

showed that No. 4 (2,993) was about 100 ft. lower, and No. 2 (2,922) about the same height as the point we were on (3,002). But this again belongs to the monograph.

\* \* Climbs at the 'back side' of the other 'deserts' are reserved for the next number.

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A WEEK AT STEIN.

BY W. T. KIRKPATRICK.

WELL may it be called Stein, for in truth a wilderness of stones surrounds the little chalet dignified by the name of 'Hotel Stein.' Far removed from road or railway, with no telegraph, no post-office, and no other habitation near, it offers great attractions to the lover of the mountains. Situated 6,000 ft. above the sea, it may be approached either from Wasen, on the St. Gothard line, or from Meiringen, and the prospect which it commands is that of a fine snow-field. The Stein Glacier may be reached in ten minutes' walk from the inn, and above it rise the Sustenhorn, the Gwachtenhorn, the Thierberg, and the Stein-Limmi; while behind the inn are the Oberthal Glacier, the Fünffingerstöcke, and the great walls of the Titlis and Wendenstock, both appearing inaccessible from this side.

It is delightful to find in the Alps at the present day an unspoilt specimen of the primitive mountain inn, where the ordinary tourist does not come, and where the board and lodging, though simple, are sufficient for all one's wants.

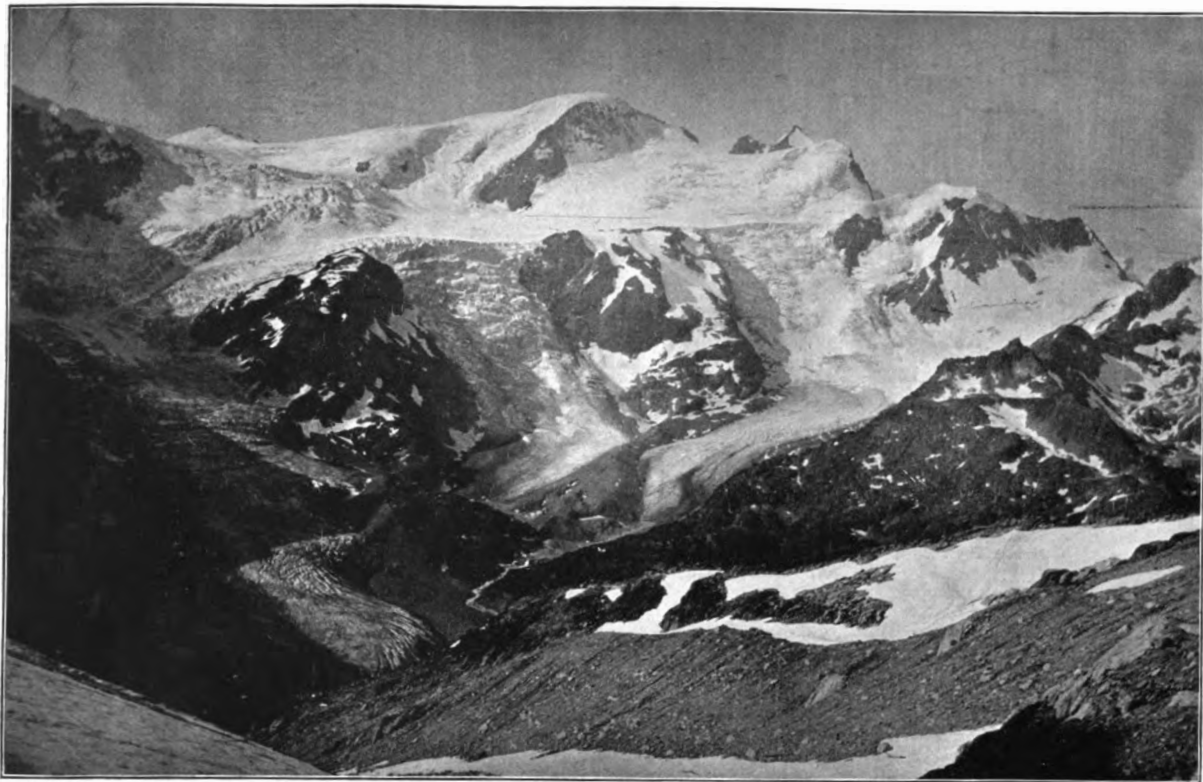
It is refreshing also to those who practise guideless climbing to find no guides lying in wait every time you emerge from the front door, smiling on you for the first portion of your sojourn, but looking askance when they find you are a profitless party. The upper portion of the house, which is devoted to guests, consists of some half-dozen bedrooms, and one living room, which serves as dining, sitting, and smoking room. The windows at the back look out on a slope of rocks and stones, and there is usually a pig or two lying in the foreground.

