

It is stated in the Press that an ITALIAN EXPEDITION to the Himalayas, under the auspices of the Milan Section of the C.A.I., is in contemplation. The British and Indian Governments having given their consent, another attempt, it is said, will be made on K<sup>2</sup>. We wish the Expedition, should it materialize, every success, and can assure its members that they will not find themselves held up or arrested—on British territory—by irregulars or frontier guards.

### NEW ZEALAND NOTES.

MR. MALCOLM ROSS kindly informs us that besides the expeditions of MESSRS. Porter and Kurz, described in the present number, the following important climbs were accomplished during the last summer in the Southern Alps :—

MOUNT DE LA BÈCHE (10,058 ft.); December 30, 1926, Messrs. Syme, Mace and Allan, *via* Rudolph glacier to Graham's Saddle, S.W. face, S.E. arête.

MOUNT ELIE DE BEAUMONT; January 5, 1927. Messrs. Syme, Mace and Allan, *via* E. face and S.E. arête.

MALTE BRUN; January 6, 1927. Messrs. Syme and Mace, *via* Malte Brun glacier and W. arête.

MOUNTS GREEN AND WALTER (9507 ft.); January 14, 1927. Messrs. Syme, Mace and Allan, *via* E. arête to divide, N.E. arête to Mount Green, by S.W. arête to Mount Walter.

HAMILTON (9915 ft.); January 21, 1927. Professor and Mrs. Algie with C. Williams, *via* Darwin glacier to head of Bonny glacier, up 'main' arête to summit.

MOUNT SEALEY (8651 ft.) was climbed many times, while the Copeland Pass was ascended thirteen times, Graham's Saddle four times, and Glacier Dome seven times during the season.

The Hermitage has been well patronized and several new hostels will be opened for the next season.

### ACCIDENTS IN 1927.

ONCE again the list of accidents makes sad reading. The Alpine Club has lost a Vice-President, a mountaineer of great experience and distinction as also one of its most invaluable 'Himalayan' members, but we may consider ourselves fortunate to have escaped comparatively lightly. The greater number of accidents has occurred, as usual, in the Eastern Alps. The vast majority were, we regret to say, easily avoidable. The numbers of guideless climbers—we have heard of no fatal accidents to guided parties—have increased beyond

all reckoning. We can also add that the number of capable members of these guideless parties is, probably, higher now than it ever has been. But it still remains a fact that the percentage of competent to incompetent parties is far too low. There are reasons for this disastrous state of affairs. Before the war beginners were wont to acquire their mountaineering experience under competent professionals; now, with increased guides' tariffs and decreased incomes, most beginners prefer to learn their business with amateur leaders often nearly as inexperienced and sometimes more reckless than themselves. Quite casually they start their career with the most difficult ascents—ascents which thirty years ago the aspiring mountaineer would never have dreamt of undertaking before his third or fourth season. We ourselves beheld such a party of four gaily setting forth for a difficult ice and rock mountain with only one competent member, the others freely confessing their lack of knowledge of icemanship or ropecraft. Caught in bad weather on an ice slope, after many hours of ascent, but still thousands of feet below their summit, they were able—providentially—to return in safety. To such parties the use of CRAMPONS is a snare and a delusion. They have read foolish tales by enthusiastic mountaineers declaring that experts can mount or descend ice slopes of  $70^\circ$  without step-cutting, even without the support of the axe.<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted that these 'experts' never give the *height* of the ice slope of  $70^\circ$ , which, axeless, they propose to ascend or descend on their crampons. You can be very bold if the probable fall will not exceed 8–10 ft. ! Such flagrant nonsense encourages the beginner to think that he can move safely, without serious previous practice, on slopes of  $45^\circ$ . He finds that he cannot, and 'another Alpine disaster' is too often reported. Such an one occurred last August low down on the Z'mutt ridge of the Matterhorn, the victim being armed only with an umbrella and—crampons.

Another fruitful source of accidents is the modern craze among amateurs for climbing in bad weather. This evil is becoming ever increasingly prevalent, and too many persons who have successfully climbed Welsh, Lakes, or 'Saxon Switzerland' boulders in rain, imagine that serious expeditions may be attempted with similar impunity in the High Alps.

