

ness of the proposition that two sides of a triangle are greater than the third.

We finally left the shores of the Lommijaur on the worst terms with the weather; the tent was saturated within an hour of striking, and the joys of packing were heightened by a steady downpour. The early morning fording of the Tjeurajokk fresh from the melting snows above, which followed, suggested Queen Elizabeth's pronouncement on speeches (according to an eminent authority), and none will deny to mountaineering difficulties of the kind the foregoing paper attempts to solve a place in the same category of 'things we chiefly bless when once we've got them over.'

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WITH LADIES IN THE LEPONTINES.

BY GEORGE BROKE.

(Read before the Alpine Club, May 7, 1901.)

**I**T has generally been the custom for a member, when commencing his paper, to declare that nothing but the sternest sense of discipline, or else a very real personal friendship for our Secretary, would have induced him to occupy such a prominent position. I am afraid that I must be less modest than most men, for the full disadvantage of the promise I had given only came over me by degrees, as effort after effort to obtain slides proved a failure. I had a certain number of inferior specimens of my own, and had not anticipated any difficulty in making up the rest. But London shops and personal friends were alike drawn blank, and at last in desperation I took to showering letters promiscuously, writing to every one, whether I knew them or not, whom I had any reason to suppose had ever been in the Lepontine district. Even so nothing resulted for some time, but at last I struck oil, and, thanks to the great kindness of total strangers, am able to make a fair show this evening. And in view of the title of my paper it is worth while laying some stress on the fact that almost every photograph shown to-night has been taken by a lady or with the assistance of a lady.

Now, the first point to which I wish to call your attention is the sad fact that so many of our members, after doing five, eight, or ten years' good work in the Alps, suddenly give up climbing altogether. Only the other day a man, in writing to me, said he was sorry that circumstances had placed him on the retired list. What circumstances? So far as I know

it was only that he had got married. Now of course there is nothing new in that, as Mr. Leslie Stephen pointed out to us so many years ago. But when that difficulty arises most men seem to assume that only two courses are open to them: the unselfish man stops at home and gives up climbing; the selfish man leaves his wife, either at home or in his Swiss headquarters, and goes climbing as usual. The sacred ibis is safest in the middle, and surely a third course is preferable to either, viz. to take his wife climbing with him.

Moreover Herr Meurer, in a paper read to this Club fifteen years ago, pointed out that the highest ideal in climbing was not to become a guideless climber only, but an amateur guide. At the time he foresaw the difficulty, one which already troubles our professional brethren—the creation of a *clientèle*. Even in making up a party to climb without guides it is very difficult to get hold of the right men at the right time. But what pleasure can be greater than introducing your better half to all those glories which lie so near to heaven, and what greater satisfaction to yourself than some quite minor expedition successfully accomplished by a very weak party under your guidance? Naturally the expeditions will have to be very minor at first, or, better still, let there be for a short time a fair supply of professional assistance. And, having done it very often, I would emphatically discourage our members from going too often alone with their wives, or with any one distinctly weaker than themselves. Even on easy peaks it often means defeat—we retired discomfited three times running one summer—and if anything goes at all wrong the strain is very great. As an 'Altes Murmelthier' said in our 'Journal' not long ago, 'the added responsibility of getting somebody else out of the scrape besides yourself may heighten interest to the point of anxiety.'

But, you will say, what has all this to do with the Lepontines? Everything—or if not the Lepontines some similar district. For what is the sort of thing that often happens when one of our members gets married? At once his idea is to take his wife to the Montanvert or to Zermatt to show her the Alps at their very best. So what does he do? Let us suppose he is a nice, unselfish sort of person, and so capable of refusing an invitation to just make a third for the Dent Blanche. 'Your wife won't mind for once, you know.' So he takes her for a day in the icefall of the Gorner Glacier, which she probably likes very much; and then as a reward for virtue she is taken up the Breithorn. A most uncomfortable night at a Theodul hut is followed by a day of trudging

ceaselessly up endless snow slopes under a blazing sun. At last, utterly exhausted, broiled, faint, and weary, she reaches her goal, to find, perhaps, as happened once to a lady I know well, twenty-nine other people seated on the top! That lady has never been up another mountain.

