Christmas, or, at farthest, at Easter. Every officer in the army knows that; anyone who told them the opposite was called names, ridiculed, and laughed at—he was either a fool or a knave or (as they said of me) both.' But they speedily realised that the valiant and distinguished General was a true prophet when he foretold that 'the war would be of a nature which they had not the smallest idea of.'

SKETCHES OF TRAVEL

XV.—CANON AND MINE

By the Editor.

'Curved is the line of beauty,
Straight is the path of duty.'

Egypt boasts a railway that runs for five-and-forty miles in a straight line through the desert sands. New South Wales has, however, a bigger wonder of this little class, and can, I think, in a record-making and record-breaking age, claim the record here. For does not its piece of railway line from Nyngan to Bourke run as level as a billiard table and as straight as the path of duty or of light for a hundred and twenty-six miles? On the level floors of wind-swept, sand-rasped desert and water-formed plain such things can be. But in the heaved up billows of the stone and scoriae of the mighty Rockies the railroad engineer must follow the line of least resistance. And this will commonly coincide with the valleys that its chief rivers have, in the course of long ages, gnawed and scooped out of the hard-ribbed hills. The Canadian Pacific Railway runs through the valleys of British Columbia's three mightiest rivers—the Fraser, the Thompson, and the Columbia. Like Tennyson's brook, it 'winds about and in and out' in endless curves and thus prolongs to over six hundred miles the traveller's enjoyment of those marvellous scenic attractions which are unsurpassed, and probably unequalled, on any railway line upon our little planet. To the sightseer who loves to look upon the face of nature in her wildest and grandest moods, the winding path of the Canadian Pacific Railway through the Rocky ranges is indeed

A Line of Beauty.

Here and there the rapidly curving track through the everlasting hills is diversified by a comparatively straight run of a few miles from North Bend to Lytton, for instance, there are twenty-seven miles of fairly straight track by the Fraser's banks. Most of it is along the wild and rocky canon or gorge of the rushing Fraser, past yellow, irregular, and unpainted Indian villages and farms, with their strangely decorated cemeteries and pretty little spired Catholic churches. The last remnants of the old Cariboo wagon-road are still to be seen along the left bank of the river. Portions of it overhang the gorge, its rotten timbers still supported by long, slender poles that in the distance look as flimsy and unsubstantial as the legs of a spider.

At Lytton the Thompson flows into the Fraser. Here we parted regretfully from the noble Fraser. As we whirled along, its broad stream disappeared to the north between two massive lines of jagged, moonlit mountain peaks that stood like battalions of ancient guards along the course of its royal progress from the icy lakes and perpetual snows of the far interior of the Cariboo. The junction of the Thompson and the Fraser forms a rich green delta. In the old wild days this delta was

The Cockpit of the Indian Tribes

or nations for many a league of the mountains round about. Here they brained, skewered, hacked, hewed, and scalped each other in many a fierce encounter. The rich alluvial soil of the delta is still bestrewn with flint arrow-heads that brought wounds or death to many a painted brave.

At Lytton we head along the winding valley of the Thompson. The mountains draw together, and we plunge into the Thompson Canon. It resembles that of the Fraser and is indescribable in its wild and rugged grandeur. We watched its changing beauties in a clear and cloudless moonlight as we sped on for hours through the scarred and rugged mountains towards Kamloops Lake. The scene was fascinating to a degree, and our little New-Zealand-Australian-Canadian party sat on the end platform of the car till past the witching hour of that bright, mellow, cloudless spring night, with keen eyes alert to miss nothing of the charms that stood now fully revealed, now veiled, anon half-suggested, as shine or shadow played upon the scene. It was well past twenty-two o'clock (10 p.m.) when our train snaked its tortuous way through the scene of desolation which has been aptly named

The Black Canon.

