborhood. He couldn't stand them as neighbors, so he sold out and came down to Calgary. He was working at his trade of carpenter when I met him, but he told me that in company with Will McGregor, of Blenheim, and his brother, Robert Townsend, he was going to start a ranch near Calgary in the spring. Mr. Townsend intends visiting Chatham at Christmas. Edward Townsend, another brother, is farming near Edmonton. He has 480 acres of land and is making money. John Bishop, formerly clerk in Ed. Snook's grocery, is now in partnership with John Hunter, a former Doverite. They are contractors and carpenters, and have all they can do. There are quite a number of Doverites in Calgary and vicinity. Besides Messrs. Bishop and Hunter there are Geo. McKinnon, Walter Hunter, David Fryer and Geo. Hardy. Mr. Hardy has a ranch about eight miles distant from Calgary. He is a brother-in-law of Mr. Gould, of Ridge-town, and is the C. P. R. station, Chatham. Mr. Gorman, formerly of Park Bros. Chatham, is now locomotive superintendent at the C. P. R. station, Calgary. Geo. Sessmith, once a prominent Maple City Orangeman, is still true to his golden colors in the far western city of Calgary. Wilbert J. Thomson, cousin of Alfred Bisset, of Blenheim, is another of the Kest county people who I met. Charlie Biggar, of Blenheim, and his cousin, Alfred Biggar, of Michigan, are partner carpenters. They are distinguished as Biggar and Little Biggar. James Hornby, of Ridge-town, lives in the hill, is also a Calgary carpenter. Powell & Baird, two former Blenheimites, have a large ranch about 40 miles from Calgary. Mr. Powell has a nice residence in Calgary.

In Calgary, I met Alfred Langford, ex-Kent Bridge, who is taking a group trip through the west. It was more than a pleasure to meet someone just from home. Mr. Langford and I missed each other by a narrow margin at Winnipeg. Brandon and Moosejaw. At these places he got off the train that I got on. We spent two or three pleasant days seeing Calgary together. That was really right for Calgary is very much apart. Let me rather say, we together spent many pleasant days seeing scattered Calgary. Mr. Langford had just come from spending a week with "Thad. Arnold" near Moosejaw. Mr. Arnold is a product of Kent County.

He reached Moosejaw eight years ago, secured a home of 160 acres and began to build himself a shack with only \$15 in his pocket. Now he has 640 acres of land, a nice house, 14 head of horses, 12 milch cows. He could easily sell his farm for \$5,000 or \$7,000 did he desire to. Such are the opportunities that the west holds out to all, and in this wonderfully fertile land everyone can make his living from the earth, and, if he is careful, can in a few years become comfortably well off. Mr. Langford drove the binder for Mr. Arnold for three days and he says that the crop was splendid. He used 5 lbs. of twine to the acre.

In Calgary I also met another ex-Maple City resident in the person of Jos. Ryan, of High River, who happened to be spending a day in Calgary. Mr. Ryan told me that he was a cousin of Jacob Ryan, tailor, Chatham, and that in 1872-73 he himself had worked for the late Chas. Poile. Mr. Ryan was asking after Tom Gledhill, J. B. Reid and other Chathamites. Just tell J. B. Reid you met me and see what he will say," was Mr. Ryan's parting salute. Alfred Clause, of Cedar Springs, is another of the carpenters from home that I met. Mr. Langford and myself called on the Chief of Police, who proved to be Thos. English, cousin of Capt. Sim Smith, of Chatham. I told the head of the Calgary police force that my father was chief at Chatham. "Then your name is Young," said he. "I know the names of nearly all the chief police officers in Canada. I never forget a name."

Mr. English was asking after his cousin and wanted to know if he had his Fenian Raid medal. The Calgary chief of police has a Fenian Raid medal, too. He was one of the Chathamians who had thought that their mother country might need them. Such an exhibition of loyalty was well worth more than a medal. George Walden, one of the police officers, also came from Ontario, from London township, near London. He is a cousin of Westman Bros. and asked to be remembered to them. I mustn't forget William Howell at one time janitor at The Planet office. Unfortunately, William was away from Calgary cooking on a C. P. R. work train, so I couldn't see him, and I missed his friendly and good-natured smile. I met a number of his friends who said that William was improving some in health but not as much as could be desired.

