

II. *The South Face.*

BY E. BENEDETTI.

I may say at once that the desire to climb the splendid S. face of the Matterhorn had, from the first time I had seen it, taken possession of me. I did not, however, mention it to the guides, because I felt that I was then lacking the sense of proportion, a sense acquired in three successful and other vain attempts to reach the summit by the ordinary Italian route.

A few years afterwards, when climbing the Furggen ridge, I succeeded in studying the chances of climbing the unconquered S. face.

To the W. (even when not reflecting on the reasons which had frustrated preceding attempts) I could not clearly notice any route : up the centre the way looked quite absurd. It was only towards the E. that I could see some probabilities, although, as seen from above, this portion of the face certainly did not look inviting. Taking advantage of a very good photograph full of details, and with the help of what I had seen, I could map out a route possessing only one doubtful bit about half-way up. This doubt disappeared when in winter I had had a good look at it from Breuil, and so I may say that in January 1931 our plan was agreed upon in every detail ; it meant a new way up to the ' head,'<sup>3</sup> which could have been climbed in its last bit, by the so-called '*passage d'Aymonod*.'

Our route, as planned, did not completely satisfy me, because I would have preferred to climb the last part by a new way also, but the opinions of Louis Carrel and Maurice Bich did not leave me much hope. As it happened, at that spot my companions and I were lucky to have still enough energy and goodwill left to enable us to climb also the ' head ' by a new way.

It is superfluous to say that I chose as my companions Carrel and Bich, to whom I trusted more than to any others and to whom I was tied by a long and great friendship. After all, had I not explained to them the reason why, when climbing the Furggen ridge, I had stopped many times to look down on the face ? We had therefore only to wait for the best moment. The bad weather which prevailed during the summer 1931 had

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<sup>3</sup> By ' head ' Signor Benedetti refers to the final ' wall,' above the great ledge or terrace extending across the S. face from the S.E. to the S.W. ridges. See photo ' D.'—*Editor*.





*Photo, Ad Astra.]*

(A) UPPER PART OF S. FACE.

