descent at all till I saw a tiny black spot on a white road and knew it was a man. Presently there was a cart and horses to be seen and then the houses began to be large enough to look like toys. They looked as one of those model Swiss chalets looks when you hold it in your hand, but by the time they do that one is getting pretty low down. The sun set just now most gloriously, blazing over a purple world and then quickly foundering ; its own motion of descent and ours added together put it quickly out of sight. There are mists wreathing Montserrat and gathering upon the ground in islands. It behoves us to land quickly, but our pilot has foreseen all that. The aerodrome is only a mile or two away. He shuts off the engine and now we glide with indescribable smoothness, I suppose descending with great rapidity ; but we feel nothing of that ; we hardly seem to be moving at all. And now we are close to the ground. It looks as though one might step out and drop on to it without hurting oneself. We pass over a road, and a moment later we are running unevenly on our wheels upon the ground. The bumping lasts a very short time. Our flight is over. There are the cars awaiting us. It is lighting-up time and night has come on long before we are back in the streets of Barcelona.

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## The Descent of the N. Face of the Eiger.

By CLAUDE A. MACDONALD.

I HAVE been asked by the Editor to put on record a few belated notes on my descent of the Eiger in August 1894 : it really was the outcome of a failure to conquer the N.E. Mittellegi arête, a proposition which Christian Jossi and I had long examined critically and longingly.

July 1890 first saw Jossi and myself on the arête, with Ulrich Kauffmann. There had been much fresh snow, and an hour and a half's work convinced us that in those conditions the arête was quite impossible.

On August 8, 1894, Christian and I, with Peter Bernet, having slept at the Bergli, were again on the arête at 06.30, the conditions being good. The N.E. arête, which, owing to foreshortening, looks harmless enough from Grindelwald, is an enormously lengthy affair, broken up by endless pinnacles which are all on the ridge itself. This is a real knife-edge falling away at a very high angle on the Grindelwald side, and

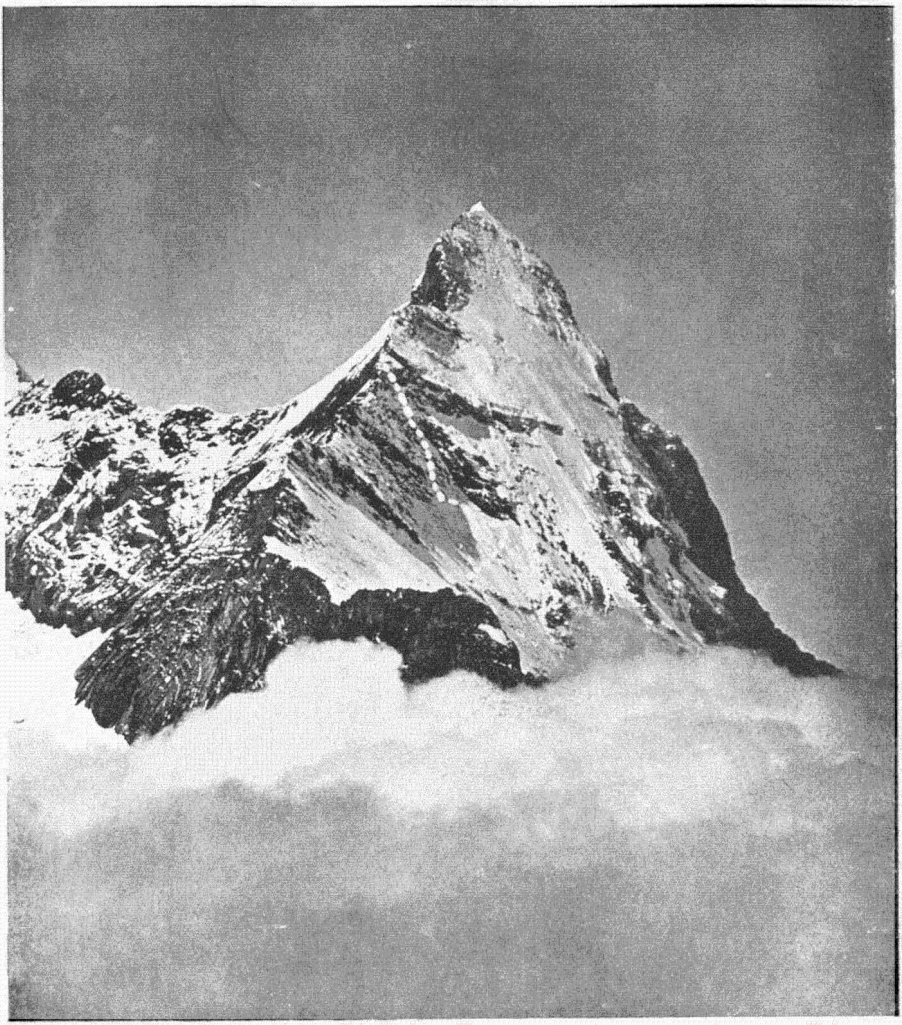

Photo. W. F. Donkin.

N. face of the EIGER.

to all intents and purposes perpendicular on the Kalli slope. Consequently all pinnacles and gendarmes have to be climbed up and down—hardly one of them is capable of being turned. The first gendarme, I remember, took us quite half an hour to surmount, and the third one over an hour. Progress was very slow, and at 13.00 we sat down and considered our position. We seemed to be about half way, and what was ahead of us looked, if anything, worse than what we had accomplished. The final cliff not only overhung, but seemed to have a diagonal cant outwards as well—altogether not a place to sleep out—and I gave the word for retreat. Jossi, I remember, said at the time that next time we attempted it, if I would let him carry up a bag of iron *pitons*, we could easily surmount the final cliff; but I laughed and deprecated all such artificial aids.[1] When the ascent was finally accomplished by a Japanese gentleman,[2] about six years ago, Jossi's suggestion was adopted, and was the chief reason of the success of the expedition.

The question now was how to go back. The way we had come was long, hard, and dangerous, and it did not seem interesting to do it all over again, so we determined to strike straight down the face till we joined the 'Mittellegi' route. At the spot where we left the arête two long rock-ribs run out: one, in a westerly direction and almost horizontal, loses itself in the snow-face; the other runs straight down, and this latter one we took. It lies at a great angle, so that we had to move very slowly and carefully; but the rocks were good, and after about an hour we got on to the snow-face. This proved to be absolutely solid ice, and we took one hour and a half cutting big steps diagonally across, till we got on to rock again, when we worked down, rather in the reverse direction, towards the hanging glacier above Alpiglen. We reached the snow above that point by 18.00 and glissaded down.

On arrival at Grindelwald we found that every glass in the village had been on us all day, and that while we were enjoying ourselves, grave doubts were being expressed by experienced people as to whether we should ever get down alive.[3] I was twice on the arête again to attempt the ascent, but weather was always against us.

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[1] And most mountaineers will agree cordially.—*Editor.*

[2] September 10, 1921. Mr. Yuko Maki with Fritz Amatter, Fritz Steuri, and Samuel Brawand. *A.J.* **34,** 166–7.

[3] I have a vivid recollection of the conversations round the numerous telescopes!—*E. L. S.*