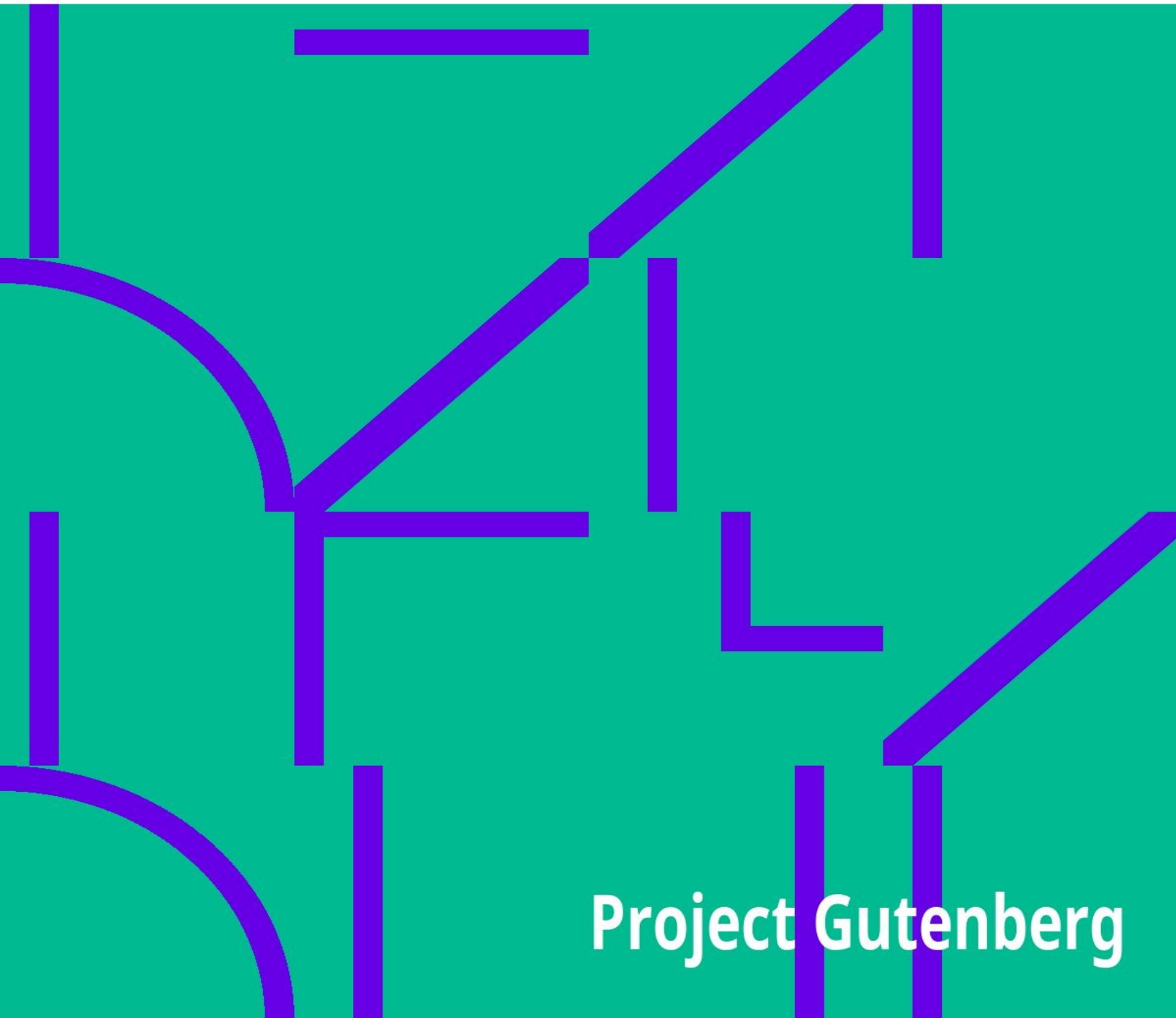
Tenting To-night

A Chronicle of Sport and Adventure in Glacier Park and the Cascade Mountains

Mary Roberts Rinehart



Title: Tenting To-night
       A Chronicle of Sport and Adventure in Glacier Park and the
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Release Date: October 5, 2006 [EBook #19475]

Language: English

Produced by Audrey Longhurst, Emmy and the Online
Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net

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A Chronicle of Sport and Adventure in Glacier Park and the Cascade Mountains by

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

Emblem
BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1918

Published April 1918

Chiwawa Mountain and Lyman Lake
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TENTING TO-NIGHT

I

THE TRAIL

The trail is narrow—often but the width of the pony's feet, a tiny path that leads on and on. It is always ahead, sometimes bold and wide, as when it leads the way through the forest; often narrow, as when it hugs the sides of the precipice; sometimes even hiding for a time in river bottom or swamp, or covered by the débris of last winter's avalanche. Sometimes it picks its precarious way over snow-fields which hang at dizzy heights, and again it flounders through mountain streams, where the tired horses must struggle for footing, and do not even dare to stoop and drink.

It is dusty; it is wet. It climbs; it falls; it is beautiful and terrible. But always it skirts the coast of adventure. Always it goes on, and always it calls to those that follow it. Tiny path that it is, worn by the feet of earth's wanderers, it is the thread which has knit together the solid places of the earth. The path of feet in the wilderness is the onward march of life itself.

Trail over Gunsight Pass, Glacier National Park

Trail over Gunsight Pass, Glacier National Park

City-dwellers know nothing of the trail. Poor followers of the pavements, what to them is this six-inch path of glory? Life for many of them is but a thing of avenues and streets, fixed and unmysterious, a matter of numbers and lights and post-boxes and people. They know whither their streets lead. There is no surprise about them, no sudden discovery of a river to be forded, no glimpse of deer in full flight or of an eagle poised over a stream. No heights, no depths. To know if it rains at night, they look down at shining pavements; they do not hold their faces to the sky.

Now, I am a near-city-dweller. For ten months in the year, I am particular about mail-delivery, and eat an evening dinner, and occasionally agitate the matter of having a telephone in every room in the house. I run the usual gamut of dinners, dances, and bridge, with the usual country-club setting as the spring goes on. And each May I order a number of flimsy frocks, in the conviction that I have done all the hard going I need to, and that this summer we shall go to the

New England coast. And then—about the first of June there comes a day when I find myself going over the fishing-tackle unearthed by the spring house-cleaning and sorting out of inextricable confusion the family's supply of sweaters, old riding-breeches, puttees, rough shoes, trout-flies, quirts, ponchos, spurs, reels, and old felt hats. Some of the hats still have a few dejected flies fastened to the ribbon, melancholy hackles, sadly ruffled Royal Coachmen, and here and there the determined gayety of the Parmachene Belle.

I look at my worn and rubbed high-laced boots, at my riding-clothes, snagged with many briers and patched from many saddles, at my old brown velours hat, survival of many storms in many countries. It has been rained on in Flanders, slept on in France, and has carried many a refreshing draft to my lips in my "ain countree."

I put my fishing-rod together and give it a tentative flick across the bed, and —I am lost.

The family professes surprise, but it is acquiescent. And that night, or the next day, we wire that we will not take the house in Maine, and I discover that the family has never expected to go to Maine, but has been buying more trout-flies right along.

As a family, we are always buying trout-flies. We buy a great many. I do not know what becomes of them. To those whose lives are limited to the unexciting sport of buying golf-balls, which have endless names but no variety, I will explain that the trout do not eat the flies, but merely attempt to. So that one of the eternal mysteries is how our flies disappear. I have seen a junior Rinehart start out with a boat, a rod, six large cakes of chocolate, and four dollars' worth of flies, and return a few hours later with one fish, one Professor, one Doctor, and one Black Moth minus the hook. And the boat had not upset.

June, after the decision, becomes a time of subdued excitement. For fear we shall forget to pack them, things are set out early. Stringers hang from chandeliers, quirts from doorknobs. Shoe-polish and disgorgers and adhesive plaster litter the dressing-tables. Rows of boots line the walls. And, in the evenings, those of us who are at home pore over maps and lists.

This last year, our plans were ambitious. They took in two complete expeditions, each with our own pack-outfit. The first was to take ourselves, some eight packers, guides, and cooks, and enough horses to carry our outfit—thirty-one in all—through the western and practically unknown side of Glacier

National Park, in northwestern Montana, to the Canadian border. If we survived that, we intended to go by rail to the Chelan country in northern Washington and there, again with a pack-train, cross the Cascades over totally unknown country to Puget Sound.

We did both, to the eternal credit of our guides and horses.

The family, luckily for those of us who have the *Wanderlust*, is four fifths masculine. I am the odd fifth—unlike the story of King George the Fifth and Queen Mary the other four fifths. It consists of the head of the family, to be known hereafter as the Head, the Big Boy, the Middle Boy, the Little Boy, and myself. As the Big Boy is very, very big, and the Little Boy is not really very little, being on the verge of long trousers, we make a comfortable traveling unit. And, because we were leaving the beaten path and going a-gypsying, with a new camp each night no one knew exactly where, the party gradually augmented.

The Author, the Middle Boy, and the Little Boy ***The Author, the Middle Boy, and the Little Boy***

First, we added an optimist named Bob. Then we added a "movie"-man, called Joe for short and because it was his name, and a "still" photographer, who was literally still most of the time. Some of these pictures are his. He did some beautiful work, but he really needed a mouth only to eat with.

(The "movie"-man is unpopular with the junior members of the family just now, because he hid his camera in the bushes and took the Little Boy in a state of goose flesh on the bank of Bowman Lake.)

But, of course, we have not got to Bowman Lake yet.

During the year before, I had ridden over the better-known trails of Glacier Park with Howard Eaton's riding party, and when I had crossed the Gunsight Pass, we had looked north and west to a great country of mountains capped with snow, with dense forests on the lower slopes and in the valleys.

"What is it?" I had asked the ranger who had accompanied us across the pass.

"It is the west side of Glacier Park," he explained. "It is not yet opened up for tourist travel. Once or twice in a year, a camping party goes up through this part of the park. That is all."

"What is it like?" I asked.

"Wonderful!"

So, sitting there on my horse, I made up my mind that sometime *I* would go up the west side of Glacier Park to the Canadian border.

Roughly speaking, there are at least six hundred square miles of Glacier Park on the west side that are easily accessible, but that are practically unknown. Probably the area is more nearly a thousand square miles. And this does not include the fastnesses of the range itself. It comprehends only the slopes on the west side to the border-line of the Flathead River.

The reason for the isolation of the west side of Glacier Park is easily understood. The park is divided into two halves by the Rocky Mountain range, which traverses it from northwest to southeast. Over it there is no single wagon-road of any sort between the Canadian border and Helena, perhaps two hundred and fifty miles. A railroad crosses at the Marias Pass. But from that to the Canadian line, one hundred miles, travel from the east is cut off over the range, except by trail.

To reach the west side of Glacier Park at the present time, the tourist, having seen the wonders of the east side, must return to Glacier Park Station, take a train over the Marias Pass, and get out at Belton. Even then, he can only go by boat up to Lewis's Hotel on Lake McDonald, a trifling distance. There are no hotels beyond Lewis's, and no roads.

Naturally, this tremendous area is unknown and unvisited.

It is being planned, however, by the new Department of National Parks to build a road this coming year along Lake McDonald. Eventually, this much-needed highway will connect with the Canadian roads, and thus indirectly with Banff and Lake Louise. The opening-up of the west side of Glacier Park will make it perhaps the most unique of all our parks, as it is undoubtedly the most magnificent. The grandeur of the east side will be tempered by the more smiling and equally lovely western slopes. And when, between the east and the west sides, there is constructed the great motor-highway which will lead across the range, we shall have, perhaps, the most scenic motor-road in the United States—until, in the fullness of time, we build another road across Cascade Pass in Washington.

II

THE BIG ADVENTURE

Came at last the day to start west. In spite of warnings, we found that our irreducible minimum of luggage filled five wardrobe-trunks. In vain we went over our lists and cast out such bulky things as extra handkerchiefs and silk socks and fancy neckties and toilet-silver. We started with all five. It was boiling hot; the sun beat in at the windows of the transcontinental train and stifled us. Over the prairies, dust blew in great clouds, covering the window-sills with white. The Big Boy and the Middle Boy and the Little Boy referred scornfully to the flannels and sweaters on which I had been so insistent. The Head slept across the continent. The Little Boy counted prairie-dogs.

Then, almost suddenly, we were in the mountains—for the Rockies seem to rise out of a great plain. The air was stimulating. There had been a great deal of snow last winter, and the wind from the ice-capped peaks overhead blew down and chilled us. We threw back our heads and breathed.

Before going to Belton for our trip with the pack-outfit, we rode again for two weeks with the Howard Eaton party through the east side of the park, crossing again those great passes, for each one of which, like the Indians, the traveler counts a *coup*—Mount Morgan, a mile high and the width of an army-mule on top; old Piegan, under the shadow of the Garden Wall; Mount Henry, where the wind blows always a steady gale. We had scaled Dawson with the aid of ropes, since snowslides covered the trail, and crossed the Cut Bank in a hailstorm. Like the noble Duke of York, Howard Eaton had led us "up a hill one day and led us down again." Only, he did it every day.

Once, in my notebook, I wrote on top of a mountain my definition of a mountain pass. I have used it before, but because it was written with shaking fingers and was torn from my very soul, I cannot better it. This is what I wrote:—

> A pass is a blood-curdling spot up which one's horse climbs like a goat and down the other side of which it slides as you lead it, trampling ever and anon on a tender part of your foot. A pass is the

> highest place between two peaks. A pass is not an opening, but a barrier which you climb with chills and descend with prayer. A pass is a thing which you try to forget at the time, and which you boast about when you get back home.

At last came the day when we crossed the Gunsight Pass and, under Sperry Glacier, looked down and across to the north and west. It was sunset and cold. The day had been a long and trying one. We had ridden across an ice-field which sloped gently off—into China, I dare say. I did not look over. Our horses were weary, and we were saddle-sore and hungry.

Pete, our big guide, whose name is really not Pete at all, waved an airy hand toward the massed peaks beyond—the land of our dreams.

"Well," he said, "there it is!"

And there it was.

Getting a pack-outfit ready for a long trip into the wilderness is a serious matter. We were taking thirty-one horses, guides, packers, and a cook. But we were doing more than that—we were taking two boats! This was Bob's idea. Any highly original idea, such as taking boats where not even tourists had gone before, or putting eggs on a bucking horse, or carrying grapefruit for breakfast into the wilderness, was Bob's idea.

"You see, I figure it out like this," he said, when, on our arrival at Belton, we found the boats among our equipment: "If we can get those boats up to the Canadian line and come down the Flathead rapids all the way, it will only take about four days on the river. It's a stunt that's never been pulled off."

"Do you mean," I said, "that we are going to run four days of rapids that have never been run?"

"That's it."

I looked around. There, in a group, were the Head and the Big Boy and the Middle Boy and the Little Boy. And a fortune-teller at Atlantic City had told me to beware of water!

"At the worst places," the Optimist continued, "we can send Joe ahead in one boat with the 'movie' outfit, and get you as you come along."

Looking south from Pollock Pass, Glacier National Park

Looking south from Pollock Pass, Glacier National Park

"I dare say," I observed, with some bitterness. "Of course we may upset. But if we do, I'll try to go down for the third time in front of the camera."

But even then the boats were being hoisted into a wagon-bed filled with hay. And I knew that I was going to run four days of rapids. It was written.

It was a bright morning. In a corral, the horses were waiting to be packed. Rolls of blankets, crates of food, and camping-utensils lay everywhere. The Big Boy marshaled the fishing-tackle. Bill, the cook, was searching the town for the top of an old stove to bake on. We had provided two reflector ovens, but he regarded them with suspicion. They would, he suspected, not do justice to his specialty, the corn-meal saddle-bag, a sort of sublimated hot cake.

I strolled to the corral and cast a horsewoman's eye on my mount.

"He looks like a very nice horse," I said. "He's quite handsome."

Pete tightened up the cinch.

"Yes," he observed; "he's all right. He's a pretty good mare."

The Head was wandering around with lists in his hand. His conversation ran something like this:—

"Pocket-flashes, chocolate, jam, medicine-case, reels, landing-nets, cigarettes, tooth-powder, slickers, matches."

He was always accumulating matches. One moment, a box of matches would be in plain sight and the next it had disappeared. He became a sort of match-magazine, so that if anybody had struck him violently, in almost any spot, he would have exploded.

Hours went by. The sun was getting high and hot. The crowd which had been watching gradually disappeared about its business. The two boats—big, sturdy river-boats they were—had rumbled along toward the wilderness, one on top of the other, with George Locke and Mike Shannon as pilots, watching for breakers

ahead. In the corral, our supplies were being packed on the horses, Bill Shea and Pete, Tom Sullivan and Tom Farmer and their assistants working against time. In crates were our cooking-utensils, ham, bacon, canned salmon, jam, flour, corn-meal, eggs, baking-powder, flies, rods, and reels, reflector ovens, sunburn lotion, coffee, cocoa, and so on. Cocoa is the cowboy's friend. Innumerable blankets, "tarp" beds, and war-sacks lay rolled ready for the pack-saddles. The cook was declaiming loudly that some one had opened his pack and taken out his cleaver.

For a pack-outfit, the west side of Glacier Park is ideal. The east side is much the best so far for those who wish to make short trips along the trails into the mountains, although as yet only a small part, comparatively, of the eastern wonderland is open. There, one may spend a day, or several days, in the midst of the wildest possible country and yet return at night to excellent hotels.

On the west side, however, a pack-outfit is necessary. There is but one hotel, Lewis's, on Lake McDonald. To get to the Canadian line, there must be camping facilities for at least eight days if there are no stop-overs. And not to stop over is to lose the joy of the trip. It is an ideal two to three weeks' jaunt with a pack-train. A woman who can sit a horse—and every one can ride in a Western saddle—a woman can make the land trip not only with comfort but with joy. That is, a woman who likes the outdoors.

What did we wear, that bright morning when, all ready at last, the cook on the chuck-wagon, the boats ambling ahead, with Bill Hossick, the teamster, driving the long line of heavily packed horses and our own saddlers lined up for the adventure, we moved out on to the trail?

Well, the men wore khaki riding-trousers and flannel shirts, broad-brimmed felt hats, army socks drawn up over the cuff of the breeches, and pack-shoes. A pack-shoe is one in which the leather of the upper part makes the sole also, without a seam. On to this soft sole is sewed a heavy leather one. The pack-shoe has a fastened tongue and is waterproof.

And I? I had not counted on the "movie"-man, and I was dressed for comfort in the woods. I had buckskin riding-breeches and high boots, and over my thin riding-shirt I wore a cloth coat. I had packed in my warbag a divided skirt also, and a linen suit, for hot days, of breeches and coat. But of this latter the least said the better. It betrayed me and, in portions, deserted me.

All of us carried tin drinking-cups, which vied with the bells on the pack-animals for jingle. Most of us had sweaters or leather wind-jammers. The guides

wore "chaps" of many colors, boots with high heels, which put our practical packs in the shade, and gay silk handkerchiefs.

Joe was to be a detachable unit. As a matter of fact, he became detached rather early in the game, having been accidentally given a bucker. It was on the second day, I think, that his horse buried his head between his fore legs, and dramatized one of the best bits of the trip when Joe was totally unable to photograph it.

