

ALPINE NOTES

THE ALPINE CLUB OBITUARY :						Year of Election.
Pollock, The Rt. Hon. Sir Frederick, Bt.	.	.	.	.	.	1867
Leith, R. F. C.	.	.	.	.	.	1889
Brunskill, Walter	.	.	.	.	.	1895
Bartleet, A. M.	.	.	.	.	.	1896
Collins, G. L.	.	.	.	.	.	1898
Moser, E. B.	.	.	.	.	.	1898
Wenham, C. H.	.	.	.	.	.	1926
Brown, Wm. Villiers	.	.	.	.	.	1927
Osborn, Ian S.	.	.	.	.	.	1928

ALPINE CLUB.—By reason of his long and devoted services to the Club, Mr. Sydney Spencer (elected 1895, Committee 1901-3, Secretary 1923-34, Vice-President 1935-6) has been elected an Honorary Member.

MT. EVEREST COMMITTEE, 1937.—This has now been reconstituted as follows: Major-General R. C. Wilson (Himalayan Club), *Chairman*; Lieut.-Colonel Kenneth Mason, Messrs. J. M. Wordie, T. G. Longstaff (R.G.S.); Brigadier-General the Hon. C. G. Bruce, Messrs. Raymond Greene, L. R. Wager (Alpine Club). All are members of the Alpine Club.

Permission has been granted for another attempt on Mt. Everest in 1938.

NANGA PARBAT, 1937.—The German party for the fourth attempt is composed of the following mountaineers: Dr. Karl Wien (A.C.), leader; A. Göttner, G. Hepp, P. Müllritter, H. Hartmann, P. Fankhauser, M. Pfeffer, U. Luft, C. Troll. The first five have much previous Himalayan experience. All British mountaineers will wish the party complete success.

EIGERWAND.—The interdiction of access¹ to this face enforced by the local authorities in July 1936 has now been removed officially.

RATIONAL MOUNTAINEERING.—The Central Committee of the S.A.C. has issued a statement to this effect:

'The assembly of delegates of the S.A.C. deprecates the granting of testimonials, such as Olympic medals, as a reward for mountaineering performances calculated to lead that pursuit into unsound lines. The Central Committee is requested to bring its misgivings to the notice

¹ A.J. 48. 374, footnote 11. See also p. 126 of this number.

of the International Association of Alpine Societies [U.I.A.A.²], and together with that Association, to strive that such advertisements be abandoned as undesirable.

'Further, the Central Committee is requested to inform the Swiss Press that it begs in the publication in word or writing of Alpine achievements, that everything of a sensational nature be avoided. . . .'

The action of the Central Committee of the S.A.C. is one to be commended highly. Mountaineering in Switzerland by the Swiss has, however, been conducted on sound lines always. Collective action as displayed by another institution has proved—as was to be expected—a grim failure in the past. There is no reason to suppose that the U.I.A.A. will be more successful, especially when the greatest and most wealthy of Alpine Societies is not even represented in the said U.I.A.A. It is exactly that Society, so largely if indirectly responsible for the present unfortunate state of affairs, which should issue this appeal to the Nations and Press it comprises.

In our opinion, the resolution of the S.A.C. would carry more weight if transmitted by its Central Committee *direct* to all Clubs and Alpine Societies.

CLUB AND 'SHELTER' HUTS.—The multiplication of fixed shelters for the inefficient continues in the Alps. Many mountaineers perceive in this multiplication a growing menace to the future. Owing to the rise in prices, the construction of Club huts proper has developed on more conservative and sounder lines, although the number of such has increased far beyond reasonable limits. But a recent development in the Italian and French Alps is much more ominous. We refer to the small shelter huts (in Italian *bivacchi fissi*) now springing up like mushrooms above the parent or Club hut. The scheme, practical when started originally, has like many excellent intentions frustrated now its own reasons for existence. The fixed shelter was inaugurated for little-known glens possessing no sleeping accommodation whatever, and where a start from a low-lying inn in a main and distant valley became consequently obligatory. The *Jumeaux* shelter (Rifugio Bobba in Valtournanche), the *Corti* shelter in the Bergamasque Alps and one or two other such are good examples of cheaply created and really needed accommodation. Now, however, the Alps are being debauched by the yearly erection of superfluous excrescences designed to enable incompetent persons, professional or amateur, to carry out expeditions otherwise impossible of achievement—to such. Ridiculously placed and redundant specimens—some appertaining almost to the dimensions of Club huts—are the *Leschaux*, *Tour Rouge* (Grépon), *Envers de Blaitière*, *Dames Anglaises*, *Fourche de la Brenva*, etc. Surpassing even these in general futility are the threatened atrocities to be constructed in the Bernina, on the Sella Pass, Sasso Rosso and, worst crime of all, on the *summit* of Monte Disgrazia, doubtless to take the place of the horror erected there years ago on which Nature took a

