

Tacoma : *Oe. A.-C.***Tälihorn** : *Akad. A. C. Zürich.***Tauri** : *Soc. Alp. d. Giulie.***Torri di Veglia** : *C. A. I. Rivista.***Triglav** : *C. A. fumano.***Tuxer Vorbergen** : *D. u. Oe. A.-V.
Mitt.***Wengen** : *K. Falke.***Winklerturm** : *C. A. I. Rivista.*— *Fell and Rock.***Wintersport** : *E. Pegge.*— *Der Winter.***Wochein** : *Soc. Alp. d. Giulie.*

THE ACCIDENT ON MT. COOK. DEATH OF MR. S. L.
KING AND HIS GUIDES THOMSON AND RICHMOND.

THE following narrative of this very unfortunate occurrence is by Mr. James R. Dennistoun, A.C., of Peel Forest, and is reprinted from the *Christchurch Press* of February 28.

‘Mr. King arrived in New Zealand on January 15, his intention being to go first to Milford Sound, to climb Mitre Peak. On finding that my brother and I had arranged on the Rangitata expedition, he decided to join us, and came straight through to Peel Forest. The story of our finding a new traverse of the Rangitata to the Hermitage, *via* St. Winifred’s, Godley, Glasson, Murchison and Tasman glaciers, has already been told. Richmond, the guide, was a member of the party. We started on January 21, and had very bad weather up the Rangitata, but perfect conditions during the two days occupied in getting through to Malte Brun Hut. Mr. King was much impressed with the extent of the New Zealand glaciers, and incidentally disgusted with the amount of moraine on some of them. When we reached the Hermitage my brother, Lieutenant Dennistoun, had to leave to rejoin his ship at Auckland. I also had to go back to Peel Forest on business, but hoped to get back to the Hermitage and rejoin King for the ascent of Mt. Cook.

‘In the meantime King was doing some great work. Accompanied by Guide Thomson, he climbed Mt. Darwin, and made an attempt at Elie de Beaumont, but was unable to get across the bergschrund. He therefore climbed Hochstetter Dome instead and also did the Aiguille route, and the Malte Brun. He and Thomson made a fine combination, and worked splendidly together. Accompanied by Thomson and Peter Graham, King attempted the ascent of Mt. Sefton, but after reaching Tuckett’s Col they were forced to return, owing to the very high wind and bad weather. In the meantime, thinking that I had no chance of getting back, I sent a telegram to King, telling him not to wait for me any longer to do the Mt. Cook climb.

‘On Friday last [February 20], however, I had arranged my business, so I telephoned through to the Hermitage to inform him that I would arrive on Saturday. King had left only an hour or two before for the Ball Hut. I asked Peter Graham to send a

porter after him to ask him to wait a day, but Graham could not do so, because King, who was climbing from the Tasman side, hoped to meet on the summit of Mt. Cook Mr. Frind, who, accompanied by Conrad Kain and William Brass, was ascending from the Hooker side. I therefore decided to go through at once, hoping to catch up with King should the weather hold him up on the Saturday. Leaving Peel Forest at 6 A.M. that day, I motored to Fairlie, and joined the car for the Hermitage, where I arrived at 5.30 P.M. Horses were waiting, and I started at once for the Ball Hut, in company with Mr. Turner, with whom I had agreed to climb Mt. Cook on Monday. We reached the Ball Hut at 11 P.M., and started at 5 o'clock on Sunday morning for Green's Bivouac, on the Haast ridge. We arrived there just after midday, and found that King had left everything in order, as though he did not intend to return that way, but to cross over into the Hooker. Just after arriving at the Bivouac we saw King's party cutting their way up the final ice slope to the summit. In the afternoon we kicked steps in the snow up on to the Glacier Dome, and traced out the steps of King's party, so as to be certain of the route across the plateau in the morning. At seven o'clock that evening we turned in at the Bivouac, feeling quite certain that King had crossed over the summit, and had gone down into the Hooker.

'At one o'clock on Monday morning we got up and were having breakfast, when Mr. Frind, with Conrad Kain and William Brass, arrived, having had a very hard day. They had ascended from the Hooker, and reached the summit about 5.30 P.M., after a very difficult and trying climb. On their way down they had followed King's steps, returning to the Tasman as far as the Linda Glacier. It was then dark, and the Frind party lost the steps where they went into the big avalanche. We were surprised when Frind turned up without having seen King, but we surmised that the latter must have got down early instead of calling at the Bivouac, and had gone straight on to the Ball Hut. We felt no anxiety, and knowing what a strong and able party they were—one of the strongest, indeed, that has climbed in New Zealand—we could not conceive that any mishap had occurred.

