

was as important as anything else in their record. If they could have lived to see the developments in New Zealand they would have every right to feel proud of their share in laying a sound foundation.

TRIBUTE TO PARTNERSHIP

By JOHN R. JENKINS

Read before the Alpine Club, May 6, 1941

LET me first say that this Paper cannot claim to be a chronicle of great achievements, of carefully planned and hard-won new ascents, and of hairbreadth escapes from death. It cannot pretend to be anything more than a sketchy account of some of the modest climbs which Michael Taylor and I have done in partnership in the Alps since 1933. Many of our humble exploits are hardly worthy of record in the annals of the Club, but these are exceptional times, and if I can rekindle in your minds some memories of happier days, I shall be satisfied. I hope also to convey something of the approach to the hills which is peculiar to my generation, and to throw into relief some new aspects of mountain philosophy.

We live in a machine age, at a time of hustle and struggle when opportunities for relaxation and recreation are gradually receding. Before the war, young climbers who were engaged in industry or commerce were fortunate if they could obtain more than a brief 14 days' holiday each summer; by taking in August Bank Holiday we used to manage 18 days. The great achievements had to be left to the leisured and privileged, and to those who served the State or who had academic or professional careers. It is my aim to show that even with such curtailed holidays it was possible in a few Alpine seasons to develop sufficient competence and confidence to tackle with safety an ambitious programme of climbs in the Caucasus, where we were thrown on our own resources.

Once in the Alps, every minute of our holiday had to be used to the best advantage. We conditioned ourselves in advance in order to be on top form when we arrived at our base. As August approached, our visits to North Wales became more frequent and, instead of going to the hut in the Nant Ffrancon monthly, we went there fortnightly and even weekly. We gave great care to the selection of our party, and if other members were invited we

took great pains to train them in rock-climbing with us as a team. In 1936, for example, we had with us Richard Barry, a brilliant and enthusiastic cragsman,¹ who in one year had graduated from the famous classic routes to the newly discovered 'very severes' on Scafell and Clogwyn dur Arddu. As many of the climbs in the Mont Blanc region require a high degree of technical ability on rock, his presence in the party gave us great confidence.

This was his first experience of Alpine mountaineering and, to our surprise, we found him remarkably competent on everything but steep ice, while his tireless energy and enthusiasm spurred us on to greater efforts. Only his judgment was unsound; he had a false idea of scale and was most inaccurate in estimating times and distances. He had had little experience in route finding, in judging conditions and in assessing possible vagaries in the weather. Although the experienced mountaineer may be inferior in endurance and technical ability on rock to the first-class cragsman, he benefits from the valuable lessons learnt in past expeditions, however humble these may have been.

But we must in no way discount the value of experience gained on British hills. Rock-climbing and even snow and ice work at home must, however, be regarded as a means to an end, and there is much of real mountaineering to be learnt on Snowdon at Christmas and Ben Nevis at Easter. David Cox's valuable Paper² was a sign of the times; I hope that the Alpine Club will tend to turn more attention to the evolution of the sport on our home hills and realise its relevance to the development of British mountaineering as a whole.

Our own crags and hills, if approached in the right spirit, afford a splendid field both for training beginners and for keeping the more experienced man in form. A long day climbing a difficult route on the 1000-ft. face of Lliwedd contributes more to the making of a mountaineer than a series of severe gymnastics on a lesser crag. My experience has been that the more concentrated difficulty of the severe British climbs demands momentarily a greater effort of will over body than some of the harder Alpine expeditions. The individual difficulties to be overcome on climbs of the 'severe' or 'very severe' standard require a high degree of resolution, confidence, technical ability and physical fitness, and one soon learns the valuable lesson that it is courting failure or disaster to attempt them under unfavourable conditions or in poor form.

A man who can lead such great climbs as the Central Buttress or Moss Ghyll Grooves on Scafell, N.W. on Pillar Rock, or Long-

¹ *A.J.* 50. 151.

² Printed in this number.

land's Climb on Clogwyn dur Arddu need have no fear of being able to cope with the technical difficulties of the harder rock climbs around Mont Blanc. But he must first gain a background of Alpine experience, or be prepared to place himself unreservedly in the hands of well tried and seasoned men. Although Taylor and I had done these British climbs, we suppressed a keen desire to visit Chamonix until we had first graduated through some of the classic routes of the Oberland and Valais.

Our first big rock climb in the Alps was on the Eigerhörnli in 1935, when we made an abortive attempt to follow the route to the Mittellegi hut made by Miss Fitzgibbon and Joseph Georges in 1933.³ From Bonern, we followed our predecessors over rock, steep grass, chamois tracks, snow and scree to the foot of the initial couloir. We found and delighted in their 400-ft. chimney with its cave pitch reminiscent of Moss Ghyll. The rocks above were loose, holdless and slabby, the sun was hot and we had brought no water, but when we eventually gained the crest of the ridge at a gap to the S.W. of Pt. 2706 m. and found a cairn, we mistakenly imagined our troubles were over. With some difficulty we reached the summit of Pt. 2866 m. but the prospect beyond plunged us in despair. An exposed knife-back of rock ran down to a defile with hopeless looking rocks on its far side. It was late when we gained the top of the tower beyond the defile and came face to face with the notorious Pt. 2929 m., which we found later to be the crux of the whole climb. The ridge narrowed down to a wall about 30 ft. high and not more than a foot thick, with holes through it in places. It was a pity that we had not read Matsukata's account.⁴ As it was, we admitted our defeat and hurriedly retraced our steps, arriving back at Alpiglen by the light of a lantern.

When in 1936 came our long-delayed season in Chamonix, we had with us both Barry and Leslie Roberts, an equally competent rock-climber. They romped up the Géant, disdainfully ignoring the fixed wires and cables, but none the less deriving great moral support from their proximity. Then Barry took Taylor and me up the Grépon by the Mer de Glace face. Shod in lightly nailed shoes, he danced ahead of us like a monkey on a string, while we toiled behind in boots with the heavy sacks. We went rather too far up the N. rib, traversed across the couloir high up and gained the S. rib well above the Niche des Amis. This was rock-climbing *in excelsis*; firm, rough granite, exposed situations and a rock structure demanding a technique more of balance than of brute force. Although the angle steepened above the Épaule, we found

³ A. J. 46. 201.

