EDWARDS WILLIAM SEYMOUR

IN TO THE YUKON

William Edwards
In to the Yukon

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=24713393
In to the Yukon:

Содержание

PREFACE 4
FIRST LETTER 6
SECOND LETTER 11
THIRD LETTER 26
VICTORIA A SLEEPY ENGLISH TOWN 33
FOURTH LETTER 35
FIFTH LETTER 43
SIXTH LETTER 56
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. 57

William Seymour Edwards
In to the Yukon

PREFACE

These letters were not written for publication originally. They were written for the home circle and the few friends who might care to read them. They are the brief narrative of daily journeyings and experiences during a very delightful two months of travel into the far north and along the Pacific slope of our continent. Some of the letters were afterwards published in the daily press. They are now put into this little book and a few of the Kodak snapshots taken are given in half-tone prints.

We were greeted with much friendliness along the way and were the recipients of many courtesies. None showed us greater attention than the able and considerate officials of the Pacific Coast S. S. Co., the Alaska S. S. Co. and the White Pass and Yukon Railway Co., including Mr. Kekewich, managing Director of the London Board, and Mr. Newell, Vice-President of the Company.

At Atlin and Dawson we met and made many friends, and we would here reiterate to them, one and all, our warm appreciation of their hospitalities.

William Seymour Edwards.

Charleston-Kanawha, West Virginia,
August, 1904.

FIRST LETTER
THE GREAT LAKES, CLEVELAND TO DETROIT

Steamer Northwest, on Lake Superior,
August 11, 1903.

We reached Cleveland just in time to catch the big liner, which cast off her cables almost as soon as we were aboard. A vessel of 5,000 tons, a regular sea ship. The boat was packed with well-dressed people, out for a vacation trip, most of them. By and by we began to pass islands, and about 2 P. M. turned into a broad channel between sedgy banks – the Detroit River. Many craft we passed and more overtook, for we were the fastest thing on the lakes as well as the biggest.

Toward 3 P. M., the tall chimneys of the huge salt works and the church spires of the city of Detroit began to come into view. A superb water front, several miles long, and great warehouses and substantial buildings of brick and stone, fit for a vast commerce.

The sail up the Detroit River, through Lake St. Clair, and then up the St. Clair River to Lake Huron, was as lovely a water trip as any I have made. The superb park "Belle Isle," the pride of Detroit; the many, very many, villas and cottages all along the

water-side, hundreds of them; everywhere boats, skiffs, launches, naphtha and steam, all filled with Sunday pleasure excursionists, the many great pleasure excursion steamers loaded down with passengers, gave a life and liveliness to the water views that astonished and pleased us.

The Lake St. Clair is about twenty miles across, apparently broader than it is, for the reason that its sedgy margins are so wide that the trees and higher land further back seem the real border of the lake. What is called the "St. Clair Flats" are the wide, low-lying lands on each side of the long reaches of the St. Clair River. Twenty miles of cottages, hotels, club-houses, are strung along the water-side, each with its little pier and its boats.

Towards dark – eight o'clock – we came to Sarnia and Port Huron, and pointed out into the great lake, second in depth to Superior – larger than any but Superior – a bit of geography I had quite forgotten.

At dawn on Monday, we were skirting the high-wooded southern shore, and by 11 A. M. sighted the fir-clad heights of Mackinac where Lake Michigan comes in. Here is a beautiful protected bay, where is a big hotel, and the good people of Chicago come to forget the summer heats. After half an hour, we turned again and toward the north, in a half circle, and by 4 P. M. were amidst islands and in a narrow channel, the St. Mary's River.

Huron is a deep blue like Superior, and unlike the green of shallow Erie. The channel toward the Soo is very tortuous – many

windings and sharp turns, marked by buoys and multitudinous beacon lights. All along we had passed great numbers of steamships and barges – ore carriers, but nowhere saw a large sailing craft, only a sail boat here and there. This entire extensive traffic is a steam traffic, and though we see many boats, they are black and sombre, and burdened with coal and ore.

It was late, nearly seven o'clock, when we steamed slowly into the lock basin at the Soo. High fir-clad hills on either hand; a multitude of channels among wooded islands. A new and vigorous manufacturing community growing up on either shore where the electric power is being harnessed. Many buildings, many new residences, some of them large and imposing, covering the sloping hillsides. The rapids are a mile or more in length and half a mile wide. The American canal with its locks is on the south side. One, the old lock, small; the other, large and deep for modern traffic. We were here delayed more than two hours by reason of the pack of boats ahead of us. It was dark when we came out of the lock – a lift of twenty-one feet. But meantime, the hills on either hand had burst out into hundreds of electric lights, betokening a much greater population than I had conceived. As we entered the American lock, a big black ship, almost as large as ours, crept in behind us to the Canadian lock on the river's further side – one of the Canadian Pacific line going to Fort William.

It was a full moon as we came out of the upper river and lost ourselves in the blackness of Lake Superior. A keen, crisp wind,

a heavier swell than on the lakes below. We were continually passing innumerable craft with their dancing night lights. The tonnage that now goes through the Soo canals is greater than that of Suez. How little could the world have dreamed of this a few years ago!

To-day when I came on deck we were just entering the ship canal that makes the short cut by way of Houghton. A cold mist and rain, fir-trees and birches, small and stunted, a cold land. A country smacking strongly of Norway. No wonder the Scandinavians and Finns take to a land so like their own.

At Houghton we were in the center of the copper region. A vigorous town, many handsome residences. But it has been cold all day. Mercury 56 degrees this morning. A sharp wind from the north. The bulk of the passengers are summer tourists in thin gauze and light clothing, and all day they are shivering in the cabin under cover, while we stay warm out on deck.

The food is excellent, and the famous planked white fish is our stand-by.

This whole trip is a great surprise to me. The splendid great ship, the conveniences and luxury equalling any trans-Atlantic liner. The variety and beauty of the scenery, the differences in the lakes, their magnitude, the islands, the tributary rivers with their great flow of clear water, the vast traffic of multitudinous big boats. The life and vigor and stir of this north country! Many of the passengers are going to the Yellowstone. We will reach Duluth about 10 P. M., and leave by the 11:10 Great Northern

train for St. Paul.

SECOND LETTER
ST. PAUL, WINNIPEG AND BANFF; THE WHEAT LANDS OF THE FAR NORTHWEST

St. Paul, Minnesota, August 13, 1903.

We have spent two delightful days in St. Paul, great city of the Northwest that it is. We came over from West Superior by the "Great Northern" route, very comfortably in a new and fresh-kept sleeper – a night's ride. I was early awake and sat for an hour watching the wide flat farming country of Minnesota. Not much timber, never a cornfield, much wheat and oats and hay land. A black, rich soil. Still a good deal of roll to the landscape, and, at the same time, a certain premonition of the greater, more boundless flatness of the land yet further west. And a land, as well, of many picturesque little lakes and pools. I now the more perfectly comprehend why the Indian word "Minne," water, comes in so often among the names and titles of Minnesota.

The farm houses and farm buildings we pass are large and well built, and here and there I see a building which might be along the Baegna Valley or the Telemarken Fjords of Norway, it is so evidently Norse. There are, as yet, but few people at the way-

stations. We are a through flyer, and the earlier commuters are not yet astir.

About the houses and barns, also, I notice a certain snugness, indicative of winters that are cold.

Now, we are nearing the city, there are more men at the way-stations. It is evident that the early morning local will follow us close behind.

