

VUE DU GLACIER SUPERIEUR DU GRINDELWALD & DU MONT WETTERHORN

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The Scheidegg Wetterhorn by the N.W. Face.

By N. S. FINZI.

(Read before the Alpine Club, December 9, 1929.)

MOST of us know and have admired the magnificent precipice of the Wetterhorn, one of the glories of Grindelwald. How many of us have cherished the desire to climb it? How many have actually investigated it?

I do not know for certain when the idea of climbing this wall first came to me, but I believe it was in 1911. The next time that I was in Grindelwald, in 1919, I know that vague ideas about it began to take shape and I determined that on becoming a more practised climber I would have a look at it.

The peak crowning the precipice has been variously known as the 'Grindelwald Dru,' the Scheidegg Wetterhorn, or simply as 'Point 3414 m.' The name Scheidegg Wetterhorn was given to it by Coolidge in the *Climbers' Guide*, Bernese Oberland, Vol. II, in preference to the earlier name, and appears on the Siegfried map. It is a rather cumbrous name, but 'Scheidegghorn' would hardly indicate that it is part of the Wetterhorn. Anyhow, the face must be obviously the 'Scheideggwand.' The peak was first climbed by Mr. G. A. Hasler with Christian Jossi, senr., and Peter Bernet on May 13, 1901, by way of the Krinnefirn and the Hühnergutz Glacier, after several unsuccessful attempts. Hasler describes a very difficult ascent on to the final ridge by means of a pole secured to the rock by iron nails and ropes ('A.J.' **20,** 466–468). We did not think

that, at the present time, this route would present any great difficulty, but it has probably changed considerably since 1901, and conditions are so different in May. In 1919 I saw the largest rock avalanche I have ever seen come down this side of the mountain, and this may have altered the whole configuration.

In 1922 I first had Franz Josef Biner as guide and found that he was keen on doing new climbs. In the following year, 1923, my time with him was divided into two parts. In the first we climbed in the Dolomites and then went to the Bregaglia, making the first ascent of the Ago del Torrone[1] (' A.J.' **36,** 60). After this we separated for about a fortnight : Franz to go to the Dauphiné with another client, and I to join W. M. Roberts and Culverwell for some guideless climbing. We arranged to rejoin in the Bernese Oberland and study the face of the Wetterhorn.

The 1923 Attempt.—I got to the Oberland first and started to take photographs and spy out the land with field-glasses and telescope. I was staying at Wengen and so I first of all had a look at it from the Männlichen. It looks fine from there, but does not make much of a picture when photographed. However, I discovered that the sun only begins to shine on the wall at all at about 3.30 P.M. and does not get well on to it until much later. When the sun strikes the wall it shows up a large tower with a double point. I could not make out whether it was detached from the wall or whether there were one or two towers. It proved eventually to be *one* tower distinct from the wall. It seemed that if we could attain the foot of this tower we might find a chimney that would help us.

The next investigations were from the ridge running N.W. above the Grosse Scheidegg and the lower slopes of the Schwarzhorn. We could see that there were a number of terraces, but whether we could get from one to another or could circumvent the final absolutely vertical part was not made manifest by telescope. Franz was with me on one of these investigations and formed the opinion that one could only tell if it would go when, as he expressed it, ' one had one's nose on it.' We mountaineers are often accused of hanging on by our eyebrows, or, if these fail, by our waistcoat buttons ; the use of the nose for this purpose is more unusual. Some of us might find it a more suitable weapon than others. Anyhow

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[1] Or *Ago di Cleopatra.*

we decided to have a look at the climb when the weather permitted. That year, 1923, the face was quite black, with a few patches of old snow here and there. A bad break in the weather, however, had eventually brought new snow on to it and we had to wait. When the weather at last permitted, we went up the N. face of the Jungfrau and came back by train.

The next day, about August 30, Franz Josef Biner, Roman Lagger, both of St. Niklaus, and myself went up to the Grosse Scheidegg to sleep. We started the next morning at about 4.30 with *Kletterschuhe* and food, but practically no other luggage. There exists a ridge leading to the face from the Grosse Scheidegg; the highest point of this is known as the Schlafhubel, 2038 m., but one keeps a little below it on the W. side. It takes about 35 minutes to attain the rock face, and here we put on *Kletterschuhe*. I wore a pair of boots with very deeply grooved crêpe-rubber soles, which Mr. Somervell very kindly had made specially for me. The climb started with a smooth chimney, not at all easy to an average climber such as myself, and this leads to a ledge. We followed this to the left, very slightly upwards to a large patch of old snow, which was there that year. From here there are some quite difficult chimneys on to the next ledge. Up to about this point there were marks of nailed boots, whether of chamois hunters, as the guides suggested, or of other climbers who had tried this route, I do not know. At any rate the nail marks were still there in 1929, so that they do not wear out readily, or else had been remade.