Zinal, or Saas, or Arolla is better, but not much better, because it is very hard to be content with small things when big peaks are also to hand; and, having reached a summit, it is always annoying to find it greatly overtopped on all sides. Therefore go where all the mountains are small. It does not at all follow that there won't be ample difficulties if judiciously selected, while in this Lepontine district, of which I have to speak this evening, there are still a few novelties, though only a few. I propose to confine myself to-night to that portion of the Lepontines which lies W. of the St. Gotthard, with the exception of my starting-point, Piora. (I might have started equally well at Berisal, but some men might be tempted to get out of the train at Visp instead of going on to Brieg.) Piora is the only place I know over 6,000 ft. which can be reached in almost exactly twenty-four hours from London. The journey by the St. Gotthard railway to Airolo is a very comfortable one, while the transport of your luggage to Piora has been made easy by Signor Lombardi's excellent arrangement, by which you simply pay 15c. per kilo. to send it up and 10c. to bring it down, and he does the rest. And yet it is curious how few English ever go there, though the hotel has been in existence for over thirty years. The lake, nearly two miles long, is charming; bathing, boating, fishing all help to fill up idle days. Other smaller lakes make objects for short walks. Piz Blas, Piz Rondadura, and others offer more serious expeditions; but the pick of the bunch is Pizzo Columbe, a quaint little peak of pure dolomite (some one else may say how it got there), which, if taken scientifically, gives a very good climb. The first ascent was made by the S.E. face, undoubtedly short and direct, but with practically no climbing at all. But if either the S.W. or N. ridges be followed there will be scrambling and to spare. My wife and I went up by the S.W. ridge, and had plenty of excitement before we reached the 'last turret' of the Adula 'Guide Book,' which gives Mr. Coolidge's route thus: 'From the pass clamber up the S.E. face of the peak, crossing several gullies. Ascend one of these gullies which is a good way to the N. and so gain a little hollow at the E. foot of the last turret. This is nearly split in two by a narrow crack, by means of which, and the rocks to the right, the summit is

attained after an amusing short scramble.' We were rather frightened about this crack and its short scramble; but the scramble is *very* short indeed, as the last turret is only 10 ft. high. The real difficulty is to get two people on the top at once.

From Piora we had a very sporting day across to Hospenthal. We ought to have crossed four ridges, but we went wrong near the start, and, instead of reaching the Taneda Pass, had to go right over the Poncioni Negri and Punta Nera instead. Mr. Coolidge somewhere speaks of the Bocca di Cadlino as a savage gully, but we only found a pleasing snow couloir down which we glissaded, toiled up to the Pian Bornengo Pass, traversed to the Maigels ridge, and glissaded again nearly all the way down to the Portgera Alp in the Unter Alp valley. While imbibing milk at the Beim Stein huts we saw an unusual sight, a calf being carried down by the torrent for about two hundred yards, when it succeeded in struggling out, and seemed very little the worse. From Andermatt we drove to Hospenthal, trying hard to look as if we had just come by train. We got found out though later on, and received many lectures on our rashness in going without guides. I ought perhaps to say at this point that many of my own experiences might be misleading to others, since I have always been in the Lepontines in June and July, at which times these smaller districts are at their best.

At Hospenthal you are again in contact with full-blown luxury, but there is not very much climbing to be had there; and the bare open Urserenthal is a little dull, so that Realp, five miles away to the W., makes a better stopping-place to those who have no fear of extreme simplicity when combined with perfect cleanliness. Any shortcomings in the diet can be made up by unlimited cream. Various expeditions may be made to the N., but that is not Lepontine, so is out of my beat to night. The chief object at Realp is to avoid driving over the Furka, a fine route, no doubt, or rather a route which gives a fine view from the top—that is, if you can see it, which has only once been my lot out of six or seven times; and, taken from whichever side you like, the slow crawl up to the top is very monotonous. But on the S. of Realp there are several nice little peaks, and probably the best way of reaching the upper Rhone valley would be to climb the Wyttengewasserstock, a peak which, with but one exception, is unique in the Alps, though Dr. Collie has discovered another in the Canadian Rockies, in supplying from its snows three great river systems: in this case that of the Rhone on the W. by way

of the Gerenthal, the Rhine on the N. by the Muttenbach and Reuss, and the Po on the S. by way of the Ticino. Its only rival is the Pizzo Lunghino, which substitutes the Danube for the Rhone.

The descent is easy to Oberwald, where there is an amusing little hotel, whose 'pension' is, or was, four francs a day, and plenty of climbing may be had; or Ulrichen may be patronised, where the inn is one of those delightful native houses with vast rooms full of ancient furniture; and only 3 miles lower down is the Golden Cross at Münster, one of the very best of the smaller hotels. Here I remember a great friend being much amused at starting in a carriage for a new peak. It fell out thus: We wanted to climb the Galmihorn and go down to Oberwald, so with all our luggage we departed at 2.30 A.M. At Ulrichen we got out, and the carriage went on with all our belongings, while we turned uphill to the Blas Alp, and after a somewhat long expedition secured our peak, which was then new, and got down to Oberwald in the evening.

At Münster there is a very fine church, and going one Sunday to high mass we heard a most excellent sermon, slightly spoiled for us by the fact that every now and then the preacher lapsed into *patois*, and so we lost some of the best bits. Just as service began a man came in and knelt down beside me who seemed somehow familiar, but you can't turn and stare hard at a man who is only a foot off, and it was not till we were going out of church that I realised it was Jost, who was up there to look after a sick brother.