On Friday afternoon, Sept. 13, I left Calgary for Banff. How horribly suggestive of ill luck "I wouldn't have done it" I hear the superstitious say. Yet I never had a more enjoyable trip in my life, and I shall always look back at my visit to Canada's natural hot baths as one of the milestones in my life. A mark to date events by and if you should ever see any event mentioned as happening three days, three weeks, or three years, "after my visit to Banff," you will easily understand the meaning. Banff, the very word is suggestive of something unusual, unexpected and out of the ordinary. I, not having access to books of reference, have wondered if this wonderful spot has been renamed from some place in Scotland, or has some genius coined the word. If he did he was an artist. If the name has been taken from some other place, and I have since learned that it was, it shows how nature in her improvement can rob man of power to think. He cries as he gazes on the site of Banff; how glorious, how grand, beautiful, merely reiterating the exclamations of hundreds before him. Then, at a loss for a name for the place, he feebly calls it Banff, after some place of inferior resemblance, that he has known.

Banff, the name seemed meaningless when I first saw it, and if not some place, at least just a name of a place, and aroused a "don't-care-it-go-there-or-not" feeling.

What different feelings the very mention of the name now awakens! The five little letters that make up the word Banff now seem charged with meaning. It recalls one of the most marvelous spots, where nature draws near, and man overcomes by her majesty is humbled, recognizing her in the presence of some mighty power. In his sudden realization of his insignificance stoops to kiss the workmanship of Nature's hand. So full of awe is he that he would not if he had the opportunity, seek Nature's presence to offer homage. Banff is a place where the humblest resident of the earth feels that Nature surrounds him and makes him understand that after all men are equal, all are mortal. I had often heard the expression "A little touch of Nature makes all the world kin." I thought I understood it, but I was deceived. I understand it now.

I had been told by those who had been there "See Banff, don't miss it." I thought that the people were just talking for something to say. I didn't really care whether I went or not and it was in a spirit of indifference that I purchased my ticket. I believe that if anything else had suggested itself I would have missed Banff. It is only a word the name of a place, but how much it expresses of Banff after dark. I registered at the Sanitarium and went to sleep. Imagine one going out through the night into an unknown country and lying down to sleep alone, to awaken in Paradise. Then you will have some idea of the feelings of those who awaken in Banff.

It is a grand sight that greets you as you step out into the morning air. All around you huge and massive rocks tower to the skies and beyond. Rough and ragged these mountains of stone look, but the view is sublime and awe-inspiring. A sense of oppressiveness and exaltation seems to strike you at the time. You are weighed down by a sense of the insignificance of man and uplifted by the grandeur of the lofty and stately mountain peaks, standing ever still and motionless like some grim and solemn monsters. Then in wondrous admiration you gaze all around trying to take in the whole panoramic view. To the right rises the twin peaks, two rough grey masses of rock, scarcely high enough to reach the snow line. Nearer and south, Tunnel mountain, just like a huge loaf of bread in shape and covered with vegetation and trees all over. Behind rises Cascade mountain, the

highest peak of all. It is 9,875 feet high, and this summer was scaled for the first time by two Swiss guides and a tourist. Next to Cascade rises Squaw mountain, with its wooded heights and up the Bow River to the westward can be seen the distant heights of the main range. Just behind the Sanitarium rises Sulphur mountain, but it is impossible to picture on paper the sublime majesty of the scene. I heard a young lady describe the view as superb. It is that—whatever it may mean—and far more. A man leaving a city and becoming a farmer was described as going "near to nature's heart." I felt that I had been permitted to come near to nature's art and I was at a loss for words. Subdued and silent, I retired to the hotel and even now I am at a loss for language to describe the glories of Banff. For the scenery alone I commend this divine spot to Canadians. It is a relative of Mr. Hyslop, once of the firm of Hyslop & Ronalds, he sang at a Scotch concert in Chatham 20 years or more ago. He is just the man to be in such a place.

