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A SUMMER CAMP IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES.

IF discovery and conquest form the essence of mountaineering, it is not hard to understand why so many climbers are turning their attention to Canada. The Swiss mountains are indeed infinitely varied and grand, but at each turn a sign-board points out the beauty spots. No virgin peaks, no unexpected lakes there to reward the adventurer, for the Alps have been subdued by two generations of mountain lovers.

Last summer I had the good fortune to be able to join the Canadian Alpine Club, founded some seven years ago, at its annual camp. Mr. William Garden is the only other Aberdeen member.

Seven years ago a few climbing enthusiasts banded themselves together for the purpose of exploring the lesser-known regions of the Rockies and climbing the peaks. It was a day of small things, but that they have done what they set out to do, may be gathered from the fact that the Government of British Columbia has given \$1000 towards the work of the Club, and Alberta \$500. Even more noteworthy is the fact that the Dominion Government has donated \$1000 to the Club, so that it is being helped on in its work of making the mountains known to, loved by, and accessible to all Canadians and many from other lands.

To be sure of being accepted for the Camp, one has to

VII. S

apply early, armed with a certificate of respectability from a member. Having friends at court, we had no difficulty in securing the necessary certificate, were accepted, and made all our summer plans fit in with the camp dates.

In due time the question of clothing—a very important one—had to be attended to, and, supplied with a formidable list of necessaries from the Secretary, we proceeded to beg, borrow, or, as a last resort, make, the required garments. It took some time to get used to the idea of ourselves divested altogether of the usual badge of womanhood—skirts—but the instructions were quite explicit on that point. “Skirts having been found a distinct source of danger on the rope, they will not be permitted except around the camp-fire.” Once there, however, and surrounded by sexless females of all ages, we were soon reconciled to our untrammelled clothing, and at the end of the ten days of camp life resigned “it” (or should I say “them”?) unwillingly. Our “*pièce de résistance*,” however, very literally, was our boots—boy’s hockey boots, reinforced at toes and sides, double soled to begin with, and thickly studded with Hungarian nails. They were big enough to hold several pairs of stockings—some of the guides wear as many as five or six pairs—and altogether we felt justifiably proud of our business-like limbs, swathed as they were in puttees.

It was my first camp of any kind, and in spite of much talk about the life beforehand from those who knew, I had very vague ideas of what the reality would be. Forty pounds weight of baggage was all that was allowed, and as that included bedding, it was by no means an exorbitant amount. When we saw afterwards, however, that it had all to climb the steep ascent to camp on the backs of panier-ponies we didn’t feel inclined to grumble. All excess was not only heavily charged for, but strongly objected to on the part of the chief packer.

What a strange-looking lot we were as many of us gathered together at Castle, the little flag-station beyond Banff on the C. P. R., preparatory to starting our walk to the scene of action. All sorts and varieties of costume

were represented—knickers, bloomers, divided skirts, and skirts of ballet-girl brevity; shirts, sweaters, and a few marvellously-worked Indian jackets. One in particular, of leather, embroidered, beaded and fringed, adorning a regal figure already seated in state on a horse's back, struck awe into our hearts. "How can we ever live up to that?" we thought, as we gazed with wondering respect at this apparition. Evidently she was somebody. We afterwards learned that the lady was Miss Mary Vaux, of Philadelphia, who has been visiting the Canadian Rockies for twenty-five years to measure and photograph the glaciers. We found too, afterwards, that she was far from formidable, was in fact a delightful woman to know.

Some of the members, then, as well as the baggage, were transported to camp by ponies, but, tenderfeet as we were, we knew enough to be aware that the correct way to reach our destination was by the use of our own means of locomotion. We accordingly set out on our ten mile walk to camp. I learned immediately that the Rockies have a measurement all their own, the miles being of a length and severity to be experienced to be believed.

At first it was all right, the way lying along the railway-line, and then for some three miles or so along a good road—part of a motor-road which is being made in continuation of the one over the Rockies from Calgary to Banff, and eventually to Windermere. We ascended steadily from the railway, magnificent views unfolding themselves as we climbed. New mountains appeared at every corner, and fresh aspects of the ones we had seen before.

