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MOUNTAIN EXPLORATION IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES.

SINGULARLY little is known of the wild mountain region lying northwards of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and extending east and west of the Great Divide. Two mighty peaks, Mount Brown and Mount Hooker, marked in most maps as respectively 16,000 and 15,700 feet in height, which rise on either side of the Athabasca Pass, are supposed to dominate this region; and a certain halo of mystery and romance hung over them until in 1893 Professor Coleman of Toronto visited the Pass and pronounced these two mountain giants to be frauds. It was thought, however, that the professor might have been mistaken, and patriotic Canadians were unwilling that the Dominion should abandon without a struggle its claim to possess the highest summits of the Rocky Mountain system. The question involved other geographical and mountaineering problems of an interesting nature, so that when my friend Dr Norman Collie, F.R.S., asked me last spring to join him in an expedition of exploration and surveying in the Northern Rockies, I gladly accepted the invitation.

We started at the end of July from Laggan, a station of the C.P.R. in the heart of the Rockies. The caravan—I beg pardon, “outfit”—consisted of our two selves and Mr Herman Woolley; four men—W. Peyto (head packer), W.

Byers (cook), Nigel Vavasour, and Roy Douglas; thirteen horses, three dogs, and a quantity of tents, provisions, and baggage. We took no Swiss guides. Our route lay northwards through a maze of fallen logs and burnt timber up the valley of the Pipestone Creek; and we spent our first night in camp in a hollow on the banks of the stream. It was terribly hot and the mosquitoes were very active, whilst my first dinner—of fat bacon, bannock, and fried onions, washed down by three cups of strong tea—induced symptoms which for a while made me oblivious of the pleasures of camp-life. After two more days of steady travel, we camped in a pretty spot an hour below the summit of the Pipestone Pass. The heat was terrific, and I tried to bathe in the stream; but before I was half undressed a brigade of “bulldogs” and mosquitoes mustered, and, attacking me “not in single spies but in battalions,” fairly put me to rout. The “bulldog” is a big horse-fly whom Nature has armed with a formidable pair of forceps like scissors, that will sometimes draw blood. The horses suffered terribly from them, and on very hot days I have seen them dripping with blood under their attacks. Still, on the whole, I prefer the “bulldog” to the mosquitoes. The former’s nip may make you swear temporarily, if audibly, but it leaves