

silent Scotchmen suffered; we don't understand what 'made twenty miles up the Stikine against a head wind' means in hard labour, any more than we guess that the statement that 'François pushed 200 lbs. across the portage' should be supplemented by the statement that he afterwards died in Victoria, while still a young man, from aneurism of the heart; we don't imagine for a moment that canoeing is anything but a pleasant, idle pastime, during which the head of the expedition lies on a robe and smokes; we can't believe that up some rivers there can be no passengers, and that an upset means death by starvation, if not



THE STIKINE RIVER

by drowning; for man, even the hardest and the handiest, cannot live in northern wilds without any artificial adjuncts, axe or hatch, rifle or canoe.

Twice I have travelled on the Stikine. The first time I went as a bear-hunter, and it seemed to me that I had dropped in unexpectedly on the first day of creation. The earth, as seen through a black curtain of ceaseless rain, appeared to be without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. The mouth of the river is in about the same latitude as Mull and the rainfall is much the same in both places (from 50 to 75 inches in Mull, and about 60 inches, according to Dr. Dawson, at Wrangel), but at Tongars the rainfall reaches 100 inches per annum, whilst