

The Valley of Youth

C. W. Holliday
1948

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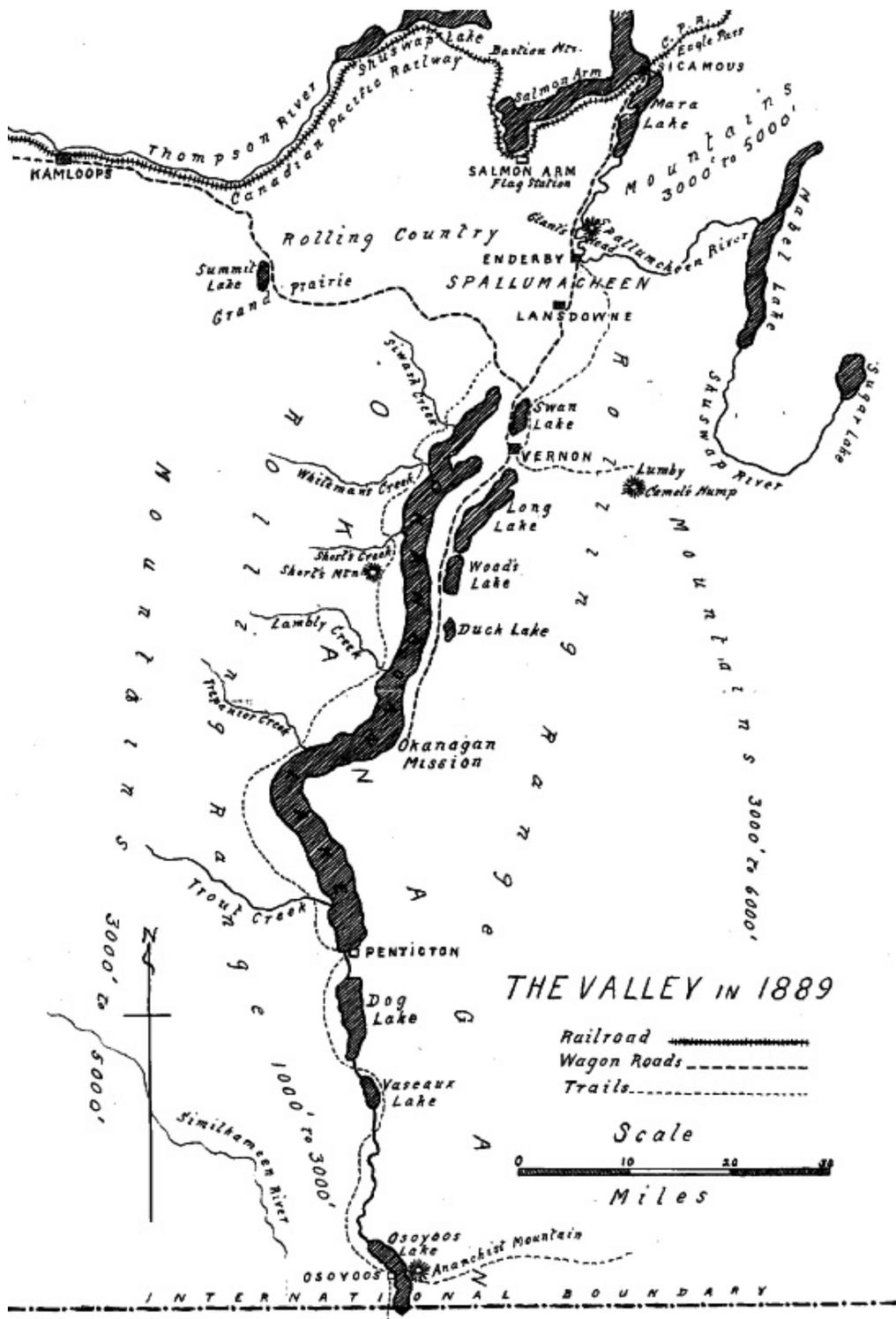
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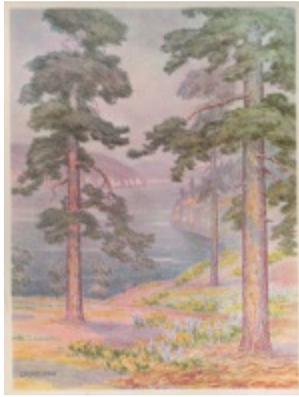
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From a painting by the author
In the sunny Okanagan

The Valley of Youth

by

C. W. HOLLIDAY

ILLUSTRATED



The CAXTON PRINTERS, Ltd.
Caldwell, Idaho
1948

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I also wish to thank Mr. Arthur Stringer for kind permission to use the verses from his poem, "A Colonial in England"; the numerous people who have assisted in securing old photographs; commander A. J. Villiers, R.N., and his publishers, Messrs. Routledge and Sons for the use of illustrations from his book, *Last of the Windships*. These photographs by A. J. Villiers were taken many years after the time that the author sailed around the Horn; at that time it would not have been possible to get such pictures with the cameras of that date, but they give a true picture of a sailing ship as it was then.

*Dedicated to the memory of
the old-timers and to
their descendants*

PREFACE

I remember reading somewhere that everyone believes that he (or she) could write a book. If this is true about most people, it certainly was not so in my case, for although in my lifetime I have attempted many things, writing was never one of my ambitions. Then one day, to pass the time when I was convalescing after an illness, I began to scribble about some of my early experiences. I found it rather hard at first, but once started, my pencil seemed to run away with me, for the memory of one thing would recall another, and so vivid were these memories that I felt as if I were actually living that life again.

And so I went on, and, rather surprisingly, realized that I had written at least enough to fill a book; and here it is. I have had a great deal of pleasure writing it.

It is about life in the Okanagan as it was fifty years ago—I have tried to paint a picture—one might call it an impressionist picture—of the country and some of its people as seen through the eyes of a young “Cheechako.”^[1]

It covers that period, the last of the nineteenth century, that in England has been called the “Gay Nineties.” I am glad that during that time I was breathing the free and easy air of the West; that I had left London behind me; for life at that time seems to have been artificial and frivolous; a rather futile sort of existence.

True we were gay enough here; probably at times frivolous, but the life was certainly far from artificial, and I do not think it was futile. The early settlers laid very solid foundations on which the country was built, and I believe those light-hearted young Englishmen who came later, whatever their faults may have been, did, very definitely, contribute something of value to those foundations.

You may find my story somewhat rambling—my thoughts were as I wrote it; perhaps it just reflects the somewhat rambling nature of our lives at that time. But every incident I write of really happened; the characters are real people, many of them my old friends. I have sometimes given them fictitious names, lest I might unintentionally hurt the feelings of someone connected with them; but I know that if I *have* seen their humorous side, they certainly would not mind that themselves. Most of them are no longer here in the flesh, but I have a curious feeling that their spirits still return to those old haunts they loved so well; that they may even be able to read my remarks about them, and chuckling to themselves, think of the things they could say about me.

I have chosen as a title for this my book, “The Valley of Youth,” for even our

greybeards were young in spirit; they seemed to have as fresh and buoyant an outlook on life as the most youthful among us.

I must now add a note of explanation. The manuscript of Part II was the first to be submitted to my publishers; and after reading it, they asked me to write more about myself. I had at first intended to write a story of the Okanagan, without dragging myself in at all; this did not seem to work out; but I certainly did not wish it to be an autobiography. However I assumed that publishers know more about books than I do, so I wrote Part I, "Fifty Thousand Miles," which leads up to Part II, "The Land of My Dreams"; and I think they will be satisfied that I have now written enough—perhaps too much—about myself and my adventures. And once more I wondered at the vast store of things that for nearly sixty years had lain, buried and forgotten, in my subconsciousness, until they were drawn once more to the surface—as by the touch of a magician's wand, by this request of my publishers. Truly the human mind is a strange and wonderful thing. One of the publisher's readers, in his or her report, wrote, and I think I may quote—"I am sure that many interesting and colorful things must have happened to the author, which he has never told us; for instance it is not until about the end of the MS. that he tells us that he was married." Well, I am afraid that my marriage was not very colorful: I have never been divorced or committed bigamy or any of those things that make interesting reading; I just got married, turned more or less respectable, and lived happily ever after. Certainly, after our children had grown up, my wife and I did, each year, go forth together in search of adventure; but that, as Kipling was so fond of saying, is another story, which I may tell some day.

[1] "Cheechako"—Chinook for newcomer, a greenhorn, it holds a slight suggestion of contempt.

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PART I

FIFTY THOUSAND MILES

CHAPTER I

INTO THE GOLDEN WEST

*Then blow ye breezes blow, for California,
For there's plenty of gold, so I've been told,
On the banks of the Sacramento.*

So runs the chorus of an old sea chantey, and it was during the summer of 1887 that these same breezes were blowing the good ship *Eleanor Margaret*, with me on board, slowly to be sure, but surely, to the golden west coast of North America.

The *Eleanor Margaret* was a four-masted barque of twenty-three hundred tons, owned by an uncle of mine and named after my aunt Maggie. She had formerly been one of the fast P. & O. mail boats, the *Mooltan*; as the P. & O. built larger ships these smaller ones were sold, some of them being converted into sailing ships. The *Mooltan*, renamed *Eleanor Margaret*, was one of these, and a very fine ship she made; she had lines like a yacht, having been designed primarily for speed. Length three hundred and sixty feet, breadth thirty-five feet, she cut the water like a knife, and close hauled, I think, could sail closer to the wind than any other square-rigger afloat; certainly when sailing into the wind we overtook and passed to windward of any other ship on the same tack.

In those days every ship still had a figurehead; this custom, dating back to the time when ships first were, does give a more personal touch to your ship; something that appeals to the imagination, and it is a pity that it is falling into disuse. And among other changes in her appearance, the figurehead of the *Mooltan*, which had been the image of an Indian Rajah wearing a turban, was changed by a skilled carver into a woman more or less like Aunt Maggie, his whiskers having been shaved off and the turban converted into a coiffure. During the voyage, however, Aunt Maggie grew a mustache. When she finally berthed in San Francisco, one of the first things that greeted the astonished eyes of our Old Man as he glanced at the bow of his ship from the wharf, was Auntie adorned with a huge mustache which some young miscreant had perpetrated with a pot of black paint. His white whiskers bristling and his face purple with rage, the captain strode back on board and demanded that the abomination should be removed instantly. He made no fussy and useless effort to discover the guilty party; he was too dignified, maybe the old boy chortled somewhere deep down below the surface—but to have his ship exposed to public

ridicule; that was too much! But I am getting to 'Frisco before I have properly started; I had better begin at the beginning and tell you how it came about that I was making this voyage.

I had been a delicate boy, and without inflicting on you details of childhood, will just start from the time when our old family doctor gave it as his opinion that if I did not spend a long time in the open air, preferably in summer clime, I should not live 'till I was thirty. Good old doctor! I wish that he could see me now at seventy-five, the result of his dictum, and that I could thank him for indirectly delivering me from the humdrum life of a business or professional man in London!

One day I was in my uncle's office, where I occasionally poked about doing such odd jobs as addressing envelopes or running on errands, probably more to keep me out of mischief than anything else. I was looking over some lists of provisions and gear for the *Eleanor Margaret* who was due to sail from South Shields on the Tyne in about two weeks, when Uncle Willie came out of his private office. He seemed to study me thoughtfully for a minute or so, then with his kindly smile; "How would you like to go with her?" I had never even dreamed of such a possibility, and first thought he was joking. "Well, would you?" he repeated. "You don't really mean it, Uncle, do you?" I got out at last, for the sudden unexpected proposal had been rather confusing and it seemed too good to be true.

But he did mean it, so for the next two weeks I was busy getting outfitted with sea-going toggery; saying good-bye to my envious friends and nervously hoping that nothing would intervene to upset my plans. And then the last day at home arrived; my uncle and I were on the night train for South Shields and I felt a great sense of relief; I was safely off at last; from then on I was in a different world, a world of novelty and adventure.

South Shields itself was quite a new experience to me; I had never been in a ship-building town before; the ceaseless machine-gun-like rattle of riveting which went on day and night; the clatter of wooden clogs on the feet of thousands of workers as they made their way over the cobbled street to the shipyards; the keen air blowing upriver from the North Sea, gathering as it came all those innumerable pleasant odors of a busy seaport; the Tyne River itself, alive with ships of every description; ships just arrived from distant parts, lying at anchor in the stream waiting for a berth, or others waiting for last orders before sailing; the hulls of other ships in all stages of construction, with their great sterns towering above the river from their ways in the ship-building yards, waiting for the day when they too would go forth to distant seas. And still more ships in the charge of tugs on their way inward or

outward bound. In and out through all this maze of shipping moved rowboats and fussy little tugs on their lawful occasions. And the accompanying music to all this drama of the river; the continuous loud staccato of hammers on steel plates, the plaintive cry or derisive laugh of seagulls, intermittent whistles from steam engines or the deep bellow of a steamer's siren. And perchance through all this crescendo of sound you might catch the melody of men's voices singing one of those haunting chanteys of the sea.

Of this busy gathering of ships the great majority were sailing vessels, for the sail still held pride of place on the oceans and in the seaports of the world, although steam was making a bold effort to displace them. The old-time sailormen had a deep-rooted dislike and contempt for this modern innovation. As we were looking one day from our deck at a steam tramp wallowing in a rough sea in the Bay of Biscay, our bosun, with a spit of disgust over the side said, "Well, I hope I never see the day when I have to serve on one of them bloody teakettles." And the officers felt the same, possibly more so, for they had a great pride in their profession. You might hear one of them remark sadly and disapprovingly, "I hear young so-and-so is thinking of going into steam when he gets his second mate's ticket." And the others would reply, "That's the end of him as far as we are concerned."

Incidentally, at that time all officers had to serve four years' apprenticeship in sail, even if they intended to go into steam. But I think the most profound contempt for the "floating teakettles" was felt by the able-bodied seamen, especially the older ones, the old "shellbacks." (I wonder if the term "mossback" for an old farmer derives from this? The old sailor has been so long at sea that barnacles grow on his back; the old farmer so long on the land that moss grows on his back.)

Referring to the crew of a steamer "Sailormen, them!" they snort, "Why, them bastards is nothing but a bunch of lousy greasers and deck swabbers." When you consider what the sailing ship was, this attitude is quite understandable. For it was about the end of that period when the sailing ship had reached the peak of perfection. A sailing ship is really one of the most beautiful and wonderful things ever made by man; I would not even concede prior place to the aeroplane, for that would be useless without its engines. The sailing ship, on the other hand, bends the free winds to its own use, it is not merely blown along by them but can progress against them. Is that not a marvellous thing, that a mass weighing thousands of tons can be propelled through the water, sometimes against the resistance of heavy seas, by simply making use of the currents of air? But the world had for centuries become so accustomed to this wonder that we just took it for granted.

Well, I seem to have wandered off my track again, so let me return to South

Shields and the river Tyne. All these unaccustomed sights and sounds and smells spelled romance to me; this busy river seemed to hold the ends of threads that extended all over the world.

After my uncle and I had finished our breakfast in a South Shields hotel, he opened a brief case and looked over sundry papers; Captain Fishwick of the *Eleanor Margaret* was due shortly to pay his respects to her owner. Very soon he arrived, a very portly and dignified, rather elderly man with white whiskers. He was clad in a black frock coat and a top hat; this I was later to learn was the correct going-ashore costume of the old-time British and American skippers. I was introduced, and felt rather overawed, and very small and insignificant, for after remarking, "Oh, this will be the boy you wrote me about?" the old gentleman simply ignored me. He also produced a brief case, and for the next hour owner and captain were busy over affairs that meant nothing to me, and I was relieved when old man Fishwick said, "Well, Mr. Wallace, I think everything is in order; shall we go aboard for lunch?"

The Old Man and Uncle Willie, with me trailing along behind, feeling like a very little boy, proceeded past warehouses and along wharves to where the captain's gig awaited him in the river at the foot of some steps. Lying at anchor out in the stream lay our ship, looking to me very large—indeed for those days she was, being the longest sailing ship afloat, although of less tonnage than many others; this being accounted for by her slender hull design.

In a few minutes we climbed up the accommodation ladder and for the first time in my life I stood on the deck of a ship. After lunch in the saloon, I was left to my own devices and I rambled about the main deck, feeling that I had no business there, for it was a very busy place, things were being lowered down the hatches; ropes being coiled; wherever I went I seemed to be in somebody's way; and I felt that they were asking each other who the devil that little squirt was. So by and by, seeing the poop deck empty, I climbed up there and tramped up and down pretending to myself that I was the officer in charge. I did not know that the poop deck was sacred ground reserved for the use of the officers and that no one else was allowed there unless engaged in some duty.

There was a very rigid etiquette in the service; the poop was the quarter-deck—equivalent to the bridge on a modern steamship. The main deck from the mainmast aft to the break of the poop belonged to the 'prentices and the "afterguard"—the equivalent of warrant officers in the navy. No common sailor was allowed abaft the mainmast except on duty; even then he could not smoke while at work. I don't think the sailors themselves would have welcomed any slacking in these rules, they would

have considered it a sign of a rather sloppy sort of ship.

After a bit when I was beginning to wonder if they had forgotten all about me; and what I was supposed to do, if anything, I heard a cheery voice hailing me; "Hallo, young feller! Are you the new captain?"

The owner of the voice appeared coming up the poop ladder. He turned out to be Mr. Taylor, the fourth mate, a nice young chap whom I took to right away. "The Old Man sent me to look for you; your uncle suddenly missed you and thought maybe you had got homesick and swum ashore," he said with a grin. "Were you playin' at being an admiral on his quarter-deck? Well, come along and I'll take you round and show you the ropes, I'm off duty now, and for the Lord's sake, take off that gaudy coat, that's only for shore use, and tomorrow we'll find you something to do."

I felt better after that, I was recognized as a human being anyway, and felt that Mr. Taylor had in a way received me into the ship's company, so that when I met my uncle again at tea I could truthfully say when he asked me, that I thought I was going to like it.

This Mr. Taylor had been an apprentice with Captain Fishwick on a former voyage on another ship which was wrecked in a typhoon in the Bay of Bengal. They were driven onto a rocky islet some two hundred miles from the Andamans, and just managed to get two boats out and provisioned before the ship sank. They hauled their boats up on the rocks, and when the storm was over started for the Andamans, the nearest inhabited land. I remember his account of this wreck because of the parody of an old music hall song that one of the boys composed on the long hard pull in open water under a tropical sun. The two boats got separated during the night and in Taylor's boat they found to their dismay that they had very little water, and nothing else but canned soup and jam. I wish I could remember the whole of that song; the refrain was:

"Sailing, sailing over the Bay of Bengal,
With nothing but raspberry jam to eat
And nothing to drink at all."

This ill-balanced diet did sustain them until they reached land, but Taylor and the Old Man, who was in the same boat, still are not keen on jam.

Taylor took me to the berth that I was to occupy; a comfortable one opening off the main saloon, next to that of the first mate, Mr. Black; an extremely fine Scotsman, a well-educated man who became a very good friend to me.

Although I did not realize it at the time, I was living in luxury compared with the

'prentices who had their quarters in a deckhouse amidships, just aft of the cook's galley—but there was one disadvantage; they had perfect freedom to do as they pleased in their own house, whereas I was right under the eye of the Old Man, whose cabin was just opposite mine; and a very stern Old Man he was, with a “spare the rod and spoil the child” complex. I always felt that he wished he had had me when I was a child.

Whatever dirty work I might have been doing on deck I always had to spruce up before sitting down at the officer's table. The rest of the crew had no tables; such luxuries were unknown in those old windjammer days—they just sat on their sea chests with their tin plates on their knees and ate picnic style.

I suppose my position on board was a bit unusual; I was not a passenger, as I was going to have the same duties as an apprentice although I was not one and lived with the officers. The common practice was to enter any extra person on the ship's papers as “ordinary seaman”; that is if the ship was not licensed to carry passengers. A captain was sometimes allowed to carry a guest in this way, and sometimes he would be accompanied by his wife, but just what that lady booked as, I do not know, perhaps as stewardess.

However, I had the beautiful brass-buttoned coat and uniform cap, as worn by apprentices, or midshipmen as they were called on some lines, who were referred to officially as “the young gentlemen,” but more generally called “brass bounders”—no connection with the modern meaning of bounder; whatever else they might have been they were certainly not that. Of course, we were very pleased with our appearance in this uniform, but I noticed that officers had a dislike for it and never wore it except when they had to, on the regular passenger ships.

The next morning directly after I had finished my breakfast, the Old Man said, “Holliday, you go and report to Mr. McTavish, the second mate—the bosun will tell you where he is.”

My uncle, who had remained on board, looked at me with an amused grin. I had no idea what reporting to anyone meant, or who or what a bosun was, but the Old Man's face did not encourage me to ask for information, so I just said, “Yes, sir,” and went on deck. (I soon learned that “Aye, aye, sir,” was the correct response to an order, it was only the landlubbers who said “yes.”)

Well, the first thing to do was to locate this bosun. The cook was standing at the door of his galley; he looked friendly, so I politely asked if he could kindly tell me which was the bosun among the several men who were working on the deck. The cook, always called “doctor” for some unknown reason, pointed out a big burly, rough-looking man with a black beard, wearing a peaked cap and a blue jersey.

“That’s him—Mr. Broddie,” he said.

The boatswain, carpenter, and sailmaker had the official title of “mister”; and are not addressed as “sir”; informally they were bosun, chips, and sails, and were so addressed by everyone except the Old Man, who never condescended to be familiar with anyone.

I approached, rather timidly, this ferocious-looking person. “Can you please tell me where Mr. McTavish is, sir?” I said—I added the “sir” to be on the safe side.

He looked at me as if he wondered what I was, then, “Hiss gan doon belar,” he said, at least it sounded something like that. What on earth did that mean? I was soon to learn that he was a “Geordie,” a native of Lancashire, and it took some time before one could understand their curious lingo. However, he leaned over a yawning hatchway, and called out something to Mr. McTavish, who evidently understood the language, for he appeared out of the shadows of the ’tween deck; a tall raw-boned rather elderly-looking Scotsman.

“Oh, aye,” said he, looking up at me, “come ye doon, laddie, we can dae wi anither mon doon here.”

So I went on “doon” by the vertical iron ladder and was soon hard at work helping two other men stow away coils of rope, barrels, boxes, and many other things. As it was the first real hard work I had ever done I was relieved when eight bells struck noon, and Mr. McTavish said, “Belay,” which in nautical language meant stop whatever you happened to be doing. I had acquired a glorious appetite for dinner, and as I walked aft with Mr. McTavish, he said, “I’m thinkin’ it’s leetle ye ken aboot work, laddie, but I see ye’re willin’. We’ll soon make a mon o’ ye.” I liked this second mate and felt quite bucked up; I felt I was going to be of some use anyway.

Mr. McTavish was quite a character, a hard-shelled, gnarled old sea dog who had worked his way up from before the mast during a long life spent entirely on the sea. He was full of reminiscences which he delighted in relating to us boys. He had, according to his yarns, spent so many years in this service and so many more in that; had been whaling and sealing; gun running and I know not what else. After a bit we began to note down how many years he had been at this and that and by the end of the trip we figured he must be at least one hundred and fifty years old. However, that did not make his yarns any less entertaining. Add to this that he spent his watches below, when not asleep, reading the Bible; that he had a most amazing flow of profanity, much of it original, and I think he may be described as unusual. After cussing freely and at length about something or other, he had a curious habit of finishing his outburst by saying, “God damn my soul tae hell that I should say the

like”; maybe this was by way of apology, but he was a likable old chap.

When I met my uncle at lunch he told me to be ready to go ashore with him and the Old Man in the afternoon; they had to go to the shipping office to pick up the rest of the crew and also I had to sign on.

The shipping office turned out to be a large and rather grimy-looking room, with a counter across one end, on which were writing material, some large official-looking books, and a rather greasy-looking Bible. Behind this counter were several men who looked like clerks, and to one side a door marked “Private” through which the captain and my uncle went, after being announced by one of the clerks.

I was told to wait outside, to my relief, so I sat down on the end of a long bench that ran round three sides of the room, on which were also seated a motley crowd of men obviously of several nationalities. They were looking for jobs on outward-bound ships, and they all had a subdued, almost dejected look, as if they felt out of their element here, and were longing to get their feet on the deck of a ship out in the free air of the sea. Perhaps what added to their discomfort was that they could not smoke in here. There had been a group of the same sort of men outside who looked comparatively cheerful with pipes stuck in their mouths, but I suppose the nearer you were to that desk in the office the more likely you were to land a job. Possibly the ones outside still had a few shillings in their pockets and so were not so anxious.

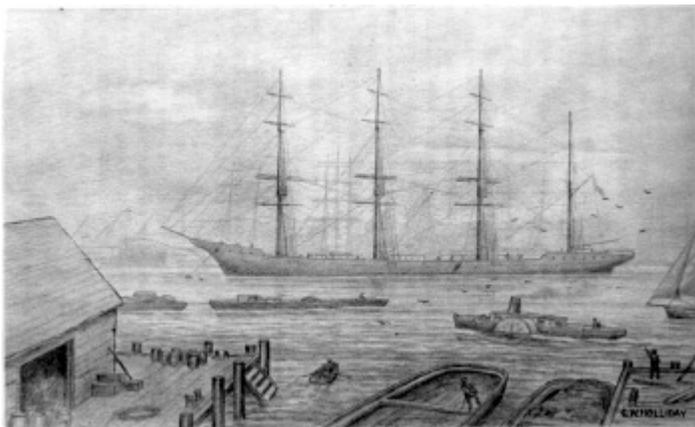
I was to learn much about these men in the years that followed. With few exceptions they lived in a world of their own; curiously apart from anything on land. I had expected that British ships would be manned by British sailors, but these were of many nationalities, drawn together by a common bond; the brotherhood of the sea, which seemed to mean more to them even than loyalty to their own country, of which they knew little beyond its seaports. Of its politics and things of that sort they knew nothing and cared less. But although they would continually grouse about their ship and its owners in much the same way as we do about our government, you could bank on their loyalty to the ship they were serving on, as long as they were on her.

In a few minutes my uncle and the captain came out, accompanied by a large red-faced old gentleman in uniform. I was led up to the counter where I signed a book; the clerk handed me the Bible, mumbled something at me, I held up my hand, kissed the Book, and forthwith became a member of the British Merchant Service.

The captain then looked around the benches; he had to select fifteen more men, and the crowd began to sit up and take notice; each man doing his best to look

smart and efficient. The Old Man looked them over carefully, picking them out one by one with a look and a sign of his hand until finally the fifteen were lined up by the counter and the disappointed ones again assumed their air of dejection. The fifteen then went through the same formality that I had and were ordered by the captain to report on board first thing in the morning of the following day. Our ship's company was now complete.

The next morning after they had all arrived on board the watches were picked; all hands being mustered aft. The first officer always had charge of the port watch, and the second officer of the starboard watch, and Mr. Black and Mr. McTavish each in turn selected a man from the crowd; like picking sides for a game, I thought.



*From a drawing by the author
Eleanor Margaret on the Tyne*

Jimmy, one of the 'prentices, and I with Mr. Taylor, fell to Mr. Black; the 'prentice, Bob, and Mr. Carlson, the third mate, to Mr. McTavish. Mr. Carlson was a dependable, good-natured Norwegian, a fine sailor as all Norwegians are.

The bosun did not have watch duty, his job being equivalent to that of a foreman on land, he was responsible for the work done during the daytime. The "tradesmen," cook, carpenter, sailmaker, and steward also did not keep watch. The steward was a queer-looking fish; a cadaverous creature who always looked as if he had something on his mind. One day far out at sea one of our cats went hurtling out into the sea from the pantry porthole.

"That man's goin' to have something bad happen to him afore he ever gets home, you mark my words," said the doctor, who was not fond of him. To sailors, cats were as sacred as they were to the ancient Egyptians. Sure enough, steward took to having epileptic fits and had to be left in a hospital in 'Frisco.

In addition to these cats—some half dozen of them—there was Mickey, who lived strictly aft with the officers and was very seldom seen forward with the common sailors; I fear Mickey our fox terrier was a bit of a snob.

That afternoon a final inspection of the ship was made by various officials; the blue peter was hoisted; the next day we would be headed for the open sea, and to my youthful imagination into those realms of adventure of which I had read so much in the pages of *Captain Marryat* and *W. H. G. Kingston*.

The pilot who was to take us out to the English Channel was on board, the anchor was up, and we were moving slowly and majestically down the Tyne in the charge of a tug; ensign flying, and our yards square and trim and sails ready to unfurl as soon as the tug let us go. As we progressed each ship that we passed dipped her flag, and such few steamers as there were gave a blast on their sirens, wishing us *bon voyage* and good luck; we dipped our ensign in return, acknowledging the salute. It has never lost its appeal to me, this courtesy of the sea.

Soon the breeze freshened with an exhilarating salty tang; the shores receded; we were out in the keen cold air of the grey North Sea, and there was a sudden activity as the men ran aloft to shake out the sails. The tug cast off our towline and came up alongside to take off my uncle, who pressed my hand very hard as he said good-bye. And as the tug bore him, my last link with my old life, away out of sight, I felt very lonesome; this ship, alone in this vast expanse of water, seemed such a small place to be living in.

However, that feeling was soon quite obliterated by a much more pressing one; as the sails took wind and the ship gathered way she also acquired a most unpleasant motion. I was being introduced to seasickness. Those who are afflicted with this horrible malady and can, as some funny person put it, sick up everything but their immortal souls, are lucky; but the others, who like me, cannot attain this desired result, are out of luck. I was given much advice, such as drinking sea water; which only made me feel worse. One old sailorman advised a remedy which no doubt would have been effective, but I could not quite screw up courage to do it. "You go and ask the doctor to give you a lump of rancid pork fat, young feller," said he. "Then you tie a bit of rope yarn to it, you swallows the pork and pulls it up again, and all the rest will follow." I can quite believe it would!

I had retired to my bunk, too miserable to do anything or care what happened to me; I was apparently forgotten and I think it was about the end of the second day that Taylor dragged me out. "Look here, kid," he said, "you come out on deck, you'll never get right lying around in your bunk like a landlubber." He forced me,

very reluctantly, to tramp up and down the deck with him, and it was he who presented me with that efficient cigar. "Best thing out for *mal-de-mer*," he said. It was. Next day having somewhat recovered, I was put on light duty and went down in the 'tween deck to help the sailmaker.

"Sails" was a thickset, powerful ex-navy man; he seemed to exude cheery good nature and I immediately felt quite at home with him. He was sitting crosslegged on a pile of sails, busily stitching the boltrope onto a new one. I squatted beside him in that delightfully comfortable place, and Sails was soon yarning away and instructing me in the art of sailmaking. Sails took a great interest in the 'prentices; we had boxing gloves and some singlesticks and he would instruct us in boxing and cutlass drill.

One day we had on the gloves, and he had been letting me try to hit him, without any success at all; I just found it impossible to get through his guard. Suddenly his left shot out and caught me, lifted me clean off my feet and landed me with a crash against a bulkhead about six feet behind me.

"Sorry, boy," he said, as he picked me up. "I didn't mean to hit you that hard; I always try to pull my punches."

"Say, Sails," I said when I had recovered my breath, "what would happen if you didn't pull your punches?"

"Well," said Sails, reminiscently, "I remember only once hitting a man as hard as I could, and what happened to him I don't know; I didn't wait to see. It was in Valparaiso; me and a chum had been ashore and was makin' our way in the dark back to the dock, when suddenly my chum yelled, 'Look out!' I jumped, and turned just in time to see a bunch of them lousy dagoes, and one of them just goin' to hit me with a club. So I hit him first, square in the face, and you betcher life I didn't pull *that* punch. I think I must have broke his neck. The other bastards beat it, and so did we. We kept our mouths shut until we was well out to sea; we wasn't takin' any chances on languishing in one of them South American jails."

In relating my memories of this voyage, I am beginning to realize that I must confine myself to the things that stand out most vividly; to describe it in detail would fill a whole book. But I think it is a tale worth telling; before many years have passed the hardy seaman who manned these ships will be an extinct race and I would like to do my little bit in recording their lives and the ways of the service that they worked for, and which treated them so scurvily. So many of the poor beggars seemed to me like human derelicts, blown hither and thither about the world; their only home the ship on which they served for the time being. And what a home, although that was

where they were apparently quite happy. Their quarters in the forecastles of these ships were, according to modern standards, indescribably comfotless. They slept in hard wooden bunks on a tick filled with straw, known as a “donkey’s breakfast”; this, and their blankets they had to supply themselves. And in this dim cavern of the fo’c’sle the only artificial light was supplied by a slush lamp, a tin contraption something like a squatly teapot, filled with fish oil with a wick protruding from the spout, and didn’t it stink!

Each man in turn carried the food from the galley in a tin tub from which the rest dipped their share. The food was good if rough; it was rationed according to board of trade regulations. Salt beef and salt pork—salt horse and sow belly in sea lingo—pea soup nearly every day—I have never liked pea soup since. I think what killed any liking I may have had for it was the unpleasant experience I had on my second voyage. The cook, like all his kind chewed tobacco. He used to expectorate expertly into an opening at the base of his range, but must have made a bad shot for I found a large well-chewed quid in my soup.

But I do not like to dwell on this, it gives me qualms even now—but back to the menu. There was an unlimited supply of hard tack, soft tack (fresh bread) twice a week, and a liberal allowance of sugar, butter, and marmalade, also raisins and evaporated vegetables, the raisins being incorporated in the sundry duff. And every morning there was “burgoo”—porridge, for breakfast. And of course, tea and coffee, although it would be hard to recognize the coffee as such. And once a week “lobscouse,” canned meat and vegetables made into a stew; sometimes this had a crust and was then known as “sea pie,” and jolly good it was. And there was “dry hash,” chopped up salt pork mashed up with biscuit and baked in the oven, another favorite dish.

So you see, the grub was good enough, it was the barbarous way in which it was served; but to men who were accustomed to nothing else, this was a mere trifle; I really believe most of them would have considered it sissified to eat in any other way.

On every ship there was a chantey singer who by common consent would be the soloist, the rest of the watch singing the chorus at the end of each verse. This soloist would often improvise verses about various members of the crew and especially the officers, which were usually far from complimentary and sometimes very funny. Nor would any officer from the captain down dare to object for it was one of the old traditions of the sea that the chanteyman could sing what he liked within reason, and the chantey was occasionally used to convey a gentle hint about a grievance to the authorities rather than to approach the Old Man sitting in state in his cabin, with a

deputation, a proceeding which was the official one but heartily disliked by everyone. I suppose those old chanteys are a thing of the past now, but it is good to know that they have been collected, and the music and the more presentable words preserved; some of the verses would certainly need revising before any publisher would dare print them, even today, and that is saying something. Some of them must date back many centuries; they are part of the folklore of the sea. But they were heard at their best in their natural environment; the smell of the sea; the creak of the ropes in the tackles; the swell of the chorus synchronizing with each hefty pull on the halliards as a yard is hoisted or the quicker tempo of the tramp of feet along the deck as the yards are swung.

The 'prentices, the young gentlemen whose parents had paid anything from fifty to a hundred guineas for the privilege of serving four years without pay learning to be officers—they fared exactly the same.

On the deck was a pen containing two pigs, and a coop of chickens. These chickens occasionally laid fresh eggs which the Old Man always appropriated.

Ships varied; ours was generously supplied and it sounds all right, but there was no cold storage then; towards the end of a long voyage everything began to taste musty; you longed for fresh fruit and vegetables, and one's thoughts ran to the lovely blowouts you would have when you got into port. We had a lot of potatoes in the hold, and I remember when we were about three months out, picking the sprouts off these; such was our craving for anything fresh that we ate these sprouts raw and to me they tasted delicious.

Once a week on British ships lime juice was served out as an antidote against scurvy, so these ships became known as "lime-juicers" a name that was sometimes also applied to the men who served on them, usually abbreviated to "limey."

Once a week each man got a tot of rum, and in bad weather when it had been a case of all hands on deck in an emergency, the watch going below when the job was finished, might also get an extra tot; but never the men who had to stay on duty; they had good strong coffee and waited for their rum until they went below. A very wise arrangement; when exhausted, rum induces sleep; while coffee has the opposite effect.

What was the pay of these sailormen? At that time it was £2.10 a month—about \$16.00. But their pay would have made little difference anyway; when paid off they just hung around the saloons and dens of the water front until it was gone, and were glad to get on a ship again.

Maybe one in a hundred had a wife, somewhere; earning a living taking in washings or in less respectable ways; perhaps one in a thousand had a real little

home where he went between voyages. Here he would stay for a time, gradually growing restless as the lure of the sea beckoned him. These were the ones who became bosuns, or carpenters, sailmakers, or even officers. "Sails" was one of these, and liked to talk about his wife in a little village on the Cornwall coast, where he looked forward to keeping a little shop or pub some day. But mostly they knew no women but the harpies of the water front.

Mr. Black for some reason or other had christened me "Easy," after "Midshipman Easy," a character in one of Marryat's books. And, "Easy," said he one day, when my seasickness had subsided, "run aloft and give a hand to that man up in the main crosstrees." I had not yet been aloft and I looked up at those crosstrees, which seemed a terrible height above the deck; but, "Aye, aye, sir," I said—and hoped I would do it in a seaman-like manner, as Mr. Black was watching me, and how I did want to have his good opinion!

This first going aloft is sometimes an ordeal for greenhorns; however, I found it not difficult, except getting over the futtock shrouds at the top of the lower mast; where you have to lean out backwards; a very uncomfortable sensation 'till you get used to it. However, barring this little bit, the rest of the way was easy, just climbing a rope ladder. Above the crosstrees it was quite a different matter; there were no ratlines, and you had to shin up the mast and backstays. But after a few trials that also lost any terrors, and we boys soon became as agile in the rigging as monkeys. Well, perhaps not quite, we lacked that prehensile tail. But I often think now of myself hanging on, feeling quite at home, somewhere aloft a hundred and fifty feet above the deck on a swaying mast and wonder how I did it. Even in a storm with the masts and yards swaying violently, I preferred to be aloft; on deck you were everlastingly soused with green seas and spray, and up there you were comparatively dry. In fine weather I would sometimes in my watch below climb up to the crosstrees, and there perfectly secure between mast and the backstay, lulled by the gentle rhythm of the swaying mast, and the warm, soothing caress of the breeze, sit and dream. Far below, the deck of the ship was the only link with the world of men, and all around, the sea; the eternal sea, the one thing on earth that has remained unchanged since creation; beyond that the great circle of the horizon, the rim of the world. I would have a curious feeling that I was alone with nature or God or something; it seemed so pure and clean compared with the sordidness of the city, but perhaps rather lonesome. I think it was then that I got that sensation that somewhere beyond that far horizon lay a land that was free from the silly little conventions of civilization—the land of my dreams, that some day I should see.

“Crosstrees, ahoy! Hi Easy, don’t go to sleep up there!” a hail from the deck and I would return to earth again.

The little platform of the foretop was also a favorite spot with us boys; we could sit up there and yarn or read in perfect security, well out of the way of any officer who might find you a job if he saw you loafing about the deck. I have gone to sleep up there on a drowsy day in the tropics.

I did feel once horribly scared while aloft, for I had already absorbed some of the superstition of the sea.

“Easy,” said an old sailor one day, “I ’ad a ’orrible dream about you last night. I thought I seen you fall off the fore royal yard and ’it the deck. And boy,” he said, regarding me mournfully, “I don’t like it; them sort of dreams is a warning; likely somethin’ bad is goin’ to ’appen to you.”

Well, a few days after that, I was up on the fore royal yard, tightening a gasket. My hands were numb with cold; I didn’t feel any too secure, and it was with a sense of relief that I finished the job and prepared to come down. As I looked down, there looking up at me from the deck was that old prophet of evil of the dream. For a few moments I was scared, almost too scared to move; it required quite an effort of will to make my way down to the deck.

“Oh Boy!” said the old blighter, tears in his eyes, “I’m terrible glad to see you off that yard, for I sure thought your time ’ad come. But the spell is broke now!”—for which I felt devoutly thankful!

On another occasion, when we were reefing a topsail, my blood suddenly froze as my feet slipped off the footrope and I would have dropped into the seas fifty feet below, if the next man had not grabbed my arm. “Yumpin Jesus, poy, ole man Neptune tam near get you dat time,” said “Yon,” my rescuer. He was a big Norwegian, Jon Svensen, and like all Norwegians, a most likable man.

In fact, I soon got to like all these simple, honest sailormen with the one exception of the Old Man. He was a painfully pious and pompous old gent, with never a smile on his face, and no sense of humor. His dealings with other men were probably quite just, but from a sense of self-righteous duty and not from any human sympathy. He simply ignored me, the boys, and the men, and he never unbent to chat or joke with the officers like an ordinary human being. I just didn’t like him.

One of the first jobs I had to learn was steering, for all members of the crew except the “tradesmen” had to take their trick at the wheel. This was a job I usually liked. At times it was a bit monotonous, but at its best one of the most thrilling things one can experience. In a fresh wind, with all sails set, the ship heeling over until the lee rail almost dips and the white, hissing smother of foam tears along the side as the

good ship, like a thing alive, exultant, rushes along irresistibly through the night; it is then that, standing at the wheel, controlling with your hands the great onrushing ship with its towering spread of canvas, you feel an almost godlike sense of power.

It was on such a night that Mr. Black paused on his tramp up and down the weather side of the poop to glance at the compass.

“Who’d be ashore on a night like this?” he said, sniffing in the breeze with a sort of ardent satisfaction as if he revelled in it.

“Blowing up, isn’t it, sir?”

“Yes, it’s freshening, boy; I think we’re in for a blow.” Then more to himself than to me, “But, man, it’s great!”

Then he quoted some lines of an old poem about a sailorman talking to his chum in a storm:

“While you and I, Bill, out at sea
Safe in our bunks are lying,
Just think what tiles and chimney pots
Round their poor heads are flying!”

“You know, Easy, that’s supposed to be poking fun at the old sailorman, but believe me, there’s a lot of truth in it. And although seafaring is classed as one of the most dangerous callings, that grand old hymn, ‘For Those in Peril on the Sea,’ would have no point at all for them.”

Mr. Black was a born sailor; he loved his ship and took a keen delight in getting the best out of her. “By gum, the old girl is kicking up her heels, isn’t she?” And he glanced critically up at the royals. “May have to shorten before long.” Now, he was one of those true sportsmen of the sea who loved to “crack on,” to let her carry all the canvas she would stand, and not to reduce sail until the last possible moment; relying confidently in his skill and judgment. And it does entail judgment; for if the limit of safety is passed, a sail may be blown clean out of the boltropes, or worse still, a yard or mast carried away; and then there is hell to pay.

By and by, as the ship heeled over more, walking briskly to the forward poop rail he roared out the order, “Stand by the royal halliards!” and the watch came running to their stations; one man at each of the falls, ready to let go and lower the yard, the others on the alert to jump aloft and furl the sail when the order was given to lower away. The Old Man, on the other hand, erred on the side of extreme caution; he had no sporting instincts and believed in playing safe; he preferred sleeping comfortably to making time.

One night when Mr. Black was cracking on a bit, the Old Man came up on

deck, a very unusual thing with him. He wandered up and down a few minutes, evidently wanting to get something off his chest. At last, he said, "Don't you think, Mr. Black, we had better take in the royals?"

Now interfering with the officer in charge of the deck was one of the things that "wasn't done"; but as I have implied already the Old Man was no gentleman. Mr. Black did not argue the point; whatever his thoughts may have been, he just said, "Yes, sir, I was just thinking that myself."

A few nights later, another glorious night when we were tearing along with all sail set; "Just slip down to the saloon, Easy, and let me know if you hear the Old Man stirring." If he was still snoring it was O.K. and we could still crack on. At other times it was far from pleasant; there was no wheelhouse, so that in bad weather the steersman was exposed to all the rain, wind, sleet, green seas or anything else that Father Neptune felt like chucking at him. But the extreme cold was the worst, when the spray froze on your oilskins making you feel as if you were encased in tin, and your hands almost frozen to the wheel. For while the rest of the watch could get some shelter, or keep their blood in circulation by moving about; the man at the wheel had to stay put. The trick at the wheel was for two hours, but in extremely bad weather the time might be cut to one; more as a measure of safety than for the comfort of the man; if the poor beggar should collapse, sudden disaster might follow. It sometimes became necessary to have two men at the wheel because it would be impossible for one man to hold her.

One of my most pleasant recollections is of certain early morning watches in the tropics from four to eight. Even though, later in the day the heat may be almost overpowering, at four o'clock there will be a little cool breeze, the prelude to the rising sun—and the wonder, the stupendous glory of those tropical sunrises! A first faint tinge of saffron pink in the sky; little facets of pink begin to sparkle on the greenish grey of the sea; then sudden, spectacular streamers of crimson and gold leap from the horizon, spreading up and up, until the whole sky from sea to zenith is ablaze with color—all the hues of the spectrum. I used to feel that some of these colors could not be of this earth. The sea, in broken reflections repeat this marvel. Then a very crescendo of magnificence, as the sun slowly, majestically, rises from the ocean, and the sea becomes a pathway of molten gold. On deck there is a hushed stillness; every man, however rough his nature, is, for a time, lifted out of himself; exalted, he unconsciously feels it would be desecration to speak.

Perhaps I should have explained before that the time while at sea was divided into watches of four hours each with two short watches of two hours each, from four to six and from six to eight in the afternoon—the dogwatches—so that each watch

would on alternate nights have different times. For instance, the port watch on one night would have the “graveyard watch,” from midnight to 4:00 A.M.; this was the most unpopular one; the next night the starboard watch would have it. I hope I have made this plain, but as the word “watch” is used for both the period of time and for the man who takes this period, it may be a bit confusing.

At first I found it very hard to get used to his arrangement; it did not seem reasonable to have to turn out of your comfortable bunk at midnight or four in the morning. But it soon becomes so much a matter of habit that when I got ashore again I would wake up every four hours, and find it hard to go to sleep again.

When in port there was just the “anchor watch,” one man on deck at night from six to twelve, another from twelve to six.

After being out in the fresh morning air since four o’clock and satisfying your soul with the drama of the sunrise, one had a real zest for the mug of steaming coffee that we got at the galley door at six. Then a few whiffs of baccy, and it was time for washing down the decks, which was done every morning unless the elements had already done it during the night. Under the break of the fo’c’sle-head there was a two-man pump. The water was carried from this pump and dashed into every hole and corner of the decks; while some of us scrubbed vigorously with brooms. This job finished, those who felt like it stripped off and had their morning bath. Great stuff! having buckets of tingling sea water dashed over you in the morning sun, then running around the deck to dry off! It would be then nearly eight bells, and by that time you would have a glorious appetite for breakfast.

Every Saturday the forecabin was also scrubbed out in the same way; the men piling their belongings in their bunks, for although the fo’c’sle was a gloomy-looking place, it was kept spotlessly clean, for sailors were almost fastidious in this regard; they considered houses on shore as rather dirty places; if a deck or floor was not clean enough to eat your dinner from—well, it just wasn’t clean!

At times a touch of sport was added to deck washing when our two pigs were turned loose, and after having a few buckets of water heaved over them, were also scrubbed down. They seemed to enjoy this; the sport came when all hands chased them round the deck, trying to get them in their pen again. Alas, poor piggies, their fate was that of all pigs, and the day came, long looked forward to on our part, when they were to be converted into fresh pork. But when that fatal day arrived, a difficulty arose, it appeared that no one on board knew anything about killing pigs! Finally the captain took charge; Chips was ordered to get a seven-pound sledge, with which he was to fell the pig; the cook was then to step in and finish the job with his longest butcher knife.

So pig number one was let out and finally rounded up against the main hatch. Chips, looking rather nervous, cautiously approached, swung his sledge and with a mighty swipe brought it down—on the deck! The pig had dodged from under. That awful dent in his beautiful deck upset the Old Man's dignity; "Hit the pig, you fool!" he roared at the unhappy Chips; and Chips, feeling considerably annoyed himself, got after his quarry with blood in his eye, the doctor following close after. The pig, evidently suspicious of our intentions by this time, put on quite a fine exhibition of sprinting and dodging while the Old Man shouted directions from the hatch; but alas for poor piggy he was out of training, and paused to get his breath; the carpenter once more swung that deadly sledge; this time he had his eye in and hit the mark; and the cook walked in and did his dirty work before the unfortunate pig came to. Not a tidy pig killing at all. We took the precaution to tie the legs of the next pig before we murdered him.

Well, after all this yarning, let us get back to the English Channel, where I think we were when I started it.

After dropping the pilot off at Dover we tacked down channel against a head wind, and so out past Land's End and across the Bay of Biscay, which lived up to its bad reputation, being most unpleasantly rough; we passed one squarerigger who to my unaccustomed eyes was rolling in a most alarming way—"yardarms under" as the mate put it. However, this was a good introduction for me; by the time we were out in the open Atlantic I had got my sea legs, and had begun to enjoy life. It was "in the Bay of Biscay O" that the steward one day was carrying aft from the galley a large tureen containing the officer's soup, when in an unexpected lurch of the ship his feet shot out from under him on the wet slippery deck, while the tureen turned a somersault in the air and emptied its contents in his face. We lost our soup; but I at least thought that the sight of that spluttering steward, trying to claw the soup out of his hair, was more than compensation.

The North Atlantic was never alluded to by that name by seamen; it was the "Western Ocean"; and it was there that I experienced the sort of rolling and plunging that I had never imagined possible; it means acute discomfort to everyone on board added to extreme danger; most men prefer danger to discomfort, when you have both, you feel the gods are not giving you a square deal. "Rolling her guts out," "rolling the sticks out of her"—those were the comparatives and superlatives of "yardarms under." Doubtless many of you have experienced rolling in a steamship or a small sailing yacht; in a great sailing ship it is a much more serious matter; the tall masts with their enormous weight of yards, violently and incessantly hurtling back

and forth in a great arc, entail an enormous strain on the hull of the ship, as well as on the standing rigging that holds them in place; should this part with the strain, the whole mast must go. There is a tense, apprehensive strain on the minds of those in charge of the ship, but they can do nothing about it; they are in the hands of fate; just carry on and let fate do its worst.

I suppose it is this sort of thing that makes sailors fatalists. One day at dinner Mr. Black and the captain and Mr. McTavish were arguing about fate—although the Old Man was hardly arguing, he just snorted, “You are in the hands of God!”; and that was that. Of course, I did not have the cheek to express my opinion, but I failed to see any difference, nor have I been able to since.

Sometimes in this dreadful rolling, when she had keeled over to what seemed the limit, there would be a horrible pause; a momentary feeling of terror. Would she recover? That was the question in the minds of every man on board. And one has a curious feeling of pity for the ship; poor old girl, you think; is this going to be your end? And a little sense of remorse; you have been cursing her, as if she were to blame for all this discomfort—you would like her to know you didn’t really mean it, before you die together. A ship sometimes does roll completely over; and that is the end. She will be posted as “missing,” and thereafter will be heard of no more; she and her men will have joined that great throng of ships and corpses that litter the bed of the ocean; unsung heroes of the merchant service.

However, our ship did recover after each of these fearsome rolls, and on the reeling deck we continued to wallow in the green seas that rushed back and forth in torrents with each roll of the ship; now and then an extra big one leaping in the air and crashing down with a force that would knock down any man caught under it.

[Transcriber Note: Image omitted for copyright reasons]

Photo by Alan J. Villiers

Going aloft

One day half a dozen men were hauling on one of the braces when a huge sea thundered down on them, two of them hung on to the rope; the others were torn loose and thrown violently along the deck; one of them struck a hatch and dislocated his shoulder; another smashed his head against the capstan, and as the water for a moment left him uncovered I saw him rolling about the deck, a ghastly sight, his head looking like a chunk of raw, bloody meat.

It was in Mr. Black’s watch and I was with him on the poop; Taylor had been

attending to tightening the braces on the main deck and was doing his best to straighten out this muddle.

“Get along forward and turn out all hands,” roared the mate, as he saw the two casualties. I shot off the poop and in a few seconds, half wallowing and half diving through the rushing water, I yelled, “All hands on deck!” at the fo’c’sle door; the men came tumbling out, and the two injured ones were hauled into the fo’c’sle. And you must picture all this happening while the deck pitched from side to side at angles so steep that it was impossible to keep on your feet unless you hung on to something, when you saw one of these big green seas coming over, you hung on like grim death while it passed over and left you half-drowned and gasping.

Mr. Black had in the meantime sent another ’prentice to report to the captain, who like all master mariners had a rough and ready knowledge of doctoring; the Old Man reluctantly got into his oilskins and made his way to the forecabin. We had already washed the bloody head of the one man, and I was awfully relieved to find that it was just a bad scalp wound. One thing I have noticed about cuts and wounds of any sort at sea; there never was any infection; probably the sea water is antiseptic, and in any case the pure air would be discouraging to microbes.

And the man with the dislocated shoulder? Under the direction of the captain, two men held him in a tight grip, while two others pulled on his arm; it jerked back in the socket again with a click and judging from the way he hollered, I should say it must have hurt.

These were two of those minor accidents that may happen any day in rough weather. I am glad I never saw a man washed overboard, although I once had a narrow squeak myself, when a large sea caught me from behind as I was standing on the hatch; there was nothing within reach to grab and I was lifted off my feet and landed fair on my stomach across the lee rail; another few inches and I should have been a goner, instead of bouncing back on deck as I did, half-drowned and with all the wind knocked out of me.

After a few experiences like this, one gets a great respect for the power of water. Our lifeboats were kept on skids about seven feet above the deck; one day a big green sea struck the side of the ship, vaulted high in the air and fell with a thunderous crash on one of these boats, smashing it to kindling; so you can imagine that if a sea like that gets you, you are out of luck. As a precaution we had “life lines” rigged along the deck; ropes extending from one end of the ship to the other, for at times it would have been not only dangerous, but impossible to get along without this assistance. Going aloft to shorten sail in this sort of weather was almost preferable to being half-drowned on deck; up on a yard, with a dozen men struggling to get a

billowing sail under control, there was something even exhilarating about it; the excitement of action, that makes one forget the danger and discomfort. Down below there is discomfort almost as bad. (Perhaps I should explain that “below” means anywhere beneath the deck—such as the saloons, cabins or forecabin; on deck means just that and aloft anywhere up in the rigging.) When you do go below, the only decently possible place is in your bunk. You will probably be wet when you turn in, for after a few such days of such weather as I have described, every rag of clothing you have will be at least damp, in spite of oilskins, and your skin so saturated with moisture that a towel has little effect. But you can acquire a special technique, so that when once in your bunk, you stay put. You jam your hindquarters against one side, and your knees against the other, and thank God that your bunk is narrow. As soon as your head hits the pillow you are sound asleep, possibly to be jolted up again by that unpleasant, disturbing shout of “All hands on deck!”

If you have a reasonable expectation of staying in your bunk to the end of your watch below, you may peel off all your clothes before you turn in. Getting out of a warm bunk into wet clothes is, literally, not so hot; but in a few minutes that first chilly shock has passed. I think the extreme saltiness of deep sea water must have a heat-inducing quality. The air down below naturally gets pretty foul; for everything has to be closed up tight, and the smell of stale food and wet clothes does not improve it, nor the stink of the swinging kerosene lamps. The meals are apt to be pretty sketchy; for the poor old cook is carrying on under almost impossible conditions. But we all had a sense of humor and took most of these things as a joke, or did our best to, except the Old Man, who just glared at us with disapproval, as if he thought we were mocking God by displaying such levity, when within the next hour we might be called to our judgment.

Of course the fiddles were on the messtable; a sort of fence; about two and a half inches high divided into compartments, which fits on top of the table to prevent the dishes sliding off, at that, sometimes things break loose. You acquire a habit of keeping your hands on the table all the time, ready to grab your plate or cup or whatever starts sliding; if you see anyone doing this, it's a pretty safe bet that he's an old sailor.

I remember one awful lurch when we were in the middle of dinner; we were nearly heaved out of our seats, and in spite of the fiddle the whole contents of the table shot off in a sort of avalanche; crockery, grub, and everything; and another crash as things tore loose in the pantry, accompanied by the curses of the steward as he lost his feet and hurtled through the door into the general melee of the saloon. And what a mess as we staggered to our feet! Mr. McTavish cursed fluently, in

Gaelic I think, as he tried to shake the stew out of his waistcoat; my share had been a pot of tea and all the boiled potatoes; we were sitting on the lower side and so received the whole force of the volley. I think this sort of thing was harder on Mickey than anyone else on board, he used to look at us with miserable, scared eyes, imploring us to do something to make it stop. The cats just disappeared; probably as is the philosophic nature of cats, they have hidey-holes where they just curled up and went to sleep until it was over. But I take off my hat to the cook; he was a real hero; and I am not joking, either. Just picture him, in his deckhouse galley, with his range tilting this way and that at impossible angles; every pot and pan trying to break loose; and still managing to cook for thirty-odd men. How he did it I can't imagine, but he did manage to dish up three meals a day that were at least eatable. I don't think he could have ever slept, for he kept his galley fire going all night so that he could hand out hot coffee; his only thought seemed to be for the rest of us. And remember that all the time his galley was being battered by the seas; at any moment an extra big one might smash it in, or even carry it clean away, him with it. Such things have happened; as I said before, he was a hero.

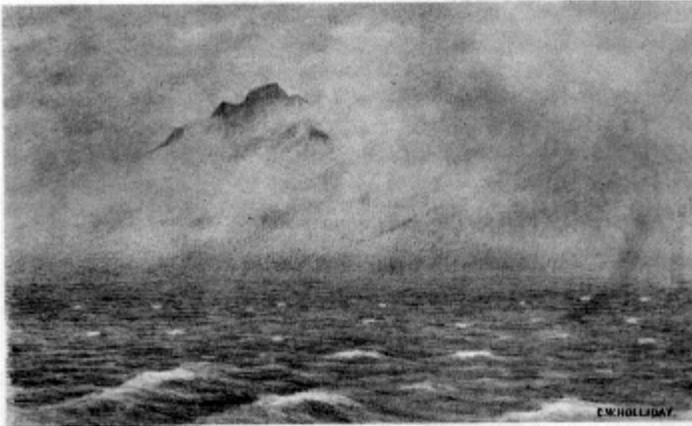
After being bedeviled by this sort of weather ever since we left the English Channel, it was like heaven to at last get down to warmer latitudes in the vicinity of Azores; "The Western Islands" to sailormen.

"The Western Ocean" and "The Western Islands"—I think these names must date back to the days when those early navigators first sailed westward into the unknown; I wonder if these names are still in use.

[Transcriber Note: Image omitted for copyright reasons]

Photo by Alan J. Villiers

Fine weather. Bowling along with all sail set



From a drawing by the author

Tristan da Cunha. Lonely island in the South Atlantic

This was the latitude where we should have picked up the northeast trade winds; but we seemed to be dogged by delays; what we did get of the trade winds were light and uncertain. But with warm days, dry decks, ports and doors open and no need for oilskins, we began to enjoy life; up to now we had had all the exercise we needed, and more, but now in the dogwatches, we would have boxing and wrestling bouts, even leapfrog and such childish games—some of the sailors even danced!

While in South Shields I had bought a briar; right under the nose of Uncle Willie too—he had just smiled comprehendingly, doubtless thinking of his first pipe. Up till now the very thought of smoking in that upsetting, everlasting motion of the ship had been rather repellent; but now Jimmy, Bob, and I produced our nice new pipes; and I have smoked ever since. Anyone connected with the sea would have regarded cigarettes with the utmost contempt; the pipe, beloved of the sailormen was a short black clay, which, tucked in his pants pocket, was always ready for “three draws and a spit.”

After a pleasant interlude of fine weather we ran into the “doldrums,” an area of calm over the equator; where it is always hot and muggy, a steamy heat that makes you listless and depressed. And there we stuck for about two weeks.

In a sailing ship you felt so helpless, as indeed you were; after a week of sweltering inaction you get the feeling of hopelessness. “Are we doomed to be stuck in this damned place forever?” you think. At night the heavy atmosphere makes you overpoweringly drowsy; we placed two men on the look out instead of one. On the poop the only way I could stay awake was to keep tramping up and down; even then I would fall asleep while I was still walking. I was relieved to see Mr. Black

was affected the same way. "For God's sake, Easy, keep your eye on me," he said, "it's your job to keep me awake." I think having that responsibility was the only thing that kept me going.

For the first few days the sea was a flat, burnished plate that reflected and intensified the glaring heat of the sun; floating on its surface, ragged masses of seaweed and bits of wreckage, maybe drifted from that place of evil repute, the Saragossa Sea. On some of this wreckage sat dismal birds; they too seemed to be affected by the general atmosphere of depression; they looked too listless to fly. Then, as if things were not unpleasant enough already, came a long oily swell; in this dead air the ship had no steerage way and rolled helplessly; it was almost more exasperating than what I had experienced in stormy weather, for then there was something to struggle with; the ship was alive; now she was dead as a floating log. The sails hung limp from the yards, and at each roll slapped against the masts with a resounding clash; the rigging strained and creaked and groaned, a sort of complaining chorus. Steering or rather holding the wheel, for a ship will not steer under these conditions, is no job for a weakling; each swell exerts a tremendous pressure against the rudder first on one side and then on the other, causing the wheel to kick with such a violence that one day the steersman was thrown clean over it. From then on as long as that swell lasted, we put two men on.

We only had about two days of this and quite enough too; then came light winds that carried us to the equator; after living in a sort of vacuum we felt that we could breathe again. Then came the ceremony of crossing the line, a pleasant break in the deadly monotony of the doldrums—at least for the old hands—Jimmy and Bob and I had looked forward to it with somewhat mixed feelings. It turned out to be much the same sort of thing as a college initiation, only rather more so. On a cleared space on the forward deck, an improvised canvas tank had been erected and filled with sea water. This came to the edge of the fore hatch on which, about eight feet back, were two upturned barrels—the thrones of Neptune and his wife. The whole ship's company with the exception of those on necessary duty, mustered around to see the fun, and soon the royal procession emerged from the fo'c'sle, their rising from the sea being left to our imagination. First came Father Neptune with a large rope yarn beard and a crown, bearing a trident, and draped in a cloak that was supposed to represent seaweed. By his side walked Mrs. Neptune, a truly alarming female with long draggly tresses made of oakum, a very red nose, and wearing a dress made of some odd bits of canvas, on which the ship's artist had painted sundry bows and ribbons. In her hand she carried an enormous rolling pin by way of sceptre. They were followed by their entourage; the barber with a bucket of nasty-looking slush in

which stood a whitewash brush, and a large weapon supposed to be the razor; and two special police.

Neptune and his lady took their seats with dignity; the barber and policemen ranged on either side, and the proceedings were about to begin—but Mrs. Neptune was not quite settled down yet—she rose, and pulling up her skirts to scratch her leg, displayed a much befrilled pair of female drawers, to the uproarious delight of the audience.

“Order in court, you lousy swabs,” yelled a policeman; and order being restored, Father Neptune began to say his piece.

“I ’as been informed,” said he, “as ’ow three lousy landlubbers ’as ’ad the bloody gall to henter my domain without ’avin’ my permission. Lead them forrard to ’ave due sentence pernounced on their miserable ’eds.”

One of the policemen gave Neptune a prod in the side: “Wait a bit, Bill,” he said, “you ’ave to try ’em first.”

“Oh, yes,” assented Neptune, “I forgot. Stand forth, you,” he roared, reaching out and giving me a jab with his trident. “Wot’s ’is other crimes, besides trespassin’ on my royal domain?”

