THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO
LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA

A 000 737 640 3
UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

ur
Friends
The White
Mountains of
New Hampshire

I am sendin
you will autograph
" Thoreau and I Visi
a few years ago, and
days, I had the plea
with snow, and it wa

you in another mail a copy of a bookwhich, I
r me. I have not yet had an opportunity to read
Mount Katahdin". I missed a trip to that mount
ave regretted it ever since. However, within a
re of looking upon the Presidential range wh
as magnificent as you can imagine.

Fred A. Gannon

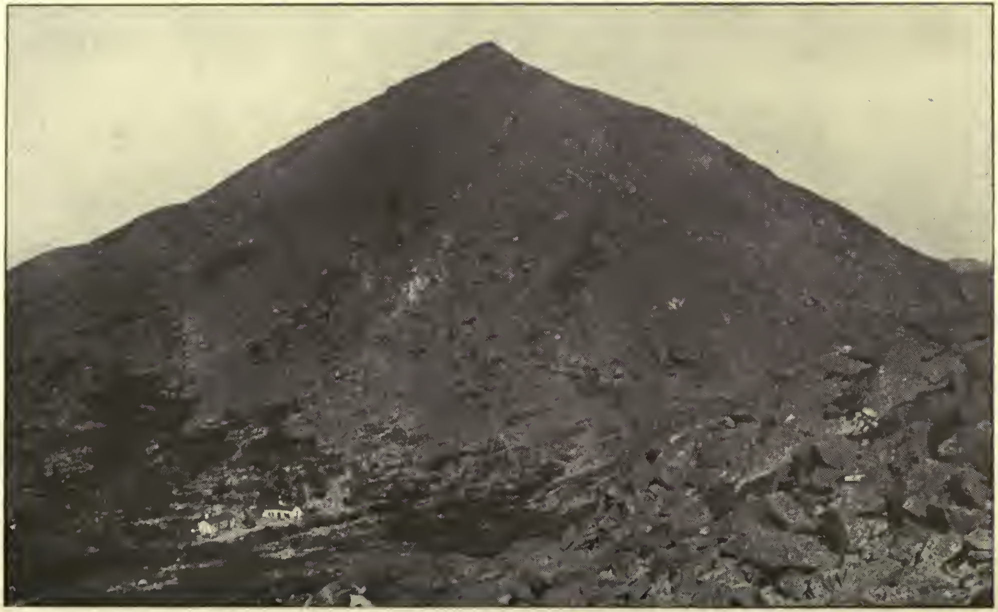
37 LORING AVE
SALEM MASS.

f a bookwhich, I trust,
ortunity to read
rip to that mountain
owever, within a few
dential range white
gine.

ING AVE
SALEM MASS.

From
F A Gannon
37 Loring av
Salem. Mass

BOSTON, MASS.
NOV 6
530PM
NO. POSTAL
19



MADISON'S SUMMIT – A PEAK ROUGH AND ROCKY BUT SYMMETRICAL AND IMPOSING, AS SEEN FROM MT. ADAMS. THE TINY MADISON HUTS NESTLES AT ITS BASE, TO WELCOME TRAMPERS OF THE MOUNTAINS

16391

OUR FRIENDS
THE WHITE MOUNTAINS
of
NEW HAMPSHIRE

❦

... BY ...
FRED A. GANNON

❦

A story of tramps over Gulfside Trail, from Mount Madison to Mount Washington, by Ernest P. Lane, Albert E. Cole Wilbur F. Brown, John L. Tudbury and Fred A. Gannon

Copyright 1921
by
Fred A. Gannon

Newcomb & Gauss
Printers
Salem, Mass.

OUR FRIENDS—THE WHITE MOUNTAINS.

It was on our seventh trip that we learned we loved the mountains. This time they welcomed us, not as occasional visitors, to be entertained, dismissed and forgotten, but as old friends, to be treated with that hearty cordiality and kindly sympathy which is currency and bond among good friends.

