MOUNTAINEERING IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES.

By S. E. S. ALLEN.

II.

Next morning I called W. and F. at 4.30, and in an hour we were ready to start for a trial upon Mount Temple. In ascending Sentinel Pass we kept to the left, as before, and, after cutting steps up the ice-slope, reached the bad rock-slope of which I have spoken. We were longer upon this than upon any other portion of equal length upon the whole mountain, and when we reached the top of the pass the possibility of three or four thousand feet more of such slopes was far from reassuring.

After a rest of a few moments we began a gradual ascent from the col on the E. side of the arête, and, proceeding up a wide gully set with a series of ledges, we were soon upon the sloping mountain side, among a great number of low buttresses or columns, obstructing the view while near and all looking alike at a distance. It was extremely difficult, therefore, to follow the route that I had outlined from the Minnestimma lakes. At length, however, we came upon a level with the top of the first or lower of the two cliffs or 'steps' seen in profile from the camp. Leaving now the steeper ledges by which we had turned this cliff, we ascended diagonally upward to the right along an easy slope of smooth rock partially covered by a stratum of slippery scree, reaching the foot of the hard quartzite cliffs or stratification, which forms a continuation of the second or higher of the two 'steps' above mentioned. The surmounting of this stratification was the doubtful point of the ascent, for the cliffs were steep and the ledges few, and it would be necessary to try one of the watercourses or steep gullies. After skirting the base of these cliffs for a considerable distance, and finding no gully sufficiently attractive, we finally chose one that led us to within about 20 ft. of the desired level. We left it here, and by a series of manœuvres along the ledges to the right succeeded in gaining the easy slope above.

At this point a suggestion was made by F. that we continue up the E. side of the arête, which looked about as good as the W. side had done from camp. W. was in favour of the W. side, in which view I finally concurred, and we immediately ascended a small snowfield and crossed the sharp ridge, marking the spot in order to recognise it on our returning. And now for the first time since leaving Sentinel Pass we looked down upon our camp and the Wastach Valley.

The remainder of the ascent to the summit was along the W. side of the arête up an easy slope of limestone. The cliffs to the E. steepened as we advanced, and had we adopted the suggestion of F. we would probably have been beaten. Some of the gorges upon this side were very grand as seen from the arête, the contrast of the yellow limestone cliffs and white snow in the hollows being very beautiful.

At noon we reached the summit, where we built a cairn in a con-

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spicuous place against the snow. A curving cornice, rising and overhanging the N. face, shut off our view of Bow Valley and of Laggan. All the peaks of the group appeared like spectres through the haze, and only the summit itself could be photographed. There were a number of cornices on the E. side of the arête, which made fair photographs.*

The western, southern, and eastern ridges of Mount Temple meet in a summit of broken rock, corniced to the N. Our camp was visible, a dash of white by the river, 4,800 ft. below us. The Sentinel and Cathedral looked insignificant beneath us, and the Wastach and Wenkchemna Valleys † with their peaks and glaciers lay mapped out for our inspection. When we looked down upon the beautiful Wastach Valley, shining with its green meadows, its darker forests, its sapphire glaciers, its graceful peaks and silver stream, we seemed translated to some fair scene in the Italian Tyrol. The other valley was all ice and rock and snow, swept with avalanches from and guarded by the dark walls of the stately Crest, and seemed like some frowning recess of the Oberland. On a clear day the view should be indeed wonderful.

We descended to the place where we had come up upon the arête, and crossing here retraced our steps to the easy slope of scree. Missing our point of ascent up the cliffs by some mischance, we were obliged to descend by a steep gorge, near the bottom of which W. was lowered by F. to a ledge below, and F. in turn by me, I descending with their assistance in safety. The rest of the descent to Sentinel Pass was made without difficulty. We descended from the pass on the southern side to avoid the ice-slope and loose rocks. For a time we were almost directly under a 'rock-shoot' on the Sentinel, and this side should never be used in ascending. A descent, however, can be made more quickly, and the rocks are better than upon the northern side of the slope.

I paused upon the grass-slopes to admire the sunset glow upon Mount Temple, lighting its summit with crimson and silver. The ice-slopes of the Sentinel glowed like molten metal, save where the great black aiguilles, rising like watch-towers from the shining surface, cast long shadows on the ice. One could almost fancy he heard the tinkling bells of herds upon the meadows, and the peace and serenity of the Alpine evening was restful and delicious to the three tired climbers, as was the welcome supper prepared by H., who had seen us with telescope upon the summit.

I cannot leave the narrative of this climb without commenting upon the unusual—even for him—energy and precision shown by W., who, at his own request, took the lead upon the most difficult portion of the mountain, and instantaneously discerned the proper route at the most critical point. Truly superb was the work of F., who, but a few short weeks before, had been crippled by his distressing accident on

* The peak has been triangulated at 11,658 ft. Our aneroid reading approximated somewhat closely to this.

