

professional guides ; the German mountaineer finds as a rule his own way, he cuts his own steps and trudges through deep snow relying on his own steam. Owing to these traditions we are still more prepared than the English for the struggle with the eight-thousanders . . . Yet, in the struggle for the said eight-thousander *peaks*, German mountaineers have not hesitated—in some cases ruthlessly—to avail themselves of the devoted services of British Empire porters to ‘trudge through deep snow’ carrying superhuman loads, for the glory of another country than their own.

This is what the nation that has played some part in mountaineering history, that was the pioneer of guideless climbing, that despises gladiatorial displays, but that still possesses some sense of proportion and of the ludicrous, is called upon to smile at but endure !

E. L. S.

IN MEMORIAM.

RICHARD WILLIAM BRANT.

(1852–1934.)

R. W. BRANT was the younger son of James Brant, C.B., British Consul at Erzeroum, and was born there on August 24, 1852. In 1856 the father was transferred to Damascus, where a very serious massacre of Christians took place soon afterwards, and the whole family came home to England. In due time Brant went to Bedford School, and in 1872, after passing a competitive examination, entered the Librarian's Department of the Foreign Office, and gradually rose to be Librarian and Keeper of the State Papers in 1905. He retired in 1914 and was made a C.M.G.

His first visit to the Alps was in 1887, where his principal expeditions were the passage from Zermatt to the Saasthal and back by the Adler and Alphubel passes, and the ascent of the Zinal-Rothhorn. He was out again in 1890 and 1891 and was elected to the Club in December 1891. From that time until 1914 he was out almost every season and made at least two winter visits, and was a very regular attendant at the Club Meetings. He most often travelled with his guide and friend Peter Anton Perren of Zermatt, but he made many guideless ascents with well-known members of the Club, including Horace Walker, Charles Pilkington, Cockin,¹ Larden and Robert Corry.

His expeditions were mostly in the Bernese Oberland and the Valais, but he had climbed in the Graians, the Bernina district and Chamonix.

¹ He was present on the occasion of the Weisshorn accident when Cockin so bravely lost his life, July 28, 1900.—*A.J.* 20, 255–9.



R. W. BRANT.
1852-1934.

I do not think that he ever wanted to take part in very severe climbs, his real pleasure was to be amongst the mountains which he loved, and the beauty of which as an amateur artist and photographer he could so well appreciate. He would seldom lead, and was perhaps unduly diffident as to his own powers, which were considerable, for I never heard of his making any serious slip or mistake, and he was very ready and careful with the rope as well as an excellent weight-carrier.

It was for his companionship that climbers such as I have named were glad to have him in their parties, and he was one of the most unselfish men that I have ever known, always ready either in the Alps or at home to take the heavy end of the work, and to save others, and yet not to expect any recognition of what he had done.

As for British climbing, he was a member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club and an early member of the Climbers' Club, and had taken part more than forty years ago in several notable expeditions in the Lake District. He was one of the second party to climb the N. face of the Pillar Rock. He was on the first climb as far as the Arrow on the Arrowhead Ridge on Great Gable, and a little later on the first climb of the upper part of the same ridge. He had been up Scawfell by Steep Ghyll and by Slingsby's Chimney to Scawfell Pinnacle, while the last climbs that he ever made were in Skye in 1919.

He has gone from us after a long illness and in the fulness of years, leaving with his surviving friends the memory of an unselfish and true companion, who whether in his official career or in his war work as an Inspector of Special Constabulary, or in his holidays, sought first and always to do his duty and to serve his friends.

G. A. S.

HENRY SINCLAIR BROOKE.

(1865-1934.)

HENRY SINCLAIR BROOKE was born at Wimbledon in 1865—the year that the Matterhorn was first climbed, as he often remarked: he died suddenly while on a visit to relatives in Wigtownshire in June 1934. He came of an old family which settled in Ireland in the seventeenth century. His father, H. E. Brooke, an accomplished scholar and a lover of mountains, was in Holy Orders. His grandfather, 'Master Brooke of Drumovana,' was the last of the 'Irish Chancellors.'

H. S. B. was educated at Monkton Combe and went on to Trinity College, Cambridge. He took Holy Orders and, after holding several curacies, became vicar of Pembury, Kent, in 1897, where he remained for twenty years. After a short incumbency in Gloucestershire he returned to the S.E. corner of England—to Wadhurst in Sussex—within ten miles of his old friends at Pembury, and whence in 1925



H. S. BROOKE (RIGHT).
1865-1934.

he came to the vicarage of St. Mark's, Tunbridge Wells, and in touch with both Wadhurst and Pembury. Here he spent the last nine years of his life, mingling the duties of the parish with many other activities. For some years he was Rural Dean of Etchingham, and on retiring from this post was made a Canon of Chichester. In Tunbridge Wells he was president of the Rotary and padre of Toc H, while he took an interest in many other social and musical activities, being a vice-president of the important East Sussex and West Kent Musical Festival.

