

Next morning being fine, the bush soon dried, and walking was more pleasant. We passed a large creek, with fine falls, coming in from the left. From this point the going was sometimes on sideling, with small flats, and short stretches along boulders at side of river, until the first elbow was reached, just above a rather rapid fall in river-bed. From here a magnificent view is obtained of the towering Mount Christina, with its snowfields and overhanging glaciers, the summit being apparently in close proximity to the river, but over 7,000 ft. above. The Hollyford is very much like the Clinton Valley in general description, but the distance to be traversed is less, and the mountains on the northern face are far more magnificent, with their additional height and overhanging glaciers, from which avalanches are frequently precipitated over the cliffs below. The going for some stretches above this is indescribably slow—the bush becomes more mixed with ribbonwood, with high ferns, which are best walked on from top to top. Here and there are patches of huge stones between which the bush has grown. The sidelings, however, are not steep, and now and again the walking is good.

We camped the next night half a mile or so below Monkey Creek. In the morning we were soon out of the bush and on to a well-grassed flat about 50 or 60 chains in length, containing about 100 acres, and infested with rabbits. There were signs of hares also, but we did not see any. Bird-life in this valley is very scarce; we saw no wekas or other ground birds, only paradise and blue duck, and keas. Above this is a short patch of stunted bush, low mountain totara, veronica, and box, with birch. Another open patch of similar extent is then reached, over which alpine flowers grow in profusion. At the head of this is some open birch bush rising more rapidly over a terminal moraine, above which the valley flattens out at the forks. Immediately in front Mount Lippe rises in a sheer angular cliff for 2,000 ft. or more, above which is a fine glacier and snow-capped summit of considerable extent. Here we had an incessant twenty-four hours genuine West Coast downpour, which started the avalanches going, often in quick succession.

On the following afternoon we made an excursion to the Gertrude Saddle, 4,820 ft., a fairly easy climb; one can go on either side of the creek at first, but should afterwards cross to the north side. When at Black Lake, a narrow basin of about 100 yards diameter, the easier way is to climb round rocks close to the north of the lake to snowfield, which leads by an easy ascent to the saddle. Here a most glorious panorama opens out—the most beautiful I have seen from any pass. You look down the Cleddau Valley to Milford Sound, about two-thirds of which can be seen, with Stirling Fall, Mounts Pembroke, Tutoko, and Underwood—which last is a fine mountain from this side. Just to the north-west, and apparently within a few hundred yards, is the Adelaide Saddle, at the headwaters of Moraine Creek. The cliff between is vertical, but it might be possible to traverse a route over the mountain. The Gertrude is the saddle where Quill is supposed to have lost his life in attempting the descent on the other side.

On the following morning—1st January, 1913—Lippe got us out at 2 a.m., when we had breakfast and made an early start for Homer Saddle, which we reached without difficulty. From the head of the Hollyford Valley to Homer Saddle is a rise of 1,200 ft. The climb to Homer Saddle is straight up on loose good-holding rocky fan. Homer Saddle is 4,480 ft. The outlook on the other side is rather circumscribed; the descent appears to be sheer, looking from the saddle. Here we saw Quill's cairn, with stump of a stick on which is cut his name, "W. Quill," still legible though the wood is nearly rotten.

It has been found quite impossible to climb down the western face of Homer Saddle, as the cliff falls away almost sheer, for what I would judge to be 1,500 ft. to 2,000 ft., to where a steep snow-grass slope leads down to the head of the Cleddau River. As the rock slope is not quite perpendicular, and is very even, there would be nothing but the cost and necessary time to prevent a zigzag sideling from being blasted out of the face, at any grade that might be required. Of course, on a similar basis a tunnel could be run through from foot to foot, which would eventually make a pack-track possible; it would, however, have to be from 600 to 700 yards in length, with substantial fall towards the Cleddau River. Both these alternatives would, to my mind, rob the route of its most attractive part. From Homer Saddle the route runs northward up the very steep rocky spur to an elevation of 5,030 ft.

During this ascent, which we named "Talbot Ladder," we were coupled together by rope. The rock is fairly good holding, but the climbing is necessarily slow, as only one can move at a time. The distance up this was estimated at about 15 chains, and for safety it would be necessary to let in iron pipes, which could be connected by steel ropes. Footholds or steps should also be cut out of the rock or the snow-grass. A very fine view is obtained during this climb of the glacier towards Mount Lippe, which seems very close below.

On arrival at the easier slope we unroped, and proceeded in a northerly direction round the western face for about 200 yards, first over loose rocky slopes, and then up a steep snow slope. At rocks on this we had lunch and left our swags, afterwards climbing a snow-covered mountain, 6,200 ft., which we named Mount Macpherson. From it a most beautiful view is obtained. To the south-west rise numberless snow-clad peaks, among which is what we took to be Mount Balloon; on the west, Mitre Peak and Mount Sheardown; then, northwards, Mounts Pembroke, Tutoko, Underwood, and countless other peaks of similar altitude, culminating in what we took to be Mount Aspiring; in the nearer north-east Mount Lippe with its glaciers, and eastward the magnificent pile of Mount Christina, with Mount Belle in the south-east. The valleys of the Hollyford and Cleddau Rivers, with those of their tributaries, lie spread out below us like a map, while the hollow of the Adelaide Saddle is visible, falling towards Moraine Creek, but the Gertrude Saddle is hidden behind a shoulder of Mount Lippe.

An easy downhill walk brought us again to our swags, and we proceeded in a northerly direction across the snow for a hundred yards or so, then over some shingle-slopes below a bluff, and on to snowfields which, except for a few crevasses, extend unbroken for about half a mile, where another spur is crossed at Lyttle Dip, 5,600 ft. Here there is a hole in the rock just large enough to allow one to crawl through with a swag, when a yawning abyss is encountered. A few yards, however, brings one to a natural shelf which leads to the right, down the cliff, to another snowfield of about a quarter of a mile in extent. Along this the grade is practically