

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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The Grey Squirrel.

Like a small grey
coffee-pot,
sits the squirrel.
He is not

all he should be,
kills by dozens
trees, and eats
his red-brown cousins.

The keeper on the
other hand,
who shot him, is
a Christian, and

loves his enemies,
which shows
the squirrel was not
one of those.

(Humbert Wolfe).

Bartle Frere.

by Laurence T. Tayner.

This mountain has personality, I was certain of it even before I had seen it. I heard many tales about its gold reefs, the wattle fringed flats on the top, and the jungle teeming with pythons. They were told by prospectors, timbergetters and commandos, who struggled along the steep slopes and stoney ridges, in the heat of the summer or some showery day.

I should have been well prepared, when the express after a shrill whistle, burst onto the open flats at Pawningilly and the mountain came in full view, yet I was overawed. It was sunset and a forlorn cloud drifted across halfway up its darkened slopes, like the veil on an exotic beauty. But there was no time to waste, I had to watch the ridge which leads from Broken Nose to the top. It looks feasible I concluded. By this time the train arrived opposite that huge gap which separates this mountain from Bellenden Ker. The red hue died off, and the sky turned now rapidly, first turquoise and then into a deep blue. The first stars shone through the blue curtain and the black ridges became lost in the gathering dusk, as we rumbled towards Gordonvale.

I must climb it was my first thought, but will there be anybody willing to join me in this venture was the second. The train arrived late at Cairns, "your only hope is to advertize in the Post for a walking partner", said my friend, a member of the former Cairns' Alpine Club, who met me on the platform. "I tried hard and could not find a single soul for you", he added.

I am on principle against too much publicity, for mountaineering is essentially a sport far removed from the noise and bustle of the city. "It will not work", I said feebly. -- "There is no harm in trying", was his irrefutable reply. So the article duly appeared. Lo and behold there was a taker, a young chap from Mareeba phoned me and in three short minutes we agreed on the walk. Of course it was easy, we both wanted to do it badly, he was after the orchids and I was eager for the views.

The next day everything in Cairns seemed beautiful, even the dusty road leading to the foothills, where I wandered to get some photos, looked pleasant. There was only one thing which had me worried, the weather. -- It was a glorious morning as the train wound its tortous way, climbing the hillside to Stoney Creek. The green squares of the cane fields alternating with the red soil patches provided a lovely chessboard, for the gods to play on. The waters of the river mirrored a clear sky but clouds were gathering as I arrived at Barron Falls. Descending to the foot of the falls, where the water foams over black rocks and the spray flies, I mused,

how much more impressive these falls must have been in the days before the hydro generators were installed. Still I enjoyed being shown through the Works and especially the ride on the cable car, which provides a grandstand view of the falls.

At lunch I was in "Paradise", and considering the beauty and variety of the vegetation, it really is a paradise for the botanist. Nightfall found me discussing details of the climb with my partner at Meeba. We decided to meet three days hence on the Saturday night at Pearamon, in the meantime I was to see the tourist attractions of the tablelands.

The road from Ravenshoe to the big Millstream Falls reminded me of New South Wales. Tall gum trees, sparse undergrowth, there is really nothing to assure you, that this part of Australia is in the tropics. The military campsites along the road made it difficult to find the turn off and I felt lucky when the lovely falls came into view, just at sunset. The water seems to form a perfect unbroken curtain, the type you could watch for hours on end.

How different are the Tully Falls. The road winds between lush green walls, the rain forest seems to close in on you. As you arrive at the sunlit lookout, where you can see the waters of the Tully leaping into a huge granite chasm, you can not help being overwhelmed by the grandeur of the scene. A path leads to the foot of the falls and walking down it seemed to me that these are the best falls on the tablelands and by the time I arrived at the bottom, where the sun-rays form a rainbow on the everlasting spray, this feeling became a certainty. At the swimming pool on the top I was told, that a new hydro station will be established in the near future, utilizing the 1500' drop. I sincerely hope that the engineers will preserve the beauty of these unique falls in all their glory.

