

In the Windermere District: Glorious Golden

(By Winifred Philpot.)

Halt! Turn ye—
Face thou thine own land—
Enter in and possess it—
And verily thou shalt be blessed.



Invermere Hotel

Few of us, of the Lower Mainland will ever forget the September of 1920. And mercifully the long continuing of the rains was hidden from the dwellers in the coast cities.

But September alone had been sufficient for us, and all plans were complete, with tents, and hammocks and muslins we were going to the south—to the sun and our friends smiled wistfully as they said "Good Bye."

Our plans were all complete, truly—and then at a moment's notice were all unmade—and it was merely with a desire to make the best of things that we turned our face to our mountains.

No joyous anticipations, no thrills at the moment of starting, it was not what we wanted, not what we had planned. Oh! blessed are we, though in our blindness we curse, when and if the Gods come down and straighten out our lives! I have since made my thanksgiving to my Gods, but their ways were strangely unattractive at the beginning.

Probably we have all passed through Golden—we may even have been moved to uncomplimentary remarks concerning man's handiwork there, but, have you ever lingered in Golden at the latter end of September? Then once again as in the days before the railway came in, nature dominates—the riot of gold foliage makes it abundantly clear at which season Golden was named.

Somehow the sky and mountains, the benches and even the firs catch the glamour of the gold—gold is supreme—above all and beyond all.

There is an amazingly ugly bridge in Golden, but from it, I saw a view that equalled easily, any color scheme I ever saw from the Rialto in Venice.

But then a thunderstorm helped the Golden scene. I am always so sorry for the folk who do not revel in thunderstorms. Storms rank to me with the stupendous things of a Wagner Opera—a great organ and a hundred strings—or High Mass in an Italian Cathedral.

This particular thunderstorm played many tricks before it burst, theatrical tricks of light and shade—now parts of the bare mountain tops were flaming like the golden foliage far below. Then the mountains were plunged into outer darkness, and the foliage took on an unearthly brilliancy and nearness. The river became purple and green—most absurd colors for a river, but those are just the tricks a really satisfactory thunderstorm does play.

The next day we motored eighty-two miles into the heart of the Windermere Valley. We can all remember

hearing of a Field of the Cloth of Gold. I know now of a whole land of the Cloth of Gold, and over it all a sky of Italian blue, and a sun of Italian warmth.

On for many miles, never far from the mountains, always near the Columbia River, creeping cautiously round the edge of the benches, running down into the ravines, and then up again. No flowers, no bird life, no trees, as we count trees at the Coast, but always the deep blue sky, the hot sun, and the golden glory of the autumn.

And so we entered into our land, and there we rested, and there finally we were blessed, that is, made supremely happy, but that of course is another story. But we did wander and rest, and were sunned in British Columbia in the closing three months of 1920—and during that period enjoyed but two half days of rain.

One glorious expedition was planned and taken—"Would we like to see the Blue Lakes?" Most certainly we would—in that yellow and grey land, something blue below the sky line sounded interesting.

Our feet were set in the narrow way, and a start made. The first few miles were so glorious. They were nearly the last. The trail was much like a miniature edition of the road to Golden, up and down and round endlessly—only now it no longer wound through a broad valley, but led ever up and into the foothills of the Rockies. The first miles were in open sunlight, then the lights were more subtle, and our feet were on a golden flame colored trail, for alas! the leaves were beginning to fall, but the sun was hot, the resting places alluring, and the vistas ever changing. But the blue lakes lured us on, and finally at mid-day we found them. There they were—a deep, clear royal blue, properly fringed with coarse green grass and rushes, backed by young firs—clear transparent blue waters. Oh, I hope no one will ever tell me what makes it thus—I never want to know—I want just to rejoice in the memory for ever and ever. Years ago we found a turquoise



The Bridge at Toby Creek Canyon

blue, snow water lake at a great altitude in the Dolomites—that was understandable. I do not want to understand the Blue Lakes above Windermere, but will just love them until death do us part.

The short autumnal days draw quickly to a close and we had to leave our newly found gems—just trusting to the grass and trees to take care of them until we came again.

Nature is very versatile, and we had a curious revelation of her many moods and whims on the way home. A sudden turn of the trail, and behold, a masterpiece presentation of the Scotch and French.