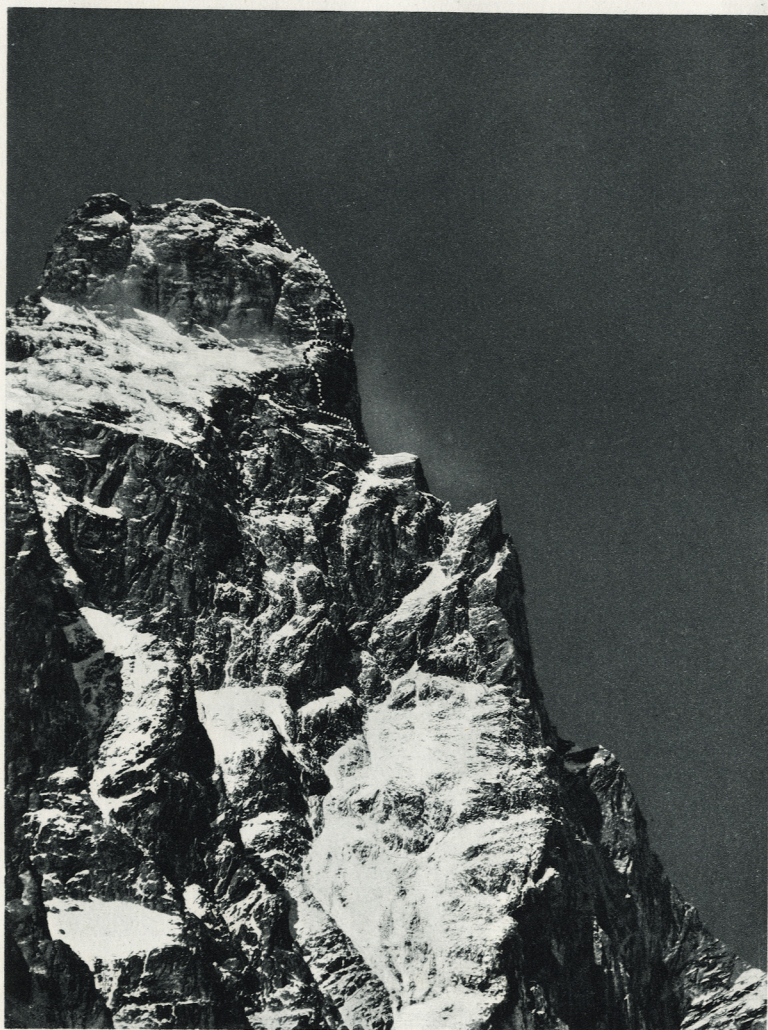




M. Pascony, photo

Swiss Electric Engineering Co.

The Furggen arête of the Matterhorn

(Telephoto)

pinnacles' of which the 'Climbers' Guide' speaks. The mountain on the N. or Lussert glacier side is very steep, and seemed to us decidedly dangerous by reason of falling stones. Of course it is quite possible that a better way up may be found from below than we could discern from the summit. We built a stone man on the highest point.*

On the descent we followed an entirely different route. There are several great couloirs in the S. face of the mountain that are well seen from the Grauson chalets. One of them begins almost under the very summit, descends straight down for some considerable distance, then turns to the right (W.) and finally becomes a torrent-bed, in parts very steep and not altogether easy. In this couloir, or on its sides, except in one place where for a short time a lateral gully was followed, we made our descent, Benjamin leading. The very last bit of the torrent bed, the steep part of which was about 100 metres above the Grauson chalets, was turned by the left bank.

Our route is probably much the quickest for the descent, as we only took 2 hours 10 minutes actual walking from the summit to the Grauson chalets. This couloir, in which we descended at least 3000 ft., is the great feature of the mountain, and was carefully examined by us from the chalets on our return.

The most interesting part of the view from the summit was the sight of the Valnontey from end to end. We returned leisurely to Cogné, well satisfied with our day's work.

THE FIRST ASCENT OF THE MATTERHORN BY THE FURGGEN ARÊTE.

By DR. MARIO PIACENZA.

[We offer our hearty thanks to Dr. Mario Piacenza and to the Editor of the 'Rivista Mensile' for permission to publish the following article. The translation we owe to Major E. L. Strutt.—EDITOR 'A. J.']

