

pleases the eye at first. He will soon find an increasing interest in the revelations of his pocket-lens and the extension of his herbarium. I have only mentioned a few of the typical flowers of the Alps and their abodes, in the hope of inducing some of my friends to search about for themselves. The pursuit will enliven many a dull walk, and lead them into many fair places that they would not otherwise have seen. In all countries they may visit, in all climates and in all weather, they will carry about with them a constant companion, and a distinct pleasure to be added to any which they may have previously enjoyed. The more countries that they see, the more they will enjoy the study of each separate Flora. He who has hunted up all the ferns and flowers of Devonshire lanes and Cumberland mountains is so much the better prepared for examining the botanical treasures of the Alps. So much the more is he disposed to enjoy the same pursuits in Southern Europe. The mountains of Greece and the Ionian Islands, for instance, will show him forests of gigantic olives with clusters of sweet cyclamens about their feet, and groves of myrtles still in fullest bloom, while clumps of snowdrops round their outer branches tell the approach of what we should call a premature spring. Still more will he be delighted if his happy fortune takes him into tropical regions, where old hothouse friends welcome him in wild luxuriance; where huge ipomeas and scarlet passion-flowers twine round the green bamboos; where cactuses fill every cleft among the granite rocks, and gorgeous orchids hang from the branches of a virgin-forest. And the more he sees and knows of each and all of them, the more compelled he will be, in reverential happiness, to think of those noble words, 'Consider the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.'

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THE ASCENT OF THE CIMON DELLA PALA.

By E. R. WHITWELL.

WHEN I read in Mr. Stephen's entertaining article on the Peaks of Primiero, which appeared in the February number of this Journal, that the Cimon della Pala and the Palle di San Martino were generally considered to be inaccessible; and further, Mr. Stephen's devout and almost pathetic wish that such might prove to be the case, an immediate desire took possession of me to see these peaks, and if possible attempt

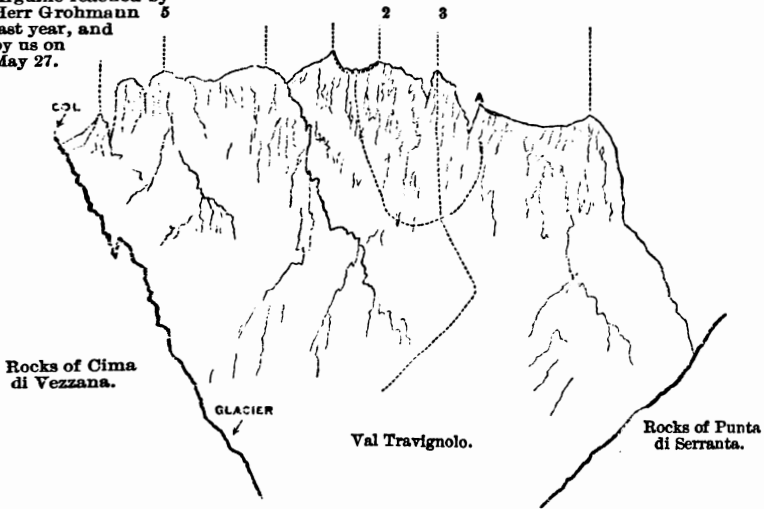
their ascent, which Mr. Stephen had not had the opportunity of doing. Mr. Tuckett had already asked me to join him in an excursion among the Dolomites early in the summer, and it was therefore with a thrill of pleasure that I noticed in our programme, which he was good enough to prepare, the names of both these mountains among those whose ascent we might hope to accomplish. It was, however, rather damping to my hopes to receive a letter at the same time, repeating that in his opinion the prospect of our reaching the summit of either was very small. Like Mr. Stephen, he had never himself attempted their ascent; so that when we left England in the middle of May, I had pretty much regained confidence that with good weather we should be fortunate enough to bag the top of at least one of them—an opinion founded chiefly, I fear, on that pleasing self-conceit that is engendered by entire ignorance, although I had the comforting reflection that nearly every difficult peak had been declared inaccessible until the reverse has been proved.

