

UNCLOUDED DAYS

1901-1914

BY R. L. G. IRVING

IT is a very special privilege to write of the early years of the present century. One reason is that those are the years of my own most active mountaineering, and for one who has received in full measure brimming over the rewards they have brought, they must appear a Golden Age enriched by memories which no sense of failure or frustration can ever tarnish.

There are other reasons, less dependent on individual preferences, for giving to this period an exalted place in mountaineering history. I see one when I look at the three shelves in my study which hold the sixty-odd volumes of the *ALPINE JOURNAL*. There in the centre of the middle shelf is Volume XXV, the largest of them all, a veritable keystone. It contains the doings of 1910 and that wonderful season of 1911. It is true that Volume XXVI and some that follow were fed with only half the quarterly numbers, but the girth tends to diminish, and of late it has needed two years to maintain this lessened size. For recent volumes, the distant ranges of the world have provided more material for the Editor. Of some forty expeditions described in Volume XXV, a bare dozen deal with mountains other than the Alps. In Volume LX, out of about two dozen expeditions, the Alps provide but two. The Alps have, in fact, almost ceased to supply the *JOURNAL* with the stories of exploration and adventure on which it must depend. Nevertheless, the Alps are still, and will remain, for British mountaineers, the main field of activity; for only a very limited minority have the leisure and the means or can rely on subsidies from newspapers or special funds to take part in expeditions to the more distant ranges of the world.

Another reason why the period of which I write has claims to pre-eminence is that it saw the splendid completion of the development of mountaineering as we knew it in the first fifty years of the Alpine Club, the attainment by climbers of what it was possible to accomplish by their natural powers, without artificial aids.

These climbs, where man's natural powers were tested to the limit, were still, in the case of British climbers, led by great guides, among whom Franz Lochmatter is probably the most famous. Franz was acknowledged by guides and amateurs to be almost in a class by himself. Let me quote what G. W. Young says of those wonderful moments

when he and Knubel joined Ryan and the Lochmatters on the summit of the Täschhorn, after Franz's supreme skill and courage had rescued the party from a desperate situation on the South face. ' Franz came across to meet me, and we shook hands. " You will never do anything harder than that, Franz." " No," he said reflectively, " man could not do much more ". ' In 1943, the last part of this climb was repeated by four of the best Swiss climbers. Four pitons were used on the terrible pitch up which Franz had led, and Charles Gos tells us : '*Roch ne comprend pas comment Franz a pu franchir le passage avec ses souliers à clous et sans pitons. . . . Evidemment que Franz était Franz !*' And Georges de Rham, who led up, considers that ' even with all the resources of modern technique, pitons, clasp-rings and rubber shoes, I thought it was exceptionally severe '.

In these pre-war years, many other notable climbs were planned by Young and led by Josef Knubel, whose skill and moods his employer came to know so well and to manage. In the season of 1911, the sort that climbers dream about and seldom experience, the Grandes Jorasses was climbed by Knubel, Young and H. O. Jones by the West ridge from the Col des Grandes Jorasses, and the same party with Laurent Croux descended the East ridge to the Col des Hirondelles, a drop of 2,500 ft. that had hitherto baffled all attempts on it. Mont Blanc was climbed by the Brouillard ridge from the Col Emile Rey, when, as Jones tells us : ' Young led rapidly up the easy serrated ridge over an apparently unending succession of rock towers ' up to the summit, while Knubel followed at some distance behind with the veteran Karl Blodig, exultant in having vanquished the latest distinctive peak to be added to the *Viertausender*. A few days later the Grépon was ascended from the Mer de Glace. Here Knubel was induced to show his quite exceptional powers, as we can gather from Young's comment in the ALPINE JOURNAL : ' It is matter for great regret that the hazard of the ascent of the slabs above the 200-ft. chimney—unless a rope was fixed from above—removes the climb outside the class of those that can be justifiably, or even sanely, led by more than two or three men now living.' We must remember that was written at a time when artificial aids to defeating natural obstacles and ensuring safety were not considered as necessary or, at least in Britain, a desirable part of an ambitious climber's outfit.

The traverse in 1914 of the impossible-looking towers and gaps of the West ridge of the Gspaltenhorn was Young's last great climb. For that, he and Knubel were joined by S. W. Herford, a particularly brilliant young cragsman, and a promising young guide, Hans Brantschen. Frequent use of the doubled rope and an occasional revelation of possibilities on the part of the mountain brought complete success. A short passage from Young's account in *On High Hills* may give some

idea of the climb and the climber : ' The first twenty feet were a clutch down the loose fretwork of the sconce. Then I had to depend almost entirely on the rope, and pendled down over the wall-corner of gliddery grey rock. Herford joined us on our blue balks—it was his first experience of this branch of rope-mechanics.'

One is struck at once, in comparing these accounts of climbing with those of earlier, and certainly those of pre-Mummery days, by the way the gap between the amateur and guide has narrowed. Young's paper ' Two Days with a Guide ' indicates it well, besides being an attractive illustration of the *panache* that makes one sometimes think of him as the Cyrano of British mountaineering. One day ending at tea-time includes the Charmoz, Grépon and Blaitière. ' The descent (from the Blaitière) was the most delightful bit of climbing I ever hope to enjoy. . . . The occasions on which the condition of the rocks, the condition of the weather and the condition of all the members of a party are all working in perfect harmony must be rare. The sensation of pure physical enjoyment, the sound mainspring of all our active sports, reaches its highest expression in climbing, and only there in perfection for short periods. Eye and ear and mind are all recording actively, but for the moment the indescribable joy of ease in conscious effort dominates all higher sensations while it contains them. Memory asserts that we floated down : Mayor may be consulted as to facts. " Ach, Herr ", Knubel commented sadly on the col, " wir machen noch manches zusammen, aber so klettern wir nie wieder ! " ' The passages quoted above should convey some idea of the standard of achievement attained by the best guides and amateurs of the period, as well as of one whose name will always be associated with its history.

A climb in the Eastern Alps that must also have bordered on the human limit of possibility was that of C. F. Meade led by Pierre Blanc on the Guglia di Brenta. A couple of ring-pitons in the sheer rock face led them to think they were on a route already made. Actually the pitons had been hammered in a few days before by an Austrian professor of gymnastics who had fallen to his death from above the higher piton. Some idea of the nightmare nature of the climb is given by Meade in his book *Approach to the Hills*, where he says : ' Throughout the long battle with the mountain my exclusive preoccupation had been a vivid conviction that to die in bed must be the most agreeable way of ending one's life.'

There were many other fine climbs made at this time, somewhat less notable and hazardous than those just mentioned, but convincing proof of how much the general standard of achievement had risen by the time the Alpine Club celebrated its fifty years of activity. It is the comparative ease with which the more difficult climbs of the period were made that is significant. Of his traverse of the Dent Blanche up the

Viereselsgrat—the name indicates Ulrich Almer's opinion of the ridge after the first ascent in 1882—and down by the West ridge, L. W. Rolleston could say : 'The actual climbing was not very difficult.' A few days before, the same party, Rolleston, Josef Lochmatter and Albert Chanton had made the ascent of the Nord End from Macugnaga. R. W. Lloyd's great climbs with Josef Pollinger included the ascent of the Brenva ridge in 1911 and the first descent in 1912, when the second guide Franz Imboden was struck by fragments falling from the ice-cliffs that almost invariably form a threatening fringe above the upper slopes. E. A. Broome was more active than ever in the years 1901-13. With young Alois Pollinger the Ober Gabelhorn was climbed by the long ridge from the Unter Gabelhorn in 1909 and the Nord End from Macugnaga in 1911 at the age of sixty-six. In the Dolomites he employed local men, making the first ascent of the Teufelswandspitze by the West face, which evidently suggested the mountain's name, and no less than three ascents of his special favourite, the South face of the Marmolata.

This was a period when the powers of the exceptional guide were fully understood and used by experienced amateurs, and their natural gift for climbing was sometimes enhanced by novel and brilliant technique. Here is an example from Young's description of the ascent of the Grépon from the Mer de Glace. 'Josef (Knubel) was in the throes of a last daring inspiration. He whipped his axe upward, balanced himself audaciously outward, and with lightning speed wedged the point of the axe-shaft into the crack above the bulge of the canopy, so that the axe-head projected horizontally and frailly into space, between our heads and the sky. . . . Using the wedged shaft as a horizontal bar, Josef dangled clear of the niche, and swung himself up on it as adroitly as a Japanese juggler, until he was standing upon it—over us and nothingness.'

