

MOUNT LOUIS.
(Canadian Rockies.)

By VAL. A. FYNN.

EARLY in July 1916 Mr. Watts and I rode to Edith Pass and, leaving our horses, walked north to investigate Mount Louis, which we understood had not yet been climbed. It was my very first trip that season, and Mr. Watts was also quite soft; our entire lack of condition made itself felt even before we reached the foot of the peak.

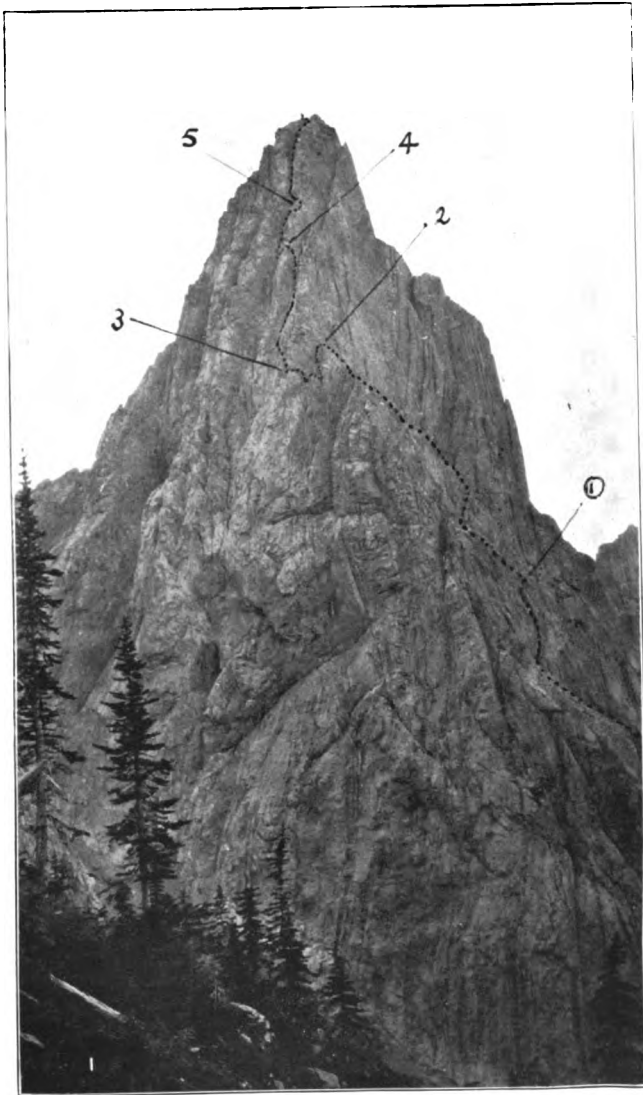
A somewhat rising traverse over a number of ribs brought us into full view of the mountain, which is separated from the north peak of Mt. Edith by a gorge which runs down to Forty Mile Creek. The lower part of the south face is extremely steep, appears to overhang in places, and is very smooth; its upper part is more broken and is seamed by a number of deep, nearly parallel couloirs which reach almost half-way down the face before merging into it. As these couloirs approach the sky-line they become steeper and narrow down to regular chimneys. The upper part of the east face is almost vertical and very slabby. Its lower part looks quite accessible and is cut by a deep and wide couloir, the upper part of which turns north to lose itself near the highest shoulder of the ridge separating the east from the north face. On the west, an easily accessible, nearly horizontal ridge reaches high up the peak. An easy grass-grown ridge running up from Forty Mile Creek gives access to the short north face. Following well-marked game trails, we traversed over to this ridge and were presently able to see that the north face is also very steep and smooth. It shows but one break, a very deep, broad, smooth and wet chimney which does not reach to the sky-line. Above this chimney the rocks appear feasible.