The highlights of the road to Millaa-Millaa are those patches of rainforest, which have escaped the axe and fire, but they seem to be in danger right now. The Millaa-Millaa Falls suffered by comparison with the Tully, and so did the other scenic gems, like the crater lakes, Barrine and Eacham.

Mt. Quincan proved to be a most fascinating and easily accessible crater, yet I have the impression, that very few of those people, who admire the curtain and cathedral figtrees ever climb this hill, although it provided the rich volcanic soil for these forest giants. The perfectly circular crater is a sight in itself, but there is also a beautiful cycloramic view awaiting those who get to the trig. I watched from the top the lazy clouds which crowned Bartle Frere for the last week; they seemed to be lifting slowly. Can it be, that they will be gone by the time I arrive there. It would be good.

I was lucky. The next morning as we admired the view from Lamond's Hill there was not the slightest trace of the clouds. There was only the majestic mountain with the sea as the background, and

the green ridges seemed to beckon, come closer. We had lunch near to a singing stream, on a luscious meadow called Gurkha Clearing, at the head of the Russell River track. This would be an ideal spot for a boarding house, or chalet, for people who would like to see the view from the peak. It does not take more than a day to get there, but we did not know this at the time.

We entered the jungle and followed the Russell River track for a while. It was a very ticklish job to find the right place to turn off for the ridge, which divides the watershed of the Russell, from that of the Mulgrave River. I had to use my bushwalker's instinct, such as it is, and we marked a huge tree with a couple of slashes where we left the track. The going in the jungle was pretty heavy, as there are plenty of "wait a whiles" and their close relatives, but fortunately we found only very few stinging trees. The divide, right here, is fairly broad and flat and it is easy to wander off it, so we were glad to find a jam jar and later a bottle on the stick, proving that we were on the right ridge. From here on we found slash marks at fairly regular intervals. At the last saddle, before the ridge gets steeper, we found water in the gully and a level spot, so we decided to make an early camp. Soon the tent was pitched and the camp fire provided a homely touch to the scene.

In the morning the ridge proved to be the right one and our hopes were high as we caught glimpses of the view, from the top of some orchid covered boulder. Ferns and orchids seem to love these heights, as all fallen trees and rocks were fairly smothered under their leaves. We passed various commando camps on the way, and at about 11 o'clock arrived at an open patch on the north peak of the mountain. This window in the jungle, must have been burned by soldiers, or other people who climbed the peak. It is the only place on Bartle Frere where we could see the ravages of bush-fire, although at one section our ascent has been blocked, not only by giant granite boulders, but by the vandal destruction of some fine trees.

The view is not cycloramic, but very impressive just the same. The towering mass of the south peak, which is about 400' higher, blotted out much of the coastal view. The military map calls the north peak "Chooree Chillum" the aboriginal way, and registers the same height for both peaks, but I can not accept this as being correct.

Our route lay on the top of the mountain and we had a great time in climbing the rocks that blocked our path. These obstacles served also as lookout points, and the views of Bellenden Ker, the Mulgrave valley and the maze of ridges, made the picture unforgettable. Close at hand the rocks seemed to have been piled up by some pre-historic giant, in the distance waterfalls were tumbling into the green abyss. I felt, I could float out above the valley free of the cares of the world. But the body can not live by views only, it needs food and -- water! There was no water at luncheon time, so we were glad to find a

little permanent stream, just before we dived down into the last saddle separating us from the summit. Here is a suitable place for a shelter hut, with a few bunks, blankets and a fireplace.

