

us say) the Galenstock, more than would care to confess it have begun by going up the Matterhorn because it was the right thing to do. Even such are men and brothers. This Club is based after all on the desires that are shared by ourselves with the humblest tripper who crawls on all fours across the slab of the easy route up the Pillar—the desire for the high air and the sun shining on the peaks and the sense of something accomplished. In the ‘concentration camps’ above described, much is being done for the moral, as well as the physical, elevation of the sojourner. When he ascends mountains, even those very boulders which he dislodges on to the head of the innocent mountaineer may be the ‘stepping-stones’ of his tourist nature whereby he climbs ‘to higher things.’ Even when he only makes what I have heard a guide describe—in reference to the chief seats at feasts gradually attained by length of stay in hotels—as ‘la grande ascension de la table d’hôte’—even then he may be imbibing that enthusiasm for mountains, that *animus ascendendi* which is the sign of the true mountaineer; which will, one hopes, still send some Englishmen to the Alps when climbing as a fashion has passed into the limbo of forgotten pastimes. And here I seem to be getting near the subject which the secretary may have had in mind when he spoke of the Alps regarded from an unprofessional point of view; but I have also got to the end of this unnecessary paper. I apologise for the length of the expedition.

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#### THE BIFERTENSTOCK AND ITS NEIGHBOURS.

By A. L. MUMM.

(Read before the Alpine Club, March 5, 1907.)

**T**HOUGH the idea of writing this paper did not occur to me till much later, it had its first origin in a proposal of mine, made about five years ago, to my friend Mr. Charles Cannan that we should celebrate the twenty-first anniversary of our first season together in the Alps by spending a few weeks there in the following summer. He replied by inviting me to suggest a district, not too far away, to which we had neither of us been before, where we should get some not too formidable climbing and be unlikely to meet any of our fellow-countrymen. After some deliberation I fixed on the Linth Thal as the nearest place which seemed likely to satisfy the prescribed conditions, and there accordingly we

went, in August 1902, with another old friend, Moritz Inderbinen.

The season was a very bad one, and there was only one short spell of five days in which it was possible to do anything; but we turned it to most satisfactory account, crossing the Bifertenstock to Brigels, going round to the Val Rusein, and returning from the Sandgrat pass over the Tödi. I should like to dwell a little more on my recollections of this first visit to the Tödi region, but space forbids, and I can only mention now that two young Swiss whom we met at Brigels told us that next year (1903), when the railway to Ilanz was opened, a new hut would be built in the Val Puntaiglas. What happened with regard to that hut I do not exactly know. I believe one of the Sections of the Swiss Alpine Club intended to build it and then changed its mind, and built one on the Dom instead. But the matter did not greatly interest me, for I had no thought at that time of ever going back there. I was then a confirmed 'mountain-climber' of the type described by Sir Martin Conway in an inspired moment seventeen years ago.\* These are some of the things he says about the mountain-climber:—

'What he loves, first and foremost, is to wander far and wide among mountains. He does not willingly sleep two consecutive nights in the same place. He detests black-coated tables d'hôte. He hates centres. He gets tired of a district and likes his holiday to be a tour. He loves a good and companionable guide. He always wants to see what is on the other side of any range of hills. He prefers passes to peaks, and hates not getting to the top of anything he starts for. He chooses the easiest and most normal route. He likes to know the names of all the peaks in a view. He cannot bear to see a group of peaks none of which he has climbed. He covers maps with red lines, marking his routes. He willingly explores side valleys. He has ascended the Basodine and other splendid points of view of easy access.'

When I first read that description I felt as if I had been sitting for my photograph; but I think I must have left off reading at that point, for on looking at it again the other day I found that Conway goes on to say, 'The future of Alpine literature depends on the climber, but the prosperity of climbing as a sport depends on the gymnast.'

Now my experience is that a man may wander for years among the mountains and remain very happy and entirely

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\* *Alpine Journal*, vol. xv. p. 108.

unconcerned about Alpine literature, but, once entangled in its meshes, he is slowly but surely transformed into an impassioned centrist, possessed with a restless desire to return to his district again and again, till he has ascended every mountain in it by all conceivable routes.

Alpine literature laid hold of me when I got home in the shape of Mr. Valentine Richards, who asked me to help with some of the routes in the Tödi section of the new edition of the 'Alpine Guide'; and, as I did not know then what it was going to be like, I consented with light-hearted alacrity.

I expect that when the literary microbe has once gained admittance one is bound to end by reading a paper sooner or later, but the immediate occasion of this one was that my earliest attempts to get up the subject resulted in the discovery of a remarkable gap in the 'Alpine Journal' which it seemed to be somebody's duty to fill. But to make this, and what follows it, clear, I must go into some topographical details.

Everybody knows in a general way the main geographical features of the district treated in the 'Climbers' Guide' and the 'Alpine Guide' under the name of the Range of the Tödi or the Tödi district.

The Vorder Rhein in the first part of its course runs, so to speak, side by side with the Reuss, but after a short distance they part company, and while the Reuss keeps straight on its way to the Lake of Lucerne the Rhine takes a great sweep to the east as far as Chur; after that it turns north again towards the Lake of Constance. In the angle between them lies the basin of the Linth, which roughly coincides with the Canton of Glarus.