From Münster there are two routes to Binn through the Blindenthal, either of which can be combined with the ascent of the Rappenhorn, a very fine view-point. Had we only done our duty on the Rappenhorn I might have been able to show you a fine slide of four chamois, who stood at quite a short distance, uneasily inspecting us while we silently wrestled for the field glasses, quite oblivious of the camera which lay beside us. But an even better expedition, though longer, would be to go up the Merzenthal, over the Merzenbachschien to the Blindenhorn, and so to Binn by either the Mittlenberg or the Thäli Glacier.

Binn is a real centre, and a very charming one, with any amount of exactly the sort of climbing which is wanted. In the early days, ten years ago or so, it was a delightful spot, but then a time supervened when they began to be ambitious at the inn, and there was a stage of development which was not so nice, in which the prices distinctly got ahead of the

comfort. Now I understand that a further stage has been reached, which may safely be recommended, the comfort having caught up the prices, though I fear the old simplicity has departed.

I should have no time to-night to enter minutely into the climbs to be done at Binn, though the slides will perhaps give some idea. The most convenient groups from our point of view are the Schienhorn and Cherbadung massifs, though the Helsenhorn is not much further off. The Ofenhorn is most often climbed, but is rather longer and less interesting, except topographically. The Hüllehorn can be taken on the way to Berisal, in combination with the direct route of the Steinenjoch, a very pleasing little pass, thoroughly well suited to guideless parties; or, if more ambitious, you may, from the Steinenjoch, go up the Bortelhorn by its N. arête, and go down to Berisal. We took it once in the opposite direction very early in the year, and were rather perturbed at finding the N. ridge very heavily corniced; but the snow was in very good order, and we encountered no real difficulty. Or, if very humble-minded, you may, taking the Bettlihorn on the way, if you like, go by the Saflisch or Safnisch Pass; there is some diversity of spelling, and much more difference of opinion as to the best way down from the col to Berisal. Those who have plunged down through the wood below Im Stafel to the Ganterbrücke are emphatic in declaring it to be an evil way. We therefore rounded the hill from Seewji Stafel to the Steinen Alp by a horrible switchback path, which took an enormous time and was most trying to the temper, since the hotel roof was the whole time just under our feet. I believe really the best and shortest way would be to traverse straight across from the pass in a southerly direction, hardly descending at all till the Saurerrück was crossed, and then drop down on the Steinen Alp.

At Berisal you will find again the luxury you left at Hospenthal, with far more pleasant surroundings, but there is not a great deal of climbing. Both Bortelhorn and Hüllehorn have already been spoken of; the Wasenhorn affords a good scramble, and may be descended by way of the Kaltwasser Glacier to the Hospice, and so to Simplon. Or, as is more likely, you may drive the 12 miles on an off day. Simplon possesses two hotels, both of which are pretty well known; the Poste is rather more pretentious and the dinner excellent, but it is always the same dinner; but if you only stop one night that does not matter.

From Simplon the pleasantest way of reaching Veglia is



*Photo by F. Baker Gibbs]*

*[Swan Electric Engraving Co.*

**SCHIENHORN AND CHERBADUNG GROUPS, FROM OFENHORN.**



*Photo by Rev. G. Brooke]*

*[Swan Electric Engraving Co.*

**PIZZO COLUMBE, EASTERN ARÊTE.** Digitized by Google

over Monte Leone, but now I hesitate a little. Not long ago I had a mild controversy with my Bishop's wife. She declared that no Italian inn was ever dirty, and was very emphatic about it. It is not seemly to contradict your Bishop's wife, but I remained unconvinced. 'Hardly could a lady stop at Veglia,' wrote some one in the 'Alpine Journal' ten years ago. Well, as I hope to show shortly, two ladies at least have done it and survived, but they didn't exactly like it. But it is a great pity, as there is any amount of most excellent climbing to be had on the great cliffs which surround Veglia, climbing which is being gradually explored by our colleagues of the Italian Club, but so far practically untouched by English climbers. And at the same time it is a spot of very great beauty.

From Veglia to Devero there is a choice of two or three low passes, all said to be very beautiful; but unfortunately Devero is under a cloud, which I sincerely hope some member present may be able to remove. For the writer just referred to has recorded that 'Veglia is better than Devero by many degrees.' If he be right my wife has some justification for declining to go to Devero at present; but I do trust some one may be able to clear its character, as I should like to go there next year, though practically all the Devero climbs can be done from Binn.

