

MT. MCKINLEY FROM THE AIR.

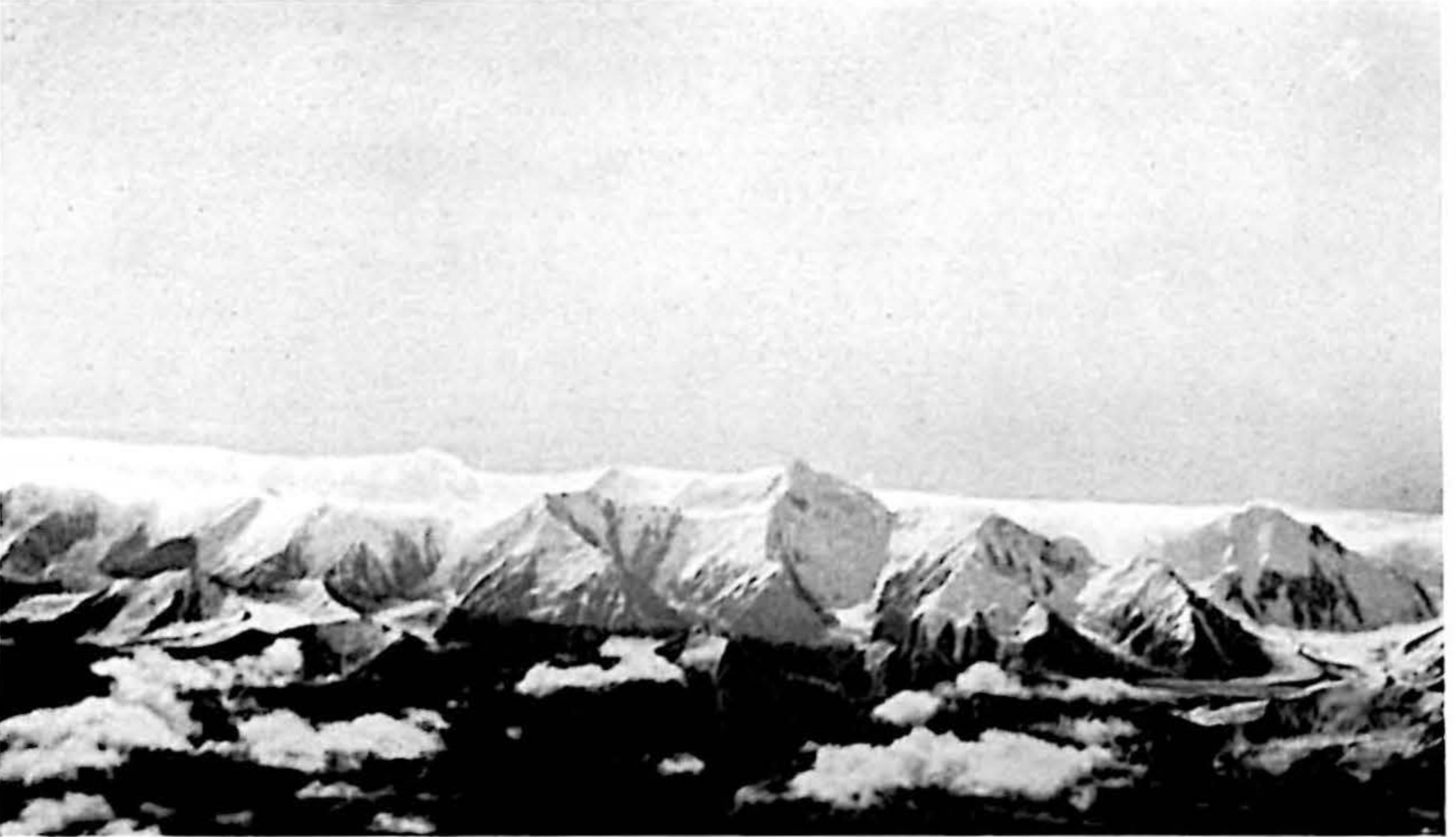
UNDOUBTEDLY the crowning sight of a trip to Alaska is a view of Mt. McKinley, the monarch of mountains on the North American continent; but owing to the blankets of mist and cloud in which it is almost constantly enveloped, due to the moisture-laden gales blowing continuously inland from the Pacific Ocean, only a small percentage of the travellers who visit Alaska have even a glimpse of the glory of this marvellous peak, which rises higher above its own base than any other known mountain. From the N. side in the Yukon Valley it is visible for 18,000 ft. of its altitude of 20,300 ft., two-thirds of which is snow-clad throughout the year.

