

most of which have appeared in various periodicals. The book is of a convenient form and well printed, while the illustrations are for the most part admirable; many of them are quite novel. The author writes with a swing that carries his reader along, while his technical knowledge enables him to present an easily grasped and accurate picture of the climb.

¶ One misses an account of one of the most adventurous climbs in the Alps—the passage of the Silbersattel—which, led by a great guide, Christian Ranggetiner, killed later on the Glockner, the author in 1880 was the first to do.

If an English edition could be produced at something like the same price it should sell; but English books seem to be as high-priced as ever, forcing one to curtail one's purchases.

*Champéry et la Dent du Midi.* Par Daniel Baud-Bovy. Published by the *Journal de Genève*, Geneva. Price bound 28 Swiss francs, post free.

THIS is another of the superb mountain books by the same author. The present volume contains eight full plates and over 100 text illustrations, many from photographs by the well-known Fréd. Boissonnas. The companion volumes are in the A.C. Library.

## ACCIDENTS IN 1923.

### THE ACCIDENT ON THE POINTE DE LA GLIÈRE.

I REACHED Pralognan from Paris on July 9, and found my friend and climbing companion, Colonel Lawrie Oppenheim, already arrived. On July 8 he had been up the Grande Casse by the ordinary route with Pierre Blanc of Bonneval-sur-Arc and a local porter. This expedition was the first of the season so far as Lawrie was concerned. Leaving Pralognan on July 10 Lawrie, Blanc, the local porter and myself went up to the Félix Faure Hut on the Col de la Vanoise, where we slept the night. It had been our intention to climb the Pointe de la Glière on the following day, but as it seemed to me a pity to waste the fine weather on a small peak like the Glière, I easily persuaded Lawrie to substitute the traverse of the Grande Casse for our projected expedition. On July 11, accordingly, we ascended the latter mountain, reaching the summit, viâ the N. face, in 4¼ hours. The conditions were wonderful, and we slept a second night at the Félix Faure Hut. During the evening Adolph, son of Josef Pollinger, joined the party, the porter returning to Pralognan.

On July 12 we four left the hut at 06.25, and crossing the Lépéna glacier, mounted the steep easy cliffs to the N. of that glacier (these cliffs really constitute the S.W. arête of the lower *Aiguille de la Glière* just S. of the *Pointe*), crossed the small upper glacier, and arrived at the Col de la Glière, between the *Aiguille* and the *Pointe*, in some two hours from the hut. The day was brilliant and the heat very great. After a longish halt on the Col we gently climbed the *Pointe* by its S.E. arête, attaining the summit at 09.50. Leaving the top at 11.05 we regained the Col by the same route in about half an hour, and picked up our various impedimenta, coats, etc., which latter had been discarded owing to the heat. We also, on my suggestion and responsibility, unroped.<sup>1</sup> I had been with Lawrie on many expeditions winter and summer, and knew his high factor of safety. (During the ascent from the Col, we had been climbing on two ropes—Lawrie and Pollinger, Blanc and myself.) Crossing the small, flat and uncrevassed glacier, we took the same route as in the ascent, i.e. the S.W. arête of the *Aiguille*. The party were invariably very close together, in fact I cannot remember any part of the descent during which I could not have touched one or other of my companions. Frequently, indeed, we were more in 'line abreast' formation than in 'line ahead.' The rocks were absolutely dry, except at one spot where a large semi-circular hollow in the ridge was filled with a soft snow-patch, inclined at an angle of 30°–35° and covering some (?) fifty square yards. After descending this we came to more broken rocks, and the ridge again widened into a steep, easy cliff, interspersed with numerous broad ledges. At 12.15 we were in the following formation: Lawrie and Blanc, close to and abreast of each other, were standing on a ledge with their backs to the mountain, while Pollinger was some ten yards to their right, also abreast and standing still. I was immediately behind Lawrie, perhaps some eight feet above him, and was the only one of the party moving. (These and previous details are merely given to show that every possible precaution was being taken to obviate any danger arising from accidental dislodgment of stones; in fact, a few minutes before the accident Lawrie had asked me to change places and come behind the party, as being less likely to disturb stones.) As I was stepping down to the ledge

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<sup>1</sup> During a previous ascent of the same peak made by Blanc and myself in 1921, we had not used the rope at all, either in the ascent or descent.

