

## IN MEMORIAM.

WALTER LEAF.

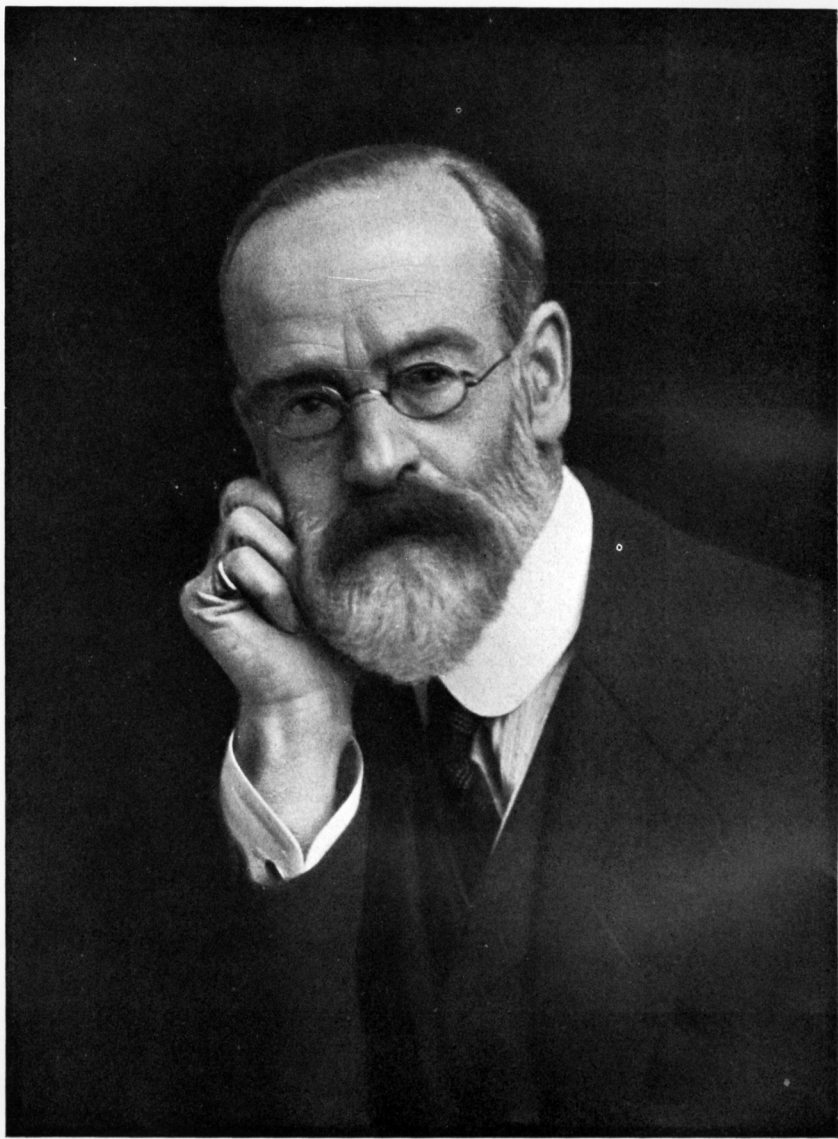
(1852-1927.)

WALTER LEAF was a singular instance of a man who came before the public in a double personality. In the City he was eminent as a high financial authority and the Chairman of the Westminster Bank. In the world of letters he was acclaimed as a scholar of unflinching accuracy and a student of the Homeric poems who had taught commentators to recognise that the topography of the *Iliad* was based on local facts. These he made a personal study of in a tour, the results of which were communicated to the Geographical Society (*Geo. J.* xl. 25-45). It included an ascent of Mont Ida, the scenery of which he compared to that of the Jura.

