

catching rheumatism during my lazy fits," Jack remarked, feeling his position as host obliged him to prevent a repetition of the awkward pause in the conversation which followed upon the meeting of his guest and himself.

"A sensible plan," said Macdonald; "and now that you have made me so comfortable, will you pardon my burning curiosity and tell me at once how you came to this valley. You certainly have not had time to cross from British Columbia, for the trails were snow-bound a month ago. You could not have passed over our trail up the Bow river, for we had to chop a road for the pack-train through miles of fallen timber."

"When I left Morleyville," Jack replied, "I forded the Bow, took the trail up the Kananaskis Pass, branched over on the White Man's Trail, again forded the Bow, went as far as Castle Mountain, fell in love with it, wandered into this lovely valley, and here I have been for two weeks and yet cannot tear myself away from sight of that wonderful piece of natural architecture."

Castle Mountain stood forth in full view from the tent. Macdonald gazed for a few moments at the great pile of fantastic rock, gave a sharp glance at Jack, knocked the loose ashes from his pipe and made up his mind that his companion had spoken truthfully.

"Were you without a guide?" Macdonald asked.

"I am not certain," replied Jack, and a flash of tenderness illumined his features: "I imagine,—in fact, I feel certain—that an Indian has preceded me on my