

IN MEMORIAM

GUIDO REY

1861-1935

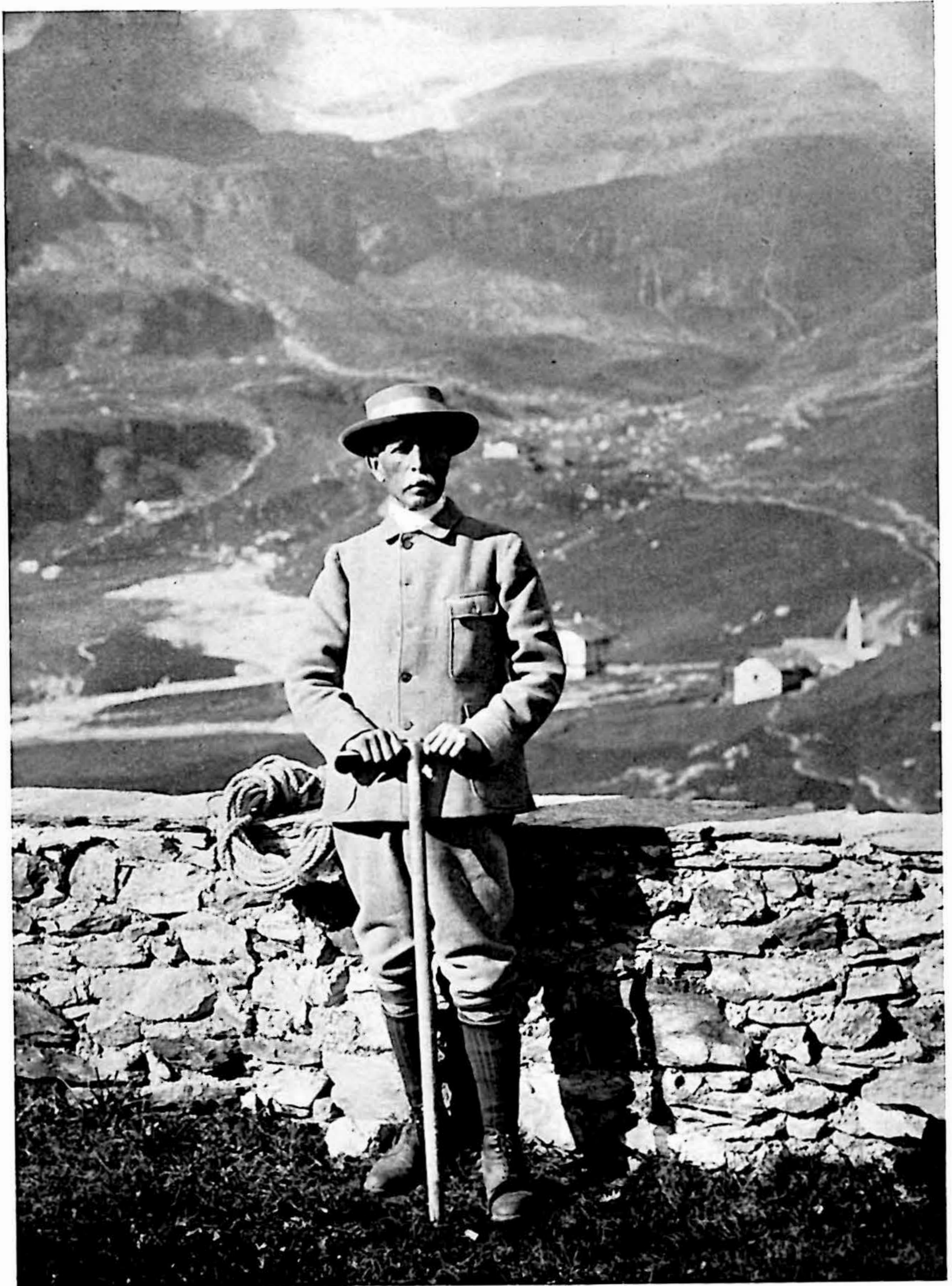
*Translated*¹

GUIDO REY was born in Turin on October 20, 1861. He was the nephew of Quintino Sella, the scientist and minister of the new Kingdom of Italy, who in 1863, returning from an ascent of Monte Viso, and inciting the youth of Italy to climb mountains in search of 'strength, beauty and virtue,' founded the Italian Alpine Club. Young Rey was one of the many descendants and relations of his illustrious uncle who followed in the latter's footsteps, and among whom figured the conquerors of the Aiguille du Géant, the pioneers of the first winter crossings of Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa and the Matterhorn—and the still hale and hearty Vittorio Sella, to whose credit stand those marvellous, and as yet unsurpassed, series of mountain views of the Alps, the Caucasus, the Karakoram, Alaska and Ruwenzori.

Rey came of a wealthy industrial family and during his whole life, his calling as a mountaineer was constantly clashing with his business duties. The fortunate position of Turin and the energy of his younger years enabled him to devote to the mountains every free day and every brief vacation. The Cottian, Graian, Pennine Alps and Dauphiné were the scene of his chief early activities. Those were the days when the search for new routes and difficulties, for difficulties' sake, was not quite so breathless as in after years. Mountains were still climbed by the main routes, which, however well known, have never lost their majestic beauty. In the company of Cesare Fiorio and Carlo Ratti who, in Italy, represented the early champions of mountaineering without guides, Rey accomplished many important ascents, culminating in the Aiguilles d'Arves. But his youthful friendship with one of the most attractive figures among Piedmontese guides, Antonio Castagneri of Balme, his fortunate association with the Valtournanche guides, notably the Maquignaz and, perhaps above all, the fatal accident which robbed him of his younger brother, near the Col du Géant, deterred Rey from guideless climbing. He was, indeed, more or less opposed to it during the remainder of his life.

Years later it was Rey's sad lot to write an affectionate commemoration of that same Castagneri who had been the companion and inspirer of the first brave mountaineers in many—for those days—great exploits (46 first ascents). That was the springtime of mountaineering in Italy. Castagneri's tragic end on Mt. Blanc, together with that of

¹ Through the courtesy of the Marchese Antinori.—*Editor.*



GUIDO REY.