We came into the big Union Depot on time. The air was crisp and dry. There was much bustle and ado. These people move with an alert vigor, their cheeks are rosy, their eyes are snappy, and I like the swing of their shoulders as they step briskly along the streets. Mankind migrates along earth's parallels of latitude, so 'tis said – and Minnesota and the great Northwest is but another New England and New York. Vermont and New Hampshire, Massachusetts and New York have sent her their ablest sons and daughters, while Ontario and Quebec and the Maritime Provinces have contributed to her population of their force and power. Upon and among this matrix of superior American and Canadian stock, has also been superimposed many thousands of the more energetic and vigorous men, women and children of Europe's ancient warlike breeds – the viking Northmen of Norway and Sweden and of Denmark, of all Scandinavia. A still great race in their fatherlands, a splendid reinforcement to the virtues of Puritan and Knickerbocker; while there have also come cross currents from Virginia and the South. The type you see on the streets is American, but among it, and

with it, is prominently evident the Norse blue eyes and yellow hair of Scandinavia.

St. Paul is surely a great city, great in her present, great in her future. St. Paul is builded on several hills, out along which are avenues and boulevards and rows of sumptuous private residences, while down in the valleys are gathered the more part of the big, modern business blocks and store houses and manufacturing establishments, where are centered the energies which direct her industries and commerce. St. Paul is a rich city, a solid city. The wild boom days of fifteen and twenty years ago are quite gone by, the bubble period has been safely weathered, she is now settled down to conservative although keen and active business and trade. She supplies all of that immense region lying west and north of her, even into the now unfolding Canadian Far Northwest. The continent is hers, even to the Pacific and the Arctic Seas. Minnesota and the Dakotas and Montana have already poured their wealth of grains and of ores, of wheat and of oats, of rye and of barley, of iron and of copper, of silver and of gold, into her capacious lap, and now Manitoba and Alberta and Assiniboia and Saskatchewan and Athabaska, and all the unfolding regions between the Hudson Bay and the Rocky Mountains, the fertile valleys of the Saskatchewan and Peace Rivers, are to contribute even yet more lavishly to her future commercial predominance as unrivalled mistress of the North. She and Minneapolis will have this trade. She and her twin sister city are entitled to it. And if I mistake not the spirit of the men

I have talked with upon her streets, in her shops and banks and clubs, she and Minneapolis will secure of it their full and certain share.

Here in the splendid stores of St. Paul we have made the last few purchases of the things we shall need for our going into the distant Yukon. H. has bought a perfectly fitting sweater – a garment that we searched for and ransacked through the town of Antwerp, in Belgium, two years ago, and could not find, while I have laid in some woolen garments, so fit and warm that they make one hanker for an Arctic blizzard just for the joy of trying them on.

And we have been feted and wined and dined as only mortals may be, who have fallen among long-time and well-tried friends. A sumptuous lunch has been given us at the Merchants' Club, where old chums and classmates of my Cornell College days did make me almost believe that it was but yesterday that we went forth from our Alma Mater's Halls.

Later in the day we have taken one of the many suburban trains and journeyed down ten miles to the summer country home of another old-time friend, along the shores of White Bear Lake, and all the afternoon have enjoyed a sail in the crack yacht of the fleet that parades these waters. A new design of boat. Conceived and perfected in St. Paul, and which has this summer carried havoc and defeat to every competing yacht club of all the wide country of the western and northern lakes, and even caused perturbation among the proud salt-water skippers of the east. I

send you a snap-shot of the prize yacht as she lies floating at her little pier.

And when we came back and landed from our voyage, we found assembled an even greater company than we had yet met, to again give us welcome without stint. We gathered in the commodious dining-hall of our host, a delightful company, these men who once with me were boys, and their cultivated wives! Long and late we sat, and old college songs we sang, until the eastern sky was already lightening with the approach of dawn. Many of us had not met for nigh twenty years, when we had parted to go forth to fight life's battles and to win or lose.

Then, in the second afternoon, yet other friends, of yet later knowing, have taken us in hand and have trollied and driven us to see St. Paul's twin sister, Minneapolis. With her monstrous flouring mills along the Mississippi, she is become the wheat milling center of the world, but she has never succeeded in rivalling St. Paul in the reach and volume of her jobbing trade. Once bitter enemies, rivals for the supremacy of the trade and commerce of the Northwest, their borders have now met, their streets have coalesced, and it will not be many years before the two will have fused and melted into one, even as Canada will one day inevitably become knitted and commingled with the great Republic, for there is room for but one nationality, one English-speaking nationality upon the northern continent of the western world.

In the long gloaming of the waning eventide we were driven

in an easy victoria behind a pair of spanking bays and threaded our way among and along the lawns and lakes and avenues of the twin cities' splendid parks. The deciduous trees do not here grow as large as with us further to the south. The conifers, the pines and firs, are here necessarily more frequently employed by the landscape artist to perfect his plans, but the flowers seemed just as big, just as fine in coloring and in wealth of leaf.

The day was ended with another elaborately served dinner, with other intelligent and cultivated friends, and then, before the night quite fully fell, we were driven to the big station which first we had entered, and were bidden a hearty farewell. We have boarded the sleeper for Winnipeg. A white porter now makes up our berths, and tells us we shall travel in his company some sixteen hours, so long is now the journey to Canada's nearest city in the north.

Winnipeg, August 14, 1908.

We left St. Paul in the Winnipeg sleeper on the Great Northern Railroad at 8:06 P. M. When we awoke this morning we were flying through the wheatfields of North Dakota, passing Grand Forks at about 9 A. M., and reaching Neche, on the Canadian border, at eleven, and arriving at Winnipeg at 1:40 P. M., a longer journey to the north – 440 miles – than I had realized. It was my first sight of a prairie – that vast stretch of wheat country reaching 1,000 miles west of St. Paul, and as far to the north of it. In the States it was wheat as far as the eye could reach in all directions – ripening wheat, waving in the keen wind like

a golden sea, or cut and stacked wheat in innumerable piles, in countless shocks. A few miles north of the boundary the wheat land gradually changed to meadow and grass land, with many red cattle. Huge hay stacks here and there – the country flat.

Winnipeg holds about 60,000 people, they tell me. Wooden houses mostly, but some fine modern ones of stone and brick. Hundreds of new houses built and houses a-building. Fine electric tramway system, on which we have been riding all the afternoon. Many paved streets, some wood-paved, but mostly the native black earth of all this northland. A vigorous, hustling town, with now a big boom on, owing to the rapid development of the far north wheat lands – "the Chicago of the far Northwest," they call it. We go on to-night by 6 P. M. train, and should reach Banff in two nights and a day. There we rest a day.

Banff Springs Hotel, Banff, Canada,
August 18, 1903.

We had intended leaving Winnipeg by the through train called the "Imperial Limited," which crosses the continent three times a week each way, but to do so we should have had to lie over in Winnipeg a full day and a half longer, and we had already seen the shell of the town in our first afternoon, so we mended our plans, paid our modest dinner bill of fifty cents each at the Clarendon Hotel, and took the ordinary daily through Pacific express which, leaving Winnipeg at 6 P. M., would yet bring us to Banff, even though it would take a half day longer in doing it, earlier than the Imperial Limited train. A good many people

seemed to be of our mind, and so the railway people attached an extra sleeper to the already crowded train. We were fixed in this. A sumptuous car, finished in curled maple and brass, longer, wider, higher than even the large cars run on the N. Y. C. & H. R. R., that traverse no tunnels. These Canadian Pacific Railway cars are built by the railway company, owned and run by it. No "Pullman conductor;" the porter, be he white or black, runs the car and handles the tickets and the cash.

