

St. Bernard to Bourg St. Maurice, still hoping for Mont Pourri. But the mountain would have none of us ; so we threw our hand in and went home.

NOTE.—The maps of the district, which the French authorities allow to be published, leave a great deal to the imagination, and the only Italian maps we could procure were on too small a scale to be of practical use. The maps in the *Guide Bleu: Section Savoie* (Hachette) are excellent and the letterpress informative. Mr. Coolidge's 'Ball,' of course, is indispensable as always. Gaillard's *Climbing Guides: Alpes de Savoie* (Dardel, Chambéry) are very thorough, and contain useful diagrams of the various groups.

'THE GREY TWINS.'*

BY E. L. STRUTT.

Piz Badile.

WITH the accomplishment, on August 4, 1923, of one of the remaining problems in the Alps, the great 4000 ft. N. face, the Piz Badile, is deserving of a paper by one of its most fervid admirers.

Piz Badile¹ (= the 'Shovel'), 3311 m. = 10,863 ft., *S. map*, for all its apparent lack of height, has no rivals, as a great rock mountain, in the Bernina, and but few in the Alps. Its appearance from all directions is striking in the extreme, while its amazing N. face constitutes as sheer a precipice of smooth unbroken granitic slabs as it is possible to conceive.

This great mass, together with its neighbour Piz Cengalo (3374 m. = 11,070 ft., *S. map*), are by far the most imposing objects from St. Moritz and the 30 miles distant Upper Engadine.

Piz Badile may roughly be described as consisting of two

* The title is taken from Mr. Freshfield's classic article, *A.J.* xvii. 419-29, and 'Below the Snow Line,' p. 180. I am confident that Pizzi Badile and Cengalo will *not* be mistaken for the unimportant Pizzi GEMELLI, 3259 m., *S. map*, lying to the E., which, in reality, constitute but a single summit.

¹ For the different names and heights borne by Piz Badile see *Climbers' Guide*, 'Bernina,' part i. pp. 22-3, compiled by Mr. Coolidge.

faces, N. and S., and two arêtes, E. and W. The S. face, grotesquely misrepresented on all the official maps,² is divided by a great buttress into two slopes, S.E. and S.W., while the 4500 ft. high ‘Sassfurà’ rib or buttress is really the sharp edge which separates the immense N.E. and N.W. precipices constituting the N. or Bondasca face.

Accordingly, following Ball and the old authorities, I refer to the North *face* in preference to the North *buttress*, since, from most points of view, the buttress is so merged into the vast face that it becomes barely noticeable.

The numerous guide books published give full details of the various routes now followed (up to 1922 as regards the latest, the S.A.C. *Guide*³—an admirable work). It suffices to state here that these routes are now four in number, corresponding to the mountain’s arêtes and faces, and that none of them, save perhaps the S. face, and then only when in first-class condition, are easy.

A few slight and not important ‘variations’ also exist.

Christian Klucker, of Sils-Fex, Upper Engadine, was leading guide⁴ in the first ascents by the W. and E. arêtes, and I would here signify my grateful indebtedness to him for his assistance towards this paper.

The writer has ascended or descended the mountain by three of these routes, on one of which he was even guilty of a rather horrible variation.⁵

1. As all the world knows, the first ascent of the mountain was made by its *S. face*,⁶ and was accomplished most appropriately, by the Rev. W. A. B. Coolidge with the Chamonix guides, François and Henri Dévouassoud, on July 27, 1867.

² It is good news that the new sheets of the *Siegfried Map*, Nos. 520 ‘Maloggia’ and 523 ‘Castasegna,’ are practically completed. ‘Castasegna,’ which Klucker tells me is a superb bit of cartography, even on the *Italian* slope (!), should be on sale before the 1925 climbing season. The old sheets, 520 and 523, are unworthy of the best ‘Mountain’ map yet produced.

³ *Clubführer durch die Bündner Alpen*, vol. iv., by H. Rütter, with the assistance of Christian Klucker (Sauerländer & Co., Aarau, Switzerland).

⁴ As well as in nine-tenths of *all* first ascents in the whole Bregaglia.

⁵ *A.J.* xxv. 10.

⁶ Why this route is now called the ‘Via Lurani’ by Italians passes my imagination. The ‘Via Coolidge’ cannot be 20 ft. distant—at any spot—from the former!

Mr. Coolidge's route is the one followed by 90 per cent. of modern climbers :—

From the Badile Club Hut mount debris and snow to the foot of the S. buttress of the mountain ; climb on to this buttress by a diagonal shelf running N. to S. and situated on the W. side of the buttress ; pass on to the E. slope and 'climb by easy flowery ledges' (and a short abrupt chimney) 'to the crest, and keep under this on the E. side by ledges sometimes narrow and overhung, but nowhere difficult. The ledges broaden out as the angle between the buttress and the main mass of the peak is approached. Here there is a choice of routes. The trough in the angle is the most obvious and, when not icy, probably the easiest. The last climb to the great tooth of granite that dominates the crowning' (E.) 'ridge is comparatively simple' ⁷ (2½ hrs.).

2. Piz Badile's very steep W. *arête* is again more the blunt edge of the N.W. and S.W. slopes than a true ridge. It is splendidly seen from the top of the Cima Sant' Anna (Badilet). The ascent is very stiff and exposed :—

From the Badile Club Hut steer for the foot of the obvious Colle (Forcola) del Badile ; mount a very steep gully and steps, and attain the watershed rather higher and to the E. of that depression. Follow the W. *arête* till an impossible tooth forces you to make an exposed and difficult descent followed by a traverse over the great N.W. precipice. Regain the *arête* above the tooth and soon climb an usually snowy gully and steep chimney to the W. end of the summit ridge (5 hrs.). A spare rope is more than useful.

3. The E. *arête* ⁸ is very sharp, high, and well-defined. It is a fine climb and the edge of the *arête* should be strictly adhered to. At its E. extremity is situated an abrupt double-pointed tower, known by Italians as the Punta Sertori, ⁹ 3198 m., *Lurani map*. From the summit and W. *arête* of Piz Cengalo this ridge is especially striking :—

From the Badile Club Hut go nearly as far as the Colle del Cengalo, then take a ledge on the S. slope of point 3198 m. and so turn that tooth. Gain the depression between 3198 m.

⁷ The part included in the inverted commas is taken from Mr. Freshfield's admirable description, *A.J.* xvii. 427.

⁸ See illustration *A.J.* xxv., facing p. 10.

⁹ See illustration *A.J.* xxvii., facing p. 411. On fine Sundays in July or August dozens of young Italians will be encountered frolicking about its steep slabs and chimneys.

M. Zorra

Sciara
Peaks

C. dell'
Albigna

Central Fern

Ferro Pass

W. Ferro

Bondo Pass

P. Gemelli

C. del Gemelli

3307-3374 m.

