

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

BY J. MONROE THORINGTON

If we, being otherwise for the most part persons of moderate respectability, and not more obviously mad than most people, continue in these unremunerative pursuits merely for the sake of pleasure, and proclaim that our climbing days have been among the best days of our lives, we ought to be able at least to define that pleasure in an intelligible way.

A. D. GODLEY

THE most important convention in the early history of mountaineering was that celestial regions were situated on high and that Avernus lay on a downward path. 'Truly the Gods live here', said Kim as he entered Himalayan fastnesses. Men lifted up their eyes unto the hills, but hesitated to invade the sanctuaries. Primitive fear was coupled with the natural desire to avoid unnecessary hardship. Ranges were crossed by soldiers, emperors and missionaries by the easiest and shortest routes. There was still belief in dragons, and pagan legends were remembered even by travellers from Britain who knew that the Cuchullins of Skye arose on the spot where the Sun flung his spear at Cailleach Bhur, the witch of Winter.

The bronze-age hunter who lost his spear-head on the summit of the Riffelhorn visualised the peaks only as a shadowy background to the necessities of his existence. They were *there*, but no compulsion to approach them had arisen. Altitude records which prevailed between the Creation and the end of classical antiquity, those of Noah and Hannibal, were due respectively to chance and the exigency of war.

Curiosity finally triumphed. In the case of Hadrian on Etna (A.D. 126), and Peter of Aragon on Canigou eleven centuries later, it was no more complicated than the desire to witness sunrise from an elevated site. Only later did anyone care what lay beyond the ranges. Toward the close of the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance, a sentimental viewpoint emerged, begun by Petrarch on Mont Ventoux, and carried on through Conrad Gesner to Haller and Rousseau. But the feeling of awe and terror was slow to vanish.

People of the plains understandably looked askance at the unknown terrain above the snowline, more so than did the peasants of the immediate vicinity. Travellers depended for guidance upon local inhabitants, hunters and crystal-seekers, who usually exploited them and encouraged their superstitions. A pilgrim, told that an avalanche

might start from vibrations of a bird in flight, had no standard to fall back upon, and readily accepted all the artificial aid available. Routes through the snow were marked by staves, and there was early, if untrustworthy, use of ropes, ladders and alpenstocks.

The earliest crossings of the Alps were through the western passes, Mont Genève and Great St. Bernard, or by the far easterly Brenner. But by 1524 men like Aegidius Tschudi of Glarus, the only sixteenth-century writer to penetrate above the snowline, were exploring passes of the Central Alps and had set foot on such glaciated crossings as the St. Théodule. His manuscript maps are preserved at St. Gallen. The Strassburg edition of *Ptolemy* (1513) improved its Swiss sheet by including the chief data from the manuscript map (1495) of the Zürich physician, Conrad Tüerst. Jacques Signot, of Paris, published a map of the Alpine passes in 1515.

The first edition of Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia* (1544) does not contain a special map of Switzerland, although there is a curious section on glaciers, and it remained for Johann Stumpf, following his tour of the Valais in 1544, to offer in his *Chronick* (1548) the first sectional maps of that country. Münster undertook his own journey in 1546 to meet this competition, but the four Swiss between them present on their maps only three peak names: *Mons Jubet* (Monte Giove), *Glaernisten* (Glärnisch) and *Vesulus* (Monte Viso). Stumpf mentions the Bietschhorn, but only in his text. A long list of Oberland peaks appears on Thomas Schöpf's map of 1577-8. It should be remembered that Monte Viso was known to both Virgil and Chaucer; the Eiger occurs in a document of 1252, while Mont Aiguille, in Dauphiné, is first mentioned by the English chronicler, Gervase of Tilbury, in 1211.

