

ox-tail soup and some port wine restored me to amiability. Before I turned in I found that, besides my two servants who were on the other side, one porter was missing, and another had left the road on the hill. Food was cooked over night, cold tea, stimulants, and some blankets were packed, and I ordered four of the Tartars and my hill sportsman to start off before daylight to help over the cripples. The next day was an anxious one, for I could not but anticipate some serious casualty ; however, the missing porter walked in early in the morning, and by sun-down the butler was led into camp a melancholy limp-looking mortal. The head of the hill porters would not face the pass at all, but returned home, having borrowed money from my hill sportsman to enable him to do so.

And now, having carried my readers over the Parung Pass into Tibet, I respectfully make my bow, and leave them to find their way back as best they can.

ASCENT OF THE AIGUILLE VERTE. By THOS. S. KENNEDY.

AT Easter in 1865, I was visiting the Rev. C. Hudson at Skillington, to arrange a Swiss tour, and we agreed to meet at Chamouni, to ascend the Aiguille Verte, and then to go to Zermatt, to try if we could climb the Matterhorn by its northern arête. The second part of this programme we could not carry out together from unforeseen circumstances. How we succeeded at Chamouni will now be detailed.

On the very day that I entered Chamouni, Mr. Whymper succeeded in making the first ascent of our mountain, with two German guides, but, from various circumstances, of which not the least one was the ill-temper shown by the Chamouni guides as a body to their more fortunate German brethren, a groundless doubt was cast by them upon his success. So our expedition was reduced to making the second ascent of the peak, partly to carry out an original intention, and partly to establish the truth of Mr. Whymper's success by finding a rope which he had buried at the top. I may here state that the Chamouni guides have made at least twenty attempts to scale this peak, of which some were really hard tussles with the mountain, whilst others were merely sham expeditions organized to extort money from their employers, it being well understood amongst the guides that the first difficulty should stop them. Bad weather detained us at Chamouni for several days, but we made one reconnoitring expedition to a point

above the Argentière Glacier, to see if there was any chance of ascending the mountain on that side. It is impossible to say from below if that side will prove to be accessible; at any rate it would be excessively difficult, and we resolved to ascend, as Mr. Whymper had done, from the Glacier du Talèfre, on the southern side of the peak. We were joined in our expedition by the Rev. G. Hodgkinson and his guide Ducroz, Messrs. Birkbeck and M'Cormick being too unwell to accompany us. The party consisted, therefore, of Hodgkinson, Hudson, Peter Perren, Michel Croz, Jean Ducroz, and myself, two porters being hired to carry our tent and baggage to the Couvercle. A pleasant walk from the Montanvert took us to the junction of the Talèfre Glacier with the Mer de Glace; at this point it is necessary to leave the ice and to ascend the rocks called Les Egralets. Formerly there was no difficulty in effecting the passage from the ice to the rock, but of late years the ice has shrunk greatly, and is quite 20 feet lower than it used to be. Consequently an almost vertical wall of rock has been left, and an insecurely placed ladder is the only way up it. For an unencumbered man there would be no trouble in ascending, even without a ladder, but our heavily-laden porters found it difficult. Our guides shouted and pushed at them as an English drover does at a herd of bullocks, and although one man nearly lost his balance round a projecting corner at the top, they all got up safely.

We pitched the tent at the top of the Couvercle; Hodgkinson, Hudson, Croz, and Ducroz could not be persuaded to sleep inside it, for the night was warm and most lovely; Perren, the two porters, and I used it. At 1.30 we rose and made our toilettes, mine taking so long that Croz became impatient and started off alone.

A clear, and, for the early hour, warm atmosphere, made our progress up the hard slopes easy and pleasant. For about two hours we went upwards, always circling round the great basin of the Talèfre Glacier, for this method not only made the route upwards easier, but it also avoided the crevasses in the central portion above the Jardin.

