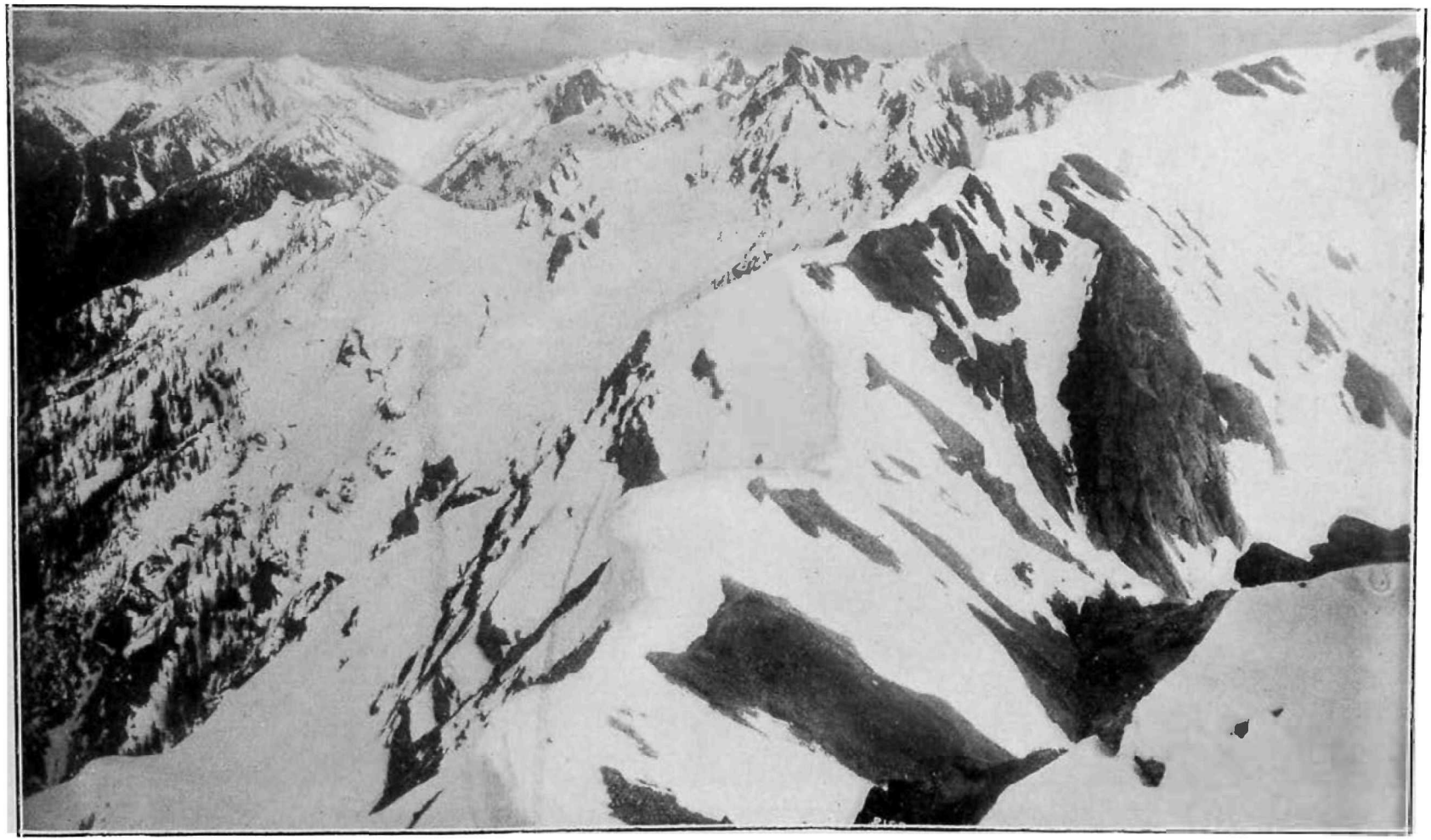
