

An excellent and complete pocket guide for these Alps is Vol. IV. of a series called 'Wagner's Alpine *Spezialführer*,' and entitled 'Die Stubaier Alpen' by Dr. Siegfried Hohenleitner, published by the Wagner'sche Universitäts Buchhandlung, Museumstrasse 4, Innsbruck; it is furnished with good contoured maps to a scale of 1/50,000. The D. & Æ.A.V. also publish good maps to the same scale, contoured at 50 metre intervals.

In conclusion, I hope these notes may prove of some use to any climbers wishing to become acquainted with an interesting and beautiful district, inhabited by a simple and delightful race, and where one is received more as a visitor and guest than as an ordinary tourist. I hope to go there again another year.

THE SOUTHERN ALPS REVISITED.

By H. E. L. PORTER.

MY fourth season in the Southern Alps was not favoured by the good fortune which had befriended me on former occasions. My programme was limited to six major expeditions and such other tempting trifles as might present themselves in the intervals almost certain to occur between bouts of high endeavour. This time I had no Marcel Kurz always with me and ready to start for any climb at any moment, but had to rely on the company of various amateurs and guides, and fit them in according to the holidays of the former and the previous engagements of the latter, an arrangement bound to lead even in a good season to a waste of opportunity, which, if one's luck is out, may prove little less than heartbreaking. As it happened, the season 1928-29 was incredibly bad. In all I spent fifty days at the *Hérmite* in three separate visits. During the first there was one fine day, on which I achieved one of my objectives, the Minarets. During the second, a period of twenty-two days, the allotment was one fine day per week, each of which we spent in toiling up the Hooker valley to the bivouac on the Pudding Rock, only to be driven down on each occasion at dawn the following day, before the obviously impending nor'-wester could develop sufficient force to render descent hazardous or even keep the four of us prisoners in my frail tent, holding two at ease, three at a pinch, and four at a stretch. The party then consisted of Messrs. Chambers



Photo, H. E. L. Porter.

First Sign of Nor'wester in the LENDENFELD Saddle.

and Latham, my wife and myself, and our object was to climb La Pérouse (10,101 ft.), the fine mountain, only three times ascended, which continues the main divide W.S.W. from Harper's Saddle, the route lying along this W.S.W. ridge over the subsidiary points, Mt. Low and Mt. Jellicoe. According to the best amateur practice, we prospected a route through the broken ice after establishing camp, and this slight advance up the glacier was the nearest we got to La Pérouse. On the third occasion the party had changed: my wife and I had secured the services of Vic Williams for an attempt to traverse the three peaks of Mt. Cook, an expedition long planned and eagerly awaited: it was doomed to failure almost from the moment we reached the bivouac, the wind having already reached gale force and rapidly developing into a hurricane, in which we could hardly hear each other speak.

These fine days were brief intervals separating prolonged storms, one of which was the worst recorded for many years. The crisis of the storm only lasted thirty-six hours, but in that time more than 12 inches of rain fell. For the last two years the Government had been patiently constructing a motor-road from the Hooker bridge to the Ball hut; from the bridge this road ran across the Tasman flats, then along the hillside, where the Tasman river comes sweeping in along its base, over the Blue Lake stream by a sturdy little wooden bridge, and finally up the long gut between the lowest spurs of the Mt. Cook range and the huge lateral moraine of the Tasman Glacier. By the end of 1928 the road had reached the head of a great shingle-flat only three miles from the hut; there was a regular motor service twice a day, so that the hut was within two hours' range of the hotel—one hour on wheels and one on foot—a delightful improvement on the old dull four and a half hours' walk. Nor could the most cantankerous reactionary justly stigmatize the innovation as a pollution of natural beauty. The road blends with its surroundings and can never be a through route to anywhere, and consequently entails no parasitic growth of garages and petrol-pumps, hotels and charabanes, and no litter of picnic effluvia, such as would defile the wayside were Styhead or Hardknott to be scarred with a motor-road.

At the time of the deluge we were in the Ball hut. Proceeding when it was over to the Malte Brun hut, we climbed Aiguille Rouge on a poor day, and as it still threatened retreated the following day, deluding ourselves with the comforting hope that we could easily catch the morning car. But there was no morning car, and we had to walk all the way. The storm

had wreaked its worst fury on the works of man, and the new road at its upper end was a succession of deep holes excavated by a raging torrent. Farther down the Tasman river had hurled itself against the hillside, even as Father Tiber crested his waves to throw down the temple of Vesta and the monuments of kings. Three hundred yards of the highway, constructed with so much toil, had vanished as if it had never been, and for many days traffic went through the 'Lawyers,' 'Spaniards,' and other barbed horrors of the N.Z. scrub, to drop back on to the road beyond the spot where its broken end yawned abruptly over the swirling flood. The Hermitage itself was isolated for a time from the coast, one important bridge on the road to Pukaki having had both its approaches washed away and the spaces between its piers filled with huge boulders to the level of its floor.

