

## CHAPTER IV

### IN KAMLOOPS, BRITISH COLUMBIA

At last, in 1885, the day came when Henry Irwin's dream was to be fulfilled, and having got his training under so good a master as Mr Murray of Rugby, he was to go forth to test his mettle on a wider field.

As a boy, Irwin had laughingly declared his intention of choosing a cold climate and being a missionary there ; and he now fulfilled this intention by choosing British Columbia as the province, and New Westminster the diocese, where he would begin work. Although he had always declared his intention of doing missionary work, yet in British Columbia he never (or very rarely) worked among the native population ; he rather turned to the Colonists, among whom, indeed, such ardent workers are greatly needed.

The history of the Church in British Columbia which (in 1909) is celebrating its Jubilee may be shortly set forth by a quotation from a leaflet issued by the Association for New Westminster.

#### "THE DIOCESE OF NEW WESTMINSTER AND KOOTENAY

"New Westminster is a third of the vast Diocese of British Columbia, divided for purposes of organization, and in 1900 again sub-divided into New Westminster and Kootenay. As yet the two halves are under one Bishop, but the way is prepared for a new See when funds are raised.

"This diocese, as large as France, lies between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific. The great Fraser River flows through it. It is 40,000 square miles larger than the United Kingdom.

"There are some 100,000 of population, consisting of—

"(a) English immigrants. These are the main part of the

population, and mainly of the wage-earning classes ; therefore the Church in British Columbia is not yet able to be self-supporting like the Church in Eastern Canada. The call to help our own Colonists is strong ; if England does not care for the souls of her own children, who is to do so ? (Gal. vi. 10.)

“(b) Indians. There are some 11,000 Indians in the diocese. These, the original possessors of the land, claim our care as an act of justice. Many are Christians, and 1,500 are under the special care of the Ven. Archdeacon of Yale : 250 are Communicants of the Church of England. An excellent school under Sisters of the English Church, at Yale, receives Indian girls in one department, and Colonists' daughters in another. A school for Indian boys (urgently needed) has also been established : The New England Company have taken this in hand.

“(c) Chinese. Of these there are about 9000 working, chiefly as servants, laundry men, and market gardeners. They come as heathen ; shall they go away without instruction in the Christian religion ? Does not the martyr blood, shed by native Christians in China, cry aloud for spiritual help for these people when working for Christians in a Christian land ? A Chinese Mission, opened in 1891, has lately been successful ; but the Bishop appeals for more help. *The Industries of this Busy Corner of our Empire* are salmon canning, coal mining, gold digging, and fruit growing. All these contribute to the comfort or luxury of English people. Let us return a gift of goodwill to the workers.

#### “ *History of the Diocese*

“British Columbia in 1858 passed from the hands of the Hudson Bay Company to the position of a Crown Colony, and is now an integral confederated province of the Canadian Dominion. In 1859, the Diocese of Columbia was founded under Bishop Hills, and endowed by the Baroness Burdett Coutts. It was found to be too large a diocese to be workable, and at last was sub-divided into three : Columbia, Caledonia, and New Westminster.

“The latter was founded, in 1879, by Bishop Hills. Bishop

Acton Windeyer Sillitoe, the first Bishop, who worked with the most earnest zeal, died in 1894. Bishop John Dart succeeded in 1895, and, in spite of financial difficulties which had supervened in Diocesan funds, great progress has been made in the work of the Church."

What led Henry Irwin to select this special field for his labours, we do not exactly know, though it is said to have been suggested to him by a sermon which he heard. We may be sure that the choice was made with thought and prayer, and that the Holy Spirit led him to this sphere of work.

After correspondence with the Bishop, Acton Windeyer Sillitoe, it was decided that Mr Irwin should begin work in Kamloops on the C.P.R. or Canadian Pacific Railway, as assistant to Mr Horlock, the Vicar, and thither he proceeded in 1885.

The town of Kamloops lies on the South Thompson River, which, after making a bend at an acute angle, runs straight for many miles under a line of hills of which the most prominent is known as Mount Paul. To the south spreads a beautiful prospect of hill and plain, but westward run the river and the railway through a panorama as strange as a mirage or an optical delusion. It consists of a series of miniature hills and valleys of sand, extending for miles along the north side of the river; doubtless the deposit of a far wider prehistoric stream. Barren and weird and strange look these quaint little hills, some thirty to forty feet high, with crenelated summits and a few stunted fir trees here and there; with cave and creek and winding valleys, they resemble the abode of gnomes or pigmies.

The C.P.R. runs through the main street of Kamloops. When Henry Irwin arrived there, no church had yet been built. Service was held in the court-house. The inhabitants largely consisted of the men employed on the C.P.R., then in progress of formation.

These men were of mixed nationalities, many of them wild and rough. The bright young Irishman, full of zeal and enthusiasm, threw himself heartily into the new life.

