

GABELHÖRNER GRAT.

By EDWARD A. BROOME.

WHY I should inflict on you a rigmarole under above heading I hardly know, but may be allowed to plead in extenuation the pretty picture from the camera of Sir Alexander Kennedy, and to suggest you stay satisfied with this and skip the superfluous story. Some few misguided people, however, still prefer old friends to fresh faces, and there is no more popular peak in the Alps than the Gabelhorn. Every member of the Club must have clambered up it by one or other of its many ways, and there is hardly a rock on any of them that has not been scarified; while unfortunately few big mountains have been the scene of more lamentable accidents and extraordinary adventures.

I myself have been on the top some eight times, and by six different routes, and have also had my share of mishaps, from the collapse of a cornice to a nasty knock from a stone; though perhaps about these the less said the better. The last completed ascent, by the entire S.E. arête from the Unter-Gabelhörner, was quite the best, has the merit of novelty, and stands out clearly against the lurid background of a 1909 Alpine season.

Before describing this, however, let me briefly recall a reminiscence or two of previous climbs, the first of which (in 1889, I think) was by the ordinary E. face, and brings back to me the kindness of two good Samaritans, Doctor Liveing and Sir Felix Schuster. Another fine expedition was by the entire N.E. arête from the Triftjoch, over the Wellenkuppe, and then along the ridge and *over* the big gendarme between the two peaks. My principal recollection of another arête (the N.W. from Mountet) was the rapid time made; but when I remarked, apparently just below the summit, that we should be up in ten minutes, the guides laughed, and later justified their mirth by cutting buckets for me in the nearly perpendicular ice for somewhere about two hours! The S.W. ridge from the Arben Joch, and the S. face from the Arben Glacier, were also excellent expeditions, and I left behind a useful memento for future generations at the foot of the last named, by constructing a new and greatly improved sleeping-place.

Well, to come to my 1909 climb, which we had often discussed in former years, wondering whether it would prove too long for us. Owing, however, chiefly to excellent conditions of both rock and snow, we found it neither too long nor too

difficult. As usual we slept out for it at the Trift Inn, now greatly improved in every way, and with the cookery no longer reminiscent of the religious rites of an ancient race; that is to say, 'either a burnt offering or a bleeding sacrifice.'

Starting on August 16, at 1.30 A.M., we contrived at first to lose a lot of time in the dark. Our intention was to take to the Gabelhörner Grat at its extreme S.E. end, beginning with the three points of the Unter-Gabelhörner; but my excellent guides, Aloys Pollinger junior and Nicholas Brantschen, though they left me to find it out, had never before achieved these mighty summits, and did not know the way. With a new moon this was not easy to discover, and we must have lost a good hour and a half, besides finding ourselves in one or two more or less impossible places. However, at last

Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops,

and we traversed our three little misty peaks, with the couloirs between them, tiptoeing the topmost at 6 o'clock, ready for a right jocund and hard-earned breakfast.

After this the work was all straightforward enough, and I do not remember ever leaving the ridge at all. First down the easy rocks on the W. side of the peak, and then along the lengthy snow arête which was in perfect order, to what is called the Unter-Gabeljoch, first crossed by Mr. Morshead in 1877,* and making an interesting and pleasant round of about 7 hours from Zermatt. From the pass up again along the good snow ridge, and on over the tops of what I believe to be the Mittel-Gabelhörner, the first of which is a sort of snow dome, and the second and higher (12,132 ft.) nice rocks. From here the ridge-climber's heart should rejoice, as the speciality of the arête is rock gendarmes, ten points in all counting the Unter and Ober summits, and between them narrow ice and snow ridges, with several really sensational cornices. If my memory serves me, we went over one of these before getting to the Ober-Gabeljoch, first crossed as a pass by Mr. Heldmann in 1888,† and making another fine circular expedition from Zermatt, *viâ* the Arben and Gabelhorn glaciers, but taking a couple of hours longer than the above-named and lower pass.

Then came two or three more big, upstanding rock pyramids, the steepest of which I thought we might shirk without dishonour; but traversing round proved impracticable, and over

* *Alpine Journal*, vol. viii. p. 339.

† *Ibid.* vol. xiv. p. 152.



Sir A. B. W. Kennedy, Photo.

SCHWARZ SEE AND GABELHÖRNER.

