

A GLIMPSE OF THE ROCKIES.

BY P. R. PARKINSON.

OF recent years Canadian and American sportsmen have lamented the fact of the rapid disappearance or dwindling of the big game from the more accessible, and even to a certain extent from the more remote, part of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. This is only too true, as any one can convince himself by a few days' wandering in that beautiful region. But a compensation has appeared and sportsmen have begun to realise that they have a bigger, and in many respects a finer, game close at hand in the mountains themselves.

A too strenuous pursuit of the almighty dollar for a long time dulled their perceptions for appreciation of the natural scenery, but having halted a little in that feverish pursuit, they have begun to understand that in their mountains they have a playground with many charms, in which they can obtain a happiness and peace unknown in cities and towns. Among the quiet, blue lakes, the long stretches of dense and tangled forest pushing their outposts up the flanks of the great mountains, is to be had a sport which, in the opinion of many, even exceeds that of big game shooting.

Mountaineering in the Canadian Rockies is a sport of recent growth, and with the exception of a few expeditions among the Selkirk glaciers, little was done until the Appalachian Club, of Boston, realised the possibilities of the range. These climbers were soon followed by Englishmen, who have now explored the remoter regions and highest mountains away to the N. of the Bow Valley, in the region of the Great Freshfield Glacier and the Columbia ice-field, where arise the great rivers of the Dominion.

Stimulated by these efforts the Canadians have now formed an Alpine Club, and doubtless their efforts will open up the country and make these remote places more accessible; it will be a long time, however, before this opening-up process robs the valleys of their wild splendour, so vast is this mountain region.

Weary of the monotony of several months' residence on the 'far flung, fenceless prairie,' and longing for a view of the mountain range, I embarked with Mr. C. T. C. Beecroft on the 'Imperial Ltd.' Transcontinental express at Regina, and on it we rushed across the long steppes of Southern Alberta. past innumerable herds of antelope, which gazed on the train

with mild wonder but without any fear, past small lakes on which could be seen large numbers of ducks, while geese, cranes, and prairie chicken abounded in this region. An occasional Indian tepee or an old buffalo trail stretching across the prairie are the sole evidences of old days associated in one's mind with the name of Fenimore Cooper.

A couple of days spent in the environs of Banff but made us more eager to reach our happy hunting ground above Laggan, and once more we embarked on the 'Imperial Ltd.' The journey through the mountains after a long residence on the prairies was a pleasure not to be forgotten, though on our return journey we were surprised to find that there was another point of view, for after travelling by night we emerged in the morning on the open prairie, and I was somewhat startled to see a man stretch out his arms to the wide expanse and say, 'Oh! this is something like; now we can see.' Apparently his quarrel with the mountains was that they obstructed his view: needless to say his life had been spent on the prairie.

But for the mountaineer the prairie is but one long, monotonous stretch, wearying to the eye and depressing to the mind, though at times the wonderful colours of sunset, when half the horizon is ablaze with coloured lights, almost compensate one for its drawbacks.

From Banff the train steadily ascends the Bow valley towards the Great Divide.

Soon there appeared away to our left the glistening, snowy dome of Mount Temple, at the foot of whose precipices, and utterly inaccessible from any point within our range of vision, lay the weirdly attractive Valley of Ten Peaks, in which we were soon to pitch our tent beside Moraine Lake.

At Laggan, the station near to the point at which the train leaves the Bow River to pass into the Kicking Horse Gorge, we disembarked, and a three-mile walk along a well made road brought us to the Lake Louise Chalet, where we spent the night; next morning, accompanied by a packer and two heavily laden pack-horses, we proceeded through dense pine forests along the trail which skirts the slopes of Mount Fairview, high up above the Bow Valley, from the depths of which the occasional hooting of a train rose to us through the clear air, the only sign that we were not yet beyond the bounds of civilisation. About $1\frac{1}{2}$ hr.'s steady going brought us to the lower end of Paradise Valley, and, crossing the creek at the foot of this, we mounted up on the narrowing trail round the slopes of Mt. Temple and entered the Valley

of the Ten Peaks at a considerable height above its bed. Soon the scene of a tragedy, all too common in the Rocky Mountains, opened to our view. In place of the stately pine and fir trees through which we had been passing now stood a host of bare gaunt poles intermingled with blackened stumps, which, with the bare broken crags above, formed a scene of the utmost desolation.

