

so as to avoid a waterfall, and only ascended the upper 300 ft. or so of the gully itself. The gap was reached in $4\frac{1}{2}$ hrs., excluding halts, from the camp. It is adorned by a well-marked cairn. After traversing the gentle Basutoland slopes on the other side and ascending Champagne Castle, the gap was again reached at 16.52. The peak, which rises immediately on the N. side of the gap to a height of perhaps 200 ft. above it, was now climbed by grass and loose rocks on its W. side, a final easy rocky wall about 20 ft. in height leading the climbers to the summit at 17.00. A cairn was erected. It appears to be about the same height as Cathkin Peak. A very grand view was afforded of Cathkin Peak, Monk's Cowl, and the peak on the S. side of the gap from which the party had ascended. Descending the same way to the gap, the morning's route of ascent was approximately followed, camp being regained by aid of the fitful light of the moon at about 20.40. From the opposite side of the Hlwazeni valley, and from the camp, the peak appears as a well-defined more or less rectangular rocky mass, and the ridge running northwards from it appears gradually to fall in height. The climbers propose for it the name of *Bastion peak*.

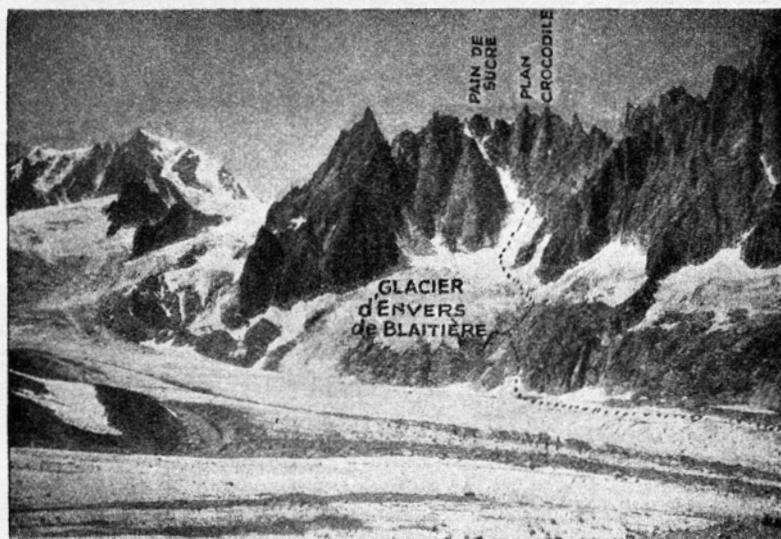
VARIOUS EXPEDITIONS.

Mont Blanc Group.

AIGUILLE DU PLAN, 3673 m. = 12,051 ft., B.I.K., SECOND ASCENT BY E. FACE (Ryan's route). July 24-25, 1927. Messrs. F. S. Smythe and J. H. B. Bell. This ascent was first made by Captain V. J. E. Ryan, with Franz and Joseph Lochmatter, in June 1906. No description has hitherto been published, but Franz Lochmatter states that he considers this route to be the finest in the Aiguilles.

Left Montenvers at 02.30. Ascended ice-fall of Glacier d'envers de Blaitière mainly by the broken, easy rocks on its N. side. Easy snow slopes led to three large schrunds which traverse the upper bay of the glacier at the foot of the great couloir dropping from the Col du Pain de Sucre. The lower two offered no difficulty, but the upper and true bergschrund was turned with difficulty under the rocks on the right. An ice traverse led to the foot of the couloir falling between the Plan and the Dent du Crocodile. Ryan's party gained the great buttress falling from the summit of the Plan low down near the foot of this couloir, but the present party found this impossible owing to icy rocks, and were forced to continue up the couloir, which was climbed with great difficulty over snow and ice-covered slabs for a considerable distance, keeping as far as possible on the left to avoid falling stones and ice. Above these slabs steep ice led to shelter beneath a conspicuous overhanging rock face beneath the buttress of the Plan. Rested and had a meal. Owing

to the icy rocks on this the sunless side of the buttress, it was still not possible to gain its crest, and the party was forced to cut directly up the long ice slope which slants up from the couloir to the crest of the buttress, which it joins at about half its height. Five hours of exacting cutting on ice of the hardest quality covered with powdery snow, and so steep as often to necessitate handholds, brought the party to the crest of the buttress at approximately 15.00 hrs. The rocks of the buttress, which often more nearly resemble a narrow rib, are severe throughout. In one exceptionally severe 80-ft. holdless crack the leader lost his axe. The rock is wonder-