And while these remarkable guided expeditions were being made, guideless parties were accomplishing climbs that were little inferior as tests of audacity, skill and endurance. The ascents of the Matterhorn by three amateurs, Cust, Colgrove and Cawood in 1876 and of the Meije by the two Pilkingtons and Gardiner in 1879 had been considered quite astonishing feats by all and unjustifiable temerity by some. Guideless ascents in the 'nineties, particularly in the Chamonix district by Mummery, Collie, Hastings, Slingsby and others had opened the door wider to guideless climbing. More important still, the rapid development of rock climbing in Britain had given our countrymen great encouragement to dispense with professional aid after learning with guides how to deal with snow and ice in the Alps.

So the opening years of the twentieth century saw the formation of mountaineering partnerships that carried out year after year a series

of expeditions that would have been considered unthinkable without the best available guides a few years earlier. That famous trio, Wilson, Wicks and Bradby, was extremely active in these pre-war years. As a test of all the qualities the High Alps may demand, their passage of the Col de la Brenva in 1904 can hardly be surpassed for severity. Late in the day, confronted at the top of the steep slopes above the famous arête by an unbroken wall of ice, they had to cut a way across a long stretch of 'steep slippery ice, of a hardness unknown to us before, and with a curious quality of viscosity, which gave the impression of cutting into something that would not chip. . . . And every step had to be a fairly ample one—some to take both feet—and everywhere a rail of handholds undercut to give a grip . . . and we all know that each would have been three times as safe without the rope.' That last sentence is an eloquent testimony to the individual worth of the party! Of Claude Wilson's 360 main expeditions, 238 were made without guides, 169 with Wicks, 157 with Bradby. Up to 1914, according to E. L. Strutt, Wilson and his friends liked to avoid Club huts, starting from inns, often before midnight and descending to some inn on the far side.

In 1905 W. T. Kirkpatrick read a paper 'Ten Years without Guides'. He and his partner on the rope, R. P. Hope, paid particular attention to saving weight. It would be difficult, even at the present day, to collect a lighter set of extra clothing than 'a tussore silk shirt and shorts weighing together 6 oz., a sweater weighing $5\frac{1}{2}$ oz., wool slippers $3\frac{3}{4}$ oz.' Other weight-savers were an aluminium collar stud, oiled linen purse and crampons of 11 oz. the pair. The extra clothing was certainly worth carrying, for on their many expeditions a good many nights out were experienced, perhaps justifying Young's alteration in a title for the paper to 'Ten Years with sleepless Hope'. Another great partnership was that of W. N. Ling and Harold Raeburn. First British guideless ascent of the Matterhorn by the Zmutt Ridge and the first guideless ascent of the Disgrazia by the North face were two of their outstanding achievements in the Alps.

The volumes of the ALPINE JOURNAL that cover the years 1901-14 contain only two articles on climbing in Britain, one on Lliwedd by A. W. Andrews, one on the Coolins by J. M. A. Thomson. Posterity will be quite mistaken if it infers that it was a period of comparative inactivity for the Alpine Club in the British climbing grounds. The publication in 1906 and 1908 of the finely illustrated books by the brothers Abraham, *Rock-climbing in North Wales* and *Rock-climbing in Skye* are evidence of the rapidly increasing popularity of the new sport, and still more convincing proof of activity are the detailed descriptions and classification of climbs in *The Climbs on Lliwedd* by the two members of our Club, Andrews and Thomson, published in 1909 and in *Climbing in the Ogwen District*, by Thomson, published in 1910.

The preference of the pioneers for the comforting feel to back and knees of the walls of a gully in an alarmingly steep face was being transferred to the breezier situations on exposed buttresses, though Thomson was equally happy in close contact with either. On Lliwedd, 'the width of the chimney permits the climber to lie sideways at full length, and to wedge in the forearm above the head. With this as a lever and anchor it is possible to writhe up one to two feet. Friction, materially increased by inspiration, provides the mainstay, while the arm is moved up. The process is repeated until the third dimension of man precludes all possibility of further progress. One hand now grasps a yellow stone in the fissure ; the right leg is brought out of the chimney and thrust up to a sloping step on the face. A strenuous effort is then needed to overcome the combined forces of friction and gravity and escape from the vice.' On a buttress of Sgurr nan Gilleann, 'A broad ledge ran off to the left, but straight before us rose a blackish wall, almost sheer-plumb near its base. From a tip-toe stance on a needle of rock, unsound but unyielding to downward pressure, it was just possible to plant the left foot on a far hold over the gap of the gully. By a resolute spring and a simultaneous swing over of the right foot up to a higher notch, a first lodgment was effected on the wall.' Evidently a pretty impressive experience, if it fixed the details so clearly in the memory !

It was in this period that Pen-y-pass developed into the wonderful hub of climbing, fun and fellowship described by Geoffrey Young in a chapter contributed to *The Mountains of Snowdonia*, by Carr and Lister. The Miss Pritchard who had looked after me and my pupil and a Swiss guide in the Dolbadarn Hotel at Llanberis in the spring of 1900 had become Mrs. Owen of Pen-y-pass when I stayed there in January of 1902 with R. K. Parr. Some of our orders at meals, owing to our ignorance of Welsh, had to be communicated to the waitress by gestures.

A photograph taken of a group staying there one Easter before the war of 1914-18 shows us some of the men who did most to make this period great in British as well as Alpine mountaineering. Besides Young and Thomson there is Percy Farrar, whose all-round knowledge of mountains and mountaineers, his encouragement to all manner of mountaineering enterprise among the young, and whose contributions to the ALPINE JOURNAL, particularly in the years of war that followed, have left enduring proofs of his place in the history of the Club. His candid and forcible language was also much treasured ; it might be by Mallory, when inviting him across what he considered a too chancy passage on the slabs of Lliwedd, or by the three roped parties who were summoned 'to form a semi-circle at dusk round the head of the Yr Ysfa Gully in order to hear Captain Farrar—that backbone of



Photo, W. F. Donkin, 1883]

MONT BLANC AND THE AIGUILLES OF CHAMONIX FROM THE DRU.

British greater mountaineering—express at length his full and frank opinion about its obstructiveness as he emerged’.

Oscar Eckenstein is in the group, a great explorer of ways and means in climbing. He was not a member of the Club and owing to my limited knowledge I only associate his name with specially long sharp crampons, with having endured and survived on the Godwin Austen Glacier what must be one of the longest snowstorms on record, and as the principal subject of a notice I received of a meeting of the Climbers’ Club—H. V. Reade helped to secure its cancellation—to decide whether Mr. O. E.’s leg had or had not trembled on one of the holds of the steep pitch of Twll Du. As a result of that notice a tremor of the leg caused by a too prolonged and strained retention of a toe-hold was commonly referred to in my parties as an ‘eckenstein’. I have myself many happy memories of both Pen-y-pass and Pen-y-gwryd, generally during Christmas holidays. On my honeymoon in April 1908 my wife and I occupied what is now Owen’s office with the window looking down the valley, and I remember how the opening of the window at the top by a single inch caused the blind to fly out horizontally. When we turned out to make way for Mr. Young’s large Easter party, we went down to Pen-y-gwryd to occupy what is now the office near the door.

Few pages of the ALPINE JOURNAL are devoted to climbs in Britain. Nevertheless, members of our Club did much to make this period one of rising standards of achievement, of discovery and exploration of new routes, above all, of infecting the young with the desire that only mountains can satisfy.