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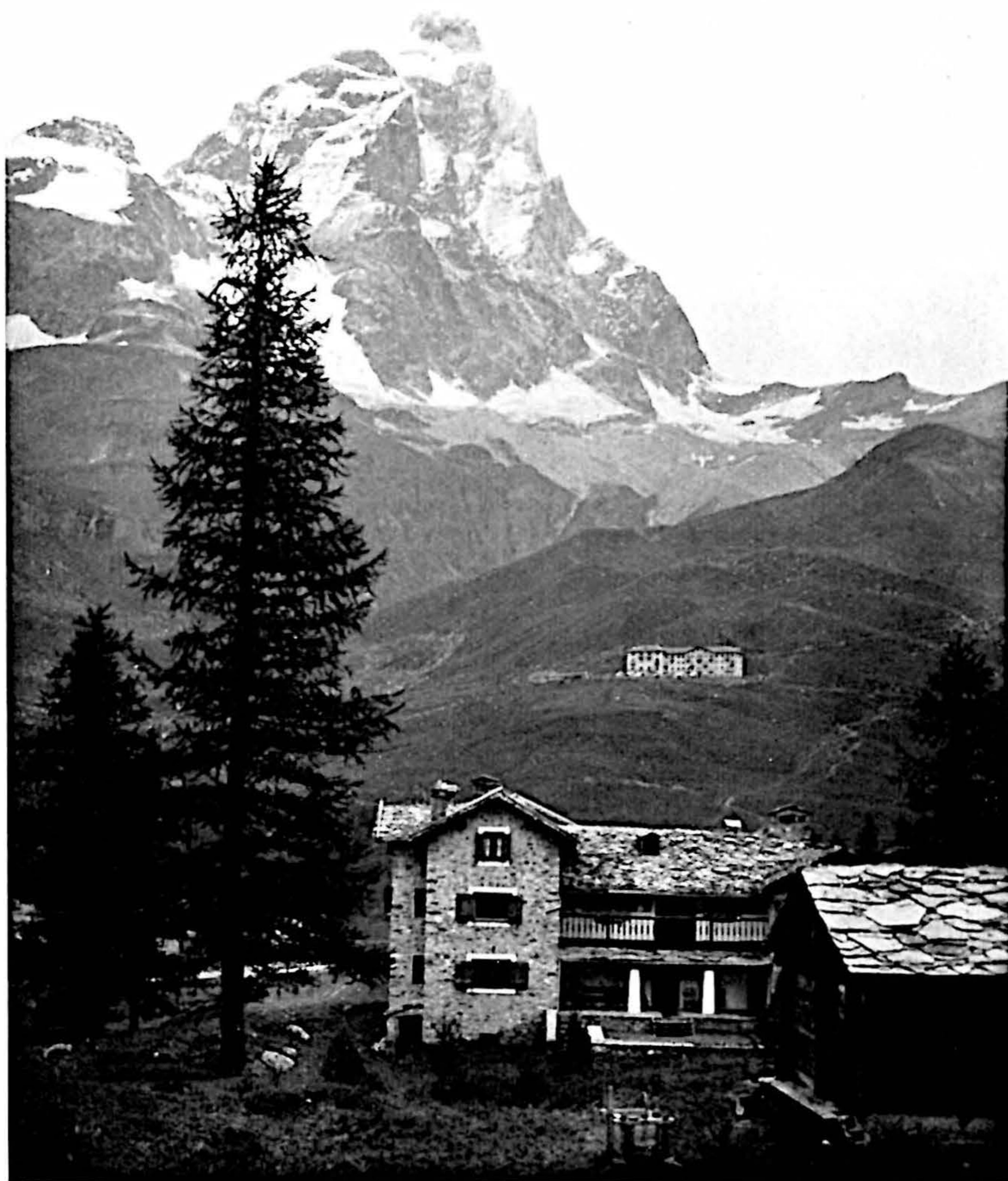
old Maquignaz, both acting as guides to the Conte di Villanova (no trace of them was ever found) and, a few days later, the heroic death of Jean Antoine Carrel—*Il Bersagliere*—at the rocky base of the Matterhorn ('Carrel n'est pas tombé, il est mort'), caused a widespread impression, and it may not be inopportune, after the passing of almost half a century, to recall the feelings then raised, and which led to a fuller and truer consideration of mountaineering. Rey then wrote—as we might well write to-day: 'It is important to affirm and prove, that we go to the mountains to live and not to die, that we are not fanatics, but firm believers, and that the few accidents which occur are hard but not useless lessons.' He further admonishes us that 'the school of mountaineering should be lengthy and not precipitate; some accidents would be avoided if climbers with little experience made their first attempts on the easier mountains, before setting out to climb the highest peaks,' so that 'those laborious days of singular fullness, which seem to last but a few hours, tire you out for a week and leave their memory for many years,' may be really and solely full of pleasure. Because 'there is in mountaineering something more than a vain ambition to climb difficult peaks, there is *soul*.'

For many years Rey devoted his energies to the inner life of the Italian Alpine Club. He was elected an ordinary member of the A.C. in 1891 and an honorary member in 1920.

At the outbreak of the great war, full of vigour, notwithstanding his mature years, he enrolled as a volunteer and did his share in the most advanced positions. His activities were cut short by a serious road accident, the painful consequences of which compelled him later to give up mountaineering and accompanied him to his grave. He passed away in Turin on June 24, 1935.

He built himself a pretty villa at Breuil, facing the Matterhorn, and there he spent his summers, in contemplation of 'the most noble cliff,' and in peaceful colloquy with his beloved mountains. There the best mountaineers, the simple and the strong, gathered in comradeship, and, indeed, there was a welcome for all who visited that peaceful valley with a heart capable of comprehending the beauty and history of the mountains. Rey would spend hours on end at his telescope, viewing at close quarters the ridges and precipices which he had climbed in his youth. If he knew of, or chanced to discover, a party of climbers at work, he was seized by a solicitous interest, almost an affectionate anxiety, which he was at pains to dissimulate. He was none too pleased with the opening of the new motor-road to Breuil, as he feared that the advent of motors and fashionable hotel life would taint the pure atmosphere of the Matterhorn.

Rey was certainly a great mountaineer, both as regards the number of peaks climbed and his numerous other Alpine enterprises. He had the best physical qualities, strength, staying power and elasticity, combined with the technique of mountaineering and an intimate knowledge of the mountains. He may be said to have been the companion of the greatest Italian climbers of his time, the valiant Fiorio



IL CERVINO : LA VILLA REY.

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CERVINO. CRESTA DI FURGEN.

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and Ratti, and that master of mountaineering and mountain science, Luigi Vaccarone.

Nevertheless, the name and work of Guido Rey will be associated chiefly with his writings, in which his personality and delicate sensitiveness are combined with such artistic worth, as to ensure for him a place among the greatest writers on mountaineering.

In the early volumes of the *Rivista Alpina Italiana*, and, later, in the better known *Rivista Mensile* of the C.A.I., we find articles by Rey. There is the description of the first ascent of the Ciamarella from the S. side and the ascent of the Bessanese by the N. ridge. Then came his first experiences of 'l'alta montagna,' beginning with Monte Rosa, which is visible from Turin as a mighty, haunted castle rising from the plain, and for which Rey conceived and nurtured a life-long love. There is an account of the first ascent of the Lyskamm by the S. arête, which he accomplished together with Alessandro and Corradino Sella, and which opened a new route, avoiding the only too famous corniches of the E. arête. We have a description of his ascent of the Dufourspitze by the S. buttress, still known in Italy and Great Britain as the *Crestone Rey*, and which facilitated access to Monte Rosa, especially for Italians coming from the Lysjoch. These are but simple, accurate accounts made during his years of youthful enthusiasm.

Two of Rey's writings, published in the *Rivista*, deserve special mention. One relates his attempts to conquer the Furggen ridge of the Matterhorn. These were much discussed at the time, but were quite forgotten after the definite success gained by Mario Piacenza and the famous direct *descent* by Blanchet. The other is a brilliant and lengthy controversial article which he wrote in conjunction with his friends Fiorio and Ratti, referring to the Aiguilles d'Arves, in which the three young Piedmontese cross swords with a great and well-known mountaineer from across the ocean who, notwithstanding his vast experience and great authority, on *that* occasion laid himself open to attack! The article was couched in courteous terms, but was as keen and destructive as a steel blade.

Rey published two volumes, *Famiglia Alpinistica* and *Alpinismo a quattro mani* in collaboration with his Turin friend Saragat (anagrammed into Toga Rasa), a light and breezy writer. The chapters by Rey are full of sentimental love for the mountains; those by Saragat overflow with gaiety, humour and occasional naïveté. We may here mention another volume, published many years later, entitled *Il tempo che torna*. These volumes were widely read, and contributed to make known Rey's gentle and ardent spirit. They include lectures and articles which had previously appeared in the *Bollettino* of the C.A.I. In the latter series, which contains so much of the best Italian Alpine literature, we find an early article by Rey and Alessandro Sella on a brief expedition in Dauphiné, and, in the same volume, a study on Monte Viso, with the description of a new route by the E. slope. Both articles, written in classical style, are accurate in all topographical and historical references. The Monte Viso was

the subject of a further dispute with the Rev. W. A. B. Coolidge, who spared neither ink nor paper. Rey, however, was able to entrench himself strongly behind facts and common sense and to demonstrate, to all who had any familiarity with the mountain and with the point in question, that his judgment had been correct, whilst in no way detracting from, or indeed trespassing on the work of the great American mountaineer. Topography made and makes it quite clear that Rey's investigations had no connection with those of Coolidge.

In the same periodical Rey, together with Fiorio and Ratti, had published an article on the Aiguilles d'Arves, which had given rise to the other contention, previously mentioned. It was an exhaustive article on those three proud sisters. Rey described the southernmost Aiguille on which, as leading man of the guideless party, he successfully tackled the famous *Cascade pétrifiée*, thus proving his capacity in the technique of a climb which, in those days of 1889, was considered one of the most difficult.

