

The Mighty Matterhorn

THE craggy peak of the Matterhorn, 14,782 ft. high, is in the Pennine Alps, the vast range between the North Italian plain and the valley of the Rhone in Switzerland that includes Mont Blanc, the highest Alpine mountain, and Monte Rosa, which is little lower than that famous giant. As our cover this month shows, the Matterhorn is thrust like a jagged tooth high up into the sky, to be an irresistible attraction to all and a challenge to mountain climbers.

In its early days the Matterhorn was probably just a great rounded mountain, but in the ages since it was first thrust upward it has undergone many changes. Except active volcanoes, our mountains are indeed just relics of the huge cones they were when formed, for they began to suffer destruction by water and ice as soon as they were formed. Where ice is the great agent of erosion, glaciers bite deeply, gouging out corries and leaving ridges with steep sides, and eventually transforming the mountains into highly angular pinnacles, a characteristic shape of which the Matterhorn is a perfect example.

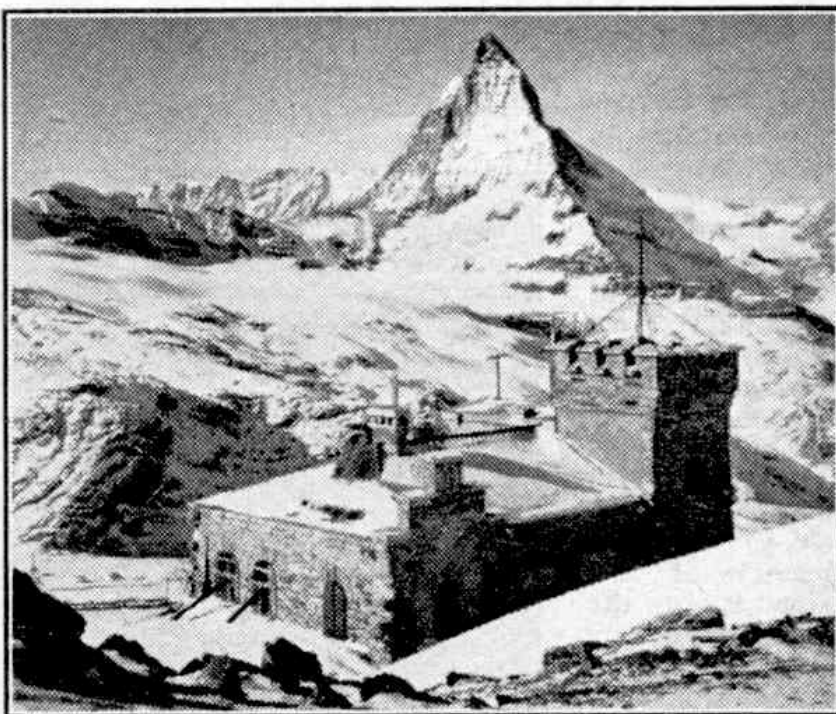
The conquest of the mountain in 1865 was one of the greatest ascents ever made. It was achieved by Edward Whymper, the great climber and explorer, whose name is imperishably associated with this rugged pinnacle. He was fascinated by the mountain and made repeated efforts to find a way to the summit, but success eluded him until his eighth attempt.

There can have been few more dramatic mountain climbing achievements than the first ascent of the Matterhorn. One reason for this was that Whymper had Italian rivals, the foremost of whom was a guide named Carrel, who were determined to be the first to climb the peak. Their project was concealed from Whymper for a time, and when at length he realised their aims he became furious and worked

with tremendous energy and at high speed to complete preparations for yet another effort.

Whymper was joined by Lord Francis Douglas and the Rev. Charles Hudson, both practised mountaineers, and a younger man named Hadow who lacked experience but had made some excellent climbs. The party also included three guides, Croz, Old Peter Taugwalder and his son, Young Peter Taugwalder.

In this climb, which in effect had



From Gornergrat Station, at a height of 10,235 ft., there is a splendid view of the Matterhorn. We are indebted to the Swiss Tourist Office for the illustrations to this article, and for the photograph on which the cover of this issue is based.

become a race, Whymper attacked the east face, and to his surprise and delight found the going comparatively easy at first. A camp was established at a point 4,000 ft. below the summit, and there the climbers spent the night, some in the tent and the remainder in sleeping bags and blankets on the rocks.

Next morning brought the climax of the struggle. The climbers made their way steadily upward, but eventually found their way barred by the sheer cliffs that fall directly from the summit of the mountain on its eastern side. They found a way round the cliffs to the north east, and after incredible exertions at last reached the first of the Matterhorn's two summits, passing from this to the second.