The company were mostly Canadians, going out to Regina, Calgary, Edmonton, etc., large towns toward which Winnipeg bears the same relation as does Cincinnati to our country (West Virginia), and many Australians en route to take ship at Vancouver.

For a long distance the track seemed to be perfectly straight, and miles and miles west of Winnipeg, the city still peeped far distant between the rails. We rose a little, too, just a little, but steadily, constantly. And on either hand and before and behind spread out the wonderful flatness of the earth. The real prairie now. Not even a tree, not a bush, not a hill, just as smooth as a floor, like an even sea, as far as the eye could reach and out beyond.

A good deal of wheat grows west of Winnipeg, as well as south and north and east of it. We were still in wheat land when we awoke yesterday morning, though the now intervening patches of green grass grew larger and larger until the grass covered and dominated everything. And then we had miles and miles of a

more rolling country. Here and there began to appear pools of water, ponds, even small lakes and deep sunk streams bordered with rushes and scrub willow and stunted alders.

Every bit of water was alive with wild fowl. Each pool we hurried by was seemingly packed with geese, brant and ducks. All the myriads of the north land water birds seemed to be here gathering and resting preparatory to their long flight to the distant south. Many plover, snipe and some herons and even cranes I noted along the margins of the pools and streams. And this prolific bird life cared but little for the presence of man. Our rushing train did not frighten them, none ever took to wing, too much engrossed were they in their own pursuits.

Through the flat wheat land the farmsteads were few and far between, and the towns only at long intervals. Nor is there here the population seen among the many and thrifty towns and villages of Minnesota and Dakota.

In the grass lands we saw no towns at all, nor made many stops, while herds of cattle began to increase in number; of horses, also, as we drew further and further west and north.

Toward evening, through the long twilight, we entered a hill country, where were a great many cattle and horses, and some Mexican cowboys rounding up the stock ere nightfall.

Here, also, the wilder life of the hills came close upon us. Just as we drew beyond the prairie a large grey wolf had crossed our way. He had no fear of the iron horse; he stood and watched us with evident curiosity, lifting one forepaw as he gazed upon

the flying train, not fifty feet away. When we were gone by, he turned and trotted leisurely into the bush.

New buildings with added frequency met our view. Sometimes whole new towns. All this I afterward learned is largely owing to the present American immigration.

At dusk we stopped at the bustling town of Dunmore, just where the railway crosses the broad Assiniboia River on a long bridge. Here many of our fellow sleepers left us, and several new passengers got into our car to ride through to Calgary, the largest town in the Northwest Territory – seven or eight thousand inhabitants – and where the Edmonton branch goes off two hundred miles into the north, and will soon go three or four hundred miles further through the opening wheat country which the world is now pouring into.

This morning we were following the Silver Bow River, past a long lake which it widens into in the journey of its waters toward Hudson's Bay; then we were among fir-clad foot-hills, and then, quite suddenly, as the enveloping mist lifted, there were revealed upon either side of us the gigantic, bare, rocky, snow-capped masses of the real Rocky Mountain chain. I have never yet seen as immense and gigantic masses of bare rock, unless it be the Cordillera of Michoacan, in Mexico.

Here we are at a fine modern hotel kept by the Canadian Pacific Railroad. It is cool, even cold, almost. As cold as on Lake Superior, 54 and 56 degrees, and as in St. Paul the days we were there, but here the air is so much drier that one sits by the open

window and does not feel the cold.

Among the passengers on our train I fell in with several of those who now make their homes in this booming land – from Winnipeg west and north, all this vast country is now on what is called a boom – a wheat-land boom, a cattle boom, a town boom! One, a vigorous six-footer from Wisconsin, a drummer for an American harvesting machine, has put and isnow putting all the money he can raise into the buying of these northern wheat lands. And there is no finer wheat land in all the world, he said, than the rich, warm Peace River valley, four hundred or five hundred miles north of Edmonton. A Canadian drummer, who had won a medal fighting in South Africa, also told me much of the awakening up here. The Hudson Bay Company had for years kept secret the fatness of this north land, although they and their agents had (for more than a century) raised great wheat harvests on their own hidden-away farms along the distant Peace River, where their mills made it into flour for their own use, and to feed the fur-trapping Indians. But never a word had they or their close-mouthed Scotch servants said about all the richness of which they so well knew. But little by little had the news of these wheat crops leaked out into the world beyond, and little by little, after the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and cession to Canada of their exclusive rights, had the pioneer settlers quietly crept into the hidden country. Now there were many farmers snugly living on their own lands along the Peace River valley and in that neighboring region. Every year there

are more of them. They haul their supplies three hundred miles north from Edmonton, or buy direct of the nearest Hudson Bay Post. Soon the railways will be up among them, soon the greatest export of Canadian wheat will come from that now far-away country. And here is where the hustling American comes in. The Canadian has been slow to "catch on." The dull farmer of Ontario has scoffed at the notion of good wheat land so far north. He preferred to stay at home and raise peas and barley. The French habitan, too, did not take stock in the tales of a land so far from church and kindred. Nor did the Englishman do more than look blandly incredulous at whatever secret tales he might hear. He would just inquire of the office of the Hudson's Bay Company, where he always learned that the tale was a joke out of the whole cloth. Not even the bankers of now booming Winnipeg would invest a dollar in buying Government land beyond the already well-defined wheat limits of Manitoba. It was the keen-scented Yankee who caught on. A group of bright men in St. Paul and Minneapolis heard in some way of the possibilities of the far north. They quietly sent their own experienced Minnesota and Dakota farm land experts and practical wheat judges up into Saskatchewan and Assiniboia to look, examine and report. This they did, and then the Americans began to buy direct of the Canadian Government at Ottawa. Their expert investigators also had friends and neighbors who had money, who had made money in farming, and some of them went up. All who went up staid, and sent back word of having got hold of a good thing. The first the

world knew, fifty thousand American farmers went in last year, more than two hundred thousand have gone in this year, and the Canadian world and the English world have awakened to the fact that the bulk of the rich wheat lands of the far north are already owned by the American land companies, American banks and American farmers. In St. Paul to-day you can learn more about all this rich far north, and buy its best lands, rather than in Toronto or even in Winnipeg. Now the railroads are also beginning to stir themselves. The Canadian Pacific Railway is to build more north branch lines. The Grand Trunk Pacific is to be built right through the Peace River country to Port Simpson, and everybody is astir to get a chance at the golden future. But the Americans have the cinch. And what is more, they do better and succeed when the Canadians, from Quebec or Ontario, and, above all, the Englishmen, make rank failures. The Americans have been farming on the same sort of land in Minnesota, in Iowa and in the Dakotas. They go into this new land with the same machinery and same methods. They all do well. Many of the Canadians fail, most of the English likewise, and the prospering American buys them out. Now, also, the Americans are beginning to find out that there is much good cattle range in this north land. The American cattle men are coming up with their herds, even with their Mexican cowboys.

No blizzards here, such as freeze and destroy in Montana. No lack of water here the year round. No drouths like those of Texas. Nor is the still, quiet, steady cold of these plains more fatal, not

as much so, as the more variable temperatures of the States. Not much snow over these northern plains, rarely more than a foot. The buffalo grass may be always reached through it. The mercury rarely more than fifty below zero, and so dry is the air and so still that no one minds that temperature.

