MOUNT COOK. BY A NEW ROUTE

By L. V. BRYANT

The main Divide of the Southern Alps of New Zealand is more than two hundred miles in length, and forms the watershed between the provinces of Canterbury and Otago on the E. and Westland on the W. It runs almost parallel with the W. coast, and is hardly ever more than twenty miles from it. With the exception of Cook, Malte Brun and Torres all the 10,000 ft. peaks are on the Divide. Innumerable spurs branch off to the E. and to the W. from this watershed. The western spurs leave at right angles, but the eastern spurs run in a southerly direction almost parallel with the Divide itself.

Mt. Cook [1] is the culminating point of an eastern range which leaves the Divide at Dampier, the third highest New Zealand mountain. It is therefore not directly accessible from the W. coast, and a traverse of the mountain can only lead from the Hooker valley to the Tasman valley or vice versa. The Hooker Glacier lies directly at the foot of the western slopes, and the glacier gives direct access to the arêtes leading to the long crest, or summit ridge, which joins the three peaks of the mountain. The Tasman Glacier lies in the valley to the E., but it is separated from the E. face of the mountain by the Grand Plateau and the Hochstetter icefall which sweeps down 3000 ft. into the Tasman from the plateau. This plateau is fed by numerous subsidiary glaciers, the most important of which is the Linda. This descends from high up between Dampier and Cook, flows in a northerly direction between a rock spur of Cook and the Divide, and then turns at right angles round the end of this buttress to feed the Grand Plateau. At the southern end of this plateau is another arête which separates it from the Ball Glacier system. This is the E. arête of Mt. Cook.

It was from the Tasman slope that, in 1882, Rev. W. S. Green, with his guides Boss and Kaufmann of Grindelwald, made the first serious attempt to climb Mt. Cook.[2] They rejected the Hooker side, reconnoitred the Tasman slope, and chose the Linda Glacier route which to-day has become the regular line to the summit.

[1] See illustrations, *A.J.* 28, *opp.* 227, E. face; *A.J.* 29, *opp.* 12, E. ridge in profile.

[2] *A.J.* 11. 57 *sqq.*, 129 *sqq.*

Under adverse conditions they overcame all the technical difficulties, and were most unfortunate to be robbed of their reward by the time factor alone when only 200 ft. or so from the summit. As it was, they spent a stormy night on the summit rocks. This route was not actually completed until the tenth ascent almost thirty years later.

The first completed ascent of the mountain was made by three New Zealanders, Fyfe, Clarke and Graham, from the Hooker side in 1894,[3] a few days before the arrival in the Alps of FitzGerald, whose avowed object was the first ascent of Mt. Cook. Defeated in his main purpose, FitzGerald turned his attention to first ascents of Tasman, Sefton and Haidinger,[4] but he left Cook alone. However, Zurbriggen, his guide, was so keen to climb the mountain that after FitzGerald had left the Alps he attempted it successfully by a rock arête running direct from the Grand Plateau to the summit.[5] It is interesting to speculate whether Green would have chosen this arête if he had had guides from Zermatt instead of from Grindelwald.

For the next fifteen years or so the Hooker Glacier was the only approach to Mt. Cook used by summit parties. Though the glacier is badly broken at times and difficult to negotiate, and though the weather in this valley has an evil reputation, the actual climbing is preferable to either of the two routes from the Tasman ; the Hooker also affords a more direct approach to the base of the mountain. During these years three routes on this side were used.[6] From near the head of the glacier Fyfe took a route leading up Fyfe's Couloir to Green's Saddle between Dampier and Cook and then took a direct line to the summit by a rock arête. Earle chose an arête leading from a little lower on the glacier direct to the high peak, and the third approach was the one selected by Sillem which led to the low peak, and can then be continued along the crest to the high peak.

Once the summit had been reached by the Linda route, this became and has remained by far the most popular. Two reasons account for its popularity. First, it is technically the easiest as the glacier runs high up between Dampier and Cook, and can be ascended to a height of about 10,500 ft. before a party has to take to the summit rocks leading up to the ice cap. Secondly, there is an excellent hut 7000 ft. high on the Haast ridge where parties can shelter from the violent nor'west storms which are the terror of New Zealand mountaineers. This King Memorial

[3] *A.J.* 17. 443 ; *N.Z.A.J.* 2. 29.
[4] *A.J.* 18. 69 *sqq*.
[5] *A.J.* 17. 474 ; *N.Z.A.J.* 2. 37.
[6] See illustration no. 8, *A.J.* 29, *opp*. 12.

hut was built by fellow mountaineers and friends of Sydney King of Rickmansworth, England, and his two guides Richmond and Thomson, who were overwhelmed by an avalanche in the upper Linda Glacier on February 14, 1914,[7] after a successful ascent of Mt. Cook. It is situated in the best ice locality in the Alps, but unfortunately persuades parties to attempt Mt. Cook by the most dangerous route of all. Some day King's fate will befall some other party in the avalanche area of the upper Linda Glacier. Now that the Gardiner hut has been built on the Hooker side, parties may be attracted more to that side of the mountain.

