

The only occasion when I lapsed for a moment into discontent was when the leading guide, knowing our old tracks through the séracs would be bad so late in the day, made for the northern corner of the great plateau. François and I had to insist on a sharp half-face, which brought us after twenty minutes' heavy walking to the long straight slope I had seen the day before south of the rocky boss. We wallowed to our waists in banks of snow, soft, but steep enough to make progress—even by wallowing—rapid. We were soon at the bottom and on hard ice, where the rope could at last be thrown off. Jogging steadily downwards we regained about 7 P.M. our boulder and white-rhododendron bank. The clouds had all melted. Ushba was a noble shadow in the sunset.

Generally in such a situation the thoughts go backwards to fight over again the day's battle; but ours and our eyes were strained onwards. Could anything be seen of our companion and his baggage train on the opposite hill? We searched in vain the sides of the Zanner icefall. I quickly came to the decision to stop where we were, since our beds were already made, in the trust that if our party were on the road, which we should doubtless learn, as soon as it was dark, by their beacon fire, we might catch them up next day. Presently our own beacon flamed up, and after the guides had turned in I rested long beside it in a comfortable hollow, watching the slow muster of the heavenly host and waiting for the responsive glow—which never came. Soon after ten I too crept into my bag, thankful that I had not to seek the narrow shelves of some crowded Clubhut.

(*To be continued.*)

AN ASCENT OF THE HOHBERGHORN.

BY AUGUST LORRIA.

THE Nadelgrat is one of the most interesting, and at the same time one of the least known, bits of the Monte Rosa district. What Mr. Conway, who knows the Zermatt mountains so well, wrote of it in 1881* still remains true: 'Switzerland abounds in neglected districts. Such, however, for the most part lie round sequestered valleys, and are invisible from the main roads. The pedestrian is ignorant of the names of their peaks, and the cockney climber shuns them, as he shuns all secondary summits. But that a group

* *Alpine Journal*, vol. x. p. 332.

Nadelhorn.

Stecknadelhorn.

Hohberghorn.

Hohbergpass.



THE NADELGRAT FROM THE ULRICHSHORN.

From a Photograph by MRS. MAIN.

of mountains should be in full view from the most frequented pathway in Switzerland, and that they should to this day be almost as unknown as the Caucasus to the climbing world, is a somewhat noteworthy fact.' Mr. Conway's article on 'The North District of the Saasgrat,' from which I take these words, corrected many mistakes which had been made about the Nadelgrat, but so far failed to draw climbers to this range that, with the exception of the Nadelhorn and the Südlenzspitze, scarcely one of its summits was visited between 1881 and 1886. The Stecknadelhorn was not ascended for the first time until 1887, though Mr. Conway* had pointed out that it was the only unclimbed peak in the Zermatt district of which the height exceeded 4,000 mètres. This singular neglect of a grand range was very surprising, for ambitious young climbers might have been heard consulting with their guides as to what new expeditions they could make in order to have their names and deeds chronicled in the 'Alpine Journal.' In 1886 and 1887 Mr. O. Eckenstein and I made a number of expeditions in and about this group, and we propose to publish a complete monograph on the subject, though we still need some information on certain geological and topographical points, as well as some more photographs, all of which we hope to obtain in the course of the summer of 1888. As my contribution to the hundredth number of the 'Alpine Journal,' I intend to tell the story of my ascent of the Hohberghorn (4,226 mètres = 13,866 feet), which, to me at least, was one of the most interesting climbs I have ever made. I will, however, refrain as far as possible from boring my readers with historical and topographical details, reserving these for the aforementioned monograph.

My start for the Hohberghorn was made after a long lazy spell at Zermatt in the summer of 1886, which I had filled up by doing all sorts of absurd things. For instance, I organised a race on mules one day, open to the guides, whose ambition was stimulated by the offer of a prize of 50 francs, in the course of which race such laughable incidents happened as surpassed our wildest hopes and imaginings. After many such nonsensical deeds as this, I started on July 29, accompanied by Mr. Eckenstein and a porter, for the Festi sleeping place. Despite the warnings of a certain acquaintance of mine at Zermatt, we had not the slightest difficulty in finding the way, for there is quite a broad path leading up to the spot, and we established ourselves for the night in

* *Loc. cit.* pp. 333-337.

the upper of the two camping-places. Our sleeping bags stood here in good stead. They are made of Dr. Jäger's camel-hair fleece, after the usual fashion, the upper part being made to tie, only at one end the cloth is of double thickness, to keep the feet warm. A light mackintosh sheet thrown over the bags helps to keep them dry. We have spent many a night in them, and they have several great advantages. Although the material of which they are made allows the air to circulate freely through it, it keeps out the cold very well, while the whole bag, *with* the mackintosh sheet, only weighs $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds, so that we ourselves can easily carry them about and can camp just where we feel disposed.

