

## Hunting in the "Yellowhead Pass" Grounds

By Bonnycastle Dale

Note.—Our readers will be sorry to miss the cheerful letters from Laddie "Somewhere in France" that have been appearing in these columns for some time. The fact is that poor "Laddie" has been severely wounded. Our readers, we are sure, will join with us in wishing this brave boy a speedy recovery. Mr. Bonnycastle Dale has, therefore, resumed his travel adventures in many wild parts of Canada while in pursuit of his natural history work. In his travels he is accompanied by Laddie's brother, Laddie Junior.—Editor.

**Y**OU lucky hunters of 1916—from your big cities you can make the wilds in "two sleeps and two looks" as O'poots our guide says. We, of an earlier hunting period, took as long as twenty days to make the Tete Jaune Cache—"The Cache in the Yellowhead Pass"—from Edmonton. All this is altered now—a few dollars, a modern railway ticket—and a grinning porter is brushing the dust—where no dust lies—and you are deposited on a platform right in the valley of the Athabasca, where Jasper Hawes years ago saw the wild animals roam daily and where his great waving yellow locks made him known alike to white, half-breed, and Indian, as The Yellowhead (Tete Jaune in the broken dialect). To-day, the iron horse thunders through this wonderful valley; and the animals have retired a few miles back into the valleys of the streams that urge the roaring Fraser on its course.

It is well to arrange with the Game Warden at Fort George as to which is the best place for the special game or fish you are after, if you are going to hunt in the Caribou District, if the R.R. cannot take you right there, steamboats will dump you somewhere near the camping ground. Once inside Jasper Park, a perpetual game sanctuary formed by the province of B.C., you are on virgin territory, as much of this huge, wild district is yet to be explored.

It is a well known fact that innumerable bands of caribou roam along its northern mountains. Goats are everywhere—right close to the track of the railway. Sheep have been taken all along the Peace River, bears of course are everywhere, especially at berrying time—these truly "terrible" black bears devour anything they meet, so look out if you happen to be grass or fruit or fish, but, notwithstanding anything certain magazine writers may say, neither Laddie Jr., nor I, or any of our men, have been killed with the regularity one would expect from such ferocious monsters. I know of a case where the wife of one of our Indian guides was picking salmon berries, she saw the opposite top of the bush pulled down and she slid around that way to chat with her neighbor—and ran right into a big black bear squatting on his haunches just as the one we easily pictured does. Result, woman waved the only weapon she had—her petticoat, aye not only her sole weapon but her sole and only garment—result, bear retires in confusion.

In a lifetime's work on this continent, although we have often come across black and so-called brown and also Grizzlies, not one has stood on the order of its going but gone at once—seldom giving us a picture let alone a scare.

You will also meet Whitetail and—at times—other deer in the north of this district, but you are more likely to get this game in the southern end. If you want small game, wildfowl and grouse, here is a paradise for it, and the trout-fishing is a thing of excellent sport—and add to it all the almost untrodden valleys and mountains of this celebrated province.

Mule and whitetailed deer, caribou and moose, mountain goat and sheep are in season from September 1st to Dec 15th to 31st, but always write ahead to the Provincial Game Warden, Vancouver, B. C., and get all pamphlets and information. I have no retainer by the Province, I am writing this in memory of the many good days spent in the pleasant valleys of B.C. I think late September and early October the best time, but if you are going far north go early, as that means big outfitting and long trips. You can do all the hunting the average

man wants within fifty miles of the railroad. It costs an even hundred dollars for a full license, for fish only five dollars and for bear alone but twenty-five.

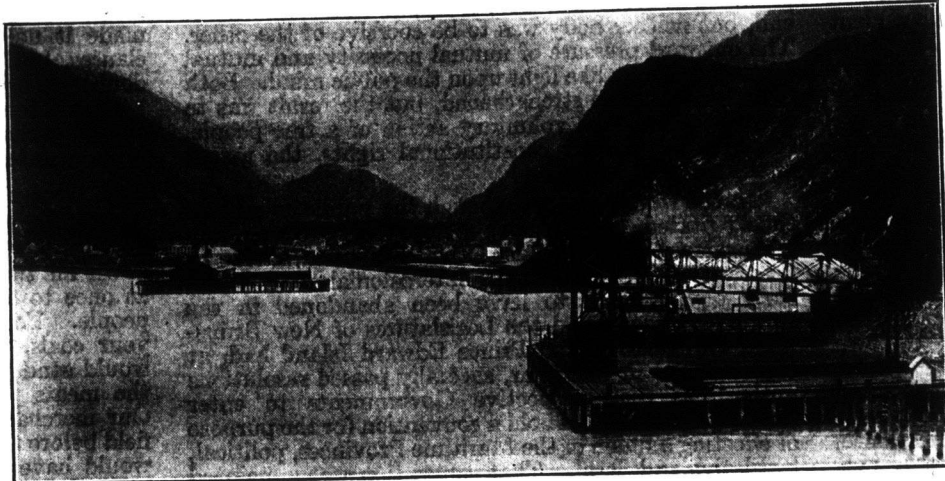
Let us go back to olden days and see the land before the G.T.P. got in—and by the way if you happen to have a desire to take up land there are many valleys full

not among the number. It is wonderful how contented I can be away down on the flat earth while my friends are but so many specks through the glasses a few miles up—right up above me. I also want to show you the ideal method of travel along these river valleys—by packtrain—all you need to bring is your rifle and ammunition and clothes, the guide outfitters attend to all the rest, and they are not "skinners" either, but reasonable, see the camp horses watering in a little lake formed by the melting