We had one little compensation for our enforced walk on this occasion in the sight, at very close quarters, of a chamois buck with his harem and numerous progeny. The family slowly retreated uphill as we swung along, but the old buck, with the courage engendered by rigid protection and the consequent contempt for slow-footed bipeds, pranced ludicrously among the scrub in between, his silly old head peering first out of one bush, then out of another, watching us in case we were not so harmless as we looked. Chamois were first imported into N.Z. in 1907. In exchange for a number of specimens of the unique fauna of N.Z., wekas, kiwis, keas, and tuatara lizards, the Emperor Franz Josef ordered a huge drive of chamois in his preserves. Hundreds were rounded up, but a large number, to the sorrow and indignation of the keepers, who were powerless to prevent it, preferred death to captivity and were dashed to pieces. Of those captured six does and two bucks after an adventurous voyage, during which their jaded appetites were tempted with a wonderful assortment of vegetable food, were finally released at the Hermitage. By 1914 it was thought advisable to refresh the stock with new blood; this time some animals born in captivity were sent: one buck and one doe survived to be released at the Hooker bridge in May 1914. The doe vanished at once, and was doubtless a welcome addition to the seraglio of the sultan-chamois, but the male intruder was rejected with contumely. Morose and disconsolate at the loss of his own kind, he returned to human society and, as generally happens in such cases, became a regular nuisance. He was for ever playing tricks, for preference on the other sex, to whom he would administer butts from the rear, playful in

intention but painful in effect, at unguarded moments. The story of his end, as related to me by Frank Milne, though possibly apocryphal, none the less makes a good tale. One day Conrad Kain was conducting a young lady to the Müller hut with the chamois in attendance. At a point where the path is narrow and the drop below considerable, the lady knelt down to do up a bootlace; the beast saw his chance, gleefully he stalked her from behind, brought off his coup on her centre of gravity, and waited expectantly for her to roll down to the glacier far below. But she recovered her balance, and Kain, in a momentary access of anger, uplifted his ice-axe and drove the pick into a vital part of the unchivalrous animal. On his return he skinned it, took it to the hotel, and left it hanging out to dry, thinking it would look well stuffed. When he came back he found a dog had pulled it down and worried it, doing serious damage to its under-jaw. But Kain was a man of resource, and replaced the injured part with the corresponding portion of a recently butchered lamb. And now that chamois, happy in his death, adorns the lobby of the Hermitage. His brethren meanwhile flourish exceedingly, and, if they are not soon thinned out, will alter the face of the landscape by their consumption of the more edible bushes of the scrub.

The recurrent storms of December and January did more than prevent us climbing at the time. Nor'-west rains are warm, and their persistence washed away snow slopes and snow bridges, melting the edges of schrunds and crevasses, till they gaped asunder. By February, when the weather picked up, many mountains were cut off and would not be climbable again till late in March, when the great schrunds collapse and fill in impassable abysses. Luck, too, pitted herself against us in this month, so that in all I have only three ascents of any interest to chronicle. This is a pitiful result for seven weeks' endeavour, especially considering the generous and willing assistance towards the furtherance of my plans given by Mr. Wigley and his staff of the Mt. Cook Motor Co. and by everyone at the Hermitage, from the manager downwards.

The Minarets ¹ (10,058 ft. and 10,022 ft.) are two points on the divide directly opposite the Malte Brun hut and about four miles S. of Elie de Beaumont. The southerly continuation of the ridge runs over De La Bêche and separates the Rudolf Glacier from the Tasman till they meet at De La Bêche corner. The watershed itself follows the rocky W. ridge of De La Bêche

¹ *A.J.* 40, illustrations facing 112, 113.

to Graham's Saddle, thence gradually veering southwards over several minor points to Douglas Peak, Haidinger, and Haast. In all the miles between Elie de Beaumont and Haast, it is a remarkable fact that the eastern aspect cannot show one single unmistakable ridge from glacier to summit. The watershed runs at a high level, never descending below 7000 ft., and the whole eastern face is a cascade of ice divided into sections by minor, discontinuous ribs. So far this fortress of ice has only been breached in seven places, the routes leading respectively to Pioneer Pass, the N. peak of Haidinger and Conway, Graham's Saddle, the Minarets, the Coronet, Green, and Elie de Beaumont. The route up the Minarets from the Tasman side is typical of all this country. It varies within narrow limits according to the state of the crevasses, but leads always up 5000 ft. of broken snow slopes at an average inclination of about 35°. It is an ideal expedition for crampons after a cold night, though descent by the same route must be always laborious and rather dangerous, since it faces the morning sun. Without crampons the ascent used to take from five to six hours. This year, with excellent snow and crevasses in their infancy early in December, we reached the first and highest summit in the record time of 3 hrs. 55 mins. I had with me Arne Larsen, a merry young Norwegian, who had come to the Hermitage as a guide after an adventurous career in the States, including an episode in the Florida land-boom, where he had earned high wages as an internal decorator: these he invested in real estate, and was getting quite wealthy on paper when the bubble burst and his land became a liability instead of an asset. The wages, however, continued, and he now put them into clothes and boots and personal wear. Then came the great flood and swept his new investments out to sea, and he emerged, still quite cheerful, with the clothes he stood up in. With us, on a separate rope, came a party from Waiho, Mr. James and the guide Frank Alack, who had already made five attempts on the mountain and was bubbling over with pleasure at securing at last the right day and the right companion to ensure victory. In the irritation of frustrated hope he had made a humorous vow to stand on his head on the summit when he did succeed in reaching it. A vow is still a vow, even in this century of disillusion. His companions were sympathetic to the spirit of it, and assisted its fulfilment by holding his legs aloft! From the Minarets we went on to De La Bèche, and thence completed the traverse by descending from the next col to the Rudolf Glacier, the parties diverging near Graham's Saddle—

