

the skull. At one time the whole plain was thickly covered with these relics, but they have been gathered, at least in the vicinity of the C. P. R., by the ton to be used for purposes of enriching the land wrested from a banished race. Gone utterly and forever is the buffalo; and in an incredibly short space of time. An old buffalo hunter told me that only a few years ago he traveled through herds of buffalo so large that it has taken him days to pass each herd; and eight years ago this summer a boat on which a friend of mine was coming up the Missouri, was stopped by a herd of buffalo crossing the river. Now, not a buffalo is to be found in the whole Northwest. Even their horns sell for two dollars or more per pair.

We passed a great many lakes on our way; some of them very pretty, over which wild fowl hovered and startled by our approach would fly low, dipping their bright wings in the water. Many of the lakes on the plains, however, are alkaline, most unpleasant to the eye, gray and stagnant, with no green thing venturing near. In one place I saw a fine flock of pelicans wheeling in the sunlight above one of these lakes, they were a beautiful sight, now white and shining like burnished silver in the strong sunshine then black as night silhouetted against the clear sky, as in stately flight they slowly circled away from us. In spite of the fact that our engine invariably stopped at the most barren places in sight I generally managed to secure some of the wild flowers which grow abundantly and in great variety all over the prairie, many of them are beautiful, quite different from our eastern wildflowers and it seemed to me much brighter in coloring. A species of cactus with its gay rose-colored blossoms was conspicuously charming. We caught glimpses of one or two wild animals, and my friends tell me that occasionally even yet an antelope may be seen scudding across the plain. In one of the loneliest spots, hundreds of miles from human

habitation, I saw a little mound of green earth upon a slight elevation with a wooden cross at the head. Some mother's son laid away to rest with the wild prairie winds sweeping for a thousand miles to sing his requiem and the silent stars keep watch by night above his lonely grave!

As we neared Medicine Hat, Indians were occasionally to be seen, sometimes standing or more often squatting about the stations, usually with polished buffalo horns for sale; and sometimes scudding across the country on horseback. They were dressed in their native garments and with their gay moccasins and blankets, ruddy dark skins, and flowing black hair, were exceedingly picturesque. Some of the men were painted red and yellow, and all wore shining ear-rings and ornaments of all sorts. Very well these become them too, and a stalwart Indian in full regalia is a handsome and striking sight. But these, too, like those other monarchs of the plain are fast going. In many parts of the West they are adopting white men's costumes and while this may be in some respects good for them it destroys their individuality and picturqueness. These and many more to me equally interesting things I saw while crossing the prairie. But how shall I describe what I saw beyond it? Better pens than mine have failed in attempting to describe the Rocky Mountains. Indeed, they are indescribable! The plains are but a preface to the mountains and most willingly would I have incurred the fatigue of a much longer prairie journey for my first half-hour among the mountains. My first sight of them came under exceptionally favorable circumstances, in the transfiguring light of a most glorious sunrise, with just enough mist and cloud to brighten the effect. Under the rising sun they were crimson, and gold, and flame-colored and stood like mighty altars with pillars of fire rising before them; while in the shadows where the sunlight could not penetrate they were of deepest blue.