TO climb the Matterhorn by the Furggen arête has been my idea for many years, and has inspired in me a great desire to lift the veil of mystery which enshrouds it. The expedition certainly appears strenuous and impossible for

* I am indebted for the illustration to the kindness of Mr. C. F. Bennett. The photograph was taken from the Valnontey and gives an excellent idea of the Val de Grauson as well as the Tour.

those not gifted with the strongest tenacity and daring ; should I succeed where so many brave mountaineers have hesitated, and from which all have turned back mistrusting, and declaring the undertaking was impossible ? The idea of attempting the ascent grew on me by jealous degrees, and I spoke no word to anyone about it. It was, however, necessary to make inquiries from my predecessors as to how the mountain appeared on that side. Somehow by gossip on the verandah of the hotel, I managed to sound all the guides who accompanied Rey, but in such a way that I appeared perfectly careless to their replies.

Ange Maquignaz informed me ' *C'est fou d'aller par là, on va se casser le cou.*' The small and intelligent Daniel, however, with his accustomed vivacity and dash, which contrasted strangely with the quiet characteristics of the other guides, informed me ' *Ah, moi j'ai dans la tête, qu'on peut trouver un passage, regardez là ?*' with which words he pointed out to me the ribbons of snow beneath the final summit. ' *C'est là qu'il faut passer ; où il reste la neige on peut toujours passer.*' In fact, he showed himself convinced of the possibility of forcing a way, and I comforted myself with the idea that he at least, although doubtless considering it a risky undertaking, nevertheless thought it a possible one.

We could at least but try ; before renouncing the splendid expedition we could anyhow attempt it, so as to see whether the ridge was invincible or not. The guides were to be found who would accompany me, although their looks might have cooled my ardour, and I knew well that without courage and faith it was useless to set out, also that we should encounter too many rebuffs if we attempted the ascent without great previous reconnoitring.

For the first part of my undertaking I secured first my worthy friend Joseph Pellisier, then later Joseph Carrel and J. Gaspard, all of Valtournanche. With them alone was I confident, my anxieties and hopes were shared with them. Pellisier, beyond all the others, was keen about the expedition ; he had aided and abetted Rey's attempts, he knew well the difficulties of the Matterhorn and also, in part at least, those of the Furggen Ridge.

We all of us knew of Rey's different adventures, described in such a masterly way in his book ' *Nel Regno del Cervino* ' ; in each of us grew some measure of his feelings and enthusiasm—we lived over again in ourselves the many hours spent by him on the mountain !

It was impossible to climb direct from the shoulder of the Furggen Ridge to the summit—the crest of the arête cannot be followed at a very obvious point ; for in this one part there is a great void of some 80 metres filled by an immense projecting ‘nose.’ Whatever happens one must here turn on to the Swiss or Italian slope. Rey chose the way on the Swiss side, possibly because it is intrinsically more beautiful, possibly because it appears more feasible for a direct ascent to the summit, as one can keep nearer to the crest. How many hopes, how many varying emotions passed through the soul of the man, quivering with the longing for conquest ! Then the agony, the horror of the final repulse !

Dreaming of the gallantly-borne discomforts of my predecessors, and the causes which brought them about, I yet became certain that a way must exist, *not* on the Swiss slope so often tried, but on the Italian side. I determined to reconnoitre with the guides that part of the mountain lying between the final peak and the shoulder of the Furggen, making the Italian shoulder our starting-point. So began my climbs on the Matterhorn, using the Luigi di Savoia Club hut as our base. The hut became the home of myself and my trusty companions, and whenever the weather allowed it we scrambled along the ridge on to the top, in the attempt to disclose the new route. At first we were content, from the Pic Tyndall, to gaze at the opposite face, but the uncertain weather compelled us to bivouac frequently and fruitlessly. Not only was it the weather that proved itself a nuisance, there were also our worthy colleagues ; these latter found it strange—and no wonder !—that we should continue our prolonged sojourns at such a height, while they themselves were all trying as quickly as possible to complete the trying ascent, in order to return happy and proud to the comfortable beds of the hotel. Our reply to these people was always that we lived up there for the sake of fresh air and the photography of the Italian ridge, which had long been neglected in this respect ; this was quite true, the camera was always there and, weather permitting, was in daily use, although whenever a favourable moment occurred for a photograph, our eyes fled ever to the great precipice of the Furggen ; we gazed at its graceful outline, at the great couloir, at the slopes ; we watched the wreckage of the avalanches thundering down from the summit of the Giant and guessed from their traces the angles of the slopes and precipices.

