

for fear of falling stones or ice, we chose a safer route, commencing by a great rocky spur rather to our right. This we quitted higher up and took to the centre of the face, right to the summit. Leaving the plateau at 9.20, we were on the summit at 4. The ascent took time on account of the steps to be cut; almost everywhere was snow-ice. The rocks were not difficult and the route is interesting throughout, and to be recommended, *starting very early* from the Cabane Sella. Our route is marked on the fine photograph placed at our disposal by Mr. Vittorio Sella. On the summit the wind was again violent and drove us down at once. So as to be sheltered from it, we decided to descend by the S. arête (del Naso) which, covered with snow, took us more time than expected. A little above the Colle del Naso we left the arête and effected the descent to the W. Glacier de Lys by a spur of rocks, broken and unstable, crossing couloirs, and finally by a snow-slope, steep and frozen hard, which, after much work, led us to the bergschrund, gaping wide and very high, without any bridge. After long ineffectual attempts, we finally got over by a jump of 5 to 6 mètres. We reached the Cabane Gnifetti at 11.30 by moonlight, much pleased with our day. . . . Another important expedition, suggested by myself, was done on July 31, by our friend F. Ravelli and some friends, viz.: the first ascent of the W. Lyskamm (4478 m.) by the S. face. Details will appear later.'

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## VARIOUS EXPEDITIONS IN 1915 AND 1919.

COL DU MONT DOLENT (3543 m. = 11,625 ft.). E. G. Oliver with Henri Rey and Alexis Brocherel, August 24, 1915.—We left the Cabane du Jardin d'Argentière at 06.00 (French time), and reached the foot of the bergschrund under the Col at 07.10.

The bergschrund was in bad condition, and it took nearly two hours hard step-cutting to pass it (09.00).

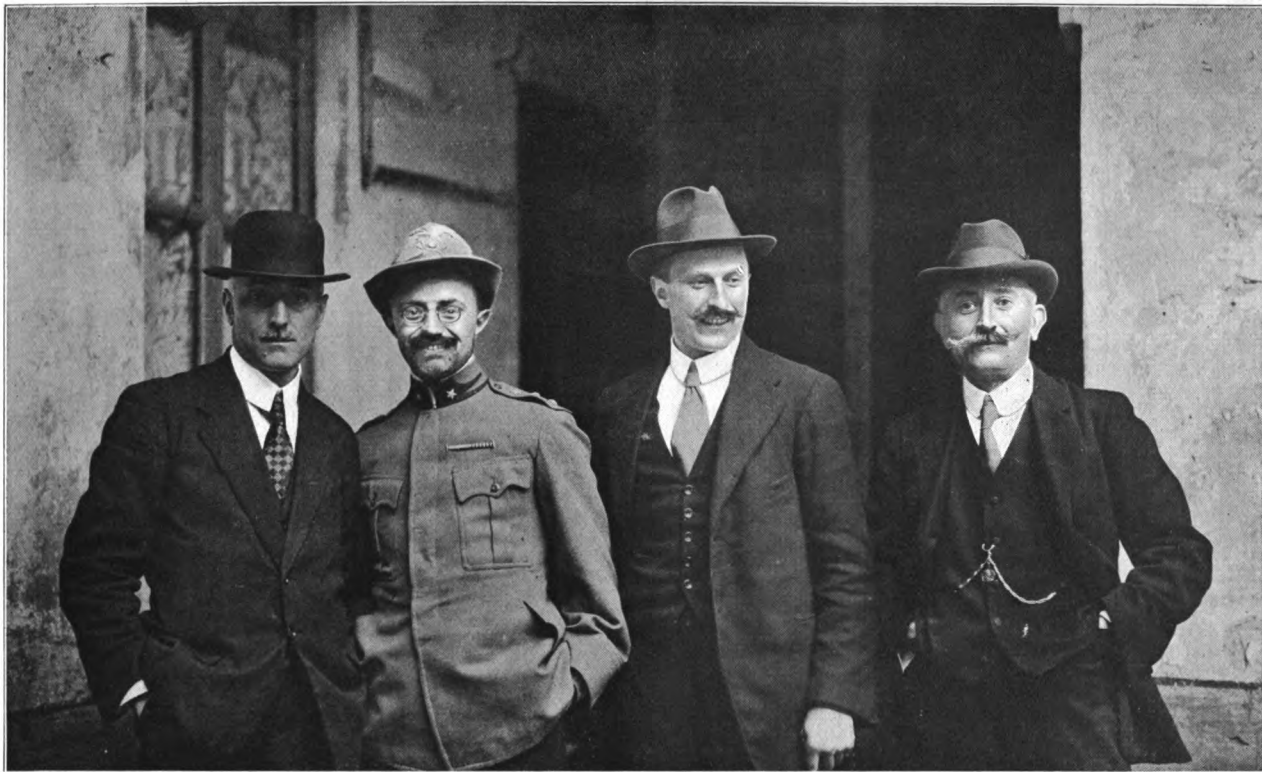
We then cut straight up the ice-slope above the bergschrund to gain the lowest portion of the rocks considerably to the East of the couloir. The first few pitches of these rocks were not difficult, and we made good progress; but above the difficulties accumulated, as the rocks were partly covered with heavy lumps of snow, frozen hard on to them. We were gradually forced more to the East against the very steep rocks, descending from the Pointe du Pré de Bar. These rocks did not look practicable, and, after climbing some very difficult pitches passing under and to the West of them, we traversed in a westerly direction with great difficulty, moving very slowly until we reached a point close to the main couloir descending from the Col (16.00). From this point we could have traversed into the main couloir without much difficulty, and another ice couloir branching to our left in a South-Easterly direction offered an alter-



