



Photograph by Hazel Weston Adams

J. W. Brown & Co. Robinson, Mass.

Mount Robson

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THE SIERRA CLUB IN THE LAND OF THE ATHABASKA

BY WALTER L. HUBER



Be with me, O Great Spirit,
 When I climb the lofty mountains;
 Be with me when I cross the sun-
 scorched valleys;
 Turn thou thy face to me
 With a smile like the sun at morning;
 Keep thou my hand in thine
 Until thou leadest me into
 The land of the setting sun.

THIS Indian prayer, a copy of which was provided by a friend of the Sierra Club for each member of the 1928 outing party as the club's special train rolled away from the Oakland pier for the most distant annual outing yet attempted, appropriately expressed the sentiment with which the party went forth to a great new adventure. The twenty-seventh annual outing was different from other outings. Not only was it farther from home and largely in a foreign although very friendly land; not only was it beyond the range of familiar packers and other helpers who have become almost a part of the organization; but it was the first party of large size to visit Jasper and Robson parks to enjoy the mountains in all their grandeur without being organized primarily as a climbing party. However, although the purpose was broader, the achievements of some of

our active climbers proved to be in keeping with the club's splendid traditions.

From the start the results of months of careful planning by our own leaders and by railroad officials were evident, unless perhaps to the uninitiated who may have supposed that things "just happened." A splendidly equipped train was permitted to make the trip faster than any of the regular schedules, with stops only for new engines and to pick up recruits to the party, among whom were enthusiastic representatives of the Mazamas and of the Mountaineers. The Canadian customs officials extended every possible courtesy as we crossed the boundary. A brief stop at Vancouver and a ride through Stanley Park afforded a pleasant interlude before we continued on up the Frazer and Big Thompson rivers to the mountainous back country.

With the arrival of the party at Jasper Park Lodge the outing really began. The first day was spent in motoring to the base of Mount Edith Cavell and to Ghost Glacier, where many learned that white slippers are not as well adapted to travel on ice as are Swiss crampons. There our first climbing party started on a knapsack trip to a higher base, from which they attained the summit of Mount Edith Cavell and later reached the club's camp in Tonquin Valley.

Another night in the Pullmans, a short trip to Geikie Station, and a very early call, and the party was on the trail for Tonquin Valley. The white slippers of the previous days were no longer in evidence, but instead there appeared a hobnailed company. Each member was armed with alpenstock or ice-axe, although to most these were at first only additional impedimenta to be carried as best they might.

We found two tall lithe strangers in our midst as we took to the trail that morning, but they did not long remain strangers. Hans and Heinie had joined our party as our train left Jasper Station. They are of the third generation of mountain guides in a family whose name, Fuhrer, means guide, and well do they bear it. Although their early mountaineering training was acquired in Switzerland, they have climbed many of North America's principal mountain-peaks. Within the next few weeks we learned to trust their judgment and skill as mountaineers, and, moreover, found them delightful companions.

The eagerness of true Sierrans to be once more on the trail was evident by the promptness with which the start was made. In some

instances this eagerness was perhaps stimulated by the fact that some of the veteran members had studied the map and were aware of the fact that sixteen miles of steep climbing lay before them. Even these veterans did not learn from their maps that much of the trail was through "muskeg." This term, new to Sierrans, means a tundra, or peaty formation, where the cross-country trumper is seldom afforded solid footing and in which trails soon become boggy when much used by horses. Miles of muskeg are even longer than the "Colby miles" which Sierrans so often encounter in their own mountains.

The trail led up Meadow Creek with irregular grades. Beautiful views of the Trident Range, particularly Mount Majestic, soon appeared. With the afternoon came threatening weather, but this only added to the grandeur of the scene which confronted us when we reached the summit of Vista Pass and suddenly beheld the entire precipitous north face of the Ramparts. Even the seasoned mountaineer paused here to gaze on one of the most striking scenes to be found among the mountain ranges of North America. Redoubt, Drawbridge, Bastion, Turret, Geikie, and Barbican, forming a castellated range collectively called the Ramparts, were spread immediately before us, rising to heights of 4700 feet above Moat Lake and the meadows of the foreground. These strange, forbidding peaks were during the ensuing week to become very familiar landmarks.

