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The Great Beast

There's an old adage kicking around somewhere which has it that it takes all kind of people to make a world, and while we haven't met them all, we came across one gent who has cornered one section all to himself.

By name he was called Aleister Crowley, and Englishman, who by all the cards should have been a genteel young man, but who was known more often as a "beast."

But just to prove the other side, he wrote poetry which was acclaimed by the experts on odes all over the world.

But the part that fascinates us most was this gent's unusual ability with pike and crampon.

As a young man he climbed virtually everything they had in England, including the soft, crumbling chalk walls of Dover. He was never accepted by the alpinists of the day but he kept them just as unhappy as they could be, by doing everything they did in concert, by himself, and he did it better.

To outdo Crowley, the alpine club once guided and hauled a woman to a particular difficult crown, but Crowley, tied a female terrier to the end of a rope and pulled the canine up the mountain and advertised "the first ascent by a _____."

But these stunts were just warm-ups for one of the most unusual climbs in history, one in which he proved to be a genius so far as mountain climbing was concerned.

Despite his many accomplishments Crowley never seemed to get anywhere but decided on one action to change his status for all time.

An acquaintance of Crowley's decided to climb the highest mountain in the world then available to mountaineers—Chogo Ri or K2. K2 is 28,250 feet high, just under 1000 feet being as high as Everest.

The party met many problems and it was decided to send Crowley ahead to make survey of the best route to follow up the mountain, and after some almost superhuman trekking he established a series of camps and climbed to 17,332 feet.

After looking over the peak and the many facets he decided that the southeast wall offered the best opportunity of success, but when the remainder of the party arrived on the plateau, two other leaders didn't agree with him and decided the Northwest side was the best route up.

They wouldn't recant and he wouldn't change his mind, so the expedition, standing on the brink of success, broke up and no attempt was made to climb the mountain after being stalled at 22,000 feet.

In 1938 an American expedition reported that Crowley was right.

The Southeast was the best route up K2.

So you can never tell about people or it takes all kind to make a world.

We have little to worry about though—we got 'em.

All kinds.