EXPEDITIONS

Dauphiné

L'AILEFROIDE (W. peak), 3959 m. = 12,989 ft., *Duhamel*. By the N.W. face. July 23–24, 1936. MM. Giusto Gervasutti and Lucien Devies.

The great face of L'Ailefroide towering above the Coste rouge Glacier is over 1 kilometre in breadth; it is very complicated and is also badly drawn on the maps. The torn Coste rouge and small Long glaciers form the margins of the said N.W. face.

The Coste rouge *ridge* plunges downwards from the Central peak, *ca.* 3925 m., in a N. direction towards the Col de la Coste rouge, 3152 m. It was first climbed, July 1, 1913, by M. Guido Mayer with Angelo Dibona, an expedition which has been repeated.[1] From the said ridge two important buttresses break off in a N.W. direction, the second forming the right bank of the Coste rouge Couloir; it shows great cliffs and ends in a sort of ponderous and lofty pinnacle. The Coste rouge Couloir begins at the gap separating the central and western peaks of our mountain. It commences in a N.W. direction and then continues, now a narrow and deeply-cut gully, usually snow or ice, in a W. direction. It forms the limit between the W. face of the Central peak and the N.W. face of the W. peak.

The central peak was attempted, *via* the couloir, in 1896 by Messrs. H. A. Beeching and P. A. L. Pryor with Roman Imboden and Hippolyte Rodier. They reached the base of the 'lofty pinnacle,' where the ascent was abandoned: they bivouacked in the face on the descent. The date was July 21–22.[2] On July 22, 1929, the ascent of the Central peak was accomplished *via* the Coste rouge Couloir by MM. Georges and Jean Vernet. The climb was made in nailed-boots and, having attained the base of the rocks at 05.50, the summit was gained at 19.45. No pitons were used.

Beyond the Coste rouge Couloir begins the great N.W. face of the W. peak. In its centre rises a gigantic rib or edge to about a height of 3600 m. This rib constitutes the right, E., bank of the lowest of two oblique ice slopes which cling diagonally, N.-S., to the W. portion of the face. Above the rib is a zone of grey slabs, followed by a complicated wall terminating in, apparently, a summit-pinnacle of the

[1] *A.J.* 27. 437–9 with Sella illustration; 47. 139.

[2] About 1897 another British party led by Alois Pollinger, jun., in this case, we believe, attempting the W. peak, was similarly forced to retreat.—*Editor*.

W. peak. Seen from the W., N.W. or N., this appears to be the actual top of the W. peak. This was the line of assault taken in 1936.

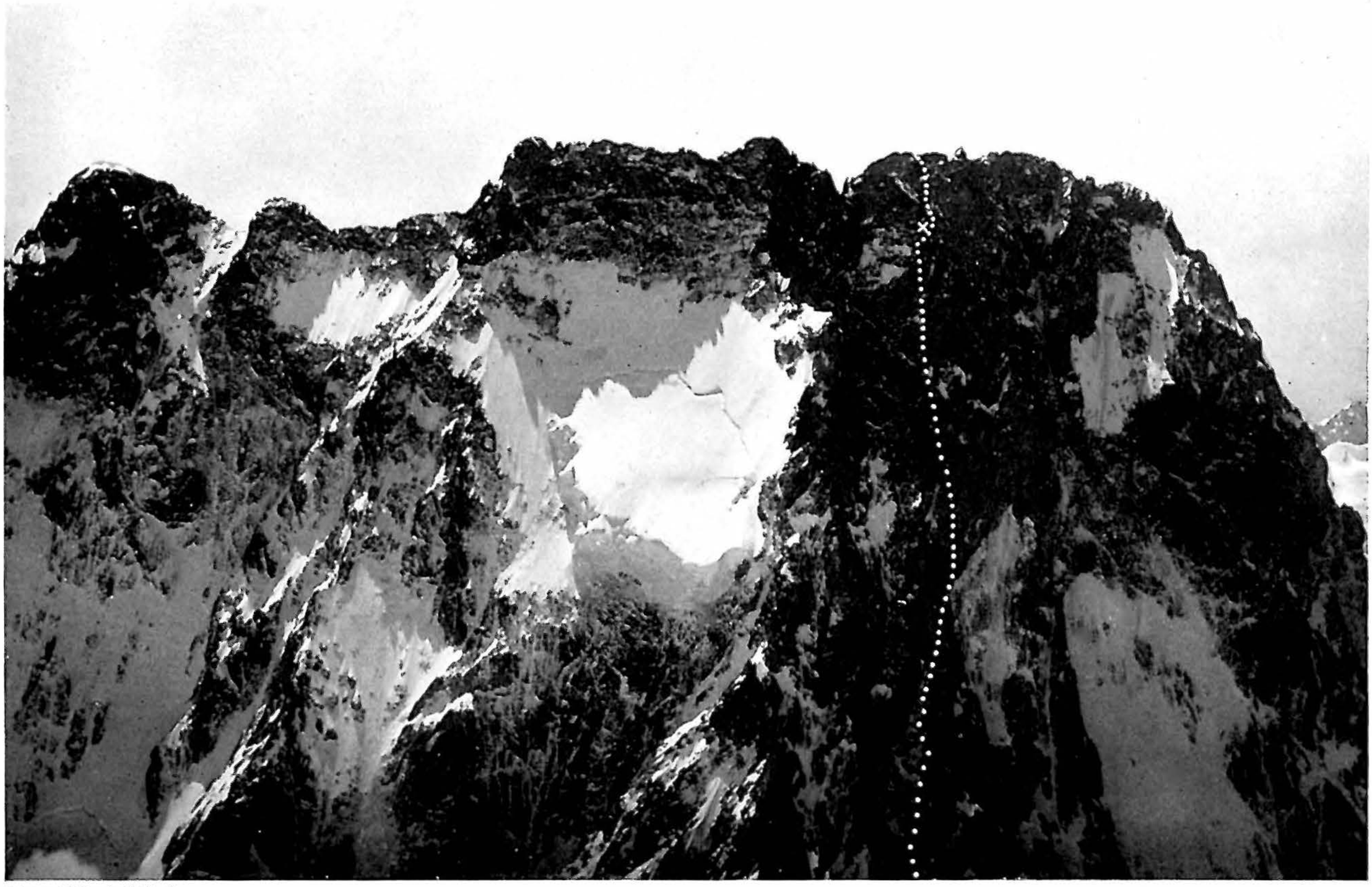
However, rather to the W. and above the lower oblique ice slope, rises an ice couloir, whose upper part is a fan-shaped stone-shoot. The true summit, 3954 m. (according to the *Service Géographique de l'Armée*, 1 : 20,000 map), lies now to the E. of that part of the main ridge situated above the stone-shoot. This was the opinion of M. Vernet, as communicated to our party at the village of Ailefroide, three days after the ascent.

Previous attempts or reconnaissances had been made in 1885 by Ludwig Purtscheller's and in 1888 by J. Maître's parties towards the Long Glacier. Further attempts were made by French parties in 1928, 1929, and 1935.

Leaving the Temple-Ecrins hut the Coste rouge Glacier was reached at 06.00 (3 hrs.), a massive tower situated right in the centre of the face and just to the left, E., of the Coste rouge Couloir forming the line of attack : climb the rocks at the base of the avalanche-cone of the said couloir. A chimney is then climbed followed by an open recess to the right, where two pitons were fixed, after which a ledge leading to the surface of the couloir is taken and crossed at the most convenient place—falling stones—towards the rocks of the great central rib or edge mentioned above. The rib is attained to the left, E., of the lower of the two afore-mentioned oblique ice slopes. The ascent of the rib is easy till it forms a triangular rampart or step. The party, choosing one of three possible alternatives, made for the crest of the rib, attained then by an extremely difficult fissure (1 piton). The crest now becomes very steep : climb an open chimney to a letter-box, followed by a vertical crevice leading back to the crest. Next you must climb the nearly vertical, following 80–90 ft., which are extremely hard (1 piton). Next a further traverse to the right bank on to the edge of the great rib, or close to it, over very exposed and difficult rocks. Next comes a narrow and deep-cut notch. *Descend* some 20 ft. and then stride across it. A great step now rises in front of you ; turn this to the left, W., and climb a smooth recess in a lofty and vertical wall of grey rocks—again extremely difficult (2 pitons). Now again take to the crest and over continuously difficult rocks attain the top of the great rib (15.00 hrs.).

The rib connects with the face by a snowy edge : above the edge, the wall rises in smooth, greyish slabs, forming a rampart some 350 ft. high. All this part of the ascent contains no security platforms ; it is extremely steep and of continuous severity—moreover, it was climbed under a constant stone bombardment (7 pitons). The meandering line of least resistance is taken in general. Finally, a great ledge forming the segment of a circle is attained, which is followed to the left. Finding a platform, the party bivouacked there, 19.00, *ca.* 3700 m.

Starting next morning at 07.00, they continued back along the ledge to the right, E., to an obvious snowy shoulder ; this is reached by rocks to the left of a short but very steep, glazed chimney. Now turn to the



Photo, Vittorio Sella.]

L'Ailefroide, E., Central and W. peaks from Pic Coolidge, showing approximate line of 1936 route and bivouac.