Some notable traverses of Mt. Cook have been made during the last twenty-five years, almost all from the Hooker valley on account of the easy descent afforded by the Linda. The ice cap gives little trouble to a party equipped with crampons, while the 800 ft. of rock is quite easy if free from ice. Thus, after descending less than 2000 ft. a party is in the head of the Linda Glacier where fast progress is possible. Miss Freda Du Faur was the first to make a complete traverse of the three peaks of the mountain,[8] referred to as the Grand Traverse, but her effort has been repeated quite frequently since. As the war interrupted climbing activities there was little climbing done on the higher peaks of the Southern Alps for some considerable time, and the Hooker approaches to Cook were left almost entirely alone. But in 1927 H. E. L. Porter with Marcel Kurz broke the spell by traversing Cook from this side to the Tasman in amazingly good time.[9] This climb proved how suited New Zealand conditions were to crampons.

The New Zealand Alps have fortunately not yet reached the stage where the only new routes are those which involve undue risks. We are not yet forced to make such ascents as are involved in attempts on the great N. faces in Switzerland. But we have arrived at the stage where all the more serious pioneering and exploration work has been completed, and where all the higher peaks have been climbed at least once. Alternative routes are now being attempted. Tasman, our grandest ice climb, has been climbed by three different routes, but there still remains the western arête, the grandest of the unclimbed arêtes in the Southern Alps. Dampier, the third highest peak, which was ascended for the second time this season, still offers an attractive though difficult alternative.

Although Mt. Cook has been climbed frequently by the five routes already mentioned, as well as by one or two minor

[7] *A.J.* 28. 222 *sqq.*
[8] *A.J.* 29. 211. *The Conquest of Mt. Cook*, 196.
[9] *A.J.* 39. 275.

variations of these routes, there still remained at the beginning of this season two great virgin ridges. One of these, the long S. arête leading up from the Ball Pass to the low peak, first attracted the attention of Green.[10] He decided against it. Until recent years no one seems to have given it serious consideration, but at the moment it is being discussed by quite a few seasoned mountaineers. It is by no means impossible, though, under difficult conditions, it will be a tough proposition. The other virgin ridge, leading in one great sweep of 4000 ft. from the Anzac peaks at its base to the middle peak of Cook does not seem to have been mentioned as a feasible route. References had been made casually to the nature of the rock near the top of the ridge, where the ridge disappears into the E. face of the mountain, but no one had thought seriously of this E. arête.

In January 1931, while I was climbing the Anzacs with Rod Syme, the idea of investigating this arête first appealed to me. We decided that it was worth a serious attempt. We were at that time trying conclusions with the unclimbed E. arête of Tasman, an arête we managed to climb only after six weeks of continued unfavourable weather conditions. This experience more than bears out the comments of H. E. L. Porter who, writing of the Alps of New Zealand, says,[11] ' The first requisite of a climber in New Zealand who hopes for results is plenty of time, and the second is unlimited patience ; he will have at least three days of idleness for every one he spends in the hills.' The idea of trying this arête took definite shape the following year, and a clear view of it in profile from the Linda Glacier the next season strengthened the desire to attempt it. On this occasion I was returning from a climb of Cook with Lud Mahan and we decided to make it our next climb together.

Those who had traversed the crest of Mt. Cook were able to give us some idea of the upper part of this arête. Mr. Porter had evidently examined this ridge as a possible climb for some party at some future date, as he makes reference in one of his articles to the rotten nature of the rock, and also to the unrelenting steepness of the ridge near the crest.[12] We were in the unfortunate position of not having seen this upper part at such close quarters. I sought the opinion of Mr. Porter whose advice has been so useful to many New Zealanders, and he told me that the last 200 ft. or so looked definitely uninviting. But he added that there was no reason why an attempt should not be made. It would certainly be an interesting climb.

[10] *High Alps of New Zealand*, 205.
[11] *Mountaineering* (Lonsdale Library), 282.
[12] *A.J.* 39. 277.

