



HOARY MT. HOOD SCALED.

Story of the First Ascent This Year of the Pride of Oregon's Snow Peaks.

A merry party of nine young people left Portland the first of last week with their faces set toward Mt. Hood and with their hearts set on seeing things from the 11225th foot of its elevation. The climbers were the Misses Jane Allen and Marie Hanson of J. K. Gill's book store, Agnes Murdock and Lillian Sabin, teachers in the East Side High School, Miss Mary Minthorn of Newport, Messrs Warren Hathaway, Dwight Coulson and Paul Maris of Portland and W. C. Woodward of Newberg.

We went by car as far as Borning, and thence by vehicles to Sandy where we changed for the regular four horse stage which runs between that point and the Rhododendron Tavern near the toll gate at the foot of Mt. Hood. There were seventeen people bent on making the trip and here came our first practical conundrum, viz, if he is a philanthropist, who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before what must be said for a stage driver, who puts seventeen people where half as many are supposed to ride? But really there are more unpleasant things than sitting four in a seat, that is if the passengers are seated by the process of "natural selection." And then too, there's nothing like it for bringing comparative strangers, as were a few of the party, into immediate and "close" acquaintance.

At 2 o'clock a stop was made at Salmon River where we were served to such a dinner as almost to make us look upon it as the foretaste of the fabled ambrosia and nectar of the gods which we would find to regale our spirits on Oregon's Olympus. After a most delightful Sabbath day's journey along dashing mountain streams and through royal forests carpeted with the fresh verdure of moss and ferns, Rhododendron Tavern was reached in the evening. Here we found a veritable Ultima Thule at the close of a long day's ride. Unique in architecture and construction, being built out of the strictly raw material of the forest, situated in the heart of the Cascades with a hurly burly mountain stream on either side, Rhododendron Tavern is as picturesque in appearance as it is comfortable and inviting within. Seated around the immense open fireplace in the reception room after a good evening meal eaten in the light of another crackling open fire in the dining room, one was inclined to wonder whether an arduous ascent of a difficult mountain peak was the summum bonum of happiness after all.

After a good night's rest our party of nine, some afoot, some by stage and some by horseback, passed through the toll gate and took the eight mile incline via the winding toll road, through one vast garden of brilliant, blooming rhododendron, to Government Camp, which we managed to reach in time for more good eatings at the Yocum inn or Mountain View House, to be more explicit. The Camp, which should be called Yocumberg, is located at the base of Mt. Hood, eight miles from the summit. The weather was just beginning to settle after days of hard rains and as the floating clouds gave us a stinging glimpse now and then of the crest of old Hood far up in the sky, it never seemed so far away and so unattainable even to those who had before viewed it at close range and we were all stricken with that "all gone"

sensation which attacks a fellow and runs down through the calves of his legs just prior to a race or hotly contested ball game.

At Yocum's we found the president of the Mazamas, Oregon's famous mountain climbing club, who had learned of our coming and had waited for us in the expectation of joining with our party in the first ascent this year from the south side. His wife had just been taken sick however and he had suddenly to return home with her, thus losing to us the satisfaction of his companionship and experience.

In the afternoon after our arrival we started out over the hills through forest and jungle in search of Yocum's Falls. No trail led to the object of our search and in the course of our explorations the crowd broke up into three companies, at least two of which learned that there are times when it is no joke not to be able to tell "where we are at." One young man, who had strayed off with a companion was equipped with a compass, but when the real emergency came he could not use it for the ding-busted thing just would point in the opposite direction from north! Whether the close companionship of an unusually attractive young lady had anything to do in messing up his sense of directions, we are unable to say, but when finally he concluded to give the despised compass a show as a last resort, it took him "out of the woods" if it did point wrong for north! There were four young people in the crowd whom you can't tell anything about what it means to travel in a circle when lost. After returning to the same point twice within a short time, it began to go in on them that there is a good deal of truth and very little poetry in the circle proposition. They then remembered faintly that moss is supposed to grow on one side of the trees. Investigations seemed to show that it grew on all sides but when one side was finally decided upon as the mossiest, then an argument took place as to whether moss grows thickest on north or south! Obviously there wasn't much light thrown on the proposition here. Having soon exhausted their questionable stock of forest lore and the young men choosing opposite directions as leading to the desired haven, they deferred at last to the young ladies who had decided ideas upon the subject, and who struck a middle course which led straight to the mountain road. Both young men hastened to explain that that was the direction they really meant, and all were so glad to "be on the way" and "know where they were going" at the same time that the young ladies were too magnanimous even to smile. For which we are duly thankful.