We had to hurry, the weather had been kind to us for two cloudless days. Will it be like this tomorrow? I had too many disappointments in the past to trust to luck, so we pushed on. In the saddle we met our little stream again, gurgling under rocks, bobbing out here and there, but mostly flowing underground, or under heaps of rock perhaps 30' below its embankments. The final climb was short and sweet,---I mean steep, but not too difficult. We found that the slash marks lead to the summit too, the army must have been here before us. Still the view that greeted us was ours,---ours only. It was late and the horizontal rays of the dying sun outlined the distant ridges and valleys, with unusual clarity. Only over the sea hovered a veil of mist. The cane fields gleamed like emerald lagoons. We tried to locate the various landmarks;---yes, that is Innisfail, with the Johnstone River, and those mountains which rise sheer from the sea form Hinchinbrook Island, and then one of those two small islands, must be Dunk Island. By jove, I can see Banfield watching us! How small everything viewed from here seems, even the crater of Mt. Quincan is just a heap of sand, which had been left on the plateau by some playful child. The shadows lengthened and it became decidedly cool, so after carefully picking the ridge that leads to Broken Nose, we started our descent.

The last 500 or 600 feet of our ascent lead us through very dense undergrowth and saplings, now we had to pass through a similar, but much more extensive zone. Our task was increased by the huge rough granite boulders, which seem to form a continuous belt, all around the summit. As night approached rapidly, we had to pitch our tent not far from the peak, on a reed covered slope. The little tent nestled in the hollow, between the rocks and stunted trees, like a white bird. The bright stars heralded a cold night, but with the cheery campfire warming us, we did not mind.

It was; "a cold frosty morning", that greeted us. The tent was frozen stiff and frost covered the reeds, but as the sun rose from the sea, its crimson rays lent the view that touch, which lifted it from the beautiful, to the sublime. The chill easterly breeze brought us quickly back to earth again. The breakfast was only a scanty affair, for we had a dry camp and our idea was to get a second helping, as soon as we found water. The coast seemed close at hand too, so we were lead to believe, that we would have an easy day before us. The rocks taught us better. They seem to be heaped in an interminable mass along the ridge, as we climbed down,---down to the valley.

We found no water. By lunchtime our throats were parched, but at last we left the region, where reeds and saplings form solid floors and walls and entered the rain forest once again. Its green ceiling sheltered us from sun and wind. On our way we could hear waterfalls, far below us, tumbling into deep gorges, and the mocking call of small birds; "it is easy to get there". Yes, it is easy to fly, but if you leave the reasonable slope of the ridge for some deep gully, you will be sorry. So, on we plodded, until at about 4 O'clock, when the two thirsty walkers arrived at their Mecca, the crystal waters of Kowadgi Creek. The stream here forms some beautiful cascades, and its clean waters leap joyfully from rockpool to rockpool, amidst towering trees. A little flat spot at the crossing, proved so attractive, that they welcomed the idea of an early camp, with the billy boiling and the rushing creek singing a lullaby. It was warm, that night in the shelter of the tall timber.

The last day was rather rushed, as we had to catch the train at Pwngilly. We rose once again before the sun, and in two short, but scratchy hours, left the jungle behind us. As we speeded along the good road, some drifting clouds slowly enveloped our mountain, in their impenetrable shroud.

A Bushwalkers Reserve
or
A Fauna and Flora Reserve.

Marie B. Byles.

Most bushwalkers would consider that I should have put "and" instead of the "or" in this title.

But, consider! Can you really have both in the same area, or must you choose which is to have priority? The mere fact of a large number of bushwalkers roaming about over a small area, and camping where they like, means that the fauna is disturbed and some of the flora is destroyed. The only reason why bushwalkers have not done much damage yet, is simply because their numbers are not very great. But every year the numbers increase, and in a small area, such as Muogamarra, they could soon leave behind the trail of their comings and campings.

Doubtless Mr. Tipper has not always been as affable as he might towards bushwalkers when we know to be faultless, but that should not prevent us from seeing his point of view, i.e. that bushwalkers ought to keep to the tracks as far as possible and ought to camp only where asked to, and ought to come in at the front gate so that he may know just who the people are and where they are likely to go. Incidentally, too, why should not bushwalkers pay their 1/- like

everyone else? There is work and upkeep in the reserve and why should they not help to maintain it? We trustees of Bouddi know to our sorrow that you cannot keep land in its natural state without money.