*Photo. V. Sella*

S.W. FACE OF LYSKAMM

- - - - ROUTE GUGLIERMINA



JOSEPH GUGLIERMINE

CAPT. G. LAMPUGNANI

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BAPTISTE GUGLIERMINE

A GROUP OF DISTINGUISHED ITALIAN MOUNTAINEERS

native route to the summit ridge. The rocks directly above us were very steep and plastered with snow and verglas.

After a short consultation we decided to try the couloir to the left, chiefly because the rocks above it looked not too difficult, and also fairly free of snow. An hour's step-cutting in hard ice brought us to the top of the couloir; but the rocks above proved much more difficult than we anticipated, and had a good deal of verglas on them.

After two hours of very arduous climbing, during which we were obliged to move with the greatest precaution, we reached the summit ridge and found we were on the top of a peak without name or height on the B.I.K. map, but described in Kurz's 'Guide de la Chaîne du Mont Blanc' (ed. 1914, p. 63), as P. 3614 m. between the Col and the Pointe du Pré de Bar (19.00).

Hence we descended on to the Col, which was reached at 19.30 (very difficult).

We at once started the descent of the Italian side and reached the last rocks above the bergschrund at 21.15 p.m.

Here we halted for the first time since leaving the hut and thought our troubles were over. We were fortunate enough to have a brilliant full moon. Without this we must inevitably have been benighted higher up.

We started again at 22.15, but found the bergschrund very high and difficult. Two and a half hours were consumed in step-cutting before reaching the level part of the glacier (00.45).

We reached La Vachey at 05.20 (Italian time), after nearly 22½ hours' going.

This was the most difficult expedition in which I have ever taken part, and both guides think the same. During the period of more than twelve hours, which were occupied in climbing from below the bergschrund to the Col, we were never for a moment comfortable, and were unable to halt at all. The expedition afforded a good illustration of how much the standard of difficulty depends upon conditions. We ought of course, in the conditions existing, to have cut steps straight up the couloir to the Col, using the rocks on the right bank where possible. As a matter of fact, we had determined to do this when we inspected the route while walking up the Argentière Glacier the previous day, as it was evident the rocks were badly plastered with snow. The couloir, however, looked so repulsive from just below that we weakly changed our intention at the last moment and took to the rocks.