“Well, your majesty,” spoke up one of the policemen, “look at ’is dirty face; ’e ’asn’t shaved for a week, and likewise and moreover, your honor, the prisoner ’as a bad record; ’e’s the howner’s nevvvy.”

“What!” shouted Mrs. Neptune, rising and shaking her rolling pin in my face; “an owner’s nevvvy? Pick up the nasty little beast and heave him over to the sharks!”

“Shut yer trap and sit down, Jane,” said Neptune, giving her a clump on the head. “E can’t ’elp bein’ the howner’s nevvvy can ’e?”

I was quite undisturbed by all this, but I didn’t like the looks of that barber; when he had his orders to shave me I knew what to expect. I shut my eyes and mouth tight and kept them shut as the evil-smelling lather was slapped plentifully over my face and scraped off again with that ferocious-looking razor; I was glad when I was pitched over backwards into the tank, where, after being shoved around for a bit with brooms held by anyone who felt like having a poke at me, I was allowed to climb out and watch the other initiations. I was now a fully-accredited subject of King Neptune.

For a few more days we drifted about the equator; at one time even drifting back again; so I might say that I have crossed it three times.

The officers would stroll aimlessly about the poop, vainly whistling for the wind that seemed so coy—for sailors really did this, though I doubt if they had any faith in its efficacy.

Then one day I sensed something different in the air, a feeling of freshness almost imperceptible, but still definitely there. It was my watch on deck, and I had gone up on the poop to strike four bells—two o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Black and the captain were standing at the rail looking at the horizon, above which appeared a few little white clouds. The mate wet his forefinger in his mouth, held it up and turned to the Old Man.

"It's coming, sir!" he said, suddenly alert, and even the Old Man looked cheerful. Rapidly, more little clouds came up; there was a ripple on the water, a freshening breeze. We had caught the southeast trade wind. The mate walked to the front of the poop, shouted the order, "Man the braces!" and the men ran to their stations. The yards were braced to the angle that would take the fullest advantage of the wind; the sails filled out and with a heartening ripple along the side we began to move. The captain was in the chartroom verifying our position on the chart, and as he came out, "What course, sir?" asked the mate.

"Make it south by west."

"Aye, aye, sir," and Mr. Black walked to the man at the wheel. "Keep her at south by west, Frenchy."

"South by west it is, sir," repeated Frenchy, turning the wheel until her nose pointed in that direction; and we were off, the ship seeming to exult in the motion; like us, she was at last liberated from the doldrums. We were headed straight for Tristan da Cunha, that lonely island in the South Atlantic which on sighting, ships can check their position and discover whether their calculations have been correct. Then followed a period of pure delight, one of those pleasant interludes in life that are never forgotten. Each morning the sun rose from beyond the rim of the world as clear as a bell; all day and every day those little clouds sailed across the bright blue sky, and in perfect harmony the sea was a glorious turquoise blue, the pure white touches of foam on each following wave repeating the motif of the little white clouds in the sky.

At night these little clouds went to bed; at least they left the sky, for it was clear, spangled with stars that were brighter and nearer than those seen in northern latitudes; as least it seemed to me; on moonlight nights it was light enough on deck to read or play cards.

We were now "down under"; each night the Southern Cross rose higher in the sky as we moved steadily southwards. Head winds and dead calms were forgotten, and an atmosphere of cheerfulness pervaded the whole ship. Day and night there was an even temperature of about seventy degrees; we all slept on deck and the watch on duty were also allowed to, excepting of course the man at the wheel and

the lookout; some compensation for the many nights in bad weather when it had been “All hands on deck!” and we had suffered from loss of sleep. Each day there was the regular routine of washing down the decks, tightening up the braces, and so on; the rest of the time was spent on pleasant jobs—overhauling gear, doing bits of repair work aloft or on deck.

I would be told to give some man a hand at one of these jobs, and while learning the mysteries of the long splice, the short splice, and other things that have been so useful to me since, the old sailor would spin yarns about his amazing adventures, imaginary or true—and I thought of the old song; “I told her many a story true, mark well what I do say; And didn’t I tell her whoppers too, of the gold dust found in Timbuctu,” and so on.

The decks could be kept scrupulously clean; every rope coiled up neatly, brasswork polished, everything shipshape, the way a well-kept ship should be, fit for the inspection of an admiral. In the daytime men not on duty would occupy themselves repairing clothes, even making them; painting wonderful pictures of ships on the lids of their sea chests, or making model ships. Alas! these models too often found their way to some water front pub where one often saw them; presumably traded for booze.

In the evening the men would gather on one of the hatches, and quite often a concert would materialize. We had a little Austrian who was a real musician; he had a sort of accordian from which he drew music that made you think of a church organ. Jimmy had a banjo, and some of the men had really fine voices. The officers would gather on the poop and listen, no doubt wishing they could join in, but convention forbade that.

Sailor’s tastes ran to lovesick ditties; little golden-haired girls about to die; “The ship that never came home”; anything sad, in fact. Comic songs and hymns seemed to be barred, and as for those rollicking sea songs written by landlubbers, they had nothing but contempt for them; for although their own chanteys are redolent of the sea, they all have haunting, almost mournful music.

The words of the landlubber’s songs, even if they could have swallowed the music, were too much for them. “Then here’s to the sailor, here’s to the life so free!” and “A pleasant gale is on the lee!”—all these fool sea songs. “The sailor’s wife the sailor’s joy shall be” and so on; those are the only lines I remember; but Jimmy sang it once on being asked if he could sing as well as play.

“Bah!” exploded old Hank, who had been glaring at Jimmy with gathering disapproval: “the —— of a —— who wrote that orter ’ave a year on a windjammer; that ud larn ’im something! ‘A pleasant gale is on our lee,’ hell!” he

snorted, "But if he had said, 'The sailor's wife the sailor's 'ore shall be,' then 'e would a bin saying something." I am afraid old Hank was a cynic.

Every few days we would sight some ship outward or homeward bound, for we were now on the regular route of sailing vessels bound to or from the Horn; but never the sight of a steamer's smoke; we were far from their restricted haunts.

When two ships sighted each other they would approach within signalling distance; the flag locker in the chartroom was opened; the Marryat Code-book got out and we would speak with each other; I always enjoyed assisting at this. First each ship ran up her ensign showing her nationality; then signalled what latitude and longitude she made it, so that each captain could check his position; where she was from and whither bound and of course her name, and any bits of information that might be useful or interesting.

One question that was always asked on that voyage was, "Anything about war with Russia?" For when we left England the Russian bear was suspected of trying to butt into northern India and the two governments were having words about it.

Remember, if you can possibly realize it, that these passing ships were the only contact we had with anything outside; with the shore we had none at all. A homeward-bound ship would, on reaching port, maybe in a few weeks time, report you, and you would be posted at Lloyds, "Four-masted barque *Eleanor Margaret*, last sighted on such and such a date in latitude and longitude so and so"; and that might be the last heard of a ship for months, which actually happened in our case, for we were later posted as "overdue." After a certain lapse of time a ship was posted as "missing," and usually thereafter was heard of no more. Every day such events as a passing ship, what she reports, and anything of interest on our own ship was entered in the log, with the day's position at noon.

There is a yarn which is a hoary chestnut at sea, but which you may not have heard. The mate of a certain ship had his own store of rum, and occasionally took one too much; the captain at last got peeved about this and entered in the logbook "Mr. so and so, the first officer, was drunk today." Next day it was the mate's turn to write up the log. (The captain and the chief officer do it alternately) and naturally he didn't like it; there was nothing he could do about it for the logbook is a legal document; nothing may be altered or deleted. But a happy thought struck him—he would at least get even with the Old Man. He wrote, "Captain so and so was sober today!"

We only had one case of drunkenness on board, at least while out at sea. One day when I was on the poop a man came up to relieve at the wheel, but he was not the right man.

[Transcriber Note: Image omitted for copyright reasons]

Photo by Alan J. Villiers

Under foresail and lower topsail



From a drawing by the author

Cape Horn

“What’s the matter with Dutchy?” asked Mr. Black.

“Oh, he ain’t feelin’ well, sir,” said the relief, “so I’m taking his spell.”

“You’d better run forrard and see what’s the matter with him, Easy,” said the mate. And there in his bunk I found Dutchy, happily and entirely soused. I would have protected old Dutchy if it had been possible, but it couldn’t be done. I had to report his condition to Mr. Black; Dutchy had to appear before the captain when he sobered up; a sort of naval court proceeding which rarely happens, but makes everyone on board feel uncomfortable when it does.

It was rather a mystery how he had got that way, for a thorough search had failed to disclose any secret cache of liquor; but eventually Dutchy confessed. He had simply carried his weekly whack of rum back to his bunk, where he had an empty bottle and a tin funnel hidden under the pillow; his ration was poured into the bottle until it contained enough for him to “feel the good of it,” as he explained. “One leetle tot, dat don’t do me no goot.” But this last time he had, to his undoing, waited until the bottle held too much for his capacity—just an error of judgment. To everybody’s relief the Old Man was lenient; the sentence was that when the rum rations were passed out old Dutchy had to drink his in the presence of the presiding officer.

Sometimes we would “go fishin’!” for bonita; a large school of these deep-sea fish escorted us, swimming around the bow. Sitting on the bowsprit and trailing a spinning bait just under the water one soon had a bite. The bonita is a fish about three feet long, rather like a mackerel, and when you land one on the deck and catch him by the tail you discover that his muscular power is almost incredible, the violent volcanic convulsions almost wrench your arm out, and you quickly drop him until you can lay him out with a marlinspike. We thought a mess of fresh fish might be pleasant change in our menu one day so we induced the doctor to dish up some bonita steaks. He did his best, but baked bonita did not come up to our expectations; once was quite enough, but they certainly gave us good sport.

We were more successful with flying fish, in fact, fried flying fish is quite good, but they were hard to come by. Large flights of them would shoot from the crest of a wave, plane for a distance of maybe sixty or seventy feet and drop into the water again. They do not really fly, just use their long side fins like wings of a glider; they look very beautiful in flight, like a shower of silver arrows. Occasionally a few would land on the deck and so in the frying pan.

Also there were sharks—there must have been quite a number of them around the ship; looking over the side you could see their great bodies lurking deep down in the water, like dim blue ghosts. We caught several of them; they are good sport all right! A large shark hook baited with pork, attached to a length of chain, and a coil of three-quarter inch rope; that was your tackle; and the fishing was done from the stern. When you had one on the hook, the line would be led around to the rail of the main deck—you couldn’t have a struggling shark messing up the poop—several men would haul him hand over hand on board, where he would be disposed of with an axe. Most of them were small, running from five to seven feet, but we hooked one ten-foot monster. To get him on board we had to swing out one of the davits and hoist him with the tackle. When he did drop on the deck he just took charge and cleared everyone else out, nobody was anxious to be anywhere within reach of that lashing, leaping devil of the sea, with his wicked-looking jaws and his tail swinging like a sledge hammer. “Get a noose around his tail,” shouted the Old Man, as if we were a lot of boobs and he was annoyed at our stupidity—I couldn’t see him trying it. At last the brave Sails jumped in at the risk of having his legs bitten or knocked from under him, and did get a noose around that wildly slashing tail; we hauled this rope and his head rope tight and Chips slew him with an axe. The bloodthirsty Mickey who had been yapping around in a fury of excitement—we had been expecting every minute he would get too close to those horrible jaws—rushed in and reveled in gore until we hauled him off; I guess Mickey thought he had killed that

shark.

Sometimes we caught a few of the numerous birds that followed the ship. You tied a piece of meat to the end of a long string; the bird would spot it bobbing about in the water, dive down and gobble it. You waited until he had swallowed it down, and if you were smart you could land him on deck before he disgorged it. Some of these birds were quite large—somewhat like a goose. It was a great sport for Mickey; he and the bird would get extremely angry with each other, but never came to close quarters; one snap with that wicked curved beak and it would have been too bad for Mickey, so he took it out in ferocious barking. A peculiarity of this particular bird was that immediately it stood up on the deck it brought its dinner up; a fish dinner. Its attempts at walking were quite ludicrous and it seemed unable to rise and fly, when he and Mickey had had enough we had to shoo him over the side with brooms.

One day a booby lit on the main royal yardarm. “D’ ye see yon birdie, laddie?” said Mr. McTavish, who was standing at my side, “Rin up aloft an’ see if ye can push him off!” So I “rinned” up aloft, but Mr. Booby, a big untidy bird, very stupid-looking, was not being pushed off; he just squawked at me. If he was not scared of me, I was of him; he might have had a peck at my face, so I just left him to it.

In these pleasant ways, ever moving southward, the time passed on, but these halcyon days could not last forever and one day it clouded up; there was a spatter of rain. It was also an eventful day. The Old Man and the mate were on the poop sweeping a certain section of the horizon with their binoculars, as if searching for something. Of course, I looked in the same direction, but could see nothing but grey drifting cloud. And suddenly, high up in the mist appeared a mountain peak; a most unexpected sight for me; it was Tristan da Cunha, but no one had told me we were so close to it. The Old Man put down his glasses with a sigh of satisfaction; we had made a perfect landfall. For a few minutes the mist and clouds passed on, revealing black cliffs rising a sheer two thousand feet from the sea; then it disappeared; it was as if we had never seen it at all.

The most lonely and isolated inhabited place on earth! Of course, you have read about it; but you must see it as I did, to realize what it must mean to live in such a place. It gave me a feeling of loneliness myself to think of that gloomy, mist-veiled, almost inaccessible little island cut off from the rest of the world by thousands of miles of ocean; it seemed a place devoid of hope. As we left that depressing place behind, it was like waking from a dream, an unpleasant dream.

As we changed our course this time for the coast of South America the sky ahead cleared; it seemed as if the very clouds conspired to shroud that solitary place

from the rest of mankind. In this region about thirty-seven degrees south, the trade wind begins to peter out, but it still held and before long we were off the coast of Uruguay. We were out of sight of land, which was obscured by a light haze; but from the indications in the water knew we could not be far off, for it was populous with sea snakes and numerous turtles paddling lazily on the surface. With visions of turtle soup we made many attempts to get one, either with the grains (a sort of fish spear), or with a noose, but they were too nippy. Our efforts at getting fresh meat were a failure anyway; a few days before we had killed one of those goose-like birds; with much difficulty plucked him; once more our good-natured cook had tried his skill. But that roast bird was worse than the bonita; much worse.

One day we saw a curiously rigged boat crowded with little copper-colored men; they came up close and chattered to us in some unknown language. I suppose they were fishermen. We asked them in English, French, German, and Dutch how far we were off land, but they no savvy—or we didn't—they just jabbered and grinned.

A few days after this we were just off the mouth of the river Plate, the wind dropped; as evening came on the sun set in a bank of ominous-looking black clouds; there was a feeling of apprehension, of tension, as if waiting for something unpleasant to happen. The ship lay motionless, not a breath of air stirred, we were enveloped in impenetrable black darkness. Suddenly, in this dead stillness the order was roared "All hands shorten sails!" and we raced aloft.

As a man passed me, he said, "We're goin' to get one of them bloody pamperos!" He was right; we had just got her shortened down to lower topsails when the squall struck with terrific violence, as sudden as the blast of a great gun. The only visible warning had been, a few seconds before, a line of ghostly white foam showing dimly through the blackness. Then followed a flash of lightning and simultaneously a crash of thunder that sounded like complete annihilation and deluge of rain in solid sheets; more electric explosions—mere words fail to describe the racket. If you have a record of "Ride of the Valkyries," put it on your gramophone and turn it on full blast and you will get some idea of what it sounded like.

An hour afterwards the sky was clear, the stars were shining, there was a light breeze and we were making sail again. Well! so that was the famous "pampero" that I had heard old sailormen speak of with awe; that curious wind that rushes out of the river Plate. And I wondered what would happen if it had caught us with all sail set.

During the following week we sighted a little cutter rigged yacht, bound the same way as we were. She ran up the red ensign, reversed, the signal of distress, so we hove to so that she could come alongside. She was a beautiful little craft; there were

four men on board, and they had brought her all the way from England for delivery to the governor of the Falkland Islands. I hoped they were being well paid, for it seemed to me a pretty risky job. They had had a pretty rough time and were almost out of provisions, so we let them have enough to see them the rest of the way. It seemed curious talking to these men, after seeing no one but our own people on board for such a long time; they seemed like being from another world. And actually they were the only ones until we struck the coast of California.

Then one day we at last sighted land. And what a land! It was the coast of Tierra del Fuego. You know the phrase, “An inhospitable shore”; well this was it! We coasted along a few miles offshore for a few days, and a more bleak and barren, desolate place I cannot imagine; mile after mile, mile after mile of precipitous rocky foreshore, backed by an unending range of high, jagged mountains. I’d hate to be wrecked on that shore!

The weather was now growing decidedly colder; it was May, and the winter was coming. But the air was exhilarating, it had an invigorating freshness, and although cloudy, most of the time the decks were dry and there was no need of oilskins; at night you just needed your double-breasted pea jacket, or “monkey jacket.” There was a fair wind; before long if our luck held out, we would sight the Horn. But “Man proposes, God disposes”; it was to be many days before we did see that famous cape; and we were probably lucky to see it at all, for once more we ran into dirty weather—high seas and head winds. Day after day we were driven far to the south and east. We were many miles south of the Horn, with incessant snow and hail; the ship sheeted in ice, for the seas and spray froze directly as they struck the deck and lower rigging. We spent the whole of one desperate night trying to get running the blocks of such tackle as we could get down on the deck; the rope was frozen solid to the sheaves. It began to look as if we were to share the fate of that “Flying Dutchman,” who was condemned to spend eternity trying to beat his way around the Horn—I believe it was for using more blasphemy than even old man Neptune would stand for. If it was worse than what I had been hearing, it must have been some swearing! One old sailor swore he had seen this mythical ship; but I think he was lying; for according to the legend, if he had, he would be sharing the same fate with the Dutchman.

However, all bad things come to an end; we eventually escaped from this hellish region, and after all this misery of being frozen and battered about, found ourselves back about where we had been a month ago, and in clear fine weather signalled the lighthouse on Cape Horn—surely the most lonely lighthouse in the world with the Diego Ramirez Islands dimly visible on our port side. I remember the date because it

was the Fourth of July; midwinter down there.

I will relate a little yarn about the Glorious Fourth that I heard recently. It was told to me by a good American, too.

There was an old British sea captain who had many friends in San Francisco, which was his frequent port of call. He was a jovial old boy, but he had an intensely “Britannia rules the waves—and most of the earth” complex, and his American friends loved to pull his leg about it. Well, one Fourth of July his ship happened to be in ’Frisco; of course, all the ships had their flags flying but his outdid them all with a wonderful display of bunting. When he went ashore the rest of the boys got after him; “How come, old cock; what are you celebrating about, you bumptious old Britisher?” and so on.

“Of course, I’m celebrating,” grinned the old captain: “I’m celebrating the day we got rid of your confounded country!” and the drinks were on them.

But if I stop to yarn any more we shall never get to San Francisco.

We were at last around the Horn, running north with yards squared and the wind dead aft, making good time. This wind gradually increased to hurricane speed; we were in the “roaring forties,” the region of the greatest seas in the world; they are rightly described as mountainous. There is much difference of opinion about the height of these enormous waves; I have seen it stated that they do not exceed sixty feet. But, our ship was three hundred and sixty feet long; the distance between the crests of two waves has been estimated to be ten times the height of the wave. And at the peak of the hurricane the distance between the crests was about three times the length of our ship; so figure it out yourself. I believe there is no way of making really correct measurements. To me they looked like hundred-foot cliffs of solid green water. Possibly, before they reached that height they would topple over in one of those great cataracts of foam. In a scientific article I read recently, the writer stated that a sixty-five mile wind produced waves thirty feet high. I expect his conclusions were based on a laboratory experiment, and that he had no conception of what the “roaring forties” were like. For the wind in those regions must at times reach a speed of near ninety miles. However, I do not wish to be taken for a liar; I am just relating what I remember, and will let it go at that. There was a terrible fascination in watching these stupendous seas, towering up to a dizzy height; the crest overbalancing, roaring down under your stern in a regular Niagara of brilliant white foam, smashing against the counter with a force like the kick of some mythological monster that made the ship tremble all over. And most of the time the sun was shining brilliantly; it was a scene of such incredible magnificence that you were spellbound by the sheer glory of it; you had no thought of fear. I recalled those

words, “They that go down to the sea in ships, they see His wonders in the vasty deep”—they seemed to have a new meaning. But I admit that down below in the cabin I didn’t feel so good, for I knew if one of those monstrous seas did crash on the deck, even if it did not smash it in, the overpowering weight of water would force us under; we should almost inevitably sink.

But we were lucky; with the exception of getting the tail end of one which poured over the poop, and for a time, flooded the main deck, we escaped. Of course, the two men at the wheel would have been in extreme danger all the time if they had not been lashed with a rope around the waist and fastened to a ringbolt in the deck. One steersman, obviously an optimist, said, “Well, there’s one advantage to this; you kin spit on the deck when the mate ain’t looking, and nobody won’t see it.” For the man at the wheel, though not allowed to smoke, may chew all he wants to, provided he doesn’t spit on the sacred poop.

One thing to be thankful for was that this hurricane was driving us in the right direction. We were making up for that lost time; the wind gradually lost its force and the sea subsided to something more normal; a few days of this, and we were once more in those delightful trade winds, and resuming our acquaintance with sharks, and bonitas, funny birds, and flying fish.

One night, hundreds of miles from land or any chartered rocks, the man on the lookout excitedly and astonishingly shouted, “Breakers on the starboard bow!” and there, sure enough, was a line of white which did look like waves breaking on a reef. But the mate knew there could not possibly be rocks in these parts. He altered our course a point to run close and investigate. It was a curious sight; a huge mass of phosphorescence that spread in a great patch on the surface of the sea. And then the most appalling stink smote us. It was a dead whale and he certainly had been dead a very long time. We quickly got out of there, to windward of him. And then we were in the doldrums again; a different brand of doldrums this time, for it was the rainy season in the tropics. For a whole week in dead calm it rained; such rain as those who have not seen it cannot imagine. It was warm, much too warm for oilskins, we went about almost naked; after the second day everything was saturated with moisture. Rain, rain, rain; a solid downpour all day, all night, day after day without cessation, like being in a perpetual tepid shower bath. After about the fourth day you fell into a state of semi-torpid apathy; it would go on raining forever and forever; rain was the normal state of things; you accepted it with resignation.

But in one way we benefitted by it; we replenished our water supply, although just one day of that downpour would have been enough. For some weeks now we had been using condensed sea water, beastly flat stuff that was made more

nauseating by a strong flavor of tallow; the tanks had been rubbed with this to prevent rust.

That rain water was deliciously sweet, for hundreds of miles out at sea the air is uncontaminated by any impurities, and it is probably the purest water in nature. After seven days of this—it had felt like at least a month—it did stop. The sun came out; and didn't it feel good! We once more felt like human beings instead of fish.

We were now more than four months out, and all hands were beginning to suffer from lack of fresh food; the hard-tack and the flour, in fact, everything tasted musty; and an atmosphere of discontent and crankiness became prevalent. And our teeth began to get loose, one of the first indications of scurvy. We were all getting fed up.

One day old Hank demanded to see the captain; he had some grievance real or fancied. He was a "sea lawyer and knew his rights," which were to lay his complaint before the British consul when we reached port. Doubtless the Old Man was not perturbed; he had been through this before, and knew that when we got to 'Frisco, in the delights of fresh grub and the beguilements of the water front all this discontent would be forgotten. However, old Hank having had his complaint entered in the log had to see it through. So the day after we arrived in 'Frisco, a trio consisting of the Old Man in his shore-going regalia, top hat, frock coat and all; me in my brass-buttoned uniform, carrying his brief case, and old Hank tagging along behind, looking as if he wished he were to hell out of it, proceeded to the consul's office. Poor old Hank looked terribly sheepish and uncomfortable as he stood before the consul; I daresay he even wished he were out at sea again.

"Henry Wilson," said the consul, glancing at the paper; "what is your complaint?"

Hank looked at the consul, a pleasant-looking man; he also was accustomed to the vagaries of old sailormen. "Well, sir"; and Hank stated his complaint in rather an apologetic voice—it sounded rather silly now.

"Well, Henry Wilson," said the consul with a smile, "do you wish to do anything further about it?"

"No, sir," said Hank, very emphatically; all he wanted was to get out of that!

"Case withdrawn," said the consul to his stenographer. So that was that.

"You may go," said the Old Man, in a sort of "let us bury the hatchet" tone of voice—he seemed quite human this morning. "And you may have shore leave till tomorrow. But don't get drunk." And Hank escaped with relief into the open air.

But I am once more getting ahead of my story.

Soon after that inundation of rain we picked up the trades again; then, one misty night I was aware of a different smell in the air; something it seemed I had not

smelled for ages; it was the scent of pine trees; we were approaching land. Presently, as the mist momentarily cleared, we saw lights; the lights of some little town. The order was given to shorten the sail and to heave the lead; we were close in shore—might even be in shallow water. We knew we had not made a good landfall because of the smell of those pine trees; we must be well to the north of 'Frisco. So we crept along cautiously until daybreak, which revealed a shore line of densely timbered hills.

By and by we sighted an old tugboat, which ran in and hailed us.

"Just exactly where are we?" shouted the Old Man.

"You're just north of Point Reyes," answered the nasal voice on the tug. "We have a pilot on board, and would you like a tow in?"

After a few inquiries about the charges the Old Man said we would. And then he hollered the old familiar question, "Is there war with Russia?"

"What?" answered the voice, and after a pause, "Oh hell—no, everybody's forgotten about that long ago."

The tug ran alongside, and the pilot climbed aboard; a dapper, well-groomed young man who, to my eyes, accustomed to the rough blue uniform of our burly British pilots, did not seem dressed for the part, for he was clad in a brown-checked suit, a brown derby hat, and very neat, polished shoes; he looked more like a race track habitué than a pilot but he evidently knew his job, for rounding the Point Bonito in the dusk, the towline parted and a strong cross current drove us right in shore. Of course, as now all our sails were furled we might easily have bumped some rock had not that pilot known his position to the inch; the anchor was ready to let go but we got another line for the tug before this became necessary. Soon we were through the Golden Gate and the lights of San Francisco, spreading over its many hills welcomed us; at last we had reached the "haven where we would be." And the sound of the city; the voices of men, the rattle of streetcars, clip, clop of horse's feet, all those multifarious noises that, heard across the water, blend into one steady musical hum; the sound that I had almost forgotten.

One had a sensation of unreality; it seemed so improbable that we were here at last. Then a splash as the anchor dropped; the rattling roar of the chain as it ran through the hawse hole; and stillness; a deck that did not move, and a sense of peace, as if the ship at last was at rest.

CHAPTER II

'FRISCO

I make no apologies for heading this chapter 'Frisco, although I have heard its modern inhabitants express a dislike for it, but no one ever called it anything else then. Well, 'Frisco before the earthquake—beg pardon, I mean fire; I had forgotten that San Franciscans are as touchy about their earthquake as Canadians are about *their* winter—was a different place to the San Francisco of today.

It still retained much of the old Spanish influence; and still more of the old reckless gaiety of its mining days. It was cosmopolitan; Californian if you like, but hardly American; no, they were Californians. You see it was not so long since they had ousted the Federal authorities and taken the government temporarily into their own hands. I think they were the most independent people on earth, and certainly one of the most likeable.

'Frisco was then known as the “wickedest city in the world,” doubtless from the reputation of the celebrated Barbary Coast; you could hardly apply it to the rest of the place. But its inhabitants seemed to take a curious pride in this title; maybe they felt it gave them a sort of distinction. “Yes, sir,” one of its most respectable citizens might say, with obvious relish, “Frisco is the wickedest city in the world!” But the Barbary Coast was tough all right.

When I turned in, the surrounding scenery was just darkness, spangled with myriads of lights. I woke the next morning, eager to see how it looked by daylight. This is one of the delightful things about arriving at an unknown place at nighttime—that feeling of expectation, like waiting for the curtain to rise at a theater. Going on deck, I found that we were surrounded by a light translucent mist, through which loomed the shapes of several ships that were anchored close by. As I sniffed the morning air and the welcome smell of breakfast coming from the galley, the mist slowly melted in the warm rays of the sun, revealing ship after ship in a vast harbor; the embarcadero with its wharves and forests of masts; the city climbing its hills in the background with the bulk of the Palace Hotel, its most prominent mark. Then the mists rolled back from the northern shore, one by one the little villages appeared, nestling in the hills that reached back to meet the blue of the sky in the distance. Far out towards the Golden Gate, the blue water of the bay was dotted with Italian fishing boats, their graceful triangular sails glowing orange in the light of the morning

sun. Truly a fascinating scene. And what a contrast to that grim little harbor of South Shields!

There and then I fell in love with the Pacific coast. Sometimes since then, I have had a horrible dream—I am back in Europe—and wake with a sense of relief that I am still here. Even before I had experienced the freedom and the friendliness of the people, the lure of the West got me.

Most of the ships in the harbor were flying the “Old red duster”—the British red ensign; the wheat fleet waiting for cargo. And strangely, with the exception of a few coasting schooners, none flew the Stars and Stripes. The American sea-carrying trade just then seemed to be in a decline; the building of their famous wooden clippers had come to an end—to my regret I have never seen one of those beautiful clipper ships—and they had hardly begun to build steel ones.

One thing I remember about the first few days, was the fresh grub; everything tasted so sweet. Forgotten was musty biscuit and salt meat; we gorged ourselves on shore tack, especially fruit; one could buy a large bag of grapes for five cents. Indeed, foods of all sorts were astonishingly cheap. I think California had not yet reached the stage of exporting much but wheat, so in that land of plenty they had to eat everything else. Then came the joy of going ashore. As I have related before, I had been to the consul’s office, but being on duty with the Old Man, that could hardly count.

Walking on the land for the first time, after being on the never still deck of a ship for five months, is a queer sensation, and it takes some time to accommodate your sea legs to the unfamiliar solidity of it; you feel ridiculously clumsy for a few hours, until you once more regain your land legs. We boys got shore leave quite often and proceeded to sample the sights of the city. The Old Man was very cautious; he would very seldom allow us to draw more than fifty cents with which to go ashore, but we managed to see life extensively even on that.

I think the first place we headed for was the historic Bella Union on the Barbary Coast; a sort of music hall dive that had the name of being pretty hot stuff. Well, of course, being still in our teens, that was just what we craved; we wanted to feel like men of the world. We had heard that an occasional item of the programme there was the cancan; and that the police were in the habit of raiding the place if they suspected that this was to be put on.

The Bella Union consisted of a large hall with a stage; all along one side ran a bar from which came the continual clink of glasses and bottles; farther back were pool tables and in more obscure parts, gambling dens of various sorts. Many apron-clad waiters circulated among the audience bearing trays laden with drinks and the

air was thick with smoke. The admission to this palace of delight was ten cents! Probably the idea was that once inside they would lift all your spare cash in payment for their very dubious whisky.

They did put on quite a good, if extremely vulgar, variety show; but we were disappointed the first night; there was no cancan. However, another night we did see it. The manager appeared in front of the curtain; beckoned to a husky-looking gent, presumably a chucker-out, and in a stage whisper, "Go and keep your eye on the door, Bill," he said. And in another loud stage whisper that seemed to suggest, "Now you're goin' to see something!"—he announced, "Ladies and gents, you are now about to observe that lovely dance the cancan as performed—" I forget where, but don't think it was before the crowned heads of Europe. To me it looked rather stupid, and certainly not at all provocative. I had seen ballet girls in short skirts who were decidedly come hither; but this repulsive female! I felt too close as it was. I think the only satisfaction you derived from it was that you could brag that you had seen it. And this time there was no police raid, another disappointment.

Another place of dubious reputation was the Cremorne; recently a man had been shot and killed there in a brawl over a girl; we had to take that in. It had a different layout. It had the usual stage; but the floor was furnished with small tables and many short-skirted girls who bore the drinks to the seated gentlemen. Around three sides ran a wide upper gallery, also next to the stage a few private boxes secretively curtained. To this gallery we went so that we could get a good view of what was going on. There was something going on on the stage, but no one was paying much attention to it anyway; it was probably just a blind. Then one of those short-skirted gals came to take our orders.

These glittering resorts of the flesh and the devil were mere Sunday schools compared to some others on the Barbary Coast, but in other parts of the city you could have all the decent amusement you wanted, for San Franciscans were decidedly a pleasure-loving people, and their theaters were celebrated all over the continent; the Californian, the Baldwin and many others, including the Tivoli, which played opera continuously throughout the year; I think it must have been the only theater in the English-speaking world that did so. Among the cafés and saloons was one, whose name I forget, with one of its walls covered by a large mural; a fine copy of Bougereau's "Vision of Faust." And there was the famous old "Poodle Dog"; I was glad to see its namesake later in Victoria; it seemed to constitute a friendly link between the two places. Then there was that pride of San Francisco, the famous Palace Hotel; "the world's greatest," they boasted. It had been built about fifteen years before by one of those amazingly enterprising Californians, William C. Ralston,

the builder of the first drydock on the Pacific coast, which we subsequently became acquainted with. He had put all his own millions into it and borrowed some four millions more, while all the city called him crazy; so you can see it was some hotel.

Our finances did not permit us to sample its interior luxury, but sometimes we would go through the great archway into the central glass-roofed court, and listen to the string orchestra that played every evening. In the center of this court was a fountain; there were many palms, and on each side soared up to the glass roof the balconies of the eight-storied hotel which was built around it.

One part of the Barbary Coast, that along the water front we did see a lot of, in the line of duty. When a man had overstayed his leave, we would be sent with a boat to look for him; and this was the most likely place to search; we might find him in a saloon if we were lucky; a dance hall, or so-called sailors' boardinghouse was a pretty poor bet.

These "boardinghouses" were tough joints run by hard-boiled thugs, "boardinghouse masters" who were actually not much better than slave dealers. When a ship arrived in port, they or their hired vermin, the "boardinghouse runners," would make their way on board, and with promises of drink and women, or if their prospective victim did not look that sort, a good job on shore; lure the man to one of their dens. When safely landed there, the unfortunate sailor would never get out until he was smuggled on board an outward-bound ship; they would see to it that he remained too drunk to wander; if their awful whisky was not enough to make him stay put he was simply drugged.

Most long voyage sailing ships would be some time in port; some of their crew would be gathered in by these miscreants, and others would desert the ship, drawn by the lure of gold or the hope of higher wages ashore, so that when a ship was ready to sail again it would be necessary to secure a new crew. And that was where the boardinghouse master came in. Approaching the captain he would say, without any beating around the bush, "How many men are you needing, Captain? And how much will you pay per man?" A price would be agreed upon; next day the men would be delivered on board; but not until the ship was riding at anchor out in the bay ready to sail, making escape impossible—and the money would be paid over. They would all be stupefied with drink or drugs, many would not even know where they were until they were out to sea. I saw one ship's crew so dead to the world that they had to be hoisted on board with davits, like so many bales of freight.

These boardinghouse fiends did not confine their activities to seamen only; many a landsman was captured while drunk; and if the demand exceeded the supply any unwary citizen might be slammed on the head with a sandbag and, when he came to

his full senses, find himself on an outward-bound ship, with no chance of communicating with the outside world for months.

When we started on our return voyage we found that we had been landed with two such. One of these unfortunates said he had been promised a job on a sheep ranch; the other was a drugstore clerk; neither had been to sea before. The Old Man was very decent about it; he excused them from going aloft and made things as easy for them as he could, and they settled down philosophically. Perhaps in later years they looked back with satisfaction on this adventure. This method of providing a crew was known as “shanghaiing”—of which doubtless you have heard. How the ship captains hated dealing with these blackguards! But there was no alternative at that time; either you dealt with them or you remained where you were.

On one of our first visits ashore to look for a man who had overstayed his leave, we went to one of these boardinghouses; a grim-looking hole with a half dozen sodden men sitting around in various stages of drunkenness. There was a dirty bar in one corner, behind which lolled an unpleasant-looking man in shirtsleeves and no collar. “Wha’ d’ ya want?” growled this unsavory person, in a menacing voice. We told him we were looking for a man. “Well, you won’t find him here!” His tone suggested that he did not want us there either. Afterwards we went to a saloon farther along and mentioned where we had been. “See here,” said the saloonkeeper—he seemed a decent chap—“You boys better keep clear of those places or you’re liable to be missin’ one of these days.” The Old Man also gave us orders to leave them alone and we did so with relief.

I must say we found the saloonkeepers on the whole a decent lot, occasionally we would locate our man in one of their places and they would invariably persuade him to come along. One thing that was common to all the ’Frisco saloons was the free lunch counter laden with food; the quality varying with the social standing of its habitués, from substantial hunks of bread and cheese and cold sausage along the water front, to dainty sandwiches in the more aristocratic quarters. You just helped yourself and ordered a schooner of beer to wash it down. And many a poor fellow down on his luck has kept himself going on free lunches, even if he hadn’t the price of a beer. A good-natured bartender could almost always size one up; if he looked genuine he would just let him go to it—might even slip him a beer if the poor devil looked like he needed it. If the would-be luncher was known as an inveterate bum, it was a different matter; he would be gently shooed out.

In these searches along the water front we boys sometimes found our man, sometimes not; in the end it made no difference anyway, for eventually we lost all our men except Dutchy and a nice red-headed sailor lad, Scotty; these two and the

afterguard were the only ones of the original crew who stayed by the ship.

One evening in a saloon we ran into Sails. He was not overstaying his leave, but looked as if he might; he was sitting looking very happy, but very obviously tight; a quite unusual thing for Sails. As one of us went up to the bar, "You boys better get your chum back to the ship before he goes to sleep," said the bartender in an aside. So after much persuasion we did induce Sails to come along. Our ship was lying at anchor some half mile from the wharf, and stumbling along, one on each side we finally got him down to the steps and into the boat, luckily picking up one of our men on the way. Sails slumped down in the stern until we got under way, then he suddenly woke up and began to sing. Now singing was alright, but this singing proclaimed that Sails was very drunk indeed; moreover, it was past the time when we were supposed to be back; the Old Man was on board; Sails was regarded by him as a most exemplary character, and we didn't want him to lose his reputation.

When we were late we always took the precaution to muffle the oars—wrapping something around the oar where it went through the rowlock so as to muffle the sound of rowing. The Old Man would be asleep; it would be too bad to wake him! and the watchman would never report us. "Shut up, Sails, you fool, or the Old Man will hear you," said someone.

"To hell with the Old Man"—and so on, at length, bawled Sails. This was terrible; we stopped rowing and at the risk of capsizing, we overpowered him and gagged him with a handkerchief, while two men sat on him for the rest of the way, while the other two rowed. It was some struggle too, for Sails would have licked the four of us if he had been sober. And by the time we reached the ship he had happily relaxed into a sort of torpor, so that the four of us, assisted by the watchman, got him hoisted aboard and into his bunk without further rumpus.

But I am again getting ahead of my story; all these things happened after we had been in some time, so I will return to my first impressions.

After we arrived we lay at anchor for several days, during which the captain and the officers were busy with customs officers, health officers and so on; then the ship was allotted her berth at one of the wharves; a gang of stevedores was hired and the business of unloading began; many days of cheerful activity as the crane on the wharf drew ton after ton of cargo from our holds, and each day the ship rose foot by foot higher in the water. It was a jolly sound, the noise of that crane with its incessant rattle and roar and the staccato chug, chug, chug of the engine; it seemed to be singing a song of praise to the god of industry. A ship's crew had nothing to do with the handling of the cargo, but the officers had to check everything as it went out; one day it was my job to sit on the wharf and watch the unloading of the firebrick, of

which we had some hundred tons. Each sling full of brick as it came from the hold was dumped on the wharf, where waiting stevedores would pick them up, ten at a time, and with a swing of their arms heave them to a man standing in a horse-drawn wagon who would expertly catch and stow them.

It was an easy job, sitting in the warm sun with my back against a pile of lumber; too easy, for what with the hypnotic rhythm of those swinging arms and the warmth I presently fell asleep. "Hi, young fellow, wake up!"; someone on the wharf prodded me. I came to with a start; how many of those confounded bricks had I missed while I slumbered? I just guessed; none of the officers had seen me; from my point of view that was the most important thing.

These wharves were built on piles, and extended for a long way along the water front, the bowsprits and figureheads of ships projected as far as I could see in one direction, while in the other they ended at the ferry slips at the foot of Market Street.

The ferryboats were strange-looking vessels to me, with their great stern wheels, and the enormous beam of the engine swinging up and down above the superstructure. Mr. McTavish one day forcibly expressed his opinion of them as we were rowing past the ferry slip; "Hell an' damnation, look oot!" he suddenly yelled. "There's one o' them blasted girt whale-barrys backin' oot!" he went on growling, eyeing with disgust the towering hulk of the ferry as it slowly emerged, and we hurriedly backed out of her way—"that I sud ever live tae see sic a bloody monstrosity afloat. A dinna ken what the world's comin' tae, bit a ken it'll sune be no fit for an honest sailorman tae leeve in." And as the great revolving stern wheel churned the water into a maelstrom that nearly upset our little boat, "Mon!" he ejaculated, "if ye was ever tae be sooked under yon devil's contraption ye'd no have time tae say yer prayers."

Out beyond the ferries on the sunny slopes of Telegraph Hill, lay "Little Italy," the home of the Italian fisherman. I walked out there one day and was straightway transported to a little bit of the Mediterranean. Rail to rail along the water front were moored their little boats, with their tall masts; their great russet-colored sails furled; their swarthy chattering owners busy about the decks, or overhauling their nets on the wharf. Many of them wore earrings, most of them had a red toque, or a colored handkerchief tied around their heads, making them look like stage pirates.

In and out of their little ramshackle houses, or sitting on the stoops gossiping and peeling potatoes; nursing babies or engaged in other domestic occupations, the gaily clad wives of the fishermen seemed to be leading a leisurely, happy existence and a swarm of jolly black-eyed kiddies played about in the sun.

From one of the boats came a chorus of men's voices, singing at their work, bits

from the “Barber of Seville”; all this combined to make a scene that was both picturesque and satisfying.

This Italian quarter seemed to be quite self-contained; they seldom wandered outside and you heard no language there but Italian. The Italians might be in the great American melting pot; but like the Orientals they did not melt.

From the ferry slips the cable cars ran straight up Market Street; this cable system was the first one in the world; it was invented by a Californian to overcome the difficulty of climbing those steep hills. And they seemed to run up and down those hills at amazing speed; I suppose it was twelve or fifteen miles an hour! The local inhabitants just jumped on and off at any old place they felt inclined to, without any regard for the proper stopping places; it seemed the correct thing to do, and you were regarded peculiar if you didn't do it. It required a special technique which I only acquired after landing on my face in the street at my first attempt; the fate of most greenhorns. Some of these cars were open, with a long seat each side running the length of the car and facing outwards. This seat was just smooth wood with no divisions; so that going up one of those steep hills, all its occupants would slide towards the rear end; going downhill the process was reversed. This was always the cause of much mirthful good humor and badinage as the gentlemen and the ladies were jammed up together. Indeed San Francisco was as a whole permeated with a spirit of light-hearted gaiety. These cars ran over hill after hill out to the Golden Gate Park, that wonderful place that has been created on barren drifting sand dunes. At that time less than half of it had been developed; it ended abruptly at a straight line; on one side verdant green lawns and shrubbery; on the other nothing but bare sand; a striking contrast, which showed clearly the marvel that had been accomplished; something that probably very few San Franciscans of today can visualize.



Part of the *embarcadero* in 1887

On Sundays, crowds would go there to listen to the military band from the Presidio; other crowds headed for the races or ball games; everybody was jolly and cheerful; so different to the Sabbath boredom of the rather hypocritical Britons of my youthful days. Do you wonder that it attracted me?

The churches also did a rushing business; Californians had as much zest then for peculiar religions as they have now. I think they were so full of pep that they just didn't need a day of rest anyway; their idea of a fitting Sabbath was church in the morning, ball game or what have you in the afternoon, and maybe a theater in the evening. One church, I remember, with a fine set of chimes, played gay secular tunes on them Sunday mornings.

Of course we explored Chinatown, at least on the surface; below that was a subterranean maze that no white man would dare enter. But Chinatown as a whole was just part of China; it might have been lifted bodily from the Orient and dropped into the middle of San Francisco; a city within a city; sufficient unto itself, and apparently with its own laws as well as customs; it seemed to defy any interference from the city authorities. It was redolent of the atmosphere of the East, to say nothing of the smells; there were many dark cul-de-sacs and doorways that exuded mystery.

Bob and I one night ventured up a dim, eery-looking alley; a few yards up we turned a corner into darkness; a creepy feeling place. A figure brushed past us so silently it might have been a ghost. Or worse, it might have been one of those hatchet men we had heard about. We felt we were not welcome there and that we were being shadowed and we got out considerably quicker than we went in.

The larger streets where one felt safe were crowded with pig-tailed Chinamen in their native costume; no Chinaman would dare shed his pigtail; if it was not long enough he lengthened it with plaited silk, blue in color for some unknown reason. They never walked side by side, always in single file; it was funny to see a whole string of them looking as if they were playing follow-my-leader, all of them jabbering for all they were worth. Since then I have learned why they always walked like that. The streets in their native cities are so congested and narrow that it is the only way they can walk, and after many centuries it has probably become almost an instinct. You seldom saw a woman on the street; but quite often in the shops; they always looked pleasant and smiling; naturally so, for the Chinaman treats his womenfolk with kindness and respect. And the same applies to their children; they were jolly looking, rather fascinating kids.

The place was densely crowded; only a haphazard guess could be made as to what the population really was; a census taker would have had a hopeless job; "Me no savvy," would have met him at every corner, and if he descended to the nether regions—well, he might never have come up again. It seemed healthy enough; I never heard of any epidemic disease there. As I said before, it was in the center, indeed one of the most desirable parts of the city, and several attempts had been made to shift it, without any result; Mr. Chinaman just smiled an inscrutable smile and carried on as usual. The Chinese are the one race on earth who have reduced passive resistance to a fine art. Being gamblers, of course there were many places devoted to their national pastime; also opium dens, but these were hidden from sight in the lower regions. And somewhere in the dark recesses of Chinatown's underworld lurked the Tongs; those mysterious powerful secret societies whose tentacles spread from Shanghai to San Francisco, and from 'Frisco to every remote corner of America where a Chinaman was to be found. Just what they were, or why, no white man has ever fathomed; if you mentioned Tong to a Chinaman, he just shut up like a clam.

We knew they had their professional assassins; "hatchet men"; ever so often a dead Chinaman would be found, not always in Chinatown; this would be a "Tong murder" and we had to let it go at that; it would have been useless to investigate. Sometimes a "Tong war" would be on; what about, no one knew; then there would be a great increase in dead Chinamen.

As late as 1936, in the Okanagan, a Chinaman was found murdered, lying face downward in his cabin, with the back of his head smashed in. The cabin was quite undisturbed; his money was intact in a table drawer; there were no clues; nothing was discovered to connect the crime with anyone in the district. Was that another

Tong murder?

If you were curious, you could hire a guide, who for a substantial fee would, allegedly, show you around the underworld, but I didn't go; in the first place, we didn't have the price of the fee, and then I had the idea that it was just a racket; you would see a few things that had been fixed up for visiting boobies; like the abodes of vice in Paris.

But I did find above-ground Chinatown most interesting; especially the shops full of wonderful chinaware, ivory and woodcarving. The proprietors never pestered you to buy things; they seemed to take an aesthetic pride in their stock and liked you to look at it, whether you bought anything or not.

I liked to look in the food shops where weird and uncanny edibles were displayed and wonder what they would taste like; and a barber shop where a Chinaman might be having the inside of his nose shaved with a long thin razor. One day I paid twenty-five cents to go into the Chinese theater. There was a very slim audience, all Chinese; who seemed to come and go as they felt like it; as the same play took several days to perform, naturally no one could sit the whole performance out. As for me, half an hour was more than enough; I have never seen anything so monotonous. The music was a continuous singsong, tum-tum of gongs and drums and squawky instruments; and the play—I suppose it was about something, but I failed to make any sense out of it. There was little action; mostly the performers just stood up and made a long speech in high-pitched, squeaky voices.

On the boundary of Chinatown, facing the Plaza, was their big ornate joss (not a Chinese word, but a corruption of the Spanish word "Dios.") house, like a decorative shopwindow to the rest of the exotic place behind it. I felt tempted to go in, I was rather curious to see one of their religious ceremonies but never quite liked to; perhaps they might resent it. And why should I be inquisitive anyway? They were certainly not about ours; had a Chinaman been interested enough to investigate the many brands of worship in 'Frisco he might well have been puzzled as to what the white man's religion really was.

The Plaza dated back to the old Spanish days, and had sometimes been called "Portsmouth Square," after the name of a certain ship. After the earthquake the city authorities made this its official name; but everyone continued to call it the Plaza. It seems that they have compromised now by calling it "Portsmouth Plaza." How old place names persist in spite of officialdom! Take Yerba Buena Island out in the bay, for instance; from the fact that goats were pastured there, it was occasionally referred to as "Goat Island" and for some unknown reason that actually became its official name, and it was only after many years of being reasoned with that the

Geographic Board restored its real name; Yerba Buena.

Oakland, across the bay, seemed to beckon me to explore it, so one afternoon I boarded the ferry *Newark*. She, by the way, had side paddles instead of a stern wheel, and looked more like a real ship, but the very much overdone decorative gilding of her saloons was rather overpowering.

Although Oakland was supposed to have a population of about thirty thousand it appeared to me like a small and rather ramshackle town, with a railroad track along the center of main street; probably I saw only the oldest part. I strolled along the board sidewalk to where it ended on the outskirts of the town, and considered whether I would go any farther. There were a few grownup people and at least two dozen kids waiting about. Then the loud toot of a locomotive, the clanging of a bell and a train came ponderously to a stop. Immediately all the kids, with the joyful noises kids make when a Sunday school excursion is starting off, swarmed on board with the adults. The train rumbled slowly along to the next block, stopped again, and more kids got on. And so it proceeded, stopping at each block, loudly clanging the bell all the way until it was out of sight. Then a long whistle, like a shout of relief at getting out of all this, and I could hear the gathering speed of the train as it disappeared in the distance. All this looked very strange, so I asked a friendly-looking citizen what it was all about.

“Oh, I guess you’re a stranger,” he said, “we’re gettin’ used to it now. You see, when the railroad was buildin’ and they wanted a right of way through town we figgered it would be a good bargain to give ’em this right of way free on condition that any citizen could ride anywhere within the city limits without payin’; the railroad people agreein’ not to exceed four miles an hour. So now all the kids in town, soon as they hear the train whistlin’, just makes a beeline fer it and climbs aboard. There’s another train goes in the other direction meets it about two miles on the other side of town. The first train disgorges ’em all at the boundary, then them kids waits for the other one and they all comes back again. Quite a game. An’ now we’re all wonderin’ what sort of damn fools we was. It’s a gosh darn good thing there’s only two trains a day.”

Going back to the wharf I noticed a large sign advertising boats for hire, and which said that “The nights are always moonlight on Lake Merrit!” Astonishing place, Oakland!

When the *Eleanor Margaret* had finally been relieved of all her cargo, we were towed out to anchorage again, after taking on ballast; and there we lay with the rest of the grain fleet until a few days after Christmas.

There was a game of endurance going on between the grain shippers and

shipowners over freight rates; the shippers got the best of it in the end for we finally had to accept twenty-one shillings a ton. Think of that; five dollars and twenty-five cents a ton for hauling wheat nearly fifteen thousand miles! Pretty tough on my poor uncle, though I didn't think of that at the time, for I was enjoying myself immensely.

We now had on board just the officers, cook, Sails, Chips and the bosun; two men, Dutch and Scotty; Jimmy, Bob and myself. We made a happy family; good grub, plenty of shore leave; and we spent the time overhauling the ship from truck to keel. I think I learned everything about a sailing ship there is to know.

Scotty was an expert at boat sailing, and we youngsters were allowed the use of a spare dinghy. We pinched one of the big lifeboat sails and would row out behind Yerba Buena Island out of sight of the Old Man, and hoist this sail. And boy, didn't we have some sailing! With three of us leaning as far out as we could over the weather gunwale to keep her from capsizing we really moved. All the other small sailboats on the bay had centreboards, for which Scotty, with Scottish accent had the greatest contempt; on the other hand the 'Frisco boatman regarded us with pitying amusement. "Say, why don't you fool Britishers have enough sense to use centreboards?" They couldn't understand us at all.

On the days the Old Man went ashore the four of us manned the captain's gig, and made a smart boat's crew, if I do say so. My first attempts at rowing in a rough sea—for it did get pretty rough on the bay at times—were not so hot. One dark night I was pulling bow; I caught a crab and landed on my back in the bottom of the boat. The Old Man was grumpy that night, "You, bow, who told you to unship your oar? You stay where you are 'till we make the ship!" So there I had to stay plentifully soused with the water that kept breaking over.

Captain Fishwick was very fussy about his words of command. As we approached the wharf steps it was "Row easy!" then "Cease rowing!—Unrow!"; and in we would swing the four oars as one. Once, thinking he had misjudged his distance, we slowed up on our own; the Old Man wrathfully snorted, "In the future you men await my command!" A few days later *we* scored. He must have been asleep or dreaming, no command came and we hit the steps with a bump that jerked him out of his seat smack into the lap of Scotty, who was pulling stroke. He never said a word or lost his dignity; just picked himself up; but he looked as if he would like to say a lot.

Sometimes—strictly against the laws—we used to take beer back to the ship, in a demijohn which we borrowed from a saloonkeeper; we hid this in the bow, covered up with coats; one day the Old Man stumbled as he was stepping in and uncovered our precious beer. Without a word he picked the demijohn up, and with

a long swing of his arm, heaved it out into the water.

Most of our cats deserted us while we were unloading, so we had instructions to capture any stray pussy we could find to make up the deficit. One day we got one and put it in the sack that we carried for the purpose; rather foolishly we put this under the flag that draped the stern seat—and the Old Man sat on it! There was an indignant squawk as he quickly arose; he just moved the cat to one side and sat down again. He was a rum old bird, was Captain Fishwick; never once did I see him make a joke or shed his dignity. He seldom deigned to speak to us, though once he did. It was Sunday, and he was going ashore to his Plymouth Brother chapel, where I think he used to preach. Pausing at the top of the wharf steps and regarding us with a severe and baleful eye, “You lads should be coming with me,” he grumped. We declined the invitation, if such it was intended for, as tactfully as we could. “You boys are on the straight road to hell!” he almost roared at us, and turning an indignant back he stalked away. Well, the old hunks; we were only going out to the park; our brief experiment at sampling hell at the Bella Union and such places had not proven attractive; but his road to heaven seemed less so.

It was about this time that there was a great gathering of warships in the bay; a sort of international convention. The Americans, as hosts, could muster but one little gunboat, the *Thetis*; at that time they did not seem to worry themselves about a navy; I suppose they were in the enviable position of not needing one, and could enjoy isolation with an easy conscience.



In old Chinatown. Note Chinamen with pigtails

Not so the other nations; there was the British flagship *Triumph*, with Admiral Lord Heneage on board; a French flagship; a Japanese flagship and a big Russian gunboat. The British and French were beautiful ships, white fullrigged three-masters, with one large funnel, and the ram bows of that period. The Japanese was an older and smaller vessel of the same rig painted black, while the two gunboats wore businesslike coats of grey. And what a festive time they did have! Every few days one of them would throw a party. The first one was on the *Triumph*; and as each commander from one of the other ships stepped on her accommodation ladder, his particular national flag was run up to the mainmast head, while guns fired a salute. When it came to the Jap admiral, he, being a royal prince, had to have twenty-one guns; by the time all these brass hats were safely on board, the *Triumph* was hidden in smoke. It had sounded like a bombardment. Then a few hours after, you would see hundreds of bottles drifting by on the tide. In a few days the same thing would happen on one of the other ships. They were making the most of their opportunity, all right. I wonder if this display of naval might had anything to do with what was politely referred to in the papers as “the Bering Sea difficulty”; a squabble between various governments about sealing—if so the navy boys enjoyed themselves and left the squabbling to their governments. One night the *Bella Union* put on a show with which they probably hoped to rake in a good harvest; like certain unscrupulous

newspaper proprietors of today, they did not hesitate to stir up ill feeling if there was any money in it. It was a crude sort of shadow show; two warships appeared on the screen and began firing on each other. Then one of them sank, running up the British flag as she went down, while the other hoisted the Stars and Stripes. Doubtless the city authorities had heard about it, and would have interfered; but the British sailors had also got on to it, and they got there first and saved them the trouble. A large crowd of shore-leave men from the *Triumph*, reinforced by numbers of 'prentices and men from the merchant ships, proceeded to the Bella Union and distributed themselves among the audience, with a man at each strategic point near a light. And when that battle scene came on, out went the lights and general hell broke loose. In the roughhouse that followed the place must have been pretty badly wrecked, for the Bella Union was out of commission for some days afterwards. The police did not interfere; they couldn't have done much anyway; perhaps they concluded they would let the proprietors get what was coming to them; by keeping out of the way they would save themselves a lot of grief.

To my great regret, I was not present at these exciting doings; but Bob and Scotty were and seemed to have enjoyed themselves immensely. Marvellously the papers were silent about it; the Bella Union people certainly were not looking for publicity; the general public opinion was that it served them right, for the British were very popular in California. It really seemed they could not do enough for us. They stood us drinks; the tobacco shops would hand us cigars; we would have gifts of fruit and other delicacies; they seemed to welcome us with openhearted hospitality. No wonder I liked them!

In the evening all the gay life of 'Frisco—I mean that part that was not dissipating on the Barbary Coast—used to congregate on the sidewalks of Market Street, strolling up and down in a leisurely way; the men smoking cigars—you never saw a pipe unless it was stuck in the face of some stray Englishman—the girls, well, they just looked smiling and beautiful for this was long before the days of artificial faces.

Up on Nob Hill were the astonishing mansions of the—I nearly said “upper ten”; but there were no upper ten in 'Frisco, it was too democratic—well then, the wealthy. Built of wood, their architecture was—what *can* one call it? Fantastic, bizarre, grotesque, it seemed as if each one strove to outshine its neighbor in weird gingerbread ornamentation. “Plentifully bedizened with jig-saw work,” to quote Kipling's description. Even at that they were more interesting than the bare rectangular stucco boxes with square holes in them with which the modern craze for stark simplicity disfigures our towns.

Out on the bay the nights were getting cooler, and we used to gather in the galley; the cook perched on his stool, the rest of us roosting on the lockers, smoking and yarning—the doctor was a great man for yarns. There might be some beer; seldom more than enough for one round; looking back, I think we must have been a very abstemious crowd. How snug it was, packed in that galley on a wet night; a big pot of coffee on the stove, and some little delicacies to eat that the cook would presently produce from one of his lockers, and when the flog in that confined space grew too thick, one could always open the door. Now and then one of the officers would look in; rather wistfully, I thought, as if he would have liked to forget that he was an officer and join us.

One night a terrific windstorm swept over the bay, and daybreak disclosed an awful mess. Several ships had torn from their moorings at the wharves; other ships, including our own, were dragging their anchors. Three or four of them had collided, and were mixed up together in a bunch with their yards and rigging all tangled up. The *Eleanor Margaret* was drifting rapidly; our heavy stern headed straight for a little British barque that was almost stationary. Her captain was yelling excitedly, “Look out! look out! your damn ship will run me down!” As if we didn’t know it! However, luck was with us, we missed him by a few feet. “By God, that was a narrow squeak!” called her old man to ours, in a relieved voice as we passed. We Presently came to a stop, far up the harbor; next day we were towed to our former anchorage and resumed our placid existence and there we remained ’till Christmas. The night before Christmas we rowed the Old Man ashore; we had leave to go up town, but one of us had to stay with the boat; otherwise we might have returned and found no boat there; for water front thieves had been busy lately. So we tossed for it and I was the goat. The night was warm, so after chatting a bit with the policeman on the wharf I lay down in the bottom of the boat with the flag around me, and the Old Man’s cushion for a pillow, and presently fell sound asleep. I suppose some practical joker must have unfastened the painter; for I woke in total darkness, uncertain whether I was really awake, or was having a nightmare. I had drifted far back under the maze of piles of the embarcadero, and had the devil’s own time finding my way out again.

Christmas over, we decided to move to a more sheltered anchorage; for it looked as if we would be stuck here for the rest of the winter; the freight rates were no better, and on top of that some speculators had cornered all the wheat and were holding it for higher prices. So we towed over to Saucelito, a delightful village facing a little bay of its own and backed with wooded hills, and there we remained until

spring.

There was another big four-master, with whose people we soon made friends. We both lay only a few hundred feet from the little landing stage; and what little work we had to do being usually finished by noon, we spent most afternoons ashore, exploring the village with its homey-looking cottages in their little flower gardens; and the surrounding hills. Facing the wharf was a small, white wooden hotel, very clean and spruce; probably a holiday resort in the summer. The proprietor was a most friendly man; he owned a remarkable black cat named Satan, of which he was tremendously proud, with very good reason. Behind his bar was a great mirror with rows of narrow shelves up against it that were well-filled with bottles and glasses. One day when we were in there Satan suddenly jumped up on the end of one of these shelves and picked his way along it, stopping every now and then to admire himself in the mirror. Then up onto the next shelf, taking delicate steps among the glassware without even touching it. "That cat," our hotel man said, "does that every day, just to amuse himself. I trained him to do it when he was just a kitten and he's never knocked anything over yet, and I have a standing bet of twenty bucks that he never will. Here Satan!" And Satan jumped down to be stroked and handed some delicacy from under the bar.

Just beyond this hotel was a greater attraction; the village store and post office, and there dwelt a beautiful lady, the storekeeper's daughter; so naturally, being acquainted with no other girls, we all fell in love with her. But it soon became evident that we were all out of the running except Priestly, one of the 'prentices from the other ship. The gal showed taste, anyway, for he had us all skinned in way of good looks. Then one day Priestly was missing—the beautiful girl had disappeared too; they had eloped!

A few days later we had orders to proceed to Port Costa for a load of wheat; a tug took us in charge and rather regretfully we moved away. There was rather a heavy fog, so instead of going ahead with a towrope, the tug was lashed alongside, for we had to go through the narrow Racoon Channel. And there occurred another of those delays that seemed to have dogged us since we left England.

We were proceeding cautiously through this channel—I remember the Old Man had expressed the opinion that it was too risky in the fog and that we should have gone around the far side of Angel Island—when suddenly bosun, who was up on the fo'c'sle-head, came running along the deck roaring, "Rocks right ahead! rocks right ahead!" And sure enough, looming through the fog quite close was a steep hill that we were heading right into. A terrific crash seemed inevitable, and I stood rooted to the deck with a horrid feeling of funk, waiting for things to come hurtling down from

aloft when we hit that nasty-looking hill. But no shock came; we ran up a soft, wide, muddy beach and came to a stop, with the tip of our bowsprit just a few yards from the cliff, while there was a crash of crockery and everything else loose on board, as *Eleanor Margaret* slowly leaned over on her side and came to rest in the mud. I can still see the bosun running along the deck; he tore off his hat and dashed it down in his excitement. "Go below and get Dutchy out of that!" he had shouted. Dutchy had been night watchman and was asleep in his bunk; and all he had said was "Wait'll the tam ship hit the rocks!" he thought his leg was being pulled, but next minute Dutchy knew better, as he and all his bedding were heaved out in a heap as the ship rolled over.

