

EXPEDITIONS

PUNJAB HIMALAYA.—The Army Mountaineering Association party in Kulu, pre-monsoon 1965, was beset by last-minute political difficulties which are becoming a sad but familiar feature of climbing in the Himalaya of India. These difficulties resulted in, first, a reduction in the size of the party and, second, an unwelcome but inevitable change of objectives from the unclimbed 21,000-ft. peaks of the upper Parbati valley, to the well-trodden regions of the Malana and Tos nullahs. Moreover, access proved especially arduous because of the late snowfall of last winter (which barred three of the passes we were now obliged to cross), and the mutinous behaviour of the Tibetan refugee porters we unwisely employed on May 16 for the march-in to Base Camp in the Malana nullah.

On May 29, 1965, we made the first ascent of Ramchukor Peak, 17,025 ft., in the east containing wall of the Ali Ratni Tibba East glacier, via the last-named glacier, easy névés, and the splendid snow arête of the North ridge. The summit was reached by Langford, Pettigrew, Wangyal and Zangbo. At a later stage in the expedition Henty, with Palgaon and Zangbo, climbed the northernmost peak in the group, unnamed Point 16,800 ft. Although modest in altitude there are several attractive and difficult peaks in this area, most of them virgin.

In *H. J.* v. 82, A. P. F. Hamilton refers to the Sara Umga pass, which once carried the ancient trade route from Ladakh to Rampur-Bashahr in the Sutlej valley, as being little known, not less than 16,000 ft. high, and probably difficult. The pass was reached by the A.M.A. party on June 3, 1965. Some difficulty was experienced in scaling the steep north bank of the deeply entrenched west stream of the Tos glacier to enter the pass from the south, but conditions would alter radically in the post-monsoon season when the pass probably opened each year for a brief period. Its height by aneroid barometer is 16,025 ft. This is probably the first crossing of the Sara Umga La by mountaineers. Later a camp was established for six days on the *Chota* Shigri glacier leading north to Phuti Runi on the true left bank of the Chandra river in Lahul (not the *Bara* Shigri glacier, as suggested by Hamilton).

Using the pass as a base, Langford, Pettigrew, Zangbo and Wangyal on June 9 reconnoitred the approaches from the south to Point 21,165 ft. (Papsura) and its north-westerly outlier, Point 20,300 ft., both prominent unclimbed peaks in the northern end of the Kulu/Bara Shigri Divide. We took the northernmost of two tributary glaciers. This, though the steeper of the two, was less exposed to falling ice from the upper shelf of their common névé. The recce camp was sited on a col, 18,013 ft., over-

looking a glacier cwm draining first north then west into the lower Chota Shigri glacier, and surrounded on three sides by precipitous walls. This cwm is unmarked on Survey of India Sheet 53 E.-NW., NE. By traversing the névé at the foot of Point 20,300 ft., we reached a good view point on the South ridge of that mountain. Here, at 18,400 ft., we were on a watershed between tributary glaciers flowing into the Tos glacier and those flowing into the Chota Shigri glacier. Looking south-east beyond the Tos East glacier we identified Point 19,061 ft., climbed by Colonel J. O. M. Roberts in 1941. We examined the North-west ridge, the West face and the South ridge of Papsura, 21,165 ft., but we could not trace a feasible route from this side.

Ali Ratni Tibba, 18,013 ft., and its fore-top, known respectively as Paptula and Dramtula to the local *paharis* (hillmen) is a formidable mountain resembling the Aiguille du Dru. Aiming to carry out a close reconnaissance Langford, Pettigrew and Wangyal circumnavigated the base of the mountain by ascending the Ali Ratni Tibba East glacier, a tributary of the Malana glacier, and descending the Ali Ratni Tibba West glacier, which emerges in the upper Malana nullah on the true left bank of the river, just below the snout of the Malana glacier. Two camps were required, one on the new pass we made immediately south-west of Ali Ratni Tibba, and one above the lower ice-fall on the descent glacier. The pass was named Pass of the Obelisks, *c.* 16,000 ft. We consider that, once gained, the South-west ridge offers the best chance of an ascent of the mountain, but it would have to be reached by a route traversing the steep ice-fields of the South face, which would require considerable resources and prolonged preparation.

The party withdrew from the area down the remarkable and precipitous gorge of the Malana river, reaching the motorable road of the Parbati valley at Jari (5,260 ft.) on June 17.

