Mont Pelvoux (from the N.W., Glacier Noir)
Le Coup de Sabre
Col du Glacier Noir
Les Bans (from the S. ; from the W., or Valgaudemar)
Vaxivier
Les Rouies (from the S.)
Pic d'Olan (N. summit, from the S.)
Pic des Souffles (first ascent of all three summits)

while, outside Dauphiné, his greatest exploit was probably the first traverse of the dangerously rotten arête connecting the Grande Casse with the Grande Motte. This expedition, like many others included in the list above, has never been repeated.

Maximin was above all a 'Dauphiné' guide; he never left it willingly, and, it must be confessed, was never as great a leader when away from his own mountains.

As a rock climber he was brilliant in the extreme as well as absolutely safe. On ice and snow, like most Dauphiné guides, he was little more than mediocre. As a pathfinder or discoverer of routes he has seldom been surpassed. The writer will always remember his graceful and rapid execution of any rock problem, and no cragsman was ever more finished in his movements. His younger brother, Dévouassoud, carries on the family traditions.

Like all of us, Maximin had his faults. A born leader of men and expeditions, completely fearless, he was often overbearing in manner and reckless in execution. Success was only too apt to carry him off his feet. Still, with many virtues, one could easily forgive what were almost *les défauts de ses qualités*.

He died at St. Christophe on June 5 last. Death, after such prolonged suffering, must have come as a relief.

The name of Maximin Gaspard will live. The Glacier Noir's incomparable *cirque*, grandest and grimmest scene of the whole range of the Alps, will, ages hence, bear testimony to his deeds.

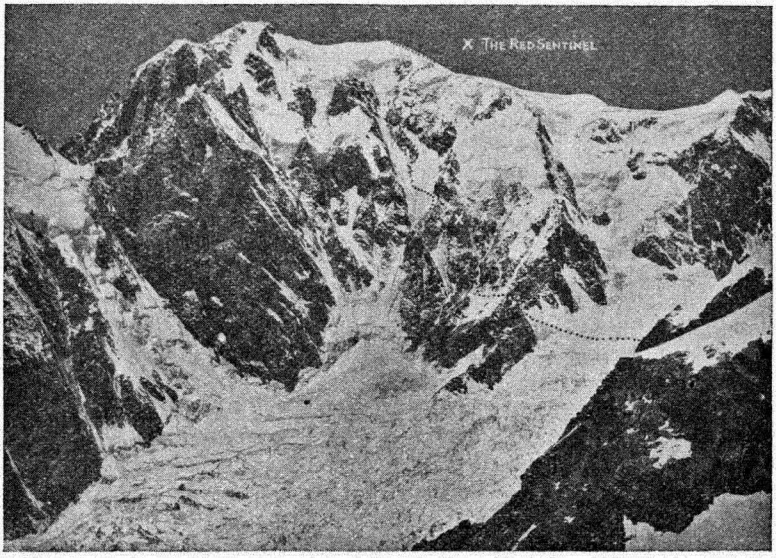
E. L. S.

NEW EXPEDITIONS.

Mont Blanc Group.

MONT BLANC, 4810 m. = 15,782 ft., B.I.K., FIRST ASCENT DIRECT FROM THE BRENVA GLACIER. September 1–2, 1927. Messrs. F. S. Smythe and T. Graham Brown. Left Torino hut 03.30 *en route* to Col du Trident and Upper Brenva Glacier. It was decided on account of soft snow on Glacier du Géant to postpone the ascent for 24 hrs. and ascend the Tour Ronde, whence it is possible to see the lower part of the face, which is invisible from the Torino hut. Ascended from Géant Glacier to E. Col de Toule and traversed

frontier ridge to first prominent point of Aiguille d'Entrèves. Descended to Glacier du Géant and ascended steep slopes to E. arête of Tour Ronde. From this point the lower part of the climb was examined and a decision made to press on owing to good snow on southerly slopes. Traversed horizontally across steep S. face of Tour Ronde, thereby saving possibly 2 hrs. Traversed arête to Col Ouest de la Tour Ronde and descended to Brenva Glacier. Climbed short steep slope to the little col at the foot of the Brenva arête (Moore's arête), for which the name *Col Moore* is suggested. Ascended a sharp steep snow arête to broken rocks below the first



Brenva Face of Mt. Blanc.
Showing Mr. Smythe's route.