Going N. from Seattle or Vancouver through the Inland Passage—a partly Canadian and partly United States waterway—the steamer beyond Juneau heads out into the Pacific Ocean, crossing the N.E. corner of the Gulf of Alaska and lands at Cordova, whence passengers may proceed to Chitina over the Copper River and North-western R.R., built and owned by the Kennecott Mining Co.; then by motor over the Richardson Highway—the only through motor road yet constructed—a distance of 315 miles to Fairbanks, the metropolis of Alaska. Or, remaining on the steamer 24 hours longer, Seward is reached, whence the Alaska R.R. goes also to Fairbanks. Along this latter route distant views of Mt. McKinley may be had if the weather is clear. The view from the town of Anchorage is said to be especially fine, but was invisible to us when leaving Alaska by this route. During a five-day stay at Fairbanks we were also unable to judge of the view of the summit over 150 miles away. Many travellers do not even stop at Mt. McKinley National Park at all, because of the cloudy reputation the great peak has acquired and because of the necessity of taking the return steamer at a fixed date for the sea voyage back to the point of departure.

We went to McKinley Park, 125 miles by rail from Fairbanks, with the intention of waiting there until 'Denali' (Indian name, meaning 'Home of the Sun') should emerge from mist and cloud, a wise precaution, for it was not until the sixth day that we were able to see the summit clearly, over 70 miles distant; and even so, what a comparatively faint idea could one get of the real splendour of Denali by peering over the tops of intervening ranges of hills!

The U.S. Government is now constructing a motor road from Savage River Camp, the present stopping place, to a point near the end of the great Muldrow Glacier, 70 miles nearer to Mt. McKinley, which will probably be open for travel by the summer of 1933, where the present excellent tent accommodation of Savage River Camp will be eventually replaced by a real hotel, from which the view of the mountain will be of unparalleled Alpine grandeur.

Till this problem shall have been solved the only satisfactory way



Photo, Mrs. Crozier.]

THE ALASKAN RANGE.



Photo, Mrs. Crozier.]

MT. FORAKER (17,000 FT.).

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Photo, Mrs. Crozier.]

MT. MCKINLEY WITH MT. FORAKER IN THE DISTANCE.



Photo, Mrs. Crozier.]

UPPER PART OF THE MULDROW GLACIER.

to see Denali is to fly over intervening obstacles and along the N. face of the giant. Flying around the mountain or over the summit is prohibited by the U.S. Government within the limits of Mt. McKinley National Park (which has an extent of 2645 square miles), because, owing to the fact of the S. and W. side being a wilderness, the rescue of passengers from an accident would be practically an impossibility.

At last the seventh day of our stay in camp broke clear, with the promise of a few hours of visibility. So we telephoned at dawn to Fairbanks for an aeroplane to come at once, and at 8.30 A.M. climbed into a five-passenger Fairchild machine—Mr. Henry S. Hall, jun., a member of the party which reached the top of Mt. Logan in 1925, and his wife sharing the plane with us—and began soaring into the sky. After the first range was crossed, Mt. McKinley in full glory came into view on our left; to the S. stretched the snow-clad Alaskan Range, in itself a magnificent sight, but quite overshadowed by the ever-increasing splendour of Denali rising imperially from a wilderness of hills and valleys, out of which fluffy cloudlets were already forming.

