

traverse, from the Schwarenbach Inn, of the Balmhorn to the Altels by the airy little icy ridge that connects them. The walk up to the former peak we made in the company of a bulky local porter who carried the rope. The traverse, however, did call for its use, a fact which, at the airiest spot, led to his untimely interrogation to my wife 'Sind Sie schwindelig?' eliciting an indignant negative.

THE FIESCHERWAND.

By W. H. AMSTUTZ (PRESIDENT ACAD. A.C., BERNE).

ON the afternoon of August 2 my friend P. v. Schumacher and I stepped out strongly for the Bäregg. My thoughts were, like Andreas Fischer's years ago, in the Mont Blanc range, for of a truth our design was not exactly pitched low! We were about to venture 'a new ascent.' Our bodily training was by no means at its height, but one thing was certain, our *moral* was all right, and this for the success of the present undertaking was of great significance.

From Bäregg the Fiescherwand presents a magnificent picture. From the Ochs or Kl. Fiescherhorn to the Lower Mönchjoch it is untrodden by the foot of man. In the middle of the wall a casual glance shows a steep arête starting in the Fiescherfirn and mounting a thousand metres high to the minor summit of the Fiescherhorn. Up that was our job! We had had it long in mind. In June we had made a thrilling ski-run over the Kalli to judge a bit closer of the possibilities, which convinced us that it must go. The wet days of July had played havoc, however, with the rocks. Snow, much snow, lay on the arête. This made us very undecided whether to wait a couple of days. Two sunny days would, we considered, alter a lot, work much alteration. Still, what guarantee had we in such a summer of such a thing? Besides, how could we be certain a second time of feeling the enterprise that now possessed us? Surely this year we had lounged about in huts perforce idle. So off!

But we had not yet done with our Tantalus trials. Scarcely had we left the inn when we ran into our fellow-member, R. Wyss. Our doubts started anew. Difficulties and fresh snow in the one scale; youthful exuberance and hope of fine weather in the other. We had also heard lately that an English



Phot. W. Burkhard.

FIESCHERWAND
from Bäregg.

flying officer¹ had designs on the climb. The rumour in Grindelwald ascribed to Mr. Yuko Maki considerable interest; and, last but not least, there was the veteran Captain Farrar.² He is in his sixty-ninth year, but you had better have a look at him! Two years ago he had told us 'It goes; if you don't go, I shall.' With von Schumacher at the other end of the rope I also thought it must go!

When Wyss also told us that a few days previously the famous climber, Fritz Amatter, with his Herr Dr. Kehl, had made an attempt to reach *direct* the summit of the Fiescherhorn, our minds were soon made up. Might not indeed Dr. Kehl take a fancy to 'our arête'?

By 6 P.M. we were on the Zäsenberghorn. A good place to bivouac was soon found. We went on for another hour to reconnoitre the glacier, and then busied ourselves with our bivouac. A little shelter-wall was soon built—in fact, we have developed the building of such walls into a fine art! On the damp ground an insulating layer of newspaper—that we are never tired of praising—was placed. We spread them out anyhow, without fear or favour—Conservative, Liberal, Democratic, Popular, and Fascistic. But since that night my secret inclination is to the Conservative paper, for my resting-place was a 32-page *Times*!

We crept into our joint sleeping sack and were soon in the arms of Morpheus. Such is the power of the press!

By 5.20 next morning our hands touched the rocks of the Fiescherwand. Von Schumacher at once took the lead and kept it during the next fifteen hours, until at dusk we stood on the cornice.

Right away the work was exciting, but not difficult. We kept immediately below the crest of the arête, on the N. side.

¹ F. S. Smythe, now stationed at Abu-Sueir, Egypt. See his paper in present number, p. 218.

² In 1924, with Peter Almer I & II, I made a careful examination of the very obvious arête. We crossed from the Zäsenberghorn to the Kalli, thus seeing it quite close in profile and in full. We came to the conclusion that it would undoubtedly go, and with such guides I would not, if my years agree to stand still, hesitate to attempt it in a fairly dry state. I am unfeignedly glad that it has fallen to these enthusiastic and competent young mountaineers who with Dr. Lauper, Richardet, Dr. Chervet, and one or two others have done much to lift their Club into the very high position which it holds in the estimation of mountaineers. They are indeed all craftsmen.—J. P. F.

