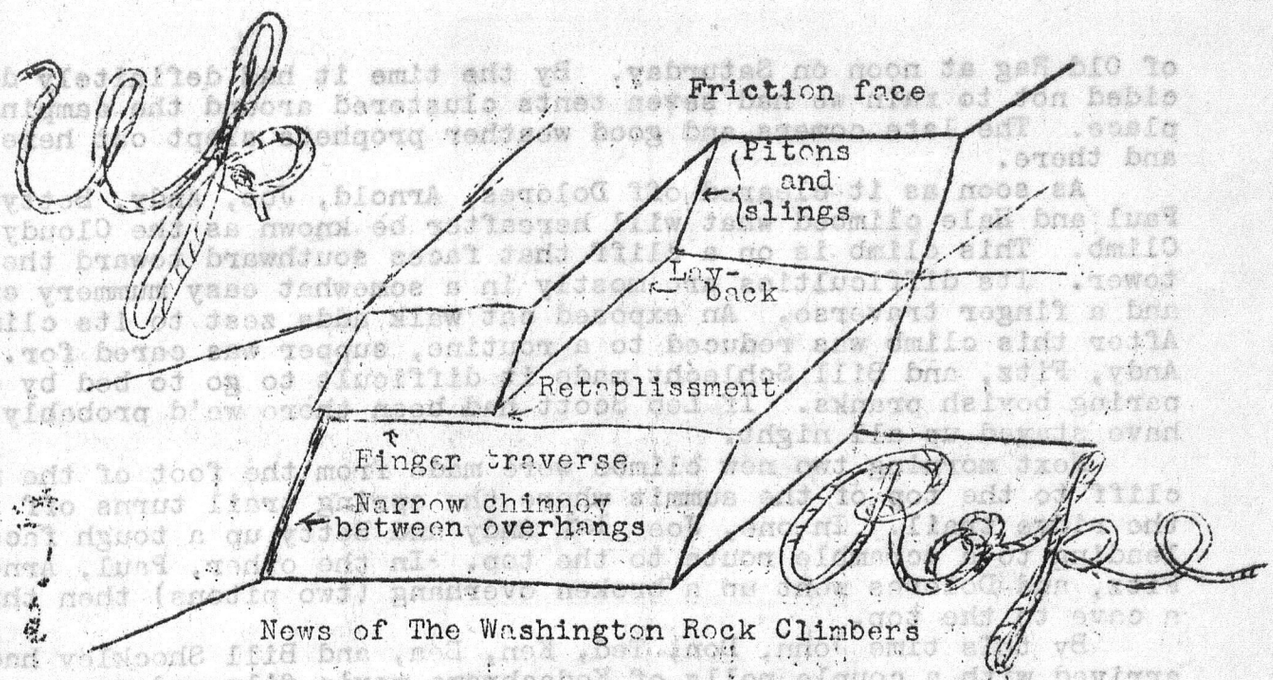


Rope

News of The Washington Rock Climbers

Vol. 3, No. 20 May 14, 1947

COMING EVENTS

May 25 Echo Cliffs, Potomac Gorge, Va., Leader, Arnold Wexler Em. 8658

May 30 to June 1-Shawangunk Mountains, N. Y. Leader, Paul Bradt Ge. 3917

Rock Climbing trips are all made by private car. It is advisable that anyone planning to go should inform the leader approximately a week in advance, especially if he wishes transportation or can provide transportation for someone else. Beginners are especially welcome and will be given instruction by experienced and qualified climbers.

NEWS NOTES: Andy Kauffman will talk on the American Ascent of Mt. St. Elias at the National Park Campfire Program at 16th and Colorado Ave. on Saturday June 21 at 7:30 P.M. He will also have an article on the same climb in the National Geographic in the near future.

Sally Chamberlin who is now in Switzerland broke her leg skiing in March. She can get pitons for 25 cents and fancy karabiners for $2.25 a piece.

The Photographic Contest which will close on May 15, 1947 is the donor to the group of a collection of Cliff Proctor's Rock Climbing Photographs. Mounted photographs of Tom's Cave Drawings by John Meenehan are also given to the group.

UPS AND DOWNS

Bill Schlecht
Ruth Schlecht
Dolores Alley
Arnold Wexler
Ted Schad
Donald Hubbard
Bea Howell
Joseph Walsh
John Reed

Sam Moore
Mrs. Moore
Mr. Moore
Elizabeth Tatum
Andy Kauffman
Betty Kauffman
Paul Bradt
Hale Bradt

Fitzhugh Clark
Geraldine Clark
Chris Scoredos
Donald Simons
Gloria Zoby
Bob Butler
John Meenehan
Ken Cole
Bill Shockley

May 3-4: Old Rag Trip. Paul Bradt.

It was threatening rain when the climbers began reaching the top

of Old Rag at noon on Saturday. By the time it had definitely decided not to rain we had seven tents clustered around the camping place. The late comers and good weather prophets slept out here and there.

As soon as it cleared off Dolores, Arnold, Joe, Andy, Betty, Paul and Hale climbed what will hereafter be known as the Cloudy Climb. This climb is on a cliff that faces southward toward the fire tower. Its difficulties are mostly in a somewhat easy mummery crack and a finger traverse. An exposed cat walk adds zest to its climax. After this climb was reduced to a routine, supper was cared for. Andy, Fitz, and Bill Schlecht made it difficult to go to bed by comparing boyish pranks. If Leo Scott had been there we'd probably have stayed up all night.

Next morning two new climbs were made from the foot of the north cliff to the top of the summit where the spring trail turns off from the ridge trail. In one, Joe led Andy and Betty up a tough face leading to a scramble route to the top. In the other, Paul, Arnold, Fitz, and Dolores went up a broken overhang (two pitons) then thru a cave to the top.

By this time John, Don, Ted, Ken, Bea, and Bill Shockley had arrived with a couple rolls of Kodachrome movie film and a camera. They wanted to film the Cloudy Climb. (See article in this issue on My Screen Career.)

The remainder of that day would have been wasted if some of the climbers hadn't used their heads. Don showed Bill and Ken his little specialty, the Getting Off Place. Bill thought it deserved a return visit. In the mean time Chris ran instruction trips up all sorts of places, and Ted, Bea, and Ken looked for a cracker jack of a climb and found only a moderate chimney and three face climbs that they all could do. Sam saw to it that his parents and aunt Elizabeth saw all of Old Rag, and now they are going to go back every week or so to make up for their late start.

* * *

Andy Kauffman	John Meenehan
Betty Kauffman	Arnold Wexler
Barbara Kauffman	Don Hubbard
Dolores Alley	Bob Hackman
Betty Alley	Chris Scoredos
Billy Alley	Bea Howell

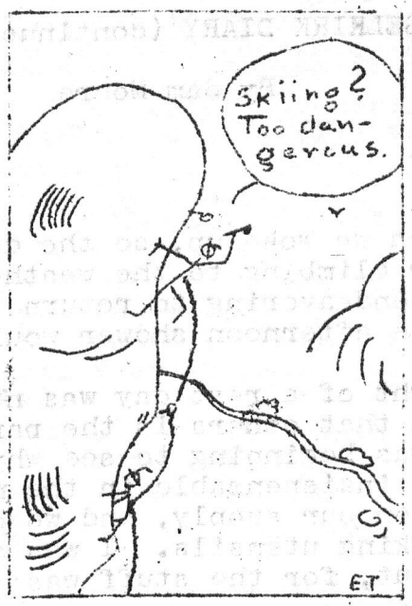
May 11, 1947 - Great Falls, Md.

The hunt for movie sites dominated the group's activities. We understand that the climbs in the vicinity of the Corkscrew, the Flat Iron, Echo Cliffs, and the Stocking Climb look super-colossal from the Maryland side. However the group tarried long enough for Dolores, Andy, Chris, and Bob to climb the Red Overhang. It is also understood that Betty finished off her Saturday night bath in the Potomac, and that Chris hadn't had enough exercise and went back to soloing at Carderock where he found Bea Howell grounded because she was wearing skirts.

ROCK CLIMBING MOVIES

The suggestion of a colored motion picture of climbs on our rocks was made just before the Old Rag trip. Donald Hubbard had bought some film and he offered its use to the Rock Climbing Group for the movie provided that they would find enough money somewhere else to work up a full length show. Time didn't allow a vote, but some ten old-timers advised Arnold to go ahead with it as a group project. The total cost would be around a hundred dollars. Any one wishing to enhance the value of the film by a contribution may send the same to Dolores Alley, 1254 Meigs Place, N.E., Apt. 1, Washington (2) D.C. The finished film will be group property and after a showing will be available for loan to members and friends.

Editorial- "My Screen Career" deleted by vote of majority of Staff.
(Paul Bradt)



LETTERS AND NEWS NOTES

Roy Britten sends us a photograph of a ski hill in Quebec. His attention is respectfully called to our cartoon above.

We at last are the grateful recipients of an article relating (distantly) to rock climbing from our past chairman, the inemulable Dr. Hubbard:

"A day for a rock-climber on vacation in Florida is somewhat on this wise.... Ed. Note: We omit here the description of local flora, fauna, and food. ...A piton hammer to crack the stone crab claws would be convenient, but not necessary since the heavy metal oyster knife is adequate for the job...."

SENECA ROCK

At the head of this issue is a pantograph copy of a photograph of Seneca Rock, West Virginia, as seen from the west. It has been a favorite climbing place for our group since 'way back in the thirties. It is a stratum of quartzite turned up on edge with the softer rock weathered away from both sides. At its foot, and 1000feet below its top, flows the North Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac. This stream, which can ordinarily be waded, bends, opposite the north end of the rock, to form a deep swimming hole and a fine camp ground owned by Mr. B. S. Armentrout, Mouth of Seneca, West Virginia. An excellent spring may be found across the river and a few feet up stream from the camp site, while one also of good repute locally is found on the same side about 100 yards downstream.

