

The method described here can be applied to give a relief picture of anything which can be photographed, whatever the distance.

In order to obtain this exaggerated picture it is necessary to take two single photographs of the mountain. Both these are best taken at the same level, equidistant from and at right angles to the face viewed, and as far apart from each other as convenient. Owing to the great accommodating power of the eyes, it is not essential that any of these conditions should be exactly obeyed.

Prints are made in the usual way, and in setting these up, the simplest method is to mount them exactly level and parallel, taking any prominent feature in the centre of the view as a 'base line'; the distance of the prints apart should be the same as those of a normal person's eyes—*i.e.* 60 to 65 mm. Care must be taken that the prints are set up so that the left eye views the picture taken from the left viewpoint, and the right eye, the picture from the right viewpoint. Many stereoscopes are fitted with diverging prismatic lenses, which enable a much greater distance to separate the centres of the pictures and so allow larger prints to be made.

To view the prints it is best to use any ordinary stereoscope, or failing this, the prints can be registered together quite well with a pair of ordinary convex lenses of the same power, or most simply of all, by medium-powered spectacles with convex lenses.

The photographs given as an example were taken from the S.E. ridge of the Tour Ronde, and show the Brenva face of Mont Blanc. They were taken about 100 yards apart.

When the prints are viewed in the manner described, an enormously exaggerated picture of the face is obtained, and vertical rock ribs, couloirs and snow ridges, stand out in the most striking relief.

When these photographs were taken it was impossible to distinguish with the naked eye the profile of the upper Péteret ridge from the Brouillard ridge beyond. When viewed stereoscopically these prints leave no doubt whatever in the matter.

It is suggested that this method, although involving the delay of printing and setting up the photographs, has very definite possibilities for surveying new routes and new mountains.

B. R. GOODFELLOW.

THE MOUNTAINEER AND THE MOUNTAIN FILM.

THE mountaineer and the mountain film belong, it would seem, to one another, and yet to those in any way familiar with Alpine literature I state nothing new when I remind them that nearly every film of the kind, whether dealing with sport, culture, expeditions, or a simple play, has been rejected more or less passionately in mountaineering circles.

The film of the present day is a peculiar product of *art*, *technique*, and *business*. Thus the film has its own laws, laws of which most

outsiders have no understanding or, what is worse, only vague and distorted ideas. As a work of art the film must concentrate on what happens, must leave out unessentials, alter many a scene, create climaxes. Even a 'documentary expedition film' must be more than a mere illustrated diary. Let me give a few examples with which I am specially familiar.

On our Himalayan expedition of 1930 we climbed, as is well known, four peaks of 7000, four peaks of 6000, and one peak of 5000 metres, and attained or crossed numerous lofty passes. Now if one had wished to show all these, if one had rolled off in round numbers 15,000 metres of film (to show which would take nine hours) in a consecutive series, what would have happened? No cinema theatre would have accepted the film, and, if the unfortunate producer had rented a theatre himself for the purpose, the public would have struck indignantly and the critics have raged furiously. In a word, both for artistic as well as for business reasons, *such* a documentary film is simply impossible.

In consequence the film *Himachal, the Throne of the Gods*, is limited to two mountains (Kangchenjunga and Jonsong Peak) and two passes (Kang La and Jonsong La). The return march is purposely left out, for the film could not possibly end with grey rain-laden monsoon pictures or with a luncheon party at Darjeeling. *Himachal* had to close with a climax, with the capture of the Jonsong Peak. Even my descent from the summit to High Camp, No. 4, could not be shown, though I had my apparatus with me, for this descent was made by night and in a storm.

On the return march we were able to take a few good pictures of the yak caravan wading through rushing torrents. Should these have been left out? On the upward route between Khunza and Pangperma yaks were also employed, but were less successfully filmed. When cutting and arranging the film, pictures of the return march were utilized for the upward route. 'A fake?' I consider this a justifiable and necessary artistic licence.

On the occasion of the first ascent of the Jonsong Peak, Hoerlin and Schneider hoisted the Swabian flag and Tyrolese Eagle. On the second ascent I had the German flag with me and filmed it on the summit in the hand of our good Lewa. Smythe had by mistake left his British flag behind. Moreover we were on the summit at different times, I some two hours after my comrades. What then? Should the film show only the genuine picture of the German flag with Lewa? This would have aroused severe political criticism. 'German *Chauvinism* of course. Why is there no Union Jack or Swiss Cross?' I wanted at all costs to avoid this, the more so as our expedition owed so much to international comradeship. So we got over the difficulty by filming elsewhere all four flags together for our final picture. 'Another fake?' My conviction is that it was merely a concession necessitated by the nature of the film.

