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New Zealand Climbing, 1892 and 1893.

By G. E. MANNERING.

AT the request of the Editor I send from New Zealand this short paper. It will be my endeavour to condense the accounts of climbing and mountain exploration which have been given by members of the New Zealand Alpine Club, and others, during the past two seasons; and it will also be my aim to describe briefly the methods of approach to the mountain districts in question, for the benefit of intending travellers.

Beginning with the southern portion of the range, the Wakatipu district first claims our attention, the ascents worthy of mention being those of Mount Earnslaw and The Remarkables. The former (a fine glaciated peak) was first ascended in 1889 by Harry Birley, a guide residing at the head of Lake Wakatipu, who accomplished his task single-handed, and appears to have broken the majority of the mountain commandments in the achievement. In February, 1892, Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Ross, Mr. Kennett Ross, with Harry Birley and D. McConachy, set out from the head of Lake Wakatipu (which is easily accessible by rail and steamer—two days from Dunedin) to attempt the second ascent. On the first night out, camp was pitched on the bush-line, at about 4,000 ft., and, in dubious weather, the party climbed on the day following, at 7 A.M., over easy rocks for 3 hours to good snow-slopes, which led by noon to the ice plateau under the final peak. Here glazed rocks gave some trouble, and Mrs. Ross and McConachy returned. Difficult rocks and heavy mists were met with higher up, till, when 300 ft. below the summit, Birley was

seized with a fainting fit and could proceed no further. Leaving him in a safe place the Ross brothers continued, arriving at the summit (9,200 ft.) at 3.30. The view to the N.W. was very fine, embracing the Western Ocean and Mount Aspiring (9,600 ft.). Mists obscured the greater part of the panorama. The descent to the camp at 4,000 ft. was accomplished by 7 P.M.—12 hours out.

In March, 1893, the mountain was again ascended by Messrs. Herbert Jones and Clive, with Harry Birley. The first-named gentleman gave most thrilling accounts of their adventures. The party spent an unhappy night out in a snowstorm, during the descent, eventually reaching the Glenorchy Hotel, at the head of the lake, after an absence of 63 hours. The view from the summit is described by Mr. Herbert Jones as being very comprehensive and magnificent.

In April, 1893, two Glenorchy residents (Messrs. James Wilson and Joseph Leary) made the ascent, and in doing so deviated from the usual route up the Birley glacier, so avoiding long spells of step-cutting, and returned to Glenorchy in 44 hours. Evidently the mountain is easy under favourable conditions, though there are times when glazed rocks make the ascent impracticable.

The Remarkables (situated at the lower end of the lake) are a peculiar jagged and rotten mass of rocks whose culminating point is a triple cone 7,688 ft. in height. The ascent of this final cap of rock was accomplished for the first time in February, 1892, by Messrs. Malcolm and Kennett Ross, with Harry Birley, since which time several Queenstown residents have followed their route to the summit. The view is described as very fine, extending from Aorangi (Mount Cook, 12,349 ft.) to Stewart Island.

Working our way northwards we now come to the mountaineering centre of New Zealand *par excellence*, the Tasman District. Here are situated the highest peaks and the largest glaciers. Thanks to the enterprise of 'The Hermitage Company,' aided by government subsidies for the construction of roads, tracks, bridges, and the 'Ball' hut, the mountaineer now finds himself able to get to his much-desired snow-line without the labour of heavy 'swagging' and precarious river-crossing, and can enjoy a comparative immunity from those dreadful curse-inspiring struggles through Alpine 'scrub' which many of us in New Zealand know so well.

Most of the Alpine climbing in New Zealand has been done in this district, but though no less than nine attempts

to scale Aorangi and a similar number to climb Mount De la Bêche have been made, their actual summits remain yet untrodden—indeed, the only first-class peak (and that can only be called first-class under certain conditions) that has been topped is the Hochstetter Dome, situated at the extreme head of the Tasman Glacier.

