

## Chapter Three

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### THE MAN WHO COLLECTED VIEWS

**P**oor judgment tends to multiply; once an outing begins to go wrong, the participants make one mistake after another in a sort of fatal contagion. One exception came the month after Lizzie Bourne's death. Against advice and with his eyes wide open, Dr. Benjamin Lincoln Ball walked straight into a lethal situation, but that was the last mistake he made.

Not only did the weather turn violently against Dr. Ball on the high slopes of Mount Washington, but he had no map because the mountains had not yet been mapped, he had no trail guide because no trails had yet been made north of the summit, he'd never been in the White Mountains before, and he had no idea at all of either the large or the small features of the terrain around him because the clouds were right down on the ground until his last day.

Dr. Ball's story looms large in the annals of these mountains and his name remains on Ball Crag, just below the summit of Mount Washington. Part of this fame was certainly due to his association with Lizzie Bourne, who died on the mountain a month earlier, and it was amplified by the book he wrote the next year: "Three Days on The White Mountains, being The Perilous Adventure of Dr. B. L. Ball On Mount Washington. Written by Himself."

The doctor was almost continuously mystified by his surroundings, but he was a precise chronicler of his attempt to negotiate them and his perilous adventure can be followed almost step by step.

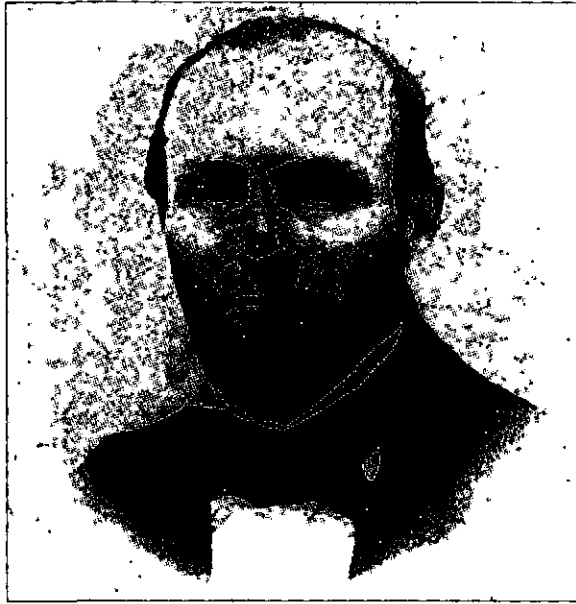
**DR. BENJAMIN LINCOLN' BALL**  
**OCTOBER 1855**

Dr. Ball was serious about views; he collected views the way other connoisseurs collect paintings. He graduated from the Harvard Medical School in 1844, but if he ever did practice, his infirmity days must have been short indeed, fitted into the space between extended trips to the Alps, to Java, to the Philippines, and through Asia.

In the summer of 1855, Dr. Ball was in Boston attending to the publication of his book *Rambles in East Asia* and thinking he ought to make a trip to the White Mountains of New Hampshire, a place that was so close he'd never been there. He was thirty-five years old and he thought it was time to make up that deficit, but preparing the text of his book took more time than he anticipated and it was October before he was finished. It was too late, he thought, to travel to the northern mountains.

One day he met Starr King, who was working on *The White Hills*, his monumental account of rambles in the White Mountains. Starr King was to writing what Albert Bierstadt was to painting, he was the prose laureate of the sublime acclivity and the dreadful abyss, the man who found forty-three adjectives to describe Mount Chocorua, and he told Dr. Ball that he hadn't seen anything until he'd seen the views from Mount Washington. In fact, he'd always wanted to make a late-season trip himself, he'd never been there after the leaves had fallen and, no, October wasn't too late.

So Dr. Ball turned his face northward from Boston. He arrived in Gorham on the morning of Wednesday, October 25, and was dismayed to find that it was raining and no mountains could be seen. He engaged a horse at the local livery and rode nine miles to the Glen House, protected only by his umbrella. It was raining at the Glen House, too, and he could see nothing but clouds. Dr. Ball was determined to see what he described as The Mountain, to compare the sight with famous views he'd found around the world, so he took counsel with Mr. Thompson, the keeper of the Glen House.



Dr. Benjamin Lincoln Ball.

Hotel keepers were an essential part of the White Mountain economy of the day. They not only provided food and shelter, they explored the hinterlands, they built trails, provided advice, guided visitors, and searched for lost trampers who had not partaken of their services. Mr. Thompson told his visitor that he might walk a way up the new road on Mount Washington and see what he could see.

This came as news to Dr. Ball—he hadn't heard of such an innovation. Mr. Thompson told him that four miles of the road were passable ending at the Camp House, a place just below timberline where workers were sheltered, though work had been suspended and only a few men would be there. Mr. Thompson said it was not a difficult walk that far, but above the Camp House the weather would be worse and the exposed terrain much more difficult, and it would not be wise to go up there on a day like this.

Dr. Ball decided to start up the road straightway, so he exchanged his hat for a cap he saw hanging on a rack in the hotel lobby, opened his umbrella, and set out in a chilly drizzle.