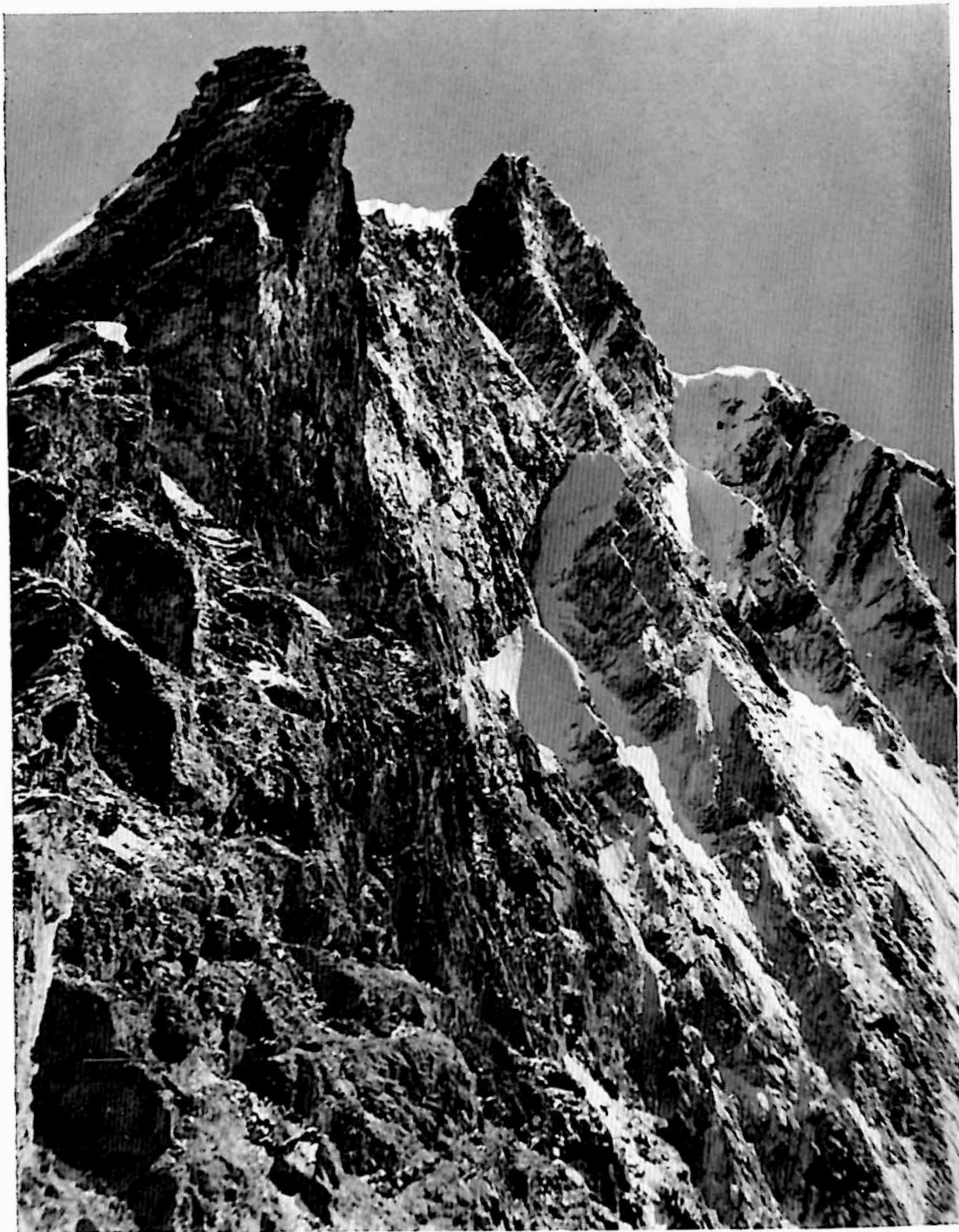
The very first number of the JOURNAL in the present century opens with a paper by Conway, whose insatiable appetite for enlarging his knowledge of mountains had already taken him to nearly all the great ranges of the world, as well as traversing the ‘Alps from End to End’, and producing with Coolidge a series of Climbers’ Guides to most of their chief groups. In that paper he surveys possible fields of future activity: ‘The exploration of the Alps is nearly complete. . . . By accident, not by design, the exploration of the mountains of the world has become a characteristic work of our Club, and the first record of such explorations is the noteworthy feature of our JOURNAL. I maintain that the time has now come when this spontaneous development should be adopted as the Club policy, when the Club should frankly look beyond the Alps, and constitute itself the centre and chief home of mountain exploration in general.’

It is almost certainly true today, as it has been throughout the whole century of mountaineering history, that the ascent of some great peak unclimbed before by any route must have priority in the ambitious plans or dreams of any man who has the urge to climb within him. Only a few men, in the years that followed the reading of that paper



p, W. F. Donkin, 1883]

THE WEISSHORN. *Left to right* : NORTH RIDGE, WEST FACE, SCHALLIGRAT, SOUTH FACE, EAST RIDGE.



Photo, F. A. Smith]

SOUTH FACE OF TÄSCHHORN FROM TEUFELSGRAT.

had the means that Conway had of going far afield to climb, and for many weeks on end. Yet the record of adventure in distant ranges is impressive, even in the days before flying enabled them to be reached in hours instead of days. Rolleston and Longstaff without guides carried through a successful campaign in the Caucasus in 1903, when Tiktengen was climbed for the first time. Another first ascent, the West peak of Shkara gave them their first experience of being benighted high up. Downy coats and downy sleeping sacks were not then part of what British climbers carried. 'The rocks were too difficult to explore by candle-light, and we had to be content with an uncomfortable narrow ledge. We could not hitch the rope anywhere, and were much too insecure to think of trying to sleep—the height of our bivouac was at least 14,500 ft. Neither of us had been benighted before, and up till midnight we endured the experience fairly well; afterwards we found it horribly cold, while clouds gathered and a little rain fell. We kept our feet from frost-bite by putting them in the rucksacks together with the lighted lantern; but when we tried to improve matters by adding our aluminium stove, we had more heat than we had bargained for, and destroyed a rucksack and a pair of stockings.'

Foreign climbers did a great deal of exploration of the main peaks of the Caucasus at this time, which may partly account for our neglect of the range in the ensuing years, but Ling and Raeburn found several unclimbed peaks of about 14,000 ft. to reward them in 1913.

Norman Collie had been finding the adventure and the mountain beauty that he loved in the Lofoten Islands, when he went there with Woolley, Hastings and Priestman in 1901; 'rock climbing as good as any one could wish to get, the rock resembling in many respects that of the Chamonix Aiguilles'. And between whiles, contemplative hours 'where the wondrous summer skies slowly change their exquisitely rich colouring of long-drawn-out evening for the more delicate tints of early dawn, and where the restless waves of the great Arctic Ocean are for ever washing against the precipitous sides of the bare, rock-girt mountains'. In 1903, Collie was there again with Slingsby, the 'Father of Norwegian Mountaineering', and the latter's son Will. The party made two grand climbs up the West and East peaks of Rulten: 'its slabs and precipices may be said to start almost out of the sea, and any mountain that can give 3,000 ft. of bare rock, most of it set at an angle of over 70°, must be treated with respect'.

Collie went to the Canadian Rockies with Woolley and Stutfield in 1902, then an almost virgin field for exploration and adventure for the mountaineer. 'For should he climb to the summit of any peak, even near the railway, big enough to give an extensive view, by far the greater number of the mountains and peaks that can be seen stretching



Photo, Georges de Rham]

ON THE SOUTH FACE OF THE TÄSCHHORN.
The climbers are André Roch and Alfred Tissières.

in every direction, as far as the eye can see to the horizon, are as yet untrodden by human feet.' This was not the first or last of Collie's visits.

Whymper had been out in 1901 with a strong lot of Alpine guides to boom the Rockies for the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, but he was a restraint rather than a stimulus to their activities ; Klucker, one of the party, has told us how he envied James Outram, who with two other guides made the first ascent of Mt. Assiniboine. V. A. Fynn and E. O. Wheeler (now Sir Oliver Wheeler), who has done so much for parties visiting the Rockies, ascended Hungabee in 1909 from the camp of the Canadian Alpine Club by Lake O'Hara. Both became members of the A.C. in 1911. Of Fynn, Captain Farrar wrote : ' Taking him all round, fair weather and foul, it is unlikely that Fynn, among amateurs, has ever had a superior.'

From the camp at Lake O'Hara that same year, Hastings, Amery and Mumm with his guide Moritz Inderbinen made a fine attempt to climb Mt. Robson from the east. This was the first of Amery's visits to the mountains of Canada ; his appreciation of the camp was unbounded : ' The marvellous beauty of our surroundings, the glorious days out, the singing of songs and telling of stories round the blazing camp fire after supper, the well-earned rest on fragrant mattresses of springy spruce fronds, and, above all, the cheery kindness of our Canadian hosts and hostesses—these are indeed memories to cherish and a constant lure to draw us back again.' It is hardly surprising that on the termination of his work as Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs in 1929, his ' reflections on leaving Downing Street were not " The Empire, how I leave the Empire ", but " Now I can manage a climb in the Rockies ! " ' And he did, making the first ascent of Mt. Amery.

