# GLACIER EXPLORATION AND NEW ASCENTS IN NORWAY IN 1896.

By WILLIAM CECIL SLINGSBY.

Slowly but surely the innermost recesses of the huge ice and snow-capped *fjelde* of central Norway are being revealed to those lovers of wild nature whose enthusiasm nerves them to endure the fatigues and discomforts which must of necessity be overcome when wandering for several days amongst the solemn solitudes of so weird a land. The Justedals-bræ, which, only a few years ago, was considered to offer so many terrors to the few persons who wished to cross from east to west, or *vice versâ*, is now annually traversed in many directions by numerous tourists, some of whom, having absolutely no knowledge of mountaineering, run very much greater risks than they are aware of, as their guides, with some notable exceptions, have not yet mastered the elements of snow craft. Nearly, but not quite all, of the glacier arms radiating from this great snow field have been, let us say, discovered. The glaciers of Gjegnalund and Aalfoten-bræ * have been annexed by mountaineers and turned into a playground. The Spörteg-bræ, east of Justedal, has also been crossed and recrossed.

A little further east again, there is a wild *terrain* where there are about a hundred square miles of glaciers; amongst these the Harbards-bræ and one or two others have been crossed by a few Norsk and English travellers; but until last year no one had had the hardihood to traverse them from end to end and to climb the wild, ice-capped Hestbræpigger, whose thick coping of ice, glistening in the noonday sun, has evoked the admiration of thousands of travellers on their way between Rödsheim and Skjolden. So far back as the year 1872 I resolved to explore this grand icy mountain, but now, honestly, I feel glad that I have not done so, because the Hestbræpigger have been conquered by a lady, and, what is better still, by a Norsk lady, Fröken Therese Bertheau, who, in the year 1894, made the first lady's ascent of Skagastölstind. As her very severe but most successful expedition of last summer deserves to be recounted in the 'Alpine Journal' I send you, with Fröken Bertheau's leave, her own account, which she sent to me. The plan of starting late in the mornings and of walking through the nights, good or bad, was arranged by her guide, but, apparently, some unnecessary discomforts seem to have been met with by changing night into day.

'On August 3 Dr. Arentz, Thorgeir Sulheim, and I [Fröken Therese Bertheau] started from Skjolden at 9 A.M. in very fine weather. We walked up the Mörkrisdal as far as Dalen sæter, where we took to the right to get on to the plateau where Svajdals sæter lies, 3,000 ft. above sea level. It is now in ruins, but is most picturesquely situated, with a grand view of the

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Spörteg-bræ. Here we had our dinner at 3 P.M., beside an eloquent little brook, and after two hours' rest we set off again northwards, till we came to where the Gravdal hills separate the Svajdals-bræ from the Harbards-bræ, about 4,500 ft. above the sea. Here we took an hour's rest and had supper. After that we went down into the valley of Gravdal and on to the Harbards-bræ, which we reached at 9.30 P.M. We had a little step-cutting to get upon the glacier, but after that did not meet with any difficulties except in avoiding the crevasses, which kept us awake. A cold wind blew in the valley, but, as there was none on the glacier, we were able to enjoy the beautiful panorama that now presented itself to our enchanted eyes. It was simply magnificent, a marvel of beauty, a sight that made me feel miserable and blissful at the same time, and sent a strange thrill through me. Above us was a clear cold sky with a thin moon; to the S. the gigantic Horungtinder, which looked like formidable ghosts in the last light of the fading day; to the S.E. the fantastic Smörstabtinder, and to the N. and N.E. Tverdalskirken, Tundradalskirken, Haalaatinder, and Hestbræpigger. It was a grand sight and one never to be forgotten.

'We now crossed the Harbard glacier from the S. to the N., which had never been done before, though Englishmen and Captain Morgenstierne have crossed it in other directions. It was most interesting. We had intended to climb Tverdalskirken in the morning, in order to see the sun rise; but when, at 3.30 A.M., we got to the foot of it, the mist came dancing thickly round us, so to keep warm we trudged about for several hours till at last we made up our minds to climb the mountain after all. The ascent was very easy up good rocks, and it took us only three-quarters of an hour to reach the top. Thick fog still surrounded us. We got to the top at 7.30 A.M. This mountain had been climbed before.

