

TWO TRAMPS VISIT THE ROCKIES.

Amusing Story of How Stephen Graham and Vachel Lindsay, Two Literary Vagabonds, Got Tired Feet, Blues and Scratched Bears' Noses in Glacier Park.

By Prof. W. T. Allison.

In the whole history of Weary Williedom when have 'tramps of their own volition and just for the joy of the thing gone mountain climbing? Invariably Tomato Can Charlie and Haystack Tommy like to wander in a level country where farmers' houses and hand-outs are set too far apart. But to the disgust of Vagabondia two noted tramps have smashed all traditions by exultingly marching up and down the Rocky Mountains and the longer the climb the more they seemed to enjoy it. While engaged in such heterodox activity they retained some of their habits of the ancient craft to which they belong; for example, their larder was constantly low and their raiment as free and easy and as disreputable as any tramp could wish; but it seems almost certain that Stephen Graham, author of "Tramping with a Poet in the Rockies" (D. Appleton and Co., New York) and Vachel Lindsay, the poet-tramp with whom he walked and talked up crags and down precipices, will be expelled from the International Tramps' Union as having put a terrible blot on the escutcheon of that languid body. However, their brethren ought to take into consideration the fact that Graham and Lindsay are literary tramps. The former, a lean Highlander, has been good for his bread and butter in many a long pilgrimage in Russia and the Holy Land, as his seventeen volumes show; the latter, a short, sturdy free verse singer of Springfield, Illinois, has gone on long tramps in his own country and has proved that a poet can earn his bread and lodging by reciting his verses to American farmers and their wives. Until they visited the Rockies together, Messrs. Graham and Lindsay were bona-fide tramps, but the hard work they did among the mountain tops, has, I fear, disqualified them from now on for membership in the International.

Vagabond Vachel, America's Troubadour.

Before proceeding with the narrative of this eccentric piece of wandering, I wish to explain to readers who have never heard of Vachel Lindsay (his name Vachel rhymes with Rachel, not with satchel) that he is the most original product of song-singing America since Walt Whitman sounded his barbaric yawp over the rooftops of Camden, New Jersey. Like Whitman, he is all for democracy, wears cynically loose-fitting clothes, indulges in flowing rhythms, and admires Abraham Lincoln and William Bryan. Strange to say, however, he does not admire Whitman, for he is conventional enough to be moral and even religious. His best-known poems, "The Congo" and "General Booth's Enters Heaven," have gained wide currency both in England and America. In fact, Vagabond Vachel has received a warm welcome not only in the farm houses of Kansas but in the colleges and universities of two continents. Students of American colleges have told me how thoroughly they have enjoyed listening to his sonorous chanting of his free verse, and even Robert Bridges and the most proper

poets and literary men of London and Oxford have been fascinated by his performances, have even roared and refrains with great gusto as he led them in the manner of a singing leader at a camp meeting. It is a pleasure for me to be able to chronicle the news that this very interesting and highly original troubadour is going to visit many of our Canadian colleges this fall. As we listen to him, and if our dignity will permit, join with him. In his Congo rhythms, we'll be thinking of that disreputable song which he composed once upon a time as he marched gaily through the corn fields of Iowa. It commences thus: Why don't you go to work Like other men do? How can we work when there's no work to do?

Tobogganing Down Mountain Sides.

It was this snatch that Lindsay roared at the top of his strong voice when he and Graham got well into Glacier National Park. He was appalled in a pair of corduroy trousers, burst out at the knees, and wore an old red handkerchief round his neck. Graham does not describe his own clothing more than to say that he had on the same hob-nailed boots in which he once tramped across Russia. When they reached the top of their first mountain, where there was a perfect cyclorama, as Vachel called it, the poet from Illinois "balanced on his toes, and half closed his eyes in his half-upturned face, and turned round and about like a teetotum. Last time I had seen him do this was on the carpet of a London drawing-room in Queen Anne's gate to the strains of "Let Samson be a-comeing in to your mind." After the ecstasy on the summit came the difficulty of getting down on the other side, for these care-free tramps followed no beaten path, no regular trail; their method was to make a bee-line across country, taking the mountains as they came. It is a wonder they were not killed, for they made toboggans of broad, flat stones and thus cascaded down long inclines of silt and shale. And as they climbed up or tobogganed down, they kept on talking. "At last, however," Graham confesses, "the mountains silenced us. They outstayed us and will outstay us. They ate up our provisions, and swallowed our breath, and beguiled us deceitfully to climb higher. And we always expected to get to the top in an hour. We finished the coffee, we finished the milk, we finished the bread, we finished the sugar. We got down to a rasher of bacon and a tea without sugar and milk. There even the much-toasted bacon was not finished and the problem was to find a "camp" and get more supplies. So we set ourselves seriously to the task of finding a pass over the range." At the close of this melancholy recital, Vachel supplies a supposed poem. (His practice at the close of each chapter of the book).