'Turner and I started off at 2.30 A.M. on Monday, Frind and his party turning in. In spite of the very high wind which blew out our lanterns, we reached the head of the Linda Glacier, over the huge avalanche, at 9.30 A.M. Meanwhile the weather was rapidly getting worse, and the wind had become so strong that after waiting half an hour we decided that it was quite impossible to go on. Somewhat reluctantly, therefore, we turned back, and after a rough experience we reached the Ball Hut at 7.30 P.M. We were much alarmed when we found that King's name was not entered there as having returned, and we became very anxious indeed. On Tuesday morning we started out early to ride to the Hermitage, but we had not gone far before we met Peter Graham,

Conrad Kain, William Brass, and F. Milne, on their way up to see if any trace could be found of King's party, which had evidently been on the Linda Glacier at the time when the huge avalanche had swept down. Knowing that we would not be back until Thursday, I decided that I must go on to the Hermitage first, and telegraph to my people to let them know that Turner and I were safe. From the old Hermitage I telephoned my message to Mr. Wilson, and the people at the new Hotel were relieved to know that Turner and myself were not involved in the catastrophe, as Monday had been such a frightful day, with a terrific gale from the north-west.

' I at once rode straight back to the Ball Hut and followed through alone to the Bivouac on Haast Ridge, Turner having gone up in the afternoon with the four guides. Graham and Kain had chipped steps, as the snow was very hard, up to the Glacier Dome, and I managed to catch them up just as it was getting dark, at 7.45 P.M., at the Bivouac.

' We started out at 5 o'clock on Wednesday morning, as it was useless to get away before daylight, and making all possible speed we soon reached the foot of the mighty avalanche. There we all spread out and ascended the avalanche up the Linda Glacier, searching carefully as we went. We saw nothing but mighty blocks of ice tumbled in confusion in the avalanche.

' At 10.15 A.M. we all reached the top of the avalanche without having seen a single trace of the missing party. We satisfied ourselves, however, that their descending steps came as far as the head of the avalanche. We were agreed that nothing more could be done, but we kept a keen and careful look-out as we descended the avalanche.

' At about 11 A.M. Peter Graham suddenly caught sight of a small, black object, which he first thought to be a stone, but which proved to be one of Richmond's boots, sticking out of the upper wall of a narrow crevice. There were piles of ice above the body, which was completely buried. We all set to work with a will to get the body out, but it took over an hour's hard work with an ice-axe to get at it. The ice was very firm and hard, and the mournful job was very trying.

' When we finally got the body clear, we found that the rope by which the man had been secured to his companion had been broken clean through by the sharp blocks of ice about six or seven feet behind him. The body was identified by the guides by means of the watch and other belongings. The watch had stopped at five minutes to five, and from the position where the body was found, and the nature of the avalanche, it was evident that King and his guides were right underneath the point where the avalanche broke off from and started on its lightning rush. Richmond being in front on the rope, the chances were that King and Thomson were struck first and swept down in front of Rich-

mond. We were of the opinion, therefore, that in all probability King and Thomson were swept over the ice-fall into the enormous crevasses at the place where the Linda Glacier sweeps round the north-east buttresses of Mt. Cook.

‘The avalanche had been an appalling one. It was fully a mile in length, and it completely filled up the bed of the Linda Glacier. It had been an enormous affair. Millions of tons of ice had broken away from the unnamed peak on the divide north of Dampier Peak, and with incredible swiftness had swept down an ice-faced precipice and right across the Linda Glacier until it had smashed with titanic force against the north-east buttresses of Aorangi, on the far side of the glacier. Then it had turned and swept right down the surface of the Linda. There were thousands of huge blocks of ice nearly as big as a house in the avalanche. It was made up of pure glass-like ice and snow.

‘Peter Graham and Conrad Kain agreed that in all their long Alpine experience they had never seen such a huge avalanche before. They had seen nothing which approached it in size either in New Zealand, Switzerland, or Canada.