The following season we were late in the Alps. An injury to my arm meant the loss of several weeks during which other climbing parties had had a tolerably satisfactory spell of weather. But they had now for the most part left the Alps. After a few days of preliminary work in the Tasman area Mahan and I went up to the King Memorial hut to reconnoitre this E. arête. From Glacier Dome, at the top of the Haast ridge, we examined through glasses every section of the ridge very carefully for several hours. It seemed to be in fair condition. We decided to try it the next day. So at 12.50 A.M. the following morning we left the hut to find that the night was warm and snow conditions unfavourable. The Grand Plateau had not frozen so that we had to trudge across to the foot of the arête through soft snow; the sky was by no means reassuring; a high wind was obviously developing and a thin filmy cloud-formation very high up clearly indicated trouble; and a blood-red sunrise—worst sign of all—meant a windy day ahead. But, though fully realizing that weather conditions would play a vital part in the day's work, we decided to carry on as far as circumstances would permit.

By dawn we had reached the saddle between the Anzacs and the foot of the E. arête. The first few hundred feet of rock were easily climbed. We had then to turn several gendarmes at the top of this first rise of rock before we were able to descend 100 ft. or so on to the actual ice. We crossed a large crevasse, climbed up another 100 ft. of very loose rock and gained the main snow arête at 6.15 A.M. We had been concerned about the state of the snow on the ridge ever since we had left the hut, and as the time element was all-important, success depended largely on this factor. To our dismay, instead of frozen snow, which would have given us good crampon conditions, we encountered a breakable crust covering about 2 ft. of soft snow, which for some reason or other had failed to pack. What should have been easy work and good progress became tiring work and slow progress. But there were no other difficulties, and during the next two hours we gained considerable height. One formation interested us. We struck what had evidently been a cornice which had been filled in by drift snow. On one side there was hard blue ice in which step-cutting would have been difficult; on the other there was deep soft snow. For 40 ft. we straddled this arête one at a time as we rather expected it to break at any moment. It reminded me of the celebrated Cheval ridge on Malte Brun.

It was by now obvious that we could not reach the summit, as

a nor'wester was threatening. But after a spell of half an hour to await developments we decided to continue until we were forced by conditions to retreat. The next section of the arête was very loose rock. The rock in the New Zealand Alps is by no means good. It is, generally speaking, friable, owing to the weathering it gets. Consequently, New Zealand climbers prefer snow and ice to rock. Two hundred feet of rock took an hour to climb. This was the worst I had ever been on. The whole structure seemed to be poised precariously ready for the next gust of wind to send it hurtling down the precipice on either side of the arête. This rock section certainly requires care, but the bad impression we got that day was largely due to the weather conditions. At 10.30 A.M. we reached the rather prominent peak about 10,000 ft. high. This is an excellent view-point, and from here one can appreciate the broken nature of the lower Linda Glacier.

Time was passing, the wind was becoming more insistent, the top of Cook was enveloped in clouds, a sure sign of bad weather, so we hastily scanned the upper half of the arête with a view to trying it at some future date, and hurried downwards. On the descent, with the cold wind making conditions far from pleasant, the first section of rocks took much longer to descend than they had taken to climb. We got quite a wrong impression of them that day. Once we reached the snow slopes our worst fears materialized. Snow conditions were treacherous. On the N. side of the arête there was blue ice, too hard for crampon work without cutting steps; on the S. side, deep soft snow which avalanched dangerously at every step. About eighteen inches would peel off at each step and sweep the slopes below us quite clean, taking the débris thousands of feet down on to the Ball Glacier. At first we kept as much as possible to the actual arête, but lower down we had to traverse the S. slope where the snow became gradually worse. Mahan, in the lead, went to infinite pains to make steps which would be useful to me, but his work was of no avail as every step I took caused a miniature avalanche which carried away his steps and sometimes almost swept him off his feet. So each man took his own line and made his own steps. In some of the steeper places the avalanching from above had shorn the slopes completely of their snow surface, and steps had to be cut in the ice. It was a long but most interesting descent. At 3 P.M., when we had reached the foot of the ice arête, we were greatly relieved to see a summit party returning down the Linda Glacier. They had left the hut that morning an hour earlier than we had, and we had wondered throughout

the day how they were faring. There was no longer any need for concern.