Of four accidents that occurred in the Valais within the space of 10 days, three were caused solely by *starting* and continuing to climb in absolutely hopeless weather conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Alpinisme*, No. 7, pp. 211–33, translated from D. & C.E.A.V. *Zeitschrift*, 1925, pp. 204–24, with preposterous illustrations.

## THE ACCIDENT ON THE SOUTHERN AIGUILLE D'ARVES.

ON July 31, at 3 A.M., Raymond Bicknell, his son Peter, A. F. Procter, and Sir J. W. L. Napier left Valloire to traverse the Aiguille Méridionale d'Arves to La Grave: it was proposed to ascend by the N.E. face direct from the head of the Glacier de Gros Jean to the Brèche in the S.E. arête, and to descend by the ordinary route.

' By 10 A.M. we had reached the head of this glacier, where we were able for the first time to decide on our exact route. Our objective, the Brèche,<sup>1</sup> was at the head of a snow and ice couloir, some 1000 ft. high, flanked by broken faces of rock. It was decided to ascend by these rocks, keeping as far as possible close to the couloir.

' For 3 hours we made slow but steady progress, though the rocks from the start proved to be loose and rotten. By 1 P.M. we had reached a point where the rocks became more difficult, being, actually at the sides of the couloir, quite impracticable. At this point the couloir contracted, and, for about 50 ft., was distinctly steeper. The best route appeared to be straight up the couloir until over this step, and then to take once more to the rocks on the side.

' With this in view we cut steps across to an island of rock which divided the couloir, and as Bicknell would have to lead nearly 80 ft. from this island before reaching a secure enough position from which to bring the second man on, our second 80 ft. rope was attached between him and Napier.

' Bicknell then traversed the gentle ice slope to the true right bank of the couloir and proceeded up the steeper ice, cutting steps with his right hand and holding the rocks on his left with his other hand. During this manœuvre the position of the three of us was as follows: Napier, second on the rope, was at the top of the island and had a small belay for the rope, but was otherwise in a poor position; Procter, third, 10 ft. below Napier, was on the right of the island, and though in a physically uncomfortable position was well placed to hold a pull from the left; Peter, at the foot of the island, a few feet below Procter, was in a good position where he was able to belay the rope round his ice-axe, which was inserted in a crack right up to its head.<sup>2</sup> We consulted as to which side of our rock a fall might occur and Napier arranged his belay accordingly, *i.e.* to

<sup>1</sup> Marked *Brèche supérieure* in the illustration, *La Montagne*, 1910, facing p. 344.—*Editor*.

<sup>2</sup> See *La Montagne*, 1910, pp. 321-59, 397-440, especially the marked illustrations facing pp. 338 and 344. In the latter, the scene of the accident is about two-thirds of the way up the extreme *left-hand* ice couloir. The route attempted is a variation of the *right-hand* one shown on the illustration facing p. 338.—*Editor*.

safeguard a fall to the right—the likely direction; without the assistance of this belay he could not hope to hold the rope in case of a fall. During this time we began to suffer slightly from cold and mild cramp in the fingers. As cutting steps with one hand proved a tedious job, Bicknell's progress was very slow. On one occasion he asked us whether, in view of the lateness of the hour, we should prefer to turn back. We replied that we left it entirely in his hands; he decided that it would probably take less time to complete the traverse to La Grave than to return down the loose rocks up which we had come. He appeared quite confident, and on two occasions said that a few more steps would get him over the difficulty.

After about half an hour's cutting, and when he was some 60 ft. above Napier, without a word of warning and with no apparent effort to stop himself, Bicknell fell from his steps and shot down the ice slope to our left. When he had fallen the full 120 ft. of the free rope the strain came on Napier who, with his belay rendered useless, the fall occurring to the *left*, was pulled from his position; Napier had fallen some 25 ft. when Procter, dragged against the rocks to his left, held the rope, with the full weight of Bicknell and Napier on it; the rope, however, was drawn over Peter's shoulders so that the latter could take some of the strain.<sup>3</sup> Napier was lying on steep rock 20 ft. below Peter, with Bicknell hanging out of sight some 70 ft. below Napier. The latter at once managed, by getting hand-holds on the projecting rock, to take some of the weight, while Procter secured the rope round a suitable belay. As the full weight of Bicknell was still on Napier, it was necessary to see if Bicknell, from whom we had heard no signs of life, could be brought to rest on a ledge. To do this, Procter eased the rope round the belay, while Napier lowered himself to a more secure ledge. Bicknell's full weight was still on the rope, and so Peter detached himself and climbed down to where his father was, using the rope between Procter, Napier and his father to lower himself by. It was at once evident that Raymond Bicknell had been killed outright, as his skull was completely smashed in. It was obvious, in fact, that he was dead *before* his fearfully rapid slide had tautened the slack of the rope.

