

ALPINE NOTES

THE ALPINE CLUB OBITUARY :	Year of Election.
Basset, Alfred	1904
Belcher, H. W.	1906
Allen, B. M.	1911
Low, R. S.	1913
Carr, R. C. C.	1922
Underhill, Daniel	1930
Studer, J. P.	1945
Veazey, Rev. H. G.	1947

PERSONAL.—The Club congratulates the following members on their several distinctions :—

Mr. D. L. Busk to be His Majesty's Ambassador at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Mr. H. W. A. Freese-Pennefather on the award of the C.M.G. in the Birthday Honours.

Dr. George Salt on receiving the Murchison Grant of the Royal Geographical Society for his researches on Kilimanjaro.

We also note the election of Sir John Beaumont to be Master of the Cutlers' Company.

HIMALAYAS, 1951.—Everest Reconnaissance Expedition, 1951.—This expedition, led by E. E. Shipton, includes W. H. Murray, M. P. Ward and T. D. Bourdillon, in addition to two New Zealand members, H. E. Riddiford and E. P. Hillary, who joined the expedition at the completion of their expedition to Garhwal.

The purpose of the Everest party is to explore in detail the possibilities of reaching the South Col between Everest and Lhotse from the Khumbu Glacier. This approach to Everest was studied from a distance by H. W. Tilman and Dr. Charles Houston (see *A.J.* 58, pp. 108-9), and its feasibility left open.

Shipton hopes to ascend to the Western Cwm and so gain a close view of the climbing problems involved in reaching the South Col. His despatches have been appearing in *The Times*, and we hope to be able to publish a full account of his explorations in the next issue of the *Alpine Journal*.

The Lyons section of the C.A.F. organised an expedition to the Himalayas with the object of traversing the ridge between the East and West summits of Nanda Devi. The eight members of the expedition were Roger Duplat, Gilbert Vignes, Louis Gevril, Louis Dubost, Alain Barbezat, Paul Gendre, Dr. Payan and Jean-Jacques Languepin. They left France in April and on June 18 established a base camp at

about 16,000 ft. above the Rishi Ganga. On June 27 Duplat and Vignes left the base camp and were observed two days later, still climbing, having sent the two Sherpas down from their last camp. The two men were not seen again and Dubost, who reached the East summit (24,390 ft.) with the Sherpa, Tenzing, could find no trace of them. There appears to be no direct evidence on the cause of the disaster.

The first New Zealand expedition to the Himalayas visited Garhwal in July and August 1951. The members of the expedition, H. E. Riddiford, E. P. Hillary, W. G. Lowe and E. M. Cotter, were all new to the Himalayas, but Riddiford had climbed in the Alps and all the party had had New Zealand experience. After an examination of the West Kamet and Chamrao Glaciers, they chose the latter approach and from a base camp at 16,000 ft. and three further camps, reached the summit of Mukut Parbat, 23,760 ft. On the summit ridge they encountered difficulties with ice, snow and rock. Two of the party reached the summit, together with the head Sherpa, Pasang Dawa. After returning to Badrinath the party again set out and in the following weeks climbed six other peaks between 18,000 and 22,000 ft.

We note the ascent of Trisul (23,382 ft.) by R. Greenwood and Sirdar Gurdial Singh, both of the Doon School, Dehra Dun, on June 23, 1951. Mr. Greenwood was a member of Mr. J. T. M. Gibson's party which climbed Bandar Punch last year (see pp. 249-55, above).

An American party is reported to have ascended to 21,000 ft. on Panch Chuli.

R. C. Evans, A. G. Trower and E. Ker visited Kulu in September and October, but we understand their plans were impeded by bad weather and restrictions on movement. Two peaks of 16,000 ft. were climbed, but an attempt on Deo Tibba (19,687 ft.) was defeated by the technical difficulties of the climbing.

ALPS, 1951.—In addition to the climbs referred to in our expeditions section, the following expeditions were carried out by guideless British parties during the season :

AIGUILLE MUMMERY.—By the South-west face. I. G. McNaught-Davis and G. H. Francis.

AIGUILLE DU PLAN.—Ryan-Lochmatter route. Two parties, (i) I. G. McNaught-Davis and the Hon. R. R. E. Chorley, (ii) A. J. J. Moulam and P. Davis.

AIGUILLE DE BLAITIÈRE.—North-west ridge (Ryan-Lochmatter). A. K. Rawlinson, R. M. Viney, M. H. Westmacott and P. C. Ridley.

AIGUILLE DU FOU. South-west ridge. Three parties.

HOGGAR, 1950-1951.—The following extracts are based on notes supplied by M. Bernard Pierre of an expedition to the Hoggar Group in Central Sahara during the winter, 1950-1951.