‘Sunday was a very hot day, which probably accounted for this mighty avalanche. The whole of the surface of the Linda Glacier had been swept by avalanches that day. A huge one came down off Mt. Cook at 8.30 on Monday morning not very far from Turner and myself. Clouds of powdery snow were swirling in the air all around us from the rush of the avalanche. Away to our left there were many other minor avalanches that day further down the Linda Glacier.

‘We were all of opinion that King, Thomson, and Richmond were right below the avalanche as it broke off from the peak, and that death would be instantaneous. The avalanche had practically a sheer drop of 1000 feet. Richmond’s body was found about half way down the avalanche, at an altitude of about 9000 feet. It was a shocking end to what must have been up till that point a very happy expedition. The day was perfect, and they had had a glorious climb. From the time at which poor Richmond’s watch had stopped we judged that they must have stayed on the summit of Mt. Cook for some two or three hours, basking in the bright sunshine and enjoying the wonderful panorama of snow-clad peaks, huge glaciers, the distant sea, and the wide stretches of mountains, hills, and plains spread out before them. Then they descended, and having reached the Linda Glacier, they were most likely jogging happily along until the mighty avalanche crashed down on them, sweeping them to instant death.

‘Having found Richmond’s body and satisfied ourselves that there was not the slightest possibility of finding King or Thomson, we wrapped the body carefully in some blankets we had taken for the purpose and started off down the tumbled and frightfully rough surface of the avalanche at 12.45 p.m. We had a dreadfully

difficult and dangerous task getting the remains down. We had frequently to secure our ice axes in the faces of the ice and lower the body by means of ropes, stage by stage. In one or two places Graham and Brass actually carried the heavy weight single-handed. It took us half an hour to get it to the side of the avalanche, and our difficulties were almost as bad on the crevassed and broken surface of the glacier. Finally we reached a point just above the Bivouac on Haast ridge, about 5 p.m., and there we buried the body in the snow for the time being. During the last hour or two the weather had become very stormy, and it was snowing hard as darkness came on. The night was a terrible one, and although we were dead-tired we hurried down with all possible speed to the Ball Hut, where we arrived about 8 o'clock on Wednesday night. On Thursday morning Peter Graham started off early for the Hermitage, to make the necessary arrangements about getting the body down. Turner and myself walked down later, as having got the body down so far there would be no great difficulty in getting it to the Ball Hut. Peter Graham had many willing and competent hands with him.'

Mr. B. M. Wilson, General Manager of the Tourist Department, adds the following particulars :

'Richmond was a giant, and his body had to be taken from the level of 9000 feet, down to the foot of the glacier. Only those who had heard the details of this superhuman struggle could understand what these men went through. Fortunately they had with them, in Conrad Kain, a man well used to such accidents in Europe and other parts of the world, and his experience was of the greatest value. This plucky man had, with Brass, who also joined the search party, crossed the mountain from the Hooker side, and immediately on being informed of the probability of accident, started out to help in the rescue work. Peter Graham, who is a past-master in alpine work, says that he could not find words to express what he thought of Conrad. Mr. Turner, Mr. Dennistoun, and all the guides, also worked with a will, and eventually succeeded in getting the body to the Bivouac. Kain and the guides stayed at the Ball Hut, where Graham returned with Mr. Frind and other willing helpers, to bring the remains down the glacier.'

The following letter appeared in *The Times* :

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE TIMES.'

SIR,—My attention has only just been called to your notice of 'The New Zealand Alpine Fatality.' The accident occurred on the Linda Glacier. As I, with my two companions, the late Emil Boss and Ulrich Kaufmann, were, in 1882, the first to traverse this glacier and to give it a name, it is with no ordinary pang I have read of this sad event. I do not understand how anyone could say 'the spot had always been regarded as quite safe.' We traversed this glacier from



F. Grav. photo.

Swan Electric Engraving Co. Ltd.

Mt. Cook, & Hochstetter Icefall.
from the Haast Spurway

end to end on March 2, ascending, and next morning descending. In the interval several large avalanches, falling from the ridge that connects Mt. Cook and Mt. Tasman, swept the glacier right across, while a large number of smaller ones stopped halfway.

I have watched all the climbing records of more modern days and often wondered how the Southern Alps had claimed no victim. The blow has now fallen, and my sympathy goes out to those who are in sorrow over it.

Yours faithfully,

WM. SPOTSWOOD GREEN (A.C.).

5 Cowper Villas, Cowper Road, Dublin, March 6.

NOTE ON THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF MT. COOK.

