

THE BREGAGLIA

By N. S. FINZI

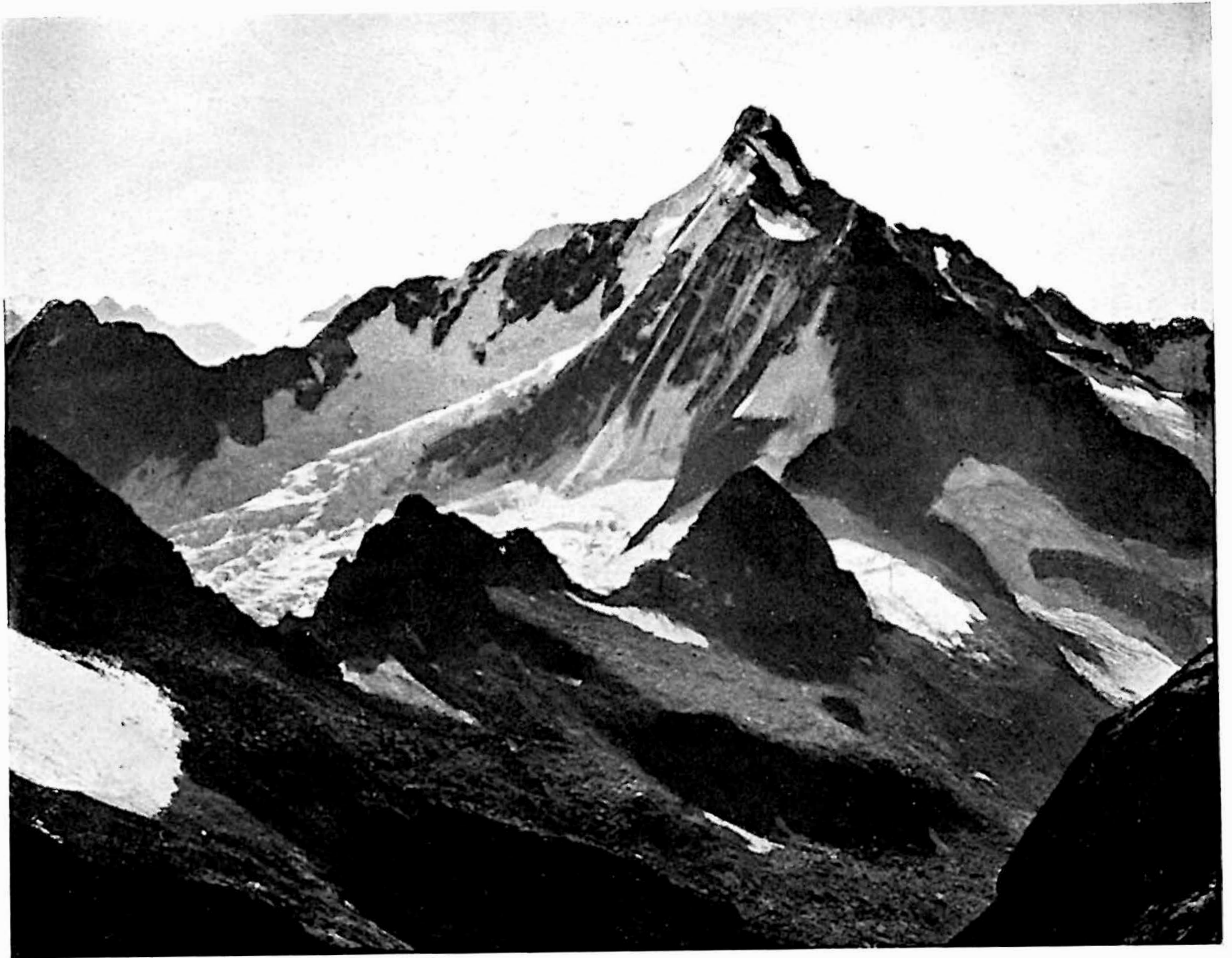
Read before the Alpine Club, December 5, 1944

I AM here as a stopgap. You were to have had a much better lecture from Mr. Charles Pasteur, but unfortunately he was not well enough, and I have had to prepare this at rather short notice. I thought, when I accepted, that I should be able to get some help with lantern slides, and Mr. Montgomery has lent me some beautiful slides to supplement my own, but there is a paucity of views of the western end of the range.

