

The First Alpine Opera in America? The New York Public Library contains a copy of the opera in three acts by William Dunlap (1766-1839) entitled *The Archers; or, Mountaineers of Switzerland*, published in New York by T. & J. Swords in 1796 and performed by the Old American Company. It is a Tell drama, based on a dramatic performance entitled *Helvetic Liberty*, given in London in the summer of 1794. In the American company Mr. Hodgkinson took the part of *William Tell*, while Mr. Cleveland enacted the part of *Gesler*, the scene being the town of Altdorf:

The apple clean remov'd and boy unhurt.
Thou hast thy liberty.

The First American Ascent of the Grépon. Does anyone know who made it? The earliest records available are curiously associated with a single surname. The editor has found nothing earlier than the traverses of Joseph Cooke Smith (1863-1942), undated but probably in the '90s; Oliver Perry-Smith in 1909 (*A. J.* 25, 168), and J. Duke Smith (d. 1942) in the same year.

An Ascent of Mont Blanc Forty Years Ago. Mr. John Vernou Bouvier (Columbia, 1886; LL.B., 1888), of New York, who completed his ascent of Mont Blanc by climbing the flagpole of the edicule, has kindly sent us the following notes:

Parlous are the perils of moving. Some five years ago my duly authenticated certificate of the successful ascent of Mont Blanc disappeared, where, or under what circumstances is conjectural. My daughters, upon visiting, with their mother, Chamonix some years later saw the original in the Hotel de Ville of that delightful mountain hamlet, with a notation thereon that my guide has been lost in an avalanche in an attempted ascent some four years thereafter.

On the other hand, my recollection is vivid. I began the ascent on August 11, 1904, descended on August 12, my anniversary, at which last mentioned date I had achieved forty years of age. Incidentally, the following year (1905) there were born girl twins. The connection between the mountain adventure and the domestic increment is not clear or necessarily immediate, but this is a factual recital and hence, in passing, is recorded. Perhaps it was in the nature of a compensation for negotiating at relatively advanced years this not particularly dangerous but *très pénible* mountain.

Therefore my Alpine climbing had been practically negligible and my earlier experience was notably conspicuous by its absence. Some years later I essayed, with my son, the Matterhorn, but a snow storm of vicious proportions supervened, making the sides *bien glissant* and our guide wisely determined to adventure no further.

The fact is, so far as Mont Blanc is concerned, my preparation therefor was merely overnight, and I ventured in my ignorance with guide and porteur blindly on "where Angels fear to tread." The undertaking, however, proved eminently successful, but in some aspects peculiarly disappointing, inasmuch as the entire mountainscape was viewed *diminuendo*, through, as it were, the large end of the telescope, and the surrounding peaks, far below us, were suggestive of nothing more picturesque than London's grimy chimney pots.

A rather amusing, but essentially typical Gallic incident followed. It was the custom—if one through the telescope was identified from the hotel veranda *au sommet*—to be distinguished by three cannon booms, while if later he appeared in the village intact he was honored by three more.

For a full fifteen minutes there was not an intervening cloud between the village and the summit; presumably, therefore, the three cannon booms were mine. On descending, I entered with guide and porteur Chamonix, to hear the last reverberations of the ancient ordinance, and upon the following morning, upon paying my bill I promptly noted an item thereof reading: *Six coups de canon, six francs*; verily had I paid for my own glory.

Mt. Etna. This Sicilian peak is the highest volcano in Europe, 10,758 ft. The Torre de Filosofo is a Roman structure 1188 ft. below the summit, the latter attainable in 7-8 hours from the village of Nicolosi. The mountain is 18 miles N.W. of Catania and is surrounded by a rail ellipse of 90 miles. Thucydides mentions eruptions in the 8th and 5th centuries B.C. The Greeks believe it was the mountain with which Zeus crushed the giant Typhon. Hadrian ascended it. The Americans, Howard and Van Rensselaer, reached the summit (and also of Vesuvius) in 1819, prior to the ascent of Mont Blanc.