A. DU PLAN, SHOWING MR. SMYTHE'S ROUTE.

fully sound, and the climbing consists almost entirely of clean-cut cracks with little hold between smooth granite slabs. Bivouacked at 18.00 on the only suitable ledge seen on the climb at a point approximately 800 ft. from the summit. Perfect weather and a comfortable night in a Zdarsky tent sack. Left at 07.00 in a warm sun, and commenced climbing the series of cracks. Unstable snow edges were sometimes present on the crest, and considerable time was lost in flogging these away before advance could be made. An 100 ft. final step was turned by a traverse across slabs to the left, and a most difficult thin crack in which it was just possible to insert the fingers and which the leader only found possible in bare feet. The final 80-ft. chimney was filled with ice, but a crack in its right wall offered the solution. An unexpected and delightful traverse to the left from the upper chock-stone in this chimney led to easy rocks

and the summit at 15.00 hrs. Descent was made by the ordinary route to the Montanvers.

There is no doubt that bad conditions added greatly to the difficulty of this climb, but the rock climbing and ice work were of the most continuously exacting standard the party had ever experienced. Captain Ryan's route over the lower portion of the climb is to be preferred to the present party's, as the Plan-Crocodile couloir is exceedingly dangerous from falling stones, corniches, and ice. The lower rocks of the arête offer, according to Franz Lochmatter, extreme difficulties, and it was only by standing on each other's shoulders and making a human ladder that Captain Ryan's party were able to climb one step. To those who know the climbing ability of the Lochmatter brothers this will no doubt speak for itself!

AIGUILLE BLANCHE DE PÉTÉRET, 4109 m. = 13,482 ft., B.I.K. Aug. 10-11, 1927. Messrs. F. S. Smythe and G. Graham Macphee. Left Courmayeur 08.45 in good weather. Arrived Gamba hut, 13.30. Left hut, 17.15. Col de l'Innominata, 18.35. Crossed intricate ice-fall of Fresnay Glacier to foot of couloir falling from 'Col des Dames Anglaises,' 20.15. The large bergschrund turned on left and couloir gained by a traverse above the bergschrund. Using Eckenstein crampons, climbed the hard and sometimes icy snow of the couloir to within 150 ft. of the col, where it is necessary to leave the couloir and traverse across the W. face of the Aiguille Blanche. Rocks very loose. Climbing by brilliant moonlight continued by a series of upward zigzag traverses on difficult rocks. At 02.00 moonlight failed. Bivouacked on a ridge connecting an outstanding pinnacle with the main W. face. Left at 05.30. Struck main S. arête too high and had to descend some way on the E. face in order to turn Grand Gendarme. Kept as high as possible to avoid falling stones, which constantly raked E. face. Considerable difficulty experienced in crossing a narrow, deeply cut ice-filled couloir. Weather meanwhile was rapidly changing for the worse, but decided to go on to Col de Pétéret rather than risk the long, difficult, and dangerous return *via* the Col des Dames Anglaises. Summit of Aiguille Blanche in bad weather at 13.00 hrs. Descended in storm to Col de Pétéret, 15.00. A hurricane was then blowing on Mont Blanc and a *tourmente* on the Col de Pétéret. Descended to Fresnay Glacier by the great rocky bastion, roping down several times on the smooth and difficult rocks. Danger was occasioned by stones blown off the rocks above by the hurricane. Descended Fresnay Glacier directly to Col de l'Innominata, and were helped down the sérac wall by steps cut by Josef Knubel in prospecting the route to the Col de Pétéret for Mr. Eustace Thomas's party. Descended from Col de l'Innominata in a terrific thunderstorm—the same storm that produced a cloudburst over Montreux. Arrived Gamba hut, 21 hrs.

This descent from the Col de Pétéret is probably the first save the fatal one of Professor F. M. Balfour and his guide J. Petrus ('A.J.' 11, 90-91).

