

IN MEMORIAM

ALFRED EDWARD WOODLEY MASON

1865-1948

ALFRED EDWARD WOODLEY MASON, who died in his eighty-third year, on November 22, 1948, will long be remembered as a great and an admitted master of the adventure story in English literature; but those who were privileged to know the man will remember him as one who loved adventure for its own sake and lived what he preached. His was in many ways a rich Elizabethan character, but smoothed and polished by a fine taste in the arts of living and of conversation; and it would not perhaps be far-fetched to draw a parallel between much in the characters, in the lives, and in the works, of A. E. W. Mason and Robert Louis Stevenson—similarities doubtless due at least in part to a common passion for romantic adventure and a common worship of good craftsmanship in writing. Born in 1865, and schooled at Dulwich College, Mason went on to Trinity College, Oxford, which in 1943 gave him its honorary fellowship. At Oxford, Mason was elected President of the Union, and there he was also bitten by stage fever, which did not prevent him from taking an honours degree in classics. But the stage won him over, and on leaving Oxford he joined Sir Frank Benson's theatrical company, with which he toured; later he acted on the London stage and played a minor part in the production of G. B. Shaw's *Arms and the Man*. By this time, however, he had realised that the stage did not offer what he hoped, and for some time Mason occupied himself with political and other work until at last he found his true vocation as a writer of novels.

This came about through his climbing. Mason's first Alpine expedition seems to have been an ascent of the Wetterhorn in 1891, but it is probable that he had gained a more extensive Alpine experience before 1894, when he made five guideless ascents in the Eastern Alps with a couple of friends. Two of these expeditions—the ascents of the Weisse Spitze and of the Glockturm—were described by him in a short article published in the *Temple Bar* magazine in March 1895. During these same years Mason had taken, with his usual thoroughness, to rock climbing in the English Lake District, where he had become familiar with the then standard climbs, and he used climbing as the topic, and the Lake District as the scene, of his first novel: *A Romance of Wastdale*—a story of love rivalry with an ingenious murder in the Mickledore chimney on Scafell—or so the present reviewer seems to remember after last reading the book thirty years ago. This novel was later made the subject of one of the early British films, for which the climbing scenes were said to have been taken on Honister Crag, and the most dramatic feature was the hurling of a dummy from Kern Knotts. The novel itself became popular amongst rock climbers,



A. E. W. MASON.
1865-1948.

although it made no great impression on the general public ; but Mason's next venture, *The Courtship of Morrice Buckler*, brought the wider success and recognition which he never thereafter lost.

Of his climbing we have no further record until 1904, and his habit of making himself carefully familiar with the settings of his stories may have diverted him for a period from the Alps, because he did spend some time in India to study the ground for *The Broken Road*, which was ultimately published in 1907, and it is probable that he gave similar care to *The Four Feathers*, which appeared in 1902. In 1904 he is known to have climbed the Grands Charmoz and the Aiguille d'Argentière, and in the year following he made several ascents in Dauphiné and at Saas-Fee. He is believed to have projected an attempt on the old Brenva route, and to have been turned back by bad weather from a bivouac on the Brenva glacier ; and, if so, the occasion was probably in one or other of these two years when he was planning and then writing *Running Water*.

It was in 1894, when Mason's attention was already occupied by climbing and by the writing of *A Romance of Wastdale*, that the guideless ascent of the old Brenva route by Norman Collie, Geoffrey Hastings, and A. F. Mummery made a great impression on mountaineers ; and Hasting's narrative of the expedition, which appeared in this JOURNAL¹ in November 1895, made a lasting appeal to Mason, as also did the account of the first ascent of the route in A. W. Moore's *The Alps in 1864*, which was published in 1902 by A. B. W. Kennedy (from the original privately printed book), and is one of the most splendidly produced climbing books in our literature. Mason's rock climbing at home had led him to find his true vocation in 1895 ; now, a decade later, he planned another climbing story which was destined to repay his debt by attracting many readers to the Alps. This he wrote in the quiet of a country vicarage, and in the garden of an inn at Fontainebleau ; and the outcome was *Running Water*, which made its first appearance as a serial in the *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, from August 1906 to March 1907, and was published in book form in the latter year. As is well known, the dramatic climax of the book is an ascent of the old Brenva route by ' Garratt Skinner ' and his intended victim—an ascent closely modelled on the respective narratives of Moore and Hastings. Of the more incidental climbing : the ascent of the Aiguille d'Argentière was obviously derived from Mason's personal experience, as was the description of the Chamonix side of the Col des Nantillons ; whilst the traverse of that col and of the Col du Mont Dolent may well have been suggested by those made respectively by Mr. E. A. Broome and Signor Cajrati-Crivelli, both in 1904, a year in which Mason is known to have been on the Nantillons and Argentière glaciers. It was in that same year that Mr. Broome and Lt.-Col. E. L. Strutt made separate attempts on the old Brenva route, both of which were frustrated by bad weather. The climbs of Mason's novel were obviously climbs which had recently attracted his attention in the Alps themselves.

¹ *A. J.*, 17. 537.

