

came with the horses at 10 to begin the homeward march to civilisation, we were ourselves again, triumphant at the conquest of a splendid peak, ready for the next that called for subjugation, and filled with so great respect for good Mt. Bryce that we shall never tackle him again two on a rope.

A MONTH'S HOLIDAY IN THE MOUNT COOK DISTRICT,
NEW ZEALAND.

BY CLAUDE A. MACDONALD.

I HAD hoped to be in Europe for the season of 1903, but terrible bush fires followed by a disastrous drought made it impossible; and when, after a long period of hard work and mental worry, a holiday was absolutely necessary, my wife and I started to spend a couple of months among the glaciers of New Zealand.

Your readers do not often get articles on these regions, so I send you an account of our holiday, a most enjoyable one, though on my chief expedition I had to turn back when victory seemed well within my grasp.

The Southern Alps are easily reached: a voyage of five days by steamer from Melbourne lands you at Dunedin, and the *Moeraki*, by which we travelled, is as replete with every comfort as any large ocean-going mail steamer. After eight hours by train to Fairlie Creek, the remaining 96 miles have to be negotiated by coach. I engaged a large waggonette, and with three excellent horses we found the two days' trip quite a comfortable one, the roads being by no means bad and the views all the way superb. Lake Tekapo, the first stopping-place for lunch, is a beautiful sheet of water backed by high mountains, and of a lovely turquoise blue colour; while Lake Pukaki, at the end of which the first night is spent, is even grander and wilder. The background here is formed by Mount Cook itself, 50 miles off, at the far end of the lake, and by its surrounding peaks. Next day Lake Pukaki is skirted the whole way, and the panorama as it unfolds itself on approaching the Hermitage is magnificent.

The Hermitage Hotel is well situated, nestling under the snows and cliffs of Mount Sefton (10,359 ft.) and at the junction of three enormous glaciers—the Tasman (about 19 miles), the Hooker and the Mueller (each about 8 miles long). For moderate walkers or first-class mountaineers alike it is a splendid place for a holiday; the great drawback is the distance one's peak is away and the necessity of making



Photo by Claude A. Macdonald.

[Swan Electric Engraving Co.]

THE HUDDLESTONE ICEFALL ON MOUNT SEFTON.

camps at a high altitude. The Government is seeing to this, and already two excellent huts have been built—the Ball Hut, 14, and the Brodrick, 24 miles from the Hermitage—up the Tasman glacier, and containing good accommodation for eight people, blankets, tinned goods, and surgical appliances.

My first fortnight was spent in moderate expeditions, of which there are many, and in reconnoitring. With my wife I went to the head of the Tasman glacier, and had a four days' exploring excursion. For this trip the Hooker river—a swiftly-running mountain torrent which has its source in the Hooker glacier, coming down from Mount Cook—has first to be crossed, either by wire suspension bridge or, some four miles down, by a wire rope on which is a cage, by which you cross on the switchback railway principle. The Tasman glacier is a magnificent sight, and the view from the upper hut one of the finest I have seen, reminding me much of the view from the Concordia, only on a much larger and grander scale.

A series of magnificent peaks, mostly unclimbed, surround the head of the glacier, amongst others, Malte Brun (10,421 ft.), a very fine rock peak, only once climbed; De la Bèche (9,815 ft.), a pyramid cutting the Tasman from the Rudolf glacier, ascended two or three times; and, at the extreme head of the glacier, Mt. Green (9,325 ft.) and Mt. Elie de Beaumont (10,200 ft.), both virgin peaks, the Hochstetter Dome (9,258 ft.), and Mt. Darwin (9,715 ft.), the former an easy ascent over snow, and the latter a sharp rock cone. Mts. Green and Elie de Beaumont attracted me very much. The latter looks impossible from this side, towering up in terraces, and hanging glaciers which lie at apparently the most unstable angles. These two peaks and a pass from here to the W. coast I should have liked to have attempted, but unfortunately my time was limited, and, as you will see later, the weather, never very settled for any considerable time in New Zealand, limited me still more.