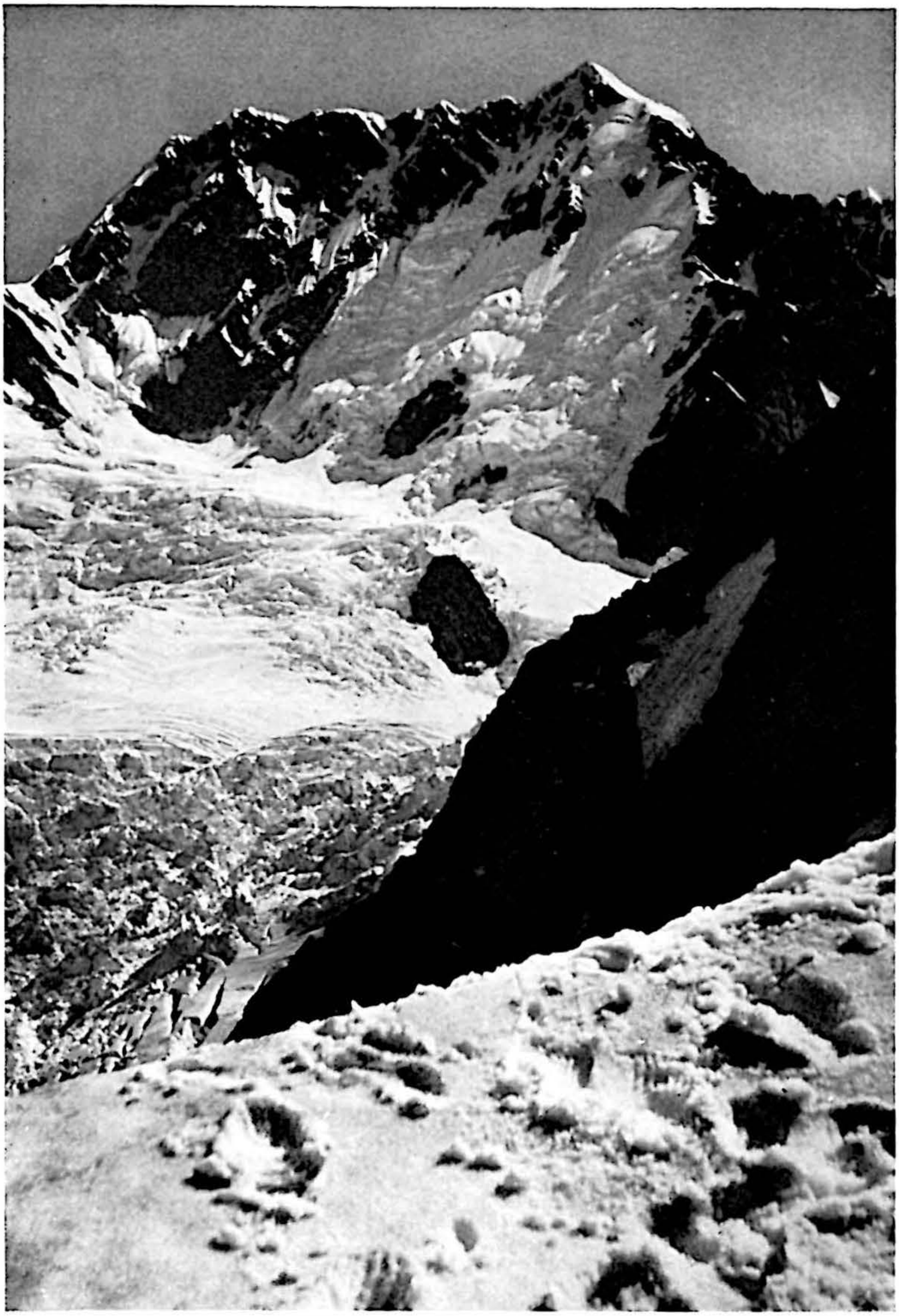
The crevasses we had crossed early in the morning gave trouble on the descent. One snow bridge had disappeared entirely, and in using another which crossed the schrund diagonally we had to use 100 ft. of rope. Once we were across these there were no more difficulties. We were soon down the final rocks and on to the Grand Plateau.

The trudge across the plateau in about a foot of wet cold snow was anything but pleasant. The mountain was completely enveloped in a swirling storm-cloud. The nor'wester which had been threatening all day was now at its height. The climb of about 600 ft. from the Plateau to the Dome is always tiring after a descent from one of the peaks on the rim of the Grand Plateau, but to us that night it seemed endless. By 8 P.M., however, we were back in the hut after a day of over nineteen hours.

We had failed in our attempt on Mt. Cook, but we had had an extremely interesting day reconnoitring a new route. We had experienced a variety of conditions, we had gained a magnificent vantage point, and we had climbed a new peak. These things combined to give us a complete sense of satisfaction, and that night we were able to appreciate ' that sweet wholesome fatigue which is one of the keenest delights the mountains can afford us.'

On the retreat to the hut that day I wondered when, if ever, Mahan and I would attempt that arête again. For the remainder of that season nothing could be done on account of the weather, but there seemed to be nothing at that time to prevent our trying it the next season. We decided to attempt it again as soon as we could. Our account of the attempt concluded with these words: ' Many have asked us whether the route is possible. It is certainly a formidable problem ; it will require an excellent day with good conditions ; but suffice it to say we intend to return to the attack at some future date.' Owing to serious football injuries to Mahan, my prolonged absence from New Zealand and a ski-ing injury soon after my return, five years elapsed before we got the chance we wanted. The passing of time, however, only increased our ardour. Meanwhile the arête was left alone.

