

scenery on the W. side is as fine as anything that I have ever seen.

‘I have this year seen Mount Everest, Kanchinjanga, and K₂. I wonder if any one else has ever done that before in a year?’

Those who know the difficulties of mountaineering amongst peaks 23,000 ft. high will understand how successful Captain Bruce has been during this last summer, not only in exploration amongst new peaks, but also in having ascended a large number of mountains and discovered new glaciers and passes.

Moreover, owing to the delay in the delivery of ice axes and Alpine rope sent out from England, the actual climbing was done with native axes, specially made in Kashmir, and rope obtained from a Calcutta shipping store. He graphically describes it as follows: ‘400 ft. of cable; it was an awful weight, but had to be used, and would have held a house.’

I am, Sir, yours truly,

J. NORMAN COLLIE.

THE FIRST ASCENT OF THE SIMELISTOCK.

BY CLAUDE A. MACDONALD.

TO go out to beautiful ‘centrist’ Grindelwald, beautiful yet, though overrun with cockney tourists brought out in bands at so much a head, and to accomplish two brand new expeditions within a few hours of that fashionable centre (one of them a virgin peak), is a fairly good record in the year of grace 1898. This I accomplished last summer, no one being more surprised than myself, for I had gone out with my wife to Switzerland, on her first visit, with no higher aspirations than to have many pleasant wanderings, ‘through heights and hollows of fern and heather,’ and possibly to finish up with the Faulhorn by the S. face and the Männlichen by the S. arête. During our wanderings I had marked the N.—or, more accurately, N.W.—arête of the Klein Schreckhorn, and inspected it from all sides, and, having mapped out a route, made up my mind to attempt it at some future date. At another time, having walked over to Rosenlauri and enjoyed a few quiet days, far from the madding crowd on the other side of the Scheideck, we resolved to return there, perhaps in 1899, so that I could enjoy a week or a fortnight’s scrambling among the Engelhörner, and, having had pointed out to me

the unclimbed and unclimbable Simelistock, I incontinently placed him upon the list of points to be inspected.

Soon after this I fell into temptation, the tempter appearing in the guise of my good friend our late Vice-President, Mr. F. Gardiner, who, having accomplished a very fine series of expeditions, culminating in the passage of the Mittel Eggi from the Little Scheideck, informed me that he was off to the flesh pots of Liverpool, and that his two most excellent guides, Rudi and Peter Almer, having nothing to do for the next week, were at my service if I wanted them. Fortunately my wife, having accomplished with success our programme above mentioned, had gone on to enjoy moderate glacier tramps and further the expeditions to the Gleckstein, Schwartzegg, and Roththal Huts, and was, therefore, thoroughly fired with love for the mountains. She immediately said, 'Go, certainly,' and I, nothing loth, closed immediately with the offer, 'for one week only.'

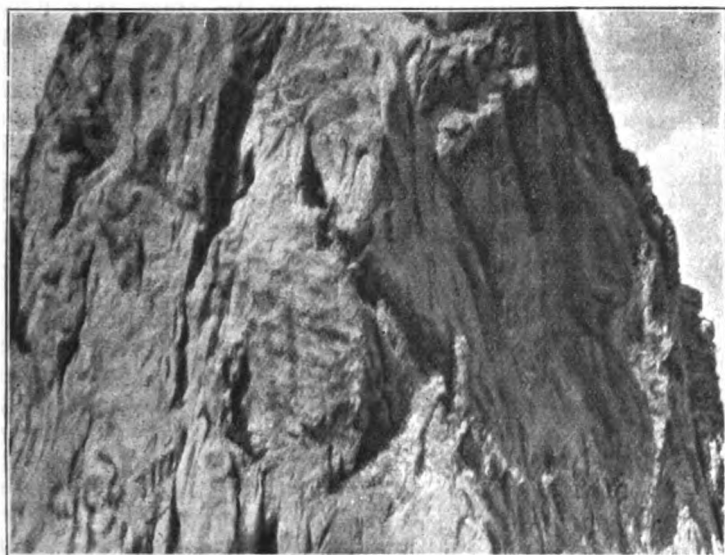
On August 17 we tackled the Klein Schreckhorn by the N.W. arête, amid encouragement but sinister forebodings from Th. and F. Boss and from certain past and present officers of the Alpine Club, who for the time being happened to be 'centrists.' Much to my delight and that of the Almers, we accomplished our peak by the route that I had mapped out, and I was very glad that I had taken so many and varied observations of the peak. We found it difficult and dangerous owing to the extreme looseness* of the very large boulders of which the arête is composed.

Flushed with success, we determined to spend the balance of the week remaining to us in an attempt on the Simelistock. We made our basis of operations the excellent inn at Rosenlauri, and duly proceeded to reconnoitre our peak. Rudi, who is nothing if not oracular, frankly said after inspection that the mountains he loved, but that 'das ist kein Berg.' We concluded that the N. side of the mountain was quite impracticable, and that our attempt must be made from the S.W. The excellent proprietors of the inn, who, singularly enough, were most anxious that the peak should be conquered by the English Alpine Club, gave us but little encouragement. 'Had not a strong party been beaten on it only the week before?' &c.; and finally advised us, whatever we did, to consult the guardian of the peak, an old shepherd or chamois hunter, who had a vested interest in it, having often made attempts on it, and having given advice to the numerous

* *Alpine Journal*, vol. xix. p. 252.

candidates for 'high' honours who had preceded us. So we, thinking it could do no harm, proceeded to interview him. 'Yes, it might go, possibly,' said he, 'but we must take with us 100 mètres of rope, a forked stick 20 ft. long, a small pick, and a dozen iron stanchions. 'Sonst kommt kein Mensch darauf.' Rudi and Peter chuckled. 'This was hardly useful, so, having thanked the gentleman, like a deputation to a cabinet minister, we withdrew.