The picture of Mt. Cook from the Haast bivouac shows the E. face with the icefall of the Hochstetter Glacier. The Linda Glacier lies beyond the ridge on the right. The photograph has kindly been placed at our disposal by Mr. Gran, who made the ascent in 1913.

The Zurbriggen arête is well shown in this picture, and starts above the rognon in the glacier rather to its right front.

In the photograph in 'A.J.' xxvii., opposite p. 100, of the W. or Hooker side of Mt. Cook, the summit is on the *left*-hand end of the ridge and the lower point on the *right*-hand end, and *not as marked in error on the photograph*. The ascent from the Hooker side, first made in 1909 by Mr. L. M. Earle with the two Grahams and Clark, is up the left-hand rock buttress direct to the summit.

Miss Du Faur's party, referred to below, bivouacked on the little rognon in the glacier at the foot of the right-hand rock arête (leading to what looks like the highest point), which they followed with occasional traverses on the left side to the right-hand or lower point of Mt. Cook. As stated above the 'summit' and 'lower point' are transposed on the picture. From the lower point Miss Du Faur's party followed the main arête to the summit of Mt. Cook, descending by the Linda route, thus making the first traverse of the three summits.

On the marked picture the . . . line is the line of ascent by the Linda Glacier now generally taken, and first followed by Dr. Teichmann, the Rev. Mr. Newton and Mr. Lowe, with the guides Jack Clark and Peter Graham, in 1906. This line for the lower half, of course, follows Mr. Green's original line.

The line along the ridge to the left marked 'Du Faur' shows the first traverse of the three peaks of Mt. Cook made in 1913 by Miss Du Faur with Peter Graham and the late D. Thomson, the arête being gained from the W. as mentioned above.

The line running right up the central arête in the foreground direct to the summit marks Zurbriggen's line of ascent in 1895. *An arête is undoubtedly always the safer route*, and doubtless the lesson of the

present accident on the Linda route will not be thrown away, and will result in drawing the attention of the many good mountaineers in New Zealand to finding a safe route up their splendid mountain. We may therefore confidently expect that the Zurbriggen route will be carefully studied, and when in reasonably good condition will become a principal line of ascent.

The — line is the Rev. Wm. S. Green's line of ascent and has been kindly marked by him for the Journal. He writes as follows :

3 Kildare Place, Dublin,
May 22, 1914.

DEAR CAPT. FARRAR,—I return the photo. of Mt. Cook. I have marked — our exact route up, and we followed the same down. With regard to upper limit, I am sure we reached the point where the line stops, but the crevasse to the right extended farther our way than in the photograph. This would probably be accounted for by the varying states of the snow, and we were in such a blizzard that any discussion about the situation was impossible. We may have got to the next 'dimple' above, but I don't wish to mark anything doubtful. The place where we tried to make a little cairn was where the rocks terminate, and where we spent the night was where I have put a dot. Above that couloir we made an abortive attempt to go straight up; this I have also indicated. We were very near taking the route afterwards taken by Zurbriggen, and Kaufmann favoured it. It was I selected the Linda Glacier route because I wanted to see our way ahead. This we could not do on Zurbriggen's route, and after failing on two other tracks largely from this very cause and thus losing a lot of time I was against it. It was a bad decision, owing to soft snow we soon got into, and the danger of avalanches.

