

## ASCENT OF MOUNT TACOMA.

THE Cascade range of mountains in Washington Territory is, without doubt, the wildest and most inaccessible region within the boundaries of the United States. Clothed with forests, whose fallen tree trunks lock together to form a continuous stockade, almost impenetrable to man or beast, furrowed by deep cañons and roaring torrents, it rises peak on peak from the valleys of the Columbia and Puget Sound to the line of perpetual snow, above which tower the culminating points of Mount Saint Helens, Mount Adams, Mount Rainier and Mount Baker. Highest, grandest, and most inaccessible of all these is Mount Rainier, or Tacoma, the home of the only living glaciers of which the American citizen can boast, if there be left out of account a few insignificant ice fields on one of the peaks of the Sierra Nevada of California, scarcely worthy the name of glacier,

when compared with the majestic ice rivers of Tacoma.

As a mountain climber of some experience, I had long felt the ambition to try the difficulties of Tacoma. The spice of danger is very pungent for the moment, but it leaves a delicious after-taste; and having achieved

continent to Mount Blanc, the Jungfrau, of the Matterhorn; and to it I turned with that eagerness which can best be appreciated by those who have been infected with the same sort of ambition.

As an additional incentive, there seemed really no well authenticated records of more



the summits of a number of western peaks, among them Mounts Whitney, Shasta, Lyell, Dana, Hood, Pike's Peak, Lassen's Butte, and, last though not least, a mountain in the Sierra Nevada named by John Muir and myself the "California Matterhorn." I had experienced in none of them except the latter such a real sample of looking destruction in the face as the Swiss climbers seem to number among their everyday experiences. If all accounts were true, Mount Tacoma could afford the only parallel on this

than one ascent having ever been made—that of General Hazzard Stevens, in 1870. Previous to that ascent, Gen. A. V. Kautz, then a subaltern officer in the army, made the attempt, and doubtless reached a point near the summit; but as he himself modestly says, he reached only "what may be called the top," though "there were points higher yet." This was in 1857. A most interesting and quaintly humorous account of his attempt was recently given in lecture form by the gallant general, who, as a lieutenant,

braved the yellowjacket wasps and mosquitoes in the then unexplored approaches to the mountain, and frightened his Indian guide by defying the Great Spirit, Ta-ho-ma, by an invasion of his stormy home.

Following the ascent of Stevens and his brave companion, P. B. Van Trump, an essay was made by Mr. Emmons, of Clarence King's geological survey; but his description of Crater Peak is dismissed as being inadequate, he having discovered but one crater where there are two, and it is therefore surmised that he may have stopped short of the topmost peak. At all events, whether General Kautz or Mr. Emmons succeeded in reaching the top or not, it is quite certain that Mount Tacoma is not within the beaten route of tourist travel; for with the three exceptions mentioned no other white men, so far as known, had ever made the attempt to ascend it, until the writer and his staunch comrades planted their flag upon its icy crest, August 17, 1884.

Arriving at Portland, Oregon, in July, I learned by accident, and quite to my surprise, that a trail had been opened from Wilkeson station to the glaciers at the base of the mountain on the north side, and that the ascent to the summit could be made in one day. Wilkeson is the terminus of a narrow gauge railroad from Puget Sound to some coal mines, and thither I repaired without delay. I found that an excellent road had been opened through the forest some fifteen miles, ending abruptly at the foot of the grand glacier, miles in width, that pours down the northern face of the mountain. A glance was sufficient to demonstrate the impossibility of ascending the mountain on the northern and western sides, and that my information had been incorrect. I felt well repaid for the trip, however, as it brought me face to face with the most stupendous field of ice that my imagination could have conceived, and spread out before my eyes the whole mountain from base to summit.

Retracing my route by rail to Yelm Prairie, I resumed a search begun a year or two before to find Mr. Van Trump, who had accompanied General Stevens, in his memora-

ble ascent fourteen years ago. My efforts were rewarded with success, and together we persuaded James Longmire, the hardy pioneer who had piloted the former party through the woods to the base of the mountain, to accompany us on another ascent. He agreed to do so if we could wait a fortnight, until he could gather his harvest—a condition which was gladly accepted.

I spent the interval very pleasantly at the Canadian metropolis of Victoria, albeit with some impatience, and gladly welcomed the letter that announced that the harvesting was over, and all was ready for the ascent.

Returning at once to Yelm Prairie, we soon completed our arrangements. Our party was increased by the addition of a fourth member—Mr. W. C. Ewing, of Ohio—and on the 10th of August we saddled our horses, packed blankets, provisions, and cooking utensils on the back of a faithful beast, and plunged into the forest.

