

rocks. There we halted for a refreshing drink of rum and a small meal. After this we went more slowly.

Beyond the rocks easy-looking snow slopes tempted us downwards towards the Fiescher glacier. We had not gone far before an icefall got in the way; we managed to avoid it, however, and found some rocks which took us rapidly and conveniently downwards to the glacier. At the bottom, these rocks were smooth and steep, and to save time we abseiled freely. Finally we got off the last difficulty and jumped down on to the glacier.

It had been a truly perfect day. Now as we tramped over the gentle surface of the great ice river the evening shadows stole across to cool the last charred fragment of Hazard's nose.

The sunlight was still on the peaks when we reached the Finsteraarhorn hut. There we were entertained, watching a party stuck on the slopes of the Finsteraarhorn. First the hut-keeper and his assistant left to succour the unfortunates. With nightfall we brought up the rear with a lantern. It was unnecessary; for by-and-by voices were heard on the glacier, and in a few minutes the party was at the hut. Its components included a sprightly young lady, a middle-aged gentleman, and a worn, jaded-looking guide. The first two appeared both proud and pleased with their exploit—far too much so to harbour any feelings of gratitude towards their rescuers or those like ourselves who had spent a small amount of time and energy in going forth to help them.

THE OCHS OR KLEIN FIESCHERHORN.

By J. P. FARRAR.

MR. Smythe's paper and statement that in Grindelwald his route was held to be new induced me to turn up some investigations made in October 1897, soon after I had made the ascent. They were sent, at the time, to Mr. Coolidge with a marked photograph, and some correspondence followed.

The paper may as well be put on record for the few readers interested in intricate topography.

Its understanding is rendered more easy by the photograph now reproduced, marked and sent to me by my friend de Villiers-Schwab, Hon. Secretary of the American A.C., with a letter dated May 13, 1921, reading:

' Your very kind letter of March 24 tempts me to write you again in the belief that you will be able to clear up some questions about my climb of August 5.

' In my list of expeditions for 1920, I spoke of having been turned back on this day from an attempt on the Ochs from the Strahlegg Hut, high up on a snow arête "about the level of the Fiescherjoch." The statement in quotation marks was based largely on the last sentence of the first paragraph on p. 13 of volume ii, C. & C.'s "Climbers' Guide of the Bernese Oberland," but I all along had some doubt as to its correctness.¹

' Since my return here from South Africa, which occurred shortly before I sent my list in to you, I have had opportunity to look into this matter and am now convinced that I was in error as to the location of the Fiescherjoch, and that the joch, about the level of which we turned back, was the nameless one which appears to be the lowest depression in the Ochs-Agassizhorn ridge, which I have marked D in the accompanying photo. However, if my present conviction is right, then the statement in the C. & C. Guide appears to be incorrect.

' On the enclosed photograph of the ridge, which I took the following day from the Strahlegghorn, I have marked with a dotted line the route which we took, and I have continued [from C] the route by which we had intended to complete the ascent of the Ochs.

' Now, according to the S. map, P. 3758 cannot possibly be the point on the ridge for which we were making, but must be the point which I have marked with that number on the photo, and an ascent of the spur leading to this would appear to be a matter of excessive difficulty, if not impossible altogether.² Furthermore, my point C would doubtless lead to the snowy plane enclosed by the three summits of the Fiescherhörner, while the S. map P. 3758 does not. I take it that the true Fiescherjoch must lie between [as marked] C and the Ochs summit.

¹ [It reads: 'It is generally best to cut up the steep snowy spur that descends from the rounded snowy summit marked 3758 m. on the S. map and so to reach the watershed rather E. of the true pass. (2 to 3 hours. See this way dotted in on the diagram in Aeby and Fellenberg's *Hochgebirge*, p. 125.)']

