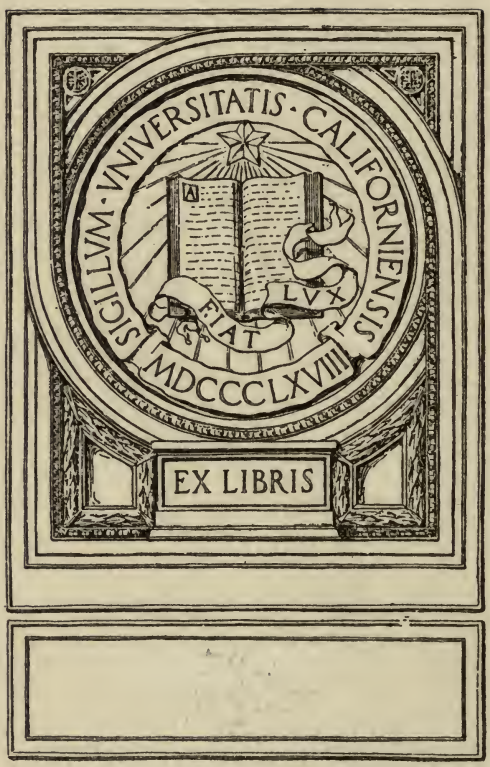
A CLIMBER IN NEW ZEALAND

MALCOLM ROSS


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
FIAT LVX
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

A CLIMBER IN NEW ZEALAND

"THE superiority of the mountains to the lowlands is as immeasurable as the richness of a painted window matched with a white one, or the wealth of a museum compared with that of a small furnished chamber."

RUSKIN.

"THE king of day lingers lovingly about his white throne in the Southern Alps, and from there he burns his brilliant fires in the heavens above and along the level world below."

RUTHERFORD WADDELL.

Mount Cook.

A CLIMBER
IN
NEW ZEALAND

BY

MALCOLM ROSS, A.C., F.R.G.S.

FORMERLY VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE NEW ZEALAND ALPINE CLUB
AUTHOR OF "AORANGI" "IN TUHOE LAND" ETC.

ILLUSTRATED
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD
1914

TO

MY WIFE

WHO IN CAMP AND BIVOUAC

REJOICED WITH US IN VICTORY

AND CHEERED US IN DEFEAT

PREFACE

Some of the material contained in the following pages appeared in the *London Times*. My thanks are due to the manager for allowing me to republish it. Articles that have appeared in the *Alpine Journal* and in some of the leading Australian and New Zealand newspapers—notably the *Otago Daily Times*, the *Christchurch Press*, the *Wellington Post*, the *New Zealand Times*, the *New Zealand Herald*, the *Melbourne Age*, and the *Australasian*—have also been used. These articles have all been re-written or revised. I am indebted to Dr. Teichelman for the interesting illustration facing page 296, and to the *Otago Witness* for the photograph of the Rev. Mr. Green, Boss, and Kaufmann. The other illustrations are from my own photographs. My thanks are also due to Mr. A. L. Mumm, late Secretary of the Alpine Club, and author of *Five Months in the Himalaya*, for the special interest he has taken in the publication of this book. Finally, I must record my great indebtedness to Lord Bryce, the distinguished Author and Ambassador, and a former President of the Alpine Club, for the charming introductory note that he has written.

M. R.

London,
February 7, 1914.

PREFATORY NOTE

BY THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT BRYCE

On the west side of the Southern Island of New Zealand there rises from the sea a magnificent mass of snowy mountains, whose highest peak, Aorangi or Mount Cook, reaches an elevation of 12,347 feet. Some of the loftiest summits are visible in the far distance from the railway which runs down the east coast of the island from Christchurch to Dunedin, but to appreciate the full grandeur of the range it must be seen either from out at sea or from points north of it on the west coast. The view from the seaport of Greymouth on that coast, nearly a hundred miles from Aorangi, is not only one of the finest mountain views which the world affords, but is almost unique as a prospect of a long line of snows rising right out of an ocean. One must go to North-Western America, or to the Caucasus where it approaches the Euxine, north of Poti, or possibly to Kamschatka (of which I cannot speak from personal knowledge), to find peaks so high which have the full value of their height, because they spring directly from the sea. The Andes are of course loftier, but they stand farther back from the shore, and they are seldom well seen from it.

In Southern New Zealand the line of perpetual snow is much lower than it is in the Alps of Europe. It varies, of course, in different parts of the range; but generally speaking, a mountain 12,000 feet high in New Zealand carries as much snow and ice as one of 15,000 feet in the Swiss Alps, and New Zealanders point with pride to glaciers comparable to the Aletsch and the Mer de Glace. On the west, some of the great ice-streams descend to within seven hundred feet of sea-level, and below the line of perpetual snow the steep declivities are covered with a thick and tangled forest, extremely difficult to penetrate, where tree ferns grow luxuriantly in the depths of the gorges. The region is one of the wettest and most thickly wooded in the world; and it is a region that might have lain long unexplored, except in those few spots where gold has been found, had it not been for the growth, about seventy years ago, of the passion for mountaineering, which has carried British climbers all over the earth in search of places where their prowess could find a field for its display. The first who forced their way into it were some New Zealand Government surveyors in 1862.

The first mountaineer to attempt Aorangi was my friend the Rev. W. S. Green of Dublin (now one of the most honoured veterans of our own Alpine Club), who had all but reached the summit when nightfall and bad weather forced him to turn back. After him came some bold New Zealand climbers and Mr. E. A. Fitzgerald. One of the former, Mr. T. C. Fyfe, with his companions, George Graham and J. Clark, reached the very top of Aorangi in 1894. Among these native mountaineers Mr. Malcolm Ross has been one of the most daring and most perse-

vering. I had the pleasure, at Wellington, New Zealand, a year and a half ago, of listening to a most interesting description which he gave of his adventures and those of his comrades, and could realize from it the dangers as well as the hardships which the climber has to face in New Zealand. The weather, on the west coast especially, can be awful, for fierce storms sweep up from the Tasman Sea, that most tempestuous part of the Pacific, whose twelve hundred miles furnished the twelve hundred reasons why New Zealand declined to enter the Australian Federation. The base of operations is distant, for no alpine hotels and hardly any shelter huts have yet been built, such as those which the Swiss, German-Austrian, and Italian Alpine clubs have recently provided in their mountain lands. The New Zealand climber, who has been almost always his own guide, has sometimes to be his own porter also. And the slopes and glens, when one approaches the west coast, are covered with so dense a growth of trees and shrubs that progress is always slow and often difficult. No finer work in conquering nature has been done by climbers anywhere than here. But the guerdon was worth the effort. The scenery is magnificent, with a character that is all its own, for New Zealand landscapes are unlike not only those of our northern hemisphere, but those of South America also; and the youth of the Islands have been fired by the ambition to emulate those British mountaineers whose achievements they admire, as well as by a patriotic love for their own beautiful and fascinating land. I hope that the fresh and vivid descriptions Mr. Ross gives of the charms of New Zealand landscape, and of the scope which its peaks and glaciers afford

for the energy and skill of those who find that the European Alps have now little that is new to offer, may draw to it more and more visitors from Britain.

February 2, 1914.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL

PAGE

Terra Incognita—An Experiment in Acclimatization—The Volcanic Mountains—The Thermal Region—Volcano of Ngauruhoe—The Southern Alps described—Physical and Economic Aspects—Influence upon Character—The Early Explorers—Green's Historic Climb—First Ascents—Immunity from Accident . 1

CHAPTER II

IN THE OLDEN DAYS

Across the Mackenzie Plains—The Alpine Lakes—The Cuisine *en route*—A Jehu in a Rage—The Old Hermitage—A Passing Storm—Provisioning a Camp—A Huge Moraine—Sub-Alpine Vegetation—Adding to the Larder—Crossing an Alpine River—We bivouac in the Valley—Feathered Visitors—In Tent in the Wilds 24

CHAPTER III

IN THE OLDEN DAYS—*concluded*

First Sight of the Hochstetter Ice Fall—An Alpine Panorama—Bad Weather—The Musings of a Lady Mountaineer—A Storm in Camp—An Acrobatic Feat—Return to the Hermitage—A Scramble on Sealy—First Meeting with Fyfe—An Avalanche from Sefton—On the Mountain-Side . . 39

CHAPTER IV

THE CONQUERING OF AORANGI

PAGE

We arrange an Expedition—The Difficulties of Transport—Quicksands in the Tasman River—The Manufacture of Ski—Flight of our Porter—The Climb to the Bivouac Rock—Difficulties with the Cooker—Preliminary Step-Cutting—Plans for a Higher Bivouac 52

CHAPTER V

THE CONQUERING OF AORANGI—*continued*

The Joys of High Bivouacking—Caught in a Storm—Thunder and Lightning—We lower the Tent—A Cold Repast—Retreat—We lose our Swags—New Fashions at the Old Hut—Other Arrivals—A Cook in Trouble—Another Storm—I return Home 65

CHAPTER VI

THE CONQUERING OF AORANGI—*continued*

Another Attack—Digging out the Frozen Tent—Camp on the Plateau—Finding a New Route—Blocked by a Wall of Rock—Some Acrobatic Performances—Defeat once more—Finding the Lost Swags—Return to the Hut—A Fourth Attempt—Back to the Plateau—Climbing by Lantern-Light—Loss of an Ice-Axe—The Final Ice-Cap gained—Retreat once more—A Terrible Storm 77

CHAPTER VII

THE CONQUERING OF AORANGI—*concluded*

Green's Route abandoned—Fyfe and Graham explore the Hooker Side—Camp on the Ice—Serious Work at a Schrund—A Long Couloir—Green's Saddle gained—Difficult Rock-Work—Success at Last—The Descent—Falling Stones . . . 105

CHAPTER VIII

ABOVE THE PLAINS

The Tararua Range—A Mountain Railway—Our Unknown Host—The Charm of High Places—Through the Beech Forest—Insects and Birds—Mr. and Mrs. Kohoperoa—A Botanist's Paradise—The Old and the New—A Reverie on a Hill-Top . 116

CHAPTER IX

DOWN IN THE VALLEYS

PAGE

The Valley of the Mueller—A Trying Moraine—Our *al fresco* Camp—A Bivouac Dream—Retreat in the Rain—In the Valley of the Tasman—Reflections on being one's own Porter—The Curious Kea—Dentistry at a Mountain Hut—An Evening under a Rock 128

CHAPTER X

AN ASCENT OF HAIDINGER

A Glacier Tramp—The Penguin Rocks—A Fairyland Grotto—Second Breakfast and some Reflections—Rock Avalanches—Beautiful Schrunds—A Sharp Arête—Scaling a Precipice—Zurbriggen's Axe—A Difficult Ice Slope—A Problem solved by Rubber—On the Summit Ridge—A Splendid Panorama—The Descent—The Bivouac again 144

CHAPTER XI

AN INTERLUDE

Thunderstorm at the Hut—The Sun-bonnet Brigade—Our Habitation—The Housing Problem—Cooking *al fresco*—Cards and a Late Dinner—Memories of Boiled Mutton . . . 158

CHAPTER XII

DE LA BÊCHE AND THE MINARETS

Mount De la Bêche—Early Attempts—An Historic Bivouac—Heroic Pluck and Endurance—View down the Valley—Reflections under a Rock—Caught in the Mist—Provisions run low—Moraines by Candle-light—Breakfast on a Summit—A Scene in Cloudland—Crossing a Bergschrund—First Ascent of the Minarets—A Quick Descent—Return to the Hut 165

CHAPTER XIII

ACROSS THE SOUTHERN ALPS

We decide to make a New Pass—Bivouac at Malte Brun—A Start by Moonlight—Early Morning on the Glacier—Dawn on the Pass—Rotten Rock and Broken Ice—Some Difficult Climbing—An Ice Fall and an Avalanche Shoot—We reach the Whymper Glacier—A Cannonade from the Dome—We explore New Country—West Coast Vegetation . . 178

CHAPTER XIV

ACROSS THE SOUTHERN ALPS—*continued*

PAGE

An Uncomfortable Bivouac and a Frugal Meal—We start down the Valley—Through the Virgin Forest—Grandeur of the Scenery—An Interesting Discovery—Blocked by Gorges—A Veritable Fairyland—We bivouac on the River Bank—A Sleepless Night 193

CHAPTER XV

ACROSS THE SOUTHERN ALPS—*concluded*

An Adventure in the River—Dripping Mountaineers—The Sand-Flies have an Innings—On Short Commons—Wild Cattle in the Forest—Footprints on the Sands—Down the Broad Valley—A Habitation at last—Fyfe goes into Hospital—An Exciting Ride—Gillespie's Beach—In a Miner's Hut—Bivouac under a Rock—I recross the Alps alone—Back at the Hermitage . 202

CHAPTER XVI

IN KIWI LAND

Early Expeditions—A Lost Explorer—The Aborigines—The Great Lakes—Primitive Navigation—The Grandeur of Te Anau—Over MacKinnon's Pass—Views from the Summit—Mount Balloon in Dangerous Mood—A Bivouac in the Forest—Camp Cookery—Down the Arthur River—In Milford Sound . . 215

CHAPTER XVII

IN KIWI LAND—*concluded*

Some Unexplored Country—Discovery of New Glaciers—Camp on an Old Moraine—The Birds of Kiwi Land—A Spotless Glacier—Strange Bergschrunds—Difficult Step-Cutting—Ice-Glazed Rocks—An Exciting Glissade—Benighted—A Cold Bivouac—The Southern Stars—The Cross and the Bear—A Dreary Vigil—Camp again—Return Journey in the Rain—Countless Waterfalls—A Concert in Camp—The Lost Explorers . 236

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FIRST CROSSING OF MOUNT COOK

PAGE

Incidents *en route*—Digging out a Hut—On the Liebig Range—Dawn on Mount Cook—A Minor Peak—Elie de Beaumont—Defeated by the Weather—A Splendid Sunset—Keas again . 264

CHAPTER XIX

THE FIRST CROSSING OF MOUNT COOK—*continued*

Testing a Leg—A Moonlight Ride—We start for the Traverse—Avalanches—The Rolling Mists—The Commissariat—The Plateau by Moonlight—Schrunds in the Dusk—A 3000-Feet Slope—On the Main Arête—Snow Ridges and Rocks—Magnificent Views—The Final Slopes—The Summit gained . 283

CHAPTER XX

THE FIRST CROSSING OF MOUNT COOK—*concluded*

On the Summit of Aorangi—We commence the Descent—An Ice-Glazed Rock Arête—Suspended over a Precipice—A Sloping Chimney—An Ungraceful Descent—Graham loses his Hat—A Cold Wind—Down a Frozen Slope—Falling Stones and Ice—An Accident—Cutting Steps by Moonlight—The Final Bergschrund—Crevasses by Candle-Light—Our Second Sunrise—The Hermitage at last 297

INDEX 313

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Mount Cook, from a Tarn on the Sealy Range . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

Ruapehu from Ngauruhoe, looking through the Rift at the Side of the latter Volcano 6

Crater of Ngauruhoe, party on farther lip of Inner Crater through which clouds of steam rise 3000 feet 10

Kaufmann, Rev. W. S. Green, and Boss in New Zealand . . 16

Jack Clark, New Zealand Alpine Guide 16

Peter Graham, New Zealand Alpine Guide 16

The Hermitage, Mount Cook 30

Crossing the Hooker River in the Cage 48

Crossing the Tasman River, Dixon driving 54

Camp Cookery at Bivouac Rock, De la Bêche . . . 54

The Mount Cook Bivouac 66

The Hooker River, Moorhouse Range in background . . 74

Camp on Plateau, during attacks on Mount Cook . . . 88

Crossing the Murchison River—Fyfe and Turner . . . 88

Elie de Beaumont, from Malte Brun Bivouac . . . 100

Mount Cook from the Upper Tasman 114

Mount Darwin 122

Mount Sefton; the short white line at foot of dark moraine in middle distance is the Hermitage 130

Cooking Scones at Ball Glacier Camp 140

T. C. Fyfe, emerging from Murchison River 140

FACING PAGE

The Sun-bonnet Brigade, on Tasman Glacier Ice Cliff . . 158

On the Upper Tasman, Mount Darwin in background . . 158

De la Bêche Bivouac Rock 166

Crevasse on Tasman Glacier, from 400 to 500 feet deep . . 182

On Lake Te Anau 222

Homeward Bound, Sealy Range with Footstool of Sefton in background 244

Mount Walter, part of Elie de Beaumont on right . . . 272

Above the Clouds: view from Mount Cook Bivouac; Tasman Glacier thousands of feet below; Leibig Range in background 286

Mount Tasman, from 11,000 feet on Mount Cook . . . 290

A 3000-feet Slope, the dotted line indicates route to where the Zurbriggen Arête is reached 296

Summit of Mount Cook: First photograph of it taken: Graham, Turner, and Fyfe on summit 296

A CLIMBER IN NEW ZEALAND

CHAPTER I

DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL

We took the path our fathers trod,
With swinging stride, and brave:
The thews we have, the hearts we hold,
Are what our fathers gave.

WANDERING through an English village, not so many years ago, a friend chanced upon a dame's school in which New Zealand was being described as "some small islands off the coast of Australia, infested with rabbits"; and only three years ago my wife was asked by a lady in the Lyceum Club, in London, if the Maoris were still cannibals, and if there were tigers in the jungle! It is not, perhaps, surprising, then, that astonishment should still be expressed when the statement is made that New Zealand has Alps and glaciers vieing in grandeur and in beauty with those of Switzerland. Distant fields are green, but seldom white; and New Zealand is a Far Country. The New Zealander, however, born and bred fifteen thousand miles away, still calls England "Home." Long may he continue to do so! He knows more of England than England knows of him, and in time of stress he will cheerfully give, out of his slender means, a battle-

cruiser as an object-lesson to the world; or, in time of danger, dye the veldt with his own red blood. And there will be nothing of selfishness in the sacrifice, as has sometimes been hinted to me by the Little Englander.

But, reverting to the main question, this ignorance in regard to the Outer Empire, which still prevails, reminds one of the story told by a well-known author on mountaineering, who once saw in the parlour of a cottage in England a wonderful erection of what appeared to be brown paper and shavings, built up in rock-like fashion, covered with little toy-box trees and dotted here and there with bits of mirror glass and cardboard houses. "What," inquired the visitor, "may this be?" "That," said the owner of the house, very slowly, "is the work of my late 'usband—a representation of the Halps, as close as 'e could imagine it, for 'e never was abroad."

Like this lady's "late 'usband," there are many people who have heard of our Alps and volcanoes, yet have little idea of their size and importance. Let me endeavour, by way of introduction,—which the non-Alpine reader may skip if he likes,—to give some idea of the character of these mountains and of their history from a climber's point of view.

The flora and fauna of the New Zealand mountains are especially interesting, but it would need much more space than is available within the limits of this book to deal adequately with them. Such references as I have made are only the passing comments of the climber, and not, in any way, the studied dissections of the scientist. But there is one matter, partly of historic and partly of scientific interest, the facts of which may very well be placed on record here. It

relates to an experiment in acclimatization that is, I believe, unique in the history of the world.

I had often thought about the introduction of chamois to the Southern Alps; but the difficulties of capturing a sufficient number and of transporting them from the heart of Europe half-way round the world and through the tropic seas seemed so great as to make the experiment almost impossible of achievement. But some few years ago, when my friend Kontre-Admiral Ritter Ludwig von Höhnel, then an honorary aide-de-camp on the staff of the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary,—himself a famous chamois hunter, —was in New Zealand, we talked the matter over. Höhnel then said to me that if he could get some of the curious New Zealand birds, such as the kiwi, the weka, the kakapo, and the kea for His Majesty's Zoological Gardens at Schönbrunn, he believed that the Emperor, in return, would send out some chamois for the New Zealand Alps. This was too good a chance to be missed, and I told him that, so far as the New Zealand Government was concerned, I felt sure that our side of the project was already as good as arranged. Von Höhnel replied that he could not, of course, speak for the Emperor, but he would do his best to persuade him. Without more ado I took my friend along and introduced him to Mr. T. E. Donne, then the head of the Tourist Department, and he, being keenly interested in acclimatization matters and also a sportsman, promptly fell in with the idea, which was also readily taken up and sanctioned by Sir Joseph Ward, at that time the minister in charge of the Tourist Department. In due course the birds were sent to Austria, and eight chamois were forwarded to New Zealand via London in 1907. The chamois arrived in New Zealand on

March 14th of the same year. They received the utmost attention on the voyage, and stood the journey very well. I went to see them on the arrival of the steamer, and they appeared to be in fine condition. Afterwards they were sent by steamer and train and wagon to Mount Cook and liberated in their new home in the Southern Alps. A few years ago some of them were seen, by one of the guides, with young at foot.

The other day, while in Vienna, I paid a visit to Schönbrunn, and looked for the New Zealand birds. I found that all but one had died. He was a sedate and venerable kea, and very sad he looked, confined, as he was, in an ordinary parrot cage. I said a few words to him in his own kea language, and he cocked his head knowingly on one side and eyed me curiously as if he had heard the sounds before but had almost forgotten them. For his own part, he seemed to have lost the power of speech in kea language. I have no doubt in the years gone by he was one of the young bloods of Kea land who used to come home with the milk and rouse us from our peaceful slumbers in the mountain hut on the Great Tasman Glacier, and that I myself had hurled both stones and imprecations at his wise-looking head. But now I felt sad at heart when I saw him cribbed, cabined, and confined in his little cage. It seemed as if his death after all would be laid at my door, and I longed to take him back with me to his friends and relatives in his home in the Southern Alps. But with the chamois it is different. They have a new home more glorious than their old one, and for years to come they must be protected from the gun of the hunter. In these Southern Alpine solitudes they can multiply and thrive in the land of the bird for

which they were exchanged, while he—poor fellow—pines in his foreign cage.

The capturing of these chamois for New Zealand resulted in the destruction of many others, which, in their wild flight from their would-be captors, dashed themselves to death over the precipices of their rocky fastnesses, while others were maimed. There was therefore an outcry in Austria against their capture. Through the persistent efforts of the Admiral, however, the experiment is to be repeated this year on a small scale. I had the good fortune to meet him again in Vienna the other day, and he was quite keen about it, there being now, of course, a necessity for a change of blood if the experiment is to be quite a success. New Zealand owes to the Emperor Franz Josef and to Rear-Admiral von Höhnel its best thanks for their efforts in connexion with this novel essay.

The mountain system of New Zealand is as varied as it is interesting. In the North Island there is a series of volcanic mountains as fascinating, almost, as are the Southern Alps. How the fire came to New Zealand is told in Maori legend. The Maoris themselves looked upon the higher volcanic mountains with superstitious awe, and they considered them *tapu*, or sacred. No white man, and certainly no Maori, dared set foot upon them; and the fact that they were *tapu* prevented, for a long time, the obtaining of scientific knowledge regarding their craters and their summit configuration generally. Their origin was attributed to a famous *tohunga*, or high priest, who piloted one of the canoes of the early migrants from Hawaiki, the fabled home of the Maori people. This man, with another high chief, took possession of all the country between the Bay of Plenty and Mount Ruapehu. In

order to assure fruitful years, these two ascended the neighbouring volcano of Ngauruhoe, and set up an altar to make the necessary incantations. The cold then, as now, was very bitter,—for the winds blow keen from the adjacent snows,—and it seemed as if the old *tohunga* would die, when happily the thought occurred to him of sending for some of the sacred fire that was in the keeping of one of his sisters in far-away Hawaiki. She straightway came with the fire. Wherever she halted in her underground travels there fire remained, and where she came to the surface to breathe there appeared boiling pools and geysers. Thus there was a trail of fire and boiling pools all along her route from White Island, down through all the thermal region to Ngauruhoe and Ruapehu. The fire revived the old man, and, in commemoration of the event, he left it burning in Ngauruhoe. As a sacrifice to the gods he cast his slave wife down the crater, and the mountain has ever afterwards been called by her name. The legend is picturesque, but unsatisfying. Years afterwards a famous chief called Te Heuheu was killed in a great landslip on the shores of Lake Taupo. His body was being taken to burial on the sacred mountain, when a terrific thunderstorm, or an eruption, came on, and the bearers, hastily depositing their burden in a cave, turned and fled. This made the mountain still more sacred and the early scientists dared not attempt to explore the range. Both Hochstetter and Dieffenbach must have been greatly disappointed that they were not allowed to set foot upon these sacred mountains, because then, as now, Ngauruhoe was the real centre of volcanic energy in New Zealand.

It is, however, the thermal region in the vicinity

Ruapehu from Ngauruhoe.

of Lakes Rotorua, Rotomahana, Tarawera, and Taupo that is best known to the great majority of New Zealanders and to the sight-seers, who, from all parts of the civilized world, flock to this truly wonderful region. All the thermal phenomena possible seem to have been plentifully distributed throughout this territory. The crowning glory of it all was the Pink and White Terraces; but these, alas! are no more, for on June 10, 1886, they were either blown to bits or buried in the rain of mud and scoria that came from the eruption of Tarawera, and made the beautiful surrounding country a desolate wilderness. The story of that eruption with its loss of life, both Maori and European, has often been told, and there is no need to repeat it here. Nature is gradually reclothing the scarred hillsides, and even the bruised and wounded trees have been healed by the hand of time. The tourist wanders through the land just as he did before the eruption, and the birds and the fish killed or starved to death, as a result of the rain of mud and stones and fiery bombs, have been replaced by others of their kind. In this particular part of the thermal region the main centre of activity remained at the site of the old terraces, but during later years it seems to have shifted to the region of the famous but short-lived Waimangu geyser. This huge geyser threw a column of boiling water, steam, mud, and stones considerably over a thousand feet in air. In August 1903 the geyser was the scene of a terrible tragedy, an unusually severe eruption resulting in the death of two young girls, another visitor, and the guide, Joe Warbrick. The party had gone rather close in order to get a photograph. The eruption suddenly became terrific, and a great column of boiling

water, shooting out at an angle, swept them off the hill into the overflow from the geyser. They were carried down in boiling water for nearly a mile towards Lake Rotomahana. The bodies were recovered shortly afterwards. Within the last few years Waimangu has become quiescent, but there is still great activity near by at a spot that has been aptly named Frying-pan Flat. There is much thermal activity too on what is supposed to be the site of the old Pink Terraces.

The completion of the North Island Main Trunk Railway has now brought the volcanoes within easy reach both of Wellington and Auckland, and year by year Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe, and the Tongariro Range are becoming favoured playgrounds for the more energetic class of holiday-makers. Ngauruhoe is apparently entering upon a period of renewed activity, and within the last four or five years there have been some fine volcanic displays from its crater. It is a perfect volcanic cone, 7515 feet high, and terminates the Tongariro Mountain Range to the southward—a range that has, within comparatively recent times, been the scene of tremendous volcanic energy. The desolate nature of the country on the eastern side of the mountain, and the vast extinct craters of the range itself, are now silent witnesses of the fiery activity of bygone ages.

There are still several centres of great thermal energy on the Tongariro Range. At the lower and northern end Te Mari and Ketetahi are in a state of almost perpetual turmoil, and clouds of steam rising from their seething cauldrons are visible many miles away. The Red Crater, near the middle of the Range, is still hot in places, and jets of steam hiss through small vents in the gloriously tinted rocks of its sides. At the

extreme southern end of the range is the active volcano of Ngauruhoe. In winter-time its slopes are clothed in snow and ice. Occasionally, for days at a time, it sends a vast column of steam fully 3000 feet in the air, and then it is a magnificent sight. At the period of greatest activity the scene must have been almost beyond description. Ngauruhoe was then, indeed, a hell unchained. A New Zealand poet—Mr. D. M. Ross—has graphically depicted such a scene as may well have been witnessed by the original inhabitants of Maoriland—

> "O'er Vassal Peaks thy smoky banners spread,
> Splashed with red flame as ever on they sped
> In serried ranks, squired by the lesser hills,
> To purple realms of mystery; the day
> Failed of her sun when thy red furnace flamed,
> And night was all aglow when earthquakes played
> Beneath thy heaving breast of startled snows."

About two years ago a geologist saw lava in the crater, and, later still, when the mountain was particularly active, a glow as from molten lava appeared in the sky. It would not be at all surprising if at any time there were an eruption on a grand scale. Fortunately, the surrounding country is so unproductive as to be but sparsely settled, and therefore a serious eruption would be more spectacular than destructive.

The Southern Alps extend in a series of ranges from the north to the extreme south of the Middle Island. In the south, the ranges, which run in different directions, are intersected by the splendid fiords on the one side and by the arms of the long, deep lakes on the other. The mountain masses, in some places, come sheer down to the water's edge, and their bases are far below the level of the lakes or of the sea. Many of their lower slopes are densely wooded, while

their summits are capped with perpetual snow and ice. In the region of Milford Sound they rise steeply from the water's edge, and their solid and sometimes smooth granite walls seem uninviting to the foot of the climber. Going farther north we have another fine series of mountains in the region of Lakes Wakatipu and Wanaka. Though not high, as heights go in the European Alps or in the Himalaya, they are imposing mountains. It is only within comparatively recent years that passes have been discovered between the lakes and the sounds; and although these passes do not lead the traveller beyond the sub-Alpine heights, they take him through scenery that is no less remarkable for its beauty than for its grandeur—a fitting introduction to those greater marvels in the heart of the Southern Alps.

Northwards, from Mount Aspiring, which is at the head of this jumble of southern mountains that spreads itself through fiordland and lakeland, the Southern Alps proper extend in an almost unbroken chain along the western side of the Middle Island of New Zealand to where Mount Cook, or Aorangi, rears his snow-crowned ridge above the grim precipices and flanking glaciers, and, dominating the landscape, gives an outlook from sea to sea. Here we are amongst the monarchs of the range, and the views are indescribably grand. There is a glorious Alpine panorama stretching north and south, and, though all the highest mountains have been climbed, there are hundreds and hundreds of untrodden peaks and passes still awaiting the foot of the climber.

Travelling over the level lands in the south-bound train from Christchurch on a summer's day, one sees wheat fence-high and golden in the sun, the grey-

Crater of Ngauruhoe.

green of oats in ear, the darker green of well-tilled root crops, interspersed with clumps and lines of English and Australian trees, making relieving splashes of colour against the purple haze of the foothills, and indicating a fertile soil. At intervals we rumble over the long bridge of some snow-fed river, with its great shingle flats and islands, and its opalescent water forming many interlacing streams, and we realize that the work done in the giant laboratory of the Frost King, in the heart of the Alps, is here finding its full fruition. We know also that the planing glacier, the eroding torrent, and the crumbling moraine are still at work. They are the Mills of the Gods, slowly grinding, and though they grind exceedingly small, they have made, in time, through the agency of these great snow-fed rivers, a land that is of a verity flowing with milk and honey —a land that is already the granary of the islands. Thus the Southern Alps have an important bearing upon the economic possibilities of the country. Their never-failing rivers, by means of irrigation, will make possible a still more intense cultivation on the plains of Canterbury and Otago. But beyond all this there are possibilities almost undreamt of in the enormous power from lake and river now running to waste. In short, the Southern Alps may one day make New Zealand not only the playground of Australasia, but its manufactory as well. A return recently compiled, giving the more important available water powers in both islands, shows an average of 3,817,180 horse power and 2,854,470 kilowatts. A considerable number of these powers are suitable for general industrial development, but the largest ones, being mainly in the unsettled portions of the Middle Island,

and near the deep-water sounds, are particularly suitable for utilization in connexion with electric-chemical or electric-metallurgical industries. Finally, the Southern Alps must not be despised from the tourist point of view. They already bring many visitors to New Zealand from all parts of the world; and in years to come, when torrid Australia and the sweltering Pacific number their population by many millions, this splendid mountain chain both in summer and in winter will have become the playground of the new nations under the Southern Cross.

But apart altogether from the physical aspect and the economic aspect, a splendid Alpine chain, such as forms the backbone of the Middle Island of New Zealand, is almost certain to have some influence upon the character and physique of the nation, and more especially upon the character and physique of a nation endowed with those qualities of hardihood and adventure that are such predominant features of the Anglo-Saxon race. In an interesting article on "Mountaineering as a Sport for Soldiers," published in the *Times* in 1907, the writer—Mr. L. M. S. Amery—pointed out that "there can be few better tests of the essential qualities of leadership than a really critical moment on a mountain. The man who can retain his judgment and confidence, and keep up the spirits of his party, when the way has already been lost, when all the rocks are coated with new *verglas*, when fingers are numb with cold, and when the guides begin to lose their heads and jabber furiously in incomprehensible patois—he is the man who (in warfare) is no less certain to keep his nerve and sustain his subordinates when casualties are heaviest and the hope of support faintest." Where there are mountains and where there are British people there

will, of a surety, be climbing, and the sport develops character and brings out qualities that are of first importance in the affairs of everyday life as well as in warfare. From this point of view, therefore, as well as from the others mentioned, New Zealand has a valuable asset in her mountains. It is an asset, too, that is already being developed to some purpose.

The splendid mountain chain that forms the backbone of the Middle Island was, during the early period of colonization, a *terra incognita* to all but a few New Zealanders, and it is only within recent years that the sons of those bold pioneers who travelled over so many leagues of ocean to build themselves new homes and to lay the foundation of a new and sturdy nation have ventured into the heart of the Southern Alps to wrest the secrets of the higher snows. The age of conquest has been long delayed, but once started, the conquerors have marched to victory with even greater vigour than did their forefathers in the European Alps. It took some little time to gain the necessary experience, for the Antipodean climbers had not only to learn the craft untaught by others, but they had to be their own guides, their own step-cutters, and even their own porters. With the first taste of victory came the lust for other conquests, and, one by one, the great peaks have fallen, till now there is not one first-class mountain left unconquered, and already "traverses" and new routes up old peaks are becoming the fashion. Though the New Zealanders have won for themselves many of the higher summits, there are a number that have fallen before climbers from the Motherland. The New Zealanders, however, did their work without assistance, and it says much for the courage, for the endurance, and for the resource of the

race that the sons of the pioneers have accomplished this remarkable record without a single fatal accident, and indeed without serious misadventure of any kind.

To an Englishman, and a member of the Alpine Club, the Rev. William Spotswood Green, belongs the credit of having initiated Alpine climbing in this the farthermost part of our Outer Empire. It was his work in the Southern Alps that fired the imagination of that hardy band of young Colonial pioneers who, like their forefathers in the Alps of Switzerland, were destined to lead the way in Alpine conquest. Green came with two experienced Swiss climbers,—Emil Boss and Ulrich Kaufmann,—and though he was not successful in reaching the actual summit of Mount Cook, he very nearly got there. The story of his adventures is simply and graphically told in his book, which must ever remain a classic in New Zealand mountaineering literature.

Mr. Green had many difficulties to contend against before he got to Mount Cook. To begin with, his wagonette came to grief in the Tasman and was swept bodily down the river. Birch Hill station was then the last human habitation on the way to the glacier world, and it took a long time before a camp could be established at the foot of the spur where now stands the Ball Hut. The attempt to climb the mountain by the main arête failed. The party got on to a narrow arête along which they came to the first rock-tooth of tottering splintered slate, which was climbed with great difficulty and danger. The ridge connecting this with the next spike was so loose that it trembled beneath their feet and made further climbing madness. An attempt by way of the eastern face of the mountain also failed. The warmth of the sunshine caused many aval-

anches, one of which nearly buried the party. A route by way of the Great Plateau and the Linda Glacier was, however, discovered. On March 1st the party spent the night on the spur near the Bivouac Rock, subsequently so much used by the New Zealanders. They started next morning on their historic climb via the Linda Glacier, and after some difficulties they found themselves close to the foot of the arête connecting Mount Cook with Mount Tasman. As the party advanced along their route many avalanches fell from Mount Tasman. A halt was made for breakfast, and some of the impedimenta deposited. The crevasses were numerous, and but for the fresh snow would have barred the way. Three hours' work brought them to the head of the glacier, after which they turned to the left, and, crossing the arête, reached an ice-filled couloir, to gain which they had to do some severe step-cutting. Here the real work began, and the first and last view was got of the western sea. After climbing up the couloir, they reached a wall of ice, and decided, after a council of war, to try to cross the couloir, which at first had been rejected as too dangerous. The setting of the sun lessened the risk, and, though it was an anxious time, the opposite side was reached in safety. After all, the rocks were inaccessible, and the party had to climb through a notch, and thus reach the ice-slope beyond, down which swept a stream of detached ice ; and, as it was thawing and getting late in the afternoon, the question of advancing was discussed. But as the bivouac could not be gained before dark, and what was presumed to be only an hour's work lay before the party, it was decided to go on. Keeping close to the rocks, an icicled bergschrund was reached but avoided by a detour to the left, and at

6 p.m. Mr. Green, Boss, and Kaufmann stepped on to the crest of Aorangi. This was, they thought, too late an hour to permit of their going on to the actual summit. As there were no rocks at hand, no cairn could be built, and they were forced to retreat, leaving no record of their ascent. Until the rocks were reached they had to descend backwards, with faces to the ice. Beneath one or two fragments of rock were placed Mr. Green's handkerchief and Kaufmann's match-box. With great difficulty, and some danger, they lowered themselves down the lower end of the ice-slope, and as they crossed the couloir to the opposite rocks, night closed in. In a little time the moon rose, enabling the three men to find a partial shelter beneath the rock-ridge, on a little ledge less than two feet wide and sloping outward, and there they spent the nine hours of darkness, stamping to keep up the circulation, and talking and singing to drive away sleep, which would have been fatal to them. Every quarter of an hour an avalanche rumbled, there being a warm north-west wind, which probably saved them from being frost-bitten. At 5.30 the descent was recommenced, and the snow was found to be very soft, one crevasse being almost impassable. The plateau was completely changed in aspect by an immense avalanche, but they found the knapsack where it had been left, and enjoyed its contents (although the bread was twenty days old), for they had been twenty-two hours without food. In the séracs they found their track obliterated, one avalanche having covered an area of two hundred acres and filled up a large crevasse. While they were crossing the Great Plateau a grand avalanche fell from the Tasman cliffs with a deafening crash. At 1 p.m. the bivouac was reached, and a welcome cup of tea and half an

PETER GRAHAM.

KAUFMANN. GREEN. BOSS.

JACK CLARK.

hour's rest enjoyed. Then they returned to their camp at the Ball Glacier in the Tasman Valley.

Long before Mr. Green's visit the early pioneers had done considerable preliminary exploratory and geological work, though they did no serious Alpine climbing. Many of these, including Dr. von Haast, have now passed away. As an indication of the dangers these pioneers had to face, it may be mentioned that out of quite a small band Mr. Howitt lost his life in Lake Brunner in 1863, and Mr. G. Dobson was murdered on the West Coast in 1866. Dr. Sinclair was drowned in one of the branches of the Rangitata River. He was buried at a place called Mesopotamia, in the words of his friend, Dr. von Haast, "near the banks of the river just where it emerges from the Alps, with their perpetual snowfields glistening in the sun. Amidst veronicas, senecios, and covered with celmesias and gentians, there lies his lonely grave."

Following in Mr. Green's footsteps came the Canterbury Climbers. They tried Mount Cook by Green's route; but, like him, they failed, though on one occasion Messrs. Mannering and Dixon made a heroic effort and got within about a couple of hundred feet of the summit.

The season of 1893–94 will ever be memorable in the annals of New Zealand mountaineering, for that was the season in which the first of the great peaks fell. On March 7, 1895, Fyfe, by himself, made the first ascent of that splendid rock peak Malte Brun (10,241 feet); with Jack Clark and Dr. Franz Kronecker (a tourist from Germany) he climbed Mount Darwin (9700 feet); and with George Graham he ascended Mount de la Bêche (10,040 feet) and the Footstool (9073 feet). It was a fine performance for the young

New Zealanders, who had by this time acquired not only the craft of climbing, but also of route-finding.

Meantime there had been no further serious attempt upon Mount Cook, but early in the season 1894–95 the New Zealanders were again at work, and, on Christmas Day 1894, succeeded in making the first ascent of Mount Cook. Their struggles, under adverse circumstances, and their final success, are dealt with in another part of this book.

That same season, Mr. E. A. Fitzgerald, a member of the English Alpine Club, arrived with the famous guide Zurbriggen to climb Mount Cook and other peaks. The visitors spent some time in Christchurch, and on their way to the theatre of operations they met the victorious New Zealanders returning from their conquest. Fitzgerald, however, continued his expedition, and did some remarkably fine work, including the first ascents of Mount Tasman (11,467 feet), Mount Sefton (10,350 feet), Mount Haidinger (10,063 feet), and Mount Sealy (8651 feet). To Mr. Fitzgerald also belongs the honour of having discovered an easy pass from the vicinity of Mount Cook to the West Coast—a pass that others had been seeking for some time but had failed to find.

There was no further serious climbing for a few years, until Mr. T. C. Fyfe and the writer made the first ascent of the Minarets (10,058 feet), an ascent of Haidinger by the eastern face, and the first pass between the head of the Great Tasman Glacier and the West Coast. In 1905 our party made the first traverse of Mount Cook. About the same time the West Coast climbers Dr. Teichelman and the Rev. Mr. Newton, with Mr. R. S. Low, a Scottish climber, and guide Alex. Graham, came into prominence. They

commenced a series of ascents from the western side of the range, on which the scenery is more varied and even more imposing than it is on the eastern side. They made the first ascent of St. David's Dome (10,410 feet), and made a new high pass over the main divide to the Tasman. Some fine work was also accomplished that season by Mr. H. Sillem, in company with the New Zealand guides Clark and Graham. He ascended Mount Cook, Malte Brun, the Footstool, and Sealy, and succeeded in making the first ascent of Elie de Beaumont (10,200 feet) and the southern peak of Mount Cook (11,844 feet). In 1907 Dr. Teichelman and the Rev. Mr. Newton, with Alex. Graham, made the first ascent of Mount Douglas (10,107 feet) and of Torris Peak (10,576 feet). Mounts Haast, Lendenfeld, Conway, and Glacier Peak (all over 10,000 feet) also fell to them. There were no high ascents made in 1908; but in the 1909 season the guides were kept busy. Mr. Claude M'Donald, a member of the Alpine Club, made the first traverse of Malte Brun (10,421 feet), and Mr. L. M. Earle, also a member of the Alpine Club, with three guides, ascended Mount Cook by a new route from the Hooker Valley. The climb was mostly on good rocks, and is probably the easiest and shortest way to the summit of the mountain. Several first ascents of second-class peaks were made. In 1909–10 Captain Head, an Englishman, with guides J. Clark and A. Graham, made the first ascent of Mount Aspiring, and, in company with Mr. L. M. Earle and the same guides, Mount Sefton was ascended for the first time from the western side.

No *résumé* of the work done in the Southern Alps would be complete without reference to the magnificent survey work and the measurements of glacier flow

made by Mr. T. N. Brodrick, C.E., of the New Zealand Survey Department.

Mummery in his delightful book about his climbs in the Alps and Caucasus says, humorously, that a mountain passes through three phases, "An inaccessible peak," "The most difficult climb in the Alps," and "An easy day for a lady." His classification has been proved true in regard to the New Zealand as well as the European Alps, and Mount Cook, which baffled Green and his Swiss experts and the early New Zealand climbers, has now been climbed by two women. Miss Du Faur, a Sydney girl, in 1911 made the ascent by the Hooker Rock route in company with the two guides Peter and Alex. Graham, while Mrs. Lindon, an Englishwoman resident in Australia, a year later, with Peter Graham and D. Thomson, made the ascent of Mount Cook by Green's more difficult route. The conditions for both ascents were perfect. Miss Du Faur has also climbed Mount Tasman (11,475 feet), Mount Dampier (11,323 feet)—a first ascent—and several other peaks. This season (1912–13), in company with Graham and Thomson, she has succeeded in making a traverse of the three peaks of Mount Cook from a high bivouac on the Hooker side to the bivouac on the Tasman side—a remarkable feat. On this trip the climbers were favoured with glorious weather, and the conditions were also good; otherwise the climb would have been almost hopeless. The writer has looked down the long icy knife edge that, with its bends and steep slopes and cornices, joins the three peaks together, and has realized the almost insuperable difficulties in the way of success, except under ideal conditions. All honour, then, to the two New Zealand guides and the young Australian girl who have accomplished such a daring feat.

In connexion with this brief historical *résumé* of mountain climbing in New Zealand and looking back over this series of victories, won without a single fatal accident, it remains only to pay a tribute—and it must be a very high tribute—to the members of the Alpine Club, whose precept and example we have so closely followed. When I first started climbing, the Rev. Mr. Green sent me an ice-axe and an article on the death-roll of the Alps! What two more appropriate things could he have forwarded to an amateur anxious to learn the craft in a Far Country? I still have the axe—a treasured possession—but I have long ago lost the article! And it occurs to me, now, that by the reader of these pages it may be laid to our charge that in some of our expeditions we did not err on the side of timidity. My answer to that will be that we were always, or nearly always, doing pioneer work, and so had to discover the dangers as well as the routes, and that, generally, when the weather failed, when the avalanches began to hiss down the slopes or crash from the cliffs, or when the rocks began to fall, we either waited or turned tail and fled. But, in any case, the most critical would, surely, not have had us run no risks at all. He is a poor soul—and there can be no pride of race in him—who will shirk all danger. Two years ago it was my privilege—at the invitation of my friend Lord Islington—to give a lecture at Government House, Wellington, before a famous historian and ambassador who is one of a long line of distinguished presidents of our Club, and, at the close of the lecture, he—in one of those charming speeches which he so easily makes—emphasized the necessity for the caution that I myself had been preaching. But afterwards, at supper, his wife came to me and said, "I like my

husband's preaching to you about caution! Why, when he climbed Ararat his only companion was his ice-axe!" But she said it with a smile, and with what I judged to be a feeling more of pride than of reproach. So you see this fondness for a spice of danger is in the blood, and cannot be altogether eliminated in the old country any more than in the new. And I will even go the length of saying that it will be a sorry day for the race when it is no longer a feature of British character.

Mount Cook has now been climbed by four routes. It has been traversed from east to west over the highest summit, and along the ridge from south to north. The first ascent was made by New Zealanders who had never seen a guide at work, and all the other ascents but one have been made with guides who have learnt their craft, untaught by others, in their native land. All the high peaks have now been climbed, with or without guides, Zurbriggen being the only foreign guide who has ever stood on the summit of a New Zealand Alp. And during all these years there has been no fatal accident to mar the tale of success. But what of the future? It is scarcely to be expected that this immunity from accident will continue indefinitely. There may come a day when some climber, caught in bad weather, or endeavouring to achieve the impossible by some new and more daring route, will meet his fate on the higher snows, or leave his bones among the beetling crags of the great precipices. One can only express the hope that such a day may be long delayed, and that, for many years to come, the steep white slopes, the grim precipices, and the towering peaks will continue as a health-giving playground, and resound with the laughter born of the fun and frolic of the

hardy mountaineer. And whatever the future history of these mountains may be, it can scarcely provide a tale of more absorbing interest than is furnished by the manly struggles of the pioneers who have climbed, with some fair measure of success, in a Far Country.

CHAPTER II

IN THE OLDEN DAYS

"The bed was made, the room was fit,
By punctual eve the stars were lit;
The air was still, the water ran;
No need was there for maid or man,
When we put up, my wife and I,
At God's great caravanserai."

From an Old Play—slightly altered.

FROM the shoulder of the Hochstetter Dome down a long valley between the giant snow peaks of the Mount Cook Range on the one hand, and the rocky buttresses of the Malte Brun and Liebig Ranges on the other, swollen at intervals by tributary ice-streams, flowing with imperceptible movement, comes the Great Tasman Glacier—a veritable *mer de glace*—eighteen miles in length. Some six miles from its terminal face the Ball Glacier descends from the south-eastern shoulder of Aorangi, and pours its huge slabs of broken ice and a rubble of moraine into the parent stream. At the foot of this glacier, in a hollow between the moraine of the Tasman and the long southern arête of Mount Cook, the Rev. William Spotswood Green, with Emil Boss and Ulrich Kaufmann, pitched his fifth camp on the occasion of his memorable expedition in 1882.

Thither, a somewhat young and inexperienced mountaineer, in company with his wife, wended his way a few years later. The proposed adventure

caused much critical comment in the family circle and among our friends. Some said we were mad : others envied us. Those were the delightful days of pioneering, when the mountains were a sealed book to all but a few faithful worshippers, and when adventures came, freely and fully, without the seeking. There were no motor-cars to run you up in a day from the confines of civilization ; there were no well-trodden tracks up the valleys ; the turbulent rivers were unbridged ; guides were a genus altogether unknown ; and, at the end of the long day's journey, there was no sheltering hut under which you could rest your weary limbs. You were your own guide, your own porter, your own tent-pitcher, and your own cook. They were days in which we accomplished little in the matter of real climbing ; but they were days in which the blood was strong and Hope flew ahead on swift wings—days that are now gone, alas ! never to return.

Previous to our visit no Englishwoman had ever attempted this journey. To a foreigner—Frau von Lendenfeld—belonged the honour of being the first woman to traverse the Great Tasman Glacier. Frau Lendenfeld, however, was a good mountaineer ; and it is given to few women to do such pioneering as she did in the Southern Alps. We were mere amateurs at the game. Still, we were not to be daunted by the croakings of friends who prophesied that our bones would soon be bleaching on the glaciers. Accordingly, after a good deal of correspondence, much planning and provisioning, and considerable consulting of maps and photographs, we started on our eventful journey. After a day in the train, we found ourselves at Fairlie Creek. Next morning, having had an early breakfast, we were bowling along a good gravel road, behind four

spanking greys, well driven, on our way to Mount Cook.

Lunch at Lake Tekapo on a calm summer's day, after hours of coaching, was a delightful experience. Afterwards, with your pipe alight, you stepped out into the hotel garden, and, a few paces in front of you, lapping a rocky shore, were the beautiful turquoise-green waters of the lake, reflecting the clouds and the mountains. Here horses were changed, and we started off again on our long journey through the dreary yellow tussock wastes of the Mackenzie Plains. Lake Pukaki was our halting-place for the night. At sunset we sighted its waters. Far up the valley, rising from the Tasman Flats, towered the great mass of Mount Cook, its final peak gleaming in the sunlight, and its snows reflected in the lake at our feet—here distinctly, and yonder more faintly, as the distant waters were ruffled by a passing breeze. After some time spent in a futile endeavour to get the dust out of our clothes and our eyes and our ears, we dined on the rough fare of the country. No delicate viands here! only the oily mutton-chop, fried—think of it, ye later-day disciples of Lucullus—in grease that boasted aloud of a long acquaintanceship with the pan! And for drink you had your choice of the everlasting boiled tea with all the tannin in it, of a cloudy and somewhat sour-tasting ale, or of an indifferent whisky. I know there are Scotsmen who maintain that there may be good whisky, and better whisky, and better whisky still, though there can be no such thing as bad whisky; but such enthusiastic patriotism as this could never have extended to a back-blocks New Zealand inn in the days when we first went a-pioneering. We had one delicacy—jam. Yet, truth to tell, we were uncertain

whether it was stale strawberry or mouldy gooseberry. My wife, after a microscopic examination, announced that it was raspberry made from turnips! A diligent cross-examination of the handmaiden—who, in the intervals of conversation with the coach-driver in the kitchen, fairly hurled the viands at us—elicited the statement that it was gooseberry. She was rather annoyed when doubts were expressed as to her veracity, and we mildly suggested that it might be pineapple! No, she was confident it *was* gooseberry. How did she know? "Sure, she saw it on the label, an' if we didn't belaive her we could go into the backyard, where she had thrown the tin, and see for ourselves!"

The after-glow on Mount Cook, the glorious colouring of which was mirrored in the lake, was some atonement for the want of delicacy in the viands.

We were early on the road again next morning. Crossing the Pukaki River on a ferry-boat, worked by the current, we drove over the tussocky downs of Rhoboro' Station, and entered what appeared to be the bed of an old river, that had no doubt, at some distant date, cut its way through this ancient lateral moraine, when the glacier of the Tasman Valley was three or four times its present size.

The road followed an old bullock-dray track, through which morainic boulders reared their hard heads, and not altogether in vain. Once, on this very road, a thoughtful traveller, sorely bruised and battered after some miles of jolting, stopped the coach and got down to examine the wheels. The driver, a little puzzled, asked what was the matter, and received the laconic reply: "Oh, nothing. I merely wished to see if your wheels were *square*." For the first mile or two we

thought this story a joke; after a few more miles, we began to think there might be some truth in it; and, finally, we too found ourselves dubiously examining the wheels. It is all very well when you are nicely wedged in between a couple of really stout passengers; but, when you have an angular tourist on your right and an iron railing bounding your hip-joint on the left, the world seems a very grey world indeed, and even scenery ceases to excite. On this particular day, however, our driver added to the excitement of the ride in a very material degree. He had that morning received what is known in these parts as "the sack." In other words, he had lost his job, and he had not taken the announcement with quite the grace of a Spanish grandee. He confided to us with many adjectives—some more forcible than polite—that he was "out for a picnic," and he did not care if he killed a tourist or two. His main object in life now appeared to be to get to his destination—in pieces, if necessary—about an hour before the proper time, and at one stage it seemed as if he might really kill a passenger, or, at least, a horse, in the accomplishment of this quite unnecessary feat. The crackings of his long whip were accompanied by a variety of oaths, and other comments, of a staccato but emphatic nature. The height of his enjoyment appeared to be reached on a steep incline leading towards the lake. Down this we rattled, over stones and around sharp curves, at a pace that would have done credit to Yuba Bill; and we said never a word, but held our breath and the iron railing of the trap, till, with a sigh of relief, we reached the bottom safely and breathed freely again. To do him justice, he did know how to handle his team, and, finally, our admiration for the fellow as a driver began to

overshadow our contempt for him as a man and a humanitarian.

During the next day's drive there was no hostelry at which we could obtain food and drink, so soon after twelve o'clock we halted and had an *al fresco* luncheon at a place known as "The Dog's Grave." There was a little patch of scrub on the flat, where fuel was obtainable, and a clear stream running past supplied good water. Near at hand was the dog's grave, with a little tombstone, the whole enclosed with a stout wooden railing. The dog belonged to the survey camp established there some months previously, and his master, grieving over his untimely demise, gave him a decent funeral and a tombstone with an inscription on it!

The latter part of the journey was over a very rough road; but the splendid views ahead were some compensation for the jolting we received. Our jehu, true to his promise, landed us at the Hermitage an hour ahead of contract time. This inn, prettily situated at the foot of an old lateral moraine of the Mueller Glacier, has since seen many vicissitudes, till, finally, it passed into the hands of the Government. It is now about to be pulled down, and another building is being erected on a better site—none too soon either, because the bursting of the glacier water through the old moraine has flooded the rooms, and caused damage such as to make the situation quite unsafe.

Next day the fine weather with which we had been favoured broke. High up in the heavens the storm-clouds were being driven before the south-west wind, while a lower current from the north-west was wreathing the rain-clouds around the highest peaks

of Aorangi and Mount Sefton. It was a battle between the two winds, but at last the north-wester triumphed. A momentary glimpse was obtained of the highest peaks of Mount Cook, and then the torn mists wound themselves about it and hid it from view for the rest of the day. The north-west wind struck us with great force, and, as we peered over the edge of the hill down on to the rock-covered surface of the Mueller Glacier, we could scarce bear up against it. The temperature quickly fell to 52 degrees, then the rain came on.

By next morning the storm had abated, and the sun shone out. I engaged a young shepherd, named Annan, with a pack-horse, and, after arranging tents, ice-axes, and provisions, we started to fix a camp some fourteen miles up the Tasman Valley. There was an anxious moment with the pack-horse in crossing the Hooker River, now swollen with the recent rains, and, as the animal struggled with loose boulders and floating blocks of ice in mid-stream, we were quite prepared to see the expedition come to a premature and ignominious end. Annan, however, riding his own horse, managed to pilot the pack-horse in safety to the farther shore, while I got into a small wooden cage, that dangled high above the roaring torrent, and laboriously pulled myself over to the other side. The pack-horse was taken as far as the terminal moraine of the Tasman Glacier. Beyond this it was impossible to proceed with the horses, and the packs had now to be transferred to our own backs. They looked, indeed, a goodly pile.

Twenty-five lb. of biscuits, 12 lb. of tinned meats, 2 loaves weighing 14 lb., 4 lb. of oatmeal, 8 lb. of butter, 4 lb. of jam, 1 shoulder of mutton, 2 lb. of

The Hermitage.

onions, 2 lb. of tea, 1 lb. of cocoa, 1 lb. of coffee, 4 lb. of sugar, 1 lb. of salt, 4 tins of sardines, and a few pots of Liebig constituted the bulk of our provisions. In addition to this, there were the 2 tents, 3 sleeping bags, 1 opossum rug, 1 large sheet of oiled calico, 2 ice-axes, 1 alpenstock, 100 feet of Alpine rope, billies, spirit lamp, lantern, aneroid, thermometers, and several other smaller articles, which all went to make up weight. Before us was the long moraine of the Great Tasman Glacier, and over this, for a distance of seven or eight miles, all these articles had to be carried on our backs. It was no joke. We knew that the undertaking was rather a difficult one, but had no idea how difficult it would be. Annan selected from among the articles a swag weighing about 50 lb. I made up one that would be probably 10 lb. lighter, and, covering up the remainder with the oilcloth sheet, at three o'clock we started off, hoping to reach Green's Fifth Camp that evening. Profiting by the experience of the Rev. Mr. Green and Dr. von Lendenfeld, we made no attempt to get on to the clear ice in the middle of the glacier, but kept to the rocks on the side of the lateral moraine that runs for miles parallel with the great southern arête of Mount Cook. There was fair walking for some little distance till we passed the group of tarns of a peculiar greenish colour at the end of the moraine. Then the rocks got rougher, and were piled in wilder confusion as we proceeded.

