

ranean, the historical interest of the island, the brilliant and certain sunshine, to mention only a few outstanding features, combine to give a characteristic charm to the island all its own.

Comparisons may be odious, but they are useful—one could not but be reminded of the Dolomites.

D'Oro, Paglia Orba, and Tafonato will not compare to advantage with Cristallo, the Cimon de la Pala, and the Langkofel, but the Kessel von Tondo, the gorges of the Tavignano and the Restonica, with the Scala de Santa Regina, in their respective classes of scenery, will hold their own with the best the Tyrol can show.

Jones and I spent our last, but by no means least interesting, day in visiting picturesque, historical Calvi.

As the evening tints on the mountains leaving Ile Rouse more than equalled in beauty even those of the dawn which had greeted our approach to the island, so the realisation of our holiday had more than equalled the expectations we had formed.

Au revoir, belle Corse!

A NIGHT ON THE SUSTENHORN.

By H. V. READE.

LESLIE STEPHEN has wisely said that there is no mountain in the Alps which may not, in some circumstances, be excessively dangerous. It might similarly be said that there is no mountain on which a party may not manage to get benighted. The experience of being benighted is not only interesting but instructive, and I am even disposed to maintain that it is an essential part of a sound mountaineering education. This does not mean that it should be incurred deliberately. One might as well deliberately plan to be shipwrecked. The unexpectedness of the thing is half its charm. Nor should it become a habit. Those who are benighted once or twice every season may reasonably be accused, if not of rashness or incompetence, yet at any rate of being prone, as the brisk Western dialect has it, to bite off more than they can chew. And the time may come when these violent delights have violent endings. Never to have been benighted, on the other hand, with guides or without, argues either singular good fortune or a certain lack of enterprise, as of those who do their climbing by contract, where safe delivery for table d'hôte is guaranteed, and time is of the essence of the bargain. Somewhere between the two lies the golden mean, but it is better



A. V. Valentine Richards. Photo.

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HINTER SUSTENHORN,
FROM ABOVE MIESENTHAL.



R. P. Hope, Photo.

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SUSTENHÖRNER.
FROM FOOT OF GWÄCHTENHORN.

to err by defect than by excess. Not of all things is it true that 'the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.'

