

buttresses—in the waters of the Pacific Ocean. It is a region of wild and rugged grandeur—of snow-capped mountains, great ice-fields, spreading lakes, tumbling waterfalls, and rushing rivers. The eastern side of Canada's great western mountain barrier, which is properly called the Rockies, is a vast region of naked but brilliantly colored stone—towering cliffs, icy cones, stupendous pinnacles, sudden rifts and gorges—almost devoid of vegetation. But the Cascade Mountains, like Elizabeth Barrett Browning's island, are

'All Awake with Trees.'

This far-spreading region is not less rich than the Rockies in scenic majesty, while its thousand varied charms are enhanced by the rich vegetation and the forests of evergreen conifers—spruces, cedars, firs, and the handsome trees that the 'Canucks' thereabouts call cypress, juniper, larch, and yew—that scrambled up the slopes and thin out like falling hair near the snow-line, underneath the bald, tapering white summits that are such a striking feature of the sky-line in these mountains. It was scenery such as this that inspired a stirring stanza in a poem by Charles G. D. Roberts, one of Canada's young and promising bards:—

'O strong hearts, guarding the birthright of our glory,
Worth your best blood this heritage that ye guard!
These mighty streams resplendent with our story,
These iron coasts by rage of seas unjarred,—
What fields of peace these bulwarks will secure!
What vales of plenty these calm floods supply!
Shall not our love this rough, sweet land make sure,
Her bounds preserve inviolate, though we die?
O strong hearts of the North,
Let flame your loyalty forth,
And put the craven and base to an open shame,
Till earth shall know the Child of Nations by her name!'

In the rich river-flats below Yale, the Fraser flows broad and deep in a yellow, masterful tide. East of Yale it thunders along at a furious pace for some four-and-twenty miles through a wild, winding, narrow, rocky gorge, which is known as

The Fraser Canon

(you pronounce this Spanish word 'can-yon' and fling the accent on the first syllable). This mighty cleft winds through the heart of the Cascade Ranges. It is hundreds of feet in depth, and a glint of sunshine never touches the face of the waters that run through its dark, cold depths. The railway line is a shelf or notch cut deep and safe into the rocky side of the sheer cliff, 200 feet or more above the swirling waters that furiously lash and grind at the great rocks through which, in the course of ages, they have rasped and eaten their way to the ocean. There is a wondrous fascination about those masterful mountain rivers. One feels, in gliding along their banks, somewhat of the charm that appealed to the ear and eye and brain of the old-time bards who sang of the Abana and Pharpar, the Nile, the Auidius, and of Mangan, Moerike, Mueller, Burns, and other later poets whose souls were attuned to the wondrous music of the passing river. As we sped along the Fraser canon, all eyes were intent upon the varying moods and ways of the rushing waters. Now and then the river was hidden from us as the train crossed the chasm by steel bridges of extraordinary strength, resting on massive abutments of solid masonry; or as we took frequent little 'headers' into tunnels that cut through projecting mountain ribs. But we were ever keenly on the watch for its re-appearance. People paid little heed to the splendidly constructed permanent way, the elaborate system of guard-rails, cut-outs, patent switches, patrols, etc., which make railway travelling in this wild region as safe as it is upon the Canterbury Plains. The fascination of the tossing river was upon them all. It was calling, and its loud voice was heard above the noise of the rushing train and billowed into the tunnel-ends and around the projecting spurs and jutting crags and promontories of rock that momentarily hid its waters from our view. River, rock, forest, and snowy mountain-top far above formed an awesome and inspiring scene as we dashed along in the gathering twilight

'And He doth give

Thy voice of thunder power to speak of Him
Eternally—bidding the lip of man
Keep silence—and upon Thine altar pour
Incense of awe-struck praise.'