Josias Simler offered, in his *De Alpibus Commentarius* (1574), the first reasonable advice on precautions required of travellers in the Alps. Paths are narrow and are sometimes bridged from rock to rock or carried along a cliff on props strengthened by poles, the dizzy voyager being led by the hands of accustomed natives. Three-pronged irons give firm foothold on ice; alpenstocks, such as shepherds use, are of further aid, and ropes are employed in passing chasms of snow. Oxen pulling beams clear new snow, the merchants who follow paying the considerable cost. Wooden hoops, such as are used in binding wine casks, woven with a lattice of cord, prevent sinking in the snow, as the ancient Greeks had found out in taking beasts of burden across the Armenian mountains. Avalanche was the greatest peril, and Simler still believed that a flying bird, a strong wind, a man's cry or even its echo might set one in motion. Trees were already being planted in wedge-formation as protection. Dark glasses are recommended against snow-glare, and paper insulation is suggested as a supplement

to clothing. Cold water, followed by warm, is advocated for frosted feet, but constant exertion is the best prevention. But afterward, it was something to talk about. As Clinton Dent once wrote: 'The peril over, they remarked that they breathed freely again, and then at once fell to eating.'

Until the middle of the eighteenth century there were few ascents of high or snowy peaks. Petrarch, on Mont Ventoux (1336), can scarcely be included, although we owe him for the only mountain incunabulum and his arresting message that even now might adorn a clubroom: *In summo finis est omnium, et viae terminus, ad quem perigrinatio nostra disponitur*. Nor need we linger on the ascent of the Stockhorn by Rhellicanus in 1536 and described in his amusing *Stockhornias* (1537):

' We rise and breakfast, grip our alpenstocks,
To make our footsteps sure upon the rocks,
And help us up the peak.'

We may well begin with the knight, Rotario d' Asti, who carried a bronze triptych in fulfilment of a vow to the summit of the Rochemelon, the ancient *Mons Romuleus* (11,605 ft.), near Susa, on September 1, 1358. It was the first time that this contour had been crossed in the Alps.

Precipitous Mont Aiguille, near Grenoble, one of the 'Seven Miracles of Dauphiné', was scaled in 1492 by order of Charles VIII of France, who had passed it on his way to Italy and adopted it as a device. This feat, incredible for its time, was carried out by his military engineer, Antoine de Ville, who used 'sobtilz engins' and other aids and remained three days on the summit.

An event far out of its time took place shortly afterward in the western hemisphere when Diego de Ordaz, one of Cortez' captains, made the first ascent of Popocatepetl in search of sulphur for gunpowder, the account in the *Pleasant History of the Conquest of Weast India* (London, 1578) being a free translation from Lopez de Gómara's *Historia*.

In the Eastern Alps the West Karwendelspitze was climbed in 1654, the following party (1704) finding three ancient crosses at the top. The pilgrimage peak of Mont Thabor, neighbour of Rochemelon, was reached before 1694.

Activity in the eighteenth century began slowly. Piz Beverin, adjacent to the Via Mala, was reached in 1707, and the Scescaplana, not far from Ragatz, in 1742 or earlier. The last ascent before 1760 was that of the Titlis, effected in 1744 by four peasants of Engelberg, following the present Trübsee route and using crampons and rope.

There was early knowledge of the Pilatus legend, curiously transferred through the years from the Tiber to Vienne, and thence to Lake

Geneva, where it remained fixed between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. The story spread abroad, and the surge of pilgrims to Rome across the St. Gotthard about 1350 finally associated it with the Lucerne area. The annual appearance of Pontius Pilate in scarlet robes was expected, but storms and greater disasters were certain if he were disturbed at other times. In 1387 six men were imprisoned for their curiosity, and it was not until 1518 when Vadianus and his companions visited the Pilatus lake, now vanished, that the tale began to be questioned. Conrad Gesner's ascent of the Gnepfstein summit on August 21, 1555, laid the affair to rest and marks the end of the period when terror kept men from mountains. It was also Gesner who gave the first modern reasons for climbing. Prefixed to his tract, *Libellus de Lacte* (1543), there is a letter he had written two years before to his friend Avienus of Glarus, in which he strikes the new note: 'As long as it may please God to grant me life, I will ascend several mountains, or at least one, every year at the season when the flowers are in their glory, partly for the sake of examining them, and partly for the sake of good bodily exercise and of mental delight.' The aesthetic sense is acknowledged, the continued interest manifested, with delight in rustic pleasures two centuries before Rousseau. 'But give me a man at least moderately endowed in mind and body. . . . I should wish him curious about natural objects and an admirer of them. . . . But walking itself and fatigue are tiresome and tedious. There is also danger in the difficulties of the region and in the steep places. The allurements of food and bed are lacking. Grant that these things are true; it will be pleasant thereafter to recall the toils and dangers; it will gratify you to turn over these things in your mind and tell them to your friends. . . . But couch, feather bed and pillows are lacking, O, soft and effeminate man! For you hay will take the place of all these; it is soft, fragrant and composed of various herbs and the most health-giving flowers. . . . This you may spread beneath your head for a pillow.' In 1585, when both Simler and Gesner were dead, the pastor of Lucerne, attended by citizens of requisite temerity, threw stones in the Pilatus lake and called in vain for Pilate to arise from its waters.