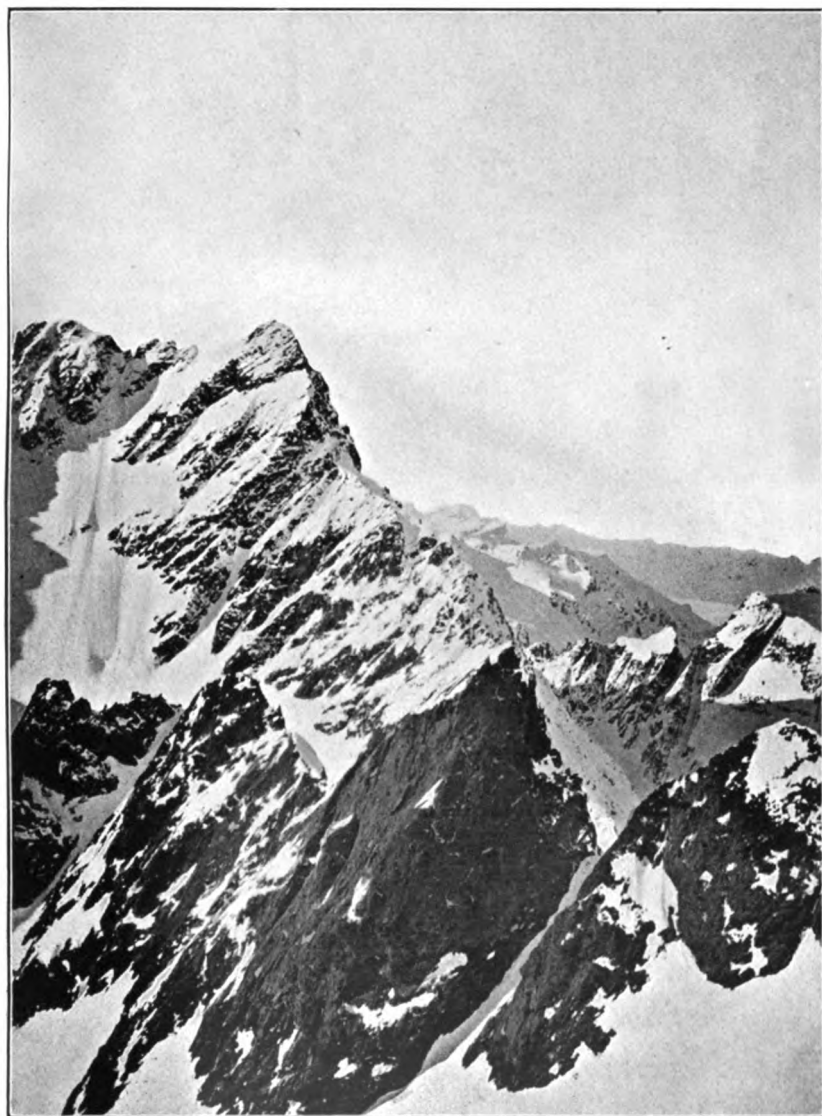
We certainly had no thoughts of being benighted when we left Stein on July 21, 1909, to traverse the two Sustenhörner. It was practically our first expedition, for one thing, and for another we were meaning to descend by the Sustenlimmi to Göschenen Alp, and meet the ladies of the party, who went round, the same day, by the Susten Pass and Göschenen. Nor did we suppose that the climb would be very long or difficult. Our original idea had been to ascend the Hinter Sustenhorn, by its W. face (route No. 4 of the 'Climbers' Guide') and then follow the ridge to the Sustenhorn proper. But after we had watched, from the Bockberg, that Western face streaming with avalanches all an afternoon, we thought it wiser to leave it alone, even in the early morning, and decided on the N.E. arête. This route had two other points in its favour; it would give a complete traverse of the two peaks, and it was first climbed by the friend who had joined us for part of the previous season, Valère Fynn. We reckoned six hours to the top, three or four to the higher peak, and another three down to Göschenen Alp—say, fourteen hours or so with all halts. Four o'clock seemed early enough to start; it was actually 4.15. A walk on the previous afternoon had shown us where to leave the well-kept path to the Susten Pass, and after three-quarters of an hour we struck off, over broken but easy ground, coasted round the E. face of the Sustenspitz, and by grass, snow, and débris reached the Kalchthalfirn in another hour and a half. A short half-hour across this would have taken us to the foot of the Sustenjoch, but we should have lost height, and in order to keep our level we decided to climb the face of the N.E. ridge and strike it some way above the pass. The short cut was not a success. There were no real difficulties, but rotten rocks, bad snow, and gullies which had to be avoided or crossed at a rush, caused annoying delays, and kept us at work for a good two hours. Ten o'clock, and not less than three hours to the top, clearly there was no time to lose. Yet we lost a good deal, from causes entirely beyond our control. Truth to tell, if we were three hours from the top of our mountain, we were much further from the top of our form. The arête is for the most part fairly easy, and was in good condition except for some stretches of deep soft snow, probably due to the recent bad weather. We turned the 'first precipitous bit,' rightly or wrongly, by a long and rather unpleasant traverse on the rotten rocks of the N. face, and climbed the second direct, as per guide book. But the three

hours had grown to four and a half when we reached the top of the Hinter Sustenhorn, and as we looked at the long and jagged ridge that formed the next stage of our journey, we felt that our time-table needed further revision. Mountains are not always amenable to the system of closure by compartments. It was 3 o'clock ; by 7, we said stoutly, we must be on the other Sustenhorn, and that would give us an hour and a half of daylight to get down to the path.

Alas ! regardless of their doom,
The little victims play,
No sense have they of ills to come—

At any rate, there was no turning back, the other ways off the Hinter Sustenhorn were either longer or unsafe for a descent in the afternoon, not to mention the fact that they would have taken us to a wrong valley.

