

A WEEK IN THE SELKIRKS WITH THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA.

By G. E. HOWARD.

SITUATED at the top of Rogers Pass, where Sir Sandford Fleming camped on his famous expedition in 1883, the 1908 Camp of the Alpine Club of Canada was in perhaps the grandest position that could have been chosen in the whole of the Selkirks. To the N. rises the rampart of the Hermit range, Rogers and Swiss Peaks standing out from among their giant neighbours. Westwards and directly above us tower Cheops and the curiously silhouetted figure of Napoleon, imposing enough from below, but dwarfed out of all recognition when viewed from the heights of their loftier surroundings. To the S. and E. the dense forests clothing the lower slopes of the mountains each side of the Illecillewaet and Asulkan Glaciers give a softer tone to a panorama which many have held to vie with the most famous in the Bernese Oberland.

The camp itself presents a picture of most workmanlike animation. Work is found for everyone, suited to their varying degrees of experience and enthusiasm. Party after party sallies forth under the eye of the President and in charge of a guide or a thoroughly competent leader for the neighbouring heights, and those who desire to go farther afield than is possible of accomplishment in one day find first-rate bivouacs excellently 'run' by a packer at convenient distances from the climbs on which they have set their hearts.

Being early on the scene I was able to accompany a party under the guidance of Eduard and Gottfried Feuz, of Lauterbrunnen, and further strengthened by the presence of that excellent climber, Mr. Ford, of Revelstoke, for the first ascent of the camp. Rogers Peak (10,536 ft.) had been selected as one of the 'official climbs' the accomplishment of which was to admit aspirants to full membership of the A.C.C. It was therefore desired to find the best route to the summit and incidentally to set in order the hut which stands just below timber-line and about 1,500 ft. above the railway. A fair trail leads up through the timber—fair, that is to say, by the time we had done with it—but sundry fallen trees had to be severely dealt with and manifold streams convinced that the path was not a watercourse before we reached our night's shelter, a substantial log-cabin with glorious views over Mounts McDonald and Avalanche, with the white tents of the camp nestling far below in the green of the deep valley.



G. E. Howard, Photo.

**MOUNTS TUPPER, AVALANCHE AND SIR DONALD
FROM ROGERS PEAK**

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A distressing lack of affection between the logs composing the walls of the hut enabled one to enjoy the view almost as well from the interior; in fact, the ventilation, if not on the most modern principles, was at any rate of an admirably thorough description.

We all turned to and 'brushed' our quarters, a process, it may be explained, consisting in cutting off the ends of fir-branches and strewing them methodically on the bunks, thus forming soft and aromatic mattresses, very grateful and comforting to tired bones.

As night fell we sat round the blazing logs of our fire, peering down into the gloom of the valley, where a solitary spark marked the great camp fire away below us, but the necessity for an early start in the morning forbade our lingering too long outside the hut, and 9 o'clock saw us snugly in our blankets.

A glorious sunrise gave promise of good weather, and with the first light we were astir and brewing tea for breakfast. Half an hour brought us to the snow and another hour over the Rogers Glacier to a slope of loose rocks running up to the main S.E. arête of our peak. Arrived on the ridge we made a second breakfast soon after six, and cameras were levelled at the grand outline of Sir Donald, flying his pennant of cloud and towering above Eagle, Avalanche, and McDonald, with the ugly-looking tooth of Mount Tupper in the left foreground. Tupper is one of the stiffest climbs in the Selkirks, and has probably been ascended fewer times than any of its neighbours. Miss Jean Parker, who is perhaps the most skilful lady mountaineer in Canada to-day, accompanied by Mr. Worsfold and the two Feuz, made the third or possibly the fourth ascent a few days after the camp had broken up.

Dividing into two parties, one led by Eduard and the other by Gottfried Feuz, we rapidly mounted the interesting rocks of our arête, which nowhere offered any serious difficulty, though there were one or two places where remarkable gymnastic exercises had to be indulged in, and legs could be seen from below gracefully waving in the air—a pleasant earnest of what was in store for those behind. To the left was a fine precipice sheer to the Rogers Glacier; to the right, curving round to the saddle between Rogers and Swiss Peaks, a steep snow-slope, up which I believe most of the subsequent parties plodded their weary way, possibly because the leg-waving aforesaid was not deemed quite seemly for the ladies who took part in most of the other ascents.