As for the telephotographs, they were equally useful whether taken from the Château des Dames or from the Pic Tyndall.

After having well studied the slope of the wall, we determined to hazard ourselves on the snow ribbons stretching beneath the final tower, but to consider this merely as an exploration, and above all to avoid being seen; accordingly we left the hut in the early hours, by moonlight, long before the other parties, and before daybreak, following the usual route, we attained the Col Félicité. When early dawn lit up the rocks, we left the ordinary route, and as quickly as possible, to avoid the stone falls, we traversed the snow ribbons, and found ourselves on the flanks of the dreadful summit. We were well supplied with rope to secure ourselves across the gullies and slabs while searching for a possible route. For this purpose, and to enable us to return quickly when daylight appeared and when stones began to fall, we left behind us ropes and 'pitons.' In turn held by the others, we clambered across vertical bits. As soon as we heard from the depths the cry of 'That will do, pull the rope!' the work of hauling up our invisible companion began. The silence was dramatic at such a moment, nothing could be heard but the gaspings and oaths of our friend attempting to climb up and being continually crushed by the rope against the sides of the gullies.

Hardly had the sun shown itself up above the horizon when the horrors of the Matterhorn began. The Colossus awoke only to begin anew his slow disintegration. Rock-slides wrecked the faces and couloirs, leaping, whistling, and thundering down towards the glaciers which fringe the peak. It was the dread trumpet-call which signals 'Retreat!' Stealthy and swift the humming stones which leapt over our heads directed themselves towards the ordinary route, avoiding somehow the ropes fixed on that ascent.

As soon as we were out of danger we seized the camera hidden under a rock, and scrambled up to the summit by the ordinary route, hesitating in the neighbourhood of the places most exposed to the stones, in order to prove to the other parties that photography was our sole object.

In the evening we used to return to our dear hut, and after a frugal meal, if the weather was fine, stretched ourselves on the little platform encircled by so many glorious mountains and deep-lying glaciers, and discussed our ideas on what we had seen and found in the dawn. Sometimes the evenings were sad and full of discomfort; we execrated the mountain, the hard life, the fatigues it entailed. Sometimes the evenings were happy and calm; smiles and fun were on our lips, perhaps, because we had found some new means of access, and in

consequence imagined we had guessed the riddle to the conquest of our Sphinx, the shoulder of *our* Furggen Ridge! At such moments our enchanted eyes dwelt on the ever-marvellous spectacle of the sun setting in a sea of stormy cloud of the most garish colours, while the eerie silent moon rose above the frozen Monte Rosa!

In such explorations we spent several years, and on many a day did we leave and return to the Luigi Savoia hut, 'midst the highest hopes or bitterest disappointments.

In the year 1909 it was my fate to uselessly reach the hut twice. The first time we found ourselves imprisoned for six days, and on the seventh day we reached the little peak with 30 centimetres of fresh snow; the second time hardly had we reached the hut when bad weather forbade us to stir a step.

My three guides Pellisier, Carrel, and Gaspard, were the only ones to know of our attempt, Pellisier being still the keenest about it. He used to say that the last ridge of the 'Becca' must remain as a prize for those from Valtournanche rather than for the Zermatt men, because although Italians had *not* first set their feet on the summit, yet *they* were still capable of attaining the peak by the most difficult way. 'Mais sans se casser le cou.' Poor Pellissier, he was not destined to scale the mountain by the most difficult route! He died in my arms in the Caucasus last year, after accomplishing with me the ascent of Elbruz.

This year *if* the weather were only propitious! . . . and all thanks to it, it set fair and smiled at the mountaineer. We knew that if the elements were favourable we had almost lifted the veil from the last mystery of the Matterhorn. We set about a last series of reconnoitrings. Starting again from the Luigi di Savoia hut, in different attempts we succeeded in storming new points nearer to the famous shoulder. The most formidable 'step' appeared to be feasible from below; in consequence there remained nothing to be achieved except the knowledge as to the possibility of combining the passage of the foot of the precipice with the shoulder itself.