It was essential for our own safety in descending that we should have the second rope which was attached to Bicknell. We decided, accordingly, that the only course open to us was for Peter to detach the body and to allow it to slide down on to the glacier below.

With the help of the spare rope we made our way safely down on to the glacier, which we reached some 4 hours later,

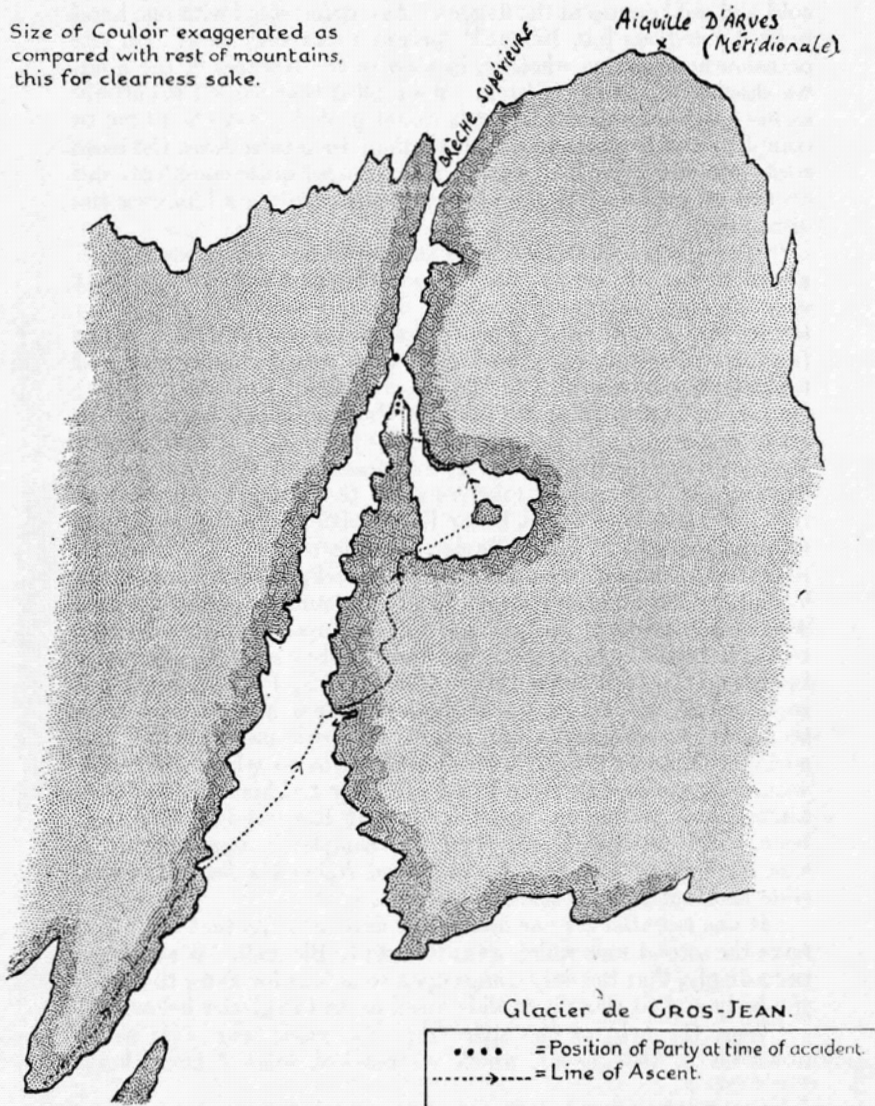
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<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that the rope—which rendered such invaluable service—was a light one by Frost, in its second season.—*Editor.*



and leaving the body where it had fallen we returned to Valloire, getting there about 11 P.M.

Size of Couloir exaggerated as compared with rest of mountains, this for clearness sake.



