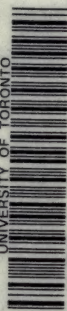


CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION
IN THE CANADIAN
ROCKIES ❧ ❧ ❧

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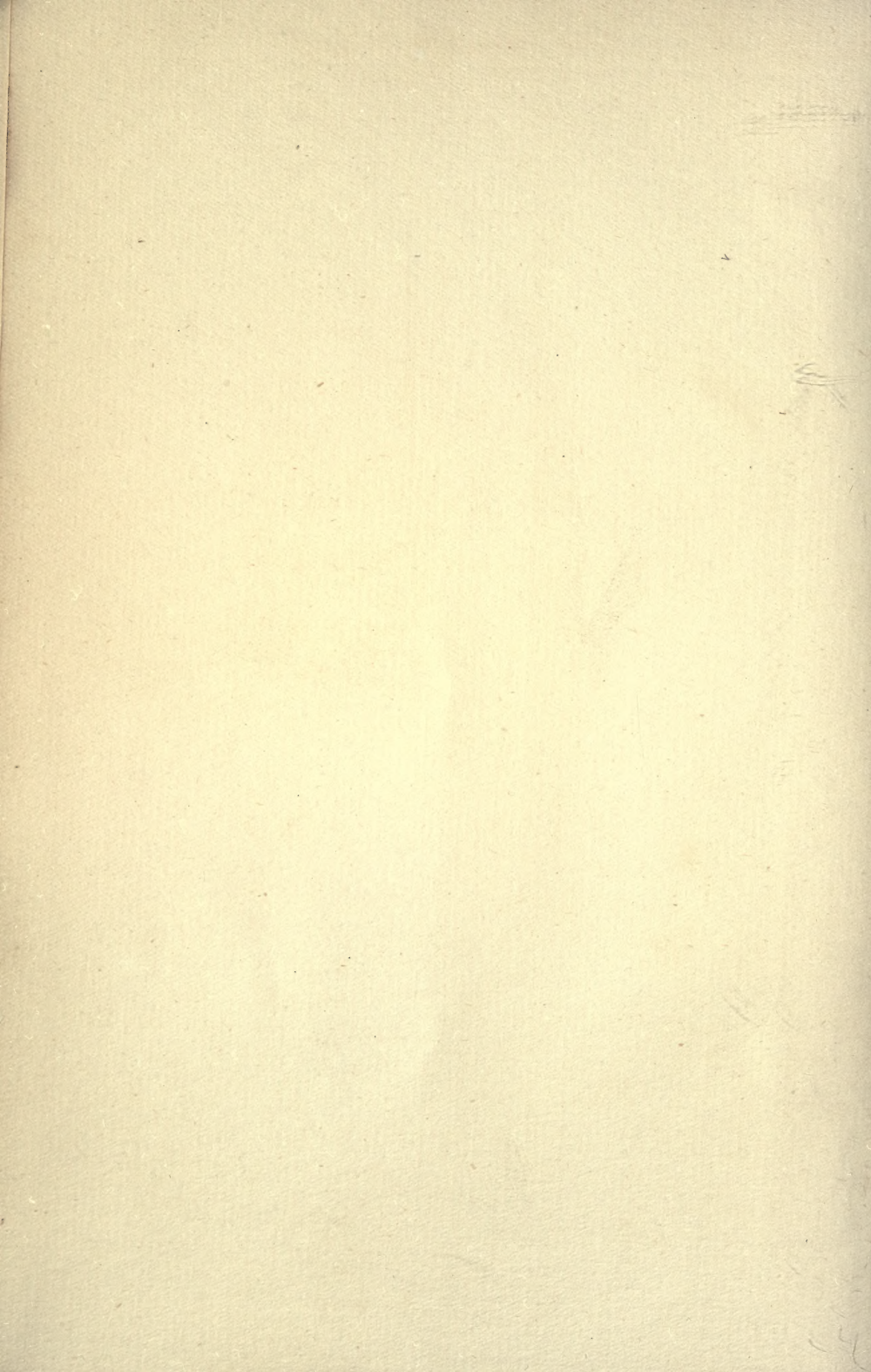
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CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION
IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES



BUSH RIVER AND PEAK

CLIMBS & EXPLORATION
IN THE
CANADIAN ROCKIES

HUGH E. M. STUTFIELD

AUTHOR OF "EL MAGHREB: 1200 MILES'
RIDE THROUGH MOROCCO"

AND

J^ohⁿ NORMAN COLLIE, F.R.S.

AUTHOR OF "CLIMBING ON THE HIMALAYA
AND OTHER MOUNTAIN RANGES"

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

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PREFATORY NOTE

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CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL

“An’ it was a game worth playin’ ! Alone—at the heart of
the world,
Where the mighty snow-slides thundered, and the long grey
vapours curled :
When we mere pigmies ventured to storm Creation’s hold,
Staked our lives on the highest bluff, and played the world
for her gold.
We had Great Things then for our comrades, and Forces of
Earth for foes ;
There’s one goes down in the battle, and another don’t care
when he goes.”

—CLIVE PHILLIPS WOLLEY.

ONE hundred years ago the Dominion of Canada, stretching as it does over thousands of miles, covered with dense forests, watered by unnumbered rivers, and dotted over with countless lakes, was a land in many places as difficult of access as Siberia ; and its Rocky Mountains, the back-bone of the continent, were almost unknown. Now even, although a trans-continental

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

railway connects the Atlantic with the Pacific Ocean, many parts still remain unexplored. For instance, only as far back as 1898, a vast snow-field and some of the highest mountains in the Rocky Mountain system were discovered at the head-waters of three of the largest rivers of Canada, the Athabasca, the Saskatchewan, and the Columbia; whilst even now, further north, in those regions where rise the Peace River, the Liard, and the Pelly, large areas are probably to be found covered with perpetual snow and glaciers, which feed turbulent streams flowing seawards through deep valleys filled with almost impenetrable pine-woods. No human beings live there, with the exception of a few prospectors and trappers; Indians seldom if ever hunt amongst these mountain fastnesses, and the land is desolate and deserted.

The history of this "Great Lone Land," this north-western and western part of the Dominion, is soon told. Its history is practically that of the fur trade. It is the tale of the hunters and trappers, the tale of those who left all to wander in strange places, hoping often against hope that some day they would be rich in the goods of men; but although this seldom happened and they came back

HISTORICAL

poor, yet they had gained what such life alone can give :—

“The lore of men that ha’ dealt with men,
In the new and naked lands.”

Even now the only names one sees on the map in a great part of this country are those of Forts : Fort Reliance, Fort Good Hope, Fort Enterprise, and so on—centres where the furs were collected.

As far back as 1670 a charter was granted to Prince Rupert, and a coalition of traders was formed to exploit the riches of this country. The Company possessed the right to all the commerce and trade of that portion which drained into Hudson’s Bay. Towards the end of the eighteenth century Captain Cook, in his “Voyages Round the World,” first drew attention to the great value of the fur trade on the western coast of North America, with the result that many ships were fitted out for carrying it on, both by the English, the Americans, and the Russians.

About the same time, 1783, a rival undertaking to the Hudson’s Bay Company came into existence, namely, the North-West Company. Many were the conflicts between these two, and their mutual animosity and jealousy not infrequently caused bloodshed. In 1821 the

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

North-West Company ceased to exist, being merged in the Hudson's Bay Company.

In the meantime, at the end of the eighteenth century, Mr. John Jacob Astor founded the American Fur Company, whose headquarters were at Astoria, near the mouth of the Columbia River. But after a stormy existence this company was extinguished during the war of 1812, by Astoria falling into the hands of the English. The furs when collected were taken to various markets; some were shipped to China and Japan and bartered for tea, silks, and other goods, whilst some were with great toil and difficulty transported over the mountains and taken down in canoes to the Great Lakes, and so to eastern Canada. This journey usually occupied the best part of a year, and a graphic description of crossing the mountains is to be found in Ross Cox's "Adventures on the Columbia River, 1817."

The first man, however, who actually crossed the continent in these high latitudes was Sir Alexander Mackenzie in 1793. Several explorers before this had penetrated as far west as the Rocky Mountains, but there is no record of any one having been successful in proceeding further. Mackenzie's route across the continent,

HISTORICAL

after the mountains had been reached, lay up the Peace River, in canoes. From its source a portage was made to the head-waters of the Fraser River, and finally, after endless dangers and misfortunes had been overcome, the Pacific Ocean was reached at latitude $52^{\circ} 20' 48''$. It was before this, in 1789, that Mackenzie had penetrated as far north as the Arctic Ocean, down the great river that now bears his name.

A few years later Alexander Henry, one of the hunters of the North-West Company, kept a journal in which he wrote down from day to day (1799–1814) a description of his life amidst the woods and wild places of that part of Canada that lies between the great Lakes and the Pacific Ocean. This journal has only recently been published,¹ but it contains endless interesting information of the wild life of the pioneers of those days; moreover, the Editor has incorporated with it, in the form of notes, the history of another pioneer, David Thompson, the celebrated explorer, geographer, astronomer, and scientist. David Thompson was constantly travelling in every direction through the same

¹ "The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry, Fur-Trader of the North-West Company, and of David Thompson, Official Geographer and Explorer of the same Company." Edited by Elliott Coues. 3 vols. 1897.

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

country as Henry, and during the same period (1789–1812). Probably amongst the early wanderers in Western Canada there were none whose record equals that of Thompson. It was he who discovered the sources of the Columbia River; and he was the first white man to explore its upper waters and tributaries, and also to cross the Rocky Mountains by means of more than one pass, from the head-waters of the Athabasca to those of the Columbia. His greatest achievement, however, was undoubtedly his “Map of the North-West Territory of the Province of Canada.” This was compiled from a survey extending over many years (1792–1812), and, considering the immense area it covers, it is a marvel of accuracy.

The Fraser River was explored to its mouth in 1809 by Jules Quesnel, Simon Fraser, and John Stuart, under the impression that it was the Columbia.

Some years later Alexander Ross, in his book entitled “The Fur-Hunters of the Far West: a Narrative of Adventures in the Oregon and Rocky Mountains,” describes the life of the first settlers on the Columbia River; and he writes of that region as the “farthest of the far west,” whilst the Red River Settlement,¹ where he

¹ Now known as Winnipeg and Manitoba.

HISTORICAL

spent the remainder of his life, he pictures as "a spot more effectually cut off from the rest of the world than any other colony of the empire."

From the early part of last century till 1858 few people penetrated into these western valleys. Sir George Simpson, on his journey round the world, crossed the Rocky Mountains by the Simpson Pass in 1841, and then descended the Kootenay River to the Columbia. Towards the end of the fifties, however, miners who had pushed north from California began to congregate in considerable numbers near the headwaters of the Fraser River, as gold had been found then in the Cariboo country.

A road was built, called the "Cariboo Road," up the canyon of the Fraser, to connect the mining district with the Pacific coast. A marvellous piece of engineering skill it still remains, resembling some of those that exist in the terrific gorges of the Himalaya. Although abandoned now for many years, parts of it can yet be seen from the cars of the Canadian Pacific Railway, clinging to the precipitous sides of that vast canyon through which the Fraser flows.

By far the most exhaustive account of these

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

western districts of Canada is that by Captain J. Palliser, published as a report to the Houses of Parliament. Palliser had been sent out in 1857 by the Government to explore "that portion of British North America which lies between the northern branch of the River Saskatchewan and the frontier of the United States, and between the Red River and the Rocky Mountains." In addition to this the Government "wished to ascertain whether any practical pass or passes, available for horses, existed across the Rocky Mountains within British territory, and south of that known to exist between Mount Brown and Mount Hooker in latitude $54^{\circ} 10'$ " (the Athabasca Pass).

During his explorations in conjunction with Dr. Hector and others, the Kananaskis Pass, the Vermilion Pass, and the British Kootanie Pass were discovered and mapped, whilst Dr. Hector by himself discovered the Kicking Horse Pass, and also traversed the Howse Pass (or Howe's Pass). This pass had at that time, 1859, been abandoned for such a long period that he hardly found any trace of the trail that had once existed, when the North-Western Fur Company used the route for communicating



THE HOWSE PASS FROM NEAR GLACIER LAKE

HISTORICAL

with their posts on the Pacific at the beginning of the century.

Although Palliser and his party had explored all these passes through the Rocky Mountains, yet that immense area which lies between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific coast and comprises the Selkirk Mountains and the Cascade Range, formed an impassable barrier, and a road through it was never made. To quote Palliser's report: "The connection, therefore, of the Saskatchewan Plains, east of the Rocky Mountains, with a known route through British Columbia has been effected by the expedition under my command, without our having been under the necessity of passing through any portion of United States territory. Still, the knowledge of the country on the whole would never lead me to advocate a line of communication from Canada across the continent to the Pacific exclusively through British territory. The time has now for ever gone by for effecting such an object, and the unfortunate choice of an astronomical boundary line has completely isolated the Central American possessions of Britain from Canada in the east, and almost debarred them from any eligible access from the Pacific coast on the west."

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This report of Palliser's, in the light of our present knowledge, does not seem justifiable; yet it was a perfectly fair deduction from the facts available at the time. The immense difficulties which all but wrecked the completion of a trans-continental Canadian railway line over twenty years later would in those days have been quite insurmountable.

Between the time of Palliser's expedition and the present era, which began with the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway, there was one more expedition worthy of mention to the Rocky Mountains—that of Viscount Milton and Dr. Cheadle in 1863. They crossed the mountains from the head-waters of the Athabasca to those of the Fraser River over the Yellow Head Pass, emerging at Kamloops. A most vivid description of this journey is given in that delightful volume, "The North-West Passage by Land."

In 1871 British Columbia entered the Dominion of Canada, and at once a Government survey for the Canadian Pacific Railway was started. It was amongst the Rocky Mountains that the difficulty of selecting a route was most evident. No less than eleven different ways across the mountains were surveyed from the Peace River in the north to the Crow's Nest

HISTORICAL

Pass in the south. But at last, almost regardless of expense, a railway was built—a railway that for hundreds of miles passes through thickly-wooded valleys, over lofty mountain ranges, across raging torrents hundreds of feet below, till finally it reaches the Pacific coast at Vancouver. The survey alone is said to have cost between three and four million dollars; but eventually the Canadian Pacific Railway was opened in 1886, after nearly one hundred and fifty million dollars had been expended on its construction.

The facilities afforded by the railway of necessity largely stopped the use of the old passes, but at the same time gave much greater facilities to those who wished to travel in the mountains in search of game or amusement. For, prior to the building of the railway, any one wishing to visit these Rocky Mountains of Canada would have had to spend at least three months' time in getting there. In spite, however, of the extra facility offered, very little advantage seems to have been taken of this easy road to the actual edge of the unexplored.

The first to make use of it was the Canadian Survey—Dr. George M. Dawson spending several summers on the watershed of the con-

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

continent. The results were published in a "Report on the Physical and Geological Features of that Portion of the Rocky Mountains between Latitudes 49° and $51^{\circ} 30'$ " (1886), which begins with a history of all previous explorations in that district. No less than nine passes across the Divide were explored by Dr. Dawson or his subordinates. In 1886, also, a detailed examination of the Bow River Pass and the vicinity was made by Mr. R. G. M'Connell.

Most of the survey work amongst the mountains has been done by the Geological section; it not being worth the while of the ordinary survey to send men into this uninhabited land, whilst so much country of a far more important nature had not yet been mapped out. In 1898 another member of the Geological Survey, Mr. M'Evoy, during a summer spent in the vicinity of the Yellow Head Pass, measured a mountain called Robson Peak, and found it to be 13,500 feet high. This peak for the present, therefore, is the highest that has been accurately surveyed in the Rocky Mountains of Canada. It is only within recent years, however, that many sporting or mountaineering expeditions have made use of the opportunities offered by the railway. Members of the Appalachian Club of Boston

HISTORICAL

were the first, and several seasons were spent by them amongst the peaks and glaciers near Laggan and Field (stations on the Canadian Pacific Railway). In 1893 Professor Coleman of Toronto undertook a journey from Morley to the sources of the Athabasca River, in order to search for the two peaks Brown and Hooker, of which little else was known except that they had been discovered about sixty years previously, and were supposed to be 16,000 and 15,700 feet in height.

Mr. W. D. Wilcox in the meantime had explored the valleys of the mountainous country south of the Canadian Pacific Railway as far as Mount Assiniboine (1894-1895), and north of the railway to the Saskatchewan and the Athabasca (1896). His experiences have been published in a delightful work, "The Rockies of Canada."

Most of our knowledge, therefore, up to that time (1897) of the mountain districts lying one hundred miles to the north or to the south of the railway, as it passes through the Rocky Mountains, was either knowledge gained in the early part of the century by traders in the employ of the fur-trading companies, or from Palliser's journals, Wilcox's book, or the reports

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

of the Canadian survey by the late Dr. Dawson. For the most part these explorations have been restricted to the valleys and low passes; very few attempts have been made to locate or explore the great snow-fields and the surrounding peaks that form the great backbone of the continent. To take the Alps as an example, it would be a parallel case if a few parties had started from Geneva, explored the St. Bernard Pass, pushed up the Rhone Valley over the Furka Pass and the St. Gothard, without troubling themselves about either the snow-fields of the Oberland, or the side valleys and the great peaks on the main Pennine chain with their attendant glaciers.

A brief record, however, of the mountaineering expeditions that were undertaken during the year from 1887 to 1897 may not be out of place.¹ From 1887 to 1892 Mr. J. J. M'Arthur climbed numerous peaks near Canmore, Banff, Laggan, and Field, the highest being Mount Stephen, 10,428 feet.

In 1894 Mount Aberdeen, 10,450 feet, and Mount Temple, 11,607 feet, were climbed by Messrs. W. D. Wilcox, S. E. S. Allen, and L. F. Frissell.

¹ Cf. W. D. Wilcox, "The Rockies of Canada," p. 301.

HISTORICAL

In 1896 Mount Hector was ascended by Messrs P. S. Abbot, C. E. Fay, and C. S. Thompson. It was during an attempt on Mount Lefroy by the same party, somewhat later, at the beginning of August, that Mr. Abbot was killed, and the Canadian Rockies claimed their first victim to the now rapidly growing passion for mountaineering as a sport.

CHAPTER II

ASCENT OF LEFROY AND VICTORIA; AND THE WAPUTEHK ICE-FIELD

TOWARDS the end of July, 1897, a strong mountaineering party was assembled at Glacier House, in the Selkirk range, west of the Rocky Mountains. The party consisted of Messrs. C. E. Fay, A. Michael, Rev. C. L. Noyes, H. B. Dixon, H. C. Parker, J. R. Vanderlip, J. N. Collie, and Peter Sarbach (a Swiss guide). Several peaks in the Selkirk range had been ascended, but a wish to conquer the higher summits of the main chain drew them eastwards to Laggan, where they were joined by C. S. Thompson, one of the most enthusiastic of the pioneers of mountaineering amongst the ranges of both the Selkirks and the Rockies. Most of the party belonged to the Appalachian Club of Boston; and it is due to members of this club and to other Americans from the States that mountaineering as a recreation was first undertaken amongst the Canadian Rocky Mountains.

THE ASCENT OF LEFROY

It was on August 3rd, the anniversary of Abbot's death, that we started from the chalet at Lake Louise, to climb Mount Lefroy. This chalet has been built by the Canadian Pacific Railway for the convenience of those who wish to see Lake Louise, one of the most beautiful mountain tarns in the world.

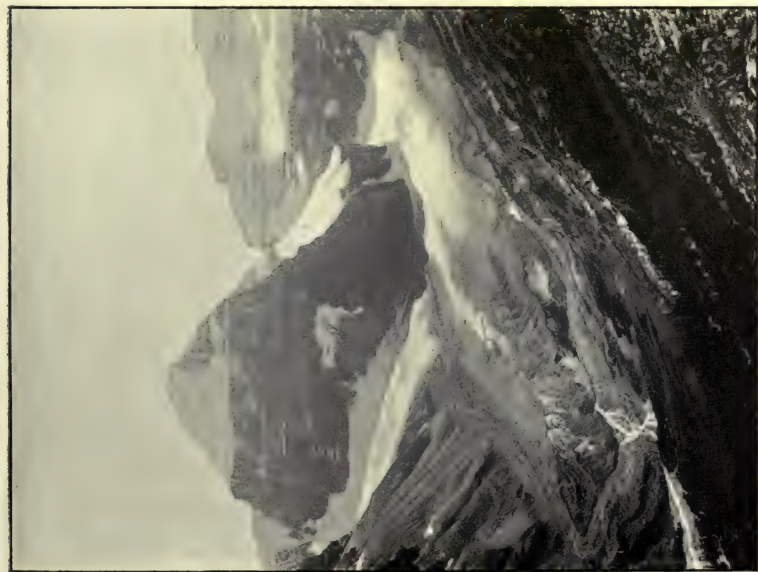
As we step out of the chalet into the brilliant starlight, at that early hour which is necessary when a long day's climb is before one, it would be impossible to find in the Alps, or elsewhere, a more peaceful scene. The stars above shine with a clear steady light, and the entire absence of twinkling foreshadows fine weather. A few yards away lies the lake, reflecting perfectly the luminous snows of Mounts Lefroy and Victoria amongst the black shadows of the pine-trees and the mirrored stars. Across its placid waters we are carried by a rowing-boat through the dark chasm in the hills: the silence is unbroken; one seems to be travelling through some forgotten land, a land of old romance, where high above, perched on the almost inaccessible crags, is the castle of the lord of the valley, a land where knights in armour rescue fair ladies from imprisonment, and roam abroad in search of perilous adventures.

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

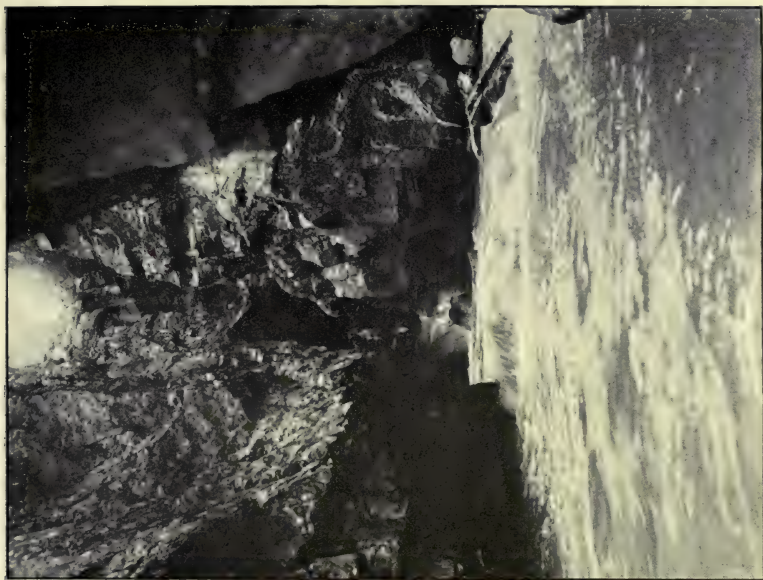
But after disembarking in the darkness that heralds the dawn, one is soon disillusioned, and swamps, tangled thickets of alder, fallen trees, and huge stones dispel any poetic fancies. Just as the dawn was breaking the end of the glacier was reached. The route lay straight up the ice towards a great gateway of the hills that lies between Mounts Victoria and Lefroy. This narrow passage has been called "The Death-Trap," for during the early summer, and in years when much snow lies on the mountains, it is a dangerous place to venture into, on account of the avalanches that fall from Lefroy on one side and Victoria on the other. The description of the remainder of the expedition is given in Professor H. B. Dixon's words:¹—

"Passing the two snow couloirs which descend from chimneys in the north-west cliff, we entered the so-called 'Death-Trap'—a wide slope of snow leading up at an easy angle to Abbot Pass. As we breasted the slope we were met by several small erratic pieces from the upper rocks of Lefroy, which came skipping down the snow with unpleasant velocity, giving us an early warning of the unstable state of the

¹ "Alpine Journal" (Harold B. Dixon), vol. xix. p. 103.



MOUNT LEEFROY AND VICTORIA



GORGE BELOW THE BOW ICE-FALL (see p. 28)

THE ASCENT OF LEFROY

limestone ledges above. After five hours' steady going we stepped on to the narrow ridge which joins Lefroy with Victoria, and caught our first view of the precipices of Hungabee and Goodsi^r to the south. The aneroid gave our height as 4200 feet above Lake Louise, 9800 feet above sea-level.

“From the col our route upwards was in plain view. The steep slope was snow-covered, except where the limestone ledges cropped out, roughly marking off the ascent into three sections. The slope is best seen from opposite on Mount Victoria. Having breakfasted, we roped up in three parties and struck straight up the snow to the first patch of rocks. The slope gradually steepened as we rose, but the snow was good, and we could kick firm steps in it. After a steady grind we reached the rocks, which proved to be both steep and rotten. For a few minutes we enjoyed the variation of wriggling our bodies over the ledges, though it would have been quicker to go round. The buttress of rock held up the snow above it at a more favourable angle for a little distance, but the slope soon became severer than before. As we approached the second patch of rocks great care became necessary. A bad slip would have

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

been difficult to check, and our path now lay above the south-western precipices. On reaching the second rocks we passed up a snow couloir near their right extremity, and found ourselves on the steepest part of the face, lying at an angle of 60° . Above us to the right frowned the cliff which Abbot had tried to scale. Between us and that cliff the snow no longer gave a foothold. It loosely plastered the steep ice-slope, and the rocks showed in patches through the surface. But against the outcrop of rock, which formed an overhanging cliff on our left, the snow still clung firmly, filling the angle between rock and ice. We crept round a ledge of snow beneath the overhanging rock, and then kicked a ladder up the snow till the top of the cliff was gained. The steps held, but we had a distinctly uneasy feeling that we might not find them so firm on our return, after the sun had been on them for a few hours. From the top of the cliff a little arête of snow led upwards at a gentler slope to the corniced ridge of the mountain, and at 11 A.M. we clambered on to one of the two rocky prominences (some fifty yards apart) which form the highest points of Mount Lefroy. The aneroid gave the height as 11,600 feet above the sea, but the mercury barometer brought it down to 11,420 feet.

THE ASCENT OF LEFROY

“The air was beautifully clear—for the forests to the west had been singularly free from fires during the summer. Two mushroom-like patches were visible on the northern horizon; the stem produced by the heated column of smoke which flattens out as it cools. Of the mountains near at hand the most striking is Hungabee, which offers a first-rate problem to climbers. Looking at it from the commanding height of Lefroy, none of us could suggest an even probable line of attack. Away to the south-east the black precipices of Mount Assiniboine were distinctly visible. To the north Mount Balfour, rising from the great Waputekh snow-field attracted greater interest, for we hoped to conquer it in the next few days. The thought of our snow-ladder gradually melting in the sun cut short our enjoyment of the summit.

“We descended easily to the end of the arête, where, planting an axe firmly in the snow, we paid out an extra rope (with a turn round the axe) attached to each man as he stepped cautiously down the ladder.

“Sitting on the arête, I had leisure to study the broken cliff opposite, where Abbot fell, and to fit together the accounts of the accident with the configuration of the rock. The chimney

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

which he climbed up is near the profile of the cliff. At the top of the first part of the chimney a snow-covered ledge bears to the left; on this Professor Little stood. Abbot continued the climb up the chimney, now seen slightly to the left of the line of the lower portion. The chimney ends at a ledge cut off by a few feet of steep rock from the snow-slope above. Abbot must either have attempted to climb this rock or to work round on the ledge. Neither course would appear to present any difficulty to a man who could climb the long chimney below, *had the rock been firm*. But the limestone rock which crops out on this face is extremely rotten. I can feel no doubt that a rock gave way suddenly with his weight, just as he was pulling himself to the top of the cliff. He had taken to the rocks to avoid slip-cutting in the ice.

“From the top rocks downwards we were mighty polite to the snow on Mount Lefroy. I cannot speak for all the party, but I know that three men, including Sarbach, came down 1500 feet with their faces to the mountain. A final glissade down the lower slope landed us on the col at 3 P.M. Thence a rapid descent of two and a half hours brought us to Lake Louise.”

THE BOW VALLEY

Two days later a small party, consisting of Fay, Michael, Collie, and Sarbach, again under the brilliant stars, rowed across the lake, this time to attack Mount Victoria. Much better progress was made than before, for the best route to take was known. Following the glacier up through the huge gateway between Lefroy and Victoria, Abbot's Pass was soon reached. Here, turning to the right instead of to the left, as had been done on the ascent of Lefroy, height was rapidly gained by climbing a series of small terraces of excessively rotten rocks. During occasional halts, the snow-slope of Lefroy, up which the larger party had so laboriously toiled forty-eight hours previously, could be seen, now converted by the two days' fine weather into an ice-slope, which, further off to the right, fell away with great steepness to the head of the O'Hara Valley. The long arête of Mount Victoria, that can be seen against the sky from the chalet at Lake Louise, was soon reached. The climbing along the arête was not difficult but required care, and it was only the last five hundred feet that were at all narrow. About midday, after breaking many steps in soft snow, the summit was finally reached—a small pinnacle of snow, 11,500 feet above sea-level.

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

From there all sorts of signals were made to inform the visitors at the chalet that Mount Victoria had been conquered. However, it turned out that not only had they missed all the signals, but had failed even with a good telescope to see any one on the summit of the mountain. This failure on their part naturally suggests the extremely uncertain nature of danger-signals on mountains; for, supposing that an accident had overtaken the party, and reliance been placed on the signals produced by the sun and an empty sardine-box as a mirror for conveying the message to the bottom of the mountain, succour would doubtless have been a long time in arriving. The view to the south and west is across a sea of jagged rock-peaks, the most prominent being Hungabee, Goodsir, and Ball, whilst further away to the south-east rises the black rock-pyramid of Assiniboine.

On August 7th G. P. Baker joined the party, and with men, horses, and an outfit we made a start up the Bow Valley with the intention of climbing Mount Balfour. From the Bow Valley, however, Balfour is invisible; therefore it was impossible to know how far up the valley it was necessary to go before striking into the moun-

THE BOW VALLEY

tains. But, before telling how we entirely missed Mount Balfour and climbed Mount Gordon instead, the experiences of our first afternoon in a Canadian forest with horses are worth narrating. As one looks back one blushes for the utter incompetence shown. But in those days we were unacquainted with many mysterious things that afterwards became obvious; in those days we were "raw hands."

Peyto (our head-man), with the rest of the men and most of the ponies, had started early in the morning, and had gone ahead up what was, for convenience of speech, called "the trail." Later in the day we came down to Laggan from the chalet with the remainder of the baggage, finding three ponies that Peyto had left. If it had not been for the help of a man at Laggan railway station we could never have satisfactorily tied on all the *impedimenta* that we wished to take with us. To pack an Indian pony and finish off all neatly with a good tight diamond hitch is an accomplishment possessed by few; it is only after long experience that the art is acquired. Although one thinks that the rope has been thrown, twisted, and looped properly, the moment the tightening-up

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process begins the knots carefully undo themselves, and another trial is necessary.

The ponies having been packed a start was made, and soon we were in the midst of miles of fallen timber that lay heaped in every direction. In one place we could count more than a dozen trees piled like spillikins one above the other. Peyto had carefully "blazed" the trail, and, as the party was large, comparatively rapid progress was made, for, should one of us miss the way, another at once found it. But it necessitated an enormous amount of jumping for both the over-laden ponies and ourselves. Gradually we worked ourselves free from this belt of fallen timber, getting into more open ground; but it was only a change of troubles, for now endless swamps or "muskegs" filled the flat open spaces of the valley. Here the "blazes" stopped, and, following some upright sticks of wood (that we afterwards found had to do with the railway survey up the valley), the tracks of the other animals were soon missed, and we got lost, floundering about helplessly trying to find a way through. Several times the luckless ponies, dead tired and over-laden, had sunk up to their bellies in the soft marshy ground, but with much kicking and

THE BOW VALLEY

plunging had just managed to get out again. At last the sun went down, then the daylight disappeared, and finally the moon came out, and the whole party and the horses were still in that muskeg.

So an attempt was made to get to the forest at the side of the valley, but one of the ponies at last got so deep into a hole that only with difficulty was he prevented from vanishing altogether. The situation was apparently quite hopeless. The pack with difficulty was rescued from his back by cutting the ropes; then, by the help of an Alpine rope and much pulling, finally he also was rescued. Professor Fay in the meantime had pushed on up the valley, and reached the camp at about eleven o'clock. Just when we thought we should have to sit in the water all night we were found by Peyto and his dog. The ponies had to be left where they were for the night with the dog to take care of them; and we, under Peyto's guidance, wading through everything, got safely into camp a little after midnight.

On the morrow the ponies and baggage were fetched. We also had a long discussion whether we should try and find Mount Balfour at the head of the Upper, or the Lower, Bow Lake.

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

We decided in the end for the Upper Bow Lake, and, as so often is the case when it is merely a toss-up, the decision was wrong. Next evening found us camped by the Upper Bow Lake in a beautiful open country, and surrounded by fine hills and glaciers. Our attempt to ascend Mount Balfour from this camp, although a failure, furnished a most delightful day—at least up to the time when Thompson sought to investigate the lower layers of the ice-sheet that covers Mount Gordon, by falling head-first down a deep crevasse. Early in the expedition great battle was done with the ice-fall that descends from the higher snow-fields towards the Upper Bow Lake. One party with fine, if unnecessary, courage, cut its way through the centre of the ice-fall, whilst the other, under the guidance of Sarbach, basely refused the encounter and fled along sideways to where they could ignominiously skirt round the end and, with the minimum expenditure of energy, flank the foe. Coming out on to this upper snow-field, a charming snow-clad peak was seen to the south, apparently not difficult of ascent; obviously Mount Balfour! Accordingly off the whole party started across the nearly level snows for the lower slopes of the mountain.



THE BOW GLACIER

THE WAPUTEHK SNOW-FIELD

The summit was reached by climbing up the eastern arête; but alas! four miles away to the south was the real Mount Balfour, and between lay a deep gulf. Still it had been a most delightful climb over a hitherto untrodden piece of ice-field; and certainly no one had been to the summit of Mount Gordon before. The height was 10,600 feet. As usual, in every direction lay a perfect sea of snow-clad peaks, with hardly a name to any of them. Professor Fay, however, suggested that there was a mountain, supposed to be very high and named Murchison, somewhere towards the north. It had been seen by Dr. Hector forty years before. So a splendid pyramid-shaped peak, obviously higher than the rest, was picked out, and it was concluded that this was Mount Murchison. More to the west a flatter-topped mountain, somewhat nearer, was given the name Mount Mummery.

Some time was spent on the top, but, as there was another summit about a third of a mile to the westward, several of the party started off for it. It was dome-shaped and covered with snow, the first peak consisting of an out-crop of limestone rocks. It was near the top of the second peak that Thompson very

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nearly ended his mountaineering experiences. Not far from this second summit a huge crevasse partially covered with snow had to be crossed. All the party had passed over but Thompson, who unfortunately broke through and at once disappeared headlong into the great crack that ran perpendicularly down into the depths of the glacier. Those of the party who were still on the first peak saw their friends gesticulating in the far distance, but did not take much notice until Sarbach drew their attention to the fact that there were only four people instead of five to be seen: some one therefore, must have fallen down a crevasse. A race across the almost level snow then took place, Sarbach being easily first. Although Thompson was too far down to be seen, yet he could be heard calling for help and saying that, although he was not hurt, he would be extremely grateful to us if we would make haste and extricate him from the awkward position he was in, for he could not move and was almost upside down, jammed between the two opposing sides of the crevasse.

It was obvious that every second was of importance; a stirrup was made in a rope, and Collie, being the lightest member of the party—

THE ASCENT OF GORDON

and, withal, unmarried—was told to put his foot into it, whilst he was also carefully roped round the waist as well. Then he was pushed over the edge of the abyss, and swung in mid-air. To quote his description: “I was then lowered into the gaping hole. On one side the ice fell sheer, on the other it was rather undercut, but again bulged outwards about eighteen feet below the surface, making the crevasse at that point not much more than two feet wide. Then it widened again, and went down into dim twilight. It was not till I had descended sixty feet, almost the whole available length of an eighty foot rope, that at last I became tightly wedged between the two walls of the crevasse, and was absolutely incapable of moving my body. My feet were close to Thompson’s, but his head was further away, and about three feet lower than his heels. Face downwards, and covered with fallen snow, he could not see me. But, after he had explained that it was entirely his own fault that he was there, I told him we would have him out in no time. At the moment I must say I hardly expected to be able to accomplish anything. For, jammed between two slippery walls of ice, and only able to move my arms, cudgel my brains as I

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would, I could not think what was to be done. I shouted for another rope. When it came down I managed to throw one end to Thompson's left hand, which was waved about, till he caught it. But, when pulled, it merely dragged out of his hand. Then with some difficulty I managed to tie a noose on the rope by putting both my hands above my head. With this I lassoed that poor pathetic arm which was the only part of Thompson that could be seen. Then came the tug-of-war. If he refused to move, I could do nothing more to help him; moreover I was afraid that at any moment he might faint. If that had occurred I do not believe he could have been got out at all, for the force of the fall had jammed him further down than it was possible to follow. Slowly the rope tightened, as it was cautiously pulled by those above. I could hear my heart thumping in the ghastly stillness of the place, but at last Thompson began to shift, and after some short time he was pulled into an upright position by my side. To get a rope round his body was of course hopeless. Partly by wriggling and pulling on my own rope I so shifted that by straining one arm over my head I could get my two hands together, and then tied the best

THE ASCENT OF GORDON

and tightest jamming knot I could think of round his arm, just above the elbow. A shout to the rest of the party, and Thompson went rapidly upwards till he disappeared round the bulge of ice forty feet or more above. I can well remember the feeling of dread that came over me lest the rope should slip or his arm give way under the strain, and he should come thundering down on the top of me; but he got out all right, and a moment later I followed. Most marvellously no bones had been broken, but how any one could have fallen as he did without being instantaneously killed will always remain a mystery. He must have partially jammed some considerable distance higher up than the point where I found him, for he had a rüch-sack on his back, and this perhaps acted as a brake, as the walls of the crevasse closed in lower down. We were both of us nearly frozen and wet to the skin, for ice-cold water was slowly dripping the whole time on to us; and in my desire to be as little encumbered as possible, I had gone down into the crevasse very scantily clad in a flannel shirt and knickerbockers."

A rapid descent to the head of the ice-fall quickly restored circulation, and that night over the camp fire the whole experience was gone

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over again, Thompson emphatically giving it as his opinion that, whatever scientific exploration or observation in future might be necessary on the summits of the Rocky Mountains, investigations made alone, sixty feet below the surface of the ice, in an inverted position, were extremely dangerous and even unworthy of record.

Next day the party returned to the lower Bow Lake. Here Dixon left for Banff and the British Association meeting at Toronto, Sarbach remaining with Baker and Collie.

An unsuccessful attempt to climb Mount Balfour in unsatisfactory weather was made up the glacier that flows towards the lower Bow Lake, the party returning by a new route past two exquisitely beautiful mountain tarns, one, the highest, being the colour of turquoise, the lower being sapphire blue.

After this the party went back to Banff, and it was not till the next year, 1898, that Messrs. Thompson, Noyes, and G. M. Weed succeeded in climbing Mount Balfour, the highest peak in the Waputehk district of the Rocky Mountains. The account of the ascent is delightfully written by the Rev. Charles L. Noyes in "Appalachia," vol. ix., No. 1, p. 29 :—

“By rising at three we had time to prepare



THE LOWER BOW LAKE (SHOWING MOUNTS BALFOUR AND GORDON)

THE ASCENT OF BALFOUR

and eat a comfortable breakfast, and get off by four. A diagonal course, stabbing up over the ridge intervening between the bottom of the Lower Bow Lake and the outlet of Margaret brought us to that lake by the easiest route.

“The sun had not yet touched its waters into beauty, and they lay a cold sombre blue. It may have been six o'clock when we were climbing the screes at the head of the lake, and after seven, when, by the one rock ladder we scaled the wall above, and came over the outer rim of Lake Turquoise—‘a joy for ever.’ It was not far from eight when we stopped for food at the foot of the glacier above. Mr. Nichols had left us at Turquoise. He was feeling the effects of a blow on the spine, got in a fall on a slippery rock whilst bathing in Lake Katherine. It did not seem to him wise to risk the strain of a longer climb; and there was so much to charm and occupy in the beauties of Turquoise Lake and its setting that he proposed to spend the day about there, and bade us God-speed, with a solemn injunction that we should meet him at six o'clock above the verge of the lake to go down the ladder together. The passage of the glacier was this year a delicate operation, taking some ingenious warping among crevasses, and

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light stepping over bridges, which needed but to melt a little more to almost cut off access to the *névé* above. This gained, full in view beyond it, broadside to us, rose the magnificent mass of Balfour. The difficulties of approach, which we had foreseen looking down from Vulture Col, by no means vanished. The final ridge, however, looked hopeful, promising us, if once on it, a clear way to the summit; but how to reach the ridge? Well to the south was the most encouraging route in view. Rising almost to the crest was a tongue of snow, but it was suspiciously gashed, and once upon the ridge, there was no surety that the way would not be barred by cornices or precipitous breaks. The prospect was too doubtful to waste time in considering, and without slackening our steps we pressed on over the *névé* to the gateway at the south, which would let us through to the western side, where we had reason to hope we might find more level and stable snow, giving access to the final ridge. It was eleven o'clock when we broke over the divide, and the change of worlds of vision, always thrilling in such a crossing, was grandly so in this case. To the south rose, near and imposing, Niles and Daly, like mammoth walruses, lifting their black heads above the ice, and thrusting

THE ASCENT OF BALFOUR

their great snouts towards us; between them the *névé* sloped down to some glaciers, and by them to the west rolled a vast snow-field toward the ravine of the Wapta, that enormous rent between the mountains, gathering into its bosom the immense volume of melted snow poured down from all the *névés* streaming off the western side of Balfour and Gordon, Collie, and Habel, to the north; and over beyond from the hither slopes of another system of mountains that filled the prospect to the horizon west and south. For all this we hardly had eyes at first; they were turned instantly toward our goal; and then they ran over a clear reach of snow leading to a ridge curving off from the main *arête* to the left, above which, fore-shortened, could be seen the summit. As it seemed readily attainable, only the nonchalance of our tones betrayed our excitement as we remarked, 'We're going to make it!' We did make it, but it took four hours. The offshoot ridge once gained, there was along its curve an even, almost level, way to the backbone of the mountain. On this main *arête* there was more difficulty; a V-shaped cleft promised to block the passage altogether, but we circumvented it by stabbing down to the screes and snow below, and diagonally up again, over un-

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stable and tricky footing, and with unreliable hand-holds on friable rock, all done without slip or danger, up to a depression in the ridge, where greeted us a reviving view Hector-ward, and a pool of water made by the snow-shelf on the eastern side, melting against the warm rocks. This invited to a final lunch, refreshed by which we rose for our last hour's climb to a height much greater than Balfour—the summit of our summer's adventure and success.

“Any one who has walked the ridge of the Presidential Range will know the thrilling sensation of such a passage, as though one were moving on the backbone of the world. Suppose it is really a bit of the coping of the continent, lifted toward eleven thousand feet, thinned down till it is no more than the fine edge of a wedge protruding through slopes of snow that cling to its sides high as the steepness will allow, flanked beyond stupendous gorges on either hand by a wilderness of mountains reaching everywhere to the sky-line, rising in great steps along an untrodden way to an untouched peak—that is what the final climb in the capture of Balfour meant to us.”

CHAPTER III

IN SEARCH OF MOUNT MURCHISON

It was after the accident to Thompson, and the unsuccessful attempt on Mount Balfour, that Baker and Collie, still having four or five weeks to spare, were so fired with enthusiasm over the high rock-peak they had seen to the north-west from the summit of Gordon, that although they had intended going southward to visit Mount Assiniboine, they changed their plans and decided to go north instead.

An "outfit" was therefore hired from T. Wilson, of Banff, the party consisting of Baker, Collie, and Sarbach, together with W. Peyto, head-man, L. Richardson, packer, and C. Black, cook. Although, several years before, Wilson had been through this country north of the Waputehk snow-fields, yet he did not remember ever having seen a very high peak about the spot where the so-called Mount Murchison had been seen from Mount Gordon. This, however, was not taken as an indication that we had been mistaken in our estimate of its size, for from

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the tops only of mountains, as a rule, can any accurate ideas concerning their relative heights be easily obtained.

On August 17th the party again started from Laggan up the Bow Valley. The lower portion was as bad as ever, for in forests that have been burnt, after a good many years the roots of the blackened and still standing trunks become rotten; thus every fresh gale brings down large numbers, adding to the almost inextricable tangle below. In this lower part of the Bow Valley it is quite possible to walk for more than a mile along the fallen stems, never being nearer than two feet, and sometimes finding oneself as high as ten feet, or more, from the ground. Fortunately since 1900 a thoroughly good trail has been cut through this part of the valley by the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The first day up the Bow Valley was excessively hot; mosquitoes swarmed in countless thousands, making life miserable, and our tempers suffered in consequence. It was early in the afternoon when Peyto announced that we should camp: to us this seemed unnecessary, so we told him so, but without any effect. Later, after dinner, he unburdened his mind,

IN SEARCH OF MOUNT MURCHISON

saying that he was there to look after the horses and should camp where he considered best; we might know, or might think we knew, how far a "cayoose" (Indian pony) could go, but he was not going to have sore backs or lame horses in his outfit. Later, when they were hardened and less heavily laden, we should be able to put in longer days. Things were beginning to get strained; and the mosquitoes made matters worse: still, we were out for a month, and it was no use quarrelling on the first day. Accordingly we acquiesced, coming to the conclusion that the ways of the "wild west" needed a great deal of learning. That Peyto was right was abundantly proved in the sequel; for, owing to the excessively hot weather, we soon had more than one pony with a sore back and ill. This remedied itself, however; for later the weather got cooler and the packs lighter. Moreover, it was no vain boast of Peyto's that he was there to look after the horses; many a time after arriving in camp after a long day's journey, when something to eat and drink was one's first thought, Peyto could be seen driving the sore-backed ponies down to the stream where he carefully washed them and smeared the raw places with bacon-

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grease to keep off the flies. He also kept his word about long days, and more than once we were only too glad when, late in the evening, he would finally tie up his black mare, Pet, and begin to unpack.