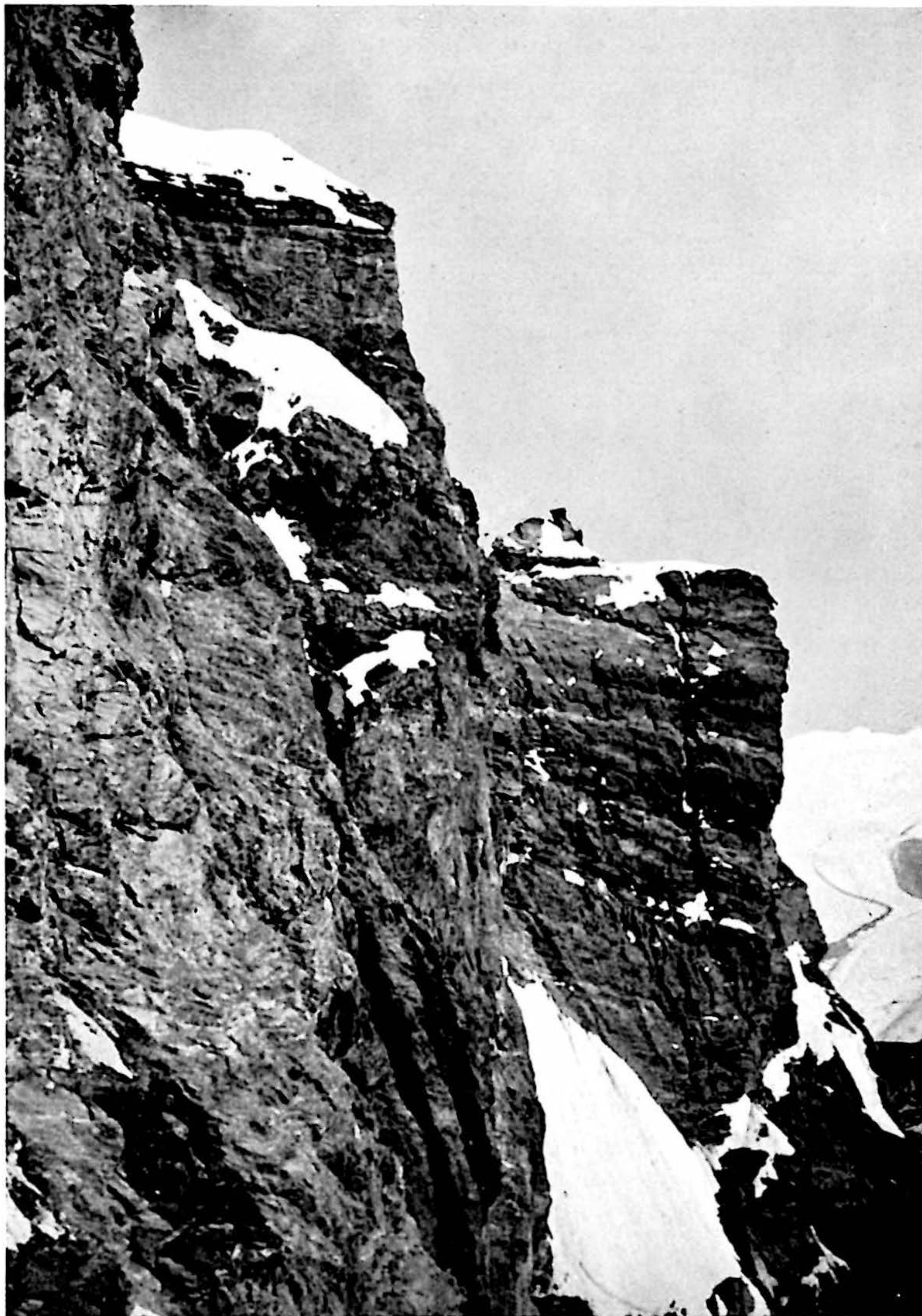




*Photo, E. Benedetti.]*

(B) HALF-WAY UP THE S. FACE.



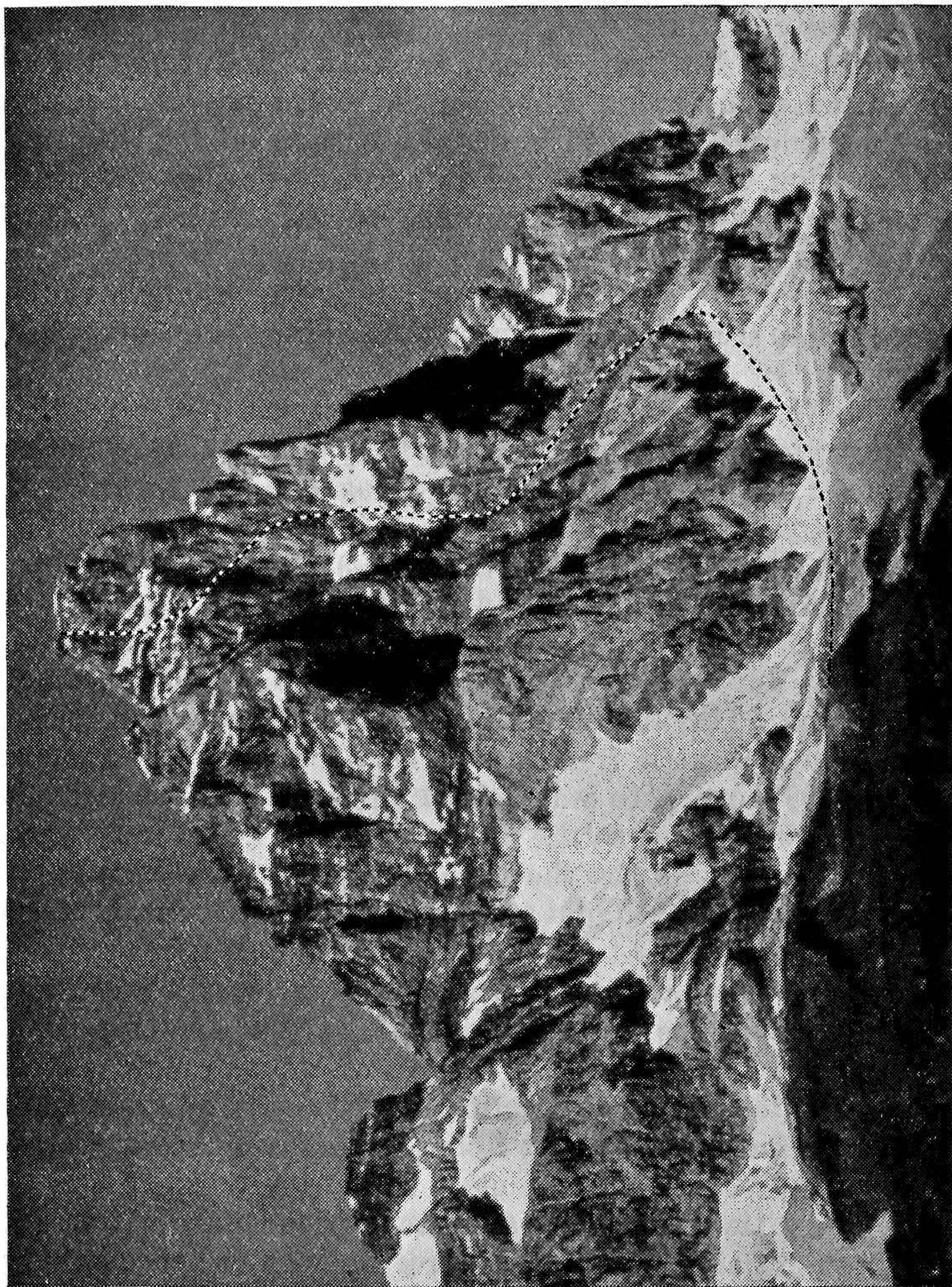


*Photo, E. Benedetti.]*

(C) THE SECOND 'STEP' WITH FURGGEN SHOULDER.