The traveller in the Rockies soon becomes accustomed to the sight of these blackened patches, as the forest fires which cause them have occurred in almost every valley, but are, perhaps, most common along the line of the railway. The presence of a forest fire is to be deplored on many grounds, among others that it completely spoils the views in the country for many miles around. On one occasion a party was camped on the Yoho Valley, above Field, and one of the largest peaks in the neighbourhood, Mount Stephen, only 5 miles away, was completely hidden by the clouds of smoke caused by a fire which was more than 80 miles distant.

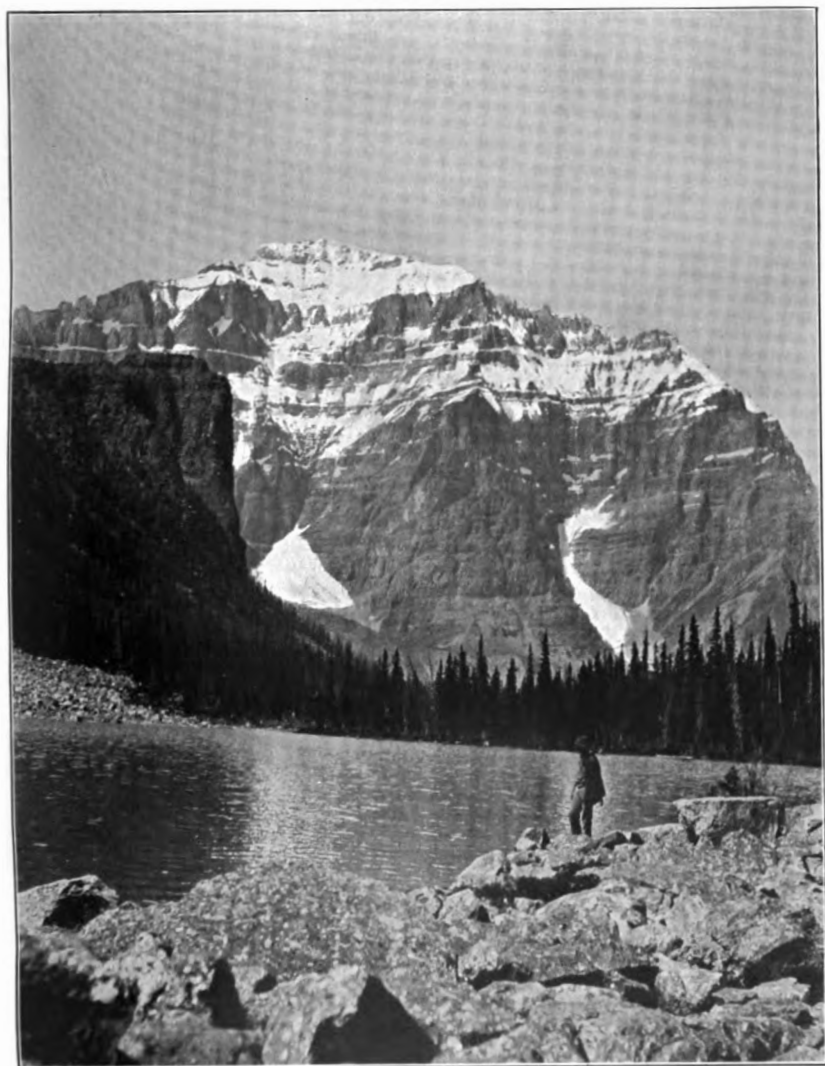
Fortunately this season was singularly free from forest fires, and, with the exception of a haze to the S.W. when we were on Bident, there was no interruption to our extensive views.

