

Jan Mayen and the Faroes, and Aberdeen reached on September 9. By contrast in 1926 we left Aberdeen on June 30 and were in the ice from July 8 to July 11. Six weeks were spent along the coast and in the fjords. Scoresby Sound was left on August 23, and after a détour by Reykjavik the *Heimland* was back in Aberdeen on September 8.

[We offer our thanks to the Council of the R.G.S. for permission to reproduce their map.—*Editor, 'A.J.'*]

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EIGER AND HÖRNLI:  
*Some Accounts and Recollections.*

By SABURO MATSUKATA.

(This and the following paper were read before the Alpine Club, April 1, 1930, by the Rev. Walter Weston.)

[Both these papers are published in their own original and delightful form.]

I.

TO my great regret, strangely have I forgotten what my first impression of Grindelwald was. All what I remember is that I felt some sort of curious familiarity when I was walking up the village road alone. It was like a first visit to a place, which one thinks he has seen in his dream before.

Of course, it was much more agreeable to me to be free from the sight of stone buildings of French cities, which caused some sort of obsession, peculiar, perhaps, to me who has had bad experiences in the earthquake. But the main reason of my being so at home here was not this. In short, I knew so much of this valley and village already and could not think myself a stranger. I owed this unusual knowledge to my predecessor<sup>1</sup> who lived here for two years, wandering widely among the hills surrounding the valley as well as among the villagers, and eventually became a half-native. And when he came back<sup>2</sup> from abroad he found us waiting for his story of adventures among the foreign mountains. Soon he became the victim of hungry wolves and whenever he was

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Yuko Maki.—*W. W.*

<sup>2</sup> To Japan.—*W. W.*

with us, he was obliged to give some lectures on the mountains and the people in the place called 'Alps,' which we imagined something like a Paradise on earth. Unlike in the class-room we were exceedingly attentive and liked to hear more.

From this pre-education I was acquainted with some names of guides and their careers as mountaineers. I knew who was the 'Pickel-meister' and where he lives. I knew where I should go to order my rucksack and *Bergschuhe*. Of course, I have decided long before I left my country where to stay in this village.

So I went to 'Adler' and was given a room looking toward Wetterhorn. It was the end of January 1925, just four weeks after I landed at Marseilles. The day was clear, Scheidegg-Wetterhorn was towering straight up into the winter sky. I sank in my chair infinitely satisfied and was quite absorbed in this magnificence until the chamber-maid knocked my door to tell that she has brought up hot water.

Late in the afternoon I was wandering up the winding road to Upper-Glacier. The dusk came so soon that I had to abandon my hope of reaching the glacier. But the Eiger I saw that evening was a revelation. We all were now in the shadow of Tschuggen and the last of sunshine was playing on the top of that gigantic pyramid. But the moment when the icy crest ceased to shine everything has changed. The giant smiled no more. He seemed twice as high as before and was looking down upon us almost mercilessly. I felt as if I was beginning to understand why those people—from the Hartleys to Maki—could not stay below in the valley quietly. I now understood that it was the mountain who challenged.

This history of the attempt to climb the Mittellegi arête tells that there were not few who had accepted this challenge. But no ridge has so long a record of persistent resistance. And so, the ridge remained still unascended for nearly half a century since it was first tried. Every one in the valley knew that it was a problem to be solved, sooner or later. But few noticed that there was a stranger, who came from the other side of the world and settled down there since the autumn of 1919, and he was examining the ridge with great devotion. Faulhorn was his favourite observatory. People saw him so often sitting by the telescope on the top looking at the mountain.

But it was not until the end of the second summer that Maki, the stranger (who by this time became well acquainted with all the villagers), revealed his intention to try this ridge.

Emil Steuri, who was Maki's first guide and who was the first to discuss the plan with him, was sadly ill in bed. So the party had to be made up without him. Fritz Amatter was to be the leader guide, Fritz Steuri and Samuel Brawand were to assist him. One thing to be noticed as to the equipments they prepared is that they had a long pole of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  metres with special arrangement on both ends. It was an invention of Amatter, who has tried the ridge twice before, and who knew the ridge better than anyone else, and it was carefully manufactured in the dark forge of Christian Schenk.