The trip was regarded by all the neighborhood as foolhardy, if not absolutely impossible. We were told that there was no vestige of a trail, and it was generally predicted that we should be obliged to return before reaching the foot of the mountain. Mrs. Longmire was quite pathetic in her appeals to her husband to abandon the trip, and clung to him, saying, "Jim, you jest shaan't go." But Jim's mind was made up to go, and with true Western determination he could be deterred by nothing after the resolve was once formed. Just before starting, we were told that a party of old woodsmen, among them Mr. Packwood, who located the old Cowlitz trail, which we proposed to try to follow, had returned a few days before, after one day's attempt to penetrate the forest, and had reported it impassable. With these numerous discouragements, we were quite prepared for the five days of toil and struggle that followed before reaching the mountain's base.

Crossing the Nisqually within an hour after leaving Yelm Prairie, we took advantage of a fair wagon road for twenty-five miles, gradually ascending to an altitude of eighteen hundred feet, and terminating abruptly

at Mishawl Prairie, where we passed the night, the welcome guests of Henry, a Klickitat Indian, who had renounced allegiance to his tribe, adopted the dress and manners of living of the whites, married three buxom squaws, and settled down as a prosperous farmer. He had preëmpted a quarter section of land, fenced it, erected several good log buildings, and planted his land to wheat and vegetables, which appeared as thrifty and prosperous as any of the farms of the white settlers we had seen. Henry was skilled in woodcraft, and we needed his services to guide us to the mountain. For the moderate consideration of two dollars a day, he agreed to take us by the most direct route to the highest point that could be reached by horses, there to remain in charge of the animals while we went forward on foot. The negotiation was carried on in Chinook by Longmire, whose long residence among the Indians had given him great fluency in the strange jargon, and the eloquent gestures and contortions so essential to its interpretation. Henry knew of the circuitous route which General Stevens had followed, and was confident he could take us by a way thirty miles shorter. Of this Longmire expressed doubts, but all agreed to follow our guide until we were convinced that he was in error.

On the following morning, the 11th, we were early in the saddle, and trouble began almost immediately. The woods were on fire around us, and we occasionally found ourselves hemmed in by flame and blinding smoke; smouldering trunks lay across the trail, and half-burned stumps left treacherous pitfalls in our way.

Nests of yellowjackets were met with every few hundred yards, their revengeful inmates swarming out upon us with relentless fury. The horses were stung to frenzy, and snorted, kicked, and finally stamped in reckless madness, until brought to a standstill by a barrier of logs, where they crowded together, trembling with terror. Nor was this a temporary experience, but was repeated at intervals of ten minutes throughout the day. We were thus in constant danger of having our brains dashed out against the

trees by the maddened beasts. The pack animals seemed to suffer most, and kicked off their packs with charming regularity about every hour.

By dint of a vigorous use of the axe in clearing the trail, we reached the Mishawl River, a distance of five miles, in four hours. The Mishawl is a clear, sparkling stream, rising in a range of mountains to the northwest of Mount Tacoma, and betraying by its purity that its birthplace was in crystal springs uncontaminated by glaciers. Four hours more of vigorous work took us six miles further, to a small brook running into the Nisqually, and by nightfall we had traversed seventeen miles from Mishawl Prairie, and gladly pitched our camp on a grassy bar of the main Nisqually.

We all needed rest and refreshing sleep, but were denied either, for no sooner had we unpacked our animals than we were assailed by myriads of small black gnats and ravenous mosquitoes. The gnats were simply irresistible; one could not breathe without inhaling them; they buried themselves in one's flesh, burning like so many coals of fire; they got into every article of food, without however, improving its flavor; they swam in the tea in such quantities that it became a nauseating *purée* of gnat, and in fact made life quite unendurable; while the mosquitoes stung and poisoned every exposed portion of our bodies. We anointed ourselves with mud, buried our heads in our blankets, and tried to snatch a little sleep, but all to no purpose. The gnats crawled down our backs, filled our hair and ears, eyes and noses; and, in short, made us so utterly wretched that not one of us closed our eyes in slumber the whole night through. This was a poor preparation for the fatigues and hardships of the following day, but we were destined to suffer the same sleepless torture for some succeeding nights before escaping to the upper region of frost and snow.

As we proceeded on our third day's journey, the forest seemed to grow denser and more entangled with fallen tree trunks, as though arranged to form a fortified stockade.

The ax was our only weapon to enable us

to penetrate the barriers. Every few minutes the Indian pony in the lead would stir up a nest of yellowjackets, and away he would dash, Henry crying out at the top of his voice, "Soldiers! Hyack claterwar!" a warning to us to look out for the yellowjackets. Pushing ahead without stopping to rest, by 3 P.M. we reached Silver Creek, or Sakatah Creek, (Chinook for wild raspberry), some fifteen miles from our last camp, and shortly after 6 P. M. made camp for the night at Copper Creek, five miles further.

What with the painful stings of the wasps, and the burning attentions of the gnats, added to the ordinary fatigues of the day, our exhaustion was complete, and we craved for sleep with an intense longing. But the gnats were, if possible, more numerous than on the previous night, and we were again disappointed.