Our camping ground beside Moraine Lake was soon reached, and after unpacking the ponies we sent them back to Lake Louise Chalet with the packer. Bedding in abundance existed around us in the shape of spruce branches, the tops of which form an excellent spring mattress. After the bedding was arranged, the tent erected over it, and dinner finished we turned our attention to the prospect. The lake, a little over a mile long, stretched away to the foot of some of the Ten Peaks which were ranged in a semicircle round its head. We were camped at the lower end of the lake on its western side, under the lower slopes of Mount Temple, while directly opposite us on the other side of the lake was the first of the Ten—Mount Babel—whose screes fell down directly into the water. On our side of the lake, however, the slope was gentler; no screes existed, but forests extended from the edge of the lake some way up the slopes. The camp was an ideal spot, the view being magnificent, and the two essentials, wood and water, present in superabundance.

Rosy as the appearances were, we were not kept long in doubt as to whether any thorns were present, for no sooner had we arrived at the camping ground than we were met by a few mosquitoes and large flies, known by the name of 'bulldogs,' who are special connoisseurs in horse blood, but, in

the absence of horses, manage to exist on the human variety. The few must have sent out special messengers, for countless hordes came flocking in from every point of the compass to the feast, and no doubt those ten days in which we remained at this spot are mentioned as the era of prosperity in the historical archives of the mosquitoes and bulldogs of this valley. The most satisfactory method of keeping them away from one's body is to build a 'smudge,' i.e. a fire giving off a large quantity of smoke, and then to sit down in the smoke. It must have seemed strange to any one immune to mosquitoes to see two persons in the finest atmosphere in the world deliberately choose to sit surrounded by smoke, but those who know not the gentle hum of the Rocky Mountains mosquito or the fierce buzz of the 'bulldog' cannot imagine the extent of their appetites or their love of human society.

Next day was very fine, but we awakened too late to contemplate any serious climbing, and also discovered that limbs whose sole exercise for some months had consisted in riding in a buggy across the prairies were in no fit condition for heavy work, so we sauntered slowly along a trail by the edge of the lake for a short distance, but when this became indistinct broke through the woods on to the bare slopes above and reached further up a large plateau leading to Sentinel Pass, and commanding a good view of the S.W. arête of Mount Temple, which was our objective for the next day, as, from its position and height, it would give us a better idea of the topography of the district than any other peak or than the very indifferent map we possessed. 'An exposition of sleep' came upon one of us, while the other passed the time in taking photographs and attempting to quench an infinite thirst with a very finite amount of water. Refreshed by these various operations we pushed on towards Sentinel Pass, but before reaching the foot of this struck up snow patches and scree to the right until a suitable hole was found in which to cache a few belongings for the morrow's climb. After the spot had been carefully noted and cairned we hurried down to the plateau, and, seeing the lake from here, could judge exactly where the camp lay, so decided on a short and direct route down through the woods; this soon involved us in a perfect labyrinth of fallen trunks and thick undergrowth, through which we had to fight our way. The fallen trunks were occasionally mere shells; the inside, being almost rotted away, formed an excellent trap for the unwary, who, immediately on stepping on it, broke through the shell and sat down in a cloud of dust and winged woods. By fighting our



C. T. C. Becroft, photo.

Swan Electric Engraving Co., Ltd

MT. TEMPLE FROM CONSOLATION VALLEY.

way more to the left a fair-sized stream was reached, and down this we proceeded with rather less trouble to the more open woods, through which we hurried to the camp, and were soon disporting ourselves in the cold blue water of the lake.

