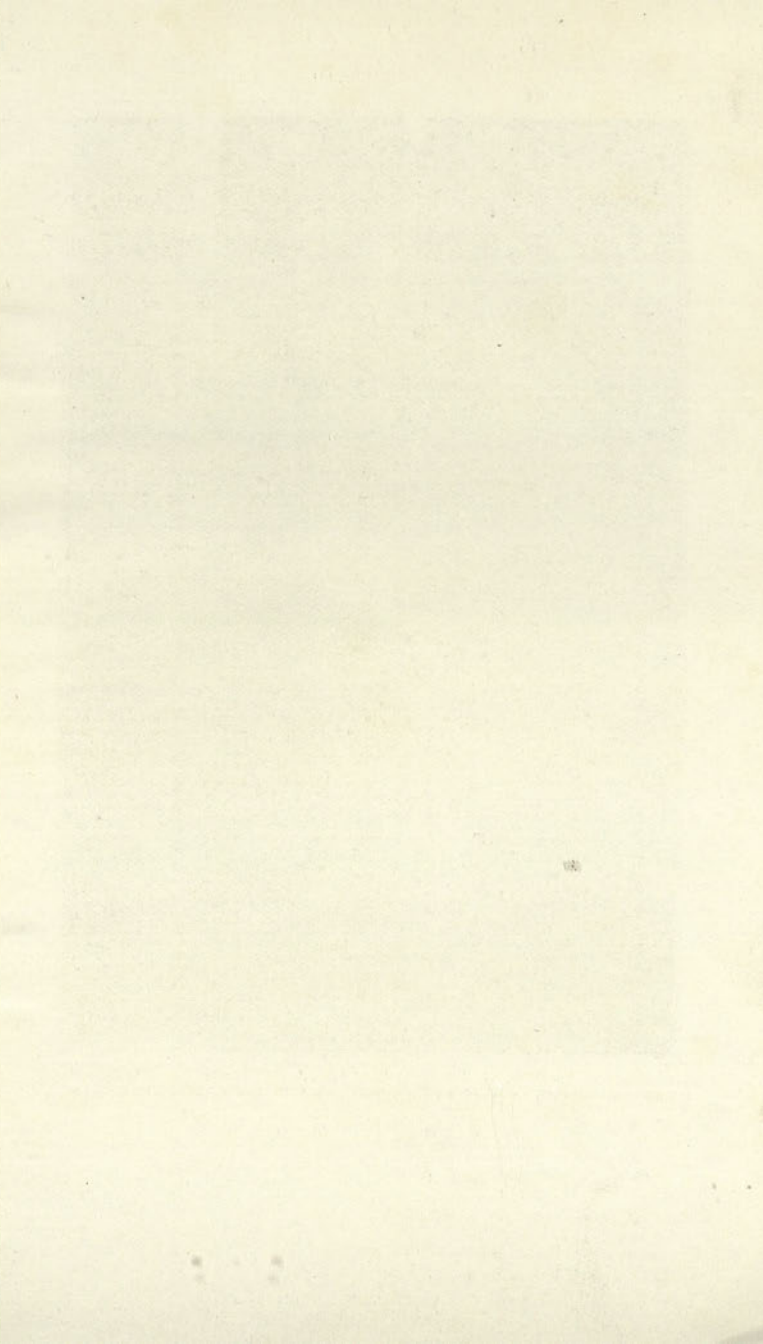


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T.W. WILBY

A MOTOR TOUR
THROUGH CANADA





Broadbridge

THE BIG TIMBERS HAVE GRUDGES AGAINST MEN AND TURN THEM INTO GNOMES

A MOTOR TOUR THROUGH CANADA

By THOMAS W. WILBY

WITH 31 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

CBGiÓŚ, ul. Twarda 51/55
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TO THE COMPANION
OF
UNFORGETTABLE MOTOR JOURNEYINGS
THROUGH AMERICAN DESERT AND WILDERNESS
MY WIFE

INTRODUCTION

MAETERLINCK'S essay upon riding in a motor-car is a delightful proof that mechanical inventions do not destroy adventure and romance. But the tonneau is no place for a philosopher bent on abstract mental speculations, or indeed for anything else, should there happen to be no road.

When I set out to see Canada from the Tonneau, by motoring from Halifax to Victoria, I had grave doubts of ever being able to make my destination. People declared that there was no continuous road across the country, and that the broken chain of highways which was to be my medium of progression had so much of the element of chance and vagueness and uncertainty, so much of the promise of adventure and endemic primitiveness, that I should be compelled to include it also in my "discoveries."

Canada, it was naively suggested, might best be seen by suspending my machine from a balloon and turning it into a kind of amphibious creature, which at times could crawl on the earth and at others fly in the air or swim in the lakes and rivers.

A study of the map, however, brought me a certain measure of comfort. The choice of route

was simplicity itself. There was only one way across. I could motor from Halifax to St. John, N.B., then steer due north for the St. Lawrence at Riviere du Loup, and follow that stately stream to Quebec, Montreal, and Ottawa. Continuing westward, my route would bring me to North Bay and Sudbury in Ontario, and thence in a north-westerly direction by the shores of Lake Superior to Port Arthur. By following the line of the Canadian-Pacific Railway, I should eventually reach Winnipeg *viâ* Kenora, on the northern shores of the Lake of the Woods, and I could then continue my journey across the prairies in a more or less direct line to the Crow's Nest Pass, at the entrance of the Rockies, by way of Brandon, Regina, Moose Jaw, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, and Macleod.

After that, all that was necessary was to inquire my way to Vancouver of the first man I met!

This plan successfully carried out, I might modestly claim the possible distinction of being the first rash spirit to cross Canada by motor-car, the first to penetrate the eternal Rockies, the first to break away from the sacred precedent of coolly and superciliously passing an entire country in critical review from the luxurious chair of a railroad observation car.

But Canadians asked me quizzically how I intended to get past Lake Superior. The southern shore was American territory, the northern shore a wilderness with only one or two straggling railway settlements. All around and beyond was a pathless region of forest, rock and swamp (muskeg). Far to the north of the lake was the great Clay

Belt, a timbered, unsettled, and roadless territory bounded by the forbidding waters of Hudson Bay and threaded only by the unfinished Grand Trunk Railway.

Superior, the lake of legend and mystery, edging the immutable wilderness, had defied almost all human invasion of her northern shore, ever since the White Man had dispossessed the Red. The canoe, the steamship, the railroad—these had been the sole instruments to men's hands by which to reach the Empire of the Setting Sun. But still the East and West were as far asunder as the Poles, still the wilderness made a mockery of the country's boasted unity and formed a fatal weakness in her political and social evolution.

What an impression of remoteness, of "lostness" and "neverness" that separation of East and West conveyed!

Then the Rockies! How, they asked, was I going to surmount them? No wheeled vehicle had successfully challenged from the road or trail the wall of granite and the eternal snows which I should encounter on leaving the level of the western plains.

When all these Canadian motor-travel conditions had been duly reviewed, it was clear that touring in Canada was in its infancy; that Canadians knew very little about their country from the road. Canada, indeed, was apparently a unit only by the good-natured tolerance of the railroad, having none of that true cohesion of human agglomeration which the existence of a network of continuous and perfected highways

alone can impart. East and West were brought precariously together at their inner borders by an intervening No-Man's Land for which nobody had much use—by a barren waste where Canada's pulsating heart should be.

But Canada was new to me—an unopened book which, owing to my familiarity with the United States, combined with the charm of novelty the force of contrast. The anticipated discomforts were more than outweighed by the certain expectation of the Lure of the Open amid unfamiliar things and the play of spiritual laws and forces in the making of a people with whom I claimed kinship.

It must be confessed that on the Canadian road the car is not yet a welcome dictator. It has not yet transformed the life of the countryside nor shown potency to change regions primitive and somnolent into things cosmopolitan and wide-awake. It has not yet transformed the village blacksmith's into a garage and repair shop, nor turned the rural grocery store into a motor-fuel emporium. It has not made over the ingenuous country inn or small, comfortless hotel, putting a model bath-room and an ideal sanitary bedroom here, and a neat, willing waitress and an exemplary meal there. Instead, the lesser caravanserai is often obtrusively dominated by the untidy loafer, the badly cooked meal and the indifferent service upstairs and down, the ill-lighted, cheerless entrance, the crowded, rusty stove with its shiftless, human types, the rough and tumble writing-desk, and the undue prominence of uncouth elements, compared with which the pleasures of

the camp fire would be infinitely preferable to the tourist of sorts.

The Canadian road, too, is still generally uncharted and unsignposted—negative conditions suggesting that the touring automobile continues to rank in some quarters as one of those infernal “contraptions” imbued with the spirit of the seven devils of perversity which must be stolidly endured but cordially ignored. In one province the rule of the road is to the right, in another to the left, and there is no talk of bringing about uniformity.

For the greater part of his trans-continental journeyings, the motorist will find himself on roads innocent of fellow-tourists, and deserted of automobilists except farmers, commercial travellers, and small tradesmen, who have accepted the motor-car as an every-day necessity. But he will be welcome wherever he goes, and be he a true motorist, he will find the battering ordeal of every kind of road more than compensated by the fascination of annihilating illimitable spaces of a vast continent. Here touring takes on that larger significance arising from the ability to motor in one direction for thousands of miles through a country possessing a common language, matchless scenery and immunity from customs boundaries and offering a study of ever-changing living conditions and habits.

It has become a habit of mind both with the Canadian and the foreigner to regard Canadian roads as bad as public interest in them is indifferent. That generalisations of this kind may often prove an injustice, a tour of forty-two

hundred miles across Canada without any serious mishap should sufficiently demonstrate. Undertaken primarily with the object of seeing as much of Canada from the tonneau as could be compressed into the limited space of about two months, it is hoped that the rough notes of the tour here set down will not only aid intending motorists in making their plans for touring Canada, but will be instrumental in calling public attention to the great need of Canada to-day—a Trans-Canadian Highway. Once completed, this will link the confusing trails of the pathfinder and the pioneer in the centre of the country with the excellent scenic roads of the Maritime Provinces on the one hand, and the routes threading the lake and river valleys of British Columbia on the other. But it will do more. It will stimulate good road building throughout the country by the mere force of example. It will form, too, a highway not only of vital importance to Canada, but to the whole of the British Empire.

The task of building this perfect highway is a great, a stupendous one. It will be the longest unbroken road in the world. It will literally transform a country whose territorial extent is a series of thinly populated empires. But Canada, young, virile, prosperous, rising steadfastly and confidently to her not distant zenith, will not fail, I believe, to initiate a sound policy of Governmental supervision of this great trunk road from east to west.

That I ultimately succeeded in reaching my destination at Victoria with the minimum of discomfort is due in a great measure to the voluntary

assistance of which I was the fortunate recipient from one end of Canada to the other. My thanks are especially due to the Mayors who entrusted me with messages of greeting to British Columbia ; to the Motor Clubs and Boards of Trade which escorted or entertained me and furnished me with pilots ; to the pilots themselves for their cheerful sacrifice of time and comfort ; to the ladies, wives of officials, who graciously came forward to decorate my car with pennants ; to the Canadian Press, the Canadian Highway Association and the Dominion Immigration Bureau at Ottawa ; also to the British Columbia Government officials for invaluable support and guidance through the mountains ; to the Progress Club at Vancouver ; and to my kindly host at Victoria, Mr. A. E. Todd.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	I
CHAPTER II	11
CHAPTER III	29
CHAPTER IV	54
CHAPTER V	67
CHAPTER VI	88
CHAPTER VII	104
CHAPTER VIII	120
CHAPTER IX	135
CHAPTER X	153
CHAPTER XI	173
CHAPTER XII	195
CHAPTER XIII	209
CHAPTER XIV	230
CHAPTER XV	250
CHAPTER XVI	270
CHAPTER XVII	279
INDEX	285

ILLUSTRATIONS

	TO FACE PAGE
The big Timbers have grudges against men and turn them into gnomes	<i>Frontispiece</i>
“They all fall asleep when the Monckton bore comes along”	24
There was an unending chain of settlements and little white churches	46
Sometimes the kitchen had revolted and escaped into the road	64
These level unprotected railway crossings form an intolerable curse and menace	80
The quaint double-decked barns	86
Ottawa has tremendous standards to live up to	96
Her spirit was broken at last : she admitted defeat	118
Bad (Ontario)	136
Good (Alberta)	136
The trails leap straight as an arrow across the illimitable prairies	162
A herd of buffalo might stampede along the entire length of a prairie town main street without doing any harm	166
We reached the smooth tree-lined earth-roads near Qu'appelle	182
When the wind struck Regina	184
At Indian Head there rose the mysterious bulk of grain elevators with the solemnity of pyramids	186

"I counted ten miles from that last school-house"	188
A farm and an alkali slough annihilated all the wheel-ruts, and navigation commenced	192
Homesteaders trekking	196
The threshers vomited mountains of chaff with a noble scorn	200
Then man set the golden waste on fire	200
No road but the broken prairie. Homesteader's house in the distance	208
Trails of the buffalo	208
The road took a thorough dislike to us—we were buried to the hubs in the slough	244
Muscles were tense, ready for a leap to a precarious safety	248
The Thompson was created for soaring poets and tempera- mental dramatists	252
We motored through the lordly ranches	254
"There's nothing better for me than this old Cariboo road, and I'll live and die on it"	258
One stopped shuddering for fear of precipitating the sand slides into the Fraser	262
Architecturally, Lytton refused to be a town	266
The Yale road—one of the roads of Empire—was fast going to the dogs!	268
We travelled through a royal preserve of Douglas firs	270
The crags made things unpleasant for the road along Cameron Lake	274
A bull terrier, fierce and aggressive of disposition, was chained to the historic post	276
The Mayor of Victoria and Aldermen came to meet us along the Malahat Drive	278

A MOTOR TOUR
THROUGH CANADA

CHAPTER I

IT was on a chilly August night in 1912 that I reached Halifax by rail for the start of my long motor tour.

The little feet of the rain pattered upon the roof of the noisy street car which bore me citywards. People at my side talked dolefully about the deluge which for six long weeks had mercilessly fallen upon the city, and indeed upon the whole of the Maritime Provinces, and made the roads "frights." They wondered what had become of the summer, wondered what had come over Canada. They said they had seen that kind of weather in London, but with the air of people who were convinced that what might be good enough for the metropolis of the world was by no means good enough for Canada.

The tramcar "dropped" me in a huge pool at the foot of a steep pitch leading to the hotel at the summit, while a motor-car slid partly sideways down the hill, showering spindrift and hissing as it approached the crossing of the streets.

In the hotel a uniformed "boy," catching sight of the drenched "arrival," used the smooth, inlaid stone pavement as a slide by which to shoot up beside me, forcibly seized my suit-case as though

convinced it was his long-lost property, and led me to the reception desk. Gravely sucking a tooth-pick, the clerk without much ado made me sign my name in a register turning on a swivel frame and bristling with advertisements, toothpicks, and matches. Then he thrust into my hand a microscopic key attached to a heavy, Gargantuan ring. The boy hurried me into the lift, shot me up a couple of floors, rushed me down a corridor and into a bedroom, containing little more than a shiny brass bed, a black telephone, a white sink, and a rigid, brown looking-glass at a distressing distance from the light, real or artificial, and then exclaimed with a hard, mechanical abruptness :

“Ice water ?”

The offer of the shivering stuff having been refused with true British indifference, the youth banged down the suit-case and banged himself out into the corridor.

The spacious hotel lobby to which I presently descended was a man's world of tobacco smoke and loungers. If you had taken a huge shop with plate-glass windows, removed the ordinary fittings of commerce, substituted a tessellated pavement, wooden armchairs, gigantic brass spittoons, a small counter at the side for a tobacconist's and newspaper stand, a bench or two, and a second small counter at the back for the reception clerk, filled up the rest of the space and every available corner, in the way and out of the way, with more spittoons of a shiny-brass, generously-proportioned nature, varied by long rows of steam radiators that did their best to raise the temperature to the sweltering conditions of a Turkish bath in August,

and then, after all that was done, made a careful collection of the smart, bright-looking commercial and non-commercial travellers in the neighbourhood and planted them in all kinds of lounging attitudes in those chairs, you would have had that hotel lobby to the life. It appeared to be a general rendezvous from which woman had conspicuously absented herself because of smoke, spittoon, and the all-pervading, monopolising masculinity which had forgotten its best manners. Brute man, indeed, was in formidable array—up the aisle on one side and then down the middle, in a long row in front of the plate-glass windows, by the door, and outside under the overhang of the upper storey. One or two women patrons of the hotel came in unnoticed at the specially-provided “ladies’ entrance,” looked momentarily at the lounging, smoke-enveloped males, and then disappeared up the extra stairway as if mounting into a seraglio.

A brisk wind blew out of a radiant sky the following morning. The start had been set for the noon hour. There was to be a little formal send-off by the Mayor and the presentation of a flag and a message for conveyance to the far-off coast of the Pacific. But I looked in vain for my car, finding only the chauffeur. He was a young expert driver, very much like those whom I had seen in the States—sturdy, independent, self-contained fellows, with the sense of relationship to their fellow-men hopelessly confused by their own free interpretation of democracy and equality. The news that he brought me concerning the car was of the worst. The railway authorities, to

whom it had been consigned twelve days before, had failed to deliver it.

As the day wore on and the next came round, the conviction grew that the car was hopelessly lost on the line. The railroad officials could not "locate" the consignment. Possibly something was wrong—that much they would admit—but not with the "system." The "system" was unimpeachable.

I was ready to admit anything if only they would give me my car. When I had grown to be a nuisance, the railway officials took pity upon me. They straightway looked up way-bills and time sheets, they unhooked telephone receivers, they swore at the yard-men, and they even figured out things on paper. There was a profound air of self-sacrifice about them as they made the most careful mathematical calculations. Then they informed me that the car had passed Montreal some days before.

A few hours later, they said the car had passed Quebec. It was wonderful, that power of prevision which they had suddenly developed. At last they assured me with calm confidence that the car had passed Moncton, only a hundred odd miles to the north, some hours before, and that it would be in the yard any moment.

Then came chaos! The wretched automobile became a phantom of elusive indefiniteness. Sometimes it was in the yard, and sometimes six hundred miles further back along the "system." The "system" swallowed it, and then it humanely disgorged it. Then the car took to loitering, and to hiding, and to stopping

altogether ; next it would come into sight, and I was ready to shake the greasy paw of the train-man and the inky one of the grinning clerk who had arranged things to my satisfaction, and even to write out a testimonial to the "system" that had held up two thousand miles of its precious self for my personal benefit. But at the critical moment there would come sickening disillusionment. The box-car containing my treasure would reveal a load of molasses or apples or baby carriages—anything, in fact, but what the way-bill declared it to contain.

System ! Nothing wrong with that. Some one had merely tampered with it, and mixed up things, very much as mischievous-minded people might tamper with the boots and shoes outside the bedroom doors of English hotels so as to confuse ownership. Nothing could be wrong with it !

At last there came an official who hurried me off to the train-yard, pulled down the telephone receiver in violent haste, and called up the "system" in order to "call it down."

"Now then, that car, d'ye hear ? The gentleman's waiting. It's GOT to be in his hands within an hour. Some one's going to be 'fired' if it isn't, and don't you for-GET it !"

A voice came back. "It's here all right. It's been here hours !"

"Good ! Have it unloaded at once !"

"All right !"

"The invoice is here, and the money's being paid. Never mind about the formalities. I'll take care of them."

"Very good, sir."

Mutual congratulations. The official refused any thanks. He had done nothing. He hated thanks—they nearly always made him swoon. I was "entirely welcome." The bell rang.

"Hello!"

"Hello! About that car."

"Yes."

"Box-car's in the middle of the train, and we can't cut it out."

"The devil! Why can't you?"

"Well, you see, sir, it's Sunday, and Bill and me's the only hands here."

"Get more, and look smart about it."

"Nothing doing! There won't be anybody around till seven to-morrow morning."

"There won't! Get busy and hire some hands. Telephone—telegraph—down the line for an engine. Do anything—everything to get that car!"

"Sorry, sir, but the yard-foreman's orders is to do nothing without his O.K., and he's not around. It's against the regulations. I'd lose my job!"

Mutual groans of despair. Bell rings furiously.

"Hello! Hello!"

"Is that you, sir?"

"Yes."

"About that car. Here's Bill—he wants to tell you something."

"Hello! It's me, sir. What Jim told you about that car's all wrong. It seems there's been a little mix-up. It ain't on No. 72 freight train."

“What isn't? The number?”

“No, sir; the car! It was on Freight No. 17, and that train's had a breakdown somewhere in Quebec province.”

“Then where the devil is it now? What's the number of the train it's been transferred to?”

“Don't know, sir. No telling! When it get's here, I reckon it'll get. That's all there is to it!”

Halifax for the next twenty-four hours was but an indefinite blur somewhere in the background of my thoughts. I stared at the people vaguely. Canadian habits, temperamental and racial peculiarities but dully puzzled me when, ordinarily, they would have aroused an irresistible curiosity—these English voices that were never heard in England, and these Yankee drawls that had never been imported from over the border; these familiar landmarks in American life everywhere evident—the disfiguring telephone poles, the crowded street cars with their clanging bells and noisy, rasping wheels; the large stores into which humanity surged through a single door for a dozen different departments; the inartistic, tawdry wooden dwellings that alternated with the more solid houses of brick. At any other time Halifax would have been an absorbing, if topsyturvy, world. Now life drifted, subservient to a delinquent automobile. Vancouver and Victoria were as far off as the Antipodes!

Sunday, wet, miserably cold, found me seated in the queer old wooden cathedral church of St. Paul's—a diminutive Georgian edifice, the mother

church of the Church of England in Canada and the Westminster Abbey of the Western Hemisphere.

“Timbered in times when men built strong,
With a tower of wood grown gray,
The frame of it old, the heart still young,
It has stood for many a day.”

St. Paul's occupies an unique position in Canadian and Imperial life. The call to prayer within its walls has been answered by the dauntless men who “built better than they knew,” and who made a British Canada possible, and by thousands on their way to found new homes on the broad lands of the Dominion.

The preacher conducted almost the entire service. He had broken through Tradition. There was no monotonous intoning, and women took the place of surpliced choristers. The effect was not spectacular; it was trying to ritual, perhaps; a trifling disappointing. But the hymns went with a swing, the prayers and the scriptural lessons followed suit with due solemnity, and the sermon, on a practical subject, fell into the general uplifting and enthusiastic key. The whole service was inspiriting, disenthralled, a delicate vindication of the disestablished nature of the Anglican Church in Canada, and a pleasant innovation to ears accustomed to the formal lifelessness of the Church of England. Its finale, however, brought with it surprise. The entire congregation rose and sang a verse of the National Anthem as a regular part of the service.

Was there ever such a remarkable attribute to Imperialism as that? I felt that delicious

crawling of the skin which I suppose is the true patriotic thrill, as the simple, many-throated chorus went home to one at least of its hearers. I do not suppose there was a single person in the congregation who felt himself in touch with the spirit of antiquated verses which sadly need revision, or cared a rap for a tune which is the common property for three different nations. But in this spontaneous tribute to kingship from a free and powerful democracy, there was surely expressed the outward symbol of that oneness of purpose and world-wide community of interests of England and her children which knows no distinction of latitude or clime.

A good many other sentiments were doubtless suggested by the singing of the anthem in that old wooden church. One might have taken a pencil and paper and made a long list of them and then have been compelled to ask the verger for more paper. But the list would have had no intrinsic value. You might strike all the items out one by one and then begin again and still be as far off from finalty as when one makes a list of all the meanings that Shaw or Maeterlinck have supposedly put into a play. You might eliminate every attribute but the one of loyalty and look at it through the microscope of your judgment and say, "There it is—Loyalty!"

But loyalty to what? England? Well, why? Has anybody ever said that Canadians were about to turn rebels? Loyalty? Fiddlesticks! If I were a Canadian I do not think that would ever enter my head any more; because I am an Englishman, I never bother my

head about loyalty to a Scotchman or an Irishman, or a modern representative of an Angle or Jute, if such a being exists.

But Imperialism and the sentiment of kinship ! Those are other and bigger and nobler things. Beside them, the catch-word of loyalty seems mere mawkish twaddle. Canada owes loyalty to herself. But she owes love and devotion and gratitude to the great Mother that fought and bled and spent of her treasures that she might found for her children this new Empire for them beyond the seas.

Were I a Haligonian, I think I should petition the city to have an electrophone laid under the sea, so that the listening Mother might proudly hear the regular and fervid repetition of those stirring strains from the nearest point on the Canadian shore.

CHAPTER II

AT last, on the 27th of August, the car stood with her rubber feet in the Atlantic ready for her ocean baptism!

Glittering in her shiny coat of black paint, her fore and aft lines as fine as those of a yacht, ship-shape and new, with everything snugly packed out of sight and not an ounce of superfluous load, she was an ideal tourist car—a guileless thing, apparently unconscious of the long and trying journey before her. “Rough-shod” with anti-skid tyres on all four wheels, her spare “shoes” hanging jauntily behind out of the way with the tyre drum, the polished metal trunk for suit-cases arranged like a table in the tonneau, a single centre lever control for the gears, pedals for both brakes, two speedometers, a horn worked by foot, two long boxes on the running boards to hold the loose paraphernalia of the outfit, the petrol reserve tanks and oil-can, I knew her for a beauty and forgave her her delay.

A flask was filled with a few precious drops of the ocean, and then, leaping gaily over the stones, the car dashed out of the water and we were off—the Mayor’s letter of greeting to the Mayor of Vancouver in my pocket—to transmute into action my idea of reaching the Pacific by road.

Fully loaded, the machine weighed four thousand pounds. She was a touring car *per se*, with open body, high clearance, and seating capacity for five. I had purposely omitted camping outfit, and beyond the inclusion of axe and shovel, spares, and block and tackle for hauling her out of bad spots, I had only the customary outfit of the tourist on the American continent who is bent on making the best of any kind of pot-luck along beaten ways.

On the edge of a rolling landscape, some three miles out of Halifax, the spirited little pilot-car pulled up at a dingy wooden inn, painted by Father Time in dull grays. Its duties were over, and, in the manner of the impish tugs which convoy and nose mighty ocean liners out into broad deep channels, it seemed to say that we might now be left to our own devices and—petrol. Somewhere, appropriately lost in the trough of the billowy undulations of land, lay many of the unidentified victims of the "Titanic" disaster. A litter of railroad yards, the flotsam and jetsam of inland shores, and the ragged *débris* of saw-mills made up the opposite landscape, over which leaden clouds raced before the fast oncoming dusk.

Rough-looking men sat in the smoke-laden atmosphere of the inhospitable and comfortless tap-room. They were not tipplers, but they appeared and smelt like lumber-jacks who had never been far from the woods or from bad drinks. The city was still in sight in a detached, straggling way, as an army is often suggested by its advance picket, or a storm by its fleecy skirmishers.

Life seemed to drift here casually, philosophically, and the men paid no heed to us as we lingered over a stirrup cup. But the pilot inadvertently gave the secret away, and one by one the loungers ambled out to the roadside and inspected the car with the same bewildered sapiency that an old salt might display in sniffing at a fresco by Botticelli or a clergyman in examining a boxing-glove once worn by Jem Mace. Vancouver awoke only vague geographical associations. It had no connection with their lives ; it suggested a journey to the moon. They stared at me, blinking behind the smoke wreaths.

For the first few hours the charm of Nova Scotia scenery was less dominant than the feeling of joy at that conscious bounding into infinitude. The physical self almost cowed before the sense of distance. Only a Cæsar, a Napoleon, an Alexander looks fearlessly into vast spaces—is big enough of soul to overcome all dread of the Space Bogey. Our common, inherited fear of death—is it not the shrinking before the Infinite with its uncertainties? We have had enough of one world ; two seem too much, and some of us would prefer that the temporal one should be dwarfed to the known limitations of a Crusoe's island. It would reduce the problem of possession, individual or racial ; it would save us puzzling out a solution of the unknown.

What was I about to discover on this long road to the setting sun? History has done its best to keep Canada hidden from prying eyes and to hold her back from too swift advancement. It was only a short time ago that Canadians awoke

and "found" themselves. The world was interested. It seemed wonderful and thrilling to read of people who, venturing a few miles from their front doors, might chance upon an unfamiliar river, creek, or hill and have the important find duly registered at Ottawa. There are still, presumably, hundreds of creeks and hills quite unknown, but the ball of discovery, once started, has never ceased to roll.

As we advanced northward the roads became narrow and winding, and rather muddy from weeks of steady rain; presently they led through dark woods, over clay-gravel paths, and along a straight bit of highway into Stubencadie, where we stopped to light our lamps. Thenceforward, the route had the consistency of a batter pudding, and a good deal of determination and petrol were necessary to force the car through. The surface was sand or loose gravel, but the sub-soil was red clay with an unconscionable amount of water in the ruts, the wheels shooting up the pools into hissing spray and flinging it disgustedly into the brushwood.

A bowing acquaintance with the scenery had not thus far revealed anything unusually attractive. The country emancipated itself but slowly from the thrall of the city. A house might be a farmhouse, but it was often an exact replica of the typical dwelling I had seen in Halifax. The man to whom I spoke on the road might be a farm hand or the farmer himself, but if he had put on a coat and seated himself in a city restaurant to eat, or in a barber's chair to talk politics, it would have taken a sharper eye than mine to distinguish

him from the average citizen. What would have stood for two extremes in Europe, were here one and the same in only a slightly different setting. The countryman, in fact, was merely a citizen in disguise. There was no village, but rather a bit of town that had become mysteriously detached and had lost its way on a deserted highway, flanked by fields and fenced by trunks of young timber or split logs. The little towns might all have been chips off some part of Halifax. Each had its hotel with a "shop window" of the lobby cleared for smokers whose feet reposed dizzily aloft on a brass bar. Each had its grocer and baker and candlestick-maker cut exactly according to the pattern that I had watched for four days at the water's edge, facing England. Rusticity was obviously taboo.

Truro, the night's destination, was reached shortly before ten o'clock. The dining-room of the hotel had gone out of business till morning, and there was nothing to do but to beat a hasty retreat to the railroad buffet, where some excellent sandwiches were unearthed and washed down by a deadly concoction of stewed hay, that masqueraded under the name of tea.

Mr. C——, a Truro motorist, asked what time I was "pulling out" in the morning.

"Oh!" I said eagerly, for the fever of the tour was already burning in my veins, "about seven."

Mr. C——'s face fell. "Hum—m! Too bad! We'd thought of giving you a send-off by ringing the town fire-bell. But the citizens would never turn out at that hour."

However, in spite of my new friend's knowledge of Truro, somnolent and awake, a good many guests of the hotel were about when I came down next morning for the early start. Most of them were young, smart-looking commercial travellers, or "drummers," as they are usually styled. The hotel appeared to be built especially for their convenience. A large room, with trestle tables, was reserved for their use and labelled "sample room." Near the proprietor's desk was a special corner for the commercial travellers' baggage, left there overnight with the same degree of confiding faith in human nature displayed by the European who leaves his boots outside his bedroom door on retiring. On the wall over the baggage were labels, one marked "For trains going East," and another "For trains going West."

While I was contemplating this methodical assortment of suit-cases and bags, the front door flew open and a stentorian voice bawled in measured accents, "All aboard for Number Thirteen, train going East!"

Thereupon an unwonted activity suddenly manifested itself among the hotel occupants. Footsteps rattled on the staircase, the smokers lolling in the armchairs flung their cigar-stumps at the accommodating stove and started up, and the door from the dining-room swung rapidly to and fro. From all sides men made dives for the luggage under the labels and disappeared hurriedly into the street.

A ruddy-faced, clean-cut English fellow, bearing unmistakable evidences of the Trans-

Atlantic liner steward, was cleaning the hotel brasswork, while two charwomen industriously scrubbed the floors. Some rearrangement of my personal baggage being rendered necessary by the hasty start of the day before, the man made himself useful by fetching it and rigging up a table in the "sample room" on which to spread it out. He opened the suit-cases, sorted the contents, gave them professional scrutiny, repacked them, and, generally speaking, performed good valet work. His voice was manly, but soft. He said "sir" in the deferential English manner, with the inimitable ring of "obligingness." If he had said "Damn," the deference and desire to please would have been just as obvious and agreeable.

Unbidden, he placed my things on the car, arranging them faultlessly and skilfully. The voluntary service marked him as a raw recruit in this country where everybody apparently finds it more convenient to help himself. I wondered how soon he would drop the obliging manner as reminiscent of inferiority; how long it would be before his vocabulary changed for the worse, the pleasing voice lost its English softness, and he emerged from his chrysalis an independent, self-reliant individual. May some good Providence prevent me from meeting him then! He will have lost the magnetism that now draws me to his honest, unconscious simplicity. Something will have departed from him, that brought to me a message from the little country which "holds the title-deeds of the British race."

Perhaps, however, he will have had time to accomplish an unsuspected purpose. Nothing is

ever destroyed. Little bits of him—his deferential manner and ready service—will be scattered without his knowledge wherever he has been in Canada. That pleasant, well-modulated English voice has to be reckoned with. Like seed before the wind its influence will permeate Canadian life, ripening here and there, and flowering into graciousness. On his march westward—he will not stay in Truro—some bright-eyed daughter of John Canuck will hear that voice and try to imitate it. A lumberman in the woods will catch the unwonted accent and feel less attuned to the roughness of the wild. It will inoculate a farmer or a cowboy. In the far-off valleys of the Columbian fastnesses, where the Chinook winds blow and the avalanches fall, some exile from the Mother Country will hear that voice and pause, and invite the man in. And some few will learn from his smile and manner that Life is not all struggle and toil and that the humblest may be embellished by grace.

The direction which I now followed was due west along the north shore of the Cobequid Bay, which forms one of the easternmost channels of the Bay of Fundy. The latter, the waters of which had ebbed and left a broad shore-line of reddish-brown sand and mud, had been one of the wonders of my early geography books. Its coasts, I remember, were not inhabited by ordinary mortals, but by the doughty offspring of Norsemen or great and sublime explorers like Hudson or Columbus. They lived in a remote world, isolated from their fellow-men, and were a most extraordinary people, gifted with a tremendous

courage that, unquailing, could look twice daily upon a wave fifty to a hundred feet high, advancing—a mighty phalanx—for hundreds of miles. I never, of course, imagined that any other than the most marvellously intrepid traveller could ever catch a glimpse of this singular race and live to tell the tale. Indeed, the man who had written the geography of Fundy had probably left his story in a hastily improvised cairn beside his dead body.

Yet here was the Bay of Fundy at last, a thing of unexpected beauty. No more mystery; no strange and impossible people; but sunlit vales, lovely woods, and beautiful, peaceful villages set amid orchards, white-steepled churches and towering barns, and traversed by red gravel and clay roads. A simple, everyday girl was drawing water from a modern well; an ordinary boy was eating live snails; a bearded farmer sat in a buggy; an itinerant butcher hawked his wares from a queer, closed wagon, while a long-headed and long-legged farm-hand squatted on a split-log fence.

In the midst of all this disenchantment lay the wonder of wonders—that deep Bay whose waters, rushing in from the sea as if to cleave a way through the narrow peninsula to the Atlantic again, are filling up and emptying rivers, till they resemble water in a gauge, and are depositing a rich mud that one day must transform the Bay into a broad, fertile land.

What a picture for an artist! Here were the easy outline of mountain, the wide placidity of water, the red-sailed ship, the schooner beached in

the mire, and overhead the white puffy clouds of the typical sketch-book. And then the colour! One's fingers twitched to daub a canvas with lapis lazuli waters, indigo hills, purple sands, green weirs, seaweed-tinted rocks, and the tawny red mud, shiny pink in the middle distance, and dull heliotrope in the offing. Was it not by shores like these that the Indians always scratched their pictures on the rocks?

The ocean waters flowed down a narrow trough between the great mud-banks. Beyond the low mountains of Cobequid Bay lay the lofty shores of Minas Basin. Opposite loomed up Cape Blomidon—a gigantic hook of land jutting out as if to arrest the waters in their sweep inland. Further yet lay Longfellow's Evangeline country centering in the village of Grand Pré. A calmer, lovelier scene was scarcely conceivable. My eyes came back to the narrow trough of trickling water—all that was left in that sea of mud by the ebbing tide.

"Heavens!" I involuntarily exclaimed. "If somebody doesn't quickly put the plug back in that old bath-tub, there won't be a drop of water left!"

Ships lay at all angles in the fathomless batter, canted high and not too dry, as if landed there on the crest of some seismic wave. It must be a rare experience to watch the magical change when the sea comes back again, and the blue waters swallow up the red earth once more—to see the ships quiver and waver and rear themselves out of the mire, to float again in a surging flood.

The bewitching panorama of Minas Basin

with its wooded Five Islands came to an end at the little town of Parrsborough. On the broad main street, in a small pastry shop, I unearthed a sandwich, a glass of "orange beer" drawn from a keg, and a few cakes. The woman who served me was apparently a new settler washed into this eddy of the Bay from the great main Fundy of emigration. Sheets stretched on cords, gave an air of aristocratic exclusiveness to a couple of refreshment tables. It was rather a dreary and hopeless scene—hardly the golden Paradise the emigrant expects of the New World.

One of the drawbacks of travel is that one is for ever leaving delightful spots where he would be perfectly content to linger. Thus, it was difficult to turn inland from Parrsboro' and to take farewell of the shining blue waters and distant Blomidon. From the wooded heights above the Bay I could see the opposite shores, which had been the haunts of the legendary Hiawatha of Fundy, the great Glooscap, the doughty giant who had been famous for his kettle, his wailing loons, his little vest-pocket dogs that increased to gigantic proportions whenever he needed their services, and his stone moose swimming across the Bay. Glooscap had guarded the jewelled Blomidon, from which had been taken the precious stones that, placed within the diadem of France, had wrought the undoing of Marie Antoinette! And Glooscap it was who, when the Great Beaver had sought to dam the Bay between Blomidon and Parrsboro', and flood the world around it, had valiantly fought with and slain it, while with Herculean strength he

had turned the dam back upon the southern shores.

Beyond Parrsboro' the roads grew bumpy, and mean, ugly stretches alternated with occasional levels as smooth as a Shrove-Tuesday pancake. The wind rose and played about the maple and elm tops in a majestic, overhead diapason all the way to Amherst. Such a charming country it was, rolling and swelling into earth crests, dotted with villages or farms, or with little white steepled churches, mightily proud of their trimness, and evidently bent on proving, by their immaculate paint and order, how near Cleanliness may be to Godliness. But if the churches shone, the village homes generally lacked all outward embellishment. Love and care had been expended on the House of God and its tributary graveyard, while the wooden home of man was negligible in its dull, gray tones, its make-shiftness, and its corner supports of rudely piled stones. The little wooden, box-like schools, which stood isolated at the cross-ways, were equally shabby, secular affairs, matching the shabby highways. For here a poor road inevitably meant a shabby farm, a dilapidated school-house, slovenly-dressed children, bad bridges, miserable plank or log culverts across the roadway. A good road, on the other hand, nearly always stood for improved conditions, and was generally as potent as magic for moral uplift. Given a good highway, the farmer sets to work to rebuild tumble-down fences, to clean out ditches, to get a new coat and hat, to shave a little oftener, to carry himself straighter, and to take more pride in his house

and wife and horse. Presently he is worrying about the appearance of his farm. For the first time he notices that the old home looks run down and painfully like a shack. Nothing will suit him but to change to better quarters before the year is out. Meantime a brand-new coat of paint won't be amiss, for he is now somewhat ashamed of the home which he had built with his own hands. Everybody in the neighbourhood catches the improvement fever. Neighbours set to work making their collective surroundings better. The school-house is the first thing that comes in for general attention. The church no longer looks so aloof in its spotlessness. In short, the good road has reformed the man, reformed the housewife, transformed the children. It has made better husbands and wives and citizens; it has cleaned out the stables and the ballot, and changed the ways of living and thinking and dealing; it has put more money into the farmer's pocket, and more pride of the genuine sort into his heart. It has been a preacher and a lecturer. It has fitted the neighbourhood for citizenship, and paved the way for the world to follow. In a word, it has regenerated the community.

The stop at Amherst was only long enough to enable us to pick up a pilot, as I was anxious to cross the weirdly picturesque Tantramar Marshes into New Brunswick by daylight. To the left were the waters of Cumberland Basin with the peninsula of Joggins jutting far out into it. Suddenly, as it seemed, we were on that narrow neck of land where the waters of Fundy have succeeded in boring their way so far to the

Atlantic as to give Nova Scotia the appearance of merely hanging on to the mainland by the skin of its teeth. There was a Delft-like quality about the sky, things levelled down, and the horizon-line retreated miles across a marsh flanked by distant hills. Sedges grew amid occasional cultivation, but the human touch was not sufficient to silence the note of wild solitude. Cut deeply through the scene was the tawny gash of Tantramar's winding bed of slime and sand. One gazed shudderingly but spell-bound at the sight. It was like a page out of the "Ingoldsby Legends," recalling the spooky dusk, the rattling gibbet, the howling wind. Some distance ahead stretched the broad sweep of the Petticodiac River, famous for its "bore" or tidal wave. But the tide was out, and the river lay there, a tawny beast, sluggishly dull and inactive.

Nobody to whom I spoke at Moncton about the "bore" seemed much interested in it. One man said I should find a notice about the time it was due posted up in the other hotel. The "bore" might be the show-thing of the town. In fact, he had once heard something to that effect. But they generally left it to strangers.

The bulletin board in the "other hotel" was deserted, and the spacious entrance was in semi-darkness. A man was asleep in a near-by chair, another was preparing to doze in a distant corner. The notice declared that the Moncton Daily Miracle was due at 10.10 o'clock that night, but, apparently true to the character of all bores, it was getting the cold shoulder from those who knew it.



"THEY ALL FALL ASLEEP WHEN THE MONCKTON BORE COMES ALONG"



A stiff walk of about a mile brought me to the scene of the aquatic spectacle. There was a "look-out" from which one could get a view of the river bend where the bore approaches the town. There were still twenty minutes to spare before the advertised performance. I sat down.

A stir in the shadows, a rustle, then a chuckle. Could it be the gurgling herald of the great volume of sound as the flood rushes into view from the distant bay? Could it——

A man stood before me—tall, thin, shot up in the pyrotechnic fashion of a beanstalk, with keen eyes and an uncommon resemblance to Haliburton's "Sam Slick the Clockmaker."

"So you've come to see it?" There was a derisive ring in his voice.

"It?—the Bore?"

The man nodded.

"Yes. Ten-ten, I think, it's due."

"You're on time."

"Waiting for it yourself?"

"I reckon so."

"Visitor?"

The man shook his head. "No; native!"

"What? A native? They told me——"

A sudden gesture interrupted me. "I know—I know. They all think me cracked because I come here and watch—and watch. But I love bores, have a passion for them, as other men have for home, or horses, or—onions."

"Perhaps they're wanting in imagination." I waved my hand deprecatingly back in the direction of the town.

“Imagination! That’s just it. I’ve got imagination about this thing, else I shouldn’t be here. There’s been a lot of libel about it, and I’m the only man in the town at present who comes here to see it. Things have changed since that old bore used to make a stir around here by the capers it cut. In those days these big mud flats would cover all the marshes, and a telescope wouldn’t discover enough water to float a may-fly for a spring trout’s breakfast. You’d see a ship trying to stand on its head in the mud, and the earth getting as dry as a bone for miles around as it dozed in the hot sun. The scene would make you kind of disgusted with the monotony, and you would turn away to go home. And then, before you could say ‘John Canuck,’ the ocean would be back there, and the ships floating and the breeze springing up and the fishermen getting ready to put out after cod and shad, and you would have to skip mighty quick to keep on this side of Jordan. There was quite a rush on that bore then—mostly Yankees. You could tell to a hair’s breadth just how long a man had lived in Moncton by the amount of interest he took in the thing. The new-comer couldn’t sleep at nights. First he’d make a point of coming here twice a day and hang about purposely the rest of the day answering visitors’ questions. Gradually that new-comer’s enthusiasm kind of waned, and he’d catch on to the solemn fact that the rest of his fellow-citizens were looking at him with the knowing gaze that says as plain as words, ‘We’ve been through the same symptoms ourselves, old man, and we’re cured.’ Then he’d

cut down his visits to once a day, next he'd save up his curiosity for Sundays, and after that he'd keep it for vay-cations and Church festivals, and finally for Christmas. It wasn't long then before he would quit entirely, and any luckless visitor who happened to run up against him with a question about the time that the wave was due, would never know the close call he had for a visit to the angel country."

He paused to take breath and to glance down the bend searchingly.

"That's why they've hit on that bulletin idea now. You understand ?

"Well, those were the days when Lorette Flamoose pulled off the world-famed sprint with the Moncton Bore. Lorette was a lumber jack, and a kind of flying machine without wings. Nobody ever saw him walk—he simply skimmed along. He was so used to moving quickly while log-driving and taking out key-logs from a jam and then rushing with the log forest through the rapids and over the falls, that he finally took it into his head to run a race with this wave. At first he'd get about a mile and quit, then he'd try a two-mile sprint, always neck and neck, and at last he came flying past the post-office a whole length ahead of the crest in the middle of the river. He had won. You never saw such a sour-looking bore in all your life. It got to jumping the tide calendar, then to reducing its weight and volume, then to retiring for days and weeks on long vay-cations. Lorette used to come down to the river and jeer at it and throw stones at it and pull faces, just to make it mad and get

busy and perform, but it never held its crest up again. He had knocked the heart out of it.

“Lorette’s dead now, and I’ve a sort of sympathy for the wave, and when it comes back I’m going to boom it for all it’s worth. I believe there’s big money in it as a show, and—— Great God, look!”

“What? Where?”

He was pointing frantically up the river.

“Didn’t you see it, man?”

“It? You mean——?”

“The bore!”

“No. Where?”

“There!”

“Great Heavens. I’d forgotten all about it. I was just about to fall asleep.”

The man’s chuckle was heard again. “They all do it. They all fall asleep when the bore comes along. But it’s passed.”

I strained my eyes into the darkness. “Where? For Heaven’s sake, tell me where!”

“Fool! You said you had imagination. But you’re like the rest. You have none. It passed us. I’ll swear to that, for it’s exactly ten-ten o’clock, Atlantic time.”

Madly I turned—in bed and awoke.

CHAPTER III

ANOTHER early start, a keen wind and bright sunshine, improved roads and a beautiful countryside—these were the essentials of the morning's run to St. John. The non-essentials were comprised in a choice collection of impossible Indian words, embalmed in the names of the valleys and towns hereabouts. In a weak moment some one had dubbed the former Petticodiac, Anagance and Kennebecasis. He was probably never called upon to spell them in public. But the names of the towns were positive crimes on the part of their anonymous christeners. They leaped from the quaint fancifulness of Economy to Penobscuis; then they grew worse: they became inhuman. It seemed impossible to believe that men had actually thought of naming villages Plumweseep, Apohaqui, Passakeag, Nanwigeauk, Quispamsis and Scoudouc, and had escaped lynching.

To make matters worse, I was compelled to inquire my way. Pronunciation of names was out of the question, and the chauffeur was no help since he knew only American English. I would stop a man, therefore, along the road and ask in indefinite unconcern:

“How does one get to the town of” (looking at the map) “of—of—P-w-rrr—asis?”

Then I would look up in the air, or at the hills, or down at the river; anywhere rather than at the man. It seemed cruel to demand so much of him and then to hurry or to embarrass him. The query would, of course, produce no sign of intelligence, and the terrible word had to be pointed out to him on the map. Some awful pronunciation would thereupon escape him; I would listen to his directions with trepidation and forget the name completely the moment he was out of sight. The phonetics of such words as Manawagonish, Kouchibouguag and Shinimacas produced a kind of mental paralysis; but when it came to the prospect of tackling Choctaw perpetrations like Toutimogouchiasibash and the full-flavoured Pugwashsourispagdhaliouchen, I gave orders to change our course and fled.