ROBERT PETTIGREW.

GANGAPURNA.—The first ascent of Gangapurna, *c.* 24,375 ft., was made by a German expedition in May, 1965, and proved more difficult than expected. Base Camp was established at 12,303 ft. at the southern foot of the Annapurna group on April 6. Between April 9 and 24, in spite of unfavourable weather, further camps were established at 14,108 ft., 16,240 ft., 18,700 ft., and 20,342 ft. A week of the hardest ice-work was then required to overcome the several hundred feet high ice-slope at an angle of 55° below the saddle between Gangapurna and Annapurna III, but on May 5 the first party reached the saddle, 21,555 ft., and set up the tents of Camp V. Next day the summit was reached at 2.35 p.m. by way of the long East ridge by Günter Hauser (leader of the expedition), L. Greissl, H. Köllensperger, E. Reismüller and the Sherpas Ang Temba and Phudorje.

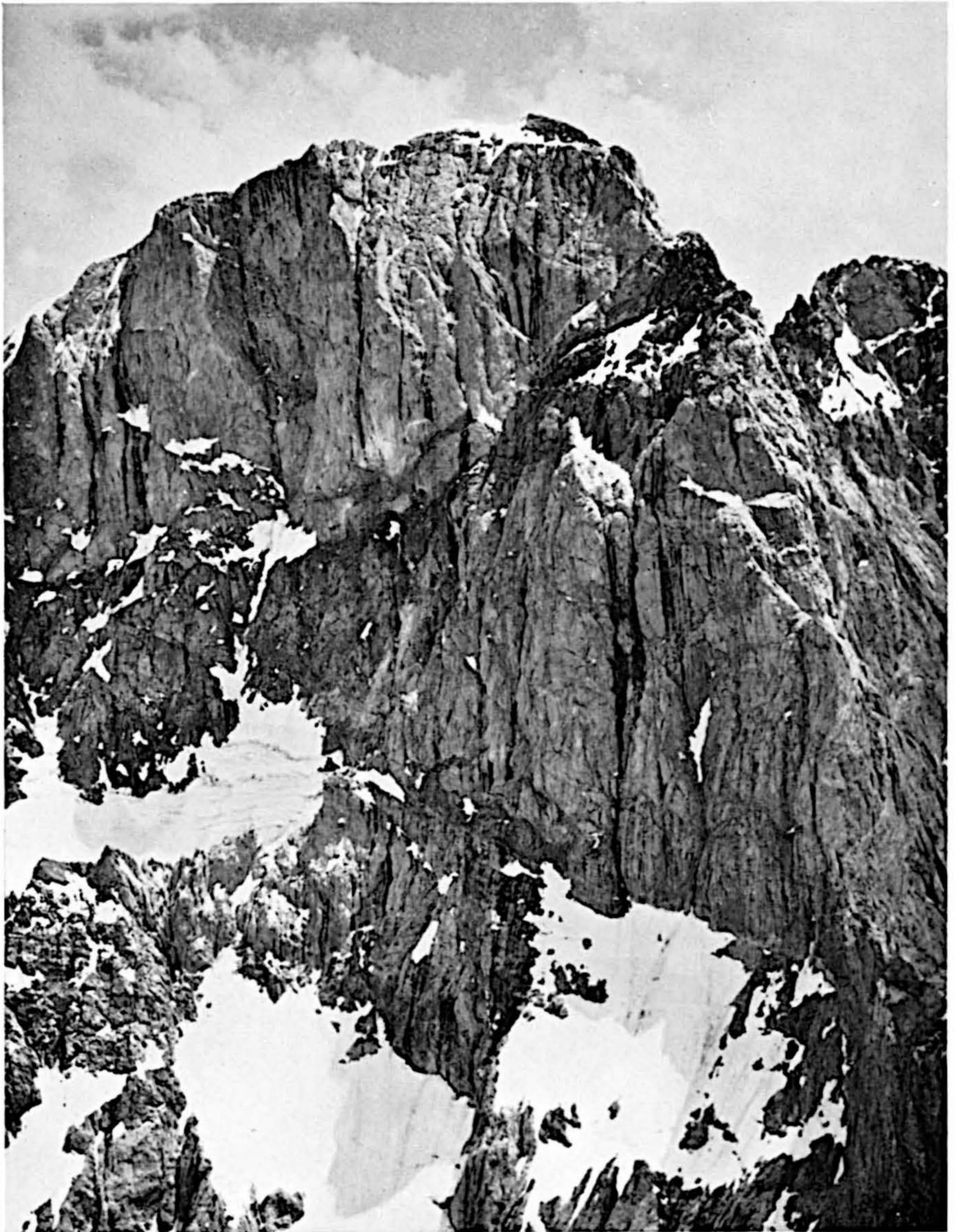


Photo: S. E. P. Nowill]