An early start next morning was made under inauspicious signs as far as the weather was concerned, for, as we passed along the trail of the preceding day, dark thunder clouds could be seen by the early morning light to be gathering around the peaks at the head of the valley; these clouds rolled across Mount Hungabee and soon burst in a heavy shower over our heads, the rain continuing until we reached, in $2\frac{1}{2}$ hrs., our cache of the previous day on the rocks below the ridge of Mount Temple. Here a halt was called for several reasons, *e.g.* breakfast, breathing, rearrangement of packs, and general survey of the weather. The result of the survey was none too inspiring, for though the clouds over the valley had to a certain extent cleared off, the upper part of the ridge above us was swathed in mist, and a perfect *tourmente* from the west was sweeping across the lower part of it. A steady pull up snow slopes landed us close under a large platform marked by a tower on the S.W. ridge, and across which we could now hear the wind whipping in sharp gusts. As it was obvious that under the conditions the ridge would have to be ascended as speedily as possible our superfluous baggage was left here. We passed on to the ridge and slightly over to the western side, as a short distance higher up a cornice of no small dimensions was just visible through the mist. The first part of the ascent was on screens, but we soon reached the snow, and in doing so encountered a blizzard. Fortunately the ridge was quite easy, as otherwise the strong wind and whistling snow would have effectually put a stop to any further ascent. Through the mist occasionally loomed the blue ice of the cornice hanging over the E. face, a sufficient warning for us to keep well over on the W. side.

By running against the cairn we found ourselves on the summit at 10.30 A.M., and crouching down on the lee side, or what should have been the lee side, we 'discussed' the weather. A quotation from 'The Tempest' came floating by: 'The gates of Hell were loosed, and all the devils were gathered on the ridge of Mount Temple,' which description seemed eminently suited to the prevailing conditions until we remembered that the storm was sweeping up to us from 'Paradise Valley,' thus rendering the appropriateness of the quotation somewhat doubtful. The ridge was descended as rapidly as circumstances permitted, but on emerging below

the snowstorm, and gaining the lee side of the mountain again, the descent to the camp, reached about 3 P.M., was somewhat more leisurely.

The next day, as the weather made amends for its previous misbehaviour, we spent in Consolation Valley with the idea of finding if Mount Fay could be ascended from this side; a short walk up this beautiful valley as far as the lower lake showed the impossibility of that plan, but opened out another in the obviously possible prospect of ascending Mount Bident from Consolation Pass, an expedition which appeared to be short and easy, but in reality proved to be fairly long. The view of Mount Temple from this valley is magnificent.

Next morning (July 28) we left camp at 3.30 A.M. to attempt the ascent of Mount Fay by the long gully leading from the Fay snowfield down to the head of Moraine Lake. If we could once reach the snowfield the ascent appeared fairly easy, but as the snowfield fell over into the gully in an enormous icefall we did not feel very sanguine of success, although a possible way appeared from below to exist and attracted us to the place. Proceeding by candle-light, we crossed the lower end of the lake and walked along the unstable scree which slope down from Babel Mountain into the lake. The usual worry and scramble through thick undergrowth brought us into the bed of the gully, which is exceedingly steep in its lower part. By the aid of crampons we rapidly ascended the hard snow slopes, and at 6 A.M. reached the lower part of the icefall, which at this point is utterly impracticable, and forced us to take to the rocks of Mount Babel by a small chimney of good rock, holding out a promise of sound climbing which was far from being fulfilled, as the remainder of the rock, with short exceptions, was composed of small scree set at an angle too steep for quick going and requiring constant care; the only serious obstacle was a steep slab about 15 ft. high, which we ascended by a small crack; above this we made the mistake of traversing too far to the left, and found ourselves, after wasting a precious hour, on the edge of a precipice too high up above the only accessible part of the icefall. After descending the requisite distance the glacier was reached at 9 A.M., much too late, as the sun was already above the Fay snowfield and shining directly on the enormous séracs which lurched above our heads. The first part of the icefall was turned in a narrow gully between the ice and the rocks, but this ended all too soon, forcing us on to the ice, and in a few minutes we were in a maze of crevasses at the foot of a

