

When travelling through the Touchwood Hills, I killed a bear of the grizzly species but one of no great size.

On the 23rd of September near the Porcupine Hill, at the base of the Rocky Mountain, I killed another grizzly bear of very large size, the animal weighing about 1100 lbs.

In the country adjacent to the Bow River and thence southward towards the Boundary line, numerous herds of antelope were seen, and some of them killed by our party.

During the past summer, the buffalo were very numerous on the Great Plains that lie between the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers.

CHAP. IV.

From the Rocky Mountain House across the mountains, viz "Wild Horse Creek," to Victoria, Vancouver's Island.

On arrival at the "Rocky Mountain House," I learned that, to cross the mountains into British Columbia by the "Vermilion Pass" with horses was impossible owing to the immense quantity of fallen timber caused by a great storm in the mountains last spring.

An attempt to cross by this Pass had been made by a party of Assiniboine Indians early in the summer without success.

Under these circumstances it became necessary to undertake a journey of about 300 miles through the country of the Blackfoot Indians and to cross the mountains by the North Kootenay Pass.

Through the kindness of Mr. R. Hardesty, the gentleman in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company Posts in the Saskatchewan District, I obtained the services of three guides from the Post of the Rocky Mountain House, one of whom was "William Munro," the Hudson's Bay Company's Interpreter for the Blackfoot Indians, better known throughout the Saskatchewan Country by his Indians name of "Piskaan." This guide is a brave man, and one of the most famous travellers and hunters in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company.

In company with him and the two other guides, one of whom was a Rocky Mountain Assiniboine Indian, the other a French half breed, I started along with my son from the Rocky Mountain House, on the 16th September, to pass through the country of the Blackfoot Indians, and cross the Mountains by the Kootenay Pass into British Columbia.

The Blackfoot tribe of Indians have always been much dreaded and their country carefully avoided by travellers. From information obtained at the Rocky Mountain House, and while travelling, it appears that this tribe which is the most numerous and warlike one of the Prairie Indians in Dominion Territory, is divided into five distinct bands, or rather clans, each band under its own chief, but all maintaining a close connection. These bands are called, and known as follows:

1st. The *Sik-is-ka*, or Blackfoot proper; this band numbers about 700 men, 1000 women, 1000 children, possessing about 3000 horses and ponies, 400 dogs, and having the following arms:—

105 Rifles,
260 Revolvers,
436 Flint guns,
286 Bows,
43 Spears,
37 War Axes,

2nd. The Piegans, (subdivided into Northern and Southern Piegans) numbering nearly 800 men, 1,100 women, 1,400 chil-

dren, possessing about 3,500 horses and ponies, 600 dogs, and the following arms:—

213 Rifles,
412 Revolvers,
320 Flint Guns,
181 Bows,
54 Spears,
41 War Axes.

3rd. Ka-na-ans, (or Blood Indians) numbering about 600 men, 800 women, 900 children, possessing about 2,500 horses and ponies, 480 dogs, and having the following arms:—

141 Rifles,
318 Revolvers,
202 Flint Guns,
216 Bows,
43 Spears,
32 War Axes,

5th. The Sar-cis, (or Beaver Indians) numbering about 100 men, 130 women, 150 children, possessing about 150 horses, 300 dogs, and having the following arms:—

6 Rifles,
14 Revolvers,
64 Flint Guns,
25 Bows,
4 Spears,
7 War Axes.

Although the Blackfeet may number altogether about 2,350 men, many of these are old, and some of them mere boys.

It is not believed that they could bring into the field more than 1,000, or 1,100 men, if as many.

They keep together by band for mutual protection, in what is termed in Military language standing camps; as many as 100 or 150 tents being pitched together, and their chiefs have control over the young men.

Their war parties usually consist of only 50 or 60 men, and when on raiding expeditions against hostile tribes, they can make with horses extraordinary marches.

With the Blackfeet, as with all the Indians in the Western Prairies, when at war, murder and assassination is considered honorable warfare.

There are many fine looking men among the Blackfeet, Sioux, Plain Crees, and other tribes, and they have a bold and military bearing. Their active wiry figures, and keen glittering eyes, betoken high health and condition, and they can endure great hardships and fatigue; but on the whole, the Indians are not equal, in point of physical strength or appearance, to white men hardened by active exercise and inured to labor.

As a rule, the Prairie Indians are bold and skilful horsemen, but they are not very skilful with firearms.

The Blackfeet and Plain Crees follow the Buffalo, subsisting entirely by the chase; they therefore require a great many horses and dogs for transport and hunting purposes.

In the present year, peace having existed for the past two summers between the Crees and Blackfeet, and accompanied as I was by a guide well known, and related to the latter tribe, I did not think there was much danger in travelling through their country.

There is always, however, great danger, if mistaken for an American citizen, and on approaching the International line, near the Porcupine Hills, of meeting with hostile bands of the Gros Ventres and Crow Indians from the Territories of Dacotah and Montana

U. S., who frequently cross into Dominion Territory on horse stealing expeditions, and who are not likely, if they fall in with travellers, to make distinctions.

From the Rocky Mountain House, the party being increased to five, we took with us twelve horses, one Red River cart for baggage, and carried twelve day's provisions intending to take the cart as far as practicable, and then cache it.

After leaving the Mountain House, no path or trail could be seen, and we journeyed through the country and over the prairies led only by the instinct of the guide.

After travelling for two days through thick wood country, in a south easterly direction, and crossing the Red Deer and Little Red Deer Rivers, we emerged on the Great Plains, following a route seldom taken by the white man.

On the 18th September, we reached the South Saskatchewan, here called the Bow River, but owing to the difficulty of finding a practicable ford, did not succeed until the following day in effecting a passage with our horses and baggage.

Whilst carrying out this operation, the Assiniboine Indians deserted, but subsequently rejoined the party fearing, probably, to be left alone in the country of the Blackfeet, the hereditary enemies of his tribe.

We found the water here of the South Saskatchewan icy cold, flowing as it does out of immense glaciers in the Rocky Mountains.

On the 21st September, we reached the North West bank of the Porcupine Hills, and when almost at the foot of the Livingstone Range of the Rocky Mountains, about eighty miles to the north of the International Boundary line, our progress was stopped by a violent snow storm, and we were forced to camp on the open prairie.

For two days and two nights it snowed without intermission, the mountains were soon covered, and by the evening of the 22nd the snow lay two feet deep all over the plain. The situation became somewhat difficult—stopped at a point 250 miles from the Rocky Mountain House, and as far from any other source of supply, with only five or six days' provisions left, the guide declaring that to cross the mountains had now become impossible.

Fortunately the storm occurred before entering the mountains or the probability is animals would have been lost and our party placed in a critical position.

On the 23rd the weather cleared, and on the afternoon of that day we killed a large grizzly bear which had approached to within a few yards of the camp, the animal having lain all the previous night close to it. This event afforded us a timely supply of meat, relieving our anxiety on that point although, in a case of extremity the horses would have supplied food, it was necessary to save them if possible for transport. We remained snowed up for six days, then, abandoning the cart and all superfluous baggage started on the 27th with the horses for the Kootenay Pass resolving to push through the mountains if practicable, and if unable to do so to make for Fort Benton, on the Missouri, a United States Military Post in Montana, distant about 250 miles to the South East.

Owing to the depth of snow we did not make more than four miles on the 27th.

(To be Continued)