In January, 1892, Messrs. A. P. Harper and H. Montgomerie-Hamilton, from 'The Refuge' (a bivouac at the foot of Mount De la Bêche), made an excursion to Mount Darwin, which they ascended to 7,100 ft., when Mr. Hamilton was attacked with a faintness which necessitated their return.

RUDOLF GLACIER, MT. DE LA BÊCHE, AND THE HEAD OF THE TASMAN GLACIER, FROM THE LOWER HOCHSTETTER GLACIER.

(Photographed by Burton Brothers, of Dunedin.)

A day or two afterwards the same party tried Mount De la Bêche, and after proceeding up the Kron Prinz Rúdolf Glacier for some distance took the snow slopes on their right, which, alternating with good rocks, brought them out on the main ridge at 8,500 ft. at 11 A.M. Shortly after this, under the main peak (10,058 ft.), Mr. Hamilton was again attacked, and the party returned. Returning to the Refuge some days subsequently with John Adamson (then acting as a guide at the Hermitage), Mr. Harper made two subsequent trials, but was brought up in the first instance by a fierce nor'-wester, and on the second by Adamson being attacked

with violent cramp in his loins and stomach, and, curiously enough, the point reached (about 9,000 ft.) was the same in each instance.

Mr. Harper secured a number of valuable photographs on this occasion.

In January, 1893, Mr. Malcolm Ross essayed to ascend De la Bêche in company with Messrs. Fyfe, Gibbs, and Adamson, and following Mr. Harper's route, succeeded in ascending a little closer to the main peak than Harper's highest, but here a gap in the ridge prevented further progress, together with the fact that Fyfe was quite worn out—he having done an unusual amount of swagging in the preliminary part of the expedition.

In December, 1893, Messrs. Malcolm Ross, Gibbs, and Wilson again essayed the task, only to meet with defeat. They found the upper portions of the Rudolf Glacier very much broken up, and were unable to reach the base of the peak proper, so turned their attention to the saddle immediately south of it, which lies between the heads of the Rudolf Glacier on the eastern, and the Franz Josef on the western side. Their efforts to reach it were futile, owing to the maze of covered crevasses which barred the way.

Both Messrs. Harper and Ross have secured many fine photographs from this route on De la Bêche.

In February, 1893, Messrs. Burton Bros., of Dunedin, photographers, sent an operator to the Hermitage, who made several extended tours of the Tasman, Hooker, and Mueller Glaciers, and secured some hundreds of fine negatives, varying in size from stereos to 18 by 15—a magnificent collection of Alpine pictures.

The Ball Pass (7,426 ft.), connecting the Tasman and Hooker Glaciers, was during this season crossed by several parties.

In November, 1893, in company with my sister, Mrs. Westland, and Messrs. M. J. Dixon and T. C. Fyfe, I revisited the Hermitage for the sixth time, and made what is for me the fifth attempt to climb Aorangi.

Dixon and Fyfe preceded me by one day to the Ball hut (14 miles from the Hermitage), and I followed with the ladies and a pack-horse (which can now be taken right to the Ball hut along a fairly good track). Our plans were as follows:—Dixon and Fyfe were to go up to the bivouac (7,000 ft.) on the Haast Ridge (called by Green in his book 'Tasman Spur'), taking provisions and two pairs of Norwegian snow-shoes, and return to the Ball hut to meet me;

then we were to take more provisions, &c., up to the bivouac on the next day, and start for the final climb at midnight. On my arrival at the Ball hut, however, there was no sign of Dixon and Fyfe, and, as they did not appear next morning, we began to be anxious on their account, which led me, at 10 A.M., to start for the bivouac with a swag of some 35 lbs. in weight. Leaving the ladies out on the clear ice of the Hochstetter, two hours later, with full directions as to finding their way back to the hut, I made my way across the final hummocks below the Hochstetter icefall, and came shortly afterwards upon traces of the lost men, which I followed up carefully towards the bivouac, now immediately above me about 3,000 ft. As time wore on my anxiety increased the more as the tracks now and then led over bad places in the rocks, and I feared continually that I should suddenly come upon two mangled corpses. Added to this, the swag was telling, and I was without the kindly assistance of the rope. I shouted continually, and at last, as I was rising into the mist, and knew I could not be very far below the bivouac (though it was after an absence of three years, I seemed to recognise every rock), I heard a reply from above.

