

ACCIDENTS.

THE year 1891 has, perhaps to some extent in consequence of the bad weather, been singularly free from accidents in the High Alps. In fact, only three, or at the most four, deaths appear to have resulted from conditions which might not almost equally well be fulfilled on Dartmoor. We will deal with these first.

On June 28 Signor Leopoldo Lanza, a young member of the Turin Section of the C.A.I., ascended the Roche Melon by the usual route from the Casa d' Asti. Within 100 ft. of the summit his foot slipped on a slope of ice covered with snow; he fell a height of 1,600 or 1,700 ft., and was, of course, instantly killed. He had a porter with him, but the account in the 'Rivista' of the accident makes no mention of a rope.

Two months later Colonel Filippo Zucchi, of the Italian Engineers, started alone to ascend the same peak from the Hospice of Mont Cenis. He was spoken with later on at the Alpe du Tour, but was not seen again. Up to the end of September all search for him had been fruitless.

On Friday, July 31, Herr Weber-Imhof, of Winterthur, a well-known Swiss climber, ascended Piz Bernina by the 'Scharte' with the guides Schocher and Schnitzler. Descending by the usual route, they reached the Boval hut at 9. The weather had been bad, and Herr Weber, not wishing to pass the night in wet clothes, decided, after a quarter of an hour's halt, to push on for Pontresina. Lanterns were lighted and the party set out—Schocher in front, Schnitzler behind, the traveller in the middle. A little below the spot called the 'Cheminée' the path passes over wet ground, and some stepping-stones have been put down. On one of these Herr Weber seems to have tripped, and to have fallen head foremost down a low rocky wall not more than 20 ft. in height, which at that point borders the path on the right. Help was fetched at once; but Herr Weber, though still breathing when it came, died before noon at the Morteratsch Restaurant. This disaster appears to have been as purely accidental as any could be. The path is used by cattle, and no reasonable precaution for traversing it in the dark seems to have been omitted. The guides behaved well, especially Schocher, who wrapped his Herr in his own coat, and sat for three hours supporting him until Schnitzler returned with help. We are glad to draw attention to their conduct, as Pontresina guides are, not undeservedly, for the most part in low esteem with mountaineers.

On August 20 a party consisting of Herr Rothe, of Brunswick, Count de Favernay, three guides, and two porters reached M. Vallot's hut on the Bosses du Dromadaire. The weather the following morning did not allow them to complete the ascent of Mont Blanc, and in the afternoon of the 21st they began the downward journey. Their party was increased by four of the men employed in connection with M. Janssen's proposed observatory. As they descended from the Grand towards the Petit Plateau a mass of ice and snow falling from the Dôme du Goûter started an avalanche, which caught those in rear

and swept five of them—Herr Rothe, his guide, Michel Simond, the porter Armand Comte, Count de Favernay, and one of his guides into the great crevasse. All but the first two were extricated, Comte with serious injuries, but the bodies of Herr Rothe and Simond were only recovered a few days later. The whole party, eleven in all, appear to have been on one rope, and when the fall took place this parted—it is said on both sides of Comte. It is hard to say in a case like this, when the mass of snow dislodged was very considerable and the distance traversed by the party in falling very short, whether the presence or absence of a rope would have made much difference, but it would surely have been more prudent for the party to have broken up into small detachments instead of thus ‘putting all their eggs into one basket,’ and there seems no doubt that either to save a little time, or straying from the right road in the mist, they had kept too far to the left, and so brought themselves within range of the missiles discharged by the Dôme.* There appears no ground for the ungenerous insinuation of one English newspaper that Herr Rothe was duly warned of danger, and that his guide was with reluctance persuaded to accompany him.

The remaining accidents, of which we need only give a few typical specimens, are almost without exception instances of falls on rocks, in most cases with the addition ‘climber alone.’ Thus Herr W. Behr, of Hamburg, left Cortina on August 13 to climb the Becco di Mezzodi, a peak of no particular difficulty. As he did not return the guide Barbaria went in search of him, and found him next morning with his skull smashed at the foot of a precipice some 200 feet high.