'On our further march northwards we fell in with some tremendous crevasses; some of them seemed big enough to swallow whole cathedrals, and it took some time to turn them. We passed between Tverdalskirken and Tundradalskirken, went down to Sota tarn, and reached Sota sæter at 11.30 A.M. on August 4.

'Sota sæter is a charming place on the Lia lake. Here we spent a very pleasant day and got a good night's rest, which I was in sore need of, as I had not slept since we left Skjolden. The two others had slept a little on the top of the mountain.

'Next day we started at 9 A.M. in a south-easterly direction, went down into Tundradal, crossed the river, and got to the plateau on the other side where the Haalaa-bræ begins. We reached the edge of this glacier at 3.30 P.M., and half an hour later put on the rope. The Haalaa-bræ is the most crevassed glacier I have ever seen. Our first object was to climb the eastern Haalaatind. It took us 2½ hrs. to get to the foot, during which time we had to cross at least a hundred crevasses. The peak was easy and it only took us half an hour to climb it from the glacier. We built a cairn and found no traces of any former visit. My companions gave the peak

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the name of Tussetind, as an abbreviation of my own name Therese. Tusse or Turse is the Norsk for goblin or sprite.

'Tussetind is about 6,700 ft. high. The view was very grand. We descended by an easy arête on the E. side, and at 8 P.M. we reached a col below. We had now another night's walk before we could reach Höidals sæter, on the shores of Höidals lake. We passed to the E. of the big lakes at the mouth of Midtdal, and had a troublesome walk over some very vicious rocks, which did their best to irritate us in the dark of night, in which effort they did not, however, succeed. At daybreak on August 6 we waded a river coming from the Hestbræ tjern, and at 4 A.M. reached Höidal sæter, where the Doctor and Sulheim slept for 6 hours.

'At 11.30 A.M. we set off for the Hestbræpigger. We went due N., and at 4.40 P.M. reached the glacier, where we found very few crevasses. Two hours' walk over the glacier brought us to the foot of the western peak of the Hestbræpigger. We climbed it by a very narrow western ridge in 35 min. and built our cairn on the top. This peak is 6,895 ft. high, and the Doctor gave it the name of Sulheimspiggen, in honour of our dauntless companion and guide.

'Our next goal was Nörstedals sæter by way of the Midtdal, a route which proved to be much longer than it had promised to be when we were on the top of Sulheimspiggen.

'We left the top at 8.30 P.M., and at 11.30 it was pitch dark, and it seemed quite hopeless to proceed any further. Just then a capital idea struck Sulheim. He threw himself down on the ground and began to grope about in a most perplexing manner. Suddenly he struck a match and in a minute had made a blazing fire of reindeer moss, which the Doctor kept burning for 4 hrs. It burned with long, narrow, bluish flames, which gave out a beautiful light and much warmth, and which looked most picturesque in the weird surroundings. After a while Sulheim was snoring, and for about half an hour I too slept soundly, which much refreshed me.

'At 7 A.M. we reached Nörstedals sæter, just as some rain-drops were beginning to fall, the first we had met with during the whole expedition. Here we had some 5 hrs.' sleep, and dinner at 2 P.M., after which we went down the Fortundal and reached Fortun at 10 P.M., very content with our 5 days' expedition.'

## THE PROPOSED JUNGFRAU RAILWAY.

WE have received a pamphlet or prospectus bearing this title enclosed in a portfolio with a number of well-executed maps and plans, and a fine panorama of the view from the summit of the Jungfrau. The following extract (p. 10) gives some details as to the route proposed to be followed:—

'The Scheidegg station of the Wengern Alp Railway, 2,060 m. above sea level, is supposed to be the starting point of the new line. From here the Jungfrau Railway will run on the western slope of the Fallbodenhubel, making straight for the foot of the Eiger

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