Finally there is the fire-risk. Bushwalkers think they are beyond reproach in the matter of making their fires safe. But we know very well they are not. We know of two bush-fires, of which members of our own club were the cause. We know of two. How many others have there been of which we have not heard? One party, of which I myself was a member, lit one fire under a peaty bank. I did not like to interfere, for they were experienced walkers. We went away for a stroll, came back in half an hour to find the bank alight, and had great difficulty in getting it out. I have seen many bushwalkers build their fires near grassy banks and under low overhanging trees. And how many bushwalkers put their camp fire out with water when they go to bed, and carefully extinguish their breakfast or lunch fire? It was just one such non-extinguished camp fire that I saw burst into flames the following morning, when later in the day there arose a sixty mile an hour gale. Fortunately on that occasion I did interfere and the fire had been extinguished in time.

Is it any wonder that for Mr. Tipper bushwalkers are synonymous with fire-risk and that he does not desire them to roam freely through the fauna and flora reserve. It is a pity that he does not give bushwalkers credit for their interest in the preservation of the bush, and does not treat them with more kindly interest, but that is no reason for our own failure to see his point of view.

Blue-Gum Interlude

By "Shorty".

We thought we'd take on hiking,
Or walking as it's known,
So shouldered up our rucksacks
With many a grunt and groan.

We started off down Govett's,
And like true walkin' sports
We paused to have a breather
And change into our shorts.

Our changing went quite smoothly
'Til someone shouted, "Stop!"
There's half a dozen tourists,
A-waving from the top!

Blue-Gum Interlude Continued:

We'd just gone past the Junction
 When Bobby (not so) Bright
 Found that he'd lost the pathway,
 So there we stopped the night.

We soon lost touch with Hallstrom--
 He trod the Canyon Grand--
 And as he went we saw him
 With female by the hand!

Now Russel felt romantic
 And nearly made us weep.
 He carried two full, rucksacks
 To the top of Govett's Leap!

Perhaps our Clem was cunning,
 But Russel's lost the knack:
 His love was not rewarded;
 He merely wrecked his back!

TO THE WAYFARER.

A Poem fastened to trees in the Portuguese
 Forests.)

Ye who pass by and would raise your hand against me, hearken
 ere you harm me.
 I am the heat of your hearth on the cold winter nights, the
 friendly shade screening you from summer sun, and my
 fruits are refreshing draughts, quenching your thirst as
 you journey on.
 I am the beam that holds your house, the board of your table,
 the bed on which you lie, the timber that builds your boat.
 I am the handle of your hoe, the door of your homestead, the
 wood of your cradle, and the shell of your coffin.
 I am the bread of kindness and the flower of beauty.
 Ye who pass by, listen to my prayer: harm me not.

--Roadside Bulletin.

(From the "Readers' Digest" - Apl.-46)

Seen on * notice-board as the party wandered up Katoomba Street:
 "Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will
 refresh you."

Still Bushed,

The Honourable, The Recorder,
Sydney Bushwalking Club.

Dear Sir or Madam,

As a guest recently at one of your walks I felt so well or ill depends upon the viewpoint, to pen a few lines of doggerel outlining a few observations.

Please accept my thanks for a most pleasant outing, special regards for most efficient leader.

Spy-eye.

A Spy Among the Bushwalkers (Time Midnight)

Ah the dreaded moment when one embarks upon the road
And leaves the warm and comfortable train.
A muttered word or two, then girdling up their packs,
The Bushies go a-walking out upon the dusty tracks.
They strike out hard and fast, with strong and sturdy legs
Many men and women in a row.

At first its very easy for you soon expect to stop
But it then bears in upon you that the pace is on to stay
and no-one answers questions on the way.

The leader he is leading but often from the back
And torches wink and flash up and down upon the track.
Now its left and down this Canyon,
Then its right and over slopes.
And ever unquestioning, gaily and in song
These hidden hard walking people plod along.

Clad in shorts and shirt and jumper
Scorning any other gear
They travel hard and fast and fatigue they never fear.