In fact, it is very much like living in a farmyard, for when you saunter outside the door, you find yourself surrounded by goats, sheep, and cattle. The goats and sheep press eagerly on you, if they suspect you of having a morsel of salt for them; but if they venture within the low paling that surrounds the inn, a great St. Bernard dog warns them off with dignified admonition.

As hostess, Fräulein Tännler is all that is charming, and ministers in the most friendly way to your creature comforts. And in descanting on the merits of the place, let not the magnificent bootjacks that adorn the bedrooms escape notice, a most welcome addition to the furniture of the climber's inn, but one seldom met with in the Alps, even in the most pretentious hostelries.

Stein is an excellent place for the guideless climber to begin his ascents of the year. Though there are no fashionable peaks with 100-franc tariffs for the guides, there is very nice snow and rock climbing to be had, while the mountains are of moderate height and the expeditions not too long. The day after our arrival, August 1, 1899, R. P. Hope and I started at the comfortable hour of 7.45, intending to do some peak or other, but not having decided which to make for. 'Bernard,' the dog, accompanied us for a considerable distance up the Stein Glacier, and paused for some time at the first crevasse, before stepping over it, while he went round others, but finally left us, apparently distrustful of a guideless party. Two days later he climbed the Sustenhorn with a party of Germans and two guides, and we were told that this was not by any means his first ascent. We went up the east side of the Bockberg, and lunched at a nice place near the top, where there was good water, and a good back stone, for one of the party at least, to lean against.

We now considered our plans, and, giving up the idea of climbing the Sustenhorn by the ordinary route, as we saw a more interesting one direct from the Stein Glacier, we made for the Gwächtenhorn, which we intended to ascend by the west ridge. But the late hour disposed us to shirk the long snow tramp of two miles which this would have involved, and we turned our attention to the north-east ridge which came down directly towards us. The ridge ends precipitously, and on its south side the glacier appeared to be cut off by crevasses, and dangerous from séracs, and we therefore went along on the north side of the ridge, intending to get on to the rocks as soon as they appeared safe from falling stones. We selected a place where a few steps in a steep ice slope above the bergschrund brought us to the rocks, and went up a steep slope of débris and rock to the arête, which was easily followed to the top. We started to descend by the west arête, but, plunging into soft snow at every step, we turned back and came down the snow slopes on the east side, making a détour to our right to avoid ice slopes and crevasses. We returned by the Thierbergli, which would have been our direct route



*Philip Hope, photo.*

**GWÄCHTENHORN AND STEIN GLACIER**  
From the North

*Swan Electric Engraving Co.*

for the ascent, and glissaded six or seven hundred feet, reaching our hotel in two hours from the top.\*

The next was an 'off' day, spent in lying about with the comfortable sense that one has had enough exercise to last for forty-eight hours, while a healthy appetite and general feeling of satisfaction with things in general add to one's pleasure. We also indulged in a bathe under the curious artificial waterfall at the back of the hotel, which is made by the stream being turned out of its course and brought over a large rock. The following morning the same party, with the addition of H. H. Jennings, started at seven o'clock for the Fünffingerstöcke, a decidedly interesting expedition. Turning up the grass slopes on the way to the Susten Pass, we ascended the east branch of the Oberthal Glacier, with the snow quite hard and crisp beneath our feet, and went up some steepish snow slopes leading to the col, from which we got a fine view of the Titlis, its imposing walls standing up straight in front of us. Descending the slope on the other side of the col, we worked round to our right in order to attack the highest of the Fünffingerstöcke (3,036 m.) from the north, by a couloir which Hope had prospected from the Titlis, and, having turned the corner, kept along the trough between the snow and a vertical wall of rock. We then crossed an ice slope covered with snow, which was in bad condition, and needed very careful going; and, getting on to the rocks beyond it, found a good breakfast place under an overhanging cliff which made us safe from falling stones. Jennings, not feeling quite up to the mark, elected to stay here, while Hope and I went on, across a short but steep ice slope, requiring big steps to be cut; then up between snow and rocks, and across the big snow couloir, by the rocks on the far side of which we ascended to the summit, the loose stones which we dislodged causing a perfect cannonade all the way and informing Jennings of our movements. At the top we found ourselves surrounded with curious rock ridges, peaks, and pinnacles, and had a fine view. The cairn contained a bottle with Mr. Powell's name and the date 1884.†

Descending to the gap on the ridge, we went down the north face, crossing the couloir lower down than before, rejoined our former route, and picked up our friend. Having reached

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\* The ascent of the Gwächtenhorn by the N.E. ridge seems to be a new route.

