greater praise than is implied in saying that he is a worthy pupil of his uncle, Jean Maître.

I cannot agree with those mountaineers who are content with having 'done a peak,' and would deem it a waste of time to repeat the ascent. To me the want of novelty in a second expedition is more than compensated for by the recollections called up of incidents of bygone days, linking one as they do with memories of the past; and I should be well content to spend all future climbing expeditions wandering among the rocky buttresses and over the shapely snow arêtes of the Lady of the White Tooth.

The Aiguille Blanche de Péteret.

By E. T. COMPTON.

'UNE montagne où l'on ne s'est pas un peu cassé la tête, les Anglais n'y viennent plus,' declared the immortal Bompard. This indispensable qualification does not, fortunately, as yet belong to the Aiguille Blanche de Péteret, but that noble peak possessed until quite lately another and perhaps unique attraction. It had in due course been ascended from two different sides, but *no one had ever descended* —at any rate more than about a hundred feet from the top— it having been treated, in spite of its 4,000 odd mètres, simply as a stepping-stone to Mont Blanc.

My friend Dr. Blodig and I arrived last summer at Courmayeur with the determination to give the Aiguille her due as an independent peak, making her the goal of our ascent, provided only we could establish one *conditio sine qua non*— namely, that, at an hour not too late in the afternoon, stones ceased to fall in dangerous quantities on the line of ascent.

Our first day, July 18, was accordingly spent in reconnoitring from the opposite ridge of the Mont de la Brenva. The weather was thundery, and therefore only too favourable to *chutes de pierres*; but, as far as we observed, there was comparative silence as soon as the sun left the east flank of the mountain. Moreover we were rejoiced to see that the central part of the glacier at our feet was apparently less crevassed than our predecessors had found it, and that the bergschrund, that skirts the rock buttresses, appeared to offer no very serious obstacle. One other important point we especially wished to decide was how to reach, if possible before daylight, the débris-covered slopes on the near side of the Brenva glacier without having to tackle the

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smooth rock slabs at its foot, which had given Dr. Pfannl's party a good deal of trouble at the start. Descending by a steep, stony couloir on the south side of the ridge, we were able to trace a practicable route up the next rib as far as a grassy terrace that seemed to lead without interruption round the brow overhanging the bed of the glacier nearly on a level with the patch of rock in its icefall, known as the Moulin Graynot. Thus encouraged we returned in drizzle by the left moraine to Entrèves and Courmayeur.

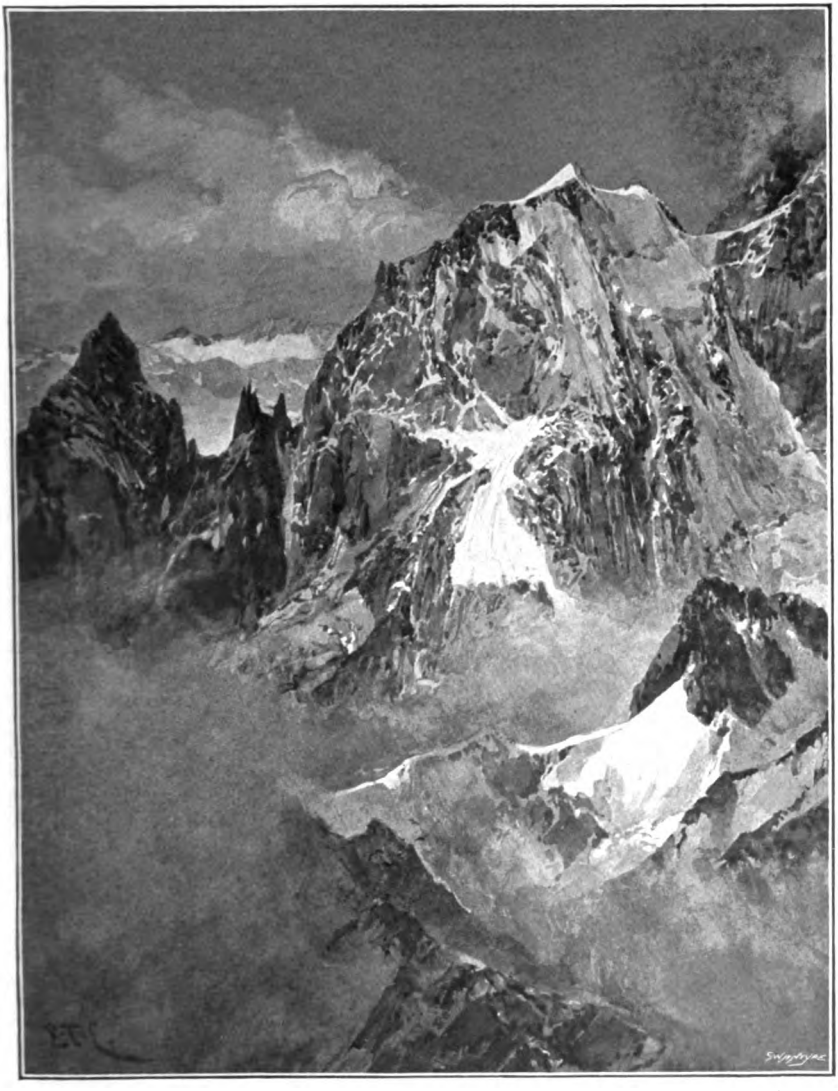
The next day being still doubtful, we reconnoitred the approaches to Mont Brouillard from the Miage, but, the weather improving towards evening, we hurried back and completed our preparations for an early start before going to roost with the fowls.

