ALPINE NOTES.

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THE ALPINE HISTORY OF THE FINSTERAARHORN.—In Mr. Compton's paper on the ascent of the Finsteraarhorn by the S.E. arête (November 'Alpine Journal') I find a number of mistakes as to matters of fact relating to the Alpine history of that peak, and I desire to correct them in order to avoid confusion in the future.

1. On p. 305 Mr. Compton throws out the suggestion that the Meyer party in 1812 climbed the E. arête. But he has clearly overlooked the fact that the line showing their route on the map annexed to their 1813 pamphlet makes them reach the *S.E.* arête high up (not the E. arête, also shown thereon) while the text of their narrative, whether in its 1813 or its 1852 dress, confirms the accuracy of this line. Their route on the way up from the Studerfirn and down to the Fiescher glacier is accurately stated in my 'Climbers' Guide to the Bernese Oberland,' vol. ii. p. 33, while the small square inserted on the map leaves no doubt that they started from a bivouac on the Gemslücke, and returned to it the same evening.

2. On pp. 305 and 308 Mr. Compton states quite positively that in 1898 the four Meiringen guides climbed the E. arête, basing this statement on the narrative they wrote in the Oberaarjoch Club Hut book, and referring to 'Alpine Journal,' xx. p. 142. Mr. Compton, however, is completely in error on this matter, as the four guides simply mounted from the Studerfirn to the S.E. arête, never touching the E. arête at all. I looked into the matter before making this assertion in my book (pp. 34–5) issued in 1904, and since the publication of Mr. Compton's article have again examined the question.

Dr. Andreas Fischer very kindly requested Melchior Kohler (one of the four guides of 1898, and now *guide chef* at Meiringen) to address to me a letter (dated January 7, 1907), in which he describes the 1898 route as follows (I translate pretty literally): from the Oberaarjoch Club Hut 'we went over the Studerfirn towards (*gegen*) the Ober Studerjoch for 1 or 1½ hour. Then we turned to the left towards the arête that mounts from the Gemslücke or Rothhornsattel to the top of the Finsteraarhorn. Our first intention was to mount, just to the left hand of the small glacier (*Gletscherlein*) which descends from the arête to join the Studerfirn, by a rock rib, but owing to the danger of falling stones we had to bear more to the left in order, by a pretty steep rock rib,

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to gain the arête. From this point we climbed over several towers on the arête before gaining the final steep cliff (*Stutz*) of the Finsteraarhorn. The best and shortest line of ascent from the Studerfirn to the arête seems to me to be by the rocks just to the left hand of the small glacier. One of my comrades tells me that Herr Bodenstein, with the guides Stähli and Tännler, in the summer of 1905, made use of those rocks in order to mount from the Studerfirn to the S.E. arête, and it is said that they offer pretty good going.' This letter by one of the 1898 men finally settles the question of the arête which they climbed—it was the main S.E. arête (descending to the Gemslücke), and *not* the E. (strictly speaking E.S.E.) arête (falling towards the Ober Studerjoch).

By the courtesy of Dr. H. Dübi I give here the translation of a letter addressed to him (in answer to his inquiry) under date of December 24, 1906, by Alexander Tännler, a well-known Meiringen guide, who has 'traversed' the peak on four occasions: 'in reply to your query I beg to inform you that the expedition in question consisted of the guides Heinrich Rieder, Melchior Kohler, Kaspar Kohler, and Albert Huggler, and that they took the route from the Studerjoch, to the left of the small glacier, up the rocks to the arête. The same route had been taken in July of the same year (therefore previously) as far as the arête by the guides Joh. Moor, Heinrich Fuhrer, and Melchior Kohler, with the similar object of fixing the rope, but this party was obliged to turn back, after gaining the arête, owing to a snow storm. I have myself 'traversed' the Finsteraarhorn four times, and have only been able to use (and that with difficulty) the rope on one occasion, as it was always covered by ice.' It will be noticed that Tännler uses the term 'Studerjoch' to designate what is really the 'Studerfirn,' and this is no doubt the detail in the original account of the four guides which has led Mr. Compton astray. Tännler says distinctly that the four guides mounted to the left of the 'kl. Gletscherli,' and the view given by Mr. Compton opposite p. 305 shows that this can only be that little glacier which clings to the E. slope of the S.E. arête.

When writing my book I had before me a note addressed to Dr. Dübi by Herr Albert Weber (of Berne), who, with Alexander Tännler, climbed the peak in 1899. Herr Weber states without ambiguity that he reached the 'Südgrat,' and certainly Tännler imagined himself then to be following the route taken by his comrades the year before. My book, on the basis of the above note, gives (p. 34) Herr Weber's route quite correctly.

It would thus seem to be quite certain that none of these parties ever touched the E. arête, which has probably never yet been climbed by anyone.

3. On p. 305 Mr. Compton mentions the case of a lady who 'in 1904, it was said,' spent 72 hrs. on the mountain, which she ascended by the E. face. I have now lived eleven years at Grindelwald, and have made inquiries without being able to discover anything as to this party of 1904. I am inclined to think that Mr.