P. Cengalo

C. del Cengalo
3198 m.

P. Badile

C. del Badile

P. Badilet

(S. Anna)

N. Porcellino

Pass

P. Porcellino

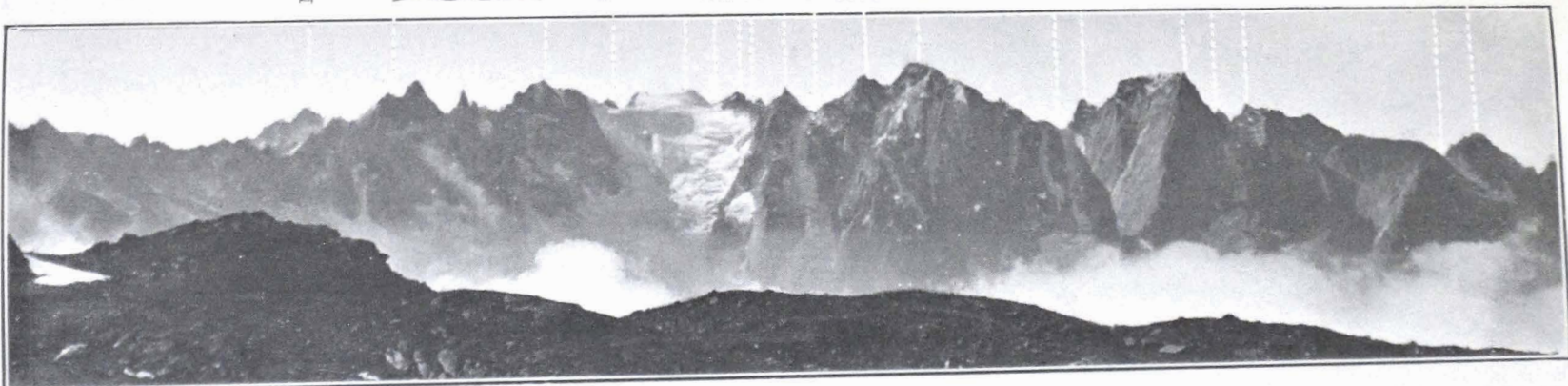


Photo: J. J. Withers.

FROM THE NORTH.

3214 m.

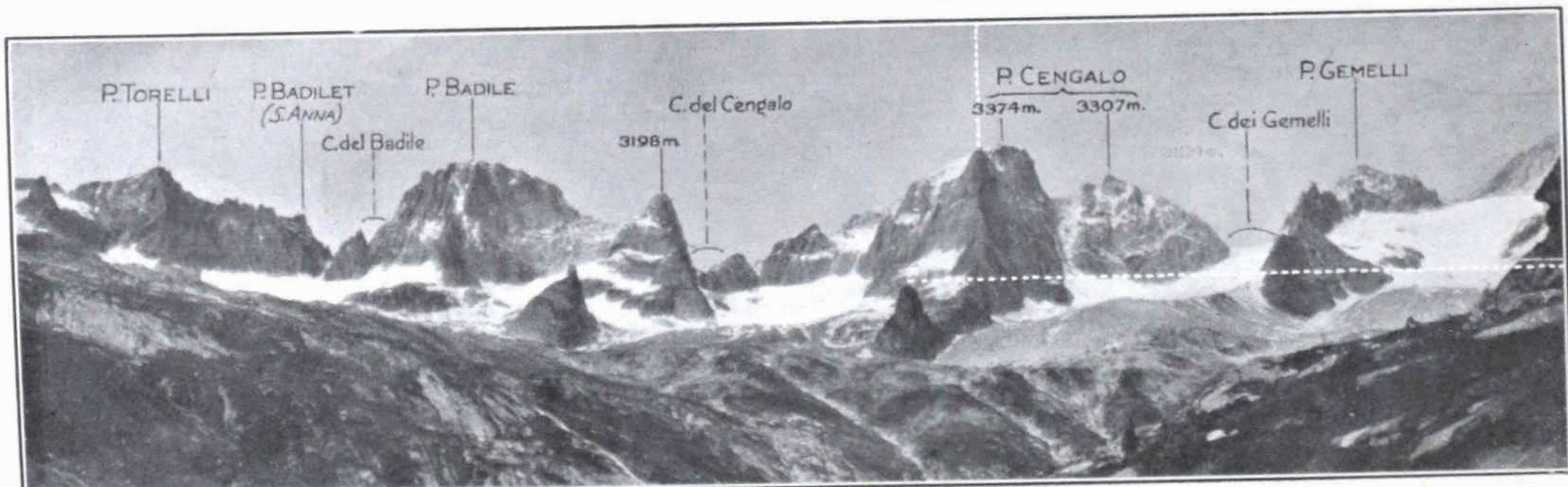


Photo: A. Corti.

FROM THE SOUTH.

2583 m.

