

around it, I got above and hoisted myself to the top where, somewhat to my surprise, I found myself facing the cairn erected on the highest point of the mountain, 14,049 ft. above sea-level.

The narrow knife-edge, with a sheer drop on west and south and a very precipitous one in the face which I had scaled, combined to render the summit a rather thrilling eyrie. The sharp west peak of the Middle Palisade across a great chasm in the summit arête, the broad-faced pyramid of Mt. Sill, the Gothic spires of the North Palisade and beyond the latter to the right, the ruggedly symmetrical peaks of Mts. Winchell and Agassiz, formed an assemblage of superb mountains capable of arousing enthusiasm in the most blasé. The eye followed the axis of the range for over a hundred miles—from Mts. Whitney and Williamson in the south to Mts. Ritter and Lyell in the north.

As the wind rumbled in the couloir on the south face and blew strongly across the summit, I took shelter in a little coign east of the crest. There I remained for half an hour lunching and watching the rosy finches playing about the rocks, apparently enjoying the mountain tops as much as do mountaineers.

In the descent I followed the crest of the same arête as much as possible. It was without incident until I neared the brink of the cliff above the glacier. In view of the morning's experience, I was not especially eager to descend to the snow-fan. After a pause, I decided to continue over the arête to the margin of the cliff with the hope that it would afford a route down to the glacier. This came to pass, and I was soon standing beside the bergschrund. I hesitated to make a leap, but eventually I shot across, alighting on firm footing. Continuing, I again encountered the schrund beyond a rocky projection, but cleared it with a bound and proceeded then northward across the glacier. I plodded through soft snow for a while, but finally indulged in a long glissade to a basin not far from the south end of the long, narrow lake encountered in the morning. Not relishing the prospect of climbing over the bluffs enclosing the lake, I walked across the ice and although it was somewhat rotten, gained the farther end, without experiencing anything worse than a pair of wet feet. Hastening down the declivity beyond, I soon arrived at the lake where my camp lay. The ascent had been a most excellent one. Later in the season, with less snow on the face and particularly in the couloirs, very little risk would be run by competent climbers. It ranks among the finest rock-climbs available in the Sierra Nevada.

#### SECOND PEAK, MIDDLE PALISADE—FIRST ASCENT FROM THE NORTH

A route having been found up the north face of the culminating peak of the Middle Palisade, there remained the desirability of discovering one up the second highest summit northwest of the first,

13,956 ft. in elevation. Although its sheer north face manifestly precluded any such direct escalade as had been found possible before, appearances favored a try up a steep snow-filled couloir just west of the peak and a traverse from the notch at the top eastward over the arête to the summit.

Accordingly, leaving camp at an early hour, I proceeded westward across an undulating terrain of glaciated granite, sparsely scattered over with lodgepole pine, rounded a long spur projecting northward from the Middle Palisade and began to ascend the stream issuing from a glacier at the foot of the desired peak. The latter stood in fine perspective at the head of an alpine gorge, its base obscured in dark shadows, but the summit glowing in bright sunshine—a truly magnificent sight.

After going through another narrow passage, I reached the terminus of the glacier and crossed it towards the couloir west of the peak. The snow being firm, such good progress was made that I was soon at the schrund near the foot of the chute. Crossing without difficulty, I began steadily to ascend the snowy couloir, being able in most places to kick in sufficiently to support my weight. When near the notch, I suddenly swung onto the rock-wall to the left and with some little difficulty succeeded in gaining the crest of the summit-arête. To my disappointment, however, I found the arête so deeply gashed and the cliffs on either side so sheer, that it did not seem feasible to continue to the top of the mountain. At first sight also it did not look possible to descend the cliff below me on the north. More careful scrutiny, however, disclosed a way down for some two hundred feet, after which a traverse eastward along the face of the mountain, across the head of a large couloir and around a shoulder, might bring one within striking distance of the summit.

The descent proved rather thrilling, but with the exercise of care, not very hazardous. It lay down steep pitches, short chimneys, and along narrow shelves. The traverse, turning out to be easy, I soon reached the couloir, crossed it and swung around the shoulder beyond. Then passing over a strip of steeply-pitching snow and rounding a buttress, I found myself looking up a Y-shaped couloir with a peak at the terminus of either branch, the more easterly being manifestly the higher. It took only a few minutes to descend into the chute and follow shelves along the left wall of the right branch to the final arête where a quick scramble brought one to the summit. This consisted of two sharp points, one overlooking the north face which dropped away sheerly for many hundreds of feet. East of the top, the arête broke away abruptly in a great gash; southward, after shelving down for perhaps two hundred feet it fell away perpendicularly to the base of the mountain. The view of the highest peak of the Middle Palisade rising in stark crags across the great intervening gap, and that of the commanding, spire-like peaks of the other Palisades to the northwest was very

striking. There being no cairn present, apparently there had been no previous ascent.

Within an hour I was on the return trip following the route of ascent to a point near where I had descended the face of the cliff. Here I ventured on a variation of the former line. As I ascended the holds became so few and the angle so steep that I feared I might be getting into an embarrassing cul-de-sac, should I be unable to reach the crest, or if neither it nor the other side should prove negotiable. In case of an enforced return, the holds were so rounded that a rope could not be looped over them. However the crest was attained in safety and apparently it could be followed westward and the north face opposite also be descended. Choosing the latter, all went well for a while, but presently difficulties arose. The steeply-tilted rocks and short chimneys held loose snow underlain with ice, and the angle was so steep that if one's footing gave way, he might not stop, short of the base of the mountain. But being unwilling to return to the crest and start anew, I headed in a diagonal direction westward towards the large couloir which I had ascended earlier in the day. When almost up to it, I came upon a fifty-foot drop but with the aid of the rope got down. This proved to be the last impediment, however, for by hitching the rope to a protruding rock, I reached the margin of the couloir.

Once off the treacherous face of the mountain, I sped down the chute in a long glissade. Upon nearing the schrund, I steered toward a bridge and shot over it. Difficulties and dangers past, I hastened over the glacier, glissading wherever possible. As I came within sight of the lake, near camp, the moon emerging above a mountain to the east, lighted up the summits of the Middle Palisade. With some gratification I gazed at the steep front of the highest peak, up which a new route had been discovered, and at the second highest trodden for the first time by human foot, after a thrilling and somewhat hazardous climb.

NORMAN CLYDE.

#### THE NORTH PALISADE—FIRST ASCENT OF SECOND HIGHEST PEAK

To the lover of mountain scenery or the scaler of mountain peaks, the North Palisade is one of the most intriguing eminences of the Sierra Nevada. Rising in almost sheer walls to the north and the south, it is surmounted by several great pinnacles, the loftiest 14,254 ft. in elevation, the second highest approximately 14,000 ft.

While making a number of ascents of the first, I frequently gazed toward its somewhat lower neighborhood several hundred yards to the northwest, wondering whether it, too, might not be scaled. The actual summit is a tapering monolith upwards of thirty feet in height which promised to demand arduous gymnastics