Italian mountaineering would undoubtedly have gained many laurels, had the association of these three Piedmontese continued. They may be said to have been complete mountaineers in the highest sense, comprising mountain technique, culture and sentiment. But, as we have said, Rey, having brilliantly proved his capacity, abandoned guideless work. His business prevented him from being ready at any moment to undertake the more difficult tests.

His companions, Fiorio and Ratti, as the result of the experience gained, published *I pericoli dell' alpinismo, e norme per evitarli*, in reply to the resolution passed by the International Alpine Congress, held in Turin in 1885, that: 'Every Alpine Society should print, in its own language, publications on the precautions necessary in order to avoid accidents in mountain ascents.' The Italian volume will bear comparison with the contemporary well-known work of Zsigmondy. For many years Ratti edited the C.A.I. publications. Fiorio continued his mountaineering activities with ardour, until a supreme test put an end to them for the rest of his life. During the whole of a December night, on the Punta Gnifetti, within a few dozen yards of the Capanna Regina Margherita, Fiorio remained by the side of a young climber seized with a sudden and mortal illness, and he, himself, lost both his feet.

In the *Bollettino* Rey published a long article on the Sesia watershed of Monte Rosa and, later, an account of the first ascent of the Colle Gnifetti from Macugnaga, in which he and Vaccarone were guided by Mattias Zurbriggen. He also wrote a fine description of the various attempts, crowned with final success, to reach the Punta Bianca in the Tiefenmatten ridge.

In these studies, Rey, without losing sight of the objective and historical accuracy of a mountaineer, displays a wealth of subjective qualities, which as they attain maturity and perfection in his later writings, contribute to make of him one of the greatest writers on mountaineering. His humanistic culture, his intimate knowledge of Dante and of the Latin and English poets, in the original languages,

of the Bible but, above all, his innate, profound sense of the beautiful, his desire for spiritual uplift, may well be said to have made of Guido Rey a great mountaineer first, and a great writer next.

Two further publications by Rey appearing in the *Bollettino* are worthy of mention. A lengthy commemoration of Luigi Vaccarone, dictated by the great affection which bound him to his colleague and teacher of mountaineering, and by his admiration for him as the patient, untiring and brilliant student of ancient records, who, with his learning and enthusiasm, succeeded in reviving the century-old echoes of the valleys and castles and passes of the Western Alps. Much of all that is best in Italian climbing is reflected in this article of Rey's. As indeed much of what is best in mountaineering, as a physical exercise and as school for the spirit, is reflected in that serio-comic production of Rey's *On the death of Tartarin*, which may be looked upon as one of his best creations and, after forty years, is still fascinating, with its expressed faith that 'mountaineering will never die, because it responds to a physical and intellectual necessity.'

Rey's Opus Magnum appeared in 1904 in the form of *Il Monte Cervino*, a volume artistically illustrated by his friend the sculptor, Eduardo Rubino, now a senator. Space forbids a detailed analysis of this volume, which a well-known Italian writer, not a mountaineer, has described as 'the outcome of an ardent love and a long experience, the intellectual fruit of a man's whole life.' Probably few books have been so unanimously acclaimed as this volume of Rey's. The first three chapters are, and always will be, of interest to every reader, both for their style as for the intimate knowledge displayed in dealing with the historical part of the subject. The correspondence between Felice Giordano and Quintino Sella, written during the last period of strenuous competition around the famous peak, constitutes a precious document and is worthy of our gratitude. In the remaining chapters 'we discover in Rey the mountaineer, the poet, the painter, the thinker, the citizen, a heart open to every delicate sentiment, a mind inquiring into every science, an observer who, from the mountain side, sees far away and round about him and within himself many things which few others see, and on which he enriches his own intellect and then fills with light and life the minds of those about him' (De Amicis).

We find ourselves instinctively comparing the two great writers on the Matterhorn, Whymper and Rey. In the Italian volume we have a sincere admiration for the successful Englishman, an admiration coupled with a sense of fellow-feeling, clearly discernible in the incident when the two great climbers met near the Théodule Pass, each unknown to the other. Whymper undoubtedly surpassed Rey as mountaineer, chiefly on account of his dogged perseverance: British tenacity had a worthy representative in the conqueror of the Matterhorn, and the famous book published by Whymper is animated by the same stubborn spirit. Rey's book is pervaded by a burning affection, an affection born of experience, for the valleys and their people, for the great mountain, for the successful as well as the unsuccessful climbers, so

that, like Whymper's book, it is of interest to all mountaineers ; but, with its human poetical vein, it speaks to the heart even of the general reader far removed from mountains. Possibly this book, dedicated to the most magnificent and famous peak of the Alps, is the one which has met with the greatest comprehension and popularity, both within and *without* the ranks of mountaineers.

Ten years later Rey published another volume, *Alpinismo Acrobatico*. Between 1904 and 1912 he had been attracted to modern climbing on the Chamonix Aiguilles and on the arid precipices of the Dolomites. In this book he collected his experiences, after having described them in a memorable series of lectures in the principal towns of Italy and France. In the winter 1913-14 young and old became thoughtful as they listened to his heartfelt allusions to the mountains on the eastern border of his country : a few months later came the European tragedy. The last words of his last book are a profession of his life-long love : ' . . . as I have ever faced the mountains, humbly and sincerely, and as I have enjoyed them to the last day with all the fervour of my soul. Because I believed, and still believe, that the struggle with the Alps is useful as work, noble as an art, beautiful as a faith.'

The fact that Rey's works have been translated into various languages must have given him great satisfaction. A translation into French of *Il Cervino* by his cousin Mme. Espinasse Mongenet, and a translation into the same language of his *Alpinismo Acrobatico* and some minor writings, in which Commandant Gaillard displays his excellent qualities as a mountaineer, a writer and a good friend of Rey's, have been the source of great pleasure both to Rey himself and to his many readers.

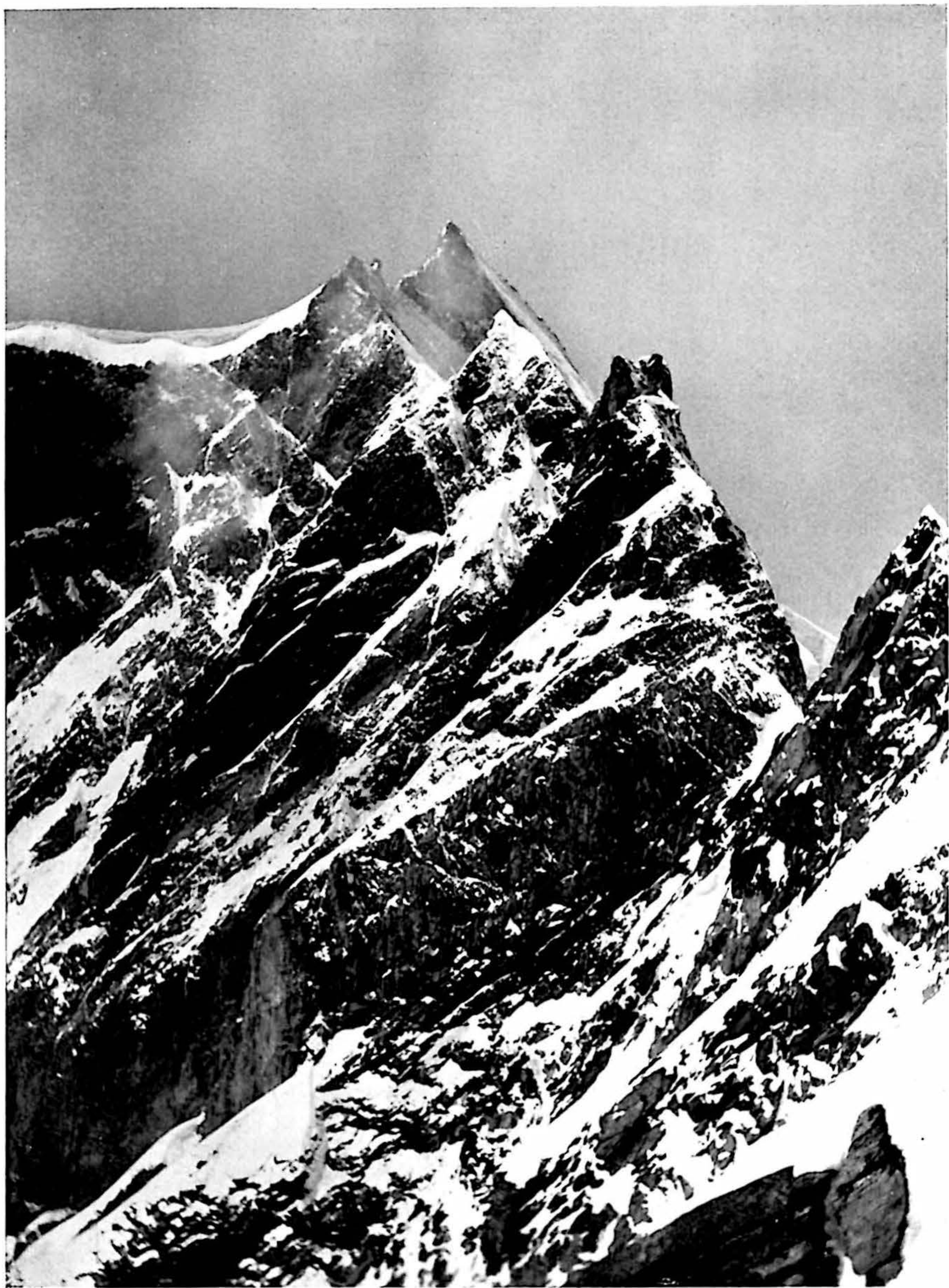
A German translation was also widely read. The brilliant translation of his two chief works by Mr. Eaton,² making them accessible to English readers, must have been especially appreciated by Guido Rey, as he always expressed the very highest esteem for British mountaineers and their achievements, of whom he had read much ; it might indeed be said that he was familiar with the whole of British literature.³ Typically Italian himself, he was always attracted greatly towards the British character, as is clearly manifest in his writings.