So there we lay for the next three days; tilted over at an angle of forty-five degrees. Occasionally curious groups of people would come along the beach, and we went ashore and talked to them and passed the time; on board you couldn't stand upright without hanging on to something; when you suddenly have to manage with everything cockeyed, as it were, it is decidedly uncomfortable; it doesn't seem natural to have to crawl up a deck instead of walking along it. But the doctor; a little thing like that wouldn't down him; how on earth he managed I can't imagine, but he gave us our three meals a day as usual, and we ate them the best way we could. In the meantime, the tug had sped back to 'Frisco for help; next morning she appeared with a helper, and at high water, with their steel hawsers attached to our stern, they hauled and strained until one after the other both hawsers broke. But nothing doing! *Eleanor Margaret* had rammed that sharp nose of hers so deep in the mud they couldn't budge her. So the tugs departed again for 'Frisco, and two days later reappeared with two companions, one of them the *Sea Lion*; the most powerful tug on the Pacific coast. High water again, and the strain taken by four tugs and eight steel hawsers, slowly she began to move, and with a cheer from the crowd that had assembled on the shore we slid once more into deep water, and rested on an even keel. And didn't it feel good! Then we headed for 'Frisco again; we would have to go into drydock at Hunter's Point to see what damage we had sustained. I had never seen a ship in drydock before, and somehow my aunt's namesake looked almost indecent standing up there with no water to cover her nakedness, as if she had shed all her clothes.

This Hunter's Point was a most dismal hole of a place; apart from the necessary sheds around the dock, there appeared to be nothing but a shabby boardinghouse, where, I suppose, some of the unfortunate dock laborers lived—a dismal unpainted dump which its proprietor had grandiloquently but inappropriately named the "Palace Hotel"; perhaps hoping it might acquire some reflected glory from its

namesake in the city. But his visions of glory must have long since disappeared; all day long he sat on the sagging veranda; if you said, "Good day," he just answered with a grudging monosyllable, as if resenting the interruption to his misanthropic meditations.

Adding to the general desolation of the scenery was a collection of sordid-looking huts which looked as if they had been dumped by a garbage wagon on to a rocky point not far from the dock. There lived a bunch of poverty-stricken Jap fishermen, who seemed to constitute the most of the community.

One evening Taylor said, "I'll go crazy if I spend another evening in this godforsaken hole, Easy; let's run into town." Connection with the city was made by a rattling little tram drawn by one weary-looking horse, who looked only slightly less depressed than its driver. It was a long dreary journey and we didn't go again; we concluded it was not worth it. We all conceived a great dislike for Hunter's Point; it was such a contrast to the bright lights of 'Frisco; and it didn't feel natural living on a ship that was not sitting on the water, where she ought to be; I always had the feeling that some of the props would give and she might fall over; and looking over the rail into the dark abyss of the dock gave me the creeps.

However all bad things come to an end; one fine day we were afloat again; the sun, which had not appeared since we entered the dock, shone again, and we headed once more for Port Costa. And this time we got there after a long day's run that was like a pleasure cruise; the evening saw us safely tied to the wharf alongside a great grain warehouse, and the next day the sacked wheat came pouring into our three hatches in a steady stream.

Port Costa was a curious place; long rows of grain warehouses, piled to the roof with sacks of wheat; there might now be no gold on the banks of the Sacramento, but there was certainly lots of wheat. It was the custom to paint the name of your ship on the side of these warehouses, and we added ours to the large number already there; many years after I saw a picture of these warehouses in a magazine, and the old ship's name was still there.

Beyond the warehouses, along the railroad which followed the shore, between the track and the river, was the town itself. A butcher shop, a grocery store, and seven saloons all in a row. In a little hollow on the other side of the track was a Chinese laundry, whose proprietor seemed to spend all his spare time in revolver practice.

One day as Jimmy and I were taking a stroll beyond the warehouse in the other direction, we came across the beginnings of another saloon. Back in a little grove of live oaks was a sort of shelter composed of four upright posts with a tent roof and

sides, and an open front, under which was a bar composed of planks resting on empty barrels. Behind this bar was a keg of whisky and a lanky individual with a straggly beard. He seemed to be one of those people who try everything once, but never stay with it long enough. His last enterprise had been chickens. "But hell," he said, "there ain't no money in raisin' chickens; they wouldn't lay no eggs anyways so I figgers I'll try this here saloon business; these hootch peddlin' hombres seems to git all the dough. I allow me hotel ain't no great shakes so fur, but I figgers it out this ways: when I've cashed in on this keg of rye, I'll have enough mazuma to buy two, three more; and when them's gone, I'll be fixed so's I can build me a real saloon. Have one on the house, boys!" And he filled three glasses with his doubtful-looking whisky, which, being polite boys, we unwillingly had to down. I doubt whether he ever did build his real saloon; probably when he had disposed of the last of his stock he figgered he would try some other business. I don't know where all these saloons could have got all their business; but the butcher was evidently prosperous; he had a large fat Mexican wife, on whose ample bosom he advertised his wealth in the shape of an enormous brooch made of five twenty-five dollar gold pieces overlapping each other.

The first Sunday we were there I was dozing on deck when I heard the sound of chimes; real church bells, and for a minute I imagined myself back in England, as the different changes pealed forth. Then I realized that this peaceful sound came from Benicia, a little town about a mile away across the river. Benicia, what a lovely name; its bells, mellow in the distance seemed to ring out a benediction across the water.

All over California were these delightful, rather sleepy little towns, with the names the old Spaniards gave them; when they had used up all the names of all the saints in the calendar, they still stuck to the religious motif—Los Angeles, Benicia, Sacramento. Familiarity has made these names commonplace but think of what some of them mean.

We finally had a full load and were towed back to 'Frisco, and after lying at anchor for a few days to settle various business, we left for the long journey back to England. Very regretfully; for we had thoroughly enjoyed our enforced stay, and in one way we had been lucky. Some of the ships, while waiting for the wheat, would receive orders to run up to Nanaimo for a cargo of coal. Now no captain enjoys having his ship all mucked up with coal dust; and worse than that, all deep-sea sailors were extremely leery about the passage between Vancouver Island and the mainland, with its many dangerous currents and reefs. We had escaped *that* anyway.

CHAPTER III

TO ENGLAND AND BACK AGAIN

The passage home was rather uneventful; I hardly even recollect rounding the Horn. With all of us there was a feeling of staleness as if we had had enough of the ship; and the crew we had secured from those foul boardinghouse masters proved a very second-rate lot.

Each day as I was borne farther and farther from those shores of the Golden West, I realized that that was where I wanted to be; somewhere on those shores lay the land of my dreams; nowhere else on earth would I ever be content.

One event comes back to me; one of our lady cats had presented us with a family and Scotty had made a nest for them at the foot of his bunk. One night when Scotty was on duty, a big hulking Swede who coveted those cats, removed them to his bunk. There followed a terrific fight, in which, to everybody's satisfaction, Scotty knocked the stuffing out of the Swede, and once more gathered his family to his bosom, or rather to the foot of his bunk.

We had a burial while at sea. A poor old chap, one of those we had gotten in 'Frisco died when we were about six weeks out. Sails had the unpleasant job of sewing the body up in canvas, weighted at the feet with odd bits of iron. Then came the funeral, the body resting on a plank sticking out over the rail, while the ship's company gathered uncomfortably around waiting for the Old Man to read the service for burial at sea. To our amazement, he began; "This man did not die as a Christian, I feel that the Lord would not think it fitting that I should read the Christian burial service over him, so I hereby commit his body to the deep. That is all." He made a sign to tilt the plank, and the body slid into the water, gradually disappearing as it bobbed out of sight astern.

We all gasped; my thoughts were that any man with decency would have risked the Lord's displeasure. Poor old Bill had been raving with fever before he died, and his language had been pretty blasphemous, but at that I think he'll have a better chance of getting into heaven than Captain Fishwick; I doubt if St. Peter would let him in at all. Well, the poor old chap had disappeared into the vast loneliness; another derelict of the sea; we thought we had seen the last of him, but had we? Next day a large albatross appeared and followed the ship for many days. "Ah," said one of the old sailors in an awed voice, "that will be the soul of old Bill!" For

many of those old shellbacks actually did believe that an albatross is the soul of a dead sailor.

We had a near collision with a Dutchman in the channel. She was a bluff-nosed brig who looked as if she was pushing half the channel in front of her. She was painted a bright green and had a windmill on her deck, which I was told was for working the pumps—a funny craft that looked as if she belonged to an old Dutch marine painting. We came so close that our main yardarm carried away some of her rigging; and I thought, as her square-built, red-faced skipper danced on his poop deck and bellowed a stream of abuse at us—what a lovely language Dutch must be for swearing!

The following day, something happened that might have ended in disaster. We had rounded the South Foreland and were off the Goodwins, with all sail set, and fortunately a light wind, when something suddenly snapped in the patent steering gear, and the wheel hung limp and useless in the steersman's hands. There was a shout of, "All hands shorten sail!" and a rush to the lazarette, from which came an ominous and terrifying sound.

In this lazarette, a space in the stern behind the cabins, was situated the rudderhead and tiller; the same thing as the tiller of a sailing boat, only this one was a great steel bar eight inches square and twelve feet long. One of the controlling tackles had parted and this great tiller was sweeping wildly backward and forward. It can, of course, be used for steering in an emergency; but this wild thing had to be captured first and the tackles attached; until that was done we were out of control and absolutely helpless. And we were in close proximity to dangerous sands; the anchor was let go, but that might not hold. We had a hectic time down there for some ten minutes; the bosun made fast the end of a chain to a ringbolt on one side of the lazarette and Larsen did the same on the other; then they both endeavored to get a loop of chain over that tiller without getting a swipe over the legs that would have broken them like matchsticks. Finally one of them succeeded, and we all hung on to that chain like grim death while the tackles were adjusted. But it was unpleasantly dangerous work while it lasted. However, when we were safe, we upped anchor, and proceeded under short sail until next day the steering gear had been repaired. And so we sailed into Hull, our port of destination.

I was glad to be going to see my people again; but as I sped southward in the train, through the towns and fields of England, I felt that I didn't belong there. England was a lovely country, but already I began to feel cramped; everything seemed so finished—set in an unchangeable pattern, each individual in his own little

social orbit and content to stay there, confirming to his own silly social conventions; they were exasperatingly “sot” in their ideas. You couldn’t do this and you couldn’t do that; there were so many things that just were “not done.”

“Oh hell!” I said to myself; “can I stick this?” I knew I couldn’t; I had absorbed too much of the freedom of the West.

It was suggested that I might go into some business office in London; or be articled to a solicitor and go in for law. What a life! Going up town by the same train day after day, week after week, year after year with a deadly soul-killing monotony; going to church every Sunday, playing tennis or cricket every Saturday afternoon with the same correct uninteresting people. I would rather be in overalls, doing some healthy honest work out in the sunshine. But that was one of those things that were not done in my own particular stratum of society—of course you could do that sort of thing in “the Colonies”; but if you did the same thing “at home” you would disgrace your family. Oh hell, again!

“The Colonies” was a vague term used which embraced all our possessions abroad; with some of my aunts I think it even included the United States, for they were most amazingly ignorant; those insular English!

I did think for a time that law might not be so bad; I had an older cousin who was a newly-fledged barrister; he had chambers in Lincoln’s Inn and was acting as junior to an admiralty court lawyer. I would drop in and chat with him—he didn’t seem to have much to do anyway. We used to have arguments about collisions at sea and so on, which would proceed somewhat in this way:

Jack (my cousin)—“There are two ships, A and B, approaching each other on such and such a course; the wind is blowing in this direction—”

Billy, interrupting—“But Jack, A couldn’t possibly be in that position with the wind where it is!”

Jack—“Well, we’ll just suppose she was.”

Billy—“But hang it all, she couldn’t be!”

Jack, irritably—“Dammit all, it’s only an imaginary case.”

Billy—“Look here, Jack, you’d better go to sea a year and then you’d know what you were talking about.”

Jack, sarcastically—“And I suppose that you’d argue that a divorce court lawyer should be an experienced divorcé or correspondent before he practiced!”

Billy—“Sure thing. Think what fun you’d have.”

Jack was a barrister and didn’t think training for a solicitor was so hot; for some mysterious reason barristers felt themselves socially superior to mere solicitors—another of those idiotic caste snobberies. Maybe if I had gone in for the law I might

have achieved a judgeship, with all the dignity pertaining thereto, as another younger cousin did; and so have been a success and a credit to my family, though I can't quite see myself that way. But I wonder if he has enjoyed life as I have? I doubt it, and would not at any time change places with him. Anyway there must be pioneers, so perhaps, in another way, I may even have been as much use to the world.

It had also been suggested that I might stay at sea, and my aunt saying, deprecatingly, implying what she thought about it, "It would be all right if he were in the navy." Anyway a life in the Merchant Service did not appeal to me; you might enjoy it while you were young, but there was little to look forward to. And the pay! I had a friend who was fourth officer on the Orient line; he had a master's ticket, as all their officers had to have, and his pay barely enough to cover the cost of his uniforms and extra mess bills.

But a life in England would be worse; oh, those silly conventions! One day Uncle Willie had asked me to have lunch with him in town; it was a hot day, and I was clad in comfortable white flannels and a straw hat, and appeared at his office in this unconventional garb. "Good Lord, Billy!" exclaimed my uncle, "you don't think you can come to—" his club, or wherever it was—"in that getup, do you?" So we went to some more obscure place, which I daresay was more comfortable.

On another occasion, I was walking with a younger uncle on a West End street; I filled my pipe and was about to light up, when, "Great Scott, Billy," exclaimed this uncle in a shocked voice, "you can't do that!" I had forgotten that no gentleman smoked a pipe on those particular streets after a certain time of day. Oh, my sainted grandmother! what a society; was it any wonder that so many of the young Englishmen fled to the Colonies?

Well, there was another convention. Could I ever get accustomed to them all? I guessed correctly, that I couldn't. England was a grand little country; I was not blaming her, but I had acquired different habits and customs, and I just didn't fit in. It was all those absurd cramping taboos that bothered me; that and the deadly industrialism and the awful gap between the rich and the poor; conditions that were non-existent in the West. But the longer I stayed in England the more restless I felt; the more longing I had to be up and away to what seemed my natural home.

I think everyone who has once lived there feels much today as I did then. Just the other day I read a very beautiful poem by Arthur Stringer that vividly expresses my own feelings and doubtless those of hundreds of other exiles who, for a time, have returned to England:

A land, for all its wounds, where roses blow
And lawns are soft with summer rains,
A land of languid hours and ivied homes
And old men, walking older lanes.

An ordered land that broods on Yesterday,
Of eyes that turn to earlier years,
Of haunted dusks and hills that harbor dreams,
A country old in time and tears.

But oh, my heart goes, homesick, back today,
Back to the wide, free prairie's sweep,
Back to the pines that brought the sunset near,
Back where the great white Rockies sleep!

For I am tired of dusk and dream and rose,
Of ghosts and glories dead and gone;
Give me the open trail, the upward sweep,
The New World and the widening dawn.

But I have always been glad that I was in London at that time; for I had a ringside seat at an event that was of historical importance—the Great London Dock Strike; the opening scene of that long struggle between labor and capital. I put labor first because it was labor that started it—with very good cause.

I might say that I played a minor part in it; for I several times acted as messenger between my uncle's office and the dock, where they were trying to unload ships with office staffs. This particular dock was shut in from the street with walls at least twelve feet high; the massive gates locked and barred; outside, pickets patrolled up and down. They regarded me rather suspiciously, but always let me pass. I probably looked to them like a harmless kid, although I felt rather important: I was the connecting link between the office and the dock—there was no phone.

I rapped at the little wicket gate; a policeman on the inside opened it cautiously; looked at my pass, and let me through. I felt much safer inside those walls; I hadn't liked the looks of those pickets! At the far end of the dock I found our ship—she was being unloaded by a bunch of amateur stevedores, evidently clerks. They seemed to be having rather a good time, too; I daresay they were glad to get away from the office and do some honest manual labor without losing caste.

On the dock a donkey engine was being operated by an elderly white-whiskered gentleman in his shirt sleeves and a top hat; he obviously knew his job and was enjoying it too. As he appeared to be the boss, I gave my message to him, and he told me that they were all camping in one of the dock warehouses for safety. I suppose they would now be called blacklegs.

The organizer and most prominent figure in this strike was the famous John Burns; and one day I had a close-up view of him. My uncle's office was just opposite that of the Orient S.S. Co., and one day I was looking from the window when a wagon was driven up and the horses unhitched, leaving it standing in the street. Then the head of a procession coming from the East End appeared; the dock strikers were coming! They halted; soon the whole street as far as you could see was jammed with them. Then there stepped from the crowd a striking-looking man with a little black beard, neatly dressed in a blue serge suit, a "boater" straw hat and a red tie; a man who looked full of life and energy.

He climbed into the wagon, there were thunderous cheers, and he began to address the crowd. So this was John Burns—I had heard of him as a mischievous demagogue; a sort of anarchist. But I quite liked the looks of this chap. He seemed full of pep, but he did not rave; he had to shout, but he smiled most of the time—an encouraging sort of smile.

Up in the Orient line building, looking out of the plate glass window of what was their board room, stood several portly men—directors I suppose—regarding this disturbing scene with disapproval: John Burns caught sight of them and with a mischievous, boyish grin, pointed them out to the crowd. There was a roar of laughter, then a tremendous chorus of boo's, until John held up his hand for silence. I couldn't help laughing when I saw the angry faces of those old gentlemen at the window! Then he called for three cheers for the laboring men; the crowd shouted themselves hoarse; he gave some word of command, and they formed up and marched past the wagon, with John waving his boater hat and cheering them on. Quite an inspiring fellow.

Again I saw the strikers, twenty thousand strong, marching from the East End to Trafalgar Square to hold a mass meeting. It was an orderly and most impressive procession, carrying banners, led by a man with a large red flag; several bands playing the "Marsellaise"; that, being at the time, I suppose, the only march suitable for the occasion. It really sounded most thrilling heard under these circumstances; with these men, in spite of their red flag, it certainly did not mean anything like revolution. At the head of this monstrous parade of the workers marched four solitary bobbies. It gave an air of authority to the procession; as if officialdom

acknowledged the right of the people to air their grievances.

Trafalgar Square became the accepted place for these mass meetings; the pedestals of the lions at the base of the Nelson Column making a fine rostrum for the speakers; while the square would accommodate many people, and the terrace in front of the National Gallery formed a good balcony from which I watched several of these great gatherings; the square, a sea of faces as far as you could see—the voice of the people, insisting on their right to be heard.

At first they were orderly; men like Burns opposed anything in the way of violence; but later on the rowdy and criminal elements of the city took advantage of the general unrest, and there was general hell to pay, and the police had to take a hand. But they never interfered unless it was absolutely necessary.

On one occasion I was watching a fiery orator—I think he must have been an anarchist; he was gesticulating and shouting wild imprecations against everything in the way of established authority. He cursed the parliament and the police, the House of Lords and a lot of other things; then he got around to the queen and made some disparaging remark about that estimable old lady. Now no British crowd, however much in revolt, would stand for that; this rather ridiculous bloke could cuss anything else if he felt that way—but not the queen. They made a rush for him with the evident intention of beating him up. Then about a dozen bobbies who had been standing in front, looking extremely bored with his oratory, butted in, and forming a protective cordon around him, escorted him to safety.

One thing I remember about this particular meeting is that the base of the Nelson Column was draped with a large red streamer bearing the words, “Vive la Republique!” It is quite likely that no one in the crowd knew what it meant. Probably they took it as some battle cry of freedom.

I think it would be quite wrong to identify the dock laborers or their leaders with the rioting. But the strike spread to other workers, including those responsible for lighting the city, and London, for about a week, was in semidarkness, making a great opportunity for robbery and lawlessness of every description: The respectable part of the community began to get a bit panicky. However, the lights came on again; I think probably that the leaders, being essentially decent men, and seeing the danger, must have called off this part of the strike.

Another scene I recall: I was standing looking over the parapet of Holborn Viaduct at the street below. Up the street came a body of strikers led by an elderly man, he was in workman's clothes, but he walked with an air of authority. From the other direction there marched, with military precision, a squad of police, headed by a soldierly stern-faced officer; he also was elderly, with grey hair and mustache. I held

my breath: would there be a clash when they met? Suddenly the officer held up his white-gloved hand; he took a step up to the leader of the workers and seemed to ask him some questions. Then he gave an order to the police: they formed in single file on each side of the body of workmen; and with both leaders walking side by side at the head, the procession moved on its way. The tension was over. I heard later that they were on their way to the Mansion House to interview the Lord Mayor. This was after there had been rioting and the police were taking no chances.

One effect of this strike I saw from this London bridge—as far as the eye could see, looking down the river, it was jammed with ships unable to unload; all perishable cargo was dumped in the river, and I daresay many poor people in small boats garnered good dinners, for anything in the way of meat, fruit or vegetables had to be thrown out.

I have said that the strikers had good cause—the pay of the lowest class of dock workers, the men who would get casual employment when extra hands were needed, was sixpence—twelve cents—an hour. When word got out that there was a job of unloading, perhaps a hundred hopeful men would gather at the dock gates—twenty or thirty might be lucky and be taken on. This job might only last a few hours; and then they were let out. And one of their demands, I believe the principal one, was simply that they should be guaranteed a full day's work! That sort of thing seems almost incredible now; people were only just beginning to realize that the common laborer had any rights. And labor was being organized by a very different type to some of the modern agitators; too many of whom are obviously working for their own profit and ambition. And most workmen know it, but seem helpless to do anything about it. But some of the labor leaders of that day, men of high social standing such as, William Morris, Hyndman, and Cunningham Graham, had nothing to gain and much to lose; they were vituperated by the press, and called traitors to their class by friends.

Most of these upper-class friends of the working man were moderate in their views; but Cunningham Graham definitely was not—he loved action. In one of the doings in Trafalgar Square, he got a crack on the head, and was arrested by the police. He was a friend of my lawyer cousin; and how Jack chortled when he heard about it! “Serves him right for getting mixed up with a lot of socialists!” that was his comment. But from what I heard of Cunningham Graham, I think he rather enjoyed that sort of thing. I never heard how this strike ended, for when it did, I was far out at sea again; and when I reached my destination I had forgotten all about it.

Shortly before this a friend of mine had gone out to Vancouver Island; and one

day my good old Uncle Willie told me that a ship, whose owners he knew, would soon be sailing for San Francisco, and that they would give me a berth with the 'prentices. So I wrote my friend and told him I was coming; a few days later I was on the deck of a ship. I felt free again.

She was a lovely little ship, the *Grasmere*; a barque of twelve hundred tons. And her Old Man, Captain Carter, was a fine man; as different from old Fishwick as a man possibly could be. It was his first command, and he was immensely proud of his ship, and kept her as smart as a man-of-war.

One of the 'prentices was a cousin or nephew of Wylie, the great marine painter, and quite an artist himself; he painted several pictures for the officers' saloon and the captain put him and me to painting the ship's name and house flag on all the boats and lifebuoys, and do sort of interior decorating on the ship; a very nice job, for we got out of all other duty while we were doing it.

All the officers were young men, the 'prentices were nice fellows; and in great contrast to my previous voyage we had fine weather the whole way; leaving England in November, as we sailed south we followed the summer all the way round, passing the Horn in midsummer. And there was nothing bleak or threatening this time; the air was fresh and exhilarating and alive with sea birds; and the night watch a pure delight, watching the sunset merge into the sunrise; it did not get dark at all and you almost hated to turn in when your watch was over. We had a fine run up the Pacific; and after we had docked in 'Frisco Captain Carter asked me to stay with him if I felt like it. I liked him and his ship so much that I was almost tempted to do so; but he quite understood when I declined, and told me I could use the ship as my headquarters as long as she was in.

So I said good-by to the sea. In a way, somewhat regretfully; even now the smell of pine tar, that all pervading smell of the sailing ship, gives me a feeling of nostalgia—I would like to be back on deck again.

Possibly I have been a bit long-winded in the telling, but I think my experiences have been worth telling; those two voyages were typical ones of an era that has gone forever, and the roll of those who manned the old Cape Homers will soon be closed.

One thing I would like to add—after a lapse of nearly sixty years my use of nautical terms may not always have been strictly accurate. Perchance some ancient mariner may read this book (I hope he will) and with glee pick out these errors, and make little marginal corrections, as so many of us love to do. I hope he does; and that if it should be a library book, that the librarian won't erase them. I often wish they would leave those interesting marginal notes!

My uncle had given me a letter of introduction to the Spreckles, who were very big people in California; owners of a Pacific steamship line; a fleet of sailing ships in the South Sea Islands; large sugar plantations in the Hawaiians, and were interested in many other things. So after making myself as presentable as I could, I went to their office, which looked rather imposing as things went then, and feeling somewhat awed by all the splendor, I presented my letter to the most important-looking gent I could see in the busy office, and asked diffidently if I could see Mr. Spreckles. "I think he's busy just now," said he, "but I'll go see." In a few minutes he returned. "Yes, Mr. Spreckles can see you; just follow me." He ushered me through a door marked "Private," protected from the public by an outer barrier of busy clerks at many desks, and I entered the inner sanctum of this great business. A beautiful room with heavy mahogany furniture, a deep-piled oriental carpet on the floor. It looked business-like and comfortable and somehow not overpowering at all; perhaps this was due to the personality of the man who rose from behind the large leather-covered desk at which he had been sitting—a young, well-groomed man, with a neat mustache and hair and a pleasant, serious face. We shook hands and he asked me to sit down and offered me a cigarette.

This I believe was Adolph Spreckles, son of the old Claus Spreckles who had started sugar growing on a large scale as the result of winning a great block of land from King Kalakaua of Hawaii at a poker game. Then followed a long pleasant chat; he told me he was just leaving for San Diego where they were building a sugar refinery; asked me to come and see him when he returned in about three weeks and he would see what he could do for me. What a decent chap! I was only a kid looking for a job, yet he treated me with as much courtesy as if I had been a bank president. I couldn't help thinking how different it would have been in London. I pondered over what he had said; it seemed to open up great possibilities. I liked the looks of their liners that flew the Hawaiian flag—Hawaii was then an independent kingdom ruled over by Queen Liliuokalani—I might get on one of them. Or I might seek adventure in the South Sea Islands on one of their trading schooners, or get some good job ashore. For Spreckles had looked like a man you could depend on. Then one day I saw a ship leaving for Victoria. It made me feel restless; some insistent urge made me feel I should get on. There were two little steamers, the *Walla Walla* and the *Umatilla*, that made weekly trips up the coast, so after leaving a note of apology to Spreckles, and having a farewell beer with my old shipmates, I booked a passage on the *Walla Walla* and went on board. There were two classes, first and second, so, not wishing to land in a new country completely broke, I went second. Although it saved me ten dollars which I needed badly, I rather wished I

hadn't, for after the boat pulled out I discovered they were taking four or five hundred men to Seattle, to work on some railroad: the sort of men who are aptly described as the "scum of Europe."



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

The provincial parliament buildings, Victoria in 1889. Commonly known as the "Birdcages"

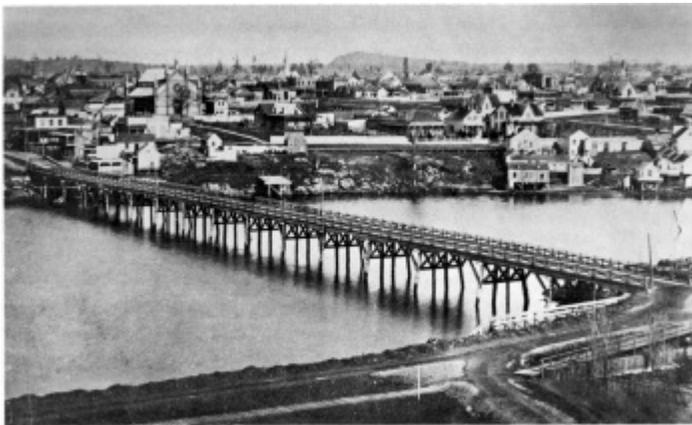


Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

Bridge over Victoria Harbor in 1889. The site of the bridge is now occupied by the causeway. The harbor to the right of it was filled in and the well-known Empress Hotel now stands there.

To accommodate these men the holds had been fitted up with rough lumber bunks with no bedding but straw, and they were fed on boards laid across trestles. This was the second-class accommodation. They were the most cut-throat looking rabble I had ever seen, and you can imagine what that hold was like. The *Walla*

Walla—"It's a darn good name for her," said one of her crew, "for she sure does waller!" And she did.

Running up the bay, her decks were crowded with happy dagoes singing and playing cards: we got outside the heads and she began to roll; one by one the card games broke up, and soon the rail on both sides was thickly lined with unhappy dagoes. The scene in the hold was indescribable; I had thought I could stick anything, but I couldn't go that.

The first officer seemed a decent sort of chap, so, sailor to sailor, I asked him if I might stay on deck; he rustled up some blankets, and I and a big Scotsman, who seemed like a lost dog and had attached himself to me, were allowed to do so for the rest of the passage—luckily it did not rain.

This Scotsman was somewhat of a character, gentle, well-educated, very shabby; the sort who had probably been a "failure" at something. The poor beggar was very dizzy and helpless from the *Walla Walla's* incessant rolling, so I became his good angel and brought his meals up for him. He was fond of quoting Bobbie Burns and Shakespeare, and we discoursed on many things, so the time didn't pass too badly. A likeable fellow; I hope he found a niche somewhere.

We followed the coast a mile or so offshore and I never could have imagined so many trees in the world; for all the way up, from the shore line up over the mountains as far as one could see, a dense, unbroken blanket of timber, eight hundred miles of it. Then, in the early morning of the fourth day, I walked down the gangplank on to the wharf at Victoria; my trunk following me on a truck. The boat pulled out; and there was I and all my worldly goods, sitting on that wharf, with not another human being in sight. Well, what now? I thought.

Then a door of a little shed opened, and a friendly little man with a bushy brown beard sauntered up. "Good morning," he said. "I'm the customs officer, and I suppose I ought to have a look at that trunk of yours." He certainly didn't look like a customs officer, for he wore no uniform; but I took his word for it and opened my trunk. Squatting beside it on an upturned box he proceeded to go through the contents in a leisurely way. He seemed to take a most friendly interest in me; what I intended to do, and so on, and spotting an album of photographs, he wanted to know all about my family and the places I had pictures of. A most unusual customs man; but, as I was soon to discover, quite typical of Victoria.

I had expected to be met by my friend, since I had written him from 'Frisco; but he was somewhere up island and had never received my letter. So I asked my friendly officer where I could find a moderately priced stopping place, and he directed me to the Occidental Hotel. He also wrote out the address of an old lady

who had a room to let. "But you'd better spend the day looking round first," he said. "We can carry your trunk into my office, and I'll take care of it until you want it." What a nice little man! But I found that all Victoria people were like that. What I wanted above anything else for the immediate present, after three days of very sketchy meals, was a very large breakfast, so I started out for town, past the old "Bird Cages," as the Parliament Buildings were called, and over the long pile bridge on Government Street, with on the upper side the muddy smelly slough where the Empress Hotel now stands. It was very early in the morning—for Victoria—not yet nine o'clock. I met very few people, and only one vehicle, which to my astonished eyes was a real English four-wheeled cab—the sort we used to call a "growler"—cabby and all; he greeted me with a cheerful, "Good morning," and a flourish of his whip. Soon the smell of coffee led me into a snug little restaurant; there was a large picture of Queen Victoria on the wall, and the white-aproned waiter might have been imported from an Old Country inn. It all felt very homey.

I stayed at the Occidental for a few days; it was a nice homelike, spotlessly clean place. I had a comfortable little room; well-cooked meals that satisfied even my youthful appetite; and all for a dollar a day! There was also a waitress who seemed to take a sort of older sister interest in me—I suppose I did look very callow! She sat and had breakfast with me one morning when I was late; I was not accustomed to waitresses being so familiar but it was very nice. And I was rather astonished at the delicious salmon that was always on the menu, for in England it was an expensive luxury. I felt that I had struck a land flowing with milk and honey!

However, a dollar a day was making an alarming hole in my pocketbook; so I went to see the old lady, and rented a room from her for a dollar a week. And *she* took a motherly interest in me; when she heard I was going into the interior, she said, "Oh, you must give me the address of your relations in the Old Country; so many people go into those awful mountains and are never heard of again!"

I won't say that Victoria was a little bit of England, for at least two hundred and fifty writers have already said so, but it had that peculiar British atmosphere of unruffled tranquillity which even today it still retains; even the great influx of troops and shipyard workers has changed it very little. Good old Victoria! It still remains serene and undisturbed. Long may she stay so. The people I met in the ships and on the streets were the most leisurely I had seen, yet there was a great deal of business transacted there: they just did things without unnecessary fuss. And they were all so kindly, these so English people; it was as if the warm sun of the Pacific had melted their starched shirt exteriors and exposed the natural friendliness that lay beneath. After California they seemed almost indolent; the Englishman considers everything at

length before he does it—often an unconsonable length; the Californian says, “Oh heck, let’s do something, anyway; we’ll see whether it was necessary when we’ve done it.” Yet they had much more in common with each other than with all the rest of Canada or the United States, with which they seemed to entirely disassociate themselves. Both Californians and British Columbians had an intense love for the Pacific slope.

I spent a very pleasant two weeks there, during which I struck a job; how this came about you will read in Part Two. It didn’t take long to explore the city; ten minutes walk in any direction and you were amongst fields or in rough country roads, with here and there a rose-covered English-looking cottage. The old wooden cathedral stood on its hill with open land all round; and Fort Street, after a quarter mile or so of little houses and stores, petered out in a rutty road that trailed up the hill on which stood “Carey Castle,” the residence of the lieutenant governor; and “Dunsmuir Castle,” the pseudo-baronial castle newly built by a coal millionaire. At Beacon Hill were just the beginnings of a park, but at that time it was just a waste of broom and stunted oaks, as was all the country beyond; it reminded one of the South Downs of England—a delightful place to ramble in.

This little capital city appealed to me so much that I thought that some day I would like to live there—and I did; but only after a lapse of nearly fifty years. For little though I guessed it at the time, it was in Victoria that I had found my destiny; there, across the Straits of Georgia, beyond the mountains across which I should soon be bound, lay that lovely valley that had beckoned me—the land of my dreams.



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia
The old cathedral, Victoria in 1889

PART II

THE LAND OF MY DREAMS

CHAPTER I

ENTRANCE TO THE VALLEY

In the spring of 1889, when by a stroke of good luck, fate decreed that I should see that lovely valley for the first time, most people, including myself, had never heard of the Okanagan. To a few people in the coast cities it was a remote place somewhere up in the mountains of the interior from which an occasional traveler in the shape of a cattle rancher spending a holiday in Victoria would appear, and into which young men seeking adventure would now and then disappear. To the rest of the world it was probably quite unknown, and I imagine that travelers on the recently completed C.P.R. little dreamed that beyond that narrow gap in the mountains at Sicamous, extending some one hundred and fifty miles south to the international boundary, lay one of the most beautiful, and, as was later on discovered, one of the most fertile valleys in the world. Surrounded by great mountain ranges, and untouched by the transcontinental railroads, it was cut off and sheltered from the disturbances and worries of the outside world; and those fortunate people who had wandered in there seemed to have evolved a way of life which I doubt that we shall ever see again; a carefree, happy existence that to me was reminiscent of schoolboy days. Everybody seemed to be perennially young; we all knew each other and were known by our first names, as if we were members of one big family, unless one had acquired a nickname, or was a "Mac" something or other, or was or had been a member of one of the learned professions, in which case one was "Doc" or "Judge" as the case might be—"Judge" including everybody in the legal profession. There was also a sprinkling of captains, majors, and colonels, with more or less right to their rank.

This custom certainly had its disadvantages and sometimes led to confusion; for instance, in a certain football eleven we once had four Billys, including myself—I never had been called Billy before, but just naturally seemed to acquire the name as soon as I entered the valley. One was apt to forget what a man's surname was, or one might not even know it, as in the case of an old chap at Enderly known far and wide as "Uncle Billy." The time came when Uncle Bill died, and lo, nobody knew what his real name was, and I forget whether we ever did discover it. Also there was Price Ellison. I had known him some time before I knew that his surname was Ellison, for everyone called him Price, and even after he entered the government and

became Minister of Finance, he was always addressed as Price—except on very formal occasions, or unless he was being introduced to a stranger. I remember a friend of mine, a rather dignified and correct English lady who had only recently arrived, and was not accustomed to our unconventional ways, being extremely astonished one day when she was talking to Tom, her man of all work, and Price Ellison appeared on the scene. “Hello, Price,” said Tom; and “This is Mr. Price Ellison, Mrs. Wood.” Price shook hands and departed just as I came up, and when shortly afterwards Mrs. Wood asked me who the delightful old gentleman was, I told her he was the Minister of Finance; I suppose that having just left the class-conscious atmosphere of England she might be excused for seeing something quite funny in being introduced to such an exalted personage by her hired man.

However, this is just one example of the friendly spirit of equality that existed at that time. Visiting lieutenant governors and such shed their importance (probably they were glad to do so) when they got off the main line at Sicamous, and just became “one of the boys” for the duration of their stay in the valley. True, when the governor-general, Lord Aberdeen, and Lady Aberdeen, paid us an official visit, we made a stab at putting on some ceremony into the necessary public function, but as no one had any idea as to what was done or what just wasn’t done when dealing with governor-generals, I expect our efforts were more amusing than dignified, but doubtless his Excellency got quite a kick out of the proceedings.

One of our colonels was Colonel Forrester, who ran the Lake View Hotel at Sicamous; a very comfortable clean little place which he had opened during the construction of the C.P.R. He was distinctly a character—tall, lean, and erect, with a grey imperial beard, he always wore a wide-brimmed soft black felt hat, a black frock coat and very shiny pointed black shoes, and usually carried a black gold-headed cane. He spoke with a decided nasal twang, and was in fact a perfect example of the Kentucky colonel of fiction in the flesh—which I believe he actually was. He claimed that he had served with Gordon in the Boxer Rebellion in China; and in one of his more expansive moments assured us that he had refused command of the Chinese army himself, and had recommended the promising young English captain, Gordon, for the job. As he had so many fantastic yarns about his past life we thought this was one of them. However, some years later he died in New York, and in a short biography of his life appearing in one of the leading American magazines, we discovered that he actually had served under Gordon as a colonel in China. Another of his yarns was that he had returned to San Francisco from China with three million dollars but had lost it there in real estate. But just how he came to be running a little hotel in the hinterland of British Columbia remained a mystery.

I had occasion at one time to spend a week end at his hotel at Sicamous—I happened to be the only guest and I think the old chap was glad to have someone to talk to. Anyway we spent a good deal of the time tramping up and down the hotel veranda (the colonel had a peculiar way of walking, with his long thin black shoes pointing very much outwards which seemed to just fit in with the rest of his appearance). Every now and then in between yarns about his astonishing adventures, he would invite me into the bar, and if I suggested that it was my turn, would insist on the drinks being on the house. Finally the end of my stay came on Monday morning and I asked for my bill. “Oh, hell,” said the colonel, in a tone of voice that suggested that he did not like to discuss such things, “suppose we call it a dollar.”

“But great Scott, Colonel,” I said, “how on earth do you make this place pay?”

“Waal,” said he, “when one of these fool Englishmen comes along, I just soak the son of a gun.”

When I reminded him that I was one of them myself, he explained that I was not one of the fool sort. Evidently I had become acclimatised, and I felt quite flattered. One of his peculiarities was that he refused to charge a lady traveling alone anything at all, which was a bit embarrassing for her if she was a stranger and had not heard of this peculiar custom. I suppose with his old world courtliness he just could not see himself taking money from a lady.

Colonel Forrester was quite a character and he was the first of many that I was to meet later on in the Okanagan. Looking back, it seems to me that one of the most remarkable things about the people was their outstanding personality—every man was distinctly himself, and about the only thing that was common to all was that feeling of good fellowship, and independence. As one man very picturesquely put it, “I like to feel that I can look any man in the face and tell him to go to hell.” One can truly say that they were the “rugged individuals” that certain modern reformers dislike so much, though why they should be blamed for all the bad things that happen it is hard to see. It is certain that it encouraged a spirit of equality rather than otherwise, and it still is more certain that new country would never be opened up without men and women of this type. It would be a sorry sort of world without them; but we needn’t worry—in spite of all the reformers’ efforts to squash them, they will always be here. At least that is my hope, for it would be a pretty flat and uninteresting sort of existence if this particular dream of Socialists came true, and if it should I hope I will have joined the good old-timers in whatever place they happen to be.



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

The first schoolhouse in Spallumcheen, North Okanagan

I imagine that all frontier people have this characteristic of individuality—were it not so they would hardly be pioneers; in any case when a man's thrown on his own resources in a new country he either develops a character or fades away back to civilization.

There is another thing that occurs to me about these people; a common saying in those days was, "Going out West to make a fortune." Well, I feel quite sure that idea did not enter much into the dreams of those who first came to the Okanagan. I should say that what took them there was a spirit of adventure, and a desire to get away from the cramping and uncomfortable respectability of what we call civilization, to where they had freedom and space to move around in and do what they felt like doing. Certainly that was my idea and that of the large number of young Englishmen who came later on. We were a pretty lively bunch and used to whoop her up considerably at times, and probably the way we lived would have seemed deplorable to our respectable relations at home, but we certainly enjoyed life and most of us eventually settled down as the country did the same and became quite respectable citizens and as to making fortunes in the Okanagan, I never heard of anyone doing that—it used to be a sort of joke that if you once got in the valley you would never amass enough money to get out again. No one seemed to have any real money and we managed to get along very well without it. However, I was once rated as a capitalist, probably a unique distinction in those parts. It happened in this way: I was at that time enjoying a period of rest which was neither well earned nor much needed, but the result of one of these overpowering desires to drop work and enjoy things—when an old chap who was taking the census came along. When he came to the question, "What is your occupation?" we were rather stuck as I had

none for the time being. I explained that I was living on my income. He looked over some papers that he had and finally said, "Well, the definition of that seems to make you a capitalist"; and having a sense of humor he described me accordingly. So somewhere in Canadian records I am rated as a capitalist, and I hope my Communist friends do not hold it against me if they find it out. However, I expect a more strictly legal term for me would have been a "vagabond without visible means of support."

A great many of the young Englishmen were public school boys and naturally one might not expect them to fit in exactly, with such unaccustomed surroundings, but they did, and were undoubtedly a useful influence on what, lacking a better term, I will call the social atmosphere.

There is a tendency with certain modern writers to refer rather sneeringly to what they are pleased to call "the old school tie," a phrase that has become so common that one gets weary of it. As far as I can make out it implies that a public school man is a snob and altogether useless in any practical way; but I would like to see some of these same writers in the same positions that these boys often found themselves and see whether they would have stood the racket as well. One good result would be that they would certainly have dropped their blah about "the old school tie," and might have become good fellows themselves. There was certainly no snobbishness about these public school boys, in those happy days we had either forgotten, or some of us had never known, what a snob was. They were invariably what we nowadays call "good mixers." A few may have been wasters, but I cannot recall one who truthfully could be called a "rotter." Occasionally when one had just received a remittance from home he would gather in his friends and they would proceed to town to celebrate. Whisky was cheap in those days and good; think of it, O ye modern toppers, good Hudson's Bay Scotch at a dollar and a quarter a quart, and no permit needed! But anyway, the bust was not a custom confined to the remittance man, but was quite common among other members of the community, but the methods differed somewhat. With the young Englishman it was a sort of cheerful letting off steam. With the lumberjack or the cowboy or old miner it was quite a serious proceeding—they laid themselves out to get good and drunk, and most of them considered that a biennial drunk was good for their health—it acted as an antidote to all the pork and beans they had been feeding on and sort of toned up the system. The usual proceeding was to come to town with his hard-earned roll, buy an outfit of new clothes, complete down to socks and a pocket handkerchief, a very gaudy tie, and occasionally a bottle of scent or hair oil; and then, having insured himself as it were against destitution he would go on to more important matters and

proceed to really enjoy himself, which meant getting good and drunk and remaining so until he felt that his system was toned up enough and that it would be a pleasant change to get back to work again. Some of the more careful ones would hand over part of their roll to the bartender, with strict orders not to let them have any of it back until they had sobered up—and the old-time bartenders could always be trusted, contrary to much that was said about them. In fact they have been quite undeservedly maligned—a good bartender had to be honest, sober, genial and tactful; he had to have the necessary muscle to be able to chuck out a fighting drunk, and the tenderness necessary to put an incapable one to bed; and I wonder how many men could shape up to those requirements? A few that I have known did; they were particularly capable men and there was great competition among the hotel men of the interior to secure their service.

The drinks available were very limited in variety, if not in quantity—as far as I remember, rye, Scotch, and Irish were about the only choice. Certainly the liquor that you did get was good. One heard of the brands known as “rot gut,” and there was also the “forty rod” whisky so called because a man was supposed to be able to walk only forty rods before he dropped in his tracks, but I suppose that was legendary, perhaps the favorite tippie of Paul Bunyan. At any rate I never encountered these famous brands. I did once ask for beer—the bartender gave me a curious and rather pitying look, as if he might say to himself, “What’s wrong with these English fellers, anyway?” After a search behind the bar he disinterred a couple of bottles of very flat and lukewarm beer. There was no such thing as soda water or such like sissy stuff—there would be a jug of water on one end of the bar; you drank your whisky straight and diluted it in your insides with a follow-up drink of water from the jug if you felt that it needed diluting—this was known as a “chaser” and was usually taken apologetically. There was also no measuring of one’s tot as in England, the bottle was put on the bar and you helped yourself ad lib. However, there must have been a large profit, as the smallest sum taken over the bar was fifty cents; this was good for either two or three drinks—such a thing as ordering a lone drink was one of those things that simply wasn’t done—if you needed one very badly and no one else was available, the correct thing was to treat the bartender. I remember a bartender friend of mine asking me one day—referring to another of my friends, a retired army man who had recently arrived, “Say, what sort of feller is this English dude, anyhow, he comes in here and has a beer all to himself.” I explained to the bartender that it was not considered bad manners and also gave the tip to the captain so that he observed the rules in the future. I believe he even apologized to the bartender, for he was a good sort with a sense of humor—other countries, other

manners.



Photo by the author On Mara Lake



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia The Red Star on the Spallumcheen River

Maybe my readers think I am rather letting myself go on the subject of barrooms, but they were so much a part of life in those days that they cannot be passed over with a mere mention, and I confess I have very happy memories of them. There was actually very little rowdyism and a good deal of friendly companionship that seems entirely lacking in the modern beer parlor (what a name!) which seems deadly dull by comparison, although if a name can damn anything the “Beverage Parlors” of Eastern Canada must be worse. Anyway if people will drink, the old-time barrooms supplied a much more cheerful atmosphere than that of a hotel bedroom, which today is about the only place where a stranger can drink anything other than “parlor beer” without being arrested.

I expect I was better fitted out at the start for the life than most other English boys, most of whom had just left comfortable homes, for I had been for several voyages round the Horn in a windjammer, so roughing it was no new experience. After all, roughing it is rather a meaningless term—you never think you are roughing it when you are, if you see what I mean, and if you don't I am unable to explain it any better. And the same thing applies to adventure, which is simply something you have not been accustomed to before. Personally I should be far more comfortable in the wilds of British Columbia or other such places where roughing it is supposed to be carried on than I would be in the middle of New York—and undoubtedly much safer too.

I also was lucky in having a good job to start with. I had come out to join a friend on Vancouver Island—but here fate stepped in and switched me off to the Okanagan. The friend did not meet me in Victoria as he was supposed to do, and while waiting for him I looked up several people to whom I had letters of introduction. One of these was Major Wilson, a well-known early resident of Victoria. As a boy I had always looked on retired majors as rather important and pompous sort of persons and was quite surprised when I found this one in a pokey little office which seemed to be half full of sacks of flour and oatmeal—the original office of Brackman and Kerr. He was taking things very easy in a swivel chair, with his feet on the desk, smoking his morning cigar; a perfect example of the Victoria businessman of the day. He proved to be most genial and friendly, although I was only a kid looking for a job. He offered to take me round town to see the sights in the evening and it was while this was in progress that we ran into C. E. Perry the engineer. The major introduced me as a young friend who was hard up and wanted a job (quite true, for I only had a very few dollars, which is the right condition for arriving in a new country if you are to be successful). Mr. Perry then said he was shortly going up into the interior to run surveys for a projected railroad, and asked me if I would like to go with him. Would I! “The interior of British Columbia” sounded romantic and suggested adventure. Naturally I jumped at the job, and about a week after found myself with the rest of the engineer staff at Sicamous, the “Gateway of the Okanagan.” The job was to last about a year, and my intention was to return to Victoria when it was over, but such was the lure of the country that, having entered the gateway, I did not return for nearly fifty years. Once having known the open-hearted hospitality and friendliness of the people in the little settlements and on the scattered ranches the utter lack of formality and the sort of “all one big family” feeling—in short having become one of them, how could I leave? I just stayed, as did most people who wandered in there, unless they wandered out

again quickly, before the lure got them. And then there was the beauty of the country; the lavish variety of lake and forest and mountain, and that sense of peace and freedom that one can only feel in a land that has been but lightly touched by the hand of man.

The people later on became bitten by the modern idea of progress, and consequently had to work harder and had less time for friendliness, although that still makes them better by comparison with many other places—but the natural beauty still remains, or most of it. Thank heaven the march of progress can not quite destroy that.

Sicamous, the station on the main line C.P.R. at the entrance to the Okanagan is situated on the beautiful Shuswap Lake, the southern arm of which, Mara Lake, runs for some twelve miles down the valley, and makes a fitting approach. These mountain-girded lakes are lovely at any time, in the spring when the higher snows begin to melt and feed the little waterfalls that dance merrily down the mountainsides to the lake far below; and the fir-clad slopes exchange their winter mantle of somber green for brighter clothing, a spring costume of delicate emerald; pale green lace on dark green velvet, a rhapsody in green. In the long summer days, the lake and the mountains drowse silently and lazily all day in the heat of the sun, and at times it can get overpoweringly hot. But as the sun retreats behind the western mountains one can enjoy the cool of the evening all the more after the heat of the day. The most beautiful time of all is in the fall; the early morning mist blurs all near objects in an opalescent haze that yet is full of color; then slowly, faintly the sun asserts itself and the mountains unexpectedly materialize out of the mist, fairy mountains that seem to have no material substance. Then the mist is gone, the daily miracle of morning is over and we are back in the world of reality. The sky and the lake are an incredible blue and the mountainsides gorgeous in yellow, crimson, and gold. At this altitude the air is so clear that in full sunshine there is no softening of the colors, the contrast of gold and yellow foliage against the intense blue of the sky is an ecstasy in color that no painter could possibly exaggerate.

One thing that always impressed me about Mara Lake, which it shares with all other remote lakes, was the silence, the intense but not unpleasant feeling of loneliness. On the wagon road side of the lake one might see a traveler perhaps once in a day, but on the other side where the motor highway now runs one might camp for a year without seeing another human being, and about the only sound would be the weird cry of the loon far out on the lake. Yet this loneliness had its fascination—you and your companion, if you had one, being the only human beings there, somehow felt that you owned the whole place, a “monarch of all I survey” sort of

feeling. The lake is now a resort for summer campers and picnic parties and I remember that for some time we quite felt that they were trespassing on our property.

Along the western shore of the lake rambled a rough track which we called the stage road, on which a democrat bumped and wallowed over the narrow rock cuts or swampy bits bridged by corduroy, with the mail and an occasional passenger.

Perhaps I had better explain what "corduroy" was, as I doubt if many people nowadays have ever seen it. A corduroy road was constructed over swampy land by laying logs close together across the width of the road; this enabled a wagon to get across without sinking in the mire. As you may imagine, it was a very bumpy road—the larger the logs the bumpier would be your progress. As we got more luxurious in our habits we spread earth or gravel over the logs to soften the bumps, and later on, as travel increased, the sides of the road would be ditched, year after year more gravel added; and today far beneath the surface of some of our modern highways over low-lying land these old corduroys still remain, relics of a bygone day. And the final dissolution of one of these old logs is the explanation of some of those mysterious "potholes" which occasionally appear in an otherwise perfect road.

This was the only road into the north end of the valley and was destroyed by the building of the S. & O. railroad. This road had been made when the C.P.R. reached Sicamous in 1886. Before that, entrance to the valley was made by a stage road which ran from Kamloops to Priest's Valley, later called Vernon. But do not imagine that these old stage roads were anything like our modern idea of a road; they were mere tracks on which it was just possible for wheels to run, and would soon have wrecked a modern motorcar.

Also before the C.P.R. was built, a stern-wheel boat occasionally hauled freight from Kamloops, via the Thompson River, Shuswap Lake, and the Spallumcheen River to Enderly—or Fortunes Landing as it was then called. At Enderly also was the first government agency with T. K. Lambly as agent; in 1887 this office was moved to more centrally located Vernon.

There was also water transportation as far as Enderly, a funny little stern-wheeler, the *Red Star*, making the return voyage from that village to Sicamous at irregular intervals. She was operated by R. P. Rithet who owned the flour mill at Enderly, and was used principally for carrying flour to the main line, but also did quite a bit of freighting and carried such passengers as were in no particular hurry, which applied to most people those days. At the south end of the lake was the mouth of the Spallumcheen River up whose tortuous course the little steamer struggled, sometimes with the greatest difficulty, for at spring high water the current

was swift and strong and seemed to resent being navigated, and at low water in the late summer the boat would sometimes stick on a sand bar. When this would happen the passengers would get out and walk, with a reasonable expectation of reaching Enderly before the boat did. With the completion of the branch railroad into the valley her short but useful life came to an end—being somewhat jerry-built she was rapidly approaching dissolution anyway. For some years her hulk stuck on a mudbank at Enderly until successive floods broke her up and scattered her remains about the river and lake on which she had spent her useful life.

Perhaps I should explain here that there has been some confusion as to the correct name of the river which runs past Enderly. It is now officially known as the “Shuswap,” but at that time and for many years we always called it the “Spallumcheen,” and all the old-timers still do so. Some writers referred to it as “the dreamy Spallumcheen”; a very suitable name. So I, being an old-timer, will always think and write of it by its original name. It is an Indian word meaning something like “beautiful place,” and was the Indian name for the country just adjacent to where Enderly now stands. The name came to be used by the early white settlers to designate all the country north of Okanagan Lake. That was the “Spallumcheen Valley”; from the north end of Okanagan Lake down to the international boundary was the “Okanagan Valley,” and it was not until about 1900 that the whole country from Sicamous to the United States was included under the general name of “The Okanagan.”

To paddle one’s own canoe from Sicamous to Mabel Lake, a distance of some fifty miles was a voyage of many delights—indeed it still is, as many people have since discovered. There is infinite variety along the river; here flowing placidly by pleasant green meadows—here and there great cottonwoods and cedars are reflected in the olive green translucent depths of the clear cool stream; the lush meadows fragrant with the scent of wild mint, backed by densely wooded slopes that rise gradually to the steep mountains in the background; and farther on rippling and sparkling with a musical tinkle over gravelly shallows or past gleaming white sand bars. And then rushing swiftly through rocky gorges with a force that challenges all one’s sinew and skill with the paddle, real hard work that enhances the delight of the easy going on the placid reaches beyond, where the steady rhythm of the paddles is like a lullaby; you and your companion do not talk, you just drowsily meditate, wrapped in your thoughts; perfect companionship. And then the evening camp, with a good driftwood fire on the beach, a dip in the river, the smell of frying bacon, that most delectable of all smells, blending with the fragrant incense of wood

smoke, that subtle weedy smell of the river—a cool and shady scent, if one may apply such adjectives to an odor; then supper of trout and bacon, bannock, beans and syrup washed down with tea that has that tang of wood smoke that only a campfire can give it. Then the best time of all, the evening pipe, truly a pipe of peace, when baccy has a flavor that induces a state of dreamy bliss.

And last of all, to sleep on a fragrant bed of fir branches, and waking in the freshness of the early morning, perhaps to the sound of a family of ducks splashing and quacking over their breakfast; to lie half awake for a bit watching the morning mist unveiling the riverbanks. Then breakfast, and packing up for another day. There is something peculiarly satisfying about starting out for the day in a canoe. You have all your stuff stowed shipshape so that she sits evenly on the water; you adjust yourselves comfortably in the spaces you have left for this purpose; and, with a last glance back to make sure that nothing has been left behind, you push off with a pleasurable feeling of eagerness to be on your way, and of anticipation for what the day may bring forth. And if it is new country to you there is a feeling of exhilaration, of mild excitement; you are adventuring into the unknown.

That was the life; you felt you had earned your grub and night's repose, a satisfaction that no motorboat enthusiast can have.

In 1889 the river above Enderly was quite in the wilderness with no inhabitants, and the country round Mabel Lake was practically unexplored and unknown to all but a few Indians and a solitary trapper named Dave, who used to put in a lonely winter up there and come down the river in the spring with his catch. One spring he failed to show up and we had given him up for lost. While canoeing on the river just above Enderly in the spring evenings we had noticed several times what looked like a pair of old overalls in the water, hanging to a snag on the bank; one evening we went over and investigated and found it was the corpse of poor old Dave. He had probably tried to shoot the Skookem-Chuck rapids, instead of portaging, and had been swamped.

Mabel Lake according to my old friend C. E. Perry, who named it, was named after the little daughter of a friend of his in Enderly. But many years after I met an old lady who said that Charlie Perry told her he had named the lake after *her*. I wonder if he had any more lady friends named Mabel?

Here and there on the riverbanks between Enderly and Mara Lake there would be a little clearing and log cabin—the beginnings of the prosperous farms that now line its banks. The clearing of these places with axe and fire, and much muscle and sweat was known as “bush ranching,” or in our local slang “bushwhacking”—the

man who did it was a “bushwhacker.”

I think all these settlers were men who had been working on C.P.R. construction—instead of going back to the cities to blow their wages they pre-empted land and made homes. They were the type who made a success of life. A few of them are still enjoying the fruits of their early labors, and many of their descendants are scattered about the Okanagan and other parts of British Columbia, and I don’t think you will find any, with the pioneer blood in them, on the relief rolls!



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia
A typical log cabin on a bush ranch

Just where the river widens out and runs into Mara Lake was the embryo farm of Dutch John. John was not a Dutchman, but an Austrian named Johann Mosier, who with his wife was making a fine job of hewing a farm out of the wilderness. I believe he originally came from the forest regions of Austria and he was an expert axeman—a great asset in this country. He spoke very broken English and was very fond of current colloquialisms. “That’s what’s the matter” was a popular one at that time, and John’s conversation was plentifully sprinkled with “Tha’s wot’s a matta,” which seemed to cover a good deal. John already had several cows, whose bells one could hear musically tinkling in the woods and meadows—he had a few pigs and chickens, a good house and barn, built of cedar logs, and he had built a seaworthy flat-bottomed boat in which he made an occasional trip to Sicamous with butter and eggs to sell to the hotel. To row a heavy boat for twenty-four miles, with homemade oars is a real man’s job.

I once spent a very pleasant week on his ranch. I had been on a fishing trip with a companion and we had run out of grub, we had been paddling all day with only a very small breakfast, and our only hope for supper was to bum or buy a meal at the first human habitation we came to, and we struck luck, for it was Dutch John’s. We

did not know him very well then, or what we would be likely to get, but we were hungry enough to eat any kind of food, Dutch or otherwise; we beached the canoe and made a beeline for the house, from which a delicious odor of hot biscuits and coffee put a finishing touch to our ravenous appetites. "Oh ja," said John, appearing at the door, "you boys sure was hungry, tha's wot's a matta—you come right in and haf supper," and Mrs. John, in the background, beamed a welcome. And after supper as we contentedly smoked our pipes with John and he proudly showed us round his little farm, "You boys better sleep in the hayloft and haf breakfast," said he. And you may be sure we did not need pressing. Sleeping in a hayloft is now usually associated with hoboes, but in those days was often the only accommodation that could be offered to a guest, and if you have never had the experience, you have missed one of the pleasures of life. The smell of the hay, the sound of the contented munching of the animals in their stable below and the comfortable springiness of your bed all act as a soporific and you are soon blissfully asleep. And if the night is cold and you are short of blankets you can burrow deeper into the hay and be as warm as you like.

Well, Harris and I were comfortably settled down in the hay when he had a brain wave. "We don't need to go back to work for a week," said he, "we are out of grub, but we have a few dollars in our pockets; why not ask the Dutch Johns if they would board us for a week?" I was a bit doubtful, Frau Mosier might well be alarmed at our appetites, but in the morning we did make arrangements and for a week we lived in clover. Lashings of fresh milk and cream, butter and eggs, bacon and roast chicken, all sorts of vegetables, pies made from wild fruit, trout from the lake and grouse or venison for a change (settlers then were allowed to shoot game at any time) "the fat of the land." Literally, for all these things were produced right there, as was all the necessary material for building except a little hardware, and the tools. Dutch John was only one of many settlers who lived like this—a happy, contented life. I wonder why no one will do it now and if the pioneer spirit has entirely died out or will return again? There are still vast areas of vacant land in British Columbia and relief in the cities seems a pretty poor alternative.

Dutch John was a good example of the experienced settler, fortunate in having a good wife as helpmate—there were others who were not so lucky, bachelors, and inexperienced people from the old country. But one thing they all had in common, "guts" and an irrepressible optimism. All the wonderful and expensive gadgets of the modern home were unknown then so they did not hanker after them, and were contented with their log houses, which were at least snug and warm, and if the space became too cramped there were always more logs with which to build additions. In

the houses of the more ambitious pioneers the logs were hewn flat, and dovetailed at the corners, some even had shakes, and the spaces between the logs chinked with moss or lichen mixed with clay. But the real little log cabin, the first dwelling of the pre-empter, which might be used as a chickenhouse later on when a more elaborate house was built—would be rather low in the walls, with the logs crossed at the corners, “saddle” and “notch” style, usually the top logs of the walls and the logs of the roof projecting out in front to form a wide porch. There were more of these in the southern part of the valley, where good straight building logs were scarce, and as there was no cedar there for shakes the roof called for a different style of architecture. Small poles were placed close together like rafters; on these would be about a foot deep layer of straw or fir brush and on top of that eight inches or so of earth. When settled down it made a roof that was warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Also an ideal nesting place for mice and bush tail rats. So every log cabin had its harmless necessary cat, and for the accommodation of pussy it was quite common to have a square hole cut in the bottom of the door—the square piece cut out hung over the opening on a leather strap—pussy could come in or go out as she liked and the hole closed after her. Why don't we have such a useful gadget now, for a cat seems to be everlastingly wanting either to go in or out?

One thing that strikes anyone with a sense of the artistic, which most people have, very often without knowing it, was that the log buildings were just “right”; they harmonized with their surroundings as no other type of building could have done. Of course we built them because there was no other material at hand—our aims were strictly utilitarian and certainly not artistic; we had to have something to live in as quickly as we could make it. But this “rightness” is recognized nowadays—witness the number of log cabins that are built, at greater expense than lumber ones could have been, at summer resorts.