On the morning of the fourth day, Ewing's horse having become completely exhausted, we were obliged to turn it loose, and cache the saddle and bridle till our return. Our route still followed the foaming Nisqually, which we crossed and recrossed at frequent intervals throughout the day. At times we were forced by some impassable cliff or narrow gorge to leave the river, when we would cut our way through the forest around the obstruction, and return to the river channel, as affording fewer obstacles than the wooded mountain slopes, and greater freedom from the yellowjackets; albeit the crossings of the swift torrent were full of danger, on account of the moving mass of bowlders carried along by the stream. Between 7 A. M. and 6 P. M. we succeeded in getting fifteen miles further on our way, and made our camp for the night near an extensive series of soda and iron springs of great variety, and most agreeable to the taste. Our barometer showed an altitude of 4750 feet, although we were scarcely conscious of having reached so great an elevation, as there was but little change in the character of the vegetation, or the temperature.

The black gnats never left us through the day, and were on hand in increasing numbers to partake of our supper, and cause us

another miserable, sleepless night. On the morning of the fifth day, a more haggard, gaunt, bleary-eyed company never sat down to a breakfast of bacon and beans. In feeling and appearance we were wretchedness personified.

Just as we were about mounting for the day's journey, the pall of dense smoke that had overhung the whole country for two months lifted for a few moments, as if to revive our dejected spirits, giving us our first inspiring view of Mount Tacoma, standing out before us in clear outline, every detail distinctly marked, and bearing almost exactly northeast by compass from our position.

Our course now lay almost wholly in the rocky bed of the Nisqually River, crossing the stream with even greater frequency than the day before. Some four miles above the Soda Springs, Longmire pointed out a blaze on one of the trees, as the point where General Stevens and Van Trump had left the Nisqually for Bear Prairie in 1870. Bear Prairie lay a long distance to the south—twenty miles at least—and was only to be reached by crossing several high mountain ranges. To be sure, it gave easy access to the longest of the ridges, leading directly up to the summit of the mountain; but the way offered fresh obstacles—precipitous wooded mountains, without a trail and without water, except at long, parching intervals. As the mountain lay to the northeast, we were naturally averse to turning in the opposite direction, and were all the more ready to believe our redskin's assurance that we could continue directly up the Nisqually. To his guidance we therefore entrusted ourselves confidently, and at 11 A. M. had the satisfaction of arriving at the foot of the great Nisqually glacier, an abrupt wall of ice five hundred feet high, filling the whole valley from side to side. Here the river, born to maturity, springs like the Rhone from a dark blue cave in the ice. Our barometers marked altitude at this point of 5850 feet.

The last few miles of the ascent were exceedingly difficult and dangerous. The river bed was inclined at an angle of about

twenty degrees, and the ice-cold water reached to the bellies of the horses. Several times our pack animals were in imminent danger of losing their footing, and rolling over and over. The narrow gorge echoed with the roaring, rushing sound of the waters, and the clicking of the bowlders bumping against each other as they rolled down the stream. The water, soon as it left the glacier, was white with sand, ground up from the granite by the resistless forces constantly at work under the ice-river—a characteristic of all streams of glacial origin.

Crossing the stream to the south side for the last time, we unluckily pitched our lunch-eon bivouac over a nest of hornets—and not until the ponies had kicked themselves free of packs and other incumbrances, could we manage to secure them, and check an incipient stampede. The horses were by no means the only sufferers from this last vicious attack, as we were all badly stung, and carried the pain in swollen faces for the rest of the day.

On either side of the river, the sides of the ancient glacial moraines were precipitous for more than one thousand feet in height; the glacier in front of us was a wall; and it seemed at first sight that we had got into a box, from which the only way out was by the route we had come. Van Trump thought we should have gone by the old route by Bear Prairie; Longmire was dubious of the outcome; but Henry was perfectly serene, and shouldering the ax, proposed cutting a zigzag trail up the mountain, as he assured us most earnestly that he could take the horses to the top of the moraine.

While the remainder of the party were engineering the trail, I started a fire, and got the dinner under way, and then eagerly ran down to examine the glacier. Its face was not so abrupt a wall as it had appeared, and I found I could climb to the top of it without difficulty. Its width was about two hundred feet, and its height over four hundred feet, confined between polished walls of grayish white granite. The river welled up from the dark blue cave at its foot, milky white, and heavily charged with fine sand. At fre-

quent intervals quantities of large bowlders were hurled out, and went rolling down the steep cañon with a deafening noise like the roar of artillery. It was a most fascinating scene, and I left it with reluctance to return to my neglected culinary operations. The party had finished a trail in my absence, returned to camp, and finished the preparation of lunch.