On the third day out from Laggan the head of the Bow Valley was reached, where a pass, the Bow Pass, leads over into Bear Creek, or the Little Fork of the Saskatchewan. This pass is similar to many in the Rocky Mountains; the woods—which, lower down in the valley, are usually so thick that it is impossible to see far ahead, and, owing to fallen trees, make it most difficult to get horses along—on the higher ground open out; and wide stretches of grass alternate with groves of pine-trees that act as excellent shelter for tents. Often small lakes are found as well, and the views of snow-clad peaks, glaciers, lakes, and forests make most beautiful pictures.

The scenery at the head of the Bow Valley, surrounding the upper Bow Lake, is grand, and will not disappoint any one who should make the journey there. The lake is also full of trout; some weighing as much as thirty pounds, or more, have been caught. A day was spent here for two reasons; first, the horses needed a



NEAR THE SUMMIT OF THE BOW PASS



WATERFOWL LAKE

IN SEARCH OF MOUNT MURCHISON

rest; secondly, Baker wished to pick up his points in a plane-table survey that had been started by Mr. Herschel C. Parker, of Brooklyn, N.Y., during the trip a week before when Mount Gordon was climbed. Mr. Parker had taken as his base line the distance between two stations in the Bow Valley that had been trigonometrically determined by the Canadian Government for their photographic survey of the district. These two points were 6.365 miles apart. One, south of Mount Hector and marked on the Government survey sheet as Station No. 1, 9830 feet, the other a peak lying on the opposite side of the valley, north of the Lower Bow Lake, marked Station No. 2, 9178 feet. When Mr. Parker returned to the States he kindly handed over his map to Baker to continue it towards the north.

On August 20th a rock and snow peak southwest of the Bow Pass was climbed (height 9000 feet), from which a splendid view to the north down Bear Creek, and to the south down the Bow Valley, was obtained; thus enabling Baker to add many new points to his survey. A fine specimen of a trilobite was also found, but unfortunately left on the summit.

The height of the Bow Pass is 6700 feet.

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On the north side the trail descends sharply for about a thousand feet to the head of Bear Creek Valley, down which flows one of the branches of the Saskatchewan, that has its source in a large glacier above Peyto Lake.

Half-way down the valley lies another lake on the western side, and then two more that occupy the bottom of the valley; these were named Waterfowl Lakes.

The western side of Bear Creek all the way down to the main Saskatchewan is exceptionally grand, a series of rocky escarpments rising sheer from the bottom of the valley for four to five thousand feet, and throwing gloomy shadows across the forest-clad slopes; whilst high overhead, far above the parallel terraces of the precipices and the black and torn ridges of the mountains, the white clouds drift slowly by—or, what is more often the case, the valley is shrouded over with mist; the tops of the mountains are far above out of sight, and only the lower slopes are visible. A good deal of the bad weather that surrounds Bear Creek may possibly be due to its proximity to the western side of the mountains, and the huge gap made in the range by the Blaeberry Creek: the clouds can often be seen driving through this gateway

IN SEARCH OF MOUNT MURCHISON

from the Columbia to catch on the long row of peaks that overshadow Bear Creek on the west, with the result that frequent rain and gloom are the portion of this most striking valley of the Canadian Rockies.

Near the Waterfowl Lakes a most curious contrast of colours was noticed in a wood that had been burnt not many years before. The gaunt black stems of the trees formed a weird but fitting background for the mass of brilliant golden-yellow daisies that were in full bloom amongst the stones at their feet. This blaze of golden-orange against satin-black tree trunks, with a bright blue sky overhead, formed a harmony of colours but rarely seen in a landscape.

It was not till the 23rd, after a long day through the splendid forests covering the lower part of Bear Creek valley, that the main Saskatchewan was reached. For some time past the weather had been exceedingly hot; consequently the rivers were in full flood from the melting snows and ice, and it was with some trepidation that, on the morrow, we watched Peyto on his mare trying to ford the foaming torrent of Bear Creek—first at one place and then at another. This crossing is one of the worst in the mountains, not on account of its depth, but because of

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the terribly bad bottom of boulders and large stones, and the swiftness of the current. Indian ponies, as a rule, are wonderfully clever at this kind of work, and may usually be left to find their own way across mountain torrents. This, however, one does not find out all at once; and, in the meantime, to see all one's baggage and provisions for the trip entirely at the mercy of a self-willed "cayoose," who is expected to follow his leader over a difficult and dangerous crossing, is, to say the least of it, anxious work.

When the river is full the ford is distinctly a dangerous one, for, should a horse stumble and fall, he would have but little chance of escaping the numerous rapids and deep pools that are below. Some of the horses are much more skilful at the work than others; and one, especially, that Collie usually rode—an old grey, a bit gone at the knees, but perfectly sure-footed—was amongst the best in the outfit. While threading the intricacies of the pine-woods, he would never so much as brush his rider's legs against the stems of the trees; and it was wonderful to see how he could remember a bad piece of muskeg that weeks before, on the outward journey, he might have got into. When it was necessary he would carry as heavy

IN SEARCH OF MOUNT MURCHISON

a pack as any of the other ponies. Wilson, who owned him, told us that this old grey in his younger days had often done his hundred miles in the twenty-four hours over the prairie.

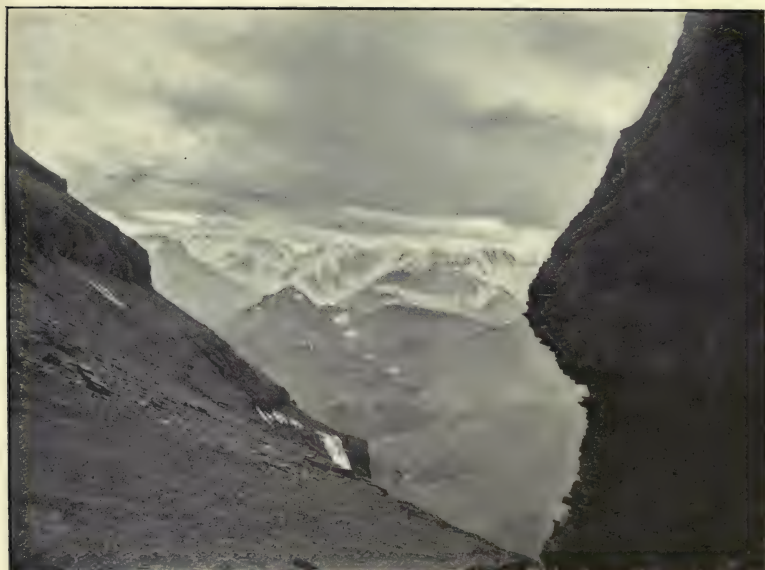
Bear Creek safely crossed, we pushed on up the main valley of the Saskatchewan to the westward. On the 25th we climbed a peak 10,700 feet high, which was named after our guide, Sarbach. The first thousand feet was through primeval forest; then up a steep gully in a limestone escarpment, and over steep screes to the foot of the final peak. The mountain, like so many others in this district, is a mass of crumbling rock; everything is loose, and the greatest care is required in order to avoid launching tons of débris on one's companions, should they be below. The actual summit ridge of Sarbach is, however, in somewhat better condition, consisting of a dark and harder limestone rock, and being very narrow and precipitous on both sides.

Unfortunately for us the clouds were drifting over the peaks nearly the whole day, and anything over 11,000 feet was hidden: consequently we could only guess which was the base of the peak we were in search of. To the north-west there was a good view of the Lyell

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ice-field, first discovered by Dr. Hector, with a snow and a rock peak at its head. To the right of the rock peak there appeared to be an excellent snow-pass from the snow-field on the south to a valley that went eastwards towards the head-waters of the Saskatchewan. To the westward a great glacier could be seen winding down through the hills towards us; and we concluded that the peak we were in search of was probably near to this glacier, in which case we could explore both together. Below stretched the valley of the Saskatchewan, filled to the foot of the mountains on either side with a mass of stones, shingle-flats, and sand bars, whilst the river itself made tangled courses through all this débris. These shingle "wash-outs" are common amongst the Rocky Mountains, not only at the head-waters of the Saskatchewan, but, as we found later, of the Athabasca and the Bush rivers as well.

On the morrow Peak Sarbach was left behind us, and, turning almost due south, the valley was followed till a wooded island lying in the middle of the "wash-out" was reached. On the western side of the island the river has cut its way through a rocky canyon; on the eastern side a particularly bad muskeg barred the way.



FRESHFIELD GROUP FROM PEAK SARBACH



THE MIDDLE FORK OF THE SASKATCHEWAN

MOUNT FORBES

We were therefore compelled to force our way through the thick timber of the island knoll, and so to the other side ; consequently it was not till late that a camping-place was found some distance further up the shingle flat. To our delight, however, the big peak we were in search of could be seen almost opposite across the valley. Although at that time we were under the impression that it was Mount Murchison, we afterwards discovered, on our return to England, from Palliser's journals, that this peak was in reality Mount Forbes, and not Murchison.

The weather, that had been almost perfect since the 9th, now began to get steadily worse, snow showers falling and powdering the tremendous precipices of our mountain—one of the finest rock peaks amongst the Rockies. It is a combination of the Weisshorn and the Dent Blanche, and, as it rises straight from its base, which is only 4600 feet above sea-level, the precipices on its eastern face are exceptionally grand. In the condition it was then in it would have been folly to attempt an ascent. As far as could be seen the only feasible route to the top lay up the south-western ridge to a very sharp arête with broken rock-towers, whilst just below the pointed snow summit the arête

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was heavily snow-corniced ; and it did not look as if the last bit of climbing would be either safe or easy.¹

It was particularly disappointing that on the very day that the mountain had at last been found snow showers, the first for weeks, should spoil the chance of a successful assault.

At the head of the shingle flat, by the side of which the camp had been made, there were two valleys ; one on the north side coming from under Forbes, and the other more to the south, that ran westward towards the great glacier that had been seen from the summit of Sarbach.

An ascent was made on the 28th up the ridge that divided these two valleys. The height reached, after a most tiring climb through the dense pine woods, was only 8000 feet, but from it a magnificent view of the great peak—Mount Forbes—across the valley to the north was obtained. From this altitude the mountain was most imposing, and its south ridge was seen far more advantageously than from below ; moreover, it seemed more certain than ever that there was nothing to stop us up to the final arête.

Whilst waiting for fine weather and for the

¹ Mount Forbes was climbed by this arête in 1902. See p. 277.

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snow to clear off the precipices and ridges of the mountain a visit was planned to the great glacier up the other valley. So a couple of ponies were laden with food and blankets, and taken as far up the valley as possible, a camp being finally made on the north side of the glacier.

The next day was gloriously fine, but it was late before we started, and before the afternoon the penalty had to be paid. The glacier, which is remarkably free from crevasses, was followed. As the sun rose higher a vast ice-field was reached. Before us rose three shapely peaks; the one nearest to us seemed the highest. During the time spent over breakfast the best route to its summit was discussed. On its north-eastern face this peak is precipitous down to the glacier, but on the south-eastern side a ridge descended to a glacier whose level was about 500 feet above the ice-field we were on. To reach this upper glacier we should have to ascend a very broken ice-fall; but it was finally decided that it was not safe to attempt it, and eventually the steep rock precipice to the north of the ice-fall was climbed instead. The glacier above was crevassed, and some time was taken in finding a way through, and also

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in cutting a way up an ice-slope before the ridge that led to the summit was finally reached.

The day was perfect. In every direction except to the west the mountain-land stretched away into the far distance. Consequently Baker at once began his plane-table survey. Just to the south were two mountains—the nearer one a rock peak, the farther one covered with snow. The peak we were on was christened Mount Freshfield, whilst the other two were named Mount Pilkington and Mount Walker. This method of nomenclature, namely, calling peaks after individuals, has been in vogue since the early days of discovery in the Rocky Mountains. As there are no Indian names at present, and, so far as one can find out, there never have been—for the country has never been inhabited—the custom is justifiable, as serving in many cases to perpetuate the connection of individuals with the country. Mount Hector, Mount Lefroy, and several others may be cited as instances.

During the day we were on Mount Freshfield Baker was the only energetic member of the party. Sarbach, who had been carrying Baker's heavy photographic apparatus, went to sleep in the sunshine—presumably as a protest ;

MOUNT FRESHFIELD

for during our ascent of the rocks below, when Collie had suggested that the party should move a little faster, he had called attention to the camera, and was heard to mutter something that sounded like "Furchtbar schwer und ganz gefährlich." As both Sarbach and Baker seemed to be enjoying themselves, Collie basely broached the idea that under the circumstances any one could climb the peak, as it looked moderately easy, but that plane-tabling and map-making were much more difficult and useful; it therefore behoved Baker to take extraordinary care over the work he was engaged upon, which was of the greatest importance; moreover, that it was late, and that, as the men and ponies had returned to the lower camp, should the ascent be persisted on there was little doubt that not only would the party not be home to dinner, but it would in all probability spend the night on the glacier as well. Baker fell in with the idea, and all intentions of climbing farther were abandoned, much to Sarbach's disgust when he awoke.

Whilst the interesting operation of surveying the country was being proceeded with by Baker, Collie did not waste his time, but went round a rock rib and across some snow to find out what the view to the north was like.

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It is curious how small things often directly determine the course of future events. The view that could be seen far away to the north was the means of bringing Collie out again in 1898, with another party, to the Canadian Rockies. Far away—perhaps thirty miles to the north-west—a magnificent snow-covered mountain was to be seen, its western face being a precipice; from the way it towered above its neighbours it seemed to be excessively high. Although the great peak, Mount Forbes, from this point also overtopped all the surrounding peaks by many hundreds of feet, yet this other giant far away to the north-west was of much greater interest, for there were only two peaks of that size, and so far north, marked on the maps. These were Brown and Hooker, reputed to be 16,000 and 15,700 feet high.

When Sarbach woke up from his sleep he was scandalised to find that no attempt was to be made on the peak, but it was now too late to think of climbing farther; so, having packed all our baggage, we proceeded down the mountain, finding an easier descent through the rock-wall on to the ice-field below. On the lower part of the Freshfield glacier were a series of large blocks of stone, some even as much as



LOOKING NORTH FROM THE SLOPES OF MOUNT FRESHFIELD



THE FRESHFIELD GLACIER (LOOKING SOUTH)



THE FRESHFIELD GLACIER

fifteen to twenty feet cubed. It is a curious fact that in 1860 Hector, who probably was the only other white man that had ever visited this glacier, noticed the same thing. He says, "We ascended over the moraines, and had a slippery climb for a long way to reach the surface of the ice, and then found that it was a more narrow but longer glacier than the one I visited the previous summer (1858).¹ The upper part of the valley which it occupies expands considerably, and is bounded to the west by a row of high conical peaks that are completely snow-clad. We walked over the surface of the ice for four miles, and did not meet with many great fissures. Its surface was remarkably pure and clear from detritus, but a row of large angular blocks followed nearly down its centre. Its length I estimated at seven miles, and its width at one and a half to two miles." The interesting question arises, Can these be the same blocks? Hector may have seen them some distance up, as he states he went three to four miles over the ice; we noticed them within a mile of the snout of the glacier, and in 1902 when the glacier was again visited (p. 264) they did not seem to have moved much. Still three to four

¹ The Lyell glacier.

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miles in thirty-eight years is slow progress. We also noticed that the snout of the glacier was advancing and ploughing up the débris before it.

After the sun had set we emerged from the forest into the shingle flat within a quarter of a mile of our camp, but on the wrong side of the torrent. To cross it without the help of horses seemed impossible, as, swollen with the melting ice and snows of the glacier during the day, it was rushing down rapidly over its bed of stones and boulders. A fire was therefore lit, in order to attract the attention of those in camp; but, as the horses were more than a mile down the valley feeding, it was a considerable time before they arrived. In the meantime Collie, growing impatient, had with the help of a long and stout pole managed to ford the stream some distance further down.

On the next day (September 1) we started up the valley that came down from Mount Forbes, taking the men and a pony with us. At first some difficulty was experienced in making a way through the thick woods, past a rocky canyon; but ultimately a camp was made almost at the foot of the mountain, just by the mouth of a small stream that joined the larger

MOUNT FORBES

one. The weather was wretched; it rained most of the night, but next morning, in the hopes that it might clear, Collie and Sarbach pushed up almost to the limit of the trees on the slopes of the mountain, but they were both soon soaked to the skin from the dripping undergrowth, and heavy snow showers and rain finally drove them back down the valley to the lower camp on the desolate shingle-flat.

The weather went from bad to worse, and it was nearly time to be thinking of the return journey. Moreover, at the beginning of September, heavy falls of snow often occur before the Indian summer sets in, and none of us were anxious to be snowed up amongst such inhospitable wilds for the best part of a week, so far from provisions and civilisation.

Therefore on September 3rd the camp was packed up, and, saying good-bye to our mountain—or at least to as much of it as we could see—we made our way south over the summit of the Howse Pass. Who it was that this pass is named after does not seem clear. It is mentioned in Palliser's journals as "Howe's Pass, a route that had at one time been used by the North-Western Fur Company, for communicating with their posts on the Pacific."

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David Thompson certainly discovered it in 1807 ; and it was visited in midwinter, 1811, by Alexander Henry. Possibly the name of the pass has come from one Jaspar Hawes (spelt also by Thompson in his journals as Hawse, Howse, and Howes) who was for many years in charge of the Rocky Mountain, or Jaspar, House on the Athabasca. It was on February 9th, 1811, that Henry visited the Howse Pass from the east side. He describes the waters that run westward as only divided from those that feed the Saskatchewan by a small ridge. He also noticed that the pines were¹ "surprisingly loaded with caps of snow"; he says, "I measured one—it was an *épinette blanche* about twelve feet high, upon the top of which lay a cap of snow thirty-six feet in circumference at the base, and six feet in diameter in the centre; between this cap of snow and the snow on the ground was a distance of two feet. It was elegantly shaped in the form of an inverted bowl, as smooth as if done by art. I observed many others, which I suppose were nearly of the same size, but did not stop to measure them." He further observes

¹ "The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson." Edited by Elliott Coues. Vol. ii. p. 693.

THE HOWSE PASS

that this loading of the trees with snow was most singular; for "it was evident, from the loose state in which the piles of snow lay upon the pines, that the wind never blows here in winter with any violence, though only two hours' walk down the Saskatchewan, where gales are incessant, no snow is to be seen on the pines."

In some respects the Howse Pass is peculiar, for it is only about 4800 feet above sea-level, and, again, although it is surrounded on all sides by high mountains, yet the ascent to it from the eastern side is very gradual indeed. The mouth of Bear Creek, nearly twenty miles down the Saskatchewan, is only three hundred feet lower (4500 feet). These low passes across the main chain of the Rocky Mountains are quite common.

The moment the Howse Pass is crossed a difference in the woods is at once noticed. They are much denser, and the difficulty of forcing a passage for the horses becomes greater. The Blaeberry Creek, down which our route lay, did not belie its reputation for being almost impassable for horses. Wilson, in 1887, who had taken the only party with horses over the Howse Pass down to the Columbia since Hector's time, had to abandon the ponies half-way down the valley: he, however, returned

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later with extra men to help, and finally cut them out. This was due to the fallen timber, which is of much larger size than on the eastern side of the mountains, and also the excessively narrow and steep nature of the Blaeberry Creek. Even in Henry's time the route seems to have been a bad one, for he speaks of some Indians who had traversed it as having come through "a dreadful country, covered with thick woods, *brûlés* and *renversés*.¹ Their horses' legs were scratched and torn in many places." The route we followed was more to the left than the one described by Hector, who seems to have followed the right-hand side of the Blaeberry Creek. Our horses all day long were scrambling over huge trunks of fallen trees too thick to cut through, or climbing up and down the steep banks of the stream. Late in the afternoon we had to camp in the forest; the day had been wet and gloomy, the hills hidden, and long trailing streamers of mist drifting about the tree-covered slopes of the mountains. Hector's account of his first camp in this valley is an almost exact description of our experiences. "At last, with much sliding and tumbling, we reached the river at three o'clock, having had our horses a

¹ Trees burnt and overturned or swept down by avalanches.

THE BLAEBERRY CREEK

good deal bruised and cut in the descent. Not a vestige of grass or anything that horses could eat was to be seen, although the vegetation was very luxuriant. The woods were formed of large trees of several kinds, and had a dense under-bush of young cedar or blaeberry bushes. We followed down the stream as fast as we could, in search of a more hospitable spot, till nightfall, when we were at last obliged to camp on a small gravel bar of the river, on which grew a few shoots of goose-grass (*Equisetum*), which our horses cropped in a few minutes, and was all they had to eat that night. To make matters worse, it rained all night, and the river rose so that our limited camping-ground was still further reduced in size, and in the morning some of our horses had crossed to the other side of the river, and the rest were so cramped for space that during the night they were stepping over us as we lay on the ground."

Next day we pushed on down the valley, and the difficulty of getting the horses backwards, and forwards over the stream and the fallen timber did not decrease, for the stream of course increased in volume every mile down the narrow valley.

At last the valley broadened a little, and we

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came to a trapper's deserted cabin. A single man seemed to have inhabited it, and we wondered who it might be that, for the sake of a few marten skins, had lived there alone through a whole winter. A more desolate spot could hardly be found, hemmed in on all sides by gloomy mountains that during the winter months shut out effectually the sun's rays, exposed to the full force of the south-west gales which, when they did occur, would sweep with increased violence up this narrow slit through the main chain of the Rocky Mountains. It was no wonder we found it deserted. Just below where this cabin had been built the valley opened out somewhat, and, as there was food for the horses, we camped.

It was just below this part of the valley that Wilson had told us was the canyon where the greatest difficulty was likely to be found. Peyto, therefore, went forward to investigate; late in the evening he returned with the information that at the next bend of the stream, just below Mount Mummery, the fallen pine-trees were so numerous that it would take a week or more to clear even half a mile for the horses; he even suggested that in some places where the avalanched trunks were lying piled many feet deep,



STONE BLOCKS ON FRESHFIELD GLACIER (see p. 55)

THE BLAEBERRY CREEK

the only possibility was to make a causeway over the obstruction. Moreover a forest fire had been burning for at least a fortnight, just below, the smoke of which we had first seen from the summit of Peak Sarbach; and even now, in spite of all the rain that had fallen, it was still alight.

Whilst Peyto had been exploring down the valley, we had climbed a peak on the west side of the valley—about 8000 feet high. From this point we were able to see a depression in the chain on the opposite side, which we thought might possibly lead to the north branch of the Kicking Horse River, and so to Field on the Canadian Pacific Railway. In it lay our last hope, for to go back the way we had come would have taken about ten days, and our provisions were already nearly done. Although, however, this gap in the mountains to the south was below the tree limit, yet we recognised that great difficulty would probably be experienced in finding a trail up which horses could be taken. Next day Peyto again explored down the valley, whilst Collie and Sarbach in the rain prospected the ground that promised the best route for the horses to follow towards the pass.

The sides of the Blaeberry Creek were very

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steep, but, as our horses were now in excellent condition, and the loads light, when in the evening Peyto returned with the intelligence that it was hopeless to attempt to follow the Blaeberry Creek further, we made up our minds to make a final effort, and, if there was any possible way to the new pass, to find it, and so reach Field.

Next day we started early. The route was excessively steep in some places, being merely a covering of loose moss and dirt on steeply sloping slabs of rock; but as we climbed higher the ground became easier, and after an ascent of over 3000 feet we camped at the limit of the pine-trees at 7500 feet on a ridge. We were wet through; there was no water and no feed for the horses. On the morrow after a couple of hours' march the pass was reached, 6800 feet. There we camped. During the night a heavy fall of snow occurred, which had the effect of clearing away the bad weather that we had been experiencing since the 27th. We were certainly the first to cross this pass, which Collie christened Baker Pass, with horses; and it seems to be the only route that can be used on the western side of the watershed for baggage animals, which will connect with the upper waters of the Blaeberry Creek.

THE BAKER PASS

On September 7th, in brilliantly fine weather, the pass was crossed, and, following down the beautiful north branch of the Kicking Horse River, we arrived on September 9th at Field. On the last day Baker and Sarbach made the first ascent of a fine rock peak called Mount Field, which can be seen from the railway.

Thus successfully ended the expedition. In 1897 the hotel at Field was by no means the busy place it is now under the admirable management of Miss Mollison, since the Canadian Pacific Railway people have moved the engine-sheds up from Donald, and made the station a divisional point on the railway. The only visitor there was Dr. Habel, who had been exploring the south side of the Waputehk snow-field with Fred Stephens, our future guide, philosopher, and friend on the expeditions of 1900 and 1902.

On our return to Banff we could find nobody, except Tom Wilson, who knew anything about the country we had visited, and his information did not date back further than the time when, in 1882, he had been alone across the Howse Pass and down the Blaeberry Creek exploring for the survey department of the Canadian Pacific Railway. In fact, more and

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more remarkable appeared the lack of knowledge which prevailed concerning the mountain country to the north; so further investigation was postponed until our return to England a few weeks later.



SKETCH MAP (based on the Map of Dr. Hector), showing all that was known in 1896 of the main Rocky Mountain range northwards of Mount Balfour to the Athabasca Pass.

CHAPTER IV

THROUGH THE PIPESTONE AND SIFFLEUR VALLEYS

DURING the winter of 1897-98 Collie spent his spare time in consulting all the literature he could find that dealt with the Canadian Rockies. He obtained a copy of that rare blue-book, "Palliser's Journals," which contains the only published record of previous exploration through the Mount Forbes country; and from it he learned definitely that the great peak that he had been in search of was not Mount Murchison but Mount Forbes. It was surprising to find how much of the ground that he and Baker had travelled over had been carefully and accurately described by Dr. Hector, as all local knowledge of the district at the present day dates from the Canadian Pacific Railway survey: the older work seems to have been entirely forgotten. Even Dr. Hector himself was unaware how he had been preceded on his journeys by David Thompson and others, who had continually used the Howse Pass for crossing the range. Of the mountain region at the head of the north fork

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of the Saskatchewan, and surrounding the various sources of the Athabasca, people at Banff and elsewhere appeared to know nothing; and a glance at the sketch map upon page 66 reveals an almost complete blank northwards of Mount Forbes and Mount Lyell. It was evident, therefore, that this region offered a pretty wide field for geographical investigation.

From a mountaineering point of view, however, by far the most interesting problem that presented itself to him was whether the high peak he had seen from the slopes of Mount Freshfield might be either Mount Brown or Mount Hooker, the two mountains standing on either side of the Athabasca Pass, and long reputed to be the loftiest summits, not only of North America, but possibly of the entire American continent. The Athabasca Pass forms the watershed between the two great river systems of the Athabasca and the Columbia, whose waters flow out at either end (a somewhat rare and remarkable phenomenon) of a small mountain tarn rejoicing in the name of "The Committee's Punch-Bowl." West and east of the tarn, forming the Titanic pillars of this natural gateway to the north, were said to be the two great peaks, Mount Brown and

MOUNTS BROWN AND HOOKER

Mount Hooker. These mountains, it appeared, were named by one David Douglas, a botanist, and one of the earliest pioneers of this region; but no record of his journey could be found. Their heights were given as 16,000 and 15,700 feet respectively; but in later years much doubt was thrown on these measurements. In 1893 Professor Coleman, of Toronto, who has done much admirable surveying and exploration work in the Rockies, visited the Athabasca Pass, after a long and arduous journey from the east; and some of his party climbed the highest peak on the western side, corresponding to the position of Mount Brown on the maps. This peak they found to be only a little over 9000 feet in height. The professor further identified the pass he was on by the small circular lake known as "The Committee's Punch-Bowl"; but, on the other hand, he did not succeed in locating Mount Hooker.

Now, from the slopes of Mount Freshfield, Collie had seen a mountain that appeared to be very high—probably 14,000 or 15,000 feet; and the idea naturally suggested itself that this mountain might be Mount Brown or Mount Hooker. This, however, entailed one of two suppositions; either that Professor Coleman had

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been mistaken as to the mountain climbed by the members of his party; or else that the botanist Douglas, who named the peaks, and David Thompson, the Hudson's Bay Company's astronomer, who estimated their heights¹ at 16,000 and 15,700 feet, had traversed a different Athabasca pass from the one that now bears the name, and which Professor Coleman undoubtedly visited. The first alternative seemed impossible; the second was the less improbable of the two, as it was difficult to understand how Douglas and Thompson, scientists both of them, could have made such glaring errors as to the altitude of these mountains. That peaks which had appeared in every map of Canada for the past sixty years as the loftiest in the Dominion, and which most Canadians still believed in as in their Bibles—that these peaks were not, after all, so high as thousands of others in the main range, seemed almost incredible. As a Manitoba paper observed, Mount Brown and Mount Hooker had been "attractively mysterious to at least two generations" of Canadians; and the Dominion could not "surrender without a struggle its claim to possess the highest crests

¹ "Memoir, Historical and Political, on the North-West Coast of North America and the Adjacent Territories, 1840," by Robert Greenhow.



IN THE VALLEY OF THE SASKATCHEWAN (*see p. 83*)

MOUNTS BROWN AND HOOKER

of the Rocky Mountain system." It may be mentioned, further, that some travellers from Edmonton, who visited the Athabasca Pass in the spring of 1898, asserted that they had seen Mount Brown and Mount Hooker standing there in their old pride of place, and they scouted the idea of their being frauds.

Altogether there seemed enough doubt about the matter to make further investigation desirable. There was, at any rate, one lofty snow-clad peak somewhere in that untrodden land to the north; and, if this did not turn out to be either of the missing giants, so much the better, as in that case it must be some new and unknown mountain. There would certainly be plenty of virgin summits to climb, and the plane-table survey could also be extended and finished.

In the spring, therefore, Collie, feeling drawn by the fascination of those wild western valleys irresistibly back to the Canadian Rockies, laid his plans for another trip. Stutfield, being asked to accompany him, accepted the invitation with alacrity. To reach the actual sources of the vast river systems of the Saskatchewan, the Athabasca, and the Columbia; to explore and map out the unknown mountain country where they take their rise; to locate, and perhaps to

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climb, the semi-fabulous peaks of that region ; to rehabilitate, if the facts permitted, the outraged majesty of Mount Brown—all this, with more besides, was a tempting enough programme in itself ; but he also hoped to work in a little sport on his own account with mountain sheep, or bear, or goat, so long as such frivolities did not interfere with the more serious business of map-making and mountaineering.

We started from Liverpool on July the 14th on board the Dominion Line steamer *Labrador*, now at the bottom of the sea off Skerryvore, on the west coast of Scotland. With us came Mr. Hermann Woolley, of Caucasian and Alpine mountaineering fame, who was also destined to accompany us on our fourth and final trip in 1902. We took no Swiss guides. Friday the 29th saw us housed under Mr. Mathews' care in the excellent Canadian Pacific Railway hotel at Banff. The exquisite beauties of this delightful spot were new to Woolley and Stutfield ; but we had no time to spend there, as our outfit had been got ready for us by Tom Wilson by the time we arrived. However, we passed a very pleasant afternoon on the Saturday, canoeing along the smooth reaches of the Bow, and following the

THE PIPESTONE VALLEY

sinuosities of its shady backwaters up to where the Vermilion Lakes nestle among the trees in the shadow of tall mountains, with the tremendous grey precipices of Mount Rundle and Cascade Peak in the background. From the pastures high above us came the sound of tinkling cow-bells, familiar to all Swiss mountaineers; while a steam launch and sundry boating parties disporting themselves on the wooded reaches of the river recalled memories of the Thames, until we began to fancy ourselves in some sub-Alpine Maidenhead, or Wargrave.

Early on Sunday morning we took the train to Laggan, where the outfit awaited us. Bill Peyto was again in charge, and under him were W. Byers, cook, Nigel Vavasour, and Roy Douglas. There were thirteen horses, an insufficient as well as an unlucky number; three dogs, a most undesirable addition to a travelling outfit, as the sequel will show; and the usual paraphernalia of tents, provisions, and baggage. Instead of following the Bow Valley, as Collie and Baker had done the year before, we travelled to the Saskatchewan *via* the Pipestone and Siffleur creeks, in order to investigate that other somewhat mythical peak, Mount Murchison, estimated by Dr. Hector to be

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13,500 feet high, and, according to the same authority, regarded by the Indians as the loftiest summit in the Canadian Rockies. Some other early cartographer, with a fine parade of accuracy, gave its height as 15,781 feet; and this latter measurement, strange to say, appears even now in some of the best and most up-to-date maps. These maps place the mountain just at the bottom of Bear Creek valley on the eastern side; but no such exalted peak had been seen there by Baker and Collie, either from Mount Gordon or from the summit they climbed above the Bow Pass, or yet from Mount Sarbach—which could not be more than ten miles off; so, as the matter seemed involved in considerable doubt, we determined to endeavour to clear it up.

By noon the horses were packed and we were off into the wilds. The retrospective views over the Laggan group of mountains were magnificent. Peak after peak, snow-clad and glacier-crowned, came into sight as we climbed higher up the thickly-wooded hillside: soon the railway station and the Canadian Pacific Railway were lost to view, and we were alone with the hills and the trees. For many weeks it would be good-bye to civilisation and

THE PIPESTONE VALLEY

its conventions and boredoms; its feather-beds and *table-d'hôtes*; its tall hats, frock coats, and stick-up collars. The wilderness lay between us and dull Respectability; we could wear what we liked, and enjoy the ineffable delights of being as disreputable as we pleased. Out here Nature and mankind (only there was no mankind) were alike untamed: there were no game-laws, and trespassers would not be prosecuted; and, last but not least, we could burn as much wood ("you can get it for the mere axing," some degraded member of the outfit remarked) and chop down as many trees as we wished without fearing the terrors of the law. To two of us the experience was a novel one, for neither Stutfield nor Woolley had ever been in the backwoods before; but their æsthetic impressions were much blunted by the constant attentions of the mosquitoes, and the necessity of looking after the horses as they blundered through and over the dead timber that choked the trail. Indeed, we had not gone far before our unlucky number of thirteen ponies was reduced to twelve, as one poor beast fell and broke its leg jumping over a log, and we had to shoot it.

Our first camp was in the pine-woods beside

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the Pipestone Creek. It was terrifically hot; the mosquitoes were very bad; and, taking one thing with another, we were not quite as happy as we ought to have been. It must not be supposed that the delights of camp-life in the Canadian Rockies are always immediately apparent to the traveller fresh from Europe. It takes a little time to get accustomed to the rough food and hard ground, and generally to adapt oneself to one's new environment. For a day or two we were all more or less out of sorts; and that evening Stutfield had a serious disagreement with his digestive organs.

“Hic ego propter aquam, quod erat deterrima, ventri Indico bellum.”

Only it wasn't the water, he said, but Byers' abominably strong tea, the doughy bannocks, the fried onions and fat bacon, that disturbed him so. However, the symptoms, if severe, were only temporary; and we had all recovered our usual health when, on the third afternoon, we pitched the tents in a pretty spot among the trees an hour below the Pipestone Pass. A storm was brewing, and the heat tremendous. We tried to bathe in the stream, but before we were half undressed a brigade of “bulldogs” (big horse-flies, like over-sized blue-



A "SMUDGE"



COLLIE ON "THE GREY"

THE PIPESTONE VALLEY

bottles, with sharp nippers that draw blood) mustered, with clouds of mosquitoes ; and, attacking us, "not in single spies, but in battalions," fairly put us to rout. The "smudges," or fires of damp grass and weeds, that we lit to drive them off proved of little avail. At midnight the threatened thunderstorm broke, and a very severe one it was. In less than half-an-hour a small stream was flowing down the centre of our tent and making things decidedly uncomfortable. On this trip we used a teepee, or Indian tent, which, though excellent in many respects, has its disadvantages. It is roomy and well ventilated, having a good-sized hole at the top for letting out the smoke ; but this aperture lets in the water as well as the air, and on these hot summer days, when you have a thunderstorm every other evening or so, the grateful rain pours through it and cools you down pleasantly. Another little drawback is that you have to cut down fifteen young trees for poles every time you put it up ; so it cannot be described as a labour-saving appliance.

Next morning, August the 3rd, we crossed the Pipestone Pass, 8400 feet above the sea—the highest we ever went over with horses—

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

and Collie climbed a small peak to the west in order to get a better view of the surrounding country. The scenery about the pass is grand, but desolate. Huge battlemented crags, grotesque rather than beautiful, with cliffs over 2000 feet in height, guard the western side of the valley; and the strata, tilted upwards at a uniform angle, with the precipices falling always towards the east, form a multitude of mountains of the form happily described by Mr. Leslie Stephen as the "writing-desk" shape. A peak which, if the maps were correct, could be no other than Murchison, loomed dimly through the mists to the north-west, but it was evident that its height had been greatly exaggerated. Clouds hung everywhere about the hills, but they cleared off as the day wore on, and after this we had fine weather for nearly three weeks. From the pass we descended into the valley of the Siffleur, a tributary of the Saskatchewan, at first over alps bright with red painter's brush and big yellow daisies; lower down through dense scrub of dwarf willow, and then once more among the everlasting pine-woods. The trail improved as we advanced, and the outfit did two good days' march. On the Thursday we saw on our left,

THE SIFFLEUR VALLEY

across the river, a fine glacier descending from the flanks of the Murchison group of mountains, and a valley coming into that of the Siffleur from the south-west. This valley was explored a few days later by Messrs. Thompson, Noyes, and Weed, who named it Dolomite Valley, from some curious rock formations near its head. They describe it as fairly open at first, with glaciers on the western side and a large lake about five miles up; but further on there are narrow canyons, and horses can only be got through with difficulty.

The Siffleur had here grown to a good-sized stream; and, as our horses were all required for the baggage (we had hitherto done all the journey on foot), we were conveyed across, one by one, on Peyto's fine mare, Pet. On the other side of the river the trail entered a thick forest of tall pines, with bad patches of muskeg. Here and there whole clumps of trees had been blown down or burned; and the logs, piled in wild confusion one on another, formed a tangle that made our progress very slow. Of the trunks that remained upright many were rotten and tottering to their fall; others, intercepted in their descent, rested on the branches of some neighbouring giant of the wood; and with every

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

passing breeze there arose a great creaking and groaning among them, like the wailing of lost souls in some arboreal Hades, as the weary forest Titan, his roots already starting from the ground, laboured under his too heavy load. You have to keep a sharp look-out for these falling trees ; and one of the horses had a narrow escape from a trunk which he bumped against with his pack, and which fell right across the trail, narrowly missing the animal's haunches. In such woods it is not merely a case of "Beware the pine-tree's withered branch," but of dodging his charred or rotting stem as it crashes to the ground. However, our heavily-laden team, though sinking deep in the boggy ground at every step, went gallantly on, headed by old Molly, the bell-mare, with her little foal trotting by her side. Every few minutes we had to wait while the men were cutting out the trail. It was tedious work for us, as one could do nothing but sit still on a log and scratch one's mosquito bites, listening to the tinkling of Molly's bell and the blows of Peyto's axe as they resounded through the wood. As the men said, it was a very "mean trail," though in places it was fairly well defined, and Peyto proved to us that we were on the right one by finding an occasional "blaze," or notch cut in



THE SIFFLEUR CREEK



FALLEN TIMBER IN THE SIFFLEUR VALLEY

THE SIFFLEUR VALLEY

the bark of a tree. We also picked up an old weather-beaten copy of "Hamlet" that had been dropped by some hunter or prospector; while now and then the teepee poles of old Indian camping-grounds were seen. Travelling in the Canadian Rockies is far more difficult and tedious now than it was forty years ago, in the days of Hector and Palliser, when game was more abundant, and the passing to and fro of Indians and trappers kept the trails open. In these times things are altogether different; the woods are veritable wildernesses, and, strange as it may seem, we never once met a human being—red, black, or white—during either of our journeys up country in 1898 or 1900.

Matters improved when we emerged from the Siffleur canyon into a tract of undulating country in the main valley of the North Saskatchewan. Leaving the forest, the trail turned abruptly westwards across miles of barren hills strewn with burnt timber. In the old days, at the beginning of the century, a sort of fair or annual meeting took place here between the Kootenay Indians from the western side of the Rocky Mountains and the fur-traders from the east; and in consequence this piece of moderately open country hidden away among the

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

hills was called "The Kootenay Plains." Now for over half a century it has remained undisturbed, save for an occasional trapper or prospector wandering among the mountains. The fair, even in Dr. Hector's days, had been long discontinued; and he tells how his Indian hunter, Nimrod, pointed out to him a large tributary of the Saskatchewan coming from the north-west, called the Waputehk, or White Goat River (the Cataract River of Coleman), up which lay a trail to Jasper House on the Athabasca. "This trail," we read in his journal, "was known as 'Old Cline's trail.' Cline was a trader who travelled through the mountains from Jasper House to the Kootenay plain."

This is now ancient history; not only have the Redskins and the fur-traders almost entirely deserted these upper waters of the Saskatchewan, but the game has gone too. On one occasion, while Hector was sitting on the mountain side above the Kootenay Plain, he says, "a flock of at least a hundred rams rushed close past me, so close, indeed, that I hit them with stones." He also found traces of buffalo, but these were already becoming scarce; and now the mountain sheep bid fair to follow the buffalo into the limbo of the extinct.

THE SASKATCHEWAN VALLEY

The view up the valley was closed by a fine glacier-covered mountain, named by Collie Peak Wilson, after Tom Wilson, of Banff; the foreground being filled in by the picturesque windings of the big river between rocky knolls. Down stream, where the Saskatchewan turned abruptly to the north, a lurid copper-coloured haze hung over the hills, and told of forest fires raging in the direction of the Athabasca river. This haze probably came from vast tracts of forest that had been fired by the wretched folk who were trying to reach the Klondike from Edmonton. Some thousands of these poor people had been despatched to their death or ruin through the lying reports spread about by transport agents and storekeepers, and not one out of five hundred ever reached his destination.

We soon reached the Saskatchewan, which, owing to the great heat melting the glacier snows, was in tremendous flood, and tearing down like a muddy mill-race 150 to 300 yards in width.

Towards sundown on Saturday the wind changed, and the distant smoke-clouds we had observed in the morning came rolling up the valley, completely obliterating the mountains from view. The haze was as thick as a moder-

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ate London fog; the air grew suspiciously hot and heavy; and a strong peaty odour assailed our nostrils. Round the camp-fire that evening the conversation naturally was of forest fires and the chances of our outfit escaping if the valley got ablaze. Very tall were the yarns that circulated as the flames shot merrily upwards from the crackling logs, and the ruddy sparks flew aloft into the gloom to join company with the now dimly shining stars. Death, it was represented to us, confronted the backwoods traveller in a quite remarkable variety of shapes; and, even if we did not break our necks on the mountains, we gathered it would be hard lines if some member of the outfit did not die of sunstroke, get burned in his bed, starved, slain by falling trees, or drowned while fording rivers. Finally, Woolley, remarking that it was getting late, announced that he was going to bed in his boots. This augmented Stutfield's already growing terror, for he slept with his head near Woolley's feet; and the latter, who was a noted footballer in his day, had a nasty way sometimes of practising place-kicks in his dreams. However, the night passed without further alarms of any sort, and next morning the sun shone in a comparatively clear sky.

THE SASKATCHEWAN VALLEY

Sunday was always our unlucky day, and the 7th of August proved no exception to the rule. It was tremendously hot; the Saskatchewan was tearing down in bigger flood than ever; and the trail along its banks was in many places under water. The horses were continually floundering about in deep holes, and we noticed with some misgivings that they keenly relished their bathes. These tiresome Indian ponies take to the water like ducks, and plunge into pools and torrents for the mere fun of the thing. Suddenly, as we were rounding a nasty corner where the bank dropped steeply into the river, a bay pack-horse called "Nitchi" slipped and fell in up to his neck. Finding the water nice and cool, and that it lightened the load on his back, to our horror he coolly swam out into mid-stream, and, after a desperate struggle with the swift current, reached an island separated from us by a broad channel. Molly, the bell-mare, who was always up to mischief, seeing the fun, took a header in after her companion, and her foal promptly followed its dam. The little creature was turned bodily over by the force of the current, and for a moment it seemed as though it must be drowned; but it soon recovered itself, and

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striking out pluckily swam to the island, where it shook itself like a dog, and trotted after its dam. We should have had the whole outfit swimming if we had not managed to grab hold of all the remaining horses except one, who made a bolt for the water before it could be secured, and swam across to the other three culprits. The language that ensued fairly beat all records in backwoods' profanity. The forest glades rang with it; and the smoke-vapours grew perceptibly bluer and thicker. There is a western saying to the effect that "No man can serve God and drive oxen"; and a pack-team of cayoooses can be equally relied on to evoke unchristian sentiments and purple patches of vituperation. The whole thing would have been excessively comic had the possible consequences been less serious; but the loss of our baggage would have meant the ruin of the trip, and possibly starvation before we got back to civilisation.