† I now consider more convenient the English names 'Paradise' and 'Desolation,' respectively applied by W. to these valleys, but to avoid confusion will retain these Indian names in the remainder of this account.

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Mount Lefroy. Considering the almost equally arduous day preceding on Hazel Peak, it was only prudent for him to forego any further severe ascents. W. had scientific work demanding his attention on our return to Lake Louise, and since H. wished to do some further shooting—(a description of his route would be a thrilling narrative; the calm nonchalance with which he crossed treacherous slopes and cols was admirable) –and G. was already planning his departure, I decided upon a reconnaissance of the S. side of Mount Green.

I went up to Hector on the morning train and started up the valley at 8 A.M., following the east bank of the stream. After an hour among fallen and burnt timber I reached the Narao Lakes * in the centre of a broad valley. To my right was an irregular peak with numerous small glaciers. To my left, further on, a glacial amphitheatre, in the foreground of which stood a vast solitary column, many hundred feet high, guarding the entrance. Its fine symmetry was enhanced by the background of blue and white and the foreground of forest green.

This amphitheatre I did not explore. I then believed its sky-line to be the notch upon Mount Green, but am now quite sure that it is the western side of Mount D'Espine.

There are occasional evidences of the old trail to Ottertail River. It starts off from Hector through the burnt timber boldly enough, but soon loses itself, reappearing again on the E. side of the valley above the Narao Lakes, where for some distance it is excellent. Various spring avalanches have buried it in places. It should be put in order, as it leads to one of the grandest sections of the Rockies. †

Continuing along the river bank through very rough timber, I came upon a beautiful cataract. Further up, I followed a stream flowing from the left to the gorge whence it issued. Here a furious blast of wind nearly knocked me over, and I have known this as the Gorge of the Winds. A waterfall descended from a hanging glacier above, but was scattered in spray by gusts before reaching the bottom. The peak at the head of this gorge containing the hanging glacier is Mount Huber. No ascent need be attempted from the Gorge of the Winds.

As it was getting late I returned to Hector. It was evidently impossible to do anything without making an extended expedition. ‡

* As I have known them for convenience of reference. I am not aware whether they have names or not.

† The region has been repeatedly visited by Colonel O'Hara, who, I understand, speaks most highly in its praise.

‡ These valleys have been delineated upon a small-scale sketch-map of certain portions of the 'Rocky and Selkirk Mountains,' by Messrs. Drewry and MacArthur, in *Ann. Rep. Dep. Int.* 1892, p. 71, the same containing the article (p. 75) by J. J. MacArthur, D.L.S. His description (p. 75) seems to indicate Lake Oeesa, which he has located on the sketch map. From his description the views from the more westerly divides fully equal in grandeur those nearer the Crest. 'From one station,' he says, 'I counted sixteen alpine lakes, one of which is more strikingly beautiful than any other I have ever seen. It is about ½ mile in length, and lies between two high spurs to the E. of the pass, at an altitude of about 8,000 ft. A steep glacier comes in at the E. end, and the water, undermining the ice, causes bodies to fall off, leaving a clear blue face, and the surface of the lake is, in consequence of the falling ice, dotted with miniature icebergs.'

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Accordingly, I made arrangements with Yule Carryer, an Indian of considerable education, employed by the railroad near Field, to accompany me the following Thursday. He had never been to the region I intended visiting, and was very glad to join me.

On Tuesday, the following day, G. and I ascended Goat Mountain. This peak on the E. bank of Lake Louise is second only to Hazel Peak as a scenic point. The panorama extends from Mount Temple on the E. to Mount Whyte on the W., embracing the fine glaciers of Hazel Peak, Mount Lefroy, and Mount Green. I had ascended Goat Mountain in the summer of 1893, before the trail to the Saddle was made, and the ease of this present ascent was a great contrast to the other.

After an unsuccessful plan on Thursday to get a horse across the swollen Bow River and Bath Creek to carry provisions for my Hector expedition, I took them down by train on Friday, and started with Carryer up the stream, each carrying 20 lb. packs.

Keeping high above the valley, we passed the first amphitheatre below the great column. In order to explore the next we deposited our packs upon a rock and followed the gorge to its head, where a small hanging glacier several hundred feet above barred further advance. Returning to our packs we proceeded up the valley just at tree-line, watching the unbroken walls for gullies or other possibilities of ascent. At length I recognised ahead of us the Gorge of the Winds and the subordinate ridge E. of it that I named Wiwaxy. Stopping at 4 o'clock by a pretty waterfall just before reaching the gorge, we explored the rock-slope above, easily accessible from this point. This we followed round until we looked down into the Gorge of the Winds, but returned without observing any way of ascent up the colossal walls rising to our left, and made a resting-place in a hollow of the heather slope, whence at a glance we could survey the valley beneath, with its lakes and river and peaks and glaciers beyond, while the wind in the tamarack boughs made harmony with the music of the waterfall.

