The First

ASCENT

of

TAKHOMA

by

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THE ASCENT OF TAKHOMA.

WHEN Vancouver, in 1792, penetrated the Straits of Fuca and explored the unknown waters of the Mediterranean of the Pacific, wherever he sailed, from the Gulf of Georgia to the farthest inlet of Puget Sound, he beheld the lofty, snow-clad barrier range of the Cascades stretching north and south and bounding the eastern horizon. Towering at twice the altitude of all others, at intervals Of a hundred miles there loomed up above the range three majestic, snowy peaks that

"Like giants stand
To sentinel enchanted land."

In the matter-of-fact spirit of a British sailor of his time, he named these sublime monuments of nature in honor of three lords of the English admiralty, Hood, Rainier, and Baker. Of these Rainier is the central, situated about half-way between the Columbia River and the line of British Columbia, and is by far the loftiest and largest. Its altitude Is 14,444 feet, while Hood is 11,026 feet, and Baker is 10,810 feet high. The others, too, are single cones, while Rainier, or Takhoma is an immense mountain-mass with three distinct peaks, an eastern, a northern, and a southern; the last two extending out and up from the main central dome, from the summit of which they stand over a mile distant, while they are nearly two miles apart from each other.

Takhoma overlooks Puget Sound from Olympia to Victoria, one hundred and sixty miles. Its snow-clad dome is visible from Portland on the Willamette, one hundred and twenty miles south, and from the table-land of Walla Walla, one hundred and fifty miles east. A region two hundred and fifty miles across, including nearly all of Washington Territory, part of Oregon, and part of Idaho, is commanded in one field of vision by this colossus among mountains.

Takhoma had never been ascended. It was a virgin peak. The superstitious fears and traditions of the Indians, as well as the danger of the ascent, had prevented their attempting to reach the summit, and the failures of a gallant and energetic officer, whose courage and hardihood were abundantly shown during the rebellion, had in general estimation proved it insurmountable

For two years I had resolved to ascend Takhoma, but both seasons and the dense smoke overspreading the whole country had prevented the attempt. Mr. Philomon Beecher Van Trump,

[1] Tak-hoˈma or Ta-hoˈma among the Yakima, Klickatat, Puyallup, Nisquallys, and allied tribes of Indians is the generic term for mountain, used precisely as we use the word "mount," as Takhoma Wynatchie, or Mount Wynatchie,. But they all designate Rainier simply as Takhoma, or The Mountain, just as the mountain men used to call it the " Old He.."

humorous, generous, whole-souled, with endurance and experience withal, for he had roughed it in the mines, and a poetic appreciation of the picturesque and the sublime, was equally eager to scale the summit. Mr. Edward T. Coleman, an English gentleman of Victoria, a landscape artist and an Alpine tourist, whose reputed experience in Switzerland had raised a high opinion of his ability above the snow-line, completed the party.

Olympia, the capital of Washington Territory, is a beautiful, maple-embowered town of some two thousand inhabitants, situated at the southernmost extremity of Puget Sound, and west of Takhoma, distant in an air line seventy-five miles. The intervening country is covered with dense fir forests, almost impenetrable to the midday sun, and obstructed with fallen trees, upturned roots and stumps, and a perfect jungle of undergrowth, through which the most energetic traveler can accomplish but eight or nine miles a day. It was advisable to gain the nearest possible point by some trail, before plunging into the unbroken forest. The Nisqually River, which rises on the southern and western slopes of Takhoma, and empties into the sound a few miles north of Olympia, offered the most direct and natural approach. Ten years before, moreover, a few enterprising settlers had blazed out a trail across the Cascade Range, which followed the Nisqually nearly up to its source, thence deflected south to the Cowlitz River, and pursued this stream in a northeastern course to the summit of the range, thus turning the great mountain by a wide circuit. The best-informed mountain men represented the approaches on the south and southeast as by far the most favorable. The Nisqually-Cowlitz trail, then, seemed much the best, for the Nisqually, heading in the south and southwest slopes, and the Cowlitz, at the southeastern, afforded two lines of approach, by either of which the distance to the mountain, after leaving the trail, could not exceed thirty miles.

One August afternoon, Van Trump and I drove out to Yelm, Prairie, thirty miles east of Olympia, and on the Nisqually River. We dashed rapidly on over a smooth, hard, level road, traversing wide reaches of prairie, passing under open groves of oaks and firs, and plunging through masses of black, dense forest in ever-changing variety. The moon had risen as we emerged upon Yelm Prairie; Takhoma, bathed in cold, white, spectral light from summit to base, appeared startlingly near and distinct. Our admiration was not so noisy as usual. Perhaps a little of dread mingled with it. In another hour we drove nearly across the plain and turned into a lane which conducted us up a beautiful rising plateau, crowned with a noble grove of oaks and overlooking the whole prairie. A comfortable, roomy house with a wide porch nestled among the trees, and its hospitable owner, Mr. James Longmire, appeared at the door and bade us enter.

The next morning we applied to Mr. Longmire for a guide, and for his advice as to our proposed trip. He was one of the few who had marked out the Nisqually-Cowlitz trail years ago. He had explored the mountains about Takhoma as thoroughly, perhaps, as any other white man. One of the earliest settlers, quiet, self-reliant, sensible, and kindly, a better counselor than he could not have been found. The trail, he said, had not been traveled for four years, and was entirely illegible to eyes not well versed in woodcraft, and it would be folly for any one to attempt to follow it who was not thoroughly acquainted with the country. He could not leave his harvest, and move for in three weeks he was to cross the mountains for a drove of cattle. His wife, too, quietly discouraged his going. She described his appearance on his return from previous mountain trips, looking as haggard and thin as though he had just risen from a sick-bed. She threw out effective little sketches of toil, discomfort, and hardship incident to mountain travel, and dwelt upon the hard fare. The bountiful country breakfast heaped before us, the rich cream, fresh butter and eggs, snowy, melting biscuits, and broiled chicken, with rich, white gravy, heightened the effect of her words.

But at length, when it appeared that no one else who knew the trail could be found, Mr. Longmire yielded to our persuasions, and consented to conduct us as far as the trail led, and to procure an Indian guide before leaving us to our own resources. As soon as we returned home we went with Mr. Coleman to his room to see a few indispensable equipments he had provided, in order that we might procure similar ones. The floor was literally covered with his traps, and he exhibited them one by one, expatiating upon their various uses. There was his ground- sheet, a large gum blanket equally serviceable to Mr. Coleman as a tent in camp and a bath-tub at the hotel. There was a strong rope to which we were all to be tied when climbing the snow - fields, so that if one fell into a chasm the others could hold him up. The "creepers" were a clumsy, heavy arrangement of iron spikes made to fasten on the foot with chains and straps, in order to prevent slipping on the ice. He had an ice-axe for cutting steps, a spirit-lamp for making tea on the mountains, green goggles for snow-blindness, deer's fat for the face, Alpine staffs, needles and thread, twine, tacks, screws, screwdriver, gimlet, file, several medical prescriptions, two boards for pressing flowers, sketching materials, and in fact every article that Mr. Coleman in his extensive reading had found used or recommended by travelers. Every one of these he regarded as indispensable. The Alpine staff was, he declared, most important of all, a great assistance in traveling through the woods as well as on the ice; and he illustrated on his hands and knees how to cross a crevasse in the ice on two staffs. This interview naturally brought to mind the characteristic incident related of Packwood, the mountain man who, as hunter and prospector, had explored the deepest recesses of the Cascades. He had been engaged to guide a railroad surveying party across the mountains, and just as the party was about to start he approached the chief and demanded an advance to enable him to buy his outfit for the trip. “How much do you want?" asked the chief, rather anxiously, lest Packwood should overdraw his prospective wages. “Well, about two dollars and a half," was the reply; and at the camp-fire that evening, being asked if he had bought his outfit, Packwood, thrusting his band into his pocket, drew forth and exhibited with perfect seriousness and complacency his entire outfit, —a jack-knife and a plug of tobacco.