We were aroused from our enchantment by lowering clouds, and before camp was reached rain was falling. Our scouts had located this camp a short distance back from the shore of Moat Lake at a site which had been used by the Canadian Alpine Club. Frames for spreading canvas shelters proved a welcome inheritance from our predecessors. Here Dan Tachet presided over our commissary for a full week. A break in the clouds toward evening again gave us wonderfully impressive views of the Ramparts. Even while they had been hidden from view, we had been aware of their presence because of the thundering of avalanches.

With the faith of true Sierrans we made camp with a feeling that rain throughout the night was not probable. A great variety of tents and shelters appeared, but many of these were pitched indifferently. Morning found some of their occupants sadder but wiser. During the night we had experienced not only rain, but hail and snow. Notwithstanding the beauty of the scene which confronted us next morn-

ing, breakfast was prolonged by the hibernation of many of those fortunate members of the party who had more successfully erected their shelters. To add variety, a snow-storm later in the day transformed the entire scene for a few hours into one of fairyland. After this first day we were favored with perfect weather throughout our stay in Tonquin Valley.

With several days of fine weather, it is not surprising that Geikie, Bastion, Drawbridge, Surprise Point, Clitheroe, Caniche, Vista, Glacis Ridge, and other summits were conquered. The difficult ascent of Mount Geikie is described elsewhere in this number. Poor old Bastion took the most punishment, as it was climbed on four successive days. This trip was made with such regularity that Heinie began hoping for a day of rain to afford an interruption. Although a less arduous climb, the ascent of Drawbridge Peak was noteworthy, since a party of forty successfully negotiated it. Here the skill and judgment of Hans and Heinie were first demonstrated to many of the party.

Our friend from Texas had some difficulty in adjusting his routine to the long days and short nights of summer in northern latitudes. Consequently, with motives of kindness, he took upon himself the responsibility of seeing that a climbing party did not oversleep, by awakening its members as soon as dawn appeared, long before the hour planned for departure—a deed of which he was later reminded many times.

The interprovincial boundary-line between British Columbia and Alberta was found to be a great improvement over the boggy trail and afforded us a very direct route from camp practically to the summit of Tonquin Hill. The use of this substitute for a trail accounts for a remarkable accident to one of my friends, who stumbled in British Columbia and fell into Alberta. The climb of Tonquin Hill and the stupendous view from its summit were enjoyed by even the least strenuous members of the party.

After seven wonderful days, it was with genuine regret that the party turned from its camp in the midst of this mountain grandeur to retrace its route to the railroad. As this was to be a very full day, the call was an early one. Camp was broken expeditiously, and no time was lost in making the climb to Vista Pass and the long descent to Geikie Station. Even the stragglers arrived well in advance of the hour set for the departure of our train. With the arrival of the

pack-train the outfit was loaded on the cars; not only the dunnage-bags and commissary, but the pack-animals as well. This was apparently a new experience for some of the horses, and loading them in the stock-cars was not a simple task. When the train finally started it presented a most unusual appearance. Indeed, I doubt whether there has ever been another like it. Forward were the colonist cars provided for the members of the party, a novelty to those not accustomed to the equipment of northern railways. Next were two flat cars carrying a few bales of hay for the horses—to many members of the party these proved more alluring than the colonist cars. Then came the cars containing the horses; then two cars heaped with dunnage-bags and commissary; and, finally, the caboose, temporarily utilized as a hospital for a case of sprained ankle. One of our members, believing that no such motley combination had been assembled since the Ark, named Mr. Colby "Noah." With its assorted cargo, this very "mixed" train rolled away from Geikie for Emperor Station, some fifty miles away, near Mount Robson.