'It is impossible to state the cause of the accident. That Bicknell gave no warning cry, that he made no apparent effort to stop himself, and that his last remark was one of confidence, seem to indicate

that it was not an accidental slip. It would appear more probably to have been due to some form of heart failure, or violent cramp to which he had been subject as the result of an attack of phlebitis in the leg in the winter of 1924-25.

'The climb itself cannot be described as easy, but in attempting it we were undertaking a task of no exceptional difficulty, especially bearing in mind the great reputation Bicknell held as one of the leading amateurs of the day.'

[The subsequent proceedings in Valloire were carried out with great despatch and Raymond Bicknell was buried there.

Monsieur Pierre Dalloz, the distinguished French mountaineer, gave every possible assistance. He accompanied the search party of La Grave guides who brought the body down from its resting-place on the Glacier de Gros Jean. He then stayed the night with the relatives and accompanied them subsequently to La Grave.

M. Dalloz's kind and disinterested behaviour will not be forgotten by the friends and relations of Raymond Bicknell, and the JOURNAL avails itself of this opportunity of expressing to M. Dalloz the grateful thanks of the Alpine Club.

As the narrative points out, the immediate cause of the slip will for ever remain obscure, but one possible charge against Raymond Bicknell—that of rashness in attempting an expedition beyond his party's powers—falls automatically to the ground. The performance of the young survivors was superb. The feat of Mr. Procter in holding the fallen, Sir Joseph Napier's own accomplishments, and last, but not least, Mr. Peter Bicknell's courage in going down, unroped, to his father, and finally his skilful descent, shaken as he was mentally and physically, during that nightmare 4 hours, in the all-responsible position of last man, will stand high in the annals of modern mountaineering. We can only add that the collective deeds of the party were worthy of any veterans or of their intrepid, erstwhile leader himself.]

#### THE ACCIDENT ON 'THE MON.'<sup>1</sup>

THIS peak, *ca.* 16,500 ft., in the Dhauli Dhar range of the Himalaya, and of great steepness, as are most of those peaks, was the scene of the lamentable accident which occurred to Major H. D. Minchinton on June 3 last. Through the kindness of Lt.-Colonel H. Holderness, D.S.O., commanding 1/1st K.G.O. Gurkha Rifles, we are enabled to publish a full

<sup>1</sup> The name of the mountain, according to General Bruce, has been *indianized* from that of General E. D. Money.—*Editor.*



GENERAL ASPECT OF DHAULI DHAR  
RANGE  
from above Lakha.



APPROXIMATE  
SCENE OF FALL

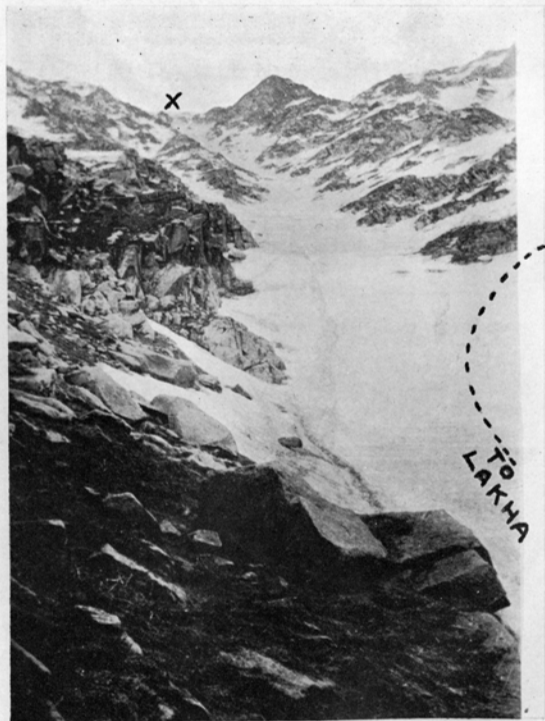
Phots. J. W. Rundall.

THE 'MON' FROM CHAMBA SLOPE OF INDRAHAR PASS.



THE 'MON' FROM SUMMIT OF  
INDRAHAR PASS.

Dotted line is Captain Rundall's 1925 line of  
ascent.



Photos. J. W. Rundall.

INDRAHAR PASS, 14,600ft.

Dotted line indicates part of route to 'Mon.'



account of the tragedy abridged from the proceedings of the Court of Enquiry :

Rifleman Bhagtbir Thapa states :—

‘ I left Dharmsala on Thursday, June 2, with Major Minchinton and Rifleman Gunjsing on 4 days’ leave for the purpose of mountain climbing. We reached Triund on the evening of the 2nd of June.