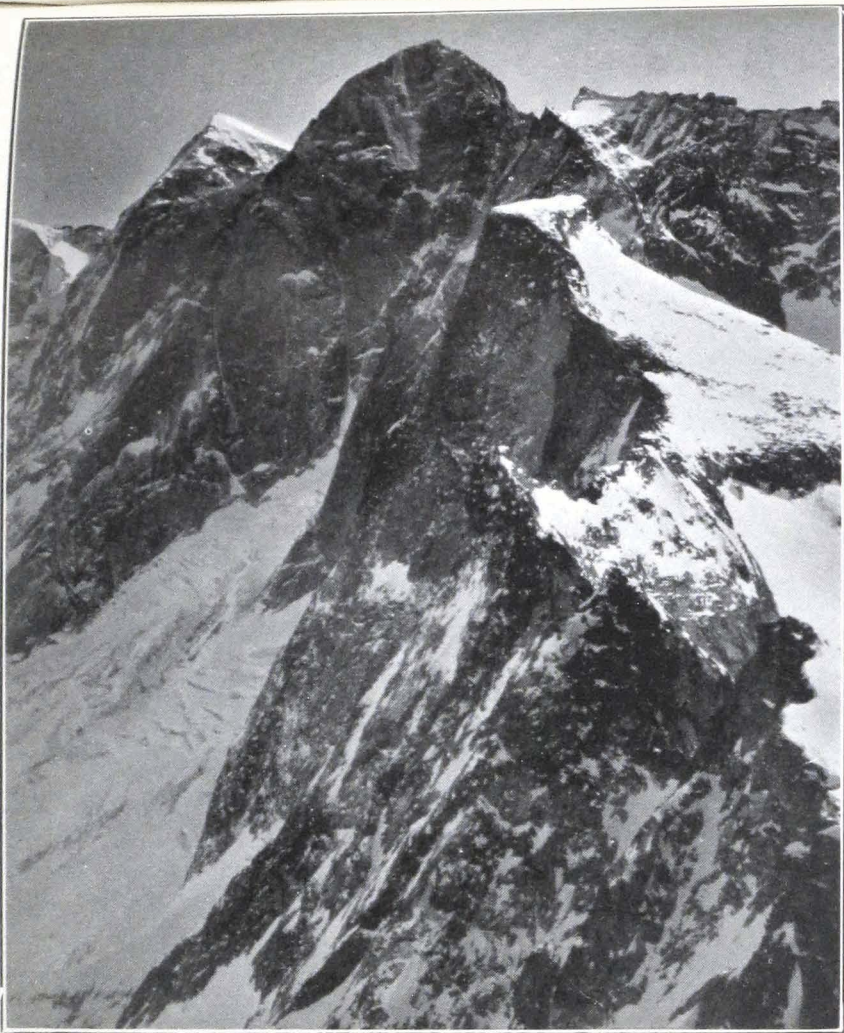


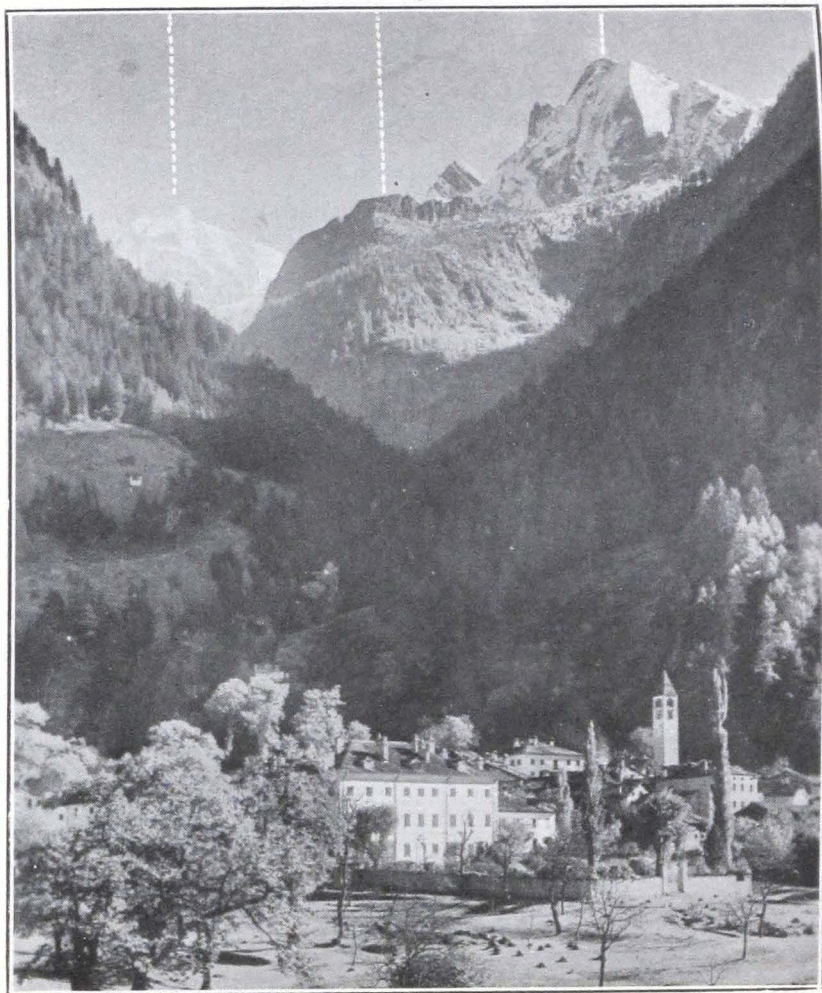
Photo: O. Schiavio.

N.W. slope of PIZ BADILE from above the
PASSO DI TRUBINASCA.

Sciara di
Dentro

Sassura
Buttres

P. Cergin



PALAZZO DE SALIS and BONDASCA
looking up VAL BONDASCA.

and the main mountain. Then follow the *crest* of the sharp E. arête to the top (4 hrs.).

The rocks on all these routes are generally splendid. The N. slope of the E. arête, which is sometimes taken as a variant to the crest, is a dangerous exception.

When the mountain is at all snowy or icy it should be left severely alone.

4. The NORTH FACE.—I shall always remember my friend Count Aldo Bonacossa, best of the younger school of Italian mountaineers, coming to me at Zermatt in August 1911 to announce the reported conquest of this face. Our mutual interest was intense. Shortly afterwards, on the facts being known, we agreed that the problem was, in great part, still unsolved.

An account¹⁰ was given of the 1911 expeditions in 'A.J.' xxvi. 464-5, and if the reader desires details let him turn to the *Rivista Mensile*, 1912, p. 195 *et seq.*, with an excellent marked illustration of the N. face.

Very briefly, a party consisting of Signori Guido Scotti and Angelo and Romano Calegari, starting from near the Sassfurà

¹⁰ The route followed is, in its lower part, not very clearly described. The Italians appear, although starting from Sassfurà, to have reached the Cengalo Glacier, by *descending* the Viale Pass; the buttress seems to have been attained by a very high traverse of the N.E. face. This traverse as well as the *lower* one, effected by the Risch-Zürcher party of 1923, is not advisable. Klucker's route by the entire buttress is the correct one.

In view of the remarks to follow, a short description of the *Viale* appears necessary.

The VIALE PASS, c. 2160 m. = 7090 ft. Name only on *Wilson map*, no height on any map. Pass leads from the Cengalo to the Sassfurà pastures and serves as a nearly level, also the sole, communication between the Sciora Club Hut and the peaks to the W. of Piz Badile. The 'Pass' lies to the S. of the spot marked 2184 m., *S. map*, and is indicated, for those with first-class eyesight, as a dotted line on the map.

A series of adjacent and curious ledges, accessible for cattle, lead diagonally upwards, S.E. to N., across the sheer Sassfurà buttress, just where that buttress falls in a great cliff to the floor of the Bondasca glen. The 'Pass' is just in the notch of the crest of the buttress, and is blocked on the N.W. side by a wall to prevent accidents to cattle. From the 'Pass' a rough descent, almost due N., over debris (or snow), leads to the Sassfurà hut, 1830 m. (About 2½ hrs. from the Sciora Club Hut.) All the guide books give full particulars.

shepherd's hut at 05.15 on July 30, 1911, attained a point on the N. face whence all farther progress was impossible. The return was commenced, and at 19.00 'a platform overhanging the abyss' was reached. Here bad weather came on, and the party halted for *eleven hours*. On July 31, at 06.00, the descent was continued, and the base of the face was regained at 13.15.¹¹ On August 3 the same party, by the S. face, reached the mountain's summit at 07.30; then, with innumerable ropes, rings, and *pitons*, after descending the N. buttress for many hours, proceeded to lower one of the party to (?) approximately the spot¹² whence they had previously turned back (15.50). The reunited party then returned to the summit, regained at 18.50, arriving at the Badile Club Hut at 21.00.