I have chosen the Bregaglia, not because I favour any one particular district, but because I have made several visits there, have made the first ascent of a small peak, have made a new route on another peak and have had two thrilling, although unpleasant adventures in that district.

There are several very attractive features about the Bregaglia. Its mountains, except Monte Disgrazia, Cima di Castello, Piz Cengalo, and Torrone Occidentale, are under 11,000 ft. All the peaks are of granite and provide the most wide variation of difficulty. The rock is mostly excellent and, owing to its low altitude, clears rapidly after bad weather. Also, there are good snow and ice expeditions in the district itself, and if something greater is wanted the Bernina group, with the Bianco ridge, the Scerscen and the Roseg are within easy reach round the corner. Lastly, its approaches are very beautiful and it is quite easy to slip away on an off day for a bathe in one of the beautiful Engadine lakes. Also, the views from the northern side of the valley from Soglio, and near it, are very lovely and are well known from Segantini's paintings. Many of the climbs are short and several of them can be done from Maloja or Masino-Bagni direct. The rock peaks will appeal to experts of our own rock climbs and they can be combined with graduated snow and ice work, which form excellent Alpine training. In some years, however, some of the glaciers can become exceedingly crevassed and difficult.

Now, where is the Bregaglia, and how does one get there? It is in the Canton Grisons (or Graubünden) in the eastern part of Switzerland and takes in several Italian valleys. If one travels from St. Moritz to Maloja and then crosses the pass, one descends Val Bregaglia, which is regarded as the northern boundary of the district. The road descends steeply to Casaccia and then goes W. through Vicosoprano and Promontogno to Castasegna. It then has turned a little southwards and continues to do this. It crosses the Italian frontier near Castasegna and then continues S. through Chiavenna to Colico, near the head of the Lake of Como. It so forms the northern part of the



Photo, N. S. Finzi.]

MONTE DISGRAZIA FROM TORRONE ORIENTALE.

western boundary. It is bounded in the E. by the Muretto Pass and Val Malenco, and in the S. by the lengthy and savage Val Codera, Valle dei Ratti to the S.E., containing the Volta hut, and Val Masino, all draining into the Adda.

The language is between Romansch and a dialect of Italian, and there are many picturesque names such as Spazzacaldera, but the most amusing name of all seems to have been dropped. Surely Piz Platta Squittra is more picturesque than Piz Val della Neve.

The best guide book for those who can read German is the excellent S.A.C. guide, *Bündner-Alpen*, vol. 4, by H. Rütter. The 1935 edition, however, does not include some of the newer and more difficult of the ascents, particularly those of Hans Frei, accounts of which can be found in the hut books, if they have not been taken away. There is a tendency for some sections of the S.A.C. to remove the hut books when they are full. This is a pity because, even if damaged by frequent consultation, they are of much more value in the hut than in a store room. Perhaps a photostat of the important pages might be stored and the book left in the hut. There is also an Italian guide book¹ which I believe is quite good, but I cannot read Italian fluently. The *Climbers' Guide* (1910), by Strutt, is rather out of date, but contains a good sketch map by Claude Wilson. The Siegfried map contained errors in earlier editions.² The sheets 'Maloggia' and 'Castasegna' are those required.

The huts are good on the Swiss side and several on the Italian side were good before the war. When no guardian is in them, the huts have to be kept locked, but the keys can be obtained at the main centres such as Maloja, Vicosoprano, Promontogno, San Martino, Cattaeggio, Novate-Mezzola and Masino-Bagni. With the closing of the frontier there were restrictions on crossing it, but one hopes these will disappear after the war. Even the locking up of the huts did not prevent thieving from the Italian side.

There is good skiing on the Forno Glacier in winter. The Albigna Glacier would also be good but one can only dare approach it over a col from the Forno and one's return might be cut off. Direct approach is too dangerous. The Bondasca Glacier could afford good skiing but in many years it is very heavily crevassed and might be dangerous of access. The southern valleys have little to offer to the skier.

I will first show you a few slides of the Engadine approach, and if one happens to be there in the latter part of September, the colours must be seen to be believed, as all the bilberry and cranberry leaves with which the slopes are covered turn bright red.

