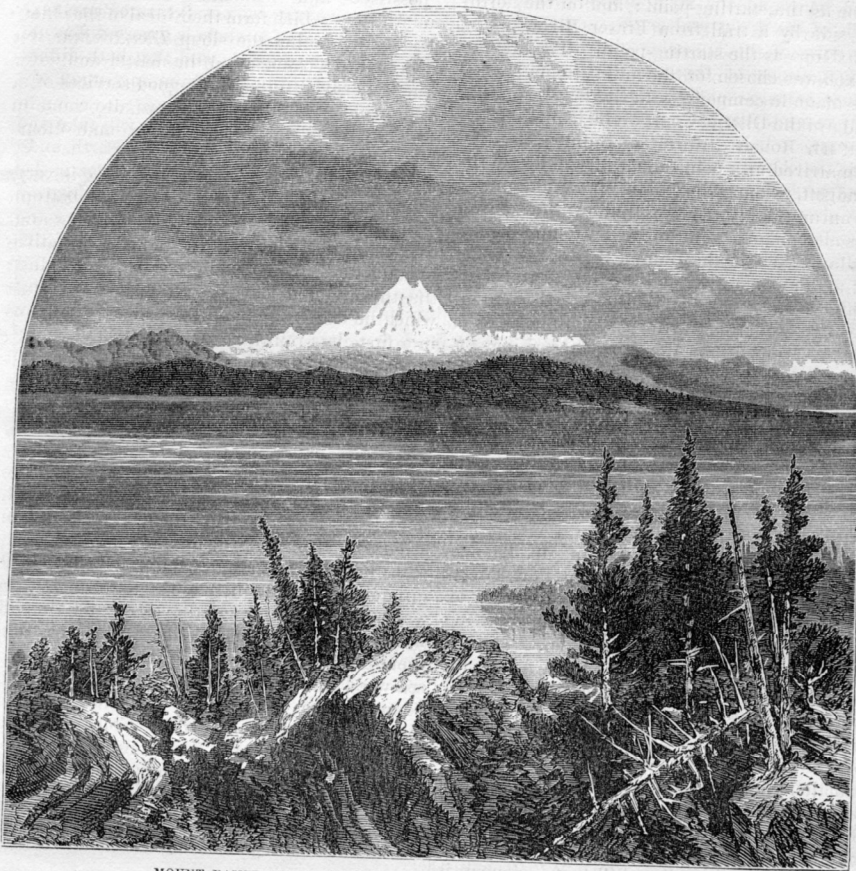


MOUNTAINEERING ON THE PACIFIC.



MOUNT BAKER, FROM CEDAR HILL, NEAR VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA.

IN these times of volcanic activity, when from all quarters we have accounts of the heaving and rending of the earth's surface, and the whole Pacific slope is agitated with the throes of earthquake, some account of the first ascent of Mount Baker, which has been active within the memory of man, may not be uninteresting. At a time, too, when the Alpine Club finds its occupation gone, the opening out of a new field for exploration deserves attention. For though Mounts Shasta and Hood have been several times ascended, they do not present the peculiar difficulties encountered in scaling the great peaks of Switzerland. Both of these are easy of approach, and almost devoid of glaciers.

Mount Baker is the most northerly of those great cones which dot the Cascade range, and is only fourteen miles south of the great boundary line cut through the forests which divide the American and English possessions. It forms the most striking feature in the attractive scenery around the Fuca Straits and the Puget

Sound. Amidst numerous groups of islands (the Western Cyclades) and pine-clad heights, like another "Snowy Olympus," it towers above, the silent sentinel of a solitary land.

The author, having satisfied himself with Mont Blanc and the surrounding scenery,* determined to leave the beaten paths of the European ice-fields for the unexplored heights of the West. He took residence in Victoria, Vancouver Island, with this object in view. Although it is eighty miles distant, a very fine view of the mountain is here presented; and the recollection of peaks and passes overcome in the Alps stimulated him to the ascent. This account is, therefore, the result of observations made in two previous attempts and the final success.

The mountain may be approached on the southeastern side by the Skadgett River, tak-

* "Scenes from the Snowfields," by Edmund T. Coleman. Longman and Co., London, 1858.