The census list is bound to be low in places blessed with such names. Immigrants with large families must move off in sheer self-protection. No school teacher could run school and ever hope to get beyond the name of the town in the curriculum. Expressive signs doubtless are often substituted for the names, otherwise an active phonetic eruption would have long ago been inevitable, and people would have cut the words ruthlessly down until every branch and twig and leaf had been lopped off and they stood out, fresh and clean and sane, as Pen, and Plum, and Apo, and Pass and Nan, or Quis and Scou, Man and Kou, and Shin, and Tout, and Pug. It was only by some similar pruning method that simple

Welsh folk saved themselves when primitive man cursed one of their villages with a serpentine nomenclature embracing the entire description of a church in a hollow behind a meadow in front of a shop before a wood with a little path running through the graveyard, and so on. After thousands of years of philological oppression, they rose and swept the whole name away save for the one syllable "church." And "Church" that village is called to-day.

The people whom we met on the road were mostly Scotch in nationality and patriarchal in type. Many were cutting hay with great scythes, women working by their sides at lighter jobs. The wooden farm or village houses, constructed of clapboards and standing on brick foundations, with a brick chimney oddly cropping out of the wood, were generally fenceless and gardenless and innocent of paint. But they were human homes that, withal, clung to one's sympathies. They spoke eloquently of hopes and struggles, and of the hard fight with the soil to win a foothold in what had once been an inhospitable, but always picturesque, wilderness. Behind the farmer of New Brunswick it was not difficult to "sense" the forest, behind that the stream, behind them the moose and the caribou and the bear, unexplored rivers teeming with fish, and the wild, free air of mountain and lonely valley.

Occasional ox-teams dragging wagons came into view—splendid beasts, absolutely steady under automobile fire. They turned neither right nor left, and slowly passed us without deigning to give the car so much as a look. This

majestic indifference, compared with the skittish timidity of the horses, was stoicism itself. But presently I observed that the Canadian ox wore his yoke upon his head instead of his neck, a circumstance that may have partly accounted for his lethargic docility. A broad bar of wood fitted closely behind and around the horns, being held in place by stout leather straps bound tightly across the skull. The tongue of the wagon, attached to the bar between the oxen, was thus raised to the level of the creatures' eyes, and the strap could be tightened only by a man bracing his knee against the broad skull and pulling with all his might.

It would be worth while knowing how the ox regarded this method of harnessing. At all events, the fine fellows strode along as solemn as saints and as bold as buccaneers. The ox-team is unfortunately an institution fast disappearing before a new civilization that, influenced by the cities, is ruthlessly tearing up by the roots the things of the past; but there is a leisurely, pastoral air about the remaining creatures and the accompanying "Gee-haw"-ing and rumbling and shambling, which makes them enjoyable and links them closely with the meadows and farms of the pioneers who first settled these wilds. The ox-wagon alone remains from French feudal days and those stirring times when men and women of British stock buried their dead in the furrows of the ploughed fields.

The Maritime Provinces had revealed to me, however, a much more conservative world than I, in common with other Englishmen, might have

expected. I was in a big country, but it—at least that part to which I should be limited before I struck the St. Lawrence—was not without a frame to environ and even to isolate it from what I believed to be the rest of Canada. The landscapes of these first days were quite in keeping with the people. They were not distinctly American, Continental, nor suggestive of the emigrant who was slowly coming into possession of a virgin soil to develop its resources and found a mighty state. The pioneer spirit had apparently long since fled or remained only as aromas linger in an old linen chest. I was in a settled country, definitely established. There was every evidence of solid conditions, of home love, and that larger home love, patriotism, which looks upon the boundary of its own grounds as upon a frontier and has no longer any desire to jump it, except by means of a telephone or a library book. There is no real sense of nationality until a plot of God's earth has been endowed with one's deep and unchanging love. Compared with these steady-going Maritime farmers, the Westerner is a nomad, a great nation-builder as yet lacking the foundations of nationality, since he sells his land on occasion as lightly as he swallows his dinner. Perhaps it is we wanderers from our own national paths and highways who feel more keenly than he the realness of that wide country, where a dusty, uneven trail sprawls out of the sunset, inviting us to partake of that stirring universal life which our souls so eagerly crave.

Not a little of this conservatism of the Canadian East is due to the engrafting of a

population of Tory stock upon a contented French peasantry, followed by the discovery of a new and remote West that drained the Maritime Provinces of their young blood. Thomas Chandler Haliburton, in "Sam Slick," has satirically preserved for posterity the tradition of this particular characteristic of the East. "Slick," in popular belief, has always stood for the avowed cynic at the expense of the Maritime Canadian; and it is thanks to him that the latter, owing to his true-blue loyalty to the Empire, has won the contemptuous soubriquet of "Blue Nose."

Most of the farms, as seen from the highway, had wood lots, besides arable land for hay and other crops, and pasture for the stock. The wood lot provided the farmer with his fuel, his fencing, and his building timber. Though this was an apple country, apple trees did not appear abundant, at least by the roadside. The farmers, who came out for a leisurely and curious inspection of the car and its equipment, confided to me that they exported all their best products. Anent apples and shoemakers' children, I was reminded of the story of the fellow who sold his best fruit in English markets, reserving only what was not fit to eat as fodder for the cattle and hogs. Occasionally, however, the craving for the acid flavour of an apple was so overpowering that what the cattle refused he himself ate rather than waste.

At St. John, where the Mayor, some of the leading automobilists, and a few very steep hills received us, my attention was proudly called to a handsome monument and to an inscription to the effect that in early days ten thousand United

Empire Loyalists had landed at the market slip and thus preserved a large portion of North America for the Crown.

United Empire Loyalists! In Halifax I had been introduced to a gentleman who had remarked incidentally that he was a descendant of the "U.E.L.'"'s. I had scarcely noticed at the time what he said. But I ought to have grasped him warmly by the hand and shown some real emotion and pride in his acquaintance. I ought to have known my history better than I did—to have been acutely aware that there is no part of Canada, or indeed of the British Empire, where loyalty to the Imperial idea is so well understood as in the Maritime Provinces. I ought to have been mobbed for my ignorance, for not to know what an "U.E.L." is, is not to know the most glorious historical fact in Canada—is to be excluded from even a bowing acquaintance with its best stock, its truest patriots, its finest citizens, its staunchest British bulwarks. If you are unfamiliar with "U.E.L."ism, you know absolutely nothing of Canadian history in the stirring days of the American Revolution, for that Revolution without the "U.E.L."s is like the French Revolution without Robespierre or Roman history without Julius Cæsar, or Slavery without Wilberforce or Abraham Lincoln. The Exodus of the "U.E.L."s stands for supreme devotion to a flag and a cause that was hallowed by suffering; it ranks the men and women who took part in it as the Pilgrim Fathers and Mothers of Canada. Indeed, compared with their lot—for thousands of them suffered torture, imprisonment and ignominious

death—that of the Pilgrims to America was a bed of down.

And yet I had to plead ignorance to the most stirring feature of British Colonial history !

I began a hurried search through encyclopedias and several weighty tomes that threatened to detain me indefinitely. What I found was that at the beginning of the American Revolution two-thirds of the entire population of the thirteen colonies were Loyalists. Many, however, influenced by fear of the Continental Congress, soon threw in their lot with the Revolutionists, leaving those who still remained faithful to the King and his Constitution to suffer the confiscation of their property and to endure many indignities. As the war progressed the Revolutionists grew more and more intolerant of the Loyalists—or Tories, as they were termed by Americans—and thousands in self-defence took up arms for the cause of the Mother Country. When the war was over and the Loyalist hope of seeing peace restored under the old conditions was for ever destroyed, the men and women who had remained faithful to the ideal of a United Empire were in a sad predicament. England had signed the treaty of Versailles at the expense of her Loyalists, who were now, in the new country, nothing less than “traitors.”

“Canada,” says Mr. Beckles Wilson in his “Romance of Empire,” “was to be the Canaan of the Loyalists. . . . It was time for them to journey forth from the new republic which they despised and distrusted. Somewhere—for most of them knew it but vaguely—in the northern wilds, in the virgin forests of pine and maple and hemlock, in the solitude of lakes and rivers,

which no man of English blood had ever seen, was the refuge the Loyalists sought. No longer could they hope their confiscated property would be restored, or even that the little they had left would be secured to them. . . .

“Thousands had perished; thousands had sought refuge in England; thousands had recanted. Fifty thousand now set out, with their wives and children and such belongings as were left to them, to traverse the hundreds of miles which lay between them and their new homesteads in Canada. These United Empire Loyalists were the fathers of English Canada. Comfort came to them in a proclamation that England would not think of deserting them. . . . Land and money were bestowed upon them freely. . . . There are few tales which history has to tell so stirring and noble as the exodus of the Loyalists. . . . The exodus was divided into two main streams, one moving eastward to Nova Scotia, . . . the other westward to a region north of Lake Ontario. . . . Many had travelled by wagons from North Carolina and Georgia, exposed to insult and danger all the way. Those who followed the eastern course landed at the mouth of the St. John River, New Brunswick, on the 18th of May, 1783, a day still celebrated in the city of St. John. They took up settlement in the meadows of the Bay of Fundy. . . .

“No one will know, because no one has told, all that these brave pioneers underwent for their devotion and fidelity. You will see to-day, on the outskirts of the older settlements, little mounds with moss-covered tombstones which record the last resting-place of the forefathers of the hamlet. They do not tell you of the brave hearts laid low by hunger and exposure, of the girlish forms wasted away; of the babes and little children who perished for want of proper food and raiment. They have nothing to tell of the courageous, high-minded mothers, wives and daughters who bore themselves as bravely as men, complaining never, toiling with the men in the fields, banishing all regrets for the life they might have led had they sacrificed their loyalty.”

So much for Canadian history. It was plain that another Longfellow was needed to chronicle, in a poem of romantic melancholy like "Evangeline," all the fidelity to principle, all the devotion and self-sacrifice, all the misery and pathos of the story of the "U.E.L."s. That story ruffles but little the surface of modern life; the old-time virtues which it represents flower in hidden places, creeping into the background and shunning the larger world. It has doubtless found its way out of Literature into Life, where like a tiny seed it grows, a secret power in shaping the nobler qualities of those who treasure it. For I take it that the true pride of descent—whether it be from Pilgrim Father, Cavalier or Loyalist—is not represented by those who worship such a meaningless anachronism as a coat-of-arms, but rather by those who make themselves worthy of their ancestors by out-virtuing the virtues of those past heroes. The great-grandchildren of the United Empire Loyalists may well leave the American craze for escutcheons to those who need such artificial claims to merit, and, looking proudly out upon the lakes and rivers, valleys and woodlands won for them by their forefathers, may vow that their patriotism shall be no less "true blue" than that pioneer patriotism of old which alone stamped and weighed the people in the balance of good citizenship.

But long before the day of the Empire Loyalist, the valley of the St. John had boasted the white settlements that followed the arrival of Champlain and De Monts. Here had stood the fort of Charles de la Tour, whose wife won a

notable place in history by her splendid resistance to the siege of her husband's rival, Charnisay. Here, still later, in Fort Howe, one Cobbett did duty as infantryman and fell in love with a little maid-of-all-work who was scrubbing out a washtub in the snow. In order to preserve his treasure for himself, the story runs, he sent her to England until such time as he could marry her. Until his arrival she maintained herself with domestic labour, and was thus able to return to him, untouched, the hundred and fifty guineas he had given her. Truly a model wife! And yet this paragon who figures so largely in the anecdotes of that time must have been rather an unmitigated drudge. One can see her cooking Cobbett's meals and cleansing Cobbett's house, blacking and mending Cobbett's shoes and hose, and generally keeping Cobbett as neat and clean as her floors and tables and pots and pans. But if Cobbett was anything of the man I take him to be, he must, in spite of his physical comfort, have spent a good many days in a pathetic hunt after some of his lost, early ideals!

We viewed the famous Reversible Falls of St. John's River from the tonneau. The miracle, like the Daily Miracle at Moncton, refused to work while we looked on, because it, too, was a phenomenon of high tide. It was explained to me, however, that the reversible-ness was due to the fact that the river-level at low tide is some fifteen feet, and that the tide of the Bay of Fundy raises the water in the harbour more than twenty-five feet. At half tide the waters on the gorge are level; at full tide they pour over the rocks

and surge up the river. When the tide is out they drop down into the harbour for many feet. Thus the phenomenon!

The roads which we followed along the river were hardly worthy of their scenic setting. Certainly the composition of earth and stream produced the most enchanting effects, and by the exercise of a little imagination one could still see the great pine trees which in past decades floated on its broad bosom—masts for the wooden walls of Old England.

My aim was to reach Fredericton, the capital of New Brunswick, for the night, and so I pushed with all haste northwards along the rough highway which flanks the Nerepis and Oromocto rivers and eventually joins the main stream and its chain of lakes. At Hoyt, however, the village postmistress remarked that there was an inn at Fredericton Junction, and eventually, since hills interfered with the speed of the journey, I was glad to take advantage of her information. At the little inn—where the odometer registered 150 miles for the day's run—a pleasant-looking young woman divided her attention between an exacting baby and her guests at supper, which was served in a small back room, where a big stove strove vainly to counteract the chilly effect of the linoleum-covered floor. Tea and Canadian steak, of doubtful cut, but usually served under the imposing name of "tenderloin" or "sirloin," followed by cake and canned fruit, proved to be the staples of the meal. There was a little guest parlour in the front of the house, where the assistant waitress and a lady caller passed the time

exchanging light and cheap badinage with a gentleman visitor from the adjoining bar. The floor was of hardwood and uncarpeted, while a tiny jet of acetylene gave niggardly of its light. In one corner stood a cradle, in another a what-not littered with hoary literature.

During the evening some sportsmen arrived at the little inn with their guns. One of these men I had met at Halifax. They were out for big game, and everybody was much more interested in moose than roads, since the season for moose stalking was in full swing in the neighbouring hunting-grounds. Here are forests of primeval solitudes, where course streams whose sources are unknown; here are lofty cataracts whose hoarse soliloquy is seldom heard by human ear; beautiful lakes without a name, "their eternal stillness broken only by the rattle of the kingfisher, the leap of the land-locked salmon, the uncanny laughter of the loon, or the plunging stride of the wading moose."

In these forests the moose and the caribou share the over-lordship. The caribou, followed by the black bear, roams in search of the stationary home in which no caribou has ever been known to abide. Imbued with the restless spirit of the age, he is always in a hurry to reach some other place where he can at once make preparations to hurry back again.

My Halifax acquaintance proved to be very communicative, and incidentally gave me some interesting information as to the methods of stalking the huge quarry.

"September," he said, "is the 'calling' season

—that supreme test of the woodsman's art. Then Mr. Moose's hearing and scent are nothing short of marvellous. It's only a good hunter who can deceive him with the plaintive, soul-moving melody of a twenty-inch long birchen horn into thinking that a maiden moose is summoning him to her mystic bower. But all the time you're playing a love ballad on the horn, you may be sure that if you're not careful his long white nostril is about to catch your scent. He's a born maestro, too, and he'll detect the first false note in the music. Make a miss-step, moreover, and your chances of ever catching sight of him will be slim. If you do see him, it is because his conjugal susceptibilities these days get the better of his judgment. Then he comes swaggering up the marshy shore, or hooking his way jauntily through the bushes in sheer insolence of strength. You might think that he has caught your scent, and that he is going to hurl the two thousand pounds of flesh and bone and antler at you. But you'll be mistaken. He is telling the world as plainly as he can that if there should happen to be any other bull moose hankering after maiden love in those groves where he already has a tryst, he is going to have his scalp if it takes all night to do it.

"I remember my first experience of moose hunting quite vividly. I had never even heard of moose in the old country, and when an acquaintance suggested that I should accompany him to the Tobique and shoot moose, I had an idea that it was something like stag or deer hunting. I guess he knew I was green by what I said, but he

never let on. He merely said he'd like to show me his 'first moose.' Everybody, you know, has a 'first moose,' and gets the head stuffed and stuck up on his wall, even if he has to have the wall underpinned or the house enlarged to hold it. After that he makes a rug of the skin, and ink horns, brush-holders, pipe frames and goodness knows what else of the feet, besides backs of chairs of the ribs, and gate-posts of the leg bones. Well, this acquaintance of mine had a big two hundred-pound head hanging over his office desk, and what with its monster size and the huge spread of the antlers, and the fierce look of the brute, I was badly scared.

"'There you are,' he said proudly, 'that's my "first moose."' "

"'Great Scot!' I gasped. 'Is *that* a moose?'

"'Why, no; that's only a tiny chunk of him, but we had to take the windows out to get even that in,' he said playfully.

"'And you mean to say that we're to stand up and shoot those monsters with mere guns?'

"'Yes!'

"'How many g—guns?'

"'One, of course.' This airily.

"'Not cannons with explosive shells? You're sure?'

"'You bet not. We do of course use dynamite to blast a way for them through the forest. Otherwise they'd knock the trees down and that's against the law.'

"'All right,' I said, 'but I reckon you'll have to excuse me this time. Why didn't you

tell me that we were out after Miocene pterodactyls, and I'd have brought a six-inch gun from Halifax.'

"Oh, pshaw! Once you get used to it, you'll think nothing of receiving a charge of a score of these brutes. The only thing to do is to keep your balance and not to spoil your aim—the earth shakes so; but you'll soon get your "moose legs."'

"It wasn't until after I'd been hunting a good many moons that I got my 'first moose.' I was returning with my wife in high dudgeon at the end of the season and waiting for the train at the forest station. Just as the train was due, what should I see but an old bull moose standing on the track not more than a couple of hundred yards away, looking straight at me and motionless as a statue. I guess he'd grown a bit careless in his old age, or he'd been watching my frantic endeavours to bag one of his kind and had a sort of inkling how mad I was. My! how I trembled with excitement, and how my fingers felt like thumbs while I fumbled for the cartridges packed away, Heaven knew where! And when I'd at last shot him, it seemed like cruelty to animals. I never heard the last of that affair. Some of my friends declared that the old fellow was either too paralysed to move or that he'd deliberately committed suicide. The badgering I got from the people on that train, too, wasn't any child's play. Anything, they insinuated maliciously, that would let a train run over it ought to be sold for dog meat; and, to tell you the truth, that's about what did become of the moose, for I left him on

the station platform, glad enough to get away from the scene of my ignominious exploit."

"That's almost as good as a moose story that I heard in the States," chimed in a bystander, settling comfortably down to his yarn. "A circus had just arrived in a little out-of-the-way town in New England, and there were of course the usual side-show features. One of the posters made a particular appeal to old man Smith, paterfamilias. It was the most educational thing he'd seen. It was hung outside of a tent, and bore in big bold letters—

"Walk in! Walk in! Now showing! The Biggest Moose in America! Walk in and see him! Only ten cents!"

"The 'Biggest Moose' was something the children certainly ought to see. So Smith hunted up the little Smiths forthwith and took them along with him to the circus.

"The keeper ushered them through the Big Moose's turnstile, while father Smith waited alongside to pay the bill.

"One—Two—Three—Four—Five——," counted the keeper, slowly. His eyes began to bulge.

"Six—Seven!—Eight!!——"

"Still the young Smiths in graded sizes filed past.

"Nine!!!—TEN!!!!——"

"The keeper's eyes bade fair to burst from their sockets.

"ELEVEN!!!!!——"

"The keeper was gasping.

"TWELVE!!!!!!—— Walk in, sir!"

he cried. 'There's not a cent to pay. Your family's as big a show for my moose as my moose is for your family . . . Walk right in!'

On our departure next morning from Fredericton Junction, every one assured us we should meet bad "going," describing the roads with disagreeable uniformity of detail. We had not "gone" far when we picked up a passenger—a tall, deaf old man, who was footing it into Fredericton with the aid of a stick, and who, as soon as he understood the invitation, threw his stick into the tonneau and clambered laboriously after it. He was an old-time native, a true type of the United Empire Loyalist, and as proud as a child of his first ride in an automobile. Very shortly, however, his condescending, kingly greetings of less fortunate friends passed by the roadside were forgotten in a desperate clinging to the sides of the tonneau, as the ruts threatened to land him again in the highway from which he had come. Looking over my shoulder, I found him clutching frantically and staring down at the mud with a resentful, unbelieving air that showed he was quite unable to account for the conditions of his local thoroughfare. Now and then, after a particularly lively jolt or pitch, I could hear him murmur—

"Never seed such roads in all *my* life. They've never been so bad since I can remember!"

The highway which led from Fredericton to Kingsclear and Woodstock offered a smooth surface, gentle grades, and a fine view of the upper St. John River. Every island was duplicated with photographic fidelity in the limpid



THERE WAS AN UNENDING CHAIN OF SETTLEMENTS AND LITTLE WHITE CHURCHES

waters ; and the fresh revelation at each bend of the great stream would have perfectly reproduced the green hills and deep blue waters of its beautiful predecessor had it not surpassed it in dignified grandeur. The morning and the greater part of the afternoon wore away, and still there was the same succession of magical and enchanting perspectives, of fir-covered slopes, and broad, undulating sweeps of land laid out in checkerboard fields. There was an apparently unending chain of farms, settlements, towns, and little white churches, while the river, like a wide belt of liquid light and colour, ever stretched itself to the north as it threaded the spacious green intervals of its noble watershed. Rising in the spruce-clad hills of northern Maine and receiving in succession the waters of the St. Francis and Madawaska, it formed for many miles the boundary between that state and New Brunswick.

At noon we drew up for lunch at a wayside inn, for substantial towns persisted in refusing to "happen" in conjunction with an appetite. Often a city or town appeared temptingly in the distance, with every promise of timing itself to luncheon or dinner, only at the last moment to retire before a vicious-looking swamp or a regiment of steep hills. Sometimes, owing to the ineradicable instinct of chauffeurs to economize on petrol, we were held up trying to convince the remaining drop of "gas" that it was capable of doing the work of a couple of gallons, and reached our hotel long after the dining-room had closed its doors for the night.

Close to this particular inn, a tiny stream

plunged down the hillside—its spray blown by the wind on to the rough sward—and scurried off to the river below. A portion of the little wooden settlement had escaped to the other side of the river, as though there had been an estrangement in its family which could not be healed. A slatternly old woman sat by a stove in the entrance of the inn, while an old man, with watery eyes, occupied a neighbouring bench and at frequent intervals fed the stove with logs. Neither person spoke. The dining-room was scrupulously clean, but bucolic. Cups, saucers and tumblers were dark brown, huge and encrusted like majolica—evidently heirlooms of the family. When one drank, it was impossible to say whether one was looking at tea, coffee or beer, or even milk. The repast consisted of the inevitable fried eggs, bread and butter, and a luxurious mince-pie, helped down with a deadly brew of senna and hay, with more than a dash of gall as flavour, and boiled up for a second time after standing for a year. This brew was politely offered under the name of “tea.”

A road followed our course on the other side of the river. When our highway grew hilly we wished we were on the other, but when, presently, our *vis-à-vis* shot up into the air to disappear in a thick coppice, we were shamelessly content with the gifts provided us by the gods of travel. The wind was strong and repeatedly blew out the sun or covered it with black, angry clouds. The sun took this interference calmly enough, and without getting too hot about the matter generally had the clouds away in a jiffy. Finally, the

wind gave up the unequal contest, and, calling home the dark clouds, sent out big, puffy white ones that rode up and down the firmament at varying aerial levels, sailing bravely over our heads and disappearing at last with a fine frenzy over the northern hills.

Villagers took curious stock of us here and there, as we pulled up for supplies, but we were too much occupied with the sublime object of sweeping across the continent to suffer for more than a fleeting moment the attentions of the insignificant village community.

As if to rebuke us for our arrogance, fourteen miles out of Grand Falls, where we were to pass the night, the petrol gave out. It was already dark, and there were bad hills and a swamp paved with logs ahead. To add to the charm of the situation, the petrol had chosen to exhaust itself at a moment when the car was climbing an ascent. To go upwards any further was an impossibility; it was an equal impossibility to descend backwards, for the road behind was narrow and would lead us again into an ugly marsh that was covered with a rank growth to the edge of the wheel ruts. What we needed was a down grade all the way to Grand Falls, or a pair of horses, or a steam roller to smooth out the roughness of the path. But all these were as unobtainable on the hillside as was petrol. Men from a neighbouring farmhouse emerged from the shadows and silhouetted themselves in helpless curiosity in the strong rays of the lamps. After some time, by dint of blowing into the tank to gain pressure, the car was started again. Two big hills surmounted on a thimbleful

of remaining liquid power—it was a miracle! It was a miracle, too, that the unfortunate chauffeur did not burst his cheeks or succumb to asphyxia, for it fell to his lot to blow into the petrol tank every few moments of the remaining journey. The minutes spun themselves into hours; the hours seemed to drag themselves wearily into days. How tremblingly we scanned each succeeding rise in the ground! How joyously we hailed every descent, every slight declivity, until swamp and hills were past and the small hotel of Grand Falls stood before us in silent welcome!

It was nearly ten o'clock, over one hundred and sixty miles had been travelled that day, and the car had received its baptism of mud in real earnest so early in the tour.

The next morning shone cold and clear as the car paused on the Grand Falls bridge to allow of a view of the roaring torrent rushing over a precipice and swirling away through a rugged gorge. What a picture must be presented here when, in the spring freshets, thousands of spruce logs go whirling over the brink, shoot up like catapults from the basin below, and then go tearing through the foaming gorge!

In spite of the boggy and rough roads, the car made good time, especially as the change from Atlantic to Eastern time gained us an extra hour at Edmundston, where the valley of the St. John merges into that of the Madawaska.

It was warm and sunny as the automobile mounted the hill to the main street. A most casual glance was enough to discover that the

town displayed unmistakable signs of Gallic occupancy. Stopping to inquire the way of a heavily moustachoied personage basking in front of the hotel, I came inadvertently upon the theosophist lecturer and traveller, Dr. Ridder of Chicago, better known by his characteristic American title of "The Millionaire Tramp." He is, I believe, an associate of Jack London, the novelist purveyor of that strong meat of the wild and the sea which is too brilliantly primal for certain over-squeamish tastes. At Edmundston, the doctor was dressed in a Norfolk suit of thick tweeds, and a flaring red tie accentuated his social creed.

We shook hands, and he told me genially, in the sunshine, of his philosophy of life, of his present lecturing tour, and his other tramps in a country where long distance foot-tours are usually relegated to tramps of the "hobo" variety and unsavouriness. He spoke in American phraseology with a German accent, but he looked like a man who had been mothered by English by-ways. His whole being seemed to say, "Look here! I am emancipated, free to wander in the air and sunshine. I am excused the toil of the hands that I may help those who are not free—or who do not know that they are. While they labour with the flesh I work with the spirit to teach them the true philosophy and happiness of life. For only he can enjoy real success or joy, who has lived long, laughed often, and learned how to love his fellow-men; who has filled his needs, accomplished his task, and made the world better for his presence."

"I believe," said the doctor, "that the ideal

existence is that of the man of whom his fellows can say that he has never cost them a moment's pain or bitterness."

The altruistic virtues—Love, Justice, Charity, Simplicity! The common platform of the pure in heart, the fundamentals of gregarious man! Dr. Ridder was devoting himself to the road to keep in touch with these. He was not banishing himself to hermit solitudes that he might teach the wholesomeness of life in a distant gospel. His audiences were close at hand, the labouring people of the highway and the villages of the countryside. Indeed, I fancied that many of them had already learned of his creed, since there seemed a strange absence of that fear and doubt engendered by anxiety for the morrow. The means of subsistence, present and prospective, to the healthy and the active were never wanting.

Let the man who has triumphantly survived shipwreck in the Sturm and Drang of European city life ponder over that! Lack is but the outcome of the unrecognized problem of distribution.

From an elevated position above the Madawaska I took my last view of the Maritime Provinces, recalling a thousand freshly acquired souvenirs—the grim majesty of Halifax, the white-steepled churches of fertile valleys, the ragged orchards on either side of the red soil roads, the sunlight and shadows of eight crowded days of motoring, the ranges of forest-covered hills, the farms and villages, the air of plentitude and not too stressful activity, the quaint mediocre inns of the wayside, the citizen-countrymen who formed such a pleasant contrast

to the solid peasantry of Europe—above all, the general atmosphere of comfort and competency. There had been thousands of acres that, still undeveloped, seemed to mock the wretchedness and misery of the submerged and disinherited of the British Isles, to scoff and taunt an Englishman for the supineness of his statesmen, for his overcrowded cities, and their sickness and squalor on the one hand and on the other their countless organized charities which gnaw at the manliness of the nation even while they relieve its sufferings. What a heritage here for those who had no foothold at home; what life and hope in these kindly, sunny valleys for the ignorant and wretched—England's incubus of crime and misery!

CHAPTER IV

NEW France! The change from the Maritime Provinces to Quebec Province came suddenly. An instant, and I was surrounded with French faces, French farms, the French language, French customs, French peasants, French churches, French frogs, and French roadside calvaries. There were small woodland lakes with a wild grace of rugged beauty and weather-worn slopes dotted with clusters of alders and little copices of dwarf mountain pine or beech saplings. A long, easy descent led to the Temiscouata Lake, a huge sapphire set amidst the emerald forests of its mountain slopes, a world of beauty wholly deserted, save by the wild-fowl and the occasional village which hugged the long line of shore. There was a naked glory about these solitudes which even the presence of the scattered villages could not destroy. Beauty was running to waste. The railroad had advertised it once, tried to exploit it, tried to people the purple slopes and the indigo waters with recreative crowds. But the world had shown no adequate enthusiasm in response, and the lake—as lovely as anything in Switzerland—remained a solitude. There were no paths and driveways to encircle

the forest hillsides, no villas in the clearings, no belvederes.

The Madawaska and Temiscouata had revealed a fairyland of enchantment. But in a country overstocked with such natural beauties they had the effect of a by-product of Dame Nature turned out with lavish carelessness from an oft-used mould. In a smaller country, lacking the *tour de force* of a St. Lawrence or the Great Lakes, they would have been marvels. Here, they seemed to have a merely naïve decorative relation to the rest of their world, though—it must be confessed—to the sympathetic heart and eyes they were no less moving and exquisite than had they held the centre of a smaller stage, nor was one less alive to the eternal message of a loveliness that was always beckoning and inviting, always replete with lyric charm.

Indeed, Canada to-day, through its untutored wild, makes its strongest appeal. In Europe, in England, we have laid the transforming and reforming hand of civilization on everything, leaving nothing to Nature and her gentle whims. But in Canada she has wrought a spell of aloofness as yet often uncontested, and hidden some of the choicest of her myriad treasures in a silence and a solitude through which we must, perforce, steal on tiptoe.

The St. Lawrence was visible in the sky—in the peculiar broad spaces of light that filled the world to the north—long before its shores at Riviere du Loup came into view. The afternoon had been divertingly full of the minor incidents of the road—a Gallic lunch at a Temiscouata

village inn, a running of the ordeal of scores of rampant dogs, and encounters with scared drivers who had frantically endeavoured to blindfold or hide away their perfectly docile steeds. But the bigness and grandeur, the majesty and beauty of the St. Lawrence were such as to sweep away all other memories, while the mind dwelt upon all the wonders before it in mountain and sky, in water and in air.

Afar off, on the opposite shores, rose the dim, blue wraiths of the Laurentians—that range over whose crests blow the winds direct and unobstructed from the North Pole. One might look in vain for signs of human settlement on their northern slopes. There, climate and latitude say to man: “Thus far shalt thou go and no farther!” In some remote glacial period, a vast salt sea, similar to that between Labrador and Greenland, covered the greater part of the Laurentian country to the depth of hundreds of feet. In the walls of these mountains, a glacier carved a way and formed the tremendous chasm of the famous tourist river, the Saguenay, which at its mouth is several hundred feet deeper than the St. Lawrence.

Riviere du Loup was a handsome riparian town, French-Canadian in character and situated well above the river. There appeared to be several excellent hotels as we passed through, but our concern was not so much with its hostelries as with the immediate requirements of the car. We found a petrol store run by a man apparently speaking a very pure Parisian French. As he turned the crank of the petrol

reservoir, he commented volubly upon the prospects and excitements of the journey before me.

“Vancouver! Vancouver! Ah! si loin!”

He spoke in tones eloquent of distance. He shrugged his shoulders, and the hand which was free began to move significantly. The mile-ages seemed to appal him. But he recovered himself and advised me to follow the route along the river to Quebec. The road would be perfect for three miles.

“And then?” I asked.

The significant shrugging recommenced.

“Hein! C'est pas grande chose, ce chemin-la. Mais, que voulez vous en Canada, Monsieur! Ce n'est qu'un Trail!”

A trail! A path which neither pick nor shovel nor steam roller had ever defiled, which would bring vividly back the pioneer world long since dead and gone! The clutch was eagerly thrown in and the car sped, with a prolonged minor note, from the gesticulations into the avenue leading to the river.

The trail began where the smooth, concave road ended by the water's edge—a grassy path, a couple of ruts in the sward with the bare, intervening space marking the tread of the horse's hoofs, a narrow spoor along which the early French may have trekked. Over its unconventional surface the car sped like an arrow. The river spread itself over the earth like a sea, keeping company with us. So suggestive was the trail of the still distant West, and so suited to the moods of those mountain shores that I

would not have exchanged my grassy carpet for the best macadam road in the world.

From it I saw the crimson sunset paint impressionistic pictures on the broad bosom of the placid river, and caught my first view of the long, narrow fields of the Habitant farmers. It passed through the rustic resort of Kamouraska, where I supped and slept. And it was there again when I set off in the brilliant sunshine of a Sabbath morning, waiting to conduct me along its time-worn path to Quebec.

Across the silver waters of the river there was a distant view of Cap a l'Aigle and Pointe au Pic which denoted the seaside resort of Murray Bay. A Canadian lady, who had spent some summers there with her children, told me that not so long ago Murray Bay had been a bit of the wild, nestling in a valley of mountain, river and stream. But the Quebecans had "discovered" its beauty, and invaded the rustic hotels and cottages to such an extent that the owners themselves were forced to find shelter in the stables. Still the transient, swallow community grew. Visitors speculated in house lots and built their own residences along the western shore of the Bay. Golf links and tennis courts appeared, and—the fortune of Murray Bay was made.

"I don't know how it would appeal to European tastes," she added, "but it has quite an Old World flavour. Shady walks and old-fashioned flower gardens, you know, and an old manorhouse close to the village church, and another manor, with thick walls and a mansard roof, just across Murray River! Both houses

have their romances of British military days when the Frasers and the Nairnes were lords of the manor in these remote regions.

“You will get old manorhouses all the way to Montreal. I simply adore them. We look upon them out here as our ‘stately homes.’ We’re very proud of them, I assure you. Of course, you know all about the Repentignys’ manor which figures in our Canadian classic, ‘The Golden Dog’? Well, you will find that these old houses tell not only the story of French-Canadian seigniorial life, but of stout British stock, strong hearted and deep faithed, which settled along these wilderness paths about the time of the American Revolution. There is many a thick wall and terraced walk that could tell a tale of thrilling interest, many a mansard roof or tiny belfry, peeping down the slopes to the St. Lawrence for a view of the mountains, that could whisper secrets of a noble estate where peasant and seignior lived in that Old World dignity which we have banished with our modernity.”

A perilous route these broad reaches of the mighty river must have made in those past days before the coming of a road along the shore! The Indians, ere they had received the supreme gift of the horse, travelled by canoe, except for the portages, from one waterway to another. The early Europeans followed the same method of progression. The canoe of seignior or peripatetic shepherd of the human flock of that time was compelled to hug the rugged shores for safety, and there must have been many occasions when the occupant was storm-bound for days at a

stretch. It was the custom for priests to celebrate mass by means of a small portable altar carried in the canoe. One can picture the dismay of waiting villagers, when, owing to a sudden storm that lashed the St. Lawrence into angry waves and blotted out the landscape with a driving rain, their missionary was obliged to postpone not only his arrival, but the long pent-up confessions, the penances, the burials, the baptisms and the marriages.

What a dramatic picture all this presents, lending a touch of real pathos to the road which I now followed!

Being Sunday, we were continuously passing a procession of buggies and traps containing French Canadians in their Sunday best. They were headed for the churches whose twin spires could be seen for miles across the flats. High above the road a stately monastery and attendant church—easily the most striking features of the shores—came occasionally into view, but received only passing notice from the proletariat, who were driving towards the village. At one comparatively small hamlet we found the good folks of the countryside drawn up under the shadow of a fane whose immense spires and high-pitched roof of burnished metal were startlingly out of proportion and keeping with their setting. The church seemed to have swallowed all the glory, all the importance of the locality. The road led to it rather than to the hamlet. Gigs by the score were drawn up before the west doors; the horses of others were tethered in long rows to the iron railings along the sides. Every minute

brought fresh arrivals—human and equine—from east and from west; and from above a figure of the virgin, wearing a crown and “clothed with the stars,” looked benignantly down upon the chattering groups of simple peasant folk. The church, no less than the regal figure ensconced in the lofty niche, stood out strikingly aloof from its humble surroundings. It was built of brick and stone and copper; the houses were of clapboards. It was noble, while the hamlet was ignoble. It soared while the hovels grovelled. It spoke of Things Eternal—the people of Things inconsequent and temporal. It spoke of Wealth, the people of Poverty. It embodied Privilege and the people Submission. It seemed to say—

“See what a blessed thing it is to give unto God through His Church. Look at my devout children down there. They think only of me and my adornment. They make themselves poor for my sake, and how happy and light-hearted and free from care they are! Their fathers and their forefathers were just the same. They will pass away, for they are but milestones in the history of the Eternal Church, but their children will follow them and give of their alms as they have given.”

And the church was doubtless right. Few of those gay and irresponsible Habitants beneath the shadow would murmur, would question the right of the church to be rich and beautiful, to be adorned with jewels of rare price, while Progress, Modernity, the practical application of the Arts and Sciences, and even Sanitation, remained

outside upon the steps. The life of the people centred in the church. With a distance of at least nine miles separating the parishes, there was little else to satisfy the social instinct of the Habitant. The church was not only his spiritual mentor, but it provided him his entertainment, his common rallying-point, his concerts, his theatres, his picture galleries, and his point of view.

Religion had now become the dominant and insistent note of the highway. There were numerous crosses by the wayside. Some of these rough, wooden Calvaries towered more than twelve feet above a decorated altar. The crown of thorns, the hammer and nails, the pincers, the ladder, the Roman soldier's spear and the sponge—all the dread material symbols of Christ's vicarious sacrifice—were there. A box for alms to help the dead through purgatory was placed at the foot of a cross. The roadside altars were usually deserted, but I was informed that in reality they formed a kind of family worshipping-place, where the Habitants, led by the head of the house in their devotions, came for prayer and thanksgiving and joined in the responses with the breezes and the birds.

The villages were generally long and straggling. They began with the name of one saint and ended with another, showing that in the course of the years two remote parishes had caught up with one another and decided to make common cause. Sometimes they had generously divided one saint between them, giving him the distinctive nomenclature of "Little," "Middle," and "Big," according to the part of the village he inhabited. Out

of the long, winding funnel of the irregular main street the car would shoot into the wide open spaces of the country, to presently pass a great monastic establishment with its accompanying church, noble and majestic in its aloofness and casting a long shadow across some chance, miserable hut into which a Habitant and his numerous progeny had burrowed like so many rabbits. The houses, wherever I found them, seemed to make no particular effort to conform to any recognizable rules for town planning. They gave one the impression that they had been thrown down by the roadside and then kicked more or less into place. Some obtruded on the road; others presented a sharp angle to it; still others were so twisted that the front did duty as the back, and the persons in the kitchens enjoyed the landscape and the life of the highway, while those in the parlour contented themselves, perforce, with a view of the pigstye. One dwelling had actually climbed up the hill, and with a few of its followers had evidently conspired to form a rudimentary street just as the local authorities nipped the plot in the bud by interposing a fence. On the whole one rather sympathized with the houses, which had been wholly rural in their upbringings, and which now, after years of long custom as the humble homes of villagers, could not readily adapt themselves to the new-fangled ideas of urbanism which modernity had brought.

Plainly, the villagers were in sympathy with the reactionary movement. It must be a heavy blow, after going barelegged for a couple of generations, to be suddenly called on to invest in

luxuries like shoes and stockings, furniture and oil lamps, new suits and tidy frocks. These people were country people and villagers *per se*—peasants stranded here out of Louis XIV.'s France on a continent which demands as one of the cardinal laws of social life that man shall be free and independent.

The voice that has called to the rest of the New World has been unheard by the Habitant, and he remains—is it a social slave in the heart of Arcadia? These men and women seem to be not so much individualistic as types or personifications of a class which amidst change remains true to its ancient and now obsolete customs. The dominant note of the type is simplification. The Habitant has none of our mental and moral trepidations. He refuses to be drawn into the vortex of social struggle. His religion was fixed long ago. Sectarianism never has and never will worry him into his grave. He does not concern himself about fashions or fads, changes of Government or of ideas, or about the appearance of himself or his home. He is content with little. He is fond of his family and abiding-place, and the latter is usually as small as the former is large.

Passing into some of the ragged little houses, I invariably found the main room doing service as parlour, dining-room and kitchen, with a smaller room or two opening from it. In a corner a clumsy staircase led up to a lumber room and possibly a crowded bedroom under the sloping roof. To the casual visitor the children were almost uncountable, especially as often two or three families of relatives were living under the



SOMETIMES THE KITCHEN HAD REVOLTED AND ESCAPED INTO THE ROAD

same roof. A big stove usually occupied the centre of the floor, and almanacs and calendars of the Roman Catholic faith, crucifixes, and small coloured cards were everywhere in evidence. Good nature and hospitality reigned supreme, and smiles symbolized hearts that had all the enviable buoyancy and gaiety of the Latin races.

Here and there were other dwellings, generally isolated places of the shack order, where the kitchen had revolted and escaped into the roadway. One woman was baking bread in an open-air oven constructed of dried earth and stone—an elaborate affair, hooded in order to shelter it from the elements. It was much the same as the outdoor ovens which I had seen among the aborigines of Western America and in the Orient, where they have been an institution from time immemorial.

Along this primitive road, one is constantly reminded that the occupants of these shabby houses are the lineal descendants of those who, centuries before, had penetrated into the "*Pays d'en Haut*," with a sublime courage and inspiration, to lift the veil from the Unknown World of the West. The faith and love with which they have clung to home and habit are only typical after all of the splendid Gallic bravery with which they have clung to a country. If anybody deserves Canada, surely it is this old-fashioned, English-language-murdering, tobacco-growing, semi-illiterate, easy-going, badly-dressed "antique"—the French Canadian.

Standing in his presence, one is almost ashamed to belong to that masterful, domineering

race that disputes with him possession of a country which was so long ago the gift of Cartier, Champlain and Frontenac to France. The Gallic mark is on every building and every institution of the Province—upon dress, manners, habits, roads; on restaurants and hotels, churches and holy days, vehicles and shops, books and names of streets.

It is years since France abandoned her child of the wilderness. But with a loyalty that must touch even an Englishman's heart, the child has remained faithful in spirit to its Latin parentage.

CHAPTER V

QUEBEC City is no place for a self-respecting touring car.

On landing from the Levis ferry-boat, there is apparently no way of mounting to the Upper Town except by a steep ascent following a winding approach to the ancient gates. Wolfe, in capturing the city, ascended by a convenient but equally tortuous path about three miles further up the river. Pedestrians now usually take the *ascenseur*, but a few were laboriously zig-zagging up the mountain-side as we emerged from the narrow alleys at the foot.

The "street" was paved with granite blocks, and in its upward progress described a huge "S." Had we been wise, we should have beaten a hasty retreat when retreat was still possible, or hitched our block and tackle to the University at the top and requisitioned a score of polite Frenchmen to haul us up. But we fatuously bombarded the hill to the accompaniment of a series of gatling-gun explosions from the "cut-out," while the polite Frenchmen looked on amusedly.

The car, heavily loaded, realized by some mechanical instinct before we did the absurdity of the unequal contest. It showed the white feather, and half-way up tried to run down again

backwards. What it actually succeeded in doing was to come to a full stop athwart the line of traffic, while all Gaul collected on the side walks.

The situation was ludicrously humiliating. The delighted crowd did not scruple to point sarcastically to the inscription on the tire drum which flauntingly announced the Pacific as our destination. The lettering of the inscription, too, had grown to five times its normal size. I sprang out to lighten the load.

“Turn her round and back her up! Quick!” I cried, and ingloriously sought self-effacement among the onlookers. Here we were undertaking the longest road tour ever attempted in Canada, and yet we were unable to climb a paved hill!

The car manœuvred for the right-about-turn while I glared into a shop-window with ostentatious indifference, and decided to go in and buy something for which I had no earthly need. From the inside of the shop, I could see the car creeping laboriously backwards up the hill while the crowd panted along in its wake.

Once on the summit, we had an unrivalled panoramic view of the St. Lawrence. Far to the left, under the serrated line of the blue Laurentians, a dent in the shore marked the foaming white Falls of Montmorency. In mid-distance, dividing the great stream into two channels, lay the verdant island of Orleans, which Cartier had christened the Isle of Bacchus owing to the tangle of wild vines which he found there. Across the river, directly before me, rose the gentle green slopes and glittering spires of Levis, the deep

green of whose landscape served to accentuate the silver grays and soft, filmy blues of the more distant hills to the south. Behind me, faced by the statue of Champlain, stood the modern château ; while further down, above the heads of the loiterers along the sunny Dufferin Terrace, rose the grim, gray wall of the ancient citadel, crowned by the symbol of world-wide Empire, the Imperial flag.

Here, as in Halifax, the visible emblems of war were still prominent in peace. Quebec, a typical old-world city of narrow streets and embattled gates, where beauty dallies with progress : Halifax, modern and ancient, with English traditions as the potent factor in life—both are garrison cities ; both, pursuing such opposite ideals, claim to be in essence true Canadian. Yet Halifax is homogeneous, while Quebec is factious. One clings to an Empire ; the other, duo-linguistic, clings to two. One, open to the sea, welcomes all external influence ; the other, inland, surrounds itself with a rampart of insularity, prejudice and conservatism. One is sure of its goal and its future ; the other is at cross purposes with itself and its destiny.

As the car picked its precarious way along the winding, undulating streets, modernity and the past came rattling by us over the cobble stones. A long hook and ladder fire-truck, brave in new paint, and manœuvring the abrupt corners of the narrow ways at imminent risk of rending itself asunder between the Scylla of the house walls and the Charybdis of a street car ! A two-wheeled, one-horse *calèche*, with the driver

perched on an improvised dash-board and crowded almost into the laps of his two passengers ! In what other city of Anglo-Saxon America, except, perhaps, New Orleans, could one find such a combination of the Old and the New ?

Thanks to an open sesame to prominent English-speaking families in Quebec, I found myself amidst a society English to the core in its habits, idioms and home life, and thoroughly Canadian in its cordial, spontaneous hospitality. On the western outskirts of a French city, in spite of a comparatively small Anglo-Saxon population, were charming villas and extensive estates enclosed by the shrubbery, stately trees and thick-hedged roads and lanes of England. Here the gravel of the driveways had been brought over from England ; there a drawing-room was "treated" in chintz ; here was a Georgian mansion ; there was a half-timber Elizabethan grange. In all these houses the servants had been brought from England ; but many establishments would be closed to the severity of the long Quebec winters while the owners flitted across to London.

"If we only had English roads !" sighed an acquaintance as we inspected his new motor car. "These powdered cinder coatings on the roads may be economical, but they're beastly uncomfortable in dry weather."

"Cinders !" I said. "That accounts for my getting into Quebec looking like a begrimed collier."

"Exactly ! You wouldn't think, by George, that we're spending a mint of money every year

on roads, would you? The trouble with us is that beggarly Statute Labour system which compels personal service on the roads, or accepts that service instead of a cash tax. Rose out of the monarchical slave labour business in France of the Louis, you know. Wretched system from a business point of view, because we get no trained labour! The farmer knows more about his fields than he does about highways. He does his roadwork grudgingly and badly, and as he votes the road superintendent into power, discipline is out of all question. He is practically his own employer."