SOUTH-EAST TURKEY, CILO MOUNTAINS: THE HIGHEST PEAK (REŞKO, 4,168 M.) SEEN FROM MAUNSELL'S PEAK.

(No. 90)

On May 8 the remaining members of the expedition repeated the ascent. (Source: *Der Bergsteiger*, July, 1965).

TURKEY: CILO MOUNTAINS.—A party composed of S. E. P. Nowill, Mrs. Hilary Nowill, and John Harding spent twelve days in this range of South-east Turkey. The area contains three 4,000 m. peaks and seventeen glaciers. The vegetation and flowers are extraordinarily lush and the climbing possibilities in the Cilo Dag and Sat Dag groups are exceptional.

Our party climbed the highest peak, Gelişin summit of Reşko (4,168 m.), on June 24, 1965. (See illustration no. 90.) This was the first June ascent recorded in the summit book. The difficulties were confined to snow cornices on the ridge (which would vanish in a few weeks' time). The rope was only used on the descent when the snow on steep slabs had softened.

We also climbed Maunsell's Peak, 3,870 m., a superb view point, starting from Erbis Yayla and taking in the 3,700 m. peak lying south-east of Maunsell's Peak. This summit necessitated some awkward climbing on broken rock.

Our final effort was to mount the North-east glacier of Reşko as far as the North-east face (which is vertical). This is the largest glacier in the area. From the upper glacier amphitheatre we climbed a small summit, apparently virgin, of 3,690 m., which was the third spire on the north containing ridge of the glacier. A cairn was put up. The rock was easy, but effecting a lodgment upon it from the glacier gave some difficulty.

S. E. P. NOWILL.

ANTARCTICA.—As briefly reported in *A. J.* 70. 125, three members of the Combined Services expedition made the first ascent of Mount Paget, 9,625 ft. Further information is now available. Shortly after the support party had left the assault team on the Christophersen glacier, the low cloud cleared for a brief period to give a clear view of the mountain. The next two days, of poor weather, were spent in carrying stores up to a camp at 3,500 ft.

At 3 a.m. on December 29 the party set off in good snow conditions with rations for five days. Climbing over the lower col on to the ridge they advanced to a point just below the Far West Summit encountering only minor problems en route, and after several traverses arrived on a prominent plateau between the Far West and West peaks. On reaching the top of this plateau the party found itself just below the West Summit; the route to this and on to the Main Summit seemed straightforward, if steep, but as it was by now late afternoon camp was set up at *c.* 8,700 ft.

After a comfortable night, camp was left at 2.55 a.m., the West Summit

being reached three-quarters of an hour later. The ridge connecting this with the Main Summit involved a gentle descent of some 400 ft. over the next three-quarters of a mile; and thereafter a steady climb up the ridge led to the top, the highest point in South Georgia, which was reached at 5.22 a.m. Visibility was perfect except for sea mist to the north. Camp was regained without incident at 12.45 p.m. Bad weather then set in and it was not until January 3 that it was possible to descend to the main base.

On January 4 three other members of the expedition, Squadron-Leader A. H. Back, Major J. D. C. Peacock, and Sergeant T. D. Thompson, made the first ascent of Mount Sugartop, 7,623 ft. This party had been placed in an assault camp at 4,500 ft. on the ridge between Sugartop and Paulsen peaks and on January 4 a reconnaissance was begun up a steep snow face to a subsidiary ridge leading westwards from the Sugartop massif. All difficulties were avoided or overcome and the reconnaissance continued along the ridge for half a mile; this was the intended limit, but the reconnaissance was extended up the West face of Sugartop on to the ridge joining the two main peaks of the mountain. It was then decided to make a full scale attempt and the climb was continued up the arête. The only serious difficulty up the final ridge was a steep ice-chimney, but this was overcome and the summit reached at 4.15 p.m.