These little bush ranches dotted the riverbanks at intervals of a mile or so all the way up to Enderly—the settlers were of various nationalities, Austrian, Dutch, American, English, Italian, and so—but there were no racial prejudices then. There was one little Italian whose name as far as I can recall it was Tony Vanetti. I remember him particularly because he once made me drunk, or I should say two of us drunk. My friend Harris and I were paddling strenuously up the river, trying to reach Enderly by evening, it was late in the afternoon and infernally hot, so we stopped at Tony's for a drink of cold spring water. Tony was a gentleman; he said, “Oh, I give you something better than that,” and produced a jug of ice-cold milk—and a bottle of three star brandy; a most unusual drink in those days. Now cold, rich milk and brandy is a drink for the gods, but is not suitable for paddling on in a

temperature of ninety degrees or so. Perhaps the hospitable Tony persuaded us to drink beyond our capacity, for after getting away to a good start our paddling soon became so feeble that we no longer made headway against the current, we just drifted into the bank, crawled into the shade of a tree, quite blotto, and went to sleep. We eventually did reach Enderly—about two o'clock the next morning.



Photo by the author

On the Spallumcheen River

Enderly is a picturesque village on the bank of the river just where it turns eastward towards Mabel Lake. Looking up the river valley one can see a distant snow peak of the Selkirks; on the banks across the river shady groves of Cottonwood and alder make just the right foreground for the great cliff which we called the “Giant’s Head,” which rises to a height of some two thousand feet, and is a landmark for many miles around, especially when it turns to crimson and gold in the rays of the setting sun. It is a beautiful little side valley through which the river runs east of Enderly; it seemed to tempt one to go and live in it. I did for a short time, for a group of us pre-empted land some ten miles up, built ourselves log cabins, and there led delightful sort of “close to nature” lives, until it dawned on us that one cannot live on scenery alone. We had to take our supplies in by pack horse, first taking them across the river at Enderly by canoe, with the horses swimming behind—for there was no bridge then—then loading up the packs on the other side, and so up a rough trail for which the government had made us a small grant for making. At the end of the trail was a natural meadow down by the river, and I always enjoyed seeing the horses, as soon as their packs were removed, rolling in the luscious green grass with grunts of satisfaction.

Southward from Enderly the valley widens out into fertile cultivated fields, golden

with wheat and oats in the late summer and with here and there a little orchard. Clover and alfalfa are also grown there now, and any other kind of field crop, but at that time there was a prevalent idea that clover and alfalfa could not be grown; we just did not realize how fertile our valley was. Indeed, to our horses and cattle, alfalfa, when we started to growing it, was such a strange food that for sometime they refused to eat it. And it was amusing to see a couple of ponies who had never seen oats before, when you gave them their first feed—they would taste a few and then disgustedly stick their noses in the feed box and with a loud snort blow all the oats out. But they soon learned that these new-fangled things were pretty good chow.

The Lambly brothers, Bob and Tom, were the big men of Enderly at that time, they owned the hotel and townsite and much of the surrounding land, and also a big cattle ranch on Okanagan Lake where Peachland now is. In Victoria I had been given a letter of introduction to “Thos. Lambly Esq. J. P.,” so when I arrived I asked where I could find him. “Oh, Tom?” said someone, “why there he is, out in front of the store.” There were a few men hanging around there, and out on the street a man sitting on a packing case having his hair cut, but none of them looked like a J. P. The man doing the barbering was tall and wiry, with a short black beard, clad in shirt and riding breeches, with a wide-brimmed sombrero on his head, and judging from his humorous remarks he was getting quite a kick out of his job. Well, that was Tom and Tom was like that, always ready to do a good turn for anybody. And Bob was just the same, he had, I believe partly trained as a doctor before they came West—if you had an aching tooth Bob would yank it out for you, and he once amputated a man’s arm, with no instruments but a meat saw and a razor—and made a good job of it. This was, of course, before there was a doctor in the valley, and was just before my time. About the time I arrived a real doctor had appeared on the scene—Dr. Offerhaus, and a very fine man he was. He was a Hollander by birth; a graduate of the University of Amsterdam, with a cultured taste in music and pictures and such-like things that was rare at that time in the West. It was quite an intellectual treat to spend an evening with him, smoking our pipes and bucking away about everything in earth or heaven. He had a fine tenor voice and was always one of the star turns at our local concerts, where he always sang “Two Little Girls Dressed in Blue” as an encore. I can still see him singing it—a tall, bony, bearded man with rather trowsled hair; the song and the man made a ludicrous combination—certainly intentional on his part—which always brought the house down. Then a professional dentist traveled through the valley once a year, a little, tubby, whiskered man in a very grubby frock coat—Dr. Brown. I once assisted Dr. Brown by holding his patient’s

head. The anaesthetic consisted of a bottle of rye whisky which the doctor produced from his coattail pocket. The doctor took a drink, the patient took a drink—a very long drink—he prepared for the worst—and I took a drink. I gripped the patient's ears, the doctor pulled, the patient yelled, and then we all had another drink. And that was how it was done in the good old days.

After having lived in the bush for some time Enderly seemed to me quite a civilized place; the houses were mostly built of lumber, and, although they were not painted, one or two of the larger ones appeared almost as mansions after seeing nothing but log cabins for some time—such is the effect of contrast—the largest being the residence of Sammy Gibbs who at that time was manager of Rithet's flour mill.

There was quite a bit of wheat grown then, as it was the only crop for which there was a cash sale, and although we got along all right with very little money that little came in very handy. And to get that welcome cash, farmers would haul their wheat from as far down the valley as Okanagan Mission, a haul of sixty miles or more. This work was usually done in the winter when the sleighing was good—perhaps I should say the horses did the work they had the best of it for at least the exercise kept them warm, and when the temperature was round about the zero mark it was a mighty cold and monotonous job for the teamster perched on top of a load of wheat. At times one of them would come into the hotel with icicles hanging to his moustache and whiskers; he would proceed to thaw them out by the stove to make the necessary opening for a snorter of whisky to warm up his insides. And with his head almost hidden in a large fur cap, his body in a buffalo coat and sometimes his feet encased in sacks of straw, he was certainly a picturesque object. We thought more of comfort then; I suppose because we jolly well had to, for I don't believe we were really more hardy than the present generation. I think if they had to face the same conditions now they would stand up to it just as well and it would probably do them good; too much luxury is making us soft.

On the bank of the river at Enderly was the general store of Oliver Harvey, where one could purchase almost anything from stock saddles, rifles and ammunition to ladies' underwear. There was also a large stock of patent medicines—people seemed to swear by them and dosed themselves with more faith than discretion. I particularly remember one fearsome concoction called Perry Davis Pain Killer, which I think must have been almost pure alcohol and opium. It had a terrific kick if you had a stomach-ache it killed the pain all right and also made you quite drunk. It was in great demand by the old inebriate during the periods when they had been "Siwashed"—which meant that it was illegal to serve them with a drink over the bar

or to sell them liquor. It must have been a very efficient substitute, and some of these hardened old toppers could drink it straight out of the bottle; their insides must have been as tough as their outward appearance.

There was a certain amount of placer mining in some of the creeks in the valley, and a miner might come to the store for provisions with no money, but a little poke of gold dust; so every store had a pair of gold scales on the counter. And there was always a set of dice and dice box. There was very little small change in the country, anything less than fifty cents was referred to rather contemptuously as “chicken feed” and I remember the snorts of disgust when copper money first appeared. So if you bought a packet of needles you shook dice with the storekeeper and either paid him fifty cents or got the needles for nothing. And in the evening there would probably be a row of the boys along the counter shaking for cigars. The country store was the social gathering place—and if there had been an early closing law in those days it wouldn’t have been observed anyway.

CHAPTER II

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF OUR INDIANS

On the outskirts of Enderly was an Indian reserve, on the reserve was the “rancherie”—Chinook for Indian village or ranch, and sometimes a bunch of Indians would come into town to do some shopping. They would make a day of it, squatting round on the wooden sidewalk outside the store having a sort of picnic with canned stuff. A row of old klootchmen would be sitting on the floor inside chortling and laughing among themselves about some joke or other—perhaps about the white people, for the Indian ladies seem to have a great sense of humor which is rather lacking in the men who are inclined to be stolid and surly. In trying to give a picture of the Indians as they were at that time I will admit at the start that I never could really like them. Also I should say that I am speaking only of the Okanagan Indians, who are the only ones with which I have had anything to do. I have come in contact with many other breeds of people and could always feel that we had some understanding and thinking in common and whatever Kipling might say about “lesser breeds” I always thought there was a bit of humbug about the “superior race” which is supposed to be us. But with the Indians I always felt that they were quite definitely an inferior race. What they were before the coming of the white man I do not know, but there is no doubt that what with whisky and diseases and other examples of our civilization they have not improved.

Also, before we came, nature’s law of the survival of the fittest would have eliminated the weaklings—and kept the tribe virile. Now with the white man’s doctoring, the weaklings grow to maturity and produce more of their kind. I can picture the Indians before we came as an indolent happy people who needed nothing but what the resources of the country bountifully gave them—they toiled not, neither did they spin, or at least did very little of either, and they have never outgrown this inherent dislike for anything in the shape of work. At the time I came the Roman Catholic missionaries of the O.M.I. had been working among them for some years and had achieved wonders; they had taught them to farm and put up decent buildings and the village on the reserve with its gardens and fruit trees had quite a homelike appearance. But in spite of their labors the Indians are dying out and degenerating—their onetime rather pleasant villages today look ramshackle and deserted. I do not know what is the reason for this, perhaps the earlier priest had a stronger influence

on them which is lacking today. Indians may be likened to children who never grow up—as long as there was a feared and respected father in charge they were good boys and girls and did what they were told, but when that influence was removed they reverted to their favorite occupation, loafing. I have said that I do not like Indians; but I cannot say that I actually dislike them, I think they have a sort of negative quality that does not arouse one's feelings much either way—one regarded them more as just a part of the scenery than anything else. One might almost call it a sort of contempt. And I think my feeling about them was pretty general.

I lived for some time with some other young Englishmen on a ranch that adjoined an Indian reserve, and I suppose we got as well acquainted with them as it is possible to do. We had already started football in the valley, and we encouraged the young Indians to play—they got quite keen on it and soon had a team that could put up a pretty good game against us, although it was rather hard to make them understand anything about the rules. By and by the Indians on other reserves followed suit and they would have quite exciting games. Now the sporting instinct is one of man's best points, which shows that these Indians had at least something good in them. They were also keen on horse racing and the old chief was very proud of his race horse which he would enter for the white man's races as well as in the Indian's that were held every Sunday on the reserve at the head of Okanagan Lake. But as the Indian population dwindled they seemed to get more lethargic and lose interest in anything of this sort. I wonder why. It may be that we have not handled them in the right way, although we have always been very fair and considerate. It is probably the inevitable process of evolution, the weak disappearing before the strong. But they were so much a picturesque accessory to the scenery that one misses seeing numbers of them about everywhere. Sometimes a whole cavalcade of them would ride in at the ranch gate and tie up their horses along the ranch house veranda. They might have berries, or buckskin gloves or moccasins to trade for old clothes; some of the klootchmen would have a baby fastened up in a sort of case, with just its head sticking out—a solemn little brown face with big black eyes—rather pretty little things they were. These baby containers made the baby look somewhat like a mummy, but were a very practical means of transportation; the case had a loop at the top and the baby could be hung over the mother's back, on the horn of the saddle, on a fence, or in fact anywhere where there was anything to hang it to. I have seen a klootchman riding with one slung on each side of the saddle—probably twins. And the babies never seemed to object.

The men were a frowsy-looking lot, but the klootchmen were very fond of bright colors, and always wore a very gaudy handkerchief tied around their heads. Some

of the gay young bucks might occasionally sport one of these round his neck, but as a rule they seemed to have no desire to make themselves attractive.



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

The old chief



Photo courtesy British Columbia Travel Bureau

An old klootchman

In trading with Indians you had to be very sure about getting what they had to exchange right on the spot, if it was a case of waiting 'till tomorrow for it, you were out of luck—for the Indian has no sense of time and also is an unashamed liar. They were apparently quite unable to understand the meaning of truth or honesty; it is an axiom in the legal profession that an Indian's evidence in court is quite worthless. I did not know this at first, and in my greenhorn ignorance traded a spare overcoat to Indian Alexis, whose klootchman was to make me a pair of buckskin breeches to pay for it. I saw Alexis many times after that; he certainly did not try to avoid me as a white debtor would have, but always when I asked him about the breeches, would solemnly say, "Oh, bye 'n' bye," or "maybe next month when I catch um good deerskin." Well, I will never see those breeches now, for it is more than fifty years ago. And if Alexis should happen to read this, which of course he won't, I would like him to know that I bear him no ill will. I just think he is a damned liar; and he won't mind that at all.

I think the Indians got the best of these trading operations, we certainly got off on them a lot of our surplus clothing, but were likely to find out later on, when perhaps our funds were low, that we could very well do with them ourselves. Most

of us were well-supplied with clothing when we came out and did not realize until it was worn out that it was very expensive here. On my first haying job I wore out two pair of nice white flannel trousers; they were so comfortable to work in I stuck to them in spite of the derisive remarks of the other men about what they called ice cream pants. At the end of two weeks the rough hay had frayed those lovely pants to rags, and then it dawned on me that they had cost about what my wages amounted to.

A proud man was the Indian who could sport a pair of English riding breeches; bare shins and moccasined feet might give him a somewhat unfinished appearance, but you could tell by his haughty bearing that he thought himself some pumpkin.

One of the boys had a bowler hat which he disliked very much; said it reminded him too much of the times when he had to wear it to church, for he was the son of a parson; but there was quite a demand amongst the Indians for that hat, and he got quite a large price in gloves and moccasins for it. I think the lucky lad who got it felt that it gave him an air of distinction, for it was a near approach to the rather moth-eaten top hat worn by the chief; a most dignified potentate. He really was rather a fine-looking chap in a way, with a face like bronze, solemn and quite expressionless with a big head of black hair which spread wide over his shoulders, topped off with the plug hat. And if you should think he was a ludicrous figure, he was not; he was much too dignified for that.

These Indians at the north end of the valley had horses, but round the river and Shuswap Lake they were much more at home in canoes. And for some unknown reason the Indians round Okanagan Lake neither made nor used canoes. Probably they belonged to a different tribe; they were sometimes referred to as horse Indians, and those round the Shuswap Lake as canoe Indians; however, in other ways their customs were much the same.

Every fall there used to be a very large run of salmon up the Spallumcheen River, which years later was stopped by a block in the Frazer caused by blasting during C.N.R. construction. I believe this obstruction has now been removed so that the salmon can once more move up to their spawning grounds; I hope so, for the freshly run salmon were a very welcome addition to the larder. The Indians used to spear them by torchlight, and it was a most spectacular sight to see a row of canoes, three or four abreast, advancing slowly up the river, the light of the flaring pitch pine torch over the bow of each canoe reflected in the inky blackness of the water, and in each canoe an Indian standing erect and alert with his long fish spear poised for a thrust. The river would be swarming with fish, and every few minutes down would go a spear and up would come a gleaming silvery salmon, lashing the water into sparkling

foam. The light of the torches picked out the figures of the Indians with a fiery glow and illuminated the big cottonwoods on the banks, giving them an eerie and spectral look against the dense, impenetrable blackness beyond. What a picture it would make on the screen! I know that to the disciples of Isaac Walton, spearing fish is one of the deadly sins; as bad or even worse than shooting a fox. But I can assure these gentlemen that it is pretty good sport, for I have done it myself, and it requires no mean skill to keep your balance standing up in a cranky canoe while you try to jab a fish with a twelve-foot spear. I know, because the first time I tried it, I fell overboard and had to swim ashore. And to digress for a moment, I will also say to those so particular sportsmen that I consider it far more ethical to be one of those pot hunters for whom they have so much scorn—to shoot and fish for just what you require for food, than to kill harmless and defenseless things just for the pleasure of killing. That is pretty poor sport, for which the men of the out-of-doors have the proper contempt.

I have a very vivid picture in my memory of my first time in an Indian fishing camp—I longed for the ability to paint it. It was a glorious hot day in the late summer, with that drowsy haziness in the air that gives things almost a touch of unreality. We were lazily paddling our canoe up the Spallumcheen, and round a bend of the river, which here was broad and shallow, the camp came into view. A broad pebbly beach, moistly brown and olive green along the river's edge, with touches of crimson water weed; as the water receded from the pebbles and sand they were a dazzling white in the blazing heat of the sun. Above the beach was a low green bank shaded by great cottonwood trees—beyond them dense forest; here and there under the break of the bank vivid green patches of horsetail grass; and under the shade of the trees three or four weather-stained tents. A thin haze of smoke from the campfire drifted lazily through the checkered light and shade of the foliage, which was taking on the first golden tints of autumn. Hanging out on a bush to dry was a klootchman's bright red skirt—just that spot of red that was needed in the picture. A few klootchmen were around the campfire preparing a meal; a very old man who looked half blind, was squatting on the ground cleaning fish. On the beach there was quite a lot of activity; round faced papooses and some bigger children were playing a game with some pebbles; a young klootchman was scraping the hair from a deerskin pegged out on the ground and an old one was waddling down to the water leading a kitten by a strip of cloth round its middle. They stopped and the kitten lapped up some water, and the old lady turned to go back to the tents. We had pushed ashore by this time and I asked her in my best Chinook why she had to keep the kitten fastened up.

“Oh,” she answered with a chuckle, “*nika tum-tum nika tenas puss puss klatawa kopa bush; coyote mamloos.*” (Oh, I think my little cat would go into the bush, and a coyote kill him.)

Three or four Indians had appeared and were pulling their canoes up on the beach. We said, “*Klahowa tillicum,*” to them, and wandered over to where, farther down the beach another Indian was putting the finishing touches to a dugout canoe, at which he was working in the usual leisurely Indian manner. Why should he hurry anyway? There is another sun tomorrow and another after that, and bye and bye that canoe she be finished. The other Indians strolled by and they conversed in their guttural native tongue. I don’t think they were making any remarks about us for they showed no curiosity. I should explain that they used their native language when talking among themselves—the Chinook jargon which was common to both the Indians and whites was simply a trade language which the Hudson’s Bay Company’s men had invented many years ago. Nowadays very few of the younger Indians would understand it, to say nothing of the white men; but in the old days it was the universal language, we got so used to it that we used it a lot among ourselves, very much like school-boy slang and it still lingers with us; so if you should hear some ancient British Columbian using strange and unfamiliar words it is more than probable that they are Chinook.

There were the usual number of dogs which were inseparable from an Indian camp, prowling about and sniffing uncomfortably at our shins, so after lingering a little while longer we said good-bye and pushed off into the stream again, to paddle a little farther up the river for a lazy lunch under the trees. For it was one of those drowsy days when it is “agin” nature to be strenuous.

This camp was quite small—it was just the beginning of the fishing season; later on we visited it again—but we did not stay long—the camp had grown quite large—there were hundreds of fish hanging in the sun to cure, and the stench was quite appalling—in fact we got whiffs of it before we came in sight of the camp. Our curiosity led us to make a hurried investigation, and then we fled and paddled rapidly away with the stink still pursuing us.

These fish are the staple food of the Indians during the winter, and are cured by being hung out in the hot sun on a light framework of poles about eight feet above the ground, on which a smouldering fire sends up a little smoke to assist in the curing. The fish are left out until they have the consistency of leather, by which time the worst of the smell has departed. There is no salt used, but the Indians manage to digest it all right.

On this particular trip, as on others that I made at the time, we were using a

dugout canoe, for there were no others. They were all in one piece, carved out of a large log, and some of them were very fine pieces of work. It was rather marvellous how light and symmetrical a good craftsman could make one, with the walls of an even thickness all through; for they judged all their measurements entirely by eye and touch, and never seemed to cut too deep when hollowing out the inside—which was done partly by burning. One noticeable thing about their work was that it was entirely utilitarian; they were good craftsmen but seemed to have nothing artistic in their make-up as had the Indians of the seacoast. You never saw ornamentation of any kind on their canoes. And this applied to everything they made. Certainly the klotchmen did embroidery on some of their buckskin gloves and moccasins, but this had been taught them by the nuns in the Roman Catholic schools—it was not original with them.

They may have made birch bark canoes at one time, but I saw only one of them—and that one I owned—for a very short time! I got it from an old Indian in some sort of trade, away up the river; and I soon had reason to believe that he had sold me a pup, for when I pushed her in with the intention of paddling down to Enderly the confounded thing seemed to be trying to slide sideways from under me all the time and paid little attention to my steering. At last, in a little rapid she insisted on going down sideways, and finally committed suicide by hitting a snag broadside on and breaking in half. Getting out of the river was all right; I was used to that sort of thing, but as I had to walk in my waterlogged clothes some eight miles over a rough trail to Enderly, I felt very displeased with that canoe.

Every year in the fall the Indians would hold a pow-wow, and on a large grassy flat on the bank of the river above Enderly there would be a great encampment—Indians from all parts of the valley with their families, horses and dogs, in fact, everything that was theirs. The river there was wide and shallow and it was here that they had their yearly bath; a sort of annual cleanup, for I have never seen them bathe any other time. They seemed to have no idea of swimming, but dozens of them, clothed as nature intended for bathing, would be splashing about in the water under the hot sun and having no end of a good time—they evidently felt quite peppy after getting rid of a year's accumulation of dirt. The younger women were shy about displaying their undraped charms in public; they had a sense of modesty and bathed in secluded spots—if one did come across a bevy of these bathing beauties they would scuttle like startled chickens for the shelter of the nearest bushes. It reminded me of an old picture I once saw in a gallery—Diana and her nymphs surprised by some god of the opposite sex whose name I forget.

Most of these girls were graceful, some even pretty; clear, light bronze skins with

just a touch of color in the cheeks, even teeth and glossy jet black hair, that had almost a tinge of blue in it; their black eyes would be modestly cast down in the presence of white men. And sometimes a shy upward glance of coquetry—but not if there were any bucks in sight. I have seen one whose face was quite strikingly beautiful, with a face that would have made a good model for a madonna. I think they did very little heavy work until they reached maturity; after that they did most of the drudgery, their figures grew squat and ungainly and their fat good-natured faces became wrinkled at a comparatively early age.

Here and there along the riverbank one could see a curious round-topped mound about two feet high and six or seven feet long, from which a naked Indian might suddenly emerge and run helter-skelter into the river; this was a sort of Turkish bath. A hollow about a foot deep was scraped into the ground and roofed with bent over willow withes covered with long grass and earth, with an opening in front just long enough for a man to crawl through. To prepare the bath, rocks were heated in a fire outside and shovelled into this den, which was then filled with steam by throwing water onto the heated rocks; the man then crawled in and closed the opening until he was well steamed. I think I have read somewhere that the same method is followed by the Laplanders, and one might speculate as to whether in the remote past there might have been some connection between the two peoples.

But the main purpose of these gatherings seemed to be the potlatch, a sort of gambling orgy; for the Indians are inveterate gamblers, and will wager everything they have down to their last or probably only shirt. You can easily tell the lucky gambler when the potlatch is over; he will be leading a horse or two, complete with saddles, possibly loaded with blankets and odds and ends of clothing, and he may also be wearing several hats stacked on top of his own; this is, I think, a sort of gesture of triumph.

When at their gambling games they squat on the ground in a large circle, clicking and passing backward and forward short pieces of wood—but just what the rules of the game are I could never find out, for they resented having any white man around when they were playing, and were apt to get quite nasty. All the time they were playing they kept up a monotonous chant which was evidently a part of the game, and I have heard this chant going on all day and all night without a break; one could hear the rather uncanny sound for quite a distance. Every now and then an Indian would get up and stagger away from the circle—maybe he was cleaned out or perhaps just tired out, but another would take his place and the game would go on and on until, I suppose the whole tribe were played out.

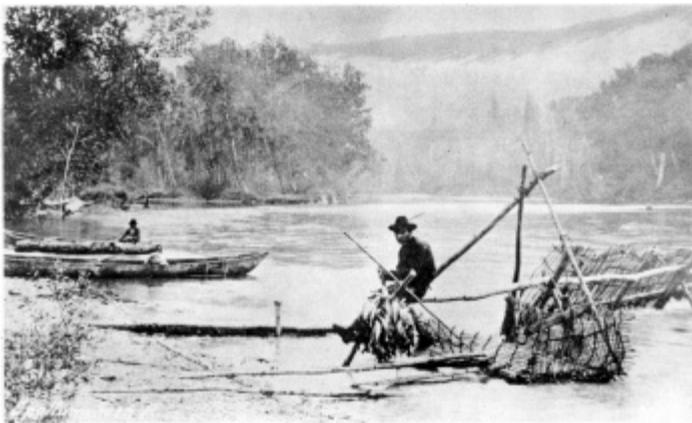


Photo by the author

Indian fishtrap on the Spallumcheen River



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

Indian church in Spallumcheen about 1900. Some of the congregation in their Sunday clothes. Note the stylish hats of the ladies.

Well, they had a happy, care-free existence, a philosophy of *laissez faire*. Responsibility? Honesty? They did not know what these things meant. The passage

of time also seemed to be beyond their mental grasp. I once got one, George, to pose for a photograph by promising him a finished picture. George could have come and claimed his picture at any time, but I did not see him, in fact had forgotten him, when one day, it must have been at least fifteen years later, George appeared at my house and said in his slow and solemn voice, "You got dat picture?" as if it had been only yesterday.

You simply could not surprise them; they took everything for granted, however astonishing it might appear. A watchmaker, Fred Jacques, had opened a shop at Enderly—the first one in the valley, and when phonographs first appeared he got one, and we thought we would have a bit of fun getting a rise out of the Indians. So we got a bunch of them around the store and turned it on. Were they surprised? Not a bit of it—not a word or a bat of the eyelid. Just a few noncommittal grunts. But they evidently took it as a part of—I was going to say the white man's magic, but I don't believe they regarded any of the white man's doings as magic—they just took everything for granted. And I don't think they had much idea of things supernatural either. They may have been pagans of sorts before the Roman Catholic fathers took them in hand, but they don't seem to have worshipped any kind of god. Certainly, a few of the Indians would talk vaguely about some supernatural being; for instance, there was a tradition that some unpleasant monster lived in the depths of Okanagan Lake, and that might explain why they were averse to using canoes there. And it is not impossible that in the remote depths there does exist some huge fish or reptile, for do not some modern people, even strictly sober and honest ones claim to have seen it? A few years ago this became rather fashionable, and the beast under the name of Ogopogo, became quite famous like the Loch Ness monster. I certainly never saw him myself and remain an agnostic on the subject. "There are more things in heaven and earth. . . ."

I think really the most unpleasant characteristic of the Indians was their utter lack of any sense of gratitude; if you did anything for them they just looked for more, sometimes to the point of becoming a nuisance.

The O.M.I. had christianized most of them, on the surface at least, and they were quite enthusiastic churchgoers; on their reserves they had built quite good churches, where every Sunday large crowds would assemble, all dressed in their finest clothes and having quite a holiday aspect. The groups of klotchmen and children in their gay colors, sitting around gossiping in the bright sunshine on the green grass outside the church, waiting for the priest, made a very gay and pleasing picture, and one realized what good work the missions were doing. It was certainly a great contrast to their great gambling potlatches, which had a somewhat sinister

aspect. Then the priest would arrive, the chattering would cease and they would all follow him sedately into the church. And soon the sound of soft musical chanting would float out on the summer air, for the Indians had quite musical voices and were fond of chanting but seemed unable to learn more complicated tunes.

The neat wooden church with its tall spire from which a mellow toned bell sent its soft sonorous tones tolling out over the woods and fields; rising from a tangle of wild roses which clustered picturesquely round its walls, stood by itself in an open grassy place, and with its background of woods and fields and distant mountains, the murmuring chant of the Indians and the soporific scents of the wild flowers and the pine trees gave one a sense of peace and restfulness.

I was fortunate enough to see a religious festival at which large crowds of Indians from all over the country were gathered. It was an impressive sight. They had built a large altar surmounted by a sort of reredos with green branches and flowers out in an open field, and when I arrived the crowd was evidently waiting for something to begin. I had just settled myself on top of a snake fence where I could get a good view of the proceedings when from the church came the sound of chanting; there was a sudden hush in the crowd, which devoutly, with bowed heads, opened out to make a road for the impressive procession which emerged from the church doors and slowly wound its way to the altar in the field. The visiting bishop was dressed in gorgeous robes and carried in an elaborate canopied palanquin by six Indians; little Indian acolytes were in scarlet surplices edged with lace; there were crucifixes and banners, and all along the route little Indian girls, carrying large baskets filled with rose petals, danced along scattering handfuls in the air as the procession advanced; roses, roses all the way. The air seemed full of roses, the ground was carpeted with them. And what diligent hours they must have spent gathering them! This ceremony was held in the morning, then some scattered to their little log cabins among the orchard trees, while many others held picnic parties out on the grass or in the shade of the big pine trees which grew here and there beyond the open space, where among the saddle horses and decrepit vehicles most of the men were loafing round as usual waiting for their womenfolk to get dinner ready.

To one side of the church a large tent had been erected; a sort of marquee. I had been wondering about this tent all morning for I had asked an old Indian what it was for, and all I could get out of him was "Bye and bye Jesus come," spoken in a hushed voice of solemn awe, so I was naturally curious. However, I managed to get a word with the local priest, who told me the Indians were putting on a passion play, and invited me to go in and see it. So I did, and a really fine performance it was—a series of tableaux depicting the life of Christ, with no spoken parts, but at each scene

the priest gave a long talk in the native tongue, which of course I did not understand, but took to be an explanation of the pictures. And at intervals the Indians intoned what sounded like a prayer.

It is easy to understand why this sort of religion appeals to Indians as it does to all simple people, and although I don't think I am exactly simple I admit that it appeals to me; it rather gives one a feeling of a good and friendly God in a beautiful world—"Le Bon Dieu" of the simple French Canadian habitant and not the unpleasant and wrathful deity that I was so scared of when I was a kid. What a relief it was when I ceased to believe in such a horror, but it is a pity that the Indians or very few of them, for the most part do not seem able to grasp the ethics of Christianity. Perhaps if they did, unlike many Christian white men, they would practice them. And I daresay they understood about as much as we do of the meaning of the ritual, which is mighty little.

Taking them on the whole, the Indians of the north parts of the valley were a peaceful lot, rather sluggish in disposition and not very intelligent, although occasionally it was evident that they were not as dumb as we had thought them. A good example of this was their business deal with the flour mills. In addition to Rithet's mill at Enderly, a farmers' co-operative mill was later built at Armstrong, some ten miles away, and it was the practice of both mills to advance the money in the spring to the farmers on the security of their crop. Now the Indians were at that time growing a considerable quantity of wheat, and on this occasion at least showed that they had enough intelligence to think up a scheme that would have done credit to any modern racketeer. One day in the early summer a plausible Indian, the spokesman for a bunch of natives whom we will call group A, appeared at the Armstrong mill office. "Me and my tillicums got big crop—heap skookum, but we no got money to harvest it—s'pose you advance us some money we bring you all our wheat—no take any to Enderly mill," said he. (This, of course, all in Chinook.) Well, the mill manager rode out to the reserve with him, found that the crop really was good, and not knowing the wily Indian as well as he should have, advanced them a considerable sum.



Photo by the author

Shuswap Indians on the Enderly reserve

At about the same time another Indian, the delegate from another lot whom we will call group B, went to Enderly with the same yarn and also negotiated an advance, for the manager of that mill wanted their wheat and thought he would encourage them to grow it. Then came the harvest time and these unsophisticated Indians pulled off their coup. Group B hauled their wheat to the Armstrong mill and were paid in full for it, for of course they had received no advance—they had got theirs from the Enderly mill. But group A, having the Armstrong mill's advance payment already in their pockets, hauled their wheat to Enderly and also received cash. And as time went on, both managers began to wonder when they were going to get their wheat for which they had already paid in advance; why didn't those confounded Indians haul it in? They soon found out, too late, for the Indians, being minors in the eyes of the law cannot be sued or proceeded against for obtaining money under false pretenses, which the poor innocent natives very well knew when they hatched their plot.

Another little game they were fond of playing, especially on the "cheechakos," otherwise newcomers, was the lost horse racket. An Indian would run off your horse, or maybe several of them, at nighttime and hide them in some secluded spot not far away. In a day or so he would ramble in and in a casual way, "One man tell me you lose a horse," he would say. "Spose you give me two dollars," (or maybe five dollars, depending on how much of a sucker you looked) "I tink maybe I find dat horse." And if you fell for it, obviously he would. They could only work this on greenhorns however. If we missed horses one of the first places we looked for them would be the corrals on the reserve. It was a perfectly safe game for the Indians to

play; if you accused them of stealing they could always say they had found the horses straying and were doing us a good turn by corralling them. Indeed, they were mostly too cowardly to take any risks of any sort; for instance, their method of breaking horses. The unfortunate horse would be starved until it was too weak to retaliate against any abuse, then saddled and ridden unmercifully and beaten until it was thoroughly cowed. So much for the Indian horsemanship of fiction.

It was probably fortunate for us that they were cowardly or they might have made things uncomfortable for us at times, as no doubt they would liked to have done, judging from the nasty trick they once played on me. I had been in the habit of using a short cut by a trail across the reserve once a week, riding to town for the mail in the afternoon and returning after dark; and for some reason the Indians objected to this, although it could not possibly do them any harm. On this trail one pitch dark night my horse stumbled, nearly throwing me over his head. I dismounted, and found that a stake had been driven in the middle of the trail, the head of it sharpened and pointing towards the direction from which I was coming. The point had caught my horse full in the chest making quite a nasty wound, and undoubtedly it was the work of the Indians; they must have seen me riding along the trail by daylight and thought they would fix me on my way back. Of course I could do nothing about it—I had no proof, and also I suppose I was trespassing.

This was when I was on the ranch which I have mentioned before, adjoining a reserve; and generally speaking we managed to get on fairly well with the Indians. Now and then they might take a few rails from your fence so that their horses could jump over and feed on our crops; but you took that sort of thing for granted if you had Indians for neighbors. And teaching them to play football helped to establish a certain amount of friendly feeling. Occasionally we hired a few of them for haying, or at other times when we required an extra hand or so, but they were very unsatisfactory; they were quite likely to tell you they would come at seven o'clock next morning and not turn up until about eleven, which was very exasperating, but they could never see anything to get mad about. And they were liable to quit any time they felt like it, however much it might inconvenience you.

We used to feed them at the ranch when they worked for us; we had a Chinaman cook named Jim. Now Jim was fat and good-natured and an A-1 cook, and the Indians appreciated his cooking so much that they got into the habit of rambling round at odd times for handouts. We suspected Jim of having a lady-love on the rancherie, for he sometimes disappeared in that direction at nighttime, and as our groceries also used to disappear, he probably went bearing gifts. And it must have been the lure of sex—there could have been no other attraction, for Jim or any

other Chinaman was superior in every way to any Indian.

He evidently didn't love all of them; one day I came up to the kitchen door and just inside stood a stolid-faced Indian who was being sworn at in Chinese. When Jim got through the Indian said slowly and solemnly, rather like a child reciting, "You ———!" Then Jim had another go at it, this time with some English cuss words. The Indian then returned the compliment with a few more white man's terms of abuse that he had thought up, and this went on for some time, each taking his turn and neither getting a bit excited. Then I thought it time to butt in and tell Jim's friend to get out of it. Perhaps they were just airing their knowledge of white man's cussing—they certainly knew a lot. However, these goings on got to be too much of a good thing, and finally we had to fire Jim, reluctantly for we had got rather fond of him, and he was a good cook.

Farther south, more particularly in the region between Penticton and the international boundary, the Indians were much more virile and alert. They were more intelligent and had a more independent air; and at times were quite truculent and gave a good deal of trouble; in fact, they had more "guts" and were not going to let any white man high-hat them.

A few years after my arrival there was an incident which nearly ended in a battle and might have even caused international trouble, if we and our neighbors across the line had at that time paid any attention to occurrences of that sort. Down near the boundary there had recently died one, Okanagan Smith, who had left behind to mourn him his woman, Indian Mary; and also a band of cattle. Now Mary had shared his bed and board for many years; she was in the eyes of their little world "his woman," and naturally thought she had the right to all the cattle if anyone had. But a certain Jack Evans, a white man, thought he saw a chance to muscle in and acquire some stock in an easy way, so claiming that Smith owed him some money, he rode up with some of his friends to whom he had probably promised a share in the booty, and proceeded to round up the cattle with the intention of seizing them for themselves. Mary wasn't letting any *cultus* white man put anything like this over on her; she had come from the Colville reserve on the American side, so she gathered some of the local braves, rode hell for leather and enlisted some more from her native tribe, and this force, with much shooting and yelling, captured the cattle from the marauding Jack Evans and his gang and drove them (the cattle) triumphantly across the border. Fortunately no one was killed, and if there was any sequel I have forgotten it, so it was probably nothing serious.

And there was Mr. Antoine Nahushiwen, who went on the warpath after two

white men who had a bottle of whisky which he coveted—he fired one shot at the local priest who tried to restrain him, and got his whisky at the point of a gun.

Incidents like these showed that they did not suffer from an inferiority complex (if people had complexes in those days; I don't think they had as yet come into fashion). And probably Mr. Nahushiwen had a skin full to start with. A drunken Indian on horseback was a very unpleasant and possibly dangerous thing to meet on the road; being full of Dutch courage, he would probably try to run you down; in fact, he was as lethal as the modern motorcar.

Also we had with us a rambunctious type, one Louis Jim—he was chief of the head of the Lake Indians—who was always making trouble. He gloried in being a heathen and was decidedly antagonistic to the priest who was doing his best to tame the tribe. On one occasion he refused to let the priest bury a dead Indian who was a Roman Catholic; he ordered that the body be buried like a dog, and this was prevented only by the interference of the provincial police. On the whole, however, the Indians and whites got on very well together. I have tried to describe them as I saw them; other people might have seen them differently. I was on good terms with them, but felt that beneath their phlegmatic surface there was always present a smoldering feeling of hostility and resentment. A quite natural feeling, for had we not taken for our own uses the great open spaces over which they used to roam and hunt and fish at will? I at least can sympathize with them, for did not we ourselves have a little of the same feeling when the country began to fill up with newcomers whom we were inclined to refer to as “cheechakos,” when they took up and fenced the land and our own freedom in turn was restricted?

CHAPTER III

THE ROAD TO VERNON, AND THE VILLAGE OF LANSDOWNE

Enderly, being at the head of navigation, such as it was, of the Spallumcheen River, was more often called "the landing"; from there a rough wagon road ran down the west side of the valley for six miles or so, when it passed through the little village of Lansdowne. It was a pleasant road, really just a narrow country lane—a leisurely sort of road that followed the line of least resistance. Bordered here with thickets of wild rose against which one brushed in passing, there were grassy banks thickly spangled with wild flowers, wild thyme and marigold and lupin, sunflowers and lilies, and many others of which I do not know the names, blue and yellow, purple and orange and violet—a garden of natural beauty. Above the road a thickly-wooded slope; on the lower side, beyond the snake fences half hidden by wild rose, hawthorn and olalla, cultivated fields swept back across the valley to the high timbered mountain range that shelters us from the east. Up on the high seat of a farm wagon we jog along slowly; an hour and a half is good enough time for six miles. The languorous air is full of the blended scent of the wild flowers and the spicy incense of the pines; you have a drowsy feeling of contentment and peace, and you and the driver chat lazily.

Today the road has been widened and straightened and paved; and much of the roadside beauty destroyed. We hurtle along in a glass inclosed car at forty miles an hour; there is no time to ruminate over the beauty through which we rush, and we swallow the scenery at a gulp. And do we enjoy the drive as much? We do not.

All through the valley, roads such as this rambled in a picturesque way, winding through the timber and round pleasant hillsides; one had a sort of feeling that they had not been really made but had just been born there, they were so much a part of the scenery; they served all our needs at the time and we whose feelings were not entirely utilitarian saw their passing with regret. And back from the wide paved motor roads that thread the valley today you may still find them. But they are not good for a car. If you are the driver you probably will not be in a fitting state of mind to enjoy their beauty.

Well, we have been a long time doing that six miles to Lansdowne, but here at

last, round a sharp curve it comes into view, scattered haphazardly in the cup of an open hillside crowned with big pine trees. It looks to the south over a great open stretch of wheat fields, for here the valley widens out, the soil is very rich and there are many fertile farms. Lansdowne had been the original business and social center of the district for many miles round; but from this description do not form in your mind an incorrect picture, for it was really a crude little place, just a collection of unpainted lumber buildings, but here dwelt the doctor and the parson; there was a harness shop, a tinshop and a smithy, and of course the usual upcountry hotel whose main reason for existence was its barroom, which knew no closing hours.

True the hotel could give you eggs and bacon and pie, and it had bedrooms—and bedbugs. That I know very definitely, for I once occupied one of those bedrooms for a night, and only escaped being eaten alive by these swarming insects by sleeping on the floor; the stuffing of the mattress and pillows seemed to be mostly bedbugs.

But to do the old upcountry hotel justice, very few of them were as bad as that, I think that was about the worst I was ever in; and most of them were at least clean, if lacking a bit in city luxuries. I remember an English girl, whom we shall call Jenny, arriving at one, where she had to wait overnight on her way out to the ranch of some friends. Now Jenny had just arrived on the train after a six-day ride and all she wanted in this life just then was to wallow in a good hot bath. There seemed to be no females round the place but a rather stupid half-breed woman—her only response to enquiries about a bathroom was uncomprehending grunts, probably she had never heard of such a thing. So Jenny after some hesitation diffidently approached Bob the bartender who seemed to be the head push. “Could I have a bath?” she timidly said. Bob looked rather struck. Coming from behind the bar and scratching his head—“Well, lady, we don’t have no bathroom,” said he, “but you go back up to your room an’ I’ll get one of the boys to fix you up.” And presently a knock came at her door, a rough but amiable-looking man appeared, with a bucket of hot water in one hand and an empty bucket in the other. “There you are, lady,” he said with a “we aim to please” look on his face. “You go ahead an’ have your bath an’ I’ll come and collect the buckets when you are through.” I suppose they had held a conference about the lady’s unusual request, anyway they had done their best, so Jenny proceeded to do hers. Just how she did it she would never explain.

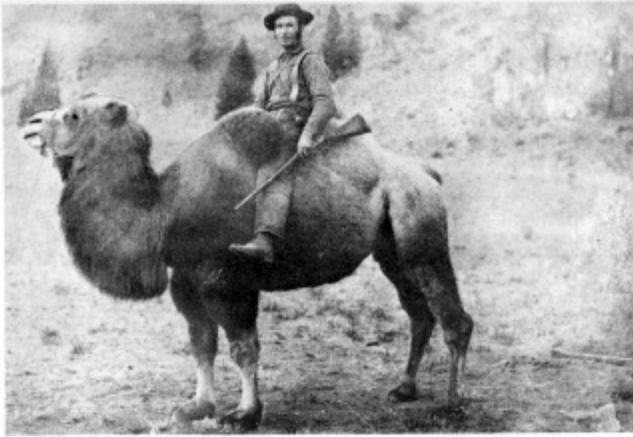


Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

The last survivor of the Cariboo road camels, living in retirement on the Clemitson ranch, Grande Prairie, in 1889.

In Lansdowne was also the general store, with the usual collection of Indians loafing around; saddle horses tied to the veranda posts and sun-tanned gentlemen of leisure sitting on the board sidewalk talking horse trades and crops. I think this must have been about the first store in the valley, for Lansdowne had been the trading center before the mill was built at Enderly.

All the buildings were of rough unpainted lumber, the shops with the usual square, false fronts—the reason for which is wrapped in mystery, but it seemed to be the accepted form of architecture in little frontier towns all over the West. There was also the post office where the stage delivered the mail once a week; a little shack about five feet by six; it also boasted a false front. It was run by a white-bearded absent-minded old gentleman who at times would forget where he had put your letters. And of course there was a little schoolhouse, and a hall where dances and public meetings were held. And a small Anglican church—the first protestant church in the Okanagan Valley. A few private homes, with fruit trees and gardens; in the middle, the community well where all the village got its water, with a big water trough for the cows and horses. That was Lansdowne, a typical little frontier town. But it was soon to disappear, for at the coming of the railroad it was sidetracked, and most of the inhabitants moved down to the new town of Armstrong, taking their little houses and store buildings with them.

From Lansdowne to Vernon was a long, long way, eighteen miles or so, nearly a half day's journey for the big freight wagons with their four- and sometimes six-horse teams that hauled supplies in from the steamboat landing at Enderly. Their drivers

were quite important members of the community; no ordinary farm hands or cowpunchers these, but men of substance, hard with the wind and the sun, with an air of authority. One broiling hot day I was given a lift by one of them, and as soon as I was comfortably seated by the driver and we had made the usual preliminary remarks about the weather, or maybe it was about his horses, he produced from under the seat a bottle. I remember that bottle, because it contained Hennessys three star brandy, a rather unusual beverage in those days. "Well," said he, wiping the sweat from his face with a big red bandana, "it's a mighty hot day; about time for a drink!" Neat three star was not exactly my idea of a thirst quencher in a temperature of ninety-five or so—but to decline to drink with a man was a snob, if not an insult; so making the usual ceremonial remark, "Here's how," I bravely downed my fiery swig, and after wiping the mouth of the bottle on my sleeve passed it back, and he, with another, "Here's how," took his—a very much larger one. Some day I might acquire his ability but not yet. This, I might say, was the correct etiquette of the road; I had already learned it. The bottle would then be replaced under the seat ready for the next occasion; we might perhaps an hour later meet a farmer in his wagon, or an acquaintance on horseback—the ceremony would then be repeated. It was one of the hospitable customs of the country, and accounts for the large number of old whisky bottles that are still found in odd places along the roadsides, relics of a bygone era. One teamster we had who was an exception to the general run; a cheerful Irishman named O'Grady; a humorous gent, late of Dublin University, who was employed to drive the supply wagon for a mine. He said he felt it his duty to introduce a little refinement into our customs, so he carried in his wagon, not only the usual bottle of rye or what have you; but several brands, also a siphon of soda and some tumblers, so that he could dispense hospitably in a way that became an Irish gentleman. His outfit became known as the traveling bar; and as the drinks were free, it was very popular.

About seven miles north of Vernon the road passes the ranch houses of the O'Keefes and Greenhows, lying at the foot of a small hill, on which stands their little Catholic church, surrounded by pine trees. And here the valley is divided down the center by a ridge of high rolling hills, on the east side of which the road, after winding up a steep hill, follows the shores of Swan Lake to Vernon. And as we climb the road and look down the west side of the valley, across the Indian reserve, we get a magnificent view of Okanagan Lake, with the bold shape of Shorts' Mountain in the blue distance. Cap'n Shorts, a most interesting character whom I shall tell you about later on, owned a ranch at the foot of this mountain, hence the name. But the Geographic Board, with the annoying habit they sometimes display, changed the

name to Terrace Mountain, by which name it is now known. I suppose they did not consider the Cap'n important enough to have a big mountain named after him, but his name is still immortalized by Shorts' Creek, which runs through his former property.

Always, on my various trips to Vernon, I had to stop at a certain place on that road up the hill, for the vision of that great lake, stretching away and away into the blue, mysterious distance had an appeal that I could not resist—that "Far Horizon" that seems to beckon you on. Some day I would go and see what that remote and hazy distance concealed.

It is a curious thing, that irresistible desire to seek the unknown—the desire that is never satisfied, for those far horizons ever recede beyond our reach. Some day maybe our disembodied spirit will behold the hidden mystery. I think that desire must be a human instinct; that we are born with it; it is very certain that children have it.

CHAPTER IV

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF VERNON

The road wound its pleasant way by woods and hills and placid lakes, the country gradually taking the character of more open grassy hills and range land, and there on a large area of level land where scattered pine trees gave it a parklike aspect, was Vernon. And in 1889 Vernon was undoubtedly just a little cow town. My first impression of it was entirely satisfactory; it was exactly what a cow town should be; but I just happened to be lucky for it was not often like that, I was just riding into town past the old log building of the Vernon Hotel when out from the yard surged a yelling crowd; tough-looking white men and tougher-looking Indians. One white man picked up a broken fence rail, and with a mighty swipe bashed an Indian over the head and knocked him off his horse. An enraged klotchman, probably the Indian's lady love then walked into the fray, and, picking up another club, smote that murderous white man over his head, and things began to look quite gory and interesting. No guns were pulled, however, which was disappointing—it would have made the proceedings more true to Wild West fiction—but the general fight that now developed seemed to be gathering in everybody in sight and as I didn't want to be included, I got while getting was good.

This old hotel was a pretty tough sort of place anyway, at that time; just a booze joint and gambling den for the boys when they rode into town for a little relaxation. A little farther on was the Hudson's Bay store—the only one in the valley—a long rough lumber one-story building, which was distinguished above the other stores by having a wholesale liquor department, a large cool room at the back where were many casks and kegs not to mention bottles of Scotch and Irish and Rye, brandy and gin, sherry and port and other delights too numerous to mention, also many gallons of the far-famed Hudson's Bay rum. If you were a friend of Jim, the manager and, on one of your visits to town, were paying him a friendly call, he would lead you into that pleasant back room and, producing glasses, would say these still more pleasant words; "Well, what's yours going to be?"

Then there was Cameron's store; the Okanagan Hotel, socially one move above the Vernon; and the principal hotel of the place, the Victoria. This was the real hostelry, and a very comfortable one too; it was owned by E. J. Tronson, one of the big cattle ranchers and was the stopping place for anyone of any importance until a

few years later the Kalamalka, a more modern up-to-date hotel, was built. I have very pleasant memories of it, for I boarded there for about a year. There was a congenial little crowd of us; Charlie Simms the sheriff; Dick Taylor the druggist; two lawyers, Cochrane and Fred Billings; old man Walker, a retired rancher; and myself, and Cameron the storekeeper, who was a mighty hunter and kept our table well supplied with all sorts of game in season—wild goose, duck, grouse and venison; and on three different occasions, mountain sheep, some bear steak, and mountain goat. The bear and the sheep were good—the goat not so good, he was tough and tasted, well, goaty. I think he was an old billy long past his tender youth.

We had quite a dining room to ourselves, and by an occasional bribe of a bottle of whisky to Sam Kee, the Chinese cook, we did ourselves very well indeed, for the hotel had its own cows and poultry, fruit trees and vegetable garden, and Sam knew how to fix things up. The pleasant memory of his black currant pie with thick cream on it still lingers with me. Doubtless our conversations scintillated with wit and wisdom for we discussed philosophy and religion and politics and—well, everything. We had what John Buchan in his “Memory Hold the Door” once called “good talk”; a happy phrase. That pleasant custom seems almost a thing of the past; today we sit and listen to the radio—some gabbling commentator telling us and all the rest of the world his views of this and that as if he knew it all. We know he doesn’t; and long to tell him so—we just say, “Oh hell” and shut him off, but that is not much satisfaction. Now if it had been, say, old man Walker airing his views in our congenial little company, we could have given our brains a little exercise by arguing the point with him. Radio with all its blessings has almost killed the art of conversation, and a lot of people even let it do their thinking for them—it saves a lot of trouble.

Old man Walker I remember in particular; a well-groomed man clad in the black coat of retirement. He was very well-educated and used to tell the most outrageous yarns in beautiful well-chosen English, that never descended to slang but did employ an amazing collection of cuss words. There was one yarn about a certain gentleman of the Caribo, who rejoiced in the name of Mr. Bloody Edwards, who on a certain occasion—but no; I am not sufficiently modern enough to be responsible for its appearance in print.

And Tronson himself, the proprietor, also occasionally joined us. He was also a courtly-groomed old gentleman who had ceased to take any active part in ranching. He was exactly like the picture of Bernard Shaw with a long sweeping beard; he was a pillar of the church when later on we got one started in Vernon; and his prowess as a poker player was known far and wide; in fact, he was known better for this accomplishment than anything else. But to see him in church looking rather

like a saintly old patriarch you would never have suspected this; nor that on his ranch he maintained an Indian wife and a large half-breed family; a quite separate establishment, none of them ever appeared in public with him.

In times of stress his suave manner peeled off and he would swear like the best of them and was no respecter of persons. Once when he was laid up with something or other in the hotel, Mr. Outerbridge, our first parson and a very mild little gentleman, thinking it his duty as the spiritual adviser of his churchwarden to visit his sickbed, did just that, with rather alarming results. I met the reverend gentleman looking rather shaken coming out of the hotel. "Hello, Outerbridge, how's Tronson?" said I. "Oh—er—he seems—er—rather upset." I heard later that the timid little man had asked Tronson if he wouldn't like to have the Bible read to him for a little, and the sick man, annoyed at being disturbed, had just let fly at him with all the cuss words he could think of. But he undoubtedly apologized later on. Outerbridge, by the way, was quite a nice man, and in spite of his rather apologetic air was quite popular and congenial; and he had a sense of humor; a bachelor, he lived alone with two cats to keep him company.

To this hotel now and then came some English family, the advance guard of many who were to come later on, and I remember the first of these, an Englishman and his three grown-up sons, because of their *faux pas* with their boots. At our breakfast table one morning appeared Louis, the hotel man of all work, with a puzzled look on his face. "Say," he said, "are them new English dudes crazy, or what's the matter with them? They've stuck all their boots out in the corridor.

"Oh, Louis," said one of us, "you're supposed to clean those boots right away and take them back in time for the gentlemen to get up for breakfast."



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

The beginning of fruit farms on the Coldstream ranch—young orchard in the

foreground

“What!” yelled Louis, in amazement.

“Yes, that’s right, Louis.”

“Well——I’ll be——! What the hell do they take me for, anyway——let the lazy bastards clean their own bloody boots.” And he walked away, looking at the same time a bit puzzled——it seemed so incredible——not the custom in this country. If a man couldn’t clean his own boots he could jolly well go with them dirty, which most of us did.

Scattered along the so-called streets were a few unpainted cottages. There were no sidewalks, and across the middle of the flat ran an irrigation ditch from which the town got all its water. After the town began to grow, and became incorporated there began to be complaints about the people throwing their soapy water into the ditch, or even putting their clothes in there to soak, so the town council diverted the water into boxed-in flumes which ran by the side of each street. Every hundred yards or so was a boxed-in tank; on each tank was a pump, and that was our water system for the next ten years.

About that time was organized Vernon’s first fire brigade with an equipment of buckets, which had a habit of disappearing after each fire practice. As I remember it, all the personnel seemed to be either captains or lieutenants. This protection seemed rather inadequate, at least the insurance companies thought so; so we purchased from San Francisco a secondhand hand pump engine, which also had to be hand drawn. I think it must have been born about 1849, and we amused ourselves with it for a long time, everyone then was eager to join the fire brigade, for it was fine exercise pulling the thing and even better pumping it, with six men on each side.

After the water system, came sidewalks; we really were getting quite urban. These were built of planks, and stood about eighteen inches above the ground level, and very inconvenient for those who were not strictly sober, or for anyone going home in the dark without any lantern, which was our only form of illumination. But they were just the right height for sitting on; if you met an acquaintance and stopped to chat, which we always had time to do then, you just naturally sat down on the sidewalk with your feet in the road. It was quite a common sight to see even the well-dressed ladies thus seated——everybody did it. I cannot remember when this free and easy custom became one of those things that “were not done,” but I remember the daughter of the town’s leading lawyer saying to me one day, “I do wish Pa wouldn’t sit on the sidewalk.” We had just seen him thus, in front of his office talking to a client——it was a hot day and doubtless cooler outside than in. I

suppose it would be about the time we began to burden ourselves with all the other restrictions of civilization, many of which are after all no more sensible than some of the taboos of so-called savage tribes.

At the far side of the townsite, snuggling amongst the fruit trees and roses, against a high sunny bank crowned by big old pine trees, was the hospitable home of Price Ellison, one of the local landowners—it was rather reminiscent of a comfortable English farmhouse—you felt the homelike atmosphere as soon as you opened the gate in the picket fence that surrounded the garden, which seemed to overflow with vegetable luxuries. Opposite this on the other side of the road, was the little schoolhouse, and a row of log buildings containing a blacksmith shop and bunkhouses for his own men; or any man who happened to be out of a job and wanted a place to sleep and something to eat; there always seemed to be a few around.

And last but not least, was the “government house.” This was a roomy bungalow, the residence and office of the government agent, who was registrar of births and marriages, deaths and deeds, gold commissioner, magistrate, administrator of all the roads in a vast district and probably had other jobs as well, and in his little office about twelve feet square all the official business of the valley was transacted; it was also used as a police court. Behind the bungalow was the solid log jail, locally known as “the jug.” I believe these two old buildings are still standing. One thing no one seemed to have thought about was a cemetery; we were suddenly faced with this lack when an unknown Chinaman died on us. Nobody would be public spirited enough to allow the corpse to be buried on their premises and the government agent was in a quandary; he wrote to Victoria for instructions as to what should be done about it; but in the meantime the Chinaman did not improve by keeping; nobody knew anything about embalming corpses, and finally he just had to be buried, and the government agent stowed him away in his back garden. After this it dawned on the community that we were not immortal and we bought a piece of land for a cemetery.

And this as far as I remember, is what Vernon was like in 1889. It was also its last appearance as a little cow town, for the railroad was creeping nearer and nearer, and suddenly, in some mysterious way, rumors of this wonderful Okanagan began to reach the outside world. How? I do not know. The world was not then blessed, or cursed, according to your views, with radio or motorcars or aeroplanes; one might think that news would travel slowly. But from near and far came a curious assortment of people crowding in, that like rocks thrown into a quiet pool disturbed our placid existence, which up to now had only been excited by an occasional horse

race or the jubilations of some festive cowpuncher.

The great Coldstream estate of Forbes George Vernon, the then minister of public works, after whom the town had been named, was purchased by Lord Aberdeen and nearly acquired a new name. By the side of the road a little to the west of the Coldstream ranch buildings there is a mound on the top of which sits an enormous rock. This was called by the Indians, "Intipmooschin," and Lady Aberdeen chose this as the name for the ranch—but it never caught on—probably too much of a mouthful. The Indians' name for the Coldstream valley was "Tebiscan."

The enthusiastic real-estate operator from Vancouver who had just engineered this deal organized the Okanagan Land and Development Co., and fairly whooping with optimism we were off into a new era, and what a joyful era it was. And what a town; I wonder if ever before there had been one quite like it; there certainly never can be again. The newcomers from North America and South America, from England and Scotland and Ireland and Wales; from Continental Europe, Australia and New Zealand, India and China and Japan they came, and some who were not so anxious for it to be known where they came from. For now the real-estate men were shouting about the delights of fruit growing—a lotus-eating existence in which you idled away the sunny hours while the dollars grew on the trees—you could actually see them doing this in some of the illustrated circulars that were broadcast all over the world. The main push of this movement was G. G. McKay, a bluff and genial promoter from Vancouver, who thought of and lived for nothing but real estate—it was said of him that when he died, and the gates of heaven opened up for him, he would seize St. Peter by the lapel and say to him, "How are the chances for laying out a townsite here?" G. G. McKay, soon known to us as Gee-Gee, was inclined to be a bit snooty about our primitive ways, but we got even on one occasion. On one of his periodical visits to Vernon he had left his shaving kit behind him, and "Is there such a thing as a decent barber here?" he inquired. Now down near the Vernon hotel there was a barber, who, during such periods as he was sober enough, would oblige you with a shave if you were not unduly fastidious, for cleanliness was not his habit. And sometimes when he was not quite sober, he might with one hand lean on his client's shoulder while with the other he wildly waved the razor to emphasize such remarks as he made to the boys sitting around waiting their turn. Rather an alarming experience for a "cheechako." So to this establishment we directed the unsuspecting Gee-Gee. And very shortly afterward he hove into view headed under full steam for his hotel, his face wearing a look of indignation and what remained of a coat of lather. He had struck our barber during one of his unsober

periods and had just got out of the chair and bolted in alarm. "My God!" was all he could sputter out. As I said, he was not used to our primitive ways. But he was resourceful, for instance, he had arranged for a special train to bring up a large number of prospective land buyers from Vancouver. The railroad had reached Vernon by that time, but you had to wait overnight at Sicamous and take the Vernon train in the morning. Now Sicamous was famed far and wide for its mosquitoes and just at the time arranged for this excursion they happened to be particularly ferocious; and Gee-Gee had gone there a day in advance to arrange matters. "My God," thought he, "what hope would there be of ever selling any land to those people after a night's encounter with those bloodthirsty insects?" Frantically he wired back to Vancouver, "Cancel train, railroad accident, line blocked."

Many other real-estate men and company promoters came in, for there were many suckers and the fishing was good. One gentleman from across the line who may have been a descendant of one of Dickens' characters for he had the name Snodgrass, sometimes known as "the Duke of Okanagan Falls," laid out a townsite, Okanagan Falls, about ninety miles south, at the foot of Skaha Lake, known at that time as "Dog Lake," and practically in the wilderness. It was a pippin of a townsite—on the plan—with the aid of which he sold us town lots at one hundred dollars a go; ten dollars down and the balance when and if you had it. It had several projected railroads, park reserves, hospital site—sites for city hall and hotels, boulevarded streets, projected wharves, industrial area, and other things that had been inspired by his fertile and vivid imagination. Why did we buy these lots? You may search me. Probably for the same reason we bought each other drinks—just because everyone else was doing it. The old chap himself undoubtedly believed that his vision would materialize; he went to live there himself and made strenuous efforts to get things going, but it was one of the many schemes of the day that petered out. Many years afterwards I happened to be driving through that long-forgotten townsite; by the side of the road was a little tumble-down store with a gas pump outside. I gave a hail, and out of the store came an aged old man—Snodgrass; the only inhabitant in the only building on his once ambitious townsite. "If I can get some capital interested," said he in the course of conversation, with the dreamy far-away look of the visionary in his eyes, "I'll have a good town here yet." He must be dead now, but if the city of Okanagan Falls never has a mortal inhabitant I daresay his beloved townsite will be haunted by the ghost of old Snodgrass.

There were two other persuasive gentlemen from the United States—Windy Young and Breezy Lee; they specialized in mining; they dug a hole which they called the Morning Glory mine, in the side of a mountain and sold us mining shares. And

there were others of the same kind. Oh, we were suckers all right, but the fortunate ranchers from whom these speculators bought their land for subdivision shrugged their shoulders and took their unearned increment with a tolerant smile. What a strange mixture of people we were; retired officers of the army and navy, retired Indian civil servants; men who had gone broke growing oranges or tea and thought apples and peaches might put them on their feet again; English school boys whose parents sent them to the “colonies” with their blessings because they would not fit into anything at home; professional men, fed up with their profession, who with dreams of a life of ease longed to be farmers; shrewd shopkeepers looking for business openings, ladies looking for husbands, ladies of easy virtue, cardsharps, just plain bums and then sisters and cousins and aunts of men who had come out ahead of them—but what’s the good of going on—just think of anything else to add to the list—they were all there. Stir all these up with the original inhabitants and you have Vernon society as it was in those rather hectic and most delightful days. The town built up rapidly with new stores and hotels and houses, sawmill and sash-and-door factory, real estate and lawyers’ and doctors’ offices, and all this booming activity in the clear invigorating Okanagan air I think went to our heads.