In spite of dusty roads, we enjoyed a run from Quebec to the world-famed shrine of St. Anne de Beaupré. The trip afforded a fine opportunity to view the villages and small towns of the St. Lawrence water-side. Here again magnificent churches, convents and monasteries stood out in strange contrast with the shabby wooden houses of the Habitant. Between the settlements stretched the long, narrow river farms peculiar to this neighbourhood. Beginning at the water's edge, these farms undulated over hill and vale and across the highway far back into the countryside. Separated from each other by rough rail fences, they had a comic resemblance to an army of uncoiled serpents, their heads in the river marshes and their tails resting on the hills. In reality they were the visible relics of the feudal system under which the land had been rented to the peasants by the seignorial owner, who in his turn had received the seignory from his over-lord in Paris. As a protective measure against Indian

attack, and to assure a certain degree of communal life, the farmhouses were erected near the river, and the tenant was only secure in his holding as long as he paid his very nominal rent. In later days these farms were divided and subdivided along their length by the peasant owners in order to give equal benefits to their large families of sons.

Here, between Quebec city and Montmorency Falls, were the old earthworks thrown up by the French to prevent Wolfe's troops gaining access to the city from the flats. At the Falls themselves, close to the edge of the thundering torrent still stands the plain Georgian country house which Queen Victoria's father, the Duke of Kent, occupied as a summer residence during his official life in Canada.

The pilgrim town of St. Anne is a garish-looking place of obvious peasant origin, although filled to-day with busy hotels and thriving boarding-houses. To the simple Habitant it is as sacred as Rome is to the Italian, and even the railway which leads to it from Quebec has been consecrated and blessed by the Church. A long procession of men, young and old, lame and blind, were marching out of the church of St. Anne from Mass as we arrived. With eyes uplifted to the sunny sky, they crossed the open square in front of the edifice chanting a hymn of faith and praise. In spite of the roughness of the voices and the uncouthness of many of the pilgrims, the effect was singularly impressive. Many of them had already climbed the Sacred Stairs on their knees; had implored the huge statue of St. Anne for intercession at the throne

of God ; had adored the sacred relic of the wrist-bone in its magnificent shrine. All had spent hours at the services in fervent devotion, and would doubtless return again for further supplication in the afternoon.

It was the old story of simple peasant faith and hope of physical cures familiar throughout Europe, but gaining a peculiar significance by virtue of its setting on the soil of the New World. Viewing this religious pageant from the tonneau, one was not so much impressed by its incongruity as by the incongruity of the automobile. One would have preferred a Sedan chair or an Indian canoe. And yet, is not this very same faith, distorted as it may be, the mainspring of even our twentieth-century existence ? One has his St. Anne, another his doctor and his bread pill ; Jones has his woollen ; Smith his cotton underwear ; Brown has his anti-pneumonic mustard foot-bath ; Robinson his bare-foot cure in the early morning grass. Chumley is cured of tuberculosis by fresh air and exposure in cold latitudes ; his father by blankets and molly-coddling behind closed windows. Marchbanks swears by drugs and operation ; his brother by bone-twisting and muscle thumping ; his sister by anti-rheumatic earrings and a rabbit-foot ; while his son, perhaps, will some day cling to enforced baldness as the panacea for all human ailments. Some sort of shrine, indeed, seems necessary to man—and not only for his bodily but also for his spiritual well-being.

Have we not each, too, some loftier shrine at which we secretly worship, expecting some

remarkable manifestation or favour? Are we not all suppliants at some hidden altar reared upon the fabric of our innermost desires? What we ask, and what the fulfilment, belongs only to ourselves. You at your own shrine may only guess the rites at mine; I may only surmise the real nature of your Holiest of Holies.

Before leaving the city we spent an interesting hour or two at the immigrant wharves, watching the inflow of new life to Canada. Most of the people who crowded the sheds and sidings were going out to the prairies for which we were bound. The majority were of British stock, and it formed a fascinating occupation to contrast the finely alert Anglo-Saxon with the groups of brutish-looking peasantry from the Continent of Europe. One came across men and women in whose eyes the light of intelligence had never shone. By the side of a fair-haired, laughing English girl stood a Roumanian peasant woman and her husband, who suggested the advanced guard of a horde of Huns on a new invasion of the civilized world. One wondered what Canada contemplated doing with such hopelessly raw material. Was she setting out on the quixotic mission of civilizing a peasantry gross, ignorant and superstitious? Was she trying to bring light into these sullen, malicious faces by recasting them afresh in her melting-pot—to make good, enlightened citizens out of the dregs of social Europe?

Quebec was celebrating its Labour Day with a procession of decorated automobiles and occasional downpourings of rain when we headed the

car in the direction of Montreal. Mr. C——, a prominent editor and motorist, piloted us westward towards the historic village of Sillery, along that Grande Allee where the alarmed Montcalm had caught his first view of the menacing British red-coats. A Government road is in course of construction which will make a complete circuit of the battlefield and throw open to the motorist some of the superb views across the St. Lawrence. From the monument marking the spot where Wolfe breathed his last, we saw range upon range of hills, softened by distance into the tenderest of blues and gray.

I took a last backward glance at the city. Under the shadow of the citadel red-coated specks moved detachedly across the undulating golf-ground, while the funnels and masts of ocean liners, bearing their precious cargoes of future Canadians, floated silently up-stream. From those gray protecting ramparts went forth how many daring explorers? La Salle, Marquette, La Verendrye, and the Jesuit martyrs for their faith, Brebœuf and Lallemand! They were the first explorers and pioneers of that "Country Beyond" towards which I, too, was setting forth. Without trail or path to guide them, the French had made their way from the St. Lawrence to the regions of the Great Lakes in an ever-present desire to find the elusive *Mer de l'Ouest*. No matter how far one might penetrate to the West, one could never get beyond the goal which they had attained. With no advantages of roads and settlements, of hotels and the most up-to-date comforts of our modern civilization, they had

reached the Pacific. To-day the traveller can do no more. Along the route I was to follow, a man could discover nothing upon which their eyes had not looked two centuries before. Compared with their horses and canoes and moccasined feet, the instrument to my hand was clumsy and ineffective, demanding its wayshowers and advance men and a thousand and one other evidences of preparation, before it could prove effective. And after all was said and done, there were to be stretches where my machine could not follow in their wake—spots where man is still hermit, symbolizing Tragedy, Solitude, Desolation.

Leaving Sillery, where stands the oldest Mission Church in Canada, the way grew rough with sand and bed-rock, and finally the stone road disappeared and the natural earth road became king.

The earth road is the offspring of the trail, and the trail the next-of-kin to the primitive footpath. Savage man built no roads. His wants were few. Hunger drove him in search of food, and the direct way to his sources of supply. Thus, out of the worn tracks of the beast and his savage hunter grew the definite routes of travel. Gradually man's trails were widened so as to admit of the passage of bodies of men on their migrations and the primitive highway was formed. Transformed and adapted to modern requirements, it became the common road of Canada—a thoroughfare of natural soil to which no other surfacing material has been added and with which no binder or filler has been mixed. Ditched and drained, scraped and crowned by means of the

split-log drag, it can be turned into a perfect motor highway. The drag consists of two logs drawn by horses at an angle of about forty-five degrees to the line of the road. Applied when the road is still wet from rain and the clay is plastic, the crown is built up, the ruts are filled in, and a little sun tends to bake into hardness the entire surface thus plastered over with a thick coating of puddled clay. The earth road is, of course, a poor substitute for macadam, but it is often superior to the urban stone roads, into which broken stone has been rolled or crushed by constant traffic without proper scientific preparation or a suitable binder.

By seven o'clock we had reached the little town of St. Anne de la Parade, to which the poet of the "Habitant Country," the late Dr. Drummond, alludes in his quaint verse :

"Ma girl—she's fader beeg farmeur—leev 'noder side St. Flore,
. . . Elmire! she's pass t'ree year on school—St. Anne de la
Parade,
An' wen she's tak de firs' class prize, dat's mak' de ole man glad,
He say, 'Ba gosh, ma girl can wash, can keep de kitchen clean,
Den change her dress, mak' politesse before God save de Queen.'"

Here, in the semi-darkness, we unearthed as pilot to the inn, a bright-eyed French boy, with the old-fashioned, knowing ways of his elders and a dirty short pipe stuck rakishly between his juvenile lips. He climbed into the tonneau, settled comfortably into the cushions, and gave the chauffeur instructions between puffs at his rank pipe-stump.

Then he became demoralized. All the boy that was ever in him fled. Judging by his

airs, he should have worn trousers and been the father of a family, but instead he wore knickerbockers and socks. The Habitant fireside and the camp had doubtless jointly contributed to lend to the imp an air of nonchalant self-assurance and philosophic ease which was nothing less than startling. He chattered like an old woman. He led the talk and refused to be "squelched." For sheer oddity and mental acuteness, he looked to be capable of outhuckleberrying Huckleberry Finn or any of the matchless boy creations of Mark Twain.

A modest supper of a joyless, impromptu kind, served in a little room abutting on a ramshackle kitchen by a somewhat subdued looking waitress, reminded me that the Habitant has not the deft, culinary gifts of his French counterpart. His inn table is devoid of wines or other attractive beverages, and the art of the savoury omelette is unknown to him. There was a time during the sorry meal when it seemed as though the flies were having rather the better of the contest in securing the viands first, in spite of scores of protective devices and contrivances. The sugar and the butter were valiantly on the defensive beneath glass lids; the bread had contrived to slip out of sight evidently too alarmed in that microbic atmosphere to be concerned about human appetites. The jams were reposing in their sticky sloughs under pink gauze awnings; and the fried eggs—the staple product of the kitchen—only escaped going down the wrong throats by emitting a hot steam very inimical to insect health. The milk was fortunately

covered with paper discs, but a few of the ravenous flies fell into the tea, and their limp corpses had to be fished out of the dangerous concoction.

For the next thirty miles through the darkness to Three Rivers, there was an eerie sense of never being sure of the way. The river was always turning up where one hardly expected to find it; there were toll bridges to cross of the existence of which one had had no previous intuition; and there were sandy roads which looked suspiciously as though the car was miles from any proper, self-respecting route. From shadowy houses, there emerged human phantoms offering, in response to the calls from the horn, half-comprehended directions in the intense gloom of narrow lanes overhung with densely-foliaged trees. Villages, darkened like a thief's lantern, came momentarily into the ghostly white rays of the car lamps, and then shot back into the world of unseen things, to give place to one of those sinister death-traps of the North American Continent—the unprotected, gateless, railroad crossing. How often, along some of these tracks of gleaming steel, the roaring, hissing engine had darted, unheralded, out of night, to gather its toll of victims and to disappear in a trail of blood! There it was, at every few miles of our way, the most obnoxiously omnipresent thing on the American Continent—the level railway track—threading the village and the town, crossing the highway and rushing into the path of pedestrian, motorist and driver where steep banks or winding curves shut it out of sight that Death might reap

his grim harvest! The one formidable terror and blot of the Road of Canada and the United States—an institution so vicious and gross, so opposed to the common acceptation of the sacredness of human life, as to place North America in the line of backward, sluggish and criminally neglectful nations—these crossings form an intolerable curse and menace, a juggernaut for human sacrifice.

It seems incredible that the railroads pay no heed to protests.

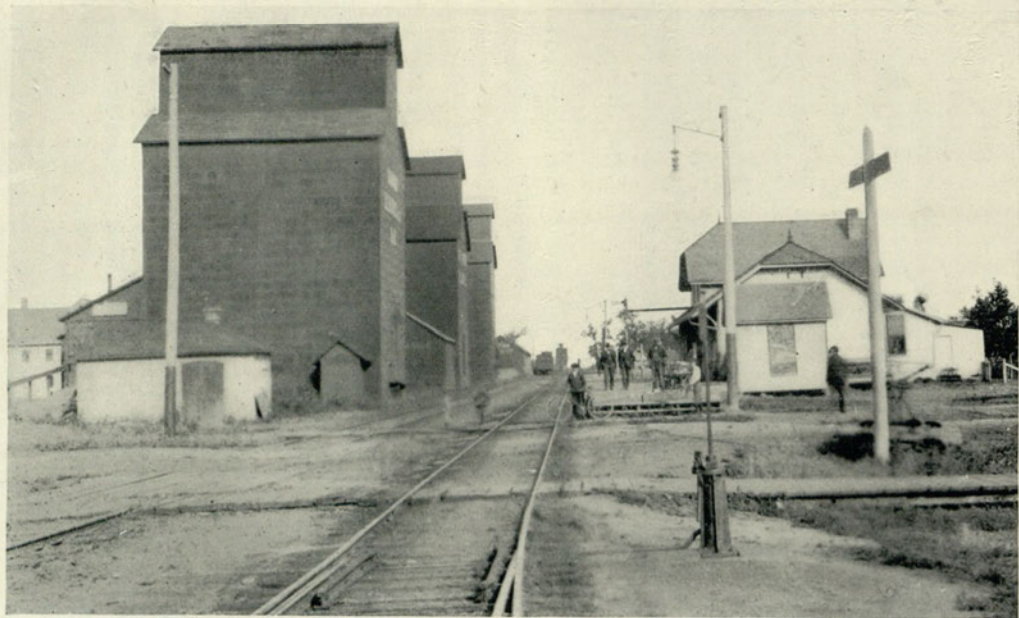
“Do you know what it means to reconstruct all these level crossings?” say the railroad owners evasively on impeachment. “Do you know that there isn’t enough loose money in the country to pay for the alterations, to put a guard at every unprotected point, and to run the road over or below the tracks? Do you know that it would take many decades to carry out these improvements? We are astonished at your thoughtless exactions. Just follow the instructions on the sign-posts and ‘Stop! Look! Listen!’ and you’ll be safe enough.”

And still the brutal sacrifice of life goes on!

Three Rivers! Half-way to Montreal and the core of Drummond’s Habitant Country!

“Victoriaw : she have beeg war, Egyp’s de nam’ de place—
An neeger peep’ dat’s leev’ im dere, got very black de face,
An’ so she’s write Joseph Mercier, he’s stop on Trois Rivieres—
‘Plees come right off, an’ bring wit you, t’ree honder voyageurs.’”

The hotel of the little French town of Trois Rivieres faced the railroad, and what with fresh paint, fresh furnishings, fresh extensions and fresh clerks, was in a state of some confusion



THESE LEVEL, UNPROTECTED RAILWAY CROSSINGS . . . FORM AN INTOLERABLE CURSE AND MENACE

when I arrived late that evening. The rooms were so many cubicles, looking sadly out on unresponsive dark courts. Big blazing corridor lamps had taken pity on their misery, however, and shot their rays lavishly through the unshaded fanlights above the doors, shockingly oblivious of the common rights of sleep.

The chauffeur and the clerks had gone to bed with that "tired feeling" peculiar to their kind when I strolled through the office into the quiet night of the well-lighted streets. Poor fellows! Mark Twain I believe it was who pointed out the kinship of work to play if we only understand it aright. If we love our work, it should be only another name for play. Are not the men who ignore the dignity and joy of work bound to be exhausted when the soft, restful shadows of night bring the opportunity for contemplation and the serenity of self-communion? So long as labour presents to us the Medusa head of arduous toil, we can never be truly happy nor feel refreshed by our exertions.

In a deserted nook of the hotel, I came across a stray volume of Drummond. Within a stone's throw were his types—the passions, sentiments, foibles and tastes, the superstitions and faults of his humble, lovable folk. One felt as one read that everything rang blade-true to the life and character of the French-Canadian.

Drummond himself had been a lovable man. "Play up, and play the game" had been his motto, and he kept all the illusions of life into his late manhood, finding his greatest pleasure in the freedom of the forest, in the trees, the streams,

the little birds singing and the "mountains calling to the Spring." Some one has said that "it requires but little talent to set the foibles of a people to metre, but it calls for genius in touch with the lowly and the divine to make a man a poet by the Grace of God." Truly Drummond's salient quality is overflowing sympathy with the people of his adopted Habitant world.

Next day, eight miles out of Three Rivers, owing to my oversight of microscopic directions on a sign-board at a fork, the car found itself ploughing along to almost certain doom on a roadless road. The highway had given no sign for the first few hundred yards that it was a thing of less than third magnitude; then it suddenly revealed itself in all its duplicity of character by resolving into a broad sand-bar on end. We were on an old bed of the St. Lawrence generally deserted of man and beast.

I should have counselled, in view of my Quebec experience, instant return to the fork. But instead, the temptation to manufacture adventure after nearly 1000 miles of uneventful motor history caused me to inaugurate a systematic course of "breaking in" the car to hills. An audience of school children lurked in the dunes, gleefully commenting on the frantic endeavours of the unlucky machine to rush the summit. Time after time, we had to disappoint the scholastic brood, and the car reached a nicely conjectured point two-thirds up the incline, only to send up a cloud of sandy spindrift from a deep pocket of bottomless sand. The particular theory of sand-hill climbing, according to a chauffeur's

platoon exercises, is that a perfectly even and straight rut must be made up the hill in order to get "way" on the car. The automobile, however, on this occasion, was resolved that for once the theory should not work and resolutely set itself to describing parabolas instead of straight lines. It was all very exhilarating and diverting for the limited audience, but after we had backed down the hill to the foot a dozen times and hurled a ton and a half of metal over and over full force at the sullen sands, the ignominious "Retreat" to the forks was sounded, and we returned, rather frayed in spirit, with all the hectic flush of impending victory and historic adventure vanished into oppressive retrospection.

The sandy roads, grass grown, that followed, kept a respectful distance from the river, and at Louisville, where I stopped to purchase stale films, I enjoyed an elementary kind of revenge against the hill in seeing some men frantically struggling with a bad log jam against the town bridge while half the population looked on anxiously. One could but feel the infinite advantage and satisfaction in the spectator's point of view.

The morning which had started so unbelievably dull and chilly was now getting unbelievably warm, as we skirted the flat shores of the great river or ran along leafy avenues. There was village after village to be traversed, name after name, all in the French vernacular, to be spelled—but not pronounced—there were sheep to be gazed at with curious eyes as the creatures stood yoked in couples in the fields, there were cramped legs to be stretched by a short, sharp constitutional,

and then at St. Sulpice, hard by the river, the inner gods to be appeased after the tonic air and sun.

St. Sulpice is but one of the minor towns of Johnnie Courteau's bringing up, modest and provincial, and furnishing very little at that hour for the human maw. Foraging in hidden bakeries and a delicatessen shop run to earth in a back alley, brought to light a sprat of a French youth who carved fearful-looking fragments of alimentation with a gigantic knife. We boldly consumed our plunder before a miscellaneous crowd of children attired in thin, bare legs and voluminous bow ties.

All the majesty and the glory had now disappeared from the scenery of the St. Lawrence. There was no loftier spectacle than the tall skeleton trelliswork of iron and wood which did duty as lighthouse to guide the steamer traffic across the river flats. The banks were low and monotonous all the way to Montreal, which we approached by a long, tree-shaded road. Before the office of *La Patrie* a press photographer cleared a ring in the crowd as one might mow a swath in grass, and insisted upon accomplishing a measure of fame for us by the exercise of his "black art." It was only three o'clock of a lovely afternoon, and there was plenty of time to see the sights *en automobile*, to drop in for a chat with the French-speaking Mayor, to settle comfortably at the lordly hotel, and after the sweet beguilings of tea and music, to steal out of the shadows of lobbies into the amber lights playing on Mount Royal. From that lofty eyrie, overlooking the stately St. Lawrence and the gorgeous

panorama of the settled plains and tinted skies, it was almost startling to recall the words of Voltaire when Montreal capitulated in 1760 to the English and the whole of the known Canada became a possession of the English crown.

“France and England are at war for several acres of snow and are spending on the fight more than the whole of Canada is worth. . . . The country is covered with snow and ice for eight months of the year and is inhabited by barbarians, bears and beavers.”

Montrealers will have plenty of opportunity for unique motoring, once their roads are brought up to automobilists' standards. About 160 miles away there is Mount Laurier, approached through a region of mountains, pleasant valleys and a vast tangle of lakes and streams which are among the best trout-fishing waters of America. In the wild heart of the region, of which the names recall the voyageur at every step, nature may be seen in all her unadorned grandeur, the Laurentians here affording an illimitable pleasure ground. It is a steep climb up the valley of the Riviere du Nord, the road ever twisting and turning with the sinuosities of the stream and ever opening new vistas of surprising scenic splendour. High hills rise on either side to the rocky summits, and from one point no less than eighteen lakes are in view. Where the Laurentians reach their greatest altitude is the pleasant village of St. Agatha des Monts on Des Sables Lake, destined to become the popular resort of Montrealers during the sweltering days of summer.

The tremendous stretch of new suburbs across

the Montreal plains has made sad havoc of the fine farming land and the rural thoroughfares through which we drove to the Ottawa River en route for the capital. Tall elms of the forked American variety, evidently bent on confusing the observer into a belief that there are more trees there than meet the eye, lined the roadways. There was a constant succession of homes and town after town followed in rapid sequence, to vanish at last before fields and woodlands and a gentle, shadowy veiled mist through which only the distant blue hills seemed to preserve any touch of reality in the delicate, gossamer scheme of creation.

On the outer edge of the Habitant country lay little Bord à Plouffe, hugging the banks of the beautiful Riviere des Prairies. Here Drummond listened to the quaint tales of backwoods life and wrote, "The Wreck of the Julie Plants," the herald of his future fame.

"I often think of the Bord à Plouffe days of 1869," he wrote in later life, "and the first time I saw the old place: and even yet memory can summon up the wild gladiators of the 'saw log' and 'square lumber' raft, and I can hear them sing, 'Trois beaux canards,' and 'Par derrière chez ma tante.'"

"Bord à Plouffe is on de reever,
Bord à Plouffe is on de shore,
An' de family of Plouffe dere all aroun'.
On some house dey got twenty,
On some house only ten.
But w'ere you get such girl
An' such fine young men?"

The unspoiled Habitant, with his double-decked barns and sloping runways to the



THE QUAIN, DOUBLE-DECKED BARNS

upper floor, his huge wooden threshing wheels, his wayside calvaries, and his quaint open-air ovens, will form some of the choicest souvenirs of a motor tour through Canada. In a sense he is of a type more unique and individual than is to be found anywhere else in Canada beside the highway, while the particular phase which he presents to the sympathetic observer from the tonneau makes for charitable tolerance and a readjustment of European standards regarding the conventional American pioneer.

As I bade farewell to the light-hearted, contented "Pierre and His People," I wondered how the Habitant—who appeared to have reached Finality—would compare with those new-comers, owners of the West which I was approaching, who will let neither mountain nor prairie sleep, who are alive with fundamental action, who cannot rest, who cannot wait.

CHAPTER V

THE day was dull but warm. The roads were in their worst, their most brutal mood—they were *macabe*. Before their grim realities of mud and rut, conversation was soon reduced to the bluntest of monosyllables. The way was soggy with constant rains, and one could easily imagine that the swallows had not only failed to make a summer, but had been compelled to fly so low as even to prefer walking.

As better roads had been promised on the Ontario shores of the broad Ottawa River, we steered a course close to the beautiful Lake of the Two Mountains in order to strike the river at the Carillon Ferry, and cross to Pointe Fortune. The stream swept nobly between forest-tipped promontories, bursting into a musical roar where the Rapids of Carillon filled the broad bed with long lines of foam-crested waves. Champlain had ascended to this point in canoes in 1613. He had the task of exploring the unknown river and of disproving a known liar—a lieutenant of his expedition whom he had despatched up the river a year or two before. The young man declared that he had followed its course to the northern seas.

The wonder is that Champlain should have discredited the story—not that the young man should have given circulation to it. The “Wild” has always had a strange tendency to tempt the white explorer to wander from the strict path of verbal rectitude. It is thus easy to imagine how the first travel story was invented. The certainty of not being contradicted in one’s data by contemporary observation galvanized the imagination of most early explorers, and spiced their versions with the qualities of genuine, hair-raising narrative. Thus, the Spanish soldier-pioneers in the American wilderness “discovered” Cities of Gold, nations of advanced civilization and untold wealth, and mountains shining with precious metals. They had tales of lands and physical marvels that far transcended all previous conception, that leaped stark out of the waters of everyday facts and set men breaking loose from human ties in quest of the fatuous creation of the Liar. The amber-coloured literature of the Seven Cities of Cibola and of the mystic Everglades proves that melancholy fact up to the hilt.

Had Champlain been born in our time, he would not have treated his lieutenant with such uncompromising harshness. The man who boldly sets forth to explore the fastnesses of the Rockies in search of “shining mountains,” or the fertile lands of the northern plains that will enrich his fellow-men, is usually rewarded by an implicit faith and trust which puts men like Champlain and Coronado to shame. Once they have returned to civilization, there is nothing too great to be done for them. Nor do we show the

unmitigated greed of the Spanish adventurers in demanding a whole city of glittering streets and golden walls. Let him but find a small hole in the ground filled with the precious metal, our gratitude knows no bounds. The story of the find is gratefully and eagerly read in thousands of homes and in many countries. Money pours in upon the promoter-discoverer. We deluge him with it. We steal for him. We sacrifice our happiness, and we risk our souls for him. Often we give up our life and the lives of some of our dear ones for him that the world shall not say that we are ungrateful.

A gasoline ferry boat, owned, engineered, and manned by a contemplative beetle-browed Scotchman with such deep-sunken shrewd blue eyes as to convey the alarming impression that he was doing the thinking for the entire country, awaited us at the crossing. After ripping the silence of the sleepy world with a shrill blast of the whistle, he put off leisurely into the current, head on to the distant rapids. Imminent and unavoidable destruction stared us in the face, but still the skipper thought on, his hoary, begrimed head sticking motionless out of the stoke-hole. One had the assurance that he was steering the ship by hard thinking, and that when the right moment came he would think a little harder in order to bring her round and swing her inshore on the strong current.

And that is exactly what did happen.

A curious little bob-tailed motor-car, which had disputed places on the ferry with us, and a frisky, fly-blown horse, essayed to make the

amende honorable by striking up an acquaintance with the dignified, lordly-looking transcontinental car. Its occupants were hatless and coatless, and, in company with a mysterious flask of handy proportions, were having a hilarious time. How long we might have been able to resist the demoralizing temptations and inuendoes directed at us from the tonneau of that disreputable-looking car I do not know. We gave it no encouragement in its advances, and, no sooner landed and cranked up, it happily shot off like a streak westward and disappeared down the road.

Our way traversed a pretty farming country. But the livestock of the farms was mostly in the centre of the road. It awaited our coming and necessitated a great deal of skilful manœuvring to avoid self-immolation by chickens, dogs, and ducks, and much descriptive phraseology, for humane reasons, from the irate driver. One lonely chick paid the death penalty for hugging shelter in a rut; a hen crawled away with a sickening, sidelong lurch; a valuable collie dog, hurling itself with fury at the revolving wheels, was caught by an incautious foot and maimed; another charging dog screamed with rage when axle and pan passed over his rolling form as a hurricane over grass; and still another limped away yelping. Now and again, however, one's faith in the Road God, lost for the moment, would come joyously back as a dog, rushing along in a parallel course with our flight, challenged us to a race until the indicator of the speedometer was somewhere among the thirties. Then, caught by a stump or other obstruction, a

sudden somersault would arrest his mad career, and he would make his way back, crestfallen. Desire for a race is the real key to the challenge of the idle road dog in nine cases out of ten, and his apparently fierce rage at the swiftly-revolving wheel is only a canine way of telling us what a true sportsman he is.

Horses, however, showed their familiar tendency to treat us as enemies of their race, and one, big of bone and doubtful of temper, caused all but one of the women occupants of a passing buggy to scramble down to safety. We alighted, stopped the engines, apologized, offered to lead the animal past. But the heroine of the reins boldly declined the offer, and the next moment she lay against a big boulder in the grassy ditch with wild beseeching eyes and blanched cheeks.

For a moment we had visions of a tragedy of the road for which we might be held responsible by the men who hurried to the scene from near-by fields. However, All's well that ends well! The woman, in spite of her pain, exonerated the anxious motorists from all blame, and we left her and her companions to the care of the sympathetic farmers.

The flatness of the country and the sandy nature of the road-bed showed that we were crossing land which had once formed the broad flats of the river, though the Ottawa was no longer in sight. The sand, while it assured us dry-going, gave a constant swaying to the car that was by no means diverting. The motion was ridiculous and it made one feel strangely

helpless and hapless. No matter how fast or how slowly the machine moved, the swaying and jiggling were ever there, to spoil a sentence, and finally to render any form of thinking a severe mental effort. One felt like getting out, searching for the demon of mischief which had "possessed" the sand and then mercilessly laying him out flat under the wheels. But the fatuous impulse to destroy intangible things merely indicated the lamentable mental state to which an hour or so of such unearthly locomotion can reduce one.

When sanity and good roads returned, the sun was dead ahead, flashing on the glass of the wind-shield, shining like copper on the roadway, and so dazzling the eyes as to make steering difficult. We scouted for shelter and found it in welcome abundance whenever the road traversed long patches of woodland. In one of these shady stretches, we came to the one-thousandth "milestone" of the tour, but this statement must by no means be taken literally since we had to trust to the odometer for the mileage record. Milestones in fact had been conspicuous by their absence. A mile in Canada is never officially recorded by the roadside; hence its length varies, depending upon the imagination of the inhabitants for approximate accuracy. *Æsop's* conception that the time it would take to cover a certain distance between two points is conditional upon the speed at which one walks, is not by any means applicable in Canada, as I found to my cost. Men were neither able to judge accurately of motor speeds nor of geographical distances. In the farmers'

and storekeepers' judgments of a mile, there was as much variation as there is between an English and a German mile. "A mile further on" would sometimes mean "five miles," and "five miles" might mean "ten" or perhaps "three." The odometer, in fact, showed that nine people out of ten of whom we inquired the way, were hopelessly at sixes and sevens on distance. This had been especially true of the French communities, of which we had now begun to lose sight, although the presence of Catholic churches suggested a countryside once populated by the French-Canadian who had fled before a British invasion.

At some early hour in the afternoon we had passed the occupants of the bob-tailed car discussing the contents of the aromatic flask by the roadside, with impromptu luncheon-tables devised out of tonneau cushion and suit-case. Of course we sped by with the sense of embarrassment which seizes the luckless caller at meal times. By what devious or direct route they managed to travel, after their *al fresco* meal had been consumed, and got ahead of us is not quite clear. Issuing from out a ganglionic tangle of bypaths into the broad stream of the main highway was the bob-tailed car's unmistakable spoor. Fate would have it, too, that we should run the disreputable-looking creature to earth at some confusing cross-roads. A broad grin of triumph played about the features of the driver when we asked him for directions. We tried to look supremely indifferent, but as we moved off one of the men called out—

"By the way, was you the fellers that run down the woman back there on the road?"

Frigid silence for a moment or two. Then, casually—

“Why?”

“Becoz if you was, they tried to put the thing on to us and have our scalps. So we quit, and we’re quittin’ still.”

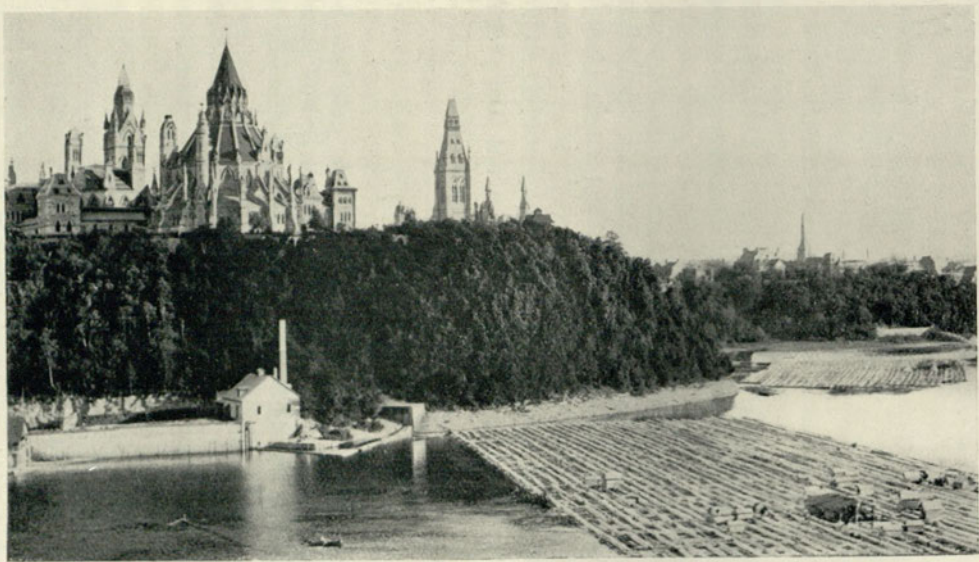
And the fly-blown car, not sure yet of being in sanctuary, shot off again.

Our haven appeared at last at the end of a good broad earth road, a breeze from the east bowling us along to the Capital with the sensation of all sails being spread to the wind.

Ottawa, the obscure village of a few years ago, and now an apparently endless maze of brick and stone, of railroad tracks, of public buildings and shops, was enthroned above the crags of a gloriously picturesque river. One instinctively compared it with Washington or with London, only to be baffled in the attempt to find an analogy. Perhaps the comparison with Buda Pesth is nearer the mark. The Canadian Houses of Parliament which dominate Ottawa, have that touch of the wild and barbaric in their architectural composition which lends a distinctive note to the Hungarian pile. In both buildings there is a suggestion of the bizarre, of a foundation upon rude beginnings by a race grown from childhood through strenuous ways to greatness. Ottawa is neither fish, flesh, fowl nor bone, but it is compounded of all four. It is neither a mean nor a great city. At one moment you seem to be standing in the heart of a metropolis, at another to be looking at a second-rate provincial town. But it has tremendous standards

to live up to ; you feel at every turn that it is trying to be equal to the destiny of which it is so conscious. The new hotel which received me under its palatial roof, named after one of the makers of modern Canada, was not a hotel in the ordinary acceptation of the term. It was a great city adornment ; it was a national, if not an imperial achievement. Close by were shops which for smartness would sit well on Fifth Avenue or in Piccadilly, but they were essentially the product of a well-understood and easily recognized commercial spirit. But, compared with them, the hotel was a monument which, look at it in any way you pleased, seemed to proclaim that the Canada of to-day would be the nation of to-morrow.

A plain and unpretentious road takes the motorist a short distance out of Ottawa along the water's edge to a rather ordinary-looking private estate, with a long driveway through an avenue of maples to the modest-looking home of the man who nominally stands at the head of the country in the name of King and Empire—the Governor-General. One is instantly attracted by the simplicity and the appropriateness of the setting. Rideau Hall hovers over the city—it is not within its gates. It is a gentleman's country estate, such as I had seen at Quebec. Doubtless conscious of its significance, it leaves the limelight and the glory for the country whose destinies it is beneficently watching and guarding. But to those who have eyes to see, England is unmistakably incorporated in those few acres—the England, I mean, of homes and family life, of



OTTAWA HAS TREMENDOUS STANDARDS TO LIVE UP TO

hospitality and sane living, the England whose tables groan under the produce of her industrious children, who beautifies her homes with gardens and parks, and who with her marvellous genius for landscape effect, can turn an entire country into a lordly domain and touch it into beauty until it is drenched and drugged and a-drunk with it.

Rideau Hall stands alone in the heart of Canada as an expression of that proverbial home-love of the Englishman ! But the Hall typifies also that fatal gift of beauty which has contributed towards England's industrial undoing, which has taken the land of her yeomen, the fields of the husbandmen, the pastures of the shepherd, the lanes of the country-folk, the hedges and the trees, the woods and the coppice, the waving fields of wheat, the lowly villages and the public commons, and, in the taking of them that they might be transmuted into loveliness by the fairy wand, has forgotten man and his needs, his birthright in the soil, his duty to till and to own it ! England has driven her disinherited, disillusionized, pauper sons to the city from the land that was theirs by the right of God, that the property of the Many may be held by the Few, and become the playground of the unproductive Rich !

But out of the wreck of the island nation have sprung the transformed colonies—the Dominions. Out of the hydra-headed evil has come the good which is to see the disinherited in possession of their own again. Canada, one of the God-sent preservers of the race, is an evidence that England is alive to the dangers which she has voluntarily

brought upon herself, is an integral part of a beneficent scheme of Providence which is to save England from a well-deserved fate ere it is too late. The feudal system of the French-Canadian swept away, a never-ending army of men is sweeping through the wide-open portals of freedom back to the land of their inalienable birthright.

If the city and all that it stands for has a fascinating interest for the motorist, a run along the river shores to the Falls of Chaudiere, and the huge lumber mills which make up the picturesque life of the Ottawa, will hold him in a spell of enchantment. Here one comes into intimate touch with the life of the lumber-jack and gazes upon the gigantic log booms and rafts which have brought the spoils of the forest to their last resting-place. The mills buzz day and night in an apparently frantic desire to reduce the giants of the woods to things of every-day utility. Those logs have reached the saw mills as if by a miracle. Driving logs is an arduous and dangerous occupation, and a lumber-jack must be able to navigate them as if he were guiding a canoe, while all around him there may be hundreds of tumbling, scrambling tree trunks tearing in open revolution a passage for themselves, fighting and swirling, rushing and halting, twisting and squirming, smashing and grinding, jamming and ramming and cleaving a way for themselves in the angry current to their shambles, while the waters exultingly bear the mighty giants to their ignominious doom.

One pictures, in fascinated horror, that warfare of the waters and the forest—the forest,

doomed, putting up a majestic chaotic fight, not for liberty, not for restoration to the primeval glades, but for the sake of that spirit which we recognize in men as "dying hard." They call for no quarter and give none. One pictures, too, those crises in the life of the lumber-jack when the whole mass of floating logs has turned side on to the stream against a sullen rock, and he must get in among them and at the risk of his life release the key-log with his cant-hook. There must be moments in his life when even he is appalled by the great swelling noises of the fiends of wood and gorge and canyon and cataract, when he and his fellow-jacks have wantonly cast all the worst forces of Hell together; when death comes bearing relentlessly down upon him in the surging, tumbling, roaring billows and there is no apparent avenue of escape.

The saw mills set up a scene of lively human activity. Logs were being hauled up to their death out of the mill pond along an inclined plane, and inside a gang-saw rushed back and forth at them as they fell into place by means of huge hooks instinct with the judgment and niceties of the human hand. The eye was riveted with horror by that deadly gang-saw. In it was concentrated the evil genius of the place. It was the ultimate expression of the civilization which had invaded and doomed the forest. Remorseless in its ceaseless butchery, the stately tree became twain, became quadrupled, and then, losing all character and relationship to the primeval forest, was flung aside as boards,

as planks, as sawn timber. The long edgings of the boards were thrust down a hopper as fast as cut off and, ignominiously ground up, their existence came to an end. And all the time, there was an incessant clamour and cry, a shrill hissing note, piercing the diapason of the saws.

The huge hotel was almost empty at this season. But Parliament was not in session, otherwise the noble entrance lobby would have been filled with Fashion and chattering groups of Parliamentarians discussing in French and English over fragrant Havanas the merits and demerits of Borden's Imperial Policy or the rights and wrongs of Reciprocity.

Late that afternoon I strolled into the hotel tea-room and ordered tea from a daintily-aproned maid. Two young ladies, with large picture hats, Empire walking dresses low at the throat, and feather boas thrown back on their shoulders, sat at an adjoining table, exchanging confidences with each other and with fearfully and wonderfully named American ice-creams.

Tea arrived, accompanied by a filmy row of all but invisible slices of bread-and-butter. I looked quizzically at the liquid in my cup as I set down the teapot. Then I tasted it.

"Pardon me, is this tea?" I asked gently, not wishing to hurt the feelings of the maid.

"Yes!" There was plenty of confidence in the voice. Not an eyelash wavered.

"Ah!"

A pause. "Pardon me, did I understand you aright? This is tea?"

"Certainly! You ordered tea."

"I thought perhaps I had made a mistake—that perhaps I had ordered—er—something else."

"No, sir!"

"Ah! Then if this is tea, will you be so kind as to bring me some coffee?"

"We can't exchange it now that you have been drinking it."

"Of course not. But never mind" (this magnanimously): "charge it to me, and let me have some coffee."

"Very well."

In due season the coffee appeared. I tasted it.

"Pardon me!"

The maid turned again with a bored expression.

"Is this coffee?"

"Certainly." She bit her lip in an effort to disguise her impatience.

A pause, in which I tasted the concoction again cautiously. Then, "Excuse me, did I understand aright? This is coffee?"

"You ordered coffee."

"Yes! And I ordered tea, but it wasn't tea, any more than this is coffee. I believe I'll have the tea back. Or—no! Bring me nothing at all, and I'll pay for it. You needn't complain to the cook. There's been some terrible mistake. No, no! I won't take chocolate—only the bill. But I'd like to know what trade the cook has hitherto followed, or whether they run a drug-store in the kitchen, or boil the fish in the tea-kettles, or what. For you've surely been giving a close imitation of cod-liver oil instead of coffee or tea."

In the restaurant I incautiously drank some of the table water. I got as far with the waiter

as "Excuse me, is this water?" and then cut things short and walked out to try another restaurant. I vowed I wouldn't touch water and ordered soup. The first spoonful arrested me. I refused to ask if it were soup, but called the head-waiter, apologized, said I'd made a mistake, paid the bill, walked out and stopped a policeman and asked him what in the name of thunder was the matter with Ottawa.

The policeman eyed me knowingly with the look of a man who had sized up the situation, then sniffed.

"You've been drinking the water, haven't you?" He seemed to be glaring angrily, reproachfully, at me.

"Yes—at least—coffee—tea—soup——"

The man nodded significantly and drew out his note-book. "Here, take this card, which admits you for free treatment at the expense of the city till cured. You smell, sir, most objectionably of chloride of lime. It's most fortunate that you did not arrive to-morrow instead of to-day."

"Why?"

"Because to-morrow the by-law comes into force whereby any one drinking or bathing in Ottawa water for the next two years, or giving or causing to be given Ottawa water, will be liable to the extreme penalty of the law. You have only escaped imprisonment by the skin of your teeth. I must take your name and address, and you must then come along with me to the City Hall, where you will have to take an oath pledging yourself not to say anything of what has happened to you in Ottawa."

"But the water?"

"Oh! That's tainted. Fact is they've got the sewage mixed up with it, and we've lost quite a 'bunch' of the population. We're hoping to get the whip hand over it by treating the water with chloride of lime! You'll be well cared for, sir, in the hospital."

CHAPTER VII

THANKS to the Bay of Fundy and the Forty-Ninth Parallel, I had been unable to take a direct westerly course except during the run between Montreal and Ottawa. I now found that I could not get to Lake Superior and the Prairies except by proceeding south to Lake Ontario. To reach the point nearest Lake Superior where I could again turn westward, I must dip down and curve up, following the course of a letter U. At the end of the U lay North Bay. After reaching that point, my route would depend upon the final advices of local road authorities.

A two days' run from the Capital to Toronto took us through a prosperous farming region. There was almost no uncleared land, but there were hedges and small gardens to give the big farm houses and barns a picturesque setting, ruddy-faced children, ruddy-faced men and women milking black and white cows, roadside platforms on which stood milk-cans ready for the market, wells from which water was drawn by weighted beams—the "shaduf" of Egypt and Biblical days—huge steel-frame wind-mills for pumping, and fine, straight macadam and dirt roads bordered with green grass, short and

even as a lawn. Wherever there was a particularly good road or bridge, however, one had to pay toll, sometimes as much as twenty-five cents. It would have been only fair had the authorities in their turn paid us whenever we had to travel a bad stretch of highway. But they never did. Instead, on one occasion, the absence of a bridge caused us to wallow through yards of mud and water and to almost break the car in deep ruts, from which we finally escaped with the aid of mud-hooks—a diabolical contrivance attached to the rear wheels whereby the machine jerked itself violently to safety.

As in France, much of the landscape was festooned by the plume-like Lombardy poplars. In the hedges golden rod with its long yellow tassels, corn flower, and Joe Pie plant were universal.

“The golden rod is yellow,
The corn is turning brown ;
The trees in apple orchards
With fruit are bending down ;”

hummed the chauffeur, unearthing from his memory a snatch of an old school ditty.

Close to Kingston, I caught my first glimpse of that picturesque touring ground of the Yankee and Canadian, the Thousand Islands of the St. Lawrence. According to a legend of the Algonquins and the Iroquois, the Garden of Eden, after the Expulsion, was borne away by white-winged angels to the eternal spheres, and in transit the most exquisite flowers fluttered down to lie on the blue waters of Lake Ontario. The more prosaic white man has named these floating

island-flowers after his own fashion : "Three Brothers," "Three Sisters," "Whiskey Island," and the like. Some of the sixteen hundred and ninety-two are mere tufts of rock and vegetation. Others are devoid of all growth and too small to be dignified by name. Many have never been tamed or currycombed, but bristle with firs and pines. Others spread out into broad, cultivated acres, and many belong to individual farmers who are lords of all they survey. Handsome residences abound, occasionally little bridges connect the buttressed banks of the islets, and large wooden caravanserais—the flimsy American type of hotel, with broad verandahs and steep, American prices—appear at every turn of these wooded and cool, crystalline water-ways.

Famous historical highways, associated more or less with the incidents of the war of 1812, brought us to Toronto in heat and sunshine—an atmosphere echoed in the heartiness of its welcome.

Torontians—or Toronters—are fond of calling their city the Boston of Canada, offering its chastening graces to Montreal or Winnipeg. Its advantages and its examples are fortuitous and casual, arising mainly out of the accident of topography, which has placed it where it catches every breeze that blows out of the intellectual world, every prima donna who sings in New York or Chicago, every impresario and piano prodigy, and all the tourist hordes of Niagara and the Lakes. English theatrical companies, starring in America, find it easy to give in Toronto a one-night stand or a week's repertory

from Buffalo, while European lecturers can no more escape Toronto than can Toronto escape Lake Ontario. Montreal catches only the driftwood, though it be the premier city of Canada; Ottawa and Quebec languish more or less in Cinderella neglect. Hence, Toronto's day-dreams of distinction; hence, its clubs and its cosmopolitan crowds; its affable tolerance of genius, art, and architecture! Hence its glittering white skyscrapers that are beginning to make a respectable showing from the water-front! Hence its fine self-approval and its flattering discovery of that wonderful thing—*itself!*—which it has been able to conjure out of a once unhealthy marsh.

“It lies too low—just where a city should never have been built,” a prominent architect confided to me sadly at the Arts and Letters Club over an excellent home-cooked club luncheon.

“His minor key is a tribute to the rheumatism which is the price of his hours in the city office,” explained the third member of the party, a Toronto editor, in a stage aside.

“It is wonderful what a few days in the country will do for a Toronter, however,” said the architect, falling into the trap. “The wilderness is so close that we can easily get out into that world of freedom and the sunshine of the hill-tops. Even England may envy us a dog, a gun, and a canoe in the primitive wild.”

Toronto was a delight and a puzzle. Some people term it a western city, but there are others who class it as of the east easterly. Does it not

reckon in cents, a thing no western city has ever been known to do? Do not its people use street cars instead of walking? Is it not a city of brick rather than of wood? All these, perhaps, are incontrovertible proofs to some of its eastern character. But over and above them there are the hundred and one familiar signs, reminiscent of New York or of London, which are constantly recurring to the traveller. The man who held up my car on the street corners was the London "bobby," regulating traffic in London style—helmeted, chin-strapped, silent, tall and clean-cut. Though he wore a thin, red stripe down his trouser legs and had neat American boots instead of the clumsy Blücher, it was the same man who holds up an avalanche of motor 'buses and cabs at the Mansion House, the same obliging servant of the public and well-ordered cog in the machinery of civic life. There were American popular restaurants and there were the American street cars modified only by the practical "Pay-as-you-enter" system peculiar to Canada. There were English waiters in the big hotels, which were otherwise run on exactly the same system as obtains at New York. There were New York stores with Britons managing them. The transported Briton was everywhere, but with much of his identity lost, working as porter, serving me my cigars, my newspapers, selling me my cravats, cleaning out the stores, driving the motor cars and doing the clerical work. But the Englishwoman had scarcely a place in Toronto life. In her place stood a woman more or less a counterpart of the Eternal Feminine over the boundary line

—a white-shirt waisted, bargain-counter haunting, street-car patronizing, hurrying, well-developed, non-sentimentalizing Anglo-Canadian blend of womanhood. Well-dressed, with some of the Englishwoman's colouring and little of her tender voice, placing emphasis rather on good taste and good manners than on delicate shades of refinement, there she was, not a creature of fine bouquet, not a devotee of the outdoor life, but well-set-up and with so much gained to compensate her for the little that she had lost.

