



Hans Brunner, Jack Titcomb, A. Sydney Dawes,
Mrs. Charmier and David Norton

WE ARRIVED in Kleine Scheidegg on January 21, just in time for a three days' snowstorm. From then on we skied in powder snow continually. As fast as the nearer slopes became tracked up we found new ones. After two weeks, as no new snow had fallen, my guide suggested that we do a glacier tour.

On February 7, Mr. Von Allmen (owner of the Scheidegg Hotels), Mrs. Von Allmen, and their guide, Johnnie Graf, also Mrs. Charmier (a member of Canada's 1936 Olympic Ladies' Ski team), Mr. David Norton (an Englishman), Mr. Jack Titcomb (an American), myself and our guide, Hans Brunner, went up on the Jungfrau railroad by special train, leaving Scheidegg at nine in the morning, and shortly after ten we were putting on our skis outside of the Jungfrauoch Station, first visiting the Berghaus which, by the way, is the highest hotel in the world.

It was a beautiful, sunny day without a cloud in the sky, hardly any wind, and the thermometer registered 10 degrees above zero. Where we were standing was slightly over 11,000 feet above sea level, and some 300 feet below us was the Aletsch Glacier. For some of us it was our first view of a glacier from above, and we were much impressed. It looked like a

Two Glacier Ski Tours in Switzerland

By A. Sydney Dawes

river of snow with mountain peaks on either side forming the banks running south towards the Rhone Valley. The snow to start with was wind-blown and slightly crusty, but once on the glacier proper we had powder snow.

We ran down one gradual schuss after another until we reached Concordia-Platz, where, perched up on a ledge to the left, is the Concordia Hut. This is the place where the tours divide, and we turned to the right up a branch of the Aletsch Glacier, and, after putting on skins, started a long, easy two-hour climb up to the Lotschen Pass. The scenery here was remarkable. On each side the mountains towered 1000 feet above us, and between them were other glaciers which flowed into the one we were on. South of the Pass we could see the Aletschorn Mountain (13,700 feet), about the same height as the Jungfrau. On the north there is a stone hut which we did not visit however, as it was 300 feet above us, and we all preferred to eat in the open. When lunch was over, Brunner produced a thermos of mint tea from his large-sized pack, and, after the first shock, we found it most refreshing.

The Pass itself is over 12,000 feet high, and from it you have a wonderful view, either looking towards Concordia-Platz or down the Lotschental Glacier to the valley. We were all looking forward to our 8,500 foot descent to Goppenstein, so shortly after lunch, with our skins tied around our waists, we set out.

The snow at the top was crusty, so, following instructions from our guide, we all did kick turns. However, soon these were replaced by christies, and we found ourselves in powder snow once more. On the right was a very large long glacier composed of tumbled blocks of ice. We stopped at several crevasses, down which everyone had a look, but where we were skiing it seemed like an ordinary snow field quite strong enough to carry us over any hidden crevasses that there might be underneath.

We had all been looking forward to the long schusses that we had heard so much about, and pretty soon, after a pause to allow us to gather and take photographs, Brunner cried, "schuss."

We all started off in powder snow down a gradual descent that was, I should think, at least two and a half miles long. From a crouching position that we assumed at first, in order to pick up speed, we soon stood upright and made our own tracks, as we had all the speed we wanted. At the bottom of this schuss we turned right and wound our way down to a lower level, and without stopping started another long schuss of over a mile. At the bottom of this we stopped and looked back to see the country that we had been running through. The mountains on each side seemed now much higher, as we had lost considerable altitude, and on the south

conditions are still most primitive and picturesque. In one place an old copper bucket that stood beside a drinking trough looked as though it had been made a hundred years ago.

We reached Goppenstein at four o'clock and half an hour later, while we were eating some spaghetti, which we thought was the correct thing to do being so near the Italian frontier, we were surprised to see Mr. Christopher MacIntosh, famous British skier and racer, come in alone. He had left the Jungfrau at noon, having gone up by the ordinary train, and, therefore, in the 25 mile ski-ing had gained an hour and a half on us, which is not surprising, as I under-



The Lotschental Glacier

side of the valley the guide pointed out a long moraine, while on the north side of the valley the huge, round Lotschental Glacier was quite an impressive sight.

