

BISHOP SALM'S EXPEDITIONS TO THE GROSS GLOCKNER

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(One illustration: no. 65)

THE ascent of the Gross Glockner (12,460 ft.) which Count Franz Xaver von Salm-Reifferscheid (1749–1822), Prince-bishop of Gurk, instigated in 1799, 1800 and 1802, marks the beginning of mountaineering in the Eastern Alps. Influenced by and closely following the first ascent of Mont Blanc, it was the success of de Saussure, the savant, rather than that of Paccard, which impressed the scientific minds of Austria. It was important not only because of the beauty and difficulty of the goal, but also on account of its rapid attainment, the spiritual importance of the participants and the literary value of the resulting accounts.

Sigmund von Hohenwart, later vicar-general of the bishopric of Gurk and subsequently bishop of Linz, was an ardent botanist who visited the Pasterze glacier in 1791 and afterwards took an active part in the conquest of the mountain. His report attracted the notice of Count Salm, a descendant of the oldest nobility, son of the tutor of Emperor Leopold II and the youthful companion of that monarch.¹ He became bishop at the age of thirty-five and was created a cardinal in 1817. There were naturalists of importance in his parish and he himself had scientific interests. With no personal desire for the hardships of mountaineering, it was rather as the sponsor of a fascinating undertaking that he approached the Glockner adventure. He decided that the Möll valley and its lateral Leiter tributary, on the south-east side of the mountain, should be the route of approach.

On June 15, 1799, two chosen peasants of Heiligenblut, Martin Klotz and his brother, made the first attempt on the mountain. They passed the point later named the Hohenwartscharte, but were driven back by

¹ This is an interesting, perhaps hitherto unnoted, coincidence. Leopold II was the father of Archduke John of Habsburg (1782–1859), who, in 1800, commissioned a member of his suite, Dr. Gebhard, to explore, and, if possible, ascend the Ortler, a project which was completed in 1804. See *A.J.* 65. 230. The Archduke visited Heiligenblut and the Pasterze glacier several times in the early years of the nineteenth century. The present hut on the Adlersruhe bears his name.



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CARDINAL SALM'S EXPEDITION TO THE GROSS GLOCKNER, 1799: PAINTING BY SCHEFFER VON LEONHARDSHOFF (1795-1822). THE SIZE OF THE ORIGINAL IS 2.47 M. × 1.97 M.

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a snowstorm when a short distance below the Klein Glockner. The effort was repeated on July 23 and, as a 450 ft. rope was fixed, it is probable that they gained the steep slopes of the lower peak. But to proceed further a 45 ft. ladder appeared necessary, and this was lacking. They again turned back in storm.

Success, however, seemed certain, and they began building the roomy, wooden hut in the Leiter valley which Count Salm had ordered at his own expense. This was completed in a week. On August 16 the bishop set forth from Klagenfurt and on the 19th occupied the new structure. Storm and piercing cold persisted for several days and forced them back to Heiligenblut. On the 24th the brothers Klotz and two other carpenters went up, only to be driven down once more without reaching the Klein Glockner. This was observed by telescope from Heiligenblut; the party returned to the hut and on the 25th fine weather rewarded them. After struggling with much fresh snow the summit of the Klein Glockner was attained and a cross erected. There is no mention of an attempt to continue to the main peak, although a ladder was taken up for this purpose.² It is also uncertain who were the participants in this effort. In addition to the four carpenters only von Hohenwart and the writer of the anonymous diary (said in 1858 to be by Joh. Zopoth, the consistorial secretary) appear definitely. The bishop was not present; it is not even known whether he again ascended to the hut in this season.

Because the author of the diary asserted that one could detect no difference in the altitude of the two peaks, Count Salm seems to have considered the task only half accomplished, and so a much grander expedition was arranged for the next year. Invitations were sent out to a number of learned men, some of them in distant places. The Salm hut in the Leiter glen was enlarged by an additional shelter for the guides, and an auxiliary hut placed on the Hohenwarte. On July 28, 1800, sixty-two persons, including a cook and three servants, guides, porters and grooms, with sixteen horses, set out, led by the prince-bishop. Malaga, Tokay, melons and pineapples are mentioned in the extraordinary list of provisions. Next morning was warm and clear and the enterprising members of the group started. Most of them got no further