So we have it, that this entire rich wheat-yielding land of the far, far north, that the bulk of these grazing lands, tempered as the winter is by the warm Pacific climate, which here climbs over the rather low barrier of the Rockies, are falling into alert American hands. Even the storekeepers, they tell me, would rather trade with the American – he buys more freely, buys higher-priced machinery and goods; he is better pay in the end. "The Englishman brings out money, but after the first year or two it is gone." "The American brings some and then keeps making more." So my Canadian drummer friend tells me, and he gathers his information from the storekeepers in all these northwest towns with whom he deals. "Some even tell me," he said, "that if it wouldn't make any disturbance, why they would do better if all this country was part of the States." So the American is popular here, and he is growing rich, richer than the Canadian and Englishman, and in course of time, I take it, he will even yet the more completely dominate the land. It is strange how the American spirit seems to have an energy and force that tells everywhere, in Canada as well as in Mexico. The information I give you here comes to me from the intelligent fellow-travelers I have chanced to meet, and, I take it, is probably a fair statement.

We are some 4,500 feet above the sea, and the highest summits near us rise to about 10,000 or 11,000 feet. There is none of the somber blackness of the Norwegian rocks, nor the greenness of the Swiss slopes, while the contour of the summits and ridges is much like that of the volcanic, serrated summits of the mountains I saw in Mexico.

THIRD LETTER
BANFF TO VANCOUVER ACROSS THE ROCKIES AND SELKIRKS

Hotel Vancouver, Vancouver, B. C.,
August 19, 1903.

Our day crossing the Rockies was delightful. We left Banff about 2 P. M., following up the valley of the Silver Bow River to its very head. A deep valley, shut in on either hand by gigantic granite mountains, rising to 10,000 and 12,000 feet, their lower slopes covered with small fir, aspen, birch, then a sparse grass, and lichens, and then rising up into the clouds and eternal snows. Snow fields everywhere, and many glaciers quite unexplored and unnamed. The rise was so easy, however, that we were surprised when we actually attained the summit of the divide, where a mountain stream forks and sends its waters, part to Hudson's Bay, part to the Pacific. But the descent toward the west was precipitous. Since leaving Winnipeg, two days and nights across plains and prairie, and a night and day up the valley of the Silver Bow River, we had steadily risen, but so gradually that we were almost unconscious of the ascending grade, but now we were to come down the 5,000 feet from the height of land and reach the Pacific in little more than a single day. Not so sheer a ride as

down the Dal of the Laera River in Norway, 3,000 feet in three hours behind the ponies, but yet so steep that the iron horse crept at a snail's pace, holding back the heavy train almost painfully, and descending into gorges and cañons and shadowy valleys until one's hair nearly stood on end. How on earth they ever manage to pull and push the long passenger and short freight trains up these grades for the east-bound traffic, is a matter of amazement; that is, shove them up and make the business pay.

At once, so soon as the divide was crossed, the influence of the warm, moist air of the Pacific was apparent. No longer the bare, bleak, naked masses of granite, no longer the puny firs and dwarf aspen and birches, but instead, the entire vast slopes of these gigantic mountain masses were covered with a dense forest. The tall Douglas firs stood almost trunk to trunk, so close together that the distant slopes looked as though covered with gigantic coverlets of green fur. The trees seemed all about of one height and size. And the slopes were green right up to the snow field's very edge. Our way wound down the profound cañon of the Kicking Horse River, sometimes sheer precipices below and also above us, the road blasted out of the granite sides, then we swept out into the beautiful Wapta Valley, green as emerald, the white snow waters of the river – not white foam, but a muddy white like the snow-fed waters of the streams of Switzerland – roaring and plunging, and spreading out into placid pools. At last we emerged through a gorge and came into the great wide, verdant valley of the British Columbia, from which the province takes its name. A

river, even there on its upper reaches, as wide as the Ohio, but wild and turbulent, and muddy white from the melting snows. Behind us the towering granite masses of the Rocky Mountains – a name whose meaning I never comprehended before – their peaks lost in clouds, their flanks and summits buried in verdure. The valley of the Columbia is wide and fertile. Many villages and farms and saw-mills already prospering along it. Here and there were indications of a developing mine upon the mountain slopes. We followed the great river until we passed through a narrow gorge where the Selkirk Mountain range jams its rock masses hard against the western flanks of the Rockies and the river thrusts itself between, to begin its long journey southward through Washington and Oregon to the Pacific; and then turning up a wild creek called Six Mile, we began again to climb the second and last mountain chain before we should reach the sea. These grades are very heavy. Too heavy, I should say, for a railroad built for business and traffic and not subsidized by a government, as in practical effect the Canadian Pacific is. The pass at the divide is almost as high as that at the source of the Silver Bow, and much more impeded in winter with snowfalls and avalanches, which require many miles of snow-sheds to save the road.

We dined about 8 P. M., in a fine large hotel owned by the railroad company at a station called "Glacier," for it is right at the foot of one of the most gigantic glaciers of the Selkirks, and many tourists tarry here to see it and climb upon it; Swiss guides

being provided by the railway company for these adventures. And then we came down again, all night and half the next day, following the valley of the Fraser River until it debouched into level tidal reaches a few miles from Puget Sound.

The Fraser River is a magnificent stream; as great as the Columbia, as wild as New River of West Virginia. We stood upon the platform of the rear car and snapped the kodak at the flying gorges, tempestuous rapids and cascades. All along, wherever the water grew angry and spume spun, were Indians fishing for salmon, sometimes standing alert, intent, spear in hand poised and ready, or, more often, watching their nets or drawing them in. And every rocky point held its poles for drying the fish, belonging to some individual Indian or tribe, safe from trespass or molestation by immemorial usage. The sands of the river are said to also have been recently discovered to hide many grains of gold, and we saw in several places Chinamen industriously panning by the water-side. Near Vancouver we passed several extensive salmon canneries, and their catch this year is said to be unusually large.

As we came nearer to the sea the air grew warmer, the vegetation more luxuriant, the flowers more prolific, and the Douglas fir more lofty and imposing. A single shaft, with sparse, ill-feathered limbs, down-bent and twisted, these marvelous trees lift their ungainly trunks above every other living thing about. The flowers, too, would have delighted you. Zinnias as tall as dahlias, dahlias as tall as hollyhocks, nasturtiums growing like

grape vines, roses as big as peonies, geraniums and heliotropes small trees. Great was the delight of our trainload of Australians. They had never seen such luxuriance of foliage, such wealth of flowers, except under the care of a gardener and incessant laying on of water. We came across with a car full of these our antipodean kin. Most have been "home," to England, and had come across to Canada to avoid the frightful heats of the voyage by Suez and the Red Sea. And they marveled at the vigor and the activity of both Canada and the States. Some had lingered at the fine hotels up in the mountains now maintained by the Canadian Pacific Railroad. All were sorry to go back to the heats of the Australian continent.

The building and maintaining of this railway has been accomplished by the giving of millions of dollars in hard cash, and millions of acres in land grants, to the railway company by the government of the Dominion. Fortunes were made and pocketed by the promoters and builders, and the Canadian people now hold the bag – but although as a mere investment it can never pay, yet as a national enterprise it has made a Canadian Dominion possible. It owns its terminals on the Atlantic and on the Pacific. It owns its own telegraph lines, its own cars, sleeping-cars, and rolling stock; it owns and runs ten, a dozen, a score of fine hotels; it is a vast land-owner. Its stock can never be bought up and owned out of Canadian hands. A Morgan or a Gould can never seize it, manipulate it, or wreck it. It is a good thing for Canada to have it so. It is a good thing for the people of the

United States that it is so.