one westward to the Almer bivouac, the other southward to the Ball hut. How strange a feeling of isolation grips the heart after such a parting high up on a mountain with no other human being within miles! So speedy were our homeward movements that we easily caught the afternoon car and reached the Hermitage before 5 p.m., so that we traversed our mountain and covered the 24 miles separating the hut from the hotel all in 15 hours.

January, as I have already said, was a month of disastrous failure and hope cruelly deferred, not only for my party but also for almost all the mountaineers on the spot. Most of them were concentrating their energies on the ascent of Mt. Cook: a notable exception was Miss Gardiner, daughter of our former Vice-President, who wisely determined to gain experience and bodily training on minor ascents first, and had scaled several peaks with Vic Williams, before she went on to make with him and Mahan the first ascent of Mt. Cook for the season on January 6, in 15½ hours, only a few minutes more than the fastest previous ascent by a lady on the Linda route, that of Mrs. Algie in 1924. There were three other ascents of Mt. Cook in January, all by the Linda, the first of which was a heroic performance, even if it presents features which do not commend themselves as sound practice. For many days the Haast hut had ten inhabitants, the limit of its capacity: it rained and blew most of the time, keeping them more or less prisoners indoors; in such conditions appetites grow with feeding, and foodstocks had to be replenished more than once. In this connexion the feat of Charlie Hilgendorf, a student porter, is worthy of record. He left the hut early, walked all the way to the hotel, which takes about 7 hours, took back with him a swag containing over 50 lb. of provisions, and regained the hut about 1 a.m., having ascended the 3000 ft. of the Haast ridge in the dark: of such stuff is the youth of N.Z. made. The mattresses in the hut were rotten with age, and the kapok with which they are stuffed exuded at every rent and invaded everything: it littered the floor and clung to clothes, it got into the food and penetrated breathing-tubes in the form of impalpable dust. It is hard to imagine conditions more likely to undermine tempers and destroy climbing form. Yet of the ten six remained (some of them after twelve days in the hut) ready to tackle the mountain, when on January 27 there seemed an exiguous chance of success. The doughty six were Miss Byles and Alf Brustad, chief guide; Mr. Samuel Turner and his son Cyril, and Messrs. Syme and Mace of Wellington,