The exquisite air of British Columbia,—light, bracing and health-giving,—was congenial to him and spurred him on to new energy. He quickly became a favourite, his work extending far and wide, for he was really an itinerant parson, assisting Mr Horlock, the Vicar of Kamloops, by riding into the mountains to the mining camps and elsewhere. Few and far between were the clergy in British Columbia at that date.

The name "Father Pat" appears to have at once been given to Henry Irwin, and to have been constantly used for him by the rougher portion of his flock. It suited his nature, which combined with a devout and earnest spirit a natural winning humour.

A friend who knew him in Oxford and at Rugby<sup>1</sup> says :— "he was always the same straightforward, simple, fearless, true-hearted character ; and it was this simplicity and utter fearlessness that gave him the power which he possessed, especially among men of the roughest class, and made him attractive to a very large circle of friends. I gave him the name of *Pat* in those first days at Oxford, the name which stuck to him all his life, and was used by everyone who knew him, in the new world as well as in the old."

A characteristic anecdote is told that shows his pluck and spirit, qualities sure to win him friends among the rough but hearty "boys" of the Far West. It was regarded by them as a good joke to make a fool of a parson, or a *padre*, as he is generally called out West. Therefore seeing a bright, well-dressed young fellow as Irwin then was, they at once concluded he was a milksop, and soon asked, "Can you ride?"

"I was bred in the saddle," he answered.

"Then you won't mind trying this nag, though he's a bit spirited?"

"All the better for that."

And Irwin mounted a fine-looking creature, which however, was that nasty thing—a buck-jumper.

Now of all uncomfortable animals, your buck-jumper, as described to me, is the worst.

His mind seems sets on no other thing than to break his

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Hedley Vicars, of All Saints' Rectory, Huntingdon.

rider's bones and shatter his nerves. Gathering up his four legs and humping up his back, he executes a *pas seul* unequalled for its power of unseating a rider. Up he goes in the air, and alighting on all four feet with a thud that makes a man feel as if all his teeth had been suddenly extracted, he then executes a few caracoles with his hind feet above the level of the rider's head ; and if that unfortunate be still in the saddle, the beast resumes the agreeable exercise.

Harry Irwin had learned in his Irish home to ride any ordinary horse with ease, even bare-backed. But a buck-jumper was a new experience. He soon found out the trick that had been played on him, but kept his temper and his nerve ; and though thrown and shaken, he remounted once and again, hating to be beaten, and would have done so a third time but that his friends interposed, assuring him he had given ample proof of pluck ; in which even his tormentors concurred. They never called him "milk-sop" again.

## CHAPTER V

### AMONG THE SELKIRKS

It was while he was at Kamloops that Mr Irwin met the sweet lady who was the love of his life, and whose influence worked so strongly in him after her passing from this world.

Miss Frances Stuart Innes was the youngest daughter of a gentleman who held a public appointment in Victoria, British Columbia. Her elder sister had married the Rev. A. Shildrick, now and for many years past Rector of Holy Trinity Cathedral Church, New Westminster. At the time when Mr Irwin went out to British Columbia, Mr Shildrick was senior assistant priest in Kamloops district, and settled in the Spallumcheen Valley, the district where Enderby and Vernon lie. He rode to and fro on his missionary work (as we have seen from his letter in the last chapter Mr Irwin also did), holding services "from house to house," in scattered ranches. The people he ministered to, though seldom of gentle breeding, were almost invariably hospitable and welcoming to the clergy, and in some cases very appreciative of their ministrations.

Frances Innes was one of those gentle, timid creatures who appeal most powerfully to a brave man's heart by their essential womanliness. Spiritually minded, of strong religious principle, she was yet so shy that it was hard to persuade her to go into the world alone, even for necessary business. She must have been very charming in appearance, though not regularly beautiful, Soft curling brown hair, blue eyes very expressive, and a sweet childlike smile. Merry and bright at home, the life of the family, there yet was a pathos in her look which seems natural now to us who

know how soon that lovable personality was to be removed from this world.

Henry Irwin was one to whom such womanly charm especially appealed; and when Frances Innes, on her way to spend a long visit with her sister Mrs Shildrick, stopped first for a time at the house of Mr and Mrs Horlock of Kamloops (old friends of her family), it was natural that the young assistant priest should be drawn to her irresistibly. When she left Kamloops for the Spallumcheen Valley, he soon found his way thither; and the end was a happy engagement, a complete and perfect union of hearts, which lasted four years before their marriage could be arranged. No love letters remain, or none are permitted for use here. It is felt that the departed would have wished to shield their most sacred feelings from the world's eyes. "Not easily forgiven are they who lay bare the marriage chambers of the heart."<sup>1</sup>