Everything appeared ready; we resolved to embark on the assault.

On a Saturday evening we set out for the Hörnli hut, for the reason that we knew that the Swiss guides do not willingly climb the Matterhorn on a Sunday. On the following day we left the hut at 3 A.M. for the Breuiljoch. We waited

for dawn at the foot of the arête. Day broke with a lurid light, a sure sign of bad weather ; nevertheless we set out and climbed up on to the ridge, taking every conceivable precaution to avoid dislodging the loose blocks with the rope. The sky cleared, the air was chill and prevented stone-fall ; in fact, loose rocks were in consequence few in number, and fell far away. When we arrived at the shoulder a sudden violent squall struck us. Clouds rapidly blotted out the sky and mists eddied around us ; a thick hailstorm dispersed the mists, followed by the wind whirling the loose snow over us. Full of bitterness and discomfort, we struggled down to Breuil.

On September 3 we returned to the Hörnli hut to try again ; this time the hut was full of people. We three started off on the following day, leaving the others still sleeping, and arrived before dawn at the Breuiljoch. We awaited the light. The night was calm, cold ; stars glinted everywhere. Many falling stones were audible in the distance. As soon as dawn appeared at 5 A.M., we put ourselves in motion, desiring to reach the first shoulder as quickly as possible ; accordingly we did not rope and, each of us choosing his own line, we made height with unusual rapidity. The cold increased with the dawn ; falling stones were more numerous but still distant. In an hour we reached the first shoulder. The sun appeared, and the rock-falls increased in number and severity. The boulders which we had to pass were very threatening—so much so that we had to press ourselves against the mountain, sometimes crouching down beneath a projecting rock. Having scaled the first shoulder we clambered up by precipitous gullies, and soon attained the famous chimney which had stopped Rey for so many hours ; we traversed it at a run 'midst the screech of falling missiles.

We arrived at the foot of the second projecting shoulder, finding the still sound rope left behind by Rey. Raising ourselves by it, Gaspard dislodged a boulder, which fell on him with two or three bounds. We hurried towards him, he had a finger crushed and blood was oozing from it ; the stone had also given him a severe wrench, and had badly bruised his knee. Nevertheless the thought of retreat never entered his head. The weather was splendid. We must reach the summit now or never.

Gaspard bound up his injured hand with a handkerchief and continued to lead until the ridge was attained. At 7.30 A.M. we reached the base of the second shoulder, having in two

and a half hours accomplished a bit which had always cost other climbers four to five hours.*

At this spot we renounced the route vainly attempted by Mummery and Rey, on the Swiss flank. We halted a moment and rested, observing the route of our predecessors and longingly contemplating our own, the first steps of which were now unfolded before us and appeared more or less inaccessible. We started again, and traversed diagonally for some 20 metres till we confronted a high, steep, and holdless boulder. To climb it we had to get on to one another's shoulders, Gaspard standing on Carrel, and I above Gaspard. Having thus attained a hand hold, the rope was secured, and by its aid the others scrambled up over my head. I waited for a long time, but at length felt the tug of the rope; they seemed to have forced the passage, so I advanced too—the bad bit was accomplished.†

Traversing other rocks of uncertain hold, we found ourselves at the base of a gully of loose rock, which we turned by slabs and crevices of no uncertain difficulty.

The weather still remained marvellous; there was no breath of wind stirring. Far above us on the ridge we perceived a party of friendly guides, who saluted us with shouts of happy augury. At length we attained the snow ribbons beneath the final summit of the mountain; now at least we ought to be sure of victory! There remained only the last 'step' of the ridge, of which the difficulties were, however, unknown to us. Before us was the great ice-filled couloir, which drove us to perilous gymnastics; we were obliged to abandon a rope here.

We now considered ourselves 150–200 metres distant from the final ridge. We looked across at the terrific 'overhang,' which concentrates in itself all the terrors of the Matterhorn. We advanced with the utmost care over the minutest holds. Below us, looking like a microscopic toy, we could perceive the Giomein hotel surrounded by its verdant pastures.