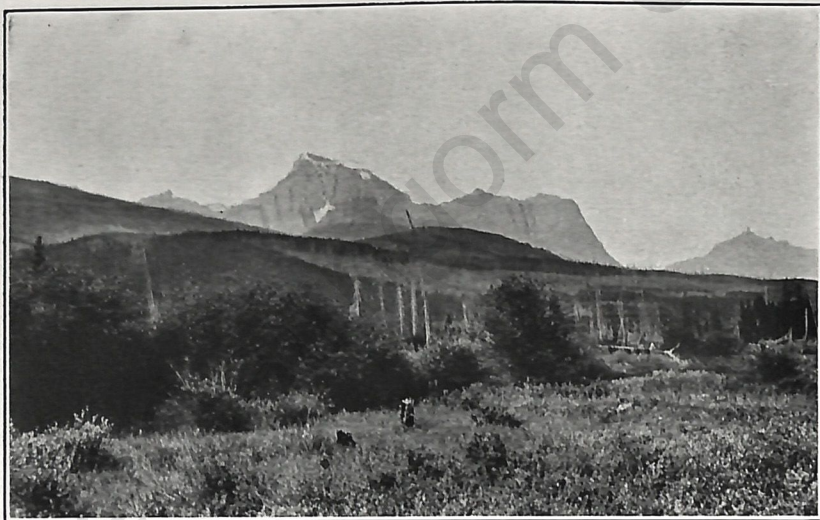
The gaiety with which we had started was soon tempered. The sun was beating down in the heat of a Canadian July, the road wound uphill all the way, and soon degenerated into a very dissipated trail. As we toiled on, we wondered—at least I did—if it was ten miles or twenty we had to go.

Comfort was close at hand, however. We turned a corner, and, behold, in a little clearing a curl of smoke, and, coming nearer, we see a kettle cheerfully boiling. Our

spirits returned with a rush. Remembering their weariness of the day before, two of the fore-runners had come the long, hard way from camp to bid us the best sort of welcome and cheer us on our way. The tea was "billy tea," the milk came out of a tin, the sugar was dispensed from a bag, the cups and tea-spoons were of tin, the bread and butter decidedly ragged, but never did the daintiest afternoon tea taste as delicious as that enjoyed by the way-side that afternoon.

We soon "hit the trail," once more, refreshed and invigorated. We had now only the surveyor's mysterious marks to assure us that we were still in the strait path, but beyond that there was hardly anything in the nature of a track. It was my first experience of the kind, and as we jumped fallen trees, manœuvred bogs, forced our way through brushwood, and dived down into valleys only to have to scramble up as best we could on the other side, I began to realise fully that I was in for a strenuous time. Ultimately the white tents of our camp shone before us, and we forgot our weariness in the hearty welcome that awaited us.

First of all, we had supper. Two large tents, open at both ends, served as a dining-room. The flies waited for no invitation to partake too, and one of the problems at meat times was how to consume as few of them as possible. Chinese cooks attended to our inner wants, and boy scouts served the food. To eliminate labour as far as possible, there was only one long-suffering plate for all the courses. Old-timers told us next morning that it was possible by careful manipulation to induce the porridge and milk to stay on one part of the plate, leaving a sufficient surface for the ham to follow, while by extra good management a virgin spot might still be reserved for butter or marmalade. Tin cups and spoons, iron knives and forks, all of a chaste simplicity of design, completed the equipment. The seats were desperately hard, being simply tree trunks supported by posts at a convenient height. The tables were also made from tree trunks, covered with laths, and given a final embellishment of white American cloth.



Photograph by

Mr. J. D. Patterson.

STORM MOUNTAIN FROM CASTLE STATION.

The mail board, a great centre of attraction when the daily mail came in, and the mountaineer's board, on which names were written for the expeditions suggested, were close by, while grouped round were the directors' tent, the Committee's tent, the Press tent, the drying tent (of which we were destined to see so much in the following days), the tea tent, from which afternoon tea was dispensed, etc., etc. Beyond was the camp-fire, as yet unlit; beyond that, on one branch of Vermilion Creek, the ladies' quarters, where we soon found our tent. Before long we were all gathered in a wide circle of tree trunks round the camp-fire for the inauguration of the 7th camp. Prof. Coleman, of Toronto, the President, made a speech of welcome, and the important ceremony of setting a match to the great spruce bonfire was entrusted to Mrs. Henshaw, one of the camp hostesses, and a botanist and authoress of some note. It flared up gloriously, and thereafter the vestal flame of our camp-fire burned night and day, smouldering down sometimes, but never allowed to go out, and replenished by willing hands from the forest around. Songs were started, mostly of the student and coon variety, till in the gloaming an unexpected shower came on, and, like Israel of old, "To your tents!" was the cry.

Busy hands had been at work a day or two before, erecting the seventy tents of various shapes and sizes and "brushing" those to be used as bedrooms. The brushing consisted of covering the ground to a depth of eight to ten inches with balsam or spruce boughs, the tips carefully turned up and the stems down. As it happened, we had unconsciously picked a good lair, and we stuck to it, for we heard many murmurs from our neighbours about obtrusive branches that would insist on poking their way into various parts of their defenceless persons.

