EXPEDITIONS

AIGUILLE CROUX, SOUTH-EAST FACE (VIA OTTOZ). T. D. Bourdillon, A. K. Rawlinson, R. M. Viney, July 11, 1954. An excellent, short, rock climb, easily accessible from the Gamba Hut. Pitches of IV and V. A few pitons useful. The description in *Alpinisme*, 1954, p. 29 amplifies and replaces that in the Vallot guide.

AIGUILLES DE PRA SEC, SOUTH RIDGE. T. D. Bourdillon, A. K. Rawlinson, R. M. Viney. July 14–15, 1954.

This ridge has two branches which meet some distance below the summit of the southernmost of the three Aiguilles. Route 460 of Vallot II takes the western branch. The present party ascended the eastern branch and descended the western, having stopped a little short of the summit of the Aiguille owing to bad snow. This expedition probably coincides in part with Route 466 of Vallot II, but Route 466 appears to avoid the central part of the eastern branch of the ridge where the good climbing is.

The eastern branch of the ridge is a good rock route, with climbing of real interest on the big step. Being at low altitude, it may be in condition when higher things are not. Pitches of IV and V. A few pitons useful. Loose rock requires care. It is believed that this is an original route.

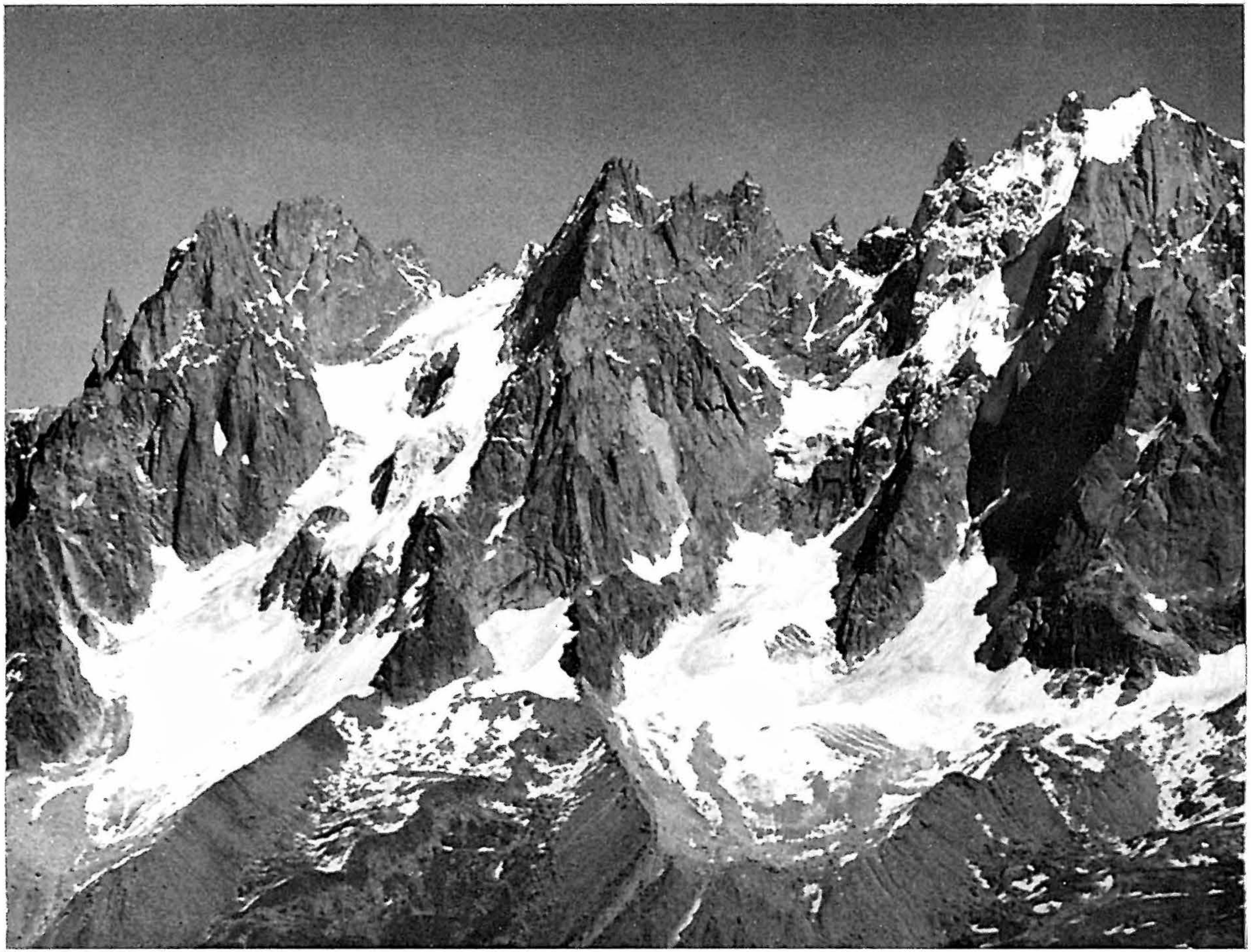
The western branch is much easier ; any difficulties are due to loose rock.