[*To face p.* 342.

right to a kind of recess mounting from right to left. Go up it by difficult rocks to a point whence you can see a sort of reddish crevice cut off by a contracted step and bounded to the left by a little crest or edge. Cross over to the further side of the crest and scramble up a smooth and extremely difficult step (2 pitons), leading to a deep-cut and glazed chimney. Climb this almost to its termination (2 pitons), when you must make an extremely exposed and difficult traverse to the left (2 pitons). Hence you take a diagonal ledge under a great overhanging vault; the ledge leads to a little gap, whence the main ridge is easily attained (15.30; 1 hr.'s halt).

The descent was made by the S.E. face, with 2 *rappels* of some 120 ft., to the Ailefroide Glacier, where the party bivouacked on the upper slopes from 21.00 to 06.00. They arrived at Ailefroide village at 10.15 on July 25.

The height of the N.W. face is approximately 3500 ft. The time taken in the ascent was 21 hrs., exclusive of the bivouac. Conditions were not good; from the semicircular ledge onwards much glaze was encountered. Armed with two ropes of 100 ft. each, the party climbed in *Kletterschuhe*, carrying their boots. They used twenty pitons, seven of which remained in the face.

The rock is excellent, but extremely exposed; there is great danger, notably at the base and higher grey slabs, from stonefall. Altogether this is an ascent of the utmost severity and, without having any step quite as severe as the worst on the N.W. face of Pic d'Olan,[3] is nevertheless harder as a whole as well as longer. The ascent can be compared to that of the N. face of the Grandes Jorasses, but the N.W. face of L'Ailefroide, W. peak, is both higher and technically the harder of the two. On the other hand, it carries no ice slopes—which must be traversed—as do the Jorasses.[4]

LUCIEN DEVIES.

[That the above expedition is among the greatest and most difficult hitherto accomplished will be granted readily by anyone who has stood at the base of the tremendous cliff, or viewed it from the summit-ridge above.—*Editor*.]

Mont Blanc Group

MONT BLANC, 4810 m. = 15,782 ft., N.–S. traverse and return. August 23–25, 1936. Mr. R. V. M. Barry with Armand Charlet.

August 23.—Walk up to Vallot hut.

August 24.—Mont Blanc having been duly reached, the descent was begun by the Innominata buttress. This began with a snow and rock rib, which starts below the first subsidiary point E. of Mt. Blanc de Courmayeur, along the Brouillard ridge. This rib was descended for 1½ hrs., after which a couloir was crossed on to the W. shoulder of the rib rising from *Col Eccles*. A descent was now made bearing slightly towards *Col Eccles*, requiring approximately 8 *rappels* of 60 ft. When

[3] Climbed by the same party—*A.J.* 46. 384–7.
[4] Signor Gervasutti made the second ascent of the N. face, pp. 75–6.

easy rocks were struck they were descended direct, and then, bearing W., the bergschrund was crossed in the centre of the couloir, limiting the Innominata buttress on the W. The Brouillard Glacier was descended easily by keeping to its left bank.

This is possibly the quickest way off Mt. Blanc into Italy; the actual descent of the Innominata buttress proper taking only $4\frac{1}{2}$ hrs.

Times :

Vallot hut	05.10
Mt. Blanc	06.10
Mt. Blanc de Courmayeur . .	06.30
Start of descent of Innominata buttress	06.45
Bergschrund	11.10
Gamba hut	12.30

August 25.—From the Gamba hut, the Col de l'Innominata was crossed and the Fresnay Glacier gained. This was crossed to the foot of the couloir leading up to l'Isolée. The fork near the top was taken leading to the Brèche nord, and about 160 ft. below the top the party broke out to the left, where after a *descent* of 30 ft., a horizontal traverse to the left was followed for some 330 ft. A crack was then ascended and the traverse continued above slightly upwards to the left for a further 300 ft. Slabs were then ascended direct to the shoulder of the Aiguille Blanche de Péteret (cairn) and the latter was skirted, keeping about 650 ft. below the arête on the E. (Brenva) side until the summit became visible, when an ascent was made direct to *Pointe Seymour King*. The snow-crest was crossed and *Pointe Jones* passed on the Brenva side, until the party found itself directly above a steep wall descending to the Col de Péteret. This was *descended* by five 60-ft. *rappels*, but the party is of the opinion that this procedure was unnecessary.

The Col de Péteret was crossed, and an ascent made by easy rocks to the E. of the couloir leading from the final snow ridge (the W. is subject to bombardment from falling stones). The level snow shoulder was gained and the party proceeded along it to the N.W., when the arête was followed direct to Mt. Blanc de Courmayeur.

The climbing presented no great technical difficulty, and the party was able to move together practically the whole time. Route-finding from the Dames Anglaises couloir to the top of the Aiguille Blanche might be difficult. The party was aided by tracks in the snow for a portion of the arête and these probably saved from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hrs.

Times :

Gamba hut	01.50
Summit of Aiguille Blanche . .	07.10
Mt. Blanc de Courmayeur . .	11.15
Mt. Blanc	11.50
Grands Mulets	13.30
Chamonix	16.00

Col de la Brenva, 4333 m. = 14,217 ft. August 7, 1936. Messrs. M. S. Taylor and J. R. Jenkins; P. L. Roberts and R. V. M. Barry.

At Chamonix this year the weather during the month of July had been shocking, but by August 6 a distinct improvement had cleared the snow off the Aiguille du Géant, and the party was able to make a chilly ascent. From the summit the Brenva route was observed to be in particularly fine condition, the séracs at the top appearing to offer no great difficulties, with the whole ridge apparently clear of ice.

It was decided to make an attempt next day without any previous preparation. The party left the Torino hut at 01.00, and reached the bergschrund at the foot of the Col Est de la Tour Ronde at 02.15. After much searching in the moonlight for a suitable place to cross, the key to the problem was eventually found on the extreme right, and a very steep snow wall was climbed on to the upper lip. A steep upward traverse was now made in zigzags to the left, but before the rocks on the right of the ice slope below the col were reached, the snow turned to ice. Much valuable time was wasted in step-cutting, but eventually the rocks were reached and a thin ribbon of snow at their edge afforded rapid progress. At the foot of a couloir branching up to the right, a diagonal traverse to the left was made and loose rocks were crossed to land the party on the col at 05.15.

A rapid descent was now made, and the upper névés of the Brenva Glacier traversed to the *Col Moore* bergschrund. Crossing this, the party left *Col Moore* on the left and reached Moore's arête by means of a steep snow couloir. The arête was now left, and an obvious line of ledges followed on its S. side. After a short chimney, easy rocks led to a steep snow slope, terminating in a knife-edge of snow. This continued to another steep slope which led to a further snow ridge. At the upper end of this a short traverse was made to the sharp edge of the ridge proper (which had to be taken *à cheval!*) not far below the horizontal part of the Brenva route. The lower end of the 'ice' arête was reached at 09.30, and an easy crossing was made in under half an hour, owing to exceptionally good snow conditions. The slopes above were free of ice and a halt was made at the rocks below point 4304 m., after a straightforward ascent, at 12.45. This season the séracs offered no difficulties and were crossed on the left by an easy ice slope (up which steps had been already cut by a previous party), the only ice encountered on the Brenva ridge itself. The Col de la Brenva was reached at 13.00 in the teeth of a blizzard, and the Corridor descended to the Grand Plateau with some difficulty. The party reached the Grands Mulets at 16.00 and Chamonix at 19.30. Crampons were worn from the Col. E. de la Tour Ronde's bergschrund to the Grand Plateau.

August 24.—Messrs. T. A. H. Peacocke and D. A. Hodgkinson. The party left the Torino hut at 02.00 by lantern-light—there was no moon—and reached the bergschrund at the foot of the Col de la Fourche de la Brenva at 03.40. After a halt of 15 mins. to put on crampons, etc., the bergschrund was crossed by a flimsy snow-bridge



Photo, M. S. Taylor.]

BRENVA ROUTE OF MONT BLANC. BELOW THE ICE-RIDGE (August 7, 1936).

[*To face p.* 348.

on the extreme left, under the rocks of the Fourche de la Brenva. The snow slope leading to the col was then mounted diagonally and the col reached at 04.40. Very little ice was encountered, and steps were scraped in the snow. Some time was wasted on the descent, partly owing to poor light, and *Col Moore* was not reached until 05.50. A traverse to the left was made to avoid the first part of the ridge, and then the party struck upwards to a large rocky bay enclosed by the ridge ascending from *Col Moore* and a southerly spur. After a halt at 06.15 for 20 mins. the party traversed upwards to the left on easy though loose rock and reaching the spur, continued to the crest of the main buttress. This was struck at a point about two-thirds of the distance between *Col Moore* and the 'ice' ridge, 07.35. The buttress was here chiefly snow-covered, and the start of the 'ice' ridge was reached at 08.00; after 10 mins.' halt the ridge was crossed in 30 mins., including three halts for photography. No ice was present, and the tracks of a former party proved useful. The first two-thirds of the upper snow slope proved quick going in good, though soft, snow, but then the latter gave out and 2 hrs. of step-cutting were necessary. The séracs were crossed to the left and the foot of the Mur de la Côte reached at 12.40—halt of 15 mins. on rocks to right of and below séracs. The summit of Mont Blanc was reached at 14.00.

AIGUILLE DES PÈLERINS, 3318 m. = 10,887 ft. By the N.W. face. August 19, 1936. Messrs. R. V. M. Barry and J. R. Jenkins.