In the year 1887, Mr Irwin's sphere of work was moved to Donald, a busy centre of the C.P.R., lying close upon the Rocky Mountains,—between these and the Selkirks. A glance at the map will show that whereas Kamloops is in a district of comparatively low hills diversifying the plain, Donald is among all the glories of the mountains. The Rockies are well named: Stony Mountains they were called by the early settlers, and stony indeed they are. The snow which lies upon them does not cover their nakedness with its downy softness all the year round as in the Swiss mountains, but the bare ribs of the giants stand out in summer, gaunt and terrible. To a traveller on the C.P.R. after days on the level prairie, which becomes monotonous despite its lovely varied greens stretching away into a sea-like distance, it is refreshing at Calgary to observe the delicate outline of the Rockies, softened by haze and distance. Forty-three peaks can be counted from one point in Calgary. Thenceforth to the traveller all is one succession of beauty. The upward strain and climb of the panting engine leads through a range of foothills, broken by picturesque glades and gullies; and then at last the Rockies begin to assert themselves with

<sup>1</sup> Emerson.

their strange and weird forms. The words of Scott—exaggerated as regards the Trossachs of which he wrote—are literally true of these passes of the West :—

“ Not a setting beam could glow  
Within the dark ravines below,  
Where twined the path in shadow hid  
Round many a rocky pyramid,  
Shooting abruptly from the dell  
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle ;  
Round many an insulated mass,  
The native bulwarks of the pass,  
Huge as the tower which builders vain  
Presumptuous reared on Shinar’s plain.  
The rocky summits, split and rent,  
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,  
Or seemed fantastically set  
With cupola or minaret.”

I have seen a mountain on which appeared to be the ruins of a feudal castle ; not only with its towers and bastion, but also with a Gothic doorway approached by broken steps, and a natural bridge cast across the ravine,—all from the unaided hand of Nature. Then the traveller tarries on his way to visit the “ Lakes in the Clouds,” approached from Laggan, where Indian ponies await the tourist. There are three of these lakes, each of its own special hue, lapis lazuli blue, emerald green and the exquisite blue of the peacock. Glaciers, too, lie between the peaks, one (at the spot named “ Glacier ”) is said to be vast enough to contain within itself all the icefields of Switzerzland ; and there are smaller ones here and there which repay a visit. Beside one of these recently dwelt an old man bearing the name of Hathaway, and claiming descent from the kin of Shakspeare’s wife,—strange link between the old world and the new.

Arrived at the summit, the traveller begins his descent through the majestic scenery of the Kicking-Horse Pass.<sup>1</sup> Its jagged summits climbing the sky, pines darkly clothing the lower rocks, and leading the eye down, down, down to an

<sup>1</sup> Various reasons are given for this strange name ; it may be a rude word-picture of the tearing, plunging torrent at the bottom of the pass.



abyss where the Kicking-Horse River gleams white and foaming below. In the gathering gloom of a summer night we saw it, a young moon rising behind the peaks and glinting on little lakes and tracts of snow among them. The Canadian Pacific train winds its slow and cautious route by curve and precipice, and for all the dreadful gradients, accidents very seldom occur.

It was in 1887, when the C.P.R. was diligently and swiftly laying its line from the Rockies to the Pacific, that Donald was a centre of great activity. Now it is a dead town. Hardly an inhabited house remains. The church erected by Father Pat has been removed; the vicarage is at Golden; every good house has been taken elsewhere, as is so easily done with the wooden buildings of the West.<sup>1</sup> Nothing is more sad and strange than these new ruins of the Far West. Without the dignity of age, without mystery or beauty, the shattered relics of the wooden shacks and gimcrack stores stare from their empty window-holes, and lean in ghastly fashion, ready to fall with the next tempest, while all the ground is strewn with their *débris*.

Nor is one of these towns more gracious in its rapid growth. All is for speed and immediate use; the question of beauty does not enter the builder's mind; the only sign of a desire to save appearances being the large square sham fronts of the stores. But the spot in which Donald stands, close under the Selkirks and beside the Columbia River, is very fine; the air is delicious, and the absolute freedom from all social conventionality is attractive to many.

The making of the line was accompanied by many dangers, one of the chief arising from the frequent snow-slides. In the summer months, when snows begin to melt, vast masses of the liberated snow will descend and bury hut or man beneath it. In one of these accidents, at Donald, Father Pat first showed the characteristics which later made his name proverbial, and himself beloved among the rough settlers of British Columbia. In the first year when the C.P.R. ran

<sup>1</sup> When it was desired to move the Church of S. Paul's, Vancouver, it was done by means of a windlass worked by one old pony!

straight through to the coast (1887), when about half the great snowsheds that now protect the railway had been built, but much of the line still lay exposed, such an accident occurred. A report came to Donald that part of the line was blocked by a snow-slide. The snow-plough was sent out to clear the way, and while this was being done, a second slide occurred in which Mr Green, the conductor of the snow-plough, was killed. As soon as this sad news was made known, the superintendent and other men went out to the summit of the pass to clear the road and to see what could be done. The snow was still coming down in small slides, the way was blocked, and Donald was cut off from communication with these men. Mrs Green was wild with anxiety, and her husband's body could not be brought in, as the line was blocked by masses of snow. "Father Pat" resolved if possible to relieve the poor widow's anxiety and restore to her the remains of her beloved husband. He took a toboggan or handsleigh, which could move *over* the snow where an engine could not cut its way through; and disregarding the danger threatening at every step from the snow-slides still going on, he made his way to where the dead man lay, took the body, reverently covered, on the little sleigh, and brought it in to Donald. He was away two days and a night. While under the protection of a snowshed, he would watch and wait for an opportunity to pass in safety to the next. He spent that night alone with the dead man on the desolate and dangerous road.

