

## ALPINE NOTES.

THE ALPINE CLUB OBITUARY :						Date of Election
Hartley, J. Walker	.	.	.	.	.	1875
Burlingham, C.	.	.	.	.	.	1877
Gage, U. W. T.	.	.	.	.	.	1877
Scriven, G.	.	.	.	.	.	1878
Bird, Arthur	.	.	.	.	.	1892
Priestman, Howard	.	.	.	.	.	1893
Campbell, Rev. Colin	.	.	.	.	.	1894
Masterman, J. S.	.	.	.	.	.	1895
Fitzpatrick, Rev. T. C.	.	.	.	.	.	1900
Comber, H. C.	.	.	.	.	.	1919

**‘Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers.’** Third Series, Volume III. Edited by A. E. Field and Sydney Spencer.

This new series will be published in the autumn, 1932, by Messrs. Methuen, price 10s. 6d.

The narratives are extracted from the first 5 volumes of the ALPINE JOURNAL (1863–1872), annotated where necessary and illustrated. The format will be the same as the first two series (1859, 1862). The letterpress has been selected from among those narratives never hitherto republished.

Should the book prove successful, further series of **‘P.P.G.’** may be published in due course.

**‘THE CLOSING OF THE ITALIAN ALPS.’**—We cannot report any improvement. The situation appears to be as in **‘A.J.’** 43, 381, as regards the Austro-Jugoslav-Italian frontiers, while on the French and Swiss borders it remains obscure.

**ALPINE CLUB.**—On December 22 next the Club completes its **75th** anniversary. Mr. Douglas W. Freshfield (Editor of the JOURNAL 1872–1880, President 1893–1895) is now its senior surviving member. Mr. Freshfield was elected in 1864.

Mr. A. O. Prickard (elected 1866), the Hon. Mr. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes (elected 1866), the Rev. C. A. Heurtley (elected 1868), and Mr. A. P. Harper (elected 1892), President of the New Zealand Alpine Club, have been elected Honorary Members.

**S.A.C. and A.A.C.**—Colonel E. L. Strutt has been elected an Honorary Member of the Swiss (section ‘Bernina’) and of the American Alpine Clubs.



LORD CONWAY OF ALLINGTON.—Sir Martin Conway, President, A.C., 1902, has been raised to the Peerage. On behalf of the Club and JOURNAL, of which Lord Conway was Editor, 1894–1895, we offer him our best congratulations.

RUWENZORI.—A Belgian mountaineering and scientific expedition has left for this range under the leadership of Count Xavier de Grunne; it will include M. Pierre Solvay (A.C.), MM. Walter Ganshof, Jean de la Vallée Poussin and others, as well as the Arolla guide Joseph Georges, *le Skieur*. The range will be approached from Beni, in the Belgian Congo, which is virgin ground.

KLUCHEVSKAYA.<sup>1</sup>—We understand that the ascent was accomplished lately by two Europeans after a long expedition.

CLOCHER DES ÉCRINS.—This so-named and imposing gendarme, situated on the W. arête of Les Écrins, close to Pic Lory and overlooking the Glacier de Bonne Pierre, collapsed last (?) spring. Its place is taken by 'three strange, ragged and tragical splinters.'—From *La Montagne*.

GIFTS TO A.C.—Mr. Godfrey Ellis has been kind enough to present two valuable water-colour drawings, of about 1828, by C. H. Smith: 'Montan Vert and the Mer de Glace' and 'Sea of ice from above the huts, Montan Verd.' Miss Le Neve Foster has presented a sepia drawing of the Wetterhorn (dated 1791) by the Rev. Clement Chevalier. Mr. C. W. Nettleton has also presented a copy of Sir Charles Fellows' *Narrative of an Ascent of Mont Blanc*, with the original coloured illustrations. For all of which, and other gifts, the Club expresses its warm thanks.

S. S.

PROFESSORSHIP OF GEOGRAPHY, OXFORD.—Major Kenneth Mason, late R.E., has been appointed the first Professor of Geography at Oxford University. The Chair is attached to a Fellowship at Hertford College. Major Mason, besides his services to the Indian Survey, is Editor of the *Himalayan Journal*.