Leaving the Plan de l'Aiguille at 06.00, the party was 300 ft. below the Col du Peigne at 08.45. A vertical chimney above on the right was avoided by steep and difficult climbing on its left-hand side, and the foot of the weakness providing the route up, the Pèlerins' face was soon reached. There are two parallel oblique faults running up to the right, and the lower crack was chosen for a start. It belied its appearance and forced the leader out on to the right wall, where the climbing was severe. An easier stretch of 100 ft. followed, and it then became necessary to cross from the lower to the upper fault; an awkward traverse to the left on to a broad ledge above a reddish rock giving further trouble. Above, an open crack filled with jammed stones offered difficult climbing for 70 ft., and after an easier stretch, a continuation of the crack landed the party on a broad snow-ledge. Hence the S.W. arête was gained, and steep and exposed climbing led quite suddenly to the summit *via* a broad ledge to the right at 11.45.

The party considers that this route presents difficulties greater than any met with on the Mer de Glace face of the Grépon, excluding the 'Knubel' crack.

AIGUILLE DE BLAITIÈRE (N. peak), 3504 m. = 11,498 ft. From the W. August 18, 1936. Messrs. J. R. Jenkins and R. V. M. Barry.

The party left the Plan de l'Aiguille at 03.30, and dawn broke when they reached the Glacier de Blaitière. Rocks on the edge of a couloir on the left were ascended for 150 ft., and the couloir crossed on to a

series of ledges running across to the formidable-looking little ' glacier suspendu.' It was hoped that by climbing as high as possible up these ledges, this glacier could be gained above the first sérac wall. A difficult flake was finally ascended, and it was seen that such a contention was hopeless. The foot of the sérac wall was finally gained by a *descent* and an easy traverse. There appeared to be no line of break in the almost vertical ice which barred the way in a wall 60 ft. high, while the crack between the rock and the ice overhung on the left. On closer examination an ice chimney was found leading to a platform 20 ft. above. After a short traverse to the right, the ice chimney was climbed with some difficulty and the platform gained. The only possible line thence led up a small slanting ice crack which ran into an ominous-looking bulge on the right. The necessary holds being cut, the leader managed to draw himself quite high up into the crack, the ice-bulge then blocking the way. At this stage an ice piton was hammered into the bulge with the flat of an ice axe and, with its aid, a landing was made on a precarious ledge. With the aid of a small step, ribs of ice led to the top of the bulge. The party is of opinion that the ascent of this first sérac wall may be impossible on occasions.

A short, oblique chimney led from an ice cave into a bay, from which an exit was made to the right. Easier climbing followed, and the second wall passed without much trouble by means of a detached snow-covered sérac. A difficult route up the rock wall on the left would provide an alternative in the case of the second sérac wall being impassable. A halt was made on the rocks to the left of the foot of the *Couloir Reynier* at 08.15. A chimney, a hard slab to the right, and further chimneys led to a snow shoulder. Thence the couloir went very well and the upper left-hand branch was taken, landing the party on another snow shoulder 1 hr. later. From here the route led horizontally round the summit on to the N.E. side over steep snow. Snow-plastered rocks were traversed to the left by an elaborate *pendule* method, and a rib gave access to an ice couloir. Above, the angle lessened somewhat, and the summit was reached by easy rocks at 11.00.

The party descended by the N.E. arête to the Nantillons Glacier.

AIGUILLE DE GRÉPON, 3489 m. = 11,447 ft. By the E. face. August 10, 1936. Messrs. R. V. M. Barry, M. S. Taylor and J. R. Jenkins.

The Tour Rouge hut was left at 06.15, and rapid progress made to the foot of the rib descending from the N. peak of the Grépon. After carefully ignoring the rope loops left by parties who cross the couloir quite low down for the Aiguille de Roc du Grépon, a particularly steep and difficult crack was followed rather to the right of the rib itself, leading after a slight traverse to the left and the ascent of some slabs, to the foot of a deep-cut chimney. This gave interesting climbing for 200 ft. or so, until it became so narrow as to barely allow passage for the climber. At this point, below a wall of yellow slabs, a corner was rounded to the left and a steep crack *descended* for about

60 ft. From the foot of this, a ledge leads to the bed of the couloir and an overhanging wall gives ample protection from possible falling stones. This is a reversible route, as the crack could be ascended with some difficulty. Harder climbing now led up snow-patches and rocks particularly devoid of holds, to the wall of the second rib, which gave steep climbing on unexpectedly loose rock. This route brought the party on to the apex of the rib at a point some distance above the *Niche des Amis*.

A halt was made on the *épaule*. The difficult crack above was negotiated by ' lay-back ' tactics, and the ledge was soon reached below the ' Knubel ' chimney. The ' Lochmatter ' slab was climbed by a hard crack to the left of the chimney and a landing made below the 35-metre chimney. The climbing was now much harder, and the speed of the party was greatly diminished. The Brèche Balfour was gained at 13.45 and the leader expressed the desire to conclude with ' Knubel ' crack. It should be mentioned that he wore *shoes*, equipped with No. 2 Tricouni nails, and he found these a great success on Chamonix granite. The two overlapping initial slabs offered no great difficulty, and he was soon grasping the famous chockstone. Previous parties had enwrapped this with sundry rope loops, and he secured himself for the more difficult work ahead by giving himself a running belay ; attaching his rope to the loops by a *Karabiner*. He then swung out on to the slab on the left on meagre holds and overcame the final portion by a ' lay-back ' on his fingers up a very narrow crack to the left of the ' Knubel ' crack. This severe move was made in a position of great exposure after over 7 hrs. of difficult climbing, and the ' Knubel ' crack was led without resorting to artificial means.

The summit was reached at 14.45 and a rapid descent was made to the Nantillons Glacier by ' C.P.' J. R. J.

AIGUILLES DES GRAND ET PETIT DRU, 3755 m. = 12,320 ft. ; 3732 m. = 12,245 ft. August 28–29, 1936. Messrs. T. A. H. Peacocke and D. A. Hodgkinson.

The party left the Charpoua hut at 03.45 and proceeded up the glacier towards the S.W. face of the Aiguille Verte. Owing to lack of a previous reconnaissance $2\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. were unfortunately wasted in finding a way through the glacier, but eventually a route was found close up under the face of the Verte. The bergschrund under the Grand Dru was not reached until 08.00. It was climbed on the right-hand side. After a halt on some rocks higher up at 09.00 for half an hour, the party reached the Brèche, E. of the Grand Dru, at 10.15. Here the usual descending traverse to the left was followed, and the climb completed by the S.E. face and N.E. arête. No fixed ropes were found on the ascent, and the *Passage de la Pendule* was found to be quite unnecessary. The summit was reached at 13.00. After a halt of 1 hr. the party roped down by the S.W. face and gained the Brèche des Dru by a traverse to the right.

The top of the Petit Dru was reached at 15.00. By a long series of



Photo, M. S. Taylor.]

A. DE GRÉPON : TOUR ROUCE HUT (August 9, 1936).

rappels down the S.W. ridge the shoulder was reached at 19.15. Unfortunately the descent was not continued far enough down the ridge, and the party found itself in the E. branch of the couloir, where the work is more difficult than in the W. branch. At 20.00 the light became very bad, though a moon was rising, and progress became slow. At 22.30, having found a convenient ledge, the party decided to bivouac. At 24.00 a move was made to a small cave not far distant, which showed signs of previous occupation. A bivouac was decided on, owing to the uncertainty of route-finding in the moonlight.

At 05.15 it became light enough to move, and a way was easily found down to the glacier and across towards the hut in a downward direction. The *ascent* to the hut was completed by a perpendicular and very loose chimney, which is not recommended.

The hut was finally reached at 07.15. The weather throughout the expedition had been extremely good and the night not particularly cold.