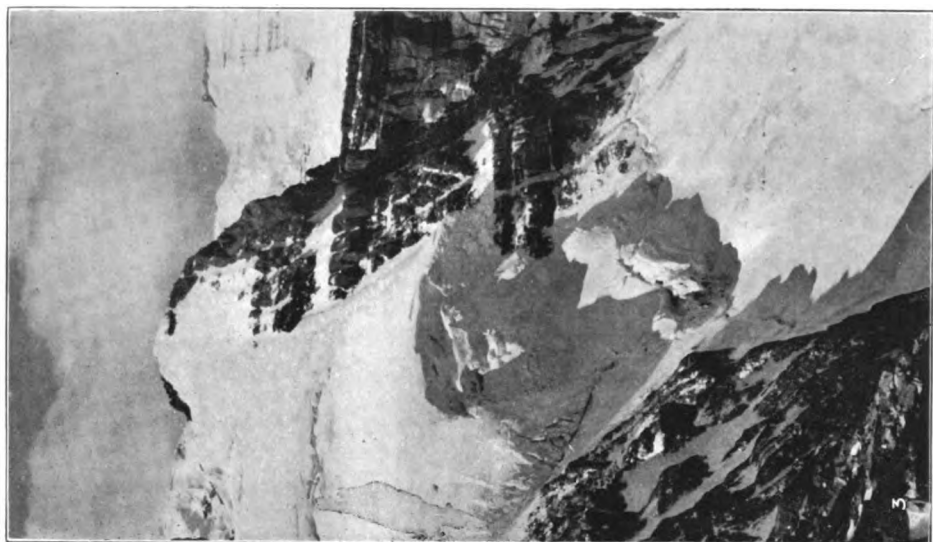
To continue in a westerly direction would have necessitated a considerable descent, and as the prospects in that region did not look at all encouraging, we retraced our steps a little and traversed into the wide couloir of the east face over fairly steep but easy rocks. From where we stood it looked as if by following the couloir we could reach the highest shoulder on the ridge separating the east from the north face. This shoulder is about on a level with the broken rocks above the

chimney in the north face, and a traverse into those might be possible. It also appeared to be possible to cross the couloir in which we stood and, climbing over the lower and easier part of the east face, reach a point high up on the ridge separating the east from the south face. Before coming to a decision I was very anxious to investigate the western face—it would take us some time to get around to it—and the late hour would furnish an admirable excuse to postpone a serious attempt on the mountain! Descending a little, we turned out of the couloir north of a grassy knoll standing in the middle of our gully, reached the screes without difficulty over steep grass ledges, and went around to the south side of the peak. In trying to get some water off the north face of Mt. Edith, I dropped a Swiss aluminium cup I valued greatly between the rocks and the snow, and had no chance at all of recovering it. After a meal, we started up the gorge between Edith and Louis, presently turning north to ascend the rocky ridge to the west of the peak. I think we were both played out by the time we reached the sky-line, and unblushingly expressed our relief at the hopeless aspect of the western side of the peak. A possible couloir comes down to within some hundred feet of the ridge we stood on, but the intervening wall is very steep and almost holdless. We crawled back to our horses, and rode slowly into Banff. A few days later I left for Honolulu, and it was not until September 1917 that I had an opportunity of improving my acquaintance with Mt. Louis. I heard that in the meantime the peak had been ascended by Mr. A. H. MacCarthy under the guidance of that crack climber Conrad Kain, and understood that their garments and hands had suffered greatly in the process, and knew that the climb must have been a difficult one. I did not get to see Mr. MacCarthy's description of his climb until my return to St. Louis late in September of this year.

On September 9, 1917, Edouard Feuz, Jr., and I left Banff on horseback at 4.45 A.M., with heavy clouds hugging the mountains and reaching almost down into the streets. At 6.50 we left our horses a little north-west of the Mt. Edith Pass, and one hour later were at the foot of the couloirs in the east face. The greater part of the mountain was shrouded in clouds, so we had to rely entirely upon my prior knowledge of the surroundings. The mountain appearing to be quite dry, our single ice-axe was left behind, and we entered the couloir. The easiest way to accomplish this is to follow the grass slopes and ledges north of the couloir and traverse into

