

(2) Lagau ought to be E. of Kaltber at head of Khabag Glacier. It is, I think, the peak which is called Skatzi Khokh in the Tsaya Valley. It was climbed by Dr. Schuster's party in 1912. The peak marked Lagau is a good deal higher, probably 14,800 ft., and, so far as I know, unascended. It is usually called Adai Khokh in the Tsaya Valley, and both Dr. Ronchetti and myself could only get this name for it. This name is now inadmissible as the Russian survey has transferred it to the highest peak, Uilpata.

IN MEMORIAM.

SIR THOMAS FOWELL BUXTON, Bt., G.C.M.G.

THE country loses in the death of Sir Fowell Buxton a distinguished public servant; the Club one of its Doyens, almost the last of that enthusiastic band of young Englishmen whose Alpine journeys are recorded in those three faded brown volumes 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers,'—which are a never-failing source of delight to the mountaineer of to-day. Born in 1837, Sir Fowell was elected a member of the Club in 1860, his qualification being the Col du Géant and the Weisssthor, and his sponsors Mr. (subsequently the Rt. Hon.) W. E. Forster and Mr. Hinchliff. There is no record of his having made any ascents in 1860, but his journey in 1861 is well described in a paper, 'The Col de Chermontane,' in 'P.P. and G.' ii. 273 *seq.*, the passage of which formed a new link in the 'High Level Route.'

There is one striking feature in many of these papers—written though they were mainly by men of an Alpine experience which nowadays would be considered small—and that is the breadth of observation and generally correct estimate of difficulties and danger. There is no absolute and unquestioned dependence on a guide, but a tendency to a vigorous and independent judgment. Doubtless in those far-off days the scarcity of efficient guides, of maps, of huts, brought out the climber's intelligence and grasp of the position in a way we hardly realise. Moreover, the Alpine climbers, of that period in particular, appear to have been drawn from a highly educated, vigorous, and intelligent class, compelled by circumstances, as stated, to depend in a measure on themselves, thus fostering their mountain education to an exceptional degree.

One is much inclined to think that, at one period, these Hudsons, these Smyths, these Ramsays, these Parkers, these Youngs, these Buxtons and others were within measurable distance of diverting the stream of English mountaineering from the course it eventually took and of forming a great school of guideless English climbers.



THOMAS FOWELL BUXTON,
about 1862.

No sport or pursuit much followed by Englishmen has ever remained in leading-strings so long, doubtless in some measure due to the penalty for a serious error of judgment or want of care being severe, possibly even fatal, injury. Friendship in some cases, a feeling of security in others, kept us tied to these sturdy guide-companions of ours, so that in English mountaineering the ordinary course of attainment to independent work, after a thorough training under a master, as the beginnings rather foreshadowed, has, generally speaking, not resulted.

The late Mr. G. E. Foster puts it well when he writes in 'Pioneers,' p. 130, 'It is difficult to make those outside the magic circle understand the peculiar relationship that rapidly springs up between the *Herren* and their guides. Even when the latter have only accompanied you in one *grande course*, there will be warm greetings on both sides at every meeting for years, but when the guide is engaged not for a day only, nor even for a season, but for a succession of seasons, the mutual attachment becomes great indeed.'

As happens to so many other young promising mountaineers, other interests invaded the life of the young Buxton, so that his Alpine career came to a speedy end with his marriage in 1862.

His brother, Mr. E. N. Buxton, likewise for the last fifty-six years a faithful son of the Club, writes :

'I am afraid his career as a climber was not long. I think a few little things he and I did are recorded in the P.P. and G. volumes. They were mostly ascents and passes at Zermatt and on the High Level line between Zermatt and Chamonix. I began climbing in 1859. I was staying at St. Gervais with a reading party and he joined us there, and I think he then first acquired a taste for climbing, but even then he was more eager to explore the battlefields of Lombardy, Magenta and Solferino, and he carried me off to the scenes of these recent battles fought a few weeks before. . . . Thus, though you might call Sir Fowell one of the Doyens of the A.C., he was never fired by the fever and soon took to other pursuits—notably the volunteer movement, which from its inception in 1859 had his enthusiastic support, and competed with his recreations. He raised and for many years commanded a London regiment. Not long after his marriage he accompanied W. E. Forster, subsequently the author of the Education Act and an early member of the Club, to the American States, especially the Southern States, to investigate the condition of the negroes after the Civil War. . . . He was always fond of hearing about exploration in new lands and was for many years a member of the Geographical Club—a sort of inner circle of the Geographical Society.