The first throbs of the shrill clarion—not of Chanticleer, but of my pocket alarum—brought us both to our feet at 11.30, and precisely at midnight our heaviest boots clattered up the silent street, each footfall accentuated by the clank of crampons outside our sacks. At 1.25 we stole past the chalets of the Brenva Alp and followed a faint path through steepish woods on the slope facing the moraine, crossed our couloir of two days before, and, scaling the broken, partially wooded face on its west side, easily reached the grassy terrace, which we followed to the polished bed of the stream which drains the eastern branch of the Brenva glacier. The moon had just gone behind the Mont Chétif, and we could not tell, until close to it, whether we should be able to cross at the only point it seemed possible to reach. Comparatively level slabs and a shallow swirl made this perfectly easy, and we soon found ourselves well up on the bluff between the two branches of the glacier, where we seated ourselves for our first meal, eagerly scanning meanwhile the cliffs and couloirs of our mountain. From here, of course, they appear far less precipitous than from high up on the opposite ridge, but still, in places, suggestive of interesting work by-and-by.

At 7.30 we left the half-submerged medial moraine and, keeping to the well compressed and nearly level stretch, steered for a triangle of steep névé at the foot of the Dames Anglaises, glancing back frequently to get bearings for the return course.

Two hours and a half sufficed to reach the far side, and the condition of the slope was so good that, shod with crampons, we were able to reach the bergschrund without cutting a single step. Güssfeld's sleeping place remained far away on our left. After some search we found a cunningly contrived curtain, whose hem just swept the lower lip of the schrund.

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AIGUILLE BLANCHE
de Péteret.

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This Blodig managed to scale, whilst I secured him with the rope from a safe niche, and we now knew that our way was open—only too exposed, in fact. From the cliffs above there had already come more than one warning missile, but now not a minute elapsed without their deadly music. We hurried on, keeping to the right towards the impending rocks of the aiguille itself, with one eye constantly on the watch for the threatening black spots that grew in the transparent blue over our heads and often had to be dodged. At last they became so frequent that we were forced to remain under the shelter of a ledge, in hopes the volleys would cease when the sun got round to the Fresnay side. Not till 2.40 did it seem prudent to proceed, but there was no time to spare if we were to cross the dreaded couloir and reach a place of shelter for the night before darkness overtook us. The couloir begins some three hundred feet above the spot at which we struck it, at the foot of the perpendicular rock wall, so well seen in Donkin's view from the Col du Géant. At about an equal distance below us it plunges into space, and, at an immeasurable depth, the crevasses of the Brenva glacier look like a tattered net spread over a marble pavement.