At the peak called Catscharauls is the point where the watershed between the Rhine and the Reuss splits into two watersheds, that between the Reuss and the Linth, which runs over the Claridengrat and the Claridenstock down to the Klausen pass, and that between the Linth and the Rhine, which may be conveniently called the main chain. The first thing on the main chain is the Sandgrat; then come the Tödi itself and some minor summits, then Piz Urlaun, the little Bundner Tödi, and the Bifertenstock. Beyond the Bifertenstock lie the Kistenstöckli and the Kisten pass, and then the main chain turns N. and runs up as far as the Hausstock, enclosing the upper part of the Linth Thal. Beyond that point it does not lie within the scope of this paper. On the S. side of the main chain there are two considerable lateral ridges, one which starts from the base of Piz Urlaun,

and a much larger one starting from the western end of the Bifertenstock, consisting of Piz Frisal and the Brigelserhörner. These, in conjunction with the main chain, enclose three valleys—the well-known Val Rusein, and the Val Puntaiglas and the Val Frisal, which are not so well known. On the N. side there are two great projections—they cannot be called ridges. One is the Tödi itself, most of which lies to the north of the watershed, and forms the northern boundary of the Biferten glacier, and the other is the Selbsanft, an enormous mass of rock, very precipitous on all sides and roofed with glaciers, the largest of which, the Gries glacier, runs up to the face of the Bifertenstock.

The Selbsanft abuts on the Bifertenstock in a very curious way; it is not nearly so high as the Bifertenstock, and is rather like a two-storied addition to a three-storied house; only at the S.W. corner a steep tongue or slope of névé connects the Gries glacier with the ice on the summit ridge of the Bifertenstock. It has no particular top to it; the only well-marked summit is the Vorder Selbsanft, which is a good deal lower than the main mass, from which it projects very much in the same way as the Vorder Glärnisch from the Glärnisch.

At its northern end the Selbsanft once joined on to the Nuschenstock, but the Limmernbach has cut through them a very remarkable cañon, called the Limmerntobel. Above the cañon, enclosed between the main chain and the Selbsanft, lies a ravine scarcely less remarkable; along its floor, called the Limmernboden, the Limmernbach flows down from the glacier of the same name, which descends from the Gries glacier. The route to the Kisten pass is high above this ravine.

Now all the western part of these mountains—all, that is to say, which lies west of a line drawn from north to south just west of the Bundner Tödi—is familiar ground to readers of the 'Alpine Journal.' Most of it was within range of the activity of Placidus a Spescha, whose story has been told by Mr. Freshfield; \* the rest was also the scene of much early Swiss mountaineering, notably on the part of Herr G. Hoffmann, who discovered the merits of the Maderaner Thal as early as 1840. Some of his exploits have been recorded by Mr. Sowerby, who himself minutely explored all the Maderaner Thal peaks and passes.† Mr. A. W. Moore wrote a charming

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\* *Alpine Journal*, vol. x. p. 289.

† *Ibid.* vol. vi. p. 321.

paper on the first English ascent of the Tödi,\* and other parties visited the Biferten glacier† and Piz Urlaun,‡ but none of them crossed the line mentioned above.

I believe I am strictly accurate in saying that to the east of it the whole of the region I have described was entirely non-existent as far as the 'Alpine Journal' is concerned till as recently as 1895, when an article by Mr. Coolidge gave some account of the Brigelserhörner. The rest of it has remained a blank to this day, though the Hausstock has been described by Sir Martin Conway in the 10th chapter of 'The Alps from End to End.' §

It was but little known even to Swiss mountaineers before 1863, when the recently formed Swiss Alpine Club selected the Tödi-Clariden groups as the 'Clubgebiet' for the season, and assembled in considerable numbers in the Linth Thal. One division of them, under the command of Herr C. Hauser and the guides Heinrich Elmer and his son Rudolf, the leading pioneers in this region, started on August 15 to attack the Vorder Selbsanft.

It is not three-quarters of an hour's walk from Thierfeld to the base of the mountain, but between it and the traveller lies the cañon of the Limmerntobel. This cañon has been described in the 'Alpine Guide' by Mr. Ball, who writes, 'It is said that when the stream is frozen hard in winter it is possible to traverse this extraordinary cleft, utterly inaccessible at other seasons.' It is rash to say of any place that it is inaccessible, but that view was accepted then and for long afterwards, and accordingly Herr Hauser's party ascended by the Kisten pass route to the Nuschen Alp, went down to the Limmernboden, up to the further end of it, and all the way back along the icy roof of the Selbsanft. They slept at a chalet on the Nuschen Alp, were 5¾ hrs. going from there to the summit of the Vorder Selbsanft (not reckoning halts), and 5¾ hrs. getting back again to the Nuschen Alp chalet, where they slept a second time.||

A few days earlier another party had been on the Selbsanft, with the idea of trying the north face of the Bifertenstock from the Gries glacier, but not liking the look of it they turned towards the Vorder Selbsanft. Then bad weather

\* *Alpine Journal*, vol. iii. p. 153. † *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 363.

‡ *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 134.