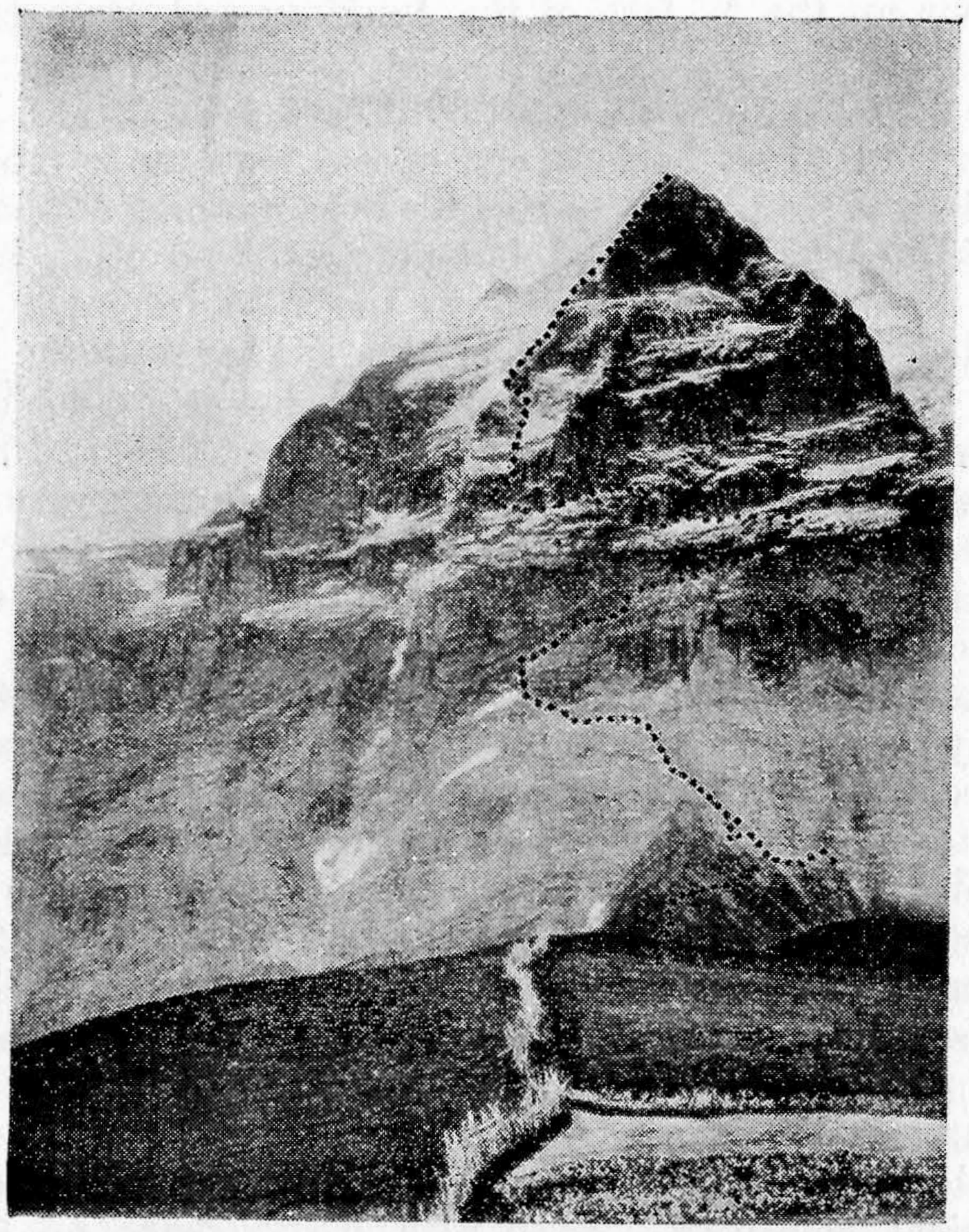
From this point the terraces slope outwards at a very uncomfortable angle, and any attempt to climb them in nailed boots is suicidal foolishness. Even with *Kletterschuhe*, no belay is possible in most places, so that if one of the party slips the others would probably fail to hold him. As all the ledges slope outwards, a fall would doubtless involve the complete destruction of the party.

The rock of the terraces [2] is unlike anything I have seen elsewhere. It is extremely hard limestone, quite smooth, almost polished, and with a slight bloom on it. It has, of course, here and there pebbles on it and occasional patches of gravelly scree. It is quite unlike the Dolomite rock in that it is so much smoother and has not the numerous small holds that

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[2] Herr Liniger describes these terraces as more nearly resembling steeply inclined slabs than ledges.—*Editor.*

the latter presents. It is also unlike the neighbouring Engelhörner, though the dissimilarity is not so great, while it is not broken up and brittle like the ordinary way up the Eiger. The chimneys, on the other hand, present the usual amenities



Photo, N. S. Finzi.]

SCHEIDEGG WETTERHORN, SHOWING 1929 ROUTE.

to cragsmen and are climbed either by violence or cunning—sometimes by both.

We climbed these terraces by a series of zigzags, interspersed by chimneys, but I have forgotten the details. At length we arrived at a flat ledge under a sheer wall of rock, which proved to be the great tower jutting out from the face. This is the only horizontal place in the whole of the terraces and is about 2000 ft. below the summit and 9500 ft. above sea-level. The weather was causing the barometer to fall, consequently the latter gave a slightly higher reading.

We did not stop here, but pressed on with rapidly worsening

weather, making our way along a terrace to the right. A few minutes later it became obvious that it was going to rain, and I insisted on a return: another half-hour would have allowed us to look round the corner if we could have got there, but, realizing the danger of these rocks becoming wet, I was quite firm about turning back. However, the guides demanded a short meal at the level place previously referred to. During this interval it began to drizzle and the whistling of a couple of pebbles from above, the only stones we heard on either this or the subsequent ascent, stirred my companions to activity. The descent was made rapidly in gradually increasing rain. By the time of our arrival at the final chimney the rocks were quite wet and the last man had to double-rope down by means of a piton driven into the rock. We returned to Grindelwald wet through.