Here for the first time one observed those subtle changes which are wrought by environment in giving birth to a new nationality out of the remnants of the old. Before my eyes there was being enacted the supreme tragedy of the passing of a race, long familiar to me by kinship, and its recreation into a type that was all but unrecognizable. The life of Toronto thus became a show of surpassing interest, calling me again and again into the highways and byways that I might watch once more the motley cosmopolitanism which made up the manners, dress, art and everyday occupations and habits of the citizen.

The regulation of the traffic in each of the Canadian cities through which I had passed varied according to the Province. In the Maritime Provinces the general rule had been to drive to the left; in Quebec we had several narrow escapes from accident owing to the change from left to right. We had no sooner accustomed ourselves to this Continental method than we heard that a change would be necessary out West, where British Columbia, with true fidelity to the rule of

the road of the Mother Country, still drives to the left. Italy, owing to the former existence of the Papal States, has a similar confusion of left and right-hand driving. That Canada has not one uniform law concerning this important matter astonished me. Here is surely a subject for immediate attention of the Dominion Government. Whichever method of driving is adopted does not matter so long as uniformity is secured. The position of the driver's seat on the right-hand side of a vehicle will, no doubt, create an overwhelming weight of opinion in favour of left-hand passing. The driver can thus accurately measure the amount of his clearance when passing another vehicle coming in the opposite direction, and after all, perhaps, the common-sense of our forefathers, both pedestrian and equestrian, ought to be taken into consideration before Canadians commit themselves one way or the other. With them the man who passed to the left had his right hand free to shake the right hand of the other without turning, while his sword hilt could not be grabbed by a possible opponent. To-day left-hand passing has fewer advocates than the rival method, but there is certainly a preponderance of common-sense and practicality in its favour as much as there ever was.

At the busy cross-streets it was usual to signal to the policeman which way you intended to turn, whereupon he would wave you "All Right." As a rule one had to pull up at the kerb headed in the direction of the traffic. Cutting in without turning was not allowed. Thus all standing vehicles faced one way, and not both ways as in

London. To turn, we were usually obliged to go to the end of the block, that is, to the next street corner ahead. It was also forbidden in certain towns to pass a street car when it had drawn up to let passengers alight, to use the big acetylene lamps or to blow other than the bulb horn. Of course there were exceptions to these rules, and various minor regulations have escaped me. "Smoking" of the exhaust and the use of the open muffler, which might have been tabooed as intolerable nuisances, were in most towns passed over. But on the whole, there was a marked tendency in Canada to inflict all kinds of penalties for street nuisances. On the bridges were the warning signs: "Not faster than a walk or \$100 fine!" or "Walk across or \$25 fine!" and so on. Some of these model bridges were new, and it seemed odd to find them plastered with warnings tacitly implicating the country in a policy of fragile bridge construction obviously inadequate and dangerous when utilized for existing traffic needs.

Toronto proved an ideal resting-place in preparation for the wilderness which awaited me to the north of the Muskoka Lakes. Over the post-prandial coffee and cigars the hours slipped pleasantly by in congenial chat with fellow motorists, while the daytime had its equally congenial tasks in calls upon the Mayor and the government officials. Yet I was not loath to leave behind me the crowded city ways and give ear to the call of that west whose verge was still hundreds of miles away. Moreover, Toronto, like Ottawa and Montreal, had for some reason,

which at first was not clear, proved disappointing. Gradually it dawned upon me that I was still seeing Canada as it had presented itself to me years before out of the vague pages of my childhood school-books.

That had been a cold, bleak Canada of snows and ice palaces and grim, frozen dwellings. Issuing from them were strange, ruddy beings enveloped in woollen sweaters, woollen night-caps, woollen knickerbockers, woollen leggings and woollen shoes to which were hanging huge, basket-like soles. Apparently they had no fires, and wore these woollens by day and slept in them by night, because the country was so cold, and because the woollens were striped in colours and were very pretty. The people had smoky breaths, and they were always pouring out something hot to drink, or they were picking up big handfuls of snow and madly rubbing each others noses or ears with it when they quarrelled. They never walked singly or in rows, but always in files, which would wind out of one front door of the frozen houses and along the street and over the nearest snow hill and then through the tall firs back to the front door again, each member of the file wearing queer web-footed things like lawn-tennis racquets. When a woman wanted to go shopping she put on the racquets, went to the door, and took her place in the long line of women all attired in the same night-caps and all bent upon shopping at the identical moment. I could see the whole of that procession in the pictures marching down the street, swerving at the corners, bending on itself, crossing and

recrossing, echeloning, right-about-turning, twisting and reversing, never getting tangled with any other procession, and all keeping step and all looking straight at me out of the picture. That was the strange thing about these people, that they never looked at any one else but me, just as though they were asking my approval and nothing else mattered. They all had exactly the same kind of features. I tried to find an ugly or a thin person, or one that had different coloured hair from the rest. But in vain. They were all very handsome, and all had jet-black hair, and all were of the same height and weight. At night they carried torches, and then one would see, in addition to the files of men and women, long processions of sleighs with horses covered with bells and plumes. But nobody ever seemed to go to the theatre or the churches or the spelling-bees of those days or the saloons—only to the forest.

By-and-bye I saw a theatrical poster on a wall in my native city displaying an ice palace built like a feudal castle with a long file of bewoollened men and women on the battlements and winding down through the front portal and under the portcullis and over the drawbridge and across the middle distance until it suddenly ended in a man, as large as life with steaming breath and handsome clean-shaven face, looking at me. There were skates on his feet instead of racquets.

It was the Canadian champion ice-skater!

Cautiously, hesitatingly, I crept to the upper balcony of that theatre. I was glad I was going up high where the lights were usually low—

otherwise I scarcely knew how I should ever face those myriad eyes—all probably fixed upon me and nobody else.

Then came the cold, stark truth and disillusionment, as the music started and the curtain was rung up and I saw the painted ice palace and—only one skater, dressed, not in the striped woollens, but in black tights and a round pork-pie cap, and looking anywhere but at me!

The country that had glowed so strangely in the real world of my childhood was just like other countries. The human figurines in it were playing the same parts and “making up” for them in exactly the same manner as they had done elsewhere.

Perhaps there is some very real compensation awaiting us in old age for these disillusionments, if we only know how to find and to utilize it. The strenuous, care-laden life which has passed between our childhood and our advanced years may, perhaps, be made to fall away, and we may be conscious of no break between the Alpha and Omega of our existence. Once more we may be able to travel—perhaps motor—through Child Land, and enjoy again the primal simplicity and naïvete of that fairy world of wonder and illusion.

Leaving Toronto, we passed through a country that slowly transformed itself from a landscape dotted with manufacturing towns, and threaded by fine roads, to a pastoral and rocky one. Then the wild came, all but unheralded. Before it the fields fled, and where only a moment before one had looked upon farm houses and villas by placid Lake Simcoe, the narrow road had now

all it could do to force its way by sinuous twists and turns between the barren, rugged hillsides. Snappy, hilarious work to penetrate the lanes of bush and hemlock and tender birch! All but impossible to dodge the huge boulders which formed an integral part of the road—the heralds of the country of the Great Lakes, sending out skirmishers of muskeg and primeval forest and towering cliff.

It was the first whiff of that great lone tract which ends only in the region of eternal ice.

Gravenhurst, the stopping-place for the night, was found by the light of the moon—a little back-room restaurant by the fitful glow of a dispirited lamp shining through a doorway. Here flies swarmed over rude culinary treasures which tasted good and had primal savours. The coffee was all but ambrosial as it reached the long-denied palate, though it would doubtless be anathema to mortals tied to the home fireside and its finicky notions. There was the tang of pine in the outside air, penetrating even the mustiness of the sorry-looking hotel where rough men sat round stoves, as Indians used to crouch round wigwam fires, and talked volubly of the Muskoka Lakes and the piloting of coasting boats through difficult channels and the sluggish watercourses of the bayous. The main street was sandy, as though a river had run dry there and its bed had been seized upon by the civic fathers and ingloriously put to man's use.

Daylight revealed a prosaic little town modestly dominated by a church tower, dominated in its turn by a huge, inornate water-tank bent on proving the triumph of the Material over the

Spiritual. Brick had practically ousted wood from the street—a wonderful evidence of active sub-consciousness which brought the little town a thousand miles nearer civilization than one would have suspected. In pursuance of the pleasant fiction of metropolitan importance, a huge tree-trunk before a watch-maker's was surmounted by a gigantic watch whose painted face for some years had assured the passer-by that it was continually the hour for five o'clock tea in a community quite indifferent to such beguilements. The hardware store was indicated by a huge circular saw and littered with barbed wire fencing. Close by was the town bank, decorated with flower window-boxes and gay awnings, and topped by a balcony—a sure proof of its cosmopolitan origin. Poplars waved their tall plumes in double lines along the street as far as the contiguous forest of frail young birch and fir, and a cow fed industriously on broad spaces of grass, fringed by aspen and maple gorgeous in autumn crimson.

Armed with shovel, hammer, axe and tackle, purchased at the hardware store, as a precautionary tribute to the wilderness ahead, we threaded the wide sandy roads into open spaces where Fire had cut ominous swaths of Death through the forest. Nothing but gaunt, black stumps remained, but these were now ornamented with startling, many-hued posters which announced: "Jones' Emporium for Fashionable Goods!" or "Splendid display of natty Ladies' Hosiery!" How insolent seemed this puny self-importance of the merchant of small wares!

No car could preserve its sweetness of temper on these Mid-Ontarian grades. Our own particular machine showed ill-humour whenever her front paws struck the steep pitches. She growled and gave out little snappy, short barks, forcing us to get down and adjust the carburettor to the new altitudes. Forewarned, we had armed ourselves with a handy compression pump directly attached to the petrol tank under the seat. Compression meant more climbing power, and affected her as oxygen does the athlete.

Stones, immodest of bulk and sharp of facets, strewed themselves carelessly about the hills in mistaken conception of their proper place in the scheme of creation. Flies became assiduous in their attentions. But always overhead spread a glorious blue sky, and always around, until one was fairly bathed in it, floated the tonic aroma of pine. A few deserted houses, fallen into sympathetic decay with the road, set the seal on my growing conviction that I had missed the "turning." However, the sun showed that we were navigating due north, and eighty-five miles away North Bay must lie directly in our path.

The road had all but disappeared in a tangle of undergrowth. One had a curious feeling of wandering helplessly without any prospect of reaching a goal. Disaster of some kind seemed imminent.

As we rocked and plunged along the stony path, a human settlement appeared in a dip below. Novar! A ribbon of road ran to meet it from somewhere to the rear. We should have passed through Novar—have hugged life and not this desolation.

The path was crowded with stumps of trees. One solitary giant still spread its branches and we ate our long-delayed meal underneath it. A scrawny farm woman, with untidy children at her skirts, came to offer milk amazingly unfresh in view of the presence of a herd of cows. A sturdy-looking man, evidently her life consort, took distant stock of us from over the farm fence. Upon solicitation, he assured me that I was on the right road. He talked of the land. It would grow almost anything except wheat! His crop, so far as I could judge, did not look any more encouraging than the trail, but I had no wish to destroy his faith—in his livelihood at least—and I returned to the shady retreat of the tree and to some confection of raisin and honey cakes which the chauffeur had scraped together from Heaven knows where.

A hill rose immediately beyond an unprotected railroad crossing and dropped off raggedly at the sides into pit-falls and sand-pockets, and crept reluctantly up to grassy turfs in astonishingly irresponsible fashion. We struck a wallow of deep, tractionless stuff between the innocently tempting heap of sand at the foot and on the crest. Wheels dropped to axle-level and motion to stagnation. There was nothing to do but to try and rush the ascent. But the hill was too wary to be caught off its guard. We retired ignominiously to the foot again. The car made the rush once more—airily, jauntily. It stuck again, and backing dispiritedly, slipped into a fiendish pocket that made a lateral gully at right angles to the line of the hill. We were



HER SPIRIT WAS BROKEN AT LAST : SHE ADMITTED DEFEAT

caught like a fly in the tangle of a spider's web.

This storming of a sand redoubt by a thing of steel and horse-power is something to wonder at and admire. The creature charges joyously, terrible to behold, shattering the great silences of the wilderness with its battery of guns, raging and storming, groaning, moaning, then roaring and whirling again. The sand flies from her rear as from the mighty back kick of an ostrich leg. But her spirit is broken at last. The wheels spin on the same spot in frantic, static dynamics. A tremor only runs through her frame and she ceases to roar impotent defiance. She admits defeat. The silence is piteous, primitive. Only horses can now bring life to the useless, motionless mechanism.

And it was the big brawny horses of M——, a singularly taciturn Irish farmer on the hill, that finally jerked our transcontinental car out of that pot-hole of sand. Alas for the strength of those well-meaning beasts! The jerk was all but a death-blow. The steel driving-shaft was hopelessly twisted; and coaxingly, slowly, crawling inch by inch, we pulled her into hospital beneath a crazy shed roof.

CHAPTER VIII

SCOTIA Junction was a geographical expression set down promiscuously and irrelevantly in a swamp in the heart of Ontario—a station at which two railroads, crossing at right angles, pointed to the four points of the compass—a little wooden hotel—a scattered farm or two—and a great ghost of an abandoned wooden boarding-house whose skeleton frame, looming through the gloomy silence, hinted at the strange futility of certain badly calculated human hopes.

Toronto was less than two hundred miles to the south; less than a hundred separated me from North Bay. Yet how far off did both seem! As for Vancouver, it was unthinkable—another sphere!

Scotia Junction was the end of the world.

Black suspicion, misgiving, doubt were now the new members of the party. Ahead lay only the dismal prospects of watching life drag slowly on in this forsaken spot for the next few days, while the surgical operation was performed which would replace the old and useless organ of the unfortunate car.

It was a fitting spot in which to effectively hide the ignominy of disaster; but one would

have preferred companionship in congested ways, or the enchantment of the broad St. Lawrence, or the roar of belligerent seas—anything but this Sybil silence of dreary flats, a hush broken only by the raucous grinding of metallic wheels and the wheezy cough of aggressive locomotives.

Some day one will dress for dinner in the future city by the swamp. But now the moose takes a look at the railroad from the tamaracs on the high slopes. The beaver persists in building his dam as if the Indian were still lord of the waste places and hunter of pelt. He and the moose, the chokeberry and the wild raspberry, seem as permanent as the hills.

Hours of watching the glistening lines of steel playing at the game of vanishing points in four directions! Hours of gazing at the thin fringe of tamaracs! The chauffeur wandered about vaguely, moodily seeking his kind and moaning inwardly for a taste of civilization and its dissipations. Pastimes were soon exhausted. A brief exchange of amity with the shirt-sleeved telegraph clerk, a little international comity with the Yankee bar-tender, porter and housemaid combined in the person of a callow youth, and recreation began to pall. At the back of the house the man of "chores" (Canadian for odd jobs), groped about in a wooden ice house amid a quantity of saw-dust, that looked suspiciously like dirty bran-mash, for the rapidly vanishing last year's ice. Here was an exhilarating find! I vowed I would not be bored; that instead of abusing the Fates, I would pray for their beatification. Had not Providence designedly provided

me with this Diogenes tub for the purpose of philosophic contemplation?

And philosophy presently did grace the scene, in the shape of a stout, cheery party with bright hair—a woman of common-sense in that senseless wilderness. She was in charge of this little white caravanserai by the side of the dark railroad station, and she detailed, in matter of fact tones, its history, the monotonous round of regularly arriving and departing trains, and the hungry, scrambling passengers who trooped into the dining-room or perched modestly at the lunch counter, only to vanish at the command of the clanging bell and leave the Swamp more dead than before. She proudly pointed to the little patch of green grass decorated with portable shrubs and a neat fence, and explained how she had laboriously won it from the wild, even while she looked eagerly forward to the day when Toronto should again claim her as its own. But success had been her misfortune. Her husband had “made” the place; the meals were good, the rooms clean, and the “management” was so well pleased that the request for transference had been politely but firmly declined.

“But failure,” I said, with a deft back-cast at consolation, “would have meant worse things than this, perhaps.”

She nodded assent. But I fancied her real consolation lay in the unconscious obedience to certain spiritual laws which demand unselfishness, integrity and fidelity to the ideal of duty. She had contrived to surround herself with flowers—geraniums that trailed from their boxes, fastidious

poppies that had tired of a summer's labour and had run to seed. Is it so small a life-work to make even a corner of the wilderness bloom?

M——, the farmer of the hill-top, afforded a striking contrast between what he might have been in a familiar old world and what he is out here! A plain man of the people, possessing as many broad acres as a country squire and with no one to dispute his right to them, he and his young sons personally cleaned out the stables, added another room to the house, chopped the wood, did a bit of hauling for a neighbour with his team, pulled out stumps on a new clearing, and generally made English discriminating prejudices anent labour look false and foolish. Here, in the hottest place of summer, the coldest of winter, the loneliest place always, a family of twelve lived in a shack of a house, prosperous and happy, and figuratively pitched the Doomsday Book on to the waste pile. There was always a full table, and the plain woman who presided over it always said grace. The young and pretty daughters carried on the work of the household.

The M——s were their own rulers and their own subjects!

A new driving shaft having arrived, the chauffeur worked his repairs on the damaged car with the litter of eight young M——s looking on curiously. One of the boys, a genius of some ten summers, was promptly created chief engineer and assistant, and when at last we took to the road again, we had some difficulty in spilling him off among the bushes, and dissipating his

new-born dreams of the tempting world beyond the limits of the farm.

The chafe and fret of forced inactivity was over. The weather was sunny and mild, almost torrid for September. The tree-lined road began a mad scramble up and down hill, apparently unable to keep long on the level or resist the temptation to joyously stand on its head.

In a fateful but beautiful spot, amid the woods, the first tyre burst. But the process of blowing up a new tyre with a power pump claimed only a jiffy of time before we were off again and in sight of the lumber town of South River—a wood town in the true sense of the word. Wood in the houses, wood in the side walks and wood in the industries. Any brick that ever got in there would doubtless feel it a kindness to be thrown out as quickly as possible, to be saved from dying a brickbat's death of sheer loneliness. It was somewhere beyond the town that I and my printed road directions parted. To say where I obtained them would be unethical. Suffice it that roads were mentioned in them which no Ontarian wise-acre or compass could locate, though eager search was made for them—for anything, in fact, rather than the ways of sand and swamp and mud and oleaginous pools which now began to mark our progress. The sand was on the hills when, of course, it might have been advantageously placed in the swamps, and the swamps were down in the hollows among the thickets when they should have been up on the hills to have a devil's chance of an airing. We picked up rumours—in a wireless out-of-the-air

fashion—of a big and formidable hill that lay, unavoidable and menacing, somewhere in our path, and I took minute details of its latitude and longitude, as a captain might in searching for a reported Atlantic derelict. Fifteen miles were wasted in endeavouring to discover the fork which would lead to the hill. When a hill came in sight, we would say: "Ah! there it is," and when we had managed to surmount it, we would add: "Thank God, we're over it and now we can cut along to North Bay." Then would come another hill and still another. But the real hill did at last appear. Ideally situated miles from anywhere, it was approached through a "corduroy" path lined by swamps, and it was edged all the way up by thickets nicely mingled with a choice collection of rocks. Side-stepping or skipping across the bordering land was thus out of the question—indeed, there are Spartan laws against such white-feather methods of travel in Ontario. Rushing the hill was out of the question; for the "corduroy" or log road at the foot would have broken our springs and landed us upside down in the thicket before we reached the incline. We therefore gave the car every ounce of power.

It was a forlorn hope. The machine stopped "dead" less than half-way up on a greasy hummock and commenced her old tactics of sliding down again without waiting for the brakes, until another hummock held her sufficiently long to give one time to jump out and block the wheels. After that we preferred to take the car's judgment in preference to our own, and although we tried her at the hill once or twice more, just to preserve

a fragment of our rapidly ebbing self-respect, we accepted the inevitableness of defeat and retraced our tracks in order to explore Ontario for a way round.

Technically, it was a thirty-per-cent. corduroy incline, about two hundred yards from the base to the summit, which later that afternoon rose in our path. But such paucity of language can never adequately portray the human indignation boiling within as we gazed helplessly at the car astraddle some of the rungs of that Jacob's Ladder. It was the old story of thicket and bush and swamp set down amid a world deserted of all human aid. For an hour or more we wrenched away like draught horses at the block and tackle, standing on a huge boulder that crowned the fiendish elevation. The sun cast chromatic reflections upon the lichen coatings of the vari-coloured stones and rock, and at last it sank behind the barren poles of the fire-blasted trees beyond the summit. Still we dragged wearily on the long wire tackle, staggering groggily, out of breath, cheered only by the buzzing, vicious flies which refused to be stampeded.

The car performed spectacularly. It split the welkin with its roar, jerking forward with violent wrenches and jerking as suddenly backwards, in order to catapult one of us into the radiator. We multiplied human energy with a new-fangled windlass arrangement born of chauffeur genius and deftly constructed by axe and fallen birch stumps. The two tons of steel and equipment began to move, but the boughs were slim and the stubbing post took it into its head to fly hurriedly

from its socket. We tried compression on the petrol tank ; we jacked up the wheels one by one, lifted them out of the hollows between the rotten logs where they had been spinning so helplessly, and filled up the hollows with stones. Gradually the car moved forward and upward, uncertain and wavering until she was on the boulder, where she drew herself smartly over a scate of stones and took anchorage in the soft mud of the crest. Before us stretched a lane, virulent and fragmentary, a streak of ragged human detail, invading a degenerate, debauched land. But we had salvaged the car, and we thanked the fates in the rough fashion of the wild for so much grace vouchsafed.

Warned by experience, the chauffeur raised the floor board, working the centre control. He beckoned moodily. The lever would only budge an inch or two. History had repeated itself. We had twisted the new driving shaft, and could only advance, crawlingly, on low gear. Our other speeds had forsaken us in the struggle with the hill, and there were still fifteen miles to cover before we could expect to reach a haven.

Slowly we advanced along the grass-grown, corduroy path—too slow a progress ever to outrace the oncoming night. We had been five days covering the two hundred miles separating us from Toronto. The road had teased and insulted us, had defied us and goaded us to herculean efforts, exasperated us, indeed, beyond the ordinary lot of human endurance. For days we had coaxed and cajoled the car along, then bullied it and made its life a torture. We had tossed it

and rocked it and pitched it and then broken it once, nay twice, and bombarded it with an infinite number of tricks and devices to advance it on its way.

Now it was the road that refused to go any further. A log bridge was missing, and there yawned a wide gap in front of the car!

A mile ahead, exploration in the dusk revealed a lonely farm whose guardian was the usual be-draggled woman with the crowd of children. We begged the loan of materials for a bridge and the necessary supply of elbow grease to aid us in its construction.

The woman looked aghast. She said all the males of the family had gone West for the harvesting of the wheat crop. We might, however, "rummage around;" possibly we should find "summat."

We came upon a pile of lumber. Our prospective bridge was there; it only needed to be transported and scientifically laid across the stream. We commenced to transport it—no need to describe how! It was the most ignominious and the most fatiguing method of transporting a bridge I have ever witnessed. Doubtless that hastily-devised span of the motor engineer still lies *in situ*, clumsy but eloquent testimony to the effective repairs of an Ontario by-way of the semi-wilderness.

Trout Creek thoroughly belied its name when it hove in sight that night. The dingy wooden inn, thick with the tobacco smoke of sleepy lumber-men and an argumentative array of boarders, could produce no more epicurean mess

of pottage than the staple of fried eggs and fried potatoes. The fidus Achates of the inn, a facetious old man of the "sly dig" variety, spoke only in quotation marks with a Sheffield brogue and diffused an airy freedom eloquent of New World democracy, while the shirt-sleeved landlord hovered modestly somewhere in the background. With a careless literary disregard of appropriateness, the elderly clerk's mind swept the entire horizon of ancient and modern culture for choice excerpts with which to point a thought or lend spirit to an action. His favourite author was Will Shakspeare, whom he adapted with levitous paraphrase when, a boarder having purloined his writing materials, he cried, "My pen! My pen! My kingdom for a pen." Guests, indeed, found it more practical to help themselves rather than to wait while the histrionic Englishman fumbled in his memory for the apt quotation.

An equally conversational though less erudite parrot presided over a writing table covered with red oil cloth and a glutinous array of fly paper. The flies having mostly retired for the night, the sticky edges of the paper had been cleverly utilised by a commercial traveller for the purpose of securely retaining his letter heads and invoices against the aggressive attacks of furtive gusts of wind. The wooden walls were decorated with a miscellaneous and impartial assortment of colour prints, including the glorious charge of Balaclava and the reigning houses of the world, among the crowned scions of which Sir Wilfred Laurier occupied a position of startling prominence. A

garish print displayed a boy looking admiringly at a calf's head ; there was a picture of a narghileh and another of a little girl measuring her height against a dog ; there was a map of the world, a tiger's head, two wild horses lightly plunging into space, and a placard of a little old man smoking an enormous pipe.

More crowned heads cropped up in unsuspected corners ; they stared at one from the dingy smoke-room and the shabby wash-house, they turned up again in the dining-room, and they even crept upstairs and shot their royal looks at one from the corridors. One hardly knew whether this formidable display of blue blood was to teach the advantages or the disadvantages of democracy, but half suspected that the self-effacing proprietor of this extensive picture gallery was himself an exiled scion of a noble house who would one day go back to claim his own.

Daylight and sunshine revealed the usual one-street town, terminating in a railroad crossing at one end and a white wooden church at the other. Telegraph poles ran slantingly but companionably beside the wooden sidewalk of the gravel road. A tawny-coloured creek, apparently bearing in its soul some iron of the neighbouring hills, dived into a *cloaca maxima* under the road, only to dart up again on the other side. In the west end of the town there was an aristocratic disposition towards trimness, evinced in neat, white-painted fences edging gardens of sunflowers and morning glories. Wood-piles and heaps of loose boards were neatly arranged about the

houses. A solitary cow grazed in the exclusiveness of the graveless churchyard, but the greater part of the grass had managed to evade the cow and was growing boldly over the roadway.

Close to the blacksmith's, where the car was being restored to mechanical health, stood the post-office yearning in dingy grayness for fresh paint. A white-bloused woman peered from behind a screen of letter-call boxes and pushed my "mail" through a protective wicket. The postmaster, a venerable but limber gentleman in discoloured shirt-sleeves whom my interview evidently discovered on the eve of his annual shave, poked a rusty stove with a wood shingle while he sized me up with his eyes. Though close to the hour of noon, several of the smaller establishments appeared still to be in doubt as to whether it was worth while opening at all that day.

A group of citizens loitered along the hotel front, where a litter of hundreds of burnt-out matches reminded one of a holocaust of dead moths under an electric lamp. The crowd showed curiosity, and I would have given much to know by what particular quotation the epic clerk had spread news of the eccentric stranger who was motoring to Victoria.

Dinner was "sharp at twelve," served in scant courses—that began flourishingly with dill pickles—by a prosaic girl with a stoop in her shoulders and a twist in her temper. She had the air of one who said: "This is really not my job. I don't care whether you like me in this capacity or not. This work is only temporary. I hate

it any way. It's beneath me, and I am not aiming at giving you satisfaction. I'm just as good as you are."

In the small communities of this new world, I had often seen the man who only on request came to take the suit-cases from the car and the landlord who left me to find my own room in the hotel. I had heard, too, of the woodman or coalman who would not deliver his wares to the house from the pavement without extra payment, the dustman who would not remove the garbage until another man had been paid to fetch it from the backyard to the street, and the servant who dictated the terms of her reluctant service. And I wondered whether they could in reality satisfactorily compare with the "downtrodden" equivalents of Europe, who have learned to take pride in their humble tasks and perform a service obligingly and artistically, with evident satisfaction in duty well done. Only in the land of the Habitant did I find that grace in the service of others—a reminiscence of rose and lavender—that belongs to a settled civilization.

Our adventures of the day before stirred the dingy crowd around the landlord's stove with quite a cheerful Ulyssean thrill of achievement. For years our arrival in Trout Creek will probably remain a never-failing topic of universal interest. It will become a classic. No local murder, no drunken spree of a giddy inhabitant, no wedding or funeral will detract from the luxury of us as a perennial excitement. And when the theme of our arrival, in the course of years, begins to show signs of natural decay, there will be the further

thrilling incident of our departure as a stimulant of spicy gossip.

We were short of petrol, and the rough roads ahead made foraging for a new supply imperative. Some one suggested the neighbouring chemical factory, reached by a short cut across the railroad. The short cut was by no means a quick one, for in order to cross the track it was necessary to build up the roadway to the level of the rails. The machine bounced hopefully over the metals like a rubber ball, only to find that no petrol was obtainable. With appropriate dejection, she returned to the railroad crossing, where, apparently losing all patience at her hard luck, she quietly tried to commit suicide and slipped off the edge of a sand embankment into a yawning hollow. Luckily, some workmen appeared on the scene in the very nick of time, and with a mighty effort we hoisted her to *terra firmâ* and determinedly bounced her over the rails again. There was now no alternative but to attempt to reach North Bay with the few pints of petrol in the tank, and doubtfully and disdainfully, the long-suffering machine set out to assail the fifty miles that lay between us and the goal.

Fifty miles ! In Europe a day's journey, a lifetime of experience, and Humanity for the passing show ! But here—merely a change in locality. The scenery remains almost exactly the same. You have travelled in a direct line north or west and scarcely seen a living being. You will probably repeat that experience the next day and the day after that. At each noontime, or thereabouts, a pocket edition of a town will appear on the

map for the useful purpose of providing you with the needful commissariat and vanish after its humanitarian deed is performed. At each night-fall there will come a town or a railroad station and an inn with a bed, which stays with you just long enough to give you a night's rest, and allow the sun a chance to get up and warm you, and then it is off again—doubtless in search of some other needy travellers like yourself.

And those beds! Almost always clean and downy! Almost always inviting to slumbers! Almost always entangling one's limbs and breaking one's best resolutions in the morning when the vows of the night before anent early rising have to be put relentlessly into force!

CHAPTER IX

AT North Bay I came into touch, for the first time, with a characteristic feature of a new town, the Old Timer. In this case the Old Timer was also the successful business man of the town.

As a rule the two honours or distinctions do not go together. The man who was the first to dicker with the Indians, who turned the first sod, made the first clearing, battled in the van for the communities of men who would one day follow him into the wilderness, is usually worn and spent before the day of his material rewards comes. The town that has grown up around the hoary pioneer will cherish him as its proudest possession, but he plays no prominent part in accumulating its dollars and cents. It cannot induce him to have his hair cut or to shave himself or to smarten himself up for the limelight. It may drag him out of his modest little home, and show him off to the crowd when the anniversaries and the civic fete days come round, but while the drums are still playing and ere the cheers have died away, he will be wending his way homeward again through the back alleys.

The up-to-date Successful-Old-Timer is quite

another thing. He rides in a big touring car, wears kid gloves, has the finest house, the finest clothes, and the finest office, does more work than a dozen others, goes to Europe or California for his recreation, and morning, noon and night booms the town for all it is worth. He is well-mannered, always has a smile and an imperturbable temper. But you will notice these features of the man after you have observed the most salient characteristic of all—that successful business air.

The moment you strike the town, he has shown himself, to whisk you into his car, whisk you off to the Mayor, whisk you off to the hotel, and to whisk you off to the town clerk and the President of the local Board of Trade. Casually—quite casually—you learn that he has helped to make the town what it is; that a big swelling pride animates him whenever he talks about it; that his life is devoted to talking about it. When he gets tired of repeating the same old worn, trite things, he has a score of other means of continuing the story. He has maps big and little, folders for the vest pocket, and others for the coat pocket, cunningly devised pencils and matchboxes and patent lighters and office rulers and penholders and pocket clips, and things practical and fanciful too numerous to mention, but all of which are yours for the asking, until your pockets are bulging with little and big things whose material lives the printer has devoted to the good cause of booming the town.

When you have heard the Successful-Old-Timer talk, and you have seen the lay-out of the



BAD (ONTARIO)



GOOD (ALBERTA)

town and caught a view of the lake or the river from every imaginable point of view, and you have heard of all the things that have been done and are going to be done, and may or may not be done, and ought to be done whenever the town gets the appropriation, and the mistakes that have been made and promptly rectified—when you have heard all about the sewerage and the paving and the Club House, and the rush on the overcrowded hotels, and the awful inadequacies of labour, and the number of babies born the year before and the number they mean to have this year—when you have tried to take in mentally all about the trades that are encouraged and the factory facilities, and the free grants of building sites and the class of houses going up *now* and what will go up *ten years to come*, and all the facilities of other towns for work and for play, and multiplied these by ten so as to get at the enormous advantages in this respect over all others of THIS town—when you have it demonstrated to you in incontrovertible facts and figures what the town stands for, exists for and means* to live for to the end of its civic days—when you realize how much everyone, big and little, loves that town and clings to it, that he never means to relax in his efforts to make it the Empire City of Canada—then you begin to see this aggregation of busy humanity in a new and altogether fascinating light. The town becomes to you what it has long been to him, a living organism. It is the one place that really interests you, the one place where you dream of owning a bit of land. Your body and your soul burn with the hot fever

of speculation which has brought fortune to so many lucky men before you.

This is the psychological moment for the successful business man. He assures you that all you have to do is to "sit tight and watch." He tells you that the day will soon come when your property will grow in value ; when it will mount up and up ; when people will pester you with offers to buy, and you will smile and say nothing ; when they will offer you four times your original outlay and you will look insulted at their niggardliness. And then—then there will come a day of days when you will get that offer which spells a life competence and you—SELL !!

It pays—sometimes—to love and stick by a new town !

In spite of all the material advantages of North Bay, the melancholy fact was soon borne in upon me that it lacked a road. People expatiated on the glories of Lake Nipissing, which spread a mighty silvery carpet at our feet ; they talked of the glorious future which awaited Canada when the projected Georgian Bay Canal should pass through Lake Nipissing and North Bay on to the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence and should provide an All-Canadian water route to the Atlantic for Canadian shipping, as opposed to the route through American waters via the Welland Canal. But there was neither a connected road to Ottawa to the east, nor an uninterrupted road to Sudbury to the west. The beautiful Timagami and Timiskaming Lake country to the north was accessible only by railroad and canoe. Lying advantageously between two great forest reserves—

Algonquin and Tamagami National "parks"—at the portals of some of the most glorious scenery the world can boast, where emerald and turquoise lakes are like jewels in Nature's noblest setting, North Bay had come forth to shoulder her burdens in the making of Canada, forgetting the one great requisite—the Road! As well might the doctor be without his instruments, the student without his books, the philanthropist without his purse, the citizen without his civic pride, the patriot without his country! As well might the astronomer be blind and man headless, as a town exist without the Road—that outlet for the swelling forces within, that harbinger of civilization and progress, without which man remains but a tragedy in the universe.

Orders were reluctantly given to have the car wheeled off to the railroad station, there to be thrust into a closed truck and hauled by a locomotive, snorting in vulgar triumph, until released some eighty miles further west. From that point the new Government road to Lake Superior at Saulte Ste. Marie would be available.

The thankless railroad journey from North Bay yet rankles in my mind. A crowd of settlers for the West squatted in the pale green, plush seats of what is known as a "first class day coach," which at night would form an uncomfortable, stuffy general bedroom. They were all settlers of a desirable class—not needy immigrants, and their cheeks wore a flush of health that promised well for the valiant fight with the wilderness.

As we sped along westward, railroad camps came into sight ; then the sage-green houses of plain wooden towns that waited apathetically for the possible boom which might one day magically transform them into prosperous cities like North Bay. What a blessing a good road would prove to these dismal little places ! How it would rouse them to renewed hope and activity ! And what a change would come over the neglected little roads, not much more than paths, which ran in and out, playing hide and seek with the bushland until they ended somewhere in a tangle and gave up the foolish game ! They bore a pathetic resemblance to the human settlements around them, and which they were vainly trying to reach. They bore the same look of dilatoriness, the same air of being shelved and pushed aside from life's joyous activities.

At Sudbury we found hotels and garages, an additional driver for the car, and a good road, that led promisingly past huge mounds of slag from the neighbouring copper and silver mines to the Soo, as Saulte Ste. Marie is familiarly called. But it soon belied its promise and brought the car to grief in innumerable water-holes and swampy spots from which she had to be hauled out by horses. Finally, after our freighting the car for seventeen miles on a tiny tug along the North Channel from Algoma to Blind River, it set us spitefully down at the edge of Lake Superior.

"Now," the road seemed to say, "put that lake into your pipe and smoke it. You may have got the better of me, but the lake will

settle you. You can't motor across that, and there's no road around."

Friendly acquaintances at the Soo Club House mournfully announced from the comfortable depths of club chairs, that the wilderness to the north of the lake belonged to the locomotive alone. They pictured gloomy rock masses, outcropping stone ledges, unbridged torrents, forests and tangle alternating with tracts of sparse timber and scrub, and vast wastes of burned tree stumps. But they all affirmed positively that roads were conspicuous by their absence, and that if I must have roads, I must motor through the United States, by following the southern shore of Lake Superior to Marquette and Duluth. Once arrived at that westerly point of the lake I should be able to steer a course for the Red River in Minnesota and to follow it northward through Fargo and Grand Forks to the Manitoba boundary line at Emerson, whence a straight run along bad roads would bring me to Winnipeg. This American route, about one thousand miles long, had been followed more or less by early pioneers into the Canadian West. But it was not a Canadian route, and I resolved to omit it from my programme.

"No automobile," said a club member, "has ever been north of Lake Superior. There's no road, and we motorists are entirely shut out, when there are wild beautiful places of theatric beauty up there to renew our spirits and give us back—ourselves. If you wish to save the car and to arrive at the Pacific with a few pieces of its mechanism still clinging together, keep

out of the wilderness of New Ontario. The machine will immolate itself on the first tree stump that blocks the path, or grind itself to junk on the rocks, or drown itself in the swamps and bridgeless rivers. The lumber-men go there only in winter and make a roadway in the deep frozen snows for log-hauling. But not even with snow on the ground could you get through with an automobile."

New Ontario is popularly supposed to belong to these lumber-men, to occasional skippers of coasting schooners, lonely railway station agents, a few idle fishermen, fast disappearing trappers or Indians. It cuts the world of Canada in two. It divides the comparatively quiescent East from the vibrant, virile West, as a surgeon's knife cleaves limb from limb, hampering national existence. For hundreds of miles along the lake and for hundreds of miles to the east and west of it, civilization has left a No-Man's Land from Superior to Hudson Bay. It remains almost precisely as the French found it in the days of Louis XIV.!

The Sleeping Beauty still dreams. Around her lies an immense domain of virgin forest, of lakes and muscallonge, of gigantic rock slides along which the glaciers of a million years have swept down from their northern fastnesses, carving out with the chisel of the ages the face of the land to the south: of rivers that rise where the foot of man has never trod, of huge inland waters that never hear the echo of the human voice, with far to the west, in the "Little Land of a Thousand Lakes," the myriad flashing

jewels of lakes only fleetingly visible to the train traveller.

Man still hesitates to penetrate the fastness of the Princess; he limps haltingly along its fringe. He is only half interested. Superior, he claims, will never be more than a region of insignificant fishing stations and isolated lumber and prospector camps, of negligible wood-pulp hunters, of a handful of pleasure anglers for unrivalled trout, and of scattered settlements where in a shabby general store is focussed the limited, narrow, almost primitive life of a benighted community.

But there are others of us who wait expectantly for the day when the Prince shall step boldly along the narrow portages and the snowshoe trails of the by-gone French trappers and voyageurs, over rocky ridges and through the silent forests of pine and spruce, balsam and birch, to wake Nature to the life of man.

New Ontario is the geographical, the topographical and ethnographical problem of Canada to-day. A couple of centuries ago, the fur traders found it easier to skirt the lake shores by canoe than to travel on foot through the forests to their distant posts on the prairies. The Red River settlements of Lord Selkirk who brought the first colonists into Manitoba at the beginning of the nineteenth century, came from the north, landing from their ships in St. James' Bay. Lord Selkirk himself travelled through the United States to reach his goal. For years modern Canada terminated where Ontario bordered on the shores of Lake Huron. The country to the west was the

Great Lone Land of the despised "backwoodsman." Even at the time of the Red River Rebellion, when Wolseley marched into Manitoba with his troops against Riel and the Indian half-breeds, there was no road through Western Ontario—only the short Dawson route connecting with a chain of lakes, to negotiate which Wolseley took ten long weeks of ceaseless labour. His troops had in fact to be transported most of the way by water. But that expedition, in spite of its apparent failure, opened up the West to the immigrant and sounded that first note of alarm which was to change the whole character of farming in Eastern Canada and to spell ruin for many a badly hit farmer in Europe.

I crossed Lake Superior by boat!

As I restlessly paced the grassy lawn at Port Arthur which overlooks the magnificent panorama of Thunder Bay, tasting the bitter wormwood and gall of my disappointment, the impulse of the pioneer spirit was strong upon me. Nine hundred miles of the heart of Canada ignored and neglected! I longed, even then, to turn the hood of the car Eastward instead of Westward, to explore the wilderness across which civilization had made such a flying leap. East and west of Port Arthur—silence. Only this one centre of life and death, of commerce and intercourse, only this one true oasis of the Wild, this twin town settlement of Port Arthur and Fort William, knit together at the head of the lake, when there were miles and miles of lacustrine shore along which proud cities might rear their heads, to overlook the Father of the Inland Waters, majestic Superior!

The old Dawson trail that had been widened for the passage of Wolseley's troops as far as the chain of lakes further west, terminated a few miles beyond Port Arthur and left the city tragically isolated from the rest of the world. However, I was cheerfully informed, that a highway would soon be constructed to connect with Duluth on American soil.

"But why Duluth?" I exclaimed. "Does not charity begin at home? Why not a road to Winnipeg? Why get tourists into Canada if you cannot get them through Canada? Must they stop on the spot where they land, for want of those arteries of communication which are the life blood of a nation?"

"Let's go home," said a newly-found English friend pacifically (an old "Pauline"), "and I'll show you my new house and we'll have a cup of tea." The argument was over before it had begun. But my queries remained, insistent, compelling, refusing to be "downed." Why neglect the construction of east and west highways in the Dominion in favour of roads running to the American border? Why build the King's Highway from Montreal to connect with New York? Why from Winnipeg join the Meridian Road that will run all the way to Kansas, before constructing a road to Port Arthur?

One suspects that this particular form of road building is intimately bound up with the question of dollars and cents; that Canada is throwing a sop to catch the American capitalist. As yet Canada has not enough money to go round. To-day British capitalists are invested up to the

hilt in Canada, and the road is a potent medium by which the Dominion can attract the rich Yankee investor. The wealthy American farmer is another important asset whom the Canadian Government cannot afford to overlook. Next to the Ontarian farmer, he is the best settler of the West. He has experience, grit, science, shrewdness and industry. He is almost bound to "make good," and he almost always comes by road over the border, with horses and cattle and waggons. Canada is practical, first and foremost, and even a transcontinental motorist must finally admit the wisdom of these north and south roads.

Port Arthur and Fort William presented civic phenomena quite new to the roving Britisher. They were primarily depôts for grain from the prairies pure and simple, and ports of shipment to and from the West. They owed their existence to the lake and the railroad. The biggest elevator in North America ornamented the shore at Port Arthur. But the city was casting its net for all kinds of trade, for factories, for everything, in fact, in the way of legitimate business. A man sat all day long in a kiosk by the docks and station ready to prove to new-comers by pamphlet and *vivâ voce* demonstration, that Port Arthur was the best place in the world in which to work and grow rich, to live and die. Yet the man in Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers, who was rash enough to attempt a stroll, might either fall into a swamp of the backwoods or into the lake, unless he preferred to be mutilated by the passing railroad trains; for the street along the water

front accommodates not only an immense amount of wheeled and foot traffic, but it also obligingly harbours a couple of stations, an entire railroad system and a network of unprotected, glistening tracks.

The sight of such an overworked street with the traffic of two railroads running down it, was something which almost took my breath away. Trains hurried past, clanging huge bells, while people walked unconcernedly across the tracks. Freight cars manœuvred and shunted in front of hotels that bore the affront with perfect equanimity and a superb indifference echoed in the grain elevator. This huge building rose nobly and grandly out of a chaotic litter of piles and planks, rails and footbridges, dirty wharves and a confusion of water basins, when it was at least worthy of a setting of landscape gardens by Kent or Le Notre. It was a sky-scraper, a François Premier Château and a Bastille rolled into one. It had nobility, tragedy, destiny, stamped all over it. It dwarfed men to pigmies, it soared with Babylonian majesty. It breathed of force and power, and it challenged the hills and the capes whose fit companion it was. It defied fire and water and all the aggressive elements, and it was the one concrete human creation built for permanency.

The West sent to the Treasure House its golden grain, and its jaws yawned and swallowed train-loads. Within, huge revolving belts and wooden chutes furnished it from floor to ceiling. Dust ascended in clouds through iron grates, and there were big wooden frames, like weavers' looms or printing presses, with arms and openings

through which wheat and oats poured like molten gold or like water from a hidden reservoir. Huge trays, on which the grain kept up a wild, infernal jig, moved ecstatically to and fro to cleanse it of all impurities. No workmen were about. One fancied that, having once started the machinery, they had drawn their wages and departed until the next year's harvest would again require their services.

Standing there, hushed and awed by that strange vibrant life around me, I felt that, for the first time, I grasped the key to the might and dominion of the Canadian New World.

Port Arthur received me with flattering interest. The town officials shook me cordially by the hand.

"Motored from Halifax, eh? Well, well," exclaimed one, "that's a stunt. Shipped your car across the lake? Yes, of course, you'd have to do that. Here, Mr. So-and-So, shake hands with this gentleman from Halifax!"

Another citizen: "Going West? And you've come all that way from my old city? How are the Haligonians? As slow as ever? Here's our Deputy-Mayor and the President of the Board of Trade. That's the car, is it?"

"Glad to meet you!" from another townsman. "Here's our M.P. Thinks he's going West, Jim. But he hasn't seen Port Arthur yet. Why not give us a long stay? You can't find a better place in Canada."

In fact, all Port Arthur, like the man in the kiosk, seemed to resolve itself into a publicity bureau for the benefit of the new-comer. The city took huge pride in itself through its citizens as if convinced that you must like it, and that your preference for it would grow the longer you stayed within its gates. It spread itself up the slopes so as to give you an unrivalled panoramic view of its attractions. Posters proclaimed its advantages as a centre for fishing and canoeing and big game hunting, while pamphlets shrieked out its merits as a summer resort:—

“Try Port Arthur and get the habit of living there!”

“See Naples and die. See Port Arthur and Live!”

“Why spend your summers in Michigan resorts and be liable to hay fever when you can visit Port Arthur where hay fever is unknown 365 days in a year?”

“This is Leap Year and Port Arthur will have no hay fever for 366 days!”

“Why can't you have hay fever here?”

“Because the deadly pollen of the rag weed and golden rod cannot cross Lake Superior. The misty strata that hang over the lake wet the pollen down into the water. It never reaches Port Arthur.”

The town seemed in truth to have drawn everybody into its service, and it worked them strenuously from dawn till dusk, making its superior merits known.

Port Arthur—Canada itself—doubtless has no desire to consume in its making the centuries

necessary to Europe for her formative period. The country must find a quick and royal route to its goal. If she were to develop at the same leisurely rate as the nations upon the foundation of which she is now building her future greatness, she might reckon upon attaining her zenith somewhere about the year 7000 A.D. Therefore she must import her population by every means of advertisement and attraction within her power. She must fill her waste places and provide for her unborn cities by believing in herself and making others believe in her.

Surely an excellent policy as far as it goes! But does it go any further than industrial, commercial and numerical gains are concerned? With a clean bill of health and a certain money qualification, the human by-products of Europe are welcomed, as Quebec had plainly shown. But where is the desire and the effort to attract intellect, culture and wealth of mind—the mental energy that, if suitably directed, would speedily place Canada in the van of progress, as powerful spiritually as she is now commercially? Would not Rudyard Kipling, G. B. Shaw and Maurice Maeterlinck make as desirable citizens as Tom, Dick and Harry with their brawn and muscle, their ploughs and their shovels?

