

Up Above the Heat Waves

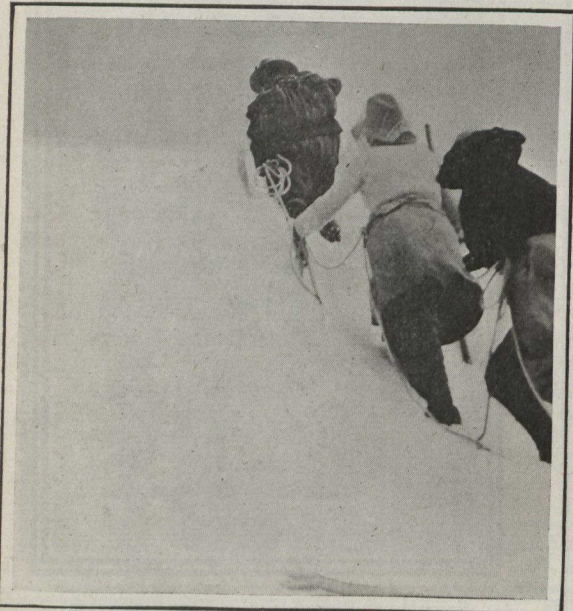
The Alpine Club of Canada in the Rockies

By H. W. ALLAN AND MAIN JOHNSON

Photographs by H. W. Allan



Party of the Alpine Club Going Up the Snow Dome on Mt. Daly, July, 1911.



Crossing the Snow Slopes; Swiss Guide and Two Ladies, One of Them Sixty-five Years of Age.



Glissading Down Mt. Daly.



On the Top of Mt. Daly—And Able to Smoke.

WAKE up at four o'clock in the morning, aroused by the noise of an insistent bell. Unroll yourself from a pair of blankets; shiver with cold. Fumble about in a dim tent for your clothes, and array yourself in hob-nailed boots, puttees, knickerbockers, sweater and soft hat. Stumble outside to meet your companions around a sputtering camp-fire. Eat an open-air breakfast of bacon and coffee. Fasten a rucksack across your back, and grasp an ice-ax in your hand. Climb and slip, scramble and fall for fourteen hours with only ice-cold water or snow to drink and only a bite to eat. Return to camp in the evening. Roll yourself between a pair of blankets; wake up again at four o'clock.

How is that for a holiday? Wouldn't it make a new man of you? Or would it rather be a sign of incipient madness to talk about such experiences as a rest and a vacation?

Whether they are insane or not, that is what the members of the Alpine Club of Canada will be doing the first week of August during their annual camp, and there is no disputing the fact that they themselves are enthusiastic over their method of holidaying. The Club was organized in 1906, largely through the efforts of A. O. Wheeler, A.C., F.R.G.S., who is still director of the Association. The membership now totals more than 800. This number includes representatives from all parts of America and the world. The President is Professor A. P. Coleman, of the University of Toronto.

This year's camp, beginning July 31, will be pitched in the Vermilion Pass in the main range of the Great Divide of the Rockies. The nearest station on the Canadian Pacific Railway is Castle, seventeen miles west of Banff. The country to be covered is almost unexplored territory, and the zest of the members is thereby increased. One of the scenic treats known to be in store is Boom Lake, whose waters are of turquoise blue. A submerged moraine catches and holds all the floating driftwood and thus gives the appearance of a boom—hence the name. Storm Mountain, with an altitude of 10,700 feet, will be accepted as a graduating climb. There is no easy road to membership in the Alpine Club; neither aristocracy nor plutocracy will let you in unless you climb the required 10,000 feet.

A number of competent Swiss guides will be in attendance. One of the most distinguished is Gottfried. He, together with his confreres, now spend all year in Canada. After the season's work is over, they retire to the new Swiss village, established at Golden, B.C.

Mountain-climbing is hard work—no doubt of that! It is the Rooseveltian strenuous life carried almost to the limit. But the rewards—the exhilaration, the stimulus of the sport! The artistic pleasure, the delightful shock of sensation that comes with the sudden view of an exquisite mountain tarn! The alluring combination of placid and rugged beauty! Such experiences make a mountaineer alive; he fairly throbs with life.

As usual, ladies will figure prominently in this year's climbing. The Alpine aspirations of women are almost beyond human comprehension. No matter how difficult a trip is proposed, lady applicants are always ready. Pink teas, alas, are not the best preparation for the arduous tests, and now and then, especially when unfavourable weather conditions assail, the co-climber (analogy, co-ed.) wonders at her mad decision to join such a party. In the heavy grind up the steep, shale slope, her view of the glorious scenery oftentimes is restricted to the rise and fall of the guides' boots ahead. Rarely, however, is there a complaint, howsoever justified.

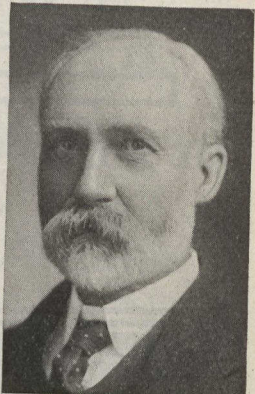
And what an unconventional costume the women have to wear! The club regulations are quite explicit on this point: "No lady," they say, "who wears skirts or bloomers will be allowed to take a place on a rope, as these have been found a distinct source of danger to the party making the ascent. Knickerbockers, with puttees or gaiters, and sweater have been found serviceable and safe." Another clause gives the useful suggestion, "The dropping of the waistline to the hip makes one look graceful in knickerbockers." The dismayed are further reassured by the saving sentence, "Skirts are fashionable by the camp-fire."

In the majority of difficult ascents, the members

of a party are linked together by a rope. On the whole, this is a useful precaution, but there are exceptions and disadvantages. Once upon a time, a lady climber, unusually competent but rather stout of build, suddenly missed her footing and slipped. The next person on the rope, a mild-mannered, kindly old gentleman, was brought up with a jerk that took him off his feet. The same misfortune happened to the guide, and the whole party rolled down the slope in a confused mass—rope, ice-axes, alpine stocks, rucksacks, climbing-boots, and knickerbockers. Fortunately, the spot was not a dangerous one, and the only untoward results were one strained finger and a half hour's delay necessary to disentangle the mass of animate and inanimate debris.

The Swiss guides are interesting characters, gifted with the highest intelligence and prepared for all emergencies. If they can secure obedience—and that is an indispensable condition—they will guarantee to get anything on two legs safely up to the top of a peak and down again. One of the guides had difficulty in keeping this pledge. The cause of the trouble was a fat man who was determined to reach the top of a mountain for which he had a particular liking. To gratify his client's whim, the guide had to carry him the last few yards and deposit him bodily on the summit.

Another gentleman, who was also finding unexpected obstacles in his dash for a peak, shrank from asking the guide to carry him and had recourse, instead, to stimulants. All such things are severely frowned down upon by Alpine tradition, but this man was of the modern sceptical school which does not give a fig for tradition. His insurgency, however, he tried to conceal by insisting on a halt from time to time "to tie his shoe lace." The guide, a Swiss strict on rules, and keen of perception, noticed the ruse. He offered to untie the unfortunate gentleman's shoe-string himself, and also to carry the distressed one's rucksack, which contained the supplies. After that there were no unnecessary delays.



PROF. A. P. COLEMAN, President of the Alpine Club.



One of the Alpine Club Swiss Guides.