it where these give place to bare rock about on the level with the grassy knoll situated within the couloir. Above this knoll progress is barred by high smooth slabs over which water trickles. A steep open chimney to the north and a difficult traverse south enable one to circumvent this obstacle. From this point easy but somewhat slippery ledges formed by a nearly vertical leaf-like stratification running north and south give access to the east face south of the couloir, and soon lead to easy ground. Presently a vertical wall, some ten feet high, immediately above wet and steep slabs, cuts one off from more easy ground above. (Point 1 on photo.) Fortunately a rock is jammed at a convenient spot between the wall and the slabs. A rope passed around it enabled me to stand firmly on the slabs and quite close up to the wall, while Edouard got on my shoulders, placed a foot on my raised hand, and thus reached a hold which enabled him to overcome the obstacle. Gradually working up and to the left (south) over easy ground, we finally came to a very steep and smooth wall, close under the ridge separating the east from the south face. (Point 2 on photo.) This is the highest point on the easy part of the east face. The only, and desperate, chance of reaching the ridge from here is to follow a small irregular crack. To the south a couple of very steep descending chimneys open out into space. To the north easy ledges appear to lead back into the big couloir high above the point at which we had left it. The clouds had lifted a little but were still immediately above our heads, so that our range of vision was restricted. We traversed north to find that it was by no means easy to get back into the big couloir, and we judged that it would be extremely difficult and perhaps impossible to reach the high shoulder on the ridge beyond the couloir. On the way to this point we had observed high up in the east face a narrow couloir, into which we could not look and which appeared to end south of the peak. To reach it, it was necessary to climb a high, smooth and very steep wall to some easy ledges. A narrow crack again appeared to offer the only slender chance. Before attempting any of these rather hopeless lines, we decided to have a look around the corner at the south end of the east face. Retracing our steps (to point 2) we descended a chimney, then a crack, down to an easy ledge which appeared to lead in the desired direction. After a descent and a rise, we came at 11 A.M. to a small grass-covered platform (point 3 on photo) just beyond the ridge separating the east from the south face and in full view of the latter, just above its very steep pitches.





A glance sufficed to show that our best chance lay here, even though we could not see anywhere near the top for clouds. After a bite we put on our climbing shoes, left one of our rucksacks, unfortunately also the camera, and Edouard led off at 11.30 A.M.

Slightly to the west and some ninety feet above us began an easy-looking narrow couloir which promised to help us well on our way. Steep rocks lead to within a few feet of it, when it becomes necessary to squeeze precariously around a projecting block in order to gain the gully. This gully is divided by a sharp rib and runs out all too soon on the ridge dividing the south and east faces. Somewhat below this point we changed leaders and climbed over into the parallel gully to the west. The dividing ridge was reached (point 4 of photo) after an interesting scramble. Here we found it necessary to rope off in order to reach the bottom of the gully we were making for. Fortunately we had about twelve feet of spare rope, and this we left behind to facilitate our return. This couloir soon narrowed down to a chimney and became very difficult, but landed us at 1 P.M. on the edge of a comfortable, large platform at the very foot of the final peak. (Point 5 on photo.) The only visible means of progress is a deep cut reaching clear to the summit and some 450 feet high. A steep but easy chimney leads to this crack. It did not look to me as if I could find room to move in this crack, but close acquaintance proved my fears to be fortunately baseless, for the edges of the crack offer but precarious holds and would force the climber into very exposed positions. For the first 400 feet the crack is some 12 feet deep and rises at an angle of about 75° , and although much effort is required to make progress in chimney-sweeper's fashion, yet we found the climbing comparatively safe and not abnormally difficult, even though the sides of this chimney were wet. Three wedged rocks obstruct progress near the top of this stretch and force one out to the outside edges of the crack. Above those rocks the angle eases off considerably, the crack widens out into a couloir, and in a surprisingly short time one stands in a gap between two summits of nearly equal height. The one west is, however, decidedly higher, and we reached it at 2 P.M. Ever since abandoning the camera, the weather had been improving steadily, and it was now quite clear in every direction, giving us a very pretty view down Forty Mile Creek and an interesting outlook on the peaks in the immediate vicinity. Edouard's climbing shoes had long since seen their best days,

and he had lost part of his soles early in the day, so I assumed the more strenuous work of bringing up the rear. Leaving the top at 2.25 p.m. we retraced our steps, reaching our rucksack at 5.5. On the way down we prospected somewhat and came to the conclusion that the difficult westerly couloir or chimney on the south face could be avoided by crossing it a few feet above the roping-off place, and following the much easier rib, west of it, until close under the last plateau (point 5), when it is easy to traverse back into the outlet of the difficult couloir. At 6.25 we had crossed the big couloir in the east face and were on the grass slopes immediately above the screes. As we changed to our heavy boots we had the pleasure of watching a herd of fifteen deer within some three hundred yards of us. Twenty minutes later we were following the game trails on our way to the horses. A pair of sheep, old and young, going in the opposite direction, seemed for a time inclined to claim the right of way, but finally hurried off up the gorge between Edith and Louis. While I turned to a high point east of Mt. Edith to try and get at least one photograph of our mountain, Edouard kindly undertook to look for the drinking-cup I had lost last year. I luckily directed him to the exact spot and he found it at once, all but covered by small loose stones. I was able to secure the appended picture notwithstanding the fast-fading light, and at 7.30 p.m. we had reached our horses. Starting at 7.50 with horses rearing and bucking after their long rest and ample meal of oats, we made Banff by 9.10 p.m., much pleased with our day and without a scratch. As far as my experience goes, Mt. Louis is the hardest rock climb in the Canadian Rockies or Selkirks. Edouard thinks the same. Mt. Pinnacle offers only one short passage which is difficult; there are several more difficult bits on Mt. Louis. Eliminating route-hunting, four hours should be ample time to take one from the foot of the east face to the summit.