NEW GUINEA.—The *Sydney Morning Herald* of February 20 reported that an Australian Government official, Mr. P. Hardie, accompanied by a Chimbu named Du, had made the first ascent of Mount Kubor, 13,999 ft., early this year.

Mount Kubor, some 350 miles north-west of Port Moresby, was first attempted in 1958. It has an evil reputation among the natives, who believe it to be haunted, and they warned Mr. Hardie that the evil spirits would attack him, and that he would never get back alive!

THE ALPS

LE CARDINAL, West face. First ascent. July 14, 1965. C. J. S. Bonington, T. W. Patey; R. Tejada Flores, S. R. Miller (both U.S.A.). The route took a direct line up the face overlooking the Charpoua hut, starting at the lowest point of the face. It gave 1,200 ft. of climbing, of which 400 ft. were sustained V, VI and A1. The rock tended to be friable. The climb took 11 hours, and was T.D. sup. in standard.

AIGUILLE DU MIDI, North face, Central éperon. Second ascent. July 22, 1965. T. W. Patey, C. J. S. Bonington; R. Baillie, J. S. Cleare. 10 hours, finishing in storm. The route goes directly up to the téléferique

station, following a rock buttress that has a pitch of V and then a series of ice-slopes and lesser buttresses straight to the top. Because the rock was so heavily iced at the top, the party traversed to the left, towards the top of the Frendo spur, and worked their way through the séracs.

Another British party made the third ascent, finishing straight up into the station. The route is comparable with the Frendo spur in difficulty and character.¹

AIGUILLE DU PLAN, West éperon. First ascent. July 28–29, 1965. C. J. S. Bonington, R. Tejada Flores; standard, E. D. This route runs up the conspicuous éperon to the left of the Gréloz-Roch route and then takes the clean-cut groove immediately above, up the steep upper wall. The éperon gives delightful climbing of IV and V. The groove is steep and difficult, with pitches of VI and A2. It was particularly hard on the first ascent owing to heavy icing; when clear, it would give delightful climbing all the way. Sixteen hours of climbing, with a bivouac near the top; in good conditions it would go easily in the day. 2,500 ft. of climbing.²

MONT BLANC: Right-hand Pillar of Brouillard. First ascent. August 21, 1965. C. J. S. Bonington, J. Harlin; R. Baillie, B. Robertson.

The Right-hand Pillar of Brouillard stands at the head of the Brouillard glacier on the south side of Mont Blanc. The Left-hand Pillar had been climbed by Bonatti and Oggioni in 1959. The Right-hand Pillar had already excited some interest. Crew and Ingle made several attempts to reach it in the summers of 1964 and 1965, but were thwarted by bad conditions. A Polish party reached the foot of the Pillar in mid-August, but turned back.

R. Baillie and myself went up to the Col du Frêne on August 9, reached the foot of the Pillar on the 10th and tried to find a route up its left-hand side without success; we bivouacked about 300 ft. up the Pillar. On the 11th we attempted a steep groove straight up the centre of the face, but found we had too few pegs—only twelve. It was obviously going to give some hard artificial climbing, and we retreated to the Col

¹ T. W. Patey describes the route as a more interesting climb than the Frendo spur. 'The difficulties are more sustained, and the route could be recommended as the best route up the Aiguille du Midi from Chamonix.' The first ascent was made by Mlle. O. Mossaz with Yannick Seigneur in 1963.—EDITOR.

² M. Boysen, T. W. Patey, R. Baillie and J. S. Cleare were members of the party on the lower sections of this route. Patey writes: 'As the final 200 m. dièdre took over 12 hours' climbing and required about 30 pitons, we diverged rightwards below the dièdre in order to avoid congestion and finished by the Direct route on the West face (the Brown-Patey finish to the Gréloz-Roch route, made in 1963—see *A. J.* 68. 292). This combination provided a fine, sustained free climb of T.D. standard. The party did the climb in a single day from Chamonix and back, descending via the Requin hut.'—EDITOR.

Eccles bivouac hut. On the 13th we returned to Courmayeur, picked up more equipment and that evening went back to the Monzino hut (the new hut replacing the Gamba; it must be the best appointed in the Alps, with a very helpful guardian). On the 14th we left the Monzino hut at 1 a.m., reached the foot of the Pillar by 6 a.m. and attacked the steep groove. It gave three fine pitches, one of V sup., one of VI (130 ft. of layback crack with 7 pegs) and a pitch of A1. The upper part of the Pillar was gained by a thin crack cleaving a smooth wall, the only weakness in the entire face. We were now 60 ft. below the top of the Pillar, when a storm broke. We bivouacked on a small ledge, and retreated next day in the storm all the way down to Courmayeur.