During the same event, another wife was terribly anxious for her husband, who was among those who were cut off by the snow from communication with his home at Donald. Half mad with fear for her husband's safety, the poor woman came to Father Pat for news. "I have heard from your husband," said Mr Irwin. "He is all right, and will soon be home." It was true that the man was safe, and he was ere long restored to his wife. But it was *not* the fact that Father Pat had heard from him. He afterwards confessed this to the wife whose mind he had calmed and relieved,—dare we say, by his splendid lie? "I did it," said he, "lest I should have you distracted on my hands."

It was Irwin's characteristic, that he acted boldly on impulse, led by his heart as often as by his head,—perhaps oftener. And this loving impulsiveness won him the hearts of the people.<sup>1</sup>

When in Donald, Mr Irwin boarded with a Mrs Lovelock ; she had another boarder, named Black, who took an active interest in Church work in Donald. He was the best helper that Father Pat had there in that respect ; perhaps the only one to render much service. There was no church at Donald when Mr Irwin went there ; services were held (as usual in such cases) in the Court-House. He had a little organ which he played himself, and moved from place to place for services, on a trolley on the line. At first only women attended these services. Religion seems to form but a small part of the life of male colonists, even of those who have been accustomed to fulfil its duties in the home country. Nor was Father Pat a brilliant or specially attractive preacher. Sound Church doctrine, clothed in simple language, was what he gave his flock, as one can judge from the specimens of his sermons remaining to us. His view was that of the old Tractarians : "Worship the Deity according to the rites He has prescribed through His Church, and lean not on the gifts of men." Once when a hearer praised him for a good sermon that he had given, his face fell ; a look of sadness and even of reproach stole over it, and he said, turning away : "We go to church to worship God."

But as his hand was ever at the service of others, so they became willing and glad to help him in things practical, and he soon had a little church erected in Donald. These tiny wooden churches do not take long to build. A clearing in the primeval forest, a few boards, much energy on the part of the priest, some kindly help given by others, and a place of worship may be erected at the cost of £100 or even less.

When the church at Donald was completed, Mr Irwin remembered his former parish at Kamloops and its needs. He collected on several occasions among his new flock money for a church at Kamloops. Records of the sums he sent for

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted for these anecdotes to Miss Nelson of Kaslo, B.C.

that purpose still remain in the minutes of the church, as also a list of the many places where Father Pat went in a wide circuit to hold divine service in the wilds. It would seem as if he were ubiquitous. One can hardly conceive of a priest ministering in so many spots within so short a space of time, many of them being so far distant and inaccessible. But "where there's a will there's a way," and his almost abnormal activity now revealed itself.

The Rev. C. F. Yates, Rector of Golden, British Columbia, gives us details of some of these mission tours. He says: "Father Pat did not confine his work to the main line of the C.P.R. but journeyed down the Arrow Lakes, services being held as far south as Nelson, then a mere mining camp. We find, too, that he followed the Columbia from Golden to the Kootenay River, services being recorded at these places. Some six or eight clergy now occupy the territory thus covered, divided into five or six parishes."

Kamloops Church was built while Mr Shildrick was in England, and the Rev. Canon Cooper was appointed Vicar of Kamloops for a time, Mr Shildrick returning to it from England. Mr Horlock had also gone to England for a year's rest and change.

It will be well here to quote a passage from the memoir of Bishop Sillitoe,<sup>1</sup> showing the state of Church work in these parts.

The Bishop and Mrs Sillitoe had been to England, where the annual meeting of the New Westminster mission was held, in London, the Marquis of Lorne speaking at it. They had been present at "the ever-memorable Jubilee Service in Westminster Abbey, at which the whole Empire lifted up its heart to God for Queen Victoria's glorious and happy reign."

Now, on his return to his diocese (1887) the Bishop was warmly welcomed by his people.

"At Donald, an address, signed by some forty persons, was presented at the C.P.R. station, in the darkness of a stormy night, to greet the Bishop. The next day being

<sup>1</sup> "Church Work in British Columbia," by Herbert H. Gowen (Longmans).

Sunday, the Bishop recommenced diocesan work by celebrating the Holy Communion, and preaching morning and evening to crowded congregations, in the new church, fitly called S. Peter's—the first church in the Rocky Mountains.