Writing in 1885, Clinton Dent must have shocked Victorian mountaineers: 'Rockets and such like are usually only mentioned in order to be condemned; while grapnels, chains and crampons are held to be inventions of the fiend. . . . For my own part, if it could be proved that by no possible means could a given bad passage be traversed without such aid, nor turned by any other route, I should not hesitate to adopt any mechanical means to the desired end.'

In the early days of climbing there was no special costume. Men went to the mountains in their ordinary town clothing, but for centuries had used artificial aids, of which the alpenstock was one of the first,

doubtless derived from the urban walking-stick or the shepherd's staff. Lengthened, it afforded leverage for vaulting or for stemming on rough ground, since it could be held with both hands and trailed through an armpit. Emperor Maximilian I, in the closing years of the fifteenth century, also employed it as a spear for game, and in *Theuerdank* (1517), where his hunting adventures are included, we have the first pictures of such aids. The first parties on the Stockhorn and Mt. Pilatus carried alpenstocks. Poles were used to mark the path on the Mont Genève pass in the time of Ammianus Marcellinus, and were placed on the Little St. Bernard as early as 1259. Taxes were collected for such markers on the Col de l'Argentière (Maritime Alps) in 1415. The *barrière ambulante* of Chamonix was a pole held at its extremities by two guides, while a traveller clung to its midsection as a substitute for rope. It was used on Saussure's expedition to Mont Blanc and the Col du Géant, and even by the Comte de Tilly at the Grands Mulets in 1843. The Victorian alpenstock was surmounted by a neatly turned knob or a chamois horn, and the names of peaks and passes burned on the shaft attested to the owner's prowess.

Xenophon used *racquettes* on his horses' feet, and Olaus Magnus (1555) illustrated their use in Scandinavia, where skis and snowshoes were in service before the dawn of history. In Sweden there are ancient rock-carvings depicting a rabbit who travelled on skis.

When the Great St. Bernard was traversed by Rudolphe, abbé of St. Trond, in 1128, his guides had iron points, probably not crampons, attached to their shoes. Thomas Coryat, author of *Crudities*, made a tour in 1608, crossing Alpine passes and using but one pair of nailed shoes in a journey of five months. The American Alpine Museum has, among its exhibits, a small chest from Chamonix, dated 1735 and studded with contemporary bootnails quite modern in appearance.

According to Strabo, Caucasian natives wore sandals of untanned leather with metal plates armed with spikes, for crossing snow and ice; and crampons resembling the early Chamonix type have been found in ancient tombs of the region. Irons for the feet were used by Celtic miners of the Hallstatt period (700-400 B.C.), and by the Gauls in Roman days. In *Theuerdank* four-pronged crampons are attached by two straps across the foot, but a binding is not always shown. A near accident is described as the result of a point bending. Several types of climbing-irons are shown by Olaus Magnus.

The Comte de Candale used *uncis ac maneads ferreas* in his attempt on the Pic du Midi d'Ossau about 1555; Simler mentions a three-pronged crampon like a horseshoe; while Clusius, in his botanical excursions on the Wiener Schneeberg between 1573 and 1578, was assisted by *ferreis uncis ad pedis alligatis*. Villamont, ascending Rochemelon in 1588, climbed with *les graffes de fer que l'on attachez*

aux mains et pieds. Crampons were in general use on the glaciers of Savoy by the latter part of the sixteenth century, were worn on P.-A. Arnod's attempt to cross the Col du Géant in 1689, and were used by the conquerors of the Titlis in 1744. Scheuchzer, Saussure and Placidus à Spescha were all familiar with crampons.

The Comte de Candale, Villamont, and Arnod used hand-irons (Arnod's *crocs de fer à la main*), but it is uncertain whether they were actually attached to the hands or were grapnels such as Whymper later advocated, to be thrown upward with a rope to engage in rocks.