Upon our arrival, teams and wagons were waiting, so that the commissary might be rushed to a spot about two and a half miles away, where we were to camp for the night. Unfortunately, the wagons had not been equipped with brakes. As soon as they started down from the railroad the second team of horses broke into a run and the first driver was unable to give them enough space for passing. The result was a grand runaway in which both wagons capsized and our precious commissary was strewn over the landscape. Reports of disaster from the rear guard seemed only to stir Dan Tachet to greater efforts. With improvised stoves and with miscellaneous provisions drawn from the advance cache, he gave us a dinner which will long be remembered by every member of the party.

As soon as we had recovered from the confusion of the day and the hurried preparation of camp, we became aware of the beauty of a new and overpowering scene. We were established in an aspen grove on a slight rise overlooking a beautiful valley. Across this valley Mount Robson rose some ten thousand feet, dominating the whole scene. During the evening this great mountain wore an ever-changing cap of clouds. Here was a scene to hold one's interest for hours at a time. The photographers found a subject supremely beautiful and interesting in its many moods. Our leader quickly took stock and decided that we should remain at this camp for an

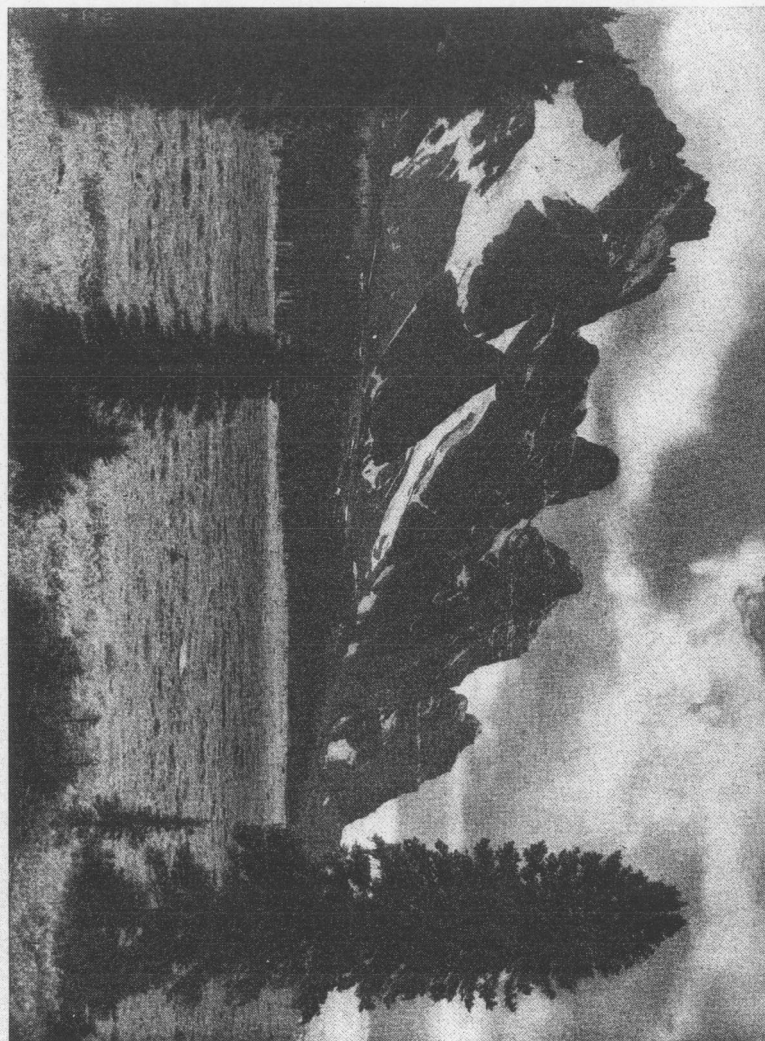
extra day, a decision to which no objections were voiced. Happily, we were not bound by a fixed schedule, so why not enjoy such pleasant surroundings?

The next day afforded an opportunity for trips to the Fraser and Grand Fork rivers, where lunch and swimming and laundry parties were the order of the day. Here too, on every hand, were berries in a profusion quite unknown to Californians. The industry of some of our members gave Dan an opportunity to make blueberry pies, which made the second evening meal another great event.