The Canadian Rockies are the most beautiful and picturesque of any section of the mountain chain from Mexico north. The air is cooler in the far northern latitude, keener, more bracing, and the hustling American has begun to find this out. The great hotels of the Canadian Pacific are already best patronized by the American visitor, and this year the sun-baked Californians have come up in swarms and promise another year even greater numbers. And the Canadian Pacific Railroad welcomes them all – all who can pay. At Banff, too, were the advance guard of the English Colony from China, brought over from Shanghai by the sumptuous steamships of the Canadian Pacific Railway, taken to and kept at their great hotels, and carried home again, at so low a round-trip rate that these Rocky Mountain resorts promise to become the summering-place of the Oriental Englishmen as well as Australian and Californian! How these things bring the world together!

Our journey from Kanawha, across Ohio, from Cleveland through the Great Lakes, across the wheatfields of Minnesota and Dakota and Manitoba, and over the wonderful prairies and plains of the opening far Northwest, has had a fit ending in the last few days climbing and plunging over and down the wildest, most picturesque, most stupendous valleys and passes of the Rocky Mountain and Selkirk Mountain ranges. How vast and varied and splendid is the continent we live on, and which one of these days the people of the United States will inevitably wholly

possess!

And now the wonders of these Pacific slopes and waters! All the afternoon we have been wandering through Vancouver's superb Natural Park, among its gigantic trees, and gazing westward over and across the waters of Puget Sound, the most mighty fjord of the Pacific seas, the most capacious land-locked harbor of the world. I must not say more about this now. I have not yet seen enough. I am only beginning dimly to comprehend what is the future power of our race and people in the development of this side of the earth.

VICTORIA A SLEEPY ENGLISH TOWN

The Driard Hotel, Victoria, B. C.,
August 21, 1903.

We came over here yesterday, leaving Vancouver by a fine new 1,800-ton steamer "Princess Victoria," and making the voyage in four hours, – all the way in and out among the islands and straits and inlets. The shores of the mainland high, lofty; – the mountain summits rising right up till snow-capped, six or seven thousand feet in the air, their flanks green with the dense forests of fir that here everywhere abound. The islands all fir-clad, the trees often leaning out over the deep blue waters. Many fishing-boats were hovering about the points and shoals below the mouth of the Fraser River, awaiting the autumnal rush of salmon into the death-traps of that stream. I hope to see one of these salmon stampedes – they often pushing each other high and dry on the shores in their mad eagerness to go on.

Tuesday we reached Vancouver. Wednesday we consumed seeing the lusty little city.

Yesterday we spent the morning in picking up the few extra things needed for the Yukon – among others a bottle of tar and carbolic – a mixture to rub on to offend the yet active mosquito.

Vancouver is a city of some 30,000 people, full of solid

buildings, asphalted streets, electric car lines, bustle and activity. Much of the outfitting for the Canadian Yukon is done there, though Seattle gets the bulk of even this trade.

To-day we are in Victoria, a town of twelve or fifteen thousand, a fine harbor, and near it the British naval and military station of Esquimault, the seat of its North Pacific war power. The town is sleepy, the buildings low and solid, the air of the whole place very English. The capitol building is an imposing structure of granite, surmounted by a successful dome.

FOURTH LETTER
VANCOUVER AND SKAGWAY; FJORDS AND FORESTS

First and Second Day Out,
August 23, 1903.

We arrived in Vancouver by the steamer "Charmer" from Victoria about ten o'clock A. M. – two hours late – a small boat, packed with passengers. We could not get a state-room to ourselves, so were glad of berths, while many people lay on mattresses in the cabin and many sat up. Tourist travel surprises the slow-going Canadian, and he does not catch up with it.

We went to the Hotel Vancouver, where we had been staying, and there breakfasted.

Our boat, "City of Seattle," is roomy and comfortable. We have a large upper state-room on the starboard side, plenty of fresh air and sunlight. It is loaded down with an immense cargo of miscellaneous freight, from piles of boxes of Iowa butter and fresh eggs, to sheep and live stock, chickens and pigs, vegetables and canned goods, most of it billed to Dawson and even to points below. The Yukon has been so low this year – less snow than usual falling last winter – that the bulk of the freight "going in" has had to be shipped via these Skagway boats and the

White Pass Railway, despite the exorbitant freight rates they are charging for everything.

The travellers are of two sorts. A good many making the round trip from Seattle to Skagway, and the Yukoner "going in" for the winter. The former are not of much concern to us, but among the latter I have found a number of interesting acquaintances. One, a man who hunts for a business, and is full of forest lore and hunting tales. He is also something of a naturalist and taxidermist, and I have been showing him our volumes of the report of the Harriman Expedition, to his delight. He has also explored along the Kamtschatka coasts of Siberia, and describes it as a land stocked with salmon and fur animals. He says, too, that I have done right to bring along my gun, for there are lots of ptarmigan as well as mountain sheep and goats in the Yukon Valley, and caribou and moose are also plentiful.

Another man has spent a year or more on the Yukon – our chief engineer – and thinks we will have no difficulty in getting a boat down from Dawson, and the scenery he says is grand. Another is a lumber-man of Wrangel – from Pennsylvania – and tells me they have some fine timber there, though most of that of these far northern latitudes is too small to now profitably compete with the big logs of Washington.

Our vis-a-vis at table is going up to the Porcupine Placer district to try his luck with finding gold, and several men are going into Atlin – whither we are bound – to find work at big pay.

The atmosphere of the company is buoyant and hopeful, even

the women have a dash of prosperity about them – gold chains and diamonds – of which there are not a few.

From all I can pick up, an immense trade is already developed with Alaska and is still growing with bounds. The United States Government statisticians give thirty-seven millions as the figure for the trade of the past year. Already three or four lines of steamers ply between Skagway alone and Puget Sound ports, and several more run to St. Michaels and Nome.

The sail from Vancouver is most delightful. You come out of a narrow channel through which the tides foam and churn, and then turn north through the "Gulf of Georgia," twenty or thirty miles wide. Vancouver Island stretches for three hundred miles along the west, fir-clad, backboned by a chain of mountains rising up into the snows. On the east a coast indented with multitudinous bays and deep channels, sharp promontories and islands; the forest coming to the water's edge, the mountains rising sharply six and seven thousand feet into the snows and clouds, as lofty as the fjelde of Norway, but not so bare and naked, the dense, deep green fir forests growing from water to snow line.

We were crossing Queen Charlotte Sound when we awoke this morning, and all day long have been threading our way among islands, through narrow channels, across seemingly shut-in lakes, ten and twelve miles wide, and then no wider than the Kanawha River or even narrower. As we come north the mountains grow higher and come closer to the water we sail upon, and there is more snow on their summits.

You might imagine yourself with Henrik Hudson on his first voyage, when the Hudson valley was covered with primeval forests.

Last evening we saw a number of humpbacked whales, and to-day more. This morning saw my first sea lions and also fur and hair seals. To-morrow, they say, we shall see yet more. Only gulls, a few terns and ducks to-day. No larger birds as yet.

Monday, August 24, 1903.