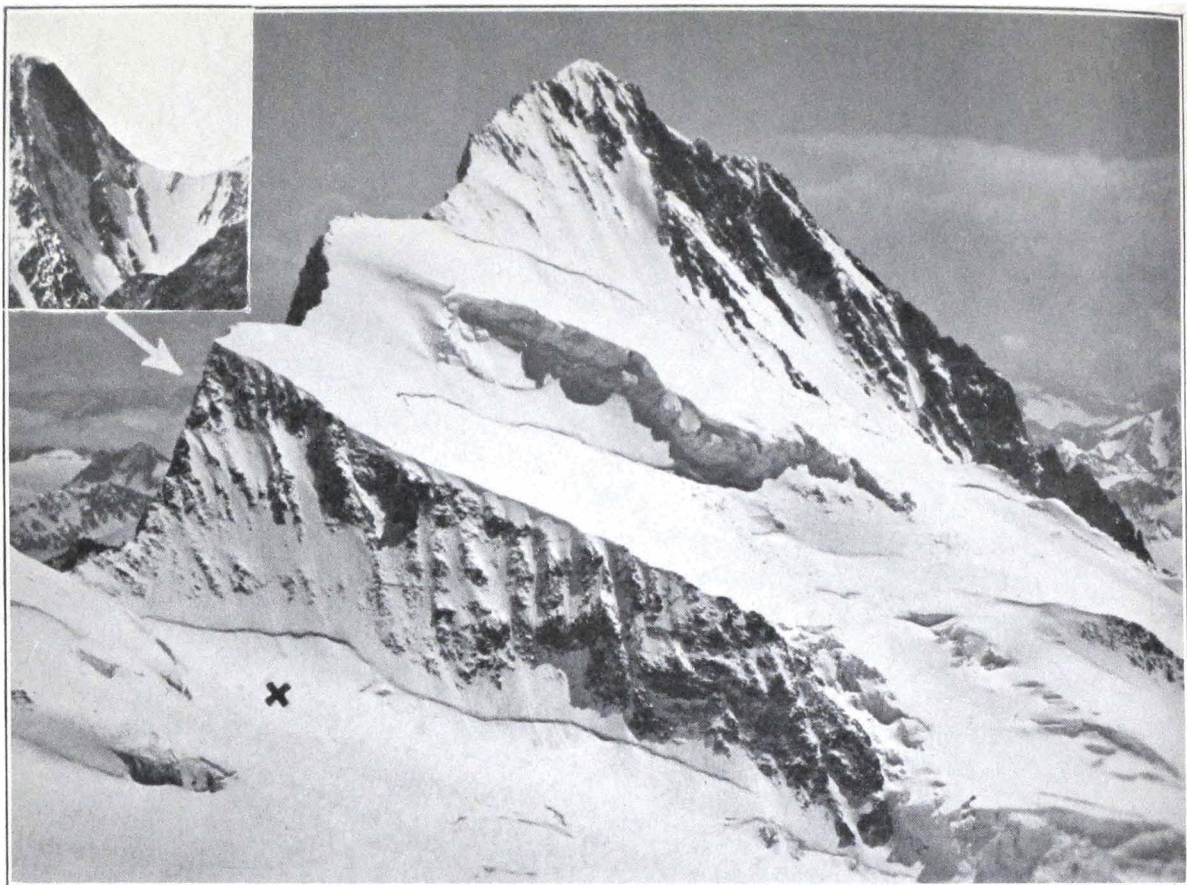
already occupied by Lawrie and Pierre—my impression is that I was sheltered at that instant by a high overhanging rock—a black shadow seemed to pass in front of my face, and, with a sickening crunch, a stone of perhaps fifty pounds' weight struck Lawrie on the back of the head, hurling him head foremost over the cliff. The body fell some 150 feet in two bounds, and brought up on a broad débris slope at the base of the cliffs, or more accurately, perhaps, at the foot of the S.W. arête of the Aiguille. As quickly as possible we hurried down to the spot, Adolph reaching Lawrie a minute or two before Pierre or myself. Death had been mercifully instantaneous.