In 1910 Longstaff ascended the North-west face of Mt. Assiniboine with Rudolf Aemmer. I think I have said enough to show that in these pre-war years the Alpine Club was not unmindful of the Canadian Rockies.

On the other side of the world, Walter Weston had been discovering the mountains of Japan. Standing on the highest point of Ho-o-zan he could say, ' In the name of the Alpine Club I annexed the Phoenix Peak.' Having climbed Fuji-San on a spring day long before ' The goddess of the Sacred Peak, She who maketh the trees to blossom ' was supposed to be at home to visitors, and descended by a different way, Weston and his party were assumed to be lost, ' a party of foreigners ' who were ' supposed to be British, since they only take pleasure in such risks '. Weston must have done much to transform the Japanese, who were already mountain lovers, into the enthusiastic climbers they later became.

Even the mist-enshrouded Mountains of the Moon, the Ruwenzori

Range, were included in the Club's field of activity. Freshfield and Mumm with Moritz Inderbinen went to explore them in 1905; unfortunately, vile weather defeated them when they reached the snows at over 14,000 ft. Better luck attended the Duke of the Abruzzi in 1906. He had been a member of our Club since 1894 and his party included another warm friend of British mountaineers, Vittorio Sella, who was for many years one of our honorary members. This party made an almost complete conquest of the Ruwenzori Range, christening the two highest peaks Queen Margherita and Queen Alexandra.

It was fitting, however, that the highest mountains of the world should provide the greatest achievements of this period. In those years General C. G. Bruce, who had shared the Nanga Parbat adventure with Mummery, Collie and Hastings in 1895, continued his exploration of the Himalaya and its inhabitants. In his obituary of Bruce, Longstaff writes: 'His greatest contribution to mountaineering came through his wide knowledge of the tribes of the Himalaya. It was he who first trained Gurkhas for serious mountain work. He started the Baltis of Kashmir and the Bhotias of Garhwal on the upward path, a lead which Kellas so ably followed. But his great discovery was the value of the Sherpa, a Tibetan tribe long settled in Nepal. These, with their purer Tibetan cousins, have long been the mainstay of every Himalayan expedition of recent years.'

Expeditions to the Himalaya before the war were generally led by Alpine guides. Here are two typical extracts from Bruce's diary of ascents made in 1912 with Capt. O. E. Todd and Heinrich Führer.

'July 16. Capt. T. and Self arrived Gondla at 5 P.M. and left at 6 P.M. after lunching; tried to race over the Tilbu-ri or Rangka La, 14,800 ft., before dark; got into bad weather and did not get off till 2 A.M. *Very young performance.* Arm in sling still.'

'Aug. 14. Ascent of higher aiguille beyond Todd's; rough and rotten climb; final arête good and interesting rocks. Wonderful view from summit; both the Chandra and Bhaga Rivers are seen. Gorgeous view of group to the S., unnamed and unmeasured. Height of our point 20,000 ft. as near as can be. Final climb.'

It was Longstaff who gave the most convincing proof of the possibility of the great achievements in the Himalaya that were to follow after each of the two World Wars. The performance on Gurla Mandhata in 1905 of Longstaff and the brothers Henri and Alexis Brocherel was a remarkable demonstration of what could be done at great heights. Two days and nights spent on the great peak of over 25,000 ft. gave them much to remember! The first afternoon, after climbing to 23,000 ft., occurred the avalanche. 'Just as I turned to take in the slack of Henri's rope I heard a sharp, hissing sound above me: Henri, lying flat and trying to stop himself, came down on the top of me and

swept me from my hold. As I shot past Alexis I felt his hand close on the back of my coat, and we went down together. . . . I could do nothing but try and keep on the surface of the avalanche. Then somehow I got turned round with my head downwards. . . . I seemed to rise on a wave of snow and dropped over a low cliff, with Henri mixed up in my part of the rope. . . . On we went with the rope round my neck this time ; but it was easy to untwist it. Then came a longer drop, which I thought must be the last from my point of view. The next thing I remember was that suddenly, to my intense surprise, the rope tightened round my chest, stopping me with a jerk which squeezed all the breath out of my body.'

The axes were all recovered, a small platform of rock found. 'We put on what spare clothes we had and curled up for the night.' And next day they resumed the ascent of the Gurla glacier! Under a scorching sun, Alexis insisted on Longstaff wearing his topi, and early in the afternoon collapsed with a violent headache. The other two would not leave him, so a hole was dug in the snow and the night passed at about 23,000 ft. No appetite was felt for dinner and such was the cold that a start was made by lantern light at 2.30. Halting to wait for daylight to find the way past the overhanging wall of a crevasse, cold and exhaustion compelled a retreat. 'I was utterly exhausted,' writes Longstaff, 'and Alexis, not yet recovered from his headache, was in little better case. For Henri it must be said that he was not only willing to go on, but very much disappointed at my refusal to do so. I quite believe that had I allowed it, he would have gone to the top alone. The altitude appeared to have no effect whatever on him.'

Earlier in this 'Six Months Wandering in the Himalaya', the party had reached a pass at over 19,000 ft. on the rim of the Nanda Devi basin and had gone some distance up the immensely long South ridge of the East Peak.

Bruce, Mumm and Longstaff had hoped to attempt the exploration and possibly the ascent of Everest in 1907 from the Tibetan side, but the proposal was vetoed by the Home Government. Another visit to Garhwal was a consolation and relief as well as a disappointment to Longstaff. With the two Brocherels and Karbir he climbed Trisul, and even insisted on continuing to a further point beyond it, in case this should prove a few feet higher. 'The distance was very short, and I soon crawled on to the cornice and looked over the edge down the astounding southern precipice of Trisul, a sheer drop of over 6,000 ft. I remember no feeling of elation at having accomplished the ascent—I suppose I was too tired for that—but on looking round me I realised as I have seldom done before that higher reward which carries us year after year, through toil and discomfort, back to the mountains. Remote from the world, the sense of isolation was complete ; the inhabited

earth was at our feet, but we stood on a different planet, removed from it by undreamed of spaces ; and the turmoil of the elements around us intensified the indescribable majesty of that stupendous vision.'

Two years later, Longstaff exchanged the exhausting fight to reach the summit of a great peak for the more pleasurable excitements of exploration in the Karakorums. In his paper on the Saltoro Pass he writes : ' In high Asia the former is so absurdly fatiguing, that the confirmed Himalayan traveller is very sure, sooner or later, to surrender himself entirely to the charms of the latter. There is another not unimportant consideration. The capture of a single big peak requires special supplies and outfit and either Alpine guides or well-trained companions ; in other words, a large party and a long purse.' Recent Everest expeditions have certainly shown the truth of those last words.

In that same year, 1909, the Duke of the Abruzzi, whose party included Vittorio Sella and the two Brocherels who had been with Longstaff, was in the Karakorums. The defences of K2 proved too formidable for a party without the experience and modern equipment of post-war years. On the East ridge of Bride Peak, a record height of 24,600 ft. was reached and it was not the effects of altitude that stopped the ascent. ' The mist was dense, the day mild, and the condition of the snow very bad. They were now about 500 feet from the summit ; the way ahead lay along a snow crest with a great cornice on one side barely visible in the mist, while on the other was the precipitous wall where the snow gave no foothold. The Duke considered that the risk of proceeding in these conditions was too great. So, at 3.30, after waiting two hours in vain for a break in the mist, he ordered the descent.' One of the most encouraging features of this fine climb was that ' during the whole ascent, in spite of the steepness of the slope and of the mass of soft snow in which they sank up to above the knee, the speed was slow but regular, with short halts every fifteen minutes, and no one felt any excessive fatigue.'

Kamet with its height of well over 25,000 ft. had become an obvious attraction. C. F. Meade, on his third visit to the Himalaya, camped at about 23,000 ft. on the East side of the mountain. Insufficient acclimatisation, as well as heavy snow, precluded any chance of success. In his book, *Approach to the Hills*, Meade says : ' I noticed that the snow was getting deeper, and I realised from the state of my exhaustion at starting, that it was a hopeless job.' His guide, Pierre Blanc, with two Bhotias, tried to push on up the final ridge and found snow above their knees, while higher up it might have been necessary to take to the face on snow likely to avalanche. They came down to rejoin Meade.