‘ On the morning of June 3 we went out for the purpose of climbing a hill called locally the “ Mon.”

‘ We climbed the “ Mon ” and then decided to return. Rifleman Gunjsing started to go down first, Major Minchinton in the middle and I was the last. We were all roped together. We had to cut steps, as the snow was hard, in order to get down. We had not gone far when I slipped and fell down a short way, but was able to check myself from going far. Finding I had got out of the footsteps cut by the others, I attempted to re-join our path, when I was suddenly jerked off my feet and pulled down the hill. It is impossible to say how far I fell, but it must have been several hundreds of feet, and the only reason why I did not suffer more injury was because I was able during my fall to constantly check myself though unable to completely stop myself, because each time I attempted to do so I was dragged down by the rope. I received injuries to my head and right shoulder. When I was finally able to stop, I followed the rope to where Major Minchinton and Rifleman Gunjsing were. They were quite close together. On seeing me Major Minchinton asked me how I was and said that we had all three better rest for a few minutes. Major Minchinton and Gunjsing were then found to be unable to proceed further, so I took the rope off both of them, and on the Major’s suggestion went down for help. I found some gaddies and sent them up to the Major. The gaddies however soon returned. They said they had put Major Minchinton into a safe place but were unable to bring him further down, and they advised my going to Dharmsala and getting help from the regiment down there. In the neighbourhood of Lakha I met a sahib and his wife, whom I at once informed, and then went to Triund, where I passed the night.

‘ The time the accident took place was about 1 P.M.’

Lieutenant G. F. Bain-Smith, I.A.O.C., states :—

‘ On the 3rd instant my wife and I, having walked up to Triund forest bungalow, had breakfast with Mrs. Minchinton, who pointed out a hill on which Major Minchinton was climbing.

We went on to Lakha, and at 2.30 p.m., as we were about to return, saw a Gurkha staggering along a path. He pulled himself together only enough to convey that Major Minchinton had had an accident. He said that Minchinton was about an hour's walk away. Had I known the difficulties ahead I would have sent at once to the Gurkha mess for help; though, even so, this party could not have arrived much before nightfall.

'My wife went back to Triund to get help and I took a tiffin coolie on with me. The Gurkha attempted to come with me to show me the way, but was left behind. Having climbed 2000-3000 ft. I heard Minchinton calling and saw him in the middle of a snow slope. As I had no ice-axe or grass shoes it took me until 4.30 p.m. to cross an intervening snow slope which had a frozen crust on it; kicking steps through the crust with stockinged feet was the only method practicable. Having crossed I found the second Gurkha sprawled face downward on a rock to which he had crawled off the snow slope. He had bad snow scrapes and cuts on his face and head. I left him there temporarily.

'Minchinton was about a hundred yards out from the rock on the slope. As I approached he was fully conscious and had changed from calling out in Hindustani to English, after he heard me answer. When I reached him he was still able to talk, though only at intervals. The only coherent information he gave was "we must have fallen 1000 ft. I cannot understand how any man can be alive after this. I have been here 3 or 4 hours." His climbing rope was curled up underneath him. He was cut in many places about the head and hands but not deeply; the main injury seemed to be his back, which was twisted. I gave him brandy from his rucksack and chocolate, which he could not eat. He did not appear to be in much pain until I started to drag him down the slope on my coat. He then cried out, and was delirious the whole time I was dragging him down.

'I moved him about 500 ft. down. The snow began to freeze over at 6.30 p.m. I found I could no longer keep him under control (I was obliged to let my coolie stay behind, as he could not tackle the snow slope). I then went about one mile downwards and across the ice slopes and got two shepherds to come and help me. On my return Minchinton was unable to speak, but was conscious. We got him down another 500 ft. Whenever we moved him he was in great agony. Having reached rough and frozen snow we could get no further, and I sent one man down for more men. He did not return.

' At about 7 P.M. I went down again myself, and after great difficulty got four more shepherds. They were extremely reluctant to help. I sent these men back to Minchinton, but as I was exhausted could only follow by crawling. When I arrived by Minchinton I found that he was struggling, and even when I spoke to him he did not recognize me. His struggles prevented our moving him more than a few feet, the snow by this time having turned to ice. I sent the Gurkha who could just keep on his feet down with two men and made repeated efforts to move Minchinton. At sunset the shepherds deserted me.