Running Water aroused great interest amongst climbers, and especially amongst the British groups which based themselves at Montenvers in these years. The author's own personality was itself an object of curiosity. His name was unknown to what at that time was a relatively small climbing world in the Western Alps, but his book showed close familiarity with the spirit and traditions of mountaineering, with the scenes of action, and even with the peculiarities of well known climbers. Mason had in fact used much unwritten Alpine lore in the drawing of his characters, and especially in that of his villain, 'Garratt Skinner.' As he himself told the present reviewer, the old pioneer 'Mr. Kenyon,' to whom the hero of the novel went for advice in London, was drawn from Leslie Stephen; the photograph in which the villain was identified was suggested by Whymper's engraving in *Scrambles* of 'The Club Room of Zermatt in 1864'; and what we may call the 'superficial' characteristics of 'Garratt Skinner' were derived from various different individuals—whilst the darker side of the villain was his alone, as also was his unfortunate criminal record. But the mosaic of this character offered good opportunity for speculation, and Montenvers was lively with various identifications: 'Skinner's' repeated attempts on one of the Chamonix Aiguilles before he conquered it obviously suggested Clinton Dent and the Aiguille du Grand Dru, whilst his characteristically neat handwriting reminded others of Sir Edward Davidson's; but his long arms, and the physical defect, which nevertheless did not prevent 'Skinner' from moving rapidly, seemed to indicate A. F. Mummery, who was said to have suffered from a malformation of the back which did not allow him to carry a heavy sack, and who had, of course, made the famous guideless ascent of the old Brenva route—a climb to which 'Skinner's' thoughts repeatedly returned in the novel.

With *Running Water* launched on its career, Mason entered politics in 1906, when he was elected Member of Parliament for Coventry in the Liberal interest, but he did not seek re-election in 1910. During these five summers he climbed vigorously in the Alps, having Joseph Lochmatter as his guide in 1908 and 1909, and our fragmentary knowledge of his Alpine career ends in 1910 with a new variation on the South face and E. arête of the Weisshorn.

When war broke out in 1914, Mason was in his fiftieth year, but he at once joined the forces as a Captain in the Manchester Regiment, was transferred to the R.M.L.I. with the rank of Major, and finally served as a naval intelligence officer. After that war, Mason returned to his literary work with a calm and steady flow of well spaced novels. The success of *The Four Feathers*, *Running Water*, *The Broken Road*, and *At the Villa Rose* (amongst others), had made him his own master, and it enabled him to give time and care to the exquisite craftsmanship which distinguished the long line of their successors and did not fail even in the last of them. It says much both for Mason and for the reading public that what it pleased him to write for his own satisfaction, pleased the public to read, and that the subtlety of his constructions never drowned the clear inspiration of that spirit of romantic adventure

which made so wide an appeal to his readers. But Mason had also to live his adventure, and with so little to choose between hills and the sea, there need be no surprise that he turned to ocean cruising in his yacht, a converted Brixham trawler. A fine and bold seaman, he there found in his later years what the Alps had given him in earlier life. One of his friends has told in *The Times* (of November 27, 1948) how, during one of these cruises, Mason suddenly told the story of a secret German wireless station in Mexico which he had destroyed single-handed in the 1914 war. Perhaps his mind was occupied by some such theme, because shortly before the beginning of his last illness he wrote to the present reviewer about the possibility that an enemy agent could have spread anthrax through the mules we imported from South America during that war. If he was planning another novel on these lines, we shall perhaps never know, for the old Viking, adventurous to the last, has sailed out on his last voyage into the setting sun.

T. G. B.

Mr. R. W. Lloyd writes :

The late A. E. W. Mason was a charming personality and a most interesting companion. His books were far above those of other writers of romance of his time. He had real ideas and this is shown by one of his most famous novels, *The Broken Road*. I once said to him years ago this was the finest of his novels because of its idea, and he agreed. His style was delightful and made his books an education as well as a pleasure.

His climbing is dealt with elsewhere and as I never climbed with him myself I can say little about it except that for some years he was an enthusiast.

His death leaves a blank in the illustrious members of the Club that cannot be filled and to his friends his loss is great.

The following incomplete list gives all that can at present be ascertained about Mr. A. E. W. Mason's Alpine expeditions :

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|------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1891 | Wetterhorn | |
| 1894 | Weisssee Spitze | } guideless |
| | Glockturm | |
| | Madatsch | |
| | Lochberg | |
| | Winterstock | |
| 1904 | Grands Charmoz | |
| | Aiguille d'Argentière | |
| 1906 | La Meije, from La Bérarde to La Grave | |
| | Col Lombard | |
| | Fletschhorn | |
| | Laquinhorn | |
| | Portjengrat | |

- 1907 Petite Dent de Veisivi, traversed
 Aiguilles Rouges d'Arolla, traversed
 Dent Blanche
 Sudlenzspitze
 Nadelhorn
 Ulrichshorn
 Col de Bertol
 Ried Pass
 Grands Charmoz, traversed, N.-S.
 Tour Noir
 Grépon
- 1908 (with Joseph Lochmatter) :
 Aiguille de Blaitière
 A peak of the Aiguilles Rouges de Chamonix
 (? Aiguille de la Persévérance)
 Riffelhorn (by the Matterhorn couloir)
 Zinal Rothorn (traversed to Mountet)
 Obergabelhorn, traversed by S.-E. arête
- 1909 (with Joseph Lochmatter, bad weather) :
 Weisshorn
 Aiguille de l'M.
- 1910 Aiguille du Moine
 Aiguille du Tacul
 Leiterspitze
 Zinal Rothorn by 'Rothorngrat' from Rothornjoch
 Weisshorn, a new route on the S. face, finishing by the E. arête.

