

**THE SÜDLENZ SPITZE FROM THE FEE GLACIER, AND OTHER
CLIMBS ON THE SAASGRAT.**

By O. K. WILLIAMSON.

(Read before the Alpine Club April 5, 1910.)

IT is perhaps probable that the heart of every mountain enthusiast is specially susceptible to the charms of some particular group of peaks, and if I were allotted the invidious task of selecting the hills which I love the best my choice would unhesitatingly fall on the majestic range which separates the valleys of Saas and Zermatt.

One's earliest recollections of the High Alps are certainly among the most lasting impressions, and I remember on a first visit to Switzerland being fascinated by the brilliant spear-points of the Saasgrat as seen rising above the lesser ranges beyond the Rhone valley from the Alpine pastures between the Rieder Alp and Eggishorn. Since then a gradually increasing intimacy with the intricacies of the fluted faces and graceful corniced ridges of these peaks has corresponded with an ever-growing interest, with the result that a part of the last three seasons has been set aside to mountaineering in these most attractive recesses of nature. In the following brief description of some expeditions among these summits I wish firstly to say something about the east face of the Dom, and thereafter shall speak in some detail of that graceful peak the Südlenz Spitze.

THE SAAS OR EAST FACE OF THE DOM.

The first ascent of this face was made on September 3, 1875, by Messrs. A. D. and W. B. Puckle with the guide Johann Petrus and accompanied by Lorenz Noti.*

They 'slept on the rocks of the Eggfluh . . . leaving at 5.15 A.M.' they 'reached the base of the Dom's Eastern wall of rock at 7.15, right under the "höchste Spitze." We then went right at it . . . speaking generally the rocks were sound. . . . The work continued much the same all the way, rock and patches of snow alternating . . . The ice ridge at the top gave us no trouble, and surmounting it, we found ourselves within about fifty yards of the summit.' They reached the top at 2.40 P.M. in 7 hrs. 25 min. from the base of the rock, or 9 hrs. 25 min. from their sleeping-place.

* *Alpine Journal*, vol. vii. p. 324.

On August 20, 1885, Mr. M. Carteighe, with Gabriel Taugwalder and Xavier Imseng, ascended the peak by the E. face by a variation of Messrs. Puckle's route.* From a gîte at the foot of the great wall 'they climbed straight up the face, without deviating more than a few feet right or left, to the summit. . . . No falling stones or ice were met with, though some fell down the couloirs to the right and left. The rock, though steep, was generally sound, and good climbing except at a point about 300 feet from the summit, where a pyramid of loose stones, perched on the face, had to be passed.' The writer states that some little damage was done to two of the party at this point. He goes on to say that 'with this exception the expedition in the condition of the rocks this year may be pronounced both practicable and safe. Time 8½ hrs., including halts and 2 hrs. very slow going by lantern light. The rock wall, both near the summit and at the foot, was this year almost entirely free of ice and snow. . . . Messrs. Puckle probably struck the wall at a point much higher than Mr. Carteighe's bivouac.'

In Vol. XVIII. of the ALPINE JOURNAL Mr. Broome, in referring to an ascent which he made in 1895, says: 'Some of the couloirs which seam the face must be crossed, and they all appeared to be raked without cessation by stones of all sizes, both by day and night.' He speaks of the expedition as a 'Balaclava affair.'† In the same volume Mr. Prothero contributes a note about an ascent of his in August 1888. He states that his party 'passed the night on some rocks well above the Fee glacier, at a point almost immediately below the Dom Joch. . . . We traversed nearly straight across the face of the mountain, which was, no doubt, seamed with shallow couloirs . . . we then struck a rocky rib, with snow at intervals, which led straight up to a projecting point three or four hundred yards to the right, i.e. to the N.E. of the summit, whence the route to the summit was easy.' He states that no falling stones were seen by them. There was new snow.‡

In the description of the ascent in Conway's 'Eastern Pennine Guide' § it is stated that: 'A good sleeping-place may be found on the lowest patch of rocks on the face to the right of the flat ridge that reaches down from near the Dom Joch to the glacier. From this point you strike off in a slanting direction upwards to

* *Alpine Journal*, vol. xii. pp. 419-20.

† *Ibid.* vol. xviii. p. 147.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 289.

§ P. 106.

the right. You cross several snow couloirs, down which avalanches do sometimes fall, and thus in 1 hr. you reach the rocks of the main rib, descending from a point which seems from Fee to be the summit, but which is really a shoulder in its north ridge. (This rock rib can be reached direct from the glacier, and the slight danger of avalanches is thus avoided. A shelf at its foot can be used for a bivouac.) The summit will now be reached in 5½ hrs. by following the rib or the rocks left of it, and either going over the false to the true top or bearing left high up and thus reaching the summit direct. The rocks are steep, but for the most part firm, and the ascent is a safe one and a splendid climb.'

It will be seen that all the routes described are limited on the north by the 'main rib' referred to in the 'Climber's Guide' description, which descends from a point which from Fee appears to be the summit. This rib is bounded on the N. by a couloir beyond which is another steep ridge or rib. Probably the extremely precipitous rocks to the right or north of this rib are inaccessible.

When one comes to compare the above descriptions it will be seen that experiences as regards safety have been widely divergent. Mr. Prothero, referring to Mr. Broome's remarks, says: 'His words convey an imputation—which I think undeserved—on the character of that respectable mountain the Dom.'

It would certainly appear that to charge the Queen of the Saasgrat with being in the habit of dropping stones on the heads of her devotees is a serious accusation.