We arrived at the Hermitage this year on the evening of January 11 to find that nor'west weather had prevailed for the greater part of the season so far, and that since New Year it had rained almost incessantly. Most parties, after a short and disappointing season, had left. The morning of January 12 was fine though the sky still showed signs of nor'west weather. These dispersed by the time we reached the Ball hut, and when we



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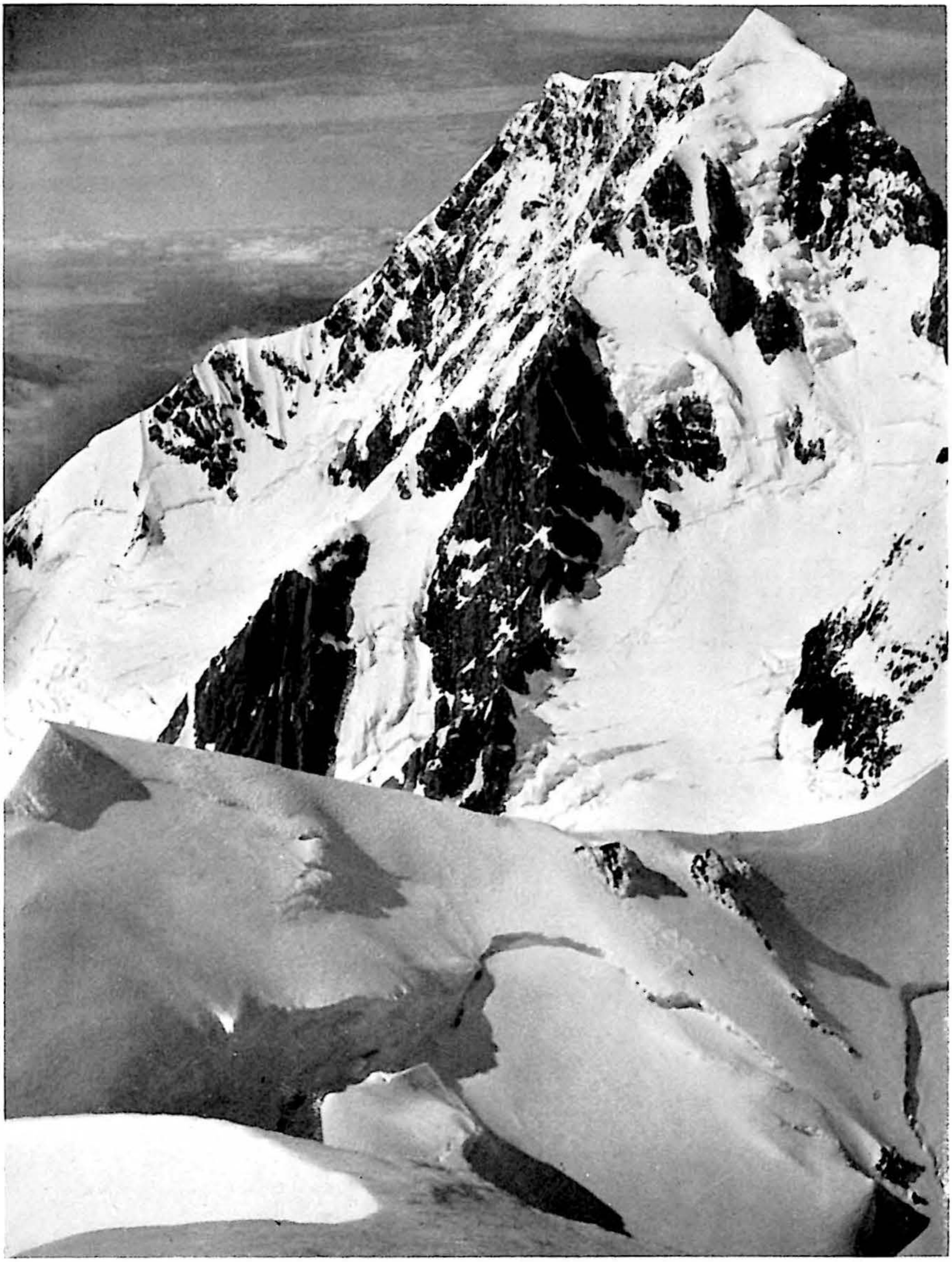
E. FACE OF MT. COOK, FROM NEAR THE HAAST HUT.

[*To face p.* 218.



Photo, H K. Douglas.]

