

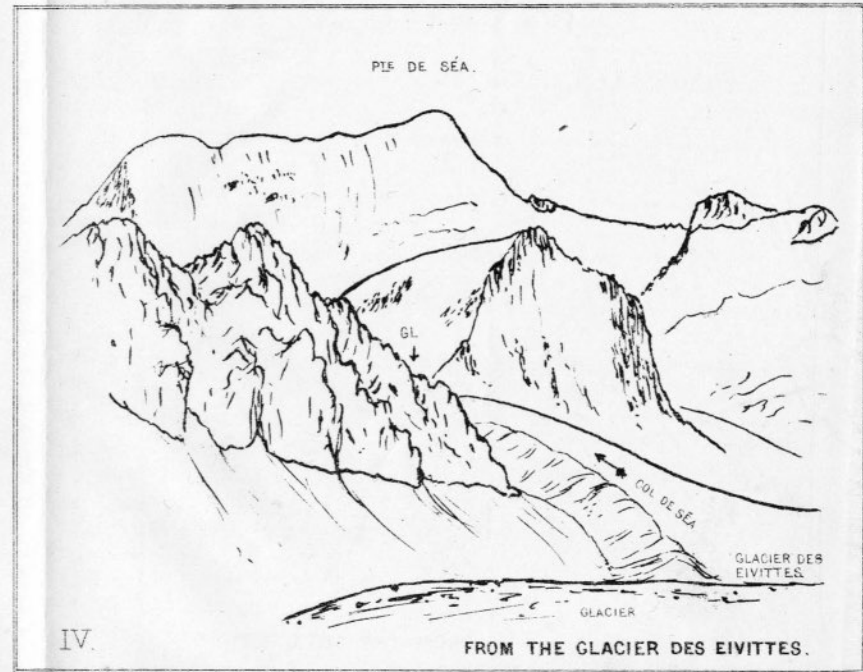
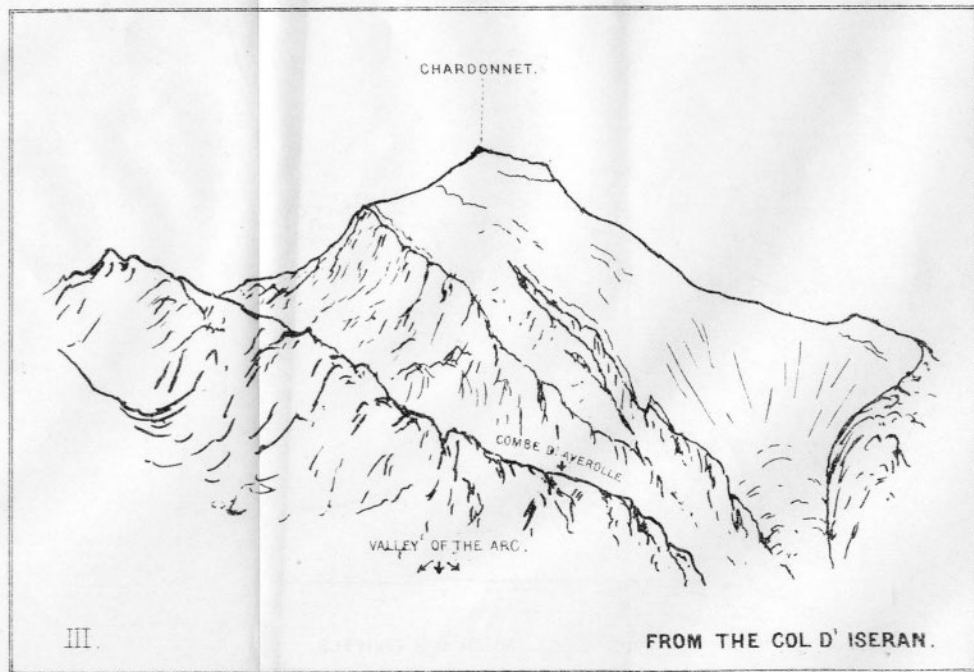
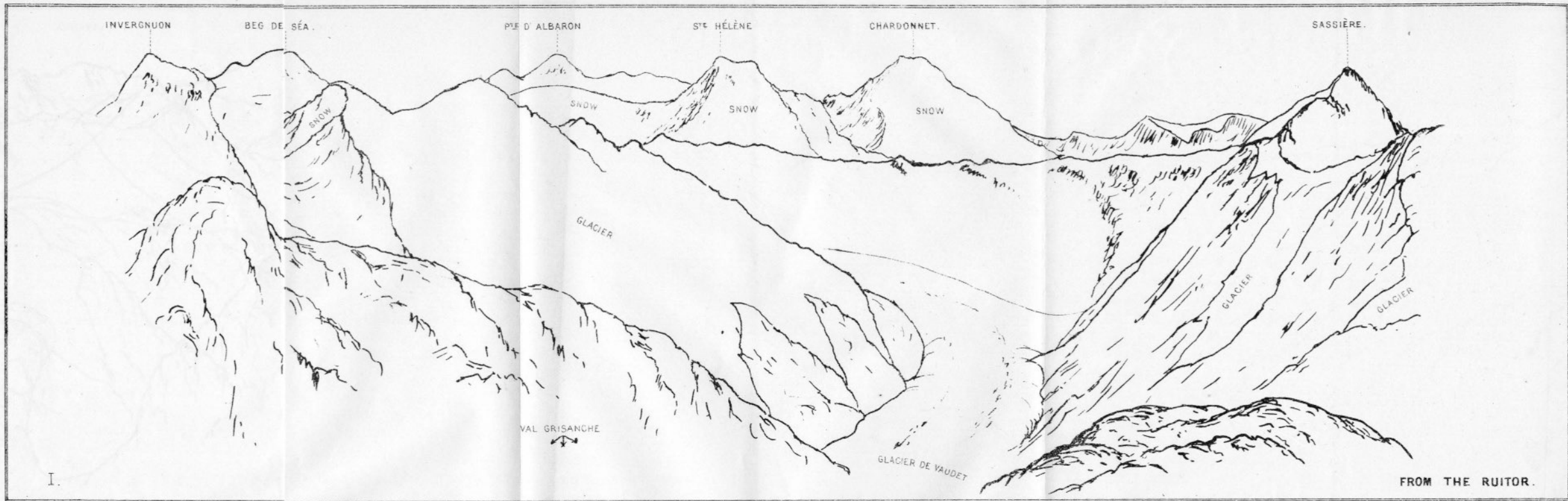
Grove's slumbers in the next cupboard, which was divided from mine by a sort of paper partition, I incline to think that I was not long awake.

