

A carefully considered chapter is devoted to what is the great danger of winter expeditions—viz. snow avalanches. During his investigations he has had to consider the reasons underlying the merging of snow into ice.

The whole chapter should be read with the closest attention, for there is scarcely a mountaineer who has had the all-seasons experience of the author.

The whole book is written with a very refreshing enthusiasm, and should make many disciples.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE LATE ALFRED G. TOPHAM.

To the Editor of the ALPINE JOURNAL.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—In the issue of November 1920, a succinct notice of the work achieved by this enthusiastic and accomplished climber was given, but exigencies of space precluded many personal touches and characteristics. May I be permitted to supplement your remarks with some information, gleaned from the best authority?

Alfred Topham, at the age of 18, fresh from Harrow, by chance found himself at Chamonix in 1880. On seeing Mont Blanc, he went up it next day. The remembrance of this ascent was often a source of amusement to him later. Thus, the joys of mountaineering were revealed to him, and love of the mountains and a passion for them became marked features of a strong character and striking personality. After climbing many of the well-known mountains, he was elected to the Club in 1886.

The years, however, of his notable achievements were from 1889 to 1895, and a list of new ascents and new routes is given in your obituary notice. The work that Topham then did was mostly in a district less well known than it is now—the Valpelline and the important ridge which lies between it and the Valtournanche. Thanks to him and his pioneering efforts, it is well mapped out.

Being impressed with the importance of photography, he took it up in 1887. At that time it was in its infancy for amateurs, and he carried a 28-lb. camera with him. In those days glass plates alone were in use, and snapshots were things undreamed of. Developing, printing, and enlarging his photographs himself, he constructed laboriously those excellent panoramas which were published in the 'A.J.' vol. xvii. pp. 551–555. He always carried an aneroid barometer, and made careful notes of the heights he reached. So authoritative were Topham's results that they proved invaluable when the new Ball's Guide was published, and to the Italian Alpine Club when revising the N. Italian map for the Italian Government. His work was gratefully acknowledged, and he was warmly thanked

by all who benefited by it. Originally, he had a small but very powerful telescope, but later acquired a pair of Zeiss glasses as soon as they came out. He would stand for hours happily reconnoitring; so, before he started, he knew exactly what he was going to do.

After the exploration of the Valpelline, Topham turned his attention to the Arolla district, and made several new ascents and some new routes. It is difficult to signal out one which reflects more than another Topham's special characteristics; but allusion may be made to the arête of the Dent Perroc, which he attempted several times in successive summers before he defeated it.

Gifted with an acute sense of locality, a power of accurate observation, great physical endurance, an instinctive knowledge of ice and snow, very sure-footed, and complete fearlessness, he was well equipped as a leader; and, his climbing friends, Ruxton, Stonham, Groves, and others, were prepared to follow him anywhere.

One personal peculiarity, which he shared with his brother Harold, may be referred to. He had a curious power of hanging on to cracks in rock-faces by the tips of the fingers. Both in him and in Harold, the last joints were noticeably enlarged. They could trust their whole weights to the finger-tips.

These remarks may serve to recall and perpetuate the personality and character of Alfred Topham. Of him it may be said that 'he turned to the mountains as a child to its mother; their grandeur restored proportion to his eager spirit, and this instinct was more wholesome than even he knew.'

I am,

Yours, etc.,

A. H. TUBBY.

'CLOCKING A ZERMATT GLACIER.'

To the Editor of the ALPINE JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,—You were good enough to print an article from me in your last issue on '“Clocking” a Zermatt Glacier,' and as far as the movements recorded are concerned, the article stands. But I expressed some surprise at the way my stone cairns were still found to be standing, and even the large flat stones marking every 25 mètres with the small stone on their backs as I had left them two years previously. I have received a letter from Mr. De Villiers-Schwab, of New York, who tells me that the reason why they were still standing is because he and his guides spent some considerable time on the glacier when storm-bound, a few weeks previous to my visit, rebuilding the cairns, and replacing the flat stones after cutting them out from the ice, into which they had sunk some distance. From details which he has kindly furnished me, it appears that all the cairns had become fairly widely scattered before he and his party reassembled them, and they evidently had, and no doubt are having, a fairly stormy

time on their measured progression towards eventual engulfment below. I therefore venture to reiterate the hope that anyone with a little time on his hands at the Bétemps hut will cast a friendly eye on these time-recorders and build them up wherever necessary once more into self-respecting cairns.

Yours faithfully,

A. C. MORRISON-BELL.

THE AMERICAN MEMBERS OF THE A.C.

To the Editor of the ALPINE JOURNAL.

DEAR CAPTAIN FARRAR,—You may be interested to hear that a number of us have gotten together as the ‘American Members of the Alpine Club,’ and held a very successful little dinner in May. As a result of this, we expect to continue holding informal dinners once or twice a year, and, in general, keep in touch with each other. There appear to be some sixteen or seventeen American members of the Alpine Club, of which the following eleven already display active interest in getting together :

Messrs. Freeman Allen, Alston Burr, J. W. S. Brady, I. de Bruyn, Charles E. Fay, J. E. Fisher, V. A. Fynn, Leroy Jeffers, A. H. McCarthy, William Williams, and myself.

Mr. Williams is Chairman ; and, by the way, he is over climbing in Switzerland this summer, where you are likely to meet him if you visit Zermatt this season.

Sincerely yours,

HENRY B. DE VILLIERS-SCHWAB.

11 Broadway, New York,
August 3, 1921.

ACONCAGUA.

House of Lords,
June 16, 1921.

DEAR MR. YOUNG,—Pray forgive my delay in replying to your letter, for which I am much obliged. Though on reading it I felt pretty sure that you were right, and that Aconcagua is on the Argentine side of the frontier, I waited to consult, first, the latest good map I could find, and, secondly, Sir Martin Conway. I have now consulted these two high authorities, who concur in thinking the peak is in Argentina. Indeed, my own recollection on the point was so definite, from my sight of the peak from the valley followed by the railway, that I don't know how I came to make the mistake in my book. I will correct it if another edition is called for.

With thanks, and regrets that I did not hear your Paper, believe me,

Sincerely yours,

BRUCE.

Sidney Young, Esq.