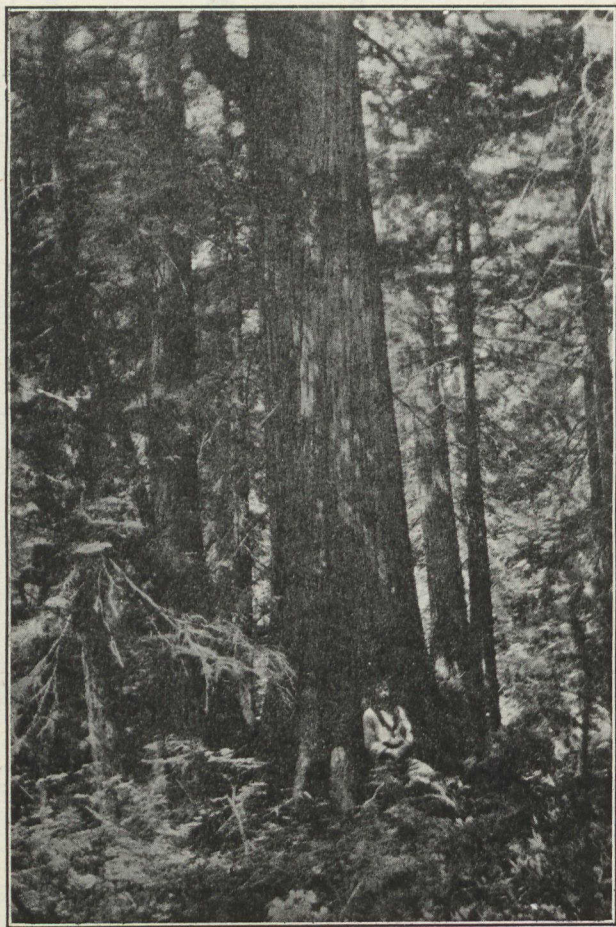
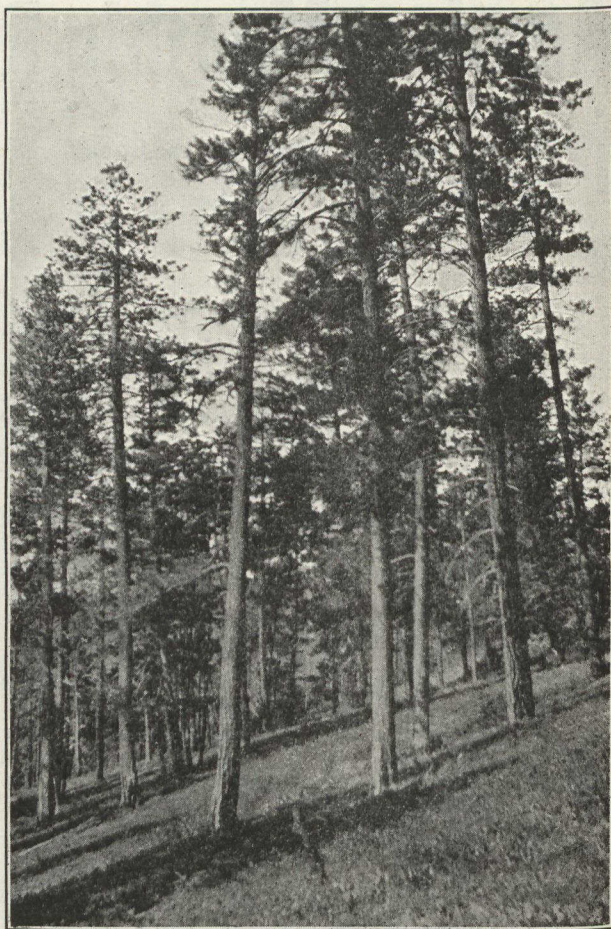




Western Cedar.

In the H i g h W o o d s



Prospect Valley, B.C.

By FREDERICK NIVEN

MERELY TO look up at the high woods from the trains passing through in the valleys, or soaring out a few seconds in space over a white creek, is simply not to know them. Seen from the train, or even from the towns in the Rocky Mountains, the woods are utterly different from what they are when visited. Those great and seemingly even humps of green that might be of moss, with a rock or two protruding, are then discovered to be fissured and wild mountains decked with trees of many varieties and, under the trees, gemmed with exquisite flowers. An ancient and eternal spirit seems to live there, terrible or consoling according to one's mood—but always luring. Trails, unseen from the car-window, or from town, wind through narrow brown ribbons of tamarack needles, soft and resilient as Wilton pile. By the trail edges simple stars of Bethlehem live their lives and fade, the blossoms of the thimbleberry and saskatoon bushes flaunt and wither, and speckled lilies, with a touch of the exotic in their hues, match the humming-birds that come up from South with the Summer.

The great green hush gets into one's heart; it is strangely broken by

the sweet sad trills of birds, trills without echo, muted by the world of leaves. Back with him, out of the woods, any average human traveller must surely take something beyond price, if it is no more than this in value in the shops; memory of a wild rose-bush tossing in a passing shower, as though agitated a moment, and in its agitation sweet, creating a little pool of scent among the rough odour of all the pines. Such as that are the memories carried away, to call one back. There are other memories. One can never again lunch in city restaurants in the old contented way, who has boiled the billy in these serene places, and had ground squirrels come and sit close by the while, in attitudes suggestive of devotion, bolt erect on their haunches, little forepaws touching as in prayer, chirping for crumbs—not really devoted, but perkily friendly.

In the density and vastness of the woods there is a hint of the terrible. Mile after mile of them cannot be traversed without aid of an axe to cleave a way, unless there is a trail through. The great hush is some-

times, in a thick forest, just on the verge of what some call spooky. But a ray of sun sweeping through between the faint undulations of a fir-branch, the gold lights, the green shadows, these invite almost indescribably. Occasionally, at night, in bed in a house, the terrible in them is accentuated in retrospect. There comes a feeling of dread. They are too wonderful. But in the morning the lift of them under a sailing cloud has its way; the grandeur and the beauty are more than terror. Though one may shudder at such gushing talk as "the mountains are my brothers," yet, without saying anything gushing about them, may a man feel that he just has to go back. In town are the smells of gasoline, face powder, cosmetics and so forth. Up there is the smell of balsam, of the tamaracks, of wild mint.

Sounds occur in the quiet, emphasising it, sounds strange at first but later explicable. Now and then is heard one that makes those who are new to the woods think that somebody, somewhere, is cranking a car, often and ineffectually. Where is he, that motorist? Is there a road not far off? So wonders the tenderfoot. It is only the sound made by a