

perfect. It is formed of scoriæ and clothed with a luxuriant chestnut grove, the crest in places having a crown of pines. A spring which issues just at the entrance of the breach is strongly charged with carbonic-acid gas. The underlying rocks belong to the coal measures, a small portion of which has been preserved in a depression in the granite. This might appear to give some countenance to the now exploded idea that volcanic action was the result of underground combustion of coal, but if any proof to the contrary were needed it would be furnished by the fact that the ejecta have been found to contain included fragments of granite which must have come from a deeper source. We afterwards crossed the Alignon from the bridge, over which there is a most interesting view of the lava current undermined by the river, and ascended to some height a very curious winding stone-paved street or pathway. The people whom we encountered were very courteous; one old lady in particular took the trouble to explain to us where the best view of the Coupe de Jaujac was to be found. It was from this spot that the accompanying illustration was taken. The evening found us in comfortable quarters at Neyrac les Bains.

AUGUST 1901 IN THE BERNESE OBERLAND.

BY H. SOMERSET BULLOCK.

ONE of the old guard of Alpine pioneers, whose words are more honoured than their authors are allowed to know, has said that the special charm of walking, compared with cycling, lies in the fact that the tramp may enjoy the stolen pleasure of trespassing, while the cyclist, even the scorcher, must stick to the public way. Some such fearful joy tempts the guideless climber to trespass on untrodden routes—the preserves of the skilled professional. I have a cherished recollection of last season when the Gspaltenhorn challenged us to a guideless combat; of our seven hours' walk to the Gämchi Balm, of an afternoon haunted by cloud ghosts trailing their sheeted forms over the rocks; of an hour seized for hasty reconnaissance while our guide acted as cook in the hut and prayed that we should fail to detect the route to be followed next morning; of our compact with him that night that, should we be defeated, he should lead the next assault; of our triumphant return in a snowstorm; and of our consolation climb the same day up the Büttlassen, which

saved his face and put francs into his pocket. But that was no trespass; it was but pedestrianism along the high road.

It was on the Klein Eiger that we left the beaten track. Our headquarters were at Little Scheidegg—little no longer, but grown up and fashionable, and devoted to the Jungfrau Bahn, whose motto is *Nulla dies sine linea*. Undoubtedly a marriage for money, which (*vide* the opposition of the Railway Buffet) has already had its tiffs! On our arrival the hall barometer pointed to Set Fair: it always does, for it predicts unblushingly the weather M. Seiler wishes to have. He hides an inconveniently truthful instrument in his bureau.

There is always a comforting reflection during a first week of persistent rain below and new snow above: the weather need not interfere with training walks. But when the 'angels of rain and lightning' stay on over a second seven days one may doubt their celestial character, or at least entertain them unawares. On a midday climb towards the first ice-fall of the Jungfrau Joch the angel of rain pertinaciously kept us company. True, we had compensation. 'Shafts of sunny mist' were shot at a venture among the séracs, and far down in the Lauterbrunnen Valley a blue haze lay over the grassy Alps like the bloom on ripe grapes. Once more on a scramble on the lower rocks of the Mitteleggi (an afternoon expedition undertaken to soothe the feelings of the Rockman who had been led too fast among the crevasses of the upper Guggi glacier) 'arrowy rain' made excellent practice, and even hail found entrance between the joints of our harness. The ascent from craggy ledge to craggy ledge, from shale-strewn shelf to yet another plastered with ice, was made light of by the Rockman; he was in his element free. Meanwhile the Iceman dripped raindrops until they made a puddle at his feet, and then came on at the word of command, not omitting to mention that he considered the pace unnecessarily fast.

This varied practice in harness helped us to learn our paces, and when the first promising day was heralded by a night of stars we were ready for it. There is positive relief in leaving one's hotel after a two-o'clock breakfast. The air of a deserted *salle à manger* is flat, and suggestive of stale *petits pains* and a yawning porter regretful of his unprofitable early rising. There is relief, too, in crossing the promenade ground of the excursionists and finding no ghostly conductor shouting, 'This way to the telescopes. Put a penny in the slot for three minutes' view of the acrobats on the greasy pole.'

