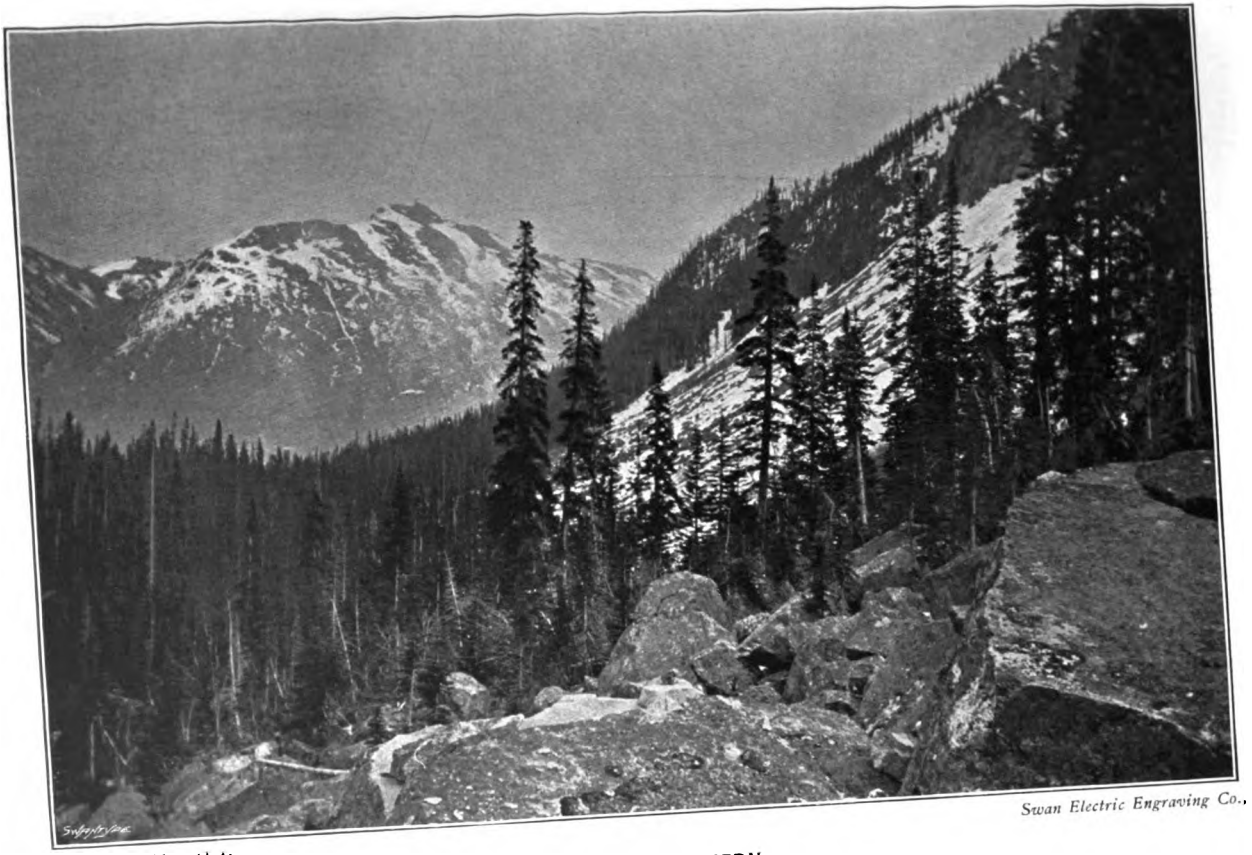
points which stand out from the many considerations a mountaineer has to deal with in preparing his outfit, that of the strength of the party is the most insistent. Personally I regretted the absence of a native cook, who would have been available for many purposes. Our party was not strong enough, but there is no doubt that too large a party is a disadvantage where the possibilities of travel are limited according to the available feed for the horses.

The First Crossing of Mount Cook.

By MALCOLM ROSS.

I HAD given up all thoughts of attempting the ascent of Mount Cook, for with an injured ankle it would be criminal for me to join any party in such an undertaking, seeing that it would not only endanger my own life but also the lives of the others. Fyfe and Graham, however, were keenly anxious for me to join them, and it was decided on the day they left for Mount Cook that I should give my leg a good trial on the Sealy Range, and, if it stood the test, join them the same evening at the Ball Hut. Accordingly, in company with Professor Baldwin Spencer, Mr. and Mrs. Lindon, and Jack Clarke, I went up the Sealy Range. We spent a delightful day, the weather being glorious, and the views of Sefton, Mount Cook, and many other mountains magnificently grand. My leg stood the test, and I returned to the Hermitage in high glee, feeling confident that another day's rest at the Mount Cook bivouac would complete the cure. Accordingly I bade farewell to my friends at the Hermitage, and that evening rode up with Clarke, in the moonlight, to the hut. Crossing the dangerous Hooker River, we changed horses, Clarke insisting that I should cross on the safer of the two, and giving instructions that I should hold on to his mane if he got bowled over. However these horses, which are wonderful at crossing rivers, got over safely. I shall never forget that glorious ride in the moonlight. We galloped over the tussock flats, and then slackened our pace as we entered upon the narrow and uncertain path between the dark spur of Aorangi on our left and the great moraine of the Tasman Glacier, that loomed on our right like some Brobdingnagian railway embankment. The talk was of climbing and climbers, reminiscences of former victories and defeats, glorious days spent amongst the higher snows, and of brave companions who had shared our alpine joys and sorrows in the years now past. Meanwhile the stars,

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O. J. Bainbridge, photo.

