

SOME NOTES ON A. F. MUMMERY

BY T. S. BLAKENEY

MUMMERY is an evergreen figure in the history of climbing. He does not 'date' in the same way as many others of his time. Mr. Ronald Clark, indeed, deliberately omitted him from his book, *The Victorian Mountaineers*, because he considered Mummery had so much of the modern spirit as not to be a true Victorian.

Undoubtedly Mummery wears well; his reputation has not been 'de-bunked' by anyone. If anything, as Mr. Young has observed,¹ fame has tended to credit him with legendary qualities. The fact that legends accumulate is in itself testimony to the reputation he owns. As Mlle. Claire Engel says,² his name is quoted by noted foreign practitioners of abnormal routes as a justification for their adventures.

Anything, therefore, that throws additional light upon him is welcome; had he decided, as he so easily might have done, to write his book only after return from his Himalayan expedition, how little we might have known of him!

The triumphant ascent of Nanga Parbat in 1953 evoked renewed interest in Mummery on the part of the Germans and, in particular, pictures of him were desired. Now, thanks to the kindness of Mummery's daughter, Mrs. Gray, we are able to publish three new pictures; one of him as a young man, the date unfortunately not known, but probably while in his twenties; one with his daughter, probably taken about 1888; and one of his wife, probably taken about 1892.

It would be interesting to know if any other portrait of Mrs. Mummery is extant. It is curious, if not, for she wrote one of the most delightful descriptions of a mountain climb that has been published. Who does not recall the vivid incidents of the first ascent of the Teufelsgrat; the bull on the Täschalp; Burgener's admonitions against kicking down stones; the damage to his thumb; or the confident exhortations to hurry as the storm sets in?

Mrs. Mummery was Mary Petherick, daughter of J. W. Petherick, a solicitor in Exeter, and sister of W. J. Petherick, *A.C.* (*A.ŷ.* 49. 259). She was born in 1859 and died 1946, having married in 1883. Miss (Lily) Bristow was a particular friend of hers, and indeed the Pethericks and Bristows had been friends, Mrs. Gray informs me, for some generations. Miss Bristow was a noted climber in her day, as shown in her own letters (published in *A.ŷ.* 53. 370) and in her descent (the first) of the Zmuttgrat in 1894 (the first time the ridge was climbed by a woman).³

¹ *A.ŷ.* 54. 114.

² *They Came to the Hills*, pp. 203-4; and *A History of Mountaineering in the Alps*, p. 216.

³ Mummery, *My Climbs*, chaps. 1 and 6.

In 1908 Mrs. Mummery, diffidently, Mlle. Engel tells us,⁴ permitted to be published a number of her husband's letters to her from India, as an Introduction to a re-issue of *My Climbs*. It was this re-issue, it may be remembered, that elicited the rather deplorable review by Whympers, referred to in *A. J.* 57. 339.

Except for these letters to his wife, and one to Lord Bryce, published in *The Times* on January 2, 1896 and, with their permission, printed at the end of this article, Mummery left few records of his climbing, apart from his book itself. Mrs. Gray assures me (and Mr. Edward Petherick said the same some few years ago) that no diaries or notes of climbs were found after her father's death; and as he greatly disliked being photographed, pictures of him have also been few. Mrs. Gray says that her own and her mother's personal relics of Mummery perished in the Exeter blitz in 1942, and it is a lamentable thing indeed to have to say that, at the moment of writing, the 'thirty short notes' by Mummery, presented to the Club in 1943,⁵ are not to be found. If any member can throw light upon these, it is hoped that he will do so.

Mrs. Gray adds that, as she was quite a small girl at the time of her father's death, he is a somewhat shadowy figure in her memory. Moreover, Mrs. Mummery found the subject of mountaineering so distressing that for many years it was a topic she and her daughter avoided.

A few miscellaneous points, however, may be added here:

(1) Farrar, writing to Montagnier April 20, 1917,⁶ says: 'Mummery was certainly very short-sighted, and was much given to tumbling down on a path. I think his main strength lay in his arms, as he never carried anything whatever on a mountain.'⁷ I believe when Mummery, Collie and Hastings climbed together, Hastings carried the lot. Of course, I remember Mummery very well—he had a most gigantic hand, almost like a gorilla.'

Mr. C. H. Pasteur confirms the short-sightedness and informs me that Mummery, who had to wear very strong glasses, found these a strain on his eyes, and was accustomed to take them off on the paths, and put them on for actual climbing. Hence the tumbling down referred to by Farrar, who says that Zurfluh, Mummery's guide in the Caucasus, had been struck by this.

