OVER A CASCADE MOUNTAIN TRAIL

Rough Trip to the Headwaters of the Mackenzie River; Maximum of Joy With Minimum of Comfort

BY ANNIE LAURA MILLER.

IF loyal Oregonians who know something of the beauties of the Cascade Range were to write a series of beatitudes they would probably begin:

Blessed be the Lord, the creator of mighty mountains, of towering forests, of swift-rushing waters and of the beasts and birds and fishes that inhabit them.

Blessed be the forest rangers, the builders of trails through the trackless wilderness.

Blessed be the inventor of the cowboy saddle, wherein mankind may ride in perfect security.

Blessed be the maker of comfortable walking boots and blessed also be the maker of the hobnails in their soles.

Although it isn't so meant, that last blessing may seem irreverent to some formal ecclesiastic in his study, if any such are left in the world, but the great company of lovers of outdoor walks will sympathize. Good boots that fit in these days of As as wide as EEs and 3s as long as 5s, are a joy so long as they last and every mountaineer knows the feeling of confidence that hobnails give. It was with keen regret that I finally discarded my own stout walking boots. They had been half-soled and hobnailed and when, as the result of much tramping for views and huckleberries, and many wettings on fishing trips they became, like Achilles, vulnerable in the heel, the carpenter at McKenzie Bridge turned cobbler and sewed large patches cut from the tongue, over the tender spots. Thus reinforced they carried me on the best trip of the Summer, but that ended their career; they were quite cut to pieces by lava and I threw them away, somewhat sadly, for I had had such "good times" in them.

Moreover, I may never see their like again; a pedestrian friend is obliged to wear a double amount of hosiery on one foot and a heel cap and inside on the other when attired in a pair of the latest cut!

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You see, we took a trail trip in the Cascade Mountains and were gone from that pleasant state of affairs which the old lady called "civilization" 19 days; long enough to appreciate to the full the great beauties of the upper McKenzie River, with the lakes from which it flows, and long enough to appreciate, too, the charms of civil life when we returned.

On the morning of the 16th of August we left Belknap Springs, some 60 miles up the McKenzie from Eugene, and we were several hours leaving, for only one pack horse was obtainable, instead of the promised two. Stout old Dan was so heaped with camping outfit that only his face and tail were visible, and what was left from his pack was tied on our riding saddles in such fashion that it took great agility to mount. Even then, as the August skies of Oregon are usually unfailingly blue, we discarded the tent as an effeminate luxury and took in its stead a tarpaulin. We were soon across the bridge and away, following the lonely river until the trail made one Z after another on the steep mountain side. The horses went lunging upwards stopping often for breath, while we sat in the high-backed saddles as comfortable as if we were in rocking chairs doing the wash's mending. Dan's pack worked loose and the bag of tinware tied on top of the load rattled and banged like cymbals.

The trail down the other side of the mountain was steep and narrow, yet down we went with comparative ease, standing up in the stirrups, with the horns of the saddles like towers of strength in front of us. We came then to a lonely flat where tall lady fern grew among the alders, then to a thicket of salal under giant firs. Little limpid streams were running to the river. Small ferns made a lacey pattern on the moss carpet, and here and there were clusters of Indian pipes, the fragile ghost flowers of the woods. At one place where the trail went high on the hillside in open timber, dozens of little trails ran down toward the river; some were old, old trails and some were new, but all ran down to the lick where so many deer came in the early days that people made a business of killing them for their hides. Only a few deer come now and a few wild pigeons that thirst for the warm salt water.

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Our horses were interesting characters, with personalities quite as distinct as those of human beings. "Bill" Yale, our guide, led Dan, and Dan, a husky, plodding farm animal in mind and form, led the team at the sober gait of two miles an hour. "Sis" was a bunchgrass boy, the kind of horse a cowboy would ride when engaged in "shooting up the town"—pretty and lively, but as ignorant of the limitations of a trail that she frisked her heels over its narrow edge time and again, being saved from a tumble, sometimes by happy accident and sometimes by her rider's good sense. "Roamey," named for his coat by some former imaginative owner—was young, but far too staid to be surprised at anything or to make a false step. He had all the conventional manner of a correct boarding-school miss. Indeed, in a way, one might call him a boarding-school product, for his youth had been spent in a fashionable city riding academy. "Knife" was an Indian pony, so named by the Indians because his flat sides and prominent backbone made him look just like a jack-knife. Accustomed to trails, he traveled them without ever looking where he went, seeming to have a sense of feeling in his hoofs like the sense of feeling in the fingers of the blind. Away from the slow gait of the pack horse, persuaded by an alder switch, Knife had a curious up-and-down gallop that gave his rider an amazing appetite; and once he showed such unwonted activity, out up so badly, that we decided the Indians had more reasons that one for naming him Knife.