On August 1, 1907, at the end of a mountaineering holiday I proceeded to Saas Fee with Josef Pollinger and Heinrich Fux of St. Niklaus, intent upon the Saas face of the Dom. It seemed reasonable to suppose at that time that owing to the presence of just the right amount of snow on the mountain the climb would be a safe one. A week or two previously we had derived some amusement from a distinguished foreign climber, the movements of whose head, when (as was usually the case) he was engaged in animated conversation, were so sudden and extreme as to lead one to surmise that the causation of this peculiarity lay in a confirmed habit of dodging falling stones. On the same evening the inhabitants were engaged in celebrating the Swiss national festival.

'There was a sound of revelry by night.'

It was delightful that clear moonlight night to witness the Swiss

girls tastefully clad in white, their voices harmoniously blended in song, with the grand wall of the Mischabel peaks as a background.

At just after 11 o'clock next morning, August 2, the party, reinforced by two porters, started towards the Lange Fluh. Just before reaching the rocks of this ridge we turned off to the right on to the glacier. We struck up this, having here and there to cut a few steps, until we reached the more level portion. Turning to the left or in a S.W. direction, we crossed some avalanche *débris* beneath seracs and passed across the foot of the great snow slope or broad couloir which descends from the top of the Dom. Crossing the bergschrund without difficulty we soon reached the rocks which bound this couloir on its true right. Up these, which were easy although steep in places, we climbed for about $\frac{3}{4}$ hr., until at 6.40 P.M. we reached our bivouac-place, having halted en route some 2 hrs. There was a ledge well sheltered by an overhanging rock. This spot cannot, I think, be less than 12,000 feet high. It is apparently directly above the rocks which are alluded to in the 'Climber's Guide' in the description to which I have referred. We had been enlivened at intervals in the late afternoon by some rock falls from the Dom and Südlenz Spitze, and this entertainment continued occasionally during the night, but none of the avalanches were near to us.

At 2.40 A.M. next day we left the Saas porters and started our climb with the aid of a certain amount of moonlight. Turning to the right we reached in a few minutes the snow of the wide couloir which descends from the summit and to which I have already alluded. The snow was very good and we ascended straight up the slope; Josef, despite the fact that he had to cut steps, was setting a great pace. Above us was seen a rib which, arising from the slope, becomes higher up gradually better marked and finally joins the S. arête of the mountain. After about an hour's going we struck the foot of this rib and proceeded up it. The rocks were loose but were not difficult, although the slope was steep. The sunrise over the eastern ranges was one of the most impressive which I remember having seen, and the near scenery striking beyond words. To the left of us was seen the snow ridge which leads up to the Dom Joch, whilst across the couloir to the right Josef pointed out the well-marked rock rib by which or by the couloir itself he informed me that it is customary to make the ascent. Presently the rocks gave place to a snow ridge which was for a short distance extremely steep. For a few yards a more or less level portion

was now followed, and this was succeeded by another extremely steep bit perhaps 12 or 15 feet in height. The sharp ridge was flanked on its right by a precipitous rock wall and it was obviously necessary to turn it by the snow on its left-hand side. This fortunately was in perfect condition, as was the snow throughout the ascent, and gave excellent hold for hands and feet, and the leader with the aid of a judicious *vis a tergo* from Heinrich soon overcame the difficulty. The ridge now assumed a gentle angle, but we soon reached rocks which, although steep and loose, were not difficult. The angle of the rib then lessened, but the rocks were still of the same apparently micaceous character. We shortly traversed into a gently sloping couloir to the left composed of rocks of similar nature, and climbing up the right-hand side of it struck a few minutes later at 6.8 A.M. the S. arête, having occupied almost exactly $3\frac{1}{4}$ hrs. actual going from our sleeping-place. The point where we struck the arête Josef estimated was about half-way between the Dom Joch and the summit. During the ascent we neither saw nor heard a single falling stone, which I think proves that under the conditions in which we effected the climb, viz. with a certain amount of fresh snow on the mountain, and reaching the summit ridge at an early hour, it is a thoroughly justifiable and safe one. It will be gathered also that the ascent was free from serious difficulty, although I am well aware that the fact of having a leader of the class of Josef Pollinger causes the apparent difficulties to be reduced to a minimum. The route which we followed is I really think the obvious one, and is certainly less exposed to any risk from falling stones or ice than those which involve ascending or crossing the couloir. On the arête we met a biting wind. The Dom seems to be a particularly cold mountain. I remember on a first visit in 1892 being horrified to learn that whilst I had been photographing on the summit Jean Maître had narrowly escaped frost-bite!

We proceeded comparatively slowly up the S. arête. Here I came across a pink flower (*Androsace glacialis* (?)) at a height of over 14,600 ft. A level portion of the ridge was followed; a traverse and ascent on the E. side then became necessary in order to turn a vertical rock wall. The climbing was easy, but care had to be taken on account of some loose rocks. A second traverse similar to this one had to be made, and we reached the top at 7.25 A.M., having halted 20 min. on the arête.

I rather regret that we did not follow the arête to the Täscherhorn, as the day was yet young, and the weather magni-



O. K. Williamson, photo.

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ON S.E. FACE OF SÜDLENZSPITZE. DOM IN DISTANCE.

ficent. Still this would have been an arduous undertaking as there was fresh snow on the rocks. After halting for some two hours on the snow below the summit we descended by the ordinary route and reached Randa early in the afternoon.

THE SÜDLENZ SPITZE.

It seems unfortunate that the name Lenz Spitze, or Peak of Spring,* which is sometimes used is not more generally applied to this peak. According to Dr. Dübi † this name has its origin in the fact that during the solstice as seen from Fee the sun sets exactly behind the mountain. The same writer points out that the name Südlenz Spitze is in any case unsuitable.

