

TWO EARLY MOUNTAINEERS— CHAPMAN AND BLACKER

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KYRLE ALFRED CHAPMAN (1838–91). Dr. Monroe Thorington has ¹ amplified our knowledge of K. A. Chapman, and a few scattered details can now be added.

Chapman was the fifth son of David Barclay Chapman, of Roehampton, by the latter's second wife, Maria, daughter of the Rev. Robert Chatfield, Vicar of Chatteris, Cambs., and ancestor of the present Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield.

K. A. Chapman was born April 10, 1838, and educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was admitted as a pensioner on March 16, 1855. He did not graduate and little is known of his later life. In 1869 he married Louisa Wilhelmina (died 1938), daughter of Admiral the Hon. Keith Stewart, son of the 8th Earl of Galloway. Chapman is simply described as of Roehampton, Surrey and of Donhead House, Wilts., and he died without issue in 1891.²

Dr. Thorington has printed Chapman's account of his ascent of Mont Blanc with George W. Heard in 1855 and suggested ³ that he may not have been able to climb in 1856. But he corrects this statement in *Early American Ascents in the Alps*, p. 25, by saying (on the authority of F. O. Wolf's *Wallis und Chamonix*, vol. ii), that Heard and Chapman on July 6, 1856 crossed the 'Col des Français' (one of the Cols du Tour) from the Col de Balme to Orsières. I have not noticed this entry in the English edition of Wolf, but, as will be seen, Chapman made other climbs in 1856 and I give below notes of his climbing career so far as I have traced it :

1855

(1) August 17 ; Mont Blanc (mentioned above).

(2) *ca.* August ; with William Blacker, the Wetterhorn. Christian Bleurer's *Führerbuch*—facsimile in A.C. Library—undated, but preceding entry is dated August 4, 1855, and succeeding entry is October 6, 1855. Cp. also Christian Almer's *Führerbuch* (ed. Cunningham and Abney), p. 26.

¹ *A. J.* 48. 142.

² J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, 1752–1900, ii, p. 13 ; *Admissions to Trinity College, Cambridge*, 1851–1900, p. 93 ; *Burke's Landed Gentry*, ed. 1952, p. 413.

³ *A. J.* 48. 144.

- (3) *ca.* August, without Blacker, apparently ; crossed the Strahlegg Pass to Grimsel.⁴
- (4) August 25. Monte Rosa.⁵
- (5) Probably in this year (if not, then in 1856) crossed the Triftjoch with Johann zum Taugwald and Zacharie Cachat.⁶
- (6) Said to have *climbed* the Dom from Saas.⁷ If Kennedy's statement were true, it would ante-date the first ascent of the Dom (by Llewellyn Davies) by three years. But see below.

1856

- (1) July 6. Col des Français, as mentioned above.
- (2) July 26. Jungfrau under bad conditions ; with Chr. Almer and Peter Bohren (entries in both Führerbücher). This was the first ascent by a British climber since Forbes's in 1841 and the first by anyone since 1842.⁸
- (3) May have crossed the Triftjoch this year, but more probably in 1855.
- (4) Said by J. Llewellyn Davies to have *attempted* the Dom from Saas this year.⁹ Studer¹⁰ adds that Johann zum Taugwald was the guide. In view of Davies' particular interest in the Dom and that he wrote subsequently to Kennedy, and therefore had had more opportunity to verify details, it seems impossible to allow Chapman's climb to have been a complete ascent of the Dom, though he reached a considerable height.

Farrar's remark¹¹ that Chapman 'appears to have been one of the most enterprising men of his day' is seen to be justified, although, as Dr. Thorington points out¹² he was hardly more than a schoolboy, and was thought to have been the youngest man to have climbed Mont Blanc at that date.¹³

A. G. Goodall, who climbed Mont Blanc on July 8, 1852, with J. D. H. Browne, was told by his guides that he was the youngest to have made the ascent at that date, just as, the year before, he was said to be the youngest to have crossed the Col du Géant.¹⁴ I have not

⁴ Ch. Bleurer's Führerbuch.

⁵ See *A. J.* 31. 316, 336.

⁶ *A. J.* 31. 222 *P.P.G.* i, 130.