Before the war traverses had been made of the crest line including the vertical south end and the 29 foot leaning pillar in the deep notch slightly north of the center of the formation. The highest point south of this notch carries a regester put there in 1939. The number of names entered there during the war exceeds our fondest dreams. Some of the best climbers of the Army's Seneca School regestered there. They also climbed all over the formation, covering it with such a lace-work of piton routes that any attempt to show them here would only disguise the mountain.

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SELKIRK DIARY (continued)

By Sam Moore

July 12

Still raining when we woke up, so the day's climbing was off. In order to adjust our climbing to the weather, we planned to begin our day at 3:00 A.M., endeavoring to return to camp by 3:00 P.M. By so doing the inevitable afternoon shower would find us safely under cover -- we hoped!

Frankly the thought of a rest day was nt exactly depressing, and I feel reasonably sure that others in the party shared my thoughts in the matter. By now I was beginning to see why Sterling had told me that adhesive tape was indispensable in the mountains. Blisters were exacting a heavy toll on our supply, and we even used tape to patch a hole in one of the cooking utensils. I was a little worried for fear our stock would give out, for the stuff was quite literally holding the party together.

The day was spent in improving our camp and building up the supply of fire wood. A spare tarp, erected in conjunction with two thickly-foliaged spruce trees, shed the rain surprisingly well. Under one end we built our fireplace, and presto, the cook and his hungry kibitzers were protected from the weather. Later a log reflector behind the fireplace added even more to our comfort.

Sterling's first bannock was delicious, and the whole crew mentally resolved to learn how he did it. Between the intermittent showers I managed to get my shoes dry for the first time in more than a week, and greased them well in the forlorn hope that they would stay that way. At intervals we took time out to enjoy the beautiful surroundings, and watch the clouds pour over the mountains above.

That evening our campfire session was a lively one. Discussion ranged from Sterling's climbing experiences in other parts of Canada to Don's detailed exposition of his "crystal analogy", accompanied by irreverent and heretical comments by the listeners which caused his crew cut to stand right up on end. I thought again, "How lucky I am to be out with such an interesting group."

July 13

Up before sunrise to find a cloudless sky. We ate what was to become our standard breakfast (hot cereal, fruit, tea) and were off up the moraine as the sun made a theatrical entrance over the Rockies. After a short distance Chuck's blisters forced him to return to camp. An easy slide down the moraine landed us on the surface of the glacier, where we roped up. With Arnold leading and Sterling busily instructing in the intricacies of glacier travel, we threaded our way in a south-westerly direction through an easy icefall and over the sun-roughened snow. Ahead towered the sparkling snow- and ice-covered peaks of the central massif in the Adamant Range; beautiful indeed until we began to examine them for possible routes of ascent. Then the lovely hanging glaciers became ominous barriers to our hopes, and the photogenic arêtes suddenly acquired impossible overhangs.

Fortunately our target for the day was a lower peak to the north of these giants, unclimbed as far as we knew. Clean, white snowfields offered an easy route over the upper glacier to a snow pass which lay between our goal and Mt. Austerity, the first major peak to its south. Don took over the lead and proceeded to zoom up the soft snow slopes at a pace which had me begging for mercy before the combined weight of the party slowed him down.

As we climbed I was soaking up knowledge at a great rate. All those things that come naturally to the experienced or skillful mountaineer; such as keeping in step with the remainder of the party, watching for the slight depressions which sometimes mark the location of hidden crevasses, preventing the rope from dragging, and planting the feet carefully to prevent slipping must be learned by the amateur. If at times I jerked the rope or committed some other serious crime, I consoled myself with the thought that a one-horse brain couldn't possibly be expected to get everything right the first time. It was fun learning, and I think no school ever had a finer classroom.

We soon reached the crest of the pass, which Sterling had selected as a possible route to Mt. Sir Sandford, five miles and several ranges away. One look was enough! Perpendicular rock walls dropped off on the far side, while sharp knife-edged ridges with sheer sides, which led out from Mt. Austerity, effectively barred the way. Even Sterling said that the faces were the steepest he had ever seen. Unroping, we scrambled several hundred feet up a slope of loose rock to the nearest summit of our peak and found it to be unclimbed. Our route of ascent may have been easy, but the other side of the mountain had a perpendicular face just like the pass, a characteristic which we found to be true of the west and south sides of the curving Adamant Range for its entire length. Arnold busied himself taking observations of the temperature and height, the latter about 9,750 ft., while we built a small cairn.

To the southwest we noticed that the mountain had another summit, slightly higher, which was a detached horn-like spire invisible from the glacier. Scrambling down we ate our lunch of bannock and fried bacon, cached the packs and ice axes, and proceeded to the base of the spire.

It was absolutely perpendicular on three sides, but the fourth, the westerly, presented a more reasonable angle. With Arnold leading we scrambled up several rope lengths of moderate climbing to the summit. The firm granite offered abundant holds and ledges, but in places the exposure was sensational. On the pointed top Arnold again recorded his observations while we admired the snowy wilderness to the west. Before us spread a whole sea of virgin peaks, unclimbed because of the great difficulty involved in reaching their bases. A curious geological feature attracted our eyes. The Adamant range and its subsidiary peaks were formed by an igneous mass thrust up through the sedimentary rocks which dominate the region. Swan Creek valley lies along part of the contact zone between these two masses. The contrast between the bright brown of the sedimentary rocks and the dull gray of the granite was prominent for many miles to the west as a dividing line which slid up mountain faces and split ridges.

From this summit Mt. Austerity and its neighbor to the southeast, Mt. Adamant, highest in the range, appeared even more impregnable than they had from below; even Sterling seemed puzzled about our chance of making successful ascents. After stoking our memories with the views to the west and northwest of a myriad of peaks unnamed and unclimbed, we returned to our packs for a second lunch. Don took a nap, Arnold meditated upon the view over the Columbia Valley, while Sterling and I (mostly Sterling) with the aid of the map identified dozens of peaks in the Canadian Rockies. The visibility was excellent (for the Selkirks, remarkable) and we were able to see from Mt. Clemenceau in the north to Mt. Forbes in the south, more than fifty miles of the finest peaks in the Rockies. The great Columbia Icefield was plainly visible almost directly across from us, seeming much closer than forty miles away, while the masses of Mts. Bryce, Tsar, Alberta, and Columbia were particularly impressive. The fine-looking peaks which we had been admiring from the depths of Swan Creek valley turned out to be insignificant fore-peaks when viewed in their true perspective.

We finally tore ourselves away from this pleasant spot and roped for the return to camp. I was given the privilege of leading. Away we went, mushing our way through the soft snow and trying unsuccessfully to glissade in the steeper spots. Occasionally we paused for a moment to examine the grim walls above, but the routes were still forbidding. Lower down the snow was slushy, deeply pitted by the sun, and, to my amazement, red! This rather unexpected color is caused by micro-organisms which flourish in cold, sun-warmed snow. We were to see quite a bit before the end of our trip.

Soon we entered the crevasses of the icefall, where I really began to learn things about glaciers--fast! The going was easy, but excellent experience, definitely something you can't learn from a book. It had been carefully explained to me that on a glacier one should stay away from the snow, placing his trust and his feet on the ice, which is much sounder and safer. After faithfully obeying instructions my consternation can well be imagined when a large ice block on which I was standing suddenly dropped quietly into a crevasse below, leaving me with both legs in the hole, my hips on the snow at its edge, a taut rope around my waist, and a bewildered look on my face!

Everyone had a good laugh--mine was a little uncertain--after I climbed to my feet. Even Sterling admitted to being surprised. No one will ever have to convince me that glaciers are treacherous!

By now the hot sun was making me regret my long underwear, parka, and wool shirt, so it was a relief to slide down into camp at three o'clock where cooler clothes were waiting. It had been a good day, the first without rain since leaving Golden, and I had learned a lot from listening to and watching Sterling, who is a fine leader and a patient teacher. We had collected a gratifying first ascent, and our hopes for the future were high.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent in washing socks, drying shoes and clothes, and in adding further improvements to the campsite. For our trip on the morrow we needed a bridge over the creek in the meadow, so I started to build one of rocks, while Chuck and Don were securing several small logs for a wooden one. As far as I was concerned I never wanted to walk another log, so my indignation knew no bounds when the others brazenly attempted to use my carefully placed piles of stepping stones as a support for their slippery logs. Threats of dire revenge brought a halt to their attempted coup, so we eventually had two bridges, side by side. Access was now easy to our refrigerator in a large snowbank across the creek.

My face and lips were badly sunburned, as I had expected them to be, but my beard offered some protection. It was coming out a bright red and seemed for some reason not obvious to me (I had no mirror) to afford Don no end of amusement.

July 14

Off again--not quite so early as before. The official cook for the day's breakfast--me--didn't wake up soon enough, and the others naturally didn't stir until called. We took turns at getting up early to prepare breakfast, thus giving the majority of the party a little longer time to sleep. I invariably woke up late, and the irrepressible Hubbard was unfailingly too early. His defections, however, although less serious always caused much more unfavorable comment than mine.

It was after sunrise when we crossed the foot bridges and climbed the slopes behind camp down which tumbled the waterfalls. Chuck again remained in camp because of his blisters. After toiling up a long snowpatch we emerged onto a debris- and snow-covered plateau carved by an early glacier, the remnants of which still clung, high on our right, to the large rocky north ridge of the mountain we later named "Sentinel Peak". The snow was iron-hard and practically level, so our progress to the southeast was rapid. At the far edge of the plateau a small but steep, moraine-like, minor ridge of "Sentinel" slowed us to a more reasonable pace. At its crest we turned right and headed up steep snow toward a low pass on the skyline, passing two small but spectacular rocky teeth on the right. For the last hundred feet or so it was necessary to kick steps.

