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MONTE DISGRAZIA, FROM MONTE SISSONE.

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BETWEEN THE INN AND THE ADDA.

By E. L. STRUTT.

AT the request of the Editor, I will endeavour to give an outline of some of my wanderings in this district during many winters and summers. Such a paper must unfortunately be largely egotistical, not through the desire of the writer, but because the ground has been largely cut away beneath his feet by Mr. Freshfield's eloquent and picturesque article 'Behind the Bernina' ('Alpine Journal,' vol. xvii., pp. 419-429) and Dr. Claude Wilson's valuable monograph, 'The Bregaglia Group' ('Alpine Journal,' vol. xxiv., pp. 381-392).

Many writers have endeavoured to impress on us how spoilt the Upper Engadine has become in recent years; true, but this spoiling process had already been in full swing long before my first visit in 1893, and it can be said that with the exception of the hideous Grand Hotel at St. Moritz-Dorf, few revolting edifices have been added in recent years. The Albula Railway, snugly tucked away in the hills, is not a defacing object; the unlovely slopes of Muottas Muraigl are scarcely more ugly for the presence of a funicular, and if we except that true monument of vandalism, the bridge of the new Bernina Railway opposite the Morteratsch Glacier, it can safely be said that the hand of the spoiler has rested more lightly on this than on any of the other crowded parts of Switzerland. Steering westwards from the hospitable quarters of the Engadiner Kulm, passing through Sils-Maria and its picturesque new hotels, we come to Maloja, and, turning our backs on its one disfiguring blot, the Kursaal, we enter a district, to the South or North of the great road, which still remains practically unknown. The condition of this road, it may be added, is a disgrace to the

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Canton of Grisons and Switzerland. The entire valleys from Tarasp to Castasegna are provided with an abundance of admirable granite, yet the authorities insist on mending the holes in the road with liquid mud, consequently after half an hour of an Engadine wind its condition can be imagined, and clouds of dust conceal half the valley. On the other hand, the admirable Italian roads through the Valtelline and Val Malenco, perfectly paved, as smooth as a billiard table, and quite dust free, surely ought to teach 'progressive' Switzerland a lesson. If Switzerland were to show a little common sense and improve her roads, instead of wasting money on useless railways and declaring war against unfortunate owners of motor cars, she might become as pleasant a country to the traveller as the adjacent parts of France, Italy, or Austria. To resume, no summer visitors to the Upper Engadine ever invade the rocky fastnesses to the S. of the road, and the Swiss side of the district, bounded by the Muretto Pass and Val Bregaglia, is known to a handful of mountaineers only, although easily if sometimes painfully accessible from Vicosoprano and beautiful Promontogno. Southwards from picturesque Chiavenna we pass the outlets of the wild Codera valley, possibly the least frequented, by travellers at any rate, of the great lateral valleys of the Alps; the better known Valle dei Ratti; and, passing Colico, we enter the fertile and hot Valtelline and come to Ardenno, the mouth of Val Masino, and historical Sondrio at the outlet of the wooded Val Malenco. In these last two valleys and their side glens, well known to Italian climbers and even to a very few Englishmen, are crowded together all the beauties and grandeur of the Greater Alps. Eastwards again we come to a number of small glens, and one long valley—Val Fontana—descending into the Valtelline, which, even by Italian mountaineers—with the brilliant exceptions of Signori A. Cederna and A. Corti—are almost totally unvisited and unexplored; yet the Valle di Ron, with the fine peak of that name at its head, deserves recognition from those who are willing to face the tiring tramp from the Valtelline. Northwards from Tirano and Poschiavo the district provides fewer attractions and interest, although the superb view from Alp Grüm—now accessible by railway from St. Moritz—must not be forgotten, and the unpleasant Bernina Hospice still remains—in spite of the unattractiveness of its surrounding peaks—one of the most popular starting-points in the entire district.

The best season for tours between the Inn and the Adda is, in the writer's opinion, undoubtedly the month of June.

True, the Baths of Masino do not open till July 1, but at every other centre the climber will find the hotels open, and the accommodation of the best. The Monte di Scerscen will possibly be inaccessible from the Italian side, but every other mountain will be found in the best of condition; as a proof of this it may be mentioned that the first ascents of all the harder peaks, meaning those W. of the Muretto Pass, were accomplished very early in June.

The Upper Engadine in summer may be described as the haunt—not of mountaineers—but of Americans anxious to win cheap and *tangible* renown on the golf links of Samaden, or St. Moritz. To such creatures the mountains have no message, and are never even glanced at. The over-dressed crowd of other nationalities and the few English are mostly recovering from cures in different parts of the Continent, while the mighty mass of Germans, who alone appear appreciative of the rather mean glacier scenery of the Morteratsch and Roseg valleys, are content with the passage of the Diavolezza Pass or Fuorcla Surlei. To find the true climber we must visit the Masino and Malenco valleys, with their far more lovely scenery, or the grand deserted side glens of Val Bregaglia.

In 1893 the writer's expeditions were few. With Martin Schocher, the one great Pontresina guide—and he comes from a very different part of Switzerland—I accomplished Piz Bernina by the N. arête and the so-called 'Scharte.' This has always seemed to me to be the true route from the Swiss side; it is incredible that Messrs. Middlemore and Cordier's guides were unable to proceed further than Pizzo Bianco (3,998 m.), when one considers that the same party were shortly after successful in storming the ghastly stone-swept precipices of the Argentière side of the Aiguille Verte, and to Dr. Güssfeldt accordingly fell the credit of the first ascent. The difficulties encountered by that distinguished mountaineer are now circumvented by most parties with comparative ease, and if no ice is found on the steep ridge leading to Pizzo Bianco, the expedition, although of great interest, is not long or difficult. The descent by this route, first accomplished by Sir W. E. Davidson and Mr. Fitzgerald in 1889, is now quite frequently repeated. In fact, there are few gullies or ribs of Piz Bernina which have not at one time or another been traversed by parties anxious to find new variations of old routes, which are henceforth boldly claimed as 'new' ascents. The same remarks apply to Piz Roseg perhaps in a still greater degree. When free from snow its entire S. face is accessible, although very steep and never easy. Twice have I stood on its summit,

