

and rated as the *ne plus ultra* of rock-climbing—anyway for the present. This route was followed by the two ladies of the present paper.

To the left is the extremely hard Dülferriß climbed alone by Herr Dülfer in 1913—now seldom used except to rope down.

Fig. 1 shows the method of using pitons and *karabiners*.

The two large Plates explain themselves.

A TRAVERSE OF THE SCHRECKHORN-LAUTERAARHORN RIDGE.

By J. H. B. BELL, S.M.C.

IT was on a clear sunny morning, July 22, 1925, to be exact, that I first caught sight of the intriguing, spiky ridge of the Lauteraarhorn. My friend Smythe and I had inaugurated our climbing season by the ascent of the N.E. face of the Jungfrau. We had just spent the night in the Bergli hut, and depletion of the commissariat necessitated an immediate descent to Grindelwald. I looked doubtfully at the array of pinnacles, but Smythe, who had already climbed the Schreckhorn and who seemed to be perfectly familiar with the climbing history of the Schreckhorn-Lauteraarhorn traverse, assured me that in its snowless condition we should be well able to deal with the problem in less than twenty hours.

On Saturday, July 25, we found ourselves in the Strahlegg hut. The weather was very bad, new snow was falling higher up, but we had provisions for about five days at least. An inspection of the Schreckhorn on Sunday from the Strahlegg-horn showed a good deal of new snow on the ridge, and the weather still doubtful. We decided that a day's sunshine was needed to clean the place up. So it happened that on Monday evening all was prepared, and the trail was blazed up to the bergschrund beneath the S.-W. ridge of the Schreckhorn.¹ There was a goodly company in the Strahlegg hut that evening, and a vivacious gentleman informed us that, along with two guides, he had covered the ground from Schrecksattel to

¹ [First ascent by Messrs. C. Wilson, Wicks, and Bradby, July 26, 1902. First descent by Messrs. Greenwood, Ling, and Raeburn, July 23, 1906.]

Lauteraarhorn in three hours, and that they moved together practically all the time.

There certainly did not seem to be any reason for leaving as early as midnight. So we were among the last to leave the hut on Tuesday morning. It was 2.50 A.M.; the night was calm and starry; the snow was crisp, and the going good. Our lantern soon gave out and we did not relight it. We made rapid progress and reached the bergschrund by 5 A.M. This went easily by a convenient snow bridge, and we started up the first section of the S.-W. ridge. There was a magnificent dawn-glow from 5.15 to 5.22 A.M., especially on the Finsteraarhorn and the Klein Fiescherhorn, but a bitterly cold wind had sprung up. Smythe assured me it was only the dawn-wind, but I was doubtful. The first section of the arête was a long, straight, steeply sloping shelf, bounded by a well-marked rock ridge on the valley side, and overhung by the Schreckhorn cliffs on the other. The going was fairly good, long slabby sections with steep snow-slopes between. There was little ice on the rocks, but step-cutting was required frequently where the snow-slope became hard and icy. We reached the top of this section at 6.55 A.M. and had our second breakfast. The height, by an aneroid which read truly both at top and bottom, was 3745 metres.

Up to this point we had been fairly sheltered, but we now experienced the full force of the wind, which blew out the rope in great festoons on the narrow parts of the ridge. It was the first time that I found it necessary to climb difficult rocks in gloves throughout the whole day. We found the rock delightfully firm and made rapid progress. The route lies very near the crest of the ridge, and though there are steep and difficult sections occasionally, the rough, firm texture of the rock makes climbing a pleasure. We reached the summit of the Schreckhorn at 9.15 A.M.

We did not remain long on the summit, but hurried down the ridge towards the Schrecksattel, passing on the way two other parties from the Strahlegg hut. We left the col about 10.15 A.M. to negotiate the first pinnacles of the Lauteraarhorn ridge. These were not very difficult, and about 11.30 we halted in a sheltered position for a meal. The view was indeed magnificent. Centrally placed in the foreground was the Finsteraarhorn, its long ridge showing to great advantage. Of the Pennine Alps, the Matterhorn, the Weisshorn, and the Mischabelhörner were most conspicuous. Mont Blanc was clearly visible farther to the W. On the other side of the

ridge the St. Gotthard peaks and the Tödi were perhaps the most impressive, but we had to pay for the good visibility with the bitter N.-W. wind which never left us for a moment.

Neither of us had been over this route before, so we determined to keep the crest of the ridge and go over every pinnacle, unless we were sure it could be avoided. After surmounting a huge fellow, we soon encountered the first serious difficulty. This was a slabby descent to a little col, the descent being on the western side of the ridge. It was a decidedly unpleasant place for the second man to negotiate. The next ascent did not seem to go at all on either side, and it was here that we made the mistake which cost us about two hours. We descended a little way on the W. side of the ridge, and then found we had to descend ever so much farther over rotten rock, until at last we were able to make a secondary ridge which, by a steepish climb, led us back to the main ridge beyond the difficulty. We are both more or less in agreement that the crest of the main ridge should never have been left at all. At any rate we had lost two valuable hours, and it was now a case of putting our best foot foremost if we were to get off the mountain and over the Strahlegg Pass before dark. We had still one outstanding pinnacle and a host of subsidiary ones to deal with before reaching the Lauteraarhorn summit; but we met no obstacles which necessitated our leaving the crest of the ridge to any extent. We had both been over the main ridge of the Coolin in Skye during the previous summer, and we found the work very similar. On the whole, the Lauteraarhorn ridge has a higher average difficulty than the Coolin ridge, but has considerably fewer places of outstanding difficulty. The crest of the ridge is fairly firm, although in places it is very thin and tilted at an unnatural angle to one side. Occasionally one meets with rotten shattered sections. Geologically speaking, the ridge has probably no long life in front of it.