Dr. Ball reached the Camp House in two hours, sooner than he expected. The weather had not grown worse, in fact, he could manage without his

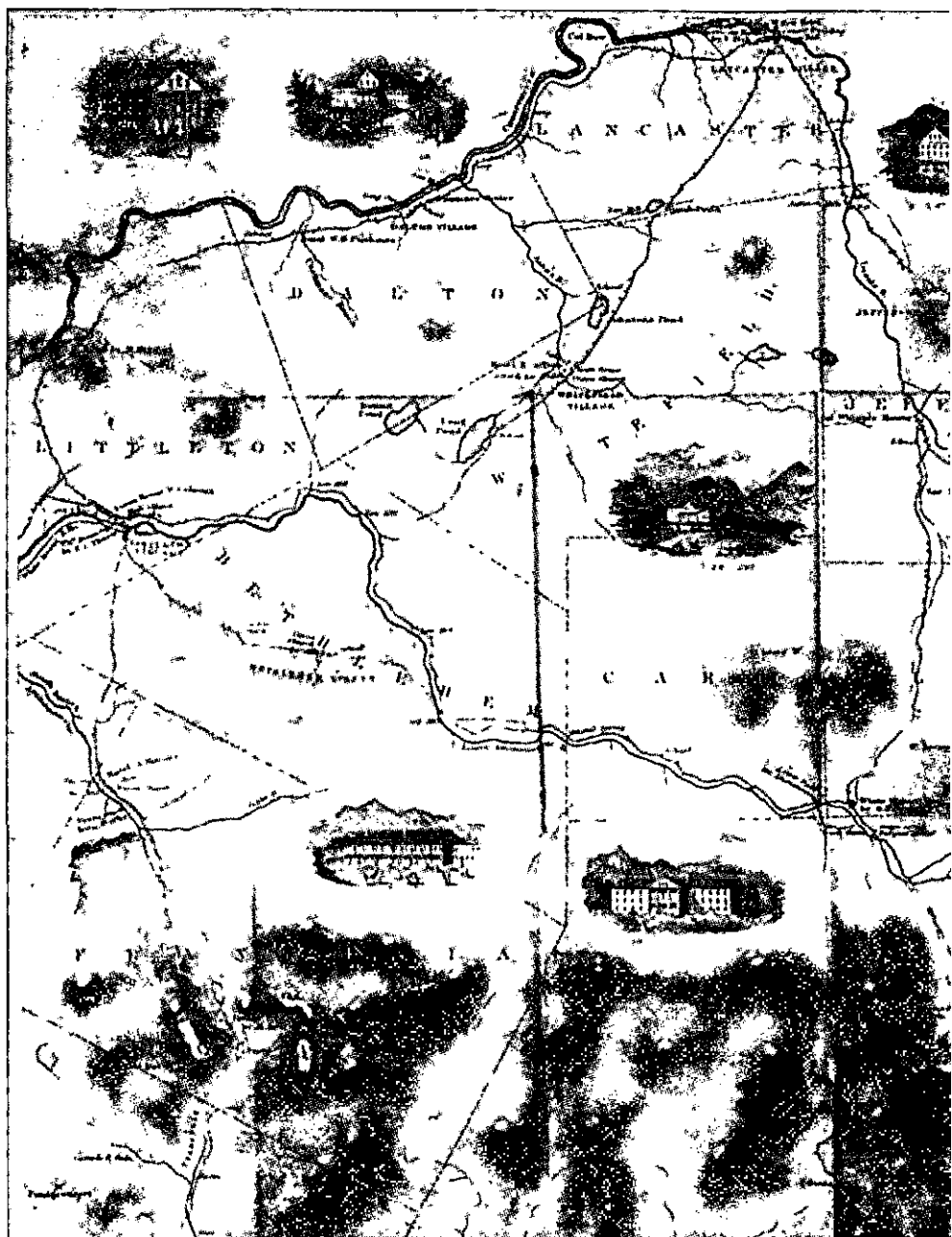
umbrella and he thought of leaving it behind, but didn't. He could see a promontory called the Ledge above the Camp House and reasoned that the view might be better up there. "Casting my eyes to the top of the Ledge, and reflecting a few moments, I concluded, as it was not very high, that I should not be violating very much the advice of Mr. Thompson if I went to the top."

Soon Dr. Ball was above the trees and a freezing rain was crusting his clothes and his umbrella and the foot-deep snow. He kept going until he realized that darkness was falling, then he turned back but it was a near thing, he could find his way only by feeling for his ascending footprints. He found the Camp House with three men resident, they made him coffee and supper and he spent Wednesday night there, but he did not sleep.

Mr. Myers was the foreman at the Camp House, the same man who had accompanied Lizzie Bourne on the start of her trip, and he cautioned Dr. Ball not to tempt the fate that befell the young lady who went by the Camp House last month. He told her party that it was too late in the day to continue, but they disregarded his advice. Dr. Ball borrowed Mr. Myers' boots and accepted the gift of his walking stick and set out, but not before being warned about bears. The boots were much too big for him, but that couldn't be helped. He followed the tracks he made above the Ledge on the previous day and saw bear tracks covering his own. At least Mr. Myers was right about that.

Dr. Ball climbed up the bridle path until the snow became too deep and he lost the track, but he kept going; he'd been told there would be four Mountains on the ridge, the last being Mount Washington, and he was sure he could find his way. At this point, the sleet and freezing drizzle had turned entirely to snow and he folded his umbrella. Conditions were not improving, but he hadn't yet taken a view, so he decided to keep going, he could always follow his footprints back. As a precaution against deeper snow, he made small cairns on prominent rocks to lead him down.

The footing and the terrain got more difficult as he climbed the ridge and several times Dr. Ball thought of turning back, but each time he remembered the many times he'd pressed on against both weather and advice only to be richly rewarded. Twice in Switzerland, he ignored the advice of guides and made his own way to majestic views. In Java, the natives told him that not even birds could survive the ascent to the top of the smoking mountain, but



Mid-nineteenth-century maps provided detailed pictures of the hotels while vague humps stood for the Presidential Range. Dr. Ball had no map at all when he started to climb Mount Washington in October 1855.

