

Death in the Alps

~~It~~ ~~those who~~ ~~the~~ "Climbers are seen by ~~non-climbers~~  
those who do not climb to be of two kinds;—  
those who climb knowing that they may be  
chosen to die, & those who climb in ignorance  
of this fact. And the former are the more  
foolish". Such is the text of many a well meant  
homily; and the homily like others of its kind  
suffers both because it is ~~delivered~~ <sup>delivered</sup> in good part  
& because it is delivered <sup>to</sup> frequently. It is well  
that climbers should appreciate the attitude  
<sup>knowing themselves</sup> of the world outside them. We are regarded like  
men of some strange religion. ~~We are met by the~~  
the ignorant ~~with~~ the proclamation "heretics the intellectual  
tolerate us because one must tolerate everyone and  
those who are neither particularly stupid nor  
particularly clever meet us with the common  
smile of the self-satisfied European for an oriental  
god. By all odds we are regarded as harmless  
and ~~that is where~~ <sup>it is here that</sup> the wit creeps in: ~~But~~ if we  
were damned as heretics as we ought to be damned  
we might take some trouble with our own defence.  
But ~~the vegetation for sport~~ <sup>in this country</sup> is so unexciting and so strong  
and ~~that the attacks~~ <sup>against</sup> ~~against~~ <sup>so rudely</sup> good  
natured and so feebly delivered, that we ~~do not seem~~

abrupt to have ceased to regard them as serious  
attacks at all - That at least is the <sup>an</sup> explanation  
of the many ~~of the~~ incomplete & apparently ~~of the~~ <sup>worthless</sup>  
statements that are ~~not~~ spoken & written on one  
side of the controversy & that is the excuse for  
the present attempt to arrive at a clear  
position.

Let us turn once again to the text: our  
sympathy of course is with the former the  
more foolish; those who are aware that  
it may be their destiny to meet ~~death~~ <sup>death</sup> for  
the mountains. But the existence of those ~~they~~  
the ignorant & the more wise deserves some  
few words.

How many climbers do ~~actually~~ <sup>actually</sup> realize the nature  
of the risks? At <sup>the</sup> least there are <sup>no small</sup> <sup>number</sup> ~~some~~ who ~~appear~~  
not to do so. Or why should they <sup>still</sup> <sup>deem</sup>  
~~continually~~ the folly of those who are <sup>or</sup> <sup>ruined</sup>  
by accident? There are many deaths <sup>we know</sup>  
in the Alps of those who <sup>cannot</sup> claim any  
serious acquaintance with the mountain & any  
knowledge of the requirements - the technical  
skill of our Art. But accidents are by no means

confined to this class of tourist. No one disputes  
the fact that men of the highest reputation  
for caution & restraint have been the  
victims of accident. It is undeniable that  
a climber may possess the great maintain-  
ing qualities, <sup>may possess them</sup> ~~that~~ even in ~~the~~  
the highest degree, & yet suffer. There is  
is ~~can be~~ no certain immunity from the  
mountain perils. Who would have suggested  
that Emile Rey might one day miss his footing,  
~~was under no great strain of difficulty~~  
~~it did even as a sheep does~~ or that a man of  
such tried prudence as another famous guide  
Alexander Burgener, should have been  
induced to ~~face~~ face the risks of avalanche when  
his life was in no peril from other circumstances.  
And yet ~~there are still~~ <sup>are found who</sup> ~~some~~ climbers, still talk  
of these sad events as though the fate of other climbers  
~~had not~~ was no particular concern of them. There  
is a simple ~~argument~~ thought: 'X was killed, therefore  
X was a fool'. That is the gist of the first step. Of  
course ~~in~~ in some cases one wouldn't have expected  
it of X, the conclusion can't be expressed so clearly  
'X's mistake is clear' the argument continues: 'I shall  
not make that mistake, certainly not, I'm not a fool

Confined to this class of tourists. None ~~with~~  
disputes the fact that men of the highest reputation  
for ~~the~~ ~~country's~~ ~~constraint~~ ~~which~~ ~~is~~ ~~essential~~  
~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~highest~~ ~~standards~~ ~~of~~ ~~maintaining~~  
have met with accidents. And yet there are  
some who still talk of these sad events as  
the deserved fate of fools <sup>with little to be had</sup> ~~un~~ ~~expected~~ in particular cases that  
indicating a condemnation none the less certain for that,  
~~and~~ ~~appeal~~ they appeal to the canons of our  
Spaul ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~like~~ ~~as~~ devotees of some strange  
fetish worship. prostrating <sup>then</sup> ~~themselves~~ ~~before~~  
~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~worthless~~ ~~idol~~, ~~or~~ ~~an~~ ~~idol~~ ~~before~~ ~~the~~ ~~doors~~ ~~of~~  
~~the~~ ~~temple~~ ~~of~~ ~~superstition~~, ~~grasping~~ ~~with~~ ~~timid~~ ~~superstition~~ ~~the~~  
~~grottesque~~ ~~statue~~ ~~of~~ ~~a~~ ~~king~~ ~~or~~ ~~trunk~~. ~~where~~ ~~they~~ ~~stand~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~  
~~name~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~king~~ ~~which~~ ~~of~~ ~~these~~ ~~cases~~  
arise only at ~~the~~ ~~discovery~~  
principle has been violated ~~and~~ ~~so~~ ~~men~~  
are they to fulfill the ritual of their creed  
& determine where ~~in~~ ~~regard~~ ~~to~~ ~~these~~ ~~cases~~ ~~of~~ ~~unfortunate~~ ~~have~~ ~~fallen~~ ~~short~~  
that they neglect the more <sup>important</sup> ~~simple~~ ~~human~~  
consideration that they themselves are liable to  
the same error; while it is not impossible that  
this very ~~mistake~~ ~~fatal~~ ~~step~~ ~~or~~ ~~lightest~~ ~~omission~~,  
~~never~~ ~~it~~ ~~is~~,  
has been made ~~by~~ ~~them~~ ~~already~~ ~~many~~ ~~times~~  
But without the same fateful consequences. They  
fail to realize perhaps has easily these <sup>mistakes</sup> ~~errors~~ ~~are~~  
made. Some of us may remember ~~the~~ ~~cases~~  
within the last two years ~~that~~ ~~men~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~highest~~ ~~reputation~~

'I shall not be killed' It seems impossible that anyone  
should be simple; and all those who reason in this  
manner would of course deny the fact categorically.  
But it would not require a very long conversation  
to ~~discover~~ find them out. ~~Within the fact~~ The  
most certain sign by which you know them is a manner  
of referring to the "rules of maintenance" These are  
regarded ~~as~~ <sup>as the simple folk of the Middle Ages regarded the King's grant</sup> with superstitious reverence, and  
~~are used~~ the devotee will bombard you <sup>with rules</sup> ~~with~~ a list  
of quotations Puritan might bombard you with fragments  
of the Old Testament.