Only Sterling was expecting the sight that met our eyes, having caught a glimpse of it the day before. A tremendous, glistening snow basin spread before us, with hardly a mark or ripple to disturb the pristine surface. The dazzling light was unbearable without our snow goggles, while photography was strictly a matter of guess-work. The snow formed the neve of what we called the "Gothics Glacier", which drained into the Columbia River through the first valley to the south of Swan Creek. The enormous expanse was bounded on the south by the rocky wall which contained Mts. Wotan and Gibraltar, named by Howard Palmer during his trips in 1908-1912, and on the west by the three peaks of Mt. Gothics. Nothing in my previous experience had prepared me for this spectacle; the total effect was quite overwhelming.

Plodding across flat snow for a short distance we decided to rope up, for there appeared to be a covered crevasse area ahead, and we had no desire to take unnecessary chances. Don took the lead and steered us at a considerate pace up slopes that were steeper than they had seemed from a distance. The unrelieved white glare of the snow made it almost impossible to see depressions and humps until one was on top of them. We had tentatively decided to attempt one of the peaks of Gothics, so angled upward toward the base of the northernmost summit, stopping on the way for lunch.

When we had risen well above the surrounding peaks, we turned and saw for the first time, about five miles to the south, the mighty peak that was our major goal, Mt. Sir Sandford. Its glacier-clad flanks and beetling cliffs towered high above the surrounding mountains, and it was easy to see why five successive attempts by Palmer's party were repulsed before their final success in 1912.

Frankly it scared the bejabers out of me just to think about it. The profile of the east arete , which had been tentatively selected from photographs as our route of ascent, was only too evident, and Sterling immediately said that he'd changed his mind about the possibilities of that route! Our best chance appeared to lie in following the route of the original ascent, which from a distance appeared to be more difficult than when Palmer climbed it, for the hanging glaciers had retreated a great deal in thirty-four years.

The clouds eventually closed in, so we gave a final shiver and turned our attention to Gothics again. Wandering up to the crest of a high snow pass between Gothics and a small peak to its northeast, we found that it was feasible as a route to Mt. Sir Sandford, though not as easy as the one we had used in the morning. After examining at close range a small but spectacular icefall which overhung the sheer cliffs plunging down to the north, we decided in view of the cloudy weather and the absence of Chuck to forego an attempt on the Gothics and try the smaller peak. This proved to be an easy, unroped scramble, and we were quickly on top, enjoying the view.

In spite of clouds the air was extraordinarily clear, and from our grandstand seat we could see more than seventy-five miles of the Rockies, our eyes ranging from Mt. Hooker of the Whirlpool Group in the north to the Freshfield Group in the south. Many of the southern Selkirks were visible, while Sir Sandford seemed so close we could touch it. Just to the west were the terrific north walls of Mts. Gothics, Adamant, and Austerity, appearing even more impossible than they had before. Just beyond them was a rounded horn-shaped pinnacle that we recognized as the site of our first ascent on the previous day. We promptly decided to name it "Unicorn Peak" (if the Geographic Board approved) because of its not-too-fancied resemblance to the horn and forehead of that fabulous creature.

Donald built a cairn, Arnold made instrumental observations, Sterling studied the map, and I took a series of panoramic shots with my camera. These duties completed, we relaxed to enjoy the view. Suddenly Arnold noticed a wall of clouds driving toward us over Gothics neve. Although we beat a hasty retreat, snow flurries caught us almost immediately, and I finally had a good answer for my naive question as to why one couldn't climb in cloudy weather. Donning our waterproofs at the foot of the peak, we roped and hustled off through the chilly gusts. Shortly after intersecting our morning tracks we dropped below the clouds and were soon at the edge of the great snow basin. Loath to return to camp so early, the leader declared a second lunch to be in order so we settled down to some of our jaw-cracking Kracken-Brot. A brisk discussion soon arose as to a proper name for our latest climb. We finally decided upon the uninspired title of "Sentinel Peak" because of its position at the head of the Swan Creek valley, where it guarded the approaches to the Adamant Range, with the outstretched arms of its north and southeast ridges. These we named "Sentinel Ridge" and "Granite Ridge" respectively, while the low pass through the latter by which we had entered Gothics neve was called "Sentinel Pass".

After lunch we had a fine glissade down from Sentinel Pass. Arnold performed the most spectacular slide of the entire trip when he lost his balance and went tumbling head over heels down the slope, clawing frantically at the snow in an effort to stop himself. As soon as we saw he was all right, he was made the target of a lot of rude humor, noting which I decided not to take any chances on emulating him. As a result I performed, under perfect control, what was undoubtedly the slowest glissade on record, finally deciding it was much faster and easier to walk.

Then came the trudge back to camp in a slight rain. Several other glissades and easy traveling through the soft snow with long skating steps brought us to our tents at one o'clock. Above loomed "Sentinel Peak", a very impressive and difficult mountain from this side. It was hard to believe that it was the same summit we had climbed so easily from Gothics neve. Settling down to a long rainy afternoon, we decided that we were lucky to have snatched such a good day from the weather, although it was a disappointment not to have climbed Gothics.

By now my lips were so badly sunburned, as were some of the others, that it was painful to eat anything. I found myself vaguely hoping that the next day would be rainy, so that a climb would be out of the question and we could recuperate.

When Sterling decided that our next climb would be Mt. Adamant by a "hell or high water" route, my hope became less vague.

July 15

Don waked us to eat breakfast shortly after we had gone to bed, or so it seemed. Anyhow it was mighty early. When we remonstrated sleepily, he just leered and passed the cereal. Since it was cloudy, we decided to go back to bed, and everyone slept late. Spent the day gathering wood and tidying up camp between showers. My lips were so swollen that I felt like Charles Laughton.

By now the quantity of food served at supper had grown until we couldn't eat all Sterling gave us, with the exception of Don, who was quite bottomless. We had begun to call him the "Scavenger Kid". As with awe I watched him plow through the victuals, stopping just in time at the bottom of his plate, I thought of earlier trips when only the greatest of catering care sufficed to keep him operating at full capacity. So far Sterling had been unable to get him to admit that he'd had enough to eat. For the evening meal this time, however, the cook prepared an enormous pot of peas and carrots, so great that even Don couldn't make more than a good-sized dent in them. But would that guy admit to being full? No indeed! He merely said that he'd try another helping after awhile! However, we sided with Sterling in his claim of a moral victory--the peas and carrots lasted for several days more.

The tent leaked a little, but I had arranged my bed so that the water merely ran out a hole in the floor and bothered no one. As we looked up at the peaks just before turning in, we could see that there was considerable new snow on the heights.

July 16

Chuck was much more reasonable about getting us up in the morning, for he took a squint at the cloudy skies and then didn't bother to call us. After a six o'clock breakfast we busied ourselves with camp chores or loafed for the remainder of the day. The recuperation that was taking place was terrific. One could almost see the energy building up in our systems. Even I was beginning to feel a little impatient with the weather. The small stream that supplied our water was slowly growing smaller and clearer as the snowfields above camp melted. A sunny afternoon brought about a great welter of picture-taking from which no one was exempt. Not so early to bed!

July 17

The weather looked doubtful at three so we delayed our start until Sterling finally said "Let's go! " at seven o'clock. Our program for the day called for an investigation of a small pass on the far side of Gothics neve which we hoped would provide an easy route to Mt. Sir Sandford. After that plans were indefinite. It was nice to have Chuck with us again for his first day of climbing since our arrival at Fairy Meadow.

The packs were well-loaded with food and equipment which we planned to leave at the pass if it offered a feasible route. Sterling had finally decided to establish an advance camp near the foot of Sir Sandford, from which we would attempt the old ogre itself. While our departure was scheduled for the next morning, packing part of our totalload as far as we could today would greatly lighten the task. As usual I started slowly but managed to catch the others at the top of the gap in"Granite Ridge". Chuck, with his movie camera, was making the most of the glorious scenery. With Don leading the rope we headed for the other side of the snow basin, contouring around the lower slopes of the Gothics. Breaking trail was a hard job, for the snow was quite soft,but Don didn't let that faze him, and soon we had to beg him to take it easy so the rest of us could keep up.

A great deal of new snow had fallen which was particularly noticeable on the peaks, virtually barren rocks a few days ago. As we plodded along, I had an annoying tendency to break out of the steps. Through experimentation, however, I found that it could be corrected by kicking hard into the step in such a way that its area was enlarged. Apparently my more daintily-shod companions just weren't leaving me enough room for my feet. After a long,steady grind we reached the pass and found it suitable for our purpose. Dumping all the equipment and

food we ate lunch and admired the view. It was truly beautiful, and Chuck was delighted. I, however, thinking of the morrow, just barely managed to stifle a groan.

Below us running from right to left was the wide level Adamant Glacier, with a small subsidiary glacier leading to it from the foot of our pass. Beyond, and this is what made me woeful, was the high sharp ridge of Azimuth Mountain. Our proposed campsite lay on the other side, and there appeared to be no feasible method of getting there except by going over the top of the mountain. A veritable sea of peaks washed at the base of Mt. Sir Sandford, which dominated them like a stern master.

After some debate as to whether we should climb Gothics or the peak on the east of the pass which we called "Mt. Thor" (hence "Thor Pass"), discretion prevailed, and in view of the lateness of the hour and the big trip in store for us, we decided to return to camp. Leading the way back, I found easy going in Don's tracks, and thought to myself that it was fortunate there would be a trail broken for the next day. When we reached the top of "Sentinel Pass", another lunch seemed like a good idea, so we sat down without further delay. A mountaineer is always ready to eat, both because he is hungry and because the act gives him an honorable excuse to rest and spend a little time looking at the view. To my mind the greatest indictment that can be leveled against the sport is the fact that one never has enough time to enjoy the beautiful and extraordinary places he has struggled so hard to attain.

