

From Fort Garry and Fort Ellice, on the Assiniboine, the distance is 215 miles; from Fort Ellice to Fort Carlton, 309; from Fort Carlton up the North Saskatchewan to Edmonston, 380. In the last part of this route the travellers had one of their best days.

"Everything contributed to make it supremely enjoyable. We had fresh, spirited horses under us, a cloudless sky and bright sun above; and an atmosphere exhilarating as some pure gentle stimulant. The country was of varied beauty; rich in soil, grasses, flowers, wood, and water; infinitely diversified in colour and outline. From elevated points, far and wide reaches of the same could be seen; here was no dreary monotonous prairie such as fancy had sometimes painted, but a land to live in and enjoy life. And last, but perhaps to us most important item, Terry had in his cart new potatoes and buffalo steak, good as any porter-house or London rump steak, enough even for our appetites; man could want nothing more for animal enjoyment. In the forenoon we rode up two or three hill-sides to get wider views. With all the beauty of former days, there was now what we had often craved for, variety of wood. Clumps and groves of tall white spruce in the gullies and valleys, and along lake sides, branching poplars, with occasional white birch and tamarack, mingled with the still prevailing aspen. The sombre spruces were the greatest relief. They gave a deeper hue to the landscape, and their tall pointed heads broke the distant sky line. Recent fires had desolated much of the country, but there was enough of the old beauty left to show what it had been and what it could soon be made. Sometimes our course lay across a wide open, or up or down a long bare slope; and sometimes through a forest where the trees were far enough apart for easy riding, while a little beyond the wood seemed impenetrably close. In the afternoon we crossed plateaus extending between the different streams that meander to the south; and here the trail ran by what looked like well-cultivated old clearings, hemmed in at varying distances by graceful trees, through the branches of which the waters of a lake, or the rough back of a hill gleamed, while high uplands beyond gave a definite horizon."

At last the Rocky Mountains came into view:

"Few thought of plants to-day, or of anything but the mountains that stood in massive grandeur, thirty miles ahead, but on account of the morning light, in which every point came out clear, seemingly just on the other side of each new patch of wood or bit of prairie before us.

"They rose bold and abrupt five or six thousand feet from the wooded country at their feet,—the western verge of the plains, the elevation of which was over three thousand feet additional above the sea,—and formed in long unbroken line across our path, save where cleft in the centre down to their very feet, by the chasm that the Athabasca long ago forced, or found for itself. 'There are no Rocky Mountains' has been the remark of many a disappointed traveller by the Union and Central Pacific Railways. The remark will never be made by those who travel on the Canadian Pacific; there was no ambiguity about these being mountains, nor about where they commenced. The line was defined, and

the scarp as clear as if they had been hewn and chiselled for a fortification. The summits on one side of the Athabasca were serrated, looking sharp as the teeth of a saw; on the other, the Roche à Myette, immediately behind the first line, reared a great, solid, unbroken cube, two thousand feet high, a 'forehead bare,' twenty times higher than Ben An's; and, before and beyond it, away to the south and west, extended ranges with bold summits and sides scooped deep, and carries far down, where formerly the wood-buffalo and the elk, and now the moose, bighorn, and bear, find shelter. There was nothing fantastic about their forms. Everything was imposing. And these two were ours, an inheritance as precious, if not as plentiful in corn and milk, as the vast rich plains they guarded. For mountains elevate the mind, and give an inspiration of courage and dignity to the hardy races who own them, and who breathe their atmosphere.

'For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our fathers' God.
Thou hast made our spirits mighty
With the touch of the mountain sod.'

"The scene had its effect on the whole party. As we wound in long Indian file along the sinuous trail that led across grassy bas-fonds under the shadow of the mountains that were still a day's journey distant, not a word was heard nor a cry to the horses for the first half-hour. Valad led the way, clad friar-like in blue hooded capote, which he wore all regardless of the fact that the sun was shining; Brown next, in rugged miner costume, half-leathern half-woollen, and Beaupré in the same with a touch of colour added; the Chief and the Doctor in their yellow moose-hide jackets; even Terry, who of late invariably brought up the rear, ceased to howl 'git up out of that' to the unfortunate animal he sat upon, dropped his stick, and put his pipe in his waistcoat pocket. He had seen Vesuvius, the Himalayas, and the Hill of Howth, but they were 'naughting to this.' Before us, at times, a grove of dark green spruce, and, beyond the sombre wood, the infinitely more sombre grey of the mountains; where the wood had been burnt, the bare blackened poles seemed to be only a screen hung before, half revealing, half concealing, what was beyond. The mountains dwarfed and relieved everything else. There was less snow than had appeared yesterday, the explanation being that the first and least elevated mountain range only was before us now that we were near, whereas, when at a greater distance, many of the higher summits beyond were visible."

This grandeur did not diminish on a nearer view:

"It was a grand morning for mountain scenery. For the first three hours the trail continued, at some distance east from the valley of the Athabasca, among wooded hills, now ascending, now descending, but on the whole with an upward slope, across creeks where the ground was invariably boggy, over fallen timber, where infinite patience was required on the part of horse and man. Suddenly it opened out on a lakelet, and right in front, a semicircle of five glorious mountains appeared; a high wooded hill and Roche à Perdrix on our left, Roche à Myette beyond, Roche Ronde in front, and a mountain above Lac Brulé on our right. For half a mile down from their summits, no tree, shrub, or plant, covered the nakedness of the three that the old trappers had