⁴ A. J. 46. 256-259.

nothing to delay us until we reached the Brèche Balfour. Nothing worse than 'very difficult' by British standards had been encountered, except a few chimneys and cracks. But the Knubel Crack was something in quite a different class. This really extended Barry, and having overcome the final section by a desperate layback on his fingers up a very narrow crack, he started to talk about 'severe gritstone problems.' In following him, Taylor and I gained more than moral support from the rope.

Two years later we traversed the Grépon by the ordinary route under the leadership of that seasoned veteran, George Bower, at one time a member of the G.H.M. Excluding the Knubel Crack, the climbing was no whit less difficult. It is, however, invidious to compare the two climbs, because the Mer de Glace face is more in the modern tradition of delicate balance and finger holds, while the more popular route requires strong arm-pulls and foot-jams, and belongs to the older British gully period of beards and corduroy suits. It was as if the God of Mountains had amused himself on an off day by fashioning a succession of acrobatic stunts and gymnastic problems for some aerial obstacle race, each with its own distinctive character and picturesque name. The Mummery Crack did not come up to expectation; it required more brute force than skill, but the Râteau de Chèvre was a far tougher problem which reduced me at least to a condition of panting exhaustion. We were fascinated by the anomalous horizontality of the Route des Bicyclettes, and when we finally reached the summit we found our muscles considerably more tired than after the E. face climb in 1936.

To open this 1938 season, Douglas Milner and I climbed the Requin from the E.⁵ by a way which traversed the lower slabs and gained the Dibona-Mayer route just below the Capucin. This was in general character very similar to its counterpart on the Grépon, but I found it more satisfying and less artificial. It rises to a crescendo of culminating difficulty where the climbing is exhilaratingly exposed and where all our powers of route finding had to be exercised in finding the one possible route below the cockscomb of gendarmes stretching from the Capucin to the summit. When we had climbed the penultimate cracks and chimneys and were sitting astride the ridge, we were faced with the final difficulty, an exposed movement of delicate balance across a narrow tilting slab. Difficult as it was, I preferred this to the convulsive strenuousness of the Knubel Crack.

So much for rock-climbing as a specialised part of mountaineering as a whole. I turn now to the gradual process of develop-

⁵ A.J. 50. 303.

ment through which Taylor and I passed in building up confidence and competence as a climbing team. Prior to our first holiday together, I had had two guided seasons at Saas Fee and Arolla, and a guideless one in the Graians. In 1933, under the experienced eye of Edwin Ransome, we went from Kandersteg to Ried via the Blümlisalp, Gamchilücke and Petersgrat. The usual Oberland bad weather drove us thence to Zermatt. Despite some overcrowding we greatly enjoyed the Rothorn from Trift, but found it easier than we had expected. Our youthful ambitions were not satisfied until we had engaged an elderly and much respected guide to take us up the Zmutt ridge of the Matterhorn. It was our first and last climb with a guide. He had not been up the Zmutt for five years and was consequently a little hazy about the route. He got us into very difficult ground in the 'galeries' and we had some rather anxious moments. Conditions were bad with much ice on the rocks and occasional stones hummed past our heads like machine-gun bullets. The rope was too short and belays were conspicuous by their absence. He got us through after battling with a frozen waterfall, but this experience taught us to curb our ambitions and gave us a truer perspective.

In 1934 we found our feet. It was our first season on our own responsibility, and we had with us two University men, one of whom was a novice. We lightheartedly made our way by the High Level Route from Bourg St. Pierre to Zermatt, accomplishing nothing notable but learning a great deal of mountaineering. We made no specific plans and only climbed those easier peaks between hut and hut that took our fancy. By the time we had reached the Schönbühl hut, our initial trepidation had given way to a youthful overconfidence. I had a score to settle with the Obergabelhorn. After a bivouac in the Arbental, we had attempted its S.W. ridge the year before but bad weather had turned us back from the Obergabeljoch.

As Taylor was a little off colour and had decided to have an easy day, I felt that the depleted party would hardly be strong enough for such a formidable expedition. We set out none the less, and benefiting from my previous experience I led the other two to the Joch in rapid time. Exhilarating climbing on rough granite led upwards until we reached the first horizontal knife-edge of snow. Thenceforward the rocks became icebound and more difficult and we grew weary from the effects of strain and altitude. The weather grew menacing and parties on the Wellenkuppe ridge shouted warnings to us. Just within hail of the summit, our spirits were dashed when we came on the third and most difficult snow arête, and light snow was falling

when we later clambered up the final rocks. We hurriedly scrambled on down the Arbengrat through a nightmare of whirling snowflakes. Cold wind and exhaustion began to tell and one of the party developed loss of memory, losing all sense of his environment. When at last we were in the shelter of the snow couloir leading down to the Arben Glacier, he began to return to normal. We heard later that on the same day five Italians had died of exposure on the Matterhorn.⁶

We had a pronounced dislike of long snow slogs and at Bernard Biner's suggestion, we next climbed Monte Rosa by the Cresta Rey. We endured agonies of cold on the Grenz Glacier but, once in the sun, rejoiced in every moment of the scramble up the firm red rocks of the Cresta.

Our last climb that year was the Dent Blanche by the S. ridge, which we enjoyed despite the sardine tins and orange peel and the queues at each difficult section. But we did not derive much satisfaction from playing Page to a host of guided and guideless King Wenceslases and would have much preferred to have found our own route and cut our own steps on some lesser peak.

All mountaineers pass through such a phase as we did this season. We had advanced from a nervous and enthusiastic novitiate to a consciousness of what real mountaineering meant.

