

When we reached the cornice through which, as I have intimated, we had made our way in the ascent, there was a moment's consideration of a suggestion to descend from the ridge at a point farther to the W. As, however, this would have meant cutting steps *down* a ridge of ice, we rapidly concluded that first of all we would attempt to descend by the route which we had climbed. We had no serious difficulty in our descent to the upper part of the ridge, and as, fortunately, this had been but very slightly exposed to the sun, our steps were in a perfect condition, so that with care we were enabled quickly to gain the main portion of the Gumachi glacier. We crossed the glacier before the light had disappeared, although it became quite dark as we went over the moraine. Having lit our lantern, our line of descent could easily be seen by the men in camp. Evidently at one time we were making our way too near to a precipice overhanging the valley on the right. Our men consequently shouted, waved their lanterns, and rushed out to direct and meet us. The sound of the falling water made it clear to us that we must work slightly more to the left, and so ere very long, though with tumbles over stones and shrubs and slight hollows in the ground, we safely reached our camp.

The shepherd had seen us on the top of Gumachi, and both that night and the morning following he expressed himself to us in language none of us could understand, and which was differently understood. Some considered it a serious condemnation, others an indication of awe and deep surprise that the 'spirit of the place' should have allowed us to visit the region and return in safety.

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#### EARLY SUMMER IN THE OBERLAND.

BY FREDERICK GARDINER.

I SUPPOSE that most of us must take our Alpine holidays when we can get them, and I also suppose that the most convenient time for the majority is late rather than early, and it is undeniable that for certain expeditions the month of August is more desirable than June. But still each month and season has its particular charm, and the climber who has invariably started work late in August can never have seen the loveliness of the Alpine flora at its best, nor have enjoyed the splendid length of a mid-June day in the Alps, nor have received the extremely cordial welcome that meets the early climber everywhere. However, I freely grant that as a rule

June is rather too early for serious mountaineering, and the only excuse for my complying with the Editor's request that I should contribute a short account of such well-known expeditions as most of those that I accomplished last summer is to show that the Alps are not closed until the middle of July, even for such middle-aged climbers as myself. I reached Grindelwald on June 4, and until the first week in July I did not meet a single climber anywhere, although I heard of one or two foreign Alpinists here and there; and notwithstanding that between June 4 and July 15 I slept out eighteen or twenty nights in huts, I had the huts invariably to myself—not the least strong argument in favour of climbing in June—excepting on the latter date, when by way of contrast I was one of fourteen at the Gleckstein. Between June 4 and 12, accompanied by my wife, and with Rudolf Almer as sole guide, I spent a delightful week in most perfect weather round the Faulhorn group—ascending Burg, the Rothhorn, the Schwarzhorn, and crossing the Faulhorn from Scheinige Platte to Giessbach; two nights we passed in the inn on the Faulhorn, and we had two as perfect sunsets and sunrises as the heart of man could desire. It is hardly necessary for me to dilate in these pages on the view from such a point under such circumstances. On the 14th Peter Almer joined me as second guide, and between that date and the 20th we ascended the Rosenhorn and the Ewig Schneeshorn, and crossed the Rosenegg and Wetterlimmi, and, although we found a considerable quantity of snow everywhere, we were by no means inconvenienced thereby. The 19th and 20th were stormy days, and fresh snow fell; but as I was anxious to make an ascent on Jubilee Day, and the weather cleared up, I slept in the Guggi hut on the 21st and ascended the Silberhorn next day in superb weather. I planted a Jubilee flag on the top, which apparently did not meet with the approval of some Swiss climbers who made the ascent shortly afterwards, as they removed it.