(2) Freshfield⁸ says that Mummery 'followed me in many of my spring rambles in the Maritime Alps, Algeria and elsewhere.' According to Mumm's *Register*, Freshfield made expeditions in the Maritime Alps in 1877 and 1878; and in Algeria in 1886. We have no clue as to the dates of Mummery's excursions in these areas, but possibly they may have been made in 1882–85, years in which no records concerning him have been noted.

⁴ *They Came to the Hills*, p. 197.

⁵ *A. J.* 54. 77.

⁶ A.C. archives.

⁷ Not literally true, as may be seen by turning to, e.g. chaps. 5 and 6 of *My Climbs*.

⁸ *A. J.* 18. 2.

(3) It was, apparently, during this blank period of 1882-5 that Mummery first met J. A. Hobson, with whom he collaborated in a book on economic questions, *The Physiology of Industry* (1889). Those interested in the economic views put forward will find a discussion of them by the late Lord Keynes, in his work, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, 1936 (pp. 364 seqq.). Hobson, quoted by Keynes, says it was not till the middle '80's that his economic heterodoxy began to take shape. While teaching at a school in Exeter,⁹ Hobson came in touch with Mummery through friends (Mummery's wife, it will be remembered, came from Exeter), and he says Mummery 'entangled' him in a controversy about excessive Saving and its effects upon Employment. Hobson adds that he held out for a long time,¹⁰ but Mummery at length convinced him. After this, they proceeded to work out their theories in their joint book.

It seems not unreasonable to assume that between 1883 (Mummery's marriage) and 1887 (when Hobson left Exeter), the two met for the first time, though most of their contacts were by correspondence. It is clear from Hobson's testimony that Mummery was the originating force in the matter, and his name appears first on the title-page of *The Physiology of Industry*. The book is highly praised by Keynes, and R. H. Tawney endorses the praise in the *Dictionary of National Biography* [art. 'J. A. Hobson'].

(4) *Mummery's Election to the Alpine Club*. As is well known, Mummery's first candidature for the A.C. was rejected, but a second application, made some years later, was successful. In the latter connection, Sir Arnold Lunn¹¹ tells how Coolidge related to him that he had 'cheated' Mummery into the Club, by removing some of the black balls in the ballot box. This story has been doubted.¹²

Mummery's original application shows that he was proposed by C. T. Dent and seconded by D. W. Freshfield; his application was passed by the Committee on March 18, 1880 and rejected at the ballot on April 6 following. His second application shows him as proposed by Alfred Williams and seconded by F. F. Tuckett, with F. Gardiner as a supporter. The application was passed by Committee on Nov. 23, 1888 and the election made on Dec. 18 following.

I am indebted to Dr. P. Sieber, of the Zentral-bibliothek, Zürich, for permission to print the correspondence of Mummery in the Coolidge papers, and though much in the letters is irrelevant to the topic of his election, I have printed the letters in full, as being of general interest.

It is obvious from the earlier letters (nos. 3, 4 and 5) that Mummery was hurt at his rejection by the Club, but letter no. 6 is of particular interest, as throwing some light upon the reasons that led to his being black-balled. It has been assumed that Mummery was turned

⁹ *D.N.B.* says Hobson was a classical master at schools at Faversham and Exeter from 1880-87.

¹⁰ 'For a year or two' is how he put it in the Appreciation he wrote for the Nelson Library edition of *My Climbs* (1908).

¹¹ *Switzerland and the English*, pp. 155, 250-51.

¹² *A. J.* 54. 205; *They Came to the Hills*, p. 198.



A. F. MUMMERY AND DAUGHTER.

[To face p. 120.]



MRS. MUMMERY.



A. F. MUMMERY.

down because of his connection with 'trade' (he was partner with his brother in a tanning business).¹³ Mummery's letter to Coolidge, however, suggests that other factors were at work, and that the main objection to his candidature may have been the jealousy and disapproval of his startlingly fresh climbs, perhaps especially the Charmoz and Col du Lion.

That petty motives could operate against a candidate being elected, by concerted black-balling at the ballot, is obvious; nor would Mummery's rejection be the only occasion. T. S. Kennedy resigned from the Club after two of his candidates had been black-balled¹⁴; Passingham's election was also blocked and he was greatly hurt at the circumstance¹⁵; and V. J. E. Ryan, perhaps the most brilliant, if meteoric, figure in the rock-climbing world at the beginning of this century, though passed by the A.C. Committee, was also rejected at the ballot.