The greedy old mountains have been to our knapsacks. And eaten up most of our food. They've swallowed our breath and silenced our speech. But they haven't broken our hearts.

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It takes more than a mountain to do that!

A Bear Snuffs At The Sleeping Graham.

I can believe Mr. Graham when he assures us that for days he and the poet lived on black currants, wild gooseberries and raspberries, but when he begins to write about encounters with bears I am afraid many readers will be sceptical. However, friends of mine have told me that in Yellowstone and other national parks bears have become quite tame through having been left unmolested by hunters for a period of years. It was fortunate for these literary tramps that the bears in Glacier National park have ceased to look upon man as a mortal enemy. For Mr. Graham tells us that one night when he and the poet were sleeping near Heaven's Peak, a bear visited them. "Vachel and I," he says, "were lying close to each other and both had our blankets over our faces, for it was cold. Vachel, as he told me afterwards, was awakened by something and lay listening to my breathing. He thought to himself, 'Stephen is certainly making a terrible racket; he must have a cold; and then he thought again lazily and unsuspectingly, 'Stephen surely must have caught a cold to be snuffing and snorting that way.' Then he thought again, 'He seems to be moving about. I wonder what he's doing.' Then Vachel put his head out of his blanket and what should he see standing beside us but a big black bear. As for me, I was sleeping like a babe, and the bear apparently had been snuffing at me to see whether I was live meat or dead meat. Vachel gave one terrific shout. 'The son of a gun,' said he, and I wakened up. 'Wake up, Stephen; it's a bear,' said he. At this brother bear walked across from my side, where I had a pile of boiled eggs, which he had scattered, and leisurely began to knock our tin cans about on the other side and try and find the ham which we had bought the day before. In a most unsavory way we drove him off."

Vachel's Bear Monologue. "On another occasion, however,

when three bears came trundling down after supper was over, I approached one with some bread, which he very gently took from my fingers, and I scratched his nose and put myself on speaking terms.

"Curious," said I to Vachel, is it not? These are the same bears which used to figure so largely in adventure stories of the Rocky Mountains. It follows that they are ready to be good citizens of the forest if treated "good."

You'd have had a different experience had they been grizzlies, we were told later.

Maybe. But St. Seraphin himself did not tackle grizzlies.

As a result of these experiences Vachel wrote a poem, "Visited by Bears." Bruin himself, he who snuffed at Graham's sleeping form, is supposed to be speaker of the last nine lines:

So we've met the bears The bear has snuffed at us And wondered what we were. Humans with a forest smell to us, No doubt quite game; Sleeping out too, very quietly. Good to eat no doubt, Dure one, dare a poor bear take a bite? Would they mind? I've bitten most of the animals in the wood Except them— In my time.

Crossing The Canadian Line.

Long before the two tramps crossed the Canadian line the poet had become rather used up. The long legs of Stephen Graham were too much for him; he wanted to keep up, constantly inveigling his companion to halt by insisting about the beauty of a particular scene he wished him to take time to study. Then one day, while descending a precipice too hastily, Vachel sprained his ankle. This was more effective than allusions to the scenery in putting a drag on the super-activity of Graham. But by the time 50-40 was reached, Vachel was once more getting up steam. The excitement of finding the line refreshed him. The tramps found the line unguarded; no patrols, no excise or passport officers, nothing but a sixteen-foot swathe cut in the forest, a rough glade, an alley through the tall pines. They discovered frontier post No. 276. Graham stood on Canadian soil, Vachel on American, and they joined their hands on the top of the post to signify the amity of the two nations they represented. It was one of the happiest moments in their journey.

Vachel facetiously remarked that now, he supposed, once they had entered the British Empire, the huckleberries were to be more plentiful, the raspberry bushes larger, the trees softer, and the air purer. Graham soberly chronicles the fact that at any rate there was a change of scenery. "The gradeur of the mountains increased upon us till all was in the sublimity of the Book of Job and the Chaldean stars. There was nothing petty anywhere—but an eternal witness and an eternal silence." They did not go far north into British Columbia. Evidently the mountains were too high for them to scale. So they emerged on the southern Alberta plain, and Graham takes up most of the rest of his space by describing visits to the Doukhobors and the Mormons. Perhaps he is saving the Canadian Rockies for another book. It is to be hoped that he will tramp there with Vachel some future summer, and that he will record their impressions and conversations in the same sprightly way that he has done in this amusing volume.