Of this same route Mr. Green says: "The lateral moraine, standing up like some great battlement shattered in the war of the Titans, was composed of huge cubes of sandstone and jagged slabs of slate, some over 20 feet a side, and ready at any moment

to topple over and crush our limbs." We found scrambling over these rocks very hard work on such a hot afternoon, but made good progress, and soon found ourselves at the Blue Lake, where Mr. Green weathered out a very severe storm on his first trip up the Tasman. Just before reaching the lake there was a bad bit of travelling through thick scrub, which Annan had not looked forward to with any great degree of pleasure; but on reaching the spot we found that a large slip had come down from the moraine, exposing the clear ice of the glacier, and completely covering the scrub for a distance of about 100 yards with morainic accumulation. The ice was quite near, from which it would appear that there was more *live* moraine than Dr. von Lendenfeld imagined. The slip gave us fairly good walking, but we had some difficulty in getting through the last bit of scrub at the Blue Lake. Beyond this we had to cross the débris of a great talus fan that came down from the mountain-side, and then we came to a piece of level ground, between the moraine and the mountain-side, which afforded the only real bit of easy walking in the whole journey. This flat—about a quarter of a mile long—was covered with large tussocks, spear grass, veronicas, and a wealth of celmesias. Ahead the moraine continued its course, in the words of Mr. Green, "looking like some great railway embankment in the symmetry of its outline." Here we made our first acquaintance with that strange, curious, impudent, and interesting bird the kea. A number flew down from the lower slopes of the great mountain ridge and regarded us with a wondering curiosity. I took the precaution to bag a brace as a welcome addition to our larder, but with some

considerable measure of regret, for though in the surrounding districts the keas kill the sheep in the most cruel manner, they are nevertheless fascinating and handsome birds. Our tent was pitched that evening in a lonely spot between the moraine and the great shoulder of Mount Cook, here clothed with an interesting variety of sub-Alpine vegetation. For this purpose we used the tent poles and the survey chain left here by some of the early Alpine explorers. We spent a cold night, and next day, while I returned to the Hermitage for my wife, Annan swagged up the rest of the provisions.

On the morning of Sunday the 1st April—rather late in the season—my wife and I said good-bye to our friends at the Hermitage, and started on foot for our camp at the Ball Glacier. It was hard work pulling the two of us across the river in the cage, as the pull to the other side was an upward one; but, after much exertion, and many splinters in my hands from the rough Manila rope, the other side was reached in safety. As we landed, two young fellows from the Hermitage approached and beckoned us to send the cage back across the river to them. This did not exactly suit our book, as, in the event of their taking the cage back with them, we should be stranded on the Tasman side. So we tied it securely to the post on our side of the river, and continued on our journey. But before we had gone very far we were astonished to see one of the young fellows commencing to scramble across the river on the wire rope to get the cage, so that he might take his companion over. One could not help admiring his nerve and daring; but we were more concerned about our own faring should he leave the cage on the wrong side of the river for us. However, we proceeded on our

journey, and, after an hour's march, reached a deserted shepherd's hut, where we found Annan with a billy of refreshing tea awaiting our arrival.

The hut was rather an uninviting place, being dirty, and having no door nor window, in addition to which it was inhabited by rats. A short council of war was held, and, as it was early in the day, and the walk up the Tasman moraine on the morrow was rather a big undertaking, we decided not to stay at the hut, but to proceed as far as we could, and sleep out in one of the hollows between the glacier and the mountain. Accordingly we started for a point two miles distant, at the edge of the glacier, where Annan and I had left part of our stores on the way up. Having adjusted our swags, we were soon on the march, scrambling over the boulders of the moraine. Our progress was slow, both Annan and myself having heavy swags, while my wife, though displaying great pluck, had not yet got used to the acrobatic feats necessary to the keeping of one's balance on the unstable boulders of the moraine.

We had a particularly lively time of it in the scrub at the Blue Lake; and my wife's jacket, which was tied to my swag, had been torn off, and was lost among the bushes.

It was a sweltering hot day, but we toiled on, and towards evening reached the celmesia flat, where Mr. Green had pitched his third camp. My wife was by this time very tired, and so, while I gathered some sticks and made the tea, she sat on a rock wrapped in the 'possum rug. Annan decided to go on to the camp and come down again to have breakfast with us early next morning. We were now close to the ice, and after tea, as it began to get very cold, I set about to look for a good spot for our bivouac. A hundred yards farther

on some scrubby totara bushes and a stunted Alpine pine grew close in to the glacier, and under the latter, after a hurried inspection, we decided to camp. Its branches would be some protection against the wind, should it come on to blow, and, in the event of rain, they would also keep us fairly dry. Some branches were cut for a mattress, and over that we put tussock grass. On top of that we spread the waterproof sheet, and lying down on that—with our clothes on, of course—pulled the 'possum rug over us and sought a well-earned repose. We both dozed off, but presently were awakened by a shrill scream. It was only the call of a kea far up the mountain-side. Over the cold white snows on the shoulder of Mount Cook, one solitary cloud hung, fringed with the gold of the setting sun. Later the moon shone brilliantly through the clear frosty air, and the peaks became silhouettes against the horizon. A rock avalanche rattled down the side of the glacier. From across the narrow flat came the cry of the mountain parrot; and a weka that had crept close to our heads under the branches startled us with a loud screech. Then again all was silent—silent as the tomb. Presently two other visitors made a friendly call upon us: two tiny wrens—absurd little things, with hardly the vestige of tails. They perched on the branches just over our heads, so close that we could have ruffled their feathers with our breath. They hopped about from twig to twig, speaking to us in their soft, low bird voices; and, having studied us from every point of the compass, they decided to give us up, and went off to roost in a totara bush. At last we also went to sleep, and, making due allowance for the hardness of our couch and the strange surroundings, managed to get a fairly good night's rest. When we awoke in the morning the frost lay white on the bushes

around us, save within a radius of a foot or two, where the heat from our bodies had melted it, or prevented it from forming. The temperature had fallen to 26° Fahr. On the way up we took down a reading of 80° in the shade, so that there was thus a drop of no less than 54° in a few hours! I was astir before sunrise, and on going back to the Blue Lake for water to boil the billy the garrulous Paradise ducks gave me a vituperative reception, while the solitary mountain duck quacked a milder remonstrance. A shot from my pistol made them think discretion the better part of valour, and while the Paradise ducks took wing the grey duck scuttled off down stream in a great hurry. After a short search, I found my wife's jacket frozen hard to the bushes, and, filling my billy, returned to the flat. On the way up I gave a jodel that was answered by Annan far up the moraine, and in a few minutes he had rejoined us. We breakfasted together, and shortly after 9.30 were once more on the march. All the way up the valley we had been getting glorious glimpses of the Mount Cook chain, and De la Bêche, with its sharp peak and minarets of spotless snow, seemed to be ever beckoning us onward. Towering in the distance above the dull grey line of the great moraine, gleaming gloriously in the sunshine of early morn, tinted with the soft rose of the after-glow, or looming coldly in the mystic moonlight, this mountain seemed ever beautiful in outline, majestic in form. Even the moraine was interesting, clothed as it was, in places, with a great variety of Alpine plants, while structurally it was always something to marvel at, if not to swear at.

"It is," says Dr. von Lendenfeld, "larger than the moraines are in the European Alps, the cause being the slower action of the New Zealand glaciers, and the peculiarity of the rocks which surround them. There

are very few places to be found where the rocks are so jointed as they are here. They are split along the different joints into polyhedric masses by freezing water; they fall on the glacier and are carried down the valley. *Ceteris paribus*, the slower the glacier moves the more moraine will accumulate. For miles no part of the glacier is visible through the moraine." The glacier does not block up the whole valley, there being quite a large space between it and the mountain-side, except, in places, where great talus fans come down from the corries to meet the live moraine of the glacier. Far away on the right were the rocky peaks and hanging glaciers of the Liebig and Malte Brun Ranges, and in between them the Murchison Glacier, once a tributary of the Tasman, but now shrunken up its own valley for a considerable distance.

On our left we passed a high waterfall, and, nearing a spot known as the Cove, came across a small iron stove—a relic of the Lendenfeld expedition, abandoned early in the journey as being, no doubt, a luxury too heavy to be carried over this rough ground. We had a rest at the Cove, and whiled away half an hour with a shooting match, in which my wife proved herself a good markswoman. A little farther on we had luncheon—bread and sardines, with a pannikin of tea, again being the bill of fare. After this, there was some difficult scrambling over great rocks, many of which were so loose that we dare not put our weight on them for more than a second. We toiled on in the heat of the afternoon, and reached the camp at half-past three o'clock. While I pitched the second tent Annan and my wife set about the camp cookery, the latter making a glorious stew from mutton and onions, with a few other ingredients. That was

twenty-three years ago, but the memory of the feast remains with us still. No French chef ever made ragout that was welcomed so eagerly, or that disappeared so quickly. That night we piled on all the clothes we could—in addition to those we had on. We could hear the rocks rattling down the face of the glacier just opposite our tent—a couple of hundred yards distant—but King Frost held the glaciers themselves in his cold grip, and there were no avalanches after nightfall. Being too tired to pay much attention to the screaming of the keas, we soon fell asleep.

CHAPTER III

IN THE OLDEN DAYS—*concluded*

"We walked in the great hall of life, looking up and around reverentially. Nothing was despicable—all was meaning-full; nothing was small, but as part of a whole whose beginning and end we knew not."—CARLYLE.

NEXT morning, though the barometer had fallen ominously, Annan and I set out to climb the Hochstetter Dome. We toiled across the crumbling moraines of the Tasman, the Ball, and the Hochstetter Glaciers, and gained the clear, hummocky ice of the latter—one of the finest sights in the Southern Alps. It issues forth from the great ice plateau at the foot of the higher precipices of Mount Cook, descending in a wonderful cascade of broken ice for over 3000 feet. It cuts into the Tasman at an angle of about 45 degrees, and, the two glaciers flowing onward and not pressing very closely together, there remains a deep chasm between them. After proceeding a few miles, we find that there are two series of crevasses—one formed by the pressure of the Hochstetter Glacier causing the ice on the western side to move faster than that portion of the glacier abutting on the Malte Brun Range, while another series is caused by the bending round of the main ice stream in a grand sweep between Malte Brun and De la Bêche, forming long crevasses which run across the glacier on its convex side.

The sun shone out brightly, and the glare from

the white ice was so dazzling that we had to keep on our goggles to avoid snow-blindness. A little beyond the Hochstetter Ice Fall we halted to admire the view. Down the valley we could see the lower part of the Ball Glacier. Right in front lay the gleaming ice slopes and dark precipices of Aorangi, towering up, and culminating in the tent-shaped ridge 8000 feet above us; and down from the great ice plateau, between the south-eastern spur of Mount Cook and the Tasman spur, the Hochstetter Ice Fall poured its beautifully coloured cascade of broken ice, in spires and cubes and pinnacles—a wonderful sight—till it joined the Tasman, on which we now stood. Every few minutes great masses of ice were broken off with the superincumbent pressure, and went thundering down with loud roar over a precipice on the left. Half a mile farther on was the Freshfield Glacier, and over the bold rocky spur on which it rested appeared the ice cap of Mount Tasman. Then came the glorious mass of the Haast Glacier, in sunshine and shadow; and beyond this again other glaciers and peaks in bewildering number and variety. The ruddy buttresses of the Malte Brun Range bounded the view across the glacier on the right. Words fail to do justice to a scene of such exquisite beauty and grandeur.

"I tried vainly," says the Rev. Mr. Green, "to recall the view in Switzerland on the Great Aletsch Glacier in front of the Concordia Hut to establish some standard for comparison. Then I tried the Görner Glacier, on the way to Monte Rosa, but the present scene so completely asserted its own grandeur that we all felt compelled to confess in that instant that it surpassed anything we had ever beheld!"

While we were gazing the clouds increased, and a

chill wind sprang up. The higher peaks were becoming obscured in the clouds. It was evident that a storm was brewing. It would have been madness to tackle the Hochstetter Dome, so we left our swags behind, and, taking only the ice-axes and the rope, made a bolt for De la Bêche, to see what we could of the upper portion of the glacier. We made good progress over hummocky ice, and at last, when opposite De la Bêche, obtained a glimpse of the Lendenfeld Saddle. A fine unnamed glacier coming from the shoulder of Mount Spencer I named the Forrest Glacier, after my wife, who, by her pluck and endurance, had conquered all the difficulties that lay between us and the enjoyment of this scene of Alpine grandeur. Then we took a last longing look at the glorious amphitheatre of mountains, and, turning our faces campward, beat a hasty retreat. It was a pleasant surprise to my wife to see us back in camp that afternoon. But I had better let her tell her own story.

"In the morning," she writes, "I was wakened by Annan's stentorian voice giving vent to a poetic and sentimental ditty, of which the following is the only verse he ever favoured us with :—

'There's the lion in his lair,
And the North Polar bear,
And the birds in the greenwood tree,
And the pretty little rabbits,
So engaging in their habits—
Who've all got a mate but me!'

To judge from the boisterous cheerfulness of the singer his lonely condition did not trouble him much. Backwards and forwards he went, preparing breakfast, and various ditties furnished amusement to us for at least

half an hour. Our breakfast menu differed little from that of any other meal, I always taking biscuit in preference to a stratum from the pre-Adamite loaf poor Annan had carried up with many groans, and coffee or tea always forming an adjunct to the meal, whatever it might be. After breakfast, my husband and Annan made preparations for their tramp onward up the glacier. This I had dreaded, for it meant leaving me for two nights and two days alone in the camp. Many a moan was made over me by my friends before we had started on our trip. One had suggested that I should certainly stay, in preference to stopping in the camp by myself, at the nearest station. The Tasman Glacier does not, however, abound in stations, the nearest human habitation being the Hermitage, fourteen miles away! I had long ago come to the conclusion that investment in land on the moraine would not be a paying concern. Another timid soul had placed before me the horrible position I should be in were a tramp to walk into the camp and surprise me. We were tramps ourselves, I reflected, and other people as adventurous or as mad—some may consider the adjectives synonymous—we were not likely to encounter. As regards burglars and fire I was safe, and in fact there was absolutely no danger; but, for all that, I had a very uncomfortable feeling as I watched my two protectors packing up their traps. Beyond our camp there was no timber of any kind, so they could light no fire, and unfortunately the spirits of wine had been left behind. They would therefore have to make the best of cold victuals while they were away, and console themselves with the cheerful prospect of hot coffee and savoury stew on their return to camp. Then again, as they had a difficult road to travel, they

had to take as few impedimenta as possible; so they limited themselves as to provisions, and carried in addition only their sleeping bags and the Alpine rope.

"At about ten o'clock we passed round the stirrup-cup in the shape of a steaming billy of tea, and off they started, after having made everything as snug as possible for me. I watched them walking along the moraine and scrambling to the top of the ridge. There they stopped, turned round, waved their caps, gave a hearty cheer, to which I feebly responded as I watched them disappear over the edge. I was now alone, and a kea from the cliff above screamed derisively at me as I stood for a moment gazing at the place where I had last seen my companions. Work I decided was the best remedy for loneliness, on the principle that Satan—in this case taking the shape of Melancholy—finds some mischief still for idle hands to do. So I tidied up the two tents, piled more wood on the fire, and sat down in the sunny doorway of our tent with my fancy work. I could hardly help smiling, so incongruous did fancy work seem with the wonderful scene around me; but for a time it took my thoughts off my position, although my hands lay often idle in my lap while my eyes feasted on the surroundings. It was about eleven, and sunshine was pouring down on the level where our tents were pitched, making the glossy green leaves of the mountain lilies glisten, and turning the tussocky flat into a golden plain. In front stretched the grey moraine wall, and on the other side the spur of Mount Cook, clothed near its base with luxuriant vegetation. As I cast my eyes up its steep face I caught sight of a totara bush, whose tiny red turpentine-flavoured berries had been my joy in

happier hours. Up I mounted, very gingerly, to where the bush hung between two great grey rocks, but somehow the berries had lost their flavour, and I did not enjoy them. So I sat me down on one of the big stones and ruminated on my position. Three days seemed a lifetime, but two nights an eternity! In vain I remonstrated with myself, and reflected how much worse it would have been had I been cast on a desert island 'where tigers and snakes prevailed,' and I tried to recall all the cases of lonely shipwrecked maidens I had read about, for consolatory purposes, but it was of little use. I knew quite well that there was absolutely nothing to fear, but it was the horrible loneliness and silence that oppressed me, added to the fears I felt for my companions' safety. Should one slip happen, I thought the rope would be of little avail, for one would not be able to bear the weight of the other, especially if it came with a sudden jerk, and I remembered the warnings against only two going on Alpine expeditions. Altogether my reflections were of no enviable character as I sat high up on the cliff, looking down on our two white tents and blazing camp fire, and across at the Malte Brun Range, towering over the grey battlement, looking very black against the blue sky, except where the white glaciers seamed its rugged sides. When I got down to the level I took a lonely meal, and again sat down to work. By this time a slight breeze had sprung up, and some ominous-looking clouds were banking up towards the north. But I thought little of that at first. Then the weather grew more threatening, some raindrops fell, the wind flapped the sides of the tents, and blew the dead ashes of my camp fire across the tussocks. I had not the heart

to re-light it, had I the matches to waste over the attempt. I possessed but eleven, for one box had got wet, and our supply was very scant, so I determined to let it remain out. Stronger and stronger blew the wind, darker and darker grew the sky, and by this the head of the glacier was closed up with mist and cloud. Evidently a storm was brewing, and in the direction in which the adventurers were going. I knew a snowstorm might come on quite suddenly in these parts, and I was not versed in the mysteries of tent-pegging. Awful thoughts of my husband's return to find my prostrate form under the collapsed tent came before my mind as I retired inside and coiled myself up in the rug. Some time after, I went out to take another look at the weather, and I was standing forlornly gazing round, when, to my delight, I heard a cheery yell from the ridge, and saw two tiny black figures silhouetted against the grey sky. You may be sure I bustled around after echoing a welcome, and by the time the two travellers had reached the camp the perennial stew and billy of tea were ready to be enjoyed."

We also were glad to be back in camp. It was well we turned back, for that same night there came on a terrible storm. The wind rose from the north-west, and blew with such force that we thought every moment the tents would be torn to ribbons. We strengthened them with the spare rope, and put heavy stones all round the canvas on the ground outside. Hour after hour the gale roared furiously; sleep was out of the question. High up the mountain spur we could hear the wind howling and tearing the Alpine foliage in its fury. Then it would swoop down on our tent and send the sides flapping with reports

like pistol shots. Again, it would cease for a moment, as if to catch breath, only to come swooping down on us with even greater vengeance. After what seemed a very long time, I looked at my watch and found that only two hours had gone by. The barometer still gave a very low reading, and it was evident that we were in for a bad time. Soon after midnight the rain came on, and the force of the wind beat it through the tent. I rigged up a hood over my wife's head with my waterproof coat and the tin in which the biscuits were. Then, tying our caps down over our ears, we coiled up in the 'possum rug and once more tried to sleep. But the wind howled and the rain beat on the tent, and sleep was out of the question. Twice during the night I had to get up, tighten the ropes, and put bigger stones on the sides of the tent to prevent its being blown clean away. For twelve hours we lay listening to the fury of the storm, and at last the dawn came. Never were we more pleased to see the first streaks of daylight. The weather gradually improved, and though it was a showery afternoon we made a successful expedition up the glacier, so that my wife might not go away without seeing the Hochstetter Ice Fall and the beauties of the Upper Tasman.

Wonderful as were the many sights close to us, it was when we lifted our eyes to the Hochstetter Ice Fall that the true grandeur of the scene impressed us. From Mount Cook came a mass of broken ice, gigantic cubes, and pinnacles, of the most exquisite and dainty colourings, ethereal blues and greens. Down 3000 feet the great frozen cataract poured its masses of ice, ever moving, yet to our eyes in perpetual rest. Even while we looked a thundering roar, that had grown familiar

to our ears for the last two weeks, rent the air, as, over a black face of the cliff that breaks the cataract, and serves to heighten the beauty of its colouring, a great mass of ice crashed to the foot of the mountain.

That evening we had a variety entertainment in our tent. We started with a shooting match, taking for our target a small tin fixed on a rock in front of the doorway. When it got too dark to see our mark we lit the lantern, played spelling games, told stories, and talked over the feats of our illustrious predecessors on the Tasman Glacier. As a great treat, on our last evening in Green's Fifth Camp, we had all the onions left boiled for supper, with a little salt, and they were delicious. Whether it was the effects of these or the fatigue of our walk, I do not know, but, though it rained that night too, we slept profoundly, and heeded not the elements.

Morning came misty and grey, but towards nine o'clock the sun came out brilliantly, and the mist rose, showing us the mountains covered with fresh white snow. We determined to press on to the shepherd's hut, at least, that day, as the weather was too unsettled to risk staying longer. Standing for a moment on the crest of the moraine, we looked down on the little flat where we had spent such a jolly time. The wet leaves of celmesias, senecios, and mountain lilies were flashing back the glittering sunlight, the dying smoke of our camp fire drifted lazily across the face of the cliff, and a kea screamed a derisive farewell to us as we took a mental photograph of the scene. Then we reluctantly turned our backs upon it and our faces once more to the grey moraine. The hut was reached early in the afternoon, and we decided to con-

tinue our journey to the Hermitage. On arriving at the Hooker we found that the cage had been left on the other side, and could only be pulled over part of the way. This was a sore disappointment. There was nothing for it but to retrace our steps to the Mount Cook Hut, or for me to crawl along the rope and secure the cage. We chose the latter alternative, and, while my wife averted her gaze, I crawled along the wire rope and scrambled down into the cage, which I managed to pilot across in safety. Both of us then got in and started across, but we had a fearful time of it, as the pulling rope had got into the current, and it was only with the greatest exertion that we managed to extricate it. We were half an hour in crossing the river, and reached the Hermitage in the darkness, after what was, for a woman, in those days, a wonderful journey down from Green's Fifth Camp.

One morning, soon after our return to the Hermitage, I found myself basking in the warm sunshine, dividing my attention for the most part between a book and a cigar, and occasionally gazing up at the ice cliffs of Mount Sefton, from which, every now and then, great masses broke away and came tumbling over the precipices with thundering roar. I was joined by Mr. Huddleston, the keeper of the Hermitage, who suggested a climb on the Sealy Range, so, next morning, I started on a lovely mountain ramble. It was a glorious day, and the glaciers at the head of the Hooker were gleaming in the sunlight, while the long southern arête of Mount Cook, right up to the summit, was in shadow, and there was one patch of glistening white on the top of St. David's Dome. Mount Sefton, with the broken ice of its hanging glaciers, was resplendent in full sunshine; and every now and

Crossing the Hooker.

then a great avalanche thundered down from the highest slopes. The mocking-birds were singing in chorus to the tuis' liquid song, and the beat of the hammers on the roof of the new buildings at the Hermitage was borne up through the still air. Halting for a spell at a little lakelet high on the shoulder of the mountain, I chanced to look up, and was surprised to find someone on the rocks above me. He turned out to be the lad who had so daringly crossed the Hooker River on the wire rope a few days before. He had been employed in connexion with the new building at the Hermitage, and, lured by the beauty and the grandeur of these mountains, had climbed from the valley to get a better view. I offered to share my luncheon with him, and he was easily persuaded to accompany me on my scramble, and I, untutored climber that I was, made bold to give him his first lesson in mountaineering. He told me his name was Fyfe. It was a name destined to play no inconsiderable part in the history of New Zealand mountaineering, and I little knew then that in the years to come we two should be in many tight corners together on the giant peaks of these great ranges, and that there would arise situations in which the life of each would depend upon the skill, the coolness, and the courage of the other. Yet so it was. But in this day's work there was not much adventure, and all we did was to reach a point from which the view amply repaid us for our toil. Many fine peaks and glaciers were in sight, and the rivers lay in the great hollows between the ranges like thin threads of silver. In the midst of it all rose the buttresses of Aorangi, pile on pile, to where its summit snows gleamed in the setting sun. Far away, on the other hand, in the yellow

tussock plains of the lower country, lay the lakes—jewels in a setting of dull gold. One began to realize that there were sermons in stones, and that this was a cathedral in which one might hear them. Certainly no cathedral floor of marble was ever so white as the snowy sunlit floor on which we trod, and no cathedral dome so vast as the blue above; while about us were the massive flying buttresses of the mountain ranges supporting the higher peaks and domes of snow. It required no stretch of the imagination to look back adown the aisles of time to the days when greater glaciers carried their burden of grey moraine across the distant plains, and even to the sea itself—to the days when still higher peaks "towered vast to heaven." The mills of the gods were still grinding up here, and the mountains were crumbling before our eyes; but, lower down, the beautiful sub-Alpine flora clothed their sides—silvery-leaved celmesias, and many other flowers and plants, with the golden-eyed ranunculus, wet with a passing shower, gazing up into the eye of the sun. Perched up there, in the midst of it all, away from the hum of cities, "the earth had ceased for us to be a weltering chaos. We walked in the great hall of life, looking up and around reverentially. Nothing was despicable—all was meaning-full; nothing was small, but as a part of a whole whose beginning and end we knew not."

From this reverie was I awakened by an avalanche crashing down from Sefton's steep slopes. We turned and glissaded over the snow, lost our way in the dark, lower down, and eventually arrived at the Hermitage an hour after nightfall. My companion was thankful for the darkness, for some of his garments had been sorely tried in the descent, and he badly needed a cloak.

One other scramble, an unimportant first ascent, and my holiday was at an end. Thus fell I in love with those beautiful mountains, on whose great glaciers, steep ice-slopes, and grim precipices I was, in after years, to spend many jocund days and some bitter nights. There have been glorious mornings when we shouldered our packs and strode boldly and joyously out into the unknown. There have been days when success met us on the mountain-side, and, grasping us warmly by the hand, led us to the almost inaccessible places, and persuaded the higher crags and snows to yield up their inmost secrets. And there have been other times when angry storms, resenting the intrusion, have chased us incontinently back to tent or bivouac. Days, too, when the higher snows, "softly rounded as the breasts of Aphrodite," in return for all our wooing, have given us but a chill response. Yet the sweet has been very sweet, and the bitter never so sharp that it could not be endured with fortitude, if not altogether with indifference. And, throughout all our guideless wanderings—and I write it down here with some little pride—no accident has occurred to mar the happiness of a generation's climbing.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONQUERING OF AORANGI

"If at first you don't succeed,
Try, try again."

GREEN's memorable visit in 1882, in company with two Swiss climbers, Emil Boss and Ulrich Kaufmann, fired the enthusiasm of a number of young New Zealanders, who hoped to succeed, where he had just failed, in reaching the actual summit of Mount Cook, or, to give it its more romantic Maori name, Aorangi. But Aorangi, entrenched behind his ramparts of ice and frowning buttresses of rock, bade defiance to these inexperienced though daring Colonial pioneers in Southern mountaineering. However, though we had to contend against many difficulties, we were gradually learning the craft, and there were several determined, if possible, to win for New Zealand the honour of the first ascent of New Zealand's highest mountain. Some there were who swore not to raise the siege so long as Aorangi remained unconquered, and stout hearts and sturdy thews remained to battle with the difficulties. Up to the time when the writer took a hand in the game some ten expeditions had been organized, and the peak still remained unclimbed. In 1894, after the failure of Mannering's party in the previous season, a solemn compact was entered into by three members of the New Zealand Alpine Club to spend their summer

holidays in making one more attempt to reach the summit of Aorangi; and, spurred into activity by the news that an English climber, with the famous Zurbriggen, was to leave England in October on an expedition to the Southern Alps, a party was hurriedly organized, and arrangements made by telegraph. Many members who were anxious to take part in the expedition could not, however, for one reason or another, get away, and Dixon had no fewer than seven refusals from climbers who had at one time or another expressed their willingness to join him. Finally a party consisting of Mr. M. J. Dixon, Mr. Kenneth Ross, and the writer decided to make the venture, and arranged to meet at Fairlie Creek, the terminus of the railway, on the evening of Monday, November 5th.

On arrival at Timaru we were surprised to find there, awaiting our arrival, Mr. T. C. Fyfe, who we thought was at that moment with Mr. A. P. Harper endeavouring to cross over from the West Coast by way of the Franz Josef and Kron Prinz Rudolph Glaciers into the Tasman. Mr. Adamson, the manager of the Hermitage, was also there. They greeted us with rather depressing news. Fyfe was doubtful if he could join our party, and Adamson assured us that we could look for neither provisions nor assistance at the Hermitage, which was practically closed "pending reconstruction of the company." On every hand, too, we were met with discouraging cries of "Much too early in the season for climbing"; but, confident in our own judgment, we kept on our way undaunted, and at Fairlie Creek, found Dixon awaiting us with a wagonette and three horses, which he had chartered for £10 to take us to Mount Cook and back. We waited only for tea at Fairlie, and proceeded at once on the first stage of our journey

—fourteen miles—to Burke's Pass. Arriving there at 10.30 p.m., we compared notes as to provisions, equipment, etc., and sorting out what we did not require, each man packed his swag for the expedition. On Tuesday we were up at 4 a.m. and on the road three-quarters of an hour later. There had been a garish red sky just after the dawn, and now, as we began to ascend the slopes of the pass, a puff of warm wind met us and gave ominous warning that a nor'-wester was brewing. The nor'-wester, which is equivalent to the dreaded Föhn wind of the Swiss Alps, is the bane of New Zealand climbers, as it generally ends in rain, and often softens the snow and brings down innumerable avalanches from the higher slopes. We could only hope that this was a false alarm, or that, if a nor'-wester did come, it would be a baby one and blow over before we reached our objective. Scarcely could we realize that the child would grow into the giant he subsequently did.

We reached Lake Tekapo at 9.30 a.m., and, after stopping to get a shoe on one of the horses, resumed our journey. At Braemar we intended to camp for the night, in the hope that the Tasman River would be fordable early next morning. Shortly after midday we halted at a mountain stream to feed the horses and boil the billy for lunch. All around us were undeniable signs of the older glacial period, when the Godley and the Great Tasman Glaciers met on the Mackenzie Plains, and, uniting, flowed on in one grand ice-stream towards the Pacific. On either side were vestiges of old moraines, now grass-grown, and great rocks that had come down on the ice from the higher mountains.

We arrived at the Tasman River early in the afternoon, and, finding it low, decided to go on past Braemar

Crossing the Tasman.

Camp Cookery.

and cross opposite Glentanner station. The river-bed here is some four miles across, and the water flows over it in several branches. We had some difficulty in finding a ford, and, at one spot, got into the treacherous quicksands in which the bed of this dreaded river abounds. In a moment the horses were up to their knees in it, and the trap wheels sank nearly to the axle. Having no desire to repeat Mr. Green's experience of leaving his wagonette in the river, the whip was vigorously applied, and, the horses willingly responding, we just succeeded in getting through to firm ground. Finally we managed to cross the many-channelled river without accident, and halted at Glentanner sheep-station, where we were hospitably entertained. Here inquiries were made as to whether we could obtain a porter to assist with the swagging, and were gratified to find that the manager was that day paying off a station hand who would be likely to afford the necessary assistance. The manager was empowered to engage him in our behalf and to send him on after us, his wages to be £1 a day. We also added to our provisions here by purchasing half a sheep, and after a cup of tea and a spell of three-quarters of an hour, proceeded on our journey up the Tasman Valley, intending to camp that night near the wire rope that spans the Hooker River at the end of the southern spur of Mount Cook. By the time we got to Birch Hill the weather was so threatening that it was deemed wise to call a halt, and no sooner had we got the things out of the trap than the rain started to come down in torrents.

Next morning by seven o'clock the storm had cleared sufficiently to allow us to proceed, so, after a hurried breakfast, we started off in the direction of the Hooker River, first taking the precaution of

getting the shepherd to kill a sheep to take up to Green's Fifth Camp in case we should be delayed there by bad weather. The ground became rougher and rougher as the journey progressed, and, at last, we were brought to a dead stop through breaking the pole of our wagonette. This caused a vexatious delay, as every hour now was valuable, seeing that it was our intention to push on past the Hermitage and the hut at Green's Fifth Camp, fourteen miles farther on, and pitch our tent some miles up the glacier at the foot of the Spur, below the Mount Cook Bivouac. However, there was nothing for it but to set to at once and repair the damage, and pack our belongings on one of the horses, to the cage on the wire rope that spanned the Hooker River. Accordingly, the horses were quickly unharnessed, and Dixon and our Jehu, on the other two horses, galloped up to the Hermitage for material to splice the pole, while Kenneth and I, with our porter—who had joined us the night before at Birch Hill—packed all our things up to the Hooker River. Arrived here, however, we found the manila rope, with which the cage is worked, broken, and one end jammed amongst the boulders in the bed of the river on the other side. Kenneth and I, however, got into the cage, pulled ourselves across, hand-over-hand on the cable, and secured the broken rope, which we spliced to the one on the other side. In this way we restored communication, though, owing to the rope's being single instead of double, the cage could be pulled across only with great exertion. All these, however, were minor difficulties, which we brushed lightly aside, determined that no ordinary obstacle should hinder our ultimate progress. Just as we were preparing to get the swags across by means of the cage, we espied

Dixon leading the old pack-horse from the Hermitage in our direction, and, as we could trust this animal in the river, we waited, and, transferring the swags to her, I got one of the other horses and led her across the river. Kenneth and our porter crossed in the cage, the latter being so frightened that he was not able to pull a pound on the rope. Dixon returned to the trap to mend the broken pole, and he and the driver followed us, later, on the other two horses.

The rough journey up to the hut at Green's Fifth Camp was uneventful. The weather was fine, and the views ahead were strikingly beautiful. Dixon hurried ahead to make a pair of "ski," which he fashioned in a most ingenious manner out of a couple of long palings and two short pieces of zinc. We were depending on these "ski" to take us safely and expeditiously over the dreaded deep snow of the great plateau above the Hochstetter Ice Fall. They were simply snow-shoes made of wood four inches wide and six feet long, and similar to those used by Nansen in his expedition across Greenland. Dixon had, the previous year, left two pairs on the rocks of the Haast Ridge above the plateau, and these we hoped to find, the third pair being required for Kenneth. A halt was called at the hut for tea, and, late in the evening, we started with the intention of crossing the Ball and Hochstetter Glaciers and camping at the foot of the Tasman Spur. It was a fine night, but no sooner had we shouldered our swags than ominous clouds were seen swirling over the shoulder of Aorangi. Dixon doubted the wisdom of proceeding, and our porter said he would much sooner wait till morning; but after a little deliberation I urged an advance, and slowly, in single file, the expedition trooped over the rough

moraine hillocks of the Ball Glacier. The clear ice of the Hochstetter Glacier was soon reached, and, crossing this obliquely, we encountered another moraine, over the loose stones of which we slowly toiled with our heavy swags. We arrived at the Tasman Spur in a couple of hours, and, in a little hollow of the old moraine of the glacier, where grew some snow grass, veronica, and Alpine plants, we pitched our tent, after first removing the larger stones so that we might have a fairly comfortable bed. It was a fine night, and the snow-capped mountains on the left towering steeply above, with De la Bêche far up the glacier in front of us, formed a picture of exquisite loveliness in the brilliant moonlight. Opposite, across the valley, frowned the gaunt, rock buttresses of the Malte Brun Range. We spent our first night comfortably enough under canvas, and slept soundly till daylight.

Next morning the weather was again fine, and our spirits rose with the thermometer. If we could only catch the upper snows in good order our chances of climbing the peak were excellent. We were, however, soon to meet with our first disappointment. As we were preparing breakfast our porter, who, like Falstaff, was somewhat fat and scant o' breath, and who had been sitting apart on a boulder on the old moraine, having finished his meditations, rose, and approaching me with some degree of deference, explained that he had come to the conclusion that he would not be of much more use to us. He was "all over pains," and he had a "bad 'eadache." Assuming, for the moment, a cheerful outward manner, though being inwardly somewhat indignant and sad at heart, I assured him that if he but came with us a few thousand feet higher,

with a good swag on his back, his pains would quickly vanish, and, moreover, that the rarefied air in the region of the Mount Cook Bivouac was an infallible cure for 'eadache, and indeed for all the other ills that flesh is heir to. But my pleading was in vain. He cast one scared look at the frowning crags above, and incontinently fled. He even refused breakfast. Like another historical person—but for quite a different reason—be stayed not for brake and he stopped not for stone. With his blanket on his back, he made a bee-line for the hut, whence he hoped to get the company of our driver back to the Hermitage. The driver, however, had already started on his journey. A less determined man might now have paused a moment in his onward flight; but not so our Falstaffian burden-bearer. With all his pains and aches forgotten, he now continued his headlong retreat down the valley. Eventually he caught sight of the driver, whereupon he began to shout and bellow to attract his attention. The latter, good man, thinking some terrible accident had happened, stopped and rode back to meet the messenger of supposed evil report, and in the charitableness of his heart gave the deserter one of our horses wherewith to continue his flight. The Esk River, which the historical personage already referred to swam, is but a minor obstacle as compared with the turbulent Hooker, and our porter, though he had a good horse under him, was nearly washed away in the foaming torrent. Next day he continued his journey down the Tasman Valley in our wagonette, and arrived at the hotel at Lake Pukaki a sadder and a quieter man; but, falling in with two station hands, who primed him with bad liquor, he, once more, waxed eloquent, and even claimed for himself the ascent of

Mount Cook! For a time he was quite the hero of the countryside; but each glass of whisky that he swallowed added some more Munchausen-like adventure to his tale, till the sum-total became so overwhelmingly great that even his boon companions, though they could swallow the whisky, could not swallow the story. It was, indeed, a terrible tale of privation and adventure that he had to tell; but, finally, he contradicted himself to such an extent that he had reluctantly to admit that he had not even set foot on the mountain! But he had his revenge. The men he had been engaged by were "mad, sir—mad as 'atters! They were going up a place as steep as the side of a 'ouse, and there was a young fellow named Ross among them who was the maddest of the lot!" Later, our porter, with his swag on his back, a bottle of whisky in his pocket, and a liberal supply of the fiery beverage inside him, wandered out into the night, lost his way on the tussock plains, and, having slept off the potion, returned next day minus all his belongings. Then he disappeared altogether, and history does not record whether he ever returned again to those dread Alpine regions; but the chances are that he preferred the delights of civilization—or the flesh-pots of the country "pub"—to the joys of Alpine climbing.

We had many a laugh, afterwards, over our adventure with the burly porter, but, now, as we looked somewhat ruefully at the extra pack he had left behind him, and thought of the added burden that would soon be upon our own shoulders, we began to realize the magnitude of our undertaking and to curse his craven heart. We did not, however, let this little adventure spoil our breakfast, and congratulated ourselves that, in three days from Dunedin, we had

established a camp at the foot of the slopes from which Green, after many difficulties and much delay, commenced his climb—a feat not easy of accomplishment in those days. But the hardest toil yet lay before us, and the memory of that first climb to the Bivouac, encumbered as we were with packs weighing close upon 50 lb. each, does not fade with the passing years.

Occasionally there would be a bit of crag work, and at last we entered a long snow couloir up which we kicked steps in the direction of the Bivouac. This couloir got steeper at the top, and Dixon, thinking to make better progress, took to the rocks on the right, while Kenneth and I tried the rocks on the left. Preferring the snow work, we were soon back in the couloir, and lost sight of Dixon. A quarter of an hour later a jodel from us brought forth an answering shout from below, and presently Dixon's head appeared above a pinnacle of rock on our right. The spare rope which he had in his swag had been taken out and was now coiled round his shoulder, so we knew he had been in difficulties. Making a traverse of the snow slope, he was soon in our steps, and we learned that he had got into rather an awkward corner, from which he had to descend by means of the Alpine rope. The snow slope above grew steeper and then eased off on to steep rocks, up which lay the route. Dixon led and Kenneth followed, but was quickly in difficulties, for the long "ski" which were attached to his swag would, in spite of everything, catch in the rocks, rendering the situation risky, and the language even more so.

It will perhaps be well to draw a veil over the various acrobatic feats that we performed, and round off the story by stating that we reached the Bivouac

Rock at 5 p.m. Under the lee of this rock we found a little flat place, about six feet square, on the crest of a narrow, exposed ridge. On the one side a snow couloir, some 2000 feet long, sloped steeply down between the precipices to the foot of the Hochstetter Ice Fall. Northwards the ridge fell away toward the Tasman Glacier. The scenery was magnificent. Immediately above our camp were some splintered towers of rock, from which is obtained a glorious view of the upper slopes of Aorangi. Northward Haast and Haidinger, clothed with sérac and icefall, tower high in heaven; and thence the eye wanders round to De la Bêche—most beautiful of mountains—Elie de Beaumont, and the magnificent sweep of the Upper Tasman, leading to the Lendenfeld Saddle and the Hochstetter Dome. Across the valley were the giant rock peaks of the Malte Brun Range, catching the rosy tint of dying day; and below our Bivouac the battlements of the long rocky ridge leading down to the deep valley in which the middle portion of the great Tasman Glacier, with its streams of moraine and white ice, stretched itself in the deepening gloom of evening.

Dixon expected to find the Bivouac snowed up so early in the season, and he had carried up a short-handled shovel with a view to digging out the *cache* of provisions left there the previous season. To our joy, however, it was found almost entirely free from snow, and the tinned meats, fish, etc., to all appearance, in good order.

Kenneth and I now divided the swags and got out some provisions for a snack, while Dixon went up over the rocks in an unsuccessful search for water. We had arrived rather late in the day, and no rock could be found retaining sufficient heat from the sun's

rays to melt the snow we spread on it. The result was that Dixon returned with only about an inch of water in the billy. This we apportioned, and, at 7.30 p.m., once more shouldered our swags and started on the climb to the Glacier Dome. But it was now found that the snow was frozen so hard that we should have to cut steps in it all the way to the Dome, and as we saw no prospect of being able to do this with swags on our backs, and to come back for the rest of our burdens in time to make a camp on the great plateau beyond the Dome, we decided to camp for the night at the Bivouac. It was well we did so decide.

As the evening wore on it began to grow cold, so Kenneth and I set about pitching the Whymper tent, while Dixon went on cutting steps up to the Dome to make the ascent the easier in the morning. Owing to the limited space at our disposal, it was rather a difficult matter to pitch the tent satisfactorily, but we made a fairly good job of it, and, getting inside, set about melting some snow over the Aurora lamp to make a cup of Liebig for Dixon. This was rather unpleasant work, as the lamp was out of order and smoked badly. The Primus stove used so effectively in after years in our Alps, and also by my friends Scott and Shackleton in the Antarctic, were not then on the market in N.Z. Our lamp smoked and went out, and was relit, and smoked and went out again. The one thing it seemed incapable of was the generation of heat! Finally, the whole thing caught fire, and in order to avoid an explosion we threw it outside and extinguished the flames in the snow. Luckily I had with me a small spirit lamp, and, though it was not made for burning kerosene, we managed, by the aid

of this, to melt some snow and brew three small pannikins of Liebig. Then we sat down and waited patiently for Dixon's return. About half-past nine we began to feel a little anxious, and I was just getting on my boots to go out and look for him when we heard the clink of his ice-axe on the rocks above the tent. He had been gone two and a half hours, and had done good work. He was rewarded with the Liebig that had been kept warm for him for three-quarters of an hour, and then we, all three, turned into our sleeping bags, intending to make a very early start in the morning. We talked over our plans, and arranged, finally, to carry heavy swags up over the Glacier Dome and on to the plateau, camping eventually on the ice of the Linda Glacier at an altitude of about 10,000 feet above sea-level. Should there be any danger of avalanches from Mount Tasman in crossing the plateau, we decided to travel by night and select a safe camp in the daytime. The mountain was, however, singularly free from avalanches, and we began to think our chances of scaling the peak were of the rosiest.

CHAPTER V

THE CONQUERING OF AORANGI—*continued*

"It thunders, and the wind rushes screaming through the void,
The night is black as a black stone."

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

A HIGH bivouac in the Southern Alps, across which sweep the great summer ocean air currents, may, at any time, and without much warning, lend a spice of adventure to a big climb. And so it now happened. Before we could get comfortably warm in our bags, and settle down for the night, ominous gusts of wind began to flap the sides of our tent, and to send the snow swirling down the gullies. The wind gradually increased, and by half-past ten it was howling round our bivouac with the force of a gale. The sides of our tent flapped wildly, and at last it became evident that it could not stand against such a gale, but would be blown to shreds if left standing, so I got up, and levelled it to the ground. Hanging on to the rope to avoid being blown away, I took a glance round. The soft snow from the tops of Haast and Haidinger, caught by the wind, was blown like a great cloud-banner half-way across the Tasman Valley, while the moon went plunging into the storm-clouds that came sailing in torn masses overhead. It was evident that we were in for a bad nor'-wester, and as I crawled back under the folds of the tent and into my sleeping bag beside my recumbent companions I could hold out little hope for the morrow. Hour after hour the wind raged. There

was no improvement till morning. Then the wind seemed to abate somewhat, and we pitched the tent again. It was bitterly cold, and snow was beginning to fall. It looked as if we were going to be caught in a trap, but we were loath to retreat, and stuck to our guns in the hope that before the day was over the gale would have blown itself out. But matters began to get worse instead of better. The wind once more increased in violence, and was now accompanied by driving rain, hail, and snow. We could do nothing but wait patiently in our sleeping bags and hope for the best. Towards evening we broached a tin of sardines, and managed to get enough water from the floor of the tent to allay our thirst. Then night closed round our storm-tossed bivouac, and the driving rain beat through the canvas, and formed pools on the waterproof floor inside. Several times we baled the tent out with pannikins, but there was no keeping it dry, and at last we were content to lie in our sleeping bags in the water. About 10 p.m. there was a vivid flash of lightning followed by a loud peal of thunder, and this was succeeded by another and yet another, each peal coming nearer than the one preceding it. The hours went slowly by, and at midnight the storm was at its height. The lightning came like balls of fire, and while the wind howled round the crags, the thunder crashed incessantly, making the Bivouac Rock, and even the ridge itself, tremble. Sleep was out of the question, but we huddled up in our sleeping bags, and occasionally told a story or sang a song. Someone quoted ironically—

> "There is beauty in the bellow of the blast,
> There is grandeur in the growling of the gale,
> . . . . . .

The Mt. Cook Bivouac.

But to him who's scientific
There's nothing that's terrific
In the falling of a flight of thunderbolts!"

and Dixon sang a song about a juvenile Celestial who had caught a bumble bee, and, taking it for a "Melican butterfly," put it in the pocket of his pantaloons with disastrous results! As the night wore on there was no abatement of the storm, but rather it seemed to increase in fury. The lightning was wonderfully vivid, the balls of fire being succeeded by a bluish light. The incessant thunder, at each crash, drowned the noise of the storm. It was grand in the extreme. Each moment I expected the rock under which we lay would be splintered by an explosion. "Is this blessed rock quite safe?" I inquired of Dixon, who had spent many nights under it, but never such a one as this. "No—not very," was the answer. So we pondered quietly and put our trust in Providence, and—the laws of chance! Sleep was out of the question. After some time I looked at my watch by a flash of lightning, and found it was 3 a.m. Snow was falling heavily, and weighing down the weather side and end of the tent. I had magnanimously taken the outside berth, and now I could feel the snow curling up over my head in the slack of the tent outside. I beat it down repeatedly, but, like the pain caused by the peach of emerald hue, "it grew! it grew!" till it was once more arching overhead, and I had to sit up and plant my back defiantly against it. Long before morning it had formed a bank outside the tent four feet high, and, when the welcome dawn appeared, though I was still in a sitting posture, it was once more curling over my head, while Kenneth, who was next the rock, had a small cornice arching over his recumbent form! By this

time the water in which we were lying had by some means or other got through into our sleeping bags, and this made matters still more uncomfortable. Peering out through the tent door in the early dawn, we saw the snow still falling, and, below us, an apparently bottomless cauldron of swirling drift. The wind had moderated somewhat and the thunder had ceased, but the situation was anything but reassuring, so we decided to beat a retreat to the lower regions. We breakfasted on cold plum pudding, and, creeping out of our bags, hurriedly packed our swags and got ready for a start. The tent had to be abandoned, as it was frozen to the rocks, and the stones to which the guy-ropes were attached were buried deep in the snow. We were soon roped together and at the top of a steep couloir leading down some three or four thousand feet to the Tasman Valley below us. Attaching the swags to the rope, we attempted to tow them behind us, but, as the snow was soft and the slope steep, this became dangerous work, and we decided to let them slide down the couloir before us. They went off with great rapidity for some 100 feet or so, then bounded over a huge tower of rock that jutted out from the middle of the couloir, and disappeared from view. Relieved of the swags, we proceeded cautiously, going with our faces to the slope as one would come down a ladder, making good anchorage with our ice-axes at every step in case we should start an avalanche. There were one or two nasty places, but nothing happened, and, getting on to easier slopes lower down, we were able to turn round and practically walk down the remainder of the gully. We could find no trace of the swags, and came to the conclusion that they must either have been arrested on the crags above or buried in the soft snow below. We

decided to hunt for them on the following day, and wended our way back across the Hochstetter and Ball Glaciers to the lonely hut, defeated but not altogether disheartened. Arrived at the hut, the first thing we did was to get out of our wet clothes; but, as our spare garments were in the lost swags, a new problem presented itself for solution. We made shift with what was at hand. Dixon attired in a bath towel, to which he subsequently added a mackintosh; Kenneth gracefully clad in a grey blanket; myself in an airy costume composed of a short serge frock discarded by a former lady climber, made a fashionable trio such as had never before graced the Ball Hut, and that aroused many a vain longing for my lost camera, which, like our spare clothing, was in the buried swags. Breakfast—after our long spell of thirty hours at the Bivouac, with little to drink, and that little not of the best—was very welcome. At midday we turned into our bunks, and dozed away the afternoon. The weather continued bad, and towards evening we were startled by a large rock which came crashing down the mountain-side in close proximity to the hut, warning us that what with falling stones and the danger of a break in the Ball Glacier a few hundred yards higher up the valley, the said hut was in anything but a safe position. Day closed in, and, one by one, we dozed off again till at about 9.30 p.m. we were aroused by a further noise outside, and in our half-sleepy condition imagined we were going to be bombarded by another rock avalanche. Presently, however, the door opened, and in walked three men with ice-axes, Alpine rope, and other climbing paraphernalia. They proved to be Fyfe and George Graham (members of the N.Z.A.C.) and Matheson (a runholder who had come up to see something of the

Great Tasman Glacier). There were now six of us in camp, and it became necessary to modify our arrangements, so we discussed plans, and resolved to make a very early start as soon as the weather cleared.

Sunday was occupied mainly as a day of rest, some necessary preparations in the way of cooking, etc., only being made. Graham constituted himself chef of the Hotel de Ball, and it was not long before the smell of a savoury stew was wafted in through the hut door. Alas for the hopes thus engendered! When we came to eat the stew we found that our cook—with the best of good intentions, no doubt—had dosed the dish liberally with what he believed to be salt, but which he afterwards ascertained to be tartaric acid! Someone suggested that if we now added soda it would counteract the effect of the acid, but we were not in a mood for experiments—so we gave the whole lot to Matheson's dog, and at the end of the day the dog was still alive! We then made the further distressing discovery that there was no salt in the camp, and for the next three days we had to cook our meat and bake our bread without it. This was not so bad as long as we had soda and acid with which to bake scones, but at last the acid likewise gave out, and we were in a quandary. Dixon suggested citrate of magnesia as a substitute, but I prevailed upon Matheson, whom we made baker-in-chief, to try fruit salts,—a bottle of which we found in the hut,—and this he did with excellent results.

The weather cleared gradually, and by 8.30 a.m. the peaks of the Malte Brun Range were standing out above the top of the moraine, grander than ever, in their tracery of newly fallen snow—their grim precipices, which had slipped their mantle of white, being accentuated by

the deep snow in the corries. The barometer had risen a tenth, the wind was from the south, and everything seemed to make for success at last.

As the weather was apparently clear down country, this seemed a fitting opportunity to liberate one of the carrier pigeons lent me by Messrs. B. and F. Hodgkins before leaving Dunedin. Attaching a message, written at the Bivouac, to the bird's leg, we liberated him at 10 a.m., all hands turning out to give him a "send off." It was an interesting experiment, as the bird had been taken right into the heart of the Southern Alps, and had to rise from a valley surrounded by mountains of from ten to twelve thousand feet in altitude. He rose gradually to a great height, making ten gyrations in one direction, and then with a sweep round in the opposite direction he seemed to suddenly make up his mind, and, taking a bee-line over the Liebig Range, disappeared in the direction of the coast at Timaru. He reached home at 4.30 p.m., having accomplished the journey in six hours and a half. It may be worth while remarking that when the bird reached Dunedin he was still flying at a very high elevation.

We now waited only for settled weather, as we were a very strong party, and had every confidence in our ability to conquer more than ordinary difficulties. Matheson, our newly formed acquaintance, was ready to join us, and to go with us to the summit if need be; so Dixon nailed up his boots with hobs and clinkers for the ice-work. We went early to bed, and pondered over the chances of success. There was one thing that made our minds uneasy—the amount of newly fallen snow on the higher slopes. This would render climbing difficult, if not dangerous. Still, we could but try, and if there should be any danger we decided to travel at night

and camp in the daytime. By this means we should also avoid the terrible glare and heat from the snow slopes of the Upper Linda Glacier.

The people of Australia—who may be taken as able to judge—say there are three hot places—Hay, Hell, and Booligal—and that in the matter of temperature these should be put in the order named! On a cloudless summer day, when the sun beats through the stagnant air and is reflected from the snow and the surrounding slopes, the Linda, in any reliable classification, would probably come in after Hay and before the other place.

It was decided that we should rise on the morrow at 2.30 a.m.; but slumber held the hut till four o'clock, and it was five before we were ready for another start. We had not gone far before the storm descended upon us again, and there was nothing for it but to retreat to the shelter of the hut. Clouds obscured the mountain-tops, and it was snowing at the Bivouac. Disconsolately we marched back, and by the time we had regained our habitation the wind, accompanied by driving hail and snow, was once more sweeping down the valley. It now became a game of patience, but though all this gloomy weather and lack of sunshine was very depressing, we kept up our spirits and determined to set out again on the first opportunity. There was some chance of our running short of provisions, as we were now a large party, and it was arranged that Fyfe should walk down to the Hermitage for bread and tinned meats, while Dixon, Matheson, Graham, and I went to look for the swags, leaving Kenneth in charge of the camp. Accordingly we proceeded once more across the Ball and Hochstetter Glaciers, and on past our lower camp. By the time we

got near the Tasman spur the snow was driving round us in blinding gusts, and we had frequently to crouch under a crag, and hold on all we knew to prevent our being blown away. Owing to the heavy snowfall, the whole aspect of the lower portion of the mountain was changed, and we had some difficulty in finding the exact couloir down which we had sent the swags; but at last we reached what we thought was it, and Dixon and Graham proceeded with some difficulty right up to the spot where the swags were seen to disappear over the middle rock. Owing to the great depth of snow, however, no trace of them could be found. Matheson and I searched another couloir to the right, but, not liking the look of it, and knowing there was danger from ice-blocks that occasionally fell from the edge of a glacier at its head, fully a thousand feet above, we beat a retreat to our camp. We halted at our cache at the foot of the Tasman spur, and Matheson knocked over a kea with his ice-axe, simply stunning it and subsequently catching it alive. We afterwards caught another at Green's Fifth Camp. On our way down the glacier the wind was so violent that we could not stand against it, and it simply blew us before it over the smooth ice, while the driving rain that had now set in drenched us once more to the skin. We got back to camp at half-past one, and Dixon and Graham came in an hour afterwards—cold, hungry, and wet. Kenneth had cooked us a hot dinner, which we thoroughly enjoyed; and once more we turned in to wait for fine weather. That night there was another thunderstorm almost as violent as the one we had experienced at the Bivouac; but the lightning was not so vivid, and the thunder—though one or two peals shook the hut—was not quite so close.

Tuesday, the 13th, was spent in camp; but, the bad weather continuing, we could not get our clothes dry, and again the costumes worn were at all events original, if not conventional. Next morning the ground about the hut was covered to a depth of several inches with snow. Fyfe made his appearance shortly after breakfast, and the result of his foraging expedition was regarded as highly satisfactory, especially as he had brought up a fresh supply of bread and a quantity of salt. We were getting tired of eating mutton without salt, and though the scones that Matheson had baked—with fruit salts in place of soda and acid, which had run short—were excellent, still we welcomed the new supply of bread.

My holiday being at an end I had to return to Dunedin, and reluctantly took leave of my companions on the Thursday morning, leaving them patiently waiting to give the weather a final chance of clearing. This was my one and only attempt to climb Mount Cook before making the traverse of it some years later. Mr. Turner in his book says that I had tried to climb Mount Cook for twenty years and "was grateful that the author's expedition gave me success at last." This is on a par with several other extraordinary statements that his book contains.

