respects that later climbers have found the expedition not unduly dangerous.[29]

One point in Stephen's letter is of importance in Alpine history. Dealing with C. T. Dent's argument that 'we should never have done the Matterhorn if we had been so nervous about danger,' Stephen replies: 'We should have done it without loss of life if the rules of prudence had been observed. It surely requires some courage to allege a case where a most lamentable accident was caused by neglect of a well established rule—the rule I mean of not taking an incompetent walker with an insufficient force of guides—as a justification for despising other rules of prudence in future.' The universal respect rightly felt for Hudson as a highminded man and a most accomplished mountaineer has led, I venture to suggest, to a general blurring of his responsibility for taking the inexperienced Hadow on such an expedition. Stephen's weighty judgment appears juster than Farrar's apologia in his brilliant article on Hudson,[30] which is rather of the nature of special pleading, since after all it *was* Hadow's inclusion and his incompetence that led to the catastrophe.

MOUNTAINEERING MEMORIES OF THE PAST

By G. P. BAKER

THE task I have set myself is to deal with incidents connected with expeditions associated with my name over a period of many years. I remember little of routes, passes, and bare facts; there are however some few incidents, of a serious nature, and others of a lighter vein, which remain ingrained in my memory, and these are they I now offer to the Editor.

* * * *

When I came of age, my father in his wisdom said that I could take a three months' holiday and go where I liked and he would foot the bill. After a year of thought and preparation, the glamour of the East took me to Persia in 1878, and on the way I stopped at Erivan, then a town of mud hovels, where in the *maidan* or open square was to be seen a pyramidal heap of native bread quite 11 ft. high. It was about the end of the war between Russia and Turkey, and it was said that this heap of bread was for the Turkish prisoners from Kars. Since that date Erivan has grown to be a modern city, the capital of the Soviet Republic of Armenia.

Continuing S. on the Araxes plain, the whole of the eastern side of Ararat is seen rising sheer unencumbered by foot hills, though a pronounced chasm is visible, caused by an earthquake many years ago. As I travelled along it occurred to me that I would like to try

[29] *Cf.* R. Bicknell's judgment, *A.J.* 33. 381–2.

[30] *A.J.* 32. 31.

and reach the top. Accordingly, on arriving at Tabriz, in concert with two friends who were willing to join me in the venture, we provided ourselves with native-made alpenstocks, small ice-axes and thick felted socks to put over our boots when footing was slippery. The story of the climb, and of the accident to my friend, is told in the ALPINE JOURNAL.[1]

Ararat, with its great biblical history, as seen from the Araxes plain, is a mountain to tempt the traveller. From below it all looks so easy, and although, as Freshfield said, it needs a good pair of legs, I would supplement this: that it also needs some knowledge of icecraft and above all, is not to be climbed alone. A neglect of this precaution caused the death of a certain Dr. Stoeber as recorded in *A.J.* 19. 42. Here was a case of a climber going ahead of his party, who, being alone, climbed to the summit and, as far as I can judge, in his descent slipped down a short snow slope, collided with a rock, broke his leg, and was left there to be frozen to death. In the case of the accident to my friend, which might easily have proved fatal, it was entirely due to the misuse of the alpenstock in glissading.

One of the most outstanding impressions of the mountain was on our return from Persia to climb the mountain. My party had been travelling all night as was our custom and were being driven in a troika. Some clouds were floating in the heavens, and towards morning, as the day began to dawn, the mountain was illumined by the first rose tint of the morning sun. Towards midday a belt of clouds was revealed and later a wreath of cloud completely encircling the lower part of the summit, leaving the top bare of cloud. Bryce in his book on Ararat explains this interesting phenomenon as due to the upward rush of air from the heated plain below. The top is invariably clear at night and remains so until dawn.