On August 20, J. Harlin (U.S.A.), R. Baillie (Rhodesia), B. Robertson (Scotland) and myself went up to the Monzino hut. Next day we left late, 3.30 a.m., owing to the uncertain state of the weather, and reached the foot of the Pillar at 9 a.m. We took a different line up the middle part of the Pillar, avoiding the steep groove, and finally reached the top of the Pillar at 6 p.m. Above the Pillar there is an easy arête leading to the Brouillard ridge. We nearly reached the top of the arête before dark, but in face of threatening weather decided it would be better to go back down the same way that we had come rather than try to cross Mont Blanc. We got back to a point immediately above the top of the Pillar before dark, and the storm broke that night. We had another storm-bound descent the next morning.

The Pillar gave 1,000 ft. of climbing on excellent rock. There were several pitches of V sup., one of VI, one of A1 and one of A2. The overall standard was E.D. The approach by the Eccles bivouac, which is several hundred feet below the Col Eccles, is both safe and straightforward, and the upper Brouillard basin is comparatively free from crevasses. This would also be a good approach for the Red Pillar, which looks as if it would give excellent climbing.

DENT DU MIDI, North-east ridge *intégrale*. First ascent. August 6, 1965. J. Harlin, R. Baillie, C. J. S. Bonington. The Dent du Midi consists of a fine chain of limestone peaks. The North-east ridge, on its far extremity, had been climbed direct in its upper part, but the steep lower face had beaten several parties. We had expected difficult artificial climbing, but were pleasantly surprised to have spectacular but straightforward free pitches of about V standard for the first 500 ft. The upper part, which looked unpleasantly loose, turned out to be surprisingly firm, giving excellent climbing of grade III on steep rock. The climb took 6 hours, and was altogether 3,000 ft. to the top.

VERCORS: LA PELLE, West face. July, 1965. C. Barbier, C. J. S. Bonington; L. Terray, J. Bourgeois. This is a 1,000 ft. limestone face,

typical of those to be found in the Grenoble region. The rock was a trifle loose but the climbing was excellent—steep and technically hard, both free and artificial. The region gives excellent bad weather climbing when the high mountains are out of condition. All the pitons were in place.

C. J. S. BONINGTON.

Bonington also writes:—

‘Although the season has been bad, with frequent storms and heavy snowfall, most of the classic rock routes have been done by British parties—Drus, Blaitière and Capucin. Many parties have been caught out by storms and forced to retreat. One party—Nick Estcourt, Chris Jones; George Lowe, Steve Miller (U.S.A.)—made an attempt on the Central Pillar of Frêne, but were forced to retreat at the foot of the Candle by the threat of bad weather. Four Polish climbers made the second ascent of the Grand Pilier d’Angle. A Parisian climber made the first ascent, solo, of the Shroud³ in early July.

‘By far the most important first ascent was that of the West face of the Dru direct, by John Harlin and Royal Robbins, between August 10 and August 13. Harlin had already made four attempts in 1964⁴ and one earlier this July. The route was both extremely difficult and dangerous, going through zones of poised blocks and flakes. The largest roof jutted out a good 30 ft., but went free, through a chimney in it.

‘They were using American equipment and techniques. The second man prusiked up the rope, while the leader pulled up the 100 lb. sack of equipment by a special method devised by Royal Robbins. They also used ‘sky-hooks’—fi-fi type hooks hung on flakes of rock.

‘On their second day Harlin was hit on the leg by a stone and was badly bruised—for a time almost completely paralysed. He prusiked up most of the rest of the climb, which was led by Robbins. On the last day he was able to take his share of the leading.’

MATTERHORN. Between February 18–22 Walter Bonatti accomplished a remarkable exploit in making the first solo winter ascent of the North face of the Matterhorn. A week previously he had made an unsuccessful attempt with two companions, but after climbing about 1,000 ft. up the wall the attempt was abandoned owing to the weather conditions.

On the night of February 18 Bonatti bivouacked just below the bergschrund at the foot of the North face and commenced the climb next morning. Above the bergschrund an ice-slope of 55° had to be overcome

³ The ice-field to the left of the Éperon Walker on the Grandes Jorasses.