After lunch the others returned to camp, but Don and I felt we had to climb something. Selecting the small summit just to the right of the pass, we scrambled easily to the top. In common with "Sentinel Peak" the far side descended precipitously for hundreds of feet to a small glacier below, a sharp contrast to the easy slopes which rose from the Gothics neve. For once there was plenty of time for building a cairn, having a good bull session, and admiring the nearby spires of the southern Adamants. Mts. Thor, Gibraltar, Wotan, and a peak east of the latter which I tentatively christened "Baldur" were unusually spectacular from this angle. Gibraltar in particular was a thin plate of rock that offered from a distance no apparent route to the summit.

After some poor wet-snow glissades, Don and I strolled leisurely into camp just in time for supper. By now the mosquitoes had almost disappeared from Fairy Meadow, a circumstance for which I gave due thanks.

July 18

Arose early to break camp for our big trip. As we climbed up our usual trail over the snowbanks, which were growing smaller every day, I noted that our packs were already rather bulky and wondered what they would be like after we picked up the loads at "Thor Pass". The day was brilliantly cloudless and favored us with the spectacle of a glowing, circular rainbow about the sun, which persisted for several hours. The Gothics neve seemed more dazzling than ever before, and I couldn't help thinking what the glare was probably doing to the skin of our faces.

Using our track of the day before, we made good time to "Thor Pass", where we stopped for a second breakfast. The night before some thought had been given to the possibility of climbing one of the peaks of the Gothics, but in view of the long trip ahead the project was now reluctantly abandoned. Since this was the third time we'd discarded the idea, I was beginning to wonder if we ever would get to climb the mountain.

Crawling into our packs, we moaned a little and started down the steep gulley leading to the glacier below. The loose rocks in its upper portion forced us to be extremely careful--but since the greater part of its length was filled with good snow most of the descent was simple. Roping up on the little glacier below, we started down toward the Adamant Glacier. The snow was very soft, and there were many patches of glare ice exposed. As Sterling waded down at a breathtaking pace, followed by the slipping, skidding, stumbling members of his party, I found myself fervently hoping that he wouldn't fall into a crevasse, for I was sure we would follow him like rats popping into a sewer pipe if he did.

Leaving the glacier we clambered down a medium-sized moraine, easy except for those sixty-pound packs, and stepped onto the level floor of the Adamant Glacier. By now it was nearly noon and HOT! The pitiless sun beat down upon us until I could feel my face beginning to char, and I longed for the cool shade of the devils club and slide alder. When we stopped for rest before starting across the glacier, I dived for the shade of a large boulder, and it was only over my bitter protests that we started on again. Half way to the other side we came upon the large tracks of a bear which led in a straight line up the glacier toward a pass in Azimuth Ridge, and I wondered fuzzily if he had been too warm in his fur coat.

The climb up to the summit of Azimuth Mountain was fierce and I felt deeply grateful to Sterling who assumed the job of kicking the steps in the soft, steep snow. Mercifully my memory has clouded over the recollection of just how tiring it really was, but I can readily recall the universal sigh of relief when we reached the crest of the ridge near the summit. Pausing for lunch we reclined on the brown rocks and admired the ice-guarded north face of Mt. Sir Sandford, while Arnold with an admirable burst of energy scouted the way upward to the top of Azimuth. When he rejoined us, we donned our packs again and climbed to the capacious summit (8,410 ft.). Here we found a large cairn, at least six feet high, which was built by Howard Palmer more than thirty years ago. It made our previous efforts along this line seem puny by comparison. The place was a fine grandstand from which to view the surrounding peaks, and it was easy to see why Palmer had selected it for one of his primary survey stations.

Eventually we started down a large grassy gulley on the southwest face of the mountain. Curiously enough there was no snow on this side. The descent was simple but long, and our knees soon were rubbery from the constant back-pedalling. Below us was the junction of Silvertip Glacier and Silvertip neve, while farther down the valley we could see the tongue of Sir Sandford Glacier. While the pictures taken by Palmer showed that Silvertip flowed into the latter glacier, the recession during the succeeding years had resulted in the present gap between the two of more than a quarter mile.

Many goat trails wound among the flowering heather and the evergreens, and we followed them whenever possible. After a considerable search we finally found a level shelf large enough to hold our two tents--after a half-hour of digging with ice axes--just at the upper edge of the bare area scoured on the hillside by Silvertip Glacier. A cold stream dashed over the rocks two hundred feet away while dead wood littered the mountainside. It was not an ideal camp, the terrain being more suited to the goats we had seen earlier in the afternoon, than to city folks on a vacation, but it could have been much worse. After all we had only to raise our eyes to see the massive flanks of Mt. Sir Sandford itself, just two miles away; a view that was ample consolation for any number of disadvantages.

One unexpected difficulty was the voracious horde of mosquitoes that descended when we arrived. Three of us had been timid enough to bring our headnets along and were well protected, but the other two! I'll never forget one plaintive remark of, "How in the world were you fellows smart enough to bring those headnets along?" We felt sorry for them--but didn't offer the use of our nets!

Bedtime that night was a little more complicated than usual as Chuck, Don, and I tried to dispose ourselves and our belongings in a two-man tent. A head-to-foot, sardine-like arrangement solved the difficulty and soon the tent was reverberating to the mighty snores of the other two, who were upholding their reputation for that sort of thing. As I thought back over the days activities, I began to realize what a fine piece of route-finding Sterling had accomplished by leading the party in a strange country over three high passes and three glaciers to exactly the place we wanted to be. Ahead of us lay Sir Sandford, a climb for which we would need to be in first-class shape, so once again, as I dropped off to sleep, I blessed the packboard beneath my hips which made a good night's rest on the hard rocky ground possible.

July 19

Don, after champing at the bit for most of the night, finally could restrain himself no longer and woke us at two o'clock. As we

sleepily gulped our breakfast, we were cheered by the clear skies above the bleak outlines of Mt. Sir Sandford. I would probably have been much more nervous than I was, if Chuck hadn't told me the previous evening that he thought the day would be devoted to a reconnaissance of the routes up the mountain than to an assault on the summit.

A little after three we began our scramble down the three hundred feet of jumbled boulders to Silvertip Glacier. Fording the icy stream which issued from its mouth proved impractical, so we retreated upstream and crossed the snout of the glacier, jumping several crevasses on the way. A half-mile scramble over glacial debris while swatting mosquitoes brought us to the edge of the Sir Sandford glacier, where a cool breeze sweeping down the ice soon dispelled the pests. This wind seems to be typical of glaciers and was certainly welcome in our case. The glacier surface was well-scarred by moulins, or surface water courses, and in several places the water plunged down deep blue holes into the depths of the ice. However, the rough ice didn't delay us, and we were soon standing under the walls of the Ravelin, a small rock peak that guards the mighty northwest face of Sir Sandford itself. Above us the early morning light was just beginning to warm the harsh ridges and touch the snow with color.

During the previous day Sterling had been studying the mountain every time he had a chance. Finally he announced that a route appeared possible which would avoid much of the danger from falling ice and obviate the most difficult part of the course followed in the first ascent. I presumed that we were on our way now to investigate the lower part of his proposed route.

A brief digression to describe the face that towered above us might be in order. A long steep arete running down to the Ravelin bounded the face on the right, while a shorter arete topped by a rounded dome of rock, above which we could not see, formed the left wall. Between the two was a great basin of snow and ice which was divided horizontally by two systems of hanging glaciers. The lower, which discharged over a band of cliffs well below the level of the rocky dome, presented no obstacle. The upper, several hundred feet above the top of the dome, extended almost the entire width of the face. Between the two was a long, acutely-angled snow and ice slope nearly two thousand feet high. Any party on this slope would be threatened by the ice cliffs above, which hung over it like the proverbial sword of Damocles. This "long slope", as it had been christened by Palmer, had repulsed five attempts at a direct ascent by his party, who climbed on the right edge near the arete. Only when they traversed it from the arete on the right to the top of the rocky dome on the left, passing directly beneath the frowning cliffs of the upper glacier, were they able to complete an ascent of the mountain. Above the upper glacier a long snow slope at a more gentle angle led to the summit ridge. The region between the two hanging glaciers was obviously the crux of the problem.

Sterling proposed climbing beside the left arete until the foot of the dome-shaped rock was reached. Then a horizontal traverse along its foot to the right corner would put us in a position to climb upwards on the snow, hugging the rock, until we could scramble out on its summit. From there the way should be comparatively simple. This plan had several advantages; for a direct assault on the "long slope" would not be necessary, the dangerous traverse across the slope beneath the ice cliffs would be avoided, and the bergschrund and crevasses of the lower glacier would be far beneath us when we finally stepped on the main snow slope. Only when moving from the foot to the top of the rocky dome would we be in line of fire from the upper glacier, and by hugging the wall that danger could be reduced to a minimum.

A curious mass of loose calcite crystals, remarkably regular in size, formed our seat beneath the Ravelin as we strapped on our crampons. I couldn't repress a certain feeling of excitement and exhilaration as I did this for the first time, for from my reading I had garnered the impression that these devices were only used when desperate doings were afoot. Sterling was already far ahead, impatient to come to grips with the mountain, as we started up the easy, hard-frozen snow that led to the base of the first cliff band. I quickly found that, while crampons give a welcome feeling of security to a novice on a slippery snow surface, they also have their disadvantages. Until one becomes used to them, there is a distressing tendency for the prongs on one foot to

catch in the cloth of the opposite pants leg, precipitating the wearer into the snow; and there is an ever-present danger of spiking oneself. A more real difficulty, from which even the expert is not immune, is caused by snow "balling" between the prongs, reducing or negating their hold on the slope. There have been serious accidents resulting from a slip caused by this condition, and a careful climber will pause every few steps to knock away accumulated snow with his ice axe. In wet, sticky snow crampons may become practically useless from this cause. As I climbed I amused myself by dreaming up a gadget that would cure the fault.