The only thing to be done was to move on with the rest of the team, and leave Peyto behind to coax the delinquents back. In ten minutes he reappeared, furiously whacking the four dripping animals; and it is needless to say that we found our bacon, flour, and sugar in a nice mess. We camped in a dreary spot

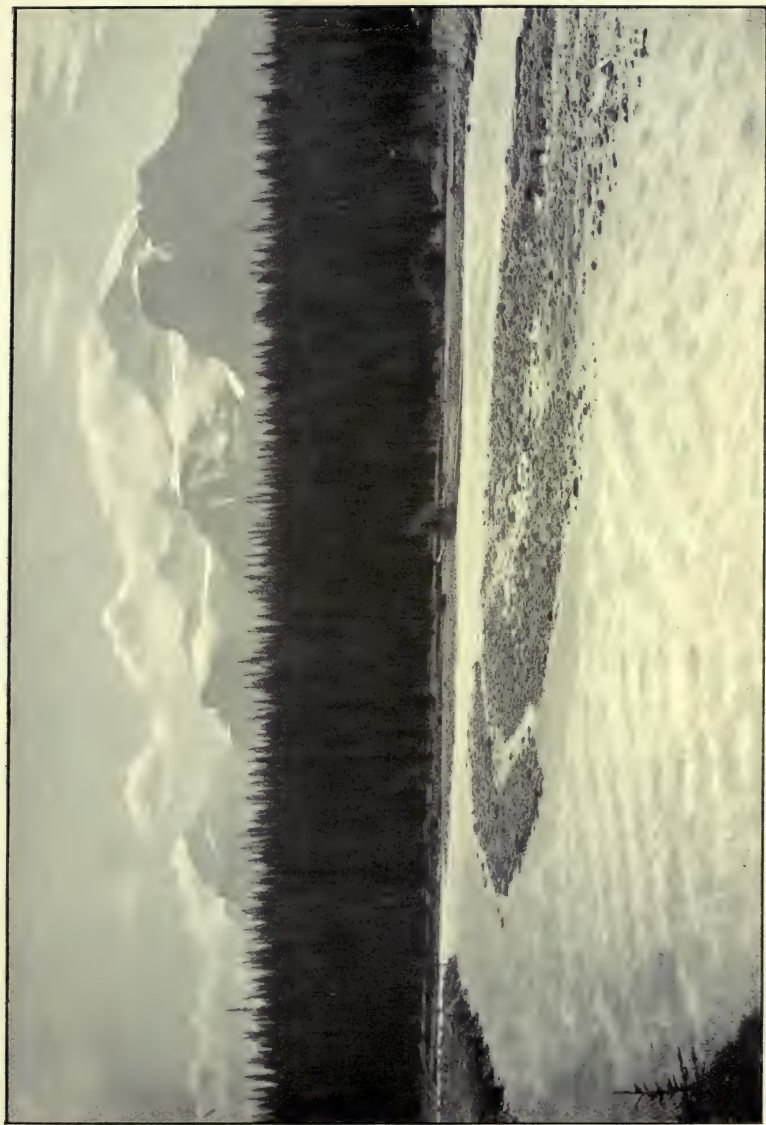
THE SASKATCHEWAN VALLEY

beside a marsh, and proceeded to dry the stuff. That afternoon the heat grew worse than ever, while every species of insect abomination—mosquitoes, black-flies, sand-flies, midges, and bull-dogs—buzzed about us; and Stutfield awoke from a nap on a mossy bank to find a tribe of ferocious ants on the war-path inside his shirt and striking a trail down his spinal column. The night brought little relief; and the mosquitoes, who generally ceased to worry us in bed, allowed us no peace, until, tired of lying awake and abusing one another for not going to sleep, we arose and took a midnight ramble through the forest. Next day we were forced by the floods high up into the woods where there was no trail, and the men had terrible work with the fallen timber. Late in the afternoon we struck an old Indian trail, which enabled us to push on more rapidly. The scenery grew grander and more Alpine as we advanced, and several fine peaks came into view whenever the haze lifted. Passing two or three pretty lakes tenanted by sundry wildfowl, we entered a forest of unusually tall pines. Towards seven o'clock a sound of rushing waters told us that we were approaching Bear Creek, and in half-an-hour we found ourselves at our

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former camping-ground. Here the outfit, which had been nine days on the move, took a much-needed rest.

Coming to the camping-place from the woods to the east we were immensely impressed by the beauty of its surroundings. Here, in a wide basin in the heart of the mountains, is the confluence of the three principal branches of the North Saskatchewan—the South Fork, or Bear Creek, the Middle (or West) Fork, and the North Fork—all leading to splendid Alpine scenery; while the main valley, up which we had just travelled, displays pictures of hill, forest, and river that are by no means to be despised. In every direction is a landscape to delight an artist's eye. Great mountain masses, bare and rugged to the north, their flanks more gently sloping and richly wooded towards the west and south, and remarkably diversified in form, tower round the spectator on all sides, but at a distance sufficient to enable him to gauge their true dimensions and grandeur. The main Saskatchewan River makes its exit through a mighty cleft between Mount Murchison and Peak Wilson, which stand as the huge twin portals of this threshold to the higher mountain region: lower down, the valley opens out, and



BEAR CREEK CAMPING-GROUND

THE SASKATCHEWAN VALLEY

the adjacent ranges, though steep and rocky in places, are for the most part of moderate height. The tributary streams, on the other hand—those of Bear Creek and the North Fork—issue from narrow canyons of a more sombre and forbidding character, with lofty peaks rising abruptly on either side.

Taken altogether the place seems an ideal one for a tourist centre; and we may fairly anticipate that at the mouth of Bear Creek will be the Chamonix or Grindelwald of the Canadian Alps in days to come, when the remoter peaks and valleys of this beautiful region are made accessible to the outside world, and the new mountain playground of the American continent becomes no longer a dream but a reality.

CHAPTER V

UP THE NORTH FORK OF THE SASKATCHEWAN

WE *cachéd* a considerable portion of our provisions at the camping-place, as henceforth our saddle-horses would be required for fording rivers. Bear Creek itself had to be crossed on the morrow, and, as we watched the swollen stream foaming and tumbling over its rocky bed, the prospect was not altogether an agreeable one. However, Peyto, who does not usually take a roseate view of things, thought we could manage it all right. If anybody *was* upset, he said, he would probably struggle ashore somehow, unless he happened to knock his head against a stone; "and then," he philosophically added, "one would die easy."

Early next morning the crossing was effected without mishap; but we were all very glad when it was over. The water was nowhere more than three or four feet deep, but the stream was running like a mill-race, and the loose stones and boulders on the bottom made it very difficult for the horses to keep their

UP THE NORTH FORK

footing. Following the south bank of the West or Middle Fork, we saw on the other side of the river the mouth of the North Fork, which discharges into the Saskatchewan the meltings of the great snow-fields and glaciers we were about to explore. A mile or so above the junction we forded the West Fork at a place where the water was spread out over a big shingle-flat half a mile wide; and then, turning down stream, camped in the angle between the two rivers. Our worst troubles were now about to begin. The Indian trail up the North Fork valley lay on the further (east) side of the river, and, as the latter was quite unfordable in its present state, we should be obliged to force our way up its west bank.

The next day (Thursday, 11th August) we did not move camp. Peyto and Nigel went ahead to find or cut a trail; while Collie and Stutfield climbed a peak, named by the former "Survey Peak," to enable him to commence his plane-table survey. After two and a half hours' tedious climb through the woods, battling with fallen logs and aggravating scrub, we emerged into the open; and an easy scramble over loose stones took us to the top. The flies followed us far up the mountain side, and we experienced

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the novel sensation of chopping ice for water with our ice-axes, and being bitten at the same time by mosquitoes and bull-dogs. The same everlasting haze hung over the landscape; the sky was of a dull uniform leaden hue; no light fleecy clouds floated in the air or rolled lazily along the flanks of the hills; but a dingy grey pall brooded monotonously over the whole mountain world. When at intervals it lifted we had glorious peeps of Mount Forbes and the blue expanse of Glacier Lake lying in a deep valley almost immediately below us. The waters of the lake, which descend from the enormous Lyell Glacier, discharge themselves by a short stream into the Middle Fork. Southwards we could dimly see the bold rock and snow peaks which cluster round the head of Bear Creek valley, while right above our late camping ground was the imposing Murchison group, culminating in several peaks, one a large serrated ridge, another a gigantic square-topped obelisk of most formidable aspect, and quite sheer on three sides. We estimated the height of its loftiest summits to be about 11,500 feet, which estimate proved subsequently to be approximately correct. To the north we looked down on a curious basin, carpeted with a broad



BEAR CREEK (LOW WATER)



A BACKWATER OF THE NORTH FORK

UP THE NORTH FORK

expanse of turf, and ringed round by lofty limestone cliffs, with striking rock-forms like the Dolomites. The peaks of these mountains were all flat-topped, and one of them had a curious rift, or gash, that clove the summit in two. We got back to camp late, and found poor Woolley nearly eaten alive by mosquitoes.

The next four days were one long battle with woods, muskegs, and rivers, the cussedness of pack-horses, and our own tempers. The North Fork seemed quite unfordable, and in places its waters were lost as they rushed foaming and swirling at the bottom of deep rocky gorges. Had we had less resolute and hard-working men than Peyto and his staff, our trip must inevitably have resulted in failure. As it was, we more than once feared we should be forced to turn back. From early morning to late afternoon they cut and cut away, but yet we could make no more than three or four miles a day. It was aggravating, too, to see across the river and within a stone's-throw of us, moderately open country with a good trail, and yet to be unable to get to it. Still, for us people who were not obliged to be always log-chopping, the time passed very pleasantly: indeed, our life in camp would have been an ideal one but for

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the flies, and they only annoyed us for a few days more. Especially delightful were the evenings, when, the mosquitoes having gone to sleep, we sat and smoked our pipes on the mossy banks of the river, listening to the swish of its rushing waters and watching the daylight fade slowly away on the mountain tops. The combination of rock, river, and forest scenery just here was magnificent. We were right under the great cliffs of Peak Wilson, which rose sheer 6000 feet from the opposite bank. Towards evening a fierce brassy glare, due to the presence of smoke in the atmosphere, overspread the sky. Great coils and masses of vapour, with fiery smouldering edges, were banked one upon another in the west; and, as the sun went down, its rays reddened the great towers, bastions, and buttresses of crag, with a rich red glow that contrasted sharply with the gloom of the intervening canyons.

The traveller along the eastern slopes of the Canadian Rockies does not, as a rule, see much bird or animal life in the backwoods. An occasional black-headed tom-tit, a jay here and there, grouse of three kinds, a woodpecker with a voice like a fishing-reel being rapidly unwound, a few dippers or water-ouzels, and

UP THE NORTH FORK

a kingfisher or two along the river banks, represent the feathered tribe in the lower forests. There are also ground-squirrels and tree-squirrels of various sorts; and the engaging little chipmunk scolds and chatters in the branches as his sanctuary is invaded. These tiny forest folk have a language all their own, and their queer antics afforded constant entertainment both to men and dogs. Now and then a porcupine may be seen climbing a tree like a small bear, or rolling himself up into a posture of defence against two- or four-legged foes.

On the 14th, being Sunday, our unlucky day, our horses got lost—it was supposed they had seen or smelt a bear—and we had a terrible job to find them. These tiresome creatures proved a constant source of vexation to us, but it must be admitted that their idiosyncrasies afforded a somewhat amusing study. There was Collie's old grey, alluded to already, who had more sense than almost any six others put together; the impulsive Buckskin, for ever flying off at a tangent into the thickest part of the wood and kicking off his pack there; Molly, that aggravating old thing, for ever up to all sorts of pranks, in spite of her mature years and the responsibilities of motherhood;

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

Woolley's tall, raw-boned chestnut, Joe, always hungry and strongly resenting any interference with his meals; Girlie and Nitchi, the bay, who loved bathing in deep waters and soaking our provisions and baggage; the wise, long-headed Pinto, an indispensable adjunct to any outfit of Tom Wilson's; and lastly, the patient plodding Denny, wall-eyed and pink-nosed, whose preternaturally thoughtful air and tardy methodical movements brought upon him unnumbered thwacks. Owing to our slow progress they were all unusually troublesome just now on the trail; and that evening, the men having had a very long and tiring day's work, we dispensed with the teepee and camped in the open round the fire, beguiling the night hours with tales of Klondike and gold-prospecting, of Indians and hunting and trapping, of riding buck-jumping bronchos, and other topics of an improving and entertaining character. The burden of conversation fell chiefly on Byers; and he ably sustained it, being a most amusing talker, a keen politician, and a theologian of somewhat unorthodox views—which he propounded with an air of most refreshing confidence. Later on the talk shifted to the interpretation of certain verses of Genesis,



WOOLLEY ON "JOE"



"THE PINTO"

UP THE NORTH FORK

and Byers took the opportunity to pronounce a glowing eulogy upon the scheme of Creation, which, in a passage of singular eloquence, he described as "a mighty fine outfit." Some rash person venturing to controvert his views, our cook promptly overwhelmed him with a torrent of backwoods satire and invective; and the would-be objector, crushed in argument, took refuge in an outburst of somewhat pointless profanity. Then the tobacco was passed round, and the discussion ended—as such discussions usually do end—in smoke.

Next morning Peyto and Nigel went ahead in search of the trail, while Stutfield scrambled up the steep sides of a neighbouring creek in search of goat or bear, but without success. At one o'clock the men returned, and we noticed that their faces wore a very dejected air. They reported that a mile further on a big river came in from the west down a wide valley filled with impassable muskeg; and, with much emphasis and many flowers of western speech, they stated their views. It was quite impossible, they said, to get up the valley, and nobody but a fool would want to try; it would take at least a week to make a trail on the other side of the river—if we could get there—and they were

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sick of cutting. Ignoring Peyto's picturesque language, Collie remarked that the weather was exceedingly warm; they must be very thirsty; and that whisky and water wasn't a bad drink when you couldn't get anything better. To this they agreed. We waited. There was evidently nothing for it but to cross the muddy torrent of the North Fork on our right, even if we had to swim for it, and at any cost—or else give up the trip. Peyto thought that the river was unfordable, but, after several plucky attempts, he forced his mare across, and the outfit followed. The water in mid-stream was almost up to the horses' backs, and the current very swift; but the bottom was good, and we all got over with nothing worse than wet legs and damp packs. Following the wide stony bed of the river for a little, we recrossed it without difficulty above the junction, and camped on a hillock in the angle between the two streams. The tributary appeared to be fully as large as the North Fork, but it is not marked on any of the older maps. It drains a very large area, and all the glaciers on the north side of Mount Lyell supply it with water. It flows sluggishly eastwards in a deep winding channel, and the valley, which is nearly half

UP THE NORTH FORK

a mile wide, is covered with large bogs and lagoons. Stutfield walked some distance up it with the rifle until he was stopped by dense underwood and muskeg. He could see no mountains of any size towards its head, while a fairly well-worn trail, that was now mostly under water, seemed to point to its leading to a pass over into the valley of the Columbia. Some days later Collie and Woolley saw this pass from the summit of Mount Athabasca, and in 1900 it was explored for the first time by Mr. C. Thompson.

We could find no game of any description except a few willow grouse or "fool-hen"—so called from their tameness and the ease with which they allow themselves to be killed—which always proved acceptable additions to our scanty larder. There are several kinds of grouse in the forests, the largest of them being the blue grouse, a handsome bird nearly as big as a blackcock; Franklin's grouse, which is much smaller; and Richardson's grouse, or fool-hen proper, which also rejoices in the more dignified Latin title of *Dendragapus Obscurus Richardsonii*. When Stutfield returned to camp there was one of these confiding birds sitting on a low branch, preening his feathers and blinking at us after

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the fashion of his foolish kind. Taking with them a small pistol, which Woolley had brought as a defence against grizzlies and marauding Indians and the like, Collie and Stutfield advanced to the attack. The first shot missed by about two feet, and the bird wagged his tail derisively, but never budged. After several more ineffectual efforts a bullet removed two feathers of his tail. The fool-hen nodded his head approvingly, as much as to say, "That's better; persevere, and you may bag me yet," but still refused to move. Then there was a miss-fire and a cartridge jammed, and, as we were examining it, the thing exploded, and Collie's head was nearly taken off. Finally, after some more bad shooting, Collie in desperation swarmed a neighbouring tree, with the pistol in his pocket, and "potted" the over-trustful fowl at a distance of five feet, and we had him for supper.

Our worst troubles were over for the present, as we struck a fairly good trail on the eastern bank, and all went well, except that the horses had a swim in a deep hole, and we again got the baggage wet. A good deal of burned timber could be seen ahead, the bare poles sticking up like a forest of masts in some distant dockyard,



THE NORTH FORK VALLEY

UP THE NORTH FORK

but on closer acquaintance it did not prove very troublesome. Further on the valley contracted to a gorge; and we bivouacked once more *à la belle étoile* at the foot of a lofty cliff. Towards midnight we were awakened by loud talking and laughing, and saw the men trooping back into camp armed with guns, hatchets, and lanterns.

“What’s up, Peyto?” we asked, from the recesses of our sleeping-bags.

“Great Cæsar’s ghost! We’ve been bear-hunting,” he replied, laughing.

A large animal, presumably a grizzly, had been heard moving in the thicket, and they had gone in pursuit. The bear proved to be our friend Woolley, who was wandering round in search of a dark place out of the moonlight, wherein to change his photographic plates.

Our eighteenth and last day’s march up the valley, on August the 17th, was a long one. For the first time for many days we left the banks of the Saskatchewan, which had caused us so much trouble and anxiety. We quitted it without a pang, and began climbing the hill-face on our right. The trail rose rapidly, and we had a delightful ride through a forest of giant pines with trunks of a rich glowing red. Below us a tributary of the Saskatchewan plunged in a

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magnificent cataract down into a deep gorge. Very soon the valley forked, and we turned to our left and followed the banks of the western stream: the other branch descends from a pass, which Stutfield subsequently crossed, leading over into the head-waters of the Brazeau River. The country here was much more open, and the going perfectly easy. Our course lay W.N.W.; and, passing through some pretty park-like glades, the outfit emerged into a broad, green, and nearly level valley. We had passed the watershed unawares; for the tiny rivulet that now meandered, parallel with us, peacefully through the meadows was the infant Athabasca starting on its long journey to the Great Slave Lake and the Arctic Ocean. Curiously enough, the Saskatchewan streamlet, whose waters are ultimately destined to lose themselves in Hudson's Bay, flows down from the opposite hill and passes within fifty yards of its rival.

We made our permanent camp in a charming spot in the woods at an elevation of 7000 feet; and it was delightful to think that, for some days at least, we should not have to shift the tents, to pack our beds and baggage, to listen to the perpetual "chop-chop" of Peyto's axe, or to drive the stubborn cayoooses along the trail. We

UP THE NORTH FORK

had not journeyed very far—about 150 miles or so—but it had taken us eighteen days of pretty constant work to reach our base of operations. Of course, travel in the summer months, when the rivers are swollen with the meltings of the glaciers, is far more difficult than in the Fall, when the water is low. Immediately opposite our camp, to the south-west, rose a noble snow-crowned peak, about 12,000 feet in height, with splendid rock precipices and hanging glaciers; and on its right the tongue of a fine glacier descended in serpentine sinuosities to the bottom of the valley. We named them Athabasca Peak and Glacier respectively. The spirits of us three climbers rose high, and our blood was stirred within us at the thought of being once more on the ice and snow; and Woolley especially hailed the prospect of a really good climb with delight, for in his Caucasian wanderings nineteen days' travel through valleys had never been part either of the programme or the performance. It was decided, therefore, that we should attack the peak next day.

After dinner, however, it struck us that we ought to see how our "grub-pile" was getting on. We knew that it was pretty low, as we had started with an insufficient stock, our appetites

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were healthy, and the dogs had eaten a great deal more of our bacon than was good either for them or for us; but we were quite unprepared for the alarming state of affairs which the inspection disclosed. There was flour for five, and bacon for two, days, at the outside; and this was all that was left on which to do a fortnight's or three weeks' climbing, and to get back to Bear Creek! Meat, it was evident, must be procured somehow, and soon, or we should be starved into retreat, and the trip would result in ignominious failure. A council of war was held, and Stutfield suggested that Collie and Woolley had better do the climb by themselves, while he went off in search of mountain sheep, or bighorn, which were said to be fairly plentiful in the neighbouring mountains. This plan was agreed to, and we made our arrangements for the morrow accordingly.



CAMP AT HEADWATERS OF THE SASKATCHEWAN AND ATHABASCA

CHAPTER VI

ATHABASCA PEAK; A BIGHORN HUNT; AND DISCOVERY OF THE COLUMBIA ICE-FIELD

THE story of the ascent of Athabasca Peak had better, perhaps, be given in Collie's own words. "It was somewhat late in the morning when Woolley and I started for our peak. Just after we had emerged from the pine-woods some valuable time was wasted over killing two ptarmigan with stones, but the small glacier on the east side of the peak was soon reached. It was not much crevassed, and keeping to the right we soon hit the north-eastern arête. This ridge for a short time gave us good climbing, but, like so many of these limestone crags, was very rotten. As the glacier to the westward appeared moderately easy, we clambered down on to it, and worked our way up into the great basin just underneath the summit. A choice of routes then lay before us—either we could skirt under some overhanging ice-cliffs on our right up to the northern arête, or, by cutting up an ice-slope on our left, the north-eastern ridge could be

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again reached. We chose the latter, and Woolley rapidly led me up on to the ridge; but a very narrow and steep ice arête lay before us. At first there was sufficient snow to enable us to ascend by kicking steps, but soon Woolley was hard at work with the axe. For two hours almost without intermission was he cutting, and the ridge was almost too steep to allow us to change places. Finally we arrived at a small platform just underneath the precipitous rocks that guard the summit, only to find that they were perpendicular. By carefully skirting round their base to the right a narrow chimney was discovered. It was our last chance: either it had to be climbed, or we should return beaten. Owing to the excessively broken state of the limestone rock, produced probably by the great extremes of heat and cold, the climbing was not difficult; but there were many loose rocks that to avoid needed exceeding care. With much caution bit by bit we managed to climb up this narrow chimney, expecting to come out within easy reach of the summit; but, as we gained the ridge, a wall of overhanging rock fifteen feet high seemed to bar further progress. After what we had gone through down below, fifteen feet, even though it did overhang, was

ATHABASCA PEAK

not going to keep us from the top. How it was surmounted I have forgotten, but I remember how we saw the summit almost within a stone's-throw of us, and how at 5·15 P.M. we stepped on to it. By mercurial barometer its height is 11,900 feet.

“The summit consists of a narrow ridge running east and west. On the south side, about ten feet below this ridge, is a rocky platform from which the snows have melted, and which forms a sort of pathway along the whole ridge. On this platform we halted. The view that lay before us in the evening light was one that does not often fall to the lot of modern mountaineers. A new world was spread at our feet; to the westward stretched a vast ice-field probably never before seen by human eye, and surrounded by entirely unknown, unnamed, and unclimbed peaks. From its vast expanse of snows the Saskatchewan glacier takes its rise, and it also supplies the head-waters of the Athabasca; while far away to the west, bending over in those unknown valleys glowing with the evening light, the level snows stretched, to finally melt and flow down more than one channel into the Columbia River, and thence to the Pacific Ocean. Beyond the Saskatchewan glacier to

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the south-east, a high peak (which we have named Mount Saskatchewan) lay between this glacier and the west branch of the North Fork, flat-topped and covered with snow, on its eastern face a precipitous wall of rock. Mount Lyell and Mount Forbes could be seen far off in the haze. But it was towards the west and north-west that the chief interest lay. From this great snow-field rose solemnly, like 'lonely sea-stacks in mid-ocean,' two magnificent peaks, which we imagined to be 13,000 or 14,000 feet high, keeping guard over those unknown western fields of ice. One of these, which reminded us of the Finsteraarhorn, we have ventured to name after the Right Hon. James Bryce, the then President of the Alpine Club. A little to the north of this peak, and directly to the westward of Peak Athabasca, rose probably the highest summit in this region of the Rocky Mountains. Chisel-shaped at the head, covered with glaciers and snow, it also stood alone, and I at once recognised the great peak I was in search of; moreover, a short distance to the north-east of this mountain, another, almost as high, also flat-topped, but ringed round with sheer precipices, reared its head into the sky above all its fellows.

“At once I concluded that these might be

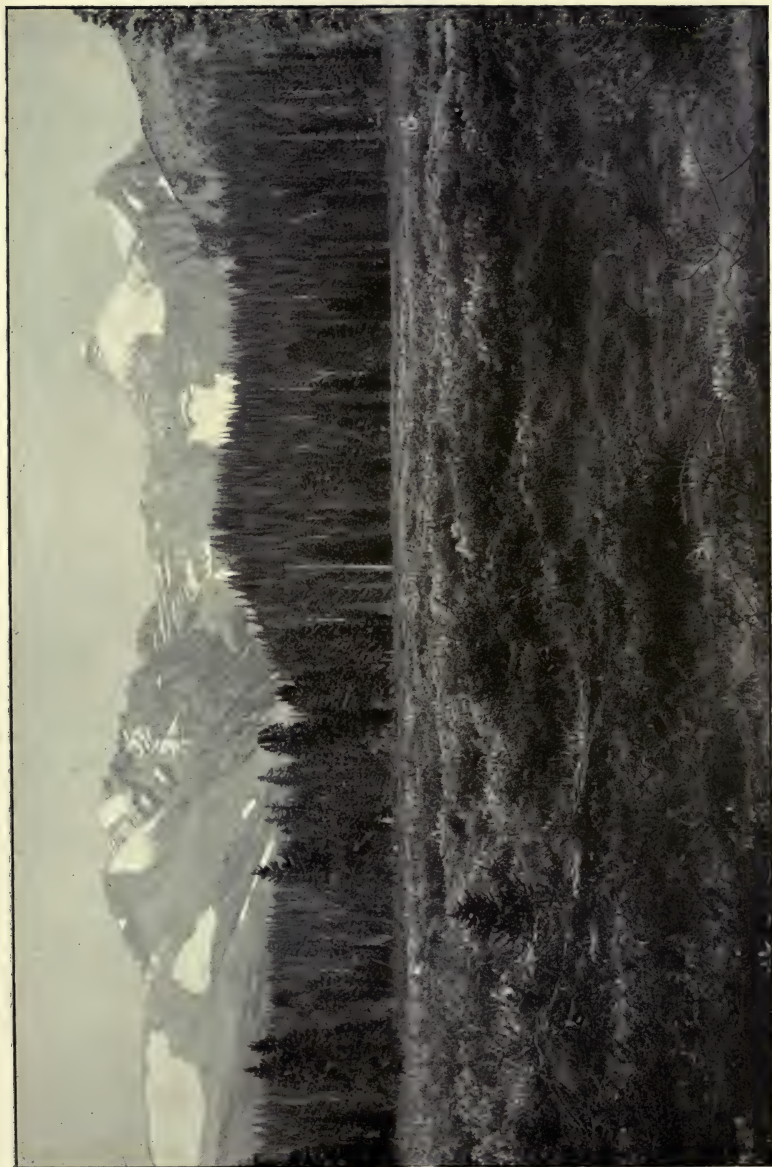
ATHABASCA PEAK

the two lost mountains, Brown and Hooker. As rapidly as I could I drew lines in all directions on my plane-table survey towards these peaks, and put up my mercurial barometer; but, hurry as fast as I could, it was 6:30 P.M. before we started down from the summit. Woolley's patience must have been sorely taxed, but he endured the waiting and the cold with characteristic fortitude. I was not at all anxious to return by the way we had ascended, for it was too difficult to allow of any undue haste being made. I therefore suggested that we should follow the rocky platform on the summit, and see how far down the north-western arête it would lead. Moreover, I thought that I had sufficiently reconnoitred a route down this arête while Woolley was cutting ice-steps towards the final summit. At first our new route was all we could wish, and a run down 500 feet of snow quickly took us clear of the summit; but soon the arête narrowed, with rock precipices on the left and ice-slopes on the right hand. Moreover, the rock was of the loosest possible kind, and the ridge broken in places by perpendicular drops, which we had to get down or turn as best we could. Daylight was rapidly going, and we were by no means clear of difficulties; but just as the last

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colours of the sunset faded out the sky, the more or less level ice of the glacier was reached. Stumbling down the mountain side, over stones and through bushes, we reached the forest; where we had a terrible struggle with fallen trunks, muskegs, and tangled brushwood: and finally got back to camp at eleven, where we found Stutfield sitting up for us, and striving to allay the growing fears of the men for our safety."

Meanwhile the rest of the outfit had not been idle, as the reader may gather from the following notes out of Stutfield's diary: "Immediately after breakfast Woolley and Collie left. It was with somewhat of a heavy heart that I saw them go, for I knew they would have a splendid climb, and, having been out three weeks without seeing a single head of game, I was beginning to despair of ever finding anything to shoot. Shouldering our rifles, Peyto and I, with Nigel, walked up through the woods in a northerly direction on to a grassy plateau about 8000 feet above sea-level. Ahead of us was the pass traversed by Mr. Wilcox on his journey to the Athabasca in 1896. As there is no record of any previous traveller having crossed this pass, Collie has named it, and an adjoining peak about 10,000 feet high, Wilcox Peak and Pass.



ATHABASCA PEAK (LOOKING WEST)

THE BIGHORN HUNT

“Let me try and picture to you the scene. A mile or two of grassy uplands, broken only by knolls and benches of rock, were hemmed in by barren hills of moderate height. Westwards, reminding me somewhat of the Mont Blanc range, rose the great unknown chain of the northern Rockies, whose mysteries we hoped shortly to explore if only Providence and my Mauser rifle sent us meat. Northwards was a black scarpèd rock-peak, with a curious snow cap, or crown, of great thickness. To the south the dazzling glaciers of Athabasca Peak glittered in the noontide sun, and somewhere in that sea of burnished silver I knew were two black specks representing Collie and Woolley, and I only wished I were with them. Altogether it was an ideal hunting-ground for a person of lazy habits and artistic leanings, as the walking was easy and you could not break your neck if you tried. It struck me it would make a splendid preserve for some Trust magnate or wealthy stockbroker, or other of those favoured mortals who seem destined, by the decrees of an all-wise Providence, to rule the world in these later days. My only doubt was whether there was anything to shoot, as ten minutes' careful spying failed to reveal any trace of bighorn; and Peyto pre-

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sently left us to hunt on his own account round the base of Peak Wilcox. Half-an-hour was next spent in stoning a covey of ptarmigan, out of which we bagged two and a half brace. My scepticism as to the existence of sheep was deepening every minute, when suddenly my unbelief was cured by the sight of quite fresh tracks, and a few minutes later we saw the animals that made them.

“The bighorn is a grand beast. A full-grown ram will occasionally scale over 250 lb. ; and his long legs, smooth tawny coat—of hair, not wool—and graceful carriage are suggestive much more of an antelope than a sheep. There were eighteen of them, mostly ewes and lambs, but I made out some rams with fairly good heads. It was now past midday, and the sheep presently settled down for their noontide siesta ; but the ground was too open for a stalk, so we lay there watching them for about two hours. The ewes reposed on the rocks, occasionally rising to see if the coast was clear, while the lambs gambolled around them. Their proceedings were much more decorous than those of chamois on similar occasions, and there was none of that mad skipping and jumping about in which the little antelope of the Alps indulges. The time passed

THE BIGHORN HUNT

quickly enough, for I know nothing more delightful than watching game among great mountains, preparatory to a stalk.

“At last the sheep got up and went off, and Nigel was for following them at once; but, remembering how in chamois-hunting the old doe sentinel of the herd always pops up when you least expect her and spoils your stalk, I waited a little. Sure enough, in five minutes the head of an old ewe appeared over a rock, and she had a good look round to see if the coast was clear. We gave them another hour, and then followed them up an open valley towards a lake that lay at the foot of a high snow-clad peak, of which Nigel is now the eponymous hero, and found them browsing on a grassy knoll sloping down to the water’s edge. It was now past four o’clock, so I decided to attempt a stalk, leaving Nigel to watch the sheep and signal to me if they shifted their position. Making a long *détour* I came across two more sheep, and stalked them—luckily, as it turned out—without success. They either winded or saw me, and made off at top speed. Meanwhile the main herd must have seen me, as they again moved on past the lake and up a valley. Hoping to cut them off, I scrambled up the stony

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hillside as fast as my legs would carry me, and, after a long crawl over some horribly sharp stones, managed to get within range. There were now two herds, browsing peacefully in a hollow—the bulk of them about two hundred yards off, and two rams with heads that made my mouth water seventy or eighty yards farther. I longed to have a shot at the latter, but, remembering that we were out, not for pleasure but for meat, I resisted the temptation.

“Shooting for the pot has an interest of its own which the man who kills only for sport can never know. I don't suffer from ‘buck fever’ as a rule, but, knowing how much depended on the shot, I felt horribly nervous. There would be winged words flying round the camp that evening if I missed, and, worse than that, it would mean the failure of the trip. However, the first shot struck the nearest bighorn, and in the ensuing skedaddle I wounded three others. Such slaughter was most regrettable, but the circumstances in which we were placed left me no alternative. Following one of the wounded sheep up the hill, I had fired my last remaining cartridge at it and missed, when I heard a rattle among the stones, and, looking round, I saw behind a big boulder, two or three

THE BIGHORN HUNT

yards off, a large ewe with her lamb. Whether she had never seen a human being before, or was scared out of her wits by the firing—she did not seem to be wounded, and the other sheep were wild enough—I cannot tell, but there she stood stock still, looking at me out of her big, sad, liquid eyes in a way that made me wish, for the moment at any rate, that somebody else had to act as ‘mutton-murderer’ for the outfit. After we had looked at each other in this way for a few minutes, I threw a pebble at them, and they trotted off quite quietly.

“Nigel soon joined me, and with his revolver I polished off two of the cripples, which we gralloched; but the approach of night compelled us to leave the third dead sheep as he lay, and make tracks homewards. It was past ten o’clock when we reached camp, very hungry after a ten hours’ fast. Collie and Woolley had not returned, and our men were getting anxious, though I explained to them that when they got used to the ways of climbers they would cease to feel alarmed when a party did not turn up for dinner. None the less I was very glad when the flicker of a lantern, like a glow-worm through the wood, announced their approach.”

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Altogether, this had been a red-letter day for us. Those blessed bighorn had saved the situation, for the present at any rate; and the geographical results obtained by Collie and Woolley augured well for the success of the expedition. Next morning we got up late, and were having breakfast, when an exclamation from Nigel made us look up; and on the verge of the perpendicular cliffs, some thousands of feet above us, we distinctly saw the heads and horns of four or five sheep, craning over the precipice, and apparently wondering what manner of creatures they were that had thus rudely disturbed them. During the rest of our journey we never saw a single bighorn or goat, or any description of large game except one bear.

Woolley and Collie rested that day after their labours, while Peyto, Nigel, and Stutfield went up to the lake and brought down the mutton; but in spite of a careful search they failed to find the wounded bighorn. In the evening a conclave was held as to our next expedition. We wanted, of course, to explore the newly discovered ice-field; and Collie thought that by a long day's work we might also ascend the great mountain he had seen from Athabasca Peak—which, it may here be mentioned, was subsequently christened Mount Columbia.

THE COLUMBIA ICE-FIELD

The following afternoon we shouldered our packs, Roy and Nigel assisting, and bivouacked as far up the right bank of the Athabasca Glacier as possible. Roy and Nigel had never been on a glacier before, so they came for a walk with us on the ice, and were much interested by what they saw. All night long a thunder-storm kept growling, and the lightning played over the summits of the mountains to the north. The flying rack scudded across the face of the moon, as we lay awake listening to the stones trickling down the dirty ice-cliff below us, the loud murmur of the torrents, now rising in volume, now falling, with the varying gusts of wind, and the occasional roar of an avalanche tumbling down the sides of Athabasca Peak. We rose at 1:30 A.M., and started by lantern-light up the glacier. Dawn broke at length in a dark and lowering sky. The glacier was easy enough to begin with, but gradually the crevasses, growing wider and more numerous, kept us dodging about backwards and forwards without making much progress, until we almost fancied we were threading the ice-maze of the Col du Géant. The Athabasca Glacier descends from the upper snow-fields in three successive ice-falls, the highest one being very much crevassed.

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Through the mazes of this upper ice-fall we slowly made our way, zigzagging between the *séracs*, or ice-pinnacles, and innumerable crevasses. The latter were unsurpassably fine. Huge chasms of immense depth yawned beneath us on every side, branching out below into mysterious caverns and long winding grottoes, their sides tinged with that strangely beautiful glacial blue, and festooned with enormous icicles.

We had been going nearly five hours when we emerged on to the upper glacier, and the wonders of that vast region of snow and ice were unfolded to our view. To Stutfield it was all new; for neither the great glacier nor the high peaks on its western side are visible from Wilcox Pass or Wild Sheep Hills: and the upper rim of the ice-fall was to him as the threshold of the unknown. We stood on the edge of an immense ice-field, bigger than the biggest in Switzerland—that is to say, than the Ewige Schneefeld and the Aletsch Glacier combined—which stretched mile upon mile before us like a rolling snow-covered prairie. The peaks, we noticed, were all a long way off, and sparser and fewer in number than in the Alps, rising only here and there like rocky islets from a frozen sea. Westwards the magnificent Finsteraarhorn-



MOUNT COLUMBIA



DIADEM PEAKS FROM WILD SHEEP HILLS

THE COLUMBIA ICE-FIELD

like mountain (Mount Bryce) sent its three peaks high into the air. North of it the goal of our ambition, that great glacier-clad, wedge-shaped peak, Mount Columbia, loomed grand and mysterious through the still prevailing smoke-haze. A double-headed mountain on the north hid the high rock peak (afterwards named by us Mount Alberta) which Collie, when on the top of Athabasca Peak, thought might be Mount Brown. The weather was very sultry, and thunder was in the air; for several hours we tramped steadily on over the almost level ice-field, but Mount Columbia proved to be much further off than it looked. The ascent, we saw, would be quite easy—merely a long snow-grind—but we were still a long way even from its base. The weather was very threatening—it was now past noon, and we had already been going nine hours—so we decided to give it up.

Before retracing our steps we halted awhile for lunch and to take stock of our surroundings. We were on the edge of a vast *cirque*, or amphitheatre, of frowning precipices, over which masses of ice from the glacier on which we stood were continually falling. This amphitheatre is formed by Mount Columbia and two fine peaks,

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one rocky, the other snow-covered, which we have called The Twins; and it is here that the western branch of the Athabasca River takes its rise.

Meanwhile the thunder-clouds gathered, the haze grew denser, and the peaks loomed dim and ghostly through the pervading murkiness. Our view was largely spoiled, but, as a compensation, the sense of vastness and mystery was enhanced—and in travelling through a new mountain country the sense of mystery is everything. The spell that once was upon the Alps has been broken; the illusion and the mystery that formerly enshrouded them have departed, never to return; and with the illusion has gone much of the awe and reverence they used to inspire. Far otherwise is it with the wayfarer through unurveyed and untrodden lands or mountains. He feels, as he never felt before, the silence and the solitude of the everlasting hills. Expectation is for ever on the alert at each new point of vantage gained; and, as the climber presses upwards towards some untrodden peak or pass, there is a quite absorbing fascination in wondering what there is on the other side. One of our party, by the way, who shall be nameless, made an observation somewhat to this effect to an American

THE COLUMBIA ICE-FIELD

widow one day, and she replied, with a fascinating sigh, "Ah! yes, life mostly consists of that—wondering what there is on the other side." And she was alluding to things temporal, rather than eternal!

But to return to our muttons. To the eastward of where we stood, and almost on our way home, rose a great white dome, and we determined to ascend it. After a hot and very tiring climb through snow that broke under our feet at every step, we finally reached the summit at 3:15 P.M. We have named this peak The Dome (11,650 feet). Another peak to the north Collie named Peak Douglas, after the botanist David Douglas who discovered Mount Hooker and Mount Brown. The Dome is not a very striking mountain in itself, but hydrographically regarded it is of great interest. Viewed in this light it is the apex, as it were, of the Rocky Mountain Range, for the meltings of its snows descend into three great river-systems, flowing into three different oceans—to the Columbia and thence to the Pacific; to Hudson's Bay *viâ* the Saskatchewan; and by the Athabasca to the Arctic Ocean.

The thunder-clouds were now gathering thick on the high mountains, so we ran down the snow, as fast as the hidden crevasses permitted, to the

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head of the Athabasca ice-fall. The storm burst before we got off the glacier, and we reached camp at nightfall drenched to the skin.

From what we had seen during the day, Collie's idea—that the great snow-clad peak (Columbia) and the imposing rock peak further to the north (Mount Alberta) were respectively the two lost giants, Brown and Hooker—did not receive any support, and we were more mystified than ever. As far as could be made out, there was no pass leading westwards between these two mountains; and the western branch of the Athabasca River, whose source lay at the foot of these peaks, was hemmed in on all sides by the loftiest peaks in the Canadian Rockies. Moreover, Stutfield, while hunting on Wild Sheep Hills next day, had an unusually clear view of the mountains to the north, and made a rough but careful sketch of them; and the result of his observations seemed to be that there was no pass between any of the peaks near the supposed Brown and Hooker by which any animal less active than a goat could cross. The solution of the problem was, in fact, as far off as ever.

CHAPTER VII

TO THE VALLEY OF THE ATHABASCA, AND ASCENT OF DIADEM

DURING the next two days we took things fairly easy, while we debated what our next move was to be. On the 23rd Woolley climbed Peak Wilcox (about 10,000 feet) with his camera, but the haze interfered seriously with photographing. Collie walked down the valley and ascended a range of hills which gave him a good view of Saskatchewan Peak and Glacier. The men spent their time usefully in making pemmican, or dried meat, out of our surplus stock of mutton, which was none too large. Stutfield, in the vain hope of adding to it, went hunting round the lower slopes of Athabasca Peak. At the foot of the great mountain he found a beautiful lake of emerald green, nestling in the woods: on the benches of grass above timber-line were numerous old game trails, now disused and overgrown with grass, but of remarkable depth, showing the quantities of game that must have existed in former days. Innumerable small gophers, or

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rock rabbits, were sitting on stones outside their holes. These conies are of different kinds, and, like those of Holy Writ, they have their habitation in the rocks. One of them, a queer little tailless fellow, with long ears and nose, is very tame and emits a strange squeaking noise like an old-fashioned bicycle alarm. Marmots are as common as in the Alps, but they are smaller as a rule—though there is one large handsome variety, which is almost as red as a fox—and their whistle is less shrill and ear-piercing. A big, heavily built ground-squirrel is found in the woods, and in the brushwood above timber-line, with his smaller brother gophers and chipmunks.

As a result of our deliberations we decided to move half the outfit over Wilcox Pass down into the main valley of the Athabasca in order, if possible, to find the Athabasca Pass and the lost Punch Bowl. We imagined they might be only two or three days' journey distant: now we know that it would have taken us at least a fortnight to get there.

On August 24th, we started with a few horses and a couple of small tents, leaving poor Roy Douglas alone to look after the remainder of the camp. Across the watershed a rapid descent took us down to the eastern Athabasca

THE ATHABASCA VALLEY

or Sun Wapta. The hill-sides in the wood were so steep in places that the horses were continually slipping and sliding down on their haunches; and the packs, though light, were frequently dislodged. The Athabasca, like so many of the rivers in this district, has filled the bottom of the valley with an ugly bare shingle-flat, which, however, we found very convenient for travelling purposes. The general features of the scenery were less attractive than those of the charming vale we had just left, though the mountains were on a bigger scale here, and Athabasca Peak nobly filled the head of the glen. We had hoped to find some lateral valley by which we could reach the foot of Mount Columbia or Alberta; but the mountains fall on their eastern face in a continual line of precipices, intersected only at places by quite impassable ice-falls. Accordingly, after a long day's march, during which we descended the bed of the river for some miles, we camped at the mouth of a gorge, down which a good-sized creek tumbled in a picturesque cascade. Our men, ever hungering after gold, spent the next morning prospecting, finding a little black sand and some quartz that showed a few traces.

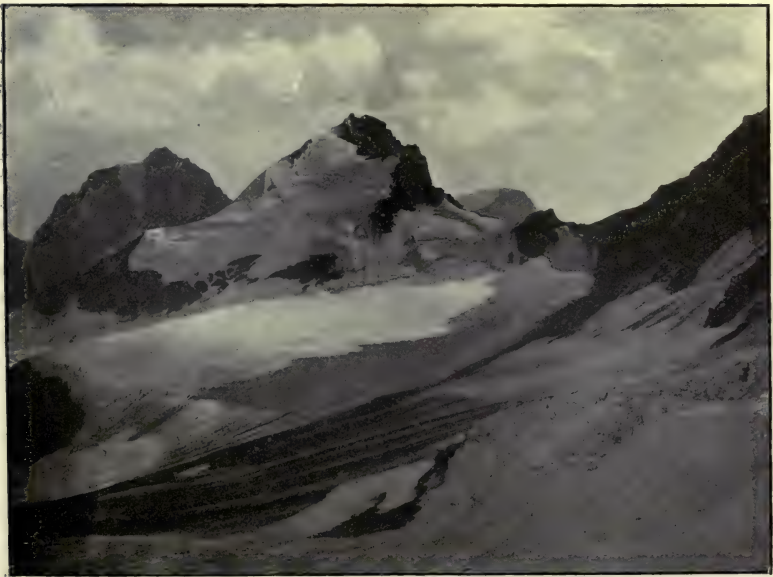
In the afternoon we made preparations for a

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bivouac, with a view to climbing some peak of the main range to the west. It was thought that a horse might be requisitioned to carry our provisions and sleeping-bags up the canyon, as the elevation of our camp was only 5600 feet; but the suggestion evoked such strong opposition (and language) from Peyto that it was promptly abandoned, and we had to make beasts of burden of ourselves and him. The creek issues from a glacier descending from a group of mountains lying between two branches of the Athabasca River. This group has three principal summits, of which the northernmost (Diadem we called it) is the curious snow-crowned peak we had seen from Wild Sheep Hills. The central and highest summit was subsequently named by Collie after Woolley, and the third after Stutfield. These two last mountains appeared to have been conducting themselves in a most erratic manner in bygone ages. A tremendous rock-fall had evidently taken place from their ugly bare limestone cliffs; and the whole valley, nearly half a mile wide, was covered to a depth of some hundreds of feet with boulders and *débris*. What had happened, apparently, was this. The immense amount of rock that had fallen on the glacier below Peak Stutfield had



GORGE IN SUN WAPTA VALLEY



FROM THE SLOPES OF DIADEM PEAK (LOOKING SOUTH)

THE ASCENT OF DIADEM

prevented the ice from melting. Consequently the glacier, filling up the valley to a depth of at least two hundred feet, had moved bodily down; and its snout, a couple of hundred feet high, covered with blocks of stone the size of small houses, was playing havoc with the pine-woods before it and on either side. In our united experiences, extending over the Alps, the Caucasus, the Himalaya, and other mountain ranges, we had never seen indications of a landslide on so colossal a scale.¹

We selected a spot for our bivouac at the foot of the Diadem glacier, and slept soundly on our beds of heather and pine twigs till we were woke by the rain pattering down on our sleeping-bags. The weather had changed for the worse, and the pale, sickly light of a most unpromising dawn had overspread the sky when we left the sleeping-place, with the intention of climbing Mount Woolley. Our idea was to ascend a steep glacier by means of a somewhat formidable ice-fall that descended between Mount Woolley and Diadem. All went well as far as the foot of the ice-fall, when a black thunder-cloud that had been gathering over Mount Columbia burst, and heavy rain drove

¹ The remains of a similar landslide were afterwards noticed blocking the outlet to Moraine Lake in Desolation Valley.