² A. J. 44. 403.

swift revenge. Regarding the last threat, a well-known Italian mountaineer and writer justly states, 'No longer will the mountain bear its well-merited name of Pizzo Bello.' We can imagine that in a few years *bivacchi fixi* will make their appearance on the N. faces of the Cime di Lavaredo (*sc.* Drei Zinnen), where there must now be sufficient metal scattered about to construct tin shelters halfway up.

If shelter huts are to remain in being at all, let them be confined to localities, if any such still exist, *at least* 8 hours distant from the nearest accommodation and not, as in the cases cited above, 2 to 3 hours above large and often provisioned Club huts. The influence of Tourism—baneful in most cases—is pressing hard on or absorbing most of the great European Alpine Societies. One consolation yet remains: the S.A.C. has not fallen a victim to the cheap lure of fixed shelters. Long may it remain an opponent of such, even as it is of handicapped routes and decadent rock-drills.

THE MISHAP ON LLIWEDD.—On Friday, January 8, a party consisting of the Hon. Richard Hope and myself, together with Mr. D. A. Hodgkinson and three others, left Pen-y-Pass to do some climbing on Lliwedd. Mr. Hope and I were bound for the central chimney which goes up the mountain to the left of the Birch Tree Terrace. The other party were going for the slanting gulley on the W. side of the peak. Mr. Hope and myself had climbed the first 100-ft. chimney to the terrace and some 30 ft. up the start of the next. At this point, where there is a good belay and fair stance, it is necessary for the leader to execute a difficult upward traverse out of the chimney to the right and continue for 80 ft. up steep and very exposed slabs. When the leader had found firm anchorage in the 'Summer House,' it was considered advisable to draw up the rucksack carried by the second before the latter attempted the traverse. In drawing up this sack it became obscured both from the view of the leader (myself) and from that of the second (Hope), who was below. At this point it dislodged a large stone about the size of a soup plate, which fell through the air some 30 ft. and struck Hope on the back of the head. He was of course unroped at the time, since all the rope was required to haul up the sack. He must have lost consciousness for approximately 10 seconds, but did not fall off. The sack was then hauled up to the 'Summer House' and the rope thrown down, when Hope tied on again and bandaged his head. The position of the party was now distinctly awkward as the descent of an 80-ft. pitch without a doubled rope would have been extremely difficult. Fortunately the party saw Mr. M. G. Bradley, who was coming up the mountain to do a climb, and called to him for assistance. He very generously answered the call and climbed to the Birch Tree Terrace. The leader could then lower the injured second some 20 ft., when Mr. Bradley was able to render assistance and by tying on his rope give the leader sufficient rope to descend by *rappel*.

The injured man was assisted down the mountain, although still

quite capable of climbing. He then walked some $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Pen-y-Pass, when he was immediately conveyed to the doctor in Llanberis.

The accident was peculiarly unfortunate, as when the chimney was inspected from below no trace of loose stones was visible—the part above the traverse being apparently a smooth groove. The sack could not be swung over to the left side as the overhanging wall prevented this. The sack was probably unnecessarily large for a Welsh climb.

I think that Mr. Bradley deserves more than a word of thanks for all his assistance. Without him a descent would have been possible by abandoning most of the rope, but it would have been extremely difficult. Also his timely application of first aid probably saved Hope from blood-poisoning.