In Berlin there are students with big coronets emblazoned in gold braid on the inside of their shabby coats and with very little in their stomachs—a smaller fry than the Kiplings and the Maeterlincks, but fellows of brain, not opportunity, who are needed in and who need the Dominion. In Paris there are young savants. In London there

are young men of culture, embryo playwrights, poets, philosophers, scholars, hampered by the financial limitations of an overcrowded old world. Why does not Canada make some bid for this culture, intellect and refinement, which are the flower of civilization?

Why will she not hold out her hand to Jones, who dragging out his existence in spite of many astounding inventions, has discovered the real source of light and heat and a process for arresting material decay, and say to him :—

“Glad to welcome you, my dear Jones, to our shores. We’ve been waiting for you. Come right in. Here’s a model workshop for you and practical engineers to commercialize your inventions. You needn’t trouble about the rent or the furniture or the living expenses or the cost of the office staff. You are the guest of the Dominion Government for the rest of your life.”

When will she welcome as her adopted son, Peek-Withers, the unstarred but clever actor-dramatist, remembering that to-day she has neither actor nor dramatist of note of her own? Ten chances to one that Peek will produce the Canadian National Drama and make her famous by founding a National Stage.

How is it that she does not send cables to a score of others among that brilliant set of insufficiently utilized brains in Europe?

The Dominion Government has posted notices throughout its European offices to the effect that farm hands and harvesters are needed at three

dollars a day wages and all found! Why should it not spread broadcast the notice :—

WANTED FOR CANADA!

THREE HUNDRED BRAINY AUTHORS!

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY PHILOSOPHERS!

FIRST-CLASS PASSAGE AND GOOD LIVING GUARANTEED
TO THE RIGHT MEN!

ALSO NEW IDEAS, PLOTS AND SCENES; QUIET SUR-
ROUNDINGS WITH UNLIMITED NATURE!

SECURE YOUR PASSAGE EARLY!!!

CHAPTER X

FIFTY miles west of the Lake of the Woods on the Manitoba boundary, I began straining my eyes into the darkness from the windows of the train for the first view of the prairie. The rocks were less bare, and the trees gradually disappeared from the foreground. Suddenly, a vast level plain stretched itself before my eyes, and the rich black earth of the wheat-growing lands was before me. There was an occasional shadowy school-house and farm, a dim shape that was a narrow wheat waggon, some pin-points of light that represented a small prairie town dominated by a grain elevator, a blur that was a tent or a shack or a prairie "windmill" on its tall Eiffel-Tower stand—and then the darkness of returning sleep.

Winnipeg was reached at five o'clock of a chill morning. The Royal Alexandra was full.

"The hotel's always full," said the clerk with a bored expression on being asked for the reason why there was not a vacant room in the house. "We always have a waiting list, and unless you have engaged rooms ahead, you will have to try one of the small hotels."

Nor was he far from the truth, for there is a dearth of first-class hotel accommodation in

Winnipeg, the centre of the Dominion, the Queen of the Prairies, and the jumping-off place for every one going west or east. A magnificent new railroad hotel is approaching completion, but it will have no sooner opened its doors than the city will have outgrown it and the demand will again be in excess of the supply.

Winnipeg impressed me. It would impress anybody. It looked as though it had been built on purpose to impress. The chief streets were splendidly wide and smooth, while residential streets were "boulevarded" with rows of trees on either side. Apparently, there was no such thing as a narrow thoroughfare, and very shortly there would be no such thing as a shack or a shanty, since the rude buildings of the city's infancy are being rapidly swept away to give place to imposing structures of brick and stone. Yet as I walked these noble streets, fashioned after the spaciousness of the neighbouring prairies, I was struck with the fact that at every step I rubbed against crowds of the unemployed and the out-of-elbows. What were they doing here at the gateway to the enormous possibilities of the west and the north—these out-of-work men, labourers of foreign nationality, the overflow of peasant Europe? Were they waiting for the ensuing spring to commence operations in the wheat fields? Were they recovering strength from illness, seeking employment in a city which had nothing but the shovel and the snow—removal of winter to offer them, or returning from the harvest to fritter away the winter in the small and unhealthy sleeping accommodations of the purlieus? Winnipeg, as yet,

has scarcely any factories, and a farming region where all the eggs are in one basket can offer little more than six months' employment each year to unskilled labourers.

Winnipeg looks confidently to the future rather than to the present, and forgets the past. Its ornate externals seem to say : " This is going to be a giant city, the best and most stately of its kind. Nothing small will suit. There'll be several millions of people here in a few years, and more millions after that. Look out ! The prairies of all Manitoba will scarcely suffice to hold this city if it once gets up steam. It's only beginning to put on pressure. But keep your eye on it. Things are going to happen that will make your head swim ! "

And yet in 1880, when the rush to Winnipeg had turned half the cultivated lands of Europe into grass, the place was scarcely a village !

In a city of such democratic growth—where everything has been proved possible—it is perhaps not strange that there should be a more or less general acceptance of the democratic theory that Jack is as good as his master—and often a good deal better. In London, one who asserted that axiom would have to prove it, and when he had done so it would be believed—not before. In Winnipeg, its truth is assumed, and there is no necessity of proof. Your man may smoke in the same hotel lounge where you smoke. He may dine at the same restaurant, and if he chances on the same table and you have any regard for the minor graces of life, it requires infinite tact to remind him of your point of view. He is easily

offended at, and quickly resentful of, any definition or distinction of quality. This mental attitude is common in the New World among those who toil with their hands and not with their brains. Its explanation is to be found in the fact that there working people pass rapidly from low wages to comparative wealth, and that, not having had the time nor power to intellectually adapt themselves to their new environment, they do not often change associates while speech, habits, tastes, remain the same. Your man, though below you in pecuniary fortunes, may expect to find you still on his social level in a world where your relation to him is duplicated on every side. Such miscellaneous grouping, and the unconscious encroachment on one's private domain and personality, are likely to be rather appalling to the European; and yet this phase of democracy is an interesting study in ethnography and environment.

It commenced to rain soon after I reached Winnipeg, and the glass steadily fell. Thenceforward, in the hotel lobbies, in the Government and municipal offices, the weather was the one supreme, all-engrossing topic of conversation. The topic pursued me into the restaurants, and into the newspaper offices. No one could say enough in condemnation of the wanton pranks the climate had played that year in Manitoba. Rain had fallen all summer and throughout the autumn. The crops could not be harvested and the motorist could not motor. If he were rash enough to take his car outside the city limits, the chances were that he would never return with it. Reports had come in of automobiles stranded

everywhere across the Province—caught helplessly in the rich black mud known as “gumbo.”

Gumbo is the bane and the saviour of Manitoba. It is a rich argillaceous mould or loam formed by the lake deposits and forest growth of ages, and resting upon a clay sub-soil. Its dark colour is due in part to the long accumulation of the charred grasses left by annual prairie fires and the collection of decayed vegetable and animal matter. But it is literally a profusion of stored-up wealth. It will grow grain; it will grow food for cattle; and it will go on like that for years to come without rotation of crops or without fertilizer. But as a roadway for vehicular traffic, Westerners will tell you that it is a “fright.” They will tell you, in order that you may understand something of the glutinous sticking properties of gumbo, the story of the man who was one day out on the prairies with an ox and waggon. The waggon became hopelessly stuck, and he left it in the mud, unhitching the ox and returning home. That incident occurred some time ago. Every month or so, the young man went back to the spot, and tried to salvage his waggon. The years have flown by, but the man has never lost heart. He is determined to have that waggon, unless old age overtakes him and he is compelled to renounce the work in favour of his sons.

My car having been detained at East Selkirk, and the rain showing no signs of ceasing, the chauffeur and an assistant set out in order to bring it to Winnipeg. The men returned the following day amid drenching showers, covered from head to foot in mud, and in a spirit of

covert mutiny. The distance was only twenty miles, but it had taken them the greater part of the day to navigate the seas of mud which they encountered. As I could get no drivers to continue further west with me under prevailing climatic conditions, there was nothing to do but to wait in Winnipeg for the return of the sun to its wonted "orbit."

During my enforced idleness in the city I had the opportunity of calling upon Sir Rodmond Roblin, the Premier of Manitoba. Official life within the walls of the plain-looking Government building was apparently shorn of almost all formality. One might hear a couple of ministers addressing each other with the free and easy cognomens of "Bill" and "Fred," and one might chat friendly-fashion with an accommodating private secretary, while the comely-looking lady-typist whistled a lively rag-time to the merry clicking of her machine. The minister would prove to be no more inaccessible than his secretary. Unhampered by the trammels of bureaucracy, one could easily imagine him having a friendly smoke with the "Cabinet" before going out into the corridors to tell the janitor to turn on a little more steam-heat or, having delivered a speech on some weighty matter before the Provincial Parliament, playfully standing the office boy on his head.

Sir Rodmond was a large man with well-marked features in which strength was dominant. A typical Canadian public man, he suggested the American ideal of a politician rather than the English statesman. In Europe you could find no type of public man by which to take

his measure. If he were sitting in an English mayoral chair, you might say he would make a fine, appropriate first magistrate. If you saw him presiding over the annual Conference of the ship-builders of the British Isles, you might congratulate the master builders over the discrimination shown in their selection. Then again, should you run across him at the head of an American Trust or a railroad system, you would not express any degree of surprise. He would be big enough for and capable of all these things and perhaps of a few more.

We talked considerably about roads, for the gumbo variety of which the Premier expressed no particular fondness. He had gumbo on his own premises, and he confessed to having been held up by it in his motor-car before his own front door only a few evenings before.

"The worst of it was," he said laughingly, "my son and I were in our dress clothes, and it was a question which of us was going to crawl under that car and release us from durance vile." Sir Rodmond said that a time was not far distant when the common enemy, Mud, would be banished from their main highways. Manitoba had already entered upon a policy of building a macadamized road across the province.

"It is perhaps fitting," explained Sir Rodmond, "that we in Manitoba should be the first to initiate this trans-provincial highway-construction scheme. We were the first to be settled, and we stand at the eastern edge of the prairie provinces. Forty miles of this highway are already under construction west of Winnipeg. It follows the

windings of the Assiniboine river as far as possible to Brandon. The weather has been so bad this year, however, that the work has advanced but slowly. About \$400,000 will be appropriated by Manitoba for the highway. Our policy is to advance two-thirds of the necessary amount in cash, the remaining one-third being raised by the municipalities through which the road runs, under a thirty-year bond guarantee, the Government undertaking to finance the bonds and paying both principal and interest. The municipality lets the contract, but the road may only be built on plans and specifications laid down by the highways commissioner and paid for on his certificate."

The Premier, who has fathered this inter-provincial road in Manitoba, expressed himself as heartily in favour of a continuous road across Canada. He thought it would be one of the greatest blessings that could come to Canada, and of great value to the empire. A Dominion Government grant for such a road was another question, however. He did not think that the Central Government could initiate a policy of good roads construction as applied to the trans-continental road without passing a new Bill, and it was questionable whether the Government at Ottawa would undertake to advise the provinces as to how any Dominion money should be spent. However, a Dominion good roads policy had already been initiated. Mr. Borden in his ministerial address had pledged his party to re-vote the one million dollars towards good roads which had been thrown out by the Senate, and to challenge the Senate to kill the Bill again.

"As a fact," added Sir Rodmond optimistically, "I believe that next year the country will get two million instead of one million dollars."

The weather showing signs at length of repenting of its storms, we left Winnipeg late one afternoon and, ferrying across the Assiniboine, placidly hidden behind fringes of alder bushes and young trees, joined the main road from Winnipeg to Brandon. Where the city pavement ended, black gumbo commenced. In a flash the road became inky and spongy. It was as if the prairie, conquered by the city, here cried aloud and defiantly: "Stop where you are. The rest of the land is mine."

Progress was slow and laborious. The mud grew heavier and deeper; the landscape monotonous. The amber-tinted waters of the Assiniboine ran so deep below its banks as to be invisible at a short distance. The whole earth seemed to lie stagnant and irresponsive to mood or emotion. Only occasional clumps of trees or bluff-like undulations relieved the general dreariness.

Headingley, a huddle of two or three crazy-looking houses apparently far past reform, took me in for the night. From the tiny window of my inn, I could see the broad black highway lined by wire fences but otherwise open to the world like a great staring, lidless eye. It was my first intimate contact with the prairies. For weeks I had looked forward to them, dreamed of them. Yet, now that I stood face to face with them, I was as unmoved and emotionless as they. I was disappointed in them.

The prairies of Canada form three distinct

prairie steppes, covering a distance of some nine hundred miles. The first of these steppes, known as the Red River Valley and Lake Winnipeg plateau, is on an average about eight hundred feet above sea level, and contains thousands of square miles of the best wheat-growing land of the American continent. The second plateau, a rich, undulating, park-like country, I should find twice as high and five times as wide, as I travelled through Saskatchewan. The third would be a grazing country over four hundred miles wide and extending to the foot of the Rockies.

The cold grey light of the next morning revealed a great untimbered, level, dried-up sea of land, as cheerless as on the night before. The broad field-fringed highway leaped straight as an arrow across the illimitable plain in the direction of Portage-la-Prairie. On either side of the road-ditches were other trails or ruts, so that the highway had a probable total width of about one hundred and fifty feet. The fields were comparatively small, and almost all of the little wheat grown had been cut. Now and again a modest farmhouse came into view, with its accompanying herds of cows, reedy sloughs of water and flocks of crows. Thistles mingled with the feathery grasses, and small yellow flowers occasionally speckled the roadside with tiny points of gold. Cross-roads—"road allowances" as they are termed—led off to right and left, but their straight lines were broken by the clumps of trees which marked the winding course of the Assiniboine and hid the country beyond. The wheat stood in sheaves, but only a few binders were at work.



THE TRAILS LEAP STRAIGHT AS AN ARROW ACROSS THE ILLIMITABLE PRAIRIES

A brisk wind played a tattoo on the leather top of the car and fanned the blood to a disagreeable chill, until the need for scouting among the prairie grasses for a better and drier track brought relief in active exercise. The patches of virgin prairie proved indeed better going for the car than the heavy gumbo roads, though high bushes of the barberry kind often closed our path until we ruthlessly mowed them down under the wheels. Then came pocket editions of towns, each built around a post-office or deserted store, with a railway station holding aloof and evidently chary of company. Then would succeed an open glade of grass, green and fresh, through which we followed the faint trail of wheels, the while the distant road, with its ugly pools and its black spongy surface, leered suspiciously at the venturesome deserters.

Threading the tall bushes and scanning the ground in all directions for a trail, we heard the familiar chug-chug of motor engines, and an automobile rolled up through an opening. The two passengers greeted us with the news that the Mayor of Brandon was on the look-out for us. They had been four hours coming from Portage-la-Prairie, and they pointed ominously backward, to where they declared there was another car, with a lady passenger and two men, which had been hauled out of the mud twice that morning. With that they waved us a farewell, and their car, stripped to racing lightness, ploughed its way into the thicket again.

Taking a ditch in a succession of leaps nicely broken with a padding of handy wheat sheaves,

we came upon the derelict wallowing distressfully but still "game." There were anxious, mutual inquiries as to prospects ahead both ways, and then we watched the other car take the plunge into the ditch, noted the tributary leap of the sheaves into the air at the impact, and finally saw it disappear, tossing and pitching, Winnipegwards. Once we tempted Providence by taking to the road again, but any attempt to run on top speed caused the machine to sulk and almost refuse to advance, so we had to immediately throw her into "second" until relief came in smoother roads and lighter soil.

As the afternoon commenced to wane, black, curly clouds formed side curtains and fringes to the windows of blue in the heavens, and in the far West light lovingly lingered when the sun was no longer visible—a rainbow promise of what was awaiting us in the higher and drier plateaus. Only a dozen or more miles to the north-west lay Lake Manitoba, the hunter's paradise, along its hundreds of miles of shore, for the best duck and goose shooting in Canada.

Portage-la-Prairie, which had an excellent hotel, reminded one, in its name, that the honour of being the first white men to traverse the Manitoba prairies is due to the French voyageurs. From the wilds north of Lake Superior, Radisson and de Groseillier in 1666 penetrated along the Winnipeg River to Lake Winnipeg and from there to Hudson Bay. They later returned to France, and not meeting with encouragement, they went to London, where their tales of great inland seas, big navigable rivers and limitless

plains filled with big and small game, aroused such interest that in 1669 a company was formed and chartered by Charles II. Thus was born the Hudson's Bay Company—that mighty organization which, through its factors, became the virtual ruler of Canada, its imperious sway being exercised over a territory stretching almost from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It had not only the sole control over the prairies in matter of trade, but it had also the right to raise and use armed forces. Portage stood on the direct route of the Company's famous Saskatchewan trail, which to-day forms the main street of the town. The street was so broad that it seemed to have swallowed every possible rival back thoroughfare to gain something of its former space and dominion. A telescope would have been handy with which to read the signs in the store windows opposite. But the roadway! By describing immense arcs, cutting off corners, moving now in echelon, now at right angles, and then deploying upon a street corner, or a lamp-post, or an innocent spectator, or a buggy hitched to a stubbing-post, and then throwing the wheel hard over in the nick of time while the horn shrieked its discordant warning, it was possible to navigate the wheels along a perfect boulevard. One could see that the street had been wrested from the prairie by the mere process of running up shacks in two parallel rows, so far apart that a man at one front door could not cover, with any chance of good target practice, a man facing him in the opposite doorway.

The street stuck tenaciously to history; it

breathed of the days when bullocks were saddled like horses to the springless Red River ox-carts to convey supplies from point to point in lieu of trains, when shacks and barns and a general store or a livery stable were its decoration instead of the brick and stone erections of to-day, and when planks stretched across the muddy earth for crossings. A herd of buffalo might have stampeded along its entire length without doing any harm ; indeed I should much prefer to meet buffalo in Portage-la-Prairie than a camel loaded with brushwood in a narrow bazaar of Cairo. There I have been forced to walk underneath the camel since there was not room for both of us. But this yawning street invited the world. One might contemplate the sunrise at one end and the sunset at the other in an uninterrupted view.

My inquiries as to where I could find a Red River ox-cart, dead or alive, elicited discouraging shakes of the head, until one citizen, more enterprising than the rest, rushed out of the hotel, and shortly returned with a photograph taken in 1880 of the last ox-train pulling out of Portage. Clumsy, springless affairs with two huge wheels, drawn by small oxen and limited in capacity, these carts could defy the worst prairie roads. For the transport of families, however, they must have been less practical than the roomy, four-wheeled "prairie schooners" with white canvas tops used in the States. I looked at the old-fashioned silver print thoughtfully. Only a day or two after it had been taken, the swift locomotive had for ever ousted the cart from



A HERD OF BUFFALO MIGHT STAMPEDE ALONG THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF A PRAIRIE TOWN MAIN STREET WITHOUT DOING ANY HARM

its long reign on the prairies. A page of Canadian history had been turned. The vehicle that had succeeded the portages of the daring voyageurs and the dogs of the Fur Companies, which had doubtless served the Scotch settlers of Lord Selkirk in the stormy days prior to the rise of Napoleon, was broken up for kindling.

For over twenty miles the road beyond Portage maintained its undeviating straightness, ornamented on either side with huckleberry bushes, badger weed, tall wolf willow, and the silvery berry plant under whose beautiful leaves the prairie chicken is said to nestle for food and shelter. The natural hedges were bright with wild raspberry, and the tiny heart-shaped leaves of the poplars waved and laughed merrily as we went by. King birds fluttered and darted along the furrows, and more than once I watched them swarm—half a hundred together—in full cry after their natural enemy the hawk, who—the tables happily turned—was taking rapid flight to the horizon.

The drivers, having carefully invited road prophecies at the Portage garages, wore an air of grim disgust and expressed their professional opinion, in no uncertain terms, of prairie highways, prairie roughness, and prairie mud. A chauffeur's point of view is intimately associated with intake valves, timing gears and tyres, and one is not surprised that he should detest a bad road with easy profanity and a suggestion of brimstone. After all, it is hard not to bear a poor road ill-will instead of affection and toleration. Yet, so long as one is busy resenting its

defects and its bodily assaults, and anathematizing the "idiots" who built it, one is liable to wholly miss its inspiration and its message. Do not highways mark the rate of human progress? Have not nations risen from obscurity to greatness and world power along their trodden ways, to vanish again into obscurity while their roads endured? The roads of Cæsar and Napoleon still seam the Old World, though ancient Rome and the "Little Corporal" are gone. The Red River carts have made way for the automobile, but the trail across the prairies westward remains.

When the long, winding fringe of trees which drew their life from the Assiniboine disappeared at last to the south, the soil had already become lighter and the car sped along into that huge, open world smoothly and noiselessly, as though entering on tiptoe into a great surprise. Centuries before the voyageurs of the Hudson Bay Company had paddled their canoes along the amber waters of the river, singing their gay *chansons* as their flotillas floated to and from old Fort Garry. It was not difficult to imagine one of these voyageurs, transformed into the motorist, abandoning for the nonce the dancing canoe and springing into the tonneau for a flight, as on tireless wings, to the heart of Pelt Land; scudding past Indian tepees and groaning and squeaking ox-carts, threading the living avenues of the herded buffalo, scattering the hawks and the prairie chickens, and now and then running a mad race with the coyote or the prairie fire, while the prairies waved their myriad grasses in tributary obeisance to the new monarch of the wild.

The sense of dreariness and disenchanting isolation which had come with the first and sudden contact with the prairie was beginning to disappear. Much of the land was untouched and had the charm of unspoilt virgin soil, free from disillusionizing barbed wire fences held up by ugly, untrimmed posts. The soil, too, had changed from an intense blackness to the softer brown of a sandy loam. Constructionally, however, the road showed very little improvement. At times it looked abject and sadly in need of repair.

At some indeterminate point we lost the main travelled highway. Then suddenly our path swerved, reeled round the back of a hut, cut through a wheat field and unceremoniously ran into a swamp.

We turned round and sought refuge in flight over the grass. But the ground gave way and the wheels cut down into the soil until we came to rest on the hubs and axles. We could neither advance nor retreat.

The rear wheels were quietly and unobtrusively endeavouring to disappear from sight. We therefore set to work to raise them and to build up the earth solidly underneath. We managed to raise the car with the jack; we requisitioned everything to hand—sheaves of wheat, tree boles, and boulders. We practically constructed a new road, and having put on the anti-skid chains so as to gain more traction, we shot the car back into safety again. There was then nothing to do but search for a fork in the road some miles back.

Along the line of retreat was a farmhouse,

where I peered in at the kitchen window for signs of life. A man of the British immigrant type was drinking soup out of a bowl. He came out cautiously with a dog. My abuse of the road struck no responsive chord in him. If we had only kept straight on through the swamp, he declared coldly, we should have come to a little white house, and a road that would have led us straight to Brandon. The only other thing for me to do was to go east four miles, then strike south for two miles, then keep on due west for about eight miles through woods, after which I should find a road which would lead me due north.

"You can't miss that turn," said the man, waving his hand down the road. He returned without further ado to the soup-basin, while the dog, evidently slower of decision, lingered behind to eye me suspiciously.

I had heard that phrase: "You can't miss the turn!" before, and I was now beginning to doubt the sanity of the men who uttered it. I had always missed the right road on such occasions, partly because of the confusing and unfamiliar compass directions, and also because of the incorrectness of the mileages. However, my position on the map having been made approximately clear, I started off again, and though the roads were supremely indifferent in quality, the presence of sand had a cheering effect as we struck drier ground. The ruts were dry and a profusion of bushland gave shelter from the wind. The road indulged in no more pranks, but became frank and well-behaved.

At first, the land flung itself up into great barren hills sprinkled with various stunted growths, and then it gently rose and fell in solid waves. Tiny lakes lay in the hollows of the bluffs, full of reeds which gave shelter to moor hens. Then came homely, pastoral scenes—fields of golden grain, cows browsing on rich pasture, and farmhouses embowered within plantations of sheltering trees.

Twenty miles short of Brandon, we caught the first view of the prairie trail. Where fences had given place to open prairie, well-defined wheel marks led diagonally away from the road as if intent upon making a short cut to our destination. We followed them in unrestricted freedom, the car gently bounding along a slightly undulating surface which never the spade nor the plough of a man had touched, never the ditch-digger had disturbed nor the surveyor surveyed. This was the wild and untrammelled path of our fathers, economizing time and distance, worn by trapper, Indian and pioneer, and preserved, by some marvellous accident of Chance, to become the finest natural road on which I had ever travelled.

It had mystery, it had solitude. The settlers' houses had disappeared. So had the human mile-stones, the interminable telephone poles. Green-brown lines marked the swales of the unending sod. The distance was pinkish-purple, the sky blue, the horizon steel and indigo.

The world was silent, majestic in its hush and sense of arrested motion. It was a treeless, lonely expanse, cut by wheels of waggons, scarcely

furrowed by rains, worked here and there into lumpy incrustations by the feet of cattle. There was no other sign of man.

It was grand and large, unspoilt and primordial. It was the real West at last !

CHAPTER XI

BRANDON lies in a depression, and our first glimpse of it was obtained from a bridge across the Assiniboine. It appeared to be a large, prosperous city, fringed with neat, wooden suburbs and outlying farms. I was presently to learn that latterly land values had taken a big rise, but that, in spite of material prosperity, old timers were still a little chary of patronizing the fine new railway hotel. Certainly, to the farmer, however wealthy he may have grown with the years, the magnificence of the hotel to which the citizens directed me, would appear less a sign of material progress than of decadence in a once sturdy community.

History would furnish more or less justification for this conservative attitude. The present city sprang logically out of the great boom of 1882, when the prairie was pegged out and canvas tents formed the homes of the prospective citizens. Life was boisterously gay and careless. There were plenty of young bloods in those days whose money, furnished by foolish English parents, was burning holes in their pockets, and who conceived the idea of a club-house amid the tents. The club-house had a popular corner, the bar. It presumably offered the ensnaring luxuries of

games of chance. It certainly brought "society" to the arms of those young gallants who had deserted it in the old country and who yearned for the social graces of club life and fox hunting. But the bubble of revelry and carelessness burst at last, as bubbles will, and on the downfall of the club, many of its former patrons left Brandon, reformed and wiser men for their fleeting glimpse of the doubtful joys of an embryo city amid the oddly-associated tents of the adventurer and the sons of toil. The club-house has become a hotel, its former glory lost amid more modern structures of brick and stone. The canvas town, too, has long since given way to comfortable residences and occasional gardens, and Brandon looks out on the swift, muddy waters of the river as staid and almost as large and important as Winnipeg itself.

A rime frost lay over the city as we left Brandon, although the weather was clear and bright and seemingly milder than on the day before. Such frosts, I was informed, were more vital and threatening to the owners of outlying farms than a political change in the Government or the possible end of the world. The man who can invent some method to keep Jack Frost away during September and October of each year stands an excellent chance of being crowned King of Canada, with a pension for his descendants for all time.

The beauty of the average prairie town is not so conspicuous as to induce one to linger for its contemplation. Yet, outside of Brandon, there was beauty without even the asking, in the superb view of the pink and purple hills of the

Assiniboine. Accompanied by Mr. E——, an architect in heavy overcoat and goggles, we followed the river at a respectful distance across open and fenced-in prairie, along level and undulation, over bad lands and great tracts where timber was more or less abundant. Here and there was the wild tangle of bush or swamp; here and there alkali outcroppings made the earth around a small pond or "sloo" glisten white in the sun, treacherous alike, when wet, for wheel or foot. One moment I found myself commenting on the dryness of the region; the next a road which had long since given up any hope of reformation, splashed us from head to foot with mud, apparently in full confidence that what it wasted upon us did not matter since the morrow's rains would furnish abundant moisture.

The railroads still served us with unprotected level crossings whose danger was minimized on the prairie by their charming frankness. No hiding here of those glistening but murderous rails behind banks or trees! A casual glance revealed to the most careless passer-by half the railroad system of Canada, and a locomotive that caught a motorist unawares would deserve its human prey. Track and right of way were enclosed with barbed wire, and at each crossing this was extended at a right-angle to the rails, between and parallel with which was a row of sharp-edged, closely-laid wooden bars, supposed to induce cattle and horses to eschew a private journey along the line.

As we motored gaily along in the warm sunshine, Mr. E—— pointed out the different prairie

growths lining the sides of the road, the spear grass with its silvery sheen, the tufts of sage too dwarfed and scattered to be classified as bush, the red haws of the prairie rose.

“Only a month ago,” he said enthusiastically, “the heavy rains made the whole countryside beautiful with a coloured carpet of flowers. I never before saw the prairies look so lovely,” he added with conviction.

I pointed to a lonely house surrounded by maples and poplars. “The farms are doing their best as well as the rain to relieve the bareness of the landscape, I see! Those trees are more than a good wind shield. They add a positive touch of home and permanence.”

Now and then Indians in “store clothing” passed us in buggies and were quite willing to be photographed to the tune of a “quarter” in the palm of their hard, brown hands. At Elkhorn, where the car of the school inspector was waiting to pilot us to Moosomin, in Saskatchewan, we came presently upon the Indian school of the reservation, where the Red Man, through his children, is being tamed to modern uses. Already he has been shorn of his embroidered tunic, his scalping knife and his war-whoop, though he still roams for the sake of barter and avoids the towns. Canada has made him a nominal Christian, but he still resents the invasion of the Red Man’s liberties.

“Hide papoose!” he cries. “White man come steal him for his school!”

The Dominion Government, however, has never had any conspicuous difficulty in handling

the Red Man. It has always rejected the theory of the United States that the Indian has no right to the territory over which he wanders. There is a separate department for the administration of affairs among the 125,000 Indians of the country. Their reservations have been guarded from the encroachments of land grabbers. Though many of them have to be fed to-day at the expense of the Government, the demoralizing effect of such charity is fully recognized. While their fathers yet dream of the day when the buffalo will return to the Red Man and two mountains will belch forth mud to destroy the Pale-faces, the children are learning civilization. It is they who will spread the seed.

The way now led us through a wild bushland crossed and recrossed by the blindest of trails. There was not a vestige of a constructed highway—only a “road” that wandered as it listed over the broken ground. Alone, I should have been lost a hundred times, but the school inspector had managed to scrape acquaintance with all the intricacies of turns and cork-screwings and zig-zaggings of a trail that defied the compass and whirled one dizzily up and down in its attempt to baffle all human calculation of direction. It would turn and back and then go ahead. It would stop dead or fade away and defy sight or scent to pick it up again, and it was soon evident that its nefarious intent was to lose us in the bushland wilderness and there leave us to the coyotes.

It of course failed in all this. But it succeeded, at least, in putting us over the border into Saskatchewan at a point where two paths crossed

one another at right angles, and handing us over to the untender mercies of a trail quite as unscrupulous and disreputable as itself. Only when we reached the little town of Fleming did the way finally straighten itself out and give us a good, self-respecting road all the way to Moosomin.

Moosomin! A name to make you smile! A town hardly big enough to hold its own name, open at both ends wide to the prairie! A town bravely springing out of nothing, gazing dauntlessly upon the wilderness, nursing big dreams! As we drew up at the crossways, however, everything had a deserted appearance. Had I caught the town unawares? Had the whole population migrated? Doors stood open, dogs yawned on doorsteps in the warm sun of the afternoon, shops were empty, and the daily activities of the human units had been suspended. A woman, then a child appeared, only, however, to accentuate the air of desolation. Next a man straggled into view, and then another, and we learnt that all Moosomin was at the fire-buckets. The town dairy was in flames.

The town hall in which I had the opportunity of meeting and chatting with the Mayor and other officials, appeared to be a very much overworked institution. In one corner it was the town opera house, in another the fire station, in still another the dance hall, and in yet another the council chamber. The building may have had a dozen other occupations which it was too modest to reveal to the casual, possibly flippant, visitor from the outside; but it looked capable of

discharging all its multifarious duties with supreme good nature.

Having breakfasted early next morning with John Chinaman, in a clean, but scrubby, little restaurant, we left sturdy, patriotic little Moosomin for Regina, conscious that the prairies would be a dull stagnant world indeed if they were not dotted with these incipient towns. Without any apparent history, these little prairie communities are, notwithstanding, going to be the salvation of the Dominion for many decades to come. They will prevent overcrowding in the great civic centres. Tolstoy raved and fulminated against city life, but he himself was a living example that the world has progressed mostly by its means. In a young country, new cities can be made to fit perfectly into the mosaic of modern conditions and demands if only we refuse to let them grow haphazard and to injure the quality of the human stock by defective distribution. If, undoubtedly, the human seedling flourishes best in the country, on the farm, in the village, it surely attains its best fruition where mind can react upon mind, and men and women think out and solve the problems which face the human race.

In the administrative standards which these prairie towns set for themselves rather than in their architectural models, one can see much of Canada's promise. It is possible that the prairie town may carry on our race to its divine destiny by surer and nobler ways than we in the old country have done. It is possible, too, that the prairie is producing a man who will reduce our complicated social and political life to the terms

of absolute simplicity, although at present he seems to some of us to be living in a one-dimensioned and shrunken world, where so much is apparently lost, so much given back to the waste.

Our Moosomin pilot anticipated for us some one hundred and sixty miles of rough trail and road, a good deal of cross-country and bushland travel, together with a sprinkling of bad lands or deserted alkali stretches. He was experienced and patient as we struck the muddy roads, having previously motored over the same route to Indian Head and made fast time. But mud and swamp enveloped us on every side, and we presently found ourselves in a farmyard with no semblance of a road in any direction. I felt sorry for the young man. He had done his best to please, he had given me delicious freedom from responsibility, and he was aiming for short cuts. But his memory played him false, and he figuratively threw up his hands when the turkeys and chickens proved the fallacy of his topography. Somewhere in the very beginning he had missed a fork in the rolling, bush trail. But a hawk would have missed it. Indeed, no guide on the prairies had been altogether certain of his bearings, since there is either a confusing monotony in these great levels or the plough and fence obliterate or usurp the familiar trails.

The farm stood upon a ridge or elevation commanding a view of wheat fields that stretched to the horizon line. So much land, so much wealth, yet the first gale bid fair to flatten out that flimsy, shabby frame house! It stood

stark and open to the world, treeless, gardenless, fenceless, the gold of the wheat reaching to the litter of crazy sheds and the scatter of the wood pile. Every available inch of soil had been turned up by the plough. The interior was not belied by the dreariness of its externalities. In the living-room, the red curtains, stretched across one corner, hid a bed. On the painted floor lay two rugs. The furniture was a table, a stove, a rocking-chair and a couch. The ceiling was formed of sheet iron stamped with a decorative classical device. The walls were painted white and were hung with hard and staring family photographs. Leading from this room was the dining-room, bare of floor and ornamented by a long table and half a dozen chairs, a stove and an almanac. The kitchen stood open to the prairie. An uncarpeted staircase led to the bedrooms. The windows were screened, the sashes being ropeless and the upper one immovable. To hold the lower half of the window open, it would be necessary to prop it up by a stick from the wood-pile.

Though by this time I had come across more than one farmhouse similarly bare and uninviting, it was difficult to understand why one blessed with the wealth of these golden fields made no effort to beautify his dwelling, or why he should store his money in a city bank and deny himself the comforts and ordinary graces of life. Why, when the country is usually the last refuge of the sweetest things of social existence in Europe, had not these men brought from the common home of the race some lingering benign influence of

the humble but picturesque house with the oriel window, the gabled and vine-clad porch, the thatched cottage bright with flowers and the places of human abode endeared to us by their atmosphere of settled repose? Was it possible that in the simplicity of his home, he was unconsciously following some law that was guiding Canada to paths of Spartan greatness and to national virility? Was he, perhaps, the true man of the people and, with something of patriarchal imagery, a man of God calling complicated human civilization back to simplicity and the soil?

After all, how artificial may be the Old World judgment which, with just a touch of pity and Pharisaic superiority, refuses the respect and honour due to the pioneer farmer! Those frail wooden walls are shelter for greatness—for the courage that is winning nationhood and empire from land that the world scoffed at as unproductive even while the farmer's hand was on the plough.

A hawk would have missed it, but we found it at last—the fork we had lost early in the morning—and by following a trail, at times invisible, at others crossing ploughed land or invading farmyards, we reached the smooth tree-lined highways which lead in and out of the attractive little town of Qu'Appelle. Here we crossed one of those old trails that, trodden out by Indians and early trappers with their dog sledges, runs due north into the wild bushland and forests. Many were the loads of pelts brought down over these north-and-south trails from the Arctic Circle to the forts of the old fur-trading companies—furs



WE REACHED THE SMOOTH TREE-LINED EARTH-ROADS NEAR QU'APPELLE

which were sold in the markets of England when our grandmothers were babes in arms. More than once I had longed to turn the car northward to trace these ancient trails of the traders that seemed to lead to the Pole itself.

The oncoming dusk caught us with still thirty more miles to go before reaching Regina.

And the evening sun descending
Sets the clouds on fire with redness,
Burns the broad sky like a prairie.

The West was ablaze with gold; overhead clouds of rose and purple flamed and flared and faded till low on the opposite horizon line the moon rose in an intangible sea of pure ether. The stars appeared. Yellow gophers, little brothers of the prairie dog, scampered to their holes; a solitary coyote slunk off to his lair disturbed by the sound of the motors. A hawk winged his silent flight overhead. A porcupine waddled clumsily along beside the road in search of his abiding place.

It was a time for silence and the solitude of thought—an hour when the exquisite beauty of the prairie might illuminate the spirit and banished to an infinite remoteness the commonplace cares and annoyances of the day.

Regina, the capital of Saskatchewan, was quite as wonderful, quite as modern, and almost as spacious as Winnipeg. Shop windows were still full of the tragic photographs of the havoc wrought by a recent cyclone, which had cut a swath of ruin and destruction through the city's heart. From the steps of the new and palatial Parliament buildings one could look out over the bosom of the tiny

lake to the scene of the disaster. At the club, I heard a good story of a worthy and prominent citizen who had been caught by the cyclone at the moment of his bath.

“That man had the time of his life for the next few minutes,” said my interlocutor over a cocktail in the smoke-room. “His bathroom was instantaneously demolished, and before he could scramble out of his tub, he found himself sailing over the city on the breeze at a fifty-knot clip. He was always a man of quick resources and ready expediency: that’s why, no doubt, the cyclone picked him out from the crowd. Anyhow he never once lost his presence of mind in spite of his Lady Godiva appearance, but he seized hold of the ‘hot and cold’ taps with both hands and started steering his craft. Would you believe it, he found it answered the helm like a cat-boat, and he at once turned it a point or two so as to bring him to the waterworks. There he descended, filled the tub again and calmly finished his interrupted bath! You can take it from me that he’s the proudest man in Regina to-day!”

“I—well——” I paused. There was nothing to be said.

Regina was certainly a good place to live in, as the pamphlets regarding the city declared, and I needed no further convincing. It seemed to me, viewed from the club windows, a great city open to the world of sunshine and air, and on tip-toe with expectation of the future. The streets bordering the heart of the city were lined with green lawns and trees and thickly sprinkled with motor-cars; indeed, Regina is said to have



WHEN THE WIND STRUCK REGINA

Rossie

more automobiles per head of population than any other city in the Dominion. It has in fairly easy accessibility the beautiful Qu'Appelle Valley and its chain of lakes, which have been made known to the outer world through the poems of Miss Pauline Johnson. The hotels, only average in quality, are numerous and always full. Indeed, it was only through the foresight of a prominent motorist that I was able to get accommodation. The leading hotel hummed like a beehive all the time I was there. Many of the guests appeared to be travelling business men, young and alert—what the Canadians call “live wires.” The old, beslippered English variety of commercial traveller, hugging a worn kit-bag, would be sadly out of place amid these fledgling men—giants as bargainers and sellers, and bristling all over with trade pointers, crisp and terse as the advertising pages of the Canadian and American magazines.

One of these men, representative of an English house, had overtaken me several times on the prairies. He was a red-cheeked Londoner, with a touch of cockney mother-wit that overflowed in good-natured, almost aggressive banter. The first I knew of his presence in Regina was when, sitting in the dining-room, I saw a man rushing up to me.

“Don't!” exclaimed the whirlwind. “Don't touch that glass of water,” pointing to the glass which I was holding in my hand.

“Why, how do you do—and what's the matter?”

“You don't know Regina,” he said more

calmly, shaking hands. "That water's——" He stopped, rubbing the pit of his stomach significantly.

I looked at the glass.

"Ottawa?" I asked, suspicious of a joke.

He nodded.

I sniffed the glass cautiously.

"Nobody drinks the water in Regina, old chap, if he's wise. Jolly bad medicine, I can tell you."

"Any more of this further on?" I asked grimly, pointing westward. "Here, waiter, give me a cup of coffee."

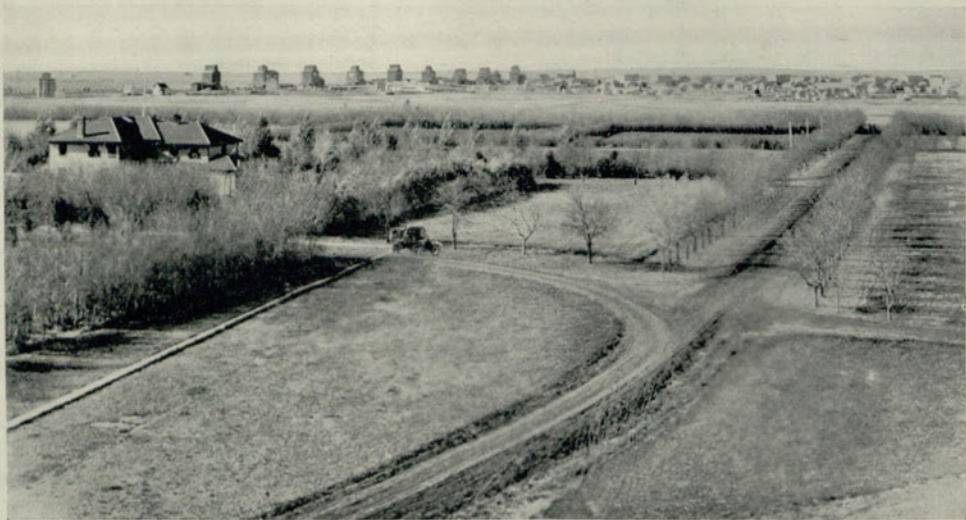
"About the same all through the prairies. They can't do much to it except doctor it."

"Alkali?"

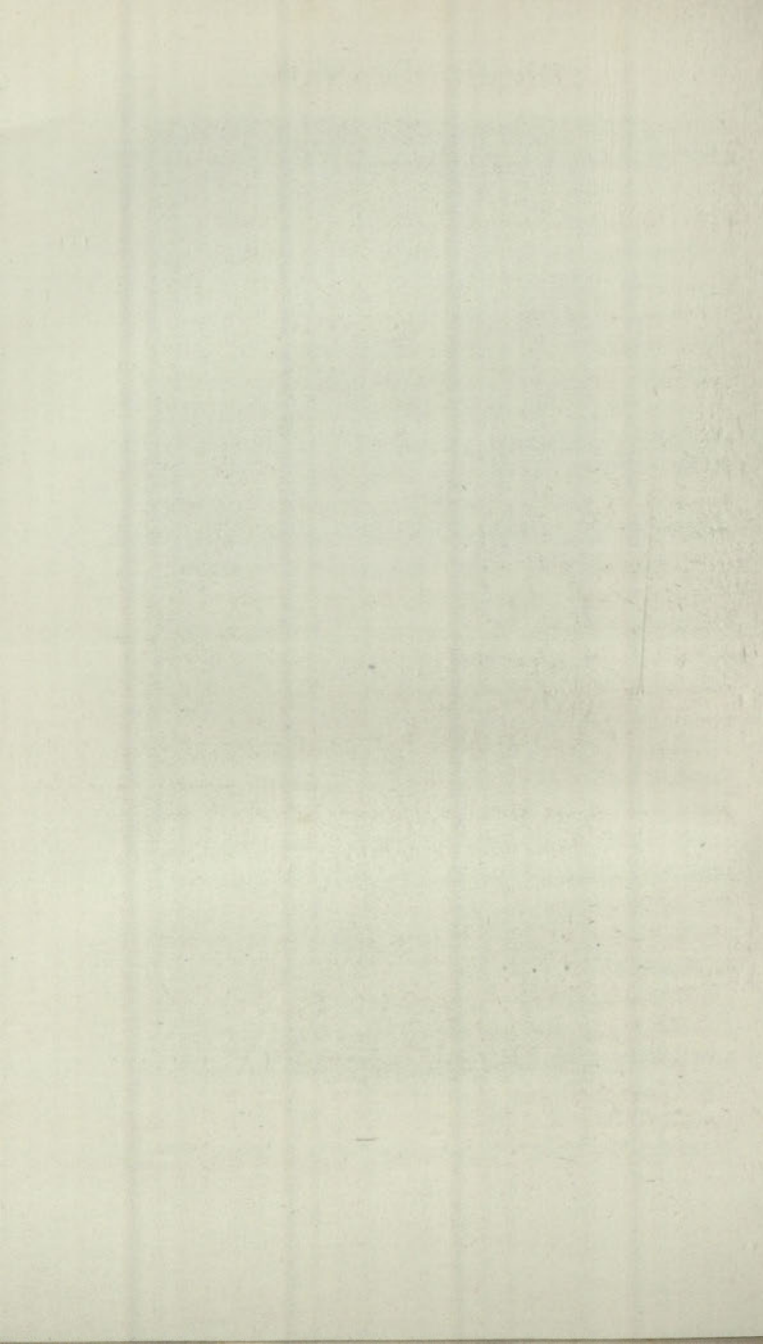
"I suppose so; anyhow it's beastly stuff—worse than a dose of salts. Well, good luck to you. I've got to hurry off now. See you in Vancouver!"

And the "live wire" from London flashed out.

The run to Moosejaw, under the pilotage of two other cars, took us over characteristic open prairie. For fifty odd miles or so, there was little in evidence but rich grass. But out of sight of the railway, where there is no temptation for monopolists to hold the land for a fabulous figure, there lay a rather thickly-settled farming country where the glutinous black loam grows some of the finest wheat in the world. South of our road lay the drift hills of the Missouri plateau, forming the great pile of rock believed to have been deposited there by huge masses of floating ice



AT INDIAN HEAD THERE ROSE THE MYSTERIOUS BULK OF GRAIN ELEVATORS WITH THE SOLEMNITY OF PYRAMIDS



in some remote glacial age. To the north stretched an apparently endless plain of gravelly and sandy soil, with coarse grass, and every now and then a white, alkali slough. Farmers, however, I was told, are rapidly overcoming the nuisance of the alkali, for by repeated ploughing they manage to get good crops out of what are proverbially considered lands unfit either for cattle or cereals.

Moosejaw greeted us with a complimentary dinner and pamphlets much in the fashion of Port Arthur, though it seemed "out" for capital rather than for hay-fever patients and summer tourists.

"Moosejaw," it boasted, "is not a city bare, open and treeless, as so many have been led to believe the cities of our prairie west to be. Moosejaw has its parks and open spaces, and almost at its doors are spots of rare, entrancing beauty with nature at her best, and, beyond, the open prairie with its waving fields of grain, its happy smiling homes—a mighty land—a mighty background for a great city. Moosejaw—proud, rich and prosperous—mighty to-day, but still mightier to-morrow, for the world lies at the door of Moosejaw, and the smile of confidence is on her face."

Moosejaw's eloquence swept one bodily off one's feet. It made one involuntarily exclaim—

"Now, there's a city to live in! And the fellow who wrote that is the kind of citizen to have about. Enthusiasm and confidence—they're the things that set the world moving. Compared to that man we're dead and half buried over in England. Who of us can say or feel half that

about his native city, let alone of a place in which he happens to have cast his lot merely by accident?"

The start from Moosejaw was made early one sunny Sunday morning under the pilotage of Mr. D——. Swift Current, our objective, was over one hundred miles away, across difficult country, and the obliging pilot knew the road like a book. We made no inquiries of farmers or others whom we met. D—— had been over the trails and pooh-poohed such adventitious aids to motor travel with a fine scorn.

We had been travelling at a fast clip along a good road for some time, when D—— spoke.

"Now it's time we made that turn!" he announced calmly.

"What turn?"

"Why, the one that brings us to the town over there." He pointed carelessly to some smoke ten miles off.