Finally all parties straggled in, in time for supper. (Let it be noted here that the chief characteristic of this crowd was, that no difference how far astray they wandered or what road they travelled or by what stage, they all managed to hit it up together at the right place at eating time.) An interchange of explanations was called for but so grudgingly given that each party was left largely to guess at the experiences of the others. Fun and hilarity ruled supreme when all were safe back under the Yocum roof but suffice it to say there were no more wild goose, hit and miss forest ranging expeditions indulged in. In the words of the song of the funny man, "We had plenty, more as plenty, more as we could use."

A big bonfire was the feature of

the evening around which we sat and sang old melodies and watched the last reflections of the setting sun play around the crown of Mt. Hood. Bonfires were very popular with this crowd for three good reasons. First, they tempered the wind to the shorn lambs. Second, a good bonfire tends to kindle the flame of romance and tender sentiment, which are always waiting somewhere in such a party to be encouraged into the "sacred flame." Third, they keep away mosquitoes. Personally, we will vote the last to be the weightiest, for in this connection another old tradition was firmly established—that it is the little things that count. But bad as were the mosquitoes we would doubtless be out voted in favor of number two. "Two" seemed to be a rather sacred number on this trip anyway. It was ever thus. Amen.

Rusticating at Government camp and feeding at the Yocum Grille was Mr. James Gill of Portland, brother of J. K., the book man. In him we found one of those rare personalities in whom the silver touch of age but fructifies the qualities of kindness and human sympathy, whose great souls are continually fed at the perennial fountain of youth and thus never grow old. Such always enter with appreciation and quick sympathy into the enthusiasms of young people and no companionship is more appreciated by the latter. It is a union of spring and autumn, the beautiful seasons of the year. Mr. Gill at once captured the young ladies, and if the young men were at all inclined to stand aloof with suspicion on this account, they made an unconditional surrender next morning when he led them on a long tramp over and around the mountains to a secluded lake where the festive trout were plentiful and unafraid. His jovial, irrepressible humor together with his keen observations on things in general, made one think twice to assure one's self that one of Van Dyke's inimitable philosopher fishermen had not "become flesh and dwelt among us." In water to our waists, which does not tell it all for three of the fellows who by accident took the cold plunge at different stages of the game, we enjoyed three hours' fishing in the shadow of Mt. Hood and betook our joyful way homeward, each with a fine string of speckled beauties.

But all this is preliminary, but none the less in place, as it prepared us for the all important climb. Now we're off, onward and upward on our haven-bound journey. At six o'clock Tuesday evening we left Government Camp for a walk of four miles up the mountain to the timber line where we were to camp for the night, ready for an early morning start on the snow. We left our guide E. Coleman and his two assistants, Messrs Mitchell and Andersen to pack a horse with camp equipment and bedding and overtake us. They were longer than they expected and did not come up with us. We missed the camping ground previously selected by Mr. Coleman and went a half mile farther on, pretty well up above the main timber line. Twilight was fast falling and yet no guide, so finally we collected enough loose fuel to build a bonfire on the south side of a big sheltering rock and led by this pillar of fire our guides were able to locate us. They suggested that the temperature was liable to manifest a decided downward tendency before morning but that as we were there, we would make the best of it. This meant an aggressive campaign for fire

wood, after which all hands were ready for a feast of fried trout from the result of the morning's catch. The unpacking however revealed the absence of the desired skillet. But very soon every fellow "had fish to fry" at the end of a sharpened stick and more toothsome meat could not be desired. By the firelight the guides busied themselves in spiking our shoes for the morrow's climb, and Miss Allen very appropriately read to us, Van Dyke's "God of the Open Air."