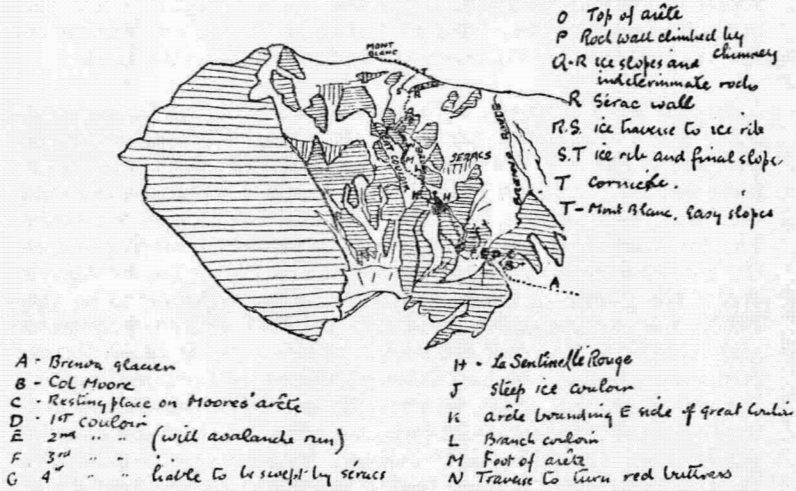
great step on Moore's arête (14.00). From the Tour Ronde a prominent red buttress with a perpendicular face had been observed on the face of the mountain. The base of this buttress, for which the name *La Sentinelle Rouge* is suggested, seemed to give promise of the most secure bivouac place on the Brenva face and was made the objective of the first day's climb.

Waited on Moore's arête until sun was off the face; stones had ceased falling and snow safely crusted. Left at 16.53 and commenced traverse across the face. Crossed four couloirs over good snow—a deep ice avalanche run was crossed in the middle of the second couloir. The last couloir, which is liable to be swept by séracs, was crossed at 18.25 in a few seconds to sheltering rocks, where a short halt was made. An upward climb over steep ice and snow sprinkled with rocks

led to the base of the ' Red Sentinel ' at 19.10. This place was found to form an ideal and safe bivouac site. The altitude is estimated to lie between 3600 and 3700 metres. A bitterly cold but fine night was passed, and climbing recommenced at 05.30 in perfect weather. After ascending under W. side of the ' Red Sentinel,' a steep ice couloir was crossed to the ridge bounding the E. side of the huge couloir which cleaves the face. *Descended* from this ridge to the couloir and climbed very steep snow and ice under the W. side of the ridge until almost level with the foot of a ridge, which splits the couloir into two branches. Crossed the right-hand (E.) branch over an avalanche groove to the ridge. Ascended steep ice, snow, and scattered rocks to the foot of the steep red buttress, at which the ridge becomes very definite (07.10).