At the base of the cliffs we ascended a snow-filled gulley, well out from the left arete, for a short distance. Then, stepping onto the rocks, we removed our crampons and traversed up and to the left toward the wall of the arete. At one place Arnold and I, well to the rear, ended in a cul-de-sac of wet rocks and were forced to extend each other a helping hand to continue the climb without retracing our steps. The footing below the arete was very loose, and the others climbing above were unable to prevent an occasional stone from rolling down. One such hit me in the stomach--and for the first time I blessed the coiled rope which I was carrying in just the right spot to serve as a cushion.

Seeing this mishap the others waited until we joined them before continuing. By now we were kicking steps in a snow slope of appalling steepness, progressing directly upward toward the foot of the rocky dome. The left arete was still close beside us, and we speculated optimistically upon its possibilities as a rock route. Upon reaching the dome we paused on the lip of the small bergschrund that divided the snow from the overhanging rock to don our crampons and the rope. At this double sign of difficulties I really began to expect the worst, and I think now that perhaps Sterling did too. Ahead was the critical moment when we would round the lower corner of the dome and see what lay ahead on the steep slope below the ice cliffs.

Before we started I looked down--and almost wished I hadn't! A smooth snow slope led down at a fifty degree angle to the top of the cliff band, and I thought to myself, "It's not the snow slope itself that bothers me, it's what lies at the bottom of it." We were already well above the lower glacier. Through the clear morning air the Adamant Range was already prominent to the north over Azimuth Mountain, and I tried to pick out our camp among the boulders of the latter's slopes. With a severe climb on our hands, however, there was no time for dawdling and Sterling urged us on. Balancing along the top of the bergschrund with careful belays, we reached the corner, dropped down and around it, and halted!

Before us spread the fearful beauties of the "long slope", sweeping in a clean, smooth curve to the glacier below. It was indeed an awesome place; yet, as we studied it and moved a few feet out on the slope, it began to lose some of its terror. Obviously (to Sterling) the snow was in perfect shape, firm and hard, and as we gazed upward, we could see that there was no ice between us and the top of the slope. That we could ascend the slope was certain; the only uncertainty was what might descend toward us. After carefully studying the hanging glacier above and correlating what he saw with observations made of the amount of debris at the foot of the mountain, Sterling advanced the opinion that the ice wall was quiescent and hadn't discharged any material for several months. Hence, it would be reasonably safe to climb beneath it. While our original route up beside the rock dome to its crest would certainly "go", it would be much quicker to climb directly up the "long slope" toward the right arete. This was the route that Palmer had attempted again and again without success; but the snow was perfect, the weather was right, and the party well-equipped and eager to climb.

With Sterling in the lead we moved onto the slanting surface, traveling in almost a horizontal direction to the right. High above us between the right edge of the ice cliff and the arete a thin tongue of snow in the shape of an hour-glass led up to the gentler slopes above. When we were well out on the slope, no longer under the worst part of the hanging glacier, Sterling veered upward and headed, with occasional small zigzags, directly toward the "hourglass". Our climbing was cautious, each man carefully driving in his ice axe as far as he could before taking a step, for a glance down was not alluring. In spite of our slow pace (or because of it) we gained altitude rapidly. Kicking steps in the hard snow was tiring work, and Chuck took the lead about halfway up.

By now we had climbed out of the shadows into the sun, and the surface of the snow had become appreciably softer. This condition was both annoying and dangerous, for it began to "ball" under our crampons, preventing them from properly gripping the slope. Sterling cautioned us several times to watch the feet of the man in front, warning him when his crampons became clogged. Chuck was doing a splendid job of leading, setting a mean pace that had my tongue hanging out, and I was glad that I didn't have the added responsibility of kicking steps.

As we ascended, the acclivity became steeper and steeper, culminating at an angle of more than sixty degrees at a small bergschrund just below the hourglass. The schrund gave us no trouble, but the view upward, consisting chiefly of a pair of Bramani soles, was thought-provoking. Entering the "hourglass" Chuck led us steadily higher, our excitement mounting with every step. Finally the slope began to lessen, and he veered to the right, stopping at an almost level spot on the arete. We were up the "Long Slope", and the most critical part of the ascent was behind us!

Eagerly our eyes leaped to the snow leading to the summit ridge. It was unbroken, of gentler grade than that we had just ascended, and apparently in splendid condition. Happily we sat on a rocky ledge with our feet dangling over the cliffs of the west face. It was a little after nine, and we suddenly realized we were hungry. Sterling broke out the cheese and crackers, the candy and nuts, and we chewed with gusto. Nothing could stop us now. The general temper was expressed when Sterling chortled, "I'll bet old man Palmer turned over in his grave when we walked right up the slope that stopped him five times!"

The view from our elevation of nearly ten thousand feet was excellent. Below Sir Sandford glacier swept down from near the snowy ridge of Mt. Citadel. Beyond lay the dark valley of Goldstream River, and towering over it was the symmetrical rock of Downie Peak. It would have been easy to linger for hours, but there was still a lot of climbing ahead of us so we soon started on. We had removed our crampons but after floundering and slipping for a few hundred feet we decided that they would be useful in spite of the "balling" snow. Don, now in the lead, took us at a steady pace to the crest of the ridge. On the way up I ventured to ask Sterling how we would climb down the "Long Slope". His cheery reply that we would probably back down gave me something to think about all the way to the summit. The thought of going backward over all those steps was certainly unnerving.

Upon reaching the top of the ridge we turned left and moved up a gentle slope to a small hump. The top of Mt. Sir Sandford is very much like a roof; we were now on the ridgepole, moving toward its highest point. At Chuck's request our rope of five split into two sections with Arnold, Don and me on one rope, and Chuck and Sterling on the other. Chuck was anxious to secure moving pictures of our rope as it progressed toward the top, so he and Sterling climbed well behind us.

By some mischance I found myself in the lead when we moved on, a circumstance I heartily disapproved. As we approached the summit, the ridge became much steeper on each side, and large cornices crowned it in several places. These were something new in my experience, and I remember thinking, "What a helluva time and place to learn about cornices!" Everything went smoothly, however, and only one place gave me cause to hesitate. Here the ridge was very thin at the head of a small gulley, and the soft snow was inclined at a steep angle. As I kicked steps, the dislodged snow slid down, picking up other snow on the way to form small snow slides; and I couldn't help wondering if there was any likelihood of the whole mass peeling off. Of course the others thought nothing of it. A few feet farther on the mountain began to slant in the other direction, and I knew we were <u>on top</u>, 11,590 ft. above sea-level and 5,400 ft. above the Sir Sandford glacier. It lacked five days of being exactly thirty-four years since the first ascent.

The summit was completely snow-covered, with not a rock to be seen. The highest point was slightly above us on the outer edge of a huge cornice, but no one volunteered to stand precisely upon it. With a careful belay, however, we did venture one at a time to within a few feet of the edge, where we could peek over at the great precipices of the north face. The eastern summit ridge, leading from the east arete, was very sharp and crowned with insecure-looking cornices. I was glad that we had abandoned our plan to attempt that route.

Since there was no way to build a cairn, we relaxed to enjoy the sensation of being on top of the Selkirks. The day was perfect, not a cloud in the sky, and the views were extraordinary. To the west, across the Columbia River valley (remember that the Columbia makes a big bend) were the broad snow summits of the Monashee or Gold Range, one of the great interior ranges of British Columbia. To the south was the major portion of the Selkirk Range, with Mt. Sir Donald and the peaks in Glacier Park (Canada) particularly prominent only thirty miles away. To their left in the distance rose two rocky towers that Sterling with delight identified as Howser and Bugaboo Spires in the Purcell Range, seventy miles away. Still farther to the left in a southeasterly direction Mt. Assiniboine stood forth clearly, over one hundred miles away in the Rockies. As we swung our gaze to the east and then to the northeast a tremendous panorama of the mighty peaks along the Continental Divide unfolded before our eyes, impossible to describe or adequately photograph. Suffice it to say that nearly all of the major summits in the Canadian Rockies with the exception of Mt. Robson were there in all their glory. From Mt. Assiniboine to Mt. Hooker in the north is a distance of well over one hundred and fifty miles. Around the skirts of Sir Sandford spread the intricate network of snowfields and glaciers that makes this region unique and so strikingly beautiful, while the clean-cut spires of the Adamant Range and the other nearby peaks played a supporting role.

After an hour of lazy ease our thoughts began to turn to the prospect of climbing down snow that was becoming increasingly soft under the hot sun. Tying into one rope we started reluctantly back, loath to leave a view and vantage point the like of which we might never see again. With Don in the lead we quickly descended the ridge and turned downward over the upper snowfield. After following our morning tracks for a short distance, Don veered to the right at Sterling's suggestion and descended toward a jumbled mass of ice blocks and crevasses just above the lip of the hanging glacier. The snow was slippery and occasionally broke away beneath our feet, but the angle was not great enough for this to be dangerous. Skillfully moving along threads of snow, zigzagging his way back and forth, Don landed us atop the bare, smooth summit of the dome-shaped buttress.

Here we stopped for a second lunch. The view from our projecting rock across the "long slope" was excellent, and as we traced the long thin line of our tracks up out of sight, it seemed incredible that we had climbed there. At the bergschrund the slope actually seemed to lean over backward. The overhanging ice cliffs, several hundred feet thick, were, close at hand, much more awesome than they had been from a distance. The Adamant Range was prominent to the north while below us I could just distinguish our camp on the side of Azimuth Mountain.

