



In remembrance of King Albert, Honorary Member
of the Alpine Club,

Elisabeth
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Albert I, King of the Belgians

BORN APRIL 8, 1875. DIED FEBRUARY 17, 1934.

A TRIBUTE has been paid already in these pages to the memory of a 'Kingly Mountaineer and most noble Gentleman.' A few lines on His Majesty's Alpine career may not seem out of place.

This career, commencing in 1906, continued uninterruptedly, save for the inevitable break of the European war, to the end of his life. Circumstances were against the King; his hours of leisure were brief, his holidays shorter still. Many of his expeditions were made during the inside of a single week. Aeroplane journeys and long motor trips were used very largely to ensure the possibility of as many expeditions as possible in the few days available. These factors account for the King's comparative neglect of the greater peaks and of ice and snow in general. The weather question loomed serious as always. He considered it better to confine his attention to the rock summits of the Dolomites or Wilde Kaiser—when even in doubtful weather *some* peaks are always available—than to waste precious days over a great mountain, and yet not achieve the summit.

The result of all this was that King Albert's list of rock climbs, pure and simple, was certainly equal to the best yet possessed by any single amateur. It may be said

that he had conquered all the most difficult Dolomites by all their hardest routes. He was no passenger, moreover, climbing between two first-rate performers. He could and did lead frequently. His reach was enormous, his staying powers and nerve equally remarkable. One of the best Swiss amateurs has declared that the King was among the most skilful cragsmen of the present time. No small praise this, considering the King's height and girth, especially in negotiating Dolomitic chimneys and ledges.

Among the King's mountain companions we may mention Charles Lefébure, who can be said to have initiated him in the Alps; Aldo Bonacossa, Xavier de Grunne, Walter Amstutz, Pierre de Schumacher, and Gottfried Michel. Among guides we may cite Antonio Dimai and his two sons, Hans Steger, Agostino Verzi, Joseph Ravanel *le rouge*, Martin Schocher and Benedikt Supersaxo.

The Queen, *née* Princess Elisabeth Duchess of Bavaria, herself brought up in her own Alps, was often the King's companion, especially before his succession to the Throne.

The list of climbs which follows is necessarily incomplete. It is well known that when Belgium was invaded in 1914 King Albert burnt his Alpine notes and records, considering that all such became then of no further value or account:—

1906.—Lobbia Alta, Cima Tosa, Rotwand (Rosengarten group), Ortler, Weisskgugel.

1907.—During a month and his longest season: Pizzi St. Jon, Champatsch, Pisoc, Linard and Verstanklahorn, Gr. Litzner, Kl. Buin, Piz Carale 'first ascent by N.E. arête'—together with the Queen—July 1. Piz Cambrena, Trais Fluors, Crasta Spinaz (Sieben Rosen), Monte Cristallo, Piz Popena, the *three* Zinnen, Cimone della Pala, Sass Maor and Punta della Madonna.

1908.—Rimpfischhorn, Matterhorn, Monte Rosa (Dufourspitze). Then in *eleven* days, Croda da Lago ('Pompanin' chimney), Kleine Zinne, Tofana di Rocces (Dimai-Eötvös route), Piz Popena (S. arête), Marmolata (S. face), Fünffingerspitze ('Schmittkamin'), Rosengartenspitze (E. face), and the same by S. and S.W. arêtes.

1909.—Punta Fiammes (between 1909 and 1929 the King made 8 ascents of this peak and 7 of Pomagagnon

by the 'Dimai-Phillimore' routes), Becco di Mezzodi ('Barbaria' chimney), Tschierspitze ('Adang' chimney), Stabeler and Delago Türme. His Majesty succeeded to the Throne on December 17.

1910.—Antelao (S. face), etc.

1911–1913.—Winklerturm, Gr. Zinne (several routes), Campanile di Val di Roda, etc., Hübschhorn, Fletschhorn. In 1912 the King accepted honorary membership of the Alpine Club.