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Were you ever in a yellow jackets' nest? It is an experience so common to mountaineers and so dreaded by them that the brayest would rather face an angry bear than be stung. We were going along at peace with the world in a beautiful spot where the trail ran on a narrow shelf between a high mountain and the river, when Dan stirred them up. Sis bolted, flourishing her tail wildly, and Knife, unwittingly held by his terrified rider exactly over the tree root from which the jackets were swarming, bucked before, bucked behind, whirled madly around and kicked with all his might until his rider's glasses fell off and she herself fell under his nose, while Roamey, of the riding school, safe in the distance, looked on disapprovingly. At noon we all met again by a stream, where we had lunch. We had collected stings enough amongst us to agree that a sting on the side of the head hurt the worst, while one under the eye looked the worst, and one on the hand did the most damage to one's usefulness. Several days afterward we were able to laugh at the suggestion of Sis' rider—she had escaped unstung—that the whole incident would have made a good series of moving pictures.

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That night we made the abandoned camp of the Southern Pacific Co., a little pioneer clearing of rude houses a mile and a half from the main trail. There was a spring of ice-cold water, a stove built of sheet iron laid on big rocks, a table and some arts-and-crafty chairs. One chair big enough for our childhood's friend, "the Papa Bear," had "the throne" carved in its back. We sat in it very little; it may be because of our being democratic Americans, but more likely because of its being uncomfortable. Darkness fell on us almost as soon as supper was eaten and our bough beds made against the side of the shanty. Away up in the mass of broken lava on the mountain above us, a coney uttered its lonely cry; then there was no sound except those near me sleeping, so I lay looking at the stars above the big black fir trees, at the big dipper dipping toward the river, and at the Milky Way growing milkier every minute. I was deciding that the idea of a celestial cowherd upsetting a pail of milk across the sky did not do the sight justice; the Japanese showing far more appreciation of that lovely stream of tiny stars when they called it the Silver River of Heaven, and I was trying to remember the pretty love story that goes with the name when the dog—(nothing as yet has been said of the dog. Sailor was his name and he was a shepherd, with a strong leaning toward bear hunting)—the dog aroused the camp by his growling. Some one called "Mr. Yale, what is it?" and Mr. Yale from his faraway resting place shouted back to calm our fears: "Only a skunk." But the next morning after breakfast the fact came to light that an old she bear with two cubs had passed through the camp.

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We had turned aside from the main trail because we wanted to see the lower fall of the McKenzie; so soon after breakfast we packed a lunch and started. For more than a mile we toiled over a stream of lava that had hardened and cracked as it flowed years and years ago, and had crumbled in some places enough for moss and lichens, hardy ferns, huckleberry bushes and trees to gain a foothold. We tried to follow the path but it was so indistinct in the rough rock and the blazed trees so infrequent that we abandoned it altogether when we heard the roar of the fall. The river runs with foaming water, white as snow crystals, and big green pools down in a deep gorge. Following up its bank we came to the fall. It is 80 feet high and a fine sight, though robbed of much of its beauty by most of the stream sinking through the lava above and gushing out near the foot of the fall. Its glory is the great round basin below it, an acre in extent, surrounded by a sheer rock wall on one side and on the other by the steep mountainside. The water of the pool is like some wonderful opal, dark blue, purple, bright green, silver and sky blue where the ripples break and golden brown where the sunlight pierces its depths! and it is set in the dull gray of the lava rock and the soft yellow green of mosses, ferns and trees that clothe the mountain slope, making an exquisite picture.