Then followed an abortive attempt at conversation at full lung power, which ended in neither party understanding the other. So I sat down and waited for the lost sheep to come down. After an hour's continual waiting, the monotony of which was varied by more shouting on my part, I suddenly heard a faint reply far, far below, and, making for the nearest couloir, went down with a mild avalanche and came across Dixon and Fyfe, as merry as sandboys, and anything but mangled corpses. If I had possessed a gun I should have shot them on the spot. Dixon had misunderstood our plans, and was making for the hut 24 hrs. late by my time, but 'up to contract' by his.

We reached the hut some 3 hrs. later, much to the relief of the ladies, and on the following day (Dixon having kept us awake half the night knocking up another pair of snow-shoes out of an old packing-case) we were off once more for the bivouac at 7,000 ft.

We foolishly struck a new route up, and paid the penalty for it by arriving 2 hrs. later than we should have done, owing to the avalanchy state of the snow from about 6,000 ft. and upwards. On one occasion, in crossing a small glacier (which we call the 'Bivouac' Glacier), we started an avalanche, which swept about half its surface, and, filling an enormous crevasse, passed hissing onward and over to

the couloirs below. The snow was in a very bad state, and we were not sorry to wriggle into our blanket bags at the bivouac, and, by the aid of a kerosene oil lamp, get a pannikin of hot soup. Snow came on for a short time, but before 12 the night was frosty and fine.

By 1 A.M. we were off, and keeping mostly on the rocks in the bright moonlight we made good progress towards what is known as the 'Plateau,' situate 1,500 ft. above the bivouac. Alternately on rocks and snow (now hard frozen), we passed the 'Ladies' Foot,' where, in 1883, Dr. von Lendenfeld spent a miserable night, and we tackled the steep snow slopes above this point leading on to the plateau. The top of these slopes is awkward, the rocks shelving down at about the same angle as the snow, and below you, in case of a slip, are the crevasses of the Freshfield Glacier, gaping wide. Dixon and Fyfe had been up here two days previously, and left the snow-shoes, or 'skis,' on the plateau. It was at this point that von Lendenfeld was beaten by crevasses in 1883. It is always a bad place. Once on the plateau we breathed more freely, and soon after this daylight began to show up in the east, and before long old Aorangi had a rosy hat on, and Tasman followed suit. I made many exposures here with a ¼-plate hand-camera by Shew & Co., using an Eastman roll-holder, with most satisfactory results. I have observed that Captain Abney does not think much of these very flexible films, but for mountain work in New Zealand, where dark rooms are unknown, and where we want sometimes to take forty pictures a day, and where time and weight have to be considered, glass plates and cut films are a long way behind an Eastman holder, and results fully justify their use; for 80 per cent. of my negatives print exceedingly well, and, indeed, with many of them it is impossible to tell from prints whether they are glass or films.

It was now 4 A.M. Before us, as we faced towards the Linda Glacier (S.W.), rose up what I suppose is one of the most magnificent scenes of mountain glory in the New Zealand Alps. The rocky mass of Aorangi, clothed here and there with enormous rooflike glaciers seamed with avalanche streaks, rose in stupendous grandeur, presenting a face of unparalleled magnificence. A little to our right hoary Tasman stood boldly out, clad thickly with coat upon coat of overlapping hanging glaciers, glistening in the morning sunlight, and beginning already to shed his daily avalanches on to the plateau. Behind us, a little to our left, we could

look round and see the maze of crevasses which appears at the top of the Hochstetter icefall, above which we now were, and away beyond this the peaks of the Malte Brun and Liebig ranges, and further still the bold rocky mass of Mount Jukes appeared against a glorious crimson sunrise.

