

Exploring the Rockies.

One of the recognized pastimes of the Old World is mountain climbing, but it is apparently safe to predict that at the close of another generation the number of mountaineers on this continent will be vastly in excess of those in Europe. To begin with, there are a larger number of the Anglo-Saxon race here to draw from, and, secondly, the attractions of the Rockies are more powerful than anything to be found elsewhere short of the Himalayas.

Several Englishmen have crossed the Atlantic for the sole purpose of climbing the higher peaks of the Canadian Rocky Mountains and Selkirk ranges. Professor Norman Collie has made two very successful trips, in which he combined exploration with climbing, and last year the foremost climber of the London Alpine Club, Edward Whymper, took a preliminary run through the mountains to get the data from which to plan an attack upon the principal peaks lying within one hundred miles or so of the little mountain resorts, Banff, Field and Glacier House. What he saw must have encouraged him, for he has just returned to Canada with four Swiss guides to pass the entire summer climbing the heights of the various peaks he visits.

Edward Whymper, who divides with Sir Martin Conway the leadership of the scientific mountaineering of the world, has lived a life far beyond the ordinary in adventure and daring. He first started climbing in the early sixties—a mere boy, but already the equal of the trained guides who had passed their lives at the work. Even from the first he made few mistakes, and whenever a first rate peak baffled him it was only a check and not a defeat, for he returned again and again until he conquered it.

For hundreds of years the sharp Matterhorn had looked down in scornful pride upon the Zermatt Valley. No man had ever succeeded in reaching its topmost pinnacle. Time and again the hardy native climbers had started out to conquer it, but it had always been the same tale; in due time the adventurers returned tired, dispirited and humbled—the Matterhorn was always the victor.

Then Whymper appeared. Season after season this quiet, resolute young Englishman made annual attempts to reach the summit, and at length his dogged persistence was awarded.

At length, in 1865, on the 14th of July, Whymper stood on the summit of the Matterhorn. There were eight in the party which included Lord F. Douglas, the Rev. Charles Hudson and Mr. Hadow. The Matterhorn had been conquered, but it was about to take a terrible revenge. On the way down Hadow slipped at a point where there was no possibility of his regaining his footing. The party was roped together and had not the rope broken not one would have survived, as it was. Lord Douglas, Messrs. Hadow, Hudson and Croz, the senior guide, fell 4,000 feet on to the Matterhorn's glacier. Whymper and the two remaining guides being left clinging to the bare rock face and not knowing how soon they might share the fate which had overtaken their comrades. Now the iron nerve for which Whymper has always been so remarkable showed itself. His two men were utterly unnerved. They trembled violently and the younger went like a child. The Englishman alone remained cool and self-possessed. By judicious mingling of threats, promises and exhortations he contrived to instill them with some of his own unconquerable spirit, and at length got them back to a point of safety.

Such an adventure would have put an end to mountaineering with most men, but Whymper can no more resist climbing than a sailor can keep away from the sea. A few years later, having conquered everything in the Alps, he made a longer expedition to the Andes, and succeeded in climbing all of the higher peaks of that range within the limits of the republic of Ecuador. Chimborazo, Carazon, Cotacachi and many others between 11,000 and 19,000 feet were climbed. When he stood upon the summit of Chimborazo, 20,545 feet above the sea, he had climbed higher than any other man, and for weeks at a time he lived at an elevation greater than that of the summit of Mount Blanc. The actual dangers of the ascent were never so great in South America as those he had met with in the Alps, but the discomfort and risk from the extreme rarity of

the air were, of course, very much greater. At these excessive elevations even the most athletic can only walk a few steps at a time, then a prone position must be adopted and breath regained. Nothing but the most dogged perseverance and magnificent powers of endurance will enable a man to reach the higher summits of the Andes.

Now, at an age when most men think more kindly of the arm chair and the slipper than of the Alpenstock and the ice axe, Whymper has mapped out a three years' exploration of the Canadian Rockies, and, barring accidents, his success is certain. Whatever is in the power of human effort he will do, and the mysterious peaks and untrodden fastnesses of the great Canadian chain will probably no longer be secrets when Whymper has finished with them.

The Canadian Rockies are so vast and so little known that it is almost unnecessary to specify any particular locality as an advisable point of departure. Future generations will envy the present its glorious opportunities. Any man whose tastes lie in that direction, who has the health, strength and courage, may win a name for himself as an explorer and a mountaineer. To instance the opportunities for discovery which abound. Last autumn E. J. Dushesnay, of Itasca, determined to take a little jaunt to extend over three days, east of the magnificent Van Horne range and north of the main Wapta River. Although the trip was so short a one, he found himself in the presence of marvels of nature of which no one had ever heard. He had the satisfaction of being the first of his race to measure the great Takakkaw Fall, 1,400 feet in depth, and the pioneer explorer of a valley which would be a fortune to any Swiss mountain resort were it near one. On his return from his exploration he described his experience as follows:

"After following the bridge path from Field to Emerald Lake I camped on the evening of the 10th inst. by a most charming little lake, which is upon the divide separating the waters of Emerald Lake from those of the north fork of the Kicking Horse. The lakelet, a couple of hundred yards in length, is 6,000 feet above the sea and is at the foot of one of the spurs of the rugged snow capped Wapta range, and directly facing it, the highest point of that range towers almost a mile into the air.