Ladders were surely a large part of Antoine de Ville's equipment, and were employed by the Comte de Candale as well as by Saussure, whose party used them to bridge crevasses. They were stored on Mont Blanc at the Pierre à l'Échelle. In 1842 Forbes found the remains of one of Saussure's ladders on the Mer de Glace. Bleuler, the artist who accompanied Placidus à Spescha to the San Bernardino pass in 1818, made a striking aquatint of the elaborate ladder technique used in mounting the tongue of the Rheinwald glacier.

Simler is the only writer of the sixteenth century to mention guides joining members of their parties by ropes, although it was probably the custom on early crossings of the Théodule pass. Rope did not come into general use until about the time ladders and long poles were going out of fashion, and was often employed in the same way, held in the hands by travellers and guides and not tied to them, on the theory that a fall by one would not pull down the others. In the suppressed Wocher plate of Saussure's descent, the seated scientist is shown attached to a rope, the extremities of which are held in the guides' hands. Dr. Edmund Clark (1823) complained that the ropes used on Mont Blanc were too thick and heavy.

The ice-axe was an adaptation of the Chamonix wood-cutter's axe, and attained prominence on Mont Blanc chiefly after 1842, when it was often of halberd form. The *hachons* used by Arnod in 1689 were probably wood-axes. The agricultural mattock was the forerunner of the blade later used in step-cutting.

Even into the nineteenth century there was no uniformity of procedure, and the Mont Blanc narratives abound in deviation from methods now considered elementary and essential to safety.

Dr. J. J. Scheuchzer (1672-1733), F.R.S., Swiss physician, is the spiritual heir of Gesner, and his extensive journeys during 1702-11 gave rise to a catalogue of peaks, glaciers, passes and villages that was the forerunner of Ball's *Central Alps*. Dragons still appear in his work, although he may not have believed in them; but the dragon-stone (now known to be a meteorite) preserved at Lucerne had too high a reputation as a sovereign remedy to be ignored.

Mountains in graphic art can scarcely be touched here, but they

appear in backgrounds of the Flemish school, as well as in the work of Leonardo, Titian, Brueghel and many others. But the first recognisable view of the Alps appears in the altar-piece (1444) of Konrad Witz (Geneva museum), the chain of Mont Blanc rising beyond the Salève as the setting for the miraculous draught of fishes, with Christ walking on the water of the lake. In Merian's *Topographia Helvetiae* (1642) we find the first engraving of an identifiable glacier, the lower Grindelwald. The first picture of an avalanche is Hans Burgkmaier's engraving for *Theuerdank* (1517), its tradition being carried over into the illustration in David Herrliberger's *Topographie der Eydgnossenschaft* (1754-73), with its whirling ball of snow, houses and cattle falling on a peaceful village. As the English traveller, Edward Brown, put it in 1673 from the story told him, 'If the smallest Bird should but scrape with her foot at the edge of an High Hill, that little beginning might so encrease in the descent, upon a thaugh, as to over-whelm an House at the bottom.'

Guillaume Paradin (1510-90) in all probability visited Chamonix. His *Cronique de Savoye* (1552) went through three editions and contains the earliest popular appreciation of glaciers ('Marvellous and prodigious are the fields of ice . . .'). Marc Lescarbot's *Tableau de La Suisse* (1618) sums up in a lengthy poem the history of the Alps, including glaciers.

J. J. Wagner's *Mercurius Helveticus* (1684) is the first Swiss guidebook, the third edition of 1701 containing small engravings derived from Merian. William Burnet, in two days of travel from Berne, visited the glaciers of Grindelwald in 1708, his descriptive letter to Sir Hans Sloane appearing in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society for the following year. Abraham Stanyan, former Lord of the Admiralty, wrote the anonymous *Account of Switzerland* in 1714 when he was envoy to the Swiss cantons. It was praised by Samuel Johnson, and is one of the best ever written by an Englishman on Swiss political matters. Pfarrer Wyttenbach issued in 1777 the first special guidebook and deals with the Bernese Oberland. Gruner's *Die Eisgebirge des Schweizerlandes* (1760) contains all the contemporary knowledge of glaciers.

