

The steep ascent of this mountain side from Kinbaskit Lake was extremely toilsome, and we suffered dreadfully for want of water. The exposed, scantily timbered, rocky face of the mountain, with the sun beating down on us and making the rocks hot, combined with myriads of black flies, rendered this climb trying in the extreme.

When we got high up the mountain, and just before entering a very elevated pass, we had a magnificent view over the northerly portion of the Selkirk range, and also of the easterly side of the Gold, and the westerly side of the Rocky Mountains, and as the sun was shining brightly, the sky blue and the atmosphere clear, the innumerable peaks and sea of mountains visible, covered with snow and glaciers glittering in places, together with the deep green forests which clothed the lower portions of the mountain ranges, and the Columbia River, like a silver ribbon, winding its way through the deep, narrow gorge far below us, impressed me with what stupendous grandeur primeval Nature is endowed.

I have read descriptions of the

MOUNTAINS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

as given by different "globe trotters," who rush through the country at the bottoms of some of the valleys traversed by the railways, which although affording truly grand and striking scenery, are not to be compared with those that can be obtained from higher altitudes. I would recommend those globe trotters to climb up above the timber line and then expand their gushings in describing unexplored and more inaccessible places than can, and are, being seen by great numbers of those who travel by rail through the mountains.

We camped on the bank of a lovely stream flowing through a park-like valley, or rather opening through the mountain spur, at an elevation above the sea of probably six thousand feet. The following morning we pursued our way for some distance through this valley, and then reached the northerly steep declivity of the mountain, down which we went, following the dry bed of a water-course which had been cut by the water from the melting snows during the early part of countless Summers.

On reaching the bottom of the valley of the Wood River we had to wade for some distance through the stagnant water containing some reddish brown substance—probably decomposed iron ore—of a disagreeable nature, and shortly after reached the Wood River, into which we plunged to free ourselves of as much as possible of the nauseous substance which painted us. We followed along the south bank of the river for some distance and then constructed a raft and crossed to the north bank, which we followed until we reached the foot of Mount Brown and found the trail of the old fur traders going up the steep mountain, and then we camped and cooked a porcupine which we found at this place.

The next forenoon, when we had nearly gained the summit of the pass, in the vicinity of

"THE COMMITTEE'S PUNCH BOWL,"

we shot two fine caribou. As our footgear was in a sadly dilapidated condition, and our feet very sore, we decided to camp and make mocassins out of the green hides, and dry and smoke the caribou meat to provision us for the rest of the journey, and cache a quantity of the meat on a platform we constructed at the top of three trees, which we stripped of their bark and branches to keep it out of reach of those thieves of the forest—the wolverines—and to supply us with meat on our return journey.

We now travelled along the easterly side of Mount Brown, and leaving the Athabasca Pass, crossed a high ridge and then following a well-beaten Caribou trail, descended a steep declivity on the north side of the ridge, over a large deposit of perpetual snow, in which we saw some recent tracks of caribou, and arrived in a beautiful valley surrounded with grand and magnificent scenery. Here we camped at a small spring that is the true source of the Fraser River. Shortly after we camped one of my Indians shot two caribou and I shot one.

For some considerable distance next day the travelling was fairly good, but in the afternoon we got into thick timber and the valley became narrow, down which the river, which had rapidly increased in volume, dashed and roared through canyons at a great rate.

Shortly before we camped we noticed a bush fire, which was, so my Indians informed me, in the neighborhood of Yellowhead Lake, and was a certain indication that white men were in that neighborhood, for the Indian is careful not to burn the forest which the white man so recklessly and wantonly destroys.

At the break of day the fire, fanned by a wind from the north, had approached rapidly in our direction, and the valley was filled with smoke. To remain in the thick timber meant being burnt to death, so we made a hurried detour by a bare place on the side of an adjoining mountain which enabled us to get behind the blazing and roaring fire. After travelling some distance along the side of the mountain we descended to the valley to resume our way through the

BLACKENED AND SMOULDERING REMAINS

of what had been, a few hours before, a dense, beautiful green forest.

My feet had not recovered from the chafing they got when we were accomplishing the first portion of this journey, and as we proceeded through the smouldering remains of the forest they became very sore and painful. In the afternoon we reached a smaller stream than the one we had been following, and which flowed from the eastward, and I knew it must be the Fraser River. We all plunged into it to wash off the ashes and other filth with which we were covered and begrimed, and to relieve our sore and blistered feet.

Shortly after reaching the bank of the Fraser River I heard the tinkling of a bell