From Devero a variety of rather longer passes over a complicated and badly mapped region lead us to Tosa Falls, where the inn, though in Italy, is under Swiss management, and so escapes all imputation. It is, in fact, a delightful little hostelry, much what Binn used to be ten years ago, where every effort is made to make you comfortable as a friend of the family. Here, as Mr. Cust has often pointed out, there are endless agreeable excursions; those on the E. are outside our present limits, but the Neufelgiuhörner and the Grieshorn group are especially to be recommended, while many of the ascents already mentioned, such as Ofenhorn, Hohsandhorn, and Blindenhorn, are within easy reach.

From Tosa the mule path of the San Giacomo leads you back again *via* All' Acqua, where there is a very simple but well spoken of tiny inn at the Swiss custom house, to Airolo, and the circle is complete.

Of course endless variety may be made by cutting across at any point; thus from Realp All' Acqua may be reached by the Cavanna Pass; a whole bunch of cols lead from Oberwald to the head of the Val Bedretto, and at Ulrichen the well-known Gries Pass route goes across to Tosa.

We had here a rather amusing experience once. It was very early in the season—June 11, to be exact—and my wife and I, with my old guide Adolf Andenmatten, were plodding across the glacier in a snow storm, when to us appeared, some two or three hundred yards away, a large blue umbrella advancing slowly towards us. We began to laugh, but Adolf, who had spotted the tip of a rifle protruding behind the broolly, growled out, 'Grenzwächter.' And so it was! Such a pretty boy, who, though we were still half a mile inside Switzerland, at once demanded to search our sacks. It did not seem worth arguing the point, as we were undoubtedly bound for Tosa; but when he wanted to begin with my wife's Adolf poured out such a volley of patois on the impropriety of such a proceeding that he abandoned not only my wife's but Adolf's also, in which my wife's sack was ensconced. But he made up for it with mine, which he slowly emptied piece by piece on the snow, while my wife sat and laughed. Ten tins of jam first struck him as ridiculously extravagant and obviously liable to duty, but we urged that they were only for mountain use and that it was a long way to Berisal *via* Binn. Appeased, he opened a box of Brand's meat lozenges. Immediately a smile spread over his face, and he said, 'Caramelli?' 'Try one,' said I, and promptly a couple went into his mouth. Shortly a pained expression was visible, and he resumed his duties with extra vigour. Presently he found my spare tobacco pouch (my other was safe in my breast pocket), opened it, and shook his head solemnly. 'Oh, you'll allow that,' I said. 'No,' he replied; 'there's more than 100 grammes here,' and went on chanting, 'Centi grammi, centi grammi,' balancing the pouch up and down in his hand. Then an inspiration seized me. I said, 'Ma anche per madama?' ('What about the lady's allowance?') Adolf roared, and our friend with the sweetest of smiles at once handed back the pouch. We saw him several times afterwards, as they had a regular camp just below the Falls, sending two men up every day to patrol the head of the valley.

From Binn numerous passes lead across the range to Tosa, Devero, or Veglia, and the latter is, of course, reached with the utmost ease from Berisal without going to Simplon.

And now, having dealt with the district in general, without, I trust, having been unduly dull, I will particularise with the account of one special run along the N. side which ended in a rather amusing manner. At the beginning of July my wife and I, after crossing the Laquinjoch with all due assistance, were awaiting at Berisal the arrival of my sister from England.

With a view to the transport of her sack with due efficiency and economy we had been making inquiries about porters, without much result, till Adolf suggested that he had a young brother-in-law, who, being neither guide nor porter, but only, as he phrased it, a 'common man,' would no doubt be willing to come for five or six francs a day. So I handed over sundry coins to Adolf to disburse on telegrams, which he must have done with remarkable inefficiency, for though the wire was, I think, called into use four times, no one had any idea whether the 'gewöhnliche Mann' was coming or not till he actually made his appearance on the morning of the day on which my sister arrived, after travelling steadily for 38 hrs.

Only one day's rest was allowed her before crossing the Forca del Rebbio to Veglia, which we found in some disorder, as, though Roggia had just opened his house, the servants had not arrived, nor, what was more serious, the cows, and it took a man three hours to go for milk and return. An additional nuisance was, according to our host, due to the absence of the herd, viz. the presence of innumerable small and exceedingly venomous gnats. He declared that these would all disappear with the arrival of the cows; and if this is true I can only suppose that in the tiny tarns, where presumably the gnats breed, the trampling hoofs destroy the nymphæ before they have time to develop into the perfect insect.

We rested a day at Veglia, during which an elderly German, guided by Alois Kronig, arrived to us from Binn. Him accordingly we taught to play squails with 5-franc pieces—a great resource in small inns in evil weather. Next morning we started for the Ritter in heavy rain, which caused us some disquiet, for the pass, which none of us had ever seen before, has more than once been the scene of ludicrous mistakes in bad weather. In 1890 two very well known climbers, finding the ridge wrapped in fog, twisted too much to the left on their ascent from Veglia, with the result that they crossed a spur instead of the main ridge, and presently going down the Mottiscia glen found themselves back at the inn they had left in the morning. This, however, they boldly published as a 'new expedition.' In 1894 another party, though accompanied by a local man, repeated the performance on the other side, but their great desire seems to have been to keep it a profound secret.