Continuing up the valley next morning we were gradually forced to descend as we rounded the Wiwaxy ridge, reaching the river bed near a small lake, which I have known as Trout Lake.

Soon we came upon the western end of as beautiful a lake as I have ever seen. While showing neither glaciers nor snow upon the immediate peaks, the immense walls to the left and the cliffs and ideally pyramidal peak to the right formed a foreground of wonderful grandeur. The N.W. end on which we stood fringed the emerald water with a growth of pine. The S.E. end facing us was encircled with cliffs 500 ft. in height, from whose summit, piled high with the rocks of an old moraine, three slender waterfalls leaped into the lake. Above these, as foreground, glistened far behind the distant snow, suggesting an amphitheatre of alpine splendour. This lake, about a mile in length and slightly less in width, I have known as Lake O'Hara.

Ascending the cliffs upon our left by a gully we reached the glacial dam. The bed of the ancient glacier behind this is occupied by a

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very small lake, at the base of the sharp peak of which I spoke, and which I called by the Indian equivalent, Yukness.

The stream at the head of this lake has cut a sinuous course resembling a rough letter S in a series of exquisite cascades down the hard stratification that lies behind, above which are a number of tiny lakes; surmounting another cliff, a scene of great beauty awaited us.

The grey quartzite lay in slabs before us, level as a floor and polished by ancient ice. From the grooves and cracks of this ancient pavement grew long grass, as in the streets of some deserted city. As we stepped upon its surface our hot faces were cooled by a whiff from the ice-fields, and before us, the grey pavement gently sloping to meet it, lay a placid lake, a dark blue circle of about ½ mile in diameter. The glaciers clustered around its further end, whence floating blocks of ice dotted with white the sapphire surface, while behind and above rose the slopes of a grand amphitheatre, their ice-fields glowing like Pentelic marble in the mellow light of the afternoon sun, like a vast Dionysiac theatre, the upper tier of seats outlined against a Grecian sky.

Depositing our packs not far from the shore of the lake, we crossed the stream and gained the top of the lower glacier on the right. From this point we had a complete view of the gorge rising at right angles above the lake on the far left, and already partially seen from the end. It was of broken rock, and looked possible, providing the lower slopes of cliff and glacier could be ascended. Deciding upon the best route for the ascent, we returned to our packs, and passed a very cold night.

Awakened next morning by the loud cries of a flock of ptarmigan, we started around the rock-slopes on the left bank and connected with the ledges above. Hardly 200 ft. above the lake Carryer was attacked with mountain-sickness, and seemed unable to proceed. As he was quite comfortable when not moving, I determined to ascend without him a little distance, in order to investigate the feasibility of reaching the gorge, and reached the dry glacier above. When this began to slope upward I took to the moraine on the left, and reached the bottom of the gorge. Owing to the instability, I hesitated to proceed alone. At this juncture I saw Carryer below me, on the glacier, ascending rapidly, and completely recovered from his attack. He was ascending the rocks upon the right, having crossed the dry glacier, and seemed to be making better progress than I. To cross over at this point, however, was troublesome, owing to a sharp ice arête that divided the slope. So I kept along the margin of this, getting all the while into steeper and more unstable stuff, until I reached the base of a great cliff, whose right side was encircled by the ice arête, and whose left side was altogether impassable. To cross the arête would be loss of valuable time, so I kept up the narrow gully between the ice and cliff. Soon I was obliged to take to the ledges of the cliff. There was not far to climb. A foothold, a couple of handholds, a wriggle, a moment of doubt, and I lay poised upon a fine ledge, whence ascent to the col was less difficult. Carryer had found easier work on the right side, and was awaiting me on the summit.

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We were standing on top of the 'Death-trap,' 10,000 ft.* above the sea, the col connecting Mount Green to the left and Mount Lefroy to the right, which W. and I had seen from below the Notch in 1893, and had then given its name from the frequency with which avalanches from Mount Green poured into the narrow valley leading up to it. Down into this, in curving folds, swept the slopes of ice, breaking, as the angle increased, into ice-falls and crevasses. Far below was the Green Glacier, partially seen between the walls on either side. The summit of Mount Green was not seen until we had ascended the lower slopes of Mount Lefroy, but the great ice-walls crowning its gigantic cliffs had never looked so near.

But the further ascent of Mount Green from this point was impossible, or, more properly, impracticable for two men. The cliffs rose on the left in a series of outward-sloping ledges, covered with unstable limestone *débris*, such as I had just encountered, and apparently much worse. In addition to the instability of the footholds, a slip might incur a drop upon the sloping glacier below, and a descent of nearly 3,000 ft. to the bottom of the Death-trap. Furthermore, to gain the first ledge necessitated an ascent over a pile of rock sloping off on the left to the cliffs, and on the right to the glacier.