In the early evening we tarried in the ravine at the foot of Mount Madison. The brook softly rippled by at our feet, the mountains rose in their majesty before our eyes, and the silvery moon, high in the skies, looked serenely down upon us. On the meadows and hills was the green verdure of June, and high up on Madison remained a patch of snow, to remind us of the winter that had passed. No wonder we talked of the mystery of the mountains, and stories were told of the Indians, who never would climb to the summits because they believed them the abode of their Great Spirit.

We began to understand what Whittier meant when he wrote:

"Touched by a light that hath no name, a glory never
sung,
Aloft in sky and mountain wall are God's great
pictures hung."

Next morning, bright and early, with packs strapped snug to our backs, we strode merrily across the meadow and struck for the trail that leads up by Snyder's brook. To us it is among the most charming of the tramps among the hills. Perhaps we loved it most because it was our first tramp to the mountains, seven years ago. Yet its beauty delights us each time we travel over it.

Up the foothills we made our way, pausing often, for it is the better part of wisdom for the city-bred to take things very easy the first days in the mountains. Besides, we had learned in experience, that he who goes slowest in the mountains sees and enjoys the most.

We looked at the brook, dashing down its rocky course and breaking into rills of silver as it tumbled from boulder to boulder. We looked at the soft green moss on the rocks, and the ferns and flowers springing up from it. We looked into the maze of the forest at the tiny trees struggling up towards the sun, at the monarch crowning the woodlands, or tumbled down to earth by the great winds that sometimes sweep down the mountain sides. We turned often to look back upon the picture of hill and lake, farm and meadow, village and manufacturing town. We paused often to speak of the charm of nature and of the beauty of the scene before us. Yes, the spirit of the mountains was coming upon us, and that is the way it should be with men who race from the cities to the peace and power of the mountains.

"STEP BY STEP THE HEIGHTS ARE CLIMBED."

True enough, our feet began to tell us that it was a long, long way up the mountains. The hundred-yard marks along the trail seemed far, far apart. Yet time in plenty we took for leisure and reflection. Memory recalled to us that in schoolboy days we raced the hundred-yard path in nigh to ten seconds. But here we were on the mountains, tramping one hundred yards in ten minutes. Laugh if ye will, ye city bred, who pound the smooth, hard pavements. The slow pace is best in the mountains, for being on leisure bent, we tarry often by the way, to drink from the brook, to watch the birds, or to look upon a tiny flower, a great tree, or that vast panorama so richly spread before us. It *was* hard to think of the war-wounded world below us.

"THIS HUT HAS A HEART."

We came to Madison hut towards noon, threw off our packs, and settled down to the business of housekeeping. Good old Madison hut! Stony and cold your walls may be, but your heart is warm, and hospitality is joy to the foot-weary traveler. Bacon and coffee restored the balance to the body. Cave dwellers of cities may praise the elaborate dinners of their favorite inns, but to the man of the mountains there is nothing sweeter and more nourishing than golden-brown bacon, hot from the pan at Madison.

"A STRONG MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS."

Making up the records, we found that we had journeyed up the Snyder brook trail, a distance of 3⅝ miles, in four hours. Glancing over the camp records, we found this entry: "August 4, 1921, Henry J. Trahan of Berlin, N. H., carried from the Ravine house to Madison hut this day: lumber, 139 pounds; sack, 2 pounds; lunch, 3 pounds; total, 144 pounds. Weighed by Howard Henderson and Lawrence Howard, caretakers."

We also found that, July 27 of the same year, Trahan had carried 102 pounds up the mountains.

No longer were 20-pound packs heavy on our backs. At least, they might have felt heavy, but we did not dare to complain after reading Trahan's records.

In the afternoon we sauntered out to the parapet, or headwall, between Madison and Adams, a favorite retreat with us. We took shelter on the sunny side of a ledge, for there was a mountain chill in the bracing winds. While we marveled at the depths of the gulf and the height of the mountain walls, we spied a flash of light from the windshield of an automobile coming down the carriage road on Washington. To us, it was like a fly on the ceiling, or better still, a mosquito, for it often disappeared from our view. We reckoned roughly that it was eight or nine miles across to the carriage road. We were glad that we could watch that tiny speck, crawling along the great mountain side, for it showed that our eyesight was still good.