The Piz Lagrev in the Albula group is worth climbing for its lovely view but not by the S.W. ridge, which is cut by a cleft more than a thousand feet deep. The Piz della Margna, of the central Bernina

¹ By far the best and not too elaborate. It is by Count Aldo Bonacossa and is reviewed in *A. J.* 48. 377.

² The latest revisions are perfectly accurate for the Swiss slope, frontier ridge, and what is *visible* from above of the Italian glens and ridges.

range, affords a good view of the eastern end of the Bregaglia. The Piz Lunghin in the Albula group looks up the Forno and Albigna Glaciers and is of interest as it sends waters to the North Sea by the Rhine, to the Adriatic and Mediterranean by the Po and to the Black Sea by the Danube.

Let us now examine the mountains on the Swiss Forno Glacier: there is an Italian Forno Glacier in the southern Ortler group. The base from which to start these expeditions is Maloja, and several of the climbs can be done direct from here without undue fatigue: its altitude is 6000 ft. and most of the peaks are between 10,000 and 11,000 ft. There is a comfortable hut, the Forno, above the right bank of the glacier from which the longer expeditions can be made. A guardian is there in the season, but one must always make enquiries and take up a key if there is any doubt. In the winter it is frightfully cold, if it has not been occupied for some days, but there is plenty of wood. On the way up we pass this lovely lake, the Lago di Cavloccio, and the hardier climbers will take a bathe in its very cold waters. I did—once. The end of the chain of peaks above the right bank is the Pizzo dei Rossi. It is seldom climbed, is probably quite easy and has no advantages over its higher neighbour, Monte del Forno. This can quite easily be climbed from Maloja direct, but, if going by the ordinary way, it is well to arrive on the S. ridge early to enjoy the early morning sunshine on the wonderful view of the N. face of Disgrazia, that face of which Raeburn and Ling made the first direct ascent. The ordinary way is not difficult, but pleasant and interesting and is good on an off day if one is staying at the hut; it is mainly rock. The next peak, Monte Rosso, is very short and is definitely an off day peak, being quite easy by the normal route and a mixture of snow and rock.

Next comes a classic expedition, the traverse of Cima di Vazzeda and Cima di Rosso. I got only as far as the Vazzeda. After a spell of bad weather in September, it became fine but cold. We got to the top of the Vazzeda and sat down to eat something. I always use worn-out gloves when climbing to protect the back of my hands and I put these down on the rock. About a quarter of an hour later I had to scrape them off with a penknife; they were frozen to it. I am the unfortunate possessor of a poor circulation, so we considered it more suitable to 'advance back' to our base, but I understand that the expedition is a very fine one and I show you some lovely views taken by Mr. Montgomery from the Rosso. The next summit, Monte Sissone, does not, I believe, present any difficulty, but it is important as from it a ridge runs S.E. to Monte Disgrazia, and by climbing the Sissone and traversing under a lot of smaller summits a long expedition can be accomplished, and Monte Disgrazia has even been done over the crest of the ridge. Both these expeditions are of extreme length.

The ridge now turns W. and the next peak of importance is the Torrone Orientale, a pleasant expedition, not difficult. Then comes the Ago del Torrone or Ago di Cleopatra, the first ascent of which on