'His most distant journeys were made late in life—namely his voyages to and from Australia, where for four years he was Governor of South Australia.

'He was ever—then and till he died—the most charming of *camarades de chasse*. Of course there are few of his contemporaries left, and not many of mine.'

It is a privilege to place on our records these all too scanty notes of a man whom we are proud to reckon as one of our pioneers, and in whom his countrymen lose one whose constant interest in the welfare of his fellow-men never ceased to play the great part in his life.

J. P. F.

JAMES ECCLES.

THE chain of Mont Blanc never fails to exercise a peculiar fascination, that is all its own, on the Alpine traveller, be his experience what it may. It is the veritable headquarters of mountaineering—it remains the one district in all the Alps where a man can commence and continue his Alpine education—where he may pit his skill and endurance against the greatest problems of ice and rock to be found anywhere in the Alpine world.

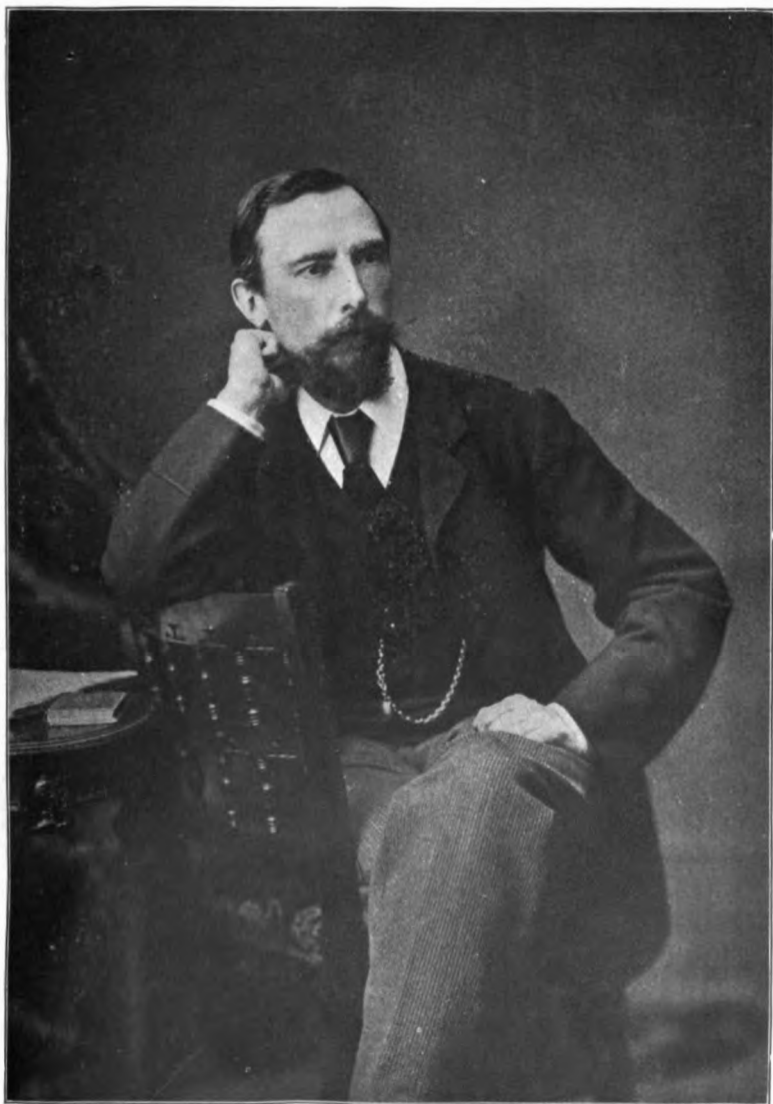
The great chain had no more ardent devotee than the subject of this notice.

