

# Eglise suisse = Schweizerkirche

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In the afternoon of the 26th of June we left Stalden for Hutegge, where we laid in a stock of provisions and hired rugs and cooking utensils; my wife went on to Saas and I with Alexander and his third son Salomon as porter, quitted Hutegge at 4.30 p.m. Our path led up somewhat steeply to the huts or village of Schweiben, which we reached in quick time, keeping together very well, though I fancy that our young porter found the pace and his load just a little trying. At Schweiben we unexpectedly met with pleasant hospitality, which in the Valais at that time was somewhat scarce; a drink of milk was ready for us in a trice, and my offer of payment was emphatically rejected; the reason for this becoming plain when in our Lady Bountiful I discovered young Salomon's sweetheart. After this call we pushed on through splendid meadows and "Alpen" and later through "Alpenrosen" in their first freshness to Ferriehen (corruption of Pferch, i.e., place to collect and keep cattle in), two hours from Hutegge. After a good deal of scouting we secured a fairly cosy bivouac. Alexander prepared a capital bed for me allotting the whole load of rugs to his "Herr," he and Salomon regardless of rheumatism, contenting themselves with the hard ground for a pillow. There was an abundance of wood about and we camped round a beautiful fire, first enjoying our supper and then an improvised concert. Alexander played several pieces on a mouth-organ (the Garibaldi march being one of them), and I sang all the Swiss Volkslieder that I was able to recall. The night, only moderately cold, was beautifully clear, and the legions of stars fascinated me so long that in the end there was not much time for sleep, especially as Alexander roused me at 1.30 a.m. in order to borrow my knife!

An excellent cup of chocolate having been served, we took leave of Salomon and started at 2.30 a.m. by the light of the lantern, following the Schweibach and thereafter mounting up the steep moraine of the Balfrin glacier, to the accompaniment of the call of the "Röthelvogel," the earliest bird of the morning.

Our plan was to follow the north-west arête in its entirety, and since we did not know how long our climb would be, nor indeed what were its difficulties, we kept up a good pace; to a certain extent Alexander had surveyed the ascent during his chamois-hunting expeditions, but taken as a whole it was new ground even to him.

Our route carried us next over snow between a huge mass of stone-débris (Bergsturz) and the left or western moraine of the Balfrin glacier, and later, after traversing this moraine, to our first stopping place in the rocks. The moraine was somewhat troublesome on account of sea-saw-stones, but Alexander in spite of being a heavy weight negotiated them extremely well. His method seemed to me unorthodox, and indeed he is unconventional in many things; he is taciturn en route, does not trouble to assist in the less difficult places — my wife on a subsequent occasion did not consider that he was attentive enough in this respect — he does not wear snow gaiters and disdains both drinking cup and gaiters or putties. Sometimes there is traceable in his work and manner a certain want of enthusiasm, but then he is a guide who has made history and who now reckons himself among the "old 'uns;" he even apologized for his slowness, and set me wondering what his speed may have been twenty years ago!

However "revenons à nos moutons!" At 5.40 a.m. we roped and the actual climbing began. We found the arête for the most part consisting of safe and not too sharp rocks, but there were several bold-looking "gendarmes" which we were obliged to circumnavigate on the Eastern side, either in the rocks or by traversing snow patches at steep angles. Once or twice we encountered the bugbear of the climber smooth slabs, and there was one ticklish place which provoked Burgener to remark: "this climb is more difficult than the Matterhorn." At another spot he handed me his axe to hold on to, and he enjoined me earnestly not to let go of it on pain of meeting with disaster. I was not conscious of any greater danger than there had been elsewhere on the arête, and I was certainly climbing very carefully, but may be Alexander saw what I did not. That was the only time when I noticed Alexander throwing off his grim reserve.

A propos of the Matterhorn it is worth recording that Burgener has ascended it no less than 54 times, with all sorts and conditions of climbers, some as good as himself, others who had to be assisted to an unusual extent: ten times he had carried tourists down from the hut. No doubt insufficient training was the cause of these failures, or is it that the Matterhorn being a fashionable peak, is attempted by people who are not really mountaineers? Certainly of late it is attracting to itself a remarkably large number of climbers: in 1898 there were 132 ascents, and in 1899 we have 112, whereas previous to 1898 the highest number in any one year appears to have been 78. (These figures are taken from an interesting statistical report published in No. 9 of the "Alpina," 1900.)