And now having, in the words of the poet, 'fairly put all characters to bed,' I have only one duty to discharge. Melchior's character is too well known to require any further commendation than an expression of our opinion that on this day he surpassed himself. Of Jacob Anderegg, who is Melchior's cousin, I must add that he showed himself on this as on other occasions to be a first-rate man. He is a powerful, very good-looking fellow. He is always good-tempered, as strong as a horse, willing to take any trouble, and on bad places as handy and steady as a man can be. I cannot conclude this paper better than by strongly recommending his claims to any of my alpine friends who are unprovided with a guide, and who require one for difficult expeditions.

---

THE LEVANNA DISTRICT. By the Rev. T. G. BONNEY, M.A., F.G.S. Read before the Alpine Club, April 4, 1865.

THIS has been called a sceptical age; and alpine tourists cannot claim exemption from the general ban. They have made disparaging observations upon the Mont Iséran; they have instituted odious barometrical comparisons between the heights of many a peak and pass; they have pooh-pooed the difficulties of Mont Blanc; they have deprived numerous virgin summits of the title 'inaccessible;' worse still, they have refused to bow down before the dicta of Murray, and sneered at the surveys of Government engineers. I cannot claim to be clear from this wide-spread infection; for the examination of certain maps always leads me to one conclusion—namely, that I have at least an accurate idea of what is not the topography of the region that they delineate. The Iséran sheet of the Sardinian survey includes a part of the Alps which I must confess to have regarded in this light. It elaborately depicts the district at the head of the Arc Valley, from the Mont Iséran on the north to the Combe d'Averolle on the south. Sundry distant views that I had obtained of the country had shown me that mountains existed there; but my enquiring spirit refused to be appeased by the delineations of them in the map. In 1863 my desires were baffled, when on the very point of being fulfilled, by a sudden downfall of snow, which drove me away from the Maurienne to the more