A few months before Rey's death, it was the writer's good fortune to be present at a special gathering when a large delegation of the C.A.F., including the president M. Sarraz-Bournet, and many district presidents and representatives from all parts of France came to Turin to present him with the decoration of the Légion d'Honneur, conferred on him by the Minister, M. Barthou. The affectionate devotion of his Alpine friends and their great appreciation of him as a mountaineering writer were very much in evidence.

ALFREDO CORTI.

² *The Matterhorn* : Fisher Unwin, 1907. *Peaks and Precipices* : Fisher Unwin, 1914.

³ It is an honour for the JOURNAL that Guido Rey has written of it as ' the Holy-Book of mountaineering literature.'—*Editor*.



LA PUNTA BIANCA.

[To face p. 154.]



VILLA REY.

[To face p. 155.]

It is sad to think that the little village of Breuil may not know again the beloved presence of our late friend. It had been his habit for many years past to leave his home in Turin and spend the summer months at his villa on the edge of the larch-woods above the village, and facing the southern precipices of his own 'Cervino.' Seated on the terrace of his villa he could look across the Val Tournanche with its humble chalets, coursing streams and waterfalls, to the slopes where the last Italian shepherds tend their flocks and lie, pipe in mouth, upon the sunlit grass; and thence far upwards to the giant bastions and pinnacles of the Central Pennines.

For some years past it had been my habit when at Zermatt, and when time and climbing conditions permitted, to cross over to Breuil and visit Guido Rey upon that classic ground. I came to know him through a chance circumstance. For the benefit of my friends I had written a pamphlet describing with well-grounded and overflowing enthusiasm, an early climb of mine. Someone had sent a copy of this innocent publication to Vittorio Sella, who had forwarded it to his cousin, Guido Rey. Our sins find us out and so do our pamphlets, but in this case I was rewarded! It must have been my enthusiasm, my innocent raptures, rather than any contribution of mine to knowledge, which led him to write and thank me; and this was the beginning of our friendship. For Rey enjoyed and encouraged the enthusiasm of *all* lovers of the hills and mountains. With his large heart he would listen with sympathy and understanding to the simple story of village lads who had scrambled far up on the adjacent rocky slopes. I was sitting with him one day on the flower-decked terrace, when we beheld a group of young people carrying a banner and winding their way up through the meadows to the garden gate. They proved to be a group of eighteen students and young climbers from the Trentino. Out of gratitude for his patriotism, and for his services to mountaineering, they bore with them an oil painting and a bronze medal for our host. Presentations took place, Italian songs were sung, and tea was served upon the grass amid scenery as noble as the eye can wish to rest upon. My friend was nearly overcome as song followed song under the pure Italian sky. I shall never forget that scene—so typical of the contacts he was so fond of making with the youth of Northern Italy—enthusing them with something of his own ever-youthful love of the mountains. As one of his nearest relatives writes: 'Often in the evening he reunited in the large old kitchen, guides and shepherds and joined in their simple talks about ancient legends and arduous enterprises. Other times one could hear the simple voices singing the characteristic songs of the mountains and in contrast he opened for them the gramophone with melodies of great authors and operas, and often the children, astonished, hid their little heads in their mother's lap, believing it was a magic box.'

Guido Rey had a constant helper and companion—his one-time guide, Maquignaz. One could see the latter waiting for his master's call: consulted on all points of local meaning and interest. Whose

tent was that, far up on the mountain side? Had he noticed the early clouds on the Pic Tyndall? Would the climbers at the Jumeaux inn care to come up and take coffee with him? (and so forth). A visit to the villa was an event apart, and ever to be treasured as a memory of travel.

Guido Rey, as all his readers know, brought a very delicate charm and *sensibilité* into his writings, and these qualities were present in all his correspondence. Even his shortest note conveyed much of the man himself. He loved our British Alpine classics. I always felt that his chief favourite was Leslie Stephen. Darkness used to fall early in the Val Tournanche at the season of my visits. He would light a large oil lamp in the *salon* and bring down books, and I can see him now, his face lighted up with this passage or with that, as he read from the 'pioneers.' His happiest times were when members of his family would join him from Turin: his beloved sister and her husband, General Bellotti, his favourite niece Elena and her favourite dog—with friends and other visitors. During summer visits to Breuil in search of pure Alpine air, the Duke of the Abruzzi would come down from the Jomein and spend hours on the peaceful terrace with his friend. Here was indeed a spiritual home. And overshadowing all and never far-distant from one's thoughts and dreams was the glorious presence of the Matterhorn with its slowly drifting clouds, ever changing in the summer light, or bathed and beautified by moonlight and the crisp dazzle of the stars.

One does not need many friends, but when a friend departs, life changes; and what was once a focus of happiest experience becomes overshadowed with the sadness of farewell. Thus for those who knew and loved him in the noontide of his Alpine life, in the serenity of his later years, or in the long days of his declining strength, Breuil can never again be the Breuil that we have known.