Returning to our arête: the progress was rather slow because we could not work together, and in several places the entire length of the rope had to be used; on the other hand, however, there was never much doubt about the route to be followed.

At last we had done with the arête, and after a tedious hour on snow we reached the snow-covered peak, at 11.30 a.m., or nine hard hours from the bivouac; we did not push on to the twin peak with the Steinmann, the height of which is given as 3,802m., (the snow-covered twin may be slightly higher.)

Already on the arête we had had a beautiful view and on the top we were rewarded with a grand panorama, the Bernese giants and the Weisshorn standing out prominently. After a short rest we descended eastwards over snow into the rocks overlooking the Bider glacier, where we "dined." At 12.40 we turned our faces homewards and scrambled down the steep rocks on to the glacier. My Alpenstock was greatly in the way, as it had been on the ascent, and the advantages of a piolet were more than ever before made manifest to me. By the time we had the glacier behind us and the Saaser Visp in sight I began to feel the effects of a long day and of the strong mountain air, and getting very drowsy. I got also terribly slow. Under ordinary circumstances the descent into the valley by this route, which is the one generally followed, must be rapid, but we did not reach Saas until about 5 p.m.

Next day my wife raced up and down the Mittaghorn with Alexander, whilst I rested. Later on we three and Salomon Burgener did the Fletschhorn, and to finish a short campaign Alexander led me up the Portjengrat (traversed), which is a most interesting climb and affords no doubt excellent training for some of the higher and more difficult Zermatter mountains.

My article should have been called "three peaks with Alexander Burgener," but a detailed description of the three expeditions would have assumed unwieldy dimensions, and I therefore picked out the new ascent of the Balfrin as being possibly of some interest to climbers.

#### FOOTBALL SEASON 1937-1938.

CUP-WINNERS: Grasshoppers Club, Zurich.

After a drawn game at 2 all, Grasshoppers defeated F. C. Servette in the replay by 5:1, at Bern.

#### NATIONAL LEAGUE.

CHAMPIONS: F. C. Lugano.

RUNNERS-UP: Grasshoppers.

Relegated: F. C. Bern.

	P.	W.	D.	L.	F.	A.	Pts.
Lugano	22	12	6	4	46	28	30
Grasshoppers	22	13	3	6	50	26	29
Young Boys	22	11	6	5	39	29	28
Basel	22	12	3	7	48	31	27
Nordstern	22	11	4	7	32	29	26
Lausanne	22	10	5	7	46	39	25
Servette	22	9	7	6	39	34	25
Young Fellows	22	9	6	7	46	32	24
Biel	22	6	4	12	23	36	16
Grenchen	22	4	7	11	31	51	15
Luzern	22	5	3	14	37	55	13
Bern	22	0	6	16	18	65	6

#### FIRST LEAGUE.

CHAMPIONS: F. C. Chaux-de-Fonds, promoted to National League.

RUNNERS-UP: F. C. St. Gall, having lost to Chaux-de-Fonds by 1:2 at home and drawn 2:2 away.

(To be continued.)

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Dimanche 31 juillet, 11h. Culte patriotique à l'occasion de la Fête Nationale.

## BAPTEME.

Le 10 juillet 1938, Denise-Madeleine Hoerler, fille de Jacques et de Madeleine-Emma née Delessert, de Teufen, née le 8 janvier 1938.

Pour l'instruction religieuse et les actes pastoraux, prière de s'adresser au pasteur, M. Marcel Pradervand, 65, Mount View Road, N.4 (Téléphone Mountview 5003). Heure de réception à l'église le mercredi de 11 — 12h.30.

## SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den Juli 23. 1938.

Predigt: Pfarrer Rud. Kägi aus Rothrist. Während der Monate Juli und August finden keine Abendgottesdienste statt.

Anfragen wegen Amtshandlungen und Besuchen sind zu richten — an Herrn Pfarrer Rud. Kägi, c/o Foyer Suisse, 12, Upper Bedford Way, Russell Square, W.C.1. — Tel.: MUSEum 2982.

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