² Much of the foregoing will be found in E. Richter, *Die Erschliessung der Ostalpen* (Berlin, 1894), III, 165. The only source for the 1799 expedition is the anonymous 'Tagebuch einer Reise auf den bis dahin unerstiegenen Berg Grossglockner im Jahre 1799', printed by K. E. Freiherr von Moll in *Jahrbuch der Berg- und Hüttenkunde*, Salzburg, 1800. The success excited immense rejoicing, and the bishop caused a portrait medal to be struck in commemoration of the great event. This is reproduced in Richter, *loc. cit.*, 168, and in A. Steinitzer, *Alpinismus in Bildern* (Munich, 2nd edit., 1924), 89. The reverse of the medal shows the Salm hut and the two peaks of the Glockner, with the Latin inscription: GLOCKNER IN CARINTHIA PRIMUS CONSCENDIT D. 25 Aug. 1799. An example of the medal is in the American Alpine Museum.

than the Adlersruhe; only von Hohenwart, the botanist Dr. Hoppe, and the priests of Döllach and St. Peter gaining the Klein Glockner. Meanwhile the four carpenters, including the brothers Klotz, had successfully crossed the knife-edged gap (there is nothing so exposed in the ordinary route on Mont Blanc) to the Gross Glockner and removed masses of snow where a second and larger cross was to be erected. Father Horasch of Döllach was the only one to follow, and these five are generally accepted as the conquerors of the mountain. At the Hohenwarte the returning party was greeted with joy by the prince-bishop, who was then drawn down the Leiter glacier on a sledge. In 1800 he was fifty-one years of age.

On the following morning the workmen went once more to the top and set up the iron cross, being reinforced by Valentin Stanig (1774-1847), who had been delayed in Heiligenblut the day before in making scientific observations and who now left on the summit an ingenious barometer which endured until 1852. As there was sufficient old snow in the gap, the tree trunk³ that had been prepared in the preceding year was not needed in the traverse, but was taken over and planted next to the cross. Stanig, with youthful impetuosity, clambered up it, in order, as he himself said, 'to be higher than the Glockner or any one else who had climbed it'. He later became an ecclesiastic and made a number of climbs in the interest of botany, including the first ascent of the Watzmann (in 1799 or 1801) and the ascent of the Triglav (1808).

With victory crowning the day the company relaxed in full enjoyment of their achievement. The four carpenters rested on the meadow before the Salm hut, while the jubilant bishop himself served them from a huge dish and tossed them a handful of coins.

The third Salm expedition took place in 1802, and deserves mention since the vicar-general von Hohenwart, historian of the second and third journeys, at last gained the highest point on August 23 with ten others. On the next day Bishop Salm himself went to the Adlersruhe and the beginning of the steep part of the Klein Glockner, but it was not his fortune ever to stand on either peak.

There was a fourth Salm expedition in 1806, in which the bishop's sister, Countess Kagenneck, as well as von Hohenwart, took part, but threatening weather prevented them from continuing above the hut.

In 1818, when almost seventy, Salm, made a cardinal in the preceding year, paid a last visit to Heiligenblut with his old friend Dr. Hoppe, the celebrated botanist of Regensburg who, so long before, stood on the

³ In von Hohenwart's diary of the second ascent (1800) one finds: 'The peasants placed the same long tree which they used in the preceding year instead of a ladder for the ascent of the second peak'. From this and the inscription on the medal one could gather that the Gross Glockner was actually gained in 1799. E. Richter, *loc. cit.*, 169, thinks this is doubtful, but the possibility that the brothers Klotz crossed the col cannot be excluded.

Klein Glockner and watched five of his companions make mountaineering history in their crossing to the highest snow.

The story continues after more than a century. In 1932, on my way from Vienna to Heiligenblut, I stopped in Klagenfurt to see the painting by Scheffer von Leonhardshoff of Bishop Salm's first expedition. It was then in a small Alpine Museum, a room in the larger Rudolfinum, now the Landesmuseum für Kärnten. It is a magnificent picture of considerable size, 2.47 m. wide and 1.97 m. high. In 1963 it was in storage, in bad condition with holes and peeling paint. I secured permission to photograph it in colour, and later arranged for its restoration. This has now been completed and it is again on display. It was painted in 1813 by command of the bishop,⁴ the landscape being executed by the drawing-master, Joseph Hermann, and the figures by Scheffer von Leonhardshoff (1795–1822), who was a protégé of Bishop Salm and was known as 'Raffaelino' by his contemporaries.