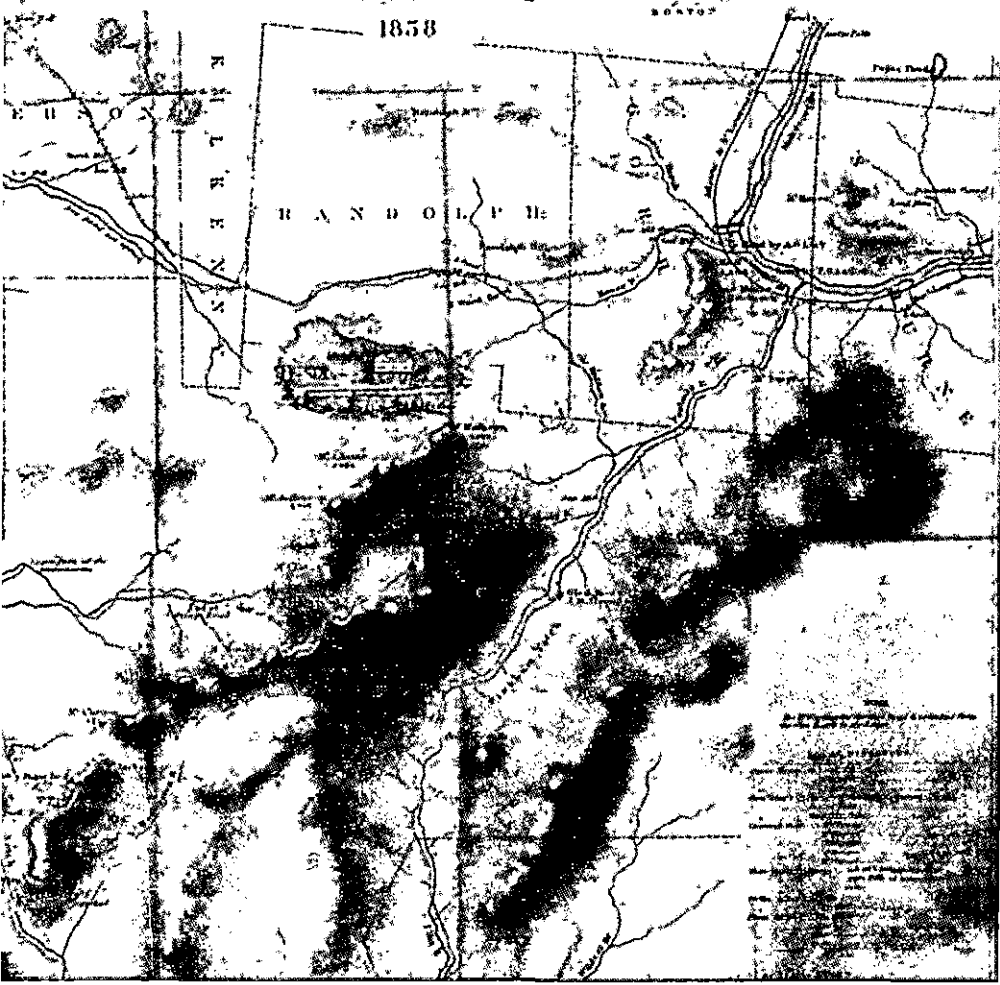
Map of the  
**WHITE MOUNTAINS**

NEW HAMPSHIRE

FROM ORIGINAL SURVEYS

by  
HARRY BOARDMAN, GERRISFORD, CONN.

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Less than two months apart in 1855, Benjamin Ball and Lizzie Bourne both took shelter in the Camp House, which housed workers. It later became known as the Halfway House.

he pressed on and found "the grandest specimen of volcanic scenes." Besides, he'd been assured that snug lodgings awaited him in the Summit House on Mount Washington, provided with the makings of fire and light, with food and drink, and beds and bedclothes.

The storm grew severe, the worst he'd ever encountered in all his travels; he ached with cold and he fell more and more often. He lost his way completely and was just taking whatever upward direction that seemed to offer good footing. Toiling on, he felt an unusual pain in his face; putting up his hand, he found that it was completely encased in ice: cap, beard, even eye-lashes, were all ice. "I considered the aspect of affairs to be somewhat desperate, and looked back. But no, thought I, the summit must be near, and, after so long a time and so much labor, I will not turn yet. At the Summit House I can make myself comfortable; and the storm is too violent to continue long, especially so early in the season as October. Thoughts of this nature passed through my mind, and, holding to my resolve, I said to myself—I will still try for the Summit House!"