Resaddling our animals, we succeeded in driving them up the trail with the greatest difficulty, and reached the top of the moraine after an hour and a half of toil and struggle. Continuing to ascend, we changed our course to due east, and in an hour emerged upon a beautiful plateau of gently rolling ground, where there was unfolded to our delighted eyes a superb panoramic view of Tacoma and all its southern and eastern approaches. The cañon of the Cowlitz, with its great glacier, lay to our right; the Nisqually glacier with its many tributaries to our left, and before us the long, sinuous, ragged ridge by which we knew lay our only hope of ascent. We were really only at the foot of the mountain, and thanks to Henry's sagacity had reached exactly the proper point, by the most direct and easiest possible route. Van Trump recognized his position and the route of approach which he and Stevens had followed from Bear Prairie, and realized the great distance that we had saved. Our way now led us through rich grassy meadows, with snow-banks jutting into them like headlands in an emerald ocean; delicate, fragrant flowers, of loveliest hue, were growing right up to the edges of the snow, and the whole scene was one of enchantment.

Across this meadow we rode for four miles, now floundering in snow, and at the next step rioting in a wilderness of flowers, coming finally to a steep, icy acclivity; ascending which, we came upon the last vestige of timber, a few stunted, gnarled, and storm-beaten balsam firs. A few steps away lay a little gem of a meadow, some fifty feet in diameter, almost surrounded by snow, with a pretty little rivulet of ice cold water trickling through it. The meadow was thickly strewn with large blue gentians, red castilleia, yel-

low polygonum, white erigeron daisy, white alpine phlox, yellow and white fritillaria, yellow arnea, and a large, blue, composite flower, all of the most brilliant coloring imaginable. Here we made our final camp with our horses, and turned them loose to graze—although it seemed almost a sacrilege to see them trample and eat the dainty, gorgeously colored flowers. Our altitude here was 8200 feet, but none of us yet experienced any discomfort from the rarity of the air, or the chilliness of the atmosphere. The night was a grand one, compensating us for all the discomforts we had suffered in the lower regions. The moon shone full and clear, revealing all the landscape above and below us with startling distinctness. The long ridges of the mountains, running away to the east and south, with their barren, blackened crests cropping out above the snow; the Cowlitz winding away to the south like a silver thread in its narrow gorge, until lost in the heavy bank of smoke that had settled down some thousands of feet below us; while overtopping and overshadowing all rose the vast bulk of Mount Tacoma, glittering coldly in the moonlight.

No insects here disturbed our rest, and for the first time in several nights we slept soundly, not leaving our blankets until eight o'clock next morning, when we prepared for climbing in earnest. The saddle animals were turned loose, and the pack horses were lightly loaded with a pair of blankets for each man, provisions for two days, and a small bundle of firewood. We started at nine o'clock, bidding adieu to the last vestige of vegetation, and after ascending over four miles of snow, at times with great difficulty, at last came to a point the steepness of which forbade further progress with horses. We then unpacked them, and gave them into charge of the Indian, whom we instructed to kill some of the mountain sheep that we had seen before leaving camp.

Henry, who had not spoken a word the entire day, and had looked as blue as possible, here made a last persuasive appeal to Longmire not to persist in his foolish attempt to scale the mountain. For the rest

of us he did not seem to care, but on Longmire, as an old friend and neighbor, he wasted quite an amount of Chinook eloquence, to save him from what he considered certain death. He said we should never get back alive, if we succeeded in reaching the top; while if we were permitted to go part way by the spirit who dwelt at the summit, we should return maimed for life. He doubtless felt as he spoke, and parted from us in a most dejected frame of mind, as he turned to go back with the horses.

Shouldering our packs, which were apporportioned to give about twenty-five pounds to each, we traveled in an easterly direction, over the snow for about three miles, when we came to a narrow ridge of burnt and blackened rock, running north and south. All about us, to the right and to the left, were vast and terrible defiles, and before us, connected with the rock on which we stood by a steep and narrow neck, lay the last thin backbone of columnar basalt, leading directly to the summit dome of the leviathan of mountains. Beyond this point it was impossible to find a spot sufficiently level to lie down and pass the night, and as it was late in the afternoon we prepared to camp.

We lighted a fire with the few sticks of wood we brought, and prepared a place to sleep by throwing out the rocks, and making holes large enough for each to lie in. Our altitude here was about 11,300 feet; the wind was blowing strongly from the north-west; and the thermometer at sundown marked 34°. We felt this sudden change of temperature keenly, on account of the wind, and gladly wrapped ourselves in our blankets.

The brilliant moonlight and the singularly clear atmosphere rendered all surrounding objects as distinct as in daylight. The sea of smoke and vapor lay six thousand feet beneath us, and as we gazed out upon its white, level expanse, so calm and limitless, it required no effort of the imagination to fancy we were on an island in mid-ocean. Mounts Saint Helena, Adams, and Hood appeared like conical islands of crystal, serene and solitary, rising from the sea far to the south of us. At times, a puff of wind would

set the vapor in motion, tearing it in tatters, and rolling it up like a scroll, unveiling for a few moments the great valleys, and the vast expanse of forests, far below; and then the fog would roll back again, filling up the gaps evenly, as before.