T. A. H. PEACOCKE.

[Mr. Hope, who was suffering from a fracture of the skull, will, we are glad to say, suffer no permanent injury whatever. It is obvious that the accident was the result of an unavoidable mischance.—*Editor.*]

WINTER ASCENTS.—The Watzmann, 8905 ft., although of no great altitude in itself, yet boasts of perhaps the highest 'precipice' in the Alps, the St. Bartolomä or E. face, some 1800 m. in height.³ The ascent of this face in summer is exceedingly long and complicated. The difficulties, if never very great from a modern technical standard, yet require much experience in their unravelment. In winter the said difficulties are, of course, infinitely more severe.⁴

It was on this face that an attempt was made by two Germans, uncle and nephew, both of the name of Josef Frey. The dates were January 1–8, 1937. Both these personages appear to have been quite ignorant of the topography of the E. face, the weather was bad and conditions, including great masses of snow piled up on every ledge and cranny of the face, quite execrable. If possessing certain rock-climbing attributes, both appear to have been totally deficient of brain powers. Long and interesting narratives of the events, D.u.Ö.A.-V. *Mitt.* 1937, pp. 30–36, by Herren R. Siebenwurst, J. Aschauer and H. Hoerlin, are given of the rescue operations. All these are worthy of close perusal.

It is impossible in these pages to give more than the shortest summary. The party having left the Königsee during the afternoon of January 1, a forester observed a lantern falling in the lower part of the E. face above the well-known Eiskappele. The hour was about 23.30, and thinking that an accident had occurred, the forester hastened to the base. Receiving no answer to his shouts he summoned three guides to his help. On the morning of January 2 the rescuers however perceived the party progressing towards the *Schöllhornplatte*. The weather was worsening and the guides repeatedly called out to the party to return while there yet was time.

³ *A. J.* 31. 268 ; 47. 344–5.

⁴ *A. J.* 43. 190.

As before, no answer was received. Later the party was observed from St. Bartolomä bivouacking for the second time near the aforementioned slab. At 11.00 on January 3 the party was again observed clambering along the fourth and fifth ledges of the face. Bad weather and the difficult progress of the party prevented Herr Siebenwurst⁵ from ordering out a rescue party to follow up the two adventurers. At that time help from above or below was impossible in the densely falling snow.

As a last resource, thinking an accident inevitable should the party continue without bivouacking, an aeroplane was ordered out laden with meta fuel, blankets, sleeping-bags, food, etc., to fly over and across the face. Aschauer accompanied the pilot and a most gallant and dangerous flight ensued. Eight different attempts, flying close to the face, were made to drop food on to the ledges, where tracks of the party could be seen by both pilot (Major Braun) and observer. All in vain, the packets could not be lodged on the face, neither could the party in distress gain access to a tent sack which managed to land safely on the face.

Meanwhile another rescue party consisting of well-known Munich mountaineers⁶ had been ordered out by rail and air from their homes; 100 men of the 100th Jaegers volunteered likewise. W.T. posts were established in the neighbourhood and on the Watzmann itself; elaborate visual and coloured light signals were arranged in addition, together with food and blanket depots. All this in continuous snow above and rain below. On January 5 the Munich party of 13 reached the summit by the ordinary route and several were lowered by long ropes over the eastern precipice, on which the still struggling Freys could be observed, from below but *not* from above. Simultaneous shouts from all the rescuers remained unanswered,⁷ but at 13.30 the Freys were observed from below to reach a boss on the fifth ledge—a spot where they bivouacked subsequently. During a weather clearance an aeroplane circled for some hours around the face; this flight caused more harm than good as it served merely to confuse and deaden signals between the various searchers. On the summit-ridge, encumbered with masses of overhanging snow, some 1200 ft. of rope were available. This amount proving totally inadequate, some of the rescuers bivouacked on the ridge while others descended to the valley for more rope.

On January 6 the Freys were observed again struggling in deep snow exactly under but far below the summit. The weather was once more appalling, all the search parties suffering from cold, frost-bite and exhaustion. In these circumstances a rescue seemed impossible

⁵ Well experienced in gauging the results of such exploits. See the Eigerwand, A. J. 48. 372 *sqq.*, to which disasters the performance on the Watzmann bears close resemblance.

⁶ Including Herren Göttner, von Kraus, Rosenschon, Schmaderer, T. and S. Kurz, Aschauer, etc., of Himalayan and Caucasus fame.

⁷ The Freys confessed subsequently that although the cries were heard and the rescuers observed above, replies were *purposely* refused!

to Siebenwurst, since he considered that the Freys could not survive a fifth night out. Nevertheless all the search parties continued the fight.