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us to seek the shelter of a friendly rock. In five minutes it cleared; but the brief delay was possibly our salvation. We were just putting on the rope to ascend the ice-fall, when, with a roar and a clatter, some tons of ice that had broken off near the summit came tumbling down, splintering into fragments in their descent. We took the friendly hint, and left that ice-fall alone. The only alternative peak was Diadem, so we turned aside and began climbing its face.

At first we had to make our way up slopes of loose shale and ice, and we kept fairly near the arête to avoid falling stones. This involved us in a scramble up some rather diverting rock chimneys; after which a sort of miniature rock-rib gave us safety from stones, and we followed it up to the summit. The rocks were very steep in places, and, as usual, terribly insecure and splintered, and one had to be very careful. The "diadem" of snow proved to be about a hundred feet high, set on the nearly flat top of the rocks. From the summit a wonderful panorama burst upon us, in spite of the murky atmosphere. Standing as we were, near the Great Divide, we looked down on a marvellous complexity of peak and glacier, of low-lying valley, shaggy forest, and

ASCENT OF DIADEM

shining stream, with here and there a blue lake nestling in the recesses of the hills. Quite close, as it seemed, the overpowering mass of the supposed Mount Brown (Alberta), towered frowning many hundreds of feet above us. It is a superb peak, like a gigantic castle in shape, with terrific black cliffs falling sheer on three sides. A great wall of dark thunder-cloud loomed up over its summit; and there was a sublime aloofness, an air of grim inaccessibility, about it that was most impressive. To the west we could dimly discern the outline of another high peak, with a large grey cloud floating like a canopy over it. Northwards the mountains were all much lower; and it was evident that the Columbia group formed the culmination of, at any rate, this region of the Rockies. In these northern districts the landscape, as was to be expected, presented a sterner and more forbidding aspect: indeed, the softer and more homely features of Alpine scenery were everywhere absent from these higher valleys of the western Athabasca. One missed the tiny green pastures dotted about with brown chalets, the terraced cornfields and vineyards; and the familiar tinkle of the cow-bells would have sounded more musical than

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ever in our ears, for, as Mr. Leslie Stephen observes in "The Playground of Europe," these evidences of civilisation tend to improve rather than spoil mountain scenery.

It was bitterly cold on the top, but we stopped some time to enable Collie to make his plane-table survey and read the patent mercurial barometer, which gave the height as 11,500 feet. All day long there had been a growling of distant thunder in the west, and as we turned to go down the storm burst upon us with a vengeance. It grew very dark; a white driving scud of sleet and hail swept by on the whistling wind, making our ears and faces tingle. The thunder rattled and roared in grand style among the crags; the air was aboil with eddying twisting vapours; and the lightning leaping, as it were, from peak to peak, zigzagged merrily athwart the sky. More than once we were constrained to stop and take shelter from the drift and sweep of the storm, throwing aside our ice-axes for fear of the lightning, which seemed to be playing all round us. We took the easiest way down the face, taking chances with falling stones; and it was with a feeling of relief that we ultimately got on to the glacier below. In the woods another bad

ASCENT OF DIADEM

storm struck us, with hailstones as big as — well, of the usual travellers' size—anyhow they hurt very much when they hit you, and again we ran down into camp like three drowned rats. During the night there were more thunder-storms—we had five in twenty-four hours—and the drippings from our leaky tent soaked our already damp sleeping-bags; but we slept soundly through it all.

It was a dreary spectacle that greeted us next morning as we looked out on the ugly grey shingle-flat, the wet camp, and dripping woods and muskegs, and the hill-sides covered with mist. There was nothing to be gained by pushing further into these inhospitable wilds, even supposing we had had the time or provisions to do it; so the wet tents were struck, and we returned over Wilcox Pass. Our provisions were again getting very low, so Stutfield left the outfit at the summit of the pass and climbed Wild Sheep Hills in search of bighorn. There was not a sheep to be seen anywhere; and from the hill-tops he looked down northwards on a scene of the most extraordinary desolation. Not a tree or trace of vegetation was visible — nothing but mountains of naked rock and shale, alternating with patches of snow

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and ice, and one small lake. What was most curious, however, was the varied colour of these mountains, which were striped in places like a blanket, and splashed, as it were, with all the hues of the rainbow—an almost exact counterpart of the multi-coloured clays that adorn the sides of the Yellowstone Canyon.

We found everything right in the camp below, and Roy, as may be imagined, was delighted to see us back. The commissariat question was again becoming pressing, as some of the mutton had gone bad in our absence, so we decided to make tracks homewards without further delay. In the hope of restocking the larder, Peyto and Stutfield took their rifles and, mounting their horses, cantered on ahead of the outfit down the valley. Arriving at the junction of the streams, they rode up the one which descends from the pass over into the Brazeau Valley. On the way they found a considerable tract of forest on fire, the charred tree-trunks and half-consumed foliage presenting a curious patchwork of green and black, while the peaty earth was still smouldering and emitting volumes of smoke. It appeared that two of our men had left the outfit to go "hunting" on the way up; and, having shot a fool-hen, they had carelessly

HEAD-WATERS OF THE BRAZEAU

omitted to perform the first duty of every backwoodsman—namely, thoroughly to extinguish the embers. Had it not rained heavily during the previous week we should probably have found the whole valley ablaze, and our retreat, perhaps, down the Saskatchewan cut off, which would have been a cheerful prospect for a party with next to nothing to eat.

The frequent, and often wanton, destruction of the forests in the Canadian Rockies by fire is most deplorable. Sometimes they are set alight on purpose by prospectors in order to clear the ground, but nine times out of ten the fires are the result of sheer carelessness. There are severe penalties attaching to the offence, but, as evidence is very difficult to obtain, convictions are extremely rare. The result is that the scenery is spoiled, men's lives endangered, much fine timber wasted, and trails rendered almost useless for years to come.

After putting out the fire as well as they could, Peyto and Stutfield pushed on to the summit of the pass. Tethering the horses a little lower down, they descended on foot some distance along the stream of the upper Brazeau, which here flows through a pleasant valley, with low rounded hills, prettily wooded, on either side,

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

somewhat resembling parts of North Wales. Not much appears to be known about this district, but it is said to abound in game—the hunting would be even easier than on Wild Sheep Hills—and the streams are full of trout. Stutfield and Peyto saw a good many sheep tracks, but no game; and returned to camp empty-handed, and once more soaked to the skin by a heavy thunder-shower.

Next morning was gloriously fine, and, as the camp was pitched near the junction of the streams, we had a last splendid view of Athabasca Peak up the western branch. We made a forced day's march down the North Fork of the Saskatchewan, so as to reach our *cache* of provisions at Bear Creek as soon as possible. The tents were pitched in a most undesirable spot, among a cluster of burned trees on the verge of falling, some of them being so rickety that a push of the hand sent them over. It was a good thing for us that the wind did not start blowing that night. We were now on very short commons, having no fresh meat and very little bread. The poor dogs were absolutely starving, and we had to keep a sharp look-out to prevent them from stealing our scanty remnants of food. We had a few scraps of biltong, or dried meat, left which

DOWN THE NORTH FORK

we sucked when very hungry. It is very sustaining but highly indigestible, and in appearance the reverse of appetising. When the first morsel was put before us on a plate we thought that that mad wag, Byers, was serving the outfit with the uppers of Peyto's boots, which had recently shown signs of disintegration. The biltong keeps wonderfully well; and some pieces that we have preserved as a memento are still, after a lapse of nearly five years, perfectly fresh.

It rained all next day, and we had perforce to remain where we were, chewing the cud of disappointed anticipation. There was one sardine left, and two anchovies; and we reserved three small crusts for breakfast on the morrow. Luckily the morning broke fine, and we pushed on as hard as we could down the left bank of the river, hustling the cayoooses for all we were worth. As a result, this was the longest day's march we ever accomplished, and we passed no fewer than five camps that we had made on the other side when ascending the valley. Arriving at the main stream of the Saskatchewan, we forded it without much trouble below the mouth of the North Fork, the cold weather having greatly reduced the volume of water. Bear Creek offered no difficulty. As we neared the

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cache we naturally felt somewhat nervous about our provisions; and Collie tried to alarm the party by drawing lurid pictures of a band of Indians gorged with our bacon and roaring drunk on our whisky; but we found everything just as we had left it. Probably no one had passed that way during our absence. In any case, provisions are very rarely stolen from *caches*, as the enormity of the offence is generally recognised. In former days the penalty was death; and even now it is very severe.

That evening we feasted on bacon, dried apricots, and other delicacies that we had been talking about for some time past. In civilised countries it is not the custom to spend a large portion of the day thinking and often talking about food. But, given an individual with a good healthy appetite, and an insufficient supply of edible material to satisfy that appetite, an interesting exhibition will ensue of how the body can tyrannise over the mind. A natural result followed after we had had our first "good square meal": we did not move the camp for two days. By way of passing the time, and to supply the larder, the next afternoon we prowled singly through the woods after fool-hen. The total bag amounted to five brace.



A DAY OFF WITH PEYTO AT BEAR CREEK

FORESTS OF BEAR CREEK

The woods surrounding the camping-ground at Bear Creek are exceptionally fine—for the eastern side of the Rockies—and some of the trees are of great height. One wants to be alone to fully appreciate the mystery and the utter solitude of these great forests. It is less agreeable, doubtless, to be by oneself; but the impressions created are deeper and more enduring. It is then that is borne in upon you the silence and the immensity of an African desert, the utter loneliness of the Canadian backwoods, or the solemnity of the great mountain peaks. In the Rockies the scarcity of bird and animal life serves to intensify the sense of solitude; and the traveller may walk for hours without hearing a sound except the roar of some distant avalanche or torrent, the southing of the wind in the tall pines, and the creaking of their gigantic limbs. Imagination, too, plays strange pranks at times, as the stray sunbeams dance on the green moss, and the play of light and shade caused by the swaying branches peoples the dark recesses with phantom shapes and figures that are curiously life-like and distinct. You could fancy there were elves and fairies in those long glades dappled with alternate sunlight and shadow, kelpies in the foam of the rushing

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

torrents, or that goblins haunted the cavernous tree-trunks. However, the whirr of a fool-hen's wings, as he rises from the ground and perches on a bough, so as to enable you to knock him over with a stick, is sufficient to dispel these reveries; and you promptly devote yourself to the more serious business of securing him for supper.

Next morning, Friday the 2nd September, we attempted to ascend Mount Murchison. After a very bad hour with the logs in the wood, we got out into the open above the trees; but the weather gave us little encouragement. A tiring shale-slope led up to steep rocks which afforded some interesting scrambles, Woolley manipulating a big stone jammed in a rock chimney with much skill. We halted for lunch on the arête at a height of about 9000 feet. It was snowing steadily, and the mountains were enveloped in mist, so we had no view to speak of; but below us two remarkable phenomena attracted our attention. The first was a tall column of rock that had become detached from the cliff, forming a slender pillar four or five hundred feet in height, and tapering towards the summit and base. Much more extraordinary, however, was a group of rocks, consisting,

FOSSIL FOREST

as it seemed, of petrified stems of pine-trees that had been broken off about a foot from the ground, with numerous fossilised remains around their base. It has been suggested, however, that they are not trees at all, but the remains of some gigantic prehistoric sea-weed. In any case, whatever they are, their existence at so great a height above sea-level, and in so excellent a state of preservation, must be accounted very remarkable; and we could wish that they might be visited and examined by some geologist competent to give a thorough account of them.

We remained some time on the arête in the hope that the weather might improve, but the snow and fog grew worse and worse, so the climb was abandoned and we returned to camp.

CHAPTER VIII

THOMPSON PEAK AND THE SELKIRKS

THE following day we pushed on, in cloudy weather, up Bear Creek valley towards the Bow Pass, camping on the shores of the beautiful Waterfowl Lake, at the foot of the grand cliffs of Pyramid and Howse Peak, which fall a sheer 5000 feet into the valley. On the Sunday (again our unlucky day) we were overtaken high up in the woods by violent hailstorms, followed by heavy snow, in which we lost the trail. After wandering about hopelessly among the burnt timber for some time we camped in a cold, slushy, miserable spot at the edge of a muskeg. Woolley sarcastically inquired if this was a specimen of the Canadian Indian summer, of whose charms we had been hearing so much; and we asked Byers if he could make us a plum-pudding for supper. We had a bitterly cold night, with hard frost, but the morning was brilliantly fine and the sun shone forth in a cloudless sky. Ice-crystals sparkled on every leaf and twig; the pails and buckets

THOMPSON PEAK

were all frozen hard; and Byers, the unfailing humorist, asked for time to thaw his socks before he could put them on and give us our breakfast. At the summit of Bow Pass we left the outfit, and, ascending a hill on our right, had a glorious view of Mount Murchison, Pyramid, and the Waputehk Mountains. From the shores of Bow Lake, which formed our camping-ground that evening, we had the last climb of the trip.

We got up early next morning, only to find a dog engaged in devouring our last loaf, on which we were relying to provide us with breakfast and provisions for the climb. Following the northern shore of the lake, as on the ascent of Mount Gordon the previous year, we passed the mouth of a remarkable gorge, with a big jammed stone forming a natural bridge, and reached the foot of the Bow Glacier. The ice-fall proved troublesome, and four or five razor-edged arêtes, connected by rickety ice-bridges, gave us some rather ticklish work. They did not last long, however, and soon we were on the *névé* of the Waputehk Glacier. We had no definite peak in our minds when we started, but we now decided on one that lies just to the north of the ice-fall. It was

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quite easy, but, as the slopes of the mountain consisted of loose stones covered with a layer of fresh powdery snow a foot and a half thick, there was a very fair chance of breaking a leg or spraining an ankle, and the ascent was frightfully laborious. The summit is 10,700 feet high, and Collie named it Thompson Peak, after Mr. C. Thompson. The recent rains had put out all the forest fires, and the air was beautifully clear, so for the first time during the trip we enjoyed an uninterrupted view. On every side, far as the eye could reach, the mountain world stretched. Taken individually, there are finer peaks to be seen elsewhere; what impresses one in the Canadian Rockies is the sense of their seemingly endless continuity. Beginning southwards in this wonderful panorama, the first to catch the eye was Mount Assiniboine, the highest and finest summit south of the railway; next on the right rose Mount Temple and the Laggan group; the Ottertail Mountains, and a collection of unknown peaks; the Selkirks, with Mount Sir Donald, seventy miles distant; the Gold Range; next, and much nearer, Mount Mummery and the Freshfield group; Mount Forbes towering above all competitors; the triple-peaked Mount Lyell partially



FOSSIL FOREST



THOMPSON PEAK

SEMI-STARVATION

obscuring Columbia and Bryce; Peak Wilson and the Murchison group; then the Slate Range, with innumerable minor summits; while over all was a cloudless sky of more than Italian blue.

Having no meat to speak of left, we had been living practically on bread and porridge; and now, with the aid of the thievish dog, these were finished. Byers, anxious to find something to try his hand on, was seen casting wolfish eyes on Molly's little foal, who was looking nice and plump in spite of his long journey; and it was a miserable meal that he set before us that evening. Collie improved the occasion by a short but impressive discourse on the chemical and nutritive properties of the scanty viands at our disposal; while Stutfield asked what amount of albuminous nitrogen, or nitrogenous albumen (he wasn't sure, and didn't much care, which) there might be in a fool-hen's leg, which, he ruefully observed, was all the grub *he* seemed likely to get for supper.

Our short commons lasted till next evening, when we caught some nice trout in the Bow River. We were lucky to find them on the feed, as these Rocky Mountain trout are very capricious and often refuse to be tempted by

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

any lure. Friday, the 9th September, was our last morning in camp. It afforded us a little mild excitement in the shape of a black bear, which was sighted on a hill across the river. Peyto and Stutfield at once saddled their horses, forded the river, and went in pursuit. The latter, hoping to stalk the bear from above, went straight up the face of the hill, keeping closely concealed in the brushwood, while Peyto, with his dog, made a *détour* to the right. A puff of wind must have given the bear their wind, as the people in camp saw him make off to the left, passing quite close to Stutfield in the dense thicket; then climb the hill, and gallop over a ridge some 8000 feet high. Stutfield, blissfully unconscious of what was going on, crept cautiously forward, only to find that the expected quarry had taken his departure.

Our troubles were not yet over, as the burned timber in the woods above Laggan was worse than anything we had hitherto experienced. Woolley, taking his big camera, had gone off while the bear-hunt was in progress. Hoping to strike the trail further on, he plunged into the woods in search of photographs, but had a very bad time of it before he got out. Collie and Stutfield also went ahead of the caravan

THE SELKIRKS

and lost the trail. The tangle of fallen timber was something extraordinary. There were places where we walked for hundreds of yards on logs several feet from the ground, and we wondered when we should ever extricate ourselves. Nevertheless, our woes were nothing to those of poor Woolley, who had left the trail much further from home, and, cumbered with his heavy photographic apparatus, stumbled about among the logs until he was almost fagged out. However, the distant scream of a Canadian Pacific Railway locomotive at last told us that we were approaching the haunts of men; and at five o'clock we found ourselves once more at Laggan railway station. The remainder of the outfit arrived an hour later, the men looking like chimney-sweeps after their battle with the burnt timber, and it was a marvel how they had managed to get through so quickly.

At Laggan we bade a last farewell to our tents and horses, and returned to hotel life once more at Banff. Two days later we separated, Collie being obliged to return immediately to England, while Woolley started off on a short tour to Vancouver and the Pacific. Stutfield, loth to quit the mountains, and wishing to see something of the Selkirks, went to Glacier

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House and stayed there a week. The charms of this delightful little Canadian Pacific Railway hostel and its neighbourhood have been written of at length by Mr. Wilcox and others, so a detailed description is unnecessary. The hotel stands at the narrow entrance of a curious deep bay in the hills; and few more striking effects can be seen anywhere than when, as the train emerges from the long dark snow-sheds—or, if the traveller is east-bound, after creeping round those wonderful loops in the line, and over the spider-legged trestle-bridges—the Great Glacier bursts into view, gleaming white amid the pines, with the splendid crags of Mount Sir Donald frowning down upon you.

When Stutfield arrived, however, he found other and more pressing matters than the scenery to occupy his attention. The tracks of an enormous grizzly and her two cubs had just been discovered on the trail leading to the Asulkan Glacier, less than an hour's walk from the hotel. They had been made that morning or during the night, and were of quite remarkable size. One reads in the older travel-books of grizzlies' foot-prints almost as long as a man's fore-arm; and the com-

A HUNT AFTER A GRIZZLY

parison is hardly an exaggerated one. We carefully measured the marks with a piece of string, which unfortunately got lost; but they were certainly well over a foot in length, and broad in proportion.¹ Much more extraordinary than their mere size, however, was the juxtaposition, in a patch of soft mud, of two tracks that offered a most curious contrast. Side by side, only a few inches apart, were the huge grizzly's spoor and the tiny imprint of a lady's smart Parisian shoe! The wearer of the shoe, a lady who is a frequent visitor at the Glacier House, had passed along the trail the preceding afternoon on a walk through the valley, and *ursus horribilis* must have followed a few hours later.

We followed the tracks some way down the banks of the stream, until we lost them in the forest. Three days were spent in a hunt after the grizzly, fish and meat being hung on the trees for bait, but not a sign of it could be discovered. A couple of days later a very large bear, measuring nine feet from snout to tail, was shot with her two cubs near Rogers' Pass, three miles up the rail-

¹ Authentic measurements of a grizzly's paw given in "Big Game Shooting" (Badminton Library Series) are—length of hind-foot, 18 inches; breadth of fore-foot, 12 inches.

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way; and, as the tracks we had seen headed in that direction, this was no doubt the same beast. Bears, black, brown, and grizzly, are by no means uncommon in the Selkirks; but hunting for them in those vast, dense, and trackless forests is like looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack. The Canadian Pacific Railway section men often see them crossing the railway; and in winter they are occasionally shot from the windows of the hotel. They told us at Glacier of a funny adventure which befell two girls belonging to a party of "Christian Adventurers" who were making a tour through the country. Being greatly daring spirits, they had borrowed ice-axes from the hotel and gone for a walk alone up the Illecillewaet ice-fall. Descending towards evening, they were about to leave the glacier by the only feasible way off the ice, when, to their horror, they saw an old she-grizzly and her cub on the moraine just in front of them. Not daring to advance, they remained on the glacier till near midnight, when they were rescued by a search-party from the hotel. The ferocity of grizzly bears in these later days is nothing like what is represented in the older books on Rocky

THE SELKIRKS

Mountain sport. Experience, probably, has taught them that their teeth and claws are no match for modern repeating rifles. Unless surprised at close quarters with their cubs, or when feeding on a carcase, they will very seldom attack a man: and in the Yellowstone Park, where Stutfield saw them in considerable numbers, they appear to be more shy even than the deer, and vanish the moment they catch sight of their human foes.

The splendours of the forest and valley scenery in the Selkirks must be seen to be realised. A humid climate and a heavy rainfall have clothed their sides with far nobler trees and a much more luxuriant vegetation than exists on the eastern slopes of the Rockies. They are seen at their best late in the season, when the Indian summer is at hand and the breath of autumn on the woods, and the somewhat garish gold of the maples, mingling with the deep russet of the rowans and the brilliant green of the thick mosses and ferns, forms a striking contrast to the sombre-hued masses of pines and cedars. A curious feature of the landscape in the Selkirks is that the higher you climb the less beautiful or imposing it becomes. True,

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the glaciers are of immense extent; but the peaks, with the exception of Mount Sir Donald and a few others, are not particularly striking, and the ordinary tourist has the best view of them from Glacier House, or from the windows of his railway carriage as the train, clinging to the precipitous sides of the deep gorges, creeps slowly round the vast rock buttresses and promontories of the mountain ranges. The real charm of the country lies in its supremely lovely woods and valleys; and of these last the most beautiful, perhaps, is that of the Asulkan. Beyond the mountain-crests which rim the view from the bottom of this valley are vast glaciers whose meltings descend in innumerable cascades flashing, jewel-like, amid the brilliant foliage. Owing to their brilliance of colouring the Selkirk forests, in spite of their vastness, are more cheerful than those of the Rockies; and bird and animal life is more abundant.

The bear-hunting having proved a failure, Stutfield, before leaving, had a solitary ramble by an unorthodox route up Eagle Peak, the mountain immediately facing the Glacier House. The summit (9400 feet) affords a magnificent



THE SELKIRKS (FROM PEAK SWANZY)

THE SELKIRKS

view of Sir Donald, with a curious rock-tower in the foreground overhanging a precipice of immense depth. Rashly essaying a short cut down, he was forced to reascend a thousand feet, with the result that night overtook him at the edge of the forest. For six mortal hours, in pitchy darkness, he crawled down nearly 3000 feet of steep, timber-choked mountain side, reaching the hotel well after midnight. This was the last climb of the season, and a few days later he journeyed by easy stages to England.

After our return home we set to work to clear up the question of Mounts Brown and Hooker, and the origin of their apparently undeserved notoriety. Again, and with greater care, Collie looked up every reference he could find that dealt with the Rocky Mountains of Canada and British Columbia. At last he discovered a reference in Bancroft's "History of British Columbia" to the journal of David Douglas the naturalist, which had been published, together with a variety of other matter, in the *Companion to the Botanical Magazine*, vol. ii. pp. 134-7, by Dr. W. T. Hooker.

The narrative deals with Douglas's journey to the Rockies and over the Athabasca Pass.

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He started from Vancouver on March 20th, 1827, and, travelling *viâ* the Kettle falls and the Columbia River, reached Boat Encampment (now called Big Bend) on April 27th, and the summit of the Athabasca pass on May 1st at ten o'clock in the morning. To quote his journal: "Being well rested by one o'clock, I set out with the view of ascending what seemed to be the highest peak on the north. Its height does not appear to be less than 16,000 or 17,000 feet above the level of the sea. After passing over the lower ridge I came to about 1200 feet of by far the most difficult and fatiguing walking I have ever experienced, and the utmost care was required to tread safely over the crust of snow. A few mosses and lichens are observable, but at an elevation of 4800 feet (?14,800 feet) vegetation no longer exists. The view from the summit is of too awful a cast to afford pleasure. Nothing can be seen, in every direction far as the eye can reach, except mountains towering above each other, rugged beyond description. . . . The majestic but terrible avalanches hurling themselves from the more exposed southerly rocks produced a crash, and groaned through the distant valleys with a sound only equalled by that of an earthquake.

MOUNT BROWN

Such scenes give a sense of the stupendous and wonderful works of the Creator. This peak, the highest yet known in the northern continent of America, I feel a sincere pleasure in naming 'Mount Brown,' in honour of R. Brown, Esq., the illustrious botanist. . . . A little to the southward is one nearly the same height, rising into a sharper point; this I named Mount Hooker, in honour of my early patron, the Professor of Botany in the university of Glasgow. This mountain, however, I was not able to climb. 'The Committee's Punch-Bowl' is a small circular lake twenty yards in diameter, with a small outlet on the west end, namely, one of the branches of the Athabasca."

This, then, is the authentic account of the discovery of Mount Brown and Mount Hooker; and to Professor Coleman belongs the credit of having settled with accuracy their real height. If Douglas climbed a 17,000 feet peak alone on a May afternoon, when the snow must have been pretty deep on the ground, all one can say is that he must have been an uncommonly active person. What, of course, he really did was to ascend the Mount Brown of Professor Coleman, which is about 9000 feet high. These two fabulous Titans, therefore, which for nearly

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seventy years have been masquerading as the monarchs of the Canadian Rockies, must now be finally deposed ; and Mounts Forbes, Columbia, and Alberta, with Peak Robson, west of the Yellowhead Pass, must reign in their stead. Moreover, the peaks and glaciers around the great Columbia ice-field, the scene of our wanderings in the summer of 1898, are entirely new ground ; and, placed as they are, at the sources of three of the largest rivers in the Dominion, they probably constitute the culminating point of the Canadian Rocky Mountain system.

CHAPTER IX

THE BUSH RIVER

FROM what we had seen in the course of our climbs and investigations among the mountains of the Columbia group, it was evident that the finest and highest peaks lay well on the western side of the range; and that their distance from any base camp in the Saskatchewan or the Athabasca valleys would render an ascent of any of them an exceedingly long and arduous undertaking. Mount Columbia might possibly be climbed, if an easy way could be found through the ice-fall of the Athabasca Glacier, from the site of our permanent camp near Wilcox Pass; but Mounts Bryce and Alberta seemed quite out of the question. The idea, therefore, occurred to Stutfield of making another expedition next year with the view of climbing these peaks from their western side; or, if that should prove impracticable, of at any rate seeing something of the deep mysterious canyons and unexplored mountain country lying between the main chain of the Rockies and the Columbia River. We

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had obtained a fair knowledge on our 1898 trip of the eastern side and the centre of the range, but to the west lay an entirely unknown region.

What, for instance, was there on the other side of the Freshfield, the Lyell, and the Columbia groups? Were there great glaciers and further outlying mountains? Did the valleys run straight to the Columbia, or, like those on the eastern side, lie parallel with the range? Were the bottoms of these valleys underneath the high mountains three, four, five, or even six thousand feet above sea-level, like those on the opposite side? and were there any passes over which an easy trail might be made? Some vague knowledge of these western mountain fastnesses had been acquired by Collie and Woolley from the summit of Athabasca Peak. West of Mount Forbes they had seen a high mountain with glaciers on its flanks, and tipped with ice and snow. South of Mount Bryce there seemed to be also a gap in the range, darkened by dense woods, that apparently led from the west branch of the North Fork of the Saskatchewan, over the divide, to the lonely valleys of the west. Another high peak reared its head far into the sky westward of Mount Columbia; and the immense expanse of the ice-field be-

THE BUSH RIVER

tween Mounts Columbia and Bryce was seen gradually bending down westwards to a deep green valley filled with pine-woods and trending in a southerly direction, whilst far away over several ranges of lesser peaks we thought we could see the valley of the Columbia running north-westwards parallel with the mountains.

On his way back from Glacier House, therefore, Stutfield stayed at Donald and made inquiries as to the possibility of getting into the mountains from the valley of the Columbia. The information he gathered amounted to very little, only serving to illustrate the extraordinary ignorance that prevails concerning this region. For instance, people at Banff, who ought to have known better, stoutly maintained that there was no trail at all down the Columbia valley, whereas a good trail has always existed since the days when Boat Encampment, situated at the Big Bend of the Columbia, was a mining centre. While Stutfield was at Donald, a prospector arrived, *via* the Athabasca Pass, with a pack-team of eighteen horses, from Tête Jaune Cache, a spot on the west of the Yellowhead Pass much frequented by trappers and prospectors in the olden days. He said there was a good trail down the Columbia all the way

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to Big Bend, and a fair one for a short distance up the left (south) bank of the Wood River. Of the country lying up towards the mountains he knew no more than any one else. All that could be learned was that the difficulties of travel would be far greater than on the eastern side—the rivers and muskegs more formidable, and the timber much denser—but this we knew before.

The existing maps gave us little information, and that little afterwards proved to be mostly wrong. It had been Stutfield's idea to ascend the valley of the Wood River, up which he knew a trail existed for some distance, and attack the mountains from the north-west; but Collie was of opinion that the Bush River, supposing we could make a trail up it, would offer an easier route. It would certainly be much shorter in point of distance. Concerning this valley only the vaguest and most meagre details could be obtained. Tom Wilson of Banff made some inquiries for us at Donald, where he met a trapper who had been some way up the Bush River eight years before, and who seemed to be the only man with any knowledge of the valley. This trapper was of opinion that the muskegs, the river, and the thick timber would make it very difficult, if not impossible,



CLOUD EFFECTS IN THE BUSH VALLEY

THE BUSH RIVER

for horses. Nor was this at all unlikely to be the case, for Dr. Hector had found great difficulty in forcing his horses down another of these western valleys, that of the Blae-berry Creek: and the trails were a good deal easier in his day. Wilson, also, had been obliged to abandon all his horses in the Blae-berry, only recovering them a week later by the aid of several men, who returned with him and eventually cut them out of the thick timber. In 1897, too, Baker and Collie had entirely failed to make their way down the same valley, and finally only escaped by traversing a new and high pass to Field on the south.

To make a long story short, we finally made up our minds to tempt fate on the western side of the range, and the Bush River route was the one decided on; but it was not till the summer of 1900 that the expedition was undertaken. The 30th July of that year saw us once more on the Canadian Pacific Railway, *en route* from Banff to Donald. Mr. Woolley did not accompany us on this trip, being unable to spare the time: in his place came Mr. Sydney Spencer of Bath, an old climbing comrade of Stut-

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field's in the Alps. As we sat on the hard uncomfortable seats of the expectionation car—we beg pardon, we mean “observation car”; but the former title is at least as appropriate—we had glimpses of the scenes of some of our former labours; and, as the train crept down the tremendously steep descent to Field, we noted the change in the character of the trees and vegetation with a lively sense of trouble to come. At Golden the railway emerges from the valley of the Kicking Horse into that of the Columbia, which, flowing down a broad open strath, is navigable almost to its source, a hundred miles away. Lower down it enters a narrow rocky gorge in the mountains; and the impression left on the traveller's mind, as he looks away from the mountains towards the comparatively open country to the south, is that the river is flowing the wrong way. Golden is a place of some size, and in former days was the principal starting-point for the mining regions of the Kootenay.

At Donald we found everything ready for us, the horses and baggage having been conveyed thither by rail at immense expense. We were not long in noticing that there

THE BUSH RIVER

were several changes in the *personnel* of the outfit. Bill Peyto was away serving his country in South Africa; and his place was taken by Fred Stephens, one of the best fellows it has ever been our good fortune to meet. The others were Charlie Bassett, axeman; C. Black, cook, who was with Collie and Baker in 1897; and one Alistair Mac-Alpine, an amusing broth of a boy, who persisted in asserting he was a Scotchman in the richest brogue that ever cut the murky atmosphere of Belfast. There were also many new faces among the horses, but we recognised several old friends as well. The steady and prudent Pinto, eulogised of Wilcox and other travellers, the vivacious Girlie, old Molly with her bell, but without a foal on this occasion, and the gaunt and gallant Joe, were all there; but we looked in vain for the fiery Buckskin, or the patient slow-moving Denny; while Collie's old grey, *jam rude donatus*, had been relegated, they told us, to light carriage-work between Laggan and the Lake Louise chalet. Joe, it should here be mentioned, has made two separate voyages to the South African war and back, and is still alive and flourishing. On the whole, the

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

horses looked a better and more level lot than those of the 1898 outfit, and we were glad to see that there were more of them.

The scenery at Donald, if not particularly striking, is very charming, and, like the name of the place, has a distinctly Highland flavour. The surrounding hills are not of great height, but they have a decided individuality and boldness of form, while the predominance of the silver birches on their sides and along the banks of the smooth-flowing Columbia helps to recall memories of Scotland. The place had undergone a sad change for the worse since Stutfield's last visit, the Canadian Pacific Railway people having removed their engine-shops and works to Field, which is now the repairing section for this part of the line: the inhabitants had nearly all left, and remnants of furniture, old tools, and other implements were lying scattered round the now empty log-cabins.

Soon after noon everything was ready, and the outfit got under weigh. Our start was a very bad one. Bassett was essaying to mount a piebald cayoose, when the brute reared and fell back on him, inflicting such serious injuries that he had to be sent back

THE COLUMBIA TRAIL

to Banff, where he remained three weeks in hospital. So we lost our best axeman, whose services would afterwards have been invaluable in the dense forests through which we had to cut our way. Collie and Fred Stephens remained behind to put poor Bassett on the east-bound train, giving instructions to one of the conductors to look after him. The rest of the outfit made a short day's march along the Columbia trail, after telegraphing to Banff for a substitute, who arrived late that evening in camp in the person of one Harry Lang. The trail does not follow the banks of the Columbia, but ascends the valley of the Blackwater Creek four or five miles to the east. The reason of this is that just below Donald the Columbia makes an abrupt turn to the westward through a canyon made, no doubt, long ago by the water finding a weak spot in a low range of hills which runs nearly parallel with the Columbia valley, dividing the latter from the glen of the Blackwater. The trail led us along the eastern side of this range, and, as it ultimately turned out, we never saw the Columbia again till our return to Donald. Two creeks, the Waitabit and the Bluewater, were passed on the way ;

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but the fact that the volume of water in them was small and did not contain glacial *débris* obviously meant that no great area of mountain country was drained by them; also that they either came from lakes, or had their rise in the small foothills where no glaciers existed.

We camped that afternoon in a stately grove of trees about ten miles from Donald. It was our first introduction to the magnificent forest scenery of this western region of the Rockies, and in the evening we wandered forth and gazed in admiration at the great cedars, pines, poplars, spruces, cotton-wood trees, and Douglas firs—some of them nearly two hundred feet high, their branches hung with long beards of grey, black, and yellow lichens—ranging and for ever re-arranging themselves, as the evening shadows fell, in long shadowy aisles and sylvan corridors. It was a true temple of Nature that we were in; such an one, no doubt, as in olden time is said to have inspired the builders of our stately Gothic fanes with the ideas that led to the new departure in architecture. Beside these princes of the wood the tallest pines in the Bow or Saskatchewan valleys were but as puny saplings; and the luxuriant undergrowth, mingling its brilliant hues with those of the silver

MAGNIFICENT FOREST

birches, hemlocks, and other smaller trees, lent a richness and variety to the foliage such as we had never before seen. Side by side with the spectacle of vigorous growth, afforded by the young trees and shrubs sprouting from the damp earth, was that of decay—a mournful array of fallen monarchs, sublime even in their ruin—trunks of immense girth that lay slowly rotting away, moss-grown masses of decomposing vegetation, whose life and sap had long since gone forth to nourish their youthful successors.

It is hard to convey in words the impressions left on one's mind by a journey through the underworld of these great forests, where the sunlight hardly penetrates and the massy leafage forms a canopy overhead that screens all view of the outside world. For days together we journeyed without so much as catching a glimpse of the surrounding mountains, and all we could see of the sky was an occasional bit of blue peeping through the narrow openings here and there. At night-time, when there is no moon, the darkness is tremendous; even when the moon is full its wan beams seem powerless to dispel the gloom cast by the heavy network of interlacing boughs. Then

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it is that the air, heavy with the scent of the pines, is filled with strange whisperings, as though the genii of the forest were holding secret converse together; and, owing to the immense height of the trees, the murmur of the breeze in their branches seems to fill, and as it were to proceed from, the starry vault above them.

The next morning we continued on our way, up hill and down dale, but always through the same interminable forest. On the third day we passed two or three small lakes, and camped on the banks of the last and largest of them. Fred Stephens pointed out to us the remains of some old beaver dams; and in a thicket hard by we came across a flock of those rare and beautiful birds, the cross-bills. There must have been over fifty of them, and their bright plumage lent an unwonted charm to these forests, where animal and bird life is all too scanty. Our readers may remember the touching legend which tells how the cross-bill got his beak twisted in a vain endeavour to extract the nails from the Saviour's hands and feet as He hung upon the cross. Swimming in the middle of the lake was a very different sort of a bird, a kind of large duck or fresh-



A BRITISH COLUMBIA FOREST-SCENE



EVENING IN THE BUSH VALLEY



THE COLUMBIA TRAIL

water cormorant, aptly called a "loon," from its loud crazy mocking laugh, which sounds most weird in the evening stillness.

When the horses were unpacked it was found that a small bag of Collie's, containing some of his scientific instruments, a silver flask, and—most important of all—two pounds of tobacco, was missing; and half next day was spent in a fruitless search for it along the trail. It was found later in the year by a prospector on his way down the valley, but very few of its contents were recovered. We camped that evening in a peculiarly wet muskeg, which was the only spot we could find where there was food for the horses or on which the tents could be pitched. The forest by this time had become less dense, and we saw something of a fine range of mountains on our right, which Collie has since named after Spencer. On the other side of the valley of the Columbia rose the snow-flecked summits of the Selkirks, with belts and patches of bright emerald green running far up their sides. These green strips, which look like grass at a distance, are in reality thickets of young trees and brushwood growing where avalanches or forest fires have destroyed the larger timber.

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Friday, the 3rd August, brought us to the banks of the Bush River, where we camped on the edge of a wide marsh and under still more disagreeable circumstances than on the previous evening. The Bush, a deep, swift-flowing, and muddy stream, over a hundred yards wide, ran between steep banks that had obviously earlier in the year been overflowed. The volume of water was decidedly large, as even at the side it was eight feet deep. The banks were clothed with the impenetrable undergrowth that has given the river its name; and the floods that earlier in the year were produced by the melting snows had deposited, for some considerable distance away from the stream, a white sticky mud amongst the roots of the trees: swamps, too, were of frequent occurrence, and the thickets of willows, alders, and other small trees, together with much fallen timber of a larger size, made all hope of getting the horses through such a jungle seem out of the question.

We found three rickety boats moored at this spot, two on one side and one on the other, with what seemed to us a very insecure fastening—merely an old rope tied to a small stake which was driven into the soft mud on the top of the bank. These boats were placed here by

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the Canadian Pacific authorities for the use of travellers journeying to the Big Bend, having been brought down the Columbia from Beaver Creek. Stephens crossed over in one of them to the opposite side, to see whether any trail existed up the Bush River on the northern bank; but, as he found nothing but dense thickets and swamps, he soon returned.

The weather was now very hot and sultry, and that evening swarms of the most voracious mosquitoes we ever encountered drove us nearly crazy. The men said they had occasionally seen them more numerous on the prairie, but that never in their lives had they known them anything like so vicious or venomous. They lost no time in buzzing or fooling around, but went straight to business with their beaks until our hands and faces were one mass of bites. Nets, lotions, and "smudges" were of no avail; all we could do was to sit still and grin and bear it as well as we could. The night was a night of unending torment, for at this lower elevation (about 2500 feet) the insects do not go to sleep after sundown, as in the higher regions of the eastern Rockies. Spencer, wise in his generation, had brought a piece of netting and bade defiance to the mosquitoes, his snores blending

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harmoniously with their ceaseless buzzing; but for his two tent-fellows it was a case of:—

Mali culices ranæque palustres

Avertunt somnos :

as Horace said on his journey with Mæcenas to Brundisium. The mosquitoes of Italy, however, are but poor things compared with those of British Columbia, and the sentiments evoked by the latter are the reverse of poetical.

Next morning we fled, the mosquito scourge being unanimously voted past endurance, while we saw no chance of making our way along the river bank. The horses were hurriedly packed amid much kicking and bucking, scratching of bites, and strong language directed at the flies, the climate, woods, rivers, and other geographical features of British Columbia. Retracing our steps for about six miles along the trail, we pitched the tents near the site of our camp on the 3rd August, but in a much more agreeable situation. From here a mountain spur, very steep and heavily timbered, divided us from the upper reaches of the Bush Valley. Over this spur, which formed the angle between the Columbia and Bush rivers, we hoped to find a way; and during the whole of next day Fred Stephens and Lang

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were engaged in cutting a trail through the woods to the bottom of the steep ascent, over 1000 feet in height, which led to the top. The distance was not much more than a mile, but the trail, which led through a jungle rather than a forest, was indeed "a daisy," as Fred expressed it; and the fallen logs, rotten timber, bog-holes, rock boulders, and rank undergrowth gave the men plenty to do. It would have been folly to attempt to take heavily-laden ponies up this hill-side; so, to get over the difficulty, the whole of Monday the 6th was spent in completing the trail, and at the same time transporting half our baggage, to the summit of the mountain spur.

On the crest of the ridge was a rock of considerable height which enabled us to see over the tops of the trees down into the valley of the Bush. Collie named this rock Mount Pisgah, and from its summit we had an excellent view of the promised land which we were about to enter. It looked anything but promising. Beneath us the Bush valley lay spread out, very broad, level, and strangely flat, but hemmed in by lofty pine-clad mountains. It is true there were no rocky canyons with cliffs on either side impassable for horses; nor

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did the river foam and boil in any single narrow channel, the passage whereof would mean certain drowning for men or horses. On the contrary, the water was spread out over the wide open floor of the valley in a network of intersecting streams, which curved and twisted in innumerable windings amid beds of shingle, mud-flats, fir-covered islands, and reedy swamps — now hugging the steep forest-clad slopes on one side, now on another—and we could see that the valley rose but slightly towards its head, and that the same features prevailed throughout its length. Away in the distance the valley forked; and in the angle between the two branches, filling the exact centre of the picture, a noble rock and ice peak, with large glaciers descending far down its sides, stood forth in solitary magnificence. This peak, if the course of the Bush River was correctly marked on the existing maps, could be none other than Mount Bryce; and we therefore naturally assumed it to be that mountain. In this, however, as the sequel will show, we were sadly mistaken.

Next day we loaded all the horses early with the remainder of the baggage, which had been left below in the camp. As there was no water

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anywhere along the ridge it was absolutely necessary to get down to the Bush valley on the other side the same day. This we eventually did, but only after nearly twelve hours' fighting with the forest. Arriving at the foot of Mount Pisgah on the summit of the mountain spur, we packed the horses with as much of the baggage as we thought they could safely carry, leaving the remainder *cached*, and commenced the descent. The weather was gloomy and threatening; and a couple of blue jays, which are now becoming quite rare in the West, croaked dismally on a neighbouring pine, presaging future woe. Following the ridge for a short distance, we crept down into a narrow cleft between perpendicular rocks, out of which we emerged with some difficulty into the forest on the further side. The hill was terribly steep, the timber also being very bad in places, and during the descent one of the horses, carrying all our bacon, stampeded from the trail and was seen no more that day. This *contretemps* naturally caused us much anxiety. It was late in the afternoon when we reached the bottom of the hill and camped in a swamp near the banks of the Bush. By barometer we were now just about the same height as Donald—2500 feet.

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During the night the barometer fell two-tenths of an inch, and next day we were treated to the kind of weather that prevailed more or less till the end of our trip—rain, dull grey skies, and lowering clouds over all the mountains. As a matter of fact, we afterwards discovered that that August was the wettest and most unsettled that had been experienced in the Canadian Rockies for many years.

On the following morning, Wednesday the 8th, Fred went off in search of the missing bacon and the miserable quadruped entrusted therewith. The latter was found, after much searching, imprisoned in a natural pen of fallen timber, into which he had jumped, carrying his pack; and it required many blows of Fred's axe to extricate him. By this time it was too late to go and fetch the provisions left on the ridge: and on the 9th a steady downpour kept us prisoners in camp; so two more valuable days were wasted. On the 10th Fred and Lang took some of the horses up to Mount Pisgah and brought down the baggage and provisions. Stutfield meanwhile explored the muskeg in search of ducks and wild geese, which, with an occasional wild swan, could be seen flying in flocks up and down the valley. Collie, taking



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FORDING A BRANCH STREAM

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an axe, had his first experience of a kind of work that was often afterwards to be reserved for him, namely, trail-cutting. To any one not accustomed to wielding a heavy Canadian axe in a thick forest, it is decidedly hard work. Not only is one unversed in the art of tree-felling and log-chopping, but one is using a set of muscles rarely employed by the average man who follows a professional life in a large town. For the dense brushwood of the British Columbian forests a light single-handed axe would be invaluable. It would be especially useful for dealing with that special abomination of these woods, the "devil's club," a long prickly trailing creeper, with broad leaves, heavy stem, and most poisonous spikes which cause very painful wounds. It grows so thickly in the damp heavy soil, half concealed by the dense undergrowth, that it is almost impossible sometimes to avoid its unwelcome embraces, the consequences of which are extremely unpleasant.