I have visited the Oberland four times and on each occasion have been cursed with shockingly bad weather. In 1935 we rushed out in the lulls between long periods of mist and rain and were lucky enough to gain some knowledge of the Grindelwald district. On our third day we climbed the Finsteraarhorn from the Strahlegg hut and consequently suffered so much from altitude that we learned to acclimatise ourselves more gradually in future. At the second attempt, we climbed the Jungfrau by the Guggi route, rapturously treading the five glaciers to the accompaniment of apt quotations from Smythe and Finch. This expedition required the exercise of all our powers. There was the route finding in the dark from fixed rope to fixed rope down the dirty gully and the slaty slabs behind the new Guggi hut; the icemanship on the Kùhlauen Glacier; the step-cutting up to the Schneehorn; the tracing of an intricate route through the labyrinth of the Silberhorn Glacier; the scaling of the bergschrund and the 100 ft. of steep ice below the Silberlücke; and finally the all too short stretch of scrambling across the rock teeth leading to the Hochfirn. The snow was delightfully firm and the scenery and situations superb. No wonder the Guggi route so often finds its way into Alpine literature! In this one

⁶ A.J. 46. 421.

expedition Taylor and I progressed from the guide-following, beaten track stage to the realm of real mountain climbing. Apart from the Obergabelhorn, this was our first break from popular routes and we now felt more worthy to visit Mont Blanc and the Aiguilles.

After another bout of bad weather, we followed Finch's footsteps over the Wetterhorn and Mittelhorn, and learnt much of how bad conditions can accentuate difficulties.

We visited Chamonix in 1936 with an openmindedness and freedom from preconceived ideas which was not far short of ignorance. We were resolved to get off the beaten track, and walking up the Mer de Glace we searched among the great vista of peaks for climbs which took our fancy: routes of character and variety, ridges which invited the axe and nailed boot, and rock faces up which even the most ambitious imagination despaired of finding a way. We limbered up on the Moine and the Géant, and from the summit of the latter became aware that the séracs at the top of the Brenva route appeared less formidable than usual. On the spur of the moment we decided to attempt this climb on the next day.

The Col Est de la Tour Ronde was not the best place to cross over the frontier ridge as we found to our cost—we wasted three anxious hours in step-cutting by moonlight. Thence things went very well until we neared the notorious Brenva arête. We approached this direct from above Col Moore and encountered steep snow walls, and knife-edges of snow which had to be passed *à cheval*. In contrast the horizontal arête was an easy walk. As we rapidly climbed the long and steep snow slope below Pt. 4304 m., storm clouds began to blow up over the Col de la Brenva. A guided party of friends level with us on Mont Maudit turned back and shouted warnings, but we mistook their calls for cries of encouragement. We passed through the séracs without difficulty and gained the col in a blizzard. We plunged blindly down the Corridor and three hours later arrived thankfully at the Grands Mulets.

To adjust the balance between snow and rock, we next chose a classic Aiguille rock climb, and Barry led us up the E. face of the Grépon before the weather broke.

As this spell of bad weather would put the Aiguilles out of condition, we next went up to the Argentière hut. On the first fine day we traversed the Aiguille d'Argentière to get an idea of the district. There were few routes thereabouts between the straightforward and the desperate, and our imagination was tickled to find ways out of the cirque at the head of the Argentière Glacier. We chose Mont Dolent by the Brèche de

l'Amône.⁷ This was a climb of great character and variety which brought home to us the limitations and shortcomings of pure rock climbs of the Grépon—Mer de Glace type. Providence supplied us with a ladder in the form of a detached snow tower to pass the extremely ugly looking bergschrund. The rocks below the Brèche progressively increased in difficulty up to the final 80-ft. wall, which we climbed by a vertical crack and an exposed hand traverse. The ridge beyond presented a series of problems: cornices, powder snow on slabby rocks, knife-edges and loose rock. This expedition was a rare blend of ice, rock and snow climbing, all of a very satisfying degree of difficulty.

We left the Argentière basin next day by a rock spur leading to the Col des Cristaux and thence traversed Les Courtes, descending to Montenvers via the Couvercle.⁸ This climb was a welcome relief after the strain of the previous day.

We now felt the need to do a climb on the Aiguilles comparable to the Dolent, and looked to their W. face to provide a combination of ice, rock and snow work. Barry and I arrived at the Plan de l'Aiguille with tentative ideas of climbing the Blaitière by the Glacier Suspendu. I can recall no climb which inspired a more intense nervous anticipation. The menacing grin of the sérac teeth of the glacier did not belie their promise. This 60-ft. wall of vertical ice was the crux of the climb and was the most difficult individual ice problem with which I have contended. Beyond, the Couloir Reynier led like Jacob's ladder from earth to heaven, and after a little difficulty with the summit rocks, we were on the top in a very short time.

After a short and concentrated rock climb on the little known Aiguilles des Pélerins, I left Barry to the tender mercies of Armand Charlet. It is recorded in the ALPINE JOURNAL how they made a double traverse of Mont Blanc from N. to S. and back in three days.⁹