Half a dozen carriages rattled gayly out of Olympia in the cool of the morning, filled with a laughing, singing, frolicking bevy of young ladies and gentlemen. They were the Takhoma party starting on their adventurous trip, with a chosen escort accompanying them to their first camp. They rested several hours at Longmire's during the heat of the day, and the drive was then continued seven miles farther, to the Lacamas, an irregular-shaped, prairie two miles in length by half a mile in breadth. Here live two of Mr. Longmire's sons. Their farms form the last settlement, and at the gate of Mr. Elkane Longmire's house the road ends. A wooded knoll overlooking the prairie, with a spring of water at its foot, was selected as the campground. Some of the party stretched a large sail between the trees as a tent, others watered and fed the horses, and others busied themselves with the supper. Two eager sportsmen started after grouse, while their more practical companions bought half a dozen chickens, and had them soon dressed and sputtering over the fire. The shades of night were falling as the party sat down on the ground and partook of a repast fit for the Olympians, and with a relish sharpened by the long journey and a whole day's fast.

Early in the morning Mr. Longmire arrived in camp with two mules and a pack-horse, and our mountain outfit was rapidly made up into suitable bales and packed upon the horse and one of the mules, the other mule being reserved for Longmire’s own riding. We assembled around the breakfast with spirits as gay and appetites as sharp as ever. Then, with many good-bys and much waving of. handkerchiefs, the party broke up.

Four roughly clad pedestrians moved off in single file, leading their pack animals, and looking back at every step to catch the last glimpse of the bright garments and fluttering cambrics, while the carriages drove rapidly down the road and disappeared in the dark, sullen forest.

We stepped off briskly, following a dim trail in an easterly course, and crossing the little prairie entered the timber. After winding over hilly ground for about three miles, we descended into the Nisqually bottom and forded a fine brook at the foot of the hill. For the next ten miles our route lay across the bottom, and along the bank of the river, passing around logs, following old, dry beds of the river and its lateral sloughs, ankle-deep in loose sand, And forcing our way through dense jungles of vine-maple. The trail was scarcely visible, and much obstructed by fallen trees and underbrush, and its difficulties were aggravated by the bewildering tracks of Indians who had lately wandered about the bottom in search of berries or rushes. We repeatedly missed the trail, and lost hours in retracing our steps and searching for the right course. The weather was hot and sultry and rendered more oppressive by the dense foliage; myriads of gnats and mosquitoes tormented us and drove our poor animals almost frantic; and our thirst, aggravated by the severe and unaccustomed toil, seemed quenchless. At length we reached the ford of the Nisqually. Directly opposite, a perpendicular bluff of sand and gravel in alternate strata rose to the height of two hundred and fifty feet, its base washed by the river and its top crowned with firs. The stream was a hundred yards wide, waist-deep, and very rapid. Its waters were icy, cold, and of a milk-white hue. This color is the characteristic of glacial rivers. The impalpable powder of thousands of tons of solid rocks, ground up beneath the vast weight and resistless, though imperceptible, flow of huge glaciers, remains in solution in these streams, and colors them milk-white to the sea. Leading the animals down the bank and over a wide, dry bar of cobble - stones, we stood at the brink of the swift, turbulent river, and prepared to essay its passage. Coleman mounted behind Van Trump on the little saddle-mule, his long legs dangling nearly to the ground, one band grasping his Alpine staff, the other the neck-rope of the pack-mule, which Longmire bestrode. Longmire led in turn the packhorse, behind whose bulky load was perched the other member of the party. The cavalcade, linked together in this order, had but just entered the stream when Coleman dropped the neck-rope he was holding. The mule, bewildered by the rush and roar of the waters, turned directly down - stream, and in another instant our two pack-animals, with their riders, would have been swept away in the furious rapids, had not Longmire with great presence of mind turned their erratic coarse in the right direction and safely brought them to the opposite shore. Following the bottom along the river for some distance, we climbed up the end of the bluff already mentioned, by a steep zigzag trail, and skirted along its brink for a mile. Far below us on the right rushed the Nisqually. On the left the bluff fell off in a steep hill-side thickly clothed with woods and underbrush, and at its foot plowed the Owhap, a large stream emptying into the Nisqually just below our ford. Another mile through the woods brought us out upon the Mishell Prairie, a beautiful, oval meadow of a hundred acres, embowered in the tall, dense fir forest, with a grove of lofty, branching oaks at its farther extremity, and covered with green grass and bright flowers. It takes its name front the Mishell River, which empties into the Nisqually a mile above the prairie.

We had marched sixteen miles. The packs were gladly thrown off beneath a lofty fir; the animals were staked out to graze. A spring in the edge of the woods afforded water, and while Mr. Coleman busied himself with his pipe, his flask, his note-book, his sketch-book, and his pouch of multifarious odds and ends, the other members of the party performed the duties incident to camp-life; made the fire, brought water, spread the blankets, and prepared supper. The

flags attached to our Alpine staffs waved gayly overhead, and the sight of their bright folds fluttering in the breeze deepened the fixed resolve to plant them on Takhoma's hoary head, and made failure seem impossible. Mr. Coleman announced the altitude of Mishell Prairie as eight hundred feet by the barometer. By an unlucky fall the thermometer was broken.

The march was resumed early next morning. As we passed the lofty oaks at the end of the little prairie "On that tree," said Longmire, pointing out one of the noblest, Maxon's company hanged two Indians in the war of '56. Ski-hi and his band, after many depredations upon the settlements, were encamped on the Mishell, a mile distant, in fancied security, when Maxon and his men surprised them and cut off every soul except the two prisoners whom they hanged here."

For eight miles the trail led through thick woods, and then, after crossing a wide burn, past a number of deserted Indian wigwams, where another trail from the Nisqually plains joined ours, it descended a gradual slope, traversed a swampy thicket and another mile of heavy timber, and debonched on the Mishell River. This is a fine, rapid, sparkling stream, knee-deep and forty feet wide, rippling and dashing over a gravelly bed with clear, cold, transparent water. The purity of the clear water, so unlike the yeasty Nisqually, proves that the Mishell is no glacial river. Rising in an outlying range to the northwest of Takhoma, it flows in a southwest course to its confluence with the Nisqually near our previous night's camp. We unsaddled for the noon-rest. Van Trump went up the stream, fishing; Lougmire crossed to look out the trail ahead, and Coleman made tea solitaire.

An hour passed, and Longmlre returned. " The trail is blind," said he, and we have no time to lose." Just then Van Trump returned; and the little train was soon in readiness to resume thus tramp. Longmire rode his mule across the stream, telling us to drive the pack animals after him and follow by a convenient log near by. As the mule attempted to climb a low place in the opposite bank, which offered an apparently easy exit from the river; his hind legs sank in a quicksand, he sat down quickly, if not gracefully, and, not fancying that posture, threw himself clear under water. His dripping rider rose to his feet, flung the bridle- rein over his arm, and, springing up the bank at a more practicable point, strode along the trail with as little delay and as perfect unconcern as though an involuntary ducking was of no more moment than climbing over a log.

