

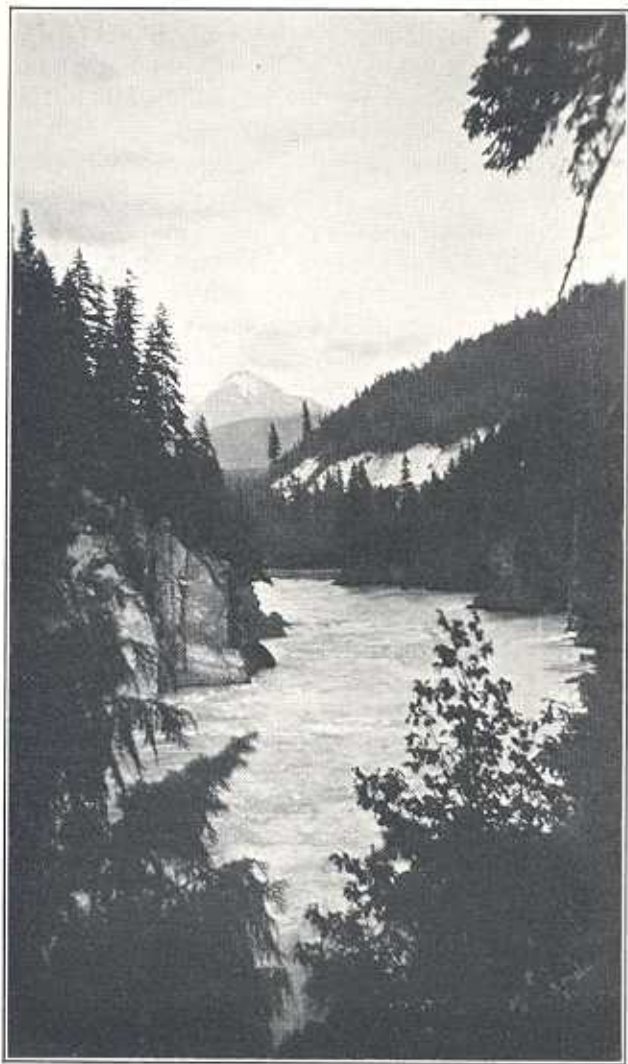
CHAPTER XI

FROM WAITABIT CREEK TO BEAVERMOUTH

On the morning of July 6 my tent was pulled down, the boat loaded, and I am ready to leave Waitabit Creek and "tackle" Redgrave Cañon. Has the reader the nerve to accompany me? If so, we'll be off. If not, stand on the railway track, just below the narrows, and watch what happens.

The plan I had formulated is adhered to. Turning the boat stern first, as the cañon is entered, everything goes well until reaching the narrow place and the point of the boat touches the rushing current on the right when, immediately, the left hand oar and its rowlock flew upward out of the socket, and without warning the COLUMBIA turned half way around with the bow down stream. The rowlock was tied to the gunwale with a stout line, and hastily replacing it I looked up quickly to see where we were with reference to the maelstrom. Not three seconds had elapsed between the time the oar unshipped and was replaced, and we were entirely past the place of danger and in safety. There was no more rough water for a mile and a half to Redgrave station and it was soon reached.

The little incident of the oar becoming detached at a critical time taught me a lesson. I did not want a repetition of the occurrence and decided to make it impossible. The rowlocks were of the U-shaped kind, of malleable cast iron, with a stem



THE "NARROWS" OF REDGRAVE CAÑON.

fitting into a metal socket set in a block nailed fast to the gunwale. I had had the neck of the "U" closed just enough so that the oar could not be raised directly out of the rowlock but had first to be drawn inward about a foot before it could be released. About each oar, at its normal rowing seat, leather sleeves were tacked, at the upper end of which a collar, made of small cotton rope enclosed in leather, was also tacked around the oar. The rowlocks were then loosely tied to the gunwales with strong cords. This arrangement prevented the oars from being lifted up without taking the rowlocks with them, and there was no danger of either rowlocks or oars getting away.