A familiar figure, and a pretty hefty one it was, was the first manager of the Coldstream ranch, Lady Aberdeen’s brother, the Honorable Coutts Majoribanks, known to all his friends and acquaintances as “Major.” Of course, the name was pronounced “Marchbanks,” but one of our local characters always persisted in addressing him as “Mr. Major-eye-banks,” with the accent on the “eye,” and we all followed suit, then it naturally was shortened to “Major.” He had spent his youth cattle ranching in the wilds of Texas and all the unpolished manners and customs of that sort of life had stuck to him. A big burly man, always wearing a cowboy hat and usually mounted on his big black horse “Cap,” he liked to ride into town at a clattering gallop to pull up short in front of the Kalamalka Hotel where he would dismount for a refresher. One day, seeing Dr. Beckinsale, a very meek little man, sitting on the hotel veranda, the Major, being in an extra festive mood, rode up the porch steps and seizing the little doctor with one hand swung him up on the front of the horse and charged up and down Bernard Avenue with joyful whoops—he said it was time for the doctor to learn to ride.

On one occasion the ranch was shipping a bunch of cattle by train, and I was sitting on the high timber fence watching the cattle milling about beneath me. A little way along the fence sat the Major who was directing the operations, and on his other side sat Mr. Langill, the Presbyterian minister. The Major was giving his instructions with the usual lurid language suitable to the occasion when the parson,

with a mistaken sense of duty, had to butt in. “Really, Mr. Majoribanks,” he said, “don’t you think that a man in your position should be showing a better example to the men in your employment?”

“Hell, man!” exploded the Major, “I’m not teaching a Sunday school, I’m loading cattle, and I’m giving the boys the best example I can. And I’ll bet that Noah swore when he was loading his animals into the ark.”

In apologizing to the ladies for his rough manners he was apt to say, “You know my sister has so much godliness that there wasn’t enough left to go around the rest of the family.” For his sister, Lady Aberdeen, as everyone knew, was an extremely proper lady; she probably thought that poor Coutts was heading straight for hell. He once, just before she was expected to arrive, asked me to go out to the ranch house with him to have a look at the pictures with which he had decorated the walls, for I was supposed to be a bit of an artist and he said he didn’t know the first thing about it. What was troubling him was this: “You know my sister has such infernally straight-laced ideas about modesty,” said he, “that she thinks all the figures in life subjects should be dressed from the ankles right up to the neck.” There were a lot of pictures—good reproductions, a few of them of slightly draped figures but certainly none that any public censor would have balked at, and I told him so. But he was going to be on the safe side: “You don’t know what my sister is,” he said, so we weeded anything that displayed skin on anything but the face. I don’t quite know why he should have wanted me to give them the once-over; perhaps because, if his sister had objected to any of them, he could say that that artist fellow had said they were all right.



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

The population of Vernon meets the “every other day” train

The Coldstream ranch had a milk route in Vernon, and the horse and buckboard with which the milk was delivered was driven by Jock McNab, a staid Presbyterian Scot who had been brought out by the Aberdeens. Now by this time, among other evidences of progress, there was in Vernon a certain house, known as “Across the Creek”; the abode of the “sporting ladies.” Jock had orders to deliver the milk there, but his stiff-necked presbyterianism balked at the idea, or he may have been scared of the suspicions of his better half or of public opinion, or that it might be playing with temptation. But whatever the reason was, he balked—and carried his objections to headquarters. “Mr. Majoribanks,” said he, “I dinna think it right that I should be delivering the milk to they pented harlots.” Now the Major couldn’t see it that way; it was business—he did not waste time arguing with Jock, but went to Mrs. McNab, for she wore the breeches. And that evening—“Jock,” said his missus, “ye’ll be taking they pair bodies their bit milk, just the same as ither folk; but ye ken, Jock, ye’ll no be gaen in.” So that was that.

These same ladies of ill repute were appearing on the street wearing white shoes, which had just come into fashion, and the respectable ladies of the place judging by their association thought white shoes must be extremely “fast,” for they were something new in women’s apparel; they had not seen them before. And one day there arrived from Vancouver a new schoolmarm, wearing white shoes—“My dear!” exclaimed the lady who came to meet her, “for heaven’s sake take off those shoes.” And of course had to explain the reason to the somewhat astonished young lady. But by the end of the summer the more daring ones were also wearing them and all the others soon followed suit. And it is rather a curious fact that women’s fashions are, generally speaking, introduced to the feminine world by the ladies of the demimonde. The costumers design them; any new fashion in ladies’ clothing is, to say the least, a bit startling at first, and the courtesans with a desire to be conspicuous or perhaps hoping their astonishing garments will have an aphrodisiac effect, will be the first to wear them. Then the stage or the screen adopts them, and the more daring of the female public, and so by easy stages these at first so bold and improper garments become respectable.

The Okanagan Land and Development Company, which gave Vernon the first kickoff towards the goal of prosperity which it has now reached, in 1891 built the Kalamalka Hotel, rightly considering that an up-to-date and comfortable hostelry would prove an attraction to prospective land buyers. It was designed by George Fripp—a brother of the well-known artist, Tom Fripp, famous for his water color paintings of British Columbian scenery. It was indeed a most attractive place and for many years was the social center of Vernon. Here one might meet celebrities and

interesting people from all over the world, and many were the festive and convivial gatherings in the spacious billiard room with the bar across one end, which some twenty years later was turned into a dining room. And there was the cozy lounge with the great open fireplace round which a congenial little bunch of us would gather on winter evenings each with his favorite drink which he himself carried from the bar.

The chief of this group by common consent was Captain Carew, a retired Royal Navy Lieutenant Commander, who bye and bye went home and returned with a wife and later was one of the mayors of Vernon. He had his own particular chair by the fire, which no one else would have presumed to sit in, and he appropriated the job of attending to the log fire which he used to poke up with a thick stick about six feet long—when that stick became too short from being burnt off at the end he would produce another one which he had cut in the bush. He really was an expert at keeping a cheerful blaze going, and got quite annoyed if anyone else undertook to stir up that fire. The first manager of this hotel was Meaken; the name seemed to fit him, for he was rather a humble little man, but there was nothing meek about his wife, we were all a little bit scared of her, and I know he was. If things were getting a bit too noisy in the bar billiard room she had an unpleasant habit of appearing in the doorway in her night rail. “Gentlemen,” she would announce in a stern voice to which no one would have dared to answer back; “it is time to go to bed.” And a dead silence would fall on the gathering; homeward or to bed we would go. Sometimes, however, the lady might be away, and Mr. Meaken being quite incapable of coping with things, the proceedings might be both noisier and longer.

Once I was going home rather late from a perfectly respectable party, and approaching the “Kal,” as we called it, heard “sounds of revelry by night”;—very loud sounds in fact. Of course had I been a good young man I should have passed by, but not being one, and anticipating a good finish to my evening I hurried in to join the festivities. Mr. Meaken, taking advantage of the absence of his wife, had become tight earlier in the evening and was out of the picture, and some of the revellers having found a cayuse straying about outside had also taken advantage of the absence of the Mrs. and the tightness of Mr. Meaken; they had led it in and were riding it round the billiard table. Of course it was only very occasionally that the high spirits of the younger members of the community broke loose to this extent; most of the time the Kalamalka was just what it was advertised to be, a comfortable family hotel; naturally it is the high spots of its career that I remember.

There then ensued a regular spate of building—for the next year or two the cheerful sound of hammering never ceased from seven in the morning till six in the afternoon, and often up to dark. The first bank to appear was opened by the private

banking firm of Wulfsohn and Bewicke, by G. A. Hankey, a member of the notable family of London shipowners; and what I remember most about Hankey is the terrific pace at which he walked. I used to go out with him sometimes and had almost to trot to keep up with him until I would beseech him to slow up a bit. I wonder if he remembers, for he still is living in Vernon. A little later came the Bank of Montreal, and that made its debut in a way that appealed to our possibly overdeveloped sense of the ridiculous; for the first thing that happened was the refusal of the safe to open one morning, and G. A. Henderson, the genial manager, found himself in the embarrassing position of having no cash to carry on business. Frantically he tried combination after combination, but the lock refused to collaborate. There appeared to be no burglar in Vernon but the thing had to be opened somehow so in desperation he went to the blacksmith, and soon the town rang with the sound of a mighty crashing as that husky man smote the lock with a ten-pound sledge. Well, that was some safe all right; it just refused to give in; they had to wire the makers in Montreal to send out an expert to open it and in the meantime Henderson managed to squeeze by with what cash he could scrape up round town.

Then came Ochsner's brewery, which also got off with a somewhat comic opera start. Whether Mr. Ochsner was an amateur at beer making or whether the beer like ourselves was affected by our exhilarating climate I do not know, but his first brew was so uppish that when a bottle was opened it would violently erupt a cascade of foam that just went on expanding and flowing until there remained but a bare half inch of beer, which might have been all right for those who delight in froth blowing but was highly unsatisfactory if you wanted a drink. But we used to order beer just for the fun of it. To see the bartender and the bar submerged in a sea of beery foam was well worth the money.

Social life in Vernon up to this time had been very free and easy and unspoiled by any sense of "class," but as English people from the so-called upper classes began to come in with their families, many of them seemed unable or unwilling to shed their prejudices; they formed a distinct exclusive "social set" among themselves, people who for some obscure reason thought they were superior to mere "colonials." On the surface these people were perhaps more "cultured," and they had their own customs and ways of speech which differed from those of the Canadians'; but just why they should feel high-hat about it, I don't know. And on the other hand the Canadians made fun of their peculiar ways, and were even inclined to feel a slight contempt for them. And it is a curious thing that the other towns in the valley were almost free of this sort of thing; the Kelowna people for

instance always mixed together in every way with a feeling of perfect social equality; they considered Vernon to be a snobbish place, they said so; and they were partly right. But looking back and mentally sorting out the many people I knew, it occurs to me that those particular English people who were the worst offenders would not in the old country have been considered as being in the “top drawer”; probably it was for that reason they were so keen on it here. The little society thus formed was, or rather aimed to be, very sophisticated; it had its quota of tittle tattle and scandal, its running round with other men’s wives, its squabbles and divorces and all the other trimmings of high society. In many ways it was like the social life in some Indian station as described by Kipling in “Plain Tales From the Hills,” and so many things happened in this somewhat frivolous and probably to an outsider rather ridiculous “society” that I wish Kipling could have been there to write about it for it is quite beyond my ability. Perhaps the actors in these little comedies unconsciously imitated some of his characters for Kipling had “caught on” just about then; every young Englishman quoted him; his tales of frontier life appealed to our adventurous minds and undoubtedly influenced us to a very great extent. But on the whole they had a good time, they did nobody any harm and to people like myself who only enjoyed their society occasionally they were a great source of entertainment. Many of these people had bought land on the Coldstream ranch, part of which had been subdivided into twenty-acre lots for fruit growing, and on these they built themselves little bungalows, planted fruit trees and then proceeded to enjoy life with tennis, shooting and fishing, and all the social frivolities of Vernon, mistakenly imagining they could carry on thus indefinitely and that fruit trees took care of themselves. Some of them had private incomes and managed all right. Others waded in and worked like good ones, and eventually most of them took hold and became real, working fruitgrowers. And it was certainly a more healthy and satisfactory life than they probably would have been leading in the old country.

In 1891 the *Vernon News* appeared on the scene—the second paper to be published in the interior of British Columbia—the first having been the *Inland Sentinel*. Angus K. Stuart was its first editor, reporter, and general news gatherer; and he had some job scratching a very large, thinly populated territory, much of which could be covered only on horseback, for news items. But with the aid of ready printed pages, known to the newspaper world as a “patent inside,” and a pair of scissors he managed to produce a very creditable little paper which is still going strong, recognized as one of the best weeklies in Canada. To its early numbers I am indebted for having my memory refreshed about little events that I had almost forgotten. At times Angus must have been hard pushed for the dearth of news; one

occasionally finds as fillers, paragraphs such as the following: “Gossips are predicting another love match to take place in town before many weeks pass by.”

And so time went on, and after the first building boom had petered out Vernon settled down for some years to an everyday sort of existence that seemed somewhat humdrum after the hectic days when the boom first started, and the very air had seemed charged with enthusiastic optimism. During the years that followed we had other booms, if you could call them such, for they were founded on nothing but pure imagination. One might call them psychological epidemics. They were strange things, these periodical outbreaks of excitement that affect the whole population; a sort of fever during which we seem to be entirely deprived of our reasoning faculties and the worst victims become almost delirious. And then when it is all over we wonder what sort of damn fools we were anyway. The most notable of these was the gold mining excitement. Now just why all of us in the North Okanagan should suddenly become convinced that the hills round Vernon should be full of gold I can't imagine, for we had the opinions of reliable geologists to the contrary. But when that sort of fever strikes a community nobody's opinion matters. So we all dreamed gold, and mining was almost the only topic of conversation; we formed mining companies and gambled ridiculously in their shares; one enthusiastic individual even opened a mining exchange in an empty store, with a big black board on which he chalked up the latest quotations on the stock of mines which only existed in the promoters' imaginations. We all carried round chunks of rock in our pockets which we would fish out and show to anyone who would look at them and talk learnedly of geology and petrology of which we really knew nothing. Men sitting at hotel dining room tables would haul their chunks of rock from their pockets and put them on the table so that they could gaze at them and talk about them as they ate. And a very indifferent man was the storekeeper who didn't have a row of specimens in his store window—our private windowsills were always thus adorned. Looking back over the *Vernon News* you will find that for a period of some two years there was hardly mention of anything else but mining; advertisements of mining companies, personal mention of Bill Jones or Shorty Jonson who had walked into the editor's office and displayed some promising looking specimens. Probably neither Bill nor Shorty nor the editor knew anything about it anyway, but it sounded better to call them promising looking. But I failed to find any mention of a real find of the precious metal for the absurd thing about the whole boom was that there was no gold—we kidded ourselves that there just must be. So we all staked our claims, or paid somebody else to stake one for us—I know one man at least who made a business of doing this and made good wages. He charged a fee of two dollars and a half and would start

out each morning on horseback with commissions to stake out maybe half a dozen claims; almost any old place up in the hills would do; everyone simply had to have a claim somewhere and many of these addicts to the prevailing craze had a very hazy idea as to where they were located; probably never got as far as recording them. But I am sure nearly all the range land within easy reach of Vernon was staked out; some claim owners got as far as expending a few dollars on dynamite and blasting out the beginnings of a shaft or tunnel, that anyway was an interesting occupation with a spice of novelty for most. So if in your rambles over the hills today you run across mysterious holes in the ground you will know what they are. I knew a few men who were bush ranching at that time whose cabins happened to be conveniently situated just at the foot of a steep hill; they started tunneling right at their back door so that they could be handy to their work; it added a pleasant variation to their usual occupation, and a tunnel was a nice cool place to work in on a hot day, and as one of them remarked, his mine would make a dandy roothouse.

There is one explanation of these periods when men's thoughts turn to possibilities of extracting wealth from the rocks; they invariably occur when times are not so good; it starts with a few men having nothing better to do, going out prospecting. Then the hotel men and storekeepers who are finding themselves rather idle and hardly any money coming in, think they will take a chance too, and either go out themselves or grubstake some other man, the hope that they will strike something becomes the belief that they will and so soon everybody has caught the infection and is a mining man. It was some years after this that the great Klondike rush occurred; many men left the valley then, drawn by the lure of gold; that excitement at least was not based on dreams.

It was also towards the end of the century that the railroad craze in British Columbia was born, lived for a few years on ambitious hopes, and died. I think charters must have been applied for to build railways over every possible route through the mountains and over some that were impossible, for most of these routes weren't even surveyed. I think most of the syndicates had no intention of building the road themselves; the idea was to sell their charter rights to someone else; I suppose one might call it a racket. Of course the Okanagan had to be in the swim and so came into being the Vernon Midway Railroad Company, born in the brain of Robert Wood, a well-known pioneer who had vision, but who was in advance of his own generation. For although a good many people made fun of the Vernon Midway at that time over that same route now run the trains of the C. N. R. and the Kettle Valley Railroad. But old Robert Wood did not live to see his dream come true. It was indeed no scheme for grabbing a charter with the hope of later selling the rights,

but a practical attempt to actually build a road, for he sent a man to try and raise capital in London, where all the money seemed to be in those days; but with rather negative results. And like nearly everything that happened in the Okanagan it had that humorous side that we always seemed to expect; for a long time one solitary old man with a pick and a shovel and a wheelbarrow worked on the beginning of a grade at the north end of Kalamalka Lake, over which the C. N. now runs. The old man was Harry Seydel, and he was employed to carry on the “continuous construction” which was called for in the wording of the charter to keep it from lapsing. We got quite accustomed to seeing him shoving his wheelbarrow about in a leisurely way, but finally he disappeared from this scene of activity and railroad construction ceased—I suppose the funds of the company had petered out.

The idea of this road had been to connect the Okanagan with the rich mining districts of the Kootenay and the Boundary country which were at that time isolated from any transportation; and it is interesting to note that in 1890, at the time the S. & O. was building in from Sicamous, Frank Barnard—who later became lieutenant governor; David Oppenheimer, the mayor of Vancouver, and others applied for a charter for a line from Vernon through Fire Valley, which was to be called the Okanagan and Kootenay Railroad Company—with the same end in view. But this never got as far as the old man, wheelbarrow, and shovel stage. Part of its projected route is now covered by the C. N. spur to Lumby. There was nothing small about the dreams of Michael Hagan of Kelowna, late editor of the *Inland Sentinel*. He envisioned a line that would run from the United States right up through the Okanagan Valley to Alaska! I wonder how many years ahead of his time he was!

I think it must have been in 1896 that we first began to take any interest in what was going on in the outside world; it was then that we heard the astonishing news of the Jameson Raid, and it was probably that which inspired the idea of forming a company of mounted rifles. This, by private endeavor, actually came into being, at least on paper, and at an enthusiastic public meeting Judge Spinks was elected captain; Jack McKelvie and W. C. Bate first and second lieutenants; and perhaps I should say that none of them had any military experience whatever. Certain retired military men in our midst declined commissions, probably with memories of war office red tape; they had doubts as to the legality of the proceeding.

This force was called the Okanagan Mounted Rifles; in 1897 support for the proposal was asked of the Department of the Militia and was refused; but finally in 1898, the department recognized it; and so was born the Thirtieth British Columbia Horse, the Okanagan's home regiment that as the Second C.M.R., won distinction

in the 1914-1918 war and was an armored regiment in the World War II.

Vernon in those early days of the boom, must have had something about it that attracted eccentric and unusual people; in fact, in looking back I wonder if most of us would not have been rather out of place in a respectable well-ordered community; say Toronto, or the suburbs of London. I would like to describe more of our unconventional citizens, but lacking both space and the ability to do them justice I must regretfully leave them in my memory, and to your imagination.

CHAPTER V

VERNON TO OKANAGAN MISSION

Let us now go back to the Vernon of 1890 and start off from there to have a look at the country to the south.

We prepare for the journey with the usual good breakfast at Tronson's hotel, light up our pipe, go into the bar and pay our bill, the bartender taking our money with the usual, "What will you have?" We then stroll round to the livery barn, where we saddle up. We know our horse will have been well fed and watered; if the stableman is there we pay him the usual fifty cents, and if he is not there it is all right, he knows we will pay the next time we see him. So we swing into the saddle and pull out for the long ride to Okanagan Mission some forty miles south.

The valley here begins to take on quite a different appearance; we are leaving behind the rich wheat fields and getting into the dry belt; great rolling hills dotted with pine trees; here and there breaking off in sheer cliffs of grey and reddish rock, and sometimes rising to high dome-shaped mountains, their steep sides tawny and bare and their summits crowned with stunted timber. And the air is full of the intoxicating tang of the sagebrush which everywhere struggles with the bunch grass for a hold on the dry hillsides. In some book I once read, I remember this phrase: "The air was like new wine." And that is what the air of the dry belt is like—one of those sparkling fizzy sort of wines that go straight to your head.

In the spring there is a tinge of emerald green in the grass that covers these ranges, and myriads of wild flowers; great patches of sunflower and sky blue lupin, the big rich green shrubs of syringa are laden with their strong scented flowers of mock orange blossom, and enormous feather clusters of creamy spirea hang from their bushes and of course there is the ubiquitous dog rose. And in the hollows of the hills where their roots may find some moisture there are little groves of aspen poplar with their slim, white trunks and delicate, bright green foliage. And over all the immense blue dome of the cloudless Okanagan sky.

In the fall of the year, at the end of the hot dry summer, the colors take on a deeper, richer tone; the grass has been sun-tanned to ocher, the poplars are brilliant cadmium, and the sumac which was unnoticed in the spring is a blaze of scarlet and crimson. And the sky, above its complimentary colors of orange and gold appears a deeper brighter blue that is almost incredible in its intensity. How I used to wish I

was a landscape painter so that I could splosh all those marvellous colors onto canvas.

Leaving Vernon behind us we first ride for some miles up a long open hill, passing over the plateau which, during World War II was alive with the tramp of marching feet and the bugles of training camp—the same old camp that was started in 1914; where sometimes after “lights out” I would lie in my tent and think of the bygone days when the silence of these hills was broken only by the excitement of the yearly round-up or the occasional rattle of the old stage on the rough road; musing over the unanswerable question—why should even our peaceful valley be unable to escape the curse of the Hun? I had heard too much about that ever-present curse to have any illusions myself, from Europeans, including Germans, who had come out here long ago to get away from the bullying blood and iron and mailed fist stuff with which they were perpetually threatened: a threat that apparently will never cease as long as Germany exists as a nation. It seems to have taken us seventy years to realize this—if we have realized it. I hope we shall not forget it for another seventy years, and not fool ourselves with the idea that it is just Hitler or the Kaiser.

However, these were the musings of middle age and I was rather given to philosophizing. All the young fellows seemed to be enjoying life, and to tell the truth I got quite a kick out of that camp myself. And perhaps the present generation, if they could be dropped down in the valley as it was in my youthful days, would think it insufferably dull. But let us get back to where we were when my ruminations got me sidetracked.

We ride on, always ascending, until we reach the highest point of the narrow road, where it creeps round the face of the cliff some one thousand feet above our starting point in Vernon. And here I am going to linger a bit, as I always have done at this spot, and get my fill of the truly magnificent view. And at the risk of boring you I am going to make an attempt to paint it; if you don't like my occasional effusions about the scenery you can always skip them. Sheer below us lies the lake, which we then knew as Long Lake but which is now called Kalamalka, along the shores of which the road will take its tortuous way for the next fifteen miles, clinging precariously to the steep mountainside with many a twist and turn until finally, as with a sense of something accomplished, it takes a long sweep down to the water's edge. Looking straight down from the edge of the road where we stand, the water for a little distance out from the shore is a clear, transparent jade, merging into a deep emerald and then suddenly to the deepest Prussian blue, almost blue-black over the unplumbed depths in the center of the lake. Away over on the other side high mountains rise steeply and abruptly from the water, their sides heavily timbered, with

every imaginable shade of green; their indentations shadowed in the darkest ultramarine. Here and there these colors are relieved with touches of the terra cotta and rosy pink of exposed rock on the mountainside or of sheer cliffs at their base. And the water beneath them takes on every hue in your palette, according to the state of the atmosphere and the light. Then turn your eyes to the south, where the distant surface of the lake reflects the sky. It is the purest turquoise there, and the distant mountainsides recede in fainter and fainter planes of hazy purple and violet.

Some writer traveling through the valley a few years ago, inspired by the beauty aptly called Kalamalka, "the lake of a thousand colors." And yet, incredibly, there are people who are quite untouched by nature's lavish display of scenes such as this, that are truly spectacular; free to anyone who will take the trouble to look. They are unfortunate, these people; they miss much that makes life worth living.

Now turn and look to the northeast, across the lake to where some three miles back it shallows out to a wide crescent beach of glistening cream white sand. Here White Valley opens out, the site of the famous Coldstream ranch, bordered by great rolling tawny hills that soar upward for three thousand feet to a forested plateau; the watershed whose melted snows feed the many creeks which today irrigate our fields and orchards. Far up the valley, looking as if it did not quite belong to the surrounding landscape, purple and somber, rises the curious shaped mountain that we call the Camel's Hump; and far, far in the distance beyond that, perhaps a hundred miles away, on a clear day we can see the serrated snow peaks of the Selkirks.

And having feasted your eyes on this, look right down below your feet and straight across. From the other side a long peninsula juts out, almost to the middle of the lake, rocky and rough and bare except for a few scattered pines; ending abruptly in sheer cliffs of pale sienna surmounted by a rounded grassy hill. We look right down on it, and against the blue-black of the lake it has the appearance of a pale carved cameo or the raised design on a wedgewood vase. I suppose it must be nearly a mile from where we stand, but in this clear atmosphere it looks so close that you have an absurd desire to spread out your arms and take a flying leap; you feel that in a few seconds you would land on that grassy hill and could satisfy your curiosity, for there is something intriguing about that peninsula seen from here, it looks more like a creation of the imagination than real. It certainly must have appealed to our friend the Honorable Coutts Majoribanks, for many years later, when he returned from the old country with a wife he built himself a very fine house on the hill at that point, where it is still standing. He, however, did not discover it in the manner my imagination has suggested, but explored it on horseback from the

other side; one can hardly picture his portly form sailing through the air in a sort of super high dive.

White Valley in 1890 was all open range land; today it is dotted with neat farm houses and in the spring is white with the blossom of orchards; the beach is alive with bathers, and down on the lake motor launches look like insects crawling along the surface of the water. A wide safe motor road passes the spot where we stand, inviting one to speed, but stop your car; and look.

But it is time we were jogging along; we have a long ride before we get to where the road drops to the level of the lake; the day is heating up, we are getting dry and there is nothing to drink until we do get there; no roadside pubs in these parts. We finally do, after passing round Rattlesnake Point. It was here that when the road was being built a shot of dynamite blasted out, mixed with rock, a whole colony of rattlers. "Yes, sir, there was hundreds of them, the bastards was wrigglin' round that thick you'd think the whole ground was movin', an' the noise of their rattlin' was terrific. We walked into them rattlers with shovels and rocks and killed about a thousand of them, and a lot was blew out into the lake when the shot went off, but the rest went squirmin' hell for leather for the bush." This was the yarn as was told me by one who was present and I will not vouch for its truth. I feel that it was somewhat exaggerated. But what a newspaper reporter he would have made. "And what did you do with all those snakes you killed?" I mildly asked. "Oh well, a few of the boys took some home but they was that plentiful we just shoveled them into the lake." Which seemed a pity for there was quite a demand for rattlesnake skins. Pound, the taxidermist in Vernon, would make them into belts and hat bands with which the fashionable youth, especially the ladies, loved to adorn their persons.

Rattlers were indeed fairly plentiful and their bite was deadly. I knew of some half dozen people who were bitten, and in every case they died. I have often wondered why animals never seemed to be victims, for horses and cattle were continually nosing about in the grass where a snake was likely coiled up asleep. And I have never heard of an Indian being killed; but then the general opinion was that if an Indian was bitten the rattler would die; not the Indian. And it is rather strange how indifferent to their danger you become, you camp in rattlesnake country and never think about them. I knew one man down at Trout Creek who had a whole family of rattlers living under his house and it didn't worry him a bit; I rather think he liked to brag about it. However, he was a bachelor living alone and a queer sort of chap anyway. Nowadays the towns in the interior always have a supply of anti-snake bite serum, and there is very little danger if this is applied within a reasonable time after the snake has got in his work. And the danger of being bitten is very remote, for the

rattlers are sluggish, and will never strike unless disturbed, and sometimes not even then. I know one man who inadvertently sat on one, which must have been coiled up asleep under the tuft of bunch grass. The man felt something move under him, and rose very hurriedly to see the rattler crawl away. He said his behind felt very uncomfortable for some time; he couldn't be sure the beast had not got in a nibble.

Well, it is getting on towards noon, so we leave Rattlesnake Point behind us and push on along the hot road cut in the side of the rock until we reach the grateful shade of some trees on the edge of the water and stop to eat the lunch we have brought along with us, while our horse, after having his saddle removed, takes a luxuriant roll on the grass and then nibbles contentedly until we are ready to move on again. Just here Long Lake ends, and is divided from Woods' Lake along which the road now runs at water level, by that curious narrow strip of land that we called the "railroad." In the middle of this Gee-Gee McKay the real-estate man, a year or so later built himself a cabin which he grandly called his shooting lodge, and there I once spent the night, or rather that had been my intention, but I didn't. Sammy Gibbs, the late manager of the Enderly flour mill and I had canoed down from the Vernon end of the lake, and tired out after our long paddle and a big supper, rolled up in our bunks for a good comfortable sleep. And then the mosquitoes got busy. Gibbs did not seem to mind them, for he soon was peacefully snoring; and perhaps I had a better flavor, but anyway, after a vain endeavor to cover my person so that they couldn't get at me I couldn't stick it out any longer; I got up and went out. There in the moonlight, hauled up on the beach was the canoe, and a brain wave hit me. There was a coil of rope in the cabin—I would tie one end of it to the canoe and to the end would fasten a big chunk of rock, and thus equipped I would anchor the canoe out on the lake well beyond the reach of those accursed mosquitoes—for it is well known they never go far from shore—and there lying on the bottom of the canoe, wrapped in my blanket would I peacefully sleep. All of which I proceeded to do, and I slept soundly. But during the night a breeze came up, my chunk of rock anchor slipped off the cable, and when in the cold grey morn my slumbers and dreams merged into reality it was a very unpleasant reality indeed, for instead of seeing the little cabin above the beach about a hundred yards from where I let go my anchor, I soon realized from landmarks on the shore that I must have drifted more than a mile up the lake and had to do a long paddle against the head wind before I got any breakfast. It is a most exasperating business this trying to paddle a light canoe by yourself against a stiff breeze. If you sit in the middle you can't steer; and if you sit in the stern her bow sticks up out of the water and the wind keeps slewing you around in the wrong direction. If you are near enough to shore you can paddle in

and collect some rocks to pile in the bow for ballast—if there happens to be any rocks just when you want them. But if you are in the middle of a lake you are out of luck. So by the time I did get back I felt so cranky that I almost hoped Gibbs wouldn't have any breakfast ready so that I would have an excuse to ease my mind by cussing at him. Luckily for us both, however, he had and the soothing effects of coffee and bacon plus a pipe soon restored me to normal, and my so annoying experience became one of those absurd little adventures that are worth having because they give you something to laugh about afterwards.

This part of the country, which is now Oyama, with its flourishing orchards and many fine houses, when I first saw it was quite uninhabited, and it was not until you had passed the southern end of Woods' Lake—named after Tom Woods, a big stock rancher whose property ran along all the eastern side—that the road ran through a number of fine ranches, with their homey, hospitable ranch houses nestling in groves of trees. They were fine people those ranchers, always with a welcome for both friends or strangers. Tom Woods, Bill and Alf Postill, George Whelan, famous for his potent brew of cider—for he already had a bearing orchard; Joe Christian, and others that I did not know so well—they are all gone now, their lands owned by others and their families scattered, but they were big men in those days. The Alf Postill ranch, especially, was one of the finest places in the valley; I should say is, for it happily was never subdivided and still exists with its original eight thousand acres, and is now known as the Eldorado Ranch. Its rich level hay meadows extend the whole width of the valley, and from the road up and back as far as the eye can see. At the foot of this range, and to the north of the meadows lies Duck Lake, along the shore of which the road runs for some half mile, and between the lake and the meadows are the house and farm buildings. Alf Postill had even in those early days a very large well-built house, almost a mansion and these three men, the two Postills and Tom Woods must have had very progressive ideas, for their three houses were connected by a private telephone system; they had constructed the five miles of line themselves, and it was the first in the interior of British Columbia. It seems strange that the first time I ever saw or used a telephone should be in the supposed wilds of the West. This house stood amongst big shade trees near the foot of the range, and on a little bench about a hundred feet above the house, sheltered on all sides except the south, by the rise of the hill, there was a vineyard where grew juicy grapes which seemed to me to be quite equal to those grown in California.

On continuing our journey, if we are in no particular hurry we may stop at George Whelan's and sample his cider. If we do and down more than two glasses, the scenery for the rest of the way will be seen through a shimmering haze. But

eventually we arrive at Okanagan Mission and the end of the road; for if you wished to travel any farther down the valley, at least by land, you would have to tackle a rough and very vague mountain trail to Penticton, which I never did.

The Indian name for this part of the country was "N'kakwastin" meaning the "place of two mills"—that of the Postills, a small sawmill, and the flour mill of Frederick Brent which had old-fashioned mill stones and was run by a water wheel. One might wonder how these stones were ever got up into the interior; the story of how it was done is well worth repeating and is a good illustration of the dauntless perseverance of the early pioneers, so I will quote in part from the account given by Joe Brent, the son of Frederick in a report of the Okanagan Historical Society.

"The stone grist mill was bought in San Francisco about 1871, and came by sea to the mouth of the Frazer, then by river boat to Fort Yale, thence by freight wagon to Savona Ferry, over the Frazer Canyon road, then by water, by way of Kamloops Lake, the Thompson River, Shuswap Lake, Mara Lake, and the Spallumcheen River to Fortunes Landing—now called Enderly." From there the mill was taken, in a homemade wagon, the wheels of which were hewn from a solid block to Okanagan Landing. (Some of these homemade wagons were still in use for some years after I came into the valley.) And as what road there was at that date ended there, the rest of the freighting to Okanagan Mission was done by rowboat down Okanagan Lake and then again by wagon some three miles to its site on the Brent ranch. Some journey for a flour mill.

Okanagan Mission was so-called from the Indian mission established there in 1857 by Father Pendosi, reputed to be the first white man to live in the Okanagan, and when I first saw it there was quite a fine church on the reserve, and a large number of Indians, the rancherie was quite a populous and lively place.

In these southern parts of the valley half-breeds, too, seemed to be much more in evidence than in the north—the natural result of the scarcity of white women in the very early days, and the mixture of white-Indian sometimes had produced rather unfortunate results. Occasionally they were the offspring of men of education and breeding and would be a strange mixture of two distinct personalities in the same individual—a savage and irresponsible strain from their Indian ancestors and the polished manners acquired from the white father. You might, one day, meet a dark, good-looking chap, quiet and well-bred, who would talk to you as well, or possibly better than many educated Englishmen, and a day or two later see the same lad whooping 'er up with a bunch of Siwashes on the rancherie. And the women were much the same, most of them were decidedly good-looking, and they had charming manners—in fact, the younger ones were most attractive; they had what we now call

“it,” that made them easy to get on with. I remember one girl, the daughter of an army officer who had spent part of his younger days ranching in the Okanagan. Later on he was attached to the governor general’s staff, and sent for his daughter—who in the meantime had been growing up with her half-breed friends and relatives—to join him in Ottawa, where she was educated and became a society belle at the vice-regal balls and such-like doings in the capital. And then I think her father died; at any rate she came back to the Okanagan, and soon dropped right back into the old half-breed ways. And why shouldn’t she? Who shall say that those ways were not just as good as the artificial whirl of gold lace and diamond tiaras that she turned her back on? They were probably much more sincere.

At the end of the road was a large house, headquarters for the stage, a sort of hotel—mostly barroom, a rather wild happy-go-lucky disreputable sort of place which was a happy resort for the surrounding male population and seemed to include rather a large proportion of tough half-breeds and white men of dubious character; a free and easy casual joint far removed from the ken of license commissioners. It was there I saw one day, sitting on the edge of the veranda, a greasy-looking half-breed with his head tied in a rag. He was looking very sorry for himself and I asked what was the matter with him. “Oh, he get into a fight, and the other feller he chewed his ear off.” Quite evident no Queensberry rules in those parts, and rather like some modern wrestling.

From this place a wagon track meandered for several miles across level open meadowland over part of which the city of Kelowna was later on to spread its tree-shaded streets, to a rough wharf on Okanagan Lake. And from this wharf at odd times sailed or rather steamed the good ship grandiloquently named the *City of Vernon*, a little tub of very doubtful safety with a very obvious homemade look about her. If you embarked for the voyage to Penticton it would be with a feeling of adventure—you were headed for the unknown—those parts vaguely known as the Lower Country. Also there was the possibility of the *City of Vernon* sinking with all hands; indeed, she did accomplish this feat several times later on, but not with all hands and fortunately in shallow water. On account of her tendency to sit in the mud on the bottom of the lake she was rechristened the *Mud Hen*.

The commander and owner of this craft was Captain Shorts, whom I have mentioned before; a most remarkable character, very much what we should describe as a “live wire.” He was a very assertive little man, with a face almost buried in a snuffy beard of no particular color, which bore the visual evidence of the fact that he chewed tobacco; he really looked snuffy all over. He always wore a very faded-bowler hat, cocked down over one eye in a sporty way—I doubt if anyone had ever

seen him without it. He had an amazing flow of language with which he would describe his many adventures or induce you to help finance his hopeful business enterprises, for he was so chock-full of optimism that he was very persuasive.



Photo by the author

Launching of the *Aberdeen*—May 23, 1893—first C.P.R. boat on Okanagan Lake



Photo by the author

N. H. Caesar's homemade boat, the *Wanderer*

He it was who initiated the first passenger service on Okanagan Lake, in an open rowboat named the *Lucy Shorts*, propelled by a pair of oars and the captain's brawny arms. The distance down the lake was some seventy-five miles, so it might mean a voyage of several days or even longer if the weather was very rough. The captain and a passenger were once marooned on the wrong side of the lake—that is, on the side on which there was no trail, for a whole week of stormy weather. Luckily this did not happen when he was carrying a lady as his only passenger—her

experience was alarming enough as it was—for her. That trip fortunately only took three days; they camped overnight on the shore; she sleeping under one tree and the captain under another. She was an English girl of gentle birth, on her way to the family of a rancher where she was to act as governess—one would expect her to be filled with misgivings; for the captain's appearance was not such as to inspire confidence, but as she told me about it some time afterwards, her sense of humor had evidently made her enjoy the somewhat unconventional experience; at any rate, as she said, it was something to write home about.

The *City of Vernon* was not the first steamboat on the lake, for in 1886, the captain—perhaps a bit tired of the rowboat business, and having seen an alluring advertisement of a two-horsepower, coal oil-burning marine engine, decided to go into steam and hired two local carpenters to build him a hull, in which he installed his coal-oil engine. She was christened the *Mary Victoria Greenhow* after the daughter of a rancher who was part owner, but she had such a voracious appetite for coal oil (the boat, not the daughter) that on her first trip she ran out of fuel and had to be rowed. Her life was very short, for on her next trip she caught fire just off Okanagan Mission and her hull was destroyed after she was beached. And such was the captain's joyous disposition that he seemed to get a kick out of all these misfortunes. Certainly he enjoyed talking about them, with humorous embroidery; and used to give a very graphic description of the enthusiastic crowds at the launching of the *Mary Victoria Greenhow* and the firing of the twenty-one-gun salute at the end of her trip. But the captain had a vivid imagination and all his experiences grew more dramatic with each repetition. He was not to be downed by any little mishap like this, so this time with the help of a real ship's carpenter he built himself a new ship which was equipped partly with new machinery and partly with some of the old out of the *Mary Victoria Greenhow*; and this one was christened the *Jubilee*; and as he was now getting more freight than she could hold, he built a barge to tow behind. The *Jubilee* held up well for two years, and then she also gave up the ghost by just falling apart. Nothing daunted, the ever sanguine Captain took out her machinery and placed it in the barge, and this remarkable vessel he named the *City of Vernon*. This was the best he could do; having started as a shipowner he was bound to carry on somehow. And then he had a stroke of luck; he sold his ranch at Shorts' Point and this provided him with more capital. He immediately went to Vancouver and arranged for having a real steamboat built, and this one was named the *Penticton*. But poor old Shorts was no businessman, and after initiating what he called a regular service, which proved to be so irregular that his patrons never knew when or how she was going to run, he finally went broke again and had to sell her, and as about

this time the gold fever struck the Okanagan, he returned to his old love, mining; and I think was for a time even more enthusiastic about that than he had been about his various vessels. He would disappear into the hills for a few weeks and return with bits of rock in his pockets and would be seen declaiming to an interested audience on the beauty and richness of his specimens.

But his career as a shipowner was not over yet; apparently navigation had got into his blood, or it may have been that the mining excitement had died; anyway, whatever the reason, he returned to his beloved lake with new energy. After he put the *Penticton* into commission he had sold the *City of Vernon* to McCauley and Grant, who operated the Victoria Hotel in Vernon; it was they who called her the *Mud Hen*, and she finally had settled down in the mud for good; her machinery was taken out and stored in an old shed where it lay and rusted, and her hull was abandoned. The captain regarded this derelict with a speculative eye; he had operated her before, why not have another try at it? He was broke again and could not raise the capital for a new boat, for about that time everybody else was broke too. And when Shorts had considered doing anything he didn't waste time reconsidering; he just went to it; so he proceeded to haul her out of the mud.

In the meantime the S.S. *Aberdeen*, the first C.P.R. boat on the lake, had been launched and was running on a regular schedule and Captain Shorts, like most of the men of his stamp, resented this "grasping octopus" grabbing everything that they considered their own special perquisites. In a spirit of defiance he advertised in the *Vernon News*, "The competing line is here to stay and so am I," followed by a notice of freight rates, timetable and so on, which was a bit previous, as the *City of Vernon* or *Mud Hen*, was not yet floating, and worse still, her machinery had mysteriously disappeared from the old shed. So to keep things going the captain managed to acquire a small boat with an engine of sorts in her, which he named the S.S. *Lucy*.

It was about this time that some of the prominent citizens of Vernon, in a spirit partly of having some fun but mostly from having a real admiration for the enterprise of the old boy, tendered him a banquet at the Kalamalka Hotel, when he was granted the title of "Admiral of the Okanagan." This last of the captain's however, fizzled out, and he gave up his attempt at steamboating in disgust. As he said, "I made six thousand dollars rowboating and lost it all in steam." Allowing for the captain's imagination the six thousand was probably nearer six hundred, but he undoubtedly lost it. Since the Klondike rush was starting about this time, he also rushed, for with his perennial optimism he said he believed he could make his fortune; and as the *Vernon News* remarked, commenting on his departure, "and

when the captain believes anything he believes it pretty thoroughly.” So, to our great regret we lost one of our most colorful inhabitants, for the Okanagan never saw him again.

These early attempts to build up water transportation certainly had a humorous side, but there was also something decidedly epic about them; Captain Shorts was the pioneer and certainly earned his title of admiral, but there were other navigators, and the history of the various boats is, as you may have gathered, quite interesting. Three English boys, Ashton, Caesar, and Valentine, who owned the property which is now known as the Rainbow Ranch at Okanagan Center, built themselves a boat which they named the *Wanderer*. Northcote Caesar was a man who seemed to be able to do anything, from mending shoes and watches to building boats, and in spite of being handicapped all his life with a lame foot, was a most active man. He was of those English public school boys to whom credit is due for helping to build up the Okanagan.

The *Wanderer* was quite an efficient boat—if a bit cranky. I remember on one occasion when she had been chartered to take a cricket team down to Kelowna, they were warned not to all stand on one side of the ship at the same time, lest she turn turtle. But then she had no freight in her hold as ballast. She was eventually sold to one, Hoodlum Smith, who hauled her overland to Long Lake, where she was used for towing logs to be sawed into firewood for Vernon. Her hull later on also disintegrated, and her machinery was taken out and rebuilt into a wood-sawing outfit.

Another steamboat was the *Okanagan*—not to be confused with the large C.P.R. boat with the same name, of a much later date. She was launched in 1900, and her owner, Pete Gooding, finding steamboating a losing proposition because he knew nothing about it, removed her machinery and turned it into a sawmill, which was his real trade. Then in 1893, came the *Kelowna*, quite an ambitious boat this, seventy-five feet long, owned by Dave Lloyd-Jones of Kelowna and the machinery from the late *Penticton* was placed in her. She must have been a really good boat for she was still going strong as late as 1911, but was eventually dismantled and part of her machinery found its way to a mine near Penticton. Quite interesting the life history of some of this old machinery.

Earlier in this book I told you about the townsite of Okanagan Falls, and the owner and duke thereof, Mr. Snodgrass; he also became, for a short time, a shipowner. For his ambition was to have water transportation between Okanagan Lake and Dog Lake, at the south end of which his so-called townsite was situated. The two lakes are connected by a small winding river, and on this he played a little

stern-wheel boat—the S.S. *Fairview*. She also succumbed not to the perils of the deep, but to those of the Okanagan River, for on one trip her pilot-house was wiped off by an overhanging tree—so her services were discontinued. A little later on, the river having been made safer for navigation, another boat was put on this route; her life was also short, for a year afterwards she was destroyed by fire. Her name was the *City of Greenwood*.

One of Robert Wood's visions was of a continuous waterway right through the Okanagan connecting the Frazer and Thompson river systems with that of the Columbia. The Okanagan River would be straightened out, and a canal cut through the land which divides Mara Lake from Okanagan Lake, a distance of some seventeen miles. Robert Wood was a man of some influence and persuaded the Dominion government to explore the possibilities of this canal; the ensuing report was to the effect that the route would be practical, but the cost prohibitive. But they must have had some idea that it might be constructed at some future time, for they surveyed a townsite a little to the south of where Enderly came into being. This was to be called Belvidere, for what reason there seems to be no record, but there exists today in Enderly a street named Belvidere.

A year later the British Columbian government urged the Dominion government to start immediate construction; the cost would not be their funeral. However, the Federal government did not bite, so that was another dream that did not come true. Robert Wood also had a remarkable scheme for moving boats through the canal. The land through which it would have to run is not very solid; rather boggy in fact, and his idea was that the wash from a stern wheel would eat the banks away, and in this he was probably right. Therefore he would have an endless chain or cable running along the bottom of the canal, which would be kept moving by a stationary engine at each end, and this cable would be gripped by some contraption projecting from the bottom of the barge. I think he must have got the idea from the cable cars in San Francisco. If it worked so beautifully with streetcars, why not with boats? I knew Robert Wood very well indeed, and although the canal scheme had fallen into oblivion years before I met him, he still spoke about it and was convinced that his endless chain idea was quite practical.

I must not forget to chronicle another boat which ran between Sicamous and Enderly. It carried passengers over the same route as the *Red Star*. This was an ordinary flat-bottomed rowboat operated by a brawny black-bearded man named Roberts. Naturally he had no time schedule, but ran it as sort of a taxi; his fare as I remember was five dollars, and he certainly earned it.

And to finish this extensive list of boats on the waterways of the valley there was

the *Queen*. She was very old, had been disused for many years and was lying abandoned in the Thompson River at her home port of Kamloops at the time of the great floods of 1896, when much of the main line C.P.R. was washed away, the S. & O. branch into the Okanagan was also partly under water and our valley cut off from the outside world. Then the owners of the *Queen*, smelling a chance for business, resurrected her, hoping she would go. She did, as far as Enderly, and part of the way back, when she ended her career in a burst of glory, for she blew up in a most spectacular way, depositing the wreck of the boiler in the bushes on the bank and the rest of her remains in the Thompson River. Miraculously the two men of her crew escaped comparatively unhurt. They may have been reckless, these early navigators but they were hard to kill; I think a special providence must have watched over them. All these sanguine spirits who made the somewhat reckless attempts at steamboating seemed to me to have derived a considerable amount of pleasure, if no profit, from their various ventures; there was something sporting about it which undoubtedly appealed to them. And considering that they were all amateurs both in boat-building and navigating, they did pretty well. After a bit, however, the authorities at Ottawa who attend to inland navigation woke up and began to worry them about such things as licences, boiler inspection and so on—things they had never heard of before. The boats were their own, and it was their lake; why did the government want to come shoving in? They were both indignant and annoyed. And they had their business worries too, for both the *City of Vernon* and the *Penticton* were at various times arrested for debt. After the C.P.R. S.S. *Aberdeen* was put on their services were unnecessary anyway.

After all the funny little homemade tubs that we were used to, the *Aberdeen* seemed absolutely palatial, with her staterooms and spacious decks and saloons. She put in at good wharves at Okanagan Landing, Kelowna, and Penticton; at other places along the lake she just shoved her nose up on the beach and a plank was pushed out over the bow. This plank was about twenty-five or thirty feet long, and naturally very wobbly in the middle, and down it the disembarking passenger had to descend gingerly to the beach, and his baggage would be heaved after him. I have seen some people, considering safety rather than dignity, crawl down.



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

The *Queen* at Eagle Pass landing, Sicamous. One of the earliest stern-wheelers.



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

All of Bernard Avenue, Kelowna, in 1895

CHAPTER VI

THE BEGINNINGS OF KELOWNA

The meaning of "Kelowna," and just why it was chosen as a name for the new town seemed to be known to very few people and probably would have remained a mystery if the Okanagan Historical Society had not gathered and recorded the following facts. A Frenchman named August Gillard had been the original owner of the land on which the town now stands, and because he lived in a sort of dugout shack rather like a bear's den, the Indians called him "Kim-ach-touch," which means "bear" or "bear-face." When, in 1892 the C.P.R. built a wharf for the use of their new boat, the *Aberdeen*, Bernard Lequime the then owner of the land, laid out a townsite, and naturally wanted a suitable name for it. At a casual little gathering he brought up the subject and someone suggested "Kim-ach-touch." Lequime thought it suitable enough, but rather too much of a mouthful. Perhaps the people gathered there were not very imaginative and could think of nothing else but bears; anyway, somebody else suggested as a substitute "Kelowna," which is the Indian for grizzly bear. Everybody being satisfied, the name was adopted. The first time I saw Kelowna was in 1892 or '93, and a crude and unpromising little place it was. About the only sign of life was the daily arrival of the *Aberdeen*, which then seemed to us the last word in luxury, on her way up or down the lake. As soon as the whistle announcing her approach was heard the whole population of some fifty or so would assemble on the wharf to meet her and get a glimpse as it were, of the outside world. The captain might have an interesting bit of gossip from Vernon or Penticton; or there might even be a new arrival to swell the population.

From this wharf a narrow board sidewalk ran up one side of the main and only street—Bernard Avenue; which ran inland for about two hundred yards, past small unpainted frame stores and a blacksmith shop. And that was about all of Kelowna. This board sidewalk was very necessary for the town was almost on a level with the lake, which had an annoying habit of extending itself up Bernard Avenue, when the populace would have to take to boats. This bad habit was later on cured by an engineering operation on the Okanagan River, which lowered the level of the lake. However, the town grew rapidly; the beautiful and fertile country which surrounded it attracted large numbers of people from the old country, many of whom had a considerable amount of money for investment. Most of them went in for fruit

growing. And soon the bald little town was surrounded by young orchards, where many hopeful young bachelors built their little bungalows and tackled the unfamiliar job of housekeeping. And as they also had their farm work to do, their housekeeping, naturally was decidedly sketchy. Well, eggs and bacon, which seemed to be their staple diet, taste just as good off a plain unadorned board table as if it was covered with snowy damask; better in fact, if you have been hoeing weeds in the orchard all the morning; a little dust won't hurt anything and it is not really necessary to make a bed. And at first there was a lovely sense of freedom at not having any womenfolk fussing around. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves—I say we, because although I was not an owner of one of these fruit ranches I knew most of the men who did own them and occasionally stayed and worked with them, and was one on the crowd.

About the only drawback to this arcadian existence was the lack of female society, and we were apt to get careless in our habits. As for instance, I was once spending a week end with Ted Carruthers and Freddy Ellis, who had the usual bachelor establishment on a little farm on the Mission road. About a hundred feet back of their house was a large irrigation flume, raised about two feet above the ground; it was an ideal place to have a bath; you could just lie down comfortably in it and let the cool water flow luxuriously over you while the hot sun violet-rayed you from above. One afternoon we were thus blissfully enjoying ourselves, all three of us in nothing but our altogethers, lying stretched out in a row and idly talking of this and that, when we were suddenly frozen silent by an unexpected and alarming sound—the sound of female voices.

“Hoo-hoo, Ted!” sang one of the voices in dulcet tones, “Where are you? I’ve brought Dora with me, and we’ve come over for tea.” It was the voice of Ted Carruther’s sister-in-law Gladys from Kelowna, and Dora was a beautiful young lady newly arrived, and although we might have been glad to make an impression on her it certainly would not have been in our present informal state. “Hoo-hoo,” persistently sang the voice again.

Ted acted promptly; it was his sister-in-law and he accepted the responsibility for the situation. “Gladys,” he yelled, poking his head over the edge of the flume; “for the Lord’s sake don’t come any farther, we’re having a bath in the flume and all our clothes are in the house.”

There was a pause and then a shriek of female laughter; I don’t know whether Dora laughed too or whether she blushed. Then sweetly, “Well, Ted, what do you want us to do, bring you your clothes?”

“Oh, damit, Gladys, stop kidding; be a sport and go hide in the barn and give us

a chance to get to the house.”

“All right, Ted, we’ll give you ten minutes; you sing out when you feel respectable.” So we timidly emerged, and each with a hand instinctively endeavoring to act as a fig leaf, bolted into the house, and all was well.

Some of the older settlers had beautiful if somewhat unsophisticated daughters, and as time went on some of the boys’ sisters came out to keep house for them, but the girl supply did not nearly meet the demand. And when a new one arrived, the glad news quickly spread, and the next Sunday our padre, Father Green, would have a large male congregation, much to his amusement. And on Sunday afternoons you would see half a dozen or more saddle horses tied up outside the house where the young lady was staying and the poor girl would be fairly mobbed. And as no one could pay her any serious attentions because he hadn’t enough money to marry on anyway it was all very gay and friendly. But perhaps the girl found it a bit disappointing.

One young lady who came out visiting some friends was doing things in style, for she brought her personal maid with her. Now on a neighboring ranch lived two bachelor brothers, Jimmy and George, and Jimmy became enamored of the lady, who seemed to reciprocate, for they for a time were quite inseparable, and as she appeared to have enough money to keep the wolf from the door even if he hadn’t, we all expected a marriage in the near future. And then the maid threw a monkey wrench into the works, for she suddenly announced that she was engaged to George. And that, in the eyes of her mistress, created a really socially impossible situation; she just couldn’t see herself having her ex-lady’s maid for a sister-in-law, so she gave Jimmy the bounce. I suppose a thing like that would not worry anyone nowadays, but the people were like that then. And as the maid concluded that her easy job was worth more than an impecunious husband she also called it off; mistress and maid continued on their travels and Jimmy and George returned to their peaceful bachelor surroundings, probably neither sadder nor wiser men.



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

The population of Kelowna meets the boat

As the years rolled by the little bachelor establishment became a thing of the past, some of the boys discovered more congenial ways of making a living than farming; some imported sisters to keep house and others married each other's sisters or one of the always popular schoolmarms and lived happily ever after, at least they seemed to.

A sort of oasis in this desert of bachelordom was the hospitable home of Tom Stirling, a wealthy retired naval lieutenant commander; there he and his kindly wife would always make us welcome, and for the brief space of a Sunday afternoon we would taste once more the refinements of an English home; afternoon tea in delicate cups, the cheerful light of an open fire glinting on china and silver and brass; good pictures on the walls; oriental rugs, and all the other fixings of a well-appointed house. And better than all this the genuine friendliness of the Stirlings and their jolly kiddies.

Here and there in the west were other homes of this sort; their influence kept many a young Englishman from losing his self-respect, and they constituted a leaven of culture which has left its mark all over British Columbia.

One thing that was always remarked about Kelowna right from the start; a happy condition which it has never lost, was that spirit of friendliness between all sorts and conditions of people; they just seemed to ignore anything in the way of those class distinctions which cast a blight over other places. Of course, when Kelowna began, class did not exist; the population was too small, but when large numbers of English people settled there it might easily have happened for class lines were so rigidly drawn in England that it would be hard for the present generation to realize what it was like; so one might have expected them to bring some of their

prejudices with them. However, if they did, they soon shed them, probably with a sense of relief at being free from all the silly and snobbish restrictions of caste. As an example, a friend of mine, Bob Farley, had been farming here for a year or two when there came out to him Thomas, who had been a gardener's boy on the estate of Bob's father in England. Thomas amused us very much at first; the poor boy couldn't make head or tail of things at all; to his rustic mind we were "toffs"; at least we spoke and ate like toffs even if we did not dress like them. And Mr. Bob most certainly was a toff, for was he not the son of Colonel Farley, his late employer who was a very big toff indeed. So he would touch his hat and address us as mister, and it was very embarrassing. But we gradually kidded him out of these unpleasant and undemocratic habits; the colonel's son became just Bob to him and it was much more comfortable all round. Indeed this feeling of easy social equality is so much more natural and pleasant that I wonder why we cannot always enjoy it. But that seems nearly impossible; the idea of caste dies hard and probably snobbishness is a human instinct.

There is no doubt that this spirit of comradeship had much to do with the evolution of Kelowna from nothing at all to the attractive prosperous town which it is today; whether it was the organizing business enterprises, amusements, or any other activities, everybody seemed to pull together. And the townspeople were quite rightly very proud of their town and undoubtedly still are, for they made it all on their own, without any of the advantages of which Vernon, being the government center had. They were very fond of taunting Vernon about this, and tried to outdo her in every way, and so began the rivalry between the two towns which persists to the present day; sometimes friendly and occasionally jealous. So Kelowna grew and prospered, and developed a personality all its own, as other places do; that abstract atmosphere that is entirely apart from material things. And I think the personality of Kelowna might be best described as a spirit of friendliness.

CHAPTER VII

A JOURNEY DOWN THE LAKE

In the winter of 1891 I was working on the ranch of J. T. Davies who had come to the Okanagan on a big-game hunting expedition and had so fallen in love with the country that like many others, he had bought property and made his home here. He had recently bought a horse which was bred on a ranch at the south end of Okanagan Lake; this horse had got away and was probably headed for his old range; which an escaped horse invariably does. So, as there was nothing much doing on the ranch just then, Davies told me I could ride down the west side of the lake to see if I could find any trace of it; I jumped at the chance—here at last was a chance to see that “far horizon” that I had often gazed at with longing eyes; I had dreamed of that distant country ever since my first glimpse of it. So with blankets and grub strapped on the back of my saddle I rode forth into the unknown, a journey of some seventy miles. I expected to reach Captain Shorts’ cabin, where there was supposed to be a man living, by suppertime, and the next night, if I did not reach my destination I should have to camp out; I had a feed of oats for my horse, and there was bunch grass on the lower ranges, which were free of snow just then; he would be hobbled and turned loose. It was safe enough to do this, a hobbled horse would seldom stray more than a few hundred yards, although I have known of old stagers who had developed a technique that would carry them an amazing distance, they bounded along in a series of jumps like a kangaroo, sometimes so fast that it was hard to catch them.

It was just after Christmas when I started, and the weather was mild, for a warm chinook wind had peeled away the snow from the lower benches; nice weather for traveling; in fact as I got farther down the lake it was more like summer than winter. I struck off the stage road at O’Keefes, following a rough track that ran for about a mile through the scattered Indian rancherie which we called Black Town. From there on there was not even a trail, here and there maybe a blaze on a tree to indicate the best way down the side of a canyon or the place to ford a creek. But nothing more, you always had the lake in sight, so couldn’t very well get lost; and the way was fairly easy; there was a spice of romance about it, too, for I was now on the route traveled by the men of the Hudson’s Bay Company nearly seventy years before—the old brigade trail.

A little way beyond the rancherie we have to ford Siwash Creek and some half mile up the canyon of the creek was a little community of elderly men engaged in placer mining for gold; I had occasion to go there later on; I found it quite interesting and may as well tell you about it now.

On a level spot of about an acre at the bottom of the canyon cut through by the waters of the creek, these old fellows had built their tiny cabins; and they seemed to lead a most contented existence; each had his claim on which he just worked when he felt like it; entirely his own boss for he had no police or parsons to tell him what or what not to do, no interfering womenfolk to criticize his habits; in fact, he was just about as free as it is possible for a man to be; why shouldn't he be contented? In the heat of the summer the high wooded sides of the canyon, and the draught created by the cold swiftly running water of the creek kept it cool down there, and in the winter you felt cozy and sheltered; you had lots of fuel and water, there were grouse and deer in the woods and you washed enough gold from the creek to trade to the stores at Vernon or Armstrong for anything else you needed; what more could a man want? They were all bachelors—for a short period one of them, Bill Parks, fed up with batching, had disturbed the monastic peace of the community by taking unto himself a dusky mistress. Bill came into the Armstrong store one day, and after making his usual purchases of grub, wandered restlessly round the store, bashfully eyeing the ladies' dress goods. "Anything else you want, Bill?" enquired the clerk.

"What's them worth?" said Bill, pointing to a pair of silk stockings.

"Oho, Bill, now what are you wanting silk stockings for?"

"Ach, hell," said Bill, disgustedly, spitting a gob of tobacco juice onto the floor; "it's that woman of mine, she is always wantin' somethin'."

So we gathered that Bill's establishment was not altogether a love nest. Bill became unpopular with his old friends on the creek—perhaps jealousy may have had something to do with it. But soon he and his lady had a bad row, and realizing that his little romance was ended he fired her out. And as none of the rest of the old boys were gallant enough to take a chance on her, the lady returned to the bosom of her tribe, and once more there was peace on earth in the little community; Bill was received again into the fold and friendly relations were resumed all round. Women, like whisky, were all right in the gay life of the towns; there you were free to indulge as much as you liked, but to bring them into camp was a breach of the unwritten law of the mines and the backwoods—and a very wise law, too.

In talking with these old miners, they had mentioned another; one Fitzpatrick. He evidently was not one of the bunch—he seemed to have no christian name or

nickname, and that alone set him apart. And he lived quite alone, somewhere up the creek, and he “never come round visitin’.” They said he was “eddicated,” and he just liked to live by himself, and liked readin’ and such things. Also he had been the original prospector there. Perhaps he resented the place getting crowded. This rather aroused my curiosity, so one day I rambled up the creek to investigate. Some quarter of a mile farther up I found him; he had heard my footsteps on the gravel of the creek bed, and emerged from his cabin to see what this intruder might want. His little house was more den than cabin, the back part hollowed out of the hillside; the front of logs with one small window and a low doorway. He was a tall old man and had to stoop as he came out. He *was* old, I think he must have been at least eighty, his hair and beard were snowy white and he had an air of dignity about him. He gave me a courteous greeting and an appraising look, then remarked that he seldom had visitors; he had been preparing a meal and would be very pleased if I would come in and share it with him. Invitations like this were never refused if it was anywhere near mealtime—to do so was equivalent to refusing to take a drink with a man—so we squeezed into the little cabin where there was just room for the two of us between a narrow bunk and a minute table under the window. And he had not been quite alone, for from the bunk arose a black cat; it blinked its eyes, stretched itself and after jumping down and rubbing itself against his legs, leaped onto my knees and proceeded to make friends. “Now Satan!” said the old gentleman, “mind your manners”; and to me, “put him down if you don’t like cats.” But I do like cats, so I probably rose in his estimation. Anyway, as we ate our simple meal, the usual bacon, with delicious biscuits, and amazingly, lettuce, and radishes, he became quite chatty. He certainly was an educated man, but did not allude to anything in his past life—he seemed more interested in the ways of the wild things that he lived amongst than in the doings of the outside world. I suppose one might call him a hermit. But I believe hermits usually are dirty, so perhaps recluse might be a better term, for everything about the place was spotlessly clean. On a shelf were some books, including works on mineralogy, and he told me quite a bit about mining. He took from the shelf and showed me a baking powder tin about a third full of small nuggets, the result of a month’s work; so he was getting a living out of his claim. And then he showed me with pride his vegetable garden, where the lettuce and radishes had come from, a little patch about five feet wide which he had terraced down on the hillside. I had noticed, fifty yards or so from his cabin, the timbered mouth of a tunnel. Yes, that was his, he said, he was tunneling in to try and locate a quartz vein which he was sure would be gold bearing; if he could strike that quartz and get some good specimens he would be able to raise some capital and start a real mine. Old

Fitzpatrick's dream never materialized; soon after this, while he was working in his tunnel the roof collapsed. No smoke had been seen coming from his cabin stovepipe for some days, and on going there to investigate they found him buried in the tunnel, dead. So they notified the authorities, adopted his cat and cared for it, and they all went to his funeral—it was all they could do for the poor old man.

