

## IN MEMORIAM

FELIX OTTO SCHUSTER

1854-1936

FELIX SCHUSTER was born on April 21, 1854. He was educated first at the University of Geneva and later at the Victoria University, Manchester (Owens College), where he attained distinction, especially in history, literature, and languages, and this knowledge of languages was of great value to him throughout his life. At about the age of eighteen he entered the banking firm of Schuster, Son & Co., of Cannon Street, into which the old family business, founded early in the eighteenth century and established in England in 1811, had long since developed, and here he received a thorough financial training from his father, the late Mr. Francis J. Schuster, becoming a partner in 1879. In 1887 part of his firm was taken over by the Union Bank of London, of which he was elected a Director, and he succeeded to the position of Governor in 1895 in the place of Lord Ritchie, then appointed to the Presidency of the Board of Trade. His biennial addresses to the shareholders, entering upon topics of wide economic interest, have led to the development of the speeches of bank chairmen into the importance they have since attained.

It was as Governor of the Union Bank that Schuster found full scope for his high ability, and in 1902 he succeeded in bringing about the important amalgamation of the Union with the old banking houses of Smith, Payne & Smiths and kindred firms, followed by Prescott, Dimsdale & Co. and the London and Yorkshire Bank.

The amalgamation proved a great success. The business grew steadily and Schuster's reputation with it. In his private room at No. 2 Princes Street, overlooking St. Mildred's Court, he was always accessible to men with a definite purpose, and here among other schemes the amalgamation of the underground railways was planned.

Schuster's chief contribution to the fiscal controversy was a pamphlet in favour of Free Trade entitled 'Foreign Trade and the Money Market,' which was influential in forming opinion in the City and throughout the country, and when in 1905 the Unionist Government resigned, he was urged to contest the seat of the City of London as a Free Trade candidate. The Conservative element in the City, however, was too strong to allow him to gain the seat. The election, moreover, took place at a late stage (January 1906), when a great many contests in the country had already been decided in such a way as to make the Free Trade cause absolutely safe. Thus he lost many Unionist Free Trade votes, which would otherwise have gone to him. Still his speeches and publications had very materially contributed to the success of the cause, and this was recognized by the Government when they

recommended him for a baronetcy, which was conferred upon him in July.

In April of that year (1906) he was appointed a member of the Council of India, a position which he held until 1916, during which period he acted as Finance Minister of that body. In 1907 he succeeded Mr. Spencer Phillips as President and Chairman of the Council of the Institute of Bankers. He was Chairman of the Central Association of Bankers, and Chairman of the Committee of London Clearing Bankers, 1913 to 1915, and again in 1925, when he was President of the British Bankers' Association. He was also Chairman of the Council of the London Chamber of Commerce, 1905 to 1906, and at various times a member of a number of important Government Commissions. In spite of the heavy pressure of work at his bank and the India Office he found time to assist in the management of several hospitals, University College, the London School of Economics and other important bodies; but it was a rule of his life to refuse to serve unless he saw a possibility of taking a definite share in the work.

The war came as a great blow to him. Nothing, however, could better have tested the solid foundations of his position in the City, and as a mark of their esteem and confidence in these critical times his co-directors asked him to sit for a presentation portrait. In the early days of the war, as Chairman of the Committee of London Clearing Bankers, Sir Felix held a position of high responsibility. Bankers' meetings, over which he presided, meetings with prominent merchants and members of the Stock Exchange, and consultations with the Chancellor followed each other in a continuous stream. Work which continued till after midnight was resumed early next morning, while the business of his own bank had to be fitted in as best it could.

Later Schuster's war work was carried out very quietly and unobtrusively, and no one except those immediately associated with him and the late Lord Cunliffe knew what heavy burdens of responsibility were shouldered in connection with the work of the Exchange Committee, of which he was a member. This Committee was appointed not by the Bank of England, but by the Treasury and was given enormous powers: the control of all exchange transactions, the control of the gold in the country and of the gold coming into it, and even of the proceeds of all the issues. Lord Cunliffe and Sir Felix were the only ones who saw the business through from beginning to end. At first the two men did not understand each other, but later full confidence and a warm friendship developed between them.

As the war drew to its close the advantages of further bank amalgamations became apparent, and after long deliberations Schuster therefore devised with Lord Inchcape a well-considered scheme by which in 1918 the National Provincial Bank of England and the Union of London and Smiths Bank were welded into one great institution. From this time forward, feeling no doubt the very bitter loss of his wife (a daughter of Sir Hermann Weber) and of his youngest daughter, he threw off some of the burdens which he had borne so successfully and

so long. Nevertheless, his efforts seemed scarcely relaxed, and in 1925 he was again Chairman of the Committee of London Clearing Bankers and President of the British Bankers' Association, and took the chair the following January at the annual meeting of the National Provincial Bank, of which he continued to be a Director until the end of his life.

Always a very hard worker he kept long hours, regardless of indifferent health, and seldom left his room at the bank till half-past six or even half-past seven at night. He was unremitting in his close attention to the bank's interests, and took great pleasure in the rebuilding of Princes Street Office, which was completed by Sir Edwin Cooper in 1930.