The trail was blind. Longmire scented it through thickets of salal, fern, and underbrush, stumbling over roots, vines, and hollows hidden in the rank vegetation, now climbing huge trunks that the animals could barely scramble over, and now laboriously working his way around some fallen giant and traveling two hundred yards in order to gain a dozen yards on the course. The packs, continually jammed against trees and shaken loose by this rough traveling, required frequent repacking—no small task. At the very top of a high, steep hill, up which we had laboriously zigzagged shortly after crossing the Mishell, the little packhorse, unable to sustain the weight of the pack, which had shifted all to one side, fell and rolled over and over to the bottom. Bringing up the goods and chattels one by one on our own shoulders to the top of the hill, we replaced the load and started again. The course was in a southerly direction, over high rolling ground of good clay soil, heavily timbered, with marshy swales at intervals, to the Nisqually River again, a distance of twelve miles. We encamped on a narrow flat between the high hill just descended and the wide and noisy river, near an old ruined log-hut, the former residence of a once famed Indian medicine man, who, after the laudable custom of his race, had expiated with his life his failure to cure a patient.

Early next morning we continued our laborious march along the right bank of the Nisqually. Towards noon we left the river, and after thridding in an easterly course a perfect

labyrinth of fallen timber for six miles, and forcing our way with much difficulty through the tangled jungle of an extensive vine-maple swamp, at length crossed Silver Creek and gladly threw off the packs for an hour's rest.

A short distance after crossing Silver Creek the trail emerged upon more open ground, and for the first time the Nisqually Valley lay spread out in view before us. On the left stretched a wall of steep, rocky mountains, standing parallel to the course of the river and extending far eastward, growing higher and steeper and more rugged as it receded from view. At the very extremity of this range Takhoma loomed aloft, its dome high above all others and its flanks extending far down into the valley, and all covered, dome and flanks, with snow of dazzling white, in striking contrast with the black basaltic mountains about it. Startlingly near it looked to our eyes, accustomed to the restricted views and gloom of the forest.

After our noon rest we continued our journey up the valley, twisting in and out among the numerous trunks of trees that encumbered the ground, and after several hours of tedious trudging struck our third camp on Copper Creek, the twin brother to Silver Creek, just at dusk. We were thoroughly tired, having made twenty miles in thirteen hours of hard traveling.

Starting at daylight next morning, we walked two miles over rough ground much broken by ravines, and then descended into the bed of the Nisqually at the mouth of Goat Creek, another fine stream which empties here. We continued our course along the river bed, stumbling over rocky bars and forcing our way through dense thickets of willow, for some distance, then ascended the steep bank, went around a high hill over four miles of execrable trail, and descended to the river again, only two miles above Goat Creek. At this point the Takhoma branch or North Fork joins the Nisqually. This stream rises on the west side of Takhoma, is nearly as large as the main river, and like it shows its glacial origin by its milk-white water and by its icy cold, terribly swift and furious torrent. Crossing the Takhoma branch, here thirty yards wide, we kept up the main river, crossing and recrossing the stream frequently, and toiling over rocky bars for four miles, a distance which consumed five hours, owing to the difficulties of the way. We then left the Nisqually, turning to the right and traveling in a southerly course, and followed up the bed of a swampy creek for half a mile, then crossed a level tract much obstructed with fallen timber, then ascended a burnt ridge, and followed it for two miles to a small, marshy prairie in a wide canyon or defile closed in by rugged mountains on either side, and camped beside a little rivulet an the east side of the prairie. This was Bear Prairie, the altitude of which by the barometer was 2830 feet. The canyon formed a low pass between the Nisqually and Cowlitz rivers, and the little rivulet near which we camped flowed into the latter stream. The whole region had been swept by fire; thousands of giant trunks stood blackened and lifeless, the picture of desolation.

As we were reclining on the ground around the camp-fire, enjoying the calm and beatific repose which comes to the toil-worn mountaineer after his hearty supper, one of these huge trunks, after several warning creaks, came toppling and falling directly over our camp. All rushed to one side or another to avoid the impending crash. As one member of the party, hastily catching up in one hand a frying-pan laden with tin plates and cups, and in the other the camp kettle half full of boiling water, was scrambling away, his foot tripped In a blackberry vine and he fell outstretched at full length, the much-prized utensils scattering far and wide, while the falling tree came thundering down in the rear, doing no other damage, however, than burying a pair of. blankets.

The following day Longmire and the writer went down the canyon to its junc-tion with the Cowlitz River, in search of a band of Indians who usually made their head-quarters at this point, and among whom Longmire hoped to find some hunter familiar with the mountains

who might guide us to the base of Takhoma. The tiny rivulet as we descended soon swelled to a large and furious torrent, and its bed filled nearly the whole bottom of the gorge. The mountains rose on both sides precipitously, and the traces of land-slides which had gouged vast furrows down their sides were frequent. With extreme toil and difficulty we made our way, continually wading the torrent, clambering over broken masses of rock which filled its bed, or clinging to the steep hill-sides, and reached the Cowlitz at length after twelve miles of this fatiguing work, but only to find the Indian camp deserted. Further march, however, was rewarded by the discovery of a rude shelter formed of a few skins thrown over a frame-work of poles, beneath which sat a squaw at work upon a half-dressed deer-skin. An infant and a naked child of perhaps four years lay on the ground near the fire in front. Beside the lodge and quietly watching our approach, of which he alone seemed aware, stood a tall, slender Indian clad in buckskin shirt and leggings, with a striped woolen breech-clout, and a singular head garniture which gave him a fierce and martial appearance. This consisted of an old military cap, the visor thickly studded with brass-headed nails, while a large circular brass article, which might have been the top of an oil-lamp, was fastened upon the crown. Several eagle feathers stuck in the crown and strips of fur sewed upon the sides completed the edifice, which, notwithstanding its components, appeared imposing rather than ridiculous. A long Hudson Bay gun, the stock also ornamented with brass-headed tacks, lay in the hollow of the Indian's shoulder.

He received us with great friendliness, yet not without dignity, shaking hands and motioning us to a seat beneath the rude shelter, while his squaw hastened to place before us suspicious-looking cakes of dried berries, apparently their only food. After a moderate indulgence in this delicacy, Longmire made known our wants. The Indian spoke fluently the Chinook jargon, that high-bred lingo invented by the old fur-traders. He called himself "Sluiskin" and readily agreed to guide us to Rainier, known to him only as Takhoma, and promised to report at Bear Prairie the next day. It was after seven in the evening when we reached camp thoroughly fagged.

Punctual to promise, Sluiskin rode up at noon mounted upon a stunted Indian pony, while his squaw and pappooses followed upon another even more puny and forlorn. After devouring an enormous dinner, evidently compensating for the rigors of a long fast, in reply to our inquiries he described the route he proposed to take to Takhoma. Pointing to the almost perpendicular height immediately back or east of our camp, towering three thousand feet or more overhead, the loftiest mountain in sight, "We go to the top of that mountain to-day," said he, " and to - morrow we follow along the high, backbone ridge of the mountains, now up, now down, first on one side and then on the other, a long day's journey, and at last, descending far down from the mountains into a deep valley, reach the base of Takhoma. Sluiskin illustrated his Chinook with speaking signs and pantomime. He had frequently hunted the mountain sheep upon the snow-fields of Takhoma, but had never ascended to the summit. It was impossible to do so, and he put aside as idle talk our expressed intention of making the ascent.