Like all respectable mountains it has three arêtes separating from one another the same number of faces. The S.W. arête joins the peak to the Dom, from which it is separated by the Nadeljoch. ‡ The N.W. arête unites it with the Nadelhorn, the gap separating these two peaks being known as the Lenzjoch. The third arête runs in a direction slightly N. of E. until it finally, as Mr. Dent says, 'terminates below after the fashion of a "rational" divided skirt in two undecided continuations' which enclose the Ober and Unter Fall glaciers. The northern offshoot is that on which is built the Mischabel hütte. The southern one is known as the Eggfluh and is well known to visitors at Saas Fee as the inartistic mass which shuts out from their view the lower part of the mountain.

Between the S.W. and N.W. arêtes lies the fluted rocky W. face, the least steep of the three, which falls away to the névé of the Hohberg glacier, whilst the latter ridge and the eastern one bound on each side the snowy N.E. wall which rises steeply from the Hohbalen névé, and is a familiar object to those who have ascended the Ulrichshorn. Last of all, between the S.W. and E. arêtes lies the S.E. face, a rocky wall, rising at a considerable angle above an upper shelf of the Fee glacier, and divided up by a number of ribs into corresponding couloirs.

As every member of this Club knows, the first ascent of the

* Other names for the peak are Südenendspitze or Landspitze according to Conway, 'The North District of the Saas Grat.'—*Alpine Journal*, vol. x. p. 332.

† 'Saas-Fee und Umgebung,' p. 149.

‡ I here enter a word of protest against the absurd custom by which nowadays the pass south of the Lenz Spitze is known as the Nadeljoch, whilst that south of the Nadelhorn is designated by the name Lenzjoch.

peak was made in August 1870 by Mr. Dent with A. Burgener and a porter, * by the N.W. arête. From the Hohbalen névé they ascended a buttress of rock, after which they made their way up the crest of a snow slope to a point apparently near the Lenzjoch, whence they followed the ridge to the top.

The E. arête and W. face were both first climbed by Mr. W. W. Graham with Theodor Andermatten and Ambrose Supersax on August 3, 1882. 'Starting from a lofty bivouac above the Fee glacier they mounted along the granite ridge which does duty as an arête. The climb was very difficult. The party were forced on to the face several times and had at one spot to leap a cleft 100 feet deep and 8 wide. The summit was reached in 3½ hrs. . . . The rocks by which the descent to the Hohberg glacier was effected † were coated with ice, and consumed 4½ hrs., but under ordinary circumstances would be easy. The gendarmes on the arête are very large, and the party consider this ridge to be the most difficult about Zermatt.' ‡

In regard to the W. face climb, the description in Conway's 'Eastern Pennine Guide' is in these words: §

'Climb fairly straight up the face, encountering several points of considerable difficulty.'

On July 28, 1888, Mr. R. F. Ball, with Ambrose Supersax and Louis Zurbrucken, climbed the peak by the S.W. arête. || They 'left the Festi hut at 1.30 A.M. . . . reached the ridge connecting the Südlenz Spitze and the Dom at a point a short distance to the N. of the Südlenz Joch (the so-called Nadeljoch) at 8.20 A.M. From this point the summit of the Südlenz Spitze was reached in 1 hr. 25 min., the route being at first along a sharp arête of rotten rocks, and afterwards up a couloir on the W. side of the ridge.'

My introduction to the mountain was in 1904. In July of the wonderful summer of that year I had the advantage of the company of Josef and Heinrich Pollinger. On the 25th inst. we left the Festi hut at 3.16 A.M., and crossing the Festijoch arrived at the bergschrund at the foot of the W. face of the peak. We crossed this at a point north of the rib which descends directly from the summit. We soon reached rock, then ascending snow slopes and bearing somewhat to the left we again climbed steep rocks, on which owing to their looseness care was specially

* *Alpine Journal*, vol. xi. p. 388, vol. xiii. p. 125; 'Above the Snow Line,' pp. 19-26.

† The W. face.

§ P. 108.

‡ *Alpine Journal*, vol. xi. p. 117.

|| *Alpine Journal*, vol. xiv. p. 153.

necessary. Still we had good sport, and got on to the N.W. arête about 10 min. from the summit, which we reached in 1 hr. 42 min. from the bergschrund or 4 hrs. 17 min. actual going from the hut. The only narrow escape which I have to record was that of my camera, which all but made a new route to the Fee glacier, and I have a strong suspicion that its failure to do so was a cause of some disappointment to Josef. We followed the N.W. arête, keeping chiefly on the narrow snow crest but occasionally traversing on the S.W. side to the Lenzjoch; and proceeded along the sporting beautifully sound rocks of its S.E. arête to the top of the Nadelhorn. From here we went over the Ulrichshorn and by the Ried Pass route to St. Niklaus, a long but very beautiful descent.

Josef is of the opinion that the route of our ascent would not be possible except under unusually favourable conditions, but I am bound to say that, doubtless owing to these, there was no serious difficulty about the climb.

A second visit to the Lady of Spring was in 1907, when H. Symons and I were accompanied by the guides Josef Pollinger and Pierre Maurys. On July 21 we slept at the Mischabel hütte, that excellent hut magnificently situated at a suitable height for the appreciation of the true proportions and steepness of the three noble peaks whose rocky flanks, seamed with snow and ice couloirs, fall away steeply to the Fee glacier. Turning southward a diminished sternness is evident in the gentle slopes of the Fee névé crowned by the Alphubel and Allalinhorn, and dropping the gaze past the green pastures of Fee at one's feet and across the blue depths of the Saasthal the Fletschhorn range beyond leads one northward to the Great Aletsch Glacier and the distant Oberland peaks mellowed by the intervening haze of the Rhone valley. We found the hut rather overcrowded, and Josef indulged in vain regrets at the somewhat tattered condition of his shirt. A few days previously he had hung it up outside the Fasleralp inn, but apparently was not versed in the vagaries of bovine appetite, for on happening to look out of the window I was fortunately in time to see a large though somewhat ill-nourished calf attempting to eat it. I shouted a warning to Josef, who managed to rescue the garment before irreparable damage had been done. He was partly consoled by the sympathy of Symons, who had himself indeed undergone a similar but more harrowing experience. We climbed the mountain next day by the E. arête, a pleasant enough expedition, and perhaps the most enjoyable part of the climb was the sound rock of the

first great rock tower and the portion of the arête by which we reached the gap to the W. of this. After this a traverse on the S.E. face by loose and rather steep rock brought us once more to the foot of the final snow ridge.