Our trail for the next day brought us past Kinney Lake to the Valley of a Thousand Falls. Camp at the foot of this valley presented enticing views of snow-capped peaks and of Emperor Falls. Another day's march, which brought us to Lake Adolphus, included some bridge construction, a side-trip to the base of Emperor Falls, a tramp across glacial detritus, and finally some very interesting views across Berg Lake to Tumbling Glacier.

Our camp at Lake Adolphus had been established in advance by a scouting party, and provisions had been cached and guarded. This now became our home for ten days. Splendid weather during most of our stay afforded opportunities for a variety of activities. Saddle parties to Moose Pass were very popular. Here Sierrans found scenes and flower-gardens to remind them of their own mountains. Mount Mumm, rising 4300 feet directly opposite our camp, offered interesting climbs for the strenuous, the near strenuous, and the least strenuous. Each was rewarded far beyond the price of his efforts. What finer reward could be asked than the view of the Robson Cirque feeding the great Robson Glacier? This view is available from most of the south face of Mount Mumm. Interesting fossils were discovered by some geologically minded members who covered wide areas. One of our most energetic amateur geologists returned from a field trip bearing in her knapsack a twenty-seven-pound rock containing the perfect fossil remains of a trilobite. Through her efforts this specimen is now resting safely in Harvard University's museum.

The foot of Robson Glacier was but a few minutes' walk from camp. Its great seracs were explored even by those who were not in the habit of straying far. More intimate views of the Robson Cirque were obtained from the summits of Peak No. 1 and Titkana Peak, which rose directly back of camp. Coleman Glacier, lying below



THE RAMPARTS
Photograph by Ansel E. Adams

Barton

Turret

Colkie

Barbican

PLATE II



HEAD OF BENNINGTON GLACIER
 Photograph by Ansel E. Adams

and to the east of these peaks, was the objective of other expeditions.

One of the finest of all trips from this camp was the climb of Mount Resplendent, a beautiful symmetrical peak sheathed far down from its summit in perpetual snow. Its pure whiteness against a background of blue gives it an ethereal appearance. One of our members, a veteran of many outings who no longer attempts strenuous climbs to high summits, enjoyed many happy hours in the meadows seeking out new vistas to delight his experienced eye. It is little wonder that mountaineers are attracted to its icy crest. From our camp a climb of more than 5800 feet was required to bring us to the summit, 11,240 feet above the sea, and the round trip involved nearly twelve hours' travel on the great Robson Glacier. Two main parties and several smaller ones made the ascent, and in all more than sixty members of the party reached the summit.

The ascent of Mount Resplendent, with its mantle of ice and snow, is quite different from climbs in the High Sierra, where at least part of the way is always on bare rock. Within a few minutes after leaving camp we reached the snout of the glacier, where Hans cut a few steps, enabling us to ascend to its surface. For a time thereafter we wound our way by a circuitous route among great crevasses. Then, for some distance, we followed the medial moraine, gradually approaching the upper ice-fields. As the way became steeper, every step seemed to unfold new views. Everything near at hand was ice, snow, and clouds; above, the blue of the firmament seemed very close. It was a different world we had entered.

On the upper ice-fields we were divided on two ropes, led by Hans and Heinie, respectively. The pace was regulated to the steepness of the ascent, and, due to Hans' judgment, the entire party reached the summit in the very best physical condition. Some distance below the summit, in crossing a bergschrund, two members of the party passed safely over a snow-bridge, but with the third the bridge failed. First the rope tightened, and then only a heel projected above the edge of the crevasse. A friendly tug at this heel assisted in effecting a rescue. The rescuer dryly explained a little later that he could not allow that particular member to go down in a crevasse because he had spent three hours cobbling her shoes on the previous day and he saw all of his handiwork disappearing.