Up to the time of our first attempt on the Cimon della Pala I had had no experience of the more difficult Dolomite mountains; but when, on the 28th of May, after an easy walk from Feltre over the Monte Pavione to Primiero we took up our quarters for the night at San Martino di Castrozza, I was enabled to view the kind of work which we had before us, and I confess I was not quite so sanguine as to the success of our expedition, as we were able to realise the character of the arête by which we hoped to make the ascent. We knew that there would be no great difficulty up to a point perhaps 300 feet lower than the summit; but here the arête became cut up into huge teeth, one of which especially, apparently about 300 feet high and nearly vertical, looked peculiarly unpromising. Still we hoped to be able to pass round this in some way, so reaching the main arête again, which from below did not look hopeless.

It is needless to waste too many words over this attempt which proved unsuccessful. It at least initiated me into the character of the Dolomite mountains, and forcibly brought home to us the knowledge of man's inability to go wheresoever he wished—at least where mountains of this description were concerned. Accompanied by Christian Lauener, of Lauterbrunnen, and Santo Siorpaes, of Cortina d'Ampezzo, as guides, we had reached the point seen from below at the foot of the final arête, by means of the Passo delle Cornelle, a long tramp over snow slopes, and a short and easy scramble up some rocks on to a small peak, on which we found Herr Grohmann's cairn,

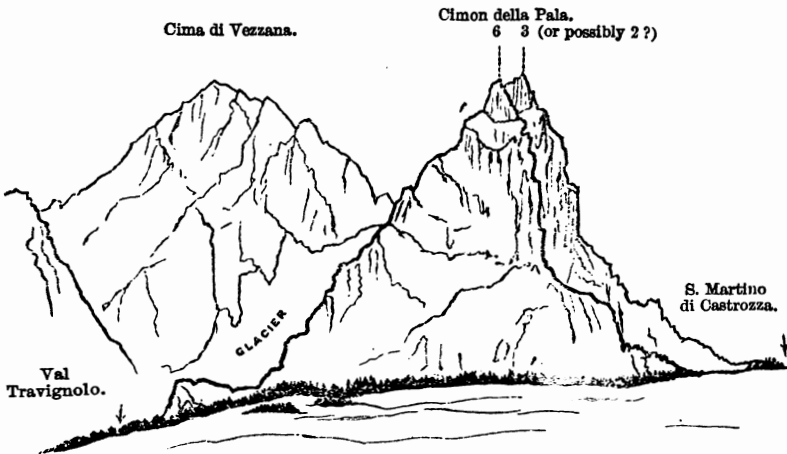
situated nearly E. [or ESE.] of the highest peak, and about 300 feet below it. The spot on which we were standing

Aiguille reached by Herr Grohmann 5 last year, and by us on May 27.



Final Kamm of Cimon della Pala, as seen through telescope from grass slopes at foot of Left Saso.

was separated by a deep cleft from the strange aiguille or terminal buttress before noticed, which now rose nearly perpen-



Cimon della Pala, and Cima di Vezzana from slopes behind Paneveggio.

dicularly before us, but evidently ascendable by a difficult

climb if the first 30 or 40 feet could be accomplished. But this seemed more than doubtful, as a portion of the face had already fallen, leaving a crumbling, overhanging mass which I believe would prove utterly insurmountable; besides, even if it were possible, we had no means of judging whether the arête could be followed further. There was, however, still the chance of our being able to pass round it in some way if we could reach the col that separated it from the tooth on which we were standing; so with this object we descended as far as we could, but, alas! found that there was still about 30 feet to be accomplished which fell sheer away in a smooth wall of rock. Having only one rope, it was impossible for one of us to remain behind so as to let down the rest of the party, as we did not clearly see how we were to rejoin our companion again were we to take the rope (and going further without one was obviously out of the question); so that we were obliged reluctantly to give up the attempt for that day, but not without noting that a glacier led up to a considerable height on the north-east of the peak (between it and the Cima di Vezzana), from which the ascent might possibly be made; besides, there was just the possibility of attacking the mountain successfully along the NW. arête which we had not yet seen, but which could be reconnoitred from Paneveggio, where we hoped to be in the course of a few days.