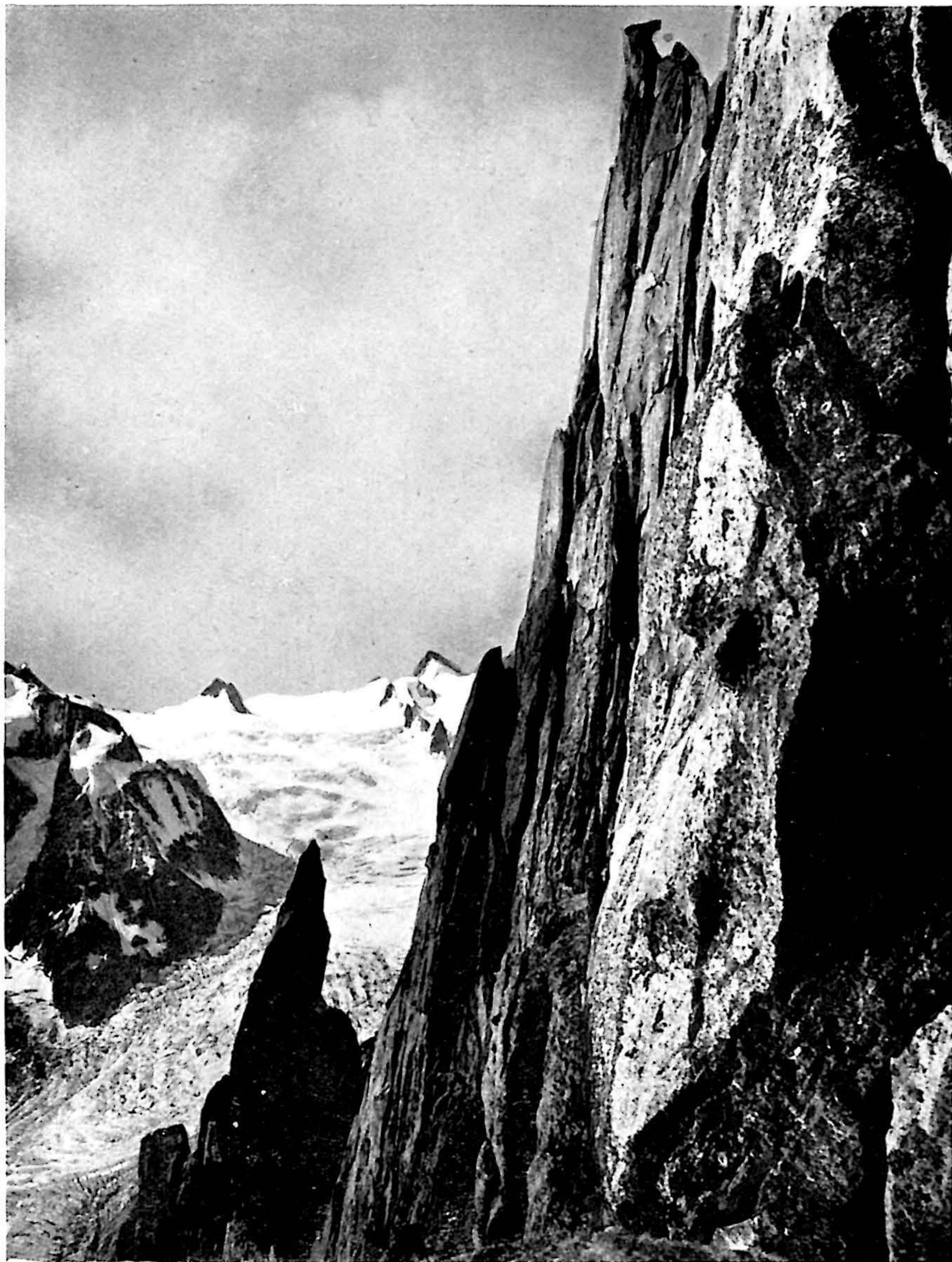
In 1937 came the Caucasus,¹⁰ and it was inevitable that the following year should find us back again at Chamonix. A lecture by H. E. G. Tyndale had given us ideas about the Tour Ronde ridge of Mont Maudit, and as soon as we were in training, Taylor and I insisted on George Bower accompanying us thither via the Torino hut. We found the Col de la Fourche much easier than the Col Est de la Tour Ronde, and as we breakfasted on the ridge, we thought of how George Mallory had spilt the porridge when

⁷ For illustrations see *A.J.* 48. between 348 and 349.

⁸ See *A.J.* 51. illustration facing 322.

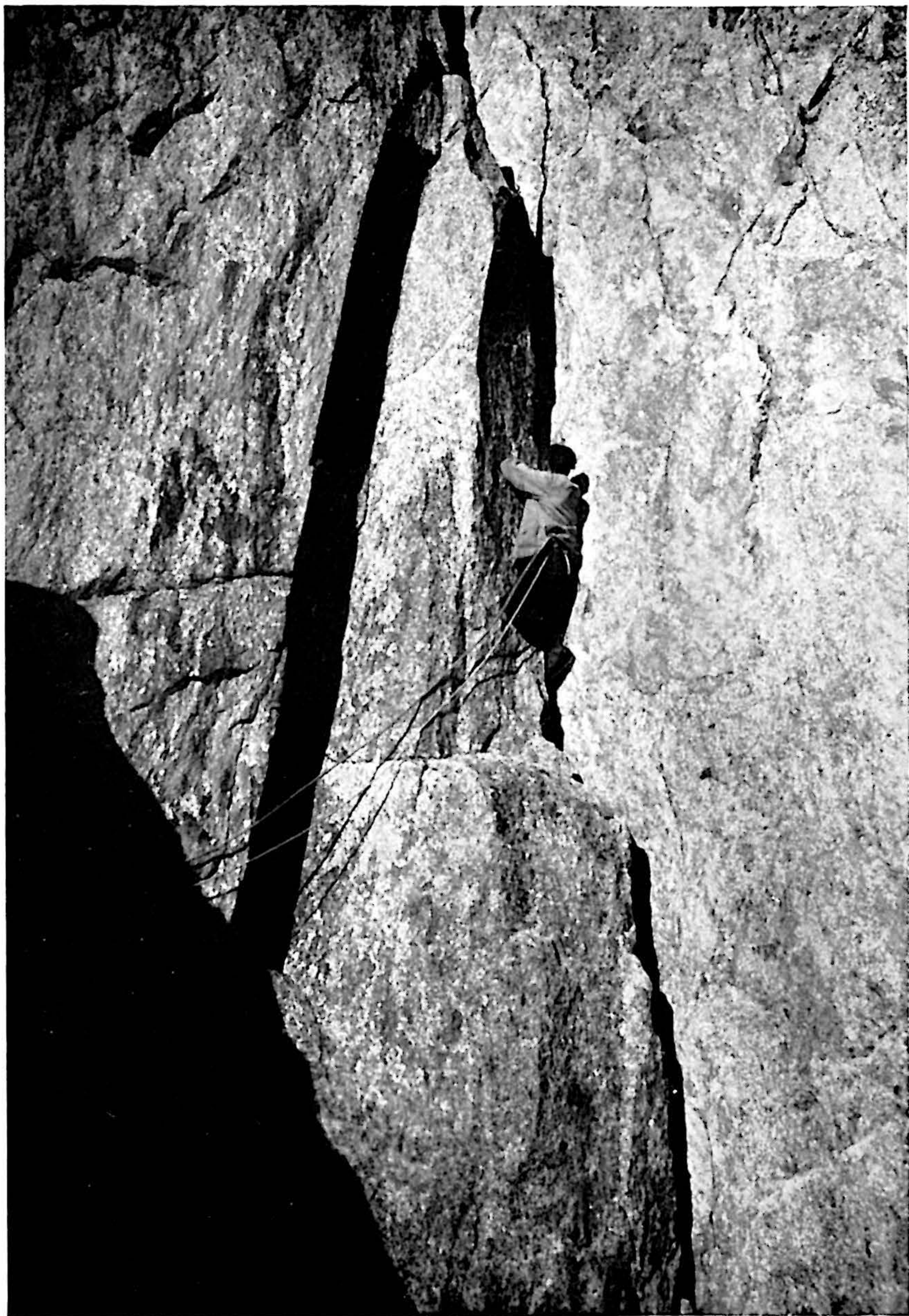
⁹ *A.J.* 46. 343.