A short snow-slope above the rock brought us to the top, where a wonderful panorama was unfolded before our delighted eyes. The view is admirably described by Mr. Wheeler in 'The Selkirk Range,' a book which cannot fail to interest the veriest layman of the plains; he says: 'North, South, East and West, in bewildering confusion, as far as the eye could reach, rose snow peaks and rock peaks innumerable; their arms, reaching out in every direction, enfolded countless snow-fields and glaciers. Westward the white-capped line of the Hermit Range stretched below this, its highest point. Looking South, the two most striking features were the black, stunted mass of Mount Bonney and the sharp, solitary peak of Mount Sir Donald. Between lay the valley of the railway and beyond, the snow world of the back ranges. Eastward, across the dark timbered swells of the Beaver and Columbia valleys, rose in the distance another system of snow-caps, snow-fields and glaciers, still more extensive and far-reaching than the one nearer at hand. Northward across the valley of Mountain Creek, a number of isolated high peaks attract attention. . . . One rises, a square, massive form, topped with snow, to an altitude of 11,634 ft. It is the highest peak * yet determined in the Selkirk Range.'

On descending to the rock again a discussion was held as to whether we should go up Swiss Peak also, but as some of the party were not yet in first-rate training, and as it was deemed inadvisable to divide our forces, we agreed to put off the second climb to another day. We accordingly plunged down the steep, soft snow-slope forming the *névé* of Swiss Glacier, and before midday found ourselves back at the hut, another hour serving for a somewhat knee-jolting descent to the camp.

The next day a very sad fatality to a lady during the early hours of an ascent in which I was taking part put an end to my climbing on that and the following day. Details of this unfortunate occurrence will be found at the end of this article.

An interesting expedition was one in company with Mr. Hector Wheeler, Mr. Gordon and three others, our object being to cross from the head of the Asulkan Pass to Sir Donald, making the ascent *en route* of an unnamed crest rising above the Illecillewaet snow-field on its S.W. side to a height of some 8,500 ft. I believe that Mr. A. O. Wheeler's party were climbing this from the Geikie Glacier when surveying the Dawson Range, but turned back owing to the

* This has now been named Mount Sandford.

death of their famous dog 'Fritz,' for many years an ardent mountaineer and his master's faithful companion on many of his climbs.

A convenient bivouac far up the Asulkan Valley enabled us to get to our work at an early hour, and the attentions of the mosquitoes, which pestered us on that occasion more persistently than we well knew how to endure, made us none too sorry to turn out of our blankets and move off some time before dawn. A steady pull up the moraine of the Asulkan Glacier and then over the glacier itself brought us betimes to the top of the pass. It was a glorious morning, and Castor and Pollux reared their twin heads against a perfect sky on our right as we trudged briskly over the hard snow. The view from the top of the pass is very fine, Mounts Donkin and Purity being the most prominent features of the scene; but we knew that a finer awaited us, so no long halt was made here and we were soon striking to our left, up an unpleasantly steep and slippery slope of shale, to the foot of our crest, which at this end consists of fantastic looking rocks of a by no means inviting character. Skirting these along their northern base we struck diagonally up a remarkably steep snow-slope, still bearing to the left and avoiding some ugly looking crevasses which extended nearly to the summit. The snow was somewhat soft and the slope was in places at an angle of 60° , so that the ten or twelve hundred feet up which we slowly and carefully toiled seemed twice as much. At last we reached a terrace where we halted for a few minutes, and then attacked the final stretch, which proved to be only 100 ft. and we suddenly found ourselves at the top. This was a long ridge of snow, heavily corniced on the S. side and commanding a magnificent view in the direction of Mt. Purity, the Dawson group and Mounts Fox and Donkin. Alas! while we had been climbing up the other side, clouds had been gradually drifting up from the S., Mt. Fox being, as I believe is his usual custom, half obscured, and an ominous blackness beyond gave no very pleasant prospect for the rest of the day. To the N. the view over the Hermit range was superb, their grand array being nobly flanked by Sir Donald on the right and Mt. Bonney on the left. A beautiful glacier between Mts. Fox and Donkin appears from here to fall perpendicularly to the valley, and the peculiarly straight lateral moraines on each side of it convey a feeling of artificiality which is very remarkable. By cautiously peering over the cornice, glimpses of the intense blue of the Geikie Glacier could be obtained, filling its mighty trough far below.