1924.—This year I came to the Schwarzwaldalp, and, before Franz had joined me, continued my photographic and telescopic investigations. This was not difficult as the weather was atrocious, the spell of rain ceasing for one day only, but with a fall of snow to below the Grosse Scheidegg. The snow became plastered on to even the vertical faces of the rock. However, a few hours later the snow had melted enough to give me the photographs from which we were able to plan out the ascent. Subsequent study of these indicated that, from the ledge under the tower, which I shall subsequently allude to as the 'breakfast place,' we ought probably to have gone to the left (N.E.) instead of to the right (S.W.). There was one place where it seemed doubtful if we could get up—just above the extreme left of the big terrace below the tower. If this place were surmounted, we both felt certain that the remainder was possible.

When Franz arrived we started to get into training in the Engelhörner, but even these became snowed up, so we moved on to other parts. The wall of the Wetterhorn was covered with snow, and, as it only gets the late afternoon sun, takes naturally a long time to become clear.

That winter we were at Grindelwald for a few days, and I took more photographs.

1925.—We came to Rosenlaui and I had some training-climbs in the Engelhörner. Our wall, however, had much snow on it and frequent bad weather drove us away.

1926.—We were in the Chamonix district. When the weather turned fine we came over to Rosenlaui again. There was so much old snow on the face, however, that there was

no chance of its melting off during my holidays, which finished early that year.

1927.—The weather again was very bad, and my main recollection of that year was of going up to many huts and coming back, because the various climbs were impossible. However, we eventually had a fine week, so I arranged to join Robert Underhill at Grindelwald and arrived there on the evening of September 6. We started for the Grosse Scheidegg on September 7, but only got half-way up because of rain. After that it rained for several days continually, and as Underhill had to go back to America, and the face had become obviously impossible for some weeks, he left at once. When at last there was a break in the wet weather, Franz, Roman Lagger and I went up to the Gleckstein hut to have a look at Hasler's route.

The weather resumed its unpleasant methods soon after we arrived at the hut, and though we got up hourly from 3 A.M. onwards we were unable to start until 8.30. We crossed the Krinnefirn, ascended a rock wall to the S.W. ridge of the Wetterhorn, and went some way along the top of this before making a slight descent to the Hühnergutz Glacier. This was neither steep nor much crevassed, so we easily reached the next rock wall and ascended this without particular difficulty to a point quite close to the N.W. ridge which joins the main summit of the Wetterhorn (the Hasli Jungfrau) to the Scheidegg Wetterhorn. This ridge would have taken a long time to traverse as the clefts between the gendarmes are very deep.[3]

The obvious route was to descend, cross a gully and mount the next ridge constituting the skyline of our peak and its own particular W. ridge or spur. However, there was no time to do this without risk of sleeping out, so we returned. This expedition, although we did not achieve the peak, was very useful, as it showed us that the descent to the Gleckstein would not present any great difficulties.

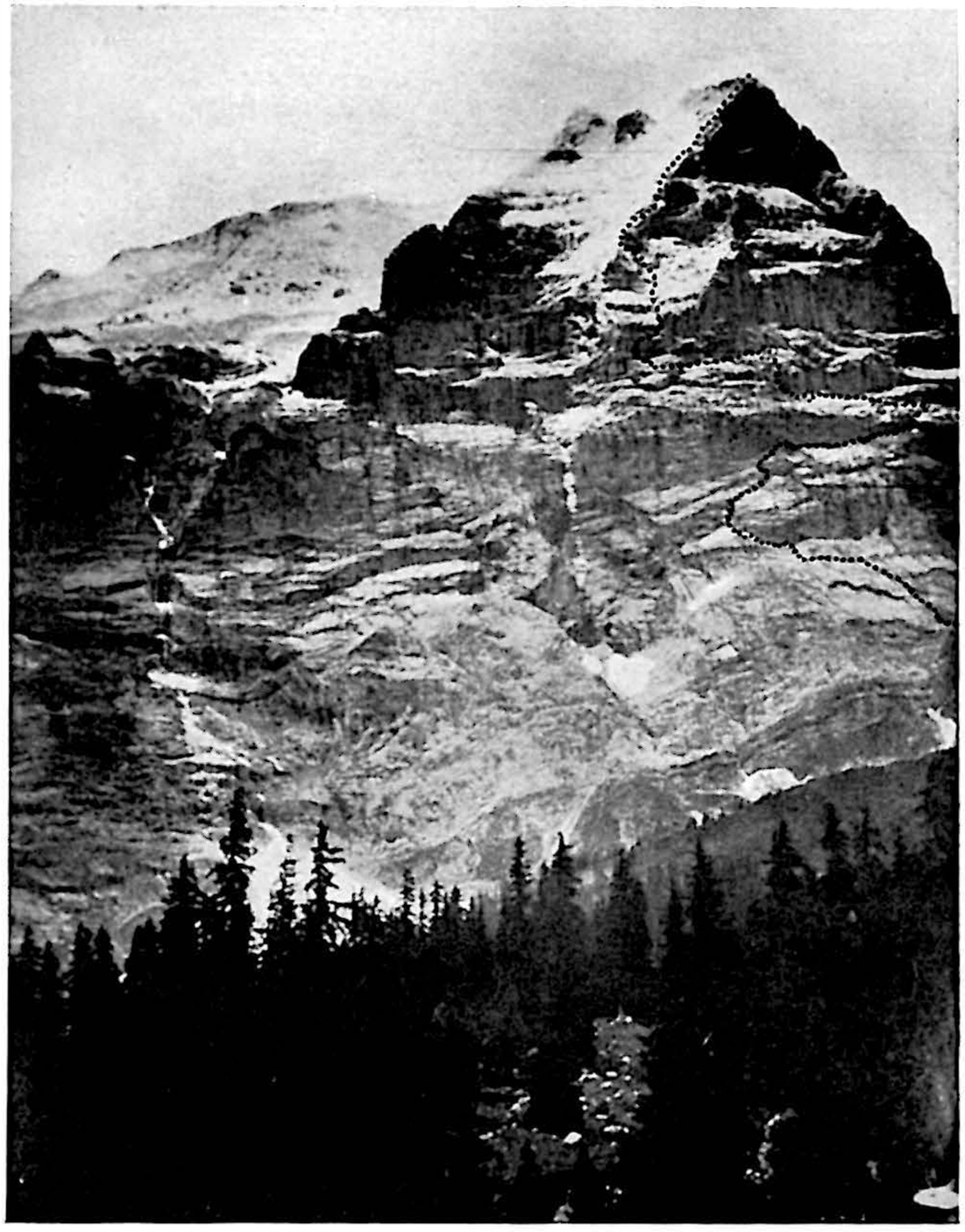
1928.—This year our wall was in the most wonderful condition and the weather was very fine. Franz and I, however, had gone to Norway, there to experience a bit of the worst summer they had had for 100 years—so they said. We greatly feared that our climb would be accomplished as there were various