In the afternoon of 9th September, the party was climbing up the Kalli-side of the ridge heavily loaded with the bivouac materials, pitons and the pole. They gained the ridge at the point a little higher than where the hut now stands. Having a rest there they followed the ridge up to the bivouac place [3500 m.] at about 5 in the evening. After some effort they managed to make a small platform, so small as to allow only one man to lie and one to sit and lean against the other. So the two have to stay on the ridge alternately. The weather seemed to be changing and the night was cold.

The morning came, the weather remained still doubtful and it was only 7 o'clock that they have decided to start. At 9 they reached to the foot of the 'Great Gendarme' (3687 m.) and at 10 they descended into the gap between the Great Gendarme and the final rise. Here began the real fight. They changed the order of the party. Amatter leading and Steuri and Brawand followed, in order to be able to assist the first by holding the pole at its foot, whenever necessary. The first overhang, which defeated so many parties, was conquered by using the pole. The pole proved to be helpful and was carried up along by the last man, Maki.

The work was exceedingly difficult, needless to say. Moreover there was new powder snow. For seven hours they were on the edge-like ridge of 200 metres, standing almost vertically. They climbed, straight up, for neither side of the ridge allowed them to traverse. They all knew that they cannot retreat. Scarcely have they spoken to each other and only once they paused, sticking to the rock, to take a slight nourishment.

It was good (not for them but for the people below, who were following them throughout the morning through the glass), that when they began this final attack they were soon covered by a mist. For the people climbing it might have been the same whether they were in the cloud or not. After all they had no choice but to climb upwards. Step by step

they went, until they found suddenly that the ridge became tame. They know they have conquered, they have overcome the most difficult part of the ascent. It was 5 o'clock in the evening. They left all the pitons there and planted the pole beside the Burgener's *Pickel*, which was used for *abseilen* by the Kuffner's party in 1885 and stood there all those 36 years on the ridge. They put a handkerchief on the pole hoping that it will tell the people in the valley of their success following morning. They proceeded. And at 7.15 they stood on the top of the Eiger.<sup>3</sup> Because of the threatening dusk and chill they could hardly stay for more than five minutes. They changed their order and soon started.

Descent to Eigergletscher in ordinary condition is not very difficult, although it is long and tiresome. But descent in the darkness after hours of so strenuous a labour and with only one lamp for a party of four was very different. (The Amatter's rucksack fell into the abyss while they were struggling on the last rock. Consequently not only one of their lamps but also some of their provisions, which they missed so much afterwards, were sacrificed to the Spirit of the Mountain.) So they were descending slowly and when, at last, they reached the Eigergletscher Station at half-past-two in the next morning, all the people there were deep in sleep having got tired with waiting.

The problem, which had become almost classical, was solved at last. Grindelwald was in a festival when they came back.

(In the village there was a rumour that the party fell and was lost.)

Everybody seemed cheerful, bursting with joy, except one. That was Maki, who knew that the time had come for him to leave the valley, where he lived for two years, connecting his life with that of the villagers so intimately, and where he lived some of the most unforgettable moments of his youth. He left Grindelwald at the end of September.

## II.

For some years preceding 1921 there was some idea to build a small refuge on the Mittellegi arête, in order to provide the party to attack the ridge with at least a comfortable sleeping place. Soon after the first successful ascent this

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<sup>3</sup> For illustrations of the Mittellegi arête, see Dr. Lauper's paper, *A.J.* **41**, 282-7.—*Editor.*

scheme began to materialize. The spot where to put up the hut was selected in 1923, two years after the last party slept on the ridge. Late in September in the next year the hut was erected. And on one autumn day some seventy of the inhabitants of the valley, including those who were the guides of the party of 1921 and their families, climbed up to the new hut from Kalli Firn to attend the dedication ceremony.