He had his own guide and extra horse for the camera. It had been our expectation that, at the most hazardous parts of the journey, he would perch on some crag and show us courageously risking our necks to have a good time. But on the really bad places he had his own life to save, and he never fully trusted Maud, I think, after the first day. Maud was his horse.

Besides, when he did climb to some aerie, and photographed me, for instance, in a sort of Napoleon-crossing-the-Alps attitude, sitting my horse on the brink of eternity and being reassured from safety by the Optimist—outside the picture, of course—the developed film flattened out the landscape. So that, although I was on the edge of a cañon a mile deep, I might as well have been posing on the bank of the Ohio River.

On the east side of the Park I had ridden Highball. It is not particularly significant that I started the summer on Highball and ended it on Budweiser. Now I had Angel, a huge white mare with a pink nose, a loving disposition, and a gait that kept me swallowing my tongue for fear I would bite the end off it. The Little Boy had Prince, a small pony which ran exactly like an Airedale dog, and in every canter beat out the entire string. The Head had H——, and considered him well indicated. One bronco was called "Bronchitis." The top horse of the string was Bill Shea's Dynamite, according to Bill Shea. There were Dusty, Shorty, Sally Goodwin, Buffalo Tom, Chalk-Eye, Comet, and Swapping Tater—Swapping Tater being a pacer who, when he hit the ground, swapped feet. Bob had Sister Sarah.

At last, everything was ready. The pack-train got slowly under way. We leaped into our saddles—"leaped" being a figurative term which grew more and more figurative as time went on and we grew saddle-weary and stiff—and, passing the pack-train on a canter, led off for the wilderness.

All that first day we rode, now in the sun, now in deep forest. Luncheon-time came, but the pack-train was far behind. We waited, but we could not hear so

much as the tinkle of its bells. So we munched cakes of chocolate from the pockets of our riding-coats and went grimly on.

The wagon with the boats had made good time. It was several miles along the wagon-trail before we caught up with it. It had found a quiet harbor beside the road, and the boatmen were demanding food. We tossed them what was left of the chocolate and went on.

The presence of a wagon-trail in that empty land, unvisited and unknown, requires explanation. In the first place, it was not really a road. It was a trail, and in places barely that. But, sixteen years before, a road had been cleared through the forest by some people who believed there was oil near the Canadian line. They cut down trees and built corduroy bridges. But in sixteen years it has not been used. No wheels have worn it smooth. It takes its leisurely way, now through wilderness, now through burnt country where the trees stand stark and dead, now through prairie or creek-bottom, now up, now down, always with the range rising abruptly to the east, and with the Flathead River somewhere to the west.

It will not take much expenditure to make that old wagon-trail into a good road. It has its faults. It goes down steep slopes—on the second day out, the chuck-wagon got away, and, fetching up at the bottom, threw out Bill the cook and nearly broke his neck. It climbs like a cat after a young robin. It is rocky or muddy or both. But it is, potentially, a road.

The Rocky Mountains run northwest and southeast, and in numerous basins, fed by melting glaciers and snow-fields, are deep and quiet lakes. These lakes, on the west side, discharge their overflow through roaring and precipitous streams to the Flathead, which flows south and east. While our general direction was north, it was our intention to turn off east and camp at the different lakes, coming back again to the wagon-trail to resume our journey.

Lake Elizabeth from Ptarmigan Pass, Glacier National Park ***Lake Elizabeth from Ptarmigan Pass, Glacier National Park***

Therefore, it became necessary, day after day, to take our boats off the wagon-road and haul them along foot-trails none too good. The log of the two boats is in itself a thrilling story. There were days and days when the wagon was mired, when it stuck in the fords of streams or in soft places on the trail. It was a land flotilla by day, and, with its straw, a couch at night. And there came, toward

the end of the journey, that one nerve-racking day when, over a sixty-foot cliff down a foot-trail, it was necessary to rope wagon, boats, and all, to get the boats into the Flathead River.

But all this was before us then. We only knew it was summer, that the days were warm and the nights cool, that the streams were full of trout, that such things as telegraphs and telephones were falling far in our rear, and that before us was the Big Adventure.

III

BRIDGE CREEK TO BOWMAN LAKE

The first night we camped at Bridge Creek on a river-flat. Beside us, the creek rolled and foamed. The horses, in their rope corral, lay down and rolled in sheer ecstasy when their heavy packs were removed. The cook set up his sheet-iron stove beside the creek, built a wood fire, lifted the stove over it, fried meat, boiled potatoes, heated beans, and made coffee while the tents were going up. From a thicket near by came the thud of an axe as branches were cut for bough beds.

I have slept on all kinds of bough beds. They may be divided into three classes. There is the one which is high in the middle and slopes down at the side—there is nothing so slippery as pine-needles—so that by morning you are quite likely to be not only off the bed but out of the tent. And there is the bough bed made by the guide when he is in a great hurry, which consists of large branches and not very many needles. So that in the morning, on rising, one is as furrowed as a waffle off the iron. And there is the third kind, which is the real bough bed, but which cannot be tossed off in a moment, like a poem, but must be the result of calculation, time, and much labor. It is to this bough bed that I shall some day indite an ode.

This is the way you go about it: First, you take a large and healthy woodsman with an axe, who cuts down a tree—a substantial tree. Because this is the frame of your bed. But on no account do this yourself. One of the joys of a bough bed is seeing somebody else build it.

The tree is an essential. It is cut into six-foot lengths—unless one is more than six feet long. If the bed is intended for one, two side pieces with one at the head and one at the foot are enough, laid flat on a level place, making a sort of boxed-in rectangle. If the bed is intended for two, another log down the center divides it into two bunks and prevents quarreling.

Now begins the real work of constructing the bough bed. If one is a good manager, while the frame is being made, the younger members of the family have been performing the loving task of getting the branches together. When a

sufficient number of small branches has been accumulated, this number varying from one ton to three, judging by size and labor, the bough bed is built by the simple expedient of sticking the branches into the enclosed space like flowers into a vase. They must be packed very closely, stem down. This is a slow and not particularly agreeable task for one's loving family and friends, owing to the tendency of pine-and balsam-needles to jag. Indeed, I have known it to happen that, after a try or two, some one in the outfit is delegated to the task of official bed-maker, and a slight coldness is noticeable when one refers to dusk and bedtime.

Over these soft and feathery plumes of balsam—soft and feathery only through six blankets—is laid the bedding, and on this couch the wearied and saddle-sore tourist may sleep as comfortably as in his grandaunt's feather bed.

But, dear traveler, it is much simpler to take an air-mattress and a foot-pump. True, even this has its disadvantages. It is not safe to stick pins into it while disrobing at night. Occasionally, a faulty valve lets go, and the sleeper dreams he is falling from the Woolworth Tower. But lacking a sturdy woodsman and a loving family to collect branches, I advise the air-bed.

Fishing at Bridge Creek, that first evening, was poor. We caught dozens of small trout. But it would have taken hundreds to satisfy us after our lunchless day, and there were other reasons.

One casts for trout. There is no sitting on a mossy stone and watching a worm guilefully struggling to attract a fish to the hooks. No; one casts.

Now, I have learned to cast fairly well. On the lawn at home, or in the middle of a ten-acre lot, cleared, or the center of a lake, I can put out quite a lot of line. In one cast out of three, I can drop a fly so that it appears to be committing suicide—which is the correct way. But in a thicket I am lost. I hold the woman's record for getting the hook in my hair or the lobe of the Little Boy's ear. I have hung fish high in trees more times than phonographs have hanged Danny Deever. I can, under such circumstances (i.e., the thicket), leave camp with a rod, four six-foot leaders, an expensive English line, and a smile, and return an hour later with a six-inch trout, a bandaged hand, a hundred and eighty mosquito bites, no leaders, and no smile.

So we fished little that first evening, and, on the discovery that candles had been left out of the cook's outfit, we retired early to our bough beds, which were, as it happened that night, of class A.

There was a deer-lick on our camp-ground there at Bridge Creek, and during the night deer came down and strayed through the camp. One of the guides saw a black bear also. We saw nothing. Some day I shall write an article called: "Wild Animals I Have Missed."

We had made fourteen miles the first day, with a late start. It was not bad, but the next day we determined to do better. At five o'clock we were up, and at five-thirty tents were down and breakfast under way. We had had a visitor the night before—that curious anomaly, a young hermit. He had been a very well-known pugilist in the light-weight class and, his health failing, he had sought the wilderness. There he had lived for seven years alone.

We asked him if he never cared to see people. But he replied that trees were all the company he wanted. Deer came and browsed around his tiny shack there in the woods. All the trout he could use played in his front garden. He had a dog and a horse, and he wanted nothing else. He came to see us off the next morning, and I think we amused him. We seemed to need so much. He stared at our thirty-one horses, sixteen of them packed with things he had learned to live without. But I think he rather hated to see us go. We had brought a little excitement into his quiet life.

The first bough bed had been a failure. For—note you—I had not then learned of the bough bed *de luxe*. This information, which I have given you so freely, dear reader, what has it not cost me in sleepless nights and family coldness and aching muscles!

So I find this note in my daily journal, written that day on horseback, and therefore not very legible:—

Mem: After this, must lie over the camp-ground until I find a place that fits me to sleep on. Then have the tent erected over it.

There was a little dissension in the party that morning, Joe having wakened in the night while being violently shoved out under the edge of his tent by his companion, who was a restless sleeper. But ill-temper cannot live long in the open. We settled to the swinging walk of the trail. In the mountain meadows there were carpets of flowers. They furnished highly esthetic if not very substantial food for our horses during our brief rests. They were very brief, those rests. All too soon, Pete would bring Angel to me, and I would vault into the saddle—extremely figurative, this—and we would fall into line, Pete swaying with the cowboy's roll in the saddle, the Optimist bouncing freely, Joe with an eye on that pack-horse which carried the delicacies of the trip, the Big Boy with long legs that almost touched the ground, the Middle Boy with eyes roving for adventure, the Little Boy deadly serious and hoping for a bear. And somewhere in the rear, where he could watch all responsibilities and supply the smokers with matches, the Head.

That second day, we crossed Dutch Ridge and approached the Flathead. What I have called here the Flathead is known locally as the North Fork. The pack-outfit had started first. Long before we caught up with them, we heard the bells on the lead horses ringing faintly.

Passing a pack-outfit on the trail is a difficult matter. The wise little horses, traveling free and looked after only by a wrangler or two, do not like to be passed. One of two things happens when the saddle-outfit tries to pass the pack. Either the pack starts on a smart canter ahead, or it turns wildly off into the forest to the accompaniment of much complaint by the drivers. A pack-horse loose on a narrow trail is a dangerous matter. With its bulging pack, it worms its way past anything on the trail, and bad accidents have followed. Here, however, there was room for us to pass.

Tiny gophers sat up beside the trail and squeaked at us. A coyote yelped. Bumping over fallen trees, creaking and groaning and swaying, came the boat-wagon. Mike had found a fishing-line somewhere, and pretended to cast from the bow.

"Ship ahoy!" he cried, when he saw us, and his instructions to the driver were purely nautical. "Hard astern!" he yelled, going down a hill, and instead of "Gee" or "Haw" he shouted "Port" or "Starboard."

An acquaintance of George and Mike has built a boat which is intended to go up-stream by the force of the water rushing against it and turning a propeller. We had a spirited discussion about it.

"Because," as one of the men objected, "it's all right until you get to the head of the stream. Then what are you going to do?" he asked. "She'll only go up—she won't go down."

Pete, the chief guide, was a German. He was rather uneasy for fear we intended to cross the Canadian line. But we reassured him. A big blond in a wide-flapping Stetson, black Angora chaps, and flannel shirt with a bandana, he led our little procession into the wilderness and sang as he rode. The Head frequently sang with him. And because the only song the Head knew very well in German was the "Lorelei," we had it hour after hour. Being translated to one of the boatmen, he observed: "I have known girls like that. I guess I'd leave most any boat for them. But I'd leave this boat for most any girl."

We were approaching the mountains, climbing slowly but steadily. We passed through Lone Tree Prairie, where one great pine dominated the country for miles around, and stopped by a small river for luncheon.

Of all the meals that we took in the open, perhaps luncheon was the most delightful. Condensed milk makes marvelous cocoa. We opened tins of things, consulted maps, eased the horses' cinches, rested our own tired bodies for an hour or so. For the going, while much better than we had expected, was still slow. It was rare, indeed, to be able to get the horses out of a walk. And there is no more muscle-racking occupation than riding a walking horse hour after hour through a long day.

By the end of the second day we were well away from even that remote part of civilization from which we had started, and a terrible fact was dawning on us. The cook did not like us!

Now, we all have our small vanities, and mine has always been my success with cooks. I like cooks. As time goes on, I am increasingly dependent on cooks. I never fuss a cook, or ask how many eggs a cake requires, or remark that we must be using the lard on the hardwood floors. I never make any of the small jests on that order, with which most housewives try to reduce the cost of living.

No; I really go out of my way to ignore the left-overs, and not once on this trip had I so much as mentioned dish-towels or anything unpleasant. I had seen

my digestion slowly going with a course of delicious but indigestible saddle-bags, which were all we had for bread.

But—I was failing. Bill unpacked and cooked and packed up again and rode on the chuck-wagon. But there was something wrong. Perhaps it was the fall out of the wagon. Perhaps we were too hungry. We were that, I know. Perhaps he looked ahead through the vista of days and saw that formidable equipment of fishing-tackle, and mentally he was counting the fish to clean and cook and clean and cook and clean and—

The center of a camping-trip is the cook. If, in the spring, men's hearts turn to love, in the woods they turn to food. And cooking is a temperamental art. No unhappy cook can make a soufflé. Not, of course, that we had soufflé.

A camp cook should be of a calm and placid disposition. He has the hardest job that I know of. He cooks with inadequate equipment on a tiny stove in the open, where the air blows smoke into his face and cinders into his food. He must cook either on his knees or bending over to within a foot or so of the ground. And he must cook moving, as it were. Worse than that, he must cook not only for the party but for a hungry crowd of guides and packers that sits around in a circle and watches him, and urges him, and gets under his feet, and, if he is unpleasant, takes his food fairly out of the frying-pan under his eyes if he is not on guard. He is the first up in the morning and the last in bed. He has to dry his dishes on anything that comes handy, and then pack all of his grub on an unreliable horse and start off for the next eating-ground.

A mountain lake in Glacier National Park

A mountain lake in Glacier National Park

So, knowing all this, and also that we were about a thousand miles from the nearest employment-office and several days' hard riding from a settlement, we went to Bill with tribute. We praised his specialties. We gave him a college lad, turned guide for the summer, to assist him. We gathered up our own dishes. We inquired for his bruise. But gloom hung over him like a cloud.

And he *could* cook. Well—

We had made a forced trip that day, and the last five miles were agonizing. In vain we sat sideways on our horses, threw a leg over the pommel, got off, and walked and led them. Bowman Lake, our objective point, seemed to recede.

Very few people have ever seen Bowman Lake. Yet I believe it is one of the most beautiful lakes in this country. It is not large, perhaps only twelve miles long and from a mile to two miles in width. Save for the lower end, it lies entirely surrounded by precipitous and inaccessible peaks—old Rainbow, on whose mist-cap the setting sun paints a true rainbow day after day, Square Peak, Reuter Peak, and Peabody, named with the usual poetic instinct of the Geological Survey. They form a natural wall, round the upper end of the lake, of solid-granite slopes which rise over a mile in height above it. Perpetual snow covers the tops of these mountains, and, melting in innumerable waterfalls, feeds the lake below.

So far as I can discover, we were taking the first boat, with the possible exception of an Indian canoe long ago, to Bowman Lake. Not the first boat, either, for the Geological Survey had nailed a few boards together, and the ruin of this venture was still decaying on the shore.

There was a report that Bowman Lake was full of trout. That was one of the things we had come to find out. It was for Bowman Lake primarily that all the reels and flies and other lure had been arranged. If it was true, then twenty-four square miles of virgin lake were ours to fish from.

IV

A FISHERMAN'S PARADISE

After our first view of the lake, the instant decision was to make a permanent camp there for a few days. And this we did. Tents were put up for the luxurious-minded, three of them. Mine was erected over me, when, as I had pre-determined, I had found a place where I could lie comfortably. The men belonging to the outfit, of course, slept under the stars. A packer, a guide, or the cook with an outfit like ours has, outside of such clothing as he wears or carries rolled in his blankets, but one possession—and that is his tarp bed. With such a bed, a can of tomatoes, and a gun, it is said that a cow-puncher can go anywhere.

Once or twice I was awake in the morning before the cook's loud call of "Come and get it!" brought us from our tents. I never ceased to view with interest this line of tarp beds, each with its sleeping occupant, his hat on the ground beside him, ready, when the call came, to sit up blinking in the sunlight, put on his hat, crawl out, and be ready for the day.

Getting ready for the day's fishing at camp on Bowman Lake ***Getting ready for the day's fishing at camp on Bowman Lake***

The boats had traveled well. The next morning, after a breakfast of ham and eggs, fried potatoes, coffee, and saddle-bags, we were ready to try them out.

And here I shall be generous. For this means that next year we shall go there and find other outfits there before us, and people in the latest thing in riding-clothes, and fancy trout-creels and probably sixty-dollar reels.

Bowman Lake is a fisherman's paradise. The first day on the lake we caught sixty-nine cut-throat trout averaging a pound each, and this without knowing where to look.

In the morning, we could see them lying luxuriously on shelving banks in the sunlight, only three to six feet below the surface. They rose, like a shot, to the flies. For some reason, George Locke, our fisherman, resented their taking the Parmachene Belle. Perhaps because the trout of his acquaintance had not cared

for this fly. Or maybe he considered the Belle not sportsmanly. The Brown Hackle and Royal Coachman did well, however, and, in later fishing on this lake, we found them more reliable than the gayer flies. In the afternoon, the shallows failed us. But in deep holes where the brilliant walls shelved down to incredible depths, they rose again in numbers.

It was perfectly silent. Doubtless, countless curious wild eyes watched us from the mountain-slopes and the lake-borders. But we heard not even the cracking of brushwood under cautious feet. The tracks of deer, where they had come down to drink, a dead mountain-lion floating in a pool, the slow flight of an eagle across the face of old Rainbow, and no sound but the soft hiss of a line as it left the reel—that was Bowman Lake, that day, as it lay among its mountains. So precipitous are the slopes, so rank the vegetation where the forest encroaches, that we were put to it to find a ridge large enough along the shore to serve as a foothold for luncheon. At last we found a tiny spot, perhaps ten feet long by three feet wide, and on that we landed. The sun went down; the rainbow clouds gathered about the peaks above, and still the trout were rising. When at last we turned for our ten-mile row back to camp, it was almost dusk.

Now and then, when I am tired and the things of this world press close and hard, I think of those long days on that lonely lake, and the home-coming at nightfall. Toward the pin-point of glow—the distant camp-fire which was our beacon light—the boat moved to the long, tired sweep of the oars; around us the black forest, the mountains overhead glowing and pink, as if lighted from within. And then, at last, the grating of our little boat on the sand—and night.