Placer mining has often been called the poor man's mining, for anyone could undertake it with practically no money to start with, but to locate good gold-bearing quartz was always the prospector's dream; for if there were good signs of gold he could get financial backing—might even sell out for what to him would be riches, though it is astounding what big ideas some of these old fellows had; they saw themselves as millionaires. The rock miner was a touch above the ordinary roustabout who washed for placer gold; he was by way of being an aristocrat in his profession. Some of these old prospectors would spend a whole lifetime—and they all seemed to live to a remarkable age—looking for gold, dreaming of great wealth; they all had that faraway look in their eyes; the eyes of a visionary. They lived their lives alone in the mountains, their sole possessions often nothing but their old clothes and blankets, a rifle for shooting the game on which they subsisted; and the tools of their trade, a pick and shovel. They could always get grubstaked with tobacco and the few groceries they needed, for most of them had a profound belief that they would strike it rich some day, and had a way of imparting their optimism to their grubstakers. I never did know one who struck it rich, or indeed who struck anything at all really worth much; and am sure that if he had he would have lost his incentive to live. I have heard of one or two who did find something that brought them temporary riches, which they blew as rapidly as possible and got back to their beloved mountains. There were also certain old frauds who made a racket of prospecting; you might see one hanging round the Kalamalka Hotel—such an interesting, honest-looking chap—on the lookout for gullible strangers, especially green Englishmen, who had an air of opulence about them. His method was to get into conversation with a group of these innocents and introduce the “gold in them thar hills” topic and representing himself as an experienced prospector, he would explain what grubstaking was, and being a plausible old bird would usually succeed in raising enough to keep him in supplies for some time; and having loaded up his pack would retire to some shack in the mountains where he would rusticate in pleasant leisure until his grubstake petered out, when he would return to town and repeat the process. By the way, in case you don't know what grubstaking means—you “stake” a man by supplying him with provisions on which to live while he is prospecting, in return for which he gives you a share of what he finds, if anything.

To return to my journey; after crossing the Siwash Creek I had reached a place which I judged to be only a few miles from the cabin where I expected to spend the night, and the light of the short winter day was beginning to fade, when I saw a man walking just ahead. As he turned and I saw his long red beard, I recognized him; it was Montana Jake. I had met him before, but was rather surprised to see him here; then I remembered hearing that he and his partner, one Fatty Brown had found it advisable for some reasons unknown, but supposed to have some connection with the law, or maybe importunate creditors; to keep in seclusion for a time, and were living in retirement.

“Well, I’ll be good goldarned,” said Jake as we met, with his blue eyes popping with astonishment; “it’s Billy Holliday; what in Sam Hill are you doing down here?” I told him, and that I was heading for Captain Shorts’ cabin where I hoped to spend the night. “Hell,” said Jake, “you don’t need to do that, there’s no one livin’ there now anyways, you better come home with me.”

Well, that sounded better than having to spend a lonely night in an unoccupied cabin, so I gratefully accepted the invitation. Jake trudged on ahead while I dismounted and led the horse, for we had turned up a steep faint trail, and I was glad to stretch my legs anyway. Jake was carrying a saw and a hammer; he explained that he had been helping a Siwash build a cabin. Now and then he would remove his hat to scratch his head, which I could see then, with the exception of a fringe of longish hair round the back of his neck, was quite bald; very shiny and pink; with his high domed forehead, aquiline nose and long flowing red beard he had a remarkably gnomelike appearance, rather like one of those comic chinaware figures that one sees in Dutch gardens. And so talking and puffing, for it was a long climb; we were now up in the snow, and must have been at quite a height above the lower benches, which were clear, we at last came to a cabin. It was secluded all right, hidden among the trees in a little hollow by a creek—I don’t think any creditors or whatever they were would be likely to bother them there. At one end of the cabin was a rough lean-to where Jake told me I could put my horse, so I offsaddled and after leading him to the creek for a drink and giving him a rubdown, I threw him an armful of wild hay from a pile outside, and going to the cabin door was introduced to Fatty, and realized how he had come by his name; for he was the exact opposite of Jake, who was lean and wiry. Fatty’s beard was also red, but it spread out wide like a fan; his face was fat and coarse and he had an enormous stomach; in fact, whereas Jake was rather a comical figure and everyone liked him, Fatty had rather a truculent appearance and there was a shifty look in his eyes. I imagine his covering of fat

protected him from the cold, for his upper parts were only clad in a red flannel undershirt. I thought he did not look altogether pleased when Jake told him that he had brought an old friend to spend the night; however, he bade me welcome, and as he appeared to be the cook, he spread the little table with a plenteous meal of bacon and beans, flapjacks and syrup, and strong hot tea. And after supper we smoked and yarned, and they told me they were running a horse ranch up here, although I had seen no evidence of horses—there was not even a corral. But I suppose they felt they had to give some reason for living here.

The little sheet-iron stove was kept well-stoked—they evidently liked warmth; soon the flog in the cabin was so thick you could have removed it with a shovel, and uneasy thoughts assailed me, where was I going to sleep? The cabin was very small, with an earth floor; the table and stove, a few blocks of wood, and a wide box of a bed in one corner just filled it. I soon found out. “Well,” said Jake—his head had been nodding sleepily for some time; “I guess it’s about time we hit the hay; Billy’s a little feller an’ won’t take much room, so he’d better sleep in the middle.” Heaven forbid, thought I—my misgivings had not been without reason. But so it had to be, although by exercising a little tact I did manage to get the outside place on the bed. I thought longingly of the fresh air outside, where I could have rolled up comfortably in my blankets in the pile of hay; and mildly suggested that rather than put them to inconvenience I would do this, but “Hell no; there’s lots of room here, Billy”; so being too polite to press the point I accepted my doom. Fatty, like an enormous snoring pig occupied the middle of the bed, while I squeezed myself as close to the outside edge as I could, the stove about two feet from my head and Fatty’s posterior, about as hot as another stove, sticking into my back. In my time I have slept in many uncomfortable places, but this had them all beaten. Early, early in the morning I crept cautiously off the bed; I just had to get outside where I could breathe. And then my eyes lit on the rifle on the wall and an idea struck me; I cautiously pulled on what clothing I had discarded; my hosts had not stirred; I took down the rifle, found it was loaded, and quietly crept out of the door, out into the lovely fresh morning air. I would have a walk before breakfast and get that flog out of my lungs—I might even get a shot at a deer. I did not see one, but when I got back breakfast was ready and it was easy to explain that I woke early and thought I might get a grouse or deer for them, in fact, when they had missed me and the rifle and found my horse still there they took it for granted that that was what I had done. And so after breakfast I continued on my way.

Before going any farther I must really tell you something about Montana Jake, or Jacob Laur as his real name was, for he was quite unique. Shortly after my visit Fatty

Brown disappeared to parts unknown, I think to Jake's relief; for Fatty was rather a doubtful sort of gent. And Jake became one of the leading characters of the valley; his various adventures added much to the joy of life, and I can hardly visualize the North Okanagan without him; he always seemed to be bobbing up in some fresh role that had a humorous side to it; in fact, he would have been an inspiration to a comic strip artist. He was quite unconscious of this himself, his innocent childlike blue eyes looked out on the world with a rather surprised and serious expression; he had a mild and rather childish voice, and I cannot remember having ever seen him laugh or forget his dignity. As a youth he had fought in the American Civil War, and drew a small pension until he died at the age of ninety-something-or-other—he was a bit hazy about his age. Before wandering into British Columbia he had been ranching in Montana; hence his name; and there had been eaten out by grasshoppers. "Yes, sir, them hoppers they et my wheat, they et the tops off my pertaters, they scratched up the ground and et the pertaters too. So I says, 'Jake, it's time you got out of here'—the year before the hail had beat me to it, and all I had in the world was my close an' a buffler robe. And I was so goldarn mad I threw that buffler robe on the fence an' I says to them hoppers, 'here, you hell-spawned hoppers, eat that,' and they ate it. Well, sir, I'd had a plenty, I figured Montanny didn't have no use for me, so I just says 'to hell with you'; I quits right there and I hits the trail for Canady. And say boys, I tell you right here Canady's God's own country an' no foolin', I'm sure glad I come." And we were glad he came too for as well as providing a great deal of amusement Jake was so full of energy that he was always starting something; which although he was a hard worker and handy at almost anything, never seemed to pan out to his benefit, probably because before he had finished it he would think of some new enterprise.

Shortly after the horse ranch and his partner Fatty Brown became things of the past, he—I was going to say settled down, but he hardly did that. Anyway he married a middle-aged and strong-minded lady who kept him in order when she had her eye on him, and she must have had her hands full. They got on together quite amiably most of the time, but occasionally relations were strained, and Jake would break loose on one of his periodical sprees. At these times he would refer to his better half as "Old Four Eyes," for she wore strong spectacles and Jake swore that she could see him a mile off. But poor old Jake started off well on his matrimonial career; he bought a little farm and built a comfortable house near the new town of Armstrong, on a hill that is still known as Jake Laur's hill. And for his wedding, so that he might look a worthy bridegroom, he bought a dress suit from an Englishman who had no further use for it, and in this he was married. True, a grey flannel shirt

filled the space that should have displayed a starched white shirt front, but his long red beard hid most of that, and he wore a very high, stiff collar. It was so uncomfortable he refused to wear it again, although his missus made him don the suit on Sundays and accompany her to church, where she kept a stern eye on him all through the service. And on one occasion at least, Jake wore these ceremonial garments when it was correct to do so. For Jake was a Mason, and in Vernon a very grand Masonic banquet was to be held. So after his wife had dressed him in the famous suit, seen that his face was quite clean, and cautioned him to drink nothing but tea or coffee, for she was one of the head pushes of the W.C.T.U., Jake hitched up his horse and cutter for the sixteen-mile drive to Vernon; and behold him, some three hours later at the banquet table. And there surrounded by all those glistening white shirt fronts, Jake realized he did not look just right. Was he embarrassed? Not Jake. He was a pioneer, accustomed to making use of any material at hand; he just improvised a shirt front with his table napkin, and was quite happy. So happy indeed that he quite forgot his wife's orders regarding liquid refreshment, and made the most of all the good things to drink. So much so that another party returning to Armstrong in the early hours of the morning discovered Jake, fast asleep in the arms of Bacchus, with his horse and cutter, stranded in a fence corner by the side of the road. So they rescued him and all returned to Armstrong; and there, as he sobered up, his terrible predicament dawned on him. His beautiful suit was all crumpled up and soiled, his breath smelt of whisky—no chewing of cloves could hide that telltale odor—and sternly awaiting his belated return was Old Four Eyes. And Jake was beginning to feel repentant to say nothing of funk; he refused to go home. "No, boys, I just dasn't; I'm not agoin' home no more; I'm just a no-account miserable sinner an' the old lady'll be better off without me; an' besides she'd give me holy hell; you fellows don't know what she is." Well, this would not do; Jake was a respectable citizen and we did not like scandals in our little community. So by the afternoon he was more or less cleaned up, and accompanied by a protective delegation of his fellow citizens he returned reluctantly to his spouse. To her they explained that Jake had been unavoidably detained, taking care of another gentleman who was drunk; he himself had been quite sober; a lame defense that did not impress the old lady at all; she told the whole crowd what she thought of them, and they sheepishly retreated, leaving Jake to his fate.

In his old bachelor days of freedom, when he was just Montana Jake; one of the boys; he had once joined the "blue ribbon army" and signed the pledge, probably because he just had to be in everything that was going on more than that he felt any desire to defy the demon rum. And proudly riding back to Lansdowne wearing the

blue ribbon on the lapel of his coat he proceeded to gin up the whole village to celebrate the event; but soon fell from grace—teetotalers were not popular in those days.

Some time after he was married a few bicycles made their appearance in the valley. Now for these contraptions most of our horse-riding inhabitants had a great contempt—not so Jake; he would try anything once. So he bought himself a bike, and could be seen pedalling violently along the roads with his coattails waving, his bald pink head glistening in the sun and his long red beard flying out over his shoulders like a pair of golden wings.

As he grew older and lost the zest of his long youth he settled down and took to religion. Some itinerant book peddler had sold him a large book profusely illustrated with pictures of angels and devils and the last judgment, and Jake would settle down comfortably in a rocking chair and laboriously spell out the gruesome warnings in the print; he probably got more kick out of it than from the tamer religion of the churches. Then his better half died and, a lonely widower, he went back to his native land to spend his declining years in a civil war veteran's home. And we regretfully thought we had seen the last of Jake. But no, long after, he bobbed up one day in Armstrong, looking rather decrepit, but with his blue eyes still bright and his whiskers still showing traces of golden hairs among the grey—he had come to say a last farewell to all his old friends—he was going to get married again. And to prove it he showed us her photograph, quite a good-looking young lady. We strongly suspected that he was pulling our legs, but patted him on the back and wished him good luck, and he departed again, this time forever.



Photo by the author
On the Okanagan Lake

And now after all this digression I had better get back on the trail again. After enduring that night with Jake and Fatty Brown, I pulled out in the morning with a decided feeling of escape. They were very hospitable; it was a new experience to me and I had enjoyed their company, but once was enough, for a time, anyway; my horse jogged along as if he too were glad to be on the move again. The weather was glorious; we were having one of those almost unbelievable springlike interludes that sometimes occur in the Okanagan in the depth of the winter; next week we might be in the grip of a sub-zero cold snap, but today the sun was shining cheerfully in a cloudless sky, the lake, blue as sapphire, lay sparkling below, and mile after mile I rode along with that pleasant feeling that it was good just to be alive; to enjoy such a day and such a beautiful place. The country was a great natural park, on the tawny grass-covered benches and along slopes that swept down to the lake great red-barked pine trees lifted their dark green heads to the sky; friendly trees these, letting in the sun to warm the ground beneath them; growing not too close together but spread out like the trees in an English park.

In the wintertime great herds of deer came down from the mountains to feed on the grass of these lower benches. I saw numbers of them in the few days I was there, in bands of from fifty to a hundred; and could have shot as many as I wanted to if I had had a rifle with me, for I could ride quietly to within a hundred feet of them; they would stand bunched together regarding me with surprise, then turn and gallop wildly away for a few hundred yards, and as suddenly stop and gather together for another look. But if I had had a rifle I would not have shot one; I was in no need of meat and certainly in no mood for killing anything on a day like this—let them enjoy life as I was doing.

I was enjoying it all the more today for being alone, letting the beauty of everything soak in, without the distraction of talking to a companion. In fact, I think this is the best way to see new country; to amble along at your own pace, taking everything in as you go; thinking your own thoughts and storing away your own impressions. Certainly you see more, and those impressions are more vivid. And the very best way to see a country is from the back of a horse—the horse does all the work, and you have nothing to do but sit and enjoy the scenery. If you do have a companion you may be fortunate enough to have one of those rare people with whom you can ride for miles without speaking, each thinking his own thoughts; feeling so in harmony with each other that there is no need to talk. One might call this the supreme test of good companionship. It is a curious thing, too, that two people like this so often find they are thinking of exactly the same thing; quite obviously that mystery that we call thought transference. Nowadays, when I hurtle through this

same country looking at the scenery whizz by, through the glass of a motorcar, I think of what the present generation has missed, poor things, in their craze for speed.

CHAPTER VIII

THE "LOWER COUNTRY"

This pleasant going continued for most of the way; once I got off the trail and arrived at the brink of a ravine with a steep gravelly descent to the bottom; from there on the way looked easy, so rather than lose time looking for a better way down, though it looked rather a hard proposition for a horse, I dismounted and tried it. When about halfway down I wished I hadn't, for it kept on getting steeper, and as I was leading the horse by the reins my shins got all the benefit of the chunks of loose rock that his scrambling descent dislodged. And then about fifty feet from the bottom I saw to my dismay that it ended in a very steep pitch indeed. But there was no stopping, and I did not end in disaster as I expected; the horse just squatted on his hunkers and slid down, and we landed at the bottom accompanied by a small avalanche of loose rock, but quite intact, barring a few scratches. I emptied the gravel that had got in my boots and we continued on our way. I found afterwards that these range-bred cayuses can scramble up or down almost anywhere a man can.

At this time of the year the day, of course, was short; the light began to fade early; but there was enough light to see my way; so I would ride on until it got too dark and then hobble my horse and bivouac for the night. I had just started to do this when some men rode up—the first I had seen since I left Jake and Fatty. It was too dark to see them very well, but one of them, speaking very good English, asked me what I was doing here—strangers were evidently unusual in these parts; indeed they seemed as surprised to see me as I was to see them. I told him I was a bit doubtful as to where I was. "Well," said he, "it's pretty cold to be sleeping outside, you had better come along with us." So I saddled up again and rode on with them, rather wondering who this well-spoken man was, for I knew by their speech that the rest of them were Indians.

As we were riding along he told me his name, Dave McDougal. I had heard of him before, he and his brother Aeneas were famous guides who took big-game hunting parties into the mountains. They were half-breeds, the sons of John McDougal, a noted packer in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company and later a fur trader with his headquarters at Okanagan Mission. They had inherited the old Scottish pride of the clan, for if asked if they were half-breeds they would say, "No,

sir, I am a McDougal.” On one occasion Aeneas had organized a big-game hunting expedition for the Archduke of Austria and a number of his pals. They started out, a most imposing cavalcade, Aeneas in command of a crowd of helpers and a long string of pack horses loaded down with tents and beds and a whole arsenal of guns of every description, to say nothing of many cases of luxuries fit for an archduke to feed on; and all the noble sportsmen bringing up the rear. When they returned, after a month in the mountains, we asked Aeneas all about it; we were rather curious to know what archdukes might be like at close quarters. “Well,” said Aeneas, “I’ve took English lords out huntin’ an’ they never put on no dog at all; they just treated me as one of them, but these bastards, they figured they was too high-toned to mix with us. An’ none of them would do a dam thing to soil their lily-white hands. Couldn’t even pack their own guns. An’ shootin’, there wasn’t one of them could hit a haystack. And in the evening the stuck-up so and sos sat by theirselves round their own fire boozing on champagne, an’ we had to sit round ours and they just gave us whisky! Now them English lords, they can shoot, but these fellows! Pah! We got some good heads for them, and they’ll stick ’em up in their baronial halls and tell how brave they was gettin’ them. But me, I don’t want no more of them European kings, to hell with ’em.” Dave McDougal, I imagine, must have gone to one of the good Roman Catholic schools in the interior, for he spoke perfect English, whereas Aeneas did not, but he was a very fine guide.

There was lots of game in the mountains, grizzlies, brown and black bear, big horn sheep, mountain goat, and so on, and a good shot with a good guide was usually sure of getting some worthwhile trophies; not always though. Here is an excerpt from an early number of the *Vernon News*. “Baron von Richthofen returned from his hunting trip on Sunday, having killed nothing more deadly than a porcupine.”

Dave McDougal’s home turned out to be a large log cabin on the Indian reserve opposite Okanagan Mission. It was late when we got there and the place was packed with Indians; both sexes, lying round asleep on the floor, and others eating round a cook stove. We had off-saddled and turned our horses into a corral, and Dave took me into the house. The stolid Indians said nothing but a few grunts; an old klootchman pulled a big pan of venison out of the oven and we had our supper of straight venison, nothing else, while sitting on the floor—there was no table. The heat in there was pretty bad and the stink a good deal worse, so after supper I edged out—I think without being noticed, and after exploring the premises outside found a shed containing a pile of deer skins; they were pretty smelly too, but not as bad as the Indians, so I rolled up in them and had a good sleep. I got up before the tribe was awake and pulled out; I had some grub left and did not feel like facing a

breakfast of straight deer meat in that cabin. That was Dave McDougal's headquarters, and he probably would have felt equally well at home in a civilized drawing room.

Towards evening, after riding all day through the same parklike country, I reached the ranch I was bound for. There was just one man in charge there for the winter; he had not seen nor heard anything of the horse I was looking for. The next day we rode over the range but there was no sign of it, so the following morning I started back without it. I was not so sorry either; it is not much fun traveling a long distance with a led horse, especially if the horse doesn't want to go. This ranch at the end of my journey was the Trepanier Ranch, named for the creek of the same name which ran through the property. It was owned by the Lambly brothers of Enderly and was a beautiful place. The cabin stood about two hundred yards back from the lake near the bend of the creek on quite a large flat from which rose a semicircle of sheltering hills. With the lake in front, it was an ideal spot. On this flat the Lamblys planted an orchard, including a number of peach trees—the first attempt at growing peaches in the Okanagan. I remember those peaches well, for I spent a holiday there with the Lamblys one fall and as there was no way of getting them to market we had to eat as many as we could, which was quite a lot.

One summer day a few years later there appeared in the valley, one, J. M. Robinson. He belonged to a queer sort of spiritualist sect in Winnipeg of which he was a leader. He had had a vision of a promised land and the spirits had led him to Okanagan; they evidently knew their job, for when he saw the southern end of Okanagan Lake he knew he need go no farther.

This Trepanier Ranch seemed a good place to start, so he asked the surprised Lamblys if they would sell him some town lots on the edge of the beach. Of course they would—he had the money to pay for them. As Bob Lambly said to me, "If the crazy fool thinks he can start a town here I'll sell him all the beach he wants; it's no use to me." J. M. Robinson evidently knew what he was about; he was a queer mixture of dreamer and hard-boiled speculator, with a bit of religious fanaticism thrown in; as he saw this country his vision grew; here in this wonderful land should be a little heaven on earth, a community of God-fearing people who would lead an ideal life growing fruit on the hills; the blue lake and the fertile soil would provide for all their bodily needs. As for their spiritual needs, he would supply a church and a parson; also a few dwelling houses to begin with, and soon his followers came hopefully in, a townsite was surveyed, a store and other buildings erected, and he named the place Peachland.

Then the hard-boiled business side of him saw there might be good money in it, and being a remarkable enterprising and optimistic man he went right to it, buying a large tract of land here and another farther south at Trout Creek, which with a poetic touch of imagination he named Summerland. He subdivided these tracts into small holdings, and his dream soon became reality, for, encouraged by his enthusiastic description, people flocked in from the prairies to view this promised land. They stayed and built themselves homes and planted orchards and duly went to his church on Sundays. After the bleak prairie this did indeed seem heaven to them. A few years later, encouraged by the success of Peachland and Summerland he bought another tract on the east side of the lake opposite Summerland. And his poetic imagination must have deserted him for he had been going to call this settlement by the horrible name of Brighton Beach. But the spirits happily saved us from this banality; at one of the sect's séances the spirit of a departed Indian told them to name it Naramatta—at least that was J. M. Robinson's account of it. I believe Naramatta is vaguely supposed to mean "the smile of God." This name was entirely new, and a word unknown to the local Indians, but I may say with regard to all Indian place names, that it is practically impossible to arrive at the real meaning to them; the Indians will tell you one thing at one time and something entirely different at another. I think it is better to take them as they are without bothering about the meaning: Spallumcheen, Lilloet, Similkameen, Keremeos, and many others—they have a musical lilt to them and a suggestion of poetry, whatever their meaning may be, and they should be retained for this if for no other reason.

At Trout Creek and the surrounding country before the days of J. M. Robinson, were the ranches of a few old-time cattlemen, one of whom had the very appropriate name of Lying Bill; for his yarns were supposed to hold the valley championship, although Tom Lambly ran him pretty close. There were three or four of us, including Tom, sitting in the barroom of the Pentiction Hotel one day; I suppose one of us had been reading something about water spouts, for we were discussing the nature and habits of these things, when someone spied Bill Barnet standing at the bar. "Oh, Bill," he called, "do you know anything about water spouts?"

Bill walked slowly over to our group, took a chair and sat down. "You was askin' about water spouts?" said he. "Well, sir, I'll tell you them water spouts is perculiar all right, an' bein' usual on the ocean you'd not be expectin' to see one anywhere round these parts, and maybe you won't believe me; but way back in '86 I seen one of them things on this very lake. And I wouldn't have believed it myself if I hadn't aseen it with my own eyes. In fac', I not only seen it, I was on the durn

thing, for it riz up out of the lake right under my boat, and kept it balancing on top like one of them little balls you see bobbing on top of a fountain, the which I seen once at one of them world fairs. And me settin' in the boat all the time. But it was all right by me, she carried me about a mile down the lake the ways I wanted to go before she set me down again sort of gentle like. Yes, sir, I tell you there's wonderful things in this world if you'll only believe them."

"Oh, Bill," said Tom, getting up and patting him on the back; "you really are an awful liar, you know."

"Well, Tom," somebody said, "how about you, you old prevaricator, after just asking us to swallow that yarn about you and your horse?"

"Oh, what was that?" said I, for I had just arrived and had not heard that one.

"Well," said Tom, "this happens to be true, although none of this sceptical bunch will believe anything I tell them, but I know you will. It happened the other day when I was coming down from the range. I was riding along the bottom of a narrow gully, and ahead of me there was a big fallen tree lying right across it, about six or seven feet above the ground. It was fairly smooth at the top, but underneath there were branches sticking out, and it didn't look like easy going to try and push through. The banks were too steep to climb, and I hated the idea of going back, and, as you know, my horse is pretty good on the jump, I thought I'd chance that, and put him at it. He never balked, but rose to it, but must have miscalculated the height, for although his forelegs cleared it, the trunk caught his stomach and brought him up short, and there the poor beggar was, with his tail and hind legs hanging over on one side and his forelegs and head over the other, and apparently unable to move either way, so I dismounted and sized up the situation. I tried first to pull him over front ways, putting all my weight on the reins, while the poor old chap looked at me with imploring eyes, but nary a budge; so then I tried the same tactics behind, pulling on his tail; he couldn't kick in that position and the pressure on his stomach had taken all the wind out of him anyway, so he was quite helpless. And finally, I had to leave him hanging there while I tramped back home to get axes and a crosscut saw and another man, and we managed to saw him down before dark."

"Yes, Tom, I believe you," says I, "I know you wouldn't tell a lie."

A collection of the anecdotes of some of these old-timers would make interesting reading. Tom Lambly died many years ago now, and the *Vernon News*, writing his obituary stated among other things that he was a "Noted Raconteur"!

All this district down here, extending for some fifteen miles along the lake and many miles back over the rolling hills is now known as Summerland, but in those

days was Trout Creek. For some miles the lake shore presents a curious and rather unique appearance, for the hills and level benches end abruptly in cliffs of a sort of hard greyish-white clay, ranging from one hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty feet in height, and these cliffs have been carved by erosion into the most fantastic shapes, in some places suggesting a medieval castle perched on a hill; in others bringing back memories of the cliffs of Dover, and here and there a narrow deep canyon with almost perpendicular walls has been cut down inland for some hundreds of yards—a nasty thing to stumble into on a dark night. On a bright sunny day these cliffs are most picturesque with their tones of creamy grey, here and there relieved with a clump of sagebrush or certain purple and yellow flowers clinging to their steep sides, with the bright blue of the lake and the sky for a background. From the top of the cliffs a level plateau extends back for some three-quarters of a mile, on which the village of West Summerland now stands, all the rest of it covered with flourishing orchards right to the edge of the cliffs—but when I first saw it before irrigation was introduced, this plateau was a dry, arid flat, growing nothing but cactus and sagebrush. But on the miles of surrounding hills was fine bunch grass pasture, and there were several big ranches here, one of them owned by an acquaintance of mine, George Barclay.

George's residence was a small log cabin with a mud floor. He said he liked living close to nature; but his father, a retired British colonel, who came out to visit him later on was very astounded and even horrified at George's way of living. I happened to meet him on his way back, and "I really found a shocking state of affairs down at George's place," said the old gentleman; "no beer, no whisky; they were actually drinking tea three times a day!" This seemed to have shocked him more than the mud floor, and George told me later that the colonel had promptly remedied that situation by sending to Vernon for a generous supply of beer and Scotch. The old gentleman had his valet with him, and George said the valet was very uncomfortable and even inclined to be snooty about things; I can quite imagine the feelings of a valet in those surroundings!

However I visited George a few years later, and in the meantime he had married a daughter of the late Lieutenant Governor Cornwall, and they were living in a fine big ranch home, and this, plus the informal hospitality of the West made a pretty good combination.

George had been to school at Harrow and at various times other Harrow boys had come out to him as farm-pupils and had acquired land, so there was quite a settlement of Harrovians in the district.

With one of these, Bob Faulder, I had shared my first experience of batching.

We had both just arrived at Lansdowne, and were looking after the ranch of Ned Cargill while he was away for a few days. He gave us a few instructions on cooking before he left and we did fine until we had eaten up all his bread. He had told us how to make more, but it seemed such a complicated process that we thought it safer to make some biscuits. On the shelf was a tin of what appeared to be baking powder; on the tin were printed directions; it looked easy. So we mixed our biscuits and put them in to bake while the bacon was frying; we would have hot biscuits and syrup for dessert. With these pleasant expectations we opened the oven door. Our biscuits didn't look quite right; they had not risen at all, and they had a most peculiar odor. And when we rather timidly sampled them, they had a still more peculiar taste. Bob said it was like chewing matches.

When Cargill came back, "Good Lord," he said, "don't you two young idiots know the difference between baking powder and flour of sulphur?" He had been using this for killing bugs, and that was what the baking powder can had contained! How were we to know that baking powder was not yellow?

Some seven miles south of Trout Creek, or Summerland, the lake ends at Penticton, where was the ranch house and hotel of Tom Ellis, at that time probably the largest landowner in the province, for you could ride all day through his land without crossing the boundaries. He was an extremely bluff and jolly man who was popular with everybody, and he held sway over all the country round with a sort of patriarchal feudalism. His property was later on bought by a land company and subdivided into small holdings which today produce many thousands of tons of fruit; and Penticton is a busy and attractive town that has an air of independence possibly inherited from its early days. It showed this once in a very emphatic way at a time when the Dominion government was encouraging large numbers of emigrants from Europe to come into Canada. The Pentictonites were very much opposed to this policy; they determined that they would never have any of these undesirable foreigners settling round Penticton anyway. Then, one day word came that the C.P.R. was bringing down the lake a whole boatload of Dukhobors on the *Aberdeen*. Well, they weren't having any; the whole town turned out and assembled on the wharf and threatened forcible action if any of these foreigners disembarked, the government and the C.P.R. were responsible for bringing them down and they could jolly well take them back again, which under the circumstances, and under protest the captain of the boat had no alternative but to do. Of course, official notice had to be taken of this defiant and entirely illegal proceeding, and I can imagine the attorney general of the day scratching his head and wondering what he could do

about it; you cannot arrest or indict a whole community and there appeared to have been no ringleaders. He evidently was unable to solve the problem, for nothing was done about it, but it had the desired effect, for foreigners gave Penticton a wide berth for many years afterwards.

But up to nearly the end of the century all this country from Penticton to Osoyoos and Keremeos on the international boundary, remained much as it was in 1889—a free and easy land of large ranches used only for cattle and horses, with a sparse population of cowboys and Indians and miners. There were some promising mines there; at one time there were about a hundred men working on claims at Fairview mines up on the mountain just to the east of where the fruit-growing center of Oliver now is, and for a brief period it even boasted a newspaper, the *Fairview Advance*. It was there that Dr. Boyce afterwards one of the most prominent citizens of Kelowna, first hung out his shingle, and I think he must have been an ideal doctor for a mining camp, for he was a good sport and “hail fellow well met” with everybody, high or low.

There were other mines too, Camp McKinney, Camp Hewitt, and others. They all made good showings, and were the scene of great activity at one time, but the lack of adequate transportation for the ore made them commercially unprofitable and they gradually were abandoned, although twenty years or so later, with up-to-date methods they have been worked with some success.

At first sight these barren hills and arid benches of the dry belt, especially in the heat of the summer, when everything is bleached by the heat of the sun to a pale and lifeless brown, are apt to look, if not actually dreary at least lacking in the interest that one feels in scenery of more varied form and color. But stay there for awhile, and you will find to your surprise that you are getting to love this bare and lonely land, its sunshine and its dry, exhilarating air; the sweep of deep blue cloudless sky and the very vastness of its bare and sun-baked hills inspires you with a curious, delightful sense of freedom. And, having left it, you will find that this country, that at first seemed so bare and bleak, will surely, some day, call you back again.

In 1892 a six-horse stage service was started between Penticton and Oro, just over on the American side of the border—Oro later on was called Oroville, and that is still its name; just where it acquired the “ville” I don’t know; I preferred it without; it sounded more romantic. This stage a few years later did a roaring business, for in 1896 occurred the great mining boom at Rossland, and the most direct route there from the Canadian side ran through the Okanagan Valley.

The stage road could not be truthfully called a road at all, most of the way it was

just a beaten track, graded down a bit here and there where it had to cross a gulch or run along the face of a steep sidehill. All of this country being in the dry belt there was a hard natural road bed that required neither macadamizing nor draining, but all through the hot summer your progress was accompanied by a cloud of dust; and this condition remained until well on into the twenties of the next century. To the east of Osoyoos, where the road to Rossland leaves the Okanagan Valley it climbs by steep grades and sharp curves for something over three thousand feet in a few miles up Anarchist Mountain. I had never been up this mountain until 1923, and I well remember my first experience of it, for it was in a "tin lizzie." There is a little garage at Osoyoos, and as I stopped there to fill 'er up the garage man said, "How are you for water?" I told him she was full: "Oh, that's no use," said he.

I had a two-gallon can full also which I always carried in that arid region, and he assured me that was not enough either, so I rustled an empty five gallon coal-oil can from a little store, filled that also and put my good car, Gwendolen, at the hill, or rather the mountain. Gwendolen boiled with indignation every few hundred yards and demanded a drink, for all the way up we were ploughing through about ten inches of sandy dust; when we finally, and very belatedly, reached the top she had swallowed and sweated out all the spare water, but I could sense that she had a feeling of satisfaction as of something accomplished when she looked back down at Osoyoos. You discovered when you started driving a tin lizzie in the mountains that the ways of adventure were not done yet. But I am wandering a long way out of the nineteenth century and had better get back again.

Osoyoos is situated at the southern end of the lake of the same name, close to the border, and here was the customs office in a small log cabin, the customs officer being Theodore Kruger who owned a large tract of land here and many head of cattle. He, Richter, another big rancher; and Tom Ellis were decidedly "cattle barons." During the mining excitement at Rossland and in the Kootenays when those places contained many thousands of people needing to be fed, these cattlemen drove many bands of cattle over the Anarchist Mountain and two more higher ones on the long trail to Rossland, and I think that must have been real adventure.

There was also an attempt to go into the sheep business, too, for in 1891 Tom Ellis brought in nine thousand of them from Oregon, much to the disgust of all the cowboys and most of his neighbors. There was something sporting about cattle and it was a man's job handling them, but sheep! hell, they were miserable critters only fit for dirt farmers. And our horses seemed to have the same opinion too, for they always shied and snorted at them in disgust.

I don't know what became of all those sheep, because I never saw any in that part of the country, but I fancy the coyotes got many of them and the rest became mutton for the Rossland miners.

The principal objection that cattlemen had to sheep was that they destroyed the bunch grass on the ranges by eating too close to the roots, which was quite true.

There was also another thing that depleted the pasture, and that was the bands of wild horses that roamed over the mountains. These horses were not originally indigenous to the country; my conjecture is that they originated from horses that the early Spanish settlers had introduced into California and Mexico some of which had gradually made their way many years ago up here and had been added to by horses that had escaped from captivity. However that may be, they were wilder than deer, and as active as goats, and there were many hundreds of them on the ranges between Trout Creek and Osoyoos. I only once saw a band of them close up, for they were so shy they were seldom seen without the aid of glasses. We were riding over the range and suddenly came across about a dozen of them; they stood rigid, with necks arched and heads in the air, outlined against the sky on a ridge some three hundred yards away. They had stopped dead on seeing us; then suddenly they turned, there was a thunder of small hooves; we had had a momentary glimpse and they disappeared. They were beautiful animals, small, but perfectly formed.

Capturing any of them alive seemed an impossibility though it was often suggested that some use might be made of them. It had been done on a few rare occasions, by dint of break-neck riding a small band had with great difficulty been rounded up and run into a corral, but doing anything with them when you got them there was quite a different matter.

Imagine a high log corral full of these terrified creatures, mad with fear, frantically tearing round and attempting to jump the walls on which were seated some half-dozen cowboys endeavoring to throw the noose of a lariat on one of their whirling necks—then some lucky throw is successful, and the captured horse leaps about like a fighting trout and tries to strangle itself. This was the scene as described to me by a sanguine cowboy who thought he might make some easy money breaking them in and selling them for saddle horses. He concluded that working for wages was more profitable.

These wild horses finally became such nuisances that they were outlawed and as time went on a great number of them were shot. It seemed a pity, but if you had well-bred mares running on the range and found them in foal it was not so good.

The Indians protested against their destruction, as they said that these wild horses belonged to them; they may occasionally have caught one and more or less

tamed it by starvation but they made no real use of them and it was probably just pride of possession; it made them feel big to own a band of several hundred horses, and of course, they had no real claim on them.

It is quite likely that some of the tough little cayuses that we used to ride had wild horse blood in them, especially those buckskins with a dark stripe along the back; these were nearly always full of devilment. And very rarely you might see one of these with not only one dark stripe along the back, but a faint indication of zebra-like stripes down the sides; surely a throwback to the original wild horse. The pintos, or piebalds were quite common; they certainly were of unknown ancestry. They seemed to be peculiar to the West, and you seldom see them now. These pintos were usually quiet, and perhaps for that reason the Indians seemed particularly fond of them, for contrary to what I had always read I found the noble red man not so hot as a horseman, although some of them were fairly good and some of the half-breed cow punchers were very fine riders. And after trying once—and once was quite enough for me—to ride a really bad buck, I realized what supreme horsemanship it called for. I had been on bucking horses before; they all seemed to buck a little if they had any life in them at all, and knowing what it was like I admit I funk'd getting aboard this bad 'un; in fact, I wouldn't have, had there not been an interesting gallery looking on and I felt that the guts of an Englishman were at stake. Said one of the onlookers before I mounted, "Now just sit tight in the saddle, and don't let him get his head down, and you'll be all right." So I got on, the horse gave two or three mild jumps forward, and then suddenly with a wild leap his back seemed to turn into a tension strung bow which shot me up in the air, and coming down I hit the saddle with a bump. No longer was I sitting tight, and moreover his head was so down I think it was tucked between his forelegs. Instantaneously came a second wicked leap which fired me still higher, and this time as I descended, the saddle seemed to hit my backside with the impact of a ten-pound sledge hammer and in the next second I was sitting on the ground regarding that horse, still frantically bucking and inwardly thanking my lucky stars that I was safely on the ground. And I was relieved that no one urged me to try again—I had anyway shown them I was not afraid; which was quite untrue. Indeed, it is foolish to try this sort of thing unless you are an expert. I have seen a professional broncobuster after staying with a bad buck, with the blood oozing from his ears and nostrils, and have heard of one dying from internal injuries, probably a split kidney. Anyway, once was quite enough for me.

At Osoyoos also was the little office of the government agent and mining recorder, Charlie Lambly, a brother of Bob and Tom, and a provincial constable

was stationed there, but there was nothing else; but just across the border was the little mining town of Oro, and there the cowboys went when they felt like celebrating; and judging from what I heard and from the numbers of empty bottles that have always littered the international boundary they always have been and still are, a remarkably thirsty crowd; I suppose it is the dry climate.

During prohibition era in the States there was a large sign right across the road just south of Osoyoos where it crossed the border which read, "Leave Booze Behind, All Ye Who Enter Here!" But at every week end hordes of them crossed to the Canadian side and judging by the way they mopped it up, they must have absorbed enough to last them till the next week end. And so, back in those early days, probably because the Canadian liquor was better, there was a large amount of it smuggled across. The boundary was ill-defined, and the United States customs officers were very fond of good Canadian whisky; free whisky at that, and our people complained to the government that they were in the habit of trespassing on our side to seize it if they ran short; but that never resulted in an "international incident."

CHAPTER IX

THE SHUSWAP AND OKANAGAN RAILWAY

Now to return to the northern part of the valley, which was being awakened from its simple pastoral existence by the building of the Shuswap & Okanagan Railway; it might be regarded as a sort of turning point in our lives; and so it was, for a short time at least. And then the railway itself, as if overcome by the prevalent atmosphere, seemed to settle down and adopt our casual easygoing ways. At Sicamous, each weekday morning after a leisurely breakfast and a pipe, the conductor of our friendly little train would say to the rest of the crew, "Well, boys, if you've finished your smoke, I guess we may as well make a start." And after looking round the hotel to round up his passengers if any, it would be "All aboard," and the engine, followed by one antiquated passenger coach, a mail and express car and a caboose, and about once a week with a freight car hitched on behind, would leave for its leisurely journey down the valley. Why should it hurry? They had all day if necessary, to travel the fifty-four miles to Okanagan Landing, where they connected with the new lake boat, *Aberdeen*, and having reached the landing, the train crew would have the rest of the day off to go fishing or swimming, and the following morning would leave for the return journey to Sicamous. It seemed an ideal occupation and I used to envy them their job. They were nice fellows too, and were friends with everybody in the valley; I have very happy recollections of them, particularly of Finlayson the mailman, a fine old Scotsman of good family, who would always offer you his snuff box, a very special snuff which he imported from his home town of Edinburgh. They were very obliging too, they would always stop the train and let you off anywhere along the line, and pick you up too, if you flagged them.



Photo courtesy British Columbia Travel Bureau

Bronco busting

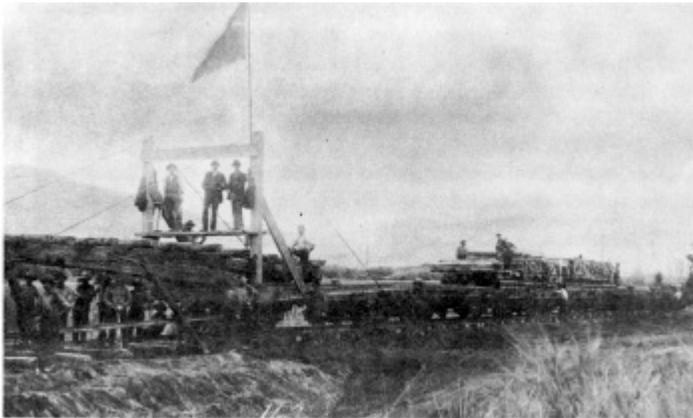


Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

The first work train. The center figure of the three men standing on the frame is T. W. Patterson—“Tom” Patterson of Patterson and Riley, the contractors; he was later lieutenant governor of British Columbia. The man just under the flag is Andrew (Andy) Forbes, the first conductor.

I have one memory of flagging a train which was not so pleasant. One winter I

had been staying overnight at a ranch about a mile from the railroad—there was a real flag station just there, and wanting to get to Vernon I walked to this to await the train which should be along about noon. Noon came; one o'clock came, still no train. It was sub-zero weather and I was getting horribly cold, to say nothing of hungry. Why hadn't I stayed at the ranch for dinner, and I wondered if I should risk going back there. No, if I did the beastly train would come along and I'd miss it. Two o'clock came and still no train. What was the matter with the blasted thing, anyway? Damn such a one-horse affair! I had to get to Vernon, and wished I had started to walk; it was only about ten miles, but I had wanted to get there in time for dinner. Well, I was too paralyzed with cold and hunger to tackle that now. It was nearly three, to hell with the train and to hell with Vernon, I was beating it back to the ranch. And I was just about to do that when I heard that long-awaited sound, the faraway whistle of the approaching train. And feeling very irritable from my long, unpleasant wait, as they came to a stop to pick me up, I unloaded my bottled-up wrath on my friends the train crew, and rudely asked them what sort of a train they thought themselves, anyway, and so on and so on. "Oh, now, Billy, keep your shirt on; come along to the caboose and get thawed out, and pour some of this down your neck." "This" was a bottle of Scotch. So I poured. And so numbed had I become that the neat whisky slid down like milk, and before I realized it, I had much exceeded my capacity, so that when I got out of that warm caboose into the cold air on the station platform at Vernon I had much difficulty in trying to walk straight.

A sudden change in temperature often does have the undesirable effect of upsetting your sense of balance with a sudden rush of alcohol fumes. I had discovered this to my discomfort on another occasion, when I must have been pretty close to losing my reputation for sobriety—that is if I had one. Three or four of us gay bachelors had driven in to a dance at Enderly, the drive was long and the night was very cold, so we went to the hotel to warm ourselves up with a drink before going over to the hall. Drinking at dances was one thing that was generally disapproved of, so I only had one, possibly it was a good-sized one, then went out into the cold air put the horses up and then to the hall. The dance had not begun, the floor was empty, and all round the walls sat the ladies, chatting and waiting for the music to begin. I had to walk to the far end of the hall to reach the gentlemen's dressing room, and after I had started over that seemingly vast expanse of slippery floor the fumes of that solitary drink of Scotch rose suddenly to my head. Why couldn't they have delayed their action for a few minutes longer? But they didn't; the rows of ladies began to look blurry and the floor acquired a curiously wavy motion. I fixed my eyes resolutely on one board and very carefully followed it with my feet—

as it were on a tightrope. But I got there all right with a feeling of relief, and I hoped without a stagger, though some of the ladies told me that I had cut them when they smiled and nodded to me. A lucky escape.

To return to our friends the crew of the S. & O. train; we had a habit of handing them parcels, with a "Would you mind handing this to so and so at Armstrong," or wherever it was we wanted it delivered, or maybe just to slow up the train and drop it at some farm along the line; why pay express when your friend the conductor would do it for nothing? Sad to say, the head office got to hear of these unbusinesslike proceedings and got nasty about it, so our friendly trainmen regretfully had to stop being so obliging. Another thing also that was against railroad regulations, or the law or something, was also stopped. I was living in Vernon at the time, and on Sundays a party of us would borrow a handcar from the local station boss, and set out for some picnic spot up or down the line. It made a pleasant change from riding or driving with horses, and is quite a thrilling way of traveling; with four men pumping you can achieve a tremendous speed; it was very unusual for any train to be on the line on Sunday so we felt safe enough. We were very careful not to pay Mickey, the section boss, anything for the use of the car; this might have got him into trouble but every now and then we would all chip in and give him a present of a little Irish whisky. So we had to do without our handcar picnics and Mickey without his whisky, which was too bad, for he was a careful man with a large family of little Mickeys and couldn't afford to buy it himself.

It was on a handcar that Lord and Lady Aberdeen made their first entry into the valley; indeed that was the only way they could get in as the stage road from Sicamous had been broken up by the new railway grade, and although the rails were laid there were no trains yet running, and the good ship *Red Star* was considered as being rather uncertain, it would be too bad if she had got stuck on a sand bar and her exalted passengers had had to wade ashore and walk the rest of the way to Enderly through the bush. The railroad did have a funny little contraption known as the "steam jigger"; a miniature flatcar on which there were two seats and a small steam engine, with which they ran a passenger service of sorts, but this also was rather uncertain; it had a habit of stalling occasionally; when the passengers would have to get off and push, and it would hardly do to let our distinguished visitors do that. So three handcars were assembled; the leading one had a small flag staff from which flew the Union Jack, and on cushioned seats sat the Earl and Countess of Aberdeen, accompanied by their secretaries or aides-de-camp, or whatever they were, trying to look as if they were accustomed to this sort of thing. This was followed by the second handcar holding what were probably maids and valets or

such small fry, and bringing up the rear the third car piled up with baggage. And thus this unusual procession speeded through the valley to Vernon.

I think exalted personages must rather welcome this sort of thing now and then as a relief from all the formal proceedings which are inflicted on them. When they paid their next visit two years later, the train stopped at every station, where the local bigwig read an address of welcome and the assembled school children sang "The Maple Leaf Forever" to them, and His Excellency had to return the compliment with a speech. How weary governor-generals must have been of that "Maple Leaf Forever." I got to dislike it myself and it was a blessing when "O Canada" was adopted instead. There is the dignity and grandeur of real music in that; something inspiring that you never get tired of.

It was largely from this first visit that the great fruit-growing industry of the Okanagan was born, for as I have mentioned elsewhere, Lord Aberdeen, sensing the possibilities, purchased a large tract of land and planted orchards, and many others followed his example.

While the railroad was being built, of course, things were quite lively in the valley, and Enderly, where the engineers and contractors and their staffs made their headquarters, became for a time quite a social center, for many of them had their womenfolk with them. I have mentioned before that I came in with the engineers, and when camped at Enderly or anywhere near we would have jolly evenings singing or playing cards; it was a very welcome change from the conditions in some of our camps where we were nearly eaten alive by mosquitoes; in fact, the tent which I shared with two other men was getting stained brown from the myriads of blood-gorged mosquitoes which we had squashed against the canvas.

But there were only a few camps like this; our first camp on Mara Lake was in such an ideal spot that to me, after my recent roughing it at sea, it seemed like heaven. It was in a little bay sheltered on three sides by steep, wooded slopes, and our tents were arranged on a level grassy spot under the trees, just above a sandy beach. The sleeping tents, the draughting tent, and to me what at that time was the most important of all, the eating tent—just a canvas roof with open sides, in which we had meals that after the sea fare that I had been feeding on made me quite gluttonous. After all these years I can still recall my feeling of perfect bliss, sitting in that open-sided tent in the fresh woodsy-scented morning air eating those magnificent breakfasts while I looked out over the lake in which I just had had a luxurious early morning dip while the first warm rays of the sun shot over the crest of the mountain on the opposite shore and dissolved the thin translucent veil of mist that

hovered over the water. Anchored out on the lake was a small scow in which our supplies came up from Sicamous and hauled up on the beach a rowboat, and as I was supposed to know all about boats they gave me the job of navigating officer for the party.

And at one side of the camp through fern-bordered mossy banks tinkled a little stream of pure mountain water.

After the day's work of running the line through deep woods or over rocky bluffs there would be yarning and singing round a big campfire—a little oasis of cosy warmth and cheerful light in the dark silence of the forest. Perchance the howl of a wolf somewhere back on the mountain would emphasize your sense of comfortable security; and then to sleep that was sleep, rolled in your blankets on a bed of springy fragrant fir boughs; that was the perfect camp. And camping like this—for some definite reason, is much more enjoyable than camping just for pleasure, which soon becomes tedious; at least that has been my experience, and I have done lots of both.

Some distance behind our tents, along the foot of the mountain ran the rough stage road, on which an infrequent traveler gave evidence that we were not the only inhabitants. Rambling along this road, a mere track, one Sunday I came to the first sign of human habitation. At the entrance to a trail into the bush was a piece of board nailed to a tree, and on the board was printed in lopsided letters, "George Little, Give a Holler." I gave a holler, but there was no answer; so being curious to know what this man of the woods might be like, I went down the trail and presently came to a little clearing and a minute log cabin roofed with cedar bark. It was very quiet; George was evidently not at home, but his cat came from behind the cabin and greeted me, evidently pussy was lonely and glad to see someone; so I stroked him and returned to the road. This clearing was the first stage of attempting to hack a farm out of the forest, known as bushwhacking.

This slow progress of the engineer party through the valley to Vernon, camping at different points for a few weeks, gave me a fine opportunity for seeing everything, and we got to like the people and the country so well that most of us stayed after the line was finished, as did many of the white men engaged on the actual construction work; mostly bosses of large gangs of Chinese coolies. There were no steam shovels in those days; all the grading was done with pick and shovel, wheelbarrow and horse scrapers, and dynamite for the rock cuts. The building of this line changed the geography of the country somewhat, for the village of Lansdowne was sidetracked and left to its fate.

Armstrong might be considered the child of the S. & O. for the railroad brought

it into existence. It sprang up suddenly, with none of the habits and traditions of the old cow towns. Being surrounded by a farming, rather than a range country, it grew up more sedately; a simple, hard-working farm village, it did not attract many of the type of old country folk who crowded into Vernon and Kelowna. Its people were less sophisticated and more industrious; it acquired a distinct character of its own. And it was built by sheer industry, for no wealthy people came here, and no government money was expended, as in other places; an enterprising little place, of which its inhabitants might be well proud. It was my headquarters off and on for a time, later on I lived there permanently, so knew it well.

At an early period of its existence nearly the whole town was wiped out by fire; next day everyone who could handle a tool became a carpenter, and for months after, from daylight to dark the air rang with the sound of saws and hammers; that cheerful and animated music of industry.

Certainly our most outstanding figure was Jim Wright; its postmaster, perennial mayor, and school trustee—to him came everyone for advice when in difficulty, domestic trouble or what not, and many secrets must Jim's wise old head have held, for you could be sure they would go no farther.

He arrived in the country shortly after I did, and at first I think we rather rubbed each other the wrong way, for he was from Lancashire and had that slight contempt for the southerner which all north country men have. He certainly thought I was a bit too "cultured," and with his bluff honesty could not help showing it; while I thought Jim was a bit of a roughneck; I hope I didn't show it. But as soon as we really knew each other we became great friends. We worked together in organizing cricket and football, and later on as members of the city council we puzzled together over many knotty problems. He was the sort of man who was just "Jim" to everyone; on the council or at public meetings I always found it difficult to refer to him as "Your Worship" or "Mr. Wright"; it didn't seem to make sense and I soon found myself reverting to "Jim."

A man's first job in a country is usually worth recalling, and so was Jim's. He came to Enderly with his pal, Pat Parry, and there they got a job painting Lambly's hotel. Now there roamed the streets of that village a belligerent ram which Jim and Pat delighted in baiting, for he always responded in an entertaining way. Behold them, then one day, on a staging some six feet above the ground on the front of the hotel, with pots full of paint, and the ram strolling round below looking for something to butt. Jim and Pat, safely out of his reach, or so they thought, made the usual provocative noises to get him mad; very successfully from the point of view of

spectators and the ram, for backing up, he made a ferocious charge at one of the supports of that staging; and next minute behold them on the ground, well spattered with paint, emerging from under the fallen planks and hastily beating it into the hotel before the ram got in another crack.

Frank Wolfenden was another of those energetic men whose influence left their mark on Armstrong; a son of Colonel Wolfenden, of Victoria, “Bones,” as we called him, from his lean and bony figure, came to the valley in search of adventure, in 1890. He had been one of the original members of the James Bay Athletic Association of Victoria, the first of its kind in British Columbia and did much to organize games and sport in the Okanagan. He was the first manager of the flour mill, and it was due to his efforts that our first infantry regiment, the 102nd “Rocky Mountain Rangers” came into existence. With this regiment he went overseas in 1917 as second in command, but died in England before he reached the front.



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

First S. & O. station under construction at Armstrong

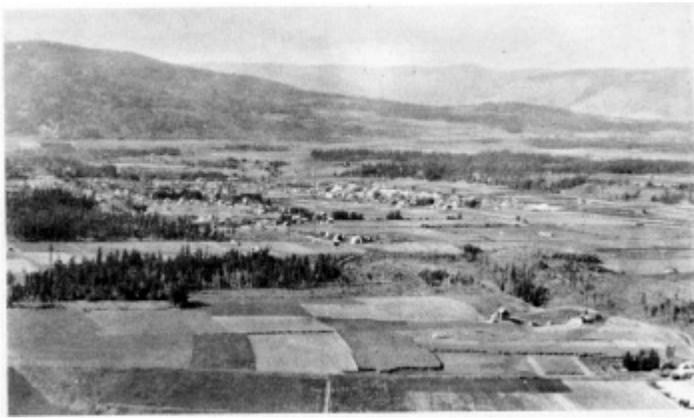


Photo by the author

The little town of Armstrong in 1900

And both Jim Wright and Frank Wolfenden had one fault, if you could call it a fault, in common; so wrapped up were they in their little town that with both, it became a sort of obsession; to them it seemed the most important place in the world.

A character so unique that he may appear incredible was old Ned Thorne, a philosopher who lived in a chicken house. He had started life as a London “bobby,” but that disciplined life was not for him, and he had drifted out to Spallumcheen, where he pre-empted land—certainly Ned did not lack “guts,” for he had cleared some forty acres and put up log buildings, a cabin, stable and chicken house. But one unlucky day “is bloody ’ouse burned down on ’im,” as he put it. So he turned his chickens out of theirs, and there he abode for many years after.

One day, before I had met Ned Thorne, Jim Wright hailed me, “Billy, old Ned is stuck for a man to help him with his hay for a few days; I wonder if you could go?” I could, and I did. And as I approached his residence this is what I saw. Seated on the doorstep of the log hut lately vacated by the fowls was a very dirty stoutish man with a grizzled bushy beard, a battered old black felt hat on his head, large horn-rimmed spectacles on his pudgy nose, and in his mouth a short and very black briar pipe. Close to his feet, in a muddy wallow contentedly lay a large lady pig and a few unconcerned fowl wandered past him, in and out of their late home.

He was peering short sightedly at a large book on his knees, occasionally spelling out to himself a difficult word. And what do you think the book was? Believe it or not; Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*! He was a determined devourer of the classics, and in some mysterious way had acquired a few volumes such as the one he was reading; more amazing still, he was teaching himself

to read French by comparing a translation with the original. But as you may imagine the pronunciation was a stumbling block. "Billy" (or "Bully," the "u" as in "dull," as he pronounced my name in his gruff voice), he would say, "you're a bloody scholar 'ow the 'ell do you pronounce *this* word?" and he would spell it out to me.

"Well," said this frowzy, but very friendly looking old bookworm, after I had told him what I had come for; "let's go in and 'ave some supper." And then I discovered the reason for a peculiar smile I had noticed on Jim Wright's face when he was asking me to go—as if he had some joke up his sleeve. On the dirty table there was some bannock and a mixture of butter and flies, and he fried some bacon and made tea that you could feel corroding your gullet as it went down.

As we were eating (I said I did not take butter) a hen would now and then hop on the table and help herself, and once Ned's cat began to help herself, and had got well under way before he saw her. "Here, Minney, you so-and-so thieving old bastard," remonstrated Ned, pushing her to one side with his fork, "get the hell out of this." But pussy paid very little attention, and as for the hen, that did not seem to worry Ned at all. I had thought that I could tackle anything in the way of grub, but Ned's cooking was altogether too much for me. And I don't think he could have ever washed his dishes, they certainly did not look like it. Luckily, in the dim light of his abode he did not see that I was only pretending to eat, and that evening I slipped back to town and bought some provisions which I hid in the hayloft where I slept.

The use of profanity was general in those days, and although old Ned had not the picturesque variety of cuss-words displayed by cowpunchers and such, his all-the-time use of those he did know excelled anything I have ever heard; he just did not know he was swearing, and even the womenfolk got used to it and were not even shocked.

One dark night I found him grumbling to himself, groping uncertainly about town, for he was very shortsighted. "Hello, Ned," I greeted him, "what are you hunting for?"

"Oh, the Methodys are 'avin' one of them pie-fights, an' I want to 'ave a feed, but I'll be gordamned if I can find their bloody 'all," he growled.

So I piloted him there, and being rather curious to see what a Methodist "chicken supper" was like, I went in with him. It certainly was some blow-out, of which Ned took full advantage and he conversed freely with his usual profanity. But none of the good ladies who were waiting table, or the parson who was sitting opposite seemed the least bit surprised. I suppose if I had even let slip a little "damn" in that pious meeting they would have thought me on the downward path.

Ned drove a team of old white mares, Dolly and Jinny, whom he used to growl

curses at as he drove, all in a very friendly way, for he was a most good-natured man, he never really swore at anything or anybody in anger. So unconscious of his language was he that I once heard him roar at Dolly and Jinny, after a long string of his usual abuse: "You so-and-so old mules, if it wasn't that we were in town I'd swear at you!"

At the back of his cabin, or rather chicken house, was an enormous pile of empty bottles, and I soon discovered that the amount of whisky he drank was as astonishing as his other peculiarities. It was on another dark night that I was walking along the road near Armstrong, I saw ahead of me a strange object which resolved itself into the clumsy figure of old Ned blundering along, clinging for support to the mane of Dolly. He was, to use a colloquialism, as full as fourteen goats.

"Bully," said he, as I caught up to him, "be a good Samaritan, and give me a 'eave into the saddle."

He was a hefty man, but with much "'eaving" I did get him up, only for him to fall off again with an alarming thud.

"Dolly, you old such-and-such old whore," he rumbled as he lay on his back in the dust, "can't you walk straight?" And so I got him on his feet again, "Bully, you'll 'ave to give me another leg up."

"Not much I won't, Ned," said I. "You'll just fall off again and break your silly old neck. You're going to walk."

And so, Ned lumbering along like a walking bear, supported on either side by his understanding old mare and me, and rumbling curses at me all the way for making him walk, the three of us staggered drunkenly along until we reached his home. And as I got him on his bed he growled forgivingly, "Bully, you're a good Samaritan; I'll do the same for you some day."

Perhaps this might be a good place to explain why at times I have found it necessary to make use of words that by some fastidious people are considered unprintable. Well, profanity was so much a part of some of my old friends that it would be impossible to paint a true picture of them without recording at least some of their sultry language; it was really nothing more than colloquialism with them and flowed out quite naturally. And one's attitude to swearing depends, after all—well, on one's attitude.

Very different was Charlie Hardy, our master bricklayer, and a very fine one he was. Charlie took a great pride in the quality of his work and the number of brick he could lay in a day; he was very outspoken, and had no use for the modern union

ideas about work. He built most of our chimneys and fireplaces for us, and some years later he was foreman of a gang who were to erect a large brick building. On the first day, starting at the head of his gang at his usual rapid pace, they remonstrated; according to union rules they only laid so many brick per day. "Oh, you do do you!" said Charlie; "well, you bloody well lay as many brick as I do, or get to hell out of here." It is a pity a union boss did not happen along; what Charlie would have said to him would have been worth recording. And did he make those bricklayers hump! I can imagine how he did, for I once acted as his hod carrier. I had employed him to build a new chimney on my house, and promptly at seven o'clock he turned up, and "Where's my helper?" he said, looking around. Now I had expected him to bring his helper, and he said I was supposed to provide one. Well, there was nothing else for it if the work was to start, so "How will I do?" said I, rather diffidently, for this was one job that I had not as yet tackled, and I had been contemplating watching the progress of that chimney at my ease. Charlie sized me up, rather doubtfully, and then, "Well, I guess you'll have to do," with an air of resignation.

He showed me how to mix mortar, and if you want to know what real hard work is just try humping a hod full of this weighty stuff, or of brick, up a steep ladder, with the boss on the roof hollering all the time for more. And Charlie had the laugh on me, for seeing that I had hired him, I was really the boss. I was mighty glad when the last brick on that chimney was laid, and we retired into the shade of the veranda for a cup of tea and a smoke. And incidentally I learned that in the profession, the plural of brick is—brick.

The site on which Armstrong is built, was, before the advent of the railroad, a sand bank surrounded by dense swamp and sloughs; we called it "The Island"; and it was a most unpromising-looking place for a townsite. In fact, it never would have been built there, as the railroad engineers had chosen a good site a mile north, but had been unable to come to an agreement with the owner of the land. So "The Island" being the nearest available place, there the town was started. And by dint of hard work and determination and that prevailing spirit of optimism, the new inhabitants built their houses and shops or fixed up those they had moved down from Lansdowne, and started their various business enterprises. Gradually the bush was cleared, the swamp drained and roads built, and soon that dense, almost impenetrable swamp was turned into fertile meadow and market gardens. But I wish the Armstrong residents of today could see what it looked like in 1889!