§ Mr. R. W. E. Forster's amusing paper on the 'The Baths of Stachelberg,' in the first volume of *Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers*, deals only with the sub-Alpine portions of this district.

|| *S.A.C. Jahrbuch*, i. 146.

came on, and they descended on the western side by the Scheibenrunse, a great gully which runs down towards the snout of the Biferten glacier. This was a very plucky performance, as it is a queer-looking place from above and was unknown ground to all the party.\*

I confess that, so far, I do not feel as if I had presented the Vorder Selbsanft in a very attractive light; the view from it down into the Linth Thal is remarkable, but in other respects it is inferior to that obtained higher up, and the climbing interest of Herr Hauser's expedition does not seem to have amounted to much. I do not know that it has ever been repeated, and no one visited the Vorder Selbsanft again by any route till 1881, when Herr J. J. Schiesser ascended it from the north with the guide Albrecht Zweifel.

They too slept at the Nuschen Alp, and descended to the Limmernboden, then followed a hunter's track along the wall of the Limmerntobel, and climbed out to a little grassy patch, very conspicuous from Thierfehd (point 1,852 m. on the Siegfried map), after which the arête was followed to the top. There is no doubt about the climbing interest of this ascent; it commences almost at the water's edge, and for nearly 3,000 ft. from the grassy patch to the summit lasts continuously for 4 or 5 hours.†

Six years later Herr Carl Seelig conceived the bold idea of forcing a way direct from below, and started from Thierfehd with Herr Treichler and the guide Heinrich Schiesser. They got down from the Ueli Alp into the cañon, where they spent an hour, mostly in the bed of the stream, then climbed out and reached the grassy patch already mentioned. After that they followed the route of the first party. 'The Grat knows the way,' as Herr Seelig drily observes.

They passed a miserable night in their wet clothes somewhere on the Gries glacier, descended next morning to the Limmernboden, and went right down the Limmerntobel and out at the lower end. They were in the water this time for nearly three hours, and state very emphatically that the upper part can only be taken down stream.‡

Heinrich Schiesser was my guide last summer; he has repeated this expedition twice since, and had to spend at least one other night out. The last thing he said to me was that I must come back next year, late in the season, when the

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\* *Alpine Journal*, i. 37.

† *S.A.C. Jahrbuch*, xvii. 290, well worth reading.

‡ *Ibid.* xxiii. 515.

water would be low, and that he would take me up. I said it would be very nice, and I hoped I should do it some day.

When one parts with a guide after a successful season one is generally possessed by a certain ardour and enthusiasm, and I daresay my reply was not wholly insincere, but I do not like the idea of that 'Kalttes-Wasser-Wanderung.'

My own experience of the Selbsanft consisted of an ascent by the Scheibenrunse with Mr. Claud Schuster, Moritz Inderbinen, and a local man, on my second visit to the Linth Thal in 1904. It was the only item of our programme that the weather allowed us to accomplish. We slept at the Hintersand chalets (two hours' very easy going from Thierfeld) and reached the top of the couloir in 5 hrs. 5. min. from Hintersand, exclusive of halts. An hour and a half was spent in the couloir itself; we found the upper part of it almost entirely free from snow or ice, which I believe is very rarely the case.

The most remarkable feature of the climb was the extreme looseness and rottenness of the rocks. I waited for several minutes in one place while Inderbinen was trying to get on without endangering the rest of the party, feeling that I should dislodge my own weight in boulders if I moved an eyelid. The local guide did move an eyelid or some other portion of his person, and Schuster got a nasty bang on the head. It was a wretched day: a dense mist enveloped everything just as we reached the top, and through it sounded the rattle of a tremendous volley of falling stones; whether they fell anywhere near the line of ascent it was impossible to tell.

A porter had been instructed to take a fresh supply of provisions up to the Muttsee hut; we proposed to sleep there and cross the Ruchi and the Hausstock on the following day; beyond that our plans were rather indefinite, as it had been impossible to form any idea of the amount of time that would be required for the ascent of the Scheibenrunse. Had it been fine we might have been tempted—one never can tell—by the N. face of the Bifertenstock; at the least we had looked forward to wandering about the Selbsanft and enjoying the view, which can only be obtained from here and must be an exceedingly fine one, of the Biferten Glacier and the peaks surrounding it. But rain began to fall heavily, and there was nothing to be done but to get round to the Muttsee hut as quickly as circumstances permitted.

The local man went astray in the fog; he seemed to think that as long as progress was being made the direction was

immaterial; so we put Inderbinen in front, but much time had been wasted. I knew from the 'Clubführer der Glarner Alpen' (an invaluable little book which no one visiting this region should fail to provide himself with) that there was a way up from the left bank of the Limmern glacier to a point a little to the west of the Kistenstöckli, but the description sounded as though there was only one practicable line of ascent, and I had a momentary vision of failure to hit it off followed by a wet night out. However the rocks, when approached, did not prove formidable, and a competent party would always get up them somehow without serious trouble; we raced along the Kisten pass track and reached the Mutsee hut between a quarter and half-past five.

I emerged from it at 8 next morning, to find a blizzard raging and 2 ft. of snow on the ground, so that it was just as well that we had not spent the night on the rocks above the Limmern glacier.