During the day, our horses were kept in a rope corral. Sometimes they were quiet; sometimes a spirit of mutiny seemed to possess the entire thirty-one. There is in such a string always one bad horse that, with ears back and teeth showing, keeps the entire bunch milling. When such a horse begins to stir up trouble, the wrangler tries to rope him and get him out. Mad excitement follows as the noose whips through the air. But they stay in the corral. So curious is the equine mind that it seldom realizes that it could duck and go under the rope, or chew it through, or, for that matter, strain against it and break it.

At night, we turned the horses loose. Almost always in the morning, some were missing, and had to be rounded up. The greater part, however, stayed close to the bell-mare. It was our first night at Bowman Lake, I think, that we heard a mountain-lion screaming. The herd immediately stampeded. It was far away, so that we could not hear the horses running. But we could hear the agitated and

rapid ringing of the bell, and, not long after, the great cat went whining by the camp. In the morning, the horses were far up the mountain-side.

Sometime I shall write that article on "Wild Animals I Have Missed." We were in a great game-country. But we had little chance to creep up on anything but deer. The bells of the pack-outfit, our own jingling spurs, the accouterments, the very tinkle of the tin cups on our saddles must have made our presence known to all the wilderness-dwellers long before we appeared.

The horses in the rope corral

The horses in the rope corral

After we had been at Bowman Lake a day or two, while at breakfast one morning, we saw two of the guides racing their horses in a mad rush toward the camp. Just outside, one of the ponies struck a log, turned a somersault, and threw his rider, who, nothing daunted, came hurrying up on foot. They had seen a bull moose not far away. Instantly all was confusion. The horses were not saddled. One of the guides gave me his and flung me on it. The Little Boy made his first essay at bareback riding. In a wild scamper we were off, leaping logs and dodging trees. The Little Boy fell off with a terrific thud, and sat up, looking extremely surprised. And when we had got there, as clandestinely as a steam calliope in a circus procession, the moose was gone. I sometimes wonder, looking back, whether there really was a moose there or not. Did I or did I not see a twinkle in Bill Shea's eye as he described the sweep of the moose's horns? I wonder.

Birds there were in plenty; wild ducks that swam across the lake at terrific speed as we approached; plover-snipe, tiny gray birds with long bills and white breasts, feeding along the edge of the lake peacefully at our very feet; an eagle carrying a trout to her nest. Brown squirrels came into the tents and ate our chocolate and wandered over us fearlessly at night. Bears left tracks around the camp. But we saw none after we left the Lake McDonald country.

Yet this is a great game-country. The warden reports a herd of thirty-six moose in the neighborhood of Bowman Lake; mountain-lion, lynx, marten, bear, and deer abound. A trapper built long ago a substantial log shack on the north shore of the lake, and although it is many years since it was abandoned, it is still almost weather-proof. All of us have our dreams. Some day I should like to go back and live for a little time in that forest cabin. In the long snow-bound days after he set his traps, the trapper had busied himself fitting it up. A tin can made

his candle-bracket on the wall, axe-hewn planks formed a table and a bench, and diagonally across a corner he had built his fireplace of stones from the lakeside.

He had a simple method of constructing a chimney; he merely left without a roof that corner of the cabin and placed slanting boards in it. He had made a crane, too, which swung out over the fireplace. All of the Rocky Mountains were in his back garden, and his front yard was Bowman Lake.

We had had fair weather so far. But now rain set in. Hail came first; then a steady rain. The tents were cold. We got out our slickers and stood out around the beach fire in the driving storm, and ate our breakfast of hot cakes, fried ham, potatoes and onions cooked together, and hot coffee. The cook rigged up a tarpaulin over his little stove and stood there muttering and frying. He had refused to don a slicker, and his red sweater, soaking up the rain, grew heavy with moisture and began to stretch. Down it crept, down and down.

The cook straightened up from his frying-pan and looked at it. Then he said:—

"There, little sweater, don't you cry;
You'll be a blanket by and by."

This little touch of humor on his part cheered us. Perhaps, seeing how sporting we were about the weather, he was going to like us after all. Well—

Our new tents leaked—disheartening little drips that came in and wandered idly over our blankets, to lodge in little pools here and there. A cold wind blew. I resorted to that camper's delight—a stone heated in the camp-fire—to warm my chilled body. We found one or two magazines, torn and dejected, and read them, advertisements and all. And still, when it seemed the end of the day, it was not high noon.

By afternoon, we were saturated; the camp steamed. We ate supper after dark, standing around the camp-fire, holding our tin plates of food in our hands. The firelight shone on our white faces and dripping slickers. The horses stood with their heads low against the storm. The men of the outfit went to bed on the sodden ground with the rain beating in their faces.

The next morning was gray, yet with a hint of something better. At eight o'clock, the clouds began to lift. Their solidity broke. The lower edge of the cloud-bank that had hung in a heavy gray line, straight and ominous, grew

ragged. Shreds of vapor detached themselves and moved off, grew smaller, disappeared. Overhead, the pall was thinner. Finally it broke, and a watery ray of sunlight came through. And, at last, old Rainbow, at the upper end of the lake, poked her granite head through its vapory sheathings. Angel, my white horse, also eyed the sky, and then, putting her pink nose under the corral-rope, she gently worked her way out. The rain was over.

The horses provided endless excitement. Whether at night being driven off by madly circling riders to the grazing-ground or rounded up into the corral in the morning, they gave the men all they could do. Getting them into the corral was like playing pigs-in-clover. As soon as a few were in, and the wrangler started for others, the captives escaped and shot through the camp. There were times when the air seemed full of flying hoofs and twitching ears, of swinging ropes and language.

On the last day at Bowman Lake, we realized that although the weather had lifted, the cook's spirits had not. He was polite enough—he had always been polite to the party. But he packed in a dejected manner. There was something ominous in the very way he rolled up the strawberry jam in sacking.

The breaking-up of a few days' camp is a busy time. The tents are taken down at dawn almost over one's head. Blankets are rolled and strapped; the pack-ponies groan and try to roll their packs off.

Bill Shea quotes a friend of his as contending that the way to keep a pack-pony cinched is to put his pack on him, throw the diamond hitch, cinch him as tight as possible, and then take him to a drinking-place and fill him up with water. However, we did not resort to this.

V

TO KINTLA LAKE

We had washed at dawn in the cold lake. The rain had turned to snow in the night, and the mountains were covered with a fresh white coating. And then, at last, we were off, the wagons first, although we were soon to pass them. We had lifted the boats out of the water and put them lovingly in their straw again. And Mike and George formed the crew. The guides were ready with facetious comments.

"Put up a sail!" they called. "Never give up the ship!" was another favorite. The Head, who has a secret conviction that he should have had his voice trained, warbled joyously:—

"I'll stick to the ship, lads;
You save your lives.
I've no one to love me;
You've children and wives."

And so, still in the cool of the morning, our long procession mounted the rise which some great glacier deposited ages ago at the foot of what is now Bowman Lake. We turned longing eyes back as we left the lake to its winter ice and quiet. For never again, probably, will it be ours. We have given its secret to the world.

At two o'clock we found a ranger's cabin and rode into its enclosure for luncheon. Breakfast had been early, and we were very hungry. We had gone long miles through the thick and silent forest, and now we wanted food. We wanted food more than we wanted anything else in the world. We sat in a circle on the ground and talked about food.

And, at last, the chuck-wagon drove in. It had had a long, slow trip. We stood up and gave a hungry cheer, and then—*Bill was gone!* Some miles back he had halted the wagon, got out, taken his bed on his back, and started toward civilization afoot. We stared blankly at the teamster.

"Well," we said; "what did he say?"

"All he said to me was, 'So long,'" said the teamster.

And that was all there was to it. So there we were in the wilderness, far, far from a cook. The hub of our universe had departed. Or, to make the figure modern, we had blown out a tire. And we had no spare one.

I made my declaration of independence at once. I could cook; but I would not cook for that outfit. There were too many; they were too hungry. Besides, I had come on a pleasure-trip, and the idea of cooking for fifteen men and thirty-one horses was too much for me. I made some cocoa and grumbled while I made it. We lunched out of tins and in savage silence. When we spoke, it was to impose horrible punishments on the defaulting cook. We hoped he would enjoy his long walk back to civilization without food.

"Food!" answered one of the boys. "He's got plenty cached in that bed of his, all right. What you should have done," he said to the teamster, "was to take his bed from him and let him starve."

In silence we finished our luncheon; in silence, mounted our horses. In black and hopeless silence we rode on north, farther and farther from cooks and hotels and tables-d'hôte.

We rode for an hour—two hours. And, at last, sitting in a cleared spot, we saw a man beside the trail. He was the first man we had seen in days. He was sitting there quite idly. Probably that man to-day thinks that he took himself there on his own feet, of his own volition. We know better. He was directed there for our happiness. It was a direct act of Providence. For we rode up to him and said:—

"Do you know of any place where we can find a cook?"

And this man, who had dropped from heaven, replied:

"*I am a cook.*"

So we put him on our extra saddle-horse and took him with us. He cooked for us with might and main, day and night, until the trip was over. And if you don't believe this story, write to Norman Lee, Kintla, Montana, and ask him if it is true. What is more, Norman Lee could cook. He could cook on his knees, bending over, and backward. He had been in Cuba, in the Philippines, in the Boxer Rebellion in China, and was now a trapper; is now a trapper, for, as I write this, Norman Lee is trapping marten and lynx on the upper left-hand corner of

Montana, in one of the empty spaces of the world.

We were very happy. We caracoled—whatever that may be. We sang and whistled, and we rode. How we rode! We rode, and rode, and rode, and rode, and rode, and rode, and rode. And, at last, just when the end of endurance had come, we reached our night camp.

Here and there upon the west side of Glacier Park are curious, sharply defined treeless places, surrounded by a border of forest. On Round Prairie, that night, we pitched our tents and slept the sleep of the weary, our heads pillowed on war-bags in which the heel of a slipper, the edge of a razor-case, a bottle of sunburn lotion, and the tooth-end of a comb made sleeping an adventure.

It was cold. It was always cold at night. But, in the morning, we wakened to brilliant sunlight, to the new cook's breakfast, and to another day in the saddle. We were roused at dawn by a shrill yell.

Startled, every one leaped to the opening of his tent and stared out. It proved, however, not to be a mountain-lion, and was, indeed, nothing more than one of the packers struggling to get into a wet pair of socks, and giving vent to his irritation in a wild fury of wrath.

As Pete and Bill Shea and Tom Farmer threw the diamond hitch over the packs that morning, they explained to me that all camp cooks are of two kinds—the good cooks, who are evil of disposition, and the tin-can cooks, who only need a can-opener to be happy. But I lived to be able to refute that. Norman Lee was a cook, and he was also amiable.

But that morning, in spite of the bright sunlight, started ill. For seven horses were missing, and before they were rounded up, the guides had ridden a good forty miles of forest and trail. But, at last, the wanderers were brought in and we were ready to pack.

Bear-grass ***Bear-grass***

On a pack-horse there are two sets of rope. There is a sling-rope, twenty or twenty-five feet long, and a lash-rope, which should be thirty-five feet long. The sling-rope holds the side pack; the top pack is held by the lash-rope and the diamond hitch. When a cow-puncher on a bronco yells for a diamond, he does not refer to a jewel. He means a lash-rope. When the diamond is finally thrown, the packer puts his foot against the horse's face and pulls. The packer pulls, and

the horse grunts. If the packer pulls a shade too much, the horse bucks, and there is an exciting time in which everybody clears and the horse has the field—every one, that is, but Joe, whose duty it was to be on the spot in dangerous moments. Generally, however, by the time he got his camera set up and everything ready, the bucker was feeding placidly and the excitement was over.

We rather stole away from Round Prairie that morning. A settler had taken advantage of a clearing some miles away to sow a little grain. When our seven truants were found that brilliant morning, they had eaten up practically the grain-field and were lying gorged in the center of it.

So "we folded our tents like the Arabs, and as silently stole away." (This has to be used in every camping-story, and this seems to be a good place for it.)

We had come out on to the foothills again on our way to Kintla Lake. Again we were near the Flathead, and beyond it lay the blue and purple of the Kootenai Hills. The Kootenais on the left, the Rockies on the right, we were traveling north in a great flat basin.

The meadow-lands were full of flowers. There was rather less Indian paint-brush than on the east side of the park. We were too low for much bear-grass. But there were masses everywhere of June roses, true forget-me-nots, and larkspur. And everywhere in the burnt areas was the fireweed, that phœnix plant that springs up from the ashes of dead trees.

There were, indeed, trees, flowers, birds, fish—everything but fresh meat. We had had no fresh meat since the first day out. And now my soul revolted at the sight of bacon. I loathed all ham with a deadly loathing. I had eaten canned salmon until I never wanted to see it again. And our provisions were getting low.

Just to the north, where we intended to camp, was Starvation Ridge. It seemed to be an ominous name.

Norman Lee knew a man somewhere within a radius of one hundred miles—they have no idea of distance there—who would kill a forty-pound calf if we would send him word. But it seemed rather too much veal. We passed it up.

On and on, a hot day, a beautiful trail, but no water. No little rivulets crossing the path, no icy lakes, no rolling cataracts from the mountains. We were tanned a blackish purple. We were saddle-sore. One of the guides had a bottle of liniment for saddle-gall and suggested rubbing it on the saddle. Packs slipped and were

tightened. The mountain panorama unrolled slowly to our right. And all day long the boatmen struggled with the most serious problem yet, for the wagon-trail was now hardly good enough for horses.

Where the trail turned off toward the mountains and Kintla Lake, we met a solitary horseman. He had ridden sixty miles down and sixty miles back to get his mail. There is a sort of R.F.D. in this corner of the world, but it is not what I should call in active operation. It was then August, and there had been just two mails since the previous Christmas!

Aside from the Geological Survey, very few people, except an occasional trapper, have ever seen Kintla Lake. It lies, like Bowman Lake, in a recess in the mountains. We took some photographs of Kintla Peak, taking our boats to the upper end of the lake for the work. They are, so far as I can discover, the only photographs ever taken of this great mountain which towers, like Rainbow, a mile or so above the lake.

Across from Kintla, there is a magnificent range of peaks without any name whatever. The imagination of the Geological Survey seemed to die after Starvation Ridge; at least, they stopped there. Kintla is a curious lemon-yellow color, a great, flat wall tapering to a point and frequently hidden under a cap of clouds.

A Glacier Park lake

A Glacier Park lake

But Kintla Lake is a disappointment to the fisherman. With the exception of one of the guides, who caught a four-pound bull-trout there, repeated whippings of the lake with the united rods and energies of the entire party failed to bring a single rise. No fish leaped of an evening; none lay in the shallows along the bank. It appeared to be a dead lake. I have a strong suspicion that that guide took away Kintla's only fish, and left it without hope of posterity.

We rested at Kintla,—for a strenuous time was before us,—rested and fasted. For supplies were now very low. Starvation Ridge loomed over us, and starvation stared us in the face. We had counted on trout, and there were no trout. That night, we supped off our last potatoes and off cakes made of canned salmon browned in butter. Breakfast would have to be a repetition minus the potatoes. We were just a little low in our minds.

The last thing I saw that night was the cook's shadowy figure as he crouched

working over his camp-fire.

And we wakened in the morning to catastrophe. In spite of the fact that we had starved our horses the day before, in order to keep them grazing near camp that night, they had wandered. Eleven were missing, and eleven remained missing. Up the mountain-slopes and through the woods the wranglers rode like madmen, only to come in on dejected horses with failure written large all over them. One half of the saddlers were gone; my Angel had taken wings and flown away.

We sat dejectedly on the bank and fished those dead waters. We wrangled among ourselves. Around us was the forest, thick and close save for the tiny clearing, perhaps forty feet by forty feet. There was no open space, no place to walk, nothing to do but sit and wait.

At last, some of us in the saddle and some afoot, we started. It looked as though the walkers might have a long hike. But sometime about midday there was a sound of wild cheering behind us, and the wranglers rode up with the truants. They had been far up on the mountain-side.

It is curious how certain comparatively unimportant things stand out about such a trip as this. Of Kintla itself, I have no very vivid memories. But standing out very sharply is that figure of the cook crouched over his dying fire, with the black forest all about him. There is a picture, too, of a wild deer that came down to the edge of the lake to drink as we sat in the first boat that had ever been on Kintla Lake, whipping a quiet pool. And there is a clear memory of the assistant cook, the college boy who was taking his vacation in the wilds, whistling the Dvořák "Humoresque" as he dried the dishes on a piece of clean sacking.

VI

RUNNING THE RAPIDS OF THE FLATHEAD

It was now approaching time for Bob's great idea to materialize. For this, and to this end, had he brought the boats on their strange land-journey—such a journey as, I fancy, very few boats have ever had before.

The project was, as I have said, to run the unknown reaches of the North Fork of the Flathead from the Canadian border to the town of Columbia Falls.

"The idea is this," Bob had said: "It's never been done before, do you see? It makes the trip unusual and all that."

"Makes it unusually risky," I had observed.

"Well, there's a risk in pretty nearly everything," he had replied blithely. "There's a risk in crossing a city street, for that matter. Riding these horses is a risk, if you come to that. Anyhow, it would make a good story."

So that is why I did it. And this is the story:

We were headed now for the Flathead just south of the Canadian line. To reach the river, it was necessary to take the boats through a burnt forest, without a trail of any sort. They leaped and plunged as the wagon scrambled, jerked, careened, stuck, détoured, and finally got through. There were miles of such going—heart-breaking miles—and at the end we paused at the top of a sixty-foot bluff and looked down at the river.

Now, I like water in a tub or drinking-glass or under a bridge. I am very keen about it. But I like still water—quiet, well-behaved, stay-at-home water. The North Fork of the Flathead River is a riotous, debauched, and highly erratic stream. It staggers in a series of wild zigzags for a hundred miles of waterway from the Canadian border to Columbia Falls, our destination. And that hundred miles of whirlpools, jagged rocks, and swift and deadly cañons we were to travel. I turned around and looked at the Family. It was my ambition that had brought them to this. We might never again meet, as a whole. We were sure to get to Columbia Falls, but not at all sure to get there in the boats. I looked at the

boats; they were, I believe, stout river-boats. But they were small. Undeniably, they were very small.

The river appeared to be going about ninety miles an hour. There was one hope, however. Perhaps they could not get the boats down over the bluff. It seemed a foolhardy thing even to try. I suggested this to Bob. But he replied, rather tartly, that he had not brought those boats at the risk of his life through all those miles of wilderness to have me fail him now.

He painted the joys of the trip. He expressed so strong a belief in them that he said that he himself would ride with the outfit, thus permitting most of the Family in the boats that first day. He said the river was full of trout. I expressed a strong doubt that any trout could live in that stream and hold their own. I felt that they had all been washed down years ago. And again I looked at the Family.

Because I knew what would happen. The Family would insist on going along. It was not going to let mother take this risk alone; it was going to drown with her if necessary.

The Family jaws were set. *They were going.*

The entire outfit lowered the wagon by roping it down. There was one delicious moment when I thought boats and all were going over the edge. But the ropes held. Nothing happened.

They put the boats in the water.

I had one last rather pitiful thought as I took my seat in the stern of one of them.