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it we had to go. The last tower brought us to a last little col, doubtless 'the well-defined snow col at the foot of the final peak,' from which Messrs. Davidson and Hartley made the first ascent of the Ober-Gabelhorn by this S.E. arête in 1877.* On looking down on it my spirits sank, for the snow dip on this col was crowned with quite the worst 'curved and convoluted' cornice, even on this 'boundless contiguity' of cornices; I felt rather

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread.

Nevertheless I held my tongue, and Aloys, without offering any observation either, cut big steps across it (just in the one safe spot), and led over as if it was the sort of place he went along every morning to breakfast.

We were also now at the foot of the final peak, and of course completed the climb by the S.E. arête, only leaving it here and there for a few yards up the wall. This is more interesting, and not more difficult than the ordinary face route, and besides you get much better views of the panorama all around. Not long before reaching the top we met two enterprising *föhrrerlos* foreign climbers descending, with whom I had forgathered overnight, and they informed us that the cornice on the summit ridge required great care, and that some well-known Zermatt guides (I will not mention names) in charge of two parties had found that the better part of valour is discretion, and in fact turned back without completing the ascent. The *föhrrerlose* however, much to their credit under the circumstances, had managed it all right, and we humbly followed and returned in their tracks; also, I am bound to say, found it somewhat less sensational than the one that caused my poetical eruption above.

We reached the top (13,364 ft.) at 1.30 P.M. exactly, or 12 hours from our start, and did not get back to the Trift Inn till 6.30; being delayed by heavy rains, and consequent swollen torrents, which forced us at several points a good way out of the regular track.

I can only repeat that I think this quite the finest way of climbing the Gabelhörner, and future parties will take less time; for though ours on the long arête (owing to hard snow and good rock conditions) was not so bad, it was impossible to make up the leeway lost on the minor peaks in the early morning.

Three weeks later, and on my last day, we went aloft again, intending to repeat this climb, but in the reverse direction.

* *Alpine Journal*, vol. viii. p. 399.

Not without some difficulty we got up the E. face of the highest peak as far as the 'plaque' ($\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ hr. below summit); but by this time we were enveloped in dense cloud and heavy snow had begun to fall. As we had also just previously come to the conclusion that, in its present condition, our grat would take some days (more or less) to traverse, we were glad enough to turn, and ultimately got back to Zermatt in a deluge, half-drowned, and chilled to the bone. Fortunately as Mrs. Wiggs remarked, and most of us found in 1909,

Many are cold, but few are frozen.

IN MEMORIAM.

J. J. HORNBY.

J. J. HORNBY was born in December 1826, and died last November at the age of eighty-three. He was a son of Admiral Sir Phipps Hornby, and a brother of Sir G. Phipps Hornby, Admiral of the Fleet. His mother was a daughter of the General Burgoyne who surrendered at Saratoga, and, more fortunate as a dramatist than as a soldier, wrote a comedy described by Horace Walpole as 'the genteelest in the English language.' Entered at Eton when he was twelve years old, Hornby was twice in the Select for the Newcastle (1844-5), and played in the eleven in 1845. Going up to Balliol, he rowed in the Oxford eight in 1849 and 1851, took a first class in the Classical School in 1849, and was subsequently elected a Fellow of Brasenose. From 1853 to 1864 he occupied a post in the University of Durham. He then returned to Brasenose, and in 1866 served for a few months as Senior Proctor. In 1867 he went to Winchester as Second Master, but before the end of the year was appointed Headmaster of Eton, a post which he took up in 1868 and held with great success for sixteen years, until in 1884 he succeeded Dr. Goodford in the Provostship.

To the majority of the present members of the Alpine Club—at least, of those who are not old Etonians—Dr. Hornby was, no doubt, an unknown personality. When in 1868 he became Headmaster of Eton he seemed to lose touch with the Alps, and betook himself to such lesser heights as might be found near the holiday home he established in the English lakes. Sixteen years later, when he withdrew into the dignified leisure of the Provostship, a habit of seclusion, which became more marked after his wife's death, grew on him, and though everything he undertook was done admirably, it was difficult to get him to do anything involving social exertion of an unusual kind. More than once I tried in vain to draw him to one of our winter dinners. Yet he kept his interest in the Alps long after he had ceased to frequent them, and he