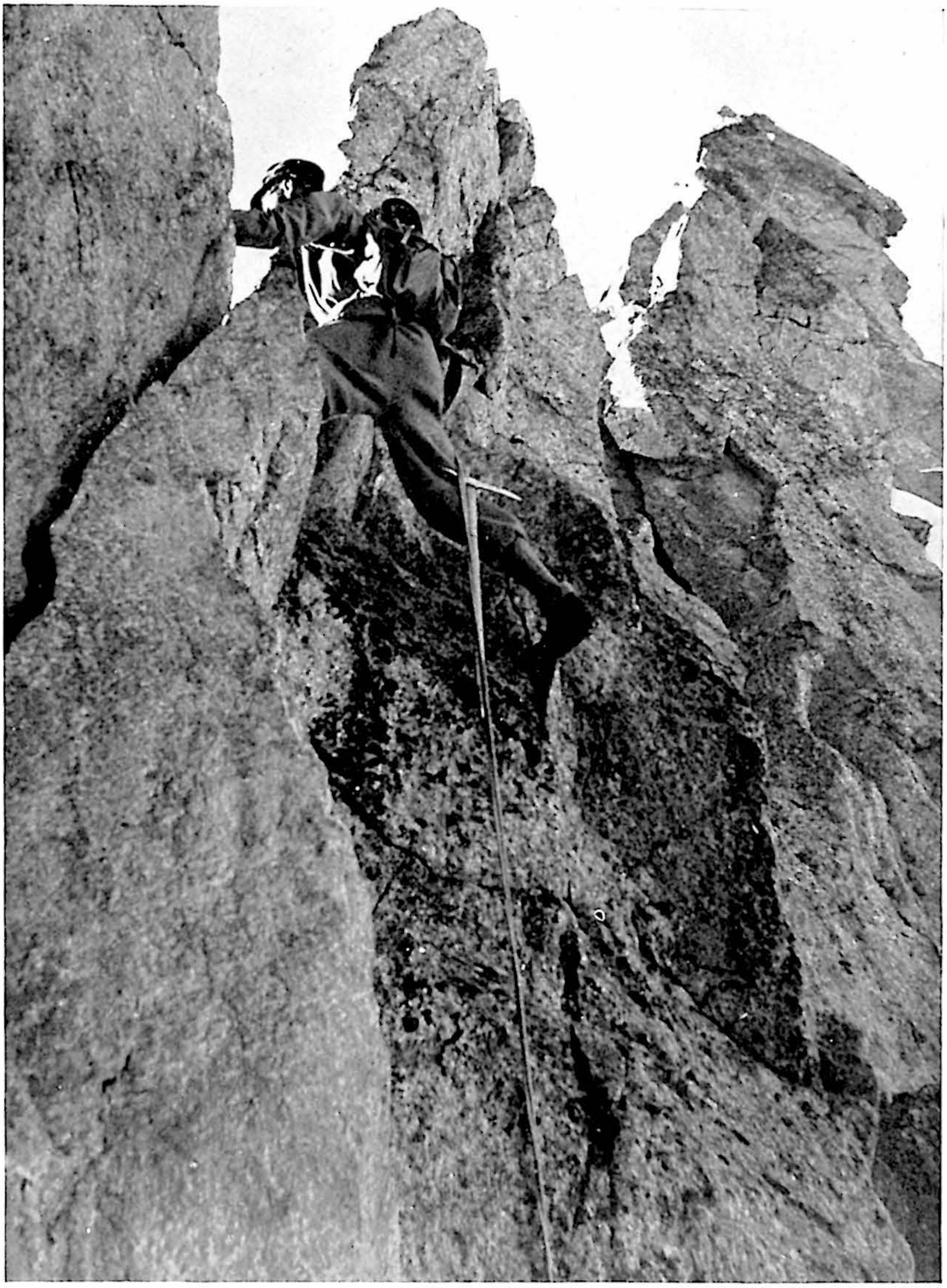
T. A. H. P.

MONT DOLENT, 3823 m. = 12,543 ft. By the N. arête : the Brèche de l'Amône attained from the Glacier d'Argentière. August 15, 1936. Messrs. M. S. Taylor, R. V. M. Barry and J. R. Jenkins.

Two days of bad weather had put the Chamonix Aiguilles out of condition, and the party, after a day on the Aiguille d'Argentière, decided to attempt this route. The Argentière hut was left at 02.20, and half an hour was spent waiting for daylight below the bergschrund. This was attacked at 04.30 and presented a most terrifying aspect. The upper lip was quite 30 ft. above the foot, and the only possible weakness was afforded by a snow-hump which had become detached well to the left. This afforded a convenient bridge, and a good layer of snow on the steep ice slope above gave access, after a short bout of step-cutting, to the rock couloir leading direct from the Brèche de l'Amône. Somewhat surprisedly, the rocks above were clear of snow. After 100 ft. or so of rocks and snow, the couloir presented steep, holdless walls, and a traverse upwards to the right had to be made. A very thin glazed crack gave some trouble and led to an even harder proposition, which was probably that referred to in Dr. Kugy's account, where Croux resorted to lassooing tactics.[5] It comprised an awkward traverse to the right on a minimum of holds, and was accomplished with difficulty. Thereafter, easy rocks led rapidly back to the left into the bed of the couloir to a bay at the foot of the final steep rock wall leading to the Brèche. An almost vertical 70-ft. crack ran up to a couple of prominent spikes of rock, and a short hand-traverse landed the party through the narrow Brèche de l'Amône into the sunlight at 07.30.

A short *descent* followed by a long stretch of broken rocks and snow led to the snow ridge. This, although corniched, gave delightful climbing, until slabby rocks covered by 2 ft. of powder snow were met. These gave some anxiety, but the ' Black Gendarme ' (it is really

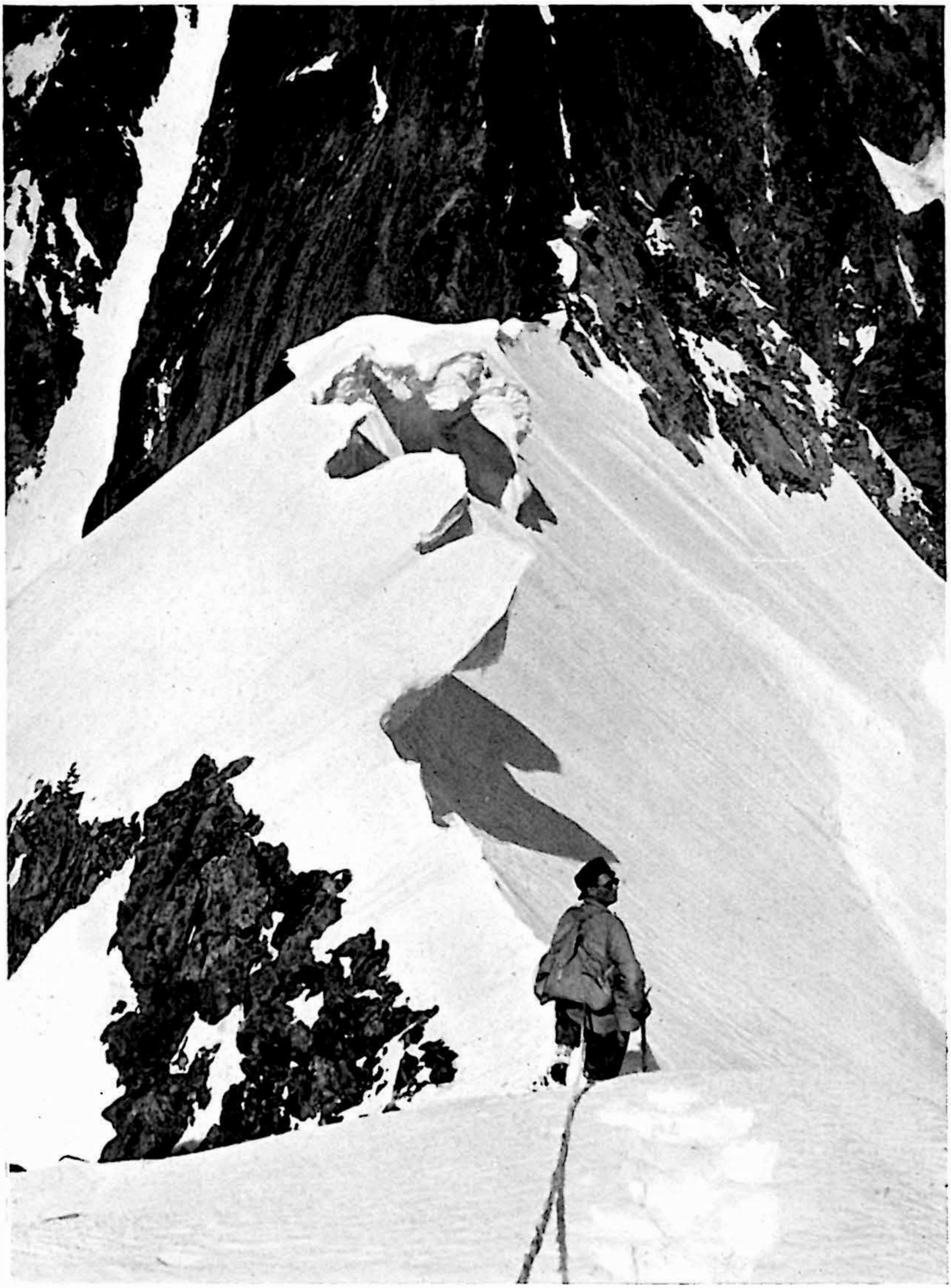
[5] *Alpine Pilgrimage*, pp. 311–5. See also *A.J.* 33. 369–72.



Photo, M. S. Taylor.]

MT. DOLENT—BRÈCHE DE L'AMÔNE.

(R. V. M. Barry passing through hand traverse at top of 70-ft. crack.)
August 15, 1936.



Photo, M. S. Taylor.]

DESCENDING MT. DOLENT. THE CORNICHED PART OF THE N. ARÊTE.

(R. V. M. Barry, August 15, 1936.)

red) was soon passed on its right side and the junction of the W. and N. arêtes reached. From here, half an hour on loose unpleasant rock led *via* steep and sounder rock to the final snow crest ; the summit being reached at 10.20.

The descent was made by the same route, the difficult rocks below the Brèche being descended by two 70-ft. *rappels*. The final ice slope offered great difficulty and the hut was not reached until 18.00.

The party has no hesitation in recommending this route, which offers a fine blend of delightful ice, rock, and snow climbing. The route belies its reputation for great difficulty, and the party cannot understand why it has been followed by a few parties only during the last 3 years.