The greyness of yesterday is vanished. The sky is cloudless, the atmosphere translucent. The mountains are more lofty, the snow patches grown into wide fields, and the air has taken on a certain added keenness, telling of distant snow and ice. To-morrow we shall see more snow and even glaciers. All day we have been going from one broad sound or channel through narrow straits into others as broad. We crossed Dixon's Channel at breakfast-time, through which the commerce of the Orient will come to Port Simpson, the Canadians hope, when the Grand Trunk Pacific shall have been built.

About noon we came around a wooded island and made our first port of Ketchikan, where there are salmon canneries, and hard by quartz mines yielding gold, and saloons and stores. Here we had our first view of near-by totem poles, and our first sight of the shoals of salmon that make alive these waters. From a foot-bridge crossing a little creek that debouched near our steamer wharf, we looked down into the clear water and saw it fairly swarming with salmon, fish from ten to fifteen pounds, "small

ones," they said. But the waters were choked with them. Dipping a net down, you might haul up a wagon load as easily as one. Yet no one was catching them. So plentiful are the fish that no one wants to eat salmon except as a last resort – "food fit only for dogs," they say, and the distant tenderfeet whom the canneries supply. And these swarming fish below us shoved each other upon the shallow shore continually, when there would be a great splashing to get back.

From Ketchikan we have come out into the great Clarence Strait, with Belim and Ernest Sounds stretching away into the snow-covered mountains toward the east. The strait is as wide as the Hudson at the Palisades, the shores fir clad, the mountains six to seven thousand feet, up into clouds and snow. The water to-day is like a mirror, and many porpoises are playing about. I have just seen three big blue herons, and awhile ago we passed a loon. Last night just at dusk, we saw several flocks of snipe or plover, small, brown, swift in flight, close above the water.

We have just looked upon the most superb panorama we have yet beheld. The last four hours the mountains both east and west of us have come closer to the shores, and risen higher, the fir mantle enveloping them has grown a darker green, larger timber than for the last few hundred miles, and then we came round a bend in our great strait – about six to ten miles wide – forty or fifty miles long – and there in front of us, bounding the horizon on the north, stretched an immense mass of jagged, serrated mountain chain, glittering like silver in the slanting sun rays. Not

mere snow patches, not mere fields of snow, but vast "fjellen" of snow, snow hiding all but the most ragged rock peaks, and even sometimes enveloping these. Valleys all snow-filled and from which descend mighty glaciers. Below the miles of snow lay the deep green forests of the lesser mountain summits and sloping flanks, and then the dark blue waters of the giant fjord, dotted with many fir-clad islands. We agree that we have seen nothing in our lives so sublimely beautiful. Never yet nature on so stupendous a scale.

The quiet waters of the last two days are now alive with gulls and ducks and grebes and divers, many loons. More bird life than we have yet seen. Just as is told by the Harriman naturalist. Only at Wrangel does the real bird life of the north begin. Curving around another wooded promontory, we beheld the town of Wrangel, at Fort Wrangel, on Wrangel Island, ten miles away, nestling at the mouth of a little valley, below the firs and snow summits behind. We are now tied up to the pier at this port, and shall lie here till 2 A. M., when flood tide will allow us to continue the voyage, and at daylight pass through the narrowest and most hazardous strait of the trip. We mean to be waked at four o'clock so as to see the pass.

In the village, which claims to be the second town in Alaska, we have walked about and seen some of the totem poles which stand before many of the Indian cabins. Grotesque things, surely.

It is now near nine o'clock and yet the lingering twilight permits one to read. At Dawson, they tell me, there is in June no

night, and baseball matches are played at 10 P. M.

August 25, 1903.

We did not leave Wrangel till 2 A. M., lying there waiting for the flood of the tide. We were to pass through the very tortuous, narrow and difficult straits and passages between Wrangel Bay and Frederick Sound, through which the tides rush with terrific fury – the tides rise twenty or thirty feet along these shores – and the ship would only venture at flood tide and after dawn. In order to see these picturesque passages, I climbed out between three and four o'clock this morning, wrapped in a blanket shawl above my overcoat, and stood in the ice-chilled air while we threaded slowly our dangerous way. Along sheer mountain-sides, between low wooded islands (all fir), a channel carefully marked with many buoys and white beacons, with many sharp turns, finally entering the great Frederick Sound, where many whales were blowing, and we saw our first real icebergs – masses of ice, blue and green, translucent, with deep, clear coloring.

All day we have sailed up this great land-locked sheet of blue water, the icebergs and floes increasing in number as we approached Taku Inlet, from whose great live glaciers they are incessantly shed off.

4 P. M. – We have landed at the Treadwell Mines on Douglas Island, where the largest stamp mill in the world crushes a low grade quartz night and day the year around, and where is gathered a mining population of several thousand. Then we crossed the fjord to the bustling port of Juneau, the would-be

capital of Alaska, the rival of Sitka. A curious little town of wooden buildings, wooden streets, wooden sidewalks, nestling under a mighty snow-capped mountain, and, like those other towns, largely built on piles, on account of the tides.

Now we are off for Skagway, a twelve hours' run with our thirteen-knot speed.

To-day we have fallen in with two more fellow-travelers. One a young fellow named Baldwin, attached to the U. S. Fish Commission, who tells me much about the fishing on these coasts, and the efforts now being made to stay the indiscriminate slaughter. Another, a grave-faced, sturdy man from Maine who is panning free gold near Circle City, and has endured much of hardship and suffering. He hopes to win enough this winter and coming summer from his claim to go back to California and make a home for his old mother who waits for him there.

Skagway, Alaska, Wednesday, August 25.

We are tied to an immense pier, and mechanical lifters seem to be dragging out the very entrails of the ship. Across the line of the warehouses I see the trucks of the railway, the hackmen are crying out their hotels. "This way, free 'bus to the Fifth Avenue Hotel."

FIFTH LETTER
SKAGWAY, CARIBOU CROSSING[1] AND ATLIN

Atlin, British Columbia, August 29, 1903.

Here we are at the mining camp of Atlin, on Atlin Lake. We left Skagway the same morning we arrived. Our boat, the "City of Seattle," came in early Wednesday morning, and long before we got up we heard them discharging cargo, all hands at work. The day was cloudy, cold, and icy winds swept down from the glaciers. It seemed November. The little town is built on a low sand tongue of detritus carried down from the glaciers by the snow rivers, the river Skagway here pouring out a flood of muddy white water like the Swiss streams.

The railway is a narrow, three-foot gauge, and the cars are low but roomy. Our train consisted of nine freight cars, a baggage, two passenger cars and three locomotives, one in front and two in the middle. The famous ride was all that has been said of it. First, a gradual ascent up the deep valley of the Skagway, then steep climbing and many doubles and winds up through the cañon to the summit, twenty miles away, and 3,200 feet above the sea. In many places the road-bed is blasted out of the granite rock, sheer

[1] Caribou Crossing now called Carcross.

precipices above and below, a most costly piece of work, and ever down below winds the difficult, dangerous trail, over which fifty to one hundred thousand men and women footed it in the winters of 1897–1898, in the strange, mad world-rush to the fabulous gold fields of the interior. How they got up and through at all is the wonder; yet men tell me that men, pack-laden, footsore, determined, were so closely massed along the trail that it was one continuous line from Skagway to summit and beyond, for months at a time. The various views from our car were magnificent and even appalling; sometimes we seemed to hang in mid-air as we crawled upward. As we approached the summit we came among snow fields and near many glaciers, and then passed through long snow-sheds over which the avalanches often slip and thunder into the abysses below.