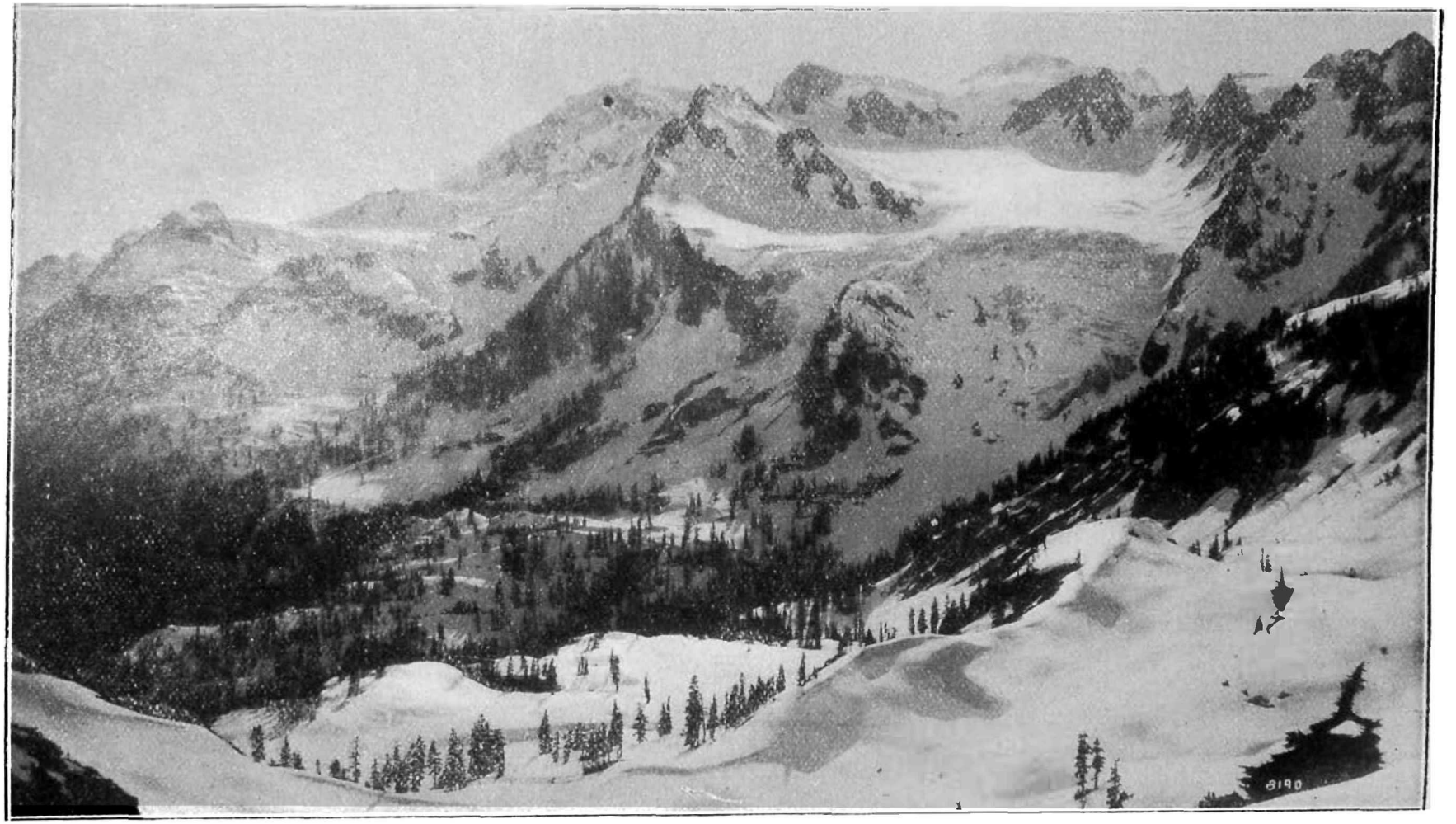
**ELWHA VALLEY FROM THE PASS.**