J. R. J.

Pennines

STRAHLHORN, 4191 m. = 13,751 ft. By the E. face, taken in the *descent*. August 26, 1936. M. E. R. Blanchet with Kaspar Mooser.

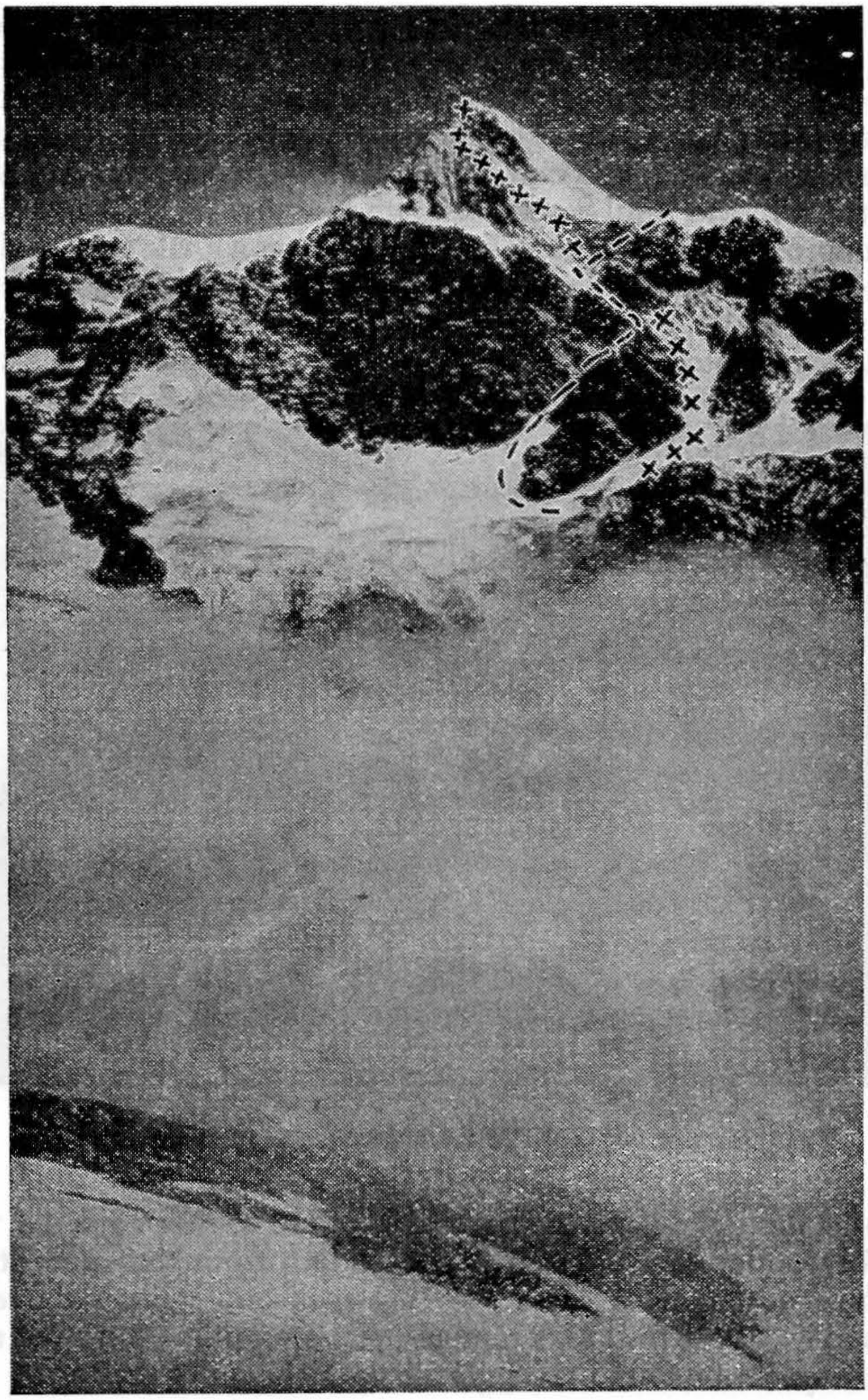
This abrupt and almost entirely rocky face dominating the Schwarzenberg Glacier culminates at a height of about 4150 m. in a first top connected with the summit by a nearly level ice ridge, save for a rocky step just under the said summit. The lower third of the face is an enormous and quite vertical, dark wall of gneiss. In 1935 M. Blanchet with Oskar Supersaxo failed in an attempt to scale this face. Mounting to the right, N., of the dark wall they endeavoured by a diagonally running—right to left—ledge to attain the first top. Ice stopped them and they pulled out to the right, N., towards the N.E. arête connecting with the Fluchthorn, 3802 m. The ridge was attained at about this latter height after hacking with difficulty through the corniche. The party then descended to Saas *via* the Britannia hut.

On August 26, 1936, M. Blanchet with Mooser only, Supersaxo being ill, descended the E. face in 8 hrs., including halts, the summit being attained from the Britannia hut. The upper part of the E. face, very steep and shattered, affords oblique chimneys, ledges and a couloir compensating in some measure to its very high angle. After some 650 ft. of sheer descent, the party turned on to a serrated buttress, always in the plumb-line of the top, which bounds to the N. a very broad and sloping ice ledge. Afterwards they followed the lower margin of the ledge, bearing N., where the rock was dry. Then by a diagonal descent they attained the point where they had failed and turned off in 1935. Thence by a route close to and parallel with their former line of ascent, they eventually took to a couloir, more to the N. of that referred to in the attempt, by which they reached the Schwarzenberg Glacier.

No *rappels* of any sort were made, the rocks are often extremely rotten, causing danger in all exposed localities. The expedition is not to be recommended. There were noticed traces of asbestos, malachite and copper mica at about half-way up.

The upper part of the face is much foreshortened in the illustration.

E. R. B.



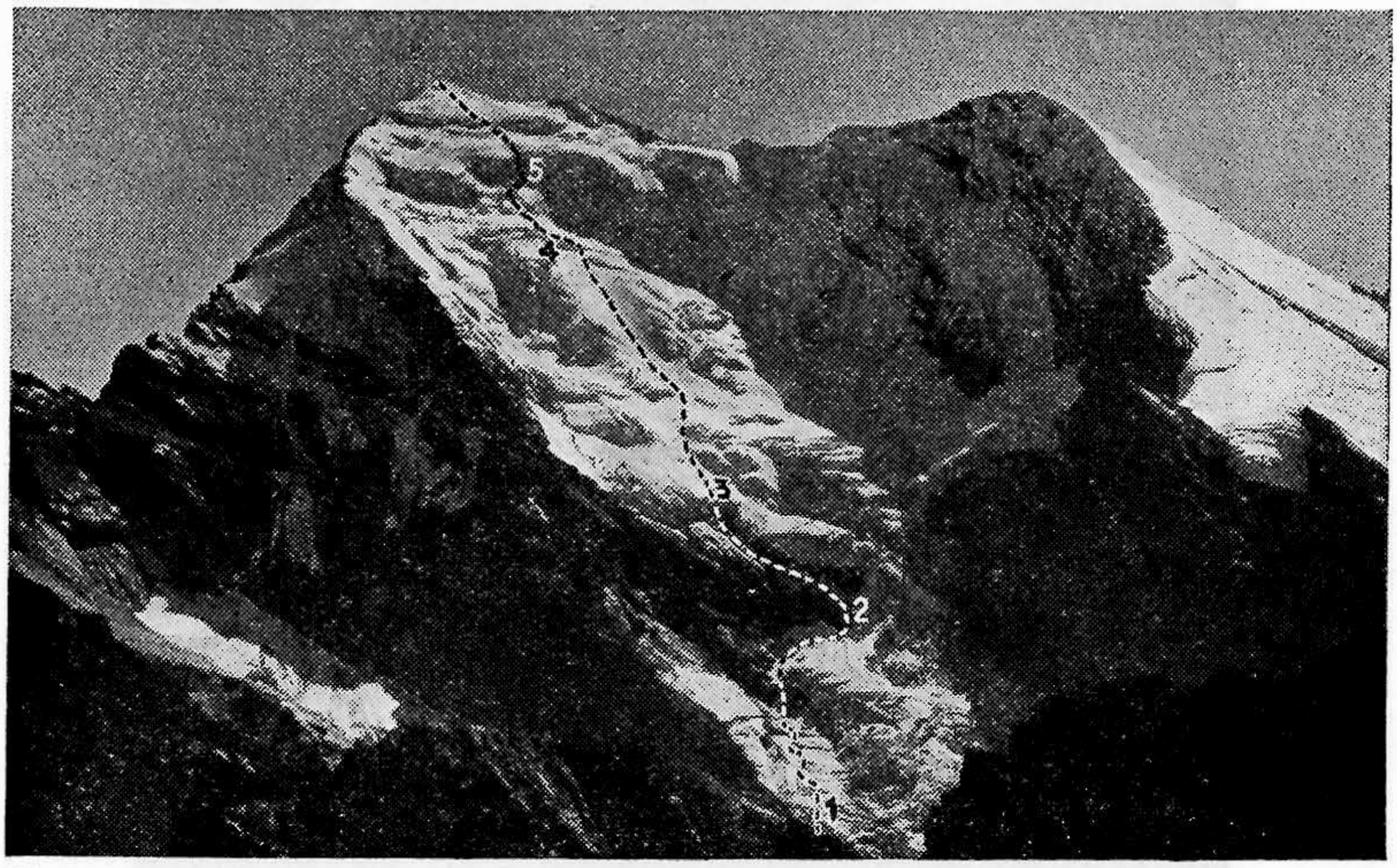
STRAHLHORN, E. FACE.
× × × × 1936 route.
– – – – 1935 route.

