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C A RUSSELL

## One Hundred Years Ago

The fine weather experienced in many parts of the Alps in January 1918 enabled Fritz Egger and Hans Lauper, both members of the Akademischer Alpen-Club Bern, to undertake a winter ascent of the Bietschhorn. After reaching the north summit by way of the west-south-west ridge and being too late to continue to the highest point they retraced their steps to the Bietschhorn hut by moonlight.

In February the Dent d'Hérens was ascended by Herbert Hafers de Magalhaes with the guides Adolf Schaller and Viktor Biner, using ski from the Schönbiel hut to the foot of the Tiefmattenjoch. In the following month two medical students, Hermann Rey and Ludwig Gelpke with Heinrich Supersaxo completed two successful expeditions to make the first winter ascents of three high peaks above the Saas valley. Starting from the Hotel Weissmies – later the Weissmies hut – they reached the summit of the Lagginhorn and three days later, climbing from the Mischabel hut, ascended the east-north-east ridge of the Lenzspitze, traversed to the Nadelhorn over the Nadeljoch and returned to the hut by way of the Windjoch. Other peaks ascended for the first time in winter included the Aiguille du Moine in the Mont Blanc range.

The weather during the mountaineering season was notable for long settled spells and it was unfortunate, as the First World War continued, that few climbers were able to take advantage of the favourable conditions. At Chamonix some guides were employed by American servicemen on leave who wished to ascend Mont Blanc whereas the Swiss climbing centres were often almost deserted.

One member of the Alpine Club who was able to spend a month at Zermatt was A C Morrison-Bell who, after being held in captivity in Germany for nearly three years, had been interned in neutral Switzerland under the terms of an Anglo-German agreement for the repatriation of prisoners of war. After completing a number of training walks Morrison-Bell engaged the guides Aloys and Heinrich Kronig with whom he climbed the Lyskamm and Dent Blanche. A few days later with the same guides he ascended the north-east, Hörnli ridge of the Matterhorn, taking the opportunity to inspect the Solvay hut: the first visit to the hut by a British climber to be recorded in the *Alpine Journal*.

For his final expedition, accompanied by Hermann Perren and Heinrich Kronig, Morrison-Bell climbed the Dom, traversed to the Täschhorn and descended the west-south-west ridge or Teufelsgrat to the Kinhorn, only the second time this long combination of routes had been completed in a single day.

In the Bernese Alps a notable expedition was the second ascent of the south-west, Rote Zähne ridge of the Gspaltenhorn first climbed by Geoffrey

Winthrop Young and his companions who had traversed round the third and highest tooth below the summit to complete the ascent. In August Jean Bernet and the guide Jakob Rumpf made the first ascent of this tooth, completing a direct line up the ridge.

As in previous years during the war some climbing was possible in other mountain regions not directly affected by the conflict. In South Africa members of the Mountain Club continued to make new ascents as they explored Table Mountain (1087m). During the year parties led by J W Fraser completed a number of notable climbs including *Postern Buttress Frontal* and *Footstool Crack*, both very severe routes for the period.

In New Zealand the weather in the Southern Alps was favourable for much of the season and several major peaks were ascended. The High Peak of Mount Cook (3724m) was reached by three parties led by Peter Graham, the chief guide at the Hermitage hotel. Another visitor at the Hermitage was Samuel Turner who had returned to continue his attempts to make a solo ascent of the High Peak. In January he climbed the Linda glacier and had reached the rocks below the summit before being forced to retreat. Turner then completed two further expeditions on his own, climbing the Footstool (2767m) above the Hooker valley and making the first ascent of Mount Nathan (2852m) in the Malte Brun range.