The cave is a large circular dome some fifty feet high. It was first discovered by a prospector who seeing the hole in the hillside left himself down inside the cave by means of a rope. Instead of gold the man found sulphur spring of water. The over-flow was lower down the hill. The government has cut an entrance to the cave where the over-flow came out, and built a bath house at the mouth of this entrance. If you like you can bathe in the pool in the cave, and looking up you can see the hole down which the prospector descended. The party I was with, however, found the cave too warm, and we preferred to bathe in the basin, which is out doors. Just

Imagine bathing out of doors with the thermometer almost at freezing point. It might suggest cold and chills until you know that most delightful of all bathing places—the pool in the basin at Banff.

The pool is protected on two sides by the hills and on the other two by the bath houses and a fence, so that the wind cannot get at the bathers. The bathing place is about 35 feet in diameter and about 8 feet deep in the middle. The water is deep blue, which color it gets from the sulphur in it. In the centre of the pool, warm water bubbles up from the earth and diving, you can plunge your arm to the shoulder in the loose sand. There is a cave at the east end of the pool where the adventuresome can crawl in. The opening isn't very large and you have to crawl in with your head under water. The overflow pipe is about six inches in diameter and the water keeps running steadily. There is an entrance change of water in the pool every two hours and a half. We generally stayed in an hour and the last time we were in an hour and a half. It was really the finest bathing I ever enjoyed. The warm water was not too warm, just comfortable, and, if your shoulders became cold all you had to do was to put them under water. The air, of course, was a little chilly, but a couple of quick sips and you were in by the fire-side. After the bath was, perhaps, the most enjoyable time. When dressed, you felt as warm and full of life as a grasshopper. In fact, it required some restraint to keep from hopping all the way back to the sanitarium. I can imagine nothing more delightful than sitting in the basin at Banff, and as the excellence of this place gets noised abroad and as towns build up near it, the time will come when the hot springs at Banff will be too few to accommodate the multitude.

For the information of those who go to Banff, it may be well to mention that there are two hotels there, the E. P. R. hotel, a modern palace with a delightful view, and the Sanitarium. The E. P. R. hotel is perfect in everything, and a delightful place of residence. The rates are \$3 per day. At the Sanitarium the rates are from \$2 to \$2.50.

The Government Museum at Banff is well worth visiting. It contains a splendid collection of birds mounted in the eggs, minerals, woods and a few animals. There is also quite a large collection of Indian ornaments and articles of war, including the scalps belonging to Chief Red Shirt, Blackfoot Indian chief. One of the scalps is of auburn hair, soft and silky as if it had belonged to some young girl, and caused a shudder to pass over me when I touched it. The E. P. R. is in charge of the museum. He told me that the highest recorded temperature at Banff was 89 degrees on August 5, 1893, and the lowest 12 degrees below zero in January, 1893. Curious that the records should be both in the same year. The past two winters have been very mild, however, and during both there was scarcely a week's snowing. Mr. Sampson said that the Government were intending to extend the limits of the Park, which already contains 290 square miles. The hot springs, of which there are five in use, are all contained within a radius of three miles and all have been found on Sulphur mountain. Even Banff had to be left and it was sorry to go to Banff. The capital of the Northwest, once called a File of Bones, but now Regina, was the next stopping place. I think that the power that gave the pile of bones substance forgot to give it life. For a quieter place I never met. Really I see no future for Regina either. It is built out in the prairie away from water and as now so in the future, it will depend for its life on the farm trade. This is large already for the capital of the Northwest is the centre of a very fertile farming and ranching country. The town, too, is so situated that a sewer system of waterworks system is impossible. It is true that the Government buildings, the police barracks, and the Indian Industrial school are situated here, and I haven't the slightest doubt but that had Regina a good river flowing through it that it would long since have surpassed me. A day in Calgary satisfied me and I intended to visit the beautiful Qu'Appelle valley, of whose fertility and beauty many have spoken to me. Every visitor to the Qu'Appelle valley, whom I met, was in raptures over this fruitful section of Canada, but fate didn't permit me to see it and this is my one regret. On the train that I came eastward on was the Rev. Mr. Stearns, once a teacher at Embury. He asked to be remembered to Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Macaulay.

Time passes on and I must stop writing, as I am just about to leave for Winnipeg to properly welcome the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York to the West.

—JOHN W. YOUNG.

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