once in summer and once in winter ; each time the route we followed (in 1893 and 1899) was the well-worn 1865 one or perhaps a 'variation (!)' of Messrs. Moore and Walker's, which presents little or no difficulty. The three finest ways up are undoubtedly Mr. Norman Neruda's N.E. face route, which, accomplished in 1890 under very favourable circumstances, has never yet been repeated (June would be the month to try it, as the ice *might* be snow then) ; the E. arête route from the Güssfeldt Sattel (Fuorcla Tschierva-Scerscen 3,527 m.), first accomplished in 1892 by Messrs. Garwood and Branch and very seldom repeated ; finally the great S.W. arête, a very long expedition first traversed in its entirety by the Messrs. Stewart in 1909. I had rather a strange experience on Piz Roseg. My winter expedition (in February 1899) only taking 5½ hrs. from the Mortel hut to the top—we suffered terribly from cold and Schocher's nose still bears the mark of frostbite—and during the descent, when about 50 ft. below the summit, my second guide, S. Platz (afterwards killed on the Crast Agüzza), dropped his axe, which shot away down the tremendously steep N.E. face, then a mass of blue ice. By some extraordinary chance some slight irregularity in the icy surface caught the axe and stopped it dead after about 100 ft., and, much to my disgust, my own axe was then borrowed, and, cutting down the face, we recovered the weapon ; having done so a member of the party proceeded to emulate the example of the axe and was only held with the greatest difficulty by the others. The cold was so great (12° below 0° F. at St. Moritz) that we never halted from the time we left the Mortel hut, about 1.30 A.M., till we returned there, about 10. Our sufferings were entirely caused by our starting 3 hrs. at least too early, being under the impression that the ascent would take at least 9 hrs. The snow conditions of the winter of 1898-99 were different from those of any other winter I have ever known in the Aps. One could walk about on the snow in ordinary boots without sinking in, even in the valleys, and there was little or no ice on any of the actual routes of the different mountains we accomplished, the ridges especially being strangely snowy. In the summer of 1893 we also traversed the Crast Agüzza, the rocks of which afford a short and interesting climb in the ascent, by the E. face and arête, but the descent by the N.W. face is dreadfully dull. Both in the ascent and descent we employed the route from the Morteratsch Glacier, which leads up to the high plateau of that glacier through its central icefall known as the 'Labyrinth.' I have been through that maze twelve times since and never have

P. Roseg

3666 m

Monte di Scerscen

Monte di Scerscen

P. Roseg



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PIZ ROSEG AND MONTE DI SCERSCEN, FROM THE MARINELLI HUT.

I seen a falling sérac or found any difficulty. Other parties have not been so fortunate, but as Schocher invariably, in his annual family ascent of Piz Bernina—the first of the summer—takes his four daughters by that route, we can conclude that there is no danger till July. Later that summer we traversed Piz Palü W. to E., an easy but rather interesting expedition. Why have so many people tried to fall through the corniche between the W. and central peaks? I have crossed that ridge four times, three times in winter and once in summer, and on each occasion the corniche was as obvious and as easily avoided as anything I have ever seen; truly the ways of the too numerous Pontresina second-class guides are as unequalled for clumsiness as they are for lack of enterprise.

I did not again visit the Upper Engadine till the winter of 1896-97, when there was much bad weather, until February; that month proving fine, I made the third winter ascent (by the ordinary route) of Piz Bernina—now quite common—again with Schocher. The mountain went brilliantly, and on our return over the lower Morteratsch Glacier we were met and warmly congratulated by the late Mr. Cecil Watson, A.C., who had made the first winter ascent seventeen years before. Returning from the Hotel Morteratsch, we met with our only mishap; our sleigh upset in a snowdrift, and I was kept pinned underneath for 10 minutes, solely owing to Schocher's sense of humour at the appearance I presented.

In the following winter I did little, a bad leg caused by an accident at that most futile of *all* sports, bobsleighing, totally incapacitating me for a long time. Mrs. le Blond, however, accomplished several fine tours in the neighbourhood. It was during this winter that a friend sent me a pair of Norwegian skis, this being, I believe, only the second appearance of these weapons at St. Moritz-Dorf, the first having been worn by Sir A. Conan Doyle. I may as well make a few remarks on them as adjuncts to winter mountaineering: for *mountains* of which the slope exceeds 30° they are, even for experts, highly dangerous, as the continuous groove that they make across a slope is extremely likely to cause an avalanche; for valleys, or for crossing a col like the Sella Pass or Theodule, they are admirable—as long as one likes risking the crevasses. Schocher and I always wore 'Canadians,' which entail the use of moccasins, as far as the hut. Thence we wore an invention of his, shaped rather like miniature ladders, entirely made of wood, and provided with large wooden studs underneath to prevent slipping. We have worn these heavy but eminently serviceable 'ladders,' as I describe them for want of a better word,

as far as the top of the central peak of Piz Palü, as far as the rocks of the E. arête of Piz Bernina, and throughout the day when ascending Piz Sella and Piz Glüschaint by the ordinary routes. The ordinary Swiss snow-hoops are not sufficiently 'stiff' for steep slopes, moreover the strings always get loose, and then they are worse than useless. To return for a moment to ski; every winter the list of accidents through their use gets more and more formidable—I have been on one, unfortunately abortive, rescue expedition myself—but what accident has ever occurred to a party wearing the slow and steady hoop or 'ladder'?

In the marvellous winter of 1898–99 we accomplished many climbs great and small. I did no less than twelve mountains above 10,000 ft. myself, and the Bernina was accomplished three times in one week. Strangely enough, the snowfall of this winter was the heaviest that I have seen in ten winters in the Engadine. On the Piz Palü ridge the heat was so great that we took off our coats—a pleasant contrast to Piz Roseg. On the former expedition we left St. Moritz at 2 A.M., drove to the Bernina houses, traversed the three peaks, and descending to the Hotel Morteratsch, regained St. Moritz at 4 P.M. In 1904, leaving St. Moritz at midnight, and accomplishing exactly the same tour, we reached the top of the mountain at 4 P.M. and St. Moritz at 11 P.M. Such is the value of 'times' in winter expeditions.

I did not revisit the Upper Engadine till the winter of 1902–3, and we only, most laboriously, accomplished Piz Bernina and Pizzi Sella and Glüschaint, the two latter on the same day; we also made abortive attempts on the Piz della Margna (3,162 m.), and the Cima di Rosso (3,371 m.), (first accomplished by Mr. Coolidge in 1867), the latter from the Forno Hut. In that winter Schocher descended on ski from Piz Languard to Pontresina in 17 minutes, including 47 falls.