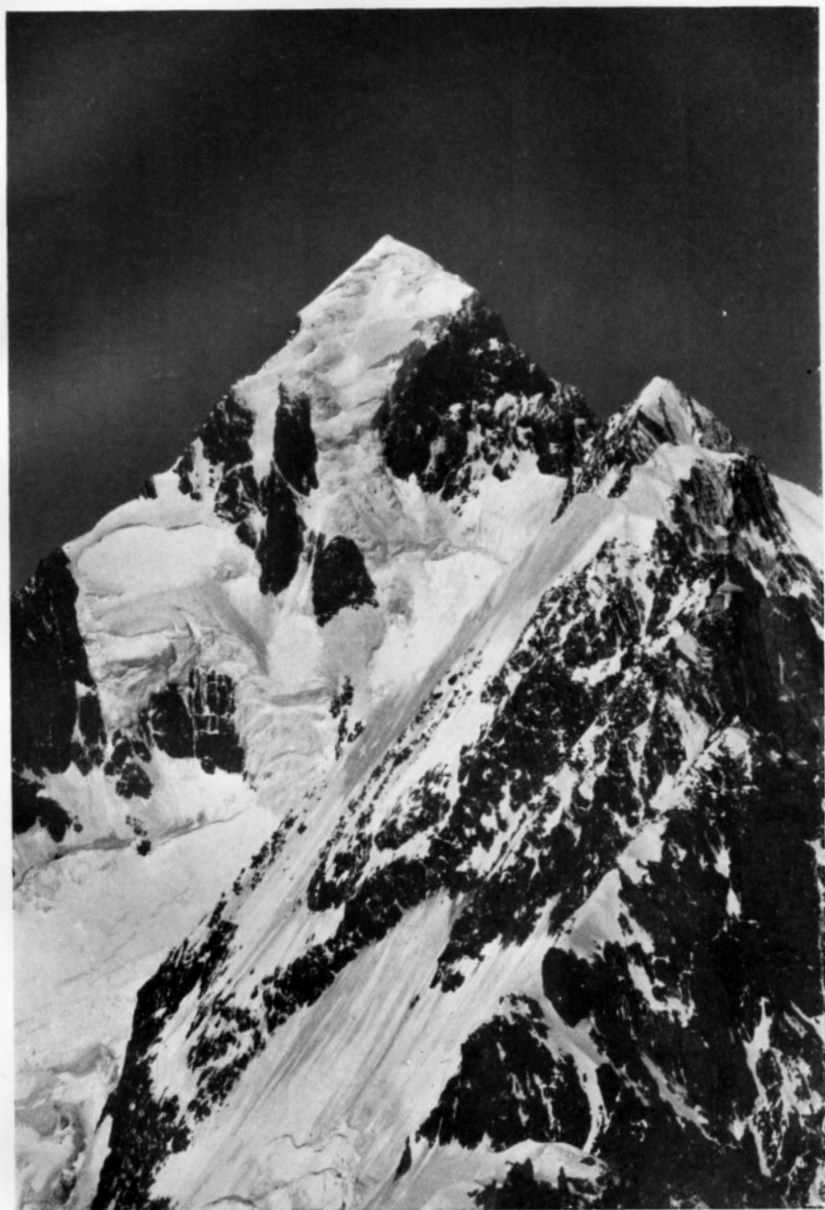
an amateur pair, whose keenness in the face of discouragement is beyond praise. They formed three parties of two, climbing on separate ropes, but with an agreement to stay together all day. There had been a heavy snow-storm on the 24th, followed by two dull days without any thawing power: consequently the Linda was a purgatory of soft snow to the knees and sometimes to the waist, up which the men took it in turn to plough a way. By the time they reached the summit rocks the wind was strong and steadily rising, reaching dangerous force as they mounted the ice-cap. In a 'death-or-glory' spirit they persevered and at 3 P.M., 13 hours after their start, they stood on the summit. Darkness overtook them on the Linda, and they had to feel their way through the worst of it above the Silberhorn corner, with the added handicap of lanterns which would not keep alight. Eventually they regained the hut at 3 A.M., after 25 hours out. It was a great feat of endurance for a lady, yet Miss Byles a day or two later was attacking other Alpine giants with undiminished vigour. Mr. S. Turner had the satisfaction of making his fifth ascent of Mt. Cook in his sixtieth year, and his son that of success at the first attempt, while no one could help rejoicing with those modest, self-trained mountaineers, Messrs. Syme and Mace, in their well-earned victory. On January 30, in rather similar conditions but without the same violence of wind, Brustad and Larsen conducted Miss Edgar Jones to the top and back in 20 hours, and the next day Williams and Hilgendorf took up Mr. Jackson of Wellington, their time of 14½ hours being the best ever recorded on the Linda route. Ascents of Mt. Cook now number thirty-five: of these twenty have been made by the Linda route, which was only completed as recently as 1912, on the occasion of the tenth ascent; sixty-seven climbers have stood on the top, of whom ten have been ladies.

It is perhaps worthy of mention that, since the very successful season rewarding Kurz and myself in 1927, no ascent of Mt. Cook has been attempted without crampons, and it is safe to assert that they have at last come into a kingdom peculiarly their own. It is surprising how quickly the young mountaineer becomes proficient in their use, just as children nowadays seem to ride a bicycle by inherited instinct, whereas a generation ago we had to learn the art not without many a sideslip and tumble. Conversely, I noted a tendency in N.Z. to believe that crampons are a kind of magic footgear, conferring a mysterious power on the veriest novice to waft himself aloft, however ignorant and untrained, to Alpine heights, which

should only be attained after due apprenticeship. No one is more conscious of this unfortunate state of affairs than the guides, on whom devolves either the dangerous duty of conducting such parties, or the unpleasant alternative of giving offence by refusing to do so. Mt. Cook is and must *always* be a dangerous mountain, and visitors to the Hermitage ought not to be lightly encouraged by the directorate to undertake the ascent regardless of their Alpine experience and physical ability. The Linda resembles a treacherous and malignant monster: some days it sleeps; on others it belches forth its very entrails in its wrath, as on that day in 1914 when it overwhelmed Mr. S. L. King's party. The more one sees of it the stronger grows the conviction that it is a place to avoid unless the conditions are absolutely perfect, and even then a prudent mountaineer cannot help being oppressed by the consciousness of the incalculable forces arrayed against him.