Lying due west of us, some three miles away in an air line, was the largest glacier any of us had seen, with a length which we estimated at five miles, and a perpendicular depth of probably fifteen hundred feet. It was torn and rent with enormous fissures, the blue color of which we could clearly distinguish in the moonlight, even at so great a distance. The surface of the glacier was strewn with detached blocks or masses of ice, that appeared to have been upheaved and thrown out by some mighty power struggling underneath to escape. Some of these cubical blocks must have measured hundreds of feet in every dimension, and could be distinguished twenty miles away.

The noises all night from the grinding of the glaciers was terrific. Avalanches of snow and ice from the sides of the gorges fell with a sullen crash, and every puff of wind brought showers of stones from the tops of the crumbling cliffs to the glacier; while above all other sounds could be heard the deep boom of the bowlders rushing along the rock-bound channel underneath the glacier. The mountain seemed to be creaking and groaning, and one could almost fancy that at times it gave a mighty shudder, as if to free itself from its icy shackles.

No pen can picture the fascination of these weird sights and sounds. It was only after many hours that tired nature asserted herself, and closed the senses in sleep. We awoke next morning, the seventh day out, August 16, at four o'clock, pretty well rested, although we had suffered somewhat from the cold. As we opened our eyes, the prospect was forbidding. It was snowing and hailing briskly, and the mountain-top was hidden in fog. The wind had changed to the south-west, and all indications pointed to an imminent storm. Before we had time, however, to regret our ill-fortune, the wind shifted to the north-west, and in fifteen minutes the clouds were dissipated, and we were treated

to a clear, beautiful sunrise, and an unobstructed view of the mountain to its summit. Springing from our blankets, we soon had a fire started, breakfast prepared, and by five o'clock we were ready for the final ascent.

We hoped to be able to reach the summit and return to our lofty camp by nightfall; but still we feared the worst, and made what little preparation we could toward passing the night on the summit. It was out of the question to think of burdening ourselves with blankets, as they too much impeded our climbing, but we took a little food with us. Unfortunately, a bottle of alcohol, with which we expected to be able to make hot tea or soup on the summit, though carried by Van Trump with the greatest care, was broken at our last horse camp; and when that accident occurred, I threw aside as useless the spirit lamp, a tin cup, and a jar of Lieb's meat extract—not thinking of the possibility of our finding a natural steam-heating apparatus, and only having in view the necessity of lightening our load. Besides, we were certain that with so early a start from so high an altitude, we should be able to return to camp again that night. I carried one hundred feet of new manila rope; Van Trump, a hatchet and a six-foot flag-staff, hewn from a dead fir; Longmire, the whisky flask; and Mr. Ewing brought up the rear with the barometer.

Starting off briskly across some three hundred yards of hard snow, we were soon climbing a black ridge of loose rock, standing at an angle of forty degrees, and requiring most dextrous and active use of hands and feet. Two hundred feet of this sort of climbing inspired Mr. Ewing with the discovery that he preferred to return to camp and watch our attempt, so the barometer was transferred to Van Trump, and we left him behind. Ascending a few hundred feet further over the crumbling rocks, which were loosened by every step, we found ourselves forced by the increasing steepness of the ridge and the volleys of stones at short range, to the edge of the glacier. This was no better. The ice lay at a frightful angle—a single misstep would have hurled us thousands of feet. We were three hours cutting some



two hundred steps in the ice, a task of which we relieved each other at frequent intervals. At the end of that time we were again able to take to the rocky ridge, and held to it for over an hour, when we were forced to resume our ice-chopping at the edge of the glacier, and for some time we alternated between ice steps and steep and dangerous scrambling over the loosened rocks on the side of the adjacent ridge.

Ten o'clock brought us to the top of the highest ridge, and to a view of the point of its junction with the vast *mer de glace* that swept downward in an unbroken sheet from the summit of the mountain. Looking downward from here, the great Nisqually glacier appeared to be flowing directly below us, in a due southeast direction. The debris from the ridge on which we stood went down to meet it at an angle of nearly sixty degrees, occasionally breaking off in a sheer precipice, as the walls were exposed. The view in every direction was one of solitary grandeur.

A halt was here called, and a consultation took place as to the route by which we should proceed. Van Trump could scarcely recognize his surroundings, on account of the great changes that had taken place in the face of the landscape since his first ascent, but was under the impression that we must descend, and get upon the edge of the glacier upon its western side. I was not in favor of this, feeling confident it was practicable for us to follow the ridge, and from its terminus reach the head of the glacier. We determined to proceed as we were going. Climbing over alternate ice and rocks, we finally came to a point where the ridge diminishes to a thin, crumbling knife edge, running squarely against a huge, perpendicular precipice of rock, rising grandly one thousand feet above our heads, and standing sharply out from the main bulk of the mountain, a mighty landmark, distinguishable for many miles in every direction.