congenial temperature of Turin. Of this I will only observe, that if a gale like that which buffeted us had been blowing on the Cénis when Hannibal crossed it, he would certainly have never 'pointed a moral' against the Alpine Clubs of the present day. Our forces, however, got over with only the loss of my hat, which disappeared in a cloud of dust over the rocks. This obliged me to walk into Susa, greatly to the astonishment of the natives, in the comfortable but picturesque head-dress of a woollen nightcap of the feminine gender. In 1864 I determined to take this district on my way from Courmayeur to La Grave, in Dauphiné. My ideas of it were necessarily somewhat vague. Mr. Cowell's interesting paper in 'Vacation Tourists' had of course made me familiar with the Levanna. I also knew that there were two passes to the south of it, the Col Girard and the Col de Séa, and somewhere near the latter a large mountain called the Aiguille or Uja di Cimarella: besides which I had heard vague rumours of a peak in the neighbourhood called the Mont Chardonnet. My travelling companion, Mr. R. W. Taylor, and myself started with the intention of crossing these two passes, and picking up by the way what crumbs of information we could about the mountains. We brought with us as guide Joseph Basil Simond, from Chamouni, and after one or two partial glimpses obtained a good general view of the district from the summit of the Ruitor. Thence four mountains are seen (Plate I.). First, the Levanna, a long jagged ridge just on the right of the Bec de Glaçon. Then comes a long wedge-shaped mountain. This at Bonneval is called the Pointe de Séa. It stands south of the Col de Séa, and just east of the watershed; and is no doubt the Uja di Cimarella of the Sardinian map; which, however, is not in the right position, being placed rather too much to the west. Still more to the right is a flattened cone rising from a high snowfield; this at Bonneval is called the Pointe d'Albaron, and perhaps is the Mont Collerin of the map, which as usual is wrong. The Ste. Hélène of Mr. Nichols then rises above the Vaudet glacier; and just to the right of this is a pyramidal peak with a flat top, covered with snow except on the left side, which is steep rock. At Bonneval this is called Mont Carbonel, and is probably identical with the Mont Chardonnet. It is on the left bank of the Combe d'Averolle, nearly south of Bessans; the extremity of its glacier is just seen on the map. I may as well state that these peaks must be about 12,000 feet; and I suspect that they are all higher than the Levanna. On the second day after this we walked from Tignes over the far-famed Mont Iséran. The ascent is simply dull, and the

pass, by a delusive cross placed on a knoll far below the summit, is true to its disreputable character. When, however, the shaly bank or plateau is gained, over which the scientific observer wanders wildly seeking for the highest point whereon to plant his instruments, a fine view to the south makes amends for previous defects; and as this hitherto, so far as I know, has not been described, I shall essay to do it. From the pass a rough ascent gradually leads up to the stone man on that gross impostor the *Iséran*, who on this occasion, smitten with a late and unseasonable repentance, covered his head, and was literally, as well as figuratively, under a cloud. We therefore did not add our stone to the heap which testifies against him, as we had intended; for in fine weather the view from it must be much more extensive than that from the pass. Clouds also kept drifting over the mountains to the south, but by patient watching I was able to obtain a complete sketch of them. A ridge, descending from the *Mont Iséran*, and overhanging a wide short glacier, encloses the head of the little *Vallon de Lenta*, which runs steeply down to join the main valley of the *Arc*, across which lies the opening of the *Combe d'Averolle*. To the right of the above-named ridge, over the smooth barrier of ice-worn rock and shale forming the opposite bank of the *Vallon de Lenta*, the *Pointe d'Albaron* rises on the other side of the *Arc*, a pyramidal peak with two faces visible; that on the left mainly a precipice of dark rock, that on the right a smooth slope of snow, widening out into a large undulating plateau of *névé*, which occupies the space between the valley of the *Arc* and the *Combe d'Averolle* (Plate II.). Across the latter towers the *Chardonnet* (Plate III.). Its summit is a flat ridge sloping gently from south-east to north-west. In the former direction it falls rapidly down from the highest point, until it terminates in a triangular mass of precipices; but from the north-western extremity of the ridge a snow *arête* descends more gradually, and sweeps round the head of a small snowy amphitheatre in the side of the mountain, from which an unusually steep narrow glacier descends towards the *Combe*. To this succeeds a long *arête* of dark rock, followed by a flat snow-field.