 MICHAEL ROBERTS

1902-1948

MICHAEL ROBERTS had been ill since he came home from his summer holiday in the Alps last year. Although his death in December was sudden and unexpected, it had been feared that he would never recover to live the life of strenuous mental and physical activity that he had always chosen. He always appeared to spend as much energy and enthusiasm on the 'outside' interest of his pupils as on teaching them; he found time for his own writing and reading; and his holidays were always spent in the hills with his family, his pupils, or (on bigger mountains) with a guide.

Although Michael Roberts first went to the Alps in 1924, when he walked across France and up to the Great St. Bernard, helped by a grant from the Donald Robertson Fund during a long vacation from Cambridge, he never climbed a mountain that he thought worth recording till 1932. By 1934 he was leading guideless expeditions in the Graians and climbing peaks such as the Midi and the Charmoz with Othon Bron. He was in the Alps every summer from 1932 to 1939, generally starting



MICHAEL ROBERTS.

1902-1948.

with a party of schoolboys from the Royal Grammar School at Newcastle, where he was a master ; he used to take them to the Tarentaise, Maurienne, or Dauphiné. Then he would climb guideless with his wife or one or two friends, still staying among the lower ranges, generally in Savoy or the neighbouring hills in Italy. The climax of his holiday would be a few expeditions with a guide on the great peaks of the Valais, the Oberland, or the Mont Blanc range. Until his death in an accident on the Col du Géant in 1938, Michael Roberts' guide was Othon Bron of Courmayeur, and their companionship was much closer than the ordinary relationship between a good guide and a good amateur climbing together ; there was a close friendship and an appreciation of one another's way of life.

Michael Roberts' friendship with Othon Bron was typical of his whole approach to the Alps. His climbing was not distinguished by the list of impressive expeditions, but by his many-sided enjoyment of his holidays. He enjoyed his climbing as hundreds of others do, but he also knew the people of the Alps and how they lived ; he knew their history and the stories of the early travellers who had known their grandparents. It doubled his pleasure, when he slept at the Marais chalets above Tignes before climbing the Dôme de la Sache, to know that Mr. and Mrs. King had stayed there in 1853 and William Mathews and Michel Croz in 1861. His idea of relaxation from the formidable problems of building up a College again after the war was to write, for the *Alpine Journal*, a detailed history of the early travellers in the Graians. He was able to share his enjoyment of the Alps with his wife, Janet Adam Smith, and her book *Mountain Holidays*, which was published just after the war, is the happiest account of people enjoying Alpine holidays to their full that I have ever read.

It had taken several years of walking and scrambling in the Alps to initiate Michael Roberts, but as soon as he had found the way to the tops he was enjoying leading his own parties on the humbler peaks as well as being taken up the classic climbs by Bron. He delighted to introduce people to the hills and set them on the right tracks, whether they were his schoolboys, or after the war his students from St. Mark's College in Chelsea, his own friends, or people he met casually on his wandering holidays. It was characteristic of his guideless climbing that he was always the leader ; other members of the party might lead a rock pitch or two in the course of the day, but there was never any doubt where the final responsibility lay. If he wanted to do climbs that he did not think he could lead, he waited till he was climbing with Bron or, in 1938 and 1939, Hans Brantschen ; otherwise he wanted to find his own route himself and work out his own expeditions. One of his Newcastle pupils, who had climbed with him at home and in the Alps, remembers how ' he had, in the Lakes, a love of going up things any way but the conventional one,' and recalls (on a party at Entre deux Eaux) ' an illogical not-in-the-guide-book route up the Vallonet by an odd ice-fall noticed two days earlier, and a long morning spent dodging the ice from Roberts' untiring axe'. Michael would have enjoyed the Alps even

more if he had been there seventy years earlier, without good maps, guide-books and countless records, and dependent on cowherds' hospitality instead of club huts.

He enjoyed the great peaks with all their associations, but also had an almost chivalrous feeling for certain lesser mountains of character which he felt had been unjustly neglected, at any rate by British climbers. It gave him immense pleasure in this way to 're-discover' the Bec de l'Invergnan and the Granta Parei; while the complete traverse of the Dôme de la Sache—Mont Pourri ridge, from Tignes to Bourg St. Maurice, which he did in company with R. C. Abbatt in 1947, he counted as one of his very best expeditions.

In his poem, *La Meije* (1937) dedicated to the memory of Othon Bron, he wrote:

'This was our pleasure: to climb among loose stones, to cut steps in ice,
To find a new alternative to the *mauvais pas* . . .
A man should use every nerve and muscle,
A man should puzzle out the hardest questions,
A man should find words for the thoughts that no one knows.'