[3] This ridge, or a great part of it, appears to have been traversed by Herren Amstutz and Richardet in September 1919. The alternative route up the Wetterhorn from the Hühnergutz Glacier lies more on the very steep snow or ice of the W. face; the N.W. arête is taken higher up, sometimes *close* to the summit.—*Editor.*



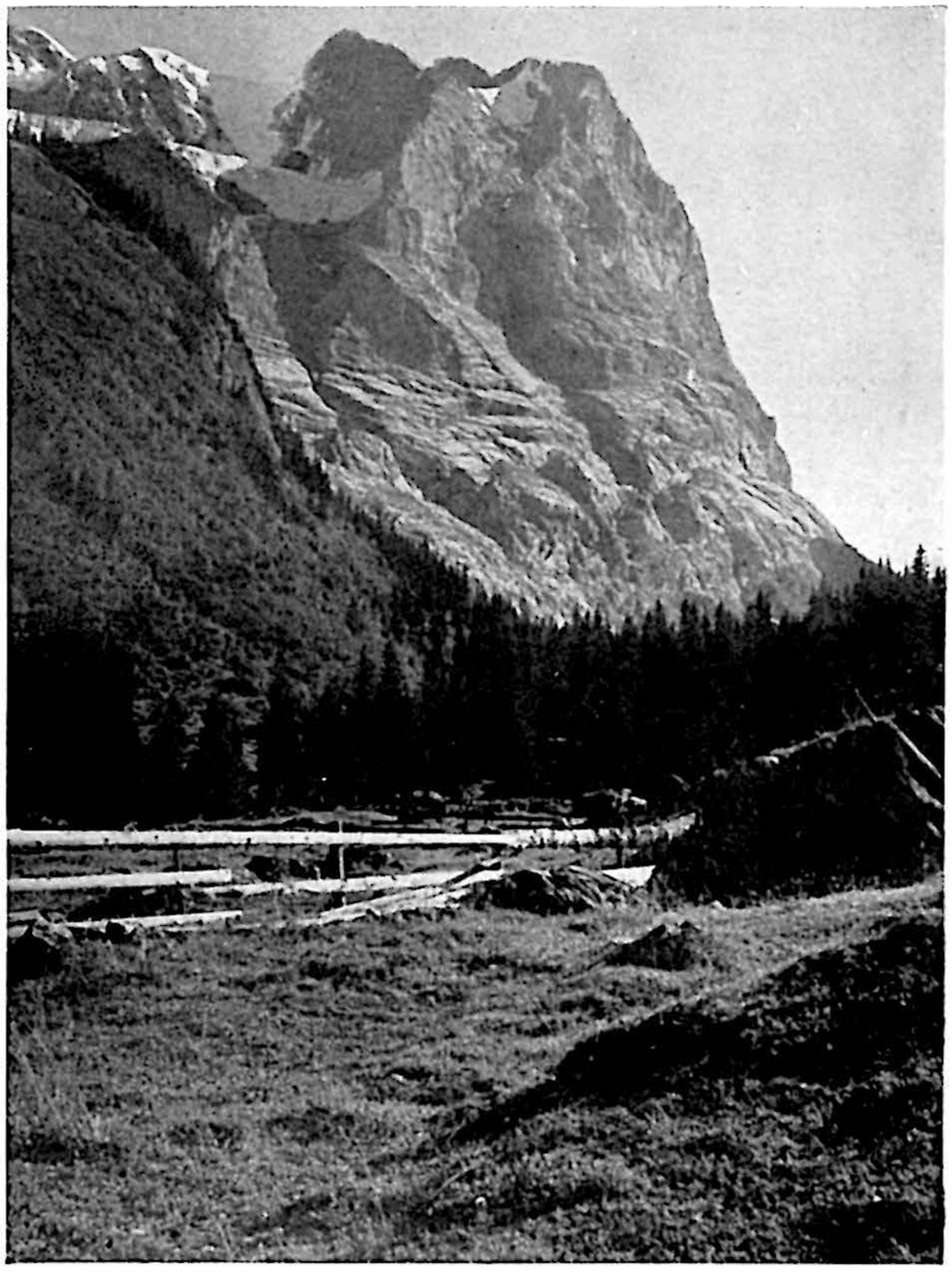
Photo, Brügger, A. G.

SCHEIDEGG WETTERHORN.
From the N.