¹⁰ *A.J.* 50. 12 sqq.



Photo, M. S. Taylor.]

AIGUILLE DU GRÉPON, MER DE GLACE FACE.
From the foot of the Mummery Crack.



Photo, Tairrax, Chamonix.]

THE MUMMERY CRACK, AIGUILLE DU GRÉPON.

the last British guideless party had passed this way in 1911.¹¹ The great buttress beyond prepared us for the hardest section of the climb : the two ice crests before the big gendarme, which were as exposed and difficult as we could wish. The gendarme itself was more easily turned than we expected, but the rocks and snow beyond seemed interminable. Even when the Shoulder was passed there was the long snow slog to the summit. This was an arduous and exhausting climb, and none but the great could resist the temptation to escape down the Corridor route. So we missed the summit of Mont Blanc for the second time. Like the Brenva and Guggi routes, this great classic climb afforded wide variety, stimulating technical difficulties, superb situations and scenery on a grand scale.

Then followed the Grépon traverse, and a second plod up to the Torino prior to a descent into Italy to make two abortive attempts on the Innominata ridge from the Gamba hut, both frustrated by unsettled weather. We were determined to climb Mont Blanc somehow, and returned from Courmayeur to Montenvers, making a first passage of the Géant icefall in thick mist after a heavy snowfall : a triumph of route finding. The weather improved but it was too cold for the snow to melt off the rocks, so we made a grand three days' traverse from the Leschaux hut to the Grands Mulets, including the Refuge Chevalier, Mont Mallet, the Rochefort ridge, the Torino hut, Mont Blanc du Tacul, Mont Maudit and Mont Blanc. It was characteristic that we should do the Rochefort ridge in reverse and thereby give ourselves the task of climbing a stiff ice chimney on the Glacier du Mont-Mallet. We made sure of Mont Blanc this time despite a fierce wind that whipped the snow chips in our faces all along the final ridge.

This chronicle of climbs would not be complete without reference to a very storm-ridden season at Grindelwald in 1939. We got in two first-class climbs before the weather broke : the S.W. ridge of the Schreckhorn and the Nollen on the Mönch. The former was in the best 'Chamonix' tradition, full of character with some splendid scrambling on steep, firm rocks. The Nollen was spoilt by the loose, slaty rocks in its lower reaches, and the sting was taken out of it for us by a party of young Germans, who preceded us over the ice bulge, obligingly cutting the steps and even lending us their pitons. After that the weather broke so completely that we had got as far as Spiez on the way home, when it cleared. The call of the great peaks was irresistible and, obeying our first impulse, we turned back to Wengen determined once more to climb the Jungfrau from the north. Then followed a

¹¹ *A.J.* 25. 749, 32. 148 *sqq.*

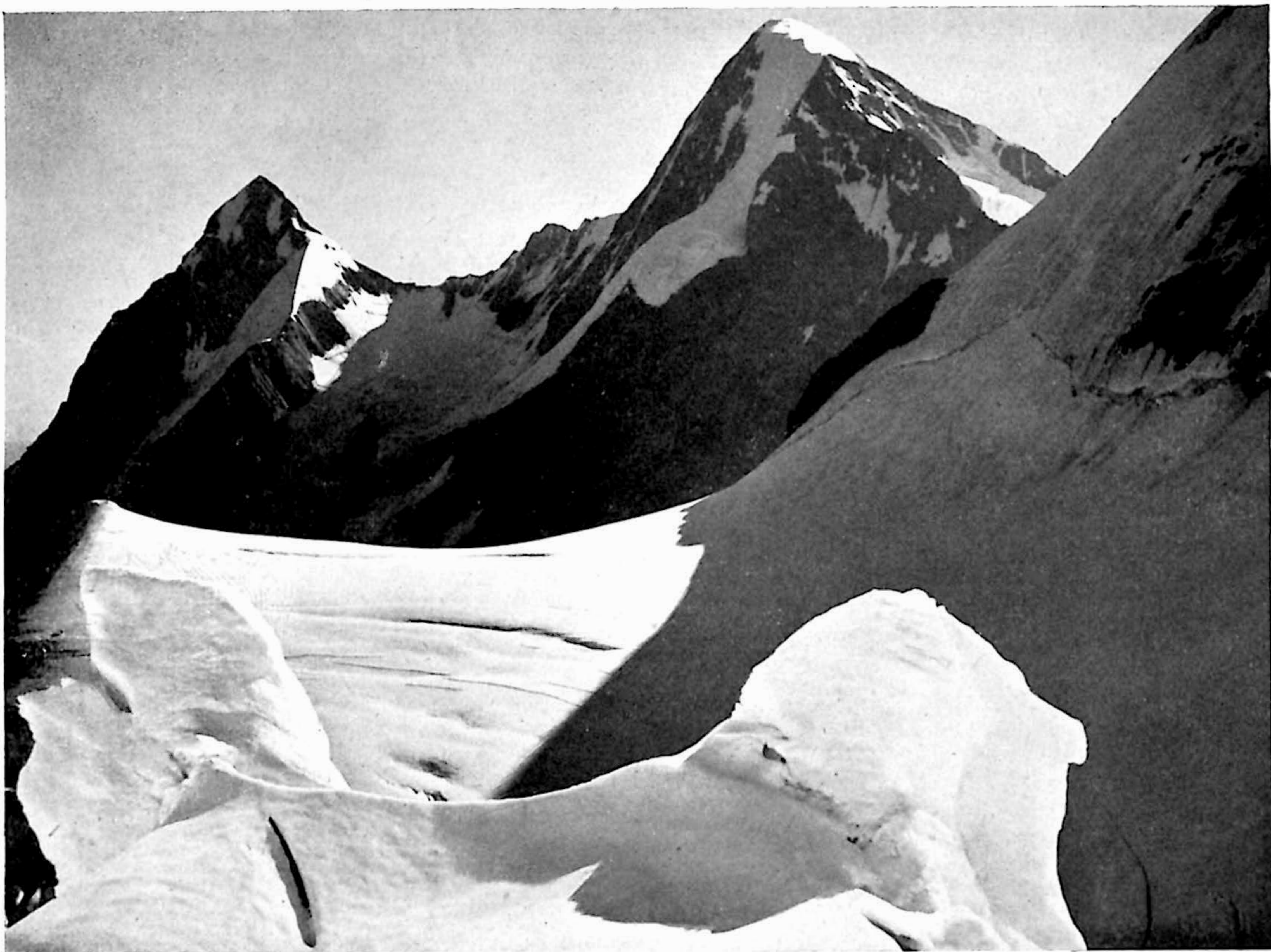
climb that affords the most precious memory of them all, partly because it was snatched unexpectedly from a season of apparent failure, and partly because it was so spontaneous and unpremeditated. The route from the Scheidegg to the hut on the Rotbrettücke was most complex and intriguing and provided a worthy expedition in itself. We rushed up in just over 3 hours. There was so much snow about that we decided to avoid the rock routes up the Silberhorn and skirt round the névé bands encircling its base. We had intended to traverse these to the tangled ice masses of the Giessen Glacier, but when we reached the foot of its N.W. face it occurred to us that this might provide a more direct and rapid route to the summit. We tackled it there and then, and had an hour of steep and exposed snow-climbing. We found afterwards, rather to our surprise, that we had made a new variation up the Silberhorn.¹² Once on the Silberlücke, we were on familiar ground, and loitered happily up the Hochfirn to the summit of the Jungfrau. Two days later, a difficult ascent of the Eiger from the Bergli hut came somewhat as an anticlimax.