In all his work as poet, critic, philosopher and schoolmaster, Michael Roberts worked out his own solutions from his own reasoning. Even if his conclusions were shared by others you felt that he had arrived at them independently. This characteristic of independent thought, and his versatility, were the distinction of his work. He had taken (at London and Cambridge) degrees in science and mathematics; he started his career teaching physics; but he used to do literature with sixth-form boys at Newcastle, and a headmaster anxious to have him on his staff is reported once to have offered him his only vacancy—to teach Latin. After spending most of the war years working in the European department of the B.B.C., he was appointed Principal of the College of St. Mark and St. John at Chelsea, a Church of England Teachers' Training College. In less than four years, apart from directing the teaching of the College, his enthusiasm and ability had mastered the new problem of managing a big organisation; he was as knowledgeable about the College's finances as about the appointment of a new member of his staff. And through all his routine work at schools and at St. Mark's, he was always able to stir his pupils' interest in literature and the arts, to help produce their plays, and to take them on camping and climbing holidays.

In the future Michael Roberts may be forgotten as a teacher or mountaineer, but he will be remembered by his writing. The titles of his books indicate his versatility—*Elizabethan Prose* (1933), *Critique of Poetry* (1934), *Newton and the Origin of Colours* (1934), *The Modern Mind* (1937), and *The Recovery of the West* (1941), a reasoned reply, from a Christian standpoint, to the pessimism of Spengler. As editor of *New Signatures* (1932) and *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* (1936) he had helped to introduce many young poets to their first big audience. In his own poetry (published in *Poems*, 1936, and *Orion Marches*, 1939)

his feeling for the mountains finds full expression. There are poems about the Alpine villages and valleys he loved—Val d'Isère, Bonneval, Champagny ; there is a long *Elegy for the Fallen Climbers*. It is always a climber's, or traveller's, poetry : no vague heroics, or over-pitched sentiment, but exact observation :

'And at dusk the familiar sequence : the light
Lingering on the peak ; and near the horizon
Apricot-coloured skies, then purple ; and the first stars ;
An hour of bustle in the hut, and then silence.
Only at two in the morning men stir in the bunks,
Look out of the windows, put on their boots,
Exchange a word with the guardian, curse the cold,
And move with a force beyond their own to the high peaks.'

But in his poetry, as in his life, mountains were more than the supremely beautiful setting for the best of holidays ; they were symbols of the difficult and disinterested activities which are worth doing because we do them for their own sake, and not for the sake of a reward. He spoke of this once in his paper read to the Club in May 1939 on *The Poetry and Humour of Mountaineering* : 'Climbing derives its most powerful symbolic meaning,' he said, 'from its gratuitousness, its apparent pointlessness . . . It is a demonstration that man is not wholly tied to grubbing for his food, not wholly tied by family and social loyalties ; that there are states of mind and spirit that he values more highly than life itself on any lower level.'

C. B.

BENSON LAWFORD

1871-1949

THERE was a strain of Swiss blood in Benson Lawford and between leaving Bath College and joining his father and eldest brother on the Stock Exchange, his life's work, he spent a year abroad studying French and German. He did some climbing before 1909 when he had an active month in the Western Graians and again in 1911 in the Central Pennines and was elected to the club that year. In 1912 among other climbs he crossed the Col des Hirondelles. He was fond of passes and traverses. He was at the opening of the Britannia Hut, coming to Saas by the Rossboden Pass and traversing the Fletchhorn and Laquinhorn. In 1913 he had another active season with Theophile Thêytaz as junior guide and ending with traverse of Mt. Blanc by the Dôme glacier route.

Lawford served with the B.E.F. in 1917 and 1918 as an interpreter. He was in Switzerland again in 1921 and 1929 and 1931 and did a little climbing. In the mountains he was steady and indefatigable ; a good map reader and always a good companion. Most of his climbs were with guides and many with one or more nephews. In his



BENSON LAWFORD.

1871-1949.

prime he was a fine runner and won the one mile championship and many other races.

He was a member of the Diablerets Section of S.A.C. and A.B.M.S.A.C. He attended the Club meetings regularly in Savile Row and contributed several articles to *A. J.*

His wife, who predeceased him, was a younger sister of Miss Lily Bristow, A. F. Mummery's companion on some of his climbs in 1893. Mrs. Lawford did not climb but shared his love of the mountains.

W. S. S.

RALPH STEWART MORRISH

1870-1948

R. S. MORRISH, who died on November 19, 1948, was a member of the Club for 38 years.

His first visit to the Alps was in 1887 while he was at school in Geneva. From 1894 onwards he went out every year until 1938, with the exception of the war years 1914-19. Not a robust man, he was never a really serious climber. But he had a deep love of the mountains, and his chief joy was to wander in comparatively out of the way districts moving on over passes and traversing peaks as they came. Nevertheless, he was a competent mountaineer, and between 1905 and 1910 had some strenuous seasons, usually with J. C. Gait and H. W. Forbes.

Among many other expeditions there may be mentioned—Ortler and Weisskugel in 1905, Grivola in 1906, Fletschorn-Laquinhorn in 1907, Gross Glockner and Cristallo in 1908, Blumlisalp and Buttlassen in 1909, Konigspitze, Cevedale, Adamello and Cima Tosa in 1910, the last year all guideless.