The early history of the Bifertenstock was not unlike that of the Vorder Selbsanft. It was reached for the first time in the same year, 1863, a few weeks later.\* The party, who were led by Heinrich Elmer, slept at the Nuschen Alp, went on from there to the Kisten pass, and ascended by means of the ledges on the S. face called the 'Bänder'; this route was again followed once or twice in the early 'seventies, and then, except on one occasion mentioned below, it appears to have been left severely alone for about twenty years.

In the meantime, in 1876, the ascent from the Gries Glacier was successfully accomplished by Herr Brunner and the Elmers. They started from the Hintersand chalets at 2, and reached the glacier by way of the Scheibenrunse, from which they got to the top of the ice slope previously described in 4 hrs. 25 min.; this included an hour's step-cutting by Rudolf Elmer, who went ahead alone for that purpose; the summit was attained in 20 min. more. The expedition was a long one, as more than six hours were occupied in getting to the top of the Scheibenrunse. The descent was made by the Bänder to the Kisten pass and Brigels, which was reached a little before 9 o'clock.†

In 1888 Herr Weber-Imhof, with two Zermatt guides, climbed the S. face from the Frisal glacier, apparently about half-way between the summit and the 'Vorgipfel' (pt. 3,371 m. on the Siegfried map).‡ The 'Clubführer' describes a variation of this route, practicable in exceptionally snowy seasons,

\* *S.A.C. Jahrbuch*, i. 163. † *Ibid.* xiii. 8. ‡ *Ibid.* xxiv. 421.  
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by way of a conspicuous patch of névé lying on the face a little to the west of the 'Vorgipfel.' In 1902 we found the mountain in the condition described (the snow on the Bänder was in some places up to our knees), and descended from the summit ridge nearly all the way on good snow, which extended to the very edge of the Frisal glacier.

How the mountain has fared since I am unable to say, but some light is thrown on this question by a remark made by the local porter who was with us on this occasion. I asked him if the Bifertenstock was often climbed. No, not very often. Had he been up it before? Yes, three or four times. Then, after a short pause, he mentioned in a casual way that he had only been as far as the top on one of these occasions. I passed this on to Inderbinen, who grinned a good deal and told me that the night before the porter had said, 'Oh, yes; let them start for the Bifertenstock if they want to, and go on as far as they like. They won't get to the top. Nobody ever gets to the top of the Bifertenstock.'

And it is true that the journey from Thierfeld to the Bänder *via* the Kisten pass is irritatingly long and circuitous, even now that the Muttsee hut provides a better placed and more comfortable half-way house than the Nuschen Alp chalets.

Therefore I was very much interested to learn that a way had been found from the Biferten glacier which brought the Bifertenstock comfortably within reach of the Grünhorn hut. This way goes up a couloir leading to the col between the Bundner Tödi and Piz Urlaun. It was discovered in 1898, and seems to have been used as a direct route from the top of the Bifertenstock to the Grünhorn for the first time in 1902, when another route was discovered down the N. face, straight from the summit to the Obere Frisal Lücke, the col lying between the Bifertenstock and Piz Frisal. The ascent by this route was the principal item on my programme in 1904, when I never was able to attempt it, and again last year.

But before coming to it I should like, in the interests of chronological sequence, to make a short digression, and to stray a little outside the limits indicated by the title of this paper. I came out last summer to Altdorf, where I met my friend Mr. A. E. Measures, who brought with him Johann Stoller, of Kandersteg, a most excellent guide, young, very competent both on rocks and ice, and full of zest for novelties. On August 19, the day after my arrival, there was a heavy storm of snow and rain, which heralded three weeks of almost



*Photo. A. L. Mumm.*

*Swan Electric Engraving Co. Ltd.*

## THE CLARIDEN ICE WALL

perfect weather, but in the meantime left us nothing to do but to walk over the Klausen pass. Now there is a ridge which runs down to the Klausen pass to the depression between the Claridenstock and the Kammlistock, which looks as if it was intended to provide a way to the N.W. arête of the Claridenstock. One of the divisions of the invading army of 1863 started from the Urnerboden, in full confidence of success, to make this ascent, but were brought up short, at a point where the ridge narrows, 2-2½ hrs. above the Klausen pass, by a remarkable ice wall, from which they retired defeated after a not very resolute attack.\* An English party, consisting of Messrs. L. Stephen, F. C. Grove, and R. S. Macdonald, with the two Andereggs, reached the same place, with the same object, in the following year, but 'finding themselves cut off by an impassable wall of glacier,' they descended to the W. to a glacier on the W., called the Gries glacier, and crossed the Scheer Joch to the Maderanerthal.† Herr Hauser and the Elmers had a similar experience a few days later.‡

We learned from the well-informed landlord of the Klausen Pass Hotel that this ice wall was now practicable, and that an iron ladder had been fixed in the ice to make it easier. On August 23, having picked up Heinrich Schiesser at Thierfeld, we crossed the Claridenstock from the Clariden hut and came down that way. It is a very curious place, but we did not find it very difficult, and only came upon the ladder when it was too late to make any use of it. I can, however, well believe that in some seasons it may be hopeless. The first party spent 4 hrs. cutting steps up it. We got down in about 35 min., some of which was spent in casting about for the right way down.