Swan Electric Engraving Co.,

IN NEW COUNTRY.

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dimmed by a glorious moon, swung westward o'er our path; the 14 miles went past like 4, and presently, about 10 P.M., we spied the solitary light of the hut window, like a star in the lower darkness, and our cheery jodelling awoke the echoes of the valley and brought an answering cry from Graham and Fyfe.

On Monday, January 8, we—Fyfe, Graham, Turner, and I—went up to the Bivouac Rock, on the Haast Ridge, from which the early New Zealand climbers made their heroic, though unsuccessful, attacks on the monarch of the Southern Alps. We climbed the steep rocky ridge with heavy swags—tent, sleeping bags, ice axes, Alpine rope, and provisions for three or four days. Green, a promising climber, came with us in the capacity of porter. We had to shovel the snow from the little stone platform on which we were to sleep, and we had no sooner got our camp pitched than the weather changed. Dense clouds, borne on southerly airs, quickly filled the valley, blotting out from view the moraines and icy tongues of the Great Tasman Glacier, thousands of feet below. We made a billy of tea and dined on bread and butter and cold mutton, after which Green very reluctantly left us to join Clarke and a party at the Malte Brun Hut, further up the glacier. Graham went down with him over the first snow slopes. As he did not return for some considerable time we got rather anxious, and Fyfe went to see what was the matter. Presently he returned with Graham, and we heard Green jodelling from the misty depths thousands of feet below us. We gave him answering jodels from the bivouac, this interchange of signals being kept up till Green's voice grew fainter and fainter, and at last we got tired of answering him. Then we made things snug about our eerie perch and turned in for the night. The four of us were packed like sardines in a tin, but, with our clothes on, in the eider-down sleeping bags, and under the shelter of my Whymper tent, with its waterproof floor, we were fairly warm and comfortable. Fyfe smoked a pipe and I an evening cigar, greatly to Turner's disgust; but it was a burnt offering to the soothing goddess long to be remembered. Then the clouds that had overwhelmed the ridge began to patter-patter on the tent roof in gentle rain, which, later in the night, turned to snow. Visions of a night in this same bivouac years ago, when the lurid lightning dazzled our eyes, the thunder shook the ridge, and the tent was frozen to the rocks in a terrible storm, came back to me; but that is another story, and rather a long one too.

We breakfasted at 7 o'clock next morning, after 14 hrs.

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of the tent—on cold mutton, tea, bread and butter, and jam. The weather was warm and the new snow was peeling off the slopes of Mount Cook. Avalanches hissed and thundered all around us, the mountains being literally alive and in a most dangerous condition for climbing. This, however, did not concern us greatly, for we had decided to rest for a day at the bivouac, and there was at last a good prospect of the weather clearing. We spent the day in delightful idleness, idling on the warm rocks, pottering about the camp, and photographing.

Fyfe acted as chief cook, and for each meal prepared us a billy of delicious hot tea, using a little bit of deal board we had brought up for firewood, together with some old candles found under the Bivouac Rock, to melt snow and boil water. We also added to our water supply by spreading snow on a warm sloping rock, allowing the drip therefrom to collect in a billy and an empty fruit tin.

For the greater part of the day we were above the lower stratum of cloud, which spread itself like a fleecy counterpane over the great valley, or swathed itself about the giant peaks, leaving the dark summits standing in startling and stately grandeur like pointed islands in a vapoury sea of white and grey. Every now and then this counterpane would be torn by some sportive wind or partially dissolved by the warm rays of the sun, and, through the holes thus made, we could see the upper snows of the Great Tasman or its lower tongues of attenuated ice flowing down between the piled débris of the grey moraine—the largest in the Southern Alps—thousands of feet below. Later, as the mists gradually dissolved, we obtained glorious views of the great alps, with their tributary glaciers pouring streams of broken ice into the valley to feed the parent stream. Here were all our old friends, Haidinger, and De la Bêche, and the Minarets, whose 10,000-ft. summits Fyfe and I had trodden, looking down at us with a lofty disdain, and across the valley Malte Brun, the Matterhorn of the Southern Alps, heaved his strong shoulders of grim dark-brown rock through a veil of surging mist and cleft the azure blue of heaven, recalling to my mind Fyfe's memorable ascent and his equally memorable entry in the visitors' book I had left at the hut—'Played a lone hand with Malte Brun, and won.' Yes, all our old friends were here, strong in their might, each with his own character moulded in everlasting form, and as I recalled the joyous days spent on slope and summit, the pulses quickened and the hour-glass ran in golden sands. 'Glorious creatures; fine old fellows!' as Lamb says. I solemnly took off my hat to these old friends, and gave

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them reverent greeting, befitting their greatness, thinking that

> When time, who steals our years away,
> Shall steal our pleasures too,
> The memory of the past will stay
> And half our joys renew.

We decided not to go to sleep that evening, but to start for the traverse of Mount Cook before midnight. We, however, crept into our sleeping bags inside the tent, to keep warm. Turner had complained about the dampness at the end of the tent the night before, so I took his place and gave him an inside berth. At 10 o'clock Fyfe was astir boiling us a billy of tea, and at 12.20 P.M. we breakfasted. The sky was clear, and the moon was shining; but higher up the range the clouds were pouring over between Haidinger and De la Bêche, which did not augur well for our success. We went through our rucksacks again, and discarded a few things to make them lighter, but what with cameras, spare clothing, food, and the two aluminium water bottles—one filled with claret and the other with water—we had to carry from 15 lbs. to 20 lbs. each, rather heavy loads for so difficult a climb.