We had already selected the indispensable articles for a week's tramp, a blanket apiece, the smallest coffee-and frying-pan, a scanty supply of bacon, flour, coffee, etc., and had made them up into suitable packs of forty pounds each, provided with slings like a knapsack, and had piled together under the lee of a huge fallen trunk our remaining goods. Longmire, who although impatient to return home, where his presence was urgently needed, had watched and directed our preparations during the forenoon with kindly solicitude, now bade us good-by, mounted on one mule and leading the other, he soon disappeared down the trail on his lonely, homeward way. He left us the little pack-horse, thinking it would be quite capable of carrying

our diminished outfit after our return from Takhoma.

Sluiskin led the way. The load upon his shoulders sustained by a broad band passing over his head, upon which his heavy, brass-studded rifle, clasped in both hands, was poised and balanced. Leaving behind the last vestige of trail, we toiled in single file slowly and laboriously up the mountain all the afternoon. The steepness of the ascent in many places required the use of both band and foot in climbing, and the exercise of great caution to keep the heavy packs from dragging us over backwards. Coleman lagged behind from the start, and at intervals his voice could be beard hallooing and calling upon us to wait. Towards sunset we reached a level terrace, or bench, near the summit, gladly threw off our packs, and waited for Coleman, who we supposed, could not be far below. He, not appearing, we halooed again and again. No answer! We then sent Sluiskin down the mountain to his aid. After an hour's absence the Indian returned. He had descended, he said, a long distance, and at last caught sight of Coleman. He was near the foot of the mountain, had thrown away his pack, blankets and all, and was evidently returning to camp. And Sluiskin finished his account with expressions of contempt for the "cultus King George man." What was. to be done? Coleman carried in his pack all our bacon, our only supply of meat, except a few pounds of dried beef. He also had the barometer, the only instrument that had survived the jolts and troubles of our rough trip. But, on the other hand, he had been a clog upon our march front the outset. He was evidently too infirm to endure the toil before us, and would not only be unable to reach, still less to ascend Takhoma, he might even impede and frustrate our own efforts. Knowing that he would be safe in camp until our return, we hastily concluded to proceed without him, trusting to our rifles for a supply of meat.

Sluiskin led us along the side of the ridge in a southerly direction for two miles farther, to a well-sheltered, grassy hollow in the mountain -top, where he had often previously encamped. It was after dark when we reached this place. The usual spring had gone dry; and, parched with thirst, we searched the gulches of the mountain-side for water for an hour, but without success. At length the writer, recalling a scanty rill which trickled across their path a mile back, taking the coffee-pot and large canteen, retraced his steps, succeeded in filling these utensils, and after much fumbling in the dark and consequent delay and returned to camp. He found Van Trump and the Indian anxious at the long delay, mounted on the crest of the ridge some two hundred yards from camp, waving torches and shouting lustily to direct his steps. The mosquitoes and flies came in clouds, and were terribly annoying. After supper of coffee and bread, we drank up the water, rolled ourselves in our blankets, and lay down under a tree with our flags floating from the boughs overhead. Hot as had been the day, the night was cold and frosty, owing, doubtless, to the altitude of our camp.

At the earliest dawn next morning we were moving on without breakfast, and parched with thirst. Sluiskin led us in a general course about north-northeast, but twisting to nearly every point of the compass, and climbing up and down , thousands of feet from mountain to mountain, yet keeping on the highest backbone between the bead - waters of the Nisqually and Cowlitz rivers. After, several hours of this work we came to a well-sheltered hollow, one side filled with a broad bed of snow, at the foot of which nestled a tiny, tranquil lakelet, and gladly threw off our heavy packs, assuaged our thirst, and took breakfast, - bread and coffee again. Early as it was, the chill of the frosty night still in the air, the mosquitoes renewal their attacks, and proved as innumerable and vexatious as ever.

Continuing our march, we crossed many beds of snow, and drank again and again from the icy rills which flowed out of them The mountains

were covered with stunted mountain-ash and low, stubby firs with short, bushy branches, and occasionally a few pines. Many slopes were destitute of trees, but covered with luxuriant grass and the greatest profusion of beautiful flowers of vivid hues. This was especially the case with the southern slopes, while the northern sides of the mountains were generally wooded. We repeatedly ate berries, and an hour afterwards ascended to where berries of the same kind were found scarcely yet formed. The country was much obscured with smoke from heavy fires which had been raging on the Cowlitz the last two days. But when at length, after climbing for hours an almost perpendicular peak, - creeping on hands and knees over loose rocks, and clinging to scanty tufts of grass where a single slip would have sent us rolling a thousand feet down to destruction, —we reached the highest crest and looked over, we exclaimed that we were already well repaid for all our toil. Nothing can convey an idea of the grandeur and ruggedness of the mountains. Directly in front, and apparently not over two miles distant, although really twenty, old Takhoma loomed up more gigantic than ever. We were far above the level of the lower snow-line on Takhoma. The high peak upon which we clung seemed the central core or focus of all the mountains around, and on every side we harked down vertically thousands of feet, deep down into vast, terrible defiles, black and fir-clothed, which stretched away until lost in the distance and smoke. Between them, separating one from another, the mountain-walls rose precipitously and terminated in bare, columnar peaks of black basaltic or volcanic rock, as sharp as needles. It seemed incredible that any human foot could have followed out the course we came, as we looked back upon it.

After a few hours more of this climbing, we stood upon the summit of the last mountain-ridge that separated us from Takhoma. We were in a saddle of the ridge; a lofty peak rose on either side. Below us extended a long, steep hollow or gulch filled with snow, the farther extremity of which seemed to drop off perpendicularly into a deep valley or basin. Across this valley, directly in front, filling up the whole horizon and view with an indescribable aspect of magnitude and grandeur, stood the old leviathan of mountains. The broad, snowy dome rose far among and above the clouds. The sides fell off in vertical steeps and fearful black walls of rock for a third of its altitude; lower down, vast, broad, gently sloping snow-fields surrounded the mountain, and were broken here and there by ledges or masses of the dark basaltic rock protruding above them. Long, green ridges projected from this snow-belt at intervals, radiating from the mountain and extending many miles until lost in the distant forests. Deep valleys lay between these ridges. Each at its upper end formed the bed of a glacier, which closed and filled it up with solid ice. Below the snow-line bright green grass with countless flowers, whose vivid scarlet, blue, and purple formed bodies of color in the distance, clothed the whole region of ridges and valleys, for a breadth of five miles. The beautiful balsam firs, about thirty feet in height; and of a purple, dark - green color, stood scattered over the landscape, now singly, now in groves, and now in long lines, as though planted in some well-kept park. Farther down an unbroken fir forest surrounded the mountain and clad the lower portions of the ridges and valleys. In every sheltered depression or hollow lay beds of snow with tiny brooks and rivulets flowing from them. The glaciers terminated not gradually, but abruptly, with a wall of ice from one to five hundred feet high, from beneath which yeasty torrents burst forth and rushed roaring and tumbling down the valleys. The principal of these, far away on our left front, could be seen plunging over two considerable falls, half hidden in the forest, while the roar of waters was distinctly audible.