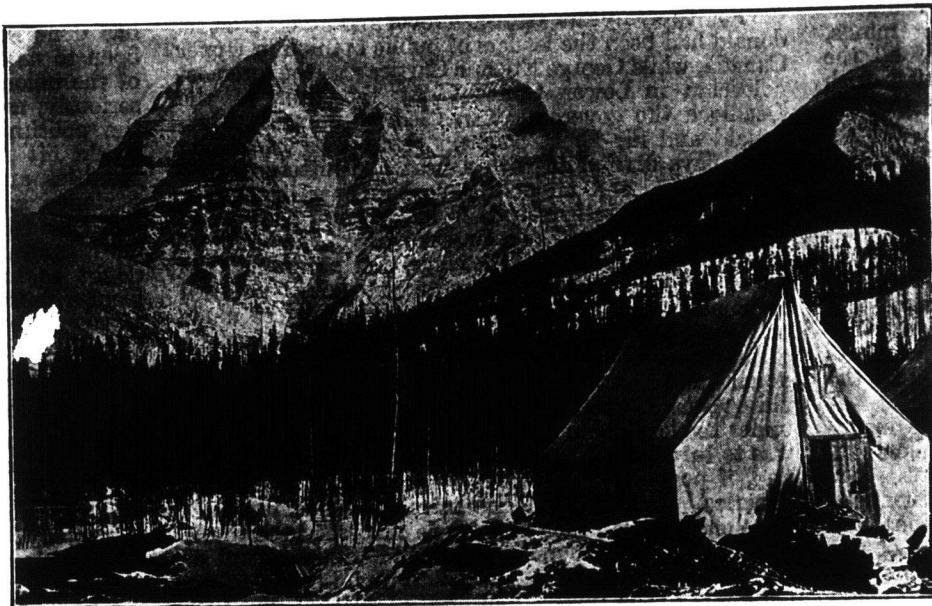
ing the salmon streams intent on getting a beast of prey several times his own weight—and mighty few little Indian boys have been eaten up to date. I well remember coming along the trail with a gang of surveyors, one, the chainman, was dreadfully afraid of bears, so the axeman dropped behind, climbed up on the upper trail, sneaked swiftly ahead and looked down onto the trail at a bend. As we rounded that elbow we heard "whoof—whoof" loudly puffed out as if by a bear! "Ping! Ping! Ping!" sang three shots from an automatic and it is just a question who was the worst scared—the axeman on the upper trail or the chainman—smoking revolver in hand—on the lower, or the rest of the gang—white-faced, waiting anxiously for the body of the practical joker to plunge down the slope—thank goodness he was behind a tree and uninjured—but he rarely "whoofs" now.

We used to get good trapping in those valleys—mink and marten; beaver were protected—sometimes an otter, often a lynx, both red and grey. Wolves howled on the hills above camp. Foxes were there but I never saw a silver or a black in a trap, although in my wanderings I have seen them through the glasses, as well as the blue chaps up in the Aleutians and a rare white one at the shore rivers' mouths—there are myriads of these if you go far enough north. The cougar is to be found in all the hills and of all the cowardly beasts commend me to "felis concolor." You get most of them south of the Fraser, but we have met their big round pads on the shores of almost every river we have struggled up along the coast.

And the wildfowl. Oh! the days of autumn, when from every northern valley the winged hosts are speeding south, resting to feed along the mighty maze of rivers, and lakes and swamps that form this huge interrupted, irregular valley that extends right through from the prairies to the brand new city of Prince Albert. I tell you it is worth while to take out the full general license—if you are a resident outside of B.C., and shoot and hunt and fish for the full three months and a half. I tell you when I was out there, for a six years trip the last time, I never knew just what weapon I was going to use (pray pardon my using the first person), but this was the daily programme. My guide paddled in the stern, in the



Skagway, Alaska



Mt. Robson on a clear winter's day, 13,700 ft. high



Berg Lake—showing Glacier, Mt. Robson

of the richest earth to be had for a mere nominal sum—say ten dollars for outright purchase, down to the pre-emption fee of some couple of dollars per acre. I know the land is good as we often lost all sight of our feeding horses in the wild pea meadows.

Look at that "meeting of the waters" at Tete Jaune Cache, waters full of trout, bushes bearing juicy grouse as well as wild fruits and nice old sociable black bear snatching salmon out of the millions that annually pass up the Fraser, the Stuart and the Nechako. See that greatest mountain of them all from the tent—Mount Robson—13,700 feet away up in the clear blue air—a few, just a few men have climbed it—yours truly

glacier on the shores of Mount Robson, an excellent picture of the ice river is obtained at this point, and also of certain black and grizzly bears that early each spring eat the new green grass along the track of the avalanche shown just to the right of the glacier. It is truly an education to see this monster of the magazines greedily filling its pig-like body with nice juicy grass—you see it is such a long time between meals off men that the beast gets hungry for less dainty food. The spring is the time to kill these big chaps, when the pelt is in its prime. Late summer and fall skins are so bleached. They kill these now with the 22 special. It is a common thing to see a youngster haunt-

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