

In honor of this intrepid explorer, we named the western fork of the Athabasca, which is somewhat smaller than the main river, though more than fifty yards wide where we crossed it, and difficult to ford, Chaba River—Chaba being Stony for Beaver. The name is a memorial in another sense also. Many and immense beaver dams exist along this river, though the race seems now extinct, whether exterminated by Job and his comrades, or, as Chief Jonas avers, by some contagious disease.

Passing the poles of the seven teepees, we came out upon the shore of Fortress Lake, and feasted our eyes once more on its opaline blue-green waters, set in dark forests untouched by fire, and reflecting splendid ruddy cliffs and rock pinnacles, and the far-off whiteness of immense snow fields.

We had cherished a hope of launching our boat, the "Athabasca," on the waters of the Punch Bowl, until we found that pond too small to make it worth the trouble; but now we quickly had her afloat on the beautiful lake beside our camp. After hard pulling in crossing swift and dangerous rivers, it was a delightful contrast to float idly on the lake, or to row furiously after the half-fledged ducks, which seemed so little afraid of man.

One disappointment awaited us. After promising ourselves trout as a relief from the monotony of bacon, we trolled and still fished and set night lines, we displayed the charms of a silver spoon, of grasshoppers, of flies, and of pork rinds, and had never a bite as reward. The lake looks the very home of mountain trout, but is apparently void of fish.

We had discovered the summer before that Fortress Lake has a subterranean outlet into a small tributary of the Athabasca, and we now found that a canal, half a mile long and six feet deep, would drain it into that river. At the opposite end of the lake, which is eight miles long, we found a beautiful clear stream, nearly as large as the Miette, flowing west into a turbulent river coming from the north, undoubtedly Wood River, an important tributary of the Columbia. Thus Fortress Lake, like the Committee's Punch Bowl, sends its waters to the Pacific as well as the Arctic Ocean. As the Punch Bowl is represented on the maps about the size of Fortress Lake, one might almost suppose they had been confounded. Fortress Lake lies east and west, instead of north and south, however, and no trail leads past it down Wood River.

The lake stands 4,330 feet above the sea, so that the pass is nearly 1,400 feet lower than Athabasca Pass; 950 feet lower than the Kicking Horse Pass, followed by the Canadian Pacific Railway; and only 610 feet higher than the Yellow Head Pass.