**Mountaineers' Camp at point of Ridge on the left. Altitude of camp 3,300 feet, of the pass 5,300 feet.**



**THE SEA OF MOUNTAINS TO THE SOUTHWEST OF ELWHA BASIN.**

**The basin is located in the valley at the extreme left of the photograph. Very few of these peaks are named and so far as known they are unclimbed.**



**MOUNT OLYMPUS AND THE HEAD OF THE QUEETS VALLEY.**
**This is one of the most beautiful mountain meadows in the Olympic mountains.**

# Expeditions Into the Olympic Mountains

By INA M. HANNA

IN view of the Mountaineers' proposed trip into the Olympics this summer, interest in former explorations of the region is revived.

**Lieut. O'Niell's Expedition.** In 1885 Lieut. O'Neill, of the regular army, stationed then at Fort Townsend, was detailed by Gen. Miles to make a trip into the country back of Port Angeles. He spent about six weeks with a party of seven men, working southeast toward Hood's Canal. He reached a point about ten miles south and twelve miles west of Mt. Constance, and located the snow field from which the east fork of the Elwha rises.

He writes that though the trip was one of many hardships, the beauty of the scenery and the magnificent hunting amply repaid them.

**Press Expedition.** The most notable attempt to open up the region was that made by the "Press" expedition in 1889-'90. An abstract from the accounts of this trip is given further on.

**Prospectors' Trip.** In June and July of 1890, following the return of the Press expedition, a party of five prospectors started in at the mouth of the Dosewallips. They returned by the Elwha to Port Angeles. On their return trip they struck the Press trail.

Mr. John Conrad, who wrote of the trip for the Seattle Press of July 16, 1890, speaks of the great difficulty in getting through. He says they found some small fertile valleys, none with more than 2,000 or 3,000 acres, only very small patches of good timber, and no evidences of "minerals," the object of the trip. They found an abundance of bear, cougar, elk, deer, woodchucks and grouse.

We find mention of a party organized to explore the source of the Skokomish, cross the summit to the head of the Elwha, and then follow down this to Port Angeles. This was projected for the summer of 1890, but we have no account of the results.

We find also that Lieut. O'Neill in the summer of 1890 took a party in to explore particularly the southeast and northwest corners, which were not touched by the Press party. We have, at hand, no information as to what was accomplished.

**Capt. Barnes' Account of Press Trip.** The following is condensed from the very interesting accounts of the Press expedition given by the leader, Mr. James H. Christie, and by Capt. Charles A. Barnes, the topographer of the party. As far as possible in space available, the account is given just as published in "The Seattle Press" of July 16, 1890.

Very few copies of this number of The Press are in existence, so far as known, but through the kindness of Prof. Meany, of the State University, who was at that time connected with "The Seattle Press," we were allowed to use one of the few copies.

**Purpose.** The Press expedition was fitted out by "The Seattle Press," an evening newspaper, for the purpose of exploring the unknown mountain region lying between Puget Sound and the Pacific Ocean, and extending from the Straits of Juan de Fuca to Lake Quiniault.

Aside from legends current among hunters and Indians nothing was known of the geology, of the topography, of the timber and mineral re-

sources. nor of the possibilities for settlement. The government charts contained but one or two elevations of the whole range.

The idea of such an expedition originated with Gov. Ferry, and was taken up by "The Press." The party consisted of six men originally, one of whom was obliged to leave before the end of the trip. They were all experienced in out-of-door hardships and perfectly fitted for such a trip.

**Date of Trip.** They left Seattle December 8, 1889, and were out six months, returning in May. Preparations for the trip were completed at Port Angeles, and by January 13, 1890, they were ready to make the start up the Elwha. They went in the winter in order to be over the first ranges and into the central valley region, reputed to be found toward the headwaters, by spring.

By January 23 they reached the head of possible navigation and transferred their stores from the boat to the shore. They had trouble with the boat in the rapids, but managed to get everything through without mishap to McDonald's clearing. From there supplies were packed by the men or on pack mules.

**Route.** They followed the Elwha on one side or the other to Lake Mary, where the headwaters are. This little lake, about 400 yards across, is separated from a similar one, Lake Margaret, by a rise of not more than fifty feet. From Lake Margaret the Quiniault flows to the south.

Mt. Seattle, so named by the party, on their map, lies west and a little north of these two lakes.

Following as they supposed, the Quiniault river, they were puzzled for a time by a large westward bend in the river between Mt. Zindorf and Mt. Lawson. After a westward stretch of about five miles it turns back to the southeast until the junction of the Alexander river, where it make a sharp bend to the southwest, going almost directly to Lake Quiniault, which it enters at the upper end; leaving the lake again about the middle of the south side.

**The Press Blaze.** The trail was carefully blazed all the way with three blazes, one above the other. The lower one was made at the surface of the snow, so that in following it again comparison of the depth of snow can be made with the depth in 1890.

**The Trail.** The trail. in brief, runs as follows to the divide:

Port Angeles to Dr. Lnll's claim it was old. From there the route led past Mt. Eldridge, the western spur of which they called the Devil's Backbone.

From there it runs through to Goblin Canyon. From the head of Geyser Valley it leads down Lillian River Canyon, crosses Lillian River, leads around Mt. Fitten to a great landslide.

Two miles below Semple Plateau it crosses to the west side. From here they advise rnnning nearer the river than the trail does. A good trail can be found around the base of the Semple Plateau. The trail leads up the Goldie River, but Press Valley should be taken instead. It furnishes a good road to within a mile or so of the sources of the Qniniault and Quilliayute rivers.

From the head of the valley one can choose between these two river valleys. The Press trail follows to the south to Lakes Mary and Margaret and the divide.

