

sounded through the wood. It was what the men called a "very mean trail," though in places it was fairly well defined, and now and then we saw the teepee-poles of old Indian camping-grounds. Matters improved when we emerged into the desolate valley of the North Saskatchewan, and the trail turned to the left westwards across miles and miles of barren hills strewn with burned timber. A fine glacier-covered peak, named by Collie Peak Wilson, closed the view up the valley, the foreground being filled in by the windings of the river through picturesque rocky knolls. Down the valley, where the stream turned abruptly to the north, a murky copper-coloured haze hung over the hills, and told of forest-fires raging in the direction of the Peace river. A few miles away we could see the Kootenay Plains, a well-known camping-ground and market of the Indians in the old days when they traded with the Hudson's Bay Company. We soon reached the Saskatchewan, which owing to the great heat was in tearing flood, and struck an excellent trail up its right or south bank. The word Saskatchewan signifies, I believe, in the Indian language, "The River of Turbid Waters," and the torrent certainly justified its title, as it swept by us like a muddy mill-race 150 to 300 yards in width.

Towards sundown on Saturday evening the wind changed, and the distant smoke-clouds we had observed in the morning came rolling up the valley,

completely obliterating the mountains from view. The air grew suspiciously hot, and as a strong peaty odour assailed our nostrils, our thoughts naturally turned to forest-fires and the chances of our outfit escaping if the valley got ablaze. Woolley humorously announced his intention of going to bed in his boots—a prospect which alarmed me considerably more than the fire, for the head of my bed was dangerously near his feet, and Woolley, who was a great footballer in his day, in his dreams seemed sometimes to fancy that he was playing a fine dribbling game with the base of my skull. However, the night passed without any alarms, and in the morning the sun shone in a fairly clear sky. All the same the thought struck me that death seemed to present itself to the backwoods traveller in a charming variety of shapes, if half the stories one heard were to be believed. Apart from the ordinary risks inseparable from climbing on virgin peaks, we seemed to have a fair chance before us of being burned in our beds, starved, slain by falling trees, or drowned while fording rivers.

Sunday was always our unlucky day, and the 7th August formed no exception to the rule. It was tremendously hot, and, as the Saskatchewan was tearing down in bigger flood than ever, the trail along the bank was in many places under water. The horses were continually floundering about in deep holes, and I noticed that they keenly relished their bathes. Suddenly, as we were rounding a