

Indeed, the story of his life might well be chronicled in some such work as Dr. Smiles's 'Self-Help;' for, in spite of the enormous disadvantage of having started with but little education, Couttet by perseverance and thrift, in the course of his honourable and upright career, amassed a larger share of this world's goods than almost any of his early colleagues and contemporaries. Although he seldom left his native valley, constant intercourse with the crowd who come to the foot of Mont Blanc from all parts of the world made him a shrewd judge of human nature, and nothing pleased him more than to relate his reminiscences of the widely different sorts and conditions of men he had met during the long years he had lived at Chamonix. His keen sense of humour, his quaint native wit and turns of phrase, imparted a great deal of individuality to these narratives. I doubt if there was anyone at Chamonix whose opinions on all matters regarding guides or mountaineering carried so much weight with the local authorities. Nearly everyone who has stayed under his roof must recall occasions when an appeal to old Couttet has enabled him to escape from some one or other of the irksome restrictions imposed by the *Guide-chef* or his *règlement*.

The death of François Couttet seems to break yet another of the few remaining links which join us with the early days of mountaineering; it will seem strange to arrive at Chamonix without seeing his familiar figure waiting to meet us at the corner of the Place, and we shall long miss his hearty welcome and the cordial grip of his hand. Everyone who knew 'brave Baguette' will always hold the memory of the true-hearted, kind old guide in affectionate regard. 'He was thoroughly loyal to his friends,' wrote an old office-bearer of the Club, 'and loyal also to the best traditions of his profession, one of the few who kept up the old feeling amongst a new order; he was in the best sense a true "vieux de la vieille."' C. D. C.

NEW EXPEDITIONS IN 1890.

Monte Rosa District.

CASTOR (4,222 mètres=13,852 feet). August 10.—Miss Richardson with Emile Rey and J. B. Bich crossed this peak from the Sella Club hut to Zermatt in 7½ hrs. actual walking, making two new variations *en route*. Starting from the Sella hut, the party gained a point on the E. arête, whence the summit of the peak was reached in 20 min. more. On the descent the arête was followed for two or three minutes. The party then struck down the snow-slopes (at first rather steep) of the N. face of the peak, and bearing always slightly to the left rejoined the route of the Zwillingsjoch on the snow-field above the Zwillings glacier, and followed that route to the Riffel.

Mont Blanc District.

AIGUILLE DU CHARDONNET BY THE S.E. FACE (3,823 mètres = 12,543 feet). September 5.—The same party having ascended this

peak by the usual route resolved to attempt the descent by way of the arête running down to the Col du Chardonnet.* The unusual amount of snow on the rocks forced them, however, to try another new route down the S.E. face, which is broken up into couloirs separated by ribs of rock, then rendered difficult by untrustworthy snow. The party zigzagged across this face at first in a westerly and afterwards generally in an easterly direction, keeping to the rocks when possible, though the couloirs were more frequently practicable. They thus joined the route from the Col du Chardonnet by the third couloir W. of the col. The descent of this face, which was uniformly steep, occupied 4 hrs. (including a halt of 35 min. just below the summit), great care being needed in many places with the step-cutting.

On the following day Mr. Arkle and Mr. C. J. Arkle made the ascent of the peak by the S.E. face, following the same route taken by the previous party on the descent.

ALPINE NOTES.

SOME ASCENTS IN THE LANGKOFEL GROUP OF THE DOLOMITES.—

(1) August 31.—Giorgio and Luigi Bernard, the well-known guides of Campitello, accompanied me in an ascent of the Grohmannspitze by a new route direct from the south side. Giorgio had looked at a certain cleft in the rocks, which runs down from the little gap almost at the summit of the mountain down to within 350 feet of its base, for some eighteen years with an ever-increasing belief in its practicability. Luigi believed that the first 350 feet were inaccessible; but as no one had ever experimented upon this route, we started at the late hour of 6.30 A.M. (it being Sunday) to put Giorgio's hopes, and Luigi's doubts, to a test. The climb began at about 8.45, the guides leaving their two (out of three) ice-axes and their hobnail boots at the breakfasting place. The first reach of rock equalled the commencement of the Sass Maor in smoothness, steepness, and difficulty, but was about three times as long. Luigi led with splendid vigour and skill. The start was made from a point about 200 yards to the left of the point immediately below the bottom of the cleft, and when, after a traverse to the right of the same length, the commencement of the cleft was reached, the guides unanimously declared that the new way had been won. The first feature in the cleft was a perpendicular chimney about 25 feet high, down which a waterfall of melted snow poured. The rocks to the right and left were smooth, glazed, and somewhat overhanging. Luigi accordingly led up straight through the waterfall like a merman, and the rest of the party followed. All the rocks above were glazed or filled with fresh slippery snow. Two other total immersions in chimney-waterfalls induced the guides to name the new cleft the Johannes-Kamin. If it had not been for the waterfalls, the iced rocks, and the snow upon the rocks, the Kamin would have pre-

* For previous attempts by this ridge see *Alpine Journal*, vol. x. p. 233; *Bulletin du Club Alpin Français*, 1889, p. 71.