Born on April 11, 1838, Mr. Eccles's Alpine career commenced in the 'sixties under the tuition of Victor Tairraz, whose name often recurs at that period. He made the ascent of Mont Blanc as long ago as 1865.

It was, however, in 1869 that probably the most continuous of those close friendships between traveller and guide, which are so constant a feature in English mountaineering, had its inception in the engagement of Michel Payot, then in his thirtieth year, one of the best guides, more especially in ice, whom the Valley of Chamonix can claim. The two travelled together for forty consecutive seasons, either climbing or chamois shooting, or occasionally grouse shooting in England.

The list of Mr. Eccles's ascents in the Mont Blanc range is a long one, Michel's younger brother, Alphonse, nearly always acting as second guide. In 1869 they made another ascent of Mont Blanc and the High Level route; in 1870 the first passage of the fantastically named Col Infranchissable between the Dôme de Miage and the Tête Carrée; in 1871 the first ascent of the Aiguille du Plan; in 1873 the first ascent of the Aiguille de Rochefort, ascending from Courmayeur and descending to Chamonix; in 1877 a new ascent of Mont Blanc by the Brouillard and Fresnay glaciers, referred to more fully below; in 1881 the Dôme de Rochefort; at various times two new cols between the Tour Ronde and the Aiguille du Géant, the Grandes Jorasses, the Mont Dolent, the Aiguille and Col de Trélatête, the Aiguilles du Midi, de Blaitière, d'Argentière, du Géant, du Chardonnet, du Tour, and others. With the exception of the Brenva route, Mr. Eccles could claim acquaintance with all the main routes up Mont Blanc.

In the Zermatt district Mr. Eccles had made all the principal ascents. Thus (in 1869) the Matterhorn from Breuil, and, at



Elliot & Fry, photo.

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JAMES ECCLES,
in 1883.

various times, the Monte Rosa, Lyskamm, Dom, Weisshorn, Zinal Rothhorn, Gabelhorn, Breithorn by the N. face, Zwillingsjoch, and a second ascent of the Matterhorn.

In 1878 Mr. Eccles, always with Michel, made an expedition to the Rocky Mountain region of Wyoming and Idaho, and read before the Club a graphic account of his experiences.

The list of Mr. Eccles's many expeditions is incomplete, as he kept no Alpine diary, and Payot's book up to 1893 unfortunately was lost in that year, but it will be readily seen that there are few Englishmen who had as good a knowledge of the range of Mont Blanc.

The great expedition, however, with which the names of James Eccles, Michel and Alphonse Payot, will be handed down is the ascent from the Brouillard and Fresnay glaciers of the Mont Blanc de Courmayeur by the couloir contained between its southern rocky contreforts and the great arête connecting it to the Aiguille Blanche de Peuteret, and, finally, by the upper part of the arête itself.¹ The party left Courmayeur on July 30, 1877, and bivouacked at the base of the final rocks of a small peak nearly at the head of the ridge separating the Brouillard and Fresnay glaciers and joined to the great rocky S. face of the Mont Blanc de Courmayeur by a narrow col; the estimated altitude was 12,400 feet. Leaving at 3 A.M. next morning, they descended to the upper basin of the Fresnay glacier² and reached at 6 the base of the great couloir, whence, partly by easy rocks on the W. side, partly by the couloir itself, which was frequently hard ice, they gained at 8.5 the crest of the great S.E. arête descending from the summit of the Mont Blanc de Courmayeur to the Col de Peuteret. This arête was followed to the summit, gained at 11.35, whence Mont Blanc itself was reached at 12.35 and, after twenty minutes' stay, Chamonix at 4.40 P.M. This expedition has never been repeated in its entirety, and is rightly considered one of the great classic ascents. The times show that the conditions were quite exceptional, as the very few other parties who have followed the great S.E. arête have encountered much step-cutting and delay.³

The expedition shows that Mr. Eccles was a thoroughly safe climber, endowed with great endurance, for it is one where mistakes are not permissible. To the powers and judgment of Michel Payot, the leading guide, and his brother Alphonse, it will always stand as a great testimony.