The fanatic for truth whose standard is *absolute* veracity at all costs makes at times gross errors. For instance, the great climb up

the ice-wall on the N.W. flank of Kangchenjunga has been repeatedly declared to be a fake—and a clumsy fake at that. These scenes are, in fact, absolutely genuine and in no way 'arranged.' The men working on the ice-wall very often did not know when they were being filmed. Duvanel, the head camera man¹ of the International Expedition, took his stand just below the advance guard and filmed from there continuously whenever action seemed particularly interesting. At times he worked with a long focus, so that a tyro in photography has the feeling that the thing is impossible, since the operator cannot be standing just beside the climber.

The sérac climbing too, at the beginning of the ascent of the Jonsong Peak section, was not filmed 'in the neighbourhood of the Jungfrau railway' but above the 'Lake Camp' at the foot of the Jonsong Peak. But I do not wish to be polemical. Let us stick to questions of more general import.

Whatever view one takes of the talking film—personally I regret extremely the passing of the silent film—there is no question that at the moment no one, not even Charlie Chaplin, can do anything to mend matters. Anybody with but an inkling of film work at the present day knows that a big silent film is, just now, unsaleable. Even the mountain film cannot escape. Of course it is impossible to drag the heavy apparatus of the talking film to a height of 25,000 ft., so such films must be 'synchronized,' that is, supplied with sound, later on. This is no 'fake,' but an unavoidable concession, and the only question is whether or not the synchronizing is achieved artistically.

The triumph of the talking film has made filming technically far more complicated and at the same time far dearer. Every big film costs literally a fortune. Who pays, dictates—an economic platitude. Whoever finances a mountain film wants, of course, to make it pay. His first question is what will the public have? The answer is that the real mountaineer will form but the tiniest fraction of the audience, and need not therefore be considered. Moreover, no mountain film will ever satisfy the climbing expert; the film industry knows this very well. However 'serious' a mountain film may be, the mountaineering 'expert' will always find something in it to cavil at. Measured by the 'ideal demands' of a *purely* mountaineering conception *every* film of that kind will be found wanting. The conclusion therefore is that it is not worth while considering the numerically weak and ever discontented element of expert mountaineers.

Thus, one thing begetting another, relations between the mountaineer and the mountain film grow steadily worse. This is very deplorable. Whether we like it or not, the film has become a highly important educational factor. All we moderns can do is to try

¹ Duvanel filmed about 9000 metres, Hoerlin, Wieland and I together about 6000.

to raise its standard and reform it artistically. The purely negative criticism with which so many mountaineers attack every film will have just the contrary effect. The film industry will be more and more thrown back to the gratification of lower tastes, while the film itself will sink more and more into a vehicle of cheap sentiment and 'Hollywood Horror.'

G. O. DYHRENFURTH.

[It appears of interest to add the views of another very experienced mountain explorer, Dr. W. Rickmer Rickmers, as communicated to us in a letter not, perhaps, intended for publication.—*Editor.*]

'Personally I stand as follows: As a mountaineer I am able to take reasonable care of myself among the peaks, whether in nature or on the screen. I am able to discriminate. Supposing there is a party of excellent climbers on the ridge next to mine. I watch their progress feeling fascinated and instructed. At the same time I hear their talk. One of them tells a long story, good, bad, or indifferent. Another may be cracking jokes. Well, I need not listen. Thus, in a film, I pick out what instructs, entertains, or amuses me, not worrying about the rest. As a competent judge I know what is good for me; I need not eat the whole dinner. The non-climbing public does not concern me unless mountaineers are ridiculed or badly misrepresented. If the whole thing is bad, I swear, warning others.

'The exact report and purely instructive or didactic film has no earthly chance outside scientific societies and mountaineering clubs.

'As to fakes I distinguish between possible, extravagant, and impossible ones. The possible ones I do not notice, the others amuse me. May I not be amused? After all a good novel, "true to life," may be "faked" from beginning to end. There are textbooks, realistic stories, and flights of fancy. We prefer them apart. The film industry rolls them into one, because the public wants it thus. Being experts, we must be able to sift.

'My own taste is deplorable. Where, as in a film, it is a matter of *seeing* only, I want to see extraordinary things, be they things as yet unattained, or unattainable, or the scenes of exciting memories. Ordinary things, such as a walk up Skiddaw or a visit to Paris, only interest me when I *do* them myself. Apart from the films of travel and animal life, the films of fascinating facts (manufacturing processes, physical experiments, surgical operations) are far too sketchy, short, and fast. That is due to the deplorable taste of the public. But I would rather have them with a love story than not at all.'

W. R. RICKMERS.

[We would point out that reviews of mountain films published from time to time in the JOURNAL are intended for the 'benefit' of mountaineers and their relations, without any regard for the opinions of the proletariat.—*Editor, 'A.J.'*]