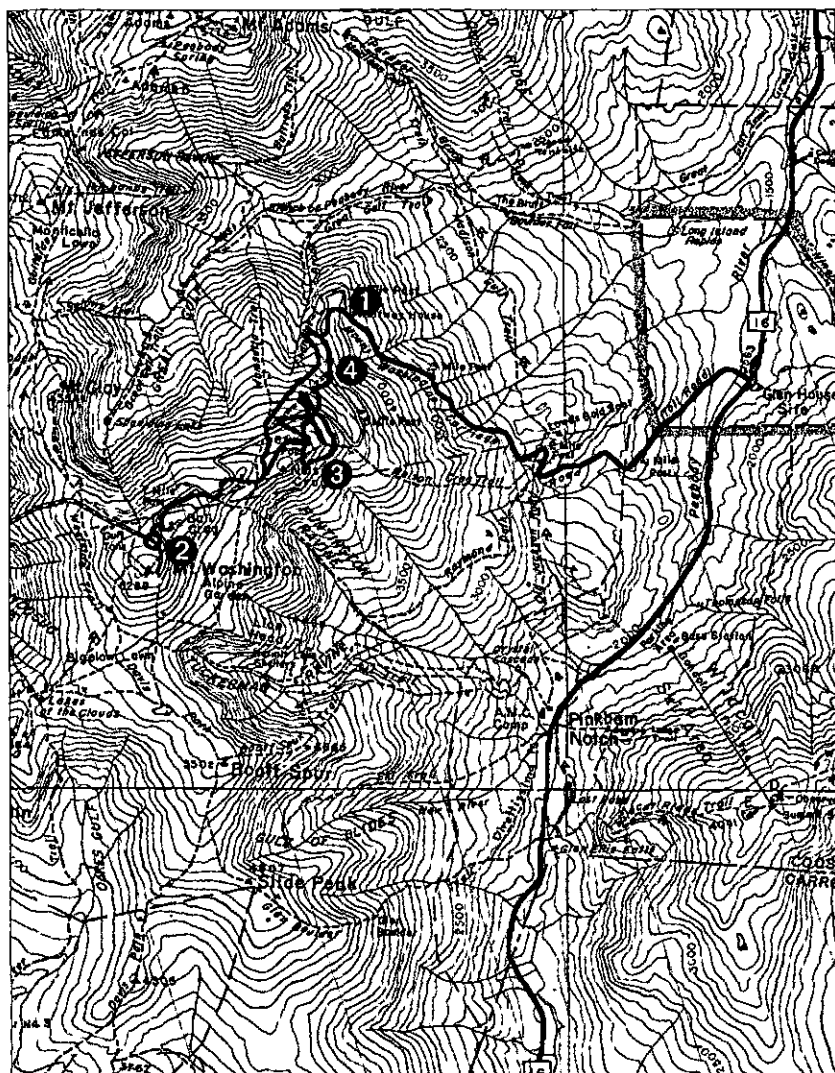
Finally, after a terrible battering, Dr. Ball reached a flat place he believed to be the summit, but he could not find the Summit House. "The storm pours down as if I was the only object of its wrath, as if avenging itself for some unknown offence. Blasts of the confused elements grapple each other, in rapid succession, and envelop me in commingled sheets of impenetrable snow. The wind, encircling me with its powerful folds, presses the cold to my very vitals, colder than the coldest robe of ice. Now it wrests me from my feet; again, it carries me furiously before it, and I sink down in fear that it will hurl me over an unseen precipice. For a few moments I remain to breathe and to rest. Shall I retreat, or shall I persevere? For I am freezing." He persevered. He persuaded himself that he lost count, that he'd climbed only three Mountains, not four. Then, seeing his situation more clearly, he realized that he must go down.

Again the plunging and falling, again the battering wind and his freezing hands and feet. Then Dr. Ball found a line of stakes, which he supposed were survey markers for the road builders. He followed these downslope, but with increasing difficulty. Then he lost the line altogether and he suddenly realized that the light was failing. "My God!" exclaimed I, 'am I to pass the night here?' Much exhausted in strength, my whole body was trembling with cold. Darkness was closing in. A snowy bed, unsheltered from the piercing blasts, my only couch, awaited me. Is it possible to survive this?"

Dr. Ball found a flat rock and a patch of scrub spruce, with a little space in between. He'd saved a piece of string from some small duty the day before, so he used this to anchor his umbrella in a root, then he pulled up scrub growth and broke out slabs of snow and cut the twisted limbs around him with his penknife and piled them all around his umbrella, making himself a fortress against the coming ordeal. He worked himself to a frenzy here, "with the view to quicken the circulation of the blood and restore warmth to my body. But the cold, by the force of the wind, penetrated like water, and conducted off the heat as rapidly as it was generated." His small shelter perfected, he tried to light a fire; he burned almost all his matches, almost all his papers, even his money, but it was no use. "Here, shivering and chattering, I went to my dreary covert, not to sleep, not to rest, but to await in suspense the coming of another day.

"Sleep! Ah, that which now is most desirous of all, and which forces itself upon me with such power, must be averted. I know too well its fatal





1. Dr. Benjamin Lincoln Ball spent sleepless night at Camp House, "Halfway House"
2. Looked for summit hotel on flats near Ball Crag
3. Umbrella camp was just above Cragway Turn
4. Basin rock

consequences. A few minutes' indulgence, and I never should awake, except in another world. But can I prevent it? Food I require, and thirst presses me hard. These I can endure. I can, at least, palliate their gnawings by the snow around me. But can I prevent this sleep? Have I sufficient vital force left to resist its influences? There I do not know myself. The ordeal I have never experienced. But it will be put to the test, and I can but try."

First, Dr. Ball avoided comfort. He twisted himself into one painful position after another, he invented difficulties every way he could, anything to avoid comfort. He thought of all the people he knew that were more comfortable than he was, all his friends, all his family. Then he thought of what few there could be who were in worse circumstances: soldiers dying in the Crimea, and an explorer he knew facing his ordeal in the polar sea.

Joseph Hall, the same guide who had been active in the unfortunate Bourne episode in September, was again stopping at the Glen House on Thursday evening. Given his reputation, word came to him that that a gentleman had stayed with Mr. Myers at Camp House the night before and it was assumed that he'd return to the Glen House sometime Thursday, but he had not appeared. This did not seem alarming; people in the Glen could see that the weather was very bad on the heights and they assumed that he was staying with Mr. Myers for another night. This seemed prudent; Mr. Myers was as familiar as anyone with the mountain, and he'd see to it that the visitor came to no harm.