Up all the icy slopes our photographer friend had uncomplainingly carried his equipment, weighing unspeakable pounds. His

only regret was that the pace required to keep up with the climbing parties did not afford opportunities to photograph all the wonders about him. He was with us one moment and then far away seeking a vantage-point—only photographers were permitted to leave the rope. On one occasion, although he had neither ice-axe nor alpenstock, he tried a direct return from the midst of a series of crevasses. Sensing danger, he tried the ice with his tripod. This precaution resulted in the tumbling of a great mass of ice down into a previously hidden cavern. The guides noted his predicament, and one of them quickly went to his rescue.

The summit of Mount Resplendent is a great snow cornice, which we found to be badly cracked. A trip to the top would have meant a swift and fearful descent in company with a substantial piece of the summit itself. In carefully cut steps we crossed the slope just under this cornice, and peered through the crevasses down into blue space. Westerly, some eight thousand feet below, we saw the valleys of the Fraser River and the Grand Fork and the line of the railroad. Little time was taken, however, for admiring the strange and wonderful view, for a cold wind was blowing across this land of ice and snow and was sweeping cloud-patches with it. But, no matter what the weather might be, I cannot imagine conditions under which one would be tempted to loiter on this treacherous summit. At a given signal we swung the rope over our heads, faced about in our tracks, quickly shifting our alpenstocks, and began the descent.

When at last we halted for lunch we looked back to see our photographer friend far up on the mountain, entranced by the view and handicapped by his pack. The guides fully understood his position, and in a tone of affection one remarked to the other: "I go back and get dat Hansel." From that time on, the guides took such friendly interest in him he had difficulty in keeping his equipment sufficiently concentrated for use, so eager were they to help him carry his burden.

The party at lunch on the snow-field brought to my mind illustrations of shipwrecked parties on the polar ice-pack. This appearance was perhaps partially due to the collection of raincoats, knapsacks, alpenstocks, and other equipment strewn over the snow-field for improvised luncheon seats.

Before us lay one of the world's finest mountain scenes—the summit of Mount Robson from the east and the great ice-fall below it. Mere words cannot adequately describe such views. Our photogra-

pher spent little of his precious time eating lunch, but the results of his work during that brief period will give the reader, who is here referred to the frontispiece, an idea of the scene which those of us who viewed it will never forget.

The descent to the surface of the glacier was made in a series of glissades, by which the distance was covered in an incredibly short time, but the return over Robson Glacier, coming at the end of the day, proved rather tedious. The ascent of Mount Resplendent is one of the vivid and cherished memories of the outing, and the return of our comrades of the Robson climbing party with thrilling stories of adventure and of success brought a feeling of satisfaction to the entire camp.

Californians are accustomed to "rodeos" and Oregonians to "roundups," but until our packers entertained us one evening with a "stampede" we were not aware that this Canadian term means much the same thing. A feature that was peculiarly interesting to several of the spectators was that some of the bucking broncos were none other than the supposedly gentle horses used for saddle trips. When the performance ended several reservations for the next day's trip to Moose Pass were canceled for what were said to be most imperative reasons.

After days of beautiful sunshine, rain finally came. The level flat near the lake shore, where our commissary stood, resembled newly poured concrete. I am sure if it had suddenly hardened during the storm some future generation would be studying strange tracks in the rocks around Lake Adolphus. The principal shelter was a great canvas fly poked up high in the center by a pole and supported along its edges. Lakelets formed on this canvas and slowly trickled through until someone tried to improve matters by punching the canvas, thus suddenly diverting the accumulated water supply down the necks of unfortunate neighbors who had been able to get only half under the shelter. Before a system of drainage was completed water was standing over the whole camp-site. Undaunted, Dan stood before his stoves dry-shod, with both feet in a baking-pan. The sleeping-quarters of that camp were on a side-hill, where problems of drainage should not have been serious, but the desire for level beds had lured many to little swales which turned into natural reservoirs. When the storm had passed, however, all seemed to have enjoyed the experience.

