

MOUNTAINEERING IN THE ST. JOHNS ALPS.

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'dour Laird' and his dreadful accomplice, to burst into uncontrollable fits of merriment. Left hand salutes came to pass almost without comment. In "Knots and Lashings", that great technical journal of Military Engineering, that mirror of a world in arms, the "Heard on Parade" Colyume, attained undreamed of dimensions.

Indeed, in a word, it became clearer, day by day, that the strategists of the various Classes had something on their several and respective minds,—a something which obsessed them even more than the delicious nothings in K. R. & O., the refined humor of Infantry Training, or the contagious wit of Otter's Guide.

But one evening, utterly worn out by intensive and well nigh incessant application to Squad drill, Equitation, Demolitions and Field Defences, the members of the Classes sat grouped together upon the spacious terrace of the Chateau Poutré, idly enjoying the magnificent panorama unfolded before them. In the near distance, lights from the stately National, set in the midst of its own superb grounds (and real concrete sidewalks), gleamed through the trees of the Park. Just beyond, in all its architectural beauty, the marvellous lines of the Fire Hall stood as though etched against the evening sky. A constant stream of luxurious limousines, racing cars and the more plebian taxis, flowed uninterrupted along the Avenue du Bon Marché.

An almost holy calm had settled over the scene. From the gilded Palais Chagnon, that mecca of the Sabyrite, occasionally there floted up, mellowed by distance, that haunting and mysterious cry of "ham and". From the Windsor, the occasional pop of a cork, caused even the oldest member of the Corps d'Elite, instinctively and involuntarily to start from his chair. From the neighboring cathedral, the (more or less continuous) music of the chimes, fell like a healing benediction on war worn souls.

Engrossed in my own thoughts, and quite unconscious of my surroundings, my gaze had wandered far, far away, across the sweep of the St. Johns Plains, to where Mount Johnson, sublime in its splendid isolation, lifted its towering crags and lofty bastions above the surrounding country. I was no longer myself; I was tranced, uplifted, intoxicated. For some

"KEEP IT UP!"



—N. Y. "World".

time I sat silent, then turning to Baker I said—

"My mind is made up."

Something in my tone struck him; and when he glanced at my eye, and read what was written there, his face paled perceptibly. He hesitated a moment, then said—

"Speak."

I answered with perfect calmness—

"I will ascend Mount Johnston!"*

Had I shot poor Baker, he could not have fallen from his chair more suddenly. If I had been his father, he could not have pleaded harder with me to give up my purpose. But I turned a deaf ear to all he said. When he perceived at last that nothing could alter my determination, he ceased to urge and for a time the deep silence was broken only by his sobs. I sat in marble resolution, with my eyes fixed upon vaceney, for in spirit, I was already wrestling with the perils of the mountains, and my friend sat gazing at me with adoring admiration through his tears. At last, he threw himself upon me with a loving embrace, and exclaimed in broken tones—

* Scientists tell us that the elevation of Mt. Johnston is not less than 472 feet above mean sea level, though I cannot vouch for the accuracy of this figure.

X.

"Your Baker will never desert you. We will die together!"

I cheered the noble fellow with praises, and soon his fears were forgotten, and he was eager for the adventure. He wanted to summon guides at once and leave at two o'clock in the morning according to the usual custom among mountain climbers in the Alps; but I explained that nobody would be looking, at that hour, and that a start in the dark was not usually made from St. Johns but from the first nights resting place on the mountain side. I said we would leave the town at three or four p.m. on the morrow; meanwhile he could secure suitable guides and let the public know of the attempt which we proposed to make.

I went to bed, but not to sleep. No man can sleep when he is about to undertake one of these Alpine exploits. I tossed feverishly all night long, and was glad when I heard the clock strike half past eleven and knew it was time to get up for lunch. I rose jaded and rusty, and went to the noon meal at the Officers Mess, where I found myself the centre of interest and curiosity, for the news was already abroad. It is not easy to eat calmly when you are a lion, but it is very pleasant, nevertheless.

As usual, at St. Johns, when a great ascent is about to be undertaken, everybody, native and foreign, laid aside his own pro-

jects and took up a good position to observe the start. Our expedition consisted of 498 persons, including mules and members of Classes 37-39 (incl.), or 505 including the cows. As follows:

Chiefs of Service

Myself
17 Guides
4 Surgeons
1 Geologist
1 Botanist
3 Missionaries
2 Draftsmen
15 Barkeepers

Subordinates

1 Veterinary Surgeon
1 Butler
12 Waiters
1 Footman
1 Barber
1 Head Cook
9 Assistants
4 Pastry Cooks
1 Confectionary Artist

Transportation

27 Mounted Sec.
44 Mules
Rags
7 Cows
3 Coarse Washers and Ironers
1 Fine ditto
2 Milkers
76 Sappers
Total 235 men; 51 animals.

Rations, etc.

16 Cases Hams
2 Barrels Flour
22 Barrels Whisky
1 Barrel Sugar
1 Keg Lemons
2000 Cigars
1 Barrel Pies

Apparatus

25 Spring Mattresses
2 Hair ditto
29 Tents

Scientific Instruments

97 Ice Axes
5 Cases Dynamite
7 Cans Nitro-Glycerine
143 Pairs Crutches
2 Barrels Arnica
1 Bale Lint
27 Kegs Paregoric
33 Cases No. 9's
22, 40 ft. Ladders
2 Miles Rope
184 Umbrellas

(In the next number of "Knots and Lashings", the manner in which the hazardous ascent of Mt. Johnston was undertaken will be related. Book your order early and avoid disappointment.)