An almost simultaneous attack on Kamet was being made by A. M. Slingsby, one of the very best of the young mountaineers who fell in the First World War. Here are one or two sentences from a letter he wrote

to his father, W. C. Slingsby: 'I set off on May 29 with six sepoy and two coolies. We spent two nights at 19,000 ft. in that awful storm. We had very good Whymper and Mummery tents, which we had the greatest difficulty to prevent being blown away. They got nearly full of snow inside, and our bedding froze to the floor. During a lull in the hurricane we fled to Ghastoli after two nights of misery.' After more snow at camps at 19,600 ft. and 22,800 ft. on June 8 and 9, 'we struggled up fresh snow towards the Gendarme, but at 23,350 ft. I was obliged to order a retreat. . . . Clouds came down on the Gendarme, the wind was fearful and four of us had frost-bitten feet.' They got down somehow to Ghastoli. 'I was unconscious the whole of the following day. The doctor, who happened to be 40 miles away, came up as quickly as possible, but only saw me four days after. I had started on my trip with influenza, so I imagine I was really too much run down to do what I attempted. I did not know this, and as an example to spur up my men, I had carried a 34 lb. load on the glacier. Anyhow, whatever I had it was very severe, and, so far from any European friends, I was apparently very fortunate to live through it.' As Mallory wrote ten years later from Everest: 'It sounds more like war than sport, and perhaps it is.'

One of the most enterprising Himalayan explorers of the period was A. M. Kellas, a native of Aberdeen, whose passion for wandering in mountains was nourished in the Cairngorms, where he used to camp for days under the Shelter Stone at the head of Loch Avon. His companions in the Himalaya were usually only coolies. Yet in the Sikkim Himalaya in 1911 his many ascents included Pauhunri (23,180 ft.) and Chomiomo (22,430 ft.). In teaching his coolies how to use a rope and deal with snow and ice he was brave and successful. I quote from a long, interesting paper he read to the Club in 1912: 'It was abundantly proved during this portion of the descent that the cloth boots worn by the coolies were not satisfactory on ice. It was misty and snowing and it was difficult to keep the ice steps clear. Twice Sona fell out of the ice steps, and on the second occasion he very nearly pulled me down, because he was so long—probably at least twenty seconds—before he managed to wriggle back into them.' And in another paper read a year later on the ascent of Kangchenjau, there is a thrilling account of an involuntary glissade, which almost suggests he was trying to better that of Longstaff on Gurla Mandhata. 'I was re-examining the ice-slope to the left, when suddenly, with a startled exclamation, Anderkyow slipped from his steps, Nona seemed to move practically simultaneously, and I certainly did not hold them for even one second. Within a few moments of Anderkyow's slip we were whizzing down the ice-slope with the speed of an express train.' Kellas estimated the vertical distance fallen at about 1,000 ft. at an average speed of forty to fifty miles per hour, though he considers that 'for the inexperienced, computation

of time is interfered with during such a rapid descent ! ' During the descent ', he continues. ' I was conscious of two tremendous jolts. . . . The impact threw me on my side with my length almost at right angles to our direction of motion, and for a critical second my feet were slightly higher than my head. By an extraordinary effort I managed to turn back into the normal glissading position, and almost immediately after, a second jerk threw me on my back.' I doubt if many of us humbler mountaineers could say, as Kellas did, as he picked himself out of the snow at the bottom : ' I felt flushed and excited.' Learning mountaineering with Kellas could not have been dull ! One might imagine that these involuntary glissades are a stock attraction of Himalayan climbing. Kellas took upon himself the sole responsibility for all he did, and the credit for all he achieved is entirely his. Collie in his obituary of him considers that ' this continuous strain was probably the cause of his sudden death from heart failure ' on the approach to Everest in 1921. He was one of those who learned their serious mountaineering without professional assistance and who were quite independent of it when the long series of assaults on Everest began after the war. In a paper published in 1917 he concludes : ' A man in first-rate training acclimatised to maximum possible altitudes could make the ascent of Mount Everest without adventitious aids, provided that the physical difficulties above 25,000 ft. are not prohibitive.' Members of the Club went near to confirming that in 1924 and 1933.

The New Zealand Alps were too far away to be visited by more than a very few British climbers fifty years ago, and spells of fine weather lasting several days are rare. C. A. Macdonald was defeated in both his attempts to climb Mt. Cook with Jack Clarke in 1903 ; the first by vile weather trying Fyfe's route, the second by the new snow on the rocks of the long Zurbriggen arête. In 1909 L. M. Earle with Clarke and the two Grahams made a new ascent of Mt. Cook by the West face above the Hooker glacier, hitherto considered impassable. But much of the serious mountaineering was done by members of the A.C. living in New Zealand, who splendidly upheld its traditions and its enterprise. Two names are outstanding, those of A. P. Harper, elected to the A.C. in 1892, and G. E. Mannering, elected in 1891 ; both were honorary members for many years. Others were Dr. E. Teichelmann, an exceptionally fine photographer, elected in 1903, the Rev. H. E. Newton elected in 1908 and R. S. Low elected in 1913. In his obituary of Teichelmann, Harper says : ' I think his first serious work above the snow line was in 1900 or 1901 and he kept it up until 1914. His most successful high climbing was done with Canon H. E. Newton, between 1902 and 1907, with that great guide Alec Graham. This party was, I think, as strong a combination as any in the history of the Southern Alps.' Low's most active climbing was ended when he

slipped on hard snow coming down alone from Graham's Saddle, broke the socket of his ankle and lay above the snowline with very little food for ten days before the rescue party arrived.

The Alpine Club celebrated its Jubilee in 1907. It was a great event, especially for the younger members like myself, for some of the eminent figures of the earliest years of the Club's existence were there to remind us of the sure foundations on which our mountain faith is based. There was Alfred Wills, who described himself as 'one of that little band who braved the scorn of Ruskin and the sarcasms of the Press, and were held up as lunatics and madmen, if not something worse . . . and have succeeded in bringing about the establishment and development of this Club in a manner which has commended itself to the sympathies of the kindly and generous audience which I have the honour of addressing.' There was Llewelyn Davies to reassure us about the present and the future: 'As inaccessible heights the Alps may be said to have disappeared, but these eternal mountains still remain in their white glory, to be an inexhaustible delight to future generations, as they are to you of the present, and have been to us of the past.' And Freshfield, to me the greatest figure in the Club's history, asked: 'Will the company which dines here fifty years hence include the conqueror of Mount Everest?' And he went on: 'Fifty years hence the fact that a British Cabinet sent to St. Petersburg to beg the Russian Government to join it in forbidding access to the highest mountain on the earth's surface will be remembered only as an anachronism.' I wonder how many members of the Club remember it even as an anachronism?