It is a deep, tireless, gloomy, winding gorge through which the Thompson swirls and froths and eddies. When Douglas Sladen passed through the dour gloom of this wild and desolate-looking region he fancied he was going to be whisked into eternity, so perilous (said he) seems the railway hung on the river ledges, leaping ravines on high trestles, and burrowing through topply-looking promontories, 'while the river below looks as pure and innocent as a trout stream.' But the good man was as safe as if he were dozing in our north express on the Canterbury Plains. Then for twenty delightful miles we skirted the southern shore of Kamloops Lake—a noble sheet of mountain girt water that danced to the moon-beams as we passed. In the circling hills beyond the far-off ripples are quicksilver mines of which good and great things are prophesied by those who profess to know.

The district through which we passed is the border of British Columbia's great

North-Central Gold-lands.

Ashcroft, through which we passed shortly after 11 p.m., is the point of departure for the great Cariboo and other northern goldfields. Farther back—ten miles from Lytton—we had passed Nicomen. It was about twenty-one o'clock (9 p.m.). The little mining village was alight, and the genial State official who was our guide, philosopher, and friend showed us a spot on the opposite bank of the Thompson where the first gold in British Columbia was discovered in 1857. In Victoria (Australia) a decade of the golden ore did more to people and develop the country than would have been effected by a cycle of the golden fleece. In the early days of flocks and herds the progress of Victoria had been that of an ox-team. But when Esmond discovered payable 'wash' at Clunes and the Kavanagh brothers followed up this by their sensational finds 'on' Ballarat, the world of adventure emptied itself into Victoria, and the neglected, struggling, and semi-bankrupt end of the Mother Colony became at a bound the richest goldfield in the world. The history of Victoria (Australia) repeated itself, though in a far less sensational way, in the rugged mountain fastnesses of British Columbia.

Population Swarmed in

and swept in a struggling procession along the wild and narrow trails of the hostile red man, and, later on, over the now abandoned Cariboo wagon road and into the deep heart of the mountains where the golden treasure lay a-plenty. Clunes, where Victoria's first payable gold was found, is now in squalid decay. It bears the pathetic look of a place that has seen better days. So does Nicomen. It made history. It has not made a fortune. And some of the history that it made, is it not written as on a mural tablet to its own dead and vanished greatness? But if Nicomen shrivelled, British Columbia grew. Its gold production in 1858 (all placer or alluvial) was valued at 705,000 dollars (about £141,000). Last year the placer gold won in the province had risen to the value of 1,073,140 dollars (about £214,628), its lode gold to 4,888,269 dollars (about £977,654)—total, some £1,192,282. New Zealand's gold yield for the year ending March 31, 1902, was £1,680,382. Our rich young country poured into the capacious lap of the world's wealth up to 1901 no less a sum than £57,406,100 in gold. British Columbia's contribution in gold to the world's pile up to and including last year represents a grand total of £37,945,707—a very respectable amount from a land that was till 1886 extremely difficult of access, that is still wild and rugged to an extraordinary degree, and a great part of which is unexplored or only partially explored even at the present day.

British Columbia is extraordinarily

Rich in Coal.

Its production last year amounted to 1,397,894 tons of coal and 128,015 tons of coke. Both represent a total value of £966,451—equal to one-third of the whole coal-production of the Dominion. Only £28,702 of all Canada's gold production in 1901 (£1,063,740) was raised outside British Columbia. In the same year silver to the value of £598,733 was produced in the Dominion. Of this amount no less than £576,949 came out of British Columbian mines. The Dominion's yield of copper in 1901 amounted to £1,320,020. Two-thirds of this—or, to be more precise, £889,393—was produced in British Columbia. The lead production of Canada in that year was valued at £439,957. All of this except what was represented by £39,400 was won from the mines of the western most province. British Columbia is extraordinarily rich in mineral as in forest wealth.

In Canada, as in the United States, 'westward

The Star of Empire

takes its way.' An almost unexampled flood-tide of immigration is pouring over the rich prairies that stretch away in rolling leagues to the Rockies. John Soule's