Leaf's two serious occupations were lightened by many accomplishments. His mind was as versatile as it was accurate. He could play with verse and translate Persian and Russian poetry, not in the fashion too often thought good enough for English readers, but with exact scholarship on which this is not the place to enlarge. He surprised his fellow-passengers in the business men's morning train by translating Greek epigrams on the way to the Bank! He startled Chicago by telling its citizens there was no better training for a man who wanted to get on in business than the Classics! He was himself a striking illustration of an argument which to Chicago sounded like a paradox. Most English men of business save themselves from becoming machines by keeping up some sport or interest. But few of us can hope to combine the accuracy and versatility of mind which enabled Leaf to take, as it were, a Double First in life as a financier and as a scholar. Nor did he fail to cultivate other energies. He held numerous posts. He served as President of the Classical Association and of the Hellenic Society; he was also, like his frequent climbing companion, Sir G. Prothero, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Alpine Club (1902-3 and 1905).

Mr. Mumm's invaluable Club Register affords a ready key to Leaf's early climbing activities. He began in 1871 at the age of nineteen with the Breithorn. Next year he climbed about the Bel Alp and the Great St. Bernard.

In 1872 one of the present writers was with Leaf and Pratt ('A.C. Register,' ii. 215). It was a most enjoyable time, though the only reportable result was a new traverse of the Dreieckhorn incidental to an attempt on the N. side of the Aletschhorn which time did not allow us to carry further ('A.J.' 6, 147). This adventure, however, was good enough to console us for a rather annoying disappointment the day before. Our intention then had been to go down to Grindelwald from the Finsteraarhorn by the Agassizjoch (this descent was made by Coolidge, the Fairbanks and Miss Brevoort three weeks later, *ib.* 146). Peter Baumann, our leading guide, whose



Phot. Elliott & Fry.

WALTER LEAF.

1852-1927.

discretion was equal to his skill, saw no rashness in it, but the second guide, a dull fellow, jibbed; he insisted that the party of two guides and three pretty fit travellers was not strong enough, so we had to go back to the Faulberg, having done nothing out of the common. The petty tragedy was relieved by a satyric episode. On the ascent we had passed a stout and pretentious tourist encumbered with a portentously long alpenstock and hauled, perhaps at times lifted, by two guides. They came in an hour or two after we were settled at the Faulberg, and Baumann unfeelingly greeted the leader with the question: 'Ihr Herr ist mehr todt als lebendig, nicht wahr?' Those were the days when mountaineering flourished at the Universities. One night there were together at the Eggischhorn no fewer than seven actual or future Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge. But we must return to our chronicle.

In 1873 Leaf ascended Mt. Blanc by the tedious Aiguille du Midi route; and in 1875 traversed the Matterhorn. He was active again in 1890 and 1891, making numerous ascents in the Val de Bagnes and Combin district. In 1893 he turned to the Graubünden and spent ten days in ascents in the little known district that lies between the Lower Engadine and the Stelvio and includes the pastoral basin of Livigno and the lately formed Sanctuary for wild animals created by the Federal Government. He gave the Club an account of his wanderings in a paper entitled *In the Land of Bears*.<sup>1</sup> He had previously contributed to the Journal an address on *Climbing with a Hand Camera*.<sup>2</sup>

The Alpine Club Register gives no climbs later than 1893, and it may be assumed that after that date there was nothing calling for special note in Leaf's Alpine excursions, but they continued, as appears by his diaries, till 1904.

The following are among the principal events in Leaf's life. Born November 26, 1852; educated Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1873 Craven University Scholar; in 1874 bracketed Senior Classic and elected Fellow of Trinity. Deaths in his family at this period led him to give up the Bar and join his father's business. In 1892 he abandoned a mercantile career to devote himself to banking. In 1909 he was appointed Deputy Chairman of the London County and Westminster Bank and in 1918 succeeded Lord Goschen in the Chairmanship. He was one of the founders and subsequently Chairman of the London Chamber of Commerce.

He married in 1894 a daughter of J. Addington Symonds and had a son and daughter, both living.

Our younger members can hardly know what an excellent companion and friend Leaf was in addition to all his other merits. His alert perception and various activities were ordered and made fruitful by a constantly sound and well-balanced judgment, and his friends never sought counsel of him without profit.

D. W. F.  
F. P.

<sup>1</sup> *A.J.* 17, 221-33.