"That's Mortlach, isn't it?"

"Yes! I'll be glad to get there. This road is one we usually cover at a thirty-knot speed, and now look at it—soggy and sloppy."

We bumped with a violent jerk over a chuck-hole.

"I've been going to fill up that hole for the last two years." He peeled off his coat as a tribute to the growing intensity of the sun's rays. "But I never have got round to it. Ah! there's the turn." He pointed to the crossways, as like other crossways as peas in a pod are like one another.

"How did you know it?"



"I COUNTED TEN MILES FROM THAT LAST SCHOOL HOUSE"

“Oh! That’s easy. I counted ten miles from that last school-house. Dead easy with these sectional roads! You know the land in the townships is surveyed in quadrilateral townships; each contains thirty-six sections of one square mile or six hundred and forty acres. A road allowance one chain wide runs between each section north and south, and between every alternate section east and west, making a network of roads crossing at right angles. See?”

“And what do we do now?”

“Just go dead west for sixteen miles!”

It sounded very much as though he had said, “Keep straight on for fifteen hundred miles, then first turn to your left and you will be at the South Pole.” We had neither sign-posts, mile-stones nor other landmarks—only his wonderful mental log—to guide us over the great waves of earth that hung suspended like frozen billows stretching unbroken from the southern to the northern horizon lines, and in whose troughs and on whose crests there came the sensation of going on for ever without effort or volition. There were purple hills in the offing, set off by smudges of dark brown around us from the ripening flax.

Forty-five miles from Moosejaw D—— began to show signs of restiveness; standing up, he scanned the sea of golden stubble for some familiar landmark.

“I want to hit that old government trail,” he explained. “Any of these turns ought to lead us to it, but we’ll take the one that looks the most inviting.”

We indulged thereupon in a little picking and

choosing. The one by the farm had a ragged, neglected look. We passed it in silent contempt. The one flanked by a tiny, lonely wooden school-house had a more civilized mien, but we did not like to appear too eager with one every mile offering itself, so we sped on, until we came to a road that had an air of not associating with its inferiors. The telephone wires, however, which we had been following, continued undeviatingly westward.

"Turn south," came the curt order from the guide, and we turned. It was extravagantly wide for a road allowance—"one of the early ninety-nine footers," as the guide explained: "sort of road the farmers grudge as a free gift to traffic." In the middle it was crowned, then it became streaked with grass to the sides, as certain cuts of bacon are streaked with "lean," while nearer the fences were other drive-ways joining and re-joining the main one at intervals. One could not take kindly to these roads that were only half roads. Running at right angles to one another, distances appeared to be unduly increased, while in the obliteration of the old, direct trails by the plough and the barbed wire fence, valuable historic landmarks were being irretrievably lost, which should be preserved by the government or marked by small stone monuments ere they are completely obliterated.

D—— looked back at the telephone poles which we were fast leaving behind, as if he were gazing for the last time at civilization before plunging into the unknown.

"I guess those heavy wires will come our

way all right further on," he muttered. "We'll strike the railroad or a farm-house a little way up here." One could see he was in doubt as to the nature of the trick the road might play him, and that he was trying to keep up his flagging self-assurance by a little talking aloud.

The road soon showed signs of fickleness. It varied at every half-mile. It lost its fence, then regained it. It lost its wheel ruts, then picked them up again. Then the prairie grasses, merely held back by a strip of wire fence, boldly crept into the roadway, cheerfully sprouted all over it, oblivious of time and change and the ruthless hand of man that had swept away their legitimate lord and master, the buffalo. A microscope, then, would have failed to find the road, and the barbed wire and the sun became our sole guide in endeavouring to "hit" the government trail. The ground rose and fell in huge undulations, narrowing our horizon line down to the limits of a five-acre field. At times, limp wire, twisted into the form of a gate, swung a thin thread of prohibition across our path and had to be contemptuously tossed aside. Here and there the long narrow parallel trails of the bygone buffalo paths, worn bare in the grasses along which the animals used to march in single file, streaked their way across the landscape as if patiently waiting for the buffalo on the long march to the water-holes and the sweet grasses over the distant bluff.

At last we separated, scouting, D—— climbing a lofty swell of ground for some message from the haunts of man. We found it in a puff of smoke far on the extended horizon. We could

see a tiny speck of a train moving upon a yellow blur, out of which rose the mysterious bulk of grain elevators with the solemnity of Pyramids. A trail gradually came into sight, cutting diagonally across the grasses through which we were ploughing our way. All in good time we "hit" it, and then came the "poles"—going our way, too, but where they came from out of the south no one knew. Nothing apparently would stay with us, however. By the high bank of the railroad the "wires" vanished again; the railroad shot miles to the north at the point where the trail and we ultimately met, and before we were aware of it, the trail had also disappeared into the grasses, running to earth as might a hunted fox, leaving us with only a pair of crazy wheel ruts which a farm and a "sloo" finally annihilated completely. Navigation commenced. Willy nilly, we kept on westward, trusting in the law of good—in the blind instinct with which the most deceptive of ruts and footprints hug the towns.

Another hour passed and saw us still struggling more or less aimlessly on, but keeping the sun ever on our left front, picking up ruts and following them across the ploughed earth and over the stubble, pulling up at the huts or the tents of the homesteaders for needful orientation in a trackless, formless land, and keeping on and on until the eyes were at last gladdened by the sight of the friendly government trail which led smoothly into our haven of Swift Current, and to the comfortable hotel facing a midget, wooden town hall and fire station combined.



A FARM AND AN ALKALI SLOUGH ANNIHILATED ALL THE WHEEL RUTS, AND NAVIGATION COMMENCED

Swift Current had the painful air of a town teething. There was a smell of paint and of undried mortar. The pavement lay about in chunks where it had been torn up bodily; in other places it was non-existent. Buildings were going up and others were coming down. The hotel had a look of indecision as to whether it should stay where it was or give way to an improved successor. Some buildings had no decision at all. Others were being excavated for; great gaps having been torn in the soil as if in expectation that houses and business buildings would crop up of their own accord from below if only given a chance to sprout. Some fine, modern edifices had already made their appearance, and had arrogantly chosen to air their superiority next to shanties. The middle of the road was the only safe place on which to walk.

Swift Current was in that stage of evolution or devolution which looks like revolution. It was a town to which a long-expected "boom" had come at last. You could see the "boom" in the piles of bricks, the cavernous holes, in the torn and bleeding streets, and in the tons of débris which necessitated circuitous navigation of the main arteries of communication. For a "boom" of an established town is very much like a tornado in the wide-spread devastation which is wrought.

Swift Current had found itself at last, and with the long-awaited cash in hand it was putting itself in order, hurrying to make for itself a place in history. It was spending its money on

the thing it knew and loved best—itself! It was not losing a minute. It was advancing, rushing, darting to its goal, and you could hear the wind whistle as it went.

CHAPTER XII

WE left the modest little town hall of Swift Current with the good wishes of the cordial Chief Magistrate and the uniformed fire chief. It happened to be the day before the open season for prairie chickens. Little wonder, then, that our citizen guide, Mr. M——, should have been armed with both gun and dog as he led the way into the open country in his bantam car. Every prairie man is a sportsman when the law allows. On that day, according to Mr. M——, no one would be accessible, no one could be inveigled into a moment's chat, a drink or a discussion of business. In fact, everybody would be out on the prairie or getting ready to start the slaughter of grouse, alias prairie chicken. The dogs might not be trained to the gun, might in fact refuse to point, and sit trembling at every shot as his own did. But that would not matter. The grouse fever would be in everybody's blood, and matters of everyday import would have to take care of themselves until some of the fever had been worked off.

The prairie chicken is practically the only wild thing that has not fled before civilization and the plough. Though it can still be found in the

stubble, it prefers the rolling bushland for cover and for rearing its young. Wherever there is underwood and a dip in the land, wherever there is coppice and brush and broken surface, there is prairie chicken. And prairie chicken makes every true prairie man's mouth water.

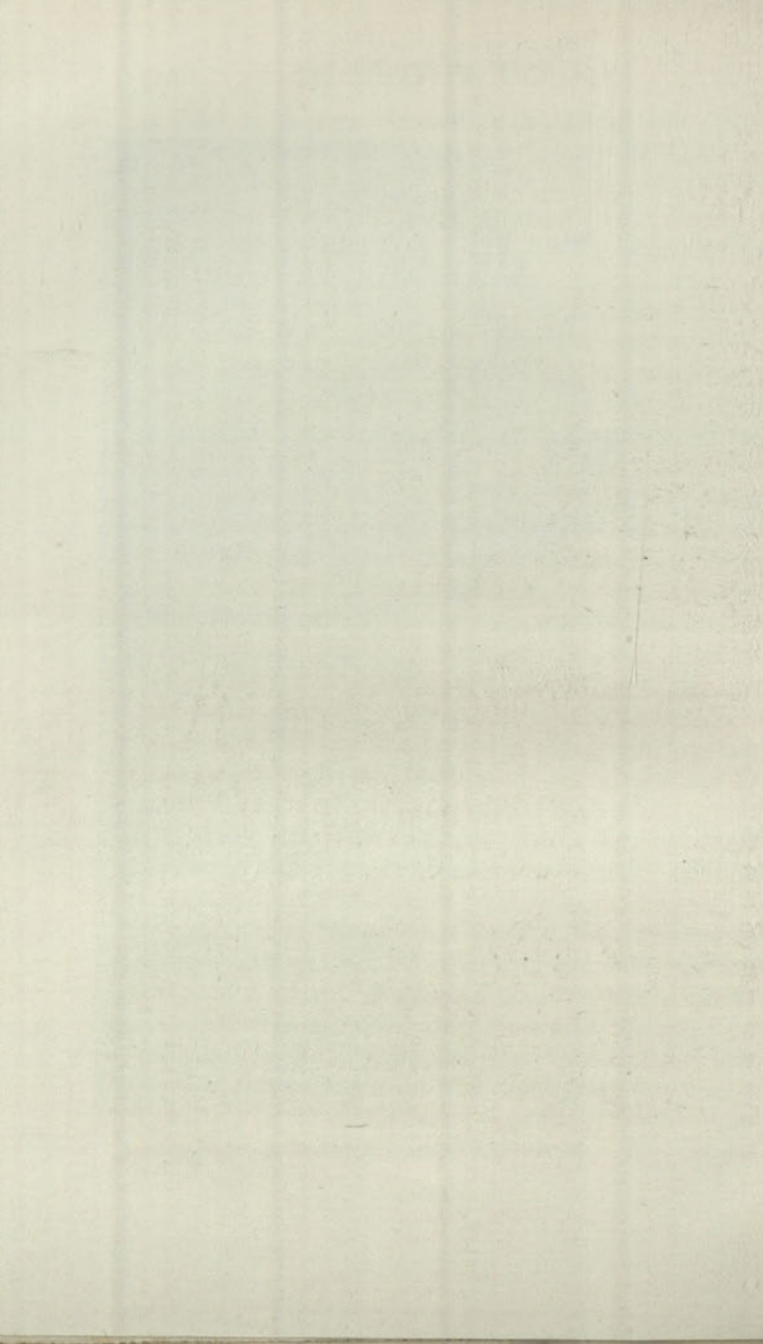
In the sterner business of trail hunting, the day soon became filled with those tragic experiences which arise from the impossibility of any man's memorizing these prairie routes for fifty or more consecutive miles. All our good friends, who had made generous sacrifices in volunteering to pilot, had missed the path soon after passing the limits of their previous zone of travel. Mr. M—— led us by short cuts of the most amazing description, wheeling and returning on his course at the most unexpected places, and darting across the rough stubble while his car swayed and pitched like a tiny craft caught in a heavy swell. We bumped through sand dust and furrows, manœuvring in wide sweeps like swift-wheeling cavalry until we picked up the railroad in the absence of any other recognized route. Gates had to be opened and shut incessantly, and it was evident that for at least half the time we were on no commonly recognized highway.

As we progressed across the prairies of Saskatchewan, it became more and more apparent that the difficulty which I was encountering was due, not to the system of sectional roads, but to frequent interruption in the system. In other words, where the land had not been taken up by farmers or homesteaders, the roads failed, beginning again in the cultivated areas. The task of



HOMESTEADERS TREKKING

Lewis Rice



the pilots was a difficult one, since they had to pick up the system again at the point where it began. Hence the manœuvring. Doubtless in a good many places we should have been able to make use of the old trails which ran direct between two points on our east-to-west route and formed short cuts. But these were rarely available, for the reason that they had been ploughed over by the farmers, who had failed to properly carry out the provisions of the law which demands of them that for every trail usurped they shall provide a road allowance suitable for vehicular traffic.

Our rudderless wanderings of the morning threatened to last eternally until we were finally put on the right path by a homesteader over whose ploughed lands and stubble we had bumped and jolted for an hour. I had seen some of the humble dwellings of the homesteaders before, but not at close range. The shelter of this particular pioneer was little more than a door and window with some clapboards arranged rectangularly around them. I believe there was a roof. I am certain there was a hen-coop and a wood pile. The man and his wife and children inhabited this domicile—probably the sequel of a tent. Nothing was in sight but the sky and their patch of cultivated ground. They had sacrificed everything—the teeming world, the humble fireside, kith and kin and known and loved ways—to win their birth-right in the soil, to gain what, after all, must at times seem to them a phantom freedom. The earth, stark, unlovely, unfriendly, limitless and unpeopled, treeless except for chance planting,

stared at them. One could read the pitiable story of a lot, yet more unlovely and unfriendly, which had determined them to challenge fate that they might have bread and liberty.

"Perhaps they don't feel their deprivations as much as we feel for them," had suggested an Englishman to me in Manitoba, where the subject had been casually broached. "Perhaps they're not so lonely as we think. There's the railroad, you know, and five miles away a neighbour. The schoolhouse is over the brow of the hill. A day's journey by team will bring them to a big town of the plains. And by next year they will be able to install that safety-valve of prairie life—the telephone!"

Nevertheless, for a long time the homesteader and his lot will haunt the traveller. He will picture him building the rude shanty, "hiring out" at first as labour on other farms to get his hand in and increase his capital, then in the spring buying a team of oxen to "break" the prairie so that it can be penetrated alike by sun and frost and transformed into a light, friable mould. It will be a couple of years before the first crop is garnered in—how much longer before the shanty will give place to a comfortable farmhouse, barn, machine shed, granaries and hog pens! And yet the young homesteader will perhaps be none the worse for having faced imperious necessity and for showing himself capable of so valiantly adapting himself to his environment. The danger is that, having gained a splendid victory over self and the prairie, prosperity will come too late to change imperious

habit. Riches in his pocket, but ignorance in his heart and poverty still in his externalities! Poor food, rancid coffee and a hell's own brew called tea, when the same amount of money would buy him the best and a reasonable attention to things culinary would ensure nourishing foods! The peasantry of Europe—the Italian with his good wine, the Hungarian “csikos” of the “puszta” with his goulasch, the German “Landsleute” with their “sauerkraut” and nourishing beer—might teach the homesteader something about kitchen gardens, poultry, and economy combined with good living. I seldom saw a vegetable garden, a flower or a fence in the vicinity of a shanty or farm, and I began to wonder if, in the homesteader's creed, comfort and any attempt at order or beauty were signs of frailty and failure. Was it, conversely, proof of strength and affluence to live on canned foods and go about in darns and patches? I had heard of a housekeeper rich enough to afford moths in her clothes-press in summer. Could a growing bank account, out here, indulge itself recklessly in shabbiness and disorder?

Long ridges began to compass us about like the Downs in an English landscape, and over them swept the stubble, spilling gold along a path bordered by the dark green of the bushland or the browns of flax. Grouse, apparently conscious of the unexpired armistice, would wing themselves forward and upward perilously close to our outstretched hands. Everywhere the eye caught waving fields of wheat—wheat climbing the undulations and spreading over the hollows,

wheat flanking the groups of circular stacks, wheat topping a distant ridge, making an afternoon call at the nearest homesteader's, rounding the pale alkali "sloo," and matching its wealth of gold with the silver of the prairie grasses, wheat marching on and on until it touched the crimson robes of the setting sun and the indigos of the far-away hills. The threshers were pouring their columns of smoke into the air and vomiting, with a noble scorn, feathery puffs of chaff forming a heap, then a mound, next a hill and finally a mountain of yellow waste. Several ducks broke from the cover of the reeds to scud down to a hollow where lay a weedy pond, and a flock of blackbirds swept up from the stubble into the sunny sky.

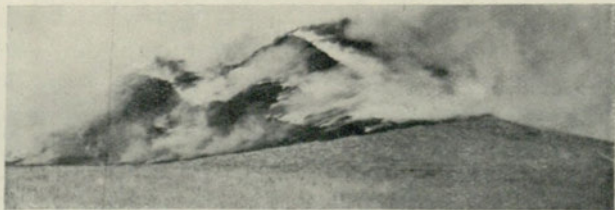
We halted beside a stream that wound through bunch grass and sage, appearing and disappearing with tantalizing invitation. Our pilot, with a couple of fellow-sportsmen whom he had picked up at Thompson, was advancing cautiously and crouchingly to the sheet of peat-coloured water. Crack! Crack! The hills sent the echo back over the sage and the bunch grass, and the stream gave up its dead in the shape of several brace of fish-duck—long-necked, tufted and beautifully marked creatures.

The prairie sportsman is as different from the home variety as chalk from cheese. He must train his own dogs, clean his own guns, do his own stalking. His judgment and his experience are called into play at every turn. He has an immense range of country in which to choose his beats, arrange his decoy birds, gather his own

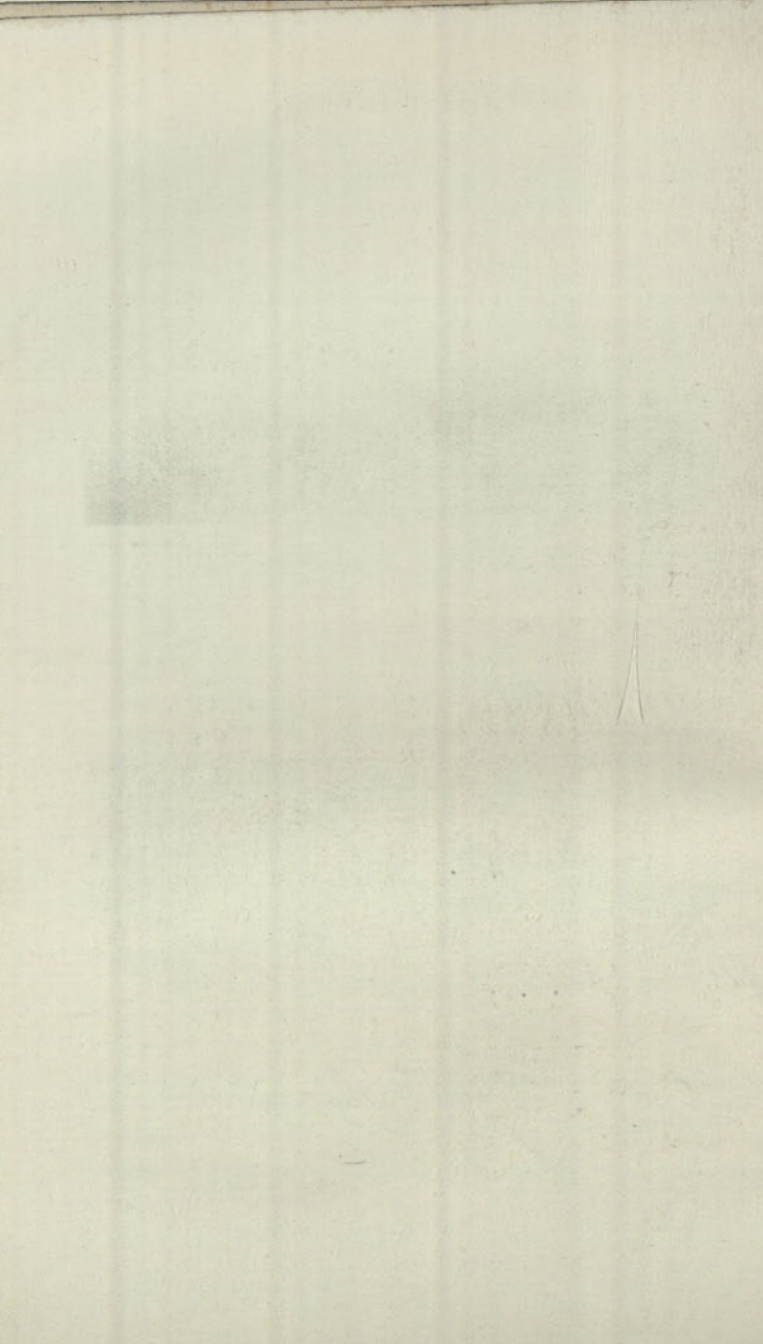


Broadbridge

THE THRESHERS VOMITED MOUNTAINS OF CHAFF WITH A NOBLE SCORN



THEN MAN SET THE GOLDEN WASTE ON FIRE



dead game, breed his dogs and generally look after his personal foraging. Often he cannot get back to his home until the next day, and he must find a night's lodging in a stray farmhouse or homesteader's shack, unless he prefers to make his camp in the chill darkness of the open. There is plenty of wildfowl—and plenty of hard work! Ground game is apparently of small account, generally consisting of the jack-rabbit and the cotton-tail.

As dusk fell, the country grew wilder and wilder, the presence of the tufted bunch grass indicating that we were beginning to leave the prairies of the golden wheat for the plains of the ranchman. A score of rods ahead a little grey puff of dust, fleeing ever on and defying us to overtake it, marked the flight of the pilot car. Behind us wheat and oat stacks stood out against a rolling skyline. Above us rose and fell the grass-covered hills, dark against a background of blazing chaff fires glowing like living coals in the sunset. The path grew more tortuous, ascending the steeps only to plunge down, blindly and recklessly, into the bush. There were the usual gates to open and shut, the usual fences to dodge, while one marvelled at the instinct of the men who threaded their way through the wilderness and the night, certain of their goal at Maple Creek along an apparently blind path of the Wild.

Maple Creek is one of the eastern outposts of the North-West Mounted Police, and before pulling out of the town on the morning succeeding our arrival, we drove to the outlying barracks. As we stopped before the little quadrangle forming

the barrack square, the place looked to be deserted. Close to the gate, however, we found a couple of men sweeping the path and dressed like rough and tumble vaudeville eccentrics, or some fantastic creatures out of the pages of "Alice in Wonderland." One could have played a game of chess with ease on their garments, which were baggy and patterned with immense black and white checks. The style gave utmost freedom to bodily movement. Comfort before elegance, and yet fanciful, airy, unenslaved!

It took some courage to address men fifty years ahead of their time.

"Excuse me," I said, breaking the ice rather gingerly, "but would you mind telling me where I can find the Commander?"

The chessboard addressed drew down his short balloon-like jacket, wriggled his neck as though arranging a collar which had once been there, and stared. I repeated the question. Still the unenslaved one remained dumb. I turned to the other in despair. His eyes were bulging; he opened his mouth and closed it. Then an unexpected voice over my shoulder made me jump aside.

"Against the orders," it said with military abruptness.

I turned and faced a tall soldierly figure in khaki and hard hat. My first North-West Mounted Policeman!

"You can't speak to those fellows. They're prisoners!"

He marched the "chessboards" off to the guard house as if to save them from further molestation by honest men.

The Commander and his small detachment being away on duty, we set off for the long ride to the Albertan boundary at Walsh, hoping to make Lethbridge before nightfall. But anything like speed at first was quite out of the question. The roads were positively alive with tiny yellow gophers. There were scores and hundreds of them as far as the eye could reach, and it looked as though progress could only be made over their crushed and mangled remains. They had burrowed under the roadway, and they sat up in the ruts waiting for us. They dared us to run over them, as they dare the badger to interfere with them while their sharp teeth saw through the wheat stems and lay whole tracts to waste. The only difference between us and the badger was that we could not catch the little rascals and he could! The gophers had decided that the trail suited them. In Montreal they would probably have selected the quiet and safe retreat of a street-car track.

They waited until the rubber wheels were upon them; then they turned tail, scampered to a hole in the rut, stood up, put their thumbs to their noses, and, turning a somersault, catapulted themselves into their subways. Before the car could say "Jack Robinson" they would bob up serenely thirty yards away, squeaking derisively. In their nice adjustments of quadrupedal locomotion to speedometer readings, those gophers were worthy of a place in the Hall of Fame.

Scores appeared to vanish under the wheels, get themselves in the spokes, clamber on to the radiator, leap on to the mud guards, revolve

gleefully on the axles, fall off, hit the ground, rebound on the windshield and disappear somewhere in the sky.

I grew nervous endeavouring to watch them all at once ; I caught the driver's arm, frantically gave the wheel a millionth part of a turn to save the little imps' lives, held my breath with anxiety forty times a second !

Fool ! The gophers always moved one-thousandth part of a second faster than the car. If we crawled along to the "Dead March in Saul," they crawled too. We put on a mile or two an hour : they exceeded it by just sufficient time to escape us. Another ten and they "flimmed" before us like a motion picture. Another ten and the earth was made of forked lightning. At top speed they vanished so fast that they imaged themselves on the human retina long after we had left their neighbourhood. Light and sound were lazy travellers compared with healthy gophers in Olympic training.

Sometimes on the open trails of the ranches, a string of horses, their curiosity aroused, would chase us for a long time—to gradually tail off to the pastures again when satisfied as to our harmless eccentricities. Often, however, they would gallop a short distance ahead of the radiator, playfully hurling huge clods of earth into our faces.

The day was superb. A rim of purple-blue hills rimmed the west and flanked us on both sides. Little white houses with red roofs stood out here and there against the blue sky. A long train snaked a line of black across the pinkish

earth, and occasionally a badger peeped out of his yawning and dangerous burrow in the dun roadway. The soil was as soft as Mexican adobe—as velvety and friable as that of Egypt—while the short-cropped grass had a dull golden sheen, picked out by the delicate pale green of the sage brush. We were in the region of the bunch grass which cures itself, and turns to hay before it is cut, and we were ringed around for many hundreds of miles by the plains which had been the paradise of the buffalo. In the short grass we found the ineffaceable, eternal trail of the departed monarch—a dark brown line a foot or so wide and several inches deep, running parallel north to south with countless similar lines at distances of from fifty to a hundred feet. Pencil lines in the vastness of the country, but their very persistence seemed to prove the reality of the Red Man's dream of the buffalo's return. Here the creature had found refuge in winter from the colder latitudes to the north and east. Even to-day, under the protection of the warm Chinook winds from the Rookeries, this portion of Alberta is ideal ranching country.

Nothing touches the imagination so powerfully in Canada as the view of these trails. Sometimes the eye traced one across the foreground to the front door of a farm or a shack in the middle distance, where it passed out by the back door and wandered on to the hill-top. Sometimes it ran under the fences and into the stubble, where it disappeared for all time. For all these weary years it had waited for the return of the lordly brute that had made it, and now,

at last, it had suffered annihilation under the blade of the plough. It and the buffalo had served their purpose, and the unmigratory White Man's cattle scorned and ignored it. No fence could have held in check the herds that had covered the plains for many days' marches, and banishment to the north would have been as impossible as domesticity. It was well, then, that the end, cruel as it was, came swiftly and suddenly. Yet, gazing on the once-undisputed empire of the buffalo, the White Man may dream with the Red that the herds have but passed on to some mysterious grazing-ground of the Great Spirit, and that at night, when the world of man is asleep, some of the more curious return to take a longing look at the old pasturage and at dawn carry back the message:—

“Not yet, O brothers! The time has not arrived for the great migration to the earthly grazing-grounds we loved.”

The horizon was lost in a haze of tender pink, and where the land levelled out, the treeless plains conveyed a sense of illimitable space. No ugliness, no uncouthness, but Sweetness and Tenderness, a Beauty in its nakedness, a Nature warm and soft and eternally young. Could there be anywhere else in the world motoring more delightful than this swift, smooth, scudding flight along the grass-grown ruts? In contrast to the prairie roads left behind, the trail was now as even as a billiard table or a lawn at Oxford, and one began to hope that the city might never come to disturb the dream of that hot-footed flight in pursuit of the Beyond. Then suddenly the path

climbed an elevation, and I looked down upon Medicine Hat, hidden amid the trees of a lovely pocket canyon. Round and round we circled, always descending in a breeze that blew the poplars out of their stiff perpendicularity and bent them in welcoming obeisance.

Medicine Hat was a charming, orderly city, with none of the hurry or unfinish common to the average prairie town. It allied itself with the wilderness with a due sense of its dignity, instead of abruptly relinquishing its civic rights in the startling fashion of the towns hitherto. Well-dressed women, lacking the hard, settled look of the "fighting women" doing battle with the prairies beside their struggling mates, were shopping or chatting over an ice at the confectioner's. There was a general air of well-to-do-ism, as agreeable as it was striking.

At Taber late that evening, our Medicine Hat pilot led us to a Sybaritic feast of the inevitable fried eggs and coffee, served by the ubiquitous Chinaman of the Canadian West, who never fails to "produce" no matter what the hour of day or night. We had still another forty miles to cover before reaching Lethbridge, and we set out in the inky darkness, the lamps cleaving a silver way between the low, tense walls of night.

I believe there was a road. There were evidences of it every now and then. In the blackness which covered the earth shadowy telegraph poles came and went, the railroad appeared and disappeared, a lonely flag station flashed into sight and out again. We took our bearings by

the stars and by the wind which would blow in our faces so long as we kept to the right trail. Lethbridge lay due west, the plains were wide, trails crossed and recrossed ; there was seldom the annoyance of a man-made and half-finished road, and the night was glorious. We motored by a kind of instinct. Only one human settlement rushed to us out of the indigo shadows, silent, lonely, and strangely illuminated by our huge ghost lights.

No more gophers or badgers now, but a trail, the virgin trail, smooth as a tennis lawn, and handed down to posterity by pioneer forefathers. A bird with a ringlet of black round his throat flew about the car, startled out of his night's sleep by the ghastly brilliance of the monster acetylene eyes that shot silver light into the blackness two hundred yards ahead. A bat flitted past, then a big meadow lark. The engines hummed monotonously.

The cry of the Indian, the thunder of the buffalo hoof, the crack of the murdering rifle, the tramp, tramp of trapper feet, the creak of the Red River cart, the howl of wolf and coyote, the flight of the hawk, the voices of the homesteaders—how many sounds mingled in fancy with that monotonous hum and whir !



NO ROAD BUT THE BROKEN PRAIRIE. HOMESTEADER'S HOUSE IN THE DISTANCE



TRAILS OF THE BUFFALO

CHAPTER XIII

SOMEWHERE in Saskatchewan an extra driver—young, plain, methodical—had clambered into the tonneau. He had rolled a cigarette and offered a dry comment or two on passing events. Incidentally, he had alluded to the novelty of finding himself in the seat of honour.

In the days which followed he struggled manfully to conform to the conventionalities of the new social status thrust thoughtlessly upon him. At last, he apparently resolved upon a compromise, lolling with his feet over the side of the car. This position had its advantages, since it saved the wear and tear of the tonneau mat, but the attitude somewhat marred my photographs. It is to his credit that he never complained of the awkwardness of the position, though he received mayors and other high officials in the same graceful *négligé*! Occasionally he refreshed his anatomy by perching on the trunk, thus giving himself the appearance, with his cigar, of a masthead light. Sometimes he went on duty as second engineer, and while the car was devouring distance, he displayed extraordinary acrobatic nimbleness by climbing out to the front mudguards to take

long hungry looks at the carburettor, or the radiator cap or the valves. Apparently satisfied, he swung back to civilization again, unemotional as a Dervish, and, solemn as a judge, cuffed the chauffeur *en passant*, rolled a cigarette at an angle of forty-five degrees to the horizon line, and sank into the placidity of a sack of potatoes.

The new driver was not the only amusing or interesting human product of the prairies. Indeed, in this Canadian West, where all men were alike in their virility and democracy, I was struck with the variety of their individual experience. At Lethbridge, the journalist who looked me up soon after my arrival wore under his coat the Khedivial star and the medal with bars for Soudan campaigning. Some one else had left a country parish in Scotland for his health's sake. Another had made and lost a fortune at home, and now was wresting a second from the soil of the New World. What with the men who had dropped in from the train and the men who had settled there, the smoking lobby furnished a motley and talkative crowd. Whatever their differences, all were eagerly discussing the crops, and a few were bent on making me nothing less than a specialist on the subject of the prairies. One man undertook to sit up all night to post me on the wonders of the soil. The first foot of it, he declared, was worth more than all the mines in the mountains from Alaska to Mexico, more than all the forest from the boundary to the Arctic Sea, and more than the Bank of England. The next three feet—well it almost took his breath away to think of the enormous value represented by that subsoil. He accordingly

rummaged in his pockets for statistics, and not finding any, announced that that top foot of soil would be nothing if it were not for the three feet of subsoil. He used to know exactly the amount of nitrogen, phosphoric acid, and potash in each, but he had mislaid the figures, the paper on which they were written being too large for his pockets. Anyhow he could say offhand that one acre of soil in Saskatchewan was worth more than twenty acres of soil on the Atlantic seaboard, and he communicated that important fact in a manner which implied that the man who persisted in farming in the Maritime Provinces was not even worth the cost of his burial.

But my new friend was not done yet. He dived into his note-book and volunteered the information that in Manitoba there were 41 million acres, with another 57 million acres to the north; 70 millions in Saskatchewan, and 64 millions in Alberta, which made a total 232 million acres for the prairies, 170 millions of which could be cultivated. That reserve of wheat land was alone more than enough to supply the needs of the wheat-eating world. But those acres could not be "worked" for the lack of men. To get the necessary number of "hands" out from the Old Country to cultivate the prairies to the fullest extent and run the cities which an agricultural district required, would take 500 years, even if ships travelled loaded to the gunwales 365 days of the year. The organization of that sea transport, moreover, would be so prodigious that, besides unhinging the sea traffic of the world, it would entail such untold misery and suffering in

every quarter of the globe that thousands of lives would be lost and Canada could not begin to take care of the immigrants. Millions would die and countries would go bankrupt, and the work of transportation would finally come to an end automatically.

After that, the conversation switched off to anecdote for obvious relief, and then "some one" pointed out a couple of young men from the Eastern Provinces who had come out for the harvest, and who looked as though they had had enough of the job and were anxious to get back to their mothers. "Some one" said that as a rule these young Easterners were a blithe lot. Ignorant of what was before them, they would leave a peaceful home by the Atlantic, armed to the teeth, expecting that they would figure in the limelight of some Bret Harte romance. Alas for the expectations of the ingenuous! The reckless hero who practised revolver practice at western telegraph poles while the engine was taking water, or played the inoffensive game of Aunt Sally with an empty whiskey bottle aimed at the heads of the unoffending section men, generally returned to his home and mother, a sadder and wiser youth, after a few months in the strenuous household of a grower of wheat, who stayed awake all night lest the hired man should sleep for five minutes too long. No one, indeed, had forced him to dance a lively jig by the simple cowboy method of shooting at his boot-heels, but he had grown quite as leg weary following the trail of the self-binder, which inexorably shot out its rows of sheaves, necessitating a compulsory activity no

less insistent than that portrayed in the novel of the wild and woolly west.

One or two of the men in the circle had been harvesters. They pictured autumn as a struggle against the inexorable laws of nature, with the ever-present terror of early frosts that refused to hold off till the hum of the reaper had ceased. They had cut wheat by moonlight, and when there was no moonlight they had tied a lantern to a pole on the machine.

The Man of Statistics drew out his note-book again and returned to the attack. He reminded us that he had calculated that one day Canada would have sufficient wheat to supply the needs of the world. The world at present could eat just so much wheat—not one peck more, not one peck less than that amount. You could make it eat more ice cream or roast beef or caviar or oysters than it ought to. In fact, you could make the world sick on these things. But you could not increase the capacity of a given number of white folks for eating wheat, no matter in what attractive form you put it up. Well, that being so, Canada would have to face the grim fact that other countries were growing wheat. With all her eggs in one basket she could not afford to let them continue growing that staple. She had too much at stake. She might, of course, go to war with them or corner their fields so as to destroy all possible competition. But she probably would find it to her advantage to change the eating habits of the Eastern races. That meant that she would first of all have to corner all the rice in the world. She could start with Japan, who has to increase

the size of her people physically, who knows she cannot do this on rice, and who therefore must turn the Japanese into a meat-eating race. With Japan as her ally, Canada would then be able to attack China and India and the Malay Archipelago. In fact in every corner of the earth where a grain of rice was to be found she must finally exterminate the plant. The millions of Orientals would have to be gradually weaned from the old rice appetite, and to do this she must send out medical missionaries, who would doctor the human palate with anti-rice toxins.

Another man ventured the opinion that when the Canadian farmer found that things had reached that pass—that there were not enough mouths into which to stuff his wheat—he would go out of business. Some one else suggested that another kind of evil would arise. The peoples of the earth, missing their cheap loaf and the wheat habit being as strong upon them as the smoking habit, would hold a pistol to his head and drive him back into the wheat-growing business again.

The Man of Statistics unexpectedly confessed that he had no patience with this wheat fad—outside the present wheat belt.

“Why on earth do we need to be always opening up outside wheat-growing areas? All this terrible catastrophe could be averted if those Ontario fellows, for instance, would only stop opening up the twenty-six thousand square miles of the new clay belt. Pandora’s box hadn’t half as many evils as that belt is going to let loose on the world. The trouble is that the wheat craze is nothing but a national disease. You

mark my words ; they'll be throwing open the North-West Passage to wheat cultivation next, and then nothing'll suit them but to try and plant Crocker Land. Why, I met a chap the other day from the Athabasca region who said that up in Ottawa they were considering a scheme for building the houses of prairie towns with flat roofs and covering them with gumbo, so as to double the wheat-producing area of the country without any trouble. Now what do you think of that, boys ? ”

“ I tell you what, ” said another, “ the Canadian just goes mad whenever he sees a grain of wheat. He has the wheat-bug, as the Yankees say. One day the world will rise up against us. The Pope will excommunicate the article, and then the chemists will have to make the grain so that the nations can distribute it free to their people. ”

Some one suggested that Canada would monopolize even that business. She would be so rich by the time the excommunication period came that she could twiddle the Pope or the chemists round her little fingers.

Another man said that if there was anything worse than the “ wheat-bug, ” it was the “ fruit-bug. ” He ought to know, as he had spent a couple of years on a British Columbian fruit ranch.

“ I think we were trying to grow apples, but I don't want to commit myself, as it might be unfair to my uncle, who had put thousands of dollars into the undertaking and was doing his best to live until the trees bore. I was told that my duty would be to watch the trees with my

cousin Jim and a dozen other fellows. Jim offered to show me the trees. The first thing I knew, after we had entered the ranch, was that I was caught violently by the scruff of the neck and dragged back, while a voice screamed:—

“‘You dunderheaded idiot! Can’t you see that you’ve trodden on a thousand-dollar Gravenstein tree?’

“Jim was bending over a tiny twig with a magnifying glass.

“‘Heavens!’ I exclaimed, ‘you don’t call that a fruit tree!’

“‘By Gosh! I do. And there are thousands more like it all round you. Look out there! I reckon we’ll have to bring you in a flying machine next time.’

“At first I could see nothing but a long, wide strip of carefully-smoothed-out brown soil. To the right was a lake, and we were surrounded by lofty mountains with firs crowding on their slopes.

“‘It’s a great place for the imagination, Jim,’ I said, and began a careful inspection of the ground with his magnifying glass. Gradually I was able to make out that many yards of the earth were planted in rows of tiny twigs, each with about six leaves on it and about eight or ten feet apart. Jim was right. I apologized. There *was* something growing.

“Well, we had to watch those microscopic sprigs like a fetish. If a blade of grass sprouted anywhere, we telephoned to headquarters, and headquarters violently and promptly uprooted it. If a cat appeared in the vicinity, we had to

shoot it without hitting the twigs. Sometimes Jim would go on a measuring expedition. But the trees had no more push than a mountain, and I could see that Jim was fast going insane worrying about them. My uncle would then order up more fertiliser, and sometimes he would come up and relieve Jim, but he was getting too old for the job, although he had planted the things somewhere back in his callow youth. Sometimes the two men would spend hours casting up figures on the posts of the verandah. But the thing got on my nerves finally and I 'quit' the job. Jim and the 'fruit-bug' were too much for me. I've no doubt that when the fruit does come, it will be worth its weight in gold, and will have to be preserved in spirits of wine for a museum, while Jim will be blind and paralysed and decrepit and starving."

Upon that, conversation turned off to the drawbacks of the Old Country in comparison with the superior advantages of life in Canada.

"People in Europe," explained the Man of Statistics to me, "have to be introduced before they show each other hospitality and friendship. Strangers are felt to be rather suspicious characters who render house dogs necessary. Here, in Canada, the idea is that all men are brothers, and that in a short time the locksmith will lose his job. The population of the country is a gigantic family of eight million relatives, and I dare say you've noticed that everybody who's a real Canadian goes about with an 'Isn't-it-nice-to-be-a-Canadian?' and 'You-must-really-stop-to-dinner!' air. Canada is a nation of optimists, you know."

"That's all very well," chimed in another, "but what I can't understand is why everybody doesn't come over to this country, if only to borrow money from Canadians."

At this point a new-comer, presumably without any desire to borrow, asked whether, in view of the bad roads, Canadians weren't forgetting how to walk.

"On the prairies," he said, "I've never yet seen any one inclined to walk. It's about as natural a place for a stroll as the inside of a motion-picture hall. People drive in buggies from one farm or settlement to another, or they sit on ploughs or harrows or on harvesters. Children ride horseback to school. I've been trying to catch a man guilty of walking. Once or twice I thought I had a vision of some human automaton recklessly and forgetfully using his legs. But he was always too far off for me to be sure that my senses were not deceiving me. Once I really did think I had caught a man walking. He was quite close to me. But when I looked again, he was sitting down. He had been too quick for me."

"That's not so queer as you may think," interrupted the man next to him, "when you remember the long distances between points. Social life on the prairie begins in a buggy and goes on to your neighbour's dinner-table and his best bedroom. To make a call, you have to hitch your horse to a buggy. When you meet a man, there's no obligation for either of you to get out of your rigs. Why I've known a couple of men to sit with the reins in their hands for

more'n half a day, discussing family affairs, transacting business and eating dinner, and pretty comfortable they were, too. Of course it takes a little practice."

I ventured to suggest that perhaps the immense spaces induced the habit of forgetting distances and mileages. The farmer's mind was filled with huge perspectives. He had to act swiftly, to grapple with big resolutions, to face great crises. The pastimes of close community life were denied him—gardens and lawns and lectures and churches and saloons. He had no paths tempting him to walk amid the honeysuckle and the early morning worms, no skylarks and thrushes to warble to him, no sundials inviting to contemplation while he wandered listlessly amid the rose bushes, no——

"I'll allow," said the Man of Statistics abruptly, "that there's a good deal of truth in that, but it isn't true to say that the farmer is without his garden. He has at his door in the spring a garden of crocuses and anemones and wild rose, and a myriad of other flowers which colour the whole earth around him like a gigantic Persian carpet. And in the sky there's the same unearthly gorgeousness and an extravagance of flaming colour that puts all Turner's work into the shade. As to the autumn, why the world has never seen such a garden of gold as lies spread out at his feet! When that man by chance visits England and escapes drowning by not falling off the edge into the sea, he sees midget gardens that require the labour of giants, and hedges that have to be put into curl papers

and pomaded, and everything that has to be persuaded to lie down and be petted like so much 'Good Dog!' And then he thinks it's about time to pity the Englishman!"

"By the way," chimed in a man of tact, turning to me, "did you have much rain in Manitoba?" Whereupon everybody laughed.

"Don't answer him!" advised one man, handing round cigars. "He's going to ring that old chestnut on to you about the Mud-Man of Manitoba."

"What I can't understand," said a Winnipegger in a voice of evident pique, "is why you fellows, and especially the British Columbians, should be so down on Manitoba weather."

"Well, isn't it true that you have pretty low temperatures out there?" asked a Vancouver man.

"Why, it does freeze a bit sometimes."

"Way down below zero, eh? Forty, fifty below, and all that kind of thing?"

"Oh yes, sometimes, but you don't feel the cold, you know. That's the great advantage of Manitoba. By the way, you fellows in Vancouver have a fierce lot of rain, don't you?"

The man from Vancouver fidgeted a bit and said that perhaps it did rain sometimes.

"Days and weeks of it in the winter, eh? Can't go out without swimming and wearing oil-skin clothes, oil-skin caps and rubber top-boots."

"Oh, pshaw! Vancouver rain doesn't wet!"

"Well, what about the chestnut?" interrupted an Englishman, after the laughter had subsided.

Everybody stared at him. For anybody in that company not to know the story of the Mud-Man of Manitoba was to admit that he was a benighted being. It was the oldest and ripest chestnut that had ever survived its birth. It had gone the round of the earth.

"That's no criterion that everybody should know it," explained the Man of Statistics conciliatorily. "The story changes with every parallel of latitude. When it has been in one latitude for a certain number of years, it has a habit of gradually slipping its bearings and migrating off to another. When you think you have the Mud-Man story 'pat,' you find that you have to revise everything you know about it. As far as I can make out, the real story is that a man was once walking towards Winnipeg along a gumbo road when he saw a hat in the middle of the highway. He stooped to pick it up, and underneath he found a head. He asked the head what it was doing there, and the head replied—

"'I'm walking to Winnipeg!'"

"That's wrong," said the man from Vancouver bluntly. "Must be, as you said those fellows were walking, when we've just admitted that nobody walks on the prairies."

"Well, let's have your version!"

"Down on the coast they've got it right. That fellow who found the head was riding in a buggy through the gumbo. He saw a hat moving gradually along the middle of the road and bobbing slightly up and down. At great risk to himself, owing to the danger of being mired, he plucked up his courage to approach the uncanny

object. When he managed at last to wallow up to it, he made a grab and raised the hat. Below he found to his horror a human face, moving steadily ahead, the mud parting mysteriously at its throat and leaving a miry wake as the head advanced. Before he could recover from the shock of the surprise, the head turned towards him and said :—

“‘Gim’mè that hat, dy’e hear? I only take it off to ladies.’

“‘But what on earth are you doing here, man?’

“‘None of your business. Gim’mè that hat.’

“‘But you’ll die, you’ll choke!’

“‘Pshaw! Can’t you see I’m riding horseback to Winnipeg!’ And the hat falling on to the traveller’s head out of the astonished would-be rescuer’s hands, the horseback rider moved on through the mud.”

This version started a confusion which finally broke up the gathering. Every one had a different story, and no two could agree as to whether the man was riding or walking or driving a buggy or a team or as to what he did, or what the other man did, or what became of the hat or how it was removed, or as to the exact way in which Adam had told the incident to Eve.

“Stories like that ought never to be allowed to get beyond human control and become a public nuisance,” declared several. “The only thing to do now will be to bury the tale if possible, but failing that to hand it on to China or to Korea. Nothing less than drastic suppression will do—if we ever want any one to travel Canadian roads.”

The Man of Statistics was anxious that I should see Lethbridge, and presently took me on a ride through its broad and handsome streets. He said it was the coal city of the wheat fringe.

“You’ll come across big men of affairs out here, real estate men who’ve got Lethbridge writ large on the brain. They’re the fellows who tell you on the circulars how many miles of streets and street railways, and canals, and coal-seams, human beings, and railroads, and dollars, and trees, and parks, and boulevards, and land, and farms, and subdivision properties, and business frontages there are in and around Dominion Square; how it’s the shortest route to the Pacific and the Panama Canal; how any investment in Lethbridge is a safe and sound and substantial one, no matter how and where you buy, since subdivision abuses can’t exist and every lot shown on the map is required for actual building in a reasonable time in a city which is bound to become the second city in the Province, so that all you’ve got to do is to buy now, to buy before the railways are all in, to buy on the eve and sell on the crest, and BUY while there is a choice of lots. See!”

He caught his breath and wiped his brow. Buttoning up his coat, he went on:—

“I knew a man out here from the Old Country when I was living at E—— and the place was in swaddling clothes. He had travelled about a good deal and didn’t care much for our Canadian towns. Nothing like the Old Country for him, and so on! Well, he got to airing his views about western towns to some of the boys.