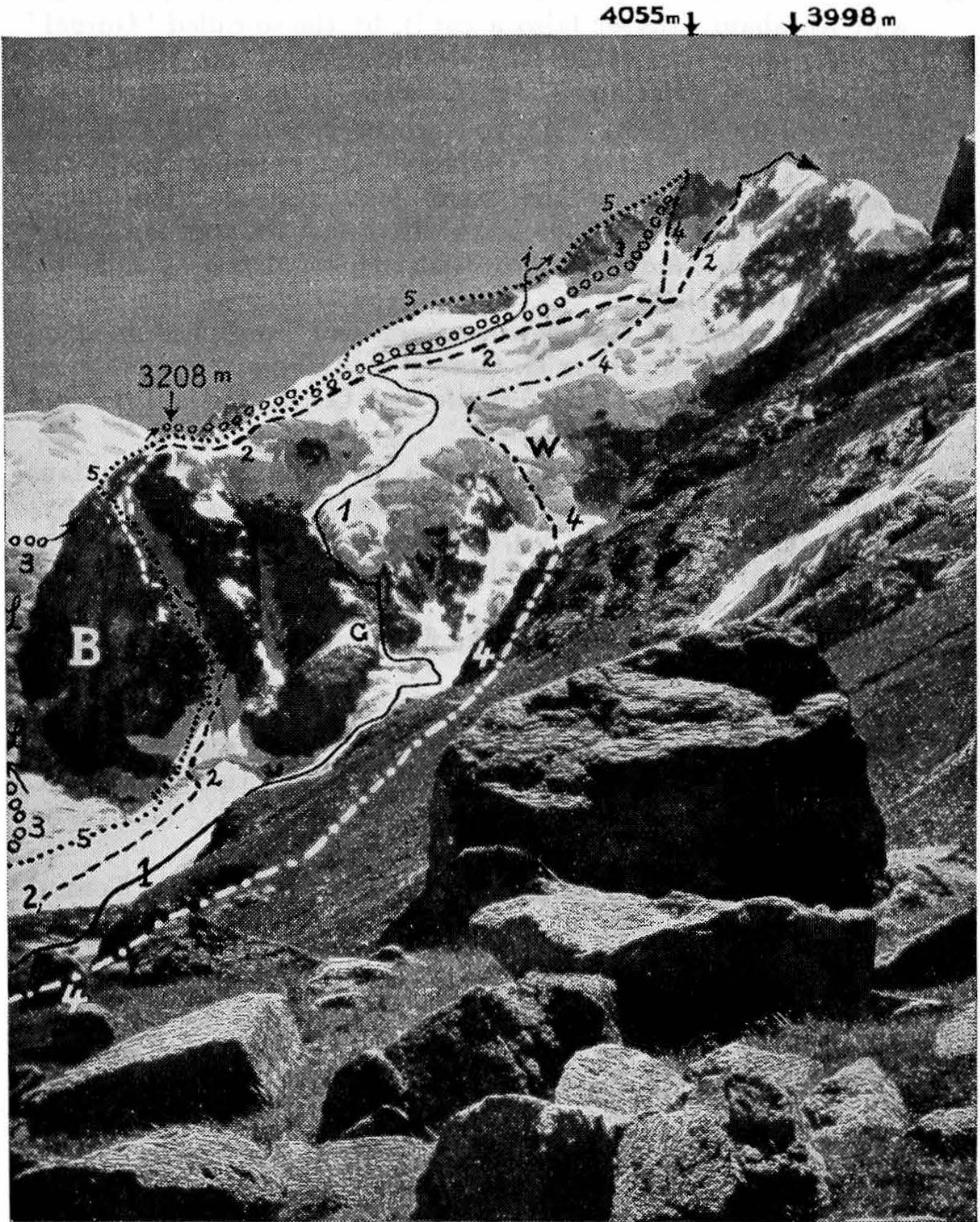
THE 'N.E.' FACE OF PIZ BERNINA.—Recessed in the angle formed by the steep E. and very abrupt N. (*Bianco*) arêtes of the mountain, is formed a precipitous icy slope contracting into what is little more than a gully at the spot where it abuts against the summit. Below this icy slope or gully, an inclined and crevassed névé terrace, some 1500 ft. high, is supported by the base of the mountain, a great, broad rock (E.) and ice (W.) bastion or rampart. This rises throughout at a very high angle, from the level of the surface of the

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<sup>1</sup> *A.J.* 42, 339.