Mount Lefroy rose from the right of the col † in steep, almost unbroken, slopes of grey glistening ice, interspersed with aiguilles and towers, and, as 1,500 ft. of step-cutting presented no particular attractions to me at that time, I made no attempt to ascend it. ‡

The view backward and downward was very fine. The gorge whence we had come looked unearthly, and Lake Oeesa (or ice, as I had named it), at 10 o'clock, still dark green in the morning shadows, seemed infinitely far below. A roar upon Mount Ringrose opposite, a cloud of yellow dust concealing half the side of that great pyramid, and a sea of rolling stones upon the glacier below announced a fall of rock down the only visible couloir upon that peak. Thus do the giant Rockies of the watershed sweep with artillery their avenues of approach. Mount Hungabee seen in profile also presented a very grand

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* The party led by Mr. P. S. Abbott during the past summer obtained, I believe, an aneroid reading of 9,800 ft. for this col. It is doubtless more correct than mine, which was, like a very large number of my heights and distances, only an estimated one.

† A proposition has been made, in which I heartily concur, to name this pass in memory of Mr. Philip S. Abbott, who, in the past summer, in an ascent straight up from the col, lost his life through an accident when the summit of Mount Lefroy was almost within his grasp. That it was a pass and not merely a col he demonstrated by reaching it from the Lake Louise side. I believe his sad death is the first fatality in the 'mountaineering' records of the Rocky mountains of Canada. Mr. Abbott's death is a great loss to mountaineering, for apart from his record on the Alps, he had already conquered Mounts Hector, Stephen, and others.

‡ While there is a possibility of a traverse around the W. slopes from the col to the snow plateau above the W. buttress (which would be best made early in the season, as at this time this W. face was almost an unbroken sheet of grey ice), yet the couloir from the Green Glacier on the Lake Louise side has always seemed more attractive to me.

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appearance. While I was taking photographs and bearings Carryer was building a cairn.

After lunching by a little glacial pool, whose rills ran on either side to the Atlantic and the Pacific, we descended the gorge by the side up which Carryer had come, reaching our 'camp' at 4 o'clock.

Returning to Lake Yukness we camped for the night, and next morning ascended the Wiwaxy Pass, in order to further study the cliffs of Mounts Huber and Green. After a hard pull up the watercourse above Lake Yukness we finally gained the top, 8,500 ft. above the sea, and beheld the most consummate view, from an artistic standpoint, that I have seen in the Rockies.*

From N. to N.E. the walls of Mount Huber shut off all view, but the valley of Lake Oeesa to the E.N.E. was a delight to the eye. The whole course of the winding stream flowing from the blue lake in the icy amphitheatre was mapped out as on a chart, together with its chain of tiny lakes, as far as the superb Lake O'Hara. The eye swept from Glacier Dome (as I called that portion of the Lefroy wall above Lake Oeesa) over the series of wonderful pyramids, past Mounts Ringrose, Hungabee, and Yukness, nearer, to the S. Then further to the right, in the distance, Mount Biddle towered like a giant, and a portion of the Opabin Pass and the greater part of that valley upon the N.W. side were visible. Then other distant peaks with Mount Odaray (cone mountain) bearing numerous small glaciers, in the foreground, and the other peaks previously seen from Opabin Pass; while below, beautiful as ever, the emerald Lake O'Hara, the cataracts at its head seeming but slender threads of white. Smaller lakes clustered around the cliffs beyond its southern shore, and from the top of these cliffs ran the level of the broad Opabin Valley, at about the altitude of the valley of Lake Oeesa. Mount Wiwaxy hid the mountains to the W., and turning round we saw to the N.W. the peaks beyond Hector and the Narao Lakes. The gorge below, with hanging glacier above, was part of the Gorge of the Winds. Picture the colours of morning darting from pyramid to pyramid, then slowly creeping down into the valleys, as sunlight puts a crown upon the summits, while still wrapt in the purple gloom sleep the circling glaciers, the winding stream, and the emerald water of Lake Oeesa. Here was a harmonised chaos, a stable union of warring elements—the pourtrayal under forms of the most entrancing symmetry of that majesty which terrifies and that vastness which overwhelms—of the spatially sublime.

The air was clear and the sun warm, and I remained 2 hrs. upon this superb point. These wide valleys and enormous walls give to the peaks an individuality and symmetry impossible in more chaotic masses like the Selkirks, though unrelieved to so great an extent by the contrast and softening lines of snow-field and névé. Each of these tall, precipitous, ideally sharp forms was a rest and pleasure to the eye, and revealed an almost personal grace.

As no way of ascent in the walls of Mounts Green and Huber

* This I wrote before visiting the Assiniboine group.

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appeared, we returned to our 'camp' in time for lunch. A subsequent examination of the cliffs from the glacial dam at Lake Yukness showed a gorge about 400 ft. above us, probably containing a glacier with a visible moraine perched high upon a ledge. This moraine, practically inaccessible from this place, I knew could be reached from Lake Oeesa, and connected with a long slope of reddish limestone to the right, which extended upward some 800 ft. further to the base of a large rock, remotely resembling a crouching lion seen in profile. A water-course had made a small gully from the top of the wall above, which passed quite near the lion's nose. To climb the lion's back and gain the gully beyond his nose was an undertaking the success of which depended on the existence of small ledges, and could only be decided by actual trial, which I determined to make the following morning.