Albrecht von Haller, in his poem *Die Alpen* (1732), recorded the impressions made by high mountains on the mind of a twenty-year youth, but his interest was botanical, and even such an ascent as that of the Stockhorn appeared to him a breakneck adventure. When Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* appeared in 1760, its theme of a return to nature exerted considerable influence on his literary contemporaries, including Goethe; but Rousseau never set foot on a glacier or ascended a peak, and Julie's garden produced no mountaineers.

St. François de Sales is the godfather of Mont Blanc, mentioning it

by this name in a letter dated May 8, 1603. He preached at Chamonix in 1606. Bishop Jean d'Aranthon d'Alix (near Annecy), at the invitation of the inhabitants, successfully exorcised and caused retreat of threatening glaciers in 1665 and 1690.

In the summer of 1741, when Benjamin Stillingfleet brought William Windham and Richard Pococke from Geneva to Chamonix as the first tourists, it set a fashion for others to follow, not diminished by the facts that the party carried firearms for protection, that Pococke, lately returned from the East, wore the robes of an oriental potentate, and that the group standing on the ice of the Mer de Glace drank the health of Admiral Vernon. When the Windham-Martel letters were published in London three years later as *An Account of the Glacières or Ice Alps in Savoy*, the Englishmen who read it and saw its curious engravings could easily succumb to the spirit of wonder, and their numbers at the foot of Mont Blanc increased thereafter.

We have seen that curiosity, necessity and royal command have been motives in man's approach to mountains. The less commendable incentive of avarice intruded when Saussure in 1760 offered a reward to the first man to find a way up Mont Blanc. No great interest was created, however, and attempts were not made until 1775 and 1783.

In 1770 the brothers Deluc, Geneva scientists, stood on the Buet (J. A. Deluc is buried at Clewes, near Windsor), followed by M.-T. Bourrit with the first recorded 'new route', the mountain gaining further prominence through the tragic death on its glacier of the young Dane, F. A. Eschen. A lifetime ambition was realised when the Great St. Bernard prior, L. J. Murith, gained Mont Velan, the clergy adding to their laurels nine years later when M. J. M. Clément, curé of Val d'Illicz, stood on the (then) highest peak of the Dent du Midi.

A parallel, independent stirring was becoming evident in the Eastern Alps, where mountain legends more than equal the Pilatus history: the wicked city of Ninevah lay under the Oetzthal glaciers; alpenglow reflected King Laurin's Rosengarten; Noah's Ark had come to rest on the Watzmann, and the Triglav cliffs protected Zlatarog, the gold-horned chamois, and treasures of the Bogatin.

We do not know the peaks on which Emperor Maximilian I set foot, but it is certain that he traversed glacial ice. He himself said that he had climbed the highest mountains of Europe and that no one had been higher or nearer heaven. Something of his spirit still lives. One senses it in the hunting tapestries of the Louvre; in every forest and mountain group of the Eastern Alps, from the *König's Schuss* of the Raxalpe to the ruined hunting castles of the upper Inn. Four centuries separate him from Albert of the Belgians, but no ruler in the interval risked more or adventured more gaily on high hills than this huntsman of the Renaissance.

The Ankogel was ascended in 1762, and the Triglav fell to Lorenz Willnötzer in 1778. In 1793, when British climbers seldom ventured so far afield, Robert Townson made the first authenticated ascent of Lomniča, then thought to be the highest of the Tatra mountains.

But ascents on the perimeter of Chamonix set the stage for the conquest of Mont Blanc. The Aiguille and Dôme du Gôuter were reached by Chamonix guides in 1784¹ by way of St. Gervais, and two years later the base of the lower Bosse was gained from Chamonix. On August 8, 1786, the long-desired objective was under the feet of the village doctor, Michel-Gabriel Paccard, in company of the guide Jacques Balmat. It was the most courageous effort since the ascent of Mont Aiguille almost three centuries earlier, and the news was received with admiration in many parts of the world. This is not the place to review the Paccard-Balmat controversy; one must feel sympathy for Balmat, but he did succumb to the lure of gold and his life ended in the search for it.

The appearance of Saussure's *Voyages dans les Alpes* (1779-96) was the most important Alpine literary event of the eighteenth century. It had tremendous vogue in scientific circles and is still worth reading despite its superseded theories.