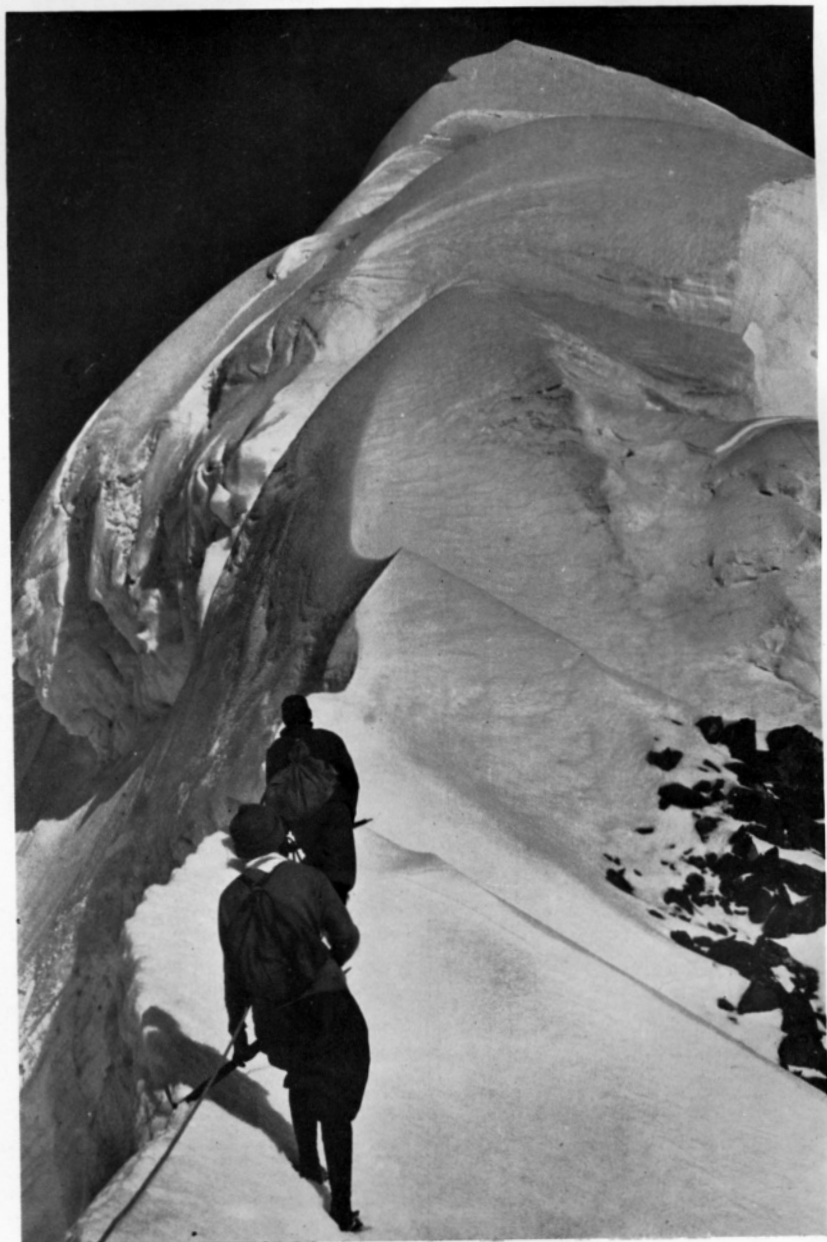
Towards the end of January my wife and I gave up the struggle in dudgeon, but ten days later I returned alone to join Miss Gardiner and Vic Williams. For the next fortnight the nor'-wester, despite occasional threats, held its hand, yet for some obscure reason the old snow was almost everywhere in bad condition. Early in the spring a layer of minute dust, said to have been wafted over in the course of a terrific dust-storm in the Australian desert, had been deposited over a wide belt of the Southern Alps, and had persisted on most snow slopes right into the autumn, giving a peculiar rusty-red tinge to the scenery. It was not till one started melting snow for water and got a liquid like pea-soup from the process that one realized the extent of the deposit. I wonder if there is any possible connexion of cause and effect between this dust and the surprising instability of the snow.

For the opening move of the new campaign I suggested making an attempt on Mt. Teichelmann (10,400 ft.), a small knob on the divide half a mile S.W. of the Silberhorn: its chief importance is that it forms one of the pivots where the divide changes direction abruptly back to the S., the prolongation of the ridge from the Silberhorn constituting a rocky barrier between the two western glaciers, Balfour and La Pérouse. It had the additional attraction of being unclimbed; in fact, I have never heard of anyone even meditating an assault on it. Some years ago I accepted without verification the statement that Grey Peak at the time we climbed it (*cf.* 'A.J.' 36, 296) was the highest virgin point in N.Z. There were then at least three higher separate peaks within five miles, all over 10,000 ft.,



Photo, H. E. L. Porter.

N. face of COOK from Summit of TEICHELMANN.



Photo, H. E. L. Porter.