Soon we started down again. By now Sterling and Arnold were in a mood for experimentation. Instead of traversing back toward the ice cliffs to get on the snow, they began to descend over the rounded, rocky ledges on the right side (facing the mountain) of the dome. Soon we roped up, with Arnold in the lead, and climbed over moderate but exposed rock until only a hundred feet above the snow. Here to save time they decided to rope down the remaining distance. The rocks were uncomfortably crowded with tiny waterfalls from the melting snow above; while waiting for the leader to drive in a piton for the rappel, I was continually doused by wind-blown drops from one of these streams. The slide down the rope while carrying ice axe and pack was awkward, so we were all glad to reach the bottom.

Here we found ourselves a short distance above the point where our traverse of the morning had started. The steep slope had lost most of its terrors by now, so much so that we looked forward to romping down. A deep trench of hard-packed snow which ran close by the rocks was obviously an avalanche track for debris falling from above. When we roped together again, Sterling evidently decided to let me do some of the work for he placed me in the lead. I moved across the firm snow in the bottom of the trough and had just reached the other side when a cry from the rear halted me. Chuck was having trouble putting his camera away. We waited, with Sterling in the bottom of the track and Arnold part of the way down the far side. It didn't look like a healthy spot to me. Evidently Sterling thought so too, for he urged Chuck to hurry.

Finally we started again, and I for one breathed a sigh of relief when we were clear of the overhanging icefall. Of course Sterling had

said that it was quiescent, but there was no point in asking for trouble. Angling down the glacier toward the right arete, the tracks of our ascent and descent formed a giant "X". By now the snow was extremely soft, and our steps repeatedly broke away beneath us as we hastened down. Presently we approached a large crevasse that crossed the slope, and slowed down to survey the situation. The upper lip was well above the lower, but we finally spotted a small snow bridge where the lips of the crevasse almost touched together. Sterling gave his approval of it as a route, and I started carefully down in that direction.

Once my foot slipped, but the ice axe and a friendly tug on the rope from Sterling stopped the slide after a few feet. Halting at the edge for lack of rope, I waited until Sterling joined me. Then, following his directions, I just let go and slid over the crevasse. Halting on the lower side I glanced back into the narrow hole and received a rude shock. It was somewhat akin to peeking through the top of a large arch, for a tremendous cavern yawned below. Both the upper and lower sides of the crevasse overhung by many feet, and my belayer had only a few feet of snow between him and the thin air below. When Sterling joined me and I pointed out what he had been sitting on, his only comment was, "My God!".

We continued on down the curving glacier, avoiding several patches of bare ice, and were well below the level of the lower icefall, when a loud noise reverberated from the cliffs above. Looking upward we saw a huge mass of snow and ice slide over the lip of the upper glacier and plunge with a dull roar to the slope below. As the tons of debris swept down the avalanche track they twice crossed our day's tracks before plunging over the lower icefall. It was sobering to think that we had stopped in that track only a half hour earlier.

Finally I exclaimed, "Looks as though Palmer didn't mind our climbing his mountain so easily after all, for he refrained from firing that avalanche until we were safely clear!" That broke the ice and as we slid down an elegant glissade, we kidded Sterling about his prediction that the glaciers were not working. He defended himself stoutly by pointing out that the fall came from the slope above the icefall, not from its face, a true claim but one that we denied had any bearing on the matter.

When we reached the edge of the Sir Sandford Glacier, a halt was called. Sterling triumphantly produced a bar of chocolate for each of us, so we held a victory celebration. As we ate, we reminded him that he had promised us a roast beef stew if we climbed Sir Sandford, and warned that he had better produce. He agreed that tonight was the night.

The loose debris on the glacier flat was fatiguing, but the three hundred foot climb to our camp was worse. Arnold and I sat for many minutes at the bottom, just thinking about it, before we finally started up. I know that only the roast beef dinner inspired me to move. It was well worth the effort though, for the meal was undoubtedly the best of the trip, with sweet potatoes, beans, and the beef vying for our affections. As I looked across at the mighty peak, I found it hard to believe that we had actually stood on its summit or climbed its steep snowfields. The day's climb had certainly a most rewarding "reconnaissance"!

Our success was due primarily to four factors, the perfect weather, the ideal condition of the snow, the clever selection of a route by Sterling, and the excellent leadership which he and Chuck exhibited. Our route of descent followed that of Palmer's first ascent, while our ascent was along the path which repeatedly repulsed him with long stretches of hard ice. Under less favorable conditions we might have suffered the same fate, although I prefer to think that Sterling's original route would have landed us on top despite adverse circumstances.

July 20

Most of us were thoroughly worn out by the two long days preceding, so we decided, like the Seventh Day Adventists, to make this Saturday a day of rest. True, a number of ambitious plans were discussed, but no one started to move. During the morning we scattered over the mountainside with our packboards to bring in wood, while The Cook (after the roast beef the title merits capitals) baked several bannocks for the days to come. Chuck gathered his wood by throwing it down the hillside from above. As I watched large branches bouncing toward our

camp, I feared for the tents. I had been a little worried all along anyhow, because the rounded ledges just above us were covered with large rocks resting at just about the angle of repose. It wasn't hard to imagine what one of them would do if it plopped down on us during the night. My fears were groundless, however, and our camp remained undamaged.

As the sun rose higher in the cloudless sky we found that our tracks across the "Long Slope" were still plainly visible, although three miles away. During the middle of the day the bare hillside grew desperately hot. The tents were like ovens, and taking a nap was well-nigh impossible. Arnold ambitiously set forth on an expedition to find the site of Palmer's base camp; Donald took a sunbath (I still don't know what he did about the mosquitoes) ; and the others performed sundry chores or tried to keep cool. Only when the sun dropped behind the lovely summit of Silvertip Mountain late in the afternoon did we finally obtain relief from the heat.

Arnold returned from his jaunt to report that he had been unable to cross the glacier stream which lay between him and his objective. Around the campfire we discussed tomorrow's climb, which was to be an attempt on Blackfriars (10,580 ft.), lying at the head of Silvertip Glacier, and perhaps the finest of the peaks which were still unclimbed. If our efforts proved successful, the two major objectives of the trip would have been accomplished. In anticipation of a hard day we turned in early.

July 21

At 3:00 A.M. we began the climb up the length of Silvertip Glacier, traversing across the slopes of Azimuth Mountain on a level with our camp until we reached the ice. The spectacular icefall was easily passed on the right side and soon we were trudging over the snow of the upper glacier. Ascending a large snow-covered hump Sterling seized the opportunity to demonstrate skillfully the various methods of stopping a fall with the ice axe. All of us would have liked to practice a little, but our peak was waiting. As we topped the rise, we caught our first view of it. The two summits, connected by a small col, abut the end of the long northwest ridge of Azimuth Mountain, but unlike the latter are formed of granite. Actually they are a part of the formation which includes their close neighbors to the north, the major Adamant peaks.

As we progressed toward the mountain after roping, our route of ascent was simple to locate. The large bergschrund which ran completely across the southern face was bridged or filled in two places with avalanche snow. One was below a large snowfield which nearly covered two-thirds of the face of the eastern and higher peak; the other was below the narrow, snow-filled couloir which rose to the col. Although both places offered feasible routes, Sterling, in the lead, headed toward the couloir, which offered two definite advantages. It was slightly steeper than the face, but would not be exposed for several hours to the hot sun that was already beating down upon the snowfield; thus the snow would probably be much firmer. In addition to this it rose slightly higher on the mountain than did the snowfield; our ascent would be speeded by minimizing the rock-climbing.

I was in fine spirits this morning and engaged Don, just behind me at the end of the rope, in a spirited argument concerning wartime censorship. Our tongues wagged merrily all the way up to the bergschrund, which was easily crossed. Here Sterling, in an effective move to stop the chatter, reversed the order of the rope and told us to use some of our surplus wind in kicking steps.

We were in the shade now, and the steep snow ran upward at an angle of well over forty-five degrees. Above us the walls closed in until at the top they seemed to nearly touch, while the hard-packed avalanche furrow in the center of the couloir warned us to climb to one side if possible. Donald climbed confidently and skillfully, kicking the steps as though he had been doing it for years. Following him to the best of my ability, I sadly fear that I occasionally jerked the rope and otherwise hindered him in his work. The slope gradually steepened until we could nearly touch the snow with our outstretched hand while standing erect. As we neared the top, the snow became softer and shallower, finally giving so little support that the leader took to the rocks on the left for the last few feet.

In the narrow little col the mildly corniced snow dropped off almost vertically on the other side. Don turned to the left toward the lower summit, but was quickly redirected up a steep bit of curving snow on the right. Leaving our ice axes (a nuisance when rock-climbing) on a rocky ledge at the top, we began our ascent over the firm granite. The climbing was strenuous but not too exposed. For the greater part of the time we moved continuously, excepting those moments when I got stuck and had to be belayed. Finally we reached the summit at 9:30.

The highest point was on the tip of a large rock which hung over the sheer north face. When we sat on it, about two thousand feet of empty space was below each leg. Sterling persuaded me to stand up for one picture, but that once was enough. While he and Chuck were taking pictures, Don and I passed up rocks to Arnold for a cairn. Then the proud builder posed for the cameraman, and we all adjourned to a flat rock for lunch.

The day was beautiful and highly gratifying to the photographers. Numerous fluffy clouds dotted the sky to make our shots much more worthwhile than on the two preceding days, which had been absolutely clear; and we made the most of our opportunities. The position was especially good for pictures of Mt. Sir Sandford, which rose in a great wall beyond the foot of Silvertip Glacier. Less than a mile to the north were the awesome spires of Austerity, Turret, Adamant, and Gothics. Turret Peak is a sheer cone lying between and below Austerity and Adamant. The southwesterly faces of all the peaks were frightening, but none more so than those of Turret. Curved slabs rose vertically without a break for several thousand feet to form the greatest expanse of solid rock I have ever seen. If it is ever climbed, it will almost certainly have to be from the direction of Austerity or Adamant.