In fact, Dr. Ball had not returned to Camp House to spend a second night with Mr. Myers; he spent the night in his umbrella camp. Day did come to his wretched shelter, and with it clearer air but no less wind. Dr. Ball was above the trees but he had no idea at all of where he was, there was only rock and snow and off to his right a sharp peak towering above everything. He assumed this to be Mount Washington, but he'd lost all his desire to go to the top and take the views and compare them to all other views he had known. Staying alive would now be sufficient reward.

He had no idea which way to go. "All was alike to me; there was no reason why I should go one way rather than another; and I could have no prejudices to bias me in favor for or against any particular way. If one thing, however, in my dilemma, seemed to be worse than the others, it was that there did not appear to be anything from which to form an opinion."

Lacking any hint or guidance, he decided to circle the summit cone of the mountain. This way, he'd be sure to cross the line of stakes or his track from the day before, or at the very least he'd see the Camp House or the Glen House far below and be able to chart a course.

Down at the Glen House, Mr. Thompson was told that a man had departed from the Camp House on the morning of the previous day and had not been seen since, so he sent Francis Smith and another man up the bridle path to look for him at the Summit House.

While those two were making their way directly up the mountain, Dr. Ball was struggling across the open slope of the mountain, heading for a promontory which he thought would have a path, or at least an orienting outlook. It took four times longer than he thought to cover the distance, and when he got there he could see only a long ridge dropping out of the clouds above and plunging into a vast chasm below, a place he thought was called the Gulf of Mexico, which was an old name for Great Gulf. All he could do was retrace his steps.

When he was almost back to the place he'd spent the night, the clouds thinned and he could see the valley, but there was nothing there, no road, no clearing, no twist of smoke, only the endless forest, and he realized that he could not possibly push his way through the dense interlaced growth below him. Then he heard a sound, as of steel upon stone. Turning that way, he saw two men on the bluff a little way off. The sound continued and he thought they must be workmen on the new road and he called to them over and over, but they took no notice. He decided they must be stones, and turned again to retracing his steps.

Now he realized that the light was fading again, he'd spent the whole day on that traverse. "I sat down to rest and to reflect. What can I do? What is best to be done? What ought I to do? for I am yet free to move and act. There is no reason why I should act impulsively or without thought, but rather from sober judgement. What is the best course under the circumstances? Shall I push ahead with all my strength around the mountain, taking the course opposite that of today? Or shall I risk my chance in recklessly plunging through the brush among the rocks, precipices, or anything that presents down the mountain side?"

Snow was in the air again and the wind had not slackened, and he was wracked with intolerable thirst. He collected slabs of ice and crusted snow

but the scrub growth was too thick to walk through, so he tried to crawl under the tearing branches, pushing his ice and snow toward the place he spent the night. With a heavy heart he again rigged his umbrella and piled on scrub branches and slabs of snow and ice, and he tried to smooth out the place where he lay inside and put some spruce branches on it for a bed, but it didn't help much.

Late that evening, Mr. Smith and the other man reached the Glen House with news that the visitor had not been seen at the Summit House, and that they'd seen his tracks at several places along the bridle path. They hadn't see any trace of the man, though, and Mr. Smith thought that he'd either perished on the heights or found his way down into the woods.

Dr. Ball was neither dead on the heights nor safe in the woods, he was settling himself for another night in his umbrella camp and he turned again to thought. This time he composed his own ironic epitaph. "How singular, that so immediately after the publishing of *Rambles in Eastern Asia*, this last and shortest of all my rambles, and within my own country, should be the winding up!—the thread caught and broken on Mount Washington, almost in sight of my own home. Terminated in such a manner, no one could know the circumstances. Different reports, if any, would be circulated. Some, perhaps, would have it that I was insane; others that I wished to commit suicide; and the most charitable might allow that I was lost in the fog. Of course there would be no one to say to the contrary of any of them."

The weather was, if anything, worse. The wind howled and the snow blew in through the front of Dr. Ball's shelter and the ice-laden blast threatened to tear his umbrella to shreds. This was his third night without sleep and he shook uncontrollably all through the dark hours. He was tormented by thirst and he sucked his ice supply, but his mouth was so cold the ice would not melt. In the midst of it all, he formulated a plan. If his umbrella is torn away, he'll head downhill, whichever way that might be. He'll keep going as long as he can, and when he reaches the end of his endurance he'll fasten his handkerchief in some conspicuous place and write an account of his perils on his remaining scraps of paper for the satisfaction of anyone who might remember him.

Then, a doctor again, he noticed that his lungs were not working properly. It seemed he could only half inflate them, and he studied this effect and formulated an explanation. He considered the condition of his heart and, as

during the night before, he took his pulse often. Now, though, he could not feel it with his fingers, so he used the palm of his hand. The heart rate was accelerated, but reduced in force by about a third, and somewhat irregular. Dr. Ball concluded that he would live through the night, if only he could stay awake. Indeed, his assessment led him to the thought that, if need be, he could stay out like this for a third night, his fourth without sleep, "And I was glad I could think so, for I much preferred to have my hopes leading ahead of my actual powers, than to have them following behind short of reality."

Now Dr. Ball turned again to the only part of his situation he could control. He took refuge in his thoughts, he followed every thought to its end, and he chose successions of topics as different from each other as he could devise. He thought of the people he had known around the world, and as the hours passed it seemed to him that he reviewed every acquaintance he'd ever had. Then he wondered if the people he met in Gorham and the Glen House and the Camp House will ever think of him again. They probably won't, except for the liveryman in Gorham who will wonder why his horse is away so long. He thought of his umbrella, and how he would not have brought it if not for the sprinkle as he started up the road, and how he would surely have died during the first night without it, and how he'd almost set it aside when the rain eased soon after he'd started up the road, and how many times the first day he'd been tempted to throw it away as a nuisance and an impedance.