But even while I was looking, a vast cloud of white mist came rolling up from the lake and hid Mount Odaray from view. Soon mist poured out of the Death-trap col as from some fabled entrance to Avernus, and all the tops of the peaks were hidden. The winds blew in every direction, whirling the mist through the depressions in the walls, until we were enveloped in cloud and only the nearest trees were visible. Then came flakes of snow, few at first, but rapidly increasing till the air was full of the driving storm. So hastily had this come upon us that we had no time for preparations, and so, crouching under the boughs of a small spruce, we passed a sleepless night, keeping a roaring fire going, and watching the ground whiten and deepen with snow around us.

In the morning it was several inches in depth, and we began a hasty return to Hector. Great care was necessary in skirting the slopes of heather and small spruce above the cliffs of Lake O'Hara, as a slip would be fatal, and we carefully prepared handholds by brushing away the new snow and grasping the heather and spruce boughs below. We descended by a gorge near the end of Lake O'Hara, and making a cut off from the stream were soon at the foot of the Wiwaxy ridge.

Then for two hours we struggled in the thick forest before meeting the stream again, quite near the cataract. At 4 o'clock we reached Hector, after a six days' absence.

After an absence of five days on a trip to the coast, I returned to Laggan the following Tuesday to make an expedition to Mount Assiniboine. This peak, 50 miles S.W. of Banff, I had seen from the Twin Peak at Banff in the summer of 1893, and had ever since desired to visit. A glance at Dr. Dawson's map will show that the region E. of this mountain, lying between it and the Whiteman's Pass, is unmapped and unexplored. From the W. the peak was represented as accessible by the Simpson Pass from Cascade (there called by its old name, 'Castle Mountain'). This pass or trail followed the Heely Creek to the summit of the watershed, descending on the other side by the Simpson River and Vermilion River to the Kootenie country. A stream was represented as flowing into the Simpson River from the E. and rising at the base of Mount Assiniboine. Intending, therefore, to follow the Simpson Pass as far as this stream, I arranged to meet Carryer at Castle Mountain (on the map called by its old name

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Silver City), he taking provisions down from Field by train, and I riding a pony down the old Tote road from Laggan.

I had previously written to a famous prospector,* who I had heard was living at Castle Mountain, and had acquired a large knowledge of the trails to the S., requesting information concerning the best route to Mount Assiniboine, but he had been unable to tell me more than I already knew.

Just as I was leaving the chalet at Lake Louise with my pony, Colonel R. O'Hara, one of the most experienced travellers and mountaineers of the Rockies, came in from an attempt to penetrate, by the White Man's Pass, into the region that I was about to try from the Simpson Pass. He had been stopped, as I understand, by forest fires then raging south of Banff, and filling the atmosphere with haze. He had made a number of journeys back from Hector, and, I believe, was one of the first to see the beautiful lake which I have called by his name. Colonel O'Hara had also an idea of trying to reach the Simpson Pass from the Vermilion Pass (which ran south from Castle Mountain, the old Silver City), his plan being to cut across from the summit by way of the Twin Lakes.† I had no idea at that time of going anywhere near the Vermilion Pass, though subsequent events made me very familiar with it.

I followed the old Tote road, indistinct at best and in places obliterated. The broad Bow Valley, flanked with peaks, their summits white with new snow or wrapped in fleecy clouds, opened before me like a great highway. Of the several streams which I forded, the Pipe Stone only gave me any difficulty. As I was late in leaving Laggan, I was obliged to stop for the night at Eldon, a small log hut for the railway hands.

After a sleepless night upon a narrow bench, I hurried on to Castle Mountain, where Carryer was awaiting me in the prospector's house. I expected to proceed at once to Cascade, in order to start over the Simpson Pass, but was led to change my plan through some information given by the prospector, who assured me of the existence of an Indian trail running from the lake near the summit of the Vermilion Pass down to the Simpson Pass. This was the idea suggested by Col. O'Hara, though I am not aware that he had known of a trail. This would be shorter for me than to go to Cascade, and would bring us to the Simpson Pass at a point quite near the stream we desired to ascend. Further, our outfit could be ferried over the Bow in a skiff owned by the prospector. Carryer thought the Vermilion Pass much preferable, therefore, and I finally decided to cross the Bow at once.

Ferried over in safety, we followed the S. bank for several miles toward Laggan until we came to the Vermilion trail. Unfortunately for travellers, the railroad has cut numerous roads for hauling ties from the forest, and it was difficult to follow the main trail. To add to our troubles, it soon began to pour, and rained steadily all the afternoon as we toiled through the woods in dripping mackintoshes.

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* 'Joe' Smith, whom Mr. Green consulted in regard to the Vermilion Pass.