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Compton is really thinking of Miss Gertrude Bell's *unsuccessful* attempt on the peak by its *N.E. face* in 1902—the party started from the Grimsel, and the whole story is narrated in No. 218, August 6–7, 1902, of the 'Bund' newspaper, a reference I give on p. 42 of my book, while mention is made of this expedition in the 'Alpine Journal,' vol. xxii. p. 322, note †.

4. On p. 307 Mr. Compton, of course unintentionally, misquotes my book. According to him I wrote: '(The 1899 party climbed from the rope [slab] to the top in 20 min.)' Now what I really wrote (p. 36) was: 'Here . . . is the fixed rope, by means of which the steep cliff is more easily scaled (in 20 min. by the English party of 1899) than formerly.'

On p. 309 Mr. Compton seems to be rather vexed with me because I considered in my book (as I still consider) that in 1899 (as again in 1905) he found the mountain in exceptionally favourable condition. My estimate of the time required from the 'minor summit' on the S.E. arête to the top of the Finsteraarhorn is 2–3 hrs., is based on the reports of various parties (I myself have never taken this route), and is not a 'record' time, but, as I state in my Preface, an 'average' time such as would be employed by average walkers under average circumstances.

In a hurried addition to his article (p. 310) Mr. Compton states that Mr. Claude Macdonald's experience of the S.E. arête (Mr. Compton says textually 'our expedition,' and so cannot refer to the final climb only) 'seems sufficiently like my own to justify me in recommending our expedition in good weather.' Mr. Compton, in order to go from the point where he struck the S.E. arête to the top, took 2¼ hrs. in 1899 and 2 hrs. in 1905. Now Mr. Macdonald in September, 1905, to cover the same ground, took (see p. 339) no less than 3 hrs. 55 min., a very considerable difference! I had the good fortune of talking over this climb with Mr. Macdonald shortly after he made it, and the impression our conversation left on my mind was that he inclined to the usual estimate of the route and not to that of Mr. Compton, as expressed in the letter which he had shortly before addressed to me.

W. A. B. Coolidge.

By the kindness of the Editor I have been permitted to see the above, and have only to add that I am glad to note the corrections of what I had taken on imperfect information. I made no allusion, however (p. 310), to Mr. Claude Macdonald's experience *of the S.E. arête*. I said, 'His experience seems,' &c. And I had mentioned (p. 307) the portion *beyond* the 'minor summit' as that 'about which there has been considerable difference of opinion.' For this portion I gave 1½ hr. as my time. Mr. Macdonald gives (p. 339) 1 hr. 55 min. when the rocks were 'a good deal glazed' and 'the fixed rope near the summit was buried in ice.' W. C. Compton.

A Winter Ascent of Piz Bernina.—Mr. W. Fowler writes, 'At midday on Thursday, January 17, I left the Hôtel Pontresina, with my wife and two guides, Andreas and Anton Rauch, for the

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Boval Hut, with the intention of climbing the Piz Bernina (13,295 feet) next day. We arrived at the Boval Hut at 5.15 P.M., having taken exactly three hours to go up the Morteratsch glacier. I left the hut with Andreas and Anton Rauch at 4 A.M. on January 18, after bidding my wife good-bye. She was able to watch our movements with a telescope most of the day. For the first three hours we advanced over the soft snow and glacier with lanterns. Just before daybreak a slight accident occurred to the younger Rauch, who was leading. He fell into a deep crevasse with no note of warning, and was only extricated after 50 minutes had passed. His presence of mind in retaining hold of his ice axe and setting about to help himself at once was most praiseworthy and lessened the danger considerably. We continued at once, as time was precious, gaining the summit at 1.15. We could only remain there 15 minutes. The view was superb on all sides, the sky cloudless and the sun brilliant. We examined the Piz Roseg from the Bernina summit, as I also thought of attempting this some day later, but its sides were so steep and slippery with smooth ice that my guides did not care about it. We effected the descent quickly, being back in the hut at 5.40 P.M.: 4½ hours from Berninagipfel to Bovalhütte. I have only to add that I found the ascent of the Piz Bernina in winter quite as enjoyable and very little colder, though more toilsome and dangerous, than the ascents of, *e.g.*, the Finsteraarhorn, Wetterhorn, and Gspaltenhorn, which I climbed last September.'

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE WATKIN ANEROID IN MOUNTAIN MEASUREMENTS. (CONCLUSION.)

To the Editor of the ALPINE JOURNAL.

SIR,—May I be permitted to reply once again to the renewed criticisms contained in the rejoinder by Mr. Freshfield in the November 'Alpine Journal,' p. 347.

Mr. Freshfield asserts that I persist 'in the attempt to represent Mr. Graham's heights as doubtful altitudes.' I answer, Mr. Freshfield's zeal in behalf of his contention for Mr. Graham leads him to persist in misinterpreting the application of my remarks. Will he explain how one can persist in an attempt which has not been made? The only two altitudes ascribed to Mr. Graham which I have characterised as doubtful, or even mentioned (see pages 83 and 345), are those attained on A. 22 and Dunagiri, as quoted by Professor Collie, the summits of which peaks, as I understand the quotation, were not reached. May I ask Mr. Freshfield to cite any other ascents by Mr. Graham to which I refer as being of doubtful altitude?

He also says, 'In the large majority of that climber's ascents they

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