I visited the hut in the summer of 1925 just to stay for a night. I felt it was my duty to go up there and report all what I saw and felt to Maki, who is now in Japan and has done so much to make the building of this hut possible. Of course, at that time, no one imagined that he will come back to this mountain so soon. But he did come back to the great joy of me and of those who were associated with him in his climbs.

The weather was exceptionally good in the summer of 1926, especially in August and September. Attached to Prince Chichibu's party we wandered in Oberland and in Wallis without knowing when the spell of the good weather will end. We were exceedingly glad that our Prince had such good luck. Zermatt was the last climbing-centre for Prince Chichibu and after having traversed Monte Rosa and Lyskamm and Matterhorn he left the mountains. So we came back to Grindelwald with Mr. Watanabe, who was attached officially to Prince Chichibu and was always accompanying him throughout his summer climbs.

The main object of our return to Grindelwald was to try a complete traverse of the east ridge of Eiger, from Hörnli to the top. Now the hut was built and the rope was fixed, owing to the most devoted effort of Amatter, the lover of Mittellegi arête. So, if we succeed in getting to the hut *via* Hörnli, we can sleep and rest there and proceed further on the next day.

Three in the morning on the 22nd September we started from Grindelwald. To me, who was accustomed to start from a club-hut, this was a strange experience and while we were arranging our things in front of the hotel-porch, I could not help to think of those old days, when they used to start for Matterhorn from Hôtel Monte Rosa.

The party consisted of three amateurs, mentioned above, and four guides, *i.e.* all the three who accompanied Maki in 1921 and Emil Steuri. We climbed along the ordinary route towards the east foot of the I. Hörnli (2866 m.). The rock was dry. We were well trained and went up quite cheerfully, enjoying every bit of the climb. We gained the ridge at about the noon and had a nice rest. Some even had slumbered

awhile under the warm autumn sun. Then the party began to traverse eastwards. The weather was perfect and the views to the both sides were so grand and fascinating that I could not help to wonder why this part of the ridge was so neglected generally. And the Eiger from here! I never saw such an impressive pose of a mountain.

We descended to the gap which separates the points 2929 m. and 3004 m. at about 3 in the afternoon. This gap is so prominent that it did not escape our notice. We all anticipated quite well that there must be some problem to be faced, but we did not realize that we were much too optimistic until we came to the spot actually.

First we tried to climb directly upwards over the face of the cleft before us. There was a crack but we had to give up this slightly overhanging face, because, we thought, without some aids of piton it was impossible to climb. And either piton or nail we had none. There was left only one alternative. It was to traverse the south-east flank. Emil went to patrol and reported this was practicable. But Amatter who was following him thought it was too exposed and will cost too much time for a caravan of seven. We all knew Emil so well that even though he says 'Es geht schön,' that may not mean that it is all right for us all. As an exceptional human being, he, like a chamois, could climb everywhere. After some discussion we decided not to force this traverse, to the great disappointment of Emil.

So the retreat began. It was a miserable one. We lost much time in searching the way and, moreover, the rock was no more so dry as before. In the disheartening mist and dusk we had to descend this slippery face and, afterwards, had to swim in the bush, often falling into the pitfall, until, at last, we reached to the foot-path, which led us to Alpiglen.

Long and good sleep and also the fresh milk from the alp had some soothing effect upon us. We got back our energy and cheerfulness miraculously.

On this day (September 23), our caravan removed its camp from Alpiglen to Mittellegi hut, and on the next morning we climbed over the east ridge of Eiger. Rock was almost free from snow and ice. Wearing rubber-soled shoes, up we went. It was a magnificent climb. Autumn sky was as clear as anything, besides, there were all the four who were the first to climb this ridge. Every now and then I tried to imagine myself hanging on the edge of the ridge without any help of fixed rope. But I had to acknowledge that even though there were nothing like this—if so, I will never dream of coming

up here—it will be impossible to understand what their first ascent was like. To climb with a consciousness of having been done before is, in itself, so totally different from that without it. All the time while I was on the ridge, I never ceased to admire those 'quatre ânes' but, at the same time, I was feeling so sorry for them, that this poor follower will never be able to appreciate their performance fully and properly. We descended to Eigergletscher. This was the last fine day in the season of the year 1926.