Matheson accompanied me on my 14-mile tramp in the driving rain down to the Hermitage. We got wet crossing the glacier streams, which were all so high that we had doubts about being able to ford the Hooker River. However, we managed to get across safely on the old grey mare, though blocks of ice were coming down by the score in the ever increasing and rapidly flowing current. In the evening we drove another 14 miles to Glentanner station, which was

The Hooker River.

reached with difficulty, as the mountain torrents that crossed the road had torn up their channels so that there were no good fords, while in one place the road was almost completely washed away. In another cutting a great slip that had come right across the road almost capsized the trap, though we went very carefully over it. In order to get to Dunedin up to time it was necessary for me to cross the Tasman next day and make a rapid passage down to Fairlie Creek; but, to our dismay, we were told that we could not possibly cross the river in the trap. I then decided to ford the stream with one of the horses, and walk the many weary miles to Lake Tekapo that night; but on arriving at Glentanner the manager said it would not be safe even to attempt to ford the river on horseback. Here was a dilemma. The alternative was to catch the coach at Lake Pukaki next morning, and young Ross, the station manager, generously offering to provide me with a saddle-horse, I got up at 2 a.m. and started on my lonely 25-mile ride along the lake-side. It was clear overhead, but Aorangi-wards the moon cut through the breaking fringe of storm-cloud. Occasionally a startled rabbit crossed my track in the moonlight, or a pair of Paradise ducks trumpeted forth a defiant note from a safe distance in the lone lagoons of the Tasman flats. In front was the changing eastern sky, tinted with the rose of morning; and, behind, the depressing gloom of the great mist-shrouded Tasman Valley, where my climbing companions were no doubt still waiting and scheming to conquer the monarch of the Southern Alps. I reached the Pukaki River at 6 a.m., and was rowed across in time for breakfast before the coach left. That evening I was in Fairlie Creek, having

accomplished the 75 miles in the one day. From an upland plain I got my last glimpse of the Southern Alps. The weather had cleared, and the mountains stood up gloriously in the noonday sun—Sealy, Sefton, the Footstool, Stokes, and Tasman vying with one another; but, above them all, the mighty ridge of Aorangi. They were like old friends. It was with a sad heart I saw them one by one disappear. And once again I came to the conclusion that, for the man with a limited holiday, mountaineering is a game of chance with the weather, and that the weather generally holds at least three aces and a long suit.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONQUERING OF AORANGI—*continued*

"Ah me! it was a toilsome hill,
With storms as black as night,
Yet up its slopes of gleaming white
That little band of men
Went climbing up, and up, until—
They just climbed down again!"

A Fragment.

While Matheson and myself were proceeding down the Tasman Valley in the rain the others stayed on at the hut, hoping for fine weather to enable them to renew the attack on Aorangi. For a little exercise and pastime they paved the earthen floor of the hut with flat stones. Next day the weather cleared sufficiently to allow of their making an excursion on the Tasman Glacier, where they got further exercise and some good practice in step-cutting. On the following day, the barometer having been steady for some time, they breakfasted at 3.30, and started once more, with fairly heavy swags, for the Bivouac. Arrived at the foot of the Tasman ridge, Graham was deputed to fry some chops left there on a previous visit, while the others went ahead, and, spreading out over the snow-fan formed by the avalanches from the couloirs above, began another search for the swags. They soon found that they should have to exercise some caution in the ascent of the spur, for, as the sun

began to rise in the heavens, the fresh snow responded to its influence in avalanches. But I must let my brother Kenneth tell the rest of the story.

"Not finding any trace of the swags," he writes, "Dixon and I crossed the large couloir to the north to gain the more accessible and safer one down which we had thrown the swags. He stayed to watch the head of it and give warning in case of danger while I crossed, and then came over himself. He had hardly gained the rocks on the opposite side when a grand snow avalanche came sweeping down the couloir, literally bounding along in its rocky bed like sheep going through a race. Deeming the rocks the safer, we kept along a narrow ridge until we came to where vegetation terminated, and, gathering some dry scrub and roots, we agreed to boil the billy and carry on some fuel to the Bivouac in order to save our kerosene for the cooking lamp. After a delay of about two hours through having to melt snow, and after experiencing great difficulty in boiling the billy through the scrub being rather damp, we started for the Bivouac, which we reached about five o'clock. Having previously left the tent here in a snowstorm, we had now to set to work and dig it out of the frozen snow in order to have it dried before carrying it on to the Plateau. While it and the wet biscuits were spread out to dry, we made a good pot of porridge—on the thin side, so as to answer as a drink and a meal—and filled a can with soup to carry on with us.

"At seven o'clock we made a start for the Plateau, and, after about two hours' hard going through soft snow, we made the top of the Dome, where we were met by a stiff breeze, accompanied by a light sleet. Descending the Dome half-way to the foot of the

Plateau, we decided to pitch camp. Excavating a hole three feet deep in the snow and building it up round the edges two feet more, with a shovel we had carried up for the purpose, we seemed to have a tolerably snug little yard of snow walls to protect our tent from the unmerciful north-wester. At 10 p.m. we had the tent well pitched, with the rope and the ice-axes, and the four pairs of ski for pegging-out stakes. A bolster of snow was left running along one side of the tent under the floor for our heads to rest upon. About eleven o'clock we turned in, but found to our sorrow that the heat of our bodies inside caused the light sleet outside to thaw, and trickle through the tent, making things all the more unpleasant now that we had no sleeping bags. On getting up next morning, we found our blankets quite wet, and pools of water on the floor of the tent. Still worse, we were convinced that in a very short time everything would be enveloped in a dense mist, which gradually crept up the Hochstetter Ice Fall, obliterating everything in its slow and stealthy advance, and, finally, wreathing the giant Aorangi in an impenetrable, dense white mantle from head to foot. After having breakfast and adjusting our ski, as the snow was soft, we took the compass bearing of a 'hot plate' on the side of the mountain above the crevasses at the head of the Hochstetter Ice Fall, and made a start about six o'clock, but before we had got half-way across the Plateau we could not see a chain ahead. Dixon, getting in the rear with compass in hand, kept us in a straight line, while we advanced, endeavouring to make the Linda, in the hope that the fog might clear with the advancing day. However, it was not to be. After keeping on for half an hour in this manner, we encountered

some crevasses on our left, while we heard avalanches ahead and to our right from the sides of Cook and Tasman, and, not being able to judge our distance, we came to the conclusion that prudence was the better part of valour and decided to return. About 7 p.m. we 'turned in' to have a good rest for an early start about one o'clock next morning. The man lying nearest to the door was instructed to keep one eye open, and give the alarm should the weather clear. At 11.30 Fyfe had a peep out, and found the night to be clear and starry, with not a cloud in the sky. The lamp was at once lit, and the operation of melting snow begun. It takes a considerable time to melt a supply for four men, for it is impossible to sufficiently concentrate the heat with any ordinary lamp or stove. At 2 a.m. on the 18th, we again got our ski adjusted, and made good progress down the gentle slope of the Plateau, assisted by the light of the moon in avoiding the crevasses. On gaining the lower slopes of the Linda we found our position none too secure from avalanches, and were, so to speak, 'between the devil and the deep sea.' At the Tasman corner we crossed the track of an avalanche, while farther on to the left it was evident there was also danger from ice-cliffs on the Cook side. However, taking turn about at breaking steps—the slopes being now too steep for ski—we made fair progress, though in places of drift the snow was almost thigh-deep.

"We were well up the Linda when the dawn began to tint the eastern sky with a pale blue light, which gradually deepened into the ruddy glow of morning. The sun rose, and with it a bank of cloud made its appearance above the horizon, while the long, winding valley of the Tasman, below, was obscured in a sea of

mist. Across the valley the dark, frowning peaks of Malte Brun seemed grander than ever in the dusky light of early morn, towering high above their dense white base of mist. About eight o'clock we were at the head of the Linda, opposite a saddle in the northern arête. Here a halt was called for lunch, and we had a consultation as to what route we ought to take. Fyfe considered, from the look of the ice-cliffs above the first couloir on Green's route, that it was very unsafe to attempt an ascent from that direction, and guaranteed to take us up the northern arête of rock. He considered it would be all the more creditable if we succeeded by that route. Dixon and myself held firm in favour of Green's route, and argued that, as it had been proved a practicable one, it would be wasting time and a good day to attempt the other. However, after some discussion it was decided to try the arête, and, about eight o'clock, the ascent was begun. Rounding a corner of projecting rock, a small couloir was entered, where we had to use the greatest caution, as the snow was not in good order, there being only a thin coating on the surface of the rocks, and the perpendicular cliff of the lower part of the ridge falling 2000 feet below on to the lower slopes of the Linda Glacier. One man moving at a time, while the others kept a good anchorage with their axes, we climbed the last bit of the snow slope, and the first of the rock-work was begun. Fyfe, taking the lead, did not keep us waiting; in fact, I had not been more than five minutes in his company on the rocks before I came to the conclusion that he was exceptionally good at rock-work, apparently being capable of detecting the safest and slightest foot-hold or hand-grip with wonderful rapidity. I, being in the rear, soon found that I was to have the benefit of any

loose stones dislodged above. However, I must say, in justice to the leaders, that they proved themselves to be no novices at rock-work, and only on one occasion had I to duck my head to prevent my being scalped—a piece of rock passing within two inches of my head. At 11.30 we got on to a flat ledge of rock, where we were able to sit down with safety, and enjoy a hunk of bread, tinned beef, and preserved fruit, which we vowed was the greatest delicacy we had ever enjoyed. All agreed that the climb was worth doing for the enjoyment derived from that meal. After waiting for a drink of water from snow spread on the rocks to melt, we again commenced the climb. On ascending a bit of a snow slope, two routes presented themselves—one leading to the left and eastward side of the top of the arête, over good reddish rock, and the other leading to the right and westward side, over a slaty, grey rock. The latter being more in our direct line for the peak, we decided to take it; but soon, to our sorrow, we found we had taken the worse and more unsafe of the two, the rock being so broken that it was almost impossible to get a safe foot-hold or hand-grip. The utmost caution had to be exercised to prevent the starting of stones or loose fragments of rock. Keeping to the left, we were not long in regaining the good rock, and in feeling much safer. From the commencement of the climb Fyfe had frequently been interrogated by those in the rear as to the possibility of advancement, when we would be assured that it looked much easier ahead. But the easy part never seemed to get any nearer, and at 2 p.m. we were brought to a standstill by a great wall of rock. The possibility of its ascent was discussed, and each one had a look at the barrier, and was asked his opinion. Fyfe declared he could

get up, but might not, he thought, be able to come down again; so, not knowing what was beyond, or whether it was possible to gain the arête from the saddle for which we were making, we came to the conclusion that there was nothing left for us but to return half-way by the track we had come, when we would be able to get on to a snow slope running almost at right angles and leading in a more direct line on to Green's track. This snow slope we had noticed when we were lunching on our way. We concluded it would save a good hour, and so enable us to get on to Green's track and climb by moonlight. Accordingly we 'put about ship,' descending in the opposite order to which we had made the ascent. We had not been long on the downward track before I was warned by a voice from above calling, 'Look out! look out! look out below!' and before I had time to realize what had happened, or what was going to happen, Fyfe's axe went whizzing past and stuck erect in a small patch of snow 200 feet below, exactly in our upward marks.

"At three o'clock we got to the head of the snow slope before mentioned, and found it to be in a most dangerous condition, with hard ice eight inches from the surface. We now decided to take advantage of the warm rocks, on which we might have a spell, and perhaps a sleep, until the snow became firmer, when we would be able to proceed with greater ease as the sun went down. Graham and I volunteered to cut steps down the slope, while the others, who complained of not having had enough sleep, might stay on the rocks, enjoy a spell, and join us at the bottom.

"We had not proceeded far when Graham was seized with cramp, and said he would have to return. For some time we tried to struggle on, but every time he

stooped to clean out a step he had another seizure, until, finally, we were compelled to return to our mates, whom we found enjoying a snooze on small ledges of rock, with hats and comforters drawn about their heads to protect them from the glare of the sun. At five o'clock, after the shadows of western peaks had gradually crept across the Linda, and the sun began to disappear behind Mount Tasman, we once more awoke to activity, and, after having something to eat, began the descent of the snow slope, the condition of which had now slightly improved.

"We decided to keep along the upper part of the slope until we cleared a precipice of rock below, when we would be able to glissade to the bottom and gain the Linda. On reaching the place from whence we intended to glissade, we found the ice destitute of snow, and also hard and rough; but nevertheless, in order to save time, we preferred to glissade it to cutting steps down. Uncoupling ourselves from the rope, Dixon went first, turning a somersault before reaching the bottom and skinning his nose, but fortunately shooting the small bergshrund at the bottom in safety. Graham went next, while I followed, and succeeded in giving the same acrobatic performance as the first man, to the amusement of the others, and also to the detriment of my unfortunate knuckles. Fyfe came last, and, half-way down, struck a stone that had been frozen to the ice, slightly straining the tendons of his heel. An hour more and we were at the bergshrund below Green's Rocks, where we were compelled to cut steps, there being only a slight coating of snow on the top of the ice. At 7 p.m. we stood on the other side of Green's Rocks, testing the hard clear ice of the bottom couloir of the route chosen by Kaufmann. A con-

sultation was held, and the advisability of advancing discussed. So far as we knew, it would take about seven hours at least to cut to the top from where we stood. This meant 2 a.m., and as the thermometer read 26, too cold for standing out all night, we decided to return to camp, and make another attempt on the following day, when we could take advantage of the steps already cut. Just after crossing the bergshrund below Green's Rocks, before mentioned, and while we were plodding along the face of the upper slope of the Linda, we were aroused from our reverie at being defeated and speculations on the chances of success on the morrow by the alarm of danger from some cause, while at the same time Fyfe, who was in the lead, began to traverse the slope at a record pace, the rest of us giving him a hard run for first place. On looking up at the source of the alarm, we beheld a huge block of ice tearing down in our direction accompanied by a small one. These had broken away from the ice-cliffs above Green's Rocks. Fortunately for us, the snow on the Linda was not sufficiently hard to bear the weight of this monster disturber of the public peace, and so we were allowed a little more time to escape from its clutches.

"The large block, weighing about six tons (as we judged from the dimensions of it taken on passing it partly embedded in the snow below) passed close on one side, while the small piece, which I had not noticed, seemed to whiz past my eyes on the opposite side, within a few feet. A fragment from one of the blocks struck me on the temple, raised a new phrenological bump, and caused a slightly dizzy sensation for a minute.

"Getting on to the tracks we had made coming up

in the morning, we started off down the Linda at the 'double-quick,' and soon reached the place where we had deposited our ski on the way up. Graham and Dixon decided to put theirs on, but Fyfe and I preferred to carry ours, as we agreed that the snow was too hard and the slope too steep for us to be able to use them to any advantage. Now, the gentle art of 'skilobning' is not altogether without its amusing features, and a man with ski on a hard and steep snow slope is sometimes pretty much as helpless as a fish out of water. However, the two pairs of ski having, on this occasion, been properly adjusted to the respective feet of Dixon and Graham, we once more started off, quite unconscious of impending disaster. Suddenly there was a tug on the rope from behind, and on looking round, much to my amusement, I beheld some twelve feet of timber being aimlessly brandished about in the air with Dixon's legs as the motive power! Then Graham, who was on the rope in front of me, would fall prostrate, embrace the merciless, hard-frozen snow with a suddenness that was disconcerting, and experience the greatest difficulty in adjusting his lengthy feet for further advancement. In such a predicament, until the ski are brought parallel, it seems almost an impossibility to prevent their crossing, one over the other, either in front or behind, this making them to appear the most awkward things a man could possibly put on his feet; yet in soft snow they are indispensable, and enable one to slide along almost without effort over the soft snow where otherwise he would have to plough waist-deep and it would be an impossibility to proceed. After a few tumbles and the use of quite a number of forcible adjectives, the ski were dispensed with for the time

being, and, following our marks up by the light of an Austrian climbing-lantern, we reached camp about 10.30 p.m., having been about twenty and a half hours on the go, pretty well all the time. After turning in, and while we were discussing what day of the week it might be, I discovered it to be my birthday, and with seeming mockery from my half-asleep companions, while I lay shivering with cold, I was wished 'many happy returns of the day'; and I now wish the same to any poor mortal who may spend his birthday on this same plateau or at the same altitude of about 8000 feet above sea-level in the New Zealand Alps, with no better prospect before him than being put on half-allowance for breakfast the following morning.

"Next morning on getting up we found the snow falling gently. We had a talk over matters as to whether or not we ought to wait and give Cook another trial, although our provisions were now all but done. Finally it was decided that three should go down to the Bivouac for some meat and biscuits that had been left there, while I should stay in camp and spread out the blankets to dry, should the weather clear. I had spent rather a miserable night in the cold damp blankets, having been an 'outside man,' and was rather pleased to see, shortly after the departure of the others, the snow gradually becoming heavier and heavier, for this guaranteed my being able to have a sleep now that I had monopolized all the blankets, for I should not be able to spread them out to dry. The three who went to the Bivouac were to boil a quantity of rice, make some porridge, and breakfast there, bringing back all the spare food they could muster. I, who stayed

behind, was left a sumptuous breakfast in the form of one sardine!

"About one o'clock, having got warm and having enjoyed a good sleep, I was awakened by a yell at the door of the tent and a call from Fyfe—'Squirm out of that, old man!'—and so my peaceful slumbers were brought to rather an abrupt termination. Upon entering the tent he appeared clothed in a mantle of white, having glissaded down the slope from the summit of the Dome. About twenty minutes later the other two put in an appearance with a kettle of rice, but had not brought on any other provisions, as they decided we should have to pack up and go back until the weather took up again. I now ate my breakfast and dinner together—one sardine for the first course, with the rice and the scrapings from a marmalade jam tin as dessert. It was rather an awkward business getting the rice out of the small kettle, but we soon had spoons of all designs at work, fashioned out of empty tins, etc. A council of war was held, and it was unanimously decided to stick to our guns, and not abandon the siege, though the combined efforts of all the demons of wind, hail, rain, and snow seemed anxious to drive us from out their stronghold. The elements had repulsed us again and again, but still, like true Britons, we lingered on, expecting yet to accomplish the task we had set ourselves. The last of our bread was gone, so we agreed to return to the hut to replenish our larder, leaving behind us the tent and all that we did not actually require.

"Fyfe was dispatched without a swag, so that he could hurry on and get to the Hermitage that night—a long journey—while we stayed behind to carry on

Camp on Plateau.

Crossing the Murchison.

the blankets and wet clothing to be dried at the hut. About three o'clock we got a start, and, at the Bivouac on the way down, had some porridge, which the others had made in the morning. On arriving at the head of the couloir down which the swags had been thrown ten days previously, Graham and I were to search it, while Dixon searched one to the south of it, having an idea that it was possible they might by some means or other have bounded out of the main couloir. About two-thirds down our couloir I came to a sudden declivity in the snow and had to take to the rocks to avoid it, coming into the couloir again below it. On looking backward I could just see part of a swag showing through the snow. Digging it out with my axe, I discovered it to be the lighter of the two. I thought I had now a good chance of finding the other, as it must be farther down, so, taking up the one I had found, I gave it a start, concluding that the other—the heavier one—not having been stopped by the same obstruction, would probably be close to where this one would now land. On overtaking it on the snow-fan below the mouth of the couloir, and looking forward about sixty yards, I saw what appeared to be a slab of rock lying in the snow, but which, I was delighted to find, proved to be the other swag resting on the top of some avalanche snow. Giving them both a start on the slope, I set them going again, quickly overtook them, and, keeping them before my feet, soon glissaded to the bottom, where I was joined by my mates.

"We then decided to take them on to a shingle fan to the right, there to unpack and spread the contents out to dry.

"On reaching the hut we found a note left by Fyfe

warning us to be careful of the provisions as he understood the Hermitage was very sparingly stocked. Next morning (Wednesday) we were up at eight o'clock, after a good night's rest, to spread out the blankets and clothing to dry, expecting Fyfe to turn up in the afternoon, when we should make another start for the plateau. The afternoon came round, but with no sign of Fyfe, and as there was no bread and meat left at the hut we felt anything but amicably disposed towards him. However, as long as we had a little flour we were not going to starve, and, as I said I had seen such a dish as flour porridge, my mates prevailed upon me to attempt the making of some. After dishing out a reasonable portion for any three white men I found I had still a plateful left, and began to censure myself for having used too much flour, to us now so precious. However, I was soon relieved from any anxiety on that score by inquiries as to whom the other plate was for. Saying it was a supposed surplus, I soon had volunteers for its consumption—just to prevent its going to waste. After finishing the last of our cigarettes that had been wet and dried, and indulging in the perusal of some of the hut literature, we retired for the night. About nine o'clock it began to blow, gradually increasing to a howling nor'-wester, which threatened to carry off the roof of the hut, rendering sleep almost an impossibility until there came a lull towards morning, when we managed to drop off.

"It was late when we awoke next morning, our breakfast of maizena being at 11 a.m. At three o'clock I took up the field-glasses, and started off to see if I could find trace of Fyfe, who had not yet put in an appearance. We were now becoming very anxious

lest an accident had befallen him in the Hooker River. I had not gone more than a mile when I saw him in the distance wending his way along the moraine, following closely in the footsteps of the old grey mare. On his arrival at the hut we learned that the pigeon we had liberated had arrived safely in Dunedin with his message, and that a newspaper Fyfe had seen told of rough weather having been prevalent all over the country during the last week. This was consoling news to us, as we were now justified in expecting a spell of fine weather. He also told us how he had met Adamson coming to look for us the day we had come down to the hut. Failing to find any trace of us, he was to have returned to light a fire on the moraine opposite the hut, which was to have been the signal for two men to join him from Glentanner and form a search party. My brother on his way down had told Adamson that we had only provisions to last until Saturday or Sunday at the latest, and, if we did not put in an appearance by that time, he might consider that there was something wrong. It was Tuesday evening when he arrived at the hut, and there was still no sign of us. Hence his alarm for our safety. After partaking of a stew, which Graham had volunteered to 'build,' from a little of all the different ingredients he could lay hands on in our replenished locker, we retired with renewed hopes of getting a fine day and an early start in the morning for our fourth departure from this point for the summit of hoary Aorangi. The morning of Friday 23rd saw us up at 4.30. The barometer had kept steady through the night, so we had a good breakfast, and at 6.30 a.m. we began to file out of camp once more. There were some ominous clouds drifting about over-

head, but, as the wind was from the south, we hoped it might keep fine. At nine o'clock, after drying the things left on the shingle fan, we began to ascend the Tasman Spur, and reached the Bivouac at 12.30 p.m., where we boiled the billy with some scrub that we had carried up, and had dinner. Three p.m. saw us on the top of the Glacier Dome, where we were again met by a gusty wind, carrying with it clouds of snowdrift, which, coming in contact with the hands and face, stung like needles. On descending to the site of our previous encampment we found the excavation filled up with fresh snow, so we had to set to work to clear the foundation and get the tent out. The tent having been pitched, some porridge was made in order to save our bread and meat, in case we should again be weather-bound. We lay down, intending to make a start any time between eleven and six o'clock, should the weather show any signs of clearing. Eleven o'clock came, but the wind and haze increased, though not to any great extent. On waking at six o'clock we found a small cornice hanging over our heads and feet, and the tent almost collapsing from the weight of snow upon it. A quantity had accumulated inside, having drifted through a hole at the door, and Graham, on awaking, found himself being embraced by a wreath of the 'beautiful snow.' Eventually he had to turn out to shovel it away from round the tent and brush it off his blankets, without stopping in the act, you may be sure, to bestow one glance of admiration upon it for either its beauty or its purity. The weather cleared a little, and we had a fair breakfast of cold roast mutton and scone crumbs, with a cup of tea. Dixon spent most of the afternoon in clearing a space round the tent, and about four

o'clock we had our dinner of porridge. During the afternoon the weather had cleared sufficiently to allow us to get a few shots with the camera at the surrounding peaks and our tent in the snow. At six o'clock the wind began to abate, and as the sun disappeared over Tasman our tent was almost instantaneously frozen as hard as a board. The wind gradually died away as the dark mantle of night spread over us, and at eight o'clock, after having lain for a considerable time counting my breaths between the gusts to prove that the said squalls were becoming fewer, the last feeble effort of the nor'-wester exhausted itself in a vain endeavour to flap the sides of our now frozen tent.

"Intending to make an early start, and not being able to sleep owing to the cold frosty air, we lay chatting, singing, and discussing the possibility of our success on the morrow, while Fyfe, to retain as near as possible the normal heat of his body, burnt a candle under his blankets.

"About 9.30 p.m. the lamp was lit, and a kettle of snow put on so that we might have a good substantial meal before leaving, as we had been economizing as much as possible—our two previous meals that day consisted principally of porridge and a little meat *minus* bread. About twelve o'clock (midnight) we crept out of the tent, one man staying inside to pack all the spare clothing, etc., into a sleeping bag, and to pass out such articles as we required, while the others set to work to unfasten the ski and ice-axes that were holding up the tent. At 1 a.m. we were roped together, ready for another attack upon the ice-walled fort of Aorangi.

"The night was clear and starry, not a cloud being visible, and we climbed in a dead calm. The great

avalanche king himself seemed hushed to rest in the awful stillness of the midnight hours as we four mortals, like demons of the night, roped together, filed out of camp, the only visible sign of which was now a small square excavation in that great ice plateau of about 1000 acres in area, guarded and fed by the stupendous cliffs of Aorangi, Tasman, Haast, and the Glacier Dome—giants of the ice regions, whose seemingly inaccessible peaks towered far above us. The broken, rugged flow of the Hochstetter Ice Fall stretched away thousands of feet below, forming a grand safeguard against mortal intrusion to this great icefield. And yet, thought I, as we climbed slowly down the gentle slope of the plateau in the gloom of the eternal hills at the midnight hour, people wonder what there is in mountaineering. Ah! I mused, let the most unintellectual or the most unobservant mortal step into our place—let him see and feel, and he will believe that there is a something here which awakens the dormant faculties of the mind and inspires one with thoughts profound.

"Marching silently onward for some time, each one busy with his own thoughts, we soon found ourselves at the lowest part of the plateau, and, half an hour later, beginning to ascend the lower slope of the Linda. The snow was quite hard, but we had carried our ski up in case a thaw might set in and they should be required on our return. By 2.30 we had gained the broken ice of the Linda, and a halt was called to light the climbing-lantern and deposit the ski. We stuck them in the snow in the form of a triangle and lashed them together to prevent their being blown away. Not being able to judge accurately, in the nighttime, the distance between Mounts

Tasman and Cook, we soon found we had kept a little too much to the left, and had struck the track of an avalanche from the side of Mount Cook, that we had on the former attempt avoided. However, preferring to cross—it being early in the morning—to retreating down a slope, we wended our way among the huge ice-blocks and reached the other side in safety. The remnant of the waning moon was now about the horizon, and soon the grey morning made its appearance in the east, enabling us to proceed without the use of the lantern. Good progress was made now, without any difficulty in avoiding the crevasses, and, about sunrise, we reached the bergshrund, from which point to Green's Rocks we had previously cut steps. We found them still in good order, only requiring a slight cleaning out. After entering there, as if in objection to our intrusion, we were greeted by a sharp crack, the ice evidently breaking under our feet. On nearing Green's Rocks Graham complained of feeling ill. A slice of lemon was prescribed first, and then a little brandy, but neither had the desired effect. We cautioned him to give warning if he felt himself becoming incapable, while we proceeded, keeping a good hold with our axes at each step. Occasionally we had to stop to give him time to revive, but succeeded in gaining Green's Rocks in safety. The sun had not yet reached this part, and his feet, he said, felt as if they were frostbitten. Leaving him in Dixon's charge, Fyfe and I proceeded to cut steps up the couloir until the sun should reach them, when we were to go back for lunch. In half an hour we returned and found Graham recovering. The provisions were handed out, but, our supply of jam having given out, and it being too

early to melt any snow on the rocks, the bread seemed to object to being eaten with meat alone. I managed to get two mouthfuls down, but the third positively refused to be swallowed, and I was compelled to give it best. A few photographs were taken here with my brother's kodak, which we had recovered with the swags, and Fyfe was adjusting the legs of his camera, to take some half-plate views, when they suddenly came asunder and two of them slid away down over the ice-cliffs on to the Linda. He threw the remaining one after them. A few seconds later the cap of the lens fell from his numbed fingers, and he was with difficulty restrained from adding the rest of the camera to the downward procession.

"About eight o'clock another start was made, and on reaching the termination of the steps I had cut, Fyfe took the lead and we made good progress. At last we took to the rocks, having hugged the couloir all the way for shelter from falling blocks of ice that might start from ice-cliffs above. The rocks we found in bad and dangerous condition, being coated in places with ice, and consequently we made very little more headway than if we had had to cut every step. On getting up a steep piece of rock at the head of the first couloir the rope behind me got foul. We were compelled to carry our axes for use on the ice-covered rocks, instead of having them slung on our wrists, and in order to clear the rope, I put mine down on what I thought to be a safe ledge. While I stooped to clear the rope, however, my axe slipped off, and was last seen hurrying off in the direction of Fyfe's camera legs, some hundreds of feet below. This was a bad job for me, but I had to be reconciled to the position, and accept the assistance of a wand about three feet in length and one inch thick,

which Dixon was carrying for a flagstaff. At 11.30 we had gained the foot of the second and upper couloir, where a halt was called for dinner. Here we discovered a splendid hollow-surfaced rock, with a pool of water, apparently fashioned by nature for the purpose of quenching the thirst of weary travellers like ourselves. Putting some oatmeal and sugar and a lemon into the water where it rested, we partook of as refreshing a drink as I had ever tasted. Taking turn about, we soon drank the fountain dry, but had only to spread some snow on the rock to replenish the supply. Having enjoyed our midday meal, Dixon and Graham volunteered to cut up this couloir, while Fyfe and I, after our arduous morning's work, had a spell. I had a shot or two with the kodak, while Fyfe adjusted his camera on some flat pieces of rock, one man holding it steady while the other made the exposure. As it was too cold for a long stay of enforced idleness, we soon hailed the others above, requesting them to stop cutting until we had overtaken them. The ice chips which they dislodged acquired a great velocity before reaching us, making a humming sound in their descent. In a short time we had overtaken them, and when half-way up the couloir we again took to the rocks to avoid the steep ice at the top. Then, getting on to a more gentle slope, we cut steps up it to some sérac ice, preferring to chance the possibility of getting over this, as it seemed quite feasible. We kept slightly to the right in preference to going direct on to the arête, where we should have to cut every step, while here we were able to proceed by cutting only a few in places for about a hundred feet. The bergschrund and final ice cap were now in sight close at hand, and borrowing Dixon's axe I once more relieved Fyfe of the step-cutting. In half an hour we had

reached the schrund, and found no difficulty in crossing it at the eastern side close to the arête. Here we discovered a curious formation, of which Green says nothing in describing his ascent. Instead of finding the ice-cap hard clear ice, as we had expected, we found it to consist of a covering of horizontal icicles, giving it a perfect honeycomb appearance and rendering step-cutting a very easy matter. This slope and the one above it was at an angle of only 30 degrees. On returning we found that this formation had its disadvantage, as the broken icicles had almost obliterated our steps. I was here relieved by Graham, and he and I made rapid progress up the first slope above the bergschrund for half an hour, the other two having stayed behind for a short spell. We were working hard and willingly, congratulating ourselves that we should have the summit of Aorangi under our feet in an hour at the latest, when we were hailed by Fyfe, asking if we did not think it was time to turn.

"It was now five o'clock, the time he said Green had turned,—we found afterwards he had not turned till an hour later,—and he had, we all knew, to spend an anxious night on a narrow rock ledge below the bottom couloir. To make things worse, we had left our lantern at Green's Rocks, as we had expected to be back there in daylight, but we had now little time to spare to gain that point before darkness set in. Deferring to those who had called out from below, as we understood they, the older and more experienced climbers, had decided to retreat, we halted in our steps and discontinued the ascent. I am of opinion now that we should have gone on. The hardest and most difficult work had been safely accomplished, and there only remained about an hour's step-cutting up a fairly easy slope of some 30 degrees or less. However, we thought it well then to act on

the advice of the others. We stopped a few minutes to admire the great panorama of mountain, glacier, lake, river, forest, and sea below us. From the point of turning a marvellous panorama of Alpine grandeur merged into distant forests, whose dark shadows loomed in strong contrast to the ice-clad mountains and the ocean to the westward. To the north a long vista of snow-capped mountains was visible until lost in extreme distance. The higher peaks stood in bold relief against a dark blue and cloudless sky, rearing their snow-clad summits far above the dense mist that rolled in the valleys at their base. The silver sheen of the River Tasman enabled us to trace the windings of its numerous branches for miles. We could see Lakes Pukaki and Tekapo, but the greater part of the Mackenzie country was invisible below a dense rolling mist that made us conjure up visions of the Arctic regions. The higher peaks at the head of Lake Tekapo were clearly visible —one, which we took to be Mount Jukes, being particularly prominent. The frowning Malte Brun Range, to which we had so often looked up, was now below us. Nearer at hand, Haast and the ice-clothed Tasman—a glorious peak from this point—reared their snowy heads aloft. Far down below in the gloom of evening lay the Great Tasman Glacier, guarded by the everlasting hills, the beautiful Elie de Beaumont and De la Bêche, near its head, half hidden in the clouds. Westward was the ocean, visible for miles and miles, more than 12,000 feet below us.

"Soon after 5 p.m. the descent was commenced. Down the long ice-ladder, roped together, we slowly went in single file, the axes of my companions clinking into the ice at every step. I, unfortunately, was now without an axe, and I had often to grip the steps with

my hands till the skin was pretty well worn from off my knuckles, and there was risk from frost-bite. We, however, made good progress down to Green's Rocks, and got out of the last of our steps at 8 p.m., just as it was getting dark. Half an hour afterwards we lit the lantern and made a quick passage down to the foot of the Linda. We then crossed the plateau once more and reached our camp too tired to discuss future plans till the morning.

"It was too cold to sleep, but we rested till daybreak. A cold wind was blowing, and there were signs of more bad weather. Our provisions were at an end, and as it meant a long delay to get a further supply, and both Dixon and I had now to return, we decided to accept defeat for the present. We accordingly set to work to pack up the swags, while Fyfe, taking only his camera, started off ahead. By the time we had reached the top of the Dome with our swags the wind had increased to a gale, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we managed to get to the top of the Dome. It was only by making a rush every now and then between the stronger gusts of wind that we succeeded at all. A gust of wind would catch the swags, and we had continually to crouch low down in order to prevent ourselves from being blown away. It was very difficult work for me, who had now no ice-axe, and before long my knees as well as my knuckles were skinned through coming into frequent contact with the frozen névé. Arriving at the top of the Dome, we were just in time to see Fyfe disappearing down below in the direction of the Bivouac, *en route* to the hut. The start he had got enabled him, as he had nothing but the camera to carry, to get down to the sheltered side of the ridge before the full force of the gale could strike him. We

Elie de Beaumont.

climbed down from the Dome on rocks and snow. The snow slopes were frozen hard, and we had to cut steps and descend backwards on the rope because of the strong wind and the heavy swags we were carrying. The light driving snow and the force of the wind made it difficult for us to open our eyes. After about six hours' continuous hard work we got under the shelter of a rock. We were shivering with the cold, and presented rather a strange appearance with the icicles hanging from our hair, our moustachios, and even our eyebrows. Fyfe and I had lost our hats—they had been blown away—and a handkerchief that I had tied round my head had also been blown away.

"We waited a while in hope of the wind's moderating, and then, as it was getting late, we decided to push on. About two chains farther on was another rock, and here we stopped and had a further consultation. We were all pretty well exhausted by this time through our long battle with the wind, and I especially was very tired, as I had come down all the way without an ice-axe, so we decided to camp, and pitched the tent in the shelter of the rock. The storm that night was something awful. The snow and the wind—now a howling blizzard—continued, and the prospect was dolorous in the extreme. The tent was pitched on the snow after we had scraped a level place for it. We then divided what little food we had left—some oatmeal and sugar, which we mixed with a little snow and partook of—and retired for the night. Sleep was out of the question; we simply lay and shivered all night, though Graham on the inside was not so badly off. We afterwards learned from Fyfe that the gale was so severe in the Tasman Valley that the end wall of the hut sagged in several inches, and, being rather afraid of a collapse,

he got up and shifted his quarters to the leeward compartment.

"We were astir at seven o'clock next morning, and having packed the swags we started off in what we thought to be the right direction; but what with the snow and the drift we could not see many yards ahead, and soon found ourselves on the verge of the precipices above the Hochstetter Ice Fall. We had to retrace our steps for some distance, and in order to shorten our journey we then took to a steep snow slope a little to the right of the track we had come down. Here we found the slope in such bad order—a layer of soft snow superimposing the clear ice—that we had again to cut steps almost right up to the rock we had camped under. We then found that we had been only about two chains from the top of the ridge leading to the Bivouac Rock! To get to the latter we had now to keep to the rocks, as the snow was dangerous. It was not till about midday that we reached the Bivouac. It was then beginning to clear and the wind was not strong, so we spent some time trying to melt snow on the rocks, but with very poor results. Here we got some tinned meat that had been previously opened; but Dixon's hands were so cold that he let the tin slip, and it went sliding down the swag couloir beyond recall.

"After a halt of about an hour we started for the hut, and finding the snow in the long couloir better than any we had traversed that day, we took to it. We decided to throw the swags down once more, but first got into a position from which we could watch their entire descent. The two heaviest swags went right down the couloir, bringing up on the snow within a few feet of each other. The lightest swag, however, stopped some two chains higher up. No

damage was done, and a few things that came out of the lightest swag we were able to pick up on the way down. We made rapid progress down the couloir, and were soon surprised to see Fyfe coming up in search of us. We shouted to let him know we were still alive, and he waited while we came down. We learnt that he had spent a very anxious night throughout the storm at the hut, and had upbraided himself a good deal for having left us. On the following morning he was undecided what to do. He thought of going down to the Hermitage for assistance, but finally concluded that if anything had happened to us we would not by that time be alive, so he decided to start off and see for himself before giving any alarm. His heart was in his mouth as he wended his way up the Tasman spur, and saw at the bottom of the couloir the swags, but no sign of the climbers. He was actually afraid, for a time, to go near them. He expected to get some clue by closer examination; but when he reached them, he could not tell from the shoulder-straps whether they had been sent down intentionally or not. He saw, however, that they had come down that morning, and, placing them together, he started up the slope, hoping for the best, and soon was overjoyed to hear our shouts above. Recognizing that we were all in the flesh, and concluding that it must take a good deal in the way of exposure to kill an average mountaineer, he retraced his steps, and, sitting down on the swags, patiently awaited our arrival.

"Here my narrative may as well end. I need say nothing about our journey back to civilization. Dixon and I had reluctantly to return. Fyfe and Graham remained to try again. Since then Dixon has gone back once more from Christchurch, and at the moment

of writing, for all I know, he may be shivering in storm under the Bivouac Rock, or frizzling in the glare of a fierce noonday sun on the remorseless white slopes of the Upper Linda. Looking back on our battles with wind and weather, on a mountain in such vile condition, thinking of all our hardships and privations, and looking, too, at my slowly healing knuckles, which I nearly lost altogether in contact with ice-steps of the upper couloirs, my only regret is that I am not with them."

CHAPTER VII

THE CONQUERING OF AORANGI—*concluded*

"At length, upon a sunny day,
They started off once more,
And climbed as they had climbed before,
Till, all their troubles past,
With scarce a halt upon their way,
They reached the top at last."

Another Fragment.

ALL the attempts by Green's route having ended in failure, Fyfe and George Graham now decided to try the western side of the mountain for a more direct route to the summit. Fyfe had always held the opinion that a practical way to the summit might be found from the upper part of the Hooker Glacier. On December 11th, about a month after our first arrival at the Hermitage, they started off one day to explore the Hooker side of Mount Cook. Fyfe eagerly scanned the mountain, and, on the way up, had picked out two routes by which he rightly thought the summit of the mountain might be reached. One was by way of the western spur of the lowest or most southerly peak, and thence along the ridge over the middle peak to the northern or highest point. The other route was from the head of the Hooker Glacier and up a nasty-looking couloir leading to Green's Saddle and thence by the arête direct to the highest peak. The latter was the route by which they were eventually successful.

They left the Hermitage on December 16th with a tent and five days' provisions. On the 18th, after camping for a couple of days in the valley, they made their way up the Hooker Glacier through badly broken and crevassed ice. In one place they found a wide crevasse where a snow bridge had fallen in and wedged itself lower down. It was so wide that their 60-feet rope would not reach across it, and, to make matters worse, steps had to be cut on the upper face of the crevasse. Camp was pitched on a rib of rock above the glacier on the right, and a reconnaisance made. On the following day, taking with them only blankets, provisions, and a little firewood, a second camp was made farther up the glacier.

First the ground was levelled alongside a big rock, and all the larger stones were carefully picked out. Then a rubble wall was built at each end, and the remaining side was sheltered by a mound of snow scraped up with a billy. All was snug by 7 p.m., and as the two climbers lay in their blankets they chatted over the chances of the morrow or groped underneath for some particularly prominent stone that was likely to disturb their repose. For the elevation (6400 feet) the night was not cold, and they rested fairly well. They were astir at 1.30 a.m. for their first attempt via the middle peak. Dawn appeared at 2.45, and, roping up, they started on their climb. They had to cross several crevasses on snow bridges before reaching the true western spur, an offshoot of which runs in a more northerly direction. The arête, however, was so difficult and irregular that they were forced on to the snow slope again. Mr. Fyfe, in an account published in the *Otago Daily Times*, gives the following account of the climb :—

"On coming to its head some slight difficulty was experienced in finding a place to get on to the spur; but, once gained, it proved good, and for about 500 feet an easy grade. After this it became much steeper and gradually narrowed in to a sharp ridge. After some 2000 feet of rock-climbing the lowest peak came in sight, and at 10.30 a.m. we stood on the true western arête running up to the same. We had now the choice of cutting steps up on to the crest of the arête or, by keeping down a little on the northern side, of skirting along the rocks. We chose the latter, and found that, although owing to their being partly buried in snow they were difficult, still they were much easier and quicker than step-cutting. We had now been in the sun some time, and a short halt was cried for 'tucker.' Vain efforts were made by one of the party to melt some snow, but even the sultry language he indulged in had no effect on its icy coldness. It is a strange sensation this, being surrounded by snow and ice, and, though 'dying' for a drink, unable to obtain a mouthful. Skirting along these partly buried rocks, and cutting a few steps here and there across slippery patches, nothing stopped us, and at 11 a.m. we stood on the highest rocks. We were now at an altitude of 11,700 feet, and our prospects of doing the remaining 600 odd feet looked 'rosy.'

"From here it was necessary to descend about 400 feet to reach the saddle which separates the first and second peaks. This we had little difficulty in doing, good rocks running right down. The sun was now very powerful, and we took advantage of it to melt the snow and drink to our hearts' content. Step-cutting commenced at a couloir which runs from the Empress Glacier right up to this col, and the axe was kept

steadily going until the summit of the middle peak was reached. On nearing the crest of the arête we soon had ample evidence that it was heavily corniced, the axe going right through when we were several feet from the edge. Keeping about 20 feet away from the true crest, we cut steps along the face of the ice-cap, thus practically making a long traverse. At 1 p.m. we stood on the top of the second peak, only 176 feet lower than the actual summit of the mountain. A glance, and we saw that our chances of doing the remainder were remote. Although only so little in actual height above us, it was still a long way off, and the arête was so corniced, and took so many turns, that to 'do' the summit would require a long traverse involving many hours' work.

"Having the other route to fall back on, we decided not to expend our energies further on this one, and so again calmly accepted defeat. The view from the second or middle peak was exceedingly grand."

The descent was quickly accomplished, and they had some splendid glissading back to the Bivouac. Where the slopes were not steep enough for glissading, ploughing through the snow was the order of the day, and the man coming last on the rope had a rough time if he made a false step, for he involuntarily received from his companion plunging on in front a jerk that generally pulled him off his feet, and caused him to take an unwilling header into the snow. Fyfe had a vivid recollection of Graham's legs on one occasion waving in mute supplication, whilst he for a few moments vainly endeavoured to extricate his head and shoulders from the snow. All the smaller crevasses were shot glissading. While shooting one of these crevasses the rope, somehow, became en-

tangled, and pulled one of the climbers up with a sudden jerk fairly across the fissure, his feet resting on one edge and the back of his neck on the other. He was, however, equal to the occasion, and, stiffening himself, he lay there in perfect composure until assisted across by his companion. The hardy climbers now returned to the Hermitage, after twenty-one hours' constant going, and were glad to get into comfortable beds again.

At the Hermitage they fell in with Jack Clark, and he readily agreed to join them in an attack on the highest peak by the other route. Clark had climbed with them the previous season, and his enthusiasm gave new life to the whole affair. Finally these three left the hotel with six days' supplies, and made their first camp on the evening of December 22nd.

"Next day," continues Fyfe's account, "we toiled, painfully swag-laden, through the ever-widening crevasses to a second bivouac farther up the glacier, narrowly escaping a fall of rocks that came bounding from the Moorhouse Range. We arrived sore and tired, although the actual distance covered and height gained were trifling. Little inclined as we were for another day's swagging, 10 a.m. next day found us again wearily plodding on our upward course. We pitched the tent under the lee of a huge block of ice that had apparently fallen from St. David's Dome at a height of about 8000 feet. An arch was cut into this block, a break-wind built round, and so sheltered were we that I believe we could have weathered a severe storm. Leaving Clark in camp, Graham and I proceeded up the glacier with the double object of breaking steps and of exploring the large bergschrund at its head. We kept to the true right of the glacier

going up, but found it very much crevassed and swept by avalanches from St. David's Dome and Mount Hector. We passed some enormous crevasses. Some we estimated as being fully 200 feet across and of great depth. Another uncommon thing so high up was a vertical shaft descending into the glacier. Graham anchoring, I crawled to its edge and peered down, but could see no bottom, its blue sides shading away until lost in impenetrable darkness.

"Two hours brought us to the bergschrund, and our worst fears were fully confirmed. No bridge of any description spanned its gaping depths. Our only chance was to find a passage where it ran out against the rock face of Aorangi. Traversing to this, we saw that it was possible to descend right into the bergschrund and reach the rocks at its end. These looked barely practicable. We kept to the left side of the glacier going back, and found it much simpler, only one crevasse of any consequence having to be dealt with. Our bleak bivouac was regained just as the sun sank behind Mount Stokes. After some food and a refreshing drink of hot tea we lay down on our icy-cold couch, fondly hoping to snatch a few hours' sleep. Vain hope! On going to rest at these high camps the usual plan is not to undress but to crowd on everything obtainable; and anyone leaving an article of clothing lying about is sometimes greatly surprised at the mysterious manner in which it disappears at night, but always religiously turns up again in the morning in time to be rolled into the owner's swag.

"At 2 a.m. Graham, shivering and growling, arose to prepare breakfast. We had brought a good supply of dry firewood from our first camp, and breakfast was ready much too soon for Clark and I, who were

making the most of the blankets. Getting on our boots with great difficulty—they being turned, apparently, into something akin to cast-iron—we packed up everything we were likely to require, and, roping together, moved upwards at 3.15 a.m. The snow was very hard, but the steps we had broken the previous day were of great assistance, and an hour's climbing saw us standing on the lower lip of the bergschrund. Letting out the rope to its full length, one of the party descended into the bergschrund and squirmed along the ledge of rocks as far as the rope would reach. Then the others crossed on to the rocks. Clinging as we were to a narrow ledge, with scarcely any hand or foot hold, and with an almost perpendicular drop into the chasm below, our position was far from enviable; and, as the leader slowly and with great difficulty made his way upwards, a slip seemed, to say the least, not altogether improbable. Some snow lying on the ledge had to be shifted, and caused a little delay, and for forty minutes the excitement and suspense were too intense to be pleasant. However, we managed to get across in safety. Above we found the snow hard, and we kept well against the rocks for hand-holds. This slope gradually converges into a deep ravine formed by the frowning crags of Aorangi on the one side and by Mount Hector on the other. Beginning at Green's Saddle and running out in the slope just above the bergschrund, a rib of rocks divides this ravine into two narrow ice-filled couloirs. As we got higher up, the amount of snow lying on the slope became less and less, and at last the clear blue ice was reached. Cutting steps across a little branch couloir, we decided to cross the couloir lying between us and the rib of rocks, and to endeavour to keep

along its ridge. At first these rocks proved difficult, a rotten slaty rock having to be dealt with, but they improved towards their top end. As we neared Green's Saddle the arête of these rocks became very sharp, with precipitous sides, and in two places was capped with ice. We had to cut steps up these places, and without further bother reached a point a few feet below Green's Saddle at 8 a.m. Here we were stopped by a break in the rib which completely barred direct access to the Saddle. Turning a little to the left, we climbed up over what was perhaps the worst rock of the whole ascent, on to the southern arête of Hector, and from thence descended to the Saddle. The arête which runs from here to the summit of Aorangi is, with the exception of one slaty stratum, composed of good, sound rocks. This slaty stratum, about 30 feet in height, was most difficult. Half-way up the leading man got into difficulties, all holds being just beyond his reach, causing him to make an awkward traverse by hand-holds only to a little chimney, up which he writhed his way. Above this, the going was good, and we rapidly rose. Looking back at 10.30 a.m., we could see that we were far above all the surrounding peaks, and, although the top of Aorangi could not be seen, we knew it could not be far distant. One wall of slate brought us to a standstill, and we had to descend a few feet, leave the ridge, and work our way round the obstacle. The wind was now piercingly cold, and we were glad to muffle our faces in anything to protect them. A few minutes' respite from its bitter blast and a slight snack were now very acceptable, and we climbed down to shelter on the sunny side. What with consulting maps and sketching, the 'few minutes' were pro-

longed into an hour and a half, and it was just midday as we filed off upwards. At 12.30 the slope of the arête became easier, and shortly afterwards the final top appeared about 400 feet above us.

"I am afraid that the reckless way in which we romped over those last rocks was very foolhardy; but one would indeed need to be phlegmatic not to get a little excited on such an occasion. The slope of the final ice-cap was easy, and only required about a hundred steps, which were quickly cut, and at 1.30 p.m. on Christmas Day we exultantly stepped on to the highest pinnacle of the monarch of the Southern Alps."

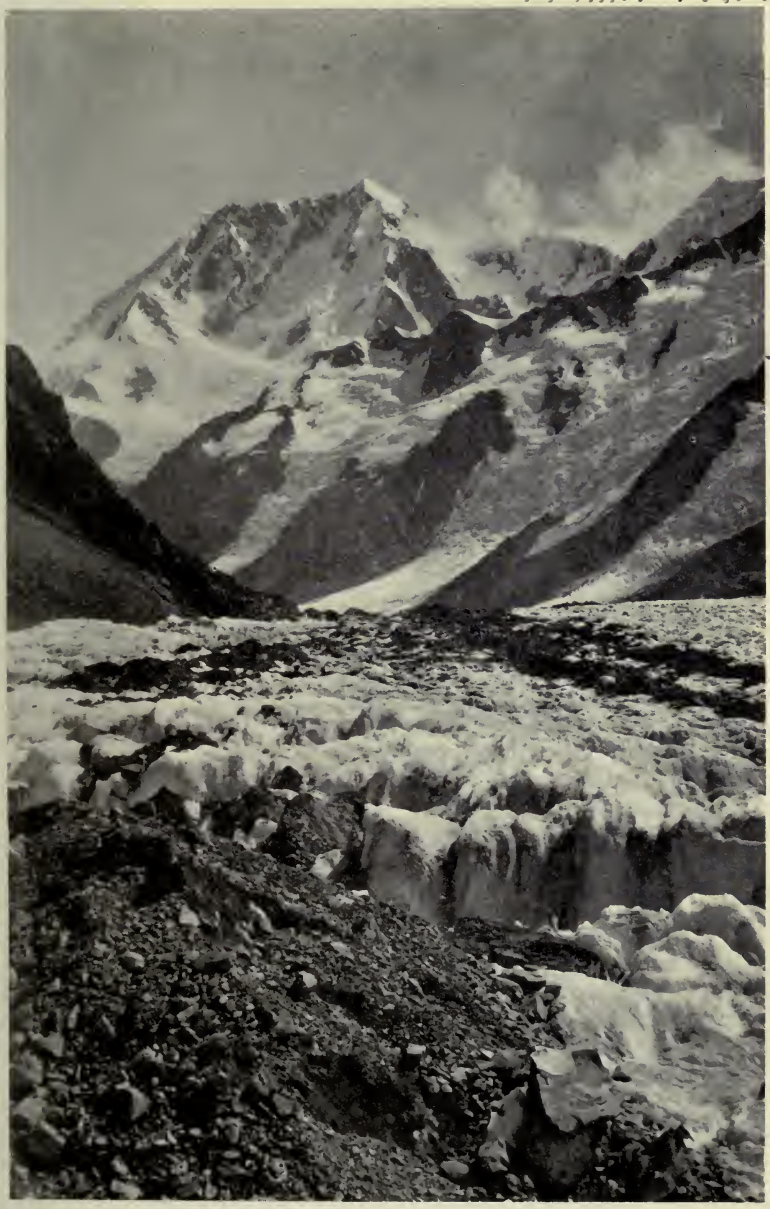
They stayed only twenty minutes on the summit, and then commenced the descent. The first rocks were soon reached, and there they built a cairn, underneath which they left a tin upon which they had scratched their names and the date. They left these rocks shortly after 2 p.m., and Green's Saddle was passed at 5.20 p.m. Just as they got a few feet below it, a rock avalanche shot past, making the ridge tremble as the blocks ricochetted from crag to crag down the mountain-side. During the whole time they were on this ridge stones were continually clattering down on either side. Going down some slaty rocks Graham lost his ice-axe. He thus describes the incident:—

"We were just getting on to the snow to cross the couloir when a hand-hold broke with me, and the sling of my axe slipping over my wrist the axe slid away down the slope, stopping above a small schrund. Going down the rocks to the lowest point Fyfe secured himself and paid out all the rope (100 feet), and then I, holding on to the rope, slid down to the end, and,

scrambling across the slope, was just able to reach the adventurous axe."

This incident caused a delay of nearly an hour—a delay that could be ill afforded, as it would soon be dark. Fyfe, continuing his account of the descent, writes :—

"When nearing the bergschrund an ominous, not-to-be-mistaken whiz above warned us that danger was coming. Crouching close into the rocks, several pieces of stone went pinging over us at a pace that rendered them invisible and buried themselves feet deep in the soft snow. This particular place is, in my estimation, the only dangerous part of the whole route, but fortunately only so in the afternoon. All the way down I had been anxious to get across the bergschrund before dark, and, but for the dropping of Graham's axe, we would have done so. It was with great uneasiness I saw that we should have to stand out all night or risk climbing down in the dark. The latter was preferred. Too dark to see either hand or foot-holds, our sense of touch was all we had to rely on. One at a time we moved on, the other two endeavouring to anchor; but, judging from the holds that I myself could obtain, a slip by one would have 'done for' us all. However, the schrund was left behind, and with it the greatest difficulties of the descent. Now for the first time we gravely congratulated each other on the ascent and descent of Mount Cook. We reached the Bivouac tired and wet, only to find that one side of our snow break-wind had fallen on to the tent, and, melting, had soaked everything. It was very cold, and it is not all joy pitching a tent with the thermometer down to about 28 degrees. We turned in supperless: no one volunteered to face the



Mt. Cook from Upper Tasman.

cold and melt some snow. So cold did we become that at last we were forced to burn a candle in a tin can underneath the blankets, while the hours of darkness passed wearily away. Day dawned at last, and, hastily packing up, we plunged away down the glacier. We reached our first camp at 7 a.m., and were glad to rest till 10.30, meanwhile basking in the sun and making great inroads into a bag of oatmeal. As we lay, idly watching the north-west clouds swirling overhead, our trials were all forgotten, and I regretfully thought—there is but one Aorangi."

Thus was the conquering of Aorangi, after many heroic struggles, accomplished by the pluck, endurance, and initiative of the young New Zealanders, who, in a far country, had taught themselves the craft of mountaineering.

CHAPTER VIII

ABOVE THE PLAINS

"High hills that bathe themselves in rain,
And, having bathed, loom yet again,
More glorious, o'er the smiling plain."

ANON.

IN the southern corner of the North Island, westward of the Wairarapa plains, there rises a mountain mass, of considerable height and boldness of formation, known as the Tararua Range. In summer the moisture-laden trade winds from the South Pacific Ocean wrap its 5000-feet summits in grey swirling mist and rain, and in winter the keen blustering squalls from the frozen south clothe its peaks and ridges with snow. Between times, there are bright days—generally during the passing of a crest of anti-cyclone—when the upper air is gloriously fresh and clear. For this region, at the invitation of an unknown host, we set out from the Capital one fine summer's afternoon.

Leaving the beautiful valley of the Upper Hutt behind, our train, with its engines puffing and snorting and belching forth great clouds of malodorous smoke, begins to crawl up the steep incline towards The Summit. There the Fell engines take charge, and we start to move cautiously down the steep windings of the Rimutaka Incline, with the strong steel brakes

striking fire from the central rail. For many years this railway was thought to be a somewhat wonderful engineering feat. Now it is more generally regarded as an engineering blunder, and a costly one at that. Down the steep ravine and its transverse corries the north-westerly winds howl and screech, making the carriages rock on the rails. Once the train was actually blown from the metals, and there was loss of life. The spot is marked by a wooden palisading that acts as a break-wind.