And now Herr Hitler himself intervened, ordering out 50 more soldiers and sending 1800 ft. of rope, provisions, tents, etc. to the rescue parties, while further military W.T. posts were established. At dawn on January 7 many rescuers with some 3500 ft. of rope were in position on the summit-ridge. Aschauer, dislodging an immense avalanche in so doing, was lowered for hundreds of feet on a rope secured by numerous *Karabiner*. Peering over the edge of a buttress he perceived the Freys below, who both now screamed for help. Schmaderer and Göttner joined Aschauer, and laden with food all were lowered again and again ⁸ down avalanching gullies and ice-glazed slabs. Other rescuers joined them and the struggle continued ceaselessly. Above, those holding the ropes were verging on collapse from cold and exposure, worse almost on the summit than on the face. Finally, after hours of labour, Schmaderer contrived to reach and tie on to the Freys. The other climbers were hauled back to the summit and, with their assistance and that of many soldiers, the two adventurers, frost-bitten and exhausted, were brought to the ridge and thence carried down with grave danger from avalanches to the hut in the Wimbachtal. It was the night of January 7. On Friday, January 8, the Freys were transported with much difficulty owing to fallen avalanches to the Wimbach bridge in the Ramsau and thence conveyed to hospital by ambulance.

From an excellent German criticism entitled *Watzmann Echo* ⁹ we gather that the Freys, aged 21 and 19 years respectively, were hoping for inclusion in an overseas team by reason of a successful winter attempt on a face of the nature of which they were quite ignorant even under summer conditions. Its conquest and their consequent inclusion would have resulted in better living conditions for their respective fathers aged 72 and 62! The same critic states that the younger Frey 'gazes daily with longing eyes' on an illustration of the Eigerwand, an exploit which he is determined to accomplish.

Such in brief is the official narrative of a mad adventure. The remarkable rescue redounds infinitely to the credit of the 'Bergwacht' and all concerned. It would be of interest to learn what the total costs of the mobilization amounted to. Rewards and decorations have been distributed among various persons taking part in the salvage. As for the two imbeciles primarily concerned, their performance—and constitutions—qualify them as eligible for no more than a prolonged course of hard labour in a detention camp.

Between December 22–25, 1936, a well-known Italian made, *alone*, the ascent of the Matterhorn from the Italian side. Conditions and

⁸ Owing to the difficulty in signalling to the summit, the rescuers were several times hauled up again by mistake.

⁹ *D.A.Z.*, February 1937, pp. 399–400.

weather were extremely bad, the former being especially dangerous between Pic Tyndall and the summit, where during the descent the climber lost his axe. The gentleman concerned has accomplished several notable climbs during the last few seasons.¹⁰ Nevertheless, this winter ascent of a great mountain several times safely accomplished¹¹ is conspicuous for a lack of judgment and responsibility remarkable in a climber of such outstanding powers. Taking into account nationalism and exaggerations in the story as related by *Lo Scarpone*, we must pronounce the entire expedition to have been little else but a series of fortunate escapes.

Among other winter exploits may be cited the ascents of the Gran Paradiso,¹² Herbetet by S. arête, Becca di Montandayné, Grand Revers, the rarely visited Ondezana,¹³ Dent Blanche (Pennines).

Unquestionably, the feats accomplished by Cav. Vittorio Sella's party still constitute the most important series of high winter ascents hitherto accomplished in the Alps. Skis and lifts did not exist in the 'eighties.

ACCIDENTS.—One officer and twenty-three other ranks belonging to the 2nd Regt. of Italian *Alpini* were killed by an avalanche on the Passo della Gardetta in Val Maira in February.

Six Milanese ski-runners were killed in Val de Lys in March, following the great snowfalls of that month and late February.

The well-known cartographer and mountaineer, Herr Johann Biersack of Hanover, was killed by a wind-slab avalanche while ski-ing in the Stubai Alps on February 21. Among other maps prepared by him is the new and magnificent sheet of the Nanga Parbat massif, 1 : 50,000.

Many other ski-ing accidents are reported from the Eastern Alps, notably the death of an Englishman in the neighbourhood of the Sammoar hut, Oetzthal.

FRÄULEIN CÉCILE BOSS.—We regret to report the death at Grindelwald of this lady, one of the last surviving members of the famous family.

BERLINER HÜTTE.—With reference to a deprecatory note concerning this Zillertal, D.U.Æ.A.-V. hut in *A.ŷ.* 48. 68, it is only just to state

¹⁰ *A.ŷ.* 46. 199-200 ; 48. 75-6, 341-3.

¹¹ The first winter ascent and traverse of the mountain was accomplished on March 17-18, 1882, by Cav. Vittorio Sella with J. A., J. B. and Louis Carrel. The main difficulties were incurred on the Swiss side below the shoulder.—*A.ŷ.* 10. 494. See also 25. 469 ; 33. 286 ; 34. 135-6 ; 41. 228.