The snow was in splendid order for walking, so after Dixon had given us an exhibition of 'skilöbning' (sitting down hard and unintentionally several times) we made a sledge of the 'ski' and put them as fourth man on the rope. We reached the junction of the Linda Glacier with the plateau close under the rocks of the N.E. arête of Aorangi

AORANGI, FROM THE HOCHSTETTER PLATEAU (7,500 feet).
(Photographed by G. E. Mannering.)

on the left and the avalanche slopes from the Silberhorn of Tasman on the right at 5 A.M., and here we left the snow-shoes and began the ascent up the Linda. Crevasses were the order of the day, and before long we were crawling over bridges, and zigzagging across, first to one side and then to the other, for some of the larger crevasses extended right across, and many had but one bridge left. To go on to the slopes on either hand was quite impossible. The sun now began to torture us, and beating down with relentless power, the rays were reflected from beneath and from both sides, and seemed to fry the very skin of our faces and hands into a

half-cooked state. Indeed, the agony of the burning was terrible. At 8 A.M. we had reached the turn in the Linda, whence, looking upwards to our left, the well-known peak of Aorangi stood up some 3,000 ft. above us. We could see well the route by which Mr. Green with Herr Emil Boss and Ulrich Kauffmann had climbed in 1882, and which Dixon and I followed in 1890; but there was no getting at the foot of it from the Linda, for the rest of the glacier was in an utterly chaotic state, being broken up into huge blocks, acres in size, tilted into dreadful confusion, with crevasses in all directions. So different was the state of things in comparison to that in which Dixon and I had found them in 1890, that we could not—except for the attendant peaks—recognise it as the same glacier.

By 8.30 we began to feel that our chance of success was going fast, and for my part I may say that I was almost exhausted physically—'played out,' as we say in the Colonies. In addition to this we were constantly speculating upon our chances of getting down safely off the plateau again, for the avalanches were pouring down in all directions, and we had unpleasant recollections of those steep slopes just below the plateau. Our only chance of success lay in stopping where we were till nightfall, and then making our way further—if indeed such were possible in the face of such a fearfully confused state of the glacier. But to stay for another eight hours or more in the broiling sun, in a place not safe from the inroad of avalanches from Tasman, was more than we were prepared to endure; so we once more turned tail on old Aorangi and acknowledged ourselves beaten.

Many of the snow bridges we had crossed coming up were now in a dangerous state, and we all experienced the cheerful sensation of going through up to the armpits now and again, in spite of our crawling propensities. (We were fast becoming quadrupeds.) On one occasion two of us were in at the same time—in different crevasses, luckily.

On reaching the snow-shoes again we were not long in finding their usefulness, and instead of sinking in up to the knees at every stride, we were soon sliding along—(no doubt it would have amused Nansen to see us)—in gay style. Small crevasses were negotiated with impunity, but one avalanche from Tasman (now on our left) struck terror into our comparatively danger-hardened hearts, for it came straight for us, but luckily spent its energy on the flat snowfield before reaching our line of march.

The sun- and snow-burning was something terrible. Fyfe and Dixon, though their faces were well plastered with lanoline and protected with handkerchiefs, notwithstanding that their calling keeps them always in the open air, suffered little less than I (whose occupation is sedentary). Whenever we halted we would wrap our heads and hands in our coats, and try every conceivable device for protection, but to little purpose. It was weeks before I recovered from the effects.

We left the 'ski' on the edge of the plateau, and began the descent of the rocks. And horrid work it was; for the rocks were very hot and very difficult, and we had to let the axes down with the spare rope every now and again. Sometimes we found the rocks too bad to get down, and we were forced on to the snow slopes, but we always first started avalanches with stones and went down in their tracks. Eventually we reached the bivouac, and after an hour's rest went down the lower couloirs (avalanches and all), and reached the Ball hut at nightfall.

The Tasman district is easily approached by rail (one day) and coach (two days) from Christ Church or Dunedin, whilst to visit the Godley (the next district under notice) one requires to branch off at Lake Tekapo. There is however no accommodation in the latter part, and camping is necessary.

The Godley district is situated next to the north from the Tasman, on the eastern side of the range. Two large glaciers (the Classen and the Godley) are here situated, and their respective waters form the Godley River, which, emptying into Lake Tekapo, flows out in the Tekapo River, and forms the most northerly affluent of the Waitaki River, just as the Tasman system forms the middle tributary as the waters emerge from Lake Pukaki.