MONT BLANC, 4810 m. = 15,782 ft., B.I.K., *via* COL MAUDIT (Gugliermi's route). Aug. 14, 1927. Messrs. F. S. Smythe and G. G. Macphee. Left Torino hut in brilliant moonlight at 00.30. Crossed bergschrund without difficulty at 02.30. Using Eckenstein crampons climbed steep hard snow to a conspicuous rock-tongue in the couloir. Good sound rock gave fine climbing till almost under the great sérac wall that defends the col proper. Kept too far to the left, and after difficult climbing on icy rocks traversed to the right, where a large cairn was found. Steep rock with good holds led up to the right of the sérac wall, finally petering out in a snow and ice slope which led without further difficulty to the crest of the sérac wall and the col at 06.35. Summit of Mont Blanc du Tacul at 07.45. Left, 08.15. Mont Blanc in a *tourmente* at 12.30. Montenvers *via* Plan des Aiguilles, 18.00 hrs.

This is believed to be the first ascent of Mont Blanc from the Torino hut by this combination, and it is the third ascent of the Col Maudit from the Géant Glacier.

AIGUILLE DU PEIGNE (3192 m. = 10,474 ft., B.I.K.). The Editor tells me that this ascent, although very frequently made, has never yet been described in the ALPINE JOURNAL.

Our party, Mr. C. G. Crawford and myself, with Pierre Blanc and his son, Alphonse, left the Plan de l'Aiguille at 05.15, September 6, 1927. The ordinary route, which we took, lies up the couloir descending to the Glacier des Pèlerins from the 'Col' du Peigne. Keep to its true left bank for a short space, then cross the bed and ascend a sort of arête on the right bank to a spot suitable for rest and refreshment, overlooking the couloir. This first third of the couloir took us just 1 hr. from the foot of the rocks. It is neither very easy nor very difficult. We then descended into the couloir by a *rappel*, and proceeded up easy rocks on the left bank to a point where two subsidiary gullies unite with it. From this point one can *either* continue up the couloir to the Col du Peigne, still keeping to the easy rocks of its left bank (some loose stones); *or* else, though not quite so easily, one can omit the col, crossing the couloir to its true right, and climbing straight to the foot of the final chimney which leads to the crest of the ridge above the col. We took the latter route on the ascent, the former on the descent. The point of bifurcation is about two-thirds of the way up the couloir. The chimney, which must be taken in either case, and which is reached from the col by a zig-zag, is steep and exposed, and its difficulties increase as one climbs higher. The rock in it at one point was not so firm as one would

like it to be. From the top of the chimney a short but exposed and rather difficult stretch of slabs lands one on the first peak. From there to the summit is a diverting and aerial scramble along an arête, without difficulty, save for the descent into the last gap, which requires a short *rappel*. The summit was reached at 11.05, the rocks having taken 3 hrs. 40 mins. actual going. We got to the foot of the couloir at 16.00, the descent occupying much the same time as the ascent. The bed of the couloir should be avoided as far as possible, as stones fall in it.

E. V. SLATER.

AIGUILLE DE GRÉPON (3482 m. = 11,424 ft., *Vallot*). By the W. or Nantillons face (Ryan's Route). August 13, 1927. MM. J. Lagarde and H. de Ségogne. From the Nantillons glacier go up the Charmoz-Grépon couloir till you are level with the higher of two diagonal ledges seaming the W. face of the Grépon. Cross the couloir and take this rocky ascending ledge composed of mixed rock, ice and snow. The ledge, on the outer side of which is a little rocky crest, can be described as half ledge, half gully. Go up it and scramble, about midway up, over an icy step and rocky knobs; at this point the angle increases and approximates to 55° for about 100 ft. You now soon arrive at the spot where the 'Dunod' route falls in, some 65 ft. below the Grépon-Balfour gap. Attain this gap and *descend* to the foot of the Dunod chimney, whence the slab and the Lochmatter chimney,¹ followed by the summit crack, lead you to the top (4-4½ hrs. from the bergschrund).