Morteratsch Glacier. The bastion, some 2000 ft. high, resembles somewhat the well-known Wandfluh of the Dent Blanche. The uppermost icy slope or gully, which alone *might* be described as



Photo, A. Steiner.]

THE 'N.E.' FACE OF PIZ BERNINA, SHOWING DIFFERENT ROUTES.

the 'N.E.' face of Piz Bernina, is not more than about 1000 ft. in height.

It has been ascended by several slightly differing routes, all more or less stone- and ice-swept, beginning in 1879 and culminating in 1931, by an approximate and, most unjustifiable of all, direct line.



The original route and its variants are shown on the accompanying illustration, kindly marked by Herr Walter Flaig :—

1. ————— October 5, 1879. Dr. J. M. Ludwig with Hans Grass and Abraham Ardüser (also a cat !), by the so-called 'Gurgel' and the upper part of the E. arête <sup>2</sup> (*Studer*, iii, pp. 100–1 ; see the *Climbers' Guide* and *C.A.I. Guida*).
2. — — — — — July 18, 1890. Mr. L. Norman Neruda with Christian Klucker, by the 'Klucker' couloir (Flaig), seaming the E. and rocky promontory of the great foot bastion. The party continued up the E. slope of the N. arête, or, approximately, that of the *Berninascharte*, to Pizzo Bianco, 3998 m. ('A.J.' 15, 314–15, 468–71).

The E. slope of the *Berninascharte* had been descended on August 8, 1889, by Herr G. Gruber with Johann and A. Jaun of Meiringen (see *Climbers' Guide* and *C.A.I. Guida* ; referred to in Sir E. Davidson's Diaries).

3. . . . . July 26, 1911. Dr. Julius Frohmann with Niklaus Kohler, Christian Zippert and Caspar Grass, *via* the 'Labyrinth,' *Sass del Pos* (3208 m.), and thence by the terrace, straight up the final N.E. slope or gully, to the top ('A.J.' 26, 197–8 ; 43, 388, footnote 12).

This appears to have been the first time the final 1000 ft. of the *summit* were scaled.

4. — — — — — June 27, 1931. Herren Karl Schneider and Franz Singer. Route—the most exposed although directest variant of all—leads up the W. icy portion of the bastion (S.W. of 1, 1879, route) and then straight up the final 'N.E.' face (as in 3) to the top.<sup>3</sup>
5. . . . . September 2, 1931. Herren Walter Flaig, Konrad Hupfer, and Franz Kühlken, *via* the 'Klucker' couloir and the E. arête.

To avoid, if possible, any repetition of these expeditions, we publish no details, contenting ourselves with the statement that the 'Klucker' couloir is far the most difficult, if not the most dangerous, portion of the route. Its ascent took the 1890 party (a snowy year) 3 hrs. 10 mins., while the 1931 party, having awaited, very rightly, favourable conditions, firm snow frozen on to the ice, took 3½ hrs. The couloir is well seen from the Boval hut, while its appearance from above is, according to Herr Flaig, 'ghastly.'

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<sup>2</sup> The route is only approximate. As far back as 1896 no one at Pontresina could say for certain where the party had been. The true position of the 'Gurgel' is a matter of doubt.

<sup>3</sup> The lower portion of the line taken is invisible in the illustration. The party spent no less than 20 hrs. in reaching the summit.



B = Rocky bastion or rampart, with 'Klucker' couloir to the left.

L = The western and inaccessible portion of the central icefall, or 'Labyrinth,' of Morteratsch Glacier.

G = Supposed site of the 'Gurgel.'

W = The 'corner' or 'angle.'

3208 m. = *Sass del Pos*—the old breakfast spot in the days when the E. arête constituted the ordinary route—of the Siegfried map.

4055 m. = Piz Bernina.

3998 m. = Pizzo Bianco.