In early July 1903, coming from Sulden, with Alois Pollinger, Senr., and Josef Lochmatter, I made one of my numerous attempts, always without success through bad weather, to climb the Monte di Scerscen (first ascended by Dr. Güssfeldt in 1877 by a route which reflects little credit on the mountaineering or leading abilities of his guides). Starting from the Tschierva hut, and acting on Schocher's advice, which he gave while strolling up to the hut with us, we attacked the mountain by its N.E. face, that towards Piz Bernina, a route first accomplished by Mr. H. C. Foster with Schocher in 1898. This route does not seem to be always possible, but that year it went splendidly, and in something under 4 hrs. from the hut

we reached the Bergschrund immediately under the summit, whence apparently another 20 minutes—there was no ice—would have brought us to the top; but it was not to be, for a great storm coming on, we fled back to the hut, which we reached before 10 A.M. That afternoon my companions, insisting that the quickest way back to Pontresina was by the Boval Pass (3,402 m.), between Piz Morteratsch and Piz Misaun, proceeded, the weather having cleared, to bring me back that way. I will not say how I had my revenge on one of them, at any rate. As all English mountaineers know, the traverse of the Scerscen-Bernina (first accomplished in 1886 by Messrs. Garwood and Wainwright) is by far the finest expedition in the Central Bernina group, but as the arête between the peaks is always bad when the N. face of the Scerscen is good, I would advise them to start from the Mortel or Marinelli huts (the latter being an 'hotel,' from July 15 to September 15) and try the mountain by the S.W. face or arête. The very name Monte di Scerscen, however, seems to inspire terror in the hearts of the local guides (with the honourable exception of Martin Schocher), and very few will be found willing or competent to undertake its ascent, in spite of the exorbitant tariff. Hence we have this strange anomaly: the finest mountain in the *Bernina* Alps frequently remaining unscaled for a season or more in succession. Schocher, Klucker, and the Pollinger-Lochmatter family appear to possess the monopoly. Last summer Mr. G. L. Stewart climbed the Scerscen *via* its S.W. arête and the Schneehaube (3,877 m.), crossed on to Piz Bernina, descended the latter by the 'Scharte' and N. arête, and reached the Tschierva hut in 15 hrs. 5 mins. (including 2 hrs. halt) from the Mortel, a truly marvellous performance. A word of advice to travellers generally: the business propensities of the host of the inn on the Diavolezza Pass require careful attention. Later that season I adjourned alone to Maloja, where bad weather prevented me from doing anything except the interesting Torrone Orientale (first climbed by Herren Ryzdewsky and Paulcke with Klucker in 1882), which first gave me an insight into the superb district between the Muretto Pass and Lake Como; the recollection of the performances of the local guide during the ascent spoil for me, however, all the glorious view from the summit, with horrid thoughts of the descent.

In January 1905 we accomplished the ascents of Piz Argient and Piz Zupô, and I did not revisit the district in summer till June 1908. About the first of that month Schocher and I left Vicosoprano early, and, after losing our way in the dark,

reached the Albigna waterfall just as dawn was breaking ; it was a wonderful spectacle, the torrent swollen to vast size by the melting snows poured over the cliffs descending from the Albigna Glen into the wild Pian dei Buoi, with a noise like thunder, in leaps of 300 feet at a time. With difficulty we tore ourselves away from this grand sight, and, crossing the sandy waste—the new Albigna Club hut (1910) is to be constructed just N.E. of this basin—travelled slowly up the Albigna and Castello Glaciers to the Colle del Cantun. Here my companion, but barely recovered from a long illness, remained, while I went up the easy S. arête to the top of the Cantun (3,360 m.), returned, and subsequently also climbed the Castello (3,400 m.) (first climbed by Messrs. Freshfield and Tucker in 1866) by its N. arête. The view and day were perfect, and with interest I gazed at a peak in the immediate vicinity—at least it is *almost* a separate peak—whose precipitous sides and knife-like ridges have never felt the foot of man ; a peak as yet nameless, one of the several of this district which still remain 'virgin' in spite of the insatiable thirst for new exploits prevailing among the few visitors to Masino and the Bregaglia, and which has led on to the wild christening of every prominent crag on the S. side, scaled or unscaled, with the names of harmless individuals.

On all sides splendid and almost unknown peaks rise up abruptly ; this is the district with which the name of that great guide, Christian Klucker of Sils, must for ever be associated, for on the entire Swiss side of the frontier ridge there is hardly one mountain of which the honour of making the first ascent has not been his. Some of these ascents and many of the new routes subsequently accomplished by this wonderful mountaineer rank among the hardest climbs ever effected in the Alps.

We glissaded down the Castello Glacier and regained Vicosoprano late in the afternoon. On the following day we drove to Promontogno, and I paid my first of many visits to the splendidly situated Sciora hut in Val Bondasca ; truth to say, as Dr. Claude Wilson has already pointed out, the hut is not well situated for a climber, nearly all the greater peaks being excessively dangerous if tried from this side, while for the Passi di Bondo (the 'true' col was first crossed by Messrs. Gardiner and Cox in 1875) or Cacciabella, Promontogno is not too far distant as a starting-point. How many English mountaineers have visited this wildly magnificent valley, dominated by the incomparable Sciora peaks and the great N. faces of Piz Cengalo and Piz Badile ? These great faces, one of which

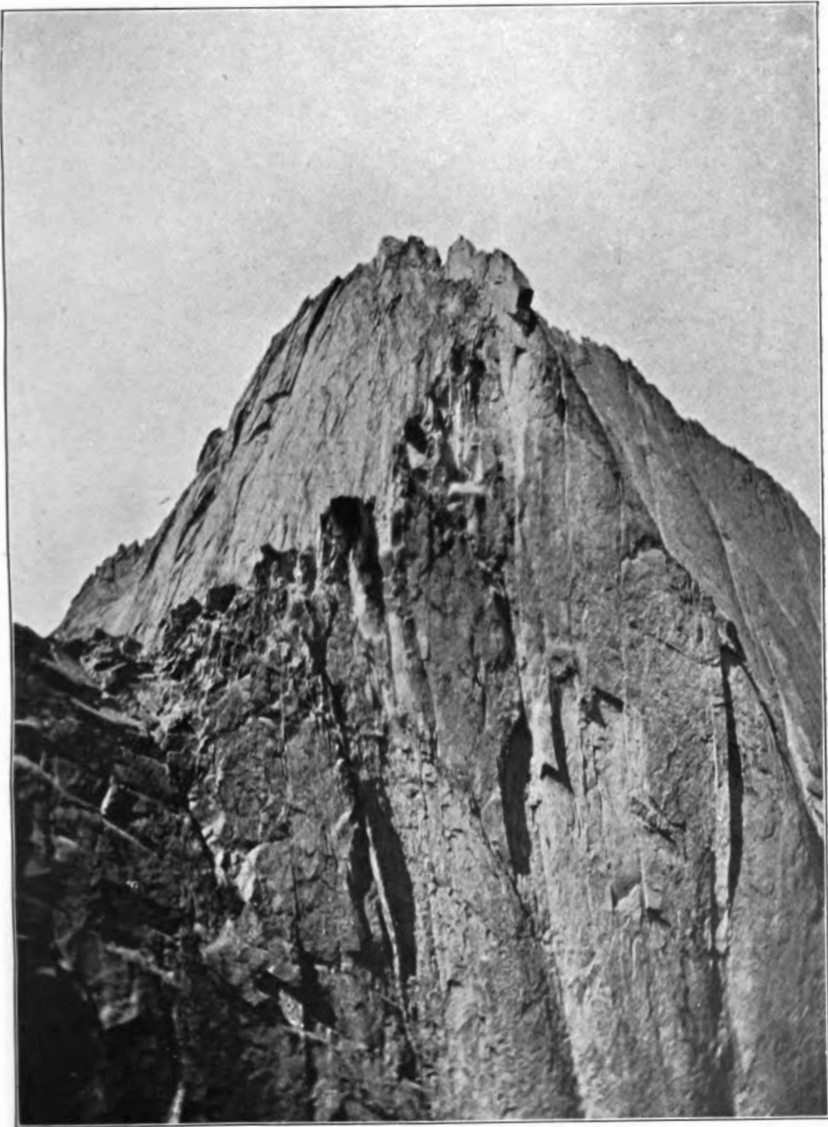
only has been climbed—Piz Cengalo—are surely the very embodiment of apparent 'inaccessibility,' and few more dangerous expeditions have ever been undertaken than the direct ascent of Piz Cengalo on June 29, 1897, by Prince Scipio Borghese with Martin Schocher and Christian Schnitzler. The danger and honour of this the only ascent was filched from Klucker by a sort of 'fluke,' very similar to that which robbed Mr. Coolidge of the record of the first ascent of the Meije, and Klucker revenged himself characteristically on his friend Schocher in the latter's own district, by taking his party—a veteran Russian gentleman and his Dolomite guide—up to the Güssfeldt Sattel from the Italian side, and thence cutting down, in 4 hrs., the formidable ice curtain leading to the Tschierva Glacier. As for the N. face of Piz Badile, 'it remains and perhaps always will remain' unclimbed, and most probably unclimbable.