“At Kamloops, the visit was marked by a Confirmation on the Monday, and a conference with the clergy on the Wednesday. A parish conversazione was also held, and an address of welcome presented on behalf of the citizens of Kamloops.

“The more official welcome was given in the city of New Westminster, where a large number of friends, including the Executive Committee of the Diocese, met the Bishop and Mrs Sillitoe on October 17. An address was presented, and what was more, the affectionate greetings of all emphasized the gladness of heart with which the inhabitants of New Westminster again saw their Bishop and his wife.

“The year was marked by one other circumstance deserving of notice.

“On the Festival of S. Andrew an interesting event took place in the Church of the Holy Trinity, New Westminster, when a beautiful pastoral staff was presented to the Bishop in the name of the clergy and communicants of the diocese, as a token of personal love and esteem.”

Bishop Sillitoe and his wife were deservedly beloved, for they endeavoured to draw forth the best that was in all around them; and many a visit did they pay to spots even more inaccessible then than now, confronting dangers and hardships, to visit the Indians and settlers in the wilder parts. Mrs Sillitoe's letters quoted in “Church Work in British Columbia,” and the diary of the Bishop, set these forth in picturesque words.

Father Pat's work lay to some extent among the Indians. A few of his missionary excursions led him to their settlements, but not much record is left of his special intercourse with them. He did not know the language and had to rely on an interpreter. His friend Mrs Macartney relates with amusement, that when she asked him how he was getting on with the Indians, he replied: “All right. I know enough to talk

to them. I know *halo* is yes, and *noitka*, no." Whereas the very reverse is the case !

These two years at Donald were broken by a short visit to his home in Ireland, owing to the need of rest and comfort after an attack of mountain fever, which is akin to ague. He landed in Ireland on January 13th, and sailed again for British Columbia on May 8th, 1889. We can see by the anecdotes related of his activities on behalf of his flock, that he had exerted his strength beyond the powers of the human body. Weak and overstrained, he returned to the dear home in Wicklow County, where his father and brothers welcomed and cared for him, till he recovered strength sufficient to enable his eager spirit to press on to the work once more.

## CHAPTER VI

### LETTERS

THE following letters from Mr Irwin relating to this period of his career, will illustrate what has been said, and give a clearer idea of the manner of his life and work :—

“ PRINCETOWN, SIMILKAMBEEN,  
“ *Saturday 19th, 1885.*

“ DEAR B.—You will have been prepared no doubt for this heading by my last two letters. Here I am in the whirl of all kinds of excitement. First, as to the way I have got to this scene of action. I had a good ride on Friday week, from Kamloops, with Mr H., for about 38 miles, then we parted, he to Nicola, I to Douglas Lake. I put up with my friends the North of Ireland people, of whom I told you before. They were well and most kind ; I baptized their child, and had some shooting, and started to the lake on Saturday afternoon ; lost my way in the hills, and had quite a toss up as to where to go ; however, as on Friday, I wandered about keeping a certain spot in view, and at last found myself at the right place. No notice had arrived about service ; so I had to ride off round about and let them know I was there ; darkish job, this, but I had a man with me who knew the way. Had service last Sunday there at 11 ; good gathering. Afternoon rode 20 miles to Quilshana for evening service ; good number. Englishman there, a wanderer ; didn't see him afterwards. Slept with some friends at their nice house. Rode over to Nicola on Monday to find Mr H. very ill, dysentery ; couldn't go on. Heavy rain prevented us camping out, so I had to make up my mind to ride through to Similkameen in the day, although it was a long ride. Started at 5 A.M. on

Wednesday, having got up at 2.45, fed horse and got pack together, then off to awake an Indian who was to show me up the first 10 miles. He, poor chap, was asleep away down in his wigwam by a river, and it was a rum thing to find oneself out in the pitch dark morning searching for a tent across a horrid marsh, with a very spirited young mare four years old, then riding up to the tent and halloaing there till the sleep was broken and a voice from within crying out 'all right.' Then back I went and had a bite more breakfast, and was ready to be off in the biting cold breeze across the hills by an old trail. Indian showed me along till 6.30, then away I went, diving deep into unknown woods and the hills and streams *ad lib.*, following an old trail of the Hudson Bay Co. that they had had in '46. I can't tell you all I should like to, as it would be endless. The autumn tints have begun. Cotton trees quite golden, and scarlet shrubs thrown out by the dark pines, and all reflected in the clearest of mountain lakes, will beat any pen. Then as we rode through the bush the birds added new glories to the scene. One thing you must hear of: after driving through the forest you come out on a whole chain of lakes, round which the trail winds until you get tired of their beauties; one of the lakes, called the Blue Lake, is the very loveliest thing I've ever seen. The water is just the colour of the blue or green round your old breakfast cups; some ore or mineral causes the whole thing simply to look like one big emerald crystal. I can't describe how heavenly it was; and then just in the right place was a great weed with bright scarlet leaves that showed off the wonderful colour to perfection. Though this was more lovely than the others, yet all had their own charms, and I can only leave you to dream of endless lakes in a row, embedded in the finest fir-wood hills in the home of the deer and bear, and hardly broken by any but those feet who foot the trail—not a house the whole way, and the whole day I didn't meet one single human soul, and I travelled some 50 odd miles along that trail. I think I accomplished the ride well, as it is a stiff one and seldom done in less than two days. Camping out in the woods being the fashion here, little camp fires fringe the trail, and you can see how the big pines have their