At 4.35 A.M. on the 20th we made a start, without, needless to say, any of these accessories. The first three hours was



SIMELISTOCK.

the usual grind over steep grass slopes, and we reached the foot of our peak at 7.30, and took breakfast. Proceeding, we tackled a very steep rock couloir, and for 2 hrs. were mostly in and out of this, making for a saddle in the arête to the S.W. of the final tooth. The chimney-couloir, though very steep, was good climbing, and at 9.50 A.M. we came out on the saddle. Here, however, we felt that we had outlived our illusions, and saw matters in the cold glare of reality. The final tooth was bare, smooth, and of the most uncompromising appearance. Rudi, the cautious, on being consulted, said, 'Das gefällt mir nicht,' while Peter was as vague in

his opinions as the weather forecast of the morning papers. 'If it is climbable we get up, if not, we have to return.' A long crack extends the whole way up the left side of the final tooth, and having well observed this with my Zeiss, I concluded that if three places, where it seemed to *fault*, could be overcome the peak would be conquered. The crack was very nasty and difficult-looking, and outside of it the limestone slabs appeared, and subsequently proved, smooth as glass, and the whole peak looked well nigh perpendicular, yet after long observation I wrote down in my notes, 'It will go.'

We left all extras, including coats, on the saddle, and called 'Vorwärts.' We had not started up the crack very long before Rudi reported he could get no further, and having tried outside and found no hold, everything being quite smooth, he advised retracing our steps. Knowing that my extra reach might be of assistance we made a fresh start, I leading and taking the whole length of the rope. I thanked my stars that I was tall and spare, as my long reach enabled me, after much struggling, to get over the first fault, while I am sure a gentleman with more 'figure' than I have could never have made progress in the crack, probably never have got into it. Keeping going, with knees and shoulders firm, we came to the second fault, where a boss of rock blocked up and overhung our upward route. I had seen from below that the crack continued above the boss, and assuring Rudi that I was 'ganz sicher,' a statement I fancy he doubted, as I heard him assure Peter that he was dubious whether we ought not to return, I called him to come up to me, and sent him up over my body, one step on my hip, another on my shoulder, a third on my head. I fancy he stood on the last step longer than was absolutely necessary, and I *know* that his boots were newly nailed. However, up he got and reported things all right, and having sent Peter over me the same way, I swung out and allowed myself to be hauled over the boss. We then went on swarming up our crack, and had two lesser difficulties higher up, and at 11.5 A.M. stood on the summit, a bare yard square, much pumped and much pleased with ourselves. Funnily enough, the first person to congratulate us was our friend the old shepherd, who waved a large and very dirty white flag from his hut below a few minutes after we appeared on the summit. We built a small cairn, and left our names in a metal match-box and proceeded down, very carefully, exactly as we had come up. We were 5 min. longer in the descent, and at the big fault I jammed again, and the others came over my body.

On the way down Rudi and Peter amused me much. After momentary silence one of them would suddenly give a loud guffaw and exclaim, '100 mètres of rope!' or 'a 20-ft. forked pole!' and this joke with variations lasted them for some considerable time. It was a first-rate climb, and I cannot



ENGELHÖRNER.

speak highly enough of my excellent guides and companions. The larger photograph I took from a small point on the arête above the saddle and opposite the final tooth; it shows well the crack up which we made our way; for the other photograph I am indebted to the courtesy of the Hon. Robert Collier, who

was staying at the Rosenlauri Hotel. A very fine view of the Engelhörner, which shows up my peak well, was painted by Mr. Colin Phillip, and hangs in the Committee Room of the Alpine Club. We reached Rosenlauri at 4 P.M., pretty tired and much abraded as to knees, elbows, and shoulders, and in the evening high revels were held; the proprietors of the hotel insisted on standing our party a champagne supper. Next day, the week being up, my friends Rudi and Peter departed for Bex, while my wife and I, after consultation, resolved on adding the traverse of the Schwartzhorn and the Schilthorn from the S.E. to our modest 'ohne Führer' programme.

SOME EXPEDITIONS FROM FERPÈCLE.

By W. C. COMPTON.

IN a season such as the ever memorable summer of 1898 a fortnight or so may well be spent at the homely little inn at Ferpècle, which appears to have undergone little or no change from the hands of the modern reformer since it first replaced a yet humbler cot some twenty odd years ago. None the worse, perhaps, for that. The rooms assigned to two guests are certainly larger than a first-class railway compartment, even though you have to procure what nails you can and knock them into the wooden walls, because the builders of the compartment have forgotten to provide a rack to carry light articles.

The fare, if homely, is at least good, and the welcome and attention of Madame Crétaz and her family none the less pleasant for being simple.

But it is with Ferpècle as a climbing centre that these pages are concerned. Strange to say, last summer brought few climbers to this valley. Up to the last week of August, or thereabouts (though there were several botanists and occasional climbers), no party came to stay for the purpose of climbing except those who took part in the expeditions here to be chronicled, and who should remain nameless but for the rule of the 'Journal'—no doubt a wise one—that names and dates must be furnished. Our party consisted then of Mr. H. T. Rhoades, Mr. Valentine-Richards and the writer, with Emmanuel Kalbermatten and Siegfried Burgener, both of the Saas valley, as guides; and the ground was new to us all.

For an off-day or a preliminary training scramble the attention of visitors at Ferpècle may with advantage be