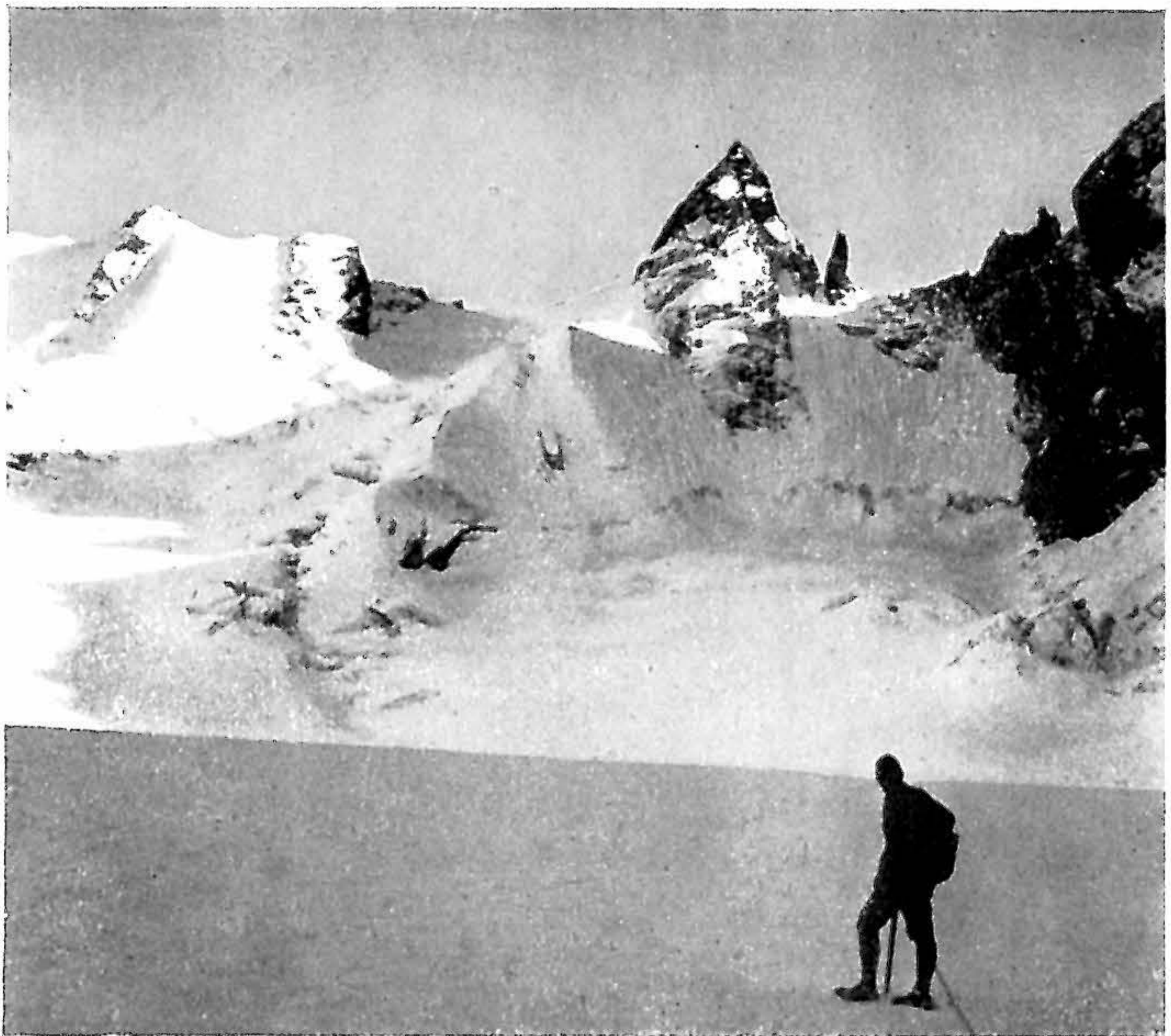
August 4, 1923, I described³ to the Club the following year. As, however, a generation has passed, I may perhaps be permitted to recapitulate it briefly. Everyone notices this striking needle on the way up the glacier and its ascent had been many times attempted. On my first visit to the district in 1921 I determined at least to have a look at its possibilities. In 1922 we engaged as one of our guides Franz Josef Biner of St. Niklaus, and this was the first of a long series of seasons that he has been with me. He was immediately fired by the ambition to conquer this peak. My companion was the late Marcus Rudolf, and the other guide in 1922 was Peter Almer of Grindelwald. The first time we approached it by the rocks on the left bank of the Torrone Glacier but arrived at a point where we were separated from the Colle del Torrone by a steep and difficult gendarme, now known as *Die Lokomotiv*, which I believe had not up to that time been ascended. A traverse on the S. side would have taken too long, so we came back. The next time we ascended the same rocks for some distance and then cut right across the exceedingly steep Torrone Glacier, a most sensational proceeding, to reach the col which is on the W. of the glacier: 130 widely spaced steps with handholds. Then bad weather came on and we returned, but not before Franz had an idea as to how the peak should be ascended. Its S. side is banked up halfway with rocks but then overhangs by at least 5° and is a sheer wall. The sides also are absolutely smooth and quite vertical. The lower part of the N. face overhangs the glacier and after a vertical portion is only 5° from the vertical until near the top, where there is another overhang which juts out at least 3 ft. above one's head with no chance of reaching any hold at all. Almer's arm had been injured by a loose stone, so we engaged an Engadine guide for our third attempt in 1922, and on this and subsequent attempts my suggestion of going over or nearly over the Torrone Orientale was adopted, a lower route being taken on each occasion. It is quite easy to walk round the base of the S. side of our needle to the W. There is then a precarious step on to the N. base and one is under an overhang. By standing on the second man's head Franz was able to pull himself up by a single left handhold and a little knee friction. He got to below the second overhang but said he could not persuade the other guide to come up and give him a hand and (very justly) did not consider me suitable for the job. When he told Christian Klucker where he had got to, he was called a liar, but I got this photograph in a lucky moment when the mists rolled away and made a background. The next year we returned to the Forno hut after some nine days' strenuous training in the Dolomites, during which we made a new, very difficult and strenuous variation on the S. wall of the Marmolata, itself the finest standard rock climb in the Alps. With Roman Lager as porter and Franz again leading, Rudolf and I were again brought to the Colle del Torrone, but once more had to return in drenching rain. Incidentally, Franz stayed behind to investigate and the key of the hut remained in his pocket until he returned