Lunn (*op. cit.*), though he appears to attach greater weight to the 'boot-shop' theory (i.e. that Mummery's tannery was really a retail boot shop, or at any rate connected with one), also mentions an alternative factor, of jealousy on the part of a member of the Club with whom Coolidge was on bad terms. I am reliably informed by a member of the Club having particular knowledge on the matter, that this *was* the true reason for the black-balling, and that (as can indeed be inferred from Lunn) W. E. Davidson was at the back of it. It will be seen that this agrees with what Mummery writes to Coolidge, about one of his 'nominal supporters' having worked in secret against him: Davidson was on the Committee at the time and in a position to exert influence in the Club—he had been acting Honorary Secretary the year before.

As for the boot-shop theory, the following considerations, I suggest, really dispose of this:

(a) It is obvious from Mrs. Mummery's Introduction to *My Climbs* that Mummery was in a sufficiently good way of business that he could think of retiring from it at the early age of 39—which does not sound like a boot-shop proprietor.

(b) The *D.N.B.* bears it out that he was a man of good private means.

(c) Neither Mummery's daughter (Mrs. Gray), nor his brother-in-law (Mr. Edward Petherick), nor any other relatives who have been asked, know anything of it. Mr. C. H. Pasteur tells me that it is entirely unknown to him also.

(d) The Town Clerk of Dover, in answer to an enquiry, informs me that William Rigden Mummery, the father, came to Dover from Deal about 1850 on acquiring the Dover tannery—situated at Stembrook. He was thrice Mayor of Dover in the 'sixties. 'The Mummery family did not carry on a retail boot shop in Dover. They resided at Maison Dieu House, an old Jacobean mansion adjoining Dover Town Hall.'

¹³ Engel, *They Came to the Hills*, p. 198 and Lunn, *Switzerland and the English*, p. 250.

¹⁴ *A.J.* 17. 334.

¹⁵ Letter from his widow to Farrar, January 12, 1916—A.C. archives.

The foregoing says as much as seems practicable at present on the subject of Mummery's black-balling in 1880; can anything be added, to confirm or deny, the story told by Coolidge to Sir Arnold Lunn, of the faking of Mummery's election in 1888?

It has been suggested that Coolidge invented the tale; Sir Arnold Lunn, however, thinks that though it may have been inaccurately given to him, there was probably a basis of truth in it.

It appears to me, from Mummery's letter no. 8, and in conjunction with the evidence to be found in certain other letters in the Coolidge papers at Zürich, that it is improbable that Coolidge would have put himself out to get Mummery elected. It will be noted that letter no. 8 differs somewhat in tone from Mummery's earlier letters; he is blaming Coolidge to some extent for having printed Sella's remarks in *A. J.* 11. 72, saying that Mummery stopped, not 20–30 metres from the summit of the Géant in 1880, but about 100 metres. Now if anything is certain about Coolidge, it is that if one criticised him, it made an enemy of him. It is possibly significant, therefore, that this is the last of Mummery's letters to be preserved among Coolidge's papers.¹⁶ By itself, one could not draw any firm conclusion about Mummery's future relations with Coolidge, but two other letters, to which Mr. Ronald Clark has kindly drawn my attention, may have a bearing.

Tuckett, writing to Coolidge on Feb. 6, 1883 [Coolidge papers, Zürich, folder 51], says 'I am grieved to learn of the hot water you have got into *re* Aiguille du Géant and that you have felt compelled to resign your membership in the C.A.I. . . .' Clearly, therefore, Coolidge was still involved in trouble over the Géant, and this would not be likely to engender kindly feelings towards Mummery.

On Nov. 18, 1894, Coolidge writes to Freshfield [Coolidge papers, Zürich, folder 21], to complain of two nominations that have been made to the A.C. Committee for the ensuing year. . . . 'You at least must have been aware how very objectionable they must be to me, as H. [Heelis] was D.'s [Davidson's] chief agent in 1885 and M. [Mummery] treated me so shabbily when I was Editor [1880–89] that although I was anxious for his final election I have never had but the most formal communications with him since. . . . It was hard for me to remain a member of a society which also included them, but to have them as office-bearers over me is impossible in my opinion. I write, therefore, to tell you privately and informally that in the course of the next two or three days I will send Wicks my formal withdrawal from A.C. and from the Editorship of Ball. . . . Of course I must continue to correspond with you for a while to wind up affairs, but apart from that I decline to have any further communications with you whatsoever. . . .'