A truly remarkable exploit, and also one in which, on the party's own avowal, every human limit of reasonable prudence was overstepped. The wonderful summer of 1911 witnessed many bold feats, and none bolder than these two desperate attempts.

Twelve years passed, and then a postcard from my splendid veteran friend, Christian Klucker, announced the conquest of the 'awful precipice' on August 4, 1923, by the guide Walter Risch¹³ of Campfer, Upper Engadine, accompanied by the Swiss amateur, Herr Alfred Zürcher¹⁴ of St. Gallen. Time again passed, and no official account¹⁵ of the great climb came to my notice. Again, as in many a previous difficulty, I appealed to Klucker, and received the following clear and characteristic letter:—

Fex, November 1st, 1924.

(Translation.)

DEAR COLONEL STRUTT—

. . . I am enclosing Herr Alfred Zürcher's account of the ascent of Piz Badile by the N. buttress, which I have just received.

¹¹ On this occasion, judging by the quantities of rope-rings and *pitons* discovered by the Risch-Zürcher party in 1923, the Italians appear, wisely, to have descended the buttress itself.

¹² A rope of 350 ft. in length appears to be necessary!

¹³ Risch is a native of Brigels, Bündner Oberland, and is consequently not an Engadiner by birth.

¹⁴ When describing such a performance I have no hesitation in putting the name of the *leader* first.

¹⁵ At the time this article was written, Herr Zürcher's paper in the new *Monatschrift S.A.C.*, 'Die Alpen,' No. 1, Jan. 15, 1925, had not appeared. I am *not* quoting from it.



Photo: J. Gaberell.

WALTER RISCH. CHRISTIAN KLUCKER.

On top of Cima del Largo.

P. Cengalo
3307 m. 3374 m.

C. del Cengalo
3198 m.

P. Badile

C. del Badile

P. Badilet
(St. Anna)

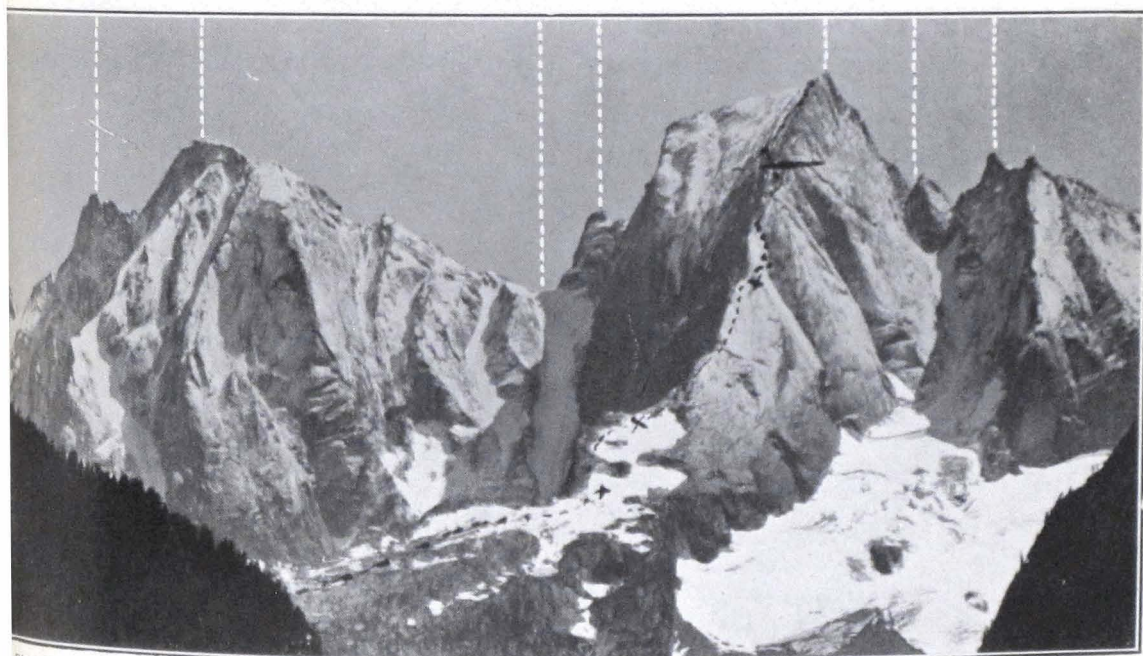


Photo: J. Gaberell, Zürich.

THE "GREY TWINS"

from the N.

(Route marked by Klucker. The black horizontal line denotes his highest point in 1892 and is the foot of the great slab since climbed in 1923 by Risch and Herr Zürcher.)

3198

3374

3214



Photo: A. Corti.

Piz CENGALO, 3374 m.,
from the S.W.

Cima di Cantun

Sciora di fuori

Pioda di Sciora

Ago di Sciora

Sciora di dentro

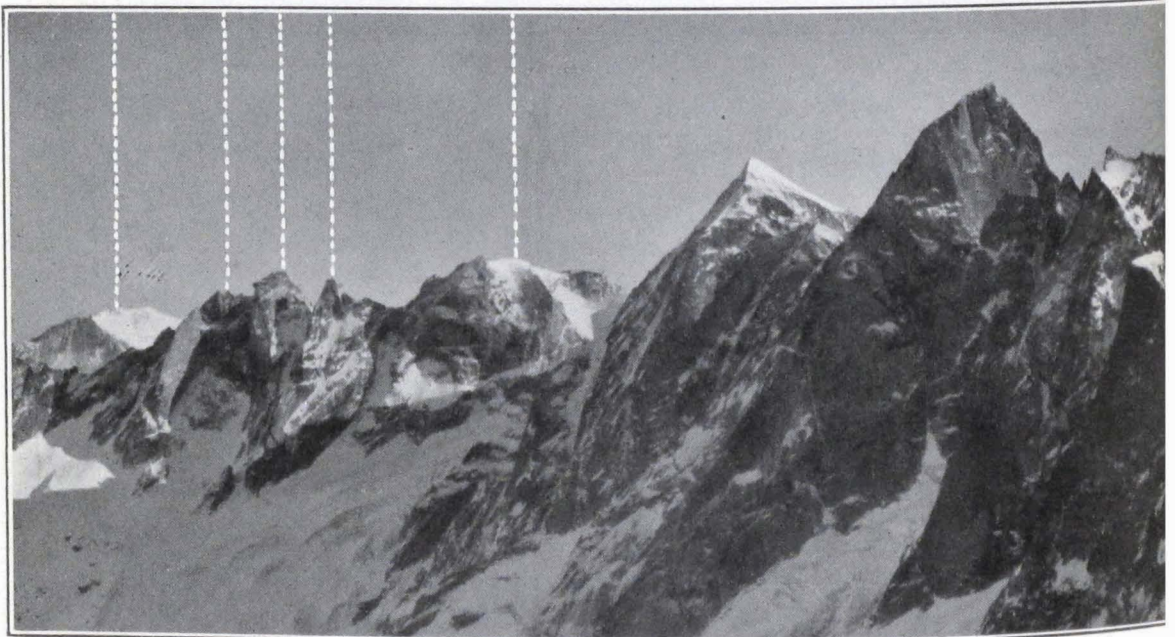


Photo: O. Schiavio.

