

IN MEMORIAM

JAN CHRISTIAAN SMUTS

1870-1950

IF General Smuts was a great mountaineer it was not because of any special achievement in the way of actual ascents. South Africa offers an almost unlimited field for the rock climber in the many ranges of Cape Colony as well as on the vast precipice faces of the Natal Drakensberg. But I doubt whether he ever systematically explored the opportunities thus offered, or even tried many of the almost endless variety of climbs afforded by his own beloved Table Mountain. But for the sheer number of his ascents, from youth up to his 80th year, his record must be pretty well unrivalled. We once, in 1918, spent some hours between trains walking up from Modane towards the Mont-Cenis, and I well remember the thrill of exaltation which the close view of the great snow and rock peaks gave him. But I do not remember him then or at any other time referring to having actually climbed in the Alps.

He was a great mountaineer because the love of the mountains was an essential element in his greatness as a statesman and as a man. It was in the physical effort of the ascent, and above all in the sense of upliftedness and of space on the summit that he continually renewed that serenity of spirit, that philosophic breadth of view and that detachment from petty issues and emotions which raised him above the ordinary crowd of restless, ambitious, frustrated politicians. For him, Table Mountain was 'the true church where he worshipped, the cathedral where he heard a subtler music, saw wider visions and was inspired by a loftier spirit.' I have adapted the words he used of the members of the Cape Town Mountain Club who fell in the First World War when he unveiled their memorial on the summit of Table Mountain. His address on that occasion¹ was, indeed, not only an interesting analysis of the connexion between man's rise, in the course of evolution, from the creatures of the slime and our habitual expression of 'all moral and spiritual values in terms of altitude.' It stated in noble words, and at its highest, the Religion of the Mountain :

'What is that religion? When we reach the mountain summits we leave behind all the things that weigh heavily down below on our body and on our spirit. We leave behind all sense of weakness and depression ; we feel a new freedom, a great exhilaration, an exaltation of the body, no less than of the spirit. We feel a great joy . . .'

L. S. AMERY.

¹ Extracts from this were published in *A.J.* 35. 92.

W. J. WILLIAMS

1863-1949

WILLIAM JONES WILLIAMS, the eldest of seven children orphaned when he was 13, spent the first seventeen years of his life in Manchester. He came to London in 1880 on entering the Civil Service, by examination, and was in the Exchequer and Audit Department until 1900. It was here that he made the acquaintance of the late George Davison (subsequently of Plas Wernfawr, Harlech), a pioneer of artistic photography, who later became Managing Director of Kodak Limited and, in 1900, invited Williams to join him. He was Secretary to the Company from 1911 to 1928. Williams was an expert accountant, took the degrees of B.A. and LL.B. (externally) at London University, was a member of the Middle Temple and qualified as a barrister (but was not formally called to the Bar). He made himself fluent in half a dozen European languages (including Russian) and amassed a considerable library which was particularly rich in Welsh books and in mountaineering books in many languages. He married in 1903 and was widowed in 1942. His only child, now Professor Gwyn Williams, is a member of the Club.

His interests were wide, and in many things deep. He was intensely conscious of his Welsh ancestry and almost fanatically enthusiastic in the development of Welsh culture. Welsh remained to the end of his life the language of his home, wherever that home was. He was active in Welsh affairs in London during his early days there, and married a Welsh wife (herself an active mountaineer). In 1921 he bought a house near Conway and that was his home until he died, although he did not fully retire from business until 1928. In 1927, at the invitation of Dr. Thomas Jones, C.H., then Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, W. J. Williams became the first Hon. Treasurer of Coleg Harlech, the residential College for adult education then in course of foundation at Harlech, in the former house of his own old friend, Mr. George Davison. He continued as an energetic Treasurer until 1948, when he was succeeded by his son. He was also from 1931 to 1942 the Treasurer of the movement for Welsh boys and girls known throughout Wales as 'Yr Urdd' which was founded by Sir Ifan ab Owen Edwards. He was a Justice of the Peace for Caernarvonshire, joint Local Secretary for the Cambrian Archæological Association, and was interested in a number of Welsh and other societies as well as in purely local affairs.