¹² The first winter ascent was made on March 1, 1885, by Cav. Vittorio Sella and Mr. Samuel Aitken with J. J. and Daniel Maguignaz from the then new V.E. hut, temperature on the summit, at 08.00, — 24° (C.). . . . 'I took seven large photographs on glass plates, 30 × 40 cm.'—*A.ŷ.* 12. 260 ; letter from Signor Sella. Twenty-seven Italians accomplished the ascent on January 21, 1888, *A.ŷ.* 14. 324-5 ; see also 15. 445. Nevertheless, *Lo Scarpone* describes the 1936 climb as the first winter ascent of the peak !

¹³ January 12, 1937. Signori R. Chabod, P. Malvezzi and M. Teppex.

that accommodation, food and attendance were excellent in July–August 1936, while prices were most reasonable.

E. L. S.

JAPANESE ALPINE CLUB.—A bronze relief tablet is to be erected by the Club at Kami Kochi at the foot of Hodakayama, Japanese Alps, in honour of our member the Rev. Walter Weston in appreciation of his successful efforts in popularizing mountaineering in Japan.

LÉGION D'HONNEUR.—The Croix de Chevalier has been awarded to Mm. Jean Escarra and Henry de Ségogne for their organization and leadership of the French Karakoram Expedition of 1936, respectively.

GRINDELWALD.—Our member, M. Gustave Hasler, together with his wife, *née* Miss Hampson-Simpson, have been presented with the Freedom of Grindelwald.

GROSS DOLDENHORN, S.W. face.—The route reported in *A. J.* 48. 353 is the same as that taken by Messrs. G. Stallard and A. L. Ormerod with J. Oggi-Müller and Abraham Müller on August 10, 1890 (*A. J.* 15. 310–11).

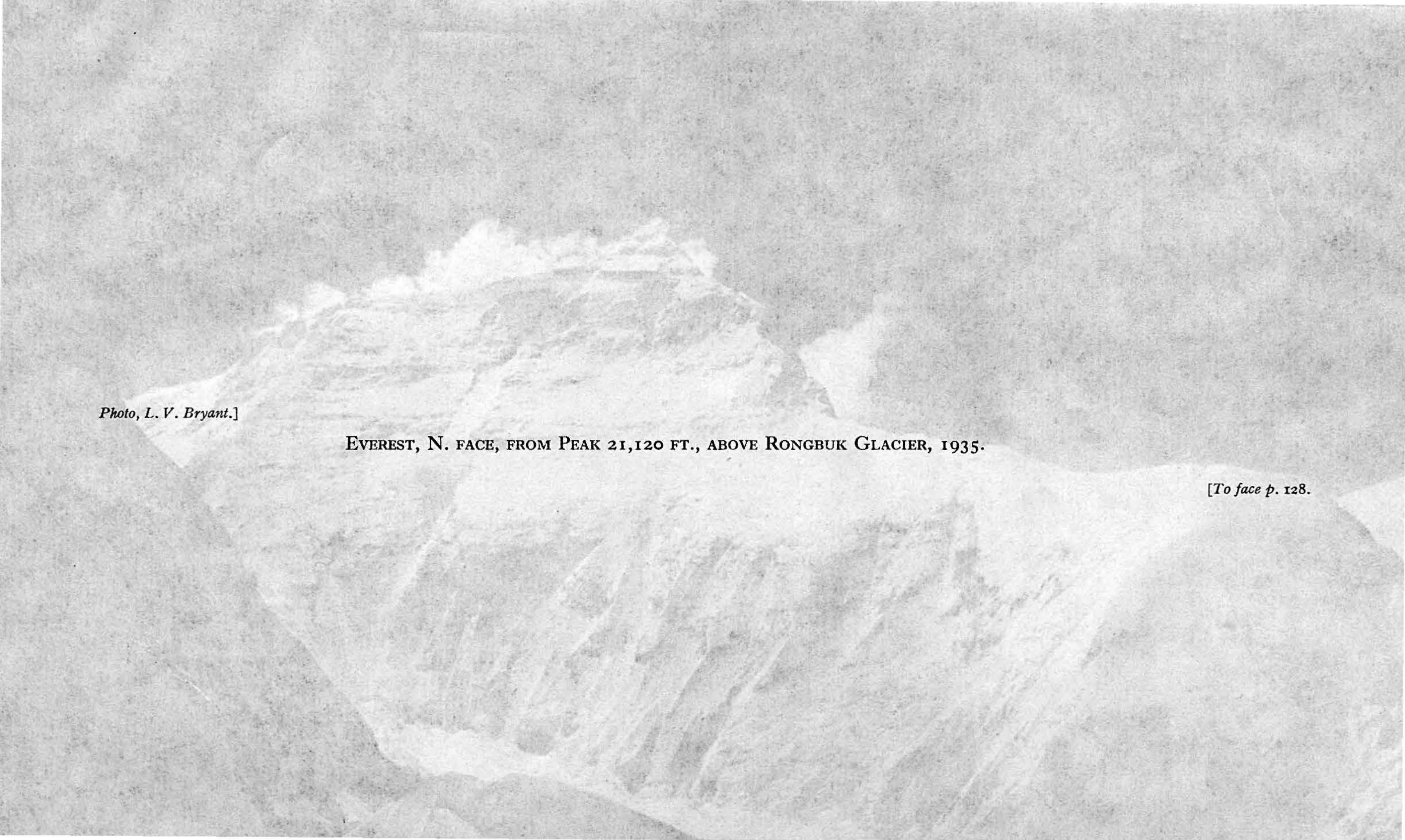
GIOVANNI BOBBA.—I read with much interest Professor Corti's memoir in the *JOURNAL* (*A. J.* 48. 334–6). Giovanni was a very intimate friend of mine for nearly forty years . . . he was certainly a most excellent fellow and one of the best friends I have ever had. Corti is not correct in saying that Bobba had never been in England before 1933, for he came to see us at Rugby in, I think, 1904, with his father, his sister and her husband.