In February, 1892, I visited the Godley Glacier in company with Mr. M. H. Lean and James Annan, the latter a shepherd, who has accompanied me in various glacier excursions. We walked up the Godley Glacier from the terminal, 7 miles, to the Sealy Pass (5,800 ft.), which we crossed for the first time, and made our way down towards the west coast. On getting off the Scone Creek Glacier on the western side of the pass an unfortunate accident occurred to Mr. Lean, who fell a distance of about 80 to 100 ft. down the steep terminal face, but was saved from a horrible fate by landing on his swag, on a block of ice at the bottom. Luckily the 'billy' was also on the back of his swag, and this was crushed flat, taking most of the concussion. As it was, his right shoulder was dislocated, and his face and hands badly cut. This

accident crippled the party, which, coupled with bad weather, made a return to civilisation exceedingly difficult. We reached Lily Bank Station some days later, after a terrible journey, the record of which would occupy too much space. The scenery of the Godley is exceedingly fine, and the *Mer de Glace* of the glacier very extensive and clean. None of the peaks have been ascended.

The same year, in March, two parties visited the glacier and crossed the Sealy Pass, viz. Messrs. Guthrie, Annan, and Jones, and Messrs. Pringle (two) and Blythe, the last-named party reaching civilisation on the western side.

In April of the same season the Sealy Pass was again visited by Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Inglis and Miss Ainger, with Maurice Hannigan, a shepherd, and again by Mr. and Mrs. Smithson and party with Maurice Hannigan.

The Rukaia district next claims our attention, and is situated still further northward, on the eastern side of the range. Here the Arrowsmith Range is the predominating *massif*, though the Ramsay and Lyell Glaciers are further westward and drain mountains which, though inferior in height to Arrowsmith (9,171 ft.), contain larger névé fields and are more heavily glaciated. This portion of the country is more difficult of access, and there is no accommodation in the vicinity of the higher mountains; one can but impose upon the hospitality of the run-holders up to a certain point, and onwards from there camping is a necessity.

In March, 1893, in company with Messrs. C. H. Inglis and M. H. Lean, I visited Mount Arrowsmith, leaving the train at Ashburton, and driving 60 miles to Lake Heron Station. From there we walked up the Cameron River and camped at the terminal of the glacier of the same name, immediately under the highest peak of the mountain. From this point we started for the ascent at 2 A.M., travelling by moonlight over the lower portion of the glacier for 2 hrs., after which we ascended the screes ('shale slopes' we call them in this country) on our left, and came out on a saddle at 7,400 ft. situate on a subsidiary ridge between the heads of the Douglas and Cameron Glaciers, which fill the two principal depressions in this part of the range. At this point the sun rose, and a glorious sunrise it was. No wind, never a cloud in the sky, and a temperature that was just delightful. We unlimbered our two cameras and fired away in all directions, and the Eastman films on this occasion also proved their adaptability to the work. Sunrise at 7,400 ft. augured well for the ascent of a mountain of 9,171 ft., but we little

dreamt of the task near at hand, for, on moving upwards, we soon found the rocks would not go any further, and we were forced, after climbing 700 ft. or so, to take to a hard ice slope on our left, and we commenced to carve a 'crystal stairway' in what proved to be some of the hardest ice I ever put an axe into. A long dry summer had effectually removed all névé and gone down into the 'bed rock' of the

THE UPPER ROCKS OF MOUNT ARROWSMITH.
(Photographed by C. H. Inglis.)

ice, and, to cut a long story short, we spent 3 hrs. and 40 m. cutting our way up less than 300 ft. It took from 20 to 30 blows with the pick to hew a step, and we cut about 250 before we reached the desired skyline above, at 12.40 P.M.