Against the background of these achievements, I would now like to sketch in simple terms something of the individual approach to the mountains that Taylor and I hold in common.

To the ambitious climber of this generation, the Alps in one respect present a blank wall: there remain practically no new routes to be pioneered. Many of our Continental contemporaries have found an outlet for this frustrated impulse in their notorious 'remarkable' and 'freak' expeditions which, although new, have the demerit that no one is likely to repeat them.

There is a peculiar trait in the British character which is exemplified in our tradition of compromise. As democrats, we form opinions only when we have heard both sides of a case, and obtained a balanced viewpoint. We are unemotional and are not prone to all-absorbing passions. The Continental, on the other hand, tends to be passionate and excitable, and can achieve that degree of singlemindedness which takes its political form in Totalitarianism. This characteristic attitude translated to the field of mountaineering finds expression in exploits which in themselves are tremendous feats of courage and endurance, but little more. Admittedly there is a heightened sense of living on the borderland of death, but this is an artificial thrill symptomatic of our day, and incomparable with the aesthetic delight that the rhythm of a great climb can give. By the conquest of anticipatory fear, by resisting the temptation to take an easier route, we strengthen the power of will and mould the character. That

¹² *A.J.* 51. 126.



Photo, M. S. Taylor.]

EIGER AND MÖNCH FROM KLEIN SILBERHORN.

[To face p. 104.]



Photo, M. S. Taylor.]

MT. VELAN FROM NEAR THE VALSOREY HUT, 1934.

deepseated feeling of satisfaction which is the reward of exercising these virtues is largely lost by our Nordwand friends, who occasionally become nervous jittering wrecks before they are thirty. I should imagine that after completing an orgy of fatigue and danger, their emotions are largely of profound relief tinged with pride, and thankfulness for their deliverance. I would like to think that the N. faces of the Eiger and Grandes Jorasses would never have been climbed had it not been for the international publicity that was focussed on them, but I think Vörg and Peters, and the martyrs that preceded them, had a deeper stimulus than fame and the acquisition of national honour.

In contrast, the British climber hates nationalism in his supranationalistic sport, he abhors this dicing with death, he vehemently disapproves of 'ironmongery' and other artificial aids, and seeks refuge in the tradition of his pioneer forefathers, who, after all, did more than anyone to open up the Alps as a climbing ground. He will tell you that first and foremost he climbs for pleasure, from a pure delight in mountains and mountaineering. But he must be careful not to indulge in an escapism from that very danger which is the spice of our sport. Sunny off days on lesser peaks are only fully appreciated as a relaxation from the real struggle, as well earned periods of release from nervous tension and grim resolution. Of the exploits of the Nordwand tigers he may say, 'C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas l'Alpinisme,' but he does admit they are magnificent, and in his heart he envies their unshakable courage and relentless determination.

Taylor and I have always tried to steer a course between the Scylla of escapism and the Charybdis of extremism. We found our ideal in the gay and gallant attitude of the Lépineys and their friends of the G.H.M. We tried to approach each new district as though no one had climbed there before. Our thirst for information was unslakable and although we read all the books and journals we could, cross-examined our friends, interrogated guides, pored over guidebooks and combed through hut books, we usually succeeded in retaining an openmindedness free from preconceived ideas. We developed this approach to serve a specific purpose. We felt that if at any future time we had the opportunity of climbing further afield, we would be able to draw full value from our Alpine experience in picking out those mountains most worth climbing and selecting the best routes up them. When, for example, we found ourselves confronted with the relatively unexplored peaks of the Jailik group, we were able to spend the happiest and most successful ten days of our mountaineering career in this northerly spur of the Central Caucasus.

