

population. About one-fourth of all the primary schools in Spain are provided by, and under the aegis of, the Church. In the higher education, which is a good test of a nation's culture, Spain and Belgium easily lead the world. Spain, with a population of 18,000,000, has ten universities with about 17,000 students. England, with a population of 32,500,000, has fewer students in its six universities. As to the term 'illiteracy': it is a tricky-some word, and, in its controversial use, is commonly taken to be synonymous with 'ignorance.' But anybody who has ever travelled (as we have) among the delightful peasantry of Spain will realise how a not infrequent lack of mere book-lore is easily consistent with an exquisite refinement of thought and manner, with a strong mental grasp of deep truths, and with a moral and religious sense of extreme delicacy. An unlettered Spaniard is far from being either rude or ignorant. Caedmon, the first religious poet of the Teutonic race, could neither read nor write when he composed his historic 'Paraphrase.' And the middle ages furnish several instances of poets who, though unable to read or write, rose to the highest rank in the realm of literature. We need only mention the name of Wolfram von Eschenbach, the sweet twelfth and thirteenth century minnesinger, whose great epic, 'Parzival,' is one of the finest literary productions that have been bequeathed to us by the past. Moreover, in the case of Spain, mere statistics of illiteracy are wholly misleading unless accompanied by a fair statement of the manner in which they are compiled. There are in Spain four different languages (not mere dialects): Castilian, Galician, Basque, and Catalan. The national and official language is Castilian, and every person unable to read and write it is returned as illiterate. And yet over forty per cent of the population of Spain do not speak Castilian. Catalan, Basque, and Galician have each its own literature—books, newspapers, etc. Great numbers of persons are able to read and write in them, and yet, unless they are able to do likewise in the official tongue, they figure in the statistical returns as illiterate.

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But what, in its last resort, is education? Surely it is to discipline the natural powers, to gradually combine them in the system of fixed habits or principles which we call character. True education begins at the mother's knee, and school books are no more an essential and indispensable requisite for it in the twentieth century than they were in the days of Eve or Plato. The most unlettered Spanish peasant receives in his home and in the village church the elements of the highest and best education, that which teaches him to 'seek first the kingdom of God and His justice'—the art of living holily and dying well; and, with his courtly manners, his flowing hospitality, his simple tastes, his comparative freedom from grosser vices, he is placed on a much higher plane, mentally, socially, and morally, than his fellows of the farther north. A curious and instructive comparative instance was furnished in an interview to the New York 'Sun' in April, 1895, by the noted inventor, Sir Hiram Maxim. He has a factory among the Basques in Spain and another at Crayford, in England. 'I have never,' said he, 'seen so high a grade of morality among any people as the Basques at Placencia. There is absolutely no dishonesty or immorality in the town. If anyone should purchase a loaf of bread and not pay for it, it would be the talk of the town. The factory which we purchased was open, so that anyone who liked might enter, for years before we bought it, and not a scrap of steel or brass was stolen. Had this factory been at Crayford or Erith, it would have been completely gutted the first night that it was left unlocked.' The simpleton Bertoldino, in the old Italian peasant story vented his inane spite upon the frogs and fishes in the pond by pelting them with handfuls of coins and bags of flour. And the Bertoldino who has been flinging misunderstood statistics and inept anonymous tales at Spain in the 'Contemporary' will find that he will thereby suffer only in his own reputation without in any way injuring the object of his wrath.

SKETCHES OF TRAVEL

XIII.—AMONG THE ROCK-RIBBED HILLS

By the Editor.

The last instalment of travel left us at Yale, on the Fraser River, 103 miles from Vancouver.

'Thus far into the bowls of the land
Had we marched on without impediment.'

Up to this point we had been scudding along over the flat or rolling delta of the Fraser. It is broad—like the end of a wedge—below in the rich green flats or polders where dykes confine its stream and where the sluggish flood finds its way by many channels into the Strait of Georgia. As we sped on our way the mountains crowded in on each flank, until at Yale the valley tapered to a point and stopped short before a vast rampart of rock. Yale stands, like a Swiss village, upon the bench or terrace over the river. But the brief illusion of a Swiss scene is shattered by a gaudy Joss-house that betokens the presence of full many a slant-eyed, pig-tailed son of the Hwa-Kwo or Flowery Kingdom in the neighborhood besides the placid groups that scooped the wash-dirt and 'rocked the cradle' for gold in the sandy river bars below. For we were now on the rocky frontier of the gold-land of British Columbia. The first intimation of the fact was the unexpected sight of

A Gold Dredge

of New Zealand pattern—and probably of Dunedin build—lying high and dry on the sands of the Fraser close to Mission City. Forty years ago Yale was the golden gate of this golden land, the starting point of the perilous wagon-road that led the adventurous digger to the famous mining-fields of Cariboo. Yale was a stirring place in those days. But forty years are as much an epoch in the great Canadian West as a cycle in Cathay. The days of the wagon-teams, the days of the gold-fever in Yale are as the times of the Barmecides. The wagon-road—the engineering triumph of the early sixties—has, for a hundred miles, fallen to pieces into the Fraser; miner and tourist are whirled along near its track in fast express trains; the gold-fever has left Yale, and the town sleeps by the rushing river and dreams as though it had opium in its veins. It was a lazy, sunny day as we passed the dozing little town. A little flat-bottomed steamer leaned reposefully against the wharf. It was the last direct reminder of the salt sea that we met until we touched the Great Lakes 1800 miles away to the east. And so at Yale we bade adieu to the Pacific and felt that we were far into the bowels of the land—into the depths of the region of snow-topped mountain and ice-field and spreading lake and tumbling alpine waterfall and rushing river.

It is a glorious journey of 600 miles through the successive ranges that come like the billows of a stormy sea and are collectively known, in common speech, as the Rocky Mountains. There are really four conjoined chains or cordilleras. The greatest are those on the eastern and western flanks. The first are the Rockies properly so called; they overlook the green, rolling prairies of Canada's great North-West. The Cascade Ranges form the westernmost barrier, and bathe their feet in the waters of the Pacific. Squeezed in between these broad ramparts are the tumultuous and far-extending cones of the Columbia and Selkirk Ranges. This vast region of craggy peaks forms the rugged backbone of the American continent. Southward it struggles away towards the buffeted rocks of Cape Horn, and northward the broken lines of peaks, crowned with their diadems of snow, run loosely in long wormy columns, diminishing as they go, till at last they dip their diminishing forms into the frozen waters of the Arctic Ocean.

The name 'Rocky Mountains' was well chosen. 'There probably exists nowhere else,' says a recent writer, 'such an extensive region of

Naked Rock

almost entirely devoid of vegetation.' The whole of this vast region was, in a comparatively recent geological age, in the throes and turmoil of violent volcanic activity. In places the stratified rocks have been covered with a blanket of lava several thousand feet deep. According to Ruskin, mountains are the beginning and end of all natural scenery. There is a revelry of them, and of every beautiful and fantastic form, in the 'humpy, bumpy, lumpy' land between Vancouver and the foothills at Calgary. Volcanic eruptions and the erosive action of rain and wind and flowing water have made it a region of naked crags, towering cliffs, icy cones, stupendous pinnacles, broken battlements, sudden gorges, rifted canyons; and the carved and fretted rocks are decked with a brilliancy of coloring which, though less delicate, is not less admirable than the soft Belleek-ware tints that seize the fancy's eager eye in the famous 'shawls' of the Jenolan