A party which has once reached this point is safe from falling stones and ice for the remainder of the climb. During the two days on the face not more than half a dozen small stones were observed to fall, and at night one ice avalanche passed to the E. of the ' Red Sentinel.' Halted and left at 08.10. Turned the red buttress on difficult rocks to the right. Steep ice led back to the crest of the ridge, the snow and rocks of which were followed until the line of ascent was again forced to the right over a nasty traverse on very steep ice. Again ice and snow led back to the ridge, which could be followed on good rock to the top of the ridge (10.30). Built a small cairn and rested 45 mins. (altitude about 4200 m.). The ridge ends in a snow and ice crest, which separates the top of the branch couloir from a small couloir falling into the main couloir. This crest abuts against a steep cliff, which was forced by a slanting chimney. The upper ice and rock slopes were reached above this cliff. The ice was covered by slushy snow, and was found to be of exceptional hardness—similar to that on the top of the Brenva. A way was threaded up indeterminate slabs by a series of ascending traverses to the right and left on this ice. The line of ascent was forced to the right until almost beneath the final great sérac wall. The final rocks were reached just under the S.W. end of this wall, where it is comparatively low and changes direction round a shoulder, to run directly towards the summit of Mont Blanc above the head of the great couloir. Traversed very steep ice to the left to a rounded and ill-defined ice rib. This ice rib runs directly up the final ice slope to the left of the sérac wall. Fortunately 2–3 ins. of frozen snow were found on the N.E. side of the ice rib, which gave just sufficient purchase to crampons and thus obviated the several hours' cutting that had seemed in prospect. Ascended this rib until the sérac wall could be easily turned. Easier slopes led to an incipient corniche crossed at 15.30, about 400–500 ft. below the summit of Mont Blanc. The summit of Mont Blanc was reached without further difficulty at 16.15, and the Vallot hut at 17.30, where the night was spent. Descended next day *via* the Aiguille du Goûter and Tête Rousse.

The climb is of varied and exceptional interest throughout. The scenery, especially the near views of the Brenva face of Mont Blanc de Courmayeur, the Pétéret ridge, and the great couloir are of the grandest character. The standard of difficulty is continuously high and the angle averages about 50° for this face, while much of the upper part is steeper. The rock throughout is of the finest quality, a grey-red granite, and this accounts for the few falling stones. The ice-swept couloirs on either side of the 'Red Sentinel' are exposed, but the traverse is perfectly justifiable if taken early or late in the day. Late in the season the séracs appear to be remarkably safe, and only one ice avalanche occurred. Crampons (we



wore 'Eckenstein,' 10 point) appear to be absolutely essential to speed and consequent safety. The keys to the climb are the little 'Col Moore' and the secure bivouac place beneath the 'Red Sentinel.' As the latter dominates the lower part of the climb and makes it a possible and safe one, we propose to name the expedition *Route de la Sentinelle.*

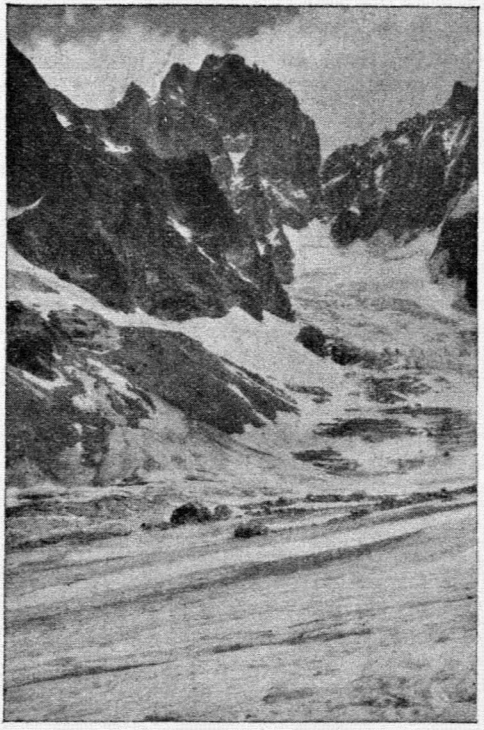
Les Courtes, 3855 m. = 12,641 ft., B.I.K., from the S. (Glacier de Talèfre). September 10, 1927. Messrs. F. S. Smythe and T. Graham Brown. Delayed in leaving Couvercle hut owing to bad weather early. Left hut 05.50, a pause for breakfast being made before reaching glacier. Ascended Glacier de Talèfre to foot of buttress leading to summit ridge of Les Courtes a little to the E. of the summit, and between it and the Aiguille Croulante. Turned the steep and glaciated rocks at the foot of the buttress on the E. by ascending the couloir on that side to a short distance below the

bergschrund, and then climbing a steep, narrow chimney followed by a short wall marked by a rock flake to the crest of the buttress, near the summit of a conspicuous scree slope. Thence the buttress was climbed throughout as much as possible on the right towards the couloir on the E.; 200–300 ft. of easy rock led to the foot of a curious bent crack, avoidable, if necessary, on the left; 1000 ft. of easy scrambling led towards the foot of a conspicuous tower, about 100 ft. below which the buttress constricted to a narrow and difficult ridge. Good climbing on firm rock led to the base of the tower, which was turned to the W. over snow-masked slabs. The arête was gained above the tower, and was followed over broken rock and soft new snow without difficulty to the summit ridge, which it joins about 15 ft. below the summit of the mountain. Summit at 14.30. Descended *via* Col de la Tour des Courtes over very bad snow to the Couvercle hut and the Montenvers, 22.15.