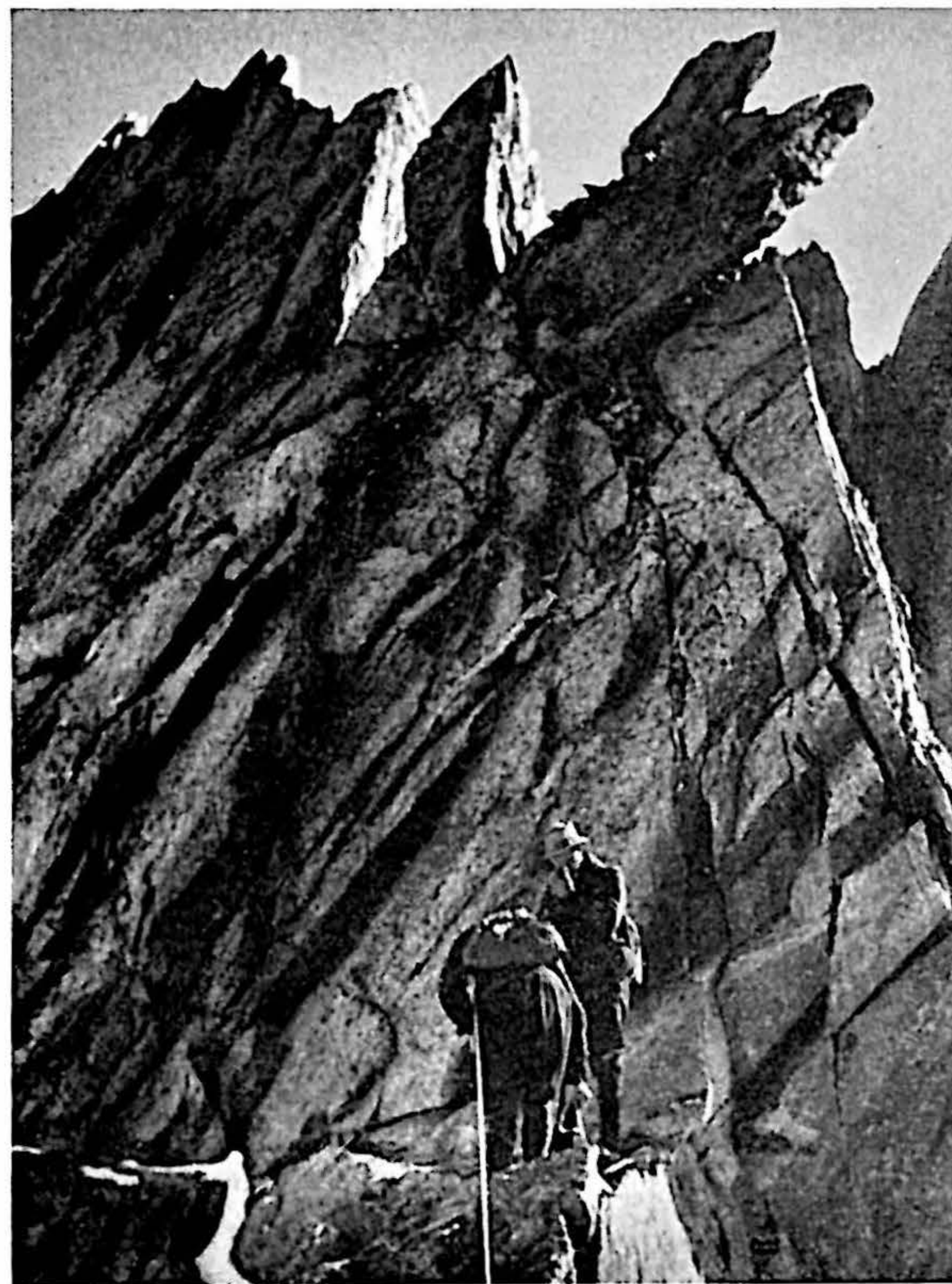
It was a great event for a young man whose Alpine career had just begun, to lunch with H. B. George at New College, to meet Martin Conway, or just to see Freshfield enter the Club and observe the way he was regarded. These links with the pioneers contributed to make those years a Golden Age; still more did some of the papers in the JOURNAL, of which George Yeld was Editor from 1896 to 1919. I am not thinking so much of the descriptions of feats accomplished as of what was written by men who loved mountains deeply and unreservedly, whose satisfaction in a climb was in no danger of being affected by its place in the Munich or any other scale. In his paper 'The Alps', Godley could write without any shame that 'Having walked and waded over leagues of very bad snow' on the Adler, he found that he had 'discovered an entirely new and unmixed pleasure'. He could also write of the British Hills in retrospect:

'Theirs is the heart of the hills who fare in snow and in sunshine;
Threading a slippery path, skirting a rocky abyss,
Theirs is the pleasure of life, and the ultimate bliss of achievement;
Show me a sport on earth keener and cleaner than this!'



Photos, H. O. Jones]

FIRST ASCENT OF MER DE GLACE FACE OF THE GRÉPON.
KNUBEL AND BROCHEREL. AUGUST 19, 1911.

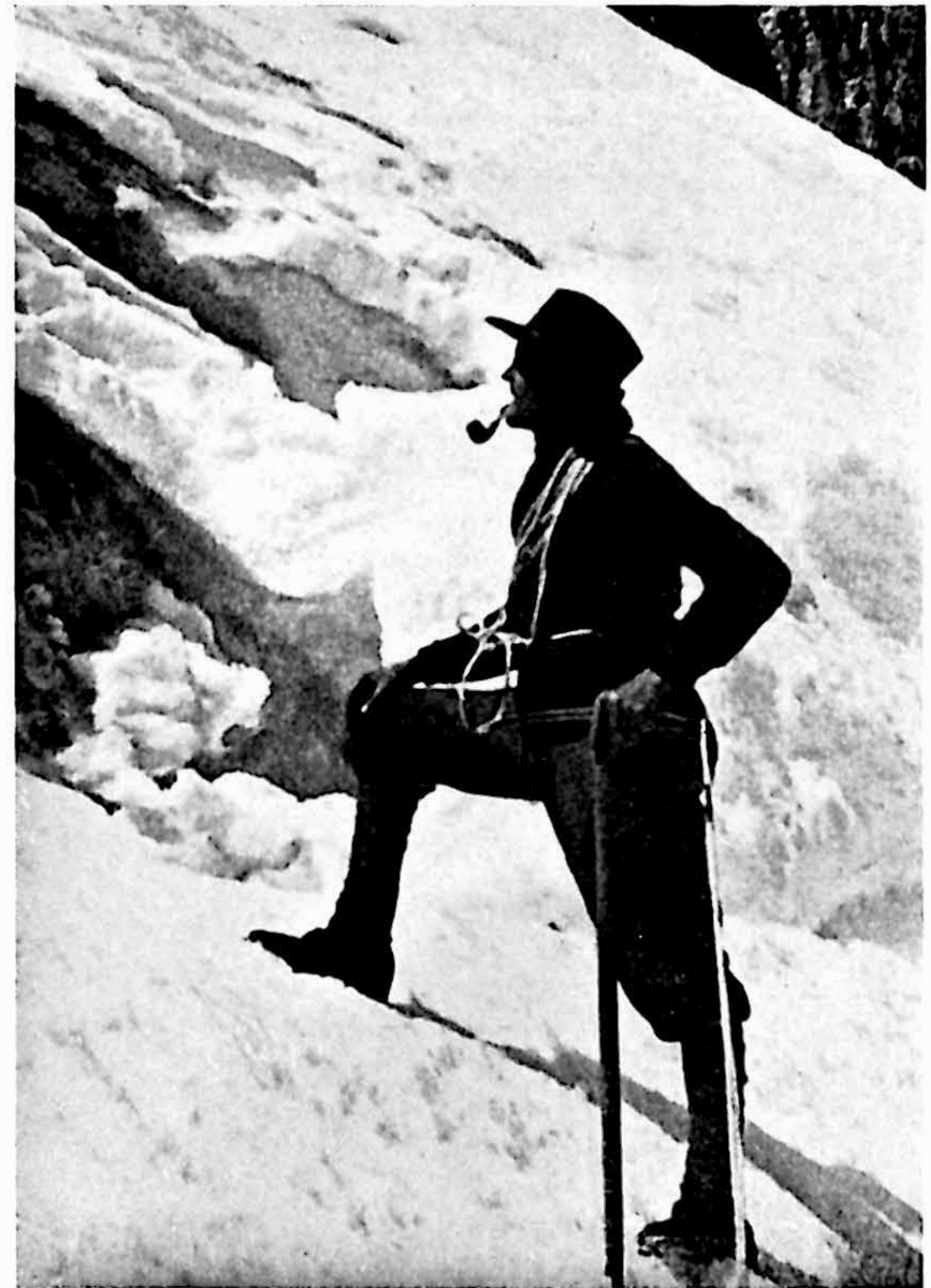
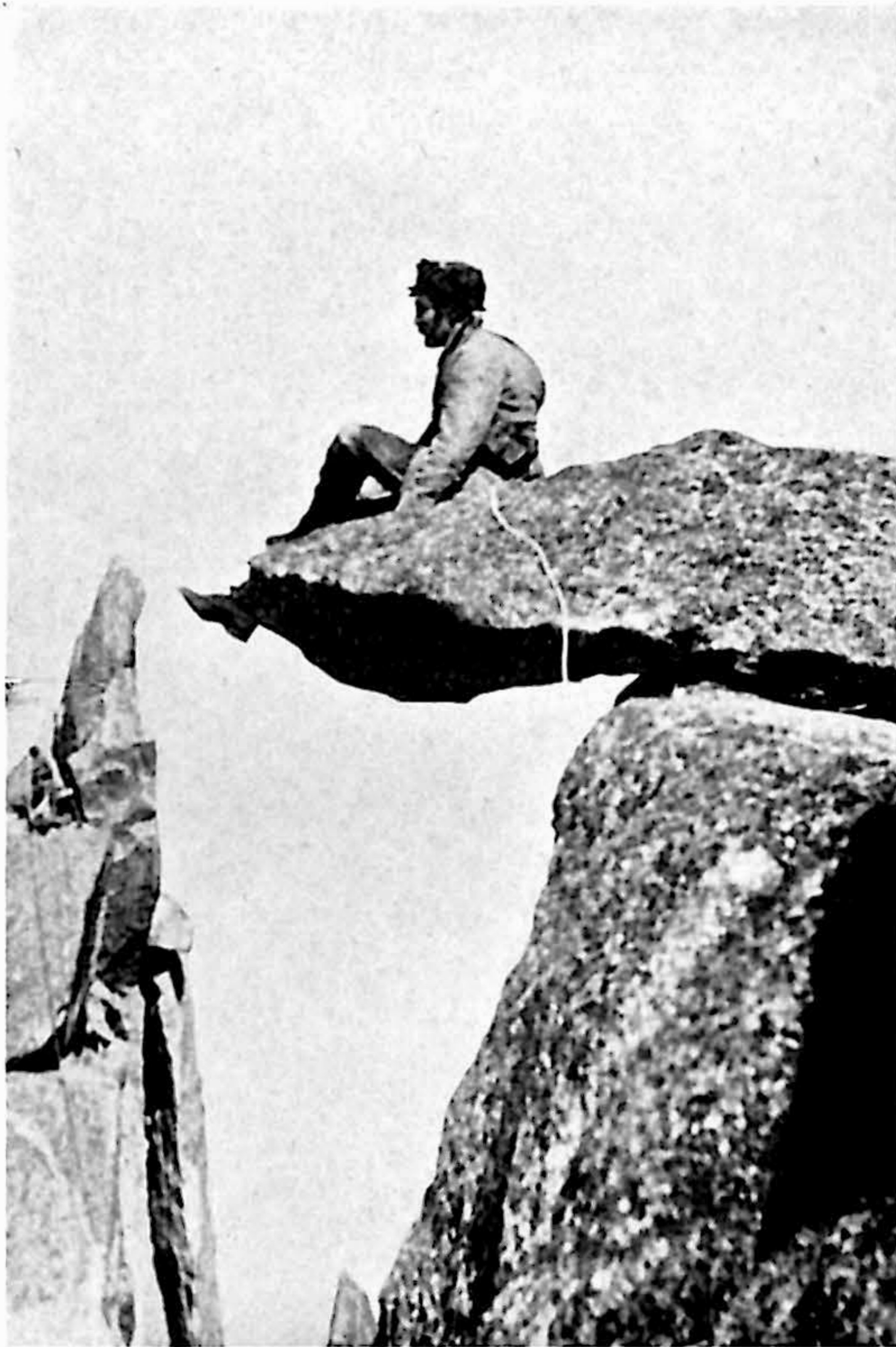