Near the divide is the international boundary line, and the customs station for Alaska and the Yukon Territory of Canada, and where the red-coated Canadian mounted police come first in evidence. Here our bags were examined by the customs. Then we began a gradual descent into wide, open, flat valleys, over bare granite rock masses and through a stunted fir wilderness into the basin of the Yukon, 2,600 miles from the Behring Sea at St. Michaels. Flocks of ptarmigan flew up as the train rolled down, and a few eagles soared high above the snow summits.

Our first stop was at a railway eating-house near the head of Lake Bennett, a sheet of light green water, two to ten miles wide and over thirty miles long, all shut in by gigantic granite

mountains whose summits were covered with glittering snow. The railway skirts the water for the entire distance until it crosses at a bridge over a swift current where Lake Bennett flows into Lake Marsh, and where is the station of Caribou.

Here we were put off, and here we would, two days later, take the bi-weekly steamer for Atlin, on Atlin Lake, where we now are, and here the railway leaves the lakes and takes a short cut across a low divide to White Horse Rapids, where begins the steamboat navigation on the Yukon River.

Caribou is a collection of cabins and tents, and is the first settlement where, they say, will some day be a city.

It was on Lake Bennett that the weary pilgrims used to camp to build their boats and rafts and begin their long water journey of five hundred miles to Dawson and the golden Klondike.

Our hotel we found surprisingly neat and clean; owned and kept by a famous Indian, "Dawson Charlie," who was one of the discoverers of the gold of Bonanza Creek in the Klondike, and who had the sense to himself stake out several claims, the gold from which has made him now a magnate worth several hundred thousand dollars, and who lives and entertains like a white man. He housed us in a neat, comfortable room, iron bedstead, wire mattress, carpeted floor. He fed us at fifty cents a meal as well, as abundantly as in West Virginia, and only his Indian daughter, who waited on us, dressed neatly and fashionably, with big diamonds in her ears, made us realize that we were not in our own land. Here we have spent two delightful days. The air is as

wonderfully clear as on the table-lands of Mexico, full of ozone, but cold in the shadow even in midday, though the sun is warm.

On the ship we met a delightful naturalist, Mr. Baldwin, of New Haven, artist of the U. S. Fish Commission, and who came with us to try and catch some grayling, in order to make drawings for the Commission, and for two days we have been out in the woods, he with my rod, H – with your butterfly net, and I with my gun. He caught his grayling, several of them. I shot several mallard ducks, but H – caught no butterflies, nor saw one. It was too late in the season for that.

On the way up we fell in with a very intelligent Swede, whose partner in the Klondike is a Dane, and who, when he learned H – 's nationality, and she had talked Danish with him, was all courtesy and friendliness. He had come in with the "mushers" (corruption of the French *marche*), as the early foot-farers are called, and had succeeded. When we get to Dawson he will welcome us.

At Caribou we also made acquaintance with the Canadian customs officer, Mr. John Turnure, a fine type of Canadian official, big, bluff, yet courteous, who at first was going to tax all my cartridges and kodak films, notwithstanding I had passed the customs at Winnipeg and had come from Vancouver direct, but who, upon explanation, relented, and afterward called on us and invited H – , Mr. B – and myself to call on his wife and family at his log cabin mansion near the station, which we did, and were served cake and coffee from dainty china, and

sat on a divan covered with priceless furs, near a good piano. His daughters were now at home from school on vacation, and his wife, a cultured woman, was next day going with them on a shopping visit to Dawson, the New York or Cincinnati of this far north.

The Yukon territory is governed from Ottawa by appointees, and policed by the "Northwest Mounted Police," a fine body of men – including many young Englishmen of good family – in cowboy hats and red coats. While here in Atlin, we are just over the line in the Province of British Columbia, a state with its own laws and civil magistrates.

We left Caribou on a little steamer with a big sternwheel – all of which, timber and machinery, had been carried from Skagway over the White Pass on horses' backs, and sledges, dragged by men and dogs, and put together on Lake Bennett, before the railway was even thought of. How in the name of heaven a ten-ton boiler, and the engines and big timbers, were got over that foot-path trail, is even yet a standing marvel – the boat is as big as the steamer "Calvert" on the Kanawha River – but it was done, and to-day I have talked with the man who bossed and directed the job, Captain Irving, now a gold hunter of Atlin and a member of the British Columbia Parliament.

We first came slowly through a well-marked track on a little lake, Lake Marsh, for about ten miles, then through a short river, and then out into Lake Taggish, a sheet of water larger than Lake Bennett, and one arm of which is famous for its desperate winds

from the glaciers – the "hurricane" arm – another arm of which heads toward the White Horse Rapids, and a third arm, "The Taku Arm," which extends southerly toward Lake Atlin, a lake more than one hundred miles in length, which empties into it through a short, swift, turbulent river. This southerly portion of the lake is eight or ten miles wide and we were all night steaming on it to Taku, where we landed this morning – a distance of forty or fifty miles – when, taking a little, short, two-mile railway, we were pulled over to Atlin Lake, a yet bigger body of water. There embarking on another steamboat, we were ferried ten miles across to Atlin, a town with a courthouse, several churches, a little hospital, a newspaper, a bank, a dozen hotels, a multitude of restaurants, bicycles, numerous livery stables, and which is the center of a gold-mining region from which already several millions of dollars have been taken since the first pay dirt was found in 1898. We dined at a restaurant where a colored French cook presides, and you may have any delicacy New York could afford. At the bars men preside with diamonds the size of hickory nuts in their shirts, drinks are twenty-five cents each and cigars the same. The hotels are full of keen-faced men; well-gowned and refined women are to be seen on the streets; the baby carriages are pulled by great big dogs, and even the water carts and delivery wagons are hauled by teams of eight and ten dogs – Newfoundland or wolfish Esquimaux.

"The Camp," or city, is now in the midst of a boom, and this morning we were shown several buckets of gold nuggets just

brought in last night from a recent "clean up."

When in the midst of Lake Taggish, yesterday afternoon, we were hailed by a naphtha launch of the Mounted Police, and, on our lying to, three gentlemen climbed in. One face seemed in some way familiar to me, and when I presently heard some one call him Mr. Sutton I recognized one of my old Port Hope schoolmates, who had also been at Cornell, and who had been an especial friend. He was as well pleased as I at the meeting, and is now here with me. He was a brilliant scholar, and is now British Columbia's most eminent geologist and mining expert. We have been out together to-day, and to have his expert opinion here on what I see is invaluable. We have also met here a Mr. and Mrs. R – , of Philadelphia, to whom I had a letter, a promoter of the largest hydraulic company here, and H – has been off with Mrs. R – to-day and panned her first chunks of real, true, genuine gold, of which performance she is not a little proud. The whole country seems to be more or less full of gold; it is in the gravels and sands everywhere, and a number of very large gold-getting enterprises are under way, mostly hydraulic placer mining, but also some fine quartz veins carrying free gold are being opened up, and I have been off with Sutton all the afternoon looking at one.

September 1, 1903.