Nearing the end of the narrow, deep, treeless valley, down one side of which the line winds, we get our first glimpse of the sunlit plains of the Wairarapa —a splash of yellow, with the sombre shade of the ravine for foreground frame, and, in the distance, the thin, soft greys of far-away, low-lying hills. On the right the lake, somewhat half-heartedly, reflects the light of the dying day from its murky waters. Half an hour later we are clank-clanking across the plains, in the darkness, towards our destination, pondering upon what might be the physical characteristics and mental attributes of our unknown host, who, on the strength of our being mountaineers, had sent us a cordial invitation to climb the Tararua Ranges with him.

As a general rule, it is little use indulging in speculation about the unknown. The captain, my wife, and myself all pictured our host in different ways —and we were all wrong. The name betokened a Scottish ancestry. For the rest, when we had picked him out from the slowly melting crowd on the platform, we found him well up in years, but still alert in mind and brisk in body. And for all his years he promised to lead us a merry dance over the hills, the which he did. He was waiting for us with

a wagonette, driven by himself, and a dog-cart driven by one of his daughters. In these two vehicles we distributed ourselves and our luggage—the captain had lost his—and drove across the Upper Plain to a commodious farmhouse and a hospitable welcome. Our host had a great love for the mountains, inherited, no doubt, from the wild northerners who were his ancestors, and he was loud in his praises of the views and plants and flowers to be seen "above the plains."

As our objective, Mount Holdsworth, was a hill of only some five thousand feet, we did not expect real climbing. But your true mountaineer does not measure mountains altogether by altitude. Neither does he regard them with that "smug insensibility to mountain beauty that marked Johnson and his Boswell," as has been pointed out by Professor Ramsay in quoting that paragraph about the Highland hills, in which, as the Professor says, the æsthetical side of the learned doctor's soul is laid bare :—

"They exhibit little variety, being wholly covered with dark heath, and even that seems to be checked in its growth. What is not heath is nakedness, a little diversified by now and then a stream rushing down the steep. An eye accustomed to flowery pastures and waving harvests is astonished and repelled by this wide extent of hopeless sterility. The appearance is that of matter incapable of form or usefulness, dismissed by Nature from her care, and disinherited of her favours, left in its original elemental state, or quickened only with one sullen power of useless vegetation." This, as Professor Ramsay adds, presents an exact parallel to the sentiment of a West Highland sea captain who could understand people admiring the

beauty of Greenock or Gourock, with their trim villas and straight paths, but could see naught to admire on Loch Fyne—where there was nothing but "rocks and woods, and the like o' that." Therefore let us thank God that we are not like Dr. Johnson, or even the West Highland sea captain, and that we can see "form" and even beauty in the hills; indeed, as Douglas Freshfield has well said, that "nothing that is mountainous is alien to us; that we are addicted to all high places, wherever man has not forked out Nature." Holding these sentiments, need I apologize to the reader for introducing him to this mountain range on whose summits one may commune with Nature, but seek in vain for hazardous adventure? The reader will decide the question according to his own tastes and inclinations.

That night it was decided that our host, his son, and his eldest daughter should accompany us on the climb, and, early in the morning, we expected a minister of the church to join us. With the captain, my wife, and myself we were, thus, a large party. We intended to retire early to rest, but supper and conversation kept us late. At last we said good-night, the luggageless captain disappearing with a Brobdignagian sleeping-suit left over, unsold, from some church bazaar, and brought to light only upon such occasions to clothe the fair form of some Adonis-like, pyjamaless visitor.

Every preparation had been made for an early start—and, of course, we all slept in. It seemed as if I had only been asleep half an hour when I heard the parson whistling a tune to the clatter of his horse's hoofs as he cantered up the road. I threw open my window and gave him early greeting. He had the

most certain and insistent of all alarm clocks in his house—a three-month-old baby—and he was the only one of the party "on time"! The dawn was just breaking above the distant hills—and the dawns and the sunrises of these plains produce pageantries that, once seen, will be remembered. Our plan was to drive across the plain, ford the Waingawa River, and go some little distance up the Maungaterera tributary. At the last farmhouse we cried a halt, and, from this point, for the remaining seven miles, which is mostly over steep ascents, we had to depend upon shanks' pony. The Maungaterera with its crystal-clear water drains the eastern slopes of Mount Holdsworth, and as it races over its rocky bed, through the heart of the forest, it is a beautiful stream, its petulant murmuring blending with the rustling of the beech-tree leaves so that both together form a fitting accompaniment to the plaintive notes of the birds in these solitary glades.

Leaving this stream behind, we plodded along a well-marked path, fringed with beautiful ferns, between the tall forest trees. The grade, easy at first, soon became steep, so that the cool shade was welcome. The forest that clothes the lower slopes of our great mountain ranges is frequently of beech trees, erroneously called by the settlers birch. On the slopes of the Tararuas, the magnificent, straight trunks of these stately trees, their spreading branches, and their beautiful tracery of foliage that more than half hides the blue above are a constant source of wonder and delight. One is reminded of the forest between Milford Sound and Te Anau, or of that on the sides of Mount Earnslaw, Lake Wakatipu. There is not much undergrowth in a beech forest, and, often, scarcely any

sign or sound of bird life. On Earnslaw, for instance, one hears little but the rustle of the leaves in the wind. On a still day at an altitude of a few thousand feet the woods seem as silent as the grave. But in the North Island, at a similar altitude, there is more variety of vegetation and more life. Beetles and butterflies are more plentiful, and birds, though not many, are in sufficient number and variety to add interest to our journeyings. The coo of the wood-pigeon and the low whoo! whoo! of its wings cleaving the still air make music among the whispering beeches as we follow the winding path to the first steep brae. A Red Admiral (*Vanessa gonerilla*) rises from beside a brooklet, his wings of black and gold and red flashing in the sunlight, as, with erratic flight, he hurries away, fearing disaster and seeking the shade rather than the sunshine. Down beside that brooklet he has been reared from the larva stage on the New Zealand nettle, where, in the early hours of his life's history, he folds himself a little tent of leaves wherein he can grow, secure from all his enemies. At a later stage, when he is thinking of emerging in all his gloriousness of gay colour as a full-fledged butterfly, he spins a little patch of silk from which he hangs on the under side of a leaf. Then, before one brief day is over, he has burst his skin and wriggled out of it as a dark or brown-coloured pupa with spots of gold or silver—a premonition of the coming glory that delights the eye, alike of the naturalist and of the casual woodland rover.

After we have climbed a thousand feet or so the giant beeches give place to more stunted trees and scrub, and, presently, we emerge upon an eminence from whence we look out across the plains, toward

which the rivers run in silver threads. Thence the pathway wanders through an upland swamp before taking a downward plunge once more into the forest primeval. At the foot of this declivity, close to a spring, is the camping-place from which the final ascent is usually made. A Government hut has since been built in place of the two tents that now sheltered the wearied bodies of would-be mountaineers. We found a billy of water simmering on a dying fire, left by one of the track-makers, and soon we were drinking most delicious bushman's tea with our "second breakfast."

The cooing of the pigeons, the harsh throaty cry of the kaka, and the note of the now rarely seen parakeet were among the sounds that fell upon our ears in our woodland breakfast-hall. The plaintive, sibilant whistle of the long-tailed cuckoo — the *kohoperoa* of the Maori and the *Eudynamys Taitensis* of the ornithologist—penetrated the forest from the thick bushes on our left. He is a shy bird, and when you stalk for a sight of him—often unsuccessfully—you come to the conclusion that he is a ventriloquist, for one moment his "Seek! Seek!" comes loud and clear as if he were just behind that bare stump a dozen yards away, while in the next minute it will be sounding faint and low, and thus giving you the impression that he has flown afar. And all the time our long-tailed, brown visitor has not shifted from his perch, but has simply been fooling you with a modulation of his voice. Both the long-tailed cuckoo and the shining cuckoo come to New Zealand every year in the summer from the Pacific islands of higher latitudes, and, late in autumn, they go back to those warmer climes. Meantime, Mistress Kohoperoa has made the

Mount Darwin.

little grey warbler do duty as foster-mother, and she takes her young back with her to the islands of the coral seas, thus adding insult to injury, for she has previously eaten the eggs or even the young found in the pretty pensile nest of the warbler. In 1898 Sir Walter Buller secured two specimens of the cuckoo, both of which were gorged with young birds; and thirty-six years ago he found in the stomach of one of them a small fledgling robbed from another nest. Once again he surprised a cuckoo carying off in his beak a tui's egg. I am afraid, therefore, that we cannot give our distinguished visitor a certificate for fine feeling, gentlemanly instincts, or epicurean delicacy.

Near the upper camp, where we have been eating our "second breakfast," and listening to these birds, the forest has, at one time, been swept by a great fire, and the scar left is only now being slowly healed. From the camp we begin the final steep ascent. As we climb, the trees grow more gnarled and stunted. Many of them, festooned with long, pendent mosses, seem to have the ghostly pallor of death already about them; others are mere bleached skeletons, rearing their gaunt trunks and leafless arms above the living foliage.

We emerged from this stunted forest on to a narrow, rocky ridge, and beheld above and around us a wonderful variety of sub-Alpine vegetation. The beautiful yellow ranunculus (*insignis*) grew in profusion, dotting the sub-Alpine carpet with shining gold. Celmesias were here in some variety, and that strange product of the New Zealand hill, the Raoulia, or vegetable sheep, a connecting link between the Alpine vegetation of the North and South Islands, was to be

found over a wide area. Here also we came upon quantities of the fragrant and quaint-looking *Raoulia Rubra*, with its imbricating leaves and tiny, dark crimson flowers, forming dense hemispherical patches on the ground. But finer than all these, and most surprising to me, was the wonderful profusion of edelweiss, in full flower, that starred the mountain-side. In all our travels in the Southern Alps we had never seen such a sight—in itself sufficient to repay us for the toil of the climb. It was evident that it was a different species from *Gnaphalium grandiceps* of the Southern Alps, and, on subsequently comparing it, on my return, with *grandiceps* and with the Swiss edelweiss (*Leontopodium alpinum*), I found it was much more closely allied to the latter, but with flower heads of different structure. It was, formerly, the *Gnaphalium Colensoi* of Hooker, but is now, I believe, classed as *Helichrysum leontopodium.*

One could continue to expatiate at some length on this botanical paradise, but we must hurry on to the mountain-top. The final bit of the climb is easy, and we are soon enjoying a magnificent and extensive view from the summit. Looking from below, one regards the range as narrow, but on the summit one is undeceived, for the eye wanders over a broad expanse of rolling hilltop and deep ravine, with scarred corrie and forest-clad slope leading down to the depths, and here and there silver bands of river flowing gracefully plainwards. Southwards the forests on Alpha and Omega and the lesser heights loom dark and mysterious. Northward the Mitre lifts himself above the bush line, and cleaves the clouds with his sharper 5000-feet peak. Farther on, still, the range slopes towards Mount Dundas (4944 feet), and practically

ends with Ngapukaturua (3580 feet), the last mountain in the range worthy of a name on our map. More to the west, through a gap in the chain, on a fine day, is the sea, grey and mysterious in the haze of distance, but now hidden by the swirling clouds that come down on the wings of the north-west wind, gathering up moisture as they go, only to be torn asunder and robbed of their rain on these serried mountain peaks. Herein, together with the hot summer suns of the higher latitude, lies the secret of this belt of glorious sub-Alpine vegetation, the fringes of which only, as yet, have been touched by the botanist and the entomologist.

And yonder, below us, far down, is the plain, stretched like a map at our feet. One conjures up visions of it in the long ago, when, perchance, the ice-streams and rivers of a post-Pliocene period were bringing down the gravels and clays of which it is composed. And, if we go back to original causes, it is not to Governments, nor to stupid Parliaments with their fetish of new-fangled legislation, but to the mills of those old gods, which grind exceeding small, that we must attribute the prosperity of the farmer on the plain below. One can almost hear this vast expanse of level land crying, from out the mists of antiquity :—

> "I am the plain: barren since time began,
> Yet do I dream of motherhood, when man
> One day at last shall look upon my charms,
> And give me towns, like children, for my arms."

And, sitting up here on the hilltop, amidst driving mists and gleams of fitful sunshine, one pursues this train of thought down the centuries, past the time of the moa and the Maori, and the advent of the

pakeha, and the fortified pa and the old stockade. The red blood of tribal war has dyed the soil below, and those mounds, which we ourselves have seen upon the level plain, were dug from mother-earth to make ovens in which the flesh of the slain was cooked for human food. Now all was peace.

"We travelled in the print of olden wars, yet all the land was green,
And love we found, and peace, where fire and war had been:
They pass and smile, the children of the sword—no more the sword they wield—
And O how deep the corn along the battlefield!"

It was a quick transition from the spear to the plough. First the pioneer, squatting on his unbounded run; next, the road and the railway; and then more settlers; and more settlers still; but never enough settlers; for this fair land shall hold many millions where now it holds one. But these musings on the plain below and its past are disturbed by a chance remark from our genial host, with frosted head, sitting beside his fair daughter on the hilltop. Thirty years ago he climbed these mountains, and he knows the history of the plain as only the pioneer knows it. He is the typical "Colonist in his Garden," in that delightful poem of William Pember Reeves':—

"See, I have poured o'er plain and hill
Gold, open-handed, wealth that will
Win children's children's smiles,
—Autumnal glories, glowing leaves,
And aureate flowers and warmth of sheaves,
'Mid weary pastoral miles.

Yonder my poplars, burning gold,
Flare in tall rows of torches bold,
Spire beyond kindling spire:

Then, raining gold round silver stem,
Soft birches gleam. Outflanking them,
    My oaks take ruddier fire.

And with my flowers about her spread
(None brighter than her shining head),
    The lady of my close,
My daughter, walks in girlhood fair.
Friend, could I rear in England's air
    A sweeter English rose?"

CHAPTER IX

DOWN IN THE VALLEYS

"I know a vale where I would go one day,
Where snows gleam bright above the vast moraine,
A mighty cleft in the great bosoming hills,
A great grey gateway to the mountains' heart."

After BLISS CARMAN.

A BOOK on climbing may be supposed to deal mainly with peaks, passes, and glaciers; and perhaps, in these days of the rock experts, one should add, precipices. It is supposed to be, very largely, a matter of "victories of ascent, and looking down on all that has looked down on us." And in that phase of it, no doubt, lies the great joy of climbing. Yet the days of defeat are not altogether to be despised. For one thing they have a chastening influence upon the soul of the, perhaps, over-ambitious mountaineer. Beside his winter fire, too, when he sees the great valleys and the high peaks taking form, once more, in the smoke-wreaths of his evening pipe, the days spent in the valleys—days when he never climbed at all—will mean for him a flood of precious memories that he will have no desire to stay. This perhaps applies with greater force to the climber in a new country, for he cannot—like his brother in the older lands—take his ease along the level road, nor, in a moment of temporary mental aberration, be tempted by a mountain railway! For myself I have got great enjoyment in those days, when, "having loitered in

the vale too long," I have "gazed, a belated worshipper," and even out of days when "the rain-clouds hung low on the mountains with their burden of unshed showers." Such days give one time to indulge in a little quiet philosophy—to study his brother humans under the lens of adversity; to see his own mind through the rays of introspection; and, perchance, to concern himself with the minor matters of birds and beetles, butterflies and flowers. I may therefore be pardoned by the general reader—if not by the mountaineer—if, in writing this chapter, I climb no higher than a mountain hut or a low bivouac.

One sunny December day, when I was rather tired of work, and thinking of some sort of holiday, a letter arrived from my friend and former climbing companion Dr. Norman Cox. He asked me to join him in an expedition to the Mount Cook district. There were several obstacles in the way of my going. But the talk of mountaineering is as the whiff of battle in the nostrils of an old war-horse, and when once the conquering of virgin peaks and the making of new passes into unexplored country begins to loom on the climber's horizon, not all the gold in Golconda will keep him back. Therefore the difficulties were brushed aside, and one fine day my friend, my wife, and I found ourselves with ice-axes, tent, sleeping bags, Alpine rope, and provisions, on board the Mount Cook coach, bound once more for that goal of New Zealand climbers, the Hermitage. We were to be joined there by Mr. T. C. Fyfe and, later on, by Mr. W. J. P. Hodgkins, who, like Fyfe, had climbed with us on other expeditions.

The weather had been bad at the Hermitage, but it now showed signs of clearing, and, after waiting two days, my wife and I decided on a trip up the Mueller

Valley. We started one fine morning, she carrying the camera, and I three days' provisions and the sleeping bags. For some miles from the Hermitage the ice of the Mueller Glacier is covered with great rocks and scree fallen from the mountains on both sides of the valley. Many of these rocks are in a position of unstable equilibrium, and, consequently, very difficult to walk over. As it was a hot day and we were not yet in form, we took matters somewhat easily, and, leaving our packs after half a day's march, returned to the Hermitage.

Next day we started off again, intending to make a bivouac half-way up the glacier. The weather was again fine, and a fierce sun beat down in the valley, making the rocks quite hot. We made many halts, and glacier pools, here few and far between, were in request. We lunched where the glacier curved round a bend in the valley, near two pretty waterfalls, a bluff of peculiar greenish-coloured rock, and some very fine ice cliffs. A glacier stream ran purling past, a strong jet of water, from which we filled our drinking-cups, pouring through an immense block of ice that was jammed in the bed of the stream. And every now and then an avalanche thundered down from the great ice cliffs that gleamed in the noonday sun high up on the shoulders of Sefton. One magnificent fall of ice arrested our attention and held us for a time spellbound. It broke from a gigantic cliff far up the mountain, and thousands of tons poured over the grim precipices with a roar as of loud thunder. The blocks were shattered into millions of pieces, and a great cloud of ice-dust rose into the air and slowly disappeared as the seething mass of ice reached the bottom of the valley and spread itself out like some great living,

Mount Sefton.

moving monster on the side of the glacier. The Mueller appeared to be much altered since our former visit some years ago, and in one place the debris of an enormous rock avalanche covered the ice, where before it was easy walking. Making our way up the ice cliffs to the right of the waterfalls, and then rounding a sharp bend in the glacier, we got amongst some very rough morainic boulders that had apparently tumbled from a rotten precipice on the left. Thence we climbed an old moraine and got a good view of our surroundings. Down below, on a narrow strip of level moraine, lay some huge rocks that promised us a good bivouac. Under one we found a little firewood, and beneath the lee of another a quantity of dried snow-grass, that afterwards served us for bedding. While I went to look for water, my wife walked to the farthest point of moraine we could see to look round the corner. Corners are always peculiarly tantalizing to her. We had no billy, nothing, in fact, except the little pannikin of our spirit-lamp, and before we separated we held a council as to the best method of carrying the water when found. The brillant idea struck us of testing the much-vaunted waterproof capabilities of our rücksack, and off I started with it down to the glacier, where, after some time, I discovered a pool.

On returning I found my wife back, and huddled up in a blanket, for the sunshine had gone from the valley and it was intensely cold. Probably we felt it more so after the great heat of the day. Lighting my spirit-lamp, I started tea-making, but under difficulties. The tiniest little breeze wafted the almost invisible flame from one side to the other, and prevented the heat from reaching the pannikin. The snow-grass caught fire; I burnt my fingers; I almost lost my

temper, and felt inclined to boot the whole inadequate contraption over the moraine. It seemed hours before we got that tea, and then it had a smoky flavour with which it would not have passed muster in the regions of civilization. Nevertheless, in this place, it was nectar to our parched throats, and we enjoyed it, sitting there under the shadow of that great rock, looking over towards the huge bulk of Sefton, cold against the amber sky.

It was really too cold to sit up late that night, so it was decided to gather our mattresses, and, knives in hand, we clambered up the hillside to cut snow-grass and the eidelweiss and small celmesia. Here we found some flowers of the ranunculus—the most perfect we had yet seen.

The rock under which we had to sleep only partially covered us, but the evening, so far, was beautifully fine. Everything promised well for the morrow, and, already, the first ascent of Mount Sealy seemed an accomplished fact. But, in the mountains, as elsewhere, hopes that are cherished as the evening fires die down, are apt to vanish before the morning fires are lit. So was it now. Our first blow, on turning out our packs, was the discovery that the Alpine rope had been left behind! Our hearts sank and our plans fell to the ground; but we were so eager over our proposed climb that we collected all our straps, fastened them together, and decided to climb with their aid rather than give it up altogether. Then we wormed ourselves into our bags, and endeavoured to sleep. But it was only a little after six o'clock, and since our infancy we had seldom gone to bed at such a preposterous time. As we lay watching the shoulder of Sefton, there came, creeping up behind it, a wreath of fleecy cloud, that

gradually grew, and moved until it reached the summit. Puffs of warm wind stole across our faces. We feared a nor'-wester was coming up.

As I lay there an awful thought came into my mind. The rücksack was a fine pea-green colour, and we had noticed a peculiar taste about the water it had held. It was not merely a waterproof flavour. What if arsenic were employed in the preparation of the knapsack? Horrible thought! I instantly felt as ill as if I had been reading a medical encyclopædia, and was positive that, already, I exhibited all the symptoms of arsenical poisoning. Then my wife, who had dropped off into a doze, woke up in great excitement to tell me what she had just dreamt. She thought we were climbing up a steep snow slope by means of the aforesaid straps. Suddenly I disappeared down a crevasse, leaving her with all the straps dangling at her feet. She went as near to the great lip as she dared, but could only see down a short distance into its horrible blue depths. A good idea struck her. Hastily grasping the straps, she lowered the end into the crevasse. To her delight, she felt a pull on the improvised rope. She put forth all her strength and stood firm. Judge of her horror when the head of another man appeared, quite old, and bearded like Rip Van Winkle. "I've been down there for years! You certainly haven't hurried yourself!" he remarked, as his head rose above the edge of the crevasse.

With the shock of this strange apparition my wife awoke, and as she retailed her droll dream to me we both laughed so loudly that sleep flew out of our cavern door, and seemed in no hurry to come back again.

For a mountain bivouac, however, our bed was not

at all an uncomfortable one, and we did manage to sleep, though we were not at all reassured in our minds about the weather. One long, narrow streak of cloud, lit by the moon, trailed right across the heavens from the north-west, and boded ill. The barometer, too, began to fall, and it was evident that we were to have a change of weather. At 2.30 a.m. we were awakened by the first gusts of the approaching storm, and by the pattering of the rain on such portion of our sleeping bags as did not come within the shelter of the rock. This was the final blow to our plans. We had intended to rise early and start on our climb by candle-light; but now all we could do was to huddle as far under the rock as possible, in order to keep ourselves dry, and wait for daylight to enable us to beat a retreat to the more friendly shelter of the Hermitage. At 5 a.m. we wriggled out of our sleeping bags, and, in the pouring rain, walked down the glacier. Dripping wet from head to foot, we sneaked quietly into the house, and, after a wash—which we scarcely needed—and a change of clothes, we appeared at the breakfast-table, much to the surprise of the other inhabitants, who had been wasting their sympathy on the two mad mountaineers whom they thought to be storm-bound on the Mueller Glacier.

On the following day the weather was again fine, so I started for the hut on the Tasman Glacier, distant some fourteen miles from the Hermitage. Next day Dr. Cox and I carried swags of provisions and Alpine appliances some eight miles farther up the glacier to our old bivouac at the foot of Mount de la Bêche. Cox returned to the hut the same day, and I waited at the Bivouac, intending on the morrow to gather some Alpine scrub for firewood from the sunny slopes

of the Malte Brun Range across the valley. In crossing the glacier next day I found the ice very much crevassed, and, not taking a good route, had to resort to step-cutting in more than one place before gaining the other side. Firewood was very scarce, but I got a small bundle—enough to boil the billy two or three times—and returned to the Bivouac, thence making my way down the glacier to the Ball Hut. Here I found Dr. Cox enjoying a well-deserved rest after the unwonted exercise of swagging.

An abrupt change from the surgery or the office stool to the swag enables the victim to make quite a number of new discoveries in the science of anatomy. The amateur porter may begin gaily in the morning with a full stomach and a light heart. In the cool, bracing air that succeeds the chilly dawn his fifty or sixty-pounds burden may seem almost as light as his own heart. But a couple of hours' experience of a New Zealand moraine, with a mile or so of hummocky ice thrown in, will convince him that neither his pack, nor the important part of his anatomy already mentioned, is quite the feather-weight of his early morning imagination. And, while he has become aware that he is the possessor of an organ that can pump at quite an alarming rate, he is prepared to take oath that his pack is rapidly increasing in weight at the rate of from three to five pounds per mile according to the instability or the steepness of the moraine over which it is his ill-fortune to be scrambling. But of these two steepness is the more wearing, because instability gives only a momentary shock, and there is (generally) recompense in the exhilaration of a quick, though not always graceful, recovery; whereas steepness—or, worse still, the combination of steepness

and instability—looms before you like a long nightmare, and depresses, even after it is conquered. By noon the straps are cutting into one's aching shoulders, and it seems only a matter of time until the friction caused by the juxtaposition of swag and vertebræ has done irreparable damage to certain garments that need not be mentioned, and all this time the amateur porter has been performing acrobatic feats on slippery ice, and the measure that he has been treading over the unstable, live moraine has been remarkable, not so much for the dignity of its movement as for the language that has accompanied it. Finally, when hungry, athirst, and a-weary, he crawls up to his cold and lonely bivouac at the close of a grilling, sweltering day, he will tell you, with much forcible detail, that his pack weighs over a hundred pounds, and that swagging is the most matured and well considered invention of the Devil and all his angels.

Next morning as he rises, cold and stiff in every joint and limb, from the road-metal mattress upon which he has been trying to keep warm and snatch some well-earned repose, his outlook may be philosophic, though it will certainly not be optimistic. But breakfast, and the bracing mountain air, which is like a vintage wine, and a glorious summer sun, and further exercise will gradually dispel the miasma of initial trouble, while a week of this kind of work, with a minor peak or pass thrown in, will send him forth as a giant refreshed, ready to oppose all the ills that flesh is heir to, and eager to conquer the long icy slopes and grim precipices that guard the way to the virgin summits of his native land. Before long even his unquenchable thirst will have vanished, and, with forty or fifty pounds' weight on his back, he will be able to

hop from a moving rock on the live moraine to more solid footing without barking his shins in the endeavour, or to bound like a kangaroo across the rounded hummocks of the great glacier. "Ach!" said a distressed German scientist to me, on one occasion when I was setting the pace down the Great Tasman Glacier in a bitter rain-storm, "you are like a glacier flea —you take such joomps!" He had, himself, fallen twice on the hard, slippery ice hummocks, and his hand was freely bleeding from a cut, but he spoke more in sorrow than in anger, and at the end of the march he produced a couple of bottles of ale—one for himself and one for me—and then the two rival nations fraternized beneath the Southern Cross; and, under the soothing influence of the beverage, discussed the question of compulsory arbitration in labour disputes, and other abstruse economic problems so dear to the German mind.

On arrival at the hut I found that Fyfe and Mrs. Ross had walked the fourteen miles from the Hermitage, and, in the evening, Hodgkins surprised us by strolling into the hut after dark, he having left the coach near the Hooker Cage and tramped up the track the same evening. We were now ready to try the ascent of one of the higher peaks, but the barometer had fallen, and there were indications of a storm, which duly came to hand, so we stayed in the hut, amusing ourselves with a variety of games, cooking on the fire-can outside, and studying the habits of Mr. *Nestor Notabilis*, famed throughout New Zealand, and the world, as the most cruel of all sheep-killers.

This bird—a mountain parrot of beautiful plumage, and quaint and curious ways—is probably the most interesting of all the feathered reivers left on the ram-

parts of civilization. His home is amongst the hills and valleys of the Southern Alps. In most districts he is an outlaw, with a price on his head. At Mount Cook he is protected, because here there are few sheep to kill, and a few tourists to be pleased. Originally he must have waxed fat—or grown lean—on a diet largely vegetarian—with perhaps an odd worm or a grub or two thrown in, by way of variety—and the question of how he came to acquire carnivorous habits has been much discussed. Before the advent of the white man there were no four-footed animals in New Zealand, except, perhaps, a native rat, and it is doubtful if the kea touched him. My own idea is that it was his inordinate inquisitiveness that led to the change, and that the change was brought about in quite an accidental manner, just as that glorious and more famous discovery of roast sucking-pig was made! Thus when the early settlers, in the mountains, killed a sheep, they spread the skin, woolly side down, on the stock-yard fence. The kea, ever curious, swooped down upon it, and began to tear it to pieces with his strong, sharp beak. "Hallo!" he said to himself, "this is a great sport," and then, after a few pecks, he stopped and began to think, for there was a new taste in his mouth—and the taste was good! It was the taste of mutton fat. And, from that day to this, the kea has never forgotten it. Then, one cold, hard winter, when all the berries were done, and he was idly pecking at another skin upon the stock-yard fence, there was set up in his brain a train of reasoning, till it suddenly dawned upon him that the sheepskin must have something to do with the sheep. And, next day, being hard put to it for a dinner, he flew down into the valley, and, there being no sheepskins about, he

went back to the mountain-side and settled upon a live sheep. There he got his dinner! And, that same evening, the other keas, seeing him satisfied and replete, while they were cold and hungry, asked him where he had got such a good dinner, and he being in a good mood after such a dinner—for keas are very much like men in this matter—told them, and next day, and for many days afterwards, they all dined well. But the poor sheep could not understand why these hitherto innocent and friendly birds had suddenly become possessed of devils, and the owner of the sheep could not understand why so many of his sheep were dead on the hillside. But one day the owner of the sheep, through his spy-glass, saw a kea alight on the back of a sheep, and begin to dig, with his cruel beak, into the loin, so that he might get some nice warm kidney-fat for his dinner. And the silly sheep, not knowing how to ward off the attack, simply ran and ran till it fell down exhausted, and then, while the kea finished his dinner, the poor sheep died in great agony. But the next day the owner of the sheep got his gun, and all the shepherds got their guns, and there was woe and lamentation in many a kea family before the shadows of evening came down. From that day onward a price was upon the head of the kea, till now more keas are killed by man than there are sheep killed by keas; for the kea cannot get the taste of mutton fat out of his mouth, any more than an aboriginal—or for the matter of that his civilized brother—can forget the taste of roast sucking-pig.

Yet in spite of all this—which is quite a true story—my sympathies are with the kea; for, after all, this was the kea's country, and the man should not have brought his silly sheep into it. And, when I

see the flashing scarlet of his under wings against the blue of an Alpine sky, or note the metallic green and blue of his overdress contrasted against some snowy slope or dome, a feeling of deep regret about his ultimate destruction comes over me.

My wife, who, during my absences from camp and bivouac on the higher climbs, has had frequent opportunities of studying his character, does him more justice than any other writer I know of. He reminds her of "one of those Highland chieftains whose greatest glory was their being 'put to the horn.' With what impudence the kea struts, dances, or flutters past your very feet! How he poses himself on a near rock, and lets you come up boldly and miss him, and how condescendingly he waits for another shot, encouraging you with a cheeky 'Kea!' 'Kea!' I have seen a man unversed in the ways of the kea, steal along, holding his missile carefully behind him; but there is no need for concealment. You can go boldly up and have your shot—nothing to pay either, and probably no result, for even if you stun him he recovers quickly, and is off to his heights unless you are very smart indeed.

"I have had a dozen round me while I have been baking, interchanging confidential and probably contemptuous remarks on my method and results. They hardly troubled to get out of my way as I passed from hut to fire. I am not a good shot, and I feel sure they knew it. Any tins or rags thrown out are carefully inspected by them, generally in committee, and I have even seen them burn themselves picking coals out of the fire.

"Once, in the days before the luxury attendant upon huts and chimneys had crept into the Tasman

Cooking Scones.

T. C. Fyfe.

Valley, I was cooking scones on an improvised oven made out of an old nail-can, when a number of keas flew down from the great shoulder of Mount Cook above the Ball Glacier. They watched the culinary operations for a time at a respectful distance, and it was quite evident that some of them had never before seen a fire. One, more daring or more inquisitive than the rest, came closer and closer to it, and I watched him from an adjacent rocky seat cocking his head first on one side and then on the other as he eyed the glowing embers. Finally, he walked right up to the fire and picked out a live coal with his beak. The result was startling. He dropped it with a loud scream, and, after a few seconds of vituperation, flew away to the moraine. There he was joined by all the other keas, and, judging from their chatter, they held a committee meeting, and carried a condemnatory resolution about the cook who exhibited to the eye of unoffending keas a beautiful red thing that made the beak so sore, and that filled the mouth with anger.

"But it is at the first streak of dawn they are liveliest. We came to the conclusion that the offenders were young birds out all night on the spree and coming home with the milk. On occasions, at the Ball Glacier Hut, their antics were the cause of much bad language in various tongues, for it was impossible to sleep during the entertainment. They held a sort of circus or gymnastic performance, but it lacked variety. About a dozen sat in a row on the ridge of the corrugated iron roof of our hut. One of them said 'Off!' and they glissaded down, scratching and clawing with their feet all the way, amid the great applause of the audience outside, and the curses loud and deep of the victims inside.

"The intervals were filled up by the whole troupe prowling round the hut yelping like puppies, with now and then a cry like that of a very fractious baby. And so it went on, for hours, unless someone was willing to get up and out and chase them off the premises. And then there would be heard more strong language, as the shivering pyjamaed individual, groping about in the dusk for some suitable missile, would tread on a meat-tin, or knock his big toe against one of the many rocks that surrounded the hut."

One day, during our enforced idleness in the hut, a surfaceman engaged on the track came up to consult our doctor. He had been suffering dreadfully from toothache. After a careful diagnosis, it was resolved that the tooth must come out. But how? That was a question to puzzle a layman, for there were no dentist's instruments within ninety miles of the Tasman Glacier. Nevertheless, it was decided to operate, and the doctor and I and the patient filed out of the hut to do the dreadful deed. We sat the victim down on a boulder, and while I held his head the doctor, with the blade of his penknife, skilfully dug out a much decayed molar! After it was all over the victim gave a sigh of relief, but did not seem quite satisfied. He felt around amongst the remaining caverns with the tip of his tongue, and at last found speech. "Thank 'oo very much, Dachter Cax—but—but—are 'oo shure you've gat the roight wan?" I confess I had my doubts on the point, but the doctor assured him it was all right, and he went away satisfied. Verily faith is a great thing! However, the little bloodletting had a soothing influence for the time being, and the real cause of the trouble was

afterwards extracted at the Hermitage, with a more suitable instrument than a penknife.

The weather continuing bad, Dr. Cox decided to walk down to the Hermitage. After two or three days the weather cleared, and Hodgkins and I did a little rock-climbing on one of the spurs of Mount Cook, and some step-cutting on the ice cliffs of the Ball Glacier. On Saturday the 28th the weather had cleared. We devoted the morning to photography, and at 2 p.m., as there was still no sign of Dr. Cox or Fyfe from the Hermitage, we left with swags for the De la Bêche Bivouac, some eight miles farther up the glacier. The journey up over rough moraine and hummocky ice took us four hours and twenty minutes. My shoulders ached with the swag straps, and we all felt a little tired with the unwonted exercise of swagging over the loose rocks of the moraines, and with the jumping *à la* kangaroo from hummock to hummock of the white ice. At 8.30 p.m. the three of us turned into our sleeping bags under the rock. It was a glorious evening, and, through the entrance of our cave-bedroom, we looked far down the valley to the cold grey snows on the summit of Aorangi, which, an hour or so before, had been bathed in the golden splendour of evening. The morrow promised to be fine, and, thinking it a pity to waste a day, we decided to make the ascent of the Hochstetter Dome, hoping that Cox and Fyfe would have arrived by the time we got back. Alas! Cox climbed no more with us that year. On an ordinary level path near the Hermitage he sprained his ankle badly, and it was not healed for months.

CHAPTER X

AN ASCENT OF HAIDINGER

"Swinging there over the world, and not high enough to get a hold on heaven, it makes you feel as if things was droppin' away from you like."—GILBERT PARKER.

FYFE arrived at the Bivouac Rock in due course, and we began to think of other plans. It was decided to attempt the ascent of Haidinger by the eastern face. We were not yet in sufficiently good training to do ourselves justice on difficult climbs, and were moreover somewhat tired with the previous day's exertions. Once more the good resolutions formed at nightfall were dispersed with the dawn, and instead of starting at 3.30 a.m. it was a quarter-past five before we got under way. Crossing the lateral moraines of the Rudolf Glacier, we hurried over the clear ice to the foot of our mountain at a speed that was too fast to be pleasant. I began to wish myself back in my comfortable sleeping bag under the Bivouac Rock. Fyfe was cutting out the pace at an unusual rate, but I set my teeth, followed doggedly in his footsteps, and answered his remarks with the briefest of monosyllables. This, ultimately, had the effect of stifling conversation altogether. In any case, it was too early for talk. But in an hour's time we had made such excellent progress that we were on the ridge and scrambling

up the first rocks, which offered no serious bar to our progress. The sunrise was splendid. Rocks soon gave place to snow, which rose in a gentle curve to a continuation of the rocky arête two or three hundred yards above. Climbing along this ridge, we at length found ourselves face to face with two enormous slabs of rocks, rearing themselves on end above the softer strata, and recognized in them the well-known Penguin Rocks, so plainly visible from the hut at the Ball Glacier, the summit of De la Bêche, and many other points miles away. The close view that we now obtained of them was decidedly interesting. They completely blocked our passage along the crest of the ridge, but we found a way round, and, gaining a safe spot on the other side, where there was room to sit down, we basked awhile in the warm morning sun and enjoyed our second breakfast.

On the right the ridge fell away in a great precipice to the Forrest Ross Glacier, here very steep, and raked by falling rocks and blocks of ice. Waterfalls shot from the edge of the clear ice above, and tumbled, with continuous roar, over the black buttresses of wet rock. The thunder of avalanches also rose on the clear morning air from the depths below. Immediately on our left another glacier flowed down the steep slope, and poured its tribute into the Great Tasman. From the highest rocks on this ridge a hummock of ice rose and curved over our heads, and through a great crack close beside us we peered down into the awesome depths of a bergschrund in the glacier on our left. At the end of this there was a beautiful grotto where the white of the snow and the tender blues and greens of the ice melted away into the gloom that shrouded the depths

of the crevasse, and seemed as if it had been transported unsullied through the pure air from Fairyland. All the same it was awesome. I drew Fyfe's attention to it, and, after we had duly admired its wondrous beauty, he remarked that it would be awkward if we dropped through! Whereat, we took another look, and, sitting, each, on a flat slab of slate placed on top of the snow, began once more to munch our "second breakfast." Water was trickling from the ice-block above. We caught it in the crowns of our hats, and, squeezing the juice of a lemon into it, enjoyed a delightfully cool and refreshing drink. Then the fragrant incense of tobacco was wafted abroad—wafted abroad on this fantastic ridge for the first time since the world began. And we two sat there in the sunshine, watching the smoke wreaths caught up in the gentle morning airs and carried over the white snow to the base of those two palæozoic giants that frowned disdainfully upon us. Hitherto no one had dared to pass over the ramparts of rock and beyond the portals of ice that guarded their domain.

On top of one of the pinnacles was a weather-worn and lichen-covered boulder that forcibly brought home to our minds the wear and tear of the ages. Clearly, at one time, the ridge had been as high as the top of these rocks, but had, bit by bit, crumbled away, leaving the harder pinnacles, with their solitary coping-stone poised aloft, to tell to the first explorers the tale of the ceaseless warring elements. And perhaps the time may arrive when mountaineering shall have become a lost art, and some highly developed mortal, in the due process of evolution, sailing by in his airship, will halt awhile on this same

ridge to find these adamantean giants gone—nay, even a time when these great glaciers shall be no more, and the very ridge itself shall have crumbled into dust. Such has happened before in the world's history; such will happen again. I am writing this chapter, on a blazing hot day, on board a P. & O. liner in the Arabian Sea, and Priestley, returning from Scott's ill-fated Antarctic expedition, has just been telling me that they found the fossil wood of fir trees in that land where to-day there is no tree, nor flower, nor herb. And I doubt not that in this same Arabian Sea, where, now, ice is in much request, there were, at one time, great glaciers flowing down from the mainland, and huge bergs drifting aimlessly out to sea. So it may be again, through some change in solar heat, or in the earth's axis.

But these problems did not greatly concern us on the ridge of Haidinger that morning. We had got our second wind now, and the sunrise, and the beautiful surroundings, found us once more in high spirits, and ready, nay eager, to pit ourselves against the opposing forces of nature. Is it not Quiller-Couch who says, if he were to draw up a hierarchy of sports, he would rank them as they oblige a man to pit himself and take his chances against opposing forces? Such sports have helped to make Britons brave, and if our New Zealand youth engage in them—as a pastime, but not as a business—it will be well, and "danger, when it comes, will not grin suddenly upon them with an unfamiliar face."

We looked anxiously ahead at the two turreted ridges that came down from the summit of our mountain. The one on the right seemed as if it might give an easy route, but the tracks of falling

stones on the glacier below were indicative of danger, and, even as we looked, a great mass of rock broke away with a loud report from the higher crags, and came thundering down to the glacier. The whole face of the rocky buttress was raked with a fire of falling stones, more deadly than the most destructive artillery. The chances were a thousand to one that, had we chosen that route, we should have met with swift and certain death. Without giving this route another thought we bore away to the left over the ice on the plateau, and made for the ridge on the left. We decided to keep to the crest so that we should be safe from falling stones and blocks of ice; but we were still in doubt as to whether we could cross the plateau and gain the rocks on the foot of the ridge. A snow-covered bergschrund met us at the outset, and we crawled cautiously across it, distributing our weight over as great an area as possible. Below us the ice was broken into enormous séracs, and one peak-like pinnacle towered aloft above the surrounding masses. Some of the schrunds were exceptionally large, and the colouring in their depths was marvellously beautiful. It was as if they had been made in some fairyland factory in which the manufacturer had mastered all the arts of delicate colouring and blending of tints.

Having arrived at a comparatively level bit of the plateau, where there were some tremendous cliffs of ice poised above, we ran as fast as possible on to safer ground. Two great schrunds gaped before us at the farther edge of the plateau, but we dodged one and crossed the other gingerly on a frail snow-bridge, one man anchoring till the other was safely over Then we saw that we should have difficulty in getting

on to the main ridge; but a secondary ridge farther down promised success. We turned towards it, and clambering up a soft snow slope, found ourselves once more on solid rocks.

These rocks gave us some interesting climbing, and the main ridge ahead looked practicable. We began to see the West Coast peaks away beyond the Lendenfeld Saddle and the Hochstetter Dome at the head of the Tasman Glacier. The view up and down the Tasman with the startling peaks and precipices of the Malte Brun Range right opposite across the glacier was one that we could not help every now and then halting to admire.

Having climbed over this first ridge, we found ourselves on a very narrow snow arête. There was just room for a man to walk on it. It sloped down steeply on either side, and we agreed that in the event of either slipping, the other would immediately throw himself bodily over on the opposite side, in which case we should find ourselves dangling one at each end of the rope in perhaps a not very elegant pose, but, at all events, in safety. However, there was no need for any such gymnastic performance, and we walked along the snowy ridge without a slip and gained a rock arête. This ridge was still narrower—Fyfe declared it was sharp enough to cut bread with. The rocks were, moreover, very rotten, and the crumbling masses that we sometimes dislodged went clattering down on to the glaciers on either side.

We were now quite on the main ridge, but it was evident our peak was going to die hard. It was even doubtful if we should succeed. A short ice-slope intervened, and the axes were brought into play. The splintered ice went down the slope with a swish!

swish! at every blow of the axe as we hacked the steps, till at length the slope was vanquished. Then a series of rocky teeth blocked the way, but we climbed over them, one after the other, and commenced to storm a dark precipice that was, beyond a doubt, in places, absolutely perpendicular. This precipice is plainly seen from the hut far down the Tasman Glacier, and it was a moot point whether it could be scaled. However, at it we went with a defiant jodel, and inch by inch, foot by foot, we pulled ourselves up. It was certainly a glorious climb, and whether we succeeded in reaching the summit ridge or not, we felt that this bit of rock-work was worth coming up for. But the rocks were very rotten, and we had to exercise the greatest caution. In some places one man had to assist the other, and the ice-axes were handed up after the leader had gained a secure stand. Only one man moved at a time, and there was a constant cry of "Have you a good hold?" before the climbing of any difficult bit was undertaken by either of us.

My axe weighed heavily on my mind. When passing through Christchurch I had asked Mr. Kinsey to lend me an ice-axe, and he generously gave me Zurbriggen's. When a mountaineer gives away the trusty axe that has stood him in good stead on many an arduous expedition, it is like a soldier giving away his sword. Zurbriggen had presented his axe to Mr. Kinsey. It was an axe with a history, and prized accordingly. It had accompanied the famous guide to the top of some twenty peaks in the European Alps —the Gabelhorn, Dent Blanche, Monte Rosa, Matterhorn, Weisshorn, Roth-horn, Jungfrau, Silberhorn, Schreckhorn, Dôme, Nadelhorn, Mont Blanc, Fin-

steraarhorn, Aiguille de Charmoz (five peaks), Kühalphorn, Aiguille de Dru, and Aiguille de Géant—truly a goodly array. On top of the Nadelhorn, which is higher than Mount Cook, the axe and Zurbriggen spent the night. It was also with him on the summit of Mont Blanc for eight days and nights! Subsequently, in New Zealand he carried this same ice-axe on Mount Cook, and to the summits of Tasman, Sefton, Haidinger, and Sealy, also over Fitzgerald's Pass to the West Coast and back over Graham's Saddle.

Later on it did good work with me on the ascent of Haidinger, De la Bêche, the two Minarets, the descent of the pass from the head of the Great Tasman Glacier to the Wataroa, and the first crossing of Fitzgerald's Pass from the West Coast. An axe with such a record had never before been seen in New Zealand, and it was naturally greatly prized by its new owner. Therefore it was that, though light enough in my hand as ice-axes go, it weighed heavily on my mind, and I was as careful for its safety as for my own. But there was always a haunting dread lest I should let it slip and never see it again. I was then half sorry I had brought it, but when we came to a slope up which steps had to be cut in the hard ice, we prized it highly, for it was cunningly made and of excellent design for that kind of work.

The storming of the great buttress put us thoroughly on our mettle, and so long as there was a knob to grip or a chink into which we could get our fingers we advanced slowly. In places the rocks were very rotten, and in places they were glazed, so that our progress was painfully slow. The mountain was certainly not in good condition, and this glazing of the rocks, which is a thing all mountaineers abhor,

gave us much trouble. The rocks were so steep that often the leader's feet were just above the other man's head. At last, however, we got over the worst of it, and paused awhile to see what was ahead. Things looked more promising, and it seemed as if we should top the peak after all. The slope eased off considerably; but then there came another long stretch of bad rock-climbing with bits of ice-work, and our spirits sank. Verily this was a regular Teufelsgrat, and the devil and all his angels must have been present at the making of it. On two or three occasions we asked each other if it was worth going on, and I am free to confess that a very little excuse would have tempted me to turn at this point, but neither would give the word to retreat. I am inclined to think now that the modern rock-climbers might not think it at all difficult; but as the route has not again been attempted one cannot speak for certain. A snow slope intervened, and we went bravely at it, kicking steps in the half-frozen snow; but soon we found that the snow thinned out, and that there was glazed ice underneath. One felt in no mood for step-cutting at this stage of the climb, but, nevertheless, began to chip away at the hard ice. Then Fyfe took a hand. It was hard work, and slow. The snow had to be scraped off the slope and each step carefully cut with the pick end of the axe. Chips of ice came rattling down, hitting me on the head and hands, and filling up the steps that had been cut. I employed my time in clearing out the ice from the steps with one hand and throwing it athwart the slope, so that it would not fall in the line of steps below me. When one hand got half-frozen I gave the other one a share of the work. But my labour was mostly in vain, for such showers of ice and snow

came down that most of the steps were completely filled up again as soon as they were cleaned out. I was not sorry when we gained the rocks above, though they were in places rather difficult. We made fair progress for awhile, but at length were brought to a complete standstill by a smooth sloping slab of rock that offered neither hand nor foot-hold. We could have cut up on the shady side of the ridge and avoided this obstacle, but there was now no time for difficult step-cutting. It was the rocks or nothing. We had brought with us a pair of rubber shoes for such an emergency as this, having on former expeditions proved their efficacy in swarming up smooth rocks. Fyfe having taken off his boots and put on the rubber-soled shoes, I got on firm standing-ground and gave him a leg up. The rope went out slowly and then stopped. It was now that my turn came. "Have you a good stand, Fyfe?" I asked. "No, not at all good," came the reply; and, not daring to put any great strain on the rope under such circumstances, I scrambled up as best I could with only its "moral" support. It now seemed a short distance of the top, and we determined to push ahead as quickly as possible, for the afternoon was wearing on, and the descent began to weigh a little heavily on our minds. There appeared to be some likelihood of our spending the night out on the mountain, especially as there were still one or two bits of bad rock-work ahead of us. At one place Fyfe left his axe behind, in order the better to grapple with the difficult rock-work.

At last we gained the highest rocks and what seemed, from the De la Bêche Bivouac, to be the highest point of the ridge. We found, however, that there was a snow slope beyond this leading to the

end of the summit ridge, and up this I cut till we gained the crest. Fitzgerald's rocks were a long way off at the other end of the ridge, and much as we should have liked to have visited his cairn, there was no time to do so, even if we could have surmounted the cornice that seemed to bar the way. We were some 27 feet, according to the map, below the highest point of the mountain, so we did not claim its complete ascent.

From the summit ridge of Haidinger, over ten thousand feet above the sea, we had an Alpine view at once extensive and imposing. We were on the main divide, and we looked northward along its snowy crests and jagged pinnacles of rock to where a long snow arête led up to the dazzling summit of Glacier Peak. Beyond that again, stretching away towards the north-east, was a grand array of peaks and glaciers, several of the mountains rising to altitudes of over 10,000 feet. The magnificent sweep of the mighty Tasman lay below—thousands of feet down—and, on its eastern boundary, rose the gaunt precipices of the Malte Brun Range, culminating in a splendid peak 10,421 feet high. We looked eastward across the island to the dim sea-haze beyond Timaru ; westward the lazy swell of ocean broke in a white line along the indented coast. Near at hand, on our left, the giant mountains of Cook and Tasman reared their hoary summits, and the children of these mighty monarchs stood around at respectful distance. But grand as all these were in their serene and stately loveliness, it was ever the west that held our gaze. Westward ho! What magic is there in these words! We felt their influence upon us once more as we gazed down at the broad expanse of spotless snow that fed the Fox and

Victoria Glaciers; at the dark lakes embosomed in the darker forests that climbed upwards from the sea; and at the white line of the Pacific breakers, that, up where we were perched, seemed to fall with noiseless beat along the western shore.

In the glorious sunshiny weather, with such marvellous views all around, our stay was all too short. But we had to think of the descent, which promised to engage all our attention and require alike nerve and skill. So, reluctantly, we turned our faces eastward and went down the snowy crest to the highest rocks at this end of the ridge, where, under a flat stone, I left a card. There were not enough loose rocks to build a cairn. Returning to the ridge, we made our way down in the ice-steps, exercising the greatest caution, as we had now only one axe. The steps were for the most part filled up, and Fyfe had to feel for them with his feet after cleaning out those on a level with his face so that he could get a grip in them with his hands. The rope was kept taut, and I took good hold above, going down with my face to the slope, and using my axe as an anchor, digging the handle in where there was snow and the pick end where there was hard ice. With my face turned to the wall I could look between my legs and see Fyfe immediately below me, cautiously feeling his way down. When we got to his axe we were able to progress more rapidly. We wasted no time, but climbed steadily without a halt, for that grim precipice still lay below. Just above it the rocks were terribly rotten. It was almost impossible to avoid dislodging them, and I, who was now leading, was, for a time, subjected to a regular bombardment. First of all I was nearly knocked out of my steps by a blow on the leg. Then I was struck

on the shoulder. A few minutes later, a flat chunk of rock that lay half buried in a bit of soft snow was dislodged by Fyfe and hit me fair on top of the head. This half-stunned me for the moment, and Fyfe was warned to keep a good hold while I leaned against the rock to recover. Luckily I have a good thick skull, and the rock struck me with the flat, and not endways on, so there was little damage done.

At length we reached the precipice. The descent was quite a work of acrobatic art, and the attitudes we sometimes got into would have been the envy of a contortionist, could he have seen them. "Swinging there over the world," writes Gilbert Parker, in one of his graphic bits of description, "and not high enough to get a hold on heaven, it makes you feel as if things was droppin' away from you like"; and that was somewhat like the feeling we had in descending this cliff. After a good deal of slow and careful climbing, we reached the plateau, and knew that our difficulties were over. We went down the final slope at a good pace, getting some fine glissading on two or three snow slopes. Below these, we took off the rope and hurried down over the final rocks. Some of the slates were very sharp and cut like a knife. One long cut on my hand bled profusely, and the handle of Zurbriggen's axe was dyed a brilliant crimson. Fyfe was still more unlucky, for he knocked his leg on a projecting slate which cut a hole in his stocking and took a bit out of the leg just over the shin bone. Spartan like, however, he said no word about it until we reached the Bivouac.

In the gathering dusk of evening two tired mountaineers, battered and bleeding, but victorious and triumphant, sought the shelter of the Bivouac

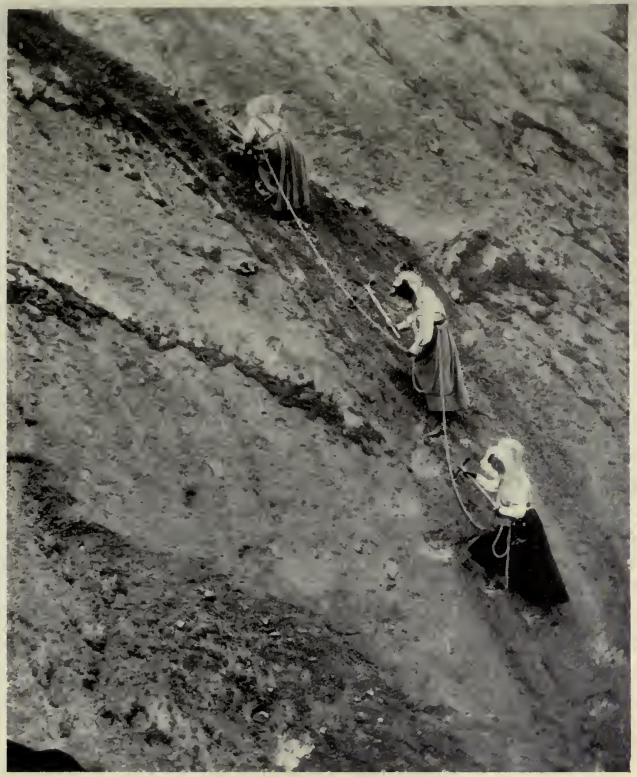
rock, where Hodgkins and my wife were kept bus
for the next half-hour in the preparation of suppe
We began with a steaming billy of porridge, then w
had stewed tinned peaches, followed by mulligatawn
soup, and tea made in the same billy as the porridge
The tea was not quite a success; but in those day
we did not stick at trifles, and the mixture quickl
vanished.

CHAPTER XI

AN INTERLUDE

"A man may feel thankful, heartily thankful, over a dish of plain mutton with turnips, and have no leisure to reflect upon the ordinance and institution of eating; when he shall confess a perturbation of mind, inconsistent with the purposes of the grace, at the presence of venison or turtle."—CHARLES LAMB.

ON January the 31st we went down to the hut, photographing on the way. Next day Fyfe had to go over the Ball Pass with a Government official from Wellington, and Hodgkins returned down the Tasman Valley to the Hermitage, leaving my wife and me alone in the hut. Bad weather came on, and one night a howling nor'-wester, accompanied by heavy rain and the crashing of thunder, shook the hut till we feared for its safety. Then it cleared, and one fine day two sun-bonneted young ladies—the Misses Williams, of Wellington—came up from the Hermitage with Fyfe. A relative of the late Lord Randolph Churchill—a geologist and a traveller—also made his appearance, and we showed him round. He was charmed with the surroundings, and intensely interested in the keas, who happened to be in rare form. Then we had more bad weather, and were all cooped up in the hut for two or three days. But these days were among the jolliest we had ever spent in camp. The old tin hut rang with laughter till far into the night.



THE SUNBONNET BRIGADE.

ON THE UPPER TASMAN.

When first we saw those two sun-bonnets looming large above two immaculate blouses invading our domain, we were not at all assured as to how we, with our rough-and-ready camp ways, would get on with them. The owners of the sun-bonnets, however, proved to be real sports, and all went merry as a marriage bell. Camp is just about the best place possible for ascertaining, in a minimum space of time, the character of a man or of a woman, and the Ball hut in those pre-luxurious days was especially a test. We had been mates with some queer characters under that tin roof. There were times when the milk of human kindness had to take the place of tinned milk, and when a man pretended that he was not hungry in order that his mate might get a bigger helping. There were other times—of rare occurrence luckily—when selfishness got the upper hand, and one had to trust one's indignation in the keeping of a grim silence. But of all the parties with whom we had camped there, never had we seen a jollier nor a more kindly one than that which met around the rickety old deal table in the first days of February 1897.

The hut on the Tasman lies at the foot of a spur of the mighty Aorangi. Above it, far up the hillside, grow masses of mountain-lilies and daisies, and little thickets of the most exquisite ribbon-wood, the very ideal flower for a New Zealand bridal bouquet. In front of the hut towers the great moraine, above whose stony ridge, and far beyond, rise the Liebig and the Malte Brun Ranges. At sunset the delicate colours of these mountains are indescribably lovely, outlined, as they often are, against a primrose sky deepening into amber.