Moving together, we gained height rapidly. Gradually we approached the crest and then followed it, finally on snow. Thus the full lower third was behind us before we sat down for a rest. A little halt; a short bite could do no harm (1. See marked photograph). I took a few pictures. It was to be my last chance!

A marked increase in the angle of the arête now occurs. The ridge which we had followed up to now loses itself gradually in a face, while the actual arête descends from the summit into a couloir to our left.

After a short bout of step-cutting, holdless, slabby rocks forbade farther progress. We accordingly traversed to the left (2) over very exposed rocks, and then for four or five rope-lengths—we were using a 30-m. rope—followed very unpleasant slabby, mostly snow-covered, very steep and difficult rocks (3). It is difficult to remember every incident. One impression was blotted out by another. Of making safe there was seldom any possibility. Many a snow-covered spot that, if dry, would have been climbed without hesitation, tried our powers to the utmost. There was no want of excitement here!

As to the line now to follow, we were not agreed. I proposed to climb in a direct line to regain the arête, while my friend was anxious to try a traverse to the left. This, as I immediately saw, was the only solution when my proposal had been tried in vain. Geologists³ have good eyes! Nothing remained but to hew with the axe in grey-black ice—sown with stones—an exposed way. But Willisich's axes cut well, and now and again one found a hold. We regained the arête (4), and up we went over great savage blocks of aiguille-like, bare granite with good holds. One reach succeeded another. The sweat fairly ran. It was real hard work.

When at times one looked down into the void the same thought struck us: there is no turning back, so up you go! And up we did go, always with care, and more and more on the S. flank of the arête. By 5 P.M. we had gained the snow arête (5). It leads steeply to the last great bastion, the summit-block itself, of the Fiescherwand. Miserably it deceived us, for we had to stamp up its soft back for an hour and three-quarters. At its end we made a short halt (6) and put on crampons. Light driving snow set in, together with unpleasant cold. The next bit looked holdless, very steep, and smothered in ice and snow. Von Schumacher set to work, felt for a bit—

³ Von Schumacher has just taken his degree in geology.

seldom long—and then ventured, with a few points of the crampon, on to the glassy rock. No holds! But in dire need the devil feeds on flies! My friend held himself by frozen-in stones. They held. He disappeared into a gully. A shower of ice-cold snow poured continuously down my neck. Slowly, by jerks, the frozen rope passed through my stiffened hands. It seemed to me an eternity. He was hardly 30 m. above me, and it had taken half an hour! At last came the shout, 'Come on! I am secure.' 'Secure! Thank God!' I shouted back, for my powers were no longer at their zenith. My fingers were stiff and without feeling; without the rope I could hardly have got up this bit.

The game was won. Under the snow we found holds for hand and foot. We could see right up to the cornice: that was not going to stop us. Two ropelengths, and my friend cut right through it!

The watch pointed to 8.20 as we stepped on to the main arête. 'With von Schumacher it goes.' So I will tell Captain Farrar.

Tired, but filled with joy, we set our course by lantern light for the Concordia.

THE NORTH-EAST FACE OF THE KLEIN FIESCHERHORN.

By F. S. SMYTHE.

ON July 26, 1925, J. H. B. Bell and I sat on the top of the Klein Strahlegghorn. The weather of the previous few days had been, to put it mildly, abandoned. We looked regretfully at the splintered spires of the Lauteraarhorn far above. Plastered in snow and ice they looked unassailable. But the sun was hot, and hour by hour the rocks showed more darkly as their icy armour was stripped relentlessly from them. Below, the new snow poured in cascades from the slabs and, quickly gathering volume, thundered down to below the Finsteraarjoch. To the N.W. vast processions of cloud mountains moved in stately array over the blue plain of Berne to the assault of the great Oberland wall. Piling up in sun-kissed pillars against the dark watch-tower of the 'Ogre,' they poured over the Mittellegi ridge into the inmost sanctuary of the High Mountains. Stretching forth hungry arms they crept along the precipices of the Fiescherwand and enwrapped