



# The B. C. Mountaineer

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA  
MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

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P. O. Box 1223

TELEPHONE SEX. 3189

Honorary President: J. PORTER, B.E.

President: L. C. FORD

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## THE ASSAULT ON MT. EVEREST

Thanks to the Club's membership in the Bureau of Associated Mountaineering Clubs, "The Assault on Mt. Everest, 1922," has been received recently, and forms the most noteworthy addition to the Club library, containing as it does the narratives of the climbs in which the stupendous height of 27,000 feet was reached—a height not exceeded by half a dozen mountains in the world.

It must be borne in mind that the 1921 expedition did not set out to climb Mt. Everest; they fulfilled their task in finding the only way up the great mountain. That the climbing expedition in 1922 failed to reach the summit simply proves the greatness of the mountain, for peaks of the first order do not yield to the first assault.

The expedition seems to have been happy in possessing as leader Brigadier-General Hon. C. G. Bruce, an experienced climber in the Himalaya, and, what was of great importance, a man with thorough knowl-

edge of Himalayan peoples, this latter side being evident in his narrative. The whole volume is a much more intimate account than the first one, and makes the reader see the climbers as living persons instead of mere names.

Among the other difficulties about conquering Everest is the fact that it is a race against time. Travelling across Tibet in March, crossing passes of over 17,000 feet, is too great a strain on the stamina of the party and would tend to lessen their climbing powers. But the monsoon season comes about the end of May.

Just what was called for in the way of organization may be guessed when it is mentioned that to establish the base camp at the snout of the Rongbuk Glacier required a cavalcade of 300 baggage animals, 20 ponies, nearly 100 Tibetans, and about 60 men in the employ of the expedition.

It is curious how the standard of what was expected from all members of the party went up. It was looked upon as a fore-gone conclusion that any member could walk with comfort to the North Col (Chang La). Yet, on only one previous occasion in mountaineering history had a night been spent as high, and on very few occasions has this height ever been attained.

The first climb was made without oxygen apparatus, because the monsoon was evidently arriving before its time, and it was thought far better to make an attempt than fail in making any attempt at all. The apparatus was unsatisfactory as sent out—Finch spent four days remodelling the inhaling parts, outdoors in zero temperatures at 21,000 feet. The first climbing party consisted of Mallory, Somervell, Norton, and Morshead. They spent a night at 25,000 feet, bad weather having prevented establishing a higher camp, and, without oxygen, reached the amazing height of 26,985 feet, and within almost a mile of the peak. Morshead was forced to drop out on the final climb. He was severely frost-bitten, and getting him down to the North Col was a tremendous feat. During the descent disaster nearly claimed them, a slip causing all but the leader to be dragged from their steps on an icy slope.

High winds are the rule on Everest, and the temperatures equal those of the polar regions. It is not generally known that part of the process of "acclimatisation" at these high altitudes consists in a change in the blood which increases in viscosity, and, therefore, increases the liability to frost-bite. Increased evaporation of body moisture is another serious problem, nor is it possible to obtain a really hot drink at 25,000 feet, so low is the boiling point of water.

Geoffrey Bruce and Finch made the record-breaking climb, 27,235 feet, using oxygen, but in a half-starved condition after suffering severely in a terrific storm and spending two nights at 25,500 feet. The members of the expedition are by no means agreed on the necessity for oxygen to conquer Everest; Mallory stoutly affirming the possibility of winning through without its aid, though admitting a lighter apparatus would be worth considering. The effects of rare atmosphere are not purely physical, the mental processes are dulled as well—Finch forgot to take any pictures on his climb; other curious actions are recorded.

In some respects the volume is complementary to the first one; the former contained many fine views of the mountain and its surroundings, while the second volume gives, instead, illustrations dealing more with the attempt to climb, this being really in keeping with the text.

Altogether, it is a book with which every mountaineer ought to be familiar.

### DEVIL'S CLUB

Devil's Club, unfortunately, is a bit too well-known to climbers in the Coast area. Between spells of giving it more emphatic names, perhaps more than one sufferer from its myriad spears has conjectured just why it should have developed such armament. Mr. Winson, who writes under the name of "Wildwood," in a recent article makes it clear that the protective spines are no protection against grazing animals—cattle will kill it by eating the leaf buds. He is of the opinion that the whole thing is the

result of bitterly fought local war between devil's club and the slug—the latter eagerly devours an entire leaf if it can get to one. However, it is small comfort to the traveller in the woods to know that he is penalized for the slug's depraved taste down the ages for devil's club foliage.

### SUMMER CAMP, 1924

As most of the members are aware, the Executive Committee favors as the scene of this year's Summer Camp the area drained by Fitzsimmons and Wedgemount Creeks, this region being east of Alta Lake on the P. G. E. Railway, about 100 miles north of Vancouver and just north of Garibaldi Park. Most of it is virgin territory, so far as climbing is concerned, and the peaks average about 8,000 feet, some exceeding that height. The Editor of "THE MOUNTAINEER" has suggested that a photographic exhibit be placed in the Club Cabin to give members an idea of the nature of the district, but the suggestion is too new to have been acted upon yet.