Fortunately for us the rain ceased, the clouds rolled away, and we had nothing worse to face than a N.W. gale. True we had some little difficulty in hitting off the descent down the cliffs on the other side; and Adolf and I indulged in the

usual acrimonious arguments, with the not unusual result that we each in turn led the others astray, though the honour of discovering the feasible gully fell to me.

Binn was reached about midday on the Saturday, and we arranged to leave on the Monday for a new pass to the Rhone valley between the Ober-Turbhorn and the Strahlgräte. At Tschampigenkeller we left the Albrun mule path, and climbed by narrower and steeper tracks to the Turben Alp, where we stopped to eat. As up to this point I have kept clear of the actuals I may be allowed to lay down as a law that with ladies, and as a matter of fact with nearly all climbers, a safe rule is to feed often. There was considerable grumbling on this occasion, because nearly three hours had elapsed since leaving Binn. Then we climbed some very steep grass slopes, and a less steep and very simple little glacier. It was getting warm now, and my wife proceeded steadily up it, umbrella in hand, while I, having discovered a crevasse at least six inches wide by the simple process of putting my leg into it, was arguing with Adolf as to the advisability of roping. Adolf, however, not only had the rope on his own shoulders but was fifty yards ahead, so had distinctly the best of the argument, and we arrived at the top at 8 o'clock, still unroped. The view was at first rather puzzling, it being possible to descend left or right into two entirely different valleys, but a few steps forward enabled me to identify the Blinden Glacier. We put on the rope, went down a short steep snowface to the head of a small buttress, and there ate largely. We here noticed that Adolf ate very little, and seemed rather short in his temper; but imagined that Schmid had probably given the men an extra festive supper the night before.

The descent of the Blinden Glacier was for some time uneventful till we suddenly reached a small bergschrund, and the 'common man,' who was leading, and who had never been on ice before, jibbed vigorously. At last, exhorted by the whole party, he prepared to leap the fearsome chasm, which may have been five feet wide with a drop of about the same. I foresaw what was likely to happen, and coming close up to my wife, who was giving him rope, held her up short with a couple of turns round my axe well driven in, just as our porter made a prodigious bound in the air. As he landed his heels slipped up, and away he went on his back at express speed till the tautened rope brought him up with a jerk that was felt by the whole party, my wife's waist naturally coming in for an extra share of compression.

Further down there were patches of bare ice where it was necessary to go cautiously, but our friend, like most novices, forgot to go on going slowly after he was clear of the difficult bits, and so more than once earned my wife's anathemas for pulling her over in the slipperiest places. Twelve o'clock saw us clear of the glacier and consuming vast quantities of milk at the highest cattle alp. But by this time the heat was tremendous. We halted at the point where our valley joined that of the Rhone, and sadly contemplated the white expanse of highroad, which stretched on the other side of the river, some half-mile away, from Reckingen to our destination at Münster. More than two miles of it to be covered, and not a particle of shade. It was not to be faced, and we struck off to the right, trusting to find some shadier path on the left bank of the river, which might bring us to the bridge opposite Münster. In this we succeeded, and once within the hospitable portals of the Golden Cross soon forgot our fatigues.

Next morning Adolf came with a serious visage to report himself 'sehr krank.' He himself attributed it to having drunk at Binn some water which had been left forgotten in his room for many days—'acht zehn,' he said, and we were divided in opinion as to whether he meant eighteen or, as seemed more probable, eight or ten. I thought the milk drunk at Beim Keller might have something to do with it, and, finding his temperature barely above normal, administered a nauseous dose of pounded-up pills, flavoured with a little eau de Cologne. This he took most meekly, and, as with touching faith he said that he thought he should be better next day, we drove up in the afternoon to Oberwald, our *objectif* being the still unclimbed Saashorn, which we hoped to traverse in some way to Realp.

But in the evening, though no worse, he was certainly no better, and next morning was about the same, the symptoms pointing to a mild attack of influenza. Like all these men, now that he was seedy he was getting desperately homesick, and so, as we were almost at our journey's end, we thought it better to let him go, sending the porter with him to take care of him. And we were somewhat reconciled to this course when our landlord, an old chamois-hunter, declared that he knew the lower slopes of our mountain well, and would be charmed to accompany us on its first ascent. It was even a sadder parting than usual with our guide; but later in the day we heard the men had got safely to Viesch, and hoped that the next evening would see them home at Saas.

