

EXPEDITIONS

Pennines

CASTOR, 4230 m. = 13,879 ft. Traverse and ascent by N. face.
POLLUX, 4094 m. = 13,433 ft. August 19, 1938. Dr. O. K. Williamson with Erwin and Xavier Lochmatter.

Leaving the Bétemps hut at 02.05 we took the usual Felikjoch route, which passes close to the wall of the Lyskamm, and so reached the upper plateau of the Zwillings Glacier. Crossing this in a W. or S.W. direction we struck, near the foot of the N. face of Castor, the track of Mr. Peacocke's party made the previous day (*A.J.* 50. 309). This by snow and some ice led us first up the N. face and then by the E. slopes of the N.E. ridge on to the very sharp crest of this, and so to the summit, 10.50, after total halts of 50 minutes. A strong N. wind blew on the upper part of the mountain. Leaving the top at 11.20, by the easy snow on the S.W. side, we reached the Zwillings Pass, and having halted 5 minutes, ascended Pollux by the broad frontier ridge, reaching its snowy top at 13.53. After resting about half an hour on the rocks a little to the W. of the summit, we dropped down the pleasant rocky W.S.W. arête to the névé near the Schwarztor. From the col we descended the Schwärze Glacier to near the foot of the steep ridge which extends in a N.W. direction from Pt. 3669 (S. map), then traversed to the right in order to avoid the greatly crevassed part of the glacier. We were now favoured with the most interesting ice work of the day. A gully containing avalanche débris was quickly crossed, and after rounding a corner we crossed horizontally a sensationally steep and very lofty ice slope 100–200 ft. above the glacier. Round another edge we were confronted by a wall of ice some 20 ft. in height, to descend which the last man had to use a doubled rope. Difficulties ceased shortly afterwards when we reached the gently sloping glacier. Descending by the Schwärze rocks and the lower part of the Schwärze Glacier we crossed the Gorner Glacier and so to the Riffelberg and Zermatt, reached by lantern light at about 23.30, after total halts of about 1 hour 10 minutes from the time we started the descent of Pollux. The snow conditions were excellent and the weather very good.

I gather from Erwin Lochmatter that the route taken up the N. face and N.E. ridge of Castor is the one usually followed in ascents up that side of the mountain, but it is not mentioned in the *Guide des Alpes Valaisannes* (vol. iii a, 1937).

I wish to commend emphatically my friend Peacocke's route through the upper icefall, on the ground of safety. In 1905 Jean Maître, whilst examining the Felikjoch route from the Riffelberg, decided that we must avoid the usual route on account of the risk of avalanches. This wise decision was justified dramatically, for whilst we were ascending

to the pass next day, by a divergence through the upper icefall somewhat further to the W. than the tracks, an enormous ice avalanche from the Lyskamm crashed right across the route, completely obliterating the steps of our predecessors for a considerable distance. Although safe we were near enough to feel snow spray from the avalanche.

O. K. W.

AIGUILLE DE LA TSA, 3673 m. = 12,051 ft. By the Tsalion rib. July 14, 1937. Messrs. R. B. Kembell-Cook, C. Foulds, E. W. Martin, G. A. Ballance.

This rocky rib runs up the W. face of the ridge of Les Dents. It can be readily identified from Arolla because it flanks on the left the great couloir running down from the N.W. foot of the Tsa and ends in a prominent little spike on the skyline. The Arolla guides call this spike the Tsalion, and the diminutive Tsa is obviously an appropriate name for it; but unfortunately there is some confusion on the map where, in apparent contradiction to local tradition, the cartographers reserve the name Dent de Tsalion for a hump further N. along the ridge.