Unless we could succeed in crawling around the face of this precipice, all further progress was at an end, as there were nothing but yawning chasms below us on either side of the knife ridge, reaching down hundreds of feet to glaciers on both sides; and

to have scaled the face of the wall in front of us would have been as useless as it was impossible, for we should have been on an isolated rock, from which we should have had to descend again to proceed on our way. To add to our discomfiture, while we were deliberating, an avalanche of stones and dirt came over the cliff from its top, covering the head of the glacier, and loosening from the foot of the cliff tons of debris, which went booming down the icy slopes with a sound like the roar of thunder.

Feeling responsible for having brought the party into this perilous situation against Van Trump's inclination, I ran ahead as fast as I could, crawling on all fours over the dizzy knife edge, till I came squarely up against the cliff, where, to my great joy, I found a narrow ledge some four feet wide, on the face of the cliff, apparently leading around to the head of the Nisqually glacier. I shouted for my companions to follow, as the way was clear, and without waiting for them, crept on along the ledge some two hundred feet, where I found progress barred by an immense icicle, which had formed from dripping water from the top of the cliff. When the others came up with the hatchet, we soon cut a hole through the icicle, and in ten minutes more of sharp work, clinging in mid air to the side of the cliff with fingers and toes, and painfully crawling past critical points of danger, we were at the head of the glacier, which here became a steep gutter of green ice.

We had barely congratulated ourselves upon having safely run the gauntlet, when another furious shower of stones came over the cliff, falling but a few feet behind us, while a few came directly down the ice gutter, warning us that the sooner we were out of that locality, the better would be our chances for preserving whole limbs. There was no way for it but to follow up the gutter of ice; and for three quarters of an hour we experienced the severest and most perilous work of the ascent. Let the reader imagine the shady side of the steepest gothic roof he has ever seen, covered with hard, slippery ice, unsoftened by the sun, and prolonged for hundreds of feet above, and thousands of feet below, and he will have a fair idea of

the situation. Every step had to be carefully selected and well chopped out of the ice. The consequences of a slip here may be readily imagined; it meant a swift slide of a thousand feet or more into the yawning jaws of a beautiful green and blue crevasse, which we had admired from the knife-edge ridge.

Laboriously and slowly carving our way up the gutter, at twelve o'clock we reached the broad stretch of billowy snow that swept unbroken to the summit, apparently within easy reach. For hours we had been looking forward to this snow-field, with pleasant anticipation of rest and relief from hard climbing. We expected to make rapid headway, and reckoned on skipping along to the summit in a few moments; but, on the contrary, we found it about the most fatiguing part of the day's work. The snow was frozen into icewaves, running across the face of the mountain, and resembled a heavy chop sea, solidified and set up at a considerable angle—the hollows being three feet deep, hard and slippery; and the crests so softened by the sun as to make sure footing impossible. Every few moments we would fall down into the hollows, thoroughly spent and exhausted, or by a mis-step would find ourselves forcibly seated astride the ridges. After a time, we tried a new method. The man in the lead would leap upon the crest of the snow ridge, and pack the snow with his feet before the others followed, and in this way we made better progress. Every few minutes the rear man would take his turn in the lead, and by a short period of extra exertion prepared the little platforms on the snow crests to give sure footing for the others to follow. Taking frequent pauses for rest, we finally surmounted this wearisome portion of our journey, and at three o'clock P. M. we stood upon the bare rim of the eastern crater of the middle summit, with the upper edge of the crater only a few hundred yards away, and about one hundred feet higher.

Thus far on our ascent, the mountain had sheltered us from a furious gale of wind blowing from the north, which here assailed us with such force that with the greatest difficulty we accomplished the remainder of the distance, and at 3.30 P. M. planted our

flag on the topmost crest, in the face of the bitterly cold blast.

The view was inexpressibly grand and comprehensive, although the whole landscape, below an altitude of five thousand feet, was swallowed up in a sea of vapor, leaving the higher mountains standing out like islands, as we had seen them the night before. An occasional gust of wind would tear open the veil for a few moments, exposing to momentary view the precipitous cañons and crags for thousands of feet down the mountain's sides. We seemed to be floating in a dark blue ocean, having no connection with the earth below, and the mountain appeared to rest gently upon its encompassing clouds.

The narrow ridge upon which we stood was the dividing line between two craters, nearly circular, opening out to the east and to the west, their rims inclining from each other at an angle of about fifteen degrees. The western crater, the larger of the two, was some four hundred yards in diameter, and filled with snow up to within sixty feet of its rocky edges. Occasional small jets of steam, issuing from the base of its ragged walls, gave evidence of former volcanic activity. We could look down into the other and slightly smaller crater, also, whose rocky walls, like those of its neighbor, stood out bare and distinct above the snow throughout their entire periphery. Jets of steam were rising from this one also at various places.