WEST ARETE and N. BUTTRESS OF
PIZ BADILE IN FOREGROUND;
WEST ARETE and N. FACES OF PIZ CENGALO BEHIND.
(Taken from Pizzo dei Vanni.)

As an introduction to this account you must allow me to go back a decade. Of course, you know, both from the *Rivista Mensile* and the *Bolletino* of the C.A.I., of the expeditions of Signori Scotti and A. and R. Calegari on July 30–31 and August 3, 1911, carried out on the said buttress. It cannot be claimed that these expeditions constitute a solution of the ascent of the mountain by its N. face . . . and I am sure that you, as an authority [*sic!*] on everything connected with mountaineering and with this district, will agree with me.

To further accentuate the importance of the story of Piz Badile’s N. buttress I must go back some more decades, to the early ’nineties of last century, when I was exploring the Bregaglia granite peaks with the now deceased Russian gentleman, Anton von Rydzewski.

On July 11, 1892, I went, quite alone, to the spot where the Scotti-Calegari party subsequently turned back. My companions, Rydzewski and the guide Mansueto Barbaria,¹⁶ after the traverse of Piz Cengalo,¹⁷ had descended to Promontogno, while I had remained in the Sassfurà hut¹⁸ on July 10, up to 23.00, collecting their effects. Accordingly, I resolved on July 11 to avail myself of the fine weather and to have a nearer look at the exposed N. face of Piz Badile, and so finally I arrived at the foot of the said steep and smooth buttress at 05.00.

In those days *Kletterschuhe*¹⁹ were unknown, and, as the buttress for long intervals afforded little or no hold, I was soon obliged to take off my boots and continue on my stockinged feet. At 07.40 I attained a small projecting boss which is most certainly the key to the whole expedition. From this boss I could overlook the Engadine, and a glance to the S.W.

¹⁶ [Of Cortina d’Ampezzo.—*E.L.S.*]

¹⁷ [Including the first crossing of the difficult Colle del Cengalo.—*E.L.S.*]

¹⁸ [To reach this hut:—From Promontogno follow the Sciora Club Hut path as far as the Larett huts, 1378 m. ($1\frac{1}{4}$ hr.). Now turn due S., cross the Bondasca torrent by a bridge and mount a very steep faint track on the right bank of a small stream flowing from above. Eventually you arrive at a cliff really a re-entrant of the Sassfurà buttress. Cross the stream and bear for a short distance to the W., skirting the cliff; the path suddenly improves and leads steeply over great boulders and through trees in a S.W. direction to a clearing in which is situated the uninviting shepherd’s hut, 1830 m. ($1\frac{1}{2}$ hr.).—*E.L.S.*]

¹⁹ [Except in the Dolomites.—*E.L.S.*]

showed me that I was higher than the adjacent Badilet [3169 m. = 10,397 ft.—*E.L.S.*].

Without any doubt, the boss is identical with the spot where the Scotti-Calegari turned back on July 30, 1911.

The following bit of the buttress and the absolutely smooth slabs to right and left, which I studied intently, are of extreme difficulty, and their ascent is a *most hazardous* undertaking. This excessively difficult bit seemed to me to be undoubtedly more than 300 ft. high. As I had only intended to *explore* the buttress, and was unwilling, strictly in accordance with my principles, to ascend anything that I might *not* be able to descend, especially in such difficult terrain, I resolved to turn back. Quite alone as I was, with my stockings torn to ribbons and without a rope, I found the descent, as you can imagine, excessively unpleasant, still at 10.00,²⁰ I was back in the little Sassfurà hut.

My conclusions on this route were . . . that for my employer, the N. buttress of Piz Badile had far better be left alone.²¹ . . .

Four years later, at the beginning of July 1896, when my now deceased friend, the late Martin Schocher, was the other guide, the conclusions we both came to were the same.²¹ . . .

. . . When, however, Alpine periodicals, such as No. 40 of the Vienna *Der Bergsteiger*, state that I gave up the N. face as hopeless, you will probably agree with me that such was hardly the case! This *exploration* of mine of July 11, 1892, was—and remains—the only time that I have ever set foot on the Badile's N. face.

In conclusion, just a word about my Alpine friend, Walter Risch.²² On difficult rocks he is quite unsurpassed and is a really marvellous performer. I can only hope that, for the future, he will be a little less enterprising. He is good

²⁰ [The 1911 party, in bad weather, took over 24 hrs. to descend from the same spot, including a halt of *eleven hours*. Only an apparently accidental hitching of the rope prevented a disaster. Klucker's performance in descending the buttress without a rope or *pitons* can hardly have been surpassed even in his own magnificent career.]

The difference between the highest class amateurs and guides is still further accentuated.—*E.L.S.*]

²¹ [Several ruthless interventions by the Censor!—*E.L.S.*]

²² [We are sure that Walter Risch will not be offended at our publishing the remarks of one of the very greatest mountaineers of this, or any other age.—*Editors.*]

on ice,²³ but requires more experience. He is a charming, quiet, and intelligent young fellow [I cordially agree.—*E.L.S.*]. May some good and steady amateur—and he will be very lucky—climb with Walter Risch, then my friend will not overstep the boundaries of reasonable mountaineering ideals!

Since 1874 I have had the luck to climb every year in my beloved mountains, and never once, in all these 50 years, has a serious mishap occurred. No search parties have had to be called upon, and, although I have traversed many difficult glaciers, I have never had both feet in a crevasse! Now I am 72 years old, and perhaps twilight is approaching.

You must forgive this long and rather disjointed letter, and I remain, with respectfully affectionate greetings,

Your faithful

(Signed) CHRISTIAN KLUCKER.

In a subsequent and most interesting letter, dated November 24, 1924, Klucker adds the following notes on his 1892 exploration, corresponding with the marked photograph.

'From the Sassfurà shepherd's hut (1830 m.) steer a southerly course²⁴ over easy ground, bearing always to the W. of the Sassfurà buttress and the terminal spurs of the said N. buttress, as far as the *first* + on the above-mentioned photograph. Here the real climb begins—*i.e.* I took to the snow slope on its extreme left (E.). This steep snow-slope, some 160 ft. high, must be tackled with extreme caution, since on a warm day the entire snow is almost sure to avalanche and, in fact, slips completely off long before the end of July. I left my boots at the *second* + and clambered up along the crest or a little to its right (W.) to the *third* + on the photograph. A very steep and smooth step follows, which I turned by a very difficult traverse to the right (W.), till an awkward and steep crack enabled me to climb up to the left and so regain the crest of the buttress. Henceforward the route lies over difficult steps, at times to the right (W.) of the crest, as far as the place where I turned back, marked by a straight line on the photograph.'