Not until midnight were the Mazama candidates ready to seek repose. A tent had been erected for the accommodation of the ladies, but with wisdom beyond their years (poetic license) they chose to bivouac in the shelter of the rock and within range of the fire. The men then took to the tent but soon came crawling out one at a time, each with his own blanket to encircle his shivering form about the attractive blaze. By two o'clock everybody was awake and from a little consultation some seventeen minutes in the aggregate of real sleep were figured up. At four light refreshments were served and at 5:10 we were off over the snow, each armed with a steel tipped alpine stock and with instructions as to how correctly to use it.

The day was perfect for the climb and only one who has been on Mt. Hood at sunrise, can appreciate what we were privileged to look upon. Hence description is futile. In a word it is ascending into the Holy of Holies from which one is vouchsafed a new and larger vision of creation.

After climbing for an hour or more, when the sun began to shine brightly upon us, the guide made a halt and said it was time for us to paint up, in which procedure the ladies naturally proved adept. First, came a good coating of vaseline over face and neck and then a thorough overlay of face paint. There were three different colors used in the crowd, white, pink and black and those using the latter were soon made to understand something as to the meaning of race prejudice. With colored glasses added to our equipment and with now and then a red bandana tied over one's head and neck for added protections from the glare of the sun on the glistening snow, we began to look our parts. Before proceeding farther, Mr. Coleman, who had by this time carefully sized up the climbing qualities of each individual in the party, made up his line of march, assigning to each his position in the line with strict admonition to keep it.

And now the real climb began. For a time hilarity ruled the hour, but it wasn't long until a strange and suggestive season of silence settled over the bunch. Each seemed to feel in need of a time of communion with himself and nothing was heard, but the crunch, crunch of the footstep and the tap, tap of the alpine stock. A few of the ambitious ones appeared at first to be a little restive over the frequent halts made by the guide for breathing spells, but after a few hours at every suggestion of a "whoa" they dropped in their tracks to best improve each shining moment.

The grinding, heart-breaking part of the climb is experienced in reaching Crater Rock. The steep climbing follows that but it is not so exhausting. The assistant guides had gone on ahead of us early in the morning and we could see them, mere specks, away on above the big crevasse, preparing for us by cutting steps in the ice and snow.

Arrived at the Crater, those

who felt equal to additional exercise ate lunch and the guide busied himself melting snow with which to quench the thirst of the famished. Sickness and extreme exhaustion on the part of two or three necessitated a stop of some two hours on the rocks here, but Mr. Coleman was not beset with importunities on the part of the others to be up and doing.

The next feature after leaving the smoking and sulphurous Crater which prodded up our imagination in a way to inspire us with a determination to be better boys and girls, was the climb up the Hogback. This is an immense, steep-sloping roof of snow covering a subterranean lake, narrowing to a sharp ridge along which steep incline one makes his way up toward the big Crevasse. This was a good deal like the tight rope performance and to most of the party this was the "shakiest" part of the journey. Those inclined ordinarily to dizziness found infinitely greater attraction in their feet than in the beauties of an incomparable landscape.

The "Big Crevasse" is a deep yawning fissure which extends along the south side of the peak some fifteen hundred feet from the top. In the past, during the climbing season, this Crevasse has been spanned with a snow bridge over which climbers crossed. For years however the Crevasse has been steadily widening and the bridge of snow is now a thing of the past. The old route from there up had accordingly to be abandoned and we were taken up a new and more precipitous one. The assistant guides had made a ladder which was thrown over the chasm and over it the party made its way. The end was now in sight but from here on the ascent was almost perpendicular and we went up on a rope attached to an alpine stock planted firmly above in the snow.