Schocher and I crossed the Forcola di Sciora between the Pioda and Ago di Sciora. A *very* steep snow couloir rises from the Bondasca Glacier to the col, but leading alternately we kicked steps up it in $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours from the foot. No stones fell then, but later in the season the couloir is all bare ice, and, resembling the notorious Couloir du Lion, becomes a veritable death-trap (the col was first effected by Herr von Ryzzewsky with Klucker in 1892). The weather broke on the col, and we hurried down the Albigna Glacier to Vicosoprano.

Two days after we crossed the Passo del Ferro (9,203 m. Lurani map) to San Martino (first crossed by Mr. Freshfield's party in 1864), whence, the only food available being polenta, and the Baths of Masino being still closed, we speedily departed, and returned over the Zocca Pass to the Val Bregaglia. A bad week followed, and not till the third week of June, with Josef Pollinger as my companion, did we do anything worth recording. Starting again from the Sciora hut we climbed the Colle del Cengalo (first crossed by Herr von Ryzzewsky with Klucker and Barbaria in 1892) by its gloomy and precipitous N. couloir, buried away between the Pizzi Cengalo and Badile—a dangerous and unpleasant ascent. From the col we ran up the easy W. arête to the top of Piz Cengalo (first climbed by Messrs. Freshfield and Tucker in 1866), which commands one of the most splendid views in the Alps, comprising as it does the Pennines, Oberland, and Lake of Como to the W. and the Engadine lakes, Ortler and Dolomites to the E., with the imposing Disgrazia in the immediate foreground; to the N. the peaks of the Duan, Gletscherhorn, and others, perhaps known only to Messrs. Coolidge and Freshfield of earthly

mortals. We hurried down to the upper Val Porcellizzo, and thence stormed by its far from easy W. flank Pizzo Cameruzzo (2,870 m.) (first climbed in 1898 by Count Lurani), returning that day to the Badile hut, where we made a great bonfire of a bench, an offence which has generously been forgiven me by the Milanese Section of the Italian Alpine Club.

On the following day, with Promontogno as our ultimate destination, we climbed, or tried to climb, Piz Badile (first ascended by Mr. Coolidge in 1867) by its ordinary and well-known southern route. An admirable description of this route will be found in Mr. Freshfield's article 'Behind the Bernina,' 'Alpine Journal,' vol. xvii., p. 426. The mountain was wrapped in fog so thick that I am unable to state whether we reached the top or not, but think we failed; at any rate, from the point reached, we descended, by an exposed route and a spare rope, its S.W. face on to the W. Badile Glacier, and thence, hoping for a view, climbed the smooth but easy E. face of the Punta Torelli (8,192 m.), and, having hurried down its S.W. arête, tried to find the Northern Passo di Porcellizzo. The Italian map is dreadfully inaccurate in these parts, and not only did we fail to find that pass, but also the broad Southern one of the same name; we therefore, quite by mistake, still in thick mist, crossed the Passo Sceroja (2,714 m.) and tried to work our way in a N. direction along the W. spurs of the ridge dividing Val Porcellizzo from Val Codera. After nearly 7 hrs. of this work we became pounded and had to descend to the upper Codera valley. We hurried up that desolate valley (Mr. Freshfield has well described it), and in a thick driving mist eventually found ourselves close to the flattened summit of the Pizzo di Trubinasca (2,920 m., It. map). Matters were getting desperate, but we now knew where we were; we ran down the W. arête of our peak, and, skirting the teeth of the frontier ridge, climbed up to a gap in it, whence we endeavoured to descend on the Swiss side by one of the most horrible chimneys it has ever been my lot to see. Every rock was loose and crumbled at a touch, and it became so obvious that, even if it was possible for Josef to lower himself down after me, I must inevitably be overwhelmed by the rocks that he would be obliged to send down, that I refused to go further, and was with difficulty hauled back to the gap. The weather now became hopeless, a tremendous thunderstorm broke, and with singing axes we each tried the next gaps to the W.; mine led down a broad snowy couloir and was undoubtedly the Passo di Trubinasca (2,746 m.) which we were



J. J. Withers, Photo.

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PIZ BADILE FROM PIZ CENGALO.

in search of. Josef joined me, and we fairly flew down the couloir, in a splendid standing glissade of over 1,200 feet, almost to the ruined huts of the wild Trubinasca Alp. We soon struck a path and thought our troubles were over, but another $3\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. were to pass before reaching our destination. Soon the track vanished altogether, we got among thick rhododendrons, and precipices began to loom in front of us through the heavy rain. Unwisely we separated and did not meet again for another hour; how Josef got down I know not, but never during any expedition have I used such sulphurous language before or since. Dripping with wet I at last got into a precipitous ravine, down which I went rapidly for some distance, being finally pulled up by a cliff over 90 feet high and overhanging. With much trouble I lowered myself—fortunately I was carrying the spare rope—over this 'step' and another which I encountered lower down, and at last discovered Josef cautiously descending the left-hand side of the ravine below me. With joy I soon saw him obliged to get out his rope, too, and descend with much skill to the bottom of another step, where his head proved of great service for my subsequent descent. In a short time we now emerged from this never-to-be-forgotten ravine and slipped down dreadfully steep and slippery grass slopes, below the cliffs, to the Selva di Luvertic huts, whence we soon reached Promontogno after a day of 18 hrs. and literally only one meal. The omelette of 16 eggs (price 2 fcs.) which we consumed at the hospitable Pension Scartazzini has since grown in my companion's imagination to one of 86!