These few names illustrate the wideness of his wanderings.

After the war he resumed his visits which were in a similar vein, his last major expedition being the Disgrazia in 1925. From 1928 onwards he spent his time almost entirely in Tyrol, the region of the Alps which he loved best.

When well over 60 he fell while descending a peak above Gschnitz and broke a rib. H. J. Gait, who was with him at the time, testifies to the cheerfulness with which he bore the pain during the rest of the descent and the long walk back to the hotel.

He was elected to the Club in 1910, incidentally in the same batch as G. L. Mallory. He was auditor of the Club from 1916-21 and served on the Committee in 1923-24. He was perhaps best known as a photographer, and many fine exhibits of his were seen on the walls of Savile Row at the Annual Shows.

By profession he was a chartered accountant, and was at one time secretary to Constables, the Publishers. In later life, in addition to Alpine history and literature, his principal interests were archæology and Church architecture in England and France. He was especially

devoted to the little Saxon Church of Stoke D'Abernon in Surrey, of which he was church warden for nearly thirty years, and of whose history and monuments he made a most exhaustive study. He was unmarried.

R. L. M.

JOHANN JAKOB EBERLI

1862-1948.

THE late J. J. Eberli was a Swiss by birth, but became a naturalised British subject in 1915. He came to England in 1884 and joined the Mannheim Insurance Co., for which he later became British agent, until it closed down in 1914, when he founded the firm of Eberli, Shorter & Co. He was a prominent figure on Lloyds, where he showed himself an excellent technician and a keen controversialist on technical matters. He retired from business in 1946 but continued to take a deep interest in market affairs. In the world of marine insurance his brisk and forceful personality and Captain Kettle beard made him well-known to all.

His first Swiss expedition, the Rigi, was as long ago as 1875, and his last climbing holiday was in 1929. Nonetheless, he revisited Switzerland on several later occasions, being out in 1939, 1946 and 1947.

He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1908. He maintained a record of all his climbs and evidently preferred to revisit old and tried districts, so that one finds him again and again in the Saas-Simplon-Belalp and adjoining areas. In 1902, however, he visited the English Lakes.

In 1900 he made, with Alexander Burgener, a new route on the Balfrinhorn by the N.W. arête, and he was again with Burgener in 1901 and 1905; among his other guides were Alex. Burgener, junior, Salomon Burgener and, the longest association of all, Theodor Kalbermatten.

As is inevitable in a man of his years, he had tended to outlive his climbing contemporaries and he was probably but little known to the younger generation of the Alpine Club. He never, however, lost his interest in mountaineering and the Club has to record with gratitude the gift of a number of Alpine books from his son, Major F. H. Eberli, who had been his companion on many of his later expeditions in Switzerland.

B.

A. E. CLARKE

1870-1948

ARTHUR EDWIN CLARKE, who died on Christmas Eve 1948, after a short illness, was born on October 24, 1870. Educated at Brighton Grammar School, he passed the Law Society's examination at the top of the list and became a particularly able and hard-working solicitor, for many



A. E. CLARKE.
1870-1948.

years senior partner of the well-known firm of Garrard, Wolfe, Gaze and Clarke of St. James's Place, S.W. 1. A keen Freemason, he held high office in the Hampshire and Past and Present Lodges.

As a mountaineer, he did not go in for guideless ascents or forcing difficult routes, but was a strong and reliable climber, cool of temper and of sound judgment. His considerable height and length of reach made him especially fond of rock climbs. He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1907, and his qualifying expeditions included :

- 1898 Allalinhorn ; Weissmies ; Portjengrat, &c. and Dom (from Randa).
- 1901 Rimpfischhorn ; Dufourspitze from Grenz glacier
- 1902 Dent Perroc ; Aigs. Rouges d'Arolla ; Weisshorn.
- 1903 Pigne d'Arolla ; Mont Collon ; Zinal Rothorn (tr. from Zermatt) ; Ober Gabelhorn (tr. from Mountet).
- 1904 Aigs. du Moine, Tacul, &c. ; Droites ; Gr. Charmoz.
- 1905 Aigs. d'Argentiére and Chardonnet ; Mt. Blanc (tr. from Courmayeur by Dôme Gl. route) ; Grépon.

For some fifteen years he climbed regularly in the Alps, principally with the late H. W. Dollar, Ambrose Supersaxo, of Saas Fee, being their favourite guide. Arthur Clarke was extremely modest about his various achievements and, as his great friend and contemporary in the Club, Ernest Stevens, died recently, it has not been possible to obtain detailed information as to his Alpine expeditions, but it is known that during these years he climbed a great many of the principal peaks and traversed passes in all parts of the Swiss, Italian and French alps and in the Dolomites. He also knew Wasdalehead and the Lakeland and Welsh mountains in his earlier days, but I have no record of his expeditions there.

I met him first in 1911 as he was sitting at his ease in the sun in front of the Montenvers, immediately on his return from the traverse of the Drus, and he told me that he had traversed the Grépon a few days before and had greatly enjoyed it. Other climbs of which he often spoke to me were the Aiguille de la Za by the Arolla face, where his party nearly came to grief as a result of stones dislodged by another party ; the Meije, the Matterhorn, the Dom and the Portjengrat.