³ A. J. 37. 268.



Photo, N. S. Finzi]

SCIORA GROUP.



Photo, N. S. Finzi]

TORRONE ORIENTALE AND AGO.

[To face p. 9.]

and let us in. However, after dehydration, we soon reached the col again next day. We fixed two pitons in the ground at the base of the peak to limit the sheer fall, which would have occurred in case of an accident, to about 20 ft.; no other piton was used. As last man I had no one's head to stand on and had to be hauled up, being halted opposite the handhold for inspection. After a difficult 60-80 ft. straight up, one has to traverse a deep groove and I had to put my whole weight on a hold which I mistrusted. This was lucky, as I was prepared when it came away and I swung clear with my feet to the rock—no harm done. On the N.E. corner there is a ledge which just holds four, and above this the going is easy, but very exposed, to the top of a thin flake, on which one must stand. Franz then made a difficult traverse on to the W. side and got to the top. He let down a rope and the other three pulled themselves and were pulled up over the overhang. The ascent was not repeated until 1933 by Hans Frei and a companion.

The next peaks on the ridge are the Torrone Centrale, the Torre Centrale Ovest, the Torre Occidentale and Punta Rasica. The routes up these are said to present an ascending grade of difficulty. Like many others, I have neglected the first three, but have done the Rasica, the last bit of which is at least a 'severe' and I found the beginning of this required quite definite mechanical assistance. Usually, a shoulder is taken here, but Franz managed it without this.

Beyond a very difficult little peak, Punta Rasica Ovest, comes the Colle del Castello (Passo Lurani), a good and easy route to the Allievi hut, in the Val Zocca, whence Masino-Bagni may be reached by Val di Mello and Val dei Bagni.

The ridge now turns N. again and lies between the Forno and Albigna Glaciers, so that the peaks can be reached from either hut. The Cima di Castello is a pleasant climb from the Forno side and is a good viewpoint. The Cantone, I do not think I have done; it looks nice. Lo Scalino is said to afford good climbing from the Albigna side. After a number of small points come the easy (by the ordinary route) Casnile and then the Bacone. We made the first ascent of the S. ridge of this latter by accident, Adolf Schaller leading with myself and Josef Biner of Zermatt. The Cima del Largo was pointed out to the guides from Monte del Forno, but they mistook which peak was meant and my protests were unavailing until the summit book was found. It is much more interesting than the S. chimney which is all loose, and the following year we repeated the ascent and probably made the first descent, this time with Rudolf and the guides Franz Biner and Peter Almer. Its N. ridge is also said to be very good.

Then comes the Cima del Largo, one of the best known of all the Bregaglia peaks. It is a very interesting climb and reminds me of English rock. The second time I climbed this peak we had an unpleasant adventure. Luckily for us we had finished the climb and were changing from rubbers or *Kletterschuhe* into boots, or I should possibly not be reading this paper here. When we had one boot on

and one off, it started to hail and the stones got bigger and bigger and came with terrific force, so that we hardly noticed it was a thunderstorm. Eventually, they reached a diameter of more than an inch. We buried our heads face down and used our forearms to protect our heads as much as possible, but it was very painful, and very alarming and exhausting. The next day Rudolf and I took a rest day on Monte del Forno and Franz insisted on accompanying us to see we did not get into mischief: you see, it was his first year with us. The remainder of the ridge is not of much importance.