AIGUILLE DE BLAITIÈRE (West Face). New route, July 25, 1954. J. Brown, D. Whillans. Length from rimaye to summit 2,400 ft. (E.D.). Two pitches of VI, several pitches of V and two pitches of artificial.

From a bivouac at the foot of the face, the climb was done in 15–16 hours, with a second bivouac on the summit.

From the glacier directly below the scar, go up diagonally for two ropes' lengths to gain the large *terrains*. Climb these to the right and cross the bottom of the scar to the foot of a corner. Climb the corner (IV) and the little slab above to a stance. Descend the slab and climb the crack above (75 ft., VI, two pitons). Continue up the groove for 20 ft. then traverse left to a good platform. Climb the crack above (120 ft., VI), go up the chimney and surmount an overhang (V, one piton, one étrier), climb a groove to a large platform. Go up to the left cavity for one rope's length to a stance at the foot of a crack. Climb this (V) and traverse left at the top to a stance on a large block. Traverse left past a platform covered with debris (IV) and climb a little wall (two pitons) into the foot of a groove which is capped by a large overhang. (Piton stance on unstable blocks.) Climb the groove to the overhang (V sup., two pitons), traverse left on pitons and go up a groove to stance on the left (A.1 and A.2, seven pitons). Continue up

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Photo, C. D. Milner.]

BLAITIÈRE, WEST FACE.

the groove (five pitons) for 20 ft. Traverse right and climb a cracked wall to a good stance. Go up easily to the false *vires*. Traverse rightwards to the slabs on the near bank of the couloir. Above the slabs is a wall with a large block set in the face. Climb the crack on the left side of the block, then traverse right and climb the crack above (V, 120 ft.) to a stance on a ridge. Continue up this to the 'Vires Fontaine.' Climb the wall above by an easy ledge sloping up to the right. From this point a large yellow block is visible on the ridge. Make for this. Climb a crack by laybacks, then up the groove above to a stance by some large blocks (V, 130 ft.). Go up a groove then climb an overhanging crack (V sup., one piton). Continue by large blocks to a stance in the foot of the chimney couloir behind the 'yellow block' (wet). Climb the wall to the right and traverse into the couloir (VI, one piton). Go up behind a flake and across a snow-covered slab on to the ridge. Continue up this to the summit.

Petit Dru (West Face). First ascent, July 1–4 and 16–18, 1952. L. Bérardini, G. Magnone, A. Dagory and M. Lainé.

The face was first climbed in two separate halves. The party reversed down the face after spending four days on it. They returned two weeks later and traversed on from the North face to the point they had reached previously, thus completing the route.

The second ascent of this face was made by four Parisian climbers on July 27, 28 and 29, 1954. The third, on August 4 and 5, 1954, by J. Brown and D. Whillans, leading through.

The height up the face is 1,100 metres from rimaye to summit. Grade E.D. The climb has many pitches of VI and over 400 ft. of continuous artificial climbing. The general angle of the face is said to be 80°. The rock is perfect.

Cross the rimaye and climb the couloir by the broken rocks on its left hand. Cross the couloir near the top to gain the terraces below a huge grey scar. (Stonefalls in the couloir.) Traverse the ledges for two ropes' lengths. Climb a chimney (IV inf.) to a platform below a chimney filled with unstable blocks. Climb this (V) and go out to the left by a diagonal crack (V sup., one piton). Continue upwards by easy ledges to the grand terraces. Traverse these to the left, cross a spur and gain a good platform. (The great difficulties begin here.) Climb the first wall (IV, one piton) then by the dièdre (IV) to a second platform. Climb a second wall to the left (V), go up a small arête (IV) and traverse right to the foot of a corner. Go up this (IV, one piton) and climb the cracks above. Surmount two small overhangs (A.2) and continue by a narrow crack (A.1, VI) (the fissure Vignes). Go up to the right (IV), then turn left into the couloir chimney. Climb the overhanging wall to the left (A.1, two pitons, V), then by a crack (V) and by a second wall (V) gain a good stance. Traverse below a roof (A.2, three pitons) and surmount it on the right (V, one piton) (bivouac). Do not follow the line of pitons, but go up a crack to the right (V inf.). Continue by the crack across a slab to some small ledges (IV), climb direct to similar