"This is my birthday," I said wistfully. "It's rather a queer way to spend a birthday, I think."

But this was met with stern silence. I was to have my story whether I wanted it or not.

Yet once in the river, the excitement got me. I had run brief spells of rapids before. There had been a gasp or two and it was over. But this was to be a prolonged four days' gasp, with intervals only to sleep at night.

Fortunately for all of us, it began rather quietly. The current was swift, so that, once out into the stream, we shot ahead as if we had been fired out of a gun.

But, for all that, the upper reaches were comparatively free of great rocks. Friendly little sandy shoals beckoned to us. The water was shallow. But, even then, I noticed what afterward I found was to be a delusion of the entire trip.

This was the impression of riding downhill. I do not remember now how much the Flathead falls per mile. I have an impression that it is ninety feet, but as that would mean a drop of nine thousand feet, or almost two miles, during the trip, I must be wrong somewhere. It was sixteen feet, perhaps.

But hour after hour, on the straight stretches, there was that sensation, on looking ahead, of staring down a toboggan-slide. It never grew less. And always I had the impression that just beyond that glassy slope the roaring meant uncharted falls—and destruction. It never did.

The outfit, following along the trail, was to meet us at night and have camp ready when we appeared—if we appeared. Only a few of us could use the boats. George Locke in one, Mike Shannon in the other, could carry two passengers each. For the sake of my story, I was to take the entire trip; the others were to alternate.

Still-water fishing ***Still-water fishing***

I do not know, but I am very confident that no other woman has ever taken this trip. I am fairly confident that no other men have ever taken it. We could find no one who had heard of it being taken. All that we knew was that it was the North Fork of the Flathead River, and that if we stayed afloat long enough, we would come out at Columbia Falls. The boatmen knew the lower part of the river, but not the upper two thirds of it.

Now that it is over, I would not give up my memory of that long run for anything. It was one of the most unique experiences in a not uneventful career. It was beautiful always, terrible occasionally. There were dozens of places each day where the boatmen stood up, staring ahead for the channel, while the boats dodged wildly ahead. But always these skillful pilots of ours found a way through. And so fast did we go that the worst places were always behind us before we had time to be really terrified.

The Flathead River in these upper reaches is fairly alive with trout. On the second day, I think it was, I landed a bull-trout that weighed nine pounds, and got it with a six-ounce rod. I am very proud of that. I have eleven different pictures of myself holding the fish up. There were trout everywhere. The

difficulty was to stop the boat long enough to get them. In fact, we did not stop, save in an occasional eddy in the midst of the torrent. We whipped the stream as we flew along. Under great boulders, where the water seethed and roared, under deep cliffs where it flew like a mill-race, there were always fish.

It was frightful work for the boatmen. It required skill every moment. There was not a second in the day when they could relax. Only men trained to river rapids could have done it, and few, even, of these. To the eternal credit of George and Mike, we got through. It was nothing else.

On the evening of the first day, in the dusk which made the river doubly treacherous, we saw our camp-fire far ahead.

With the going-down of the sun, the river had grown cold. We were wet with spray, cramped from sitting still and holding on. But friendly hands drew our boats to shore and helped us out.

VII

THE SECOND DAY ON THE FLATHEAD

In a way, this is a fairy-story. Because a good fairy had been busy during our absence. Days before, at the ranger's cabin, unknown to most of us, an order had gone down to civilization for food. During all those days under Starvation Ridge, food had been on the way by pack-horse—food and an extra cook.

So we went up to camp, expecting more canned salmon and fried trout and little else, and beheld—

A festive board set with candles—the board, however, in this case is figurative; it was the ground covered with a tarpaulin—fried chicken, fresh green beans, real bread, jam, potatoes, cheese, cake, candy, cigars, and cigarettes. And —champagne!

That champagne had traveled a hundred miles on horseback. It had been cooled in the icy water of the river. We drank it out of tin cups. We toasted each other. We toasted the Flathead flowing just beside us. We toasted the full moon rising over the Kootenais. We toasted the good fairy. The candles burned low in their sockets—this, also, is figurative; they were stuck on pieces of wood. With due formality I was presented with a birthday gift, a fishing-reel purchased by the Big and the Middle and the Little Boy.

Of all the birthdays that I can remember—and I remember quite a few—this one was the most wonderful. Over mountain-tops, glowing deep pink as they rose above masses of white clouds, came slowly a great yellow moon. It turned the Flathead beside us to golden glory, and transformed the evergreen thickets into fairy glades of light and shadow. Flickering candles inside the tents made them glow in luminous triangles against their background of forest.

Behind us, in the valley lands at the foot of the Rockies, the horses rested and grazed, and eased their tired backs. The men lay out in the open and looked at the stars. The air was fragrant with pine and balsam. Night creatures called and answered.

And, at last, we went to our tents and slept. For the morning was a new day,

and I had not got all my story.

That first day's run of the river we got fifty trout, ranging from one half-pound to four pounds. We should have caught more, but they could not keep up with the boat. We caught, also, the most terrific sunburn that I have ever known anything about. We had thought that we were thoroughly leathered, but we had not passed the primary stage, apparently. In vain I dosed my face with cold-cream and talcum powder, and with a liquid warranted to restore the bloom of youth to an aged skin (mine, however, is not aged).

My journal for the second day starts something like this:—

Cold and gray. Stood in the water fifteen minutes in hip-boots for a moving picture. River looks savage.

Of that second day, one beautiful picture stands out with distinctness.

The river is lovely; it winds and twists through deep forests with always that marvelous background of purple mountains capped with snow. Here and there, at long intervals, would come a quiet half-mile where, although the current was incredibly swift, there were, at least, no rocks. It was on coming round one of these bends that we saw, out from shore and drinking quietly, a deer. He was incredulous at first, and then uncertain whether to be frightened or not. He threw his head up and watched us, and then, turning, leaped up the bank and into the forest.

Except for fish, there was surprisingly little life to be seen. Bald eagles sat by the river, as intent on their fishing as we were on ours. Wild ducks paddled painfully up against the current. Kingfishers fished in quiet pools. But the real interest of the river, its real life, lay in its fish. What piscine tragedies it conceals, with those murderous, greedy, and powerful assassins, the bull-trout, pursuing fish, as I have seen them, almost into the landing-net! What joyous interludes where, in a sunny shallow, tiny baby trout played tag while we sat and watched them!

Mountains of Glacier National Park from the North Fork of the Flathead River

Mountains of Glacier National Park from the North Fork of the Flathead River

The danger of the river is not all in the current. There are quicksands along the Flathead, sands underlain with water, apparently secure but reaching up clutching hands to the unwary. Our noonday luncheon, taken along the shore, was always on some safe and gravelly bank or tiny island.

Our second camp on the Flathead was less fortunate than the first. Always, in such an outfit as ours, the first responsibility is the horses. Camp must be made within reach of grazing-grounds for them, and in these mountain and forest regions this is almost always a difficult matter. Here and there are meadows where horses may eat their fill; but, generally, pasture must be hunted. Often, long after we were settled for the night, our horses were still ranging far, hunting for grass.

So, on this second night, we made an uncomfortable camp for the sake of the horses, a camp on a steep bluff sloping into the water in a dead forest. It had been the intention, as the river was comparatively quiet here, to swim the animals across and graze them on the other side. But, although generally a horse can swim when put to it, we discovered too late that several horses in our string could not swim at all. In the attempt to get them across, one horse with a rider was almost drowned. So we gave that up, and they were driven back five miles into the country to pasture.

There is something ominous and most depressing about a burnt forest. There is no life, nothing green. It is a ghost-forest, filled with tall tree skeletons and the mouldering bones of those that have fallen, and draped with dry gray moss that swings in the wind. Moving through such a forest is almost impossible. Fallen and rotten trees, black and charred stumps cover every foot of ground. It required two hours' work with an axe to clear a path that I might get to the little ridge on which my tent was placed. The day had been gray, and, to add to our discomfort, there was a soft, fine rain. The Middle Boy had developed an inflamed knee and was badly crippled. Sitting in the drizzle beside the camp-fire, I heated water in a tin pail and applied hot compresses consisting of woolen socks.

It was all in the game. Eggs tasted none the worse for being fried in a skillet into which the rain was pattering. Skins were weather-proof, if clothes were not. And heavy tarpaulins on the ground protected our bedding from dampness.

The outfit, coming down by trail, had passed a small store in a clearing. They had bought a whole cheese weighing eleven pounds, a difficult thing to transport on horseback, a wooden pail containing nineteen pounds of chocolate chips, and six dozen eggs—our first eggs in many days.

In the shop, while making the purchase, the Head had pulled out a box of cigarettes. The woman who kept the little store had never seen machine-made cigarettes before, and examined them with the greatest interest. For in that country every man is his own cigarette-maker. The Middle Boy later reported with wide eyes that at her elbow she kept a loaded revolver lying, in plain view. She is alone a great deal of the time there in the wilderness, and probably she has many strange visitors.

It was at the shop that a terrible discovery was made. We had been in the wilderness on the east side and then on the west side of the park for four weeks.

And days in the woods are much alike. No one had had a calendar. The discovery was that we had celebrated my birthday on the wrong day!

That night, in the dead forest, we gathered round the camp-fire. I made hot compresses. The packers and guides told stories of the West, and we matched them with ones of the East. From across the river, above the roaring, we could hear the sharp stroke of the axe as branches were being cut for our beds. There was nothing living, nothing green about us where we sat.

I am aware that the camp-fire is considered one of the things about which the camper should rave. My own experience of camp-fires is that they come too late in the day to be more than a warming-time before going to bed. We were generally too tired to talk. A little desultory conversation, a cigarette or two, an outline of the next day's work, and all were off to bed. Yet, in that evergreen forest, our fires were always rarely beautiful. The boughs burned with a crackling white flame, and when we threw on needles, they burst into stars and sailed far up into the night. As the glare died down, each of us took his hot stone from its bed of ashes and, carrying it carefully, retired with it.

VIII

THROUGH THE FLATHEAD CAÑON

The next morning we wakened to sunshine, and fried trout and bacon and eggs for breakfast. The cook tossed his flapjacks skillfully. As the only woman in the party, I sometimes found an air of festivity about my breakfast-table. Whereas the others ate from a tarpaulin laid on the ground, I was favored with a small box for a table and a smaller one for a seat. On the table-box was set my graniteware plate, knife, fork, and spoon, a paper napkin, the Prince Albert and the St. Charles. Lest this sound strange to the uninitiated, the St. Charles was the condensed milk and the Prince Albert was an old tin can which had once contained tobacco but which now contained the sugar. Thus, in our camp-etiquette, one never asked for the sugar, but always for the Prince Albert; not for the milk, but always for the St. Charles, sometimes corrupted to the Charlie.

I was late that morning. The men had gone about the business of preparing the boats for the day. The packers and guides were out after the horses. The cook, hot and weary, was packing up for the daily exodus. He turned and surveyed that ghost-forest with a scowl.

"Another camping-place like this, and I'll be braying like a blooming burro."

On the third day, we went through the Flathead River cañon. We had looked forward to this, both because of its beauty and its danger. Bitterly complaining, the junior members of the family were exiled to the trail with the exception of the Big Boy.

It had been Joe's plan to photograph the boat with the moving-picture camera as we came down the cañon. He meant, I am sure, to be on hand if anything exciting happened. But impenetrable wilderness separated the trail from the edge of the gorge, and that evening we reached the camp unphotographed, unrecorded, to find Joe sulking in a corner and inclined to blame the forest on us.

In one of the very greatest stretches of the rapids, a long straightaway, we saw a pigmy figure, far ahead, hailing us from the bank. "Pigmy" is a word I use generally with much caution, since a friend of mine, in the excitement of a first baby, once published a poem entitled "My Pigmy Counterpart," which a type-

setter made, in the magazine version, "My Pig, My Counterpart."

The beginning of the cañon, Middle Fork of the Flathead River ***The beginning of the cañon, Middle Fork of the Flathead River***

Nevertheless, we will use it here. Behind this pigmy figure stretched a cliff, more than one hundred feet in height, of sheer rock overgrown with bushes. The figure had apparently but room on which to stand. George stood up and surveyed the prospect.

"Well," he said, in his slow drawl, "if that's lunch, I don't think we can hit it."

The river was racing at mad speed. Great rocks caught the current, formed whirlpools and eddies, turned us round again and again, and sent us spinning on, drenched with spray. That part of the river the boatmen knew—at least by reputation. It had been the scene, a few years before, of the tragic drowning of a man they knew. For now we were getting down into the better known portions.

To check a boat in such a current seemed impossible. But we needed food. We were tired and cold, and we had a long afternoon's work still before us.

At last, by tremendous effort and great skill, the boatmen made the landing. It was the college boy who had clambered down the cliff and brought the lunch, and it was he who caught the boats as they were whirling by. We had to cling like limpets—whatever a limpet is—to the edge, and work our way over to where there was room to sit down.

It reminded the Head of Roosevelt's expression about peace raging in Mexico. He considered that enjoyment was raging here.

Nevertheless, we ate. We made the inevitable cocoa, warmed beans, ate a part of the great cheese purchased the day before, and, with gingersnaps and canned fruit, managed to eke out a frugal repast. And shrieked our words over the roar of the river.

It was here that the boats were roped down. Critical examination and long debate with the boatmen showed no way through. On the far side, under the towering cliff, was an opening in the rocks through which the river boiled in a drop of twenty feet.

So it was fortunate, after all, that we had been hailed from the shore and had stopped, dangerous as it had been. For not one of us would have lived had we

essayed that passage under the cliff. The Flathead River is not a deep river; but the force of its flow is so great, its drop so rapid, that the most powerful swimmer is hopeless in such a current. Light as our flies were, again and again they were swept under and held as though by a powerful hand.

Another year, the Flathead may be a much simpler proposition to negotiate. Owing to the unusually heavy snows of last winter, which had not commenced to melt on the mountain-tops until July, the river was high. In a normal summer, I believe that this trip could be taken—although always the boatmen must be expert in river rapids—with comparative safety and enormous pleasure.

There is a thrill and exultation about running rapids—not for minutes, not for an hour or two, but for days—that gets into the blood. And when to that exultation is added the most beautiful scenery in America, the trip becomes well worth while. However, I am not at all sure that it is a trip for a woman to take. I can swim, but that would not have helped at all had the boat, at any time in those four days, struck a rock and turned over. Nor would the men of the party, all powerful swimmers, have had any more chance than I.

We were a little nervous that afternoon. The cañon grew wilder; the current, if possible, more rapid. But there were fewer rocks; the river-bed was clearer.

We were rapidly nearing the Middle Fork. Another day would see us there, and from that point, the river, although swift, would lose much of its danger.

Late the afternoon of the third day we saw our camp well ahead, on a ledge above the river. Everything was in order when we arrived. We unloaded ourselves solemnly out of the boats, took our fish, our poles, our graft-hooks and landing-nets, our fly-books, my sunburn lotion, and our weary selves up the bank. Then we solemnly shook hands all round. We had come through; the rest was easy.

On the last day, the river became almost a smiling stream. Once again, instead of between cliffs, we were traveling between great forests of spruce, tamarack, white and yellow pine, fir, and cedar. A great golden eagle flew over the water just ahead of our boat. And in the morning we came across our first sign of civilization—a wire trolley with a cage, extending across the river in lieu of a bridge. High up in the air at each end, it sagged in the middle until the little car must almost have touched the water. We had a fancy to try it, and landed to make the experiment. But some ungenerous soul had padlocked it and had gone away with the key.

For the first time that day, it was possible to use the trolling-lines. We had tried them before, but the current had carried them out far ahead of the boat. Cut-throat trout now and then take a spoon. But it is the bull-trout which falls victim, as a rule, to the troll.

I am not gifted with the trolling-line. Sometime I shall write an article on the humors of using it—on the soft and sibilant hiss with which it goes out over the stern; on the rasping with which it grates on the edge of the boat as it holds on, stanch and true, to water-weeds and floating branches; on the low moan with which it buries itself under a rock and dies; on the inextricable confusion into which it twists and knots itself when, hand over hand, it is brought in for inspection.

I have spent hours over a trolling-line, hours which, otherwise, I should have wasted in idleness. There are thirty-seven kinds of knots which, so far, I have discovered in a trolling-line, and I am but at the beginning of my fishing career.

"What are you doing," the Head said to me that last day, as I sat in the stern busily working at the line. "Knitting?"

We got few fish that day, but nobody cared. The river was wide and smooth; the mountains had receded somewhat; the forest was there to the right and left of us. But it was an open, smiling forest. Still far enough away, but slipping toward us with the hours, were settlements, towns, the fertile valley of the lower river.

We lunched that night where, just a year before, I had eaten my first lunch on the Flathead, on a shelving, sandy beach. But this time the meal was somewhat shadowed by the fact that some one had forgotten to put in butter and coffee and condensed milk.

However, we were now in that part of the river which our boatmen knew well. From a secret cache back in the willows, George and Mike produced coffee and condensed milk and even butter. So we lunched, and far away we heard a sound which showed us how completely our wilderness days were over—the screech of a railway locomotive.

Late that afternoon, tired, sunburned, and unkempt, we drew in at the little wharf near Columbia Falls. It was weeks since we had seen a mirror larger than an inch or so across. Our clothes were wrinkled from being used to augment our bedding on cold nights. The whites of our eyes were bloodshot with the sun. My old felt hat was battered and torn with the fish-hooks that had been hung round

the band. Each of us looked at the other, and prayed to Heaven that he looked a little better himself.

IX

THE ROUND-UP AT KALISPELL

Columbia Falls had heard of our adventure, and was prepared to do us honor. Automobiles awaited us on the river-bank. In a moment we were snatched from the jaws of the river and seated in the lap of luxury. If this is a mixed metaphor, it is due to the excitement of the change. With one of those swift transitions of the Northwest, we were out of the wilderness and surrounded by great yellow fields of wheat.

Cleared land or natural prairie, these valleys of the Northwest are marvelously fertile. Wheat grows an incredible number of bushels to the acre. Everything thrives. And on the very borders of the fields stands still the wilderness to be conquered, the forest to be cleared. Untold wealth is there for the man who will work and wait, land rich beyond the dreams of fertilizer. But it costs about eighty dollars an acre, I am told, to clear forest-land after it has been cut over. It is not a project, this Northwestern farming, to be undertaken on a shoestring. The wilderness must be conquered. It cannot be coaxed. And a good many hearts have been broken in making that discovery. A little money—not too little—infinite patience, cheerfulness, and red-blooded effort—these are the factors which are conquering the Northwest.

I like the Northwest. In spite of its pretensions, its large cities, its wealth, it is still peopled by essential frontiersmen. They are still pioneers—because the wilderness encroaches still so close to them. I like their downrightness, their pride in what they have achieved, their hatred of sham and affectation.

And if there is to be real progress among us in this present generation, the growth of a political and national spirit, that sturdy insistence on better things on which our pioneer forefathers founded this nation, it is likely to come, as a beginning, from these newer parts of our country. These people have built for themselves. What we in the East have inherited, they have made. They know its exact cost in blood and sweat. They value it. And they will do their best by it.

Perhaps, after all, this is the end of this particular adventure. And yet, what Western story is complete without a round-up?