Brooke first visited the Alps in his undergraduate days, after an illness at Cambridge. He took to mountaineering as a duck to water, climbed a little in the Lakes, in Wales and in Skye, and went to the Alps whenever he could manage it. He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1907. In later days his profession provided the opportunity for taking his family out with him for many summer holidays, and he was often to be found at the Chaplaincies of Grindelwald, Zermatt, Chamonix, Arolla, and Saas Fee, at which resort the presence of some of his family, his wife, four boys and a girl—all of them climbers almost from infancy—had become something like an institution. Brooke's last visit was in 1932, and though his health was then not good, he was constantly on the glaciers, and managed to reach the Britannia hut. In his earlier days he climbed each year with W. Bryan, and later with his two great friends, H. J. Heard¹ and B. Rodway. With two guides, Samuel² and Peter Brawand of Grindelwald, he was especially associated. They were fine guides and charming companions.

Brooke was a good and fast rock-climber, and he much preferred rocks to snow and ice; but he was no specialist and had done many of the chief climbs in the Oberland and Pennines, and a good deal elsewhere. He collaborated with Heard in revising a portion of Ball's Guide for the Tödi district.

Canon Brooke had a singularly mellow voice and charm of accent and diction, and it was a pleasure to hear him read aloud or speak. These gifts doubtless swelled his popularity as a clergyman: but if one met him off his ground, no one could guess what was his profession. He was good company, full of enthusiasm and of Irish charm and humour, making friends easily and quickly with climbers, guides, peasants, hotel keepers, servants, visitors of all nationalities, and especially perhaps with children, with whom he found much in common, for there was a side of him which to the last remained a child.

To Mrs. Brooke, who first met him in the Alps, we extend our sympathy in her unexpected and irreparable bereavement, while we

¹ Whose obituary, *A.J.* 43, 343-4, was written by Brooke.

² The elder—'Sammy'—Brawand, father of the celebrated present-day guide of that name, was killed by lightning on the top of the Wetterhorn in 1902.

may look to some of his boys, now all of them grown up—one in the Army, one in the Navy, and so on—to carry on the best traditions, as well as complete competence, in the future annals of mountaineering, for they learned under good guides, and have already a highly creditable record.

C. W.

HENRY EDWARDS.

(1859–1934.)

HENRY EDWARDS'S interest in mountaineering extended over half a century. He never relinquished attachment to Alpine matters past and current. His diaries from 1883 onwards recount in lucid style not only Alpine ascents, but climbs at home. The latter began in Wales in 1884, and were facilitated by his appointment on public service to Dolgelly, Portmadoc and Bangor successively for periods of some ten years. He came to Precipice Walk at Dolgelly with the inexperienced outlook of a lowlander, but with refined sensitiveness to the magic of mountains there revealed to him.

His reserve was a pronounced characteristic. Of ecclesiastical and conservative stock, he seemed to impersonate the tranquil dignity of that Dean of Durham from whom he descended. The dark eyes of piercing quality were often unconsciously penetrative during conversation, with a welcoming gleam for tangible fact rather than for fugitive fancy.

This appeal of actuality is conspicuous throughout the climbing records, where even minor happenings are included. Mountain scenery is described in language plain but apt. The essential qualities of natural beauty emerge convincingly from these word-pictures, where sun, moon and stars are allowed to shine by their own light. Such aptness of language is significant of Edwards's clarity of mind and simplicity of heart, resulting in honesty of diction, without artificiality, whether in writing or speaking. An evening adventure on Cynicht is registered as 'the beginning of the true love.'

At all times Edwards's observation was alert, noting play and interplay of wind, clouds, and light; also many incidents of bird-life, particularly on Moel Gest, a favourite hillock of his, with its suggestion of remoter charm accentuated by subdued sounds rising from town and sea 800 ft. below.

While Moel Gest served for evening relaxation, interests widened and he seized every opportunity to climb: not content until he had explored all principal heights, some of them repeatedly, within a wide area between Dolgelly and Bangor. He imparted enthusiasm to members of his staff who often accompanied him. The fascination of Snowdon for him was tremendous; his knowledge of the peak and its ridges, by many approaches and regardless of seasons, most intimate. The persistent pilgrim, in experiencing Snowdon's

infinite variety, was vouchsafed many rewards for his sense of adventure and love of scenic beauty; his ascents of the peak eventually exceeded fifty.

Meanwhile, Edwards's curiosity as to vulnerability of rock defences received an important fillip: the genius of J. M. A. Thomson was astir, when the two men met at Bangor in May 1894, and their friendship culminated for Edwards in leadership of two of the seven 'first ascents' in which he participated on Lliwedd, Glyders and Braich Du, 1894-1896.

