

pressed—probably two hundred feet in depth; in one part of it, two huge cavern entrances worn by the action of the water, with an enormous boulder forming the column of support between the two, then a distinct layer of lava defined and marked as if it had flowed over and cooled—then another, then another; each equally defined and marked, each about the same depth, from 150 to 200 feet, the upper surface perfectly flat, forming a bench back towards the mountain, perhaps half a mile, whence the mountain sloped upwards, in height corresponding to the range on which we rode. Whether the formation was the same on our side it was impossible to say, as the *débris* between us and the bank below, narrow as the space was, would not permit observation to be made. On our side the mountains towered far above us, and rounding the point, we could see stretching away in front for several miles the bench over which our trail would pass, but so trending as to obstruct the continuation of the view of the wall of the river on the opposite side. The benches and the sides of the mountains were covered with trees, except here and there where sufficient soil had not been deposited on the lava bed to admit of vegetation.

This formation, however, was but the entrance leading to the lava beds at the "First North Fork," as it is called, of the River. Here the scene is simply indescribable. The whole country looked as if it had been rent and torn asunder in convulsions. The Fork ran into the river through a perpendicular fissure of a thousand feet. The peninsula forming the point between the Fork and the river was lava pure and simple—scarred and rugged, without a leaf of vegetation of any kind. On one side of the Fork, opposite to the point of the peninsula, rose a conical mountain 2,000 feet in height, unbroken to the water's edge. On the corresponding side of the main river—standing on

the flat surface, in front of the mountain behind, from which it had been clearly torn by the wash and waste of centuries—stood a huge block of lava, ragged and pointed, cathedral-like in shape and size, with buttresses and spires as if designed by Art—while facing the two, and immediately opposite the point of the peninsula, a mountain of gravelly formation rose straight and high many thousand feet, down which our zig-zag trail descended. Then as far as the eye could see along both rivers—the main and the Fork, and after the junction in the three directions—they ran through unbroken perpendicular walls of lava seven or eight hundred feet in height.

How or when such formations were made a geologist alone could tell. To us it seemed as if the whole had been a seething sea of surging, molten lava, when the Divine command went forth, stayed its power, and bade its turmoil cease.

"Illum Expirantem transfixô pectorê flammas
Turbine corripuit, scopuloque infixit acute."

Yet amid this terrific scene there was life. At the water's edge, at the bottom of the last mentioned mountain, down which our trail descended, a little bridge spanned the Fork, and on a small bank beyond formed by the *débris*, the Taltan Indians have their village, just at the base of the peninsula. They are considered a fine tribe, honest and industrious, and pride themselves upon their good name. They claim the lordship of the river, and refuse to permit the Naas or sea-coast Indians to come into the interior. A feud long existed between them, which was only quieted this season by compensation for the excess in the number of scalps that one tribe had obtained over the other. On this spot the Taltans have large wicker buildings, in which they live, and store their winter supply of salmon. In British Columbia the staple food of the Indians is salmon. The fish is used in every