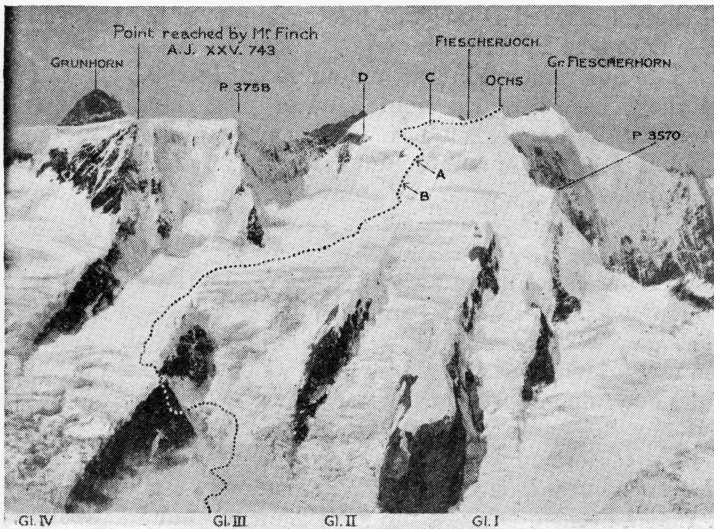
² [See *A.J.* 25, 743, for route taken by Max Finch to Pt. ca. 3700, E. of 3758. M. Finch is almost as competent a mountaineer as his brother George and his note usefully supplements this letter and deserves careful study.—F.]

‘It is indeed a bold man who questions the accuracy of Mr. Coolidge’s Guide, but I can see no other explanation than that the guide-book is in error regarding this point. . . . I do not possess an Aeby, to which reference is made in the C. & C. Guide. Since you are one of the pioneers of this very ascent and can, no doubt, authoritatively answer the question, I should greatly appreciate hearing from you, if it is not too much trouble.

‘As a matter of interest, I have marked . . . the extensive snow-slope, whose surface peeled away in an avalanche to within some twenty feet of the arête when we were about at B, soon after having turned back at A because of the avalanchey condition of the snow: a very narrow escape, I think.’ [The slope is on the right or N. flank below A–B.]

My reply, June 3, 1921, read :

‘I was very much interested to receive your letter of May 13. So many climbers simply follow the heels of their guide that



FROM THE STRAHLEGGHORN.

it is particularly refreshing to find one with such a keen and accurate topographical bent.

‘Strange to say, as long ago as 1897 I went very carefully into the history of this N.E. face of the Kl. Fiescherhorn, and had quite a long correspondence with Mr. Coolidge upon it. I have turned up the papers and send them enclosed.

' There is a further note in "A.J." 25, 743 [see note 2]. If you look at Stephen's "Playground," new edition, 1894, p. 160, you will see that the col which he crossed was between the two points of the Kl. Fiescherhorn, *i.e.* between the highest point and the snow knob at the top of the arête just N. of the word "Ochs" on the Siegfried map. Certainly, a little higher, he refers to the col as being on the S. side of this knob, but the one he crossed was as stated, and is the one, I believe, usually crossed.

' A col is, of course, not necessarily the lowest point in the ridge, *e.g.* the Sesiajoch crosses the shoulder of the Parrotspitze.

' The statement in the "Climbers' Guide" is incorrect. Mr. Coolidge mistook, or rather failed to notice, the small but very well-marked snow or ice ridge immediately to the N. of the word "Ochs" and which bears no côte, and by which the ascent is made.

' The ridge leading to point 3758 is quite far away, and to my knowledge has never been done, nor has, *I think*, the E. face of the col marked D on your photograph ever been ascended. [See note 2 re Finch's ascent.]

' I do not remember that, on our ascent in 1897, the E. face of the Ochs, *i.e.* to the right hand of your ridge AB, was so broken up as it appears to be in your photograph. We traversed right under this, so as to gain the ridge at about the arrow-head beside B, and I am quite sure we should not have done so had the wall above us been as threatening as it appears to be now.

' On our descent we followed practically the exact line of your ascent. We had no trouble whatever, except in getting through the rib of rocks through which you passed. Here the ice was a bit broken. Otherwise, it was a simple walk.

' Your ridge of ascent is better shown in a map which came out as a Beilage to vol. xxi., "S.A.C.J."

' I meant to make the ascent by the final N.N.E. arête of the Ochs, but it looked so prodigiously steep when we got under it that I decided to cross the level plain to your ridge BAC.'

The following pages, with slight enlightening additions, are substantially the same as submitted to Mr. Coolidge in 1897. He was, during the greater part of his life, the authority to whom we all turned for information and confirmation, and none of us will ever fail to remember with appreciation the meticulous care which he bestowed on the voluminous correspondence inflicted on him.

ANALYSIS OF ROUTES.

Northern Approach.

I. To Coolidge-Foster's Ochsenjoch.³ (3080 m.)

(a) from N.

Foster, 1868; Whitwell, 1878; Dübi, 1888.

(b) from E.

Anderson, 1886; Farrar, 1897.⁴

II. From Ochsenjoch 3080 to snow peak 3570. ('Firnollen' of Dübi, 'S.A.C.J.' xxiv. 14.)

(a) by N. arête or close to it.