On we flew, reaching an altitude of 10,000 ft., with the panorama growing more tremendous with every mile, the great Muldrow Glacier sweeping down in majestic curves from the highest shoulder of the giant; lesser glaciers and endless snowfields covering other slopes with robes of white, but always subordinated to the great mountain as a whole. Knowing the Swiss Alps intimately, and having seen something of the Himalaya and the Karakoram, it seemed to us that nothing could compare with the matchless solitary grandeur of this massive mountain; it was like looking at the greatest single peak hitherto seen through a very powerful magnifying glass, because Denali stands out alone, and not as part of a chain of mountains. We were like atoms floating through space in a world of supernatural beauty and unreality. Below us, range upon range of hills five or six thousand and more feet in height, with herds of white mountain sheep near the crests, whither these rare wild animals had fled to escape the gnats of the lower pastures. Caribos moved across the glens, safe and undisturbed by mankind and their guns in this magnificent Government preserve, where all species of fauna and flora are rigidly protected by Act of Congress.

The accompanying photographs, taken under the greatest difficulties—namely, holding a camera against a wind of 100 miles an hour outside of an aeroplane window too small to admit of looking into the finder (which must be one excuse for their imperfections)—will perhaps convey a very faint idea of the sublime spectacle spread before our gaze. Robbins, our noted Alaskan pilot, stated that ours was the first flight made across the N. face of Mt. Foraker, many miles beyond Mt. McKinley, so we may hope to show a hitherto unknown picture of the details of this very beautiful mountain and virgin peak which attains an altitude of 17,000 ft.

When we reluctantly turned back, the mists below us had developed into heavy clouds which were gradually veiling Mt. Foraker and creeping up the sides of Mt. McKinley, leaving the head of the Muldrow Glacier visible in the upper regions of that ice world. As we sped toward the little landing field of Savage River the curtain dropped over the monarch of North American mountains, and an hour after we reached the Camp a soft, drizzling rain was falling.

WILLIAM CROZIER.

MARY W. CROZIER.

[We are very much indebted to Major-General and Mrs. Crozier, brother-in-law and sister of Mr. William Williams, for the excellent note and illustrations. These latter possess peculiar interest as showing views of the Muldrow Glacier on which the disaster to Mr. Allen Carpe and his companion occurred.—*Editor, 'A.J.'*]

JÄGI AND BIETSCHHOERNER.

(1) *The S.E. Ridge of the Baltschieder Jägihorn, 3416 m.*

THIS magnificent expedition, which Monsieur Paul Montandon justly considers to be one of the finest rock climbs in the Alps—an opinion that I can heartily endorse—deserves to be better known, for in itself it makes the eight to ten hours trudge from Visp to the comfortable little Baltschieder hut, situated on the southernmost spur of the Jägihörner between the two main tributaries of the Baltschieder Glacier, worth while. Suffice to say, it is a route comparable in interest, difficulty and soundness of rock with the best that the Chamonix Aiguilles can provide.

I am indebted to Monsieur Paul Montandon, the discoverer of the ridge, for the following details of its previous history, and thank him for permission to reproduce his interesting photographs.

On October 9, 1920, P. Montandon with Josef Knubel made an attempt to climb the ridge. This was before the Baltschieder hut had been built. They had previously prospected the route, and had climbed directly up the steep cliff rising immediately above the site of the present hut which has been built just below the old bivouac place.¹ Their route is well shown by a dotted line on the accompanying photograph. They also discovered an alternative way to the right, E., which avoids the steep initial cliff and follows a terrace sloping up in a north-westerly direction approximately parallel to the crest of the S.E. ridge. The crest of the ridge was gained in two hours by this easier variation. The party then traversed the crest, the gendarmes on which steadily increase in

¹ This is still to be seen, and its protecting wall of stones has been preserved.