

THE DOM GRAT AND THE FLETSCHHORN RIDGE.

By OWEN GLYNNE JONES.

SIX years ago I crossed the Rossboden Pass from the Simplon to Saas. Ours was a large party, and might have been a merry one but for our want of training. On the pass mountain sickness harassed the majority, with but the slightest assistance from the bad wine that we had unwisely brought, and all our gaiety vanished. Our topographical zeal was quenched, our longings were for the valley. But I remember we looked dimly at the S. ridge, leading to the distant Fletschhorn, and wondered whether the time was near when we should become personally acquainted with this beautiful peak and its neighbours, with the queer hole through the Portiengrat and the glorious glissade on the Weissmies.

Arrived at Saas Fée we rested awhile from our labours. Eager for information concerning the neighbourhood, we learnt from a communicative youth, who knew all about these things, that the Saas peaks were designed in pairs, requiring really only five or six working days to visit double that number of summits. The simplicity of this scheme of Nature appealed to our own, and we set ourselves the task of meeting Providence half-way.

It is, perhaps, to our credit that we took an easy pair first—the Mittaghorn and the Egginer—but our stay at Saas that year was to be short, and we could not afford to fail at higher work. A couple of Saas loafers undertook to guide us, but proved to be lamentably weak. They shed tears and ice axes, and required much help from us dismayed amateurs. Then we left the district, and before my next visit my comrades were scattered over the globe, beyond the seductive influence of axe and rope.

Three years later, in August 1895, Elias Furrer took me from the Täsch Alp to the Mischabeljoch, and thence over the Täschhorn and Dom to Randa, a course of $17\frac{1}{2}$ hrs., including halts. Shortly afterwards Mr. W. E. Davidson followed our route from the Mischabeljoch. During the same week Furrer showed me a third pair of the Saas peaks. We bivouacked on the Eggfluh rocks one bitterly cold night, and next day traversed the Sudlenzspitze and Nadelhorn. The usual *grande course* is to include the Ulrichshorn, and descend to Saas again; but Furrer had business and I fresh raiment at Zermatt, and we hastened over the Stecknadel-

horn (or was it the Hohberghorn?), and thence by the Hohberg Pass and Festi Glacier down to Randa in 14 hrs. from the start.

The best epithets have long since been exhausted in reference to the weather of last autumn. Towards the end of August I migrated mournfully from Montanvert to Saas Fée, in search of blue sky and mountain adventure. The latter we tasted on the Tête Noire during a perilous night ascent from Chamonix, on our way to Martigny. Our lumbering old *voiture* broke some of its bones in a collision with the tunnel walls, and we fearfully expected to be pitched over into the rushing stream below.

At the Stalden station I met Peter Venetz, who hastened forward to greet me, and to beg of me to go up somewhere with him, anywhere out of the accursed valley. I promised that if the heavens would only cease telling the glory of humidity for a day I would telegraph for him; and he vowed blankly to come. He got the telegram in a week--late one Sunday night. He started from Stalden at midnight, and reached Fée half an hour after I had departed for the Portiengrat with young Emil Imseng. The telegram had been despatched early in the afternoon; but obtaining no reply I had concluded that Venetz was elsewhere engaged, and called up Imseng at 2.50 A.M. on the Monday morning.

Imseng knew both the Weissmies and Portiengrat, and said he could take both in the day if I could; but he little knew how ravenous for peaks this long abstention from climbing had made me. We left Fée at 8.15 A.M., and went off at a good pace across the main valley and up in the direction of the Zwischbergen Pass. Towards 7 o'clock we had breakfast at the glacier foot, and, bearing to the ridge on our right, we made short work of the heavily crystallised rocks that led straight to the highest point of the Portiengrat. This we gained at 8.15, and enjoyed a grand view southwards. Our 20 minutes' halt chilled us through, and we gladly started off again in the direction of the Weissmies. The remaining rocks on our ridge were passed in a few minutes, and we shot across the long, smooth snow-slope that marks the usual descent. Near its lower end we traversed across easy rocks till the Zwischbergen Pass was in sight. It was almost at our level, and we contoured along good snow to the cairn by 10 o'clock.

Then Imseng suggested that we had had enough for one day. Yes; but not enough for a month! I called a little halt and deposited most of our traps at the cairn. Then we



Sydney Spencer, photo.