† This, I understand, he accomplished in the summer of 1895.

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The pass became almost a flowing stream, and with uncertainty as to where we should spend the night, our situation was far from reassuring.*

We reached an old logging camp at 5 o'clock, and at 6 came to another, where we passed a comfortable night in one of the huts. The rain had stopped by morning, but we lost nearly three hours in getting the right trail. Again at noon the trail failed, and we searched in the dense woods for two hours before finding a tentative trail which we followed for two hours to a lake. Here I waited while Carryer returned for the horse, which we had left behind, and as it was late when he arrived, we camped for the night.

The lake on which we camped was undoubtedly the one mentioned by the prospector, but a hunt for the trail of which he spoke was fruitless, and I am inclined to think it had been obliterated by time. The lake was small, but the image of Castle Mountain to the N., mirrored in its surface, made, with the foreground of green, a charming picture. To the S. a snowy dome (Mount Ball) and lower peaks appeared. We had been obliged to come without a tent, as we had but one pony; but heavy sleeping-bags and rubber blankets answered every purpose.

Next morning we followed the Vermilion trail over the summit, across flowering meadows and thin woods, and descended the Vermilion Creek on the other side, having decided to continue on to the Simpson River by way of the Vermilion—a roundabout way, but unavoidable, as we had failed to discover the prospector's trail.

For the rest of the day, and every day until we reached the Simpson River, it was a succession of trail hunts and losses of time. The trail was well-nigh extinguished from *débris* and freshets, and the forest was very thick. That night we made our camp upon a sparsely-wooded island. The ground was damp, and rain fell during the night.

Next morning we threaded our way along the river flats, having reached the main stream of the Vermilion, which joins the other from the N.E. This stream may be found to rise at the head of the Opabin Valley; its source has not been definitely determined. It is doubtless named from the peculiar characteristic colour that coats the stones and marsh grass of the river flats.†

After making the bend to the E. the Vermilion Valley lay before us, broad, and bounded by low hills to the S., with higher peaks to the N., topped by the snows of Mount Ball. During the course of a trail-hunt, soon after, we encountered the 'falls' of the Vermilion—a beautiful cataract of some 50 ft., resembling the cataract of the Wapta Creek,

* As I shall later explain, Banff is a much preferable centre from which to start for extended expeditions. Mr. T. E. Wilson, of that place, has started a most excellent bureau of outfit, providing packers, horses, guides for trails, &c., though not as yet trained guides for climbing. They, of course, are not yet in sufficient demand. For a certain class of climbers, however, the greatest pleasure consists in dispensing with guides on the mountain, particularly upon those that are entirely unascended.

† Ochre, as mentioned by Dr. Dawson.

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back of Hector. We camped that night at Snow River—a cold spot, swept by winds from the glaciers on Mount Ball.

The following morning—Saturday, September 9—after toiling for five hours through a pathless forest, we emerged, tired, hot, and generally uncomfortable, upon a circular opening in the woods, through whose long, waving grass was heard the ripple of a brook. Ferns, waist-high, fringed the edges; streamers of moss waved from the boughs; while many-coloured painter's brush, pink and white spireas, and the graceful columbine grew in profusion around, together with yellow buttercups, pink and white pyrolas, and the ever-present daisy. Blue lupins and larkspur were contrasted with curious yellow and red and white fungi, and the air was sweet with the scent of wild roses.

Unable to reach the Simpson River before nightfall, we camped in a swamp on the edge of a thick forest. As the sun sank lower and lower behind Mount Ball, its snowfields glowed with crimson against the sky, fading into violet and purple till they shone like silver in the light of the rising moon. A single aiguille of prodigious steepness towered black above the other mountains upon the S. side of the valley.

We reached the Simpson at noon next day, September 10. The frequency and great size of the bear tracks on the river flats, together with tracks of cariboo, elk, and bighorn, indicated an abundance of game. There ought to be good hunting in this valley, for it connected directly with the celebrated Kootenie country, so famous for its game.

Leaving the Vermilion, which here bends to the S.E., we ascended the W. bank of the Simpson River by the Simpson trail, and camped at 6 o'clock. The following noon we had reached the stream desired, the third from the Vermilion, flowing from the E. As the only stream flowing into the Simpson from the W. was represented on Dr. Dawson's map as about a mile further on, we made certain of our stream by continuing until we met this stream from the W. Returning thence, we forded the Simpson, and began to ascend the stream from the E., which from subsequent developments I called Walandoo * Creek. After slow progress among the stones and boulders, we discovered an ancient Indian trail upon our left, by which we ascended some 1,500 ft. above the Simpson River. Here our stream made a sharp turn to the right, and as it was nearly night we camped in a grove of spruce.

In the morning the ground was rapidly whitening with snow, and we continued our ascent of the valley, unable to see any distance ahead. The exposure had caused in me an enlargement of the palate, preventing clear speaking and causing me much alarm. This was completely cured in ½ hr. by the application of a few drops of sap squeezed from the blisters of the bark of a balsam tree, an Indian remedy suggested by Carryer.