<sup>2</sup> *A.J.* 15, 472-9.

## PRINCE SCIPIO BORGHESE.

(1871-1927.)

PRINCE SCIPIO BORGHESE (A.C., 1898-1927) was the senior representative of the illustrious Roman family which includes among its ancestors one Pope (Paul V., 1605-1621), and has left such an extraordinary mark on the Eternal City. The Villa Borghese, with its gardens and famous art collections; the Palazzo Borghese, the name and the family: all these for centuries have been pre-eminent in Rome. Scipio Borghese was above all a man of action who could always show great driving power; when financial reverses afflicted his father, far from being discouraged, he succeeded by will power and work in re-establishing his fortunes. He was twice elected Deputy for the Albano Laziale College. In the European war he joined up as a volunteer and was several times decorated for valour. In 1917, Borghese was sent, as member of a military mission, to the notorious Kerensky. He never forgot the artistic traditions of his family, and, before his death, bequeathed to the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore the superb Borghese Chapel with its priceless art treasures, which was his own private property.

Tall and well-built, he was a keen sportsman in the best Italian sense which does not include the hunting of beasts or men. He was above all an expert in mountaineering and motoring. This latter qualification especially, endeared him to the Italian nation and to other races besides. When the famous Pekin-Paris 'raid' was started by *Le Matin* in 1907, it was Borghese who proved the victor with his Itala car, overcoming, for that epoch, the most formidable obstacles and literally annihilating all his competitors. His arrival in Paris was a positive triumph.

As a mountaineer, by his skill and speed he rapidly attained the very first flight. He was one of the few who can go anywhere. He was a charming companion and his delightful manners made him immensely popular with all guides. He was especially keen on winter mountaineering; the second winter ascent of Piz Bernina,<sup>1</sup> January 1894, with Martin Schocher and Christian Schnitzler, was due to his initiative. He was unable to devote as much time as he wished to mountaineering, nevertheless he made the ascent of most of the principal summits from Mt. Blanc to the Gross Glockner. Most of his expeditions in the Oberland, Pennines, Bernina and Ortler will be found in the numbers of the *Rivista Mensile* between 1890 and 1900. His greatest feat was unquestionably the first ascent of the formidable N. face of Piz Cengalo,<sup>2</sup> one of the 'Grey Twins' of Val Bregaglia, the sight of which overcomes even the profanest of tourists.

On December 22, 1898, when trying the first winter ascent of the Adamello, his guides suffered terribly from the cold, one of them dying a month later from gangrene and the other losing nearly all

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<sup>1</sup> *A.J.* 19, 482.

<sup>2</sup> *A.J.* 25, 9; 37, 149, 152-3.

his toes. Irresponsible journalists accused Borghese of being almost the cause of this disaster, as if a mountaineer could be held responsible for the bad boots of his guides! Borghese was overcome by grief and his Alpine career seriously affected. He was one of the first Italians to commence camping in the Alps, and with his young daughters (now Princess Herculani and Countess Cavazza) he was often making Alpine expeditions. In 1911, a mischance prevented his joining P. Torti and myself in the first complete traverse of the S.E. arête of Monte della Disgrazia<sup>3</sup>; he was then camping at the Palu lake. Probably Borghese's last expeditions were in the Valpellina, at Prarayé, in 1912. He was there for a long time, and made the first ascent of the E. face of Mont Brulé with A. Brocherel and A. Chenoz of Courmayeur.

ALDO BONACOSSA.

The Alpine Club expresses its deep sympathy with the family of our late distinguished member.

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#### HAROLD RÆBURN.

(1865-1926.)

THE death of Harold Ræburn on December 21, 1926, has deprived the Club of an outstanding mountaineer. A born lover of Nature in all its aspects, he was interested in birds and beasts, flowers and rocks, and the mountains made to him a special appeal.