On Friday, August 7, two Vienna schoolboys, aged 17 and 18, set out to walk from Radstadt to Gosau over a pass called the ‘Stiegl,’ which, it may be remarked, is ‘markirt.’ Shortly before reaching the lower Gosau lake they lost their way, and the elder, Joseph Kraus, fell over a precipice some 300 feet high and was killed. The other lad, Karl Karger, reached the body and went for help, but in his bewilderment lost his way and wandered off towards the Dachstein. Not till the Sunday did he reach the Gosau See. A party then went up and with much difficulty brought down the body. Similar accidents of course occur in every mountainous district. There is little to choose between a fall of 100 feet and one of 100 metres, and the lower ranges of the Alps differ from Welsh or Cumbrian mountains only in the fact that, the distances being greater, those who lose their way run a greater risk of being overcome by hunger or fatigue before they can reach shelter.

Of all the accidents of the year perhaps the most melancholy, because, so far as can be seen, the most recklessly incurred, is that by which Signor Mario Andreis, treasurer of the Italian Alpine Club, lost his life on July 19. A party of members of the club having gone on a Sunday excursion from Turin to the famous sanctuary of San Michele, Signor Andreis, accompanied by the well-known mountaineer, Signor Fiorio, proposed to arrive at their destination by clambering up

* See Hudson and Kennedy, *When there's a will, &c.* Second Edition, pp. 96, 97.

the precipice below the monastery known as the Salto della Bell' Alda. After an hour's climb they came to a path, and Signor Fiorio proposed that they should abandon the rocks and follow it. Signor Andreis, however, begged to be allowed 'a little more gymnastics,' and they proceeded to scramble upward. After about half the remaining distance had been achieved Signor Andreis, while prospecting ahead up a difficult chimney, lost his hold and fell in several bounds to the wood below, being killed instantly. He was close upon forty years of age.

The 'Echo' of August 21 recorded the death of a French officer, who 'fell from a height of 1,500 feet whilst ascending one of the ridges of Mount Chambeyron, which has an altitude of 12,000 feet and . . . has always been considered inaccessible;' but no intelligence of this disaster seems as yet to have reached the 'Rivista' or any other organ of Alpine information. Both Chambeyron peaks were ascended by Mr. Coolidge in 1879. The highest is 11,155 feet.

We may congratulate ourselves that in the present year not only no member of the Club but no Englishman has lost his life in the mountains. We can read the diatribes of well-informed writers on 'the alarums and excursions of Alpine climbers, their perilous jealousies, their lamentable record of deaths and casualties,' 'the spirit of competition which has made mountain-climbing a thing to be enjoyed in proportion to the risk run,' 'the *quorum pars fui* vainglory, which plays a very significant part in the endeavours of those who risk their lives in climbing such peaks as the Jungfrau or Mont Blanc,' 'the perversity of mountain-climbers,' and so on, and feel that this year, at any rate, their fables are not narrated of us.

NEW EXPEDITIONS IN 1891.

[It is thought that the time has arrived when the fact that an expedition is 'new' hardly confers sufficient importance on it to make its classification under a separate heading necessary. Of course so long as any points from which the ground falls on all sides remain untraced, and the depressions between them untraversed, it will always be possible to find 'peaks' and 'passes' to which the term 'virgin' may be applied, and which may very well serve as goals for the enterprising climber. But it can hardly be said that the relation of his success in attacking them will add more to our knowledge of the Alps, or convey any more generally valuable information than the accounts of many another expedition, which does not profess to have been done for the first time. In future, therefore, reverting to a former practice, one section will be devoted to 'Alpine Notes and New Expeditions.']

Dauphiné.

S. PIC DU SAYS (3,409 m.=11,180 ft.). July 6.—Mr. J. H. Gibson, with Ulrich Almer and Fritz Boss, starting from La Bérarde, climbed this peak from the Petit Glacier du Chardon by the long couloir that descends to it from the arête running between the N. and S. Pics du Says. From the top of the couloir the arête was followed to the summit. The ascent took 8 hours, nearly 4 being spent in the