



**The Conquest of Mount McKinley the story of
three expeditions through the Alaskan wilderness
to Mount McKinley, North America's highest and
most inaccessible mountain**

Belmore Browne

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Belmore Browne (1880-1954) accomplished painter, explorer, mountain climber, and great proponent of northern outdoor living and wilderness adventure.

"The Conquest of Mount McKinley" --- the story of the three attempts made by Professor Herschel C. Parker and Mr. Browne to reach the summit of Mount McKinley, the highest mountain in North America, is of absorbing interest to mountaineers. It may be remembered that Professor Parker and Mr. Browne were with Dr. F. A. Cook on the occasion of his second attempt to climb McKinley, in 1906, and that after their return to the coast Dr. Cook claimed to have reached the summit. The Parker Browne expedition of 1910 was undertaken primarily to prove the worth of Dr. Cook's claim, disbelieved by them from the outset, as their knowledge of the country satisfied them that no "dash to the summit" could possibly have been made in the short time at Dr. Cook's disposal. They were successful in this part of their venture, securing photographs that disproved Dr. Cook's story, but their ascent of McKinley was blocked at an altitude of 10,300 feet. These attempts, both undertaken from the south, were followed by the still more arduous expedition of 1912, when, starting again from the south, they crossed the Alaskan Range and made their attack on the summit from the northeast. It was an heroic undertaking, involving the relaying of all their provisions and outfits by dog sled across the unknown range and up to an altitude of 11,000 feet, and thence back-packing to the camp at 16,615 feet, from which the final attempts were made. While contributing greatly to the knowledge of the country, and being in itself a noteworthy achievement, this laborious route across the Alaskan Range cost them their ultimate success. Within only three or four hundred feet of the summit they were driven back by heavy storms. Their long fight with the icy wilderness had taken the best of their strength; their stomachs revolted at the pemmican, their most important article of diet, and for lack of food they were compelled to return after two storm-defeated attempts on the final snow slope.

But to all intents and purposes Mr. Browne is perfectly justified in claiming the conquest of Mount McKinley. The remaining distance consisted of a perfectly easy slope; and nothing but the extraordinary weather conditions, which made it suicidal to continue, prevented him and his companion, Professor Parker, from pushing on to the summit. The book is splendidly illustrated with a series of photographs taken by the explorers on their several trips to and from Mount McKinley.

To most of us, the tense, overwhelming emotions that spring from the perils of big adventures are enviable; and from such a narrative as Belmore Browne's we learn to appreciate something of that tonic effect which the explorer feels as the result of successful resistance to hardship-the sense of well-being, of readiness for almost anything that may turn up, which is almost a spiritual asset.

The Conquest of Mount McKinley is an epic of American mountain-climbing, in which every-day cheerfulness and courage take the place of poetic fervor, while the perils encountered are no less impressive than that of Odysseus when the Cyclops hurled half a hilltop at his little boat. The conquest of the highest

peak in North America appeals to one not merely as a manifestation of the spirit of sport raised to a heroic pitch and dignified by its connection with the most awe-inspiring grandeurs of nature, but also as a phase of man's everlasting conflict with the physical world. In reading the story of this exploit, we feel ourselves responding to the elemental "call of the wild."

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