By the time we had explored both craters, another hour had passed, and all thought of descending the mountain that night had to be abandoned. Indeed, had we turned back the moment we reached the top, it would have been impossible, before the darkness overtook us, to pass under the perilous cliff, where even now we could see showers of stones flying down to the glacier below; and the attempt must have proven fatal. The only thing that could be done was to seek some sheltered nook, and pass the night as best we could.

To pass the time till dark, a suggestion was made to scale the north peak of the mountain, about a mile away; but the steadily increasing wind admonished us that we had better not run the risk of being blown

over the narrow ridge by which lay our only path to the peak.

After a long search, Van Trump finally found the ice-cave where General Stevens and himself had found shelter for the night in 1870; but alas! the roof had melted away, leaving only a circular well in the ice some six or eight feet in depth, and about eighteen feet in diameter. From a small and irregular hole in the center issued a scalding jet of steam about the size of one's little finger, around which still remained the loose rocks piled up by the last tenants of this rude hostelry.

Rebuilding the low wall to enclose a space large enough for their bodies to lie in, Longmire and Van Trump stowed themselves away inside the wall and on either side of the steam jet; while with hatchet and alpenstock I leveled off the stones for a short path, some seven feet long, inside the cave, and prepared to pass the night pacing to and fro to keep from freezing, preferring this weary exercise to scalding myself with the steam, which had already saturated the clothing of my companions. It was a dreary outlook for the night, as the thermometer soon fell to twenty degrees Fahrenheit, and the wind howled, and roared, and poured down into our ice-walled cave, upon our unprotected heads, with a fury that made us long for the warm blankets we left in camp. I succeeded in keeping tolerably comfortable till midnight on my feet; but finally, overcome by drowsiness, and after repeated falls and bruises on the sharp rocks, was obliged to join my comrades around the "register."

Notwithstanding the discomfort and misery of our situation, one could not but take note of the weird beauty of the night, and the brilliant prismatic effects of the full moon, directly over our heads, shining from a cloudless sky upon the blue ice-walls of our cavern. Not even the ice-palace of Montreal, illuminated with myriads of electric lights, could rival in beauty the wonderful colors displayed in our fairy grotto by moonlight.

The long night at last wore away, and by morning we were fairly cooked by the steam. We could face it but a few moments at a time, and when we turned around, our cloth-

ing was instantly frozen to sheets of ice. The monotony and discomfort of this procedure may be imagined without further elaboration.

At six the next morning, August 17th, we shivered about the steam jet, and discussed plans for the descent. The thermometer indicated sixteen degrees, and the wind was blowing at the rate of one hundred miles an hour, and shifting to the southwest, with strong indications of snow. I make this statement of the velocity of the wind with some degree of positiveness, as I once walked up Mount Washington in the face of a gale that was registered at one hundred and five miles per hour when I reached the signal station at the summit, and I could therefore judge of the effects of such a gale.

Dreading a storm, we decided not to wait for the wind to subside, and at 7 A. M. left our friendly steam jet and started on the descent. Scarcely were we outside the cavern before our clothing was frozen solid, and we were hurled with great violence upon our faces. Staggering and crawling along upon our hands and feet, we managed to reach the western rim of the large crater, where we found a partial shelter from the force of the gale behind some large rocks, which allowed us to take our breath—but so benumbed with cold as to be scarcely able to grasp our alpenstocks. We discussed the route by which we should return to the east slope of the mountain. One favored crossing the large crater and scaling its opposite wall, but the terrible wind raked it fore and aft, and we must have perished in the attempt. While the others hesitated, I set the example, and, gathering all my strength, started at my best speed along the rim of the crater.

I had not gone one hundred feet before I fell among the rocks, completely exhausted and benumbed. The others followed. Longmire also fell heavily, receiving severe cuts and bruises before reaching me. We continued crawling along slowly and painfully, a few feet at a time, all the while clinging to the rocks for dear life, to prevent being blown away by the gale, until at 9 A. M. we got around sufficiently under the lee of the mountain to be out of the wind, and

reached the billowy snow field that had so wearied and vexed us on the ascent.

Following our trail of the day before, we sprang from crest to crest with accelerating pace, momentarily cheered by the fast increasing warmth of the sun. Ten o'clock brought us to the ice gutter at the head of the glacier, where we used the rope to good advantage. Two of us were lowered the rope's length at a time, while the last man lowered himself by doubling the rope over projecting knobs of ice, and so getting down half the rope's length at a time. The high cliff was passed safely, although volleys of rocks fell on our path immediately after we had gone by.

