fallen about 600 ft., of which the last 300 ft. were absolutely perpendicular, nay, overhanging. Each had landed on small deep drifts between projecting boulders, and, most miraculous of all, neither had fallen on his head. The impetus of the slip had caused them to clear the base of the cliff by many yards.

Hamilton had no injuries except for his badly broken arm. Hussey was suffering from concussion and severe bruises. In neither case were their clothes even torn.

Both have now quite recovered.

The humiliation to myself is everlasting; my admiration of my companions eternal.

The Third Mount Everest Expedition.

An Austrian Criticism.

COLONEL NORTON'S volume entitled 'The Fight for Everest, 1924,' has been translated into German by Herr Rickmers and published at Basel under a distorted and inaccurate title, *Bis zur Spitze des Mount Everest. Die Besteigung.*

We have before us an able and, on the whole, sympathetic review of this volume, printed in the *Œ.A.Z.* xlix. 1–4, from the pen of Dr. G. Lammer, formerly famous for his mountaineering exploits and lately well known as 'the most terrible of all Alpine critics.' The opinions of such an expert are worthy of careful consideration, and we think it may be well, therefore, to cite from his review a crucial passage for more particular study. In dealing with the last fatal and immortal attempt, Dr. Lammer expresses himself as follows:

'. . . But Mallory had recovered from his bad throat and was blazing with energy for the summit. For this last attempt he chose Irvine as his companion, which caused grave misgivings to Norton. I consider that this choice of Mallory's proved to be his undoing. Why did he select this 22-year-old athlete and oarsman, who had so far accomplished no mountaineering expeditions worthy of mention and who was suffering from throat trouble? Chomo Lungma as a first expedition, what an outrage! And yet there was available the very experienced Odell, who had brilliantly passed the altitude test. Mallory was anxious, so as to make certain of a result

this time, to use oxygen and was in need of Irvine's mechanical knowledge; also Irvine believed in the magic of oxygen, yet Odell had obtained no relief from its use. Perhaps there are unknown reasons for Mallory's fateful choice. . . .'

In justice to Mallory and Norton we feel bound to state that the opinion expressed above seems to be based on a not altogether correct appreciation of the physical condition of the climbers, and, in any case, to be too positively asserted.

Odell had *not*, at this stage, 'brilliantly passed the altitude test.' Up to two or three days before, this said altitude had found him wanting: he had then climbed up to 25,000 ft., and Norton was only just beginning to realize that his earlier form had belied his great capabilities. In fact at this period Odell was about equal to Irvine as regards his resistance to high levels. Odell had then only had *one* very inconclusive trial with oxygen. Again, as regards Irvine's bad throat: this was nothing like as bad as Somervell's had been when the latter had started on the attempt of a few days before and was about the same as that which Mallory had endured and from which he was now practically recovered.

Nevertheless, there are few mountaineers who will not agree, in theory at any rate, with Dr. Lammer's stern reasoning. Many of us, including those who know the mountain, are inclined to believe that Mallory and Odell would have achieved the summit and *returned*. But, on Everest, the last word must and always will be with the Leader on the spot. It is rash, however tempting, for those who are at a distance to challenge that Leader's decisions. It is extremely easy to be wise after the event!

Dr. Lammer realizes that the great mountain will be conquered, and by Britons. He also realizes the uselessness and encumbrance of the oxygen in its present apparatus. We thank him for his understanding of the spirit of the expedition and his sympathy in its tragic conclusion; we can substantially agree with much of his criticism. But, while the standard of taste in the expression of sentiment varies so widely in different nations—*de gustibus non est disputandum* (*!*), Dr. Lammer would, we think, have done well to refrain from his comment on the absence of any such expressions in Mallory's letters to his family in their published form.

E. L. Strutt.
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