“‘Look here!’ said he pompously, ‘I’ve come to the conclusion that a man raised out here is only half born. If you want pride of citizenship, there’s nothing like the Old Country. Take the good old city in which I was born—wonderful place that! A saloon for every tenth man, a dressmaker for every twentieth woman and a garden for everybody! No man too poor that he couldn’t own a dozen canaries. Churches, too, and not one of them that didn’t cost twenty times as much as these wooden affairs out here, and all built of polished flint brick outside so that you could titivate a bit as in a looking-glass before going in to sing the Doxology! Stained glass, about four hundred years old, and walls so thick that they couldn’t be pulled down, and had to be turned into public monuments. Parsons pensioned off, you know, to go fox-hunting for the rest of their earthly! Besides the churches there was a huge cathedral with a garden as big as one of these Canadian towns you’re always talking so much about. And you should have seen the market-place! None of your old flimsy shacks in that, but fine buildings that had stood since the days of the Crusades. And as a trump card a mighty castle which Rufus had left there, and which will be looking as good as new long after this town has gone out of business. They don’t have to spend a cent to-day on that building or on the town hall, except for disinfectant against the germs left there by the Saxons and the Normans. Talk about civic pride! You never get that quality of the goods in Canada. Why, they keep a special school of artists over there just to paint

pictures of those buildings and send them all over the world! The men who serve that city don't take any pay for their services: they scorn pay. When they put up a new public building, they write a letter to the Mayor of 7000 A.D. and place it safely in the foundation stone, asking him to be good enough to continue carefully dusting and sweeping and fumigating the edifice just as they have done. That's citizenship, boys, I can tell you! And that's a kind of city worth living in!

"Well," continued the Man of Statistics, "that sounded pretty good to all of us, for we'd most of us come from the other side of the pond as children. But there was one Old-Timer Canadian there—I think his name was Ontario Jim—and he fixed Johnnie with that queer, far-away look of his.

"'Strikes me you're a kind o' dead lot in that there old town,' he said thoughtfully. 'Strikes me it must be kind of lonesome there, with only them cathedrals and graveyards and the castle and city hall to look at for a thousand years. Seems like sittin' in a summer-house with the wind-falls lyin' a rottin' on the ground, and you and the other folks blinkin' at the past. You've no more weeds to pull out: only to let the flowers grow. I can git all that kind of thing out of a book. But it ain't somehow life, as I figure it: it ain't doin' and creatin' and it ain't city-building such as you see right here. We've raised this city with our own hands out of the flowers and the prairie. It hasn't got any past to be ashamed of, for it's all in the future. It's our baby and we've fed it and seen it grow these

score years. We saw the first tent and the first shack go up, and we heard the first wind whistlin' down the main street. We put up the first mayor and we put down the first gas-pipe. We levied the first tax and we sent in our congratulations to the first mother of the first child that was born here. And we put up the first factory and the first fence and the first law about the saloons, and we started the first newspaper and the first public opinion. All the town's got, we gave it. We've no legacies of crime to shake off, we're always movin' like a fellow with the St. Vitus's dance. And we've got no slums and foul livin' and unemployed problems and down-trodden poor, and we've given every man an equal chance. Yes, sir, we've got history on the jump, workin' for us twenty-four hours each day, and you've only got his corpse. Daresay if I was to come and look into your city, I'd find that there ain't no more'n half of you as can get a decent livin'—that there are streets and back alleys where there never was a ray of sunshine nor a ray of hope nor a purse of money, and the people prowlin' and skulkin' through life like the coyote over these plains. Yes, sir, I'll take this here 'burg' for mine every time and you can keep yours.'"

. . . Before we left Lethbridge for the foot of the Rockies, the Mayor took us for a morning call upon the North-West Mounted Police, whose barracks, practically within the town, are considerably larger than those at Maple Creek. The Commander received us cordially in the barrack square, and regretted that we had come too late to see the mounted parade of his men. We went

through the stables to see the mounts—big-boned horses, native bred, but with none of the Indian pony blood in them. They were more of the heavy cavalry type. The police themselves appeared to be mostly cavalrymen from English regiments, apparently recruited for their good looks and smartness as much as for their tough soldierly qualities and bravery. They certainly made as fine and as picturesque a lot of troopers as I have seen in any country.

As we headed across the plains for Macleod, I was conscious of a strange physical and spiritual elation. The long journey to the mountains did not appear so long as before. The prospects of danger and difficulty ahead were exhilarating. Fatigue was trifling, and the Pacific close at hand.

Lethbridge had been as invigorating as the fresh air of its own crisp morning. And at last, there were these soldier-police doing Empire work without the prospect of reward beyond the sense of duty well done, and submitting themselves to a rigid discipline—when all around were tempting fortune to yield her riches—that they might learn the glory of achievement devoid of all selfishness, cowardice or meanness.

For hours there lingered in my memory the picture of those thousand soldier-dandies, half cowboy, half dragoon, tall and straight, without an ounce of spare flesh, the police of a vast corner of the Empire, ready for death, following the trail of their lawful prey—horse thieves and obstreperous Indians—from the frozen zone to the mining regions of Dakota and Montana, running down their quarry single-handed in the

name of the law, and so well policing the West that crime was the exception, and travel as safe as in an English country lane.

We were now following the historic Macleod Trail, the first part of which afforded a panorama of scenic beauty and daring engineering in the valley of the Belly River. The trail crossed the river by a magnificent bridge and then entered a canyon, where the road wound high above a stream before it finally debouched to the level plains again, close to the remains of old Fort Kipp. Far to the west we could see the dim white-capped wraiths of the Rockies, over which hung fleecy clouds that curiously imitated the snowfields of the mountains. Close at hand, sheep and horses were abundant, and a man passed us with a dead coyote chained to the back of his little motor-car. Not far to the south lay the Peigan and Blood Indian Reserves.

Nowhere did one catch a glimpse of those cowboys of the picturesque type of cheap literature. Thanks to the mounted police, the desperado—once a feature of the landscape—was as dead as a door nail.

The Prairies! What emotions stir the road traveller turning to take his last view of that old earth trail of primitive man—the trail that ended where he became weary, that has been his path of progress since history began!

There is nothing like these prairie trails for lifting the soul of a man above any littleness that he has hitherto clung to as a creed of daily life. Their spell may not be sudden as that which mountain and canyon throw over the

imagination. The prairie has not at first any obvious, striking beauty of perspective. But motor for days along these virgin paths worn by clumsy Red River carts and christened by the drops of sweat that are the measure of human toil, and there will come to you an irresistible hour when you will long to hush the "thum-thum" of the engines, and pause, silent in this vast sea-like earth of which man has touched only the fringe. You will want to go down on hands and knees with the prairie pixies, to catch the faint music of the gently rustling grasses, to explore the shallow, narrow buffalo trails and the hoof marks of the myriad migratory beasts that for ages passed over the brow of the hill to the grazing grounds and—annihilation!

The Prairies! One turns the pages of the past in Anglo-Saxon history, and one prays that there may not come too many cities to destroy the sturdy virility of the husbandmen of the plains.

Two million acres of arable land for the support of mankind! Far to the north lie millions more, awaiting only the striking of the hour and that uncertain factor, the acclimatization of the human unit, before they, too, shall be unlocked to the hungry hordes.

In the British Isles unnumbered thousands are starving. Here in Canada the wail is heard, "Give us people! There are not enough to till the land."

CHAPTER XIV

THE Rockies!

There are stories, touching and even pathetic in the light of modern methods of locomotion, of old pioneers who travelled wearily and painfully for days, the mountains ever in sight and never, seemingly, any nearer. On the same trails, toward much the same goal, how great a contrast to theirs was my twentieth-century journey! Twenty-five miles an hour along the ruts which their wheels had made, past the spots where they had corralled their waggons for protection, or where they had halted that the countless herds of buffalo might pass, and at will I could conjure those same mountains to draw near. I could challenge the Indian to get my scalp. I could even race the wind that in mad glee dared me to keep pace with it in its rush to the Rockies. I had a road, smooth, macadamized for a short distance, on which a steam roller had actually ventured to introduce its welcome, if impudent, anachronisms. Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who had been the first transcontinentalist as long ago as 1793, had had none. On foot and by canoe it had taken him something like a year to accomplish his crossing—before he

could inscribe his name upon the rock overlooking the Pacific several hundred miles to the north of the spot where I should come upon the ocean.

A few Indians of the Peigan Reserve, high above the dreamy valley of Old Man River, glanced up indifferently as the car passed. They wore black "store clothes," white shirts, and felt hats, while the squaws were nondescript creatures who stepped in and out of huts or wooden-frame houses and occupied themselves with potted flowers or clothes lines on which they stretched the household wash! Pocahontas with a laundry! Hiawatha, patron of the "Old Clo's" Jew! Atter all, had education accomplished so marvellous a feat by making the Indian a poor imitation of the poorest class of white man? Out of the picturesqueness of his past had it permitted only the scenery to remain?

From where we caught our first view of the Rockies, we could see the white clouds that hung about the horizon edge climb into the zenith, transforming themselves into purple masses above a wall of jagged-topped mountains robed in steely blue. The foothills, parted a little, showed a semblance of a pass, and then spilled off on the plains again. Nearer still, the mountains took on the appearance of a solid wall, apparently barring all further progress. Presently coke ovens like Plutonic vents loomed up in the forest background of lofty hills, and under their crimson flames we ran into an eddy of the main path, stony, sinuous and narrow, hemmed in by bush like a wild animal's track

and ending in a frail, low, log bridge, flush with a rushing stream. A tall young man, issuing from a prospector's hut, brought us back to the main trail by a circuitous route and a steep cleft in the rocks, and thenceforward the road twisted and coiled itself around the mountain sides as if convinced that it had had enough of straightness on the plains to last it for the rest of the five hundred miles to the Pacific.

We had apparently crossed a mountain divide when we reached a steep descent cut through enormous piles of rock and boulders, the white, powdery road running through a treeless and shapeless landscape. Before us lay the wreckage of a mountain that had spilled itself over the valley and, extending as far as the eye could see, had buried a portion of the town of Frank. A hundred lives had been crushed out by the fallen Titan.

A mile beyond, we found the remnants of the town and a melancholy little community that seemed to have lost all heart or pride since the terrible disaster of a few years before. The decree had gone forth that the town must be abandoned. Death and disaster might reappear at any moment, and Frank had been counselled to betake itself to a site more convenient for this earthly pilgrimage. Everybody was fully conscious of the danger, but everybody looked up at the great, bare slopes of the slide and out at the white sepulchre of rock across the valley, and prepared to take his chances, pending—what? Children were still going to school, men to their work on the railroad that had been temporarily

obliterated ; tradesmen were bartering their wares with the wonted air of men who had never known the terrors of a cataclysm. They had interests. Some of them had their unshriven dead beneath the pile of wreckage. Perhaps they felt they could not desert them. At all events, a road had been cut through the débris, and as I stood looking up at the mass of rock that towered above, a little boy and girl drove a rig unconcernedly by and disappeared behind a fallen rock-monster fully thirty feet high.

We found superior accommodations at the commodious hotel of Frank, which is situated in a broad and comparatively safe part of the valley.

A few miles beyond, next day, a shaggy little car stopped in front of us and the occupants threw up their hands to attract our attention. A man sprang down.

"Are you the feller that's come all the way from Halifax?" he asked with kindly concern.

"Yes!"

"Well, we've heard about you from Pincher City by telephone. There was a man waiting there with his car to pilot you yesterday—waited for hours. He's sorry he missed you—mighty sorry. But there's a feller at Coleman, a few miles ahead, ready with his machine to take you on as far as you want him to."

The man was only half a prophet. At Coleman, not only was the volunteer pilot awaiting us, but the Mayor. The Mayor was mysteriously joined by the chief of police ; the two swelled into the parson, and the three were joined by the remaining town fathers, the Old Timers and every

official of the place, until we were presently wending our way in quite a little procession to the town hall under the shadow of the pass. Such spontaneity of welcome! Such faith in the coming of a highway across Canada as these men of Coleman showed, while they crowded around a mud-stained car from Halifax to offer their hospitality and to shake hands again and again!

Soon enough, however, we were on our way once more amidst fir trees and pines and hemlocks. Above, towered the splendid horn of Crow's Nest Peak, flanked by the giant bulk of Mount Sentinel that craned itself over the mountain ridges to peep at the life of the valley below—the tiny hotels, the coal mines, and the countless trees standing or lying about, cut down by the swinging axe or the victims of wind and storm that had rushed down the valley to tear them from their anchorage in the shallow soil.

Grades were most deceptive. They seemed to be mere inclinations of the earth's surface, but they called for every ounce of power. Looking back, it was evident at times that we had surmounted a twenty-five per cent. hill.

"Pile out!" cried the pilot, as the car attacked a wooded, narrow ascent. "It's a two-mile climb to the summit before we cross into British Columbia. After that there's another climb along a narrow road over a chasm." He laughed boisterously, as though there was no fun in the world like that of turning oneself into a motor-engine in the mountains.

He laughed again when we had sprung in and out of the car a score of times to lighten the

weight or to push as the machine balked at the steep grades. He laughed even louder as the car rushed the hills and we grabbed at it by the sides, the hood, the wheels, the top—by anything, in fact—to save it from slipping backwards as the life gave out of the unfortunate creature.

It seemed an eternity before the ascent brought us into view of a lake and afforded a fleeting glimpse of a cave out of which the Old Man River is supposed to rise.

“That’s about as far as they’ve ever been able to get concerning that cave,” said the hilarious guide. “No one has been able to discover what feeds the lake. Probably the water comes from some subterranean spring. The name of the lake is a translation of the Indian word. The Indians named all the rivers hereabouts after the different parts of a human being; some of the parts, however, have got lost in course of translation or from other causes.”

We entered British Columbia on a down grade.

“Odd, isn’t it?” said he, bursting out into a roar again, “to enter the mountain province downgrade instead of upgrade? But you always have the doubtful consolation in these parts that you never go down without having to go up again afterwards. I suppose that’s a little way the earth has of compensating itself.”

There was a pungent smell of burning rubber, and we waited a few minutes to allow the brakes time to cool off. The wind that had been blowing pretty strongly on the Albertan side of the divide had now sunk to a dead calm.

"It's always so here," explained the guide, "and, by the way, you'll notice that from now on all the water runs west to the Pacific. That divide makes a true division between the provinces."

The road was now of a soft, loamy consistency. On either side lay an undergrowth of golden russet, and thickets of light poplars stood out amid a débris of ashen-grey trunks—the remnants of devastating forest fires. The dead trees lay or stood at all angles, forming a tangle that suggested that they had been tossed there by a forest race of giants in a mad game of universal spillikins. Fire had been one of the horrors of the prairie; and here again the same horror faced us. For miles the way was lined by these charred trunks—mute evidence of the flames that had raged for many weeks, swept away the town of Fernie, and blackened the earth for twenty miles.

It is said that the uncontrollable and irresistible speed with which these fires travel is almost invariably due to the presence of the resinous pine trees. Burning like torches, they form perfect fire conductors. The remedy is found in the planting of foliage trees, which, owing to the total lack of resin in their trunks and branches and to the moisture of their leaves, burn slowly and smoulderingly and thus afford poor food to the flames. By planting broad zones or belts of these trees among the conifers, the forests might be supplied with an admirable natural preventive against the spread of fire.

From the newly-built town of Fernie, where we took leave of our pilot, we pushed on in a

slight drizzle of rain to Cranbrook, crossing the broad Columbia River at Wardner and meeting a number of escorting cars from Cranbrook just as dusk began to fall. A friendly flask, very welcome in the chill of the evening, was handed round by a big, hearty hand, and we took of its contents with the feeling that we had come all the way from Halifax that day and needed it! Superb trails and roads led into the town, the pilot car dashing off at a clip which would have brought disaster on anything but a first-class surface. The Cranbrookites were evidently very proud of a road which seemed to be without sinuosity or unevenness. The town itself received us with open-handed hospitality. Everybody took it for granted that we were in no hurry, and it was darkly hinted that we should not be able to get any further west by road without entraining the car.

My objective was the town of Nelson on the western arm of the Kootenay Lake. Motorists advised me to ship my car to that point or even to Castlegar. Between Cranbrook and the Kootenay Lake, in a direct westerly line, lay a range of mountains, traversed only by a narrow mountain trail impassable for automobiles and touching the lake at the town of Balfour. The only road out of Cranbrook ran south as far as Ryan; then came a bad stretch of swamp to the international boundary at Yahk, where I should be compelled to take to the railroad ties over a dangerous loop track as far as Kitchener, a distance of fourteen miles, after which there was a very steep and narrow mountain road over the Goat

River Gorge to Creston. Beyond that, northward, there was a short road ending near the Kootenay Lake, leaving me hopelessly stranded amid the log booms and the sedges of the dangerous flats and unable to reach the landing stage for steamers to and from Nelson, some forty or fifty miles further on. By engaging guides, however, I might be able to find a path through the flats to the steamer, but success would depend upon the ferries and the amount of water I should find on the flooded valleys, which are usually covered to the depth of fifteen feet until well into September.

What was I to do? The Pacific seemed to be as far off as ever.

"Ship your car at once," suggested a prominent townsman, "and we will take a run in my machine to Golden along the Kootenay Valley. It's the finest motor trip in all British Columbia."

Several townsmen echoed his enthusiasm, for Cranbrookites are never tired of telling strangers of the wonderful valley which will soon be open to motor tourists by the construction of a scenic road from Cranbrook to Banff on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway. At present, there is a good waggon road along the Columbia River as far as Golden and Donald. At a point, two-thirds of the total distance, a branch road is being constructed so as to follow the valleys of the Selkirk Range through the Vermilion Pass. At Banff, the road will connect with another from Calgary. The highway from Cranbrook to Golden lies on the eastern bank of the Columbia, but the valley is wide enough to afford magnificent views

of the Selkirks. A sudden turn of the road and one sees a valley gleaming in golden sunlight, while through the landscape runs the emerald green river dotted with wooded islands. Sometimes such a view extends for forty or fifty miles. The road passes through Sinclair Hot Springs, which is destined to become a popular resort for motorists, and along Windermere Lake. From Wilmer, another highway has been projected along the Toby Creek, tapping Earl Grey's Cabin, twenty miles to the west, and ending at a height of 8000 feet amid the glacier. From the west, the Columbia-Kootenay Valley is still inaccessible, but from the Crow's Nest Pass it is open for the greater part of the year.

Cranbrook was interesting, but at first sight there was not much to see. It seemed to be about the size of a man's pocket-handkerchief, a mere village in dimensions. A hotel, of which the landlord was my genial friend of the flask, a railroad station, a modest town hall, a few more or less sleepy stores, a formless back street or two, a chaotic pavement, and a Y.M.C.A. building built and maintained by the C.P.R.—that was all.

But Cranbrook had hidden riches. Like many another town of the West, it had men who had interpreted education in the terms of opportunity and progress and communal welfare, who were using it as an instrument which would solve for them the problem of a social life free from the trammels of tradition. It had no wastrels, no drones, no men of leisure. No one was hurrying, but neither was any one wasting strength or capital, foresight or initiative. There

was abroad a spirit of daring to do the right thing at the right moment. Every one shared it, every one talked it. There was the enthusiasm of men who had found a good thing, who had introduced Government and Mrs. Grundy, the Church and the Mutual Improvement Society in the spirit which is determined to keep the moral slate clean. All were thinking and working for the future, for that was all that concerned them.

The town was strewn thick with railroad men—train hands and train conductors, active and retired. Some of these men have made big money at conducting. The pay is that of a bank manager in England! Think of a conductor making his 150 to 200 dollars a month, while the respectable and portly guard of an English Express from London to Edinburgh is content with his salary of less than 100 dollars! Think of his owning, it may be, a motor-car, a fruit orchard, a farm—of his doing “a deal” in real estate, holding on, buying on the drop and selling on the crest! Think of him in his home, sharing in civic duties, holding a control in a joint stock company, and always proving himself a worthy and influential citizen, the while he gives his time to a railroad company as conductor! Think, too, what this “go ahead” opportunist New World has done for him. It does not call for Demagogy or Socialism or Labour organized against the forces of Capital to win his position among his fellowmen—only sterling worth, ability, and willingness to work with his brain as well as his hands. The brightest man has the best chance of success. Like many another town of the

Canadian West, Cranbrook is the home of the self-made man. Culture and refinement are not ordinarily the weapons with which Nature hews out the wilderness. Social advantages are accumulative, not fashioned by the waving of a fairy wand while the shovel and the axe are still in the hands of the moulders of life.

Cranbrook, too, was the pivotal point of hundreds of miles of God's earth around. People said that there were only a few miles between them and the prairie town of Calgary. What did that mean? Why, that the fruit lands of the Kootenay-Columbia valley were the nearest fruit lands to the prairie markets. In a direct line east and west, too, Cranbrook, the pulse of the fruit ranches, was the outlet from the valley to Vancouver, Macleod and Lethbridge, and to markets of the East such as Montreal and Toronto.

Though outwardly below the standards we have formed of what municipalities should be, virile western towns like Cranbrook point unmistakably to the defects which beset us in European communal life, and to the need for greater clarity of vision in raising the level of common existence. The life of the average man and woman is darkened by a cloud of human cares. We want a civilization which will bring us true intellectual democracy, and give to the poorest of us plenty of air and sunshine, plenty of chance for growth, and the power to avoid that appalling tragedy of poverty and restriction which for many is the great fact of life.

To motor south to the International boundary line was preferable to handing the car once more

to the railway authorities, and we were honoured with a public send-off in front of the town hall, where motorists and other townsmen were assembled to proffer God speed. Mr. R——, an English fruit rancher, volunteered to accompany me as far as Creston, and a small car in charge of Mr. McN—— and the secretary of the local Automobile Association, led the way south in order to pilot us to the swamp. Our objective was the little station settlement of Yahk, near the boundary, which we calculated we should reach at dusk. The swamp was understood to be about five miles long. A motor-car had never before ventured into it, and as a precaution against being "bogged," telephonic instructions were sent ahead to have horses in waiting.

The road, for the first hour, ascended along the flanks of wooded mountains whose valleys were watered by the numerous creeks feeding the Moyie Lakes. It was narrow and strewn with boulders, against which we repeatedly struck the pan. It was not at all particular about its grades, seeming to feel that as they were good enough and wide enough for goats, they ought to form a good makeshift for motor-cars. Our heavy transcontinental equipment was no doubt in part responsible for the repeated refusal of the car to stand on end, and the light, fleet-footed pilot-car lent embarrassment by friskily skipping up the hills on top-speed, while we had to jump the moment we changed into "second," or to push with all our might when the driver dropped into "low." But it was not bad sport, even hauling on the tackle, and the scenery left little

opportunity for dulness. Eye and mind were stimulated by the magic of the mountain setting, while muscles were stretched to their utmost.

For mountain travel, however, the car was ill-prepared to meet all demands. It needed stripping of some of its excessive load—extra parts, tackle and baggage—and it needed more horsepower in proportion to weight. We scaled nearly four thousand pounds with only two occupants, and we developed nominally 30 h.p., American rating, which is considerably higher than the English rating; but I doubt whether we were getting out of the engines at that time as much as that. Minimum weight with maximum power is essential for mountain climbing, and it was clear that an accompanying car to bear a proportion of the load would have been a decided advantage for such a tour. Block and tackle might have been omitted, and much time would have been consequently saved.

In the distance the mountains were weaving a filmy pattern on the sky-line; in the foreground, Nature, in impressionistic abandon, had flung great splashes of colour upon the landscape, and was conjuring up effective contrasts of high light and shadow. There was scarcely a hut and seldom a puff of smoke to humanize the lonely valleys. A new-comer might claim all the sensation and honour of discovery—the track of man's footsteps in the primitive roadway to the contrary. In truth, not so long before, the Indian had held all this region in fief if not in fee.

The immense shadows of night were falling as we made our descent, in "slithering" wariness,

to a little wooden bridge at the entrance to the swamp. We lit the lamps, and struck a stony path between dejected-looking trees and brush, the pilot car, with a sort of "after you" politeness, giving us the lead.

The path plunged headlong into a thicket, too well littered with stones and roots and fallen trees to have any semblance of active life. Sometimes tree-snags covered the track; again it was lost in pools of unknown depths, which we "took" only after cautious sounding, and from the opposite side of which, ankle deep in mud, we watched the plucky little pilot follow our "dare." Often we plunged along at angles which no motor-car was ever intended to take, inwardly praying for the advent of the horses. We were buried to the flanks in the slough and at times both cars sank to the hubs, listing heavily, grinding and ploughing their way, pounding the tyres to rags, the while the engines roared and groaned and the wheels angrily shot the water in inky spindrift over men and trees. How we longed for the smooth prairie trail, where our flight had been made musical with the song of the motor as it purred and hummed to the undertone of the wind!

When at last a friendly human voice hailed us out of the darkness and we saw the huge shadows of the long-expected horses between the trees, not a voice was raised in protest at the caution which had kept man and beast away from the scene of our trials!

The remainder of the journey to Yahk was pleasantly uneventful, though some of us were



THE ROAD TOOK A THOROUGH DISLIKE TO US—WE WERE BURIED TO THE HUBS IN THE SLOUGH

already thrilling to the dangerous adventure that lay just ahead. For at Yahk the road ended abruptly, and for fourteen miles we should be obliged to progress on the railroad ties, in imminent danger of being hurled down an embankment by some legal claimant of the track. Even though we should succeed in saving ourselves if a train contested our right of way, the car must be a total wreck.

A panting locomotive and the big black shadows of freight cars greeted us ominously at Yahk. Trainmen peered at us curiously through the shadows.

On foot we crossed the gleaming tracks to a darkened station and a small, gloomy-looking inn. Inside, a lamp faintly illumined a dingy bar crowded with trainmen. A rough-and-tumble supper was served in a room where a girl sat toying with a typewriter—incongruous enough in a settlement where no one was permitted the luxury of walking, or driving, or riding, since all must take the train in and out of Yahk.

As the greasy, unsavoury meal was consumed, a whisper went round among us that stratagem must be employed to get on the line. We seemed to have a fighting chance of making the journey in safety, once the track was gained, since the pilot had secretly discovered that no trains—barring a possible freight or two—were expected for the next few hours. But not a word must be breathed of our intended invasion. Officially, no one was supposed to be aware of our foolhardy venture. However, further along, where the trail ended, we should find a road-gang in camp.

From them we could get directions concerning a level-crossing where we could put the car on the track under cover of the darkness.

“And good luck to you!” cried the pilot, cheerfully flinging back the words to us through the night, as he turned about to make the trip through the swamp again. “We’ll have that road fixed all right for you by the time you come again!”

A few minutes later and we had located the camp fires, received the hurried directions, and were astride the glittering rails which were to lead us along the intense darkness of the Yahk Loop. There was a gasp as one felt the first forward plunge of the car and the white path of acetylene light shot before us into the immense shadows of that forest wilderness. Four pairs of eyes strove to pierce the distance ahead and behind; and every nerve was strained in listening for a possible monster of steel and steam which might dash down upon us at any moment from around a curve or catch us in its swift career from behind! Muscles were tense, ready for the leap to a precarious safety at first sight of an approaching headlight.

And yet, strangely enough, there seemed just then nothing novel in the situation. It was as if we had always motored on a railroad—so paradoxical is Man! After all, danger was no greater there than at every turn of the crowded city thoroughfares, where no one knew from what direction it might come. Here, every fibre, every cell, was ready for it. We knew from what quarter it might be expected, and the danger,

perhaps, only added to the spiciness of the ride.

As the wheels—one within and one outside the track—crept from sleeper to sleeper, there was an incessant and infernal jiggling and jolting that shook the teeth and vibrated through the spine. The jaw rattled slightly as when a man shivers with cold. One felt as though in speaking there was a danger of biting the tongue at every attempt at articulation.

Time dragged on interminably as we chased the long triangle of brilliant light into the forest. The way had been straight only for a mile or so, then it began to contort and twist and writhe and throw itself into agonies as if trying to toss us off the rails. The track ran sharply downhill: one could sense the grade in the sound of the engines and the "feel" of the pedals. The curves grew sharper and shorter, the contortions more violent.

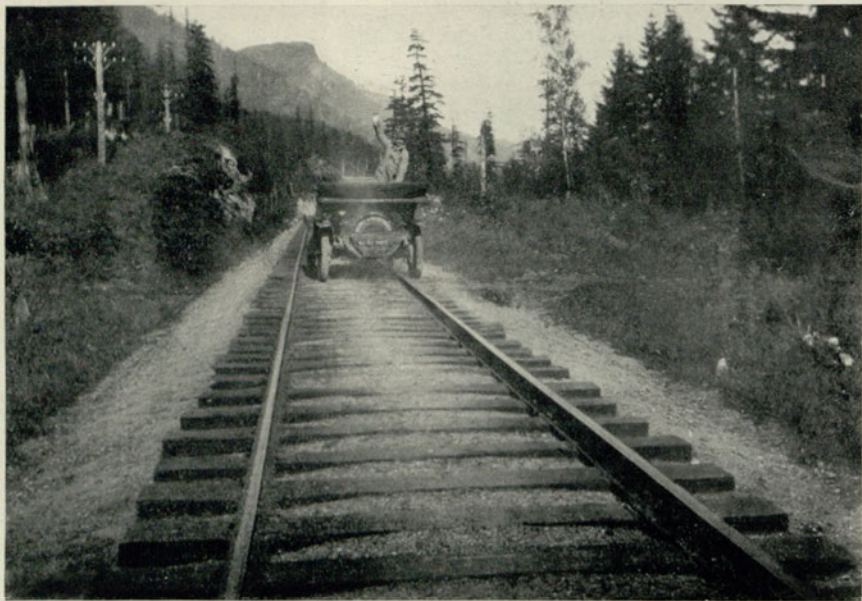
We caught the wheels in the frogs of the switches. Hurriedly we jacked the car above the level of the rails. Rapidly we filled the track beneath the wheel with stones and shot the car over the obstruction. The spikes in the sides of the rail—the characteristic Canadian method of holding the rails to the ties—cut the rubber, and very soon our rear tyres were in ribbons. But nothing worse happened than these temporary hold-ups at the switches. Apparently the enemy thought it idle to interfere with fools and their folly, and we reached our haven—a lonely and darkened railroad station in the forest—in safety, roused a sleepy alien lad out of cover, jerked the car off the tracks and through a gate, and

commandeered the youth to show us what he called the "Government road" to Creston.

Our vociferous triumph changed to silent gloom as we entered a mountain path—half road, half trail, that clambered towards the clouds above the Goat River Gorge, and soon swallowed us up in an impenetrable blackness. We were again adrift in a primal world. As the car roared once more its defiance at forest, mountain and hill, its voice attuned to the invisible torrent far below, we might have been Primeval Man wresting from Nature that narrow path which straggled between the timber line and the snows or dropped hurriedly into summer valleys. The machinery split the hush of the solitudes with its deafening clatter as we hauled, time after time, on the ropes or yelled a warning to the driver on the verge of a hidden precipice. There was a smell of damp, fresh earth, and a tang of the Wild above the invisible river. Darkness blotted out the startled savage things that must have cowered behind branch or fallen tree in fear of our dazzling "fire" and the frightful din.

Two o'clock! The open at last, and a road forking in half a dozen different ways by a deserted railroad! We tried all the forks, then foraged for humanity in some distant huts, and found our road paralleling the tracks to the north, good and indifferent but never bad, always sheering off a number of points from the direction which we wanted it to keep and always mercifully swinging round to the north again at the eleventh hour.

Three o'clock! A darkened hotel, a deserted



MUSCLES WERE TENSE, READY FOR A LEAP TO A PRECARIOUS SAFETY

town of a few straggling houses, and the ride to the edge of the dawn was over at last! The first motor-car that had ever entered Creston from the "road" stood panting and trembling, while the horn sent out hoarse messages to the sleeping world of our safe, triumphant arrival!

We clambered down and roused the inmates, and in the dimly-lit bar the blinking proprietor served the "loving cup" wherewith to celebrate the occasion ere we tumbled off to bed.

"Lucky thing," said Mr. R——, as we clinked glasses, "that we came over the tracks in the dark. Those precipices are bad enough to look at from the train, but in daylight in a motor-car—— Excuse me!!"

CHAPTER XV

THE sea was almost in sight.

Above the rush and roar of the Columbia, as we followed the devious paths of its green waters from Canada into America and back again, in imagination I could already hear the boom of the surf upon the Pacific sands and see the tremendous perspectives of the shimmering western ocean. Yet the hardest part of the tour was still ahead. There was no straight road westward: at times there was no road at all. I was compelled to make a detour of three hundred miles to cover sixty-five! to again entrain my car for twenty miles at Nelson! occasionally to "make" my own path! and horses and rafts were still in requisition in the emergency of mud and river-bank!

In spite of these delays, which tempted one to push on to the goal no matter what the hour of the day or night, the scenery and the incidents of travel in a highly picturesque country like British Columbia could not be ignored. Beauty and interest were concentrated—magnified fourfold. It was as if Canada had saved for the end of the tour not only the most difficult travel conditions but also its greatest glories of mountain, lake and

stream, colour and composition. The human element, too, became more absorbing.

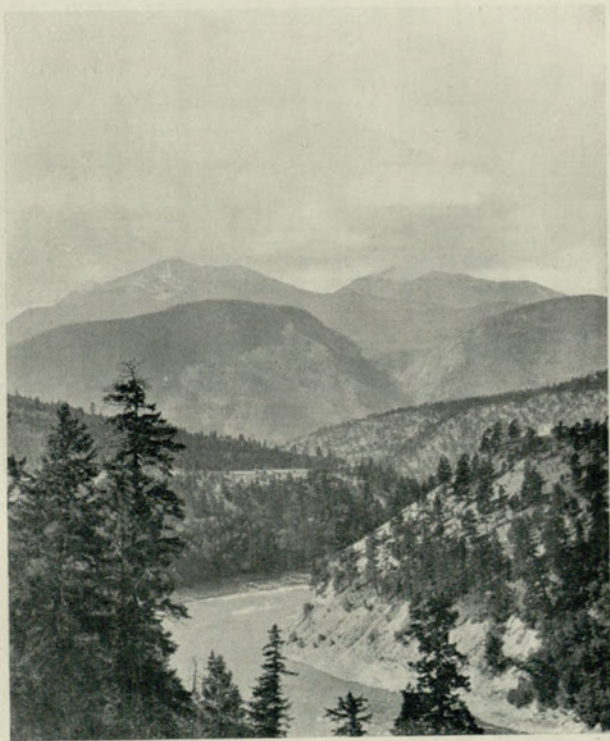
Accompanied by the Government road superintendent, Mr. S——, we motored through the Doukhobor country on our way to the Okanagan Lakes. As we drew up at one of the community houses of this Russian peasantry, close to Grand Forks, some of the strange, immobile, shapeless creatures who form the women folk of the colony came forward and arranged themselves gawkily in front of the entrance, a motley collection of children clinging to their skirts. The house had about a dozen rooms and probably sheltered as many families. House and women were equally uncouth. The latter were apparently ignorant as well, though they were representatives of those religious fanatics whom Tolstoi had mistaken for inspired Christian Socialists and to whose cause he had devoted the proceeds of his "Resurrection." How incongruously their appearance contrasted with those noble tenets which have made successful farmers and colonizers of a people who work to enrich not themselves but the community; who abhor war; who neither steal nor covet; who scorn to work for wages and who own nothing but that which belongs to all!

Threading forest paths like the woodland scenes of a fairy play, past whirling pools and the icy blue waters of silent lakes and of rivers that rushed through canyons and ravines, now dropping to valleys flanked by towering walls of granite and sand, now climbing towards snow-capped peaks, we pursued a road that followed the line of least resistance and took us more often

north and south than westward. Pine-clad hills and slopes, lovely in the soft nuances of autumn foliage, gave place to perilous divides and the sites of abandoned mines. Again and again placid vistas, beautiful in their domesticity, were succeeded by all that was wild and rugged and stamped for ever as Nature's undisputed own.

Princeton lay at the foot of the great barrier of the Hope Mountains. Dropped down amidst forests and canyons and rivers, and with little as yet to offer the traveller in the way of fare or accommodation, it was situated on the direct route from the United States boundary to the Cariboo country to the north, while at a distance of about sixty-five miles westward, as the crow flies, lay the town of Hope. For the present, however, Hope was absolutely inaccessible by motor-car. Only one or two precarious pack-horse trails, much visited of blizzards, led over the mountains, and there were many places along these lofty trails where it was impossible to find footing for any kind of car. The projected government trans-provincial highway will strike south along the Similkameen River and thence west by Silver Creek to Hope on the Fraser. Only a short strip of this route had been completed from the western end, and between the two extremes lay a dense thicket of mountain forest.

For one brief hour of perfect motoring, however, we were able to follow the wide and safe macadam boulevard along the Similkameen under the guidance of another government road superintendent.



Broadbridge

THE THOMPSON WAS CREATED FOR SOARING POETS AND TEMPERAMENTAL
DRAMATISTS

"The finished Princeton-Hope road will be a revelation in mountain-road construction," explained Mr. T——. "You'll find it some day quite a different affair from many of the old roads you have travelled, which are so steep and impracticable that we have had to abandon the majority of them as too expensive to keep up. You see the old roads were constructed by hand labour, and the province, too, was short of money. To-day we are eliminating all pitches and aiming to have the best of surfaces with minimum grades and low altitudes—nothing over seven per cent., you know—and a road available nine months of the year."

The route from Princeton now lay along the Tulameen and Otter Creeks northward to the Cariboo country, where I expected to strike the road along the Fraser near Lillooet. Soon we had risen from 1500 to 3000 feet, and were looking down from the dizzy height of a narrow, corkscrew road to a torrential valley clothed in firs. At Granite Creek we saw the spot where two million dollars' worth of gold had been taken out of the earth in placer mining; at Merritt there came into view the broad sweep of the Nicola Valleys, exquisite in their soft loveliness and rich in their panoramas of hillside ranch lands. Where the road forks, the waters of the Nicola follow it westward to the Thompson, while to the east it runs by the chain of lakes of the Nicola to Kamloops on the Canadian Pacific Railway and the valley of the North Thompson River. Somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Clearwater River the waggon road

degenerates into a primitive trail, which will one day, however, form the nucleus of a highway to Tete Jaune Cache, on the Grand Trunk Pacific, where it will meet the mighty Fraser a few miles from its source near the Yellowhead Pass.

We reached Spences Bridge without incident. No road connecting this town with Lytton on the Fraser, a local government agent kindly volunteered to pilot us along the western bank of the Thompson—a torrential stream of “picture-book” magnificence traversing a country of great splendour and beauty. Everything, indeed, suggested the familiar painted stage-settings of melodramatic western life. The water seemed too green to be real, the banks too steep and rocky for human passage, and the river roared and rushed and boiled so self-consciously that it was obviously waiting for soaring poets and temperamental dramatists to chronicle its moods.

How such a river must have despised automobiles and the other trumpery details of travel! The Thompson, I know, took a dislike to us from the first. It rolled up the earth of the road-bed as one might twist hair into curl papers. It buckled and warped and wrenched the path into semblance of a flapping ribbon. It tossed the path about like a shuttlecock, bending it back and forth until often we seemed to be returning to Spences Bridge. Then it dropped us to water level and tried to drown us; next it endeavoured to pitch us into a cleft in the rocks, or to shoot us up into the sky again. Failing in these tactics,



WE MOTORED THROUGH THE LORDLY RANCHES

it threw out a lofty wall of rock and a careful arrangement of trees and bushes as screens. To all seeming, there was an end to the path and the tour! But the path merely lay hidden.

When we found it again, the river, obviously incensed, straightway broke a spring leaf on the car, forced us continually to adjust the carburettor to the changing altitudes, and kept us generally shivering with anticipation for the next catastrophe. Suddenly, aware of its impotence to do us further damage, the Thompson melodramatically shot out of sight and left us to struggle on alone through the bunch grass and rabbit brush of lordly cattle ranches and high plateaus. When, an hour later, it reappeared, it found us struggling with precipitous down-grades cut in the sides of mighty sand-hills. Again it showered us with hair-pin turns, steep pitches and deep clefts spanned by frail wooden trestles. On the opposite banks lay Ashcroft, safely ensconced on an island plateau. Our road maintained an average height above the river of one hundred feet. Higher up, bushes and scrub timber had obtained a precarious foothold on the towering slopes and appeared to be wondering, not so much how they ever got there as how much longer they would be able to remain there before the whole hillside pitched bodily into the river and obliterated the landscape. The uncertainty of their tenancy reminded us of our own imminent danger of entombment, and we crept nervously down to the bridge by the fermenting waters and into the sanctuary of the comfortable little hotel at Ashcroft.

We were now on the fringe of the Cariboo

mining country, and in the heart of the Fraser and Thompson gold lands, which had been the "making" of Vancouver and Victoria. With the discovery of the precious metal, British Columbia had developed a new vigour in road building. Highways were projected in order to open up the gold country. Sir James Douglas was then in power at Victoria as Governor, and initiated a highway system which followed the rocky canyons and defiles of the Fraser from Yale, winding past Lytton and Ashcroft, and along the Thompson and the Bonaparte Rivers to join a road from Lillooet at Clinton, and to form the nucleus of a great artery of travel through agricultural and auriferous lands.

Ashcroft, an outpost of a back country only now beginning to be tapped by railroads, was originally a miners' outfitting town. Waggon roads still stretch between it and the north, bisected by the new and unfinished Grand Trunk Pacific. The town and its surroundings as I viewed them, were neither Anglo-Saxon, Tudor, nor Norman. They were decidedly Oriental. The sandhills above the river, the intense blueness of the sky, the deep green of the firs upon the mountains, the strange unearthliness of the boiling, contorted stream—all these combined to suggest a landscape in Algiers or Egypt.

No traveller, in face of this general bizarreness, could remain long indoors in Ashcroft. There was little civic conventionality about the main street. There were low huts, with tiny windows and doors, occupied by "Chinatown." There were shops with wooden roofs projecting

over the side walks to give shelter from sun and rain. On the side streets, private houses were fenced off, seemingly with the laudable intention of keeping out wandering kine and dogs, and keeping in unornamental wild flowers and weeds. In a corner above the river-banks, however, I came across a garden of old-fashioned flowers, lovingly tended by the rector of the little Anglican church. Across the river, the sand-benches loomed uncannily against the sky. Ribbons of road ran in straight lines along their sides; and the little wooden bridges over the fissures looked like trap-doors set to precipitate unwary travellers into the treacherous waters. In the illusion of distance and elevation, it was not difficult to imagine that the draught horses moving slowly along the highway against the dun yellow background of hills were camels or to endow the human beings by their side with something of the mystery of Bedouins.

A jingling of bells, and the cracking of whips in the direction of the bridge brought an abrupt end to my dream. A number of waggons, with long spans of horses, were pulling out of town, moving slowly up the winding road. They formed one of the picturesque freight caravans which for years, in conjunction with trains of pack mules, have plied along the Cariboo trail between Ashcroft and the gold district of Soda Creek and Barkerville. Shooting past them hurried the automobile "stage," a huge red-painted affair, great of horse-power, which of late has disputed service on the Cariboo trail.

Some hours later, we, too, were on our way

north, and overtook the waggon train on a sandy slope above the Bonaparte river. A team of eight or ten horses drew a couple of waggons and a trailer. Built high and narrow, the waggons were loaded with every conceivable object of utility for the hardy frontier. What could not be jammed under the huge canvas cover was rammed at all angles into the sides; what could not be rammed was apparently slammed—anywhere; and what could not be slammed was unceremoniously hanged by the neck to the sides, the top, the underside, the back, the front, the axles and the horses' harness. The driver, the least important part of the load, was perched high above all other earthly things except the hills. His descent was presumably accomplished by hitching the reins to a bedstead or a steam boiler on top of the load and sliding down to the backs of the horses. Most of the men, however, were walking, for the obvious reason that until something fell off there was no room for them to ride. They were huge of limb and arm, big of head and broad of shoulder, and generally of that splendid physique which stoically bears hardship, while it inspires the puny denizen of the city with a frantic desire to revise anatomical lines and be born again. They were dressed in top boots, flannel shirts, and greenish-yellow or grey trousers. Anything beyond these essentials appeared to be rare luxuries.

One of these picturesque sons of the wild climbed on to the tonneau door and sat side-saddle for a chat.

“I've been at this kind of thing,” he said,



"THERE'S NOTHING BETTER FOR ME THAN THIS OLD CARIBOO ROAD, AND I'LL LIVE AND DIE ON IT"

“ever since I was a kid. There ain’t nothin’ on this trail in the way of freightin’ which I haven’t done. It’s a good life as far as it goes. I’ve got my own team and a bit of a ranch, with a shack and some good beef cattle, and you’ve got to show me somethin’ that has this thing beat. Of course, there are times when a fellow wants to pull out and quit doin’ the same durned thing that don’t seem to get you anywheres in particular. I’ve tried to unhitch sometimes, and every time I’ve come back to the road. It didn’t matter so much before, but now I’m married and got a kid it’s kind of hard—the road pullin’ me one way an’ the missis and the kid the other. It’s only becoz of them that I ever go home at all. I guess there’s nothin’ better for me than this road, and I’ll live and die on it.”

The call of the road! How many of us must answer that summons! What matter whether it reveal only a few hundred miles of its length to a sturdy freighter, or a continent to an automobilist!

Prognathous of jaw, with huge neck and shoulders, and fingers that were eloquent of the massiveness of his frame, my new friend of the trail was a frontier type that one instinctively admired. If he should walk down Piccadilly, the newsboys would follow him till they dropped, certain that the hero of their penny literature had come to life. Should he condescend to speak to them they would have a fit from sheer excess of joy. Was not this the man who had made their blood run cold with his exploits of deadly rifle or knife, who had shot buffalo, grappled with bears,

killed Indians? Was not this the hero who had made them long to run away and become fierce desperadoes?

Yet as he sat straining the tonneau door, where the legs of the emergency driver usually reposed, there was nothing particularly romantic about him. He asked for a "lift," explaining that his team was ahead and he was endeavouring to catch it. He had never been on an automobile before, but he "guessed" it would get him along quicker than the freighters.

Twelve miles out from Ashcroft we came upon the first of the lonely wooden inns, or way-side houses, which provide rest and refreshment every twenty to fifty miles of the route. The entrance porch was covered with creeper, and dormer windows peeped out of the slanting roof. One side of the inn formed a general store, the other contained the room which did duty as the restaurant. Here the shirt-sleeved proprietor sat at the head of a long table vigorously carving at a "rib roast smothered in onions," and talking to a half-dozen stolid Cariboo teamsters. A light express waggon drew up outside, and a neat-looking girl ran out and dropped a letter into the mail bag. She was a pretty creature, rather self-conscious in her well-coiffured hair and high-heeled shoes, and conveying the impression of having been "got up to kill." What the damsel imagined she might "kill" in the Cariboo country remained a puzzle all during the meal, where she acted the *rôle* of waitress whenever a guest was too occupied to slide the bread, pickles and butter along the table. The meat formed another puzzle

until mine host volunteered the explanation that we were eating venison which he himself had "brought down" only a day or two before.

At Hat Creek, a narrow road appeared out of the west to take us to the Fraser, and we bade reluctant "good-bye" to the Cariboo trail. Our way now wound through woods and past small lakes, with occasional settlements and signs of farming. The region was one of great natural beauty. At one point the road and the limpid waters of a lake squeezed themselves through the attenuated valley, but not without some evidence of friction and ill-feeling. The quarrel was soon over and we entered a more open country, which revealed another and larger valley running at right angles to our road but totally neglected to warn us of the magnificent scene Nature was preparing. A tremendous sweep of road dipped down to vast solitudes. Then we saw a deep cleft in the earth, somewhere within which, though hidden from view, coursed the torrential Fraser. Directly before us, enormous benches of coloured rock and soil receded upward from ledge to ledge and slope to slope. In the course of a million years, the river had worked its way down over these benches to the lower levels, leaving noble terraces of green carpeted earth, on which grew dark and shapely firs and golden poplars, and whose faces formed towering escarpments of bare rock shaped into castles and impregnable walls of natural fortresses.