⁷ Hudson and Kennedy, *Mont Blanc and Monte Rosa*, p. 130.

⁸ Forbes, *Travels through the Alps*, ed. Coolidge, pp. xii, 452. Coolidge gives Chapman's Christian name incorrectly as 'Robert.'

⁹ *P.P.G.* i, 195.

¹⁰ *Ueber Eis und Schnee*, 2nd edn., ii, 117.

¹¹ *A. J.* 31. 222, note.

¹² *A. J.* 48. 142.

¹³ Thorington, *Early American Ascents in the Alps*, pp. 24, 25.

¹⁴ Letter from Goodall to Auldjo, dated December 8, 1852, in a grangerised copy of the latter's book in the British Museum Library.

traced much about Goodall, but the following will fill in the little given by Montagnier.¹⁵

Alfred George Goodall was born at Fisherton, Wilts., on November 4, 1834, the son of an old Peninsular War soldier, Lieut. William Goodall, 52nd Regt. His father applied on January 23, 1845, for his son's admission as a Cadet at the R.M.A., Woolwich.¹⁶ Alfred Goodall was commissioned as Second Lieutenant, Royal Engineers, on February 17, 1851,¹⁷ and was duly promoted Lieutenant and Captain; and he died unmarried at Gibraltar on May 23, 1859.¹⁸

K. A. Chapman, therefore, in 1855 was about four months younger than Goodall had been in 1852, but it would seem that Venance Payot may have been younger still—only sixteen—at the time of his ascent in 1843.¹⁹

It is to be regretted that Chapman appears to have lost interest in mountaineering, as his record of climbs was very notable for those days and he might have gone far had he continued with the sport. He never joined the Alpine Club, though, as will be seen later, Vaughan Hawkins appears to have had him in mind as an original member.

WILLIAM BLACKER was born about 1836, the second and eldest surviving son of St. John Blacker, Lt.-Col. Indian Army (1786–1842). He was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, matriculating on June 8, 1854, at the age of eighteen.²⁰

William Blacker, companion of Chapman on the Wetterhorn in 1855, was another enterprising young man who started off well but did not continue his climbing. His record is slightly inferior to Chapman's:

1855

His Wetterhorn ascent is the only climb of his that I have traced.

1856

This year he engaged Peter Bohren²¹ for three weeks and made a tour from Grindelwald to Chamonix, via Zermatt. His entries are:

- (1) Tschingel glacier—presumably from Lauterbrunnen to Kandersteg.
- (2) Gemmi Pass, from Kandersteg.

¹⁵ *A. J.* 25. 640.

¹⁶ *P.R.O.*, London, W.O.54/842.

¹⁷ Information from W.O. Records Centre, Hayes, Middlesex.

¹⁸ *P.R.O.*, W.O.17/1845.

¹⁹ *A. J.* 54. 79/80.

²⁰ J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses, 1715–1886*, vol. 2, p. 117; *Burke's Landed Gentry of Ireland*, ed. 1912, p. 190.

²¹ Latter's *Führerbuch*, facsimile in A.C. Library, entry of August 19, 1856.

- (3) Monte Rosa on August 7, taking also as guide Johann Franz zum Taugwald.²²
- (4) Théodule Pass to Châtillon and on to Courmayeur.
- (5) Col des Fours (to St. Gervais) and Col de Voza (to Chamonix).
- (6) Failed in an attempt on Mont Blanc owing to bad weather.

F. Vaughan Hawkins, on December 8, 1857, writing to E. S. Kennedy, then busy with the formation of the Alpine Club, says: 'There was an Oxford man, Blacker of Ch. Ch. with whom Hort and myself made one of our unsuccessful attempts on Mont Blanc—he had been up the Wetterhorn with Chapman, and done Mt. Rosa and other things and was a very good fellow—I don't know whether you have heard of him.'²³

I have failed to find out anything further concerning Blacker; there appears to be nothing about him in the records of Christ Church, Oxford, for 1854 was the year before Dean Liddell began to keep biographical data of new members. He never joined the Alpine Club.

²² *A. J.* 31. 318, 337.

²³ *A. C.* archives.