Around the hut lie multitudes of tins—tins once

containing all sorts of comestibles, from the humble boiled mutton to Stewart Island oysters—and bottles of all sizes and shapes. These afford great amusement to the keas, who go poking about them incessantly, and hold great corroberees over any new discovery.

The hut was of corrugated iron, lined, in those days, with Willesden roofing-paper, and paved with large flat stones from the moraine. This was done by some members of our party, years before, on a wet day, and we noticed in the visitors' book a special vote of thanks for the same proposed by Harper, seconded by Fitzgerald, and carried *nem. con.*, Zurbriggen being in the chair. On these stones the table rested somewhat unsteadily, and had to be carefully humoured, unless you wished to empty your pannikin of tea over your neighbour or yourself.

For seats, there were a narrow cross-legged stool, which tipped up on the slightest provocation, and a locker, in which all the provisions were kept. If you ever go to the hut, sit on the stool. It is maddening when you have finally settled down on the locker, and are assuaging the pangs of hunger, for some unfeeling person to ask you to get up and let them open the locker, as the pepper is not on the table. For beds, read bunks, four of them in the larger room, and the same number in the smaller, which was the ladies' bedroom, boudoir, drawing-room, and anything else necessary. A canvas curtain divided the two rooms. It was weighted with a heavy piece of wood which had a nasty habit of banging against a new chum's ankles, and causing naughty words to be spoken.

People came and went in an erratic way. One had often either a feast or a famine of company. There have been times when I, a solitary occupant, have fled

from the lonely hut to the Hermitage, craving for the company of my fellow-beings. There have been other occasions upon which the housing problem could only be solved by an overflow from the men's into the ladies' quarters. Such predicaments, awkward in civilization, are of little moment in the more primitive existence that one leads in the unexplored wilds. One incident I well remember, recalling Stevenson's experience at the *auberge* of Bouchet St. Nicolas, where, after uncorking his bottle of Beaujolais and partaking of a frugal meal, he found the sleeping-room furnished with two beds, and, while he got into the one, he was abashed to find a young man and his wife and child in the act of climbing into the other. However, he kept his eyes to himself, and knew nothing of the woman except that she had beautiful arms and seemed no whit embarrassed by his appearance. One can easily imagine that to the sensitive Stevenson the situation was more trying than to the pair; for, as he truly says, "a pair keep each in other countenance; it is the single gentleman who has to blush." In my own particular experience I knew not even if the woman had beautiful arms. I let the pair get into their bunks before I climbed into mine, and next morning crept out again in the cold grey dawn, before they were yet astir.

In the olden days there were no patent oil-stoves in the Ball Hut; there was not even a chimney to it, and the cooking was done outside over an old nail-can with little squares cunningly cut out of it, to give a sufficient draught and at the same time to conserve the fuel. Firewood, consisting of the green stunted Alpine vegetation, was rather scarce, and it was never wasted. All sorts of dishes used to be produced, from toffee to stewed keas.

We had a capital breakfast one morning in which some of our inquisitive friends formed the *pièce de résistance.* And to every meal what appetites we brought, born of the keen pure air and free life! Even on the dull days, when there was a clearing in the mist, we were out and about. The girls were "gone" on glissading, and used to toil up the 200 feet odd of moraine in front of the hut for the pleasure of coming down again. And they did the descent in style, ice-axe as rudder and anchor, and wild cries of delight accompanying the performance.

One day especially is a red-letter day in our memories. The aroma of boiled mutton even now rises as I recall the fun we managed to squeeze into those fourteen hours. When we opened our eyes that morning there was a persistent drizzle on the roof that meant a wet day, so we decided to have a late breakfast, and turned over—like the sluggard—to sleep again. Breakfast was laid at half-past ten, and after a light luncheon at three, so as not to interfere with the serious matter of dinner, we sallied out—in a pause between the showers—to do a little climbing.

Rain drove us back to the hut in company with a number of keas, who followed in our wake, hopping over the ice hummocks in a delightfully comical way. On regaining the hut we had afternoon tea at half-past six! Then we all sat in committee on the leg of mutton. The length of time it should be cooked, the manner of cooking, and the utensil to be used, were all eagerly discussed. At last, about half-past seven, the mutton was duly consigned to our largest billy, and in a little while it was boiling merrily outside over the nail-can that formed our stove. Fyfe, who was appointed cook-in-chief, donned his waterproof and

went out every now and then to stoke up and report progress to the committee.

To do honour to our feast, the ladies had "dressed" for dinner, and their gay dressing-gowns over their ordinary costumes looked quite festive in the light of all the candles we could muster. Meanwhile we played whist and various other games. We even descended to poker. But, whatever he may be able to do in London or New York, man cannot live by cards alone on the Great Tasman Glacier, and there came a time when we craved for something more satisfying. It was half-past ten, however, before Fyfe, after a momentary dash into the darkness and the driving rain, returned to inform us "it" felt soft. There was only one "it" in our minds at that hour. Many hands made light work, and, very soon, the steaming leg of mutton, in a tin plate much too small for its ample proportions, was being carved with a very blunt knife and handed round.

And how we enjoyed that supper! Had anyone told those girls a week or two before that they would dispose of two helpings of boiled mutton off cold tin plates at half-past ten o'clock at night, he would have been laughed to scorn. But we all agreed that it was the very nicest mutton we had ever tasted, and after our living so long on tinned meats it *was* good. I am afraid we did not take time—as we should have done—to say a grace before that meal; for, as Charles Lamb has well said, the plainest diet seems the fittest to be preceded by a grace. I once attended one of the old London Companies' annual dinners, at which we had turtle soups, and fine fishes, and game, and wines old and of rare vintage; and an archbishop said a grace before meat and a singer sang a grace after meat;

but the taste of these choice viands has long since been forgotten, while the flavour of our simple mutton supper does not fade, but rather is intensified with the passing years. And the latter was, surely, the more worthy of the graces than the former.

After supper we played poker in the most reckless way for matches, and the ladies, novices in the game, lost and won in the most charmingly irresponsible way.

And then—after midnight—it suddenly occurred to us that we ought to go to bed. Loath to depart, we lingered until there was no excuse to stay longer. I fancy we all felt sorry to write "*Finis*" to such a happy day. But at last the lights were out, and in spite of the mutton, all slept soundly till morning, when the young bloods of the kea household came home with the milk, as was their wont, and roused us from our peaceful slumbers.

CHAPTER XII

DE LA BÊCHE AND THE MINARETS

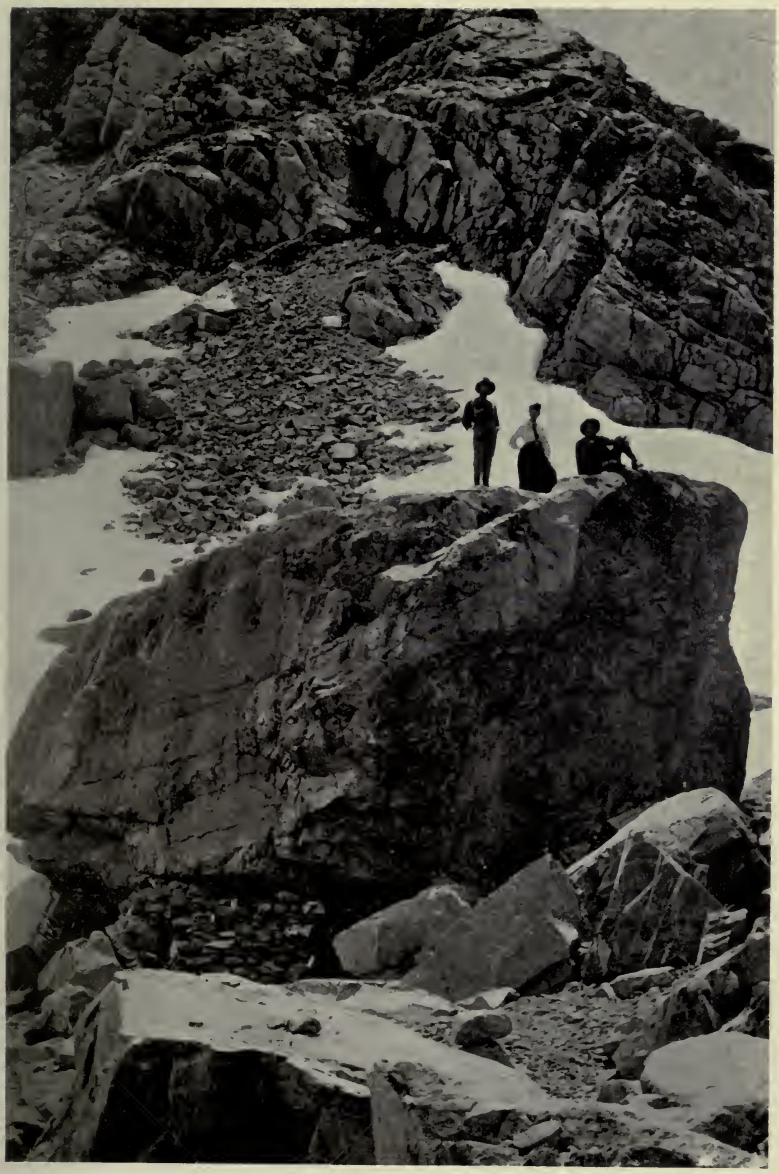
"The mountains in their overwhelming might
Moved me to sadness when I saw them first,
And afterwards they moved me to delight."

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

IN the days when we first visited the Mount Cook region we thought De la Bêche would be an easy mountain to climb. But our youthful eagerness and inexperience led us into some difficult situations, and then we began to think it was a difficult mountain to climb. In after years one was apt to smile at the recollection of those early attempts, which, try we ever so bravely, always ended in failure, and moved us to sadness. Yet, if they had to be made over again, one would not have it otherwise; for, notwithstanding our disappointments, we had great fun, and we really could climb. It was our knowledge of route-finding that was at fault. That knowledge has to be learnt slowly in the hard school of experience. Fyfe was the first to acquire it, and after that the rest was comparatively easy. The great peaks went down one by one — Cook, De la Bêche, the Minarets, Malte Brun, Darwin, and the Footstool. Fitzgerald bagged three of the finest—Tasman, Sefton, and Haidinger; and, later on, the small band of West Coast climbers — Newton, Teichelman, and Low — conquered others.

It was in 1893 that we first turned our steps towards De la Bêche and the Minarets. De la Bêche had attracted the attention of the Rev. Mr. Green, and as far back as 1889 Mannering, Dixon, and Johnston had had a shot at it. In all, some four attempts to scale it had been made before our arrival on the scene. Early in January of the year named, Fyfe and I swagged bedding and provisions up to the Bivouac Rock. This rock is a historic spot in connexion with New Zealand mountaineering. Many of the early climbers have starved and shivered there, but seldom have they waxed fat on a plethora of provisions. I recall especially one jolly expedition when my wife and I and four others used it as an habitation for some days, and I can still see Wilson of Glasgow and my wife vainly endeavouring to cook something hot for supper with what remained of our methylated spirit and the oil from a tin of sardines! That supper was not quite a success. But, later on, one warm summer's night, after a jolly meal, we sat up singing songs and telling stories till midnight, when we saw the New Year in, and then crept reluctantly into our sleeping bags for the rest of the night.

Here, too, it was that Mr. R. S. Low was found in 1908, almost unconscious, after his accident on the descent from Graham's Saddle, and after one of the most marvellous feats of physical endurance in the history of Alpine climbing. While descending the couloir near the Kron Prinz Rudolf Ice Fall he slipped and fell. He succeeded in driving his ice-axe into the slope, and it held; but a heavy knapsack that he was carrying threw him off his balance at the critical moment, with the result that he shot down the couloir for some 20 or 30 feet on to some jagged rocks. The



De la Bêche Bivouac.

shock was so severe that he rebounded on to the most dangerous part of the couloir, with a clear slide of 200 feet leading down to a bergschrund about 20 feet wide and of unknown depth. His knapsack apparently gripped against the slope, and he was able to get a handhold on an isolated strip of rock jutting out from the snow. He dragged himself on to these rocks with a badly dislocated ankle, a lacerated knee, and minor wounds, and lay there for hours in a semi-conscious state. Late in the afternoon, when the snow slopes were soft, with the boot removed from his injured and now swollen foot, Mr. Low started on what was the most perilous part of the whole descent. Unable to ascend to get his ice-axe, he used his left knee on the slope, and kicked steps in the snow with his right foot. In this way he made two traverses down the slope and crossed two snow bridges and the bergschrund at the foot of the couloir. He then crawled to a piece of light moraine on the lower portion of the glacier. Here he passed the first night, endeavouring to stanch the bleeding and to cover his wounds with adhesive plaster. On the following day (Thursday) he decided to make for the Bivouac Rock. He expected to reach it before nightfall. Tying a 30-foot piece of rope to his knapsack, he lay on his back on the snow and used his hands and his sound foot to propel himself to the rope limit. Having gone so far, he would drag the knapsack up to him and then proceed as before. This mode of progression was fairly satisfactory so long as the smooth going lasted, but on reaching the hummocky ice and the rough moraine lower down the glacier he was again forced to crawl on his hands and knees. Towards evening he crawled to the lee side of the biggest rock he could find. Next day (Friday) it rained and hailed,

and finally snowed to a depth of two feet, making it impossible for him to move. On the Saturday, however, he started off again and accomplished the most marvellous performance of crawling on his hands and knees through newly fallen snow over the rough and broken surface of the moraine-covered glacier, between crevasses and over ice bridges, thence for 300 feet up the steep face of the lateral moraine, and finally down a ridge of broken loose rocks to the Bivouac. Here he remained for six days. His dislocated ankle was much swollen and very painful, and the skin and flesh were considerably worn from his knees. Each day he became weaker for want of food, as the one day's food that he carried had to last him ten days. At last he had reduced himself to two pinches of cocoa a day. Fortunately there were a few pieces of short board at the Bivouac, and out of these he improvised a crutch, so that he was able to get about sufficiently to obtain water by melting snow on the rocks.

It was not till the Friday that the people at the Hermitage knew that Mr. Low was missing. On the West Coast a search party was immediately organized, and the two young New Zealand Alpine guides, Jack Clark and Peter Graham, at once set out from the Hermitage, and arrived at the De la Bêche Bivouac at 4 a.m. on Saturday, March 3. There they found Mr. Low alive, but in a very weak condition. They at once released a carrier pigeon they had brought with them, with a brief message to the manager at the Hermitage for medical aid. In case of any misadventure to the pigeon, Guide Clark dispatched a man to the Hermitage with the news. On the Monday Mr. Low was carried down to the Ball Glacier Hut. This was a terribly arduous undertaking, as the Tasman Glacier

at this point is very much crevassed and broken up into large hummocks, while, lower down, the Hochstetter and Ball Glaciers and some enormous moraines had to be crossed. Next day (Tuesday) the guides improvised a comfortable couch with a sheet of galvanized iron, a mattress, and some pillows, and, this being placed on a stout pack-horse, Mr. Low was taken across the Hooker River for twelve miles to the coach road. Thence he was conveyed by road and rail to Timaru, and, subsequently, to Christchurch, where, after an operation and skilful treatment, he began gradually to recover. I had the pleasure of sitting beside him at the Alpine Club dinner in London the other evening, and he told me he had been rock-climbing in Wales! And yet there are some pessimists who will tell you to-day that the young Briton is becoming decadent! I did not mean to write anything about all this—and I am afraid Mr. Low will not forgive me for having done so—but the incident is of historic interest, and no chronicle of De la Bêche and its Bivouac Rock would be complete without some reference to it.

It was on January 3, 1893, that Fyfe and I reached the rock. It was a glorious evening, with not a breath of air stirring, and the warm sun streaming down into the valley loosened the séracs of a fine glacier opposite, sending avalanche after avalanche thundering down over the precipices on to the Kron Prinz Rudolf Glacier below. We raked up the gravel under the rock, and having levelled it somewhat and scooped out small holes for our hips in order that we might be more comfortable, we spread the tent and one blanket for a mattress, leaving another double blanket for a covering. Just in front of us, above our Bivouac Rock, was the main spur of De la Bêche, and at the

foot of it the lateral moraine of the Kron Prinz Rudolf, with six or seven older and higher moraines, some four or five of which had plants growing on them. The Kron Prinz itself, near where it joins the Tasman, was very much broken, and its ice was black with morainic débris. Across this glacier we looked on to the lower cliffs of the main range, over which rock avalanches frequently fell. Above were visible some fine peaks, and the upper portions of two or three unnamed glaciers. More to the left, in the direction of Mount Cook, could be seen glacier after glacier,—the Forrest Ross, the Kaufmann, the Haast, the Freshfield, the Hochstetter, and Ball all being visible,—while down the centre of the valley we looked for miles over the white billowy ice of the Tasman to the opposite range far beyond its terminal face. One great rock on the lateral moraine of the Tasman just above us seemed to menace our safety, but a closer examination showed that it was firmly poised and likely to retain its position for a year or two at all events.

The evening continued fine, and we sat at the mouth of our cave watching the sun illumining the higher snows as it sank slowly behind the bold outline of Mount Haidinger, and listening to the avalanches thundering down from the glacier. Far away down the valley a bank of sun-lit mist continued for a while above the Hochstetter Ice Fall, and while we sat and watched the lighter wreaths mysteriously appearing and vanishing on the highest peak of Aorangi, the last gleam of sunlight slowly stole away.

We intended to make an early start next morning, but, just before the gloaming, our hopes fell as we saw the relentless mists once more gradually creeping down the mountain-side, and observed that a light wind had

begun to blow in at the mouth of our cave. Slowly the mist descended, and glacier after glacier faded from our view, till at last a dense fog filled the whole valley. It grew cold, and we found it difficult to get to sleep. The more one tries to sleep in such situations, and especially on the eve of some important expedition, the more one cannot do it. The mind becomes abnormally active, and is occupied by one train of thought after another in quick succession, most of the subjects being quite incongruous, and entirely out of keeping with the situation. I'm sure if any eminent mental scientist ever has the good fortune to spend a night under the Bivouac Rock at De la Bêche, he will find food for reflection, and perhaps be able to write an interesting chapter on "Bivouacs and Mental Effect." At first our pebbly bed feels fairly comfortable: after a while we begin to think it hard. About an hour or so convinces us that it *is* hard. Then we imagine that our hip bone is slowly working its way through the blankets, and we turn over to give the other one a fair share of the discomfort. But it also soon seems to be working its way through, and as a sort of compromise we lie on our back for a few minutes preparatory to going through the whole performance over again. Then the unwonted sounds add to our wakefulness—the roar of an avalanche above the mists; the noise of loose stones rattling eerily down the moraine near our bivouac; or the cry of a belated mountain parrot seeking his aerie.

Next morning a drizzling mist was driving in at the mouth of our little cave, and the rock had sprung a leak. There was nothing of the view left but the huge boulders of the moraine looming up ghost-like through the fog, while the only sign of life was a funny

little wren that every now and then fluttered inquisitively up to the mouth of the cave. He had only the semblance of a tail. No doubt he philosophized in his own little way as to what manner of beings they could be who had made themselves a bed in such a strange situation and in such weather. Fyfe brewed some hot tea over the spirit lamp, and after we had partaken of breakfast we turned into bed again. By this time we were getting used to disappointments, so now we resolved to take matters philosophically, and wait for a chance at our mountain as long as the provisions held out. We had little in the way of amusement, and our only literature consisted of a copy of the *Sydney Bulletin* that Fyfe had put into his swag when leaving the Hermitage. We read the stories in this, then the advertisements, and then read some of the stories over again. We were, however, better off than on the occasion of our last expedition to these regions, when our only literature was the labels on the meat tins and what we composed ourselves. Later on we occupied ourselves by keeping count of the number of avalanches that fell from the glacier opposite. We found the average to be about ten an hour, or at the rate of 240 a day.

Eventually, we got our climb, but I shall not weary the reader—gentle or otherwise—with the details of it. We got caught in the mists, and had to descend. We enjoyed some fine glissading and one or two adventures, such as a tumble or two into narrow crevasses. We returned to the Bivouac defeated, and the weather grew worse. The old sea-captain who said, "Give me weather as is weather: none of your damned blue skies for me!" would have revelled in it. Food got scarce, and we had to tramp down the glacier for

further supplies. It was true that there were some provisions under the rock left by Harper and Hamilton, to which we might have helped ourselves; but we resolved that if we were to climb the mountain we should do so entirely by our own exertions. We were painfully conscientious in those days.

In company with some visitors whom we met on the glacier, we had another shot at the mountain later on. We got on to the main ridge just below the final peak, and, finding ourselves on a bad route, again retired defeated. We were, however, rewarded by the most glorious views on every side. It will perhaps also be as well to draw a veil over this descent. We got into some awkward situations, and I have a vivid recollection of cutting steps down an almost perpendicular slope; of making some very awkward traverses across others; and of dangling at the end of the rope on a smooth rock in order to make a step in the ice at its edge. And all the time the sun beat down furiously, and there was so much refraction that our hands and faces were not only browned to a dark chocolate colour, but painfully swollen into the bargain. The rocks in places were so hot as to be quite unpleasant to the touch, while the leather of my camera case began to smell as if it were singed. In one steep place, during a rather ticklish piece of step-cutting, I removed my goggles for a few minutes in order the better to see what I was doing, but paid the penalty for it afterwards by suffering considerably from snow-blindness. It was two or three days before my eyes were quite right again.

Years later, one fine day, soon after our ascent of Haidinger, Fyfe and I strolled from the hut up to the De la Bêche Bivouac, carrying fairly light packs,

consisting of sleeping bags and provisions for three days. We were in fine form, and made light of the journey. We reached our destination at three o'clock in the afternoon, lunched sumptuously at four, lit our pipes, and basked, smoking, in the warm sunshine. It was a gloriously bright day, and the higher mountains lifted their ridges above the tumbled moraine, clear cut against an azure sky, while glaciers and white slopes of snow billowing to still higher and purer fields completed the picture. And there were those other and sterner rock peaks that "took in their teeth the sun, the storm, and the whirlwind, never changing countenance from day to year, and from year to age." We smoked, and talked, and watched the shadows stealing across the ice-floored valley, till finally the sun dipped behind the narrow ridge of Haidinger, and only the snow cap of Aorangi was illumined. The gleaming silver brow of the monarch of the Southern Alps was then transmuted into glowing gold, and, in turn, changed into frosted silver, all in the space of the fleeting sunset half-hour. The temperature fell quickly: we crawled under the rock and sought the warmth of our sleeping bags. Through the mouth of our cave we watched the stars being set like jewels in the darkness of the sky.

We were astir at half-past two of the clock, and breakfasted by lantern light on tinned food and cold tea. By 3 a.m. we were marching, with the lantern, across the old lateral moraines and up the Kron Prinz Rudolf Glacier towards the Ice Fall, which we reached as dawn was breaking. One does not make quick progress across these dreadful New Zealand moraines by the uncertain light of a flickering candle. You step on what appears to be solid ground, and a boulder,

resting on ice, slides from under your foot. You recover your balance with an effort, but hit your ankle in the process against a sharp-edged slate that is as unyielding as the other stone was unstable. Dark shadows that you treat with confidence are discovered to be pools of water with a thin covering of ice that lets you through, and the warmth of your language is not sufficient to counteract the chilling shock that you have received. It is to be hoped that the recording angel turns a deaf ear to the language of the early-morning mountaineer. It is under such circumstances that the climber notes, with a feeling of devout thankfulness, the faint glow that heralds the dawn, and eagerly watches the conquering march of the sun along the peaks of the giant range.

With the breaking of day our spirits rose, and, being in splendid form, we simply romped over the first cliffs and snow slopes. Having gained the crest of a narrow rocky ridge, we descended by a slanting crack on to the plateau at the foot of the peak. We walked and ran across this plateau, and then started up a snow slope that took us on to the rocks of the final peak. There was one short bit of rock-work that proved interesting, but we made light of it, and at 7.55 a.m. we were having second breakfast on the top of the mountain! It was a record performance, and one could not help casting a retrospective glance at the unsuccessful struggles of the early mountaineers —ourselves included—upon these slopes. As we gazed across the island and along the great Alpine chain, the virgin snowy peaks of the Minarets, quite close at hand, attracted our attention. They were first-class peaks, over ten thousand feet high. Why not attempt their ascent now that we were so high up

and had time to spare? While we were eating our breakfast and considering this problem, clouds formed in a stratum of cool air below us, and a marvellous transformation scene was unfolded before our wondering gaze. Northwards the mountains became islands in a sea of fleecy cloud. South and east there was a wilderness of majestic peaks, and westward that glorious view upon which we ever cast longing eyes—the dark lakes and forests, the silver streaks of river, and the great ocean, far, far down below us. That islanded sea of cloud with the sun shining on it was such a scene as Nansen saw when he sailed in the *Fram* along the fair coast-line of his beloved Nordland, past Alden and Kinn, when he beheld "wreaths of mist glittering like silver over the mountains, their tops soaring above the mist like islands out of the sea"; only, instead of looking up at this, as he did, we looked down on it, and saw the sun shining on the top of the clouds—a still more glorious sight.

In order to get at the Minarets, we had to descend on the western precipices of De la Bêche to a somewhat extensive plateau of snow. The rocks were rather difficult where we attacked them, and when we got down and on to the snow we came on a kind of bergschrund with an almost perpendicular wall of ice, down which steps had to be cut. I dug the handle of my ice-axe deep into the snow and took a hitch of the rope round it. I held on to the cliff with one hand and paid out the rope with the other as Fyfe cut down this wall of ice. It was not of any great height, but it was a ticklish bit of work, and it took three-quarters of an hour to cut twenty-three steps, so hard was the ice, so difficult the slope, and so carefully had the steps to be fashioned for the descent of such a place. After this

there was no difficulty, and we simply romped up those two icy peaks. The higher one was a perfect cone of ice with scarcely room for one to take a photograph of the other on it. We left a record of our ascent in the rocks on the western side just below the ice-cap, and then climbed the other peak, leaving on the highest rocks another account of this the first ascent. For some time now we were enveloped in the clouds, and had difficulty in finding our way back to De la Bêche, which we had to climb once more on our way back. The ice-staircase which we had cut on the descent gave us no trouble in ascending, and we gained our peak in quick time, and waited for an hour on its summit enjoying the panorama and a smoke. We felt quite pleased with our performance.

The descent was made in splendid style. We glissaded and scrambled down the final slope in a manner that would have made a model mountaineer's hair stand on end, but we had absolute confidence in each other's powers. The bergschrund at the foot of the ice fall was a little awkward to cross, but we gained the glacier while it was still early in the afternoon. We ran down its ice for a mile or so, and after scrambling over the final moraines, found ourselves back in camp at 4 p.m.,—a ridiculously early hour—so, after tea, we must needs start off again down the Tasman Glacier to the Ball Hut, which we reached in the dusk of evening. Here we had another tea and turned in for the night to enjoy a well-earned rest. Oh for those glorious days again! Why does one grow old?

CHAPTER XIII

ACROSS THE SOUTHERN ALPS

"A wretched invention, forsooth, for people who wish to push on is 'a line of retreat,' an everlasting inducement to look behind, when they should have enough to do in looking ahead."—NANSEN.

WHEN we were on the Hochstetter Dome, and subsequently, when we climbed Haidinger and De la Bêche, we saw, far below us, the silver streaks of rivers winding seaward through the sombre forests, and cast longing eyes adown the western slopes of the Alps. The more we saw the more we wished to go over. And what better way could we go than by some unknown pass at the head of the largest and most splendid of all our glaciers?

After our ascent of De la Bêche and the Minarets it was decided to try over the Lendenfeld Saddle, and down the left-hand branch of the Wataroa River. "About twenty miles down the coast" (from the Wanganui), writes Mr. Harper in the latest work on the Southern Alps, "is the Wataroa, another large river, draining the main range at the head of the Rangitata, Godley, and Murchison Glaciers. It has many large branches in the mountains, up which, no doubt, there are considerable snowfields and some fair-sized glaciers; but except the tributary coming from the Sealy Pass at the head of the Godley Glacier, it may be said to be *terra incognita.*" Mr. Roberts, of the

Westland Survey Department, wrote in a similar strain. There were, he stated, many legends of people who had come over different passes from Canterbury in the early digging days, and stories of others who went up into unknown valleys and never returned; but amongst all these, he had never heard of anyone who had come down the left-hand branch of the Wataroa River.

On Thursday, the 18th February, the weather was fine, and Fyfe and I shouldered our packs, and started off once more for the Tasman Glacier. Our friends at the Hermitage came out to say good-bye and wish us good luck. "Take good care of yourself," said my wife; and I replied, laughingly, that there was little danger. Fyfe had written to his wife to say that there was "absolutely none." It was not like climbing a mountain; it would be just a walk. Such wretches we men are! For after all there *might* be danger. We could not tell. As I turned my back on the Hermitage and marched off over the tussocky shingle flats to the cage in which we had to pull ourselves across the Hooker River, I fell a-wondering if we should get over the pass and down through the unexplored country in safety. But it would never do for Britons to be poor fibreless mortals and to turn tail and run just because there was a spice of danger in an adventure. So what if there were risk? We should keep our eyes and our ears open, and go through in the face of it; and no sirens of the mountains, charm they ever so sweetly, should tempt us to destruction. We were Spartans for the moment, and our packs seemed feather-weights, as we swung out over the uneven plain in fine style, bound for our old bivouac some twenty-two miles ahead.

But such an inconsistent animal is man, that by the time we got half-way over the dreary shingle flats of the

Tasman, the pace had relaxed somewhat, and the feather-weight packs of an hour ago began, in some mysterious manner, to be transmuted into lead. After leaving the shingle flat behind us, we strode out bravely once more; but, while walking up the hot valley, we were met by the Goddess of Indolence. And she, in her most insinuating manner, said men were fools to toil along with heavy swags on their backs under a broiling summer sun, and talked pleasantly of "to-morrow" and the cool of another morning. So, by the time the Blue Lake was reached, we had succumbed to her blandishments, and stopped there eating and drinking, in arcadian simplicity, by the lake-shore. Then we smoked and sauntered slowly over the remaining miles of the rocky track to the comforts of the Ball Glacier hut, and, once arrived there, wild horses would not have drawn us farther that night. Thus does the Spartan morning of the mountaineer too often end in lotus-eating afternoon!

And next morning we were in no great hurry to leave our beds. There was a red dawn, and we pretended that it was going to be bad weather—

> "When the morning riseth red,
> Rise not thou, but keep thy bed;
> When the dawn is full and grey,
> Sleep is still the better way:
> Beasts are up betimes, but then
> They are beasts, and we are men."

But, as a matter of fact, the weather was glorious, and we had reluctantly to tear ourselves away from the flesh-pots of the hut. So once more we shouldered our loads, marched up the glacier to the De la Bêche Bivouac, and dined there at 3 p.m. In order to save our fresh provisions, we ate some bread that was a month old and had been lying under the rock for three weeks. It was

blue mouldy in the cracks, but judicious paring made it palatable, and we even enjoyed it. The butter was also old. It had been buried in an ice-slope near the Bivouac some weeks before, and now we found it had mysteriously disappeared. After some considerable search, it was discovered in a cranny between the rocks, into which it had fallen owing to the recedence of the ice slope by melting. It was fairly good. Dinner over, we left for the Malte Brun Bivouac, higher up, on the other side of the glacier. Here, in a little flat hollow between the lateral moraine and the mountain, we discovered a scanty supply of snow grass that had been used for bedding by Dr. Kronecker, a German climber, four years before. Apparently the worthy Doctor had left camp in a hurry, for, on shaking out the grass, we found in it an Austrian climbing lantern of the folding pattern, and, near at hand, on the rocks, a penknife, much rusted, also the remains of a leather case for a field-glass.

When crossing the upper portion of the glacier from the De la Bêche Bivouac we came to the conclusion that our swags were too heavy for difficult climbing, so we now set to work to reduce them to the smallest possible compass. We jettisoned some spare clothing and provisions, and it was finally decided, after much deep thought, that my camera should be left behind—a decision I have never since ceased to regret, because, on this expedition, we traversed unexplored country by a route that in all these years no one has since attempted. Moreover, when, dishevelled and aweary, I returned, some weeks later, by a more southern pass to the Hermitage, it cost me a walk of forty-eight miles to retrieve the camera! We had a beautifully fine night for our bivouac, and, having supped, and there being

nothing else to do, we turned into our sleeping bags while it was yet day. The view was glorious, and we watched the great steadfast peaks slowly changing colour in "the held breath of the day's decline." Across the glacier, but a mile and a half away, rose the main range of the Southern Alps in all its glory of broken glacier, black precipice, and snowy dome. Lying in bed there we looked far down the Tasman to where Aorangi's great ice-capped ridge pierced the primrose of the western sky, and watched, through God's great window, the coming of the stars—for in such bivouacs as these it is that you get the most glorious revelations of the night. True, our pillow of rock was somewhat hard, and the Milky Way was rather a cool counterpane. But what cared we? The Goddess of Indolence does not come so far up the glacier. We were Spartans again.

On Saturday, an hour after midnight, we crept out of our sleeping bags to prepare breakfast, and at 2 a.m. we shouldered our packs and set our faces towards the unknown. In the dim light we had to exercise a little care in descending the loose rocks of the moraine and in getting over the broken ice at the edge of the glacier. Once we had left the moraine and the crevasses behind, the going was easy; but we went at a very leisurely pace, wishing to keep our strength in reserve, for we knew not what difficulties were in front of us. The white mountains at the head of the glacier looked ethereally beautiful in the clear moonlight, which cast strong cold shadows on the white ice as we walked along. On our left, a fine avalanche fell from the lower slopes of Elie de Beaumont, and came thundering down into the head of the valley. In the east a pale flush heralded the dawn.

Crevasse on Tasman Glacier.

Some clouds came floating up over our pass from the north-west, and hung menacingly on the white shoulders of the Dome. It was an ominous sight, and our spirits fell. We were soon in the region of covered crevasses, so we put on the rope. The eastern light gradually brightened, and we watched the moon-shadows on our right grow fainter and fainter till they disappeared, and the sun-shadows took their places on the left, growing slowly in boldness of outline with the advancing sun. As we mounted the final slopes towards the saddle, the sun was bathing the higher snows of the western range with a golden glow, and by the time we were fairly on the pass, his slanting rays fell athwart our way.

The pass did not look inviting. The glacier fell away on the other side in a broken ice fall, and great chasms yawned immediately below us. It was not possible to get straight down, that was clear, so we climbed a snow-slope and got on to some rocks on the left, higher up. "Don't say a blessed word till we've had a smoke, and then we'll look round," remarked Fyfe. I acquiesced, and we sat down on the rocks, munched a few figs and some chocolate, and then had our smoke and the look round. We were not enamoured of the prospect. The panorama certainly was magnificent, especially towards the north-east; but the getting down—that was the trouble. Far below us we could see the Whymper Glacier, much crevassed in its upper parts, and farther on entirely covered with moraine. "How far below do you think it is?" asked Fyfe. "Three thousand feet," I hazarded. Fyfe thought four thousand. But even four thousand feet would have been nothing on good rocks and unbroken ice slopes. The rocks, however, were very rotten, and the ice was

just about as bad as it could be. Away down below us on the left—a long way it seemed—was a track where the avalanches had completely swept away the snow, and loose blocks of ice had filled up the crevasses. If we could get into that we could get down. It was our only hope, and everything depended on speed; for it would never do to be caught in that narrow ice-gut after the sun had acquired strength and the ice-blocks were hurtling down. We rose deliberately, shouldered our packs, shortened up the rope, and started down the first ridge. The rocks were fearfully rotten, and the last man on the rope had to exercise the greatest caution lest, by starting a block, he should crack the leader's skull. But we got down the first bit all right, and at the foot of the rocks encountered a snow slope, which, though beautiful enough, was, from a climber's point of view, altogether uninviting, because in two places there were clear indications that it was swept by avalanches that poured over a precipice immediately above on our left. But we knew there was not much danger at that early hour of the morning, and we started across. One of the avalanche tracks was scooped out to such an extent that the farther side was a perpendicular wall of snow some ten feet high. Up this we had considerable difficulty in climbing, as the steps we made repeatedly gave way. But we went at it doggedly, and in due course it was vanquished. The final avalanche shoot for which we were making was still a distressingly long way off, and a great ice fall, through the séracs of which we should have to thread our way, now began to loom large in front of us. We made a traverse across the last bit of the soft snow slope on which we were now climbing, taking good anchorage with our axes in the difficult

places. Near the end of the slope was a schrund which was partly filled with avalanche snow, but we jumped it, and, crossing a little more snow, got on to good solid rocks. There was ice above, and the rocks were dripping. The débris of avalanches lay below. We crossed on slippery rocks right underneath a great wall of ice, and then climbed downward, more to the right, to gain a rocky ridge of a peculiar reddish-brown colour. There we halted for two or three minutes, and enjoyed a deliciously cool drink of the ice-water that was trickling over the rocks in several places. We then saw that one strand of the Alpine rope, about midway between Fyfe and myself, had been cut through by a falling rock. The cut was as clean as if it had been made with a knife. Having repaired the damage with a "fisherman's bend," we began to climb down on easy rocks. Good progress was now being made, and, if we could only get down this ridge of rock, and on to the snow slope at the foot of it, it was apparent that the back of the climb would be broken. But, in mountaineering, as in many other things in this life, it often happens that, just as we are nearing the goal of our ambition, some unexpected obstacle bars the way. So, now, our hopes were quickly dashed to the ground—we were face to face with a precipice down which it was impossible for man to climb. We thought we should have to give it up as hopeless, but we pondered the situation, and then began to scan the ridge immediately behind on our left. Here an almost vertical slab of wet rock, between thirty and forty feet, led into a narrow gulch or chimney, down which a waterfall was pouring. There were no hand-holds to speak of—only one or two cracks in the rock—but one of the climbers thought he could get down. It was

truly a case of hanging on by one's eyebrows, but it was managed somehow, without putting much strain on the rope, and the one stood patiently waiting under the waterfall till his clothes were quite wet, and until the other had scrambled down. The descent of this chimney, which was dripping all the way down, did not take us many minutes, for two pinnacles of ice loomed threateningly overhead, and there was also some danger of falling stones. We kept in the shelter of the cliff as much as we could. The passage under the great sérac and the little bit of work into and down this chimney were somewhat sensational, and put all thoughts of return by the same route out of our heads. An hour or two later it would have been absolutely dangerous to go that way. We had burned our boats behind us, and must needs push on. That wretched invention, "a line of retreat," had, by this time, to all appearances, been shattered, and, save for an occasional turn of the head to see if there was danger behind, our glances must be ever forward. In a few minutes we had reached the ice fall, and, without further hesitation, we commenced to thread a way through it.

Had we not known our work we should have been afraid. The toppling séracs looked dangerous. Higher up the fall, two enormous pinnacles of ice towered splendidly in all the glitter of the morning sun. One felt so fascinated with them, and with the surroundings generally, that one needs must occasionally indulge in a momentary halt to gaze on the scene, greatly to the vexation of Fyfe, who always remonstrated and kept urging the necessity for greater speed. We threaded our way down that ice fall in a way that we felt sure would be a credit to any guide, and in due course

arrived at the avalanche shoot. It had been raked by blocks of falling ice and masses of snow, but at this early hour of the morning, when King Frost still held the situation in his icy grip, there was no business doing. Later in the day, after the sun had been at work for some hours on the snow slopes and ice pinnacles above, it would have been a veritable death-trap. Even now there was no time to waste, for the sun was gaining strength every minute. Without a word we got into the shoot and started down. I am free to confess that when we were on the other side of the overhanging ice cliff an hour before, I should have been quite glad to have turned back. Now I was keenly enjoying the adventure. There is something intoxicating in danger once you are fairly in it, and once you are keyed up to that point of daring and alertness at which you begin to feel the *spin* of the blood in your veins, as, exultant, and with every confidence in your own prowess, you go forth into the battle. Whether man be at close grips with Nature; whether he be batting with opponents in sport; or pitting his wits against rivals in commerce —in play or in work, in love or in war—it is under such circumstances that his greatest successes are made. And so it was that our dash and daring pulled us through.

For a time everything now depended upon rapid climbing, and we started off down the shoot, jumping half-filled crevasses, scrambling over solid ice-blocks, and even glissading on hard névé in a way that would have made the hair of the authors of the Badminton book on mountaineering stand on end. We slid down places where, under ordinary circumstances, we should never have dreamt of going without first cutting steps

in the ice. Sometimes I found myself slipping down at an alarming rate, only to be pulled up by Fyfe with a jerk of the rope. At other times Fyfe came hurrying down after me, and I had to hold on with my axe and set a stiff back to check his descent. It was splendid fun and we were making wonderful progress, albeit the destruction of our nether garments was not exactly in inverse ratio to the rapidity of the descent. There was a succession of steps in the ice shoot at the foot of which there were invariably loose blocks or masses of avalanche snow, and these, also, assisted us in checking a too-long-continued and precipate glissade. Thus, frequently, just as an unnecessary and somewhat alarming amount of friction was being developed, were we by the aid of the avalanche snow in front, and the ice-axe acting as a brake behind, pulled up and brought to a sudden stop. The shocks from the unexpected interposition of an avalanche block and from the sudden tightening of the rope around the most boneless part of one's anatomy came in about equal proportions, though, occasionally, the effects were somewhat modified by a combination of both; but the moment we had recovered from the surprise of the former or the tension of the latter, the process was commenced again *de novo*. Thus did we make a truly wonderful, albeit a somewhat undignified, progress. Once only, during this stage of the proceedings, I looked behind, and saw the great séracs and pinnacles poised aloft. After twenty minutes of fast going, for such a place, we came to a point at which we could see the foot of the shoot, filled with avalanche débris, bulging out in fan-like shape as it reached the more gently sloping part of the glacier. Without further adventure we made our way down

to this débris, which, as it had no snow on it, made somewhat difficult walking. But we were now out of danger, and could afford to slacken our pace. Soon we had crossed the last bit of avalanche, and had gained the gently sloping solid ice of the Whymper Glacier. There we approached each other, and, solemnly shaking hands in that wonderful *terra incognita*, with the everlasting hills as witnesses, vowed that whatever happened we should not attempt to go back by that route. I thought a little ruefully of the long walk I should have from the Hermitage on my return to get my camera, and I wondered, also, if we could get down to the coast from where we were. But of this surely there could be no doubt. After what we had just accomplished, no West Coast river, nor gorge, nor forest could possibly stop us, though the question of food might cause us some little anxiety.

We halted a few minutes to scan our route. Looking back at it, no one would have imagined it possible for human beings to come down that way—the rocks seemed so steep and the ice so terribly broken. As we gazed, a few small blocks of ice started down the avalanche shoot. We had got out of it none too soon. Old Sol was making his influence felt. The ice was followed by a large piece of rock, that broke away above the shoot and came hurtling down in our tracks. On it came, in great leaps and bounds, till at length its progress was arrested, and it found a resting-place, half buried in the débris of the avalanche at the foot of the shoot.

Rock avalanches continued to start from the Dome, which on this side was a series of magnificent ridges and precipices. At one time there was a regular cannonade, but we were well out of the line of fire. To

the left of this mountain the range continued round the farther side of the Whymper Glacier. There was one sharp rocky peak next to the Dome, and, adjoining that, on the other side of a long snow couloir, some enormous slabs of slate, sloping up to the summit of the range. Then there were two glaciers, joined at the bottom, where they poured their tribute into the Whymper, but separated, higher up, by a ridge that came down for some distance between them. Beyond this, the range was very rotten. Farther away still, on the right-hand side of the Wataroa, we could see other rocky peaks and a ridge with a flat-shaped glacier on the top of it. The Whymper Glacier went straight down the valley for some distance, and then took a fine sweep to the left. An effort was made to follow it down, but, after going some way, dodging one or two crevasses and jumping others, we came upon some enormous rents in the ice, very deep, and extending right across the glacier. There was nothing for it but to retrace our steps. There was a possible route on the left by way of the rocks above the ice. Threading our way through some more crevasses, we climbed this ridge, and having gained its crest, were delighted to find that, so far as the ice-work was concerned, all our difficulties were now at an end. We sat on the warm rocks and smoked. The ridge below was studded with numbers of beautiful yellow ranunculi, the wax-like petals of which glistened like burnished gold in the sunlight amongst the dark rocks. From this ridge we scrambled down some slopes of séracs, and gained the glacier again. Here, beside a stream that ran in a channel in the ice, we stopped for lunch at 11 a.m. We had been going without food or rest for nine hours, and now took off our wet things, and dried our putties, boots, and

stockings on the warm rocks that here almost covered the glacier. How we did enjoy that lunch! We stopped for nearly an hour, dozing for part of the time in the sunshine. Then off down the glacier for fully a mile over moraine—in some places composed of small rocks, in others of great erratic boulders—then up the face of a great ancient lateral moraine, on top of which there was a luxuriant growth of vegetation; thence down to the terminal face of the glacier, where the Wataroa River came forth in majestic volume from a cave of clear ice. A creek flowed in from the left, fed from some beautiful waterfalls that came over the precipices from the everlasting snows beyond. It was fringed with fine trees and Alpine plants, and one ribbon-wood tree was gay with beautiful white blossoms that peeped out from amongst the tender green of its leafy branches. It was so different from the eastern side of the Alps, and altogether such a charming spot, that we were tempted to halt a while. A cold wind sprang up, so we made a fire and boiled our little billy to make bovril. We put a whole pot of bovril in it, and this we ate with dry bread. In half an hour we were on the march again down the left-hand side of the river, finding our way through scrub, over enormous boulders, and on through dense bush. The river was now a seething torrent, roaring over and between the great rocks, and the mountains towered above the sombre vale. We seemed to make but slow progress, and hour after hour went all too quickly by. At 6 p.m. we camped for the night beside the turbulent torrent that went roaring down the unexplored valley. We had been on the march since two o'clock that morning, and now, after our sixteen hours' toil, during which we had carried swags over by far the roughest pass ever

made in New Zealand, felt we were entitled to a well-earned rest. Tea; then bed; and soon the crackling of the camp fire mingled with the rumble of the river, which was ever present, and seemed to haunt us in our dreams.

CHAPTER XIV

ACROSS THE SOUTHERN ALPS—*continued*

"Good Luck is the gayest of all gay girls,
Long in one place she will not stay,
Back from your brow she brushes the curls,
Kisses you quick, then runs away.

But Madam Bad Luck, she soberly comes,
No fancy has she for flitting,
Snatches of strange, sad songs she sings,
Sits by your side and brings her knitting."

Good Luck had walked with us over the pass and down the valley; but at this point of the journey she must have either outdistanced our lagging footsteps or returned the way she came. Anyhow, she left us, and our troubles began. When we halted the warm sun had left the narrow valley, and before we could get a fire going the chill air began to search out the very marrow in our bones. The dryness of the eastern side of the range had given place to the humidity of the west, and every bit of wood or plant was either green or sodden with moisture. Finally, when we did get a fire going it was a very smoky one, and gave little heat except what was required for the boiling of the "billy." We ate a frugal meal of tinned meat, bread, and tea, made mattresses of damp green branches and ferns cut with our pocket-knives, crept into our sleeping bags, lit our pipes, talked over the events of the

day and the prospects of the morrow, and then tried to sleep. Fyfe's leg was beginning to trouble him; but he said little about it. The mere fact of his mentioning it at all was, however, sufficient to give me some concern, for Fyfe was never a man to make a mountain out of a mole-hill. We spent a miserable night in our sleeping bags, and when we awoke at five o'clock next morning were cold and stiff. Tea was made from compressed tabloids, and sweetened with saccharine. In this compressed form it is possible to carry in one's waistcoat pocket enough tea and sugar for an expedition lasting several days. Saccharine, however, does not seem to be a good substitute for sugar, as there is no nourishment in it, and tea in tabloid form is an invention of the devil.

At 6 a.m., shouldering our packs once more, we started down the valley. Cold and stiff as we were, there was no buoyancy in our stride, and I could not fail to see that Fyfe was limping badly, though he toiled bravely on.

It was Sunday morning, and a clear sky gave promise of another glorious day. The valley was densely wooded, the forest coming down the steep hillsides right to the water's edge. There was scarcely a scrap of level ground anywhere, and the river was a seething torrent. It was necessary to shout to make our voices heard above its everlasting roar. We proceeded for a little way along the side of the stream, and then took to the bush, but returned to the edge of the river again a little farther on. The boulders were very large, and had we not both been rock-climbers they would have troubled us considerably. As it was, however, we lost but little time, for whoever happened to be leading tackled the difficulties without

hesitation, selecting the route, and quickly noting the best hand-grips as he went up one side of some great boulder that blocked the way and down the other. After an hour or two's scrambling we found our progress barred by a gorge in the river, and we had to climb through the bush on the hillside. Here Fyfe had the misfortune to strike his leg twice in rapid succession on sharp angular rocks—the débris of an ancient moraine that lay hidden under a luxuriant growth of the most exquisite mosses and ferns. In each case the blow was severe, and very painful because of the already inflamed wound on the leg, and, though we were still in the cool shade of the forest, the pain was so intense that the perspiration came out in beads on his forehead. We struggled on in rather a gloomy frame of mind, till, at 10 a.m., we came to a second gorge in which the scenery was very grand. A rocky plateau, worn smooth by flood water, fringed the left bank of the stream at a considerable height above. Pools of water lay here and there in the hollows of the rocks. Along this plateau we proceeded. Across the stream the rocks rose straight from the water's edge, clothed with ferns and mosses, and fringed above with trees, amongst which the scarlet blaze of the rata blossom made a glorious contrast with the sombre green. The scarcity of bird life in such a beautiful wood seemed strange. At times we could hear the beating of a wood-pigeon's wings in the air, and, on looking up, would see a solitary, grey-plumaged bird flying across the narrow valley. Or we would hear the whistle of the kaka—a bush parrot—and note the flashing scarlet of his under-wings as he went from one branch to another, eyeing the strange intruders into his domain with that insatiable curiosity that

is such a feature of his character, and that, alas! so often leads to his destruction.

The Alpine vegetation was now far behind us. Everywhere was a luxuriant growth of moss and fern and tree. In one place a titanic boulder blocked the river-bed, and the waters thundered through a narrow defile, over which a man might easily jump. At the lower end of the gorge the river ran for some distance between precipitous walls, and we had once more to take to the pathless forest on the mountain-side. Then we climbed down to the river again, and began the same scramble over the interminable boulders. This scrambling over and under rocks made us get into all sorts of strange attitudes. We felt, if there were much more of it, that we should soon qualify for the position of acrobats in a circus.

But the cold, hard, damp bed of the previous night, following upon a long and trying day's exercise, had left us rather stiff for such contortions, and we simply longed for a hot bath and a rub down. We even talked about such a luxury, and scarcely were the words uttered than we found Mother Nature with the bath ready at hand.

All this morning we had noticed at intervals, as we marched beside the stream, a strange and somewhat offensive smell. We had attributed it to some plant in the forest, or to decaying vegetation. In jumping from one boulder to another I saw that the water below had patches of oil floating on it, and the offensive smell was very strong, so I stopped to make an investigation. On putting my hand into the water I found it was quite hot. Here was just what we wanted. I called out to Fyfe that I had found a hot spring. He was at first inclined to doubt my words;

but when he remembered the strange smell that abounded in the valley he came back, and, in less time than it takes to tell the story, we found ourselves in the garb of Adam, and revelling in the luxury of a hot bath in the midst of a garden more glorious than the original Eden, but minus the temptations and distractions with which our original ancestor was beset. The water ran into a clear pool, and where it welled up in one place beside the glacier water of the river we could have, at the same moment, a warm bath on one side of our bodies and a cold bath on the other. This bath freshened us up wonderfully, and took all the stiffness away. Our only regret was that we had no means of taking a sample of the water away with us for analysis.

About midday we came to yet another gorge, where we halted for lunch. We got through without much bush-work, and arrived at a large stream that came in from the left. We took off our nether garments, put on our boots again without stockings, waded through, and in that guise walked for some distance along a comparatively level beach. When I looked round and saw Fyfe walking half naked behind me over the rocks I was seized with the ludicrous nature of his appearance and laughed heartily, only to have myself heartily laughed at in return. Our delight was now great, for we saw ahead of us a mile or so of comparatively easy walking, and fondly imagined that we had done with those troublesome gorges. But again our hopes were foredoomed to disappointment, for on rounding a promontory the river took a bend to the left and entered another gorge. It was the worst one of the lot. There was nothing for it but to take to the bush and climb the steep hillside to a

plateau in the forest that seemed to run parallel with the river. We climbed up a long way, and got in amongst some tall trees where the forest was fairly open. The ferns here were exquisitely beautiful, and rare varieties abounded. Whole tree trunks were covered with the varied greens of the beautiful kidney fern, and at almost every step the graceful fronds of the umbrella fern rose above its neighbours and the lovely mosses that made a gloriously green and springy carpet for the uneven ground. It was a veritable fairyland, and one would not have been greatly surprised if the Queen of all the fairies had met us at any turn.

We kept well up the mountain-side, sometimes getting a bit of easy climbing, at other times making heavy work of it with our swags through scrub and luxuriant undergrowth; and all the time the rumbling of the waters, softened now by distance, could be heard down below on the right. But we could see nothing beyond a few yards. Suddenly the roaring of waters close in front fell upon our ears, and we found ourselves face to face with a high fall that came down in a succession of leaps through the forest. We followed it to the river and crossed where the precipice ended and the water ran over some gently sloping ground towards the river. Ahead was a level shingle flat. The valley was widening out and the hills were lower. Now, surely, our difficulties would be at an end. But after going a few hundred yards we saw the river again entering a deep and narrow gorge. We had been going pretty steadily for twelve hours. Fyfe's leg was bad, and we were both a little tired, and in no mood to tackle the gorge, so we camped and made tea. Drift-wood was here in plenty. We lit a big fire under the overhanging trees, and dried

our wet clothing. Meanwhile we took our bearings. The river, now swollen into a stately stream, forked on the shingle flats, and ran at a more leisurely pace. It seemed a good spot to cross in the event of our deciding to avoid the gorge by climbing a lower hill on the right bank.

We had taken with us at the start of this expedition two loaves of bread, a 4-lb. tin of meat and 4 lb. of marmalade, together with a small pot of bovril, and the tea and sugar tabloids, reckoning that, with our sleeping bags and some spare clothing, this would be as much as we could conveniently carry over so difficult a pass. We estimated also that this quantity of provisions would be just about enough to see us down to civilization on the West Coast. It was with a somewhat rueful countenance, therefore, that, after supper, we now looked at the two empty tins that had contained the jam and marmalade, and beheld only enough bread left for one frugal meal. Had Fyfe's leg been sound we should not have minded, but it was now terribly inflamed and swollen to abnormal dimensions, so that we were not sure whether he would be able to stand another day's rough walking.

Having dried our things, we scooped out, with our ice-axes, two hollows in the shingle on a bank overhung by trees, and, getting into our sleeping bags, lay down in them for the night. Should it come on to rain, it was decided to get up at any hour of the night and endeavour to cross the river before it became flooded. The sandflies were numerous and very troublesome, but they left us shortly after sundown. The shingle bank made a soft bed in comparison with the rougher rocks of the glacier moraines, to which we had been used on the eastern

side of the divide, and under ordinary circumstances I doubt not that we should have slept long and soundly; but Fyfe's leg grew worse and worse, and all night long he tossed, moaning, from side to side in a vain endeavour to get relief from the pain. I lay awake for hours, listening, and wondering whether we could cross the river in safety, and whether in the event of our doing so he would be able to continue the journey. Then I would commence to devise schemes for getting him down to the coast should he knock up altogether. I fully expected that I should have to leave him here and proceed alone down the valley in quest of aid. Once or twice during the night, when he was more than usually restless, I ventured an inquiry as to how he fared, and received a gloomy, monosyllabic answer that was the reverse of cheering. And then it was, in the silences of the night, as I lay a-thinking and a-planning, that the lines I have put at the head of this chapter came into my head, and I could not refrain from repeating them over and over again to myself—

"Good Luck is the gayest of all gay girls,
Long in one place she will not stay,
Back from your brow she brushes the curls,
Kisses you quick, then runs away.

But Madam Bad Luck, she soberly comes,
No fancy has she for flitting,
Snatches of strange, sad songs she sings,
Sits by your side and brings her knitting."

Well, after all our good fortune, here was Madam Bad Luck come at last, and it really looked as if she had "brought her knitting."

The camp fire dies down, and a weka or some

night bird stirs the dry leaves near at hand. I watch the stars come out, and one fine star rise slowly above the eastern horizon. The night is clear and cold.

> "And stretching, stretching over all,
> Bends the unmeasured sky, that glows
> With its pale stars—like the full close
> Wherewith Eternity shall wall
> Time round when Time shall fall."

CHAPTER XV

ACROSS THE SOUTHERN ALPS—*concluded*

"The' was 'bout half a minit when I'd hev sold out mighty cheap an' took a promise fer the money."—*American Author.*

When dawn came, Fyfe was still tossing restlessly in his sleeping bag. We got up at 5 a.m., and partially undressed for the crossing of the river. We got over the first branch without difficulty; but the second stream ran swift and deep. Fyfe got near mid-stream, hesitated a moment, and then plunged ahead. But he had scarcely gone a couple of yards when he was swept off his feet and was at the mercy of the current. His swag was over one shoulder, in one hand he carried the Alpine rope, and in the other his ice-axe. I never expected to see swag, ice-axe, nor rope again, and I was just on the point of rushing down-stream with a view to intercepting Fyfe at a bend in the river before he should be carried down to the gorge, once into which there would have been no hope for him. Many years ago a man was drowned while attempting to cross this same river below the gorge. Fyfe, however, with grim determination stuck to all his belongings, and, after a stroke or two, he came to the surface again and floundered into shallower water. The current there was still strong, and he was knocked off his feet for the second time. But in two minutes he had got through the worst of it, and as

he gained the farther shore he turned round and laughed. He told me afterwards that, though he had set his teeth with grim determination, and was all the more minded, after his involuntary sousing, to get even with the river, he would not have cared—so great was the pain from his wound—had he been swept into the gorge, whether he got through it dead or alive.