Let us now pass to the Albigna Glacier, and follow the ridge from the Colle del Castello. There is a club hut on a shelf below the snout of the glacier. But first let us take a look at the valley itself from the northern slopes of Val Bregaglia near Soglio. It probably contains the finest waterfall in Switzerland or possibly in Europe, even since they have damned the Albigna torrent. There is a sheer drop of at least 900 ft. and possibly over 1000 ft. but there is no path from which one can see it from near. Whether a good viewpoint in the Albigna valley can be obtained in safety I do not know. If it could, it would be worth making. The setting of the fall as seen from the other side is lovely. After a couple of unnamed points we come to the Zocca Pass, which is an easy route from the Albigna valley to the Allievi hut in Val Zocca and so via Val di Mello and Val dei Bagni to Masino-Bagni. This is a lovely spot, so after climbing Monte Zocca, rather loose and not very interesting by the ordinary route, we will proceed thither. Masino-Bagni is a thermal station so that, when one arrives down hot from a climb, it is most pleasant to have a bath in the thermal waters, even though they are not quite hot enough (or used not to be). The actual springs come out at about 110° F., but, as the source is a short distance above the hotel, the water cools a little en route and has to be heated up again. Everyone I know who has been to this place has liked it. For an off day I can most strongly recommend the ascent of Pizzo Ligoncio for its lovely view of Lake Como. An early start, if the weather is fine, would give one a better view than I can produce, on account of the midday haze. The ascent is quite easy; no rope usually necessary.

Three and a half to four hours above the hotel is the Capanna Gianetti. One of the best climbs from here is the W. ridge of the Badile, a very pleasant and interesting rock climb, quite difficult in places. The ordinary route is up the S.E. wall, and I shall have a bit more to say about the descent of this later on. By the young and eager the E. ridge can be descended, turning or climbing the tooth known as Punta Sertori (3198 m.), and then the Cengalo traversed. We tried the Cengalo by its E. ridge and climbed the lower peak, E. (3308 m.), which has a name in the Italian guide book; the snow conditions that day, however, rendered the ascent of the main peak practically impossible, so I must go back and have another try. The next peaks to the E. are the Gemelli. We climbed them from the N., but there are easy or difficult routes from the Gianetti hut. On the

N. side some very difficult climbs have been made since the 1935 edition of the Swiss guide book was published. The Passo di Bondo, a little difficult to find as to the correct gap, was the normal route to the Bondasca valley before Mussolini.

The ridge between the Porcellizzo and Ferro valleys has the Pizzo Camerozzo and two Monti Sione on it, the Punte Bertani and Moraschini. These are quite interesting, but I have only done the former.

The other ridge between the Porcellizzo and Codera valleys has also some good short climbs on it such as the Pizzo Porcellizzo by the N.E. ridge and Piz Badilet.⁴

While we are at Masino-Bagni we shall probably take the opportunity of climbing the highest point in the district, Monte Disgrazia, unless we have already tackled it by the very long route from the Forno hut or the difficult routes by the N. face. This peak has a British history. It was first climbed⁵ by Leslie Stephen and E. S. Kennedy with the latter's servant Thomas Cox and the guide Melchior Anderegg. The N. face was first climbed⁶ in 1910 by Ling and Raeburn, guideless, and it was not repeated for many years. The N.E. ridge and wall was first climbed⁷ by the Pilkingtons and Hulton in 1882. There are two huts. The Capanna Ponti is reached from Cattaeggio, to which one takes a car or bus from Masino-Bagni or Ardenno-Masino. When I did the climb in 1921, the hut had been burgled so many times, even when encased in iron, that we had to hire porters to carry up blankets, etc. It was then called the Capanna Cecilia. It is still standing, but the Ponti is quite recent and adjacent. It is an inn. There are several routes of varying degrees of difficulty. As the guides would not take the S.W. ridge, which I wanted, we went up the S.W. face, Via Baroni, and I demanded two hours on top. I believe that there is a new hut near the Preda Rossa Glacier, which has tended to popularise the S.E. and S.W. ridges. It is near where there was an old hut, the Capanna Desio on the Passo di Cornarossa.