The Indian trail had long since disappeared. About 1 o'clock we reached a small lake and further on a larger one, over ¼ mile in

* Meaning 'deception' in Carryer's native tongue, so called on account of our being deceived by the storm.

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length, surrounded by great black walls, but the storm shut off all view. Standing in the meadow at the head of the lake we ate a cheerless lunch, and then began to ascend the steepening slopes of heather, past scattered groups of spruce and tamarack, toward the great misty walls ahead, which I then believed must be a portion of Mount Assiniboine.

It was nearly 6 o'clock when we reached the last group of pines and saw before us a ridge whose summit, hidden in cloud, was evidently the end of the valley. Judging from Dr. Dawson's map, it seemed to be a spur of Mount Assiniboine, and we camped in the group of pines, believing that we were under the shadow of our long-desired, though as yet invisible, mountain.

Making a rough shed of boughs, we covered it with rubber blankets; a little runnel in a hollow to the right supplied us with water, and there was good grass for the pony. Thus closed Thursday, September 13.

The snow fell with brief intermission until the night of Saturday, the 15th, when for a brief hour the moon shone forth, burnishing the white landscape with its golden light. Doubtful of obtaining any other photographs, I exposed a quick plate for ½ hr., pointed directly at the moon, which shone through a depression in the ridge. The result, printable though faint, shows a string of moons, owing to the moon's motion while under occasional clouds. The skyline of the ridge ahead was hardly 500 ft. above us, though on either side the walls rose from 1,000 to 2,000 ft. Thus there was an evident pass into a valley beyond. Nothing was seen of Mount Assiniboine, and in the morning, starting at 5 o'clock, we trudged through snow from 1 to 2 ft. in depth up the long slope on the right to the top of the ridge. In places the snow had frozen and was as compact as old névé.

On reaching the top a valley was seen on the other side, broader than that whence we had ascended, and filled with writhing mists. These, touched with the faint colours of sunrise and tossed by the morning winds, swept by me and about me, showing snatches of superb vistas through their damp grey openings, till I felt like some aerial navigator sailing over peaks and valleys.

When I finally had an opportunity to observe the other side of the valley, the first object I saw was a beautiful lake lying a little below tree-line at the base of a great glacier-crowned wall. Above this lake, encircled by glaciers at the foot of the walls, which rose 3,000 ft. above it, was a smaller lake. The top of the wall was hidden by moving clouds, and I believed it to be Mount Assiniboine at last. After taking a few photographs I returned to camp for lunch, and in the afternoon we crossed the divide to the right of the ridge in order to visit and name the lake.

Our visit was partly for purposes of fishing. The extension of our trip had sadly diminished our larder, and only two days' provisions remained. This fact, together with our unfamiliarity with the Simpson Pass to the Bow River—a distance requiring at least 3 days, as we estimated—caused us considerable foreboding.

Having crossed the divide and descended the burnt timber on the

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other side, we found the valley free from snow. Reaching the bed of the stream, we followed it to the small creek observed from the ridge to flow from the lake. Ascending this creek, we stood upon the bank of the lake at 3 o'clock.

This beautiful lake, than which I have seen none finer in the Rockies, and which I named Assiniboine, is about 1 mile in length and slightly less in width. It colour was a dark green and it was fringed with grass and shrubs and slopes of pine.* The great walls rising behind it with their fine blue hanging glaciers and the white snow below made it a scene never to be forgotten by one who has seen it.

Carryer's luck at fishing was nil, and he decided to fish down the creek and meet me at the junction of the stream.†

I had followed the left bank of the lake to get a few more photographs, and was about to leave when, happening to glance up at the rapidly moving clouds that hid the top of the wall, I observed through a sudden opening a single needle-like point glittering against the blue sky behind like a bit of black obsidian beneath a silver veil. It was indeed Mount Assiniboine; for, though the apparition lasted but a second, I obtained other sectional views of the gigantic pyramid. The walls above the lake seem but a support for the base on which it rests, and the summit must be at least 2,000 and possibly 3,000 ft. above the summit of the wall. The altitude of the lake was 6,600 ft., and calling the wall 3,000 ft. and the pyramid from 2,000 to 3,000 ft., more, the altitude of the summit becomes about 12,000 ft. above the sea. Dr. Dawson estimates the height at about 11,500 ft., which is, I think, too low. Perhaps ‡ 12,000 ft. would be a cautious estimate which would make the peak higher than either Mount Lefroy or Mount Temple. The N.E. and N.W. arêtes seemed from these sides inaccessible, and attempted ascents should be made from the S.E. or S.W. side. Carryer, when I joined him, had also seen the peak, and was much impressed by what he considered the most awful mountain he had ever seen.

On our return we killed a large porcupine and some ptarmigan, which solved the vexed question of provisions, and at 7 o'clock we closed an eventful day with a delicious ptarmigan stew.