At length we cautiously descended the snow-bed, and, climbing at least fifteen hundred feet down a steep but ancient land-slide by means of the bushes growing among the loose rocks,

reached the valley, and encountered a beautiful, peaceful, limpid creek. Van Trump could not resist the temptation of unpacking his bundle, selecting one of his carefully preserved flies, and trying the stream for trout, but without a single rise. After an hour's rest and a hearty repast we resumed our pack, despite Sluiskin's protests, who seemed tired out with his arduous day's toil and pleaded hard against traveling farther. Crossing the stream, we walked through several grassy glades, or meadows, alternating with open woods. We soon came to the foot of one of the long ridges already described, and ascending it followed it for several miles through open woods, until we emerged upon the enchanting emerald and flowery meads which clothe these upper regions. Halting upon a rising eminence in our course, and looking back, we beheld the ridge of mountains we had just descended stretching from east to west in a steep, rocky wall; a little to the left, a beautiful lake, evidently the source of the stream just crossed, which we called Clear Creek, and glimpses of which could be seen among the trees as it flowed away to the right, down a rapidly descending valley along the foot of the lofty mountain-wall. Beyond the lake again, still farther to the left, the land also subsided quickly. It was at once evident that the lake was upon a summit, or divide, between the waters of the Nisqually and Cowlitz rivers. The ridge which we were ascending lay north and south, and led directly up to the mountain.

We camped, as the twilight fell upon us, in an aromatic grove of balsam firs. A grouse., the fruit of Sluiskin's rifle, broiled before the fire and impartially divided, gave relish to the dry bread and coffee. After supper we reclined upon our blankets in front of the bright, blazing fire, well satisfied. The Indian when starting from Bear Prairie had evidently deemed, our intention of ascending Takhoma too absurd to deserve notice. The turning back of Mr. Coleman only deepened his contempt for our prowess. But his views had undergone a change with the day's march. The affair began to look serious to him, and now in Chinook, interspersed with a few words of broken English and many signs and gesticulations, he began a solemn exhortation and warning against our rash project.

Takhoma, he said, was an enchanted mountain, inhabited by an evil spirit, who dwelt in a fiery lake on its summit. No human being could ascend it or even attempt its ascent, and survive. At first, indeed, the way was easy. The broad snow-fields, over which be had so often hunted the mountain goat, interposed no obstacle, but above them the rash adventurer would be compelled to climb up steeps of loose, rolling rocks, which would turn beneath his feet and cast him headlong into the deep abyss below. The upper snow- slopes, too, were so steep that not, even a goat, far less a man, could get over them. And he would have to pass below lofty walls and precipices whence avalanches of snow and vast masses of rock were continually falling; and these would inevitably bury the intruder beneath their ruins. Moreover, a furious tempest continually swept the crown of the mountain, and the luckless adventurer even if he wonderfully escaped the perils below, would be torn from the mountain and whirled through the air by this fearful blast. And the awful being upon the summit, who would surely punish the sacrilegious attempt to invade his sanctuary,—who could hope to escape his vengeance? Many years ago, he continued, his grandfather, a great chief and warrior, and a mighty hunter, had ascended part way up the mountain, and had encountered some of these dangers, but he fortunately turned hack in time to escape destruction; and no other Indian had ever gone so far.

Finding that his words did not produce the desired effect, he assured us that, if we persisted in attempting the ascent, he would wait three days for our return, and would then proceed to Olympia and inform our friends of our death; and he begged us to give him a paper (a written note) to take to them, so that they might believe his story.

Sluiskin's manner during this harangue was earnest in the extreme, and he was undoubtedly sincere in his forebodings. After we had retired to rest, he kept up a most dismal chant, or dirge, until late in the night. The dim, white, spectral. mass towering so near, the roar of the torrents below us, and the occasional thunder of avalanches, several of which fell during the night, added to the weird effect of Sluiskin's song.

The next morning we moved two miles. farther up the ridge and made camp in the last clump of trees, quite within the limit of perpetual snow. Thence, with snow-spikes upon our feet and alpine staff in hand, we went up the snow-fields to reconnoiter the best line of ascent. We spent four hours, walking fast, in reaching the foot of the steep, abrupt part of the mountain. After carefully scanning the southern approach, we decided to ascend on the morrow by a steep, rocky ridge that seemed to lead up to the snowy crown.

Our camp was pitched on a high knoll crowned by a grove of balsam firs, near a turbulent glacial torrent. About nine o'clock, after we had lain down for the

night, the firs around our camp took fire

and suddenly burst out in a vivid conflagration. The night was dark and windy, and the scene— the vast, dim outlines of Takhoma, the white snow-fields, the roaring torrent, the crackling blaze of the burning trees — was strik- ingly wild and picturesque.

In honor of our guide we named the cascade at our feet Sluiskin's Falls; the stream we named Glacier Creek, and the mass of ice whence it derives its source we styled the Little Nisqnally Glacier.

Before daylight the next morning, Wednesday, Angust 17, 1870, we were up and had breakfasted, and at six o'clock we started to ascend Takhoma. Besides our alpine staffs and we carried a long rope, an ice axe, a brass plate inscribed with our names, our flags, a large canteen, and some luncheon. We were also provided with gloves, and green goggles for snow-blindness, but found no occasion to use the latter. Having suffered much from the heat of the sun since leaving Bear Prairie, and being satisfied from our late reconnaissance that we could reach the summit and return on the same day, we left behind our coats and blankets. In three hours of fast walking we reached the highest point of the preceding day's trip, and commenced the ascent by the steep, rocky ridge already described as reaching up to the snowy dome. We found it to be a very narrow, steep, irregular backbone, composed of a crumbling basaltic conglomerate, the top only, or backbone, being solid rock, while the sides were composed of loose broken rocks and debris. Up this ridge, keeping upon the spine when possible, and sometimes forced to pick our way over the loose and broken rocks at the sides, around columnar masses which we could not directly climb over, we toiled for five hundred yards, ascending at an angle of nearly forty-five degrees. Here the ridge connected, by a narrow neck or saddle, with a vast, square rock, whose huge and distinct outline can be clearly perceived from a distance of twenty-five miles. This, like the ridge, is a conglomerate of basalt and trap, its well - defined strata, and is rapidly disintegrating and continually falling in showers and even masses of rocks and rubbish, under the action of frost by night and melting snow by day. It lies imbedded in the side of the mountain, with one side and end projected and overhanging deep, terrible gorges, and it is at the corner or junction of these two faces that the ridge joined it at a point about a thousand feet below its top. On the southern face the strata were inclined at an angle of thirty degrees. Crossing the saddle from the ridge, despite a strong wind which swept across it, we gained a narrow ledge formed by a stratum more solid than its fellows, and creeping along it, hugging close to the main rock on our right, laboriously and cautiously continued the ascent. The wind was blowing violently. We were now crawling along the face of the precipice almost in mid-air. On the right the rock towered far above us

perpendicularly. On the left it fell sheer off two thousand feet, into a vast abyss. A great glacier filled its bed and stretched away for several miles, all seamed or wrinkled across, with countless crevasses. We crept up and along a ledge, not of solid, sure rock, but one obstructed with the loose stones and debris which were continually falling from above, and we trod on the upper edge of a steep slope of this rubbish, sending the stones at every step rolling and bounding into the depth below. Several times during our progress showers of rocks fell from the precipice above across our path, and rolled into the abyss, but fortunately none struck us.