Aiguille de Leschaux, 3770 m. = 12,365 ft., B.I.K., by the N.W. face. August 3, 1927. Mr. R. Ogier Ward, with Joseph Georges, *le Skieur*. Leaving the Couvercle at 02.40, the party traversed the Glacier de Talèfre to the Pierre à Béranger, then up the Glacier de Leschaux, bearing left into the basin below the Peak. This last part of the glacier could only be passed by bearing well to the left, close to the rocks of the Aiguille de l'Éboulement, thence across the glacier to the rocks of that arête, represented on the B.I.K. map as descending from near Pt. 3517 m., reaching some rocks a little to the N. of the bottom of this arête at 06.30, thence across snow to the arête, and following this, sometimes on the crest, but chiefly on its S. slope, we presently reached a point below and to the right of the snow, which forms a noticeable inverted triangular patch, when the mountain is viewed from any point to its W. To this snow patch a large couloir descends; it lies behind the main arête which I have mentioned, and cuts it off from the very perpendicular W. face of the mountain. It is only possible to see into this couloir from the Grandes or Petites Jorasses. It is of considerable depth and width, but stones do not appear often to fall down it, probably because the quality of the rocks of the mountain is similar to that of the Grépon, and loose stones are very few.

We crossed below the snow patch on to the true right bank of the couloir, then up a little chimney level with the middle of the snow, and were now climbing along the inside or S. wall of the main arête; *i.e.* we were in the couloir, fairly high up on its true right bank, a little below the crest of the arête. We continued up this for about 50 mins., and at 10.00 reached the point where the arête ends by joining the face of the mountain at the top of the couloir. At this point the climb extends up the face of the mountain; this was difficult, the rocks being steep and slabby; by this in about 1 hr. we arrived at a very narrow, almost horizontal ridge of rocks, which runs S.E. and forms the last step which can be seen from the W.

to meet the main mass of the mountain at a point where the final vertical cliff descending from the summit joins a long chimney which passes almost vertically for some distance down the steep W. face; after climbing along this ridge we were able to traverse to the right until we were on the W. face of the mountain, just below the summit, and then ascend without much difficulty, reaching the top at 13.30. The rocks of this last step were also difficult.



N.W. Face of Aiguille de Leschaux.

We left the summit at 14.00, and descended by the ordinary route to the Glacier de Frébouzie until 15.20, keeping close below the cliffs of the Petites Jorasses. We then mounted the glacier to the summit of the Col des Hirondelles, arriving there at 17.15.

We began the descent from the col at 17.35, and found it difficult and dangerous, the rocks being of a very poor quality, so that great care was necessary to avoid dislodging stones. There was also some risk from stones falling down the couloirs between the rock ribs. We crossed the bergschrund at the foot of these at 20.00, and reached Montenvers at 23.10.

While climbing high up on the face of the mountain about ½ hr. below the final step, we found a piton, and above this recent axe-marks in several clefts in the rocks, and a cairn on the final step itself. These, we heard afterwards, were made by an Italian party some days before, who appear to have made the first ascent or descent of the mountain from Italy *via* the Col de Leschaux, probably by the N. arête, and to have been forced on to this face by the difficulties of the arête itself, which must be considerable. We found their descending tracks in the snow, leading down from the summit to the Glacier de Frébouzie. There were no tracks, old or recent, on our route below the piton, either on the rocks, except for about 50 ft. beneath it, or on the névé of the Glacier de Leschaux; it seems that near the position of the piton the two routes converge, and this is about 1½ hr. below the summit.