On February 14 I started up the Hooker glacier to attempt Mount Cook (12,349 ft.) from the N.W. For companion I was fortunate in having Jack Clarke, the Government 'guide' at the Hermitage, whom I found an excellent mate and, considering the very limited opportunities he gets for first-class work, a most efficient one. He had done some climbing with Mr. E. A. FitzGerald in 1896. My experience of Clarke's abilities was fortunately different from his. I found him a very nice, quiet fellow, keen and eager about the mountains, with a great natural ability both for rock and

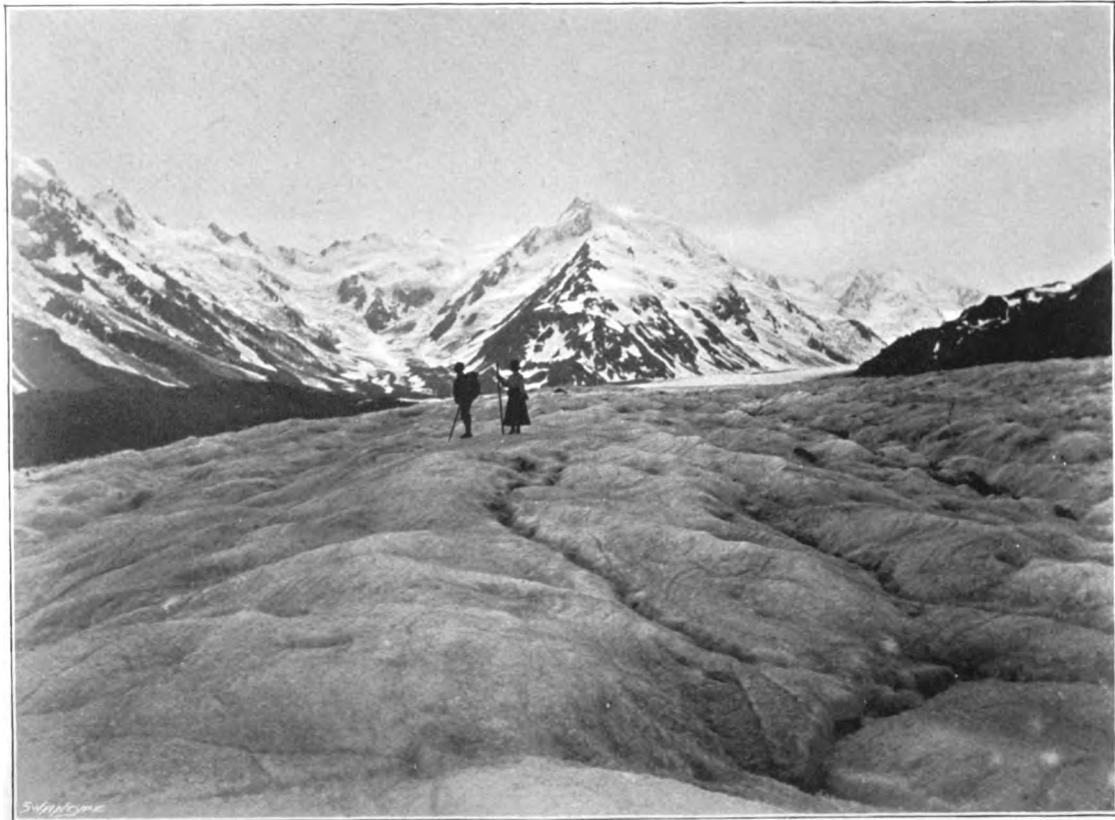


Photo by Claude A. Macdonald.

MOUNT DE LA BÉCHE.

[Swan Electric Engraving Co.]

snow work, and quite ready and anxious to acquire experience and information. During the time he climbed with me I tried him pretty highly, and was thoroughly satisfied. My porter, James Smith, was strong, willing, and sure-footed, and accustomed to the lower glaciers, although he had never been on a first-class peak before. I made several minor expeditions to test my team, including the passage of the Upper Hooker icefall to Harper's Saddle; and, having made all our preparations and laid our plans, we started on February 14, taking provisions for two days, and carrying sleeping things to enable us to make a high camp. We found the upper part of the Hooker terribly crevassed, and had very hard work, owing to the lateness of the season, in forcing the icefall, five or six of the crevasses being the whole width of the glacier, and any bridges that we found almost on their last legs. We formed our camp above the icefall on some rocks outcropping from the ice itself (the only shelter we could find); and, after a short attempt at a night's rest, during which we suffered much from cold, we started by moonlight next morning, the 15th, and got to Harper's Saddle at the head of the Hooker at 2.45; crossed the glacier, descending between St. David's Dome and Mt. Cook, since named the Sheila glacier; and reached the rocks leading to the saddle which joins Mt. Hector to Mt. Cook at 6 A.M. Here a thick fog came on, and we had breakfast. Later it started to rain, got thicker, and, finally, rain came down in torrents; and, after waiting some hours and getting soaked to the skin, I decided to return. We were 9,600 ft. up, by aneroid, and separated from the summit by the rock arête leading directly to it—a long arête of good rocks; and I calculated, with fine weather, some 4 hrs. more would have seen us on the top, and in this Clarke, who with Fyfe had made the first ascent in 1896 by this arête, agreed with me.

