

EASTERN IMPRESSIONS OF THE MOUNTAIN-
EERS.

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When this native of Chicago was asked to give her impressions of the Mountaineers' camp in Moraine Park, Mt. Rainier, as those of an eastern member, she had a moment of reluctance. In the windy city she was always accounted western without challenge. In Washington, D. C., her adopted home for seven years, she has more than once been charitably accounted for with,

"But, then, you're from the west, you know!"

It is not to be disputed, however, that whatever her location geographical, her true place among the Mountaineers is with the *Che-cha-kos*. This was proclaimed officially by the outing committee in the baggage car, "north of the King Street station," as they sat in conference upon the easterner's dunnage bag weighing a fatal fifty pounds. It was finally allowed to go through as a concession to its owner's newness, not to say rawness and distance from home. But with appropriate irony it was ordered packed alongside that of the president of the society, whose dunnage, as befitted an expert, was as much under weight as the new-comer's was over.

This first impression made in the Mountaineers by the eastern member was not half so exciting as that made by them upon her. It came over the telephone, Thursday, July 17, from some unknown headquarters:

"Your dunnage must be ready in forty minutes or it will not be taken to Fairfax."

Alone in a flat, in the strange city of Seattle, dunnage too heavy to be packed alone, no expressman known, or persuadable even if known; this first impression on the hapless easterner was one of dismay, promptly developing into fright. Had she not come across the continent to take that dunnage to Fairfax, and now even before she had seen them, was she not already being left behind by these speedy mountaineers?

The cloud-veiled mountain at this moment seemed further off than Washington, D. C., and much more impossible. Fortunately, however, entreaties over the 'phone and cries of "help, help," resounding through the flat, brought to the rescue a stalwart Swede of the Ray H. Butler Company, who swept the dunnage into the bag and had it down to the N. P. R. tracks before its owner's preliminary mountain heart-beat had fallen to ordinary again.

Impression No. 2 came at the station Saturday morning as one of gratified relief. Here was a large group of people looking almost as queer as she did. This depot memory consists largely of boots; partly also of knapsacks, bandannas or strange-cornered packages of luncheon, worn before, behind, sideways, "any old way." Also there was a look about the crowd noticeably superior, if not actually condescending, to the other people at the station who did not have a good time, a mountainous time, so conspicuously advertised all over them.

I suppose that only in the west would a person start off up a mountain with seventy-two people, half a dozen of whom only she had been hastily introduced to; the other sixty-six she was to become acquainted with, without even knowing their names, for several days or a week. Not the least interesting of train impressions was the friendliness at once evident, which belongs, of

course, to east and west alike, when out-doors people come together. The ride to Fairfax was full of this delightful freedom.

Reminiscence, anticipation and gayety, walked up the aisle and then back again, hung over the backs or sides of seats, asked "Where was So-and-so?" and "Hadn't such-and-such turned up yet?" Shook hands heartily in welcome, or invited you to eat luncheon with a jolly group down the car. Hospitality extended even to the new-comer's alpenstock, so hopelessly new and bare of inscriptions. It was invited to the crowd of experienced ones stacked up sociably in the corner near belated dunnage (going, you notice, to Fairfax though *not* ready in forty minutes on that scaresome Thursday).

The Saturday walk up the trail was memorable for the queer rain which kept steadily on but did not wet anything perceptibly for its pains, though it freshened the fragrant twin-flowers in luxuriant hollows and pretty slopes; for the uselessness of the alpenstock as yet, but which was never to be left alone a minute by any wayside resting place; for the individuality shown in costumes, particularly the one protected by an olive poncho cape which could also serve other protective uses, topped by a fetching straw hat on which a lovely pine branch was frescoed and finished off by little, trim, tall boots that fairly flew along and up, up, up. There was that halt for luncheon by the brook overgrown with alders, and then the tramp, tramp, tramp again along the lovely trail. At night the flaring, roaring fire and expeditiously gotten supper, the friendly drying of moist garments, and the kindness of all these strangers, aroused in the captivated new-comer a sense of exultation that interesting as all was so far, it was but a faint promise of excitements to come.

There was no first view of Rainier from the trail next day. Fogs and clouds kept that in store. But

surely all of us remember with gratitude that moment at the end of the day when Dr. Van Horn gathered us together in the beautiful park that for three weeks was to be our home. The sunset glowed down the gorge beyond the Mother Mount Range. The magnificent snows of Rainier deep as the ages, white as the Great White Throne itself, were flushed with rosy color, the very *Jungfrau* light.

A history of each day that followed in this happy camp would not be too detailed for mountaineering memories. Each day was different but alike delightful to experience and recall. One felt oppressed at times with having only five senses, however active, with which to enjoy the mountain beauty investing us from every side, or to appreciate the opportunities for companionship. You had to be in a kind of a hurry all the time to keep up with the sensations, thoughts and impressions that poured in upon you. It was impossible to convey it to yourself in adequate manner, much less to friends far away. Consequently, it was noticeable that the picture post card was the main medium of correspondence. And such post cards!—only those who received these mementos know beside ourselves what photographs we had in camp.

The most abiding and recurrent memory to me is the spirit of the people. Ninety-two at our greatest the second week, and fifty-two at our smallest, the last few days, we formed a nucleus for an ideal state. Here were authority and rules for which the reason was so evident in each case that obedience was merely intelligent co-operation. No one was greater or less sure by talents or temperament. Each made his place by these alone. This was remarked one day by the cook's helper:

"All the people are so good as one anudder—no richer, make no difference."