The feelings of one who for years has had an ambition to set foot on the very pinnacle of the glory of the Cascades, can be imagined in part only. And apart from the satisfaction from having accomplished a difficult feat, the magnificent panorama which was ours to enjoy was such as is rarely vouchsafed to mortal man. Nine snow peaks were visible, from Shasta down in California to St. Helens up in Washington. On the east we could look over into the wheat fields of Eastern Oregon, trace the winding, widening Columbia down through the Cascades to the sea, and thence look southward down the Willamette.

But the first thing to be done was to signal with looking glass eight miles down the mountain to Government Camp that the ascent had been successful whereupon, as we afterwards learned, the Stars and Stripes were run up on the "town" flag pole in honor of the first ascent of the season. The next thing was to dig up the historic record box which contains the names of those who have "continued unto the end," and to add ours to the scroll of fame. The summit was covered with several feet of snow, more than our guide had ever seen at this time of the year. During "the season" the top itself is generally bare.

On the way up the heat was found very oppressive, though the temperature could not have been at all high. One young lady had declared despairingly that she just knew she would never be cool enough again. Within ten minutes after reaching the summit she declared just as emphatically through chattering teeth that if we didn't get down from

there pretty quick we would have her to carry down in a stiff and congealed state. The breath up there was decidedly icy and no motions were heard in favor of "building us tabernacles on the Mount," inspiring though the experience was.

Immediately on the descent the fun begins and we had been looking forward all day to when we could turn our faces southward again and slide down in the snow. The first attempt was made at tobogganing in sliding off the ridge of the Hogback. We went two by two, the gentleman sitting upright in the snow, with the lady behind him, leaning backward, her feet in his lap. All hands let go and away they are off. The first couple to make the attempt swerved suddenly in the start, pitched over and over each other, then broke loose, he taking a steam rotary motion while she took a magnificent slide head first on her stomach, both arriving at the bottom on schedule time if not in the most approved style. Thus we made the descent, slide after slide, amid much hilarity.

In making our way down from the Crater over a very steep ledge of loose rock, the guide was in front assisting one of the ladies. Suddenly she lost her footing and pitched downward head first. Instinctively it seemed, so quickly was it done, the guide shot forward full length under her falling body, saved her from the sharp rocks and arrested her downward progress. We began to expatiate on what seemed to us a sort of Carnegie medal act of heroism but he passed it off unconcernedly as "merely a part of the business." The crowd had all day been swearing by their gentlemanly, considerate and resourceful guide and this little incident merely capped the climax. Half the battle in making the top of Mt. Hood, is in the wise, careful leadership of such a man as Mr. Coleman.

After an eight mile walk down the mountain we straggled in a few at a time at the Yocum inn, unpainted with some difficulty, changed our wet clothes and then proceeded to do things in the way of lowering the store of Mrs. Yocum's commissary department. About nine o'clock we took various conveyances down the dark mountain toll road to Rhododendron Tavern in order to catch the seven o'clock stage homeward next morning.

Why people persist in going to prosaic beaches and monotonous seaside resorts year after year and do the same old stunts time after time, when a Mt. Hood trip is an ever present possibility, is hard to understand. Not all would care to try to make the ascent to the top, but everyone can go part way with ease and an early morning view anywhere above the timber line is worth the whole trip for anybody. After the return home one of the fellows said to the writer, "I wouldn't take one hundred and fifty dollars for that trip. It is a new experience in your life which gives you a new vision and makes you feel like you had just passed another Commencement."

W. C. W.

West Chealem.

Mrs. C. Root is on the sick list, having met with an accident.

The directors of the new district No. 61 are G. Worden, chairman; C. Wade, M. Patten, with Frank Nelson clerk.

Services were held last Sunday by S. W. Potter of Newberg. C. F. Moore was also present. Services will be held next Sunday at 11 a. m., Sunday School 10 a. m.