

Mr. Adrian Stokes, among which Miss Clifford's 'Sospel' held its modest own by gentler means.

Mr. Colin Philip tackled a most difficult subject in his large water-colour 'Winter Storm on the Lake of Geneva' (116). No one can have had more opportunities of close observation of such effects, of hills on an opposite shore showing dimly through drifting clouds and rain. And, in spite of a certain mottliness and dottiness in all the features, the more it was looked at the more interesting and suggestive it seemed. Mr. T. Hall Hall was at his best in his grey-green sunrise over a lake (29). Our old friend Mr. Lawrence Pilkington showed two careful drawings, Nos. 86 and 101, of which the latter was the better. And his daughter, Miss Margaret Pilkington, in her 'Meije' (85), displayed a knowledge of mountain architecture comparable with some of Miss Hechle's earlier work. Let us hope to see many more of her sketches as time goes on. A small green-grey sketch by another lady artist, Miss J. E. Pawsey, 'Tellialp' (107), was singularly pleasing. Her other exhibit (128) had the distinction of being the only figure picture—and it was a very small picture—in the whole show. Mrs. A. W. Moore's charming little sketches deserve a word of praise, as do many other exhibits of which space forbids the mention. It was good to see half a dozen attempts by various brushes to depict the beauties of Alpine meadows in full bloom. But our flower artists will be the first to admit that perfection has not been quite reached yet.

Lastly, the fact must not escape record that our Mr. Sydney Spencer, to whom we all owe so much as secretary, as photographer, and as organizer of this and of previous exhibitions, has, in his mature age, turned from the camera to the palette. He was represented by several water-colour sketches, which illustrate his courageous use of his new and untried tools, and his taste in choice of subjects. May he enjoy many years of devotion to this strange occupation, but let us hope he will not entirely desert his first and sunburnt love.

H. G. W.

THE AIGUILLE BLANCHE DE PEUTERET.

By J. P. FARRAR.

IT is well to emphasize the lesson to be learned from the Richardet accident on the Aiguille Blanche last summer. The line of ascent lies across the E. face, safe enough in early morning, but very subject to stonefall later. This accident

showed that it is very undesirable to *bivouac too high*, as in case of an enforced retreat the descent may become, as it did in Richardet's case, very dangerous.

On the illustration Mr. Amstutz has been good enough to mark their bivouac of August 11, 1925—the highest dot. The middle dot indicates the Rey-Klucker-Güssfeldt¹ bivouac of August 14, 1893, while the lowest dot indicates the Maquignaz-Farrar bivouac of August 26, 1893. The extreme left-hand dot indicates the spot where Richardet



was killed by a stone when his party was forced to descend in thick weather from their bivouac.

We took 9 hrs. slow going from Courmayeur to our bivouac. Next morning we left at 4.40, followed the rock rib on which our bivouac was as far as the narrowest point of the couloir on our right, cut 26 steps in the ice across this (5 to 5.15),

¹ Güssfeldt estimates his bivouac at 3200 m. (*Der Mont Blanc*, p. 259). The contour lines on the B.I.K. map have no claim to any accuracy. They were put in from the data acquired in about 2 months by a young Swiss topographer, mostly from photographs. I should put the altitude at not over 2800 m., as in those days our vertical rate was certainly much more than 900 m. in about 5 hrs.

and took to a broad rock ridge on the other side, traversing continually in a N. direction (9.30), finally, after crossing two exposed stone couloirs, turned W. up a tolerably defined ridge, cleaning out some of Güssfeldt's steps, to the beautiful little snow summit, the apex of four arêtes (9.51). We had, so far, no difficulty whatever and never saw or heard a stone. We were on the Col Peuteret at 1.15, passed what was obviously Güssfeldt's bivouac under a big rock on the Fresnay side at 3.33, and gained the summit of M. Blanc de Courmayeur at 0.5 A.M. (midnight). The total of halts all day was 1 hr. 50 mins., but as the leader—Daniel Maquignaz throughout—had much step cutting we had much waiting.²

Herr Welzenbach and Dr. Allwein in 1925 made their second bivouac on the Col de Peuteret and got to the Vallot hut that night.³ Herren Horeschowsky and Piekielko in 1923⁴ made their second bivouac (excluding an extra night in their first) somewhere about Güssfeldt's. Even from the higher bivouac of the Richardet party, a party of guideless climbers might,⁵ save in very favourable—not probable—conditions, require a second bivouac before gaining the summit. Now above the second Güssfeldt bivouac place there is hardly any suitable place, so that there is no certain gain by adopting the higher bivouac to set off against the certain danger from stones in the ascent to, and the possible descent from, that bivouac.⁶

My ever helpful old friend Klueker, whose opinion on any mountain question none will gainsay, writes to me (freely translated):

'Our bivouac of August 14, 1893, stands a little higher than yours. I have marked it. Since it is on a rock arête, it is absolutely safe from stones. I share your view that the Richardet party bivouacked too high, especially in such changeable weather as 1925. [The day they went up was brilliant with every promise of good weather.—J.P.F.] From my notes I see we reached our bivouac about 5.30 P.M.

² *A.J.* xxxiii. 50. ³ Present number, p. 121. ⁴ *A.J.* xxxvi. 408.

⁵ *A.J.* xxiv. 691. Maischberger's party took 16 hrs. from the higher bivouac to the summit of M. B. de C. (1.30 A.M. to 5.30 P.M.).

⁶ Years ago we often bivouacked, but fought very shy of impromptu bivouacs. Nowadays men like Horeschowsky and Welzenbach prepare for several consecutive bivouacs and come off all right. They carry a Zdarsky sack described and illustrated in the review of Mr. Flaig's *Eistechnik* in this number.

Rey had wished to camp lower down to the right of Richardet's fatal spot, but I protested, as on those rocks and to the right across to the rock arête I noted signs of stones. So, unroped and at a distance apart, we hurried across to the rock arête. About 6 P.M. I continued alone up the arête and cut steps across the couloir to the main mountain so that we should not be held up next morning. Next morning our start was delayed a long time by a lively controversy as to which porter was to come with us, till at last César Ollier made up his mind to come.

'By the time we had crossed the couloir to the main mountain the sun had risen and the stones began to be lively. After ascending easy rocks for a short time we determined to cross two steep névé shoots on our left, in the direction of Richardet's bivouac. We had, however, hardly taken a hundred steps when heavy stonefall compelled our retreat. Thereupon we turned to our right and reached an, at first, slightly defined rock rib which led in a straight line to the summit. The last 50 m. were, by reason of the loose rocks, extremely unpleasant. . . . The tragic end of the splendid young fellow Richardet filled me with sorrow. Ought we to reproach these three young mountaineers? No! The catastrophe was due to the unexpectedly sudden change in the weather. . . .'

There is no reason why this great expedition should not be repeated by a party of strong, well-trained, and practised mountaineers with a prospect of three days good weather and fair conditions; and this note is written, not to discourage its repetition, but to draw attention to a factor of safety.

IN MEMORIAM.

SIR R. MELVILL BEACHCROFT.

(1846-1926.)

IN Sir Melvill Beachcroft, who died in January a few days before his eightieth birthday, the Club loses another of its veterans, and the writer his oldest friend and first climbing companion.

Beachcroft was, owing to the neighbourhood of our homes at Hampstead, one of my earliest playfellows. In school-life we were parted, and he did not go to any university. But when, in 1864,