E. ridge of SILBERHORN. Nearing the Top.

of which Mt. Teichelmann is easily the highest. It was named after our fellow-member, Dr. Teichelmann, in recognition of his sterling pioneer work extending over many years, during which he shared in many first ascents of Ten-Thousanders from the little-known western side. The peak might perhaps be approached by the Linda Glacier and Clark's Saddle, but to my mind the most promising plan was to attack it over the Silberhorn. The others agreed to this, and on February 9 we established ourselves at the Haast hut, now empty of mankind but still full of kapok, a nuisance which we lessened by bringing up some new mattress-covers and bottling up as much of the loose stuffing as we could secure. Next day, leaving the hut at 3.15, we mounted the Silberhorn by the route described in my last article ('A.J.' 39, 268), and after a most enjoyable ascent stood on the summit of the Silberhorn at 9.20. The conditions so far had been fair, the surface-snow being well frozen and deep enough in most places to take the whole length of our spikes, while the schrunds had been surprisingly amenable. The wind was rather strong at times for such an exposed ridge, but seemed to be on the wane. The ensuing half-mile to Teichelmann was a joyous pilgrimage in glorious surroundings along a fairly broad and level snow arête, ending with a change of motion over two rocky teeth, for which crampons had to be discarded. A few steps more and we were reaching out our hands to pluck the plum which had been left dangling for so many years. The beauty of such fruit is that it never grows overripe, but waxes ever sweeter the longer it remains unpicked. From 11.10 to 11.30 we revelled in an ecstasy of appreciation, then slowly retraced our steps, regaining the Silberhorn at 1.0. As soon as we launched ourselves on the descent of the steep ridge we realized that deterioration was rapidly setting in. Though there was no sharp line of cleavage between ice and snow, the surface was inclined to slide an inch or two beneath the foot and also to clog our crampons. All went well till we came to a point some 600 ft. down, where to avoid a great break on the crest of the ridge a short deviation had to be made on to the face. I had cut down a little ice-wall, and inserted one foot into the snow below it, in which Vic had tramped steps in the morning. The steps were deep and seemed good to the pressure of my feet and the probing of my axe. But the instant I placed my other foot in the next step the whole slope peeled off without the least warning; the others had no adequate holding-stance, and we all went in a flash down the slope for 60 ft. and clean over a 30-ft. ice-cliff, to sink into the



Photo, Miss D. Theomin.]

TEICHELMANN, SILBERHORN, TASMAN AND LENDENFELD FROM THE ANZACS.

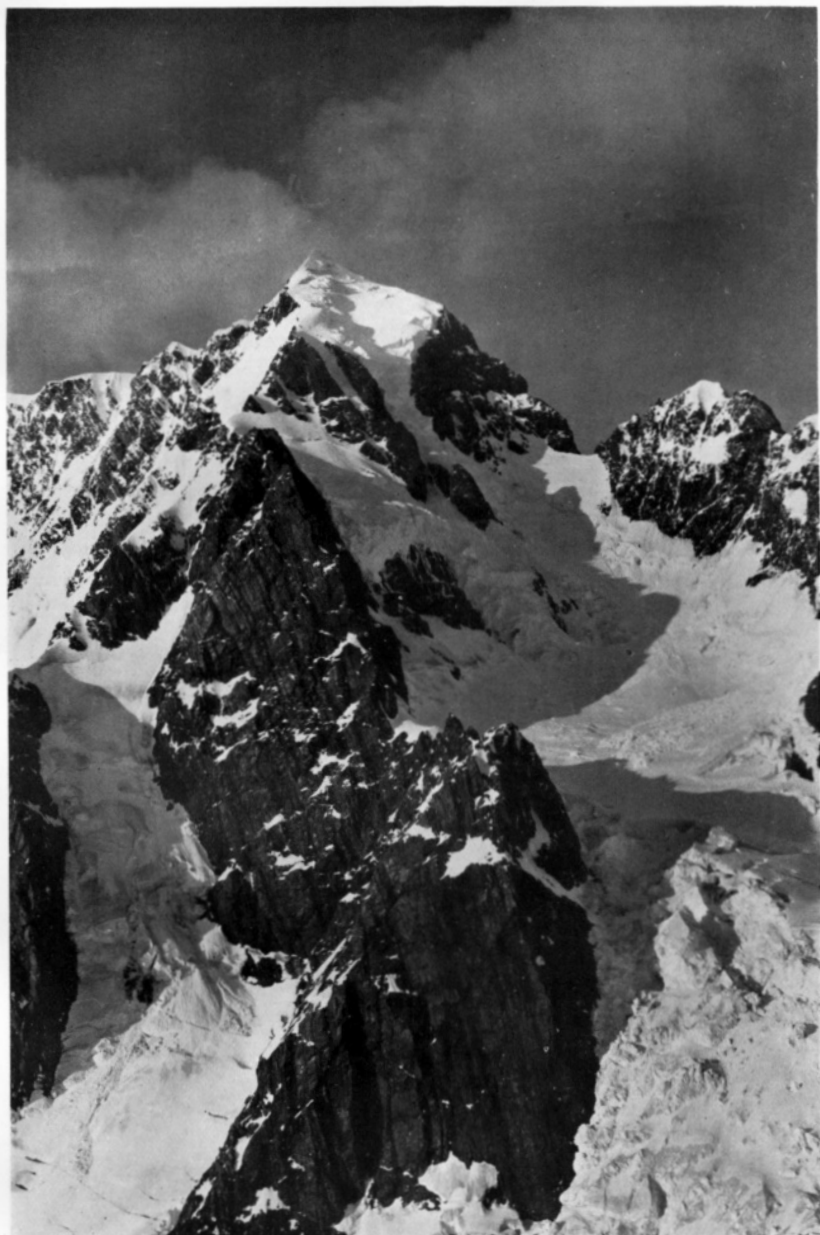
bank of loose snow built up on a providential little platform (almost the only one on the mountain) by the very snow which had been responsible for the whole incident. Miss Gardiner and I came to rest feet foremost, and escaped without a scratch or bruise, but Vic, in his effort to hold, had had his balance destroyed and, being unable to recover it in the few seconds occupied by our slide, fell on his shoulder, straining his neck-muscles and injuring some of the delicate tissues over his heart, which rendered his breathing increasingly difficult during the subsequent descent. We picked ourselves up and got going again with little delay. Vic, despite his pain, kept moving deliberately downhill in the most heroic fashion, though for 2000 ft. every step required concentration of will power, and not seldom the ice-axe had to be plied vigorously where the snow had turned treacherous. It was not till we were out of all serious danger on the broad slopes above the Grand Plateau that he showed any symptoms of collapse. Reinvigorated then by a sip of brandy and a mouthful of food he soon resumed the struggle, and we regained the hut and safety, not without intense relief, at 8.15, just as the last light of day was fading out. Next day Miss Gardiner went into the Hermitage to get help and comforts sent up, and to seek medical advice as to the extent of the injury, of which we were still uncertain, and the best treatment for it. At an early hour on the 12th Jack Crombie and Hilgendorf of the Hermitage staff appeared, as if by magic, with all manner of delicacies for our wounded man. By the 14th, after three days of rest and gentle massage, he had recovered sufficiently to move down the ridge under his own steam and reach the Ball hut, coming on to the hotel the following day.