The only 'rock' difficulty of this route is the Lochmatter slab. Your instinct is to try and cross it by placing your feet in a little horizontal crack. You must, however, grasp it with your hands, otherwise you are sure to get pounded about 3 ft. short of the chimney, owing to the gradual splay-out of the crack. Consequently, you must *descend* a little below the platform at the base of the Dunod chimney so as to reach a little nearly perpendicular 'gutter' rising in a corner (*dièdre*). Cross a slab and climb the gutter by minute holds till you attain a shallow horizontal crevice flattening out gradually to your *left*. (This crevice is somewhat vaingloriously described as a *ledge* in the account, *Vallot*, I, p. 67.) By means of this crevice you can scramble over a second slab which still separates you from the base of the Lochmatter chimney. Two small, almost invisible, knobs are very useful as footholds.

In snowy summers like 1927, it is a curious fact that you can get by this route to within 130 ft. of the summit of the Grépon, almost entirely over *ice*!

¹ The slab and Lochmatter chimney were first climbed by Messrs. L. W. Rolleston and H. C. Bowen with Josef and Gabriel Lochmatter. *Gabriel* led. August 26, 1913, *A.J.* 28, 83-4.

This route was taken first, both in the ascent and descent, by Captain V. J. E. Ryan with Josef and Franz Lochmatter in July, 1914 ('A.J.' 29, 200; with two marked illustrations). MM. Fallet and R. T. de Montcel made the second ascent in 1926 (G.H.M. *Annuaire*, 1927, p. 71).

On the day of our ascent the Grépon was for the first time climbed simultaneously by its two faces and two arêtes. One party scaled it by the Mummery route, another from 'C.P.,' ours by Ryan's route, while Madame Helburn and Miss O'Brien with Armand Charlet and [?] Alfred Couttet climbed the peak, by Young's Mer de Glace route, in remarkably short time.

J. LAGARDE.

Pennine Alps.

GRAND CORNIER, 3969 m. = 13,022 ft., BY E. ARÊTE, attained from the N.E. July 15, 1927. Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Murray, with



GRAND CORNIER, SHOWING MR. MURRAY'S ROUTE.

Théophile and Hilaire Theytaz. Owing to threatening weather, the start from Mountet was delayed till 03.30, and the party roped at 04.00 on the Durand glacier. Crossing the glacier, some steep ice-worn rocks led up to the glacier-covered ledge descending from point 3191 m. at the foot of the E. arête. Many tracks of chamois were seen on this glacier. 3191 m. was reached about 06.45, and the steep cliff 'overhanging' this point climbed just to the left (S.) of a couloir which breaks it near this point. The E. arête was then

followed till about 10.30 on rocks of no particular difficulty, and then on very bad snow, which was again deserted for rocks about 11.15. The point where the N.E. arête falls in was reached at 12.00. Thence to the summit in 3 hrs., a series of corniches near the top making progress very slow indeed. Following the N.W. ridge for perhaps 30 yards, a descent was made almost straight down towards Bricolla. The party unroped at 20.00 on the moraine, and the hotel was reached at 21.00 hrs. Given good conditions, these times could be greatly improved on, and the summit reached from Mountet by this arête in 7-8 hrs.

Bernese Oberland.

TRAVERSE OF THE HÖRNLI RIDGE. Point 2866 m. to the new Mittellegi Hut. August 6, 1927. Messrs. S. Uramatsu and S. Matsukata, with Emil Steuri and Samuel Brawand.



Photo, Wehrli.]

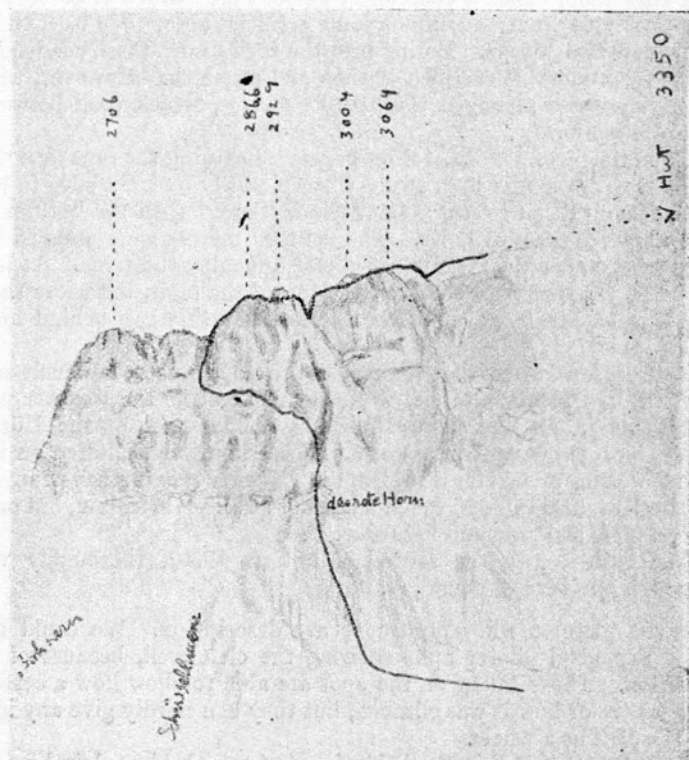
EIGER AND MITTELLEGI ARÊTE.