W. B.

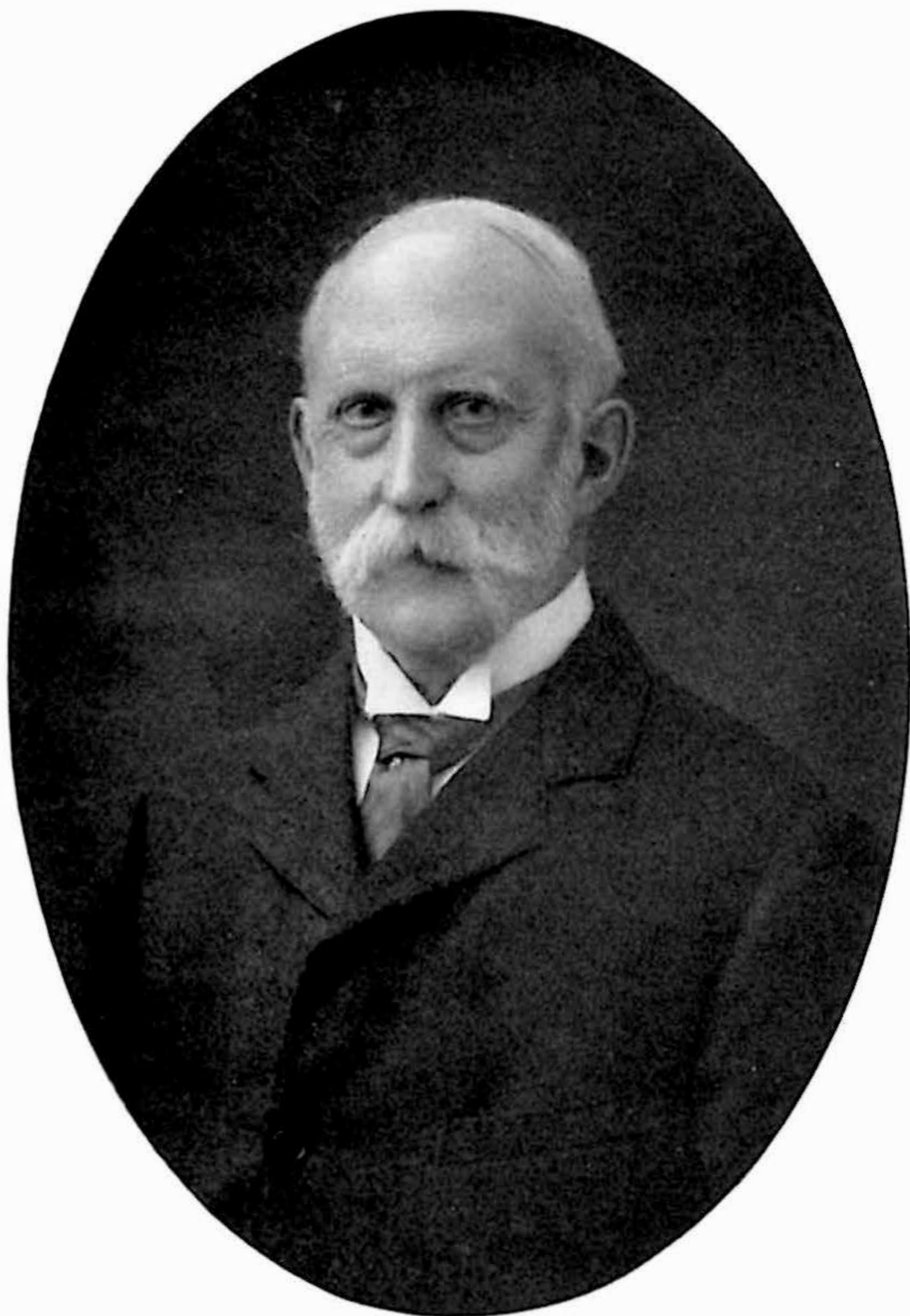
HENRY COCKBURN

1848-1936

HENRY COCKBURN, one of the oldest members of the Club—elected in 1883—died on January 14. He was a grandson of the famous Scotch judge, Henry Lord Cockburn, and was born in Edinburgh on June 29, 1848. He soon made his mark in life assurance, becoming life manager and actuary in London of the North British and Mercantile Insurance Company. He retired in 1913.

To the Alpine Club and mountaineering in general, Cockburn rendered great services. He served on the Committee in 1894 and was Librarian from 1894-1906. The Library and especially its catalogue owe much to his unremitting care and attention.¹ He was an original member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club.

¹ *A.J.* 20. 35.



HENRY COCKBURN.
1848-1935.

Cockburn's list of climbs when elected to the Club was an unusually long one for the early 'eighties; it comprises: Monte Rosa, Strahlhorn, Breithorn, Matterhorn, Zinal-Rothhorn, Weisshorn, Taeschhorn, Rimpfischhorn, Aiguille du Midi, Grivola, Jungfrau, Eiger, Wetterhorn, Finsteraarhorn, Piz Morteratsch, Chamonix-Zermatt 'high level,' Castor and Pollux, etc., Schreckhorn, Gspaltenhorn. Among passes can be noted: Col Durand, Adler Pass, Alphubeljoch, Jungfrau-joch, Oberaarjoch, Triftjoch, Col du Géant, Col des Hirondelles, Schmadrijoch, etc. Henri Dévouassoud of Chamonix appears to have been his usual guide, while among his friends and climbing companions were the late J. H. W. Rolland, Arthur Woods, C. W. Mead, George Byron, Arnold Mumm, H. Seymour Hoare, Sir Edward Davidson and Claude Wilson, G. F. Woodroffe and Sir George Barnes.

I am permitted to quote from a letter of Cockburn's to Arthur Woods as an interesting retrospect on mountaineering from a great centre in the 'eighties.

Hôtel de l'Ours,
Kandersteg,
August 26, 1884.

' . . . I have spent a week at the Bär, Grindelwald, and a week at Mürren. . . . There were a great many people at the old Bär, some very nice ones, ladies included, and a good many of the Faithful, *i.e.* climbists, most of them A.C. fellows. Davidson, the A.C. Secretary, Graham of Himalayan renown and several you saw last year at Zermatt. One day we went a large picnic to the Zäsenberg, returning by the glacier, down which eight A.C. gentlemen succeeded in getting four young ladies in safety. Then I managed to get up Schreckhorn. It is stiffish and a very *straight up* hillock. Some stones came rather near our heads and we escaped the pleasure of a snow avalanche in the afternoon by about half a minute. But all's well that ends well. And I did the Mönch from the Bergli. We ascended half of it by moonlight. It was easy, short and very nice, and we were at the Bär by 1.30 P.M. At the Bergli I found two fellows and your little Peter [Baumann]. He was glad to see me and begged me to tell you that he wanted you next year! They all did the Mönch with us. We danced in the evening at the Bär. There had been a row about using the smoking room for Choir practice on Saturday night, and the result, that two factions existed in the hotel, not speaking to the other. So in the evenings one set (mine, the best and largest!), danced in the dining room, the other in the smoking room. Most absurd.

' A number of our Bär party, ladies and men, were going to Mürren, so I went too. One day we all did the mighty Schilthorn and gave the girls a good glissade down. Then I and a man, the Rev. Govett, A.C., went out for the Gspaltenhorn. Owing to fresh snow and ice on it, and the rottenness of the rocks, it proved the most difficult thing I have ever done. We were watched with interest through the Mürren telescopes. Our guides were H. Dévouassoud and Aloys Burgener. We were off the peak at 4 P.M., but it then began to rain and in the mist

we lost the track, which ran on the other side of the range from Mürren. To make a long story short, we arrived at the hotel at 9.30 P.M., after 5½ hours of pouring rain, having met two men who were sent with lanterns to look for us.

'Ours was the 5th ascent or so. The whole hotel were on the *qui vive*, and turned out, and gave us a reception such as I never had before! Nice, moist spectacles we were. I came here from Mürren *via* the Schmadrijoch (not too easy)² and the Petersgrat (from Ried); and am hoping to try the Blümlisalp. It is, however, raining hard this morning.

'The family Boss were all in good form and very attentive. . . . Oakley Maund is there. He had a bad operation and is there recruiting. He can't walk yet and lies on a mattress in the garden, poor chap. He has his brother George and a servant with him. Mürren is charming and we were very gay. Owing to the attractions of the society generally, I haven't worked quite so hard at the mountains this year, but still I have done a little. Our guides of last year, old Peter Baumann and Jossi, were away from home, and I did not see them. I heard of some good sized evening parties at the Concordia—over 20!! Kandersteg seems a nice place to stay a day or two. I am now on my way home. . . .'

A very charming man with many and varied interests besides mountaineering—Cockburn was a keen golfer until quite recently—he devoted much time to charities, notably to the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families' Association, the Chelsea Hospital for Women, and the Invalid Children's Aid Association. During the war years he worked ceaselessly for the Red Cross and for the cause of British prisoners. Cockburn married the daughter of the late Canon W. Chetwynd-Stapylton,³ well-known to many old members of the Club at the Riffel Alp and elsewhere. Mrs. Cockburn and her three sons survive their father, and to them is extended the deep sympathy of the Alpine Club.