The people who first established themselves there chose "Aberdeen" as the name for their new town; but the railroad people named their station "Armstrong,"

after a Captain Armstrong who had financed the road; and as the postal authorities also named the post office Armstrong, Armstrong it had to be. And it developed into a typical farm village, very rustic compared with Vernon, and I suspect that they regarded us as hayseeds. The accepted everyday costume for men's wear was denim overalls, and we did not pretend to be anything else but hayseeds. There were all the usual village characters, too, and of course everybody was Ed or Tom or Joe, as the case might be. Perhaps some of these were not so very usual, either.

There was Ratledge, our barber; "Rat" to us. Rat was a real western frontiersman; he arrived in a covered wagon containing a wife and baby and everything he owned. He immediately became popular; he was one of those men you couldn't help liking. He had a wooden leg, the reason why he took to barbering. Astonishingly, he was a big-game hunter—the type that needs no guides or well-equipped expedition. Each fall he took time off and with a companion struck off into the wilds, never failing to return with some fine trophies. But after a time Armstrong became too urban, and to our regret Rat pulled out for Quesnal in the Cariboo, again in his covered wagon. I believe he is still there.

Nor could our first butcher be considered very orthodox; he was a casual sort of chap, more at home in the saddle than in his shop, where he very seldom could be found. But that did not matter; he left the door open; there was always a carcass hanging there, and if you wanted meat you just cut off a chunk, guessed the weight, and left a note saying what you had taken.

Then there was Warden, a livery stable proprietor we had with us for a time. He was a late member of the London Stock Exchange, a fine musician, and he had come out to manage the mine of a British syndicate that later went broke. Warden ran a roulette table in the dim recesses back of his stable. He had a young half brother; a quite different sort; a cheerful irrepressible cockney; "Arry" to all of us. I remember one day when he had newly arrived he was sitting in the barroom of the hotel, leaning back at his ease, with his legs stretched out and his hands in his pockets; sort of taking things in. Also in the barroom was a truculent individual who liked to pose as a "bad man." He was swaggering round, evidently trying to impress this English cheechako with his dangerous character. 'Arry, disappointingly, did not seem to be a bit impressed, so the bad man went closer, and standing menacingly over him, made some rude remark about Englishmen in general. "Aw, cripes," drawled 'Arry disgustedly, regarding the blustering desperado with a look of supreme indifference; not even troubling to take his hands out of his pockets; "Shut up!" As if to say, "Run away little man, and don't be a nuisance." There was a yell of laughter from the rest of the boys, and the bad man, looking very deflated, relieved

them of his undesirable company. They were queer fish these Englishmen, he probably meditated; perhaps it was safer to leave them alone.

Eugene Rhian, started a newspaper; he was proprietor, printer, editor, manager—in fact, the whole works. It was a very bright and newsy little paper, and at times unintentionally amusing, for Gene was an American and ignorant of some of the subtleties of the English language. On one occasion among his “personal items” he stated that Miss So-and-so had been “soliciting” on the streets! (The young lady had been “tagging” for some charitable object.) But you can imagine poor Gene’s horror when I told him what his expression implied!

Most of the businessmen of Armstrong were also farmers in a small way; a good thing, for all our interests were the same; there was no dividing line between townsman and countryman. But about the end of the century, a group of German farmers formed a settlement near Armstrong, and these people kept very much to themselves. I suppose this was quite natural, for their customs were quite different to ours; doubtless the second generation of these people will be assimilated.

One day I met one of them on the station platform; he was in his best clothes, and carrying a suitcase. I knew him slightly; so I said, “Hello, Carl, going for a holiday?”

“Ach, no,” said Carl, “I don’t go for no holiday; mein wife she yoost die on me.” And as I was trying to think of something suitable to say to the bereaved one, he continued, “und mein hay is all retty to get in, so I haf to go down to Iowa to get me anudder vun.” And one of the supreme tests of civilized people is the way they regard their womenfolk; well, there you have it.

Well, I could go on indefinitely about these old-timers; probably weary you to death of them. But there is one more I must mention; perhaps he should have come first, for he certainly left his mark on Armstrong; in fact, he would have done so in a much wider field. But Dr. Van Kleek, although he was a man of outstanding ability, could never be tempted to leave us, and I doubt if many of us realized how fortunate we were. If he had gone to some big city he would undoubtedly have made a name for himself; but would he have been more useful to his fellowmen? And would he have had a more pleasant and interesting life? I don’t think so, for he was so definitely the trusted friend of everyone here; he knew all our peculiarities and family histories; an advantage which the city doctor seldom has. Moreover, Doc was a keen sportsman, and here, right at his door, was all the shooting and fishing that his heart desired.

I remember his first job; at least one of the first. He was a young man when he first came to us; all he had in the world was his instruments, very good ones; and his

clothes, very bad ones, for they were shabby and always in need of mending. He opened up in a little two-roomed shack, one room of which was his office and surgery, and the other his living quarters; just at the back, a stable which housed his buggy and horse.

To this residence, late one night, came Tom Clinton, a substantial farmer who lived some nine miles out in the country. “Doc,” said Tom, when he had roused him from a comfortable sleep; “I wish you would hitch up and come out to the house with me.”

“Why, certainly, what’s wrong?” said the Doc.

Tom was a bit vague about what was wrong, but anyway Doc drove him home, and when they reached there Tom said, “By the way, Doc, what is it you charge for a visit?”

“Oh, two and a half.”

“Well, here it is,” said Tom, fishing out this amount from his pocket. “You see, I was stranded in town, and if I had roused the livery man, the son of a gun would have soaked me five bucks to drive out at this time of the night.”

Doc was too good a sport not to see the joke was on him, and, knowing Tom Clinton you may be sure he made it up to the Doc sooner or later.

Doctor Van Kleek, unlike some country doctors, never got rusty, he was keenly interested in the science of his profession, and kept up to date. But the business side—well, he was just hopeless. I don’t know if he ever sent bills, but I do know the only way I could ever find out what I owed him, and pay it, was to catch him alone in his office some day and sort of hold him up. “Doc,” I would say, “for gosh sakes, look over your books and let me know what I owe you; I want to get the damn thing fixed up.” And with a look of annoyance at being bothered with such uninteresting things as money he would reluctantly do so; and the unpleasant business over, he would brighten up as we changed the subject to discussing some new scientific theory or something of that sort. But I always felt as if I were making myself disagreeable by asking him to let me pay him.

CHAPTER X

A LITTLE LOGGING CAMP

When I first came to the valley there were already two or three small sawmills, but no regular logging camps; most of the settlers, including myself, had timber on their land, and during the winter we would cut logs for these mills, often in trade for lumber, for even if we only had log buildings we needed a certain amount of lumber for floors, doors, and so on. The more ambitious of us were beginning to put up frame buildings. Cutting logs in the bush was hard but healthy work and I thoroughly enjoyed it; working with experienced woodsmen I soon discovered that the skill and judgment that was necessary in falling trees, loading the logs on the sleighs, and so on made the work most interesting. Neighbors used to trade work with each other, usually four of us working together, two falling the trees and two cutting them into log lengths. If it was zero weather you went rather unwillingly in the early morning from your nice warm cabin out into the sharp air; your axe handle would be so cruelly cold that you could hardly grip it and had to look out for frozen fingers, but a few minutes of hard chopping soon warmed you up and you might even discard your gloves. The worst sort of mornings were when there had been a fall of snow during the night and the treetops were covered with it; it looked very beautiful, but at each blow of the axe on the bole of the tree a heavy shower of snow would descend on you, some of it down your neck. But the fresh, keen air and the tonic, slightly turpentiney smell of the trees were most invigorating and gave you an enormous appetite; and there was one thing I always liked about this work as compared with most farm work; it was clean, and when you quit for the day, you were finished, and indeed you did not feel like doing anything more.

Occasionally, but not often, the Okanagan in common with all the other interior valleys at that altitude, about 1200 feet, is afflicted with one of those sudden and extremely unpleasant drops in temperature called a cold snap, when even the hardest backwoodsman will stay indoors. You feel it coming as the sun goes down; a death-like stillness in the air—a feeling of foreboding, as if the world were waiting for some frightful doom. As the light fades, the cold, electric green of the western sky changes to a hard, menacing metallic grey; to the deepest indigo. And the cold stars appear with a cruel steely glitter like sword points thrusting at your brain. The spirit in the thermometer sinks, down, down, down, with an alarming rapidity. And

my spirits sink too for that is how I always feel about it.

As years went on, and with the building up of the little towns, the demand for lumber increased and larger mills were built. Some of these operated small logging camps of their own; and at one time an eastern Canadian concern acquired extensive timber limits round Mabel Lake and built a very large modern mill at Enderly, which camps employed many hundred men, and for some years Enderly was a very busy, prosperous place humming with industry. But their output was more than the valley could absorb; exporting it did not pay as they could not compete with the large mills at the coast with their finer grade of lumber, so they finally shut down. Before this mill was built, a smaller one had operated at Enderly; they had a small camp some twenty miles up the river, and as this was typical of the logging camps of the interior in those days I will try to describe it.



Photo by the author

Patten's sawmill in 1889. First sawmill in the northern Okanagan



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

Opening up a pile of logs on the mountainside

Although I had done a good deal of work at logging, I had never worked in a camp, and was glad to have the opportunity of staying in one for a time. The owners had asked me to go there and take a number of photographs of the various operations, so one winter afternoon with a horse and cutter and my camera I set forth from Enderly, expecting to make the camp in good time for supper after a pleasant drive. But that day my luck was out; the narrow logging road had been almost obliterated by a heavy fall of snow which made the going hard and slow. Some miles out, one of the runners of the cutter hit a concealed stump and the sudden jolt broke the breeching straps of the harness, and a little farther on, going down a steep pitch the cutter bumped the rear end of my horse, who immediately retaliated by kicking the dashboard in.

And then the temperature began to fall, one of those deadly rapid drops which seem to carry a threat; you know that if you don't keep moving the cold will get you. And the day was fading out; soon, except for the pale light from the hard malevolent blue glitter of the stars, it was dark, and I admit I began to get a bit scared. I had not been here before; perhaps I was lost, for surely I should have reached the camp by now. My horse was getting petered out, and so was I, for I had to get out and walk in the deep snow to keep my blood circulating. I began to have visions of keeping on and on until exhaustion stopped us, and wondered what freezing to death felt like. And it did not seem to worry me much; I believe intense cold finally and mercifully numbs the brain; acts as an anaesthetic. And then suddenly I was jolted out of this feeling of resignation to my envisioned fate—there, right ahead of me was a glimmer of light. Even if it was not the camp it meant safety—I jumped right out of my trance and forgot all about dying—I would reach that light and hug the stove and eat—wouldn't I eat! I shall always remember the sudden vision of that light; it was one of those trivial little experiences with nothing unusual or dramatic about them that yet, curiously, made an indelible impression on your memory. And then I think I emitted a whoop of joyful relief, for there in the uncertain light was a group of log buildings; it was the camp all right; there were lighted windows, then a door opened and the snowy road was flooded with a warm ruddy glow and men came out; they had just heard my sleigh bells. "You must be nearly frozen; we were just thinking of coming out to look for you; come right in and get something to eat; we'll look after your horse." I made a beeline for the stove first; then what a meal I ate, and half an hour later, replete and comfortable with the knowledge that my horse was warmly stabled and well-fed—no decent man could feel comfortable if his horse was not—I was rolled in my blankets and blissfully asleep.

This camp as I have said, was typical, and very different from the great

mechanized coast camps of today. It employed about twenty men and three or four teams of horses; there was no other power whatever; except for the help of these horses it was just hand logging. The logs were cut on the mountainside and snaked out with a team to the head of a chute which dropped at a steep incline to the river some hundreds of feet below. A log would be eased into the top of the chute by two men with cant hooks, start down slowly, and then, gathering way, travel with terrific speed and hit the water with a splash like the explosion of a torpedo—to rest there quietly with hundreds of others waiting for the long drive down to the mill at high water in the spring. From the head of the chute there was a rough sleigh track winding for about a mile back into the mountains; logs that had been cut some distance up this were hauled to the chute on sleighs; maybe six or seven to a load; this was really dangerous work that only an expert teamster could handle, for there were terribly steep downgrades where it was impossible for the horses to hold the load back; they had to go down on the run. And if a horse stumbled? Well, a horse had stumbled a few weeks before on one of these steep pitches, and his teammate was dead. For the sudden shock had loosened the load and a large log had shot off, and like a battering-ram had smashed this unfortunate horse against a rock at the side of the road, crushing his ribs in. The other horse was almost unhurt; I suppose in his crouched position from the stumble the rest of the logs had shot right over him. And the driver, how did he escape? Quite easily, according to him; he just jumped. For the driver always stands up on top of the load, prepared to jump clear in any emergency like this. How he keeps his balance is a marvel; it looked to me as if he risked his life every trip he made; he seemed to think nothing of it but it was one job I had no ambition to try.

The loggers' home, at which I had so thankfully arrived was a delightful place; bunkhouse, cook house and dining room combined in one big log cabin some forty feet by twenty. A long table down the center, covered with white oilcloth; benches on each side. At one end of the cabin the sleeping quarters, simply a space on the floor about seven feet wide, across the whole width of the cabin, and were separated from the rest of the floor by a twelve-inch-high board. The floor in this space was well-padded with hay, each man had his own blankets and his ditty bag or suitcase was stowed at his head. And above this was an upper deck, the same size and arranged the same way. And this primitive dormitory was clean, the hay was changed about once a week and the men were clean and healthy; men who work in the woods almost invariably are. Also there were no undesirable insects, if there had been I would certainly have known, for I had a lower berth there for a week, and every night slept the sleep that is induced by a day in the cold air and a

large supper.

Between these bunks and the end of the table was a large box stove and a few homemade chairs, and at the other end of the cabin, beyond the table was the big cooking range with its attendant high priest the Chinese cook—the most important man in camp. And what a cook he was! I had read much about the pork and beans and molasses fare of logging camps and had come prepared to make the best of it—but I was disappointed.

Picture the boys, with appetites such as only loggers possess, seated along each side of the table. They do not talk much, just an occasional witty remark thrown across the table or shouted at the cook, for they are too busy, and there is a cheerful clatter of knives and forks on the tin plates while Cookie, the cook's helper, a lively boy of about sixteen, hurries round with the grub. Pork and beans? Not much. Two kinds of porridge, hot cakes and syrup, eggs and bacon, beefsteaks, toast, bread, hot biscuits, two kinds of stewed fruits, tea or coffee, lots of canned milk, and butter; that is breakfast; the boys are well stoked up for the morning's work; they light pipes and the cabin is fragrant with the smell of baccy smoke as they trail out to the woods. Dinner and supper are just as lavish—roasts and stews, puddings and pies, oh, everything—sometimes even pork and beans. For Chong, the cook is a chef who takes pride in his work. True, the plates and cups are of tin; but curiously, when you have been accustomed to drinking tea out of a tin cup, and, returning to civilization come back to porcelain, the tea doesn't seem to taste quite right.

As we smoked our pipes after supper—that was before the era of cigarettes—and Cookie was washing the dishes I was much interested by the method of polishing the dishes which he employed. After washing and drying they were dumped into a flour sack, knives and forks, spoons, plates and cups. The sack was then shaken violently, an economic reason for tableware of tin.

The fare here was typical of most camps in British Columbia at that time, and if you were a passing traveler, friend or stranger, and wanted a meal they would always find a place for you at the table. You presented the cook with a gratuity of fifty cents on leaving, and if you put up your horse you did likewise with the stableman.

In the evening the boys would sit round yarning and reading; one of them was studying textbooks on engineering; some played cards, draught, or dominoes. And one day of a blinding snowstorm when work out of doors was impossible, we played an interminable game of poker—quite harmless for we only played for matches. But by nine o'clock everybody would be rolling up in his blankets, drowsy from a long day in the open air. The engineer student might sit up a little longer;

cookie prepare the kindling for the morning, and Billy Johnson, the camp foreman check over his books, then they too would retire and the camp would be asleep.

The camp employed an expert saw-filer whose job was to keep the crosscut saws in perfect condition, but each man had his individual axe, supplied by the camp, and this he always ground or honed in his spare time; to have a dull axe, or to take time off to sharpen it during working hours was contrary to the woodsman's ethics, for they had a very definite code, unexpressed in any way, and of which they probably were hardly conscious. It might be roughly stated as being on their honor to do a good day's work for their employer to the best of their ability. But although undoubtedly they really felt that way I can imagine what a hoot of derision any of these boys would give if they should read my definition of it, they just did their work and would have snorted at the suggestion of any other motives.

Indeed, this spirit, the feeling that it was up to a man to do a good job, and taking pride in it, was the spirit of the times; such a thing as slacking of work because the boss was not there just wasn't done; any man who did would have been considered as no better than a Siwash.

CHAPTER XI

THE LAW, SOME LAW-BREAKERS AND SOME LAW-MAKERS

It was in Vernon that I first came into contact with the majesty of the law and the administration of justice, for having heard that an acquaintance had been charged with something or other and was to appear before our local *cadi* that afternoon I went, along with an expectant crowd, to that little government office that was used as the courtroom when on rare occasions justice had to be dispensed—and found the proceedings entertaining rather than impressive.

Picture to yourself a small, crowded room with no seats. At one end a desk behind which sits Moses Lumby, the government agent, a portly gentleman with the serious expression that the occasion calls for, on his usually smiling face. The air is thick with tobacco smoke from the pipes of the thickly-packed audience, and there is a feeling of tenseness; this is evidently a *cause célèbre*; in fact, any case that comes up here arouses the interest of the whole community as everybody knows the people involved. The magistrate taps on his desk, and a man standing by his side whom I take to be the clerk of the court says in a loud voice, “Order in the Court!” A pause, and then, rather indignantly, “Take off your hats.” The audience is evidently unused to court proceedings and doesn’t know the proper etiquette. Another pause, then, as if he were not quite sure of his ground this time, “Put out your pipes!” However, the audience does, somewhat unwillingly, put out its pipes; one of them murmuring under his breath, “Heck, we’re not in church,” and the proceedings begin.

The local constable, Bill Heron, charges “one, Bob Dundas, with riding his horse on the new board sidewalk which has just been constructed along Bernard Avenue, which he had no right to do, said sidewalk having been constructed for the sole use and purpose of foot passengers only. And furthermore and moreover that the said Bob Dundas, when admonished, did give me some of his lip. Also, that the accused did appear at the time to be under the influence of liquor.”

The accused then takes the oath—which of course Bill has done to start with, and gives evidence for the defense (there are no other witnesses).

The magistrate—“Well, Mr. Robert Dundas, what have you to say for

yourself?”

“Well, Your Honor, it was the horse that walked on the sidewalk, not me; he wanted to, so he just did.”

“Were you drunk at the time?”

“No, Your Honor, maybe the horse was.”

There was laughter in the court, stopped by a stern cry of “Silence,” from the clerk. His Honor pondered a moment or two, looking a bit doubtful—then questioned Bill again. “Constable what was the nature of the ‘lip’ which you assert was given you by the accused?”

“Well, Your Honor, I think he told me to mind my own bloody business”; and, indignantly, “his damned horse nearly stepped on my feet.”

The custodian of law and order in Vernon, constable Heron, Bill to everybody, including any law-defying persons that he had his eye on who invariably argued the point with him, as to whether they were legally subject to arrest or not, if that be threatened, seemed to me to be rather an anachronism, for how he came to be a policeman in a town that at times got decidedly disorderly was rather a mystery, for Bill was quite elderly, one might even say ancient. He had a game leg and hobbled along with the aid of a hefty walking stick. His white whiskers swept majestically down his shirt front and his uniform was a wide-brimmed, high-crowned, black felt hat and a black frock coat with a large shiny metal star on which was engraved the warning “Police,” pinned to the lapel. It is quite likely that Bill, being a needy old-timer and there being no old-age pensions in those days, had been given this job as a sort of sinecure for his declining years. Also, if we had to have a policeman why not have one who could not interfere with our liberties too much? And so, who better than Bill—he knew all of us and we all knew him, so everyone was satisfied.

I once saw Bill make quite a brave attempt to arrest a gentleman of the roughneck order. A large crowd had gathered on the local sports ground for the annual first of July celebration, when into it, like a bombshell hurtled one, “Slim Jim,” a festive cowboy from one of the outlying cattle ranches on an equally festive horse. Slim had evidently already made a good start at his celebration; was feeling exceedingly full of beans, and deciding that the proceedings needed peppering up a bit started running amok through the crowd with a sort of equestrian Highland fling accompanied by the appropriate joyful whoops. And then, stumping across the field came Bill, to see what all the excitement was about. “Whoopee, Bill!” yelled Jimmy as his horse gave a few more playful leaps and the crowd stampeded in all directions. This was even better than he had hoped for; now he was going to have a real good time. Bill decided that it was right here that he had to assert his authority.

“Here, you, you—get off that horse and be Goddam quick about it!” But Slim showed no intention of getting off that horse, and defied the representative of the law in no uncertain terms.

“Pull him off,” yelled someone. Things had now taken on a sporting aspect, and Bill rose to the occasion like a good one, and grabbing the miscreant’s leg, it became a sort of cavalry versus infantry wrestling bout; for if Bill was just an old stiff with a game leg, funk was not one of his shortcomings. Meanwhile, others joined in the fray, some assisting Bill, while on the other side of the horse Jim’s friends hung on to his other leg, which made it rather painful for Jim, also for his horse, which began to make frantic efforts to buck, while from the crowd rose enthusiastic shouts of “Ride her, cowboy!” and, “Stay with her, Bill.” However, partly from exhaustion or more probably out of consideration of Bill’s game leg, all hands by mutual consent called it a draw; the cowboy calmed down, he and Bill shook hands and Bill resumed his dignity. Bill once threatened to arrest me; I was quite innocent but I admit circumstances were suspicious.

An over-sanguine company had installed a telephone system in Vernon, and for some weeks the top of one of the poles on Bernard Avenue had been adorned with an article of furniture, a barroom chair, known in more refined circles as a Windsor chair. Now one fine evening one of my evil companions bet me the cigars or drinks or something that I could not get it down, so naturally it was up to me to do just that. It must have been quite a stunt getting it up there, but what man has done man can do—anyway I could pry it loose and if I got stuck on the way down I could drop the damn thing; the bet made no stipulation as to that. And behold me, a few minutes later, halfway down the pole, still grasping the chair, while an admiring crowd had gathered, of course making the usual funny remarks that the occasion called for. And there, right at the base of the pole, looking up at me as a bear who has treed his quarry might look, stood Bill, thick stick, shining badge of office and all.

“Aha,” said Bill, “I’ve bin watchin’ this pole for a long time, and now I’ve got you at last; you English boys is getting a damn sight too fresh around this town.”

I halted my descent, Bill had got me all right if I came down, and I certainly couldn’t hang on much longer. For a moment I considered letting the chair drop on his head and escaping during his ensuing confusion. But that might hurt poor old Bill, and even the toughest character would not do that; diplomacy seemed the best plan.

“Look here, Bill, I didn’t put the beastly thing up there, I am just performing a public service by taking it down, you can’t touch me for that.”

Bill chewed on this for a minute. “How in hell am I to know you didn’t put it up there?”

“Well, Bill if it comes to that, how in hell are you to know that I did?”

Bill also considered this, then, “Who does that chair belong to, anyways?”

“The Okanagan Hotel,” from somebody in the crowd.

“Well, hand her down and get down out of that yourself.” Which I did, feeling rather foolish, for I couldn’t have hung on much longer. And the usual admonition from Bill, “And don’t let me catch you again,” which more often than not concluded his dealings with disturbers of the peace was flung at me. Bill was left standing with the chair in his hands, not quite knowing what to do with it, but finally, stumping across to the hotel which was just across the street, he placed it on the veranda and sat on it. The crowd tried to make out that the drinks were on me, but I didn’t see it that way, and just went over and had one with Bill, to show we had no ill feeling. Bill’s efforts at keeping law and order usually had a happy ending.

I might add that the telephone company had been much too previous with their enterprise; they did get some half-dozen subscribers, but finally faded away leaving their unemployed poles behind them. These time-saving gadgets such as telephones had no appeal to us—we had more time than money with which to pay telephone bills, and who wanted to be annoyed with the beastly things, anyway, ringing at all sorts of inconvenient times? If we wanted to talk business with a man, it was more sociable to go to his office and spend a pleasant half hour over a smoke and a chat, or to ratify a business deal over the bar.

It was about this time that the pioneer lawyer of the Okanagan first hung out his shingle in Vernon. Mr. Corkins was not his real name, but it will do; to his family he was “pa,” and to his friends which means the whole town, he was known as “Pa Corkins.” Pa Corkins was a most likeable man, and his wife, Ma Corkins was a delightful grey-haired lady who called everybody “dear” and took a motherly interest in all our love affairs. Between them Ma and Pa raised a family some of whom afterwards became quite distinguished, and the whole family spent much of their time making a flower garden which was an inspiration to the rest of the community. Yes, Pa Corkins was one of our outstanding characters all right, for if his other qualifications had not marked him his appearance certainly would have; for he had a taste in dress which was all his own. I believe he must have taken a sort of mischievous delight in what we used to call his court costume, for to put it mildly it was most striking. In fact, it was noisy, it simply shouted at you. Now Pa was a portly man with long side whiskers, the sort that in the mid-Victorian era were called “Dundreary,” these whiskers, sweeping gracefully down on either side, did a lot to set off the famous costume: a long, immaculately fresh black frock coat, low cut

waistcoat which exposed a large acreage of shining white shirt front bisected vertically by a thin black tie; and draped across the lower part of the waistcoat a large gleaming gold watch chain, hung with sundry seals, or perhaps they were mascots. A pair of trousers of a surprisingly startling black-and-white shepherds plaid check; rather short in the leg, they allowed a good view of bright red socks; a red handkerchief carried out the color scheme, and always there was a red rose or some other red flower in his buttonhole. I can picture Ma putting it there for him as they parted for the morning at the garden gate. And Pa Corkins succeeded in doing what very few men could have done arrayed like this; he always looked dignified when rising to address the court, where at that time it was not customary for counsel to wear a wig and gown. I think one of his sons, who inherited his father's practice must also have inherited his delight in unusual raiment, for although at the time that he practiced, he had to dress more or less like the other men, he let his fancy run riot when it came to his neckties, which were of the sort that horses shy at.

"For God's sake, Ed, where did you get that one?" was just the appreciation he liked—the tie of the moment might be a vivid red with large blue horseshoes on it. Where he did get these marvellous decorations no one knew. He liked his ties to be exclusive and would not give his source of supply away.

Taking us all round, we were a law-observing lot. Or perhaps I should say that being generally decent and peaceable we did not bother our heads at all about the law, so our transgressions were mainly confined to minor offences, such as getting drunk and disorderly which on rare occasions were dealt with as I have described. But Vernon was the assize town for a large district, and having no courthouse the small local school building was used when the high court judge made his annual visit. And the children, of necessity, were given a holiday as long as the assizes lasted, and naturally hoped there would be a large docket.

In 1891, Judge Spinks, one of the well-known judges of the early days came to live in Vernon, and an interesting sidelight on the way which judges had sometimes to cover their circuits is the following item in the *Vernon News*; "Judge Spinks left Sunday morning on horseback for Rock Creek; he has a camping outfit with him."

Of course, in a range country such as ours there was bound to be a certain amount of cattle stealing; it was an easy matter to collect a little band of cattle or horses and drive them across the border; apparently no questions were asked over there. And if a cattle thief was caught we didn't lynch him—the law would have stepped in then, with a very heavy step indeed. But I just cannot imagine any of those old-timers even dreaming of such a thing as lynching; they were not that type at all. One favorite method of dealing with a suspected cattle thief was for the local

J.P.'s to give him so many days to get out of the district or else. This he wisely and obligingly did, for what would have happened if he didn't I do not know and doubt if the J.P.'s did either, for it was hard to get anyone to give evidence against these men.

In the large bands of cattle on the ranges there would always be a certain number of calves or yearlings that had not been branded—"mavericks"; also cattle whose brands might easily be altered. To alter a brand was obviously a crime; however easygoing the ranchers might be they wouldn't stand for that and if it could be proved on a man he usually ended up in jail unless he escaped over the border. But as to the mavericks, there were a few men amongst us who were known to gather these into their own herds, but no one seemed to worry much about it. Even with the known or suspected cattle thieves, there was nothing of the wild west desperado about them; like other men addicted to crime they had a good side to them, and living right amongst us that was naturally the side we saw most often; I knew them quite well and even liked them. It was quite safe to leave your tools lying about or your cabin unlocked, they certainly would never take anything, that according to their code would be stealing. Nor would they think of taking any livestock belonging to a poor man; it was always from the big herds that they helped themselves. Sort of modern equivalents of Robin Hood, or perhaps they were just practical socialists. However, at one time cattle stealing became too prevalent altogether and the authorities got really annoyed, and having collected ample evidence, they arrested their man near Armstrong. The arrest was made by a provincial constable (not Bill Heron); who handcuffed his prisoner, and loading him into a buggy proceeded to drive to the Vernon jail. And about halfway there, Ronny, the handcuffed one, let out a wild yell which made the horses bolt, jumped for the bush and disappeared in the darkness. He knew that any of the ranchers round there, even if they had missed some of their own cattle and suspected him, would give him help if he appealed to them—you just couldn't kick a man when he was down. The police were well aware of this too, and I sometimes wondered if they were awfully keen themselves on capturing the fugitive. Anyway, presumably some good Samaritan helped him out of his handcuffs so that he could inconspicuously make his way across the border. Which he did, and years after—I suppose the time limit for his rearrest had expired—he reappeared here to look up his old friends. He was on the state of Washington police force; a respectable citizen with a family, and none of us mentioned cattle stealing.

One of our best-known and rather popular reprobates whose life consisted of being alternately a hard-working farm hand, a festive drunk, and a jailbird, was one

“Jimmy the Dasher,” an extremely cheerful little Irishman whose failing was whisky. My first meeting with him was somewhat startling, for I had not heard of him before. I was at the time living alone in a cabin, working at a land-clearing job, and on going home late one evening I found things looking as if a wild drinking party had taken place in the cabin, which of course, according to custom I had not locked. There was an empty whisky bottle on the table, my three cups had been used as whisky glasses, eggshells and some of their contents had been spattered around and my teapot had evidently been used for mixing egg-nogs. But no sign of the celebrants. Then I went to the stable to throw down some hay for my horse, and there, sprawling fast asleep in the hayloft was my visitor, and a tough-looking ruffian he was as I regarded him by the light of the lantern; a thick-set little man with a whiskified face, a red flannel shirt and long cowhide boots. What should I do; wake him up and ask him what the devil he meant by messing up my house? No, that would be a breach of hospitality. I left him there, and when I went to the loft in the morning to feed my horse he woke and greeted me with a disarming smile; he appeared to be a very amiable sort of ruffian. So I told him breakfast was ready.

“Well, now,” said he, very cheerfully and quite unembarrassed; “an’ isn’t that foine; sure an’ it’s me that’s ready for ’t. And well now, ain’t it too bad, but I entoirely forgot to wash up the dishes after me supper last night.” And introducing himself; “and I’m that pleased to meet ye, me name is Jimmy the Dasher, and if I’d thought ye was comin’ home I’d have left a snorter in the bottle for ye. And the saints forgive me but I didn’t even leave a drap to put the heart into the breakfast for us; sure the Dasher must have been drunk.”

The next time I met him he was prowling round a field surrounded by a snake fence, peering into every fence corner with a disconsolate look on his usually beaming face.

“Lost something, Jimmy?” I said.

“Yes, by Jasas, an’ I have that,” said the Dasher, “I cached a bottle in one of these fence corners an’ I entoirely disremember which one it was, an’ here’s me been huntin’ all the marnin’ an’ by the howly Jasas, I’m thinkin’ some dirty divil must have stole it on me.”

The Dasher had been siwashed for a period, and as was his habit when he knew this was likely to happen, he had hidden supplies in various places so that he might have something to fall back on that was more palatable than painkiller or Jamaica ginger. At almost regular intervals he would be arrested and lodged for a week or two in the Vernon jail—all officialdom knew the Dasher, in fact, he was by way of being a sort of pet, and he enjoyed these free holidays very much. At first, as was

the custom, the policeman would fetch his meals to the jail from the Victoria Hotel, which was close by, but soon the Dasher was allowed to go to the hotel himself; why should he even want to escape from such comfortable surroundings? So, during his periods of incarceration the Dasher would be seen seated on the hotel veranda smoking his after-dinner pipe and chatting contentedly with any of us who happened to be there—his pipe finished, he would announce, “Well, boys, it’s time I was gettin’ back,” and return dutifully to the jail, or to potter about in the courthouse garden. Once he had gone away for a time to work on a ranch near Kamloops; and there the usual thing happened and he spent a period in the Kamloops jail. When he returned to the valley, we asked him how he liked it there. “Och, foine!” said Jimmy, “them lads is gintlemen, and they sure did treat me like a gintleman.”

So to the Kamloops authorities also the Dasher was evidently irresistible. And he usually managed to spend most of the winter in jail—some kindhearted magistrate or J.P. could be relied upon to arrange that, and it became the recognized thing.

But alas, poor old Dasher; his end was tragic. One winter, by some mistake, he was not lodged comfortably in jail, and on one of our cold sub-zero nights he left Vernon with a bottle in his pocket to cheer him on his way, with the intention of tramping over the range to Okanagan Landing. And on the trail next day they found him, frozen to death. I remember a curious comment on this tragedy, made to me by another little Irishman, a friend of the Dasher’s, “Well now,” said Danny, “an’ wasn’t it a turrible thing for poor Jimmy to go before his Maker when he was droonk?” Well, *requiescat in pace*; there were lots of worse men than Jimmy. And for many years after, the Dasher’s ghost was supposed to haunt the trail on which his body was found.



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

Pioneer justices of the peace. Left to right—standing: C. O’Keefe, M. Lumby, L.

Girouard, C. Crozier; sitting: E. J. Tronson, B. Lequime, F. Brent, I. Boucherie, T. Ellis.



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia

The courthouse, Osoyoos, South Okanagan, 1890

Perhaps it is hardly correct to refer to these lockups as jails; they were referred to locally as the “jug,” or the “skookum house” (Chinook for lockup) and another name of unknown origin was “hoosegow.” They were little log buildings about twelve feet square; with a stove, bed, table and chair, and many of their temporary occupants seemed to find them quite comfortable, especially as the prisoners usually were given much better meals than they were accustomed to. I remember one, Indian Johnny Pierre, who escaped because the door had been left unlocked, coming back again on his own initiative, although he was not particularly wanted; I think he had just been put in overnight to keep him out of mischief, and probably thought if he returned he might get some more of those good meals.

Then there was that unfortunate event at Armstrong when one of our prominent ranchers was incarcerated and we had to remove him by force. He had been having an evening in the local barroom with the rest of the boys, and as was his custom, had started to drive home in a very hilarious and noisy condition. Our constable, a newly-appointed man, who didn't know this rancher, with that excess of zeal which new men are apt to display, had gathered him in and locked him up in the hoosegow and the rest of the town did not hear of it until some hours later. Well, the law might be no respecter of persons, but that was going a bit too far, so a deputation of citizens went to this officious policeman, and telling him he couldn't do things like that, secured the key and advanced on the jail to release our festive friend from his

ignominious position. But when the deputation opened the door they found him in such a state of rage at the insult to his dignity that after threatening to wreck the jail, which was obviously impossible, or to sue the town for false imprisonment, he spluttered indignantly that we could all go to hell; we—he seemed to blame us for it—had put him there in jail and there he would stay. Finally finding persuasion no good, two strong men just picked him up and removed him to freedom; by the time they got him safely home he had calmed down—he had to anyway for his wife awaited him and you know what wives are. So the town escaped that scandal.

This same constable locked up two hoboos one afternoon, then went off with his best girl to a dance at Enderly and forgot all about them. They didn't seem to appreciate their quarters, for they had had nothing to eat, and along towards noon the next day several people, attracted by loud yells proceeding from the jail, went to investigate, and found their two angry faces at the barred window demanding freedom and food and emitting terrible threats as to what they were going to do about it. We had much trouble pacifying those two birds; they demanded much compensation and looked like making trouble, but after a big dinner and a cigar apiece, they felt better about it and we managed, with a sigh of relief, to shoo them out of town at a total expense of two dollars in each of their pockets; and that cop was requested to send in his resignation.

In 1892 a new courthouse was built in Vernon, a red brick building which seemed palatial in those days; the precursor of the present dignified stone building on the hill. It is still standing and I believe is used as a school; during the last war it was used as a barracks and I spent many uncomfortable nights there for it was crowded and the ventilation was particularly rotten. The old log lockup, however was still used; it too, I believe, is still there in the yard behind the brick building; it must be haunted by many ghosts. And in this new courthouse I saw a number of interesting trials, for it seemed to be my luck to be called for jury duty at nearly every assize, and I enjoyed it, as I believe nine men out of ten really do, although it is the fashion to grouse about it.

I have often wondered, and have never, solved the mystery of how petit juries are chosen. The sheriff was a friend of mine, and possibly that had something to do with my being chosen so often, for he knew that I liked it. On the other hand, I know so many people who have never been on a jury in their lives, which is a pity, for they would learn many interesting things about the law. In my experience I have found that if half of the twelve good men and true on a jury have enough intelligence to know what it is all about you are lucky, and it has occurred to me that if they were

chosen as the grand jury is, from men of standing in the community it would be more sensible. Later on I was on the grand jury and appreciated the difference. We served on the grand jury without any remuneration until they rather insulted us by paying us, as if we were in the same class as the petit jurors; we considered ourselves quite superior. Then for some reason the grand jury was abolished. I wonder why, for at first we cost the government nothing, and it seemed to me that we were rather useful—at almost every assize we saved the government the expense of a trial by throwing out some case that obviously should never have been sent up; it was the combined opinion of twelve men against that of the magistrate or J.P. who had sent the case up; men who were certainly quite as intelligent as the magistrate, who was seldom or never a man with any legal training. But I suppose it is like my cheek to advance my very lay opinions, and I can imagine some legal light, say a judge or an attorney general if any such should read this, smiling with tolerant amusement at what I think about it.

I seem to have written so far mostly of the humorous side of the law as it affected us, so lest you should think that it was generally rather farcical I must assure you that the procedure in this courthouse was invariably carried out with the dignity and ceremony that marks British courts of justice all over the world. A British Columbian judge might be, and usually was, in his private life, a good mixer, with no side, but during assizes he held himself very much aloof, and never forgot his dignity. And most of them were very human and considerate, too. A reproof given during a criminal trial by Judge Murphy to a rather bullying crown prosecutor is rather typical. “You must remember Mr. ——,” said the judge, “that it is the function of the crown, not to prove that the prisoner is guilty; but to prove whether he is guilty or not.” Which is an aspect in those cases of “Rex versus so-and-so” which had not occurred to me before.

Another judge once gave a gentle and delicate reproof to the jurymen. The assizes were nearly over, there being just a little business to finish up the next day; the session had been a long and tedious one, and nearly all the jurymen free from their duties had gathered in the Kalamalka billiard room for a sort of finishing-up celebration. (For assizes a large number of men are called up, usually at least fifty or sixty, and from these various juries are selected.) I remember we had a mock trial, and as usual, about midnight the proceedings became extremely hilarious. Now unfortunately the judge was sleeping, or trying to sleep in his room overhead. I think that particular room must have been where they always parked celebrities, a sort of royal suite, for some years before a bishop had had the same experience.

Well, the next day in court, after dismissing the jurymen with the usual formal

compliments and thanks for their services, the judge added these words: "And gentlemen, of the jury, I hope you will all return to your homes as soon as possible." He smiled meaningly as he said it; doubtless the old boy remembered the days when he was young; perhaps he even wished he could have been with us.

To anyone who is interested in his fellow human beings at all, a trial must always have a great attraction; it is drama, sometimes tragic; at other times pure comedy, translated into real life instead of the other way round as on the stage. The arguments of the various counsel, evidence of expert witnesses and sometimes of very funny witnesses; the summing up of the judge, and if you happen to be on the jury, the mental analysis of all these different factors so that you can reach a decision—certainly I have always found it most absorbing. And talking about the evidence of experts, I was once on a special jury trying a civil action for damages; the proof rested partly on medical grounds, and both appeal and defense had at great expense brought experts from Vancouver as witnesses. And the opinions of these two doctors differed, absolutely and entirely. So what could the jury do about it? The judge in his summing up gave us no hint, probably he felt that that was our worry. So we did what we thought the wisest thing to do—we ignored that expert evidence.

On another occasion, having retired to the jury room, we found there was some point of law bearing on the case that we did not understand. If the jury, after retiring, needs further information they may return to the courtroom and ask the judge for it, and this we did. Could the judge tell us so-and-so? He was not sure about it; he asked the various lawyers present if they knew. No, they didn't, they had to consult various legal books before they found the necessary information. "Well," remarked the judge, with a very large smile, "it is held that ignorance of the law is no excuse, but when the judge and several lawyers do not know it, that principle seems rather hard on the layman." And when you consider the myriad existing laws which are constantly being amended and added to, how could even the most learned jurist know them all. Sometimes one feels inclined to agree with Sam Weller that "the law is a hass."

I also saw here a few trials for murder, usually the outcome of some drunken brawl; one in which a mine manager had shot dead a holdup man; another case was that of a half crazy old recluse who had shot and killed a neighbor over some boundary dispute; so you will see that we were not entirely law-abiding and peaceful.

And it was in this courthouse that I once saw a man condemned to death—and believe me I never want to see that again. The judge looked ghastly sick when he put the dread black cap on his head and pronounced the horrible words of the sentence.

He turned and hurried out of the courtroom as if he wanted to escape. And the condemned man showed no emotion at all, he just seemed numbed, perhaps because he was an Indian. And I was glad to get out of there, out in the fresh air to try and forget it.

There was another trial for murder, of which the prisoner was obviously guilty. But the jury, probably out of pity brought back the verdict of "not guilty," much to the surprise of the whole court. I am glad to say I was not on that jury. "Well gentlemen of the jury," said the judge, with a look of disapproval, "you have at least saved me from a most unpleasant duty." And to the wretched prisoner, who had broken down completely while awaiting the verdict and was miserably weeping; "Young man, your neck has only escaped the halter by a hair's breadth; had the jury considered their duty rather than their feelings you would now be on your way to the condemned cell." I'll bet that judge felt a sense of relief all the same.

One criminal case that was of personal interest to me because I had been an unwilling participant in the events that led up to it, was the trial of Red Malone for attempted murder. I suppose Red was the nearest approach to the "bad man" of wild western fiction that I became acquainted with; he was certainly a "bad actor."

The first time I saw him was at Grande Prairie. I was just riding up to the Adelphi Hotel, a typical ranch stopping place, when I saw what looked like a riot going on in the road; men hitting and kicking and rolling in the dust and falling violently in all directions; it was Red being arrested! He was finally overpowered, and while several large men sat on him his wrists were bound together and as there was no hoosegow in the vicinity he was locked up in the harness room of the hotel stable, the idea being to hold him there while they notified the provincial police at Kamloops some forty miles distant. But Red managed to get his hands free and an hour or two later they found he had been amusing himself by cutting up the harness. So he was removed from there and flung into an empty root house; there was nothing he could damage there, and he couldn't get out. But they had reckoned without their Reddy, for the light of the next morning showed that that was just what he had done; there was a big hole in the roof and the bird had flown. And I think the general feeling was one of relief, provided he had flown far enough.

I had left the hotel that afternoon and was riding along in a leisurely way about ten miles farther on, when from a lonely cabin standing back some two hundred yards from the road a man emerged and waved at me. It was our friend Red. He looked cautiously all around, holding a rifle ready for any emergency—evidently he wasn't running any chances on being arrested again. Then having satisfied himself that I looked harmless and that there was no one else around, he walked up, but still

holding his gun at ready. Assuming a confidential tone, he said, "How's things back at the Prairie? Are they still huntin' me? And say, you don't want to be lettin' on to no one how you seen me here."

"Well, Red," I said, "I'd advise you to keep clear of the Prairie; they don't seem to love you there—if I were you I'd lie low here 'till dark and then light out for some place where they don't know you. And for the Lord's sake don't go loosing off that gun at anyone. I won't let on where you are, anyway, so you needn't worry about that."

Perhaps you think I should have notified the authorities, but we didn't do that sort of thing; I kept my mouth shut for a week or so; let the man have a sporting chance. I don't think whatever crime he had committed could have been a very serious one anyway, for I have forgotten now what it was. And I was sure the bunch at Grande Prairie had no desire to see him again.

Well, he disappeared from those parts, but about five years later he turned up again one winter in the Okanagan, and was living in a cabin on the shore of Otter Lake, by the side of the road near Armstrong, and it was here that he committed the crime for which he finally got laid by the heels, and where I again met him, at unpleasantly close quarters.

It happened on New Year's Day; two friends of mine, Horsley and McMullin, were driving in a sleigh with two Pelly children and I was on horseback riding behind; we were bound for Pelly's, whose house was about half a mile beyond the cabin in which dwelt Red. And just as we were passing this cabin, which stood about fifty yards back from the road, an Indian woman, screeching like a scared hen, came running out and made for the sleigh. We could not make out what she was yelling about, but obviously something serious was on, so we stopped and Horsley and McMullin helped the lady onto the sleigh while I dismounted, with the idea of going to the cabin to investigate. And just then Red emerged from the door, and I rapidly changed my mind, for Red, holding a gun as if he meant business and with his fierce red whiskers sticking out all around his face, looked alarmingly wild; certainly quite unapproachable. With a torrent of horrible curses he told us to bring that woman back, which of course gun or no gun, we could hardly do; even though she was a rather unpleasant looking klotchman she was still a lady in distress.

"Well, then I'll shoot the blasted bitch," he yelled—and fired, luckily missing her; and the shot scaring the horses they bolted, with her and the two kids in the sleigh, fortunately stopping when they reached the Pelly's yard.

Well, there were the three of us left facing Mr. Red, who still stood in the doorway hurling curses at us; we felt rather foolish, and not at all heroic. Mac had

been in the army, and I suppose with some memory of military tactics, he remarked, rather doubtfully it is true, "I suppose we ought to charge the blighter." But none of us seemed at all eager to act on this suggestion—I am quite sure I wasn't; a boozecrazed ruffian with a loaded Winchester in his hands doesn't exactly inspire one to bravery. And Red may have heard this remark for he promptly put the gun to his shoulder and aimed in our direction—Horsley and McMullin just as promptly dropped down behind a little mound just in front of them while I hurriedly took cover behind my horse; I remember a very unpleasant feeling that my legs were quite unprotected, and wondering if Red would take a crack at them. And I also remember how funny Horsley and McMullin looked lying flat on their tummies in the snow, now and then raising a head above the protecting mound to have a look at Red and promptly ducking down again when he threatened them with that confounded gun. However, after what seemed a long time, but was probably only a few minutes, Red went into the cabin and banged the door shut; evidently it was the lady he wanted, dead or alive, and was really not anxious to slaughter any of us. So we hastily retired from there, but it was not until we got round a bend in the road that I lost that very unpleasant feeling of expecting a bullet in my back. And Mac, who invariably saw the humorous side of everything, remarked with an air of disgust, "Well, just like our luck; all that about a beastly old klootchman; why couldn't it be the appropriate beautiful damsel that had to be rescued?"

"Huh," grunted Horsley, "that's a one man's job, we couldn't have all married the girl."

We then arranged that I, having the saddle horse, should go on to Vernon, some twelve miles, to report the matter to the government office, while one of the others went back the three miles to Armstrong, where there was a part-time constable, Harry Schneider, a big powerful man who always made me think of Longfellow's "Village Blacksmith"—for "the muscles of his brawny arms stood out like iron bands"; and he actually was the town's blacksmith. And it was not until I returned from Vernon the next day that I heard the full story of what had happened.

Red, it being New Year's Eve, had laid in a good supply of hooch and had invited an acquaintance, one George Stump, and the Indian woman, to help celebrate the occasion with him. And probably jealousy was the cause of what followed—"the eternal triangle" that leads to so much trouble. Or *cherchez la femme*, if you prefer the rather ungallant French viewpoint; they like to put all the blame on the lady.

Harry Schneider having been informed, got together a few more stalwarts, and having armed themselves this posse advanced cautiously on the cabin from the rear

and the side where there were no windows. Schneider, with the handcuffs in his pocket, and another man then crept round to the door while the others stood prepared to shoot if necessary. One of the two at the door then knocked, and immediately it opened they hurled themselves on Red, and after a short but furious struggle he was overpowered and handcuffed. And this is what they found in the cabin: there was no sign of a real fight, but on the only bed, in a pool of blood, lay George Stump, with his head horribly battered and he was apparently dead; it is not surprising that Mr. Red did not want anyone to approach that cabin; the wonder of it is that he did not clear out while the going was good; possibly he was too fuddled with drink.

After Stump had been found to be still alive and had been attended to, Red was immediately taken to the jail at Vernon, and there everyone concerned went a few days after to give evidence at the preliminary inquiry; of course, he was sent up for trial at the next assizes. There he was tried on the first charge, that of the attempted murder of George Stump. And as the evidence showed—Stump's head being horribly battered and Red being quite uninjured—that there had been no fight; that it had been a brutal one-sided attack, he was convicted on that charge. And as there was an element of doubt as to whether his intention had been to kill, he was sentenced to seven years imprisonment, which, considering the circumstances seemed a light sentence. He did not think so, though; he looked most astonished and indignant, and was led away muttering that some day he would fix those so-and-sos who had helped to convict him. However, we never saw nor heard of him again; it is likely that jail had a taming effect on him.

It is curious that humorous incidents seem to linger in one's memory more vividly than others, for what I remember most clearly about that trial is the evidence of George Stump—if you could call it evidence, and that of Harry Schneider the constable. Stump was really quite a decent man, a big, quiet chap, simple and honest; obviously the victim—very much the victim of evil company! And, standing in the witness box he really did look awfully funny; his head was all dolled up in bandages with some black whiskers sticking out, and one mild brown eye regarding his surroundings. And a ripple of hardly suppressed laughter ran through the courtroom. He had, of course, been called as a witness for the prosecution, but he wasn't giving anything away that might damage Red; good egg—if he did bear any malice he was too much of a sport to let it influence him, and he was as dumb as an oyster. "No, sir, I just don't remember nothing," that was all they could get out of him. However, what had happened was so obvious from his appearance that words were quite unnecessary.

Harry Schneider, huge, good-natured, and popular, was a good policeman but a terribly poor witness, for he was rather slow-thinking and had great difficulty in expressing what he did think; by many questions and slow answers they got his account of the arrest as far as the advance on the cabin; the court and spectators getting more and more amused all the time. "Well, I knocked on the door—" full stop and pause.

"Well, go on," from the prosecutor, "what happened then?"

"Well, Red he comes out." Harry was perspiring with discomfort, arresting a ruffian was easy stuff, but this sort of thing was slow torture.

"Well come now," said the prosecutor impatiently; "what did you do then?"

"Oh, well," said Harry, with a perplexed and weary look—he was getting tired of being pestered; didn't that lawyer have enough gumption to know what he would do?

"Naturally, I just grabbed him!" and the rising tide of amusement in the court broke all bounds in a roar of laughter as he stretched out an enormous hand and demonstrated how he grabbed; certainly no transgressor had a chance of getting away if that paw got hold of him.

But I think you must be getting tired of this crime; also I recollect that I mentioned elsewhere how peaceful and law-abiding we were, and you might be thinking this slightly exaggerated. But you must remember that these few crimes were spread over a good many years; and when you consider that the district of a single policeman might extend for fifty miles or more I do not think we did so badly. And looking back, I can see that most of the minor offences and many of the crimes of violence were undoubtedly the result of over-indulgence in alcohol. It will please my friends of the W.C.T.U. to hear this; but on the other hand, they are so fond of deploring what they call the shocking drinking habits of the present-day young people—as if it were an entirely modern custom—that I am afraid they will be disappointed to know how much worse things were then. Naturally, nowadays I do not go round with "the boys"—or the girls—but I am very much interested in observing them, and it seems to me that their attitude to drinking is considerably better than ours was; in my youth a young man who did not drink to excess or to put it colloquially get "blotto" on occasions, was looked on as a bit of a sissy; in fact drinking was almost compulsory. But now, I should say that they consider a man who drank too much to be rather a poor sort of fish—and they are certainly not prigs.

The subject of law naturally leads to a consideration of legislators—or politicians

if you prefer that term, and we had our share of these. In those days we took our politics—I was going to say seriously, but perhaps hilariously would be a more suitable term; anyway we had a good time over them as we did with everything else. In provincial politics there was no party, liberal or conservative; just the government and the opposition—the ins and the outs. And socialists? Well, we had heard of these strange and rather sinister people, sort of anarchists or nihilists, who wanted to upset the present pleasant existing order of things weren't they? We regarded them with suspicion; we were quite satisfied with things as they were; we had all the liberty, equality and fraternity there was, and didn't want any of these political cranks messing things up. I suppose we were really hide-bound conservatives. Anyway, at an election we simply voted for the candidate we liked best; we didn't give a damn about his politics. And electioneering was great fun; a pre-election meeting was looked on as a sporting event, much as a boxing match or a bucking contest might be, and provided an excellent opportunity “for making whoopee” of which we took full advantage.

It was considered the right thing to do, when a candidate held a meeting, for him to invite his opponent, who, with any of his supporters, was always given his turn on the platform and it was to hear all these gentlemen spatting that we came; certainly no crowd would have turned out just to hear one side. And there was always plenty of heckling from the audience to liven things up; from my observations, the platform speakers, far from resenting this, rather enjoyed it; the more ragging a candidate could take with a smile the more likely the boys were to vote for him.

But I remember one meeting where the speaker came near losing his poise. He was a certain General G——; a typical well-groomed British army officer, and he was touching on the subject of liquor which happened to be one of the political issues of the time. He was a cultured and eloquent speaker, and was just in the middle of a discourse on the benefits of alcohol when used with discretion when suddenly an old Irishwoman, a well-known local character who was a rabid prohibitionist, rose up in the audience and belligerently shaking her fist, yelled, “Ye lie! ye lie, Ginerall! ye lie! and well ye know it!” The “gineral” was struck dumb, a look of blank astonishment crossed his face and he was so taken by surprise that he almost fell over backward into the lap of the chairman who was sitting just behind him; but was saved from defeat at the hands of the old lady by the pandemonium which broke loose—roars of laughter, shouts of, “Order! order; platform; let's hear the lady!” A shout from the gallery, “What's the matter with the general?” and the immediate chorus from his supporters: “He's all right,” and then someone started “He's a jolly good fellow.” The row didn't cease until everyone was too hoarse to

shout anymore, by which time both the old lady and the “gíneral” were forgotten and another gentleman on the platform was making a speech. And that was the sort of stuff we hoped for when we took in political meetings.

The most extraordinary one of all was the first that I ever went to; the shortest as to speeches and the longest as to the time it lasted, which was until the small hours of the morning, long after all the official speakers had gone home. It was in the Ram’s Horn at Lumby; I had some business there and was staying there overnight so, of course, I went to the meeting, which was held in the big barroom, the only place in the village where it could be held. The Hon. Forbes George Vernon, minister of public works, was seeking re-election, and it was his meeting. The room was packed with men, mostly French Canadians, for this was a French Canadian settlement—but there were no ladies present. And after this audience had waited expectantly for some time, every man smoking his pipe of rank French Canadian tobacco until they were almost hidden in a thick blue fog, several rigs drove up and the principal performers of the evening entered. Forbes George, a big genial Irishman with a merry twinkle in his eye, sized up his audience, and mounted a barroom chair—there was nothing else to mount, and there did not appear to be a chairman. And if he had composed a speech, he kept it under his hat and did not waste it on that audience; and moreover, who could maintain a semblance of dignity standing on a barroom chair? And maybe the smell of Quebec tobacco smoke had something to do with it. But, as I say, he mounted that chair, and, had a representative of the press been present he would have had little trouble reporting the speech, for, holding up his hand to silence the applause; “Gentlemen,” he said, “you boys all know me and know all about me, and I am quite sure none of you want to hear me make a speech, so all I will say at present is: Let us all go and have a drink.” That was the stuff to give the troops: no heckles arose to dispute that and the whole meeting filed past the bar, a somewhat lengthy proceeding for there were many of them. But there were opposition speakers present; they couldn’t let the Honorable Forbes George have it all his own way, and Mr. Müller, the proprietor of the Coldstream Hotel in Vernon—one of those really decent Germans who had come to live in our free country—also climbed on a chair and addressed the meeting.

“Shentlemans, we haf had a government trink; ve vill now haf ein opposition trink.” And they had. And certainly many more—at this stage I went for a walk—I couldn’t swallow any more of that habitant tobacco smoke, and when I returned towards midnight the meeting was still going strong. By that time a fiddler seemed to have taken charge and some of them were dancing; I suppose the Latin

temperament was coming to the surface. And hours after, up in my room I could hear them howling the “Marseillaise.”

And traveling round the constituency to solicit votes—that was easy; the distances might be great and the trails and roads rough, but the necessary equipment was simple; as Jimmy Murphy, a onetime candidate remarked; “All you need for electioneering in this part of the world is a cayuse and a case of whisky.” And as the ladies had no vote in those days that simplified matters.

And of course, as elsewhere and always, the election over, we, the intelligent voters, forgot all about politics until the next one came along.

Then in a few years we had our local politics and elections, for several municipalities were formed, and the little towns of Vernon, Kelowna, Armstrong and Enderly were incorporated. None of this small village stuff for us, we were ambitious and became cities right away with mayor and aldermen and all the other trimmings. Why, we thought, we may have a population of more than a thousand some day! Which rather suggested congestion to our simple minds. Each city had its “chief of police,” who was also the whole police force, but we always addressed him solemnly as “chief”—at Armstrong he was provided with a hat with his title on it in gold letters. And in the city employ would be also a man of all work who was known variously as “city foreman” or “superintendent of works” which sounded more impressive; Enderly went one better than this and called their handyman the “city engineer.”

To any stranger from more sophisticated parts it savored of the ridiculous, this to them rather childish grandiloquence; calling our funny little towns “cities,” but to us there was nothing absurd about it. We were very proud of them and our local politics was one of the few things that we did take really seriously and there was great rivalry for civic honors, at least at first. I will say that our public affairs were run honestly and efficiently; the results show that better than anything I can say, and the province as a whole would have benefited if its affairs had been managed as well.

In concluding this chapter, there are a few things I would like to say. Today I am living in a city; I have my own small circle of friends and acquaintances: “criminals” and law-breakers in general are in a different sphere and I see nothing of them. And those who make the laws and administer them, the officials and politicians, they also are more or less remote from the general public.

But out in the great open spaces; the country districts and small towns, one mixes with all sorts of people, including both criminals and politicians—they are your neighbors, and you know them; and by knowing them you find that even criminals have a good side; indeed they are sometimes quite likeable chaps.

And the politicians, you also know them, ministers of the crown and such, if they belong to your district. To you, they, by being in office, do not become supermen, and you do not damn them because they are not; and you certainly know that they are not crooks or grafters!

And, considering these things, it seems to me that the countrymen sees things such as government and the administration of the law in a much better perspective than the dweller in a city can.

And I also think that his environment; the lack of noise, and the slower tempo, is more conducive to clear thinking, whereas it has always seemed to me that the continual rush and noise of a city has a deadening effect on thought; and so, the men of the cities are less able to judge wisely than the men in the open spaces.

CHAPTER XII

RELIGION, ROUGH AND READY

Religion, if you could call it such—and at that I believe we had, with all our roughness, more real religion than you will find in most of these so well-organized modern churches—had a very definite place in our life. At first church services were few and far between; some parson, any denomination, would happen along and hold one in any old place that was available, and the general attitude to these services was, “Well, come along, boys, let’s give the parson a good send-off”; and everyone would turn out. Then regular services, weekly or monthly, began to be held in the little schoolhouses or the churches which were built later; and these churches, as in all country places, became the center of much of the social life of the community—concerts and suppers, and even dances—we had much to thank them for. And of course, as time went on we had, as everywhere else, too many churches; too many denominations.

All we young Englishmen were quite regular churchgoers, certainly not from any religious motives; but there were girls to be seen, and it was the very pleasant way for the married women to gather in a bachelor or two after church and ask them to dinner. I am afraid we did not realize at the time what a lot of extra work this meant for them, and certainly we were able to do odd things for them now and then; but they really were awfully good to us, and I hereby tender them my very belated gratitude. But I daresay that after having seen no one but their husband all the week, it was a pleasant change to talk to someone else and well worth a little extra cooking.

Then at one time there was a beautiful schoolmarm who was the church organist at Armstrong; she lived some three miles out in the country and there was great competition among the young bachelors for the privilege of driving her in; now and then the parson, Billy Butler—his name was really George but we called him Billy because it sounded better—would drive her in himself and fool us all; he was a ponderous elderly bearded man and we felt this was not quite cricket. We derived much innocent pleasure from our church going.

But it was in the little cowtown of Lansdowne that I first went to church, for there stood a manse and there dwelt the Presbyterian minister, quite a striking figure. He was tall and lean, with fierce blue eyes. He had a large, glossy black beard and

he wore a long, black frock coat. (On looking back, so many of my characters seemed to have had long black frock coats, but they were the official and ceremonial garment of the day, and even in the wild and woolly West one could not escape from them.)

Each Sunday he held services in the schoolhouse, where with a loud and fiery voice and clashing eye he denounced the sins of his congregation with dire threats of eternal damnation and told us what his wrathful God thought of us.

The atmosphere in the little crowded schoolhouse would be very stuffy, the service long and boring, we sang the hymns in a slow and mournful drone. And my thoughts would wander to the little Indian village sleeping in the sun not so far away, and the beautiful and peaceful flower-decked ceremony at the altar in the field.

Resting on the platform in front of the parson stood his Sunday hat, the sort known as a stovepipe, and this hat served a dual purpose; it was both useful and decorative; outside it added a sabbath dignity to his erect figure, and inside at the end of the service an elder solemnly passed it round to take up the collection.

I was not a Presbyterian, but would often ride in to this service—one saw people; it was a change, and a sort of meeting place for discussing the news of the week. The storekeeper would obligingly open his store for an hour, for some people came in from quite a distance, and it was very convenient to kill two birds with one stone and do one's week's shopping.

And then after church, which was held in the afternoon there, the parson would invite a few of us into the manse for a smoke and chat, for he was a good chap, and his thundering denunciations in church were just the proper thing and not to be taken too seriously. The Presbyterians of that day just lapped up that sort of thing and enjoyed it; they liked their religion strong, like their whisky.

Not far from the Lansdowne schoolhouse stood a real church, the Anglican, the first Protestant church building in the Okanagan Valley. (This church is still standing, but on other ground, about three miles away.) There were very few Anglicans in the district, but every few months the rector of Kamloops, Mr. Shildrick would ride the eighty miles and give us a service. He would arrive and put up with the storekeeper and on Sunday morning the intending churchgoers would gradually gather around the store and when enough of us had mustered to make a congregation a sort of procession would be seen wending its way to the church, led by the parson in his vestments; not exactly a ceremonial religious procession for someone might be carrying a broom to do any necessary sweeping, another a chair for the organist to sit on; others might bear books and cushions or if it was cold weather, some stove wood and kindling donated by the store. And so, after parson and congregation had

straightened things out in the little church the service would begin. After church Robert Wood or Dan Rabbet, the owners of the store, would ask some of us in to dine with the parson.