Apart from his work in the banking world, Schuster achieved much by his quiet but persistent criticism of Government finance. He strongly disapproved of the heavily increased Death Duties, which he denounced as economically unsound, considering that the Government by these burdensome impositions was spending as income money which ought to have been available for new enterprise. His repeated recommendations in favour of strengthening the gold reserves of the nation, though not adopted as fully or as soon as he desired, had also considerable effect. Besides the essay on foreign trade already referred to, he wrote two more important papers: one, 'The Bank of England and the State,' originally an address to the Institute of Bankers; the other an article in the *Nineteenth Century* in 1909 on Death Duties.

Schuster stood for all that was sober, sound, and honourable in the City, which he was fond of saying was the most honest place in the world.

He was certainly one of the great theoretical bankers of his day, and few had deeper insight into international and public finance. On the Continent and in the U.S.A. his reputation was almost legendary. He always took the greatest interest in the International Chamber of Commerce. He was a member of the Council from its foundation and played a leading part in some of its most important Congresses, and in the endeavour to promote a feeling of friendship and the pursuit of common aims amongst the nations. It was largely owing to his efforts that the important Resolution on World Restoration was passed at Rome in 1923.

As years went on he watched with uneasiness the constantly rising trade barriers between nations, and though still a devoted adherent of the principle of Free Trade, he stated, when speaking at the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce in 1930, that it had become necessary for England to use defensive measures and that the safeguarding of our industries against artificial and uneconomic conditions had become not only justifiable but inevitable. He went on to point out that these grave problems ought to be solved on non-party lines, and to suggest a National Government consisting of the leading men of all parties. Wherever he saw an opportunity he did his utmost to impress upon traders and politicians the great injury which he thought tariff walls were inflicting on the whole world.

To many of his acquaintances Schuster was always something of a

mystery. He seemed to possess a certain aloofness, which was partly shyness, and it was given to few to know him intimately or to understand him. Those who did were rewarded by warm affection, loyalty, and kindness. It was said of him that he was exacting, but to his subordinates it seemed that with his fine memory, intense concentration, and strict sense of duty he exacted so much of himself that he left little for others to do. He faced disagreeable tasks with courage, and when necessary administered reproofs unflinchingly. An expression of regret, however, was instantly accepted. The culprit was generously forgiven, and it was characteristic of him never to refer to the subject again. His accuracy and grasp of detail were amazing even in his latter days. Asked once for the secret of success he said: 'Picking out the important things first, and—doing them.'

In his business life, the bank and its staff was his chief interest. One of the tasks he set himself after a big amalgamation was 'to endeavour to create a feeling of co-operation and friendship throughout the service,' and he added, 'If I have succeeded to a small degree I am well content.'

Schuster was a good negotiator and diplomatist, and his knowledge of languages and fluency in speaking them has often enabled him to bring opposing parties together and to reach an agreement which has seemed impossible. This was especially apparent at the meetings and congresses of the International Chamber of Commerce. He spoke German fluently and also French. His Italian was good enough for a speech if the extremities of the occasion demanded it, and his Spanish was not to be despised.

In committee he was a very able chairman, and his firmness in keeping to the point and his promptness in despatching business was greatly appreciated. He seemed to have a remarkable faculty for picking out the points that other people missed. This was apparent not only in business but in the criticism of music and art. At first he might seem slow in conversation, and young people found the attention and concentration he gave to their casual chatter rather embarrassing if flattering, but the reply, when it came, was sure to be illuminated by some new thought.

In art he was very fond of the Italian school, of which he had a wide knowledge, but he did not appreciate ultra-modern developments. Simplicity and sincerity were what he looked for. He was for many years a member of the Arts Club, and used to dine there frequently with Orpen and David Murray and play a game of bridge, though he could never be persuaded to take up contract.

Music was one of the dominating features of his life, and it is said that he even had a boyish ambition to become a great pianist. It was by no means beyond his powers to have done so, as he had a beautiful touch and great rhythmic feeling. To induce him to play to a large audience was extremely difficult, but for a friend or for an invalid he would willingly play on until he thought they were tired. Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms were his favourites, and he did not care for

the modern school. He had many recollections of Eugène d'Albert, Sir Charles and Lady Hallé, and Joachim. It is remarkable that both painters and musicians always seemed to recognize Schuster as one of themselves, just as if he had been a professional.

Field sports never appealed to him, but his fondness for the Sussex countryside and the open Downs stayed with him from the days of his youth. In his country life he was simple and homely; he loved his books and his piano, and he enjoyed a game of billiards, but he liked best to play with his grandchildren or to take long walks with his favourite dog.

Schuster never cared for display, and though he was a shrewd buyer of antiques, he loved beautiful things for their own sake and not for their money value. A reputation as a philanthropist would not have pleased him, yet his private generosity was large. He thought it his duty as a good citizen to save; and he spent, if generously on others, little enough on himself. His whole life, in fact, was wonderfully regulated by sanity and moderation.

A natural reserve hid a very kind heart, and he had to be known intimately to be fully appreciated. Not everybody's friend perhaps, but as one of his co-directors once said, 'The man everybody would choose to go to in trouble.'

Felix Schuster died on May 13, 1936.

T. A. R.

I have been specially requested to write something of Felix Schuster's Alpine career. Although I feel that many other members of the Club are more competent to do this, it is a labour of love that I cannot forgo. Schuster would be the last person to lay claim to have been a great mountaineer. Nevertheless, he was a sound, strong man on rock or snow, and, as in all his other pursuits, an extremely shrewd judge. He could tell at a glance from his favourite Riffelalp whether the great peaks, Matterhorn, Dent Blanche, Gabelhorn, Rothhorn, Weisshorn, etc., were in a fit state to be climbed. Having begun mountaineering at an early age his Alpine judgment remained unimpaired, even after other infirmities had overtaken him. He detested 'records' and many of the modern methods.