When the day had fully broken, we stood at the foot of a hard frozen snow débris, forming the base of a couloir in the side of the Aiguille Verte. Directly below the mountain, as it were, this couloir seemed to lead almost to the summit, and presented a very obvious point of attack; Hudson and I concurred in thinking that it would be a good route. But Hodgkinson, who had talked with Mr. Reilly on the result of his expedition the previous year, said that these very rocks had

turned out to be difficult to climb, and Mr. Whymper had told us that his successful route lay further eastward, and that there he had found no particular difficulty up to almost the summit of the mountain. So we consulted, and as usual the guides would give no opinion, whilst Hodgkinson wished to go further on along the base before commencing the ascent; but he was overruled by the majority. We decided to go straight up, if only for the sake of novelty, but Hodgkinson was right; the way up the Aiguille Verte by the great ridge of the Aiguille du Moine is one of the most difficult routes up a mountain that has ever been made. Up the débris we went, up to the rocks from it, and then, finding many a broad sheet of most slippery and untrustworthy ice upon the rocks, we turned to the right and descended into the hard snow of the couloir. Perren, Hudson, and I were roped together, and formed the first party; Hodgkinson had for attendants Michel Croz and Ducroz; I told Perren to reserve himself for the hard work higher up, and proceeded to cut away at the steps.

The couloir was steep and straight, the snow hard, and my axe a good one; and, as we happened to be 20 yards ahead of the other party, the blocks cut out acquired a considerable velocity before reaching Hodgkinson, and caused some murmuring from below, and corresponding merriment from above. My little black dog began, as she always does on hard snow slopes, to look unhappy. Although her claws acted in some measure the part of crampons, they were not sufficient to enable her to walk in any but an up-and-down direction, and sitting on her hind legs was manifestly impossible. An hour's work brought us to the head of the couloir, and we ascended through some soft snow to a short secondary ridge, which showed us that we were standing on the crest of a buttress of the Aiguille Verte, down one side of which our couloir fell. We sat down to breakfast, and then turned to the left, climbed some rocks, and found ourselves on the edge of an immense ridge, the connecting link between the Aiguilles du Moine and Verte. And here a grand sight awaited us. Nearly on a level, and about half a mile off, rose the top of the Aiguille du Dru, the great red perpendicular rocks standing up almost terrifically from below, whilst some slight mists curling and waving about lent them a peculiar charm. Far down below was the Montanvert, Chamouni, and all the well-known spots, the clear sharp atmosphere showing every little point with wonderful distinctness. 'They see us at Chamouni,' Perren said; and I imagined that the sound of a gunshot reached my ears, but it must have been fancy, the Chamouni people could scarcely have dis-

tinguished our party from the numberless little projections of the ridge.

Things began to look more difficult above. Great smooth rocks frowned above, and went sloping down from us until they seemed to be lost in the depths. But we set to work to see how far we could get, and so we scrambled up an icy corner, and then went out directly upon the face of the slope, cutting steps in the thin ice which covered the rock. Not even a cat could have got up there, and, whilst we were extricating ourselves from a perilous adventure, a shout from Croz announced that he had discovered an old alpenstock fixed in the rocks, with the remains of a red pocket handkerchief hanging to it. Other evidences of an exploring party having previously attained this height were lying about; we took up the old flagstaff and carried it with us. Croz made a reconnaissance round a corner and shouted to us to follow him; we did so, and then found that Ducroz had detached himself from his party and gone on as an independent explorer. The slopes which here presented themselves were easy, leading up again to the great ridge at a point above the rocks which had proved to be impracticable below. We had now an extended view over the whole mountain side, and we could see that farther to the west the route would have been better. Gaining the ridge again we overtook Ducroz, who had stopped at a point where I think most unattached men would have stopped. The ridge was becoming broken into jagged steps and great protuberances of rock; these were covered with ice or frozen snow, and the greatest caution was necessary upon them. We were forced to cross over to the Chamouni side of the ridge, at this point of fearful steepness, and descending without a break for thousands of feet. Having circumvented the first difficulty, we crossed back again to the less steep or western side. It presented a soft and insecure-looking snow slope with a wreath overhanging at the top; directly below this we crossed it, and something was said about the danger of recrossing such a place in the late afternoon. But our blood was roused now, and we had determined to stop all night at the top if it should be necessary to wait for the night's frost to harden the snow again. Perren complained of fatigue, and asked if Croz might be allowed to take his place. He did so, and Hodgkinson's party went in front, a position which they retained to the summit, and which gave me an opportunity of witnessing the powers of one of the greatest guides that ever trod a mountain top.