After a few years, when Lansdowne, by the building of the S. & O. railway, had ceased to be of any importance, the little church was moved to Armstrong, where most of the other buildings had already gone. This was accomplished by cutting it in half, and hauling the two halves on sleighs to its new site where it was stuck together again. A new full-time parson had just been appointed to keep us in the straight and narrow path—if possible. He was a good sort; he also sported a large black beard; but unlike his Presbyterian brother he was of portly build and did not wear a long black frock coat—nor a stovepipe hat. His name was George Butler, which we immediately changed to “Billy” Butler as being more euphonious.

Well, the old boy quite rightly considered that it would be more convenient to have the church, the parson and the congregation all in the same place, so he called a meeting of the faithful to see what we could do about it. Of course everybody went; we took in everything that was going then. I remember that meeting; it was held in the small office of the sawmill; its only furniture one chair and a desk. The parson naturally had the chair, two of us sat on the desk and the rest on the floor, smoking our pipes and talking of this and that. Then, without any warning “Old Butty” (this was his alternate name) said, “Let us pray.” Nobody was in a comfortable position to follow his advice even if we had felt like praying—it had not occurred to us that this was the usual way to open a church meeting—however, we hurriedly put out our pipes and did the best we could for him under the circumstances, and this preliminary over, the meeting decided to move the church by volunteer labor, which was done as I have described; and it still stands on the site to which it was moved. That was how the church began in Armstrong.

I also happened to be living in Vernon when the English church was built there; I think we must have been a bit short on religion in Vernon for the bishop himself came all the way from Victoria to stir us up a bit. He also called a meeting, and all I remember about that is that we thought him such a decent old boy that each of us dug up or promised five dollars—which to most of us was quite a large sum at that time—to start the church going. To celebrate the occasion we threw an impromptu banquet for him in the Kalamalka; a stag party at which he proved himself to be a very decent old boy indeed. The later proceedings after the banquet, got rather riotous as they usually did when a few of us were gathered together in the “Kal” at nighttime. For after his lordship had discreetly retired to bed we got racing round the billiard table astraddle on chairs, one common form of amusement. Now this is not

only hard on chairs, but it makes a terrible racket, and about midnight Mrs. Meaken, the hotel man's wife, appeared at the door. "Gentlemen, gentlemen! Don't you know that the bishop is sleeping just overhead?" We had entirely forgotten the bishop; but next morning we apologized and hoped we had not disturbed his rest. "Oh, no!" said his lordship, "I never hear anything like that!" And, by the twinkle in the old gentleman's eye I suspect that he, like a judge on another occasion, wished that he too could have been present.

He probably thought our ideas of starting a church were somewhat unusual, but anyway we didn't know what the correct doings were, and probably wouldn't have done them if we had known—the Okanagan did not take kindly to formalities.

A few years later I met Bishop Sillitoe again. It was at Enderly this time—I was walking along the railroad track returning from an early morning swim when I saw a tall, black figure ahead of me walking with a peculiar wobbly gait; and when I got nearer, behold it was the bishop performing the balancing feat of walking on one of the rails. He was also smoking a pipe and did not look at all episcopal. Then as I caught up with him a witty remark occurred to me; at least I thought it was witty.

"Good morning, my lord," I said, "are you practicing walking in the straight and narrow path?"

"Oh, good morning," said he, getting off the rail, "it is not so easy, is it? But I can never resist the temptation to walk on a rail whenever I see one; it does not look very becoming in a bishop; neither does smoking a pipe in public, so I indulge in my vices in the early morning when no one is about."

And so pleasantly conversing we walked back to town together and I liked him, for he was a very human bishop. Though he was old and I was very young he did not in any way embarrass me by talking religion.

At about this time too, he started the first Anglican church at Kelowna, and I think the procedure was much the same as that in Vernon had been, for in those parts there was another bunch of free and easy English boys. Tom Ellis, the big cattle rancher at Penticton, had already built a little church on his ranch, and had imported a jovial padre affectionately known in those parts as "Father Green." He used to travel up and down the lake holding services here and there wherever he could round up enough people for a congregation, and had an especially happy knack of getting on with all the English boys. He seemed to understand our somewhat errant ways and was very popular with us. A friend of mine, George Barclay, had also built a little church on his ranch, and on one occasion when I was staying there for a week end, Father Green turned up and announced he was going to hold service on Sunday morning. Now this did not suit the bunch at all for we had planned to drive down to

the lake, about two miles away, for a swim, a much more sensible and certainly more pleasant way of spending Sunday morning than changing into respectable clothes. So we told him we would do that in the evening, and as his sense of duty refused to let him come swimming with us we would drop him at the church which was on our way and pick him up on the way back—which we did. Returning after our swim, we found him sitting patiently on the doorstep of the church, smoking his pipe and looking rather bored.



Photo by the author

The first Protestant church in the Okanagan, Armstrong



Photo courtesy British Columbia Travel Bureau

St. Ann's, the first Roman Catholic church, built on the O'Keefe ranch in 1886

“Well,” said he, with a grin of relief as he climbed into the democrat, “I almost wish I had come with you fellows after all, for my congregation was one old lady. We did our best, but I was merciful and did not inflict my sermon on her.”

“But how about the poor old dame, if she had tramped all the way to church and found no parson there?”

“Well, well,” said Father Green, “who knows? She might have felt relieved.”

This little church snuggled peacefully in a sheltered hollow of the mountainside high above the lake; all alone, with nothing in sight but great red-barked pine trees through which one caught glimpses of distant purple mountains and the blue lake far below. For weeks it was disturbed by no other life than that of the blue jays and squirrels who doubtless wondered what it was doing there. As it slumbered there in the sun one could imagine that in its meditations it also wondered why. But it was a most beautiful setting for a church and I think George Barclay must have been thinking of that rather than convenience.

At Kelowna the church people were lucky; some of them owned wealthy maiden aunts in the old country who willingly provided them funds—“It is so encouraging to think that that wild nephew of mine is taking an interest in church matters, you know”; and dear nephew would receive a nice fat check, thereby saving any strain on his own pocket. And so quite a fine church was built, with very little effort on the part of the local people. And from the same source came gifts of altar cloths and candlesticks and lecterns and if the church exchequer was running low, someone’s aunt could always be counted on for further funds.

When the church building was finished, Father Green was appointed rector—I think when the bishop prevailed on them to build that it was one of their stipulations that he should have the job; but for some time he still carried on his congenial occupation of looking after the little communities round the lake.

I believe that at one time his sermons may have been rather long-winded, for one day he had asked me to take a photograph of the interior of the church—I had set up my camera, and wanted to give an exposure of about ten minutes. I had no watch, so asked him if he had one.

“No, neither have I,” said Father Green. “But it’s ten minutes you want isn’t it? How would it do if I preached one of my sermons?” The application of this suggestion to timing a photograph exposure seemed rather obscure, but he went on: “You see, a little while ago my congregation presented me with a volume of ten minute sermons. I took the hint, and always use it now; after all, they are better ones than I can write, it saves me a lot of brain work and then also, none of my congregation can complain about them!”

He had that happy quality of being a “good mixer,” and his cheerful figure always seemed in evidence on the streets of Kelowna, where he liked to amble about, stopping for a chat with everyone he met.

One day just as I was riding out of town, I met him taking his usual afternoon stroll; I had a bottle of Scotch strapped on the back of my saddle, for I was on my way to spend the night with a friend—and of course we halted to pass the time of day.

“Aha!” said Father Green, pointing to the bottle, “now what is that?”

“Oh, just some vinegar,” said I.

“Ah, it is astonishing how much vinegar I see in Kelowna that is put up in sealed whisky bottles. But don’t ask me to sample it; it is too close to town—suppose one of my good lady parishioners were to see me drinking out of a bottle on a public highway!”

At that I don’t suppose they would have been so awfully surprised, for Father Green enjoyed the good things of life as well as any of us.

If at any time your travels should take you to the south Okanagan or to the boundary district of British Columbia you will not be there very long before you hear of one, “Father Pat,” for in those parts he has become a legend. Although I was a contemporary, I was not lucky enough to meet him; but I heard a great deal about him, and this chapter would not be complete without telling you what I do know, for truly he was a “striking and romantic figure,” as a church historian has called him.

You are likely to hear many strange things about him, some of them true and some not, for as the years go on the story has acquired much embroidery, for instance, only the other day I was told that he had been found frozen to death on a mountainside in Kootenay; but fortunately a very good account of his life has been written by Mrs. Jerome Mercer, so with the help of this, for which I make due acknowledgment and from the things I heard at firsthand which I know to be true, I will give you the story.

Ralph Connor admitted that he drew the character of the parson in “The Prospector,” from Father Pat, and probably this has tended to obscure things; but here is the true story.

When I first came into the valley, one day in talking to an old lady, she mentioned a Mr. Irwin, a clergyman for whom she seemed to have a reverence almost amounting to awe; to her he was evidently everything a preacher should be. Now this old dame was of that terribly pious type who seemed to have the ten commandments written on their face with a few additional ones of their own, and I felt very sure that the kind of parson that appealed to her certainly would not to me, and thus formed an entirely wrong idea of what he was really like. For the Reverend Henry Irwin was “Father Pat.” I did not connect the two names until years after; for his real name became almost forgotten; and I only mentioned this old lady because it

shows that it was not only among the rough men of the mountains and the mines that his essential goodness was recognized.

Henry Irwin was born in Wicklow, Ireland, in 1859; he graduated at Oxford, and acquired that sobriquet of "Father Pat" during his first curacy in England. But he had a thorough dislike for the stuffy drawing-room atmosphere which at times as an English curate he had to endure; he longed for the open air, and secured an appointment as missionary in the interior of British Columbia, where he went in 1885, first going to Donald, which at that time was one of the big C.P.R. construction camps, and full of men of the roughest type. Irwin had found his vocation; here was work worthy of a parson; no more drawing-room stuff for him! And it is worthy of note that he immediately became known there as "Father Pat"; from that time on until his death it was only polite old ladies who ever called him Mr. Irwin.

So, at Donald he built that little church that is now historic; getting the lumber donated; in shirt sleeves and overalls working on it himself with the aid of other volunteer labor.

When the C.P.R. was finished and the camp closed down, Donald became almost deserted and Father Pat was moved to Kamloops, where he acted as assistant to the rector, Mr. Shildrick; his job being to ride round the country to places that were only accessible by horseback. This work was very hard on his clerical clothes, which soon wore out, and he often presented a very unorthodox appearance, sometimes in overalls and an old tweed coat, the sort of costume which I am sure he really preferred. He delighted in this life, and in letters home called himself "the itinerant parson."

It was at this time that he met Shildrick's sister-in-law to whom he was married later. And then came the tragedy which probably influenced the rest of his life, for, less than a year after they were married, both his wife and infant child died; from then on Father Pat gave himself and all he had to his chosen vocation, working almost beyond his power of endurance—trying to forget.

There was the time when, alone, he spent several days and nights recovering the body of a man who had been buried in a snowslide; bringing it on a hand sleigh over the rough mountainside, in an effort to ease the mind of the widow. And when he fought an objectionable ruffian who was cursing him, and God in particular, in a saloon at Fairview, Pat took the cursing of himself without turning a hair, but when it came to God he boiled over, and walking up to this gent he battered him up pretty badly, finally knocking him unconscious. Then knelt by his prostrate body and delivered this prayer: "O God, forgive me for not telling him first that I was a

champion boxer at Oxford!"

If any lone bachelor was sick and Pat heard of it, off he would go to the sick man's cabin, often meaning a rough tramp over the mountains; not just as a "spiritual adviser," but to nurse him, cook for him, or do anything else that was necessary. And his clothes! they seemed to get worse and worse. One of his friends, who knew his people in England occasionally wrote and got them to send him something that was fit for a parson to wear, but what was the use; they were soon given away to some poor fellow who Father Pat considered needed them more than he did.

He used to tell some amusing tales of some of his "parishioners." "Hello, Dick, did I actually see you in church last Sunday?" he said to a hard-looking old stiff one day.

"Well, your reverence, I was there part of the time, anyways. First time I bin in a church for thirty years. Couldn't stand too much at a time, though; had to go out every now and then an' have a smoke."

Some of his services must have been rather unusual, too, and not at all according to the forms generally observed by the Church of England. He had one of those little portable organs that he used to take about with him, and one Sunday was holding service in a saloon on Kettle River. Now he could play this organ, but was no good at singing, and on this occasion could not get anyone to start up a hymn. "Gorman, you beggar, for goodness sake sing!" said Pat, appealing to his friend Gorman West, who was one of this dumb congregation.

"Well, Pat," retaliated Gorman, "if I do, all the boys will walk out on you." So I guess they had to call hymns off that time.

At Rossland, which for some time was his headquarters, there was a church underneath which were comfortable quarters for the parson; but these he turned into a library and general resort for his many rough friends—"you boys don't need to come to church if you don't want to, you know," he would say. And he himself batched in a little rough lumber shack; he said it was all he needed. And his sermons? I imagine these may have been as unconventional as his raiment. I do not know; for with all I heard about him no one ever mentioned his preaching; he was never referred to as "the preacher," the common term among the men of the frontier for a parson. Bishop Dart several times remonstrated with him on his unorthodox habits and this may have also included his sermons, for he told the bishop, "People come to church to worship God, not to hear me preach."

After a bit Rossland got too civilized for Father Pat and wishing to leave, he was offered an easy job elsewhere by the bishop, who thought he needed a rest. But that was not what Pat wanted at all and I suspect a desire to be a safe distance from the

too critical eye of the bishop had something to do with it; anyway, he chose the rough mining camp of Fairview.

But at last he became utterly worn out, both physically and mentally, and the bishop persuaded him to go home to England for a rest. But he never reached there; in the depth of winter, early in 1901, he left the train near Montreal to walk; I can imagine his craving for fresh air and exercise after being cooped up in a train for nearly a week.

Shortly afterwards he was found by a farmer, stupefied with cold and with both feet frozen, and was taken to Notre Dame hospital in Winnipeg; a mystery at first to the nuns, for he refused to divulge anything about himself; he was ragged and unkempt and certainly did not look like a clergyman, but they saw he was a man of uncommon intellect and a gentleman, and they seemed like everyone else with whom he came in contact to have been attracted by his charm. But it was too late to save his life; knowing he was going to die he gave his name and story to Doctor Kingston, and his remains were sent back to British Columbia for burial.

Undoubtedly Father Pat was unorthodox; in the eyes of many churchmen he failed to uphold the dignity of their church; rather, it seems to me, did his ideas reach back nineteen hundred years to the teachings of its founder.

By others he has been praised in many conventional phrases; but worth more than all these is the appreciation of the rough miners and prospectors among whom he lived. There can only be a few alive today, but should you be lucky enough to meet one and get him on the subject of "Father Pat" he will surely end by saying, "Yes sir, he was a white man!"—that highest tribute that a man can earn in the outposts of the West. And one must have lived there to understand the depth of meaning in that simple phrase. You may be a "real nice feller"; a "straight shooter," a "genuine gentleman," "as honest as they make 'em," "just downright good." But "he was a white man" is all these things and much more.

I daresay to the orthodox, most of the parsons I have mentioned would appear unconventional; they could hardly help it in their surroundings. For instance, I remember one man's congregation striking a bargain with him that if he would fill in for another man in a polo game that was scheduled to take place at the usual service time on Sunday morning, they would all go to church in the afternoon.

And if serious-minded parsons think that I have treated religious matters too lightly—well, do you not, my steady churchgoers, on returning after church—although you may be a bit vague about the sermon—delight in telling me of anything funny that may have happened there? Even parsons cannot plead "not guilty" to this.



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia
All set for a start on a big game hunting trip



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia
Supper at our "hunting lodge" in the mountains

CHAPTER XIII

HOW WE AMUSED OURSELVES

We Okanagan people seemed to enjoy our work so much that it is not so easy to draw a line between work and amusement, but we did have our recreations as distinct from our daily labor, and of these, without any doubt, the most important were our dances. Many years ago there was a phrase much beloved of country newspapers when describing one of them—"A good time was had by all." Quite true, for didn't we just enjoy ourselves at those old-time dances! I rather wondered at first why dancing was so general and popular, but soon could see the reason—several reasons. A dance made an opportunity for everyone of both sexes, for many miles round, to gather together and have a good time; it was something everybody could do, and, a very important point, it was at nighttime and did not encroach on our working hours; to wear our best clothes in the daytime except on Sundays or holidays was not considered seemly.

Few of the young Englishmen who came to the country were very keen on dancing at first, but we soon became as enthusiastic as any old-timer, and our efforts to master the many intricate steps of some of these dances were the cause of much amusement. Especially popular were the square dances, with the caller, who was also master of ceremonies, sometimes called the "floor manager," calling out the various figures. One of his duties was to prepare the floor; this he did by walking up and down scraping a wax candle. These scrapings were soon rubbed smooth by the shoes of the dancers and the process would be repeated at intervals during the evening. A very important man he was; his word was law; and in every community there was always one who by common consent had a monopoly of this office.

There were many different square dances; probably they were a survival of the old English country dances of a hundred years before, or were derived from them. One in particular, I remember, the Navy Island Reel, a sort of glorified Sir Roger de Coverly, a beautiful dance to watch, with the most intricate evolutions in which I invariably got lost, much to the disgust of the caller, if I essayed to dance it. At such times he could be as dictatorial as a drill sergeant, and would call you off.

Then there were the French Minuet and the Jersey; very graceful dances; the Military Schottische and the Rush Polka, a dance that was not graceful but very popular and energetic, for you simply scooted up and down the floor as fast as you

could go, and it usually ended in a competition between the various couples to see who could keep it up the longest, with the music going faster and faster until one by one they had to drop out.

And those dance suppers! It was the custom for the ladies to provide these, and they vied with each other in bringing their best, so the chow was both tempting and plentiful. But alcohol at a dance was strictly taboo. That was not for ladies, and generally speaking, the men out of respect for them left it alone. Occasionally a few gentlemen might have a bottle hidden outside to which they would every now and then betake themselves for refreshment, mistakenly thinking that by chewing a clove their breath would not smell of whisky; but this was not common.

Our music varied all the way from a single fiddler—for in every community there was at least one of these—all the way up to a full orchestra; we just took what was available at the time and made the most of it.

There was Billy Buker, whose only waltz tune was “Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone?” a not very inspiring tune to dance to; and the Knapps, a truly remarkable pair. Mrs. Knapp vigorously vamped on an old tinny piano, while Mr. Knapp, seated on a chair, played a fiddle. In addition to this he played a mouth organ that was fixed in some way in front of his chin; a pair of cymbals between his knees, and a drum to which he gave an occasional wallop—how he did this I forget, but think he must have kicked it.

Mr. Knapp was very fond of the bottle and had to be watched carefully; at times towards the end of the evening he would elude the vigilance of his wife and the floor manager, and this one-man band would emit strange and mournful sounds of which I am reminded at times when listening to one of those curious modern compositions that claim to be music.

At one dance I remember there was not even a fiddler, and Johnny Garbet, a little wiry half-breed was both caller and orchestra. Dressed in shiny black, with a large expanse of white shirt front and a scarlet sash round his waist, he played a mouth organ and called off at the same time; when a waltz came on he danced that himself, playing the mouth organ over his partner's shoulder. Johnny professionally was a jockey and bronchobuster; quite an accomplished man!

But in a few years we had better music; half a dozen men would get up an orchestra, and with practice become quite good, and would earn a little extra money by playing in the different towns in the valley.

A difficulty at first in some places was the shortage of women, especially in Vernon during the first year when numbers of bachelors had collected there. A bunch of these bachelors were, one evening, sitting round the lounge of the new

Kalamalka Hotel, the dining room of which had a fine large floor. Mr. Marpole, the superintendent of the C.P.R., from Vancouver, happened to be there, and regarding this floor, he said, "Why don't you young fellows give a dance?"

"Oh no chance," said someone, "there are not enough girls."

"Suppose you haul us in a carload, Marpole!" said Hankey.

"By Jove!" said Marpole, slapping his thigh, "you fellows will have the dance, that's just what I will do."

And that is exactly what he did do, for he invited a bevy of Vancouver girls and brought them, complete with chaperon, in his private car all the way up to Vernon; the only fly in the ointment being that they all had to go back again. A good sportsman was Marpole, when we started football and cricket he made a standing offer of the use of this same private car if we could get together a valley team to play clubs in Vancouver; but alas, this never came off for we could never get enough of us together at the same time to make up an eleven; even if we could have it is doubtful if many of us could have raised the necessary funds to pay our expenses in Vancouver.

This Kalamalka dance, the first of the "bachelor balls," was quite different to our usual ones; rather a "high-toned" affair at which dress suits, in deference to the Vancouver ladies, were in evidence; afterwards the bachelor's balls became large annual events in all the towns.

At first, at all the dances there was a very curious custom; all the ladies sat on one side of the hall; all the gents on the other. When a dance was announced you chasséd across to the ladies' side and grabbed your partner, and immediately it was over, you deposited her again with the other females. To us young Englishmen this seemed a most unsociable arrangement; so when a dance was finished we would take our partner and hurriedly sit down beside her before another female took the seat. The haughty floor manager would at first eye us with puzzled disapproval; this was something altogether outside his experience—we were undoubtedly defying tradition, but was it up to him to check this brazen conduct? The poor man did not know, so fortunately did nothing. And our partner at first would look very self-conscious—surely everyone must be looking at the poor girl. But gradually everybody followed our good example, and so, as in other ways, was our civilized influence felt.

As to dress, anything went, provided it was clean, so you would see an amazing variety of costumes; cotton dresses buttoned up to the neck; stiff silk dresses in the fashion of fifty years before, chic ball gowns fresh from London or Paris, or perhaps a peasant woman from Europe in her gala costume. And the men? Anything from a

crumpled dress suit smelling of moth balls to cowhide boots and overalls. And with all this jolly mixing of people of all sorts I cannot imagine anything more conducive to social harmony and friendliness.

The going to and coming from these dances was also a part of the fun. The dances were usually held in the winter, and if at any distance, say ten or twenty miles, we would get up a party, and packed together in a hay-rack on a sleigh, well bedded down in straw and covered with sleigh robes we would be comfortable and warm even if the temperature were round the zero mark. And the good old choruses we sang—at least on the way there; on the way back everyone but the driver might be asleep.

But perhaps better than this was driving in a cosy cutter with your current girl friend; just you and she and let the world go hang. The homeward way was wont to be long and lingering, and doubtless these unchaperoned, secluded tête-à-têtes were contrary to all convention, and the Mother Grundys of that day, as of this, were very shocked. Those old people, and some not so old, who moan and groan over the goings on of the young are very irritating to me. I always feel like asking them if they were ever young themselves. I daresay it is a case of sour grapes; that they never had the guts to have any fun when they were young.

In Vernon, with its government offices and banks, and its numbers of new people from more conventional places, the dances soon became more sophisticated; they even experienced a “vice-regal ball.” This function, of course, took place during a visit of Lord and Lady Aberdeen and was held in an unfinished jam factory which they had built in connection with their fruit farm. And I remember that on opening my invitation to this ball I at first mistook it for a summons, for it was headed by the royal coat-of-arms.

It was at this ball that our leading lawyer, Pa Corkins, got a bad scare, for as he was seated in the smoking room just before it began, in came Captain Sinclair, the governor general’s aide-de-camp, and announced to Pa that Lady Aberdeen desired to open the ball with him. “Oh, my God,” thought Pa, turning pale, “I’m such an awful dancer; but dare I decline what I suppose is a royal command?” And he looked as if he were about to bolt. But Sinclair, good sport, seeing the poor man’s alarm, came to his rescue. “Oh, don’t worry,” he said, with an understanding grin; “I’ll fix that, I’ll tell her I couldn’t find you.” And Pa spent the rest of the evening in the smoking room; he wasn’t taking any chances. And Pa had reason for his fears, for Lady Aberdeen was a large and majestic lady and I doubt if her performance on the ballroom floor would have been any better than Pa’s.

But it was in the smaller towns that the dances were most popular; there they

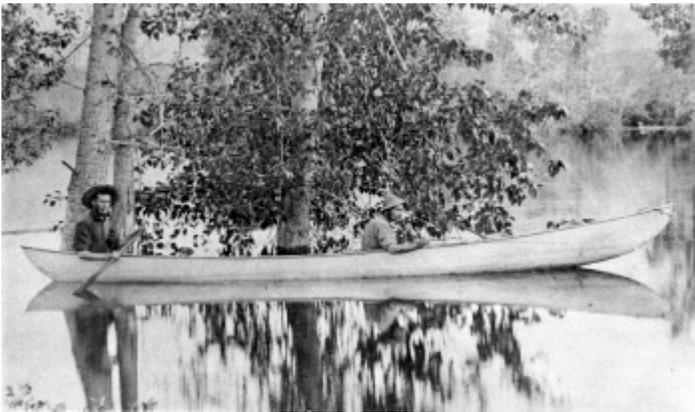
were enjoyed to the full; there was no exclusiveness about them. Everybody went, and I have been told often by some stranger from more class-conscious parts how much more enjoyable they found them than the formal affairs they were accustomed to. Armstrong, especially became famous for the whole-hearted gaiety of its dances, a reputation which has endured to this day.

One necessary thing at these dances was to provide accommodation for the babies which many of the womenfolk had to bring with them; this was arranged by putting them in a row on sleigh robes in some warm corner of the hall, where they slept contentedly till their mothers were ready to take them home; curiously, they never even let out a yap; perhaps the music made them sleep. I heard a yarn about some mothers taking home the wrong baby because some practical joker had mixed them up, but I doubt the truth of this. What I do know to be true because I saw it, is that one night Tom Clinton, a rather hefty gentleman, sat on one of the babies that had rather carelessly been laid, wrapped in a rug, on one of the seats. "Well I'll be gordammed," said Tom, rising as rapidly as if he had sat on a tack. The baby said nothing and finding it undamaged we kept the incident to ourselves.

As well as the big public balls, we also occasionally had smaller ones in one of the little schoolhouses, or in our own homes. And one of these I remember very well, for in connection with it there was a little incident the story of which I feel I must relate to you, with apologies if necessary, for it is an improper story: at least my wife says it is; if you are easily shocked you had better not read it, but I know you will!

Four of us, Mac, Jim, Ted and myself had been batching together in a very small cabin on Mac's ranch; we had just finished building a commodious house for him, for he was due to get married before long. The living room was large, about twenty feet by thirty; at the time its furniture consisted of a stove and four kitchen chairs on which we were sitting one evening smoking our after supper pipes. "I think," said Mac, "we ought to have a housewarming, how'd't be to throw a party of some sort?" So we discussed the matter, and had about decided on a stag party, when Jim, who was looking dreamily at the expanse of bare floor, but had not said much, chipped in, "Oh, hell, I'm tired of these damn drunks; why not have a dance, and have the girls?" We had not thought of that, and though it seemed a bold experiment for four bachelors unaided by female help or advice to undertake, we then and there decided to go to it. Well, we had made great preparations, scrubbed and polished the floor, hired a fiddler, laid in a supply of those things that ladies love to eat, and last but not least had fixed up the largest bedroom for a ladies' dressing room, and were quite proud of it. And then, on the last day a friend, who was a married man,

happened along and we showed him our arrangements—especially the ladies' dressing room. "Yes, fine," said he, grinning, "but there's one thing you've forgotten," and he mentioned a very necessary article of bedroom crockery. Good Lord, thought we; why couldn't we have thought of that before? Well, I happened to have a horse and cutter handy so I drove post haste to the store at Armstrong, praying that they might have these things. They did; several of them, and Dave the clerk said, "You'd better be on the safe side and take two while you're about it." So I did, and pushing them under the seat of the cutter started triumphantly for home. And just after I had left town I overtook two young ladies who were going the same way, so naturally I gathered them in and felt quite gay with a charming girl squeezed up to me on each side. We chatted about the dance, which of course these gals were going to, and things were going along fine, when suddenly there was a clatter and a clink. Those infernal things under the seat, with the well-known cussedness of inanimate objects, were making their embarrassing presence known. Very much so, for we had come to a part of the road with many ups and downs in it, and every time we went up they would slide with a bang against the back of the cutter, and every time we went down the wretched things would bump together and try to shoot out into full view, with me desperately trying to prevent such an awful thing happening by shoving them back with my heels. Damn the things, why couldn't they stay put?



Wilde and the author canoeing on the Spallumcheen River which is in flood



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia Tennis at the Kalamalka. Note the lady's costume

“Whatever have you got under the seat, Mr. Holliday?” said one of those unsuspecting young ladies.

“Oh-er-a couple of pudding basins for the salad tonight,” I hastily lied—it was the first thing I could think of; and I broke out in a cold perspiration as that wretched girl said, “Oh, but they will get cracked, banging about like that; let me hold one and Netty will hold the other, then they’ll be quite safe.”

“Oh, no,” says I; “I’m really in an awful hurry, we’d better get on, they’ll be all right.” Did those girls, from my evident reluctance, suspect what those mysterious crocks were? I wonder! Anyway they changed the subject.

I think those two homely but unmentionable-in-polite-society utensils must have been possessed of a devil of mischief, for they finally did appear, openly and unashamed. Ned Cargill, a neighboring bachelor, inspired by the success of our dance, gave one too, and having more money to spend than we had, his was quite a swell one, for he hired the old Lansdowne hall for the occasion. And he also was evidently thoughtless for at the last moment he came over and borrowed our two things. I really don’t know what to call them in polite language, so will just refer to them as “things” and you will know what I mean.

The Lansdowne hall had only one entrance, the large front one; at the back end was a platform, a portion of which he had screened off for a ladies’ dressing room. The dance came off all right, and the following day Cargill went to the hall to clear things up. And in the afternoon Mac and I, thinking we might help him, also proceeded there, on our way picking up several ladies who were also going to help.

And then came the grand climax; doubtless that devil of mischief chuckled

triumphantly to himself, for as we entered the door, there, walking towards us down the middle of the hall was Cargill, carefully holding a “thing” in each hand. I do not know what the ladies thought; they did not say; but I was filled with admiration at the perfect *sangfroid* of Cargill, who with great presence of mind carefully put the things down on the floor and advanced to greet us as if the situation was nothing unusual; he didn't even blush.

Well, I seem to have rather let myself go about our dances, and hope I have not bored you; but they do linger lovingly in my memory, for they had a natural spontaneous gaiety undreamed of by those who dwell in the supposedly more civilized surroundings of a city.

We had other more quieter forms of evening entertainment, especially amateur concerts in the earlier days, usually given to raise funds for the church, for in those years there was nothing else that could be used as an excuse for a “benefit performance.”

And always the most important item on the programme of these concerts was refreshments, which were very substantial indeed, and were handed round during the long interval. For some time before this the audience had been sniffing expectantly the fragrant odor of coffee, and it always seemed to me that the rest of the concert was just an excuse for this feed. There were usually a few numbers on the programme that always appealed to me as being a relief from the wearing songs and piano duets and such that one has to endure at an amateur concert; songs sung by less polished gentlemen of the backwoods or the range. These songs were always either of the saccharine or mournful type; usually something about mother, or dying, the sort that made the ladies blush, and for some unknown reason the gentleman always took off his coat before ascending the platform to do his stuff.

As we became less rustic in our habits we organized amateur theatricals, and put on some really presentable shows, for we were lucky in having in the valley a few ex-professionals, and had the benefit of their experience.

And then, I think it was about 1893, professional theatrical companies, some of which were quite good, found it worth their while to play one or two night stands at the various towns in the valley; concert troupes also, conjurers and variety shows, and soon we had no lack of professional entertainment.

The most familiar and popular of these entertainers was Harry Lindley, who with his company toured the West in the late nineties and the first few years of the twentieth century—many old-timers will remember him. Harry had been on the London music hall stage and was a good actor, though some of his company were

not so hot. He always treated us as old friends, and for our part there was always a crowd on the station platform to greet him when he arrived and to give him a farewell cheer when he departed. Harry had one fault, if one could call it such; his obsession for his little daughter; she was quite obviously “the apple of his eye.” At home she may have been as adorable as he thought her, but unfortunately he also thought that histrionically she was a prodigy, whereas “Little Mystic,” for that was her stage name, had no dramatic sense whatever and a voice that made you shiver. And so fond were we of Harry Lindley that rather than destroy his happy illusion we used to encore and applaud her from the wings with assumed admiration.

Poor old Harry! he gave his best to the far places of the West for many years, and then the movies killed him, as they did all those others we used to enjoy so much. But the movies, with all their present perfection, are a poor substitute for “those others,” with all their imperfections; that magnetic contact between the actors and their audience is a thing that the screen can never achieve.

Of all our outdoor sports, racing easily had first place, as it naturally would have in a country where horses were cheap and plentiful and riding was part of our daily existence; in fact, for the first few years, except for an occasional baseball game it was really our only relaxation. The early races were very informal affairs. On the appointed day all the racing enthusiasts, in fact everybody who could get there would gather at some convenient level spot for at that time it was all flat racing. There was no railed off track, no grandstands or judges’ box, although of course the judges were chosen by mutual consent—no regulations as to saddles—a rider either used his own stock saddle or rode bareback, and no weighing in. But the betting was lively, and soon there would be other challenges amongst the crowd with the result that the races would go on for several days. Indeed so prevalent was this taste for racing that even the church was not immune, for among our race-horse owners we had a Presbyterian minister and Roman Catholic priest.

Then about 1890 the Lamblys constructed a proper race track on their ranch at Enderly, complete with grandstand, judges’ box and all the other fixings, and the jockeys wore their owner’s colors; in fact everything was carried out according to the usual regulations of the turf. Everything, that is, except the klotchmen’s races. This event was always extremely popular with the spectators, and even more so with the Indian ladies who rode in it. Someone would pass round the hat and the crowd would soon dig up enough to make a good purse; and we certainly got our money’s worth for those klotchmen rode for blood, and Tom Lambly, who was responsible for introducing this particular race had the happy knack of making the most of it, he got quite a kick out of joshing the competing ladies, and there would be roars of

laughter as the squealing bunch, in all their brightest finery got off to rather a ragged start.



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia
Clearing land. A slashing in heavy brush



Photo by the author

Threshing wheat on the Stepney ranch, Spallumcheen, about 1900, showing the type of threshing equipment in use at that date.

Soon afterwards a racing association was formed in the valley with headquarters at Vernon, where we had a fine track; the annual race meetings became large events to which racing men brought horses from all over the West, and Vernon during race week was full of bookies and jockeys, trainers and tin horn gamblers, all that human miscellany that follows racing.

At Kelowna also there was a small track, and here the meets were more of the gymkhana type; the country round was full of old-country boys and most of them would enter something on four legs whether it could run or not; the more entries the

more fun.

I used to have my share in small events like these, but I also became a real race-horse owner—at least I owned a small part of him. It was when I was living with those other boys on the Brightlea Ranch; we had been to the Vernon races, and here met the owner of a thoroughbred stallion called “Reciprocity”; a nice-looking horse with a registered pedigree. The owner was offering him for sale, and with the notion of breeding saddle horses from certain Irish hunter mares we bought him for five hundred dollars. Now in our crowd Wilde and Harris, the owners of the ranch, were the only ones who had any money, and they could only produce four hundred dollars between them. The rest of us managed to scratch up the other one hundred dollars and so, for a very short time, did I become a member of the racing fraternity. And Bill Martin, that cheerful and humorous Vernon wag who loved to make fun of us English boys, christened us “The British racing syndicate.”

Good old Bill; he got a great kick out of observing the many peculiar pursuits of his young English friends. A short time before, I had been renting a small office on Bernard Avenue, with living quarters behind in which I batched; and from my habit of entertaining almost daily visiting friends at lunch or supper Bill with exultant glee named this “Ye Olde English Chop House.”

Reciprocity as a race horse was a failure as far as the “syndicate” was concerned, for he never earned enough in prize money to pay his way, but he did raise some good colts. But he was a bad-tempered and vicious brute, and took a dislike to me—the only horse that ever did; and I admit I was afraid of him though I was not the only one. When we first got him I happened to go rather suddenly into his loose-box and startled him; he just reared up and went for me, and if I had not made a lucky jump up the ladder that led to the hayloft he might easily have killed me. Then I knew what the devil really looked like for I could never imagine anything more diabolical-looking than a black stallion striking at you with his forefeet, the red of his eyes showing, and with his lips drawn back horribly, squealing and displaying an array of terrifying teeth. It seemed to me at the time that his nostrils sent forth flames, but I wouldn’t swear to that. But always after that, whenever I went near him he would bare his teeth, put his ears back and give me a nasty look, so I discreetly left him alone.

All the Reciprocity colts had a mean streak too, an interesting point worth considering by those scientists who do not believe in the heredity of non-physical characteristics. One of his colts was caught deliberately trying to kill a calf by striking at it, and they all had the nasty habit of cow-kicking (kicking forward at you with a hind foot when you were stooping to tighten up the girth). And although of all

animals, horses are the most likeable, I think a vicious horse is the most objectionable. I do not include buckers in this category, for your gee has a perfect right to chuck you off if he can, if he feels like it.

There was another well-known horse that Wilde owned for a time, "Keno." He was a trotter, a big chestnut with a long swinging stride that covered the ground at a remarkable pace without at all giving one the impression of speed; a delightful, easy horse to ride. He was quite unlike a race horse to look at; he looked even clumsy, and had a big Roman nose with a broad white blaze which made his head look even bigger than it was. In fact, he looked more fitted for the plough than the race track. He was bought from Wilde by W. R. Megaw, a Vernon merchant who was a noted trotting-horse owner.

The Roman Catholic priest whom I have mentioned before, about this time had a trotter that he thought could lick anything else in the valley, and a race was arranged with Keno. Bob Lambly was training Keno for Megaw and was going to drive him, and a few days before the race the priest strolled round to Bob's stables; he wanted to size this Keno up. And he went away very satisfied indeed; outtrotting this gawky beast would be a cinch. I hope if this sporting ecclesiastic was betting, that the poor man did not give too big odds.

Bob was also satisfied; he had seen that rather contemptuous look on the father's face; he would have a bit of fun with him. He did; the race was three laps round the track; for the first two Bob let him think he was having it all his own way, the unsuspecting priest imagining an easy win. Then, as they entered the third lap Bob gave a little "click" and old Keno sailed ahead with his big white nose sticking out in front and his driver waving a tantalizing farewell to the astonished priest. Moral: never judge by appearances.

Keno once fell down the Kalamalka steps. He had not been drinking though possibly his master had, for Wilde had ridden him up the hotel steps and tied his reins to the big brass handle of the door; and someone suddenly opening it from the inside had startled Keno so much that he reared back and tripping over his hind legs landed on his back on the sidewalk at the bottom of the steps. The outgoing gentleman was startled too; he was a rather mild stranger. I think he had a feeling that he had done something that he shouldn't have, and maybe he ought to apologize.

There were other horses of my acquaintance, many of them. "Lottie," a beautiful Irish hunter mare, a great jumper and so light on her feet you might be sitting in an armchair, and "Major," my own particular mount that I had used for everything from polo to ploughing, for being stuck for a horse once I tried him for that, but he was so

full of beans he almost ran away with the plough.

I raised Major from a colt and never parted with him; in his declining years I never rode him but occasionally drove him the mile and a half to town from where I lived. He was very old for a horse, nearly thirty, but he always started out as lively as a colt, like some of those old gentlemen you see who try to appear young and sprightly—then soon slow down to almost a walk. Then one day just as we reached home, he lay right down in the shafts and gave me a look which clearly meant, “Well, old chap, I’ll have to give it up.” It made me feel quite mournful. But old Major spent the rest of his life in happy idleness.

This chapter being largely about the games we played, I should mention those of our horses, for a horse we regarded as one of ourselves. Behind the stables on the ranch there was a big yard of about five acres where the horses used to run. If there happened also to be a few head of cattle there the horses would play at rounding them up, and of course they learned that game from us. But they also used to play a game that they invented entirely themselves. A sack of straw, used as a cushion on the wagon seat, had been pulled off by one of the horses, who galloped about the yard with it, dodging this way and that trying to elude the rest of the bunch who were chasing him; by and by another horse managed to grab it away from the first one and he became “it,” and so on. After that we always kept a strong sack well-stuffed with straw in the yard for them. It hung on a hook in the stable wall, and they just took it off when they felt like a game, and like small boys they always forgot to put it back again. But phooey to those biologists or psychologists or whatever they are, who think that animals have no reasoning power. The people who live close to them (I mean the four-legged animals, not the scientists) know that they have.

We sometimes played polo, and there were several teams who managed to compete in an annual tournament; we also had occasional scratch games in which anyone who had a horse, including myself, could play. And if as sometimes happened some excitable half-breed on a big stock horse got into one of these games, things might get quite interesting; when their blood was up they had an unpleasant habit of charging into you without any regard for rules, might even take a crack at you with their mallet.

One thing that surprised me was the quickness with which a horse learned the game. I had had a vague idea that a polo pony was a sort of special horse that had been bred for the purpose, but I soon found that you could take almost any horse and in a very short time he would realize that you were after the ball, and would chase it himself, usually trying to jump on it. You then had to train him to keep to one side so that you could get a stroke, and this he also learned without much trouble.

But I am afraid you will be getting weary of me and my horses and that my memories of them do not interest you as they do me, for I suppose most modern people—to parody “A primrose by the river’s bank”—a gee-gee . . . just a gee-gee is, and nothing more. But there is something about a horse that only those who have lived in close companionship with them can ever understand.

So I will go on to those games we played on our own two legs. Baseball was already here, and then came football. I had played rugby at school, but soccer seemed to catch on better with the men who had not played before, so we concentrated on that, and soon got together several teams, including some all Indian ones. The lumberjacks especially seemed to take to it, and I remember one with whom I had a rather astonishing encounter. He was on the other side, and as he came charging up the field I happened to be right in his path. I knew I couldn’t stop him, for he was a great big husky brute, but I dutifully if rather unwillingly took him with my shoulder, expecting to be more or less squashed, or at the best to be brushed aside undamaged. But no; that two hundred pounds of lumberjack suddenly collapsed, luckily not on top of me; he lay on his back gasping and looking very sick indeed. Good Lord! thought I, surely I couldn’t have hurt that! Have I broken one of his ribs, or what? The game stopped, the other players crowded round. And then the wounded man to my relief slowly sat up and spoke. “Holy gosh,” he gasped, “I swallowed my chew of terbaccer!” and staggered to the side lines to try and bring it up again.

Naturally with so many Englishmen about we had to have cricket, and, of course, as always our attitude to it was a source of amazement to those who had not seen our great national game before.

“Well sir, you Englishmen has me beat,” said one puzzled native, after watching a game for as long as he could stand it; “it looks about as lively as a Sunday school to me. And what do the whole crazy bunch keep stopping for, just to walk across the field? That’s one hell of a game,” he concluded in disgust. “Give me baseball, if I gotta play anything, which I don’t see no sense in anyways.” He was a cowboy; legs were intended to sit astride a saddle. Polo was all right, there was some sense in that. But walk, what in heck was a horse for anyway?

Until the country became more settled, cricket was a bit difficult, for it was hard to get twenty-two men together all at the same time. A certain date might be set for a match, say Vernon vs. Kelowna, and at the last moment Kelowna would have to call it off because five or six of their men had to get in their hay—that sort of thing. But by hook or crook each town managed to play the others at least once during the season, even if we had to fall back on some obliging baseball men as substitutes. But

the natives never could get the hang of cricket. I remember one match, Armstrong vs. Kelowna, which we played in such surroundings as never a cricket match was played before. Enderly was holding its annual twenty-fourth of May celebration, and had asked us to play off this match there to help out with their programme of sports; they would entertain us at lunch, and were very keen on our coming, so we duly arrived there about ten A.M. and were met by the sports' committee. And right away a difficulty arose.

“Very good of you to come,” said the committee, “let us know how long your game will take so that we can fit it in”—they didn't know cricket!

“Well,” said we, “we figured on about two hours before lunch, and after lunch play on as long as the light lasted, if necessary.”

The faces of the committee fell, their ground was about the size of a cricket field, and they had apparently expected that we would occupy it for about an hour; they had a baseball game, foot races and horse races, and here were these leisurely cricketers who took a whole day to play one game!

Well, we were here, we were their guests and they had invited us all in good faith, so we made the most of it, and came to the amicable arrangement that we would have our pitch in the middle of the ground and not interfere with the races which were run all round us. A sort of two-ring circus. So everybody was satisfied; our fielders now and then got mixed up in the horse race, but that just added to the joy of the spectators.

The committee were good fellows, they gave us a noble lunch with lashins of beer, and the day's proceedings ended up most hilariously with an impromptu smoking concert, in which cricketers, baseballers, and all the other sportsmen did their stuff, and the inspiring strains of “For they are jolly good fellows” must have disturbed the slumbers of the good folk of Enderly well on into the early hours of the next morning.



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia
Branding a calf



Photo courtesy Archives of British Columbia
Miners outside the “Bucket of Blood” dance hall at Fairview mining camp

CHAPTER XIV

OUR “LAWFUL OCCASIONS”

I have said so much about our seemingly aimless existence that you may have gathered the altogether erroneous impression that we never did any real serious work. Well, we did, to be sure; not all the time or even most of the time, but when we were working we did work, and if you will pardon my colloquial language, a damned sight harder than I can see anybody working today. Not that I wish to imply that you are lazier; let us say you have more sense. For all work except ordinary farm work, which knew no regular hours, it was a ten-hour day, six days a week, and I know from my own experience that this was far too much; it meant that by Saturday night you were about all in; and started out tired Monday morning, more often than not.

I think about the hardest job I ever had was in the Armstrong sawmill where I worked for a time; I was batching—doing my own cooking; had to get my breakfast, be at the mill by seven o'clock, work there piling heavy lumber for ten hours, then go home at six and cook supper. Would any young man do this today? I think not; and I quite agree that he would be a fool if he did. And yet it doesn't seem to have done me any harm, for I am still very much alive at seventy-four. I think that probably the reason that we stuck it was that the work was not steady; a man might have a job at a mill, at threshing, logging or any other of the valley industries at various times, interspersed by periods when he might be on a fishing or hunting trip, or just pottering about his own little ranch, for practically everybody (I'm referring to bachelors now) had a bit of land with a cabin on it; a sort of *pied-a-terre*; and to us was really more in the nature of play than work. But we must have been curious people; I think we really liked work, for when in 1899 the eight-hour day act passed there was great indignation—among the workingmen I mean—for it seemed like interfering with our liberties; and did they think we were sissies, that we couldn't work for ten hours? It was an insult to interfere with the free intercourse between an employer and his men; we felt we had a perfect right to work ten hours or even fifteen hours a day if we felt like it.

Probably at the back of it all was the pioneer spirit; the desire to get things done; the things that we were all more or less personally interested in. So, naturally, we were not cursed with strikes; I do remember two, but no one could say we were

cursed with them.

The first one was on a big farm at harvesting when the some twenty men struck for an increase in pay from one dollar to a dollar and a half per day, which was what they were paying at the mines. This was soon arranged, and there seemed to have been no ill feelings. I was in Vernon at the time, and we used to josh the “strikers,” who were hanging round there for a few days, evidently feeling a bit embarrassed in their unusual role.

Then in 1896 there was the general strike on the C.P.R. which affected all employees on the S. & O. from station agents to section men. None of these, apparently knew what it was all about, or cared, and although everything was tied up and they were forbidden to touch any railroad work, they surreptitiously did what they could for their valley friends, hoping that no labor union spotter could catch them at it.

We English boys certainly did wander about, jumping from one thing to another in a casual way when probably most of our friends at home thought we would have been better in some steady business or profession—that is if they thought of us at all; but I do not think it was a waste of time; one learned to be able to turn one’s hand to anything; anyway I have no regrets about my “wasted youth”; if I could only get it back wouldn’t I just waste it in the same old way, again!

And of those, not necessarily all young Englishmen, who at various times wandered in these valleys, some later became well known in the spheres of journalism and art, business and politics; doubtless finding their early experiences as nomads an asset.

There was Jimmy Fitzmaurice, the well-known province cartoonist; F. Niven, “Harry” Stevens; Alan Brooks, the famous artist and naturalist, and others.

But we usually had some excuse for our travels up and down the valley; it was often in pursuit of our lawful occasions; but that did not make it any the less enjoyable, I have blissful memories especially, of journeys on horseback in the soft darkness of warm summer nights soothed into a state of drowsy bliss by the musical, clicking chirrup of the cicadas and the occasional solemn hoot of an owl, followed in a few seconds, far away, like an echo from the land of spirits, by the answering eery “hoo hoo” of his mate—the mystic music of the night. For at nighttime the air is full of music if your mind is attuned to it.

On a summer night, high on some mountainside beneath the stars, you fall asleep to the soothing, harplike strumming of the night wind in the pines—Aeolian melody; a perfect lullaby. Or, far from the restless haunts of men, on the shore of some

secluded lake, in that state of pure contentment induced by strenuous exercise in the open air, camp-cooked supper and a pipe, you are lulled into the land of dreams by the soft, rhythmic lapping of little wavelets on the sand.

And what is more inspiring than the sublime, symphonic music of the storm; on a wild and windy night to listen to the distant, steady rumble of the surf, the crash of the breaking rollers on the beach, and the rattle of the shingle as each wave recedes. Like the rolling drums, the clash of the brasses and the tinkling castanets of some great orchestra; all is better heard in a dark and silent auditorium.

Other times I remember, with a good companion riding over the open range by moonlight; it distorts the landscape; and you cannot judge distance or depth as in the daytime. You approach a depression, a dense, black shadow gashing the brilliant silvery level of the plateau. There are no trees on the other side by which to judge its width; it may be only fifty yards; it may be half a mile—you cannot tell. It has an eerie look; you feel that you may be descending into spooky unknown depths and your horses feel the same, they hesitate on the brink; you can always sense that feeling of fear in a horse you are riding. And you yourself have a curious sense of being removed from the world of reality.

Fifty years have come and gone since then; how many moons have waxed and waned! But in retrospect the fascination of those night rides in the Okanagan still persists.

As you will have guessed, each of us became a sort of Jack-of-all-trades; a most useful talent in a new country; in addition to this there was usually some occupation which we pursued on and off more than any other.

In England I had been an amateur photographer and had brought my camera with me, and I soon found that my services were so much in demand that I turned professional and every now and then would travel about the valley—a sort of itinerant photographer, making pictures of anything and everything, from race horses to babies, and many interesting experiences I had. And as that was before the days of hand cameras and snapshots I was welcome everywhere. I traveled sometimes in a light two-wheeled cart, sometimes by canoe or rowboat, and sometimes even with my outfit on a pack horse; and in this way got to know practically everyone in the valley.

To the Indians I became known as the “picture man” and they soon became quite keen on being photographed.

“*Mika mammook nika pitcher*”; one of them would ride up and say. But they never could understand paying for it; at first they expected me to pay them, so that side of my business was not exactly profitable. However, I soon found that if they

would not pay for their own photographs other people would buy them. But the bucks would never let me photograph their ladies, which I was very anxious to do. I once did get into an Indian camp and succeed in getting a picture of some klotchmen and papooses before they realized what I was doing. There did not seem to be any of their menfolk around, but suddenly an old buck crawled out of a tent, spotted me and my camera and yelled out something in a panicky sort of voice; and then things got pretty hot; I seemed to be surrounded by angry bucks, yelling klotchmen, and all the beastly snarling dogs in the camp. I managed to get out safely at last with my camera intact, feeling not at all like the superior white man.

But it was not long before they found that my camera was just as harmless as I was, and I became quite popular with them. The half-breeds especially delighted in pictures of themselves, but unlike the newly arrived Englishmen, who liked to array himself in chaps and spurs, buckskin shirt and sombrero, looking as wild and woolly as he could to impress his old country friends; the breeds aspired to look as much as possible like what they considered to be well-dressed English people. One of the ladies, I remember; she rode up one day and asked me to take her picture on horseback.

“That’s all right,” I said, “I’ll be ready in a few minutes.”

“You wait,” she said; “I go and dress.” And dress she did, in a beautiful black silk ball gown, with a frilly edge of lace petticoat peeping from beneath the skirt, and a large picture hat adorned with an ostrich plume. Mounted on the big stock horse holding a heavy quirt, and sitting astride on a Mexican saddle on the horn of which hung a coiled lasso she galloped proudly up and said, “Now I’m ready.”

So I draped her skirt for her so that she did not show quite so much leg, and we got a very successful, unusual equestrienne portrait.

I have had many other amusing experiences while in the pursuit of my profession. Once I had photographed a man’s house for him; rather astonishingly a white man, and on showing him the picture he was both astonished and annoyed because it did not show both the front and back of the house on the same photograph. He did not think I was much of a photographer, and said so. I gave it up; you can’t explain things to a man like that. I daresay one of these modernist painters could have made a good job of it; I am unable to grasp the meaning of most of their lingo but they would probably call it fourth dimensional; they may even ring in a fifth dimension for all I know to get round difficulties such as this.

But this man was not the worst; incredible as it may seem I have known people whose brains were even less developed than this, who seemed unable to recognize anything at all in a picture. They would look at it as a dog or a cat would—it had no

meaning whatever to them.

These people were members of a few families who had wandered into the Okanagan from some mountain region in Idaho; probably they were born and had grown up in some remote spot entirely isolated from any contact with the outside world; perhaps the descendants of some undesirable character who had been outlawed from pioneer settlements of a hundred years ago. They were even more primitive than the hillbillies of the Alleghenies; their half-naked children would scoot into the bush like scared rabbits at the sight of a stranger, and the lanky unkempt men never appeared without a gun, often a muzzle-loader of ancient make; their frowzy, frightened-looking women seldom appeared. These people built themselves rough cabins in the mountains near Okanagan Mission where for a few years they existed in some mysterious way, and then as mysteriously faded away.

I found my professional visits to the big ranches especially, most enjoyable; I would often be asked to go and stay for some days or even a week or more, to take what photographs they wanted, and make the ranch my headquarters while I scoured the surrounding country for other interesting pictures. I remember one day I spent with Sir Arthur Stepney, an eccentric English baronet who owned a ranch near Enderly, which while not typical of these ranch visits was decidedly amusing.

He wanted quite a lot of different pictures of this place, and walked round with me while I took them. It was a very hot day, and each time we came near the house, which was quite often, he would say, "Well, suppose we go in and have a cooler." The "cooler," I found, consisted of a drink he said he had discovered in Australia—and it was well worth discovering. Into a long tumbler pour two fingers of Scotch, drop in a small piece of ice; fill up with lime juice sweetened to taste, and just before taking stir in a little "Eno" to give it a sparkle. The baronet seemed to be quite immune to the effects of our numerous potions of this refreshing beverage, but I soon found that I was not, and regretfully had to explain that I had better postpone further cooling off until I had taken all the photographs.

The last one was a bird's-eye view of the ranch from the top of a rough hill, some five hundred feet high. Now Sir Arthur had with him his valet, a very soft and flabby "gentleman's gentleman" and as we were leaving the house for the climb he said, eyeing my large and heavy camera which I was about to shoulder, "Oh, my man will carry that. Here, Jenkins."

Mr. Jenkins reluctantly lifted the heavy case and regarded that hill with a look of intense dislike, and as he toiled unwillingly behind us I told the baronet that I was quite able to carry it myself.

“Oh yes, I know,” said he in an aside, with a wink; “but it will do that lazy brute good—take some of that beastly fat off him.” It certainly did, for it ran off in streams. Not so with the baronet, though, for although he was long past middle age, he skipped up that hill like an active old goat, an animal to which he bore some resemblance, for he was lean and wiry and had a straggly goatlike beard, and was not at all what one would expect a titled Englishman to look like.

As I did with photography, alternated with other work, so did other young Englishmen; we tackled any sort of job to earn an honest dollar; quite often paid for in trade, for real money was not plentiful. For most of us had to earn a living and though we had come out with the idea of ranching, we soon found that our embryo ranches would neither support us nor themselves. For some mysterious reason “farming in the colonies” as a career for England’s surplus youth was considered a fitting occupation for a gentleman. How it is to laugh!

So in the records of his late public school you might read: “James Barlow, 1890; farming in Okanagan, British Columbia.” And James would become just plain Jimmy now, would maybe be working with a road gang shoveling gravel; in other words he was a navy. And jolly good for him too; better than being a clerk or a lounge lizard in London. And moreover Jimmy thought it no hardship—he enjoyed it.

Some of us would find we had hitherto unexpected ability; one friend of mine became a boat builder; another a cabinet maker, another a nursery gardener and so on; usually a matter of turning some favorite hobby to practical use. Another one, Freddy Ellis, had brought out a fine kit of tools, so after a bit he also, needing to earn something, hung out his shingle as a carpenter. And one day shortly after I met him riding, and looking a bit worried.

“Where the devil can I find a land roller?” said Freddy, “I’ve taken on a job to make one and I’ve never even seen one of the darned things. So I’m scouring the country in search for one to copy from.” Freddy’s efforts were crowned with success for he eventually ran one to earth, and having made a sketch of it returned home and made a duplicate. After all, it was very simple; the first operation being to cut down a large pine tree about two feet in diameter; from this you cut a log seven or eight feet long; into the center of each end of this log you drive a section of one inch iron bar for an axle and there is your roller; the frame is made of four by four lumber or poles if the lumber is not available, bolted together. Having cut down his tree, Freddy made the rest of it into rollers and sold them; he became a sort of primitive manufacturer of agricultural implements, making harrows and other things.

Not quite so successful were the efforts of Reginald de Hautrain, who undertook to repair the parlor organ of a neighboring farmer; but Reggie would tackle anything.

And as he had at one time played the organ in his father's church and seemed to be the only man in the valley who knew anything about organs the farmer got him to overhaul it. So Reggie boldly tackled the job; there might be a few dollars in it, or if the farmer had no ready money one could always rely on getting some chickens or maybe a pig or a few sacks of potatoes in payment. He carefully took the works apart but when he came to reassemble them he found there were some left over; they just didn't seem to fit in anywhere. So he put those unwanted parts in his bag and took them home with him; they would probably come in useful for something else. However, the organ played all right and the farmer was quite satisfied. As Reggie said, probably these parts had been quite unnecessary anyway, like one's appendix, and the organ would function better without them.

When haying and harvest time came on it was a case of everyone working to get the crops in, and to a novice pitching hay or sheaves of wheat onto a load seems terribly hard work, but when you have once acquired the proper technique for lifting a fork full it is comparatively easy.

My first experience of this was working for Herman Ehmcke on his Pleasant Valley farm in Spallumcheen. We slept in the hayloft and I can still remember the feeling of bliss that descended on me one morning when I woke up and heard rain pattering on the roof; there would be no pitching that morning, and I was horribly tired.

A few days later I was promoted to driving a team; or possibly old man Ehmcke thought I would not be as dumb at that as I was at pitching. But if he did think that, he was mistaken. Between the far end of the field and the wheat stacks there was a deep gulch round which one had to make a wide circuit when driving in the load, and I with the foolishness of a "cheechako" thought I would save time by driving across this instead of going round. And descending into this gulch, the weight of the load proved too much for the front support of the rack, which gave way, precipitating an avalanche of sheaves among which I was somewhere buried, on top of the team. Luckily they were quiet old nags and did not bolt, and when the boss came on the scene and found I was unhurt and in a fit condition to be sworn at, he relieved his feelings by a flow of cuss words which I certainly deserved. But he was a good sort and I think derived quite a lot of satisfaction by everlastingly pulling my leg about it afterwards.

Just the other night I heard over the radio that his widow, dear old Mrs. Ehmcke, was celebrating her ninetieth birthday in Armstrong and I wonder if she remembers it. She was a great friend of mine—a native of Schleswig-Holstein, one of the sturdy pioneer women who made real homes in the Okanagan; always

hospitable, and with a sense of quiet humor that made her always popular; good nature fairly beamed from her like an aura.

It is some ten years ago, and she would have been about eighty then, that one winter day I saw her stranded in the middle of a large sheet of ice in Armstrong, for there had been a thaw and then it had frozen, making walking rather dangerous. So I went to her rescue, and clinging together we made the rest of the way to her home. "I hope no vun vill see us," said the dear old lady, "dey shure vill be talking about us if dey do."

But after my first experience I always enjoyed haying and harvesting, and I think everyone else did. After all, there is something wrong about a man who does not enjoy his work. And one of the most satisfying things in life is to get well-plastered with sweat and hayseed and honest dirt, and when the last load of the hay is in to wash it of in a creek—always when I was doing this, those lines of Kipling's came back to me—"I 'ad my bath and I wallered! for Gawd! I needed it so." Then clean clothes and an appetite for supper that needed no sherry and bitters to pep it up. I always think that passage in Genesis, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" has been misunderstood; and that the Almighty did not intend it as a punishment, as is generally supposed, but being a sensible God saw that mankind would be happier that way. And I imagine that loafing in the Garden of Eden would have got rather monotonous after a time; Adam and Eve would probably have taken to quarreling when they got tired of honeymooning if they had had no work to do.

There are certain people who dream about a socialist paradise where all our work will be done by machinery, a paternal government will do all our planning; and life being eternal bliss and leisure everybody consequently will be good and happy! How little they know of human nature, those armchair socialists! In fact, I think they must be lacking in psychology or they would not be socialists. From my own experience and observation I know that human happiness is best secured by work.

And as for that other dream, that from this life of leisure we should reach such a state of perfection that wars would cease; don't you believe it! People would get so bored that even war would be welcome—unless you could find some good hard work for them to do, such as we did in the good old pioneer days.

But don't we old people like to blather about the joys of the simpler life we led, and try to impress the younger generation about how much better things were then! Luckily for them they don't believe us. And we ourselves; our tastes and inclinations have changed with our changing environment. One of the compensations of old age

is undoubtedly the ability to relive those good old times—in spirit. If we did so in the flesh I fear our old bones would find it decidedly uncomfortable. But we do like to kid ourselves that we would like to. Yet the truth is, that, surrounded with modern comforts and conveniences, I am enjoying my old age as I never could have if I had been old in 1889. And there is also the fact that but for the marvel of modern surgery I should not be alive at all.

And there is another thought that occurs to me; perhaps one reason why I enjoy old age is because I so thoroughly enjoyed my youth. So benefit by my experience, and, to quote the words of an old music-hall song, “Go It While You’re Young.”



Photo courtesy British Columbia Travel Bureau

The fall round-up



Photo courtesy British Columbia Travel Bureau

Packing up for a prospecting trip

Well, I’m afraid I am moralizing too much, and getting pedantic. And a horrid

thought assails me, that in my old age I may even be getting garrulous; for hard as I found it to start writing this rambling record of my memories, I find it still harder to stop. So perhaps I had better do just that, before I suddenly remember something else that I feel I must tell you about. And so, if you have had the patience to follow me as far as this, I bid you, reluctantly, good-by.

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed. This includes many obviously incorrect words; and some less obvious ones: Naranatta to Naramatta; Enderby to Enderly; Oppenheiner to Oppenheimer; and Barnard Avenue to Bernard Avenue.

Inconsistency in hyphenation has been retained.

Because of copyright considerations, the illustrations by Alan J. Villiers (1903-1982) have been omitted from this etext.

Illustrations have been relocated due to using a non-page layout.

Some photographs have been enhanced to be more legible.

[The end of *The Valley of Youth* by C. W. Holliday]