⁴ See ‘Expeditions’, *A. J.* 69. 277, where the route is described as ‘the big groove between the West face and the South-west Pillar’ of the Dru.—EDITOR.

and this was followed by a steep ascent over rocks and snow. The elaborate safety precautions that it was essential to carry out on a solo climb of this nature, and the fact that the equipment had to be hauled up after each rope's length, prevented Bonatti from making fast progress and he spent his second night some 1,000 ft. up the face.

On the 20th he succeeded in gaining only 500 ft. over steep and difficult rocks and next day arrived at the upper end of the very steep middle portion of the climb, where he bivouacked for the fourth time. Finally, on February 22 he reached the Zmutt ridge *c.* 820 ft. below the top and followed it to the Italian summit where he arrived shortly after 3 p.m.

Bonatti descended by the South-west ridge and had to spend yet another night out before reaching Breuil on February 23.

Bonatti's route, lying further west than that of the Schmid brothers in 1931, was not a *direttissima*, as was suggested in some accounts of the climb. Such a route would have to start between the Schmid and Bonatti routes and for approximately the last third of the climb follow the Schmid brothers' route directly to the summit. (Source: *Alpinismus*, April, 1965).

Rassemblement International d'Alpinistes

For a number of years the École Nationale de Ski et d'Alpinisme under its Director, M. Jean Franco, has acted as host to an international meet of the world's mountaineers at Chamonix. This year the *rassemblement* was held from July 12 to July 31. In addition to four French participants, two representatives from each of the following twenty-three countries enjoyed the generous hospitality of the École Nationale: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Great Britain, Holland, Iran, Italy, Japan, Jugoslavia, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Rumania, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, U.S.A., U.S.S.R. The British representatives were C. J. S. Bonington and T. W. Patey; some of the climbs of which Bonington has sent particulars (above) were done during the *rassemblement*.

As M. Franco commented in his brief report of the meet, 'Le temps, dans l'ensemble, n'a pas été favorable'; but the list of climbs done is nevertheless quite an impressive one—although it is perhaps significant that the two ascents which were made (by German and Russian parties) of the South-west Pillar of the Dru each took five days. It may be of interest that one of the Russian representatives was A. Ovchinnikov, who was a member of the British-Soviet Pamirs expedition, 1962.

NORWAY.—The Storsteinsfjell rock massif and adjacent areas of the Tysfjord region of Arctic Norway, which lie to the south-east of Narvik, were visited by a Lancashire party (J. R. Amatt, D. G. Heap, C. B. Greenhalgh, P. J. Hayes) in August, 1964.

From a base camp established in the Skjommen valley, the party made several first ascents. These included the first traverse of the Lappviktind ridge, which has a 2,000 ft. unclimbed precipice along the whole length of its East face. The North-west face of Nordre Ippococka (1,367 m.) was also climbed by Amatt and Greenhalgh from this camp in 4½ hours, climbing overnight. The same night, Hayes and Heap made the first ascent of the East face of Stortind (1,537 m.) by an obvious gully weakness below col 1,263 m.

A week later, an advanced base was established at 3,000 ft. on the banks of the Losivatn. From this camp, the party climbed the tremendous South face of Kuinarcocka (1,796 m.), and Amatt and Heap succeeded on the South face of Losivarre. In 1957, C. J. Mortlock of the O.U.M.C. expedition had attempted this face, but was compelled to retreat after an accident to his second.

In the Storsteinfjell massif, Hayes and Greenhalgh made an ascent of the previously unclimbed North-west ridge of Kirken (1,734 m.), and then traversed to Hjørnetoppen (1,875 m.). They descended by way of an unclimbed ice-gully on the South face—'an extremely steep gully, hard ice covered with powder snow'.

There is still unlimited scope for new routes in this area. Most of the major faces still remain unclimbed, and would only be solved after a great deal of effort. The 1,000 ft. West face of Haugbakktind (1,454 m.) presents a tremendous challenge, rising absolutely vertically above the Skjommen valley. Other formidable faces include the 2,000 ft. East face of Lappviktind, the 2,000 ft. overhanging East Pillar of Kuinarcocka and the North Pillar of Kuinarcocka. All these faces would require artificial aid, and possibly several days, before they could be climbed.

J. R. AMATT.