We should again have saved much time if we had traversed into the main couloir at the point reached at 16.00, instead of taking the couloir to the left. We had no crampons; but I do not think they would have been much use in the circumstances. A longer rope would have helped us in places—we had only 100 feet and no spare rope. Fortunately the weather was very fine.

EDMUND G. OLIVER.

**AIGUILLE DE ROCHEFORT** (4003 m. = 13,134 ft.) and **DÔME DE ROCHEFORT** (4012 m. = 13,164 ft.). S. L. Courtauld and E. G. Oliver, with Adolphe Rey and Adolf Aufdenblatten. August 9, 1919.—The party left the Rifugio Torino at 04.15, and reached the usual breakfast place below the Dent du Géant at 06.00. Leaving at 06.45, the ridge was followed, except that the large gendarme (P. 3933 m. on B.I.K. map) was turned on its North side; the top of the Aiguille de Rochefort<sup>1</sup> was reached by the rotten rocks on its North-West face at 09.15.

This arête, which was very narrow in places, consisted generally of snow, alternating with a certain amount of ice. It was interesting and difficult, chiefly owing to heavy cornices to the South.

The party left the top of the Aiguille at 11.10, and passing over the narrow arête between the peaks, reached the top of the Dôme at 13.15. This arête was even more corniced than the arête on the other side of the Aiguille, and afforded some interesting snow climbing. The final climb up the Dôme is on rotten rocks, but is quite easy.

The party returned by the same route; leaving the top of the Dôme at 13.45, they reached the hut at 17.30, and Courmayeur at 20.15, after a halt of rather over half an hour at the hut.

The return journey was more difficult as the snow had become soft in places owing to the hot sun, and the cornices required very careful manipulation.

Later in the season it was observed that the climb became much easier as many of the cornices had fallen down, and it would have been possible in some places to have taken to the rocks below the arête on the South side of it.

**DENT DU GÉANT** (4014 m. = 13,170 ft.), BY NORTH-WEST FACE. Mario Piacenza, S. L. Courtauld and E. G. Oliver, with Henri and Adolphe Rey, Joseph Carrel and Adolf Aufdenblatten, August 25, 1919.—The party started from the Rifugio Torino at 09.00 and reached the usual breakfast place below the Dent at 10.30. Leaving at 11.30, they passed over the snow shoulder leading towards the Rochefort ridge, and then descended to the North about 100 mètres on the East side of the Dent, and close to it, at first by ice and then rotten rocks, until below a rock couloir leading up to the prominent shoulder on the North arête of the peak. They climbed this couloir to reach the shoulder on which is a flagstaff (12.30).

From here they traversed over a sloping slab on to the North-West face, which was climbed, gradually traversing to the right until a chimney leading to the Col between the two peaks of the Dent was reached, by which the highest point was reached at 14.30.

They left the top at 15.30, reached the breakfast place at 16.20

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<sup>1</sup> [Cf. *A.J.* xxv. 449 *seq.*, for information on the Rochefort arête.]

by the ordinary route, and leaving this at 17.00 reached the hut at 18.15.

This expedition is not nearly so difficult as it looks. It is certainly very steep, but the holds are good; though care is required owing to rotten rock in places. In good condition and free from ice, it is, in the opinion of each member of the party, much more to be recommended than swarming up the ropes of the ordinary route.

MONT BLANC (4810 m. = 15,782 ft.), BY THE BRENVA GLACIER. S. L. Courtauld and E. G. Oliver, with Henri and Adolphe Rey and Adolf Aufdenblatten. August 13, 1919.—The previous day the guides had been sent to cut steps up to the Col de la Tour Ronde, but found the bergschrund under both East and West Cols impassable. They succeeded, however, in passing the bergschrund much further to the North under a small Col that forms the gap nearest Mont Maudit. (This appears to be the Col crossed in the opposite direction by Messrs. Bartleet and Mothersill in 1907.) This bergschrund was far from easy, and occupied  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 hours step-cutting.