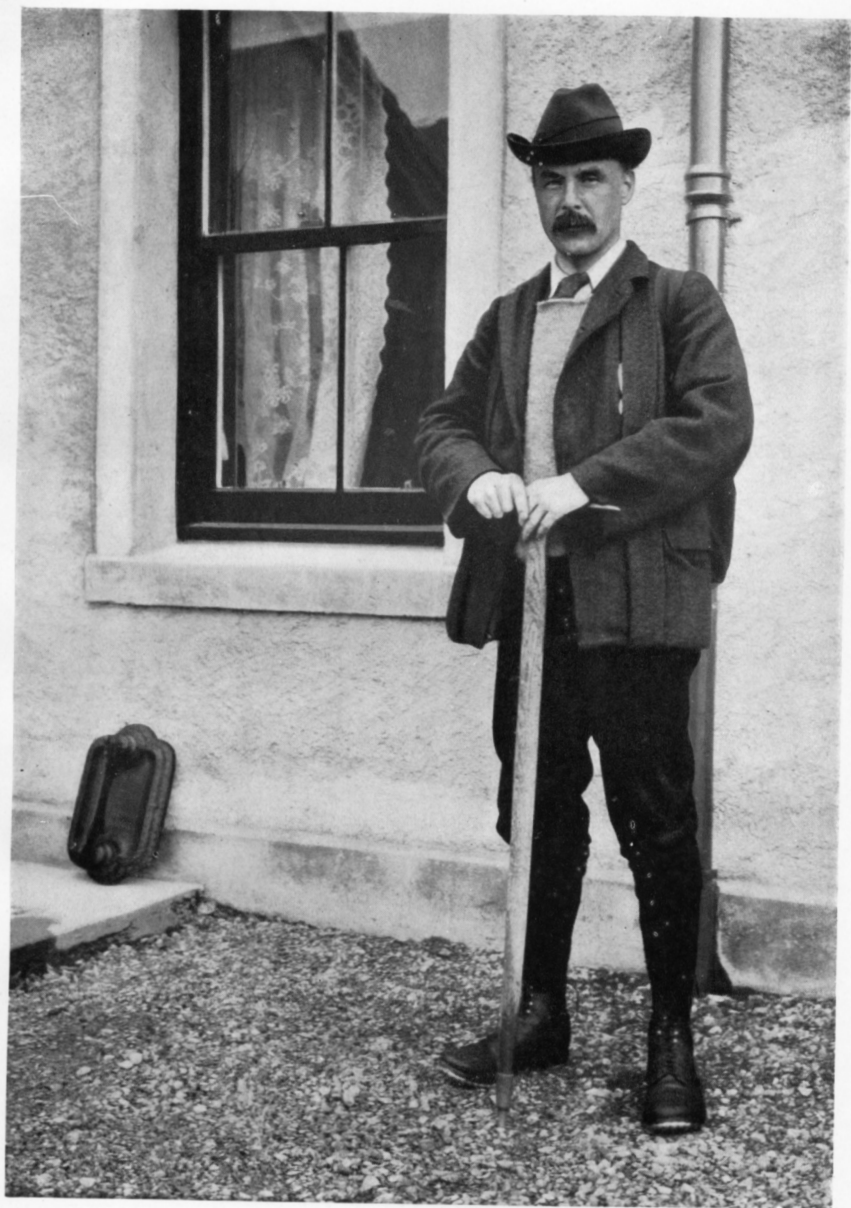
His own native hills of Scotland were the first to attract his attention, and he quickly showed that he possessed in a marked degree the qualifications of a mountaineer. Light, wiry, and active, with supple limbs and a perfect balance, he added to his physical gifts an indomitable will and a sound judgment as to routes and possibilities, coupled with a fearless self-reliance.

He was always ready to help and advise younger climbers, and to go on an expedition with him was a liberal education, which was extended to many. He joined the Scottish Mountaineering Club in 1896, and at once began to show great activity in exploring new climbs and routes, and many of the best climbs in Scotland, both mainland and islands, are due to his initiative. Winter and summer alike found him on the hills, and he rapidly increased his knowledge and technical skill both in rock and icework. He also climbed in the Lake District, where the standard of rock-climbing is very high.