In the summer of 1927 I came back to the mountain once more, but not accompanying Mr. Watanabe and Maki, who were gone back home already, but together with Uramatsu, Emil and Brawand who were waiting for us. And, of course, the mountain did not disappear in the meantime. So everything was all right, except the weather.

We thought first thing to be done is to solve the problem which we left reluctantly unsolved last year.

This time we have chosen Alpiglen for our starting point. Leaving the hotel at 3.15 on August 6, we gained the ridge at 7.30 and reached the gap, the battlefield of last year, at 10 o'clock. Then we opened our attack. We prepared plenty of nail and piton as we were to force our way straight forward. We spent between two and three hours in boring into the rock to make the first 10 metres comparatively tame. But we have another 30 metres to overcome. Belaying his rope over the highest nail Brawand slowly swung himself over the edge to the south-east face, and so was lost from our sight, for how long, we do not remember. At least for one hour we were waiting below, not knowing what was happening on the other side of the edge. But at last there came a voice, from the top, opposite to us. Then we saw the head of 'Giraffe.' He had climbed up exceedingly difficult and exposed gully and had reached to the ridge. For the following two hours we were still engaged on this some 40 metres. One by one we had to go. So, Emil followed the route of the first. But we two were to climb directly upwards over the face by the aid of the rope thrown from above. Reason for this *coup d'état* was that the weather began to change quickly and we could not waste a second. So I had no choice but to accept the order and to climb the slightly overhanging face. Almost desperately I started. It was really an exhausting work. First ten metres made me pessimistic already. But I could not come back because I could not shout and explain my intention to the people above and because the English rope was not so negotiable as a rubber string. On the nail I hanged

awhile to recover breath and strength. Then I started again, departing my last base pathetically.

Like everything unorthodox it was a task very hard. But as it was started it has got to be finished. So I struggled on. The *verdammte Nase* resisted as I expected. For a moment I had to go without any hold but my rope. I saw the crevassed Kalli Firn thousand feet below and was so glad that I had the celebrated Frost's rope. When the nose was over everything has changed. I paused for a few seconds, knowing that I am again on the ridge. The rest of the climb was no more difficult and I joined Emil and Brawand soon. At 4 o'clock we all stood on the ridge. We were tired and liked to have some rest before we start again. We thought it was a privilege for those who now stood on the spot where they longed to reach for so long. But the weather was not generous. We had to proceed because of the threatening *Föhn* and were already caught in a storm before we left Hörnli-ridge behind us. For one hour we took shelter under a rock, from where we could see the hut standing on the ridge. But it was not at all so near as I expected. There was a long ridge between the hut and our rock. The weather seemed getting worse and the night was coming up from the valley. So, we had to start. And when we rushed into the hut two hours later (7.40 P.M.) we were really in a miserable condition, thoroughly wet through. We took off everything wet and wrapped up ourselves in the dry blankets, like African chiefs.

The storm was getting so strong that we had some trouble in keeping our fire burning in the stove; still we felt so happy while we were looking at the lightning through our tiny window, not only because we knew that we are safe here in this hut but also because we knew that we have done what we were thinking of for so long a time. We had a small meal for we had little appetite and soon went to sleep after saying 'gute Nacht' to Maki's portrait which hangs above the entrance.

#### REFERENCES.

(1) '山行' ('San-Ko')—Song of the Mountain—by Y. Maki, which contains narrative of the first ascent of 1921.

(2) *Die Alpen*, vol. iv, No. 4. 'Der Eiger,' by Samuel Brawand. Description of both the first ascents of Mittellegi arête and Hörnli.

(3) *Chronik der Wengernalp- und Jungfraubahn*, No. 4, Sept. 13, 1925, contains 'Mittellegi: Der Kampf um den Grat,' B. Tännler; 'Die Erstbesteigung,' S. Brawand; 'Hüttenbau,' B. Tännler.

(4) Last No. of 'A.J.' and vol. 35, 324-6; and others.

## THE S.W. ARÊTE OF THE WETTERHORN.

By SAMITARO URAMATSU.