Henry Cockburn was until recently a well-known and popular figure at all General Meetings of the Club. It may be safely said of him that he is mourned by a host of friends and throughout his life never made an enemy. As a mountaineer his career was a long one, and it was no less distinguished than his public and private life.

G. F. W.

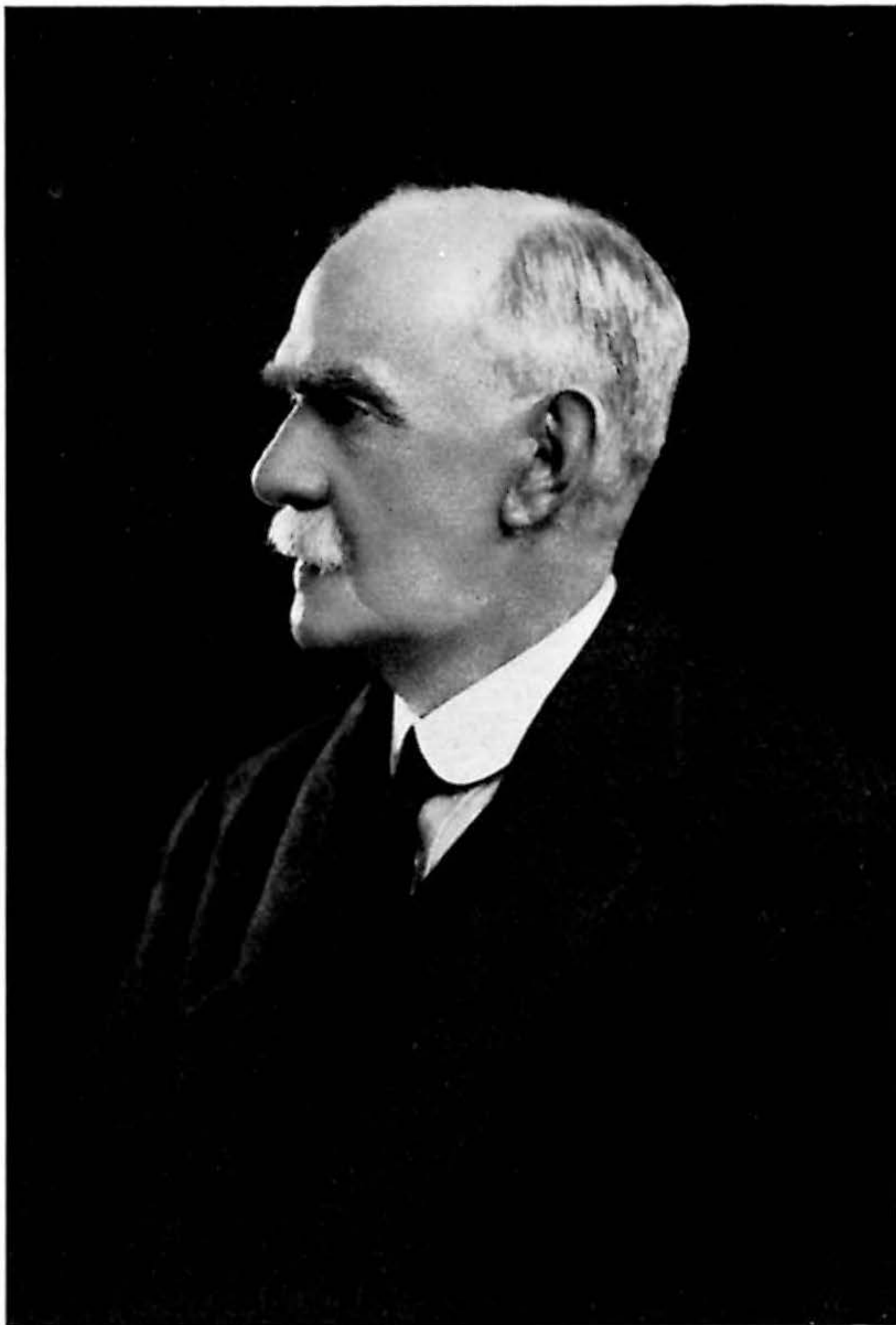
RICHARD TETLEY GLAZEBROOK

1854-1935

THE long and distinguished scientific career of Sir Richard Glazebrook, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., F.R.S., who passed suddenly and peacefully away at his home in Surrey on Sunday, December 15, 1935, had for its starting-point a high place in the Cambridge Mathematical Tripos,

² *A.J.* 36. 88-9. Cockburn's guides were Henri Dévouassoud and H. von Almen.

³ *Mumm* iii, p. 291.



RICHARD T. GLAZEBROOK.

1854-1935.

followed at once by those experimental investigations in optics at the Cavendish Laboratory under the inspiration of Professor Clerk Maxwell which soon obtained for him his Fellowship at Trinity College and five years later the Fellowship of the Royal Society. After Maxwell's death and the succession of Lord Rayleigh to the Professorship, Glazebrook was appointed in 1880 one of the two senior demonstrators at the Cavendish Laboratory and for eighteen years took a leading part in the organization, development and exposition of methods for the teaching of Physics to all grades of students in the University, work which ultimately became very heavy owing to the rapid growth alike of the subject and of the numbers studying it. In this connection the names of Glazebrook and Shaw became household words to every English-speaking teacher of physical science throughout the world.

The routine duties of his demonstratorship and of the College Lectureship which he held concurrently with it were not allowed by Glazebrook to dull the edge of his keenness for original investigation. As might be expected from a pupil of Maxwell, he was greatly interested in the so-called 'absolute' system of electrical units which had been recommended under the joint guidance of that great physicist and Lord Kelvin by the British Association as suitable for international adoption, and he soon became an important member of that band of accurate experimenters who in various countries were undertaking the refined measurements involved in the adaption of this system to the everyday needs of the community. Further, in 1883 Glazebrook was appointed Secretary of the British Association Committee on Electrical Standards and in that capacity not only undertook the guardianship and systematic verification of the material standards constructed so as to represent their 'absolute' values, but also the comparison with these standards of the components of electrical apparatus submitted to him by manufacturers and other workers to whom accuracy was a primary necessity. Side by side with these activities, Glazebrook was building up in Cambridge a reputation as a man of affairs no less than as a man of science; he was appointed Senior Bursar of his College, and was prominent in many departments of general University administration; thus it came about that when in 1898 the Principalship of University College, Liverpool, became vacant the College Council invited him to occupy that office. The invitation was accepted, but with the proviso that he should be free to transfer himself, if requested, to a uniquely appropriate position whose early establishment was then in contemplation. For this position, the Directorship of a projected National Physical Laboratory, Glazebrook was selected a year later, and this marked the beginning of what he must have felt to be the real work of his life. The site, the buildings, the equipment, the staff, all had to be considered and to be provided, and the confidence and co-operation of manufacturers, engineers, and all other industrialists, designers and investigators to whom such a Laboratory could render service had to be secured. For such heavy responsibilities Glazebrook was alike by training and by temperament admirably fitted and under his direction the Laboratory grew from its modest inception to a great

Scientific Institute, continually occupying and fruitfully cultivating ever new fields of work. Naval architecture, aeronautics, wireless telegraphy, acoustics of buildings, radiology, all received hospitality, as well as the growing number of standards for all kinds of physical quantities. During the war, also, the Laboratory gave valuable help to the Ministry of Munitions through its facilities for and experience in accurate measurement. When in 1919 Glazebrook retired from its Directorship under the age limit he had the satisfaction of leaving it with its staff increased twenty-fold, its buildings transformed from a single adapted house to a great range of scientifically designed workshops and its reputation, both at home and abroad, finely and firmly established.

Glazebrook's retirement from the Laboratory, however, by no means withdrew him from the service of Applied Physics. He had already held for ten years the Chairmanship of the Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, and he now accepted a two years' appointment as Zaharoff professor and director of the department of Aeronautics in the Imperial College of Science and Technology, so that this new venture might enjoy the benefit of his experience. Throughout his career he had been a very active member of a large number of scientific commissions and committees and this kind of work he never laid down. He was peculiarly skilled in the diplomatic management of such bodies and as Chairman of an international commission on symbols, units and nomenclature was occupied up to the day of his death in trying to compass mutual comprehension and agreement in the face of rather intractable differences of outlook and practice.