We have had three days of outing; at least, I have. Saturday morning I made an early start with Sutton and three other men for a visit to some hydraulic mining operations up on Pine Creek,

and to the great dredge now being built. At one of these, an operation called "The Sunrise Gold Co.," I found in charge a Mr. Ruffner, of Cincinnati, a cousin to the Kanawha family, grandson of one of the original Ruffner brothers, who, hating slavery, had freed his slaves and removed to free soil in Ohio. A bright young fellow, managing a large operation. Then we went on further to Gold Run, where an enormous dredge is being built. An experiment in this country, about the final success of which there is yet much question. Here I dined in a tent, which is warmer, they say, than any timber building, even when the temperature is 50 degrees below zero. The valley is a broad, open one, all of glacial formation. It is very level, with Pine Creek cutting deeply between high gravel banks. A black top soil of a foot or two, eight or ten feet of grey gravel, then as much more yellowish sandy gravel, and often a foot or two of black sand at the bottom, lying upon a bed of serpentine rock; and it is in this lowest ten feet of yellow gravel and black sand that the free gold is found, nuggets of a pound or two down to minute gold dust, a red gold of about 22 to 23 carats in combination with copper or silver. Through this gravel are also immense stones and boulders, and these are the gold diggers' particular bete noir. Most of the digging is done by getting out this gravel, freeing it of the boulders and washing it. Pine Creek is the overflow of Surprise Lake, a sheet of water twenty miles long and one-half to one mile wide; and although a considerable stream, yet its waters are so much needed in these gold-washing operations that

a constant water-war among the diggers and digging companies goes on. There is much waste also in the present methods, and it is to prevent the wars as well as to save the fine gold that now largely escapes that the dredging method is to be applied. Then, too, there are only four, or at most five, months in the year when men can work, so that great energy must be expended during the open season. There is no night up here for these four months, and men work all the twenty-four hours in eight-hour shifts; thus, really, more work is done than one would at first imagine. The life of the ideally successful gold digger is to toil with unflagging vigor for the four or five months of daylight and open weather, then "come out" and blow it in leisurely luxury in some comfortable city. But not all are so able to make their summer pile. They may not strike rich pay dirt, but may find it lean, or even barren, and such must just live on through ice and snow and mighty frost, hoping for more luck another year. Many are the tales of hardship and suffering and dire wreck one hears. The little graveyard out along the Pine Creek pike has many graves in it. One man died a natural death, they say, but all the rest went to their graves stark mad from disappointment, poverty and privation. Every train passing out over the White Pass Railway carries its complement of the hopelessly insane, gone mad in the hunt for gold.

In this little town or "camp," as it is called, are very many too poor to get away, too broken in health and spirits to more than barely exist. A delicate woman, once the wife of the mayor of an

Illinois city, does our washing; her husband, a maimed and frozen cripple, sits penniless and helpless while she earns a pittance at the tub. Our landlady lets rooms to lodgers, her husband's body lying beneath the deep waters of Teslin Lake.

A Cambridge Senior wrangler passed us yesterday on the road driving two dogs hitched to a little wagon, peddling cabbages and fish. A few strike gold, and, making their piles, depart, but the many toil hopelessly on, working for a wage, or frozen or crippled, weary in spirit and out of heart, sink into penury, or die mad.

After our dinner in the tent I joined another party, some of those interested in the building of the dredge, and drove with them twenty miles up into the interior to Otter Creek, where three of them have just started an operation, sluicing for gold. We passed many cabins and small tents, where live the men who are working claims and washing for gold. Some were quite shut down for lack of water, others were eagerly at work. At one point a Mr. S – and I left the wagon and struck six miles across a great grassy mountain. We must have ascended 2,000 feet or more. An easy ascent over a vast expanse of moss and tufted grass; no trees, no bushes, no hardy herbs, nothing but grass and moss. Only on the south and west was the horizon bounded by jagged peaks and summits of snow-topped mountains. Glacial action has everywhere worn down the surface into rounded rolling domes and slopes, and for hundreds of miles the land is one wide moorland of grass and moss.

Here are many flocks of wild sheep and mountain goats, and here moose and caribou are said to abound. During the day, about the noon hour, a giant bull moose had stalked deliberately through the midst of the camp, neither quickening his pace, nor fearing man. So engrossed were the men in their search for gold, that none dropped pick or shovel to molest him.

On these higher slopes are multitudes of ptarmigan, – the birds breeding close to the permanent snow line, remaining high up during the summer heats, and gradually descending to the valleys as the fresh falling autumnal snows little by little push them down.

In Atlin, the other day, a young Swedish engineer, a graduate of Upsala, showed me a fine pair of ibex horns from one which he had shot high up on the mountains beyond the lake. The animal, though not uncommon, is difficult to get, inhabiting the most inaccessible summits and rarely descending to even the levels where the mountain sheep and goats find pasture.

A superb and seemingly boundless pasture land where great herds of cattle ought also to be feeding, and would be, except for the terror of the winter's cold. Perhaps the reindeer will some day here find a congenial home.

We sat by fires after nightfall, and when day came icicles a foot long hung all along the drip of the flume, and in the afternoon snow fell, covering every rounded summit with its white mantle.

Returning, I walked another ten miles down the winding valley of Otter Creek. A stretch of open, grassy moorland, where in the winter-time the moose and caribou gather in numbers seeking

shelter from the winds, and finding the dried grass through the scraped-off snow.

To-day H – , Sutton and I have driven for hours along the valley of Spruce Creek, visiting another industrious gold-washing section. We picnicked for lunch in an abandoned miner's camp, and H – saw her first real washing for gold. We took the picture of one old man, a Mr. Alfred Sutton, in whose cabin we had sought shelter from a passing rain squall. He had hoped to return to England for the winter – he left there many years ago – but the gold had not come in as rich as he had hoped, so he must delay his going for one more year. Poor old fellow, his beard was long and white, so, too, his uncombed hair. He had not yet made his yellow pile, but was as hopeful as a boy of twenty. I promised to send him a copy of the photograph and he thanked me joyfully, saying, "And I shall send it to my family at home" – in England.

We are here two days longer, when we move on to Dawson and I mail these lines to you.

September 2, 1903.

This is our last day in Atlin. The morning was cold like late November in Virginia, the air keen and frosty. Ice has formed in the pools, though the aspen and scrub willow and a sort of stunted alder are only turned yellow in spots and patches. The mountain-tops are now all whitened with the delicate early snows, extending like blankets of hoar-frost out beyond the margins of the snow fields that never melt.

We dine sumptuously, and all through the gold fields it is the same. The one thing men will and must have is food, good food and no stint. The most expensive canned goods, the costliest preserves, the most high-priced fresh fruits, oranges, bananas, pears and grapes, the finest beef steaks and meats, the most ample variety of vegetables. Such an average as New York gives only in her best hotels, is what the gold digger demands, will have, and freely spends his nuggets to obtain. We are astonished at such lavish eating. At the diggings where men work for wages, $4.50 and $5.00 per day, board is always included and demanded, and only this high-priced, costly food is accepted. The cooks are connoisseurs. Their wages run from $125.00 to $150.00 per month and free board. At the camp high amidst the desolate moorlands of Otter Creek, the men eat beef steaks, thick, juicy, rare, California fresh fruit and lemon meringue pie; with lemons $1.00 per dozen and eggs ten cents apiece! Dundee marmalade is eaten by the ton; the costliest canned cream is swallowed by the gallon – the one permitted, recognized and established extravagance of the gold fields is the sumptuous eating of every man who finds the gold.

This afternoon Sutton and ourselves with a few friends are going down to see the great glacier at the south end of Lake Atlin.

SIXTH LETTER
THE GREAT LLEWELLYN
OR TAKU GLACIER

Caribou Crossing, September 4, 1903.

We have just come in on the steamboat from Atlin, and are waiting for the train which will take us to White Horse this afternoon, where we will take a river boat to Dawson.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.