In the perfidious moonlight we narrowly escape falling

into the artificial crevasses made by the constructors of the Jungfrau Bahn; even the old familiar faces of the Eiger and the Mönch seem in the deceptive silver radiance both steep and strange. Surely a cascade of silver descends over the well-remembered ice-wall of the Mönch, while the final slope of the Eiger is trimmed with tiny stars. It is warm, too warm, though now and again a cold air comes draughtily by. We cross the line by the Eiger Glacier station; there is no night service yet running! From the mouth of the great tunnel creeps forth an odour of smoky fumes like some evil reptile. It is an odour that can be felt as well as seen; it is almost a presence, for it seems to uncoil and crawl among the wilderness of pots and tins and other refuse which litter a dirty snow-slope near to the path to the ice-grotto! As we take to the crisp slope above, a moan, long-drawn, as of a giant in pain, breaks the silence of the night; the Italian workmen are blasting at the end of the tunnel. For a pittance they are content to live in contaminated air, and all to make a tripper's holiday.

The music of the yielding snow-crust as boot and axe crush through alternately, each with its separate note, gives one heart of grace to look for 'the white star' which hovers

'Low over dim fields fresh with blooming dew,
Near the face of dawn.'

Happily the sunrise cannot be bought up by an American company.

We rapidly mounted by the edge of an old avalanche which had descended from the hanging glacier between the two Eigers, the great blocks like shattered fragments of a vast marble temple. They were white, and yet not white as snow. At the first chance we struck across to the shelter of the rocks which flank the right bank of the channel down which the ice-stream thunders whenever a sérac breaks off above. At this point it needs but two or three minutes' quick work to traverse to the stony ledges of the N. face of the Klein Eiger. At first sight they were by no means uninviting even in the early dawnlight, and we found no cause to regret that we had got up early enough 'to steal a few hours from the night.' The north face of the Little Eiger is scored with many wrinkles, sloping rock shelves, the temporary quarters of rolling stones, which do not contain sermons. These make attempts, with the aid of the night frost, to preserve a stable equilibrium. Between these wrinkles there are slabby frontages, sometimes offering moderate hand-hold; at

other times presenting a fair example of a mountain mirror of *verglas*. On August 5 the Little Eiger was also suffering from freckles, represented by patches of snow and shale. It needed no remarkable foresight to predict that these would be ready to peel off when the sun had been on the face a few hours. We halted for breakfast and a consultation at 5.30, and crampons and Mummery spikes (destined to save hours of step-cutting during our season's work) were adjusted in the hope of overcoming the slipperiness of the thin ice on the rocks. Already in the grey light the slopes towards which we were tending looked glassy, and the pattering of falling stones not many feet away was not lost upon us. We decided to go on, avoiding the glazed rocks as much as possible, with the proviso that we should leave time for retreat before the sun touched our peak. That meant at least three hours' grace. On a short rope we advanced extremely cautiously, paying much attention to would-be rolling stones. Diminutive gullies, all too short, led from shelf to shelf (these claimed but comma pauses); then we had to be content with cracks, which meant semicolons; and at last came an expanse of ugly ice and slabs of sliding snow which brought us to a full stop. There was no question as to our continuing our traverse towards the prominent tower on the N.W. arête; for us it was absolutely impossible. The Rockman and the Iceman were in perfect agreement. Retreat was seriously considered; the view was admired; the lapping tide of clouds flowed round the Lauberhorn, flooded its island summit, and crept slowly over Little Scheidegg. 'And the sun looked over the mountain's rim.' Pink cherubs went bathing in the sea of rippling, rolling mist; and the beaming face of the sun seemed to laugh with pleasure at the sight. Then the unpoetic person demanded a decision. The desire to report progress carried the day. The Rockman proceeded to examine the gullies, which are half chimneys and half cracks; they are veined with frozen streamlets; they are smooth with plates of ice; they are full of loose stones—and they certainly won't go in the opinion of the Iceman, who favours another route by snow patches and a distant couloir. This, on nearer acquaintance, proves highly objectionable. A gully midway, almost hidden from view, till one is directly beneath it, offers some security. We insure in it by twisting the rope round anything that looks as if it might hold. At length we stand secure on an upper shelf, which widens out at the base of a steep bastion of smooth rock, and leads on under a conspicuous tower on the N.E. angle of the face. The route

was plain; there was no need to search for the ghostly bootscratches of the Geister. At the rope's end the Rockman advanced until his crampons refused to bite into iron-grey ice, smooth, and well polished. By means of diminutive handholds and a close embrace of the rocks he made a few inches—which were by no means easy to unmake. Then the Iceman tried and failed ignominiously, despite his best efforts to freeze on to the ice by sitting tight on it.