We climbed up what seemed to be a little spire of rock rising from the ridge—it was, in reality, the end of a level and very

sharp section of it; along this we balanced ourselves until a projecting piece of stone caused each in turn to embrace it with his arms whilst his body hung in mid-air over the Montanvert, and a precarious footing was gained on the other side. Then up a little gap from which we could see the two ridges or buttresses of the mountain ascending from the Aiguille du Dru and from Les Droites until they nearly met to form the summit. But our own ridge, which formed the third side, concealed the actual summit, and we began to fear lest some great projection or gap in our ridge, of which the difficulties increased at every step, should cut us off from it. We were evidently very near it, and the sight had a magical effect upon Croz. Advancing along a piece of snow, supported upon a jutting rock at some distance below the ridge, he announced that he could go no further. 'Try the Montanvert side,' called out Hudson, but the Montanvert side did not look inviting to our great guide, for he turned back immediately, and, to my astonishment, prepared to pass below the snow and rock which he could not climb. Hudson and I were sitting in the gap and watching the proceedings. 'Dear sir,' Perren said to me, solemnly, 'that is too dangerous, they will all be killed!' Unaided he slid down a snow-covered rock of most precarious footing, and, stooping, passed round a ledge of slippery rock on which lay piled a great mass of snow with depending icicles. No help or consolation would he give to his followers, but 'Venez seulement,' and up a steep icy corner he went, never looking behind him until he had anchored himself securely on a bit of jutting rock; and thus was performed the most daring feat of mountaineering I ever saw. The air was perfectly still, and the quiet fall every few minutes of portions of snow detached by the sun's heat, gave at this time an almost ominous feeling which every climber must have known once or twice in his mountain life. From the jutting stone the three ascended in soft snow, whilst we waited breathlessly for the result of the adventure; they disappeared over the ridge-top above our heads; five minutes more and a loud cheer announced success. In a few minutes we had followed, and were welcomed by Hodgkinson on the top. 'Voilà, messieurs, l'Aiguille Verte entièrement et complètement,' said Croz, who was almost trembling with excitement; and just as we all stood together to give a great cheer and to form a visible group against the sky, a gun, fired from the Flegère, announced our success to the valley of Chamouni.

The day was perfect, a lighted candle might have been held in the air; had it been otherwise, our descent by the steep and very difficult ridge might have proved an awkward matter. But

no such thoughts entered our heads. We seemed to be on the top of the world; the Aiguille du Dru was lost, and nothing could be seen of that pyramid of granite now dwarfed into insignificance. Down the snow it would have been easy to have walked a long distance towards it, and the descent towards the Flegère would have been equally easy as far as the well-known cornice. To the east a great rocky peak of Les Droites rose up solemnly almost to our own height, and our shouts came echoing wildly back from it. The Jardin looked as though a stone might have been flung down upon it, and so far as appearance went, all hope of descent by our ridge was impossible. My little dog was soon fast asleep on a knapsack in the sun, and we set to work to find a rope left on the top by the party who had ascended the week before. We soon dug through the freshly fallen snow, and then, cutting two large trenches crossing one another, we searched in the older and harder snow beneath for nearly half an hour, but without finding it. Then we set up our flagstaff on the very summit, and, a few yards lower down, towards the Aiguille du Dru, we placed the second staff picked up on the mountain side, tied a handkerchief to it, and prepared to descend.