With the knowledge gained at home, he went out in 1900 to the Dolomites, and made some good ascents there. The following year he was at Zermatt and Chamonix, and climbed, amongst others, the Weisshorn, Matterhorn, Monte Rosa, and Dent du Géant. The next two seasons were spent in Norway, and from 1902 all his ascents

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<sup>3</sup> *A.J.* 25, 745-6.



HAROLD RAEBURN.  
1865-1926

were made without guides. The chief ascents of these two years were the complete traverse of the five Skagastolstinder, a new ascent of the Soleitind, first ascent and traverse of the three Saetretinder, first ascent of the Grötsdaltinder, complete traverse of the ridge from the Brekktind to the Gjeithorn, and the ascent of Slogen by the face overlooking the Norangsfjord, which has not yet been repeated.

In 1904 he was in Dauphiné, and climbed the S. Aiguille d'Arves and the Meije, and then in Tarentaise the Pointe de la Glière, and the traverse of the Grande Casse, first British ascent by the N. face, and from Courmayeur the Aig. Noire de Pétéret, involving two nights out in the open.

The following year he was again in Dauphiné, where he made a fine ascent of the Ecrins, and from Chamonix the ascents of the Petit Dru and Grands Charmoz.

1906 was a fruitful year and gave a rich harvest. New summit, La Mouche, in the Aiguilles Rouges du Dolent,—the first traverse of the Aig. d'Argentière over the S. peak, La Flèche Rousse; the Finsteraarhorn traverse over the S.E. ridge and down to the Schwarzegg hut by the Agassizjoch, a long day; Schreckhorn, first traverse by the N.W. ridge (*Andersongrat*) and the S.W. ridge, first descent of latter; first British guideless ascent of the Matterhorn by the Z'mutt ridge in difficult conditions, with descent by the Italian ridge in a thunderstorm.

In 1907 an attempt to traverse the Meije by the western ridge from the Brèche was frustrated by bad weather, but the traverse of the whole ridge of the Dôme de la Sache and the Mont Pourri, several mountains at the head of the Val de Rhêmes in one day, the Grand Paradis by the S. face with a thunderstorm on the summit, when both climbers were slightly struck by lightning, the first guideless traverse of the Bec de l'Invergnan, and later Mont Blanc by the Rochers, with descent to Chamonix, in a heavy storm, were successfully carried through.

In 1908 the chief expeditions were: the traverse of the Rothhorn, of the Dent Blanche by the 'Viereselgrat,' first time by a British guideless party under very difficult conditions, entailing a night out on the mountain; the complete traverse of the Aig. du Chardonnet, and the traverse of the Grand and Petit Drus, another night out owing to a snowstorm.

The next year an attempt on the Aiguille Verte by the Moine ridge was nullified by the enforced rescue of a solitary climber, but the Grépon was traversed, as also Monte Rosa by the E. face from Macugnaga to Zermatt, another first British guideless expedition; the Rimpfischhorn with ladies, and the traverse of the Wellenkuppe and Gabelhorn.

In 1910 the principal ascents were those of the Disgrazia by the N. face, a very difficult ice climb done for the first time and not repeated since, and the ascents of the Scerscen and Bernina.

For the next two years, owing to an accident, his energies were restrained, but in 1913 he led a mountaineering and exploring party to the Caucasus, where his knowledge and tact, coupled with his powers of organisation, made him an ideal leader. The travelling covered about 300 miles, and seven mountains were climbed and many passes crossed. Five of the mountains were climbed for the first time and were very difficult: Tur Choch, Ullar Choch, Tschantschachi Choch, which took forty-five hours, Mamison Choch, and Nuamquam. Elbruz, 18,400 ft., was also ascended, and a determined assault on Uschba, the double-headed Matterhorn of the Caucasus, which extended over five days, was only defeated by the condition of the mountain.

The next year, 1914, saw him back again in the Caucasus, and two new passes were crossed and four new mountains ascended: Bubis Choch, Karagom Choch, Vologata Choch, and Laboda. The last-named was climbed on August 1, and on descending to the valley it was found that the world was at war. Many adventures were met with on the journey home across the Black Sea to Constantinople and up the Adriatic, and England was reached on September 2.