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LAQUINHORN, FROM THE FLETSCORN.

went up the long south ridge of the Weissmies and into the clouds. The snow-slope on our right was occasionally taken, but for the most part we kept to the rocks. In $2\frac{1}{4}$ hrs. from the col we reached the summit, and saw nothing in particular. We did not feel the need of a view. I had wanted a training walk, and had obtained it. That was a sufficient point of view. We became hilarious and saw humour in everything, even in Inseng's now vanished fatigue during the last hour up.

The wondrous glissade in the descent was not fully enjoyed, for the way was misty, and the slope icy in parts. But we reached the pass again in an hour at 2 P.M. and hurried home to Fée in heavy rain by 4.30.

Venez was waiting with a sorrowful face to tell his tale of woe. I thereupon made an arrangement on the spot to take the Fletschhorn and Laquinhorn on the morrow as a consolation. In consideration for my probable weariness the weather interfered, and gave us two days to think over the plan. Then on the Thursday we got the opportunity, and starting off again at 3.15 A.M. (How significant these odd minutes are in Alpine notes! Of course we had meant to start at 3) we took our way towards the Fletschhorn. We were nearing the little Weissmies hotel when the splendours of sunrise clothed in crimson the high peaks of the Dom Grat, and half an hour later we halted for breakfast at the foot of the glacier. By 7.40 we reached the rib of rock that leads down to the Jäghörner, and followed it up till we could conveniently bear away across the upper fields of the Fletsch glacier to the N.W. ridge. The snow was heavy and our pace very slow, but fortunately the wind had swept and garnished our final ridge, and we had no further trouble. The summit was reached unexpectedly at 9.15, and we felt justified in taking our perfect ease in the bright sunshine.

The N. ridge of the Laquinhorn, across the way, rising to a level 13 ft. above our own, was, as Venez explained, an easy scramble of less than an hour from the Fletschjoch when in its palmiest condition. But appearances were threatening as we beheld them. The ridge was plastered heavily with ice and snow, and to ensure success we determined to hasten across and give plenty of time to the work. So packing up our traps we cut a few preliminary steps on the S. side of our summit and then ran down to the Fletschjoch in 20 min. The ridge commenced easily, but gradually became very troublesome. The cornices on our left drove us on to the icy western slopes, and we both worked as hard as we were able

for 2¼ hrs. before the angle eased off and the summit of the Laquinhorn gave us a convenient halting-place for lunch at 12.30.

We ostentatiously opened our bouvier, and with exaggerated gestures partook of our remaining provisions, for the possible delectation of the observing friends at the further end of the Fée telescope. Then when in half an hour the wind blew cold we looked longingly towards the Laquinjoch at the magnificent S. ridge below us, and turned resolutely down the western face. To avoid the icy parts we zigzagged a good deal at first, making much of the small excrescences of rock in the steep face. The route became easy when in an hour we struck the W. ridge and kept it to its base. We halted an hour for tea at the hotel, and then scampered happily down to Grund by 4.30, and thence on to Fée by 5 o'clock.

Venez was appeased, and forgave me for my base desertion on the Portiengrat. On the whole I was well satisfied at having so far realised the hopes that had been first entertained five years earlier on the Rossboden.

THE EXPEDITION OF H.R.H. THE PRINCE LOUIS OF SAVOY,
DUKE OF THE ABRUZZI, TO MOUNT ST. ELIAS (ALASKA).

BY DR. FILIPPO DE FILIPPI.

(Read before the Alpine Club, March 29, 1898.)

EARLY in February 1897 H.R.H. the Duke of the Abruzzi decided to attempt the ascent of Mount St. Elias in the following summer. The expedition under his direction consisted of Lieut. Umberto Cagni, his A.D.C., of Francesco Gonella, president of the business section of the Italian Alpine Club, of Vittorio Sella, and myself. There were also four guides of the Val d'Aosta—Giuseppe Petigax and Antonio Croux, of Courmayeur, Antonio Maquignaz and Andrea Pelissier, of Valtournanche, besides Erminio Botta, formerly porter of Mr. Sella in the Caucasus.

We left Turin on May 17, and arrived at Seattle, in Puget Sound, on June 11. On the 13th we started for Sitka on the steamship 'City of Topeka.' There is no need for me to describe once again the passage through the wonderful canals of the Archipelago of Alexander.

Sitka is the northern limit of the regular shipping service. The archipelago comes to an end between the 58th and 59th degrees latitude. Beyond this the coast runs N.W. for about