There was to be a round-up the next day at Kalispell, farther south in that wonderful valley.

But there was a difficulty in the way. Our horses were Glacier Park horses. Columbia Falls was outside of Glacier Park. Kalispell was even farther outside of Glacier Park, and horses were needed badly in the Park. For last year Glacier Park had the greatest boom in its history and found the concessionnaires unprepared to take care of all the tourists. What we should do, we knew, was to deadhead our horses back into the Park as soon as they had had a little rest.

But, on the other hand, there was Kalispell and the round-up. It would make a difference of just one day. True, we could have gone to the round-up on the train. But, for two reasons, this was out of the question. First, it would not make a good story. Second, we had nothing but riding-clothes, and ours were only good to ride in and not at all to walk about in.

After a long and serious conclave, it was decided that Glacier Park would not suffer by the absence of our string for twenty-four hours more.

On the following morning, then, we set off down the white and dusty road, a gay procession, albeit somewhat ragged. Sixteen miles in the heat we rode that morning. It was when we were halfway there that one of the party—it does not matter which one—revealed that he had received a telegram from the Government demanding the immediate return of our outfit. We halted in the road and conferred.

It is notorious of Governments that they are short-sighted, detached, impersonal, aloof, and haughty. We gathered in the road, a gayly bandanaed, dusty, and highly indignant crowd, and conferred.

The telegram had been imperative. It did not request. It commanded. It unhorsed us violently at a time when it did not suit either ourselves or our riding-clothes to be unhorsed.

We conferred. We were, we said, paying two dollars and a half a day for each of those horses. Besides, we were out of adhesive tape, which is useful for holding on patches. Besides, also, we had the horses. If they wanted them, let them come and get them. Besides, this was discrimination. Ever since the Park was opened, horses had been taken out of it, either on to the Reservation or into Canada, to get about to other parts of the Park. Why should the Government pick on us?

We were very bitter and abusive, and the rest of the way I wrote mentally a dozen sarcastic telegrams. Yes; the rest of the way. Because we went on. With a round-up ahead and the Department of the Interior in the rear, we rode forward to our stolen holiday, now and then pausing, an eye back to see if we were pursued. But nothing happened; no sheriff in a buckboard drove up with a shotgun across his knees. The Government, or its representative in Glacier Park, was contenting itself with foaming at the mouth. We rode on through the sunlight, and sang as we rode.

Kalispell is a flourishing and attractive town of northwestern Montana. It is notable for many other things besides its annual round-up. But it remains dear to me for one particular reason.

My hat was done. It had no longer the spring and elasticity of youth. It was scarred with many rains and many fish-hooks. It had ceased to add its necessary jaunty touch to my costume. It detracted. In its age, I loved it, but the Family insisted cruelly on a change. So, sitting on Angel, a new one was brought me, a chirky young thing, a cowgirl affair of high felt crown and broad rim.

And, at this moment, a gentleman I had never seen before, but who is green in my memory, stepped forward and presented me with his own hat-band. It was of leather, and it bore this vigorous and inspiriting inscription: "Give 'er pep and let 'er buck."

To-day, when I am low in my mind, I take that cowgirl hat from its retreat and read its inscription: "Give 'er pep and let 'er buck." It is a whole creed.

Somewhere among my papers I have the programme of that round-up at Kalispell. It was a very fine round-up. There was a herd of buffalo; there were wild horses and long-horned Mexican steers. There was a cheering crowd. There was roping, and marvelous riding.

But my eyes were fixed on the grand-stand with a stony stare.

I am an adopted Blackfoot Indian, known in the tribe as "Pi-ta-mak-an," and only a few weeks before I had had a long conference with the chiefs of the tribe, Two Guns, White Calf (the son of old White Calf, the great chief who dropped dead in the White House during President Cleveland's administration), Medicine Owl and Curly Bear and Big Spring and Bird Plume and Wolf Plume and Bird Rattler and Bill Shute and Stabs-by-Mistake and Eagle Child and Many Tail-Feathers—and many more.

Pi-ta-mak-an, or Running Eagle (Mrs. Rinehart), with two other members of the Blackfoot Tribe

Pi-ta-mak-an, or Running Eagle (Mrs. Rinehart), with two other members of the Blackfoot Tribe

And these Indians had all promised me that, as soon as our conference was over, they were going back to the Reservation to get in their hay and work hard for the great herd which the Government had promised to give them. They were going to be good Indians.

So I stared at the grand-stand with a cold and fixed eye. For there, very many miles from where they should have been, off the Reservation without permission of the Indian agent, painted and bedecked in all the glory of their forefathers—paint, feathers, beads, strings of thimbles and little mirrors—handsome, bland, and enjoying every instant to the full in their childish hearts, were my chiefs.

During the first lull in the proceedings, a delegation came to visit me and to explain. This is what they said: First of all, they desired me to make peace with the Indian agent. He was, they considered, most unreasonable. There were many times when one could labor, and there was but one round-up. They petitioned, then, that I intercede and see that their ration-tickets were not taken away.

And even as the interpreter told me their plea, one old brave caught my hand and pointed across to the enclosure, where a few captive buffalo were grazing. I knew what it meant. These, my Blackfeet, had been the great buffalo-hunters. With bow and arrow they had followed the herds from Canada to the Far South. These chiefs had been mighty hunters. But for many years not a single buffalo had their eyes beheld. They who had lived by the buffalo were now dying with them. A few full-bloods shut away on a reservation, a few buffalo penned in a corral—children of the open spaces and of freedom, both of them, and now dying and imprisoned. For the Blackfeet are a dying people.

They had come to see the buffalo.

But they did not say so. An Indian is a stoic. He has both imagination and sentiment, but the latter he conceals. And this was the explanation they gave me for the Indian agent:—

I knew that, back in my home, when a friend asked me to come to an entertainment, I must go or that friend would be offended with me. And so it was with the Blackfeet Indians—they had been invited to this round-up, and they felt

that they should come or they would hurt the feelings of those who had asked them. Therefore, would I, Pi-ta-mak-an, go to the Indian agent and make their peace for them? For, after all, summer was short and winter was coming. The old would need their ration-tickets again. And they, the braves, would promise to go back to the Reservation and get in the hay, and be all that good Indians should be.

And I, too, was as good an Indian as I knew how to be, for I scolded them all roundly and then sat down at the first possible opportunity and wrote to the agent.

And the agent? He is a very wise and kindly man, facing one of the biggest problems in our country. He gave them back their ration-tickets and wiped the slate clean, to the eternal credit of a Government that has not often to the Indian tempered justice with mercy.

X

OFF FOR CASCADE PASS

How many secrets the mountains hold! They have forgotten things we shall never know. And they are cruel, savagely cruel. What they want, they take. They reach out a thousand clutching hands. They attack with avalanche, starvation, loneliness, precipice. They lure on with green valleys and high flowering meadows where mountain-sheep move sedately, with sunlit peaks and hidden lakes, with silence for tired ears and peace for weary souls. And then—they kill.

Because man is a fighting animal, he obeys their call, his wit against their wisdom of the ages, his strength against their solidity, his courage against their cunning. And too often he loses.

A high mountain meadow

A high mountain meadow

I am afraid of the mountains. I have always the feeling that they are lying in wait. At night, their very silence is ominous. The crack of ice as a bit of slow-moving glacier is dislodged, lightning, and the roar of thunder somewhere below where I lie—these are the artillery of the range, and from them I am safe. I am too small for their heavy guns. But a shelving trail on the verge of a chasm, a slip on an ice-field, a rolling stone under a horse's foot—these are the weapons I fear above the timber-line.

Even below there is danger—swamps and rushing rivers, but above all the forest. In mountain valleys it grows thick on the bodies of dead forests beneath. It crowds. There is barely room for a tent. And all through the night the trees protest. They creak and groan and sigh, and sometimes they burn. In a *cul-de-sac*, with only frowning cliffs about, the forest becomes ominous, a thing of dreadful beauty. On nights when, through the crevices of the green roof, there are stars hung in the sky, the weight lifts. But there are other nights when the trees close in like ranks of hostile men and take the spirit prisoner.

The peace of the wilderness is not peace. It is waiting.

On the Glacier Park trip, there had been one subject which came up for discussion night after night round the camp-fire. It resolved itself, briefly, into this: Should we or should we not get out in time to go over to the State of Washington and there perform the thrilling feat which Bob, the Optimist, had in mind?

This was nothing more nor less than the organization of a second pack-outfit and the crossing of the Cascade Mountains on horseback by a virgin route. The Head, Bob, and Joe had many discussions about it. I do not recall that my advice was ever asked. It is generally taken for granted in these wilderness-trips of ours that I will be there, ready to get a story when the opportunity presents itself.

Owing to the speed with which the North Fork of the Flathead River descends from the Canadian border to civilization, we had made very good time. And, at last, the decision was made to try this new adventure.

"It will be a bully story," said the Optimist, "and you can be dead sure of this: it's never been done before."

So, at last, it was determined, and we set out on that wonderful harebrain excursion of which the very memory gives me a thrill. Yet, now that I know it can be done, I may try it again some day. It paid for itself over and over in scenery, in health, and in thrills. But there were several times when it seemed to me impossible that we could all get over the range alive.

We took through thirty-one horses and nineteen people. When we got out, our horses had had nothing to eat, not a blade of grass or a handful of grain, for thirty-six hours, and they had had very little for five days.

On the last morning, the Head gave his horse for breakfast one rain-soaked biscuit, an apple, two lumps of sugar, and a raw egg. The other horses had nothing.

We dropped three pack-horses over cliffs in two days, but got them again, cut and bruised, and we took out our outfit complete, after two weeks of the most arduous going I have ever known anything about. When the news that we had got over the pass penetrated to the settlements, a pack-outfit started over Cascade Pass in our footsteps to take supplies to a miner. They killed three horses on that same trail, and I believe gave it up in the end.

Doubtless, by next year, a passable trail will have been built up to Doubtful

Lake and another one up that eight-hundred-foot mountain-wall above the lake, where, when one reaches the top, there is but room to look down again on the other side. Perhaps, too, there will be a trail down the Agnes Creek Valley, so that parties can get through easily. When that is done,—and it is promised by the Forest Supervisor,—one of the most magnificent horseback trips in the country will be opened for the first time to the traveler.

Most emphatically, the trip across the Cascades at Doubtful Lake and Cascade Pass is not a trip for a woman in the present condition of things, although any woman who can ride can cross Cloudy Pass and get down Agnes Creek way. But perhaps before this is published, the Chelan National Forest will have been made a National Park. It ought to be. It is superb. There is no other word for it. And it ought not to be called a forest, because it seems to have everything but trees. Rocks and rivers and glaciers—more in one county than in all Switzerland, they claim—and granite peaks and hair-raising precipices and lakes filled with ice in midsummer. But not many trees, until, at Cascade Pass, one reaches the boundaries of the Washington National Forest and begins to descend the Pacific slope.

The personnel of our party was slightly changed. Of the original one, there remained the Head, the Big, the Middle, and the Little Boy, Joe, Bob, and myself. To these we added at the beginning six persons besides our guides and packers. Two of them did not cross the pass, however—the Forest Pathologist from Washington, who travels all over the country watching for tree-diseases and tree-epidemics and who left us after a few days, and the Supervisor of Chelan Forest, who had but just come from Oregon and was making his first trip over his new territory.

We were fortunate, indeed, in having four forest-men with us, men whose lives are spent in the big timber, who know the every mood and tense of the wilderness. For besides these two, the Pathologist and the Forest Supervisor, there was "Silent Lawrie" Lindsley, naturalist, photographer, and lover of all that is wild, a young man who has spent years wandering through the mountains around Chelan, camera and gun at hand, the gun never raised against the wild creatures, but used to shoot away tree-branches that interfere with pictures, or, more frequently, to trim a tree into such outlines as fit it into the photograph.

And then there was the Man Who Went Ahead. For forty years this man, Mr. Hilligoss, has lived in the forest. Hardly a big timber-deal in the Northwest but was passed by him. Hardly a tree in that vast wilderness but he knew it. He knew

everything about the forest but fear—fear and fatigue. And, with an axe and a gun, he went ahead, clearing trail, blazing trees, and marking the détours to camp-sites by an arrow made of bark and thrust through a slash in a tree.

Hour after hour we would struggle on, seeing everywhere evidences of his skill on the trail, to find, just as endurance had reached its limit, the arrow that meant camp and rest.

And—there was Dan Devore and his dog, Whiskers. Dan Devore was our chief guide and outfitter, a soft voiced, bearded, big souled man, neither very large nor very young. All soul and courage was Dan Devore, and one of the proud moments of my life was when it was all over and he told me I had done well. I wanted most awfully to have Dan Devore think I had done well.

He was sitting on a stone at the time, I remember, and Whiskers, his old Airedale, had his head on Dan's knee. All of his thirteen years, Whiskers had wandered through the mountains with Dan Devore, always within call. To see Dan was to see Whiskers; to see Whiskers was to see Dan.

He slept on Dan's tarp bed at night, and in the daytime led our long and winding procession. Indomitable spirit that he was, he traveled three miles to our one, saved us from the furious onslaughts of many a marmot and mountain-squirrel, and, in the absence of fresh meat, ate his salt pork and scraps with the zest of a hungry traveler.

Then there were Mr. and Mrs. Fred. I call them Mr. and Mrs. Fred, because, like Joe, that was a part of their name. I will be frank about Mrs. Fred. I was worried about her before I knew her. I was accustomed to roughing it; but how about another woman? Would she be putting up her hair in curlers every night, and whimpering when, as sometimes happens, the slow gait of her horse became intolerable? Little did I know Mrs. Fred. She was a natural wanderer, a follower of the trail, a fine and sound and sporting traveling companion. And I like to think that she is typical of the women of that Western country which bred her, feminine to the core, but strong and sweet still.

Both the Freds were great additions. Was it not after Mr. Fred that we trailed on that famous game-hunt of ours, of which a spirited account is coming later? Was it not Mr. Fred who, night after night, took the junior Rineharts away from an anxious mother into the depths of the forest or the bleakness of mountain-slopes, there to lie, armed to the teeth, and wait for the first bears to start out for breakfast?

Now you have us, I think, except the men of the outfit, and they deserve space I cannot give them. They were a splendid lot, and it was by their incessant labor that we got over.

Try to see us, then, filing along through deep valleys, climbing cliffs, stumbling, struggling, not talking much, a long line of horses and riders. First, far ahead, Mr. Hilligoss. Then the riders, led by "Silent Lawrie," with me just behind him, because of photographs. Then, at the head of the pack-horses, Dan Devore. Then the long line of pack-ponies, sturdy and willing, and piled high with our food, our bedding, and our tents. And here, there, and everywhere, Joe, with the moving-picture camera.

We were determined, this time, to have no repetition of the Glacier Park fiasco, where Bill, our cook, had deserted us at a bad time—although it is always a bad time when the cook leaves. So now we had two cooks. Much as I love the mountains and the woods, the purple of evening valleys, the faint pink of sunrise on snow-covered peaks, the most really thrilling sight of a camping-trip is two cooks bending over an iron grating above a fire, one frying trout and the other turning flapjacks.

Our trail led us through one of the few remaining unknown portions of the United States. It cannot long remain unknown. It is too superb, too wonderful. And it has mineral in it, silver and copper and probably coal. The Middle Boy, who is by way of being a chemist and has systematically blown himself up with home-made explosives for years—the Middle Boy found at least a dozen silver mines of fabulous value, although the men in the party insisted that his specimens were iron pyrites and other unromantic minerals.

XI

LAKE CHELAN TO LYMAN LAKE

Now, as to where we were—those long days of fording rivers and beating our way through jungle or of dizzy climbs up to the snow, those short nights, so cold that six blankets hardly kept us warm, while our tired horses wandered far, searching for such bits of grass as grew among the shale.

In the north-central part of the State of Washington, Nature has done a curious thing. She has built a great lake in the eastern shoulders of the Cascade Mountains. Lake Chelan, more than fifty miles long and averaging a mile and a half in width, is ten hundred and seventy-five feet above sea-level, while its bottom is four hundred feet below the level of the ocean. It is almost completely surrounded by granite walls and peaks which reach more than a mile and a half into the air.

The region back from the lake is practically unknown. A small part of it has never been touched by the Geological Survey, and, in one or two instances, we were able to check up errors on our maps. Thus, a lake shown on our map as belonging at the head of McAllister Creek really belongs at the head of Rainbow Creek, while McAllister Lake is not shown at all. Mr. Coulter, a forester who was with us for a time, last year discovered three lakes at the head of Rainbow Creek which have never been mapped, and, so far as could be learned, had never been seen by a white man before. Yet Lake Chelan itself is well known in the Northwest. It is easily reached, its gateway being the famous Wenatchee Valley, celebrated for its apples.

Sitting Bull Mountain, Lake Chelan ***Sitting Bull Mountain, Lake Chelan***

It was from Chelan that we were to make our start. Long before we arrived, Dan Devore and the packers were getting the outfit ready.

Yet the first glimpse of Chelan was not attractive. We had motored half a day through that curious, semi-arid country, which, when irrigated, proves the greatest of all soils in the world for fruit-raising. The August sun had baked the soil into yellow dust which covered everything. Arid hillsides without a leaf of

green but dotted thickly with gray sagebrush, eroded valleys, rocks and gullies—all shone a dusty yellow in the heat. The dust penetrated everything. Wherever water could be utilized were orchards, little trees planted in geometrical rows and only waiting the touch of irrigation to make their owners wealthy beyond dreams.

The lower end of Lake Chelan was surrounded by these bleak hillsides, desert without the great spaces of the desert. Yet unquestionably, in a few years from now, these bleak hillsides will be orchard land. Only the lower part, however, is bleak—only an end, indeed. There is nothing more beautiful and impressive than the upper part of that strangely deep and quiet lake lying at the foot of its enormous cliffs.

By devious stages we reached the head of Lake Chelan, and there for four days the outfitting went on. Horses were being brought in, saddles fitted; provisions in great cases were arriving. To outfit a party of our size for two weeks means labor and generous outlay. And we were going to be comfortable. We were willing to travel hard and sleep hard. But we meant to have plenty of food. I think we may claim the unique distinction of being the only people who ever had grapefruit regularly for breakfast on the top of that portion of the Cascade Range.

While we waited, we learned something about the country. It is volcanic ash, disintegrated basalt, this great fruit-country to the right of the range. And three things, apparently, are responsible for its marvelous fruit-growing properties. First, the soil itself, which needs only water to prove marvelously fertile; second, the length of the growing-season, which around Lake Chelan is one hundred and ninety-two days in the year. And this just south of the Canadian border! There is a third reason, too: the valleys are sheltered from frost. Even if a frost comes,—and I believe it is almost unknown,—the high mountains surrounding these valleys protect the blossoms so that the frost has evaporated before the sun strikes the trees. There is no such thing known as a killing frost.

But it is irrigation on a virgin and fertile soil that is primarily responsible. They run the water to the orchards in conduits, and then dig little trenches, running parallel among the trees. Then they turn it on, and the tree-roots are bathed, soaked. And out of the desert spring such trees of laden fruit that each branch must be supported by wires!