Glazebrook was knighted in 1917, became K.C.B. in 1920 and K.C.V.O. in 1934. He held the Hughes medal and the Royal medal of the Royal Society, whose foreign secretary he was for three years, and he was an honorary graduate of Oxford, Edinburgh, Heidelberg and Manchester. He married Frances Gertrude, daughter of the late J. W. Atkinson of Leeds. They celebrated their golden wedding in June 1933 and Lady Glazebrook, with their son and three daughters, survives him.

Glazebrook paid his first visit to Switzerland in 1890, ascending the Rimpfischhorn as his introduction to mountaineering. During the twenty-three years which preceded the outbreak of the war, he returned seventeen times, in the companionship sometimes of G. E. Wherry, whom he knew well in Cambridge, but far more frequently of T. C. Fitzpatrick, at first a pupil, later a colleague and subsequently President of Queens' College, Cambridge. In the notes jotted down during a few of their holidays the Pigne d'Arolla, Riffelhorn by the Matterhorn couloir, Zinal-Rothorn, Obergabelhorn and Matterhorn appear among their climbs together, and in the first three weeks of September 1895 they did the Taeschhorn, Weisshorn and Grand Dru, the high-level route from Zermatt to Argentière and, as shorter expeditions, the Glacier du Géant icefall, Gorner icefall, Furgggrat, Stockhorn traverse and Riffelhorn from the glacier.

Glazebrook became a member of the Alpine Club in 1899, Fitzpatrick a year later, and their associated ascents, of which further details are unfortunately lacking, continued until 1913.

When Fitzpatrick died in 1931, Glazebrook wrote the following account of their companionship: 'Some 45 years ago he met me by chance in Switzerland and his first words were: "You have taught me physics for the past three years, I am going to teach you to climb mountains." For the next 20 years or so we met nearly every year and climbed usually in the district between Arolla and Saas Fee, sometimes wandering as far as Chamonix. On many of these occasions he brought with him as his guests one or more of his undergraduate pupils. He loved the mountains, he would teach others to love them, and he succeeded; occasionally a novice was somewhat overpowered by the activity of his tutor. Fitzpatrick was a good mountaineer, especially on rocks, very quick and very active, and an inexperienced man found it difficult at times to follow in the footsteps of his guide or to share his enthusiasm for a long expedition every day, sometimes without much regard for the weather. There are many, I am sure, who are grateful to him for their introduction to the Alps and for a wonderful holiday, impossible at the time but for his generous help.'

After 1920, when Swiss holidays once more became possible, Glazebrook revisited the Riffel Alp some eight or ten times, but had then become satisfied merely to take part in unambitious scrambles and glacier excursions, on which he was a most informing and delightful companion. His earliest attitude towards the mountains had been that of love at first sight and as knowledge increased his affection had become ever deeper and deeper. Among them he had been content to serve as a follower rather than as a pioneer, thinking of the mountains not in terms of his effect on them but of their effect on him and gaining from them alike the stimulus and the solace of a prolonged, busy and fruitful life.

L. R. W.

WILLIAM C. COMPTON

1854-1936

WILLIAM COOKWORTHY COMPTON was born on June 23, 1854, and died on January 3, 1936. He had been a member of the Club for over forty years, having been elected in 1895. He was placed on the Committee in 1917, and he contributed several articles to the ALPINE JOURNAL.

Born of Quaker stock, he was the younger brother of Edward Compton, the well-known mountain painter, and was educated partly abroad and partly at a well-known Quaker school at Tottenham. Proceeding to Jesus College, Cambridge, he obtained a First Class in the Classical Tripos and won the Members' University Prize for a Latin essay. On leaving Cambridge he married Alice, daughter of the Rev. Stenning



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Johnson of Chichester, took Holy Orders, and started his career as a schoolmaster.

In 1880 he obtained an appointment under the Rev. Edward Thring at Uppingham, and for eleven years (1881-1892) served as a house-master there. He was then appointed Headmaster of Dover College—a position which he held for eighteen years. On retiring in 1910, he became Rector of Sandhurst, Kent, and ten years later was made Honorary Canon of Canterbury and became the representative of the Province on Convocation. He also acted for twenty years as Secretary of the Canterbury Diocesan Conference, where he worked in close association with the late Archbishop, Randall Davidson.

Compton was a good scholar and loved the classics. In his teaching he always aimed at giving new life to the stories of Greece and Rome, and this led him to produce two editions of classical writers, which differed from the ordinary textbook by giving first-hand illustrations of the country described. The first of these editions, *Caesar's Seventh Campaign in Gaul*, was illustrated by a series of charming sketches made by Edward Compton on a tour which the two brothers made in France for the purpose. It was first published in 1889 and ran into seven editions. It was followed by a similar book on *The Athenians in Sicily*, in which the sketches were made by Edward's son, Harrison Compton, also a gifted artist.

The year which saw the issue of this second book (1901) also saw the starting of another of Compton's enterprises—the organization of the schoolmasters' tours in Greece, which led to the establishment of the annual 'Hellenic Cruises.' Two years ago he was presented with his portrait by a number of those who had taken part in the tours, and who, as the inscription on the picture says, 'to his happy inspiration owe many golden memories.'

The Alps, however, were throughout his life his master passion. 'How he loved the mountains!' writes his daughter. 'On the rare occasions when he was ill, he used to surround himself with ALPINE JOURNALS; and his study and bedroom had enlargements of climbing photographs that he had taken himself.'

He was initiated into mountain climbing at an early age; for he was only fifteen when he made his first Alpine ascent (the Titlis). Before he was twenty he had crossed the Neu Weissthor and made the ascent of the Gross Glockner, as well as of other lesser peaks, and the list of the climbs made during the many seasons which he afterwards spent in Switzerland and the Tyrol totals over fifty. Not that he had a passion for adding ever new peaks to his record. He liked to revisit old haunts, and half a dozen of the principal mountains were climbed by him more than once. He was usually content to take a trusted friend and a good guide and to follow some route which others had trodden before him. But on occasion he would climb without a guide, and he can be credited with at least one first ascent, that of the Beichgrat, which he climbed with G. Yeld in 1905.

In his younger days he was a rapid climber, and I have seen a guide experience considerable difficulty in keeping pace with him in the

earlier stages of an ascent. Later on he learnt, I think, the wisdom of not getting up too much pace at first. But he always liked to make an early start and to cover the initial stages of a climb before the sun rose. On one occasion in his early days he started on an ascent of the Jungfrau by moonlight; on descending from the top, the party was faced by a steep wall of ice; the man just below him lost his footing; and it was only Compton's firm grip of the rope that averted a disaster.

All who have climbed with him will agree that he was the most cheery and delightful of companions, and that his energy and spirit never flagged. The series of articles which he has written in the JOURNAL give evidence of the keen delight which he took in every aspect of mountain climbing. He kept his youthful vigour longer than most men, and it was a grief to him when, shortly before the war, a weakness of the heart showed itself and compelled him in later years to content himself with walks in the Alps instead of climbs. He would still, however, occasionally make a minor ascent, and when he was in his seventieth year he succeeded in getting to the top of the Tschingelochthorn, near Kandersteg.

Spare in frame and sure of foot, Compton was equally good on rock or snow. He was not a frequenter of the Lake District, though he did some climbing in Wales. His favourite haunts were the giants of the Valais and the Bernese Oberland, where he could get a combination of rock and snow work and where he could revel in the glorious solitudes of the great Alpine ranges. He was a skilful photographer, and his articles in the JOURNAL were illustrated by admirable views from his camera.

For the last few years of his life Canon Compton knew that at any moment his heart might suddenly give way. But he refused to be treated as an invalid and continued to live an active life. At the last 1935 gathering of the Alpine Club, just before Christmas, he seemed to his friends, in spite of his eighty-one years, to be younger and brighter than ever, and he talked of old days with all his usual zest and vigour. But the end was nearer than we thought. On January 3, after a busy day in town, he was travelling by train to his daughter's house, when his heart suddenly stopped and without a struggle he passed away.