FIRST ASCENT OF WEST RIDGE OF GRANDES JORASSES.
KNUBEL and G. W. YOUNG. AUGUST 14, 1911.

F. W. Bourdillon in 'Another Way of Mountain Love' speaks of 'the ideal joy that only mountains give—the unreasoned, uncovetous, unworldly love of them we know not why, we care not why, only because they are what they are'. To Collie, a famous rock climber, 'The Aiguilles round Mont Blanc are architectural in the highest degree, but the mighty summit rising up far above them into the blue sky, draped in wonderful and sweeping lines of snow and ice, marvellously strong, yet full of moderation, is far more mysterious, far more beautiful, than all the serrated ridges and peaks that cluster round its base'. Donald Robertson, in an appreciation of G. W. Young's poems in *Wind and Hill*, acknowledges that 'for some of us at least the most potent spell is not danger, nor beauty, not fullness of life, but a simple call, a sense of craving when we are not with the mountains, of content when they stand about us'.

I must say something about the way of mountaineering I myself pursued in the years 1904-14, that of the amateur guide; partly because it produced a protest signed by several prominent members of the Club, mainly because I believe it to be the most rewarding of all forms of mountaineering. The protest followed a paper I read entitled 'Five Years with Recruits', the five years being 1904-8. The rankness of my offence lay mainly in the first year, when three traverses were made with novices, of the Combin and Monte Rosa with George Mallory and Harry Gibson, of Mont Blanc with Mallory. I cannot imagine three climbs or two recruits better designed by Providence to set me irrevocably in the way of mountaineering I was to follow. Tyndale in *Mountain Paths* has told much of the story of subsequent years, and of how the sources of enjoyment remained fresh and rejuvenating though sought and found on increasingly familiar or less ambitious climbs. Young suggested the title of my paper might have been 'Five Years with Fortune', but Fortune continued so to smile that throughout the whole of this period of which I write, no sort of accident befell my party, and the only night it was compelled to pass upon the mountain-side left none but pleasant memories. My offence has been most generously forgiven; and particularly by a future President of the Club, who at the conclusion of my paper expressed horror at the idea of a son of his being exposed to the perils that threatened my recruits. His son came to my house at Winchester, a boy with many gifts, but quite hopeless at any sort of ball game, one of those who may discover for a first time on a mountain the satisfaction that comes from successful physical effort. Almost my last memory of him before he went out to be killed in France is on the Glydys in the dusk of a January day, when I had to dissuade him from choosing a dangerously steep and frozen short-cut on the descent to Pen-y-gwryd.

The career of an amateur guide is likely to suffer from periodical



TRAVERSE OF THE AIGUILLES DES GRANDS CHARMOZ, GRÉPON AND BLAITIÈRE IN A DAY. AUGUST 1906.

Geoffrey Winthrop Young on the Grépon . . . 'my own sofa was the outer end of the balanced block . . .'

Josef Knubel at the Col des Nantillons . . . 'the trim, tense dark little figure . . . ready to spring into the ascent. . . .'

(quotations from *On High Hills*.)

lowerings of achievement, apart from those due to increasing years. His early recruits may themselves become leaders, as Mallory did, or find their life's work in other parts of the world, as Bullock did ; and in my case, war produced not a few casualties among them. Expeditions suitable for the novices that succeed them are not the sort to provide material for printed record. Yet I know that those behind me on the rope have renewed for me the sense of discovery, the simple joy of handling the rocks and cutting steps that might seem to be the perquisite of youth. I have no records of achievement fit to compare with the great expeditions mentioned above. The best known is probably that of the first British ascent of Mont Blanc by the grand ridge of Mont Maudit, part of the frontier between France and Italy, in 1911, for all three of us, Mallory, Tyndale and I, have written about it ! Mont Blanc stands easily first in my affection for mountains, and I cannot imagine anything more likely to give a recruit in his first season a proper feeling for mountains than a traverse of this greatest of the Alps. Two such are for me treasured memories: one with Mallory, in 1904, up from the Dôme Hut and down by the Mur de la Côte to Chamonix; the other with Gilbert Murray's eldest son Dennis in 1909 from the Col du Géant over Mont Blanc du Tacul and down by the Dôme glacier to Courmayeur. On the latter occasion, soft snow after a spell of bad weather delayed us so much that we did not leave the summit till after 6 P.M. We passed the Dôme Hut early in the night, but failed, not surprisingly, to hit off the exact point where one rounds a buttress before the final simple descent on to the Miage glacier. After midnight we lay down on some rocks—it was not unpleasantly cold—to wait for dawn, and before long the moon rose and provided us with entrancing visions as it played upon the light mists on the immense slopes below the Bosses Ridge.

Sir Edwin Herbert, in what to me is the best of all the valedictory addresses of our Presidents, reminded us that ' Every great day in the mountains has for those who experience it a peculiar value of great worth '. A far less famous peak than Mont Blanc, the Grosshorn, provided Tyndale, Bullock and myself with all the ingredients that can make a day on a big Alpine peak a great experience, especially with the ingredient of the unexpected, which is more essential to true adventure than any known, anticipated difficulty. To this day I really do not know—or care—whether our descent was on virgin ground. Much the best attitude for the guideless climber is :

If only it be new to me,
What care I how new it be ?