THE morning was dull. The Lake Thun was flat under the overcasted sky. The Interlaken express was passing by Spiez. A passenger was eagerly looking at the corner of the sky where those snow-clad mountains ought to be seen, though he knew well it was a vain hope. It was his first time to come to Switzerland. How long he had been wishing to see the Alps! Now his long-cherished ambition was going to be realized. The cloud was very thick, but he did not give up his hope that he might be able to have a glance at a snow peak high up in the sky. When he arrived at Grindelwald, even the rain was pouring. He could see nothing but hotel porters, rows of hotels and mist. He followed mutely after a porter in the cold rain. He was I. And it was the beginning of August 1926.

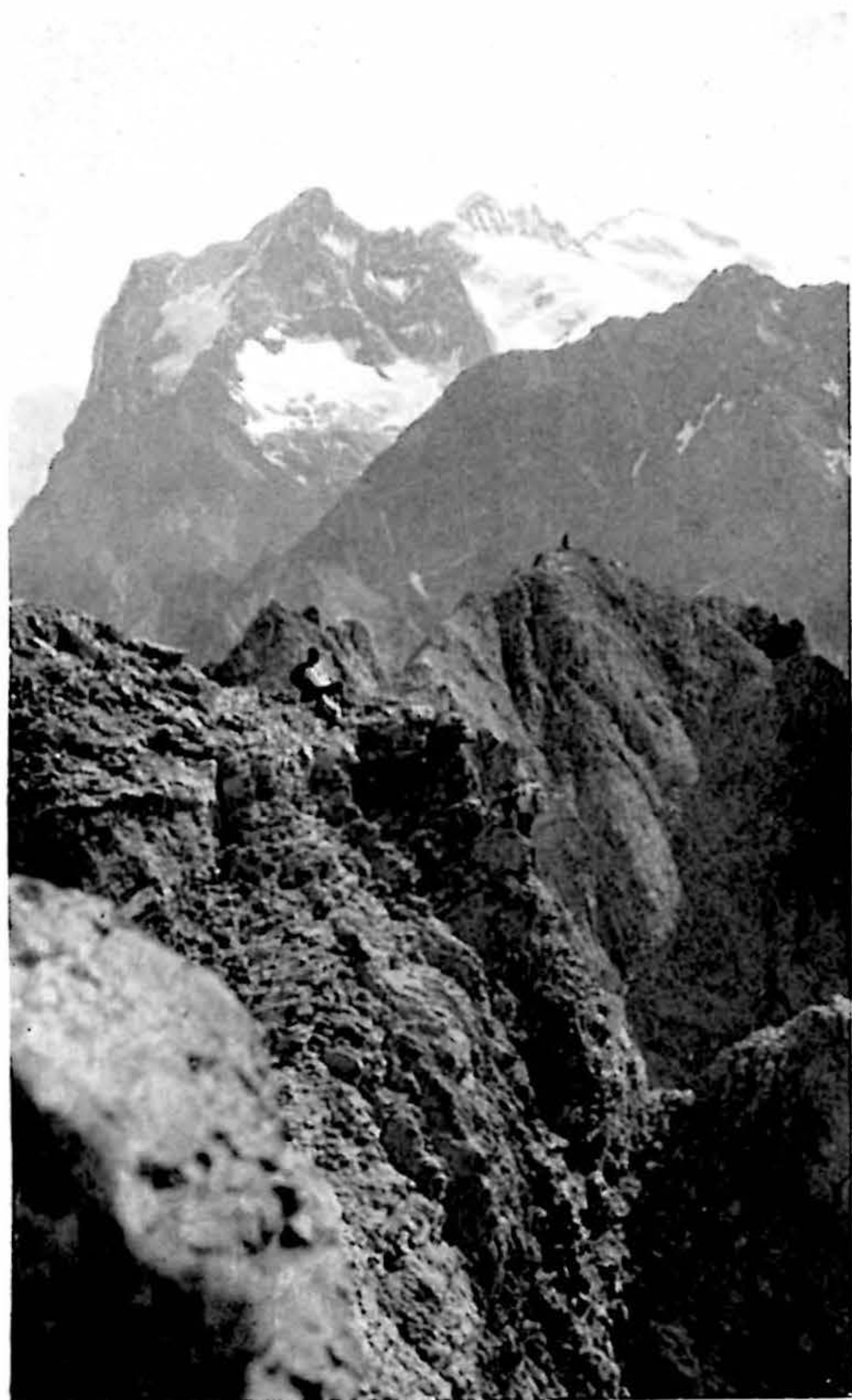
Next morning, when I opened the window shutter, the bright sunshine flooded into my room. And there a beautiful mountain! I could not believe my eyes. Never I could imagine such a colour, such a massiveness. It surpassed all the expectation of a mountaineer whose experience was only limited among the Japanese hills. The sky was clear and the lines of the mountain were sharp after the rain. Whiteness of the fresh snow laid on the mountain-side looked soft against the deep blue of the sky. If I had not been in the hotel room, I should have jumped up with overjoy. I looked at the map and found the name of that mountain was the Wetterhorn.