Two years later, in the autumn of 1880, I happened to be in the Manchester district on business, and towards the end of the week instead of returning to London I wandered into Wales, hoping beyond hope that I would meet some congenial companion on the way for walks in Snowdonia. A passenger in the carriage sitting opposite I thought might be the person, but I had not the pluck to speak, and he got out at Bangor, whilst I proceeded towards Carnarvon, where on the narrow gauge railway I was deposited at Snowdon Ranger station. From there I walked over the summit of Snowdon and when I came down to Penygwryd I stopped at the inn for refreshments, when a lady and gentleman passed by whom I thought were at last the companions I was seeking. I quickly left the inn, caught them up, and it was not long before I was asked if I contributed the article in the ALPINE JOURNAL on Ararat. We were both destined for Capel Curig, and when we came to the hotel my companion, giving in his name, was told that two rooms were reserved for him, and then when it came for me to require a room I was told I could not be accommodated, whereupon my new acquaintance turned to the manager and

[1] *A.J.* 9. 318.

asked if a bed could not be put up in his room. This turned out to be George Yeld, travelling with his sister. I was with them for several days, climbing and walking, and when it came for me to part, I found myself with but a few shillings in my pocket. I sent my bag by coach to the Cathedral hotel, Bangor, spent one shilling for a telegram to London with instructions to pack a £5 note as a parcel to Bangor station in my name, and with the last two shillings walked to Bangor and moved straight for the hotel where I found my bag. I ordered a good dinner and being asked if I intended to sleep the night in the hotel replied that it depended on the Holyhead express soon to arrive at the station. There I went, saw the guard when the train came to a standstill, claimed my parcel, then to the hotel, paid my bill and next morning I was in London. This was not the first time I had been in a tight corner, and that with Yeld, but sufficient for the day, for the other incident will be in the order of its telling. This then is the story of my first acquaintance with Yeld which lasted for nearly sixty years, and to whom I owe more than I can say, in more ways than mountaineering, for it was he who led me into horticulture, and particularly in the Iris track in which I have specialised as a hybridist.

The following year, Yeld invited me to join him climbing in the Graians, with Ulrich Almer and Johann Jossi as guides. We put in some good work, eight new expeditions, the outstanding one being the Grivola from the Col de Belleface, up a chimney 200 ft. in height, conspicuous in the view of the Grivola from the Cogne path near Pont d'El. To reach the base of the chimney we were two hours climbing 750 ft. of some nasty smooth slabs, where Almer as leader distinguished himself by somehow clinging to the surface of the slabs, where there was neither foot nor finger hold. He was like a cat, and I have often wondered since whether the native rough cloth of the Swiss guides had clinging properties to help the climber under such conditions. Descending to Cogne by the usual route, Yeld managed to get into a masked crevasse, through carelessness he said, from which he was hauled up unhurt, but as well powdered as Father Christmas himself. It was my first season of climbing in the Alps which under Yeld's guidance qualified me for membership to the Club. For more enjoyable climbing than we were fortunate to have during this my first season; for the courtesy we met with from the natives who though in Italy all spoke French; for the charming weather which transformed a bivouac in the open air from a discomfort to a pleasure, but above all for the perfect naturalness of the district the memory of this time will remain to the end of the chapter.

* * * *

1882 and 1883 were the years when, with my brother-in-law Stafford Anderson and the guides Ulrich Almer and Alois Pollinger, the Dent Blanche by the Viereselgrat [2] and Schreckhorn by the N.W. ridge [3] were first climbed.

[2] *A.J.* 11. 158 *sqq.*

[3] *A.J.* 11. 437 *sqq.*

How I was able to climb the Dent Blanche on a stomach unable to take anything more solid than Brand's Meat Lozenges, with a nip of brandy, was a mystery. The sudden change from sea level to the summit of the Zinal Rothorn all within forty-eight hours of London was more than my equilibrium could stand, and yet I was never sick, nor did I recover my appetite until after the climb was all over, three days later.

From the Rothorn we were at the Mountet hut the whole of the second day, and had I not been physically fit, the guides would never have started on the big climb. It was full of difficulties of the most sensational kind, and when the main ridge was not possible, Pollinger, who was leading, would take to one of the two faces which fortunately were subject to the sun's rays, to melt the ice which had accumulated during the night.

The most sensational of all the difficulties which remains in my memory as I can see now, was the spot where the main ridge was narrowed to perhaps 2 ft. wide, with a steep wall of iced hard névé almost touching my left shoulder, and on the other side of me the steep face of the mountain falling away perhaps 4000 ft. Before reaching this narrowest part of the ridge, the guides cut pockets in the wall, and up this we were led to continue the ascent on snow in a rather nasty condition. I was the last on the rope and the order came down that Herr Baker was to be prepared to throw himself over the wall of ice, if by chance the snow gave way under the leaders, in accepting which I was reminded of the drawing by Willink who depicted the feat performed by little Ulrich Almer, when he saved the life of the Rev. H. W. Majendie on the Gabelhorn under similar circumstances.[4]

Anderson managed to get his hands cut by the ice in climbing the wall of ice, whereas I did not, and I conclude that the skin of my hands was hardened by rowing, for I had been at that time training for a regatta.