G. STALLARD.

NADELGRAT, 1936.—Last summer after an interval of 24 years I was overjoyed at having the opportunity of revisiting the peaks of the Nadelgrat. On August 18 Karl Pollinger, his brother-in-law Ludwig Sarbach and I had a lovely walk from St. Niklaus by the verdant slopes above it in almost exactly 5 hours, excluding halts, to the Pierre Bordier hut, 9777 ft., well placed to the E. of the Ried Glacier at the base of the Klein Bigerhorn. This hut is admirably positioned for the exploration of the summits on either side of the large and too little known Ried Glacier (*i.e.* the peaks of the Nadelgrat and Northern Saasgrat), and is also an excellent starting-point for the passes at the head of it which lead over to the Saas valley.

Judging from the entries in the visitors' book most of the parties have used the hut either as a point of departure for one of those passes or for the traverse of the Nadelgrat (not including the Lenzspitze).¹⁴ I was surprised (and disappointed) to find that the fine climbs of the

¹⁴ See in general, *A. J.* 25. 312–31.

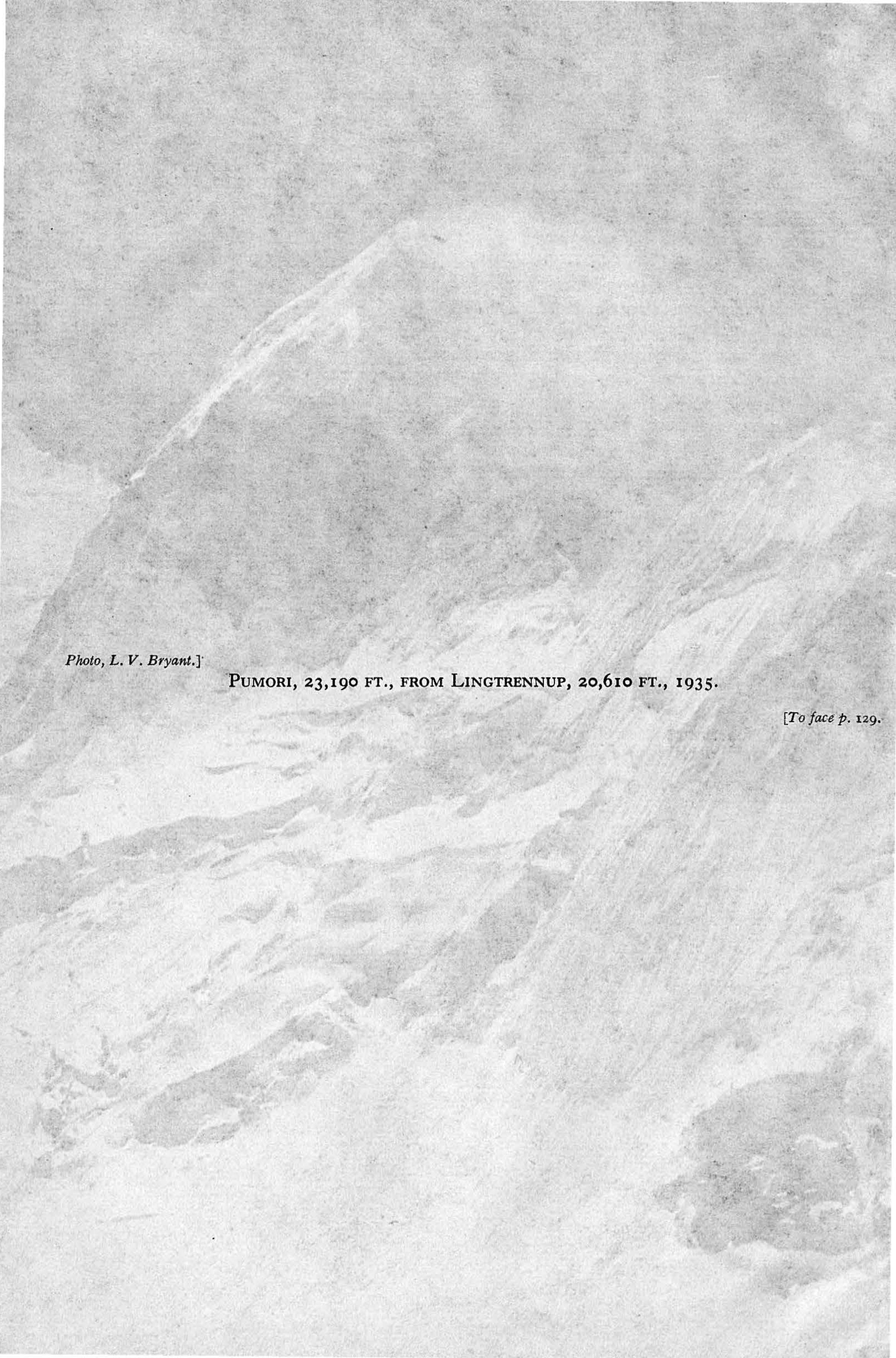


Photo, L. V. Bryant.]

EVEREST, N. FACE, FROM PEAK 21,120 FT., ABOVE RONGBUK GLACIER, 1935.

[To face p. 128.]





Photo, L. V. Bryant.]

PUMORI, 23,190 FT., FROM LINGTRENNUP, 20,610 FT., 1935.

[To face p. 129.]