So we ate such apples as I had never dreamed of, and waited. Joe got his

films together. The boys practiced shooting. I rested and sharpened lead-pencils. Bob had found a way to fold his soft hat into what he fondly called the "Jennings do," which means a plait in the crown to shed the rain, and which turned an amiable *ensemble* into something savage and extremely flat on top. The Head played croquet.

And then into our complacency came, one night, a bit of tragedy.

A man staggered into the little hotel at the head of the lake, carrying another man on his back. He had carried him for forty hours, lowering him down, bit by bit, from that mountain highland where he had been hurt—forty hours of superhuman effort and heart-breaking going, over cliffs and through wilderness.

The injured man was a sheep-herder. He had cut his leg with his wood-axe, and blood-poisoning had set in. I do not know the rest of that story. The sheep-herder was taken to a hospital the next day, traveling a very long way. But whether he traveled still farther, to the land of the Great Shepherd, I do not know. Only this I do know: that this Western country I love is full of such stories, and of such men as the hero of this one.

At last we were ready. Some of the horses were sent by boat the day before, for this strange lake has little or no shore-line. Granite mountains slope stark and sheer to the water's edge, and drop from there to frightful depths below. There are, at the upper end, no roads, no trails or paths that border it. So the horses and all of us went by boat to the mouth of Railroad Creek,—so called, I suppose, because the nearest railroad is more than forty miles away,—up which led the trail to the great unknown. All around and above us were the cliffs, towering seven thousand feet over the lake. And beyond those cliffs lay adventure.

For it *was* adventure. Even Dan Devore, experienced mountaineer and guide that he was, had only been to Cascade Pass once, and that was sixteen years before. He had never been across the divide. "Silent Lawrie" Lindsley, the naturalist, had been only part-way down the Agnes Creek Valley, which we intended to follow. Only in a general way had we any itinerary at all.

Now a National Forest is a happy hunting-ground. Whereas in the National Parks game is faithfully preserved, hunting is permitted in the forests. To this end, we took with us a complete arsenal. The naturalist carried a Colt's revolver; the Big Boy had a twelve-gauge hammerless, called a "howitzer." We had two twenty-four-gauge shotguns in case we met an elephant or anything similarly large and heavy, and the Little Boy proudly carried, strapped to his saddle, a

twenty-two high-power rifle, shooting a steel-jacketed, soft-nose bullet, an express-rifle of high velocity and great alarm to mothers. In addition to this, we had a Savage repeater and two Winchester thirties, and the Forest Supervisor carried his own Winchester thirty-eight. We were entirely prepared to meet the whole German army.

It is rather sad to relate that, with all this preparation, we killed nothing whatever. Although it is not true that, on the day we encountered a large bear, and the three junior members of the family were allowed to turn the artillery loose on him, at the end of the firing the bear pulled out a flag and waved it, thinking it was the Fourth of July.

As we started, that August midday, for the long, dusty ride up the Railroad Creek Trail, I am sure that the three junior Rineharts had nothing less in mind than two or three bearskins apiece for school bedrooms. They deserved better luck than they had. Night after night, sitting in the comparative safety of the camp-fire, I have seen my three sons, the Big, the Middle, and the Little Boy, starting off, armed to the teeth with deadly weapons, to sleep out under the stars and catch the first unwary bear on his way to breakfast in the morning.

Morning after morning, I have sat breakfastless and shaken until the weary procession of young America toiled into camp, hungry and bearless, but, thank Heaven, whole of skin save where mosquitoes and black flies had taken their toll of them. They would trudge five miles, sleep three hours, hunt, walk five miles back, and then ride all day.

The first day was the least pleasant. We were still in the Railroad Creek Valley; the trail was dusty; packs slipped on the sweating horses and had to be replaced. The bucking horse of the outfit had, as usual, been given the eggs, and, burying his head between his fore legs, threw off about a million dollars' worth before he had been on the trail an hour.

On that first part of the trip, we had three dogs with us—Chubb and Doc, as well as Whiskers. They ran in the dust with their tongues out, and lay panting under bushes at each stop. Here and there we found the track of sheep driven into the mountain to graze. For a hundred or two hundred feet in width, it was eaten completely clean, for sheep have a way of tearing up even the roots of the

grass so that nothing green lives behind them. They carry blight into a country like this.

Then, at last, we found the first arrow of the journey, and turned off the trail to camp.

On that first evening, the arrow landed us in a great spruce grove where the trees averaged a hundred and twenty-five feet in height. Below, the ground was cleared and level and covered with fine moss. The great gray trunks rose to Gothic arches of green. It was a churchly place. And running through it were little streams living with trout.

And in this saintly spot, quiet and peaceful, its only noise the babbling of little rivers, dwelt billions on billions of mosquitoes that were for the first time learning the delights of the human frame as food.

There was no getting away from them. Open our mouths and we inhaled them. They hung in dense clouds about us and fought over the best locations. They held loud and noisy conversations about us, and got in our ears and up our nostrils and into our coffee. They went trout-fishing with us and put up the tents with us; dined with us and on us. But they let us alone at night.

It is a curious thing about the mountain mosquito as I know him. He is a lazy insect. He retires at sundown and does not begin to get in any active work until eight o'clock the following morning. He keeps union hours.

Something of this we had anticipated, and I had ordered mosquito-netting, to be worn as veils. When it was unrolled, it proved to be a brilliant scarlet, a scarlet which faded in hot weather on to necks and faces and turned us suddenly red and hideous.

Although it was late in the afternoon when we reached that first camp, Camp Romany, two or three of us caught more than a hundred trout before sundown. We should have done better had it not been necessary to stop and scratch every thirty seconds.

That night, the Woodsman built a great bonfire. We huddled about it, glad of its warmth, for although the days were hot, the nights, with the wind from the snow-covered peaks overhead, were very cold. The tall, unbranching gray spruce-trunks rose round it like the pillars of a colonnade. The forester blew up his air bed. In front of the supper-fire, the shadowy figures of the cooks moved

back and forward. From a near-by glacier came an occasional crack, followed by a roar which told of ice dropping into cavernous depths below. The Little Boy cleaned his gun and dreamed of mighty exploits.

We rested all the next day at Camp Romany—rested and fished, while three of the more adventurous spirits climbed a near-by mountain. Late in the afternoon they rode in, bringing in their midst Joe, who had, at the risk of his life, slid a distance which varied in the reports from one hundred yards to a mile and a half down a snow-field, and had hung fastened on the brink of eternity until he was rescued.

Very white was Joe that evening, white and bruised. It was twenty-four hours before he began to regret that the camera had not been turned on him at the time.

Not until we left Camp Romany did we feel that we were really off for the trip. And yet that first day out from Romany was not agreeable going. The trail was poor, although there came a time when we looked back on it as superlative. The sun was hot, and there was no shade. Years ago, prospectors hunting for minerals had started forest-fires to level the ridges. The result was the burning-over of perhaps a hundred square miles of magnificent forest. The second growth which has come up is scrubby, a wilderness of young trees and chaparral, through which progress was difficult and uninteresting.

Up the bottom of the great glacier-basin toward the mountain at its head, we made our slow and painful way. More dust, more mosquitoes. Even the beauty of the snow-capped peaks overhead could not atone for the ugliness of that destroyed region. Yet, although it was not lovely, it was vastly impressive. Literally, hundreds of waterfalls cascaded down the mountain wall from hidden lakes and glaciers above, and towering before us was the mountain wall which we were to climb later that day.

We had seen no human creature since leaving the lake, but as we halted for luncheon by a steep little river, we suddenly found that we were not alone. Standing beside the trail was an Italian bandit with a knife two feet long in his hands.

Ha! Come adventure! Come romance! Come rifles and pistols and all the arsenal, including the Little Boy, with pure joy writ large over him! A bandit, armed to the teeth!

But this is a disappointing world. He was the cook from a mine—strange, the

way we met cooks, floating around loose in a world that seems to be growing gradually cookless. And he carried with him his knife and his bread-pan, which was, even then, hanging to a branch of a tree.

We fed him, and he offered to sing. The Optimist nudged me.

"Now, listen," he said; "these fellows can *sing*. Be quiet, everybody!"

The bandit twisted up his mustachios, smiled beatifically, and took up a position in the trail, feet apart, eyes upturned.

And then—he stopped.

"I start a leetle high," he said; "I start again."

So he started again, and the woods receded from around us, and the rushing of the river died away, and nothing was heard in that lonely valley but the most hideous sounds that ever broke a primeval silence into rags and tatters.

When, at last, he stopped, we got on our horses and rode on, a bitter and disillusioned party of adventurers whose first bubble of enthusiasm had been pricked.

It was four o'clock when we began the ascent of the switchback at the top of the valley. Up and up we went, dismounting here and there, going slowly but eagerly. For, once over the wall, we were beyond the reach of civilization. So strange a thing is the human mind! We who were for most of the year most civilized, most dependent on our kind and the comforts it has wrought out of a primitive world, now we were savagely resentful of it. We wanted neither men nor houses. Stirring in us had commenced that primeval call that comes to all now and then, the longing to be alone with Mother Earth, savage, tender, calm old Mother Earth.

And yet we were still in touch with the world. For even here man had intruded. Hanging to the cliff were the few buildings of a small mine which sends out its ore by pack-pony. I had already begun to feel the aloofness of the quiet places, so it was rather disconcerting to have a miner with a patch over one eye come to the doorway of one of the buildings and remark that he had read some of my political articles and agreed with them most thoroughly.

Looking out of ice-cave, Lyman Glacier

Looking out of ice-cave, Lyman Glacier

That was a long day. We traveled from early morning until long after late sundown. Up the switchback to a green plateau we went, meeting our first ice there, and here again that miracle of the mountains, meadow flowers and snow side by side.

Far behind us strung the pack-outfit, plodding doggedly along. From the rim we could look back down that fire-swept valley toward Heart Lake and the camp we had left. But there was little time for looking back. Somewhere ahead was a brawling river descending in great leaps from Lyman Lake, which lay in a basin above and beyond. Our camp, that night, was to be on the shore of Lyman Lake, at the foot of Lyman Glacier. And we had still far to go.

Mr. Hilligoss met us on the trail. He had found a camp-site by the lake and had seen a bear and a deer. There were wild ducks also.

Now and then there are scenes in the mountains that defy the written word. The view from Cloudy Pass is one; the outlook from Cascade Pass is another. But for sheer loveliness there are few things that surpass Lyman Lake at sunset, its great glacier turned to pink, the towering granite cliffs which surround it dark purple below, bright rose at the summits. And lying there, still with the stillness of the ages, the quiet lake.

There was, as a matter of fact, nothing to disturb its quiet. Not a fish, so far as we could discover, lived in its opalescent water, cloudy as is all glacial water. It is only good to look at, is Lyman Lake, and there are no people to look at it.

Set in its encircling, snow-covered mountains, it lies fifty-five hundred feet above sea-level. We had come up in two days from eleven hundred feet, a considerable climb. That night, for the first time, we saw the northern lights—at first, one band like a cold finger set across the sky, then others, shooting ribbons of cold fire, now bright, now dim, covering the northern horizon and throwing into silhouette the peaks over our heads.

XII

CLOUDY PASS AND THE AGNES CREEK VALLEY

I think I have said that one of the purposes of our expedition was to hunt. We were to spend a day or two at Lyman Lake, and the sportsmen were busy by the camp-fire that evening, getting rifles and shotguns in order and preparing fishing-tackle.

At dawn the next morning, which was at four o'clock, one of the packers roused the Big Boy with the information that there were wild ducks on the lake. He was wakened with extreme difficulty, put on his bedroom slippers, picked up his shotgun, and, still in his sleeping-garments, walked some ten feet from the mouth of his tent. There he yawned, discharged both barrels of his gun in the general direction of the ducks, yawned again, and went back to bed.

I myself went on a hunting-excursion on the second day at Lyman Lake. Now, theoretically, I am a mighty hunter. I have always expected to shoot something worth while and be photographed with my foot on it, and a "bearer"—whatever that may be—holding my gun in the background. So when Mr. Fred proposed an early start and a search along the side of Chiwawa Mountain for anything from sheep to goats, including a grizzly if possible, my imagination was roused. So jealous were we that the first game should be ours that the party was kept a profound secret. Mr. Fred and Mrs. Fred, the Head, and I planned it ourselves.

We would rise early, and, armed to the teeth, would stalk the skulking bear to his den.

Rising early is also a theory of mine. I approve of it. But I do not consider it rising early to get up at three o'clock in the morning. Three o'clock in the morning is late at night. The moon was still up. It was frightfully cold. My shoes were damp and refused to go on. I could not find any hairpins. And I recalled a number of stories of the extreme disagreeableness of bears when not shot in a vital spot.

With all our hurry, it was four o'clock when we were ready to start. No sun was in sight, but already a faint rose-colored tint was on the tops of the

mountains. Whiskers raised a sleepy head and looked at us from Dan's bed. We tiptoed through the camp and started.

We climbed. Then we climbed some more. Then we kept on climbing. Mr. Fred led the way. He had the energy of a high-powered car and the hopefulness of a pacifist. From ledge to ledge he scrambled, turning now and then to wave an encouraging hand. It was not long before I ceased to have strength to wave back. Hours went on. Five hundred feet, one thousand feet, fifteen hundred feet above the lake. I confided to the Head, between gasps, that I was dying. We had seen no living thing; we continued to see no living thing. Two thousand feet, twenty-five hundred feet. There was not enough air in the world to fill my collapsed lungs.

Once Mr. Fred found a track, and scurried off in a new direction. Still no result. The sun was up by that time, and I judged that it was about noon. It was only six-thirty.

Looking southeast from Cloudy Pass

Looking southeast from Cloudy Pass

A sort of desperation took possession of us all. We would keep up with Mr. Fred or die trying. And then, suddenly, we were on the very roof of the world, on the top of Cloudy Pass. All the kingdoms of the earth lay stretched out around us, and all the kingdoms of the earth were empty.

Now, the usual way to climb Cloudy Pass is to take a good businesslike horse and sit on his back. Then, by devious and circuitous routes, with frequent rests, the horse takes you up. When there is a place the horse cannot manage, you get off and hold his tail, and he pulls you. Even at that, it is a long business and a painful one. But it is better—oh, far, far better!—than the way we had taken.

Have you ever reached a point where you fix your starting eyes on a shrub or a rock ten feet ahead and struggle for it? And, having achieved it, fix on another five feet farther on, and almost fail to get it? Because, if you have not, you know nothing of this agony of tearing lungs and hammering heart and throbbing muscles that is the mountain-climber's price for achievement.

And then, after all, while resting on the top of the world with our feet hanging over, discussing dilated hearts, because I knew mine would never go back to normal, to see a ptarmigan, and have Mr. Fred miss it because he wanted to

shoot its head neatly off!

Strange birds, those ptarmigan. Quite fearless of man, because they know him not or his evil works, on alarm they have the faculty of almost instantly obliterating themselves. I have seen a mother bird and her babies, on an alarm, so hide themselves on a bare mountain-side that not so much as a bit of feather could be seen. But unless frightened, they will wander almost under the hunter's feet.

I dare say they do not know how very delicious they are, especially after a diet of salt meat.

As we sat panting on Cloudy Pass, the sun rose over the cliff of the great granite bowl. The peaks turned from red to yellow. It was absolutely silent. No trees rustled in the morning air. There were no trees. Only, here and there, a few stunted evergreens, two or three feet high, had rooted on the rock and clung there, gnarled and twisted from their winter struggles.

Ears that had grown tired of the noises of cities grew rested. But our ears were more rested than our bodies.

I have always believed that it is easier to go downhill than to go up. This is not true. I say it with the deepest earnestness. After the first five hundred feet of descent, progress down became agonizing. The something that had gone wrong with my knees became terribly wrong; they showed a tendency to bend backward; they shook and quivered.

The last mile of that four-mile descent was one of the most dreadful experiences of my life. A broken thing, I crept into camp and tendered mute apologies to Budweiser, my horse, called familiarly "Buddy." (Although he was not the sort of horse one really became familiar with.)

The remainder of that day, Mrs. Fred and I lay under a mosquito-canopy, played solitaire, and rested our aching bodies. The Forest Supervisor climbed Lyman Glacier. The Head and the Little Boy made the circuit of the lake, and had to be roped across the rushing river which is its outlet. And the horses rested for the real hardship of the trip, which was about to commence.

One thing should be a part of the equipment of every one who intends to camp in the mountains near the snow-fields. This is a mosquito-tent. Ours was brought by that experienced woodsman and mountaineer, Mr. Hilligoss, and was

made with a light-muslin top three feet long by the width of double-width muslin. To this was sewed sides of cheese-cloth, with double seams and reinforced corners. At the bottom it had an extra piece of netting two feet wide, to prevent the insects from crawling under.

Erecting such a shelter is very simple. Four stakes, five feet high, were driven into the ground and the mosquito-canopy simply hung over them.

We had no face-masks, except the red netting, but, for such a trip, a mask is simple to make and occasionally most acceptable. The best one I know—and it, too, is the Woodsman's invention—consists of a four-inch band of wire netting; above it, whipped on, a foot of light muslin to be tied round the hat, and, below, a border of cheese-cloth two feet deep, with a rubber band. Such a mask does not stick to the face. Through the wire netting, it is possible to shoot with accuracy. The rubber band round the neck allows it to be lifted with ease.

I do not wish to give the impression that there were mosquitoes everywhere. But when there were mosquitoes, there was nothing clandestine about it.

The next day we crossed Cloudy Pass and started down the Agnes Creek Valley. It was to be a forced march of twenty-five miles over a trail which no one was sure existed. There had, at one time, been a trail, but avalanches have a way, in these mountain valleys, of destroying all landmarks, and rock-slides come down from the great cliffs, fill creek-beds, and form swamps. Whether we could get down at all or not was a question. To the eternal credit of our guides, we made it. For the upper five miles below Cloudy Pass it was touch and go. Even with the sharp hatchet of the Woodsman ahead, with his blazes on the trees where the trail had been obliterated, it was the hardest kind of going.

Here were ditches that the horses leaped; here were rushing streams where they could hardly keep their footing. Again, a long mile or two of swamp and almost impenetrable jungle, where only the Woodsman's axe-marks gave us courage to go on. We were mired at times, and again there were long stretches over rock-slides, where the horses scrambled like cats.

But with every mile there came a sense of exhilaration. We were making progress.

There was little or no life to be seen. The Woodsman, going ahead of us, encountered a brown bear reaching up for a cluster of salmon-berries. He ambled away, quite unconcerned, and happily ignorant of that desperate trio of junior

Rineharts, bearing down on him with almost the entire contents of the best gun shop in Spokane.

It should have been a great place for bears, that Agnes Creek Valley. There were ripe huckleberries, service-berries, salmon-and manzanita-berries. There were plenty of places where, if I had been a bear, I should have been entirely happy—caves and great rocks, and good, cold water. And I believe they were there. But thirty-one horses and a sort of family tendency to see if there is an echo anywhere about, and such loud inquiries as, "Are you all right, mother?" and "Who the dickens has any matches?"—these things are fatal to seeing wild life.

Indeed, the next time I am overcome by one of my mad desires to see a bear, I shall go to the zoo.