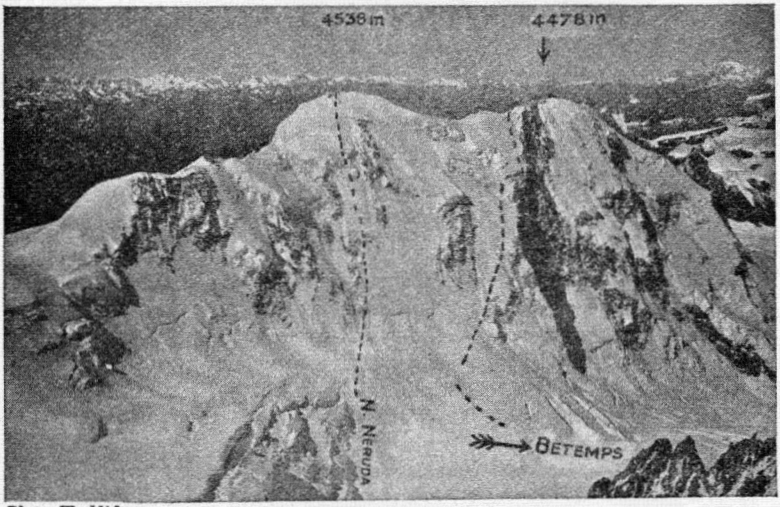
It should be noted that the N. slope of the arête leading E. from the summit of the A. de Leschaux, towards Monte Gruetta, is extraordinarily steep above the Triolet Glacier, far steeper than the map suggests.

The climb is a very fine one, the rock as good as that of the Grépon, and in many places exceedingly steep. Joseph Georges put it as intermediate in difficulty between the traverse of the Grépon and Grands Charmoz.

R. O. W.

Pennine Alps.

Lyskamm W. Summit, 4478 m. = 14,690 ft., by the N.E. face. August 5, 1927. Monsieur E. R. Blanchet, with Kaspar Mooser and Josef Aufdenblatten. The height of the face is more than 3000 ft.,



Photo, Werhli.]

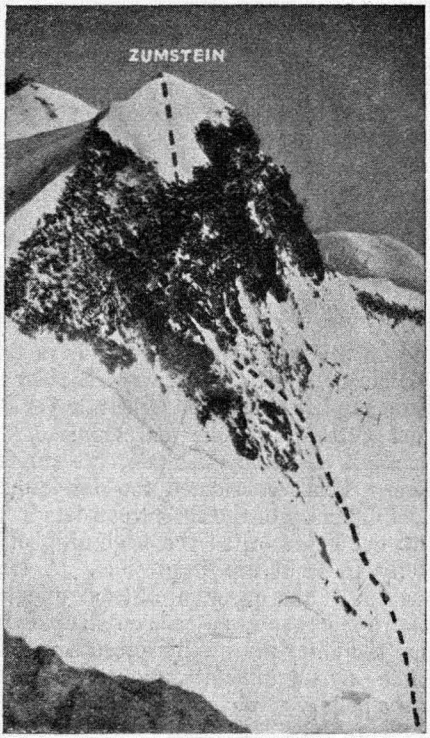
N.E. Face of Lyskamm.

Right-hand route is M. Blanchet's.

set at an average angle of 55°. No rocks were touched throughout. Two easy bergschrunds were crossed low down. At a height of about two-thirds of the slope a traverse was made to the right (W.), in order to cross a bad heart-shaped outcrop of séracs. This traverse, which was only about 100 ft. long, took 1 hr. Higher up the angle eases off to 30°, but steepens again after a long oblique crevasse—easily crossed. The watershed was attained some ¼ hr. from the summit. The conditions were so good that no step-cutting was necessary except on the traverse. Times: base of face, 06.25; watershed, 11.35; summit, 11.50.

[This appears to be the first time that any part of the main N.E. face has been touched since the late Mr. Norman Neruda's ascent of the E. summit with Christian Klucker and the late Josef Reinstadler, August 9, 1890, 'A.J.' **15,** 307, 441.]