If Coolidge could find it hard to remain a member of the Alpine Club after Mummery was elected to it, it scarcely seems likely that he would

¹⁶ The last, that is, under the present classification of the Coolidge papers. It is not impossible that further letters might come to light in other parts of the collection, as the sorting of correspondence has only been done in a rough-and-ready fashion (see *A. J.* 43. 381).

have been at pains to 'cheat' him into the Club, even had Coolidge been present at the time of the ballot and in a position to falsify the returns. What is more probable is that the relationship between Mummery and Coolidge became strained over the Géant episode and that Coolidge, whilst not opposing Mummery's election in 1888 in any way (which would have meant having to eat his own words very considerably), would not have taken any steps to promote Mummery's interests, which is, indeed, borne out by the absence of Coolidge's name from the application paper, even as a supporter, and still less as proposer or seconder.

Copies of letters from A. F. Mummery to W. A. B. Coolidge in the Zentral Bibliothek, Zürich (the Coolidge papers). [Folder No. 40.]

No. 1.

- I. Col du Lion.
- II. Charmoz.
- III. Matterhorn by Furggen ridge.

Dover,
7th Sept. (1880).

DEAR SIR,

I am much too fond of climbing to think it any trouble to write about my scrambles. My only regret is that the peculiar position in which I am placed prevents my fully satisfying your wishes.

On July 6th Alex. Burgener and I left Zermatt at 12.30 A.M. and reached the upper basin of the Tiefenmatten glacier at 6.

I. As I daresay you have noticed, the lower part of the Couloir du Lion overhangs, so we kept well to the right, crossing the Bergschrund directly under the Tête du Lion. Thence we bore sharply to the left, making for some projecting rocks. These were quite impracticable, and we traversed the very steep ice slope beneath them. Once fairly in the Couloir the work became easier, though notwithstanding an extremely cold night I doubt whether the snow, varying from 4 to 8 inches thick, was altogether worthy the confidence we put in it.

About 9 (?) we reached the point some 400 feet under the Col where a buttress of rock breaks through the snow, giving the couloir its impracticable appearance. On either side of this buttress we now saw there was a narrow ice gully. We took to the one on our left and at length succeeded in getting up it and reaching a bank of snow, which some projecting rocks in the buttress had supported while either side had swept down in avalanches. The first bank thinned out, and we took to a second, more to our right, which led us onto an incipient ridge about 60 feet below the Col. This 60 feet was a nearly perpendicular wall of rotten rock well powdered with snow, and guarded by a formidable cornice. This latter was impassable at the only point we could

reach it and a traverse of extreme difficulty had to be made to a gap on our right, up which we scrambled onto the pass, 11.15 A.M.

In descending we glissaded down the couloir onto the glacier, reaching Breil [*sic*] $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours from the pass.

So far as I could judge, the Couloir on the Stockje side must be between 2,000 & 3,000 feet high at an average inclination of 60 deg.

II. July 15. With the addition of Benedict Venetz, we left Chamounix at 12.15 A.M. When we got to the glacier des Nantillons it seemed to us that the usual route would be exposed to great danger from ice falls. We therefore kept to the right, under the Blaitière, first in a snow couloir and then on easy rocks on its left. We then found the only way onto the glacier was by a wedge of ice lurching over the cliff below. After traversing the glacier we got onto some convenient rocks where we waited till the Sun had warmed the crags we were to climb.

The Charmoz consists of two peaks. We decided to climb the left-hand or Montanvert peak as it appeared to be the highest* and was evidently the most difficult.

Ascending the snow couloir, at 8.45 we got to a secondary ridge which proved fairly easy, till (at 9.30) it abutted onto the face of the peak. A few yards above and to our left was the point where Mr. Dent & Burgener had been turned back some years previously. We kept more to the right. First, however, leaving all unnecessary clothes and baggage behind. The rocks were of excessive difficulty. At one point we encountered an ice gully of some 15 feet high; the ice bulging out above and generally partaking of the nature of a big icicle. The arête was reached at a point just to the right of the big overhanging stone, which, seen from Chamounix, appears the highest point. It is not so, and a stiff piece of arête had to be climbed before we balanced ourselves on the top, 11.45. Leaving at 12.15 we got to the easier rocks at 2.15 & Chamounix at 5.30. We left no ropes on the mountain.

III. On July 19, with the same guides I left Zermatt at 12.30 A.M., reached the Furggen glacier and then bore across the steep glacier descending from the Matterhorn. Here we lost much time owing to the formidable crevasses with which it is riven in every direction. We made for a small couloir about midway in the line of cliff between the Furggen arête & the snow slopes of the East face. By the rocks, at first on the right and then on the left of this couloir, we got above the cliffs and were able to ascend the face rapidly. Taking, after a short time, to a secondary arête which we followed till the Furggen ridge became practicable. This proved by no means difficult & I do not think it can have been more than 7.30 when we got to the gap between the two towers seen from Zermatt under the final peak.