Photo, N. S. Finzi.

The 1929 Route from above the Gr. Scheidegg.



SCHEIDEGG WETTERHORN.
From above ROSENLAUI.

parties whom we suspected of having an eye on it. When I arrived back I was told that it had been done and was therefore relieved when I heard that it was the S.W. arête of the Wetterhorn that Uramatsu had accomplished, and when Farrar, who knew of my project, sent me the outline sketch of Herren Michel, Brugger, and Töni's route, the original photograph showed more clearly than its reproduction in the JOURNAL that this expedition [4] never touched my proposed route at any point. There is in fact a deep couloir between the N.W. and the N. faces with a hanging glacier in its upper part.

1929.—We decided that the Dolomites were the best ground in which to get into training quickly, especially in the use of *Kletterschuhe*. Accordingly we started there. After 11 days, with more or less bad weather, a sudden change came on August 22, which we celebrated by an afternoon climb. Subsequently, apart from the afternoon clouds and thunderstorms, so common in the Dolomites, we had very fine weather and made good use of it. Among other excellent climbs we again did the S. wall of the Marmolata, this time more or less by the normal route: I consider this expedition to be the finest rock-climb in my experience.

We then went to Sulden, inquired for the best and most difficult climb in the district and were advised to do the *Marltgrat*, or N.E. arête of the Ortler. I mention this ridge only to warn my fellow-members against it. It is an expedition that is not technically difficult but is intensely dangerous on account of loose rocks, some of enormous size. A pebble of about the size of a football hit me on the thigh and it was only with great difficulty that I could continue. Had it been possible we should have retreated long before. It is an *absolutely* unjustifiable climb.[5]

On September 6 we left Sulden, and by means of a car to Landeck were enabled to reach Thalwil that night and Rosenlaui the following afternoon. Franz wished to go to Rosenlaui,

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[4] This expedition stopped short at the Schwarzwaldfirn and was not continued, owing to the lateness of the hour, either towards the Wetterhorn or Scheidegg Wetterhorn, the former of which had already been attained from the surface of the Schwarzwaldfirn, *A.J.* **41**, 210-11.—*Editor.*

[5] First ascent, August 22, 1889, Herren R. H. Schmitt, L. Friedmann, O. Fischer, and E. Matasek. We concur entirely with Dr. Finzi's views. The N.E. buttress of the 'Marlt' arête, the so-called *Rothböckgrat*, first ascended by the late Franz Pinggera's party on June 30, 1904, is even more dangerous.—*Editor.*

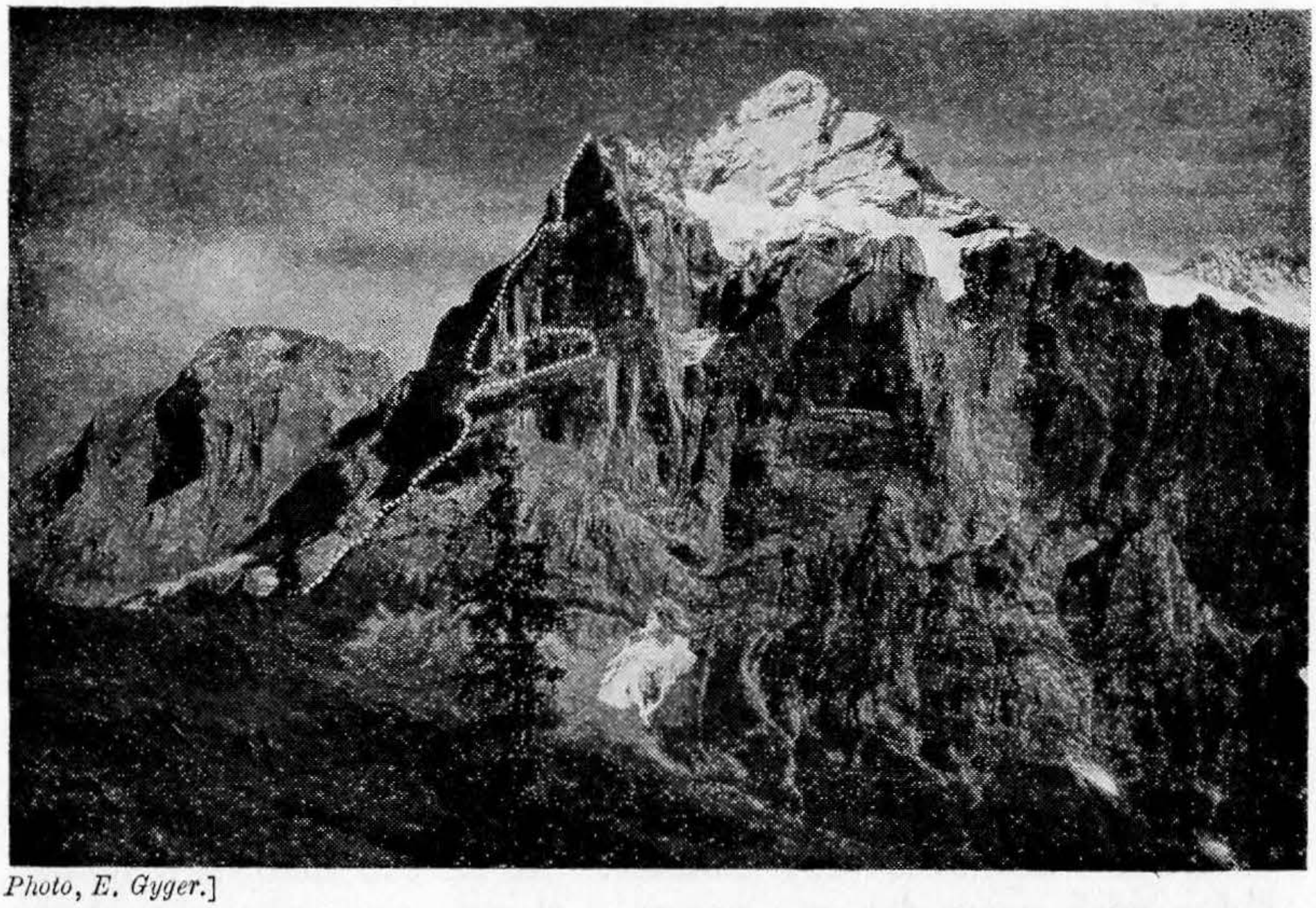
partly because he disliked the publicity of Grindelwald, where several of the guides had surmised what we were trying for, and partly because of the bad weather we had had there in the past.

