

A TRIP WEST--IX.

IN CAMP NEAR TIMBER LINE, Pike's Peak.

DEAR PRESS: After supper, with considerable difficulty we gathered sufficient dry wood to build a camp fire, and soon a roaring blaze lit up the mountain side. Blankets and robes were unstrapped and spread, and, after filling the hills with the merry echoes of song, interspersed now and then with a story, we lay down to sleep. The night air at this altitude was very sharp, but we were generously supplied with wraps, and the keen freshness of the air added a zest to the enjoyment of our slumbers.

The moon was still high in the heavens when we rose, and, hastily donning our clothing, we were soon in the saddle, en route for a

SUNRISE ON THE PEAK.

It was not yet four o'clock, but we had a severe mount of four and a half miles between us and the summit. Having no further use for Henry, whom we had pressed into the service as pack mule, and fearing the effect of altitude upon his lungs, we tied him by means of a short lariat to a pine tree to await our return, and pushed on. As we approached timber line we met the first game we had seen in Colorado; we carried nothing but our revolvers, and after emptying fourteen shells upon, or rather toward, a grouse twenty yards distant, who was not the least disconcerted by the performance, we formed an opinion as to the efficiency of the revolver as a hunting weapon, and left our grouse master of the situation. We now strike timber line, distinctly marked, and find above, nothing in the shape of vegetation or vegetable life, not even soil, nothing in fact but an immense aggregation of red porphyrous rock piled in indiscriminate confusion on every side, the peculiar distinctive feature of this mountain.

Gazing in astonishment upon this strange picture, our attention was distracted by a familiar friendly blast of music. Turning hurriedly to discover the source of this strange sound in the midst of the solemn silence of the mountain, judge of our astonishment in seeing, a hundred yards below us on the trail, his features beaming with unsuppressed delight, the partner of joys and sorrows, Henry W., our pack mule. Annoyed at the restraint of the rope that bound him, and finding himself deserted by his dear Elizabeth, the lariat had proven insufficient to detain him, and now he came whinnying as he ran, carrying around his neck the remnant of the rope.

So noble a devotion merited a reward, and, as he evidently purposed to be counted in on the whole programme and there being no other disposition possible of that mule, we permitted him to continue in our company. A thousand feet higher we amused ourselves pelting snow balls at each other—an amusement somewhat rare at this season—July.

Day had begun to dawn as we approached the signal station, where we found several of the engineer corps. Here we are at last on the summit of the Peak at 5:10 A. M., and the sun just peeping over the horizon, bathing the plains and hills in a liquid light and creating a picture I shall not attempt to describe, so strange, so wierd, so grandly beautiful.

Without much ceremony we made the acquaintance of the officials here, whom we discovered at the breakfast table. A friendliness soon sprung up among us all, and all the conveniences of the station were placed at our disposal. Officer Hobbs in command; O'Keefe who will be remembered in connection with

conveniences of the station were placed at our disposal. Officer Hobbs in command; O'Keefe who will be remembered in connection with colored ladies (Smith) business at West Point; Greenwell, and several others, escorted us over the summit, and with the aid of the powerful glasses and timely suggestions, we were enabled to do the Peak up in the most approved style.

The surface of the summit is five acres in extent, and consists wholly of the same red rock before mentioned, jumbled together in shapeless confusion. At every move the view changes. Now looking along a line of rapid peaks to the southwest 200 miles, now to the northwest where appeared in all its white-robed magnificence the snow glistening in matchless beauty under the rays of the rising sun; now into the south park a mile below us to the north, into which by the aid of a huge crowbar as a lever, we plunged rocks from the summit, that in their fearful momentum crashed against each other as they fell, filling the air with ten thousand splinters, and creating a sound like to the rumblings of a thunderstorm, and finally out upon the plain, looking into Manitou, nestled in the gorge at our feet. Old Town, barely discernible beyond, and Colorado Springs, twelve miles away in an air line, the regularity of whose streets and squares was discernible to the naked eye. Adjusting the powerful glasses to the station, we were enabled to discern several familiar points, among others the Crawford House, in front of which, upon the greensward, we espied our camp, in which lay at full length our invalid, Will, basking in the luxuriance of the sunlight.

The light air so affected our party at this altitude that a few moments' work clambering over the rocky plateau exhausted all of the party except the chaplain and myself. We, by the force of piety and victuals, retained sufficient vitality to view the scene in all its glorious beauty.

Suddenly a fleecy cloud enveloped the peak, hiding everything from view and moistening us so completely that we felt constrained to seek the shelter of the station, where we found O'Keefe, whose turn as *chef de cuisine* had come, wrapped in a huge apron and diligently engaged in the preparation of biscuit. An invitation from the boys to breakfast was cheerfully accepted, and with a better appetizer than Lea & Perrin ever prepared, we took our places at the mess, nearly demolishing the supply that O'Keefe had prepared.

In every sense, our visit to the Peak had proved a success, and we bade the boys adieu and many thanks for the kind reception they had given us.

As we passed, we noticed an inscription marked on a post by some enthusiastic wayfarer reading "Nearer my God to Thee," entirely in keeping with the spot, and supplemented by another immediately below bearing the addition "Nearer than ever I had hoped to be," the authorship being lost to posterity, much to the misery of visitors.

Up to this time we had frequently been amused by the excessive care given by the chaplain to his horse. A dozen times a day he would stop to adjust his saddle cloth, bewailing the absence of a curry comb which, by intentional accident, we had lost. Any opportunity for extra feed for the animal was warmly welcomed, and a particular spot was always selected at night for his keeping. On the upward trip, the chaplain often preferred to walk, that he might better exercise, as he insisted, but in reality to relieve his pony, and shortly after we had begun the descent, fearing an injury to the animal, he dismounted and driving his steed close to mine he followed on foot.

D. S. L.

On the 8th inst., a black whale 37 1/2 feet long