



Britain's El Dorado

Lines suggested by a journey from Vancouver, September, 1904

BY RUSSELL ELLIOT MACNAGHTEN

SO all day long through that vast Wonderland,
And night on night, and day succeeding day,
We onward sped—and still the untiring wheels
(Whose ceaseless energy an emblem seemed
Of those who dared that task Herculean)
New glories, new delights revealed to view.

First through a land with giant mountains crown'd
We passed; and scarce could bear to pass away—
So exquisitely, wildly fair the scene.
It was a land of lordly cataracts
And mighty rivers rolling to the sea
Resistless and majestic. Every way,
Far as the eye could reach, gigantic peaks
Snow-crown'd and piercing to the azure sky
Uprose in wild profusion; while, beneath,
The mountain torrent, dower'd with the strength
And fulness of the everlasting snows
Onward and downward through the narrow gorge
Swept in its joyous course invincible.
And still with ever-varying delight
The landscape changed, and changing glowed to view:
Till twilight falling steep'd the world in peace,
And veil'd the beauty of the fairy scene,
Save that, above, the everlasting peaks
Still in serene and icy splendour showed.
And once again the unforgotten stars,
The kindly heralds of the northern sky,
Shone with the glory of my boyhood's days,
To welcome me to friends and home again.
And yet behind me lay another home,
And other friends whose memories were dear,
Within the vast and lonely southern isle,*