ADAOUA, 6,890 ft.—First climbed in 1938 by A. Jacquet, probably by the South face. Second ascent, by the West face, December 27, 1950. Rock not reliable, Standard D. *sup.*, with two passages involving artificial aids.

ASSEKRAR, 6,240 ft.—First climbed by Dr. Wyss-Dunant, 1937, by the East face. First ascent by the South ridge, December 29, 1950, Standard T.D. *inf.*, with one passage involving artificial aids. Rock fairly good, about a thousand feet of climbing.

TIGMAL, 5,790 ft.—First climbed in 1937 by Dr. Wyss-Dunant. Second ascent by the South face, January 1, 1951, Standard A.D. The climb is in three sections :

(a) A wall of about 200 ft. presenting considerable difficulties owing to the rotten state of the rock.

(b) A steep section of about 350 ft. overcome by means of chimneys.

(c) Long scree terraces leading to the summit.

AOUKENET, c. 8,000 ft.—First ascent, January 4, 1951. 800 ft. of climbing, good rock, fairly exposed and a fine summit. Standard D.

TARIDALT, c. 8,000 ft.—First traversed from East to West, January 6, 1951. A fine expedition involving the ascent of four separate needles, each involving between 300 and 600 ft. of climbing. Rock good. Standard D. *sup.*

TEHOULAG (a) North summit, c. 9,500 ft.—First ascent by the North-west face January 8, 1951. About 1,200 ft. of climbing on good rock. The finest summit of the massif after Ilamane. Standard T.D. *inf.*

(b) South summit.—First climbed by Dr. Wyss-Dunant, 1937, and Central summit (first climbed by P. Gighlione, 1950), traversed January 8, 1951. Standard P.D.

IHAREN, c. 6,200 ft.—Fourth ascent of the South face January 12, 1951. Third ascent of the Frison-Roche route, Standard D, with one passage of V *inf.* Rock requires care.

Composition of the party :—

Maurice Martin and Mme. Y. Syda.

Bernard Pierre and Jean Syda.

LUC MEYNET AND THE MATTERHORN.—In *A. J.* 57. 421, Dr. Monroe Thorington quotes Guido Rey as being the source of the statement that Luc Meynet, the hunchback, reached the top of the Matterhorn and asks if this is true. Guido Rey was quite correct ; Luc Meynet made the ascent of the Matterhorn from Breuil on May 12, 1875, with G. Corona and S. Santelli, and the guides J. J. and J. P. Maquignaz and J. A. Carrel (*A. J.* 7. 268).

Meynet's name is not mentioned in Whymper's list of those who gained the summit, but the list is by no means complete.

D. F. O. DANGAR.

HIGH ALPINE MICE.—The answer to your correspondent's question as to how a mouse came to find itself at 10,470 ft. and in such an isolated spot (*A. J.* 57. 100, 257) is almost certainly that the animal observed was not a mouse but a Snow Vole. These beasts are grey and have rather long tails compared with most voles; the German name is *Schneemaus*.

The scientific name is *Microtus nivalis*, due to Charles Frédéric Martins who, in a communication to the Académie des Sciences de Paris in 1842, described a specimen which had been caught the previous year in the 'auberge du Faulhorn, à 2708 mètres.'

The species occurs in mountainous regions from northern Spain to south-western Turkestan and also in Palestine. In the Alps the lower limit of its range coincides closely with that of the Rusty-leaved Alpenrose (*Rhododendron ferrugineum* L.), *i.e.* about 1,500 m., and it is interesting to note that though the Snow Vole is most plentiful between 1,700 and 2,700 m., in the Tessin where this Alpenrose occurs as low as 1,000 m. there the Snow Vole is also found. The uppermost limit varies according to the nature of the ground, the important consideration probably being whether it is burrowable or not. On the Finsteraarhorn and Piz Bernina the animal ranges up to 4,000 m.

The normal food consists of alpine plants and roots, but these voles are very confiding in man and will readily come into huts for scraps of food. They do not hibernate but move about on the surface of the ground under the snow and have burrows in which they sleep and in which food is stored during the summer to help them through the winter.

T. C. S. MORRISON-SCOTT.

MONT AIGUILLE.—While spending a few days at Grenoble last July, my wife and I made an excursion to see Mont Aiguille, the 'Mons Inascensibilis' of Aymar Falco (1534), which was ascended by Antoine de Ville in 1492 by command of Charles VIII of France. On a few old maps it is called Mont Equille, *i.e.* equal in height to the adjacent Grand Veymont, highest summit of the Vercors. As the weather was overcast, we had no view of the peak until we emerged from the tunnel at Clelles-Mens station, where it gives a tremendous impression both of form and height. Even with artificial aid its ascent was a remarkable achievement in its time.