In 1933, he married Violet Stanley, widow of the late Brigadier-General C. B. Prowse, and this last part of his life, though it included the War, was without doubt the happiest. After he ceased from active mountaineering, he and his wife frequently accompanied my father and mother to Pontresina or Grindelwald for their summer holidays between the two wars. His wife's sudden death from pneumonia only a few months ago undoubtedly hastened his own, their mutual devotion being of the kind that made a separate existence for him an almost intolerable burden. Tall and distinguished-looking, he was, though rather shy of making advances to those he did not know well, perfectly approachable, courteous and friendly, and he possessed sound views and

a well-balanced judgment. To his friends he was therefore a most agreeable companion, especially on a country walk.

Up to the second war, he was a fairly frequent attendant at Alpine Club evenings, but afterwards, as his contemporaries there became fewer and his health declined, he was seen less often, but was always keenly interested in anything to do with mountaineering and the Alps which had given him so much happiness.

P. H. PILDITCH.

RICHARD LLOYD LANGFORD-JAMES

1873-1948

THE REV. R. L. LANGFORD-JAMES was born May 24, 1873, and elected to the Club in 1919. His qualification papers show that he had, between 1901 and 1911, done a good deal of rock climbing in N. Wales and Wasdale, amongst other companions in those parts being O. Eckenstein and J. M. Archer Thompson.

His first visit to Switzerland was in the summer of 1910, but earlier that year he and his wife had walked to Chamonix from the Alpes Maritimes along the French-Italian frontier. He was out again in the Alps in 1911, 1912 and 1914, keeping generally to well-known centres, like Arolla, Zinal or Saas-Fee, but making most of his climbs guideless with his wife. Perhaps his best year was (as with so many other mountaineers) 1911, when he fell in with Mr. G. H. Bullock at Arolla and made a number of expeditions with him.

He was a scholar of Keble College (B.A. 1896), and was B.D. in 1904 and D.D. 1910. He was also Mus. Bac. of Birmingham University (1926). He was ordained in 1902, and was an Assistant Master at Gresham's School, Holt, from 1900-03, being Curate of Holt for the last twelve months. He was appointed to St. Cyprian's, Kimberley, South Africa, in 1904, leaving in 1906 to become Chaplain at Cannes, where he remained until 1910. He was Vicar of St. Mark's, Bush Hill Park, from 1910-19, Rector of Thruxton, Hants, 1919-23, and Vicar of St. James, Edgbaston, from 1923-41.

He was ardent High Churchman, a fact that at times led to some clashes of opinion with his parishioners; but he lived for his work and his transparent honesty and fervour could never be in doubt. He was the author of a Dictionary of the Eastern Orthodox Church (1923) and of a number of other devotional works.

B.

GEORGE STANTON PROVIS

1881-1949

THE REV. G. S. PROVIS was elected to the Club in 1925, on a qualification that covered climbing in the Candian Rockies, the Pyrenees, the Alps and the Dolomites.

He was ordained in 1906 and went out to Western Canada in the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission and built the first church at Edmonton. He served as a Chaplain to the Forces from 1915-19, and was twice mentioned in despatches. He was Vicar of Cranbrook, Kent, from 1919-23, and then had a year in Switzerland as the result of a breakdown. From 1924-28 he was Vicar of Rodmersham, Kent; from 1928-33, Vicar of St. Anne's, Newcastle-on-Tyne; and Rector of Petworth, Sussex, from 1933-40. Since the latter date he had lived at Oxted, being from 1944 Chaplain to the Surrey County Hospital, Redhill, where he was working when he died suddenly from a heart attack on February 22 of this year.

While at Rodmersham he went out to Burma on a tour of the Mission stations there, and also visited India and Ceylon.

During the late war he attended some of the Alpine Club Meets held in Wales and the Lakes, and will be remembered by many Members of the Club. Unfortunately, he suffered severely from sciatica, which he had contracted in the early thirties, and this handicapped his climbing but never impaired his enthusiasm. He was much liked by all who came into contact with him and he will leave a wide circle of friends to regret his passing.

Canon W. A. R. Ball writes :—

I climbed with G. S. Provis from 1912 onwards. During the years 1912-14 all his climbing was in the Rocky Mountains. In 1914, while on the summit of Mt. Balfour, with Conrad Kain as our guide, we were struck by an electric storm which knocked us out for a few minutes. In those days Provis was a very good singer and round the camp-fire the packers and members of the Canadian Alpine Club always called on him for a song. He was a general favourite with all types of men in N.-W. Canada.

He visited the Pyrenees in 1922 and the Vignemale, Mont Perdu and Piminée are mentioned among other ascents. In 1923 the Oldenhorn Diablerets, Dent du Midi, Aig. du Tour, Mont Blanc, Matterhorn, Weisshorn, Rothorn and Dent Blanche were among his ascents. In 1925 an early season's visit to the Dolomites caused some of the climbs to be more difficult, such as Piz Popena by the S. arête and the traverse of the Kl. Zinne from N. to S. Other climbs were Cimon della Pala (tr.); Saas Maor (tr.); Becco di Mezzodi, Monte Cristallo and Croda da Lago.