On a date not mentioned, but apparently in 1931, a party of the 5th *Alpini*, climbing on two ropes and consisting of Captain d'Adda, Corporal Pirovano, Captain Introzzi; and Major Massini, Lieutenant Micanzi, 2nd Lieutenant Foppoli, accomplished the ascent of Piz Bernina from the Marinelli hut. The route taken was by the great snow and ice couloir leading to the Fuorcla Scerscen-Bernina.<sup>4</sup> At a point perhaps two-thirds of the way up that couloir, the party deviated on to the W. slope of the mountain's S.E. arête, which was ascended by a minor snow gully or its rocky banks, the vicinity of the Shoulder, 3885 m., being attained at a notch slightly S. of that point. The summit was then climbed by the crest. The ascent took 12 hrs. 20 mins., and the variation possesses no merits whatever. The sporting composition of the party is alone of note.—*Communicated.*

MECHANIZED 'MOUNTAINEERING.'—In *Æ.A.Z.*, 1932, p. 5, appears a remarkable note describing the process of scaling, by means of a so-called *Pickelsitz*, perpendicular or, preferably, overhanging ice walls. An excellent, if obviously 'arranged,' photograph illustrates this curious method. At first sight it is impossible to judge whether note or photograph is to be taken seriously. However, in *Æ.A.Z.*, 1932, pp. 79–81, Dr. W. Welzenbach—and there could be no better critic—is 'drawn' and proves the entire method not only ancient,<sup>5</sup> but futile and absurd. The process, which in the original note is described as 'without exertion and rapid,' is reduced, according to Dr. Welzenbach, to this: to overcome an ice wall or overhang of 100 ft. requires portage by the *artiste* on his person of 60 ice-pitons, while the time to scale the wall amounts to 3 hours! Dr. Welzenbach also proves the photograph, stated in some publications to have been taken in the N.N.E. gully of the Ortler,<sup>6</sup> as posed in reality on a sérac near the ordinary route.

<sup>4</sup> P. 106.

<sup>5</sup> We have heard of and had experience of the 'ice-axe grip,' but the 'ice-axe seat' remains *terra intacta*—at any rate in the sense indicated.

<sup>6</sup> *A.J.* 43, 384.



The methods recommended in the original note remind us of a fantastic article <sup>7</sup> on climbers ascending and descending séracs of an inclination of 70° on superhuman crampons and without cutting steps. The grotesque illustrations to this article, or so we were informed, were taken on the frozen Elbe!

Members in search of instruction or amusement will find the illustration of the *Pickelsitz*—and its consequences—in the Club scrap-book. The original note and photograph will be considered as yet a further development of 'modern' mountain-madness.

MOUNTAINEERING FILMS.—Mr. F. S. Smythe had the honour of showing the *Kamet* film to Their Majesties the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace on March 3.

The privilege of a private exhibition of this film was given by the British Gaumont Co. to a few members of the Club. It is exceedingly well constructed, consisting of an interesting sequence of incidents illustrating native and camp life and the journey through the indescribably grand scenery of the route to the peak, leading to a magnificent series of snow and ice pictures which culminate in the final triumph, the ascent of the summit of Kamet.

The photography rivals that of the *Everest* films, and Mr. Smythe very wisely wastes no time on the preliminary portion of his journey, but starts the story at Ranikhet, finishing with the arrival on the top of Kamet itself.

So splendid a series of pictures of Himalayan scenery should on no account be missed by all lovers of the mountains. Needless to say, not the slightest suspicion of faking occurs.

S. S.

EGYPTIAN MOUNTAINS.—Between January and March 1931 Dr. Max Storz made the first ascents of several granite peaks of 'high-mountain' characteristics, situated in the Arabian desert of Egypt between 27° 15' and 33° 15'. The heights lay between 5200 ft. and 7000 ft. and, for a solitary climber, the ascents were far from easy. The district is highly recommended.—From A.A.V. München, *Jahresbericht*.

A.A.V.M.—Despite the bad weather, an enormous number of ascents were achieved by the 306 members, active and 'old gentlemen,' in which latter category are included mountaineers like Herren Aufschnaiter, Beigel, Leupold of Kangchenjunga fame, and others. Nevertheless, 200 ascents in the Western Alps in 1931 contrast with 434 in 1930.