While he was convalescing, Miss Gardiner and I, with Jack Crombie, made the third ascent of Mt. Bannie (*cf.* 'A.J.' 38, 22). The untoward incident on this occasion was the heeling over of a large block, loosely poised on its pedestal, at the merest touch of the hand; luckily a shoulder could be applied to it before it gathered momentum, and the only damage was the loss of a piece of skin.

By the 19th, Vic felt fit enough to enter the lists again, and his speedy recovery enabled us to view our new ascent in its proper perspective, and to decide among ourselves that there was nothing in the whole range that could have better compensated for the misadventure than the first conquest of Teichelmann. We now migrated to the Malte Brun hut, and on the 21st attacked Elie de Beaumont, marking down its

neighbour, Mt. Green, for our next climb. This was a tactical error: we should have tackled them in the reverse order, for Elie is at its very worst in February, and from Green we would have been able to see that its summit was completely cut off by a huge encircling moat. It was a mistake proving expensive in two ways: in the first place we wasted a really good day, finding it impossible to get through even the lower icefall, where tier upon tier of vast schrunds with overhanging lips were tottering towards collapse; secondly, while endeavouring to circumvent one of them under the frowning ice-crowned wall of Mt. Walter, suddenly we heard an ominous crack, and, looking up, saw a large block of ice silently detach itself 200 ft. above and fall remorselessly towards us. Owing to the configuration of the ground we had our backs to it, and watched it with fascinated eyes directed over our shoulders. Vic was more or less sheltered behind a projecting fin, but Miss Gardiner and I were defenceless if it took our direction. Halfway down it struck and split, and some large fragments came hurtling straight at us. We could do nothing but shield our heads and brace ourselves to receive the shock. One lump caught Miss Gardiner on her rucksack and winded without seriously hurting her; another hit me fair and square on the back of the calf, tearing my puttees and breeches but not penetrating to the skin beneath. The risk we had run our heads into was only such as one incurs automatically every time one ascends an icefall; neither before nor after, as long as we were within sight, did any other block fall at this point, and I can only ascribe the accident to pure bad luck. We evacuated the untenable position in haste, and half-heartedly explored the centre of the fall for an alternative route. Luckily, as we realized two days later, we failed completely. I had already been repulsed near the summit in a previous year, and to have failed again high up after refusing to be deterred by the frowns of fate lower down would have indeed been bitter. My leg was very badly bruised and quickly stiffened up, so that our descent was perforce very leisurely. Next day was the one perfect day of the whole season. I was thirsting to revenge the two defeats I had suffered in 1925 in trying to make the first ascent of Glacier Peak and Douglas Peak from the E. Had I been fit, Vic and I could at least have made a bold bid for it on such a day. I can only console myself with the reflection that here, too, our grasp might have exceeded our reach, leaving the heaven of accomplishment for yet another season.