To our delight there was abundant snow in first-rate condition across nearly the whole width, and we were able to rush across without using our axes, save for a couple of steps in the central channel, where no stones came at the time, though recent marks proved what a lively traffic there had been during the heat of the day.

We now expected to find disagreeably rotten rock interspersed with snow couloirs, as described by Dr. Pfannl, but we had evidently crossed the great couloir a good deal lower down than his party had, and we had all the more to ascend, but firmer rock on a broad rib. For a long while we looked in vain for the sleeping place which that party had improved. We took two lines of march, and I had ascended some distance up the enormously steep and rather insecure rocks, and was about to call Blodig to inspect a possible cranny, when a shout from him brought me across the face in such haste that I dislodged a mass of stones, and was in mortal fear he might be unable to get out of their way. However he was safe enough behind a pile of blocks, and triumphantly held up the white cream jug mentioned in Pfannl's account as left behind.

A few stones had been built up to widen and level a ledge under a slightly overhanging block, but we found it too narrow for two to lie abreast, and one of us proceeded to

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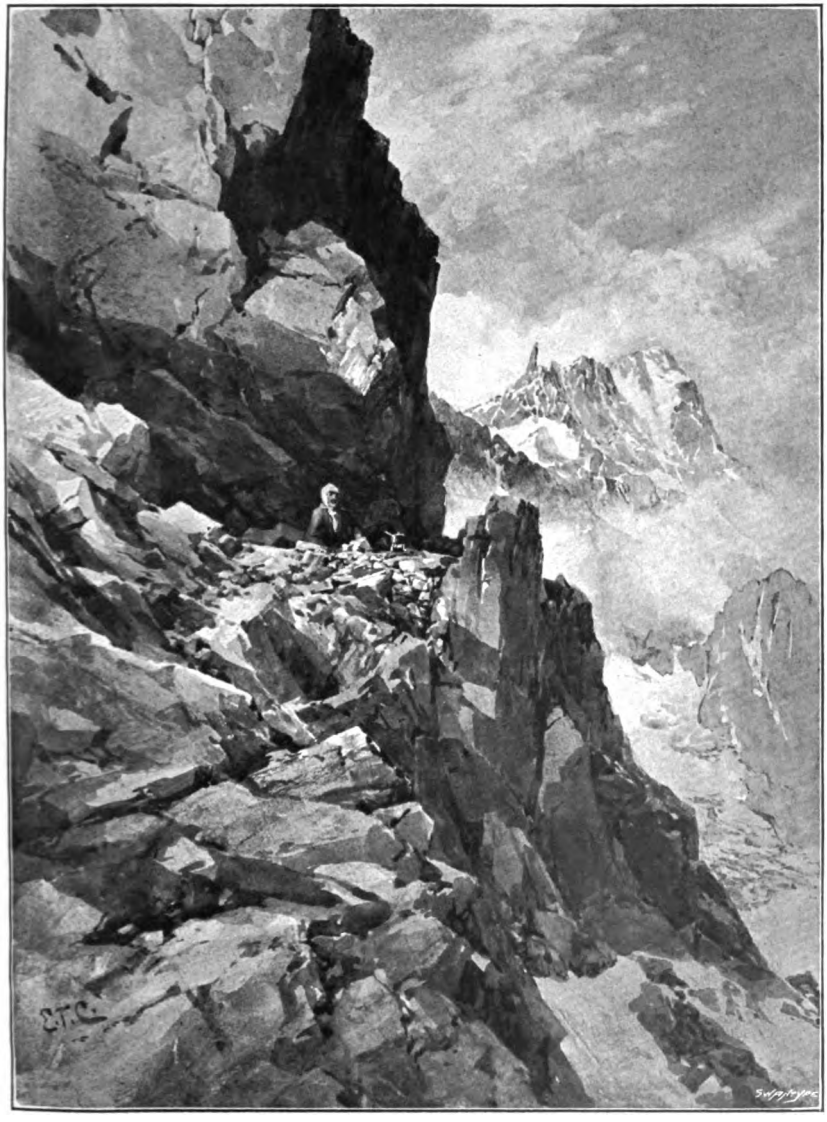
arrange a second berth a few feet lower down, whilst the other fetched water from the nearest snowfield and made tea. Thus it was already quite dark before we were through with our domestic arrangements, which had left us hardly a minute to enjoy the wondrous beauty of the dying day and all the grandeur around us. I shall not dwell on the hours of endurance through which our aching muscles took prints of each many-cornered stone in our narrow berths, whilst summer lightning flickered over the Lombard plains and the constellations followed each other in tardy procession across the sky. After a while the outline of the Grandes Jorasses became more clearly defined against a pale light, and the waning moon rose, fantastically bisected by the Matterhorn. She was still the reigning luminary when, after a hasty meal, we packed away our sweaters and the thin waterproofs we had slept in with all surplus provisions, &c., having quite decided to return the same way.