We reached the Klausen Pass Hotel at 2.30, in 8 hrs. from the Clariden hut, and drove down to Thierfeld, but undoubtedly the expedition is better taken the reverse way; it provides an excellent approach to the Linth Thal for any one coming to it from the valley of Reuss.

On the way to the Grünhorn next day I noted two interesting entries in the visitors' book at the Fridolin hut. One gave the names of V. A. Fynn and A. Bruderlin, and proceeded, with a conciseness recalling Captain Walton's report of the sea fight off Cape Passaro, '1<sup>ste</sup> Besteigung des N.W. Bifer-

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\* *S.A.C. Jahrbuch*, i. p. 109 &c. † *Alpine Journal*, vol. i. p. 485.  
‡ *S.A.C. Jahrbuch*, ii. 181-2.

tenwand. Abstieg über Scheibenrunse.' This was a remarkable climb; so far as we could judge, it must have been made up a very long and steep couloir, just at the junction of the Selbsanft and the Bifertenstock, and have ended on the slope by which Herr Brunner's ascent was made. Besides this I do not know of even an attempt having been made to scale the wall extending from the Bundner Tödi to the Vorder Selbsanft at any point except the Scheibenrunse.\* The other was a short note of an attempt to climb the Bifertenstock by the rock arête above the Bänder, which was stopped by 'smooth towers' above the second Band, *i.e.* the one nearest the summit. The only other actual attempt on this ridge of which I have come across any trace was one made by Herr Weber-Imhof before his ascent from the Val Frisal; no details are given.

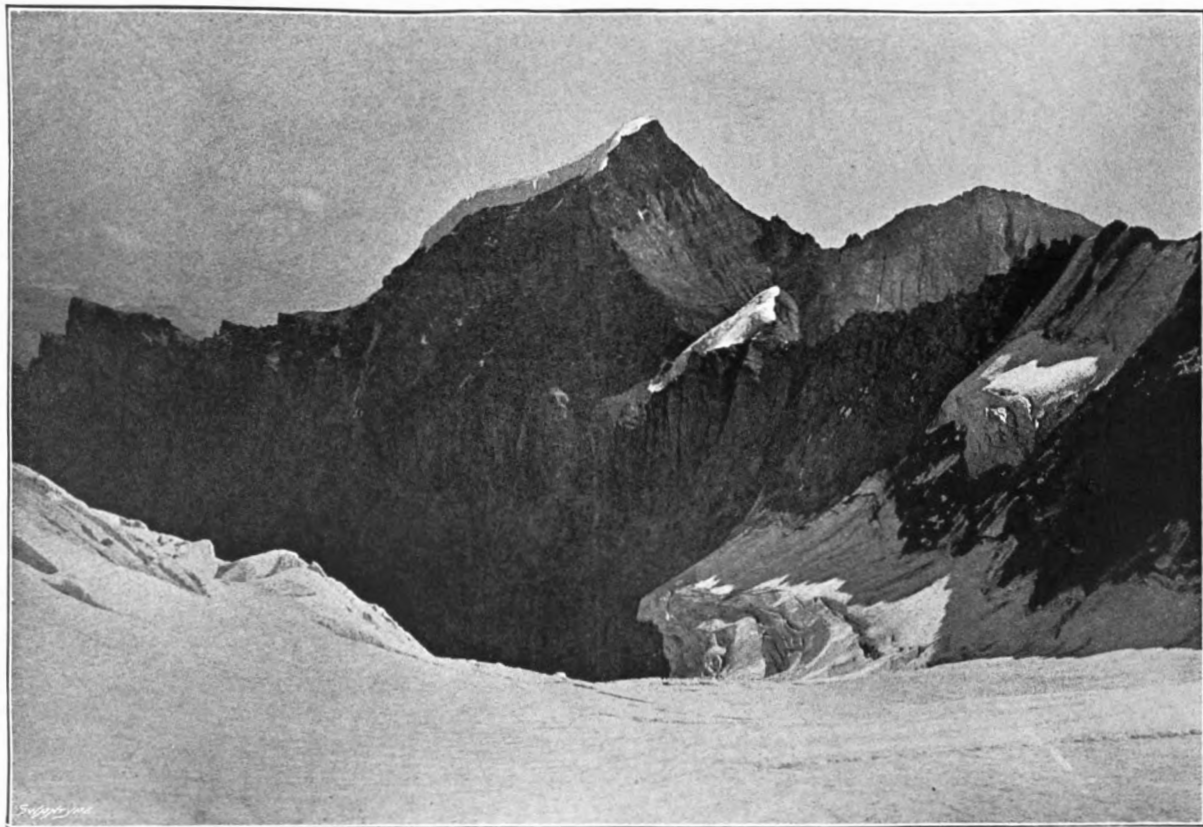
On August 25 we set out for the Bifertenstock, reached the upper plateau of the glacier by the Schneerunse, and crossed to the other side. There is no mistaking the couloir, which starts from the very edge of the plateau, just above the icefall. We started up some rocks to the right, but this did not answer very well, and a considerable time was spent over a not very easy traverse into the couloir; we ought to have gone straight for the bottom of it. Once in, it was plain sailing, and a steepish climb of 35 min. brought us to the top at 9.15, in 4 hrs.' actual going from the Grünhorn hut. I did not know what the traverse of the Bundner Tödi was going to be like, and was prepared for some step-cutting, but we walked over it with absolute ease to the Bifertenlücke, the gap between it and the Bifertenstock, in  $\frac{1}{4}$  hr., stopping on the top to photograph the Bifertenstock, which soared majestically above our heads. After a few minutes' descent and a short horizontal traverse we scrambled up slopes of shaly scree for something under half an hour to the Obere Frisal Lücke, which was reached in less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  hr. from the gap without difficulty of any kind.