"Making an early start the next morning, I followed the trail made by the wild goats along the crest of a ridge bordering a picturesque and peaceful valley for some ten miles. I was almost constantly above timber line, the trail keeping pretty steadily between 6,000 and 7,000 feet. I do not think I have ever seen so beautiful a scene, and I named it at once Yoho, which is a Cree exclamation of astonishment. At its northern end it is guarded by Mounts Collie and Balfour, forming a gateway through which a great glacier forces its slow, restless way to the bottom of the valley. Here the north fork of the Kicking Horse river is born. East, I found myself facing a scene absolutely terrible in its wild grandeur, a range of grim sentinels formed a barrier between valley and the watershed of Bow Lake at the head of Bow river. All were glaciated and white to the very edge of the cliffs bordering the valley, and as slanting rays of the autumn sun lit up those great snow fields and ice slopes, the scene was one to impress itself upon the mind and imagination of the most stolid.

"Had I had the time to hunt I could have shot wild goats by the dozen, and had I been a botanist I could have filled my herbarium with plants so rare as yet in the museums that they are worth their weight in gold, or had I been a mountaineer there were a score of peaks in view upon whose summits no human foot has ever been placed—but as I was only out for a little quiet exploration, and somewhat pressed for time, I could do none of these things. Yet I was amply rewarded by discovering two cataracts the like of which do not exist elsewhere, so far as I know. At one point twin falls come down from the eternal ice fields in a drop of 1,200 feet. In another a magnificent arch of snow-white water leaps 1,100 feet from the foot of its present glacier to the bed of the Kicking Horse Canyon. Moreover, I had no hardships or difficulties to face, my sure-footed pony carried me over every foot of the road, and I was absent from Field but three days."

Mr. Whymper will first exploit this wonderful Yoho valley, after which he will attempt the Ascent of Mount Assiniboine, a giant peak about twenty miles south of Banff, in the Canadian

National park, which bears a striking resemblance to the Swiss Mountain. Like the Matterhorn, Mount Assiniboine is a needle-shaped mass of rock rising abruptly from the enormous glaciers at its foot, and, like the Matterhorn, Mount Assiniboine has baffled every man who has tried to scale its steep flanks, but Whymper is understood to have resolved upon its defeat, and it is not unlikely that the first year of the present century will see the ascent of Mount Assiniboine by this dauntless mountaineer.

One advantage the Rockies and Selkirks possess in common over the Alps is their wild solitude. Not one in ten, even of the higher peaks, has been seen by a white man, and not one in five thousand has been climbed. The lovely valleys are never trodden by a human foot, and the lakes and streams abound in trout for which no fisherman has ever cast a fly, and now that the Stoneys, the only Indian tribe which hunted between the plains and the Kootenay, are almost extinct, game is as abundant as the cheeks which nature always puts upon the wild things of the woods and ranges will permit it to become. Thus the man who cares for exploration and for nature, as well as for climbing, will find more to satisfy him in Alberta and British Columbia than he can hope for, at this late day, in the Alps or the Carpathians.

Even within the narrow limits of the Canadian National park, whose boundaries are the sides of a rectangle twenty-six miles long by ten broad, there are many beautiful valleys which no one has yet visited. An old guide and trapper, Tom Wilson, who lives in Banff, went off almost by himself last year and saw many strange sights. Among other things he actually found a small glacier within the park limits, something that nobody in Banff ever dreamed of. His account of his trip, which, by the by, was made over a road hitherto absolutely untraveled, is most interesting. By the camp fire awaiting the arrival of a belated pack train he gave the following outlined sketch of the exploration in question.

"I started out from Banff and rode along the trail to Devil's Lake, nine miles. This trail, as you know, passes by the base of Cascade Mountain, the Indian name for which is 'The Mountain Where the Water Falls.' At its foot there is a beautiful little prairie, now fenced in by the Canadian government and stocked with herds of buffalo, elk, antelope and white goat.