Between June 23 and July 7 I had the best part of my holiday and fair weather on the whole, and I was successful in ascending the Mutthorn, Tschingelhorn (a much-neglected peak), Lauterbrunnen Breithorn (in most years one of the most heavily corniced peaks in the Oberland), Gross Viescherhorn, Oschenhorn, Kranzberg, and Berglistock, and crossing the Tschingel, Petersgrat, Wetterlücke, Gamchilücke, Mönchjoch, Grunhorn-Lücke, Lötschenlücke, and Lauteraarjoch. On July 9 I ascended the Lauteraarhorn by the usual S. route, finding it long and toilsome, and by no means appreciating the

necessity of crossing the Strahlegg Pass twice in one day. My last expedition was the ascent of the Wetterhorn, ascending from Grindelwald and descending to Rosenlauri, in which expedition my wife accompanied me. Unfortunately the weather was bad, and we reached the summit in a heavy snowstorm. The only one of the expeditions that calls for any remark is the ascent of the Kranzberg, which I fondly hoped was a virgin peak; but, alas! on the summit I found a tell-tale bottle with the card of Mr. Freeman, who made the ascent in 1896; \* he had, however, neglected to record his conquest either in the 'Alpine Journal' or the visitors' book in the Concordia hut. It is a perfectly easy ascent, and it is remarkable that, as it is the most conspicuous mountain seen from Concordia when looking towards the Jungfrau, it has never been ascended before. The actual summit, however, is not visible from that place. The secondary peaks of the Oberland do not seem to be frequently ascended. So far as I could ascertain, the Silberhorn has been but rarely climbed for many years,† while on the Lauteraarhorn and the Berglistock the most recent records of ascents I could find, judging from the cards on the top, were about four years old. Some of the Alpine huts I occupied were extremely comfortable, notably the Mutthorn hut, where such luxuries as an Alpine library, champagne glasses, and an alarm clock were provided, and where I spent three or four days with my wife in the greatest comfort. The Gauli hut at the head of the Urbach Thal is excellent in all respects, and the Pavillon Dolfuss has been much enlarged and improved; while the Dossenhütte is very nice, clean, and comfortable. But no words of mine can describe the horrors of the Concordia as I found it at the end of June, with the remains of winter snow and ice still there, and everything reeking of damp, mould, and filth; as a friend of mine, who followed me a few days later there, observed: 'I would not kennel a dog there.' The framework of a new hut or inn is *in situ*; let us hope that before another season a decent little mountain inn may welcome the weary ones who reach this spot in such large numbers. With the mere recital of what I accomplished during the past season I think this paper must conclude, as there was no incident worthy of much remark. I had excellent guides and good weather, and everything went smoothly from beginning

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\* See p. 530.

† An interesting account of the ascent of this peak from the Roththal, by Sir Seymour King, will be found in the 'Alpine Journal,' xiv. 31-37.

to end ; and the only object for this paper, as I observed before, is to point out that under favourable circumstances mountaineering, even among some of the greater Alpine peaks, may be undertaken so early as June.

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A SPITZBERGEN GLACIER EXPEDITION.

By VICTOR H. GATTY.

THREE years ago, in the paper which introduced the subject to these pages, I ventured on the assertion that Spitzbergen was little likely to attract the climber. This prediction has been falsified in at least two notable instances, and the facilities for visiting the islands have increased in a degree which could not then have been anticipated. Spitzbergen has, in fact, entered into a fresh period of its history, and has definitely emerged from the outer darkness of a seldom heard of Arctic land, and renewed the pleasant memories of its youth, when there were hot rolls for breakfast in Smeerenburg (so history chronicles), only the tourist has replaced the whale.

A second visit this summer, of only too short duration, to a different district, an extension of a Norwegian holiday, served to modify the opinion I had formed regarding Lamont's comparison of the islands to the Alps submerged to the snow-line, after seeing something of the country round Ice Fiord only—a country from which the parallel gains little support.

Soon after 3 o'clock on the afternoon of August 5 last, Dr. Woodman, Captain Stronge, Mr. A. Waddell, and myself landed on the W. shore of Recherche Bay, Bel Sound, at a point just S. of the right moraine of the Fox Glacier, a glacier which ends in a sheer wall of ice about 100 ft. high, rising out of the water of the bay. We avoided the ice at first, and went on up through a little valley which lay between the moraine and the hill to the S. of it.

This part of the island is entirely different from the country round Ice Fiord, where mosses, flowers, and lichens cover the low-lying land along the coast and in the valleys, and extend in a tentative way even to the tops of hills 3,000 ft. above sea level. Round Recherche Bay the valleys are filled by glaciers, and the little vegetation which is to be seen down at sea level ceases entirely a short way up.

The little stony valley we went up brought us in  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr. on to the glacier at the point where it commenced to be snow-covered. Before going on to the ice we left behind some