Four hundred yards of this progress brought us to where the rock joined the overhanging edge of the vast neve' or snow-field that descended from the dome of the mountain and was from time to time, pressed forward and downward, breaking off in immense masses, which fell with a noise of thunder into the great canyon on our left. The junction of rock and ice afforded our only line of ascent. It was an almost perpendicular gutter, but here our ice-axe came into play, and by cutting steps in the ice and availing ourselves of every crevice or projecting point of the rock, we slowly worked our way up two hundred yards higher. Falling stones were continually coming down, both from the rock on our right and from the ice in front, as it melted and relaxed its hold upon them. Mr. Van Trump was hit by a small one, and another struck his staff from his hand. Abandoning the rock, then, at the earliest practicable point, we ascended directly up the ice, cutting steps for a short distance, until we reached ice so corrugated, or drawn up in sharp pinnacles, as to afford a foothold. These folds or pinnacles were about two or three feet high, and half as thick, and stood close together. It was like a very violent chop sea, only the waves were sharper. Up this safe footing we climbed rapidly, the side a the mountain becoming less and less steep, and the ice waves smaller and more regular, and, after ascending about three hundred yards, stood fairly upon the broad dome of mighty Takhoma. It rose before us like a broad, gently swelling headland of dazzling white, topped with black, where the rocky summit projected above the neve'. Ascending diagonally towards the left, we continued our course. The snow was hard and firm under foot, crisp and light for an inch or two, but solidified into ice a foot or less beneath the surface. The whole field was covered with the ice-waves already described, and intersected by a number of crevasses which we crossed at narrow places without difficulty. About half-way up the slope, we encountered one from eight to twenty feet wide and of profound depth. The most beautiful vivid emerald-green color seemed to fill the abyss, the reflection of the bright sunlight from side to side of its pure ice walls. The upper side or wall of the crevasses was some twelve feet above the lower, and in places overhung it, as though the snow-field on the lower side had bodily settled down a dozen feet. Throwing a bight of the rope around a projecting pinnacle on the upper side, we climbed up, hand over hand, and thus affected a crossing. We were now obliged to travel slowly, with frequent rests. In that rare atmosphere, after taking seventy or eighty steps, our breath would be gone, our muscles grew tired and strained, and we experienced all the sensations of extreme fatigue. An instant's pause, however, was sufficient to recover strength and breath, and we would start again. The wind, which we had not felt while climbing the steepest part of the mountain, now again blew furiously, and we began to suffer from the cold. Our course, — directed still diagonally toward the left, thus shunning the severe exertion of climbing straight up the dome, although at an ordinary altitude the slope would be deemed easy, — brought us first to the southwest peak. This is a long, exceedingly sharp, narrow ridge, springing out from the main dome for a mile into midair. The ridge affords not over ten or twelve feet of foothold on top, and the sides descend almost vertically. On the right side

the snow lay firm and smooth for a few feet on top, and then descended in a steep, unbroken sheet, like an immense, flowing curtain, into the tremendous basin which lies on the west side of the mountain between the south- ern and northern peaks, and which is enclosed by them as by two mighty arms. The snow on the top and left crest of the ridge was broken into high, sharp pinnacles, with cracks and fissures extending to the rocks a few feet below.

The left side, too steep for the snow to lie on, was vertical, bare rock. The wind blew so violently that we were obliged to brace ourselves with our alpine staffs and use great caution to guard against being swept off the ridge. We threw ourselves behind the pinnacles or into the cracks every, seventy steps, for rest and shelter against. the bitter, piercing wind. Hastening forward in this way along the dizzy, narrow, and precarious ridge, we reached at length the highest point. Sheltered behind a pinnacle of ice we rested a moment, took out our flags and fastened them upon the Alpine staffs, and then, standing erect in the furious blast, waved them in triumph with three cheers. We stood a moment upon that narrow summit, bracing ourselves against the tempest to view the prospect. The whole country was shrouded in a dense sea of smoke, above which the mountain towered two thousand feet in the clear, cloudless ether. A solitary peak far to the southeast, doubtless Mount Adams, and one or two others in the extreme northern horizon, alone protruded above the pall. On every side of the mountain were deep gorges falling off precipitously thousands of feet, and from these the thunderous sound of avalanches would rise occasionally. Far below were the wide-extended glaciers, already described. The wind was now a perfect tempest, and bitterly cold; smoke and mist were flying about the base of the mountain, half hiding, half revealing its gigantic outlines; and the whole scene was sublimely awful.

It was now five P.M. We had spent eleven hours of unremitted toil in making the ascent, and, thoroughly fatigued, and chilled by the cold, bitter gale, we saw ourselves obliged to pass the night on the summit without shelter or food, except our meagre lunch. It would have been impossible to descend the mountain before nightfall, and sure destruction to attempt it in darkness. We concluded to return to a mass of rocks not far below, and there pass the night as best we could, burrowing in the loose debris.

The middle peak of the mountain, however, was evidently the highest, and we determined to first visit it. Retracing our steps along the narrow crest at Peak Success, as we named the scene of our triumph, we crossed an intervening depression in the dome, and ascended the middle peak, about a mile distant and two hundred feet higher than Peak Success. Climbing over a rocky ridge which crowns the summit, we found ourselves within a circular crater two hundred yards in diameter, filled with a solid bed of snow, and enclosed with a rim of rocks projecting above the snow all around. As we were crossing the crater on the snow, Van Trump detected the odor of sulphur, and the next instant numerous jets of steam and smoke were observed issuing from the crevices of the rocks which formed the rim on the northern side. Never was discovery more welcome! Hastening forward, we both exclaimed, as we warmed our chilled and benumbed extremities over one of Pluto's fires, that here we would pass the night, secure against freezing to death, at least. These jets were from the size of that of a large steam pipe to a faint, scarcely perceptible emission, and issued all along the rim among the loose rocks on the northern side for more than half the circumference of the crater. At Intervals they would puff up more strongly, and the smoke would collect in a cloud until blown aside and scattered by the wind, and then their force would abate for a time.

A deep cavern, extending into and under the ice, and formed by the action of heat, was found.

Its roof was a dome of brilliant green ice with long icicles pendent from it, while its floor, composed of the rocks and debris which formed the side of the crater, descended at an angle of thirty degrees. Forty feet within its mouth we built a wall of stones, inclosing a space five by six feet around a strong jet of steam and heat. Unlike the angular, broken rocks met with elsewhere, within the crater we found well-rounded boulders and stones of all sizes worn as smooth by the trituration of the crater as by the action of water. Nowhere, however, did we observe any new lava or other evidences of volcanic action excepting these issues of steam and smoke. Enclosed within the rude shelter thus hastily constructed, we discussed our future prospects while we ate our lunch and warmed ourselves at our natural register. The heat at the orifice was too great to bear for more than an instant, but the steam wet us, the smell of sulphur was nauseating, and the cold was so severe that our clothes, saturated with the steam, froze stiff when turned away from the heated jet. The wind outside roared and whistled, but it did not much affect us, secure within our cavern, except when an occasional gust came down perpendicularly. However, we passed a most miserable night, freezing on one side, and in a hot steam-sulphur-bath on the other.

The dawn at last slowly broke, cold and gray. The tempest howled still wilder. As it grew light, dense masses of driven mist went sweeping by overhead and completely hid the sun, and enveloped the mountain so as to conceal objects scarce a hundred feet distant. We watched and waited with great anxiety, fearing a storm which might detain us there for days without food or shelter, or, worse yet, snow, which would render the descent more perilous, or most likely impossible. And when, at nine A. M., an occasional rift in the driving mist gave a glimpse of blue sky, we made haste to descend. First, however, I deposited the brass plate inscribed with our names in a cleft in a large boulder on the highest summit,— a huge mound of rocks on the east side of our crater of refuge, which we named Crater Peak,— placed tin canteen alongside, and covered it with a large stone. I was then literally freezing in the cold, piercing blast, and was glad to hurry back to the crater, breathless and benumbed.