left very little hope, but finally the unexpected wire came and so on the morning of October 15 at 5 A.M. we left 'Lo Riondé' where we had spent the night.



MATTERHORN, S. FACE, SHOWING 1931 ROUTE.

Photo, E. Benedetti.]

We went up towards the upper lip of the Forca Glacier towards the Col du Breuil and, after an hour, began to climb a sort of pinnacle in the direction of the second step of the Furggen ridge. Along a small slab we went round the pinnacle towards the right, and then coming back towards the left, climbed a little gully of about 60 ft.



Here we discovered our mistake in thinking this route safe from falling stones, for the marks which we found on the rocks did not leave us in any doubt. We think, however, that we ought to thank the prevailing bad weather which had obliged us to wait for the beautiful beginning of autumn, thus making possible a climb which during the summer would have been very dangerous—if not impossible. With the rising sun stones began to fall methodically and we were involved in their unpleasant company during 10 hours. We were obliged to proceed by rushes, steering towards big boulders or other obstacles which might afford shelter. But the stones were kind to us and fell only at regular intervals, thus permitting us to pass between successive showers.

We reached without too much difficulty the level of the first step in the S.E. (Furggen) ridge, always bearing towards the left. From this place the face became quite steep. We climbed about 330 ft. of the wall until at 11 A.M. we could halt to have something to eat in a sort of recess where there was no danger. From this spot we had a beautiful view extending from the Viso to Monte Rosa.

We started again, going round a great outcrop of rocks, and after about 160 ft. of climbing came to an ice cascade. Next we followed the main couloir or some secondary smaller ones, subsidiary to the big one. We then reached a small shoulder from which we could see (photo 'D') the lower flange of the great rib of rock below the 'head.' We went on upwards for a few rope-lengths and then traversed nearly on the level till we were in a straight line under the Swiss summit. We then bore straight upwards and at 4 P.M. were at the real base of the 'head' under the Italian summit. We stopped for a second time in the day, and then after a very difficult traverse reached the foot (photo 'E') of the couloir leading to the cross near the summit. This couloir, about 250 ft. high, was divided into three steps. It was very hard, but perhaps we found it so by being very tired at that stage,

Where the '*passage d'Aymonod*' cut across our couloir there was a very difficult bit where we left a piton. Then we went straight up, still over extremely difficult rocks. After  $1\frac{3}{4}$  hours of very hard gymnastics we reached a point a few yards below the summit ridge. Putting on our few spare clothes we contrived to reach the summit ridge at 6 P.M. We decided at once to go down by the ordinary Swiss route. For a little while we could see fairly well, but afterwards it was only by intuition that we reached the Swiss shoulder. Finally, we perceived the