The tide of clouds had ebbed. Little Scheidegg was waking up in sunlight. The early morning business train, which brings up crisp rolls and other delights, screamed to be attended to. There was time to be reminiscent of poetry, and Tennyson's lines corrupted seemed worth quoting:

‘The shadows of the Eiger towers
Slant down the snowy sward.’

‘We can go no further!’

‘No further!’

‘Little Scheidegg will be crowded when we get back.’

‘We will *not* go back.’

If it had not been for the thought of the twopenny telescope tubes we should have gone back, so I have been told.

Stung to unusual action the Iceman led the advance up rocks which gave promise of leading to a shelf which seemed to exist at the top of the bastion-like crags. The Rockman, of course, came up another way! But the shelf flattered only to deceive. It ended abruptly. Below, awkward rocks, glazed with a suspicion of ice; above, slabs; in front, nothing!

We began to nurse extravagant hopes. The Rockman assured the Iceman that the secret of the N. face lay round the tower. Once there he knew he would see the way. The Iceman agreed that his companion ought to be able to see further through a rock wall than anyone else after all the Cumberland practice he had had. Anyhow, the Rockman could go to the extreme tether of the rope if he liked. The fly has gummy pads with which it clings to smooth surfaces, and the Iceman has a theory that the Rockman carries a bottle of ‘Stickfast’ in one of his pockets. With trifling aid, moral and otherwise, from the rope, he descended, traversing so as to avoid the glazed slabs immediately below. The last few feet seemed to give some trouble, but they were managed successfully. A minute later the Rockman had unroped and disappeared round the base of the tower. The Iceman was left on the shelf. In five minutes he knew that the other had found the route. ‘It went, went beautifully, went to the

very summit.' But the intermediate question how the Iceman was to come had first to be answered. A little *verglas* is almost as dangerous as a little learning. Weigh this piece of wisdom against the consideration that he who hesitates is lost, and you at once understand why the Iceman made ready for descent. First, however, the loose end of the rope was tied round a convenient boulder by the Rockman, who, having taken this precaution, prepared to field his friend should he slip. This the latter prophesied was a foregone conclusion; the only doubtful point was how far he would fall before he came to hand. The first dozen feet offered no great difficulty; then holds became less than nominal—a vague expression which is none the less suggestive for that—until the squirming climber felt he had come 'unto this last'—a finger hold of sloping ledge. This proved inadequate, and a moment later the prophecy was fulfilled, and the Rockman had his hands full. A sudden slide, the scrape of the axe, a clatter of loose stones, a tightening of the rope, and the rock-toboggan was over. Total damages, some numbed fingers, and a few silent maledictions. I should like to make this little incident match the thrilling escapades of the Cumberland climber, but I cannot claim that there were only 'invisible holds.' Some day Mr. H. G. Wells will write his most imaginative piece of fiction on the ascent of an invisible mountain; then only will the phrase be justified.

Our turning movement brought us directly below a snow-covered slope leading up to a steep gully, which seemed to give direct access to a ridge sloping upwards at an angle that spoke eloquently of many steps to the summit. To clamber cautiously from shelf to shelf of the intervening rocks was easy enough, thanks to well-frozen snow patches, and the lower section of the gully yielded to vigorous step-kicking. But it was soon a case of enduring hardness, and the Iceman was allowed to cut comfortable steps through the snow crust into the ice beneath. The Rockman constantly pleaded to be allowed to court the rib of rock which edged the gully, but even he proved fickle and did not fall head over heels in love with the slippery slabs. Step-cutting was, therefore, continued: at first after the fashion of an accommodating stairway; then more like a ladder of notches, miserable imitations of rungs!

Once on the final snow slope there came relief, and the Rockman offered his services as step-kicker. A halt of a few minutes gave an opportunity to note the outgoing tide of mist waves, which had left sunny pools of cloud among the shadowy valleys.