These successes fittingly closed the chapter of residence in Wales. During the next ten years Edwards frequently went North to join W. Watson, colleague and firm friend. Great were those treks from Penrith: Edwards venting boyish humour; Watson's vision and expansiveness matching the breeze and sweep of the fells; at last the inevitable objective—Wastdale, and reunions. On occasion came E. Clark (now Sir Ernest, of Tasmania), reviving memories of campaigns and adventures with Edwards in Wales. Later, H. W. Blunt, don of Christ Church, holding sway in the stuffy smoking-room and passing genial judgments, or leading his friends Watson and Edwards on favourite climbs.

Edwards spent his first Alpine season in the Oberland, walking and rejoicing in the scenery (1887). At Zermatt (1890) the lonely soul enjoyed sociability with the climbers, his chief ascents being the Matterhorn and Monte Rosa. The traverse of Mont Blanc from Courmayeur (1892) afforded him 'greatest delight.' The ascent of the Matterhorn from Breuil was made with the appropriate companionship of J. M. A. Thomson (1895). Later he added Monte Viso and the Gross Schreckhorn to his achievements. During the period 1900-1906 Watson accompanied him four times to the Alps. Their ascents include the Grivola, S. Aiguille d'Arves, Old Weissthor, Nadelhorn, Monte Leone. From 1908-1921 I joined forces with Edwards for five seasons, visiting Saas Fee twice, including the Lenzspitze and Saasgrat, also the Weissmies and Portjengrat guideless; La Bérarde with Les Ecrins and traverse of La Meije; in 1911 various peaks, including Ankogel, Gross Glockner, Ortler, Piz Bernina—all guideless—Matterhorn by *Z'muttgrat*; lastly (1921), Pralognan and Val d'Isère with the Pointe de la Glière, Grande Casse, etc.

The passage of the Old Weissthor is notable for the leadership of Mattias Zurbriggen of Himalayan fame. With grin and earrings complete he took the shorter difficult 30-ft. rock wall below the pass, very pleasing to his patrons, and later drank from his little barrel, trolling Indian ditties. Thus enlivened, the caravan returned by the Adler Pass to Saas Fee, a centre frequented by Edwards (1905-1908). Apart from being attracted by the big mountains, he was fond of taking friends of modest attainments up the Mittag-horn. Also the retired situation and relatively reposeful atmosphere of the village seemed to lend themselves to that sociability and

congenial intercourse which Edwards himself might not easily initiate, but readily welcomed and desired.

Outstanding amongst the associations of this period is the personality of the late Madame Julia de Wesselitsky, an habituée of Saas Fee, who with her family were well-known climbing enthusiasts, and with whom Edwards remained on the friendliest terms—a relationship it was my happiness to share.

In 1919 he retired from public service, after an operation, but regained vigour for our last joint campaign in 1921. On July 26 we attained the belvedere of the Aiguille de la Grande Sassièrè, and Edwards greeted for the last time, as it proved to be, many of his old challengers in the Alpine world. Happily, he was able to record of that peerless morning: 'The view was one of the most marvellous I have ever seen. . . . I don't remember enjoying a view from a peak so much.'

Always a bachelor, he pursued in retirement his hobbies of reading and translating from German and Spanish, with much of the zeal that characterized his study of bird-life when in contact with Professor Orton at Bangor. His interests had long included chess and cricket.

At seventy a painful and protracted illness called for that power of endurance often needed by him during over-exertion in the mountains. Returning slowly to something like normal life, he may have recalled the sundial motto at Courmayeur, noted in his diary:

Afflictis lentae, celeræ gaudentibus horæ.

It will be recollected that he contributed an interesting note on the Matterhorn accident of 1865 to a very recent number of the JOURNAL, but in December last he was unable to withstand the severity of winter and succumbed in January at Bury St. Edmunds, his old home.

A reliable companion of the hills has passed.

H. M. F. D.

MRS. AUBREY LE BLOND.

(1861-1934.)

THE death of this well-known mountaineer occurred on July 27, 1934. She was one of the first ladies to climb regularly year after year, following the lead given by Miss Lucy Walker and Mrs. Jackson. She was a friend and practically a contemporary of Miss Katherine Richardson.¹

Née Elizabeth, daughter of the late Sir St. Vincent Hawkins-Whitshed, Bart., of Killincarrick, Co. Wicklow, Mrs. Le Blond was married three times: first, to Colonel Fred Burnaby, R.H.G., of

¹ Whose obituary in *A.J.* 40, 160-2, was written by Mrs. Le Blond.



Photo, Martin Schocher.]

ON PIZ MORTERATSCH, JANUARY 1898.

(Note the only form of 'snow-shoes'—except Canadians—then available.)

MRS. LE BLOND.



Photo, Josef Imboden.]

ON A NORWEGIAN PEAK IN 1899.