MT. COOK FROM NEAR SUMMIT OF TASMAN. SILBERHORN IN FOREGROUND, E. ARETE ON LEFT SKYLINE. LINDA GLACIER ON RIGHT, ZURBRIGGEN'S ARETE BETWEEN LINDA GLACIER AND E. ARETE.

arrived at the King Memorial hut at 7 P.M. there seemed every prospect of settled weather. As our stay was limited to ten days we needed good weather. That night we discussed fully our plan of attack. We decided to climb from a bivouac at the foot of, or actually on, the arête in order to save three hours' work from the hut on the morning of the climb. We also thought it wise to bivouac as high up on the arête as possible so that we could get the best possible start. And, as we were certain to be late on the descent, the state of the summit rocks was an important factor, and it might be wise to wait an extra day to allow them to improve. These summit rocks are very exposed and receive the full force of the nor'west storms which come over from the Tasman Sea, the stormiest sea in the world. After one of these storms these rocks are plastered with a thick coating of snow and ice which takes a few days to clear. Those who know these rocks best allow about three days of warm weather as a minimum before the rocks are in fair condition. With cold southerly weather following nor'west they may be plastered for a much longer period.

At noon the next day we left the hut with provisions for four days. If we were held up longer we would return to the hut. We spent an hour on the Dome examining through glasses every section of the arête as well as the summit rocks. These were well plastered and it was advisable to wait another day. The arête itself looked difficult but not impossible. High up there were two breaks which were either schrunds or ice walls. These might give trouble and take time, but they could be negotiated. So settled did the weather seem that we left our packs on the Dome and returned to the hut. In New Zealand we hesitate before deciding to lose an opportunity, but on this occasion we felt that it was essential to wait, and the settled appearance of the weather allowed us to make this decision with an easy mind.

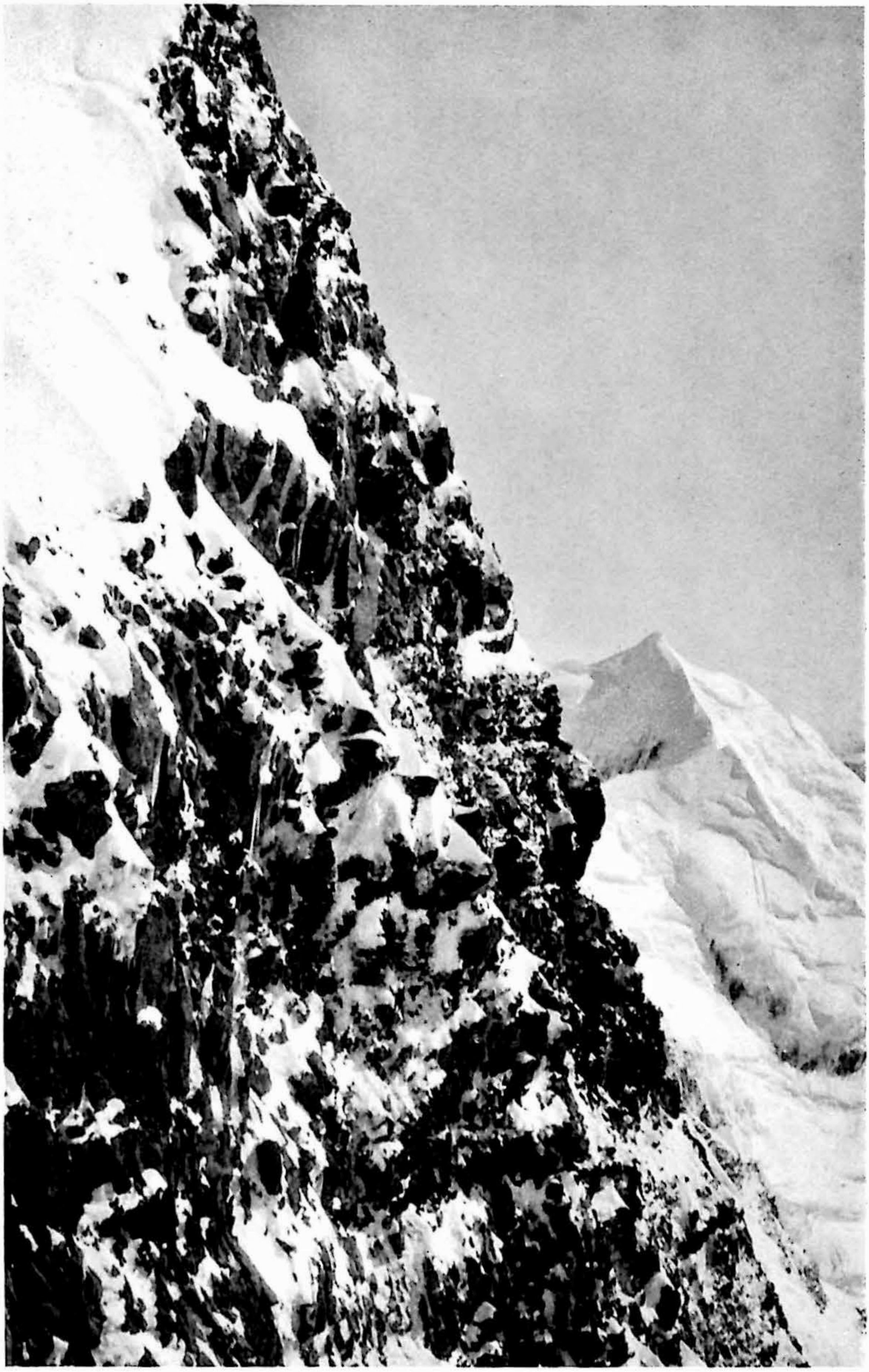
Early the next morning we were back on the Dome to find that the summit rocks were already looking better, though far from perfect. We crossed the Grand Plateau leisurely and scrambled up 300 ft. of rock to find an excellent bivouac site. As we were still a little distance from the top of this lower section of rock and as we wanted to save time the next morning, I spent some time reconnoitring the next few hundred feet while Mahan busied himself preparing a meal. That night, with a deep sense of satisfaction, we felt that at last we were at grips with this absorbing problem, and our diary entries strike an optimistic note.