Our provisions consisted of half a loaf, 1 large tin of ox tongue, 1 tin of sheeps' tongues, 1 tin of sardines, 2 tins of jam, some butter, 2 oranges, 2 lemons, a few raisins, and about a pound of brown sugar, upon which I existed almost entirely on all our climbs. I had remembered reading about the virtues of brown sugar in one of Sir Martin Conway's books, and my wife had obtained some special brown Demerara sugar for me from our grocer. Then I went across to the Parliamentary Library and looked the subject up in Conway's book on the 'Ascent of Aconcagua.' I found that Conway, after mentioning the necessity for light foods, such as soup and jam, for high ascents, stated that on the Aconcagua ascent more important than all these was a great tin of coarse brown Demerara sugar, the finest heat-producing, muscle-nourishing food in the world. For men taking violent exercises, such as soldiers on active service or athletes in training, a plentiful supply of sugar was, he stated, far better than large meat rations. A quarter of a pound per day per man was his allowance on the mountain-side, and he was inclined to think that this might be increased to nearly half a pound with advantage, cane sugar of course being selected for this purpose.

We were aware that on such a climb, what with the great exertion, the want of water, and the reduced atmospheric

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pressure, we should be able to eat very little, and that, if we were successful, most of the provisions we were taking would be thrown away. Still there was the danger, in consequence of a sudden storm or other unforeseen difficulties, of our having to spend the night out on an exposed ledge of rock at an altitude of ten or eleven thousand feet, in which case our lives would depend upon a supply of extra clothing and food. Therefore we dared not make our loads any lighter.

At 11.15 P.M. on the night of Tuesday, January 9, we started, having rolled up all our belongings that we did not require in the sleeping bags and the tent. This made one big bundle, which we jammed under the rock as far as possible and weighted down with stones, so that it should not be blown away. We took with us also one 65-ft. length and one 50-ft. length of Alpine rope, made by Buckingham, of London, and tested to a breaking strain of 2,000 lbs. In single file, in the moonlight, we toiled up the snow-slopes leading to the Glacier Dome, 1,300 ft. above our bivouac. For the most part we climbed upwards in solemn silence, each one being busy with his own thoughts. Ten minutes after midnight we had left the final steep snow-slope of the Dome behind us and looked across the great plateau that stretches, at an altitude of over 7,000 ft., for a distance of some four miles, at the foot of the precipitous slopes of Mounts Cook and Tasman. From the Dome we had to descend 700 ft., and then cross the plateau to gain the foot of the north-eastern ridge that was to lead us to the summit of our peak. The snow was in bad condition, and we sank in it over our boot-tops. In places it was in that most tantalising of conditions, with a frozen crust that let one foot through while the other foot held on the surface. As we were crossing the plateau a vivid streak of lightning flashed athwart the northern sky, and a weird effect was produced by the moon, which, with a great halo around it, was dipping westward over the snowy peak of Mount Haast. We crossed the plateau in the shadow of the high peaks of the main divide, behind which the moon had sunk, and presently we encountered the débris of a great avalanche that had fallen from the slopes of Mount Tasman. A mass of broken ice and snow was piled in confusion to a height of 15 or 20 ft., and we had to make a slight détour to avoid the obstruction.

At about a quarter past 2 A.M. we started to ascend the long snow-slope leading to the Zurbriggen arête; and in the dusk before the dawn we reached a bergschrund that might have given us a good deal of trouble to cross. Graham led

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Malcolm Ross, photo. *Swan Electric Engraving Co.,*

STORM GATHERING ON Mt. COOK.
Photo from altitude of 7,000 ft.

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carefully through the broken ice, and, peering into the dull grey light, thought he saw a bridge over which we could scramble. We made a traverse to the right and skirted under the overhanging wall of ice that formed the upper lip of the schrund, and which, had it fallen, would have crushed us out of existence. At this hour of the morning, however, it was perfectly safe, and Graham, disappearing round a huge block of ice that towered above us, crossed a frail snow bridge and gained the upper lip of the bergschrund. Turner followed, and I paid out the rope as he gradually disappeared from view round the corner, Graham driving the handle of his axe deep in the snow, while Fyfe and I, below, took a firm stand and kept the rope taut. In a few minutes we were all safely across, and congratulated ourselves on having so easily overcome the first serious obstacle of the climb.

We were now fairly on the long 3,000-ft. snow-slope that leads up to the rocks of the Zurbriggen arête. This slope was found in fairly good order. In places we could kick steps, but in other places the steps had to be chipped with the ice axes. As we slowly climbed upwards the slope got steeper and steeper. Indeed the angle was just about as steep as it is possible for snow to rest on. We had not been going long before we were startled by a magnificent avalanche that fell with thundering roar from high up on the ice-slopes of Mount Tasman. It crashed on to the Great Plateau, sending ice blocks to a great distance, and throwing up a cloud of snow, like some huge breaker that sends its spray high into the air above a rock-bound coast.

Hour after hour went by. We began to get a little tired of the never-ending snow-slope, so traversed to the right to gain the rocks. These rocks, however, were difficult, as there were few holds for hands or feet, and the snow and ice with which they were coated made our progress still very slow; therefore we were once more reluctantly compelled to traverse back to the snow-slope. At last—3 hrs. and 25 min. from the schrund—we gained the rocks of the main arête.

