

seldom long—and then ventured, with a few points of the crampon, on to the glassy rock. No holds! But in dire need the devil feeds on flies! My friend held himself by frozen-in stones. They held. He disappeared into a gully. A shower of ice-cold snow poured continuously down my neck. Slowly, by jerks, the frozen rope passed through my stiffened hands. It seemed to me an eternity. He was hardly 30 m. above me, and it had taken half an hour! At last came the shout, 'Come on! I am secure.' 'Secure! Thank God!' I shouted back, for my powers were no longer at their zenith. My fingers were stiff and without feeling; without the rope I could hardly have got up this bit.

The game was won. Under the snow we found holds for hand and foot. We could see right up to the cornice: that was not going to stop us. Two ropelengths, and my friend cut right through it!

The watch pointed to 8.20 as we stepped on to the main arête. 'With von Schumacher it goes.' So I will tell Captain Farrar.

Tired, but filled with joy, we set our course by lantern light for the Concordia.

THE NORTH-EAST FACE OF THE KLEIN FIESCHERHORN.

By F. S. SMYTHE.

ON July 26, 1925, J. H. B. Bell and I sat on the top of the Klein Strahlegghorn. The weather of the previous few days had been, to put it mildly, abandoned. We looked regretfully at the splintered spires of the Lauteraarhorn far above. Plastered in snow and ice they looked unassailable. But the sun was hot, and hour by hour the rocks showed more darkly as their icy armour was stripped relentlessly from them. Below, the new snow poured in cascades from the slabs and, quickly gathering volume, thundered down to below the Finsteraarjoch. To the N.W. vast processions of cloud mountains moved in stately array over the blue plain of Berne to the assault of the great Oberland wall. Piling up in sun-kissed pillars against the dark watch-tower of the 'Ogre,' they poured over the Mittellegi ridge into the inmost sanctuary of the High Mountains. Stretching forth hungry arms they crept along the precipices of the Fiescherwand and enwrapped

the Klein Fiescherhorn. And there they were halted, battling with a sun that strove to dissolve and a wind to dissipate.

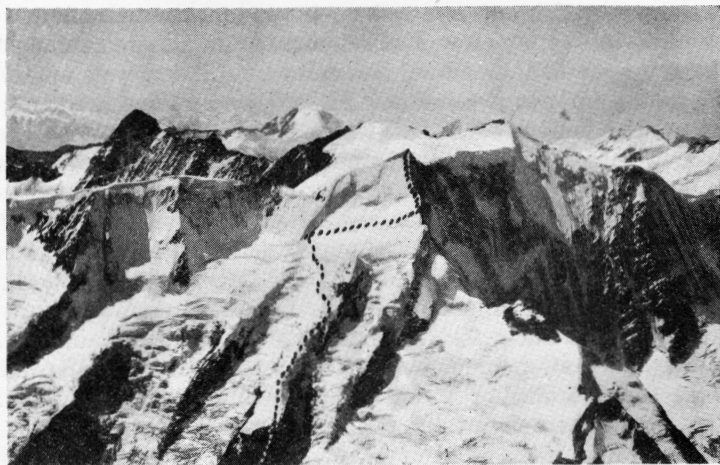
We were watching idly the play of sunshine and mist when a ray of the former, piercing the latter, shone suddenly on a little cone-like peak that rose from the N.E. face of the Klein Fiescherhorn. This small summit formed the culminating point of a ridge that ran up from the Ober Grindelwald glacier. Above, the ridge disappeared in the snows of the plateau that extends for a considerable distance across the face. From this plateau the final peak of the Klein Fiescherhorn rises steeply for over a thousand feet. We looked at this ridge with interest, for it seemed to afford the most direct route from the Strahlegg hut to the summit of the Klein Fiescherhorn. As a matter of fact a line drawn between these two points passes along the ridge. Some eight hundred feet from the glacier the ridge broke away in a steep buttress. There seemed no way of circumventing this buttress: the icefalls on either side were too broken and steep. For a while the sun lighted the small peak, but soon his rays were withdrawn, and it hid itself shyly against the slope.

