

the year. Shouldering our loads, we pushed our way through the incessant bogs which now filled up the valley, and at night put up in the huts. This was the hardest piece of work we had done, for we covered from fifteen to twenty miles a day, and that through ground where we frequently sank up to our knees and never felt sure of our footing, and with a load on our backs to make it still more wearisome. Added to this was the further trial that we had to place ourselves on half-rations. Ever since we had entered the forest we had found a difficulty in obtaining supplies; flour was very scarce, so that we had to live principally upon millet porridge, and meat was not forthcoming as often as we should have liked after our hard work. But now, as we approached the mountain, supplies became scarcer still, and after we had left the mules, and consequently while we were doing our hardest work, we were on fare which made me at least so ravenous that I more than once went round to the hunters' cooking-pot and scraped out all I could from the inside after they had finished their meal. On three separate occasions I remember James, Fulford, and myself all sitting down to dine off one partridge between us; this, with a little palatable soup and a scone was all we had after our trying march.

We had, however, the satisfaction of knowing that we now really were approaching the mysterious White Mountain. As we climbed higher the forest began to open out, and on the fourth day after leaving the mules we found ourselves at its base, and saw it rising up above the forest. It was with a sigh of infinite relief that we looked upon it, but I cannot say that, here in its solid reality, it inspired us with awe commensurate with the mystery which had been attached to it. It certainly rose high above all the surrounding forest-clad hills, and perhaps in the British Isles would pass muster as a mountain; but it was not the snow-clad monarch we had expected to see, and it afterwards proved to be but eight thousand feet in height.