Saturday the 11th August saw us start along the steep muddy banks of the now swollen Bush river. Hemmed in by the stream against the hill-side and the willow-thickets and muskegs, we had to make our trail as we went, and progress was very slow. Every now and then a

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horse would fall or plunge wilfully into the water, to be extricated only at the expense of much labour and strong language. In such places as these the cayoooses want looking after at every step. Just as the vanguard seems to be getting on nicely a cry of "Halt" arises from the rear, when it is found that some beast of ill omen has strayed from the track and deposited his burden in the mud. There is a rush to the rescue, and the others take advantage of the confusion to make a bolt of it into the forest, or else to get mired up to their girths. The result is a rare trial of temper and patience.

"Can't! Don't! Shan't! Won't!

Pass it along the line:

Somebody's pack has slid from his back;

'Wish it were only mine!

Somebody's load has tipped off in the road—

Cheer for a halt and a row!

Urr! Yarrh! Grr! Arrh!

Somebody's catching it now."

So sings Mr. Rudyard Kipling's commissariat camel, and you may be sure that a team of Indian cayoooses would gladly join in the chorus.

In the afternoon we crossed a branch stream on to a large island, and Fred, despairing of making his way along the southern bank,

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mounted the Pinto and essayed, with Lang, to ford the main river, which was here over a hundred yards wide and running pretty fast. When they were in about mid-stream six of the baggage animals rushed into the water before they could be prevented and followed them across. Then the fun began. All went well until they were quite close to the opposite bank, where the water was about five feet deep and the current very strong. The Pinto, trying to climb up the slippery bank, fell back with his rider into the river; and, Fred's foot getting entangled in the *ladigo*, or leather thong of the saddle, he was nearly drowned. However, he just managed to get free in time, and swam ashore. Lang, with the other horses, got safely across, but the rest of us, wishing neither to be swept down stream or to get soaked, waited on events where we were. Meanwhile Fred, as soon as he reached dry land, shouted to us not to come over; unpacked and tethered the horses that had crossed the river, and proceeded to construct a raft wherewith to ferry back Lang and himself. A few water-sodden logs were his only available material; and, after tying them loosely together with the cinch-ropes, he and Lang embarked on their perilous voyage.

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In the stream the raft, becoming unmanageable, was sucked into a deep and narrow rapid. Here Lang, trying to pole the crazy vessel in water which must have been at least ten feet deep, lost his balance and fell overboard into the icy river, his heavy boots dragging him down; and, but for the presence of mind of Fred Stephens, who crawled along the raft with a pole just long enough to reach his comrade in distress, there is little doubt that in a few minutes the latter would have been drowned. There is no difficulty in launching a raft into the centre of a swift-flowing river, but to reach land on the other side is a very different thing; and, if it had not been possible to throw a rope to the two men as, exhausted and benumbed, they drifted rapidly round a sharp bend in the stream about a quarter of a mile below, they might have sailed in a very short time down to the unknown reaches of the Bush River, or perhaps to the Columbia itself.

It was a cheerless night that we spent—seven men packed like sardines in one small leaky tent (the other was across the stream); but we were thankful that nothing worse had happened. The valley reeked with damp exhalations from the marshes; the rain poured

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down without intermission ; and the great river rushed silently by, dark and gloomy as the Styx, while inside the tent Charon, personified by Fred, was snoring the roof off, his large frame and long legs taking up much more than their fair share of room. Our best tent and half the provisions and outfit were on the other side of the stream ; where the tethered nags, frightened at their isolation in the gloom and rain, could be heard whinnying to their companions across the water.

Next morning Fred, undaunted by the mishaps of the previous day, and still full of energy and resource, started to build a raft of dry pine logs on a more magnificent scale, and with a pair of oars : he then ferried himself across alone ; drove the horses over ; packed the raft with their burdens, and rowed back to us in the evening, placing the whole outfit once more *in statu quo* on the island—a very fine day's work. In the meantime Collie, unwilling to be idle, had forded the branch stream with some difficulty, and was cutting trail laboriously along the left, or southern, bank, while Spencer took photographs of the scene of our mishaps. Stutfield, his spare clothes being on the other side of the river, divested himself of those he wore, and, clad only in a hat, a rüch-sack, and a gun, like-

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wise forded the branch stream and hunted for wild geese, which had been heard gagging during the night in a "sloo" (*Anglicé*, slough) on the other side. He might have spared himself the trouble, as there were no geese there when he reached the sloo—at least, only one, as Spencer sarcastically observed that evening at supper.

CHAPTER X

TO THE HEAD OF THE BUSH VALLEY

THE weather had served us very shabbily hitherto, but a slight improvement was discernible when Black next morning, adopting the favourite formula of cooks in the backwoods, announced in stentorian tones that breakfast was "ready in the dining-car." The skies wept less copiously, and the trailing mists uplifted their draggled skirts from the flanks of the hills sufficiently to leave the lower slopes clear. The sun, too, strove hard to show itself; but all it could do was to occasionally shine with a sickly pallor through the watery vapour that hung persistently over the valley. Recrossing the branch of the river, we continued slowly up the left bank through sopping underbrush, the jungles, logs, and quagmires seeming to have no end.

For the second time within a week our bacon this day was in grave jeopardy. It was extremely hot and muggy; and while we were cautiously edging along a narrow strip of very muddy land between the river and some deep

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muskeg, Girlie (whose taste for bathing in inconvenient manners and seasons was already notorious) and another mare took a header off the bank into the river, which at this point was running like a mill-race and about ten feet deep. The second mare was washed down some distance, but, having nothing on her back except a saddle, she was got out without much difficulty. Girlie, however, who was packed with about 250 lb. of bacon, promptly went out of sight, bobbed up again twenty yards lower down, only to go under a second time. Luckily her next appearance was close against the bank, when two of the men at once seized her; but then the difficulty was to get her out. The water was still very deep; the bank steep and slippery, and choked with driftwood and overhanging willows; so all we could do for some time was to keep her head up with the halter, which got twisted round her neck till she was nearly strangled. Poor Girlie's gasps grew fainter and fainter, and we fancied it was all up with her. Our hearts were in our mouths, for if the flour and bacon she carried were lost we might have to beat a retreat homewards. Eventually, however, by means of a rope taken from one of the packs, and with seven of us pulling,



AN AWKWARD CORNER ON THE BUSH RIVER

THE BUSH VALLEY

she was landed on her side on the bank, alive but half-strangled, and our bacon was saved. Half-an-hour afterwards she was grazing tranquilly with the other horses, just as if nothing had happened, and with unimpaired appetite.

We camped then and there in a most abominable quagmire and not the best of tempers. The loss of our axeman, Charlie Bassett, was now making itself keenly felt. The men, with the one exception of Fred Stephens, were beginning to grumble, and their maledictions on the valley and the trip generally were both loud and deep. "Why couldn't we have stuck to the eastern side of the mountains, as in former years?" "What on earth was the use of persisting on our journey up this accursed valley, which was no fit habitation for white men?" On the other hand, Fred's good temper and spirits rose superior to every trial and annoyance. Immensely strong, always willing and cheerful, he was a host in himself; but there are limits to human endurance, and we sorely needed another expert axeman.

However, if our trials were great, we had our compensations. To begin with, the scenery was magnificent, both mountains and forests being on a much grander scale than on the

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eastern side. Deep valleys—mighty rifts carved out of the mountains by the age-long action of the snow-fed torrents—descended on either side from the glacier-clad offshoots of the main chain. Between these valleys rose bold rocky peaks—one of them, a long crest or cock's-comb of jagged crag, being particularly striking. Down the Bush valley the view was bounded by the Selkirks, with a grand Weisshorn-like pyramid in the centre. Some weeks later Stutfield had an excellent view of this unnamed mountain monarch from the top of Mount Sir Donald, and we frequently saw it from the peaks we climbed in 1902. It would seem to be unquestionably the highest summit of any of the known parts of the Selkirk range. One of these days, no doubt, some hardy explorer will be able to tell us more about this peak and the unknown mountain region around it, but we do not altogether envy him the journey to its base. In the opposite direction, at the head of the valley, and getting nearer to us every day, was the splendid mountain we supposed to be Mount Bryce.

Of the beauties of the forests we have already spoken. We might have more greatly admired them if they had not been so abomin-

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ably troublesome. They have a wondrous fascination of their own, these vast woodland wildernesses of the West, but the charm is apt to evaporate when you are cutting trail. Now and again, when the willow thickets and muskegs were particularly bad along the river banks, we tried to get through the timber on our right, but the attempt had almost always to be abandoned, as the obstructions were such as to daunt the stoutest axeman. The account given by Lord Milton and Dr. Cheadle in "The North-West Passage by Land" — one of the best books of travel in the Rockies ever written — of a British Columbian forest scene can hardly be bettered. The forest in question is not a hundred miles north of where we were in the Bush valley, and the two explorers had to make their way through it on their adventurous journey. "No one who has not seen a primeval forest, where trees of gigantic size have grown and fallen undisturbed for ages, can form any idea of the collection of timber, or the impenetrable nature of such a region. There are pines and thujas of every size, the patriarch of three hundred feet in height standing alone . . . The fallen trees lay piled around, forming barriers often six or eight feet high on every side: trunks

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of huge cedars, moss-grown and decayed, lay half-buried in the ground on which others as mighty had recently fallen ; trees still green and living, recently blown down, blocking the view with walls of earth held in their matted roots ; living trunks, dead trunks, rotten trunks ; dry barkless trunks, trunks moist and green with moss ; bare trunks, and trunks with branches—prostrate, reclining, and horizontal, propped up at different angles ; timber of every size, in every stage of growth and decay, in every possible position, entangled in every possible combination.”

Such are the obstacles, such the difficulties—to say nothing of other inconveniences, such as swollen rivers, swamps, thick underbrush, a bad climate, and well-nigh intolerable mosquitoes—which the would-be explorer in the mountainous regions of British Columbia must be prepared to encounter. The admirable description given by Milton and Cheadle might, with more or less accuracy, be written of almost any part of the western slopes of the Canadian Rockies : and it must be remembered that, as has been mentioned before, travel is a good deal more difficult now than in earlier days. In Milton and Cheadle’s book, as in those of

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Hector, Palliser, and others of the earlier pioneers, one reads of comparatively frequent meetings with Indians, trappers, prospectors, and the like, and this meant that the trails were kept more or less open; that game was reasonably abundant; and that you had some chance of meeting with assistance if you ran short of food or found yourself otherwise in a tight place. Nowadays the traveller at any distance from his base is not likely to meet a soul, Indian or white man, and he must do his trail-cutting himself; while, as to finding game to stock his larder with, he cannot rely on having the luck which befell us in 1898 near Wilcox Pass. Dr. Hector was a man of rare energy and endurance, but not even he could have made the long daily marches we read of in his narrative, had his explorations taken place thirty or forty years later. In our case we had known pretty well what we were in for, though forewarned was not altogether forearmed with us, as our party, especially with Bassett absent, was not adequately equipped for so formidable a job.

There was one more bad day in store for us before matters began to improve. About a quarter of a mile above our camp in the swamp the river swept in a turbid flood past

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the foot of a high rocky bank covered with large trees, and quite impassable for horses. We therefore had once more to cut our way over the shoulder of a hill; and Fred and Collie spent a whole morning at the work. Spencer and Stutfield, being unprovided with axes, and doubtful of their ability to use them had they possessed such things, enjoyed their *otium cum dignitate* in camp. In the afternoon the two trail-cutters returned, and the whole outfit started. This hill was perhaps the worst thing we had to negotiate, not so much owing to the wood as to the steepness of the ground and the excessive rottenness of the soil, which seemed to be composed wholly of decayed tree-trunks and other vegetable matter. In such places one may be walking along some colossal trunk that looks fairly solid outside, but within is a mass of rottenness; and if you break through the outside crust you may suddenly find yourself up to your neck in soft pulp.

The descent from the shoulder of the hill was a most parlous operation, the steep slope being pitted with numerous bog-holes, in which stubborn roots interlaced and big hidden stones set the horses stumbling in all directions; and it was a wonder that none of them got

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their legs broken. Stutfield, while trying to assist the horses round one very bad spot, was overwhelmed by an avalanche of ponies slipping, sliding, tumbling down the hill — and was knocked over in a sitting posture among a bunch of devil's club which, under the circumstances, struck him as being even more than usually poisonous. After this there was a stampede all round, and the men were flying after the horses in all directions. Joe, carrying a heavy pack, was particularly fractious. Breaking away from the others, he careered madly through the forest, clearing several high logs in excellent style, until he found himself corralled in a cluster of fallen trees, from which Collie had to cut him out. Joe was not accustomed to being treated as a beast of burden, and doubtless took this opportunity of expressing his dissatisfaction. Stutfield had ridden him all the way down the Columbia trail, but discarded him when the timber became bad. He was too big and powerful a brute to be safe in such places as we had to pass in the Bush valley; and the idea of breaking a leg or arm in the wilderness, far from surgical aid, is not pleasant to contemplate. The rest of the outfit affected great surprise at this excess of caution

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on Stutfield's part, but he observed that nobody else seemed anxious to mount his fiery steed—the accident to poor Bassett was still fresh in our minds—so Joe carried a pack henceforth until we got back to the Columbia trail. His place as saddle-horse was taken by a strawberry-coloured animal, named Tom, with large holes in his ears, through which his rider enjoyed charming peeps of the river and surrounding landscape. These holes are often bored by the Indians in their horses' ears to serve as distinguishing marks.

Once at the bottom of the hill our worst troubles were over for the present, and for some distance the going was quite easy. In the mud along the river bank were numerous tracks of mink and musk-rat; and we saw one or two specimens of the curious kangaroo mouse, so called from his appearance and method of propelling himself forward by a succession of leaps. Two days' fording the river backwards and forwards, with a moderate amount of chopping, brought us to the head of the valley; and on the evening of the 16th we camped in a splendid site on the northern bank, half a mile below the junction of the forks, in the middle of an amphitheatre of high



AT THE HEAD OF BUSH VALLEY

THE BUSH VALLEY.

mountains, with the great peak towering right above us.

Assuming the maps to have correctly delineated the course of the Bush River, we still believed this peak to be Mount Bryce, and we therefore expected to find the Columbia ice-field not many miles away round the corner to the north. The Bush River flowed in a westerly direction from our camp: its two forks branch out nearly north and south, that is to say, almost at right angles to the main valley. The height of our camp, as given by Collie's mercurial barometer, was only 2800 feet above sea-level, which is a remarkably low elevation for the head of a valley running right up into the heart of the mountains, and our calculations were entirely upset thereby. We had hoped to find ourselves at about the same height as at the head-waters of the Saskatchewan or the Athabasca, that is to say, from 5000 to 7000 feet; which would have given us so much less timber-work, and made things generally easier. Moreover, when subsequently we looked up the gorge of the North Fork, to the foot of the great glaciers at its head, the valley seemed to rise but little—certainly not so much as 1000 feet. The valley of the Bush, therefore, is by

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far the lowest, so far as is at present known, of any of the large valleys that run up directly under the highest peaks.

On Friday the 17th it rained steadily all day, and we never stirred from our tents. On the morrow the weather improved in the afternoon; so, leaving the horses, we climbed about 2000 feet up the mountain spur that lay between us and the north fork of the Bush River. The mists lay low on the snow peaks, but we saw that about two miles up the north fork a valley came in from the east, and glaciers lay at its head some five or six miles distant. The north fork itself stretched away for miles, filled with dense pine woods, with occasional small shingle-flats in between; and under the dull grey sky it presented a dreary and inhospitable appearance. But Fred Stephens pointed to a grassy plateau on the hills across the stream, and talked of shooting cariboo, goat, and perhaps, if we were lucky, a bighorn. Black, on the other hand, who usually took a gloomy view of things, gave it as his opinion that this was a country forsaken both of gods and animals, much to be condemned, and no fit place for a white man. We could not see much owing to the mists,

THE BUSH VALLEY

but the appearance of the valleys distinctly puzzled us: somehow, the whole thing was quite different from what we had expected.

On the way down we sighted a couple of wild swans on a small lake about a mile from the tents; and Stutfield and Fred, taking both gun and rifle, stalked them through the bushes that grew along the margin of the pool. Fred had the rifle and fired at the male bird, but only succeeded in removing a couple of feathers from its back; and the pair sailed majestically away on their broad pinions, and we saw them no more. There were any number of bear-tracks in the mud along the banks, so Stutfield revisited the place soon after dawn next morning. A dense fog hung over everything, making the bushes sopping wet; he saw neither bear, nor swans, nor geese, and returned to camp for breakfast soaked to the skin with the dew. He paid several visits subsequently to this lake, but only succeeded in bagging one goose and a couple of duck.

The day was fine, so after breakfast Fred Stephens and Lang went on a voyage of discovery up the north fork valley. Collie and Stutfield, taking a couple of horses, forded the main river opposite the camp in order to in-

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investigate the valley of the southern branch. Tethering the horses on the further bank, we proceeded afoot through the most horrible logs and jungle imaginable. The river is much narrower and more impetuous in its higher reaches, and absolutely impassable for horses: just below the junction of the forks it rushes, boiling and foaming over big boulders, between high rocky banks. After an hour or two's toilsome scrambling we reached a splendid gorge, some hundreds of feet deep, which the south fork has cleft for itself through the hills a short distance above the junction. Here we found ourselves in a veritable woodland fruit-garden, the hill-sides being covered with wild raspberries and blaeberreries as big as small grapes, and of most exquisite flavour. The raspberries, on the other hand, though large, were distinctly unpalatable and hardly worth eating.

A rocky knoll in the wood gave us an uninterrupted view up the valley of the north fork, and at its head we saw a high and very beautiful pyramid of snow rising in isolated grandeur out of an immense ice-field. There was no mistaking it. Beyond all question it was Mount Columbia, the chief goal of our expedition; and, to our dismay, it was twenty

THE BUSH VALLEY

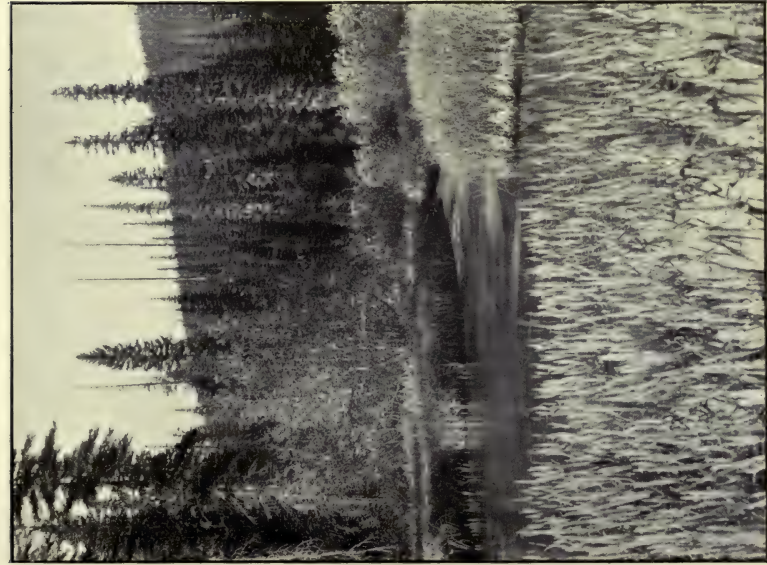
or twenty-five miles off, when it ought—if the Bush River had been correctly located, as the Americans say, on the maps—to have been only eight or ten. There was evidently something very wrong somewhere; and we returned, much puzzled and somewhat downcast in our minds, through those hateful woods to where we had tethered the horses, and thence to the tents.

Meanwhile Fred and Lang had been four or five miles up the north fork, passing a small shingle-flat and the mouth of the valley that came in from the east. They reported that the fallen timber was dreadful, and that trail-cutting would be necessary every step of the way; moreover, that along the west bank gullies and steep hill-sides, with occasionally small precipices, would, so far as they could judge, entirely prevent us getting the horses along, unless we could cross the stream to the eastern side. Fred also showed us his arm, which was quite swollen with the bites of black flies—a new form of insect plague which, together with clouds of midges, now began to form quite an agreeable variation to the incessant attacks of the mosquitoes. Curiously enough, while the latter drove us Europeans nearly crazy, we suffered very little from the

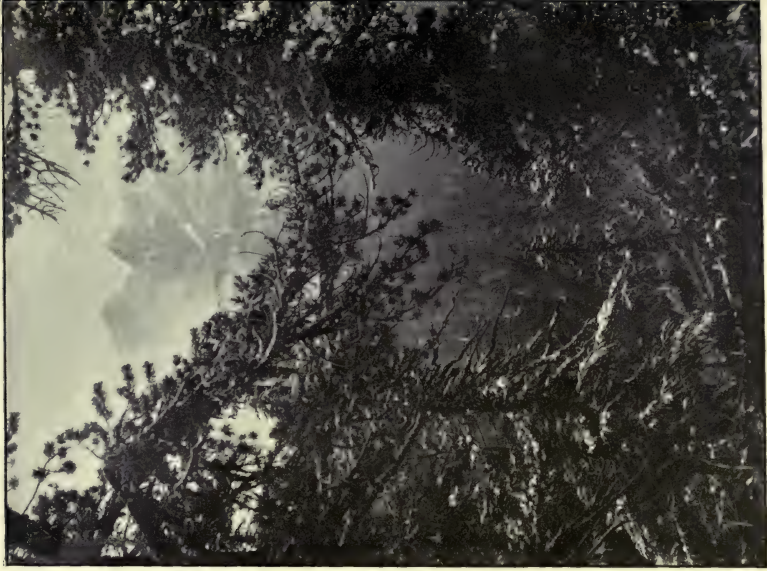
CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

bites of the black flies, which, on the other hand, caused our men much more distress than the mosquitoes. Another fact worth mentioning, perhaps, is that we never saw any "bulldogs" in the Bush valley. Probably the mosquitoes and other insect pests were too numerous for them all to live together.

By this time we were beginning to get anxious, for we had been out twenty-two days without getting anywhere near the base of our mountains, and time and provisions were running out. Something had to be done, and that quickly. Next day, therefore, Collie, Stutfield, and Spencer decided to climb to the top of the peak that lay in the angle between the north fork and the main valley of the Bush. Stutfield took the gun as far as the sloo where we had seen the wild swans; and, with his two companions acting as beaters, secured a Canada goose, a splendid bird weighing over 10 lb., whose flesh proved an acceptable change from the eternal bacon and tinned meat. From the lake there was a most tiring climb of about 5000 feet, every inch of the way having to be fought through the woods. An hour below the summit Stutfield, who had not been feeling well all day, felt his legs giving



A MUSKEG IN THE BUSH VALLEY



THE HOME OF THE WILD GOAT

THE BUSH VALLEY

out; so he gave up the climb and returned to camp. Collie and Spencer, however, went on their way and had a glorious view, the day being beautifully fine and the mountains of the main chain entirely free from cloud. As it turned out, this was a piece of great good fortune, for we never had another really fine day throughout the trip. During the whole of the remaining fortnight that we spent in the mountains the clouds never quite lifted from the high peaks; and, had the view that was got that afternoon been missed, much knowledge of the geography of the district would never have been acquired.

Just as Collie and Spencer arrived within a hundred yards of the summit and were walking round a corner on the ridge, they came across an old Rocky Mountain he-goat. He looked at them awhile and then went on feeding, so Collie photographed him. He seemed tame enough, never probably having seen a human being before. All the same, when Stutfield pursued him with a rifle a day or two afterwards he showed himself—for a Rocky Mountain goat, which is not the most intelligent of wild animals—fairly wide-awake.

Once on the summit, Collie immediately

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recognised why the head of the valley had seemed so different from what he had expected. Ten miles or more to the northward, up the north fork, was Mount Bryce; and beyond it was Mount Columbia and the great ice-field, which we had explored on our last trip, sending its glaciers low down into the valley, their snouts in places being little over 4000 feet above sea-level; while the heads of the Twins showed far away at the head-waters of the Athabasca. Almost due east was Mount Lyell, or a peak which he then imagined to be Lyell—it was in reality an adjoining summit of the range, which has since been christened Mount Alexandra. It was quite evident, therefore, that we were ten or twelve miles south of where we imagined ourselves to be; and that the maps had placed the head of the Bush River that much too far to the south. The mountain we had been calling Bryce, at the head of the Bush valley, was another peak altogether, and one that Collie had marked as “high peak” on his 1899 map. To the left of this peak, in the distance, lay Mount Forbes; whilst far away at the head of the south fork, rising from a great snow-field and glaciers, were the Freshfield group. This explained why the Waitabit and the Bluewater

THE BUSH VALLEY

creeks contained no glacier water ; for the Bush River, and the Bush River alone, drained the whole area, from Mount Freshfield on the south, the back of Mount Forbes, and the western side of the whole Lyell ice-field, to the north of the Columbia ice-field, which, splitting into several large glaciers, poured down in magnificent cascades of ice to the green pine-woods that filled the valley below. Another point of considerable interest, which has been alluded to already, was the very low altitude of the valleys.

But with this discovery of our exact locality there was borne in upon him the extremely unpleasant fact that the Columbia ice-field, which was our principal goal, lay about fifteen miles up a valley, every yard of which would have to be cut with the axe ; and probably it would take us at least a fortnight to reach its head. With this reflection he and Spencer returned to our camp in the valley, sad and disheartened, for our plans would have to be changed, and, as far as we were concerned, the highest snow-peak in this part of the Rockies, Mount Columbia, would not be climbed this year.

CHAPTER XI

OUR CAMP ON GOAT PEAK

A COUNCIL of war was held that evening to decide on our next move. We finally determined to *cache* part of the baggage and provisions, so as to travel as light as possible, and push on next morning as far as possible up the valley of the north fork. Fred Stephens and Lang had been cutting trail all day to the mouth of the valley ; and along this trail we started as soon as the process of packing the horses and *caching* the baggage was completed. Half-an-hour from the start, the timber getting very bad, we were forced down to the river bank, and Fred essayed to ford the stream ; but it was too deep and rapid, and the attempt had to be abandoned before he was half-way across. Ahead the ground sloped precipitously down to the water's edge ; the timber looked as though a forest of scaffolding poles had fallen one across the other, and further progress along the banks of the stream would, at the best, be at the rate of about a mile a day. Moreover, we were all

OUR CAMP ON GOAT PEAK

heartily sick of the work, so Fred conceived a somewhat bold idea. Turning the horses' heads straight up the hill, by dint of hard work and skilful guidance, he conducted the whole party, in torrents of rain, up more than 4000 feet of heavily-wooded mountain-side to the foot of the peak which Collie and Spencer had ascended the day before. His intention was to find a passage above timber-level, and along the benches of rock that lined the face of the mountain, but these proved to be far too formidable to be negotiated with horses.

We camped in a pleasant spot at tree-line, about 7300 feet above the sea, with only one drawback—there was no water; and Alec had to fetch snow in buckets for every meal from a place some hundreds of yards off, a labour he strongly objected to. While the tents were being pitched, Stutfield wandered off through the rain in search of Collie's old he-goat, as our larder was by this time getting very low. He saw the goat, but in an open place where a stalk was impossible; and the old billy did not show himself so tame or accommodating as on the previous day, so Stutfield had to return without any meat, drenched to the skin, to a most uncomfortable dinner in our leaky little tent.

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Next morning the weather improved, and Collie and Spencer again ascended to the top of their peak (now named Goat Peak), photographed, surveyed, and mapped as much of the country as possible. Fred took the gun and went after blue grouse and fool-hen, while Stutfield returned to the chase of Collie's venerable friend, the ancient billy. Most of the high peaks kept themselves persistently veiled; but we had some gorgeous Elijah Walton-like views, through the parting mists, of Mount Columbia, which, in spite of its greater height, appears to have less attraction for clouds than its neighbours. From this point of view it is a sharp pyramid, with most graceful contours,—altogether different from the flat-topped and somewhat shapeless mass it appears from the other side. Nearer, the triple-peaked Mount Bryce towered majestically over the sombre canyon; while westwards the Selkirks, dominated by the grand pyramidal peak that we used to see from the banks of the Bush, were distinctly visible. The prospect was something like that from the Brévent, above Chamonix, but it was far more extensive; and the mountains rising steeply 9000 or 10,000 feet out of the low-lying valleys, formed a much more impressive



BUSH PEAK FROM GOAT PEAK



MOUNT BRYCE FROM GOAT PEAK

OUR CAMP ON GOAT PEAK

panorama than anything we had seen from the Saskatchewan or Athabasca.

The old billy-goat was not on view this morning, so Stutfield returned to lunch at the tents, where he found that the men had sighted three goats, two old ones and a kid, browsing on a hill across a deep valley not far to the west of the camp. Descending into the valley he climbed up the other side, and, screened by a belt of low trees, crept within shot of the unsuspecting trio. They had not shifted their position, but were browsing tranquilly on some small patches of grass above a long and very steep shale-slope terminating in a high precipice. The first shot was a bad miss, but the second bowled over the biggest of the three. A couple of bullets, sent after the kid as it scampered off, only made the dust fly under its belly; and Stutfield was not altogether sorry that his indifferent shooting had saved him from the guilt of infanticide. On the other hand, what a lovely stew the little fellow would have made! The dead goat lay for a few moments supported by the stem of a dwarf fir-tree; but presently the carcass slipped and rolled head over heels down the shale-slope to the brink

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

of some rocks about 1200 feet in depth. A few yards more and it would have gone over the abyss, and we should have seen it no more.

With some difficulty Stutfield got down to it, but moving the carcase alone—it weighed well over 150 lbs.—was out of the question, as the slope was very steep and slippery, with a thin layer of greasy mud resting on smooth rocks; and it was all he could do to keep his feet, even when unencumbered. However, an hour later Black and Alec, having heard the shots, came to the rescue with a rope; and with infinite trouble, and not without risk, they all three managed to haul the beast up to a safer position where they could gralloch him. The rescue of that goat from his perilous position afforded Stutfield much the most exciting climbing experience of the whole trip. It was impossible to get the carcase home that day, but there was much jubilation in camp at the prospect of fresh meat, and the men fared sumptuously off goat's liver in the evening.

That night the weather, which had been misbehaving itself all through the trip, went hopelessly to the bad. It rained and sleeted all next day, and we could not stir from camp; but the following afternoon, Friday the 24th,

OUR CAMP ON GOAT PEAK

a party of us sallied forth, taking a horse part of the way, and after much trouble brought in the goat, returning, as usual, soaked to the skin. We had a haunch for supper, and it wasn't at all bad. The meat is, of course, by no means equal to that of the bighorn; but, if kept awhile, it is not unpalatable, and there is singularly little goaty flavour about it.

In the night the wind went round to the north, and the driven snow and sleet forced its way into our wretched little tent, so that Spencer and Stutfield woke up to find their pillows sprinkled with it; while the ground outside was covered to a depth of several inches. Collie, a day or two previously, had retired into the privacy of his little Mummery tent, which he found much warmer and more snug than the other. This tent, invented by the late Mr. Mummery, who perished on Mount Nanga Parbat, in the Himalayas, is made of silk, and weighs only three and a half pounds. It is invaluable for bivouacs on the mountains, or in places where impedimenta can only be packed on men's backs, as a couple of ice-axes are all that is necessary for poles, while the side ropes can be attached to stones.

Our exposed camp was not exactly a joyous

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

habitation now; and the men—Fred always excepted—grumbled more than ever, while our prospects of doing any serious mountaineering grew fainter and fainter. The snow lay pretty thick on the ground, and showed little signs of melting. Occasional rifts through the rolling masses of vapour, with faint gleams of sunshine, gave us uninviting glimpses now and then of the Bush valley far below, and the muddy torrent tearing along between the shingle-flats and muskegs. Overhead everything was in dense mist, and a blizzard from the north-east blew continuously. Taken altogether, it was quite a nice place for a summer holiday!

All the same, we would not paint too gloomy a picture of our week's sojourn in the high camp, for really it was not half so bad as it may seem to the reader. It was very wet and cold, no doubt; but hardships such as these are generally worse in the recital than the actual experience. On the other hand, only those who have endured their attacks can realise the misery caused by mosquitoes when they are really bad: rain, hail, snow, and slush on the mountain side were bliss itself compared with what we sometimes suffered in the valley below. Stutfield, at any rate, had



SPENCER RANGE FROM CAMP ON GOAT PEAK

OUR CAMP ON GOAT PEAK

little cause to complain; for he had many delightful expeditions over the craggy hills after goat, with occasional glimpses of the most wonderful scenery, when the mists parted and one or another of the great peaks coyly unveiled itself to view.

There was one evening in particular — one brief “crowded hour of glorious life” — when we had a vision of strange sunset splendours, which were enough in themselves to compensate for many a wet, weary day of fog and sleet. The whole landscape was swathed in a white mantle of freshly-fallen snow; the clouds suddenly dispersed, only a light caftan of pink mist resting on the shoulders of Columbia; and the sun went down, not in the conventional blaze of green and gold and orange, but with a soft saffron effulgence, more suggestive of dawn than sunset, that shed á strange unearthly radiance over peak and glacier and snow-field. The air was marvellously still; the pines stood motionless under their heavy burden of snow; even the avalanches ceased to thunder; and a most impressive hush pervaded the whole forest and mountain world. Stutfield had been out all the afternoon on a long, but ineffectual, scramble after goat along the ridge, and was

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

within two or three hundred yards of camp. He had taken the cartridges out of his rifle to climb a band of steep rocks, and was strolling towards the tents, his mind absorbed in the weird witchery of the scene, when suddenly there bounded out of the bushes, quite close to him, the father of all the goats—Collie's grand old billy, his long white fringe brushing the branches as he lumbered heavily out of view, for all the world more like a big white bear than a goat. At that moment the splendours of the sky and the mountains seemed to fade away into nothingness; for on occasions like these the instincts of the artist and sportsman, which ought to go together, seem somewhat to clash. Still, the loss of an old billy-goat, however large and shaggy, could hardly cause enduring annoyance, while the glories of that marvellous sunset can never be wholly erased from our minds.

Unwilling to leave the mountains without attempting one good climb, we three, with Fred, started early on Sunday the 26th to ascend a bold rock peak nearly 11,000 feet high to the west of the camp. The morning was fairly fine, and a few feeble attempts on the part of the sun to assert itself gave us hopes

OUR CAMP ON GOAT PEAK

of better weather. Following the ridge beyond Goat Peak for a considerable distance, we reached a good-sized glacier, up which we walked for more than an hour. The stratification of some of the surrounding mountains was most extraordinary, the rocks being twisted and contorted into S-shaped figures and curious crumpled forms, while sometimes the adjoining strata would be quite perpendicular. This contortion seemed general throughout the district, and it was far more pronounced than anything we saw on the eastern side of the range. Towards noon the clouds rolled up as relentlessly as ever; and, after wandering about aimlessly in the fog for some time, we gave up the climb and returned to camp.

The weather showed no signs of improvement; provisions were getting low; the men were the reverse of happy, and anxious to be getting home; so next day we reluctantly retraced our steps to the old camping-place in the Bush valley. As the outfit started, a herd of goats was sighted on a hill a long way off, but a deep canyon intervened, and, if we had shot one, we could not have brought it to the tents. On the way down we came across two fine coveys of blue grouse: the gun was unpacked, and we bagged three

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

brace. Needless to say, on this occasion we felt no fear of our provisions at the *cache* having been tampered with in our absence.

Whilst we were at the high camp Collie had noticed that on the south side of the Bush valley, at the head of a small creek, an obvious pass seemed to lead through the mountains straight to the head of the Bluewater creek, and so to Donald; and he had hopes that we might perhaps find a short cut home by this route, and, at the same time, that we might have an opportunity of investigating the mountains which lay between the Blaeberry creek and the Bush valley. On the 28th we started, therefore, down the valley with the intention of making our way up this creek and over the pass, but we were unable even to begin the ascent of the glen with the horses: the usual fallen timber lay piled thicker than ever; and a canyon with precipitous sides would have forced us far up on to the steep face of the hill, where the horses could hardly have got along. We therefore decided to return by our former route along the Bush valley; and, as always happened on our return journeys, we found travelling comparatively easy, the trail being cut and the summer floods having subsided.



COLLIE SURVEYING; FRED STEPHENS, AND SPENCER



LYELL RANGE AND ALEXANDRA PEAK

A TIRING CLIMB

On August 29th we started early to climb a peak about four miles to the south of the river, in order to find out how the valleys ran, and how the mountains were situated, in that part of the country west of the Freshfield range and south of the Bush valley. Stutfield and Spencer were by no means anxious to undergo the torment of another long scramble through those detestable woods, but Collie wished very much to correct and add certain details, and, as far as might be, to put the finishing touches to his plane-table survey. In his interests, therefore, and in those of geographical science in general, we all went together, accompanied by Fred. As the expedition was about the most tiring and exasperating one we have ever taken up a mountain, let us hope that geographical science will be proportionately grateful. The brushwood and fallen trees, mostly small, were the worst we ever encountered. Pushed back by obstinate bushes, stopped by logs of all sizes, caught in the criss-cross and tangle of the smaller tree-trunks with interlacing spiky branches, bitten by every sort of insect pest, and half stifled by the hot moisture-laden air, we dragged ourselves up foot by foot. Though all in excellent training, we made less than

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1000 feet in two hours and a half; and when at length we emerged from the stuffy air of the forest into the open, we felt as though we had wings and finished the remaining 2000 feet, or so, of the climb with ease. The high peaks of the main chain were, as usual, obscured, or else loomed dimly, bleared spectral shapes, through the watery vapour; but fortunately there were no big mountains to the south-east, south, or west, so Collie was able to complete his plane-table survey of that district, and our labours had not been altogether in vain. We returned by a somewhat different route, hoping to find it easier, but eventually found ourselves cut off from the camp by a large muskeg, the dangers of which, however, we disregarded, and, wading straight through it, got back to dinner.

From the Columbia trail, which we reached in a few days without difficulty, we branched off to visit some lakes which form the source of the Blackwater creek. The highest of these lakes is situated on what may be termed a low pass, about 800 feet above Donald, and from this point the trail descends towards the Bush River in one direction, and to Donald in the other.

FISH LAKE

One of the lakes, named Fish Lake, is full of small rainbow trout, and we camped on its banks for two nights. Fred having constructed for us an impromptu raft, we had a day's fishing and caught a great many trout: then on again next morning to Donald and civilisation in a downpour of rain. For some rather occult reason it was considered desirable that Tom Wilson should have as early intimation as possible of the outfit's arrival; so Stutfield and Spencer were deputed to mount the swiftest nags, to wit, Joe and a black mare yclept Dinah, and ride ahead into Donald. They had a most exhilarating gallop through the forest, soaked with the heavy rain and the dripping underbrush; and reached Donald in under three hours. Joe, with his nose set homewards, went admirably, though he came down badly in a boghole, causing Stutfield to embrace his mother earth on the happily soft floor of the forest. The outfit arrived an hour or two later.

Our haste was quite unnecessary, as "Number 1" was a trifle of half a day, or thereabouts, behind time. There had been a landslip on the line; or, as a negro porter more aptly phrased it on a similar occasion, "the scenery had come

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down." We spent a most uncomfortable night in our wet things at the station, in company with a very unsteady person who had been carousing not wisely, but too well, with his friends; until at last the train came in and landed us at Glacier House, and under Mrs. Young's care, in the early morning.

CHAPTER XII

SUNDRY MOUNTAIN ASCENTS

AT Glacier the party broke up, but before returning home we managed to do some climbing in the neighbourhood of the railway, which compensated us in some measure for our bad luck with the mountains in the Bush valley. Spencer, remaining at Glacier for a few days, made the first ascent—in company with Professor Arthur Michael and two Swiss guides, E. Feuz and C. Michel—of Peak Swanzy, one of the few remaining virgin summits of the Selkirks within reach of the hotel. The following is Spencer's description of the climb: "Starting at 3·45 A.M., we followed the trail leading past Lake Marion to Mount Abbott. Thence we walked along the easy level ridge that connects Mount Abbott with a peak known as The Rampart. From this arête we dropped by easy slopes on its eastern side to the edge of a considerable glacier which fills the head of the Lilly valley.

"The scenery at this point was of remark-

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

able grandeur. Opposite to us Mount Bonney presented a huge line of ice-capped precipices rising from a broad crevassed glacier, to the left of which, at the head of the Lilly glacier, soared a graceful snow-clad cone, Peak Swanzy, the goal of our expedition. A rocky rib running up from the other side of the glacier offered a possible and rather tempting route; but Feuz suggested that we should probably find a better way from the *col* at the head of the Lilly Glacier. His surmise proved correct; for on arriving at the *col*, we saw that we could reach the summit by a rather steep, but easy, snow-slope. As the rocks in front of us looked very difficult, we traversed to the south-east side, and, after a charming scramble up rocks of no great difficulty, stepped on to the top a few minutes after noon. The summit, which is a little over 10,000 feet in height, consists of a rock-cap with a short snow ridge running from it in a south-westerly direction. It commands a view of extraordinary splendour. In the far distance beyond the Hermit Range the great chain of the Rockies showed with remarkable clearness against the horizon. I easily identified Freshfield, Forbes, Lyell, Bryce, and Columbia; and in my thoughts I retraced



PEAK SWANZY

ASCENT OF PEAK SWANZY

my steps on our journey up the Bush valley, with all its new and interesting experiences. In our immediate vicinity the grand precipices of the loftier Mount Bonney shut out the view towards the west; while beyond the great snow-fields of the Illecillewaet Glacier, but partially obscured by heavy cloud-banks, lay a tangled maze of peaks and glaciers, amongst which I was able to single out the comparatively well-known summits, Mounts Dawson, Fox, and Donkin. To the east, and much nearer, rose the noble form of Mount Sir Donald.

“As Feuz did not quite like the look of the snow-slope by which we had ascended, we made our descent to the *col* by a rib of steep rocky slabs on the right, a very pleasant variation in the climb. From the *col* we crossed through a gap in the ridge on the other side to the Asulkan valley, finally reaching Glacier House at a quarter past six, after one of the most delightful days of my Alpine experience.”

Meanwhile Collie had returned to Banff, where, having a day or two to spare, he began to feel a longing once more for the smell of the camp-fires and the free, disreputable life of the woods. Accordingly, one morning down at Tom Wilson's house, arrangements were made

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for a start the same afternoon, with Fred Stephens, Wilson's eldest boy, and a small outfit, for the valley that lies under Mount Edith—a somewhat remarkable peak standing a short way up a creek that drains from the north side of the Bow valley a few miles west of Banff. It is visible from the railway, and resembles, on a small scale, the Little Dru as seen through the trees before approaching the Montanvert.

Fred Stephens had always protested that climbing peaks, for the mere sake of climbing them, was foolishness—only, if sheep or goats could be shot by so doing, there might be some use in taking the trouble to get to the top of a mountain. From the look of Mount Edith Collie judged that some very good rock climbing would be required to ascend it; and he looked forward to experiencing all the pleasures of the initiated, when he should have Fred dangling on the end of an Alpine rope.

The weather was perfect; and, following the valley lying on the eastern side of Mount Edith, a good camping-place was soon found. With due solemnity the bacon was cooked for the last time under the silent pines, for the party purposed returning to Banff the following evening; and to wash the supper down Collie had brought

ASCENT OF MOUNT EDITH

with him a bottle of Pommery. Fred, however, was not enthusiastic, or even polite, to the champagne, remarking that he had tasted far better cider in his native and beloved Montana.

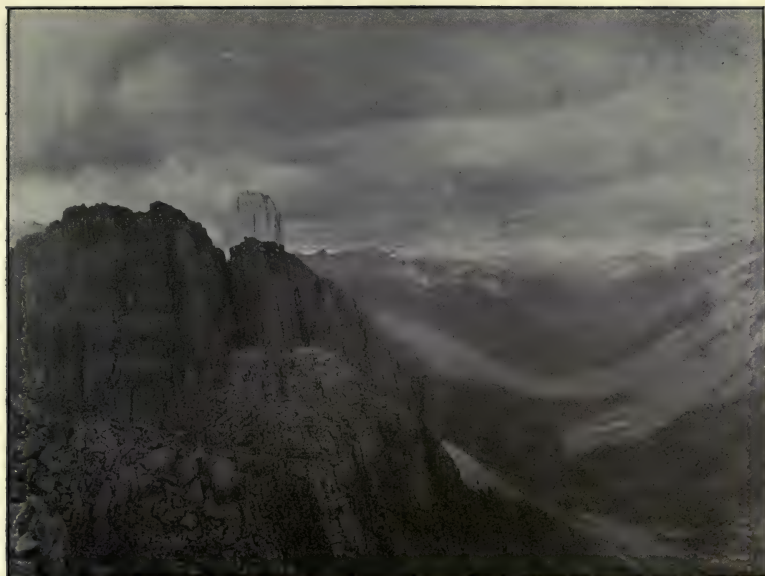
After sundown the party rolled themselves up in their blankets; and soon the full moon slowly moved up the sky, sending a flood of light through the branches of the perfectly still pines, and the black shadows moved lazily across the grass below. On such a night who would change the free untainted air of the mountains for that of a stuffy room? Occasionally a faint breeze would stir the upper branches of the trees, or send a whiff of the still smouldering camp-fire across one's nostrils—it seemed almost sacrilege even to think of going to sleep, and so miss any of the wonderful pictures in black and white. Presently, however, the moon set behind a neighbouring mountain ridge, and all was merged in darkness, only a few glittering stars shining coldly in the heavens.

