

filled with water. The sergeant and I could no longer hold her. We were dragged over the rocks and were on the point of letting go when fortunately she dropped into an eddy and was once more under control. The oars and paddles were washed away, revolved a minute in the whirling eddy, and then went down stream. We got our breath again, bailed out, and watching till the current slackened a little, triumphantly dragged the canoe past the point, into smoother water above. And so the struggle went on till about noon, when the worst was passed; and pulling our battered craft into a little side cañon we gave a wild hurrah for our victory.

A tramp through the woods brought us once more to the camp at the foot of the rapids, where we dined more sumptuously than usual, on a porcupine which had been so unlucky as to come within range of the Frenchman's rifle. We felt ourselves heroes and imagined ourselves already at Laporte able to laugh at the prophets of evil in Farwell. The afternoon's work of portaging our effects, which weighed about six hundred pounds, somewhat damped our ardor however. Heavily loaded we toiled up the steep hillside, following the course of a long overgrown portage path. The last trip was over just as evening came on, and my sympathy for hodmen and pack-mules was never more profound than at that moment.

Hewing out new oars and paddles we made a fresh start next day, and at first got along famously; but alas for the confidence of man! We presently came to a promontory so smooth that nothing without wings could make its way along the steep rocky wall; while our rope would not reach around. Its base was swept by a fierce current against which our oars were useless. We landed and held a council of war. A mountain goat had been seen the day before and the Frenchman suggested that we should camp where we were, go hunting in the mountains, and wait for the river to fall. Having no rifle and very little time to spare I urged that we should cross the river and try the other side. There was of course the risk of drifting down into the more violent part of the rapids half a mile below, in which case none of us might have come through alive. My plan carried and we made ready for the venture. A moment's hesitation and then off! We had little time to watch the dreadful speed with which we were slipping toward the breakers; for every muscle was strained to make our point. A great surge broke over the edge of the canoe, half drenching us, but doing no further damage, and a moment after we swept into an eddy, safe, though the rapids roared just below.

Our canal-horse work began once more, though much hindered by the rising river. A succession of sunny days had melted layer after layer from the thousands of square miles of snow-field and glacier on the mountains through which the great river flows, and every valley brought down its tribute of ice water. But now the weather changed and a thunderstorm ushered in a rainy season in which the unreasonable Columbia swelled still more rapidly. We landed hastily to get our provisions under cover, and very soon the little tent was up and a camp-fire burning in spite of the rain. My companions lighted their pipes, and beguiled the long evening after supper by giving the story of their lives. The French-Canadian's quaint English gave a certain flavor to his tales of shooting rapids and running logs on the Ottawa and Wisconsin, and he pulled his grizzled mustache with satisfaction as he recounted the jolly songs and dances of long winter evenings in backwood shanties while the snow drifted deeper and deeper outside. The sergeant had much to say of garrison life, and boasted of exploits in the British and American armies, for he had been a soldier in both. The third partner, Mac, a farmer's

son, had chanced to be in Winnipeg during the boom, had grown suddenly rich by speculating in lots, and for some months played the man of wealth, until one morning he woke to find the bubble burst and his riches evaporated; then he was glad to get work on the railway as an ax man.

My bed that night was not of the downiest, nor was my roof of the tightest. Notwithstanding a waterproof and my felt hat pulled over my ears, the driving rain would every now and then find me out under the spruce where I had taken shelter, and break my troubled sleep. The night seemed long, and the voices around, the rushing of the river, the patter of drops, the groanings of some tree, tormented by the storm, had all a note of melancholy. The coming of daylight brought no great relief. Driving mists scudded over the gray water or tangled themselves in the tree tops, and the narrow valley was roofed with leaden clouds hanging low on the mountain sides, till it seemed as if no ray of sunshine could ever reach us. The river had risen till it swept the bushes on the bank and made tracking impossible. Any attempt to move from camp brought down torrents of drops from the loaded bushes, so we huddled together in the little tent with a despondent feeling that things were against us. We all wished ourselves away from this drenched mountain side.

If five days of toil had brought us only fifteen miles on our way, how many days would it take to cover the thirty miles yet between us and Laporte? A squirrel discovered us, and worked himself into a fury over our intrusion. The Frenchman suggested shooting him for a stew, but reflected that the fragments left by a rifle bullet would hardly be worth stewing. Some blue jays, less strikingly dressed than their Eastern cousins, came near and scolded us roundly. It was a relief even to be scolded. All at once a strange event occurred. A rustling and crashing among the bushes startled us and made the Frenchman snatch his rifle; but looking out we saw a man striding toward us, an athletic fellow with wonderfully arched chest and bold, restless eyes. Flinging his pack under a corner of the tent, he straightway made himself at home, drying his soaked clothing by the fire while he told us his errand. He was a prospector on his way to the Big Bend to examine a claim for the company that employed him. He carried ten days' supplies in his sack and proposed to make his way over the mountains to French Creek and back within that time. From his stories, it was evident that the greatest prospector or the greatest boaster in British Columbia stood before us; however, his high spirits were contagious and our prospects suddenly looked brighter.

But this was not the only surprise of the day. Toward evening a shout and the splash of paddles drew our eyes to the river, where eight or ten men were paddling desperately to bring their heavy boat round against the current. They landed just below our canoe, and seemed a jolly crew, if rather rough and ragged. They were on their way from the gold region and had started that morning from Laporte, running down with the stream. "What were the prospects?" "Oh, splendid! Pick up gold anywhere along the creeks," and each man thrust his brown hand deep into the pocket of his jean trousers and pulled out specimens of quartz glittering with gold. Nevertheless, they advised us to turn back. We never could reach Laporte while this high water lasted. Then the hardy, gray haired leader said, "Come boys, we must be off, or we won't reach the Dalles to-night." "Well, solong, partner!" and into their bateau they jumped. We let go the line, the paddles struck the water, and away they went down the river, a picturesque sight till lost in the

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