It is a very simple matter to get down from the gap to the Puntaiglas glacier; the direct descent from the Obere Frisal-lücke involves some climbing, but not, I believe, of formidable character.

The ascent of the Bifertenstock from the Lücke took exactly 2 hrs. At starting we went down a short distance

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\* There is a good view of this wall in the *S.A.C. Jahrbuch*, xxxvii. p. 240. See also two other views at pp. 72 and 80 of the same volume.



*Photo. A. L. Mumm.*

*Swan Electric Engraving Co. Ltd.*

**THE BIFERTENSTOCK, BÜNDNER TÖDI, & PIZ FRISAL**  
**FROM THE UPPER PLATEAU OF THE BIFERTEN GLACIER.**

below the col ; afterwards we were on the arête once or twice for a few minutes, but practically the whole climb is by the face. Everything sloped the wrong way, but the rocks were not slabby, and there was no great difficulty about it.

My only *contretemps* was just below the top, where the other three, whose legs were considerably longer than mine, got up a place involving a big stride upwards and sideways, which I did not see my way to accomplishing. They were not straight above me by any means, and I looked at the place and did not like it. As always happens on such occasions the others sat in a row and cheerfully advised me to come along ; it was quite safe. So at last I made my effort, and promptly swung out into space, a thing I particularly dislike. However no harm was done, and a very few minutes later we were on the top.

On the descent we reached the beginning of the Bänder in 55 min., crossed the first one in 25 min. and the second in 18 min. From the end of the second Band the Kisten pass route was reached in 1 hr., and Brigels in 2 hrs. more. These may be taken as fair average times. Being bound for Brigels we passed to the right (S.) of the Kistenstöckli, but it is worth making the circuit round to the N., if time is no object, for the sake of the view down the ravine of the Limmern, which is one of the weirdest and strangest I have ever seen.

We spent a lazy Sunday at Brigels, where we were fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of Dr. Franz Weber, a member of the Akademischer Alpenclub of Zürich, and one of the party who first ascended the Clariden ice-wall. He was working on the Geological Survey, and gave us much interesting information about the climbing, geology, and nomenclature of the Tödi district. When he heard that we wished to see something of the Puntaiglas glacier he said that he had a tent at the foot of the glacier, which he would not want for the next few days, and if we cared to use it it was at our disposal. We accepted this most kind and considerate offer in the spirit in which it was made, and had the satisfaction of turning it to account in the fullest measure.

We slept out next day about 2 hrs. above Brigels. Our intention was to ascend the Brigelserhörner from the eastern end, beginning with Piz Tumbif, and following the ridge to Kavestrau grond, and then to try the descent of the western face of the ridge by a route described to us by Dr. Weber, whom we hoped to meet in the afternoon on the Puntaiglas glacier. For once the weather was unfavourable. I think,

however, that it was a blessing in disguise, and resulted in our eventually making a better expedition on the Brigelserhörner than we should otherwise have done.

The storm did not last very late, and we had a delightful walk on the morning of the 28th down to Truns; but there we had to wait for some final tidings with regard to the tent, till it was too late to start again that day.

Truns, as every one ought to know, is the place where the peasant deputies took the oath of fidelity to the Graue Bund in 1424. We swore no oaths at Truns; the weather was mending rapidly, the cook at the Hotel Tödi had a touch of genius, and I resigned myself to a lazy afternoon with considerable cheerfulness.

In the evening we heard some chaff directed against the landlord with reference to the long-talked-of Club hut in the Puntaiglas valley; but he declared that officials representing one of the sections of the S.A.C. had been up there with the president of the commune a short time before to discuss the question of a site, so perhaps they really mean business this time.