It was now 6.40 A.M., and we halted on a narrow ledge of snow, had a drink and some bread and marmalade, and took a number of photographs. The sun had risen from a bank of dull cloud that loomed above the eastern mountains, and, as there was at last every prospect of fine weather, our spirits rose considerably. From this point a beautiful snow ridge rose in a gentle curve to a series of rocky crags. There was just room for our feet on this narrow ridge. On the right a

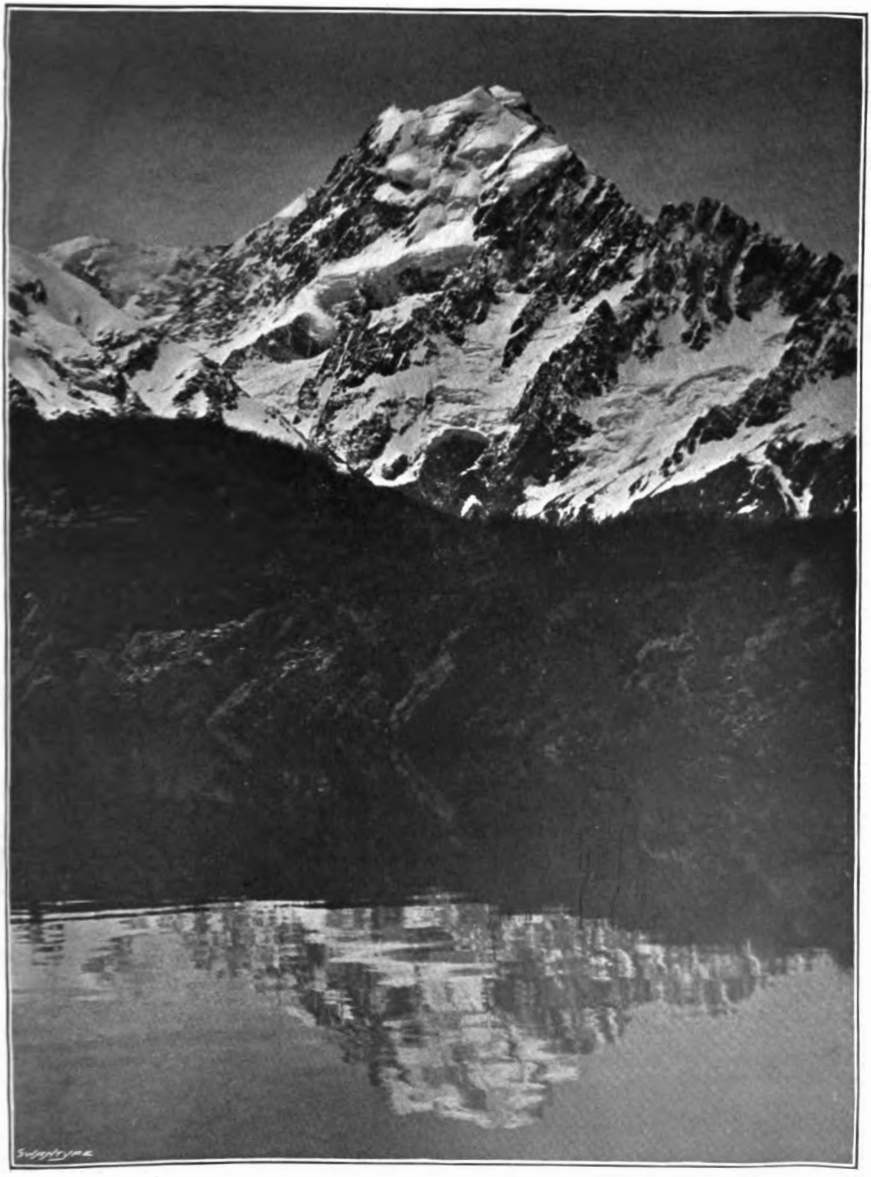
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steep couloir led down to the Linda Glacier, and on the left the mountain fell away in very steep slopes, for over 3,000 ft., to the Grand Plateau. At the end of the snow ridge we had some fine climbing up a shoulder of rock. This was scaled without incident, except that of a falling stone which Turner dislodged, but which, fortunately, went past without hitting either Fyfe or myself. Then we climbed along another narrow snow arête, which, though steeper than the first one, was somewhat shorter. On gaining the rocks at the head of this ridge at 9 A.M. we halted for an early lunch. We replenished the wine bottle and the water bottle with the drippings of snow that we melted on a slab of warm stone.

We had now gained an altitude of between 10,000 ft. and 11,000 ft., and the views were magnificently grand. Tasman, the second highest mountain in New Zealand, with his wonderful slopes of snow and ice and a magnificent snow cornice, was quite close to us on the N. Then came Mount Lendenfeldt, and the jagged, pinnacled ridge of Haast, which, from this point of view, seemed to bid defiance to the mountaineer. Further along on the main divide rose the square top of Mount Haidinger, from which the magnificent schrunds and broken ice of the Haast glacier fell away towards the Tasman valley. Beyond that the rocky pinnacle of De la Bêche and the beautifully pure snowy peaks of the Minarets cleft the blue, leading the eye in turn to the gleaming masses of Elie de Beaumont and the Hochstetter Dom, at the head of the Great Tasman Glacier. Across the valley the rugged mass of Malte Brun towered grandly above all the other rocky peaks of the range, and still further away, towards the N.E., was the finest view of all, range succeeding range and mountain succeeding mountain for more than 100 miles, or as far as the eye could reach. In the distance, to the N. of the main range, we looked down on a sea of clouds upon which the sun was shining, the higher peaks piercing the billows of mist and looking like pointed islands. We could plainly trace our steps along the snow arêtes that we had climbed, and across the Plateau thousands of feet below. Lower still were the great schrunds and toppling pinnacles of the Hochstetter icefall, and below that the magnificent sweep of the Great Tasman Glacier. Eastward a few fleecy cumulus clouds sailed over the foothills, and beyond were the plains of Canterbury and the distant sea.