The threatening weather caused us to curtail our time on the summit and we began the descent towards the Illecillewaet snow-field down a steep, sharp ridge of snow the sides of which vanished into space in an abrupt manner which rendered it advisable to attend strictly to business for the first couple of hundred feet of our route. Soon it broadened out into a fan-shaped platform which we found to our annoyance ended on three sides in a 50-foot cornice. To the left it sloped down to the edge of a 1,000-foot precipice, which we proceeded to reconnoitre with a view to making a traverse round to the left of the cornice on to Glacier Crest, the long ridge flanking the great Illecillewaet Glacier on its S. side. A very short examination showed this route to be out of the question and we therefore began a careful study of the cornice; nor were we unrewarded, as Mr. Wheeler at last discovered a break some 4 ft. wide where a way looked possible. Considerable care was required, as an absolutely vertical wall of 30 or 40 ft. had to be negotiated. Fortunately the snow was soft and it was possible to kick a 'ladder,' down which we climbed, two at a time, while those above planted themselves firmly and held the rope. Mr. Wheeler, who brought up the rear, slid down safely amid a shower of snow and ice into our waiting arms. From below we could see that we had good cause to be grateful for the one passage, as without its aid we must have retraced our steps back to the Asulkan Valley, and entirely abandoned our 'rundreise.'

A seemingly interminable tramp over the great Illecillewaet snow-field brought us at last to the shoulder of Mount Sir Donald and here we paused for lunch, but as by this time a steady rain was falling and it was bitterly cold, the meal was a hurried one, and after a brief consultation we decided to abandon our intention of crossing the shoulder and began to make our way down the glacier.

A knowledge that the heavy rain would have greatly swollen the torrents which had to be crossed lower down caused us to leave the ice a short distance below Purley Rock and we were soon fighting our way through the dense undergrowth bordering the glacier on its right bank. Again and again we found ourselves brought to a standstill on the brink of unsuspected precipices, necessitating a return and a wearisome *détour*, but at last, after much plunging, sliding and scrambling, in some discomfort of mind and much of body, we reached the first stream, which proved, as my companions were pleased to express it, 'no cinch,' especially for one or two who were getting tired and were beginning to feel the effects of being

soaked to the skin for many hours ; but after considerable floundering, and by dint of mutual assistance with ice-axes, we dragged our dripping and bedraggled persons across this and the subsequent torrents which crossed our path, and reached civilisation once more in the shape of the Glacier House Hotel, where that most hospitable of landlords, Mr. Schiller Flindt, was soon busy with hot baths for the exterior and something else hot for the interior of those of us who preferred the immediate enjoyment of such creature comforts to the delay entailed by the further $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles to be traversed between this and the camp.

Later in the evening I left the hotel and made my way along the railway, which in these regions is also the road, being often the only available track through the forests. This section of the line is particularly rich in snow-sheds, owing to the vast quantity of winter snow which slides down the hillsides and would otherwise obliterate the great highway. To pass through these at night is a quite pleasantly eerie proceeding, and when, as occurred to me on this occasion, you are caught in the middle of one by a train, the sensation of weirdness is intensified a thousandfold. As the huge engine thunders round the curve and her great eye illumines the black timbers of the tunnel, you feel such a very small actor for such a large allowance of limelight and stage-thunder that only the knowledge that no chance of escape is offered by flight prevents your giving way to an infantile desire to run for it. The alternative is to flatten yourself against the dripping timbers while the engineer adds to the prevailing din by the cynically superfluous clanging of the great bell of the locomotive and fires off inaudible ribaldries at you from his cab *en passant*.

For the less energetically inclined, or for those who wanted an off-day, the caves recently discovered in the Cougar Valley provided a pleasant excursion. I accompanied a large party thither by way of Bear Creek, a most beautiful valley branching off from Rogers Pass and leading between Hermit Range and Mount Cheops. A well-made trail runs most of the way up, but crosses the stream *en route*. Arrived at this spot we were considerably nonplussed to find the bridge washed away. The torrent was running deep and strong, and we had a number of ladies with us. It was no doubt very ungallant of us, but I think none of us were particularly sorry in our inmost hearts at their stout refusal to allow us to carry them over, for from the struggles of two of us who waded across it was evident that to gain the opposite

bank encumbered with a burden, however light and fair, would have been a somewhat risky proceeding. Finally a very unstable bridge of two thin tree-trunks was thrown across, and by stretching a rope as a handrail the transit was safely accomplished, though the last man, having nothing to hold on to, lost his balance and fell in. Fortunately we had put a rope round his waist and after a short struggle he was pulled out, breathless but unperturbed.