If anyone be lighthearted enough to renew this ascent, Klucker's route, I repeat, is the only safe one as far as the foot of the buttress. The Italians, in fact, began the actual expedition by an useless descent of some 300–400 ft., cf. footnote No. 10, *ante*.

²³ [In *March* 1924, Risch made the ascent of Piz (Monte di) Scerscen, 3967 m., *alone*!—*E.L.S.*]

²⁴ [*i.e.* the route to the Viale Pass, *ante*.—*E.L.S.*]

(Herr Zürcher's account translated literally from his letter to Christian Klucker.)

'On August 2, 1923, Risch and I carried out the traverse of the entire 'Sciора ridge'—*i.e.* Sciора di dentro, Ago di Sciора, Pioda di Sciора, and Sciора di fuori. This expedition took us from 04.00 till 19.00.²⁵

'On August 3 we had a day of rest in the Sciора Club Hut, and took the opportunity that morning of making the necessary preparations and of again studying the route with Zeiss glasses. We had already done this from every peak which afforded a view of the N. buttress of Piz Badile. After mature reflection we came to the conclusion that it would be best to allow Risch, on the afternoon of August 3, to proceed alone on a reconnoitring expedition as far as the actual spot where the climb on to the N. buttress of the Badile begins.

'Risch accordingly left the Sciора Hut at 13.00, and after about an hour I was able to observe him, through the glasses, cutting his way up the snow and ice slopes towards the buttress. He took a fairly long time over this, and did not return till 19.00, when he brought the comforting news that the route was well prepared as far as the buttress, and that much time would consequently be saved.

'Our expedition up Piz Badile was accomplished on August 4 under ideal conditions. To spare ourselves as much as possible, our porter, Rezzoli, accompanied us to the foot of the buttress, declaring himself willing to carry all our effects.

'We left the Hut at 04.45, attained the actual base of the buttress at 06.35, packed our rucksacks, and commenced the climb proper at 07.10. We left ice-axes and nailed boots²⁶ at this spot, as we intended to return by this route [*sic*], not knowing whether the expedition was possible or not.

'At 13.30 we made our first halt, exactly at the spot where the Italian party of 1911 turned back.²⁷ We found their cards under some heaped-up stones, and I took the cards with me. [Klucker informs me that he built a small cairn here.—*E.L.S.*]

²⁵ [This is, I think, the first *combined* traverse of the said peaks. An accident, during the descent of the Colle della Scioretta, W. slope, was only narrowly avoided.—*E.L.S.*]

²⁶ [In a short note in *R.M.* 1924, p. 239, Herr Zürcher states that the party carried two new ropes of 120 and 80 ft. length respectively, besides 18 *pitons* and the strict minimum of provisions.—*E.L.S.*]

²⁷ [See *A.J.* xxvi. 464–5 and the photo marked by Klucker in this number—*E.L.S.*]

‘At 14.00 we commenced the hardest bit of the climb, which, without exaggeration, reaches the extremest limits of human possibility. The slab is about 350 ft. high and we only accomplished its ascent at 17.15. Thenceforward the climb, although very difficult, is probably the finest existing anywhere.

‘At 18.50 the ascent was completed, and, thanks to Risch’s superb leading and judgment, fortunately without accident.

‘We commenced the descent to the Badile Hut at 19.15. Unfortunately we missed the proper route and had to descend, in the dark, a long couloir²⁸ of 300 to 350 ft. in height by means of a hitched rope, so as to reach a tongue of snow below. Having attained this snow, we slid down by means of *pitons* [*sic*] and small steps cut by the axe²⁹ (*Beil*) over this hard frozen substance. Finally, we hurried, with our footgear torn to strips, to the Badile Hut, attained at 22.30.

‘Next morning we left the hut at 04.30, descended Val Masino³⁰ to Ardenno, whence we proceeded by rail, via Colico and Chiavenna, to Promontogno, where we arrived, very fit, at 16.00.’

Walter Risch has kindly verbally supplemented the above narrative :—

The party struck the Sassfurà buttress [coming, of course, from the N.E.] just about the *second* + on the marked photograph [where Klucker left his boots]. After attaining, by Klucker’s route, the place [there is a very difficult bit *below* this spot which they turned to the *left*, E.] whence Klucker and the Italians turned back, Risch turned to the *left*,³¹ E., and traversed some 180 to 360 ft. [he cannot, and no wonder, definitely recall the exact distance traversed], by a barely perceptible upwards

²⁸ [This couloir may very possibly be the one first ascended in 1879 by the late Professor B. Minnigerode with Alois Pinggera of Sulden. Risch and Klucker concur. I had the pleasure of seeing Pinggera, hale and hearty at the age of 78, at Sulden in 1924.—*E.L.S.*]

²⁹ [Walter Risch informs me that he took with him a very small wood-cutting axe belonging to the Sciora Club Hut, and that the said axe proved a vital necessity during the *ascent*.—*E.L.S.*]

³⁰ [The party drove from Masino-Bagni to Ardenno.—*E.L.S.*]

³¹ This is the part of the N.E. face where streaks of snow, set at an impossible angle, are often visible in late summer. On this occasion the face was completely bare, except for ice-threads in the minute cracks.

slanting ledge [in some places only an inch or two wide], over the enormous N.E. face. Risch states—his whole account is modest in the extreme—that the exposure is indescribable. At the end of the ledge he turned upwards by a minute crack or chimney, occasionally ice-filled, till almost flush with the face, and, by means of two or three doubtfully wedged boulders, with extreme difficulty regained the crest of the buttress above the great step. Thenceforward the climb is straightforward, and, although extremely steep, leads over many quite negotiable steps to the top (14 hrs. 5 mins.).

During the ascent, Risch employed only 3 [all on the N.E. face] out of the 18 *pitons* carried. He adds that all along the buttress he encountered numerous rope-rings, *pitons*, and even a long rope left by the Italians and also by an Austrian Cinema [!] party who had previously [*i.e.* before August 1923] attempted the route and wisely turned back after climbing a very short distance.

The rocks, on the whole, are very good, but at the difficult step where Klucker and Risch turned on to the N.W. face³² they are apt to flake off through weathering, and this occasionally occurs above as well as below.

As regards the route followed by Risch and Herr Zürcher, it must, of course, be remembered that the start in this case was from the Sciora Club Hut, on the opposite side of the Bondasca glen. Nevertheless in Klucker's opinion, and, if I may add, also in my own, the party should have taken the Viale ledge by passing below the Cengalo Glacier (quite safe in the morning) and point 2313m., *S. map*; then, mounting the ledge to the notch or 'pass' in the lower Sassfurà buttress, have climbed on to the crest of the said buttress as Klucker did.