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The next morning when the sunlight struck the top of the mountain 900 feet above us we arose and made haste for our way led along the ridge of that mountain. Back in the main trail we began to climb, going up and up a southern slope covered with brake. From its summit we had a wide view of the wooded range below us with the Three Sisters and the shell of an old volcano, once another sister. The narrow ridge became a dismal place covered with the mere unclothed skeletons of trees, their dead limbs reaching in every direction. A jay squawked overhead, and two tiny song birds were making their Summer home in the inhospitable spot, but we saw no other signs of life except the tracks of deer that had been trailing the night before. Once out of the ghostly wood the trail became a level path, a credit to its ranger builder, going through an open park of fir and larch trees. Here and there big bears had measured their height on the blazed trees beside the trail, making their marks, as if they thought they were overreaching some smaller enemy—above the man-made signs on the trees; here and there they had knocked old stumps to pieces and eaten colonies of ants out of house and home. The ugly black and white spiders, too, must have had a grudge against mankind, for again and again we ran into their webs woven so that they hit a horseback rider in the face. It was late afternoon when we passed the forest ranger's place and came at last to Fish Lake.

Fish Lake in the Spring is three miles long, but the thirsty Summer sun comes up from Eastern Oregon to drink it almost dry, and when we saw it nothing remained except occasional pools and streamlets in a field of high grass, surrounded by empty curving beaches and forest trees. Nevertheless it was extremely picturesque, and we felt like a Remington painting as we rode across it to the hotel on the other side. Very slowly we rode and in the grass, for every path was black with thousands of tiny frogs and every pool had a margin of them several inches wide. We stayed that night at the simple hotel, and the next morning went on over the two-mile trail to Clear Lake. Here we struck camp, and remained for two days, while the horses reveled in the lush grass and the society of their kind at Fish Lake.

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Those were pleasant days. We women emerged from a dressing-room made of the tarpaulin and walked through the dewy fern to the wash basin, which was the lake itself, sparkling in the morning light. Our dining table was a joy made of shakes, with logs for seats, but cooking in that particular camp was almost as unpopular as dishwashing, for we had no sheetiron to make a top and the stove, left by former campers, was a simple hole in the ground, with a draft that blew the smoke into the faces of the cook and her assistants, making us all cry. How the biscuits burned before they were done in the frying pan and how the ham grew cold and was rescued just in time from Sailor, while the fish refused to brown, and ashes fell into the beans! Our beds, in spite of the fir bough mattresses, were very downhill at the foot, and had to be padded at night with our walking boots, extra clothing and fishing tackle. We might have added our hats, but combs and hairpins would have been forever lost had they not reposed at night in our hats beside our pillows. The second night we had a rain scare and made a tent of the tarpaulin, causing me to fear that I should not awake, for the morning before a hummingbird had served as alarm clock, whizzing down in my face. However, a kingfisher, shrieking for his breakfast on the lake shore, served the purpose just as well. That night a young buck made himself at home in our kitchen, but our bedrooms were widely scattered in the forest and Sailor was dreaming of bear, so he escaped unharmed.

One of our greatest pleasures was boating on the lake, for its waters are so clear that except in the deepest parts one sees the bottom seemingly but a few feet below, covered with silt or lava, and the boat passes over petrified trees sticking up almost to the surface, some petrified even to their tips, looking like great serpents standing on their heads as the water ripples over them. We saw one lone snipe on the lake, a family of scrawny blue herons and a woodduck that looked like a portly jug of gray pottery until he flapped his wings and stooped to drink. Few of the lake fish came our way, although a man on a raft was having great success with bread dough for bait; but the few we caught were beauties of good size and fine flavor.

Clear Lake is a mile and a half long and its outlet is the McKenzie. We followed along the river's rushing waters, fishing with success in pools below a series of cascades until we came to the upper fall. It is a glorious fall with a sudden rush of power that is terrifying. The water churned by small falls above shoots over the brink, a mass of white bubbles to strike the rocks 120 feet below and go swirling and roaring away down a wild gorge. A walk of a mile over lava brought us to the second fall, with its wild mountain background and great blue pool 160 feet below.