SKI ACCIDENTS.—Largely owing to the absence, through the world-crisis, of other than native skiers, the season shows a welcome

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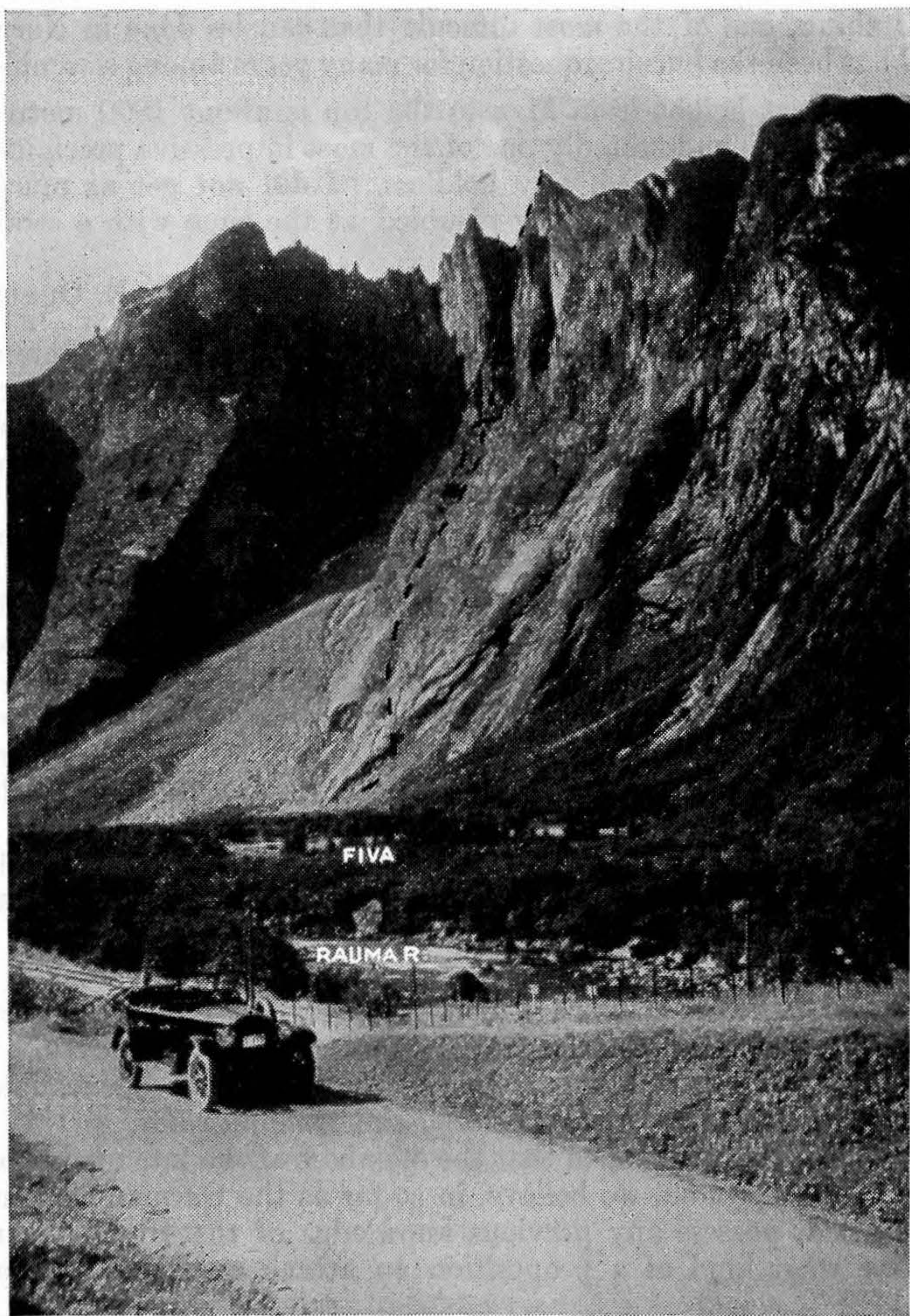
<sup>7</sup> D. & Oe. A.-V. *Zeitschrift*, 1925, pp. 204–24; *Alpinisme*, No. 7, pp. 211–33.



diminution in the number of accidents. But, when opportunity arose, the normal ignorance *plus* folly were as prevalent as ever. Several serious disasters occurred in the Eastern Alps, notably in the Tauern. A German tourist and a Tyrolese guide were killed on the Mönch last March.