The view is then closed by the rocks and glaciers north of the *Arc* and west of the *Col d'Iséran*; over these runs more than one pass from *Tignes* to *Bonneval*; and I should strongly recommend them to future explorers—they cannot be difficult or long, and are probably a little under 10,000 feet in height.

On the descent from the *Col d'Iséran* we had a glimpse of the *Pointe de Séa* through the drifting clouds, but the *Levanna* is not visible. From *Tignes* to the *Col d'Iséran* took us three

hours and twenty minutes, and from the Col to Bonneval one hour and twenty-five minutes.

On arriving at Culet's auberge, we obtained, after some difficulty, accommodation and the promise of a dinner. The houses in Bonneval present certain architectural peculiarities worthy of notice. The people are partially troglodytes, as in London, and place their cattle on the same level as themselves. A sketch of Culet's house, principal aubergiste and mayor of Bonneval, will explain my meaning. It stands on slightly rising ground, and occupies two sides of a square. At the angle is a descent, leading into the 'airy.' Follow it, and you will find yourself in a cowhouse; pass on and you will reach a stable. Be not deterred, but go yet farther, and you will arrive in the kitchen of the establishment, which is also, in the winter season, the sleeping chamber of the host and hostess. Above ground, one wing is a barn; the other consists of two rooms, each containing a bed: the outer the guest-chamber, the inner the summer apartment of the owners, which, however, was on this occasion resigned in Taylor's favour. As in many parts of the Tarentaise, the tourist's first question on arriving at Bonneval is, 'Have you any meat?' and here, too, he will probably hear the usual negative. The *menu* of our dinner was, I think, worthy of record, so here it is:—

Potage (aux trois étoiles)—Pommes de terre frites aux oignons—Verdure (alias épinard)—Omelette—Salade.

We summoned the landlord to our council, and I must say that I cannot quite endorse Mr. Cowell's favourable opinion of him. He tried to dissuade us from passing the Col de Séa, by saying that it was very difficult and dangerous and would take us eight hours of ice-work. The ascent of the Levanna he also described as dangerous. He said that the Col Girard was easier; the Col de Collarin, at the head of the Combe d'Averolle, easier than that; and with regard to the Cols d'Arnaz and du Lautaret, he stated that the former had a small snow-field at the top, and the latter none at all.

As, however, we adhered to our original plan, he provided us with a guide named François Blanc, of Ecot, who engaged for the sum of 24 francs to take us to Forno by the Col de Séa and bring us back by the Col Girard. We started early next morning, and after crossing over to the left bank of the Arc, kept by the stream for ten minutes, and then turned up a track leading along the mountain side, from which we soon got a view of the Levanna, a long ridge of precipitous rock, with two narrow snow-beds on the left. It is the least beautiful and