The following is a list of the articles which Canon Compton contributed to the JOURNAL:

- Vol. 18. 'Arolla in 1897.'
- Vol. 19. 'Some Expeditions from Ferpècle' (climbs made in 1898).
- Vol. 20. 'At the Back of Titlis and other Places.' Two articles (climbs made in 1899).
- Vol. 22. 'The Finsteraarhorn by the S.E. Ridge' (climb made in 1905).
- Vol. 27. 'The Dent d'Hérens by the W.N.W. Face' (climb made in 1907).
- Vol. 32. 'Note on the Weissthor Ridge.'

B. M. A.

W. W. NAISMITH

1856-1935

WILLIAM W. NAISMITH became a member of the Club in 1894, so that he is likely to be better known by members of that period than by the younger generation of climbers. Up to the time of his sudden death in September 1935, he kept a careful account of his holidays from 1870 onwards. From this list and other writings of his, love of the mountains commenced at a very early period of his life. 'At my father's instigation,' he writes, at the age of 4 years he was led to look on the hills of his native land; and at 9 years of age he ascended Ben Lomond. This early instigation of his father's rapidly expanded into a longing to climb further afield; and when in 1877 he had a trip in the Mediterranean he, for the first time, obtained a glimpse of the Alps from a hill above Turin. In the distance were seen Monte Rosa, Lyskamm, Grand Paradis, Monte Viso, and others. It was not, however, until the summer of 1883 that he visited Switzerland and, by himself, made many minor ascents and crossed passes. He returned to the Alps in 1887, when his real mountaineering career commenced, for he climbed the Rimpfischhorn, Monte Rosa, Dom, Strahlhorn, and other peaks. In 1889 and 1890 he was again in Switzerland making many ascents. In 1891 he was climbing in Norway. He had now qualified himself to become a member of the Alpine Club, and was duly elected in 1894.

In 1889 a marked change came over his pursuit of mountaineering; for he had come to realize how much sport was to be found in his own country, especially in winter and spring. It was in the early part of this year (January) that he wrote a letter to the *Glasgow Herald*, proposing that a local Alpine Club should be formed in Scotland. The suggestion at once took on; and in a short time a properly constituted Club, under the designation of 'The Scottish Mountaineering Club,' became a reality. Having 'fathered' this Club, he more and more threw his interest into it; and, perhaps, for this reason he less frequently visited the Alps. Of his climbs and interest in the S.M.C. I refrain from carrying my remarks any further into his career, for this part of it will be fully recorded in the pages of the Club's JOURNAL by his devoted and constant companion, Gilbert Thomson.

I may, however, add in conclusion a few personal remarks regarding the man himself and his efficiency as a climber. No pleasanter companion on any expedition could be found, for his humility found expression in his profound love of nature in all its varied aspects; the beauty of the valleys and the majesty of the mountains led him to those deeper thoughts of reverence for Him who made them all.

Slight in stature and slim in build, he proved an exceptionally good rock-climber, and was a good example for younger men to emulate. Unlike the Alpine Club, there is a Junior Scottish Mountaineering Club, whose members have to qualify before being admitted to the senior body; it was to these men that Naismith was such a good example. He had perfect faith in his own powers, which occasionally



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led him to make solitary ascents ; as, for instance, when he climbed the Eiger alone, besides two or three other ascents, all undertaken in his earlier days ; attempts which it is unlikely he would have encouraged later in life. Although Naismith may never have taken a prominent place in the Alpine Club, no man was ever more beloved and looked up to by members of the S.M.C. While he could never be persuaded to occupy the presidential chair, he succumbed to the universal desire of being elected the first honorary Vice-President—a post, it may be added, especially created to do him honour.

A. E. M.

WILLIAM GILBERT EDWARDS

1846-1936

By the passing of William Gilbert Edwards at the age of 90, the Club loses one of its oldest and most attached members. Before his election in 1897, although he had not any remarkable expeditions to his credit, he had climbed fairly widely in various districts, and had shown himself an ardent lover of the mountains and appreciative of mountain beauty in all its forms. Although beyond the average in age when most of his climbing was done, he was possessed of unusual activity and powers of endurance, of which, perhaps, the foundations were laid when, as an undergraduate of the House, Oxford, he stroked his college Eight and got his 'blue' for the Three Miles nearly 70 years ago. He was a most congenial and cheerful companion in the mountains, always good-tempered and unselfish.

These qualities endeared him to a large circle of friends in Windsor and Oxford as well as in his quarter of a century in his old parish of Great Haseley, where he followed Canon Ellison as its Rector from a minor canonry of St. George's, Windsor.

Although much crippled by acute arthritis during his later years, he maintained his activities in educational affairs in the Diocese of Oxford, and these were recognised by his receiving an honorary Canonry of Christ Church which he held at the time of his death.

W. W.

ALBERT ERNEST THOMPSON

1883-1935

THAT the ordinary accidents of everyday life are frequently far more dangerous than the supposed perils of mountaineering has been borne out once more by the untimely end of one of our Irish members, Canon A. E. Thompson. It was on December 27 last, while returning from an errand of mercy (he had just visited one of his parishioners who was ill), that he collided with a motor-car and received injuries which ultimately proved fatal. He lingered on in hospital for a little over two weeks and died on January 12. Thompson, who was in the prime of life and a very hard-working and energetic man, had only quite recently become engaged to be married to a young lady who

shared his love of the mountains. Their wedding had been fixed for January 22, and another of our members, John Greeves (of Belfast), was to have been 'best man,' but fate willed it otherwise.

A native of Manorhamilton, County Leitrim, the deceased graduated M.A. at Trinity College, Dublin, afterwards obtaining the degree B.D. He was ordained to the curacy of Anghaval (diocese of Tuam) in 1908, and was appointed curate of Whitehouse (diocese of Connor) in 1911. Two years later he became rector of Clondevaddock. In 1925 he was appointed rector of Drumholm, and two years later he went to Drumachose and Carrick. Canon Thompson was appointed Canon of St. Columb's Cathedral, Londonderry, in 1930, and served on many committees there. He was a most popular clergyman and was greatly loved by all his parishioners.

Thompson was a very strong and rapid climber, and showed remarkable endurance for a man of his years. He climbed for a number of seasons in the Alps (Oberland, Valais, Engadine and other districts) and in the Pyrenees. Besides that he had a wide experience and a very useful knowledge of climbing in his native Ireland. Altogether he truly fulfilled the two essential qualities laid down a number of years ago by Captain J. P. Farrar for members of the Alpine Club, inasmuch as he was indeed a fine fellow and a good man on a mountain. He will be greatly missed by his many friends both in Ireland and in England.

S. DE V. M.

DENIS N. B. HUNT

1905-1935

LIEUT. D. N. B. HUNT was born on October 13, 1905, and was commissioned in the Royal Engineers in September 1925.

One of the most delightful companions, he was far above the average in any form of sport to which he set his mind. He was generally considered one of the finest ocean-sailing skippers in the British Isles. He commanded the Royal Engineers' yacht the *Ilex* on many occasions, including the Fastnet races of 1929 and 1930, the Santander races of those two years and the Transatlantic race of 1931. He was awarded the Royal Humane Society's Medal for life-saving, for a very brave act in the middle of the North Sea during a heavy gale, when he went over the side to save another member of the crew, knowing that his own yacht was unable to pick them up. They were rescued later by a Dutch Pilot boat. He was also a very keen exponent of ski running, and had spent several short periods in Austria. In Chitral he was the life and soul of the ski club. In August 1935, with Captain R. J. Lawder of the Chitral Scouts, he made an attempt on Istor-o-nal, a 24,271 ft. peak in the Hindu Kush, and they reached 24,000 ft. on it. This was his first attempt at mountain climbing.

His tragic drowning in the Chitral River whilst out duck shooting, on October 15, 1935, put an end to a very promising career and deprived many of a perfect friend.

R. J. L.



Photo, Captain Lawder.]

DENNIS HUNT IN CAMP DURING HIS ATTEMPT ON
ISTOR-O-NAL, CHITRAL, IN 1935.

[To face p. 166.