The broad East Peak of the Gothics was almost equally impressive, with a curious wide band of quartz dividing it diagonally about halfway to the top. It, too, will provide a fine first ascent for someone; Palmer had written that edge-on it looked like a church steeple. Directly opposite us was the steep couloir on Mt. Adamant which had been used as a route of ascent by Palmer and his guides. Our admiration for his gallant crew increased still more as we studied the details of their climb. Frankly we had no desire to try it. All around us spread the magnificent glaciers, not new to our eyes now, but just as beautiful as the first time we saw them.

After a leisurely hour or two the heat of the sun warned us that we had better be starting back. As we scrambled down the rocks, we paused to study the west peak of Blackfriars. It looked something like a large version of the Higher Cathedral Spire in Yosemite Valley, and we concluded that an ascent would require tension climbing on a scale that we were not prepared to undertake. Below us the snow in the couloir was in a very dangerous condition, just on the verge of avalanching. A descent within its confines would place the whole party at the mercy of the snow, with no chance to escape, so we decided to try the snowfield on the south face. There we could descend part of the way on rock before venturing onto the snow; the snow itself would be deeper and more firmly bound to the rock; and we would have room to spread out, so that in the event of a small snow slide the whole party would not be swept away.

After descending as far as we could on the rocks, Chuck leading, we paused and looked across the steep snowfield to our left. Several hundred feet below us a bulge marked the location of a high cliff band which we had noted during our ascent, but beyond its end the snow swept in an unbroken line to the glacier. At least we wouldn't have to worry about the bergschrund; we had seen early in the morning that many such small avalanches had completely filled it.

As we watched, several small patches of snow slid slowly downward and spilled over the cliff. Sterling and Chuck tossed several rocks onto the slope to see what effect they would have, concluding from what they saw that the small slides were composed of surface snow only. The underlying layers were probably safe enough. At any rate we would soon find out. Chuck untied from our rope and tied in the spare, which placed about a hundred and twenty feet of rope between him and the next man. The purpose was twofold; it permitted him to progress well out on the snow and give it a thorough test before the whole party was committed, being securely belayed from the rocks while so doing; and it meant that only two long leads would be necessary to traverse across the slope and clear the cliffs.

Confidently kicking deep steps he started across, angling slightly downward as he worked. At nearly every step small bits of snow which he dislodged slid hissingly toward the cliffs below. Once in a while a step would break away, but he always caught himself and had no need of the rope. Presently, when the rope was nearly out, he halted and stamped a broad, solid seat in the snow. Burying his ice axe in the compacted mass, he called for me to follow him. Of my thoughts during the descent I can recall only two. One was the determination that for once I was not going to break a step while I climbed; it was not the spot for such carelessness. The other was a feeling of great exhiliration at the unusual experience, spiced as it was with a bit of danger, which could only come through absolute confidence in one's leaders.

The others, of course, had followed me across the slope as the rope grew taut between us, halting when I reached Chuck. Sterling on the upper end was still belaying from the rocks. When I had secured my belay on Chuck's platform, he moved on for another rope length to a second point in a small avalanche trough just beyond the end of the cliffs. When I started forward to join him this time, the others behind me moved simultaneously, and we no longer had a belay from the rocks. Anchored again, he moved forward, increasing his angle of descent, and called for me to join him after about seventy feet of rope were out. When I did so, Don was forced to stop in the avalanche trough. I later learned that while he was standing there a small slide swirled down toward him. Uncertain what the book recommended doing under such circumstances, he settled his dilemma by stopping the slide!

We now moved simultaneously until the angle began to lessen. Here Chuck stopped, cast off the rope, and hopped aboard his ice axe like a witch riding side-saddle on a broom. A swift glissade down one of the many avalanche troughs and he was at the bottom. Sterling and the others quickly followed suit, and I brought up the rear. The snow in the bottom of the troughs was hard-packed and bumpy, and I upset near the bottom. The resulting slide on the seat of my pants was quite comfortable and speedy, and I couldn't understand why the others were shouting and waving at me. I was quite happy, however, so I waved merrily back. When I finally realized that they wanted me to stop, I did so--and was completely bewildered when they just as eagerly waved for me to start again. Only when I had joined them did I learn that I had stopped right on top of a thinly-covered section of the bergschrund which they had been signalling me to avoid.

The danger was over, so we adjourned to a scree-covered ledge on the side for another lunch. As we ate, we watched bits of the snow peel off the face and avalanche slowly down. The large trough just below us was filled with a great mass of the stuff, which looked just like a river of white molasses as it wound slowly down. When it finally stopped for a few minutes, we roped and started down at a fast pace, plunging knee-deep into the soft mass. Suddenly as I tried to withdraw one of my feet for another step, the snow hardened and gripped it like a vise. Fortunately I was able to stop myself immediately. My predicament was laughable, for the snow had set like concrete and even with the most strenuous twisting and kicking I was unable to free myself. Only when I had dug the mass away with my ice axe could I extricate my foot. The sight of me chopping away at my leg was too much for the others, and they burst into howls of laughter. Although the incident was funny at the time, it illustrated only too well on a small scale the manner in which a wet snow avalanche will consolidate and harden, inevitably crushing or smothering anyone caught in it. If I had been traveling a little faster, a broken leg could easily have been the result.

It was still early, so we paid a visit to Silvertip Pass at the head of the glacier, obtaining a good view into the deep valley of Stitt Creek. We could also see that there was a good possibility of climbing the west peak from the ridge leading to Belvedere Peak, a small outpost of Blackfriars to the southwest. On the way down the glacier Arnold led us at a swift rate over and around crevasses which we had passed very sedately in the morning, and we were soon past the icefall. Here we digressed to the slopes of Azimuth Mountain well above the moraine, and ambled leisurely and independently along the goat trails toward camp. The heather was lovely, and I was surprised to see how many other flowers were blooming at this high altitude. Well ahead I saw two goats scampering up the hillside, and quickly snapped my camera in their direction. The picture has been developed, but so far I haven't been able to find the goats!

That evening a wide variety of ideas were expressed concerning the way in which our remaining time should be spent if the good weather continued. I had become quite enamored with Mt. Silvertip, an unclimbed peak of lovely name and alluring shape which rose directly across the glacier from Mt. Blackfriars. Chuck was all for returning to attack the lower peak of Blackfriars, while Arnold was anxious to attempt the Minaret, a slender needle, several hundred feet high, which lay just to the west of Sir Sandford. Donald was ready for anything, and Sterling wanted to tour the glaciers and visit the country to the southwest around Mt. Citadel. When we went to bed, the problem still hadn't been settled.

July 22

After considerable discussion we left camp at 5:00 A. M. to traverse the Sir Sandford Glacier. On the way we planned to visit the Minaret and Mt. Citadel, returning to camp by Silvertip Neve, a broad, flat glacier that paralleled the Sir Sandford and joined the Silvertip just above camp. This plan left either Mt. Silvertip or Blackfriars for the following day. Once again we grumbled our way down the hillside to the ice, crossed the latter and the glacial debris, and stepped onto the Sir Sandford glacier. Climbing over the rough moulins we came to the icefall, which stretched the width of the glacier. Ascending this on the left side Sterling seized the opportunity to demonstrate the gentle art of cutting steps in ice.

On the glacier above we passed close under the curious rounded walls of the Rhvelin, which will provide a good climb and first ascent for some party in the future. When we came to the slopes leading to the Minaret, Sterling continued to advance up the glacier; so, after hesitating a few minutes, the others followed him like a flock of chicks after a hen. Soon the party was strung out for a long distance over the beautiful white snow. We were traveling in an area where the ice was under compression, so there was no need to wear the rope. The footing was extremely firm and easy to walk on, so we hastened to cover the several miles between us and Mt. Citadel before the sun softened the surface.

Mt. Citadel is a peak lying on the ridge which forms a southwesterly extension of the Sir Sandford massif. Itself in the shape of a ridge, the peak had been climbed by Palmer in 1911. At the foot of the mountain we began our climb up broad, clean snow. Stopping presently onto the graceful snow arete which led to the summit, we stopped to wait for Arnold and Chuck, who were a little behind us. Several miles away Sir Sandford, a squat, ugly mass of rock that looked simple to climb, gave no indication of its great beauty or difficulty.

When the others joined us, we roped and started to climb the arete. As leader I tried to steer carefully away from the cornices, and was quite dumfounded when Sterling told me to stay on top of them where the walking was easier. It seems that there are all sorts of cornices; these turned out to be the solid kind. Another lesson came while I was laboriously kicking steps in the hard snow. The boss showed me how to use the adze blade of my ice axe to scrape steps. It worked like a charm! Only three or four scrapes and I had completed another step in the staircase with one-quarter the effort. Progress was rapid, and at 11:00 A. M. we were atop the east peak (9,580 ft.).

A large stoneman similar to the one on Azimuth Mountain crowned the summit. The twin peak to the west, separated from us by a narrow notch of broken rock, was apparently uncairned and promised to offer a first ascent. First, though, we had to eat. The map came into play, as usual, and we did our best to identify the many ice-sheathed spires to the south. Below the walls of Mt. Citadel was the deep canyon of Gold River with the stream dimly visible in its depths. Immediately across the gorge from us, just below the Centurion Glacier, was an attractive tarn, the first we had seen in the whole region. To the north the Adamant Range was as prominent as ever, and the mountains north of Windy River as bewildering. Downie Peak and Goldstream Mountain raised their symmetrical summits to the west, while the Sir Sandford Glacier formed a lovely foreground for the whole scene.