Schuster was a great authority on the Bernese Oberland; he was invited by Coolidge to prepare the *Climbers' Guide* to that district—a work designed to follow Conway's *Pennine Guide*. Unfortunately, a disagreement arose between Schuster and the Seer of Grindelwald. It was to do, if I remember rightly, with the famous question of the first ascent of the Finsteraarhorn by Meyer's guides in 1812. Schuster maintained that the guides had but reached the 'minor summit'; Coolidge rose in his wrath, both refused to budge—with the result that the Oberland *Climbers' Guides* were not published for many years. In fact, the first two volumes, their compiler having in due course also fallen under the ban of excommunication, were withdrawn after publication and rewritten by Coolidge himself! Many years later—in 1922—I had the pleasure of witnessing a meeting between a

chastened and repentant 'Hermit of Grindelwald' and the subject of this memoir—the hatchet having fallen on my own head in the intermediate period. History has long shown the justice of Schuster's contention; his views as to the date of the first ascent of the Finsteraarhorn—1829—are now accepted generally.

Among Schuster's Alpine friends may be mentioned Conway, Dent, Freshfield, Willink, Kirkpatrick, Mumm, Farrar, Seymour King, Horace and Lucy Walker, Slingsby, Charles and Lawrence Pilkington, Mrs. Jackson, Ellis Carr. But it may be said that he was acquainted with all the leading British mountaineers of the last 50 years. My first meeting with him was at a dinner-party of Abney's early in 1895. In 1923 he had a long audience with the Pope, during which both talked incessantly of mountains. He once shared a table at the Monte Rosa for several days with King Albert I of the Belgians. Schuster had also often met Queen Margherita and the Duke of the Abruzzi.

Very strongly built, his was probably the best-known figure at all meetings of the Club, where he often spoke and was listened to invariably with great attention.

An early record in Felix Schuster's life is that of a visit to the Black Forest with his two brothers (Dr.) Ernest and (Sir) Arthur, who were sent on a walking tour with a tutor. Felix was then aged six, and there is a story of his being lost and ultimately found by the roadside fast asleep. Such tours seem to have been frequent at this time, and probably it was during one of them that from the train somewhere in the neighbourhood of Lake Constance he saw for the first time a distant view of snow mountains—possibly the Säntis—which he found marvellously beautiful. This was his first inspiration and the beginning of his admiration for mountains. From 1879 onwards until 1914 he never missed a single season in the Alps he loved so well.

Later he was a student at Geneva for some months, and used often to scramble on Mont Salève, but his first real season seems to have been in 1873, when he was at Engelberg and climbed the Titlis. A visit to Zermatt followed in 1874. On December 12, 1877, when elected a member of the Alpine Club, having been proposed by Fred Gardiner and seconded by G. E. Forster, his qualifications included: Titlis, Col d'Hérens, Diablerets, Col du Grand Cornier, Breithorn, Triftjoch, Schwarztor, Finsteraarhorn, Pollux, Strahlegg, Weisstor, Mönch, Adler, Jungfrau, Strahlhorn, Aletschhorn and Matterhorn, which he climbed in the summer of 1877. Altogether a substantial qualification list for those days.

In 1878, according to Mumm's *Alpine Register*, he climbed Schreckhorn, Eiger, Wetterhorn, Alphubeljoch, Mischabeljoch, second passage of Col de la Dent Blanche (with the Rev. F. T. Wethered and Ulrich Almer, *A. J.* 25. 563-5), Moming Pass, Traverse Zwillingsjoch and Felikjoch.

In 1880 first passage of Mettenbergjoch, with Peter Baumann.

In 1885 Klein Schreckhorn: new route with Peter Baumann and Christian Bernet.

From old letters Miss Schuster has discovered that he was greatly disappointed at a failure in an attempt on the Fiescherhorn in this year (1885), owing to snow and bad weather, but later in the same season he achieved the Weisshorn, which gave him great pleasure. Apparently he found it long and in difficult condition.

In 1886 a 'centenary' ascent of Mont Blanc, with Henri Dévouassoud and a porter. They stayed 3 hours on the top!

Schuster was caught on the top of the Nordend with A. Lorria by the great snowstorm of August 17 (the same storm which proved fatal to Mr. Borckhardt on the Matterhorn, *A. J.* 13. 95 *sqq.*), and rescued a party from Monte Rosa. With Peter Truffer and the youngest Gentinetta they had difficulty in returning, and found themselves in the séracs of the Monte Rosa Glacier. Here at 2 P.M. they found two Frenchmen, with Johann Perren, Elias Lauber and a porter, sitting under a rock bewildered and demoralized. The guides on being remonstrated with said that it was better to die there than on the glacier, but Schuster and his party tied them on and forced them to follow.

In 1887 Piz Bernina, Tschierva, Palü, Bellavista.

In 1888 second ascent of the N. (2nd) summit of the Strahlegg Hörner, with Major-General Blanckley, Peter Baumann and Christian Bernet.

In 1889 second ascent by a new route of Gross Hohwanghorn, with Ellis Carr, Josef Mooser and Peter Baumann.