This was perhaps the most exhilarating part of the day. The going required care, but we could generally move both together, and we were at last making evident progress towards the summit of the Lauteraarhorn. Even the large pinnacle did not delay us long, and it is always cheering, on surmounting a pinnacle, to be able to call out that the way lies clear to the next one. The last pinnacle, the Lauteraarhorn himself, received us safely at 5.18 P.M. We halted a quarter of an hour and proceeded downwards towards the Klein Lauteraarhorn. About halfway down to the col a prominent rib of rotten rock and scree

abutted on our ridge and showed us an easy, if laborious, route down to the Strahlegg glacier. Here we unroped. The snow-slope on our left was slush above ice and clearly impossible,² so we had to toil down on rotten rock and scree. There was little conversation, except an occasional word of abuse. Our throats were too dry for conversation, and when we at length reached water lower down, our first remarks were about filthy scree mountains we had known. About this point we had a glissade of about 300 feet, before descending the final steep rocks down to the Strahleggfirn, which we reached about 8 p.m., with the evening colours already in the sky. We were a little tired and very glad to avail ourselves of the convenient steps which a former party had kindly left us on the steep slopes beneath the Strahlegg Pass.

It was fully 9 p.m., and daylight was altogether gone, when we stood on the top of the Pass. A chill wind greeted us, the same we had experienced most of the day, but I asked Smythe gently if this was the sunset-wind now. We stepped forward out of the shadow of the Strahlegghorn into the light of the moon. Before us a billowy sea of cloud filled the valley of the Grindelwald Obereismeer. Above its luminous waves projected the peaks—on the extreme right the dark rock summit of the Eiger, crowned with a small dark cloud; beside him gleamed the snowy slopes of the Mönch, and in front was Klein Fiescherhorn. In great contrast to these was the red granite mass of the Schreckhorn behind us, glowing with a ghostly radiance, such as I remember observing once before on the Langkofel, as seen from the Grödner Thal in moonlight. We were just in the mood to appreciate the prospect, with only downhill slopes and easy ones before us. Soon we were swallowed up in the mist, but there was still moonlight enough for a careful glissade of the last snow-slopes above the hut. It was 9.50 p.m. when we entered and set to work to disturb the peace of the inhabitants with preparations for what turned out to be an excellent repast. After this we smoked the pipe of contentment and would not even have picked a quarrel with the man who had assured us that it took only three hours from the Schrecksattel to the Lauteraarhorn. Our one regret was that the heavy nature of the undertaking had persuaded us to leave the camera behind on what would have been an ideal day for photography.

² [When this is good snow, as in 1910 and as it probably often is, one descends without hardly touching a rock.]

[The author desires the following note :

'F. S. Smythe, who is a Yorkshire Rambler, is unable to collaborate with me as he has sailed for the Argentine. He has done far more mountaineering than I have, having been several seasons in the Alps and spent two winters in Tirol, doing big ski expeditions. Hence the initiative and most of the snow and ice leadership are his, though, of course, this particular expedition is a rock one.'—EDITORS.]

MOUNTAINEERING CLUB PARTIES IN THE ALPS.

MR. UNNA writes :—'I joined an unofficially arranged party of the Scottish Mountaineering Club at Fafler Alp on July 23. Eight of them had been there for three days and had climbed the Tschingelhorn and Breithorn. The weather was unpromising, and we decided upon a cross-country trip in the direction of Grindelwald. Our chief difficulty was the arrangement for catering for the requirements of so large a party, and J. W. Brown and I spent a whole day in Brigue telephoning and telegraphing in order to arrange for a dump of supplies at Eggishorn and Grimsel. We were surprised to find that it was necessary to get these supplies sent by post from Bern. The Brigue people would have nothing to do with it. The telephone however proved a somewhat unsatisfactory medium for dealing with the lists of articles required, and it transpired, in the end, that the party was forced to exist during this trek upon a diet mainly consisting of beans in various forms. Practice showed that, although satisfying for the time, this form of vegetable has its special drawbacks. We had also to pay very heavily for the conveyance of the parcel from Grimsel to the Dolfus Hut, because the day on which we decided to have the goods forwarded happened to coincide with a *festa* and the porters had to be fetched by motor-car from a Protestant valley.

'Our route led us over the Lötschenlücke, where we spent a night of snowstorm in the Egon von Steiger Hut; then to the Concordia, over the Grünhornlücke, across the Gemslücke, from which point some of the party ascended the Finsteraar-Rothhorn; then on to the Oberaarjoch Hut, which was very overcrowded and excessively cold; from this point the party descended the Oberaar Glacier for a certain distance and then up to the Scheuchzerjoch and down the Tierberg Glacier to the Dolfus Hut on the Unteraar Glacier, where we arrived on July 29 to find only one previous entry in the hut book for that year. From that point we crossed the Strahlegg and descended to Grindelwald. The unusual appearance of so large a party of Britishers wandering about together with no professional attendance seemed to cause great surprise to the Swiss and some