ledges eight metres higher (V sup., two pitons). Continue up the crack above, which overhangs near the top (A.2, wooden wedges, 40 metre crack) to a ledge on the left. Step back, right, into the crack. Climb this to a large platform. (Bivouac.) Ascend a wall (V inf.) to a ledge and traverse right (V sup., one piton). Climb the half-moon-shaped crack, first by the slab (wet, V), then by the crack (A.2, wooden wedges). Climb a chimney, then by an overhanging wall on the right (A.1, V, two pitons), continue up the small ice-filled couloir and climb a short steep wall of ice. In normal conditions this is a rock pitch of V to the broken rock below an enormous block which closes the couloir. Go up under the block and climb it by the crack on the right (A.3, wooden wedges, VI). Continue up the short slab above to the large platform in the base of the Grand Dièdre. (Bivouac.) By a system of chimneys and cracks (V, one piton) gain a platform on the monolith, which fills the bottom of the dièdre, surmount a short wall to the right (V, one piton) and climb a crack to the top of a flake (V, two pitons), continue up the corner by a system of cracks (A.2, piton and wooden wedges) to a bulge, surmount this (A.3) continue for 10 metres (A.1) and traverse right (A.2). Climb the cracks direct (A.2) until the angle eases on to a large slab. (This dièdre is 90 metres high, stances in étriers are unavoidable.) At this point it is possible to escape on to the north face by a system of knotted ropes and pitons with which the passage is equipped. Continue up the crack to the fixed rope, descend this and climb a crack to a platform on the right. (Bivouac.) Climb the steep wall above (V sup., two pitons), traverse right and descend a crack (V). Climb two parallel cracks and gain the base of a steep open corner and climb a system of chimneys in the base of the corner for one rope's length (VI, exposed). Climb a detached flake on the right (IV, one wooden wedge) and surmount the overhangs (IV). Climb the north corner above for two ropes' lengths (V., pitons) to a bulge. Go out right* on to the steep wall and climb a short slab (V, two pitons) and continue by a thin crack to the left (V sup.). Ascend an overhanging chimney (V) and go out to the left (V sup., one piton). Climb the flakes for thirty metres (IV) to a ledge on the left (V). Climb a small overhanging corner (V) to a little cave. Climb the corner above (V and V sup.) and escape to the left. By the easy ledges gain the north-west arête and finish the route up the north face of the Dru.

JOE BROWN.

AIGUILLE DE LA BRENVA. East face by the Boccalatte Route. July 24, 1954. M. J. Harris and J. Neill. (References are to the latest revision of the new Vallot guide.)

The foot of the face was reached from the Pavillon du Mont Fréty via the spring below la Porte on the Col du Géant track, the snout of the Toule Glacier, and the Entrèves Glacier (attained via a small saddle and a slanting descent of the low rock wall above the glacier). The lower part of the face is ascended by the line common to the easier East face and South-east ridge route (also made by Boccalatte) and the other

* At this point M. Magnone's notes indicate a movement to the left.—ED.

routes on this face. The Boccalatte route proper starts where the easier route turns to the left along large terraces to avoid the steeper upper part of the face ; it follows more or less a shallow crack running straight up this part of the face, which continues almost to the top. The foot of the crack is reached from the beginning of the terraces by a move across an almost holdless slab. The route given in the Vallot guide was followed to a point above the first pitch of V sup. where the crack is blocked by a short overhanging wall—here the guide-book route turns the difficulty on the right by a pitch of V. Instead, the wall was climbed direct by bridging and pulling over the overhang (Standard V).

A little higher a small very exposed stance is reached on the right of the crack ; here the guide-book route works out further to the right and returns to the left to the line of the crack higher, finishing up a large sweep of steep slabs on the left leading to the easy highest rocks. Instead, from the stance a difficult step left was made back into the crack (the hardest move on the climb as done by the present party) and the crack was followed until it was blocked by a cornice of large overhangs, about 30 ft. above the stance. As there seemed no possibility of breaking out to the right to rejoin the guide-book route a traverse of about 20 ft. to the left was made to a platform. From here the line of overhangs was seen to bend up steeply to the left, with a sort of rake under it leading leftwards up the cliff. The foot of the rake was reached from the platform by an awkward move up a little wall (V), then a vegetated groove. The rake itself was found to be mostly quite easy, but with three harder pitches climbed by the rocks on the left. The second of these was very loose ; an old piton was seen halfway up the third (Standard IV). The latter gave out on the easy highest rocks of the face, which soon led to the summit ridge.

The crack in the lower parts gave a series of excellent pitches, with small but sufficient stances. Running belays can be arranged where necessary. The rock is mostly quite good, though various slings and other equipment were found which had been left behind by a previous British party who were compelled to retreat when their leader was injured by a fall due to a hold coming away. The whole climb is continuously very steep and exposed.

AIGUILLE DE LA PERSÉVÉRANCE, North-east arête. July 14, 1954. M. J. Harris and J. Neill.

Somewhat over-written in the guide-book (Aiguilles Rouges de Chamonix) ; the guide-book's crux was thought to be no harder than the previous pitch, which was wet and awkward.

ARÊTE DE BRIOCHE (on the Mer de Glace side of the Brioche). July 16, 1954. M. J. Harris and J. Neill ; J. F. Mawe and D. Thomas.

SALBITSCHIJEN, South Ridge. July 21, 1954. J. F. Mawe, J. Neill and M. J. Harris.