The final peak, was, however, inaccessible and we had to traverse the face by some very smooth rocks onto the Hörnli ridge which we gained

* It is not so.

a short distance (a rope's length) beneath the first chain, finishing the ascent by the usual route.

If there are any further details that you would like to have I shall be very pleased to send them.

Yours faithfully,

A. F. MUMMERY.

No. 2.

Dover,
Sept. 9th. (1880).

DEAR SIR,

We only went up the Montanvert peak of the Charmoz. Unluckily, neither Burgener nor myself were aware that it was not the highest point till we got to the top. I fancy the other peak is much easier of access but will let you know more about that another year.

I will certainly do myself the pleasure of calling on you when in your neighbourhood and trust you will do the same to me if ever in Dover.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

A. F. MUMMERY.

P.S.—If not troubling you too much, I should like to know what foreign Alpine paper the Charmoz was mentioned in?

No. 3.

Maison Dieu, (Dover).
8th Oct. 1881.

DEAR SIR,

I must apologize for not answering your letter sooner, but having been away from home I was obliged to wait till my return for the necessary references to my notes.

I thank you heartily for your kind offer to attempt to 'run' me again for the A.C. but I do not care to risk a second defeat.

It does not seem to me desirable for those who are not members of the Club to send notes to the *A. J.*, but if you would really like to make any extracts from this letter, pray do so.