' I stayed with Minchinton, who was now completely unconscious, whether alive or not I cannot say, for about half an hour after dark, but soon realized that nothing could remain alive on that snow after dark. The wind was very strong and there had been intermittent hail storms all through the afternoon. I had previously covered Minchinton with my coat. I got down to a fire below the glacier about 1½ hours after sunset and found Mrs. Minchinton with some men whom she had brought. None of these were capable or equipped to tackle the snow in the dark. I sent Mrs. Minchinton back to Triund, and on the arrival of the first working party at 3 A.M., escorted them a short distance to point out where Minchinton lay. In this evidence I mentioned certain difficulties; these are merely mentioned in order to give reasons for the delay in moving Minchinton.'

Questioned by the court :—

Q. 1. Have you done much climbing previously in the snow ?

A. 1. None at all.

Q. 2. You say you heard first about the accident at 2.30 P.M.

What food arrangements had you for yourself after that time ?

A. 2. I had a slab of chocolate, which I lost after trying to give it to Major Minchinton, and at 2 A.M. on the 4th received a chupatti from one of the shepherds. I got breakfast at 9.30 A.M., my previous meal being 9.45 A.M. on the 3rd.

Q. 3. When you covered Major Minchinton with your coat, how were you dressed ?

A. 3. I had a khaki shirt, khaki shorts and a pair of stockings on.

Q. 4. At what time did you get any warmer clothes ?

A. 4. At 9 P.M. one blanket from a shepherd.

Q. 5. Have you suffered from any injuries as a result of what you did ?

A. 5. My feet are slightly frostbitten.

Q. 6. When you were dragging Major Minchinton along, had you slipped, how far do you think you would have fallen ?

A. 6. It is impossible to say; the snow slope was about 2000 ft. down.

Captain J. O. Fulton, 1/1st K.G.O. Gurkha Rifles, states :—

‘ At about 9.45 P.M. on the evening of June 3 I received word from Captain Carrey, I.M.S., that he had heard that Major Minchinton had had an accident above Triund and requesting 20 men to be sent to Triund to bring him down. Along with Captain O’Ferral and 20 men I proceeded at once to Triund. Captain Carrey followed a few moments later. Half-way up to Triund we intercepted a letter from Mrs. Minchinton to Colonel Holderness which showed that the Major was still out in the snow. We had previously been given the impression that he was either at Triund or being brought there. On this we sent word for a party to be sent up equipped for climbing.

‘ On arrival at Triund at about 1.20 A.M. on the 4th we decided to equip 8 men as well as possible and to proceed to search for Major Minchinton.

‘ On arrival at the huts about a mile above Lakha we found Lieutenant Bain-Smith and one wounded Gurkha. Lieutenant Bain-Smith was thoroughly exhausted and shaking with cold, but was able to come far enough with us to point out to us where Major Minchinton was.

‘ There was an icy wind blowing and the surface of the snow was frozen, so there was little hope of finding the Major alive. At 5.15 A.M. we reached Major Minchinton. He was quite dead. The upper part of his body was frozen stiff, but his legs were limp. We then managed to drag the body down to a patch of rocks, cutting steps as we went along; the men being laden with stretchers were at this stage some 500 ft. below. While the men were coming along we decided on the route that we should bring Major Minchinton down by. This entailed cutting a path across the nullah of a distance of about 70 yards. After working for an hour and a half, Captain O’Ferral and myself cutting steps while the men rested and strapped Major Minchinton on to one of the stretchers, we were able to cross this nullah, using ropes as we went along. The



snow slope was about 2000 ft. down. Directly we had got Major Minchinton across the bad bit, I went on ahead to give the news.'

Q. 1. Is this the first time you have used an ice-axe ?

A. 1. Yes. I have never used an ice-axe before.

Captain J. L. O'Ferral, 2/1st K.G.O. Gurkha Rifles, states :—

' On the evening of June 3 I accompanied Captain Fulton and 20 men up to Triund and afterwards went with Captain Fulton and 8 men to the huts above Lakha, where we met Lieutenant Bain-Smith, who was able to direct us to the place where Major Minchinton was. We reached Major Minchinton at about 5.15 A.M. Captain Fulton and I then dragged Major Minchinton down to some rocks, some forty yards below.

