The party next crossed by the Dongusorun Pass into Suanetia and visited most of its glaciers and villages. They found the district under the control of a Suanetian Soviet and had no difficulty with the inhabitants. There had been some fighting after the revolution, but the villagers had since been disarmed. From Kal a portion of the party proceeded directly to Kutais by the Latpar Pass, while the remainder descended the gorge of the Ingur and then, following its tributary the Nenskra and crossing the Khita Pass, entered the valley of the Seken river in Abkhazia. This valley, formerly deserted, they found thickly populated by settlers from Suanetia. The tourists finished their arduous journey of 700 kilometres on foot at Sukhum-Kaleh on the coast of the Black Sea. They took numerous photographs, and in the Nenskra valley were lucky in acquiring two gold coins, one of Alexander the Great and the other of his lieutenant Lysimachus, King of Thrace.

D. W. Freshfield.

NEW ZEALAND NOTES.

Letter from Mr. Arthur P. Harper to the Editor, January 20, 1927.

'. . . Porter and Kurz should be having some good weather this season, but I have heard nothing from them since they left for the Alps. I have not had time to go S. so far this year, but may do so at Easter.

'At present, I am having a great fight on the guides' behalf, to get them better conditions, both as to pay and general treatment. Luckily our Prime Minister is interested in this, and on his return from England I may be able to get some results. If I don't, there will be no good guides at the Hermitage next year. Porter and Kurz are going to assist after their season ends; the former fully supports my scheme and admits that the outlook is very bad so far as the future guiding is concerned.

'Last January I went to the Franz Joseph and took my 16-year-old daughter over Graham's Saddle to the Hermitage, doing a peak on the way; three days, of which the last was 22½ hours (not bad for a 16-year-old), and both going strong! We returned *via* the Copland Pass, which I crossed first, and alone in the 1894–5 season. The Prime Minister asked for a full report, and most of my suggestions are being carried out, including the erection of a hut on the Chancellor Ridge of the Fox glacier, a hut which I advocated in my book "Pioneer Work"[1] as long ago as 1895. One has to wait

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[1] The Government have issued another edition of their booklet on the Alps, which I have amended and brought up to date. I am sending you a copy.

a long time, but persistence often succeeds, and our hut will be up this year I hope. It will be one of the most useful huts for high work.

'A week or so ago one of the guides, Williams, and a Dr. Bradshaw tried Mount Elie de Beaumont (10,200 ft.), one of our highest peaks, and the latter slipped and pulled Williams out of his steps. They however "somehow" saved themselves and got down. It was a bit of luck.

'On their return along the Tasman glacier, they found a leg at the foot of the Hochstetter Icefall, the remains of one of the poor fellows who were killed high up on the Linda glacier when King lost his life with his two guides some 12 years ago. They were overwhelmed by a huge ice avalanche off Mt. Dampier. There is no possibility of identifying the leg, which is torn in parts, although the lower portion and foot is unharmed.

'Owing to the guide troubles, there is not the high climbing at the Hermitage that there was when the Grahams were there, who, as you know probably, are as good guides as can be found anywhere; but I am glad to say that some of the youngsters of the present generation are gradually pushing into minor districts and learning the game on some of our lower, but still very interesting, peaks and smaller ice-fields. We have many such districts at the heads of our various rivers, and they take their camps and do a little pioneer work, not real first exploration, but at any rate first ascents. It is cheaper than the Hermitage, which is so expensive that many of us find our purses too short to afford it.

'These more or less out-of-the-way expeditions will, however, breed enthusiasts who later will try our greater peaks, without guides. There is more likelihood of high climbing developing from the western side, where the Grahams have set up a hostel, and do all they can to encourage climbing, and when my Fox glacier hut materialises I forecast some high work from the West.

'For myself, I fear real high work is out of the question. In my youth exploring had to be done and I did it. I am now over 60, and though good for some fairly strenuous work, it would be folly to go in for hard climbing on high peaks. I can get a lot of pleasure going over the old ground which Douglas and I explored, and doing so under modern conditions. That, and the keeping alive of our N.Z.A.C., will be my work now.

(Signed) 'ARTHUR P. HARPER.'

LETTER to Captain Farrar, dated the Hermitage, January 13, 1927.