The 23rd dawned fair again. Lame though I still was, I was



Photo, H. E. L. Porter.

Mt. COOK from 10,000 ft. up on SILBERHORN
showing LINDA Glacier and DAMPIER.



Photo, H. E. L. Porter.

"EN FLAGRANT DÉLIT."

Kea stealing wire.

confident that sufficient exercise would tend to restore elasticity to my bruised muscles, and in any case could do no harm. Accordingly at 4.10 we set out for Mt. Green (9305 ft.). Having descended the 400 ft. of pathless tussock and loose moraine to the glacier, I discovered with a pang of dismay that I had left my crampons in the hut. This was the only misadventure of the day, and was cheaply expiated by the sacrifice of half an hour, the time it took the kindly Vic to retrieve my weapons. Mts. Green and Walter viewed from the hut looked like lower peaks of Elie de Beaumont, rising as steep conical points on its southern flank. At closer quarters they assume more independent proportions as separate peaks on the divide some half-mile distant from each other. On the few occasions on which they have been climbed, they have generally both been included in the day's programme. We had hoped to do the same, but found the conditions so difficult that we had to confine our activities to Green. Leaving the Tasman Glacier below the unnamed col to the S. of Green, we ascended snow slopes which proved more and more unstable the higher we mounted. On the way up a priceless opportunity was presented to my camera. I have often harped with bitter words upon the familiar cloud in Lendenfeld Saddle, 'no bigger than a man's hand,' the sinister omen that a nor'-wester is due within twenty-four hours. This cloud now made a dramatic appearance: one moment the saddle was clear, the next a billow of fleecy vapour, having completed its stealthy march up the Wataroa valley under cover of the northern face of Elie, peered over the rim, voicing inaudibly the injunction, 'To-morrow ye shall not climb!' My lens instantly secured a record of its smiling infamy, which the wizardry of Mr. Beken of Christchurch, N.Z., has transformed into a thing of beauty. Here I feel it my duty to pay tribute to his astonishing genius, which continues to amaze and delight the fortunate few for whom he still consents to put forth his skill, despite his seventy years and more. To return to Mt. Green: after ascending many hundreds of feet with the deliberation which the state of the snow and our past experiences enjoined, we emerged by a sharp snow-crest on the plateau of névé from which the final peak of Green rises in a steep spring of 500 ft. The usual route is straight up the face when there is snow on it. At this time of year it was a sheet of bare and horrible ice. We skirted its base and worked up to the divide at the foot of the N. ridge, now mostly rock, and rotten at that. By it we achieved our peak at 11.45. What interested me most in the

view was the detail it presented of the approaches to that great unsolved problem, the ascent of Elie de Beaumont from the W. After careful study I came to the conclusion that it is an even more formidable undertaking than I had imagined.

Here, since our subsequent doings were of interest only to ourselves, I will leave the party seated on the top of Green, or, to be quite accurate, on the nearest comfortable rock adjacent to the summit, one of them at least lost for a time in pleasant dreams of a happy and not too far distant future when a few more gems may be inserted in the still vacant niches of his New Zealand crown.

THE FIRST ASCENTS OF THE HOHBERGHORN AND
STECKNADELHORN FROM THE RIED GLACIER.

By O. K. WILLIAMSON.

(Read before the Alpine Club, May 6, 1919.)

THERE is a French proverb which runs: 'On revient toujours à ses premiers amours,' perhaps an explanation of another paper on the Saasgrat. The plain unvarnished truth is that I love the Saasgrat peaks whether in fair weather or in foul: when having shed their snowy winter mantle they rise in majestic grace with sharp yet shapely granite ridges, flanked by couloirs of snow and ice gleaming in the summer sun and converging to the clear-cut summit cone; or when a gale chases the clouds in fast fury across their rugged pinnacles and soft rolling snowfields, obscuring here, revealing there, and providing marvellous glimpses of undreamt-of grandeur and of ever-changing beauty.

The present paper is, I think, justified by the fact that the JOURNAL has never contained one on the Stecknadelhorn, and only one, that by August Lorria, in Vol. 13, 521-9, on an ascent of the Hohberghorn.¹ The story of the two climbs forming the basis of this paper, old friends with new faces, has not yet appeared except in the form of bare notes. Owing to their shortness these expeditions cannot rank as great climbs, indeed the glaciers at the points at which these peaks arise

¹ True in 1919, but see, however, Mr. Meade's note, *A.J.* 41, 212-3, as well as M. Blanchet's note, *A.J.* 40, 395.—*Editor.*