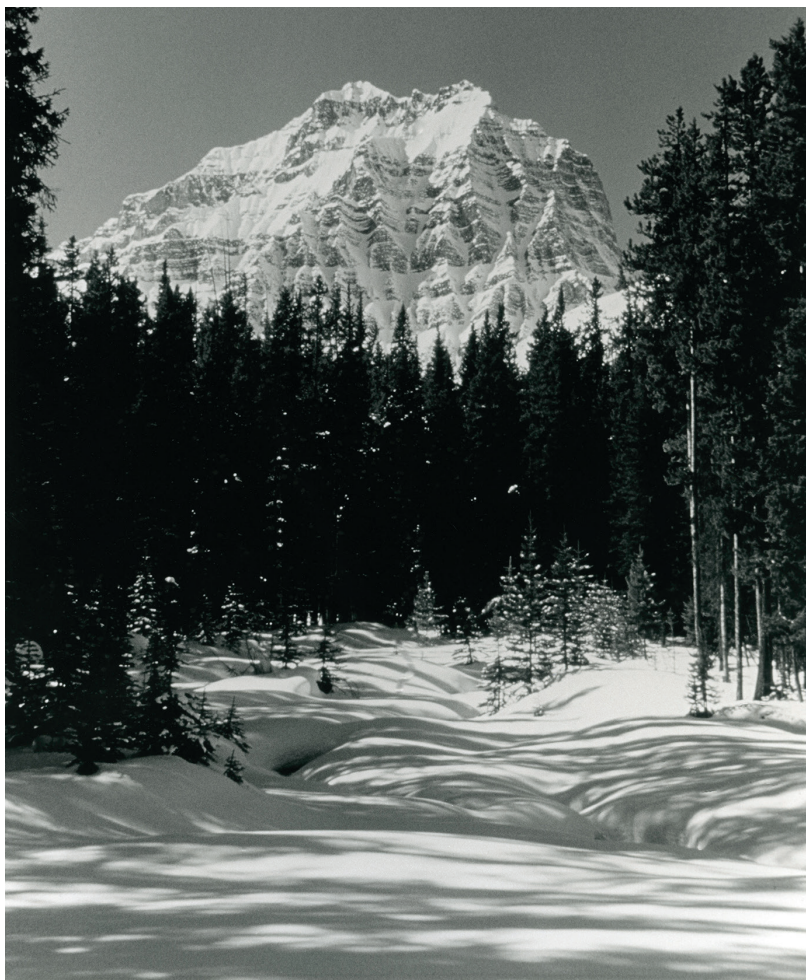
In the Canadian Rockies V A Fynn continued his exploration in the Lake Louise district. After climbing Pinnacle Mountain (3067m) above Sentinel Pass with his wife, the first lady to ascend the peak, and the guide Rudolph Aemmer, Fynn and Aemmer made the second ascent and first traverse of Glacier Peak (3283m). They then undertook two major expeditions, completing the second traverse of the long narrow ridge between the north and south peaks of Mount Victoria (3464m) and making the first ascent of the south-east cirque and east-south-east ridge of Mount Temple (3543m).

At home in Wales a notable climb was completed above the Idwal Slabs in Cwm Idwal. In May I A Richards, his future wife Dorothy Pilley and C F Holland opened the *Original Route* on Holly Tree Wall, the first line to be forced up this famous cliff.

In June an interesting paper by Alexander Kellas entitled 'The Possibility of Aerial Reconnaissance in the Himalaya' was published in the *Geographical Journal*. The paper evoked considerable discussion and it was suggested that 'by a rapid flight into the Himalaya in an aeroplane fitted with photographic apparatus, particularly in the direction of Nepal, one might really get valuable results, though only a rapid reconnaissance.'

A welcome event during the year was the publication of *The Playground of the Far East*, an account by the Rev Walter Weston of his extensive exploration in the Japanese Alps during his time as missionary and chaplain in Japan. The work was favourably reviewed in the *Alpine Journal* where it was described as 'altogether a somewhat tantalising account of what one would fain were not quite such a far country.'

In April the death occurred of Mary Isabella Charlet-Straton, one of the first ladies to undertake serious mountaineering, who married Jean Charlet



The south-east face of Mount Temple, Canadian Rockies.  
(*Frank Smythe, Alpine Club Photo Library*)

her principal guide. During a successful climbing career she took part in several notable expeditions including the first ascent of the Aiguille du Moine and the first winter ascent of Mont Blanc.

At the annual general meeting of the Alpine Club in December the president, Captain Farrar, made a significant announcement, confirming that the Royal Geographical Society 'is about to submit to the Government of India proposals for preparing the exploration and ascent of Mt Everest as soon as circumstances permit. Mr Freshfield, who is never forgetful of his old Club, has been good enough to suggest that the Alpine Club should be joined in the proposed submission. I feel I may assure the RGS that we feel honoured in this and that we will do all in our power to further the project.'