He had always been theoretically interested in aviation and tried hard to join the R.F.C.; but his age was against him, and he found an outlet for his patriotism in an aeroplane factory, where he worked fifteen or sixteen hours a day. With the exception of an occasional two or three days in the Highlands or the English Lake District, the mountains had to be left alone till the war was over.

In 1919 what was perhaps the most daring of all his expeditions was carried out—the solitary traverse of the ridges of the Meije, which had always strongly attracted him.

But more ambitious projects still were maturing. In 1920 he set out for the Himalaya. He wished to visit Kangchenjunga, and if possible get an idea of the approach to Everest. The Guecha La was crossed and the Talung glacier descended; but conditions were bad, and a return was made to Darjeeling. A later expedition crossed into Nepal by the Chumba La, crossed the Semo La passes between 15,000 and 16,000 ft., and ascended the Tallung glacier. The highest camp was pitched below the highest point of Kangchenjunga at 20,000 ft., and about 1000 ft. higher was reached; but the face of the mountain was impossible, owing to continuous avalanches. The return was made to Darjeeling by a new pass, the Rathong La, between 18,000 and 19,000 ft.

The attempt on Mount Everest was projected for 1921, and by reason of his experience and skill the choice of leader of the mountaineering part of the expedition fell naturally on Raeburn. Before he set out he was exceptionally hard-worked in organising supplies and equipment when he was suffering from influenza, and in India also he was rather overdone, so that when the expedition reached Tibet, and dysentery broke out amongst them, it took

great hold of him, and he had to be carried back under difficult conditions over a high pass to Lachen in Sikkim, in a very weak state. For two months he was in hospital, but as soon as he was up again his unconquerable spirit drove him across country, and after an arduous journey, which involved wading icy streams and much hardship, he rejoined the expedition.

He went with the party up to 22,000 ft., but it was by sheer will-power. He had shot his bolt, and although he was able to do the return journey to Darjeeling and home, the effort was a great strain, and after he got home a complete breakdown supervened, and for four long years he was gradually getting weaker, till the end came. The spirit had always been stronger than the flesh, and large drafts had been made on his reserve. This breakdown was a great disappointment to him at the moment of the supreme ambition of his life, the assault on Mount Everest.

He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1904, and was a frequent contributor to the JOURNAL, his papers including: 'Some Traverses in 1906' ('A.J.' 23, 425); 'Gran Paradiso by the S. face' (23, 592); 'Dent Blanche by the E. Ridge' (24, 627); 'Bec de l'Invergnan by the E. Ridge' (24, 321); 'Disgrazia by the N. Face' (25, 691); 'In the Caucasus, 1914' (29, 142); 'The Western Ridge of the Meije' (33, 215); 'The Southerly Walls of Kangchenjunga and the Rathong La' (34, 33). In 1920 he published an extremely valuable book entitled 'Mountaineering Art,' which is one of the standard works on mountaineering.

He was a delightful travelling companion; his thoughtfulness and care for others, his wide experience and extensive knowledge of all natural features, birds and flowers, endeared him to all his friends, and his death leaves a void which cannot be filled, in the loss of a trusty comrade, a well-trying friend, and an indomitable spirit. May the soil rest lightly upon him.

W. N. LING.

## NEW EXPEDITIONS (1910; 1925-6).

### *Cottian Alps.*

AIGUILLE DE CHAMBEYRON (3409 m. = 11,155 ft.), BY THE N. AND N.W. FACES. July 11, 1926. MM. Jean Coste<sup>1</sup> and Paul Guilleret. From a bivouac (left at 02.00) near Chillol in the Val de Mary glen of the Ubaye valley, the party crossed the Marinet glacier, making for the base of the long and steep couloir seaming the N. face of the Aiguille de Chambeyron which abuts against the watershed at a

<sup>1</sup> M. Coste perished on the Meije a few days later.—*A.J.* 38, 346.