We crossed the Baloo Pass at the head of the valley, and after missing our way and plunging for a couple of hours through the tangle of the bush, at last reached the cabin of Deutschman, a veteran trapper, who discovered the caves and takes great pride in showing them. Here we spent the night, the ladies in one room and the men packed like sardines on the floor of another.

Perhaps a too recent visit to the subterranean marvels of Majorca rendered me a trifle *blasé* on the subject of caverns, or possibly an ingrained dislike of having icy water trickling down my neck damped my enthusiasm, but whatever the cause I must confess to a certain amount of disappointment with the object of our excursion, and I found greater satisfaction in the natural beauty of the spot, situated as it was among grand fir-trees, between which one caught delicious glimpses of the snow-capped heights far away across the Illecillewaet Valley, and in watching the gambols of the marmots, which abound here and are of unusual size. The flowers, too, were a constant source of delight, and I only deplored my utter ignorance of botany, which prevented my enjoying them from a scientific point of view. Everywhere was a profusion of the yellow dog-tooth violets which are found in such quantities in the district that they are often known as Selkirk lilies, while masses of varying shades of what I believe are called Indian's Paintbrush made gorgeous splashes of colour up the slopes.

An excellent pony-track leads from Deutschman's cabin, down the Cougar Valley and round by Glacier House to Rogers Pass, and the rest of the party elected to return by this roundabout but unfatiguing route, but by mid-day I began to remember that my opportunities of visiting the Selkirks were not so frequent that I could afford many off-days, and finding three kindred spirits I determined to return by our yesterday's route, taking on our way Ursus Major, a moderate rock peak rising to a height of 9,000 ft. to the N.E. of Baloo Pass. Tempted by an excellent lunch which Deutschman provided we delayed our departure till after 2 P.M. and consequently

found we must hasten up the steep slopes above the cabin to the pass; but we soon had to slacken our pace, one of the party, a reverend gentleman who ought to have known better, confessing to a retarding shortness of wind consequent on an unwise indulgence in the aforesaid lunch. It was therefore 3.30 P.M. before we reached the ridge of the pass, and we could only afford a few minutes in which to enjoy the view of the grand mass of Mount Bonney towering above the intervening Illecillewaet Valley.

From this point it is a straightaway scramble up easy rocks to the summit of Ursus Major, but just when our goal was in sight and only a couple of hundred feet remained, I was startled to find that it was half-past five. We were a long way from camp and I had made up my mind that the Bear Creek River must be crossed above its source in the snow-field, since it was very doubtful if our improvised bridge of the day before would still be in place, and anyhow its passage so late in the day was a proceeding to be avoided if possible. The alternative route would involve a stern battle with several miles of the worst variety of alder scrub, and we therefore very reluctantly agreed to admit defeat and began to descend. Our fears as to the task before us were by no means groundless, for it was 8.30 o'clock before we at last struck the trail again after a seemingly unending struggle with the dense bush and the assiduous mosquitoes. A magnificent prospect of Mount Macdonald refreshes the vision all down this valley, and lit up by a gorgeous sunset glow it was like a pillar of fire to us wanderers in that most pugnacious wilderness.

Once on the trail we made short work of our homeward march, a halt to drive a devastating porcupine from a railway coolie's tent being our only delay, and by the light of a grand full moon we got into camp at 9.30 P.M. On proceeding to the camp-fire to report our return to Mr. Wheeler he met me with the inquiry 'Are you all in?' and on my replying in the affirmative produced a capacious flask and pressed a goodly jorum of its contents upon me. Somewhat surprised, for tea was the universal camp beverage, but, must I say it? little loth, I made short work of the cheering cup; and it was not till later that I learned from the amused bystanders that I owed my lapse from teetotal principles to my lamentable ignorance of yet another of our Cousins' catchwords, and I leave it to philologists to explain why physical exhaustion is by us commonly expressed by that apparently irrelevant phrase 'done up' and by our brethren across the water by 'all in.'