ON THE STEEP SNOW SLOPES OF THE UPPER WHITE GLACIER

Photo by A. W. Archer

Almost every kind of vocation was represented among us; "doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief;" mothers and fathers, bachelors unabashed, single ladies quite content, a merry widow, a lover or two, and a bonnie lass and laddie to complete our family circle.

We varied, too, in weight, between a substantial two hundred twenty-five—the weight of the law of course—and slender little eighty-six; as for age we were all young except two who were just younger. With all these chances for variation in temperament, every note of wit and humor was struck in this assemblage. It rang out in prolonged laughter from the slope to the northwest at almost any time of day; it accompanied the rites of making or of going to bed, it radiated in quiet significant smiles from the official tent; in shafts of repartee it flew from tent to tent. Not the character and attainments of leaders, nor the presence of distinguished guests would suffice entirely to counteract it. Perhaps no single moment so expressed the prevailing tone in Moraine Park as that, at the end of every evening program when Dr. Van Horn rose.

The momentary hush that prefaced the wanderer's night song, the instant of silence afterward to hear the bugles sound "Taps" from the ridges near by, as it echoed and re-echoed; by the darkened mountains, the increasing splendor of the stars above; the dying down of the hospitable fire below—all this was a fitting benediction to the pleasures of the day and a welcome preparation for the night.

As Mr. Curtis once observed casually "The mountains either lift a man up or pull him down." What they had maintained in one man was evident the second Sunday night, when Nature quotations were being given around the fire.

In his turn, arose from a place on the slope above

the rest, the member of the club who lives most in the mountains, and took off his hat before he began.

This opening tribute to the subject of his poem, no less than to the poet and his words, was felt immediately as an expression of character borne out, in every line and feature as he stood there in the leaping firelight, picturesquely outlined against the tall black firs.

Those Sunday night quotations were a revelation, by the by, of the love of true poetry and the verbal memory possessed by the Mountaineers. The more outdoors the person, the more quotations he knew. It was something worth while when the man from Alaska gave "Under the wide and starry sky," and when the second in command gave,

"Here's what I love, the blue sky above,
The wide clear space, and the open place,
And the life that fills."

Or when Mr. Curtis, with such impressive voice, quoted:

"Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the
twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great
Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed,
nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho they come
from the ends of the earth!"

Beside all this the president of the club proved a veritable poet-laureate. From time to time he withdrew to a cloistered space in Marmot Park and built a friendly fire. Warmed by this and soothed by unflinching cigars he celebrated in turn our mountain,

"King in ermine robes of crystal snow," our glacier lilies, alpine firs, and even our Carbon Glacier, in verses highly acceptable at evening assembly.

In a list of camp talents, dramatics would take a high place. I still seem to see bearing down upon me in moments of review the chief of the Igorrotes, bejeweled with kitchen ware and garnished with dish towels, managing his heavily socked feet like an aborigine.

We had an artist, too, among us, whose sketch-book was filled before his departure with pictures of distinguished characters heard or seen about the camp (not omitting the solicitous mosquito), "speaking likeness" most of these were, eloquent as the artist's evening pantomimes.

The skill, strength and general expertness of the girls and women among the Mountaineers, impressed this *che-cha-ko* especially.

Their outfits and contrivances for comfort and dispatch were fairly masculine in ingenuity, and no less feminine in taste. Going into a neighbor's tent one day—not to borrow please, understand—lo, in the marvellous wall-pocket were stowed away the contents of a bureau and writing-desk combined, with one tiny pocket for a still tinier book—the highly appropriate poems of a Tentmaker—the Rubaiyat itself.

Camp calls and camp talks are continually echoing back to me. I wish I could hear the Apache yell in the morning instead of the galloping milk wagons. The cawing of improvised crows making merry near the head of the trail, the bugle to assembly and to meals; the orders down the line; the wonderful Tyrolean yodeling, for all once more would I barter a Boston Symphony concert, and the clatter of the Wright aeroplane.

The camp metaphors were so deliciously sophisticated. "Throw out the life line" came with vividness

from the party below waiting coldly if not impatiently, for the party above to get through using that responsible article, and "I heard a voice, way up in the mountain-top—tip top" was enthusiastically and frequently illustrated in fact as well as in song.

Even the gloves talked: "I'm Mollie's, whose are you?" The buttons displayed stag's heads, the overalls were marked "Black Bears." The alpenstocks recited histories as long as they were, burned in with fire, if not with blood; the hats bragged loudest of all, "Olympus," "Mt. Baker," "Mt. Rainier."

At this point, if at any, a *che-cha-ko*, who is in no sense at all a tip-topper, should modestly pause. Not for her the pains or glories of the summit, the invigorating comparisons and joyous congratulations.

Recollections here become too personal, too numerous to share. The humming-birds, the banks of heather, the violets, and all the other flowers. The glacial Cascades in the morning, the sunsets and heavens at night, and always Mt. Rainier above us. These all are "mountain voices calling softly to me."

In the future when they speak again may all our Mountaineers be able to answer:

"I'm coming, I'm coming,
And my heart is light and free,
I hear the mountain voices
Calling, softly to me."