rampart of séracs which leaned over threateningly above our heads. We doubled in and out among these crevasses, seeking a route through the wall of séracs to the snowfield above, but in vain, when suddenly, a few yards behind us, one of the largest séracs fell over with a crash, and the great masses of blue ice, weighing many tons, went hurtling down the gully up which we had ascended. This hint, spoken with no uncertain voice, was not one to be neglected, so we turned and fled down the gully to the shelter of the rocks. The long scree slopes of Mount Babel afforded no inducement to an ascent of that mountain, so we quickly proceeded down the steep snow slope towards the lake, and in trying to make a direct route across its upper end, later in the afternoon, became entangled once more in dense undergrowth, through which we struggled for some time until, just as we appeared to be emerging into more open ground, we were cut off by the large torrent descending from the head of the valley to the lake. This necessitated our forcing a way through the scrub for about a mile up the valley till a fordable place was reached. That night our dreams were somewhat disturbed by a pair of marauding porcupines of remarkable size, and also by the chipmunks, who by this time had become accustomed to the presence of our tent, and amused themselves by climbing up one side and completing the traverse by glissading down the other.

Next day was spent on Mount Neptuak, which stands at the head of the valley, and is ascended by the ridge leading up from the Wenckhemma Pass: the first ascent was made by Professor Collie's party. From it a most striking view is obtained of Mount Hungabee, the 'chieftain' of the valley, whose long ridge runs up from the other side of the pass.

Most of our days up to the present had appeared to consist of one long round of cooking and washing up, with occasional lucid intervals for climbing. This combined work being rather laborious, it was decided to spend this day (July 30) in camp, and, moreover, as our bread had given out the previous day, a suitable substitute was essential. The cook of the party made an attempt in this direction, and succeeded in producing a strange-looking mass more resembling a piece of conglomerate rock than anything edible. On being reminded of the fact that it was not the first time that good intention had resulted in nothing better than mere paving-stones he tried again, and with the accumulated mass of experience before him another attempt provided the required substitute.

Towards evening the spirit of unrest again seized us, so we packed up a Mummery tent and provisions, with the intention of starting up Consolation Valley, to camp the night there and attack Mount Bident on the morrow. As we were about to start, however, dark storm clouds rolled down the valley, and a heavy shower of rain drove us into our tent, effectually settling an argument which had arisen as to the value of fly camps. We had come to the conclusion that the early morning struggle through pine woods and over interminable scree considerably curtailed our climbing as well as our pleasure, and there can be no doubt that under these conditions a camp high up above these obstacles is an advantage.

We were off by 2 A.M. next morning in perfect weather, and soon entered the thick woods of Consolation Valley, where the lantern-bearer distinguished himself by dropping the lantern. The darkness of the wood was luminous compared with the dark thoughts that were expressed when, owing to a mistake in waistcoats, it was discovered that the matches had been left behind. Just as we had decided to sit down and wait an hour or so for the daylight a dilapidated match was discovered in an obscure pocket, and it sufficed.

The trail ends at the lower lake, and we passed this on the right-hand side along the scree which, indistinct though they were by the dim light of the candle, provided easier going than the thick woods on the other side; below the upper lake we crossed the stream, and by ascending the hill-side for some distance avoided the woods on its shore.

In our prospection two days before it was estimated that from the lower lake to the summit of the pass should take about $2\frac{1}{2}$ hrs.; it required actually rather more than 6 hrs., as the way, which appears unbroken from the lower part of the valley, is cut across by many ravines, well wooded, as usual; probably a better route would be along the glacier. The climb up to the pass was chiefly up steep snow, and, as we stepped on to the ridge, a magnificent view opened up, extending to the east over a sea of mountains, while below us lay the lower end of Prospector Valley with the very beautiful Boom Lake at the foot of the snowfields. No time was spent on the pass, as the snow was becoming soft, so depositing our baggage here we traversed across the lower snow slopes to the N.E. face, which afforded very pleasant climbing. The ascent was made straight up the snow, advantage however being taken of several islands of rock, easy but interesting, and a welcome relief from the soft snow. This route brought us on to the



C. T. C. Beecroft, photo.

Suan Electric Engineering Co., Ltd.

MTS. BIDENT AND FAY, AND LAKE IN CONSOLATION VALLEY.