' The men arrived shortly after, and while they were resting Captain Fulton and I cut steps across a nullah preparatory to having the stretcher brought across. The snow was treacherous, being soft in places and very hard in others ; while the stretcher was being carried across with Major Minchinton on it I slipped, and had Captain Fulton not been holding the other end of the rope I might have fallen to any distance. When we reached the far side of the nullah Captain Fulton went ahead to take the news to Mrs. Minchinton, while I superintended the further removal of the body. The going was difficult and the men carrying the stretcher had a very hard time of it.

' About half-way to the huts, at about 8 A.M., Captain Hamber and some 40 other Gurkhas came to our help, and the body was then taken in reliefs to Triund and, later, to Dharmsala.'

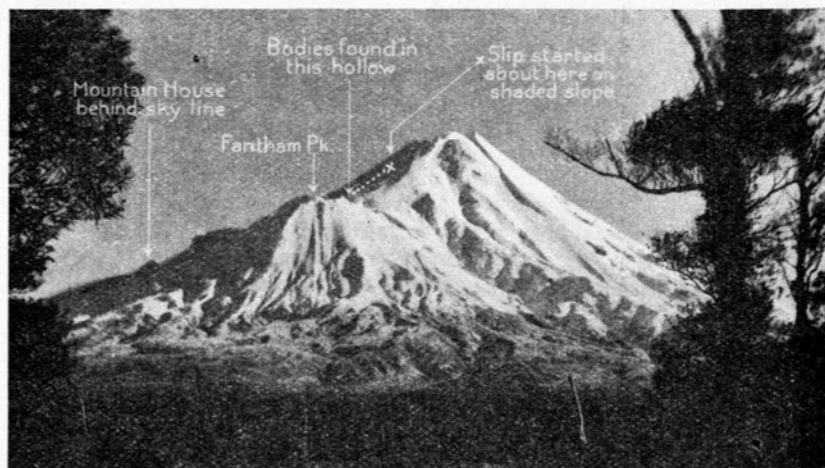
[In addition to a letter and the proceedings of the Court of Enquiry forwarded by Colonel Holderness, we have received letters from Colonel E. M. Lang, Major P. H. Sharpe, Captain J. W. Rundall and others ; to all of these we return our best thanks. Captain Rundall, who has twice made the ascent of The Mon, is convinced that 'Major Minchinton's fall cannot have been less than 2000-3000 ft.']

No further comments are required ; the accident appears to have been one of those that will always occur as long as mountaineering exists. It might, of course, be said that had Major Minchinton occupied the position of last man on the rope no accident, probably, would have occurred. We must

remember, however, that he was engaged in training his Gurkhas in mountaineering. The conduct of all ranks, and especially that of Lieutenant Bain-Smith,<sup>2</sup> was magnificent and worthy of the traditions of the British and Indian Armies alike.

#### THE ACCIDENT ON MOUNT EGMONT.

A FATAL accident involving the loss of two lives occurred on Mount Egmont, 8260 ft., North Island, New Zealand, on May 11, 1927.



MT. EGMONT, N.Z.

We are indebted to Mr. A. P. Harper for many of the details, as well as for the topography of the mountain.

A party consisting of Captain N. Baines, Messrs. F. Latham, P. Taylor, and D. Allen, none of whom had had much mountaineering practice, made the ascent in perfect weather but wintry conditions. In the descent they occupied, roped, the following order: Baines (leading), Taylor, Allen, and Latham. Only two of the party appear to have possessed ice-axes. Some 700 ft. below the summit a slip occurred on hard wind-blown snow, and the whole party slid or rolled down for some 500 ft., finally bringing up on a kind of snow plateau. Latham was fatally injured. Taylor, severely hurt, attempted to drag down the still living Latham; Baines and Allen, who were also much injured, meanwhile freeing themselves from the rope. Taylor

<sup>2</sup> The *London Gazette* of September 30 announces that the King has awarded the Albert Medal to Lieutenant G. F. Bain-Smith, R.A.

and Allen were duly rescued by a party under the leadership of the well-known Mt. Cook guide, Murphy, but Latham had expired from his injuries, *en route*; Baines, meanwhile, having disappeared. The body of Baines was found by a search party on May 13, at a spot approximately half a mile from the scene of Latham's death. 'The deceased had apparently crawled on his hands and knees for some distance and had then fallen over a bank some 20 ft. high' [*Press reports*].