To thoroughly enjoy the climb and avoid danger from falling stones, it should be undertaken when the rocks are quite dry and climbing shoes can be worn. Two light spare ropes will save much time, a twenty-foot rope to be left at point 4 on the way up, and a sixty-foot to be carried to the platform 5 just below the final peak.

On carefully reading Mr. MacCarthy's description of his ascent ('C.A.J.' 1917, p. 79,) I came to the conclusion that his party did not ascend the east face to as high a point as we

did, but traversed into the south face considerably below our line, and began the ascent of this face more to the west than we did. We both started from the same couloir in the east face and both utilised the same crack above the platform 5 at the foot of the final peak. Our traverse around the corner into the south face (from point 2 to point 3) was easy and short. Our main difficulties occurred at point 1, just beyond point 3, while getting into the first chimney on the south face, and in the second chimney on that face between points 4 and 5. On the appended photograph our route is shown exactly from point 2 to the summit, but only approximately from point 2 down. The lower part of the route could not be shown accurately because of the pronounced fore-shortening of the east face in the photograph.

Mr. MacCarthy gives the height of the mountain, as ascertained by the barometer, as 8650 feet.

The following short notes of my other expeditions in the same neighbourhood in 1917 may be of use:—

On August 1 I climbed Haddow and Aberdeen by myself, leaving the Château at Banff at 4.30 A.M. I reached the cabin in Saddleback Pass at 6 A.M. At 6.30 began the traverse to the foot of the glacier, coming down between Sheol and Haddow; followed a rib of rock dividing the glacier, then the glacier itself, up to the foot of a deep, curved snow couloir on the W.; followed the rocks on the N. side of the couloir to the foot of the E. face of the final peak and up it to the summit, which was reached at 11.10 A.M. Left at 11.40, descended to the Aberdeen glacier and reached the summit of Aberdeen over the steep snow and ice ridge at 12.30 P.M. Descending by the usual route along the S. arête, I reached Lefroy glacier close under the Mitre Pass, and was back at the hotel at 5.30 P.M.

On August 4, Rudolph Aemmer and I left the hotel at 4.8 A.M., reached the Saddle between the N. peak of Victoria and Collyer at 10.30 A.M. After half an hour's rest, made the N. peak in one hour and thirty minutes. Leaving the summit at 2.30, we followed the ridge to the summit of Collyer, which was reached at 3.15 P.M. I felt too tired to go on to Mt. Pope, although we started in that direction, and so descended the S.E. face of Mt. Collyer to the upper Victoria glacier, making the Château in a little under four hours.

On August 12 climbed the Devil's Thumb with Dr. Withmer from Philadelphia, and Mrs. Fynn.

On August 13 traversed Mt. Whyte with Dr. Withmer, leaving hotel at 7 A.M., reaching summit at 11.55, and descending the S.E. face by way of the couloir between the two highest summits, in three hours, to the glacier trail.

On August 15 Rudolph and I left the Château at 12.55 A.M., reached Abbot Pass at 5.30, rested until 6.5, reached Lefroy, after a good deal of step-cutting, at 9.30, rested until 10, and were back at Abbot Pass at 11.30. Left at 12.5 for Victoria, which we reached by the ordinary route at 4.20 P.M. The going was slow and sometimes quite difficult, owing to great masses of fresh snow. Leaving at 4.58 P.M., we were back in Abbot Pass at 8.15 P.M., picked up our rucksacks, and five minutes later were on our way down to Victoria glacier, reaching the trail at 9 P.M. and the hotel at 11.10 P.M.