E. ridge of the mountain about 20 min. from the summit, where we arrived at 10 A.M. The view was a very extensive one, though somewhat limited in the S.E. on account of a slight haze, due, as we subsequently heard, to a forest fire; close at hand was Mount Fay, and below us its fine snowfield, across which we should have walked two days previously but for our unfortunate defeat on its icefall. The descent to the pass was accomplished very quickly, partly on account of the condition of the snow, partly from the stimulus of various stones which 'fell,' strange to say, only on the head of the leader, while doubtless the remembrance of a certain tin of fruit left, with Spartan fortitude, some distance below the pass also played no inconsiderable part.

At this spot a long halt was made, and although our matchless condition deprived us of the pleasure of making afternoon tea in the speedily emptied tin, to say nothing of a well deserved smoke, some consolation was afforded us by the continued performance of the Fay snowfield, from which great overhanging masses—'chunks,' my companion called them, by some strange association with fruit tins—fell many hundreds of feet on to the glacier below, hiding the cliffs with their smoke and sending their thunder reverberating along the lower hills behind us.

Instead of avoiding the woods beside the upper lake by taking the grass slopes above them, as we had done in ascending the valley, we saw, aided by the eye of faith, what appeared to be a clear strip between the woods and the lake. Unfortunately this open route was only temporary, and we found ourselves at times compelled to decide the question as to whether it were better to avoid the woods by going into the lake or to avoid the lake by taking to the woods. Some of the undergrowth possessed sharp points, which fortunately, however, were not poisonous, like the similar well known 'Devil's Club' of British Columbia. 'Twixt 'the Devil and the deep sea' we made a rough passage, and were duly appreciative when we reached the more open pine woods lower down the valley, in whose shade we sauntered slowly back to camp.

That evening, like most of our evenings in camp, the weather was perfect, and 'often 'mid the din of towns and cities' the memory of them comes back to me. Again I see us sitting by the camp fire after dinner, watching the slanting shadows creep slowly across the lake as the twilight begins to deepen into night; the mosquitoes and 'bulldogs,' stupefied either by the cool night air or from over-feeding, have dis-

appeared; upon the mountain world comes the silence of night, unbroken save by the occasional murmur of the wind among the tree-tops or the hurried scamper of some inquisitive chipmunk as he darts for one moment into the fire-light circle to give a startled glance at us and hurry still more quickly out of it. The fire-light flickers among the deep shadows of the pine trees and glows on the white canvas of the tent, deepening the blackness around by contrast, and there descends upon us that peace which comes alone from the mountains, the forests, and the open world of nature, and truly a peace which passeth all understanding and all expression.

THE ALPINE CLUB ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION.

THE Alpine Club Photographic Exhibition occupied the rooms from May 5 to the 30th. It was distinguished by the usual high level of technical excellence, and in some respects proved to be as interesting as its predecessors.

We must confess, however, that the annual repetition of the same views of many of the great Zermatt Peaks is becoming somewhat monotonous. There must surely be many views in the district which would be new to our walls. We fear that the Alpine Photographer is somewhat too much of a centrist, and we should like some of the more enterprising amongst them to turn their attention to less familiar regions, such as, to name but a few, the Adula district, certain unfrequented portions of the Dauphiné, the Tarentaise, the Italian Alps, and many valleys in the Tyrol.

If the Exhibition is to maintain its interest some movement in that direction is highly necessary, although we do not wish to see Zermatt, Chamonix, and Grindelwald boycotted altogether.

Turning our attention to the Exhibition itself, the most interesting contributions were without doubt the group of exhibits sent by Mr. Longstaff and Mr. Mumm, being views taken during their Kumaon Himalayan expeditions. Mr. Longstaff's 'Changabang' gave us an extraordinarily impressive picture of that magnificent rock peak, whilst Mr. Mumm showed amongst other beautiful pictures a very charming sylvan landscape in 'Karein Bridge, Kashmir.'

Mr. Ponting sent several views of that fascinating mountain Fujiyama, by which he seems to be inspired. 'Mt. Fuji and the Kara Grass' and 'Mt. Fuji at Midday' in particular were curiously Japanese in feeling, and were two of the most delightful pictures we have seen at these exhibitions. There was also a very remarkable telephoto of the same peak.