In 1894 Piz d'Arlas, new route by N.E. arête.

During the years 1878 to 1895, besides probably two visits to the Dolomites, Sir Felix must have climbed most of the higher peaks of the Oberland and Zermatt, with the exception (I believe) of the Dent Blanche. I do not think he ever climbed much among the Chamonix Aiguilles. An ascent of Mont Blanc has been recorded and also of the Aiguille Verte.

In 1890-94, according to his son, Schuster climbed a great deal with Sir George Savage, and one year they visited the Dolomites.

From 1895 onwards Sir Felix seems to have travelled in the Alps with his family, sometimes with his son alone, but more often with his wife, his daughters, Miss Evelyn Schuster, Miss Ethel (now Mrs. Wilson), Molly (later the wife of Sir Rayner Goddard)—who died in 1928—and Miss Kitty, who died a few years after the war, and his son Bob, now Sir Victor. The climbers among the children were Miss Evelyn and Sir Victor.

In 1895 or the following year Schuster traversed the Chapütschin with Sir Hermann Weber and Hans Grass. Both the latter were old, and Hans really unfit for the expedition. The party was very late in arriving at Silvaplana, causing much anxiety in which, knowing her husband's predilection for staying long on a summit for the sake of the changing views, Lady Schuster did *not* share.

In one of these years Schuster climbed the Crast 'agüzza, and possibly other peaks. In 1897 three generations were represented on Piz Corvatsch: Sir Hermann Weber, aged 74 (grandfather—he was the father of Lady Schuster); Sir Felix himself, Bob, his son, aged 12,



METTENBERGJOCH FROM GLECKSTEIN, 1880.



RIFFELALP, AUGUST 15, 1933.

W. T. Kirkpatrick, W. Hooper, Sir F. Schuster, F. N. Ellis,  
(standing) Dr. Cyril Bardsley.

[To face p. 332.]

and also Miss Ethel and Miss Evelyn Schuster. The guides were Hans Grass and Baumgartner.

During following years we find records of ascents of Piz Julier, Weissmies, Fletschhorn, Laquinhorn, Furggenrat, and a curious expedition (1902) with Douglas Freshfield (and François Dévouassoud), Claud Schuster and many members of the family ; it began in the Fex and ended in Val Fedoz. Other peaks include the Balmhorn, Rimpfischhorn, Monte Rosa (again), Wellenkuppe, Jungfrau (25 years after his previous ascent). In 1908, with his son and Heinrich Burgener, Schuster attempted the Lyskamm. They were, however, driven back by a snowstorm and had to descend to Italy *via* the Lysjoch, arriving eventually in climbing clothes at Turin. Presenting themselves at an hotel, they were offered a small room on the top floor at 3 *lire* a day. On asking for better accommodation, Schuster was warned in kindly tones that this would be too expensive for him !

During all these years Schuster paid many visits to his friend and late guide, old Peter Baumann of Grindelwald. He went to Grindelwald in the winter of 1921 for that purpose, only to find that Baumann had died a week previously. Schuster's memoir of him will be found in *A. J.* 34. 463-6.

From 1921 onwards Schuster spent all his summer vacations at the Riffelalp, making periodical visits, thence to Grindelwald and the Engadine. Failing eyesight—for which he underwent two operations in 1932—prevented climbing, but he remained a very active walker up to 1934. However, handicapped in *descents* by his eyes, he informed me that he had achieved in 1934 a record descent to Zermatt in 2½ hours ! His health then began to fail, and he was unable to attend the A.C. Dinner in 1935—the first he had missed since 1877.

To the Alpine Club Schuster rendered great and devoted services. He first served on the Committee in 1888, was Honorary Secretary from 1889-1892, and was elected Vice-President 1899-1901. On numberless other occasions he served as an Extra Member on the Committee, being once more elected at the age of eighty in 1935. I feel that in justice to an old friend and as a further proof of his modesty, loyalty and deep affection for the Club, an episode, which is most certainly not to *his* discredit, should be mentioned. In November 1901 Schuster was nominated President of A.C. Finding, however, that there was a certain opposition, he generously refused to submit to a ballot, which would most probably have given his candidature a substantial majority, but withdrew his consent to nomination. Never, for one moment, was Schuster heard to complain, and for the remainder of his life continued to give his care, assistance and advice to the Committee of that Club of which he was so proud. The worth of that kindly and shrewd counsel can be appreciated best by those who have occupied the place that Felix Schuster should have held, but vacated so chivalrously.

During the course of his last illness, although knowing that recovery was hopeless, he continued to display the greatest interest in the Club,

and especially in the relations of the A.C. Committee with the Mt. Everest Committee. He expressed the strongest approval of the team sent out in 1936.

To Felix Schuster's family I would once more convey our sorrow at his death, our deep appreciation of the man and his worth.