The party left the Rifugio Torino at 02.30 and crossed the Col above described over ice and steep rocks, reaching the upper basin of the Brenva Glacier at 05.30, after some trouble with the bergschrund on the further side. The night having been very warm the snow was far from good between the hut and the foot of the Col. At least  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours was saved by the steps cut the previous day.

The Brenva Glacier was crossed, and a halt of half an hour made on the further side, where crampons were put on.

Close to the South-West rose the snowy flank of the great buttress, bounded by rocks on both sides. The crest of this buttress has been sometimes termed the Brenva arête, part of it being the ice arête, the passage of which is so graphically described by Mr. A. W. Moore in his account of the first ascent.

The steep snow-slope leading towards the crest of the buttress was ascended, the débris of numerous avalanches being passed on the way. The snow was very firm here and no difficulties were met with, until the bergschrund was reached below the final very steep slope leading to the crest of the buttress. This part of the climb is undoubtedly exposed to danger of ice-fall from threatening séracs above and to the right.

The bergschrund, which had a large overhanging lip, gave considerable trouble; but, after a good deal of step-cutting and a sensational traverse inside the bergschrund, it was surmounted and the top of the buttress reached at 08.10.

The danger in ascending the buttress by the snow-slopes could be avoided by climbing the rocks considerably to the left of the route above described; but this alternative looks considerably longer.\*

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\* [Cf. *A.J.* xxviii. 306 seq.]

The crest of the buttress was surmounted at a point above the narrowest part of the famous arête (which on this occasion was neither ice nor particularly narrow). It was here observed that an easier way over the bergschrund lay to the left of the route described, and would have brought the party on to the crest of the buttress, below instead of above the narrowest part of the arête.

The ascent proceeded up the arête over good snow (broad and easy) for about half an hour, until it merged in the face of the mountain; then, as the slopes above were all hard ice, a traverse to the right was made to gain a rib of steep rocks leading straight upwards. These rocks, alternating with snow and ice, were ascended without any particular difficulty to a point just below the highest rocks and close to the upper séracs (10.20).

Halt of twenty minutes for second breakfast.

From this point step-cutting in hard ice was for a long time necessary. The line taken was at first straight up the ice slopes, in continuation of the line of rocks already climbed, until further progress became impossible owing to ice-cliffs and large crevasses. The party then turned sharp to the left and traversed round the East and South sides of a very high and prominent pinnacle of ice, after passing which they turned to the right up a steep ice-slope, and on to an ice-ridge which connected the pinnacle to the glacier. Turning to the left along the ridge, direct progress was barred by a line of ice-cliffs; but a way through these cliffs was found by traversing along a shelf of glacier to the right. The séracs were finally passed at 13.15, after  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours of continuous step-cutting in hard blue ice.

After a halt of about half an hour, the Petits Rochers Rouges were reached over easy snow-slopes at 13.55, and the top of Mont Blanc at 14.30.

The descent was at once commenced, and the Cabane Vallot reached at 15.00.

(Halt of half an hour.)

The descent was continued by the Dôme route, the snow on the Dôme Glacier being very bad.

The Dôme hut was reached at 18.00, and after a halt at the springs of water about half an hour below the hut, the party arrived at the Hôtel Royal, Courmayeur, at 22.30. Time, 20 hours including halts.

## ALPINE NOTES.

'BALL'S ALPINE GUIDE.' THE WESTERN ALPS.—Copies of the new edition (1898) of this work can be obtained from all booksellers, or from Edward Stanford, Limited, 12 Long Acre, W.C. 2. Price 12s. net.