My thigh was still very painful, so we spent the late afternoon of September 8 looking at the face with a telescope from above the Schwarzwaldalp, postponing the start until Monday, September 9. We wired to Josef Knubel to join us on that date. He arrived about 6.30 P.M. and we went up to the Grosse Scheidegg. That night Knubel threw out the suggestion that it might be possible to do the whole thing in *Kletterschuhe*, and on the following morning further elaborated this idea. The Hühnergutz Glacier, according to him, was practically level, and he was quite sure we could cross this, as also the Krinnefirn, in *Kletterschuhe*. At first a return by the route of ascent had been mooted, but later this was dropped and the scheme appeared in all its nakedness. I confess I disliked the idea. I knew that what appears level to a guide's feet, seems to me like the Cresta Run. However, if the others, accustomed to carry weights on their backs, were leaving their nailed boots behind, I was not taking mine either, and, my luggage being thus reduced to less than a pound, apart from food and drink, took no rucksack at all. We decided not to start until daylight and to use the lanterns, if necessary, at the other end. I did not myself consider that a bivouac was entirely impossible, but had less anxiety about the ascent than the descent on the other side.

The party consisted of Josef Knubel, Franz Josef Biner, and myself. We started from the hotel at 5.06 and proceeded along the ridge towards the Schlafhubel, skirting under this to the right and reaching the rocks in 35 minutes. From this point Franz took the lead on account of his previous knowledge of the route, continuing as leader throughout the whole climb.

The ascent, beginning with a chimney at first sloping gently, becomes steeper and steeper; it leads to a terrace, most of which slopes outwards. We followed this to the left for some distance. The patch of snow which had assisted us in 1923 was no longer there, consequently the chimneys to the next ledge were quite difficult. The terraces from this point had quite a considerable slope on them, and Knubel, not having worn *Kletterschuhe* for some time, was the least comfortable of the three of us. To me they seemed easier than my recollections of 1923 had led me to expect, but whether this was

because I was in better training or because we took a somewhat different route, I am unable to say. This is the part which makes the climb possible on certain occasions and in strictly settled weather only. When wet, these terraces become much too slippery and so dangerous that retreat or advance may become impossible. One cannot use nailed boots on them, and our experience of 1923 showed us how awkward they may be even before being thoroughly drenched. Not only must the weather be fine, but the face must be practically



Photo, E. Gyger.]

SCHEIDEGG WETTERHORN AND 1929 ROUTE FROM WALDSPITZE.

free from snow. With wet weather or melting snow comes also the danger of falling stones, and, though these would only be small, the face is so steep that they must come down at a great pace. On a fine day there is no danger from this source —once the snow has gone. The terraces slope so much that, with no possibility of any belay, the fall of one of the party would entail the death of the rest.

The terraces now lead to the right, in the main, but with a little zigzagging. Mostly these slope gently upwards, but occasionally there is a slight downwards tendency. Eventually one doubles back, and a terrace leading to a chimney which, to me, was quite difficult, landed us on the ' breakfast place,' the only level spot in the whole of this part of the mountain. This

was the point reached in 1923 and, according to barometric reading, is some 9500 ft. high. We reached it at 9.40.

The guides went off for a little exploration on their own while I unpacked the sacks. On their return they reported the difficult portion as partly overhanging and probably inaccessible. However, I was not perturbed, because I did not believe that Franz had placed sufficient reliance on the telescope to map out the route as accurately with it as I had. He trusted more to his nose! Accordingly my appetite was undisturbed from this cause, but it *was* by the cold wind just hitting our ledge. In all we spent about 35 minutes here, leaving about 10.15.

I inspected the place investigated by the guides, but as it was obviously not the one I had intended to try we went on farther, *descending* slightly until the face had a somewhat more northerly aspect—round a slight corner, in fact. Here we found two chimneys, which I had seen from below and which I recognized for two reasons: first, because we had observed that it was after 5 o'clock before the sun could reach them, and therefore they must face more north than the rest of the wall; and secondly, because the right-hand chimney contained some scooped-out patches of red rock. We took this chimney and it led easily to a small ledge.

Here occurs the doubtful point of the climb.