On the return trip we camped where Smith Creek flows into the McKenzie, because there is a rock there with a famous deep pool beneath it full of redsides, large and venerable. Nine of them found their way to our frying pan, but the three-pounder, for want of a landing net, found his way back to the pool. The next morning we arose (oh! so early!) and at 7 had everything packed and were sitting on rolls of bedding waiting for Mr. Yale to come with the horses. (He had gone for them before breakfast to their pasture, a mile and a half away.) The day wore on; we unpacked our lunch and ate it; we decided that the primitive life had grown too primitive; nothing could make us happy but extreme civilization. We saw that our flannel shirts were dusty and our khaki skirts a sight; and I felt, regardless of a rich brown sunburn, ending at collar and cuffs, a sudden desire to don a satin evening gown and go to a dinner party, followed by a box at the theater. But if we might have had our dearest wishes fulfilled, I think there would have sprung up, instantaneously in the forest fire, modern bathrooms with white tiled floors, porcelain tubs, Turkish towels, scented soaps and endless hot water. Toward evening Bill Yale came back; he had arisen while it was still night, met a timber wolf in the trail by the camp and then trudged on and on back the 12 miles between us and Fish Lake, where he had found the horses feasting on the grass they like so well. It was Roaney of the riding school, with his social sense and knowledge of dainty fare developed by city life above that of his companions, who had led the rest astray.

But that night we forgot our troubles while our guide yarned to us. All wild animals, he said, follow man-made trails, but most of all wolves, and they have regular hunting rounds. Every two weeks, he said, they came by his place where he lives under Bald Mountain. He showed us on his gun scratches wildcats had made, and many were the tales he told of tracking cougars to their lairs and of catching deer and bear alive. One cub he kept until it grew to be a bear so big that his wife was afraid the great beast might kill the children. So when it came time for the bear to "hole up" for Winter, Mr. Yale took him down to the river and shot him dead with one shot of a 44 revolver.

"Oh, I shot him decent," said Bill Yale. "I reckon he thinks he's standin' there yet."

The next noon we were back at McKenzie Bridge. When we go again we want to travel the trail the forest rangers are building now, south from McKenzie Bridge through the Cascades to the California line. That will be a trail trip well worth the taking.

DAUGHTER OF SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE WILL TOUR THE WEST.

MISS FLORA WILSON.

NEW YORK, Nov. 6.—(Special.)—Much interest is being manifested in the forthcoming tour to the Pacific Coast of Miss Flora Wilson, coloratura soprano, daughter of the Secretary of Agriculture, who will challenge the interest and approval of both the social and artistic world. Beginning the last week in this month she will be heard in a large number of Western States and all though the South.

ONE OF THE SCIENTISTS OF THE PEARY EXPEDITION.

DR. JOHN W. GOODSELL.

NEW YORK, Nov. 6.—(Special.)—One of the members of the Peary party is Dr. John W. Goodsell, from New Kensington, Ohio. He is a graduate of Cincinnati Medical College. He went with Peary as surgeon, but in addition to this work he expected to make certain scientific observations which should be of great value to the world.

Relation of Roads to Salt.

London Daily News.

Roads, we are told, owe a great deal to salt. According to one theory, the oldest trade routes came into existence as a result of the traffic in salt. One of the oldest roads in Italy is the "Via Salaria," along which the people of the Sabine country obtained their salt from the salt pans of Ostia. Salt was the main merchandise carried in the trans-Libyan caravans in the days of Herodotus, and salt is one of the chief elements in the trade along the Sahara caravan routes today. Salt and salt fish, it is interesting to remember, entered largely into the commerce by the Carthaginians. The latter, by the way, were considered a delicacy in those pre-Christian days.

When Father Goes to Shoot.

November's near, the law is off
  For all the kinds of game;
And ev'ry year about this time
  Pa guns it for the same.
It takes him 'bout a week or so
  To fix things up to suit;
An' when the fatal mornin' comes
  He sallies forth to shoot.

I've wanted pa to buy a gun
  For me, but he says "No";
He says it's fun enough for me
  To follow him, an' so
When he starts out I tag behind
  To carry all the loot;
It is an awful day for me
  When father goes to shoot.

If he would only GIT some game
  I wouldn't care a bit;
If he would shoot a hundred pounds
  I'd lug the hull of it.
But Lawd! This trampin' round all day
  For nothin' doesn't suit;
I allus dread the time to come
  When father goes to shoot.

He stromps around the underbrush
  An' looks up in each tree,
An' when he don't see any game
  He blames it onto me.
"Hang boys!" says he, "for scarin' game;
  They'd orter get the boot";
Oh, pa is loaded up for bear
  When he goes out to shoot.

Pa gets back home mos' tired to death,
  An' cross as he kin be;
"Ain't supper ready? I am starved!"
  He says to me, says he.
"Oh, yes," says ma, "I thought you'd like
  Some game, cooked up to suit;
Ol' Tabby fetched a rabbit in
  While you was out to shoot."

—Boston Herald.