We woke up at 3 A.M. on the morning of July 30, 1886, after having passed a very comfortable night. The weather was fine, and we made haste to prepare our frugal breakfast, consisting of some cakes of chocolate and some cups of cold water; for we do not care about anything hot, and thus save ourselves the trouble of conveying wood about for fires. Gradually the day dawned, and it became lighter and lighter in the direction of the Dom. At 3.45 we two set off alone, carrying in our knapsacks our provisions—chocolate, butter, bread, biscuits, preserved meat, and lemonade. Our porter we sent back to Randa with our sleeping bags. A great block of ice crashed down from the glacier, but mounting over *débris* and moraine, we had no trouble in reaching the Festi glacier. Keeping its right bank, we managed to thread the crevasses and climbed steadily upwards. Across the S. Niklaus valley loomed the Weisshorn and its neighbours, at first dun-coloured, then one by one touched by the rising sun till it seemed as though they were all on fire. The rays of the sun drove the night shadows and morning dimness farther and farther down into the valleys, and lighted up the peaks round the Festi glacier. The Dom alone was white and cold, the great precipice of its N.W. wall towering grandly above us. Meanwhile we had reached the foot of the snow-slope which leads up to the snowy hump marked 3,757 mètres on the Siegfried map. Immediately opposite rose the finely shaped peak marked 3,635 mètres, next to which is a summit of even more striking aspect; neither of them seems to rejoice as yet in a name, and so I would propose to christen them the Vorderes and Hinteres Festihorn. At this point we left the ice, believing that the gap close to the peak 3,757 was the Festijoch, and thinking (wrongly) that the way up to it lay over the rocks on the right bank of the glacier. These

rocks proved easy enough, and it was only here and there that we had to help ourselves with our hands. We rose higher and higher above the Festi glacier, and at 7.15 A.M. we reached the col between the points 3,757 and 3,724. The splendid Hohberg glacier lay at our feet bathed in glorious sunlight, the Dom rose magnificently above it, while over the shoulder of the Dom one caught a glimpse of the mighty Täschhorn. On the other side of the glacier stretched the rugged range which we proposed to explore—seen here in its entire length from the Südlenzspitze to the Dürrenhorn, a grand wall crowned by five peaks. Some idea of this scene may be gained from the reproduction of Mr. Donkin's photograph which accompanies Mr. Conway's paper in vol. x. of the 'Alpine Journal.' The great hole in the uppermost rocks of the Nadelhorn, to which the name is due, showed well against the brilliantly clear sky. The illustration which accompanies the present paper has been reproduced (by her kind permission) from a photograph taken from the summit of the Ulrichshorn by Mrs. Main. It shows the Nadelhorn, the Stecknadelhorn, and, in the background, the Hohberghorn.

We halted at this spot for some time in order to take a look round. I buckled on my 'Steigeisen,' and then let Eckenstein, as far as our 15-mètre rope allowed, down the steep snow-slope descending towards the Hohberg glacier. There he anchored himself with his ice-axe, and in a few strides I rejoined him, without having had to cut a single step, thanks to my 'Steigeisen.' We repeated this operation three or four times, crossed the inevitable bergschrund, and found ourselves on the level glacier. We traversed it direct to the foot of the S.W. arête of the Hohberghorn, getting into some séracs on the way. We could easily have turned them, but I wanted to show Eckenstein how well my 'Steigeisen' worked, and so we went straight through them. I had to cut steps here for Eckenstein, for my 'Steigeisen' enabled me to get on without any. At 9.15 A.M. we reached the foot of our arête. Eckenstein was so delighted with the manner in which the 'Steigeisen' helped me that in 1887 he procured a pair and used them throughout the summer. The arête which we had now to climb was difficult all the way, and made up of many sharp teeth and deep gaps between; but we preferred to stick to it, because, though a traverse to the left would have brought us into a much easier snow gully, we had made up our minds to climb this particular ridge, and did not want to be beaten. The sun

blazed down on our backs; there was not a breath of air to refresh us as hour after hour passed by, and we slowly but steadily worked our way up it. In the places into which the sun did not penetrate the rocks were iced, while now and then a great rock-tower would bar the way. At last, after a very laborious climb, we got on to easier ground, for the last twenty mètres offer no difficulty, and it was down this bit only that Herr Burckhardt's party came in 1881, preferring then to descend by the N.W. flank of the peak. We hurried joyfully over the highest rocks, then covered with snow, reached the snowy arête from which large corniches hung over the Gassenried glacier, and a few minutes later, at 3.45 P.M., gained the summit. We found here a cairn and a rotten bit of the flagstaff which Mr. R. B. Heathcote is known to have left on the top when he made the first ascent in August, 1869.