Nadelgrat peaks from the E. or N.E. had for the most part been left alone; but men if not mountaineers resemble sheep in the manner of their movements. The only entry describing a climb on these faces spoke of a descent by some guideless German mountaineers a short time before our visit, apparently by the N.E. face of the Hohberghorn, in bad weather, some 16 hours elapsing from the time the party left the summit-ridge before it reached the hut; the climbers were certainly lucky to come down alive in such execrable snow conditions. Our combined parties in 1910 ascended this steep slope safely and with great enjoyment in about $1\frac{3}{4}$ hrs. from the foot of the slope.¹⁵ The difference between the times is amply accounted for by the vastly changed conditions, for in 1910 we had delayed the expedition until the snow conditions were, as far as possible, perfect.

On August 19, 1936, bad conditions of snow on the N.E. slopes precluded an ambitious scheme, but we had a never-to-be-forgotten climb in beautiful weather, ascending to the Hohberg Pass by the rocks on the N. side of the couloir, then up the Dürrenhorn by the S.E. arête, whence we went down by the N. arête, followed by the N.W. arête of the Klein Dürrenhorn to the Galenpass and Galenhorn, so reaching St. Niklaus about dusk.

The most interesting routes up the mountain are those by its N. arête, the face climbs up it and the Klein Dürrenhorn from the E., and by the route up to the Hohberg Pass from the E. (In 1910 my party ascended the Klein Dürrenhorn from the E. and then proceeded up the Dürrenhorn by its N. arête.¹⁶ There was very much less snow on the ridge then than in 1936.)

The W. routes up the mountain are abominably rotten.

O. K. WILLIAMSON.

¹⁵ *A. J.* 25. 361-2.

¹⁶ *A. J.* 24. 680-1.