It was fifteen years, I believe, since Dan Devore had seen the Agnes Creek Valley. From the condition of the trail, I am inclined to think that Dan was the last man who had ever used it. And such a wonderland as it is! Such marvels of flowers as we descended, such wild tiger-lilies and columbines and Mariposa lilies! What berries and queen's-cup and chalice-cup and bird's-bill! There was trillium, too, although it was not in bloom, and devil's-club, a plant which stings and sets up a painful swelling. There were yew trees, those trees which the Indians use for making their bows, wild white rhododendron and spirea, cottonwood, white pine, hemlock, Douglas spruce, and white fir. Everywhere there was mountain-ash, the berries beloved of bears. And high up on the mountain there was always heather, beautiful to look at but slippery, uncertain footing for horse and man.

Twenty-five miles, broken with canter and trot, is not more than I have frequently taken on a brisk sunny morning at home. But twenty-five miles at a slow walk, now in a creek-bed, now on the edge of a cliff, is a different matter. The last five miles of the Agnes Creek trip were a long despair. We found and located new muscles that the anatomists have overlooked.—A really first-class anatomist ought never to make a chart without first climbing a high mountain and riding all day on the creature alluded to in this song of Bob's, which gained a certain popularity among the male members of the party.

"A sailor's life is bold and free.
He lives upon the bright blue sea.
He has to work like h——, of course,

But he doesn't have to ride on a darned old horse."

It was dark when we reached our camp-ground at the foot of the valley. A hundred feet below, in a gorge, ran the Stehekin River, a noisy and turbulent stream full of trout. We groped through the darkness for our tents that night and fell into bed more dead than alive. But at three o'clock the next morning, the junior Rineharts, following Mr. Fred, were off for bear, reappearing at ten, after breakfast was over, with an excited story of having seen one very close but having unaccountably missed it.

There was no water for the horses at camp that night, and none for them in the morning. There was no way to get them down to the river, and the poor animals were almost desperate with thirst. They were having little enough to eat even then, at the beginning of the trip, and it was hard to see them without water, too.

XIII

CAÑON FISHING AND A TELEGRAM

It was eleven o'clock the next morning before I led Buddy—I had abandoned "Budweiser" in view of the drought—into a mountain stream and let him drink. He would have rolled in it, too, but I was on his back and I fiercely restrained him.

The next day was a comparatively short trip. There was a trapper's cabin at the fork of Bridge Creek in the Stehekin River. There we were to spend the night before starting on our way to Cascade Pass. As it turned out, we spent two days there. There was a little grass for the horses, and we learned of a cañon, some five or six miles off our trail, which was reported as full of fish.

The most ardent of us went there the next day—Mr. Hilligoss, Weaver, and "Silent Lawrie" and the Freds and Bob and the Big Boy and the Little Boy and Joe. And, without expecting it, we happened on adventure.

Have you ever climbed down a cañon with rocky sides, a straight and precipitous five hundred feet, clinging with your finger nails to any bit of green that grows from the cliff, and to footholds made by an axe, and carrying a fly-book and a trout-rod which is an infinitely precious trout-rod? Also, a share of the midday lunch and twenty pounds more weight than you ought to have by the beauty-scale? Because, unless you have, you will never understand that trip.

It was a series of wild drops, of blood-curdling escapes, of slips and recoveries, of bruises and abrasions. But at last we made it, and there was the river!

I have still in mind a deep pool where the water, rushing at tremendous speed over a rocky ledge, fell perhaps fifteen feet. I had fixed my eyes on that pool early in the day, but it seemed impossible of access. To reach it it was necessary again to scale a part of the cliff, and, clinging to its face, to work one's way round along a ledge perhaps three inches wide. When I had once made it, with the aid of friendly hands and a leather belt, by which I was lowered, I knew one thing—knew it inevitably. I was there for life. Nothing would ever take me back over that ledge.

However, I was there, and there was no use wasting time. For there were fish there. Now and then they jumped. But they did not take the fly. The water seethed and boiled, and I stood still and fished, because a slip on that spray-covered ledge and I was gone, to be washed down to Lake Chelan, and lie below sea-level in the Cascade Mountains. Which might be a glorious sort of tomb, but it did not appeal to me.

I tried different flies with no result. At last, with a weighted line and a fish's eye, I got my first fish—the best of the day, and from that time on I forgot the danger.

Some day, armed with every enticement known to the fisherman, I am going back to that river. For there, under a log, lurks the wiliest trout I have ever encountered. In full view he stayed during the entire time of my sojourn. He came up to the fly, leaped over it, made faces at it. Then he would look up at me scornfully.

"Old tricks," he seemed to say. "Old stuff—not good enough." I dare say he is still there.

Late in the day, we got out of that cañon. Got out at infinite peril and fatigue, climbed, struggled, stumbled, held on, pulled. I slipped once and had a bad knee for six weeks. Never once did I dare to look back and down. It was always up, and the top was always receding. And when we reached camp, the Head, who had been on an excursion of his own, refused to be thrilled, and spent the evening telling how he had been climbing over the top of the world on his hands and knees. In sheer scorn, we let him babble.

But my hat is off to him, after all, for he had ready for us, and swears to this day to its truth, the best fish-story of the trip.

Lying on the top of one of our packing-cases was a great bull-trout. Now a bull-trout has teeth, and held in a vise-like grip in the teeth of this one was a smaller trout. In the mouth of the small trout was a gray-and-black fly. The Head maintained that he had hooked the small fish and was about to draw it to shore when the bull-trout leaped out of the water, caught the small fish, and held on grimly. The Head thereupon had landed them both.

In proof of this, as I have said, he had the two fish on top of a packing-case. But it is not a difficult matter to place a small trout cross-wise in the jaws of a bull-trout, and to this day we are not quite certain.

There *were* tooth-marks on the little fish, but, as one of the guides said, he wouldn't put it past the Head to have made them himself.

That night we received a telegram. I remember it with great distinctness, because the man who brought it in charged fifteen dollars for delivering it. He came at midnight, and how he had reached us no one will ever know. The telegram notified us that a railroad strike was about to take place and that we should get out as soon as possible.

Early the next morning we held a conference. It was about as far back as it was to go ahead over the range. And before us still lay the Great Adventure of the pass.

We took a vote on it at last and the "ayes" carried. We would go ahead, making the best time we could. If the railroads had stopped when we got out, we would merely turn our pack-outfit toward the east and keep on moving. We had been all summer in the saddle by that time, and a matter of thirty-five hundred miles across the continent seemed a trifle.

Dan Devore brought us other news that morning, however. Cascade Pass was closed with snow. A miner who lived alone somewhere up the gorge had brought in the information. It was a serious moment. We could get to Doubtful Lake, but it was unlikely we could get any farther. The comparatively simple matter thus became a complicated one, for Doubtful Lake was not only a détour; it was almost inaccessible, especially for horses. But we hated to acknowledge defeat. So again we voted to go ahead.

That day, while the pack-outfit was being got ready, I had a long talk with the Forest Supervisor. He told me many things about our National Forests, things which are worth knowing and which every American, whose playgrounds the forests are, should know.

In the first place, the Forestry Department welcomes the camper. He is given his liberty, absolutely. He is allowed to hunt such game as is in season, and but two restrictions are placed on him. He shall leave his camp-ground clean, and he shall extinguish every spark of fire before he leaves. Beyond that, it is the policy of the Government to let campers alone. It is possible in a National Forest to

secure a special permit to put up buildings for permanent camps. An act passed on the 4th of March, 1915, gives the camper a permit for a definite period, although until that time the Government could revoke the permit at will.

The rental is so small that it is practically negligible. All roads and trails are open to the public; no admission can be charged to a National Forest, and no concession will be sold. The whole idea of the National Forest as a playground is to administer it in the public interest. Good lots on Lake Chelan can be obtained for from five to twenty-five dollars a year, depending on their locality. It is the intention of the Government to pipe water to these allotments.

For the hunters, there is no protection for bear, cougar, coyotes, bobcats, and lynx. No license is required to hunt them. And to the persistent hunter who goes into the woods, not as we did, with an outfit the size of a cavalry regiment, there is game to be had in abundance. We saw goat-tracks in numbers at Cloudy Pass and the marks of Bruin everywhere.

The Chelan National Forest is well protected against fires. A fire-launch patrols the lake and lookouts are stationed all the time on Strong Mountain and Crow's Hill. They live there on the summits, where provisions and water must be carried up to them. These lookouts now have telephones, but until last summer they used the heliograph instead.

So now we prepared, having made our decision to go on. That night, if the trail was possible, we would camp at Doubtful Lake.

XIV

DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE

The first part of that adventurous day was quiet. We moved sedately along on an overgrown trail, mountain walls so close on each side that the valley lay in shadow. I rode next to Dan Devore that day, and on the trail he stopped his horse and showed me the place where Hughie McKeever was found.

Dan Devore and Hughie McKeever went out one November to go up to Horseshoe Basin. Dan left before the heaviest snows came, leaving McKeever alone. When McKeever had not appeared by February, Dan went in for him. His cabin was empty.

He had kept a diary up to the 24th of December, when it stopped abruptly. There were a few marten skins in the cabin, and his outfit. That was all. In some cottonwoods, not far from the camp, they found his hatchet and his bag hanging to a tree.

It looked for a time, as though the mystery of Hughie McKeever's disappearance would be one of the unsolved tragedies of the mountains. But a trapper, whose route took him along Thunder Creek that spring, noticed that his dog made a side trip each time, away from the trail. At last he investigated, and found the body of Hughie McKeever. He had probably been caught in a snow-slide, for his leg was broken below the knee. Unable to walk, he had put his snowshoes on his hands and, dragging the broken leg, had crawled six miles through the snow and ice of the mountain winter. When he was found, he was only a mile and a half from his cabin and safety.

There are many other tragedies of that valley. There was a man who went up Bridge Creek to see a claim he had located there. He was to be out four days. But in ten days he had not appeared, which was not surprising, for there was twenty-five feet of snow, and when the snow had frozen so that rescuers could travel over the crust, they went up after him. He was lying in one of the bunks of his cabin with a mattress over him, frozen to death.

Mountain miles: The trail up Swiftcurrent Pass, Glacier National Park

Mountain miles: The trail up Swiftcurrent Pass,
Glacier National Park

So, Dan said, they covered him in the snow with a mattress, and went back in the spring to bury him.

Every winter, in those mountain valleys, men who cannot get their outfits out before the snow shoot their horses or cut their throats rather than let them freeze or starve to death. It is a grim country, the Cascade country. One man shot nine in this very valley last winter.

Our naturalist had been caught the winter before in the first snowstorm of the season. He was from daylight until eight o'clock at night making two miles of trail. He had to break it, foot by foot, for the horses.

As we rode up the gorge toward the pass, it was evident, from the amount of snow in the mountains, that stories had not been exaggerated. The packers looked dubious. Even if we could make the climb to Doubtful Lake, it seemed impossible that we could get farther. But the monotony of the long ride was broken that afternoon by our first sight, as a party, of a bear.

It came out on a ledge of the mountain, perhaps three hundred yards away, and proceeded, with great deliberation, to walk across a rock-slide. It paid no attention whatever to us and to the wild excitement which followed its discovery. Instantly, the three junior Rineharts were off their horses, and our artillery attack was being prepared. At the first shot, the pack-ponies went crazy. They lunged and jumped, and even Buddy showed signs of strain, leaping what I imagine to be some eleven feet in the air and coming back on four rigid knees. Followed such a peppering of that cliff as it had never had before. Little clouds of rock-dust rose above the bear, in front of him, behind him, and below him. He stopped, mildly astonished, and looked around. More noise, more bucking on the trail, more dust. The bear walked on a trifle faster.

It had been arranged that the first bear was to be left for the juniors. So the packers and the rest of the party watched and advised.

But, as I have related elsewhere in this narrative, there were no casualties. The bear, as far as I know, is living to-day, an honored member of his community, and still telling how he survived the great war. At last he disappeared into a cave, and we went on without so much as a single skin to decorate a college room.

We went on.

What odds and ends of knowledge we picked up on those long days in the saddle! That if lightning strikes a pine even lightly, it kills, but that a fir will ordinarily survive; that mountain miles are measured air-line, so that twenty-five miles may really be forty, and that, even then, they are calculated on the level, so that one is credited with only the base of the triangle while he is laboriously climbing up its hypotenuse. I am personally acquainted with the hypotenuses of a good many mountains, and there is no use trying to pretend that they are bases. They are not.

Then we learned that the purpose of the National Forests is not to preserve timber but to conserve it. The idea is to sell and reseed. About twenty-five per cent of the timber we saw was yellow pine. But most of the timber we saw on the east side of the Cascades will be safe for some time. I wouldn't undertake to carry out, from most of that region, enough pine-needles to make a sofa-cushion. It is quite enough to get oneself out.

Up to now it had been hard going, but not impossible. Now we were to do the impossible.

It is a curious thing about mountains, but they have a hideous tendency to fall down. Whole cliff-faces, a mile or so high, are suddenly seized with a wandering disposition. Leaving the old folks at home and sliding down into the valleys, they come awful croppers and sustain about eleven million compound comminuted fractures.

These family breaks are known as rock-slides.

Now to travel twenty feet over a rock-slide is to twist an ankle, bruise a shin-bone, utterly discourage a horse, and sour the most amiable disposition.

Where the rock-slides start (Glacier National Park)

Where the rock-slides start (Glacier National Park)

There is no flat side to these wandering rocks. With the diabolical ingenuity that nature can show when she goes wrong, they lie edge up. Do you remember the little mermaid who wished to lose her tail and gain legs so she could follow the prince? And how her penalty was that every step was like walking on the edges of swords? That is a mountain rock-slide, but I do not recall that the little

mermaid had to drag a frightened and slipping horse, which stepped on her now and then. Or wear riding-boots. Or stop every now and then to be photographed, and try to persuade her horse to stop also. Or keep looking up to see if another family jar threatened. Or look around to see if any of the party or the pack was rolling down over the spareribs of that ghastly skeleton. No; the little mermaid's problem was a simple and uncomplicated one.

We were climbing, too. Only one thing kept us going. The narrow valley twisted, and around each cliff-face we expected the end—either death or solid ground. But not so, or, at least, not for some hours. Riding-boots peeled like a sunburnt face; stones dislodged and rolled down; the sun beat down in early September fury, and still we went on.

Only three miles it was, but it was as bad a three miles as I have ever covered. Then—the naturalist turned and smiled.

"Now we are all right," he said. "*We start to climb soon!*"

XV

DOUBTFUL LAKE

Of all the mountain-climbing I have ever done the switchback up to Doubtful Lake is the worst. We were hours doing it. There were places when it seemed no horse could possibly make the climb. Back and forth, up and up, along that narrow rock-filled trail, which was lost here in a snow-bank, there in a jungle of evergreen that hung out from the mountain-side, we were obliged to go. There was no going back. We could not have turned a horse around, nor could we have reversed the pack-outfit without losing some of the horses.

As a matter of fact, we dropped two horses on that switchback. With infinite labor the packers got them back to the trail, rolling, tumbling, and roping them down to the ledge below, and there salvaging them. It was heart-breaking, nerve-racking work. Near the top was an ice-patch across a brawling waterfall. To slip on that ice-patch meant a drop of incredible distance. From broken places in the crust it was possible to see the stream below. Yet over the ice it was necessary to take ourselves and the pack.

"Absolutely no riding here," was the order, given in strained tones. For everybody's nerves were on edge.

Somehow or other, we got over. I can still see one little pack-pony wandering away from the others and traveling across that tiny ice-field on the very brink of death at the top of the precipice. The sun had softened the snow so that I fell flat into it. And there was a dreadful moment when I thought I was going to slide.

Even when I was safely over, my anxieties were just beginning. For the Head and the Juniors were not yet over. And there was no space to stop and see them come. It was necessary to move on up the switchback, that the next horse behind might scramble up. Buddy went gallantly on, leaping, slipping, his flanks heaving, his nostrils dilated. Then, at last, the familiar call,—

Switchbacks on the trail (Glacier National Park)

Switchbacks on the trail (Glacier National Park)

"Are you all right, mother?"

And I knew it was all right with them—so far.

Three thousand feet that switchback went straight up in the air. How many thousand feet we traveled back and forward, I do not know.

But these things have a way of getting over somehow. The last of the pack-horses was three hours behind us in reaching Doubtful Lake. The weary little beasts, cut, bruised, and by this time very hungry, looked dejected and forlorn. It was bitterly cold. Doubtful Lake was full of floating ice, and a chilling wind blew on us from the snow all about. A bear came out on the cliff-face across the valley. But no one attempted to shoot at him. We were too tired, too bruised and sore. We gave him no more than a passing glance.

It had been a tremendous experience, but a most alarming one. From the brink of that pocket on the mountain-top where we stood the earth fell away to vast distances beneath. The little river which empties Doubtful Lake slid greasily over a rock and disappeared without a sound into the void.

Until the pack-outfit arrived, we could have no food. We built a fire and huddled round it, and now and then one of us would go to the edge of the pit which lay below to listen. The summer evening was over and night had fallen before we heard the horses coming near the top of the cliff. We cheered them, as, one by one, they stumbled over the edge, dark figures of horses and men, the animals with their bulging packs. They had put up a gallant fight.

And we had no food for the horses. The few oats we had been able to carry were gone, and there was no grass on the little plateau. There was heather, deceptively green, but nothing else. And here, for the benefit of those who may follow us along the trail, let me say that oats should be carried, if two additional horses are required for the purpose—carried, and kept in reserve for the last hard days of the trip.

The two horses that had fallen were unpacked first. They were cut, and on their cuts the Head poured iodine. But that was all we could do for them. One little gray mare was trembling violently. She went over a cliff again the next day, but I am glad to say that we took her out finally, not much the worse except for a badly cut shoulder. The other horse, a sorrel, had only a day or two before slid five hundred feet down a snow-bank. He was still stiff from his previous accident, and if ever I saw a horse whose nerve was gone, I saw one there—a

poor, tragic, shaken creature, trembling at a word.

That night, while we lay wrapped in blankets round the fire while the cooks prepared supper at another fire near by, the Optimist produced a bottle of claret. We drank it out of tin cups, the only wine of the journey, and not until long afterward did we know its history—that a very great man to whose faith the Northwest owes so much of its development had purchased it, twenty-five years before, for the visit to this country of Albert, King of the Belgians.

That claret, taken so casually from tin cups near the summit of the Cascades, had been a part of the store of that great dreamer and most abstemious of men, James J. Hill, laid in for the use of that other great dreamer and idealist, Albert, when he was his guest. While we ate, Weaver said suddenly,—

"Listen!"

His keen ears had caught the sound of a bell. He got up.

"Either Johnny or Buck," he said, "starting back home!"

Then commenced again that heart-breaking task of rounding up the horses. That is a part of such an expedition. And, even at that, one escaped and was found the next morning high up the cliffside, in a basin.

It was too late to put up all the tents that night. Mrs. Fred and I slept in our clothes but under canvas, and the men lay out with their faces to the sky.

Toward dawn a thunder-storm came up. For we were on the crest of the Cascades now, where the rain-clouds empty themselves before traveling to the arid country to the east. Just over the mountain-wall above us lay the Pacific Slope.