The Bernese chain rose to the north quite clear and free from clouds, the Bietschhorn and Finsteraarhorn being specially magnificent. The great ice-streams of the Aletsch and the Rhone glaciers lay unrolled before our eyes. Close to us were the Fletschhorn group, the Weisshorn, and all the great circle of mountain giants which encloses the Zermatt valley. Far away, glittering in the clear warm sunshine, were the Grand Combin and Mont Blanc. Deep below was Zermatt itself and the end of the Gorner glacier, while directly beneath us we could see a bit of the carriage road near Randa. We commanded, too, the enormous snow-fields of the Gassenried and Hohberg glaciers. But why should I try to describe this marvellous view? Neither the painter nor the photographer can come any way near to reproducing such a panorama, in which the foreground blended so admirably with the background. And far more powerless than these is the wielder of the pen, who must content himself with making a catalogue of what he sees, and will in the end never succeed in helping less fortunate persons to see with the eyes of imagination what he really saw in the flesh.

At best he can but revive in the memory of another climber the recollection of some similar sight which he has enjoyed in years gone by. Then, too, in every description of a view or of a journey the personal element comes in, so that descriptions of the same objects differ according to the individuality of the writer. As Herr Güssfeldt well remarks in the preface of his admirable book on the Andes, every description of a journey is a bit of autobiography. That is the

reason why in such a description there are defects and faults, for it is often a very much retouched portrait of the writer in which the original has become well-nigh irrecongnisable. Such blots are specially met with in Alpine articles by persons who have overcome the difficulties of a climb by the aid of the rope of his guides or of his companions; for in such cases the writer much resembles a sack of potatoes, the only difference being that the one can and the other cannot describe the experiences undergone. Hence, when a man has been hauled up a peak by the rope, his opinion of the difficulties encountered is not worth very much, though his statements get into circulation and are finally published to the world in his formal narrative of that particular climb. We find that he has the most shadowy recollection of the bits which he could not accomplish unaided. It is always instructive and amusing to hear both sides of the question, and to compare the account of an ascent given by a *Herr* with that given by his guide, both erring not uncommonly, as well in depreciating as in exaggerating the difficulties overcome.

We could not stay very long on top as the day was far advanced, and we did not intend to bivouac anywhere. So at 4.15 we started off on our way down. We retraced our steps along the snow ridge to the summit of a snow couloir which stretches straight down to the Hohberg glacier, and is clearly seen in Mr. Donkin's photograph in vol. x. of the 'Alpine Journal.' Eckenstein hankered to descend towards the Gassenried glacier, and the snow-slope seemed practicable, at least as much of it as we could see. But after my determined declaration that I considered this route very difficult, and perhaps impossible, from what I had seen of it some days before from the Gassenried glacier, Eckenstein made up his mind to descend by the snow couloir to the Hohberg glacier, like Mr. Wainwright in 1879. It appeared quite free from avalanches, notwithstanding the hot afternoon sun, and almost free from falling stones, so we glissaded down it, despite its slope of 47° according to our clinometer. There was a bridge over the bergschrund, and at 5.30 P.M. we were once more on the Hohberg glacier. Eckenstein would not believe me when I assured him that the lower ice-fall was absolutely impassable, as I had ascertained a few days before on my way to a bivouac, so, in a temper with him, in order to prove it to him, I went with him straight down towards it. The sun had been hard at work all day. At every step we sank in deep; the ice was more

and more broken up, until when we were under the glacier which comes down from the Hohberg Pass, near the spot indicated by the figures 3,441 on the Siegfried map, all chance of getting down any farther was absolutely cut off. A monster crevasse stretched from one side of the glacier to the other; and, besides, there was great danger from the bits of ice falling from the Hohberg Pass glacier, as was shown by the surface of the main glacier, which was strewn with fragments of recent avalanches. This little glacier was frightfully dislocated, and hung down in a most alarming fashion, being the outflow of a broad snowfield above, which lower down is squeezed into a narrow rock-gorge. The ice-pinnacles towered superbly into the air, and seemed to set all the laws of gravity at defiance.

(In the summer of 1887 the condition of these glaciers was very much altered. It seemed as if the Hohberg glacier might be forced without any very great difficulty, and the Hohberg Pass glacier did not appear nearly so crevassed or broken up. This is a curious instance of a rapid change in the case of two glaciers, and helps us to understand how much glaciers can change in the course of a longer period.)

