UNEXPLORED BEAUTY IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES: BY LOUIS AKIN

THROUGH my entire life of intimate association with the big things of the West I have felt that sometime I should go to the land of the Canadian Rockies and the Selkirks, and that I should find there the apotheosis of all mountain scenery, my ultimate goal of beauty. And as a reward for my faith in the kindness of Fate, I found myself this last summer out in the midst of those great mountain peaks, knowing them by name, feeling familiar with them, yet not even stopping to pass the time of day. For having reached the goal of my desire, I realized that my interest had passed beyond, and that I was headed for that place marked on the Canadian maps as “Mountains and Glaciers.” I was going to Lillooet, to a land of things utterly primordial and unpublished.

Clinging to the walls of a magnificent gorge breaking down through the western foothills of the Rockies, the railroad on which I was traveling suddenly turned out into the great valley of the Fraser, the River of Gold from the far North. From here my way lay northward fifty miles by stage, and all through mountains, vast mountains on every side. They piled up, height upon height, on both banks of the river,—some precipitous, naked, awful, some gentler of contour, clothed in a green velvet of spruce and pine, and everywhere, the great walled heights streaked and patched with snow; through an occasional break in the outline, still higher, masses of glaciers clinging to their breasts.

Once upon a time there was a broad smooth valley (or was it a river bed?) spread between these mountains several hundred feet above the present river level, but the River of Gold has been a busy river and its activities have resulted in ninety-nine per cent of the level land being carried out to sea, leaving only bits of tillable bench land filling in the bays and bends on both shores. These are occupied mainly by Indians, and the ground is very productive under the influence of irrigation. Beyond the bit of habitation called Lillooet, out to the northwestward, there is practically nothing but mountains and glaciers covering thousands of square miles. The formation is peculiar. The earth’s crust seems to have been torn apart and thrown up into enormous furrows. Each furrow is a range. The stratification is turned on edge, and the jagged black masses, raw and terrible, are thrust upward into a dozen unscalable, inaccessible Matterhorns, twelve to fifteen thousand feet high. Supporting them are lesser masses; while sweeping from peak to peak and from range to range are snowfields and glaciers of greatest magnitude and inexpressible
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beauty. Where else but on the Pacific slope, with its extremes of precipitation, could snow enough fall to store up such inconceivable quantities? It is what might be expected in Alaska, but hardly within a few hundred miles of Vancouver.

Yet it is a region that offers very little reason for intimate acquaintance. The prospector has no use for a country that is mostly blanketed with snow and ice, with the greater part standing on edge, though the gold in streams flowing away from it has kept them experimenting with it for many years. The Indian does not need it, for full of big game though it must be, the big-horn and mountain goat are roaming in herds over the outlying spurs. But surrounding these mountains in every direction is the most ideal out of door lands. Anywhere above five thousand feet you may ride freely; there are magnificent leagues of park-like country, all aslopes one way or another, but easy or steep, your tough little cayuse will carry you over it, up, down or crosswise at a run, if you let him! Game is plentiful, big and little; trout are in every stream and lake, and wood, water and grass are everywhere. The days are hot and the nights are cool, even snappy. It is that most fascinating zone where the Alpine spruce groups itself in its most picturesque way,—its clusters of spirelike tops broadening out at the base into a well-nigh impenetrable hedge, that, surrounding an entire group of trees, offers safe and sheltered haven in time of storm to the wild things of the highlands.

High up are emerald green lakes that defy the palette, some at the very foot of glaciers and bearing gleaming icebergs on their placid bosoms; some lower down, set in warm green meadows with spruce-green backing; some washing the base of cheerless granite heights, black and barren. And everywhere are flowers and ripe luscious wild strawberries,—all in September and October. Spring is always here, except when winter is: spring grasses and blossoms follow the retreating snowfields right up the mountains, and highest of all, blooming and living its brief life in evident happiness, is the forget-me-not, rooted in the ice-cold moisture not a yard from the snow's edge. Then, just in the height of its beauty comes a blanket of new snow to cover it for seven or eight months' rest. It is the sign. It drives the grizzly and the hoary marmot to their dens; it drives the big-horn and goat to their spruce shelters; it drives the mule deer and white man to the lowlands, and mountains and glaciers are supreme.
GIANT'S STEPS, PARADISE VALLEY,
IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES.
MORANNE LAKE, VALLEY OF THE TEN PEAKS, IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES.
INEXPENSIVE CEMENT CONSTRUCTION FOR SUMMERTIME AND WEEK-END COTTAGES THAT THE OWNER MAY ERECT FOR HIMSELF

It has been our idea in designing these two houses to enable those members of the Home Builders’ Club, who desire an inexpensive summer cottage to build one for themselves if necessary. Many people have put up summer shacks for themselves, and too often, for the lack of a little guidance and advice, the result has not justified the labor or even the slight expense. Believing that a word of advice is sufficient to the earnest amateur builder, The Craftsman for this month contains the plans and detailed working drawings for two bungalows for summer use, which, although so simple in construction that one man could build them, will be, when done, well planned, serviceable and attractive little houses. With these plans we are publishing a complete mill bill; the prices in various communities may differ slightly on the different items; but that, of course, is to be expected. For example, if there is plenty of stone upon a building site, the cost of the field stone used in the chimney will be less, and in like manner if the country about is wooded the price of the logs that support the porch roof will be reduced, or the builder may even procure them for himself.

The first bungalow, walls and partitions, is built of cement mortar upon truss metal lath. Cement mortar is a mixture of sand, three parts, and cement, one part, which may be purchased already prepared, and this is also used in laying the brick and stone. Truss metal lath is an openwork metal sheathing that comes in pieces 90 x 28 inches square. The roof is covered with a composition roofing to be had in three colors: red, green and slate color. The porch supports are of logs, which, if they are of cedar, may be left untouched, but if they are of chestnut, oak or of any other wood that has a smooth surface when barked, they should be hewn, as this gives them a more rugged appearance and at the same time corrects the impression that they were left in that condition to save trouble, for the smooth log is not especially attractive.

The girders of the house are supported upon brick piers, a less expensive support than a stone foundation. The foundation of the chimney runs to the depth of the piers, as also does the cinder bed that forms the basis for the concrete floor of the porch. This porch floor is slightly slanted so that it will drain easily and is made of a concrete mixture which consists of one part of cement, three parts of sand and six parts of crushed stone. The chimney should be built at the same time as the framework of the house. The studs for the partitions are erected simultaneously with the studs for the outside walls, as they are, for the most part, bearing