The Annual Meeting is still two months away but members might do well to consider a better method of handling the yearly decision upon the site of the next year's camp than has prevailed in the past. March is too late to make the decision, as anyone who has ever shouldered any part of the responsibility of carrying through a camp knows. The Club should know nearly a year in advance, where the next camp will be. The summer months are the only ones during which a district may be properly examined. Camps have fallen through repeatedly solely because the decision had to be left until the Annual Meeting and the unlucky Executive has found that the programme laid down for them was not such as could be carried out.

During the term of the present Executive, a Camp Committee has been in existence, the special duties of which has been to gather information about various regions that might meet the requirements of a Summer Camp. Members of the committee made two trips to the district east of Alta Lake,

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and one to the eastern part of the Cheam Range ("The Lucky Four" Mountains). Only illness of one member prevented a fourth trip for the same purpose. So it will be seen that the matter of a Summer Camp has been a live topic with the Executive Committee in general and the Camp Committee in particular.

#### NORTH PEAKS OF CROWN. FEB. 9-10

This fine winter trip will be under the leadership of Mr. Neal M. Carter. Snowshoes may be useful part of the way to the base of the mountain, but members should consult the notice in the Club box, 610 Granville Street. It may be possible to use one of the cabins at the logging camp below the Forks of Lynn Creek.

#### STARTING THE NEW YEAR RIGHT

S. Millard and I, having determined to make an attempt to ascend Crown Mt. on New Year's, left the city by the two o'clock ferry New Year's Eve, returning late New Year's night.

We followed the usual route to Lynn Forks, and deciding it was too cold for camping out doors, entreated the hospitality of two Chinamen in one of the cabins belonging to the Cedar's Limited. Here, with a roaring stove, we thoroughly enjoyed a hot supper.

Rising at eight o'clock New Year's morning, we started on the climb. Snowshoes were used up the old Zinc Mine trail. Owing to the various difficulties presented by the great depth of new snow, the amphitheatre at the head of the valley was not reached until noon. From this point an imposing view was obtained of the icy precipices of Mt. Crown, while the peaks above were observed to be corniced with snow and ice. By 1.30 we had reached the summit of Crown Pass, after a long and steep climb on snowshoes. Here, after a hasty meal, the ascent was continued with mocassins.

We found the snow on the summit ridge blown away by the wind and solid ice exposed. Real difficulties were met with as every step had to be cut with our ice-axes, and, owing to the slippery soles of our mocassins it was difficult to obtain firm footholds. The summit was reached at four o'clock in a dense fog. The bitter wind cut short our stay on top and the descent was commenced immediately. After an exhilarating glissade in the soft snow we reached the Pass. The remainder of the trip was completed on snowshoes back to camp by the light of our "bugs" through falling snow.

There we supped heartily, and, after a three-mile snowshoe hike, reached the car at 10.30 p.m. homeward bound.

ARTHUR COOPER.

#### NO APOLOGIES

The Editor makes no apologies for the lateness of the December issue—when snowstorms come with the ferocity and frequency that marked most of December, life in a tent on Grouse Mt. Plateau is highly strenuous. But those days are gone forever—and log walls and a sound roof defy the wildest whims of winter, and the snow shovel may be laid aside in favor of the typewriter.

#### THE LIONS, FEB. 23-24

Remember the Lions Trip, February 23-24, led by the Director, Tom Fyles, which guarantees getting to the top, if it can be done. There is no record of anybody actually reaching the summit of either peak in winter. (The Editor is under the impression that he got closer to the summit of the Western Lion one February than anybody else has succeeded in doing. It was a worth-while trip, too.)

The trip will be by launch up Howe Sound. Don't miss this trip.

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“THE MOUNTAINEER”

Volume XVI., of “THE MOUNTAINEER,” the annual publication of the mountaineers of Seattle, deals at length with their summer camp in Garibaldi Park, where, seemingly they had a splendid time. One of their lesser discoveries, thought worthy of a whole paragraph, was Vancouver-made pineapple marmalade.

They are generous in their remarks about B. C. M. C. members. “Our Canadian cousins as a group are better and more daring rock climbers than The Mountaineers. Most of their climbing is done on rock.” But we do get a great deal of snow work. Our system of roping on snow and ice (as practised by the world’s foremost mountain climbers) does not meet with The Mountaineers’ approval, and in an account of their Mt. Baker trip last year, when they met a B. C. M. C. party, there seems to be

an invitation to a controversy on the subject, they claiming that the sounder practice is their own method which they call the “moving handrail,” all except the man in front and rear merely holding on to the rope.

In the early days of mountaineering in the Alps some of the Swiss guides used to tie the rope around the members of their party, merely holding the end themselves.

THE LYNN PEAK TRIPS

The weather took a mean slam at Bill Wheatley’s reputation for picking fine weekends, and the Lynn Peaks trip was cancelled in favor of a visit to the Club Cabin. Rain fell consistently all day, even at the higher levels where precipitation usually takes the form of snow in winter.

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