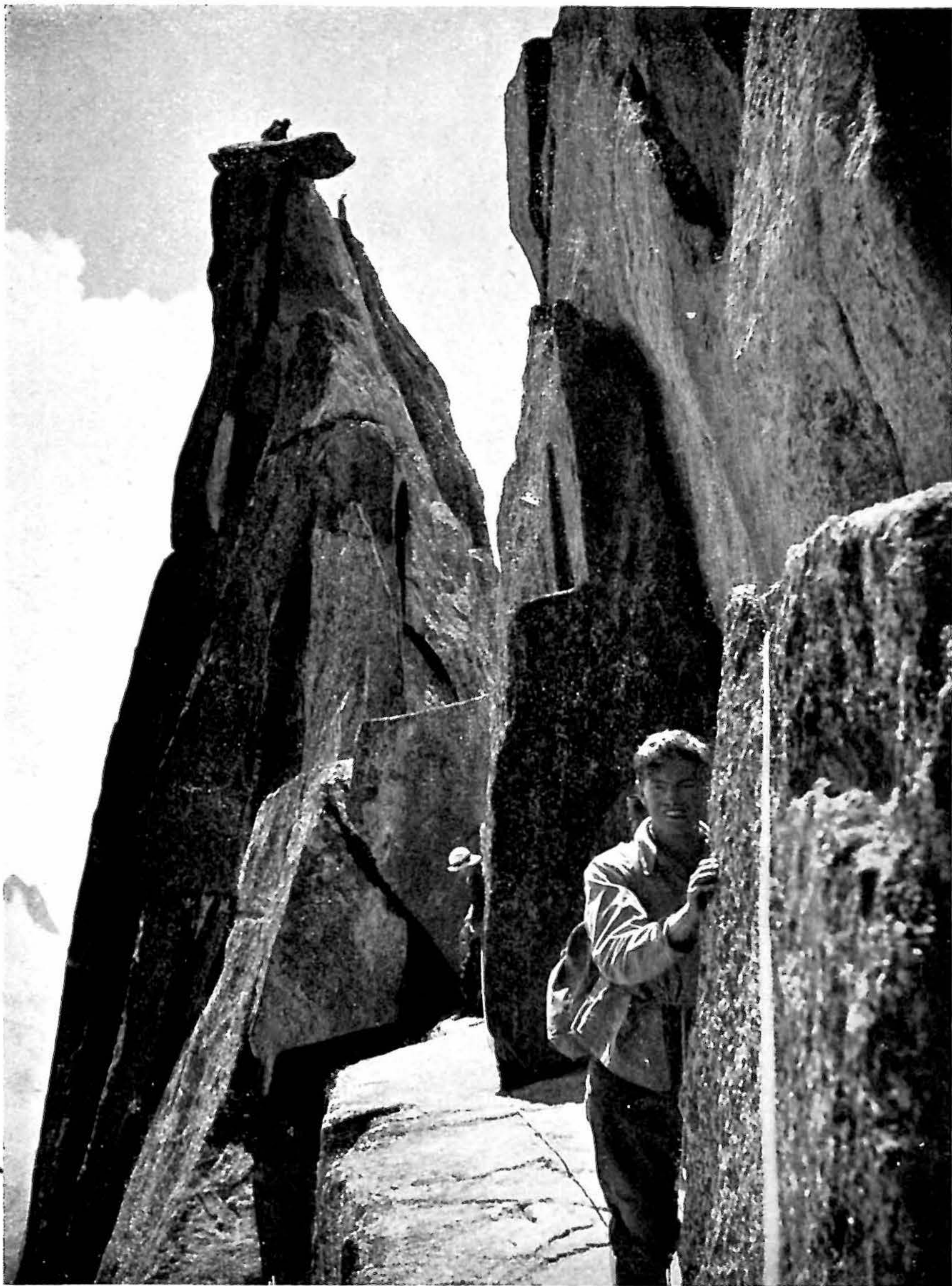
We found an outlet for our frustrated desire to tread the untrodden, by treading the rarely trodden. We tried to resurrect half-forgotten climbs or find the spice of originality in doing a familiar traverse in the reverse direction. If we could not make a first ascent, we could at least make a first guideless ascent, or a first British ascent, or a second ascent, and so on. These stimuli, though somewhat artificial, were, strange to say, none the less rewarding. But they should have been, and were, of a secondary nature. Basically we climbed a mountain because we liked the look of it and felt strongly attracted by some particular face or ridge. We were drawn by such features as a bold upcurving skyline; a jagged or unusual outline; an unexpected line of weakness that invited and intrigued; a thin chain of geological traits that rendered the impossible possible and captured the imagination. To put it more realistically, we chose climbs of sufficient character, variety and length to bring out the best of our ability and experience and to reward us with that degree of aesthetic delight that only a great climb can give.

An equally important motive was to ascend or traverse a mountain in order to gain more knowledge of a district and to examine and reconnoitre further possibilities. Frequently both motives were combined and the climb became both a means and an end in itself. As our vista of knowledge widened, our list of cherished projects multiplied, and plans for future seasons took shape.

And now, finally, I come to the title of this Paper. The ties binding men who have made long and difficult climbs together on the same rope are stronger and more inseverable than those linking men brought together in a great number of other human relationships. Once you have formed a mountaineering partnership with a man, experiencing with him that unique synchronisation of minds and bodies in action on a mountain, with the same goal in view, sharing the same fears and the same exhilarations, the same discomforts and the same simple pleasures, then a mutual respect and deep understanding spring up between you that no other association can give.

One of the salient features of mountaineering in the last generation has been the great number of notable routes made by pairs of climbers working together, season after season, as members of a team. To mention only a few: Merkl and Welzenbach, the Schmid brothers, Vörg and Schmaderer, Gervasutti and Devies, Roch and Gréloz, Zürcher and Lauper. It is remarkable that Britain has produced few such partnerships.