Things have changed since it was visited by Coolidge and Gardiner in 1888 (*A. J.* 14. 211). A bus now transports one by paved road to Chichilliane; the Hotel Mont Aiguille, known to Hope and Kirkpatrick in 1913 (*A. J.* 28. 369) is closed, although there are two adequate inns near the station.

We walked through fields of lovely flowers to the railroad viaduct and took the mule path to Trèzanne, but, as the day was not perfect, did not carry out our plan of crossing the Col du Pas Pavet, renowned for its flora, to St. Michel-les-Portes, returning instead to Clelles. This was a fortunate decision since we were taking motion-pictures and, on

our way back, encountered waves of sheep and goats coming down the hillside. The accompanying shepherds, who had been camping out and had their tents and other equipment neatly packed on four small donkeys, told us that this was a small herd of about 800 head and that we should come back another time when they had 5,000. They were moving to new pasture, as was constantly necessary, but the scene with dogs working, men driving, and the herd flowing by orchards and fields, with Mont Aiguille for a background, was almost biblical in its simple grandeur.

While returning to Grenoble we passed St. Michel-les-Portes, where guides are stationed and from whence Mont Aiguille is now usually ascended, and had a final view of the peak, which from this point appears as a slender knife-edged block of vast size. The whole area of the Vercors was an island of resistance during the war, and terrible atrocities were perpetrated on the inhabitants. During the past several years the region has been developed for winter sports.

On the following day I called on M. Avezou at the Archives, located in the Prefecture de l'Isère, Place Verdun. This obliging gentleman allowed me to examine the documents written on the summit by Antoine de Ville and by witnesses from Clelles in 1492. They are well preserved, and M. Avezou thought that I was the first English-speaking climber to have seen them, since even Coolidge, who reproduced them in his work on Simler, had only photographic copies. It is not generally known that Charles VIII, after becoming Dauphin on his entry into Vienne in 1490, adopted Mont Aiguille as his 'device,' surmounting it by the Latin motto 'Supereminet Inuius.' It is not quite clear whether he ever saw the peak prior to passing its base on his way to Italy in 1494, but he must have heard of it earlier, perhaps from the chronicle (1211) of Gervais of Tilbury, and for that reason gave the order for its ascent.

J. MONROE THORINGTON.

EARLY ENGLISH TRAVELLERS IN THE GRAIANS.—In 1751 the Abbé J. T. Needham, F.R.S., walked from Bourg St. Maurice to the Mont Cenis by way of the Col du Palet and Entre-deux-Eaux, the first Englishman known to have crossed the mountains of the Tarentaise. His journey was described by Michael Roberts in his first article on *English Travellers in the Graians* (*A.J.* 56. 52-5). The bicentenary of Needham's pioneer journey was celebrated this summer at Entre-deux-Eaux by Mrs. Michael Roberts and a party of young climbers. The hostesses at the farmhouse inn—Mesdames Dianon and Busdin (*nées* Richard) entered at once into the spirit of the occasion. They provided a dinner such as the younger members of the party had never before seen, and insisted on presenting as their contribution two bottles of admirable Burgundy. In this, toasts were drunk to the Club Alpin Français, the Alpine Club, the Ladies' Alpine Club and Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club, and finally to the Abbé Needham and all Mountain Travellers.

In spite of some hydroelectric works at the junction of the Leisse and Rocheure torrents, Entre-deux-Eaux has changed little since the war. Travellers will find a scrupulously clean bedroom at the inn and a first-class cuisine, served up by a competent waitress of nine years old. There is a specially warm welcome for British climbers and walkers.

JANET ADAM SMITH.

ZERMATT REVISITED.—At Easter 1951 I revisited Zermatt after an absence of twenty years. I found myself introduced as one who, in 1911, when still a boy, had been forced to give up a longed-for climb on the Rimpfischhorn owing to the sad lapse of his guide. Not for the first time he got drunk the night before the climb at the Fluhalp inn. Memories are long in Zermatt.

The railway station had been slightly damaged by avalanches. It might well have suffered more damage if the snow had not avalanched in two successive falls over the same slope. I heard no evidence of previous avalanche damage to the station, but was told that when the railway was planned old men had objected to the present site of the station owing to avalanche danger.

The Matterhorn has always been a magnet attracting tourists in large numbers. But it was interesting to read in a guide's book the testimony of the numerous tourists who had been dragged to the top and arrived home utterly exhausted, though pathetically grateful to their guide for his help and kindnesses during long hours of misery. Perhaps I should have written 'drugged' not 'dragged,' as a guide informed me that coramine tablets had enabled eighty people to reach the top of the Matterhorn in the 1950 season. Fortunately, coramine is not a very strong or harmful drug. It can have little direct physiological value in overcoming exhaustion. No doubt it has some psychological effect, enabling many ordinary people to vanquish not an enemy but themselves and thus prove the truth of Mallory's words.