'. . . On the 5th and 6th of January we [Messrs. H. E. L. Porter and Marcel Kurz] transferred ourselves in gloomy weather to the Haast hut, and struck a perfectly glorious day on the 7th. Leaving the hut at 01.50, we reached our highest point of December in an hour's less time and got to the summit of the Silberhorn at 06.35

without any setbacks. The conditions were vastly improved since December, good snow, in which crampons bit beautifully, replacing the nondescript ice, and very few steps being required. From the Silberhorn, the Tasman ridge—real knife-edge ice most of it—looks amazingly formidable. Neither Kurz nor I know anything in the Alps to compare with it. Not far above the depression between Silberhorn and Mt. Tasman it was broken by a schrund which did not seem feasible near the ridge itself. So we wandered along the lip on the E. side till we came to a point where a very delicate bit of icemanship on the part of Kurz gave us victory. Above that the ridge was too steep and acute-angled even for my " Eckenstein " crampons, and we kept below the slight corniche on the E. slope for some 200 ft. or so, till the ridge eased off a bit. We got to the top [of Mt. Tasman] at 08.50—7 hrs. in all. After 15 mins. halt we proceeded down the virgin N. ridge—not nearly so fierce an affair, although very interesting all the way—to the col. S. of Mt. Lendenfeld, and thence to the Grand Plateau. The whole of our descent to the Plateau was new ground: anyhow, this was the first, I think, traverse of the mountain and the fourth ascent. We were back at the hut at 15.20, extremely satisfied and with one more of my ambitions fulfilled. Kurz was splendid, but had the bad luck to twist a tendon in his knee in a rather adventurous jump over a big schrund—nothing serious. Without crampons we should have had to cut some thousands of steps and descend by the same way, and, as we were neither of us very fit, we should undoubtedly have failed. . . . Three days later we made the second ascent of the S. peak of Haidinger, along the ridge which is shown in my last article.[2] . . . No one had been on it since FitzGerald, Zurbriggen and Clarke on February 8, 1895. . . . We had rather a long day. It is a splendid ridge walk, rather like the Rochefort ridge in parts. On the summit we found a bottle left by FitzGerald with a paper inside: most of the writing had faded and was illegible, but the date was still clearly visible.[3] We waited in the hut for two more days for Mt. Cook, but a Nor'Wester developed and drove us down to-day. . . .

(Signed) ' H. E. L. PORTER.'

LETTER to Captain Farrar, dated the Hermitage, January 30, 1927.

' Our second bout at the Hermitage has now come to an end, and despite much bad weather has been, I think I may say, a magnificent success. We have achieved, in one of the worst seasons on record, since Jan. 4, (1) The first traverse of Mt. Tasman (11,500 ft.); (2) The second ascent of S. Peak of Haidinger (10,150 ft.); (3) A failure

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[2] *A.J.* **36,** facing 290.

[3] Cf. *Climbs in the New Zealand Alps,* by E. A. FitzGerald, pp. 165–79; *A.J.* **17,** 471.

on Elie de Beaumont (1000 ft. from top); (4) Ascent of Aiguilles Rouges (9700 ft.); (5) Ascent of Malte Brun (10,420 ft.); (6) Third ascent of David's Dôme (10,450 ft.); (7) Fourth traverse of the great ice-ridge of Mt. Cook.

'For the last two expeditions we have been blessed with a spell of fine weather lasting six days, on three of which there was little enough wind to make climbing on these great ridges a safe and wonderful pursuit. David's Dôme is an interesting mountain and a marvellous view-point. We climbed it from a tent-bivouac halfway up the Hooker glacier on top of the Noeline rocks, via Harper's Saddle and the W. face. We had hoped to go on along the ridge to Dampier (the third highest of the lot) and only once climbed (from the other side), but we had made too late a start.

'Next day we rested, and on Friday, the 28th, set out at 02.30 from the bivouac for the Cook traverse. Crampons on at once, and Kurz had them on all day nearly, while my Eckensteins didn't come off till we reached the summit rocks on the descent. We had 6500 ft. to ascend to the ridge between the Low and Central Peaks, and we followed more or less Route 1 on Newton's 8th picture[4] till near the top, when we swung out to the left, the rocks being all swathed in icicles. Ridge at 09.05 some 250 yds. north of the Low Peak, which we didn't bother about as we couldn't traverse it, and time is even more valuable to the guideless here than in Switzerland. The ice-ridge is pure joy, not so difficult as that of Tasman, being neither so steep, nor so acute. It was pretty well corniched, and below the corniche where our path lay was a most curious ice-formation: myriads of truncated ice-mushrooms the whole way along in which our spikes bit well. Up the last 800 ft. to the ridge, we had struck real hard ice and had much cutting to do. Once on the ridge we never cut another step all day! Central Peak 09.40, High Peak, a mile or so beyond, 10.30. Quite comfortable for a meal, and my pipe was lit with the third match, so the wind was strictly moderate. We descended the Linda Route without trouble and with very little danger. The ice-cap, which took us 4½ hrs. to ascend 3 years ago with mere boots, was polished off in 30 minutes of descent! The summit rocks, which had foiled a party the week before, were still very messy with snow, but they are so easy that it didn't matter. The Linda Glacier was in good order. We had to watch our chance crossing its head below the two evil couloirs, which were active as usual, and the Silberhorn corner at the entrance to the Grand Plateau was very broken and difficult. We got to the Haast hut at 17.30. Fifteen hours for the traverse, of which 2¾ were halts. This knocks several hours off previous times. It is the fourth traverse (by Route A of my article)[5] and of course the first amateur traverse. Kurz is delighted with the whole business. It has just come exactly right as the culmination of our time at the Hermitage:

[4] *A.J.* **29,** facing 13.