It was just breaking dawn the next morning as we left our bivouac in perfect weather conditions for what was to be an

eventful day. We spent the first hour in scrambling slowly up about 150 ft. of rock, down a chimney on to the ice, across a few small crevasses, up another 100 ft. or so of friable rock, and on to the real ice arête, where we put on crampons. During the next two hours, with conditions very different from those in 1933, we made steady progress up the ice arête, and by 6.50 A.M. had reached the foot of the next rock step. This was the place where we had had to straddle the ice cornice on our previous attempt, but this year we walked straight on to the foot of the rock without difficulty. We enjoyed the next 200 ft. of the climb. The cold, miserable day we had experienced before was entirely responsible for our mistaken impression. This day, though the loose rock required care, this part of the arête was not nearly as difficult as we had anticipated. Before 8 A.M. we had reached the rather prominent peak we had climbed before. All was going well. This rate of progress would see us on the crest before midday. It was obvious now that the two schrunds or ice walls would give little trouble. Everything depended now on the condition of the ice and snow higher up under the influence of the hot sun, and the type of rock we would meet on the upper part of the arête.

Here we struck an exceedingly sharp undulating ridge leading from this peak into the wall of the mountain. Falling away almost sheer on either side, and offering little or no anchorage should the crust give way, it was almost 100 yds. in length, and reminded me in some ways of the Cheval ridge on Malte Brun. Fortunately it was still quite firm, and we crossed it safely but very cautiously. Once we were across this, however, our worst fears about the state of the snow materialized. The next 100 ft. was most exhausting work. The deep soft snow through which we had literally to wade thigh-deep had failed to consolidate, and reminded me of monsoon snow at about 22,000 ft. in the Himalaya. Much of this work would have been not only too exhausting, but far too dangerous later on in the day under the influence of the hot sun. Fortunately, things improved.

At 9 A.M. we halted for ten minutes or so. This was the only spell we had on the whole arête. For some time Mahan had been feeling very unwell and had had little or nothing to say throughout the whole climb. What it was that was troubling him we were never able to discover, though it must have been some food poison. I developed a minor touch of the same complaint later in the day on the return when, fortunately, Mahan had recovered. After a brief discussion, reluctant to lose such a grand opportunity, and hoping that things might improve, we decided to continue. But it was sheer will-power that enabled



Photo, H. E. E. Porter.]

FINAL RISE OF E. FACE OF MT. COOK BEFORE IT MEETS THE CREST NEAR THE CENTRAL PEAK.

Photo, L. V. Bryant.]

SILBERHORN RIDGE AND MT. TASMAN FROM SUMMIT OF MT. COOK, SOUTH ISLAND, NEW ZEALAND.

Mahan to continue up that 2000 ft. ice slope for the next six hours without so much as a short spell.

Of those hours there is little to record except hard work and endless step-cutting. Conditions varied a great deal. At times we struck blue ice in the vicinity of rock outcrops ; occasionally 50 ft. or so of firm snow, which gave adequate foothold without step-cutting ; now and again on the sharp edge of this arête, deep unpacked snow, through which we ploughed a furrow waist-deep ; but for the most part, particularly higher up, we struck a foot or two feet of avalanching snow on top of blue ice, where safety demanded steps cut through the snow into the ice. The top foot or more of this snow invariably avalanched at the first blow of the axe. There was little rock work to be done. Only once during these hours did we take to the rock, but finding that it was smooth and somewhat difficult we returned to our step-cutting as soon as we could. From 9 A.M. until 11 A.M. we maintained a steady rate and we actually hoped to reach the crest by 1 P.M. But harder ice and more dangerous snow meant much slower progress, and the hours seemed to slip by ever so quickly with little height gained.