Making an early start next morning, Collie and Fred followed the valley almost up to a pass that leads over into Forty Mile Creek; then, turning to the left, a straight line was struck for the precipitous limestone wall of Mount Edith. A wide open gully promised

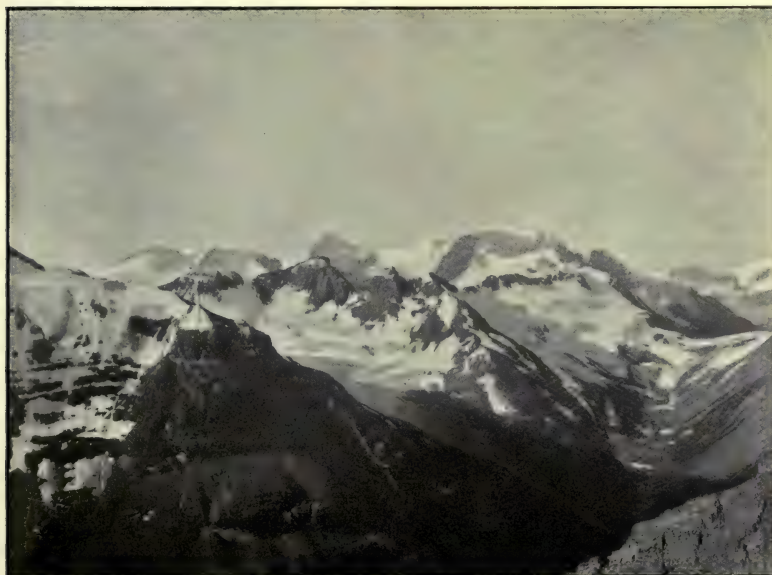
CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

success,—the one that leads up to the *col* connecting Mount Edith with the next peak to the north. Fortunately there was no snow lying in the upper part of this gully; otherwise it would have been foolhardy to attempt to ascend it. The climbing was steep and somewhat rotten, but not very difficult; and Fred declared that a rope was hardly necessary. On reaching the *col* Mount Edith was to the south, and it seemed impossible to climb direct to the summit; so, crossing the *col* to the western side, a series of traverses and climbs through holes in the ridge were made: we next crossed some very sloping slabs overhanging dizzy precipices; then climbed up excessively rotten gullies, first one way then another, but always getting higher, till we emerged quite unexpectedly on to the top.

Of course we built a cairn, after which Fred amused himself by hurling big stones down the cliffs—the only use he saw in such a mountain top was to pitch it over into the valley below. It was certainly an ideal place for such a performance, as the summit was composed of limestone strata set straight on end, its eastern face consisting of almost flawless slabs 1000 or 1500 feet high, set at an angle somewhere between 85° and 90°. Rock after rock Fred brought to



MOUNT EDITH



THE BUSH PASS (*see p. 284*)

ASCENT OF MOUNT EDITH

the edge, and, tilting them over, watched them half fall, half slide, down the smooth slabs till they burst in fragments perhaps 2000 feet below.

To the north of Mount Edith is a still higher peak, that cannot be seen from below the Bow valley easily ; it is most remarkable in form, and apparently quite inaccessible. We descended by a much easier route down the western side; then, skirting across some scree, we crossed the ridge to the south. Below us could be seen the smoke of the camp-fire ; and Fred, disregarding Collie's warning that he would be cut off below, set off down a tempting-looking gully. The warning proved true, and, to make matters worse, the only possible way of escape was to traverse back again with great difficulty right under the peak on the eastern side till we nearly joined our morning's route. Thus we got down through the forest to the camp, and night saw us again in Banff.

On September the 11th, a few days later, Stutfield found himself once more at Glacier on his way home from Vancouver. Among the passengers on "Number 2" was an American lady, who had ideas concerning the mountains. The crevasses of the Great Glacier, she maintained, were all artificial—they didn't

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

even *look* natural, she said ; and it was no good our trying to humbug her into believing that they were. It appears that not a few people from the States think that the glacier was put there by the Canadian Pacific Railway as an ornament—like the rock walk or the fountains in the middle of the lawn : and one citizen of the Great Republic asked the manageress of the hotel if it was there when she arrived !

The season was waning, but the weather was fine and the opportunity too good to lose ; so Stutfield engaged two of the Swiss guides stationed at the hotel by the Canadian Pacific Railway, Jacob Muller and Michel of Grindelwald, and arranged to go up Mount Sir Donald next day. Before describing the climb, a few words on previous ascents and attempts upon this interesting mountain may not be out of place. Long deemed inaccessible by people on the spot, for some years it defied all efforts to scale its precipices, which from below look distinctly formidable—much more so than they are in reality. Among its earlier assailants were such well-known mountaineers as Mr. Harold Topham and the Rev. William Green, of whom the latter attempted the ascent by the Illecillewaet *névé*, but only succeeded in climbing the peak

ASCENT OF MOUNT SIR DONALD

that now bears his name. The first actual ascent was made in 1890 by Messrs. Huber, Sulzer, and Cooper, by a difficult and dangerous route up a couloir on the north-west face. The mountain then remained unclimbed for nine years, until in 1899 M. Leprince-Ringuet followed Mr. Green's route with success, descending from the *col* between Green Peak and Sir Donald, and joining the present route up the rocks. On the summit he found the cards left by his predecessors, Huber and Sulzer, thus disposing of the doubts which unbelieving persons had cast upon their ascent. In 1900 five parties reached the summit.

The walk, as we sallied forth at 3:15 A.M., along the broad trail leading to the Illecillewaet ice-fall, was delightful—no logs or bushes to fight with—and a full moon shed a strangely eerie radiance upon the great trees, the sheen and glimmer of its beams making a lantern quite unnecessary. The trail soon ended, but there was a nice little path through the bushes beyond; and a well-constructed moraine, very superior to the ordinary Swiss variety, leads to a glacier that mounts to the foot of the rocks. Dawn came slowly up over the shoulder of the peak, and Sir Donald stood forth, grandly sil-

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

houetted against the saffron sky. At the foot of the final peak the most serious obstacle has to be passed—the *schrund* that stopped some of the first people to attempt the ascent of the mountain. It did not give us much trouble, but in some seasons the crossing of it might be a very difficult matter.

Just above the *schrund* is a curious tunnel through the snow, about ten or fifteen yards long; and immediately beyond it a very steep little snow-slope takes you on to the rocks. These are nowhere very difficult according to modern climbing standards, but always steep and interesting. There was a good deal of fresh snow on the mountain when we climbed it: otherwise it might have been necessary to keep a sharp look-out for falling stones. After zig-zagging up the face of the rocks on to the arête, we reached the summit at 9 A.M., when the guides much amused their "Herr" by at once claiming a record time for the ascent; which shows that modern Alpine notions have already invaded America's new mountain playground! The height of Sir Donald is 10,645 feet, about 6600 feet above Glacier, but the actual summit is not visible from the hotel.

The view from the top suffers from the

MOUNT SIR DONALD

lack of any effective foreground, as you are standing on much the most striking object in the panorama. It is, of course, enormously extensive. The spectator seems to be in the centre of a perfect universe of mountains, a chaotic far-stretching wilderness of peak, snow-field, and valley; which in imagination he sees extending hundreds of miles to the Pacific, nearly a thousand miles northwards to Alaska, and heaven knows how many thousands to the south. Bush valley with its mountains, and the grand Selkirk peak we had so often seen therefrom, were quite clear; but a long thin line of cloud cut off the summits of Mount Forbes, Bryce, and other giants of the central chain, only the silvery spire of Columbia piercing the vapour, and proudly overtopping its neighbours.

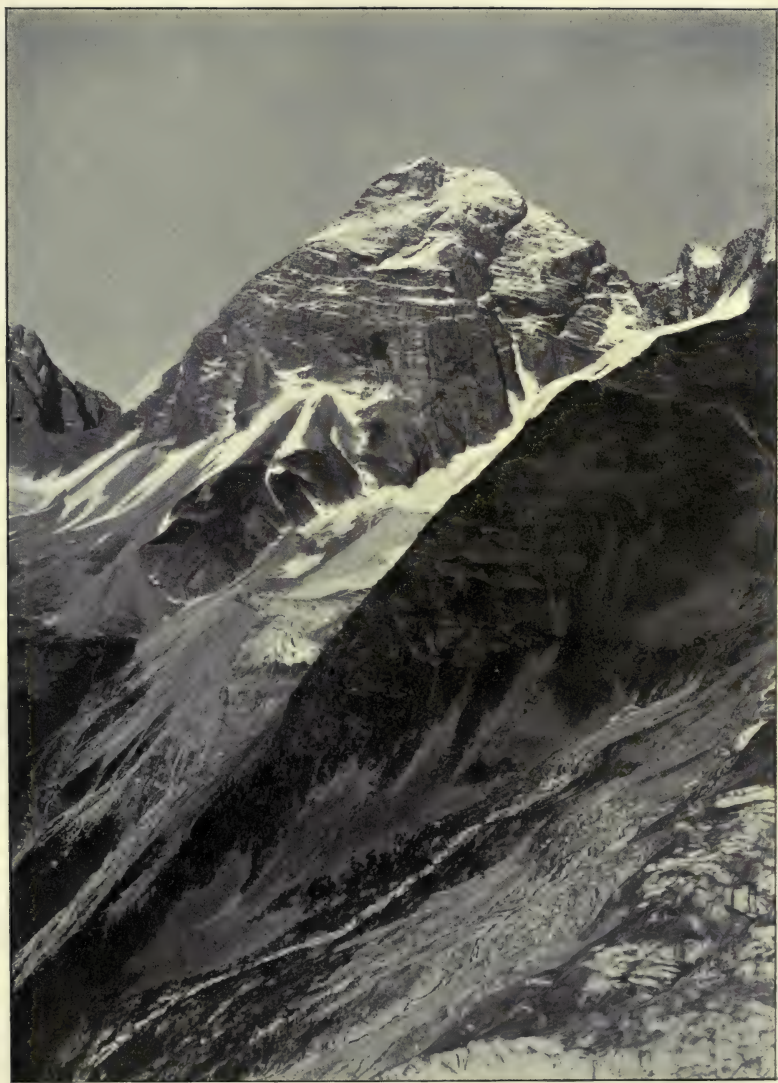
Some care was necessary in negotiating the now rapidly melting snow at the beginning of the descent; but, this passed, the party made its way down without difficulty, reaching Glacier at two o'clock. At the hotel Stutfield sat down to an excellent lunch, feeling very fit and hungry; and, as he walked down the line to the "loops" in the afternoon, he reflected that rock and snow climbing was, after all, a

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

much easier and pleasanter occupation than forcing your way through untrodden British Columbian forests. Indeed, beside some of our expeditions in the woods the day's work seemed a light one: and it was only after this climb that he realised, by comparison, how severe had been our labours battling with logs, devil's-club creepers, jungles, and mosquitoes, on the timber-choked slopes of the mountains around the Bush River.

Our trip was now ended: of course we were not entirely satisfied—one seldom is in this wicked world—and wished we could have done more. Even supposing, however, that things had gone better with us at the outset, the weather was too persistently bad at the head of the Bush valley for us to have been able to do any serious mountaineering: and, as it was, we had found out nearly all we wanted to know about the geography of the region lying to the west of the main range.

To recapitulate: practically the whole district lying between the Wood river and the Blaeberry creek is drained by the Bush River; the Waitabit and Bluewater creeks merely take the water from the foot-hills. A large glacier exists at the back of the Freshfield



MOUNT SIR DONALD

GEOGRAPHICAL RESULTS

group: this is the source of the south fork of the Bush, whilst the meltings from the Columbia glacier and some of the ice-fields lying at the base of the Lyell group flow into the north fork. Another system of glaciers, lying to the west of Mount Bryce, feed two tributaries of the Bush River that flow southward and parallel with the north fork. The magnificent snow-capped peak standing almost over the junction of the south and north forks is not Mount Bryce, as we had supposed, but is a new and unnamed mountain. As it is in full view of the traveller all the way up the Bush valley, it ought, perhaps, to be called Bush Peak. The great depth of the Bush valley is also of interest; and the fact that, to start with, both from Mount Freshfield and Mount Columbia, the valleys lie parallel with the main chain shows that the same forces that fashioned the valleys on the eastern side also made those on the west. This pressure, in many places at the head-waters of the Bush, had contorted the rock into the most fantastic bends and loops, as we have previously mentioned on page 209. The general lie of the country was a series of more or less tilted strata dipping to the south-west and consequently producing gentle slopes in

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

that direction and precipitous faces towards the north-east, the ranges consisting of carboniferous and Devonian limestones.

Professor Bonney, F.R.S., kindly examined one or two specimens of rock that we brought home. In the bed of the Bush River there was a considerable amount of limestone with fossil corals in it. Professor Bonney describes it as follows: "It appears to belong to the genus *Lithostrotion*, and one at least is very like the Martini of Britain. This belongs to the carboniferous limestone age." Of another limestone he says: "Contains numerous fragments of organisms, but ill preserved; some, perhaps *foraminiferæ*, are like an ostreod, others probably mollusca." A third limestone: "The ground mass appears to retain traces of organisms and shows signs of pressure. The round spots are puzzling; the mode of occurrence suggests oolitic grains, but they have a coarse granular structure—perhaps recrystallisation has taken place."

There appears to be only one pass below timber-line connecting the Bush valley with the east side of the range. This is the pass which Collie and Woolley had seen from the summit of Athabasca Peak. It was explored

THOMPSON PASS

by Mr. Charles Thompson, while we were in the Bush valley, by way of the west branch of the North Fork of the Saskatchewan. As he is the first person who has been on its summit, Collie named it Thompson Pass: it is 6800 feet above sea-level, and below timber-line.

The question of passes and sources of rivers amongst the Canadian Rockies is a most interesting one. Of the little tarn, called the Committee's Punch-bowl, which drains both ways from the Athabasca Pass, full mention has been made already. The same double out-flow occurs in another lake just south-east of the Athabasca Pass—Fortress Lake, which was discovered by Professor Coleman. He says: "The lake has a curious subterranean outlet in a tributary of the Chaba River, but sends most of its waters into the Wood River."

Probably, if there were a lake on the Howse Pass a similar state of affairs would be found, for the summit is quite flat, with, as Dr. Hector says, "a few swampy streams flowing east, a little further on a small creek issuing from a number of springs flowing westwards." Again, the same phenomenon occurs at the head-

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

waters of the Saskatchewan and the Athabasca.¹

While we were travelling west by the railway from Donald to Glacier, through the canyon of the Columbia between Donald and Beaver Mouth, it occurred to Collie that possibly centuries ago there may have been a large lake filling the Columbia valley to the south from Donald to the upper lakes. This lake would be formed anew if the aforesaid canyon between Donald and Beaver Mouth were to be filled up for a height of two hundred feet, or less, Donald being 2530 feet, while the upper Columbia lake is 2700 feet, above the sea. The south end of the latter lake is only cut off by about two miles of swamp from the Kootenay River. All along the wide Columbia valley up to the lakes are well-marked terraces of white calcareous mud, whilst at the bottom of the valley are a chain of great swamps. If the whole of this valley had been at any time a large lake, chiefly or wholly draining to the south, it is quite likely that the Kootenay River, as it breaks into the wide valley just below the Columbia lakes from the north-east through a rocky gorge, would gradually have silted up the

¹ See page 102.

SOURCE OF COLUMBIA RIVER

south end of the lake, so raising the height till at last a weak spot was found at the north end, and the whole drained away down the present valley of the Columbia.¹ Moreover, one would gather, from the direction in which the Shuswap and Spilimichene creeks flow, that they were flowing into a river whose course was south.

Now, if in former times this great lake drained south, instead of north, then the headwaters of the Columbia must have been in the Bush River; and its source was amongst the great glaciers that sweep down from Mount Columbia and the Columbia ice-fields. Surely, for the birthplace of one of the most magnificent rivers of the West, such a spot is more fitting than a swamp among the foot-hills. Surely its source should be where the huge snow-clad peaks rise high into the clouds, where the avalanche thunders, where the dark precipices keep guard over the valleys beneath,

¹ Compare Dr. G. M. Dawson's "Preliminary Report on the Physical and Geological Features of that Part of the Rocky Mountains between lats. 49° and 51° 30'," Part B, Annual Report, 1885, where he suggests that the original course of what is now the Upper Columbia was probably southward. When the idea first occurred to Collie, he was not aware that it had been thus anticipated. The probable source, however, of the Columbia in the Bush valley was not suggested by Dr. Dawson.

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and where the Rocky Mountains culminate in one great effort ; for there, amidst ice and snow in the glacier caves, is born the Athabasca, that old river of the lonely northland ; and there arise the rivulets that later become the mighty Saskatchewan !

CHAPTER XIII

TO BEAR CREEK ONCE MORE

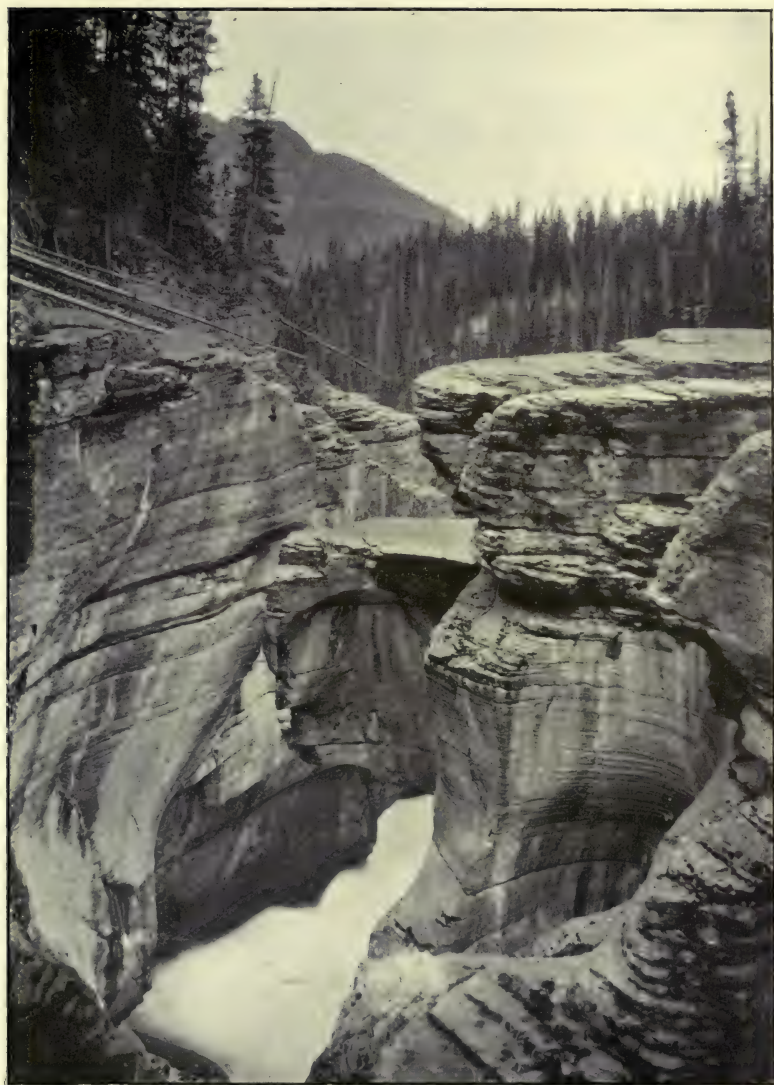
THE following year, 1901, saw considerable activity among climbers and explorers in the Canadian Rockies. The veteran mountaineer, Mr. Edward Whymper, the first conqueror of the Matterhorn and Chimborazo, came out with four Swiss guides and made a series of ascents and observations in the neighbourhood of the Vermillion Pass; in the Yoho valley, near Field; and in the valley of the Ice River. That indefatigable climber, the Rev. James Outram, accompanied him on some of his expeditions: and later on, in conjunction with Messrs. G. M. Weed, J. H. Scattergood, and a Swiss guide, Mr. Outram ascended Mount Chancellor and other summits along the railway, winding up his season's mountaineering with the conquest of Mount Assiniboine. Messrs. Weed and C. S. Thompson, with Hans Kaufmann of Grindelwald as guide, climbed various peaks in the valley of the Ten Peaks, at the head of Moraine Lake near Laggan.

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

Much the most interesting journey of exploration, however, was that of Dr. Jean Habel up the North Fork of the Saskatchewan, over Wilcox Pass, and thence down the valley of the Sun Wapta to its junction with the west branch of the Athabasca. From here he ascended the two branches of the Chaba River, and visited Fortress Lake; then travelled to the head of the western branch of the Athabasca towards the northern face of Mount Columbia, of which he obtained a fine photograph.¹ His outfit, like so many others, ran short of provisions and the expedition had to be curtailed; and much good work of exploration, which might otherwise have been accomplished, was thereby prevented. Some day, perhaps, it will be possible to obtain an outfit manned and equipped with sufficient transport and provisions to last out a trip of three or four months. At present nobody seems to have mastered the problem; and the prospect of running short of food on the journey remains the most serious obstacle to all projects of extended exploration among the mountains.

In the spring of 1902 three of us, Collie, Stutfield, and Woolley, made plans for another trip to the Canadian Rockies. Those peaks and

¹ "Appalachia" (Boston), Vol. x. No. 1.



GORGE OF BEAR CREEK (see p. 257)

TO BEAR CREEK

glaciers and canyons, and the subtle charms of camp-life in the backwoods, had woven a spell around us that we could not, if we would, have broken. The expedition was to be mainly a mountaineering one; as, apart from virgin mountain summits and ice-fields, we did not expect to break much new ground. At the same time, there were many points of interest and geographical uncertainties to be cleared up, as on our previous trips the panoramic views had been greatly interfered with by cloudy weather and smoke haze and the intervention of other peaks. It must be remembered, also, that the country mapped as the result of those journeys comprises about 3000 square miles; and necessarily there were many valleys whose sources were difficult to trace; glaciers and snow-fields the direction of whose flow was problematical; and, lastly, the altitude of some of the highest peaks was doubtful. It remained to discover what system of valleys lay on the south-west side of the Freshfield range; to traverse the great Lyell glacier, upon whose ice no human being had probably set foot, in order to learn about the complicated series of snow-peaks in that district; to find out how the continental Divide ran, and how the various creeks

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

of the Bush River were connected with the Lyell snow-field; and, further, Collie wished to see if there was an easy pass across the watershed between Mount Forbes and the Freshfield group. If any such low pass existed, it would be probably the only one from the Fortress Lake pass on the Athabasca to the Kicking Horse pass on the railway; and, moreover, it would be useful as a means of reaching the head-waters of the south fork of the Bush without the toil of forcing one's way up the main Bush valley.

Profiting by previous experiences, we hoped to avoid the starvation and other hardships we had endured in the valleys of the Bush, Athabasca, and Saskatchewan, and generally to do things more comfortably. Bad weather, flooded rivers, and such-like visitations of Providence, we could not hope to avoid; but we thought that with reasonable care and forethought we might at any rate have a good tent and a sufficiency of food. With this end in view Collie wrote to Fred Stephens, who had now started an outfitting business on his own account, and asked him to give us an estimate for a trip of seven or eight weeks. Fred replied, suggesting the quantity of flour, bacon, &c., required; and Collie wrote back, nearly doubling the amount,

TO BEAR CREEK

and directing that half should be sent on ahead over the Bow pass and *cached* at Bear Creek. This was done, and at the end of the trip there were not many provisions left over.

We left England on July 3rd, nearly a fortnight earlier than usual, hoping to "pull out"—*Anglicé*, go into camp—on the 19th; but sundry mishaps delayed the start till five days later. At Banff we made the pleasing discovery that three pieces of luggage, containing a large proportion of our camp outfit, were missing: one turned up in two days, but we could obtain no clue whatever as to the whereabouts of the others.

Reader, when your American or Canadian friend dilates to you on the perfection and quasi-infallibility of the Transatlantic system of "checking" baggage, don't you believe him! It is a good system, which works well on the whole, but it is very far from being infallible; and on this trip we heard of more cases of baggage being lost than we have ever known in any European country in a similar space of time. There was some excuse for the breakdown in 1902, as the increase of traffic was very large and rapid; the travelling trunks of American ladies grow bigger and ever bigger;

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labour was difficult to procure, and the good times had made the railway employés exceedingly independent: but the fact remains that such *contretemps* do more than anything else to mar the pleasure of travelling.

At Laggan we found Mr. C. S. Thompson, who, with Mr. Weed and Hans Kaufmann, was to accompany us on the trip; but, alas! on the Monday a worse mishap even than the loss of our luggage upset our plans, for Mr. Thompson received a telegram announcing the destruction by fire of his home in Texas; and he was forced to forego his brief annual holiday in the mountains and return home. It was a keen disappointment to us as well as to him, for we had looked forward with pleasure to spending a few weeks in camp and doing some good climbs with this keen and energetic mountaineer.

As the lost trunks obstinately refused to turn up, we got together such things as were procurable in the village to replace the missing outfit, and prepared to start. Mr. Mathews most obligingly lent us several useful articles; among others, a most magnificent bedroom mattress, which on the journey proved as great a solace to its temporary owner as it was an

TO BEAR CREEK

annoyance to the packers; and on Wednesday the 23rd we left for Laggan, where Fred was awaiting us with the horses and men. "Number One" was less punctual even than usual, and we reached Laggan too late to make a start that day. On the platform we found Fred with his friend Jack Robson, who was engaged to take charge of the culinary department in our somewhat extensive outfit. Fred, expecting us to arrive earlier, had sent the other two men, with the tents and most of the horses, ahead along the Bow trail; so we spent our first night *à la belle étoile* outside the station.

The evening was spent in sorting the baggage, which, owing to our fixed determination to make ourselves comfortable, was somewhat bulkier than usual. One depraved person, for instance, had brought a camp-bedstead. This luxury was viewed with the strongest disapproval, as out West, for some occult reason, it is considered unmanly to sleep otherwise than on the ground. Weed, hardy man, had neither cork mattress nor bedstead; but, like a true son of America, lay in his blanket and ground-sheet. Worse even than the camp-bedstead, however, lurked behind; and presently Fred's all-seeing eye fell on the bedroom mattress.

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

“What’s this blamed truck?” he inquired, and his good-humoured face assumed an expression of unwonted severity.

“Truck,” it should be explained, is one of those delightfully comprehensive western words, like “outfit,” which can be applied to anything or everything; to a creation at large or a water-bucket; to a rifle or a kitchen utensil; a maiden aunt or a mother-in-law. We explained that the “truck” was nothing more or less than what it appeared to be, a mattress, and that we meant to sleep on it; whereat Robson, with quite unnecessary politeness, inquired if he should wait for the wardrobe and the rest of the bedroom suite, which he supposed was to follow later; and Fred was certain that a decent pack could not possibly be made of such a monstrosity, that no self-respecting cayoose would submit to carry it, &c., &c. So the talk went on till night fell; the bedding (including the mattress) was spread on the ground, and further argument was quenched in slumber.

It froze hard during the night, though thunder could be heard rumbling at intervals, and our blankets next morning were white with rime. We waited till noon, in the faint but

TO BEAR CREEK

delusive hope of finding our baggage on "Number One" when it arrived, and then started up the Bow valley. Four years had elapsed since we had passed along this route on our return from the head-waters of the Saskatchewan and the Athabasca; and the Canadian Pacific Railway people had evidently not been idle in the meantime. The trail of evil renown was now, at any rate for the first five or six miles, as broad and good as any backwoods traveller could desire, only the criss-cross and jumble of logs on either side serving to remind us of our troubles here in former days. Further on, however, where the trail descends to the level of the Bow river, the improvement ceases, and the muskegs and bog-holes are now worse than ever, owing to the increase of traffic and the trampling of many horses' hoofs. To make a thorough job of it, the trail should be carried along the hillside past the base of Mount Hector, where, if once properly cut out, it could easily be maintained in a state of tolerable repair.

We found the tents on the banks of the Bow after a ride of three hours, and were introduced to our other two men, Dave Tewksbury and Clarence Murray, both of them citizens of

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

the U.S.A., who had taken part in the recent inrush of settlers from the western States into Alberta. Dave, a lumberman by trade from Wisconsin, was a veritable artist with the axe. It was a treat to see him fell a tree or chop up firewood; every blow fell in the right place to the sixteenth of an inch, and when the operation was completed the end of the log was as smooth as though it had been cut with a knife. The horses were all complete strangers to us, and at first we quite missed Joe and Molly and the Pinto, and the other animals that had shared—and largely caused—our tribulations in former years.

Our journey to Bear Creek was an uneventful one, and we were far from regretting the absence of incident. Things seemed so entirely different in this charming valley from that miserable region of the Bush. The weather was fine on most days; we had a well-stocked larder, and an excellent tent that kept out the rain; the mosquitoes were not too bad, though the bulldogs were terribly numerous and worried the cayoses a good deal; while the latter seemed to have a smaller allowance of original sin than most pack-horses, and, on the whole, behaved extremely



BEAR CREEK, WITH PYRAMID, MOUNT WILSON, AND MURCHISON

TO BEAR CREEK

well. Now and again one of them might be seen wildly careering through the woods, shedding pots and pans and kettles as he went ; while Moses, a sprightly old sorrel that carried the obnoxious mattress, showed his disgust at his burden by depositing it on the trail at every convenient opportunity—but they never tried to drown themselves in the lakes or swam about in rivers merely for the fun of wetting our baggage. Everything, in short, seemed to combine to make our pilgrimage the pleasant picnic we had intended it to be ; as though Fate, repenting of the trials wherewith she had formerly afflicted us, were now bent on making all possible amends.

On the second day the outfit camped, after a short day's march, on the banks of a stream descending from a pass leading over into the Pipestone valley, in order to wait for Collie and Weed, who had gone on a journey of exploration along the sides of Mount Hector. The others caught a few trout in the Bow, but the water was very "riley" — *Anglicé*, clouded with glacial *débris* — and the fish throughout this season took exceedingly badly. The following evening we pitched the tents on the Bow summit, in suffocating heat which

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

produced clouds of flies and, later on, a thunderstorm. From the Bow Pass a long march brought us to our old beautiful camping-ground near Waterfowl Lake at the foot of Pyramid and Howse Peak. Those two cloud-compelling mountains were, as usual, veiled in mist when we arrived; but they were nearly clear next morning, and old Dave's wonder and delight at the grim black precipices and stately glacier-crowned peaks knew no bounds. The old fellow had never been in the mountains before, and the grand scenery was a complete revelation to him. "Well now, isn't that just wonderful!" he kept on exclaiming, as, leaving his sturdy nag (his own) to find its way along the trail, he gazed up at the towering cliffs of Pyramid, whose head, thinly veiled in cloud, gave to Dave's inexperienced eye an impression of almost illimitable height. His only regret was that he could not bring his "old woman" along to enjoy these glories of Nature with him.

On the way through the woods to Bear Creek camping-ground Fred pointed out to us a bear-trap belonging to two young trappers from Banff, Ballard and Simpson, who had spent the winter in a "shack" or log-cabin at

A GRIZZLY STORY

the foot of the valley. Two or three weeks before we passed that way a two-year-old bear had been caught in the trap; and an old grizzly coming along got wind of him, and proceeded at once to business. Struggling to tear his prey out of the trap, the grizzly had wrenched the staple to which it was attached out of the ground, and dragged the whole concern, trap, staple, bear, and all, down to a small muskeg hard by. The ground near the trap indicated the terrific nature of the struggle that had taken place; and we followed the marks across the trail down to the muskeg. Here the grizzly had seized the poor beast in his deadly grip, and literally wrenched the leg which was caught in the trap out of the shoulder-socket, and then made a meal of him. Scraps of the victim's hide and pieces of brown fur lying about, as well as the marks on the ground and the grass and weeds crushed flat, were evidences of the truth of the story which one might otherwise have found difficult to believe.

Early in the afternoon Mount Murchison came into view, and we entered the forest of tall pines which told us that Bear Creek was not far off. At five o'clock the outfit came to a halt on the familiar camping-ground; and

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

we proceeded at once to inspect the river with a view to fording it on the morrow. That notorious torrent, however, was most unpleasantly high: its waters had worn for themselves a narrower and deeper channel than before, and rushed by more swiftly and impetuously than ever. Our examination of the river over, Collie's first care was to search for two bottles, one of whisky, the other of brandy, which he had buried at the foot of a tree in 1898, with elaborate instructions as to how they were to be found. You stood, compass in hand, at the foot of a certain tree; then walked twenty-two paces north-west to another tree with a blaze on it; then twenty-five paces due north to a tree with a white stone at its base, under which the bottles were buried. The secret had been confided to Fred and Peyto, and many and diligent had been the searches made by them and other thirsty trappers and prospectors, but all in vain. The ground looked as though bears or wild boars had been rooting round; but the men had dug at the foot of every tree but the right one, across which another trunk had fallen, covering the white stone and the burial-place of the bottles. We, however, had no difficulty in finding them,

BEAR CREEK

and copious libations from their well-matured contents were drunk round the camp-fire that evening.

On a knoll hard by, in the woods above the tents, we found the shack built by Ballard and Simpson—the first human habitation in a spot which future generations will probably see transformed into a populous mountain resort for tourists. The owners of the shack were not at home, being away in charge of an expedition up the west branch of the north fork of the Saskatchewan with the Rev. James Outram and Hans' brother, Christian Kaufmann, who had started from Banff more than a fortnight before us: but on the door was pinned a note from Mr. Outram saying that he had returned from the west branch, and was now encamped at Glacier Lake, and would meet us (as had previously been arranged) at the foot of Mount Forbes.

Fred had stored our reserve stock of provisions in the shack, by arrangement with the owners, who had also provided him with a key of the door. The interior, which smelt very fusty and damp, was filled with skins, horns, traps of all kinds and sizes—conspicuous among them being two bear-traps, cruel-looking instruments

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

like gigantic rabbit-traps, and requiring a force of nearly 400 lbs. to open the jaws when closed—tools of various sorts, and other trappers' implements. In this lonely retreat the two men had passed the long Canadian winter in complete isolation from the outside world, shooting and trapping with fair success, considering the ever-growing scarcity of game and fur-bearing animals.

The sight of such a shack, or cabin, as this in the wilds of the backwoods brings vividly before one the kind of life led by the trapper or miner or prospector up country; and the grit and endurance that a man must have to enter upon it. The mere thought of the possible results of some trivial accident or mishap would be enough in itself to deter people of ordinary nerves. For instance, we heard of a case when two prospectors in British Columbia made a compact together before starting on their travels that, if either of them broke a leg or sprained an ankle, he was to be shot by the other. And how great must be the courage of the hunter or trapper who, in the depth of winter, ventures forth alone for weeks or months together into the woods, pack and blanket on back, dependent largely on his gun or rifle for food, and with none near to succour

THE TRAPPER'S LIFE

in case he falls ill or meets with an accident ! The picture, in Milton and Cheadle's book, of the headless Indian corpse seated on the ground, dead of starvation ; the miner whose body was found in the woods, his pack beside him, with the pathetic words scrawled on a piece of paper pinned to a neighbouring tree, "The trail ends here"—these and many similar stories serve to remind one of the terrible fate that is for ever staring the solitary backwoodsman in the face. Probably the fact that it is always before their eyes tends to make them callous to the risk : anyhow, hundreds of men are to be found who will cheerfully face these dangers and, what to most people would be more terrifying still, the awful loneliness of their solitary vigils in the great forests and mountains ; and, what may seem strangest of all, not a few of them find pleasure in doing so.

Nor, one would think, are the profits in these days large enough to compensate the trapper for the perils and privations incident to his trade. Formerly a man might with fair luck earn from six to eight hundred dollars in a season, but he cannot expect to do so well nowadays. Of course, whatever he makes is almost all clear profit, as his food and lodging and the imple-

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

ments of his craft cost him very little. The skins of the marten and mink are the chief source of income, now that the beaver has grown scarce and his pelt less valuable : besides these are the lynx, ermine, musk-rat, otter, wolverine or glutton, and foxes of various kinds. The wolverine is a beast of infinite cunning, and marvellous tales are told of his ingenuity in ferreting out the locality of the traps and stealing the animals caught therein. In addition to these smaller beasts there are bears, black, cinnamon, and grizzly ; and in these days, when furs of all kinds are growing scarce and dear, the pelt of the ordinary wild mountain goat, if in good winter condition, finds a ready market.



MOUNT MURCHISON

CHAPTER XIV

MOUNT MURCHISON AND MOUNT FRESHFIELD

FRED STEPHENS was by no means inclined to risk his newly-purchased outfit by the passage of Bear Creek in its present swollen condition ; and the river was, if anything, rather higher next morning. Moreover, an examination of the bacon which had been stored in the shack showed that it had got slightly mouldy, and a thorough drying in the sun was considered desirable. The customary day's halt, without which few outfits leave Bear Creek, was therefore decided on ; and by way of spending the time we arranged to attempt the ascent of the rocky pinnacle of Mount Murchison which faces and, as it were, overhangs the valley where the tents were pitched. It was thought that the highest summit, or what we had always deemed to be such, lay too far to the east for us to climb it, at any rate in one day, from our present camping-ground.

Next morning, therefore, Collie, Stutfield, Weed, and Hans Kaufmann sallied forth for

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

what we imagined would prove quite a moderate expedition. Leaving the trail about half-an-hour from the camp, we ascended the dry bed of a torrent that comes straight down the mountain side, some distance northwards of the route we followed in 1898 up to the arête where the fossil forest was found. In this way we avoided the long grind through the woods, which, after our experiences in the Bush valley, we regarded with special aversion. The going proved excellent, and we soon found ourselves at timberline, ready to tackle Mount Murchison with legs untired by log-jumping or fighting our way through brushwood. As we were all more or less out of training this was a matter of no slight importance. Straight above us was a series of shale slopes leading up to a narrow snow couloir, which, though very steep and possibly somewhat risky owing to falling stones, looked quite feasible; and, as it obviously offered much the most direct way up the mountain, we determined to try it. The old route would doubtless be easier, but a frontal attack promised more amusement, as well as a considerable economy of time.

In a grassy basin at the foot of the rocks we disturbed a young he-goat who, after the manner

ASCENT OF MOUNT MURCHISON

of bachelors of his class, was having a quiet lunch by himself on the succulent herbage that abounds at tree-line. On seeing the intruders he cantered off in leisurely fashion, traversing some tiny ledges along the face of most gruesome precipices in a fashion that made us wonder why the epithet "giddy" should, of all others, ever be applied to a goat, and disappeared slowly round the shoulder of the mountain. There was a good deal of ice at the bottom of the couloir, which in dry seasons is almost bare of snow, and to avoid the risk of falling stones we took to the rocks on our right. These were distinctly difficult in one or two places, and we soon had to put on the rope. Above the rocks we got on to the snow which, though at a very steep angle, was in excellent condition. At the head of the couloir we crossed over to its northern side, enjoying on the way a striking glimpse, through the opposing walls of rock, of Bear Creek valley and the mountains rising beyond.

From the top of a rocky promontory, where we halted for our second meal, it was perceived for the first time that our objective rock peak was cut off from us by a mighty cleft, or notch, in the mountain, with perpendicular cliffs on

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

either side some hundreds of feet in height. We were more than consoled, however, by the discovery that a snow-clad summit, invisible from Bear Creek, which rose straight in front of us and immediately to the right of the rock peak, was much higher; and we had no doubt of our being able to climb it. A long, but easy, scramble up alternate rock and shale-slopes took us on to the final snow arête, which, as usual in these mountains, was very heavily corniced; and we had to traverse along the slope, which was excessively steep, a considerable distance from the edge.

At four in the afternoon, more than seven hours from the start, we stood on the maiden crest of Mount Murchison—or rather, a few feet below it, the actual top consisting of a tremendous cornice of snow that projected some distance over an abyss several thousands of feet deep. To our surprise, and great delight, we found we were on one of two peaks of about equal height—the clinometer made ours slightly the higher—which easily over-topped all the other numerous pinnacles of the Murchison group. Viewed from the Bow Pass the easternmost summit looks considerably higher than the one on which we stood; but the latter, though



THE TOP OF MOUNT MURCHISON



MOUNT PILKINGTON (*see p. 270*)

ASCENT OF MOUNT MURCHISON

it does not appear so, is in reality a good deal further off. Facing us, towards the east, were the square-topped black tower and the castellated rock ridge that we had seen from the Pipestone Pass and Survey Peak: and, peeping under the great masses of overhanging snow, we could see, 7000 feet below, the Saskatchewan valley stretching away eastwards, and the river threading its devious way, like some huge silver snake, between the high mud banks and pine-clad hillocks. We could also make out several minor valleys among the hills, of whose existence we had till then been quite unaware. In the opposite direction the summits of Mount Forbes, Bush Peak, Lyell, and the Columbia group were capped with cloud; but there was a charming view of the Middle Fork valley and Glacier Lake nestling among the purple hills beyond.

A very brief examination of our barometers showed that Mount Murchison would have to suffer the degradation which, sooner or later, is the lot of most mountains in this region; and to be classed henceforth among the fraudulent, or semi-fabulous, mountain monsters which have so long imposed upon the makers of maps. So far from its being 15,781 feet, or 13,500 as

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

Hector imagined, Collie's Watkin barometer, lent him by the Royal Geographical Society, only made it 11,300 feet above sea-level: possibly some future mountain explorer will bring it down further still until, as some American geographer predicted would one day be the fate of these mountains, it becomes a hole in the ground.

We had intended to descend by the southwestern arête, in order to make a more detailed examination of the remarkable fossil forest we had discovered four years previously; but the evening shadows were already falling, and we had no wish to be benighted in the woods, so we kept to the route by which we had ascended. On the way down the clouds began to lift from the mountains to the west, and by the time we had emerged from the couloir and got off the final rocks Bush Peak and Mount Lyell were quite clear. We managed to strike the trail before dark, and reached camp at 9.30, where we rejoiced to find that Bear Creek was considerably lower; the bacon was thoroughly dried, and all promised well for a start on the morrow.

During the day Woolley, accompanied by Fred and Dave, had visited a remarkable gorge which Bear Creek has worn for itself in the

GORGE OF BEAR CREEK

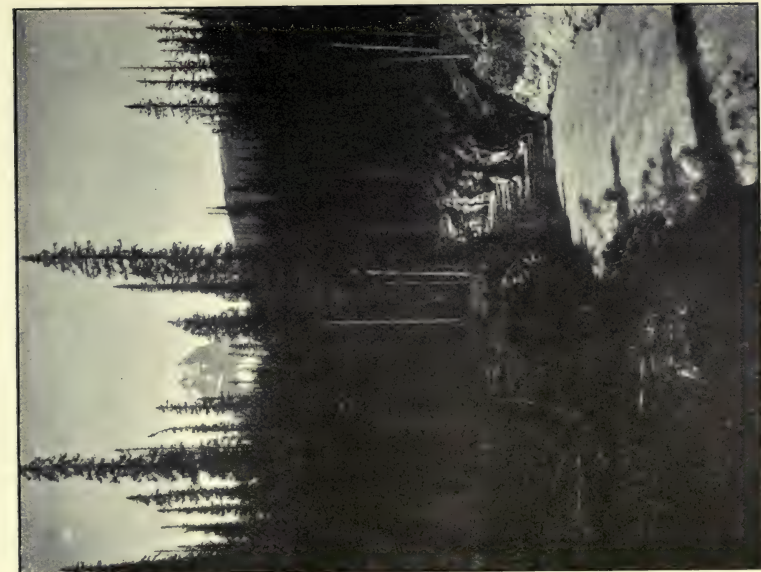
limestone rock about a mile above the encampment. "In some places," Woolley writes, "the chasm is but six to eight feet wide; in others its sides contain ancient pot-holes similar to those in the Glacier Garden at Lucerne, one or two of these rock-cauldrons being of unusual size." Pent up in this narrow chasm the voluminous waters of the torrent rush boiling and thundering between walls of rock a hundred or a hundred and fifty feet high. The gorge was first discovered by Ballard and Simpson during their winter sojourn at the shack; and in former days it appears to have been used as a crossing-place by the Indians—when Bear Creek was too high to be safely forded—by means of tree-trunks felled across the ravine.

An inspection of the river early next morning showed that it had fallen still further during the night, and it was now some six or eight inches lower than on the day we arrived. The outfit was accordingly packed without any more delay, and we started on our journey to the source of the Middle Fork of the Saskatchewan; Mount Forbes, and the Freshfield group. As our stock of provisions and baggage was still a good deal beyond the carrying capacity of the horses we left a large quantity behind in the

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

shack. Bear Creek offered no terrors, and the crossing was effected without difficulty. It was Hans' first experience of fording streams on horseback; and, though brave as a lion on the mountains, this sort of thing was not at all to his taste: which was not surprising, as Bear Creek, even when low, is always more or less of a trial to the inexperienced. However, he faced the ordeal with exemplary fortitude: only, when safe on the further shore, he shook his head gravely and in his broken English enigmatically observed, "Several times you cross it; but once is the last time!"

Across the stream we proceeded on our way up the Middle Fork along the south bank. The weather was very fine, and the scenery round this delightful spot seemed more beautiful than ever. In front the silver spear-head of Forbes pierced a sky of deepest blue; on the left, through the glades in the forest, which just here is much less dense than elsewhere, we had peeps of the noble obelisk of Pyramid, by far the most striking object in the panorama; while northwards was an uninterrupted view up the valley of the North Fork, with its rugged mountain masses on either side. The landscape in the nearer foreground is pleasantly diversified by open



MOUNT FORBES FROM SASKATCHEWAN VALLEY



LOOKING DOWN COULOIR ON MURCHISON

UP THE MIDDLE FORK

spaces in the forest, while here and there reedy muskegs and small tarns may be seen hidden away among the tangle of the trees.

Five distinct groups of lofty mountains are visible from the neighbourhood of Bear Creek: Mount Forbes and its satellites, the Waputehk range, the peaks to the west of the North Fork, Mount Wilson, and Mount Murchison. The two last-named peaks, in addition to their striking form, are geologically interesting, from the fact that the dip of their limestone strata differs in a marked manner from most of the neighbouring peaks, being towards the east. As a result, the "writing-desk" is reversed, as it were; and there are tremendous precipices on the wrong, that is to say, the western side. In the case of almost every other mountain in this part of the Canadian Rockies, it is the eastern side that is sheer, the face towards the west and south-west being gently sloping.