† Point 3,036 does not appear to have been ascended from the N. side before, though we were quite unaware of this at the time.

the col again, he felt equal to tackling the point to the east of the pass, which only took half an hour there and back, while the writer lazily looked on, and heard sensational reports of a ledge a foot wide with no holds, easy enough in going up, but not so nice to come down. We found the Siegfried map apparently wrong in this locality, as it puts point 3,002 on the east side of the col, whereas the point on the west is the higher of the two and must be 3,002. An easy descent took us back to Stein in three-quarters of an hour from the col.

I have seen in one of the climbing books some sarcastic remarks as to the alarm watch, which it is suggested goes off like a cock pheasant when least expected; but I can only say that I have found it most useful, and on the morning of August 5 it saved the situation. Getting up at 3 A.M. we found the cook faithless, and neither fire, nor light, nor other sign of life in the Hotel. Foraging in the kitchen we discovered some bread, butter, and a large jug of milk, which, though rather cold comfort at that early hour, was decidedly better than nothing. Whether the other occupants of the inn had to breakfast off *café noir*, history does not relate. We all three started at 4.15 for the Sustenhorn, hoping to ascend it by the N.W. face, which, so far as we knew, had not been done before, but which, from careful examination with a pair of Zeiss glasses, appeared quite practicable. It was a fine clear morning as we made our way up the moraine to the Bockberg, from which we descended to the Stein Glacier, and crossed it diagonally to the foot of the most southerly of two couloirs, keeping to our right to avoid an impossible bergschrund. We got on to the rocks by this couloir, and passed into the big couloir to the north, which we ascended on its left side, keeping to the rocks, till we came to the first broad band of snow, which we traversed to the right, and then mounted by snow and rock, diagonally to our right, till we gained the ridge. We were in the shade up to this point, but later in the day there might be some danger from falling stones. It will be observed that our route for a considerable distance was the same as that taken a fortnight later by the Rev. W. C. Compton and Mr. Valentine Richards in their ascent of the Hinter-Sustenhorn.\* We made our way along the ridge over rock and shale, and up the final slopes to the top, which we reached in 4½ hrs. actual going from the inn. Having refreshed our bodies with a hearty meal, and our

\* *Alpine Journal*, No. 146, p. 599, 'New Expeditions in 1899.'

minds by gazing on the giants of the Oberland, we came down by the usual route, where we found tracks made the day before by a party of men and the St. Bernard dog. Our return was uneventful save that the middleman on the rope, disregarding the maxim of 'Follow your leader,' suddenly popped into a crevasse, and disappeared completely, as if through a trap-door. The rope was fairly taut, so he did not go far, but there was no answer to our calls for a few moments. Then an ice-axe appeared waving in the air, followed by a head, and our friend struggled out somewhat short of breath. Our only regret was that we had not photographed him as he appeared with his head just clear, but he positively refused to resume the position even in the interests of art.

On making inquiries after our return to the hotel, we were told that there had been two previous ascents of the Sustenhorn by this route several years ago, one by Johann Luchs and his brother, and one by the same guide and an Englishman. I have since learnt that this was the route taken by G. Studer on the first ascent in 1841.\*

On August 7 we started at 3 p.m., with a porter carrying about forty pounds of food, while we also carried fair loads ourselves, intending to spend four nights in the Trift hut. After crossing the Stein-Limmi, our porter, declaring that he knew a short cut which would save a descent to the Trift Glacier, led us, against our better judgment, to the top of the ridge on our left, and we found ourselves above a steep wall of rock impossible for a heavily laden man to descend. After prospecting in various directions we had to go down again on the side we had come up, and soon found the right route round the shoulder of the ridge, though a very awkward and dangerous corner was nearly too much for the porter. On reaching the descent to the Thierberg glacier, he said he was now sure of his way, and brought us to the top of a steep slope of wet rocks, but as it was now almost dark two of us roped together to prospect the descent. Lighting the lantern we climbed down one at a time in what seemed to be the bed of a stream, the leader holding the lantern in his teeth and the last man following as best he could in the dark. After descending 200 ft. the rocks became steeper, and the stones we threw down gave indication of a drop at the end, so we decided to retreat. At this point the last man was horrified to see the light below him fall, but happily it was only the candle, which, after a wet scramble