Twelve o'clock found us half way down the burnt ridge, and within half an hour of camp, when we missed the trail, and wandered over a labyrinth of crumbling rocks for two hours, before we reached our bivouac, where we found Ewing, who was becoming very uneasy at our protracted absence. His little fire of two sticks served to give us a cup of hot tea, which, together with bread and butter, we devoured with the appetites of famished wolves, as we had eaten nothing in the two days of our absence. Food seemed so distasteful on the mountain-top, doubtless owing to our exhausted condition, that, though abundantly provided, we were unable to masticate it. Nature deals harshly in every way with those who have the hardihood to investigate her secrets, not alone in throwing obstacles in the way, but in the preparation of all the conditions of swift and easy destruction.

At three P. M. we resumed the downward march, and almost instantly were enveloped in a dense fog, which seemed to come from nowhere, but to form about us out of a clear sky. Luckily, the sun had not quite obliterated our tracks in the snow, and by the closest attention we groped our way down the mountain. Otherwise, we might have wandered all night, or taken a plunge to the Nisqually or the Cowlitz glaciers, by a slight deviation to the right or to the left. When we came upon the horse tracks, we had a plainer trail, and by five P. M. reached our camp at the snow line.

An unbroken stillness and solitude reigned

in camp. Neither Henry nor the horse could be seen or heard. The tent was found more carefully stretched than when the party left it, a trench had been dug about it, the provisions and camp equipage had been piled and covered in the center of the tent, and at either end a scarecrow, or rather scare-wolf, had been improvised—the large, fresh tracks of a wolf had been noticed on the snow not far from camp. All these preparations indicated that the Indian had made a movement not on the programme of the white man. Later in the evening, after much whooping and several revolver shots by one of the party, who had gone some distance down the slope, Henry made his appearance, and proceeded to explain—with a preliminary ejaculation of his relief from a grave responsibility. He had concluded that the party had been lost on the mountain, and he had put their house (tent) in order, removed the horses to good pasturage below, had moved his "ictas" (personal effects) to that point, provided himself with a few days' rations, and on the morrow had intended to start for home, to relate to their friends the supposed tragic fate of the mountaineers. It had been sad and mournful business for him, but his joy at our return was as genuine as his surprise, and we doubted if he really believed that we had reached the top at all.

The next morning, August 18th, there came a flurry of snow that inclined us to lie abed, and it was not till nine o'clock that we were once more under way, in full force, with blankets and all our effects packed on our horses. We adhered to the route by which we had come, and during the four succeeding days of travel encountered but a repetition of the experiences already described; a renewal of the plague of gnats and mosquitoes by night, with a running accompaniment of yellowjackets by day. When the nests of these warm-footed little insects are stationed at intervals of one hundred yards on the trail, travel becomes lively and spirited; and when trod upon, they become an incentive to "cayuse" locomotion superior to whip or spur.

The expedition was eminently successful in all that its projectors had planned, with

one exception—the southern peak was not climbed, owing to lack of time the first day, and the furious gale blowing on the second, which prevented an attempt, had we been so disposed. That peak, I believe, is still virgin soil, and may tempt the ambition of some future climber. When one has once reached the middle peak, it is only a matter of two or three hours to ascend it, provided the wind is not blowing a hurricane, as we found it. It is undoubtedly inaccessible, except by way of the middle peak.

There are indications of abundant mountain sheep on Mount Tacoma. The party obtained a view of a flock of twenty-five or thirty of them on the ascent, a long way to their right, passing from the snow to a ridge of rock, from the high comb of which they paused to view the intruding climbers. The writer has often seen them on Mount Whitney and other Californian peaks, always at high altitudes, and of the same appearance as those of Tacoma, with large curved horns and shaggy coats, very shy and most difficult to approach. Their feeding grounds are below the snow line, and they only seek the higher snowfields and precipitous rocks to escape their natural enemies. No signs of them were seen on Tacoma higher than eleven thousand feet. Our uppermost camp on the mountain was about eleven thousand

feet above sea level, and was found to be the extreme limit of organic life. Among the rocks there was a little moss, a few blades of mountain grass, and a species of saxifrage; beyond this point not a vestige of animal or vegetable life, nor a fossil of either—nothing but igneous rocks, snow, and profound solitude. Since the time, ages gone by, that nature upheaved the mountain from the primal waters, the only living things the wastes of snow and rock there have known, are doubtless the few human beings who have planted weary feet upon its summit.

The achievement was a great satisfaction to all of us—to Van Trump, because it vindicated his former claims to the distinction, upon which doubts had been cast in the neighborhood; to Longmire, because it gave him renewed pride in his manly vigor which sixty winters of hardship had in no wise undermined; and to the writer, because he realized that all other mountain climbing in which he had indulged was as boys' play compared to the ascent of this—the king of all the mountains of the United States.

The name of Rainier is being gradually supplanted by the Indian appellation of Tacoma (pronounced Tachoma, with the German guttural sound to the *ach*), a name not only more appropriate on account of its antiquity, but to be preferred on account of its euphony.

George Bailey.

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