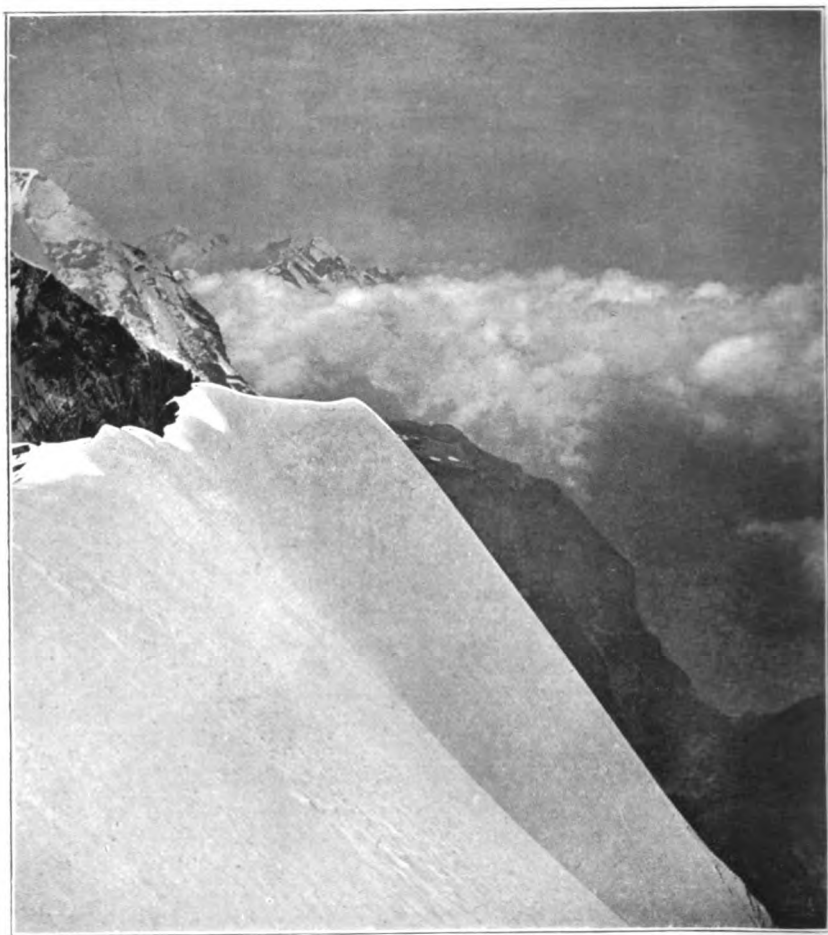


Photo by H. Somerset Bullock

[Svan Electric Engraving Co.]

THE SUMMIT OF THE LITTLE EGER, WITH THE FINAL SNOW SLOPE.

'Sun rays, leaning on our southern hills and lighting
Wild cloud mountains that drag the hills along.'

The prospect of a 'blue and breezy noon' with hot sun upon rock and snow made us hurry on. Our steps took no zigzag course, but a bee-line for the Silberhorn-like summit, a pretty pattern of pin-pricks, which were all we needed, since our boots were armed at all points like a hedgehog's back. The topmost snows provide splendid shelter. There is a hollow of the hills, a snowy basin with a corniced rim on one side and black rocks on the other. Here, despite the urgent call for refreshment from the rucksack, one cannot but drink in the view.

'For to admire an' for to see,
For to be'old this world so wide—
It never done no good to me,
But I can't drop it if I tried!'

If you translate the third line to mean that the finest prospect cannot take the place of porridge or any other delicacy you may have in your sack, it is profoundly true.

I have no more partiality for records and time-tables than certain southern railway companies. The chiefest charm of the complete holiday is its leisurely delight, and the curse of the conducted tourist that travelling by the watch which is so destructive of peace of mind. Yet for those who are bent on setting up new figures it may be courteous to note that we left Little Scheidegg at 3.5 A.M., spent half an hour close to where we took to the rocks of the Little Eiger, turned the tower about 7 A.M., and reached the summit close on two hours later.