E. L. S.

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### GIOVANNI BOBBA<sup>1</sup>

1866-1935

GIOVANNI BOBBA was born in Turin on May 27, 1866. His father, a university professor of the faculty of philosophy, was the first to instil in him a love for the Alps, to which his earliest visit was in 1884. He spent the two following summers at Cogne, where he made his first long excursions accompanied by the guide Jantet. After that, he and his family spent successively four summers at Rhêmes Notre Dame, two (1891-92) back at Cogne, five at La Thuile, after which Valtournanche claimed him for the rest of his life. He was one of the faithful of the Val d'Aosta and his chief Alpine activities were devoted to the Gran Paradiso group. At Rhêmes he got to know Casimiro Thérissod, who, during their friendship, became a distinguished guide, and, being a superior type of man, was for many years connected with the Bobba family not only as guide but as a family friend. Bobba was of a frank disposition, he had been carefully educated on noble and religious lines and was the worthy friend of the best Italian mountaineers of his time, Barale, Fiorio, Ratti, Gonella, Corrà, Rey, Vaccarone. The last of these, who was as keen a student as he was a man of action, invited Bobba to collaborate in compiling the large guide to the Western Alps which for more than a decade remained one of the best and most comprehensive. He fully merited the honour. He was on friendly terms with well-known non-Italian mountaineers, among whom were Gertrude Bell, Yeld, Coolidge, Gardiner, Farrar, Montagnier, Broome, Wundt and Strutt. The C.A.I. claimed much of his activity and invested him with many official positions. He was elected an honorary member of the Alpine Club in 1920. He was also an honorary member of the C.A.F., of the Appalachian and of the Czechoslovak Clubs. He was a highly cultured and able magistrate and was elected a Consigliere della Suprema Corte di Cassazione (counsellor of the Court of High Appeal) as well as President of the Piedmontese branch of the newly instituted 'Magistratura del Lavoro.'

The first years of his judicial career took him to the small towns near the Maritime Alps, to which he prepared the first Italian guide, published nearly thirty years ago by the C.A.I. He accomplished many first ascents from the Maritimes to the Pennines. In the now remote past, he and Thérissod made what, for that time, was a noteworthy attempt on Mont Blanc by the then virgin crest of the Brouillard,

<sup>1</sup> Courteously translated by the Marchese Antinori.



GIOVANNI BOBBA.

1866-1935.

and they were only beaten by the adverse weather. He wrote articles for the *Rivista Mensile* of the C.A.I., for the *Revue Alpine*, for *La Montagne*, etc. His best Alpine writings, reflecting the enthusiasm of the explorer, the diligence of the observer and the strength of the mountaineer, are his articles on the Gran Paradiso group, published between 1889 and 1894 in the *Bollettino* of the C.A.I.<sup>2</sup> These are classics, full of topographic and Alpine data, accurate in their literary form, which Bobba attended to with the conscientiousness of a purist and accompanied by notes on the history of the valleys and accounts of his own most noteworthy achievements: First ascents of the S. Cresta della Grivola, of the Uje de Ciardoney, of the Punta di Valeille and of the central and northern 'Becs' of the Tribolazione, first crossings of the Colle del Piccolo Paradiso, of the Colletto di Monciair, of the Colle di Montandayné, of the Colle della Becca di Moncorvé and others of minor importance. He also published an excellent pamphlet, 'A Guide to the Matterhorn,' dedicated to the youth of the Italian universities. As a personal friend of His Holiness Pope Pius XI, who every year deigned to receive him in private audience, he collected the latter's Alpine writings in book form. He was the author of the excellent article regarding the word 'Alpi' in the *Enciclopedia Italiana*.

Though a true Alpinist, Bobba might be better described as a man with the soul of a mountaineer. He was thoroughly well versed in Alpine literature, but he knew the mountains and loved them for their own sake and that of their inhabitants, for the needs and for the character of the simple-souled, earnest mountaineers. During his lengthy winter and summer sojourns at Valtournanche, he was on intimate terms with all the villagers, including the humblest. For everyone he had a friendly greeting, accosting each by his name and lending a sympathetic ear to the needs, the wishes and the opinions of each one; ever ready to help with his valuable judicial knowledge, but still more with his gentle, kindly common sense. His house was always open, with the cordial hospitality traditional in his family, to the humblest as well as the most illustrious friend.

The writer will not forget the last meeting. We were sadly accompanying Guido Rey to his last resting-place. Suddenly Bobba turned to the writer, warmly inviting him to visit him at his country house and adding: 'In opposition to death we must set the enjoyment and strengthening of friendship.' Three weeks later, like a sturdy oak struck down by lightning, his life came to a sudden end in Valtournanche, on July 15, 1935.

The red chalet overlooking Paquier and the valley beyond as far as the Tersiva and behind which rise the frowning bulwarks of Les Grandes Murailles (the Jumeaux hut far above owes its existence to Bobba and to-day bears his name), whilst the majestic presence of the

<sup>2</sup> (1) In Val di Rhêmes, *Boll. C.A.I.*, vol. xxiii, 1889, pp. 33-80. (2) In Valgrisanche, *ibid.*, vol. xxiv., 1890, pp. 55-107. (3) Grivola e Gran Paradiso, *ibid.*, vol. xxv, 1891, pp. 1-60. (4) Attorno al Gran Paradiso, *ibid.*, vol. xxviii, 1894, pp. 209-68.

Matterhorn is barely revealed by a plume of white cloud, no longer shelters that noble life; it no longer rejoices in the music which that old idealist drew from his ancient harmonium as he accompanied the valley songs.

Many British mountaineers will remember the tall characteristic figure. He had never visited England before December 1933, when he made a short trip to London to take part in the A.C. Dinner. He there revived many old friendships. On his return, he wrote an enthusiastic article<sup>3</sup> addressed to the young men of Italy encouraging them to respect and cultivate ideal values, and even 'form,' when form is the outer garment of a deeper-set education of the spirit.