An excellent test, as well as an excellent rest, for the eyes, is a trip to the mountains. Eyes tired of being glued to books, figures of business, and print of newspapers day after day, find rest when they turn to the long-range views of the mountains. We know that, on clear days, one may look from the mountain tops to the Atlantic, 70 miles away. We have heard that mountains in Maine, Canada and New York, more than 100 miles away, may be seen. But what is a few hundred miles to see. Do we not see the stars at night, a million and more miles away?

"THE EVER-APPEALING MYSTERY OF THE MOUNTAINS."

After supper we went to Sunset rock, on the northerly shoulder of Madison, and watched the sun go down. At such a time there is peace and mystery in the mountains beyond understanding. What is there on the other side of that gate of crimson and gold, through which the sun passes so serenely at eventide?

"ALONG A MOUNTAIN BOULEVARD."

Next day, while the morning was yet young, we set forth from Madison huts for a tramp over Gulfside trail. to Washington's summit. Old Adams frowns upon us as we pass. Why does that peak always look as cold and as forbidding as an iceberg? We climbed hastily over its rocky sides and made our course for Jefferson. We paused here and there to praise Professor Edmunds for making this paved trail, which we are pleased to consider the best boulevard in the mountains. Certainly it is the highest route of traveling in New England, it being, we figure, nearly a mile above the sea. And if a man cannot enjoy the view with every step that he takes along Gulfside trail, then he might as well lock himself up in one of those modern caves, called office buildings, and stay there the rest of his life, for he is a lover of nature no more than is a red brick.

On Monticello lawn, by Jefferson's noble summit, we paused to look at the croquet set, and to wonder if any imps of the White Mountains ever tried their skill with it, as the strange men of the Adirondacks with whom Rip Van Winkle tried his skill in the game of bowls.

By the side of Great Gulf we paused to rest, or rather to dream, for though the limbs be weary from tramping, yet the mind will not close to the vision that nature spreads before us. Seven times in seven years have we tarried by the Great Gulf, and each time do we marvel anew at its wonders. We believe, as Thoreau wrote, that "Nature was here something savage and awful, though beautiful."

How big is it? Could we hide our home town in it? Could one man be seen among its trees? Could an army of men hide in its forests? Is Spaulding Lake a big mirror, or is it the pool of clear water that we saw when we visited it? How long were those great boulders sliding down the mountain side? What started yonder slide? Does not the shadow of the clouds upon the trees look like an elephant, a whale, or a giant hand? How long would it take a man to dig out this vast gulf? These, and other and other questions we have asked and asked again, and have talked over again and again, for it is a part of a mountain trip to forget the tedious detail of business and to let fancy run free.

"THE TOPS OF THE MOUNTAINS ARE AMONG THE UNFINISHED PARTS OF THE WORLD."—THOREAU.

This time, there comes to us the story told by an old man, whom we met at breakfast in the ravine, just before we started up the trail. "How old are these mountains?" we asked him, thinking to draw from him some early story of Darby Field, the Crawfords, Starr King, or other early traveler or settler of the mountains.

"Some say 20,000,000 and some say 25,000,000 years," began the old man. "Ages and ages ago were they heaved up from the seas. The hot suns of the tropics have shone upon them, and great trees have grown on them, and giant beasts have roamed their forests. Glaciers have rolled down upon them from the arctic, The seas have surged upon them, even covering their summits. Time and the giant forces of nature, earthquake and avalanche, heat and cold, rain and snow, have made the mountains, and now they are growing old and wrinkled and are settling down, like a man bent and wrinkled by years." So the old man told us. As we recollected his story we gave up trying to figure out how long it would take a man to dig out the great gulf. A man is only a mite in the mountains, less than that speck of an automobile which we saw crawling on the side of Washington. Indeed, man is less than a mite in the mountains. A million men would be only a mite in comparison with the years and the size of the mountains.