We left our den of refuge at length, after exercising violently to start the blood through our limbs, and, in attempting to pass around the rocky summit, discovered a second crater, larger than the first, perhaps three hundred yards in diameter. It is circular, filled with a bed of snow, with a rocky rim all around and numerous jets of steam issuing from the rocks on the northern side. Both craters are Inclined — the first to the west, and the latter to the east with a much steeper inclination, about thirty degrees. The rim of the second crater is higher, or the snow-field inside lower, than that of the first, and upon the east side rises In a rocky wall thirty feet above the snow within. From the summit we obtained a view of the northern peak, still partially enveloped in the driving mist. It appeared about a mile distant, several hundred feet lower than the centre peak, and separated from it by a deeper, more abrupt depression or gap than that separating Crater and Success Peaks. Like the latter, too, it is a sharp, narrow ridge springing out from the main mountain, and wept bare of snow on its summit by the wind. The weather was still too threatening, the glimpses of the sun and sky through the thick, flying scud, were too few and fugitive, to warrant us in visiting this peak, which we named Peak Takhoma, to perpetuate the Indian name of the mountain.

Our route back was the same as on the ascent. At the steepest and most perilous point in descending the steep gutter where we had been forced to cut steps in the ice, we fastened one end of the rope as securely as possible to a projecting rock, and lowered ourselves down by it as far as it reached, thereby passing the place with comparative safety. We were forced to abandon

the rope here, having no means of unfastening it from the rock above. We reached the foot of the rocky ledge or ridge, where the real difficulties and dangers of the ascent commenced, at 1:30 P.M., four and a half hours after leaving the crater. We had been seven and a half hours in ascending from this point to the summit of Peak Success, and in both cases we toiled hard and lost no time.

We now struck out rapidly and joyfully for camp. When nearly there Van Trump, in attempting to descend a snow-bank without his creepers, which he had taken off for greater ease in walking, fell, shot like lightning forty feet down the steep incline, and struck among some loose rocks at its foot with such force as to rebound several feet into the air; his face and hands were badly skinned, and he received some severe bruises and a deep. wide gash upon his thigh. Fortunately the camp was not far distant, and thither with great pain and very slowly he managed to hobble. Once there I soon started a blazing fire, made coffee, and roasted choice morsels of a marmot, Sluiskin having killed and dressed four of these animals during our absence. Their flesh, like the badger's, is extremely muscular and tough, and has a strong, disagreeable, doggy odor.

Towards the close of our repast, we observed the Indian approaching with his head down, and walking slowly and wearily as though tired by a long tramp. He raised his head as he came nearer, and, seeing us for the first time, stopped short, gazed long and fixedly, and then slowly drew near, eyeing us closely the while, as if to see whether we were real flesh and blood or disembodied ghosts fresh from the evil demon of Takhoma. He seemed both astonished and delighted to find us safe back, and kept repeating that we were strong men and had brave hearts: “Skookum tilicum, skookum tumtum." He expected never to see us again, he said, and had resolved to start the next morning for Olympia to report our destruction.

The weather was still raw and cold. A dense cloud overhung and shrouded the triple crown of Takhoma and made us rejoice at our timely descent. The scanty shelter afforded by the few balsam firs about our camp had been destroyed by the fire, and the situation was terribly exposed to the chilly and piercing wind that blew from the great ice-fields. Van Trump, however, was too badly hurt to think of moving that night. Heating some large stones we placed them at our feet, and closely wrapped in our blankets slept soundly upon the open ground, although we awoke in the morning benumbed and chilled.

We found many fresh tracks and signs of the mountain sheep upon the snow-fields, and hair and wool rubbed off upon rocks, and places where they had lain at night. The mountain-sheep of Takhoma is much larger than the common goat, and is found only upon the loftiest and most secluded peaks of the Cascade Range. Even Sluiskin, a skillful hunter and accustomed to the pursuit of this animal for years, failed to kill one, notwithstanding he hunted assiduously during our entire stay upon the mountain, three days. Sluiskin was greatly chagrined at his failure, and promised to bring each of us a sheep-skin the following summer, a promise which he faithfully fulfilled.

The glacial system of Takhoma is stupendous. The mountain is really the grand focal centre and summit of a region larger than Massachusetts, and the five large rivers which water this region all find their sources in its vast glaciers. They are the Cowlitz, which empties into the Columbia; the White, Puyallup, and Nisqually rivers, which empty into Puget Sound sixty, forty, and twelve miles respectively north of Olympia; and the Wenass, which flows eastward through the range and empties into the Yakima, which joins the Columbia four hundred miles above its mouth. These are all large streams from seventy to hundred miles in length. The White, Puyallup, and Cowlitz rivers are each navigable for steamboats for some thirty miles, and like the Nisqually show their glacial origin by their white and turgid water, which indeed gives the former its name.

The southwestern sides of the mountain furnish the glaciers which form the sources of the Nisqually, and one of these, at Sluiskin's Falls, has, been already described. The main Nisqually glacier issues from the deep abyss over-hung by the vast rock along the face of which our route of ascent lay, and extends in a narrow and somewhat crooked canyon for two miles. The ice at its extremity rises in an abrupt wall five hundred feet high, and a noisy torrent pours out with great force from beneath. This feature is characteristic of every glacier. The main Cowlitz glacier issues from the southeast side, just to the right of our ridge of ascent. Its head fills a deep gorge at the foot of the eastern front or face of the great mass of rock just referred to, and the southern face of which overhangs the main Nisqually glacier. Thus the heads of these glaciers are separated only by this great rock and are probably not more than half a mile apart, while their mouths are three miles apart. Several smaller glaciers serve to swell the waters of the Cowlitz. In like manner the glaciers from the western side form the Puyallup, and those from the northern and northwestern sides the White River. The principal White River glacier is nearly ten miles long, and its width is from two to four miles. Its depth, or the thickness of the ice, must be thousands of feet. Streams and rivulets under the heat of the sun flow down Its surface until swallowed by the crevasses and a lakelet of deep blue water an eighth of a mile in diameter has been observed upon the solid ice. Pouring down from the mountain, the ice by its immense weight and force has gouged out a mass upon the northeastern side a mile in thickness. The geological formation of Takhoma poorly resists the eroding power of these mighty glaciers, for it seems to be composed not of solid rock, but of a basaltic conglomerate strata, as though the volcanic force had burst through and rent in pieces some earlier basaltic outflow, and had heaped up this vast pile from the fragments in successive strata. On every side the mountain is slowly disintegrating.

What other peak can offer to scientific examination or to the admiration of tourist, fourteen living glaciers of such magnitude, issuing from every side, or such grandeur, beauty, and variety of scenery?