We camped on the river bank a mile or so above the mouth of the stream which comes in from Glacier Lake on the opposite side; and in the evening Collie and Robson forded the Saskatchewan and rode up to Mr. Outram's camp, near the lake, to acquaint him of our arrival. Here they found Ballard and Simpson,

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

who said that Mr. Outram was away with Christian Kaufmann on a two days' mountaineering expedition. Returning to camp, they missed the ford in the milky waters of the river, and, getting into a deep hole, were swept down by the current and had to swim for it.

On the afternoon of the following day, Thursday, 31st July, we pushed on, in pelting rain, to Collie's old camping-ground with Baker, on the broad wash-out near the junction of the two streams descending from Mount Forbes and the Freshfield glacier respectively. The tents were pitched on the exact spot which they had formerly occupied; and an hour later a line of horses, advancing in single file across the shingle-flats, announced the approach of Mr. Outram and his outfit. On his arrival he told us that he and Christian had passed the night on the northern shore of Glacier Lake, near its further end, on their return from the ascent of a snow-peak in the neighbourhood of Mount Forbes. From the head of the west branch of the North Fork of the Saskatchewan they had ascended Mount Lyell and Mount Columbia; and they described the latter as a tremendously long and fatiguing tramp through the snow of more than twenty hours' duration.

ASCENT OF MOUNT FRESHFIELD

Our chief ambition on this trip was to reach the summit of Mount Forbes, the finest and most commanding, and probably the most difficult, of the high peaks in the Canadian Rockies. As, however, there was still a great deal of snow upon it, owing to the bad weather which had prevailed all through the early summer, we thought it better to wait a few days before attempting the ascent. It was therefore decided that the next move of the combined outfits should be up to the foot of the Freshfield glacier, with a view to the ascent of Mount Freshfield; but, as the weather next morning showed little sign of improving, we did not move camp. Fred and Dave sallied forth to investigate and cut out the trail which Peyto had made in 1897; while Christian and Hans Kaufmann took their rifles up the mountain in search of goat. They shot two small ones near the snout of a glacier in an adjoining canyon, and had to carry the carcasses home over a mountain spur more than 2000 feet above the level of the valley. Towards evening the clouds began to lift; the snowy dome of Howse Peak, emerging from the mists, seemed, as it were, poised in mid-air; and Forbes slowly unveiled his noble outline and proportions to our view.

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

Standing nearly north-west of our camping-ground in the valley, the great peak was admirably situated for striking sunset effects. This evening Nature had reserved for our benefit some of her finest pyrotechnic displays, and the mighty pyramid of Forbes was a fitting subject for so splendid an illumination. The eastern face of the mountain falls almost sheer from the summit in a tremendous precipice 3000 feet in depth; and, as the huge red globe of the sun sank slowly out of sight, the watery vapours that still hovered over the peak glowed with a marvellously variegated radiance; and the terrific black crags, surmounted by their tiny diadem of snow, stood grimly forth in a gorgeous setting of rainbow-coloured fires.

The clouds had almost entirely disappeared next morning, and, turning our glasses on the mountain, we examined it from a severely professional, that is to say, mountaineering point of view. There was no doubt whatever that it would afford us two or three thousand feet of pretty stiff climbing; but the lower part of the arête, which was nearly all rock, did not look at all difficult. As a matter of fact, it proved in the event to be by no means so easy as we supposed. About three-quarters of

ASCENT OF MOUNT FRESHFIELD

the way up the arête was a rocky pinnacle—a counterpart in miniature of the Pic Tyndall on the Italian side of the Matterhorn—and beyond it a very ugly-looking notch, which would certainly be troublesome, though we hoped that when we saw it from the other side it might present a less formidable appearance. The last part of the climb would be along the narrow snow arête, fringed with most unpleasantly large cornices overhanging the great precipices of the eastern face.

Before packing the outfits for our journey to the Freshfield glacier we despatched Dave and Clarence, with four of the horses, back to Laggan to pick up the lost baggage, as well as certain cases of whisky and provisions which Fred had *cached* along the Bow trail. Peyto's trail through the woods to the Freshfield glacier, cut in 1897, was still in a tolerable state of repair; and we made our way there easily enough in the afternoon. The tents were pitched in a cosy nook in the forest a few hundred yards from the snout of the glacier, commanding a fine view of Mount Freshfield at the head of the great snow-field; and a pleasant breeze blowing from the ice cooled our fevered brows and mitigated the attacks of the mosqui-

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

toes and bulldogs. It rained hard that night, and next day, Sunday August 3rd, was a day of rest. It was all new ground to everybody in the party, except Collie: so, when in the afternoon it cleared up and the sun came out, we took a walk up the glacier almost to the foot of Mount Freshfield. The glacier seemed exactly the same as when Collie and Baker had visited it five years previously, except that the huge blocks of stone, mentioned on page 55, had moved somewhat lower down the ice.

The air was very clear after the rain that had fallen in the night, and we had a good view over the immense ice-field stretching away for miles on either side. The peaks at its head seemed to us, on closer acquaintance, to be somewhat disappointing; and it was evident that Mount Freshfield was not so high as we had previously supposed. However, it is the usual fate of newly-discovered mountains, unless they have been scientifically measured, to be partially shorn of their estimated stature; and the peaks about the sources of the Saskatchewan and the Athabasca were not destined to form exceptions to the general rule. The persistent smoke-haze in 1898, the clouds and bad weather of our Bush river trip, had caused us somewhat to over-esti-

ASCENT OF MOUNT FRESHFIELD

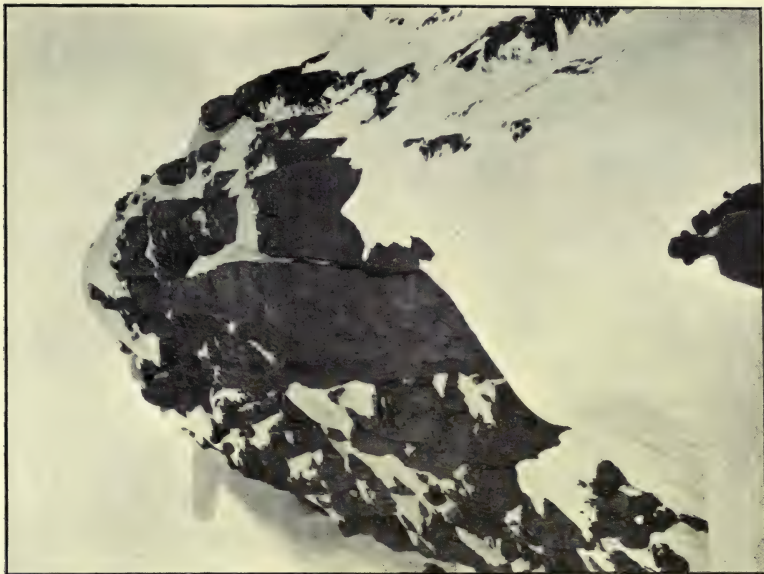
mate the heights of the mountains that we had not actually climbed or seen close at hand. *Omne tenebrosum pro magnifico*: looming mysteriously through the murky atmosphere they had certainly appeared grander and larger in bulk than when seen with their outlines sharp-cut against a clear sky. Fortunately, in their case the degradation will not be anything like so severe as in the cases of Mount Brown, Mount Hooker, and Mount Murchison, of whose sad fate the reader has learned in the foregoing pages.

Next morning being quite fine, we rose at daybreak and started—a party of seven climbers, Collie, Outram, Stutfield, Weed, and Woolley, and the two Kaufmanns—for the ascent of Mount Freshfield. Robson, who had never been on a glacier and was anxious to see some of the wonders of the ice world, came with us as far as the foot of the peak, a tramp of three hours from the tents. Here the caravan halted for a little light refreshment; and then we commenced the climb, after bidding farewell to Robson, and showering upon him copious advice and instructions as to how *not* to fall through the treacherous crusts of snow, below which lurked dangerous crevasses. We followed a

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

similar route to that taken by Collie, Baker, and Sarbach in 1897; but found an easier way a little to the right up the band of rocks that runs along the base of the peak. We then made our way diagonally up a steep snow-slope on to the higher ice plateau. The glacier was in distinctly better condition than on the former occasion, and, being thickly coated with snow, much less step-cutting was needed. At eleven o'clock a halt was called on the eastern arête, at the place where the 1897 party had stopped, and we enjoyed a good rest and a substantial meal. The weather was fine and time was not particularly pressing, as there were no woods to go through, or difficult glacier to get off, at the end of the day; and we felt it would matter little if darkness overtook us before we got home.

At the same time we were very anxious that the day should remain fine, in order that we might see the country on the west side of the mountain, which was a blank on Collie's map: also the complicated geography of the south fork of the Bush valley would be capable of being followed for the first time; and, lastly, the doubts as to whether a low pass existed between the Lyell and Freshfield ice-fields could be cleared up. However, long before we



SUMMIT OF MOUNT FRESHFIELD



BREAKFAST-PLACE AT THE FOOT OF FRESHFIELD

ASCENT OF MOUNT FRESHFIELD

arrived on the final arête of our peak this last question was settled, and it was with much satisfaction, as we mounted higher and higher, that Collie could see how the valley on the south side of Forbes took a bend to the southwest, joining a similar depression that ran northeast from the south fork of the Bush.

The party was on two ropes, the first consisting of Hans, Stutfield, Woolley, and Collie, the other of Christian, Weed, and Outram. For some distance above the breakfast-place the climbing was easy enough, and we began to fancy we might reach the summit without serious difficulty. Higher up, however, the arête was broken by several formidable *gendarmes*, or buttresses of crag, with some pretty difficult rock-faces, which gave a good deal of trouble. At first we thought of traversing below on the left; but the rocks were too steep and insecure to render the operation a safe one, even supposing it had been practicable. In the end we kept to the crest of the arête the whole way, Hans negotiating the bad places with much skill. As usual, the chief difficulty consisted in the abominably rotten and splintered character of the rock; but one or two narrow cracks, or

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

chimneys, served us in good stead, and foot by foot we gradually made our way till we suddenly found ourselves on the snow cornice within a few yards of the summit.

Our height, as previous consultations with the barometers had led us to anticipate, was barely 11,000 feet; but, if the peak was lower than we had previously supposed it to be, it had at any rate afforded us an excellent climb. The prospect from the top, owing to the central position occupied by the mountain between the Laggan and Waputehk groups and the Lyell and Columbia ice-fields, is probably unsurpassed in the Canadian Rockies. The splendid mass of Bush peak seemed quite close, with Goat Peak and the scene of our labours at the head of the Bush valley immediately to the left. The canyon of the south fork of the Bush was below us to the north-west, with, as we had imagined must be the case, a glacier at its head discharging its water into the river. To the north were all our old friends of 1898,—Columbia, and Athabasca peak, Alberta, with the Twins straight in front, appearing to be part of it; the Dome, Saskatchewan, the three-headed Lyell, and many more; some standing out clear, others with their heads cut off by

ASCENT OF MOUNT FRESHFIELD

the thin lines of grey cloud that so often mar the views in these mountains.

Much nearer, and quite free from cloud, by far the most commanding feature in the view, was the stately pyramid of Forbes; and we scanned for the first time, and with critical eyes, the western side of the arête by which we hoped to climb it. It was not particularly gratifying to find that the notch looked even worse from this side than from the other, as the cliffs immediately underneath fell perfectly sheer; and there was evidently no chance whatever of our being able to traverse below on either side. A brief comparison with the height of our own peak was enough to show that Forbes would have to come down in the world at least as much as Freshfield.

There is a great, if undefinable, pleasure in standing on a high mountain summit in a country but imperfectly known; so many uncertainties vanish in a moment, often with the comment—spoken or unspoken—“I thought so;” while a host of new possibilities and further queries take their place. One of those queries which could not be answered was the height of the splendid pyramid of snow gleaming far away in the Selkirks, which we used to see day after

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

day from the Bush valley. Now, from a still greater distance, its height seemed even greater; but what that height may be must be left to others to determine.

A keen wind, driving a light scud of mist before it, was blowing from the west, so we did not linger on the top longer than was necessary to make the required observations. We went down by a different route on the southern face; slowly and carefully for the first six or eight hundred feet, as the slope was very steep and the crust of snow in places did not seem altogether secure. Lower down it was all plain sailing; and, crossing the upper ice-field at a good smart pace, we soon found ourselves at the foot of the peak, and reached camp shortly after seven.

As the neighbouring peaks of Pilkington and Walker did not look particularly attractive, and we were anxious to attack Mount Forbes as soon as possible, we returned without further delay to our camping-ground in the Saskatchewan valley. During the two following days, August 6th and 7th, Fred and Ballard and Simpson cut trail along the left bank of the canyon leading up to the base of Forbes. The hot sun meanwhile was exerting its power on

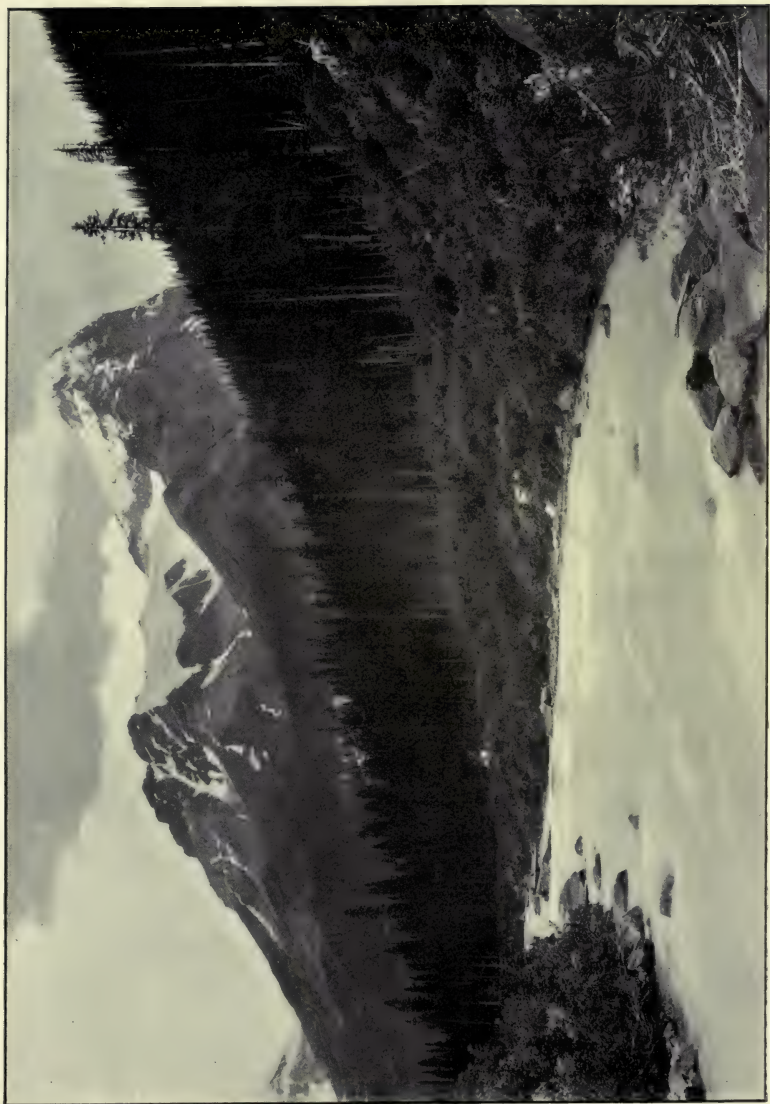
ASCENT OF MOUNT FRESHFIELD

the snow; and we could hear the avalanches thundering at intervals down the great eastern precipices of our peak. On the 6th Collie, Outram, Weed, and Woolley spent a delightful summer's day climbing on to a broad alp that lies to the east and north-east of the mountain. This alp is the largest we know of south of Wilcox Pass. In the early summer it must be carpeted with flowers: even in August there were many still in bloom, whilst the remains of numberless others could be seen. It seemed to be a favourite haunt of the wild goat, and a herd of over fifty was found browsing peacefully on the hill-side. Directly, however, they caught sight of their human enemies they moved off towards the precipices that overlook the valley of the Saskatchewan on the east. Having seen the last of the goat, Collie and Weed, climbing to the north side of the alp, ascended a small peak, which afforded a splendid view in every direction except the north. Forbes looked very grand across an intervening dip in the hills; and to the left of it the pass leading over into the Bush valley, which we have since named Bush Pass, was plainly visible.

Next morning the horses got lost in the woods, but were tracked and recovered by

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

Robson and Collie; and in the afternoon the latter made a series of measurements of Mount Forbes by means of a base line, a Steward's surveying telemeter, and a clinometer. As the mean of two observations he made out its altitude to be about 12,250 feet, or more than a thousand feet less than Dr. Hector and others had supposed it to be. This height was a disappointment to us all, even though we had made up our minds that it would have to be considerably lowered; but, as has already been pointed out, such degradation is the common lot of the higher summits in the Canadian Rockies.



MOUNT FORBES

CHAPTER XV

MOUNT FORBES AND HOWSE PEAK

As soon as the trail was cut the horses were packed and the two outfits moved up the canyon to make a base camp for the ascent of Mount Forbes. The Forbes canyon is infinitely finer than the valley descending from the Freshfield glacier: indeed, for a combination of peak, glacier, gorge, and forest scenery, there is nothing to surpass it in the Canadian Rockies. If the trees are not quite so tall and stately as those of British Columbia, they are still very grand, and their grouping in places is most beautiful. The dampness of the climate—for Forbes, owing to its height and solitary pre-eminence, is, like Pyramid and Howse Peak, a great compeller of clouds—causes the floor of the forest to be covered with a bright carpet of greenest moss; and the luxuriance of the undergrowth, the ruin and tangle of fallen trees, were worthy almost of the Bush or Columbia valleys. High above us great peaks towered; and from the glaciers overhanging their lower cliffs fell

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

innumerable cascades, some with a fair body of water, others mere filmy wisps of undulating spray that were almost dissipated by the breeze before they reached the bottom. The trail, which was pretty rough and broken by numerous water-courses, took us at first some distance up into the woods, as the torrent has worn for itself a deep and most picturesque gorge through the rocks, and the ground near it is quite impassable. Presently, however, the valley opened out somewhat, and we were able to descend to the river and travel along the bank. The tents were pitched near the foot of the rocky snow-clad cone of Forbes, about half a mile short of the former site in 1897, in a small clear space that had been denuded of trees many years ago by a huge avalanche that, falling from the south side of the valley, had crossed the stream and swept away the forest for perhaps a hundred yards up the opposite face.

Next morning we made our final preparations for the ascent; and, after a more than usually substantial lunch, we shouldered our packs for a bivouac above the pine-woods on the southern slope of the mountain. On the way through the woods the party got separated: Outram, Stutfield, Woolley, and

ASCENT OF MOUNT FORBES

Hans, climbing higher up into the forest than the main body, found their way cut off by a gorge with perpendicular rock walls, through which rushed tumultuously a small branch of the Saskatchewan. After some search they found a tree-trunk that had fallen across the ravine; and on this somewhat precarious bridge, with the water boiling and foaming many feet below, they effected a crossing. Christian, who had gone on his own account still higher up into the woods, found at the head of the gorge a very fine waterfall, and got over the stream above it without much difficulty. The rest of the party had no trouble with the river, which they crossed near its mouth, but they got involved in some very bad timber, and reached the bivouac some time after the others.

Above the trees was a sort of miniature alp, carpeted with a profusion of crimson painter's brush, yellow lilies, and other wild flowers and heath; and we found an exceedingly snug and sheltered sleeping-place just on the verge of the forest. Heather spread thickly on the soft mossy ground made most luxurious beds, while the night was beautifully fine and warm. Forbes, grim and majestic, stood sentinel over us; and,

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with the pine-branches for a canopy, the steely-blue, star-spangled firmament for our roof, and a neighbouring brook murmuring a not too loud lullaby, everything was as pleasant and comfortable as any reasonable person could desire.

We did not forget that to-day, August the 9th, was Coronation Day, and it was a pity, perhaps, that we could not have celebrated it on the top of Mount Forbes. Tea and a little weak whisky and water were the most generous fluids we possessed wherein to drink their Majesties' health; but, as a memento of the occasion, we named a fine peak to the south, with a drapery of whitest snow, and a singularly beautiful glacier clinging to its northern face—Coronation Peak. "Alexandra Peak" was another name suggested, but this was reserved for some grander and more striking summit.

It was still quite dark when the guides, in orthodox Alpine fashion, roused us from our lairs; and at 5 o'clock (4 A.M. by British Columbia time) we were off. The weather was perfect, with a light but cool breeze blowing. Grass and shale-slopes, easy rocks, and a tramp up a small snow-covered glacier brought us to the arête; and from this point the climbing was pretty stiff and continuous. The rocks,

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which had looked easy enough from below, proved to be no child's-play, being a good deal steeper than we had anticipated, and very deficient in handhold or foothold: indeed, one or two pitches, forty or fifty feet high, were distinctly difficult. On our right the face of the mountain was hollowed out into a large corrie, with sides of brown scaly rock suggestive of rhinoceros hide, that were most unprepossessing: in fact, it must be admitted that Forbes is much more beautiful at a distance than when you are actually standing upon him.

Owing to the steepness of the rocks some hours elapsed before a convenient breakfast-place presented itself; and by the time we found one we were all pretty hungry. Above the breakfasting-place we left the arête and skirted a short distance to the right, arriving on the summit of the miniature Pic Tyndall soon after half-past ten. From here we dropped down into the dreaded notch, and the *gymnase*, or sensational part of the climb, began. Beyond the notch was a smooth upright buttress that was decidedly formidable, and the arête contracted to a narrow knife-edge of rock set at a very steep angle. Very slowly, inch by inch, we edged our way upwards—now *à cheval*,

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astride of the uncomfortably sharp crest of the ridge, now clinging like limpets to the rocks at the side, for there was very little to catch hold of. On the left the cliffs fell perfectly sheer for some hundreds of feet, with mingled snow and rock declivities fifteen hundred feet or so below: on the right was the great precipice of the eastern face. The climb at this point resembled that on the Zinal side of the Rothhorn more than anything else with which we are acquainted; but the rocks were not nearly so good.

We were in two parties, as on Mount Freshfield, and Christian Kaufmann led up admirably. The second party, by some mistake, had only brought an eighty-foot rope, which was not nearly long enough for four people on a climb of this character; and Collie, recognising that the short distance between each climber was an element of considerable danger, unroped and remained behind until the difficult rocks were surmounted, when he followed with the two guides. While Hans Kaufmann, with Stutfield and Woolley, was negotiating an exceptionally nasty bit, a large chunk of rock gave way under his feet and rolled with a clatter over the cliff on our right. Luckily, he only fell a couple of feet or so, and

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managed to grab the edge of the arête with his right hand in time to avert what might otherwise have been a catastrophe.

Towards the top the rocks became most extraordinarily rotten, alternating with intervals of snow cornice. To quote from Woolley's paper¹ in the *Alpine Journal*: "The narrow crest of the ridge seemed to be held together only by the snow frozen against its sides, and in case of the snow melting it appeared that the first westerly gale might easily hurl the whole structure down the great eastern precipice, on its way to augment the shingle-flats of the Middle Fork. In places the piled-up snow certainly favoured us by bridging over spaces where the loose rocks, if bare, would have been a source of danger." At one part the sensation was as if we were walking along the top of a very ill-constructed Scotch dyke—only with a big precipice below on either side—although, doubtless, having withstood the buffeting of the tempests that beat upon the peak, there was little fear of its proving unequal to supporting our puny weight. A straddle along a most insecure-looking edge of wind-drifted snow—a very chilly and uncomfortable sort of saddle—was the last of our acrobatic perfor-

¹ *Alpine Journal*, Vol. xxi., No. 160.

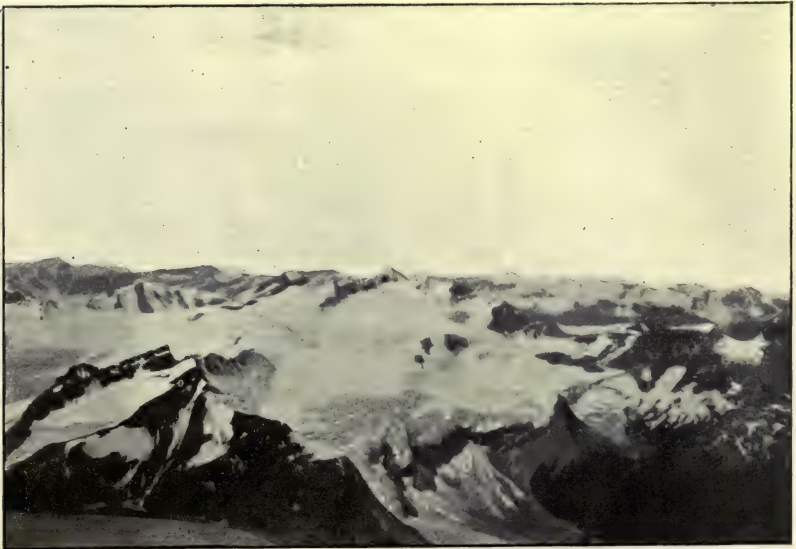
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mances; and a short snow-slope terminating in a cornice overhanging the eastern escarpment led us, soon after two o'clock, to the little snow-cap that forms the summit.

If the aneroids were to be believed, the height of our mountain was even less than Collie had made it with his measurements in the valley of the Saskatchewan, being only about 12,000 feet; but the exceptional fineness of the weather may have caused the barometer to give too low a reading. The view was similar to that from Mount Freshfield, *minus* one important feature, namely, the peak on which we stood; but, the day being finer, every mountain summit was perfectly free from cloud, and the Columbia group and Athabasca peak were quite plain, with the Twins more than usually prominent. From the Columbia valley, north of Donald, a dense column of smoke, rising high above the trees, betokened the starting of a forest fire, which for many days to come was destined to prove a sad impediment to our views and photographing. Up till now we had fortunately been exceptionally free from this annoyance. To Collie the view from Forbes was of much value, for while we were in the Bush valley we had never been able to see what lay between Forbes



MOUNT FORBES FROM THE EAST



VIEW NORTHWARDS FROM SUMMIT OF MOUNT FORBES

ASCENT OF MOUNT FORBES

and the Bush peak. To-day that part of the country lay at our feet; also we could see the whole of the great Lyell ice-field, and how the west branch of the north fork of the Saskatchewan bent round up to the Columbia snow-field and Mount Bryce.

As on Mount Freshfield, we varied the route on the descent; and, on the suggestion of Christian Kaufmann, who had seen the north-west face of Forbes about ten days before, the whole party was roped together and went down the snow slopes on the north-western side. The slope in places was tremendously steep, but luckily the snow was in perfect order, being soft enough to make step-cutting easy, while the cold wind solidified it sufficiently to prevent its giving way under our feet. When we saw this face ten days later from the Lyell ice-field it was seamed and scarred by the fall of large masses of the snow crust, which had avalanched away in huge flakes from the surface of the mountain; and we thanked our lucky stars that it had been in such excellent condition when we had to go down it. For over 1500 feet Christian had to cut every step; but at last we reached a small *col*, which was the connecting link between the *massif* of Forbes and

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the mountains on the west. A band of cliffs skirting the foot of the peak gave us some trouble, and we had to make a considerable *détour* before we could find a gully that enabled us to descend. From the *col* we glissaded rapidly to the glacier below; then, skirting underneath the great western precipices of Forbes, we came to the foot of the southern ridge, up which we had climbed in the morning.

It was past eight, and the sun had just set, when we got back to the bivouac. There was yet another hour of daylight, but, not caring to tackle those terrible woods with our heavy packs in the dusk, we decided to spend a second night on the mountain. This was no great hardship, as the weather still remained fine and we had enough food to last us; so, lighting a big bonfire, we talked over the climb, and then, ensconcing ourselves in our sleeping-bags, once more slept comfortably under the pines. The night, like the previous one, was extraordinarily warm; although at the camp far beneath us in the valley the temperature was below freezing-point, and every morning, when we emerged from our tents, the bushes for two hundred yards on either side of the icy waters of the stream were thickly covered with rime. At

ASCENT OF MOUNT FORBES

our bivouac high up among the great fir-trees we found our sleeping-bags uncomfortably hot, and at dawn next morning, the moment the full orb of the sun topped the shoulder of the hill to the east, the air was full of mosquitoes. This remarkable warmth may perhaps have been due to the dense forest becoming much heated during the daytime by the sun; then, owing to the tendency of the hot air to rise, a slow but continuous current of air filtered up the mountain side among the trees, so keeping us warm all through the night.

So comfortable were we that it was late before breakfast was finished and we made our plans for the day. Collie, Outram, and Weed started off to explore the newly discovered Bush Pass, while the others shouldered our somewhat bulky impedimenta and tramped down through the woods to the camp. At the tents appeared Fred and Robson, with faces as long as their arms, greatly scared at our late arrival and the non-appearance of the other three members of the party. Fred, armed with our spare ice-axe, was about to start out at the head of a search-party, and expressed himself strongly on the subject of climbing mountains for mere amusement. In the background were Dave

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and Clarence, apparently less concerned for our safety, but—most blessed sight!—with the missing baggage which they had found at Laggan on their arrival.

Meanwhile the others, after a fatiguing tramp through the woods, had reached the Bush Pass. Collie had hoped to find it practicable for horses, but there was a short but steep snow-slope on the eastern side up which it would be difficult to take baggage-animals. In any case, to get an outfit even to the foot of the pass would mean an immense amount of cutting for the first few miles, though higher up the valley opens out. On the west side there seemed to be no snow or other difficulty, the valley stretching in a south-westerly direction till it joins the south fork of the Bush River, which runs at right angles to it. All the rocks on the summit are heavily glaciated, and at one time a huge glacier must have poured over it, whether in a northerly or southerly direction it is impossible to say. The height by the aneroid barometer was 7800 feet, or well above timber-line.

Next morning the partnership between the two outfits, having accomplished the purpose for which it had been formed, was dissolved.

LIFE IN CAMP

Mr. Outram and his party returned post-haste to their former quarters in the west branch, where, in company with Christian Kaufmann, he climbed Mount Bryce and another peak on the Lyell range. We, less energetic, preferred to take a brief rest after our labours, and tasted the delights of a lazy day in camp. Yet were we not altogether idle; for Woolley, who seems as he grows older to get more enterprising than ever, climbed up on to the slopes of Coronation Peak with his big camera, and took some admirable photographs of Mount Forbes. Collie, Stutfield, and Weed did not stir from the tents. They found plenty to do, however; for in camp-life there need never be any lack of occupation for an off day. Especially had we found this to be the case in the absence of Dave and Clarence, which had left us very short-handed; and we often had to give a helping hand in unpacking the horses, putting up the tents, fetching water, or chopping firewood. Then, when the camp was fixed, there were always onions to be peeled and boiled, clothes to be mended or washed, boots to be greased, photographic plates and films to be changed, baggage to be arranged and the commissariat to be examined, dishes and cups and

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plates to be washed up, and a hundred and one other odd jobs to be done—Collie on occasions practised the intricacies of the “diamond hitch”—which together go to make up life in the backwoods. Doubtless if one were compelled to do these things they would be less agreeable; the pleasure consists in doing them because you feel so disposed.

On the 13th the camp was moved into the adjoining valley leading up to the Howse Pass, and we took up our quarters at the foot of Howse Peak with a view to climbing that mountain. Next morning, emerging from the woods after a tiring climb of over two hours, we followed a rocky ridge leading straight up towards our peak. Presently, however, we found ourselves cut off by a couple of precipitous rock faces intersecting the ridge. The first was negotiated without much difficulty, but the second proved a more formidable affair. Hans and Woolley, after expending much time and labour and performing some really remarkable acrobatic feats, succeeded in getting down a perpendicular rock chimney about fifty feet high: the rest of the party, less avid of glory and doubtful if time would allow us all to follow in their wake, preferred the safer but more undignified

ASCENT OF HOWSE PEAK

course of descending into the valley and re-mounting to the ridge further on. The remainder of the climb was a long snow grind, with only a few crevasses here and there that required a certain amount of care; and we reached the top eight hours from the start. Howse Peak, by aneroid barometer, is apparently the same height as Mount Freshfield, and it shares with Balfour the primacy of the Waputehk range.

The summit is formed of a most enormous snow cornice running along the ridge for a great distance, and overhanging the terrific precipices which line the western side of Bear Creek above Waterfowl Lake. Crawling on our stomachs one by one to the edge, while the others held a firm grip of the rope, we looked over. The rocks fell absolutely sheer for some thousands of feet, and the valley, with its rolling pine-clad hills, and the river, a mere ribbon of pearly grey, winding between green meadows and dull drab shingle-flats, lay spread out immediately below us. The rocky pinnacle of Pyramid was quite close, and at the foot of its precipices, 5000 feet in depth, a sea-green lake of considerable size, that we had not seen before, lay amid the pines. The rest of the view was spoiled by the smoke-haze, our ancient enemy,

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recalling memories of our trip in 1898. The nearer mountains loomed grimly through the fog; and a fine peak on the eastern side of the Freshfield group was named by Collie after Sir Martin Conway. Forbes could just be seen lifting its head high above all its neighbours, but everything beyond a radius of ten or twelve miles was quite invisible. The forest fires, it was evident, were beginning in real earnest; and with deep disgust we saw volumes of smoke issuing, as from the crater of a volcano, from the lower end of the Glacier Lake valley, whither we had intended to shift our camp on the following day. Clearly we were in for another bad time, as far as scenery and photography were concerned; but when we were half-way down the mountain side the haze became somewhat less dense, and we had a most beautiful view that embraced many of the most characteristic features of Canadian Rocky Mountain landscape.

The sun was low above the horizon; the lurid brassy glare, which is the inevitable accompaniment of smoke in the atmosphere, overspread the sky, and the graceful forms of the mountains, their outlines softened by the all-prevailing vapour, towered high above the



VALLEY OF THE SASKATCHEWAN



FORDING THE SASKATCHEWAN

ASCENT OF HOWSE PEAK

dark mysterious pine-woods and gleaming glaciers. Beneath us were the broad sandy bars and shingle-flats at the head of the west fork of the Saskatchewan, whose numerous winding rivulets and streams flowed glittering in the fading sunlight, like a tangled skein of golden threads, amid rocky knolls and pebbly islands crowned by clumps of firs. A land of infinite beauty and strange subtle charm—melancholy, no doubt, even gloomy, in certain of its aspects; especially when the evening shadows rest on the sombre and monotonous expanse of forest, and the departing sun leaves the mountains grey and cold; but, however cheerless the scene at nightfall, one reflects that the peaks will be gilded anew in the morning, and that the full light of day will lend life and animation even to the darkest recesses of the woods.

CHAPTER XVI

GLACIER LAKE AND THE LYELL ICE-FIELD

It had been our intention to journey straight from Howse Peak to Glacier Lake, but the fire that was evidently raging in the valley of the latter made a preliminary inspection desirable. We therefore pitched the tents on our previous camping-ground nearly opposite the mouth of the Glacier Lake stream, and in the afternoon Fred, Stutfield, and Weed rode across the Saskatchewan to the lake. The fire was burning merrily at the further end, and the forest at the water's edge was belching forth big columns of dun-coloured smoke, while smaller patches of brushwood were ablaze higher up the mountain-side. The woods at the nearer end were as yet quite untouched by the fire; so on the following day we moved the outfit over the river up to the lake. The sand on the further side of the wash-out, as well as some high banks of white clay lining the river, was covered with goat tracks, and we found tufts of their wool clinging to the bushes all

GLACIER LAKE

over the place. Curiously enough, the Rocky Mountain goat has a white woolly pelt, while his neighbour the bighorn, or mountain sheep, is covered with a coat of straight tawny hair. The clay bluffs along this part of the Saskatchewan are heavily impregnated with salt, and the goats come down to the licks in large numbers. It is a great mistake to suppose, as some writers on American sport would have us believe, that mountain sheep or goats are only, or even generally, to be found on break-neck rocks or inaccessible precipices. The sheep which Stutfield shot near Wilcox Pass, and most of the goats he saw elsewhere, were on quite easy ground; and at the time of which we are writing there were far more goats in the forests than on the high peaks. While we were mountaineering at the head of the Middle Fork valley our men saw them at intervals in bands of five, ten, or even twenty crossing the river bottom or gambolling about on the shingle-flats in the mid-day sun.

From the ford over the Saskatchewan to Glacier Lake is a ride of barely two miles, but there is much beautiful scenery on the way. A few hundred yards above its junction with the main river the stream issues from a canyon

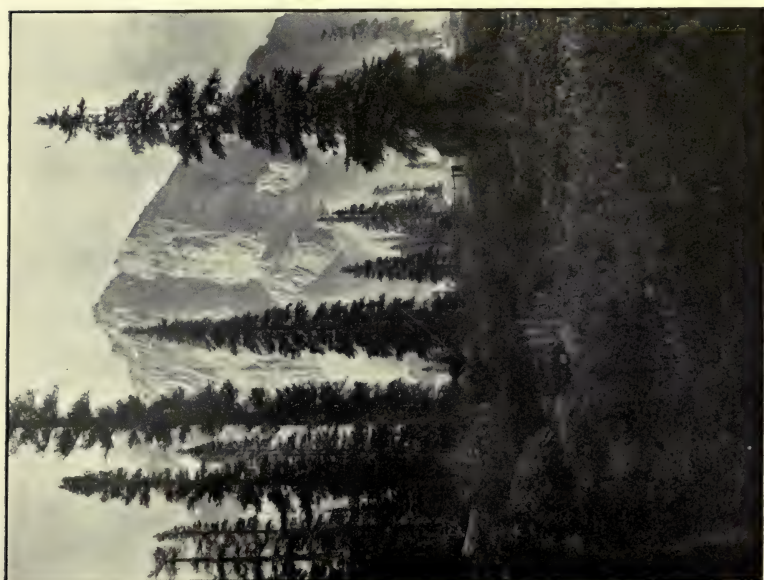
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into a good-sized lake of a brilliant blue-green colour. A short distance higher up is a remarkable log - jam completely bridging the stream, so that men and animals can cross over with ease; and it is a favourite passage of the wild goats. Even in Dr. Hector's time (1858) this spot seems to have been a usual crossing - place, for he mentions that "while halting here a bighorn sheep came down the mountain almost close to us, but, seeing us first, made off without our getting a shot. Nimrod, an Indian hunter who accompanied him, says this is the only place where these are to be seen so far in the mountains." There are certainly none in the vicinity nowadays.

Above the log-jam the trail — which is a good and well-worn one, Glacier Lake being a favourite hunting-ground of the Stoney Indians — climbs over a high clay bluff, and from the top there bursts upon the traveller a most exquisite view of the lake, hemmed in by lofty mountains descending steeply to the water's edge, and the great ice-fall of the Lyell Glacier at its head. The waters of the lake are of a most beautiful turquoise blue; and the stream, half-choked with the accumulation of logs, flows out from it, stealthily at first, then with augment-



GLACIER LAKE



AN IDEAL CAMPING-GROUND

GLACIER LAKE

ing speed, until it plunges into the canyon, its banks fringed with pine-trees, and half-fallen dead or decayed trunks projecting at various angles over the water. Our camp was made on the hill-side some few hundred feet above the lake, commanding a fine prospect southwards up the valley we had just left, and over the Howse Pass. Our intention was to form a base-camp beyond the further end of the lake, from which we could explore the great ice-field of the Lyell Glacier; but it would have been madness to attempt to take horses through the burning forest, so Fred Stephens said he would make us a raft on which we could ferry ourselves and part of the outfit to our destination, leaving the heavy baggage and the horses to look after themselves.

It rained hard all next day, Sunday the 17th, and we passed the time about the tents in conversation of a varied and instructive character. We were remarkably fortunate in our staff of men, most of whom had seen life in very different, but equally interesting, aspects in out-of-the-way parts of the earth. Robson had been through the Boer War with Strathcona's Horse, and had great things to tell of the prowess of General Buller, and the ignorance

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of those who knew not the peculiarities of horses and the various methods of "getting along" on the open veldt. He was a very good talker on a variety of other subjects, with a vein of quiet sarcasm, which was vented largely on the bedroom mattress and the degradation of people who used such things. Fred told of his trapping and hunting adventures; and Dave Tewksbury's experiences in the lumber camps of the Far West were well worth listening to—of the life men led there, the dangers of the trade, and how single logs could be used for the purposes of navigation instead of the ordinary boat. Clarence was great on farming; and Hans, though his limited knowledge of English prevented him from contributing many ideas to the general stock, was nevertheless a most genial companion and very popular with the whole outfit.

On the Monday Fred and Dave set to work with a will on the raft, and the sound of their chopping could be heard all day through the woods. The rest of us spent the day in fishing and hunting. The fish obstinately refused to look at flies and other lures of the best London make, but Collie, using a pole and a piece of twine and a hook baited with a lump of bacon

GLACIER LAKE

fat, landed a bull trout of about 6 lbs., with a most gigantic head and a mouth into which Fred could insert his capacious fist; and we had a fish supper worthy of Greenwich. Stutfeld, meanwhile, explored the continuation of the ridge of Survey Peak in search of goat. From the hill-side, about 1000 feet above the tents, he had a splendid view of Mount Forbes, which from this point is a marvellously slender and gracefully tapering pyramid. On the crest of the ridge he found himself within a few hundred yards of where he and Collie had been in 1898, on their ascent of Survey Peak; and he looked down once more into the "happy valley," with its broad carpet of turf and ring of grim black precipices—a sequestered spot which should be an ideal feeding-ground for goat; but not one was to be seen on either side of the ridge. Probably the fire had scared them all out of this part of the country. Continuing westwards along the ridge to the base of a great square-topped rock-tower that stands guard over the northern shore of the lake, he found himself right above the forest fire, and had an admirable opportunity of observing how these conflagrations commence their devastating careers.

The rain of the previous day had some-

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what quenched its ardour, but with a renewal of the fine weather it was preparing for a fresh start. The still damp underbrush was smouldering, the fire now dying away, now suddenly rising again. Occasionally great tongues and jets of flame would shoot skywards, as some clump of extra dry timber got ablaze; and, with a mighty crackling, thousands of sparks and red-hot pieces of wood flew up, followed by immense slowly-rising pillars of smoke that expanded, umbrella-like, towards the top; and, lit by the rays of the declining sun, gradually enveloped the surrounding peaks with a lurid haze. The fire had not, as yet, embraced any one large expanse of wood; but it was slowly eating its way like a pestilence eastwards in small scattered patches which gradually united, and, if the fine weather continued, it was evident that wide tracts of the neighbouring forests would be destroyed.

An hour or two's work next morning sufficed to bring the raft to completion. It was a large and very fine specimen of naval architecture, made of good-sized logs lashed together with cinches (pack-ropes), and wooden cross-pieces and branches laid thereon to raise our goodly pile of baggage above the water. She was named



FIRE AT GLACIER LAKE



RAFTING ON GLACIER LAKE

GLACIER LAKE

“The Glacier Belle,” but we had no liquor to waste on her christening. The baggage was brought down on the horses, and piled up and lashed securely on the raised portions of the raft, the edifice being fitly crowned by the colossal form of the mattress amid jeers from the packers. Punting-poles were fashioned out of pine saplings; Fred sang out, “All aboard”; and, with everybody pushing and shoving with poles, and chattering a strange medley of railway and nautical jargon, we committed ourselves to the deep. It was a brilliant morning; the sun was blazing hot; not a breath stirred, and the mountains and rocks and trees were reflected with startling clearness in the placid surface of the lake. We hugged the northern shore as closely as possible, but it shelved so rapidly into deep water that punting was no easy matter. Raft, freight, and passengers must have weighed two or three tons, so it may be imagined our speed was not that of an Atlantic greyhound. Dave, with his lumbering experience, was naturally the handy man of the party at this sort of job, and by a unanimous vote he was elected skipper. Robson also showed great energy with a tow-rope on the bank, whenever towing was practicable; and thus, punting, pushing,

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paddling, and hauling for some hours, we gradually approached the further end of the lake. The scenery grew grander as we advanced. Eastwards Mount Murchison came into view, a most imposing mass: in the opposite direction was the Lyell glacier, with its attendant peaks and magnificent ice-fall brilliantly mirrored in the turquoise, or rather peacock-blue, water.

At the western end of the lake a wide swampy valley descends four or five miles from the Lyell ice-field. Probably in former days the lake, which is gradually being filled in by alluvial matter, occupied the greater part of this valley. As the ground was very wet and the river was overflowing its banks, we put up our tents on the hillside in the forest.

Next day we packed our sleeping-bags and a good stock of provisions, and started to bivouac at the foot of the ice-fall for a journey of exploration over the Lyell glacier. The distance was not great, but the logs and thickets of willow and alder evoked sad memories of the Bush valley; and we got exceedingly wet in the muskegs along the river bank. However, we found a most comfortable place for a bivouac, and dawn saw us off for the upper snows along

THE LYELL ICE-FIELD

the moraine running parallel to the ice-fall. Our route lay due north—at first it was very possibly that taken by Dr. Hector in 1858, when he climbed the small peak marked on the maps as Mount Sullivan—and we had a long and weary tramp before we reached the upper glacier, which, like that of the Columbia ice-field, is a wide snow-covered plateau more like a big snow-field than a glacier. Behind us, across the valley where we had passed the night, and under a heavy canopy of cloud, was Forbes—from this point of view no slender elegant pyramid, as from the hill above Glacier Lake, but an unshapely monster, grand and terrible under the rapidly darkening sky, and of most forbidding aspect. Its snow-slopes seemed to rise an immense height from their base; and we noticed that they were scarred with avalanche tracks, which told us how fortunate we had been in finding a firm crust upon the snow when we descended.