NORWAY.—I have received the following from Herr Arne Randers-Heen of Aandalsnes, Romsdal, Norway :

‘Last summer, August 1931, accompanied by Eirik Heen, I mounted the Store Trolltind on the E. side direct from Romsdal. We



TROLLTIND, SHOWING 1931 ROUTE.



went up from the farm Fiva, where many Englishmen live during the summer. Later I heard that you, two years ago, had been half-way up this route, marked on the illustration. As I think you may be the first person who really has tried this route, I send you this and a short description of the line taken. The first half over the slabs, that look almost impossible from below, was really easy; it ended at a big snow-patch. From here a narrow gully leads upwards, but this was too slippery to be climbed. We were forced to scramble up a ridge to the left—in many places a very difficult task. We were troubled by new snow and mist, and took 11 hours to the top. We had to stay the night there because of the darkness. The route is, I think, one of the most difficult that can be done in Norway, and has been the burning question for many years among scramblers.'

The direct height from Fiva to the top is about 1800 metres = 6300 ft. It is undoubtedly one of the most impressive precipices in Norway, glaciated, and very holdless. I did not get as much as half-way up it in 1929, being troubled at the time with a strained leg.

N. E. ODELL.

NANGA PARBAT.—An expedition led by Mr. F. S. Smythe intended to have *reconnoitred* all sides of the mountain in 1932. Hearing, however, that the postponed German expedition of 1931 proposed to start this year, Mr. Smythe has yielded very rightly to prior claims and withdrawn his party.

The German party, sailing on April 26, and proceeding *via* Rawal Pindi, Srinagar and Astor, hopes to be in position for the first attack on the summit within three weeks of its landing in Bombay. The base-camp will be on the Rakhiot Glacier. The party is composed as follows: W. Merkl (leader,<sup>8</sup> Munich), F. Bechtold (Trostberg), H. König (Munich), F. Fetzer (Wilhelmshaven), F. Wiessner (Dresden), F. Simon (Leipzig), P. Aschenbrenner (Kufstein), H. Hamberger (medical officer, Rosenheim), and E. Rand Herron (New York), together with two (British) members of the Himalayan Club. Miss Elizabeth Knowlton (New York) will be in charge of the commissariat at the base-camp. A Mr. (?) Beckwith (New York) is reported as also accompanying the party.

The expedition, financed in U.S.A. and by many sections of the D. & Oe. A.-V., etc., is to be run on the most economical but effective lines. A minimum of native porters will accompany the party. The members are prepared to carry their own loads as far as possible.—From *Allgemeine Bergsteiger Zeitung* and *communicated*.

It is greatly to be hoped that the members of the intended expedition, none of whom, we believe, in so far as the German element is concerned, possess any previous knowledge of the Himalaya, now realize what kind of a proposition an attack on Nanga Parbat—

<sup>8</sup> Replacing Dr. Welzenbach, unable to accompany the party.



*without* previous reconnaissance of all approaches and all sides—really is.<sup>9</sup>

The best judges, such as Generals Bruce and Powell, Messrs. Norman Collie, Longstaff, and Lord Conway, concur in considering the great mountain as one of the most difficult and dangerous in the Himalaya, surpassing in objective dangers even Kangchenjunga. Only the N., or Buldar-Rakhiot face, is still quite unexplored terrain.

It is our sincere trust that the fetish of the magic '8000 metres' may not precipitate a rash attempt on what proved to be the grave of the greatest mountaineer of his generation.

Herren Merkl and Bechtold were associated in the very successful Caucasus expedition of 1929, including the third ascent of Ushba, while Mr. Herron took part in the first ascent of Giulchi in the same year.—'A.J.' 42, 102-5, 116-7, 278-88.

ANDES.—Another German expedition financed by the D. & Oe.A.-V. left Europe for Peru on March 26. The party is composed of nine persons under the leadership of Dr. P. Borchers (A.C.), and includes Herren H. Hoerlin and E. Schneider of Himalayan fame. Dr. Borchers was in charge of the mountaineering detachment of the 'Rickmers' Alai—Pamirs expedition, in the course of which an extraordinary number of high peaks were climbed.<sup>10</sup> The Andes expedition will be in Peru for six months.