The first bit was simple, but presently we were driven off the ridge, to traverses on the W. face—slow and awkward traverses, we called them, though if there had been any spectators they might have transferred the epithets. It was 6 when we came to the lowest gap, 7.10 when we had climbed up again to the nameless peak on the ridge, actually higher than the Hinter Sustenhorn. By this time the S.W. wind, lord of the weather throughout that disastrous season, had wrapped us in cloud, and sleet was falling. Our last chance of avoiding a bivouac in these unattractive conditions presented itself a little later, when the ridge turned to snow ; it was to traverse the snow-slopes on our right, under the Gross Sustenhorn, straight to the Sustenlimmi. We descended a little, and then bore southwards. But we knew, from our observations three days earlier, that somewhere between us and the desired haven lay a line of ice-cliffs. We ought to be above them, but we could not be sure of it ; the mist was thicker than ever, and the compass could only give us the general direction. We hesitated, altered our course, and at the psychological moment—a little after 8 P.M., to be more precise—an island of rock appeared just below us. 'The very place to spend the night,' cried Farrar cheerily, and indeed it seemed made for the purpose. It was broad, gently inclined, dry, and inspection disclosed a shelf in one corner on which we could sit comfortably, with backs against the rock. The snow had ceased to fall, we were out of the wind, it only remained to make our toilets before darkness set in. To one at least of the party there was a curious sense of unreality about the affair—we could not really be benighted, something must happen at the



Col. Huber, Photo.

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HINTER SUSTENHORN AND SUSTENJOCH,
FROM FLECKISTOCK.

last minute to extricate us, or we should wake up and find ourselves comfortably in bed. And something did happen, the clouds suddenly lifted and revealed the ice-cliffs within 100 yards of us, and behind them our pass. For a moment we thought of making a final dash, but it was too late. Even if the weather cleared, there was a considerable stretch of soft snow to cross, which might well prove to rest on ice; and the other side of the pass was unknown ground, perhaps impossible by lantern-light. In another minute the mist closed round us again and settled the matter.

Wet stockings and socks were replaced by dry ones, wet boots by felt slippers. Spare shirts went over the others, two of us had light sweaters, and one, much envied, a spare pair of what the shops call 'All-wool Pants.' On our shelf of rock we arranged first the rope, then our gaiters, then our sponge-bags, making as dry and comfortable a seat as one could desire. Food and drink, of which we had plenty, was put within reach. Finally we sat down side by side, feet in our sacks. The lightest man, given the warmest place in the middle, made a much appreciated return by throwing an arm round each of the others.

Having brought us to this extremity, the Fates relented. The mist vanished, the wind dropped, 'the high stars grew bright,' and presently came the moon, 'new crescent of a hair's breadth.' It was an ideal night for a bivouac. Tradition demands song on such occasions. Neither Farrar nor I are soloists, but Gask's outburst of love-songs, when we crossed the Weissthor to Macugnaga and he first felt the soft Italian air about him, still vibrated in our memories. Yet now it seemed better to sleep, if we could, and sleep we did, at intervals, disturbed only, from time to time, by the roar of a belated avalanche. Between whiles we talked, both of things appropriate to the circumstances, such as Farrar's five or six previous benightments, one near the top of Mont Blanc de Courmayeur in a hurricane, another on the terrible slopes between Saas Grund and the Hôtel Weissmies—and of things irrelevant, such as the House of Lords. The conditions were quite endurable. Our bodies were warm throughout the night, our feet for a long time; it was the knees, wet from the sleet of the afternoon, which felt the cold most. We thought that we wanted nothing but a fur carriage rug to be really comfortable. One of the new menagerie muffs would have done as well, but a spare pocket-handkerchief did not help much. It was found useful, though, to tie the knees together with string. At last there came a moment when

someone suggested looking at a watch. I pointed out forcibly the folly of this, on the ground that we should probably find it to be about midnight, which would be very depressing. But even as I spoke I saw that the Milky Way, which had been over the Sustenhorn ridge to our left, was now in front of us, and when the match was struck, the time proved to be 2.30 A.M., a delightful surprise. Concluding that we must have slept much longer than we had realised, we resumed with fresh vigour a discussion on the Budget and the prospects of the Government.