We moved on and down. Through a huge gash in the dun-coloured earth far to the right, there flowed a tiny rill of slatey-steel edged with white. It was the mighty Fraser, a thousand or

more feet below, crawling out of an abysmal and gloomy channel into light.

Our path descended to the left toward the river. The scene became more colourful. The waters were now tinged with milky-green. They boiled and swirled and lashed themselves into foam. At the bends they tore savagely and vindictively at the jutting bluffs. They seemed animated by an evil spirit, and formed a striking contrast to the peaceful scene around. Firs climbed up the slopes above the road. Rabbit brush and tufted sage trailed after them. Farms began to patch the hillsides. A little Indian village appeared upon a lofty, isolated, grassy ledge of rock standing out clear-cut in an unearthly realism against the intensely blue sky. It was as though the earth defied the river, saying :—

“You may boil and surge and tear at your banks as much and as long as you like, but you shall not disturb my peace. Go on burrowing, cut down until the bottom falls out of you in Kamtchatka, if you wish. But all the mischief that you imagine you are working, I shall turn into beauty and blessing.”

Swarthy women were working on arable patches of land close to crowded Indian huts. They wore white head-cloths, blue skirts and pink blouses hanging baggily. There was scarcely any sign of white settlement except for a distant view of Lillooet on the opposite side of the river, at the head of the trail (opened by Sir James Douglas to give access from Vancouver *via* the Harrison and Anderson Lakes.



ONE STOPPED SHUDDERING FOR FEAR OF PRECIPITATING THE SAND SLIDES INTO THE FRASER

Broadbridge

The road grew more tortuous. At one moment it dodged the mountains ; at another it dodged the creeks, which poured their waters into the main stream at every quarter of a mile. The farms disappeared, and tremendous "slides" of loose stone and sand threatened to bury us under mountain avalanches. One stopped shuddering for fear of starting a slide.

Fourteen miles from Lytton, the proprietor of a lonely wayside inn cautioned us in the dusk to be on the look-out for a couple of freight teams which he expected from the other direction along the dangerous, winding trail. With lighted lamps, we crept warily along the unprotected precipices above the river. At last we heard through the darkness ahead a high-pitched voice. I sprang cautiously down. Nothing could be seen. After some time a light waggon containing an Indian and his squaw appeared round a curve directly in front of us. Gingerly the car backed out upon a jutting ledge to let them by, and they passed us indifferently while we anxiously watched our rear wheels, all but poised over space.

Again we cautiously advanced. Then came the sounds of bells and our lights flashed upon the huge canvas tops of the expected freighters with their long strings of horses. The waggons carried no lights and one marvelled at the miracle which kept them on the roadway. Had the horses taken fright a catastrophe would have been inevitable.

We backed again. We stopped the engines. We held our breaths. The freighters crawled past, half asleep !

We had still ten more miles to shelter, but our big acetylene lamps went out, leaving us in total darkness on a dangerous curve. We pulled up, lit the lamps again and crept onward. Once more the lights went out; the gas in the cylinder was exhausted. To advance without lights meant certain death, and our small oil lamps were next to useless, being hung too high above the roadway to give us a view of the dangerous ledge.

The situation was desperate. We could not camp there, nor could we apparently progress until daylight, since to walk ahead with our feeble light only served to increase the danger of a fall over the precipices.

It was the extra driver from Saskatchewan who finally came to the rescue. Taking one of the oil lamps, he stretched himself at full length along the mudguard next the outer edge of the road, reached out his arm so as to bring the lamp close to the ground, and boldly gave the signal: "Go ahead!"

Ten miles on one's stomach, holding a light over a sheer drop of hundreds of feet is a devilishly unpleasant *rôle!* Inch by inch we crept on. Moment by moment the poor fellow grew stiffer. A sudden jolt and it seemed as if we must throw him down the bank. A flicker of the light, and it seemed as if we all, car and passengers, were already over the brink. We were incessantly rounding a series of bluffs, twisting and turning in short, sharp curves that shut out the road ahead. Conversation languished. The unfortunate man progressing on his stomach gave vent to his emotions only in occasional grunts.

Lytton! A hot supper and shelter! The acrobatic driver of the prairies had performed a gymnastic feat this time to some purpose. But for his self-sacrifice, there would have been neither meal nor hotel for us that night.

Architecturally, the dwellings of Lytton appeared to have been impressed into service against their will. Called upon at a moment's notice to make up the externalities of a town, the barn-like buildings, with their gable ends turned to the street, and thrown promiscuously together, refused to conform to any familiar civic order or relationship. The new hotel had evidently caused some consternation to its predecessor, which had hastily scattered itself in fragments over the town and, in the guise of "annexes," was endeavouring to capture whatever business might escape its more pretentious rival. In close sympathy with its badly-hit proprietor, a number of Swedes were considerably running up bills at the liquor bar. From the side door, the customers had access to a high boarded room, lighted by the doorway in the daytime, and by a couple of "skied" lamps at night, a little window perched up somewhere near the ceiling having scrambled out of the way in nervous anticipation of flying bottles and destructive fists. Familiarly known as the "sample room," its usual occupants were among the worst samples of humanity, flung here out of kindness of heart by the humane proprietor when drunkenness reduced his guests to heavy sleep or elevated them to the inward elation of raging maniacs. The entrance once securely closed, no outside interruptions could

break in upon the revelries of this besotted, frayed and often bleeding world. Fights, attempts to scale smooth perpendicular walls, the breaking of offensive or inoffensive heads, and desperate efforts to rid society either of each other or of the aggressive demons which afflict certain members of the human race under stimulus, afforded unending entertainment to those concerned.

A peep into this hall of revelry the morning after my arrival in Lytton revealed an evil smell as the only occupant. Certain misunderstandings overnight as to the exact location of the place or the licensed doss-houses near by had resulted in several convivial souls taking their entertainment in the gutters. The town was used to the *al fresco* sleepers. Drivers carefully dodged them. It must have been a miracle that in the darkness of the night before we had not decapitated a few of these choice spirits. One man was still lying in the centre of a roadway under the broiling sun. There he would lie until he got up of his own volition. Men might remove garbage, but men would not remove him.

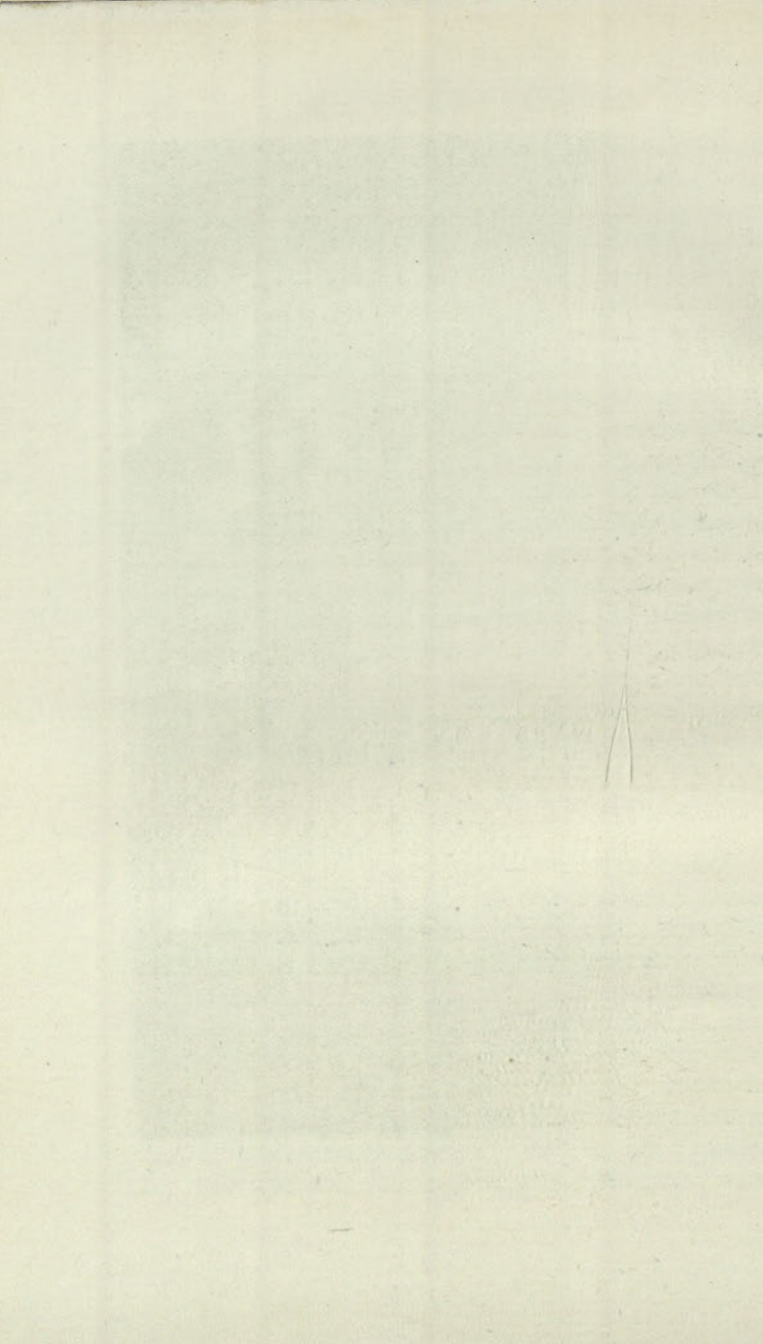
The man was a little worse than garbage!

Most of the Bacchanalian revellers of Lytton are Swedes. These men like drink, but love Copenhagen snuff. When they cannot get the Copenhagen brand, they make their own variety. The recipe varies with the individual Swede. But "Oskar" or "Ole" does not snuff the vile concoction after the fashion of the eighteenth-century gallants. He chews it after the fashion of the American with his "quid" or his "gum," the superfluous saliva being distributed with



ARCHITECTURALLY, LYTTON REFUSED TO BE A TOWN

Broadbridge



generous freedom about the surrounding world. Once beyond bounds of moral suasion, a court house and prison pound, neatly topped with bottles broken in numerous frays, await him hard by the school-house. I found the custodian of the morals of the unregenerate a tall, fine-looking soldierly type of Anglo-Canadian. He was clean—excessively so—and he loved gardening. Dirt seemed to be his abhorrence and his Frankenstein. He and his two assistants had no sooner chased it effectually with a rubber hose from one prisoner than it appeared rampant upon another. Dirt gave him no rest. But it never succeeded in getting a moment's rest, itself, inside the prison.

The plain court room led into a closed pound, open only to the sky. Here were carried out the Draconic methods of cleansing the inmate with the garden hose. Should he be found too obstreperous for association with his kind, he was then thrust into a solitary wooden cell until discretion returned and he could be placed amid the society of the adjoining lock-up, where at either end of the room, freely open to air and light, was a row of iron cages or cubicles. In one of these the prisoner had room to turn round. He could even lie down, exchange the time of day with his next-door neighbour, or join in a general howling chorus designed to bridge over temporary ill-luck and make life a hot torment to the gaolers.

In the pound there lay the half-burned hat and trousers and the broken pipe of a poor unfortunate whose dead body had recently been

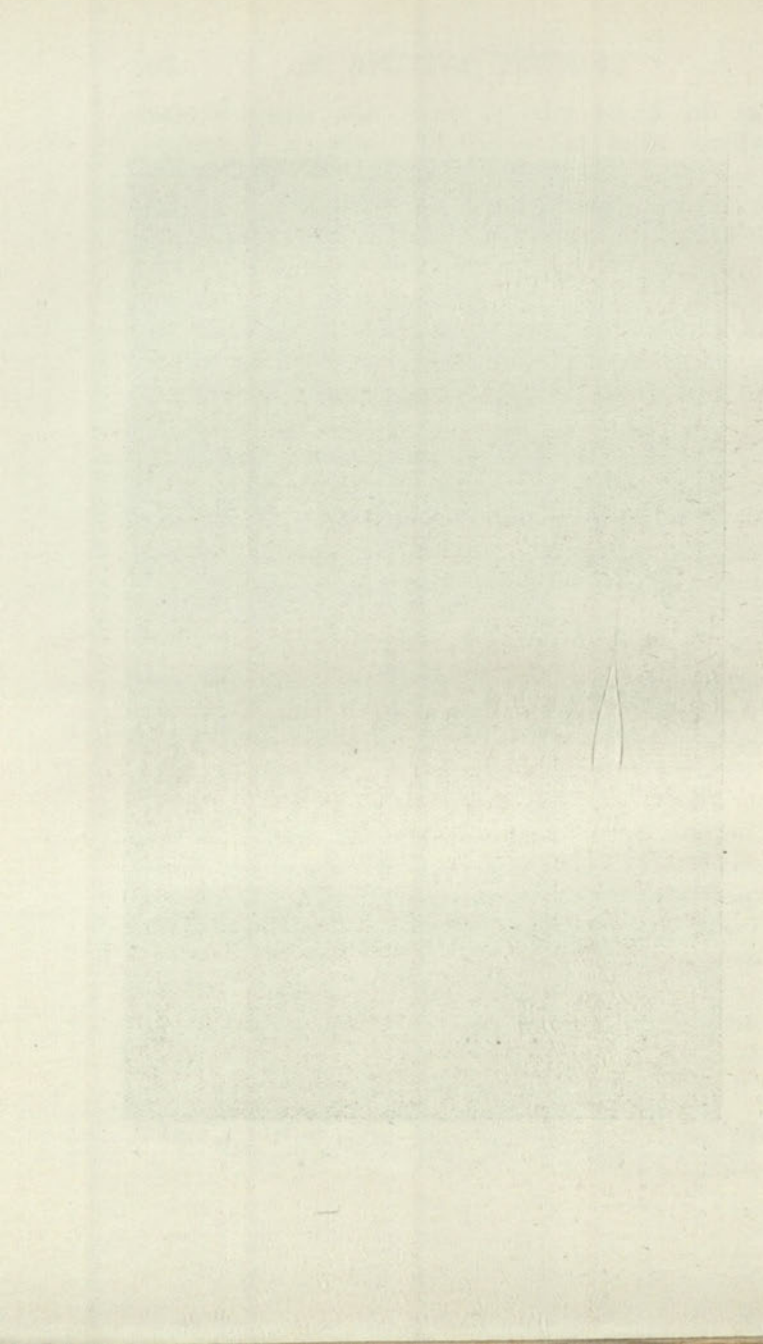
dragged from the river as the result of an accident to a scow. The man had been hastily buried in a little fenced-off whitewashed cemetery, decorated with wooden crosses, and every one said he was lucky even to have the luxury of a burial. The boiling Fraser "ran on its edge," and rarely, if ever, gave up its dead. Its torrent swirled through a deep, wedge-shaped channel in endless whirlpools, once in the vortex of which a victim was inevitably drawn into a huge cavity of the rocky bed.

The river road south of Lytton, once open as far as Hope, was now clear to Keefer, a distance of about fifteen miles. From this point on, some of the old highway has been appropriated by the two railroads which now monopolize the gorge-like banks. The sacrifice of this important highway at the time of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway seemed insignificant, since British Columbia desired a railroad which established for her communication with the prairies and the East. Indeed, she insisted upon a railway before she would consent to join the confederation of the Provinces. The old highway formed an admirable road-bed for the tracks and would save time and money. Moreover, the supplies then conveyed in horse-drawn waggons or by pack mules could, once the railroad was working, be conveyed to Ashcroft with ten times the present speed. So the Canadian Pacific Railway took the road and British Columbia gained improved transportation. The exchange seemed fair enough.

It was only later that the Province realized



THE YALE ROAD—ONE OF THE ROADS OF EMPIRE—WAS FAST GOING TO THE DOGS !



that the highway had been sacrificed to a short-sighted policy, that the People's Rights, as now interpreted, had been infringed. To-day a government which would turn a listening ear to a similar proposition would find itself decidedly unpopular. Road building has become a passion in British Columbia. It is a slogan and a safety-valve of all sound political policy. No premier, no minister of public works, can hope to retain the franchises of the country unless he is an open advocate and promoter of good roads.

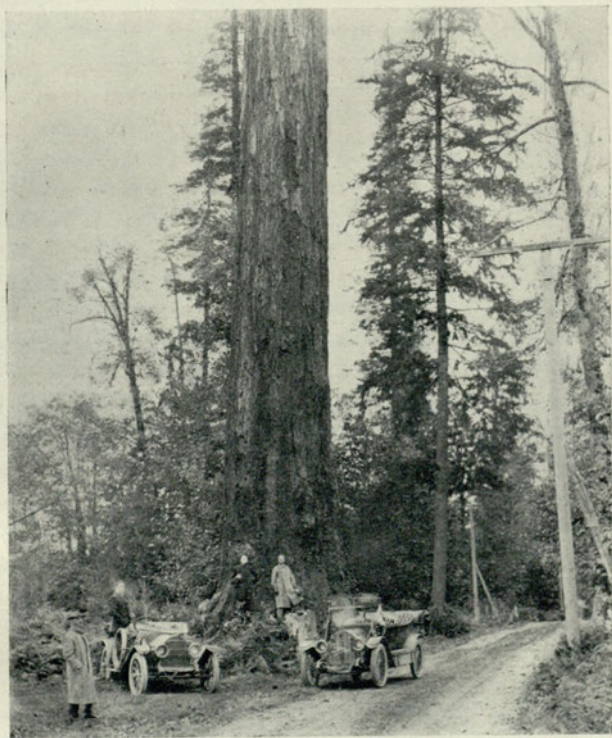
Yale was the first point along the romantic gorge of the Fraser where the old road put in a reappearance, to take us on for a distance of some fifteen miles to Hope. Apparently aware of the danger of further appropriation by the railroad, it shot out of view of the river, and took a winding route through the forest. If, however, it had managed to escape the Scylla of absorption, it had not succeeded in avoiding the Charybdis of neglect. It lay buried under leaves, twigs, and pine needles. For years apparently no vehicle had been driven through these glades. Another decade of abandonment, and it would be absolutely impassable. The soil was soft, and there were a few inclines where the wheels of the car could scarcely get sufficient purchase to take us to the top.

A splendid avenue, originally built, I understand, by the British engineers—one of the highways of empire—is fast going to the dogs!

CHAPTER XVI

HOPE gave scant sign of existence as we ferried across the Fraser to the steep landing. The inhabitants were at a football match at the back of the town, and, from the appearance of the streets, most of the houses had gone with them as a possible precaution against burglars. One or two wooden "left-overs," facing the river, played sentinel on either side of a broad thoroughfare running back to the hills, shaded by maples and firs. The wide roadway was evidently utterly demoralized by the tremendous latitude given to it, and made ineffectual attempts to meander off through fences or into side paths in favour of the encroaching grass.

The little town, ideally situated amid the mountains, began its chequered career as a station of the Hudson Bay Company, whose trading post still stands—reminder that only a few decades ago the whole of this vast territory was ruled by a private company. To this little house—a wooden, box-like affair with gabled roof—the Indians brought pelts from the north to exchange for the luxuries of civilization. Should he need a musket, the Indian had only to get his friend the factor to stand one on end



Broadbridge

WE TRAVELLED THROUGH A ROYAL PRESERVE OF DOUGLAS FIRS

while he piled skins from the floor to the muzzle. The wily factor took advantage of this method of barter by importing guns of increased length of barrel, but refraining from explanations. Had a gun sixty feet long been offered him for his pelts, the Indian would have felt that he was about to become the lucky owner of a weapon worthy to be the property of the Great Spirit himself.

Under the guidance of Mr. G——, the owner of the ferry, I explored the few miles of the Princeton-Hope mountain road already completed at the western end. Three miles from the starting point, we resorted to saddle and pack horses—tough, wiry Indian mounts of uncertain age. The ground continually rose and fell precipitously, throwing one in turn heavily against the crupper and the pommel. To add to the discomfiture of the journey, one of the pack horses entertained us with a series of buck-jumping performances and repeatedly scattered his pack on the trail.

“Ain’t much to look at and cost next to nothing,” said one of the road-camp men, “but worth their weight in gold. That grey over there with his ribs sticking out went over a precipice once. Got him back to the trail more or less in pieces. Looked just about good enough for dog-meat, but they patched him up, did a bit of sawing and hammering and glueing, and now he’s got as much steam in him as a colt.”

“Talking about steam,” said Mr. G——, “that reminds me of the Steamboat Mountain

wild cat scare which struck Hope a short time ago. Did you ever hear about that?"

I shook my head.

"It hit the town badly. Hope went up like a rocket and came down like one, too. All the doing of a couple of Americans from Nevada. One of them committed suicide a few months ago. Pity he didn't do that before he ever came here. He and his pard went back of the town about thirty-seven miles, declared they'd struck a rich vein of gold ore, and commenced operations to make everybody rich. One fellow opened up an office in Hope, and the other moved on to Vancouver to unload the stock in the new mine. Pretty soon things began to boom. Everybody was talking about the new Klondike, and the ferry from the railway station to the town began working overtime, bringing in the young and old, the women and kids, and all the people who wanted to live and die in Hope as millionaires. Junk and furniture they brought along with them kept us busy for months. Hotels filled up, houses went up. Even then people slept all over the place, out of doors—any old corner was good enough. Hope had the population it had been waiting for for years.

"Well, that was during the winter months. Everybody was waiting for the snow and frost to clear away from the Steamboat Mountain so as to begin operations. When spring came along, some of the boys went ahead to take the first look and bring back news to the eager, waiting crowds. But Mr. Yankee didn't wait for their return. Both he and his pard in Vancouver

cleared out. Lucky they did. Everybody wanted their blood. The bubble had burst; the bottom fallen out of the boom. For there wasn't any gold in that Steamboat except the bit of ore the sharks had brought with them from Nevada to salt the 'mine.'

"Then the trouble began—people stony broke, women crying, men cursing, selling every stick they had, and all trying to get out of the town at once! Lots without the price of the ferry or the railroad fare and having to be helped! Others footing it back! Furniture being sold for junk! Scare spelled ruin for some of the townsmen, too, and I guess Hope had a close call. A little more and it would have been wiped out."

As we moved westward from Hope of the visionary Klondike toward the Pacific, mountains still blocked our path, and the Fraser still offered us the comparative levels of its valleys and its huge flats, where wildfowl gathered in countless flocks. A few miles east of Chilliwack, we found a group of townspeople—ruddy of face and hearty of greeting—awaiting us by the roadside. Cars were drawn up, ready to escort us into the town and on to New Westminster, a Pacific port and former capital of British Columbia.

And now, at last, the mountains, which we had been facing for so long, parted to reveal a broad and pleasant valley. With almost a sigh of relief, the car scudded forward. Our difficulties were over—the journey all but finished.

Prosperous farms and tidy villages now filled the landscape; there were huge fields of hops, where Indians were still at work among the tall

vines, symmetrically-fenced fields of clover, herds of sleek Holstein and Jersey cows—all the adjuncts of a conventionally smiling countryside.

At New Westminster we paused just long enough for luncheon and speeches, photographers and congratulations. And then, an hour or so later, came Vancouver, another welcoming crowd, and the Mayor and Mayoress awaiting on the steps of the hotel the first motor-car that had ever attempted the journey across the Dominion.

With due formality the letters I had carried from Halifax and other eastern cities were delivered.

But though to all intents and purposes I had reached the coast of the Pacific, actually I had still many miles to travel before I reached the most westerly point available on Vancouver Island. Vancouver lies on an inlet of the sea, whose deep blue waters are overlooked by lofty mountain peaks. There still remained a sixty-five mile journey across the intervening Sound to Nanaimo and about a hundred miles of motor travel to Alberni.

From Nanaimo, after a welcome by the Mayor and member of Parliament, we set out with the pilot escort and Press representative from Victoria, for the final stage of the long journey. Lordly scenery and land and sea-scapes of unsurpassed beauty, ideal gravel roads through forests of giant pine and fir—that was Vancouver Island, a paradise of the motorists. Our way led along the fringe of a kingly preserve, and for miles we travelled through a veritable forest tunnel of timber, the car dwarfed to insignificance by trees



THE CRAGS MADE THINGS UNPLEASANT FOR THE ROAD ALONG CAMERON LAKE

which shot up to the sky and barred the sunlight from spreading banks of fern and flower. The way followed closely the first trail blazed years ago through this solitude and now marked by immense stumps, sooner or later to be torn by dynamite from their anchorage.

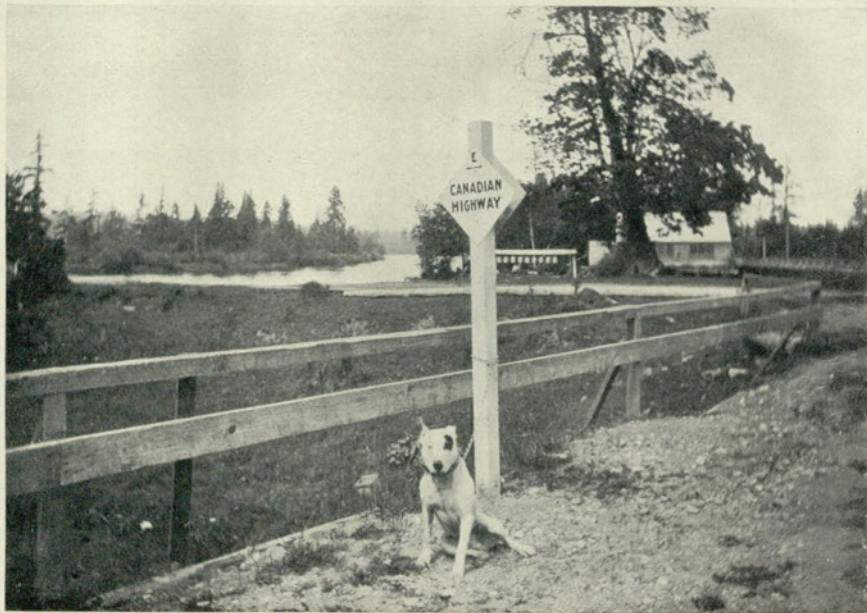
We emerged from the forest into the open at the head of Cameron Lake, where an automobile road skirted the south shore and was often almost crowded into the water by towering crags. Streams ribboned their way down the mountain sides, to join a torrent hurtling towards the lake. Presently the road wound upwards, a strip of grey and brown, bent on finding the easiest method of ascent, but never very successful in discovering convenient grades. Eventually it made up its mind to descend again, and, without any particular regard for our safety, hurried downwards between a mountain bank and a precipice over which there was a sheer drop to perdition. It ended at last, however, in the centre of the little town of Alberni, on the banks of the Somas, a river where salmon leaped in great parabolas on their way to the spawning grounds.

Further than Alberni I could not go. The inlet, flowing in from the wide Pacific, was the western goal of which I had been dreaming for so many weeks, for so many thousands of miles.

The car drew up before a simple white post, on which an arrow points due east to Halifax. Below are the words: "Canadian Highway." A few months before, there had been a significant ceremony, when the planting of this first post of the future Trans-Canadian Highway had brought

together throngs of public-spirited men and women from Victoria, Vancouver and Nanaimo. That ceremony marked the commencement of a work hardly second in importance to the construction of the first transcontinental railroad. Two days later, men had stolen out with crow-bars, pickaxes, and shovels, under cover of the night, and borne the precious post a mile and half away to the rival town of Port Alberni. There the luckless landmark was planted unceremoniously like a broken stake in a picket fence. There was consternation in Alberni next morning. Resolutions of dire revenge were hurriedly passed, but ere the town fathers could act, a cart was seen approaching from the suspected quarter bearing the stolen sign. The treasured post was tenderly restored to its rightful place on the inlet, and a bull terrier, fierce and aggressive of disposition and sharing the local indignation, was chained to it to keep watch and ward over the outward symbol of a road that is yet to "weave province with province, to interlace people with people."

A few years more and the transcontinental motorist will find a post yet further west than Alberni, on the actual western shore, looking out across the blue Pacific to an unobstructed view of the horizon beyond which lies the Orient. Some day, too, he may journey northward through the interior of the island, following the Great and Buttle's Lakes to the newly-laid-out National Reserve, Strathcona Park—a great provincial domain of 240 square miles, abounding in glacial lakes, forests, lofty peaks, and a flora and fauna quite equal in natural beauty to anything on the



A BULL TERRIER, FIERCE AND AGGRESSIVE OF DISPOSITION, WAS CHAINED TO THE HISTORIC POST *L. Frank*

American Continent. Some day, yet far in the future, he may supplement his motor trip across Canada by a tour on a Pacific highway stretching along "the slope of the two Americas, from Arctic to Antarctic; a great broad, smooth well-engineered road, extending continuously from community to community and absolutely free to the use of all."

More speeches, more cameras, another luncheon! Then Nanaimo again, and on to Victoria through Coombs, where Salvation Army colonies are transforming eight hundred acres into a model settlement of twenty-acre farms, through a region of copper and coal mines, and lands which harvest the big timbers, through the trout paradise of Duncans, where the Mayor of Victoria and his aldermen awaited us, over the famous Malahat Drive winding along an arm of the sea to the capital!

At the Parliament Buildings, hard by the obelisk to Sir James Douglas, I delivered the last of the transcontinental mail entrusted to me to Sir Richard McBride, the Premier of British Columbia. The speedometer registered forty-two hundred miles.

Fifty-two days before, the car had bounced over the stones of the Halifax "beach" to dip its rubber toes in the Atlantic Ocean. Now it made its way, escorted by the City Fathers and officials of the Victoria Automobile Association, to the sea, overlooked by the distant blue mountain giants of the Olympic range. Gaily it glided over the smooth sand, and came to a stop at the water's edge. The flask which had borne the

Atlantic across the Canadian continent, emptied the Eastern ocean into the Pacific! A solemn libation to the transcontinental road which should one day render the journey from coast to coast the casual episode of a glorious summer's holiday!



THE MAYOR OF VICTOKIA AND ALDERMEN CAME TO MEET US ALONG THE
MALAHAT DRIVE

CHAPTER XVII

IT was after the car had been stripped of the appurtenances of travel—after the speeches of the banquet at the Pacific Club—that I strolled out under the stars to the Douglas obelisk in the Parliament grounds.

The tall, simple shaft stood out grey against a background of fir and jewelled sky. With difficulty I made out the inscription :

“Erected by the People of British Columbia to the Memory of Sir James Douglas, K.C.B., Governor and Commander-in-Chief from 1851 to 1864.”

Sir James Douglas, Factor, Governor, Dreamer! Douglas who had pre-visionsed the day when vehicles would make the crossing of the Canadas to the Pacific! Linking east with west—a trail from Hope to the Kootenay across the Rockies, meeting at Edmonton a similar road built westward from the Atlantic—a great highway should cross the continent by which emigrants from the Maritime Provinces might have easy access to British Columbia. It was much the same dream as that of those men who, in 1912, had planted the white post at Alberni.

The Douglas road was to save Canada for the Empire. In his mind Sir James saw a commercial suzerainty of the Hudson Bay Company, including the Sandwich Islands and the Orient—a dream to be dissipated by the advent of the American colonists in Oregon and California, since the settler conveyed a clearer title to the soil than did the fur-trader. The need of a resolute stand to the north of the forty-ninth parallel was imperative, if the bond between Canada and the Mother Country was to be preserved and strengthened. Thus the highway was to bear Imperial significance as well as to contribute to the unification of Canada.

The men responsible for the present-day little white post at Alberni have taken up the unfinished work of Sir James Douglas. They propose to organize the country, province by province, for the construction of a great trans-Canadian highway. They see the highway already taking "its first step on the four-thousand-mile march to the sea to the east whence their fathers came—to the east where the history of Canada has been made."

It may be that before many years the journey of a motor-car from coast to coast will be an everyday occurrence. It may be that in less than threescore years from the day on which Douglas resigned office, his ambitious visions will be realized by a macadamized highway across the Dominion from sea to sea.

I looked from the grey shaft under the shadow of the fir to the eastern sky. I saw again historically-picturesque Nova Scotia, the mountain-fringed Bay of Fundy, the pastoral symphonies

of the St. John's Valley, the quaint Habitant country with its patriarchal simplicity, the stately St. Lawrence and Ottawa, the golden prairies, the beauty and grandeur of the Rockies with their snow-capped summits and thousand lakes and streams.

But New Ontario—there was that No-Man's-Land on the matchless shores of the matchless lake, a roadless wilderness. That gap of nine hundred miles must be bridged by a passable road. How much longer would other travellers be compelled to interrupt their journey on land by passage on steamer across Lake Superior and by resorting to a train to reach the prairies? Who would presume to say that road building was impossible or unnecessary here? Have not Europe and Africa proved that population follows road building quite as often as population precedes the highway?

As in the days of Sir James Douglas, so now Canada needs the Transcontinental Highway for the unification of her peoples. Had I not seen them—Scotchmen, Irishmen, Welshmen, Old and New Englanders, United Empire Loyalist descendants, picturesque Habitants, the mixed races of the prairies and the mountains, thousands of incoming farmers from the great Republic to the south? Were they not as isolated from each other as if Eastern and Western Canada were worlds remote and unrelated? What might not a connecting road accomplish for such diverse elements as these in common purpose, in common ideals? Does not Canada, as much as India, or Algiers and Tunis, or

indeed Europe itself, need that continuous thoroughfare from border to border which has ever stood for unity and strength ?

This is the Century of Canada. She is not only to-day the granary of the Empire, but a possible tourist centre of the world. Where one automobile has travelled, a hundred will be ready to follow, and a thousand eager to travel a four-thousand-mile Highway through a panorama, unique, varied, rugged and consistently sublime.

Sir James Douglas had his dream. Standing at the foot of his monument, the traveller motorist of to-day may visualize that tourist's Canada of to-morrow.

The house beautiful will be set in order. There will be the perfect road running from sea to sea. There will be good hotels ; wholesome little wayside inns will be as plentiful as scenery. Invitations will go out broadcast to all the world to tour the Dominion. Perhaps there will even be a special government bureau to operate systematically the attractions of Canada.

"Now, sir," the Dominion will say to her Publicity Minister, "see what you can do to make this country the playground of the world, and to bring me in a tremendous revenue from this transcontinental road and all this scenery of mine."

Straightway Mr. Publicity Minister rolls up his sleeves and gets to work. He has the whole of Canada with which to conjure. He divides the country up into zones, and semi-zones, and demi-semi-zones. He files away enough tourist

information about Canada to fill a gallery. He calls conferences of railway magnates, premiers, mayors, automobile associations, steamship companies, boards of trade, hotel keepers. Every moment he is busy learning, teaching, collecting, collating, noting, testing, directing, altering, encouraging, suggesting, ordering, formulating, pushing. He runs incessantly to and from the printers and the Press. He takes photographs of every known and unknown bit of Canadian scenery and life, of every historic spot, of every salmon or trout river in the country.

Having organized, he is ready for his general assault upon the world. He sends out broadcast pamphlets, circulars, maps, pictures and data. He journeys east and west, north and south, establishing branches of his main publicity office at various points in Canada and the States and Europe. He trains assistants in the aggressive tactics of tourist winning.

Soon enough the Globe is on tiptoe of expectation ; hurriedly it packs its suit-cases and trunks, it ships its motor-cars, guns and fishing tackle and trots off to Canada. Mr. Minister, a missionary of leisure and pleasure and health, is ready ; rubbing his hands, he tells the visitors what they want to see, where they want to go, where they shall invest, where they shall build, where they shall settle. His very manner says—

“Now this is the place you have been looking for all your life. Feel better and happier and richer already, don't you? Just take a journey along our new road. Longest continuous bit of macadam in the world. Better stop at some of

the new health resorts along Lake Superior or by the Lake of the Woods. You can also take a little run round Timagami or Algonquin Reserves. By the way, you'll find the prairies sign-posted now, you know—no getting lost or mud-bound. Gumbo's a thing of the past. Don't miss, of course, a tour of Strathcona Park on Vancouver Island. What? Oh, never mind now about the way to get back! I know what's going to happen to you. You'll so fall in love with British Columbia that you'll settle down there."

I turned away from the obelisk.

Sir James Douglas, the Father of the Trans-Canadian Highway, had dreamed of a United Canada. Later, men had conceived of an Imperial Granary that should feed millions of British subjects. And both those visions had come true.

Should not the traveller dare dream of yet another Canada—the "Canada of the Scenic Road"?

INDEX

A

- Alberni, 274, 275, 279, 280
 Alberta, 205
 Alexander, 13
 Algoma, 140
 Algonquins, 105
 Algonquin Reserves, 284
 — "park," 139
 Amherst, 23
 Anagance, 29
 Anderson Lake, 262
 Apohaqui, 29
 Ashcroft, 255, 256, 257, 260
 Assiniboine, river, 160, 161, 162,
 173, 175
 Athabasca, 215

B

- Balaclava, 129
 Balfour, 237
 Banff, 238
 Barkerville, 257
 Belly River, 228
 Berlin, 150
 Blind River, 140
 Blomidon Cape, 20, 21
 Bonaparte River, 256, 258
 Bord à Plouffe, 86
 Borden, Mr., 100, 160
 Botticelli, 13
 Brandon, Introd. viii, 160, 161,
 170, 171, 173, 174
 Brebœuf, 75
 British Columbia, Introd. xii, xiii,
 109, 256

- Buda Pesth, 95
 Buffalo, 107
 Buttle's Lakes, 276

C

- Cæsar, Julius, 13, 35
 Cairo, 166
 California, 280
 Calgary, 238, 241
 Cameron lake, 275
 Canuck, John, 18
 Cap a l'Aigle, 58
 Cariboo country, 252, 253, 256,
 260, 261
 Carillon Ferry, 88
 — Rapids, 88
 Cartier, 66, 68
 Castlegar, 237
 Champlain, 38, 66, 69, 88, 89
 Charnisay, 39
 Chaudiere, Falls of, 98
 Chicago, 106
 Chilliwack, 273
 Chinock, 205
 Cibola, Seven Cities of, 89
 Clay Belt., Introd. ix
 Clearwater River, 253
 Clinton, 256
 Cobbett, 39
 Cobequid Bay, 18, 20
 Coleman, 233, 234
 Columbia-Kootenay Valley, 239,
 241
 Columbia River, 237, 238, 250
 Columbus, 18
 Coombs, 277

Coronado, 89
 Courteau, Johnnie, 84
 Cranbrook, 237, 238, 239, 241
 Creston, 238, 242, 248, 249
 Crocker Land, 215
 Crow's Nest Peak, 234
 — — — Pass, Introd. viii, 234
 Cumberland Basin, 23

D

Dakota, 227
 Dawson route, 144
 De Groseillier, 164
 De la Tour, Charles, 38
 De Monts, 38
 Des Sables Lake, 85
 Donald, 238
 Douglas, Sir James, 256, 262, 277,
 279, 280, 281, 282, 284
 Doukhobor country, 251
 Drummond, Dr., 77, 80, 81, 82, 86
 Dufferin Terrace, 69
 Duke of Kent, 72
 Duluth, 141, 145
 Duncans, 277

E

East Selkirk, 157
 Edmonton, 279
 Edmundston, 50, 51
 Elkhorn, 176
 Emerson, 141
 Everglades, 89

F

Fargo, 141
 Fernie, 236
 Five Islands, 21
 Flamoose, Lorette, 27, 28
 Fleming, 178
 Fort Garry, 168
 — — — Howe, 39

Fort Kipp, 228
 — — — William, 144, 146
 Frank, 232, 233
 Fraser River, 252, 253, 254, 256,
 261, 268, 269, 270
 Fredericton, 40, 46
 Frontenac, 66
 Fundy, Bay of, 18, 19, 23, 37, 39,
 104, 280

G

Georgia, 37
 Georgian Bay Canal, 138
 Glooscap, 21
 Goat River Gorge, 238, 248
 Golden, 238
 Grande Allee, 75
 Grand Falls, 49, 50
 — — — Forks, 141, 251
 — — — Pré, 20
 Granite Creek, 253
 Gravenhurst, 115
 Great Beaver, 21
 Great Lakes, 55, 75, 115, 276

H

Habitants, 58, 62, 63, 64, 71, 77,
 78, 80, 82, 86, 87, 132
 Haliburton, 25, 34
 Halifax, Introd. viii, 1, 7, 12, 14,
 35, 41, 44, 52, 69, 148, 233,
 234, 237, 274, 275, 277
 Harrison Lake, 262
 Harte, Bret, 212
 Hat Creek, 261
 Headingley, 161
 Hiawatha of Fundy, 21
 Hope, 252, 268, 270, 272, 273,
 279
 Hope Mountains, 252
 Hoyt, 40
 Hudson, 18
 — — — Bay, Introd. ix, 142, 164
 Huron, Lake, 143

I

Iroquois, 105

J

Japan, 213, 214

Joggins, 23

Johnson, Miss Pauline, 185

K

Kamloops, 253

Kamouraska, 58

Kamtchatka, 262

Kansas, 145

Keefer, 268

Kennebecasis, 29

Kenora, *Introd.* viii

Kent, 147

Kingsclear, 46

Kingston, 105

Kitchener, 237

Kootenay Lake, 237, 238

— Valley, 238, 279

L

Lake of the Two Mountains, 88

Lake of the Woods, *Introd.* viii,
153, 284

Lallemant, 75

La Salle, 75

Laurentian Mountains, 56, 68, 85

Laurier, Mount, 85

—, Sir Wilfred, 129

La Verendrye, 75

Le Notre, 147

Lethbridge, *Introd.* viii, 203, 207,
208, 223, 227, 241

Levis, 67, 68

Lilloet, 253, 256, 262

Lincoln, Abraham, 35

London, 95, 108, 150, 164

Louisville, 83

Lytton, 254, 256, 263, 265, 266,
268

M

McBride, Sir Richard, 277

Mace, Jem, 13

Macleod, *Introd.* viii, 227, 241

— Trail, 228

Madawaska, 47

— Lake, 55

— River, 50, 52

Maeterlinck, Maurice, *Introd.* vii,
150

Maine, 47

Malahat Drive, 277

Manitoba, 141, 143, 144, 155,

156, 157, 159, 160, 164, 198,
220

Manitoba, Lake, 164

Maple Creek, 201, 226

Marie Antoinette, 21

Maritime Provinces, *Introd.* xii,

1, 32, 34, 35, 52, 54, 109, 279

Marquette, 75, 141

Medicine Hat, *Introd.* viii, 207

Mercier, Joseph, 80

Mer de l'Ouest, 75

Meridian road, 145

Merritt, 253

Michigan, 149

Minas Basin, 20

Minnesota, 141

Missouri plateau, 186

Moncton, 4, 24, 26, 27, 39

Montana, 228

Montcalm, 75

Montmorency, Falls of, 68, 72

Montreal, *Introd.* viii, 4, 59, 75,

80, 84, 85, 86, 104, 106, 107,
111, 145, 203, 241

Moosejaw, *Introd.* viii, 186, 187,
188, 189

Moosomin, 178, 180

Mortlach, 188

Mount Royal, 84

Mount Sentinel, 234

Moyie Lakes, 242
 Murray Bay, 58
 Muskoka Lakes, 111, 115

N

Nanaimo, 274, 276, 277
 Nanwigeauk, 29
 Naples, 149
 Napoleon, 13
 Nelson, 237, 238, 250
 Nerepis River, 40
 Nevada, 272, 273
 New Brunswick, 23, 31, 37, 40
 New Ontario, 70, 142, 143, 144,
 281
 New Westminster, 273, 274
 New York, 106, 108, 145
 Niagara, 106
 Nicola valleys, 253
 Nipissing, Lake, 138
 North Bay, Introd. viii, 104, 117,
 120, 125, 133, 135, 138, 139,
 140
 North Carolina, 37
 North Channel, 140
 North Thompson River, 253
 Novar, 117
 Nova Scotia, 13, 24, 37, 280

O

Okanagan Lakes, 251
 Old Man River, 231, 235
 Ontario, Introd. viii, 37, 88, 104,
 105, 107, 120, 125, 126, 128,
 214
 Oregon, 280
 Orient, 280
 Orleans, 68
 Oromocto River, 40
 Ottawa, Introd. viii, 14, 92, 95,
 96, 102, 104, 107, 111, 138,
 160, 186, 215
 Ottawa River, 86, 88, 138, 281
 Otter Creek, 253

P

Parrsborough, 21, 22
 Passakeag, 29
 Peek-Withers, 151
 Peigau Reserve, 228, 231
 Pelt Land, 168
 Petticodiac River, 24, 29
 Pincher City, 233
 Plumweseep, 29
 Pointe au Pic, 58
 Port Alberni, 276
 Portage-la-Prairie, 162, 163, 164,
 165, 166, 167
 Port Arthur, Introd. viii, 145,
 146, 148, 149, 187
 Princeton, 252, 253
 Princeton-Hope Mountains, 271

Q

Qu'Appelle, 182, 185
 Quebec, Introd. viii, 4, 54, 57,
 58, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 74, 82,
 107, 109
 Quispamsis, 29

R

Radisson, 164
 Red River, 141, 143, 144, 166;
 168, 208, 229
 Red River Valley, 162
 Regina, Introd. viii, 183, 184,
 185, 186
 Repentigny, 59
 Ridder, Dr., 51, 52
 Rideau Hall, 96, 97
 Riel, 144
 Riviere des Prairies, 86
 Riviere du Loup, Introd. viii,
 55, 56
 Riviere du Nord, 85
 Robespierre, 35
 Roblin, Sir Rodmond, 158, 159,
 161

Rocky Mountains, Introd. viii,
ix, 162, 228, 230, 231, 279,
281

Ryan, 237

S

Saguenay River, 56

Scotia Junction, 120

Scoudouc, 29

Selkirk, Lord, 143, 167

Selkirk Range, 238, 239

Sandwich Islands, 280

Saskatchewan, 162, 165, 177, 183,
196, 209, 264

Saulte Ste. Marie, 139, 140, 141

Shakspeare, 129

Sillery, 75, 76

Silver Creek, 252

Simcoe, Lake, 114

Similkameen River, 252

Sinclair Hot Springs, 239

Smith, 45

Soda Creek, 257

Somas, 275

South River, 124

Spences Bridge, 254

St. Agatha des Monts, 85

St. Anne de Beaupré, 71, 72

St. Anne de La Parade, 77

St. Flore, 77

St. Francis River, 47

St. James Bay, 143

St. John, Introd. viii, 29, 34, 37

St. John River, 37, 38, 39, 46, 50

St. John's Valley, 281

St. Lawrence River, Introd. viii,
33, 55, 56, 60, 68, 71, 75, 82,
84, 121, 138, 281

Strathcona Park, 284

St. Sulpice, 84

Stubencadie, 14

Sudbury, Introd. viii, 138, 140

Superior, Lake, Introd. viii, ix,
104, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143,
144, 164, 281, 284

Swift Current, 188, 192, 193, 195

T

Taber, 207

Tamagani "Park," 139

Tantramar, 24

— Marshes, 23

Temisconata, Lake, 54

Tete Jaune Cache, 254

Thompson River, 253, 254, 256

Thousand Islands of the St.
Lawrence, 105

Three Rivers, 79, 80, 82

Thunder Bay, 144

Timagami, 284

Timagami, Lake, 138

Tobique, 42

Toby Creek, 239

Todd, A. E., Introd. xiii

Tolstoy, 179, 251

Toronto, 104, 106, 107, 108, 109,
111, 114, 120, 122, 127, 128,
132, 241

Trout Creek, 128, 132

Truro, 15, 16, 18

Tulameen Creek, 253

Tuniskaming, Lake, 138

Twain, Mark, 78, 81

V

Vancouver, Introd. viii, xiii, 7, 13,
57, 186, 220, 221, 241, 256, 262,
272, 274, 276

Vermilion Range, 238

Versailles, 36

Victoria, Introd. xii, xiii, 7, 131,
256, 274, 276, 277

Victoria, Queen, 72

Voltaire, 85

W

Walsh, 203

Wardner, 237

Washington, 95

Welland Canal, 138

U

Wilberforce, 35
 Wilmer, 239
 Wilson, Beckles, 36
 Windermere Lake, 239
 Winnipeg, Introd. viii, 106, 141,
 145, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157,
 158, 159, 161, 174, 183, 221,
 222
 Winnipeg, Lake, 162, 164
 Winnipeg, River, 164

Wolfe, 67, 72, 75
 Wolseley, 144, 145
 Woodstock, 46

Y

Yahk, 237, 242, 244, 245, 246
 Yale, 269
 Yellowhead Pass, 254