We left the Hotel Alpighen at 03.15 and followed the 'Bohner'n' way up to the W. rib of the great avalanche passage—*Schüssellauene*—directly below the Hörnli, where we began to ascend in the direction of a characteristic wide snow patch which marks what is locally called *das rote Horn*.

We gained the ridge at 07.30 at the saddle. After half an hour's rest we started to traverse the ridge. Point 2866 m. was gained at 08.45. The second Hörnli peak was not climbed over but crept through; i.e. after a little excavating work we managed to make an

artificial tunnel of about 7 ft. through the foot of it to the other side. This short cut enabled us to get to the cleft as early as 10.30.

This is the prominent gap on the N.E. ridge of the Eiger which separates the point 2929 m. from the point 3004 m., or, in other words, the West-Hörnli from the East-Hörnli. [This place was not unfamiliar to us, as three of us, with other companions, came up to



HÖRNLI RIDGE WITH 1927 ROUTE.

this point in September, 1926. But the conditions were not quite favourable then and, moreover, we were not fully equipped to force our way. Result was a retreat down to Alpigen through mist and dusk. A bitter experience, the memory of which has never ceased to haunt us since.] There seem to exist two ways of getting to the W. top of the cleft: The first traverses the S.E. flank and gains the ridge by a long couloir dropping from the ridge to the Kalli glacier. This is very exposed. The other necessitates climbing the smooth face of the cleft directly upwards by means of a crack and then traversing to the S.E. flank over an edge to get to a gully behind it

and follow that gully to the ridge. The N.W. side of the ridge seems impossible neither does the climbing of the whole W. face of the cleft appear possible, as it projects towards the middle.

We chose the second way. The first few metres of the crack were comparatively easy. But then it becomes too narrow to allow either hand or foot to get in, while between the top of the crack and the edge there exists a completely smooth face which is absolutely impossible to traverse without some artificial aids. We used three nails and two pitons. Boring into the rock under these conditions meant considerable sacrifice of time and strength. However, with great effort we managed the first 10 metres, which took between 2 and 3 hours.

Then the second stage of work began. Belaying the rope over the highest nail, the first man swung himself slowly over the edge to the S.E. face until he gained a small platform and then the bottom of the above-mentioned gully. The next 30 metres were climbed by this gully under the most exposed and difficult conditions. At last at 14.00 the first man stood on the top of the cleft, but more than 2 hours had to be spent before the last left this gap behind him, 16.15.

Although we knew that the rest of the ridge was not difficult and we still had plenty of time, we could not rest as the weather was threatening. In fact before finishing the traverse of the Hörnli ridge, we were caught in a storm. For 1 hour we sheltered on the ridge, waiting in vain for it to clear up. The traverse of the remainder of the Mittellegi ridge to the hut was not at all plain sailing, but only because of the storm and lightning.