An hour passed all too quickly amidst scenes of such magnificence and grandeur; but there was still a long climb ahead, and, in high spirits, we started to cut steps up another

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MOUNT COOK -- FROM A MOUNTAIN TARN ON THE SEALY RANGE.

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very sharp snow ridge with a drop of 4,000 ft. on one side. This ridge led us on to the last rocks, which were steep and afforded some fine climbing. Fyfe led up to a shoulder below the final ice cap, still cutting steps, and then the order on the rope was reversed and Graham went to the front. This shoulder turned us to the left, and soon we gained the final snow arête, that rose steeply almost to the summit. The last bit of the ice cap was fairly easy climbing, and at 1 o'clock on Wednesday afternoon we stepped on to the topmost pinnacle of Aorangi—13 hrs. and 45 min. from the time we left our bivouac. The view was again magnificent—almost indescribable. We looked across the island from sea to sea, and, in addition to the views northward, eastward, and westward, we now beheld a glorious alpine panorama stretching to the S. as far as the eye could reach. The giant Tasman and all the lesser mountains were dwarfed, and the whole country was spread out like a map in relief at our feet. Hector, the third highest mountain in New Zealand, seemed a pimple, St. David's Dome had become a low peak; but Elie de Beaumont, near the head of the Tasman, still looked a grand mountain.

Through rents in the clouds to the westward patches of sea appeared like dark lagoons. I stepped out of the rope to secure the first photograph of a party that had ever been taken on the summit of Mount Cook; then we congratulated each other, and while Graham got the provisions out of the rucksacks Fyfe employed himself in taking in the view and coolly cutting up his tobacco for a smoke.

Fyfe had intended to take the pulses of the party, and I to make some careful notes of the surrounding mountains; but we did not do so. Professor Tyndall in his famous description of the ascent of the Weisshorn says that he opened his notebook to make a few observations, but he soon relinquished the attempt. There was something incongruous, if not profane, in allowing the scientific faculty to interfere where silent worship was a 'reasonable service.' Thus I felt as I gazed around at the marvellous panorama. Then thoughts of the descent began to obtrude themselves on the mind. We had climbed Mount Cook from the Tasman side. A more serious problem now presented itself. Could we descend on the Hooker side, and so make the first crossing of Aorangi?

We spent altogether 25 min. on the summit of the mountain—12,397 ft. above the sea. The views were certainly grand and very beautiful, but not so fine as from between the altitudes of 10,000 and 11,000 ft., for the simple

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reason that, from the greater height of the summit, all the lesser mountains were dwarfed, and many of those that looked imposing from below had now dwindled into insignificance.

Having replaced our rucksacks, we gave one last glance about us, and then started down the slope on the other side of the mountain. We were now struck by a wind, which, of course, at this altitude, was very cold. The snow-slope was not steep, but it was frozen, and we had to cut a number of steps before we could reach the rock arête. In ½ hr. we were on the highest rocks of this arête, and, to our horror, we found them in the worst possible condition for climbing—plastered with snow and ice and festooned with great icicles. We might have returned to the summit and climbed back to safety before nightfall down our upward route; but we were very keen to cross the peak for the first time, and decided to take the risk. Very little was said, and, after a brief consultation between Fyfe and myself, the word was given to continue the descent, and we started with grim determination to conquer the difficulties and overcome the dangers that lay between us and the upper slopes of the Hooker Glacier, 4,000 ft. below the summit on the western side. It now became a question of climbing not only with care, but also with all possible speed, for there was no place on this long ridge, in its present condition and with the cold wind blowing, where we could bivouac in safety. We had reckoned on a comparatively easy climb down these rocks, and also upon crossing the bergschrund at the head of the Hooker Glacier before nightfall; but we soon saw that this would be out of the question, especially as Turner was a slow climber, both on snow and on rocks. Fyfe, who held the responsible position of last man on the rope, repeatedly urged him to hurry and trust for safety to the rope. I came next, and Turner was between me and Graham, who, under general directions from Fyfe, led down. After descending for a few hundred feet we soon found that, owing to the ice-glazing and the snow, it was impossible to keep to the crest of the ridge, and the descent became largely a series of traverses across difficult and at times precipitous faces of rock, mostly on the eastern face of the arête. On the west the climbing was even more difficult, and there was a bitter wind blowing, so we avoided that side as much as possible. In one place we had to climb back from the eastern face through a gap of overhanging rock and great icicles. Peter smashed the greater part of the icicles with the handle of his ice axe, and the broken pieces went swishing

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down the precipices towards the Hooker. Under the circumstances there was naturally some hesitancy in selecting the best route; but there was little time for undue deliberation, and, as Graham paused now and then in some doubt, Fyfe would call out, 'Will it "go," Peter?' Peter, in quiet and solemn tones, would invariably give the one answer, 'Well, it doesn't look too good;' and then would come the answering admonition from Fyfe, 'Get down—get somewhere!'