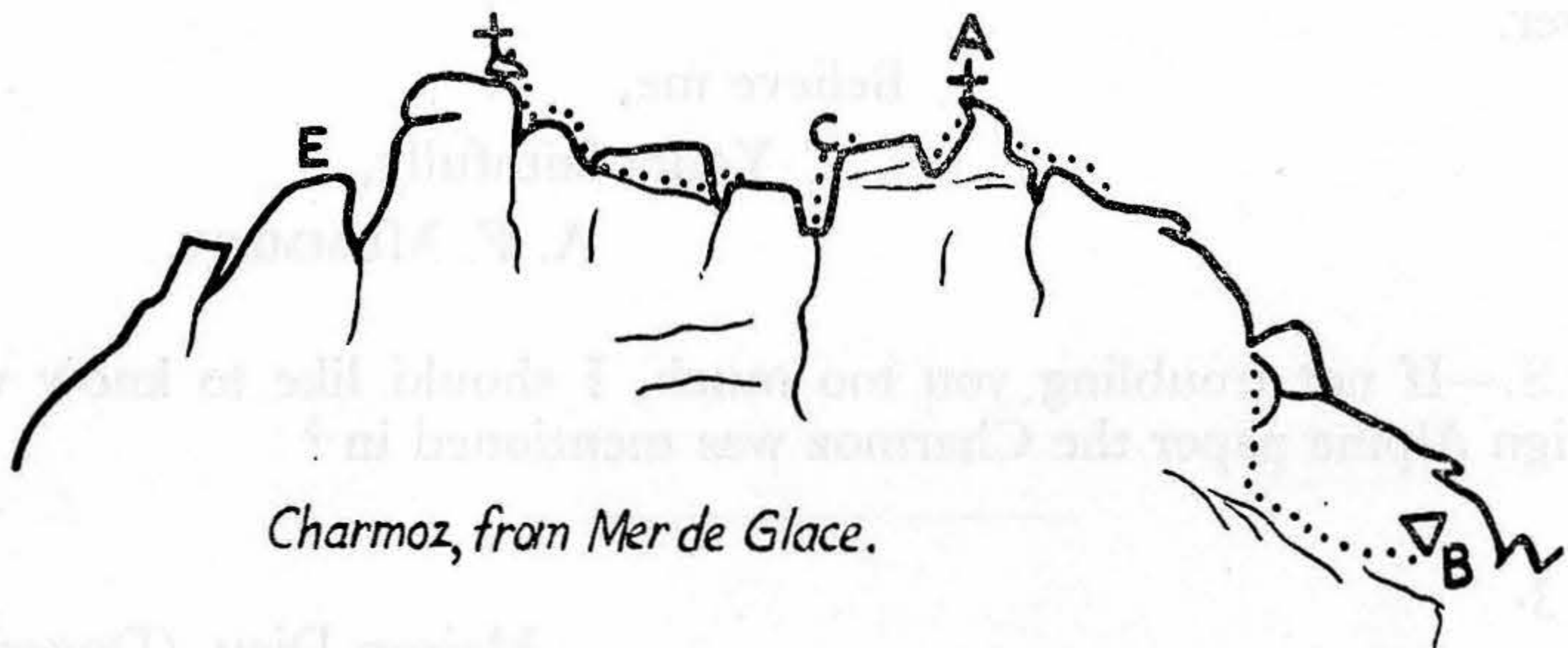
Verte by the S.W. face

Burgener and I left the Montanvert at 11 P.M. July 29th, and crossed the last Bergschrund of the Charpoua glacier at 7 A.M. the next morning. The great snow couloir is cut off from the glacier by a precipitous cliff. In this there are two rock couloirs on the left (N) and one well to the right (S). The Bergschrund was only passable immediately beneath the right-hand gully, and as the slope was here bare ice and extremely steep, we were obliged to make for that line of ascent. The gully

proved to be ice-glazed and otherwise objectionable. We climbed it and made a traverse to the left into the great snow couloir. This is seamed throughout its whole length by a deep and impassable avalanche gully. Higher up, the couloir divides into two arms; that to the right is impracticable, and having been kept on that side of the couloir by the avalanche track, we had to make a difficult ice and iced rock traverse to gain the left arm. This couloir was filled with bare ice, so we took, as soon as possible, to the rocks on our right, whence a short scramble brought us to the main arête. We got to the summit at 12.20 P.M. Descended by ordinary route.

Charmoz

On Aug. 3rd, Venetz being also with me, we left Chamonix at 2 A.M. We followed the ordinary Blaitière track to the base of the couloir that runs up to the Col between the two summits of the Charmoz. When near the top of this, we lost an hour trying to find a way to our right. We subsequently came back to the couloir and reached a slab, with the



bottom of which several members of your club are well acquainted. Having ascended it, we found ourselves close to the curious hole in the arête (B) visible from the Mer de Glace near Trélaporte. We scrambled through it and traversed the left (Mer de Glace) face a short distance, regaining the ridge by a difficult bit of rock-work. We were immediately forced over onto the right (Nantillons) face, but regained the arête by a convenient crack close to the first summit (A). We threw a rope over it and hauled ourselves up, 2.20 P.M. Despite the assurances of my guides, I did not feel sure this was the highest point and the next afternoon I walked up to the Châlet of Blaitière dessous and started thence at 2 A.M. (on the 5th). We followed the same line to the base of the first peak. We fixed a short rope and slid into the first gap. We then traversed to the right and regained the arête just above a huge cleft (C) some eighty feet deep. This was, on our side, quite perpendicular, so we fixed a 100 feet of rope, well provided with knots, and lowered ourselves into it. We were again forced onto the right face, but getting back to the arête we found a convenient ledge on the left and reached without much more serious difficulty the small cleft beneath the summit. The ascent of this was desperately difficult (Summit 11.20 A.M.).

There does not appear to be much difficulty in reaching the point gained by the Balfours (E) this summer, apparently the same as that reached by Mr. Whitwell in 1875, but there is no possibility of getting from it to the summit.

Forcing the pace, we reached Chamonix at 6.15 P.M.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

A. F. MUMMERY.

No. 4.

3/11/81.

Maison Dieu,
Dover.

DEAR MR. COOLIDGE,

If you think it desirable I will (presuming you can give me the assurance suggested in one of your letters) put up again for the A.C. I do not see any other way in which I could become a contributor to the *A. J.* without exposing myself to unpleasing comments.

Should this course appear to involve much bother, pray leave matters as they are. Balfour, I hear, claims to have ascended the Charmoz and can doubtless describe the mountain.

I am extremely sorry to be unable to promise you a paper, but can assure you that if anything would have induced me to do so, your letter would have had that effect. I trust you will understand that my refusal is the unavoidable result of the action of the A.C.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

A. F. MUMMERY.

No. 5.

(January 20, 1882)

Maison Dieu,
Dover.

DEAR MR. COOLIDGE,

I take it I am right in assuming from your silence, that on second thoughts you agree with me in thinking it undesirable for me to again seek election to the English A.C. ?

I am sorry to trouble you any more about this matter, but for one or two reasons I should like to know your own and the feeling of the A.C. on the subject.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

A. F. MUMMERY.

20th Jan.

No. 6.

Private.

26th January (1882).

Maison Dieu,
Dover.

DEAR MR. COOLIDGE,

Many thanks for your kind letter and the trouble you have taken. Personally, I am conceited enough to think that I can do quite as well without the A.C. as the A.C. can without me. But it is different with my guides. Burgener does not appear to be very much injured by the almost total loss of his A.C. 'Monsieurs' or the rumours that are sedulously spread to his & his brother's discredit, but Venetz suffers so severely from his connection with me that the most skilful young rock climber in the Alps seems likely to be forced into some other employment.

