

## GUIDING THE TENDERFOOT IN PARADISE VALLEY

FAIRMAN B. LEE



WHILE guiding the tenderfoot on the southern slopes of Mount Rainier in Paradise Valley the past summer, the thing that impressed me the most was their lack of knowledge of how to walk. When going over the trails and glaciers the average tourist used his feet as if he were walking on eggs. On the ice, where everyone wore caulked boots, they would insist on walking on the sides of their feet, especially in places where you wanted as many square inches of holding surface as possible; and then they did not understand why they could not get along or were always slipping and falling down.

The hardest part of the work for me, at first, was to "throttle down," so to speak, and not get away ahead of the party. Our principal trips were to the glaciers, one three miles in three hours, and the other four miles in four hours; and then some complain that our Local Walks are so slow. It was surprising, even at the mile per hour, how many people had difficulty in keeping up or were "all tired out" when half way. The average summer tourist has what we called "Limousine Limbs," and is of the "Lobby Lizard" type, i. e., hates to walk.

To give you a better conception of the daily procedure we will go on one of the glacier trips, say the Paradise-Stevens, the four mile one. First let me say that every night except Saturday, when the jazz orchestra held sway, there was an illustrated lecture on the trips and scenic points in the Park, and especially Paradise Valley. Views of and on the different guide trips were shown and people urged to go down to the guide room after the lecture and sign up and be equipped for the trips for the following morning.

Now, let us go down with the crowd after the lecture and get our equipment, which consists of calked boots and heavy sox, "tin pants," i. e., khaki trousers with a reinforced, paraffined seat; heavy shirt, hat or cap, colored glasses and alpenstock. The first thing was to fit the shoes, and if it was a man he generally knew his size, but if a woman, it was a fifty-fifty break that she didn't know. Then again they would tell you a "4 triple A" when a 7 was the smallest that they could possibly wear. Of course, we specialized in the triple A. We would also get calls for a 7 when a 5 was plenty large enough. Some of the men were just as bad. One day a fellow came in and called for "the biggest shoe in the house," which was 11, and the boy fitted him to 8s. After the shoes came the tin pants. Here we had to ask the waist measure and the women got about ten sizes larger, as they were men's cut and made straight from the hips to the waist.

When everyone was ready in the morning it was generally a half hour after the scheduled time for leaving, especially if the crowd was large. The parties numbered from five to twenty-five, with some larger. After leaving the Inn a short while a stop was always made to take the first "official picture," and incidentally to give them time to get their second wind. After the picture we would go on and the different flowers and points of interest would be pointed out and named and innumerable questions answered all the while. After some time someone would be sure to say, "Oh, Mr. Guide, don't you ever get tired?" and then we knew it was time for another rest. When they got over to the glacier and started out on the ice they were always cautioned to stay in line and watch their step, etc., told how accidents were liable to happen and I always ended up by telling about the new kind of poison we had found, "Crevasse poison"—one drop being enough to kill you.

The great sport on the Paradise-Stevens trip was the sliding, the first one where everyone went toboggan fashion, and the second, which was the

better, when they went alone. We always started them sitting up, feet first, with alpenstock under the arm, both hands on it, etc., and they generally ended up in some other position, probably without the alpenstock, with snow down their necks and elsewhere, unhurt and happy and wanting to do it again. After the big slide the way led to Marmot Rock overlooking the Stevens Canyon, with a sheer drop of several hundred feet. Then we went over to the head of Sluiskin Falls, past the site of the Stevens-Van Trump camp, where they were told all about it, with occasionally a member from our own club or some similar organization adding to the pile of rock for the memorial seat. Then through the flower fields of Mazama Ridge, where some of the best specimens were, and back the road home.

We featured the Paradise-Stevens trip for sliding and scenery and the Nisqually for glacial formation, but the best trip, outside of the Summit, in the estimation of the guide department, was to Pinnacle Peak. This was a six to eight hour trip where you ate your lunch on top and got an idea of the immensity of the Mountain that you could not realize from the Inn.

Of course, the Summit trip was the "big trip," where many tried and not all arrived. It is safe to say that three times as many people reached the top this year as in any year before. In one day, when we had a party from the Inn and the Mazamas had their official climb, there were some eighty people who reached the top. The Summit trip was made, starting from the Inn (5400 feet) about 2 p. m. one day, arriving at Camp Muir (10,080 feet) about 8 p. m., leaving there around 5 a. m. the next morning, making the top by 11:30 and getting back to the Inn by 5 p. m. One of the interesting things on the Summit trip was a pair of chipmunks at Register Rock (14,161 feet) and when asked what they lived on the reply would be, "The nuts that climbed."

Of course, many amusing things occurred during the summer and one that comes to mind was one night in the guide room the boy who helped there was fitting out a lady for the next morning's trip, and put the heavy shirt on the counter. She picked it up with two fingers, turned her nose up till it scraped the ceiling, and asked in a very icy tone, "Are there any bugs here?" The boy, without an instant's hesitation or changing his expression, replied in a very pleasant tone, "Yes, there are hundreds who come up every day in machines." She did not reply and left hastily with her equipment.

One day a lady came up to me and very seriously asked me what I thought about the report that the mountain was going to blow up in the early fall. Another prize one was the lady who sat in the lobby all one afternoon looking at a colored photo of the Mountain when all she had to do was to turn around and move ten feet and see it in all the glory of a fine afternoon. Another one came in one day and said she did not know that they allowed dogs in the park. I replied that they did not, and she told me of seeing deer tracks back of Alta Vista and big dog tracks following them. Apparently she had never seen wildcat tracks.

As to foolish questions—they number unlimited. For example: A man sees a stream coming out from under a glacier and asks if there are any fish in it. "Oh, Guide, I suppose you carry that ice axe just for the effect?" "Yes, madam, for the effect it has on the ice." "Guide, what is the name of that falls over there?" indicating water coming from a melting snow field. "That is Snow-water Falls." "Thank you." And thus they go on, ad infinitum.

As a summer job, guiding the cheechaco is a "great life if you don't weaken." It has its pleasures and its sorrows, but taken on the whole, I think it can't be beaten.

---