The Western or Brèche Arête of La Meije.

IN 'A.J.' **33**, 215 *seq.*, the late Mr. Harold Raeburn published a very instructive article, 'The W. Arête of the Meije.' The somewhat freak photograph was, however, so difficult to understand that the article left me, as probably others, in a state of some perplexity as to the exact line of ascent.

Mr. C. H. Brook, who has been a close student of the Dauphiné the last few years, showed a photograph of the arête at a Club Exhibition not so long ago. He was good enough to tell me that Mr. C. M. Sleeman of Queens' College, Cambridge, possessed an even more instructive picture which is here reproduced. The photographer's name is unknown.

M. Pierre Dalloz, the authority on the Alps of the Dauphiné and director of the Syndicat d'Initiative du Dauphiné at Grenoble, has, at my request, kindly marked the lines followed on this W. arête, which is an independent route only so far as the *Pas du Chat* when it merges into the ordinary S. route just below the Glacier Carré. It is conceivable that this W. arête might be followed over Les Doigts and the Pic du Glacier Carré.

M. Dalloz writes :

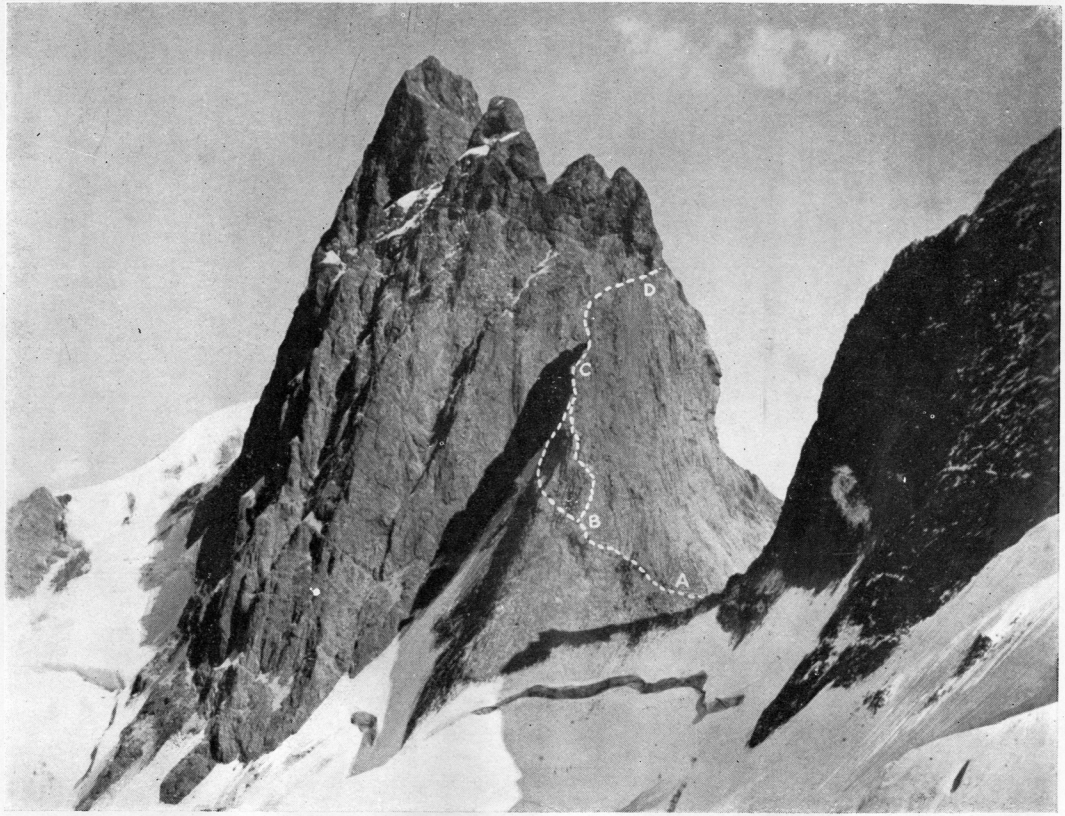
'A is the Brèche de la Meije. A to B indicates a traverse below the crest on the La Bérarde side. One cuts a little couloir in which the rock is bad, and regains the arête at B in a little gap well seen in a profile picture. The actual crest of the arête can however be followed.

'At B at the foot of the great escarpment formed by a series of slabs separated by little platforms one can mount straight up (Loustalot) or make a bad flank march on the N. (La Grave) side, which leads into or close to the bed of the great couloir seen in the photograph. One thus gains the *épaule* C and follows the fairly narrow crest installing at the point where it is cut off a short *rappel*. Finally a wide " vire aux bicyclettes " leads to D, just above the Pas du Chat, where the ordinary route is joined.

'To my knowledge the arête has been followed four times :

'(1) By C. Verne with Pierre Gaspard père et fils, Maximin Gaspard and J. B. Rodier, in 1885.[1]

[1] *Alps of the Dauphiny*, Coolidge edition, 1905, p. 62.



LA MEIJE.
Showing the W. arête and N. face (in profile) taken from below the Brèche.

'(2) MM. Main and Plossu in 1919.[2]

'(3) J. P. Loustalot and Mlle. Y. Millière in 1922.[3] They followed the crest throughout.

'(4) Jean Vernet and R. Toumayeff in 1926. They followed a route between Verne's and Loustalot's.

'Verne's route is not always excellent on account of its N. exposure.

'Loustalot's, although very impressive, seems preferable. It does not appear to be very difficult. Loustalot in conversation compared the difficulties as equal to those of the S. wall below the Glacier Carré. Every ten or fifteen metres there is a little platform where one is all right. At the same time Loustalot's great skill must not be forgotten.'

Die Alpen (the monthly issue of the S.A.C.) for August 1927 contains a very striking picture of the La Grave side of La Meije by Dr. Cav. B. Acquasiati, but I confess my inability to reconcile the topographical details.

J. P. Farrar.

Note on the Viro Valley Peaks, Corsica.

In the event of any members of the Club intending to climb in Corsica during the Christmas or Easter vacations the following brief notes on the Viro valley may prove to be of interest. This is without doubt the finest mountaineering centre in the island, and as such would keep even a very active party busy for at least a month.

The Grotte des Anges (about 4500 ft.) provides sufficient shelter to enable a tent to be dispensed with. It is about 4½ hours above Calacuccia. The surrounding scenery is magnificent and other amenities (such as bathing, fishing, plenty of firewood) are equally attractive.

The Grotte des Anges is surrounded by mountains in the form of a horseshoe—the toe pointing W. Beginning at the S. end of the horseshoe heel (Punta Scopiccia) and working round the whole chain to the Cinque Fratri at the N. extremity of the heel, I have first-hand knowledge of the following mountains :

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[2] Mr. Raeburn's paper, *A.J.* **33,** 215 *seq.*

[3] *La Montagne*, 1922, p. 228.