After lunch the party planned to split, Sterling and I to return by Silvertip Neve while the others retraced their steps to the Minaret. First, however, we wanted to climb the other summit. Don, Sterling, and Chuck proceeded by separate routes to the notch, where they roped before climbing to the top of the west peak. After taking several

pictures Arnold and I roped and followed them. Remaining only long enough to build a cairn, we joined on one rope and climbed down to the col again. It was at this point that Chuck unroped and shortly after fell to his death.

We hastened to the glacier by our route of ascent and circled the peak until we came to his body, lying in the bergschrund of the north face. He was buried there, with his ice axe as a marker, overlooking the beautiful glacier and the rocky peaks beyond.

Sick at heart we returned to camp over the ice and red snow of Silvertip Neve. That night we agreed to return to Golden as swiftly as possible and made preparations for breaking camp in the morning.

July 23

For once no one objected to an early rising. Striking camp after a hasty breakfast, we abandoned everything but essential equipment and presented our remaining food to the ground squirrels. Then we headed northwest across the slopes of Azimuth Mountain until opposite the Silvertip icefall where we turned directly upward. A strenuous climb over the heather and dirt brought us to a pass in Azimuth Ridge, somewhat lower than the route we used when first entering the region. This pass is the one which should be used by future parties.

Moving down the steep snow on the other side, I showed a tendency to break out of my steps more than ever before, although Don, who was leading, kicked buckets that were big enough for a horse. Crossing the Adamant Glacier was simple, and we rapidly ascended the small glacier leading to the foot of "Thor Pass". Here we paused for a moment. Mt. Silvertip and Mt. Sir Sandford were as beautiful as ever, while Mt. Citadel in the distance was engraved forever on my memory.

Turning to the pass we found that the snow which had filled it five days ago was now almost gone. The loose debris in the bottom of the gulley seemed to me as though it would be difficult to climb, but Sterling scoffed at the idea. We were both right. The others scampered up like monkeys, while Sam--tch, tch, tch. Suffice it to say that Don is now completely resigned to my becoming a canoeist!

We ate lunch at the top of the pass, drinking in the view of Sir Sandford for the last time. Sterling made the important announcement that he at last had found why we had a hard time keeping up with Don. It seems that the gentleman manages to take steps several inches longer than the rest of the party's; naturally when we kept in step, he soon forged ahead. This explanation helped to boost my morale a little. At last, bidding farewell to the Sir Sandford region, we turned and moved onto the Gothics Neve. I was in the lead and managed to strike the remains of our old track beneath Mt. Gothics. As we pounded rapidly along, I looked up at the peaks of the latter and thought wryly, "Sure enough, we never did get to climb them."

For once we didn't pause at "Thor Pass" but quickly glissaded down, an awkward procedure with our packs, and hastened over the familiar trail to Fairy Meadow. The snow had certainly shrunk; we were forced to climb down places that had previously furnished easy sliding. When we arrived at our base camp at 1:30 P.M., quite a discussion ensued as to the advisability of continuing on our way or waiting until the next morning. In view of the amount of time remaining, we decided to advance at least as far as Glacier Camp before dark, and yanked the tents down so we wouldn't change our mind.

Sorting our equipment we discarded everything possible, and placed it in a cache for the use of the next person who visits our campsite. Among the items was a week's supply of food, which may or may not be prey to the bears by now, and a goodly amount of rock-climbing hardware. As we worked we noted that the mosquitoes had finally disappeared. When all was complete, we donned our packs, took a last fond look at Fairy Meadow and the peaks above, and headed down the moraine. A slight rain had begun, the first we had experienced in a week. Glacier Camp was reached in a very short time (I guess we were in good condition by now), but we decided to go no farther. Setting up the camp was easy since our old tent poles and fireplace were available.

Our conversation around the campfire was desultory and chiefly concerned the course of action to be taken on the following day. Shortly after supper we turned in.

July 24

Getting off to an early start we headed over goat trails toward the terminal moraine. I was carrying the large tent that had belonged to Chuck on top of my pack, and it persisted in working loose, making me so mad that I swore I'd carry it out though it took me a week. When we had scrambled along the stream and through the big alder slide, we discovered that nature had been making some changes during our absence. The snowslide area was almost entirely free of snow and swiftly growing up with underbrush that was already quite thick. This increase in the size of the brush we found to be true all the way to the river; the stuff grew fully as rapidly as the summer growth in the Blue Ridge.

Our first stop was at Disappointment Camp, where we halted for a short rest. It still looked like a good campsite, although we had now been somewhat spoiled by Fairy Meadow. As we climbed down through the forest toward Swan Dive Camp, I tried in vain to locate a short cut about which I had bragged for a mile or so. I still recommend it to the traveler who can find it. We learned as we traveled that our tree-blazing during the ascent had not been as thorough in the reverse direction as it might have been, and lost many minutes searching for the trail in various places.

At Swan Dive Camp we stopped for lunch a little before noon. It was a meal that only one word can describe, "orgy". We tried our best to eat more than a week's supply of chocolate and nuts at one sitting, and it's a wonder we didn't all founder. As it was, our mealtime lasted three times as long as it should have. When we started on, I was staggering a little--and no wonder. During the afternoon I fell off so many logs that Sterling later told me he and Don had held a serious discussion as to whether my frequent topples indicated that I would not be able to make it to the river. In view of the fact that I didn't seem to mind the falls and always had plenty of energy left when I got up again, they decided that it was just a slight idiosyncrasy on my part.

As we traveled along, it was curious to note that parts of the trail which had seemed so difficult on the way up were now ridiculously easy, while other portions which I had forgotten completely were quite laborious. I remembered that lower section only too well, however, and it didn't disappoint me. It was a rugged afternoon. We had placed very few blazes there and were now having cause to regret it. In addition the valley was close and hot; we couldn't seem to get enough water to drink. The only events that lightened the toil were my winning a bet with Sterling as to the location of our first day's lunch spot, and finding the long-lost bag of salt! Just by accident I happened to see the latter beneath a fallen log in the burned-over area. We just looked--and let it lie.

Eventually we reached the river, wringing wet with perspiration. Our most important task now was to ferry Sterling across the Columbia before it became too late for him to catch a ride back to Golden. It was now four o'clock, so, cursing the voracious mosquitoes, Arnold and I hastily pumped up the rubber boat. Sterling and Don, the dudes of the party, proceeded to shave off their beards--but not before I had secured close-ups in full color of their hirsute beauty. Just for a change Sterling also shaved off his mustache for the first time in many years. We wondered what his wife would say!

With Don at the oars we were across in only three trips, bag and baggage. Caching our equipment on the river bank, we joined Sterling at the roadside, thumbs pointed south. Traffic was slight and our appearance unprepossessing, so it was quite a while before he finally started on his way. It was now nearly sundown, so the three of us reversed our thumbs and eventually reached Kinbasket Lake, where we spent the night. The next day we rode to Golden, and our Selkirk holiday was at an end.

July 25 - July 31

Although our major expedition was over, our traveling was not. After eating all the icecream in Golden, we scattered for several days on diverse errands. Arnold went to the larger town of Revelstoke in order to have his films processed, while Donald made a trip to Seattle

to visit Chuck's father. Rather than spend our time waiting in Golden, Sterling and I paid a visit to the Alpine Club of Canada camp in the Bugaboos, just missing our old friend, Gus Gambs. There Sterling made a fine climb of Pigeon Spire, and I managed to spend a late afternoon strolling up the trail to Frenchman's Peak, where I secured several snapshots of the Bugaboo peaks below a storm cloud. The courtesy and hospitality of the Canadians were thoroughly delightful. I was grateful to Sterling for giving me the opportunity to see how one of their justly famous camps operated. Reassembling at Golden we completed our business and boarded the train for home.

Postlude

Even at this late date my memories of the Selkirks are not completely organized. There were just too many striking impressions of peaks and glaciers to assimilate, too many lessons in the arts of mountaineering and woodcraft to learn. Perhaps as time passes and details fade, the overall picture of our holiday will become more vivid, and I will be able to appreciate its many-faceted rewards to the fullest.

For the records, however, we had satisfactorily accomplished our two major objectives, the second ascent of Mt. Sir Sandford and the first ascent of Mt. Blackfriars. Two minor peaks, "Unicorn" and "Sentinel", had yielded as first ascents, and we had repeated Palmer's climbs of Azimuth and Citadel. Most important of all perhaps, the region had been entered by a route that proves it to be much more accessible than had been realized.

There was much that might have been accomplished had not our climbing been prematurely brought to a close. Primary ascents of Mt. Turret, the East Peak of Gothics, and Mts. Wotan, Gibraltar, and "Baldur" still await the climber in the Adamant Range, while Mt. Silvertip, Mt. Palmer, the Minaret and the Ravelin, and the lower peak of Mt. Blackfriars will give good climbs from a camp near Mt. Sir Sandford. In addition to these first ascents we had hoped to repeat by new routes the climbs made by Palmer of Mts. Austerity and Adamant, both of which would be rewarding but difficult.

In spite of the lack of an imposing list of accomplishments, we were quite satisfied, for our hypothesis about the accessibility of the Sir Sandford region had been successfully established and proved. As a reward we carried away priceless memories of the magnificent snowfields, peaks, and glaciers. The region had left its scars, however, and in my own mind the beauties of the mountains are matched at present by the astonishing fecundity of the mosquitoes and slide alder.

The final touch which crowned my own impressions of the latter was added a few weeks ago, when I attempted to repair our rubber boat. In one of the side pockets I found a partly-used bottle of the very best insect repellent obtainable, placed there for safekeeping during our crossing of the Columbia and subsequently forgotten. Inside the bottle was a sight that in a flash brought back vivid memories. Four well-preserved but very dead Big Bend mosquitoes floated gently about--mute victims of their own insatiable thirst!