With precedent to encourage him, Saussure made the ascent (the third) in 1787, his footsteps being followed by the English Colonel Beaufoy. M.-T. Bourrit, self-styled 'historian of Mont Blanc', never quite succeeded in any of his several attempts, but we must still be grateful for his quaint engravings of the glacial scenery of the Great White Mountain. Maria Paradis, a village girl of Chamonix, was the first woman to reach the summit, and was lifted above it on the shoulders of her guides, while thirty years later Henriette d'Angeville, 'bride of Mont Blanc', emulated this and left amusing memories of her own unique costume. The first Americans to make the ascent (1820), Drs. William Howard and Jeremiah Van Rensselaer, followed the established custom of calling on Dr. Paccard, whose generosity in loaning scientific instruments was proverbial. Howard's MS. narrative, with his own illustrations, is a treasured exhibit in the American Alpine Museum. The first British women climbers whose names have come down to us were the three Misses Parminter on the Buet just before 1800, and Mrs. and Miss Campbell, who crossed the Col du Géant in 1822 but never returned to Chamonix to carry out their announced intention of ascending Mont Blanc. John Auldjo's *Narrative*, issued in 1828, the year after his ascent, contains the first attractive and reasonably accurate illustrations of Mont Blanc and the climbing on it. Robert Burford's panoramic 'View of Mont Blanc'

¹ In 1775 four guides *may* have reached the summit of the Dôme du Gôuter.



TYROLESE HUNTER (*circa* 1830).
(Note the Raquettes; Crampons at waist; and ice-axe.)



DRESSED FOR THE GLACIER.
A self-portrait by J. B. R. Bulwer (*circa* 1850).
Member 1860-2.

was exhibited at London early in 1837. Such paintings were on a cylindrical surface 60–130 ft. in diameter, so this was the first time the mountain had been shown on such a large scale in England.

Events of considerable importance took place between 1800 and 1840. Placidus à Spescha (1752–1833), monk of Disentis, aware of Saussure's activity, was a solitary and misunderstood climber, yet successful on the heights. While he failed in 1824 to reach the summit of the Tödi, and watched his chamois-hunter companions triumph, the Rheinwaldhorn, Oberalpstock, Güferhorn and others were already his.

In the glacier garden of Lucerne one may still see the earliest triangulated map of the Alps, the relief of General Pfyffer made during 1766–85. Its final dimensions were 22·5 ft. by 12 ft. It was examined several times by Saussure when he was the general's guest (*Voyages* § 1944). In 1791 Saussure also visited Aarau to see similar work by J. R. Meyer (1752–1833), a silk manufacturer who had made some small reliefs as a basis for printing mountain panoramas on fabrics. Meyer had engaged J. H. Weiss (1759–1856), a geographer of Strassburg, to undertake a relief of Switzerland from Mont Blanc to the Lake of Constance, which was completed in 1797. Coworker with Weiss was J. E. Müller, of Engelberg, who had assisted in the making of Pfyffer's model. In 1803 Meyer sold the relief (7 ft. by 14 ft.) to the French government for 25,000 francs and Napoleon installed it at St. Cloud.

The sixteen sheets of the Weiss *Atlas of Switzerland* appeared from 1786 to 1802, astonishingly accurate for its time, cost having been assumed by the Meyer family of Aarau. In 1811, J. R. Meyer, Jr. (1768–1825) and his brother, Hieronymus, crossed the Beich pass and the Lötschenlücke to the Aletsch glacier and made the first ascent of the Jungfrau, the intricate and lengthy approach being as admirable as the climb itself.

It was not believed by everyone, and in the following year two sons of Jeremiah, Jr., Rudolf and Gottlieb, visited the area again, three of their peasant companions, Volker, Bortis and Abbühl, conquering the Finsteraarhorn, highest summit of the Oberland. Or so it was said, while later historians (Farrar) gave credit to Hugi's guides in 1829. In any case, the party then crossed the Grünhornlücke, and Gottlieb, from the Märjelen huts, made the second ascent of the Jungfrau.

The peaks of Monte Rosa, with the exceptions of Grenzgipfel, Ostspitze, Parrotspitze, Nordend and Dufourspitze, were gained by 1842. Gressoney men, in the tradition of their migration from the Valais, climbed to the Lysjoch in 1778 and reached the 'Rock of Discovery', whence they looked down through the glacial bowl toward the meadows of Zermatt. In 1801, Giordani, and in 1819, Vincent (a survivor of the 1778 group) reached the points now bearing their names. In 1820 a



THE EIGER AND GRINDELWALD CHURCH (*circa* 1845).