He was small in stature, but in his day must have been exceedingly agile and tough. He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1903, on the proposal of Roderick Williams, seconded by W. P. Haskett-Smith. The qualifications disclosed on his proposal form showed (with the exception of only one year) a continuous record of good quality climbing in the Alps from 1894 to the time of his election. Thereafter, he and his wife continued to visit the Alps every year until 1914, usually with a guideless party which included Roderick Williams and J. M.

Archer Thomson. They went occasionally to Switzerland, but most often to Tyrol. He was again in the Alps in 1922, in Tyrol in 1923 and 1924, at Chamonix in 1925 and Arolla in 1928 (he was then aged 65). He wrote a chapter on mountaineering for *The Dolomites* (1910, 2nd edition 1926) by his closest friend, the late S. H. Hamer, for many years Secretary of the National Trust.

In his early days he was intimate with Owen Glynne Jones, with whom he climbed much both in this country and in the Alps. He took part in some first ascents of Welsh rocks and climbed with most of the early pioneers of British rock climbing and figured (anonymously) in some of the well-known climbing photographs of the Messrs. G. D. and A. P. Abraham. He was an original member of the Climbers' Club and was made an Honorary Member of that Club on completing fifty years' membership in 1948.

He was a charming and generous host at his fine house in Wales and never ceased to delight in talking about mountains with anyone who shared his enthusiasm. There are many (including the present writer) who have reason to be grateful for his encouragement in a pursuit which has meant so much to them, and he will long be held in affectionate memory by all who had the privilege of his acquaintance.

JOHN POOLE.

LESLIE FREDERIC SCOTT

1869-1950

LESLIE FREDERIC SCOTT was born on October 29, 1869. Having been at school at Rugby, he went up to New College, Oxford, as an exhibitor in 1888. He disappointed his friends by taking a second class both in Mods. and in Greats—places well below his intellectual powers—and took his degree in 1892. Before practising he underwent a course of practical instruction in coal-mining. He was a pupil in the chambers of Maurice (afterwards Mr. Justice) Hill (a near relation) and of Mr. Hugh Boyd; was called to the Bar by the Inner Temple in 1894, and took chambers in Liverpool. Assisted by his mother's connections with a famous firm of commercial solicitors, and possessing great industry and determination, he soon acquired a large junior practice, which in a few years became probably the largest practice in Liverpool, at a time when litigation arising from the carriage of goods by sea was at its highest and most lucrative. A further note of distinction accrued to his chambers by reason of the fact that Frederick Edwin Smith (afterwards Earl of Birkenhead) was his pupil. The friendship thus begun continued until the death of Lord Birkenhead and was a substantial influence throughout Scott's life. In due course he came to London, took silk, and was elected a Bencher of his Inn, to whose Treasurership he would have succeeded a few years ago if he had not thought that his health would not enable him to support the burden

of this office. His practice in the Front Row was as extensive and strenuous as before he took silk. On a vacancy occurring in the Exchange Division of Liverpool, then regarded as the premier division of this city, he was an obvious, and successful, candidate, and in March 1922, on Sir Ernest Pollock's appointment to the Attorney-Generalship, he succeeded him as Solicitor-General; but the days of Mr. Lloyd-George's coalition government were drawing to an end, and in October Scott resigned his office, retiring from Parliament in 1929. In 1935 he was appointed a Lord Justice of Appeal and held that office until a few months before his death.

Scott's Alpine career seems to have begun in 1901 and, at least until 1908, he climbed in the Alps every year. In 1909 he was elected to the Alpine Club, being proposed by Sir Edward Davidson and seconded by Sir William Pickford (afterwards Lord Sterndale). He was a competent mountaineer, very neat on his feet, careful on rocks and capable of enduring fatigue and, among the Alps, as charming a companion as in ordinary social life. Much of his climbing was done with Johann Custer of Engelberg.

When Scott came to New College he possessed a peculiarly youthful appearance, a vivid enthusiasm and a deep sense of public duty and social obligation. The former characteristic remained with him until late in life and the two latter almost to the last. With them he united an innocence of the world most unusual in a successful advocate. For many years he devoted himself to the internationalisation of the Law of the Sea. Later he applied himself to English Local Government, particularly with a view to agricultural development and to the preservation of the countryside, and was actively engaged up to the last months of his life in the organisation of Parish Councils. His health was never robust; at a critical moment of his early professional career he was hampered by serious illness, and his last years were made painful by severe arthritis. It says much for his essential toughness of spirit that he did not give way to this physical disability nor to heavy material misfortunes, but more than once, when lesser men might have thought that all was lost, pressed on again with equal mind and undaunted courage.

