

**ELBRIDGE RAND HERRON****1902-1932**

On October 13, 1932, Elbridge Rand Herron, returning from India with an expedition that had attempted Nanga Parbat, made a day's excursion to Cairo and climbed the Second Pyramid. He had done the difficult top part with intense enjoyment, and was running down the easy part, when his foot slipped on a loose pebble. He fell 300 feet, and was instantly killed.

Rand Herron had climbed almost entirely with Continentals, and had lived in this country only two years, but he always considered himself completely American. Actually, however, his American life and climbing were only beginning, and very little is known of him here.

He was born in Pegli, Italy, July 23, 1902. His parents were both American, his father, George Herron, a well-known Socialist and internationalist, his mother, Caroline Rand, daughter of the founder of the Rand School in New York. His childhood was spent in a beautiful old villa outside Florence, where his parents entertained freely and he had the opportunity of seeing many interesting and noted people. Here his brother was born, George Davis Herron, who survives him. When he was twelve, his mother died, and his father moved to a country place outside Geneva. There Rand went to school for eight years. They returned to Florence in time for him to enter the University, where he specialized in philosophy.

From his earliest youth, his main interests were music, his pursuit through all his life, and mountaineering. Owing to family complications, he was not able to begin climbing until his early twenties, but he always longed to do it. He covered the walls of his room with mountain pictures, and to him one of the greatest events of his boyhood was an ascent with his uncle of the Wellenkuppe.

In his seven climbing years before his death, he ranged far and wide. He climbed extensively and brilliantly in the Alps, generally guideless; leading many first ascents, holding a record as highest on the north face of the Grandes Jorasses, and doing some of the stiffest routes in the Kaisergebirge. He sampled the climbing in half the major and minor mountain ranges of Europe. He wandered alone to Corsica, and over Parnassus, and the five summits of Olympus, where he slept out for two nights. He

went with friends to the High Atlas in Morocco, and the mountains of Lapland in winter. In the Caucasus, he made a first ascent of Guilchi, and climbed other peaks. And last summer, as the one American climbing member of the German American Himalayan Expedition to Nanga Parbat, he was first on the mountain and last off it, and reached an altitude of over 22,000 feet.

Meanwhile, he did not neglect his music, but spent his winters studying in Vienna, Berlin, Rome and Moscow. In Berlin he perfected his German, which with English learned in the family, French in Geneva and Italian in Florence, gave him mastery of four languages, which he spoke absolutely interchangeably. He had a natural gift for languages, and was more or less at home in seven others.

In 1929 he came to America and settled in New York. Here he took up aviation and got his pilot's license. It was here also that he met Allen Carpe, whom he greatly admired. They found one another immediately congenial, and climbed together often on the Hudson.

It is hard to describe him, and not sound absurdly eulogistic. He had, to be sure, plenty of faults—most of which he would be the first to acknowledge. But he had also so many gifts and qualities not usually found in the same person.

The first impression he seemed to make on almost everyone was of youth—youth, shy, eager and enthusiastic. Behind his shyness soon showed great charm and lovable gaiety. He was a naturally happy person. His sense of fun was that of a nice child, teasing, and joking, and bubbling with laughter.

Of the many sides of his personality, perhaps most important was the artist, the passionate lover of beauty, and its creator. "Genius" is a word to be used only very carefully, but to all those who knew him at all intimately, he gave a definite impression of having at least a touch of the real thing. He wrote charming vivid Italian poetry, and had half completed a novel. He played with finished ease the piano, the organ, and the harpsichord, and improvised delightfully. His greatest gift of all was for musical composition, and musicians have said that he gave promise of becoming one of America's leading composers. Already some of his music has been played in Florence and in Moscow, and his "Cantata to the Sun" for full choir is probably to be sung in

California this spring. In every line he was tremendously ambitious, and with a capacity for hard intense work to back up his ambitions.

He had also a fine, flexible mind. It took hold of practical matters with an instant grasp, exploring and weighing possibilities, guarding against eventualities, planning minutely down to the smallest detail. More theoretical questions, social or political or esthetic, he considered always with warm live interest, with an eye for fundamental values and a balanced view of both sides. It was amusing to hear with what zest he would argue on either side of almost any question, for he was hotly intolerant of other's intolerance. In judgments that concerned himself, he kept generally the same cheerful objectivity and impartiality.

On our expedition last summer, he showed especially the active, practical and adventurous sides of his nature. He proved a "thoroughly sound man." He was always ready to do more than his share, always eager to push on, and as staunch and efficient as he was enthusiastic. Not only throughout the expedition, but throughout his life, he always, with serious thoughtfulness, took on every sort of responsibility. He seemed automatically to be the one who was counted on to attend to things, or to look after people; for he was reliable and considerate of others, and always most unbelievably kind. In all the strains and tensions of the summer, he remained sociable and good-tempered, and boyishly anxious to keep everything happy and friendly all round. "*Everybody* liked Rand," said a friend.

For myself, I have never seen anyone who lived more sensitively in every moment, good or bad, yet always with a fundamental serenity of acceptance, who loved life more, who put more into it, or got more out of it.

"After the first few moments," writes a climbing acquaintance, from India, "I realized that he was an exceptional man. That realization grew intense. . . . The gods appear to have treated harshly one possessing so finely tempered a spirit."

In his deep love of mountaineering, many sides of him were seen—the practical, the intellectual, the esthetic, the joyously adventurous. There was also a strain of romantic mysticism. "Although we climbers usually don't admit it," he wrote to Mrs. Carpe, "we are always more or less conscious that the strange and irresistible call of mountains is also a call toward the

end of life. And for that very reason we love them all the more, and find their call more sublime. Our secret heart's desire is that our end shall be on them." It seems the final irony of his short life, with all its broken promise, that he should have met the death he did.

E. K.

### THE DUKE OF THE ABRUZZI

1873-1933

In the death of our Honorary Member, His Royal Highness Prince Luigi Amedeo Guiseppe Maria Ferdinando Francisco di Savoia-Aosta, Duke of the Abruzzi, one of the most romantic figures of our times has been lost, not only to the American Alpine Club, but to the world. Sailor, navigator, oceanographer, sea-fighter, polar explorer, big game hunter, topographer, land explorer, geologist, botanist, zoologist, financier and mountaineer, he has been one of the outstanding figures of our day.

Born of royal parents, apparently into the lap of luxury, one might have thought that the young man would become a dilettante and nothing more. Not so, however. From early youth he was given a strict schooling and drilled in the fundamentals of learning. Thus were shaped the building blocks which enabled him to construct a life of masterful adventure.

Certain of his accomplishments are well known, and neither space nor time now permit of more than an inadequate sketch of his remarkable career. The Prince, third son of Amedeo, Duke of Aosta, and Princess Marie del Pozzo della Cisterna, was born in Madrid January 29th, 1873. At the time of his birth his father was Amedeo I, King of Spain. Almost immediately his father lost the throne and was expelled from the country. His mother died when he was three. At six he became a cabin boy and attended the Naval College in Leghorn. At eleven he received his first instruction on a warship. At sixteen he cruised the shore of South America in the warship *Amerigo Vespucci* and at twenty commanded the gunboat *Volturmo* on a punitive expedition to Somaliland. At twenty-one he started a cruise around the world in the *Christopher Columbus* which lasted two years. At thirty-one he made another world cruise for three years as commander of the ship *Liguria*. During this cruise he made extensive observations in oceanography. He visited the Jamestown Exposition in 1907 in command of the cruiser *Varese*