A few days after we climbed from the Sciora hut the Pizzo del Ferro Centrale (the Cima della Bondasca of the Siegfried map), and, returning to the upper Val Bondasca (I confess that I do *not* like the Bondasca Glacier with only two on the rope), tried the direct descent thence to Vicosoprano by the so-called Le Forcellete col (2,546 m., S. map). We lost our way, as usual, in the trees on the N. side of the col, and anyone descending by that most unpleasant route is entreated for his own sake to keep down the *right* bank of the main ravine till he reaches the level of Val Bregaglia. We took $5\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. from the Sciora Hut to Vicosoprano, not including halts.

A week or so later, having accomplished from Sils the ascent of Piz Fora (8,372 m. S. map), we went up, a party of six, to the Forno hut, encountering on our way a distinguished climber and late Secretary of the Club who was accompanied by a weeping 'guide' of 14. They had been to the hut, and the 'guide' had been overcome by the feel of a glacier. On the

following day Captain L. C. F. Oppenheim and myself, with Josef and Heinrich Pollinger, climbed Monte Disgrazia (first ascent by Leslie Stephen and E. S. Kennedy in 1862); the well-known route over Mounte Sissone is very long, but thanks to a perfect day and conditions we only took 5 hrs. and 55 mins. to the top, including all halts. We were back at the Forno hut at 2.15 p.m. after a delightful day of only 11½ hrs. Mr. W. M. Baker and his inseparable companion Alois Pollinger père, had been up Piz Bacun (3,249 m.), first climbed by Herren Curtius and Bernus with Klucker in 1883, by its interesting N. arête. Josef and I went up Monte del Forno (3,220 m.), on the following day, and returned to Sils *via* the Muretto Pass and the charming S. bank of the Sils lake. On another perfect day Baker and I, with Josef and his father, had a splendid climb up the Torrone Occidentale (first climbed by Count Lurani in 1882) by its W. arête, a route which had not been repeated since Messrs. Garwood, Kingscote and Branch first accomplished it under Schocher's lead in 1891. The descent into the great gap in that ridge is very difficult. Would any member of the Club like to repeat Herr von Rydzewsky's 1893 route with Klucker and Emile Rey, up the N. face of this peak? It looks and is appallingly steep, and would lend itself well to one of those extraordinary descriptions in the 'Journal' to which we are unfortunately getting too much accustomed. Later that season we returned to Pontresina and accomplished some long but not important or interesting ascents.

In the early summer of that dreadful year of wet, 1909, I reached Chiesa in Val Malenco (7½ miles from Sondrio) by a charming route. Sleeping the previous night at Como, I left by the 6.30 a.m. steamer for Colico, which was reached some 6 hrs. later, when I railed and drove to my destination. It was an absolutely perfect day—May 31—and the lovely lake was looking its best. The scenery always appears to me as far surpassing that of the Lake of Lucerne, which I had crossed on the previous day. On June 1, with Josef Pollinger and a local porter, Oppenheim and I set out to climb Pizzo Scalino (3,323 m.) as a training walk. Let me warn anyone, for such a purpose, not to attempt this peak—at any rate except on a cool day. The walk is perfectly beautiful, but going our hardest we took nearly six hours to reach the Passo del Ometto (not named or measured on the It. map). So far the track is the direct one from Chiesa to the Cederna Club hut in Val Forame, the highest branch of the long Fontana valley, again a side branch of the Valtelline. We now turned N.E., and some 2½ hrs. later two weary individuals (the others had

fallen out) were grovelling up the easy S. face of our peak ; this fortunately did not take long, and we reached the top in well under nine hours from Chiesa. Mr. Tuckett, after making what was probably the first ascent in 1866, has drawn a most interesting panoramic sketch of the view from the summit, which, from its position, commands certainly one of the most striking ones I know. We descended a rather narrow but very easy rock ridge passing over a little peak to the S. called Cima Val di Tugno (8,054 m.), soon perceived the Cederna hut to the E., and, steering straight for it, attained its comfortable precincts in half-an-hour from leaving the great Cross on the summit of Pizzo Scalino. It may here be noted that the position of this hut is not shown on the It. map ; it is close to the point marked 2,701 m. on that map, and N.E. of the Passo Forame. We had a good rest and started again early next morning for the Passo Forame, which divides the Scalino massif from the peaks to the S., which I will call the Painale group. This group, of which the finest peaks from N. to S. are the Cima Painale itself, Pizzo Calino, which is said to resemble the Matterhorn (this, fortunately, is *not* true), Vetta di Ron, and the triple headed Corna Brutana, is part of a strange little district possessing among other qualities the extraordinary one of being unknown to Mr. Coolidge. So far as I know—perhaps Mr. Freshfield or the present Secretary will contradict me—I am the only Englishman who has visited it, and yet Signori Cederna and Corti have long sung its praises in their many interesting articles in the ‘Rivista.’ A few strange and tiny little glaciers surround the grim sides of the Painale and Calino ; patches of what seem to be névé adorn the flanks of the Vetta di Ron—the finest summit in the district—otherwise the mountains are too low and too near the hot Valtelline for snow to lie much after May. I had been long worried over the topography of the Painale group, but soon found that the Italian map delineates it correctly, although the absence of names or heights on that map is rather bewildering. The crescent-shaped ridge descending S.W. and S.E. from Pizzo Scalino, and separating the main Painale group from the Malenco and Poschiavo valleys, possesses no beauty or climbing interest. Signor Corti has given a series of admirable topographical and *not* personal names to the principal summits ; in addition, he has been up nearly every possible route of each peak in this, perhaps the most neglected, district of the Alps. Signor Cederna’s most valuable monograph in the ‘Bolletino,’ vol. xix., No. 52, pp. 74–91, with a sketch map, must also not be forgotten.

Having reached the Passo Forame, which we accomplished in some 40 min. from the hut, we proceeded to take the N. arête of Cima Painale as our objective. This is the route by which the summit was first reached by Signor Magnaghi in 1885. Since then, but only in the last few years, Signor Corti has accomplished the ascent from every flank and every arête, but, strangely enough, not one of these many routes is easy, and they may all be said to require quite serious scrambling, the S.E. face being apparently the most difficult. We found the N. arête narrow and interesting, but 1 hr. 30 min. from the pass found us on the top (3,248 m.), which affords very little view. Our intention had been to follow the S. arête (only once traversed previously, in August 1908, by the indefatigable Signor Corti) over the tops of the Pizzo and Cima Vicima; there being, however, every sign of a change of weather for the worse, and much snow on the rocky and jagged arête, our plans were altered, and we descended the W. face by a steep rock rib; lastly, its funny little hanging glacier, to the level of the upper Val Painale—called Val di Togno. It was clearing now, and the hour being still early, we proceeded down the valley till we struck the N. face of the ridge-like little peak called Pizzo Canino (2,801 m.), which apparently possesses no Alpine history. We climbed up this steep face close to its junction with the Pizzo Vicima (Pt. 3,230 of the It. map), but did not possibly reach its actual top, which is hard to make out, owing to the many pinnacles crowning the ridge. A rather difficult rocky chimney brought us down its S. face, and we crossed some débris slopes to the foot of the N.W. buttress of the imposing Vetta di Ron. This fine peak has apparently never been attempted from this side, and our 1909 luck having now set in in earnest, we had barely reached the level of the Passo Vicima (2,841 m.) when a sharp hailstorm entirely stopped us. After cowering on the buttress for some 2 hrs., the weather ever getting worse, we were obliged to turn back, and did not reach the Passo del Ometto till 3 p.m., from which col we ran back to Chiesa in some 2½ hrs. more. A word might be added concerning the Vetta di Ron (3,133 m.).