After much preparation, our annual theatrical performances were held near Lake Adolphus. A great flat-topped boulder served admirably as a stage. A curtain was necessary. Material for the curtain and ropes for suspending it were available, but curtain-rings could not be found. One of our members, who is noted for his talent for invention solved the problem by cutting short lengths of ham-bone and removing the marrow, thereby producing most excellent curtain-rings. It would be quite impossible to adequately describe the program. The most sensational number was Ernest Arnold's Pavlowa and the ballet of white-clad maidens.

There are always a few ardent sailors on the club's outings. After hours of patient labor, "Scotty" constructed a raft with which he conducted a passenger service on the lake. On one occasion, having unwittingly invaded the ladies' camp and having been duly warned of his trespass, he landed two passengers on an island to walk ashore as best they might while he cruised away to unknown seas.

In anticipation of trips among the ice-fields and glaciers, some of our number came equipped not only with ice-axes, but with Swiss crampons and other technical paraphernalia. Hans and Heinie did not encourage the use of these articles, but as the trip was nearing its close they were finally hauled out for a fine experimental tramp among the crevasses of Robson Glacier, affording varying degrees of satisfaction to the owners.

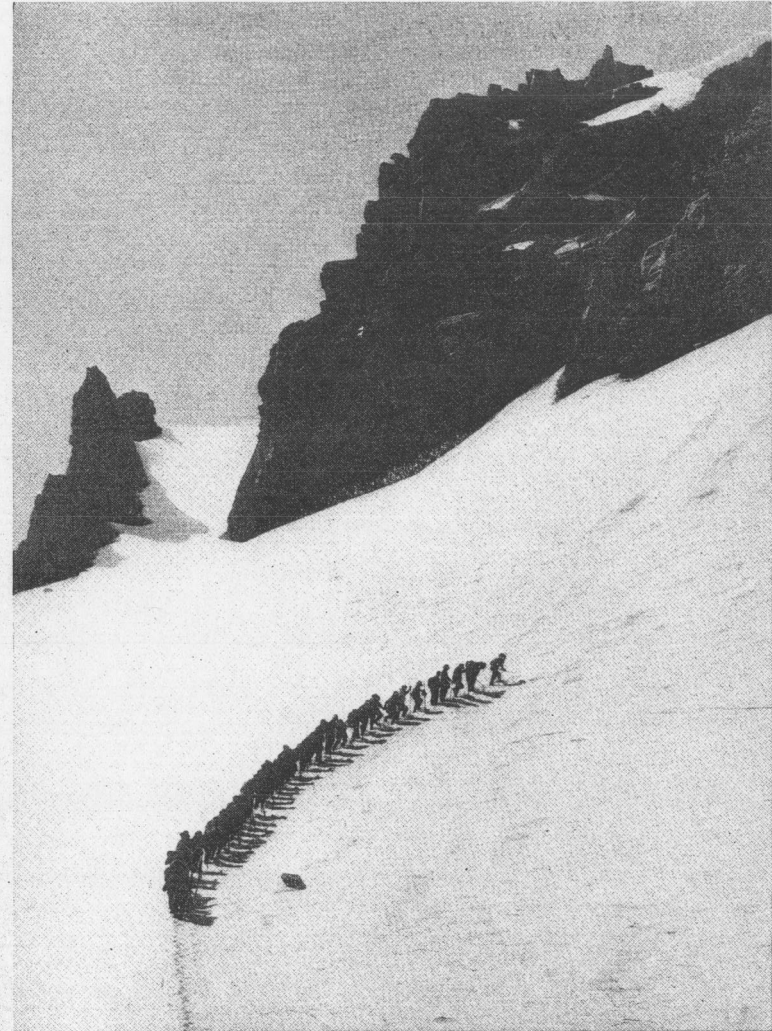
A climb of Mount Mumm through a cloud-cap proved very interesting. From the summit views of Mural Glacier through rifts in the clouds were spectacular and unusual. Lynx Mountain was also conquered. Although considered a lesser peak, its ascent was not without adventure.

The upward trip from the railroad station, or rather from Dennison and Brittain's ranch, which is near by, had required two days, but the return was scheduled for one. Some of the party, preferring shorter journeys, left a day in advance, camping en route at Kinney Lake. A few others left early to keep an appointment with Whitehorn Mountain. Most of us, however, were so reluctant to leave the scene of so much enjoyment that for the sake of one more day we were quite willing to return in a single march.