From thence to the summit it was comparatively good going on snow, and I have some recollection that to reach the summit a hole was cut through a cornice, or else if not a hole, the cornice was broken to admit of our getting through and so to the top, not far off.

But our troubles were by no means over, for before us came the bergschrund near the Col d'Hérens, which had to be negotiated in the dark. Here, however, little Almer, with his usual foresight, produced an empty bottle, with a piece of candle ready for this anticipated emergency. We broke off the bottom of the bottle and inserted the candle down the neck, and in that way made a fair lantern, which enabled Pollinger, after much anxious going, to reach the upper edge of the bergschrund, and with true guide's instinct, strike the ice bridge at the right place.[5] The Stockje hut was only reached about

[4] *Pioneers of the Alps*, p. 138. The drawing is in the possession of the Alpine Club.

[5] *A.J.* 11. 97–9.

midnight; it was tenanted by Gabbett and the two Lochmatters, who all three lost their lives the very next day on the Dent Blanche.[6]

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In 1887, in the early part of the year, my wife and I were bound for Cogne via the Little St. Bernard Pass, Courmayeur and Aosta. Somehow we got on to the main line by mistake and there was nothing for it but to leave the train and take to the nearest inn for the night. It was a primitive one, and when it came to going to bed we found the mattress was nothing more than a huge sack filled with the husks of Indian corn. In order to keep the mattress in position and prevent it from rolling over one's body when getting into bed, my wife stood on one side of the bed and I on the other, and at the word 'go' we each sprang on to the mattress. This was not the first time I had experienced such a mattress, for at an inn near the Lac de Combal for the Col de Miage, the husks of the Indian corn were used there for the same purpose.

When we reached the Hospice of the Little St. Bernard, I found in the visitors' room only two English books; one was King's *Italian Valleys* and the other the third volume of the ALPINE JOURNAL. It was the one volume I had not got and I made overtures to acquire it. I saw the Deacon in charge of the place and offered him a Napoleon and promised that when I reached home I would provide the Hospice with a book, which would include all the expeditions and excursions of the neighbourhood of the Hospice, and I would include photographs if they were obtainable. He replied that such a matter must rest with the Rector, who was then at Courmayeur, to whom he would write. I took the book, and when I returned home I bought perhaps a dozen numbers of the Journal, from which articles were torn out and bound in one volume. It made an interesting volume embodying so many climbing expeditions of that part of the Graians. Some years later when I met Coolidge at Grenoble I was called to account and to explain how it came about that I had sacrificed so many numbers of the Journal.

* * * *

But of all my mountaineering rambles there are none that live in my memory as those it was my privilege to join at Easter time with members of the Club—not that the scenery could equal that of the Alps, but rather it must have been due to the friendships one made on these occasions, to last us till death us do part. When I look back at the photographic groups I used to take on those occasions, they recall members, the majority of whom have joined the elect—Eustace Hulton organised the early ones I joined, then followed Horace Walker, who carried a large flask of a special liqueur for the benefit of the party. This reminds me that at the Easter meeting at the Goat Hotel, Beddgelert, on the Saturday before Easter, we sat down to a guinea dinner, including a bottle of champagne. On that occasion

[6] *A.J.* 11. 98.

I had on each side of me Cecil Slingsby and Stafford Anderson, and although they were not teetotallers, they each deemed it wasteful to uncork their bottles, whereupon I hid them under my chair, and although they found their way into Charles Pilkington's bed that night, they appeared next day on the summit of Snowdon for the benefit of the company.

Slingsby, always with us in those days, was regarded as the Whymper of Norway, it being my good fortune to climb with him in these mountains on three separate occasions. He was so much beloved by the Norwegians that I used to chaff him by saying that he could raise a Slingsby horse if needed, and on one occasion starting from Vetti, he, with his son Laurence [7] (killed in the 1914 war) and I, with one of my sons, and Anfind Vetti with his son, all walked to Turtegrö. It was an allday business, where we arrived in the dark. There we found Grieg, the Norwegian composer, who remained up in order to welcome and thank Slingsby for all he had done to inspire the love of the mountains amongst his countrymen. On another occasion when our party arrived in a village in Justedal, the people, on hearing that Slingsby had arrived, came out to see this hero, who had gained such a reputation amongst them. They looked him up and down, to find that characteristic of this dear friend, one of his stockings was halfway down his leg.