A few of the notable sights, aside from the grandenr of the scenery

every time an elevation was reached above timber, were Goblin Canyon and signs of an old Indian village on Semple Plateau.

**Goblin Gates.** The so-called Goblin Gates are ledges of projecting slate where the Elwha is crowded through a narrow portal about twelve feet wide into a canyon with rock walls hundreds of feet high, which seems to swallow the river down its gloomy depts.

**Signs of Former Inhabitants.** While exploring for a trail up Elwha Pass the first evidences of old Indian tribes were discovered. This was a spruce, and the blazes were evidently made when it was a sapling. The wood and bark had almost grown over the blaze.

They concluded from the condition of the blazes, the size and rate of growth of the spruce in such a locality, that the blaze must have been made over 200 years ago.

Not far from this tree they found an old wringing post, used by the Indians in dressing skins. After this, while in the Elwha region, other old trails were discovered, also other of the wringing posts.

Capt. Barnes suggests that this region would probably well repay investigation, yielding interesting traces of the old Indian tribes once living here. It lies between Geyser Valley and the entrance of the Lillian River.

A blaze discovered later in the vicinity of Mt. Fitten, had grown with the tree, and was about ten feet long. When cut into, 210 rings of growth were counted covering the edge of the blaze.

**Semple Plateau** lies on the west side of the Elwha and north of the Goldie River.

Capt. Barnes describes it as a level plateau one and one-half miles long and three-quarters of a mile wide, rectangular in form. It is covered with a thin soil over white gravelly sand. The trees are mountain fir, spruce and Douglas pine, all small, in marked contrast with the trees all around the plateau, which are very large.

Upon the plateau great numbers of the trees are blazed and otherwise injured, undoubtedly by the hand of man. All these scars are old. A circular mound, evidently artificial, was found on the plateau. There was no fallen timber.

The conclusion from these signs and from the situation of the plateau, three sides sloping steeply and the fourth an inaccessible mountain side, that it was the site of an ancient Indian village. There was no water on the plateau, but springs on all sides, just below the margin.

**Avalanches.** Avalanches are said to be uncommon except in the Bailey range. The mountains, even where very steep, are heavily timbered, and very few avalanche tracks are seen through the timber.

**Geysers.** Geyser Valley was so called because of noises heard there and believed to be geyser eruptions. The geysers were suspected of being in the canyon below the mouth of Lillian River, but could not be certainly located.

A second geyser, if geysers caused the noise, was heard on the Quiniault River between the east fork, or Crumback River, and Lake Quiniault.

Capt. Barnes describes the sounds as beginning slowly, like the clicking of a ratchet on a cog-wheel, gradually increasing in rapidity until at the end they are too rapid to be distinguished, and ceasing abruptly at the end of eight seconds. The interval between reports was four seconds. As near as could be determined the intervals between times of activity was three days.

**MT. MEANY FROM THE NORTHEAST.**
Named in honor of Prof. E. S. Meany, by the Press party in 1890. This peak is near camp and can be climbed easily in a single day.

**MT. SEATTLE FROM ELWHA BASIN.**
The pass at the head of the valley leads to the Quinault. Altitude of pass 6,400 feet; of Mt. Seattle 7,800. Mountain named by Press party in 1890.

**Glaciers.** Although the snowfall was very heavy, they report that no glaciers were found, even upon Mt. Olympus, and no streams showed glacial origin.

**Topography.** The topographic map of the region prepared by Capt. Barnes locates the principal ranges, peaks and stream valleys. The elevations of some of the prominent peaks are given as follows: Mt. Olympus, 8,550 feet; Mt. Seattle, 7,700 feet; Mount Christie, 7,450 feet.

The Bailey Range forms the backbone of the Olympics, and the other ranges are irregularly grouped about it. This range, with Mt. Seattle and Mt. Christie, form the watershed from which the Elwha flows north, the Quinault south, and the Quilliayute west.

Mt. Olympus is placed southwest of Geyser Valley, about midway between the Elwha and the Quilliayute rivers. No large streams were found flowing from it.

The Burke range divides the waters of the Elwha and its tributaries from the waters of the Skokomish.

**Quiniault Valley.** Of those explored, the Quiniault is the largest and most important. Beginning at the Alexander River, it extends to the ocean. Above the lake it contains about 15,000 acres of tillable land, and lies right to get the sun. Below the lake there are probably 50,000 acres of tillable land.