As a climbing team, Taylor and I are complementary in many



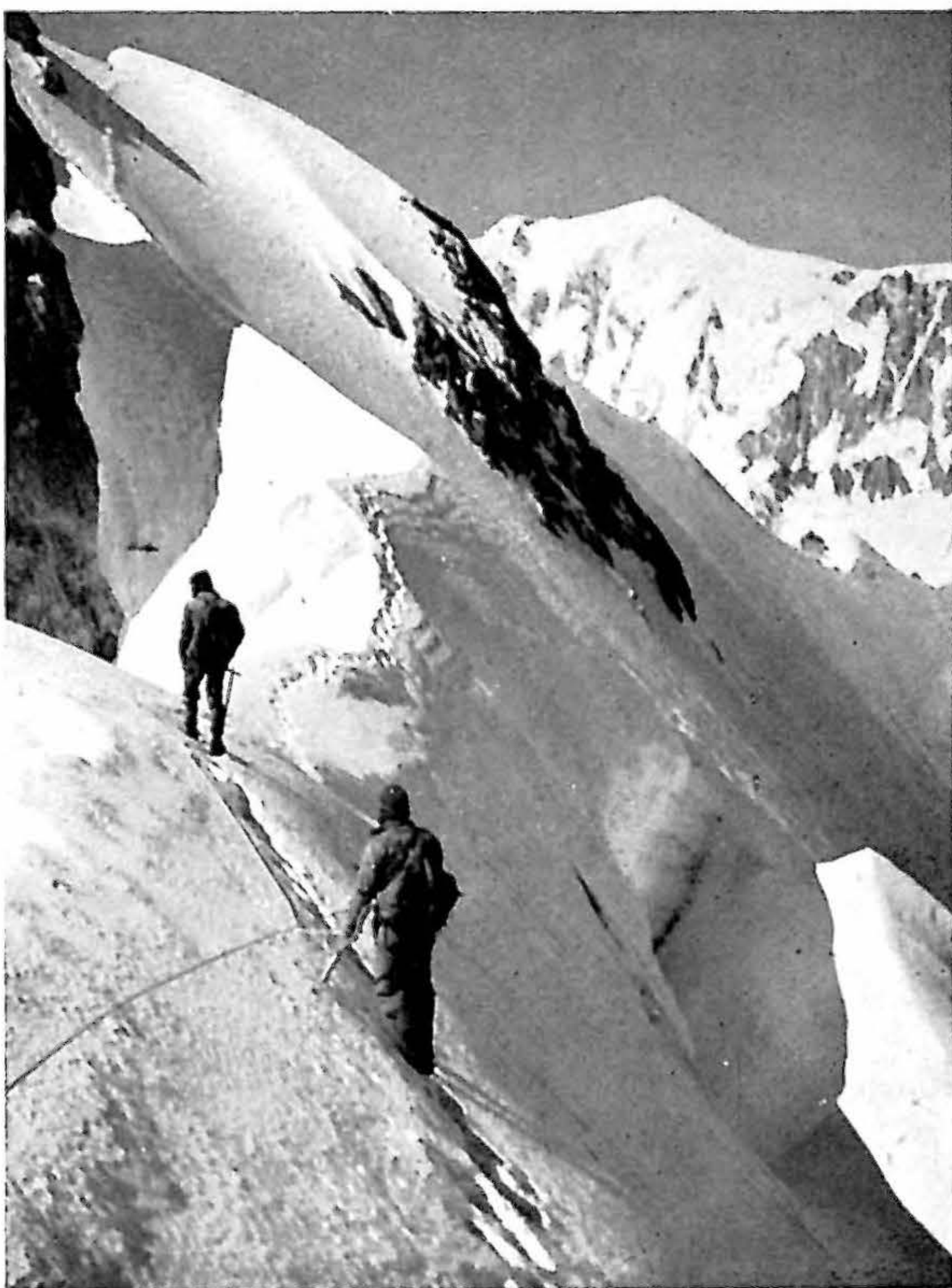
Photo, M. S. Taylor.]

SUMMIT OF THE GRÉPON, FROM ROUTE DES BICYCLETTES.



Photo, M. S. Taylor.]

MT. MAUDIT. THE NARROW ICE ARÊTE SHOWING TRAVERSE ACROSS ICE SLOPE
BELOW GRAND GENDARME.



Photo, M. S. Taylor]

ROCHEFORT ARÊTE. APPROACHING AIGUILLE DE ROCHEFORT
FROM MT. MALLET. MONT BLANC BEHIND.

ways. He has a greater flair for both rock and ice. He is exceptional on loose rock and has unexpected reserves from which he can draw to overcome crucial problems. On the rare occasions that Taylor is off form, I find that something operates to adjust the balance and I become correspondingly 'on form.'

Neither of us has succumbed to the traditional British vice of preferring bad rocks to good snow, and the steeper a snow slope, the better we like it. We have climbed long enough together to share the same approach, the same ambitions and the same judgment. We have no difficulty in agreeing on plans and do not squabble over the choice of a district or a climb. With my greater experience, the main burdens of route finding, weighing up conditions and judgment of weather fall on my shoulders.

Our partnership is not confined only to the Alps. We do not, like some parties, meet once a year at Victoria station, climb together abroad and then part until the next season. By climbing at frequent intervals on British hills we manage to keep alive the essential features of our combination.

We have passed together through the evolutionary process of gaining confidence and competence. We have found that the greatest asset of partnership is the way our confidence one in the other neutralises nervous apprehension. Few mountaineers are unaffected by a sinking of the heart and a half-suppressed fear when they seriously contemplate a major expedition. Before leaving the hut, they have to steel themselves against insidious fears, and go through a process of mental keying-up. The nervous tension that obtains while the issue of the climb is still in doubt proves often to be a more exhausting factor than the altitude and muscular exertion.

I have experienced the full sum of these emotions on the few occasions when I have led a climb alone and when I have had to bear the full weight of responsibility. By sharing this responsibility, Taylor and I succeed in reducing the extent of anticipatory apprehension to a minimum. I think to myself: 'I am terrified of this climb, but I can rely on Taylor to see us through the really stiff bits'—and I have little doubt that he has a similar confidence in me. So we find that in our partnership each can attain a height of confidence and achievement that neither could realise on his own.

[For full technical details of certain expeditions described above, see *A.J.* 48. 345 *sqq.*; 50. 303, 307; 51. 125 *sqq.*]