Foster, 1868; Whitwell, 1878; Anderson, 1886;

Dübi, 1888; Farrar, 1897.⁴

III. From 3570 to summit 3905

(a) by N.N.E. arête.

Whitwell, 1878; Anderson, 1886; Dübi, 1888.⁵

North Eastern Approach.

IV. From Ober Eismeer to 'Firnhochebene' of Fellenberg, Das Hochgebirge von Grindelwald (*Plate P. 125*): 'level plain' of Stephen's 'Playground,' 2nd edit. 156 (= to say the snow summit 3570) at foot of E. face of Kl. Fiescherhorn.⁶

Stephen, 1862; Fellenberg, 1864; Coolidge, 1874; Burkhardt, 1890.

³ Coolidge's *Bernese Oberland*, ii. 8-9. This Col is seen in the picture $\frac{3}{4}$ in. vertically below the figures 3570. It leads from the Zäsenberg and crosses the ridge running N. from the summit of Ochs to the Pfaffenstöckli, just S. of the latter. As a Col it is useless, as the glacier to right of Gl. 1 in picture is a much better approach.

⁴ Farrar stopped short rather below the actual col, made a long, as it turned out unnecessary, traverse to the S. in hard ice, involving much cutting, and joined N. arête about half-way up to 3570.

⁵ It is curious that Schlegel who had done it with Whitwell made no remark when Peter Baumann said the whole N.-N.E. arête was impossible. *S.A.C.J.* xxiv. 113. They did it all the same! Jossi was not to be denied! Dr. Dübi's whole article is very instructive.

⁶ This plateau or fairly level snow plain stretches right across the foot of the final ice wall of Ochs, from 3570 to foot of ridge A-B. It is almost better seen in the cut in Smythe's paper, p. 220. The route taken was either that marked or up to right of Gl. 1.

V. From 'Firnhochebene' to summit 3905 by the E. snow arête leading to Fiescherjoch.⁷

Stephen, 1862; Fellenberg, 1864; ? Coolidge, 1874 (*see note 7*); Burkhardt, 1890; Farrar, 1897.

VI. From the same to same. Direct by E. ice face.
Foster, 1868; ? Coolidge, 1874 (*see note 7*)

As to Foster's direct route by E. ice face: cf. 'A.J.' **4**, 155, and Mr. Coolidge's note 'A.J.' **13**, 267-8. To Foster's Ochsenjoch it is clear.

From here he bore 'to left over snowslopes, and ascended some steep rocks'—these slopes are, I consider, those to E. of the part of the N. arête stretching from point 3080 to 3360, and were also followed by Dübi (cf. 'S.A.C.J.' xxiv. 114), and are the obvious route. The rocks are referred to by Anderson, 'A.J.' **13**, 122, 'bad rocks' and were also climbed by my party. They are just below the snow dome 3570. I think Mr. Coolidge's par. (2) 'A.J.' **13**, 267, refers to Foster's route from this point 3570, not from 3080 to 3570—as up to 3570 he was bound to keep very close to, indeed at places on, the N. ridge—we were on it 1 hour 30 minutes). [In this paragraph (2) Mr. Coolidge seems to overlook the mention by Foster ('A.J.' **4**, 155) of having 'ascended some steep rocks.' No doubt from his Ochsenjoch, gained from the N., Foster made a more or less long excursion on the S. flank of the bit of the N. arête 3080 to 3360, but he must then have returned to the N. arête on which the 'steep rocks' are. My party, though approaching the Ochsenjoch from the E. side, turned left or a bit W. of S. before we reached the actual Col and cut up very steep ice under an enormous ice bulge plainly seen in cut p. 220 and so gained the N. arête and followed it for 1½ hrs. over the 'steep rocks' to 3570, practically Foster's route, of which I then knew nothing.] He then at about 3570 reaches a 'small snow plain' after which he spends 6 hours on the last ice-slope. This ice-slope must be wholly above the Plateau (= Fellenberg's 'Hochebene,'

⁷ In a letter Nov. 2, 1897, Mr. Coolidge writes: 'From the plain [at foot of steep N.E. face] I think we [Aug. 5, 1874] went up Foster's ice face, *not* the usual snowy spur.

a. I remember the slope was very steep.

b. From point on final ridge reached, only 22 min. up to Ochsenhorn. Yet a *slow* party (*sic*). Foster took ¼ hr. and you 22 min. (*fast*).'