In 1927 the Blumisalphorn, Wetterhorn and Schreckhorn were all that Provis could manage in a short visit, but the Wetterhorn climb was memorable, for we accompanied Claude Wilson on his Jubilee climb. In 1929 our best climb was the direct route up the N. face of the Pigne d'Arolla, with Joseph Georges le Skieur as our guide. From 1930 to 1937 Provis was out nearly every year, often in the Eastern Alps; but in 1935 he climbed the Eiger by the Mittelleggi ridge and spent 1936 and most of 1937 in the Austrian Alps. During three seasons Provis and I went to Kandersteg for the Balmhorn-Altels traverse, but were beaten every time by bad weather, though on the last occasion we waited five

days. He was planning with me to make one more attempt this year, but it is not to be.

Provis had been richly endowed with the gift of friendship and in camp in the rockies, or in a homesteader's shack in the N.-W., or in his own home with a group of people round him, he was always the same—a man who cared for his fellow-men.

ALLSTON BURR

1867-1949

ALLSTON BURR, of Boston, Massachusetts, a member of the Alpine Club since 1911, died at his home on January 19, 1949, at the age of 82.

His varied and active work in charitable and social organisations was a reflection of his life, and of his active climbing days. Graduated from Harvard in 1889, he served as President of the Harvard Alumni Association, as Alderman, as director of many Boston charities, as Chairman of the Metropolitan Red Cross, trustee of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Athenæum, and Radcliffe College, in addition to serving as trustee of the State Street Trust Co., and as a partner in Coffin and Burr.

Elected a member of the Alpine Club in 1911, Burr had climbed in the Alps over a span of 30 years, before advancing age in the mid-thirties required a check on his enthusiasm. Among his climbs were many of the classical climbs of the Pennine Alps and of the Oberland, including the now popular Wellenkuppe-Gabelhorn traverse and the Täschhorn-Dom traverse which then were rarely combined; the Brenva route on Mont Blanc; the Matterhorn, Zmutt to Breuil; the Nadelgrat; Piz Bernina by the Biancograt; the Palü-Bellavista-Zupô traverse; the Ancien Passage on Mont Blanc; together with over a hundred other ascents.

An original member of the American Alpine Club, he served as Treasurer of his home Club from 1911 to 1918. He was also a member of the Alpine Club of Canada, the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Harvard Mountaineering Club, and the Swiss Alpine Club.

As he climbed usually with guides, there are few members still alive with whom he had actually climbed, but the recollection of his ever-genial smile, his ever-youthful vigour, his warmth and generosity to all with whom he could share memories of the heights, has left a deep sense of loss among his many friends.

JOEL E. FISHER.

Dr. T. G. Longstaff writes :

The death of Allston Burr is a great loss to the Alpine Club. Elected in 1911, he was the senior American member. An indefatigable climber, he was familiar with the mountains both of Europe and North America.

He was an ardent supporter of the Club and his great generosity to us in our lean times during and directly after the War left us greatly indebted to him. The Club will wish to extend their sincere sympathy to his family.

SYDNEY GASK

1867-1948

SYDNEY GASK was elected to the Club in 1903 having as his proposers the Rev. A. C. Downer and Dr. Henry D. Waugh.

His qualifications then were over ten years of expeditions in the Alps and a deep love of the hills and the mountains. Living as he did in Lancashire he was not seen much at the club, but far more often on the tops of the hills in the lakes, which he loved.

Though not himself an outstanding climber he shared a number of climbs with some notabilities such as Valentine Fynn, Herbert Reade and Captain Farrar and in their company had the reputation of being a safe and sound backer up.

Quite late in life he was introduced to Snowdonia, in which he was much interested, though it has to be recorded that his last ascent of Snowden was by train, which none the less he enjoyed. His heart however always turned back to the Lake District which was, early and late, his great delight. He retired from the Club in 1947, and died on December 22, 1948.

G. E. G.

THEODOR KALBERMATTEN

1862-1949

MANY British climbers will hear with regret of the death of Theodor Kalbermatten, the Lötschental guide, on January 23, 1949. Dr. Max Oechslin, Editor of *Les Alpes*, has been kind enough to furnish us with details of Kalbermatten's career, which have been drawn up by Herr J. Siegen, Prior of Kippel, and from which much of what follows is derived.

Theodor Kalbermatten was born on February 16, 1862, at Weissenried, near Ried in the Lötschental, and when only 17 years of age he was with Edmund von Fellenberg at the first ascent of the Wilerhorn, which was led by Peter Siegen in 1879. He did not, however, obtain his guide's certificate until 1887, when his career of more than 50 years of active guiding began. From that year to about 1907, most of his engagements were to British climbers, with whom he made his most serious expeditions, and in the whole span of 45 years covered by his first Führerbuch, one-third of his employers were British. Amongst their names may be mentioned those of Fairbanks (1889), Thompson

and Benecke (1890), Hopkins (1891), Higgins, Reade, Cohen, and Benecke (1892), Reade again (1896 and 1897), Danby, Mordaunt, and Barnard (1898 and 1900, when the party visited the Range of Mont Blanc), Thompson, Hobday, and Brown (in the Italian Alps and the Range of Mont Blanc, 1901 and again in 1906), and from 1903 and 1907 respectively, he repeatedly guided Finsch and Johns in the Bernese Oberland and Vallais. Amongst his German patrons was Herr Killinger, later a well known airman in the first world war, who was in his seventeenth year when Kalbermatten took him up the Bietschhorn; and his Swiss patrons included Herrn Eberli, von Streng (the present Bishop of Basel), Paul Gass, and Dr. Spiess.