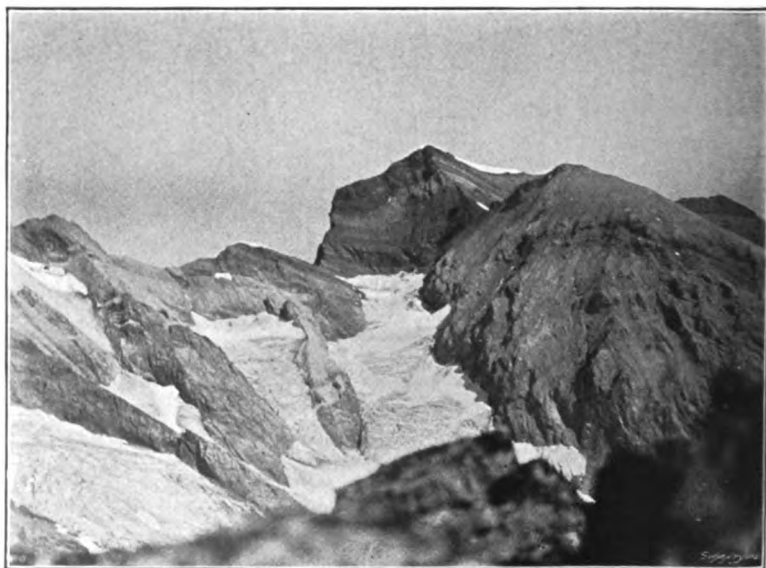
Next day we set off for the Val Puntaiglas, and I here take the opportunity of warning every one whom it may concern that if, in reliance on the 'Climbers' Guide,' they reckon on getting to the foot of the glacier in 2½ hrs., they had better make a very early start. That was the time taken by Mr. Tuckett's party when they went up Piz Urlaun in 1865; we started at a few minutes past 9, and took 4 hrs., and found it a grind at that; the sun gets on to the valley very early, and stays there relentlessly nearly all day.

About half-way up one reaches a great combe, filled at the head by worn, slabby precipices, over which the Puntaiglas glacier once poured. We could just see above them a small patch of white against the sky; I thought it was a bit of glacier, but I believe now that it was really the top of Piz Urlaun. The glacier ends about 300 to 400 yards short of the edge of the precipice, and about 50 yards from the edge we found the tent. It was a tight fit for four persons, but with the weather we were having it served us well, and we spent three nights in it very snugly.

I had long been looking forward to seeing the Puntaiglas basin; now the cirque which surrounded it was in full view, and I was not disappointed. Above the mass of rather dirty ice in front of us rose the smooth grey walls of Piz Urlaun and the Bundner Tödi, partially sheathed in glacier. On our left the circle was not complete; and a jagged rock ridge



**KAVESTRAU GROND**  
FROM PIZ PUNTAIGLAS.



*Photo. A. L. Mumm.*

*Swan Electric Engraving Co. Ltd.*

**THE BIFERTENSTOCK AND PIZ FRISAL**  
FROM PIZ PUNTAIGLAS.

which had towered finely above the Alp Puntaiglas as we were ascending had sunk into comparative insignificance; but on the right Piz Frisal and the Brigelserhörner stretched in an apparently continuous line of precipices, seamed with deep gullies, and broken by scree-covered terraces from which queer little rock towers rose like fungi.

Our hot walk up from Truns would have been amply rewarded even if we contemplated nothing further.

On August 30 we started for the Brigelserhörner; the evening before we had weighed the merits of Dr. Weber's route, which attacks the face of the ridge at the extreme top left-hand corner of the great slope of screes lying to the north of the arête which descends from Crap grond, and of another which appeared to be practicable, partly up the lower part of this arête and partly to the south of it beyond Crap grond. We learned later from Dr. Weber that the summit of the ridge had been reached by the latter route also, but eventually we followed neither of them, but made for the bottom of a couloir between the two, about half-way across the great scree-slope and nearly straight in front of us as we faced the ridge from the tent. This couloir seemed to offer a more promising line, but there was one bit just above, where the couloir came to an end, which we could not quite make out.

The couloir was climbed without much trouble, but the doubtful appearance of things at the top was found to be due to the fact that a huge cleft, some hundreds of feet deep, ran right into the mountain there and completely barred all progress in that direction. I thought we were done for, but Stoller rose to the occasion and led us up chimneys and rock-ribs away to the right without a check, except what was due to the necessity of clearing out the loose stones with which the chimneys abounded, until we were high enough to accomplish a traverse—which required care—beyond and well above the chasm which had stopped us. About 1½ hour after leaving the top of the first couloir our difficulties were at an end, and rough scree-covered slopes led us to the top of the ridge in a little over 4 hrs. from the tent. (Dr. Weber's route lies well to the north of the chasm.)

We were now near the northern foot of Crap grond, which scarcely seems to me to be entitled to a separate name, or to recognition as a separate mountain; the steep northern side of it took about half an hour; on the S. it hardly rises above the ridge, and we walked from it in 5 min. to the foot of Kavestrau grond, a beautiful rock tower which gave us

about 50 minutes' climbing. Returning to the foot of Crap grond, we descended by the glacier on the N. side into the Val Frisal and so back to Brigels once more. This route has been described by Herr Dübi \* and Mr. Coolidge,† both of whom reached the main ridge by it, though at widely different points, from the Val Frisal. The glacier is very steep and much crevassed, and gave Stoller an opportunity of showing his resourcefulness.

We returned to the tent next day, attempting a short cut from Brigels direct to the Puntaiglas Alp with the amount of success that usually attends such efforts. On September 1 we went up Piz Puntaiglas: a lateral glacier led to the foot of the peak in a little over 2 hrs., and from there a climb of  $\frac{3}{4}$  hr. up some very rotten rocks brought us to the top of a long shattered ridge with a stone-man at each end.

The northern one was selected as better adapted than the other for photographic purposes. It turned out to be slightly the lower of the two, but a perfect standpoint for studying the more lofty peaks around it.