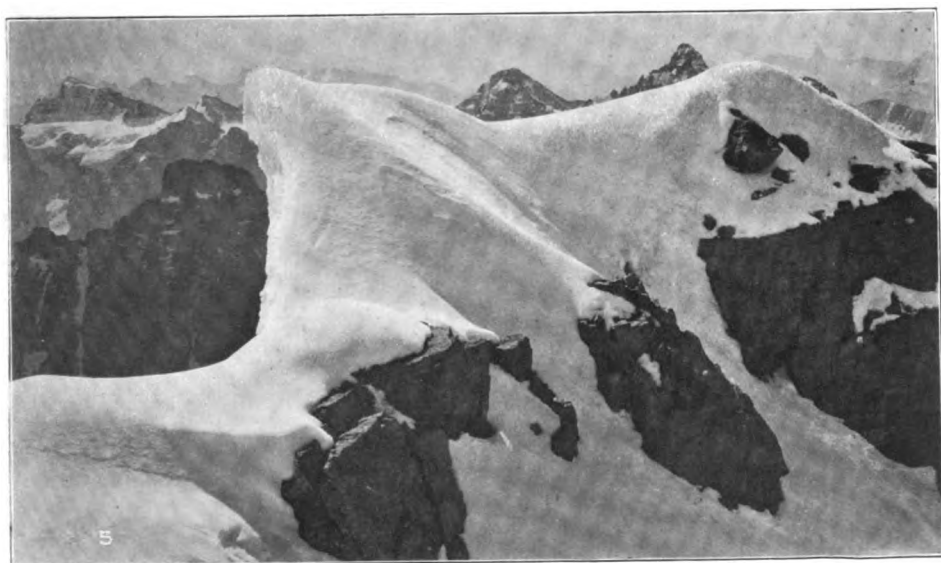
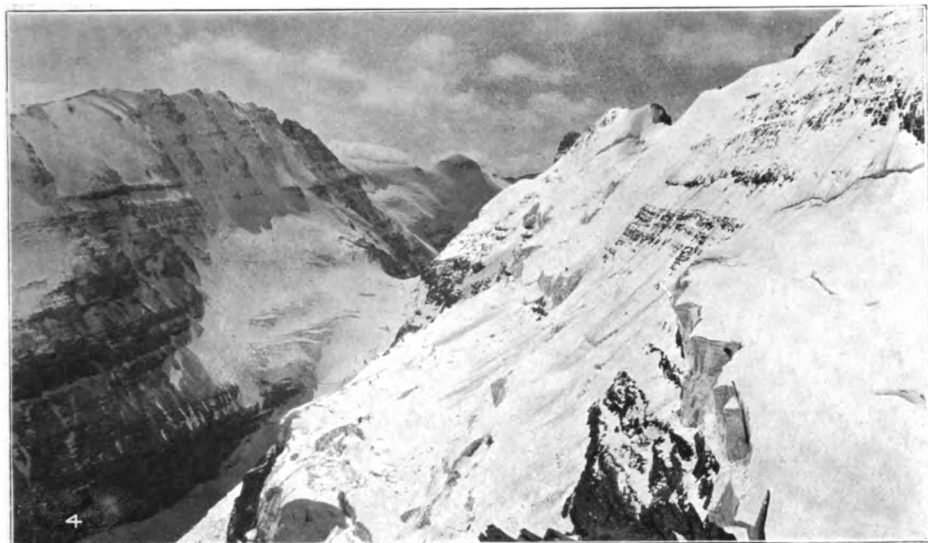
On August 17 traversed Mt. Whyte with Mrs. Fynn and Rudolph. On the way down, followed the W. arête to near the bottom of the gap between Mt. Whyte and the unnamed peak W. thereof, and then took to the S.E. face, reaching the glacier trail near the spot where it leaves the moraine, on its way to the plain of the Six Glaciers.