It has been climbed from the S.E. Val Fontana side as well as from the S. (Signor Cederna in 1885 made the first ascent), and is, I understand, not an easy climb. The route is long, and you are obliged to start from hot Ponte in the Valtelline and either go up the Valle di Ron to its head (Signor Cederna employing this route in the descent) or else mount to the Campello huts in Val Fontana, where you must find night quarters. My advice to anyone wishing to make the ascent is this: Start from Chiesa

and cross the Passi del Ometto and Forame (the former pass is situated between the points 2,709 m. and 2,767 m. of the It. map) to the good Cederna hut ($7\frac{1}{2}$ hrs.), where you sleep the night. On the following day re-cross the Forame Pass and *descend* the Painale (Val di Tognò) glen, till you strike our buttress just to the S.W. of the Passo Vicima. The route we attempted, apparently, although steep, presents no great obstacles, but the climb would be most repaying. If the summit is reached, $1\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. would bring you from the top to the head of the Valle di Ron, and another 3 hrs. or less to Ponte, where you can take train to Sondrio, and return by one of the Hotel Malenco motors in half-an-hour to Chiesa, or of course you can re-ascend, as we did, to the Passo del Ometto and regain Chiesa that way, the ridge S.W. of the Passo del Ometto being also easily crossed at many other points. There is said to be a pleasant little inn at San Bernardo on the E. slopes of the Valle di Ron, but I have never been in the lower part of that glen. The Corna Brutana (first climbed by Signor Cederna and others in 1886) is not an interesting peak; it is to the E. of the peak, 2,908 m. (Cima di Rogneda), to which its name is wrongly applied on the Italian map. Eleven consecutive days of bad weather now kept us tied to the lower slopes of Val Malenco, during which we gained a knowledge of paths that must be almost unique. Fortunately our quarters at the Hotel Malenco could not have been more comfortable, and its charming proprietor and first-class chef surpassed themselves on behalf of their few guests. I rank this hotel with the Engadiner Kulm at St. Moritz and the Royal at Courmayeur as the best in the 'High' Alps.

Josef and I managed about June 15 to cross the Passo Ventina (2,674 m.), a pass from Val Malenco to the Ventina valley, which latter glen is almost entirely filled by the splendid Ventina glacier descending from the N.E. face of Monte Disgrazia. It was a fine day, but new snow covered everything above 5,000 ft., and walking was most laborious. From the pass we climbed up the easy N. arête of Pizzo Rachele (2,996 m. of It. map), but we were too lazy to go to the true top, and struck straight down the N.W. face to the Ventina Glacier. I cannot speak too highly of the view of Monte Disgrazia which the Passo Ventina affords, in fact down the whole Ventina Glacier the views beggar description, and are perhaps only surpassed by the famous one of the same mountain seen through the woods of Val Sissone, from near Forbicina on the Muretto Pass path.

Some days after, on one of the worst days of the year, we

climbed Pizzo Cassandra by a new route up its S.E. face. It gave no trouble, and I was able to certify to the truth of Melchior Anderegg's advice to his party in 1862 ('Alpine Journal,' vol. i. p. 5), when he said that the true way to the top of Monte Disgrazia from Val Malenco was *direct* from Chiesa. If one was to go and sleep at the Giumellino Alp, about 2½ hrs. above Chiesa, the summit of Pizzo Cassandra would be reached by the S.E. face in 3 hrs. You would then descend the W. arête of that peak (some 500 ft. of easy snow) to the col at the head of the Ventina Glacier (3,034 m.), and then mount the long easy S.E. arête of Monte Disgrazia, turning or scaling the point marked 3,475 m. (It. map) and thence follow the arête over its great teeth, as Messrs. Still and Barlow did in 1874, to the top. I see no reason why the expedition, thus taken, should consume more than 8 hrs., as no difficulties would be encountered before Pt. 3,475 m. I am under the impression that Claude Wilson, whose party in July 1909 explored *all* the glens and glaciers of the Disgrazia, agrees with me.

During June we also had a long and beautiful walk up to the grandly situated Marinelli Hut; the way is rather intricate but is correctly marked on the map. Since the opening of the 'hotel,' constructed alongside of the old hut, the latter has been allowed to fall into decay, and as the 'hotel' does not open till July 15, we spent a damp and wretched night among the rats. On the following day the weather was very stormy, and our plans were vague; we did not start till 7, and then crossed the Caspoggio Glacier and climbed all the Cime di Musella lying to the S. of the hut; these peaks are measured W. to E., 3,094 m., 3,079 m. (called Punta Biella), one unmeasured (about 3,030 m.), and 3,135 m. The first two are anything but easy, and in their snowy condition required great care. We ended up by also climbing point 3,186 m. to the N.E. I meant to descend to Chiesa by the Val Campo Moro, but, although by map and compass, and in a snow-storm, we succeeded in finding the point we were aiming at—Pt. 2,848 m. on the S. edge of the lower Fellaria Glacier, the snow was falling too thickly to attempt the apparently very steep descent to the Fellaria Châlets, and we retraced our steps back to near point 3,186 m., returning thence to the Marinelli hut. It is a good 4 hrs.' walk from the hut to Chiesa, and 8 hrs. is quite a fast time to reckon in the opposite direction. A hay-cart should be hired to carry one over the hot three miles road between Chiesa and Tornadri.

The natives of this most picturesque Val Malenco are of an extremely simple and friendly disposition, and are invariably

prepared to give strangers all the information in their power. They appear generally well-to-do and are exceedingly well supplied with cows and pigs; the latter, who invariably bask round the houses, will, if whistled to, follow like dogs. When driving to Tornadri, on one occasion, we were followed by seven cows and fifteen pigs, who frisked round the cart to the delight of the driver and intense amusement of the owner, who remained behind in Lanzada. The Schenattis and Albareda of Chiesa are the best guides in the valley; they were more than friendly to Josef and me throughout our stay. Austria and Germany are not regarded as friendly powers.