> "This was that earth of which we had heard,
> Made out of Chaos and Old Night."—*Thoreau.*

Millions of years were the mountains in making. So we tarried a while longer and looked into that great gulf, and upon the huge mountains towering above it, like guardians of eternity. Then we rose and started on our way to Washington. Around the base of Clay we passed, and up the long slope of the hill to the carriage road, and thence to the summit, arriving in the middle of the afternoon and completing our journey, which we made at the comfortable rate of a mile an hour.

Of the night and morning on the summit of Washington we will not say much. He who has been there will understand. As for he who has not been there, let him picture in memory all the sunrises that he has seen by the shores of the sea, and all the sunsets he has seen from hilltops of his home town. Let him roll them all in one great picture, and he has a bit of the picture of the sun setting and rising on Washington.

We will never grow weary of watching the sun come up through the mists and reveal the mountain tops, like islands in a sea. That was as it was in the beginning. We will never forget a glorious evening when the sun sank in the west and two magnificent rainbows spanned from ravine to ravine in the east. So may it be in the end.

"Uplift against the blue walls of the sky
Your mighty shapes, and let the sunshine weave
Its golden network in your belting woods;
Smile down in rainbows from your falling floods,
And on your knightly brows at morn and eve set crowns of fire."—*Whittier.*

After the sun went down, we gathered around the council fire, to listen to the report of the keeper of the records, for, be it known, that making written note of and comment upon, and contemplating in retrospect the adventures, experiences and impressions of each trip, is a joy of tramping in the mountains.

Opening his book, and reading by the light of the fire, the keeper of the records read:—

"We first came to Mount Washington in 1913, and stood on its summit, 6,523 feet above the sea level, or 100 times higher than the highest hill in our home town. Yet we will not venture the comparison with too much confidence, for we have not climbed the highest hill in our home town.

"We wish they would push that water-tank away from the brass plate that is set into the pinnacle of Mount Washington to mark the highest spot in New England. We would like to see a memorial to Darby Field in place of that wretched looking tank.

"Field, the first man to climb Mount Washington, did so in 1642, or 22 years after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, and 271 years before we made our first visit to the summit. We would like to see a tower on the summit, in memory of pioneers, trail makers, and other leaders among men of the mountains, with the name of Field leading all the rest.

"Norsemen and other early rovers of the sea, were the first white men to see the White Mountains.

"For the immortal Washington the mountain was named. As we have listened to some stories told on its summit, we have wondered why it did not crumble into dust. A few story-tellers of the mountain camps apparently have forgotten the little story of Washington and the cherry tree.

"We accept the story told us about the wind, which sometimes rages from 80 to 180 miles an hour, blowing the door of the stage-coach office down to Lake Sebago in Maine, 60 miles distant, for the teller showed us the door as proof of this story.

"But we have our doubts about the night so cold that the water froze in the kettle on the stove while the fire roared beneath it. We have seen notes of the U. S. Weather Bureau reports, which show that the thermometer dropped to 50 below zero. But we have yet to see that kettle of frozen water. We want convincing evidence before we inscribe in our records any of the stories that we hear in the mountain camps. We know it was colder than 50 below one night at the Lake of the Cloud huts, for we spent the night there, and felt the cold.

"We accept the story of our old friend, who made his first visit to Washington's summit in 1863, and his second in 1913, or 50 years later, then being accompanied by his son. We like to believe that men of the mountains live long and well. We hope to walk up the carriage road in 1962. We have faith in Emerson's remark: "In the woods is perpetual youth."

"Our old friend who made the trip in 1863, rode in the train to Lakeport, crossed Winnepesaukee, and thence rode by stage to the Glen House. He tramped up the carriage road. The railroads were making their way into the mountains in Civil War times. But the Glen, at the foot of the carriage road, is yet to hear the screech of the locomotive's whistle.