One afternoon later of the season, I was sitting on the hillside near Kleine Scheidegg after coming down from the top of Eiger. Watching at the slow movement of an electric train, listening to the jingling of cow-bells, the morning's hard work was making me impossible to resist sleepiness. Suddenly my eyes were arrested. I saw a mysterious colour in the blue sky just behind the dark cliff of the Wetterhorn which was forming a powerful line like a cataract dashing down to Grosse Scheidegg. There was something in it which made one uneasy until one would grasp the very rock of the mountain. I renewed my impression of the Wetterhorn. I watched the mountain intently. I climbed the mountain by Mr. Wills's



Photo, W. Weston.

WETTERHORN and S.W. Arête  
(from Summit of MITTELHORN).



Photo, S. Uramatsu.  
HOERNLI and WETTERHORN.



HOERNLI, S.E. slope of ridge.  
Brawand leading.

classical route. After a few other climbings, my first season in the Alps was over.

January 1927 I was in Grindelwald again. I was waiting there for the weather to make a winter excursion to the Finsteraarhorn. One day my guide, Emil Steuri, suggested me a plan to try an ascent on the S.W. arête of the Wetterhorn while we were talking about that mountain. It was the arête which was once tried by Messrs. Claude Wilson, J. H. Wicks and E. H. F. Bradby on July 5, 1902. So it was written in the Coolidge's *Climbers' Guide*.

Next summer I crossed the channel to Switzerland with my friend Matsukata. The weather of that summer was not favourable at all. Our programme must have been always altered. We came back to Grindelwald in the beginning of September after we had spent much longer time in Dauphiné, Chamonix and Wallis than we had have expected. We were fit and everything was ready. Only a fine weather wanted. The weather was promising on the 10th of that month. So we started for the Gleckstein hut. Next morning we were climbing up the Hühnergutz Glacier, but the doubtful weather turned into a storm as usual. The numberless troops of dark clouds which spread over the western sky were running over the needle peak of Eiger and dashing towards us with a great speed. We were driven back. But the mind bound with a hope was never at rest. We were watching at the mountain with a faint gleam of hope. Every day snow was coming lower and lower on the mountain-side. At last we bid farewell to the mountain on the day when a report of Gemsjaeger's gun was echoing in the autumn valley.

Next August I was in Grindelwald again, but alone, as Matsukata had gone back to Japan. I spent two weeks for training by climbing several peaks around there. On the 23rd we were again at the Gleckstein hut. The evening was calm. I was watching at the twinkling lights of Grindelwald. The gorgeous evening glow just faded away from the top of the Wetterhorn when I turned back to the hut.

Four o'clock in the morning we stepped out into the still darkness. Stars were big and sharp. Three lanterns ahead of us were steadily going up on the Krinne Glacier. We hurried up towards the foot of the S.W. arête. When we stood on the Hühnergutz Glacier, a bright morning was just dawning. Looking backwards we could see Eiger and Mönch fully bathed in the morning glow. Grindelwald was still dim under the morning mist.