Ride to Khiva fame, who was killed in the broken square of Abu Klea (1885) after performing prodigies of valour and who left a son; second, to Mr. D. F. Main, who died in 1892; third, to Mr. Aubrey Le Blond, who survives her.

In early youth Mrs. Le Blond was delicate, and for this reason was sent to the Alps. This was somewhere about 1879. She soon recovered, and henceforth up to about 1900 became an industrious and indefatigable mountaineer. She was a highly skilful climber and, in her best days, was certainly rivalled in performance and form by Miss Richardson alone. Her chief characteristic was her extraordinary judgment. In the writer's opinion, as one who knew her well and had made many ascents—both in summer and winter—in her company, this judgment has never been surpassed in any mountaineer, professional or amateur, of the so-called stronger sex. Her staying powers were quite outstanding; she was slight but very strongly built, with the finished stride² of the first-class guide. Mrs. Le Blond was certainly the first lady to make 'manless' ascents and, if these did not rival the feats of a later generation, yet they were considered extraordinary—if slightly 'improper'—in the Victorian era. She was very reticent on all such, but I can recollect a traverse of Piz Palü, a first ascent of the season, her sole companion being, I think, Lady Evelyn McDonnell.

She had climbed in every part of the Western Alps from the Cottians to the Ortler, her knowledge of the Bernina both in summer and winter being remarkable. In the Central Group she had, I believe, accomplished all the principal climbs in winter, notably the first ascents of Crast' Agüzza and also Monte Disgrazia, the latter from and to the Forno—a great *tour de force*—made long before the days of ski. In summer, she achieved the ascent of Piz Scerscen *twice* in two days, traversing to Piz Bernina on the second occasion. Her favourite guides were Edouard Cupelin, Emile Rey, Wieland Wieland, Josef Imboden and his son Roman. These last two especially rendered devoted services to her for many years. Mrs. Le Blond felt the untimely death of the latter on the Lyskamm so much that she practically gave up climbing in the Alps, visiting Norway with Josef and another of his sons for several seasons in succession. A great number of first ascents, mostly about the Lyngenfjord, rewarded their efforts. When Josef Imboden finally retired from the axe, Mrs. Le Blond retired too; but her other activities continued up to the hour of her death.

She was one of the founders, as well as first President, of the Ladies' Alpine Club. She was once again elected President last year. Among other duties she looked after French wounded during the period 1914–16. She was Hon. Sec. of the British Empire Fund for the restoration of Reims Cathedral, as well as serving in the same capacity with the Anglo-French Luncheon Club. She organized

² She was a magnificent skater of the 'English' school.

the erection of the statue of Maréchal Foch in London and was created an Officer of the *Légion d'Honneur* in 1933.

Her works on the Alps and mountaineering in general were very numerous and some were highly successful: *High Alps in Winter* (1883), *High Life and Towers of Silence* (1886), *My Home in the Alps* (1892), *Hints on Snow Photography*—in which she was a veritable expert—(1894), *True Tales of Mountain Adventure* (1903), *Story of an Alpine Winter*—St. Moritz, a novel—(1907), *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun* (1908), *Day in and Day out: reminiscences* (1928).³

To her many friends, Alpine and others, Mrs. Le Blond's death in the fulness of her mental powers came as a grievous shock. She was one of those who could not grow old. Her skill as a mountaineer, like her extraordinary kindness to all, will live in the memory of her *Home in the Alps*—and far beyond.

E. L. S.

EXPEDITIONS.

Dauphiné.

PIC D'OLAN, 3578 m. = 11,739 ft. (Central peak, 3563 m.). By the N.W. (Valjouffrey) face. August 23–24, 1934. MM. G. Gervasutti and L. Devies.

[A great gully seams the entire wall and lies, practically, about the centre of the said N.W. face. From above, the gully commences under a little gap of the main (watershed) ridge to the S.W. of the central peak. It forms at first a deep and narrow cleft, and, after a short step, a series of oblique snow patches situated under the central peak. Below this point again the gully is cut off for a great distance by a slabby zone. A trickle of water alone indicates the presence of the cleft. Lower down again, in the plumb-line of the N. peak, it forms a smooth recess in which lie patches of snow. Thence the gully plunges straight down towards the uppermost portions of the small glacier situated at the foot of the wall. A kind of buttress bounds the great gully to the right: this buttress is approximately the line of ascent.]

From the Font Turbat hut (4 hrs.) bear across the torrent and attain the bergschrund at the base of the face by means of the moraine and the small glacier, 05.15. At 05.50 the party commenced the ascent by bearing some 25 yards to the right of the water streaming down from the great gully. Climb first by slabs, then by ill-defined and difficult cracks (2 pitons). Now by rocks provided with good holds to the first of three caves noticeable from below

³ She had also translated some of Maréchal Lyautey's works, who, strangely enough, died on the same day.