One final recollection. In September 1931 he was once again ascending the Breithorn peak in the company of another distinguished mountaineering friend of the old stock, Victor de Cessole; near the top they met a mountaineer of a younger generation, also a highly esteemed magistrate. It was Umberto Balestreri, who was introducing his little daughter to 4000-metre climbs. Balestreri wrote a touching page<sup>4</sup> about this meeting, which was found carefully preserved among his papers when his own precious life was cut short in a crevasse of the Morteratsch.<sup>5</sup> The recalling of a memory associating those two noble lovers of the mountains seems to be but a last pious duty.

ALFREDO CORTI.

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## HANS LAUPER

1895-1936

*Translated*

ON a fine Sunday morning, June 21 of this year, three of us were wandering from the Schynige Platte to the Faulhorn. In front with long powerful steps strode Hans Lauper, singing joyously, a splendid specimen of manly strength and skill, happy carelessness and keen humour, filled with energy and love of life. Three days later Hans Lauper was dead. Not a mountain death, such would have been altogether illogical for *his* methods of mountaineering. A serious internal trouble, dating from a youthful attack of appendicitis and which suddenly became threatening, carried him off, despite attempts at an operation, in three short days.

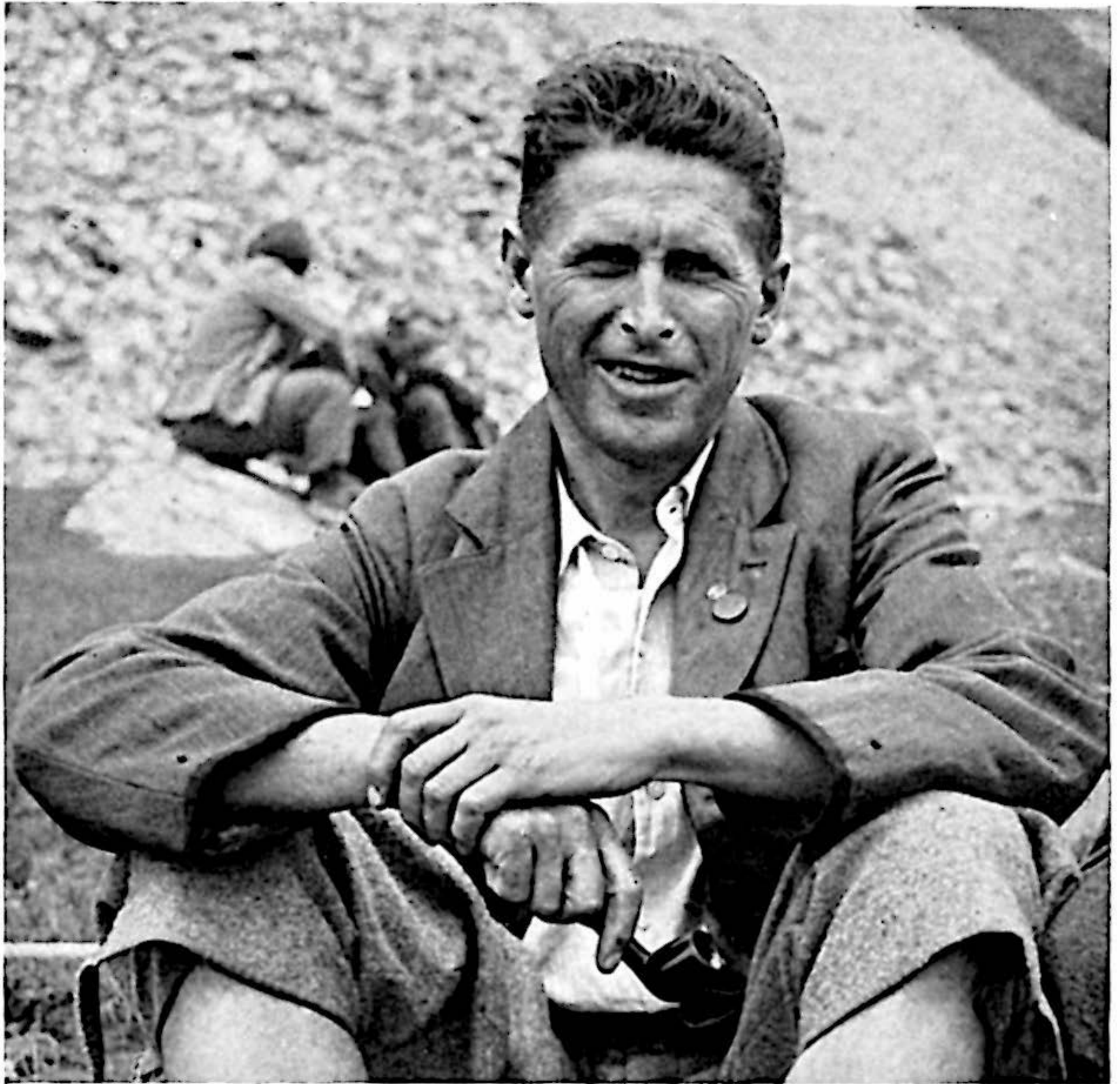
He was 40 years old and had lived his life well. He had achieved and given much, remaining true to type and profession. Cheery and yet reserved, outspoken yet wisely reticent, enterprising but calm in judgment, very keen but not aggressive, full of understanding and good feeling—such, in short, was my friend.