We took our route to the foot of the big tower which was clearly visible from Grindelwald. *Verglas* which covered the lower part of the slope gave us the first serious task of the day. Then we were on the dry rock, but very loose. Cautious steps carried us up to the arête. The second breakfast was opened. A pebble hissing down from the higher cliff was only a disturber of this peaceful moment. The morning sunshine coloured the edge of the higher part of the arête. It looked warm and gay as we sat on the chilly N. side of the mountain. I wished to be there as quick as possible.

A fresh start after the breakfast brought us easily to the gap between the big tower and the continuation of arête. A small crack on the surface of the rock gave us a good foothold to traverse to the other side of the arête. Next moment we were in the full sunshine. Looking downwards, I realized that there was nothing but the air between the foothold and the Krinne Glacier. It was a very exposed bit. Sound rocks, plenty of hand-holds and warm sunshine made us happy.

Meanwhile we were faced with a steep rock with a smooth surface which was higher than 20 ft. Steuri, standing on the shoulders of Brawand, tried his best. But it was hardly possible. At last, with the aid of an iron piton, he jumped up from Brawand's shoulders. His left hand scarcely reached a hold. He climbed it up with a beautiful balance. Then we followed an easy narrow crest until it was closed on three sides by a huge gendarme. This gendarme was our problem since we had made the plan of this climb. There was a shallow chimney in the right wing. Brawand went first to examine it. But it was impossible even to reach the tail of it. He found another chimney which was hidden from us, as it was facing to the N. He thought it might be climbable, so we tried it. It was packed with loose stones and snow. While I was struggling inside the cold chimney, a joyful jodeling came upon me. There were a blue sky and Brawand's face at the top of the chimney. Now our problem was solved. After a short climbing on the loose rocks we got the top of the gendarme.

Since the breakfast we sat on the rock for the first time. We lighted our pipes. I felt my thought was melting away into the endless Alpine sky. The valley of Grindelwald was flooded with the midday light. Eiger, Mönch and Schreckhorn were sleeping under the blue sky. I was happy to be a mountaineer. A distant voice came to us like a breeze. Down



Photos, S. Uramatsu.