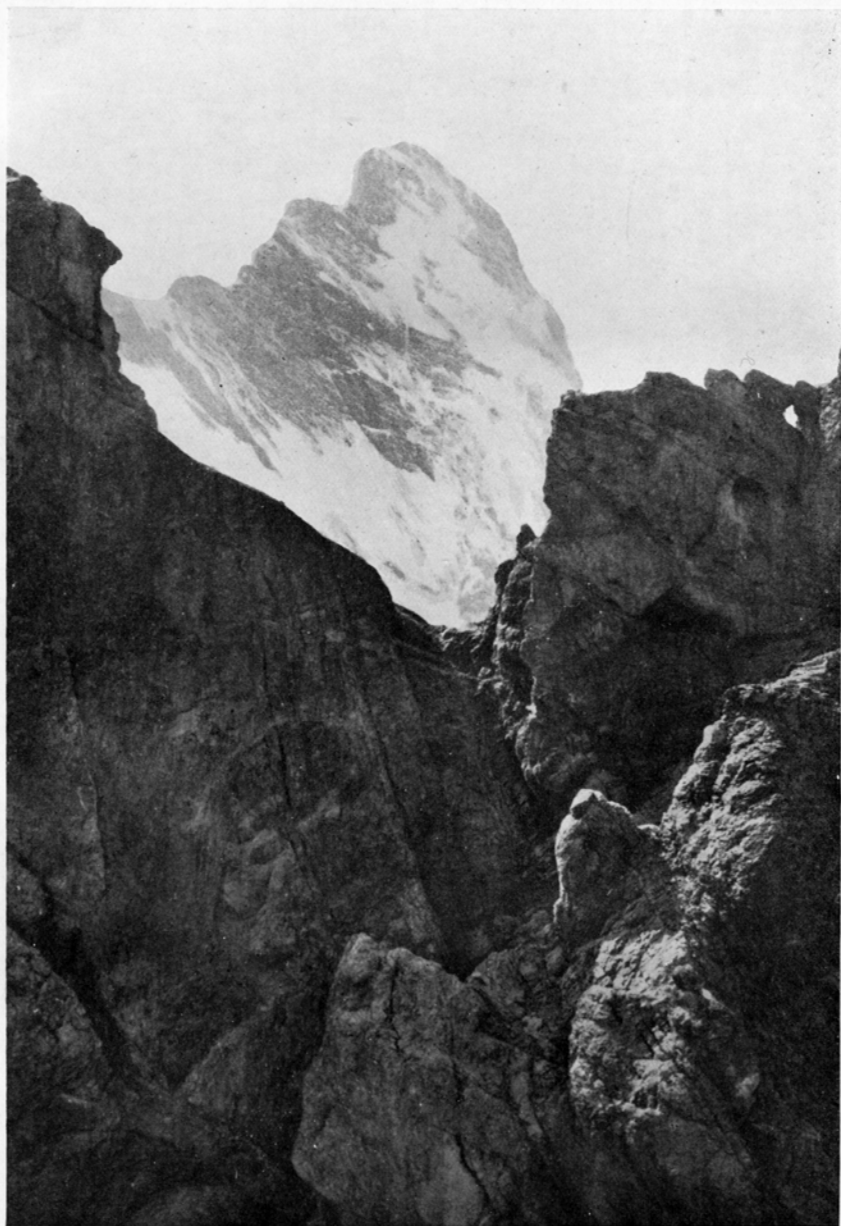
We rushed into the Mittellegi hut at 19.40, thoroughly wet through but with extreme joy.

Some pictures will supplement my description. We could not take any good photographs showing the cleft well, because of its position. Those taken on the spot are able to show how a certain crack runs or how it was climbed, but they can hardly give any idea of the cleft as a whole.

It is better to call in the help of a photograph to explain how we made a short cut, as it is difficult to make the point clear by any description, although it has little importance. The photograph is taken from point 2866 m. in 1926. The gap is the one between the II. peak and III. peak (last of the East-Hörnli). The black spot on the right hand of the gap is the cave through which we made a tunnel without any difficulty. A hole near the skyline of the ridge will serve to explain how the ridge is suffering from weathering, especially at this point.

S. MATSUKATA.

[The *Climbers' Guide*, Bernese Oberland, I, i, pp. 144-9, gives full details of the history of the Hörnli, of which all the points had previously been climbed. This appears to be the *first* complete traverse of the ridge, as well as a new 'combination.'



Phot. S. Matsukata.

EIGER WITH GAP BETWEEN PEAKS II AND III
from Point 2866 m.

The credit of the first *upward* traverses of the Hörnli-Mittellegi-Eiger arête thus clearly belongs to the Japanese parties and their guides, 'A.J.' 34, 166-7.—*Editor.*]

Drakensberg, Natal.