At daylight we broke up our camp at Sluiskin's Falls, and moved slowly, on account of Van Trump's hurt, down the ridge about five miles to Clear Creek, where we again regaled ourselves upon a hearty repast of marmots, or " raw dog," as Van Trump styled them in derision both of the viand and of the cookery. I was convinced from the lay of the country that Clear Creek flowed into the Nisqually, or was, perhaps, the main stream itself, and that the most direct and feasible route back to Bear Prairie would be found by following down the valley of these streams to the trail leading from the Nisqually to Bear Prairie. Besides, it was evidently impossible for Van Trump, in his bruised and injured state; to retrace our rough route over the mountains. Leaving him as comfortable as possible, with all our scanty stock of flour and marmots, sufficient to last him nearly a week in case of need, I started immediately after dinner, with Sluiskin leading the way, to explore this new route. The Indian had opposed the attempt strenuously, insisting with much urgency that the stream flowed through canyons impossible for us to traverse. He now gradually veered away from the course of the stream, until erelong he was leading directly up the steep mountain range upon our former route, when I called him back peremptorily, and kept him in the rear for a little distance. Traveling through open timber, over ground rapidly descending, we came at the end of two miles to where the stream is hemmed in between two of the long ridges or spurs from Takhoma and the high mountain-chain on the south. The stream, receiving many affluents on both sides, its clear waters soon discolored by the yeasty glacial torrents, here looses its peaceful flow, and for upwards of three miles rushes furiously down a narrow, broken, and rocky bed in a succession of falls and cascades of great

picturesque beauty. With much toil and difficulty we picked our way over a wide "talus" of huge, broken granite blocks and boulders, along the foot of a vast mountain of solid granite on the south side of the river, until near the end of the defile, then crossed the stream, and soon after encountered a still larger branch coming from the north, direct from Takhoma, the product, doubtless, of the glaciers on the southern and southwestern sides. Fording this branch just above its confluence with the other, we followed the general course of the river, now unmistakably the Nisqnally, for about four miles; then, leaving it, we struck off nearly south through the forest for three miles, and emerged upon the Bear Prairie. The distance was about thirteen miles from where we left Van Trump, and we were only some six hours in traveling it, while it took seventeen hours of terribly revere work to make the mountain route under Sluiskin's guidance.

Without his help on the shorter route, too, it would have taken me more than twice the time it did. For the manner in which, after entering the defile of the Nisqually, Sluiskin again took the lead and proceeded in a direct and unhesitating course, securing every advantage of the ground, availing himself of the wide, rocky bars along the river, crossing and recrossing the milky flood which rushed along with terrific swiftness and fury, and occasionally forcing his way through the thick timber and underbrush in order to cut off wide bends of the river, and at length leaving it and striking boldly through the forest to Bear Prairie, proved him familiar with every foot of the country. His objections to the route evidently arose from the jealousy so common with his people of further exploration of the country by the whites. As long as they keep within the limits already known and explored, they are faithful and indefatigable guides, but they invariably interpose every obstacle their ingenuity can suggest to deter the adventurous mountaineer from exposing the few last hidden recesses that remain unexplored.

Mr. Coleman was found safe in camp, and seemed too glad to see us to think of reproaching us for our summary abandonment. He said that in attempting to follow us he climbed up so precipitous a place that, encumbered with his heavy pack, he could neither advance nor recede. He was compelled, therefore, to throw off the pack, which rolled to the very bottom of the mountain, and being thus delivered of his necessary outfit., he was forced to return to camp. He had been unable to find his pack, but having come across some cricketer's spikes among his remaining effects, he was resolved to continue his trip to, and make the ascent of Rainier by himself; he had just completed his preparations, and especially had deposited on top of the lofty mountain which overlooked the prairie two caches, or stores, of provisions.

At daylight next morning, Sluiskin, with his little boy riding one of his own ponies, himself riding our little calico-colored pack-horse, now well rested and saucy, started back for Van Trump, with directions to meet us at the trail on the Nisqually. A heavy, drizzling rain set in soon afterwards. Mr. Coleman, who had gone early to bring in the contents of his mountain-top caches, returned about noon with a very small bundle, and; packing our traps upon Sluiskin's other pony, we moved over to the rendezvous, pitched Coleman's large gum-sheet as a partial shelter, made a robust fire, and tried to be comfortable. Late in the afternoon the pony set up a violent neighing, and in a few minutes Van Trump, and Sluiskin with his little boy behind him, rode up, drenched to the skin. By following the bed of the river, frequently crossing and recrossing, the Indian had managed to ride to the very foot of the Nisqually defile, when, leaving the horses in his boy's care, be hastened to Van Trump and carefully led and assisted him down. Despite the pain of his severe hurts, the latter was much amused at Sluiskin's account of our trip, and of finding Mr. Coleman safe in camp making tea, and for long after would repeat as an excellent joke Sluiskin's remark on passing the point

where he had attempted to mislead me,

"Skookum tenas man hiyu goddam."

We sent the horses back by, the Indian to Bear Prairie for grass, there being no indications of the rain ceasing. The storm indeed lasted three days, during which we remained sheltered beneath the gum-sheet as far as possible and endeavored to counteract the rain by heaping up our fire in front. About eight o'clock on the second morning, Sluiskin reported himself with our horse, which he returned, be said, because he was about to return to his lodge on the Cowlite, being destitute of shelter and food for his family on Bear Prairie. He vigorously replenished the fife, declined breakfast, jeered Coleman for turning back, although probably the latter did not comprehend his broken lingo, and departed.

Sluiskin was an original and striking character. Leading a solitary life of hardships amidst these wilds, yet of unusual native intelligence, he had contrived, during rare visits to the settlements, to acquire the Chinook jargon, besides a considerable stock of English words, while his fund of general information was really wonderful. He was possessed of a shrewd, sarcastic wit, and, making no pretense to the traditional gravity of his race, did not scruple to use it freely. Yet beneath this he cherished a high sense of pride and personal independence. Although of the blood of the numerous and powerful Yakimas, who occupied the country just east of the Cascades, he disdained to render allegiance to them, or any tribe, and undoubtedly regarded the superintendent of Indian affairs, or even the great father at Washington himself, with equally contemptuous indifference.

As the last rays of the sun, one warm, drowsy summer afternoon, were falling aslant the shady streets of Olympia, Mr. Longmire's well-worn family carry-all, drawn by two fat, grass-fed horses, came rattling down the main street at a most unusual pace for them; two bright flags attached to alpine staffs, one projecting from each door, fluttered gaily overhead, while the occupants of the carriage looked eagerly forth to catch the first glimpse of welcoming friends. We returned after our tramp of two hundred and forty miles with visages tanned and sun-scorched, and with forms as lean and gaunt as greyhounds, and were received and lionized to the full, like veterans returning from an arduous and glorious campaign. For days afterward, in walking along the smooth and level pavements, we felt a strong impulse to step high, as though still striding over the innumerable fallen logs and boughs of the forest, and for weeks our appetites were a source of astonishment to our friends and somewhat mortifying to ourselves. More than two months had elapsed before Mr. Van Trump fully recovered from his hurts. We published at the time short newspaper accounts of the ascent, and, although an occasional old Puget Sounder will still growl, "They say they went on top of Mount Rainier, but I 'd like to see them prove it," we were justly regarded as the first, and as I believe, the only ones up to the present time, who have ever achieved the summit of Takhoma.

Hazard Stevens.

Processing Note:

This facsimile of Hazard Stevens' account of his 1st Ascent of Tahkoma published in 1876 in the Atlantic Monthly was derived from a scan of the original by D. Zane, a photographer, on Whidbey Island, Washington. It attempts to communicate at least a sense of the look and feel of the original, but is far from authentic. Besides the differences in fonts and justification formatting, there are undoubtedly typographical errors left from the OCR and my proofing. I'd be happy to supply anyone who would like to improve the PDF (create a more accurate copy) with both the scanned version of the original and the MS Word document that I produced.

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