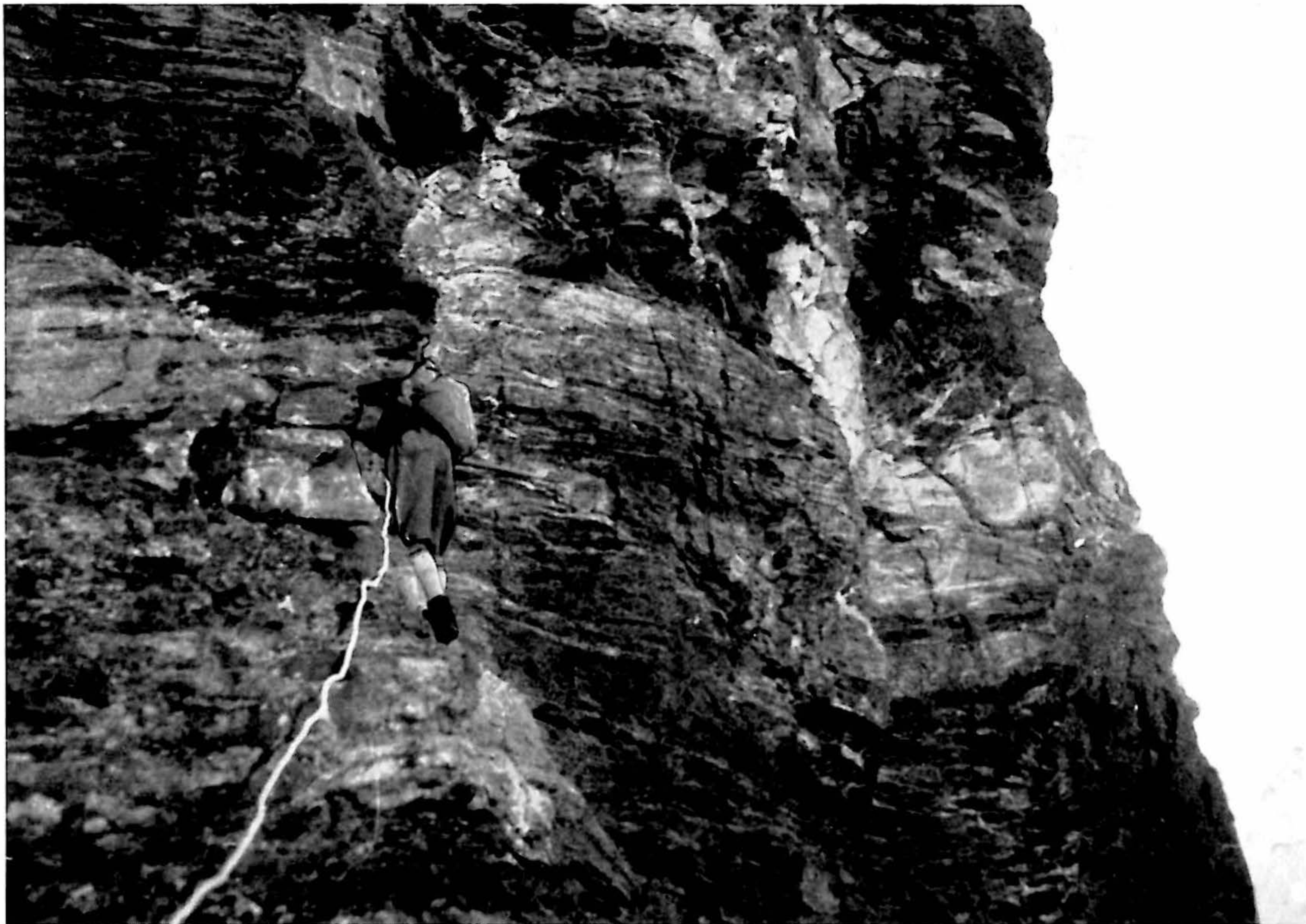


*Photo, E. Benedetti.]*

(D) LOWER PORTION OF THE GREAT TERRACE OR LEDGE.

*[To face p. 76.]*





*Photo, E. Benedetti.]*

(E) CARREL COMMENCING THE LAST CHIMNEY.



silhouette of the Solvay hut, where we obtained a well-deserved rest.

[We are much indebted to Signor Benedetti for his valuable article. The translation we owe to Signor Don R. Cajrati-Crivelli.—*Editor*, 'A.J.']

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IN THE JULIAN ALPS ; FROM THE FORCA DEI DISTÈIS  
TO THE CLAPPADORIE.<sup>1</sup>

BY MADAME MARKO DEBELAK.

THE Valley of Raccolana lies south of Montasch (*Montasio* in Italian, *Poliški Špik* in Slovene, 2752 m.<sup>2</sup>), and extends from Chiusaforte to the Passo di Nevéa (1198 m., *I. map*). The natives of Raccolana are miserably poor mountain folk. They speak Furlano. The men go out into the world as masons or coal-miners, because they cannot earn their living at home. The women do all the hard work. You scarcely believe your own eyes when you see those little women cutting grass on the mountain pasture and then carrying enormous loads of it down to the valley. Their faces are haggard and sharp-featured as if carved in wood. If you meet a woman of Raccolana in the daytime, she will return your greeting kindly ; but when the sun has dipped below Jôf di Montasio (*Poliški Špik*, *Mentaž*, *Montasch*), the people shut themselves up timidly in their stone cottages. In vain the weary traveller seeks a night's lodging in those parts. The men of Raccolana are excellent shots and good hunters. One of them was that Osvaldo Pesamosca, grandfather of the well-known guide Pesamosca who died not long ago. Old Osvaldo was a poacher. He knew every crag and gully in the domain of Montasio and Višnja Gera, 2666 m. (*Wischberg*), and for years and years he hid in those fastnesses as a deserter while the gendarmes tried unsuccessfully to catch him. The Pesamosche are the pride of Raccolana.

I have described the Raccolanese lest other mountaineers fare among them as did Edo Deržaj and I !

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<sup>1</sup> See, in general, the extremely indifferent 1 : 100,000 Italian map, sheet 'Pontebba,' the only one now available for the public.—*Editor*.

<sup>2</sup> 2754 m., *I. map*.