The last camp-fire in these pleasant surroundings was unique. It was held at the farthest outpost of the camp, where the party, now reduced in numbers, was invited by some of the ladies to share the

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PLATE IV.



SIERRA CLUB PARTY ON THE WAY TO DRAWBRIDGE PEAK
 Photograph by Ansel E. Adams



SIERRA CLUB PARTY AT THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT RESPLENDENT
 Photograph by Cedric Wright

wonderful view from their own camp-site. Here a promontory, almost an island, extends out from the shore of Lake Adolphus. The storm of the last few days had suddenly cleared, leaving the waters of the lake beautifully calm. In them, throughout the long twilight were reflected the lofty peaks of Robson and Whitehorn with their ever-changing fleecy cloud-mantles. Two huge camp-fires burned cheerfully. Our violinist went up the shore a short distance to a vantage-point from which his music was more wonderful than ever. The thoughts of many of the party turned naturally on this occasion to the kindly sympathetic leader who has planned and led all of the Sierra Club's twenty-seven outings and to what he has done for the club, and through it for all lovers of the great outdoors.

It is well that a man of William E. Colby's character appears from time to time to lead unselfishly the struggle for finer and better appreciation of the value of God's handiwork. The results of this leadership are accomplished so quietly that it is perhaps not fully appreciated. But, as of the noted architect, it may be said "If thou seekest his monument, look about." It is beyond the scope of this article to enumerate his achievements, but without his efforts our system of parks and forests would not be what it now is, nor would there be the great public appreciation of these wonders. What inspiration he has brought to so many lives! Best of all, his work will continue to bring inspiration to the lives of generations yet to come, although they may not fully appreciate to whom they owe the debt. It is little wonder, then, that as he stood in the glow of that camp-fire on the shore of Lake Adolphus, one after another of the party spontaneously voiced appreciation of the service he has rendered. These sentiments were further expressed at the next and last camp-fire when, the party once more united, farewells were said, and the good-fellowship was voiced in songs lasting far into the night.

From this final camp some of our friends went east, rather than west, among them Hans and Heinie, who were returning to Jasper. At the railroad station suitcases and hand-bags were rescued from a box-car and marvelous changes of costume were soon effected. Before the arrival of the train, bedding and dunnage were unpacked and strewn along the track in an effort to dry them before the long journey to California. It looked for all the world like a "hobo" camp, such as one sometimes sees along the Sacramento River.

The train trip of more than twenty-four hours to Prince Rupert

was broken by a stop at the Indian Village of Kitwanga. By the time we reached Prince Rupert the appearance and the manners of the party were completely altered from the shaggy roughness of the wilderness, although perhaps they did not yet reflect all the amenities of civilization. When we embarked on the steamer "Prince George," our photographer friend stowed his cameras away and held the attention of everyone on board with wonderful piano concerts. The trip through the Inside Passage was made in rain, but the spirit of comradeship which pervaded that passenger-list was unaffected by any matter so trifling as weather. At Vancouver wonderful purchases of coats, sweaters, and chinaware were made in the brief period before the departure of the special train awaiting us.

With many regrets we left some of our friends at their homes in the Northwest. Our friend from Portland was called at 3:25 A.M., although his train did not arrive at his station until 5:25 A.M., whereupon he promptly accused our friend from Texas, who had left us at Seattle, of bribing the porter. Thus, he is still being reminded by correspondence of his mistake in calling a climbing party at Tonquin Valley at an unseemly hour.

We are back in our homes, but this trip is lived over whenever two members of the party meet. Someone described it as one of the best of all of our outings, and the *very* best one to think back upon. I suspect that she made this reference to retrospection because in so doing she could omit the mosquitoes and horseflies. You will note that I have also omitted them. I prefer to do so, but notwithstanding such minor discomforts, and like many another member of the party, "I'm going back."