[5] *A.J.* **36,** 281–99.

if Friday or Saturday hadn't been fine, he wouldn't have got Mt. Cook at all, as we are now off to Waiho to join Hugh Chambers in a bivouac on the Fox glacier for ten days or so.

'Peter Graham brought Miss Beattie of the Ladies' A.C. over Graham's Saddle to the Malte Brun hut while I was there, and was detained there two days by a Nor'wester. A most interesting and charming man.

'From the Fox Glacier—bivouac on Pioneer Ridge—there should be some good things to do: (1) Traverse of Haast and Lendenfeld in a day; (2) Traverse of Douglas Peak and Glacier Peak in a day; (3) Most important climb left in the Southern Alps—ascent of west ridge of Mt. Tasman from the col between Tasman and Torres. We don't yet know if this is possible, but hope to know before we are many days older. . . .'

(Signed) 'H. E. L. Porter.'

Letter to Captain Farrar, dated Glacier Hotel, Waiho Gorge, February 14, 1927.

'Our climbing season is now finished, and has ended with another week of almost incredible good fortune. The last event of the season was arranged long ago with Hugh Chambers, and was to be a bivouac high up the Fox Glacier—a repetition of Newton and Teichelmann's wonderful camp in 1907 with Alec Graham. From the Hermitage base we had been round Mt. Tasman on the S.E. and N., traversed it, and photographed it on every possible occasion. If we had any luck on the Fox, we might complete the job by climbing Lendenfeld and Torres and so getting more photos from the N., and new ones from the W.

'The W. coast climate is even wetter than that on the E. of the divide. The sweat and labour of getting up a bivouac from 500 ft. to 7000 ft. up a highly broken glacier, and through scrub and bush would be too heart-breaking if no result was achieved.

'Last Monday we started off, and by Wednesday midday had selected a new site under Pioneer Ridge. For the last few hours we had been staggering across and through a maze of long crevasses with nearly 60 lb. swags, as our two porters had had to leave us to secure their own retreat. That afternoon Kurz and I went off and climbed a virgin peak (Le Receveur, about 9300 ft.), the continuation of the W. ridge of Tasman beyond Torres (10,376 ft.), which is the first peak on the ridge. Torres is one of the most inaccessible of the eighteen tenthousanders, and we were most anxious to make the second ascent of it. From Le Receveur we spotted a most promising route for another day.

'Next day dawned badly, but improved, and at 08.30 we were off to Pioneer Pass to try and traverse Haast and Lendenfeld (both over 10,000 ft.). Haast had been once ascended, but never traversed, and Lendenfeld had been conquered three times. We climbed easy rocks

from Pioneer Pass to the Great Haast ridge, running down to Glacier Dôme and the Haast hut, and finally the Tasman Glacier, nearly 7000 ft. below. It had been my ambition to climb the whole ridge some day, but I am wiser now. The small portion left for us to deal with on this occasion took nearly 2 hours (and we are not a slow party!). Mostly a sharp, narrow snow-arête such as are so common on the bigger mountains here—like the Rochefort ridge only longer and much sharper and steeper-sided. At one point the ridge rose for 50 ft. at an angle, at which none of us had ever seen snow lie elsewhere. It turned to ice halfway up, and I had a difficult job to do cutting across to some rocks away on the right, and so round the corner. Lendenfeld was an easy crampon walk, but the descent from the col between it and Tasman was distinctly bad for some 300 ft. Kurz and I in three expeditions had now traversed the whole main divide from the Silberhorn to Haidinger in one season—a unique record.

'The floor of our bivouac was angular débris as big as one's hand, and the amount of sleep obtained was negligible. However, one's muscles got some rest, and by this time Kurz and I were almost tireless in body, though I was getting distinctly fatigued mentally (a fact evidenced by my taking two exposures on the same negative more than once on this trip).

'Next day we conquered Torres by the route we had spotted. It is a fine mountain and the views from it completed the perfectly wonderful series of photos which Kurz and I have got this season—beyond compare better than those of my two other seasons. This year I have a Sybil camera with a magnificent lens, and it has been well worth its cost.

'Next day we broke camp, having nearly eaten ourselves out, the day being also far too windy to be on the main divide; so we had to leave Douglas Peak, our other ambition, unclimbed. We got right down the Fox, and next day back to Waiho, still dry and unrained on. Having let us get home, the rain then began in earnest! Perfectly astonishing fortune. We had added three tenthousanders and a virgin peak of over 9000 ft. to our victories in 2½ days' climbing.