By 2 P.M. we were among the first outcrops of rock near the top of the arête, and the end was in view. The ice in between two ribs of rock, up which we chose to cut steps in preference to climbing the uninviting rock, afforded no anchorage at all. Over this last section we were particularly careful as we could afford to take no chances. I have seldom, if ever, struck harder ice. It was obviously a fairly thin coating over rock, and later in the season might be quite impossible, and so force a party on to the rock. At last we reached the topmost tongue of ice and stepped on to the dreaded rock section. All our fears were allayed at once, as we discovered this to be the easiest section of the whole climb. Two short leads on fairly sound rock, and another on a sharp little ice arête, put us on to the crest of Mt. Cook between the middle and low peaks. At 3.5 P.M. we sat down on the western slopes of the mountain to enjoy a short respite of fifteen minutes before continuing on towards the high peak.

We now felt that the climb was over, the strain was off, and yet another virgin arête was mastered. It was a moment of intense satisfaction as we realized that yet another page in our book of mountain memories had been filled. It is such moments as these that make the sport what it is.

We had set for ourselves the hour of 3 P.M. as the latest time for gaining the crest if we were to be off the summit rocks before

dark. This meant getting on the move again as soon as possible. At 3.20 we left for the high peak, and made our way slowly along the roof of New Zealand. With the exception of 100 ft. or so which required steps, crampon conditions were perfect. The warm afternoon sun made the going very pleasant, and the views in all directions were superb. As we approached the summit the billowy clouds covering the W. Coast made a magnificent picture in the setting sun. The crest was slightly corniced most of the way, and on one occasion, after we had rested a little, a bit of cornice slipped away from near where we had been sitting, to remind me only too vividly of a plunge down the face of a Himalayan peak when I was with Shipton. The summit was traversed at 5.20 P.M. with but a momentary glance back along the ridge which had been the scene of our day's endeavours, and by 6 P.M. we had reached the summit rocks.

Not until we had descended too far to return did we realize that it would have saved time to have gone down Green's Couloir. The rocks were still iced and called for great care. We double-roped down the worst sections, notably Jacob's Ladder, and taking our time, reached the head of the glacier at 8 P.M. I must confess that I dislike this glacier. Although it is used extensively for ascents of Mt. Cook, it is one of the most dangerous places in our Alps. There is no chance of escape for a party caught high up in the upper Linda by a big avalanche from Cook or Dampier. Low down, where the glacier is wider and more crevassed, the risk can be minimized.

The trip down the glacier that evening we remember chiefly for a glorious mountain sunset. While the last rays of the setting sun were still shining on the western slopes of Tasman, the moon was casting its silvery light on the eastern slopes of the upper Linda and the ice cap of Mt. Cook. As the daylight gradually faded, the delicate shades of mauve and indigo changed with the rapidity of a kaleidoscope, to leave us with the memory of a perfect mountain sunset.

As darkness overtook us we were already past Teichelmann Corner and into the lower glacier. We looked up frequently to the slopes leading to Clarke's Saddle—cold and forbidding in the moonlight—the scene of another episode in our mountain careers. The lower glacier was fairly badly crevassed, but Mahan led in a more or less direct route with the instinct of a chamois, and by 9.30 P.M. we were almost to the Silberhorn Corner. The moon, on whose assistance we had relied for this part of the descent, now failed us completely, and we were left with the alternatives of spending the night on the glacier or forcing a way through a

badly broken part in the almost complete darkness. We chose the former and, quite safe from any avalanche débris, dug a hole in the snow as shelter until daylight. This was the first time either of us had been benighted during a climb, but we had rather anticipated this. We had a complete change of footgear and settled down to spend what was, under the circumstances, a tolerably comfortable night. We were tired and spent at least half the time in a state of semi-consciousness. Fortunately for us the weather was good. Soon after dawn we made our way through the broken section of the glacier, crossed the Grand Plateau and descended to the hut by 8.20 A.M. for a day's rest.

The following morning we left again for the foot of the E. arête to retrieve our bivouac, and that afternoon descended to the Tasman Glacier on our way down country. It had been a most satisfactory expedition. As we left the Hermitage the next day, with a high nor'wester developing, we could not but account ourselves fortunate in having had such a wonderful spell of settled weather and such good conditions.