The weather showed signs of improvement, and Messrs. Claude Wilson, Wicks, and Bradby, who arrived at the end of the month, brought a lovely evening with them. The next day was also fine, and we foolishly spent it in trekking by road and rail to Val Masino. The Passo di Mello is the best way of going to that valley from the Malenco, but it is long, and, with the snow in the condition of 1909, makes up a most laborious day, to which statement I can see the experienced heads of the aforementioned English mountaineers nodding an emphatic if gloomy assent. Rough but clean accommodation with, however, little food, can be obtained at Chiareggio, if one desires to break the journey. Masino and its valley have been written about at length too lately to be again described; beyond stating that the great fallen boulder called Sasso di Remeno, close to the road between Cattaeggio and San Martino, seemed to be almost as high as the average British mountain, and far more difficult of access, suffice it to say that Masino has always appeared to me as one of the most ideal 'centres' in the Alps, and it is a thousand pities that the excellent 'Grand Bathing Establishment' is only open from July 1 to September 5.

The weather was dreadful there last July, and after a long walk to the Bocchetta di Merdarola (2,571 m.) and a few scrambles in the neighbourhood of the Sceroja Pass and on the Cima del Barbacan (2,767 m.) we took advantage of a fairly clear but boisterous day (July 2) to make the ascent of Pizzo Ligoncio (3,033 m.), the most important peak S. of the frontier ridge. Mr. Freshfield describes this peak in his eloquent 'Italian Alps' as 'quite unknown to the English mountaineer.' What was true of his rambles in 1866 is still true regarding the whole district between the Lake of Como and Val Masino, even in 1909.

The peaks of this district vary between 8,500 ft. and 9,800 ft. The actual climbs are short and rocky, and some startling routes have been effected by the members of the Como section of the

I.A.C. in the last two or three years; they more probably resemble Welsh scrambles than Alpine mountaineering, and are very suitable as May and October expeditions. The Volta Club hut, a large and excellent one, at the head of the Valle dei Ratti, is the best starting-point, and two or three peaks can easily be ascended in the day from that lofty shelter. The way to that hut from Verceja (Station Dubino) on the Colico-Chiavenna Railway is, however, a painfully hot and fatiguing $7\frac{1}{2}$ hrs.' trudge, and I confess that I have never dared face it. The retrospect from the path over the whole N. end of Lake Como and Monte Legnone must be exquisite. It is, however, quite feasible (as will be shown) to climb one of these peaks from Masino, by crossing one of the Passi della Vedretta, and to return on the same day.

To return to Pizzo Ligoncio: we left Masino at 6 A.M., and, hurrying up the rocky pastures of Val Ligoncio in a S.W. direction, soon got to the small glacier—not marked on any of the maps, save on Count Lurani's valuable one—which extends across the N.E. face of the entire ridge from a point N. of Pizzo Ligoncio to the three peaks of the Cime del Calvo. It is a strange and narrow little glacier, and is quite invisible from Val Masino. We soon went up it, and arrived under the precipitous N.E. face of our peak. Crossing an incipient Bergschrund we bore across an easy ledge of the face, which brought us to a gap in the watershed well to the E. of the summit. We then scrambled up the quite interesting E. (rock) arête to the top—time, $3\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. from the Baths, including halts. I expected an extraordinary view from the position of the mountain, and I was not disappointed. In spite of a fearfully cold wind, we stayed over an hour on the summit, and I was delighted to find that the tracing of the Italian map is quite sufficiently accurate, as Lurani, unfortunately, does not extend S.W. of the summit. The Volta hut is plainly visible, and from it the ascent of our peak by its S. face and W. arête would be a mere walk of 2 hrs. We descended the N. arête by which Count Lurani made the first ascent in 1881, and found it, plastered as it was with snow and ice, quite sufficiently interesting; an easy chimney at the N.E. end of the snow plateau to which the arête descends, gives access to the Ligoncio Glacier.

As the day was yet young (11.30 A.M.), instead of descending to the glacier, we determined to try the strange-looking little unmeasured peak to the N. of Pizzo Ligoncio, called La Sfinge, from its supposed resemblance to the Sphinx. A very narrow rock ridge, jagged in parts, brought us to the top in about

40 min. The peak had been first ascended (in August, 1908, by Signor de Carli) by an evil-looking ledge on its E. face, whereas our route up its S. arête is far shorter and probably much easier. From the summit Josef lowered me down the N. face and arête to a ledge, and then, doubling the rope, followed. This process was several times repeated, and it took us an hour of rather exciting work to reach the level part of the Porcellizzo-Codera watershed. I do not think that the ascent would be possible by our line of descent. We were back at Masino about 3 P.M. and enjoyed the excellent hot baths.

The next day we set out to try one of the peaks at the head of the Valle dei Ratti. Leaving Masino at 4 A.M. we followed the same route as for Pizzo Ligoncio, keeping more to the S. after reaching the Ligoncio Glacier. We crossed the watershed between the Porcellizzo and Ratti valleys at the Passo Ratti, a gap between the Punta Ratti (2,919 m., It. map) and point 2,941 m. of the Cime del Calvo; an easy snow and débris couloir brought us to the upper level of the Valle dei Ratti. It may be noted that the usual passes are the Passi della Vedretta N. of the Punta Ratti.

A word concerning the topography of the rocky little peaks surrounding the head of this not very remarkable valley may be useful. The nomenclature of the peaks from W. to E. which are generally nameless on the map is as follows: Sasso Manduin (2,888 m.), by far the most imposing peak of the glen; Punta Volta; Punta Como (2,837 m.); Punta Magnaghi (2,865 m.); then follow several teeth on the long W. arête of Pizzo Ligoncio, which projects into Val Codera (its furthest extremity being called Pizzo Brasciadega) (2,613 m.); these teeth, in no ways to be considered as 'peaks,' have been named by enthusiastic scramblers Pizzo Torretta (2,970 m., a too great height, I think); Punte Clerici (4 teeth); and Punta Bonazzola. Next comes the Bocchetta d'Arnasca, an easy pass into Val Codera, Pizzo Ligoncio (3,033 m.), Passi della Vedretta (2 passes); Punta Ratti; Passo Ratti; and the three peaks of the Cime del Calvo, of which the S.S.E. one (2,955 m.) is the highest; an easy ridge broken by several cols of which the Passo di Primalpia or Primaggia (2,457 m.) is the most convenient, then extends S. to the Monte Spluga (2,845 m.), the last outpost of the mountain region proper, and up which many routes, some unpleasant, have been achieved.