The defect in the arrangement was the possibility, that at any time an uplifting wave would unship both oar and rowlock. What I wanted was some way whereby the effect of the wave would be nullified and yet the oar, and attached rowlock, could be instantly released at any time by the rower. This is how the desired purpose was attained. At the upper end of the rowlock stem is a small collar under the "U." I cut two strips of leather about six inches long and three inches wide, and in the center of each made a round hole just the size of, and into which, the metal stems were inserted, and the leather forced over each collar to a position just below the "U." The rowlocks were then set in their respective sockets and the attached leather strip was tacked, lengthwise, across each rowlock block, after which the rowlocks were tied to the gunwales, as before. So secured, whenever it was necessary, the oars could be withdrawn inward and removed, or, in case

of emergency, a sudden jerk would pull the rowlock collar through the leather strip, and yet a wave had not the power to do so. Thus arranged I never again had trouble with the oars even in the roughest water.

Redgrave station comprises nothing but a siding and a section house. Here the section crew make their home on a small bench above the River. Landing at the foot of the trail that is used by the men to reach the River for water, I tied to the limb of a convenient tree, and walking down the railroad track two miles came to the head of Kitchen Rapids. The River was about 300 feet wide at the head of the rapids, and it was there that the bad features existed. On the right was the remains of a submerged dam that ran diagonally into the water and threw a strong current of troubled breakers clear across to the left shore. On the left side, not far from the shore and just above the breakers, was a large, flat, submerged rock with the water dashing madly over it and surging up and down with spasmodic regularity. It was plainly a case of lining down the left hand shore for at least half a mile. Below that was a swift current for another half mile, and some breakers which could be easily avoided.

After sizing up Kitchen Rapids I started to walk back to Redgrave. On the way down I had passed a red shanty on the River bank. It is known as the watchman's shanty. A man is kept here, constantly, at a salary of \$125 per month, as a lookout at what is called "Calamity Curve," a curve of the railroad, near a short tunnel just above the shanty, where the

mountain sides have a fashion of sending rocks down on the track. It is necessary for the watchman to visit, and inspect, Calamity Curve just before the arrival of each train; and if any obstruction is on the track too large for him to remove he must place torpedoes on the rails to stop the train.

As I repassed the watchman's shanty I met the watchman himself, Mr. August Berlin, who urged me to camp in his cabin overnight, as he intended to go to Golden that evening for provisions, but would return before morning. I agreed to the proposition, brought my boat down from Redgrave, tied her up at the shanty, and cooked my meals on Berlin's stove. The place was a two-room affair and I slept on a couch in the front room.

I have frequently used the term "lining" in this narrative, and as it will soon have to be resorted to, I will endeavor to make clear to those unfamiliar with it what it is. It is called by the French-Canadians "cordelling." The derivation of both terms is plain—the use of a line or cord.

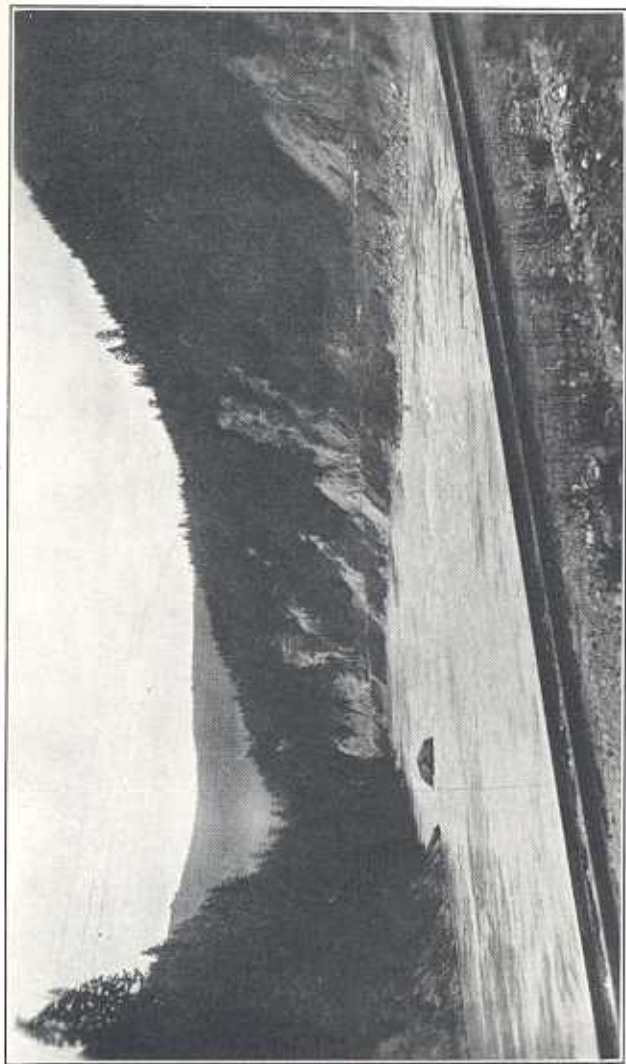
In navigating against a swift current, too strong to be overcome by rowing or paddling, the canoe, rowboat, batteau, or whatever watercraft used, is taken up stream in this manner: a strong rope, usually a hundred feet in length is tied, at one end, to the bow; one, two, or more men grasp the free end of the rope, and, walking along the shore, tow the boat after them, which, as she has a constant tendency to come ashore, requires the attention of an additional man carrying a pike pole. The pike pole is from 12 to 16 feet long and in its larger end is a sharp metal point, and sometimes a hook. With