The next day we regretfully bade adieu to our tent, crossed the col between Piz Puntaiglas and Piz Urlaun, descended to the Gliems glacier, and reached the top of the Tödi in 5½ hrs. from the tent, *via* the Gliemspforte. I think this quite the best way of getting to the Gliemspforte, and I believe it is also the best and shortest way for any one wishing to descend from the Tödi to the Rhine valley.

A lazy day at Thierfehld followed, and we finished up by traversing the Ruchi and Hausstock from the Muttsee hut to Elm.

The moral of my last year's experiences is that a hut near the foot of the Puntaiglas is very much needed; all the peaks on the main chain, except the Hausstock, would be within reach of it, as well as the lateral ridges which enclose the glacier. It could be worked conveniently in connection with Brigels, and all ordinary requirements in the way of supplies can be obtained at Truns.

I hope some members will also have drawn the conclusion that these mountains are worth a visit. Though not very high above the sea level, they are quite on the grand scale (the Tödi and Bifertenstock rise higher above Thierfehld than

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\* *S.A.C. Jahrbuch*, xxix. p. 815, where there is a good view of the Brigelserhörner from the N.E.

† *Ibid.* xxxi. p. 875, and (more briefly) *Alpine Journal*, vol. xvii. p. 589.

the Dent Blanche and Rothhorn above Zermatt); much of their scenery is beautiful, and all of it has a very distinct character of its own. The climbing is for the most part of the kind indicated at the outset, not too formidable (though I should not call our Kavestrau grond expedition an easy one); but there are plenty of other things to be done, some among them probably of greater difficulty than anything I have described, and I cannot conclude better than by giving a list of expeditions still undescribed in the 'Alpine Journal' and unaccomplished, so far as I am aware, by members of the Club.

On the N. side there are the Bifertenstock from the Gries glacier, and the Vorder Selbsanft, from the N., probably the finest climb in the whole district. And I should like to mention, though it is going a little outside my beat, the Bocktschindel and the Teufelsstöcke, which are only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hour's walk from the Clariden hut, and must provide some good, though short, rock-climbs.

From the Puntaiglas hut (when it comes into being) there are the eastern arête of Piz Urlaun, also accessible from the Grünhorn hut by means of the couloir, which I have described already in connection with the Bifertenstock:—

Piz Frisal, which I have had no opportunity of mentioning hitherto, was another of the spoils of Herr Hauser and the Elmers, who climbed it from the Upper Frisal Glacier.\* On the Val Frisal side it is a fine, symmetrical rock pyramid. From the Puntaiglas glacier it is not a thing of beauty; but it has not yet been climbed on that side, and would be worth trying.

and the Untere Frisal Lücke, reached by a mysterious-looking couloir, which I have not seen except from a distance; but I was much impressed by the respect with which Heinrich Schiesser spoke of the climb. Any one crossing the col might well spend a little time in examining the northern end of the ridge of the Brigelserhörner ridge, to see whether it can be reached from the Lower Frisal Glacier. This may be quite impracticable, but it is worth looking into.

Another attempt also ought to be made on the main ridge of the Bifertenstock above the Bänder.

One last word about the Bifertenstock. I should advise any one ascending it by one of the other available ways not to miss the descent by the Bänder.† There is no difficulty

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\* *S.A.C. Jahrbuch*, vi. p. 17.

† There are good views of the Bänder in the *S.A.C. Jahrbuch*, xxxv. pp. 826-29.

about this route ; but it is a very interesting and remarkable one, and if it was within easy reach of a frequented 'centre' would be very popular and much talked about. Indeed, considering the indignities which are being heaped on mountains elsewhere, the Bänder would run considerable risk of being fitted up with a handrail.

#### A HIMALAYAN BARRIER.

THE following correspondence is taken from the 'Times' of March 18, 1907 :—

*To the Editor of the 'Times.'*

SIR,—On returning to England I have found so much dissatisfaction in various scientific circles at the ultimate refusal of the Home Government to permit the ascent of Mount Everest that I shall be grateful if you can find space for the only three official letters, within my cognisance, on the subject. Mr. Morley telegraphs that he has no objection whatever to their publication.

The conception of this important scientific expedition was due to Lord Curzon ; and, as I am neither an original promoter of the scheme nor an Indian expert, I leave it to others to comment on the regrettable interposition by a Liberal Government of a Himalayan barrier to the advance of knowledge in this direction.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

GEORGE TAUBMAN GOLDIE,

President R.G.S.

1 Savile Row : March 16.

#### *Memorandum.*

1 Savile Row, Burlington Gardens, London, W. :  
January 23, 1907.

#### SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION TO MOUNT EVEREST.

1. *Finance and Authority.*—The funds are found by members of the Alpine Club ; but the expedition is also under the auspices of the Royal Geographical Society.

2. *Leaders.*—The expedition will be commanded, if the Government of India permit, by Major the Hon. Charles Bruce, M.V.O., of the 5th Gurkha Rifles, and son of the late Lord Aberdare. Every one in India or in geographical circles at home will know that Major Bruce is exceptionally qualified for this work. Next to him is Dr. Tom G. Longstaff, M.A. of Oxford (Christ Church), and who has also taken there a medical degree—M.D. In 1905, with the sanction of the Government of India, Dr. Longstaff accom-