attractive of the four mountains of the district. We were now on the buttresses of the Albaron, and soon crossed a valley, up which is a fine view of the Glacier de Vallonet. Two hours' walking brought us into an upland valley, between the Albaron and the Pointe de Séa. The greater part of this is filled by the Glacier des Eivittes, at the bottom of which is a marshy plain, terminated by precipices, down which the glacier torrent plunges. We kept along the rough slopes above the left bank of the glacier, which appears generally smooth and easy to traverse, till we called a halt for breakfast. The view hence includes the Levanna and the snow-field of the Col Girard, next to which, and somewhat in advance, comes a fine pinnacle of dark rock, called by our guide the Vanoise (perhaps the Ulia de Trieves of the Italian map), then the Glacier de Mulinet, the Glacier des Eivittes, with the Pointe de Séa rising over the depression formed by the col of the same name (Plate IV.). The summit of the Albaron cannot be seen. Breakfast over, we crossed the glacier, and turned up towards the Col de Séa, keeping near the right bank, close by a moraine descending from it, in order to avoid some crevasses; and then, after a short climb up a steepish wall with a bergschrund in the usual position, we easily reached the col in one hour and five minutes' walking. Hence is a fine view of the Pourri, and of a flattish glacier-covered but lower mountain on the left of it. The Albaron might be ascended by keeping straight up the Glacier des Eivittes; but there would be an hour or two's difficult work among some shattered séracs until the east arête was gained, after which all would be easy. Culet told me that it was quite accessible from the Col de Collarin. On the east side of the col, a short slope of broken rock leads down to a glacier which descends from the Pointe de Séa and from a small hill south of the col. High crags, forming the south barrier of the Vallon de Séa, impede the view to the east.

Here, as in so many other parts of the Alps, there is a tradition that the pass was formerly less difficult, and was crossed by cattle. Certainly there is a well-marked path on the rough bank of shale, which leads down to the head of the Glacier de Séa. On the summit of the pass three species of plants, one of them an Androsace, were in flower. A few minutes brought us on to the glacier, which we followed for about a quarter of an hour, when the increasing size and intricacy of the crevasses drove us to the moraine on the left bank. The Pointe de Séa might be ascended from this side, but the snow-slopes are steep. After ten minutes we again returned to the ice, which we followed for twenty minutes, and then quitted for the rocks

on the left bank. Over these we scrambled for a quarter of an hour, when we were obliged to return to the glacier; where a steep slope, fortunately covered in most places with old snow, led us to the bottom of the valley; and in less than another quarter of an hour we finally quitted the ice, having spent rather over an hour and three-quarters upon it. I can, however, believe that later in the season the crevasses of the Glacier de Séa may require the aid of an experienced ice-man, with the usual weapons. We descended some rough slopes of stone and rock, scrambled down by a cascade, crossed more banks of débris, then ascended the turfy slopes on the left side of the valley, till we reached a deserted châlet. Hence we followed a rising path till we came out on a sort of bluff, where François fairly lost his way. Simond, however, discovered a narrow goat-track which led us down a cliff to the bottom of the valley; and in a few minutes more we reached the Châlets de Séa, nestled under a mass of rounded rock. Here dwelt a berger, hospitable as the patriarchs of old; for he refreshed us with copious draughts of milk, and then (*mirabile dictu*) steadfastly refused any payment. On the right bank of the valley is a magnificent line of crags, which then were towering grandly over the clouds wreathed about their bases. So far as we could see, there was nothing that would have prevented our following the stream down the valley from the foot of the glacier. A descent of one hour and a half down a desolate valley, by a wearisome path, brought us to Forno, a little village prettily situated among green fields. The auberge is poor, and meat could not be obtained; but still we did not fare amiss, and the hay was clean.

The clouds during the night had cleared off the mountains, and the dawn revealed to us the notch of the Col Girard at the top of a wall of rock, apparently any number of thousand feet above us. The path to it crosses to the right bank of the Stura, then winds completely round under a magnificent amphitheatre of apparently inaccessible cliffs, until, in rather more than an hour and a half, the stream is crossed again, and the last châlets are reached. From these we ascended a succession of turfy knolls, strewn with broken rocks, keeping in a direction nearly parallel to the main ridge, on the left bank of a ravine, until in an hour and a quarter more we gained its head at the foot of the long snow-slope leading to the Col Girard. Blanc told us that we could, if we chose, go by another route, by which, in the time of Napoleon I., mules used to cross from France to Piedmont. It is a little to the north of the Col Girard, from which its stone-man is visible, and—

being rather higher, and commanding a view into the Val d'Orca—would be worth a visit; it could be also reached without difficulty from the col. As clouds had gathered again, and we were anxious to reach Lanslebourg by night, we did not change our plan.