Occasionally now we traversed the tongues of glaciers that crossed our path, and soon reached a forest of tamarack with the shadows of the trees so clearly defined that we stopped to take a photograph. Here the glacier ended, and the last two hours of our trip was along the bottom of the valley through five little villages, including Kippel and Ferden. We stopped at Kippel to have some beer, but found that they had nothing except a very dry, indifferent white wine. The villagers in the Lotschental Valley produce a great deal of cheese, which is kept in storehouses built on posts, on top of which are large, round, flat stones to prevent mice from entering them. In summer the cows graze right up to the foot of the glaciers, and, as there is no automobile road as far up as this,

stand that he takes everything straight. At 5.30 p.m. our train left for Spiez, where we had to change, and as both Mr. Von Allmen and Christopher MacIntosh had their cars to meet them they very kindly drove us to Lauderbrunner. At Lauderbrunner Mr. Von Allmen had another special train waiting, so that we could return to Scheidegg the same night. We reached there at 10 p.m., and I for one consider it one of the most interesting and amazing experiences of my life.

As the weather was still beautiful and no new snow had fallen, two days later, February 9, we decided to make a second glacier trip. This time we chose a short tour from Eismeer to Grindelwald. The distance is approximately five miles, and the descent 6,300 feet without the necessity of doing any climbing at all. It was a much steeper run than our previous tour and, on account of the fact that two days before a man had been badly hurt through falling and cutting

his head against some blocks of ice, we were advised to keep the party small. Therefore, Mrs. Charmier and I went along with Johnnie Graff as our guide.

We went up on the Jungfrau Railroad to Eismeer station by the eleven o'clock train. Most of the trip is through a tunnel, the station itself being completely inside the mountain. After arriving at the station, we had to descend several long flights of stairs to reach the level of the glacier. At the bottom of the stairs a door opened on to the top of a steep slope, where there was only room for one person to put on their skis at a time. Our guide kept telling us to hurry, as little bits of snow were continually falling from the rocks above. Needless to say we did as we were told, and soon were on our way to the ice fall. We were careful to turn exactly where our guide did and to follow him closely. At the icefall, the walls of the canyon through which this glacier runs come close together. They are quite precipitous, with a certain amount of ice hanging to them higher up, and as there is a constant danger of this ice falling we were again told to waste no time.

When we reached the icefall, we removed our

skis and carefully worked our way down from one level to the other, sometimes using steps which our guide cut for us with his ice axe. Here we saw the place where the accident had occurred two days before, and, judging from the signs in the snow, the injured man had not been bandaged until he had reached a widening in the canyon. We stopped there also and took some photographs. Unfortunately, none of these photographs turned out, as the perforations had somehow been torn when putting the film in the camera, and it, therefore, was not exposed.

During the descent, we had no long schusses, but some rather fast ones. For quite a distance we kept constantly turning to check our speed. The slopes were quite steep and we were in powder snow as we wound our way down to the lower levels. The rock walls around us seemed quite close, and in many places there were glaciers. In one place we skied across the bottom of a glacier which was quite rough. The scenery was magnificent, and we regretted very much later having no photographs turn out. On the lower levels the ski-ing conditions were bad, as, owing to the walls being close together, many rocks and lumps of ice had fallen on to

the surface of the glacier and were protruding from the snow. Soon after we reached the timberline we removed our skis and carried them the rest of the way down. On reaching the main valley to Grindelwald, we put on our skis again, and by doing some hurrying we were just able to make the 2.30 train back to Scheidegg. We ate our lunch in the train on the way up, first having obtained the co-operation of the conductor in waiting while we each had a bottle of beer.



The Aletsch Glacier

1924 is an interesting date in the history of skiing. It was in 1924 that the first Winter Olympic Games were held, Chamonix being the venue selected. It was in 1924 that the FIS (Fédération Internationale de Ski) was founded at Chamonix. It was in 1924 that the Kandahar Ski Club was founded at Murren with the

intention of securing the inclusion of Downhill Racing in the Olympic Games. The Kandahar was founded in the same week and perhaps on the same day as the FIS. Finally, it was in 1924, January 10-11, that the first international meeting decided on the combined result of a straight and a slalom race.