Himalayan Expeditions, Kaghan Valley.

IN June and July last year my nephew, Captain O. Erik Todd, of the 5th Gurkhas, wrote three interesting letters to me from high camps in Kaghan, describing ascents made, or attempted, by himself and some Gurkhas in a portion of the Himalaya, which Major the Hon. C. G. Bruce terms, and rightly so, his 'own particular playground.' Bruce himself was to have led the party, but was prevented from doing so by an accident.

Feeling sure that extracts from these letters will interest the Club, and will satisfy those who recently helped to elect Todd as a fellow-member that he is well upholding our best traditions, I have no hesitation in sending the following accounts to the Alpine Journal. This I would have done before, but for the fact that it was necessary to write to Abbottabad and to receive a reply in connexion with the spelling of certain proper names.

Wm. Cecil Slingsby.

Basul, Kaghan Valley, *July 14th*, 1911.

'Naturally the one real Kaghan giant, Mali Ka Parbat by name, very rough and wicked-looking,' * and 'square and solid as a Norman keep,' † was the first to attract us, on June 22. Mali is 17,346 ft. in height. Dangerous snow conditions and traces of recent avalanches caused us to retreat from a col above the S.W. face at a height of 15,000 ft. On June 24 we made another attempt, by a steep snow gully on the E. face. A third attack was made on June 30 from the N.W. from the Duddur camp. Again, owing to adverse climatic conditions, we were forced back on reaching a col at a height of 15,200 ft.

Though fortune had not smiled on us, I felt satisfied, as a result of much careful reconnoitring, that, under good conditions, a strong party should be pretty certain of success.

The mountains viewed from Duddur are extremely grand, and several peaks of over 16,000 ft., including the Duddur mountain itself, surround this valley; and I am convinced that Duddur should make a magnificent climbing centre.

From Battakundi as my base, I made several ascents. The

* *Twenty Years in the Himalaya*, by Major The Hon. C. G. Bruce, pp. 120, 126.

† *Five Months in the Himalaya*, by A. L. Mumm, p. 246.

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first, Dubooka, was an easy mountain with steep snow at the bottom. We built cairns on four summits of 16,000 to 16,196 ft. in height and traversed the whole mountain ridge *without a rope.* Tell it not in Gath! The fact was this: We made an early start from our camp in the Dubooka nullah at 3.30 A.M., and after a time we heard stones falling, and looking up saw an ibex. With glasses I counted seven, one with a really good head. I sent one Gurkha back for my rifle, and of course he happened to be the man who was carrying the rope. As I knew he could not be back for at least five hours, I thought it was a pity to spoil a day, one of good weather too; and success smiled upon us.

The second and third days we spent ibex shooting, but with little profit for the larder. On the latter day, when we were over 14,000 ft. I determined to cross a big glacier at the foot of Dubooka. Such cliffs—about 1000 ft. in height and a mile long! The question was, Could we find a way off the snout of the glacier, a wall of ice about 100 ft. in height? We made three vain attempts, and then were forced to trek back over the glacier. Eventually we struck a steep rock face and had a magnificent climb down it. We had to drive in pitons and also to double the rope over a rock, but eventually we reached the snowfield at the base.

Opposite Dubooka was an aggressive-looking mountain which had the insolence to look higher than Dubooka himself, and I am certain that it is. The rock—all rock in fact—looked very rotten, so, with sorrow, I left it a virgin peak, but not for long.

This mountain is not named on the map. However, we will call it Ruree, as it heads the Ruree nullah.

I determined to make a pass over the Dubooka Kotal, under Ruree and to land up at a place called Burawai.

This is what happened. We made the pass and saw that the descent to Burawai was easy. I said in Gurkhali to the Gurkha who was looking up at Ruree: 'What about it?' He replied 'Achha' = 'Right Ho.' So we set *about it.* It was a first-rate climb, nearly all rock. We went up an almost razor-edged arête and took about two and a quarter hours to ascend. There was one short hand traverse of about five yards which the Gurkha did not like, but he had to cross it as there was no alternative.

About 30 or 40 ft. from the summit was a difficult place where there were great slabs of almost vertical rock. These had to be surmounted. Just then snow began to fall and we heard

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growls of distant thunder. Suddenly I heard a noise like a swarm of bees in my right-hand coat-pocket. I found nothing in it but some half-dissolved peppermint bull's-eyes. The noise was transferred to my left-hand pocket—only a handkerchief full of raisins—the buzzing stopped—I looked at the Gurkha, who was smiting his pocket violently—the same thing—half-dissolved bull's-eyes. Then I saw him put his hand on his cap as if he had got a bee there, and almost immediately I felt something like an electric shock on my head, and I believe my hair stood on end. At the same time I heard a crackling noise, exactly like what one hears through the receiver of a wireless telegraph instrument. Evidently the air was charged with electricity; but why those bull's-eyes should have been fused I don't know. Do you?

I have always carried these delectable lozenges in the same pocket when mountaineering, and they have invariably remained quite dry except on this one occasion when they were dissolved and only some treacly stuff was left. The raisins were turned a bit sticky.