We were now getting into unknown country. We turned away from a ledge descending from the direction of the Swiss summit. The snow was all speckled with stones, a sure proof of constant rock-falls; availing ourselves of this urgent warning, we hurried across the gully, and took refuge on the crest of the

* 'Shoulder' is indicated by letter 'a' in the illustration given in the *Rivista*.

† This point is indicated by letter 'b,' and is technically the worst of the entire ascent.

ridge beneath a great boss.* From this spot we perceived the Swiss parties on the Hörnli Ridge, who greeted us without, it must be confessed, the cordiality of the Italian guides on the other arête. The glory which will accrue to the men of Val-tournanche is lost for ever to those of Zermatt !

We remained here for an hour to avoid stones dislodged by the descending parties. As the falls ceased we emerged from our hiding-place and resolutely attacked the final wall. We attempted to advance up a slab some 80 metres distant from the crest, but it proved impossible. We clambered about here and there, and found another smooth and perpendicular slab, which we contrived to scale by means of yet another human pyramid. Another great struggle for the professionals ; another long and lonely wait for the amateur clinging to the grand old wall ! There I hang, as it were in space, all the while eagerly listening ; I seem to have been deserted. I can only hear the voices of the guides, who out of my sight are arguing how to proceed. At length, after half an hour, I feel the rope drawn taut ; I hear the voice of Gaspard crying ' *Avancez !* '

We were once more reunited on a tiny platform. As we consulted together, an enormous mass dislodged itself from the mountain and, raising a cloud of smoke, plunged down the couloir with a hideous crash. The guides no longer know how to proceed ; in every direction impossibilities apparently confront us. Nothing else is left but the avalanche-swept couloir, feasible only at night when frost has bound the débris. Almost we determined to halt on our lofty eyrie and to bivouac there till night permitted us to risk ourselves in the couloir ; our hesitation was, however, brief. We made up our minds to hazard the traverse of some dangerous rocks and to get back on to the ridge. We securely belayed a rope, and then with infinite care Carrel crawled up towards a great boulder, a few stones broke away from beneath his feet with dreadful clamour ; he kept his balance, however, and at length we saw him safe and sound by the boulder. The rope was secured to it and we others got across out of danger.

The difficulties are, however, not yet over ; again we have to fasten a rope in order to traverse a bare slab, which we accomplished without any untoward incident. And now for the last obstacle ! We are on the ridge, the view over the Swiss side unfolds itself ; clouds are rolling up towards the

* This point is indicated by letter ' c. '

summit. We are certain of victory! Another scramble of a quarter of an hour, and we perceive not far from us the ladder abandoned by Rey after his last attempt.* The way reveals itself before us, difficulties diminish, the summit approaches. Proudly and full of confidence, we advance. We assemble on a little rock buttress whence we perceive the cross on the Italian summit. Twenty minutes more, and at 1.30 P.M. we attain the top. . . . We are mad with joy . . . we embrace and wave a red flag as a token of victory to our friends at Giomein.

At 3 P.M. we descend the ordinary route and at 10 P.M. we arrive at Giomein.

MARIO PIACENZA.

(Sezione di Biella)

From *Rivista Mensile*, 1911, pp. 320-7.

A NIGHT ON THE HINTERSUSTENHORN.

By H. L. HUTTON.

STORY? God bless you, mine is ancient history! In an unguarded moment I told it to the Editor in the train between Bern and Boulogne in September 1909. Then it was a living thing, now it is a recollection into which writer and reader must enter by an act of volition. But who may say nay to the repeated requests of the Editor? Flog my jaded memory into an ambling gait I must, and so reach the repose of print! 'I never can recapture that first, fine, careless rapture.'

This then is the recollection of how F. Harrison, H. L. Joseland, Rev. W. H. Hodges and the writer climbed the Hintersustenhorn from Stein on August 17, 1909. Hodges was chaplain at the Rhone Glacier and joined us the day before. His experience consisted of a snow peak and a snow pass, so he may be called a novice. We had promised him a little coaching in rock-work and general mountaineering without guides. He proved a pupil with a touch of genius: witness his faith in us. 'Come along,' we said, as he hesitated at each strange-looking traverse or chimney; 'come along! it's quite easy. Put your hand here and your foot there.' He put his hand here and his foot there, and came. The

* This point is indicated by the letter 'd.'