Inspired by Mr. Irving's description, in his recent book,¹ of this route up the Tsa, four members of the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club decided to attempt the climb. We left the Mont Collon Hôtel at the civilised hour of dawn, crossed the Borgne stream and started up the grass slopes, with the dew still upon them, on as perfect a morning as a mountaineer could desire. We reached the foot of the rocks at 7 A.M. and roped up in two parties of two each. The climbing at once became steep, but the rock was excellent and we met with no real difficulty until three-quarters of the way up, where we were forced off the crest of the rib on to slabs on the left. Here belays were scarce and the passage might be unpleasant in bad weather. Above this traverse, the rock on the last 200 ft. was red and crumbly, but holds were plentiful and at 11.30, after nearly 3,000 ft. of delightful climbing, we reached the crest of the main ridge and saw, for the first time in our lives, the great peaks round Zermatt. A traverse of a few hundred yards S. along the ridge brought us to the foot of the final pinnacle of the Tsa and after a short scramble we were soon resting on its airy summit.

Altogether the rib makes an excellent approach to the Tsa. It has these objective advantages over the face climb, that the rock is firm and that there is no danger from falling stones.

G. A. B.

Bernese Oberland

BURSTSPITZEN, 3189 m. = 10,463 ft. By the S.E. ridge (from Heimiseggen) to the middle summit, thence over Pt. 3189 and the whole S. ridge (S.S.W.) back to Fafleralp. August 8, 1938. Mr. M. N. Clarke with Hans Stoller of Kandersteg.

¹ *The Romance of Mountaineering*, p. 251. See also *A.J.* 35. 80 sqq.

According to Dr. Ernst Jenny this is a new route except for 'the uppermost piece of the route and the short piece from the summit N. of Pt. 3189 up and on to Pt. 3189.' The first ascent of the Burstspitzen was made by Messrs. E. F. M. Bernecke and H. A. Cohen on July 28, 1894, from the W. and in 1925, 1929 and 1936 the mountain was traversed by Mr. R. L. G. Irving's party, also from the W. At the two places referred to by Dr. Jenny one of these routes would appear to have been followed.

This is a most interesting and enjoyable climb with no unusual difficulties. Though there is no written record of the climb, Mr. Irving states that his party on each of the three climbs struck the ridge at the lowest gap between the Burstspitzen and the Lauterbrunnen Breithorn, thence following the ridge southward.

Bernina

PIZ ROSEG, 3942 m. = 12,933 ft. From the S. August 2, 1938. Signori R. Chabod and Alfredo Corti; M. Rivero, N. Corti and E. Andreis, in two parties.

The great, rocky S. face of Piz Roseg plunging steeply to the Scerscen Glacier is composed of reddish, unstable rock seamed by many icy gullies, the banks of which are constituted by more or less prominent ribs or buttresses. Few of these ribs or gullies remain unvisited by enterprising climbers, but the S. face of the peak, limited by the great S.W. and E. arêtes, both climbed by British parties in 1909 and 1892 respectively,² is on the whole devoid of much interest.—*Editor*.

From the summit a crest at first narrow broadens out into a wider buttress towards the W. High up, this is very steep but eases off considerably lower down. It is bounded to the N.W. by the steep and narrow gully plunging to the Sella Glacier—climbed in 1909³—from the notch between Schneekuppe and summit. To the S.E. it is contained by a wider couloir falling from the S.W. arête—climbed in 1878.

The 1938 party from the Marinelli hut and via the Sella Pass, attained the base of the broad buttress almost at the foot of the 1909 gully. They then bore diagonally upwards, N.E., till they attained the very steep upper buttress. Bearing to the left, W., they clambered close to the surface of the 1909 gully, when they turned upwards, N., and climbed by little ice runnels between rocky ribs on the W. side of the buttress. Hereabouts the work was serious until the narrow crest above was attained. By the crest or keeping close to it, the base of a great red pinnacle was reached. This latter was turned to the N.W. when the crest was regained and followed straight to the top (9 hrs.).

The rock is often treacherous but no falling stones were noticed.

A. C.

² *A.J.* 24. 688; 16. 271.

³ *A.J.* 25. 461.