There was nothing for it but to beat a retreat. Eckenstein now acknowledged that my stories were true ones, but I made him go first, and as he is rather a heavy man, he was soon punished severely for his want of faith in me. We toiled up the glacier again with great weariness; it was not till 8 P.M. that we stood at the base of the snow-slope down which we had come so well in the morning, thanks to my 'Steigeisen.' Then the snow had been almost too hard, now it was much too soft, and we plunged in over our thighs, dragging ourselves upwards by the aid of our ice-axes thrust in as far as possible. Four times we had to change places on that short bit, but finally, about 9 P.M., we reached the col. The sun had long before sunk behind the Mont Blanc chain, and very shortly total darkness, after a short twilight, would come on. In our haste to reach the level Festi glacier by the last rays of daylight—for we had hidden our lantern on the moraine there on the way up—we lost the track, and tried to force our way straight down to the glacier. However, in spite of several times letting ourselves down by the rope in a rather desperate fashion, considering that it was twilight, we stuck fast at a place about 50 mètres above the glacier. We could not advance any farther, nor could we go back. It was now quite dark, and we were compelled to stop where we were, though our clothes were wet through with

our long wade through the soft snow. It was not a convenient place for a bivouac. Above and below us were sheer walls of rock. Eckenstein found a small shelf on which he could just manage to lie down, but I was only lucky enough to discover one where I could sit; for if I wished to lie down, the whole of my body save my feet, head, and shoulders hung over a steep gully in the rocks. To increase the discomfort of our position a cold north-westerly wind began to blow. We had to resign ourselves to our fate, though I long rebelled against it, but any attempt to push on would simply have been most dangerous. We fastened ourselves to the rocks with our rope. Of course it was impossible to think of sleeping. As the night wore on it became colder and colder; our upper clothing froze quite hard; the thermometer, read by means of a match struck by Eckenstein, marked -7° C. ($=20^{\circ}$ F.), and it was then only 11.30 P.M. I did not think it was worth while to take another reading—it could not help us. The cold pierced us to the very marrow, for it must be remembered that we were still at a height of 3,700 mètres ($=12,140$ feet). It was in vain that we tried to keep warm by hugging each other as tightly as the limits of our prison permitted. Nothing would help us. My feet began to freeze, till at length I took off my shoes, as I usually do at a bivouac, and had not done this time simply because my feet were very wet and I had no dry socks with me. I wrung a good deal of water out of my wet socks and put my feet into my rucksack made of thin cloth. This scanty protection worked wonders; my feet gradually got warm again, and that was a very great thing indeed under the circumstances. The stormy wind whistled among the rocky pinnacles above us, a sudden gust carrying off Eckenstein's hat, his faithful companion on many an ascent, and my woollen mittens, which I had taken off for a moment. Both flew away in the pitchy darkness, and were never seen by us again. Finally, after what seemed an endless time, the long wished-for dawn began to appear. It touched first the clouds floating round the Dom like unquiet spirits. When the day had come, with a great deal of trouble I managed to get into my shoes, which were frozen hard, and we executed a dance on the narrow shelf, certainly not to amuse ourselves, but to unstiffen our cramped and weary limbs. Our faces were ashy grey. Eckenstein had in some measure whiled away the time by smoking, and had warmed his hands with his pipe. This small consolation was, however, denied to me, as I am not a smoker.

We were heartily glad to set off again at 4 A.M. As quickly as our stiff joints would allow us we clambered back to the right track, and hurried down to the Festi glacier, where we met a party on the way up the Dom, though they were later driven back by weather. We found our lantern on the moraine all right. Then it began to snow, and the clouds came down lower and lower. We went straight down to the Randaierbach. Then the snow turned to rain. We descended along the side of the stream, which was bridged over by the remains of an old avalanche; traces of a recent fall lay on the old dirty snow, and could be seen in the gorge, through which roars the stream from the glacier. The fact was that while we had been up on the heights a huge avalanche had come down, which shows that even here one must be on the lookout. We halted from 9 to 11 in Randa, and then drove up to Zermatt, where two famished mountaineers committed such frightful ravages on the good things set before them at the Monte Rosa table d'hôte, that we have a well-founded suspicion that Herr Seiler did not make large profits, if any, out of the lunch that day.

THE DENTS DES BOUQUETINS.

BY G. S. BARNES.

(Read before the Alpine Club, March 6, 1888.)

TOWARDS the end of August, 1887, I arrived at Arolla. I had no aim or ambition except of doing nothing in particular for a few days. In making plans for laziness, however, I had counted, I will not say without my host, but without my fellow guests. The energetic importunities of Mr. Cecil Slingsby soon prevailed, and it was settled on the day of my arrival that I was to undertake a joint venture with him and Miss Blair Oliphant. Each of us was allowed to impose one condition on the party. Miss Oliphant, for whom the unknown has no terrors, desired that the expedition should be an entirely new one; and Slingsby, who had recently whetted but had not satisfied his appetite for guideless expeditions, insisted that we should take no guide; I was allowed to bargain for the luxury of a porter, but only on the understanding that he was to be strictly confined to his 'portorial' functions.

These details were arranged, but we had not yet found our