It was now my turn to cross, and as I looked ruefully over the broad stream at my dripping, half-clothed companion, I realized that what he had so narrowly escaped might, perchance, happen to me. Fyfe came back, as far as he dared, into the current, and endeavoured to throw one end of the Alpine rope back to me; but the stream was much too wide, and he failed in his efforts. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to make the attempt, and I waded in. By going a few yards farther up-stream, I took the current at an easier angle, and, though it was touch and go at one time, I crossed in safety. At that early hour of the morning, both the water and the air were icy cold, and when I reached the farther bank Fyfe's teeth were chattering. We lit a fire to dry our wet things, and between the process of undressing and dressing we were attacked by myriads of sandflies. Ahead was a steep hill covered with dense bush, up which we had to climb, and we knew not what was beyond. Moreover, we had to be content with tabloid tea and saccharine for breakfast, as we wished to keep our last bit of bread as an emergency ration. While we were drying our things a small wren came hopping about, in quite a friendly way, and, though it went to my heart to do it, I killed him with my catapult. Still, in the event of my having to leave Fyfe, one or

two of these birds, small as they were, would not be amiss.

One cannot make a very full meal of tabloid tea sweetened with saccharine, and it is scarcely the sort of food for a climber when he has to go through dense forest, and up a steep hill, with a swag on his back. At one time we thought of abandoning our swags so that we might make quicker progress. Fyfe's leg pained him at every step, and he told me afterwards that he was busy wondering during all this morning why he had ever been born. On gaining the top of the hill we found several gullies running in the direction of the river. We crossed near the head of these, and arrived at a comparatively flat area on top of a ridge, but could see nothing owing to the tallness of the trees. At length with a joyful shout I came suddenly on an old disused track on which were the recent footprints of a bullock.

We presumed that the animal was being used by some lonely miner as a means of transport to his "claim," and came to the conclusion that if we followed the tracks we should find food and help near at hand. A closer examination of the tracks, however, revealed the fact that the bullock had gone up and down the path, and we could not tell which prints were the newer. Moreover, look we ever so closely, we could find, nowhere, any sign or trace of the presence of man; and, finally, the mystery was solved, and our hopes again dashed to the ground, by the sudden appearance of five or six wild cattle, big and fat, and with great horned heads, that went tearing past us through the forest, and vanished over the brow of the hill into the valley out of which we had just climbed. The noise they made, as they crashed through the

undergrowth at close quarters, startled us somewhat, and the first inclination was to dodge behind the trunks of the splendid trees that grew in such luxuriance in this forest primeval. But it was soon apparent that they were much more frightened of us than we were of them, so we continued our weary march down the narrow, half-overgrown track, which led us out of the forest and back to the river a little way below the mouth of the gorge. Here, on the beach, the first thing that met our gaze was the footprints of a man! We would have given a great deal to have found that man, but, like the footprints of the bullock, his tracks, also, went both ways, and it was impossible to decide at which end of his journey he was. I tried very hard to make out which were the more recent footprints, but there appeared to be no difference. They had apparently been made on the same day. We afterwards found that the man was a miner and that he was working hard by.

Here we halted to have some warm tea, and we now ate all our bread except about two cubic inches, which we kept as a memento of the trip. I also plucked and cooked the wren, grilling him at the end of a stick. He was a tender morsel, but very, very small! At this point there was some debate as to whether we should swim the river to the left bank or proceed down the bank upon which we now were, so, while Fyfe rested, I went exploring, and, at the mouth of the gorge, found an old and rickety footbridge made of fencing wire and saplings suspended high above the water. As Fyfe's leg grew still worse, I now threw away the blanket out of my sleeping bag, and, to ease his burden, took most of his things in my pack. We crossed the bridge in some trepidation, for it swayed

ominously and looked most insecure. On the other side of the river we found another disused track, in places completely overgrown with ferns and scrub. It led us to the river-bank a mile or so farther on, where we came upon the footprints of a man, a horse, and a dog, and we followed these down the valley. Sometimes the tracks were along the shingle beach, at other times they went into the bush. Occasionally we lost them altogether. Then one of us would suddenly come upon them again, and cry out, "Oh, here's the horse!" while the other would, perhaps, remark, "Here's the man," or "Here's the dog also." In this manner we made our way down the valley, where there was, as yet, no sign of cultivation, nor of any habitation. The river was now a stately stream, flowing over a broad shingle bed. Indeed, it is the third largest river on all the West Coast, only the Buller and the Haast exceeding it in size.

About eleven o'clock I was overjoyed to see the head and shoulders of a horse appearing above one of the gravel banks in the river bed. We found a small but very intelligent boy in charge, and immediately subjected him to a running fire of questions. He told us he was the son of Alex. Gunn, of the Wataroa Ferry. Now it chanced that I had a letter of introduction from the late Mr. Seddon, then Prime Minister of New Zealand, to Mr. Gunn, so we made haste down to his house, some three and a half miles farther on. We spoke of leaving our swags for the horse to carry, but on second thoughts we decided to finish our contract in style, and left them on our own backs, regretting all the time that we had done so. At 12.30 in the afternoon we walked into what is marked on the map as the township of Rohutu. It consisted of one house!

In the house we found an elderly man with his wife and a large family, the youngest of which was only three months old. In this home we received a most kindly and hospitable welcome, and remained several days in the hope that rest and hot fomentations would heal the wound in Fyfe's leg. But the leg got no better, and after a time it was decided that I should go south some forty miles to Gillespie's Beach and return to the Hermitage via Fitzgerald's Pass, while Fyfe went on to Hokitika, where he had his leg opened up by a doctor, and two or three pieces of bone taken out.

We said farewell on Wednesday, February 24, he going north, and I going south in company with the mailman, on horseback. It was raining heavily when I left the Wataroa Ferry, and I had no overcoat, but Mr. Gunn rigged me out in true West Coast fashion, with one sack tied round my loins and another fastened round my shoulders. Then we started off down the wonderful and historic West Coast, where the climate is as wet and the liquor as fiery as any in the whole wide world. The pack-horse that carried the mails was a particularly obstinate brute, and while I was helping the mailman to drive it along it suddenly lashed out vigorously with its heels and kicked me on the leg. In a few seconds the leg was terribly swollen, and the pain was so acute that I feared the bone had been injured. Luckily, however, the iron shoe had just missed the shin bone, and my leg was to some extent protected by the putties I was wearing. Otherwise it had gone harder still with me. Here was a nice state of affairs—to be laid by the heels in this manner on a level road after all one's adventures amongst unexplored glaciers, mountains, and rivers!

However, I decided to ride on to Okarito, and, for the next few miles of the journey, was able to reflect on the fact that all our original party except my wife were now *hors de combat* with injured legs. It seemed doubtful if I should now be able to return alone over Fitzgerald's Pass. An injured leg is not the best of companions on a solitary mountain journey.

After we had proceeded a few miles through the bush we came upon some men who were driving cattle, and, strangely enough, one of these young fellows had just been kicked on the chest by the horse he was riding. Such accidents are among the little troubles that the pioneer has to put up with, and as there is usually no doctor within a hundred miles one simply damns the cause of the injury, applies the ordinary simple remedies—or even a horse embrocation—leaving Nature, with the assistance of plain living, to complete the cure. It is wonderful how many things can be cured by simples and how well you are when the doctor is a hundred miles away!

We arrived at Okarito in the evening in the pouring rain, and for one night we enjoyed the luxury and comfort of an hotel. Here I met quite a character who was locally known as "Billy Barlow." He had been a "star" in the halls in London many years ago, and could still act Hamlet and sing a good comic song.

On Thursday we made an early start for Gillespie's. The Main South road from this point was, in places, more imaginary than real, so we kept to the sea-beach. The heavy rain had ceased and the sun shone brightly on the shore, while inland great masses of cumulus cloud piled themselves above the mountain-tops. Our spirits were high, and the horses, too, seemed to revel in the glorious morning as they galloped along the

firm, wet sands. The breakers came tumbling shoreward; above us were the cliffs of the seabeach, covered in places with beautiful ferns and shrubs, through which, at intervals, the silver streak of some waterfall flashed in the sunlight. Beyond, the tall trees rose on a sort of tableland, and the forest stretched away to the foot-hills, above which gleamed the long line of glory of the Southern Alps. Peak after peak I recognized. Here were all our old snowy friends with their backs turned on us, but looking grander than ever in their stateliness of beetling crag and gleaming cone, above the sombre green of their forest setting. In riding along the beach to Gillespie's the traveller has to study the tides. In places there are bold rocky bluffs that cannot be passed at high water. We were late enough at the last bluff, and Hughie Thompson, the mailman, shook his head dubiously as the foaming breakers came thundering amongst the big rocks. We waited some minutes, anxiously watching, and then made a dash for it, I, who came last, just escaping a big wave that broke as I passed. The pack-horses used in this mail service are, however, wonderfully sagacious animals. On occasions they have been left to their own devices whilst the mailman has taken a safer route along the rocks higher up. At such times they will be seen patiently watching the receding waves till a good opening occurs, when they will dash along to a safe standpoint, there to await another opportunity before dashing on again. Several men, however, have been drowned while rounding these bluffs, and their horses dashed to death on the rocks by the remorseless surf. In other cases the horses have escaped by swimming. The turbulent, unbridged rivers, too, have claimed heavy toll of the daring pioneers.

Gillespie's Beach is a small mining settlement with one hotel and a few diggers' huts. I had to wait here for some days, but did not grudge the time, as both my leg and the weather were bad. Eventually I moved on farther south, and stayed in a hut with four miners and an entertaining young Maori named Friday. The hut was on a small cattle ranch owned by an old West Coaster who was then in the Hokitika Hospital. His nephew, Dick Fiddian, a strong, bright, Lancashire lad, was in charge, and, as I was not very sure that my leg would hold out, I engaged him to accompany me part of the way on my return journey to the Hermitage. All the people I met on the way down shook their heads gravely when they learned that I purposed crossing the Alps alone; but I knew if my leg held out for the first two days I should be all right. I was rather pleased than otherwise that the weather continued bad, for the enforced idleness gave my leg a chance to mend. Much bathing with warm water and rubbing with a horse embrocation, a panacea for all outward ailments in these parts, had considerably reduced the swelling.

One night we were visited by a severe thunderstorm, and the rain fell in torrents. But we made merry inside the hut, and, after a supper of boiled fish and potatoes, held a grand concert. "Friday," with a Maori song, some parts of which, I am afraid, would not bear translation, was the hero of the evening. Even "Billy Barlow" would have had to play second fiddle to our man Friday. I can still see his expressive dark features and his expansive grin, revealing a set of beautiful pearly teeth, and hear, in imagination, the strange songs that were sung. I can see again young Foster, and Head, and Wick, and the Maori, and

a quiet old Scotsman sitting round the big log fire that went roaring up the capacious chimney, all keeping time with their feet as they drawled out a melancholy chorus to each verse of an interminably long love-song :—

> "I'll take you home, Kathleen,
> Across the ocean blue and wide;
> To where your heart has ever been,
> Since first you were my bonnie bride."

Kathleen was evidently an exile in a strange land, and, apparently, could not get used to her new surroundings.

Fine, bronzed, broad-chested fellows the singers were, leading a healthy, happy life in these western wilds, and I shall never forget their kindness to the lonely pilgrim who had chanced within their domain.

My leg mended slowly, but I spent the time in delightful idleness, by day fishing for flounders and mullet, and by night mainly occupied in hunting—the quarry being that diminutive species of chamois so humorously described by my old friend and fellow-traveller, Mark Twain. But the more one slaughtered the more there seemed to be. No sooner had you killed one than you found a hundred prepared to come to his funeral !

At last the time came for me to turn my face again towards the mountains, for I knew my wife, who was waiting at the Hermitage, on the other side of the great mountain chain, would be getting anxious about my non-arrival. So one fine morning Dick Fiddian and I got horses and rode to Scott's Homestead, situated on a little island between the forks of the Karangarua River. We were warmly welcomed and pressed to stay the night, but I decided to hurry on.

Here I purchased two loaves of bread, four dozen hard-boiled eggs, some bacon, cheese, tea, sugar, and butter for my journey. The butter, unfortunately, owing to the heat, melted and ran out of the tin in which it was enclosed into the blanket in my sleeping bag. It was not at all pleasant getting into a buttered sleeping bag, and I would much rather have had the said butter on my bread than on my bed. However, there was no use crying over spilt milk, or spilt butter, and we ate our dry bread with a good grace, that atoned, in a measure, for the absence of the butter.

We camped the first night under an overhanging rock near Architect Creek, several miles up the Copland, which is the right-hand branch of the Karangarua River. My companion was an excellent bushman and a good hand with a swag.

He had built a large fire close by the side of our bivouac; but I, who had not of late been used to such warm quarters, found it mighty unpleasant, and lay sweltering in my sleeping bag, warding off the attacks of mosquitoes, and vainly endeavouring to sleep.

The next day we went right up to the head of the valley—a good day's march, as the blazed tracks made in the bush were in places completely obliterated by slips from the hillside or new vegetation that had grown since they were cut. Our bivouac this night, near Mount Sefton and the Marchant Glacier, at the head of the valley, was as cold as the previous night's was warm, for the temperature was below freezing-point, and without an axe we could get no suitable wood to build a big fire.

Next, morning, early, I said good-bye to Dick, and started up the valley alone. This was the first crossing of the pass from the West Coast, and there was

little data as to the line of route. To add to the difficulty the last thousand feet had to be climbed in a fog; but luckily I had, before the fog descended, taken a compass-bearing of the general direction of the pass, and this stood me in good stead. The summit of the range was gained after slightly more than two and a half hours' climbing. Here I waited for an hour till the clouds had risen, when I was able to enjoy the views on every hand. Then I commenced the descent. It was quite clear weather on the eastern side of the divide. There was a bit of rock work to begin with, which, seeing I was alone, I did very carefully. Then I crossed the top of a glacier and got some good glissading down snow slopes and shingle shoots, till, in an incredibly short space of time, I found myself eating a second luncheon on the old moraine of the Hooker Glacier. I was in splendid form, and my leg had stood the strain well so far. The whole descent occupied only an hour!

There can be no doubt that this pass, discovered by Fitzgerald, a member of the Alpine Club, is the best route for tourists proceeding from the Hermitage to the West Coast.

On the old lateral moraine of the Hooker Glacier I gathered some very fine edelweiss, which I took with me to the Hermitage. I arrived there early in the afternoon, but was in no plight to be seen, for my knees were sticking through great holes in my knickerbockers, my coat was torn, and I was bronzed and bearded, if not like the pard, at least like a man who hadn't shaved for several weeks, which is perhaps worse, though I do not know for certain, never having seen the pard. I tried to slink into the Hermitage by the back way, but the rattle of my pannikin against

the ice-axe drew the attention of one of the sun-bonnet brigade in my direction, and I had to run the gauntlet of their hearty congratulations, while at the same time I had to walk backwards into the house, because it was not only the knees of my nether garments that had suffered on this particular expedition!

In a very few minutes I was steeped in a luxurious hot bath, and an amused listener to the remarks on my personal appearance made by the Hermitage maid —"I'm glad 'e's back, Mrs. Ross; but ain't 'e a sight. Lord! mum, no tramp could look wuss!"

CHAPTER XVI

IN KIWI LAND

"A land of streams! Some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below."

TENNYSON.

IN that far corner of New Zealand where the long fingers of the fiords reach inland towards the mountain ranges, amidst which lie the great deep lakes, there is a region rich in its surpassing beauty and ever ready to offer a store of stern adventure to the modest climber who delights in the untrodden ways. It is true the mountains are not high—as heights go in these modern days—yet even the Abruzzis and the Bullock-Workmans, your Conways and your Collies would, in the times I write of, find tasks to test their endurance—or, at least, their perseverance—and to put a strain upon their commissariat sufficient to conduce to a gradual tightening of the belts of such as wear them. Into that land of beautiful forests and a strange bird-life, of deep canyons and high waterfalls, of lovely lakes and clear rivers, of dark precipices and unsullied glaciers, we were the first climbers to adventure. Of our journeyings in that wonderland memories come crowding in upon me as I take up my pen to

commence this chapter. But there is scarce space in this book to tell a tithe of them. They began with that sad mission into the mountains—in company with my friend and fellow-explorer, the Hon. Thos. Mackenzie—to look for my own lost professor. He had wandered out from the tent and his two companions, one wet day, for a stroll up the gorge leading to the pass they were looking for. That was more than twenty years ago, and to this day no one has found trace of him, and no man knows the manner of his death. Of how, after a hurried journey by means of special trains and coaches, we reached that beautiful, sombre "lake of the sorrowing heart," and launched a leaky boat upon its troubled waters, only to find it sinking so rapidly that we had scarce time to get it back with our wetted belongings to the shore; of how we patched it up with old rags and some tar found mixed up with the pebbles of the beach; of our adventurous trip, with the bailer ever at work, up the lake; of our journey through the forest primeval; of our discovery of the pass and our unavailing search there; of how the mountain torrent rose in the nighttime, many feet, till the tent was in danger of being swept away; and of how our food gradually diminished until there remained only some biscuit crumbs and the leg of a tough and hoary pre-adamantine kakapo—of these and other matters I am tempted to write; but the most good-natured of publishers must put some limit to the size of the book he is producing, and so I forbear.

The cairn that we erected to the memory of Professor J. Mainwaring Brown — a talented English gentleman—with the rude wooden cross at its head, was, perhaps, not a very lasting memorial; but we

took the liberty of naming after him a lonely mountain tarn and a peak at the head of the pass near which must lie his lonely grave—either in the fairyland forest or amongst the beautiful Alpine flora that he loved so well. These form a more fitting monument.

The road to this region led past the Takitimo mountain range, across the silvery tussock downs, and through unbridged streams. The Takitimo Range—so tradition says—is one of the canoes of the Maori migration turned into stone, and its sail is now the plain through which the Five Rivers flow from the inner land. Time was when the swarthy southern Maori, encamped by the lake-side, grubbed the edible fern root, or—in the absence of a war—cunningly baited his eel-pots in view of a change from the monotony of a vegetable diet. In time of war the change was, perhaps, as easily made, and, certainly, it was more decided. For some years it was thought that a remnant of the Ngatimamoes might still exist in the mountain fastnesses of Fiordland, but there can be no doubt, now, that the marauding warriors from the north practically annihilated the tribe, and that the eel-pots and fire-sticks, the old skull with the teeth gnarled from chewing the fern root, and the *meres* and other relics from the ancient battle-grounds, dug up by the early settlers, are all that remain, besides tradition, to tell the story of the former inhabitants of Manapouri and Te Anau.

How the lakes came to be formed is a matter for the geologists, the geographers, and the physiographers. Some will tell you they have been scooped out by the glaciers of a past period; others, again, will deny this. For myself I can never quite follow the reasoning of

the erosionists. The greater glaciers, in the higher part of the range at Mount Cook, moving at the rate of, say, half an inch a day along their softer beds, and with a great press of moraine above and in the ice below, have scooped out no such deep lakes. The vanished glaciers of Te Anau and Manapouri, flowing from a lower altitude, and down a more level valley, would march at a still slower rate, and they carried with them a minimum of moraine. Why in the less likely case have we deep lakes, and, in the more likely one, none—except those shallow ones that have been formed, not by erosion, but by the blocking of the valleys with morainic débris? It is difficult to conceive how Lake Wakatipu, especially, with its surface 1000 feet above sea-level and its floor 400 feet below it, could have been so scooped out, and one is tempted to tell the erosionists, as Ruskin told them, to try to saw a piece of marble through (with edge of iron, not of soppy ice, for saw, and with sharp flint sand for felspar slime), to move the saw at the rate of an inch in three-quarters of an hour, and see what lively and impressive work they will make of it! I may be told that Ruskin was not a scientist, and I certainly am not; but even the scientists, themselves, hold converse theories—and, after all, they are only theories.

In the days when I made the journey I am now about to write of, travel in Kiwi Land was beset with many difficulties. The getting to the lake was bad enough; but once aboard the lugger—which was a very small steamer that raised steam in a most erratic way from burning wood—one never quite knew what would happen. The captain had some knowledge of steering a plough on dry land, but little in regard to the navi-

gation of a ship, and, moreover, he had contracted an unpleasant habit of falling asleep at the wheel—a habit that one would rather not see unduly encouraged, especially on a dark night. The result was that when he awoke—or was awakened—there would generally be a heated argument between him and the one and only engineer as to where they were! The engineer had a happy knack of poking his head up through the little hatchway at an opportune moment and asking the skipper in a gruff voice where the devil he was making for; and the skipper, guiltily endeavouring to rub the slumber out of his eyes, would remark in dubious tones that he was steering for "yon clump o' trees" or for "the promontory with the blue-gums on it"; but, as often as not, the clump of trees would be quite a fiction, and the promontory with the blue-gums on it the creation of an imaginative but otherwise dull brain. At such moments the skipper would at first argue the point with all the positiveness of the slumberer who swears he has been awake all the time; but, generally, it would end in his taking his orders from the engineer! This was somewhat disconcerting for the passengers, and, it might have been thought, humiliating for the captain, especially as he was not only the captain, but also the owner of the vessel. The captain, however, did not seem to mind. Occasionally, when there was a head wind, the little vessel would make but slow progress up the lake, and the supply of fuel would come suddenly to an end; but that was a matter easily remedied, for they simply ran the nose of the vessel ashore, and captain and engineer, with the passengers assisting, plied the axe in the forest primeval until a new supply of fuel had been put on board. Then the vessel would be put ahead for all she was worth and

sparks would come streaming aft from the funnel till the drier part of the fuel on deck would catch fire and we would have to dip buckets of water from the lake to quench the conflagration, or maybe, under the press of steam caused by some combined momentary enthusiasm on the part of the engineer and the captain, the boiler tubes would commence to leak, so that we would once more have to run ashore and make up some puddle of thick clay with which to heal up the wounds—

> "All nautical pride we laid aside
> And ran the ship ashore
> Till with rags and clay in a lonely bay
> We made her taut once more;
>
> At the close of a gay, exciting day,
> We sailed in pouring rain,
> And, at length, we lay in another bay,
> To patch her up again!"

But even in such memorable journeys there are some compensations, and one of these is luncheon. We land in a sheltered nook where the little waves come flapping lazily to our feet—

> "To kiss with whispering sound and low
> The beach of pebbles white as snow."

There, under the tall beech trees, we build a great log fire, and, all unheeding of the gently falling rain, boil the "billy" and enjoy our first camp meal, amidst scenes of almost Arcadian simplicity. It is the memories of such meals that remain when recollections of Voisin's, in the Rue Saint-Honoré, or the Ritz, in Piccadilly, have been dimmed by the passing years. And I am sure that no delicacy in a Savoy supper, and not even Delair's famous *canard à la presse* at the Tour d'

Argent could be more delicious than the grilled bacon that came to us, in these wilds, still sizzling from the red coals of the camp fire. Overhead we could hear the strange sound from the beating of the air by the wings of a wood-pigeon and note the scarlet flash of the kaka's underdress as he flew across the valley uttering his discordant screeches of protest. Nearer, the quiet native thrush, with russet tail, would peer at us from the tangled undergrowth, while the little wrens, confiding to the verge of boldness, would come hopping to us, and, after eyeing us with curiosity, but without suspicion, would peck the crumbs that fell at our feet.

By the time our meal was at an end and we had re-embarked, the rain-clouds were low on the mountains with their "burden of unshed showers," and a stiffish breeze from the middle fiord was chasing a squadron of white-crested waves aslant the lake. But we got out of this disturbance into smoother waters and steamed slowly along the western shore at the feet of the great forest-clad mountains. And high in heaven we got a glimpse of one snow-capped peak that rent the clouds asunder with startling suddenness and then vanished again beneath its ashen drapery. Later, other peaks came out, and, in the breaking clouds, the majestic grandeur of the scene was slowly revealed. The walled summits closed in upon us as we went, the cold night air dissipated the swirling mists, the stars stole out one by one, and the serrated edges of the mountains on either hand were silhouetted against the evening sky as our vessel puffed along. Narrower and narrower became the lake, and as we rounded the final turn the blackness of the water and the towering precipices ahead seemed to be luring us to

destruction. The captain and the engineer exchanged orders, but there was no slackening of speed, and just as the doctor, who had been stationed in the bow as a look out, was straining his eyes in a hopeless effort to fathom the cimmerian darkness, the vessel went full tilt on to the beach, and we found ourselves suddenly at the end of our journey, and, as the engineer remarked to the captain, "in a devil of a place." Luckily no damage was done, and we had only missed the proper landing—a shelving, sandy beach—by a few yards. The men of our party scrambled out over the bow, knee-deep in the cold water, the ladies were carried from the side, and then swags and provisions were quickly transferred from the steamer and up a short bush path to the hut near by. A roaring fire was soon blazing up the spacious log chimney, and the expedition settled down to discuss the pannikins of steaming hot tea and the liberal camp bill-of-fare that the self-appointed cooks—the doctor's wife and "the poetess"—had spread on the rough bush table for our delectation.

The walk from Milford Sound has been described as the finest walk in the world, and, although this is an exaggeration, it has sufficient of beauty, and grandeur, and variety to make it world famous. But it has been so much described that it were futile for my poor pen to add anything here, except, perhaps, to say a word or two about the views from and about the pass, which is named after my old friend and fellow-explorer, Quintin MacKinnon, whose body, these many years now, has lain at the bottom of the deep, cold lake that he loved so well. One of the loneliest spots on the journey is Lake Mintaro, at the eastern foot of the pass. The lake itself reflects the surroundings,

On Lake Te Anau.

and the few wildfowl on its waters look at themselves as in a mirror—

> "The swan on still St. Mary's lake
> Floats double—swan and shadow."

With the dying day the gloom of the narrow valley deepened. The glow of sunset fell for a few moments on the mountains down the valley, and the tracery of the dark beech trees stood boldly out against the gold. The trumpet note of the Paradise ducks—which are not ducks, but geese—sounded from the lake, and the plaintive cry of the orange-wattled crow—three clear, sad notes in a minor key—came from the hillside in the dying day. The trees were grey with clinging mosses, Mount Hart towered on the left, and across the lake the grim precipices of Mount Balloon, inaccessible from this side, rose in wild grandeur for thousands of feet—a solid wall of black granite seamed with snow; while just overhead, on the left, the enormous buttresses of the mountain range in places overhung, and seemed ready at any moment to topple over and compass our destruction. The valley is narrow and gloomy, and almost completely shut in from the late autumn sun, so that as the evening wanes one is glad to seek the shelter of the hut and to pile on the beech-tree logs till a great sparking fire goes roaring up the capacious chimney.

Late in the season as it was, we only gained the summit of the pass after a weary trudge through snow. Our reward was the view. One has seen nobler mountains, greater glaciers, and more beautiful snow-fields; but the wild and rugged grandeur of the surrounding country cannot fail to leave a lasting impression. The blackness of the mountain walls,

the narrowness of the valleys, and, above all, the *nearness* of the views, charmed and surprised us. In the valley up which we had journeyed the mountain ranges rose above the mists. Deep down below us was Lake Mintaro with the lonely hut. Turning to the right, we saw the long ridge of Mount Hart, leading to a fine rock peak, and, beyond it, behind Mount Sutherland, the glacier that feeds the Sutherland Falls, gleaming in the morning sun. Down the Arthur Valley range after range, streaked with snow, rose, clear cut, against a blue sky, merging, near the horizon, into pale green; while right opposite the pass—the grandest and most striking sight of all—was Mount Elliot, with the pretty little Jervois Glacier stretching between its twin peaks. The sun just tipped a patch of snow on the left of either peak, while the glacier itself and the stupendous black precipices flanking Roaring Creek were in shadow. Two streams of frozen snow clung to the rocks below the higher end of the glacier, and, still farther round, a peculiar cleft in the rock ran down slantwise from near the summit to the shoulder of the mountain for fully a thousand feet. Occasionally a block of ice fell from the edge of the glacier, or a rock avalanche rattled down sheer into the valley, thousands of feet below. Mount Balloon rose on the right, but, in point of grandeur and beauty, it was not to be compared with Mount Elliot, the dark precipices of which stood out in vivid contrast against the foreground of snow which the saddle this day afforded. The fine crags of Mount Balloon frowned defiantly down upon me, so Fyfe and I, leaving our burdens on the pass, went off to test them from a climber's point of view. We went straight at the precipices that rise above the pass, kicked steps

up a short snow couloir, and then zigzagged up the rocks, climbing towards what appeared to be an arête, running down into the valley at the head of Roaring Creek. We got on very well for a while, but the sun began to work round on to our side of the mountain, and, melting the snow, made the rocks slippery and the vegetation in the crevices and on the ledges dripping wet, so that we had to exercise more than usual care. The heat of the sun, moreover, began to loosen the frozen snow on the ledges of a wall of rock that towered above us for nearly a thousand feet, and masses came crashing down in unpleasant proximity. In nearly every case, however, the falling pieces became so disintegrated through coming from such a great height that there seemed little danger, and we proceeded. The climbing was unlike anything we had previously experienced, and we went at it independently, trying the rocks in different directions. Fyfe almost got blocked on a difficult bit of the cliff near the head of the couloir, and had to leave his axe behind. The couloir narrowed as we proceeded, furtively glancing up every now and then at the chunks of frozen snow that came whizzing down from the heights above. Some of the chips occasionally struck us, and the fusillade was becoming just a little unpleasant, when suddenly there was a louder crash above, and we saw, descending from a great height, a larger mass than any that had preceded it. We instinctively ducked our heads into the snow as the falling mass struck the edge of the couloir above us a little to the right, and came swishing down the slope in a thousand pieces. This was hardly good enough, so, recognizing that discretion was the better part of valour, we turned and beat a precipitate retreat. With

the rocks free from snow these crags would, however, make quite a fine climb; but now it was quite clear the mountain was not in a condition to be trifled with. We had further evidence of this a few minutes later, for as we were glissading down the couloir a chip of rock came whizzing past us, too close to be pleasant. Fyfe went down first, and was skirting the base of the first great precipice that rises from the saddle on the Milford side, when there was a crash above. I yelled to him to look out, but he had seen the rock coming, and in a moment had ducked his head down and his heels up the slope, so that if the rock did strike him it would not be in a vulnerable part. To me, looking down from a height of 200 or 300 feet, the attitude he presented was most comical; and although I could not but recognize the danger and admire his quickness and presence of mind, I could not at the same time refrain from laughter. The rock fell within half a dozen yards of him and buried itself in the snow.

Later, my brother Kenneth and I made two efforts to ascend the peak, as we had discovered a route from the head of the valley on the Milford Sound side, leading to an easy arête that led right on to the summit; but each attempt was nipped in the bud by bad weather. One afternoon in company with Mr. Ziele, a member of our party, we left the Beech Huts at Sutherland Falls, and climbed to a bivouac near the pass, feeling confident that on the morrow the peak would be ours. We found an ideal place for a camp. A small stream trickled through the bush near at hand. Lower down we could hear the ceaseless murmur of the waters of Roaring Creek, and over the tree-tops immediately below us we got a glimpse of the frowning precipices of Mount Elliot. Kenneth lit a great camp-

fire right on the path, and while I built up a rude platform of branches and twigs, Ziele busied himself cutting the fronds of *Todea Superba* and other ferns, so that we should have an easy couch. It was dark before we finished, but we continued our operations by the aid of the firelight, and at 7.30 p.m. we crawled into our sleeping bags for the night. The cries of the kiwi and kakapo sounded close by; the fire crackled on the path near at hand; while above the monotonous lullaby of Roaring Creek and all the other noises came, every now and then, the roar of an avalanche from the Jervois Glacier just across the valley. Two kakapos, half flying, half running, rushed past us through the bush, and the shrill whistle of a weka on the slopes above was answered by the quack! quack! quack! of a blue mountain duck in the creek below. Then a wind began to sigh ominously in the trees, and a falling barometer warned us of further defeat. But our bed was a comfortable one, and the old campaigners, at all events, were soon in the land of dreams.

Towards morning we were awakened by our friends the kakapos, who in their frolics seemed to forget the respect due to the featherless bipeds, and scampered right over our heads. Putting out my hand half an hour or so later, I felt a gentle rain falling, and there was a small pool of water in the folds of Ziele's sleeping bag. The weather had again broken, and there was nothing for it but to return to the huts and try another time. The mist was thick in the valley and all the mountains were blotted out, but the booming of the avalanches indicated clearly that the Jervois Glacier was still alive and kicking. We waited an hour after daylight, and then, squirming out of our sleeping bags, made a hurried breakfast and marched off in single file down

to the Beech Huts. On arrival there we found that Fyfe and Hodgkins had started down the Milford Sound track to see if they might by any chance fall in with the Government road-making party, who we knew must be camped not many miles away. Hodgkins returned in the afternoon with the intelligence that a party of fourteen men were camped about a mile and a half down the valley, that they had almost run short of provisions, and had been for some weeks without news of the outside world. As the day wore on, the rain came down heavier and heavier, and by nighttime we fully realized that the climate on the western side of the divide could be "demned moist and unpleasant" when it chose. Our supply of bread now ran out, but luckily we had taken some flour over the pass, and my wife was kept busy baking scones to supply the wants of six hungry men with fully developed appetites. It was rather interesting to watch the evolution of the methods of camp cookery, but let us hear the cook herself on so important a matter :—

"It was with some trepidation," she says, "that I decided that afternoon to bake bread. At home, I am considered a good cook, even by those who suffer under my experiments, but here things were different. The commissariat department included self-raising flour,—one is fairly sure of a success with that,—and I was fortunate enough in the first hut to find a tin basin to mix my dough in.

"My husband had, before starting, objected, on the score of weight, to the handle of the common domestic frying-pan that figured among our utensils. It was decided to break it off and put two light curved wire handles across. To make it still lighter,

only one of these handles was brought, and the consequence was that the pan, if anyone winked or coughed, tipped up suddenly. My dough looked beautifully light as I patted it gently into the hanging pan. Stokers there were in plenty, and I felt sure of success as I saw the cream-white bubbles rise on the surface. Two of the party were building castles in the air, sitting on the bench in front of the fire, gloating over the idea of fresh bannocks for their tea. For but one moment—one hapless moment—I left my scone to wash the basin at the door, one short step away from the hearth. When I returned, the pan had ignominiously ejected its contents into the very middle of the fire, and then had righted itself again. I demanded of the two, who still sat gloomily gazing, why was this thus; but they told me they thought I was running the show, or words to that effect. The three of us set disconsolately to work with spoons to fish up some of the dough. I deposited a spoonful or two of it in the frying-pan, where it burnt, and smelt so strong that another member of the party came rushing in with his appetite in full play. 'Well,' he said cheerily, 'how did your scone turn out?' I stared solemnly, spoon in hand, and told him that it had turned out all right; but not in the manner expected! However, they let me down lightly over this first *faux pas* in camp cookery, and I hid the charred remnants with the meat-tins where the rats ran riot behind the hut, and, no doubt, made short work of them.

"It was always interesting on arrival at a hut to inspect the kitchen utensils. As a rule it did not take long. We left the hapless frying-pan behind in one hut hoping to find in another a substitute. I

pounced eagerly upon three small cake-tins, and determined to utilize them. They did very well, though of rather thin metal. An enamel plate I also used returned, I regret to say, from the furnace minus the enamel. Of course, these were simply placed on the embers, which had constantly to be raked out from beneath the great mossy logs at the back of the fireplace. Now and again culinary operations had to be stopped, as the wooden chimney had a little habit of going on fire; but a man inside with one bucket of water, and another outside with a second bucket, soon extinguished the conflagration. We got quite used to it at last. It was terribly hot work raking out the embers and watching the bread, and I always got a volunteer for that. I sort of superintended. These scones were really very good; but the best plan was hit upon towards the end of our trip. One awesome night, dark as pitch, when I lay awake in the hut and listened to the rain pouring and the rush of Roaring Creek as it carried its rain-swollen waters into the Arthur River, my thoughts veered round to the perennial scone. The rats that night were holding high carnival. They had discovered some figs in my swag. Among the bric-à-brac in the men's hut, which was our kitchen, dining-room, and drawing-room in one, I had noticed a frying-pan with a large hole in the bottom. This inverted over the baking tins, a piece of tin covering the hole, and then thickly covered with hot embers, would be a great improvement on our present method, and this also would save the trouble of turning. Next day, when tried, the plan proved a great success, and much less bother than the other way. *La nuit porte conseil*, the French say. It was so in this case."

We had heavy rain now, and on our journey down to the Sound had to wade nearly waist-deep through strong-running streams. We were hospitably received at the roadmen's camp, albeit they were running short of provisions. At one time they had run out of tea, and had to be content with hot water, while now they had neither sugar, butter, nor jam, but were obliged to rest satisfied with dry bread and tinned meats. To add to their troubles, they had a cook who was no cook, and whose mental balance, never very well adjusted, had in these solitary places developed a decided kink. He eyed us with a weird look, half of suspicion and half curiosity. We had noted, in passing, near the cook-house, a crooked log partially hollowed out, and we now learnt that this was a primitive canoe which the cook in his spare moments was laboriously fashioning with the avowed object of making a voyage to the better land.

It would have been a cranky craft in any case, and, had he trusted his body to it, there can be no doubt that his contemplated journey to the better land would have been somewhat shorter than he anticipated. However, instead of voyaging on the troubled waters of the Arthur River, he wandered off at midnight down the track to Lake Ada. He returned next day, but went straight to his bed, and refused to cook any more. When asked what possessed him to make this midnight journey, he merely remarked that he had heard the Lord calling him. Some of the men wished he had gone in his canoe.

Our journey down the valley after the heavy rains afforded us a wonderful sight. The Arthur River, swollen to three times its normal size, roared over the rapids, and flowed swiftly along the more level reaches,

while adown the granite walls of the splendid valley hundreds of waterfalls of great variety in height, in volume, and in beauty came madly rushing or softly falling as the case might be—

> "A land of streams! Some, like a downward smoke,
> Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
> And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
> Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below."

Down the river in the boats that we found there, across Lake Ada with its sunken forest, and again on down the woodland track we rowed and marched till we reached the lower boat landing. There we found a boat and a small flat-bottomed punt. We baled them out and embarked—four in the boat and three in the "flatty"—for Milford Sound. The valley broadened out a little, and the rapids of the river had given place to quiet tidal reaches. We seemed to be floating down into fairyland over mountain-tops that were mirrored beneath us. Kenneth, Fyfe, and I were in the "flatty," and we had to bale for dear life; but often we would halt in our work and gaze admiringly upon the beautiful scenes that a bountiful Creator had spread about us with such lavish hand.

No wind stirred the waters, and no sound vexed the hushed air save the plash of our oars and the swish from the baler's can. It all seemed unreal—a pleasant dreamland, a land in "which it seemed always afternoon."

> "We saw the gleaming river seaward flow
> From the inner land; far off, three mountain tops,
> Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
> Stood sunset flushed; and, dewed with showery drops,
> Up clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse."

Suddenly the curving foam of the Bowen Falls flashed into sight, and an involuntary shout of delight and admiration arose from both boats. Then, rounding the last promontory, we came from the dark mountain shadows of the narrow valley into the gleaming sunshine of the open sound.

The stay of a few days in Milford Sound was greatly enjoyed by the non-climbing members of the party. My wife writes of it :—

"The exquisite weather—true Indian summer days—the magnificent surroundings, the genial hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Sutherland, and the feeling that there was no need to be 'up and doing,' all increased the lazy enjoyment of those halcyon days. Perhaps even the knowledge that our comrades, while we basked in the sunshine or rowed on the calm water, were toiling through the matted bush, or cutting their way up their mountain, also added a sharper relish to our pleasure. Many a time our thoughts of them were tinged with anxiety, and we followed their course in imagination. From the hour we came in sight of Sutherland's, lying in the afternoon sunshine of that perfect day, with the white curving flash of the Bowen Fall on our left, and the great mountains far above, to the morning when, with many a wistful backward glance, we left it, silent and seemingly tenantless, we had ideal weather. After the excitement and bustle of starting the climbers were over, and after the return of Mr. Fyfe, who had to be put under medical treatment for neuralgia, we decided to go fishing. It was most exciting. The boat, to begin with, was leaky, and I was very thankful that I had no skirts to get draggled and dirty. One had to keep baling half the time, and another rowing to keep the boat

in position. As there were only two of us in our boat our fishing was spasmodic, but in Mr. Fyfe's case successful. He stood with quite a professional air in the stern of the boat, and caught four or five fish—some blue cod, and two or three of a large frill-backed kind called teraki, which objected extremely to have the hook taken out of their mouths, and flopped most alarmingly about my ankles. Some little red fish, called 'soldiers,' were not considered worth catching at Milford, where so many finer varieties may be hooked. In other places they are thought very good. The water seemed teeming with fish. The line was scarcely out before there came a tug, and occasionally some of our party caught two at once. As the afternoon wore on, a tiny breeze ruffled the surface of the Sound, and it began to feel chilly. The sun had set, and the silvery pallor of the mist wreath across the Lion, veiling its precipices, was changed to rose. From the water's edge towered the great mountains, gloomy in shadow, but above, the higher peaks were still glorious in the sunlight and glowed with living gold.

"When we got back to the roaring fire and comfortable tea Mrs. Sutherland had provided, we did full justice to both. It was the first time I had tasted kid cutlets or stewed kaka, and both were very good. And then, after, we gathered round the blazing logs and told stories, and listened to Mr. Sutherland's yarns amid the curling smoke of the evening pipes. He told us among many other things that there were in the Sound fish he called grampuses—'grampi' sounds more correct—that when at play jumped out of the water 20 feet, sometimes turning a somersault in the air. He said they were often 12 feet long. A recent

visitor to Milford City had said Mr. Sutherland's yarns were on a par with the scenery—'tall'; and we, metaphorically, of course, winked at one another as he volunteered this statement. Time proved it to be quite correct, however. Next morning the three men of our party started off to try to climb the Mitre, and left me to my own devices. It had been dark a long time, and there were no signs of their return. I was feeling a little anxious, as they had to row five miles in the leaky boat. At eight o'clock Mrs. Sutherland and I went out and listened for the plash of their oars, for that, on a still night in the Sound, can be heard over a mile away. The moon was up and making a silver glory of the water. The muffled roar of the hidden Bowen Fall came to us across the little inlet. In front towered the Mitre, grander yet in the misty moonlight. Suddenly across the silence of the sound came a cheer, and some nondescript noises, afterwards explained to be singing, and in a little while we welcomed the wanderers back. They were exultant, for they had filled their boat with fish, and excited, for they had been chased for miles by 'grampuses,' 'quite 12 feet long, and that jumped at least 20 feet out of the water just alongside our boat.' To judge from the slightly incoherent accounts, these monsters must have chosen this fine moonlight night for a game of leap-frog, and have wanted an audience. Fortunately, though they dived underneath and jumped quite close to the oars, they never touched the boat, but evidently the minds of the gallant crew were not free from apprehension. The next day Mr. Sutherland showed us these same fish spouting five miles away, near the Stirling Falls."

CHAPTER XVII

IN KIWI LAND—*continued*

"My summit calls. Its floors are shod
With rainbows laughing up to God.

But ah, the jagged ways and bleak
That give upon that lonely peak!"

ROBERT HAVEN SCHAUFFLER.

THE time had now arrived for us, on this journey, to do a little climbing and some real exploration, so one morning early in May, and much too late in the season, Fyfe, Hodgkins, Kenneth, and I started off up the Cleddau River, with the object of making a first ascent of Tutoko, the highest mountain in Fiordland. The guide who convoys tourists overland to Milford from Te Anau and *vice versa* accompanied us. So far as we could ascertain from him, and from Sutherland, who had resided in these parts for about twenty-five years, no one had explored the head waters of this branch of the Cleddau, and the ascent to Tutoko had never even been attempted. We had three days in which to accomplish our undertaking, and as we were promised some rough travelling through the forest and over the river boulders, besides which there was the prospect of a difficult climb, we decided to push on with all haste. Our plan was to establish a camp, as far up the valley as we could the first day, climb the mountain on the second day, and on

the day following return to the Sound. We started at 8 a.m., tracking through the bush behind Sutherland's, and then skirting the right bank of the Cleddau, there a broad-flowing stream. We followed an old, disused bush-track cut by Sutherland some years previously, and then emerged on to a comparatively open piece of flat, with only a clump of trees here and there in the middle. Fyfe, who was still suffering terribly from neuralgia, could, bravely as he bore the pain, proceed no farther, and, greatly to our regret, and his own disappointment, he had to return to the Sound.

We carried, in addition to a tent, our sleeping bags, a camera, the ice-axes and Alpine rope, and provisions to last us four days. We were not likely to starve, whatever happened, as the valley abounded in game, and we had with us two dogs—Tubs, belonging to Sutherland, and Rover, belonging to the guide. Rover went about his work quietly, and in spite of our admonitions was continually bringing us kakapos he had killed. Tubs, on the other hand, roamed at large through the bush making a great noise but killing nothing—although on one occasion he very nearly succeeded in killing himself. But more of that later.

Proceeding for a mile or so over comparatively open ground, we were able to obtain a good view of our surroundings. Barren Peak, the end of the Barren Range, rose abruptly on our left, Mount Moreton towered massively in front, and on its right, up the left-hand branch of the Cleddau, we saw the mountains where it is supposed that young Quill lost his life in the attempt to discover a pass from Wakatipu to Milford Sound. His footprints were found on the

brink of a precipice overlooking the left-hand branch of the Cleddau River, and, subsequently, his brothers, making search in the valley, on the Milford side, found a portion of a skull which may, or may not, have been his.

Some two and a half miles from the Sound the river forks. Turning abruptly to the left, we re-entered the forest, and then followed, for a few miles, the north branch of the river, now for seven or eight miles a foaming torrent, swollen with the rains, and hurrying seaward over its boulder-strewn granite bed. We struggled over and around these great slippery boulders, in some places balancing ourselves with difficulty, in others slipping knee-deep into pools of icy-cold water. Then, by way of variation, we would march back into the forest. On either side the trees came down to the water's edge. The bush was wet and gloomy, and occasionally we sank to the knee in springing moss and decaying leaves. The trees were covered with moss and lichen; no sunshine penetrated, and, what with the gloom and the smell of rotting vegetation, a depressing influence is apt to steal over the stranger unused to such solitudes. All the time we heard the muffled roar of the river on our right, varied at intervals by the piercing scream of some kaka, hidden in the higher branches of the tall beech trees. Occasionally there was a loud barking from a distance. This was from Tubs, who was assisting at the death of some poor kakapo. Tubs did the barking, but Rover did the killing, and presently would turn up smiling, and looking very pleased with himself, because he had a full-sized kakapo in his mouth. Some of these birds were very fine specimens, and one old fellow, with bristling whiskers and dilapidated wings,

we judged to be the patriarch of all Kakapo Land.

A number of streams that came down through the bush from the mountains on the left had cut deep channels for themselves, and, swag-laden as we were, we did not at all enjoy clambering down one steep bank and up the other. After a time we would get tired of this bush travelling, and, for the sake of variation, take to the boulders again. The nails in our boots could get no grip on the smooth wet granite, and it was sometimes entertaining to the last man to watch the peculiar gymnastic progression of those in front—albeit, if he let his eyes wander from the rock on which he was treading, he was soon, himself, providing a more entertaining exhibition. Our remarks were not frequent, but, as they might say in the parish of Drumtochty, a few purple adjectives were "aye slippin' oot." From the forest we could see nothing of the surrounding country: from the bed of the stream the view was superb. The coloured granite boulders, with the foaming river struggling over and around them, made a striking foreground, the graceful beech trees an exquisite middle distance, and the massive snow-clad mountains, towering high above, a noble background. We waited three-quarters of an hour for lunch and then journeyed on, as before, sometimes keeping in the river bed, at other times scrambling through the forest.

Near the head of the valley we came upon some open country, and obtained a good view of the mountains ahead, and of the ranges on either side. The mountains swept round the head of the valley in a grand amphitheatre. Straight ahead was a long, snow-filled couloir leading to a narrow col, on the right of which rose, abruptly, the serrated edge of a peak that

held on its shoulder an ice-field of considerable extent. Then came another mass of rock, shelving gradually towards a larger glacier that occupied the heights to the north, and flowed low down into the valley. From the middle of this field of ice there rose a huge *gendarme*, or tower of rock—a landmark for miles around. On our right another narrow valley began to open out. A waterfall fell over a precipice opposite, and, a mile and a half distant, we could see a glacier leading up to the foot of a high peak with a beautifully rounded dome of snow close to it on the right. This peak we took to be Mount Tutoko, 9040 feet in height, though it was impossible to tell which was the higher of the two mountains, and only one was marked on the map. We judged that the right-hand one was the higher, as it stood farther back and carried the greater glacier, and so we made up our minds to attack it on the morrow. A critical glance at the lower portion of the glacier revealed séracs and crevasses, and it seemed as if we should have a fairly long climb. We had now to wade through the river, which we did with some difficulty. Then, crossing the flat, we followed the bed of a mountain torrent that came from the ice-field which we named the Age Glacier. We were less than a mile from the ice, but it took us a good hour, tired as we now were, to accomplish that distance. The bed of the stream got rougher and rougher as we proceeded, and at last we were forced to the bush, through which the leader proceeded, bill-hook in hand, slashing every few steps at some sapling or branch that barred the way. It seemed strange to be carrying ice-axes in such a place. The last bit of the journey was over an old moraine covered with dense forest. At length, shortly after

sunset, we emerged from the bush, and, with a sigh of relief, threw off our swags, for our day's work was happily at an end.

While two of us went on to reconnoitre the lower part of the route, the other two pitched the tent and boiled the billy. After supper we partially dried our wet clothing, and then turned into our sleeping bags for the night. We were too tired to talk; but I listened for a time to the crackling of the camp fire, the murmur of the stream, and the strange cries of the night birds that were now wandering through the forest in search of food. Kiwis and kakapos appeared to be about us in plenty, but more especially the latter. The kakapo breeds every second year, three or four young ones being found in each nest; but the kiwi lays only one egg. As if to compensate for this difference, the little kiwi is a very independent fellow, while Master Kakapo, on the other hand, requires a considerable amount of attention before he can shift for himself. The kiwi is out of the nest almost as soon as he is out of his shell. There are four species of kiwi, but, so far as I know, only one kind of kakapo. Both birds are easily tamed, and make interesting pets, the kakapo in particular being a very affectionate fellow. A professor friend of mine—when he lived in a hut on the wild West Coast, in the days before he was a professor—had one that became very much attached to him. They are practically blind in the daytime, and, on our return, we caught one on the track in the Clinton Valley. He was staggering about, and bumping up against the trees just as if he had been out all night and was coming home with the milk. Lying in my sleeping bag there, I could hear also the strange whistle of the weka, that

other curious, flightless bird with his strange feathers, his long beak, and his rudimentary wings. He is distributed over a very wide area in New Zealand, and is so fearless a bird that he will come right into your tent and even eat out of your hand. He is, however, an inveterate thief, and particularly fond of walking off with any little bright thing that you may happen to leave lying about the camp. He is very fat and oily under the skin, and if, by any chance, you require to use him as food, you must boil him before you grill him. He has, however, such a friendly, confidential, inquisitive way with him that you would never dream of killing him unless you were hard put to it in the matter of provisions. He is not found in large numbers about Milford Sound. Perhaps the climate is too damp for him.

One of the handsomest birds found in the sounds and on the southern lakes is the crested grebe, which builds its nest under scrub or overhanging bushes near the water's edge. These beautiful birds are much rarer than either the kakapo or the kiwi. The kea—in some localities so destructive of sheep—is also to be met with in the Alpine parts of Fiordland; but in these localities he knows nothing of sheep, and is still a vegetarian. He comes into this story elsewhere, and, of all the New Zealand birds, he is the one that is most fascinating to the mountaineer. Duck of various species are met with, the most interesting being the blue mountain duck, who has a peculiar whistling note, and who seems almost to have lost the use of his wings.

Other interesting birds frequently met with on our journey were the kaka (a tree parrot), the wood pigeon, the New Zealand thrush, and the orange-wattle crow. The *Notornis Mantelli*, of which there are only four

specimens in existence, once inhabited this region, but is now, to all intents and purposes, extinct. No specimen has ever been taken alive. The last one found was killed by a guide's dog in the vicinity of Lake Te Anau, and was sold to the Dunedin Museum for quite a large sum. A good specimen would now fetch as much as £500. As a matter of fact an agent, acting for Lord Rothschild, wanted to buy the last one found, and offered a sum considerably larger than was offered by the New Zealand authorities; but the guide, being a patriotic New Zealander, accepted a much smaller sum rather than let the specimen go out of the country. It is just possible that a very few more specimens of this handsome bird may be found in the unexplored wilds of Fiordland; but there cannot be very many more left. The gigantic moa, which once wandered over the upland plains of Lakeland, is, of a surety, extinct. If one specimen could be found, it would be a prize indeed. At present the birds of Fiordland have few if any natural enemies, and none of the commoner kinds are likely to become extinct for years to come, unless through the ravages of ferrets, stoats, weasels, and cats that have been introduced into the neighbouring country with a view to keeping down the rabbits on the sheep runs—a kind of acclimatization that is almost criminal.

But in following the birds I have wandered off the track, so, now, let us return to our mountain. Next morning the old familiar clink of the ice-axes on the rocks of the moraine sent a thrill of pleasure through us, while a sniff of the keen mountain air, and the prospect of a stiff climb, cheered us onward, as, leaving behind the depressing gloom of the dark, trackless forest, we resolutely strode forward to attack our peak.

We could not help remarking on the purity of the glacier, and the almost complete absence of moraine, owing, no doubt, to the hardness of the granite rock of which the mountains in this region are composed. In similar situations in the vicinity of Mount Cook there would be long slopes of scree on the mountain sides, and the snout of the glacier would be buried under a morainic accumulation. Here the clear ice flowed, unencumbered, to the terminal face. As we climbed the rocky buttresses above our camp we observed on this glacier—of which we were the discoverers—a fine mass of sérac ice from which blocks came crashing down on to the lower part of the glacier. A great deal of this broken ice had fallen at one time or another, and, while we were scrutinizing the glacier for a safer route, a splendid avalanche thundered down. The glacier was steep, and the ice hard, so that there would have been much arduous step-cutting by that route, even if we could have avoided the ice-fall. We therefore kept to the rocks, and made our way upwards, zigzagging, by ledges, through a series of precipices.

On leaving the old lateral moraine, we crossed a stream that issued from an enormous cleft in the granite. We then commenced the ascent proper. The rock, except where it was absolutely precipitous, or actually overhung, was clothed with a slippery grass, alternating with Alpine plants and shrubs, and, though this vegetation seemed to give good hold, we, not being used to it, did not care to trust it too much, so that at first our motto was "Slow but sure." One or two vertical bits of rock gave us some little trouble at the start, and the dogs soon had to give the ascent best. The irrepressible Tubbs had a narrow escape here, tumbling over backwards, but managing to pull himself

Homeward Bound.

up just in the nick of time on the verge of an awful precipice, thus escaping certain and ignominious death, as it were, by the skin of his teeth. Our guide, at this point, apparently, thought discretion the better part of valour, and returned to the camp. From an upper ledge we shouted instructions to him to have a soft bed and a good supper ready for us on our return, but not to be alarmed if we did not come back that day, for, if the peak were worth doing, and should prove difficult, we might spend the night out on the rocks.

After some time we reached the crest of a ridge overlooking the ice-fall, and saw, stretching away before us, a beautiful snow slope that led, in gentle undulations, to the steeper ice slope that barred the way to the final peak. We progressed rapidly over this plateau, the snow being just soft enough to permit of our getting a good grip with the nails in our boots. The peculiarity of the glacier was its purity. Not a stone of any kind was to be seen on its surface. Our route now lay plainly before us. By making a slight detour we could easily avoid the bergschrunds and crevasses that extended from the ice-fall almost to the head of the plateau. From that point there was the slope of frozen snow, up which we should have to cut steps to the final rocks. These rocks might afford us half an hour's scramble, and then, heigh presto! Tutoko would be conquered. Already we counted our victory won. We were confident of topping the peak by 2 p.m. at the latest. Alas! we were never more mistaken in our lives.

We stopped in the middle of the plateau for a morsel of lunch, and divested ourselves of our superfluous clothing, which, under such circumstances is always a mistake, and for which we were heartily sorry

afterwards. Close at hand on our right rose a splendid rock peak, with a steep snow couloir leading up to a shattered pinnacle—

> "The fretwork of some earthquake—where the clouds
> Pause to repose themselves in passing by."

This we thought of attacking on our return, so confident were we of gaining an easy victory over Tutoko.