the pole in his hands the additional man walks on the shore, alongside the boat, and sticking the sharp point into her at the bow forces her outward and holds her offshore as he walks. Sometimes the water is so shallow near shore, or so cluttered up with rocks, that it is necessary for all hands to wade to get outside of obstructions. Rubber hip-boots are generally worn when lining, although some men prefer to do their wading in leather footwear.

It is possible for one man to line a boat upstream. This is done with a shorter tow rope, and by using what is called a "bridle," which means that a short piece of rope is fastened about one-fourth of the way back from the bow and its other end secured to the tow line not far in front of the boat, so that the two ropes will form a $-\angle$ which is adjusted in such way that its rear arm takes the pulling strain and will incline the bow outward giving her a tendency to cut diagonally into the current. At the same time the boatman must carry a light pike pole in one hand and occasionally shove out the boat which, at times, persists in coming ashore. He will also, sometimes, have to resort to wading, and then grasps the boat at the bow and drags her, as at such times the tow line is a hindrance rather than an aid. This is slow and tedious work, but it can be done. At one time I alone lined a twenty-foot boat upstream with a bridle, twenty miles, and was only prevented from going farther by a cañon where the walls were too high and steep for lining. My rate of progress was generally two miles a day, but occasionally when the going was good I made three miles.

Lining down stream is just the opposite of the method used in going upstream. The boat is kept pushed off shore with the pike pole, the current carrying it down, and the boatman holding fast to the tow line. For one man to line down stream is about as tough a proposition as anyone wants to undertake, for in spite of everything he can do, the boat is constantly against the shore, her sides grinding on the rocks. In the rapids there is always a side swell from the violently agitated water in the channel, which produces a surf like that of the ocean, although on a smaller scale, and this has a serious effect on the sides of the boat or canoe if she can not be kept off shore.

The first night I passed in Berlin's cabin, a Mr. Seward, one of the section men, came down from Redgrave and acted as watchman. I remained three nights in the cabin, and still Berlin did not return; and becoming impatient at his continued absence, on the morning of July 9 I got ready to depart from the place. Mr. Seward was still performing the watchman's duties, and as he had ample time between trains, agreed to help me line past the bad places in the rapids below. I could have done the work alone, but as two men can line better and more easily than one the offer was very acceptable. We started out together and got safely by the worst places, although at one section, on account of numerous rocks that had rolled in the water from the railroad embankment I was compelled to remove the boatload, carry it a quarter of a mile, and drop the boat down empty. Re-loading, I parted from Mr. Seward and getting aboard the boat shot the



KITCHEN RAPIDS AT CURVE ON C. P. R.

lower end of the rapids without difficulty, and by 3 o'clock P. M. was at Beavermouth, and went into camp on a grassy flat, at the mouth of Quartz Creek, and near the remains of a sawmill that had burned down—the flat being littered with charred timbers, twisted iron rods, and rusty boilers. This is the best camp ground I had so far on the trip, being shady, dry, clean, comparatively free from mosquitoes, with good water within fifty feet of the tent, and plenty of firewood available from the old mill.