I cannot bring these rambling notes to a conclusion without a word about the nightly camp-fire. In the middle is a huge pile of blazing tree-trunks, and seated around it is a crowd of men and girls in the motley garb of camp *déshabillé*. Song and story follow each other in quick succession, broken only by chaff and laughter, and—I tremble to recall it—speeches from the visitors. And so the ball is kept rolling merrily—too merrily perhaps, for the time slips away so imperceptibly that when at last your sleeping-bag does contain its owner, the somewhat rueful reflection comes over you that, in view of a start at 3 A.M., another hour's repose at this end of the night would not have been unwelcome. But still, you would have to travel far to find anything quite like an A.C.C. camp-fire, and you philosophically decide with Mr. Punch's little Christmas gourmand that 'It's worth it.'

Note on the Fatal Accident to Miss Hatch, July 8, 1908.

A party of seven left camp at 6.30 to try a new route up Mount Avalanche, the lower slopes of which ran right down to the camp. Having two ladies with us we made rather slow progress through the timber and scrub above the railway, and it was after nine before we reached the N.W. side above the great basin of snow which lies in an amphitheatre to the E. of our mountain. The exigencies of the scrub had compelled us to keep high up to the left, and we consequently had to descend again into the basin, which we intended to cross in order to climb the rocks running straight into it from the summit. We were just below timber-line and were descending a slope consisting of stretches of grass and firm, fine shale, broken by short 'stairs' of rock with patches of scrub and stunted trees scattered about. Climbing proper had not begun and the rope had not been called into requisition by the leader of the party, nor was it a place where any one would have thought of using it, a point on which the Swiss guides who afterwards examined the spot were emphatic.

In descending a short patch of old snow a few feet in length, one of the ladies, a Miss Hatch, who had had considerable experience as a climber, failed to check herself at the bottom. She had, unfortunately, taken a different direction to the leader, who threw himself forward to stop her, but was thus too far off and only just touched her. The slope below was not steep, and ninety-nine times out of a hundred she would have been brought up lying on her back, but in some way difficult to see clearly from above she began to roll, and, making no apparent effort to stop herself, tumbled on to the snow of a couloir running into the main basin, and sliding down this struck her head against a jutting rock at the bottom and was killed.

So safe was the place that the other men were able to run

straight down in her tracks and reached her in three or four minutes, but nothing could be done for her. I followed much more slowly with the other lady, who was naturally greatly unnerved by the terrible sight. It was impossible to get the body down that day, owing to the thickness of the timber, and four men therefore watched by her until early next morning, when a strong party got up to the spot soon after dawn and by dint of a good deal of axe-work brought the poor lady down to Glacier House Hotel, where the inquest was held at once, to permit of the body being conveyed eastwards on the midday train.

IN MEMORIAM.

SIR HENRY BERGNE.

JOHN HENRY GIBBS BERGNE, whose premature death in the maturity of his powers the public service, the Alpine Club, and a very large circle of devoted personal friends most unfeignedly mourn, was born in the year 1842.

He came of an old French Protestant stock, originally settled at Rudez in the Auvergne, who migrated to this country towards the end of the eighteenth century.

His father, having entered the service of the Foreign Office in the year 1817, subsequently became Superintendent of the Treaty Department, to which important position he was in 1854 appointed as its first incumbent, and in which he was destined eventually to be succeeded by his son.

Henry Bergne himself was, after competitive examination, appointed, on the nomination of the then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Lord John Russell), a Junior Clerk on the Diplomatic Establishment of the office in 1861, and, after twenty years' service in various other departments, himself became Superintendent of the Treaty Department in 1881, and of the Commercial Department in 1894.

His services both at home and abroad fill a column of the Foreign Office List, and were publicly recognised by his having conferred upon him in 1886 the C.M.G., in 1888 the K.C.M.G., in 1902 the C.B., and in 1908 the K.C.B.

In 1902 he retired on a full pension after forty-one years of strenuous service, but he continued after his retirement to serve his country with marked ability and success as plenipotentiary and delegate at various international conferences, until he was suddenly and prematurely cut off, in the plenitude of his powers and experience, after a few days illness, by an attack of pneumonia while acting as H.B.M.'s senior representative at the International Copyright Conference at Berlin in November of last year.

After his retirement from the Foreign Office he also continued as Chairman of the Committee of Management of the Incorporated