I doubt if you can see more difficult or more delightful snow and ice work from any peak of the Oberland than that which rewards the climber on the Little Eiger. The Great Brother in his glittering coat of armour, glazed with *verglas*; the Mönch, showing its precipitous ice-wall in perfect relief; the Jungfrau in her many-folded robe of snow; and, above all, to those who have made lifelong friends of them, the Eiger and Jungfrau Jochs. The final steep of the former pass was ablaze with sunlight: every detail of a day gone by was recalled to me, and over the very ice-slope up which we had climbed by interminable steps for seven hours an avalanche of new snow had swept, leaving an ever-widening trail. The fan-shaped mass of debris lay in the deep shadow at the foot of the precipice. Rarely has a photographer the chance to take such clouds as hovered over the arête of

splintered rock. Like the breakers of a silent sea, they seemed to have risen mysteriously from the waveless blue of the distant horizon, to have rolled threateningly towards the great intercepting wall, and at last to have burst in sunlit spray over each majestic gendarme. Beyond the pass that fails, that tempting snowy breach which leads to impassable precipices, and near the Great Eiger, there were gentle clouds—a pretty enough sight, but with none of the grandeur of the foam clouds over the Eiger Joch.

Then our outlook became severely practical. We knew that a party of Swiss climbers had planned to start that morning for the Jungfrau from the little goblin-like Guggi Hut. We raked, in true nautical style, that sea of ice which separates the cabin from the first ice-wall, but the glasses gave us no news of them. Instead, we made out a gigantic crevasse, stretching from end to end of the ice-fall, and spanned by no bridge of snows. At one solitary point a shattered sérac seemed to have lodged, but we could not determine whether the chasm might be crossed by means of it. On our return we were told that for the first season of the century neither the Jungfrau Joch nor the Jungfrau would be possible from Little Scheidegg: the crevasses were too formidable.

Next we turned our attention to the Great Eiger, where we made out a party of three just beyond the rocks where one usually has breakfast. The mountain had not been ascended before in 1901, and we watched the advance with considerable interest and far more than idle curiosity. Our plan had been to descend by the usual route up the Little Eiger, that is, by way of the sham Eiger Joch, and thence through the ice-fall round and back to the foot of our peak. But an obvious and attractive alternative was offered in a climb from the Little to the Great Eiger, first by the steep snow arête (at least, we hoped it was snow), then by a narrowing couloir and steep rocks to the last ridge, which gives access to the summit. Our only cause for misgiving was the possibility that the ice on the Great Eiger would demand a heavy tale of step-cutting, and that the rocks might be badly glazed.

Like the childlike Chinaman, we refused to know our own mind: in a word, we temporised, keeping a weather eye on the progress of our unknown friends. At 10.35 A.M. we left our first peak, the ostensible objective being a great rock which stood as guardian of the steep S.W. ridge. Here we decided to examine the route to the sham Joch. The

climbing is highly diverting, for one traverses under a small cornice for some distance, and at times one is constrained to duck under the frozen wave, or wade forward with one arm affectionately over the far side. At length it was possible to kick steps along the ridge, and we were speedily in the shadow of the great rock. Here we had another consultation, and again in diplomatic fashion we deferred judgment. The Rockman suddenly awoke to the discovery that the Eiger ice-fall is—mostly ice, and that the descent to the *névé* above is—mostly snow. On the other hand, he detected rocks ahead on the Great Eiger, and it was useless for him to try to conceal the fact that he was keenly anxious to wreck the Iceman's hopes upon them. For the latter hankered for his beloved crevasses, and pronounced the snow-covered slopes to the *névé* perfectly safe and easy. However, he admitted that he would like to leave his card on the Big Brother. Besides, the other party were getting up, and after what we had done any pride in refusing to use their steps would deserve to be followed by a fall.

We kicked off for our goal in fine style. The pace was good, and the combination of cheerfulness and determination excellent. One kick to a step is exhilarating, two kicks to a step is depressing, three kicks to a step—well, one would willingly exchange them for one's last halfpence. Even the Iceman soon had enough of it, and suddenly developed a remarkable devotion to rocks, even slabby rocks. In other seasons, when fine weather is the rule rather than the exception, this steeply sloping eave may be hard as ice, and three or four hours' step-cutting may be counted as the cost. In our case it was firm enough to make us imagine we were developing gouty toes by over much step-kicking. At the top of the ridge, which reminds one of a snow-covered eave, there is a lofty stack of rock. For some reason, or for none, we tried to turn it on the right, and had made a short traverse when we decided to explore the face before committing ourselves. This promised better things, and we struck straight up snow at a steep angle, needing steps, and leading to an open gully, bounded on one side by the gendarmes on the ridge, and on the other by a rib of rock joining it higher up. The formation was suggestive of the prongs of a hay fork. Where these are fixed to the shaft there was a choice of route, first a narrow chimney, second a bulging knee, not by any means as sound as one could have wished. The wisdom that follows the event now makes it clear that we should have gone for the chimney. As it was, the Rockman left the Iceman as