My reverend companion and I had the advantage of travelling through the Cascade Ranges in company with a British Columbian Government official and a retired contractor who had constructed this railway line through the Fraser Canon. Their genial courtesy and ready store of local information contributed no small portion of the charm of this part of our trip. Along the north side of the steep ravine they pointed out to us here and there traces of the break-neck old Indian trail over which the early gold-seekers led their pack-horses in

the 'early days'—five-and-forty years ago—when placer-mining broke out in the Cariboo country, British Columbia. This was in 1858. Only forty-five years ago! And yet it is 'old times'—so fast do things move nowadays—and they are spoken of as if they were as dead and distant as the times of the Barmecides. In British Columbia

The 'Fifty-eight'

is a pioneer, explorer, empire-builder. He occupies locally the same level of early romance as the 'forty-niner' does in California, although he has not yet found a Bret Harte to spin an aureole around him and make him world-famous. Those daring prospectors of the British Columbian wilds gathered to the mountains from across the American border, from the British Isles, from Australia, from New Zealand. They became the pathfinders of its rugged mountains, the Argonauts of its rushing rivers, and with pack-saddle and 'dug-out' opened their perilous and toilsome way to the treasures that lay deep in the inner fastnesses of Cariboo. In their camps along the Fraser delta and farther east there was not the same ready resort to the derring as on the Sacramento, and the probing of people's 'innards' with twelve-inch bowie-knives never became a tradition. For in those times there was a stern old Spartan on the fields, Sir Matthew Begbie, and he taught the rough miners from across the border the value of human life by the ungentle suasion of the hangman's noose and slip-knot, and a short shrift and a long drop. And so the British Columbian miners were not given to 'drawing a bead' or 'shooting at sight' over cards or cups or dice. Neither did they gamble to any great extent for match-boxes filled with gold-dust, like their fellows on the richer Californian and Australian goldfields; for times were dull, placers were shifty—one of the camps was significantly called 'Root-Hog-or-Die'; quartz-reefs went unheeded; food was scarce and dear; routes were long and difficult; and Indians were 'bad.' Thousands of miners were speedily 'on the bed-rock' of their fortunes. At least a thousand are said to have perished in the exodus from the trackless land of fierce red men, of dense forest, and impassable mountains. But those that struggled over the broken trail that we saw along the Fraser Canon and into the Cariboo district, scooped up the yellow dust to a merry tune. For British Columbia is a gold-land, in good sooth. And when you speak of Klondike to the sturdy miner there as he draws on his rubber boots and cuts his plug of the weed, he tips you a merry wink and answers you back with the saying that is known all over the Coast: 'If the head of the rat is in Alaska and its tail in Montana, the body lies in British Columbia.' Which is, perhaps, pretty near the truth. The dulness of the lone mountain camps in those early days was relieved from time to time by encounters with 'b'ar'—generally big grizzlies that attacked like a whirlwind and hunted the unskilled hunter to death or up a tree. And then there were 'affairs'—amounting sometimes to

Pitched Battles

—with Indians, who are said to have numbered 75,000 along the Coast in 1857. A humpy saddle-backed hill over the Fraser was shown to us where ambuscaded Reds shot down the miners on the trail, seized their pack-horses and provisions, and tossed the luckless white men's bodies into the arrowy Fraser two hundred feet beneath. The sequel was a story which told of the practically complete wiping out of a whole Indian village near the spot.

But the Indian trail and its perils and romance had their day. In the early sixties the Royal Engineers built a wagon-road through the Fraser Canon—something which surpassed in breathless peril the wheelway that goes through our Buller and Otira, and equalled that of the Via Mala Gorge on the upper courses of the Rhine. Since the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway to Vancouver it is no longer used, and snow-slide, earth-fall, and the elements are year by year tearing the toilsome work to pieces. The winding pitching, ribbon-like track is still to be seen—part of it at the north side of the Canon, most of it at the south. It is the father and mother of fearsome wagon-roads—with steep pitches here in the face of the cliff, a sharp turn there around a windy bluff, sometimes close to the tossing waters, at others several hundred feet above them, and here and there supported for quite long stretches on spidery-looking legs of spruce and pine. It has, of course, had

Its Tragedies

—this Road of Sighs. There, for instance, is a bold, rocky bluff around which the abandoned track bends in a sharp elbow three hundred feet in sheer height above the foaming torrent. A wagoner comes round it with his team. He watches the 'leaders' as they come far towards the outer edge of the precipice, so that the wheels shall not graze the rock as the vehicle rounds the sharp and sudden curve. With many a 'Yo-ho-o-o!' they are