middles burnt out by the campers. Well! I had a near shave of being out myself all night, and I suppose I should have camped, if I had not a good deal of that Irish Nil Desperandum in my blood, as when I got down off the hills on to these flats near here I could have given up myself for lost, as I knew Mr Allison's was on a river, and I was skirting a stream the whole time and yet never came to it; this was 6-30 to 7; it was pitch dark, but I chanced to meet a drunken Indian, who told me to keep the road, and so I did, but had to stick to it for 6 miles and then found myself on the brink of a steep bank ending in an Indian camp. The camp fire was blazing, and the Indians were all around their tents eating and gambling; so I gave up all hope of more than an Indian tent for the night. After halloaing and roaring at a fence round the camp, a nice Indian came out and pointed out Allison's house some few hundred yards away on the flat, so I was thankful, and had a good supper and went to bed, rolled up in blankets in one corner of a room. You would laugh to see me welcome the light of a house at last; and I found the best of good friends here, and they have such a comfortable place. On Wednesday I took it easy and went out with the boys here to give my horse some bunch grass up the hills, such a tear as we had. Now to get you into our shape here, I must let you know how we are fixed. Nothing but mines and gold is heard of here. The mines are just 12 miles away, but the men register here, so we see hundreds. There are all sorts and conditions of men—lawyers, farmers, cowboys from the United States and Manitoba, a jolly lot of rough cards, but rare good, fine-looking fellows and very hearty; and then more than a thousand Chinamen. Such is the pack there on the mines at Granite Creek. It was Wednesday evening; just as we were in the middle of supper I remember that an Indian, drunk and hurt, came to get something from the store, but he was not given anything at first, but like the widow he was stubborn and got a little something to eat. He complained of a hurt. Well, we had just lighted our pipes after supper and were sitting round the stove, when a great knock came to the door and in came a queer crowd. Three cowboys with clattering spurs, and armed to the teeth

with revolvers and rifles, came in with the terrible news of a man having been murdered up at the mines. A rowdy lot were riding madly about the camp and had been drinking, etc., when as one of the men was swinging his revolver round his head and going about, he happened to point it at the head of a friend of mine who was on a visit to the mines ; the ball struck him above the left eye, and it was the nearest chance he wasn't killed on the spot. But this is going to the end before you hear the exciting beginning of the story. Well ! the three boys who had come down from the mines reported the man dead, and they had started off amid a shower of bullets after the murderers. They rode the 12 miles up and down hill in half an hour they say. Then in our presence they were sworn in as constables, and sent off to hunt down the shooter. All night they rode, but could not get him, until late in the day they ran into him up at a farm in the hills, and he made off on a good horse, but under threats of being shot he came back and gave himself up, and was run in here just before I left for the mines. He's a cowboy and a rough one. Joke is that the three constables are also cowboys, so you see how good they are on a case of this kind. He was committed, and is to go down to New Westminster to-morrow. They are going to take this letter down with them, so you see it will be quite romantic. You can guess how very sad I was to think that my friend had been shot, especially as he has a wife and family ; and I should have gone up at once to see him if I had known the trail, but I had to put it off till next day. So on Thursday I started, and got upon a wretched beastly old screw of a horse that I was lent, and which I dragged up the hills and made him carry me down. Bah ! I never was so sick in my life. However, we got into the camp at last, and there I was glad to see N. was all right and walking about. He had a terrible shave, and only escaped by a miracle ; he was talking to some friends of mine as they were eating their supper, and had been laughing a minute before at the cook because he was afraid of the shooting, and next minute he was lying on his face on the ground. The cowboy at once made off whooping and yelling and was pursued by the others as you