'Our total of ten tenthousanders and four other good peaks and three great passes in seven weeks will stand untouched until a similar party manages to do the same or better.

'I remain deeply indebted to you for suggesting Kurz to me. Neither of us has lost a day's climbing through illness or fatigue, or damage. Since our return to the Hermitage on January 4 we could not have dreamed of a finer series of expeditions successfully carried through, with only one defeat entirely due to bad weather.

'We start home on March 10, and I get back to London on the *Ormonde* about the end of April. I look forward to showing you my photos, and I should love to have a place in the "A.J." to devote to the glorious Mt. Tasman, worthily illustrated from N., S., E., and W.

(Signed) 'H. E. L. Porter.'

AMERICAN NOTES.

Captain and Mrs. A. H. MacCarthy are keeping their ranch in British Columbia for their summer home, and have bought Fair Hill Farm in Colorado for their winter residence.

Captain MacCarthy writes on February 26 to Captain Farrar:

'. . . It appears that we have picked rather a rough state (Colorado) in which to live, for within its boundary lines it has 46, 14,000 ft. peaks, 257, 13,000 ft., 329, 12,000 ft. and 209, 11,000 ft., or 841 ranging from 11,000 ft. to 14,420 ft. above sea level. I wonder . . . if it would be a foolishly ambitious job to climb the list? . . .'

After Captain MacCarthy's performances in the Alps during the summer of 1926, we do not think that these 841 peaks should keep him busy for more than $8\frac{1}{4}$ seasons!

Captain A. H. MacCarthy and Mr. H. R. C. Carr have been elected Honorary Members of the Appalachian Mountain Club.

Dr. J. Monroe Thorington will be at Chamonix and Zermatt during the coming summer.

American Members of the Alpine Club.

Minutes of Meeting of October 23, 1926.

The Association held its Autumn Dinner at the Harvard Club in New York on Saturday, October 23, 1926.

The following members attended: Allston Burr, J. W. A. Hickson, Noel E. Odell, Allen Carpe, J. E. Fisher, H. S. Hall, jun., Howard Palmer, Joseph Wood, jun., and H. B. de Villiers-Schwab; also these guests: Wm. S. Ladd, B. F. Seaver, and J. M. Thorington.

At the commencement of dinner the Chairman, Mr. Burr, mentioned the loss of our fellow member Leroy Jeffers. There being no business to conduct, the speakers were called upon immediately after dinner.

Mr. Odell spoke at length on 'Mt. Everest,' and then answered many questions put to him, especially concerning the final and tragic phase of the attack. His slides were splendid.

Dr. Hickson followed with an account of his 'First Ascent of Mt. Fryatt' with Howard Palmer and guide, and also told of their conquest of Mt. Lapensee.

The evening concluded with a first showing of Mr. Carpe's film of his 'Attempt on Mt. Fairweather,' made with Dr. Ladd and Andy Taylor the past summer. They were up to his usual high standard of excellence and graphically illustrated the difficulties encountered.

The next dinner is to be held in Montreal next May.

Alpine Accidents.

THE winter season of 1926–27 has been disastrous in loss of life and in injury. The newspapers publish almost daily accounts of fresh tragedies, many exaggerated, some even imaginary. Nevertheless, the total is very startling. The number of winter visitors to the Alps has increased by thousands, most of whom ski, while perhaps one per cent. have the faintest knowledge of snow conditions or mountaineering. This ignorance, unfortunately, applies principally to our countrymen. The Swiss, the Austrians, the French, the Italians and the Germans have, by their environment, learnt something of the perils of the Alps. British expert ski-runners mostly spend their time in sports known as 'slaloms,' while the non-expert slide about on slopes, trodden to adamantine hardness, at the back of hotels. Yet both kinds often start for an expedition immediately after or during a fall of fresh snow. 'It will be perfect to-morrow for ski,' was the remark made to us by a well-known ski-runner, when after 60 hours of storm and continuous fall of snow he proposed to set out on a big expedition. He and his two companions returned safely, principally because, having no map, they were unable to leave the main valley! They saw many avalanches and they had an 'interesting' day, but the conditions were 'disappointing.' Many more accidents may occur before these young skiers learn the rudiments of winter mountaineering. The pioneers waited for days, even weeks, before the conditions appeared safe; these later-day 'experts' wait hours, sometimes not even that. The British and other Ski Clubs issue sensible advice and warnings, but the toll of accidents appears to qualify considerably the statement by a great ski authority that:—

'. . . the ski-runner . . . may claim with justice to be a specialist in one important branch of mountaineering, for he has contributed far more than the foot climber to the science