"Devil's lake is twelve miles long, and from a point on the northern side a fairly good old Indian hunting trail was followed over a high divide to the middle fork of the Dead Man's River. From the summit of this pass I obtained one of the finest views I ever had in the mountains, and moreover, I was the first to notice a small glacier which I found exists at the base of Mt. Aylmer, 10,300 feet high, the highest mountain in the park. In future lots of people will visit this mass of blue ice, some of them will think they were the first to find it, but as a matter of fact until I was there in 1900 no white man in Banff or in any other place in the Rockies ever suspected that a glacier existed in the National Park.

"Away to the north the eye ranges over mountains and ridges extending to an interminable distance. Everywhere the short turf was enlivened by flowers, few of which have as yet been examined by the botanist. I followed the trail down the Dead Man's River for nine miles, much of the way being through green standing timber, made up largely of the Douglas fir and the Englemann spruce, and at length I came to the gap through which the trail runs to the eastern end of Devil's Lake, into which no doubt it flowed, until some ancient glacier piled up a moraine across its path and forced the river to turn east. But as a protest the river, except during a couple of weeks in early spring, disappears at this point and flows underground for five miles, not emerging into daylight until it is joined by the south fork, then, as if glad of company, it flows joyously above ground and starts off in a fairly direct line for Hudson Bay. Its Indian name, Ghost River, was given it on account of its somewhat mysterious disappearance and reappearance.

"Leaving Devil's Lake I travelled for five miles down a valley, the average width of which was, perhaps, half a mile, though it is walled in by cliffs almost perpendicular and 4,000 feet in height. I am not a geologist, but I think it would well repay any man who understands such things to visit a lit-

tle gulch which comes in near the end of the Devil's Lake. Here are to be found, marked in the solid rock, the footprints of some prehistoric monster which kindly left the imprints of its feet to make glad the heart of some man of science.

"At length reached the summit of the pass which leads to Carrot Creek and to Duthill, from which point it is but a couple of hours' ride to Banff. On another occasion I extended the trip when I got to Carrot Creek by turning east into a fine park-like country, continuing on to the south fork of the Ghost River. I followed the river down to a little stream that comes in from the south and heads in a delightful lake swarming with trout which run as high as ten pounds. This lake was a favorite camping place of the Stoney Indians half a century ago; here they have defeated the Blackfeet of the Plains in pitched battle, even when the latter outnumbered them ten to one. From this point an old Indian trail crosses a rolling country to the Bow River, striking it at the site of the old Bow fort. This old Hudson Bay post was built in 1802, but abandoned after a few years occupation, on account of the bloodthirsty attacks of the Blackfeet, Blood and Pagan tribes."

Mr. Whymper, too, will doubtless explore this region, for his present intentions are to spend this and the summers of 1902-3 in the Canadian Rockies and the story he may have to tell the world of its hidden mysteries will be awaited with the deepest interest.

Nitrate of Soda Situation.

The conditions prevailing and as, in part, explained in these columns recently, continue, and a strong market may be expected during the remainder of the current year, but it is not expected that prices will be forced much higher on the west coast, notwithstanding the fact that the combination of producers has control of the situation. Further particulars have come to hand since our previous review of the situation from which it may be inferred that lower prices need not be expected until after March of next year, the time of expiration of the producers' agreement. Prices in the meantime may be affected by changes in freight rates and the conditions prevailing in other markets, and should consumptive requirements in this country increase, there may follow periods of comparative scarcity and temporary advances, although shipments from the west coast are regulated to supply prospective requirements and purchasers of cargoes for future arrivals can provide against such contingencies with reasonable assurance of constant and ample supply.

The production allowed by the combination of the twelve months from April 1, 1901, to March 31, 1902, was 31,273,000 quintals, or approximately 1,120,000 tons. Subsequently it was agreed that only seventy-five per cent. of this amount should be exported during the nine months from April 1 to December 31 of the present year, the object stated being to more evenly distribute the production over the entire twelve months. The amount to be shipped therefore during the nine months will therefore be 23,451,750 quintals, and as the quantity exported during the first three months of the year was 6,388,383 quintals, makes the calendar year's exports 29,643,133 quintals. The total exports during the year year 1900 was 31,550,073 quintals. The amount decided upon therefore shows a decrease of 1,906,940 quintals from the exports during 1900. This is equivalent to 66,670 tons, or about 650,000 bags. From this it will be seen that the combination of producers has pretty good control of the situation, which has enabled it to fix the higher prices recently established. This control of supplies might, of course, be taken advantage of to raise the price at will and to an exorbitant figure, but this is not feared, as it would be impolitic and probably result in competition by new producers who could not easily be brought into the fold.—Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter.

Little tongues are more powerful than the ingenious might credit

Scribbler—Hear the joke editor is looking for another job.

Sawyer—Yes, he was helping out on the copy desk last night and came across an item about a cat being run over and killed by a trolley car. He headed it "Nine Lives Lost."—Phila. delphia Record.