Here we rested and photographed for an hour. As we looked westward, below us lay the head of the Cameron Glacier, some 2,000 ft. down, from the opposite side of

which the battlements of the main peak rose in awful precipices—such rocks, wonderful faces of red sandstone, broken at their summits into jagged aiguilles not at all unlike, in some respects, those of Chamonix, only on a smaller scale. On our left continued upwards our rocky ridge, leading towards the highest part of the mountain. For a long way it seemed to promise glorious rock-climbing, but the highest parts were shut out from view. Unfortunately we were under the necessity of reaching Lake Heron again that night, so we had to consider the question of time, and to go further meant that we should never reach our respective places of business in time to avert 'getting the sack' or some such dire calamity; so back we had to turn for home, leaving the top rocks still untrodden. Half an hour sufficed to see us safely down our steps, and then the pace soon became a clinker, and we reached camp at 4 P.M., 14 hrs. from the start. But our day's work was not over yet, and at 5 we were off again, following the pack-horse down for four solid hours at a pace that only a homeward-bound New Zealand pack-horse can walk, and reaching Lake Heron station at 9 P.M.—19 hrs.' hard going. The next day we drove 60 miles to catch the train at Ashburton.

This range promises some of the finest rock-climbing, and may be fairly called 'first-class.' I have never been amongst such fantastic rocks. Rugged grandeur dominates everywhere, and the climbing is simply magnificent on the upper ridges. There is nothing on the Mount Cook route to compare with the rock-work here; even the rugged north-eastern arête, between the Linda and Hochstetter Glaciers, though perhaps larger as a mass of rocks, is not by any means its equal in fantastic outline.

In April, 1893, the Hon. James and Mrs. Westland visited the head waters of the Rakaia River, and made some photographic excursions amongst the glaciers. They reached Whitcombe's pass—a pass which can tell terrible tales of hardy adventure in the early days of the gold diggings—and they brought back negatives of country which had never before been under the photographer's lens.

The New Zealand Survey Department can tell of glacier work done in 1892 on the west coast, the last report containing most interesting accounts of reconnaissance work in the Wills, Macfarlane, and Copland valleys, mostly by Mr. C. Douglas, which are illustrated after the manner of colonial attempts at reproduction.

At the time of writing, Messrs. A. R. Harper and C.

Douglas are doing reconnaissance survey work for the New Zealand Government on the Franz Josef Glacier, upon completion of which they move southwards and explore the Fox and other large glaciers in detail. The report of their work is not yet available, being required for the Annual Survey Report (published in May), but promises exceedingly interesting details regarding mapping glacier-movement observation, &c.

Mr. Brodrick, of the Eastern Survey, has also some valuable glacier-movement observations to chronicle shortly, he having quite recently picked up marked stones on the Mueller Glacier, whose positions he last fixed in December, 1890.

To anyone desirous of acquiring a book-knowledge of the New Zealand mountains I would recommend a perusal of the following works * :—

1. Haast's 'Geology of Canterbury and Westland.'
2. Hutton's 'Geology of Otago.'
3. Green's 'High Alps of New Zealand.'
4. Von Lendenfeld's 'Australische Reise.'
5. Mannering's 'With Axe and Rope in the New Zealand Alps.'
6. Ross' 'Aorangi; or the Heart of the Southern Alps.'
7. No. 1 of the 'Geographical Journal,' which contains the best map hitherto published of the central portion of the Southern Alps.
8. The New Zealand 'Alpine Journal.'

Suanetia in 1893.

By GODFREY A. SOLLY.

(Read before the Alpine Club, March 6, 1894.)

SINCE the days of Jason and Prometheus every traveller to the Caucasus has on his return home had some stirring tale of success to tell: some dragon has been overcome, some high mountain climbed, or some scientific object achieved. To-night I have to break the record of centuries, and to give the story of a mountaineering and exploring expedition to Suanetia in 1893, in which no summit was reached and no new district explored. So many papers have already been written and printed in the 'Journal' describing the general features of the country that I cannot

* 1 and 2, out of print; 3, Macmillan; 4, Wagner, Innsbruck; 5, Longmans; 6, New Zealand Survey, Wellington, N.Z.; 7, Royal Geographical Society; 8, Whitcombe and Tombs, Christchurch, N.Z.