The slope is very long and steep, so that, though the snow was in good order, we were more than an hour and a half in climbing it. On nearing the col, two notches, divided by a tooth of rock, are seen in the ridge; we made for that on the right, scrambled up a few rocks, and gained another snow-field, which swells gently up for a short distance before it begins to descend towards the Arc. It is therefore not easy to determine the exact height of the pass.

The distant view from the col should include the Grande Casse, the Grande Motte, and the Pourri, besides the Levanna, which here looks a very uninteresting ridge of dark rock, and some part of the plains of Piedmont. All the latter was, however, blotted out by the mists. On comparing the attractions of the two cols, I should say that, while the distant view from the Girard must be the finer, the general scenery of the Séa is far superior.

A descent of forty-five minutes down a smooth and gently sloping glacier brought us to its right bank, and after a few minutes' floundering among snow and loose rock we arrived in a secluded glen under the Levanna, the Comba de Grande Fonda of the map. After leaving this we passed some châteaux, at which the path turns off to the Col del Carro: there is no glacier on this side. In an hour and twenty minutes we reached Ecot, a poor village built among stranded boulders and magnificent domes of ice-worn rock. A few minutes' walk lower down the valley is to my mind the only picturesque view of the Levanna; where a little bridge and waterfall make an excellent foreground. Another hour brought us to Bonneval, and three and a quarter hours' quick walking took us from it to Lanslebourg, where we arrived just in time to escape a violent thunderstorm. On our way we had a fine view of the Mont Chardonnet rising above the Combe d'Averolle.

I advise the next traveller who visits this district to start from Bessans, and explore the Combe with the special view of determining whether it is possible to reach the summit of the Chardonnet from this side. The precipices look very forbidding, and the small glacier mentioned above appears impracticable, but the upper snow-fields would not present any difficulties. After this he should cross the Col de Collarin, and examine

the southern faces of the Albaron and Pointe de Séa. Should they turn out to be inaccessible on that side, he can make his way to Forno, and attack them from the Col de Séa.

---

THE COL TOURNANCHE. BY J. A. HUDSON, B.A.

ONE day during the month of August 1861, the Rev. J. F. Hardy and I took leave of a party of friends whom we had accompanied from Zermatt to Breuil, over the St. Théodule pass: as we wished to return to Zermatt, and felt inclined to vary our route, if possible, we looked round to see if we could find an eligible col. We soon discovered a very marked depression in the ridge connecting the Matterhorn and the Dent d'Hérens, which seemed accessible on the Italian side, though of the descent we knew nothing. We determined at all events to attempt it, and accordingly started at 5.30 A.M. the next morning, provided with a rope, but destitute of the equally necessary accompaniments of a guide and an axe: after mounting for about an hour up slippery grass slopes, we got on to a steep but not difficult glacier, which was surmounted by a snow slope leading straight up to a point in the ridge a little to the west of the true col, and rather higher than it, but which then appeared to us, though erroneously, to be easier of access. Our supply of fluids for the expedition consisted of one bottle of champagne, which was confided to Hardy's charge, and attached to the rope which hung gracefully down his back, allowing the bottle to dangle to and fro. After we had mounted for some distance, kicking steps with our toes, Hardy found the bottle rather inconvenient in the position it then occupied, and detached it from the rope with the intention of putting it in his pocket; the intention was a good one, but alas! it shared the fate of many of its brethren, for Hardy's fingers were cold, and the melancholy result was that, instead of going inside, it went outside his pocket, and commenced a glissade down the steep slopes we had just surmounted.

We stood with elongated faces watching the somewhat erratic progress of our lost treasure, which zigzagged from side to side, jumping the crevasses like a young chamois, till at length its progress was arrested, just on the edge of a large chasm, by a bed of soft snow into which it plunged. As we had not a drop of anything else to drink I descended, and brought back the wanderer in triumph, though a good deal of time was thus wasted. Soon after my return, we came to a bergschrund which without the aid of an axe looked rather formidable, and we