We left the top about 3 o'clock, all tied to one long rope, a mode of proceeding which was certainly not the best one, and we did not regain the Montanvert for eleven hours afterwards. Croz led the way down to the most difficult passage we had to encounter, and Hudson was last of all, just behind me. More than once, as we came to the edge of a steeper place than usual, it seemed to me that we were almost cut off from the world below. But the appearance was worse than the reality; and when actually upon the most perilous spots I did not feel the slightest sense of doubt or insecurity; whilst Hudson, who for a great portion of the time was the last in the line, invariably refused all aid from me after I had securely placed myself. His object was, undoubtedly, to render himself as independent and self-reliant as possible, and in this he had succeeded to an extent greater than I have ever seen in any other Englishman. He was almost as great as a guide. Towards the evening, as we approached the head of the couloir, I seemed to lose the feeling of certainty which enables a man to throw himself carelessly from rock to rock. Hudson, who was anxious to be back in Chamouni before night, to rejoin his friends, saw it, and urged me on frequently, although, being only a follower in the procession, I was not really detaining him. But once in the deep soft snow of the couloir I was again myself. It is astonishing what confidence the deep yielding

snow, however steep, will give to those who are accustomed to it, and who know what great reliance may be placed upon it, if only it be made proper use of. Turning round, I descended precisely as a man descends a ladder. The number of men who had already passed had dragged away the snow in many parts, but it did not signify if no footstep met the descending foot; I knew that in a slide of a yard or more, sufficient snow would gather and ball under my feet and arms to arrest me.

We regained the Talèfre Glacier at the foot of the mountain about nightfall, and an hour afterwards were at our bivouac of the previous evening on the Couvercle. The porters had gone hours before, and had cleared off everything; not even a crust of bread could be found: but I think that with our day's work and our success, we were all too excited to have eaten if we had had anything. We remained about an hour resting, for the night was calm and warm, and at half-past ten we took up our knapsacks, and left for Chamouni. The moon was shining brightly in our faces until we got to 'Les Egralets,' when she became obscured by a peak on the other side of the Mer de Glace, and we were left in darkness, increased by the fact of our eyes being much fatigued, and by our general sleepiness. We got to the top of the rock where the ladder is placed, and a more hopeless-looking place to get down in the dark I do not wish to see; it seemed like going down a coal-pit by climbing down the side of the pit. Perren went down with a rope round him, then Hudson and I, then the little dog had the rope tied round her neck, and was slung down, and then Hodgkinson's turn came. But the effect of the day's glare upon his eyes had been such as to render him nearly blind, and he declared that it was absurd to go down such a place in a state of blindness, and that he should bivouac among the rocks at the top until daylight. It would have been by far the wiser plan to have done so, for to this day it has been a wonder to me that no one of us tumbled down a crevasse on the glacier; but Croz was determined to go on, and partly by persuasion and partly, I believe, by main force, he induced Hodgkinson to go down, and then, unaided from above, the two men came clattering after us amid a shower of small stones and gravel, and a volley of Chamouni oaths. Then began the descent of the glacier in the dark, through a maze of crevasses out of which nothing could have led us before daylight but the perfect local knowledge of our two Chamouni men. It was almost impossible, from the absence of all shadow, to see whether the ice on which we were about to walk was level or not, and many a time we walked against