From the top we went down a couloir of rather loose rock which is between the S.W. arête and a rock buttress which descends W. from the summit, at first crossing its head and afterwards descending chiefly on the left side. We then went along the S.W. arête as far as a prominent rock tooth on it, then descended by the snow and rock of the W. face. Some micaceous rock and a little ice had to be traversed, and we quickly crossed the snow at the foot of the couloir. We went down the snow below the rock buttress which is to the right of the couloir and then descended obliquely to the left. Suddenly a humming sound was heard and a mass of rock whizzed through the air between Josef and me. This and one or two similar missiles caused us to put on what in the language of University oarsmen would be described as a well-timed spurt. Snow and a little ice landed us on the névé below the schrund, which was here fortunately filled up, and after a halt we descended to Randa.

That same season, whilst crossing the Alphubel Joch in soft snow rather late in the day (which accidents were the cause of Josef making use of epithets which savoured somewhat of disrespect towards that noble pass), it occurred to us that the S.E. face of the Südlenz Spitze might afford a sporting climb, and as a result an attempt on it formed a prominent place in my programme for the next summer.

In July 1908 I was once more at Saas, this time with E. C. Kempe, and had been fortunate enough to secure the services of Daniel Maquignaz. Heinrich Fux was our second guide. After a first expedition on the Ulrichshorn nine days of bad weather allowed of nothing more formidable than the ascent of the Fletschhorn by the ordinary route. The wretched meteorological conditions permitted us, however, to make a reconnoitring expedition. Having followed the path on the S. side of the gorge of the Feekinn, Daniel had assured us that the quickest way to reach the Gletscheralp would be to continue on the same side of the stream. In our childlike simplicity we followed his advice, and in consequence of walking up and down many steep moraines and fording various glacier streams our muscles received (as Tyndall would have said) much discipline, this result being doubtless precisely what our experienced friend had wished for. On finally reaching our goal we examined our prospective climb



O. K. Williamson, photo.

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STECKNADELHORN AND HOHBERGHORN, FROM ULRICIISHORN.

from slightly different points of view, with as much thoroughness as was possible seeing that the top of the peak was swathed in mist and that the face of the mountain, although directly opposite to us, was considerably foreshortened. From this point high up on the S.W. arête is seen a prominent tooth to which I have already alluded, and which is familiar to those who have climbed the peak by that route. From this tooth a well-marked rib descends to the upper shelf of the Fee glacier, that shelf from which the ascent of the face must necessarily begin. Two ribs were seen to the right of this one, the second one being perhaps the best marked of the three. By this latter rib it was fairly obvious that one could reach the S.W. arête a short distance below the top, but it seemed extremely doubtful whether it would be possible to reach the summit direct without first striking this arête. (Subsequent examination of the face with a thirty-magnification telescope at Saas Fee confirmed this opinion, and indeed the final rocks beneath the summit appeared as a black wall apparently too steep to hold any snow.) This rib struck both Kempe and me as the best route. It is true that another rib further to the right was seen leading up to the E. arête, but this appeared to come out on the skyline at a point further from the summit than the route which we favoured. Late that evening Daniel told us that he had been up the slopes below the Mittaghorn, and we learnt that he had chosen the same line of ascent as we had.

A few days later the weather cleared up, so that on the 22nd and 23rd we had two fine excursions on the Fletschhorn ridge. These were followed two days later by a pleasant day on the Balfrinhorn, which we ascended by the E. face and returned by the Ried Pass route and rhododendron-covered slopes to Grund. A pleasant feature of these expeditions was the large number of chamois and marmots which we saw.

The following day, Sunday the 26th, we decided to start for our climb. Daniel had come to the conclusion that in order to reach the sleeping-place on the rocks at the foot of our peak it would be preferable to cross the Eggfluh to taking the route by way of the Fee glacier. Having employed the subterfuges well known to members of this Club when pressed by inquisitive friends as to particulars of the climb for which they are starting, our party, increased by two evil-looking porters, straggled up to Fee. Here we met R. W. Lloyd, who, generous as always, offered us free use of his luxurious stock of provisions and moreover kindly lent Kempe his sleeping-bag. After lunch

we proceeded. Taking the route to the Mischabel hütte as far as the foot of the Unter Fall glacier, we now bore away to the left, until we reached in about 2½ hrs., excluding halts, the ridge of the Eggfluh, on the W. side of which we struck an old sleeping-place. The weather, which had latterly become threatening (we had actually taken shelter from the rain a few minutes before reaching this spot), now became unmistakably bad, and rain began to fall steadily, whilst towards the Rhone valley it looked very black. The change for the worse in the meteorological conditions, however, was more than equalled by a corresponding transformation in the expression of countenance of our younger guide. Tradition has it that a certain rock near St. Niklaus indicates the spot where any inhabitant giving way to the use of bad language had in the 'good old times' to pay the capital penalty. On the present occasion I could only be profoundly thankful for his sake that Heinrich Fux lived in modern days. A council of war was held. Even if the bad weather should prove to be, as we hoped, merely a passing storm, Daniel was of opinion that the rocks of the mountain would probably be iced, that the lower ones would thereby be rendered impracticable, and that it would therefore be desirable in any case to wait another day before tackling the peak. We therefore decided to stay where we were for the night and that Kempe and I should in the event of the weather clearing up descend to Saas Fee next morning in order to re-provision, whilst the guides should reconnoitre the beginning of the climb.

