

REMINISCENCES.

The press of work being over, Anthony J—b—n and I took a ten-days' run up to the source of that mighty stream, the Columbia.

We got to the crossing of the Kootenay—that oft described but ever attractive place—where the Kootenay sweeps out of its rocky bounds and roaring round the beetling cliff seeks the calmer and flatter regions, crossing majestically past the head waters of the Columbia on a level with the lake, in the most independent manner as if it claimed and sought a separate existence.

Thus far no adventure or anything worthy of note, unless the magnificent valleys and lacustrine reaches that stretched for miles along our left were worthy of note. We did not give them a thought.

The bracing air through which we dashed along, the open park-like scenery, the invigorating sense of buoyancy must be seen and felt to be appreciated.

We had about 65 miles to make, and had a late start, so the beauties of the landscape, or the future of this interesting place, did not bother us.

Having crossed the Kootenay we struck into a spur of the Rockies, which here stand back, leaving a long flat slope covered with grass, flattening all the way down to the lake, with a corresponding slope leading up to the Selkirk range on the south. We got in early, saw the cattle and Ramon, the Mexican herder, and ate supper with a zest known only to the traveler in these latitudes.

We agreed that in place of exploring those rocky fortresses towering up to the north of us, that we would ride down the Columbia 50 or 60 miles probably to near the present site of Golden City, and started in good time. About half-past ten we met a number of pack animals, and soon the owner, Jack Sh—tl—w—th, hove in sight. "What on earth are you doing here, said Jack. "Just taking a ride." "Are you looking for anything?" "No." Jack looked incredulous. "Haven't you got a warrant for the arrest of Machelock?" "No, certainly not." "Well," says Jack, "I would advise you to 'bout ship and south if you would save your heads." "How's that?" "You know the Indian that killed the soldier down at Coleville?" "Yes." "He's here, down at the camp about twenty miles below here, there's a lot of Coleville Indians hunting, and they have heard that two men are coming in to arrest him. They are prepared," said Jack, "you'd better turn back with me, for if you go down there now I wouldn't give five cents for your chances."

Anthony argued that we were from Kootenay and had nothing to do with the Indians, and much talk of that kind, Sh—tl—w—th always telling us, "That's nothing, they won't believe you." Andy laughed it off. "Well, if you will run yourselves into the trap," said Jack, "ta ta." Sh—th slackened rein and soon

disappeared after his goods and chattels. He was married to a Coleville squaw, but he didn't consider himself safe, and was making his way down to Galbraith's, Wild Horse Creek.

We had time enough to muse on the situation as we cantered through the rolling foot-hills. How the Indians knew of our coming was a mystery, but a fact, also. (Those who were here at the time of the Bute Inlet massacre will recollect that the Indians here knew for some time before any one else).

We cantered on through an undulating grassy country marked by piles of deer horns at one place to show where a battle had been decided between two contending tribes; and towards night came to some houses, which had been built by the first miners of "Wild Horse" who, driven out by prospects of starvation, had hunted the Rocky Mountain sheep, shot geese, and fished in the stream, till

"Spring came with opening breezes bland
And, touched by her Ithurian wand
Earth burst her winter chains."

Two or three of the houses were common log shanties, the rest were underground houses, big oblong holes with only the roof above the level of ground, and the only means of getting in or out, was a hole in the centre of the roof which answered for door, window and chimney. These the Indians had taken temporary possession of, but they looked too much like traps, so we boldly presented ourselves at the house of the chief, a conical one of buffalo skins.

The chief received us kindly, but not devoid of suspicion. It was his brother who had killed the soldier and who presently came in. He had been hunting the big horns and had some fine specimens. He seemed to look on the whole business as if concluded, and but required the execution. We differed of course, and prepared our "Colt's" death-dealing irons for any emergency, when the mistress of the house took a say. We couldn't understand a word they said but the controversy waxed loud and long, the squaw manfully replying to the arguments advanced and we could hear by the undertone comments that the whole camp was listening, though none entered. We had given up our horses so that our chances of seeing daylight depended on the apparently slender thread of a chief's honor, and ideas of hospitality. The brother had gone out very angry and shortly returned reinforced as we could tell by the hubbub outside, but now the chief seized his gun and went to the door, spoke in a commanding tone, and seemed determined that no harm should befall his guests, and he was as good as his word.

The crowd dispersed. We lay as we rode, with our blankets drawn over us unconcernedly by the fire. Shortly after daybreak our horses were brought all ready and had been well attended to, bade good-bye to the hospitable chief, and leisurely rode off, believing our time had not yet come.