ZUMSTEINSPITZE, 4573 m. = 15,004 ft., BY THE W. FACE. August 30, 1927. Same party. Height of face, 1000–1100 ft.;



W. FACE OF ZUMSTEIN.
Showing M. Blanchet's route.

very steep—in fact, steeper than N.E. face of Lyskamm. Base was all ice, the second half rocky and with a kind of spherical ice-cap just below the summit. The bergschrund at the base was attained at 07.30, commencement of the rocks 10.50, summit 12.20. First 2 hrs. gave very arduous step-cutting, followed by vertical and insecure rocks. A crevice in these rocks, at first difficult, then easy, was scaled, followed by easy snow on the final cone. Ascent very dangerous from falling stones.

[This route is quite different from Route ' 2 ' in *Alpes Valaisannes*, iii., p. 94, where a serious error in the translation of an article in ' R. M.' has been made. The entire question will be thrashed out shortly in *Die Alpen*.—E. R. B.]

Bernina (W. Wing) Group.

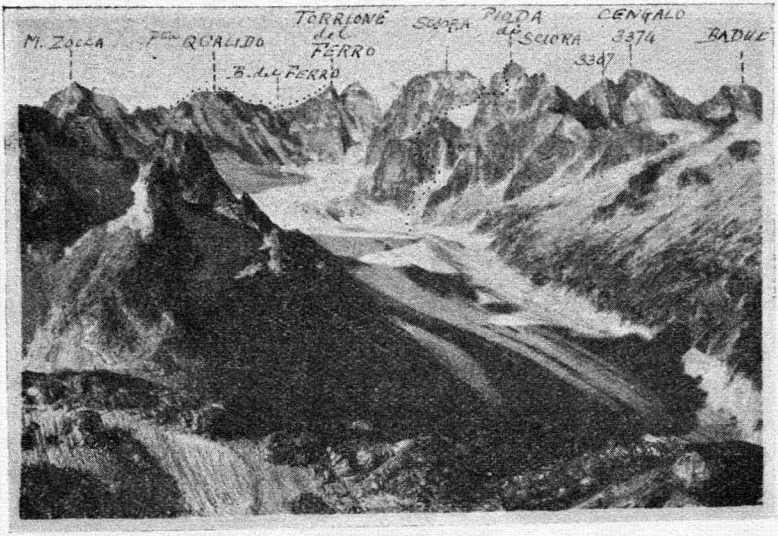
PUNTA PIODA DI SCIORA, 3238 m. = 10,624 ft., *S. map*.[1] July 3, 1927. Herr H. Rütter, with Chr. Klucker, made the first ascent of this peak *via* the N. slope of the E. arête, and by the latter to the ordinary traverse of the E. face. The broad snow couloir leading up to the arête, between Punta Pioda and Sciora di fuori (danger from falling stones!), was mounted to the lower of two névé ledges which traverse the N. slope of the E. arête diagonally upwards from N. to S. The E. arête was gained over steep névé and snow-covered slabs, and followed to the ordinary route. Much snow on the rocks made very careful going necessary.

This, the direct route from the Albigna glacier, is very interesting and of moderate difficulty. Some danger from falling stones in the lower part of the ascent.

TORRIONE DEL FERRO, 3234 m. = 10,611 ft., *S. map*,[1] BY THE E. ARÊTE. July 5, 1927. Herr H. Rütter, with Chr. Klucker, made the first ascent by the E. arête of this imposing rock tower, which is situated on the Swiss-Italian frontier, in the S.W. corner of the Albigna Glacier valley. The party reached the Bocchetto del Ferro, the deep gap between Ferro Orientale [or Punta Qualido] and Torrione del Ferro, *via* Colle del Qualido, Passo Qualido Nord, and W. summit of Ferro Orientale, the direct ascent from the Albigna Glacier being considered too dangerous from falling stones. The chief difficulty of the ascent consists in getting up out of the Bocchetto del Ferro on to the beginning of the E. arête. The rocks directly in front are impossible. A traverse on the Albigna side was out of the question, at least under obtaining circumstances; small insecure snow patches on steep slabs. Remained the S. side, where the party eventually forced a passage up smooth perpendicular cliffs—a very difficult and exposed climb, which was effected *without* the help of artificial means (pitons).