At last we came to a break in the ridge that looked utterly unscalable. We halted, and glanced ahead and from side to side. Then we cast longing eyes to some snow-slopes leading down to the Linda Glacier, on the E.; but that was thousands of feet below us. 'Will it "go," Peter?' we asked, and back came the non-committal reply, 'It doesn't look too good.' There was considerable hesitancy. It now appeared to me that the moment for decisive action had come, so I suggested that we should unrope, and be lowered down singly over the face of rock. I was lowered down first, and then, untying, the rope was hauled up and Graham was lowered. I had gained a footing on a knob of rock that jutted out from the snow and ice in a narrow 'chimney;' but there was not room on this for two people, so I cut a few steps and climbed down some 12 or 15 ft., and held on in a somewhat insecure position. I confess that I was anxious to see the last man make his appearance, for, with a keen wind nearly freezing the fingers with which I clung to the rock, and without even the 'moral' support of the rope, my position was not altogether one to be envied. Graham climbed down the slanting 'chimney' for a few feet towards me, and then Turner was lowered to the knob of rock on which I had gained my first secure footing. It remained for Fyfe to get down. This was the position of the greatest responsibility, and required a cool head and splendid nerve, for there was no one to lower him, and he had to use the rope doubled and hitched over a projection of rock. The greatest care had to be exercised, especially for the first few feet, in case the rope should slip over the knob. Fyfe, however, managed to get down in safety, and then we all roped up once more. We could not shift our positions to revert to the original order on the rope, so that I now had to take the lead. We climbed round the foot of the steep wall that had cut us off, and once more gained the crest of the ridge; but it would not 'go,' and we crossed to the eastern face, scrambling down a short broken 'couloir,' and then traversing back to regain the ridge. I had to hack a hole through long icicles that were hanging

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from a jutting rock. There was just room to crawl through, the knapsack grazing the broken fingers of ice above. There might have been a route on the eastern side of this face; but a glance down the dark precipices and 'couloirs,' filled with clear ice, to a depth of 3,000 or 4,000 ft., was somewhat startling, when that glance was made in search of a practicable line of descent. Besides, under such conditions as we were face to face with, the known is always preferable to the unknown, especially when time is so important a factor in a climb. We knew the ridge we were on could be descended, but we might have got into a *cul-de-sac* on those grim ice-plastered eastern precipices.

Our difficulties, however, were by no means over, for, in a few minutes, I was peering over the face of a dangerous-looking precipitous cliff. A glance showed that there was no practicable route either to the right or the left. The afternoon was wearing on, there was no time for hesitancy, so I went over the edge, and with the assistance of the rope scrambled down a steep chimney with square smooth sides and few hand-grips. This chimney, however, fell away from the perpendicular near its foot and sloped inwards. On its final twelve feet there were neither hand nor foot holds. There was accordingly nothing for it but to unrope again, and be lowered down singly. Graham lowered me down with one rope, Fyfe and Turner anchoring on the rocks above. For a little way, by clawing at the rock with feet and hands, and by the friction of my body, I was able to descend with some slight amount of dignity, and I told Graham to lower away. Then, as I reached the part where the chimney sloped inward from the perpendicular, I lost contact with the rocks, and hung suspended, like Mahomet's coffin, between heaven and earth. The strain of the rope round one's waist, threatening to effect a complete change in one's internal anatomy, a vague clawing at air with one's hands and an equally vague searching for foothold with the nether limbs as you dangle in mid-air at the end of a forty-foot rope with precipices and snow-slopes of over a thousand feet below, have a chastening influence on the most seasoned mountaineer, and, however exhilarating the experience may be, it is always with feelings of supreme satisfaction and almost devout thankfulness that he once more comes to close grips with mother earth. At all events when, after my brief and more or less graceful gyrations at the end of that particular rope, I found the strain removed from my waist, and footholds and handholds once more actual realities, I made no complaint,

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even though the middle finger of my left hand, which had been cut on the sharp rocks, was spurting blood and dyeing the snow at my feet a beautiful crimson.

The spot on which I found my feet was not the best of landings, for the rock shelved outwards into snow. It was now Peter's turn to descend, so I planted myself as well as I could, and watched the operation. He was a good stone and a half heavier, so there must have been a considerable strain on Fyfe's arms. As he slid off the rocks into the air his ice axe caught in the chimney, and sent him swinging round. I saw a long body, a swirling mass of arms and legs, and a nice felt hat sailing down on the wind to the Linda Glacier, thousands of feet below, and then a somewhat blown, but otherwise cool mountaineer, with a little assistance as to where to plant his feet, landed beside me. Peter's descent was so comical that I could not refrain from laughing. Turner was the next man, and Fyfe urged him forward. The rope was fastened round his waist, and he, too, cut a comical figure as he slid off from the perpendicular, clawed at vacancy, and eventually landed beside us. Fyfe's grinning countenance peered over the edge of the cliff above, as if he were enjoying the sport. Sensational as this performance was, especially until a landing-place had been found, a more serious one remained for Fyfe to accomplish. I, however, knew Fyfe's capabilities; otherwise I should never have undertaken such a descent. I had been with him in some tight corners before, and I had absolute faith in his ability to get down. Once more he hitched the double rope over a rock, and scrambled down the precipice. The only rock available was slightly loose, so he had to be very careful at the start in case the rope should slip over the projection. Such experiences are apt to be a little nerve-shattering, and these two sensational descents—especially the latter one—must have taken something out of him. However, he was again equal to the emergency, and, assisted by Graham's long reach as he swung over the last few feet like a pendulum, he was soon beside us in safety.

We now halted for a few minutes while we donned our spare clothing. I gave Graham my hat, as I had a spare cap in my rucksack, and then bound up my bleeding finger with some strips of Johnston's adhesive plaster. After all there was something very exhilarating in such difficult work. Every nerve and muscle was at full tension, and thoughts of all else save the matter in hand were banished from the

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brain. The way ahead now seemed clear. We had 'drunk delight of battle with our peers,' and thus far had won.