Up to this point I was certain we should arrive, but the next step I knew would be the crucial test—if we passed it, we had won our peak. The chimney leads vertically upwards for about 65 ft. and to me is very difficult. At its top there is a small ledge with room for one person; thence the only way that progress is possible is by an oblique traverse to the right. Standing on this ledge, Franz drove a piton [6] with great difficulty into the very hard rock and into this we inserted a *Karabiner*, which we had brought from the Dolomites. This is a slotted oval of steel with a spring catch, closing the said slot like the catch on a watch-chain. The slot enables the rope to be slipped through the *Karabiner* without unroping. The last man

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[6] This was the *only* 'artificial aid' used apart from the rope and was employed only as a safety device and not as an essential to the ascent.—*N. S. F.* [And as *such* was thoroughly justifiable. Our remarks—*A.J.* **41**, 406—referred to the objectionable modern method as practised chiefly in the Eastern Alps, of driving in a series of pitons to be used as foot and hand holds in scaling overhangs otherwise impossible of access. See 'Triglav' articles in the present number.—*Editor.*]

detaches the *Karabiner* from both rope and piton and slips it into his pocket. The traverse was extremely exposed, but otherwise not very difficult, which is fortunate, as, if one were to come off, the pendulum swing thus caused would be very disturbing! In the chimney the climber is safe, although he probably could not obtain much help if unable to climb it himself. The traverse is about 55 ft. in length and is at a diagonal angle of 45° across an absolutely vertical face. It ends in a most remarkable and large platform, in the middle of which is a stone pillar placed there obviously for a belay. Evidently the mountain was intended to be climbed by this way. Owing to the fact that he did not use the spare rope, Knubel, as second man, had to unrope twice on this step, once before the piton and once on the traverse; otherwise the rope would not have come back to me. The step is in all 120 ft. long and it would be best to use 120 ft. of rope for each person, but the spare rope or even a piece of thin cord can be used to connect with the last man so that he can draw the rope back. A *Karabiner* [7] is almost a necessity.

From here onwards the climbing, while not easy, is not exceptionally difficult. The character of the rock changes completely, gradually becoming looser, especially after the ridge is attained, but there are no more sloping terraces and the climb is much more 'ordinary.' The route is more or less obvious to the ridge whence it follows practically the crest of the arête. On reaching this spot at about 12.45 we stopped for a light lunch. We all felt that the top was a certainty, and only I expressed any anxiety as to the descent. The height at this point was about 10,400 ft. and we thought an hour would take us to the summit. However, the rocks were still by no means easy and were now *very* loose, so that we had to go carefully, only reaching the summit at 3.10. As we arrived a glorious view burst suddenly upon us, only to be obscured a few seconds later by clouds. We found a bottle on the top with a little pulped paper in it, presumably the cards of the first ascent. We added a card to the pulp and did our best to seal up the bottle. We did not find Hasler's pole [8] which he had erected there, but there was a cairn.

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[7] *Karabiners*, see illustration *A.J.* **37,** 282, may be obtained at Sporthaus Kühlken, Augsburg, Bavaria; price about 1 mark. Herr Walther Flaig kindly supplied one, enabling Dr. Finzi to illustrate its use during the reading of his paper.—*Editor.*

[8] *A.J.* **33,** illustration facing p. 457.

We now turned our minds to the descent. From the ridge leading up to the summit of the Wetterhorn, two spurs run to the S.W., one leading directly up to the Scheidegg Wetterhorn, and the other, parallel to this, to a point some distance along the main ridge. We knew from our climb of 1927 that we had to cross this second spur, so we tried to reach it by going along the main (N.W.) ridge, leaving the summit at 3.35. However, after crossing several gendarmes we came to a very deep cleft and decided that it would be better to return, descend the sky-line ridge a little, and then cross the couloir between the two. We returned to the summit and left it at exactly 4 o'clock. We descended the sky-line ridge without difficulty for some little way, and as soon as we came to a convenient spot, double-roped down, noticing, however, that the step was possible in the ascent if desired. At this moment it started to snow, but fortunately only continued for about half an hour. We crossed the gully, mounted the second spur, descended some distance along this, and attained the Hühnergutz Glacier by approximately the same route as in 1927.

It will be remembered that we only had *Kletterschuhe* and no nailed boots or crampons, so that I now began to find great difficulty in keeping my feet on the 'level' glacier névé. The guides, however, had no difficulty at all, so that, to get on more quickly, Franz supported me until we reached the point where we had to cut steps to get over a small bergschrund in order to attain the rock ridge over the Krinnefirn. In these steps I found that the *Kletterschuhe* were quite comfortable, and I felt perfectly safe. We then descended this ridge and the Krinnefirn by the route ordinarily used to attain the W. face of the Wetterhorn. It was late in the year and darkness came on just as we got off the glacier. We proceeded for a long time in the gloom, as Franz had an idea that it was easier to find the way out without the lantern. After he had lost it several times and I had nearly broken my leg, he was persuaded that most human eyes see better in the light, even if it is only the dim glimmer of a lantern. We got on better after this, and arriving at the Gleckstein hut a little before 9 P.M., found that the guardian had left that morning. There was an American with a Grindelwald guide there and they very kindly gave us some tea and boiled it for us. We went to bed happy and returned to Rosenlaui by the Grosse Scheidegg on the following morning.

The ascent of the Scheidegg Wetterhorn is a fine climb, well

worth doing when the conditions are suitable, and I am sure it will be repeated soon. That it should be in an impossible condition for four years in succession is, I am sure, quite exceptional.

The essential things are :

(1) That the face must be dry and practically snow-free.
(2) That the weather must be fine and settled.
(3) That the whole party must be experienced, in good training and accustomed to use *Kletterschuhe* or rubber-soled boots.
(4) The equipment must include 120 ft. of rope for each person, or else 120 ft. of rope and a similar amount of cord to draw the rope back with. A *Karabiner* should also be taken. The only piton required is already there.