Scrambling to the top of a rocky summit on the right, we looked down into a somewhat remarkable valley, almost perfectly straight, with steep and wooded sides topped by high mountains, and filled with innumerable lakes. The stream flowing down it discharges itself

CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION

into the north fork of the Saskatchewan just under the cliffs of Mount Wilson, and at the head of the valley is Mount Lyell. We have named it the "Valley of Lakes." Descending again to the glacier we tramped on over the soft snow towards Mount Lyell, which rose straight in front of us—three low, rounded, white humps, the right-hand one falling in a rock-face towards the east. Starting, as it does, from an elevated snow-plateau, Lyell, for its height, is a singularly uninteresting and unimposing mountain. However, some of the party, Hans and Woolley in particular, were anxious to make the ascent, which would have been merely a tiring trudge up a moderate slope of snow; but bad weather was coming up from the west, and all three peaks were already in mist, so the project was overruled. Hans was greatly shocked.

"What, not climb Mount Lyell?" he exclaimed in horrified tones: "you will regret it very much!"

Hans cared nought for geography: his business was to climb mountains, not to admire or map them; and he would much rather go up a high peak in a fog than get the finest view in the world from a lower one. We, however,



FORBES FROM THE LYELL ICE-FIELD



HOWSE PEAK FROM THE WEST (*see p. 287*)

THE LYELL ICE-FIELD

who wished to study the surrounding country, thought that a small protuberance of snow near the centre of the glacier, and below the level of the now thickly gathering mists, would suit us much better; and the lazy ones of the party had their way. From the summit of our little peak we could see well the Bush peak and the valleys round it; also other mountains northwards of Bush peak, to the west of which we had been in 1900. Moreover, Collie observed how the ridge, of which Lyell is a part, bent away to the north-west and the Thompson pass.

We went down by a shorter and more precipitous way, having some rather interesting ice-work in a maze of crevasses on the steep slope, and some splendid glissades below. On the longest of these glissades Collie knocked his pipe out of his mouth with his ice-axe, and, in attempting to save it, lost his balance and rolled head over heels to the bottom in a series of most undignified positions. Unluckily, his descent was so rapid that none of the rest of the party were quick enough to photograph him.

After leaving the glacier we skirted the top of the woods on the hill-side facing the great ice-fall; and for the first time had an opportunity of gauging, from higher ground, its true

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dimensions and grandeur. Incomparably the finest we have seen in the Rockies, it is on a larger scale than anything of the kind in Switzerland. It is of immense width, with a band of cliffs, surmounted at their northern end by blue ice-pinnacles, dividing the upper from the lower glacier for the greater part of the distance. The meltings of the higher snows fall over these cliffs in a series of waterfalls, and the roar of the ice-avalanches was constant and deafening.

Not wishing to fight our way again through those tiresome woods, we picked up our sleeping-bags and other chattels that we had left behind, and, crossing the snout of the glacier, climbed a high bluff overhanging a gorge through which the stream made its exit, and descended the right bank of the river. The route, though longer, was a good deal easier than the left bank, but it necessitated our wading through the river in order to get back to camp.

We had now explored the last of the four great plateaux of ice and snow in this region of the Canadian Rockies—the others being the Columbia, the Freshfield, and the Waputehk glaciers; and, as a result of a consultation that

GLACIER LAKE

evening, it was decided that, as there appeared to be no more mountaineering of an interesting nature to be done in the neighbourhood, we should return with all speed to Laggan, and wind up the season with some climbing in the Valley of the Ten Peaks, which none of us, except Weed, had visited. We should have much liked to revisit our old haunts to the north on Wilcox Pass, but we had not nearly enough time; so early next morning Fred and Clarence started on foot to collect the horses at the last camp, while the rest of us loaded the "Glacier Belle" with the baggage. The logs of which that noble vessel was constructed had become thoroughly sodden with their three days' immersion, and she was an inch or two lower in the water than when we started. However, by heightening the platform in the centre we managed to keep our things fairly dry. A stiff breeze was blowing, luckily in the right direction, so we set up a canvas pack-cover on two poles as a sail; and, with Dave at the helm, and youth, personified by Hans, at the prow, we were slowly wafted into the port whence we had started. The fire was still burning as we passed; and the once thickly

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wooded hillside, now blackened and bereft of its beautiful primeval forest—an unsightly waste of charred tree-stumps, shrivelled-up bushes, and calcined earth—presented a most melancholy spectacle. It will be a long while before these ravages can be repaired; and the scenery of this beautiful lake, which has few rivals in the Rockies, is, we fear, sadly marred for many a year to come.

Luckily for us, the horses had not strayed far; and Fred and Clarence had them all ready by the lake-side when we disembarked. The men all worked with a will; the ponies were quickly packed; and evening saw us encamped once more, and for the last time, at Bear Creek. From here, dispensing with the customary day's halt, we pushed on to the lower Waterfowl Lake. The weather was showery, but in the evening both Pyramid and Howse Peak unveiled their heads for once; and Dave broke forth into renewed expressions of rapture at the grandeur of the scene. Next morning, August the 24th, leaving the packers to follow with the outfit, we rode ahead for two hours along the trail; tethered the horses, and ascended a rock peak on the



HOWSE PEAK AND WATERFOWL LAKE

THE LYELL ICE-FIELD

eastern side of the valley in order to investigate the country lying between the Siffleur and Bear Creek. Climbing up a steep snow couloir we reached the arête, whence easy rocks and shale took us on to the summit. Our elevation was greater than we had expected, being over 10,000 feet above sea-level; and the peak proved an admirable view-point. The scenery, looking east, was singularly unlovely, barren hills covered with interminable slopes of drab earth and shale alternating with small glaciers and patches of snow. However, we learned all we wanted to know about the lie of the land; and a portion of the country lying eastwards of Mount Murchison we saw for the first time. There appeared to be only two valleys of any magnitude, one being that of the Dolomite stream, up which Thompson, Noyes, and Weed had travelled in 1898.

From this summit, which we named after Mr. Noyes, we recognised the splendid isolation of Murchison, and its series of rugged peaks stood up magnificently against the white clouds. Almost due north, and to the right of the most easterly point of Murchison, could be seen the highest of the mountains in the group lying between the Cataract River and

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the Saskatchewan. This mountain overlooks the historic Kootenay Plain, and Collie named it "Cline Peak," after the trader who in by-gone days, as described in Hector's "Journals,"¹ journeyed yearly through that part of the country to and from Jasper House.

¹ See page 82.

CHAPTER XVII

MORaine LAKE AND THE TEN PEAKS

THE following day we crossed the Bow Pass and camped on the shore of the Upper Bow Lake. The horses, with their noses set homeward, and tormented by clouds of bull-dogs, became quite skittish and rattled along at a grand rate. These flies persecuted us all the way back to Laggan, their numbers being extraordinary. Beyond the lake we encountered a new insect plague in the shape of swarms of wasps—hornets, or “yellow-jackets,” the men called them—which afforded an additional stimulus to violent exertion on the part of the cayooses. At intervals throughout the day one or another of the latter would suddenly fling his heels in the air, or gallop madly through the woods for no apparent cause, shedding his pack piecemeal as he went; when we at once knew that he had disturbed a colony of “yellow-jackets.” The packers had a busy time of it. In particular, the mattress or “bedroom suite,” as Robson preferred to call it, seemed to spend half

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its time on the ground, or else in being re-adjusted on the pony's back : and this, somewhat unreasonably as we thought, provoked much bad feeling and worse language among the men, who protested that nobody could possibly make a pack of it that would stay on a cayoose's back for any length of time. Much heated argument ensued, and winged words were flying round as thickly as the wasps and the bull-dogs. Finally, so bitter and cruel became the taunts levelled at the mattress that the soul of the outfit's Poet Laureate was stirred to its depths ; and, taking up his pen on behalf of this most useful piece of furniture, he composed and recited (at his own request) round the camp fire that evening the following ode :—

TO MY MATTRESS

THE plague of the packer, the tenderfoot's joy,
Though mosquitoes be spiteful and bull-dogs annoy ;
My bed after labour, my sofa in leisure,
They call thee a nuisance—I deem thee a treasure !
They growl and they gird at thy corpulent form—
I deny that its bulk is exceeding the norm ;
A trifle unwieldy, I grant you, and weighty,
A blending of *otium* with much *dignitate*,
'Tis something akin to an Eastern divan—
Just the right sort of thing for an ease-loving man !

See ! the cayoose in fury bounds off with a snort,
For his pack, mountain-high, has a bad list to port,

ODE TO THE MATTRESS

And he's quite unaccustomed to loads of this sort :
He's kicking and swishing the flies with his tail,
And—Lordy ! there's mattress and all on the trail !

In a lively refrain
Of language profane,

And a chorus of swear-words, the packers complain ;
Maledictions upon thee descend like the rain :
But a fig for the horrors invoked on thy head,
The ructions of Robson, the gibing of Fred ;
These slight misadventures that Dave gets so cross over
Shouldn't ruffle the calm of our backwoods philosopher !

Dost *thou* ever flinch
When the pitiless cinch

Screws up thy fat sides to the very last inch ?
And tighter than woman was ever tight-laced
Is the grip of the diamond hitch on thy waist.
Thy cuticle's sadly abraded and worn ;
With the spears of the pine-wood thy body is torn ;
Yet, mangled and battered and twisted awry,
Still bulky, disdainful, inert dost thou lie !

When, at nightfall, the outfit lies under the stars,
'Mid the perfume of pine-trees and five-cent cigars—
A draggle-tailed crew, all unshaven and hairy,
Peak-climbers, and far-faring folk of the prairie—
When the camp-fire is dying, and fitful its rays
As a log on a sudden leaps into a blaze ;

When the mists on the hill
Their moisture distil,

Thy armour is proof against dampness and chill :
That my bones do not ache, that my joints can work free,
My blessing and thanks, stout old Mattress, to thee !
Thy panoply shields me from stumps and from stones
When the earth's like a brick, and in dolorous tones
My comrades inform me they're racked to the bones ;
That A has the cramp, B a cold in his nose—
It's exceedingly odd, but the tale of their woes
Doesn't seem to disturb in the least my repose !

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Let the flies on my top-knot be playing ping-pong,
While mosquitoes in chorus oblige with a song ;
Let the wind in the spruces be wailing and souging,
As their stems to its onset are gracefully bowing :

The tempest may vent

Its rage on our tent,

And the darkening heavens with lightnings be rent ;
The thunder may rattle, the hurricane roar—
While Woolley keeps dodging the draught on the floor
Because Weed has forgotten to fasten the door,
And the Doctor's expounding his chemical lore—
Still at peace on thy broad ample bosom I snore.

L'Envoi.

Farewell—for we have reached our journey's ending—

Poor fluttering rags, poor wisps of mouldering hay !

Our campaign's o'er ; my Mattress past all mending,

The first, the only, victim of the fray.

Pile on the logs ; heap high the funeral pyre :

Who's got a match ? myself shall light the fire.

Our trifling troubles were nearing their end ;
and—all too soon—mattress, kicking cayooses,
biting bull-dogs, mosquitoes, and wasps would
be no more than a memory, and the comforts
and the dull routine of civilised existence would
be ours once again.

On the way home no less than three outfits
were met on their way north, which we took to
be a sign of the growing popularity of the
Canadian Rockies. Owing to the trampling
it had received, the trail through the muskegs



LAGGAN GROUP OF MOUNTAINS FROM THE BOW VALLEY



HUNGABEE, VICTORIA, AND LEFROY, FROM NEPTUAK

MORAINÉ LAKE

was in a shocking state, and the mud-holes were worse than ever. As the traffic up the valley grows, it will probably be found absolutely necessary to carry the trail, as previously suggested, along the hillside above the swamps. Laggan was reached at noon on Wednesday the 27th; and the tents had hardly been put up when a storm of hail and sleet set in, which was the precursor of ten days' bad weather.

Next morning we started along the carriage road leading to the Lake Louise châlet, *en route* for Moraine Lake and the valley of the Ten Peaks, a journey of about fifteen miles. From the châlet we found an excellent trail in course of construction by the Canadian Pacific Railway, and only the last two miles remained to be completed. The trail follows the route to Saddle Mountain at first; then, after crossing the stream which flows down from the beautiful Paradise Valley, described at length in Mr. Wilcox's book, it winds along a shoulder of Mount Temple at timber-line. Rounding a corner of the hill, we had a sudden and most striking view of Moraine Lake and the magnificent range of the Ten Peaks, with their tremendous precipices, rising beyond. Presently we came to the end of the trail, where a gang of

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men were hard at work upon it; and, dropping down through the woods into the valley, reached the lake. The weather continued cold and disagreeable, so we camped in the most sheltered spot we could find in the adjoining forest.

Moraine Lake, so named by Mr. Wilcox in 1899, from a curious isolated pile of *débris* at its eastern end, is not the least striking of the many beautiful mountain tarns of the Canadian Rockies. Not even Lake Louise can boast of so noble a galaxy of guardian mountains as is furnished by the range of the Ten Peaks and the craggy and imposing pile of Mount Temple. On the other hand, the lake itself, its wooded shores, and immediate surroundings, are distinctly inferior in picturesqueness of form and composition both to Louise and Glacier Lake, though the turquoise blue of the water, in spite of the dull weather and lowering skies, struck us as being more than ordinarily brilliant. The lake abounds with rainbow trout, but we could not induce them to rise at the fly.

On Saturday the 30th we moved the outfit some distance up the valley beyond the further end of the lake, hoping to find a more convenient base for mountaineering in the event

THE TEN PEAKS

of the weather improving. On the verge of the forest, however, we were overtaken by a violent storm of wind and snow, and the order was given to camp at once. The site was a magnificent one, right opposite the centre of the Ten Peaks, whose precipices, picked out with little snow patches and seamed with bands of curiously parti-coloured rock, rose almost vertically 3000 feet above the glacier. The latter is of a dirty brown colour, the ice being covered with piles of moraine and *débris*, which suggested the alternative name of Desolation Valley. A novel feature in the landscape was the number of mountain larches among the surrounding trees, which formed quite an agreeable change after the interminable pines and spruces of Bear Creek and the Saskatchewan valley. The woods, moreover, were fairly open, as is usually the case where the larch flourishes. It is a hardy tree, being found mostly in the neighbourhood of timber-line; yet, in spite of its *penchant* for the rigours of an Alpine climate, we never saw it growing north of the railway.

Showers of light hail and sleet, the drippings from the clouds that hung persistently round the higher mountain tops, fell continuously for the next two days; and climbing was not to

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be thought of. Taking advantage of a slight break in the bad weather, Weed conducted us one afternoon to the summit of a pass leading over into Prospectors' Valley, which he had traversed the previous year with Mr. C. Thompson and Hans on an unsuccessful attempt to reach the top of Mount Hungabee. We had a fine view of that majestic peak on the way up, and discussed projects of an assault on its formidable precipices as soon as the weather cleared. On the moraine of the glacier we found a number of most curious and apparently fossil remains in the Cambrian quartzites.¹ The pass, which crosses the range forming the continental watershed at a height of about 8000 feet, lies between Neptuak, or Number Nine—the Ten Peaks are so called after the first ten numerals of the Indian language—and Hungabee ("The Chieftain") which, though belonging to an entirely separate group of mountains, appears to have been reckoned as one of the ten by Mr. S. E. S. Allen who named them. Of the other nine peaks the highest and most striking is Number Eight, about 10,900 feet, which also bears the name

¹ An account of these remarkable rock specimens, by Professor Bonney, F.R.S., appears in the *Geographical Journal* for May, 1903, pp. 498, 500.

ASCENT OF NEPTUAK

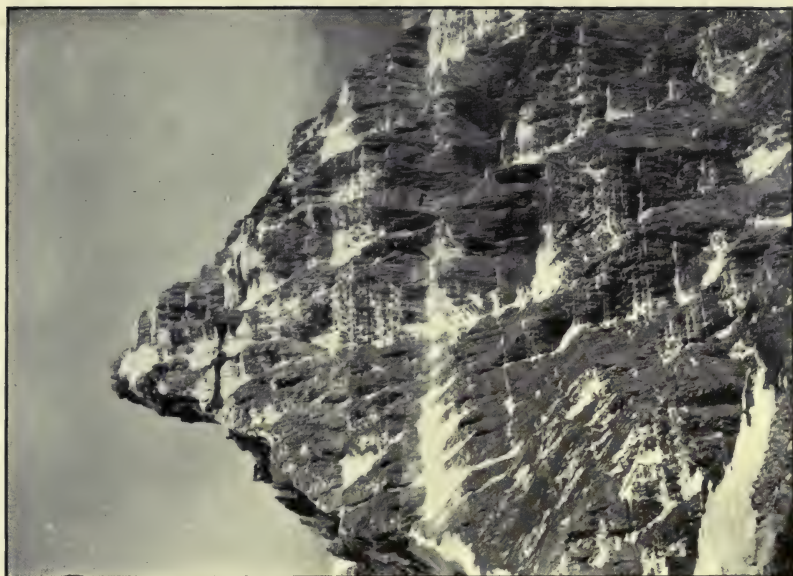
of Deltaform, from its triangular shape. The ascent of both Hungabee and Deltaform must be made from the side of Prospectors' Valley.

Thursday, September 2nd, was a fine day, so we got up early to do a climb of some description. Deltaform and Hungabee were voted out of the question owing to the quantities of new snow; and our choice eventually fell on Neptuak, the northernmost summit of the range, which, viewed from the summit of the pass, seemed to offer the prospect of a good climb. Woolley remarks in his paper that the mountain, as seen from the pass, may be roughly compared to the Eiger from the Little Scheideck. Turning to our left, we traversed a small but steep snow-slope and got on to the arête. For some distance the going was easy enough, but presently we found our way barred by some formidable-looking walls and towers of rock. On our left we looked down the tremendous sheer precipice facing Desolation Valley: below on the right were shale-slopes and couloirs, now sheeted with ice, down which stones and icicles were falling with unpleasant frequency. We therefore decided to stick to the arête; and the result was one of the best climbs of the trip. It was good hard scrambling nearly

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the whole way, the rocks being almost vertical in places and the hand-holds not over-abundant ; and, being a party of five on one rope, we made but slow progress. " During the ascent " of these rocks, to quote once more from Woolley's paper, " we made a closer acquaintance with the variegated strata seen in the cliffs from below. First we encountered a layer of light-coloured limestone very much shattered ; then came a bed of much firmer dark brown rock, then more pale loose limestone, and near the top almost black limestone with light veins." Towards the summit the inevitable cornice was encountered, and, traversing some distance below it, we climbed a narrow ridge of rocks overhung with snow and found ourselves on the highest point at 3 P.M. Our height appeared to be 10,500 feet.

The view was an entirely new one to all of us, except Weed and Hans, the foreground being filled in with a set of mountains whose heads were only dimly discernible from the peaks about the head-waters of the Saskatchewan. Northwards the terraced cliffs of Hungabee chiefly attracted our gaze, with the massive forms of Victoria and Lefroy immediately to the right : across Prospectors' Valley rose



MOUNT DELTAFORM



CLIMBING NEPTUAK

ASCENT OF NEPTUAK

Mount Vaux and the three pinnacles of Good-sir, the most imposing, and perhaps the loftiest, peak in this region of the Rockies, with Sir Donald and the Selkirks beyond, and a sea of mountains rolling, wave upon wave, further to the west. Quite close to us southwards, across a dip in the ridge, the grim precipices of the triangular Deltaform towered, tier upon tier, some hundreds of feet above our heads; and from this point of view they did not look at all inviting. After half-an-hour spent in taking our bearings and photographing we began the descent, and it was late in the afternoon before we got off the rocks. We had a couple of merry glissades down the snow, and then tramped homewards, reaching the tents soon after sundown.

Neptuak proved our last climb. All Wednesday and Thursday it blew and sleeted and snowed, and the hillsides once more donned their winter mantles; so, having only two more days to spend in the mountains, on the Friday we struck camp and returned to Laggan. On the way down we stopped a few hours at the chalet, and enjoyed our first civilised dinner beneath Miss Mollison's hospitable roof. This over, with sorrow we bade farewell to Hans,

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who, in addition to being a first-rate guide, was an excellent fellow—very keen and good-tempered, and willing to do all sorts of things, from hard work on the mountain-side to carrying gigantic logs on his back for the camp-fire, or mending boots. In short, he was everything that the British climber is wont to write (with more or less truth) in his guide's "Führer Buch" at the close of his season in the Alps—and more besides.

An occasion of still greater regret was our parting, on the cars that evening towards midnight, with Fred, who accompanied us aboard "Number 2" on the way to his home at Lacombe. Much of the success, as well as the pleasure and good-fellowship, of our expeditions in 1900 and 1902 had been due to his unfailing tact, good temper, and management: and, when we said good-bye to him and stepped out on to the platform at Banff, we felt we were at the same time bidding farewell to the Canadian Rockies.

We were well content with the results of this our last journey among the mountains, which, at any rate as regards physical comfort, had been much the most agreeable of the four. From the geographical point of view a number of questions relating to the peaks, passes, and

A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW

glaciers had been satisfactorily solved. Several high mountains—chief among them being Mounts Forbes, Murchison, Freshfield, and Howse Peak—had been ascended for the first time, and their heights barometrically determined. We had discovered a pass across the main range between the Freshfield and the Lyell groups; explored the Lyell Glacier, and found out how the watershed ran from the Freshfield group to the peaks about the Columbia ice-field; and gained a much more detailed topographical knowledge of various outlying portions of the mountains—for instance, the portion south of the Freshfield group, that east of the peaks of Murchison, and that north-east of Mount Wilson.

Our climbs, moreover, and the continued fine weather with which we had been favoured, had enabled us better to appreciate the charm of the scenery in the Rockies, and also, at the same time, to gauge more correctly their merits and possibilities as a field for mountaineering. Regarded as a whole, and from the severely “greased pole” point of view that Mr. Ruskin used to deplore, it may be said at once that they can hardly, in this respect, become serious competitors with the Alps. Mount Forbes and a few other high peaks will always afford

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magnificent climbs, and excellent rock scrambling can be enjoyed on a host of minor summits ; but the majority of the loftier mountains will not test the skill of the modern Alpine gymnast very severely. The climber's chief obstacles at present are their distance from his base and the impenetrable character of the forests through which he has to fight his way. In future days, when trails are cut to the foot of the peaks, when the easiest routes to the summits are discovered, and the contempt bred of familiarity supervenes, it is possible that a good many of them may be lightly esteemed by up-to-date mountaineers. People with a taste for capturing virgin peaks will be able, by going a little further afield than their predecessors, to gratify their ambition in that direction for many years to come. They can climb half-a-dozen or so a week, if they have the fancy ; but we question whether the results will repay the trouble expended.

Nor, perhaps, from an æsthetic standpoint, can it be maintained that the Alps of Canada possess quite the grandeur or the stateliness of their European compeers. It is doubtful, for instance, if there are any mountain landscapes in the Rockies that vie in sublimity with the view of the Jungfrau from Interlachen,



AFTER THE BIGHORN HUNT (p. 113)

THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

the Italian sides of Mont Blanc, or Monte Rosa, or the Matterhorn. On the other hand, they have a very remarkable individuality and character, in addition to special beauties of their own which Switzerland cannot rival. The picturesque landscapes in the valleys; the magnificence of the vast forests, with their inextricable tangle of luxuriant undergrowth, and the wreck and ruin of the fallen tree-trunks; the size, number, and exquisite colouring of the mountain lakes—in these things the New Switzerland stands pre-eminent. In the Alps we can recall only one lake of any size surrounded by high glacier-clad mountains, namely, the *Æschinen See*; in the Rockies they may be counted by the score—gems of purest turquoise blue, in matchless settings of crag and forest scenery, glacier and snow, storm-riven peak, and gloomy mysterious canyon. Last, but by no means least, in the free wild life of the backwoods can be found absolute freedom from all taint of the vulgar or the commonplace; and the sense of mystery and of awe at the unknown—things which are gone for ever from the high mountain ranges of Europe—yet linger around the crests of the Northern Rockies.

Gradually, year by year, these things are

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getting appreciated by the outside world. Canada, as all the world knows, is now entering on a new era of commercial, agricultural, and industrial development. Vast tracts of country are being opened up in the great North-West; settlers are pouring in from the States and elsewhere, and the whole country is progressing in wealth and material prosperity by leaps and bounds. Coincidentally with this advance in riches there is growing in the West a taste for natural beauties, an appreciation, hitherto dormant, of the fair things of the earth, which in its turn is proving a new source of wealth. People have ceased to scoff at the mountains along the Divide as barren profitless things; and the Canadian Pacific Railway authorities, at any rate, with their accustomed shrewdness, have learned that even glaciers, if utilised with skill, may have a commercial value. A growing horde of tourists all along the railway is the result; while—most happily for those who shun the society of their fellow wayfarers, and long for the silent solitude of the forest, the grandeur and the keen air of the great peaks—a tent and an outfit always afford an easy means of escape from that over-civilisation which, as some of us think, is already sufficiently burdensome in our home surroundings.

CHAPTER XVIII

A NOTE ON SPORT AND GAME IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

IN the course of our expeditions among the mountains the shooting and hunting were always kept quite subordinate to the climbing, surveying, and exploration work; and it may be imagined that a large outfit of men and horses, with its accompaniment of bells tinkling and people talking and shouting, is not conducive to the tranquillity which is essential for the finding of game. At the same time we saw enough in the course of our travels to give us a pretty fair idea of the country's capacities as a field for sport—in that narrower sense of the word which limits its meaning to the pursuit and slaying of birds and beasts; and a few remarks, by way of conclusion, on this subject may not be out of place.

Although it is impossible to recommend the Canadian Rockies as a really first-rate hunting-ground—the “game hog,” as the Americans call the man avid of indiscriminate

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slaughter, and the sportsman who wishes to shoot with a minimum expenditure of time and labour, had better betake themselves elsewhere—enough sport may be obtained to add plenty of zest to a camping trip among the mountains. The only big game which the traveller has a reasonable chance of securing are Rocky Mountain sheep, or bighorn, wild goats, and bears. We saw a good many tracks of deer, and occasionally those of moose, elk (or wapiti), and cariboo, but these latter are so seldom met with that they are hardly worth taking into consideration.

Bighorn, in the early part of the last century, must have been plentiful all over these mountains. We may infer this from the works of David Thompson and other travellers, and also from the old game trails still visible along the hillsides. Now, however, in common with other big game throughout the world, they are rapidly decreasing in numbers; and, unless effectual measures are taken to preserve them, the fate of the buffalo must eventually be theirs. Even forty or fifty years ago the herds had been sadly thinned, and part of Captain Palliser's anxiety for the safety of Dr. Hector and his party was due to the fear that they

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might be starved owing to the difficulty of finding game for food. The scarcity of wild animals in those days was attributed to a succession of exceptionally severe winters, during which large numbers of sheep and goats had perished, to great fires through the woods and mountains on the eastern side of the main range, and also to a mysterious disease, apparently a kind of mange or scab, which attacked the bighorn. Still, from the accounts of Dr. Hector and other explorers in the middle of the century, it is evident that game was much more abundant then than now. The traveller by the Kootenay Plains in these days is not likely to be startled, like Hector, by the apparition of a hundred rams rushing by him so close as to enable him to throw stones at them; although Professor Coleman, on his journey¹ up the Cataract River to the headwaters of the Brazeau in 1902, saw several bighorn in the course of the expedition. They appear to frequent this part of the country more than any other on the eastern side of the chain. Peyto and Stutfield saw a good many tracks in the upper valley of the Brazeau; and the animals which the latter so rudely

¹ *Geographical Journal*, May, 1903.

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disturbed on the slopes of Wild Sheep Hills had evidently come there from the east.

The sheep in the mountains at the head of the north fork of the Saskatchewan were very seldom molested till quite recent years, as the Stoney Indians have a legend that certain members of their tribe were spirited away in this valley by some supernatural agency, and they are consequently afraid to go up it. Bighorn are more plentiful in the Lillooet and other districts of British Columbia, but the heads are not nearly so fine as those of the Rockies.

The Rocky Mountain goat is much commoner and more widely distributed than the bighorn, and anybody who goes up country after the former should be tolerably certain of getting one or two. They are often to be seen in the mountains on either side of the railway, where sheep seldom come nowadays, except in the depth of winter. They are pretty numerous in the Selkirks, which are too wet to be good ground for sheep; and we saw a fair number in the mountains at the head of the Bush Valley. The wild goat is no mean quarry, but he is a stupid beast, and, so long as the hunter keeps above him, he is by no means difficult to stalk.

As a matter of fact, there is little of the

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romantic glamour which hangs round chamois-hunting attaching to the chase of either Rocky Mountain sheep or goat. In some books dealing with sport in the American Rockies one reads of perilous adventures and hair-breadth escapes of bighorn hunters, who, like the conventional *gemsjäger* of the Alps, appear sometimes to have been very desperate characters and to have faced death in a variety of terrible shapes. In Canada and British Columbia, on the other hand, the pursuit of the bighorn is seldom attended with danger, as, although capable of surprising feats of agility on difficult rocks when hard pressed, they are usually to be found on quite easy ground, such as the grassy knolls and benches of rock above timber-line. Wild sheep have been killed, ere now, by men on horseback; and on our last return journey along the Bow trail we met an American gentleman and his daughter who were setting forth with the avowed intention of shooting bighorn from the saddle. Their efforts, however, we have since heard, were not crowned with success.

The wild goats of the Rockies have a distinct *penchant* for the summits of beetling crags and ledges running along dizzy precipices; but they

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too, like the bighorn, are more often to be found in easy country about timber-level. Comical, antediluvian-looking creatures are these old billies, with a venerable air of profound wisdom, which, however, greatly belies their true character. Like the chamois in certain parts of the Alps they sometimes frequent the lower woods, and we often saw their wool on the bushes by the banks of rivers and along the bottoms of the larger valleys. When alarmed they make off at a sort of heavy lumbering canter and betake themselves to the rocks, which they negotiate with perfect ease, but always with great caution. When a goat arrives at a difficult place he stops and surveys the ground carefully, slowly moving his head from side to side, until he has satisfied himself of the best route to take. Though a wondrously skilful climber, he has none of the careless dash and *élan* of the chamois, who seems to throw himself at the rocks without reflection, trusting, as it would appear, to chance and his own marvellous agility to carry him through.

Bears, black, brown, and grizzly, abound more or less all over the Rockies. Traces of them are often to be seen where they have been grubbing in the moss at the roots of large trees ; and their footprints may be followed across the

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sandy bars and broad shingly flats at the head of the larger valleys, or on the muddy banks of the smaller mountain tarns. Hunting them, however, is an extremely difficult matter; and very few bears are killed by visitors to the country. Probably not one is shot by hunters for twenty that are caught in traps. The woods are so vast, and the undergrowth so dense, that the sportsman, unless uncommonly lucky, must be prepared to expend much time and trouble before he meets with success. Indians are probably the best hunters for this sort of work. The impenetrable thickets of the Blaeberry Creek are a favourite *habitat* of bears, as are also the immense forests on the slopes of the Selkirks and along the west side of the main Rocky Mountain chain, but the traveller may journey for months together without Bruin ever putting in an appearance. Occasionally he may emerge into the open to feed on the berries which grow thickly on the sunny hill-sides, but as a rule he prefers to remain concealed in the mysterious recesses of the forests. In the winter he "dens up" in some dark hole under a rock, sheltered from the piercing wind by the snow-laden bushes.

Of the smaller varieties of game the com-

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monest are the willow grouse, or "fool-hen," the blue grouse, and the ptarmigan. These birds are exceedingly useful for the purpose of replenishing the larder, but shooting them can hardly be called sport. Ducks of various kinds, teal, and widgeon are not uncommon, and in the Bush Valley we saw flocks of wild geese and a few swans; but far better shooting of this description can be obtained in the lower lakes of British Columbia and on the prairies east of the Rockies, where wildfowl of every sort exist in myriads.

Of the fishing in the Rockies it is difficult to convey an accurate impression. Trout of various kinds abound in many of the lakes and streams; but they appear to be singularly capricious, and the fisherman cannot reckon with any certainty on getting good sport. On some days and in certain seasons they will rise greedily at the fly: on others they obstinately refuse to be tempted by any artificial lure. 1902 was distinctly an unfavourable season, and we fished rivers and lakes, which in previous years had yielded excellent sport, with unvarying ill-success. Very large bull-trout, up to 30 lb. or more, are to be caught in Lake Minnewanka, near Banff, in the upper and lower Bow lakes,



"THE GOAT HANGS HIGH" (p. 204)



PTARMIGAN

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and other mountain tarns—Collie, as already mentioned, got one in the stream flowing out of Glacier Lake—but they will not take a fly. On calm days they may sometimes be seen in the Bow lakes basking in shallow water near the shore—ugly, unattractive monsters, with big heads and most capacious mouths. More satisfactory, from the fly-fisher's point of view, are the smaller rainbow trout, which are very sporting fish and excellent eating; and the visitor, with fair luck and the aid of local information, should have no difficulty in discovering lakes and streams that will afford him plenty of amusement.

The destruction, and consequent diminution, of large game in the Canadian Rocky Mountains has for some years past engaged the attention of the Government authorities in the North-West Territories. Following the successful example of the United States in their game preserve of the Yellowstone Park, they have prohibited sheep and goat hunting in a large tract of country extending northwards of Banff and Laggan as far as the main valley of the Saskatchewan. In other words, they have greatly widened the boundaries of the existing National Park at Banff, where a small herd of

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buffalo, a few elk, moose, goat, and deer are confined ; and it is hoped that in course of time the numbers of wild animals may be considerably increased. The analogous system of making *freiberge*, or sanctuaries for chamois, in large districts has worked well in the Swiss cantons ; but the conditions prevailing in the Canadian Rockies are very different from those both in the Alps and the Yellowstone Park, and the system of enclosing large areas of wild country, which cannot possibly be effectively policed, seems to be of questionable expediency. It must be remembered that a great part of the ground now reserved is many days' journey from civilisation—a good deal of it until quite recent years has never been mapped or explored—and it is difficult to see how the killing of game there by Indians and professional hunters is to be prevented. Probably this will go on pretty much as before, while visitors and tourists, who until lately were able to enjoy short hunting trips up the Bow or Pipestone valleys—trips, by the way, which seldom resulted in any serious destruction of game !—will now be unable to do so without infringing the regulations. That is to say, law-respecting strangers will be debarred from a certain amount of more

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or less harmless enjoyment, while the protection to the game will be practically *nil*. It would have been better, perhaps, if the authorities had acted more on the principle of *festina lente*, and, contenting themselves with a less ambitious project at first, had gradually extended the boundaries of the enclosed ground year by year.

Closely connected with the problem of game preservation in the Rockies is that of the Indians. One thing is certain: if the Stoneys are allowed to hunt indefinitely, as at present, the large game, already sufficiently scarce, will be exterminated in all but the most remote districts. It is a frequent subject of complaint that Indians are allowed greater facilities for hunting than white men. In theory the Red-skin is only allowed to leave his reservation for the pursuit of game during the Fall; but, as a matter of fact, he can nearly always obtain a permit at any season of the year—nominally for the purpose of business, visiting a relation, or on some similar pretext, when the old primitive instincts assert themselves and he goes off hunting.

In the autumn the Stoneys sally forth with their squaws and papooses, their teepees and

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other household gods, and scour the woods and hill-sides in search of game. They hunt in bands, and directly a herd of sheep or goats is sighted they set to work to surround it, and if they can wipe out the whole herd, young and old, male and female, they do not hesitate to do so. Needless to say, the Red Man is not deterred by sportsmanlike or prudential considerations, and the idea of leaving a sufficient breeding-stock for future seasons does not enter his head. Skins and heads and horns are so valuable nowadays that the pecuniary inducements to kill game of all sorts are very great, quite apart from the love of the chase which is inbred in every Indian. The Stoneys form probably the finest type of Redskins extant; and, as Mr. Wilcox, an admirer of the tribe, says, they are incomparable hunters, and their boast is that "No game can live where we hunt."

The question of what is to be done with these untamed, and apparently untamable, children of Nature; how "the provisional races," as the "Professor at the Breakfast Table" calls them—"the red crayon sketches of humanity laid on the canvas before the colours for the real humanity are ready"—ought to be treated, is

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a difficult one. The abuses, and in some cases the brutalities, of the American system are well known; and the principle that "the only good Indian is a dead Indian" has doubtless found too ready acceptance in the States. On the other hand, it would seem that in Canada the Redskin is allowed too free a hand, at any rate as regards hunting and shooting. No doubt, as is sometimes urged, the country was formerly his to hunt and roam over at his own sweet will—so, for the matter of that, were the present sites of Montreal, New York, and Chicago—and it may readily be admitted that there is much that is pathetic in the fate of the Indian in these later days, as in that of all savages who have become enmeshed in civilisation's net. By nature and tradition a warrior, a hunter, a rover amid wildernesses, he has changed his airy teepee for a mud hut, and is condemned to a life of enforced inaction in the comparatively narrow confines of his reserve. On the other hand, it is useless to shut our eyes to the facts. The Indians could not in these days live by the chase, even if they were permitted to hunt more freely, for there is not enough game to support a tenth of their number. The old free, wild life of the prairie and the backwoods cannot now, in

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the nature of things, be permanently theirs ; and it would surely be wiser to train and habituate them, as far as possible, to the changed conditions of life under which they and their descendants must henceforth dwell. The main fact to be considered in this relation is that at the present rate the game will shortly be exterminated, in which case the Red Man will be no better off than if he were now debarred from hunting ; and then the whole question of maintaining and guarding him will have to be considered afresh.

Happily for the hunter whose lot is cast in these times when large game is growing ever scarcer, if only he be a true lover of Nature in all her forms, sport in the mountains offers other joys than those contained in the mere gunning part of the business. It is enough for such an one, even if a stalk be out of the question, to sit out in the sunshine on some ridge or hill-top and watch the game, whether it be Rocky Mountain sheep or goat, or Alpine chamois or ibex. Again, half the charm of mountain sport, as opposed to mountaineering proper, is that it gives you so much time to admire the scenery. As you lie concealed behind some knoll or rocky protuberance you can watch at your ease the

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face of the landscape changing with each change in Nature's moods, the great glaciers and snows around you, while above them the tall peaks thrust their heads up into the deep blue sky. Below, on the grassy hillside, the big-eyed, white-faced ewes keep watch and ward over the lambs frisking and gambolling around them, while further off, on some jutting promontory of crag, may be seen the curving massive horns of an old sentinel ram, his eyes intently fixed on the middle distance, alert and ready to give the alarm the moment that danger threatens. Such a sight consoles you for much hard work or long hours of waiting, or even for the disappointments of the chase ; and you feel that, kill or no kill, after all your labour has not been entirely in vain, and that life is worth living—at any rate in the mountains.

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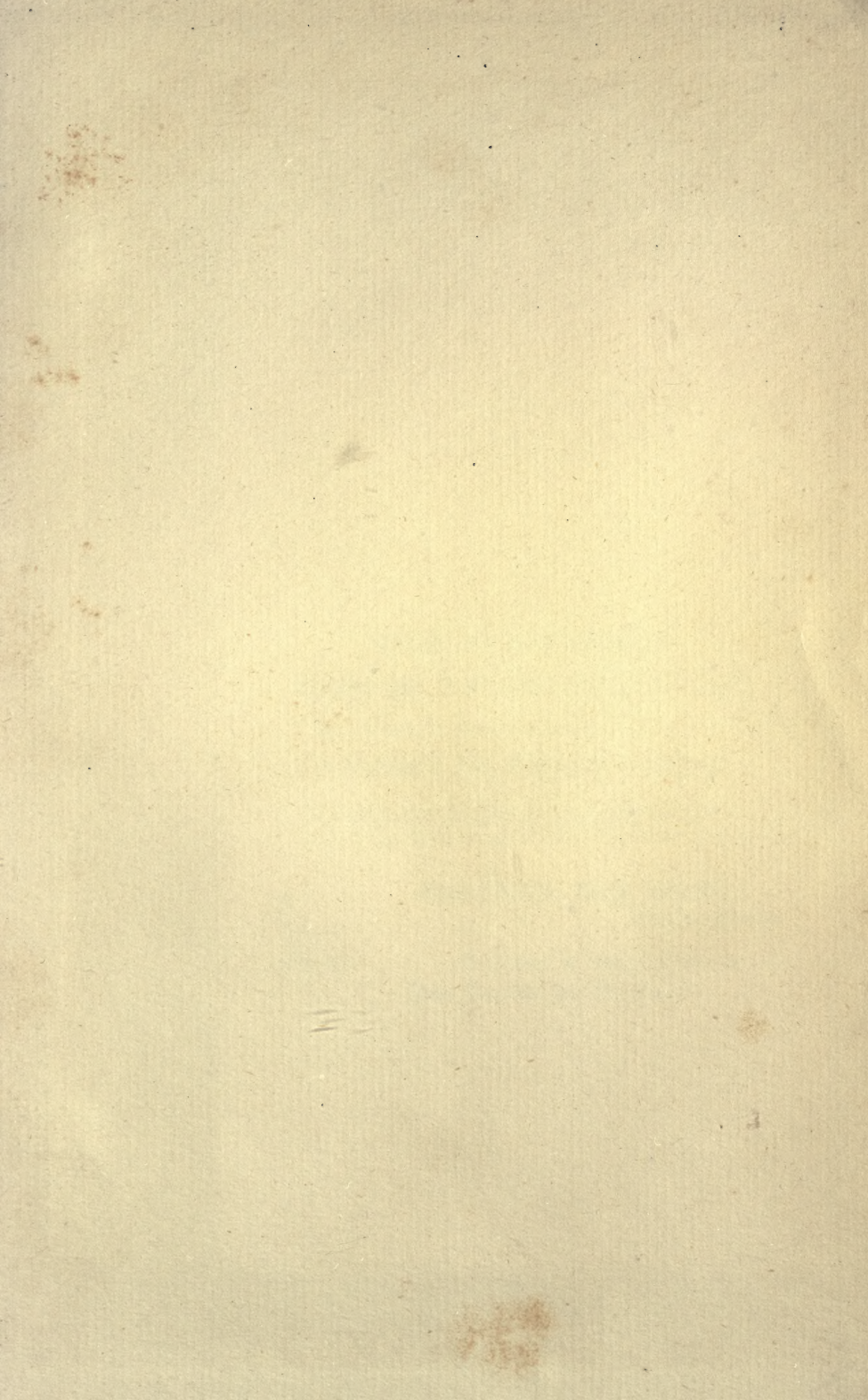
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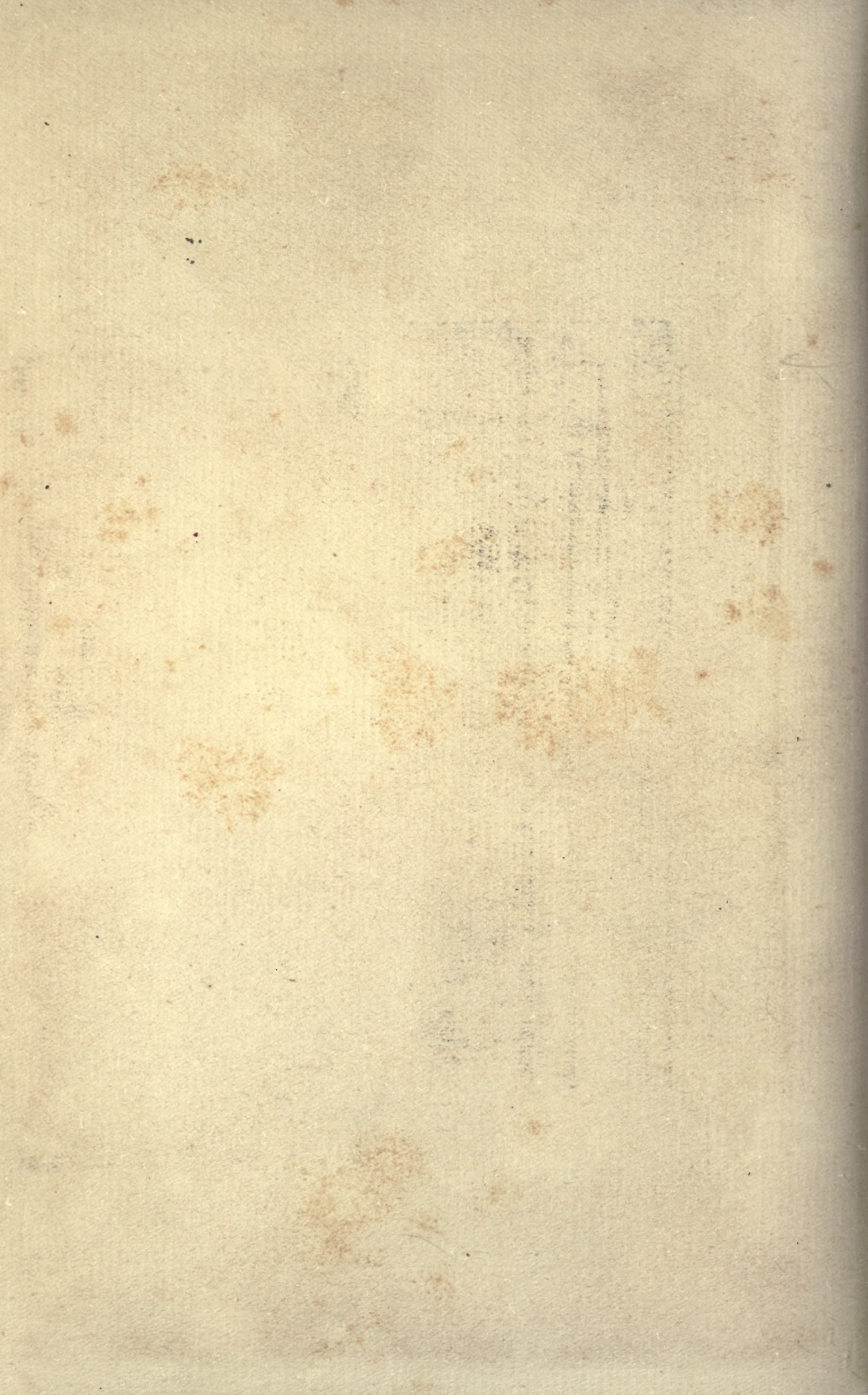
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