At dinner-time a great thunder-storm came rolling up, and went on at intervals during the night. We were called at half-past 12, but found rain still falling, so retired to bed again till 4 o'clock, when appearances were more hopeful. By the time we were fairly off it was half-past 5, but we thought little of this, believing our peak to be a mere trifle, on which time was of no importance.

Away past Unterwasser, and up the Gerenthal, we started in full daylight; but our old host, a great stalwart man of between fifty and sixty, proved sorely garrulous, and, what was worse, found it necessary to halt whenever he had any information to impart. Now it was the site of an old chapel, now the quarry whence the stone for the local stoves was hewn that checked his steps and loosed his tongue. Rapidly the ladies waxed wroth at being pulled up every three or four hundred yards, just as they were comfortably settled into their stride; insult was added to injury when to each in turn he offered a slender bamboo alpenstock as more suitable than their own axes; and at last I had to impress upon him that we had come out to walk and not to talk.

Pained, but not altogether silenced, he ambled along more steadily, stirred up by the point of my axe whenever he endeavoured to halt to point out the exact spot where he had succeeded in doing to death a chamois, and these were fairly numerous. He had also a romance about a bear, only a few years back, and the great hunt that was organised in pursuit: but I gathered that they went somewhat on the principle of 'not having lost a bear,' and were quite satisfied when they had driven him out of the country.

At last we found ourselves at Im Schweif, a collection of some half-dozen mouldering hovels at the foot of the tremendous cliffs which here drop to the west from our peak. On these some two score sheep, according to old Kreuzer, managed some years ago to get so irretrievably pounded that it was found impossible to extricate them, and, to save them from a lingering death, they were deliberately shot down with rifles. A few of the carcasses fell over the precipice, but the majority had to be left where they lay. Here we had to cross the Saasbach, a fair-sized stream even at 7 A.M., and, though we managed to ford it with only a few splashes, we wondered what was likely to be its afternoon condition on a summer's day.

Some 40 min. later, the orthodox  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hrs. having elapsed since the start, we halted amid grey boulders and parsley fern for our first meal, and then pushed on till we rounded

the corner and saw to the N.E. the Geren Glacier stretching up to the Wyttewasser Stock before mentioned.

All traces of a track had now disappeared, and, after a few minutes more along the bottom of the valley, we turned again to our left up a narrow and appallingly steep grass gully, which made us pant and groan dismally for half an hour. At last we topped the ridge, and began doubling back along the top of the cliffs, which had so overshadowed us two hours before. Here there was no possible difficulty; our peak stood up at no great distance, sharp and spearlike certainly, but no misgivings assailed us till, about 10 o'clock, we reached the foot of a great slope, still partly covered with snow. A delightfully clear cold stream coursed among the great rocks, and we stopped again not only to eat, as in all probability we should not see water higher up, but also to reconnoitre our future course.

Straight in front, nearly due north of us, and perhaps half a mile away, rose the jagged point of the Saashorn, and for the first time we began to think that perhaps our work was only just beginning. To south-east and south-west rose two ridges enclosing the upper part of our slope. That to the left was the one seen on the sky line from Oberwald, and though it was obviously easy to reach the lower part of it, an uncompromising and almost perpendicular step higher up offered an all but certain bar to progress. The ridge to the east was far less steep, but jagged like a broken saw, promising work for the rest of the day should we be forced to keep to the crest.

I therefore proposed to go up the slope to the foot of the last notch in this eastern ridge, thence somehow, though the rocks did not look altogether inviting, to gain the notch and finish the climb by the ridge. Kreuzer, however, objected vehemently, declaring it was only possible to go further by turning the east ridge and getting on to its north side. To humour him we accordingly tramped up a long snow bed which stretched conveniently down the slope, and found on gaining the crest at the nearest gap that, as I expected, there was a sheer drop on the other side of some hundreds of feet. A sorely dismayed man now was our host, and began to throw out hints that sufficient had been done for honour. We dismissed these suggestions with contempt, dropped down again to the snow which lay along the foot of the crest, and tramped along for 20 min. till we were under my notch.

Obviously, if success was to be gained, this was the only way, but a serious effort was inevitable. Solemnly we depo-

sited our axes with the ladies' coats, umbrellas, and other impedimenta behind a big rock, and girded ourselves with the rope, a performance new to Kreuzer, but hardening his heart he professed himself ready to go wherever the ladies would, and at 12 o'clock we started upwards. In a minute or two we were brought to a stand by a 'pitch' of about 12 ft., very smooth and forbidding, but slanting up to the left I discovered a feasible means of turning the obstacle. At the top of this was a fair-sized ledge, and I hauled up the others in succession, after which we rounded an awkward corner and dropped down again into the gully just above the before-mentioned pitch.