I fear this discloses a very much wider jealousy than you imagine exists, though I am aware that only a very small knot of climbers, or rather non-climbers, express it openly.

I have recently learned that on one occasion a well-known member of your club & a nominal supporter of my last candidature, made tempting offers to my guide, both in money & employment, if he would 'make the expedition to fail'; as I was already started this was, you will admit, scarcely honourable warfare. I take it from this that the small knot (as almost invariably is the case in clubs) derives its strength from the undeclared support of influential members.

You will not, of course, allow this letter to pass beyond ourselves. I only mention it as explaining much that may have seemed discourteous to you in some of my letters last autumn.

The initials C.P. stand, I should think, for Charlet (Stratton) & Payot (Prosper). These men, I know, attempted the Charmoz both by the Blaitière ridge & the Couloir. They were also out three days trying to get up the Montanvert point. Eccles might possibly be able to give you definite information.

Again thanking you for your great courtesy,

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

A. F. MUMMERY.

No. 7.

Jan. 30th (1882).

Maison Dieu,
Dover.

DEAR MR. COOLIDGE,

I fully appreciate the kindness of your letter. I am very sorry that my case is not, as I had thought, quite exceptional in the history of the A.C. With regard to future contributions to the *A. J.*, now that you fully understand my position I am quite willing to place myself in your hands.

The heights attained on the S.E. and N.W. ridges are stated much too high. The parties were certainly 120 feet in the one case and 40 feet in the other below peaks 2 & 3 respectively.

From my experience of the Mer de Glace face, I believe the point at which we gained the arête might be made from that side.

Thanks for proof of paper and illustration.

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

A. F. MUMMERY.

No. 8.

[*Extracts from this letter were published in A. J. 48. 180. As I understand Mummery's letter, B. & M. marks the limit of his attempt on the N. face of the Géant, and he estimates it as about 1,000 ft. from the summit. Mr. H. E. L. Porter and Mr. B. R. Goodfellow inform me that they consider 1,000 ft. is an overestimate ; perhaps 800 ft. would be nearer the mark.*

Sella (A. J. 11. 72) says Mummery stopped at a point not 20-30 m. from the summit, but about 100 m. This refers, of course, to their attempt on the S.W. face, and Sella's estimate of distance seems more correct than Mummery's, as the point he marks as 'Our Furthest', which is really behind the skyline arête, is certainly more than 20-30 m. (i.e. less than 100 ft.) from the top.]

(Dec. 7, 1882.)

Maison Dieu,
Dover.

DEAR MR. COOLIDGE,

I scarcely understand the basis on which you wish me to send you a letter. If you are willing to state in the *A. J.* that you accept it as a correction, I shall be pleased to send it.

It is, I think, obvious that a misstatement (to anyone acquainted with the Géant) necessarily involving an imputation of bad faith, is persisted in by the *A. J.* till directly or indirectly withdrawn by the Editor. I cannot therefore write to the *A. J.* unless you are prepared, by endorsing my letter, to withdraw your authority from the objectionable paragraph.

The snow ridge (rt. of peak in lithograph) abuts onto the peak and is therefore *further* from the spectator than B. & M.