Leslie Scott (it is difficult to think or write of him except as 'Leslie') was no Puritan, though he did not court an easy or general popularity, but his memory will always remain as that of the most lovable of men.

SCHUSTER.

GEORGE HAROLD LANCASTER

1882-1950

By the death of the Rev. George Harold Lancaster, M.A., F.R.A.S., Hon. C.F. in the 1914-1918 war (47th Division), the Alpine Club has lost an erudite and devoted member and the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club one of its Vice Presidents.

G. H. Lancaster, who was born in 1882, was the second son of Dr. H. E. Lancaster who was a Consultant on the staff of Guy's Hospital. He was educated at the Mercers' School and the London College of Divinity, afterwards taking his B.A. and M.A. at Durham. After teaching at a preparatory school, he was ordained deacon in 1906 and priest in 1907. After holding two Paddington curacies he was vicar of St. Stephen's Church, Bow, where he remained for sixteen years. In 1931 he became vicar of St. Paul's, Winchmore Hill, where he spent the last nineteen years of his life. Of the books which he wrote, *Prophecy. The War and the Near East*, published in 1920, ran to five editions. He was also greatly interested in astronomy and often wrote and lectured about that branch of learning. He was for many years a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society. Besides that he was a Freemason as well as a member of the Athenaeum Club. He was a founder of the Air Defence Cadet Corps, forerunner of No. 85 Southgate Squadron A.T.C., and was its chaplain and vice-chairman. He also took a keen interest in other local affairs and was for some time a Borough Councillor. The esteem and affection in which he was held were evinced by the attendance at his funeral, not only of his bishop and many other clergymen, but also of a number of Free Church ministers.

George Lancaster was elected to the Alpine Club in 1921, his proposer being Sydney Spencer and seconder A. L. Mumm, and supporters being Sir Edward Davidson, General Bruce and C. H. R. Wollaston. His qualification list was as follows :—

- 1910 Untergabelhorn ; Theodulhorn and Pass ; Hohtäligrat.
- 1911 Wellenkuppe, Furgggrat, Zinal Rothorn, Breithorn, Riffelhorn (from the lake and from the glacier).
- 1912 Mount Carmel, The Lebanons (on tour in Syria and Palestine he climbed a number of mountains and was also Hon. Lecturer for the Palestine Exploration Fund).
- 1913 Wetterhorn, Mönch, Finsteraarhorn, Jungfrau.
- 1914 Laquinhorn, guideless (with H. Edwards and H. M. F. Dodd, both of the Alpine Club), Portjengrat, Egginergrat, Südlenspitze, Nadelhorn, Ulrichshorn.
- 1920 Monte Rosa. Obergabelhorn (traversed), Matterhorn (traversed to Breuil, returning via the Breuiljoch).
- 1921 Riffelhorn (via the 'Matterhorncouloir'), Dent Blanche, Fletschhorn (traversed, ascent by south-west arête, descent ordinary way), Sonnighorn (trav.).

His favourite guide was Joseph Biner.

In later years he suffered a good deal from ill health and had at least four or five operations. Nevertheless he continued climbing, with intervals, till 1938. His principal peaks after 1921 were the Rimpfischhorn, Piz Palü, Strahlhorn and Adler Pass. He also did a lot of guideless climbing among the lesser peaks round Saas-Fee, Pontresina, and elsewhere. When his health did not allow him actually to climb,

he still took numerous parties of friends for Alpine walks, including crossing easy glaciers.

Besides climbing, he interested himself in the movement of glaciers ; in 1920 he assisted Sir Clive Morrison-Bell in observations taken on the Grenz glacier and in 1921 he revisited the spots to take notes of the movement during the year. He also made experiments as regards atmospheric pressure at different heights in relation to the heart and breathing.