The snow on the plateau was so hard, and the crevasses and schrunds were so marked, that we never dreamt of putting on the rope till Kenneth, who was leading, cut a step or two up a short, steep, curving slope, and found himself on the edge of a yawning bergschrund. The mountaineering authorities define a bergschrund as a big crevasse with its upper edge higher than its lower edge. Here, however, was a schrund that, paradoxical as it may seem, had a curving lower lip that rose above its upper edge, and so it happened that as we were proceeding up the glacier we found ourselves on dangerous ground before we were aware of it. But the snow was so hard that even this thin overhanging lip would have held the whole party safely. We deemed it wise, however, at this stage, to put on the rope, and we bore away to the right to avoid other schrunds, eventually reaching the crest of the range and overlooking a pass that led down into the Holyford. Here there were some most remarkable pinnacles of rock, and the radiation of the heat from one of the larger buttresses had melted the ice of the plateau, which stood back from it in a beautiful amphitheatre some forty or fifty feet thick. This we named the Colosseum. The ice at the top was a pure white, but gradually merged into beautiful tints of bluish green lower down, where, owing to the greater pressure,

it was more compact. The bold granite battlements, rising above the delicately tinted Colosseum ice, half in sunshine, half in shadow, and the broad expanse of the plateau combined to make as effective an Alpine picture as could well be imagined, and we now longed for the camera which our tired shoulders had rebelled against carrying beyond the head of the valley. Cameras were heavy in those days.

From the Colosseum to the final snow slope was but a few hundred yards, and up to this point we were well satisfied with our progress. Now, however, our troubles began. The névé was so hard that every step had to be cut with the pick end of the axe. Midway up the slope was an overhanging wall of ice, and up to this we cut steps, only to find, when too late, that we could not surmount the obstacle, so we turned abruptly to the right and made a traverse to where the wall ran out. Then we made a more difficult traverse back again, above the wall, and, ascending gradually, after a good deal of left-handed step-cutting, we gained the final rocks. These, to our dismay, we found glazed with ice. It was the penalty we paid for coming so late into these low latitudes.

At the point where we first gained the rocks, they were so steep and so glazed with ice that it was practically impossible to get on to them. There was nothing for it but to make a traverse along the slope for some distance in the hope of finding an easier place at which to attack them. Kenneth led round here, the step-cutting being arduous. Sometimes he was out of sight round a corner, and while he was chipping away, we held on with our axes and stood firmly in the steps till he called to us to move on a step or two. The ice chips went swishing down the slope over the ice wall and into

a bergschrund at the top of the plateau. Occasionally we were able to hook the rope over a projecting knob of rock, but, for the most part, the rocks afforded no hold. Kenneth, however, made the steps wide and deep, and, so long as we moved one at a time, managed the rope skilfully, and kept our heads half as cool as our feet were, the danger was practically nil, for everything above was frozen, and there could be neither avalanche nor falling rock to fear. Still the situation was sufficiently exhilarating, and Hodgkins afterwards informed us that on mature reflection he had come to the conclusion that the pictures in the Badminton book on mountaineering, instead of being, as he had at one time imagined, greatly exaggerated, were wonderfully true to nature.

With this sort of work hour after hour slipped by, and still our peak looked down defiantly on us. At length, when we did get on to the rocks, progress was slower than ever, and, eventually, we had to turn back from the line of route we had selected and take to an ice-filled couloir that was both steep and slippery, with smooth slabs of rock showing through, in places, just under the ice. Up this we slowly hacked our way and gained some broken rocks above, where the climbing was still difficult. In one place the rocks were perpendicular, and, owing to the ice and the nature of the rock, the holds were few and far between. The ice had to be chipped off the rocks, and it rained down on the heads and hands of those below with rather unpleasant force, till at length we reached the highest rocks, and called a halt. The views were splendid. On the one hand was the valley of the Holyford, on the other that of the Cleddau. Inland, we looked over a wilderness of peaks rising, near at hand, in savage grandeur, and

farther away mingling and fading in the dim haze of distance. But all the while

> "the broad sun
> Was sinking down in his tranquillity,"

and, as we had spent hours on those rocks and ice slopes where we only expected to spend minutes, it behoved us to think of the descent. There was a further pinnacle of the peak above us, and, earlier in the season, with the rocks in good condition, we should have waltzed up it in quick time. But now, with the rocks in this frozen state, it was clear that there would be step-cutting—and difficult step-cutting at that—all the way, and not only step-cutting but the uncovering of the rock itself, so that if we wished to get off the mountain in daylight, it was already high time to think about the descent. We took one last look around, and, then, very slowly, and cautiously, with our faces to the mountain, we climbed down, the last man, when opportunity offered, hitching the rope around some pinnacle, so that the others might descend more safely. We had turned none too soon, for just as we reached the foot of the rocks the sun, in a blaze of golden glory, pushed his rosy rim behind a bank of westering cloud, and all the choicest and most delicate tints from Nature's palette seemed blended in the evening sky above the far away mountain-tops. Someone has wisely said, or written, that if you must have a sunset in your book, by all means have it, but let it be a short one ; and in this case we must perforce follow such excellent advice, for we had scarce time to notice detail, though we could not help every now and then stealing a glance from our icy staircase to the glowing west beyond.

But there was no time to stop. The keen air and

the gathering gloom warned us to get off those steep and slippery ice slopes before dark. But it would have been dangerous to hurry, so down we went, faces to the wall, with no sound to break the silence save the clink! clink! clink! of our axes in the ice, and an occasional admonition from Kenneth to the plucky Hodgkins to take the steps faster. But Kenneth's legs are long and Hodgkins's legs are short, and, as the steps had been made at intervals to suit the former, it was not so easy for the latter to comply with the request. Still we made good progress, considering the difficulties, and at length emerged from the shadow of the peak into the moonlight which now gleamed on the final slope just above the plateau. Here we had adventures. The temptation to indulge in a glissade was too strong to be resisted, so, unfastening myself from the rope, I made a traverse across the slope so as to evade the bergschrund below, and started off on a standing glissade. But the slope was steeper, and the snow harder, than I imagined, and, though I used my axe as a brake with all the skill I could, I quickly lost control, and went whirling down at an alarming speed. Away went my hat and away went my axe, but I just managed to keep my feet till, with strange gyrations of arms and legs, I landed, breathless with excitement, on the gentler slopes of the plateau, 300 or 400 feet below. The others, profiting by my experience, came down more slowly, trusting simply to the hold they obtained with their axes, for we had made no steps here in going up. All went well till Kenneth suddenly found Hodgkins whizzing past him down the slope in the direction of the bergschrund. Kenneth, however, was equal to the emergency, for, quick as thought, he clutched the slack of the rope with one hand, and dug

his axe into the slope with the other, bringing his companion up with a round turn a few feet below him. Once off these slopes the strain of the past few hours was at an end, and we ran down the plateau in the moonlight to where we had left our coats in the morning. Here we hastily donned them, and then continued our race across the plateau. On the last snow slopes we had to slow down, as the gradient was steeper, and the snow was now frozen quite hard. The ice fall was a glorious sight in the clear moonlight.

Once off the snow, it was not an easy matter to keep to our route, and, lower down, in the shadow of the valley, the difficulty was increased. All things considered, however, we managed to hit off the route wonderfully well; but, at last, in the darkness, we were completely stuck up at a point not more than 2000 feet above our camp. There was only one way by which we could descend, but all our efforts to find the exact spot were unavailing. I tried to the right in several places, making an awkward traverse across a steep and slippery wall of granite, and, eventually, on finding myself hanging over the face of an awesome precipice above the glacier, I gave up the search. On rejoining my companions we held a short council of war, with the result that, rather than risk an accident, we decided to stand the night out on the mountain. There was no shelter where we were, nor any dry grass nor fern with which to make a comfortable bivouac, but, luckily, the night was fine. The temperature fell quickly, and the provoking part of the situation was that, only some 2000 feet below, we could see the glimmer of our camp fire—so near and yet so far. We shouted and jodelled to our guide in hopes that he would hear us, come up to the foot of the cliff, and give us a clue to the route;

but all our shouting and jodelling were in vain. The only answer was the rumble of an avalanche from the séracs opposite, and visions of the soft bed and the hot supper that we had been longing for quickly faded away. We were none too warmly clad, and we had but a limited stock of provisions—three small scones and the scrapings of a tin of jam, which we now disposed of, washing the crumbs down with a drink of icy cold water from a little pool in a rock close at hand.

The temperature continued to fall till by ten o'clock it was several degrees below freezing-point, and the pool of water on the rock became a frozen mass. We selected a spot where there was a comparatively flat rock about a dozen yards long, on which we might promenade at intervals to keep up the circulation. The stars shone in a wonderfully clear sky, star beyond star, until they seemed to melt or mingle into a pale glow in the realms of illimitable space.

"No one," says Stevenson, "knows the stars who has not slept, as the French say, *à la belle étoile.* He may know all their names and distances and magnitudes, and yet be ignorant of what alone concerns mankind—their serene and gladsome influence on the mind." There is a great deal of truth, though not, perhaps, the whole truth in this bit of Stevensonian philosophy. But, at any rate, it is in such bivouacs as these that one realizes to the full the wondrous beauty of the Southern constellations: not of the Southern Cross itself—which, one might almost say, is a feeble thing as compared with the regal radiance of those seven resplendent suns of The Great Bear that have scarce changed their positions since the days of Ptolemy, two thousand years ago—but of the Southern firmament as a whole. I have heard English-

men profess their disappointment with their first view of the Cross and its attendant constellations; but let them sail to the far South, or camp, in late autumn, in the high mountains, or even go out on one of our clearer winter nights, and they will begin to understand our pæan. One can easily comprehend their first disappointment, for, in the same way was I, too, disappointed, when, sailing through tropic seas, I first saw The Bear, and, also, later, in England. But soon it began to dawn upon me that neither the haze of smoky London nor the moist summer air of southern England was the medium through which one should search for the beauty of the heavens; and, finally, one clear, dark night, in the Isle of Arran, I began to form a higher estimate of the beauty and magnitude of the Northern constellations—an estimate that was more than justified, when, later in the year, after witnessing the most gorgeous sunset imaginable from the summit of a pass in the High Carpathians, I descended into the darksome valley, and saw The Great Bear, in all his glory, with his two pointers leading the eye on to the Pole Star, serene and immovable in his place in the Northern sky. Nevertheless, I must still hold that our Southern firmament bears the palm, and more especially that part of the Milky Way —invisible in the North—that is strewn with millions of bright stars, and that glows with the nebulous mingled haze of still more distant myriad suns.

One begins then to realize that

> "To other worlds that spin in space
> Our world looks just a shining star."

But, perhaps, I shall be told that one whose ignorance of astronomy is in inverse ratio to his

knowledge of mountains cannot be trusted to make comparisons; and I quite agree that it is as futile to attempt comparisons between groups of stars as between groups of mountains, for each has a beauty and a grandeur that cannot be justly estimated the one against the other. And, moreover, no author, however obscure, can afford to have a charge of parochialism levelled at his head in regard to the firmament, though, mind you, there are people quite ready to take up this attitude, as I myself know, for I once heard a young lady clinch an argument with an acquaintance, about the relative beauties of their cities, with this triumphant assertion, tacked on to an admission—"Well, your harbour may be beautiful; but, you should see the moon we have in Auckland!"

But I have been drawn, by this dissertation on the stars, from the matter in hand. We certainly had full opportunity of studying the beauty of the Southern stars that night. A cold wind began to sigh through the rocks, and it was not long before we commenced to tramp resolutely up and down our rocky platform, marking time to a song sung, or a tune whistled. This got somewhat monotonous after about half an hour, and, for a change, we lay down in the lee of some detached rocks near our platform and tried to sleep. But granite rock is not exactly a feather mattress, and the Milky Way makes rather a cool counterpane, so it was not long before we had resumed our platform march. Then we coiled up once more in the shelter of the rocks. At first it was "one man one rock," but experience, which teaches many things, subsequently taught us that "three men one rock" resulted in a greater conservation of bodily warmth, albeit the outside man got somewhat the

worst of the bargain, and was always the first to resume the march. However, we were sufficiently magnanimous to take turn about on the outside, and in this way we did fairly well, and some of us even managed to sleep. We spent the night in half-hours under the rock trying to sleep, and half-hours perambulating the narrow platform, singing songs, telling stories, making speeches, and trying to get warm again. But the hours passed so slowly that after a time we were afraid to look at our watches. For once we thought an autumn night unnecessarily long; and, truth to tell, we would willingly have exchanged all the glories of the Southern Cross for a hot supper, our warm sleeping bags, and a glowing camp fire. I tried to console myself with the fact that this cold, autumn bivouac was better than our midsummer one on Aorangi on that terrible night when the snow, drifting higher and higher every hour, threatened to overwhelm us, when the lightning played around us, and the incessant thunder shook the tottering ridge. We had endured all that with a Mark Tapleyan philosophy and some pretence of jollity, so that now, when the elements were propitious, we were not so much inclined to grumble, but rather cheered ourselves with the thought that when morning dawned one should have gained a new experience. And so we talked and joked and sang; and had anyone chanced that way an hour after midnight he would have been amused, and mayhap astonished, to see three yawning and shivering mountaineers, with hands deep in pockets and hats tied down over ears, solemnly marking time on the rock to the strains of a weird melody from Kenneth's *répertoire.*

But notwithstanding all our inventions the night

seemed long. Some kola wine which we doled out at intervals in small doses kept away hunger and, we imagined, had a sustaining effect. And, somehow, the hours did pass. The stars began to lose their lustre and fade slowly away, till only one dim twinkling orb was left—

> "And east and west, without a breath,
> Mixt their dim lights, twixt life and death,
> To broaden into boundless day."

With the first streak of dawn I set about the putting on of my boots, which I had discarded during the night for tennis shoes; but I now found them hard frozen. However, by sitting on them, one at a time, for ten or fifteen minutes, I thawed them out sufficiently to permit of my getting my feet into them.

With the daylight we saw our route clearly enough —not fifty yards from where we had spent the night. We were not long in hurrying down to the tent. Once again beside the cheery camp fire we felt happy, and not one jot the worse for our strange experience and our five-and-twenty hours on the mountain, though inclined to agree with one of Crockett's characters that "a reeking dish of porridge is the delightsomest of scenery to a famished man."

After breakfast we lost little time in packing up, and then we marched back down the valley through the forest primeval to Milford Sound. From there we commenced the long trudge back over the pass and down the Clinton Valley to Lake Te Anau. The weather, which had been remarkably fine for the past three or four days, showed signs of breaking, and by the time we had crossed Lake Ada we saw we were in for a drenching. We had very hard work getting

the big boat back up the Arthur River to the upper landing, and at several places in the rapids the four rowers had to get out and push, waist-deep in water. Once or twice we thought we should have to abandon our task altogether, but eventually perseverance and determination won the day. A gentle rain had begun to fall, so we hurried on to the Beech Huts, where we arrived in a rather moist condition early in the afternoon.

Next morning we again shouldered the inexorable swag, and started off up the pass. Before we quitted the huts we had a "cleaning-up," and left the place in as orderly a condition as we could. It was raining heavily as we commenced to climb the steep incline into the bush—heavily and hopelessly, and not even the Mark Tapley of our party could prophesy a change for the better. The mountains had shrouded themselves, and the waterfalls were riotous. But above us, in the branches of the trees, undeterred by rain or storm, the birds sang cheerily, and now and again a kakapo blundered across the track, blinded by the daylight. Before we had gone far we were soaked to the skin, and the track was naturally heavier and more difficult to climb. Soon we got out of the forest into the low scrub. Then came the steep pull up the tussocky slopes, down which, ten days before, some of us had attempted to glissade. Now there was no remnant of the snow that then lay so thickly on the pass, but the foot sank deep in the marshy ground, and numberless little noisy streams bore witness to the heavy rains and melting snow.

On the top of the pass a strong wind was blowing, ruffling the sullenly grey surface of the tarns, and whistling through the tussocks. Near the cairn built

there we went to the edge of the great wall of granite which falls sheer to the valley below. Far down lay the Mintaro Lake and hut, mere specks in the misty distance. The mountains in front of us loomed up through the mist, that, lifting a little, gave us a glimpse of the spun silver of a waterfall or the rugged grandeur of a granite peak. But there was still some distance to go before we reached our little haven, and on we trudged, serenely conscious that by this time it was quite impossible to get any wetter. A little care was necessary in the descent, but soon the Clinton River was waded, and the Mintaro Hut reached. There, before a blazing fire, a council of war was held as to the advisability of going on farther that day. It was urged that the next hut was more comfortable and drier, and could easily be reached by dusk; so, after some hot tea, we took up our swags and plodded on down the Clinton Valley, now a wonderful sight with countless waterfalls streaming over the dark rocks. Wet and a little tired with the heavy walking, we reached the half-way hut at 6 p.m.

There is a delicious feeling of virtuous well-being when—after a weary tramp—clothes are changed, and, pannikins in hand, all gather round the huge log fire that crackles so cheerily up the great wooden chimney. No tea—even be it the finest Pekoe, enriched with the thickest of cream and sipped from the daintiest Dresden—tastes like "billy" tea. We had quite a festive appearance as we sat round the fire that evening. One man especially, who sported a white "sweater," gave a gala air to the proceedings, and my wife's pink-and-white dressing-gown was, at anyrate, a piquant contrast to her "business suit" in which she had climbed the pass, waded the swollen

streams, and cheerily held her own in the long day's march. Tea over and the dishes washed—lately we had hit upon the idea of this being taken in alphabetical order—four of us settled down to whist. The others read, smoked, talked, or lounged in their bunks. For the labour was all but over. To-morrow was a mere afternoon stroll: to a certain extent our ambitions had been realized, and our expectations fulfilled, and though the rain continued and the jealous mists still hid everything up and down the valley from us, we were happy. Hot cocoa and then early to bed was voted the correct thing, and all slept soundly that night.

In the morning the rain was still steadily falling, and there was little hope of its clearing. We waited two or three hours, and then started for Te Anau. On the way down I stopped to take a photograph of Quintin MacKinnon's Hut, standing lonely and tenantless amid the tall beech trees on the picturesque banks of the Clinton River. As we neared the lake we heard the steamer's whistle echoing up amongst the mountain heights, and a few minutes later, with a fervent "Thank Heaven!" we slung our swags on the floor of the hut at the head of Lake Te Anau.

This being our last night in the wilds,—for to-morrow we should be, winds and waters concurring, in the comfortable hotel at the foot of the lake,—we resolved to have a concert—a smoking concert. After a substantial tea, and the usual whist contest, seats were taken on the bunks, the table, and a bench, which had an amusing habit—amusing, at least, to the onlookers—of tipping up suddenly unless it were evenly balanced. Everyone had to sing, no excuse being taken. Medical certificates, physical disabilities, were of no avail; each was to give one verse, to which

was to be appended—by the whole company—the rousing refrain of "Rule Britannia!" One could scarcely imagine a more unmusical set than we were, taken as a whole, but everyone did his best. One warbled a love ditty in a voice that was perhaps tremulous with emotion; another—from a dim corner, where he blushed unseen—a sailor's song; while the last man, when it came to his turn, made a hasty retreat to the door, only to be brought back forcibly by his coat-tails. When he again took his seat, he brought down the house by a spirited rendering of "The Man who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo," displaying a talent which none of us had ever given him the credit for possessing. An encore was insisted on, and by the time we had all sung again we were certain of at least one thing—the refrain of "Rule Britannia." The captain and the engineer, who were in the steamer, had been asked up to join in our convivialities, but they did not put in an appearance. Away down in the dim shadows one could now and then catch the notes of the latter's flute, and I have no doubt they could hear something of our so-called musical attempts. To finish up our concert, Kenneth was called upon for "The Wild Colonial Boy," as sung by him on Mount Tutoko. I can see him now, his handsome bronzed face and dark eyes lit up by the firelight, waving his pipe backwards and forwards in time to the tune, and singing the lawless ditty with the greatest vigour, while all of us, in a delightfully promiscuous way, shouted the refrain—

"We'll gallop o'er yon mountains,
And roa-m o'er yon plains,
And scorn to die in slave-ry,
Bound down in i-ron chains."

It was a song, with endless verses, of the old bush-ranging days in Australia. The exploits of the gang were belauded, and they themselves were made out to be great heroes, whereas, as a matter of law and justice, they should all have been hanged! However, this perversion of sentiment did not detract from the merits of the song as a song, and so we all vigorously demanded an encore, which was promptly given.

Someone says that there is a certain pain always in doing anything for the last time, and certainly as we said "Good-night" on this our last day in the Clinton Valley, most of us must have wished ourselves able to put Time's dial-hand back. The merry evening in that hut will be among our many pleasant memories of the trip—a trip in which one and all worked heartily, often in the face of impediments and dangers, from the beginning to the end. Fyfe and Kenneth had laboured under difficulties, the former suffering terribly from neuralgia, and the latter having, from the second day out, a heel on which there was a section of raw flesh the size of a two-shilling piece. How he managed to climb at all under such circumstances was often a puzzle to me. Hodgkins, who was comparatively new to such rough work, did remarkably well; while the good-natured Ziele was invaluable in camp. My brother John surprised us with the cool manner in which he threw another man's camera in addition to his own heavy swag over his shoulders, lit his pipe, and strolled without apparent effort, smoking all the time, to the top of the pass; and last, but not least, my wife was all times, I think, the cheeriest and the pluckiest of the party.

Next morning there was a big flood in the Clinton, and the river had overflowed its bounds to such an

extent that it was no easy matter getting to the steamer. The men waded out with the swags and cameras and afterwards pushed a boat up the edge of the stream for my wife and me. Into this we got, and once fairly out in the current we were shot down like a cork into the quieter and safer waters of the lake.

And now shall I attempt to describe our sail down the wonderful lake? I am afraid I can do it but scant justice. There was no gale to vex the waters through which our little craft cut her way. The rain had ceased, and the heavy pall of ashen grey was slowly but surely resolving itself into noble piles of cumuli. Peak after peak came out, here black with overhanging precipice, yonder, where less steep, snow-flecked. And ever and anon the cloud masses that were slowly rent asunder would, more slowly still, with ever-varying change, heal themselves up again and softly drape the beetling crags. Now a peak would be hidden completely; then the clouds would break, revealing with startling suddenness some rocky pinnacle high in heaven. Farther down the sun came out, and the mists formed themselves in bands athwart the lower hills. The high mountains at the head of the lake slowly recede. On our right a purple cone flecked with new snow rises above the mists and then is cloaked as with a thick veil. A black promontory, with tree-serrated edge, clear cut against a bank of sunlit mist, juts out ahead. Mists and high snow-capped mountains on the right, trees and the low land on the left; away up the North Fiord a patch of blue sky; and southward gleams of green. Below us the dark waters of the great lake; and yonder, on Lone Island, standing out against the sombre trees, left by some long-melted glacier, a granite obelisk—MacKinnon's monument. Our journey is

coming to an end, and in the gloom of this restful autumn evening a feeling in which there is a tinge of sadness steals over those of us who are such barbarians as to enjoy a taste of the nomad's existence. And ever I find my thoughts recurring to the fate of the lost explorers of Fiordland—Mainwaring Brown, William Quill, and Quintin MacKinnon. Widely different in temperament, in character, and in education, each had the same love of undefiled nature, and each had felt the fascinating spell of the great unexplored mountain region.

"Gone to Lake Gertrude Saddle, and trying to get down to Cleddau Valley.—WILL QUILL, 15/1/91, 7 a.m." Thus ran the last words of Quill's diary, written on a paper bag and left in the tent at the foot of Homer's Pass. In endeavouring to find a way to Milford he probably slipped and fell over a precipice. Mainwaring Brown perished, no one knows how, in endeavouring to find a pass from Manapouri to Hall's Arm ; and poor MacKinnon, who had gone through many adventures by flood and field, was no doubt knocked off his boat by the boom in some sudden squall, and drowned in the lake. Brave fellows all of them. Of the manner of their going hence we know little, but of this we may be sure, that when the time came for them to leave for that other country,

> "Where ends our dark, uncertain travel;
> Where lie those happy hills and meadows low,"

there would be no flinching nor bemoaning, but that bravely and unmurmuringly they would depart. The charm of the unexplored, of the sombre forests, of the beautiful rivers, and of the giant mountains seemed to beckon them on—on to unknown graves.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FIRST CROSSING OF MOUNT COOK

"From depth to height, from height to loftier height
The climber sets his foot and sets his face,
Tracks lingering sunbeams to their resting-place,
And counts the last pulsations of the light:
Strenuous through day, and unsurprised by night,
He runs a race with Time and wins the race."

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

I HAD been in the hands of my doctor, and had made a good recovery. It was not surprising, therefore, that with renewed health and summer suns there should fall upon me that irresistible longing for the mountains that so often comes across the dreary miles to the city man. In imagination I was already drinking in the champagne air of those higher lands, and seeing, in my mind's eye, the ever-changing scenes of the Southern Alps. But I had given up all hopes of a climb that year. A week or two later, Mr. Samuel Turner, F.R.G.S., of England, appeared upon the scene and asked Fyfe and myself to join him in an expedition to the Mount Cook district. I was doubtful about attempting big work, so I went back to my doctor. He thumped me in various places, listened carefully to certain interior organs that it is generally supposed should be in good working order for climbing, and said, "Go: it will do you good." That settled it; though I believe if the doctor had said "No," I should have

gone all the same. Turner and Fyfe had a week's start of me, and, before I could shake off the shackles of the city, they were already at the Hermitage.

Our coach had a full load of passengers, and the accommodation along the line of route was sorely taxed. "Very comfortable in the laundry," one man had written in the visitors' book, and this entry was indicative of the general crush, for there was truth as well as sarcasm in the sentence. Both this hostelry and the one at Mount Cook were in the hands of the Tourist Department, and, like most Government enterprises of the kind, were a dismal failure. Tourists, or the majority of them, do not have votes, and what matters efficiency under a Liberal Government if votes cannot be counted? Much better expend the needed money in some other place where the ballot box looms larger on the political horizon. *Vox populi, vox Dei!*

The views along the lake-side as we drove towards Aorangi in the early morning were very beautiful, and it was pleasing to note a considerable increase in the bird-life of this region, because as a general rule the feathered tribe of a colony has to bear the brunt of the colonist's gun. Swan, Paradise and grey duck seemed to abound, while the strutting pukaki, the perky redbill, and the ubiquitous seagull were also in evidence. As the coach pulled up at the Hermitage, Turner and Fyfe appeared in the doorway. They had attempted the ascent of Mount Sealy in a nor'-wester, and, as was only to be expected, had failed.

Two days later we left the Hermitage and walked up the Tasman Valley, fourteen miles, to the Ball Glacier Hut. Clark, Graham, and Green, of the Hermitage staff, who were packing provisions to the huts,

came with us. The skilful way in which Clark managed this portion of his duties was evident even to a novice in the art of transport in rough country. He had reduced it to a science, and, though he declared that the dreadful Hooker River would one day be the death of him, he continued year after year successfully to make these packing pilgrimages with the horses across swollen streams and moraines and avalanche débris to the Ball Glacier Hut, and thence, without horses, over the solid hummocky and crevassed ice to the Malte Brun Hut, far up the Great Tasman Glacier.

The huts were now very comfortable, and I could not help contrasting the changes that had been made since my wife and I first pitched our tent in this rocky wilderness sixteen years before, and carried tents, blankets, and provisions on our own backs along the crumbling moraine and up the trackless valley. We passed the spot where we had bivouacked under the stunted pine tree, and a screech from an impudent kea on the moraine recalled the fact that in those days a slight detour would have been made in order to get him for the pot. Now the keas are preserved to amuse the tourists, and the chief guide, with wonderful celerity, will produce you a four-course dinner that is warranted to satisfy even a Mount Cook appetite. It is true that coloured oilcloth takes the place of spotless damask, and that soups, entrees, etc., are evolved from the mysterious contents of gaudily labelled tins. Nevertheless, after a hard day's tramp, one is apt to consider it a banquet fit for a king. There is a story current—and it is quite a true one—of two tourists who finished a four-course wine dinner at the Ball Glacier Hut with black coffee and cigars, after which one, looking at the unusual surroundings, remarked quite seriously to his

companion, "Bai Jove! We are roughing it, aren't we?"

Next day we walked up the glacier to the Malte Brun Hut, which we found half buried in snow. A week before it was quite covered, and Clark and Green, coming up with some tourists, had to dig their way down to the door, while inside the hut six candles had to be kept burning all day to give light. Our party was bent on the conquest of Elie de Beaumont, but a storm came up from the north-west, and a heavy fall of snow put climbing out of the question for some days. We decided to retreat to the Ball Hut, and walked down the glacier in the dying storm, the gaunt precipices of the Malte Brun Range looming darkly through the mists, while the murmuring of waterfalls and the roaring of avalanches were borne on the winds across the floor of the glacier.

On Christmas Eve, the weather having cleared, we packed up tent, sleeping bags and provisions, and started across the Tasman Glacier and the Murchison Valley, for a climb on the Liebig Range. Our objective was the Nun's Veil, a mountain of about 9000 feet. It occupies a commanding position on the range, and Fyfe and I had often expressed a desire to climb it for the sake of the splendid views likely to be obtained. It was a hot walk across the glacier, here almost entirely covered with morainic débris. A solitary kea from the flanks of the Malte Brun Range came and screeched at us, daring us to enter his demesne; but we heeded not his eldritch cries, and descended into the Murchison Valley, the upper portion of which is filled with a fine glacier drawing its supply of ice from an area of 14,000 acres. The Murchison River coming from this eight-mile-long glacier barred our way, but we doffed our

nether garments and crossed it in comfort in the garb of Old Gaul. Camp was pitched close to a waterfall that came down in a series of leaps and cascades for fully two thousand feet. It was a most interesting corner. The billy was boiled and supper served round a blazing fire, after which we turned into our sleeping bags inside the Whymper tent.

We slept fairly well till Turner roused us with an attempt to sing "Christians, awake!" and we realized that it was Christmas morn. Turner had the billy boiled—an hour too soon, but that was a detail—and, breakfast finished, we waited for the dawn. Then a start was made up the steep slopes of a spur on the Liebig Range. The waterfall on our right came down in magnificent leaps. At our feet the Murchison River, in numerous branches, wandered over its stony bed, and north and north-east hundreds and hundreds of rocky peaks and ice-clothed mountains cleft the sky. Directly opposite, across the valley, the splendid mass of Mount Cook filled the view above the boulder-strewn glacier. Presently the sun caught its upper snows and grim precipices, bathing them in a warm ethereal tint—the despair alike of the artist and of the writer. The rosy flush crept slowly down the slopes, and then faded as it came, giving place to a wonderfully delicate pearly grey with just the faintest trace of warmth in it. This in turn vanished, and then, as Phœbus came boldly up above the eastern mountain-tops, the snows of Aorangi were changed to gleaming silver. It was a sunrise to be remembered.

A detailed description of this climb would only bore the reader unacquainted with Alpine heights. Suffice it then to say that the ridge that from below looked a "cake-walk" became very much broken, and

gave us some interesting rock-work. Fyfe, who was, of course, in his element, decided to keep to the arête, and gain the snow slopes higher up; but Turner urged a deviation, and, somewhat reluctantly, we descended a snow couloir, flanked on either side by magnificent precipices. This detour lost us five hundred feet of elevation, and the climb became, for an hour or more, a weary snow trudge. The main arête was regained only to find that we were completely cut off from the Nun's Veil. We therefore had to be content with the first ascent of the nearest peak—Mount Beret, 8761 feet, which is the highest point of the rocky Priest's Cap. The final climb was interesting, especially the crossing of one narrow snow ridge, on which there was just room to stand. On either hand the snow slope swept sharply down to great bergschrunds that yawned below. From the summit of our peak the view of Mount Cook was magnificent—probably the finest in all the Southern Alps—and, towards the north-east, there was a most glorious panorama of mountain peaks that seemed to stretch for over a hundred miles, till the more distant were lost in a haze of bluish-grey. The weather was still unsettled, and a cold wind had arisen; but we secured some very interesting photographs. On the descent we got two thousand feet of glissading, and reached camp early in the afternoon. We packed up, waded the Murchison River, crossed the Tasman Glacier, and were back in the Ball Hut just before nightfall, after fifteen hours' fairly hard work—an easy day for an invalid!

We now began to cast longing eyes toward Mount Cook, the first "colling" of which—*i.e.* the climbing to the highest summit on one side, and the descending on the other side—we had resolved to attempt. This was

no ordinary undertaking, and it was necessary that we should take no chances either in regard to weather or equipment. The weather, however, was not yet quite settled, and another difficulty in the way was Mr. Turner's boot. While the chief guide at the Hermitage was hammering some nails into it, he gave the heel a tap with the hammer, and the heel came off! The boot was sent post-haste to the nearest shoemaker—ninety-six miles away. It was now due back at the Hermitage, and Fyfe went down for it—a 28-mile journey there and back. Meanwhile Turner did his walking and climbing in a pair of my Alpine boots, I, luckily, having taken the precaution to bring a second pair with me. Turner and I were left in the hut, and during these two days, in addition to doing the cooking and washing-up, I managed to find time to make a collection of beetles and butterflies for my friend, Mr. Percy Buller of Wellington.

On Wednesday, December 27, accompanied by Dr. Fitchett of Wellington, we proceeded up the Tasman Glacier to the Malte Brun Hut, where we found a party, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Longton of Christchurch, Miss von Dadelszen, Miss Hickson, and Mr. W. M'Intosh of Wellington, under the leadership of Graham, one of the Hermitage guides. These huts have only two rooms, and the bunks—four in each room—are like steamers' berths, one above the other. One room is supposed to be reserved for ladies; the men's room does for bedroom, kitchen, dining-room, and drawing-room by turns. The problem of housing seven men and three women in these two four-berth cabins had to be solved by one of the men taking a bunk in the ladies' room, and two of our party sleeping on the floor in the men's room. This central portion of the Southern Alps was

becoming such a popular tourist resort that problems of this nature not infrequently presented themselves, and further accommodation, both at the huts and at the Hermitage, was urgently required.

Fyfe having returned with the much-travelled boot, we were ready for more serious work, and on the 29th December were astir at 1.15 a.m., preparing breakfast. An hour later two climbing parties might have been seen marching by lantern-light in single file down the path that leads from the hut to the Upper Tasman Glacier, 500 feet below, one party consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Longton, Dr. Fitchett, Mr. M'Intosh, and Graham, being bound for the Hochstetter Dome, 9179 feet high, while our party was bent upon making the first ascent of Elie de Beaumont, a fine snow-clad mountain of 10,200 feet. The day was not promising. While we were having breakfast, a fitful wind had soughed ominously about the hut, and by the time we had proceeded about two miles up the glacier, and before it was yet dawn, this wind had increased in strength, and was blowing steadily. The great mountains around us seemed dwarfed in the feeble light before the dawning, and the cold, grey snows of the Minarets, Mount Green, Mount Walter, and Elie de Beaumont loomed ghost-like against the western sky. Eastward, the serrated ridge of Mount Darwin, and the dark precipices of Malte Brun frowned on us from heights of over nine thousand and ten thousand feet respectively. The rounded snows of the Hochstetter Dome closed in the view at the head of the great ice-filled valley. The snow on the glacier was hard with a night's freezing, and we made quick progress over its gently sloping, even surface. The sunrise on the Tasman peaks was devoid of the beautiful rosy tints that one so often

sees in Alpine regions; but far away down the valley beyond the Ben Ohau Range, where the storm-clouds now gathered in great companies and battalions, there was a gorgeous and even a theatrical display, the mountain-tops and the distant cloud-land appearing as if lit up by some great conflagration, or the glowing fires of some vast volcano. Just as day was dawning, Graham halted to rope up his party for the ascent of the Dome, while we swung round to the left in the direction of our mountain.

Easy snow slopes broken by an occasional crevasse led us towards the foot of Mount Walter, from which "The Times" Glacier takes its rise on the western side. This fine peak (9507 feet) and Mount Green (8704 feet) rise from the main glacier, two glorious spires of rock, and ice, and snow, forming, with the pure dome of Elie de Beaumont, a magnificent Alpine view that dominates the head of the Great Tasman Glacier. The approach to the upper snows of our mountain was guarded by deep crevasses, great gaping bergschrunds, and gigantic séracs, and through and up these we had to thread our way. The snow was in bad condition, and the climb became a weary grind. Fyfe and Turner led alternately, and I, being in the middle of the rope, had little to do but follow my leader. Some great ice-cliffs on the left coming down from the shoulder of Mount Walter looked dangerous, and we gave them as wide a berth as possible. As we climbed past them on the right, a great ice avalanche fell away below us, crashing with thundering roar on to the glacier some distance to the left of our line of route. Ahead, the face of Elie de Beaumont presented a fine sight with its towering walls of ice and steep snow slopes. On the whole line of the ascent we could see no sign of

Mount Walter.

any rock to contrast with the delicate harmonies of green and blue and white.

Beyond the corner of Mount Walter there was an interesting little bit of work in threading a way past great blocks of ice and gaping schrunds; but, generally speaking, the climb was uninteresting. It is a climb to do once, but never a second time. We dodged round a steep sloping ice-block, and ascended a fairly easy snow slope, only to find the way barred by a bergschrund—a crevasse with one lip lower than the other. This schrund, however, was narrow enough to permit of our jumping over it, and, though it was a case of jumping up, we had little difficulty in crossing it.

It is very rare for two parties to be climbing together within sight of each other in the Southern Alps, because in New Zealand we have not yet got to that stage in which, as Whistler put it, you can both admire the mountain and recognize the tourist on the top. It was a decided novelty, therefore, to watch the Longton party gradually ascending higher and higher on the Hochstetter Dome. By the time we had crossed this bergschrund we could see them—five small dots—like flies, sheltering from the cold wind on the lee side of the ridge leading to the lower peak of the Dome. They, wisely, did not attempt the higher peak.

When we had gained a height of 9000 feet, the cold north-wester, at this altitude blowing with considerable violence, struck us with full force, and whisked clouds of snow and fine particles of ice in our faces. The mist was also pouring over the main divide, and the Longton party, who were watching us from their distant sheltered ridge, now saw us disappearing into the clouds. Really, we should have turned at this point, but Turner was very anxious to climb a virgin peak,

and, while he led up the frozen slope, we two followed meekly in his uncertain wake. Soon the clouds and the driving snow grew so dense that we could see only a very few yards ahead, and the line of route became quite obscured. The wind also increased in violence, and once or twice we had to cling to the frozen slope with the aid of our ice-axes. The wind was bitterly cold, and icicles hung from Turner's moustache and half-grown beard. For about an hour we climbed upward in this blizzard, without any likelihood of a view, and with a very good chance of not being able to follow the proper route on the descent. Besides, we could not tell what dangers lay ahead, so at last Turner gave the word to retreat. During a momentary rent in the driving cloud, we got a glimpse of the last bergschrund, which runs round the final ice-cap of the mountain, so that we were only some four hundred feet below the summit, and all the real difficulties of the climb had been overcome. Another half an hour in fine weather, and we should have topped our peak; but a first ascent cannot be claimed till the actual summit is under foot—at all events by any true sportsman—and therefore, though only a few hundred feet of easy step-cutting on the final ice-cap remained to be done, we retired defeated.

As we turned, the swirling cloud and snow became denser, and I was fearful lest we should not find our way back. All I could see was my two shivering companions and the Alpine rope that connected the party. As it was, the drifting snow had completely obliterated our upward steps, and we got off the proper line; but we climbed downward as quickly as possible, trusting to the general direction of the slopes to bring us right in the end. There was not, however, a great deal of

room to come and go on, and the great walls and blocks of broken ice loomed through the fog, looking nearly twice their actual size, and more formidable than ever. At length Fyfe found a landmark in the sloping sérac round which we had climbed on the ascent, and, thereafter, we were able to keep the route fairly well. Just below this sérac Turner started a glissade, but the slope—hard rough ice under a very thin coating of snow—was unsuitable for glissading, and, after whizzing down a few feet, I had the misfortune to strike a hard block in the ice, and was doubled up in an instant with a bruise on my left hip, another on my right knee, and a third on the bone just above the right ankle. Using my ice-axe as a brake, I shouted to the leader, and quickly pulled up; but not till Fyfe, who was glissading behind, had almost cannoned on to me. After this experience, we proceeded more cautiously till we had passed the dangerous corner at the foot of Walter Peak, where the fog thinned out, and we could see more clearly. The rest was a trudge down the glacier to the hut. Turner proudly carried the icicles on his moustache right into the hut. We had been going steadily for nine hours without halting to eat or drink, and we were glad of hot soup and other luxuries that Graham provided out of the Government locker.

All the others, including two tourists who had come up with Clark, returned to the Ball Hut that afternoon; but we remained behind to make another attempt to conquer Elie de Beaumont. Next day the weather was still threatening; but we marched off again, only to turn after proceeding a little way up the glacier. We resolved to try once more on the morrow, and started by lantern light, this time at

2 a.m. The night had been unusually warm, and Fyfe and I felt convinced that it was useless to persevere, as the snow would be in bad order, and there was a nor'-wester brewing. In deference to Turner's wishes, however, we went on; but we never touched our mountain that day. The snow was soft and slushy, and, after a weary, uninteresting trudge, we reached a point above the Lendenfeld Saddle—8000 feet above sea-level. The nor'-wester had covered the West Coast with cloud; but Fyfe and I were glad of the opportunity of looking down the pass we made from the head of the Great Tasman Glacier to the West Coast six years before. Many memories of that somewhat daring exploit were recalled, and, as we looked over the steep walls of splintered rock and broken ice, we now wondered how we had got down.

In an icy-cold wind we trudged wearily back through the soft snow to the Malte Brun Hut. The weather was bad as ever, so, after some food and a rest, we retreated down the glacier to the Ball Hut. Fyfe had a skinned heel, Turner had sore feet, and I had a bad ankle. Again we had suffered defeat: Elie de Beaumont hid his snowy summit in the clouds, defiant and unconquered, and the ascent of Mount Cook seemed still afar off.

On our arrival at the Ball Glacier Hut we found it already occupied by a party consisting of Professor Baldwin Spencer of Melbourne, Mr. and Mrs. Lindon of Geelong Grammar School, and Mr. L. Stott, junior, of Melbourne. Clark had come up with them, as had also the coach-driver and the stableman, so that the hut was again full to overflowing, with the result that three men had to sleep in the ladies' room, while Clark and Fyfe dossed on the floor of the men's room,

in which all the bunks were already occupied. So far as we were concerned, it was evident that our party would be the better for a rest; but even had we been bent upon another climb, the weather would again have prevented it.

That night the nor'-wester developed in force, and, accompanied by heavy rain, howled round the hut. Turner and Fyfe, the coach-driver and the stableman, returned to the Hermitage, but I was unable to accompany them, and remained behind to treat my now swollen ankle with hot fomentations and bandaging. Nevertheless, I spent a very pleasant day in the company of the Professor, Mr. and Mrs. Lindon, Mr. Stott, and Clark. Our expedition was evidently, for various reasons, becoming an ill-starred one, and the congenial company of my new-found friends came like a ray of sunshine through the gloom.

In the afternoon the weather cleared, and, as it was New Year's Day, we celebrated the event with a four-course dinner, served up in Clark's best style. The menu consisted of soup, fried sardines, cold mutton, and hot plum pudding, with cocoa (decidedly good) *à la* Baldwin Spencer. The best of the Professor was that you would never know he was a professor, and it was some time before it dawned upon me that he might be, and indeed was, the man who had been guilty of an erudite treatise on a rudimentary eye in the tuatara lizard, and the author of a valuable work on the Australian aboriginals! Evidently I was in luck's way—he might have been just an ordinary tourist, or a climber who regarded the mountains very much in the nature of greased poles, to be climbed for his own glorification and profit. On the contrary, the new visitors were charmed with the

New Zealand Alps, and it was a great delight to Clark and myself to find such a whole-souled appreciation of our mountain glories, and no attempt at belittlement or vain comparison.

That evening there was a wonderful sunset, and we all stood outside the hut watching the gorgeous and ever-changing pageantry of cloudland. In front of De la Bêche—most beautiful of mountains—and the spotless snows of the Minarets, far up the ice-filled valley, great rounded cumuli came sailing across from the north-west, like huge balls of glowing fire. The southern sky was glorious with higher clouds of spun gold and burnished copper, and the heavens themselves were tinted with yellow and amber, in the distance exquisitely shaded by some master-hand into delicate ethereal greens and blues. The ever-changing tints formed marvellous and wonderful harmonies. The stony grey wall of the moraine fronting the hut was splashed with the sombre green of the Alpine herbage, and across the glacier, high above the level of the moraine, the rugged rock peaks of the Malte Brun Range were tinged with dull rose, their bold perpendicular slabs silhouetted against a sky of lapis lazuli flecked with exquisite wisps of thin cloud. The colours changed quickly; the clouds, sailing past De la Bêche in the dying nor'-wester, lost their fire; the spun gold, the lapis lazuli, and the delicate peacock blues and greens gave place to sombre grey. The air grew chilly, so we went into the hut, and chatted around the fire till bedtime. Thus passed our New Year's Day.

On the 2nd January my friends departed for the Malte Brun Hut, eight miles up the glacier, and I was left alone. Even the keas and the two sea-gulls,

who had interested and amused us during the previous day, had gone upon a winged pilgrimage. I did some washing and mending, cooked my meals, washed the dishes, tidied the hut, wrote up my journal, made a beetle trap with an empty tin sunk in the ground, fed the carrier pigeon left by Clark, and read Rider Haggard's *Jess*, which I found in the hut, for the second time. The weather grew worse, and in the afternoon snow fell in big flakes.

On the 3rd January the programme was much the same. This day I continued the hot fomentations on my ankle, and succeeded in reducing the swelling considerably. I had no watch, so I gauged the time by my hunger, and determined to satisfy the inner man with some of the delicacies in the Government larder. "Hare soup" rather appealed to one, and a tin was opened, only to find that it contained stewed kidneys! I pitched it over the hut and opened a tin labelled "Curried mutton chops"; but once more the label was a lie, and there stood revealed stewed kidneys. That tin with its contents also went over the roof of the hut, as did a third delicacy that existed only in the imagination of the packer. I was going through the same trial that my wife and I had gone through at the De la Bêche Bivouac several years before, and found, afterwards, that my experience was not at all an unusual one. Finally I made a dish of hot macaroni soup (put up by another firm), to which I added green peas tinned in Paris, and this, with bread, made a sumptuous repast. The weather was still unsettled, the barometer standing at 27·14, and the thermometer at 46 degrees.

The keas and the gulls returned in the evening, and one of the keas came inside the hut and walked

about, cocking his head knowingly from side to side as if he were taking an inventory of the furniture, and reckoning what it would fetch at an auction sale. There were in all nine keas, and they went through the most comical antics, chattering in their quaint kea language, dancing on the rocks, and even kissing one another. As the night wore on they became a decided nuisance, glissading down the iron roof, and picking up and dropping the empty meat tins behind the hut. The tin-dropping business, with its noisy rattle, seemed to entertain them hugely, but the sleepy mountaineer inside the hut could not see where the fun came in, so he got up and hurled imprecations and stones at them. They replied to the imprecations with some of their own invective, and the stone-throwing, instead of scaring, only amused them. However, I had my revenge, for a random shot laid one of them low. I picked him up and put him in a box, just outside the door, with the intention of skinning him in the morning. Then all the other keas gathered together in a committee meeting a few yards off and jabbered away to one another about this strange big featherless animal who threw stones. I know I was roundly condemned. And the mate of the dead kea came up to the box, and pecked at it, and crooned eerily over the corpse till I felt a perfect brute, and went off to bed again, but was unable to sleep.

Thereupon I fell to moralizing upon the pleasures and penalties of mountaineering. Apart from the actual joy of climbing, it gives the opportunity of beholding Nature in her most sublime and most glorious moods. Sir Martin Conway agrees in this, but adds a word of warning. "The climber," he says, "pits his life against Nature's forces, and dares them to take it.

He can do so with impunity if he knows enough, and has enough skill. He will get the better of Nature every time, and to an almost dead certainty; but if he does not know enough, or lacks skill, sooner or later Nature will win the trick." Skill, knowledge, and text-books are supposed to have hurled the dangers of mountaineering almost into the unknown. But Mummery, that most brilliant cragsman—whose own unknown grave lies somewhere among the snows of the giant Himalayas—in his delightful book about his climbs in the Alps and Caucasus, says he cannot forget that the first guide to whom he was ever roped, and one who possessed more knowledge of mountains than is to be found even in the Badminton Library, was none the less killed on the Brouillard Mont Blanc, and his son, subsequently, on Koshtantau. Then the memory of two rollicking parties, comprising seven men, who one day in 1879 were climbing on the west face of the Matterhorn, passes with ghost-like admonition before his mind, and bids him remember that of these seven Mr. Penhall was killed on the Wetterhorn, Ferdinand Imseng on the Macugnaga Monte Rosa, and John Petrus on the Fresnay Mont Blanc. In New Zealand the early pioneers of Alpine climbing have done good work without guides and without accident, and in thus quoting two such famous authorities as Conway and Mummery I have no wish to in any way discourage the practice of so ennobling a sport, but rather to enjoin caution and pains to acquire proficiency. "High proficiency," as Mummery again points out, "is only attainable when a natural aptitude is combined with long years of practice. It is true the great ridges sometimes demand their sacrifice; but the mountaineer would hardly

forgo his worship though he knew himself to be the destined victim. But, happily, to most of us the great brown slabs bending over into immeasurable space, the lines and curves of the wind-moulded cornice, the delicate undulations of the fissured snow, are old and trusted friends, ever luring us to health and fun and laughter, and enabling us to bid a sturdy defiance to all the ills that time and life oppose."

But I have been led by the lonely hut and its surroundings into a moralizing mood. Let me therefore come back from the great peaks and descend to the valley, for the next morning the former were hidden in the clouds, and even the valley was filled with gloom. Fyfe and Turner had not returned. I felt lonelier than ever, and formed a strong conviction that man is a gregarious animal. Having come to this conclusion, I cooked myself a late breakfast of bacon and onions, and a little later went out and saw the Professor and his party striding down the moraine from the Upper Tasman. In a few minutes the billy was singing on the fire, and then, over a cup of hot coffee with my friends, I became once more a sociable being and all the world was rose-coloured. The visitors resolved to go to the Hermitage in the afternoon. I decided to walk a few miles down the valley with them, and then, tempted by the pleasant company and thoughts of the luxurious ease of the Hermitage, I was persuaded to accompany them all the way. By the time I had done ten miles my ankle was again bad, and, an hour or two later, I limped into the Hermitage, dead lame, and fully convinced that my climbing for that season was at an end.

CHAPTER XIX

THE FIRST CROSSING OF MOUNT COOK—*continued*

"Tighten the muscle, feel the strong blood flow,
And set your foot upon the utmost crest!"

GEOFFRY WINTHORP YOUNG.

DURING the next seven days my ankle mended slowly, and a biologist—the nearest approach to a doctor within ninety miles—expressed the opinion that there was a splinter off the bone. So far as I was concerned I had now given up all thoughts of attempting the ascent of Mount Cook; for, with a weak leg, I should be likely to endanger the whole party. It was with a sad heart that I watched the expedition start off once more for the Tasman, in the hopes of accomplishing the first traverse of Mount Cook.

Fyfe and Graham, however, were keenly anxious for me to accompany them, and it was decided, on the day they left for Mount Cook, that I should give my leg a good trial on the Sealy Range, and, if it stood the test, rejoin the party the same evening at the Ball Hut. Accordingly, in company with Professor Baldwin Spencer, Mr. and Mrs. Lindon, and Jack Clark, I went up the Sealy Range. We spent a delightful day, the weather being glorious, and the views of Sefton, Mount Cook, and many other mountains, magnificently grand. My leg stood the test, and I returned to the Hermitage in high glee, feeling con-

fident that another day's rest at the Mount Cook Bivouac would complete the cure. Accordingly I bade farewell to my friends at the Hermitage, and that evening rode up with Clark, in the moonlight, to the hut. Crossing the dangerous Hooker River, we changed horses, Clark insisting that I should cross on the safer of the two, and giving instructions that I should hold on to his mane if he got bowled over. However, these horses, which are wonderful at crossing rivers, got over safely. Never shall I forget that glorious ride in the moonlight. We galloped over the tussock flats, and then slackened our pace as we entered upon the narrow and uncertain path between the dark spur of Aorangi on our left and the great moraine of the Tasman Glacier that loomed on our right like some titanic jumble of rock-work. The talk was of climbing and climbers, reminiscences of former victories and defeats, glorious days spent amongst the higher snows, and of brave companions who had shared our Alpine joys and sorrows in the years now past. Meanwhile the stars, dimmed by a glorious moon, swung westward o'er our path, the fourteen miles went past like four, and presently, about 10 p.m., we spied the solitary light of the hut window, like a star in the lower darkness, and our cheery jodelling awoke the echoes of the valley and brought an answering shout from Graham and Fyfe. They were glad to see me, and delighted to hear that I was fit to climb again.

On Monday, the 8th January, we ascended to the Bivouac Rock, on the Haast Ridge, from which the early New Zealand climbers made their heroic, though unsuccessful, attacks on the monarch of the Southern Alps. We climbed the steep rocky ridge with heavy

swags—tent, sleeping bags, ice-axes, Alpine rope, and provisions for three or four days. Green, a promising climber, came with us in the capacity of porter. It was necessary to shovel the snow from the little stone platform on which we were to sleep, and we had no sooner got camp pitched than the weather changed. Dense clouds, borne on southerly airs, quickly filled the valley, blotting out from view the moraines and icy tongues of the Great Tasman Glacier thousands of feet below. We made a billy of tea, and dined on bread-and-butter and cold mutton, after which Green very reluctantly left us to join Clark and a party at the Malte Brun Hut farther up the glacier. Graham went down with him over the first snow slopes. As he did not return for some considerable time we got rather anxious, and Fyfe went to see what was the matter. Presently he returned with Graham, and we heard Green jodelling from the misty depths thousands of feet below us. We gave him answering jodels from the Bivouac, this interchange of signals being kept up till Green's voice grew fainter and fainter, and at last we got tired of answering him. Then we made things snug about our eerie perch, and turned in for the night. The four of us were packed like sardines in a tin, but, with our clothes on, in the eider-down sleeping bags, and under the shelter of my Whymper tent, with its waterproof floor, we were fairly warm and comfortable. Those of us who were smokers lit our pipes and were happy. Then the clouds that had overwhelmed the ridge began to patter-patter on the tent roof in gentle rain, which, later in the night, turned to snow. Visions of a night in this same bivouac years ago, when the lurid lightning dazzled our eyes, the thunder shook the ridge, and the tent

was frozen to the rocks in a terrible storm, came back to me. But that is another story, and has been told elsewhere in this book.

We breakfasted at seven o'clock next morning, after fourteen hours of the tent—cold mutton, tea, bread-and-butter, and jam. The weather was warm and the new snow was peeling off the slopes of Mount Cook. Avalanches hissed and thundered all around us, the mountains being literally alive, and in a most dangerous condition for climbing. This, however, did not concern us greatly, for we had decided to rest for a day at the Bivouac, and there was, at last, a good prospect of the weather's clearing. We spent the day in delightful idleness, lazying on the warm rocks, pottering about the camp, and photographing. Fyfe acted as chief cook, and for each meal prepared a billy of delicious hot tea, using as fuel a little bit of deal board we had brought up, together with some old candles found under the Bivouac Rock. With these he melted snow and boiled the water. We also added to our water supply by spreading snow on a warm sloping rock, and allowing the drip therefrom to collect in a billy and an empty fruit-tin. For the greater part of the day we were above the lower stratum of cloud, which spread itself like a fleecy counterpane over the great valley, or swathed itself about the giant peaks, leaving the dark summits standing in startling yet stately grandeur as pointed islands in a vapoury sea of white and grey. Now and again this counterpane would be torn by some sportive wind or partially dissolved by the warm rays of the sun, and, through the holes thus made, we could see the upper snows of the Great Tasman or its lower tongues of attenuated ice flowing between the piled débris of the grey

Above the Clouds.

moraines—the largest in the Southern Alps—thousands of feet below. Later, as the mists gradually dissolved, we obtained glorious views of the great Alps, with their tributary glaciers pouring streams of broken ice down the sides of the valley to feed the parent stream. Here were all our old friends, Haidinger, and De la Bêche, and the Minarets—whose 10,000-feet summits Fyfe and I had trodden—looking down at us with a lofty disdain, and, across the valley, Malte Brun, the Matterhorn of the Southern Alps, heaved his strong shoulders of grim dark brown rock up through the veil of surging mist, and cleft the azure blue of heaven, recalling to my mind Fyfe's memorable first ascent and his equally memorable entry in the visitors' book I had left at the hut—"Played a lone hand with Malte Brun, and won." Yes, all our old friends were here, strong in their might, each with his own unchanging character, and as one recalled the joyous days spent on slope and summit, the pulses quickened and the hour-glass ran in golden sands. "Glorious creatures; fine old fellows!" as Lamb says. We bowed before them and gave them reverent greeting, befitting their greatness, thinking that

> "When time, who steals our years away,
> Shall steal our pleasures too,
> The memory of the past will stay,
> And half our joys renew."

It was decided not to go to sleep that evening, but to start for the traverse of Mount Cook before midnight. We, however, crept into our sleeping bags inside the tent in order to keep warm. Turner had complained of the dampness at the end of the tent the night before, so I took his place, and gave him an

inside berth. At 10 p.m. Fyfe was astir boiling us a billy of tea, and at 10.20 we breakfasted! The sky was clear, and the moon was shining; but, higher up the range, the clouds were pouring over between Haidinger and De la Bêche. This did not augur well for success. On going through our rücksacks again, we discarded a few things to make them lighter, but, what with cameras, spare clothing, food, and the two aluminium water-bottles, one filled with claret and the other with water, we had to carry from 15 lb. to 20 lb. each —rather heavy loads for so long and difficult a climb.