The rain came down, and around the peaks overhead lightning flashed and flamed. No one moved except Joe, who sat up in his blankets, put his hat on, said, "Let 'er rain," and lay down to sleep again. Peanuts, the naturalist's horse, sought human companionship in the storm, and wandered into camp, where one of the young bear-hunters wakened to find him stepping across his prostrate and blanketed form.

Then all was still again, except for the solid beat of the rain on canvas and blanket, horse and man.

It cleared toward morning, and at dawn Dan was up and climbed the wall on foot. At breakfast, on his return, we held a conference. He reported that it was possible to reach the top—possible but difficult, and that what lay on the other side we should have to discover later on.

A night's sleep had made Joe all business again. On the previous day he had been too busy saving his camera and his life—camera first, of course—to try for pictures. But now he had a brilliant idea.

"Now see here," he said to me; "I've got a great idea. How's Buddy about water?"

"He's partial to it," I admitted, "for drinking, or for lying down and rolling in it, especially when I am on him. Why?"

"Well, it's like this," he observed: "I'm set up on the bank of the lake. See? And you ride him into the water and get him to scramble up on one of those ice-cakes. Do you get it? It'll be a whale of a picture."

"Joe," I said, in a stern voice, "did you ever try to make a horse go into an icy lake and climb on to an ice-cake? Because if you have, you can do it now. I can turn the camera all right. Anyhow," I added firmly, "I've been photographed enough. This film is going to look as if I'd crossed the Cascades alone. Some of you other people ought to have a chance."

But a moving-picture man after a picture is as determined as a cook who does not like the suburbs.

I rode Buddy to the brink of the lake, and there spoke to him in friendly tones. I observed that this lake was like other lakes, only colder, and that it ought to be mere play after the day before. I also selected a large ice-cake, which looked fairly solid, and pointed Buddy at it.

Then I kicked him. He took a step and began to shake. Then he leaped six feet to one side and reared, still shaking. Then he turned round and headed for the camp.

By that I was determined on the picture. There is nothing like two wills set in opposite directions to determine a woman. Buddy and I again and again approached the lake, mostly sideways. But at last he went in, took twenty steps out, felt the cold on his poor empty belly, and—refused the ice-cake. We went out much faster than we went in, making the bank in a great bound and a very

bad humor—two very bad humors.

XVI

OVER CASCADE PASS

To get out of the Doubtful Lake plateau to Cascade Pass it was necessary to climb eight hundred feet up a steep and very slippery cliffside. On the other side lay the pass, but on the level of the lake. It was here that we "went up a hill one day and then went down again" with a vengeance. And on this cliffside it was that the little gray mare went over again, falling straight on to a snow-bank, which saved her, and then rolling over and over shedding parts of our equipment, and landing far below dazed and almost senseless.

It was on the top of that wall above Doubtful Lake that I had the greatest fright of the trip.

That morning, as a special favor, the Little Boy had been allowed to go ahead with Mr. Hilligoss, who was to clear trail and cut footholds where they were necessary. When we were more than halfway to the top of the wall above the lake, two alternative routes to the top offered themselves, one to the right across a snow-field that hugged the edge of a cliff which dropped sheer five hundred feet to the water, another to the left over slippery heather which threatened a slide and a casualty at every step. The Woodsman had left no blazes, there being no tree to mark. Holding on by clutching to the heather with our hands, we debated. Finally, we chose the left-hand route as the one they had probably taken. But when we reached the top, the Woodsman and the Little Boy were not there. We hallooed, but there was no reply. And, suddenly, the terrible silence of the mountains seemed ominous. Had they ventured across the snow-bank and slipped?

I am not ashamed to say that, sitting on my horse on the top of that mountain-wall, I proceeded to have a noiseless attack of hysterics. There were too many chances of accident for any of the party to take the matter lightly. There we gathered on that little mountain meadow, not much bigger than a good-sized room, and waited. There was snow and ice and silence everywhere. Below, Doubtful Lake lay like a sapphire set in granite, and far beneath it lay the valley from which we had climbed the day before. But no one cared for scenery.

Then it was that "Silent Lawrie" turned his horse around and went back. Soon he hallooed, and, climbing back to us, reported that they had crossed the ice-bank. He had found the marks of the axe making footholds. And soon afterward there was another halloo from below, and the missing ones rode into sight. They were blithe and gay. They had crossed the ice-field and had seen a view which they urged we should not miss. But I had had enough view. All I wanted was the level earth. There could be nothing after that flat enough to suit me.

Sliding, stumbling, falling, leading our scrambling horses, we got down the wall on the other side. It was easier going, but slippery with heather and that green moss of the mountains, which looks so tempting but which gives neither foothold nor nourishment. Then, at last, the pass.

It was thirty-six hours since our horses had had anything to eat. We had had food and sleep, but during the entire night the poor animals had been searching those rocky mountain-sides for food and failing to find it. They stood in a dejected group, heads down, feet well braced to support their weary bodies.

But last summer was not a normal one. Unusually heavy snowfalls the winter before had been followed by a late, cold spring. The snow was only beginning to melt late in July, and by September, although almost gone from the pass itself, it still covered deep the trail on the east side.

So, some of those who read this may try the same great adventure hereafter and find it unnecessary to make the Doubtful Lake détour. I hope so. Because the pass is too wonderful not to be visited. Some day, when this magnificent region becomes a National Park, and there is something more than a dollar a mile to be spent on trails, a thousand dollars or so invested in trail-work will put this roof of the world within reach of any one who can sit a horse. And those who go there will be the better for the going. Petty things slip away in the silent high places. It is easy to believe in God there. And the stars and heaven seem very close.

One thing died there forever for me—my confidence in the man who writes the geography and who says that, representing the earth by an orange, the highest mountains are merely as the corrugations on its skin.

On Cascade Pass is the dividing-line between the Chelan and the Washington National Forests. For some reason we had confidently believed that reaching the pass would see the end of our difficulties. The only question that had ever arisen was whether we could get to the pass or not. And now we were there.

We were all perceptibly cheered; even the horses seemed to feel that the worst was over. Tame grouse scudded almost under our feet. They had never seen human beings, and therefore had no terror of them.

And here occurred one of the small disappointments that the Middle Boy will probably remember long after he has forgotten the altitude in feet of that pass and other unimportant matters. For he scared up some grouse, and this is the tragedy. The open season for grouse is September 1st in Chelan and September 15th across the line. And the birds would not cross the line. They were wise birds, and must have had a calendar about them, for, although we were vague as to the date, we knew it was not yet the 15th. So they sat or fluttered about, and looked most awfully good to eat. But they never went near the danger-zone or the enemy's trenches.

We lay about and rested, and the grouse laughed at us, and a great marmot, sentinel of his colony, sat on a near-by rock and whistled reports of what we were doing. Joe unlimbered the moving-picture camera, and the Head used the remainder of his small stock of iodine on the injured horses. The sun shone on the flowers and the snow, on the pail in which our cocoa was cooking, on the barrels of our unused guns and the buckles of the saddles. We watched the pack-horses coming down, tiny pin-point figures, oddly distorted by the great packs. And we rested for the descent.

I do not know why we thought that descent from Cascade Pass on the Pacific side was going to be easy. It was by far the most nerve-racking part of the trip. Yet we started off blithely enough. Perhaps Buddy knew that he was the first horse to make that desperate excursion. He developed a strange nervousness, and took to leaping off the trail in bad places, so that one moment I was a part of the procession and the next was likely to be six feet above the trail on a rocky ledge, with no apparent way to get down.

We had expected that there would be less snow on the western slope, but at the beginning of the trip we found snow everywhere. And whereas before the rock-slides had been wretchedly uncomfortable but at comparatively low altitudes, now we found ourselves climbing across slides which hugged the mountain thousands of feet above the valley.

Watching the pack-train coming down at Cascade Pass ***Watching the pack-train coming down at Cascade Pass***

Our nerves began to go, too, I think, on that last day. We were plainly frightened, not for ourselves but each for the other. There were many places where to dislodge a stone was to lose it as down a bottomless well. There was one frightful spot where it was necessary to go through a waterfall on a narrow ledge slippery with moss, where the water dropped straight, uncounted feet to the valley below.

The Little Boy paused blithely, his reins over his arm, and surveyed the scenery from the center of this death-trap.

"If anybody slipped here," he said, "he'd fall quite a distance." Then he kicked a stone to see it go.

"*Quit that!*" said the Head, in awful tones.

Midway of the descent, we estimated that we should lose at least ten horses. The pack was behind us, and there was no way to discover how they were faring. But as the ledges were never wide enough for a horse and the one leading him to move side by side, it seemed impossible that the pack-ponies with their wide burdens could edge their way along.

I had mounted Buddy again. I was too fatigued to walk farther, and, besides, I had fallen so often that I felt he was more sure-footed than I. Perhaps my narrowest escape on that trip was where a huge stone had slipped across the ledge we were following. Buddy, afraid to climb its slippery sides, undertook to leap it. There was one terrible moment when he failed to make a footing with his hind feet and we hung there over the gorge. After that, Dan Devore led him.

In spite of our difficulties, we got down to the timber-line rather quickly. But there trouble seemed to increase rather than diminish. Trees had fallen across the way, and dangerous détours on uncertain footing were necessary to get round them. The warm rains of the Pacific Slope had covered the mountain-sides with thick vegetation also. Our way, hardly less steep than on the day before, was overgrown with greenery that was often a trap for the unwary. And even when, at last, we were down beyond the imminent danger of breaking our necks at every step, there were more difficulties. The vegetation was rank, tremendously high. We worked our way through it, lost to each other and to the world.

Wilderness snows had turned the small streams to roaring rivers and spread them over flats through which we floundered. So long was it since the trail had been used that it was often difficult to tell where it took off from the other side of the stream. And our horses were growing very weary. They had made the entire trip without grain and with such bits of pasture as they could pick up in the mountains. Now it was a long time since they had had even grass.

It will never be possible to know how many miles we covered in that Cascade Pass trip. As Mr. Hilligoss said, mountain miles were measured with a coonskin, and they threw in the tail. Often to make a mile's advance we traveled four on the mountain-side.

So when they tell me that it was a trifle of sixteen miles from the top of Cascade Pass to the camp-site we made that night, I know that it was nearer thirty. In point of difficulties, it was a thousand.

Yet the last part of the trip, had we not been too weary to enjoy it, was superbly beautiful. There was a fine rain falling. The undergrowth was less riotous and had taken on the form of giant ferns, ten feet high, which overhung the trail. Here were great cypress trees thirty-six feet in circumference—a forest of them. We rode through green aisles where even the death of the forest was covered by soft moss. Out of the green and moss-covered trunks of dead giants, new growth had sprung, new trees, hanging gardens of ferns.

There had been much talk of Mineral Park. It was our objective point for camp that night, and I think I had gathered that it was to be a settlement. I expected nothing less than a post-office and perhaps some miners' cabins. When, at the end of that long, hard day, we reached Mineral Park at twilight and in a heavy rain, I was doomed to disappointment.

Mineral Park consists of a deserted shack in a clearing perhaps forty feet square, on the bank of a mountain stream. All around it is impenetrable forest. The mountains converge here so that the valley becomes a cañon. So dense was the growth that we put up our tents on the trail itself.

In the little clearing round the empty shack, the horses were tied in the cold rain. It was impossible to let them loose, for we could never have found them again. Our hearts ached that night for the hungry creatures; the rain had brought a cold wind and they could not even move about to keep warm.

I was too tired to eat that night. I went to bed and lay in my tent, listening to

the sound of the rain on the canvas. The camp-stove was set up in the trail, and the others gathered round it, eating in the rain. But, weary as I was, I did not sleep. For the first time, terror of the forest gripped me. It menaced; it threatened.

The roar of the river sounded like the rush of flame. I lay there and wondered what would happen if the forest took fire. For the gentle summer rain would do little good once a fire started. There would be no way out. The giant cliffs would offer no refuge. We could not even have reached them through the jungle had we tried. And forest-fires were common enough. We had ridden over too many burned areas not to realize that.

XVII

OUT TO CIVILIZATION

It was still raining in the morning. The skies were gray and sodden and the air was moist. We stood round the camp-fire and ate our fried ham, hot coffee, and biscuits. It was then that the Head, prompted by sympathy, fed his horse the rain-soaked biscuit, the apple, the two lumps of sugar, and the raw egg.

Yet, in spite of the weather, we were jubilant. The pack-train had come through without the loss of a single horse. Again the impossible had become possible. And that day was to see us out of the mountains and in peaceful green valleys, where the horses could eat their fill.

The sun came out as we started. Had it not been for the horses, we should have been entirely happy. But sympathy for them had become an obsession. We rode slowly to save them; we walked when we could. It was strange to go through that green wonderland and find not a leaf the horses could eat. It was all moss, ferns, and evergreens.

From the semi-arid lands east of the Cascades to the rank vegetation of the Pacific side was an extraordinary change. Trees grew to enormous sizes. In addition to the great cedars, there were hemlocks fifteen and eighteen feet in circumference. Only the strong trees survive in these valleys, and by that ruthless selection of nature weak young saplings die early. So we found cedar, hemlock, lodge-pole pine, white and Douglas fir, cottonwood, white pine, spruce, and alder of enormous size.

The brake ferns were the most common, often growing ten feet tall. We counted five varieties of ferns growing in profusion, among them brake ferns, sword-ferns, and maidenhair, most beautiful and luxuriant. The maidenhair fern grew in masses, covering dead trunks of trees and making solid walls of delicate green beside the trail.

"Silent Lawrie" knew them all. He knew every tiniest flower and plant that thrust its head above the leaf-mould. He saw them all, too. Peanuts, his horse, made his own way now, and the naturalist sat a trifle sideways in his saddle and showed me his discoveries.

I am no naturalist, so I rode behind him, notebook in hand, and I made a list something like this. If there are any errors they are not the naturalist's, but mine, because, although I have written a great deal on a horse's back, I am not proof against the accident of Whiskers stirring a yellow-jackets' nest on the trail, or of Buddy stumbling, weary beast that he was, over a root on the path.

This is my list: red-stemmed dogwood; bunchberries, in blossom on the higher reaches, in bloom below; service-berries, salmon-berries; skunk-cabbage, beloved by bears, and the roots of which the Indians roast and eat; above four thousand feet, white rhododendrons, and, above four thousand five hundred feet, heather; hellebore also in the high places; thimble-berries and red elderberries, tag-alder, red honeysuckle, long stretches of willows in the creek-bottoms; vining maples, too, and yew trees, the wood of which the Indians use for making bows.

A field of bear-grass

A field of bear-grass

Around Cloudy Pass we found the red monkey-flower. In different places there was the wild parsnip; the ginger-plant, with its heart-shaped leaf and blossom, buried in the leaf-mould, its crushed leaves redolent of ginger; masses of yellow violets, twinflowers, ox-eye daisies, and sweet-in-death, which is sold on the streets in the West as we sell sweet lavender. There were buttercups, purple asters, bluebells, goat's-beard, columbines, Mariposa lilies, bird's-bill, trillium, devil's-club, wild white heliotrope, brick-leaved spirea, wintergreen, everlasting.

And there are still others, where Buddy collided with the yellow-jacket, that I find I cannot read at all.

Something lifted for me that day as Buddy and I led off down that fat, green valley, with the pass farther and farther behind—a weight off my spirit, a deadly fear of accident, not to myself but to the Family, which had obsessed me for the last few days. But now I could twist in my saddle and see them all, ruddy and sound and happy, whistling as they rode. And I knew that it was all right. It had been good for them and good for me. It is always good to do a difficult thing. And no one has ever fought a mountain and won who is not the better for it. The mountains are not for the weak or the craven, or the feeble of mind or body.

We went on, to the distant tinkle of the bell on the lead-horse of the pack-

train.

It was that day that "Silent Lawrie" spoke I remember, because he had said so little before, and because what he said was so well worth remembering.

"Why can't all this sort of thing be put into music?" he asked. "It *is* music. Think of it, the drama of it all!"

Then he went on, and this is what "Silent Lawrie" wants to have written. I pass it on to the world, and surely it can be done. It starts at dawn, with the dew, and the whistling of the packers as they go after the horses. Then come the bells of the horses as they come in, the smoke of the camp-fire, the first sunlight on the mountains, the saddling and packing. And all the time the packers are whistling.

Then the pack starts out on the trail, the bells of the leaders jingling, the rattle and crunch of buckles and saddle-leather, the click of the horses' feet against the rocks, the swish as they ford a singing stream. The wind is in the trees and birds are chirping. Then comes the long, hard day, the forest, the first sight of snow-covered peaks, the final effort, and camp.

After that, there is the thrush's evening song, the afterglow, the camp-fire, and the stars. And over all is the quiet of the night, and the faint bells of grazing horses, like the silver ringing of the bell at a mass.

I wish I could do it.

At noon that day in the Skagit Valley, we found our first civilization, a camp where a man was cutting cedar blocks for shingles. He looked absolutely astounded when our long procession drew in around his shanty. He meant only one thing to us; he meant oats. If he had oats, we were saved. If he had no oats, it meant again long hours of traveling with our hungry horses.

He had a bag of oats. But he was not inclined, at first, to dispose of them, and, as a matter of fact, he did not sell them to us at all. When we finally got them from him, it was only on our promise to send back more oats. Money was of no use to him there in the wilderness; but oats meant everything.

Thirty-one horses we drove into that little bit of a clearing under the cedar trees, perhaps a hundred feet by thirty. Such wild excitement as prevailed among the horses when the distribution of oats began, such plaintive whinnying and restless stirring! But I think they behaved much better than human beings would

have under the same circumstances. And at last each was being fed—such a pathetically small amount, too, hardly more than a handful apiece, it seemed. In his eagerness, the Little Boy's horse breathed in some oats, and for a time it looked as though he would cough himself to death.

The wood-cutter's wife was there. We were the one excitement in her long months of isolation. I can still see her rather pathetic face as she showed me the lace she was making, the one hundred and one ways in which she tried to fill her lonely hours.

All through the world there are such women, shut away from their kind, staying loyally with the man they have chosen through days of aching isolation. That woman had children. She could not take them into the wilderness with her, so they were in a town, and she was here in the forest, making things for them and fretting about them and longing for them. There was something tragic in her face as she watched us mount to go on.

We were to reach Marblemont that day and there to leave our horses. After they had rested and recovered, Dan Devore was to take them back over the range again, while we went on to civilization and a railroad.

We promised the wood-cutter to send the oats back with the outfit; and when we sent them, we sent at the same time some magazines to that lonely wife and mother on the Skagit.

Late in the afternoon, we emerged from the forest. It was like coming from a darkened room into the light. One moment we were in the aisles of that great green cathedral, the next there was an open road and the sunlight and houses. We prodded the horses with our heels and raced down the road. Surprised inhabitants came out and stared. We waved to them; we loved them; we loved houses and dogs and cows and apple trees. But most of all we loved level places.

We were in time, too, for the railroad strike had not yet taken place.

As Bob got off his horse, he sang again that little ditty with which, during the most strenuous hours of the trip, we had become familiar:—

"Oh, a sailor's life is bold and free,
He lives upon the bright blue sea:
He has to work like h—, of course,
But he doesn't have to ride on a darned old horse."

THE END

Transcriber's Note:

The poems on pages 140 and 188, were punctuated differently. This was retained.

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