Murphy and the search parties had accomplished all that was humanly possible and the conduct of the survivors, of whom Allen was aged only sixteen, and who are now reported to be progressing favourably, is highly commended.

'Egmont is a walk—a volcanic cone, quite perfect—in summer you can walk up on scoria slopes, but in winter some 2000 ft. or more is snow-covered and large patches of snow remain on it through the summer and in the crater.

'I, as a matter of fact, made what I believe to have been the first snow ascent in 1895 and by exactly the same route as the party took, but in those days there were no tracks or mountain-houses. In the winter the snow slopes are steep, somewhere about 40°, but easy to walk up and glissade down if the snow is in good order—as we found it in 1895—but when the Baines party made the ascent there had been high winds and considerable cold. The light snow was thus blown off and the slopes were evidently partly hard snow with patches of glazed surface, and, here and there, of practically blue ice (there is no glacial ice on the mountain). Murphy—a first-class Mt. Cook guide—appears to have warned the party to look out for this ice, which he foresaw owing to weather conditions. From Fantham's peak (a shoulder of Egmont) to the top is some 1700 ft.; there are no real cliffs or rocks there, but only many outcrops of hard snow . . . ' [*extracts from a letter from Mr. Harper*].

[I should like to add a short tribute to the memory of an old brother officer, Noel Baines, more especially as in the latter stages of the war he was under my immediate command. Gifted with unusually good linguistic and literary powers, he was of high intelligence and certain to make his way in the world. On the outbreak of the war, he enlisted, very young, as a private in the 18th (Public Schools) Bn. Royal Fusiliers—commanded by another old friend and brother officer. With this unit he proceeded to France in 1915, where he was soon gazetted as an officer to the Royal Scots. He served in the Royal Scots in the Dardanelles, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and, finally, for the last two years, with the 1st Bn. in Macedonia. Severely wounded during the brilliant Guevgueli operation of June 1918, he was on recovery posted to me as a liaison officer. Rumania was just then re-entering the war, and proceeding there he

served with General Berthelot, commanding the so-called Armée du Danube, and General Prezan, C-in-C. of the Rumanian Army. Baines's services to Rumania were rewarded by the Order of the Crown. Later in 1919 he rejoined the 1st Royal Scots and was stationed at Tiflis and Kutais in the Caucasus. He resigned his commission about 1920, when I lost sight of him, although he continued to correspond with me. An adept letter-writer, his news kept me in touch with his wanderings, which eventually terminated in New Zealand. He had always, although very limited in practice, been devoted to climbing. His interest in the three Everest expeditions was profound. His last letter to me, received on the very day of his death and dated Wanganui, March 27, 1927, contains the following: ' . . . I did a great tour of the South Island this summer, nearly 3000 miles, and saw much that was very fine. The Milford track is magnificent and the Franz Josef glacier unique. . . . I know, however, nothing finer than the view from my bedroom window of Ruapehu. I have been to the huts there every winter so far, and I can quite honestly say that they have been the best days I have spent out here. Egmont is a fine mountain and I hope to go there next holidays. . . . '

Well, he went, and one of our minor empire-builders and single-minded patriots met his fate. May he rest in peace.—E. L. S.]

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## REVIEWS.

*George Leigh Mallory. A Memoir.* By David Pye. Oxford University Press.

THIS is a worthy memorial to a great mountaineer and to a singular and attractive personality. Mallory's life, apart from his mountain climbing, was the not unusual one of a hard-working and cultivated man, strenuous in his profession, with intellectual and artistic interests and many friends. For those who knew him, an intense vitality and a vivid personal charm threw a glamour over all he did. By the world at large he will not be forgotten, owing to the tragic and romantic circumstance of his last mountain campaign.

But this was not the material of which a full-length ' biography ' could be composed ; and Mr. David Pye has, rightly, not attempted it. With impartiality and an excellent sense of proportion he has sketched a very human portrait, omitting what was immaterial, compressing what was usual, and selecting with skill from correspondence, conversation, incident and opinion just so much detail—sometimes only a few words of citation—as might serve to bring the portrait alive.

A man of varied interests, varying moods and irregular if continuous development, George Mallory probably never made quite the same impression upon any two of those who knew him.