The bright sunshine of next morning revealed what a happy choice of site had been made. The camp was called Palliser's Vermilion Pass Camp, and had been discovered by the explorer Palliser and used by the Indians from time immemorial in their journeys from the

plains down to the ochre beds along the Vermilion and Ochre Rivers to get material for their war-paint. Just at the site of the camp, the Vermilion River obligingly divides into two branches; the women's tents were on one, the men's quarters on the other, the main camp in the centre, a bit of flat, wooded country about a quarter of a mile wide. Those of us who had courage to bathe in the icy waters of the creek, fed constantly from the snows of the everlasting hills, did not stay in long. I didn't know before that water could be so cold and still flow!

The first day's expedition will, I think, remain in my memory as long and as vividly as even the graduating climb of two days later. During breakfast an excursion to some wonderful box-canyon—five miles off—was suggested, and this we joined, under the impression that we were going for a little forenoon stroll. Never were we more mistaken. The country round was for all practical purposes unexplored, and there were, naturally, difficulties in finding one's way anywhere from a base new to everyone, from which trails radiated indeed through the camp in all directions, only to come to an abrupt end at its limits. Our volunteer guide, however, was full of self-confidence, and we started light-heartedly soon after ten. We wound on through ever-increasing difficulties, crossed the winding Vermilion on perilous logs till we lost all count of how often we had done so and leaped over perfect forests of fallen trees, with ever decreasing confidence in our guide. The last straw was when, after having patiently clambered up something of a precipice, we found we had been taken there only that our guide, now hopelessly lost, might get a better view, and were told to get down again, back to the Creek, where we would have lunch, it being now considerably past two!

Dr. Levack, in a most interesting lecture on "Mountaineering" last winter, pointed out in one of his slides a decidedly sulky-looking man, sitting all by himself—on Ben Muich Dhui, I think it was—and said that man never forgave him for taking him out and losing him. The poor man looked cold and weary and hungry, and with this

day fresh in my mind, I could not cast a stone at him. We descended that dreadful hill somehow, mostly sitting, to the distinct detriment of our nether garments.

On our way we fortunately fell in with a party of prospectors, their pack horses picking their uneven way by themselves with marvellous sure-footedness, led and followed by men; it looked most picturesque. They seemed as astonished to see us as we were surprised and pleased to see them. On learning from them that the canyon for which we had set out so cheerfully was still two miles off—it was supposed to be a five-mile walk from camp, and we had already been walking hard for about four hours!—it was decided to go home and leave the canyon alone. As it was, it would take us all our time to get back for supper. I may remark that on two or three occasions we met pack-trails of prospectors, and they always regarded us with interest certainly, but with an expression of what we could only feel was amused contempt. We thought we were working very hard, roughing it nobly, and sometimes were inwardly rather sorry for ourselves, but to them of course we were idle amateurs, playing awkwardly at what was their hard life-work, and they always looked at us as if we were some new and incomprehensible kind of animal.

Well, the billy was boiled, the tea proved refreshing and very helpful in getting the rather dry and stodgy sandwiches down, and when the meal was over we set out—some of us footsore and weary—for home, by a new and as it turned out a far viler track than the one by which we had come. From going we went, at times, like Christian, to clambering, jumping over more forests till our limbs struck at crossing trees and had to be lifted over, while, to add to our happiness the rain started. At last, after grave doubts about our way, and after I had almost resigned myself in imagination to the fate of going “o’er moor and fen, o’er crag and torrent, till the night was gone,” we rejoiced to see white tents looming ghost-like before us. I am sure “Punch” would have said of this, as he did of a similarly unfortunate walking ex-

cursion, that he did not grudge us our simple pleasures.

We stripped off our wringing clothes, had a welcome meal, and soon forgot our little discomforts in the sad news that there had been an accident—within an ace of being fatal—on one of the other expeditions, up a spur of Mount Storm. Strangely enough, it seems to be the experienced climbers who get hurt oftenest. There has been one fatal accident in the history of the Club, to a girl who was an expert climber, and this year's one was to a mountaineer so experienced that he was a leader of his party. He had to lie in plaster casts for weeks up there among the mountains after the camp broke up before he could be moved down to his home in Calgary, but the last news I heard of him was that, by something like a miracle, he was almost well again. He occupied his too ample leisure in happy plans for next summer's climbs.

(To be continued.)



Photograph by

Professor Freeborn.

CAIRN, STORM MOUNTAIN.