

CORRESPONDENCE

52 Ovington Street, S.W.1.

25th January, 1962.

DEAR SIR,

In his review of *Bayonets to Lhasa*, the reviewer, like the author of the book, is obviously not an authority on the political differences separating Mr. St. John Brodrick, Secretary of State for India, and Lord Curzon the Viceroy. Yet the reviewer, like the author, absurdly accuses Mr. Brodrick of 'animosity' towards Lord Curzon, and even of a hatred 'of the whole expedition' which, the reviewer alleges, narrowly escaped failure in consequence.

The animosity and its supposed consequences are a freak of the critics' imaginations. Today there are few people alive who have any knowledge of the broken friendship between Lord Curzon and Lord Midleton (formerly Mr. St. John Brodrick). There are, however, still many living who knew and respected Lord Midleton. These will well understand that, incapable as he was of the 'vengefulness' so quaintly imputed to him by the author of this book, Lord Midleton could be nevertheless severely critical of any government servant in his department of whom it could be claimed, as in the case of Sir Francis Younghusband, that he had 'the courage to exceed his instructions'.

As for Sir Francis Younghusband, no one who had the privilege of knowing this distinguished man could fail to appreciate his many great qualities but, unfortunately, in the candid words of the author of the book, he could be 'mildly insubordinate' and 'very slightly devious'. Lord Midleton, on the other hand, was no tyrant, but a conscientious statesman with a strong sense of discipline, and the Government was at his back. Neither author nor reviewer should have mistaken him for a vindictive man pursuing a ridiculous vendetta.

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES MEADE.

The Editor,
The Alpine Journal.

Caius College, Cambridge.

2nd February, 1962.

SIR,

We would like to rectify an error in the latest number of the ALPINE JOURNAL (November, 1961). We refer to Mr. Clough's notes. On page

376, he mentions an accident which occurred on the S.W. Pillar of the Dru last summer (1961). In reference to the two climbers involved, he writes: 'It seems that this second pair were in the Alps for the first time!'

This is incorrect. Crampin and Lee, the 'second pair', both had several seasons to their credit. Shortly before attempting the Dru, they had successfully climbed the East face of the Capucin.

Moreover, since the exact circumstances of their accident are not known, we feel that Mr. Clough's statement implies an inexperience on their part which is not justified by fact.

Yours etc.,

T. A. J. GOODFELLOW,
M. GRAVINA,
R. E. LANGFORD.

(*Cambridge University Mountaineering Club.*)

The Editor,
The Alpine Journal.

To the Editor,
The Alpine Journal.

Hindhead,
February 24, 1962.

DEAR SIR,

It is encouraging news that Sir Arnold Lunn hopes to persuade a publisher to publish further writings of Geoffrey Winthrop Young.¹ All success to him.

In your last issue Sir Arnold refers to a letter which I wrote from a camp in the Karakoram. I apologised for writing from there, out of reach of books and journals; but I still do not find my memory to have been entirely at fault. I said that Geoffrey Young's attitude seemed to me to make sense, not that I could interpret everything that he wrote—indeed much of his writing I found very difficult, and much more difficult than his talk. It was, surely, an attitude far too complex to be put into any single cover-word like 'atheist' (Mrs. Young does not think of him as one), but like every honest agnostic he found difficulty, which the convinced Anglican, for instance, would not find, in putting what he did believe into words, in clarifying it if you like.

This does not excuse the obscurity of some passages, but may partly explain it. I remember him saying that he sometimes envied the 'open-air curates who have it all cut and dried', but felt that he had more fun out of his doubts than they out of their certainty.

¹ Mrs. Winthrop Young has asked the Editor to make it clear that the memoir which she is writing, and to which reference is made in *A.J.* 66. 425, is a separate work and not part of the book proposed by Sir Arnold Lunn.

I do not, therefore, see the relevance of the passage from Llewellyn Powys referred to by Sir Arnold as 'one of the most moving and beautiful passages in mountain literature': 'the passage from the pen of an atheist describing the sense of desolation which is all that he could find in mountain scenery', since G. W. Y. was neither an atheist, nor did he, except at moments to which all are subject, find a 'sense of desolation' in mountain scenery. Indeed Sir Arnold, who knew him and talked with him far longer than I did, is the first to show that mountain scenery inspired him as it has inspired few other men.

Yours, etc.,

WILFRID NOYCE.