firm as he could make himself in gigantic steps with his axe jammed between the rock and the ice, and foot by foot the seventy feet of rope were paid out to him as he climbed over the knee and beyond into an extremely steep and narrow gully. Here he anchored, and the Iceman, with half-frozen hands and feet, was gently urged over the awkward places. To soothe his injured feelings he was allowed to lead up the last rocks and along the fine-cut snowy ridge stretching down from the summit. This was reached at 1.10 P.M., about an hour later than the party we had seen from the Little Eiger. Five minutes' halt was voted sufficient owing to threatening weather, and we were by no means sorry for the steps of ample proportions zigzagging down the western slope. At 2 P.M. at the breakfast place we caught up the men to whom we were indebted for them. They turned out to be an English climber with two guides, who, when they discovered that we had no contempt for professional assistance, proved genial enough. They asked for a quarter of an hour's start so as to avoid danger from any stones which we might have inadvertently disturbed, and we allowed them more than double that time. Getting away at 2.50 we made the descent without difficulty, the *verglas* having thawed off the rocks. About a thousand feet above the Rothstock we were peppered with hail and snow, and imagined we heard thunder, though it is impossible to say for certain, owing to the rumble of explosions caused by the blasting operations. We did *not* take the train from the Eiger Glacier Station to Little Scheidegg, but marched into the hotel, or, to be quite correct, stole into the *dépendance* at 6.15 P.M. The tabulated times were five and a half hours to the top of the Klein Eiger, two and a half hours to the Gross Eiger, and four and a quarter hours back to Kleine Scheidegg.

That evening came the deluge. We had seized the one day in our first fortnight on which any serious expedition could have been justifiably attempted. There was a grim sunset: 'yellow and black, and pale and hectic red.' The Eigers, cloaked in 'mantles grey, star-inwrought,' stood proudly as though men had but paid homage to them, never conquered them. So would I close every mountain pilgrimage, inspired with new knowledge of the eternal 'splendour of the hills' and new desire to climb. As Mr. Bourdillon has sung:—

'The high stars over at night
Are under at noon;
And a young soul's vision of Heaven
Passes how soon!

He climbs, and the clear-seen goal
 Is gone—ah ! where ?
 Whispers a voice from the Infinite,
Climb ! I am there !

THE 'PUNTA DI CIAN.

BY THE EDITOR.

WHEN in 1899 an opportunity of ascending Monte Rosa was offered to me, I embraced it with effusion, for my peaks had of late somewhat lacked height, though deficient neither in interest and difficulty, nor, altogether, in novelty. But on the mountain my feelings suffered a rude shock. Those great snow slopes, as to distance so enlightening, as to the nature of snow so didactic, as to mere exercise so satisfying, in actual traverse so exasperating, in retrospect so balm-giving, are crowned at last by ice and rock, which afford a delightful scramble—but—'but me no buts on such a noble summit,' you say. But truly, though the prospect pleases, the traces of man's presence are sordid in the extreme,

'The fragments, scraps, the bits, and greasy relics.'

Poor Troilus can hardly have been more wrathful when he used these words, than I was when the full significance of the phrase 'a popular summit' burst upon me. I was content to fly back to the simplicity of smaller peaks, and leave such great court beauties as Monte Rosa to be adored of the many. [Since then, however, I have been reconquered by her splendours, and may profess for her a 'tempered and mellow admiration.']

So it was that when I stood with my friend Tempest Anderson a day or two afterwards near the summit of the Théodule Pass, and regarded the grim ridge which runs southward from the Dent d'Hérens on the W. side of the Val Tournanche, my gaze rested with delight on the last obelisk of that many-needed wall. A white sisterhood of clouds came up one after another, as though they would fain embrace him, but there was little fervour in their movements; their thoughts must have been elsewhere. Thereupon, having learnt his name from Sylvain's cousin, I vowed to ascend him. I directed Anderson's attention to him. 'Is he not worth a photograph?' 'Distinctly; he is splendid! I think he deserves the trouble of fitting on the telephoto lense.' 'Oh, certainly.' Thus invariably speaks the man who does none of