This night Dr. Ball never tried to stay awake simply by trying to stay awake, for he knew if he did that he would quickly fall asleep and that would be the end of him. Still, though, he was not sure his thoughts would last the night, he was not sure if he had enough of them. So he placed one elbow on a pointed stone and rested his head on the palm of that hand. This way, if he fell asleep the pain would waken him. Lacking that, his head would fall off his hand, it would, as he wrote, "recall the notice of my mind." Then he surrendered himself to that saving mind and let whatever impressions it might have come flooding in upon him.

It didn't work, no thoughts came. "The sensation of cold was succeeded by a kind of soothing glow stealing along through every nerve and fiber, filling the whole system as if with an invisible ethereal fluid. My body soon seemed like a mass of cold clay, over which I had no control, and in which my own self was dwelling as a mere tenant, and from which I was about to escape,

leaving it behind me. My mind became perfectly composed and quiet, as if absorbing some balmy and mysterious influence that floated gently over and around me. I did not wish to move or make the least effort. I felt resigned and reconciled to whatever situation I might be in. The world seemed nothing to me, and life not worth living for. What tie could the world possess against the fascinating spell which was now riveting its bonds upon me! I would willingly and gladly give up all for a half hour of this delightful indulgence. I would not if I could stay its procedure. It comes—I am happy—and let it continue, was the thought or the sum of my sensations; and I believe I was fast sinking, as in a charmed and unresisting state, into the soft folds of that insidious enemy—SLEEP!”

Dr. Ball let himself drift thus for, he thought, ten minutes. Then he began to reflect on this sensation, he concentrated on it, he made it into an experiment. He realized that he was not directing the experiment, and this was not sound scientific practice. So, as a good clinician, he decided to pursue the course he would take if he was not subject to such languid temptations, to regain the control which he always brought to laboratories and to emergencies. So he woke up.

His third day on the mountain dawned and, looking out of his shelter, Dr. Ball saw a house far below him and a peak above it domed with white. He was profoundly puzzled by this. He thought the snow-capped mountain must be Mount Washington and the buildings the Glen House, but how can that be? He is on Mount Washington. Or is Mount Washington that pyramid across the Gulf of Mexico? He could go straight toward it, straight down the slope, but this would soon bring him to the impenetrable forest and he did not think he had the strength to push through its tangles and hazards. So, still hoping to find the bridle path or the line of stakes or his own track, he resolved to circle the mountain in the opposite direction than the one he took the previous day.

The men down there in the valley were thinking that the visitor had very little chance now. Even if he was alive at the beginning of this day, he'd certainly be dead by the time they could reach him. Nevertheless, they made an early start up the mountain to see what they could find. Mr. Hall was thinking that if they found their man at all, they'd find him "in the cold embrace of death," and the kit they brought was not chosen to help an invalid, but to carry down a dead man.

Mr. Hall, J. J. Davis, and Francis Smith started up the carriage road and they recruited another man at Camp House. When they had almost reached the summit they found footprints they assumed were made by the visitor and they crossed the bridle path from east to west, heading for the top of Great Gulf. They followed the track without much difficulty and before long it lost its heading and wandered for a while, then the maker turned toward the northeast with apparent resolution, a line that seemed to follow the surveyed route of the carriage road that Mr. Myers was building up from Camp House. They followed this track down the ridge for about half a mile and it crossed the old bridle path heading almost directly east toward the Glen House in the Valley.

At about this point they met the Culhane brothers, Patrick and Thomas, and the six of them pushed on along the easterly track. If they continued on this heading for very much longer, they'd come to the edge of the great ravine on the opposite side of the ridge from the Gulf of Mexico. The men were able to stay on this track for a mile and its purposive nature raised hopes in Mr. Hall, he thought the man might reach the woods after all and they'd find him alive. Unfortunately, they came to a thick patch of stunted spruce where new snow had drifted in, and they lost the track.

With renewed hope, the men stopped to consider their situation. Then Mr. Hall divided his group and spread three to the left, three to the right. They'd make a close search for signs of a camp or any other sign of survival they could find, and they worked their way almost to the end of this large growth of stunted spruce.

Dr. Ball was very weak now. He was no longer hungry and thought he would not eat if food was put before him, but his thirst was terrible. He could not hold both the cane and his umbrella, so he hooked the handle of his umbrella into his jacket against future need. He could move only in a stooped posture, supporting himself with his cane on one side and leaning against the uphill rocks. He pressed on, now resolving to circle the mountain a hundred feet higher to be able to see into the valley over the bulge of the terrain.

At about noon, as he counted the hours, he looked up and saw a line of men approaching. "They had long sticks or poles, and were advancing in a line a little distance from each other. They appeared to be looking around on the ground, as if for some object in the snow. With not the shadow of a thought that I could be the object they were in quest of, I cried out to them in

a loud voice. All stopped short, and looked at me with a steady gaze. Why do they stare at me so? I wondered. They seem astonished and amazed. Perhaps they are surprised in meeting with any one on this side of the Mountain. But I am most happy to fall in with them. I shall soon know whether I am on the right course or not."

One of the searchers walked straight up to the haggard wanderer and said, "Is this Dr. Ball?" Dr. Ball said that he was that very person.

Joseph Hall said, "Are you the person who left the Glen House Wednesday afternoon to walk up on the new road?" Dr. Ball assured his interlocutor that he was still on the right track.

Joseph Hall said, "And you have been out on the Mountain since that time?" Dr. Ball replied that this was indeed the case.