HIMALAYA.—M. Marcel Kurz has left on an exploring and surveying expedition.

KANGCHENJUNGA.—50,000 R.M. (= £3000 on the gold standard) represent the very moderate total cost of the 1931 expedition.

ANOTHER ALPINE 'RECORD.'—In the excellent monthly bulletin of the C.A.I., *Sezione di Milano*, February 1932, pp. 25-34, will be found the narrative of a 'record' climb (July 2, 1931) of the Gran Paradiso by the Abbot Henry de Valpelline. Published in the original *French*, it describes an extraordinary feat in company of a great mountaineer named Cagliostro, now, alas, resident in U.S.A. Without hesitation, we can pronounce this as delightful a paper as any we can remember in an Alpine periodical. We will not spoil the story by any description, but rest content with the statement that it should be read by all mountaineers, veterans and young. The original illustrations are, like Cagliostro, full of humour.

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<sup>9</sup> In a prospectus of the intended 1931 expedition, we noted, to the best of our recollection, the words '... the ascent of the mountain is not likely to present serious difficulty.' This statement is, most unfortunately, repeated approximately in an 'inspired' article in *Der Bergsteiger*, April 1932, p. 430.

<sup>10</sup> See p. 147.



AIGUILLE NOIRE DE PÉTERET, S.E. arête.—We are requested to state with reference to the note in 'A.J.' 42, 341, that the late Herren H. Schaller and K. Brendel had *absolutely no knowledge* of any preparations for making the ridge accessible by the planting of spikes, etc., by the Courmayeur workmen. On finding the iron-mongery referred to in the note, both these mountaineers 'were very much surprised.' Herr Schaller read the statement complained of on Kangchenjunga a few days before his fatal accident (Herr Brendel had been killed previously on the Predigstuhl: 'A.J.' 43, 356, footnote 3), and, at Herr Bauer's wish, we have much pleasure in making the correction.

WINTER ASCENTS.—What appears to have been the first winter *traverse* of La Meije was accomplished on February 5–6, 1932, by MM. E. Stofer and A. Chabert, from the Promontoire hut to La Grave. The hut was left at 07.00, and one of the party was injured slightly by the collapse of a boulder within 70 ft. of the start. Conditions were fairly good, but a very cold if wind-still bivouac proved necessary on the 'arêtes.' Descent by the extremely crevassed Tabuchet Glacier to La Grave on the following day.—From *La Montagne*.

The first winter *ascent* of La Meije took place in March 1926, this also necessitating a bivouac in the open.—'A.J.' 38, 126.

LA MEIJE, S. FACE.—The fourth ascent of this formidable precipice was accomplished, July 31–August 1, 1931, by a party of four *Polish* mountaineers of the Tatra Club, MM. W. Birkenmajer, J. K. Dorawski, J. de Golcz, J. A. Szczepanski. The route taken was approximately that of Dibona and Stofer. The exploit, by the party's own account, was both hazardous and irresponsible: a fatal termination was *just* averted. Weather and conditions were both bad.<sup>11</sup>

On July 31 another member of the same Club accomplished *alone* the ascent of the 'central peak' of Le Râteau by the N. face in 4 hrs.—From *La Montagne*.

AIGUILLE DE CHAMBEYRON, *Tour Coolidge*.<sup>12</sup>—The illustration shows the line of the first ascent made in 1931 by M. Henri Daniel. Should this catch that gentleman's eye, we would intimate to him that our letter of November 25, 1931, was returned to us 'destinataire inconnu,' from Barcelonnette.—E. L. S.