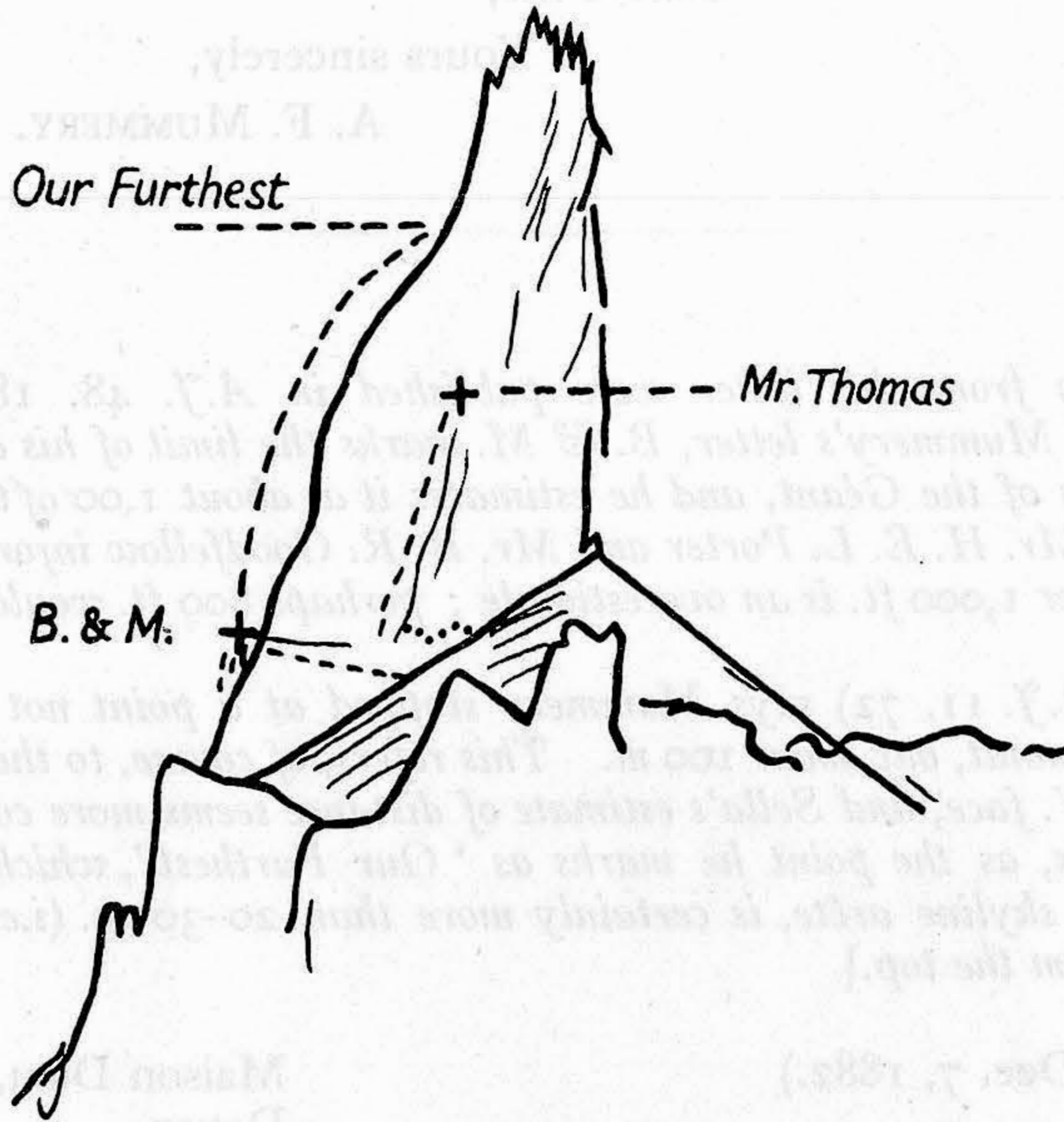
I enclose a rough sketch (from one given me by Mr. Thomas) which shows the point B. & M. as nearly as my memory serves me.

Your assumption that 1,000 feet remained to be climbed was practically correct, as the peak can only be *climbed* from the north (on the east side of the north face). On this part of the peak 1,000 feet of rock remain to be ascended.

I had intended to try it from this direction but fresh snow on that line of rocks made it impossible, and being at the Col de Géant we thought we might as well see if anything could be done from the snow ridge.

Yours faithfully,

A. F. MUMMERY.



Letter from A. F. Mummery to James Bryce, printed in *The Times*, January 2, 1896.

Rupal Nallah (near Astor),
July 26, 1895.

MY DEAR MR. BRYCE,

Thanks to your help we are having a splendid time. The Government have helped us in every way imaginable, and not only so but the different officials with whom we have come in contact have gone right out of their way to give us personal aid and assistance. So far we have not exceeded 19,000 ft., but our last expedition (from the Diamarai valley back here) involved some exceedingly difficult rock climbing of the Chamonix Aiguille sort at a height of 17,000, and we found ourselves as 'fit' as in the Alps, so I have good hopes that we shall get up Nanga.

On our first pass, the Mazeno, we felt very bad, partly, I think, from heat, partly from interminable loose stones, and partly from rarity of

the air, but we seem to have entirely got over these troubles. We are going to do a little peak from here and then cross a shoulder of Nanga itself. I am glad to say Bruce has joined our party for a fortnight and will be with us. We have also managed to borrow two Gurkhas from General Lockhart, so our carrying power is all that we could wish. It is most extraordinary to find that food and shelter are almost as easily managed as in the Alps. In this respect the Himalayas (Nanga district) are infinitely superior to the Caucasus.

Hoping before long to send you news of the conquest of Nanga,

Yours most sincerely,

A. F. MUMMERY.