A *contretemps* now occurred in the shape of bad behaviour of our two porters, who showed themselves in their true colours. Moreover we discovered next morning that they had eaten some of our choicest provisions. Their conduct was the cause of Daniel exhibiting anger on the only occasion in my memory.

Next morning the weather was again brilliant, and Kempe and I descended to Fee with the porters. After a rest and having engaged two fresh men we again started up at 2 P.M. We proceeded by our route of the day before as far as our bivouac-place, from which point we followed the crest of the ridge of the Eggfluh. Climbing along the very rotten and loose rocks of this we presently joined the guides, who reported favourably on their reconnaissance of our proposed route, saying that at the foot of the rib there was no sign of any stones having fallen. We now traversed on the S.W. side of the ridge, first descending slightly. The slope was steep and consisted of shaly material and rock. We proceeded more or less at a level to the right,

and crossing a patch of snow reached our bivouac-place, which is situated immediately above an upper shelf of the Fee glacier and almost directly below the point (marked 9810 m. on the Siegfried map) where the E. arête of the Südlenz Spitze finally divides into its two continuations, the hour being 7.10 p.m. We had occupied 4 hrs. 40 min., excluding halts, from Fee. The height according to Kempe's aneroid was approximately 11,400 feet. We could not have desired a better place at which to spend the night. We found a nearly level patch of ground, and a rock overhanging this afforded excellent shelter. The time passed quickly with the preparations for our supper, and when we lay down to sleep the prospects for the morrow's climb could hardly have been better, for the clouds which had collected soon after midday had melted away.

We were called betimes on the 28th, and having bade farewell to our excellent young porters started at 4.5 a.m. in perfect weather. About this time we saw a party on the glacier below which we afterwards learnt consisted of Alois Supersax with two young Americans, who, having slept at the Mischabel hütte, were bound for the Dom. This accounted for a previously inexplicable meeting with Alois on the previous evening. We scrambled down some easy rocks to the névé of the upper shelf of the Fee glacier to which I have already alluded. Turning to the right we traversed the gentle slopes, passing below a wide snow couloir and beneath the rocks (which form part of the base of the Südlenz Spitze) immediately to the W. thereof. Having reached a point beneath the next snow couloir we now ascended until we struck the lowest rocks of our peak on the true left of this couloir. Daniel, who was leading, was forcing the pace. Like Romeo he recognised that :

'Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops ;
I must begone and live, or stay and die.'

He well knew that it was desirable to get as high as possible before the sun should touch the upper rocks and cause stones to fall. Henceforward our ascent was practically in a straight line in the direction of the summit. A clinometer reading of the slope, from the point where we stood to the top of the peak, taken soon after we reached the rocks, showed an angle of 53°. Both Daniel and Josef Pollinger, with whom I had previously discussed the route, had expressed the opinion that these lower rocks might very probably turn out to be slabby and difficult. This, however, we found not to be the case. They were both

loose and rotten, arranged in terraced fashion, reminding me of those met with during the ascent of the Grivola by the S.E. face, but difficult they were certainly not.