The only information we had about it was given in Ball's *Guide to the Central Alps* published the previous year, 1907. There we learned

that ' the S. ridge did not give much trouble when in good condition ' but that ' it was frequently found to be either a narrow ridge of hard ice or so heavily corniced as to be impracticable '. Ours was, I fancy, the only ascent that year.

Two days of enforced idleness from the weather at Fafleralp had changed the pessimist of Saturday into the optimist of Monday, who, even at 4 A.M. could sense a hopeful tingle in the air and see beyond the inky mists that enveloped the hotel a vision of the cloudless skies that were presently to be. As we rose steadily up the slopes of Heimischeggen, the whole Mont Blanc Range came into view above the hills behind us, and one look assured us that the sun was going to be with us for the day, though the Grosshorn was the last of the surrounding peaks to have his cloud-cap finally removed. Some crusted snow on the steepening slopes of the Jägi glacier just failed to bear the few extra pounds of Guy's weight, but the higher we rose, the better the snow.

No route could have looked more inviting than the South ridge when we reached it ; it rose in a succession of ascending curves, with one steep pitch ; along its whole length on one side, a cornice curled over the precipices of dark rock above the Anen glacier, while on the other side, a great white slope of spotless snow fell like a well-hung robe to the Jägi glacier. The feel of the surface under our feet was perfection as we ran a hem of tracks or steps at a wise distance from the cornice.

Where our ridge joined the main crest dividing the Lötschental from the Lauterbrunnen Valley, we had our first view of the descent we hoped to make to the gap immediately below, actually the lowest point between us and the Mittaghorn. A point a few feet higher than where we stood was obviously the summit of the Grosshorn. The short ridge that connected us with it and seen against the background of intense blue sky was the loveliest bit of mountain architecture of the kind that I have ever seen :

And man the marvel seeing
Forgets his selfish being
For joy of beauty not his own.

Half an hour's vandalistic work with the axe might have enabled us to stand or sit on the delicate structure of ice that formed the Grosshorn's head. We were content to lay a hand on its exquisite cool surface, then turn back to see what our new descent had in store for us. There were three drops, some 400 ft. in all, and they gave us four hours of strenuous action, enforced waiting and anxious watching, at each of which we took our turn. Guy Bullock, usually our sheet anchor, came second to hold me, if need arose. The first drop was judged impracticable direct, with no convenient bollard for the spare rope. The only alternative was down the North face. It was horribly steep,

but enough snow had adhered to the ice to let me sometimes kick a step, with my nose against the mountain's very cold cheek, and a handhold of sorts here and there on outcropping rocks helped me on the traverse back to the ridge. I had a long, cold, anxious wait there, working my toes hard to retain feeling in them as I watched the others come down and drew in the rope.

The second drop we managed on steep rock ; the third and last was the worst ; I found it worse than a rather similar one at the start of the traverse from the Breitlauhorn to the Lötschentaler Breithorn nearly opposite us across the valley. I can remember no better moment on any climb than that in which I reached a sure haven at a small patch of really good snow close to the crest, where an axe could be buried almost to the head and the rope passed round it ; something like 180 ft. of rope separated me from Hal Tyndale. Those were bad moments as I watched the other two come down. Quite unnecessary anxiety on my part, for they never looked like breaking a step in the rather breakable stuff often found on steep north faces.

It was now 4 o'clock. A formidable gendarme obstructed the way along the ridge towards the Mittaghorn, whence we had a thought of descending to the hut on the Lötschën-lücke with a view to the Aletschhorn next day. Immediately below where we stood was a grim couloir. Hacking away a piece of the cornice that overhung it I lay on my stomach and looked over. Anything dropped would have hit nothing for 40 ft. ; it was the sight of snow in the lower part of the couloir and the very uncertain temper of the gendarme ahead that made us choose the former. Guy and Hal found a firm stance a little way up the ridge, to hold me as I went down from the side into the couloir. The worst part was where it narrowed, the surface being hard ice and not far from vertical, and it was impossible to swing the axe freely. The two above had a long, trying wait. Below the narrows was a beautifully sheltered nook where I could watch the tiny fragments dislodged from the steps pass overhead as they came steadily down. Then another staircase in steep but more comforting conditions to the full extent of the long rope and the last period of waiting. The lights on the high South wall of the Lötschental turned to gold and the last crimson flush was fading off the Aletschhorn as we slid happily over the fanning-out snow of the long couloir on to the gentler slopes of the Anen glacier. The snow on its surface was already crusted by frost and scraped our shins, the moraine in the dark caused tribulation but Fafleralp was reached before midnight.

I have given the above to illustrate a perfect day for the amateur guide of this period with companions in their fourth season in the Alps. It was the most testing climb we did ; and one does not find in mountaineering the best of all recreations by constantly subjecting the human

machine to severe tests. As an achievement it has, like all such achievements, a diminishing value. Today, with a piton or two and some hundred feet of nylon rope, the climb could be done in a fraction of the time. If we had had them with us, I should be without one of the many memories I treasure.

My last climbs of the period were made with two novices while we were marooned in Switzerland in August 1914. Our enforced 'Flight into Italy' is described in the JOURNAL. The days that followed, especially, I think, the day when we had the Matterhorn entirely to ourselves on a gloriously fine August morning, must have given them good things to remember in the next few months. To have helped them to those memories is better than a new ascent. Both were killed in the War.

Let it be quite clear that the amateur guide is no altruist. His rewards and satisfactions may be likened to those of a man who feels chilly and puts a match to a fire when the paper and the wood are dry and laid by other hands. He sees the flame spreading, hears the first crackle of the chips and watches the fire take lasting hold. Soon, he will hold out his hand to the blaze, will feel the glow pervade his whole being and in the evening lie back and warm his toes. That is to say, to borrow Godley's language, 'experienced Alpine stagers and impetuous recruits' will make their summer plans and 'review the condition of their mountaineering boots' and then in the Alps 'taste the joy of living as you taste it only there' and later 'in memory live with a glamour of strength and of springtime'.

These pre-wars years did, I think, see a distinct advance in the status of the amateur guide and in the merit of being able to lead. I venture to mention one thing which has been of immense benefit to me in countless ways: it is mountaineering alone, what Bourdillon calls 'the most absolutely enjoyable form of climbing'. I would myself couple it closely with becoming an amateur guide, as two phases of a perfect whole, that may be deemed preparation and completion. Mummery in his long chapter on the 'Pleasures and Penalties of Mountaineering' enumerates some of the desirable attributes of the solitary climber, among them the rather grim testimonial that 'the law of the survival of the fittest has had full and ample opportunity of eliminating him should he be, in any way, a careless or incapable mountaineer.' There is something that matters much more. Alone among mountains, a man with any sort of imagination develops an intimacy with them that is hardly possible when other human influences are present, a consciousness of what they can communicate. As Belloc puts it: 'There also, from the morning to the evening of a summer's day a man could become part of that magnitude by which they were made.' And this may somehow communicate itself to those he brings to mountains to let them

discover what they have to offer. If he has himself learned direct from mountains, he is inclined to let others do the same, appropriately enough in what are essentially 'out of school' hours. In the pre-war days when the young could be well satisfied with climbs that could be achieved without artificial aids, the system worked well. The climbs with their moments of contemplation and the off-days of assimilation were a perfect means of communicating what mountains had to give. I cannot quite follow Bourdillon when he says: 'the mountains we gaze at are not the mountains we climb'. To me they are one and indivisible, though the mountain is far greater than any route upon it. But for perfect intimacy there must be that satisfying physical union of which we are conscious when the face of the mountain is closest to our own, whether it be on the precipices of Britain or the steepening snows of the Alps.

Sweet and cool is its misty breath
As I cling to its rugged breast ;
This is the Earth that's dear to me
Dearer than all the rest.

Hot on my cheek the kiss of snow
That yields me the radiant crest,
The bit of Earth that's near to heaven,
Nearer than all the rest.

Those of us who were at the height of our powers, doing increasingly ambitious climbs about the time of the Club's Jubilee, could still read with delight many of the things Ruskin wrote of mountains. We had not to fear his scorn, we could feel real sorrow that he had missed so much of what we were enjoying. If we have had the love of mountains born in us, have been taken for walks upon them in our childhood, and have been granted as we grew older a fuller knowledge of what they have to give us, we can look upon them as mother, nurse and bride. We do not revere and love them less for having been happiest when they have held us closest in their arms.