Leaving Pollinger beside the body, Pierre and I scrambled down to the glacier and across to the Félix Faure hut. There we were at once joined by two of the Amiez family, father and son, and a porter. I remained in the hut for a few minutes to write out telegrams for the family, and overtook the others on the Lépéna glacier. The party reached the body at 14.00 hours. By 16.00, under Pierre's able instructions and the most willing exertions of the excellent Pralognan men, we had transported the body, wrapped in blankets, to the Pralognan path at the Lac des Vaches. Here we were met by a mule and sleigh, ordered up from Pralognan by telephone message from the Félix Faure hut. By 20.00 hours we had deposited our friend in the little upper chapel of Pralognan.

As to the causes of the accident, I prefer to look at it simply as an act of God. The fatal stone was the only one seen to fall throughout the day, and it fell at the one spot—i.e. where the arête momentarily widens into a cliff—where it could do any harm. The stone had been most probably disturbed some minutes previously by one of the party passing over it, and, having begun to slide, fell at the psychological instant.

The use of the rope, almost an absurdity for a party like ours, could not have saved my friend. He was dead before the fall, to which numerous traces on and just below the ledge where he was struck bore only too certain witness. The fall of a stone of the size mentioned even from a height of 20 ft. would have sufficed.

The local authorities, guides, and visitors showed us the utmost sympathy and kindness. Between France and Great Britain blood is still thicker than water. I would express my most grateful thanks to one and all at Pralognan, notably to M. Jean Giraud, Sous Préfet of Moutiers-Salins, the Mayor and Curé of Pralognan, M. Doussin of the Hôtel des Glaciers,



THE N. ARÊTE OF FINSTERAARHORN SEEN IN FACE FROM THE SLOPES OF AGASSIZHORN.

The inset shows in profile the arête where the accident occurred.

X Bodies found.



THE NIGHT BEFORE THE ACCIDENT AT THE FINSTERAARHORN HUT.  
C. COSSON, SIR H. H. HAYDEN, K. v. ALLMEN.

M. Couttet of the Félix Faure hut, and, last but not least, to the French Military and Police Authorities and to M. Louis Bucherer and to the Rev. P. B. Whalley.

As to Pierre Blanc and Adolph Pollinger, their conduct was worthy of their name and family. No higher praise can be given.

The funeral took place at Pralognan on July 16 in the presence of Lawrie's widow and sister, the civil authorities and many of the inhabitants and visitors of Pralognan. The French Army was also officially represented.

E. L. STRUTT.

SIR HENRY HUBERT HAYDEN and his old guide and travelling companion in Sikkim, César Cosson of Courmayeur, arrived at the 'Steinbock' at Lauterbrunnen on August 8 after a five days' tour in the Diablerets, Wildhorn and Wildstrubel group. On August 9 they paid a visit to Mürren, and engaged a second guide, Karl von Allmen of Lauterbrunnen. On August 10 the party went up to the Rottal Hut, and crossed the Jungfrau to the Pavillon Cathrein on August 11 in 8 hrs. 50 mins. Next day they reached the Finsteraarhorn Hut. Early on August 13 they took the Finsteraarhorn by storm in 2½ hrs. and enjoyed the clear view on this fine summer's morning during an hour's rest on the summit. On the descent to the Hugisattel, they met Messrs. Chorley, Graham and Wilson (who had left the hut ½ hr. after them), who testify that Sir Henry and his guides were in great form. Distinct traces of well-cut steps have been found the whole way down the icy part of the N. arête of the Finsteraarhorn which leads to the top of the Agassizjoch. In climbing down the last steep but easy rocky bit of the ridge (see photograph) a great mass of rock must have split off, so that this, in my opinion, very able party was hurled down by the avalanche of stones on to the Fiescherfirn, 800 feet below.

When no news was received in Lauterbrunnen of the party, it was presumed that they had extended their tour. Anxiety, however, was aroused, and on August 28 two strong search parties of Lauterbrunnen guides, the one via the Jungfraujoeh, the other via the Strahlegg route, set out, and the bodies, frozen hard, nearly covered with snow, bearing marks of fatal injuries and surrounded by fallen stones, were discovered on the 29th at the place marked on the photograph. They were carried down on the following day over the Jungfraujoeh to Lauterbrunnen, and were interred in one grave.

OTHMAR GURTNER, A.A.C.B. & S.A.C.

Lauterbrunnen.