

## THROUGH SOUTH CASSIAR.

THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF THE TRIP OF TWO EXPLORERS WILL BE INTERESTING TO THE KITAMAATS. MESSRS STEPLEMAN & DUNN WENT THROUGH SOUTH CASSIAR THIS SUMMER, EMPLOYING PART OF THE TIME, SOME OF THE KITAMAATS AS CANOE MEN AND GUIDES.

We left Fort Essington the 5th day of April 1895 in a canoe manned by four Skeena River Indians, with two tons and a half of freight, including provisions, prospecting tools, and also clothes for our trip. We travelled without any trouble till we got about 50 miles in the Skeena River, then striking rough swift water, we had to hire another Indian at the first village up the Skeena from Essington. Ice and snow stood five to eight feet deep on both sides of the river which, with the falling and breaking away of ice into the river, made it both dangerous and disagreeable for canoeing; this together with the almost incessant rains made travelling rather unpleasant, we managed though to get along all right until seventy five miles up river was gained, when in crossing a rapid, the current got the best of the Indians, and the canoe was dashed on the rocks in mid stream partly breaking in the side. The Captain becoming frightened at the sight of the water rushing in though the side of the canoe, jumped for his life into the stream where he stood for about five minutes with the water up to his waist, yelling and half crying like a man half crazed. A few minutes later the bowman jumped into the stream, but held on to the bow of the canoe, while another Indian and ourselves jumped with the tow line in our hands, got ashore, and got a half hitch around a stump that was standing on the bank. The other two Indians seemed to lose all hope of saving the canoe and stood like men bewildered, one of them repeating "canoe gone, all lost; canoe gone, all lost." Finally we got the canoe ashore with all freight intact; the water in the canoe having done no damage as everything was tightly boxed and covered with oiled canvas sacks, thanks to the experienced packers of the Hudson Bay Co., with whom we outfitted. A day was spent in repairing the canoe, a few days after this, the canoe again got the best of the Indians, crossing a rapid, the canoe going down stream at a great rate of speed, but just as it was passing under a tree, which was hanging over the water, the bowman made an exceedingly good spring, landing on the top of the overhanging tree, and snubbed the canoe just as it was about to strike on the rocks that were projecting from the shore, then a great cheer went up that made the valley ring.

After this we travelled along without having any more mishaps, reaching Hazelton safely after a sixteen days' good hard trip up the Skeena. Hazelton seems to be a favoured spot as far as climate goes, the weather being fine and dry, which was a rather pleasant experience to us after the snow and rain fogged weather of the Skeena. Here we lay over for a couple of weeks, waiting for the trail to get into shape to travel with horses over the Babine Range. At the end of this time the snow being fairly gone off the mountains, we struck out for the Omineca country with four Indians and five pack horses. Getting out about 40 miles from Hazelton, the rain set in again, which together with the melting of snow, made the ground soft and the streams high. Being the first outfit over the trail this Spring, we had quite a

time cutting out fallen timber, and bridging streams. Finally we reached Tom Creek after two weeks and a half hard work, cutting and clearing the trail, with horses floundering and plunging through mud and slush. Oh! but is not a prospector, like a picnic? travelling in mud and slush, scolding himself and everybody coming in contact with him at such times. Even a poor inoffensive dog gets his share of abuse if happening to get in the way. We made Tom Creek head-quarter camp, prospecting in a radius of about 30 miles looking principally for quartz. We found plenty, but none that suited us. So we hired nine Indians with horses, and started back for Hazelton. The return trip was rather pleasant, the weather being dry; and the trail gang under Mr. Jones having put the trail between Babine and Tahlah lakes in fair shape, travelling was good.

We made Hazelton in quick time. Then struck out with more horses for Kishkagas. It was here we found some rich ore but not in sufficient quantity. We again returned to Hazelton.

From the indications, and from information obtained from different parties, we concluded there must be a good mineral belt, lying between the Skeena River and the Coast.

We decided upon Kitamaat at the head of Douglas Channel as the most convenient centre. We reached Kitamaat about six weeks ago, and since then have been prospecting in different directions making Kitamaat central camp. We have prospected up to the head of several creeks that empty into the Kitamaat River, and some that empty into the Kitamaat Arm, and have found some very favourable indications of there being a mineral bearing belt running through the country.

There seems to be a good deal of game both ducks and geese in the different streams. We saw several bears and goats, also ptarmigan in the mountains around Kitamaat.

John Bolton (Sonnahed) our Indian packer, had rather an interesting experience. We were coming down from a trip up in Wahwah Creek and struck out to climb over Telegraph Mountain, half way up our dog freed a cub. John shot, killed it, and got some fresh meat. The dog struck out ahead of us again, and in a few minutes came back on the dead run with the old female bear close behind him, when the bear came within fifteen yards off where we were standing, John at once dropped the shot gun, pulled the revolver, (we had no rifle with us) and fired at the bear striking her in the neck, this did not seem to affect her much, as she simply shook her head and ran off down the mountain, but soon turned and came back on the other side of us to within 20 yards and stood looking at us. John picked up the shot-gun and fired striking her full in the face, her roar could have been heard a mile away, she pawed her face and tore around for a minute or two, John firing the remaining five shots from the revolver at her none seemed to take effect, as finally she struck off on the dead run, we lost her track, climbed to the summit, and reloaded. Descending, we got into thick brush at the base of a little cliff, John cried "a bear, a bear in his hole," he fired, the charge struck below the eyes, the bear roared and rushed at John who was quite cool, standing 10 yds. from the hole, saying:—"the bear got me." He fired the revolver, the shot took effect; the bear rolled over dead.