a small hillock of ice, and tumbled over it, cutting ourselves against the sharp spikes. Hodgkinson was continually obliged to take the arm of some one who could see a little better than himself, and my little dog howled piteously, her bleeding feet would scarcely let her walk, and our progress was slow and weary. But all things have an end; and just as our patience was exhausted we found ourselves upon the moraine, and we soon struck into the little path. Perren and I hurried on as fast as our tired legs would carry us, and at 2 o'clock we got to the Montanvert. Ten minutes hammering brought the people to the door, and the landlord, seeing who we were, rushed back into the house and, bringing out a light, fired off a cannon. Half-an-hour afterwards the remainder of our party came up, a bottle of Swiss Champagne put a little more liveliness into us all, and then Perren and I resolved to sleep until the morning, whilst Hodgkinson and Hudson went down at once to Chamouni with their two men. At 10 o'clock next morning we all met in the Hôtel de l'Union, rid of our fatigues and greatly pleased with our expedition, and we determined to make use of the fine weather by ascending Mont Blanc the next day. So we all went to bed until 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and at 4 o'clock we started for the little hotel at the Pierre Pointue, about three hours' walk below the Grands Mulets, our party consisting of Hudson, M'Cormick, Hadow, and myself, with Croz and Perren as guides. We got there about 7 o'clock; and at 1 A.M. we started up the rocky path to the glacier, our host showing us the way with his lamp as far as the edge of the glacier. Here we took the lamp and went on, reaching the Grands Mulets about 4 o'clock, soon after daybreak. It then appeared that some one had been sleeping that night at the Mulets, and that he had left two hours or so before us for Mont Blanc.

The true British instinct came upon us that he must be caught before reaching the top; so about 4.30 we left the rocks and went upwards in a deep snow-track formed by many successive parties. Soon it appeared that one part of the cavalcade was in better trim, and able to go on faster than the other, and we divided into two parties, Perren leading, with Hadow in the middle, and myself as one party, Croz taking Hudson and M'Cormick. We pushed on as fast as possible, going, nevertheless, with that sweet sense of innate power and endurance which is only attained at the expense of much severe labour. We did not halt until across the Grand Plateau, at the foot of the ascent to the Corridor. By this time we had gained half an hour on Croz's party, and set ourselves hard to work at the

great slope before us. Crossing one or two insignificant crevasses in the slope, we were soon on the Corridor itself, meeting a great mass of white clouds boiling up from Italy, and then at the summit of the Mur de la Côte; and here, for the first time, we saw the party in front about half-way up the Calotte. At the Petits Mulets we stopped to cast off our rope, and to leave my knapsack in the snow; and I asked Hadow how he felt, telling him that this was the point where travellers usually succumbed to the might of Mont Blanc. He only laughed, adding that this was the first glacier mountain he had ever ascended, excepting the Buet; his strength and endurance were extraordinary. We halted for ten minutes on the slope, and about 8.50 stood on the top, a few minutes after the first party. The ascent, therefore, from the Grands Mulets had been accomplished in somewhat less than four and a half hours. About an hour afterwards, just as Croz came up, we started on the downward journey. The snow was very soft, and Hadow, although of wonderful pluck and strength, had not yet acquired sufficient practice to make him quite secure upon his feet. So I left Perren to bring up the rear and afford Hadow support, and went on in front, ploughing downwards up to the knees in soft snow, and above the Grands Mulets nearly disappearing altogether down a concealed crevasse. A desperate struggle extricated me. We went on swiftly, sliding and jumping down the ice-hummocks of the Glacier des Bossons. At the Pierre Pointue we stopped for twenty minutes to pay our bill and to take up our luggage, and before three o'clock we were again in the Hotel de l'Union at Chamouni, having made the descent from the summit in five hours without a single glissade. The next morning my wife and I left for England, and the gallant Hudson drove with us as far as the village of Les Ouches, where we parted with him, little thinking that it would be for ever.

AN EXPEDITION TO HAMMERFEST. Read before the Alpine Club, April 2, 1867. By the Rev. R. ST. JOHN TYR-WHITT, M.A.

IT was about July 4, 1866, that we ran out of the Humber on board the little Bergen screw steamer *Amicitia*. I don't wish to abuse my own country and its institutions, or anybody else's, so I say no more of the steamer or of the town, and refer the club to Coleridge on Cologne and the Rhine, for the proper remarks about Hull and the Humber—though whether