Let us now return to the Albigna Glacier. After Monte Zocca there are the Pizzi del Ferro on which there are a number of highly interesting routes, but the favourite climbs are on the ridge between the Albigna and Bondasca Glaciers, in the Sciora group. The best known of these is the Ago di Sciora, and it is quite possible to take it en route to or from the Zocca Pass. There are several ways of getting to the foot of the peak, and when one gets there rock experts can make several difficult variations of the ordinary route, which itself would probably be classed as 'severe' in this country. In some snow conditions the approaches to the foot of the needle may become dangerous.

The Punta Pioda di Sciora afforded us some fine climbing, but I have a notion that we made some variation from the ordinary route. The same applies to the Sciora di fuori. Anyhow, there are several quite difficult routes on these peaks. The Sciora di dentro I have not

⁴ Notably, Punta Milano—an enormous gendarme—and La Sfinge just N. of Pizzo Ligancio.

⁵ *A. J.* 1. 3 *sqq.*

⁶ *A. J.* 25. 691 *sqq.*

⁷ *A. J.* 11. 245 *sqq.*

climbed. The ordinary way is easy, but the S. and N.W. routes, the latter from the Sciora hut, are difficult. The next group, the Cacciabella, is not of great importance, but after that comes Il Gallo. This used to be a most striking peak, either as seen from a distance or in its climbing pictures. Claude Wilson showed a photograph of this in a paper which he read to the Club. It always looked as if the climber were trying to push the higher part of the peak off, and apparently someone succeeded: anyhow it went.⁸ The result is that the climb is more difficult and delicate but less sensational-looking. The next peak, La Vergine, is quite short and can be taken either after Il Gallo or on the day one gets up to the hut, as we did after a spell of bad weather. Being only about 8500 ft., it dries quickly. The way we did it, we had a most sensational traverse. The first man must abandon all hope of getting back by his own powers and hope for a good handhold round the corner as he steps downwards and to the right: fortunately the handhold is there. We came back a different way. Piz Val della Neve (Platta Squittra) and one route on the Piz Spazzacaldera are said to afford interesting climbing, and must have marvellous views.

The next glen is Val Bondasca, in which lies the Sciora hut. This serves for various excursions in the Sciora group, for the Gemelli and particularly for the N. ridge of Piz Badile. It also affords a good way to the Gianetti hut and to Masino-Bagni by the Passo di Bondo. As one follows the valley up, there is at the top a steep but pleasant snow or ice slope which looks as if it must be the way, but this is the Passo del Ferro, and if one takes it, one must make another pass over the Camerozzo ridge to get to Val Porcellizzo. The proper pass goes over rocks to the right and is not very obvious from below.

The ridge between this valley and Val Trubinasca is only of importance in that one has to cross it in order to ascend the N. ridge of the Badile. On the other side of Val Trubinasca and at its western base is the Dente del Lupo, while at its head tower Punta and Piz Trubinasca, the former a magnificent climb. There is also a pass into Val Codera.⁹ There is a new club hut in this valley above the tiny hamlet of Codera.¹⁰

I have already described my adventures on the Badile in an article in the JOURNAL (*A. J.* 49. 65 *sqq.*), entitled 'Struck by Lightning,' but will briefly repeat them. We went much too low in crossing into Val Trubinasca and only arrived at the foot of the N. buttress or ridge at the same time as another party from the Sciora hut which had started two hours later. This party consisted of a frontier guard who was leading and two Engadine skiing guides who were doing it for practice. The slowness of this party and the fact that we had too short a rope caused our discomfiture. Rather more than 100 ft. of rope per person is required: we had but 100 ft. in all. We had, as porter, a nephew of Franz named Heinrich Biner, a novice, but he proved himself most reliable and competent. Our start of the first difficult passage was much delayed by the party in front and, when we came to do it, Franz put the porter on to lead. His lack of knowledge of difficult

⁸ *A. J.* 35. 300.

⁹ Passo di Trubinasca.