have heard. I had a nice time in the mining camp ; lots of friends there, and had quite a number of visits to supper, etc. I shall have a service there to-morrow morning. The camp is in a big rough part of the country, and of course everything is terribly rough and ready ; but it is not a bad place. A creek runs into the river and forms a peninsula, and on that tongue is the camp. The hills run up perpendicular on all sides and are well wooded. The tents are comfortable but a bit rough ; no houses yet built, but some building ; a whole forest was round about there, but now there are no trees hardly on the tongue, all having been felled to make mining implements, etc. The gold is plenty and I have seen lots of it ; little wee pieces, as a rule, of all shapes, flat and bright ; other big bits worth seventy-eight dollars or so, and others something less. Men get cracked on the subject, and no wonder ; you could make your fortune in a morning if you had luck. It's a queer side of this rough life. I like the men, and they seem very nice as a rule. I wish though the whiskey was not in there ; it is playing the fool with most of them. To-day we have had here another excitement ; the Indians like the eagles are gathered together all round here from all parts. They got some whiskey here and were all drunk last night ; so we ran some white men in and have been holding Court here. The Indian Chief being sorry for his poor people, came to give evidence, and he seems a fine sort of fellow ; very unlike your picture chief, as he is dressed in ordinary Indian pants and shirt, and looks much like a back-woodsman with his long black hair and big moccassins. I was in fits of laughter as he was giving his evidence in Chinook, which is certainly an idiotic conglomeration. The real Indian is a mixture of clicks and chucks and gutterals, very like a bad sailor aboard ship, as he tries to repeat poetry to ease his soul and is sick at the same time.

"I must shut up now as I am hungry and it is lunch time, and this jobation is enough for at least four meals.—Yours,

"HARRY."

"QUILSHANNA, NICOLA,  
April 7th, 1886.

"DEAREST M.—I had some fairly rough days at the mines. The men have worked until the high water has driven them out, and have now to lie by for about six weeks till the ice and snow melt. It was by no means the best of roads or trails I had to travel over there. In fact, the very worst sort of walking for one whose feet are likely to be tender, as mine are still. Crawling along trails and sliding down ice slopes and scrambling up the steepest of precipices—and all this in big top boots, you can fancy the state my feet were in. The skin was off most of them and the heels were all raw. On Sunday last I had morning service in camp, and then made a sharp walk to Otter Flat (six miles) and had afternoon service at three o'clock. Next morning I started on a bit longer tramp, as I could get no horse, shouldering my saddle bags, which were by no means light, I started about 8 A.M. for a big 30 mile tramp. People assured me at the start I could not possibly get over the creeks and rivers, which were swollen very high and even took the horses to swim them. However, my Irish nature won't give in, and I started. You can fancy me trudging along a good trail through the most lovely lake and forest scenery, up and down heavy hills, with saddle bags so arranged that one was on my chest and the other on my back, by slipping my head through the hole which fits on to the back of the saddle. I can tell you it was no easy pack I had. Well, I had a real good start and a most glorious walk on the finest of spring mornings. Ice on the lakes still and snow on the hills, but the warm sun makes those winter signs diminish quick. The birds are all hard at work, trying to make up for their tuneless nature by twittering in the maddest, merriest way. Blue jays—little blue birds—great white owls and hawks, with a lot of little brownies with black top knots, wild geese and ducks *ad lib.* on the lakes; a cayote here and there crawling about—you can guess I enjoyed it well. Armed with a stout pilgrim's staff, I came to the first creek swollen high: this I crossed on a log, taking special pains to keep

upright across the deepest part of the river, knowing that if I went in I should have fine times with the saddle bags round my neck! Well, then, I crossed a couple more creeks, successfully walking the logs, and that is no easy matter, as you have to balance yourself with your pole, which you can get to the upper side of the log, and the force of the current keeps it jammed to the log, and gives you a good support. But you would have seen, no doubt, a woeful expression on my face when I came to the next river, a perfect torrent boiling and fussing away in grand style, no log or tree to be seen anywhere. Well, off I went up stream to search for something, and at last came to a good stout tree; but it was three feet under water and a big rush going over it. This was my only chance; so I got on to it, and by dint of a little balancing, I astonished myself by getting safely across. You would have laughed to have seen me going inch by inch across the stream, taking just about five minutes to get across the thirty yards. I then walked on hard to the house of one of my friends, and there had lunch on beans and bacon, cooked out in a tent on a couple of logs, Indian fashion. It was a good scene for life in the Far West; a dirty, travelled-looking individual, a poor imitation of a parson, sitting at one side of the log fire; a tin plate with his bacon and beans on it, and his tinney of tea; bread just cooked on the fire in a dirty pan. The other leading figures being a dirty smutty looking coon, son of a Canon, blackened with work and smoke: he was cook that day. Dress,—a pair of old gum boots, an old, very old shirt, and a beastly old pair of overalls as pants, completed his rig out. There were two Frenchmen besides him, who were even dirtier than he was. So you can form some idea of the Far West dirt. How grimy one gets to be sure! How you would have laughed to see me by the end of that 30 mile walk.