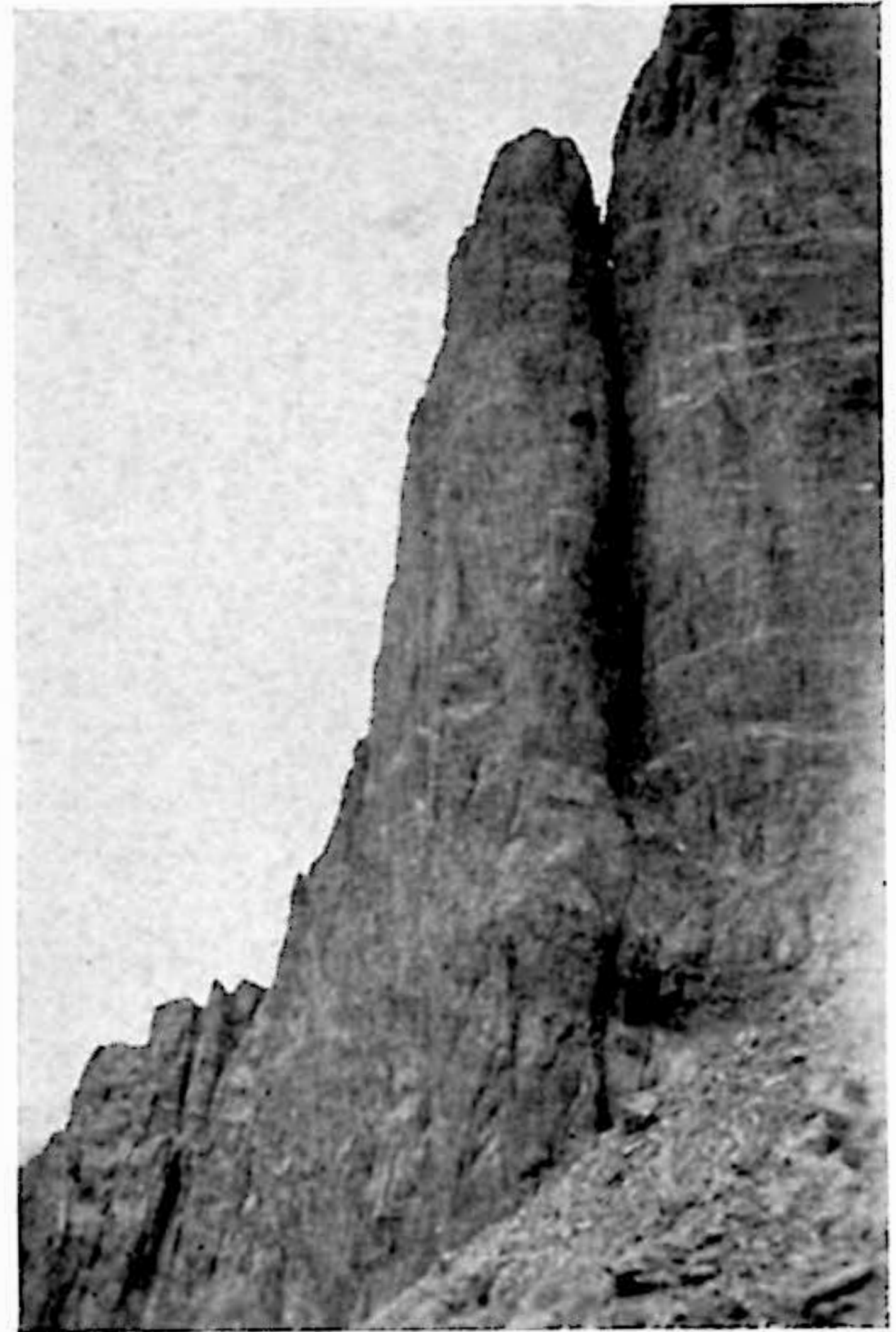
Left Wing of the GENDARME.



S.W. Arête from KRINNE Glacier.



Photos, S. Uramatsu.  
Descending the GENDARME.



The "Big Tower."

in the couloir there we found a party coming down from the summit. We jodeled down to them in response.

The final peak stood beautifully and solemnly like an Italian dome. There was a short ridge between us. When we started for the last task of the day, I felt as if I were waiting for the 'finale' of a great symphony just to begin. The sound of falling ice crashed by the ice-axe was quite refreshing to the tired body. The final slope was not difficult at all. Soon we were on the snow. And then the very summit was under us. There we met with a party which came up by the N.W. arête. Thus the Wetterhorn was climbed from three sides on the same day. It was one o'clock in the afternoon. I sat on my rucksack. The stillness of mountain came back to me. The gleam of the Lake Lucerne was peaceful and the meadow of Grindelwald was as remote as a dream. I was called back to myself as Steuri asked me which route should we take to climb down. We saw dark clouds gathering over the mountains of Wallis. So we took the ordinary route for our descent. After a nice cup of tea at Steuri's restaurant, Hotel Wetterhorn, I was obliged to sit on a cab by his kindness, though I was reluctant. Steuri's son sat on the driver's seat and the cab rattled down the road. I was quite uneasy, for it was my first experience to pass through that road like a Thomas Cook sight-seer.

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#### THE ALPINE CLUB PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION, 1929.

THE Exhibition held in December 1929 totalled some 200 photographs and much of the work attained a really high standard. An Exhibition of this nature is intended primarily for climbers and mountain-lovers, while probably some personal experience of mountaineering is essential for the fullest enjoyment of photographs of the glacier world and the high snow-fields.

Curious to see how our Exhibition would appeal to the uninitiated, we invited a friend, a skilled photographer but no mountaineer, to go round the gallery with us. His comments were interesting and suggestive. Sub-alpine studies moved him often to admiration, and he displayed enthusiasm over many of the pictures taken from the middle zone of pasturage and footpath. But when we got him fairly above the snow-line and among the unfamiliar scenery of the summits he