While I had been struggling with the first difficulty our poor old host had been cheering the ladies with such remarks as, 'The Herr is quite mad,' 'We shall all be killed,' 'The rocks are utterly impossible,' and finally turned to my sister with the searching enquiry, 'Haben Sie nicht Angst?' These continual growlings irritated us all so much that at last I asked him if he would like to wait where he was till we returned, saying I thought we should be away about an hour and a half or two hours. He hemmed and hawed a bit, and to give him time to consider I proceeded to attack the next pitch, which was now evidently the only obstacle between us and the notch.

This was about the same height as the other, but a few friendly cracks, aided by some knee and elbow work, got me up to the sticking point, where the final slab not only projected over my head, but carried on its upper sloping surface a number of loose stones. Slowly I got a finger over into a convenient crevice, then an arm followed, until I was so far up that I was just worming delicately on to the great slab with good holds for both hands, when I disturbed some loose stone, and a rock some 18 inches square began to roll down. With a yell to those below I swung my right foot across to the opposite side of the chimney, and stopped the boulder with my shin (I still bear the mark, though several years have elapsed) as it paused for its final leap.

Gazing with anxiety under my right arm, a ludicrous picture presented itself. On one side of the chimney the ladies were hastily ensconcing themselves behind a projecting buttress, while on the other Kreuzer was making desperate efforts to flatten out his rather bulky person. All was clear, however, and swinging my leg back I let go the boulder, which by this time seemed to weigh tons, and bouncing on the top of the lower pitch it split into two pieces and whizzed away

down to the valley. In a minute more I was safely up and prepared to assist the others. My last performance had meantime settled Kreuzer; he was not going any further tied to a madman who hurled large rocks about, and thankfully decided to rest where he was till our return.

So he detached himself from the rope; my sister coiled the end round her waist—we had 120 ft. in all—and we scrambled up to the notch, whence a decidedly long drop let us down to much easier going, though constant watchfulness with regard to loose stones was necessary. Still we made steady progress upward till close to the top we halted, to choose between two parallel chimneys either of which seemed to lead to the actual summit. The right-hand one began with an 8-ft. pitch, while that on the left was easy; so up it I went, till I found it becoming inconveniently narrow, and soon I had to drop the sack and leave it in the cleft. Narrower still it became, till at last it closed overhead, leaving only the smallest of holes on the right, through which with many contortions I wriggled, to find myself at the head of chimney number one, at the foot of which the last member of our trio was still patiently sitting.

One glance round revealed the fact that we were only on a great 'gendarme'; the real peak lay some distance off to the north-east, and I hurriedly made an excursion over the next point to see if we could stick to the ridge. Finding this all right, I set to work to get my followers up. All went well for a time, but then my wife stuck badly in the narrowest part, and it was some time before she appeared through the rabbit hole at the end, pushing her hat before her, as, being a stiff straw, it would only go through edgeways. The other lady also nearly proved a fixture, thanks to the extra coils of rope wound round her, and at one time it looked as if she would have to untie and come up through the other chimney, but my wife found a point at the top of the gendarme from which, hard held, she could survey and encourage progress, and at last we joined forces again.

The next pinnacle was the only one where a slip seemed at all likely; its top had apparently been sliced off, leaving a broad smooth surface at an inclination of about thirty degrees, on which it was necessary to squirm for one appreciable instant without grip while changing holds. But with the rope securely hitched a slip would have been no great matter, and we landed safely again on the ridge beyond, from which the eye seemed to drop almost sheer into Oberwald. Here we bustled along gaily till a short knife-edge of snow called

for steadiness in the absence of axes. Then we traversed again to the right, swarmed two more great slabs, and swung up among the cluster of spikes which represent the real top. Two of these rise above the rest, and standing in the notch between it was just possible to touch their sharp points with the hand.

Then we looked at the time; nearly half-past two. No time to build a cairn; and no jam or sardine tin in which to place our names, for the sack had been left in what we with one accord called the 'bad crack.' Finally we deposited a matchbox with our names under a few stones in the notch between the final teeth, fixing a safety pin in the rock above to point out its hiding-place, and after the briefest of halts fled downwards with, I fear, no thoughts about the view. I do dimly recollect that the distance was hazy, and most of the Pennine ranges wrapped in cloud, though many of the Oberland peaks could be identified.

My sister now took the lead, and led right well, only hesitating once or twice as to the exact route. Back along the ridge to the great gendarme, then down the chimney up which we had *not* come, easily dropping over its final pitch, though I then had to go up the other to recover the sack, and so to just under the notch, up which I again led, and we found ourselves once more above the spot where we had left Kreuzer nearly *four* hours before instead of the two I had reckoned when I thought the gendarme was the real peak. Wild yells elicited no response, and we wondered if he had tried to get down alone and had killed himself.