The rocks, though steep, afforded, in their then dry state, delightful climbing, and our long pointed crampons gave sufficient grip on the snow ribs and gullies. Having the whole morning before us—for we could not think of venturing over the stone-raked face before 2 P.M.—we gave ourselves up to the enjoyment of the climb and the view, watching the oft-admired but ever new miracle of awakening day and the gradual disappearance of the mysterious shades of night from the world below us. Ever since leaving the great couloir we had deposited strips of scarlet paper at doubtful spots, and continued to do so to the last rocks. After a couple of hours the broad rib began to narrow away, and we soon found ourselves at the edge of the final ice-slope and judged the summit could not be far to the right of the bit of cornice directly above us.

The sun had been shining on this slope long enough to soften the thin coating of snow that still covered most of it, and this, at an incline of some 55°, was not quite welcome; still the crampons took hold of the ice after a kick or two, and the axes had hardly any work. At last we stepped on to the cornice, and a few minutes later the summit was ours.

Extraordinarily impressive—almost appalling—is the mass of Mont Blanc, still towering far above us in a sheer wall, fretted with ice and streaked with apparently perpendicular couloirs, its foundations buried in the Fresnay glacier, far below. A dizzy causeway coped with a beautifully curved cornice leads across to the great yellow buttress on our right, giving access to the upper arêtes and the *calotte* of Mont

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CAMP ON AIGUILLE BLANCHE de PÉTERET.

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Blanc de Courmayeur. In the opposite direction the Aiguille Noire rears its dark head in front of the bluer shadows of Mont Chétif and the Cramont, whilst the receding chain of Mont Blanc from the Mont Maudit to the Jorasses is bathed in full sunshine.

Our descent, after the rather perilous passage of the first ice-wall, went merrily enough—in fact rather too carelessly, for, following our train of red signals, we overlooked the spot where we ought to have turned aside to the sleeping place, and only discovered our mistake when confronted with the couloir, whence of course we had to return for our impedimenta.

The loss of time was really of little consequence, for we were still obliged to wait over an hour for the batteries to cease firing, and did not reach the glacier till 5 P.M., and had to pass a second night, this time on grass, at the foot of the Mont de la Brenva, reaching Courmayeur for breakfast next morning.

A more delightful expedition for an efficient party under favourable conditions it would be hard to find, but if those conditions should change, or any accident occur after passing the critical zone, it is easy to see that the consequences would be most serious. In bad weather the traverse of Mont Blanc would be bad enough, but less desperate, to my thinking, than the descent to the Brenva glacier.

Six Weeks in the Lillouet District, B.C.

By O. J. BAINBRIDGE.

Give me the sport which calls a man
To some far off and lonely land,
Where cold, unconquerable peaks
And crevassed glaciers sternly guard
Impenetrable forest land;
Where safe recesses hide the lair
Of silvertip and grizzly bear,
Where 'skeeto' ridden swamps conceal
The loon, the wild duck, and the teal.
And tho' the yellow pine and fir
Are monarchs of the forest drear,
Perchance an avalanche has made
An open and refreshing glade,
Where gentler vegetation grows,
The alder, mountain ash, and rose.
There would I pitch my tent . . .
. . . . . .

SOME apology is needed for the inclusion in the Alpine Journal of a paper which does not record the ascent of any peak. No useful addition can be given to the descriptions of those who have made the intricacies of travel in

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