If my guide's experience is at all normal, it seems that the lure of the Matterhorn has resulted in comparatively fewer guided parties on other peaks in recent years. Perhaps one reason is that the tariff for the Hörnli ridge route on the Matterhorn is no longer artificially high compared with other well-known Valais climbs (see table in *Die Alpen*, April 1951).

Recently it seems to have become rarer for a guide to go outside his own district; no doubt this is due largely to lack of money in his employer's pocket. My guide's most regular employer outside the Zermatt valley was, I am glad to record, a member of the Alpine Club. It must be difficult for a young guide to get a wide experience nowadays.

The old families of St. Niklaus are no longer so strongly represented among the younger guides in the Zermatt district. I was told that the reason is entirely economic. The Zermatt guide who is temporarily out of a job can find something useful to do near at hand without having to waste his days lounging in the streets; he can come quickly when

summoned by a hotel to meet an employer. The St. Niklaus men could not afford to hang about Zermatt indefinitely waiting for a job. A new factory at St. Niklaus now provides more secure employment for young men there.

If much has changed among guides, much is still the same. The best still enjoy the mountains and still show a real desire to further the aims and enhance the pleasure of their clients, without being swayed unduly by mercenary considerations.

E. GUETERBOCK.

PRARAYÉ, 1951.—The Rifugio d'Aosta above Prarayé was destroyed by avalanches last winter, only a year or so after its reconstruction.

Our party discovered this fact (which seemed not to be generally known across the Swiss side of the frontier) after crossing the Col d'Oren from Chanrion. We also found that the former hotel at Prarayé had been sacked by partisans during the war and never reopened, but the Blanc family kindly improvised accommodation and food for the unexpected travellers.

The customs post above Bionaz proved haughty and officious on our descent of the valley next morning. They went through the contents of all our sacks and informed us that we had entered Italy by an unauthorised route; their proper duty would have been to detain us while they reported to 'higher authority,' but they would on this occasion regard the bad weather—it had poured since dawn—as constituting *force majeure* and allow us to proceed.

One wonders whether the embargo of Fascist days, whereby travellers were only allowed to enter Italy over the mountains by one or two passes of no interest to mountaineers, does, in fact, still hold. All our passports were in order.

L. H. HURST.

GOSAU (SALZKAMMERGUT, AUSTRIA).—Unlike most mountain villages Gosau (c. 3,000 ft.) is not concentrated in one small area but extends for three or four miles up the broad and beautiful Gosau valley. The Gasthaus Brandwirt is only a few hundred yards from the cross-roads where the Post autobus stops. It can be thoroughly recommended as reasonable; I paid 42 Austrian schillings a day en pension (10 per cent. extra for service); excellent food, well cooked, and spotlessly clean; and, last but not least, a bathroom.

There is another hotel at the top end of the valley—the Gosauschmied—but judging by reports I had from people staying there, it is not up to the Gasthaus Brandwirt.

Gosau may be termed an ideal place for training walks, of which there are a large number. While unable to leave for the Adamek Hut, owing to weather, I indulged in quite a number of them.

At Gosausee, half an hour by bus from Brandwirt, there is a small hotel with only five bedrooms; but the food is excellent.

Adamek Hut, 6,000 ft.— $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours from the Gosausee Hotel ; the first hour is along the Gosausee, then a gradual climb up past the Gosaulake to the Hinterer Gosausee, which is one of the most beautiful mountain lakes to be seen anywhere—surrounded by an amphitheatre of rock. From there it is 4 hours to the hut, where there is accommodation for 40–50 people, beds comfortable and cooking good. The service was poor, only one girl of 16 to wait on everybody, so the guides came to the rescue.

From the Adamek Hut : *The Hohen Dachstein*—rope not necessary. Wire ropes in many places. Fairly long from the Einstieg. *The Mittelspitz*—a 5–6 hours' climb. *Torstein*—up North-east face and down South-west face—a very enjoyable climb, described as '*Schwindlig*' ; only one rather severe pitch and a short, narrow, slanting chimney. One hour from Einstieg to summit. Descent not difficult but care necessary to avoid *steinschlag* and when crossing steep, movable scree. This is a good second-day climb. *Eiskarlspitze*—third-day climb : 2 hours to Einstieg, 1 hour up. Very exposed North-east arête, but holds good. Down the same way. *Schneebergerwandtürme*—8–10 hours. Long and severe in many places. Eight towers are climbed in all. Only for those who are in first-rate condition and with plenty of climbing experience. Considered the best climb in the district ; classed as very severe.

For those unacquainted with this district, it may be added that the nearest big centre is Salzburg. The best guide there is Gottfried Spielbuchler (at Gosau) ; if not obtainable, he has a colleague named Bergtoller, also very good. At Goisern, above Bad Ischl, there is a guide named Peter Zopf who is a reliable guide but now too old for severe climbs.

C. M. D. EALES.