Having crossed our col, we steered S.W. across the head of the valley over pleasant grass and firm débris, and, passing just above the Volta hut and below the S. spur of the Punta

Volta, we mounted up a little glen in a N.W. direction (from the head of this glen, a little rocky col, called Bocchetta del Sereno, leads into Val Codera) till we got right under the N.E. face of the Sasso Manduin (first climbed in 1896 by Signor Allievi and others), the mountain which forms such a splendid object from the head of Lake Como. We doubled back across a grassy ledge, first steering S.W. and then again N.W., till we got up against the rocks of the N.E. face. Five chimneys seam this almost vertical wall, doubtless resembling the 'face' of the excessively advertised Lliwedd; we proceeded to attack the most northerly but one, which, I believe, is practically the sole route as yet discovered. The rocks are very steep but easy, and about one hour's climb brought us to the top of the chimney, whence a steep slab led us to the N.W. arête close to the summit; from the top of the gully there are several ways of reaching the summit, but we were forced to go where the snow lay firmest, as the peak was in anything but good condition (6¼ hrs. from Masino). Snow flurries drifting up from the S. allowed but a bare glimpse down the tremendous S. face, before almost blowing us off the cairn on the summit. The Punta Magnaghi to the N. looked in its then condition as hopeless as anything I have seen; when dry its rocks should give a short and interesting scramble up its Codera face. Punta Como is easy by its S.W. arête. We had intended to sleep at the Volta hut and attempt the Punta Como and Magnaghi on the following day, but the weather and the wet condition we were reduced to caused us to pass the hut without stopping (reached in 1 hr. from the top of the peak) and to circle round the head of the glen in a S.S.E. direction, till, passing a little lake (2,297 m.), we gained by a short ascent the Primalpia Pass (2,457 m.) in another 1½ hr. Rain was coming down steadily, but the scenery was sufficiently clear to bring us easily past the little Spluga lakes to the Bocchetta di Merdarola (2,571 m.), which leads from the upper Val di Spluga to the Merdarola Alp, from which one stumbles painfully but rapidly down to the Baths. We had only taken 10½ hrs. for the whole expedition, but had gone quickly with only two short halts.

The following day we walked up in 4¼ hrs., easy going, to the Allievi hut in Val Zocca—the best situated of all huts in this region, and a most comfortable one in every way. It rained all night, and, after crossing the Zocca Pass, our attempt to reach the Punta Pioda di Sciora under a blazing sun was almost bound to end in failure; the upper N.E. face was raked by small avalanches and falling stones; and, having reached a great height, we proceeded to fly incontinently. A most fatiguing

S. C. in Italia, a

M. di Zucca

Sciara di Fuori
Piola di Sciara

Ag. di Scova

Sciara di Dentro,

Ferro Cervate
Pio. del Ferro
Ferro Orientale
Pio. di Bando
3,223 m.

Poi, Gemella

P. Cengalo
3,307 m.
3,374 m.

Colle di Cengalo
Pia. Serrin

P. Barber

C. Sant'Anna

Pia. di Forno



J. J. Withers, Photo.

swim brought us to the end of the Albigna Glacier, and the well-remembered path skirting the great ravine, to Vicosoprano that afternoon. Shortly after I took refuge at St. Moritz among the pot-hunting droves of indifferent golfers, and was glad to have done with a miserable season.

Of the long ridge running eastwards from Chiavenna to the Bocchetta della Teggiola, which col leads from Val Codera to Castasegna in Val Bregaglia, there is little to be said. The Cima di Gruf or Monte Droso (2,936 m.) is the highest peak, and, like the others, presents no mountaineering difficulties; all the peaks are accessible from Val Codera or the lower Val Bregaglia by endless steep grass and débris slopes. The Pizzi dei Vanni or Monte di Bondo (2,794 m.), between the Teggiola and Trubinasca passes, is only of historical importance, but the Dente, the sharp pinnacle just E. of the broad Pizzo di Trubinasca, has only been climbed once, by its W. arête. Klucker tells me that there is a dangerous, but fortunately short, traverse across the N. face, to be made at the commencement of that arête. The Cima Sant' Anna (3,169 m., Lurani map) or Badiletto has been reached from the S.W. (by Count Lurani's party in 1893) without much trouble, and Klucker has since discovered and led up two very long, difficult and dangerous routes from the N. in 1899 and 1904. This is the point where the long ridge running N. from Pizzo Ligoncio joins the frontier ridge, and not as represented on the official maps; the Forcola del Badile separates the Cima Sant' Anna from Piz Badile. This col was once crossed (in 1896) by Klucker and Schocher, an exploit that should not be repeated.

British mountaineers who first discovered and explored the Bregaglia-Masino Group and Monte Disgrazia between 1861 and 1867 have since strangely neglected it, though one hopes that a reaction has now set in. Since those years our exploits and new expeditions have been very few.

In 1874 Messrs. Still and Barlow ascended Monte Disgrazia by the S.E. arête, and in 1882 the Messrs. Pilkington and Hulton reached the same summit by the N.E. face and arête. In 1893 Mr. Garwood discovered a horrible way down the S.E. face of the difficult Punta Rasica, having in 1891 also accomplished a new way, previously described, up the Western Pizzo Torrone. On July 11, 1908, Messrs. Wilson, Wicks, and Bradby engineered a sensational variation on the Cima del Largo (first climbed by Klucker in 1891). In 1909 Mr. G. L. Stewart, in the course of a short but brilliant raid, worthy of the great General J. E. B. Stuart himself, gives us the first British ascent of the redoubtable Ago di Sciora (first climbed by

Herr v. Rydzewsky with Klucker and Rey in 1893); the traverse of the W. and E. arêtes of Piz Badile and the first ascent of Punta Sertori (3,198 m., Lurani map) from the N. all on the same day; finally, the first properly recorded ascent of Monte Disgrazia by the S.S.W. arête. During all these ascents Mr. Stewart moved at a rate vying with that of his Confederate prototype.

This paper has already exceeded all reasonable limits, but a word of profound gratitude is required of the writer for the great and exceeding kindnesses shown him by all Italian and Swiss mountaineers during the course of many seasons in the Alps of the Bernina. I am also much indebted to Mr. J. J. Withers for permitting the reproduction of several of his beautiful and unique photographs.

WITH THE CANADIAN ALPINE CLUB.

By HAROLD B. DIXON.

I.

THE CLUB HOUSE AND THE CAMP.

'The Alpine members of the British Association who are guests of the Canadian Alpine "Camp" this year include many noted men of the Alpine Club of the British Isles, and the party will be under the leadership of Professor Harold Dixon, F.R.S., of the University of Manchester.'

SUCH was the official announcement in the *Canadian Gazette*, and the 'party' and its 'leader' had to try to live up to it.

The invitation had been originally made to Whymper, Woolley, Collie, and myself. The letter inviting these four had been sent to the local secretaries of the British Association at Winnipeg, but was only forwarded to the office in London some months afterwards. The Council sent me the letter, asking me (as the senior member of the Association) to make arrangements for any members who wished to climb.

Meantime Whymper had written that he did not intend to go, Collie found himself tied to Skye, and Woolley could not be sure of the time. Thus, by the elimination of the fittest, Dame Fortune transferred the uncertain honours of leadership to me.

As so often happens in getting up such a party, things go swimmingly at first and the disappointments come later.