The bishop, in maroon coat, rides a bay horse at the head of his entourage, also mounted. The other figures can be identified: Father Hautzendorfer, gentleman-in-waiting Reichel, and Mathias Frühauf, an attendant. Two peasants with ropes and alpenstocks are seated on foreground rocks. They are the brothers Klotz, village carpenters of Heiligenblut who would conquer the Glockner. In the middle distance there are five other men with packs, alpenstocks and ladders, preceded by a woman driving two sheep. In the background is the Salm hut and, behind all this, the tongue of the Leiter glacier and the towering Gross Glockner. The scene represents the arrival of the bishop and his party on August 19, 1799.

The painting came into the possession of Paul Freiherr von Herbert, who died in the summer of 1884. Later in the same year his adopted son, Ernst Herbert Kerchnawe, presented it to the Historical Society of Carinthia. The restoration, in addition to repairs, included removal of subsequent over-painting which obscured the picture's original state. The inky blue of the costume of the left-hand figure is made clearer and finer in its contemporary style. On the bishop's saddle is revealed a light-grey mass cloak embroidered with gold, on which he sits. He undoubtedly conducted services while on his travels.

Johann Scheffer von Leonhardshoff,⁵ historic painter, was born in Vienna on October 30, 1795, and died there on January 12, 1822. Descended from a noble family in reduced circumstances, he began to paint in childhood. He refused to enter trade as his father wished, and became almost destitute, eking out existence, despite a weak chest, by

⁴ Karl Baron Hauser, *Führer durch das Historische Museum des Rudolfinums in Klagenfurt* (1890); *der Carinthia* II (1925), 114.

⁵ Dr. Constant von Wurzbach, *Biographisches Lexicon*, Part xx (Vienna, 1875), 49 ff. Theme-Becker, *Allgemeines Lexicon der bildender Künstler*, vol. xx (Leipzig, 1936), 6.

playing a bassoon in the Prater. He was saved by a chance meeting with Bishop Salm, who thereafter was his patron. He copied in the Belvedere and Liechtenstein galleries, but, in the war year of 1809, when he was barely fifteen, enlisted and eventually became lieutenant. When the French evacuated Vienna he returned to art, and in 1812 paid his first visit to Italy, staying with his married sister, Signora Contarini, in Venice. He continued to Ferrara, in light clothing and with little to eat, and was caught in a violent storm, the exposure resulting in chronic illness which later proved fatal. He returned to Klagenfurt where Salm appointed him as his official painter. He produced altar-pieces and other religious works which still exist. In 1817 his patron sent him on a second journey to Italy during which he observed in Venice, Milan, Florence, Rome and Sicily. He was befriended in Rome by the artist, J. H. Overbeck (1789-1869), and received a commission for a portrait of Pope Pius VII, for which he was awarded the Order of Christ. In the winter of 1818 he returned to Klagenfurt, becoming so ill that his life was despaired of. But he recovered and spent another year and a half in that town. He then went to Vienna, his mind set on winning the great Milan prize. To this end he made sketches for 'Raphael's introduction by Bramante to Pope Julius II', but changed his plan and, on the same canvas, painted his important oil 'St. Cecilia', which gained acclaim at the Vienna exhibition of 1820. In May of that year he made his last journey to Rome. When he returned from Italy in the summer of 1821 his health failed suddenly and he died in the following January, being not yet twenty-six years of age. His Gross Glockner painting remains as the earliest and most notable graphic production in the history of the Eastern Alps.⁶

⁶ Black and white illustrations of the painting will be found in the books of Richter and Steinitzer cited in this paper, and also in Myrtil Schwartz's . . . *et la Montagne conquiert l'Homme* (Paris, 1931), facing p. 90. Because of the cost involved it has not been possible to reproduce it in colour. The writer wishes to acknowledge indebtedness to Hofrat Prof. Dr. Gotbert Moro, Director of the Landesmuseum für Kärnten, Klagenfurt, for unfailing assistance with the foregoing narrative.