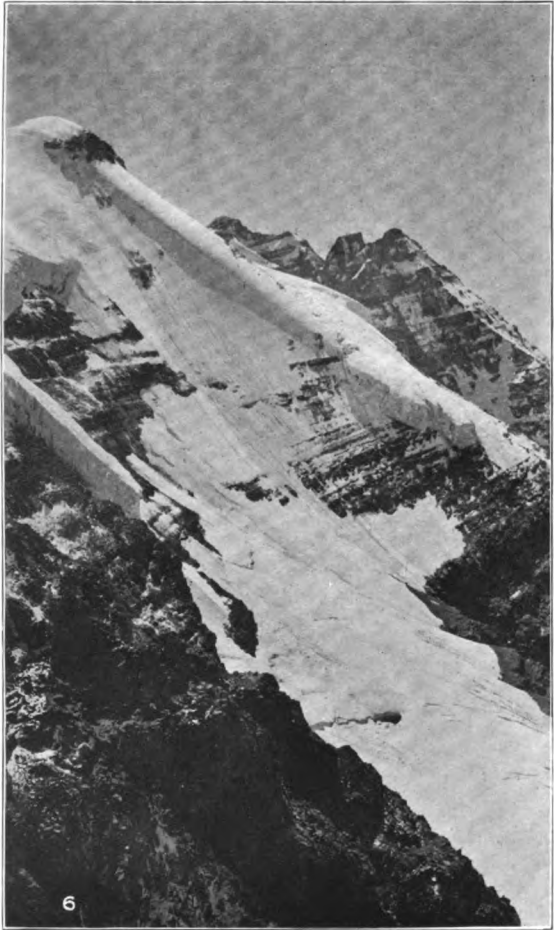
On August 22 left hotel at 6.10 A.M. with Dr. Withmer and Mrs. Fynn. Reached Abbot Pass at 12.10 P.M., rested until 1 o'clock, and descended to the S. Made O'Hara Camp at 4.50 P.M.

On August 23 we left camp at 8.30, reached O'Pabin Pass at 12.15 P.M. and Prospector's Valley at 1.35 P.M. After an hour's rest started for Wenkhemna Pass, which we reached at 5 P.M. Following the upper trail, we made the Moraine Chalets at 7.40.

On August 25 left hotel at 6.30 A.M. with Dr. Withmer, reached Mitre Pass at 10.15, left at 10.45, and made the summit of Mitre at 12.15. After an hour's rest reached the Pass at 2.43, remaining until 3.30 P.M., and were back in the hotel at 6.10 P.M.

On September 1 left Moraine Chalets at 4 A.M. with Dr. Withmer and Rudolph. Reached the col between Pinnacle and Eiffel at 7.15 in bad weather. The mountain was covered with fresh snow and the temperature was very low, and we had occasional flurries of snow. Leaving the col at 8.20, we found the rocks in the lower part of the climb all iced, and were unable to use climbing shoes. Reached the summit of Pinnacle at 10.15, remaining until 10.40, and were back in the col at





12.20. In the meantime Mrs. Fynn had left Moraine Chalets at about 8, and we now saw her high up on the Eiffel Ridge and about on the level with our col, so we traversed in her direction, reaching the Eiffel Ridge at 1 p.m. After thirty-five minutes' rest we completed the ascent of Eiffel in a snowstorm, reaching the summit at 3 p.m. At 3.15 we started down with the snowstorm still raging, and reached Moraine Chalets at 5.45 p.m.

Notes on the Illustrations.

1. Mt. Louis from the S. (taken after 7 p.m., September 9, 1917).
2. Haddow from Saddleback Pass.
3. Aberdeen from Haddow, with Lefroy and Victoria behind.
4. Lefroy, Abbot Pass, Victoria, Glacier Peak, and Hungabee from Upper Victoria Glacier.
5. Cornice on Victoria near main summit, looking S.E.
6. Glacier Peak, Ringrose, and Hungabee from Abbot Pass.
7. View from Lefroy.
Ridge to Glacier Peak, Hungabee, Ringrose, Biddle.

CHAMOUNI IN 1780 AND 1786.

THE following interesting extracts are from letters and diaries of the Rev. Tho: Brand, who travelled in Switzerland, Savoy, and Italy in 1780, and the immediately following years.

They are placed at the disposal of the Editor by Mr. H. W. Malkin, a great-nephew of our old member and diarist, the late Mr. A. T. Malkin, whose first wife was a niece of Mr. Brand.]

Describing a visit to the Montanvert with his friend Sr. James Hall in 1780 "under the direction of Pierre Balma a very excellent & sensible guide with all the good qualities of a Montagnard not yet spoilt by foreign follies & English extravagance," Mr. Brand mentions the first building there: "a little hut which Mr. Blair, an English gentleman, whose claret hounds and fortune had run so fast in Dorsetshire that he himself was obliged to quit England, had built as a shelter against a storm or to preserve his wine from the sun on his frequent excursions to Chamouny—This is dignified with the