A fitting conclusion to this tramps' narrative I quote Vachel Lindsay's comical poem, "Tired Feet Blues": A'm ti-ord, yes a'm ti-ord, A got th' bloo-ooes aw-fool ba-ad. Ma feet is sore; You's awful so-ore, Ain't ye, feet? That fellah over the-ere 's legs is just too lo-ong. Now where's he gwine to now? Where's he gwine to now? I've skeered he'll leave me here a-lone, All a-lo-ong. Say, Cap, dean go ou so fa-ar, Say, boss, you sure didn't see that tree, You can have no feelin's for the view. Huhhyn' on so fast— W. T. ALLISON

Literary Notes. On top of the announcement that we are shortly to have war books from Premier Lloyd George, ex-Premier Asquith and the Hon. Winston Churchill, we are informed that the late Sir Henry Wilson kept a diary during all the years of the great struggle. As many of the entries have been made with Peppysian frankness they will be withheld for publication in years to come. A volume of extracts from this diary, together with a brief biography of the martyred general, has been arranged for by a London publisher. It seems certain that by the time all the generals and statesmen will have made their revelations and confessions posterity will be able to piece out very accurately the inside history of the Great War.

A little book, costing only half a crown in the old country, that will be of great use to students of contemporary literature, "The Realistic Revolt in Modern Poetry," by A. M. Clark. Mr. Clark reviews the work of all the important English poets of the present day and analyzes the character of free verse.

The admirers of the immortal dog story, "Rab and his Friends," are reflecting a fund with the intention of erecting a memorial to Dr. John Brown in Biggar, Scotland. Subscriptions will be gratefully received by William B. Parnin, Agent, National Bank of Scotland, Biggar.

The American publisher of Cousin's "Self-Mastery through Conscious Autosuggestion," makes the sweeping statement that "All America is beginning to repeat 'Day by day, in every way, I am getting better and better.'" He brings England into his advertisement by inserting portraits of Lord Curzon and Countess Beatrix, both of whom, he declares were cured, after all other methods failed, by Professor Cousin. The haughty marquis will probably have a relapse if his eye ever falls on this blazing advertisement.

A writer in the New York Times says there is probably no other volume of Kipling so sumptuously bound as the copy of "Many Inventions" owned by Brander Matthews. It has a back of blue morocco, sides of harmoniously marbled paper and velvet corners, and is the work of Mr. Cobden-Sanderson, one of the best-known bookbinders of the age. Brander Matthews was so delighted with the book that he sent it to Kipling with a request for his autograph. Kipling found the blank pages at the beginning of the volume so tempting that he wrote on three of them—a parody of Browning, a parody of James Whitcomb Riley and the following quatrain: See my literary pants! I am bound in crused levants. Brander Matthews did it, and a Very handsome thing of Branda.

—W. T. A.



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The editor of the Butcher's Advocate noticed that an American publisher had issued a new book entitled "Cannibal Land." Whereupon he wrote the following letter, "We have noticed the publication entitled 'Cannibal Land,' by Martin Johnson, and request that you send us a copy of this book for review in our columns. We feel certain that a work of this kind would be of exceptional interest to the people reached by our Weekly." This burst of unconscious humor ought to make pleasing reading for all vegetarians.

CANADA'S NATIONAL RAILWAYS AND THE RECENT WORLD'S WAR. Under the heading "Canada's National Railways and the War" the Canadian National Railways have put out a book which is at the same time a general review of Canada's part in the recent conflict and a record of the part played by the railways of the Dominion and their employees.

Among the great organizations of the country, probably none had greater burdens thrust upon them than the railways. Almost without warning they were called upon to do that which was before thought impossible in the world of transportation, to keep up the never-ending stream of men, munitions and provisions from coast to coast and to do all this when spies beset the land and big operations of military importance were in constant danger.

Splendidly did the Canadian National Railways do their work and splendidly also did their employees who served in the forces serve their country. Forty-five pages at the end of the booklet give the names and addresses of those employees who served with the British troops during the World's War from 1914 to 1918.

CANADIAN GIRLS ARE SUCCESSFUL NURSES. The Canadian Magazine for August contains an interesting and enlightening article under the heading

of "Canadian Girls Nursing Uncle Sam," by Jean Morrison, setting forth the histories of several Canadian nurses who have attained high positions in the United States and have made an outstanding record in the medical world by their efficiency and fine ability. There are many Canadian girls going yearly to the country across the border to follow up their professions and their services are in constant demand, as are those of Canadian doctors. Some time ago one of the most famous hospitals in the United States wrote to Queen's University asking for young graduate doctors from Queen's. The same principle applies to nurses from the land of the maple; they are welcomed, yes, sought, on the American side.

Miss Morrison's article gives general figures concerning nursing in the

big republic to the south of us, tells the work of the Canadian girls who are nurses there and sketches many individual cases of the wonderful success of Canadian girls. There are a few of the names mentioned of especial interest to us. From Belleville came Margaret St. Charles, Superintendent of Nurses at St. James' Hospital, Newark, N.J.; M. Agnes Copeland, R.N., Superintendent of Nurses, St. Catharine's Hospital, Brooklyn; Lavinia M. Copeland, Superintendent of the School of Nursing, St. Mary's Hospital, Brooklyn. From Kingston there are many nurses in the United States, prominent among them being Helen Farrell Grady, Mabel F. Grady and M. Helena McMillan. Almost every city and town in Ontario has one or more daughters rendering service in the big hospitals of Uncle Sam's domain.

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