Bernese Oberland

ALTELS, 3636 m. = 11,929 ft. By the N.E. face. July 5, 1936. Fräulein M. Lüthi, Herren Hans Haidegger and Max Eggenschwiler of Solothurn.

From the Wildelsigen (Balmhorn) hut, cross the second torrent and bear E. over moraine to the right bank of the lower Balmhorn Glacier. Steer for the narrowest part of that glacier, where it

forces its way over a hot-plate. Having attained this, force your way up a 15-m. vertical ice wall towards the left, E., portion of the glacier, by means of slabby rocks under the icefall. Keep bearing to the E. until a good passage is found on to the upper glacier. Now steer straight for the bergschrund at base of N.E. face of Altels. Bear along the schrund until a good take-off is found on to the rocks. Zig-zag along over ledges to an obvious little snowy rib to the right, E., and mount this until beneath the final wall. Now a short traverse over ledges to a rocky notch followed by another short traverse to the E. The further route leads over a very steep rib, which is followed over



Photo, O. Hari.]

BALMHORN AND ALTELS SHOWING 1935 ROUTE.

bad rocks throughout its length, with a 50-m. couloir adjacent. Again bear S.E. under the rocky steps descending from the summit. Now take the true left bank of the couloir itself and mount it over steep snow and ice to the final rock rampart of the summit. Turn the rampart until a way can be found through the corniche on to the top.

Times :

Moraine to icefall . . .	3 hrs.
Icefall to base of face . .	$2\frac{1}{2}$ hrs.
Base of face to summit . .	11 hrs.

Conditions were bad, with much fresh snow. *Communicated.*

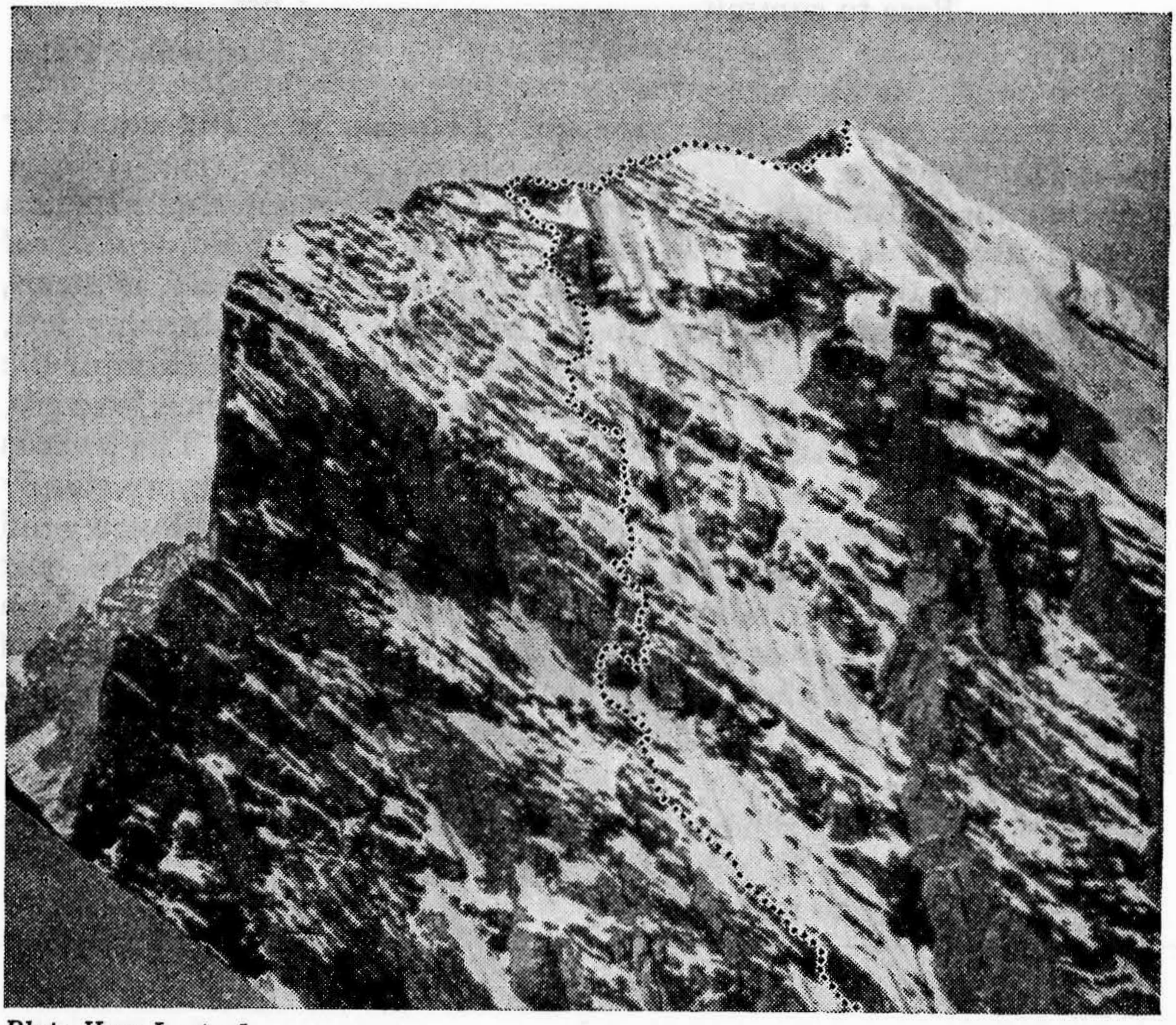
BALMHORN, 3711 m. = 12,175 ft. By the N. face. July 14, 1935. MM. Edgar Seiler and F. Desaules of Neuchâtel.

From the Wildelsigen (Balmhorn) hut left at 01.00, steer for the moraine fringing the Balmhorn Glacier's right bank, and follow its crest to where the latter merges into débris to the E. Go on to the glacier surface at its easiest point—few crevasses—and then mount diagonally to the right to

the first séracs, and continue over the smoother but steeper surface return towards the right bank to point (1), in illustration. Now mount parallel with the first boulders and débris, keeping as near the bank as possible, through a maze of awkward crevasses, to where the glacier contracts. At this spot a rocky little ledge penetrates far into the séracs (2). Climb low steps to the base of an ice rampart, mounted by terraces (3); this place is dangerous from icefalls, and from (2) onwards must be traversed as quickly as possible. From (3) mount steeply in the direction of the summit to (4), where further enormous chasms must be turned to the foot of another ice wall (5). This is the hardest place, and must be climbed (in 1935) by a kind of transverse fissure in the lowest and easiest part of the wall. Now mount gentle névé slopes straight to the top (09.00 : 8 hrs., including halts).

Weather and conditions excellent. F. D.

GROSS DOLDENHORN, 3650 m. = 11,976 ft. By the S.W. face.[6] July 19, 1936. Herren Hans Haidegger and Max Eggenschwiler.



Photo, Hans Lauper.]

GR. DOLDENHORN SHOWING E. AND 'GALLET' RIDGES, WITH 1936 ROUTE.

From the Gasterntal and before attaining the bridge spanning the torrent coming from the Silleren Glacier [*sic*, ? the small glacier represented

[6] For an ascent by the adjacent S. arête, see *A.J.* 45. 151–2, with illustrations.



Photo, O. Hari.]

ALTELS, N.E. FACE WITH 1936 ROUTE.



Photo, E. Gyger.]

DOLDENHORN, S.W. FACE WITH 1936 ROUTE.

on *S. map* at base of S. face of the mountain], mount the great moraine slopes to their highest point. Here a hunters' track is found to the high grazing grounds above; follow this track to the main torrent, which is crossed, followed by a steep ascent straight to the base of the said glacier. Here a good bivouac was found under a boulder. Turn left, W., under the glacier, till a rock and ice step compel steep progress through the centre of the glacier. Turn the great icefall to the left by steep névé slopes and then proceed along the base of the S. arête through very torn ice—progress appeared impossible but a route was quickly found. Having left the bivouac at 03.45, by 08.00 the upper bergschrund had been surmounted. Mount ledges in the S. face to a badly-defined rib, which is more or less easily climbed. Water streamed everywhere on the slabby face, but despite much snow and ice, keeping always to the right of a couloir, the top of the S. arête was attained two rope-lengths from the summit. The top was reached at 12.00.

Times :

Bridge to Silleren Glacier . .	4–5 hrs.
Glacier to base of face . . .	4 hrs.
Base to summit	4 hrs.

Communicated.

BY THE N.E. FACE. August 29, 1936. Fräulein M. Lüthi and Herr Hans Haidegger.