An attempt on CATHKIN PEAK (c. 10,500 ft.). July 13, 1927. Messrs. G. F. Travers-Jackson and O. K. Williamson left at 07.45 a camp in the Hlwazeni valley situated about 200 ft. above its level floor. The Hlwazeni valley runs in a direction somewhat W. of N. and separates the main Drakensberg ridge from the subsidiary one, of which the chief summits are the Monk's Cowl and Cathkin Peak. At its highest point (S.) it is close to the junction of these two ridges. We traversed slopes on the true right of the valley, then ascended a glen in an approximately N.E. direction to the depression separating Cathkin Peak and Monk's Cowl, Cathkin Neck reached at about 09.40. We descended the left-hand slopes of Monk's Ravine, approximately in a N.W. direction, for about 300 ft., then traversed to the left, slightly ascending, on the grassy slopes immediately under the rocks of Cathkin Peak.

The slopes from here onwards were frozen hard and were covered by a thin layer of recent snow. Above us loomed the precipitous rocky wall of the S. bastion of Cathkin Peak, separated from the main peak by a well-marked depression. Our slopes brought us to the right-hand side of the deep ravine on the S.E. side of the mountain, which descends from close to the summit. The slopes on the left-hand side of the gully which forms the bed of this ravine are far steeper than those on its right; they are, in fact, quite precipitous. The slopes on the right consist of steep grass separated by low rocky walls which extend horizontally, a formation characteristic of the Drakensberg. Having reached the actual gully, it was found that its direct ascent would consume too much time, owing to rock work interspersed with ice which would be involved; accordingly, the slopes on its right were ascended in zigzag fashion. Two later attempts to ascend directly by the gully were given up for similar reasons. At one point it was necessary to ascend one of the low rocky walls by a chimney some 25 ft. high, affording some delightful ice work. Steep, grassy, and rocky slopes then led to a short level rock ridge. From a ledge some glazed rock slabs had then to be climbed to a good platform about 20 ft. above their base. Descending from this, a sensational though not difficult traverse to the left (looking up) under a rocky bulge brought us to steep rock and grass, and following this the ascent of a short chimney crowned by a chock-stone led us to the foot of the last chimney but one, perhaps 80 ft. high. The lower portion of this (15-20 ft. in height) contained some ice and led us through a hole.

Above this lay a choice of routes, obviously none of them

easy. As it was now 17.00, and only about an hour's daylight remained, although we estimated our height as only about 150 ft. below the summit, it was considered unjustifiable to proceed farther, and we reluctantly started the descent. This was effected by approximately the same route as used in the ascent by the grateful aid of a nearly full moon which shortly rose above the crags on our left. Owing to the exigencies of the steep icy slopes, the rope was not discarded until the Monk's Ravine was again reached. In this we were greeted by a hurricane of wind. After becoming involved in some thorn bushes we finally regained camp at 02.50 on the 14th inst., the expedition having lasted 18 hrs., including halts of approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ hr. From the time of leaving the Monk's Ravine during the ascent the slopes where they were not snow-covered were hard frozen, and we were subjected for a considerable part of the day to a very cold wind; apart from this the weather was very fine. Many hours of valuable time were, of course, lost in working out the best route.

We both are of the opinion that owing to the continuous care needed for many consecutive hours on the exceedingly steep slopes, especially during the descent, the expedition under the circumstances in which we undertook it must be ranked as a really difficult one. Probably the conditions were exceptionally bad; snow had fallen on the mountain two days previously. It has been suggested that the above record may be desirable, although we were unsuccessful in that we failed to reach the summit. It is certain that the climb afforded a day of magnificent mountaineering experience.

O. K. WILLIAMSON.

ALPINE NOTES.

THE ALPINE CLUB OBITUARY :	Date of Election
Howard, Eliot	1867
Mortimer, Alexander	1867
Michell, Colonel J. W. A.	1882
Spence, W. M.	1891
Fletcher, Colonel P.	1892
Barran, Alfred	1897
Minchinton, Major H. D.	1909
Bicknell, R. P.	1911
Minor, P. S.	1911
Lamb, R.	1917

'BALL'S ALPINE GUIDE,' THE WESTERN ALPS.—The edition (1898) by Mr. Coolidge covers the Maritimes, Graians, Dauphiné, Mt. Blanc group, and Pennines to the Simplon. With maps of each district, 1 : 250,000, and a general map. Price 10s., or 10s. 4d. post free. Obtainable from any bookseller or the Assistant Secretary.