During a number of summers he was British Chaplain at Chamonix, Villars, Saas Fée, Pontresina, in the Bernese Oberland, Zermatt, and elsewhere. He was very fond of the small English church at Zermatt, which one of our Presidents, Prof. Norman Collie, used to call 'The Parish Church of the Alpine Club.' I remember so well one occasion when that miniature Westminster Abbey of mountaineers was 'staffed' entirely by Alpine Club Members ; the officiating clergyman was G. H. Lancaster, the organist that eminent civil engineer, Sir William Ellis ; other members acted as 'sidesmen' and the writer of these lines as churchwarden. Still another member (a Col. in the R.A.) acted as bell ringer.

George Lancaster was much interested also in the 'geographical background' of the High Alps, in land and people, their work, their habits and pastimes.

As he was sociable by nature he always made many acquaintances during his Alpine holidays. He got to know very well Mrs. Tyndall, widow of the great John Tyndall, while the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, confessed to him that were he younger at the time of meeting, he would have felt greatly tempted to try his hand at Alpine climbing. Lady Megan Lloyd George, who was with her father, appeared to consider this a great joke. Lancaster had a keen sense of humour, was an excellent 'raconteur' and altogether a very good fellow.

He will be greatly missed.

Our sympathy goes out very sincerely to Mrs. Lancaster who, for the last forty years, has shared, and in her quiet and gentle way has supported, many of her husband's varied interests.

S. DE V. MERRIMAN.

ANTHONY MELLAND ROBINSON

1907-1950

ANTHONY ROBINSON died on August 18, 1950, after an operation, at the early age of 43. He was educated at Marlborough and at Clare College, Cambridge, where he took Honours in the Natural Science Tripos ; in 1940 he joined the staff of the Admiralty Chemical Pool and later was appointed to the newly formed Royal Naval Scientific Service where he made original contributions in analytical research. He became M.A. and A.R.I.C.

Mountaineering with Robinson was a passion to the exclusion of every other sport and activity, but, as often happens, his love of the hills was shared with a love of music. His climbing career is fully detailed in his delightful book 'Alpine Roundabout'; the Roundabout began in 1926 at Chateau d'Oex and was afterwards chiefly in the Oberland. A chance meeting at Grindelwald in 1932 led to his asking me to climb with him in the following year, ignoring the great disparity in our ages, which he humorously describes in his book as 'a difference of thirty years between one end of the rope and the other.' The result was a most successful partnership lasting till the outbreak of war, and as both of us disliked what he called popular peaks we generally went to the less frequented districts and mountains, so much so that of the thirty-two peaks we climbed together, on only three—the Wildspitze, Aiguille Pers and the Nordend of Monte Rosa—did we meet another party.

Of our joint expeditions I would list particularly :—

Traverse of the Bruneggjoch and Bieshorn from the Topali hut to the Tracuit, returning next day by the Barrhorn and Schöllijoch, a splendidly varied expedition.

The Aiguille de Pécelet by a direct ascent from the Cabane de P.P.

A quite unorthodox traverse of the Wildspitze due to a false start which was persevered in; the result was a delightful day which just ended in success.

Traverse of the Trugberg, descending by a new route down the West face.

The Wilder Pfaff and Zuckerhütl over the Pfaffen Sattel.

The traverse of the Alphubel by the whole length of the Rotengrat; on that occasion we were accompanied by the late W. S. Bull and the guide Alexander Pollinger.

Traverse of the Dürrenhorn down the North arête. Our last climb together was the Mont Tondu on July 14, 1939.

Robinson's preference was for rockwork, he had climbed much in Wales and was very sure-footed but he yielded to my argument that you can get rocks anywhere from sea level upwards but ice and snow only among the true heights; he rapidly acquired snow technique and came to like climbs which shared both qualities. He was an excellent companion on the mountains, enjoying every aspect of the sport and always ready to attempt something the wrong way up. He married early in the war, finding in his wife a companion perfectly fitted to share his enthusiasms, and from all I have seen of their small son Geoffrey when he is hanging on to whatever he can hang on to in a house, there will eventually be another Robinson in the Club.

By Robinson's death the Club has lost a keen and most promising member, who regarded mountaineering as the best form of sport and and always intensely interested in the Club's activities.

K. C. P. STRUVE.