Getting back over the icefall was awful; the rain and thaw had whittled away our ice-bridges, huge gaps opened everywhere, and many blocks by which we had crossed deep crevasses had now fallen in—especially was this the case with one crevasse, the largest I have ever crossed. We cut a long distance down into it and shinned *à cheval* across a long ice pinnacle some 12 ft. long and 1 ft. thick that had fallen across and got jammed in the jaws of the crevasse. There was no other way, and riding across this slippery, narrow, and slender track, with unfathomable depths below, recalled to me Leo and Holly's adventure when getting out of the bowels of the earth in 'She.' However, all ended well,

and, drenched and disappointed, we reached the Hermitage again in time for dinner.

As ill-luck would have it, it rained for a week after this, and when it cleared the mountains were well covered with fresh snow. The Hooker glacier was impassable, closed for the year. Having only a week of my holiday left, I could not wait, so determined to try Mt. Cook again by Zurbriggen's N.E. arête.

We started, accordingly, on February 20 for the Ball Hut, where we loaded up, and, taking provisions and sleeping-bags, reached our camping ground and made our camp beneath a huge boulder on the Haast Ridge at 6 P.M. The weather was beautiful, but the arête looked very long to me, and the new snow, I was very much afraid, would make it an impossible job. Next morning at 2.15 we started, and reached the top of the Glacier Dome rocks at 3.20, and crossed the Grand Plateau. This glorious amphitheatre makes one of the finest of Alpine views. It is flanked by Mt. Cook and Mt. Tasman (11,475 ft.), the latter a brilliantly shining ice-peak, covered on this side by enormous hanging glaciers. From the Plateau the Hochstetter icefall, 4,000 ft. high and 1 mile across, descends to the Tasman glacier, and forms a splendid spectacle. This, and the Huddleston icefall from Mt. Sefton, which is on a smaller scale, are two of the most beautiful icefalls I have ever seen.

We reached the foot of the N.E. arête proper at 5 A.M. and started to ascend it. It lies at a great angle, and we found the new snow on the rocks very powdery and avalanchy, consequently our progress was very slow. We were 7 hrs. doing what took Zurbriggen 3 hrs., and after progressing slowly a few hours more I came to the conclusion from his data that we should make the summit about 6 P.M., and have to sleep out (in light marching order) on the shoulder at about 12,000 ft. As the snow was in a very dangerous condition and descending had to be done very carefully, I reluctantly gave the word for retreat. We had had 16 hrs. hard climbing, and by aneroid, compared and corrected with the Hermitage one, we had reached 9,950 ft. Our descent, though slow, was safe and uneventful, and we were glad to reach our sleeping-bags under the boulder again. Judging from my experience on my two attempts, I have no doubt that the N.W. is the better and shorter way up Mt. Cook. The rocks are excellent, but as the season progresses the Hooker icefall becomes terribly cut up, and later still impassable. Zurbriggen's arête, even under the most favourable circumstances,