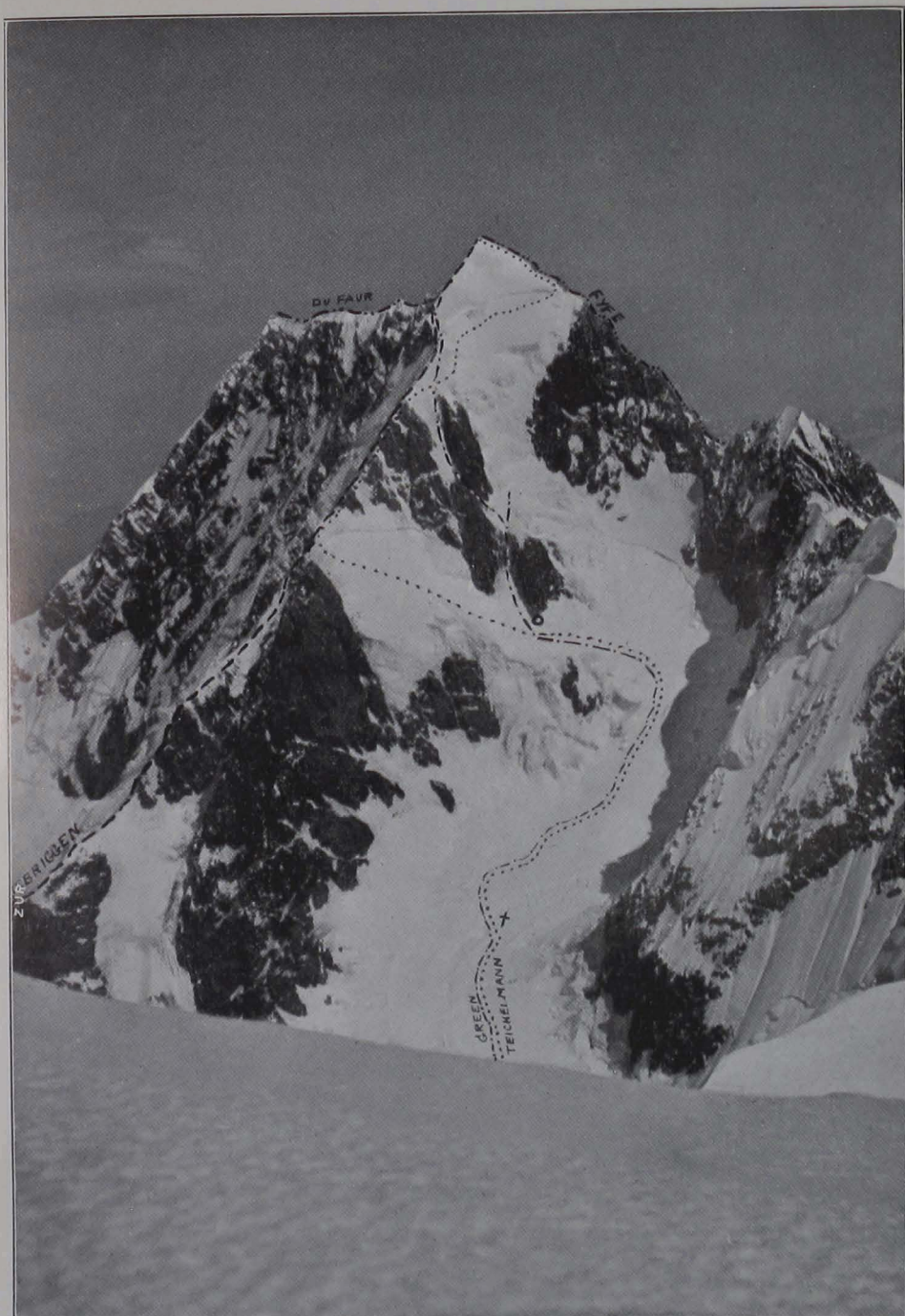
Yours very truly,
WM. S. GREEN.*

Finally the line on the right-hand sky-line shows the upper portion of the first complete ascent of Mt. Cook, the ascent to the arête being from the W. or Hooker side, made by T. C. Fyfe, George Graham and Jack Clark in 1894, who returned the same way.

The probable place where the ice avalanche overwhelmed Mr. King and his guides on the Linda Glacier is marked by a cross. The avalanche came from the right-hand hanging glacier.

We are indebted to Miss Du Faur for information in compiling this note, as well as for the photograph.

* Cf. *A.J.* xviii. 191, where Mr. Green writes as follows:—'Zurbriggen's route is, I feel sure, the best and safest, but we had not the advantage which he had of inspecting it from the summit of Mt. Tasman, and therefore did not trust it, although we fully discussed its merits.'



[Swan Electric Engraving Co., Ltd.

MT. COOK AND MT. DAMPIER,
from the summit of Mt. Tasman.