Concerning the snow-slope³³ above point 2313 m., traversed *thrice*³⁴ by Risch, Klucker and I are both well acquainted with it. It rests on extremely smooth and steep slabs and consequently never adheres long. So soon as a really warm wind occurs, the slope, which attains in a snowy spring a depth of 6 to 10 ft., peels completely off, and thunders right down over

³² *i.e.* at the *third* + on the marked photograph.

³³ In 1911, at the time of the Italian attempts, this snow had already slipped off—so Klucker informs me.

³⁴ Risch's *first* traverse, on his exploration of August 3, made between 13.00 and 19.00, was especially dangerous.

the Cengalo pastures. An entire herd of cattle and sheep was thus destroyed some years ago, as is well remembered in Bondo.

Let it not be thought that I am lightly criticising the judgment of better men than myself. This is, however, a place like, indeed, the entire N.³⁵ slope of the massif from the Passo di Bondo to the Trubinasca Pass, where intimate local knowledge is essential, and Val Bregaglia contains, in 1925 as in 1861, no professional mountaineers worthy of the name.

If Walter Risch committed an error of judgment through want of local knowledge, then he sinned, at any rate, in good company. That very first-class guide, the late Martin Schocher, confessed to both Klucker and myself that on June 29, 1897, he committed, also without any unfortunate result, the worst crime of his professional career. The day was a very warm one, and the party, after successfully withstanding an intense ice and stone bombardment of many hours' duration, duly accomplished the first and only ascent of the N. face of Piz Cengalo. The summit was attained after hacking a hole through the great corniche. A few hours later the entire corniche, some 400 yards long, fell and completely raked their route.

Yet another example, since it is a writer's privilege to talk about himself. On June 9, 1913, Josef Pollinger—he needs no introduction—and myself were anxious to make the second crossing of the Colle dei Gemelli ³⁶ (between the Pizzi Gemelli and Piz Cengalo). The day was not cold, but conditions were apparently perfect. The writer, with great *local* knowledge, was somehow not enthusiastic, and eventually the party ignominiously made the tame ascent of the Sciora di Dentro. While sitting on that summit, the largest and most awe-inspiring avalanche of my whole Alpine experience swept the full length of the N. couloir leading to the Col. Our position would have been about midway in that couloir. It is perhaps an indiscretion to add that the second crossing of the Colle dei Gemelli has yet to be made.

No further comments are needed on the truly great performance of the Risch-Zürcher party.

³⁵ Or, for that matter, the *entire* N. slope of the ‘Bregaglia’ Group.

³⁶ First crossing—Klucker leading guide. Extremely cold day, conditions perfect, June 9, 1892.

*Piz Cengalo.*³⁷

Piz Cengalo³⁸ (= 'Tschingel,' *i.e.* the 'Girdle'), 3374 m. = 11,070 ft., *S. map*, of all the Bregaglia mountains, is only surpassed in appearance by Piz Badile and in height by the Cima di Castello, Monte Disgrazia being, of course, off the main chain.

Like Piz Badile, it consists of two principal arêtes, E. and W., but has also a secondary one, S.; Piz Cengalo may thus be said to have three faces, N., S.E., and S.W. Unlike Piz Badile, Piz Cengalo possesses two peaks.

Of routes, however, I am tempted to say, the mountain has—at present—but (!) *one*, the W. arête. For practical purposes, and so far as my knowledge goes, the E. arête has been taken but once; the S. arête, of which the lower third is impracticable, but once, partly, up and once, partly, down, while the great N. face, to which allusion has already been made, has been accomplished but once, and that ascent took place twenty-eight years ago.

Like 99 per cent. of other mountaineers, I have been content with the W. arête (twice).

1. The first ascent of the mountain, long pronounced impossible, was accomplished, most deservedly, by Messrs.³⁹

³⁷ Between Piz Badile and Piz Cengalo is situated the Colle del Cengalo, 3049 m. = 10,004 ft., *S. map*. Name only on *Wilson map*.

A long snow or ice gully, some 1500 ft. high and averaging 52°, leads from the Cengalo glacier to the watershed. The ascent, very rarely made, is, after mid-July, usually impossible, owing to the enormous bergschrund and the numerous falling stones. The descent on the S. side presents no difficulty. The pass has been attained in 3 hrs. 30 min. from the Sciora Club Hut—the time of the writer, led by Josef Pollinger, on June 15, 1908, but as much as 21 hrs. have been consumed in the gully alone!

The *descent* on the Swiss side has been accomplished but once, and under Klucker's lead.

On the whole, it is safest, although not the easiest, of the three precipitous passes—Gemelli, Cengalo, and Badile—leading from Val Bondasca to Masino.

³⁸ For the various names and heights assigned to the mountain, see *Climbers' Guide*, 'Bernina,' Part I., pp. 32–3, also compiled by Mr. Coolidge.

³⁹ The first party, starting from Masino-Bagni, accomplished the ascent in the extraordinary time—especially for a first ascent—of 4 hrs. 40 min. The writer, in 1914, led by Josef Pollinger, after straining every nerve, was only able to beat this time by 10 minutes!

D. W. Freshfield and C. Comyns Tucker, with François Dévouassoud, on July 25, 1866, by the *W. arête* :—

From the Badile Club Hut, mount debris and snow to the small glacier lying S.W. of the peak. Now, *either* mount this glacier to the conspicuous Colle del Cengalo and thence climb the easy rock *W. arête* of our peak, *or* by a gully attain the *arête E.* of, and higher than, the said pass. After a short *descent*, climb easy rocks and then a snow slope, keeping well to the *S.*, to the summit (3 hrs.).

Great care should be taken to avoid the enormous summit-ridge cornice which overhangs the *N.* wall.

2. The *S. arête*, as has already been said, is hopeless in its lower part and can only be reached from the *E.* It is a difficult and unpleasant climb over loose rocks and is much exposed to falling stones :—

From the Badile Club Hut, steer N.E. to the little depression N. of point 2583 m., *I. map*, of our peak’s *S. arête*, thence go up the small glacier lying S.E. of the summit. A snow and rock gully seams the *E.* slope of the *S. arête* from a gap rather N. of point 3214 m., *Lurani map*. Go up this dangerous gully and with difficulty attain the crest, which is followed over its steep *W.* slope to the summit (*c.* 4½ hrs.).⁴⁰

3. The *E. arête* is a splendid example of shattered mountain architecture ; at its *E.* extremity is situated a fine rocky tooth point 3307 m., *Lurani map*, constituting Piz Cengalo’s *E.* peak.⁴¹

Although point 3307 m. has several times been attained, yet the ridge leading from that point to the summit of Piz Cengalo appears to have been traversed only once, *i.e.* on August 8, 1920, by Count A. Bonacossa⁴² and Signor Carlo Prochownik. The *complete* ascent of Piz Cengalo by the *E. arête*, or, in other words, from the Colle dei Gemelli, passing *over* point 3307 m., has not, I think, yet been accomplished. The ascent, although the rocks are not sound, should prove to be one of great interest and is recommended :—

From the Badile Club Hut follow the route to the Colle dei Gemelli (2 hrs.). From that pass turn *W.* and climb on to the *E. arête* of Piz Cengalo, *E.* peak. First by the crest, then, as

⁴⁰ Taken from Count A. Bonacossa’s account, *S.A.C. Guide*, pp. 144–5.