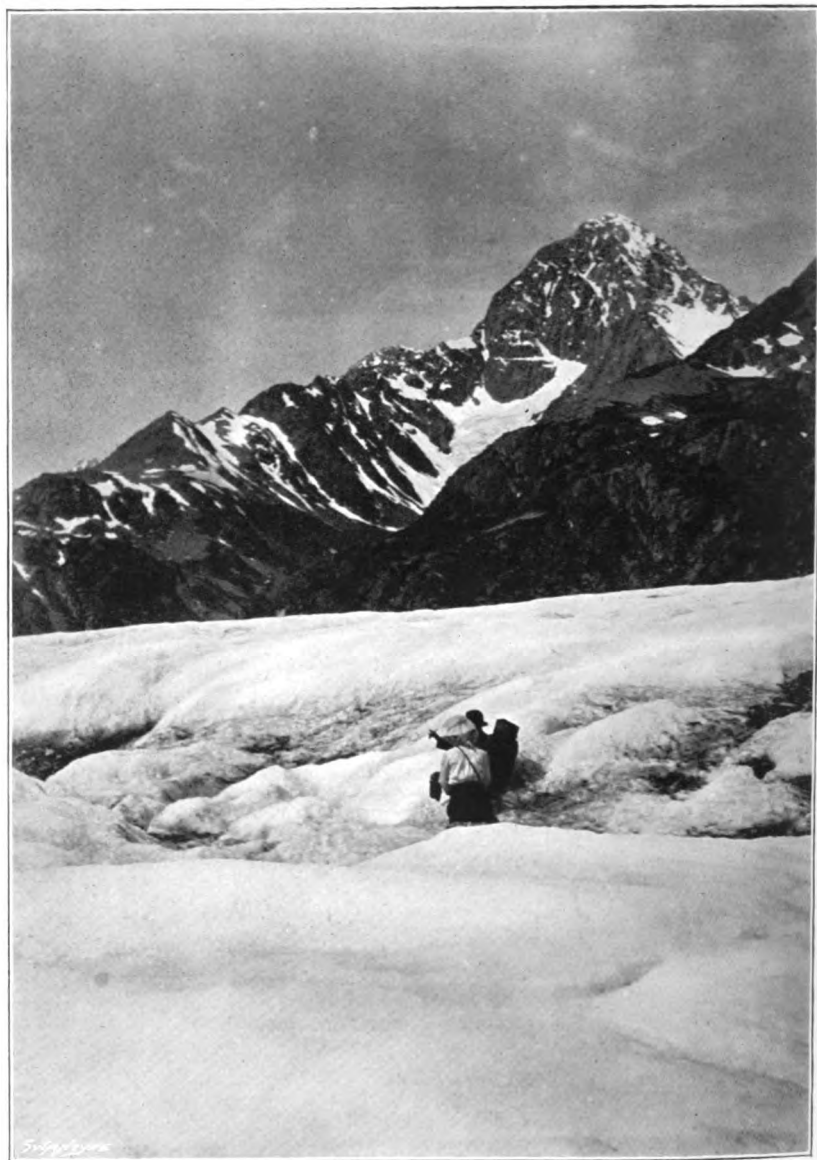


Photo by Claude A. Macdonald.

[Swan Electric Engraving Co.]

MOUNT MALTE BRUN.

must always be a very long expedition, and the night before camp should be made at the foot of the actual arête on the further side of the great plateau. Our first attempt, if the weather had not broken, would undoubtedly have been successful; and if we had been able to put off the second for a week, to clear the rocks of the new snow, I feel pretty confident we should have succeeded here also. New Zealand offers a wonderful field to anyone who can afford time to wait for fine weather, the uncertainty of the latter being the greatest drawback to success.

THE ALPINE CLUB PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION OF 1903.

THE first impression of a visitor to the recent exhibition was that the number of exhibits was smaller than of recent years. This impression, however, was hardly correct.

No doubt the actual surface space of wall covered was smaller, but the number of exhibits was well up to the average. The real explanation of the apparent diminution is due to the reduced size of the pictures, the enlargements now being generally smaller than was the case some years back. This is certainly an improvement. In quality too the exhibition was well above the average. Of the 132 exhibits there was hardly one which had not some interest and distinctive merit of its own, though of course these varied to a considerable degree.

It is customary to mention the ladies' exhibits first, and we were much pleased to see some very good work from them. In the sub-Alpine section the most noticeable picture was 'The Castle of Valeria and Church of St. Catherine,' by Miss Ella A. Corry. Of views in the higher Alps the two exhibits of Miss G. E. Benham of the Grand Combin from two different points were effective and harmonious. Miss Ethel Blandy's 'Tour Ronde from the Route to the Aiguille du Midi' was most pleasing. The three pictures of Miss Evelyn A. Arkle of 'The Düssistock from the Maderanerthal,' 'The Düssistock from the Hüfi Glacier,' and 'The Tödi from the Hüfi Glacier' were excellently printed from good, firm negatives, and were obviously the work of one who knows and understands mountains from a climber's point of view. Be it here said, in parenthesis, that, generally speaking, the treatment of a mountain picture by a climber and the treatment by a non-climber are quite distinct and different. In some indefinable way the climber brings out the realities of the subject; the non-climber looks more for the purely artistic effects.

The series of pictures by the Hon. Mrs. C. Bruce, lent by Major the Hon. C. G. Bruce, and principally of the Kagan Valley district, were of great interest both geographically and artistically.

With regard to the general body of exhibitors there were several