[1] These heights are taken from the *new* Siegfried map, sheet 523, ' Castasegna,' 1927.

The great obstacle of the gap once overcome, the rest was plain sailing. The party traversed the snow-covered ledges directly under the arête. There was much snow at a very steep angle, in some places nearly perpendicular, the whole traverse very exposed through-



ALBIGNA GLACIER.
Showing Herr Rütter's 1927 routes.

out. At 14.45 the summit was attained, 11½ hrs. after leaving the Albigna hut.

The party returned by the same route, and reached the Albigna hut at 23.00.

'Kletterschuhe' would facilitate considerably; the snow prevented their being used.

H. RÜTTER.

Drakensberg, Natal.

ASCENT OF POINT ON MAIN DRAKENSBERG RIDGE (*c.* 10,500 ft.), N. OF CHAMPAGNE CASTLE. July 15, 1927. Messrs. G. F. Travers-Jackson and O. K. Williamson. Party left a camp close to the stream in the Hlwazeni Valley, about 10 mins. below that used for the attempt on Cathkin Peak, at 07.10. They ascended to a very well-defined gap in the main Drakensberg ridge, in a direction rather S. of W. from the camp. It is understood that this gap is the one which is crossed to the Basutoland plateau in the ascents of Champagne Castle and is called Grey's Pass. To reach the gap they traversed slopes on the true right of the gully leading up to it,

so as to avoid a waterfall, and only ascended the upper 300 ft. or so of the gully itself. The gap was reached in 4½ hrs., excluding halts, from the camp. It is adorned by a well-marked cairn. After traversing the gentle Basutoland slopes on the other side and ascending Champagne Castle, the gap was again reached at 16.52. The peak, which rises immediately on the N. side of the gap to a height of perhaps 200 ft. above it, was now climbed by grass and loose rocks on its W. side, a final easy rocky wall about 20 ft. in height leading the climbers to the summit at 17.00. A cairn was erected. It appears to be about the same height as Cathkin Peak. A very grand view was afforded of Cathkin Peak, Monk's Cowl, and the peak on the S. side of the gap from which the party had ascended. Descending the same way to the gap, the morning's route of ascent was approximately followed, camp being regained by aid of the fitful light of the moon at about 20.40. From the opposite side of the Hlwazeni valley, and from the camp, the peak appears as a well-defined more or less rectangular rocky mass, and the ridge running northwards from it appears gradually to fall in height. The climbers propose for it the name of *Bastion peak*.

VARIOUS EXPEDITIONS.

Mont Blanc Group.

AIGUILLE DU PLAN, 3673 m. = 12,051 ft., B.I.K., SECOND ASCENT BY E. FACE (Ryan's route). July 24–25, 1927. Messrs. F. S. Smythe and J. H. B. Bell. This ascent was first made by Captain V. J. E. Ryan, with Franz and Joseph Lochmatter, in June 1906. No description has hitherto been published, but Franz Lochmatter states that he considers this route to be the finest in the Aiguilles.

Left Montenvers at 02.30. Ascended ice-fall of Glacier d'envers de Blaitière mainly by the broken, easy rocks on its N. side. Easy snow slopes led to three large schrunds which traverse the upper bay of the glacier at the foot of the great couloir dropping from the Col du Pain de Sucre. The lower two offered no difficulty, but the upper and true bergschrund was turned with difficulty under the rocks on the right. An ice traverse led to the foot of the couloir falling between the Plan and the Dent du Crocodile. Ryan's party gained the great buttress falling from the summit of the Plan low down near the foot of this couloir, but the present party found this impossible owing to icy rocks, and were forced to continue up the couloir, which was climbed with great difficulty over snow and ice-covered slabs for a considerable distance, keeping as far as possible on the left to avoid falling stones and ice. Above these slabs steep ice led to shelter beneath a conspicuous overhanging rock face beneath the buttress of the Plan. Rested and had a meal. Owing