

A few Impressions of the Rockies.

IN looking back on a journey of which we have not taken minute or particular notes, the recollections of what we have seen are generally of a somewhat heterogeneous as well as nebulous character. We may remember the chief points of interest, the places whose beauty or sublimity have more especially drawn our attention, but our remembrance is equally vivid of the exact spot where we lost our umbrella or where we were given that delicious cup of coffee—our personal pleasures or mishaps are apt to cast a gloomy shadow or a rosy light over certain scenes through which we have passed. It is only when these scenes have been such as have by their own inherent power lifted us out of ourselves for the time being, and compelled us to be, as it were, mere impersonal spectators of their grandeur or beauty, that we find our recollections have merged into a broad generalization, that the wealth of detail has disappeared, and that there remains simply an impression, in some cases strong and deep enough to influence character or change the tendencies of a life. The more this has been the case the more the imagination has been a true interpreter of the meaning and inner beauty of the scene, as the free, bold sweep of an artist's brush can produce in a few suggestive touches an effect which is lost in the most accurate photograph.

If there is an occasion more certain than another to imprint this one absorbing, strong impression upon the mind, it is when passing for the first time through the Rocky and Selkirk chains of mountains. It is the "new sensation" that so many jaded spirits have been demanding from time immemorial. On a far grander scale than the most famous mountain scenery of the old world, their extent is such that one scene of surpassing beauty is only the precursor or the outcome of countless others.

The first view of the Rockies from a distance is a revelation. After the monotony of day after day crossing the vast northern prairie, noting with practical eye the character of the soil and the condition of the inhabitants, the probable wheat crop and the progress of cultivation,—after the utilitarian ideas evoked by passing through this otherwise uninteresting country, the first sight of the mountains is like a vision of another world—their wonderful ideality is the strongest impression upon the mind. There they lie upon the horizon, first dim in outline, then growing gradually clearer, white and snowy, melting into the sky, mysterious in their possibilities; here rising aloft into the similitude of the pearly gates of heaven, there gleaming through the fleecy veil of a jewelled mist, growing always whiter, purer, more ethereal, until their delicate peaks seem almost to quiver and float upon the sunlit air. The very shadows that flit across them beneath the light drifts of opal clouds are of a faint tender blue that is like no earthly tint. The material world has vanished from our gaze and we feel as if we were given a fleeting glimpse of some spiritual and glorified land only pictured in our dreams.

Later on as we ascend the greater slopes of the Bow River the scene changes into a more natural tranquil beauty. We follow the Bow River up, up, as if we would reach its very source among the hills. Beautiful vistas open each moment before us, we are ascending so gradually that merely gentle slopes seem to lie around us, wild flowers are clustering on either side—surely we cannot be entering any wild region of rock and precipice through these enchanting glades!—and yet slowly but surely we are mounting and the impression of tranquil beauty will but intensify the emotions we are destined to experience farther on. Soon the character of the hills changes, the verdure does not quite reach their summits, a grey crag rears aloft as if spurning the mantle that would enfold it, a dark pine stretches out a jagged arm across the now foaming river, a bolder outline rises on the right, a gleaming peak stands sharply out upon the left, we are gaining an approach to the stronghold of the mountains. The train sweeps on around curve, after curve always rising higher and higher, and still we are in a region so wild and startling in its beauty that involuntarily we hold our breath in expectation of what each new turn will bring before us. The precipitous

mountains rise sheer on either hand, we are climbing along their sides, our way now barred by some enormous rock which seems to yield before us as we dart through in an instant of darkness and clamour, now gliding beside a raging torrent or hanging suspended over some dark abyss, the cloud-capped summits soaring all around us and seeming to melt into the sky. Faint gleams of rosy haze drift along the dark green of the mountain sides, great masses of granite-rock are barred with purple shadows that stretch afar to meet the purple of the evening sky, and nearer on every side a thousand rivulets flash and break into jewelled spray as they dash downward to join the foaming river.

After passing the summit of the Rockies, where a little lake lies calm and still, reflecting each cloud and peak in its clear surface, we enter the Pass of the Wapta or Kicking Horse. Here in the very heart of the mountains, at a height of over five thousand feet above the sea, the solid earth seems to fall away from under us,—we are hanging on the sides of cliffs whose ramparts disappear amongst the clouds, and in whose deep ravines great glaciers are piled in masses of cold blue light, while far below us lie hills and valleys, woods and waters, gigantic trees fringing the banks of mighty rivers appearing like blades of grass beside tiny rivulets. All feelings die away but that of awe and a sense of the insignificance of man, suspended between earth and air, a mere dot in the universe, surrounded by heights and depths such as were never even imaged in our dreams, what is there left us but the consciousness of our weakness, and a realization of the limitations of our being. And yet a strange mysterious thrill of exultation, rising stronger than all doubts or fears, teaches us that in all this we have a part, that here, among scenes whose beauty and sublimity no tongue can describe, we are at home; we claim fellowship with woods and streams, valleys and mountains, and learn from them the secret that deep in the spirit of man lie possibilities beyond the reach of philosophy to fathom or speculation to explore, but which expand and blossom into life as we stand face to face with Nature in the stronghold of her majesty and power.

L. A. L.

Vancouver, B. C.

To Walt Whitman.

Lo, I from amidst the Dominion Canadian, a sojourner now in
Toronto—
The queen of the cities that girdle the Great Lakes, the fairest, the
loveliest—
Unto thee, O mellifluous singer that dwellest in Mannahatta,
Girt round by the friends of thine old age, the charmed of thy sing-
ing, who know thee and love thee,
Unto thee, Comorado, send I hopeful this greeting,
And hail thee, Republican bard, Cosmopolitan poet:
Whose voice, like the free winds of heaven, the tempests, the light-
nings,
Knows no bounds, knows no limits, airily scorning
The barriers, rude, artificial, uprearing, that sunder the nations, the
masses.
Thou, boldly outspoken, chantest the Hymn Democratic, the song
of the people.

MONDAMIN.

Forgetfulness.

THERE is, perhaps, no greater hindrance, encountered by mankind in general, to the carrying on of the great every-day work of the world than the proneness of each individual to forget. Thus, it may be required that an impression made upon the mind of a person at one time must be subsequently reproduced in his mind at another and a certain time, in order that he may properly