We roped up once more in the old order and continued the descent. We were still a long way from the saddle, and the summit of Mount Hector seemed far below us. The climbing, however, now became easier, and we were able to make fairly quick progress in places. Eventually, we left the dreadful arête behind us, and Peter cut steps across a frozen slope that led from Green's Saddle into the long 2,000-ft. couloir that sloped steeply down to the Hooker Glacier. It was a quarter to 7 on the evening of Wednesday, and, as we had now been going since 11.15 P.M. on Tuesday, or for 19¼ hours, we hoped to find the couloir in good order. Our hearts sank as we saw Graham plying his ice axe. Fyfe shouted to him to endeavour to do without the cutting, and to kick steps; but this was impossible —the slope was frozen hard! The wind was also increasing in violence, and it was bitterly cold. There was still the alternative of cutting down to the Linda Glacier on the eastern side and of a comparatively easy and comfortable descent, out of the wind, to the great plateau, from which we could gain the Glacier Dome and then descend to the Bivouac Rock by means of our steps of the night before. The matter was mentioned between Fyfe and myself; but we scarcely gave it a second thought, and decided to stick to our original intention to cross the peak. The word was given to go forward down the couloir, and young Graham, who was leading, treated us to a splendid example of ice-craft and physical endurance as he proceeded to hack a way with his axe down that 2,000 ft. of frozen slope. It was a narrow, steep gully, varying in width from about 15 to 20 yards, and flanked on either side by great walls of precipitous rock. Hour after hour went by, and we seemed to be getting no nearer to the foot of the couloir. The wind seemed to pierce to our bones, and every now and then it would send a shower of broken ice from the precipices above swishing down about our ears. In one place we took to a rib of rock in the middle of the couloir. Occasionally the rocks on the left of the couloir were used for hand-grips, thus enabling Graham to cut smaller steps. Turner then began to feel the want of sleep, and he asked me to talk to him to keep him awake. The mere suggestion of a man's falling asleep in such a situation was, of course, sufficient to keep me more than ever on the alert, especially as, if Turner had slipped, it would have devolved on me to hold him up, I being next on the rope to him. A few minutes later some bits of rock, dislodged,

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no doubt, through the falling icicles that were broken by the wind, came whizzing past us, and, as Turner immediately cried out, 'Oh, my head! my head!' I knew that he had been struck. In a moment I had driven the handle of my axe into the frozen snow and had hitched the rope around it, while Fyfe, behind me, had already taken a firm stand. Turner, in his account of the accident, says, 'We would have been dashed to eternity if I had fallen and upset Graham out of his step while step-cutting, which would have been a very easy matter.' Such, however, was not the case, for both Fyfe and I had the rope absolutely taut, and, being well anchored, we could easily have held up three times Turner's weight. As a matter of fact he could not have fallen a yard. Fortunately the accident was not a serious one. It resolved itself into a scalp wound about ¾ in. long, and Turner, after a few minutes, was able to continue the descent. Stones falling from such a great height—probably a thousand feet—acquire an extraordinary velocity. Indeed, they come so fast as to be invisible, and you can only hear them whizzing past. Had this stone struck Turner on the top of the head it would undoubtedly have cleft his skull in twain. Luckily it only grazed the back of his head at the base of the skull.

We had now descended about 1,000 feet of the 'couloir.' The sun had dipped to the rim of the sea, and the western heavens were glorious with colour, heightened by the distant gloom. Almost on a level with us, away beyond Sefton, a bank of flame-coloured cloud stretched seaward from the lesser mountains toward the ocean, and beyond that again was a far-away continent of cloud, sombre and mysterious, as if it were part of another world. The rugged mountains and the valleys and forests of Southern Westland were being gripped in the shades of night. A long headland, still thousands of feet below us, on the S.W., stretched itself out into the darkened sea, a thin line of white at its base indicating the tumbling breakers of the Pacific Ocean. Difficult as was our situation, Fyfe and I would find ourselves gazing in contemplation at this mysterious and almost fantastic scene of mountain glory. Turner was concerned mostly with his head, and Peter had to devote his whole attention to the step-cutting. We climbed down a rib of rock in the dusk between the lights, and then zigzagged on down the 'couloir' in the steps cut by the never-tiring Graham. Presently the moon rose and bathed the snowy slopes of Stokes and Sefton and other giant mountains in a flood of silver. After the accident we kept closer in to the rocks, to evade any falling

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icicles or stones that might come down the couloir. Graham, anxious, no doubt, to get out of the couloir, was now making the steps rather small, and there was sometimes difficulty in seeing them in the semi-darkness, and in standing in them once they were found; but we got occasional hand-grips on the rocks, so that the danger from a slip was reduced to a minimum. On one occasion I did slip in a bad step; but Fyfe was easily able to hold me on the rope. Down, down, down we went on this apparently never-ending slope. Hour after hour went past and still the end of the 'couloir' seemed a long way off. Very little was said. Occasionally there would be a request by Turner for me to hold him tight on the rope, or a plaintive cry of, 'Peter, where are the steps?' To such queries I would reply cheerily, 'Buck up, Turner, old man; you're doing splendidly. There's only another couple of hundred feet of it!' As a matter of fact there was more nearly 1,000, and I hope the Lord will forgive me for all the lies I told between half-past 9 and 12 o'clock that night about the length of that blessed 'couloir.' Nine o'clock, 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock went past, and still we could not see the final bergschrund at the foot. Fyfe took a turn at step-cutting, but quickly relinquished the task in favour of Graham. Fyfe, however, relieved Graham of his knapsack, and, with his double load, must have had a difficult time coming down in those 'economical' steps that Graham was making for the sake of speed.