....**Press Valley.** The largest valley on the Elwha is Press Valley. It is thirty miles long, and from one to three miles wide, containing about 14,000 acres. It rises from 1,800 feet above sea level at the lower end, to 2,500 feet elevation at the upper end. The timber is large and heavy, the soil good, the surface level at the upper end, at the lower slightly rolling. Small alder bottoms are numerous.

**Quilliayute.** The headwaters of the Quilliayute are in a deep canyon. Between the part shown on the map and the settlements at the houth, its character is unknown.

**Geyser Valley.** Geyser Valley is about four miles long and one mile broad at the widest part. The river runs broad and deep through it, and it is covered with large timber.

Lake Quiniault, on United States land office maps, extends nearly north and south, instead of northeast to southwest, as located by the Press party. The lake is shown on the west side, while the Press party map locates it about the middle of the southern side.

**Names.** About fifty names were given to ranges, peaks, rivers and valleys.

**Geology.** The following concerning the geology of the Olympics is from Capt. Barnes' observations. He says:

"The coast strip and foothills are basaltic formation. Upon the Elwha this formation extends to the base of Olympus. We observed here no rock in place other than basalt or trap. From the base of the Olympics the formation changes abruptly to slate, sandstone, gravel and marl."

"Granite in place was seen but once—on Belle River, high up on the mountain side. The strata are tilted at angles varying from 45° to 90°, 75° and 85°.

being the most common angles. They are seldom found at an angle of 45°. The "strike" is, in most canyons, at right angles to the river's course. The folding is often very complex.

Being set up on edge as they are, the Elwha canyons expose them for examination in ideal position.

These vertical strata give the ranges the remarkably sharp, ragged outline so familiar to us. Sheer precipices of from 1,000 to 2,000 feet of nacked rock are common, and everywhere the rugged character of the sides is beyond description.

Weathering and frost effects are noticeably absent. This, with the extreme sharpness of the ranges, the unworn beds of the streams, the canyons where streams have followed fissures, the cascades over soft tilted slate, in fact everything about the mountains, indicates their youth.

Some coarse granite boulders, evidently glacial, are mentioned as found in Goblin Canyon.

White quartz veins of varying thickness are abundant in places.

The crater-like form of many of the peaks was found in every case investigated to be due only to the fantastic breaking of the vertical strata.

**No Lava.** Entire absence of lava or any other volcanic matter except trap is one of the characteristics of the whole region explored.

**Flora.** As a whole, the mountains are well timbered. Hemlock, fir, spruce, cedar and pine are the chief varieties. In the interior of the mountains much cedar of large size was found at an elevation of from 3,000 to 4,000 feet. In general, fir, spruce and balsam are found on the mountain sides below 4,000 feet. Above 4,000 feet the mountains are either bare or the timber is the hardy, close-grained varieties of fir. In Press Valley there is considerable white and yellow pine.

On the Elwha the timber is generally good, and would average four to five million feet to the quarter section. The trees were medium size, tall, straight and perfectly healthy.

On the Quiniault the timber is good as far as the Alexander River, but is poor above that. There is almost no grass in the mountains, a little on the lower Elwha. The "bunch-grass country" within the Olympics is a myth. Oregon grape and ground laurel furnish an excellent substitute for the pasturage of pack animals. They are abundant.

Salmon berries, raspberries, blackberries, strawberries and cranberries are very abundant, and in some places also the kinnikinick berries.

**Fauna.** As to the game, the mountains are full of elk, which are usually quite tame. Deer are plentiful. One goat was seen by the party. Owing to the time of year and the severity of the season, only a few grouse and pheasants were seen. Undoubtedly they are abundant. Beaver were numerous in the Quiniault, and black bear are plentiful. One track of a cinnamon bear was seen. Cougars, wild cat and wolves are common.

The party most of the time was abundantly supplied with game, but occasionally there would be several days when nothing was in sight.

**Minerals.** The severity of the weather and the depth of the snow prevented much prospecting. No gold was found in the Elwha, although upyards of a dozen bars were washed.

Promising looking quartz was found, but without gold. Silver was found in a ledge of rock, and indications of silver were often seen. Silver was found on the upper Quiniault, but no gold. The river sand was not prospected, however.

On both sides of the mountain oxide of iron was seen. No coal was found upon either the Elwha or Quiniault. Galena was found in the silver rock. No traces of copper or tin were found.

So far as prospected, silver seems to be the principal mineral of the Olympics. The silver bearing rock found in the ledge was four feet thick.

**ELWHA BASIN AND THE WALL THAT FORMS MT. QUEETS.**

**The cleared area, over 600 acres, at the base of the mountain will be the site of The Mountaineers' permanent camp.**