I have been asked as to its difficulty. I should class it as 'severe,' but *not* exceptionally so. It is, for instance, not as difficult as the S. face of the Marmolata, although longer and even more exposed. I should class it with the S. face of the Tofana di Razes in order of difficulty, but the latter is shorter.

The climbing up to the 'breakfast place' is quite unique and I have never come across anything like it.

In conclusion I must say a word for the guides. Franz Biner led the whole ascent, very ably backed by his friend, Josef Knubel, and he led it in magnificent style, without error, and never did we have to try any place twice or go back and take another route. Knubel's experience also saved us from carrying our nailed boots, and what this would have meant I know from having had to carry Franz's sack with hammer, many pitons, and spare rope for a short time. Franz Josef Biner is, as stated in the last number of the JOURNAL, the son of Josef Marie Biener [*sic*]. The Editor refers to the latter as 'one of the finest guides who ever put on a rope.' His son deserves the same appellation.

The interesting thing about this expedition is that it went, down to the smallest detail, exactly as we had planned it out by photograph and telescope.

TIMES.—Gr. Scheidegg 05.06, Scheideggwand 05.42, 'Breakfast place' 09.40–10.15, Ridge 12.45–13.05, Summit 15.10, Descent commenced 16.00, Gleckstein about 21.00.

[In the discussion following the reading of this paper, Mr. C. W. Nettleton mentioned an attempt by himself and

stated that he believed the late Mr. J. Oakley Maund had made an attempt in the 'eighties. At our request, Mr. Nettleton writes as follows:

'. . . The result of my search in Alpine literature has proved entirely disappointing. In your editorial note following Dr. Finzi's account of his expedition, 'A.J.' **41,** 406, you say "the N.W. face has been attempted on countless previous occasions." I have entirely failed to find any record of any one of these attempts, and the only one I had previously heard of was from the member of the Boss family who was in charge of the Bear Hôtel in July 1899, and who told me that Messrs. Oakley Maund and H. Seymour Hoare had tried this face in the early 'eighties . . . I can find no account anywhere by Oakley Maund of any attempt on this N.W. face.

'At our recent A.C. meeting, the President asked me why I had not contributed a paragraph to the JOURNAL 30 years ago, and I could only reply that surely it was not usual to record failures; and I am now the more interested to find that, apparently, none of the "countless previous attempts" have been recorded, even in articles recording successful accomplishments, where details of one or two interesting failures could easily have been worked in.

'. . . Coming to our attempt, if such it can be called: in 1893 I spent some days at Rosenlaui and at the little inn on the Grosse Scheidegg where I fell in with Heinrich Zurfluh,[9] with whom we had some scrambles in one of which we went a little way up this N.W. face.

'In July, 1899 I was at Grindelwald, and had the services of Christian Jossi and Bernet. I mentioned the N.W. face and Jossi spoke to a chamois hunter friend of his about it. As a result we went up to the inn on the pass one evening soon after, and in view of what I found next day, and now know in greater detail, it is clear we attempted the impossible. I do think, however, judging by the photograph ['A.J.' **41,** 405], that we reached about the same spot as Dr. Finzi did in 1923, where, as he agrees with me, "the frowning cliffs forbade further advance." All that my wife clearly remembers of the day is that we arrived back at Grindelwald long after dark. . . .

'There was a small sequel next year to Jossi's chamois hunter friend. My wife and I were at the Riffelalp in 1900, and the Hon. Gerald Fitzgerald and Sir Maurice Holzmann

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[9] 'An exceptionally brilliant rock climber,' vide *Mummery*, p. 276.—*Editor.*

lent us Fritz Boss for a week and he took us up the Matterhorn, Dufourspitze (S. face), etc.

'Boss turned out to be the "chamois hunter," and in our chat on the N.W. face I remember his saying "you kept to the right, where I said left." Boss told me of his extensive knowledge of the Wetterhorn and it was with great regret that I read, 'A.J.' **20,** 535, of his untimely end on this, his favourite mountain.

'. . . For myself I thank you for giving me an enforced day with Alpine books which I love, and which have brought back a crowd of forgotten incidents to my memory. . . .'

Largely through the courtesy of Dr. Lauper, we have been able to trace several attempts, nearly all of which failed at a comparatively low altitude owing to weather conditions. These include expeditions by Herr Miescher, also attempts by Herren von Schumacher and Chervet in 1924. According to Herr Peter Lendorff, the well-known Meiringen guide, Melchior Kohler, tried it with a party some years ago. Herren M. Liniger and Neumeyer made two attempts, in July 1919 and July 1920 respectively, reaching (in 1919) a point approximately about half-way along the long traverse to the right, W. ('A.J.' **41,** illustration p. 405), and (in 1920) a point near to where the 1929 party commenced their *descent*, prior to the red chimney or 'doubtful point.' On both these occasions extremely bad weather and snow forbade further progress.

In a further letter Dr. Lauper informs us of another attempt made on August 18, 1917, by Dr. G. Leuch (President of the S.A.C., 1923–25), Dr. R. Wyss (now with the Vissers in the Himalaya), and Herr H. Leuthold (now in California). Dr. Lauper is unable to state how far the party went, but '. . . they intended to attempt the route taken by Gottlieb Michel [in the lower part, 'A.J.' **41,** 210–11], but were thence to attempt the attainment of the crest [N.W. arête] taken by Dr. Finzi. Herr Leuthold, a very fine climber in his time, specialized in the Engelhörner, while Herren Leuch and Wyss are, with Dr. Scabell, probably the best mountaineers the A.A.C. Berne ever had among its members.'

It would be of great interest to hear of any other attempts—if only to justify our rather rash statement !—*Editor.*]