Towards the bottom the couloir broadened out somewhat, and the work was easier. We progressed a little more quickly, and at last reached the bergschrund. This schrund, in ordinary seasons a very formidable one, had been often in our minds during the past few weeks, and gave us some concern from the commencement of the descent; but we reckoned that we could cross it somehow, even if we had to sacrifice an ice axe and one of the lengths of alpine rope. The first attempt to find a bridge failed; but Graham with a pretty bit of snow-craft, in the uncertain light, found a comparatively safe snow bridge, over which we crossed one by one, while the others anchored with their ice axes and held the rope taut in case the man on the bridge at the time should show an unpraiseworthy desire, by reason of his weight or the rottenness of the snow under him, to explore the unknown depths of the schrund. In a few minutes we were all across in safety, and, just after midnight—on Thursday morning—we stepped on to the upper slopes of the Hooker Glacier, and the first crossing of Mount Cook had

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been safely accomplished. We went down a little way to where the slope eased off, and, gathering together on the ice, we lit the lantern, hung it on an ice axe stuck in the snow, and proceeded to explore the rucksacks for food and drink. We had now been climbing for 22¾ hours, with but little to eat and drink. Even now we could scarcely eat; but the little water and a very small quantity of wine that was left in the bottles were soon disposed of. I had some of my Demerara sugar, and the others were content with a sardine or two and a little bread and jam. What remained of our provisions we now threw away. Fyfe, Graham, and I also indulged in a little whisky that Dr. Fitchett had sent us to the Ball Hut, and a small flask of which Fyfe had carried in his rucksack during the climb. Now that the mental strain of the climb was practically over we felt that a little stimulant would do us no harm. Drink and sleep were what we most needed, and we almost went to sleep standing up.

After our long spell of over twenty-two hours' climbing we now had to devote ourselves to a journey of some ten or eleven miles down the Hooker Glacier and the valley at its termination to the Hermitage. We had some little trouble amongst the enormous crevasses and séracs of the glacier, which, even in the moonlight, were a magnificent sight. We got through the first crevasses by candle light and then plodded on down the glacier by the light of the moon. Once or twice we got blocked, and had to retrace our steps to find a route through the maze of crevasses and broken ice. The sunrise was splendid. The silver of the moon gave place to the grey of dawn, and then the higher snows were flushed with rose and gold, the ice cap of Mount Stokes being the first to catch the glow. The great ice-paved valley, loth to reveal the secrets of its grandeur, waited yet awhile in the sombre shade. But presently the sun searched the dimmest recesses of the lower crags, blazed upon the gleaming snows, and all the world was filled with light.

But I must draw a veil over that long, weary walk. Lower down the roar of a waterfall, born on the snowy slopes of the Moorhouse Ranges, mocked our thirst, but on the lower ice-slopes of the glacier we found some pools of water and moistened our parched throats with mighty draughts. We plodded on down the valley, lifting our feet almost mechanically, halting at every stream, and falling asleep at every resting-place, till some resolute member of the party would prod us into mechanical action once more. Never have I travelled such long, weary miles. Towards the end of

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the journey the one impression fixed indelibly on the brain seemed to be 'the Hermitage.' Once across the Hooker River, it was 'the Bar' which loomed large in our minds with a capital B. We pulled ourselves together for the last hundred yards; but I am afraid it was with a rather faltering stride that we reached the winning post after our long struggle of thirty-six hours from Bivouac Rock, many miles away on the other side of the great range. Turner, for sartorial reasons, had to make a bee-line for his bedroom; but the three New Zealanders went boldly into the kitchen of the Hermitage and discussed a bottle of dry wine amidst the congratulations of Friend Macdonald and his worthy family. Fife and Graham followed this up with ham and eggs and copious draughts of milk. I had a jug of hot milk, a hot bath, and bed. We had not had a wash nor taken off our clothes for several days, and were now in a position fully to appreciate the luxuries of civilisation. I slept till the dinner gong woke me in the evening, and, as there was not time to dress, I had dinner in bed. Later on Fyfe, Graham, and Clarke came into my room, and we climbed the mountain over again. On the way down the Hooker I had sworn to myself that I would never climb another peak; but so strange an animal is man, and so fascinating is his most glorious sport, that no sooner had we recovered from our exertions than we immediately began to discuss plans for the ascent of Mount Sefton. The mountain, however, was in bad condition, and I had already outstayed my leave, so that climb had to be reserved for another day. But I must conclude—or perhaps it were better that I should let another conclude—so I shall end by making an appropriate quotation from Norman Collie's delightful chapter on 'The Alps.' 'Those,' he says, 'who have learned to understand the language of the hills can appreciate the many-voiced calls of the mountains, and, I am sure, are not in the least afraid that, for the present, the Alps will be wholly ruined and degraded. For my own part, they will always possess an attraction which I care neither to analyse nor to destroy. I shall go back there just as the swallow at the end of summer goes south; and if by an unfortunate combination of circumstances anything should happen to prevent my ever returning from that world of snow, my ghost, could it walk, would then, at any rate, be surrounded by nothing uncommon or unclean, which might perhaps not be so should it be compelled to wander amongst the tombstones of a London cemetery.'

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