How to cook the porcupine was a subject of debate. The following method gave entire satisfaction. All night he was roasted on stakes, afterwards he was parboiled and then stewed.

The valley in which we were camped, with its creek and lake and ridge, I named Walandoo, or deception. The river § and valley beyond the ridge I named Assiniboine, like the lake.

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* The burnt timber in this valley was glossed over with the recent snows. It is a sad defect, as I shall mention later. The shores of the lake, however, are in places beautifully wooded.

† Doubtless because of the burnt timber below. Walandoo Lake, as was afterwards found, contains numerous small trout.

‡ Acquaintance with the N. and S. sides has led me to increase this estimate by several hundred feet.

§ As I found in 1895, it is the upper portion of the main North Fork of the Cross River; I have therefore restricted the name Assiniboine Creek to the small tributary from Lake Assiniboine.

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It was now necessary to hasten back to civilisation. Accordingly, we broke camp next morning, and on reaching Lake Walandoo I photographed it, and likewise the amphitheatre to the north. Most of my plates on this expedition were scratched or light-struck, as I had had only my sleeping bag to change them in.

We descended on the left side of the stream until we had rounded the corner, then joining the old Indian trail on the right side * and reaching Simpson at 5 o'clock. By 6.30 we were camped by the banks of the clear stream flowing from the W. A chinook wind swept up the valley and the air was warm and springlike.

Next morning we followed the Simpson River until the trail turned off to cross the divide. We were wet to the skin nearly all day with continual fording of the stream, occasional showers and soaking underbrush. As we neared the summit of the pass we obtained a beautiful retrospect over the Simpson Valley. Upon the summit, which is, of course, the watershed, we encountered a heavy snow-storm, and a night in the open seemed imminent, but we found the Heely Creek trail on the other side, and descending by it we camped in the woods by a little stream at 6.30.

Making rapid time next morning, favoured by an ideal day, we were soon descending the beautiful valley of Heely Creek. A



MOUNT HEEJEE AND LAKE HEEJEE.†

pretty peak to the W. was in sight nearly all the morning. The mountains reminded me of the limestone peaks of Salzkammergut, their summits white and lower slopes of varying shades of green. Many of the peaks were very sharp.

At 4 o'clock we reached the broad valley of the Bow. Fording without difficulty on horseback, we spent a comfortable night in the clean section house at Cascade siding, about a mile up the track toward

* Its upper portions must have been worn by Indian hunters. Mr. T. E. Wilson has informed me that the lower portions were opened by himself.

† See p. 113.

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Laggan. I must mention the beauty of the ford of Simpson Pass where we crossed the Bow. The river formed a foreground for the graceful range of distant peaks to the S., whence we had come.* Our circuit by the Vermilion had taken 13 days from Castle Mountain round to Cascade, and we had travelled nearly 150 miles.

I flagged the train next morning and was soon at Laggan, where I was joined in two days by Carryer, who rode the horse up the Tote road, arranging, however, not to stop at Eldon. Further explorations being impossible, owing to continued snows, I left shortly for the east.

IN MEMORIAM.

CHARLES PACKE AND THE PYRENEES.

I.

As an intimate friend of the late Charles Packe, and his fellow-mountaineer in the early explorations of the highest regions of the Pyrenees, thirty-three years ago, perhaps I may claim the melancholy privilege of reviewing his long Pyrenean career, dating from the year 1858 (or 1859).

In those distant times, whatever may have been the case in the Alps, mountaineering was, in the Pyrenees, quite in its infancy, and climbing entailed all sorts of privations, hardships, and even risks, unknown to the present generation. Ice-axes had never been heard of, and when we crossed or scaled steep slopes of blue ice or frozen snow, we had to cut our steps either with a microscopic pocket-axe, which was often dropped and lost, or with sharp stones and slates. Speed was impossible. The rope had only just made its appearance: it was scarcely ever used, and in crevassed glaciers we trusted almost entirely to sounding with alpenstocks. As for guides, there were barely half a dozen good ones in the whole range of the Pyrenees, and even those only knew their own district. They were useless elsewhere, and we had to guide them ourselves, with the help of a compass and of the most rudimentary maps, full of mistakes.

On the Spanish side things were still worse, for there were neither maps nor guides; *à fortiori*, no guide-books. And yet it was just there, behind the frontier, that the proudest Pyrenean summits solemnly stood in unknown and snowy solitudes. Indeed, to a mountaineer, their mystery made them as attractive as the North Pole or the peaks of the moon. The Néthou (3,404 m.) had been climbed about a dozen times, but the Posets (3,367 m.) only once or twice, and the Maladetta (3,312 m.) never. As for their

* The Vermilion range, so beautifully seen from the bridge spanning the Bow at Banff. That peculiar flat-topped peak, furthest E. of those seen from the latter point, while bearing, as do the others, glaciers of considerable size upon the N. slopes, should offer easy rock climbing from the S.

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