Mr. Eccles was elected to the Alpine Club in 1874, and to the Committee in 1881. His interest in Alpine matters never abated, and although indifferent health compelled him in later years to

¹ Cf. illustration, *A.J.* xxvi. 256.

² Cf. *A.J.* viii. 337 (short description); *A.J.* viii. 409 *seq.* (paper read before the Club); *A.J.* xxiv. 679 (appreciation).

³ Cf. *A.J.* xxiv. 691-2.

give up active mountaineering he was still to be seen occasionally at Chamonix and the Montanvert, always in the company of his old leader Michel Payot, whose great qualities and courtly manners earned the esteem of every mountaineer.

Mr. Eccles married in 1863, and it is to Mrs. Eccles as well as to Michel Payot that we are indebted for many particulars of the Alpine career of our distinguished colleague. Mme. Loppé is Mr. Eccles's sister. His death took place in London on June 6, 1915.

It is interesting to quote in conclusion Michel Payot's words, written a few weeks ago in his seventy-sixth year :

' Il y a deux ans, parti de Lognan, j'ai fait l'ascension du Col du Chardonnet, la Fenêtre de Saleinaz, l'Aig. du Tour, le Col du Tour, et retour à Chamonix le même jour, et je serais encore capable de le faire à présent.' May his powers long continue !

It is hoped that it will not be found unfitting to place side by side with the portrait of Mr. Eccles, taken in 1883, the photograph of Michel, taken by Mr. Eccles himself, his *' très regretté bienfaiteur,'* so that the two great comrades may not be separated in our records.

Mr. Eccles took great interest in geology, and our sometime President, Prof. Bonney, is good enough to make an addition to this notice.

In July 1881 I fell in with James Eccles at the Hotel Fletschhorn, on the southern side of Simplon village, where he was staying with Mrs. Eccles and his guides Michel and Alphonse Payot. A common interest in the Alps and in geology drew us together, and I accompanied him up Monte Leone. We did not meet again in the mountains till 1889, when considerations of health made very laborious excursions undesirable for both. In that summer we began at Andermatt, and studied the geology of the Lukmanier and Val Piora districts, going on by the Nufenen Pass to the head of the Rhone valley. We then went to Binn, and after ascending the Ofenhorn joined Mrs. Eccles and two friends at the Rififelalp Hotel, from which we had some interesting glacier excursions. In 1891 he met me in the Haslithal, and after some more work about the head of the Rhone valley, including an ascent of the Nufenenstock, we spent some time at Saas Fee with the same party. Here again we made some interesting combinations of glaciers and geology, after which I returned to England. In 1895 he came to Zinal, where I was staying with another friend, but we had two or three excursions together, including an ascent of the Diablons, and the next year we spent about three weeks in studying the district around Vals, the Splügen and the Bernardino Passes.

Though for most of this time the ailment which proved indirectly fatal occasionally troubled him, it did not disturb the serenity of his temper. I never had a more pleasant travelling companion. He was interested in natural history generally, and was a good 'all round' geologist, though in his earlier days he had studied fossils rather than rocks. His admirable photographs many members



J. Eccles, photo.

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MICHEL PAYOT,
in 1897.

of the Club will remember. He had read much and had an excellent memory. So keen was his interest in literature that, quite late in his life, he obtained the assistance of a young Classical Fellow of my College, then resident in London, to improve his knowledge of Greek. Never was there a man more unselfish or thoughtful of everything that might interest a friend. I have specimens which he brought me from out-of-the-way spots in the Alps and photographs of rocks, with no other attraction than a geological one, which are to me most valuable records, but cost him much time and trouble. The time spent in his company will always be a bright memory in my Alpine experiences.

T. G. BONNEY.

CATHERINE MARTHA GARDNER.