THE WETTERHORN AND METTENBERG (*circa* 1845).
(From lithographs by George Barnard (M. 1863-90).)

large party gained the Zumsteinspitze, while in 1822 the Austrian Baron von Welden attained the Ludwigshöhe. The curate of Alagna, Giovanni Gnifetti, reached the Signalkuppe (Punta Gnifetti) in 1842. The Grenzgipfel held out until 1848, the Ostspitze until 1854 (the year of the Riffelberg hotel), while the Dufourspitze was the prize of 1855, its centenary in Zermatt being presided over by our beloved former president, the late L. S. Amery.

In the Eastern Alps, Saussure's attainment of Mont Blanc served as impetus toward the Gross Glockner. The first detailed maps of a snowy group appeared in Anich's *Atlas of Tyrol* (1774)—antedating the cartography of Saussure's *Voyages*—but the Gross Glockner was still thought to be the loftiest peak in Austria despite Anich's survey having given pre-eminence to the Ortler.

It now seems probable that the first ascent of the Gross Glockner was achieved in 1799 by the peasant brothers Klotz of Heiligenblut, the expedition being organised by Count Franz von Salm (1749–1822), created cardinal in 1817. It is at least certain that the highest point was gained (or regained) in 1800 by the brothers Klotz and three others. The American Alpine Museum has an example of the medal struck in commemoration.

Archduke John of Habsburg (1782–1859) was the modern prototype of Emperor Maximilian I, and equally loved throughout Austria. He ascended the Ankogel in 1826, and two years later made an attempt on the Venediger, repulsed on a difficult route when an avalanche struck down his leading guide, Rohregger. When the Archduke saw the Ortler from the Reschen Scheideck, he commissioned Dr. Gebhard, a member of his suite, to climb this splendid culmination of the Eastern Alps. This was accomplished in 1804 by Gebhard's two Zillerthaler men, and the chamois-hunter of St. Leonhard, Joseph Pichler (Passeier Josele). It was repeated in the following year by way of the Hinter Grat, Dr. Gebhard himself taking part.

With the coming to the Western and Central Alps of such men as Venetz, Charpentier, Hugi, Agassiz, Desor, Forbes, Tyndall and others, science dominates the motivation of human presence in the world of ice. Several decades would elapse before Albert Smith could stimulate a generation of Englishmen with the idea of mountaineering for the ultimate motive of pure sport or Leslie Stephen could make the Alps the Playground of Europe. The day had not come when

‘ Soft laughter rings above the crusted snow,
Light footsteps hurry past.’

Yet the forerunners of the Alpine Club, from the bronze-age hunter to Saussure, might with little effort and only slightly different circum-



VUE DU JUNGFRAU-HORN (*PIC DE LA VIERGE*)

fameuse Montagne neigée de la Vallée de Lauterbrunnen au Canton de Berne, ainsi nommée des tentatives infructueuses faites jusques à présent pour parvenir à sa cime.

*Cette Vue prise aux environs d'Unterseen est gravée d'après le Dessin original du célèbre J. L. Alberti
Publié par Chr: de Mehel Graveur, et se trouve chez lui à Basle.*

stances have found themselves hearing the same pan-pipes that draw the present-day climber to the heights. Motives vary, but the goal is unchanging. In celebrating the Centenary of the Alpine Club is it merely sentimental to think that on some celestial alpland there are understanding shades wishing us Godspeed on our second hundred years? 'What a Valhalla', wrote Percy Farrar. 'Upon my word we shall have some tales to tell them all!'

Coming full circle, we find that the direction of human striving is still upward, in full consciousness of tragedy, futility and failure, but always with hope. Mountaineering is, in this respect, a small pattern of human life, with success more frequent than in many fields of human endeavour. But the rational approach is that mountains are impersonal, giving back precisely what we bring to them. They are a mirror, and the image of adventure is our own reflection. With this, however, we may combine the ancient symbolism so charmingly expressed in modern thought: *Alpensteigen ist vom Art eine halbe Himmelfahrt.*