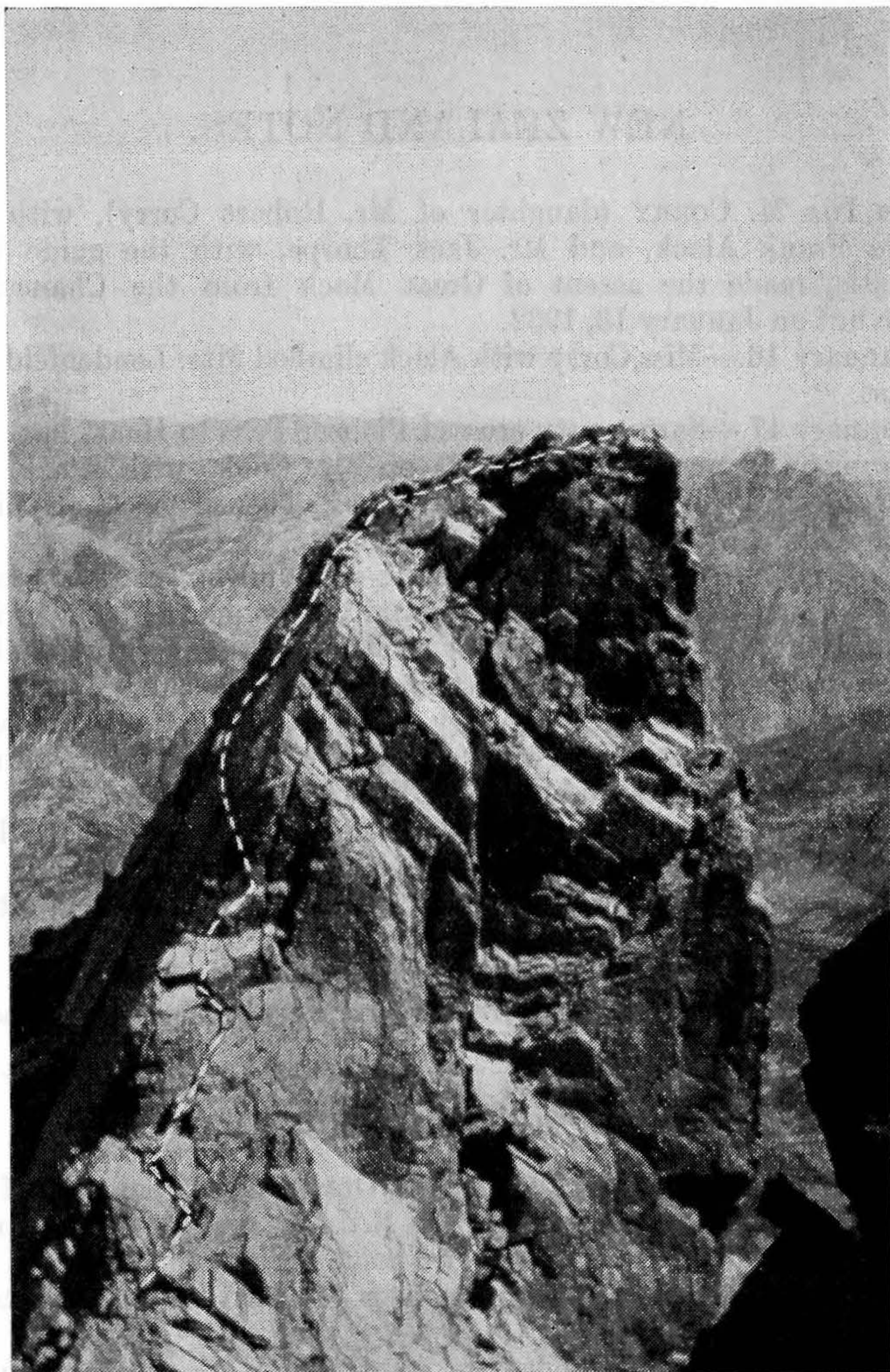
R.G.S.—The King has approved the award of the Royal medals of the Royal Geographical Society as follows:

The Founder's Medal to Mr. H. G. Watkins, for his work in the

<sup>11</sup> This being apparently the party's very first experience of 'big' mountaineering, the conclusions come to can hardly be taken seriously.

<sup>12</sup> *A.J.* 39, 129–30.





*Photo, H. Daniel.]*

GREAT TOWER 'COOLIDGE.'

----- way of ascent.

Arctic regions, especially as leader of the British Arctic Air Route Expedition.

The Patron's Medal to H.R.H. the Duke of Spoleto, for his work in the Himalaya as leader of the Karakoram Expedition of 1929.

The Council of the Society have awarded the Victoria Medal to Professor A. P. Coleman, F.R.S., of Toronto, for his contribution to the Geography and Geology of Canada.