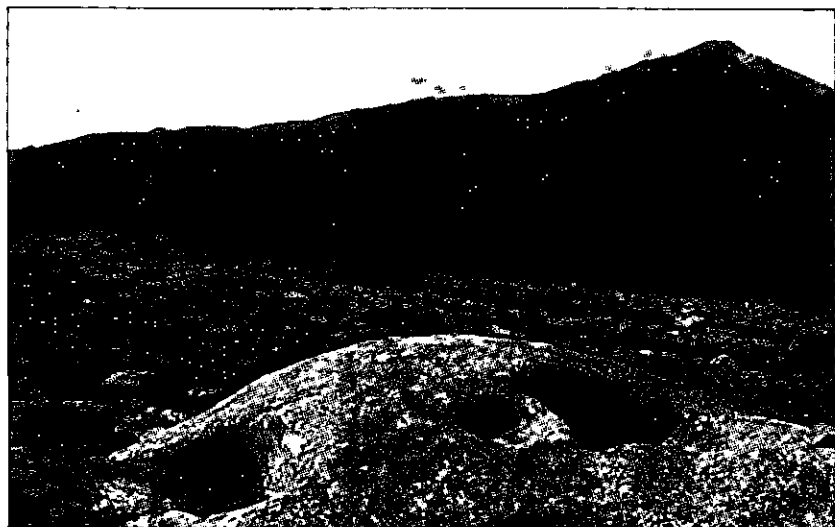
Then Joseph Hall said, "It is indeed wonderful! How could you preserve yourself all this time? You had nothing to eat, nothing to drink! And you can still stand?" Dr. Ball asked for something to drink. They had nothing to drink, but they gave him a piece of gingerbread. He could not eat it.

The men said that they were searching yesterday as well. They said they'd gone to the summit and they were the people he saw making the metallic sound. Mr. Hall saw that Dr. Ball was in good spirits, but his hands were very much swollen and he seemed hardly able to stand on his legs. By now, Dr. Ball had again reverted to his professional training and he noticed that he felt less strong than before he was discovered, so he put his arms around the necks of two of the men and they started back along the way he had just come. "And I shall not forget the thrills of emotion I experienced, from their hearty goodwill, readiness, and earnestness, in affording me their assistance, each anxious to render me some aid. But I could not but notice, from the implements they brought, that the party had no expectation of finding me alive."

He was perplexed by their course toward Mount Washington up ahead; shouldn't they be going away from it? They told him his idea of the mountain was turned around, that the peak was Mount Jefferson, the place he thought was the Gulf of Mexico was Huntington Ravine. They might also have told him that the domed summit looming above the hotel was Carter Dome rising above the Glen House.

Dr. Ball was still wracked by a thirst no handful of snow could slake and soon they came upon a rock standing up out of the snow as if put there by Providence. There was a large bowl cut into one side, "Which," Mr. Hall





His mouth too cold to melt snow, Dr. Ball drank from water collected in these glacial basins.

thought, "like the rock that Moses smote, and water gushed out to slake the thirst of the children of Isreal, afforded the greatest luxury that could be administered." After his saviors had broken away the lid of ice, Dr. Ball finally drank his fill.

Thus refreshed, Dr. Ball regained the shelter of the Camp House, where Mr. Myers told of his own vigil on the Ledge that first night, how he stayed there so long his heels froze, how he couldn't sleep for worrying about what had become of the doctor. The rescue party warmed Dr. Ball and gave him warm tea, which he could not hold down. Then they gave him ice water, which he could. They found his feet were frozen, so they put them in cold water to draw the frost. Then they wrapped him up and put him astride a horse belonging to the bridle path company. The animal was named Tom and he was accustomed to carrying rather inert riders, so he went gently and without guidance down the carriage road. As they began to descend from the Camp House, snow began falling again on the heights behind them, so heavy that it quickly obscured all signs of human passage on the mountain.

Before long they met Mr. Thompson from the Glen House, upward bound with a horse and carriage. He'd arranged for the searchers to alert him with signal flags when they found Dr. Ball's body, and he was watching

with a telescope as they made their way across the flank of the mountain toward the place they found Dr. Ball.

By now the rain had started again and the rescuers put Dr. Ball in the wagon and covered him with blankets, and as one of the men steadied his head, he descended comfortably enough. They arrived at the Glen House amidst cries of astonishment and joy; Dr. Ball was taken inside, warmed up, and asked what he would like first. He said he'd like a hot toddy, which agreed very well. Then, mindful that a starving man should not eat too much, he took part of a cup of gruel with warm milk. He took a little more gruel each hour, along with cups of water. *His feet were blackened and without feeling, "like masses of cold clay attached to the extremities, with heavy dragging sensations."* He feared for their vitality and also for his hands, which were numb and useless.

Dr. Ball thought that a poultice of flaxseed meal mixed with oil and charcoal would be the best restorative for his frozen limbs, but he gave way to the suggestion of a Mr. Hall, who seemed to have long experience with these conditions. So they made a poultice of charred hickory leaves, pulverized and simmered in fresh lard. This was applied to his hands and feet and wrapped in cloths and he gratefully took to a warm soft bed. He'd been out in the arctic storm for sixty hours, and without sleep for eighty.

"Toward nine o'clock in the evening I began to experience for the first time since my return, a strong desire to sleep. In this I was very soon able to indulge, happy with the thought that there was now no fear—that I might give myself up entirely to rest with no anxiety for the morrow." Mr. Hall stayed in the room with him and awakened him at intervals, lest he sleep too deeply.