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\* G. Studer's *Topographische Mittheilungen* (1844), pp. 79-85.  
VOL. XX.—NO. CXLVII. D

up in the dark, was replaced from our store. We then selected a large rock, which afforded a certain amount of shelter, as our resting place; and, hanging up the lantern, ate our supper, put on our slippers and extra clothing, and 'turned in.' The rock overhung sufficiently to give more or less shelter to two of us, although it involved lying in a very strained position and on uncomfortably sharp stones, while the third man kept shifting his position in a vain attempt to make himself safe from wind and a fine rain, which fell intermittently. When light came we shook ourselves and made a brew of hot cocoa with a small home-made aluminium stove, which was exceedingly welcome, especially to the porter, whose teeth were chattering so that we gave him the first brew. It was decidedly trying having to face the camera at about 6 A.M. after a night under a rock, but the artist of the party was inexorable. Starting at 7 we got to the hut by 8.30, and dismissed our man without regret, this being the only occasion during our tour on which we engaged the services of guide or porter.

It came on to rain that afternoon, and rained persistently all night and all next day. We found the hut dirty, damp, and very cold, and endeavoured to keep up our spirits and our circulation with a variety entertainment, consisting of clog dances and every fragment of a song, chorus, or recitation that we were able to recall. We were rewarded next day by fine weather, and going up to the Trift-Limmi traversed the four summits of the Thieralplistock, from which we got a magnificent view of the Oberland.

Leaving the hut next morning a good deal cleaner than we found it, we went up the snow slopes behind it to the highest point of the Thierberg (3,446 m.) intending to traverse the ridge towards the north, and descend to Stein. The arête of the first peak we should have had to traverse looked very steep, and we should further have been exposed to a bitter wind, so we changed our plans and decided to make for the Goeschener Alp. The descent looked easy enough, but the rocks were rotten and partly covered with snow, so we got as soon as possible into a branch of the big couloir which descends from the top of the ridge, and hoped for easy going. The snow, however, was very hard, and after kicking our way down for some distance, we again took to the rocks on the left of the couloir, till they ended in a little cliff, to turn which we were forced into the couloir, tumbling into, and then scrambling out of, a large avalanche trough which barred the way. Regaining the rocks we soon reached the first bergschrund, which we climbed into and out of, and zigzagging through the others

reached the open glacier.\* Two hours' weary tramp brought us to the Goeschener Alp, where we spent the night. But this reminds me that I have gone beyond the limit of a week and the district of Stein.

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CATALOGUE OF BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

THIS catalogue will be welcomed by all Alpine Club men, and will probably be found useful by non-members also. The last catalogue was published in 1888, under the care of Sir F. Pollock, since which time the number of works in the library has more than doubled, and its scope perhaps somewhat widened. The catalogue is of the same size as the 'Alpine Journal,' and the printing does credit to Messrs. Constable, of the Edinburgh University Press. It should perhaps be mentioned that maps, except so far as they may be annexed to books, or, in a few cases, collected in book form, are not within the scope of this catalogue. These have been catalogued separately in manuscript. Though absolute immunity from error can hardly be expected in dealing with so great a number of names, every care has been taken by Mr. Cockburn, the Honorary Librarian, to whose energy, as members know, the library owes so much, and he has been helped in his task largely by Mr. A. J. Mackintosh, the Assistant Secretary of the Club. The catalogue aims at being complete down to November 1, 1899. The price is 3s., bound in cloth ; postage 3d.

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IN MEMORIAM.

S. F. STILL.

THE Club has experienced a great loss by the recent death—with almost dramatic suddenness—of Stafford F. Still, formerly one of its Vice-Presidents, and a well-known member of the committee. He commenced climbing in 1865, and up to 1876 did much good work in various districts of the Alps, including ascents by new routes of the Grand Paradis from Cogne in 1873, and the Monte della Disgrazia from Chiareggio in 1875, accompanied in both expeditions by the late F. Pratt Barlow, whose accounts of them will be found in the 'Alpine Journal,' vol. vii. p. 1 and vol. viii. p. 20; but to the last he missed but few seasons in Switzerland, and took the keenest interest in everything connected with the Club and the mountains. A born mountaineer, excelling especially on ice, he would, had he climbed without guides, have been an acknowledged leader in that branch of the mountain craft.

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\* This descent appears to be a new route.