Thunder growled during the night, and the dark hour before dawn was lit with flickering lightning. The weather was far too unsettled for any attempt on the Schreckhorn-Lauteraarhorn traverse on which we had set our hearts. We remembered the ridge we had seen and determined to find a way up the big initial buttress if possible. As luck would have it the day turned out perfect. The sun shone warmly as we crossed the easy glacier to the foot of the buttress. Towering séracs overlooked the rocks on either side; while masses of blue ice-blocks at their base spoke eloquently of possibilities. We gave them a wide berth. An abysmal cleft separated the rocks from the glacier. Fortunately, at the only place where the base of the buttress appeared feasible, the cleft was substantially bridged. For thirty feet the climbing was steep and difficult. Above this initial bit, impending rocks forced us to the left along a ledge until it was possible to climb upwards again. The going was delightful. Firm steep slabs, warm and dry, put me strongly in mind of pleasant sunny days on Gimmer Crag. All too soon the difficulties eased off, and we found ourselves on easy broken rocks up which we scrambled to the crest of the buttress. We had discovered all we wanted to know, so we returned and lazed in the sun, until that good friend swung down and the shadows of a perfect evening stole across the snows.

The wretched weather prevented our attempting the remainder of the route; and Bell's holiday coming to an end he had to return home. It was not until about ten days later that J. V. Hazard and I trudged up to the Strahlegg hut for the climb.

We left the hut at 5 A.M. on the following morning. One of the very few, very short, spells of good weather, that alone redeemed 'the worst season on record,' had begun, and 'everything was lovely in the garden.' Even the Schreckhorn looked kind, and the Lauteraarhorn less cruel, in the golden light of early morning. Moving quickly we were on the crest of the buttress soon after 6. There we halted to allow Hazard to attach a weird beaklike arrangement over his nose which he declared was warranted to keep that part of his physiognomy immune from the pressing attentions of the sun. Of its efficacy it is perhaps not for me to judge, but I do know what his appearance at the end of the day was like. In this grim contrivance he looked like some feathered heraldic monster prowling among the mountains in search of prey.

Above the buttress a steep snow slope, occasionally icy, took us up to the crest of the snow ridge. At first narrow, the



ridge soon broadened out to a broad hogsback, up which we trudged, feeling a little bored that things were going so easily.

At one point where the ridge almost sinks to the level of the icefalls on either side some suspicious-looking transverse bulges had suggested serious difficulty. We had previously

examined these carefully through a telescope, but could make nothing of them. We accordingly pressed on eagerly, expecting to find a series of 'Eis Nollen,' similar to that on the Mönch. We were not a little disgusted to find the formidable-looking 'ice bulges' nothing but gentle swellings of snow between two or three well-bridged crevasses!

The morning was glorious and a level place simply invited breakfast. So down we sat for a few minutes in the warm sun, with no breath of wind to alloy the enjoyment of the good things in our sacks or the prospect before our eyes. A little higher we elected to leave the ridge in favour of the snow slopes on the left. It would, however, have been more interesting and less fatiguing to have followed the ridge to its termination. The snow slopes were not steep, but they were soft. The sun shone with vigour on our backs. We bore upwards and to the left to an immense crevasse that split the slope across. This we crossed by a long rickety bridge, with as much circumspection as that of the individuals depicted in Mr. Bairnsfather's famous cartoon.¹

More treadmill action followed to another big crevasse. This was well bridged. We now found ourselves on the smooth floor of the plateau below the slope running up to the Fiescherjoch. Another party, a day or so previously, had been up this slope, and had started on it before the sun had softened the covering of snow. But now the surface consisted of mere slush overlying hard ice; to cut up it would obviously take many hours; we therefore cast around for an alternative. There was but one—the N.E. ridge. This ridge is well seen in profile from the Bergli hut. It looks steep and it is steep. To gain it we turned to the right, and walking along the plateau climbed a short slope to its crest. There we halted for a meal and the view. All the way up the scenery had been magnificent. It is, in fact, as fine as that on the N. face of the Jungfrau. The savage sculpture of the shattered icefalls; the proud sweep of the snow slopes; the bitter gleam of the icy steep; the sun-kissed cornice against the blue of heaven are not easily forgotten. Now from our perch we gazed down and across the fearful precipices of the Fiescherwand and far along that great unrelenting wall,² to the little rib of rock, where stands the Bergli hut, a hardly distinguishable speck amid desolation.