Miss Freda Du Faur, who, with Peter Graham and Thomson, made in 1913 the first traverse of the three peaks of Mt. Cook, has kindly furnished the following appreciation of the two guides who lost their lives :

‘David Thomson, who was about thirty years old, was a native of the west coast of New Zealand ; he was Peter Graham’s second in seniority at the Hermitage and his right-hand man. From a variety of reasons Thomson had not come much to the fore until the last two seasons when he came out in his true colours as one of the finest guides New Zealand has produced. A true mountaineer, with all the keen inborn love and reverence for the mountains that marks the best of guides, he took a fine pride in his profession. In ice work he was considered the best and quickest stepcutter in New Zealand. It is a great pleasure to me to remember how glad he was to be elected second guide last year when we made the first complete traverse of Mt. Cook ; he regarded the climb as the finest of his career. I like best to think of him as he was that day, stretched at his ease on the hardly-gained peak, smoking the eternal pipe and reviewing the route with intense satisfaction. Between puffs of his pipe he brought forward the opinion that the complete traverse might be done again in twenty years but probably never. He did splendid work that day with untiring cheerfulness. He was also my second guide on the first traverse of Mt. Sefton, and did considerable climbing with Mr. S. Turner who preferred him to any guide at the Hermitage. In losing him New Zealand has lost one of her ablest guides, one that it will take many years to replace. Both climbers and friends most deeply regret his early death. It is some consolation that he met his end as a brave man should, at the height of his career, and in a moment of success on the greatest of his beloved mountains. I doubt not that his end was such as he would himself have chosen, whilst among his comrades his memory will live long, kept green by many a talk in lonely bivouacs, and on the great mountain with which his death must ever be associated—a mighty monument under which the bravest of us would be proud to lie.

‘Jock Richmond, whose home was at Willowbridge, South Canterbury, had only been attached to the Hermitage guiding staff for the last two seasons. He was looked upon as the most promising of the younger guides. Peter Graham who had a particular affection for him, believed him to have the makings of one of the best guides he had ever had in his hands to train. Richmond was only about twenty-five years old, of a splendid physique and a great favourite with the parties he guided, by reason of his particularly quiet, gentle and unassuming helpfulness. He was with me on an expedition to Tuckett’s Col, and after one experience of him as second guide I am inclined to think that Graham had by no means over-estimated his climbing qualifications. This was his first ascent of Mt. Cook, though he had been on several other high expeditions.

I can imagine the deep pleasure he must have experienced at taking part in such a great climb so early in his career, and with what a joyful heart he was returning to his comrades, who will regret so deeply the untimely end of what promised to be a splendid career.'

NEW EXPEDITIONS IN 1913 AND 1908.

Dauphiné.

TRAVERSE: MONTAGNE DES AGNEAUX (3660 m. = 12,008 ft.)—ROCHE DE JABEL (3602 m. = 11,818 ft.)—PIC DES PRÉS LES FONDS (3363 m. = 11,034 ft.). August 18, 1913.—Messrs. Harry Runge and W. R. Cæsar, with Abraham Müller, jun., and Gottfried Müller, left the Chalets de l'Alpe at 3.15 A.M. and followed the Coolidge route (July 17, 1873) to the W. summit of the Montagne des Agneaux. On reaching the névé basin between the N. arête and the great buttress to the W. they deviated from the Coolidge route by turning to the left (E.) and mounted to a snow col, overlooking the Glacier du Casset, in order to prospect for an alternative route home in case of traversing the Agneaux. Then, retracing their steps, they again followed the Coolidge route, circling round the névé basin, bearing to the right. This deviation and a previous halt of 45 minutes for breakfast occasioned some loss of time. The steep arête leading to the W. summit was in bad condition, with insecure snow, which had to be cleared away, leaving hard ice, entailing prolonged step-cutting. Crossing over the Central Summit (11 A.M.), they reached the E. and highest point by rocks 11.20 A.M. After a stay of 35 minutes they descended the E. rock arête to the small col between the Agneaux and the Roche de Jabel; thence traversed the N.N.W. face of the Jabel by cutting across an exceedingly steep, hard ice slope to a small gap at the E. foot of the rocks leading to the summit of the Jabel. After ascending a short, steep buttress, they gained the E. arête and then, bearing to the left, scrambled a short distance up the face, then on to the arête again, reaching the summit at 1.25 P.M. Descending again to the above small gap, they cut down, for about 50 ft., a narrow ice couloir leading to the Monestier Glacier and facing S.E., then turned left—N.E.—and ascended to the arête (rocks and snow), which they followed down to the Col du Casset; thence a somewhat broken arête, rocks and snow alternating, led to the summit of the Pic des Prés les Fonds. From this peak a broad snow arête runs down N.E., splitting after a short distance into two arêtes ending on rocks and enclosing a broad snow-and-ice couloir. They kept to the arête on their right at first, and then glissaded down to the broad snow col des Prés les Fonds,