Our provisions consisted of half a loaf, 1 large tin of ox tongue, 1 tin of sheep's tongues, 1 tin of sardines, 2 tins of jam, some butter, 2 oranges, 2 lemons, a few raisins, and about a pound of brown sugar, upon which latter I subsisted almost entirely on all our climbs. I had remembered reading about the virtues of brown sugar in one of Sir Martin Conway's books, and my wife had obtained some special brown Demerara sugar for me from our grocer. Then I looked the subject up in Conway's book on the ascent of Aconcagua. After mentioning the necessity for light foods, such as soup and jam, for high ascents, he states that on the Aconcagua climb more important than all these was a great tin of coarse brown Demerara sugar, the finest heat-producing, muscle-nourishing food in the world. For men taking violent exercise, such as soldiers on active service or athletes in training, a plentiful supply of sugar was, he stated, far better than large meat rations. A quarter of a pound per day per man was his allowance on the mountain-side, and he was inclined to think that this might be increased to nearly half a pound with advantage, cane sugar, of course, being selected for this purpose.

We were aware that on such a climb, what with the great exertion, the want of water, and the reduced atmospheric pressure, we should be able to eat very little, and that, if we were successful, most of the provisions we were taking would not be needed. Still there was the danger, in consequence of a sudden storm, or other unforeseen difficulties, of our having to spend the night out on an exposed ledge of rock at an altitude of 10,000 or 11,000 feet, in which case our lives would depend upon a supply of extra clothing and food. Therefore we dared not with prudence make our loads any lighter.

At 11.15 p.m. on the night of Tuesday, January 9, we started, having rolled up all our belongings that we did not require in the sleeping bags, and these, in turn, in the tent. This made one big bundle, which we jammed under the rock as far as possible and weighted down with stones, so that it should not be blown away. We took with us also one 65-foot length and one 50-foot length of Alpine rope made by Buckingham, of London, and tested to a breaking strain of 2000 lb. In single file, in the moonlight, we toiled up the snow slopes leading to the Glacier Dome, 1300 feet above our bivouac. For the most part we climbed upwards in solemn silence, each one being busy with his own thoughts, and wondering, no doubt, what the day would bring about. Ten minutes after midnight we had left the final steep snow slope of the Dome behind, and looked across the great plateau that stretches, at an altitude of over 7000 feet, for a distance of some four miles, at the foot of the precipitous slopes of Mounts Cook and Tasman. From the Dome we had now to descend 700 feet, and then cross the plateau to gain the foot of the north-

eastern ridge that was to lead us to the summit of our peak. The snow was in bad condition, and we sank in it over the boot-tops. In places it was in that most tantalizing of conditions with a frozen crust that let one foot through, while the other foot held on the surface. While we were crossing the plateau, a vivid streak of lightning, or an unusually brilliant meteor, flashed athwart the northern sky, and a weird effect was produced by the moon, which, with a great halo around it, was dipping westward over the snowy peak of Mount Haast. For a few moments the moon, with half its halo, seemed to rest on the very apex of the mountain. We crossed the rest of the plateau in the shadow of the high peaks of the main divide, behind which the moon had now sunk, and, presently, in the dim, uncertain light we came up against the débris of a great avalanche that had fallen from the slopes of Mount Tasman. A mass of broken ice and snow was piled in confusion to a height of 15 or 20 feet, and we had to make a detour to avoid the obstruction.

At about a quarter past 2 a.m. we commenced to ascend the long snow slope leading to the Zurbriggen arête ; and in the dusk before the dawn we reached a bergschrund that might have given us a good deal of trouble to cross. Graham led carefully through the broken ice, and, peering into the dull grey light, thought he saw a bridge over which we might crawl in safety. We made a traverse to the right and climbed round under the overhanging wall of ice that formed the upper lip of the schrund, and which, had it fallen, would have crushed us out of existence. At this hour of the morning, however, it was perfectly safe, and Graham, disappearing round a huge block that towered above, crossed a frail snow bridge and

Mount Tasman.

gained the upper lip of the schrund. Turner followed, and I paid out the rope as he, too, gradually disappeared from view round the corner, Graham driving the handle of his axe deep in the snow, while Fyfe and I, below, took a firm stand and kept the rope taut. In a few minutes we were all safely across, and congratulating ourselves upon having so easily overcome the first serious obstacle of the climb.

We were now fairly on to the long 3000-feet snow slope that leads up to the rocks of the Zurbriggen arête. This slope was found in fairly good order. In places we could kick steps, but in other places the steps had to be chipped with the ice-axes. As we slowly climbed upwards the slope got steeper and steeper. Indeed, the angle was just about as steep as it is possible for snow to hold. After about half-an-hour's climbing we were startled by a magnificent avalanche that fell with thundering roar from high up on the broken ice-slopes of Mount Tasman. It crashed on to the great Plateau 2000 feet below, sending ice-blocks to a great distance, and throwing up a cloud of snow like some huge breaker that sends its spray high in air above a rock-bound coast.

It was cold work standing in the steps in the chilly dawn with the ice chips from the leader's axe swishing about us. Presently the sun rose gloriously over the Eastern ranges, and we were revelling in its generous warmth on the slope where, before, we had been half frozen. But the combination of sun and slope became almost more intolerable than the slope without the sun. Three thousand feet of such work is apt to become a shade monotonous even to the keenest disciple of snow-craft. This particular wall is so long and so steep that the climber must give his attention almost

continually to the matter in hand. He has little time to admire the view. The steps must be cleaned out, and the rope must be held taut. Each man must keep his distance. Otherwise, a slip might be fatal. But it is monotonous work climbing slowly, hour after hour, in zigzags, with your face to the white wall. You have time to review your past life for years and years, and to think of the future for years ahead. With the dead uniformity of it all, and the never-ceasing glare in the stagnant atmosphere, there comes a monition of impending drowsiness. This you fight with an effort of the will, and some pretence at enlarging the steps that the leader has made, but which are, already, large enough in all conscience. While I was standing in the steps at a spot about half-way up the slope I felt a strange tug on the rope, and thought it must have caught in some obstruction or have been struck by a falling block of ice; but, on looking round, I could see nothing to account for it. Some hours afterwards, while we were resting on the warm rocks above, Fyfe smilingly asked me if I had felt the pull, and then the rascal, still smiling, informed me that it was the result of a moment of actual somnolence on his part. For a second his brain had become dulled and his feet had come to a sudden stop on this never-ending ladder of ice. As the rope was taut, and I had a firm footing, the danger was nil; but it would never do for the leader to be so taken, and the leader on that particular slope has enough to do to keep him very wide awake.

Hour after hour went by, and we began to get very tired of the endless snow slope, so traversed to the right to gain the rocks. We found them difficult, with few holds for hands or feet, and so coated with snow and ice that progress was almost impossible.

Reluctantly we had to traverse back to the snow slope. It was 6.40 a.m. before we reached the rocks on the main arête. A halt was called on a narrow ledge of snow. There we had a drink and some bread and marmalade, and took a number of photographs.

A bank of cloud loomed above the eastern mountains, but the sun was clear in the blue above, and as there was, at last, every prospect of fine weather, our spirits rose proportionately to the elevation gained. From this point a beautiful snow ridge rose in a gentle curve to a series of rocky crags. There was just room for our feet on this narrow ridge. On the right a steep couloir led down to the Linda Glacier, and on the left the mountain fell away in very steep slopes, for over three thousand feet, to the Grand Plateau. At the end of the snow ridge we had some fine climbing up a shoulder of rock. This was scaled without incident, except that of a falling stone which Turner dislodged, but which, fortunately, went past without hitting either Fyfe or myself. Then we climbed along another narrow snow arête, which, though steeper than the first one, was somewhat shorter. On gaining the rocks at the head of this ridge at 9 a.m., we halted for an early lunch. We replenished the wine-bottle and the water-bottle with the drippings of snow that we melted on a slab of warm stone.

We had now gained an altitude of between 10,000 and 11,000 feet, and the views were magnificently grand. Tasman, the second highest mountain in New Zealand, with his wonderful slopes of snow and ice, and a magnificent snow cornice, was quite close to us on the north. Then came Mount Lendenfeld, and the jagged, pinnacled ridge of Haast, which, from this point of view, seemed to bid defiance to the moun-

taineer. Farther along, on the main divide, rose the square top of Mount Haidinger, from which the magnificent schrunds and broken ice of the Haast Glacier fell away towards the Tasman Valley. Beyond that, the rocky peak of De la Bêche, and the beautifully pure snows of the Minarets cleft the blue, leading the eye in turn to the gleaming masses of Elie de Beaumont and the Hochstetter Dome at the head of the Great Tasman Glacier. Across the valley Malte Brun towered grandly above all the other rock peaks of the range, and still farther away, towards the north-east, was the finest view of all, range succeeding range, and mountain succeeding mountain for more than a hundred miles, or as far as the eye could reach. In the distance, to the north of the main range, we looked down on a sea of clouds upon which the sun was shining, the higher peaks piercing the billows of mist and looking like pointed islands. We could plainly trace our steps along the snow arêtes that we had climbed, and across the Plateau thousands of feet below. Lower still were the great schrunds and toppling pinnacles of the Hochstetter Ice Fall, and below that the magnificent sweep of the Great Tasman Glacier. Eastward a few fleecy cumulus clouds sailed over the foot-hills, and beyond were the plains of Canterbury and the distant sea.

An hour passed all too quickly amidst scenes of such magnificence and grandeur; but there was still a long climb ahead, and, in high spirits, we started to cut steps up another very sharp snow ridge with a drop of four thousand feet on one side. Balancing on this narrow ridge and gazing down those tremendous slopes was quite an exhilarating performance. This ridge brought us to the last rocks, which were steep and

afforded some fine climbing. At the top of these rocks we found Zurbriggen's match-box under a few pieces of splintered rock, and left a card in it. Fyfe led up to a shoulder below the final ice-cap, still cutting steps, and then the order on the rope was reversed and Graham went to the front. This shoulder turned us to the left, and soon we gained the final snow arête that rose steeply almost to the summit. The last bit of the ice-cap afforded easy climbing, and at one o'clock on Wednesday afternoon we stepped on to the topmost pinnacle of Aorangi—thirteen hours and forty-five minutes from the time we left our Bivouac. The view was again magnificent—almost indescribable. We looked across the island from sea to sea, and in addition to the views northward, eastward, and westward, we now beheld a glorious Alpine panorama stretching to the south as far as the eye could reach. The giant Tasman and all the lesser mountains were dwarfed, and the whole country was spread out like a map in relief at our feet. Hector, the third highest mountain in New Zealand, seemed a pimple ; St. David's Dome had become a low peak ; but Elie de Beaumont, near the head of the Tasman, still looked a grand mountain, the effect of distance seeming to make it the more imposing.

Through rents in the clouds to the westward patches of sea appeared like dark lagoons. I stepped out of the rope to secure the first photograph that had ever been taken of the summit of Mount Cook ; then we congratulated each other, and while Graham got the provisions out of the rücksacks Fyfe employed himself in taking in the view and coolly cutting up his tobacco for a smoke.

Fyfe had intended to take the pulses of the party,

and I to make some careful notes of the surrounding mountains; but we did not do so. Professor Tyndall in his famous description of the ascent of the Weisshorn says that he opened his notebook to make a few observations, but he soon relinquished the attempt. There was something incongruous, if not profane, in allowing the scientific faculty to interfere where silent worship was a "reasonable service." Thus felt we as we gazed around at the marvellous panorama. Then thoughts of the descent began to obtrude themselves. We had climbed Mount Cook from the Tasman side. A more serious problem now presented itself. Could we descend on the Hooker side, and so make the first crossing of Aorangi?

A 3000 FOOT SNOW SLOPE

SUMMIT OF MT. COOK

CHAPTER XX

THE FIRST CROSSING OF MOUNT COOK—*concluded*

"And now that I have climbed and won this height,
I must tread downward through the sloping shade,
And travel the bewildered tracks till night."

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

WE spent altogether twenty-five minutes on the summit of the mountain—12,349 feet above the sea. The views were certainly grand and very beautiful, but not so fine as from between the altitudes of 10,000 and 11,000 feet, for the simple reason that, from the greater height of the summit, all the lesser mountains were dwarfed, and many of those that looked imposing from below had now dwindled into insignificance.

Having repacked our rücksacks, we gave one last glance about us, and then started down the slope on the other side of the mountain. We were now met by a wind, which, of course, at this altitude, was very cold. The snow slope was not steep, but it was frozen, and we had to cut a number of steps before we could reach the rock arête. In half an hour we were on the highest rocks of this arête, and, to our dismay, we found them in the worst possible condition for climbing—plastered with snow and ice, and fringed with great icicles. We might have returned to the summit and climbed back to safety before nightfall down our upward route; but we were very keen to "col" the peak for the first time, and

decided to take the risk. Very little was said, and, after a brief consultation between Fyfe and myself, the word was given to continue the descent, and we started with grim determination to conquer the difficulties and overcome the dangers that lay between us and the upper slopes of the Hooker Glacier, thousands of feet below the summit on the western side. It now became a question, not only of climbing with care, but also with all possible speed; for there was no place on this long ridge, in its present condition and with the cold wind blowing, where we could bivouac in safety. We had reckoned on a comparatively easy climb down these rocks, and also upon crossing the bergschrund at the head of the Hooker Glacier before nightfall, but soon saw that this would be out of the question, especially as one of the party was a slow climber. Fyfe repeatedly urged him to hurry and trust for safety to the rope. Fyfe was now in the responsible position—last man on the rope. I came next, and Turner was between me and Graham, who, under general directions from Fyfe, led down. After descending a few hundred feet, we soon found that, owing to the ice-glazing and the new snow, it was impossible to keep to the crest of the ridge, and the descent became largely a series of traverses across difficult and, at times, precipitous faces of rock, mostly on the eastern face of the arête. On the west the climbing was even more difficult, and there was a bitter wind blowing, so we avoided that side as much as possible. In one place we had to climb back from the eastern face through a gap of overhanging rock and great icicles. Peter smashed the greater part of the icicles with the handle of his ice-axe, and the broken pieces went swishing down the precipices towards the Hooker. Under the circumstances, there was naturally some hesitancy

in selecting the best route; but there was little time for undue deliberation, and as Graham paused now and then in some doubt Fyfe would call out, "Will it 'go,' Peter?" Peter, in quiet and solemn tones, would invariably give the one answer, "Well, it doesn't look too good," and then would come the answering admonition from Fyfe, "Get down—get somewhere!"

At last we came to a break in the ridge that looked utterly unscaleable. We halted and glanced ahead and from side to side. Then we cast longing eyes to some snow slopes leading down to the Linda Glacier on the east; but that was thousands of feet below us. "Will it 'go,' Peter?" we asked, and back came the non-committal reply, "It doesn't look too good." There was considerable hesitancy. It now appeared that the moment for decisive action had come, so I suggested that we should unrope, and be lowered down singly over the face of rock. I was lowered down first, and then, untying, the rope was hauled up, and Graham was lowered. I had gained a footing on a knob of rock that jutted out from the snow and ice in a narrow "chimney"; but there was not room on this for two people, so I cut a few steps and climbed down some twelve or fifteen feet, and held on in a somewhat insecure position. I confess that I was anxious to see the last man make his appearance: for, with a keen wind nearly freezing the fingers with which I clung to the rock, and without even the "moral" support of the rope, my position was not altogether one to be envied. Graham climbed down the slanting "chimney" for a few feet towards me, and then Turner was lowered to the knob of rock on which I had gained my first secure footing. It remained for Fyfe to get down. His was a position of the greatest responsibility, and it re-

quired a cool head and splendid nerve, for there was no one to lower him. He had to use the rope doubled and hitched over a projection of rock. The greatest care had to be exercised, especially for the first few feet, in case the rope should slip over the knob. Fyfe, however, managed to get down in safety, and then we all roped up once more. There was no room for us to shift our positions to revert to the original order on the rope, so that now I had to take the lead. We climbed round the foot of the steep wall that had cut us off, and once more gained the crest of the ridge; but it would not "go," and we crossed to the eastern face, scrambling down a short broken couloir, and then traversing back to regain the ridge. I had to hack a hole through long icicles that were hanging from a jutting rock. There was just room to crawl through, the knapsack grazing the broken fingers of ice above. There might have been a route on the eastern side of this face; but a glance down the dark precipices and couloirs, filled with clear ice, to a depth of three or four thousand feet, was somewhat startling, especially when that glance was made in search of a practicable line of descent. Besides, under such conditions as we were face to face with, the known is always preferable to the unknown, and the more so when time is so important a factor in a climb. We knew the ridge we were on could be descended, but we might easily have got into a *cul de sac* on those grim, ice-plastered eastern precipices.

Our difficulties, however, were by no means over, for, in a few minutes, I was peering over the face of a dangerous-looking, precipitous cliff. A glance showed that there was no practicable route either to the right or the left. The afternoon was wearing on; there was

no time for hesitancy, so I went over the edge, and, with the assistance of the spare rope, scrambled down a steep chimney with square smooth sides and few hand-grips. This chimney, however, fell away from the perpendicular near its foot and sloped inwards. On its final twelve feet there were neither hand nor foot holds. There was accordingly nothing for it but to unrope again, and be lowered down singly. Graham lowered me down with one rope, Fyfe and Turner anchoring on the rocks above. For a little way, by clawing at the rock with feet and hands, and by the friction of my body, I was able to descend with some slight amount of dignity, and told Graham to lower away. Then, as I reached the part where the chimney sloped inward from the perpendicular, I lost contact with the rocks, and hung suspended like Mahomet's coffin between heaven and earth. The strain of the rope round one's waist, threatening to effect a complete change in one's internal anatomy, a vague clawing at air with one's hands and an equally vague searching for foot-hold with the nether limbs as you dangle in space at the end of a forty-foot rope with precipices and snow slopes of over a thousand feet below, have a chastening influence on the most seasoned mountaineer, and, however exhilarating the experience may be, it is always with feelings of supreme satisfaction, and almost of devout thankfulness, that he once more comes to close grips with mother earth. At all events, when, after these brief and more or less graceful gyrations at the end of that particular rope, the strain was removed from my waist, and foot-holds and hand-holds once more became actual realities, no complaint was made, even though the middle finger of my left hand, which had been cut on the sharp rocks,

was spurting blood, and dyeing the snow a beautiful crimson.

The spot on which my feet again met the mountain was not the best of landing-places, for the rock shelved outwards into snow. It was now Peter's turn to descend, so I planted myself as firmly as possible and watched the operation. He was a good stone and a half heavier, so there must have been a considerable strain on Fyfe's arms. As he slid off the rocks into the air, his ice-axe caught in the chimney, and sent him swinging round like a top. I saw a long body and a swirling mass of arms and legs above me, preceded by an excellent felt hat that went sailing down on the wind to the Linda Glacier thousands of feet below, and then a somewhat dishevelled but cool mountaineer, with a little assistance as to where to plant his feet, landed beside me. Peter's descent was so comical that I could not refrain from laughter. Turner was the next man, and Fyfe urged him forward. The rope was fastened round his waist, and he too cut a comical figure as he slid off from the perpendicular, clawed vainly at vacancy, and eventually landed beside us. Fyfe's grinning countenance above, peering over the edge of the precipice, as if he were enjoying the sport, was quite a study.

Sensational as this performance was, especially until a landing-place had been found, a more serious one remained for Fyfe to accomplish. I, however, well knew Fyfe's capabilities, otherwise I should never have undertaken such a descent. We had been together in other tight corners before, and I had absolute faith in his ability to get down safely. Once more he hitched the double rope over a rock, and scrambled over the edge of the precipice. The only rock available was slightly

loose, so he had to be very careful at the start in case the rope should slip over the projection. Such experiences are apt to be a little nerve-shattering, and these two sensational descents—especially the latter one—must have put some strain upon his nerve. However, he was again equal to the emergency, and, assisted by Graham's long reach as he swung like a pendulum over the last few feet, he was soon beside us in safety.

A halt was called for a few minutes while we donned our spare clothing. I gave Graham my hat, as I had a spare cap in my rücksack, and then bound my bleeding finger with strips of adhesive plaster. After all, there was something very exhilarating in such difficult work. Every nerve and muscle was at full tension, and thoughts of all else save the matter in hand were banished from the brain. The way ahead now seemed clear. We had "drunk delight of battle with our peers," and, thus far, had won.

Roping up once more in the old order, we continued the descent. We were still a long way from the saddle, and the summit of Mount Hector seemed very far below. The climbing, however, now became easier, and in places we were able to make fairly quick progress. Eventually, at a quarter to seven on Wednesday evening, we had left the dreadful arête behind us, and Peter cut steps across a frozen ridge that led from Green's Saddle into the long 2000-feet couloir that sloped steeply down to the Hooker Glacier. It was a quarter to seven on the evening of Wednesday, and, as we had now been going since 11.15 p.m. on Tuesday, or for 19½ hours, we hoped to find the couloir in good order. Our hearts sank as we saw Graham plying his ice-axe. Fyfe shouted to him to endeavour to do without the cutting, and to kick steps; but this was impossible—the slope

was frozen hard! The wind was also increasing in violence, and bitterly cold. There was still the alternative of cutting down to the Linda Glacier on the eastern side, and of a comparatively easy and comfortable descent, out of the wind, to the great plateau, from which we could gain the Glacier Dome and then descend to the Bivouac Rock by means of our steps of the night before. The matter was mentioned between Fyfe and myself; but we scarcely gave it a second thought, and decided to stick to our original intention to "col" the peak. The word was given to go forward down the couloir, and young Graham, who was leading, treated us to a splendid example of ice-craft and physical endurance as he hacked a way with his axe down that 2000 feet of frozen slope. It was a narrow, steep gully varying in width from about fifteen to twenty yards, and flanked on either side by great walls of precipitous rock.

Hour after hour went by, and we appeared to be getting no nearer to the foot of the couloir. The wind seemed to pierce to our bones, and every now and then it would send a shower of broken ice from the precipices above swishing down about our ears. Some of the bits were big enough to hurt. In one place we took to a rib of rock in the middle of the couloir. Occasionally the rocks on the left of the couloir were used for hand-grips, thus enabling Graham to cut smaller steps. Turner, at this stage, began to feel the want of sleep, and asked me to talk to him to keep him awake. The mere suggestion of a man's falling asleep in such a situation was, of course, sufficient to keep one more than ever on the alert, especially as, if Turner had slipped, it would have devolved upon me, being next above on the rope, to hold him up. A few minutes

later, some bits of rock—dislodged, no doubt, through the falling icicles that were broken by the wind—came whizzing past us, and as Turner immediately cried out, "Oh, my head! my head!" I knew that he had been struck. In a moment the handle of my axe was driven into the frozen snow and the rope hitched around it; while Fyfe, behind me, had already taken a firm stand. Turner, in his account of the accident, says: "We would have been dashed to eternity if I had fallen and upset Graham out of his steps while step-cutting, which would have been a very easy matter." Such, however, was not the case, for both Fyfe and I had the rope absolutely taut, and, being well anchored, we could easily have held up three times Turner's weight. As a matter of fact, he could not have fallen a single yard.

Fortunately, the accident was not a serious one. It resolved itself into a scalp wound about three-quarters of an inch long, and Turner, after a few minutes, was able to continue the descent. Stones falling from such a great height—probably a thousand feet or more—acquire an extraordinary velocity. Indeed, they come so fast as to be invisible, and you can only hear them whizzing past. Had this stone struck Turner on the top of the head, it would undoubtedly have cleft his skull in twain. Luckily, it only grazed the back of his head at the base of the skull.

We had now descended about a thousand feet of the couloir. The sun had dipped to the rim of the sea, and the western heavens were glorious with colour, heightened by the distant gloom. Almost on a level with us, away beyond Sefton, a band of flame-coloured cloud stretched seaward from the lesser mountains toward the ocean, and beyond that again was a far-away continent of cloud, sombre and mysterious, as if

it were part of another world. The rugged mountains and the valleys and forests of Southern Westland were being gripped in the shades of night. A long headland, still thousands of feet below us, on the southwest, stretched itself out into the darkened sea, a thin line of white at its base indicating the tumbling breakers of the Pacific Ocean.

Difficult as was our situation, Fyfe and I could not refrain from occasional contemplation of this mysterious and almost fantastic scene of mountain glory. Turner was concerned mostly with his head, and Peter had to devote his whole attention to the step-cutting. We climbed down a rib of rock in the dusk between the lights, and then zigzagged on down the couloir in the steps cut by the never-tiring Graham. Presently the moon rose and bathed the snowy slopes of Stokes and Sefton and other giant mountains in a flood of silver. After the accident we kept closer in to the rocks to evade any falling icicles or stones that might come down. Graham, anxious no doubt to get out of the couloir, was now making the steps rather small, and there was sometimes difficulty in seeing them in the semi-darkness, and in standing in them once they were found; but we got occasional hand-grips on the rocks, so that the danger from a slip was reduced to a minimum. On one occasion I did slip in a bad step; but Fyfe was easily able to hold me on the rope. Down, down, down we went on this apparently never-ending slope. Hour after hour went past, and still the end of the couloir seemed a long way off.

Very little was said. Occasionally there would be a request by Turner asking me to hold him tight on the rope, or a plaintive cry of "Peter! where are the steps?" Peter was non-committal. He had enough to

do to cut the steps without telling us where they were, and there was the additional fact that, in some instances, identification might not have been altogether an easy matter. But, if Peter was too busily engaged to be other than non-committal, I, on the other hand, had sufficient time to be optimistic, and I made a point of answering cheerily that Turner was doing splendidly, and that there was only another couple of hundred feet of step-cutting. As a matter of fact, there was more—nearly a thousand feet of it—but, under the special circumstances, I have no doubt the recording angel has overlooked all the lies I told between half-past nine and twelve of the clock that night, both in regard to the length of the couloir and the figure cut by our now despondent companion.

Nine o'clock, ten o'clock, eleven o'clock went past, and still we could not see the final bergschrund at the foot. Fyfe took a turn at step-cutting, but quickly relinquished the task in favour of Graham. Fyfe, however, relieved Graham of his knapsack, and, with his double load, must have had a difficult time coming down in those "economical" steps that Graham was making for the sake of speed. Speed! The word seemed a mockery. We went almost at a snail's pace!

The wind continued bitterly cold, and the shadow of the precipices in the moonlight seemed to fill the head of the valley with gloom. Some lines of Shelley's seemed to fit the situation—

> "The cold ice slept below,
> Above, the cold sky shone,
> And all around
> With a chilling sound,
> From caves of ice and fields of snow
> The breath of night like death did flow
> Beneath the sinking moon."

Towards the bottom, the couloir broadened out somewhat, and the work was easier. We progressed a little more quickly, and at last reached the bergschrund. This schrund, in ordinary seasons a very formidable one, had been often in our minds during the past few weeks, and gave us some concern from the commencement of the descent; but we reckoned that we could cross it somehow, even if we had to sacrifice an ice-axe and one of the lengths of Alpine rope. The first attempt to find a bridge failed; but Graham, with a pretty bit of snow-craft in the uncertain light, found a comparatively safe snow bridge, over which we crossed one by one, while the others anchored with their ice-axes and held the rope taut in case the man on the bridge at the time should show an unpraiseworthy inclination, by reason of his weight or the rottenness of the snow under him, to explore the unknown depths of the schrund. In a few minutes we were all across in safety, and, just after midnight — on Thursday morning—we stepped on to the upper slopes of the Hooker Glacier, and the first crossing of Mount Cook had been safely accomplished.

Going down a little way to where the slope eased off, and gathering together on the ice, we lit the lantern, hung it on an ice-axe stuck in the snow, and proceeded to explore the rücksacks for food and drink. We had been climbing for twenty-two and three-quarter hours, with but little food or drink. Even now we could scarcely eat; but the little water and a very small quantity of wine left in the bottles were soon disposed of. I had some of my Demerara sugar, and the others were content with a sardine or two and a little bread and jam. What remained of our provisions we now threw away. Fyfe, Graham, and I also in-

dulged in a little whisky that Dr. Fitchett had sent us to the Ball Hut, and a small flask of which Fyfe had carried in his rücksack during the descent. Now that the mental strain of the climb was practically over, we felt that a little stimulant would do us no harm. Drink and sleep were what we most needed. We almost went to sleep standing up.

After our long spell of over twenty-two hours' climbing, we had now to devote ourselves to a journey of ten or eleven miles down the Hooker Glacier and the valley at its termination to the Hermitage. There was some little trouble amongst the enormous crevasses and séracs, which, even in the moonlight, were a magnificent sight. We got through the first crevasses by candle-light, and then plodded on down the glacier by the light of the moon. Twice we got blocked, and had to retrace our steps to find a route through the maze of crevasses and broken ice. The sunrise was splendid. The silver of the moon gave place to the grey of dawn, and then the higher snows were flushed with rose and gold, the ice-cap of Mount Stokes being the first to catch the glow. The great ice-paved valley, loath to reveal the secrets of its grandeur, waited yet awhile in the sombre shade. But presently the sun searched the dimmest recesses of the lower crags, blazed upon the gleaming snows, and all the world was filled with light.

But it will be as well to draw a veil over the details of that long, dreary walk—the zigzagging to find a way down through the broken ice; the jumping of many crevasses; the uncertain steps along the crumbling live moraine; and the mechanical, sleepy trudge along the final pathway. Our throats were parched, and, early in the morning, the roar of a

waterfall on the range across the valley mocked our thirst; but on the final slopes of the clear ice of the glacier we broke the frozen surface of some pools with our ice-axes and drank mighty draughts.

Hour by hour we plodded on down the valley, lifting our feet almost mechanically, halting at every stream, and falling asleep at every resting-place, till some resolute member of the party would prod the sleepy ones into mechanical action once more. Never, in all my life, have I travelled such long, weary miles. Towards the end of the journey, the one impression fixed indelibly on the brain seemed to be "the Hermitage." Once across the Hooker River, it was "the Bar," which loomed large in our minds with a capital B. We pulled ourselves together for the last hundred yards; but I am afraid it was with a rather faltering stride that we reached the winning-post after our long struggle of thirty-six hours from the Bivouac Rock many miles away on the other side of the great range. Turner, for sartorial reasons, had to make a bee-line for his bedroom; but the three New Zealanders went boldly into the kitchen of the Hermitage and discussed a bottle of wine amidst the congratulations of friend Macdonald and his worthy family. Fyfe and Graham followed this up with ham and eggs and copious draughts of milk. I had a jug of hot milk, a hot bath, and bed. We had not had a wash nor taken off our clothes for several days, and were now in a position to fully appreciate the luxuries of civilization. I slept till the dinner-gong woke me in the evening, and as there was not time to dress I had dinner in bed. Later on, Fyfe, Graham, and Clark came into my room, and we climbed the mountain over again.

On the way down the Hooker I had sworn to myself that I would never climb another peak; but so strange an animal is man, and so fascinating is his most glorious sport, that no sooner had we recovered from our exertions than we now immediately began to discuss plans for the ascent of Mount Sefton! But next day, through the glasses, we could plainly see great icicles hanging from the rocks on the main arête. The ridge was plastered with ice, and we had no immediate desire to repeat the performance we had just gone through.

THE END

INDEX

Accident to wagonette, 56; to Mr. Low, 166; to Turner, 305.
Ada, Lake, 232.
Adamson, 53, 91.
Age Glacier, 240.
Alpha, Mount, 124.
Alpine Club, tribute to, 21.
  Ex-President, 21.
Amery, L. M. S., 12.
Annan, 30, 41.
Aorangi conquered, 115.
Architect's Creek, 212.
Arthur Valley, 224.
  River, 232.
Aspiring, Mount, 10, 19.
Austria, Emperor of, 3, 5.
Avalanche shoot, an, 187.
Avalanches, 78, 80, 95, 110, 130, 182, 290, 291.

Ball Glacier, 40, 69.
  Hut, 14, 69, 160.
Balloon, Mount, 223, 224.
Beech trees, 120.
Beret, Mount, 269.
"Billy Barlow," 208.
Birch Hill station, 14, 55.
Bivouac Rock, De la Bêche, 134, 143, 166.
  at Malte Brun, 181.
  in Tasman Valley, 35.
  Mount Cook, 15, 18, 61, 77, 87, 89, 102; view from, 62, 286.
  on Mueller, 131.
  on Plateau, 79, 87, 92, 93.
  on Tutoko, 254.
Bivouacs on the Wataroa, 193, 199.
Blue Lake, the, 32, 34.
Boss, Emil, 14.
Botanical paradise, a, 124.
Bowen Falls, 233, 235.
Broderick, Mr. T. N., 20.
Brown, Professor Mainwaring, 216, 263.
Buller, Mr. Percy, 270.
  Sir Walter, 123.
Burke's Pass, 54.

Camp concert, 258.
  cookery, 37, 70, 220, 228, 279.
  in a storm, 101.
  life, 159.
  meditations, 42.
  on Tasman moraine, 58.
Carrier pigeons, 71, 91.
Celmesia flat, 34.
Celmesias, 123.
Chamois, acclimatization of, 3.
Churchill, 158.
Clark, Jack, 17, 19, 109, 110, 168, 266.
Cleddau River, 236.
Clinton River, 261.
Coach journey, 27.
Conway, Mount, 19.
  Sir W. M., 280, 288.
Cook, Mount, 10, 18, 19, 20, 22, 26, 268.
    (Bivouac), 15, 18, 61, 62, 77, 87, 89, 102, 286.
    descent of, 297.
    eastern arête, 82.
    final ice-cap, 98.
    first crossing of, 264.
    first traverse of, 18.
    Green's attempts, 14.
    Hooker route, 105.
    hut, 34.
    ice-cap, view from, 99.
    middle peak, ascent of, 106.
    north-west arête, 112.
    ridge, cairn on, 113.
    summit reached, 113.
    summit of, 295.
    sunset on, 305.
Cook-Hector Couloir, 111, 114.
Copland River, 212.
Couch, Quiller-, 147.
Cox, Dr. Norman, 129, 134, 135, 143.
Crow, orange-wattle, 242.
Cuckoos, 122.

Dadelszen, Miss von, 270.
Dampier, Mount, 20.
Darwin, Mount, 17, 271.

Dawn on Mount Cook, 81.
De la Bêche, 17, 36, 99, 165.
and the Minarets, 165.
Bivouac, 134, 143, 166.
Dieffenbach, 6.
Dixon, M., 17, 53, 57, 61, 81, 86, 100, 103.
Dobson, G., 17.
Donne, T. E., 3.
Douglas, Mount, 19.
Du Faur, Miss, 20.
Dundas, Mount, 124.

Earle, L. M., 19.
Earnslaw, Mount, 121.
Edelweiss, 124, 213.
Elie de Beaumont, 19, 99, 267, 272.
Elliot, Mount, 224.
Empress Glacier, 107.

Fairlie Creek, 25.
Fiddian, Dick, 210, 211.
Fitchett, Dr., 270.
Fitzgerald, E. A., 18, 53, 160.
Fitzgerald's Pass, 208, 213.
Footstool, the, 17, 19.
Forrest Ross Glacier, 41, 145.
Fox Glacier, 154.
Freshfield, Douglas, 119.
Glacier, 40.
Frying-pan Flat, 8.
Fyfe, T. C., 17, 18, 49, 53, 69, 81, 83, 88, 89, 96, 98, 100, 103, 105, 106, 129, 179, 236, 261, 264, 298, 302.
in Wataroa River, 202.
leg injured, 194, 195, 199.

Gillespie's Beach, 207, 208, 209, 210.
Glacier Peak, 19.
action, 217.
Dome, 78, 92, 100, 289.
Glaciers, ancient, 54.
Glentanner station, 55, 75.
Glissading, 84, 108.
Godley Glacier, 54, 178.
Graham, Alexander, 18, 19, 20.
George, 17, 69, 95, 103, 105, 109, 113.
Peter, 19, 20, 168, 290, 298, 299, 302, 304.
Grampus, chased by, 235.
Grand Plateau, 78.
camp on, 79, 87, 92, 94, 100.
Great Bear, the, 252.
Grebe, crested, 242.
Green, Rev. W. S., 14, 21, 24, 31, 32, 40, 98.
Mount, 271.
(porter), 285.
Green's Fifth Camp, 31, 47, 52.
Rocks, 85, 95, 100.
route, attempts by, 65, 105.
Saddle, 105, 111, 112, 113.
Grey warbler, the, 123.
Gunn, Alexander, 206.

Haast, Dr. von, 17.
Glacier, 40.
Mount, 19, 99, 290, 293.
Haidinger, Mount, 18.
ascent of, 144, 154.
Hall's Arm, 263.
Harper, A. P., 53, 160, 178.
Hart, Mount, 223.
Head, Captain, 19.
Hector-Cook Couloir, 111, 114.
Hector, Mount, southern arête, 112.
Hermitage, the, 29, 53, 90.
Hickson, Miss, 270.
Highland hills, 118.
Hochstetter, 6.
Dome, 189.
Glacier, 39, 46, 79, 94, 102.
Ice Fall, 40.
Hodgkins, Messrs. B. and F., 71.
W. J. P., 129, 137, 143, 236, 250, 261.
Höhnel, Rear-Admiral Ritter von, 3, 5.
Holdsworth, Mount, 118, 120.
Homer's Pass, 263.
Hooker Cage, 30, 33, 48, 57.
bergschrund, 109, 111, 114, 308.
Glacier, 106, 110.
camp on, 106.
River, 30, 74, 266, 284.
route, 105.
Hot springs, 196.
Howitt, Mr., 17.
Huddleston, Mr., 48.

Ice-axe lost, 96, 113.
-cap, descent from, 99.
falling, 85.
Islington, Lord, 21.

Jervois Glacier, 224.
Johnson, Dr., 118, 119.
Jukes, Mount, 99.

Kaka, the, 122, 242.
Kakapos, 227, 238, 241.
Kaufmann, Ulrich, 14.
Keas, 3, 4, 32, 47, 137, 142, 162, 267, 279.
Ketetahi, 8.
Kinsey, J. J., 150.
Kiwi Land, in, 215.
Kiwis, 241.
Kron Prinz Rudolf Glacier, 169.
Kronecker, Dr. Franz, 17, 181.

Lamb, Charles, 163.
Lendenfeld, Frau von, 25.
  Dr. von, 31, 32, 36.
  Mount, 19, 293.
  Saddle, 276.
Liebig Range, 37.
Linda Glacier, 15, 80, 81, 85, 87, 94, 100.
Lindon, Mr., 276, 277, 282.
  Mrs., 20, 276, 277, 282.
Longton, Mr. and Mrs., 270.
Low, R. S., 18, 165, 166.

Mackenzie, Hon. Thos., 216.
  Plains, 26, 99.
MacKinnon, Quintin, 222, 262, 263.
Malte Brun Bivouac, 181.
    Mount, 17, 19, 294.
    Range, 37, 40, 70, 81, 99, 135.
Mannering, G. E., 17, 52.
Marchant Glacier, 212.
Mark Twain, 211.
Matheson, 69, 70, 73, 74.
Maungaterera River, 120.
M'Donald, Claude, 19.
M'Intosh, W., 270.
Milford Sound, 10, 222, 233.
Minarets, the, 18, 165, 175.
Mintaro, Lake, 222, 224, 258.
Mitre, the, 124.
  Peak, 235.
Moa, the, 243.
Mountain duck, 242.
Mueller Glacier, 130, 131.
  Bivouac, 131.
Mummery, 20, 281.
Murchison Glacier, 37, 267.
  River, 267, 268.

Nansen, 176.
Newton, Rev. Mr., 18, 19, 165.
Ngapukaturua, Mount, 125.
Ngatimamoe tribe, 217.
Ngauruhoe, 6, 8, 9.
North Island, fauna and flora, 121.
Nor'-wester, the, 54.
Notornis Mantelli, 242.
Nun's Veil, 267.

Okarito, 208.
Omega, Mount, 124.

Pacific breakers, 155.
  Ocean, 99.
Paradise ducks, 36, 75.
Parker, Gilbert, 156.
Penguin Rocks, 145.
Photography under difficulties, 96.
Pigeons, wood, 122.
Pioneers, the, 17.
Plateau Bivouac, 79, 87, 92, 93.
Precipices on Mount Cook, 300.
Priestley, 147.
Pukaki, Lake, 26, 99.
  River, 27, 75.

Quill, William, 238, 263.

Ramsay, Professor, 118.
Ranunculus insignis, 123, 190.
  Lyallii, 132.
Raoulia Rubra, 124.
Red Admiral butterfly, 121.
  Crater, 8.
Reeves, Hon. W. P., 126.
Ribbon wood, 159.
Rimutaka Railway, 116.
Roaring Creek, 225.
Roberts, G. J., 178.
Rock avalanche, 113, 114, 131.
Rohutu, 206.
Ross, D. M., 9.
  John, 261.
  Kenneth, 53, 61, 78, 100, 101, 103, 226, 236, 250, 260, 261.
  Mrs. Malcolm, 33, 37, 41, 119, 129, 131, 137, 228, 233, 261.
  —, station manager, 75.
Rothschild, Lord, 243.
Route-finding, 165.
Ruapehu, 6.
Rubber shoes, 153.
Ruskin, 218.

Schönbrunn, 3, 4.
Scott, Captain, 63.
Scott's Homestead, 211.
Sealy, Mount, 19.
  Pass, 178.
  Range, 48, 132.
Seddon, Hon. Mr., 206.
Sefton, Mount, 18, 19, 130, 132.
Shackleton, Sir E., 63.
Sillem, H., 19.
Sinclair, Dr., 17.
Ski, 57, 86, 94.
Southern Alps, 9, 209.
  Cross, the, 252.
  Stars, 252.
Spencer, Professor Baldwin, 276, 282.
St. David's Dome, 19.
    camp near, 109, 110, 114.
Stevenson, Robert Louis, 161, 252.
Stokes, Mount, 110, 309.
Stones, falling, 113, 114.
Storm on Glacier Dome, 100.
  at Mount Cook Bivouac, 65.
  at hut, 73.
Stott, L., 276.
Sugar as a food, 288.
Sun-bonnet brigade, 159.
Sunset on Mount Cook, 305.

Sutherland, Mount, 224.
  Mr. and Mrs., 233, 234.
Swagging in the Alps, 135.
Swags in couloir, 68, 78, 89, 103.
Sydney Bulletin, 172.

Takitimo Range, 217.
Tararua Forest, 120.
  Range, 116.
Tarawera eruption, 7.
Tasman Glacier, 18, 99, 294.
  Moraine, 31, 36.
  Mount, 15, 18, 20, 40, 99, 293, 295.
  River, 54, 55.
  Spur, 92.
Taupo, Lake, 6.
Te Anau, Lake, 262.
    navigation, 218.
Te Heuheu, 6.
Te Mari, 8.
Teichelman, Dr., 18, 19, 165.
Tekapo, Lake, 26, 99.
Terraces, Pink and White, 7.
The Times, 11.
"The Times" Glacier, 272.
Thompson, Hughie, 209.
Thomson, D., 20.
Thrush, the New Zealand, 242.
Tongariro, 8.
Torris Peak, 19.
Totara berries, 44.
Tourist Department, 3.
Turner, Samuel, 74, 264, 274, 275, 299, 302, 304, 305.
Tutoko, Mount, 240, 251, 254.
Tyndall, Professor, 296.

Valleys, in the, 128.
Vegetable sheep, 123.
Victoria Glacier, 155.
Volcanic mountains, 5.

Waimangu geyser, 7.
Waingawa River, 120.
Wairarapa Plain, 117.
Wakatipu, 10.
  Lake, 218.
Walter, Mount, 271, 272.
Wanaka, 10.
Warbrick, Joe, death of, 7.
Ward, Sir Joseph, 3.
Wataroa River, 178, 191, 202, 203.
Water-power, 11.
Weka, the, 241.
West Coasters, the, 211.
White Island, 6.
Whymper Glacier, 183, 189, 190.
Wild cattle, 204.
Williams, the Misses, 158.
Wood pigeon, 242.
Wrens, Alpine, 36.

Ziele, C., 226, 261.
Zurbriggen arête, 290.
  Mattias, 18, 22, 53, 160, 295.
Zurbriggen's axe, 150.

Printed by Morrison & Gibb Limited, *Edinburgh*

A CLIMBER IN NEW ZEALAND.

By MALCOLM ROSS, A.C., F.R.G.S.

With numerous beautiful Illustrations. Demy 8vo.
Probable price, **15s. net.**

A work dealing with climbs and exploration in the New Zealand Alps. As one of the founders and Vice-President of the New Zealand Alpine Club, and editor of its journal, the author is well qualified to write on the subject of climbing and mountain exploration in his native land.

The charm and adventures attendant upon exploration in the Alps of a new country are most graphically described. Indeed, there is not a dull page in the whole book, while some of the adventures were of quite a thrilling nature. The book is something more than a mere record of ascents. From beginning to end it has quite a literary flavour, and there is, also, running through its pages a quaint vein of humour and philosophy. Such chapters as "Above the Plains" and "An Interlude" will appeal to a wide circle of readers. Mrs. Malcolm Ross, a well-known New Zealand authoress, comes into the book a good deal, and her amusing descriptions of camp cookery and of the Kea, or mountain parrot, add to the interest of the work of her daring and talented husband. The author has illustrated his book with some very excellent and artistic pictures from his own photographs.

HANNIBAL ONCE MORE.

By DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD, M.A.,

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY; TREASURER OF THE HELLENIC AND ROMAN SOCIETIES; FORMERLY PRESIDENT OF THE ALPINE CLUB; AUTHOR OF "THE EXPLORATION OF THE CAUCASUS," "ROUND KINCHINJUNGA," ETC.

Illustrated. 8vo. **5s. net.**

In this little volume Mr. Freshfield has put into final shape the results of his study of the famous and still-debated question: "By which Pass did Hannibal cross the Alps?" The literature which has grown up round this intricate subject is surprisingly extensive, and various solutions have been propounded and upheld, with remarkable warmth and tenacity, by a host of scholars, historians, geographers, military men, and mountaineers. Mr. Freshfield has a solution of his own, which, however, he puts forward in no dogmatic spirit, but in such a fashion that his book is practically a lucid review of the whole matter in each of its many aspects. To an extensive acquaintance with ancient and

modern geographical literature he unites a wide and varied experience as an alpine climber and a traveller, and a minute topographical knowledge of the regions under discussion; and these qualifications—in which many of his predecessors in the same field of inquiry have been conspicuously lacking—enable him to throw much new light on a perennially fascinating problem.

THE LIFE OF

ADMIRAL SIR HARRY RAWSON,

G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

By LIEUT. GEOFFREY RAWSON, R.I.M.

With Illustrations. Demy 8vo. **12s. 6d. net.**

This book, which has been written by a relative of the late Admiral Sir Harry Rawson, gives a deeply interesting account of the Admiral's long and varied career in China, the Near East, Africa and Australia.

Entering the Navy as long ago as 1857, when the sailing ship still held the seas, Sir Harry, as a young cadet, thirteen years of age, took part in the China War of 1858-60, being present in the *Calcutta's* launch at the capture of the Taku forts.

In 1863, when only nineteen years of age, he held Ning-po for three months against the rebels, with 1,300 Chinese troops under his command. He served for two commissions as Commander of the battleship *Hercules*, and acted as Flag-captain in both the Channel and Mediterranean Squadrons.

During the Egyptian Campaign of 1882, he acted as principal Transport officer, and after his promotion to Flag rank, was appointed Commander-in-Chief on the Cape Station, 1895-98. Whilst holding this important position, he landed the Naval Brigade which captured Mweli, the stronghold of a rebel Arab chief; part of his squadron bombarded the palace at Zanzibar; and, in 1897, he commanded the famous expedition for the capture of Benin, which was successfully accomplished.

For more than two years he commanded the Channel Squadron, and the work contains a chapter devoted to the naval manœuvres of 1900.

The book terminates with a well-told account of Sir Harry's Governorship of New South Wales, and a chapter on his short-lived but no less famous brother, Commander Wyatt Rawson, who led the historic night march over the desert to Tel-el-Kebir.

RICHARD CORFIELD OF SOMALILAND.

By H. F. PREVOST-BATTERSBY,

WAR CORRESPONDENT OF THE "MORNING POST" IN SOUTH AFRICA AND SOMALILAND.

Illustrated. Demy 8vo.

It was the news of his death that made the world acquainted with Corfield's name, but everyone who had served with him knew him as a man of extraordinary charm, with some secret source of power which had an amazing influence over savage peoples, and regarded a notable future as assured to him.

He had gone as a mere boy to the South African War, serving afterwards in the South African Constabulary. He had just returned home on leave from his five years' service when he was appointed to the new Tribal Militia being raised in Somaliland. He remained there till the country was evacuated, and the militia disbanded, in 1910, acquiring a remarkable reputation for handling the most "difficult" natives in Africa.

He was at once transferred to Northern Nigeria, and after a year's work, signalized by striking successes with the pagan tribes, was specially requisitioned to raise and command a force of camelry, to which the governance of Somaliland was to be entrusted. In nine months he performed miracles in a country literally reeking with blood, 100,000 of the inhabitants having been massacred since the country was evacuated, and restored in that short time the confidence of the natives in the honour of the British Government.

He lost his life in a gallant attempt to check a Dervish raid, which was spreading fresh ruin over the country; but those who read his life will discover that his action touched a much deeper issue than the succour of a starving people. He died for England's old ways of honour—for the keeping of faith to unfortunate dependents, for his country's good name.

TEACHING FOR LADS.

For use in Bible Classes and Confirmation Classes.

By the REV. PETER GREEN, M.A.,

RECTOR OF ST. PHILIP'S, SALFORD, AND CANON OF MANCHESTER;
AUTHOR OF "HOW TO DEAL WITH LADS," "HOW TO DEAL WITH MEN."

Crown 8vo. **2s. 6d. net.**

This book is intended primarily for the use of those who have to give instruction to boys in Sunday Schools, Church Lads'

Brigades' Bible Classes, and similar institutions, and has been written in response to many and constant inquiries from people desirous of help in such teaching. The course of teaching outlined is based upon what the author has himself used with his own classes. Canon Green has the exceptional faculty of combining a knowledge of philosophy with a wide experience in actual practice. He is a theorist who has really put his theories to the test. In his two previous works there has been found a freshness about his whole treatment of the subject that is most stimulating, and it may be confidently asserted that readers of the new volume will derive equal pleasure and profit from its perusal.

THE ORIGIN OF ATTIC COMEDY.

By F. M. CORNFORD,

Fellow and Lecturer of Trinity College, Cambridge;
Author of "From Religion to Philosophy," "Thucydides Mythistoricus," etc.

One Volume. Demy 8vo. **8s. 6d. net.**

This book tries to show that the peculiar structure and features of Aristophanic Comedy can be explained by an hypothesis like that by which Professor Gilbert Murray explains the form of Greek Tragedy. A detailed examination of the extant plays brings to light, under all their variety, a plot-formula composed of a regular sequence of incidents: *Agon*, Sacrifice, Feast, Marriage, *Kômos*. The theory is that this canonical sequence presents the stereotyped action of a folk-drama (like the English Mummer's Play), which itself preserves the outline of a well-known seasonal ritual. This ritual turns out to be substantially identical with that which, according to Professor Murray, lies behind Tragedy. The stock masks in the Old Comedy are shown to be the essential characters in the supposed folk-drama. On this view, various features of Aristophanic Comedy, such as the *Agon* and *Parabasis*, about which widely different views are now held, can be satisfactorily explained. It follows also that Aristophanic Comedy is not a patchwork of heterogeneous elements, but a coherent whole, and in all probability a native growth of Attic soil. Athenian Comedy and Tragedy have a common source in ritual of the same fundamental type. The causes of their differentiation—a problem of great interest in the history of drama—are treated in the last chapter.

The book is intended, not only for classical scholars, but for all readers interested in the origin and growth of the drama. Greek has been confined to the footnotes, and a synopsis of the plots of Aristophanes' plays has been added, to enable the ordinary reader to follow the argument.

THE REVIVAL OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE.

By FATHER PAUL BULL,
Of the House of the Resurrection, Mirfield.

Crown 8vo. **3s. 6d. net.**

The purpose of the author of this volume is to give an outline sketch of the ideals of the Religious Life, and the attempts to realize that life in history, and to trace the various manifestations and interpretations of the ascetic and mystic spirit of the Gospel. Father Bull has spent twenty-two years of his life in trying to realize these ideals, and feels that both the infinite joy of the attempts and also his consciousness of abysmal failure may have qualified him to offer an opinion on the glory and the perils of the Religious Life—the word "Religious" being here used in its original technical sense for a corporate life under rule. In urging the need for a fuller revival of the Religious Life for men in the English Church, the author deprecates mere imitation of what has been done in past times and in other lands, and considers it important to accumulate as soon as possible a body of experience, to discuss principles and see what adaptations of these principles are necessary to meet modern conditions. The book should prove of great interest and utility to all who are concerned with the religious tendencies of our times.

ESSAYS ON FAITH AND IMMORTALITY.

By GEORGE TYRRELL.

Arranged, with Introduction, by M. D. PETRE, his Biographer.

One Volume. Crown 8vo. **5s. net.**

This volume comprises, for the most part, matter hitherto unpublished which existed in the form of notes and essays amongst the MSS. which Father Tyrrell left behind him. To this have been added a few articles already published, either in England or abroad, in various periodicals, but which are not now easily obtainable, and which possess a certain importance. One of these latter essays, in particular, has attained considerable celebrity, and is yet almost unprocurable—namely, the one entitled "A

Perverted Devotion," which played so large a part in the drama of its author's life.

The essays have been divided into two parts, of which the first may be said roughly to deal with problems of faith, the second with the ever-recurring problem and mystery of personal immortality. This second part is specially characteristic of George Tyrrell's mind, with its spiritual tact and delicate power of intuition. Some of the many to whom this question is the question of all questions will find in these essays, not a scientific answer to their difficulties, but illuminating hints and suggestions to help them in their own search. The essays, in fact, as a whole, are not definite treatises, but the musings and gropings of a deeply spiritual mind in its quest of truth.

NEW NOVEL

BARBARA LYNN.

By EMILY JENKINSON,

AUTHOR OF "SILVERWOOL," "THE SOUL OF UNREST," ETC.

Crown 8vo. **6s.**

In "Barbara Lynn" the author returns to the English Lake District—the scene of her novel "Silverwool"; and from the first page, where the reader is taken to the "Lonely Steading in the Dale," right on to the end, he is not only surrounded by the mighty hills and vast solitudes of Nature, but made to feel the pulse of romance and tragedy. "Barbara Lynn" shows a distinct advance in the work of this gifted young writer. The style, as in her earlier books, is powerful, individual, lucid. There is the same love of wild and majestic scenery, and power to convey impressions of it to others; the same knowledge of human character and of sympathy with country folk, and capacity to enter into their lives and experiences. But with these gifts, which have already given distinction to Miss Emily Jenkinson's work, we hear a deeper chord struck in "Barbara Lynn." It comes out especially in the presentation of the character of the girl whose name gives the title to the story. Barbara Lynn is a splendid creature; and the picture of her spiritual victory, her mysticism and self-sacrifice, is something unique in current works of fiction. In our judgment this is a book, not merely to delight readers for a season, but to remain a notable contribution to our literature for a long time to come.

Important Books Recently Issued.

LORD LYONS : A Record of British Diplomacy.

By LORD NEWTON. 2 vols. **30s.** net.

"A great biography, a classical record of the career of one of the greatest of British Ambassadors."—*Saturday Review.*

LIFE AND LETTERS OF GEORGE VILLIERS, FOURTH EARL OF CLARENDON.

By Sir HERBERT MAXWELL, Bart. 2 vols. **30s.** net.

"Not since Lord Morley's 'Life of Gladstone' was published have we had so useful a contribution as this book to the history of the Victorian era."—*Daily Chronicle.*

PRIMATE ALEXANDER : Archbishop of Armagh.

Edited by ELEANOR ALEXANDER. **12s. 6d.** net.

Third Impression.

"A book that is most likeable, besides having a great charm that the reader will certainly appreciate, even when he cannot exactly define its quality."—*Spectator.*

WILLIAM AUGUSTUS, DUKE OF CUMBERLAND : His Early Life and Times, 1721-1748.

By the Hon. EVAN CHARTERIS. **12s. 6d.** net.

"Mr. Charteris has the gift of making his characters live; he is at once vivid and impartial. His analysis of Cumberland's military campaigns are especially lucid."—*Daily Mail.*

A CIVIL SERVANT IN BURMA.

By Sir HERBERT T. WHITE, K.C.I.E. **12s. 6d.** net.

"It contains some of the best descriptions of Burma and the Burmese people we have ever met."—*Outlook.*

SPLENDID FAILURES.

By HARRY GRAHAM. **10s. 6d.** net.

"We should imagine that few, even among well-read men and women, could read this volume without learning something they did not know before."—*Times.*

THIRTY YEARS IN KASHMIR.

By ARTHUR NEVE, F.R.C.S. With Illustrations. **12s. 6d.** net.

"Another of the splendid contributions to geographical and ethnological science, by which alone missionary endeavour would be more than justified."—*Outlook.*

SHAKESPEARE'S STORIES.

By CONSTANCE MAUD, Author of "Wagner's Heroes," and MARY MAUD. Illustrated. **5s.** net.

New and Revised Edition.

PAINTING IN THE FAR EAST.

By LAURENCE BINYON. With 40 Plates. Crown 4to. **21s.** net.