The last hour before dawn soon passed, and about 4 o'clock we began to disentangle ourselves. There was space to dance and 'the usual methods of restoring circulation were resorted to,' as the journalists have it. The struggle into boots frozen hard proved less desperate than we had feared. Breakfast was postponed, and at 5 we were off, nor did anyone dare to suggest that the expedition should not be finished. So we retraced our steps to the ridge, and after a quarter of an hour's hard going were so warm and comfortable that the memory of the night was as a dream that is past. Nevertheless we found ourselves indisposed to attack the iced rocks which confronted us on the last bit of the arête, and saved time by traversing under them until we could cut steps up a steep snow-gully to the ridge just S. of the summit, where we arrived at 6.50.

A short ten minutes run took us down to a halting-place, and we considered it to be one of the few occasions when it is permissible to take brandy-punch with breakfast. In another ten minutes we were at the Sustenlimmi, an hour brought us to the Kehlen Alp Hut, and another hour and a half to Göschenen Alp.

The expedition is a very fine one, probably the best to be made from Stein, and to return to Stein from the Sustenlimmi is as easy, of course, as to descend to Göschenen Alp. Nor is it excessively long. Our actual going time, the *détour* to our bivouac excluded, was $14\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. to the Sustenlimmi, but we did not find the mountain in good condition; we lost about an hour by not taking to the N.E. arête at the Sustenjoch, and we were climbing slowly throughout. The whole route, except a short bit of the arête above the Sustenjoch, is shown in the photograph by Dr. Brun, taken from the Kühplanckenstock.

There are many worse things than being benighted on comfortable rocks in fine weather. Had the wind and sleet continued, or had our sacks been less well filled, we might



Dr Hans Brun, Photo.

Swan Electric Engraving Co., Ltd.

EASTERN FACE OF THE SUSTENHÖRNER RANGE,
FROM KÜH PLANKENSTOCK.

have had a very different story to tell. I retained a vivid enough recollection of a night in 1892, spent on a little ledge above the Silberlücke, without food, drink, or spare clothes, to appreciate the contrast. Another contrast was afforded to two of us later in the season, when we shared the Schwarzegg Hut with some twenty fellow-creatures. So closely were we packed on our shelf that it was impossible even to turn round, 'all the night sleep came not upon my eyelids,' and gladly would I have exchanged the straw, the blankets, and the shelter for the bare rocks and the clean biting air of our bivouac under the 'huge and thoughtful night.' Two months later it was again my fate to sit upright from 8.30 P.M. to 4 A.M., while an all-night sitting in the House of Commons 'like a wounded snake dragged its slow length along,' and once more I wished myself on the Sustenhorn, where the Budget discussion had at least been relieved by intervals of unproved slumber.

Valuable as the experience was, it cost us more than we knew. If we had finished our climb on July 21 we could have done the next stage of our cross-country route, the traverse of the Dammastock to Handegg, on the 23rd instead of on the 28th at the third time of asking, and should not have been kept at Handegg :

With close-lipped patience for our only friend,
Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair—

until August 2. It was well for our peace of mind that we did not know of the really inföhnal weather which was to envelop the Oberland from that time onwards, until the senior member of the party, left at Grindelwald by himself, was reduced to climbing the Wetterhorn in the company of ladies :

Romanus—eheu, posteri negabitis—
Emancipatus feminae
Fert vallum et arma miles.

But in such a season as 1909 anything was justifiable.

IN MEMORIAM.

REV. L. S. CALVERT, M.A., V.D.

LANGTON SAMUEL CALVERT passed away on July 20 of this year after a brief illness at the age of fifty-nine years.

For over thirty years he was Head Master of the Grammar School, Batley, Yorks, where he was very popular. His success