From the Mittelkopf [*sic*, ? point 2569 m.] mount the Fründen Glacier straight under the wall situated to the right of the *Galletgrat* and to left of the E. arête of the peak. The glacier névé is steep, but is climbed by the centre to its end. Now climb bearing left, W., over smooth rocks towards a polished and smooth section of the face, which is negotiated first by slabs under the face, then by a rib, followed by a *descending* ledge of 100 ft. leading to a gully. The latter is climbed till it contracts and reaches a snow slope. Mount very steeply to the S. by zigzags over rocky ledges and snow. Now follow a good ledge towards a great, reddish rock-bastion, which ever since the start of the climb appears to indicate the line of approach. Turn the bastion by passing under it over ledges and, over ice, attain the upper part of the E. arête. Follow the arête for some 650 ft. to its junction with the *Galletgrat*, whence the summit is attained.

Times :

To the Fründen névé . . .	$1\frac{1}{4}$ hrs.
Névé to E. arête	7 hrs.
Arête to summit	$2\frac{1}{4}$ hrs.
	(halts, $2\frac{3}{4}$ hrs.)

Communicated.

FRÜNDENHORN, 3367 m. = 11,047 ft. By the S.E. face. July 19, 1936. Dr. J. Berger with Fritz and Hermann Oggi.

Leaving Selden in the Gasterntal at 24.00, the Alpetli Glacier was reached, and thence the Kanderfirn was skirted in a N. and W. direction.

At 04.00 the rocks at the N. end of the latter glacier were attained. The line of ascent is the rock rib reaching highest towards the hanging glacier S. of the Fründenhorn: the rib terminates in a sharp triangle. By this rib the hanging glacier was attained in 1¼ hrs.—height *ca.* 2900 m.

From the hanging glacier a couloir of some 1500 ft. leads upwards towards the N.W. arête of the peak. The lower part of the former was very steep and much glazed, the party accordingly clambered up the true left bank for some 300 ft., took then to the couloir's surface for about 180 ft., after which they climbed the latter's right bank. Some 150 ft. higher the bank becomes quite vertical, the party then changed back to the original left bank, climbing this to about 250 ft. below the N.W. arête. Hitherto the route had lain over steep but good rock with small if reliable holds, the strata being in favour of the party. The last 250 ft. proved, however, extremely difficult, the couloir being very steep and ice-glazed with nearly perpendicular and smooth sides. Taking great care the party attained the N.W. arête rather to the E. of the uppermost vertical step, 09.00.

The party roped down to the Oeschinenjoch, attained 11.30, the Oeschinensee being reached at 15.00 hrs.

The expedition is a fine one, but the line of assault appears hardly practicable as a *descent*, owing to lack of belays.

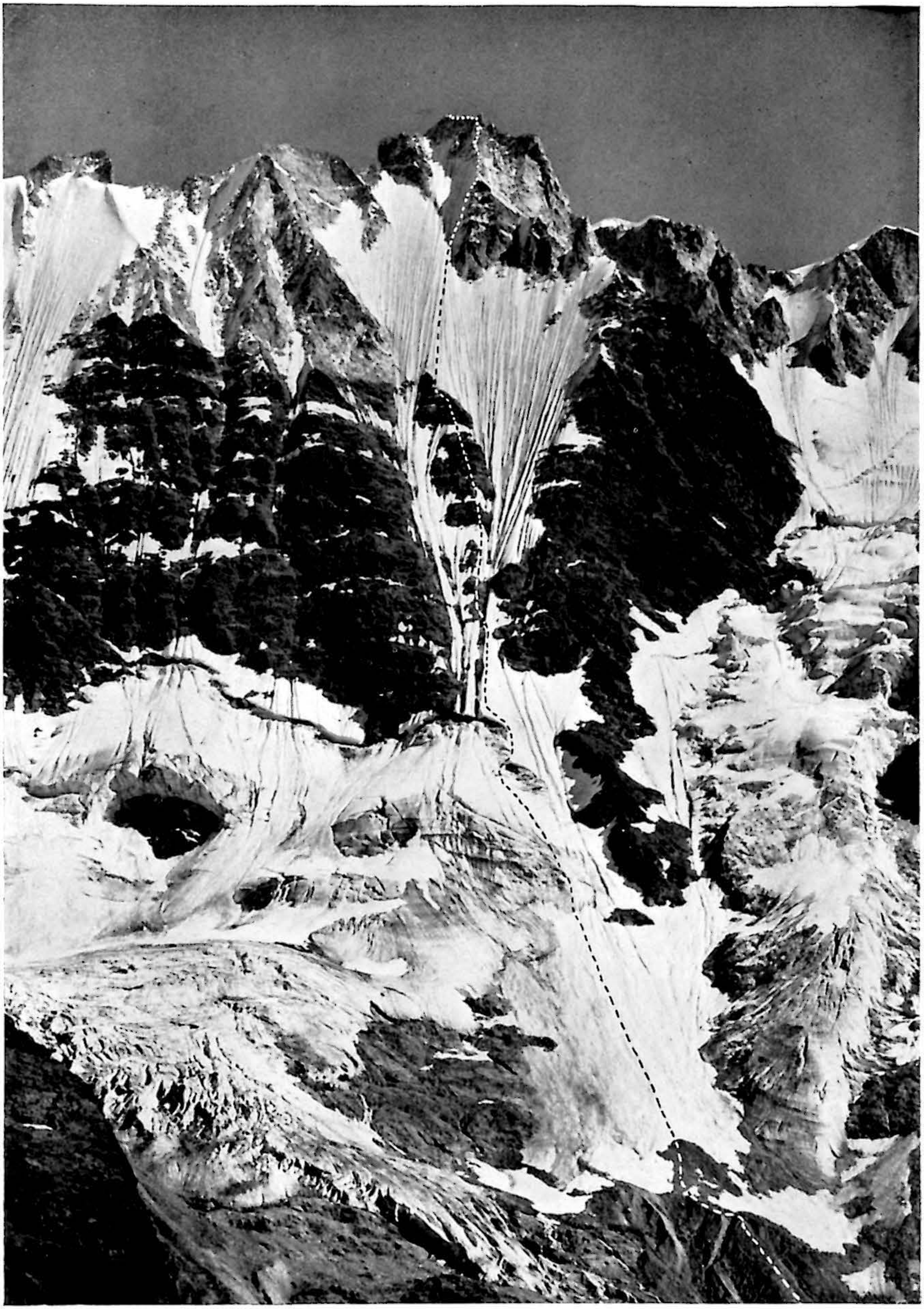
J. B.

BREITLAUIHORN, 3663 m. = 12,019 ft. From the N.[7] June 21, 1936. Herren Walter von Allmen and Ernst Feuz.

We left the Hôtel Fafleralp at 02.00 and, climbing over the débris of avalanches, by 05.00 had crossed the bergschrund at the beginning of the 1000-m. ice wall. Avalanche tracks and firm névé brought us quickly higher. At 08.00 we arrived just below the summit rocks. An almost vertical face of granite stood between us and the summit. Overhanging corniches on the summit ridges were beginning to show up dangerously. We kept slightly to the right to get out of their probable line of fall. With astonishing steepness our route led us towards the first rocks, which should bring us to the nose, apparently plunging direct from the summit, as seen from the Fafleralp. However, as we found out later, this was not the case, and we had to scramble some 50 m. over the ridge to the true summit. The good snow, which we had below, became powdery, and here also we lost much time in sweeping it away and cutting steps and handholds in the ice. Careful progress took us 6 hrs., Walter von Allmen leading, while I endeavoured to secure the rope on stones and ice pitons as safely as possible. The granite rocks were rough, sharp-edged, and of green colour. It was a splendid climb. At 14.00 we reached the summit. It took us 5 hrs. to descend by the Baltschiederpass to the Fafleralp.[8]

E. F.

[7] See illustrations *A.J.* 41. 209, and facing 210.
[8] Cf. *A.J.* 40. 408; 41. 208–10.



Photo, A. Klopfenstein.]

BREITLAUIHORN, N.W. FACE, SHOWING 1936 ROUTE.

LÖTSCHENTALER BREITHORN, 3783 m. = 12,412 ft. By the N. face.[9] June 18, 1936. Herren Ernst Feuz and Walter von Allmen.

We left the Hôtel Fafleralp in the Lötschental shortly after midnight. By the light of the lantern we crossed the Lonza at Gletscherstaffel, climbed the slopes covered with rhododendrons to the avalanche tracks. We reached the Lauibach Glacier, and as dawn broke tackled the rocky ridge of the Gletscherspitzen, 3063 m. Traversing the first of the three towers, we climbed, to save time, down again to the Distel Glacier, and followed it to the snow saddle separating the Breithorn wall from the Gletscherspitzen. As we took our first rest, the sun rose over the Aletschhorn, promising a beautiful day.

At 07.00 we mounted on crampons over the short but steep snowfield, leading to the 200-m.-high rock face, composed of gneiss. To our surprise, we did not have to cross a bergschrund, and after 2 hrs.' climbing, finding good holds, were at the beginning of the ice wall. It was covered with névé and only far above could we observe the glittering of ice. This, however, did not worry us at the moment. We tested the névé and found old dark ice below the surface, plastered above with green ice and a foot of snow. All these layers were solidly joined. In 2 hrs. more, moving one at a time, the other securing the rope around the ice axe stuck deep in the snow, we reached an altitude of 3500 m. The face then became steeper by some degrees, while a fresh new test of the snow called for additional care. The danger of the snow slipping became imminent; powdery stuff lay lightly on green ice, giving the deceitful appearance of being compact and solid. The second man planted ice pitons to secure the rope, while the first man, ignoring the powdery snow, cut steps into the underlying ice. At times we were in a deep furrow. During this trying work hours passed, and it was 16.00 when we reached the rock ridge that led directly to the summit. Handholds and steps could be found only deep below the snow. Often we buried our arms up to the shoulder in the snow, groping for the next step. The short but vertical summit rocks were also very difficult. At 18.00 we reached the summit.