"We have found most enjoyable the trip up the carriage road. It is eight miles, rising one foot in eight, with a total rise of 4,600 feet. We have made it in four hours up, and two hours down. When circumstances require we can move faster than a mile an hour.

"Yes, the automobile has made its way to the summit; so has the railroad, which climbs the westerly slope, stopping at the tip-top, though wags of the early New Hampshire legislature offered to give it a franchise to run to the moon. What a climb that would be!

"But we hope we never will get caught riding to the summit, unless, perchance, Passaconaway should come along from Indian spirit-land with his team of trained wolves. We'd ride with him and his wolves; otherwise we will walk, walk, walk, and take our leisure, and enjoy the eternal grandeur of the great hills.

"We have roamed around the summit, to Tuckerman's and Huntington ravine, to the Lake of the

Clouds and the Hanging cliff, to Boott spur, Lion's head and Alpine gardens. There is no better way to spend a day in the mountains. Yet we will except that glorious trip along Gulfside trail.

"We have tramped up Tuckerman's ravine, tarrying at Hermit lake, and later, resting by the side of the Snow Arch, which, in spring time, is the nearest approach to a glacier that we have in New England. An ugly little glacier it is, too. Already has it caught several reckless victims. "Trespassing Forbidden," should be the sign upon it.

"We have looked into Huntington's ravine, but have not yet undertaken to scale its steep walls. We've heard that the record for slow traveling was made on these walls, the trampers advancing 100 feet in 12 minutes. So our mile an hour gait is not so slow after all.

"We have camped in Great Gulf, and have come up Six Husband's trail. But never again will we camp in the woods when there is a chance to climb to the summits and look down upon the rest of the world below.

"We have seen the great hills in the bright sunlight, in the blue haze, and in the pure white snow, in the blankets of fog and the drenching rain. All seasons, all times, they call us, and they welcome us as good friends; for

"Nature ever faithful is
To such as trust her faithfulness."

The engineer begged a few moments of our time. to speak of the White Mountains as "The Heart of New England." He asked that the keeper of the records make note of his words.

"I agree with you," he began, "that the White Mountains are a glory of New England and an inspiration and joy to all who visit them.

"But I would speak of them as the source of New England enterprise and prosperity, the heart of our industrial and social life.

"Our great hills, taking up a sixth of our area, are a natural advantage of more value than most of us realize. Imagine that they were leveled. Then we might become as bleak as the Arctic and as dry as the Sahara. For our mountains temper our winds, checking the cold from the north in the winter and sending us down cool and refreshing breezes in the summer.

"Our mountain tops catch the mists that rise from the sea, and condense them, and send them down to us in rain. Our mountain forests hold back the snows of winter, and send them forth in dashing brooks. The brooks form our large rivers, and the rivers are a source of abundant energy, which we are learning to make into electricity, with which to turn our factory wheels and light our streets and homes.

"I might give you the figures of our total New England water-powers, but figures are dreary in a place like this, where the energies of nature go on for unceasing years. Yet I will say that I hope for the time when our New England rivers, coming down from out the mountains, will provide us with all the electrical energy that we desire, and our New England forests, growing on the mountain sides and along our rivers, will provide us with lumber for all our houses and all our manufacturing industries.

"I would speak to you more at length of the economic, or dollars and cents value of the mountains to New England, but the hour draws late. So I will beg that you trampers, who have enjoyed the mountains as a playground, will also consider their economic value, and do all in your power to guard and extend the mountain parks now held by the United States Forestry Service, the Appalachian Mountain Club, and kindred organizations, for these mountains are the heart of our New England industries."

"THE POET'S GOOD NIGHT."

As we were about to say Good Night to one another, the poet offered as a thought for us to take back to our homes with us, this verse from Whittier:

"Your unforgettable beauties interfuse
My common life. Your glorious shapes and hues
And sun-dropped splendors at my bidding come,
Loom vast through dreams and stretch in billowing
length
From the sea level of my lowland home."

~~10397~~

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

A 000 737 640 3