

Banff from Donald, where we stayed during the night, continuing next day our journey through the valley of the Columbia river and the still more difficult pass of the Selkirk range. Immediately after leaving Banff the road is involved in sinuosities, apparently inextricable, of gorges and precipices which follow the course of the Bow river, which we cross and recross many times. We ascend following an acclivity more or less rapid according to the necessities of the ground. Two powerful locomotives, which drag us slowly along, let us hear at regular intervals their cadenced snortings which make us comprehend the enormous force of traction necessary to overcome the difficulties which multiply at every turn. Clinging at times to the buttresses and trestle work of a viaduct of giddy height that spans a torrent roaring three hundred feet below the train, suspended on the flank of a mountain and overhung by rocks that threaten us by their enormous proportions and fantastic shapes, then following to the bottom of a vale, the tranquilized waters of a river that seems to rest a moment in the silence of an Arcadian scene, to resume soon after its tumultuous course over rocks and precipices, it seems as though we were dreaming with our eyes open. We see again in fantastic reality those landscapes which Dore delighted to invent, and which his extraordinary imagination revealed to him without the aid of fact. Forests of pine, cedar and spruce cover everywhere the flanks of the mountains, and one catches a glimpse now and then of clear spaces that run clear from the summit to the depths of the valley. These are the routes traced by the avalanches that sweep all before them in their terribly destructive descent. On both sides of the road rise innumerable peaks that take the most diverse shapes; old castles of the middle ages perched like aeries on inaccessible heights, rocks of proportions as regular as the pyramids of Egypt, obelisks of many-colored granite, stairs carved by nature as if for giants.

And all this in view of the traveller, who, seated in his parlor car, asks himself what energy, intelligence, perseverance were needed to conquer all those obstacles that nature had placed in the way of this Pacific railway which now connects the two oceans. We keep on ascending slowly, traversing tunnels, snowsheds and viaducts of all forms and sizes. We pass Castle

Mountain, Silver City, Eden, Laggan, Stephen, Hector and Field, where we stop a few moments to empty a cup of champagne to the health of the president of the company, Sir George Stephen, in honor of whom the culminating point of the Rocky mountains has been named—Mount Stephen. Field is situated at the foot of that celebrated peak which commands the surrounding mountains, with its snow covered crest. It is one of the most picturesque spots on the route, and the company has there built a hotel as elegantly furnished within as its outer proportions are attractive, and adapted to its surroundings. We are here on the summit of the Rocky mountains, and we remark that the waters of Bear creek now flow westward to mingle with those of the Columbia which drains the basin formed between the Rockies and the Selkirks to cast itself farther south into the Pacific ocean after crossing Washington Territory.

The descent is made under the same conditions of security and with the same variety of scenery. It is a veritable panorama. The darkness which comes on suddenly, without twilight, in the deep valleys that we traversed, surprises us before reaching Donald, where we pass the night. Next day we begin the ascent of the Selkirk range. Donald is an important centre, which has hitherto drawn its resources from the immense works of construction necessitated by the passage of the road across the neighboring mountains. The valley of the Columbia, which is said to be fertile and fit for cultivation, will pay its tribute of commerce as soon as there are settlers in sufficient number to develop its agricultural resources. Next day, at 9 o'clock, after having visited the rising town, we get aboard again to climb new mountains and to admire new scenes. We still follow the course of the little Beaver river which winds at the bottom of ravines, flowing from west to east to discharge itself into the Columbia. We pass, but without stopping, Six-mile Creek, Bear creek, Roger's pass, and arrive at the Glacier hotel, where the train stays for twenty minutes to allow passengers to have dinner. Let us say here, *en passant*, that the service of meals, whether in the dining cars or in the hotels and refreshment rooms, is conducted to perfection over the whole course of the railway. Everywhere one dines as well as he could do at Montreal or Toronto. The sleeping cars are dazzlingly luxurious, and the first and second class cars all that could be de-