Their feet are cased in hob-nailed boots
As thick as they can get them,
With fancy sox and coloured tops, they trip ad infinitum.

The morn comes on apace but still they do not slacken
By now you are drugged and walking in your sleep.
But there's an end to everything and at cliffs edge they halt,
And soon they're snoring in their "bags" asleep.

And you are left awondering what its all about,
 Waiting for the daylight to see what lies without.
 The tents they seem to cluster in a little circled knot
 In a softly wooded hollow chosen as "the spot".

Then heads appear - just human and fires begin to burn,
 And chops and steak and toast and tea are spread upon the fern.
 The "bushies" then will greet you in a desultory sort of way,
 To remind you of the Trials and terrors of the day.

Then we're moving in five minutes, is the hoary age old cry
 And you run and do your best with your packing to comply.
 But already they are moving and filtering thru the trees,
 A tribute to efficiency making bush life a life of ease.

You then begin to wonder how they're going to keep this up,
 And you speculate upon the motives of this trip.
 When you come to this conclusion--
 Which might be an illusion
 That men have one and girls another
 Ones a girl and ones a brother.

Clem is tough and loves to show it,
 Clouds a spartan and so he's for it,
 Dormies down and full of mettle,
 And Mavis is in such fine fettle
 That task and burden quickly tackled,
 Fail to hold this girleen shackled.

Therefore each and every one
 Act by instinct and full of fun.
 Show to "the spy" a side of life
 Bereft of any sort of strife.

Long live the "Bushies" one and all
 Your pleasant walks hold me in thrall.

Backyard Bushwalking.....Paddy.

Dry! Dry! Dry! Rather than see my precious plants die of thirst,
 I am judiciously watering them to keep them alive. Flannel flowers
 have said "Thanks" very gracefully by bursting into flower. Without
 the assistance of water the Gompholobium (Golden Pea bush) has donned
 its spring dress of lovely yellow blooms. The plant is 3 years old
 from seed and this is the first time it has flowered and against a
 background of Red Spider flowers - it looks a pretty sight.

As if anticipating a long dry spell all the bush plants seem to have decided on a now or never policy and come into bloom before they dry up altogether. The very waratahs are in full bloom two months ahead of schedule.

As I look out of the window now, I see a Pussy Willow in full flower. I must be getting old for the sight of this takes me back nearly forty years when as kids in England we gathered great armfuls for Palm Sunday. In fact we called Pussy Willow "Palm". We used to have a little rhyme which referred to the Sundays in Lent. It went like this (spelling phonetic).

"Tid, mid, miseray
Carling, Palm, Paste-egg day".

What the "Tid, mid miseray" means I know not. (Maybe some ecclesiastical reader can help). Carling referred to "Carling Sunday" when we fed almost exclusively on carlings (a species of brown pea). This was a local custom said to commemorate the time when the inhabitants were saved from famine by the timely shipwreck of a vessel laden with carlings. The carlings besides making a tasty, if somewhat wind-producing dish, made fine ammunition for pea-shooters. Paste-egg day was of course Easter Sunday. The paste-eggs were hard boiled eggs coloured and often decorated with quaint drawings. We would visit relatives and friends and from each collect an egg. Then we would go "jarping". It was a simple game consisting of one chap having a strike (or jarp) at another fellow's egg with his own. If the shell of one egg were broken it was forfeited. Consequently the owner of an extra hard shelled egg could acquire a goodly collection of eggs. In the afternoon we would go into the "country" and bowl (or roll) our eggs. This consisted of rolling the eggs down a steep grassy bank to see whose egg would travel furthest.

But enough! We have strayed from Australian bush to English fields. Though distant in space they are close in spirit for the same sun shines on both, away from the fog and fumes of the city and the same clean wind blows, refreshing mind and spirit.

Paddy has ample supplies of reconditioned army prismatic compasses priced at £2-0-0. A valuable addition to every walkers outfit.

'Phone.
B 3101.

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