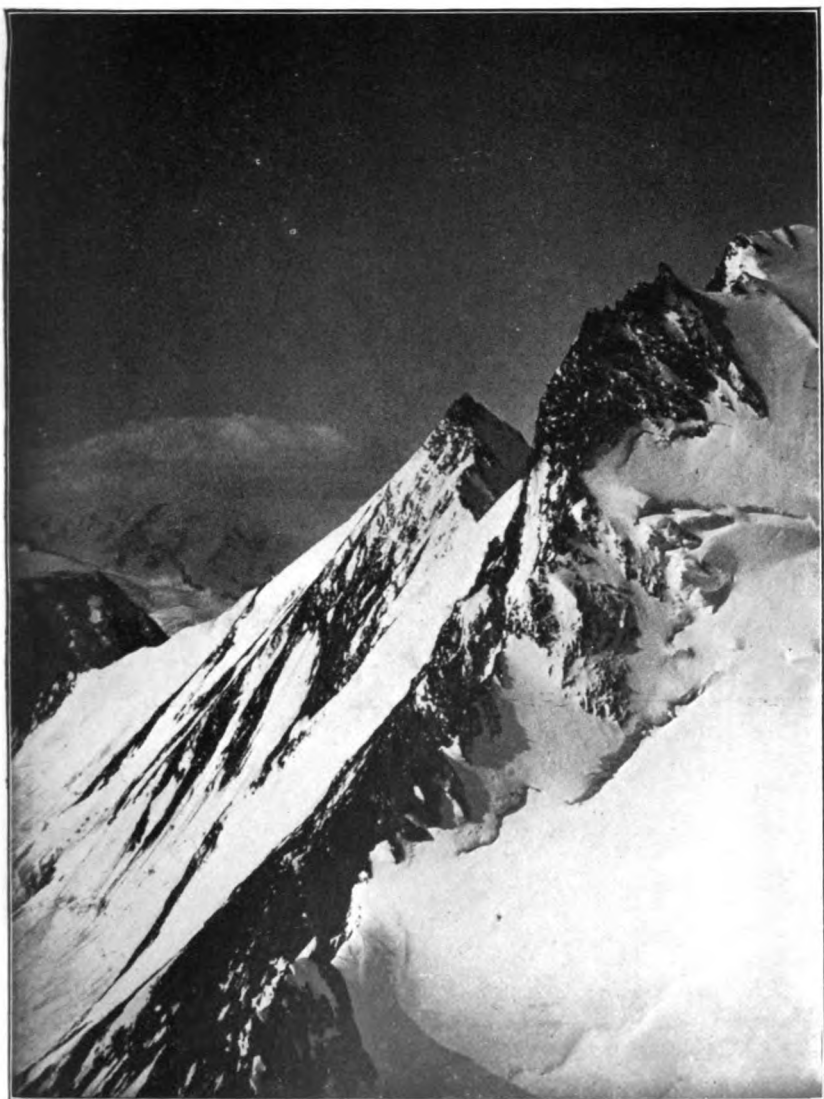
Looking upwards one could see what I can best describe as a frozen waterfall, to the right of which was the commencement of a rib or arête which ascended from approximately that level. On reaching this rib the slope became considerably steeper. Here we had to climb a short chimney by stretching across from side to side so as to avoid the loose rocks which were perched in it. Just above this great care was again needed for the same reason, although there were no objective difficulties. Hereabouts we were first touched by the rays of the morning sun. A most welcome change in the character of our work now took place, and as we climbed up a slab of sound rock (apparently granite) with good finger-holds our spirits rose. At the top of this slab we halted for a second breakfast. The hour was 6.27 A.M. ; we were on a well-marked arête and estimated the height as being about 1000 feet below the top of the mountain. We were greeted about this time by the jodels of a party who were climbing the E. arête. On our left as we looked up was a steep, well-defined couloir down which we saw a few stones falling, and these were the only ones which we saw during the whole day. The scenery here was magnificent, comprising as it did the steep ribs and couloirs of our peak backed by the terrific wall of the Dom. Starting again at 7.5 A.M. we soon reached another granite (apparently) slab, on the right-hand side of the ridge, at the top of which a good handhold enabled one to pull oneself up and so reach easy rocks, which again led to the crest of the arête. Above our halting-place the slope had become rapidly much less steep. The work now consisted alternately of easy rocks and snow, the latter being in excellent condition, and we reached a point where the snow ridge, although fairly level, was decorated with a small cornice on the right. We sat on the snow whilst Daniel attempted to force a way along the actual crest, but he soon found that this would take too long and elected to traverse on the left. The method of progression adopted on a ridge of this kind I have seen described in German Alpine literature as an 'Alpine Eiertanz.' The slope here was very steep, although perhaps less so than on the opposite or right-hand side of the cornice, and the ridge rose, I should say, from one hundred to two hundred feet above the bed of the couloir. We descended a few feet, being careful to obtain good hold on the firm rocks of which there were fortunately plenty. A

few yards of horizontal movement and good holds enabled us once more to regain the ridge beyond the cornice, Daniel reaching this before I commenced the upward journey. 'Ça va, monsieur?' was our leader's quiet question to me, to which, as well as to a similar inquiry from Heinrich, a confident assent was my reply. Indeed on this and on all other occasions when we have climbed together nothing has ever occurred to disturb the perfect harmony of our relations to one another; Heinrich, although during our first few expeditions he was inclined to exhibit a little independence of character, very soon came to acquiesce unhesitatingly in Daniel's decisions, and the fact that neither guide understood the other's language, and that I was consequently forced to interpret, was not a disadvantage. Having proceeded a short distance further along the crest of the arête we came upon another small cornice where a turning movement was once more necessary. In the present instance, however, it was found desirable to traverse the slope on the right or E. A horizontal ledge of rock, approximately a foot wide and I should say about six feet below the cornice, had to be traversed, and the quick clatter of a rock, dislodged by our leader, into the couloir below told of the steepness of the slope below us. The rocks were wet from the drippings of the cornice and many were loose, consequently the greatest care had to be exercised in the choosing of footholds. Daniel proceeded to the full length of the rope between him and me, I should say some 30 feet, before I attempted to follow. In reply to my usual question, 'Est-ce que vous êtes bien?' came back the reply, 'Pas trop, mais venez doucement.' This I did. However, before I had proceeded many yards Daniel reached a mass of firm rock, beyond the level of the cornice, on which he was able to anchor securely. From this point we once more ascended by thoroughly sound rock to the crest of the ridge. I think we all agreed afterwards that the passage just described was the *mauvais pas* of the climb. A few feet further on and our rib became merged in the face. We were now almost on a level with the conspicuous rock tooth on the S.W. arête of the mountain to which reference has already been made, itself some distance below a couloir on the W. face which has to be crossed in that climb. The rock with which we now had to deal was rotten and loose, composed of micaceous material, but easy, of just the same nature as that met with at the top of the E. face of the Dom. We now halted at 9.50 for a third meal. At 10.10 we proceeded; ascending, and bearing slightly to the right over rock of the

same nature, we struck at 10.35 A.M. the S.W. arête just below the top of the above-mentioned couloir. We were now on known ground. Twelve minutes later, or at 10.47 A.M., we stepped on to the highest point. We had thus occupied exactly $5\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. actual going from our sleeping-place to the point where we struck the S.W. arête, rising somewhat less than 3000 feet. During the first 2 hrs. and 20 min. of our climb we rose nearly 2000 feet, whilst the next 800 feet or so occupied us 3 hrs. and 10 min., I think a sufficient proof that the chief difficulties were concentrated in this latter portion of the expedition. The actual rib which we followed was the exact route which we had planned out. It might have been possible before striking the S.W. arête, by ascending a chimney which slopes obliquely to the right (and which I had seen with the Fee telescope), to have reached a point nearer the top. To arrive at the actual summit, however, without first touching one or other of the two main arêtes would, I think, be impossible, seeing that the final rocks actually overhang. During the latter part of our ascent clouds had gathered so as to interfere with the view down to Fee.