Excuse my plainness of speech, but we are and have to be very plain here. I got in to the half-way house all right in good time, best time on record for a pedestrian. A good night's sleep set me up, and yesterday morning I

started with a German to walk right through here ! That is, to finish up with 35 miles ; we marched along from 7 to 6, with one and a half hour's rest in the middle of the day, and I got in here fairly beat last evening, but none the worse for the tramp, except that my feet are sadly in want of skin. I am taking it easy to-day, and hope to have a nice little ride this afternoon to the foot of the Nicola lake (about ten miles), which will set me up again. The mines and miners are the roughest part of this country just now. It is perfectly astonishing the numbers that have trooped in from all countries. It would do your heart good to hear some of the ghastly tales the old miners have of nearly every wild country of the globe ; they are certainly the hardest, roughest, and yet best-hearted fellows alive. It has never been my lot to rub up against such an utterly fearless class of men. They go through the wildest countries in search of their darling gold, and no dangers daunt them. I could yarn for hours on their doings.—Yours,  
H. I."

" BEAR CREEK, SELKIRKS, E.,  
" *March 5th, 1887.*

" DEAREST B.—I must write you a line to tell you of one of the most weird things you ever heard of and what I have just gone through to-day. A few days ago up here in the Selkirks an avalanche came thundering down Mount Carrol, and came right across the valley and struck the track, turned right up grade and smashed into two engines and the snow-plough, burying them completely, and sixteen men with them ; nothing was to be seen of them but the end of the plough and the smoke stack of one engine and a spout of steam from the other engine, which was buried up altogether. Well, the slide came upon the men who were watching it come down the other side, before any of them could escape ; of course when the few men who were around saw this, they set in digging and got out ten, but six of the poor fellows were killed ; the men dared not go on digging for long, as avalanches were coming down all round them, and they were in peril of their lives. It was a strange scene and a heartrending one too ; they now have got all the bodies out ; one of them was the husband of a poor woman in Donald

whom I know. I had to break the news to her, and as there was no one to hurry up things for her, I started for Donald yesterday, and after a ride of 12 miles on an engine, and then a run of 5 miles to catch another train up the hills, I got up to Bear Creek last evening late. This morning we had to start for the camp where the bodies were left, and I think of all queer frisks this day's was the greatest I ever had. We got about ten men to carry a coffin, and then away we went with avalanches coming down all round us; we had to run from one snowshed to another, keeping a good look out for the avalanches, the roars of which always told us when they came, and the flurry of snow ahead of them makes them exactly like artillery booming away, and the smoke curling from the guns; and, true to the simile, the great snow or ice balls come thundering down with all the frightful force of cannon balls. Well—we had to climb over slides between the snowsheds, and that by a bad trail, over perhaps 30 feet of snow and trees, and you fancy that those 200 or 300 yards did not take us long to make. The scene of the accident was too awful and too weird to describe; all snow around piled up 100 feet, and there down in the hole the engines, and the graves of the poor six, one of whom we had to put in a coffin, and start back with along that fearful hillside, and run all the risks again. That was the strangest funeral procession that ever passed on earth; fancy avalanches rumbling and thundering around, and twelve men trailing across the hills with a coffin swinging on a pole; every man listening for the avalanche above him and going as fast as he could across the 200 yards between the sheds. I can tell you it made one think of the six-hundred ride into the valley of death. However, thank God, we got through all safe, but we don't want to have to do it again. I am going in to Donald to-morrow with the coffin.—Ever Yours,

“HARRY.”

“DONALD,  
“March 8th, 1887.

“DEAREST B.—I had a fine time of it last Sunday getting that poor fellow's body down. I told you we had some horrid

risks to run from the slides in carrying him across the hillside, and that was the weirdest funeral that the wildest imagination could paint; you can only think of great gigantic heights up to 4000 feet above you, and some 20 feet of snow on the hillsides; then you hear the rumbling like the rolls of thunder, you see the smoke (snow) rolling from guns and the slide rushes into the gulch below you at 100 miles a minute. No place can give you a better idea of the power of Nature and the powerlessness of man. There is no railroad to be seen; the only things to mark the line are the tops of telegraph poles, or the butt ends here and there where they have been turned endwise. Well, we felt most thankful to have escaped as we did, and when we returned you should have seen how pleased the boys were to see us back safe, as there were three great slides while we were away, and they came down just behind us; of course there is no chance of a man living if he is buried, as the slides will have to be blown out by powder; they are as solid as granite and just as heavy, in fact they are packed into ice. Well, Sunday morning I thought I could make down the hill to Donald, which was about 28 miles off. I had gangs of six men to help me to drag the coffin on a toboggan. I placed out three gangs and had to haul myself; and when not hauling I was breaking track through 3 feet of snow in the middle of the track. We toiled along at about 2 miles an hour, and about 4 P.M. met three engines ploughing their way through the snow up the hill. These picked us up on our way down, and helped us on about 8 miles. Then I wired for an engine from Donald, which came out and brought us in just by midnight; that was the hardest Sunday's work I've ever done, and hope it will be the last I'll have to do of that kind: of course I should not have done it unless the poor wife was here fretting her heart away that her husband's body was lying miles away in the snow. Hoping you will be out here some day to see the places that men can run such risks in. Love to all, your loving

"HARRY."