

EN ROUTE FOR THE NORTH-WEST.

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July 1st, Dominion Day, on board the steamer Alberta. She is a magnificently appointed boat and a swift sailer, making fourteen miles an hour without apparent effort. After the thumping and jolting of the railway to Owen Sound the steady motion of the Alberta is particularly pleasant. Arrived at the Sault about 11 a. m. The scenery here is grand. Sault St. Marie is certainly not less fortunate in picturesqueness of environment than in the commercial advantage of location. The iron bridge connecting the C. P. R. with American lines is nearly completed. On west through several miles of magnificent scenery until on the broad waters of Lake Superior we gradually lose sight of land. At 7 p. m., mirage of an island to the right or starboard side. It appears to be partially surrounded by a dark blue perfectly calm sheet of water quite distinct from the lake itself, and in the dark blue water indications of ice bergs and floes. The mirage changes wonderfully as we go on; at times appearing to gradually fade away, then for a time increasing in size and altering in form as we draw away from it. Sunset brings out the most wonderful rainbow shades of color in the water, beautiful beyond description.

Monday 2nd.—We are passing several islands, and mountains on the north shore are just looming up. Think they must be of considerable height, as there are clouds apparently resting on the sides and lying in the valleys between the higher points. We are told by a passenger that this is Thunder Cape, 1,360 feet high, and derives its name from an Indian tradition of a thunder bird. At the summit is quite a large lake. The sides of the mountain are very rocky and almost perpendicular. A first cabin lady passenger just remarked to a friend: "That's the most beautiful mountain I ever did see."

Just before coming to Thunder Cape we passed the famous Silver Island, and Pie Island to the left of it, said to be over 900 feet high. At 9 a. m. arrive at Port Arthur, a pleasant little place about the size of our own Norwich. Here Dominion Day celebrations—fire company parade, boat races, etc.—are at their height. As our train does not leave until 4:15 we have plenty of time to "do the town" and to take in most of the celebration at the same time. But rather better than either are the beautiful wild flowers growing in brilliant profusion in the waste places here, as well as over the prairie everywhere, as we set our faces again westward. Buttercups everywhere, and on the prairie hundreds of varieties most vivid in color, but their names unknown to me. Every moment as we rush on the scenery seems to me more beautiful; and as picture after picture unrolls I exclaim at the end of the first hour from Port Arthur: "This is the climax for a time at least!" A real Indian camp on a lovely island in the river, and in a measure one boyhood dream realized. Along the Kannisquish river the scenery is magnificent, nearly all wild land, but so picturesque that I regret the nightfall. Nevertheless there are people who prefer novels to all this! Some of them near me read placidly on while one of nature's most magnificent panoramas unfolds every moment at their window something new and beautiful.

Tuesday, 3rd.—This morning just before sunrise we go through some deep cuttings, passing very steep and rocky cliffs, and enter Rat Portage. Here I have the pleasure of meeting an old college chum, and have a few minutes chat while looking about me. Rat Portage is an important point on the C. P. R., the company having built here several switches and covered sheds. The town is certainly not large but to me it seems wonderful that it is at all, for the surrounding country is almost totally unfit for cultivation.