Kalbermatten belonged to a well known family of guides in the Lötschental, and his own name is associated with many first ascents on his home mountains. In 1895, two of his former Herren, Messrs. E. F. M. Benecke and H. A. Cohen disappeared in the Lötschental whilst climbing without guides¹—the former was helping the Rev. W. A. B. Coolidge in the preparation of the Climbers' Guide for the Bernese Oberland, and earlier in that season, he had made a solitary first ascent of the Ober Tatlishorn, and, with Cohen, the first and guideless ascent of the Elwerrück and first passage of the Breitlaujoch. It was with Theodor (and Johann) Kalbermatten that Mr. H. V. Reade made the first ascents of two points on the South arête of the Lauterbrunnen Breithorn whilst searching for possible traces of the victims in 1896²; and it was again with Theodor Kalbermatten that he made the first complete traverse of the Anengrat, the first ascent of the South peak of the Kranzberg, and, with Mr. P. M. Barnard also, what they believed to be the first traverse of the Tellispitzen³, in 1897.

GOTTFRIED SCHÖPF

THE death occurred on October 20, as a result of an accident while wood-cutting, of the guide Gottfried Schöpf, of Sölden in the Oetztal, Tirol, who was well known to several members of the Club. I first met him in Sölden in 1924 and we climbed together almost every season until 1937, either in Austria or Switzerland, covering a number of peaks in the Oetztal, Zillertal, Gross Venidiger and Gross Glockner districts, also Bernina, Bregaglia, and during one season in Valais. He was a good guide, specially reliable and resourceful on snow and ice, with a wonderful instinct for the behaviour of glaciers. In his own district he knew of course every possible route, but we climbed together in Switzerland on ground which was new to him and on many occasions he led with great skill and care. A great character, he was always *persona grata* wherever we travelled in huts or hotels and invariably made friends with local guides who never seemed to grudge him local information. He was the best and most considerate of companions

¹ A. J. 17. 562.

² A. J. 18. 249.

³ A. J. 18. 528-530.

and our warm friendship was continued by correspondence since the war, with the hope of meeting once more in Tyrol. He is referred to, and his likeness appears in a photograph, in 'From Tauern to Bernina,' *A. J.* 48. 58. In the 1914-18 war he served in the Austrian army and was taken prisoner by the Russians in Przemysl after which he was sent to Siberia and worked in the salt mines at Vladivostok, finally, on the outbreak of the revolution, finding his way on foot home to Tyrol where he was subsequently employed under British officers on the delineation of the new Austro-Italian frontier. During the recent war he was imprisoned for six months in Innsbruck for expressing anti-Hitler sentiments in public—a matter of no surprise to me, as his remarks on this subject used to be embarrassingly outspoken in pre-war days! Although his climbing days were really over, he had hoped we should once more have 'done something together'—now, alas! not to be. He leaves a widow and nine children.

J. E. M.

EXPEDITIONS

WEST RIDGE OF BATIAN (MOUNT KENYA)

ON July 23, 1948, Mr. Arthur Firmin and I repeated Messrs. Shipton and Tilman's 1930 climb up the W. ridge of Batian;¹ we had previously made an abortive attempt in August 1947, when we were held up on the rocks of the Grand Gendarme and had to rope down to the Northey Glacier.

This year we followed what must have been the same as the 1930 route except that we climbed almost directly over the Petit Gendarme instead of traversing beneath it on the S. side; and near the summit we turned on the E. side a gap into which Shipton and Tilman had roped down. We wore rubbers from the base of the difficult climbing on the Grand Gendarme as far as the junction of the W. and N. ridges. Leaving our bivouac at the side of the Joseph Glacier at 6.05 A.M. we reached the summit of Batian at 12.55 P.M.

For the descent we chose the N. face which was climbed by Firmin and Hicks in 1944.² Getting caught in a snowstorm at the top of the Tower, progress was very slow and we only managed to get off the final rocks ten minutes before darkness would have made climbing impossible. Near the Tower I was struck by an electrical disturbance which caused my hair to sizzle and crackle; Firmin, though unaffected himself, heard the sizzling from 50 ft. away.

The expedition was a most enjoyable one, involving first rate snow, ice and rock work. Two days earlier, Messrs. Firmin, J. Inglis Moore and I made an ascent of Point Piggott. An empty Brand's beef essence tin, evidently left by the first party, was found on top.³

J. W. HOWARD.

¹ *A. J.* 43. 131-146.

² *A. J.* 55. 76-81.

³ *A. J.* 43. 144.