For thirty years Lauper was a mountaineer—perhaps even longer. Veneration of the heights was born in him, although brought up in a

<sup>3</sup> *Alpinismo*, Anno VI, no. 1, 1934.

<sup>4</sup> *R.M.*, vol. 52, no. 6, 1933.

<sup>5</sup> *A.ŷ.* 45. 418.



HANS LAUPER.  
1896-1936.

city ; this love existed from his very earliest years. Such passion raised and exalted him ; it developed his character, increased with age, and gave him every compensation. Throughout his life this feature restrained and put aside all unjustifiable excess. In such manner he formed himself into a great mountaineer, becoming in the fullness of time a perfect example of competence in great deeds. Had he been granted a long life he would have remained ever faithful to, and an active participant in, high mountaineering. As a grey-headed veteran he could yet have climbed many a peak with undiminished elasticity ; every kind of mountain journey, every manner of peak, even the smallest, would he have undertaken with lasting enthusiasm.

The chief feature of Lauper's mountain career was his very slow and progressive apprenticeship—so exceedingly different from the tendency of modern youth, which, with the slightest preparation at the age of 20 years, attempts the most desperate deeds. As a schoolboy, he could be seen wandering regularly in the Bernese Oberland with a few companions, almost always the same. The Lauterbrunnen peaks especially attracted him. During the first years of his mountain diary we find always repeated the same names of apparently simple peaks. He did not mind in the least accomplishing the same mountain half a dozen or more times. He never tried for the greatest number of peaks possible. His main object was ever the 'mountain' and, as such, climbed in the best possible way and manner. This is one of the principal reasons why his form was of the most finished class. That is why people who had often climbed with him were, so to speak, bluffed. He was no showy cragsman, but he climbed always in perfect style ; that is, faultlessly, with no undue exertion, one might almost say, introspectively. I never saw a handhold come away with him, I never saw him out of position—far less dislodge a stone. There was no brilliancy in his movements, just perfect efficiency. His main powers lay in ice-craft, and for such he showed his preference. A Brenva or Péteret expedition was for him far greater than a Guglia di Brenta scramble or a Vajolet traverse. Moreover, he had never climbed in the Dolomites ; his inclinations were far more towards the giants of Mont Blanc or the Valais. His list comprises many climbs in these two districts, but especially in that of the Oberland.

The Bernese Oberland was Lauper's lodestar. There are certainly no amateurs and but few first-class professionals who knew the Oberland as thoroughly as he. Eiger, Mönch, Jungfrau, Bietschhorn and so on—all had he climbed and by every known route, and to the already existing ways he had added new and classic ones. Jungfrau and Finsteraarhorn he had climbed a dozen times each—at least—and other Oberland giants hardly less. Lauper was the only man competent to prepare that portion of the S.A.C. *Climbers' Guide* comprising the 4000-metre category. His literary skill fitted him pre-eminently, as did his descriptive climbing notes, for such a task. Clearly, concisely and accurately, omitting all superfluties, did he write, aided in such, moreover, by his keen critical sense.

Lauper respected each mountain and every ascent. Consequently, want of care was foreign to his nature, and not the slightest mischance ever occurred to him. On long and protracted glacier traverses *his* rope-length was always dry. Skill in rope-management on snow or rock was ingrained in him.

Lauper was a great mountain companion. It was a privilege to travel with him. There on the heights his character was always even, always to be depended on, ever ready was he with help, ever adaptable. Below in the city he was sometimes different, reserved, occasionally shy and variable. This came, however, from his oft-recurring interior ailments. Those who had to do with his health (and complete knowledge of the state of that health was, alas, wanting until the operation before his death) realized that these failings were easily forgiven when the reasons were considered. It was not the mind that was the cause, but only Lauper's health. He himself never knew the reason, otherwise he would doubtless have taken resolutely, years ago, the necessary steps.

Lauper had a first-class knowledge of Alpine literature. His excellent library of books was richly annotated with his own observations. Especially in the matter of the history of ascents was he an expert. His unfailing knowledge of dates, of persons and of events, was such that one turned instinctively and with full reward to his erudition. He kept up a constant correspondence with many of the best-known native and foreign experts. His collected and prepared results of this correspondence contain many interesting particulars of persons and their deeds as accomplished day by day. He had especially much correspondence with British mountaineers, and bonds of friendship connected him with men like Farrar, Graham Brown, Strutt, Spencer, Montandon, Simon and many others. The walls of his narrow study are to this day hung with photographs of mountains and well-known mountaineers. All the portraits last named are inscribed with personal remarks, plainly showing what Lauper was to the donors and how they appreciated him. Soon after his election to the Alpine Club he became an anonymous contributor to the *JOURNAL*. His personal touch remained hidden, but Strutt as editor knows doubtless how capable a 'Swiss correspondent' Lauper always was.<sup>6</sup>

Lauper's powers in Alpine literature came but recently to the fore. This again is characteristic of the man; first he had to acquire what he considered the essential and, in his case, profound knowledge. Later only would he consent to publish it. The following is a summary of his chief publications:

- Hochgebirgsführer* durch die Berner Alpen, Bd. IV, 1931. Gruppe-Lauterbrunner-Breithorn bis Eiger.
- Die Alpen*, 1925, Willy Richardet (Obituary).
- „ 1925, Mount Shasta and Shastina.