FIVE-and-twenty years ago there was no more enthusiastic climber in the whole Alps than the little lady whose death took place at Vevey in March last in her eightieth year. Although much handicapped by her short stature, she was enabled by her determination to carry out some quite considerable expeditions. She ascended Mont Blanc in 1886, and subsequently many of the Zermatt giants as well as the mountains round Arolla. Probably her best expedition was the descent of the N. face of the Pigne d'Arolla about 1890, led by the very bold guide, Xaver Imseng, killed in 1893 on the Charmoz with Mr. Aston Binns.

I think I first met her at Grindelwald in the winter of 1892, and I remember one perfect winter's day when she, Papa Almer, I and a fox-terrier pup had a delightful walk to the top of the Zäsenberg-horn, sometimes in snow that reached to her waist, the dog meantime in the sack.

She had stayed a good deal at Saas, and her great ambition was to ascend the Dom from that side. Accordingly, when one afternoon in 1894 Daniel Maquignaz and I strode into Randa after doing that journey, she drew me on one side and told me I could offer him a thousand francs if he would undertake to repeat the traverse with her. But, to her great disappointment, it came to nothing. Even the enterprising Daniel was obliged to answer with considerable reluctance, 'Ah—vous savez, Monsieur, avec elle, non—ça ne va pas!'

Once more I met her, again at Randa, five or six years ago. Reade and I were starting for some mountain or other, and she was, as ever, enormously interested in all our doings.

She was a valiant little lady, and in one's memory there will always be a place for the quaint little figure with a face that age only seemed to soften, illumined by a pair of charmingly inquiring, twinkling brown eyes.

J. P. F.

JEAN JOSEPH BLANC, DIT LE GREFFIER.

THE well-known guide of Bonneval, one of the greatest of the old school, died in the autumn of 1914 at the age of seventy-three, after a very short illness. He was admirable as a man and pre-eminent as a guide. His loss is irreparable.

Owing to the war it has not been possible to collect details of his remarkable career, as his sons are at the front in the Chasseurs Alpins, but it is hoped that these may be published later. Monsieur Henri Ferrand writes :

‘ Je crois que je suis le premier voyageur que Blanc le Greffier ait conduit à la montagne. Je fis avec lui la première ascension *française* de la Levanna Occidentale le 27 Juillet 1877 (voir ann. C.A.F. 1877, p. 179). A ce moment il ne savait pas du tout son métier de guide et avait horreur de la corde ; quant à tailler des pas, son misérable petit piolet en était incapable, et s’il tailla à la montée du col du Bouquetin ce fut avec le piolet de mon guide Ginot et après l’avoir vu faire.

‘ Quand je le repris en 1888 c’était un guide accompli.’

(Extract from a letter, March 14, 1915, from M. Henri Ferrand, ancien Président de la Société des Touristes du Dauphiné.)

Blanc was also employed in his early days by Mr. Yeld, who adds the following testimony :

‘ In August, 1878, the late James Heelis (A.C.) and I found ourselves at Bonneval-sur-Arc with Alphonse Payot of Chamonix, who was my guide at that time. Heelis’ guide had not arrived, so we engaged J. J. Blanc, better known as the Greffier, on the recommendation of M. J. Culet, the landlord of the inn. Culet is well known in Alpine history as the companion of J. J. Cowell in his ascent of the western Levanna in 1860. He described the Greffier as an enthusiastic chamois hunter and mountaineer. The Greffier accompanied us on ascents of the Albaron and the Roc du Mulinet or Cima Martellot, and also went with me and Payot up the Ciamarella. We found him a good man, especially on rocks, and a cheerful and pleasant companion. Bonneval in those days was not much visited ; later on, as it became more frequented, the Greffier’s reputation greatly increased.’

Blanc was in his way one of the great classical figures, and had always fought his own battles independently of all Alpine schools and influences.

Blanc Greffier’s own words may be his fitting epitaph : ‘ Tout ce que je regrette en quittant cette terre ce sont les montagnes et les chamois ’

C. F. MEADE.



J. J. BLANC LE GREFFIER,
1841—1914.