

same moment the shots of my men's guns echoing among the rocks announced the passage of the first white man over the Kootanie Pass. I halted for the purpose of reading the barometer, which shewed an altitude of 5960 feet. It was just five hours since leaving our previous night's camp, at an altitude of 4100 feet.

This is no place for a dissertation on the physical geography of North America, but I may simply state, that in that portion of the Rocky Mountains, comprised between the parallels of 45° and 54° north latitude, rise the four great rivers of the continent, namely, the Mackenzie, running north to the Arctic Ocean, the Saskatchewan east to Hudson's Bay, the Columbia west to the Pacific, and the Missouri south to the Gulf of Mexico; thus we may say, that in a certain sense that portion of the mountains is the culminating point of North America, and I now, on the Kootanie Pass, stood as nearly as possible in the centre of it.

A rapid descent of two hours brought us to the Flathead River, a clear and quick running stream, dividing a beautiful partially wooded valley enclosed by mountains; here we halted soon after mid-day, having passed the great watershed, and descended again 1400 feet without breakfast.

During Sunday I did not move from my pleasant camp, where was wood, good water, and good pasturage, everything to be desired by the traveller. I was engaged in obtaining observations for latitude and longitude, and computing them, writing up my notes, &c.; and I also made a sketch of the mountains over which we had passed the previous day. The men brought in some ducks, grouse, and trout, which made an agreeable change in our diet; two or three humming birds were seen about the camp.

The track now led up to the course of Flathead River, through thick forests with occasional openings, crossing several mountain streams, feeders of the river. We halted for breakfast on an open piece of swampy ground. On moving on again we plunged into thick forest, where the track was greatly obstructed by fallen timber. The Kootanies cut through a good many of the fallen sticks to allow of the passage of the horses, but still the greater number remain as they fall, and cause much twisting, turning, and branching of the track. We ascended gradually, passing a few fine pieces of open meadow, until we arrived near the head waters of the river, when the different streams composing it became mere mountain torrents. Here we commenced a steep ascent, the path ascending in a zig-zag up the hill; the trees, mostly spruce and fir, became smaller until we gained the summit of this knife-like ridge, from which an extensive view of the mountains was obtained. I halted to contemplate the scene, take bearings, and read the barometer, which shewed an altitude of 6100 feet. All appeared, however, utter confusion, such slight differences were there between the different mountains and ridges. One peak alone shewed itself above the general surface. It lay to the northward about thirty miles distant, and I recognised it as "Gould's Dome," which I had previously remarked from the edge of the plains. I estimated it to be not more than 1000 feet above my present position which would give it an altitude of about 7000 feet. The rest of the mountains appeared all about the same level, and but few of greater altitude than the ridge from which I surveyed them; there were visible the main range or watershed, then a number of ridges and mountains densely wooded, and of somewhat less elevation; after which, to the westward, higher mountains,