

limit of our long journey, a little station called Laggan, beyond which the line was only in construction. The porter of our car had been almost silent during the journey, but he astonished us when calling us up, by a long oration, "Rocky Mountains, gentlemen, breakfast ready, all lovely, duck! prairie chicken! cakes! spec'm'ns! silver! gold! diamonds! All lovely in the Rocky Mount'ns."

Laggan consisted of a few log huts and tents, most of them hanging out abnormally large signs. In front of one stopping place was in large letters, T. Gray, Fashionable Tailor. Some of the other signs were still more Western, as for instance, at a general store, "Godly Books and Gimblets."

The train drew on to Stephen, the highest point of the Kicking Horse Pass, and stopped near Kicking Horse Lake, amidst beautiful Alpine scenery, when we found ourselves at last on the "Great Divide" and looked upon the torrent which was fiercely leaping down the gorge towards the Pacific Ocean. On either hand towered snowy mountains, their flanks covered with dense pine.

Descending from the carriages, we looked with astonishment upon the scenes around us; one of these formed a grand picture. From the torrent, almost clogged with pines, among which the water snapped and snarled, rose funereal masses of Douglas and Black Pine, closely serried and spreading upwards for hundreds of feet, till hidden in the white whirl of snow squalls driving through the mountains. But, about a thousand feet above, the cloud had opened and we saw a beautifully shapen snowy peak, shining with light against the celestial blue.

The day was "all before us where to choose." We were told we could go to the end of the track on the construction wagons, but warned that it was distinctly at our own risk. Most of us climbed on one or other of them and dared the descent towards the Columbia, and certainly a very risky proceeding it seemed; the grade was stiff, the railway running along a nick in the rocky side of the pass; every here and there a siding, with ascending grade, was cut, into which to shunt runaway trains. The trucks went down with an engine at both ends for safety. The scenery was magnificent, and at points about Mount Stephen and down to the wide shingle bed of the Columbia river, was especially sublime; but the density of the forest, chiefly of Douglas Pine, mantling the valleys and flanks of the mountains in such an unbroken garb of the sombrest green, gives it a melancholy aspect which differs from the Alps of Europe.

The summit of Kicking Horse Pass is 5,296 ft., and the peaks tower up to 10,000 ft. in Cascade Mountain, 11,650 in M. Lefroy, and similar elevation in Mount Hector, Goat Mountain, etc. In descending the grade to the Columbia the mountain masses are seen in their full stature, and are most impressive.

The mountain sides above the railway were explored by Professor Macoun, who described the sequence of the vegetation as follows:—Starting from the track itself, 5,000 feet above the sea at this point, passing through the dense masses of the Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga douglasii*) he entered and passed a zone of Engelmann's spruce (*Picea*