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In 1890 I was with Yeld in the Eastern Caucasus,[8] an expedition which was introduced to us by Dr. Radde, the curator of the Tiflis Museum, who as a visitor to the Club in St. Martin's Lane suggested that mountaineers should turn their footsteps to these more eastern glaciers of the Caucasian isthmus. We accordingly took his advice, and with camera and ice-axe we completed the examination of the geological character and glacial structure of the highest peaks. The country always formed the subject for tales of romance and robbery. Daghestan, hitherto known to us for its rugs and also as given up to robbery, is a region which offers a striking contrast to the central Caucasus best known to members of the Club.

Instead of granite peaks and aiguilles of every shape, here we get tent-shaped summits, red rock walls with small glaciers hanging on them, with a snowline perhaps 2000 ft. higher. The mountains on the N.E. side of the chain are desolation in the extreme, in marked contrast to the forest-clad slopes on the S. side, which become tropical as we reach the bottom of the valleys.

Armed with the necessary permit from the authorities in Tiflis and with a telegram from Dr. Radde, who was at a summer resort, and with an interpreter, the train and a ' phyton ' took us to Noukha, situated at the foot of the mountain range. Here we were visited by the chief of the police, who had evidently received instructions

[7] *A.J.* 31. 344 (with portrait).
[8] *A.J.* 16. 1 *sqq.*, 83 *sqq.*, articles by G. Yeld.

to provide us with an escort. In the town we were fortunate in being able to engage a party of Lesghians mountaineers, traders who were returning to their villages, after disposing of their merchandise at this important trade centre. They are in appearance a very wild and uncouth race, their shaggy black sheepskin busbies overhanging their eyes, and their large skin cloaks making them look more ferocious. The reputation of this race in the past as brigands and outlaws gave one a somewhat uncomfortable impression as to their probable behaviour towards us.

We engaged three of these men with their horses to take us to Shin, where we were now to enter the first stage of the expedition. We passed by many villages all perched on hillsides ; the habitations were built of mud with straw, flat-roofed, which made a terrace to the neighbouring house above, and periodic rolling with a marble roller makes the flat roof waterproof. The houses were closely packed one above the other, with narrow alleys at the side to give access to their entrances. How they managed their drainage I failed to observe, but I have no doubt they emptied into an open sewer in the middle of the alley, and as the villages are on steep hillsides, the sewerage and rain water would find its way into the torrent bed below and so to some river.

After several days in and out of these desolate hills, we reached a pass at 9250 ft. and were greeted with a blast of wind and mist and it was some minutes before we were rewarded with a view. Then we saw facing us Basardjusi, a fine pyramidal peak and the mountain we had come to climb. It was a time of great excitement to me while I took photographs. We suddenly found ourselves in a beautiful fog-bow, which was due to the brilliant sun at our backs, while we were enveloped in mist. Willink was good enough afterwards to produce a black and white picture of this scene.

The higher we travelled, we found that the male population of the villages became correspondingly lazier in their habits and the women more industrious. At a small village of Kurush—8100 ft. in altitude and situated in a naturally impregnable position—a number of men, many of them young, were lounging about, some quarrelling. 'To work,' they say, 'is a disgrace. We are men,' whilst on the other hand the women make bricks, build houses, drag heavy sacks of grain down to the mill at the foot of the village, and carry again the sacks converted into flour, and in addition to this have the many duties of the house. Girls were seen carrying on their shoulders large copper pitchers filled with water from a spring halfway down the mountain side.

We were now in the hills we had come to climb and several of them fell to us, but perhaps one of the most interesting incidents was at a Mohammedan shrine we struck when we were climbing Shalbuz, where below we saw a concourse of people in the neighbourhood of what appeared to us very cathedral-like pinnacles. We decided to return to our camp that way and as we approached we realised that

it must be a shrine. The height of the place was 12,000 ft., formed by large dolomite-looking blocks of white limestone. The pilgrims were leaving as we approached. The natural formation of these castellated pinnacles was covered with twigs to which were tied pieces of rag. Surrounding the shrine were walled enclosures used for prayer and penance. Close by on a prominence was a place of sacrifice, where were the remains of blood and the entrails of sheep recently sacrificed. I made no attempt to unravel the mysteries of the place. The Tartars who visit it are of the Shia branch, followers of Hussein, dissenters of the orthodox religion, and I have no doubt that the pilgrims go through a form of severe penance usual with this sect. On my return to London by way of Constantinople I came across a Tartar of Daghestan who knew the mountain and had himself made a pilgrimage to the Shalbuz shrine.

