



Moose Head

CHAPTER I

LOCATION AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE PARK

Location of the park . . . David Thompson's discovery of the Athabaska pass . . . John Jacob Astor's ambitious plans . . . Misfortunes of Astoria . . . The Tonquin . . . Gabriel Franchère, Ross Cox and Alexander Ross . . . Jasper House . . . David Douglas the botanist . . . De Smet, Paul Kane, Milton and Cheadle . . . Sir James Hector . . . Sir Sandford Fleming . . . Railways through the park

JASPER PARK is historic ground. More stirring scenes in the upbuilding of Canada have been staged in it than in any other part of the Rockies.

Men, women and children, representing a score of nationalities, have threaded its trails, and their ghosts still linger in the shadows, their influence still radiates in the colours of mountain, valley and stream.

Jasper park has a literature of its own. Among those who have left us the narrative of their experiences within its bounds are David Thompson, the fur trader, and one of the greatest geographers of the world; Gabriel Franchère, Ross Cox and Alexander Ross, participants in John Jacob Astor's attempt to monopolize the fur-trade; David Douglas, the unwearied botanist, who met an untimely death in the Sandwich islands; Edward Ermatinger, the young trader; Pierre Jean De Smet, the ubiquitous Belgian missionary to the Indians; Sir James Hector, the explorer, most accurate of observers; Dr. Wm. Cheadle, first of the tourists; and Principal Grant, of Queen's University, seeking a route for a transcontinental railway.

The town of Jasper, which is the capital of this mountainous kingdom, lies about 200 miles west of Edmonton, just below the confluence of Miette river with the Athabaska, the Miette coming from Yellowhead pass to the west, and the Athabaska from the glaciers to the south, to pursue its way in a northeasterly direction to the plains of Alberta and the Arctic ocean.

Four thousand four hundred miles of this region extending to the divide, the western boundary of Alberta, constitute Jasper park, one of the great playgrounds of the Dominion. To-day the tourist can reach the heart of it from Edmonton by