Stephen's 'level plain,' Foster's 'small snow plain')⁸ as the plateau breaks the continuity of the E. face and the lower slopes.

Now the regular Fiescherjoch route is by the E. ridge and could not be called a slope. We took by this route—*i.e.* from 3570 to Fiescherjoch—constant step-cutting after the first short-bit 2·35. Fellenberg (P. 125, Hochgeb.) inferentially takes say 3½ hours. Stephen—a large part—inferentially, 3 to 4 hours ('Playground,' P. 158-160).

Foster then states he took 15 minutes to the summit of Ochs from the point where he struck the main S.E. arête of Ochs arête. They had had many hours of work and Mr. Coolidge refers to them (? or his own) as 'a slow party' (*note* 7).

Now my party took for the part of the arête from the Fiescherjoch to Summit 22 minutes fast going.

I draw the conclusion therefore that Foster's party did not follow the old Fiescherjoch route by the E. snow arête, but cut right up the N.E. face of the Kl. Fiescherhorn, which would account for the longer time, and struck the main arête rather nearer the Ochs, which would account for the short time on the arête.⁷ [I drew his route in red on a photo.]

[Mr. Coolidge marked 'yes' against this par.]

Thus his route is new throughout and has never been followed in its entirety since, tho' Bowyear with Old Almer came down a bit of the E. face 'A.J.' 15, 310, and in their lower route may have followed Fellenberg's ascent.

It is easy to be misled by Stephen's account on p. 159; you could conclude that the top of the Pass is the summit of the 'rounded knob' but (p. 160) it is tolerably clear that they branched off to the right and traversed to the Col leaving the knob on their front. As did also v. Fellenberg. [Mr. Coolidge again marks 'yes.']

My party quitted this E. arête close to its top and traversed to S.S.E. arête and so reached the level of the summit plateau. Thus we went to the left instead of to the right, but what Stephen calls (p. 156) the 'actual col' is still further away to S.E. and is too steep on its E. face to be practicable.

Moseley and Craven *descended* the Fiescherjoch with C. Inäbnit and P. Rubi, neither of whom, so far as is recorded,

⁸ This plateau or fairly level snow plain stretches right across the foot of the final ice wall of Ochs, from 3570 to foot of ridge A-B. It is almost better seen in the cut in Smythe's paper, p. 220. The route taken was either that marked or up to right of Gl. 1.

had crossed this little-done Pass. They would probably take the same line as we did as it is that which can be best followed with the eye and is all right as far as we could see. We only had difficulty in getting off the spur of rocks at foot on to the open Glacier. [Our line of descent from the Col coincides with that marked on Mr. de Villiers-Schwab's photograph.]

The Ochsenhorn routes in Mr. Coolidge's 'Bernese Oberland,' vol. ii. 7-9 (1904), and in Dr. Dübi's 'Berner Alpen,' vol. iii. 26-27 (1909), which is, for this mountain, an exact translation, will be seen to need some revision.⁹

The arête from Ochsenjoch 3080 to snow peak 3570 runs N. to S., but after 3570 the arête turns a bit W. of N., *i.e.* becomes rather a N.E. arête or any way N.N.E.

It will be necessary to classify Foster's ascent by the E. ice face which, above the plateau at foot of this ice face, starts where Smythe's did, but soon diverges to the left. The difference in condition is noteworthy, Foster's party cutting for hours, Smythe's kicking steps over not dissimilar terrain.

'B.O.' p. 9 (1904) credits Foster only with the ascent to the Ochsenjoch and then makes him proceed to the Fiescherjoch as indeed he himself is 'inclined to think' he did ('A.J.' 13, 267). Anyone sufficiently interested can follow my argument against his having done so and for his having kept more to the right up the ice face. The great master had overlooked my argument with which he was, at the time, in agreement, and had gone so far as to say he thought that his own party followed more or less the same route (*see note 7*). Foster's actual route on the final wall starts at foot of N.N.E. arête of Ochs, which foot is well seen in cut, p. 220, and then bears diagonally to the left to strike the main arête slightly to left of the summit. It is a poor route as the direct ascent of the N.N.E. ridge was within their grasp and would have demanded less time and less work. His guide Hans Baumann was a glutton for ice-work. Old Almer,—Col Dolent, Col du Tour Noir, Brenva!!—could be the same, and Christian Jossi loved it.

⁹ The reference in *B.O.* ii. 8 to 'Pioneers' should be p. 29 (1887 edit. 12 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 10).