But to return to the climb. In every respect it was an excellent and most enjoyable one—in fact, the best day's climbing I have had so far, in India. We were going from 3.45 A.M. to 6 P.M., during which we made a new pass and a very good first ascent.

I am after ibex now and had a quiet eleven miles' walk up the road to-day, but start for Burawai Mountain at 3.30 to-morrow morning. The bungalow in which I am writing is loopholed for rifles, as the Kohistanis often come here to loot, and Kohistan is barely two miles away. If one crosses the border one may very likely be shot at by these wild people. I am all right, and have three dogs with me here—an Irish setter, a retriever, and a spaniel—but I leave them behind when I go climbing.

BASUL, *15th July*, 1911.

Back here again. I saw two ibex near the summit of a nice little white hill, 15,300 ft.; so climbed and found it a most excellent rock climb. We built a cairn on the top, traversed the whole mountain ridge and had a good thousand-foot glissade on the descent. Of course the ibex had bolted.

BASUL, *16th July*, 1911.

I had a nice climb after ibex yesterday, and got a most glorious view of Nanga Parbat—the above is a rough sketch.

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I was standing on a mountain of about 15,500 ft., and looking over two other ranges of some 15,000 ft. Above these was a broad belt of cloud out of which Nanga Parbat rose in stern majesty, absolutely dwarfing every other range. In the distance, farther N., I could see some other very high peaks—I don't know which they were until I see a map. As I was practically standing on the most northern point of British India they ought to be easy to make out.

I had made a very early start and remained on the top for nearly two hours pretending to look through my glasses for ibex, but actually I was riveted to the spot, looking alone at that giant mountain. In addition to its grandeur, Nanga Parbat had a special interest for me, because when I was a schoolboy I had the good fortune to scramble on the chalk cliffs at Dover, led by Mr. Mummery, that magnificent climber, who lost his life on this cruel mountain along with two Gurkhas in my regiment.

MAHANDRI, 31*st July*, 1911.

We made our last effort yesterday, and it was a great effort, starting at 5.15 A.M. and returning to camp at 10.15 P.M. I wanted to climb one of the highest of the Rajee Bogee peaks, over 16,000 ft. We were camped at Badal Graun at 6600, so had a long pull ahead of us. On the N.N.E. of this peak of Rajee Bogee is the Suki Sangal snowfield, from which an ascent can easily be made. On the other hand, the south face which we actually tackled was difficult and was composed of very rotten and dangerous rock. In fact the whole mountain on that side was bad.

The two Gurkhas and I made for the central rib, the weather then being very good. After about two hours of hard going signs of a change became evident. When about 300 feet from the summit snow began to fall and rocks hurtled down. The only thing to be done was to push on and reach the summit.

One large rock nearly hit one of my Gurkhas, and a large avalanche came down close to us.

We reached the crest of the mountain in thick mist, snow and hail, and it was dreadfully cold ; so cold in fact that, though the summit of this maiden peak was only at the most 150 ft. above us and perfectly easy to reach, we left it severely alone and started on the snowfield. We were now in Kashmir and were confronted by a ridge at right angles to the main Rajee Bogee line of peaks. This ridge eventually reaches Shikara—

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ascended by Major Bruce and his party. The thick mist refused to lift, and we had to find another way down as our line of ascent was now practically impossible.

With much difficulty we found our way down, having many awkward bits of rock climbing. Amongst other troublesome places were two waterfalls which we descended. At about 8 P.M. we reached a steep snow slope and our difficulties were at an end. After a long standing glissade we reached a river which turned out to be the Shikara. The main difficulty had been that, owing to the thick mist, it was impossible to locate our position, and you can easily imagine our joy when we found that we were in the Shikara nullah, where we wished to be, and which led us directly down to our camp.

OSWALD ERIK TODD.

THE MOUNTAINS OF THE YELLOWHEAD PASS.

BY A. O. WHEELER.

THE Expedition of the Alpine Club of Canada, made during the months of July, August, and September 1911, was for the purpose of ascertaining the character of the mountain areas opened up by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway in the region of the Yellowhead Pass.

Mt. Robson was the keynote of the expedition, and an eighty-five-mile circuit was made around it, mapping the country by photographic methods as the party proceeded.

Mountaineering was not the primary object, and no very arduous ascents were made, the time at our disposal in this climatically uncertain district being preferably devoted to obtaining material for mapping purposes. Notwithstanding, thirty peaks were climbed, ranging in altitude from 7000 to 11,000 ft. above sea level.

The general line of travel was as follows: From the site of Henry House, up the valleys of the Athabaska and Miette Rivers to the Continental Divide at the Yellowhead Pass; thence, down the valley of Yellowhead Lake and Fraser River, seventeen miles to the junction of Moose River with the Fraser. At this point the actual circuit of the great massif began. Following the Moose River to the summit of Moose Pass, the Continental Divide was again crossed and the valley of the stream on the opposite side of the pass

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