¹ 'An army crawls on its stomach.'

² [Since climbed by MM. von Schumacher and Amstutz, as described on p. 215 *seq.*]

We were not a little surprised to find the ridge in exceptionally good condition. Had it been icy the ascent might have taken even longer than by the Fiescherjoch. As it was, we mounted easily over hard snow, kicking steps most of the time. Other parties have experienced difficulty on this ridge and have taken three to four hours to do the last thousand feet. We were lucky to find just the right snow into which the axe drove well home. It was hard work nevertheless, for the angle was continuously severe, and we were glad when the slope suddenly eased off, and we stepped on the summit of our peak. The ascent had taken barely seven hours.

Sitting in the soft wet snow we basked in the sun. The weather was perfect—almost too perfect. Scarcely a breeze stirred. There was not a cloud in the sky. And the view? Custom demands a catalogue of things seen. 'Opposite we saw the Schreckhorn. To the S. the Finsteraarhorn rose finely. The Eiger showed to fine advantage in the N. Mont Blanc stood out in the S.E.,' and so on. I don't remember them. I remember only a fearful precipice dropping away at our feet; torn glaciers far below; a glimpse of pastoral green framed in a dark portal of mountain walls; a huddle of brown chalets—mere dots—so small, it seemed incredible that people could dwell within them. I remember vaguely many ranges shining in the sunlight; the violet depths of quiet valleys over which the eye wandered mechanically to the wide horizon, where the peaks marched in endless procession. That is all most of us see from a mountain top. Do we want to see more? Is it not better to dream and for a while tread space with the Gods?

All dreams end. It is time to be off. The dreamy ethereality of the mountain world becomes a stern reality once more; where snow is cold, and rock hard, and the law of gravity eternal.

Our original intention was to traverse to the Gross Fiescherhorn and descend to the Ewigschneefeld and the Concordia hut. For some reason or other I had imagined the connecting ridge to be a bagatelle. But such was not the case, and when we looked at the thin-edged ridge and felt the sloppy snow beneath our feet we decided against it. The alternative lay in the ridge towards the Agassizhorn, and subsequent descent to the Fiescher glacier and the Finsteraarhorn hut.

Time was getting on. Off we went, treading carefully in the soft snow. The ridge was easy and progress rapid to some

rocks. There we halted for a refreshing drink of rum and a small meal. After this we went more slowly.

Beyond the rocks easy-looking snow slopes tempted us downwards towards the Fiescher glacier. We had not gone far before an icefall got in the way; we managed to avoid it, however, and found some rocks which took us rapidly and conveniently downwards to the glacier. At the bottom, these rocks were smooth and steep, and to save time we abseiled freely. Finally we got off the last difficulty and jumped down on to the glacier.

It had been a truly perfect day. Now as we tramped over the gentle surface of the great ice river the evening shadows stole across to cool the last charred fragment of Hazard's nose.

The sunlight was still on the peaks when we reached the Finsteraarhorn hut. There we were entertained, watching a party stuck on the slopes of the Finsteraarhorn. First the hut-keeper and his assistant left to succour the unfortunates. With nightfall we brought up the rear with a lantern. It was unnecessary; for by-and-by voices were heard on the glacier, and in a few minutes the party was at the hut. Its components included a sprightly young lady, a middle-aged gentleman, and a worn, jaded-looking guide. The first two appeared both proud and pleased with their exploit—far too much so to harbour any feelings of gratitude towards their rescuers or those like ourselves who had spent a small amount of time and energy in going forth to help them.

THE OCHS OR KLEIN FIESCHERHORN.

By J. P. FARRAR.

MR. Smythe's paper and statement that in Grindelwald his route was held to be new induced me to turn up some investigations made in October 1897, soon after I had made the ascent. They were sent, at the time, to Mr. Coolidge with a marked photograph, and some correspondence followed.

The paper may as well be put on record for the few readers interested in intricate topography.

Its understanding is rendered more easy by the photograph now reproduced, marked and sent to me by my friend de Villiers-Schwab, Hon. Secretary of the American A.C., with a letter dated May 13, 1921, reading:

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