⁴¹ This peak received from Italians the remarkably inappropriate name of ‘Punta Francesco,’ cf. *A.J.* xxvii. 413 ; the *S.A.C. Guide*, p. viii, very rightly suppresses it.

⁴² See *S.A.C. Guide*, pp. 146–7.

the rocks become rotten, turn on to the S. slope, and by this slope, and finally again by the crest, attain the E. peak (2 hrs.). From this peak *descend* some 60 ft. towards the S.S.W., and so attain by easy ledges the depression between the E. peak and the summit (20 min.). Now by good rocks to a slab accessible by a crack, then over a smooth and exposed ledge leading diagonally towards the S., and thence attain, by easier rocks, the ridge itself. Keeping slightly on its S. slope, the summit is then reached over good rocks (2 hrs.).⁴³

A very few and quite unimportant variations to the summit have also been accomplished.

The E. peak, 3307 m., has been reached by various routes besides the above: the S.E. rib, the (??) S. face and the S.S.W. face, *i.e.* the flattened gully or trough forming the face in the angle between the summit, 3374 m., and the E. peak, 3307 m.

From this latter route my party was driven back in 1913 by showers of stones, and the ascent should only be attempted with perfectly *dry* rocks.

4. The NORTH FACE.—This splendid wall, some 4000 ft. in height, suffers only by comparison with that of Piz Badile. The face, if nearly equally steep, is more broken, and, in its upper portions, less slabby. Owing to the presence of numerous gullies and occasional ledges, I have never seen it denuded of snow, and imagine that this event rarely, if ever, takes place. There is nothing resembling the Sassfurà buttress, consequently it is impossible to find shelter anywhere from the constant danger of falling stones and icicles, besides the ever-recurrent peril of falls from the immense summit-ridge cornice.

The 'difficulty' of the ascent is far less than that of the N. face of Piz Badile. On the other hand, the 'danger,' as differentiated from mere 'difficulty,' is infinitely greater. A baboon would easily climb the N. face of Piz Badile; it would be long odds on his being killed on Piz Cengalo.

All the guide-books, as well as the writer, concur in considering that this route should never be repeated.

The only ascent was accomplished by ⁴⁴ Martin Schocher, of Pontresina, together with Prince Scipio Borghese and the guide Christian Schnitzler, also of Pontresina, June 29, 1897:—

Very briefly: from the Sciora Club Hut follow the Colle del Cengalo route till almost exactly under the summit. A great

⁴³ Taken from Count A. Bonacossa's account, *S.A.C. Guide*, pp. 146-7.

⁴⁴ I adopt the same procedure as in footnote 14.

glacier-polished nose here projects into the glacier; this nose was left to the right, W., by the first party. Now turn upwards, cross the bergschrund and climb the Eastern of two parallel chimneys to a perpendicular step, then turn and traverse into the W. chimney; when this in turn becomes impossible, traverse back into the E. chimney till with great difficulty you attain a snowy ledge.⁴⁵ The ledge leads steeply and diagonally, W. to E., across the lower portion of the N. face. Follow it till you can attain a precipitous icy rib interspersed with slabby steps leading S. towards the summit. The danger, hitherto excessive, becomes rather less acute. Climb this difficult rib, cut through the corniche, and attain the top (9 hrs., the time of the party, which is fast).⁴⁶

The fate of the corniche on June 29, 1897, has already been related, and Martin Schocher informed me that this ascent was by far the most dangerous expedition of his life.

The *S.A.C. Guide* gives full details of all these routes, and my best thanks are due to my friends Count Bonacossa and Herr H. Rütter.

Writing these last few lines from Bondo, from the windows of the historical 'Palazzo' de Salis,⁴⁷ beneath the shadow of immemorial Castelmur, the two gigantic mountains vividly outlined against a lowering winter sky, it appears vain to realize that any human being could cling for one instant, leave alone for endless, breathless hours, to those threatening, sky-cleaving walls!

None who have glanced at them from Val Bondasca or Soglio will disagree with me, and, as in the case of a far more famous mountain . . . 'however exalted may be their ideas and however exaggerated their expectations, none will come to return disappointed.' The Swiss and Italian parties, undaunted Christian Klucker himself, have no cause for mutual jealousy, but I cannot help hoping that the N. faces of the great 'Grey Twins' will now for ever rest in peace.

Some years ago the writer was indiscreet enough to publish

⁴⁵ In 1908 the writer noted that this ledge could be far more easily reached by a snow or ice gully, W. of the nose, starting from near the E. foot of the gully leading to the Colle del Cengalo. Klucker and Herr Rütter both concur.

⁴⁶ *R.M.* 1897, pp. 249-50; *A.J.* xxv. 9.

⁴⁷ The Grisons residence of Count J. F. C. de Salis, K.C.M.G., C.V.O., late H.B.M.'s Minister to the Vatican.

an article on facts and fiction in the Bernina.⁴⁸ Italians have generously forgiven him. The first ascent of Piz Badile by the N. face is, in 1924, 'denied by the guides, inhabitants, and irresponsible visitors of Val Masino'!

SWISS PRINTS.

SOME EXHIBITION REFLECTIONS.

BY C. R. PARAVICINI

(Swiss Minister to Great Britain).

AN Exhibition of Swiss prints in London is a novelty. I personally have never seen one. But the introduction to the catalogue tells us that the Alpine Club held one in 1909, at which time I was in Russia.

One of the leading daily papers headed its *revue* of the December exhibition 'A Revelation.' This makes me believe that the Alpine Club has indeed shown the London public something hitherto unknown to them. How far that novelty has appealed to their taste is a question which I shall not attempt to answer, but many people whose judgment I highly value have been unstinted in their praise.

That the quality of the prints shown has been—with hardly an exception—of very high standard is explained by the traditions of the organizing club itself. It may be said, however, that even in Switzerland temporary exhibitions of this class and extension are rarely seen. For anyone anxious to study the various artists, their working ground, their inspiration, and their technique, no better opportunity could have been wished for.

From the point of view of pure contemplation and visual enjoyment the subjects chosen by these Swiss artists speak for themselves. They need no lengthy explanation. They are taken from nature untouched and unaltered in its graceful simplicity. They do not seek to convey any deep secrets of art or philosophy, they show the ordinary events of daily life: peasants at their rustic work and their simple and pleasant enjoyments, rivers, wood-surrounded meadows in sunshine, snow-covered mountains seen from the platform of an ancient

⁴⁸ *A.J.* xxvii. 402-17.