Before making an attempt on Basardjusi, Yeld went off to explore and find a weak spot in its defences, whilst I was left to mount guard at the camera, where I managed to get a photograph of a sea of clouds extending over the steppes to the mountains of Karadagh eighty miles away. It was a wonderful sight—the billows moved gently along, filling up the valleys and leaving exposed the upper parts of the ridges. At about 6 P.M. the clouds ceased to move, there was not a breath of wind, all was calm and still, and as the sun went down the snowy peak of Charron 'shone like a golden altar, and nature worshipped in silence.'

At our camp on Basardjusi we were visited in the early morning by a herd of twenty-five to thirty ibex, and during the night I remember some animal, perhaps a bear, came sniffing at the canvas of our Whymper tent ; however, it did not disturb us. Basardjusi (14,700 ft.), the highest peak of the chain, was climbed in full sunshine, not a cloud above, nothing but a sea of cloud below, hiding the Georgian steppes, with here and there above a vapour floating like a fairy scarf in the blue sky.

We had so far enjoyed rainless days, but after Basardjusi the aneroid indicated a disturbance which induced us to make a hasty retreat towards a village in the valley of Boum. At 13,000 ft. the clouds began to gather on the upper ridges of the main chain. We raced down the screes into camp, collected the men and the horses and it was six hours before we came to the valley where the torrent bed more often than not was the only track. We crossed and recrossed the impetuous stream twenty-eight times. In the afternoon rain began and increased in violence till it became torrential. We took to the wooded slopes whilst the thunder seemed to burst in our very midst and then went crashing and echoing through the ravines as though it would rend the very mountains. We plodded on as Yeld said, ' drenched, deafened and dazzled.' At last we emerged from the forest at a high level and towards evening sighted a village and made for the largest house, which fortunately belonged to the Yusbachi (the head of the village). He received us with great hospitality and in a few minutes we were stripped and in fresh clothes.

It was the new village called Kamaroffka, formed by the General of that name. We now parted with our men and horses too, who had behaved remarkably well, willing servants at all times to carry or help us across the streams, never once during the short campaign had we the least trouble with the packhorses.

When it came to leave the mountain we passed into quite a sub-tropical vegetation, at first fruit trees, then majestic plane and chestnut trees of extraordinary girth, while bunches of purple grapes hung side by side with walnuts and chestnuts, and from the topmost boughs of the poplar dropped, in sweeping festoons, the same graceful tendrils of the vine, waving softly above our heads their luscious burdens. I examined a primitive rice mill by the side of a stream with its pounders and mortars, all constructed of wood—a shoot or turbine set the wooden cylinders in motion.

We put up for the night in a very large caravanserai, a building of stone, surrounding a quadrangle with exception of a large gateway. A gallery overlooking the quadrangle communicated with rooms, each used for travellers. We occupied one and slept on the divan, using our kit. In the centre of the quadrangle was a big basin of water for the horses, mules and camels. I noticed in the next early morning, and also the previous evening, the faithful Mohammedan true to his religion, going through his prayers, each one using in turn the prayer rug of the guardian of the caravanserai, which eventually I acquired and still possess.

A phyton took us to the railway by way of Noukha. From Tiflis we journeyed through the Dariel pass to the railway on the N. side of the main chain of the Caucasus and then by train to Moscow, where we parted; Yeld, taking all the money I could spare, returned to London via Poland, whilst I went to Odessa with only one and a half roubles in my pocket. With the help of an old acquaintance of my youth I was provided with funds to carry me to Constantinople.

(To be continued.)

MOUNTAIN INNS

By G. M. BELL

FROM the majority of English parish churches you may walk but a step to the village inn. Their proximity is not fortuitous: they represent (in different aspects) what Scott Holland in a sermon calls 'the solidarity of salvation.' For we owe everything, good and evil, to the associations of the past, and we cannot get anywhere without association in the present. Chesterton perhaps would go further and reduce salvation to terms of beer, so that for him the independent Puritan must be seated cheek by jowl with the Knights of a very jolly Round Table. The heat of the Rhone valley and a