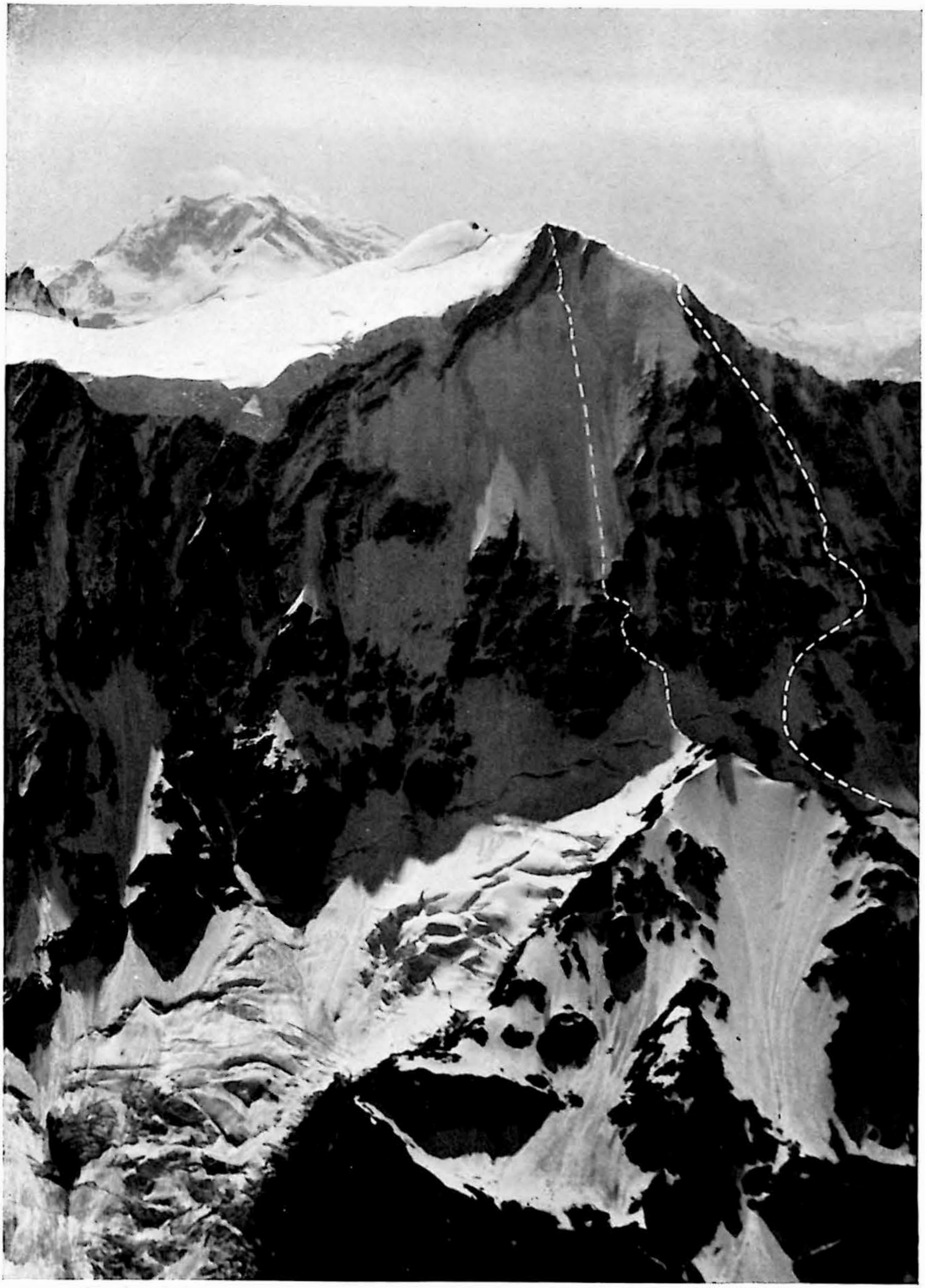
After 2 hrs.' rest we descended to the Oberaletsch Glacier, climbed the Beichpass and descended the long snowfields to the valley. In less than 4 hrs. from the summit we reached our base, the Hôtel Fafleralp.

E. F.

KLEIN FIESCHERHORN (Ochs), 3905 m. = 12,712 ft. By the N. face. August 9, 1936. Fräulein Martha Lüthi with Hermann Steuri.

From the Strahlegg hut bear across the upper Grindelwald Glacier to the Gr. Fiescherfirn and to the bergschrund at the base of our peak's N. face; cross this (05.00) and make for the rib in the plumb-line of the summit which eventually splays out in the face. Alternately on either side of this, climb shattered rocks interspersed with snow to a

[9] See illustration *A.J.* 41. facing 210. This route lies to the left, N.E., of the 1897 Flach-Kalbermatten-Rubin line, see S.A.C. *Climbers' Guide*, 'Berner Alpen,' iii. p. 81.



Photo, A. Klopfenstein.]

LÖTSCHENTALER BREITHORN,
SHOWING 1936 ROUTE (LEFT) AND 1897 (RIGHT).



Photo, R. Schudel.]

KLEIN FIESCHERHORN, N. FACE, SHOWING 1936 ROUTE.

snowy ledge to the left, S.E., of the hanging glacier (1½ hrs.). Cut across this to a rocky step dividing the upper and lower portions of the former. Climb this smooth step over somewhat holdless rocks for some 250 ft. to another snowy ledge above, 09.00. An obvious chimney had to be abandoned as it was full of loose débris and ice; the party accordingly bore somewhat to the left, S.E., to force an issue over a highly glazed rock pinnacle. Turning this partially to the right, N.W., a severe struggle brought them to a further chimney so choked with evil débris that its sharp right bank must be climbed to an overhanging chock-stone. Two pitons having been fixed for security, the leader contrived to climb right under this, direct, where two holds enabled him to conquer this extremely difficult bit. Over easier terrain for about 100 ft. the party came to a glazed boss and further overhang. The latter was scaled direct with extreme difficulty, whence a holdless slab is reached and a piton again fixed for security. With equal trouble another 35 ft. brought the party to a ledge forming the base of a triangle of which the summit constitutes the apex. Next come two rope-lengths over shattered but firm rocks to another little ledge. The best if hardest of three alternatives was to make towards the summit-ridge by bearing to the left, the summit being attained at 14.00 (9 hrs. from the base).

Descent by the ordinary route, using the party's own steps of a traverse of the Gr. and Kl. Fiescherhörner on August 8, to the Strahlegg hut.

Steuri states that conditions were bad, but that the ascent should be repeated in *Kletterschuhe*. This extremely difficult climb is free from objective dangers.

Communication from Hermann Steuri through Dr. Hug.

[From the Grindelwald Fiescherfirn, the Ochs forms the easternmost pylon of the gigantic wall-like cirque, the Fiescherwand, extending from the N. peak of the Gross Fiescherhorn (point 3802 m., *new* Siegfried), including the latter peak, to the Ochs itself; all have now been climbed from the N. Point 3802 m. was climbed on August 3, 1926, by our members Drs. W. H. Amstutz and P. von Schumacher —*A.J.* 38. 215–18, with illustration.

Gr. Fiescherhorn was climbed on September 5, 1930, by Herren W. Welzenbach and H. Tillman—*A.J.* 42. 319–21, with illustration.

And now Kl. Fiescherhorn (Ochs) as above.—*Editor*.]

Southern Alps, N.Z.

WILCZEK PEAK,[10] 9968 ft. First ascent, September 19, 1936. Mr. Colin Wyatt with Mick Bowie.

We left the Malte Brun hut, 5700 ft., by lantern-light at 05.00 and climbed on ski up the Tasman Glacier and through the first icefall

[10] The mountain under the name of '*W*. peak of Elie de Beaumont' is mentioned in *A.J.* 43. 82.

on Mt. Elie de Beaumont, 10,200 ft. Half-way up the second icefall we struck a sheer 20-ft. face of green ice, up which we had to cut and then put on crampons, discarding the ski. We got to the top of Eliede Beaumont at 10.15, weather absolutely perfect with hot sun and no wind. At 10.45 we descended on the opposite side of the summit, N., some 250 ft., to the beginning of the knife-edged arête leading to Wilczek. It was a long up-and-down ridge literally as sharp as a blade with the slopes facing E. and W. In places we had to go astride, but for three-quarters of the way we were able to cut steps on the [?] S. side. The slopes were almost sheer for 3000–4000 ft. There was a bad step of iced rock on the edge itself. Wilczek was reached at 12.00, when after taking a few photographs we made our way back to Elie de Beaumont, 13.00. After a halt there, we descended to the Lendenfeld Saddle and skied home to the Malte Brun hut, attained at 16.00.

Wilczek is an isolated part of the massif of Elie de Beaumont [lying N. of that summit, according to the *FitzGerald* map]. On September 20 we climbed HAMILTON, 9915 ft., partly on ski, then with crampons.

This is the most wonderful mountaineering and ski country that I have seen . . . but the weather is appallingly unsettled.

C. W.