Mr. Dent, in his charming account of the first ascent of the peak, shows extreme modesty when he says, speaking of the time when he reached the ridge between the Südlenz Spitze and Nadelhorn, that 'we could not but feel that if we were to achieve the honour of a first ascent, such honour would be principally due to the fact that we had sub-divided the secondary peaks of the chain more minutely than other travellers.'

It is true that the Spring Lady probably suffers from having such an imposing and much taller neighbour as the Dom near at hand. Still even this fact may perhaps be not without its compensating advantage to her, and I am not convinced that the Südlenz Spitze has not a finer view than its great neighbours. I say this with hesitation, as so great an authority as Leslie Stephen has stated that the view from the Dom is the very finest in the Alps. Owing to its superior height the peaks, as seen from the Dom, are necessarily somewhat dwarfed, whilst from the Südlenz Spitze one obtains a grand view of that peak itself and especially of a part of its most impressive E. flank and N.E. arête, with their forbidding black buttresses and gleaming snow ridges, which would seem to more than compensate for the portion of the distant panorama which it shuts out. In other directions the view from the Südlenz Spitze is similar to that from the Dom itself.



O. K. Williamson, photo.

Swan Electric Engraving Co., Ltd.

DOM AND TÄSCHHORN, FROM SÜDLENZSPITZE.

We saw the young Americans who had crossed the Dom from the Domjoch traverse the snow slopes to the Nadeljoch, and wondered whether it was their intention to descend the Saas side of the pass. Apparently, however, they were merely having a look round and perhaps examining the details of our climb, as after a time they proceeded down the Randa side. At 11.30 A.M. we started down the N.W. arête. At a point near the Lenzjoch we took to the slope which leads down to the Hohberg névé. We followed a rib of the shaley rotten rock, of which this side of the peak is mostly composed, rock which I found on this occasion exasperatingly liable to cut one's fingers. These rocks were interspersed by short slopes of snow with here and there a little ice.

A recent mountaineering publication is responsible for the statement that during a descent it is desirable to beware of the 'bergs hund.' I am anxious for information about this particular member of the Alpine fauna. At any rate, on the present occasion a simple rock chimney landed us on the snow just above the bergschrund at 1.7 P.M. After a five minutes' halt we proceeded. The crevasse beneath the hanging glacier on the N. face of the Dom was apparently impassable, and we had in consequence to make a rather annoying detour. The only other incident of our descent which calls for notice was the fact that on reaching the forest Heinrich broke to us the unwelcome news that the bridge over the Randaierbach had not been put down since the previous season. We managed however with a little trouble to find a place at the foot of the forest where a few rocks enabled us to get across without much difficulty. The short and gradual descent down the vivid green meadows, always doubly delicious by contrast with the stern crag and ice scenery of the Saasgrat peaks, brought us at 4.35 P.M. to the pleasant Hôtel Weisshorn at Randa. Here a welcome bath was followed by a change of raiment and the stern necessity of repacking, and after tea, in weather now once more stormy, we caught the evening train to Visp *en route* for Montreux, thus finishing one of the most delightful days in my mountaineering experience.

With regard to the S.E. face, it is to my mind undoubtedly the most interesting route up the peak, and if ascended early in the day and under the conditions in which we found it, viz. with a small amount of fresh snow, perfectly safe, just as the E. face of the Dom is, although of course continuous care is needed in those places where the rocks are loose. I trust

members of the Club will try it. Under unsuitable conditions it is of course equally certain that it would be an excessively dangerous expedition. Heinrich and I agreed in considering it a decidedly more difficult expedition than our ascent the previous year of the E. face of the Dom.

With regard to the E. or Saas face of the Täschhorn, it is to my mind a far less interesting expedition than the corresponding side of either the Dom or Südlenz Spitze.

In 1899 our party bivouacked on some rocks to the N.E. of the Alphubel. We then crossed the foot of the E. face of the Täschhorn and reached a rock rib by which we ascended direct to the summit. The rocks were rotten and in consequence needed to be treated with respect, but there was no objective difficulty. Before reaching our rock rib we heard the hum of a few falling stones, but the mountain was extremely dry at the time.

Lastly I would say a word in reference to a couple of climbs on the Nadelgrat which stand out among a few successful expeditions which we were able to bring off in the season of 1909. I am not prepared to say that the German language is unsuited to give an idea of the heart-breaking weather of last summer. Judging from a conversation or two on the subject with Heinrich Fux, I should say that it is perfectly adequate to do so, however much our own tongue falls short of the necessities of the case.

On July 30, Daniel, Heinrich, and I, from the Mischabelhütte crossed the Windjoch and reached, in about $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours, the foot of the E. face of the Dürrenhorn, upon which we had designs. There are two snow couloirs which seam this face of the peak. Of these the northern one is the broader; Daniel held the opinion that the rocks of the rib which leads almost directly to the summit might land us in a 'cut off,' and raised a similar objection to the rocks between the two couloirs. We accordingly took to the face to the right or N. of the broader couloir, and got up without any difficulty to the N. arête. Soon after reaching this we saw Symons under the leadership of Franz Lochmatter climbing the rib which leads most directly to the top, and learned, on meeting his party on the summit, that they had had a very fine climb up rocks which appear to have been much harder than those which we took.*

From the point where we struck the arête—which I afterwards discovered was the top of the Klein Dürrenhorn, and not the

* *Alpine Journal*, vol. xxiv. pp. 680-681.



O. K. Williamson, photo.

NADELGRAT, FROM DÜRRENHORN.

Swan Electric Engraving Co., Ltd.

Dürrenhorn itself—we had an interesting climb along its N. arête to the summit of the major peak.

‘ Which, were it not for many a mountain nigh,
Rising in lofty ranks, and loftier still,
Might well itself be deemed of dignity.’