I lowered the ladies, and then followed with assistance from a shoulder at the critical point. We repeated the process at the lower pitch, and slithered down the snow to our big rock, to at last fully realise our woes. Kreuzer had gone home, and had taken everything with him, including all our ice axes and the *wine gourd!* Dire were the maledictions heaped on his head by the others on their way along the snow slopes, as from time to time one of them lost her footing and shot down till checked by the rope, while the absence of the wine bottle stirred up a most unchristian spirit in my thirsty body. Wrath mounted still higher when we found by the tracks that the old man had gaily glissaded where we felt bound to walk cautiously down; but much of our woe was forgotten when we got back to our clear stream at a quarter-past five, and, not having touched food or drink for over six hours, pretty well cleared out the sack, while I was ensnared into drinking undue quantities of the icy water by getting hold of our biscuit tin, a cut-down Bath Oliver, which holds about a pint,

and was filled and emptied often enough to cause me to repent it for the next day or two.

For fifty minutes we sat there, basking recklessly in the sun and finishing up the jam tins, till I felt bound to point out that the shadow had already covered most of the valley, and that there were less impossible things than getting benighted in our lanternless condition in the forest on a path that none of us had ever seen before that morning. So down we pressed until again at that awful grass gully Kreuzer's ears must have burnt freely, for it was no joke, with night coming on, to have to creep and crawl for fear of a tumble, when with axes we could have scurried down gaily.

Round the corner I managed to hit off among the boulders the faint sheep trail up which we had come in the early hours, and we pushed on steadily, only halting once for a drink of water and a biscuit, till again we reached the Saasbach, to find it, as we had expected, in a very different condition from that of the morning. So tumultuously was it coming down that the patch of stones in the middle, by which we had crossed almost dry-shod, was now 2 ft. under water. Uncoiling 10 or 12 ft. of the rope, and giving the others the end, I jumped for the stones, and then backed up stream till the water was surging high above my knees. Aided by a jerk from the rope, my wife just reached the stones, and then, losing her balance, promptly knelt down at my feet, but hurriedly got up again, and safely effected the narrower leap to the further shore, where she untied and tossed me back the rope. It then took me four or five casts before I got it over to my sister, there being little more than enough to reach her, while if one strand touched the racing water it was instantly whirled away. At last she caught it, tied on, and got over safely, imitating my wife's performance in every particular.

This icy cold bath refreshed them both considerably, and it was almost at a run that we pressed on downwards, just clearing the forest as night finally closed in on us. On reaching the bridge over the torrent near its junction with the Gornerlibach there was a choice of route, and some one suggested that the path by which we had come in the morning was not only very narrow, but overhung the torrent in a way that offered unpleasant possibilities in the dusk. However we preferred to chance the evils that we knew of, and hurrying on at last got back to the paved mule track which mounts from Unterwasser to the hamlet of Gerendorf. It was no longer possible to tell at all at what angle the stones were set, barely to see whether they were large or

small, and when we totalled up our croppers at the bottom they came to a very respectable sum.

Finally the flat level of the Rhone valley was reached, and then our hotel, at the somewhat tardy hour of nearly half-past nine. Our appearance created a tremendous sensation, for old Kreuzer had come in half an hour before to report that we were all most certainly killed. He had waited for 3 hrs. where we left him, and then, deciding that we were probably killed, but might possibly have found some better way down, had collected all our impedimenta and made the best of his way back to the Saasbach, where he had waited a long time in the vain hope of seeing us descending by that valley, till gathering darkness drove him at last homewards.

He fell on our necks with such unfeigned joy at our safe return, and poured forth such eulogies on our masterly performances, that our wrath speedily evaporated, though that of my sister revived to some tune when she found that, on the assumption that she was either lost or slain, her room had been bestowed on some other travellers. They were speedily evicted, and after we had taken turns at the one tub of the establishment and discussed an excellent supper we finally retired to rest about midnight.

Now this is the sort of climbing to which almost every lady may aspire. So many who are thoroughly up to a day of 10 or 12 hrs. are disgusted with the noblest of all sports by being started on their career with a long dull snow-grind from a fashionable centre, preluded perhaps by a miserably uncomfortable night in a hut, or in one of those tiny inns so abundant now at places like Zermatt, in which sleep is generally almost unprocurable. If only their male belongings would give them short days with plenty of rock-scrambling, expeditions such as may be found in abundance in less frequented districts like the Lepontines, fewer of our members would give up climbing, fewer wives would be left behind, and it would be found that not a few ladies were in time perfectly capable of making 'a third on the rope' even in a guideless party.

#### THE GRINDELWALD DRU.

By G. HASLER.

THE peak now for some years known under this name is that to which the figures 3414 are attached on the Siegfried map, and forms the lowest part of that rocky ridge