¹⁰ Cf. *A. J.* 48. 251 *sqq.*

rope manœuvres with the too short rope delayed us further, but we caught up the other party at the foot of the other difficult passage, and here again were held up for a very long time, at least three quarters of an hour. After surmounting it, Franz suggested some food, but the weather was too threatening and I fortunately insisted on pressing on. We had altered our positions on the rope. Franz was first, then Heinrich, and I was last. We did the last bit rapidly and, just as I stepped off the ridge, my right hand was torn off the rock by a fearful electric discharge. Had we all been on the ridge, nothing could have saved us, though it was quite easy at that point. All one's muscles contract, so that one has no control for a moment, even if one does not lose consciousness. Just as when one is very close to a bomb, one does not hear a bang; there is a tearing noise as if a giant sheet of calico were being ripped. The shock passed along the rope to Franz and got his left leg. We were just recovering when we got a second shock. I have never been so terrified in my life, not even in the early London blitzes. I gave myself up for lost and almost decided never to climb again, if I survived, and wished we could have had a less painful death. There was a patch of snow near by, swept by wind and rain, and we ought to have lain flat on that, but we could not think clearly and we sat on a pile of rocks which proved, when the cloud lifted, to be just under a sharp peak, the lower summit. The next shock knocked me and Franz unconscious. I saw a large white ball of light and thought that was the end. When I came to, I was paralysed from the waist down with a horrible pain round my waist, but after a few minutes or seconds I was able to hobble after the others on to the patch of snow. It was lucky that the porter escaped, for he was able to take off our *Kletterschuhe* and put on our boots; we were quite incapable of doing this ourselves. We left our axes and Heinrich retrieved them two days later. We reached the summit in a few minutes and passed to the comparative quiet of the S. side. But our troubles were not over. On the descent we unfortunately caught up the Swiss party. I say unfortunately, because Franz, who subsequently confessed that he could not think clearly till midnight, insisted on following them, when they went wrong, despite my protest. As a result we spent the night high up on the mountain, wet through and miserable, except the porter, who slept soundly standing up, even when I tried to use him as a cushion. Luckily the frost, which set in with snow at dusk, let up after a time. When not freezing it may be very unpleasant, but it is not nearly so dangerous. The Swiss party left two hours before we did, but when we started at dawn we soon found them off the track again, and we put them on to the correct route and got to the Capanna Gianetti. After breakfast we had two disturbances only in sleeping the clock round. The first was a visit from Italian frontier guards, who, notwithstanding our condition, refused to let us go back by the valley and said we must go back the way we came. Actually we went over the Passo di Bondo two days later after a wet day. The second disturbance was for dinner. We hardly noticed the noisy arrival of

a section of the C.A.I. in the night or their departure in the early hours of the following morning.

And then we left this delightful district. Notwithstanding all our trials, we hope to return some day. I hope also I have persuaded some of you that it is well worth visiting, especially by young British rock experts.

MOUNTAIN RESCUE IN WAR AND PEACE¹

*The following three papers were read before the Alpine Club,
February 6, 1945*

I. DR. RAYMOND GREENE'S PAPER

PART I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

THE general principles of mountain rescue in war and peace are similar. In both circumstances, there are certain necessary requirements to be fulfilled by any stretcher. It must be :

(a) Light in weight. This is important both in war and peace, but especially in the former. Whereas in time of peace it is often possible to collect a large team of stretcher bearers, in action this is always impossible. Men are required for fighting and cannot be spared in large numbers for rescue work. On the other hand, it must be remembered that lightness must not be achieved by sacrifice of strength.

(b) Capable of convenient transport over rough country. This is partly a matter of weight but largely a matter of design.

(c) Strong and capable of withstanding rough treatment. One has only to watch the treatment meted out by the British soldier to all his equipment to realise the importance of this. The Eustace Thomas stretcher, for instance, is a good stretcher in the hands of careful people. Commando medical officers who examined it felt quite certain that in the hands of the soldier in a very short time the light alloy tubing would become bent and the handles would become fixed. A similar criticism was brought against the Airborne stretcher as *a mountain stretcher* by the committee referred to later.

(d) Simple in design with no gadgets to break or get clogged with snow. This is the only point in favour of Mark II, but simplicity has been attained at too great a cost.

(e) Capable of being used over the roughest ground, lowered over cliffs or dragged up them, or dragged over smooth or icy ground.

¹ Further material dealing with this subject, together with illustrations, will be published in our issue of November 1945.—EDITOR.