The large amount of snow on the ridge at once negated the idea of proceeding thence to the Hohberghorn. We decided to go down by the W. arête, as I gathered from the guides that this would be the quickest route.

This arête is rotten and loose to an extreme degree, so much so that it is almost impossible on parts of it to move a single step without dislodging, practically speaking, tons of the stuff. To make things worse, we were unable to shorten matters by striking off to the right, down to the valley, as the steep snow slopes which led thither were for a considerable distance too hard to allow of doing so. Finally, when we did succeed in descending, it was only to discover that the iniquities of the W. arête were to be succeeded by the abomination known as the ‘Dürrenfad.’ This consists of an almost endless succession of old moraines, compared with which those of Dauphiné would almost sink into insignificance. Even when clear of this our troubles were not ended. The steep side valley leading down to the Nikolaithal was beautiful, I am ready to admit, but most unsuitable as a means of descent. It abounded in rank vegetation, which concealed many loose boulders, and was divided up into sections by vertical rock walls, all of which had to be turned. I remarked to Heinrich that the inhabitants of St. Niklaus had much to be responsible for. However, he informed me that this choice valley belongs to the commune of Randa.

A short distance above the main valley we struck a path and a few minutes later emerged on the high road not far above Herbriggen. If any additional testimony is needed as to the quality of the descent it would have been amply furnished by the almost indecent condition of my boots. It turned out subsequently that my younger guide’s only reason for suggesting to me this way off the peak was that he was under the impression that I wished to descend to Randa and not to St. Niklaus as was really the case.

Three days later, in apparently beautiful weather following a stormy-looking evening, we had a remarkably fine expedition on the Nadelhorn. From the Windjoch we followed the N.E. ridge of the peak for a short distance, then turned off to the right on to the snowy northern face. After traversing a little

and descending so as to circumvent a crevasse, we again ascended. The snow was at first very powdery, but rapidly became better as we got higher. Crossing the bergschrund we went up the exceedingly steep slope, the snow being here in magnificent condition, and a few minutes afterwards reached the N.W. arête at a point a short distance above the col between the Nadelhorn and Stecknadelhorn.

It was quite evident that bad weather was blowing up from the S., and we consequently hurried up the interesting rocky N.W. arête at our best pace.* We descended by the same ridge, and went over the top of the Stecknadelhorn to the col between that peak and the Hohberghorn.

From here, on account of falling snow, we gave up our project of continuing to the Hohberghorn, and went down the loose rotten rocks to the Hohberg glacier, where we encountered a snow-storm, and so by the Festjoch to Randa. A thunder-storm during our descent through the forest was apparently the sign of a change to another period of hopelessly bad weather. This climb was a very charming one, probably no doubt on account of its great variety.

Some weeks later, on a brilliant afternoon, we walked from St. Niklaus up the beautiful slopes to the Schallbett alp, anxious for one more expedition on the Nadelgrat. Daniel on this, and indeed on other occasions, found it necessary to curb the youthful ardour of Heinrich by the words 'Langsam, Fux.'

The charming spot, on a strip of brilliant green turf under a rocky wall, with fascinating glimpses of the Nadelgrat peaks now bathed in the golden evening light, and in full view of the proud Bietschhorn, was an almost ideal camping-ground, and a stone-walled hut afforded us good shelter. We soon lay down, and deep breathing shortly after proclaimed the fact that Daniel slept. Yet through the stillness of the night arose in soft though distinct tones the pleading words 'Langsam, Fux, langsam, Fux!' Unsafe snow conditions foiled our expedition on the morrow. The following day a misty unsettled dawn was succeeded by pouring rain, thus finishing our party's mountaineering.

One word as regards that best of good fellows Heinrich Fux. Brilliant as are his powers of dealing with the objective difficulties of rock ice and snow, he is I think rapidly developing good judgment in matters pertaining to mountain

* *Alpine Journal*, vol. xxiv. p. 681.

craft. The fact that he is always ready to learn from those of greater experience gives good reason for the belief that he will develop into a guide of the very first rank.

My last expedition with Daniel Maquignaz ended as described above. There is little that one can add to the admirable summary of that great mountaineer's qualities which Captain Farrar and Sir Edward Davidson have written for the *JOURNAL*. I take it that it is in most cases by his mental qualities that a guide of the highest class is raised above his confrères, and there can be no doubt that this was peculiarly the case with Daniel. I remember that Tyndall spoke of Joseph Maquignaz as a man of high boiling-point. This is a description that would have applied equally well to the nephew Daniel.

One can never hope again to travel with a finer guide or more amiable companion, and some of my happiest days, and most glorious expeditions on the beautiful peaks of the Saas-grat will always be associated with recollections of the inspiring leadership of that magnificent mountaineer.

H.R.H. THE DUKE OF THE ABRUZZI'S EXPEDITION TO THE
KARAKORAM.

By DR. F. DE FILIPPI.

(Read before the Alpine Club, November 1, 1910.)

IT has given me great pleasure to be able (by permission of H.R.H. the Duke of the Abruzzi) to accept your invitation to read a paper upon his expedition in the Karakoram. As a whole year has passed since the expedition took place, and as the *ALPINE JOURNAL* has published the chief results, I fear that there is little left for me to relate that will be new to you. I will endeavour, however, to give a brief description of our experiences, and I feel sure that you will be interested in Vittorio Sella's slides. While serving to illustrate a region still so little known in detail, they may give you a conception of the unsurpassed grandeur of its ranges. At the same time this occasion gives a new chance to discuss the possibility of ascending the highest peaks in the world. Since the first ascent of Mont Blanc towards the end of the eighteenth century, up till the present day, we have obtained a total gain of about 9000 feet altitude. The progress has been slow but continuous; nor is there any sign to indicate that we are approaching an