1919.—L'Index, Pointes de la Glière, Petits Charmoz.

1920.—Aiguilles de Grépon, Grand-Petit Dru (traverse), Moine.

1921.—Grands Charmoz (traverse), L'Index, Brévent (by face), Aiguille de la Persévérance. Owing to the vulgar publicity given to his climbs, His Majesty then forsook Chamonix for ever.

1922–3.—Campanile di Val Montanaia, Cristallino, Sorapis (traverse).

During the following years His Majesty undertook great official voyages: Dutch East Indies—in the course of which he visited Darjeeling and Sikkim—and the Belgian Congo.

1927.—Kl. Zinne by E. (?) face. Grohmannspitze, Guglia di Brenta, Col Rosa. Cinque Torri and Gr. Zinne (with the Queen), etc.

1929.—Gr. and Kl. Simelistock, Lobhörner, Guglia di Edmondo de Amicis, Campanile Alto.

1930.—Il Gallo, Ago di Sciora, Piz Bacone, Pomagagnon yet again, Torre del Diavolo, Tofana di Mezzo (by 'via Inglese'), Sattel-Tannenspitzen (Engelhoerner).

1931.—Torri Sella I, II and III. Rotwand, Rosengartenspitze, Cima del Largo (Bernina). Kl. Gelmerhorn, Kingspitze, Gr. Simelistock, Corno di Campo, Santnerspitze (Dolomites). *Kleinste Zinne*, Torre Venezia, Grigna (3 points).

1932.—Visit to the volcano Mikenno (Africa). Jungfrau (by Rottal), Pordoispitze, Punta della Madonna (by 'Schleierkante'). Crozzon di Brenta ('Preuss' route)—Cima Tosa, Langkofel (N. arête). Some difficult climbs in the St. Gotthard group. Castello, Castelletto (Maritimes).

1933.—His last and perhaps most brilliant season: Torre Sella (W. face), Torre Sella II, N. face. Eiger (bad weather in attempt on N.E. arête). In Wilde Kaiser:

Fleischbank (S.E. face). Predigstuhl, W. face ; also N. peak of same, Totenkirchl (W. face), Winkler-Stabeler-Delago Türme (traverse), Guglia di Brenta ('Preuss' route). Croz' del Altissimo (W. face), Rosengartenspitze (N. face). Also some peaks in Maritimes.

Of the world-catastrophe of February 17 of this year, it is unnecessary to speak at length. It is clear to every mountaineer that the disaster on that lamentable Meuse pinnacle was a pure accident—an Act of God. Such have occurred and will continue to occur. That His Majesty—an expert in descents *en rappel*—took every precaution is evidenced by the presence of a long rope. It is certain either that the latter slipped off the rock hitch, or that the hitch itself gave way. It is equally clear that death was mercifully instantaneous. . . .

The hazard underlying the fatality that has thrown all Europe into grief and mourning is as manifest to the world as the fact that as a ruler, as a soldier and as a mountaineer, King Albert of the Belgians belongs to the Immortals for all time.

FROM TITLIS TO BITLIS.

By W. RICKMER RICKMERS.

IN the Swiss Alps the Titlis (3239 m.; first ascended by J. Hess and companions in 1744) raises her glittering crown over the vast expanse of majestic peaks from Tyrol to Savoy. Many have aspired to her wuthering heights (I cannot find 'to wuther' in the Oxford Dictionary, but it sounds poetically familiar), some have succeeded, more have failed, and most have never tried. So she stands, a landmark among mountains.

On the bleak highlands of Armenia, nestling in the folds of barren hills, lies Bitlis (1560 m., W. of Lake Van, in the Turkish vilayet of the same name). The stark crater of Nimrud (2919 m.) invites the heroic effort of the climber, and in winter the icy drifts of storm-swept snow tempt the hardy ski-runner.

A vast vista indeed unrolled before the imagination of the ambitious traveller who would fain encompass with his stride