<sup>6</sup> As did Farrar before me. Many Swiss notes bear the initials *H. L.*; many more Lauper preferred to publish anonymously.—E. L. S.

- Die Alpen*, 1926, Mount Tacoma.  
 „ 1927, Altes und Neues von der Jungfrau.  
 „ 1933, Der Eiger von Norden.  
 „ 1933, Die Doldenhorngruppe (Monograph).  
 „ 1934, Die Jungfrau von Nordosten.  
*A. J.* 41, The Mittellegi or E. Arête of the Eiger.  
 „ 42, Bietschhorn.  
 „ 45, North Faces of Jungfrau, Mönch and Eiger.<sup>7</sup>  
 „ 47, The South Face of the Blümlisalp.  
*Alpinisme*, 1931, i, La Jungfrau.  
 „ 1933, iii, L'Eiger par le Nord.  
*Der Bergsteiger*  
 „ 1933/34, Die Gspaltenhorngruppe.  
 „ 1934/35, Nachträge zum Schweizer Bergsommer.  
*A.A.C.Z. Jahresbericht* 1935, Mont Blanc.

Hans Lauper became widely known in mountaineering circles principally by his new ascents, now Alpine classics. It was he who first considered the possibility of ascent of the great Oberland 'North faces' of the 4000-metre peaks, subsequently carried through by himself. The subjugation of the N. faces of Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau was his reward. He discovered these routes; he was the first to accomplish them. Again it is typical of the man that his new ascents are not of the 'veni, vidi, vici' order. Generally, years of preparation, together with countless reconnaissances and careful waiting for the best conditions, were required. As an example, in 1915 he scrambled with his friend Gurtner around the base of the Grosshorn's N. face, but retreated owing to bad weather. In 1921, however, the attempt proved successful. In 1923-1925 and also later he reconnoitred with different friends, photographed and discussed the best route up the N. face of Eiger. Not till 1932 did he actually accomplish the peak, but then he carried out the expedition in one effort. His first ascents, necessarily not very numerous, were however most certainly of the highest class. In nearly all he was the leader:

- 1915, Kanzel-Lauterbrunner-Wetterhorn, with O. Gurtner  
 (A.A.C.B. *Jahresbericht* No. 10/11).  
 1918, Ijollihorn (Baltschiedergebiet), with F. Egger, *Jb.* No. 13  
 „ Stockhorn, N. face, with P. Montandon, Triner, and  
 König, A.A.C.B. *Jb.* 13  
 1919, Obertalstock, with H. Rüfenacht „ „ 14  
 „ Gletschhorn, S.E. arête, with H. Rey „ „ 14  
 „ Trugberg, S.S.W. arête, with H. Rey „ „ 14  
 1920, Tödi, E. face, with O. Hug, H.  
 Rüfenacht, Ph. Weydmann and E.  
 Wälti „ „ 15  
 1921, Galenstock, E. face, with W. Burger „ „ 16

<sup>7</sup> A most interesting paper read before the Club.

1921, Fründenhorn, W. arête, with M. Liniger	A.A.C.B.	<i>Jb.</i>	16
„ Mönch, N. face, with M. Liniger	„	„	16
„ Grosshorn, N.W. arête, with M. Liniger	„	„	16
1922, Bietschhorn, S. face (Variant), with W. Richardet	„	„	17
„ Ebnefluh, N.W. ridge, with O. Hug	„	„	17
„ Kamm, N. face, with O. Hug	„	„	17
1926, Jungfrau, N. face, with P. von Schumacher	„	„	21
1927, Fusshorn, 'Turm IX,' first ascent with O. Hug	„	„	22
1932, Eiger, N. face, with A. Zürcher and the guides J. Knubel and A. Graven, A.A.C.Z.	<i>Jb.</i>		37
„ Jungfrau, Guggi, N.W. ridge, with the same party	„	„	37

Beyond the Alps, Lauper had travelled but once. During his student days in California he climbed Mounts Shasta, Shastina and Tacoma, all of which were accomplished in winter on ski. He would have been the very man for great distant expeditions. His profession prevented, unfortunately, any possibility of such. Lauper was a member of several Alpine Societies, notably the A.A.C. Berne, of which he was President 1917-18; of the A.A.C. Zürich, of the S.A.C. 'Sektion Lauterbrunnen' and 'Uto,' and of the Alpine Club, to which he was elected in 1929.

Lauper was born in Berne in 1895: the first 20 years of his life were spent in that city, where he was educated, passing his examinations brilliantly in 1915. During the following years he worked at Latin studies and—to be as near his beloved mountains as possible—as a topographical assistant. Then he began his studies as a dentist, first in Berne and later in Zürich, where he completed his examinations. After special work in San Francisco, in which town he also practised, he returned to Zürich and opened a practice, becoming one of the most notable experts in our town, theoretically as well as practically. His happy marriage of 10 years ago has resulted in two fine boys.

Now 'Heus,' as his friends called Lauper, has left us. His sudden and quite unexpected death was a terrible mental shock to his friends, so great, in fact, that many of us for weeks could hardly look at a mountain. But that is not what he would have liked. Nay, rather we will commemorate his memory in worthier fashion—in those places where a very great mountaineer strove and conquered. So will his memory be with us for the remainder of our lives.

OSKAR HUG.