Difficult times followed. "Slight chills, commencing at my feet, frequently ran through my body, causing the whole nervous system to vibrate. My feet, as if dead, were without feeling or sensation, distorted by swelling, and covered with water-blisters. About the ankles, and above the injuries, the pain was severe, with piercing and racking sensations, as if pointed sticks and nails were thrust into the flesh, and wrenched back and forth among the bones, tendons, and nerves; and, when cramp set in, the pain for a few minutes was excruciating. My hands ached and burned day and night, quite as if freshly immersed in scalding water; but, with no other frozen parts, I only

experienced a general soreness and tenderness, and I thought my self under the circumstances comfortably well off."

Dr. Ball stayed at the Glen House for a week, then returned to Boston, where his brother and two other men, doctors all, supervised his recovery. He continued to study his situation, a habit that had already been his salvation. During the winter he read of a more recent climb to the summit of Mount Washington and realized that three climbs were made in successive months: Miss Bourne died in September, he nearly perished in October, and the climb made latest in the season was the only one that succeeded. He concluded that *his own misfortunes were not the result of bad judgment, only of bad luck.*

Four months later, Dr. Ball wrote a letter of advice for others who might want to try the hazards of Mount Washington. He urged the employment of a guide, or going with others, "It is true many prefer to go alone and independently, to the risk of an uncompanionable and unintelligent associate; but safety here demands more than the gratification of minor wishes."

He expanded on the matter of clothing. "I was informed at the Glen House that in the majority of cases it is very difficult to convince visitors that they will absolutely require warmer garments at the summit than at the base of the Mountain. When the weather below is very warm, they expect to find the same above; but in reality there is a difference of several degrees. In July and August the thermometer shows frequently a sinking to below the freezing-point; and in general overcoats and shawls are necessary for comfort, even in the warmest part of the day.

"Visitors arrive at the summit in a considerable glow and perspiration; they remain looking at the Mountain, absorbed with the beauty of the prospect, and forget the cold wind which is blowing upon them. Too late they think of their shawls or cloaks, that they might have brought with them, which would have obviated all difficulties. The result frequently is a cold and cough; perspiration has received a sudden check; pains in the chest, irritation or inflammation of the lungs follow, and ill health is often a consequence."

DR. BALL'S AGGRESSIVE SELF-PROMOTION LEAVES FEW MYSTERIES and his route can be followed easily on a trail map of today. He followed the bridle path to the Camp House just as the Bourne party did a month earlier.

The completed carriage road reached the summit in eight miles, so this name was changed to the Halfway House and all that remains of the historic building is a large clearing on the right side of the auto road just short of 4-Mile. The road goes straight past this site to make the sharp left turn around Cape Horn, but the bridle path turned left at the Camp House and climbed the amphitheater of loose rock directly across the road. Dr. Ball scrambled up the steep bridle path here and then on to the mass of rock just above timberline that he called the Ledge. This is still the most conspicuous feature of the area; it's the pivot of the large U-turn the auto road makes just above 4-Mile. There's a parking space at this point and the remains of an army Signal Corps installation built during the 1950s.

The carriage road company had just gone bankrupt when Dr. Ball made his climb and their work ended at the Camp House, though the route had been staked out for some distance above the Ledge. Dr. Ball knew this but he lost the track almost immediately. Accustomed as he was to trackless wastes, he pushed on. He knew there were four "Mountains" on the ridge, so he apparently kept to the highest ground he could find and this led him up the ridge on about the line taken by the present-day Nelson Crag Trail. His high point was almost certainly the flat area just below the summit now marked by the foundations of test facilities built in the 1950s.

Dr. Ball turned back there and the place where he made his camp can be located from the evidence he provides. When the weather cleared he was at the top edge of a thick patch of dwarf spruce, he saw an unbroken forest below him, a conspicuous pointed peak off to his left, and the Glen House in the distant valley, but he cannot see the Camp House. Only one place on the ridge matches all five of these conditions.

"Cragway Turn" is a sharp bend in the auto road where the Nelson Crag Trail meets the road and departs again at the apex of the turn. Above the turn the road enters a large patch of dwarf spruce and it was this barrier which stopped Dr. Ball as he tried to find his way down. The Nelson Crag trail ascends along one side of this patch and the site of his umbrella camp can be found by climbing a short way up the trail and then turning at the upper edge of the spruce patch. From this point he made his embattled way back and forth across the broad shoulder of Chandler Ridge, coming almost to the edge of Huntington Ravine to the south and back toward Great Gulf at the other limit of his swing.

All this is obvious from his chronicle and only one landmark remained to be found in the soft summer days I spent retracing his steps. This last one was the basin-shaped rock where he finally drank his fill of water and this detail seemed improbable—the rock on this part of the mountain is harsh and jagged and does not lend itself to basin shapes. Nevertheless, I found the traces of the old bridle path and started down the slope.

The footing was mild and the August day was sweet, and it was easy to let Dr. Ball's fierce ordeal drift out of mind. Then the corner of my eye caught a section of ledge rising about four feet above the grade. As the ice of the Laurentide glacier was melting, a stone got caught in an eddy of meltwater at just this place and began to spin on the bedrock. This tiny scrubbing went on for centuries, for a whole geologic age, until the ice drew back from our part of the continent. And there it was in front of me, the basin-shaped rock just as the glacial melt and Dr. Ball had left it.

Our monuments usually remind us of death. Lizzie Bourne is remembered by a conspicuous marker next to the railway tracks and just below the large bay window in the tourists' building on the summit, and thousands of people see it every summer season. Dr. Ball's persistent defense of life goes unmarked except at the hidden place where that ancient spinning stone cut a basin to catch a saving drink for him.

That is the only souvenir of his passing. Dr. Ball never found his view from Mount Washington and four years later he died in some unknown place and clime, still adding new prospects to his collection.