The appearance of the peak from Paneveggio did not prove very encouraging, as the rocks seemed to fall away in much steeper precipices even than from any other point of view, and it was with small hopes of success that I determined to make the attempt from the glacier which we had noted in our previous trial, and which proved to flow into the Val Travignolo. Mr. Tuckett was suffering from the effects of an old strain, and not caring, under the circumstances, to try again what would doubtless prove a difficult ascent (even if it were possible), reluctantly decided to content himself with a stroll up one of the lower summits of the neighbourhood, from which he felt sure there would be a magnificent view.

On the afternoon of June 2nd, accompanied by our guides, Lauener and Siorpaes, I started for the foot of the glacier, where we intended to pass the night. The mist which had been threatening all day finally settled down, enveloping us in its thick folds, so that nothing was to be seen of the peak when we reached the col separating us from the Val Travignolo, and we had to pause for a while in order to take our bearings. We had not to wait long before the mist lifted for a moment, disclosing one of the most magnificent scenic effects

that I have ever witnessed. The higher part of the mountain was alone visible, just tinged by the glory of the setting sun and surrounded by a halo of mist, which imparted to it the most gloriously impossible appearance conceivable, as the enormous aiguille, too steep for a particle of snow to cling to its sides, towered up before us, glorying in its appearance of utter inaccessibility, and seeming to mock any attempt that man could make to reach its summit.

It was disclosed only for a few moments, however, before we were once more surrounded by the impenetrable mist; but we had ascertained our direction, and soon reached the foot of the glacier, where, to our surprise, we found a rickety little hut, which proved most acceptable, as rain was already beginning to fall. It was not long before we had a capital fire, and after cooking some soup and smoking the evening pipe, with many mental misgivings as to the weather, retired between our blankets, hearing as we fell asleep the ominous rain beating over our heads.

Our forebodings were not to be realised, however, for when we turned out at 3 o'clock the next morning, there was not a cloud to be seen, and, what was equally important to the success of our expedition, a very decided sharpness in the air told us that it was already freezing hard, giving promise that the rocks and snow would be in excellent order. The fire had continued burning all night, so that a few minutes sufficed for the cooking of the ever-useful 'Liebig' (with which the guides will, I think, always be cheerful and contented, no matter under what circumstances they may be placed!), and by 3.30 we were fairly on our way.

After following the glacier for about an hour we took to some easy rocks, surmounted by a small hanging glacier on the north-eastern face of the mountain, and by 5 o'clock reached the main cliffs, which rose from this point to the summit in a broken wall of rock, with hardly a speck of snow visible on its steep face. We stopped here for a few minutes to ascertain the best line of attack, or rather, to determine which was the highest point of the long, deeply-serrated ridge which forms the summit of the mountain. It is divided into what may be called six huge teeth of nearly the same height, the one to our extreme right appearing from where we stood to claim pre-eminence. I had, however, grave misgivings on the subject, having examined the mountain from the hill behind Paneveggio, and pretty much determined that the highest peak must be one of those more to the left; but as the guides seemed

confident that such was not the case, and appearances were certainly in their favour, I yielded to their opinion.

After a little more than three hours' steady climbing over very steep, but not really difficult rocks, we gained the arête on the left, or SE. of our peak, at a point where it would have been easily reached; but, as I had feared, the peak immediately on our left rose about 50 feet above us, whilst we were already as high as the point at which we were aiming, so thoroughly had the perspective deceived us. The higher peak was separated from us by a deep chasm, with nearly perpendicular and perfectly smooth sides, so that there was nothing to be done but retrace our steps for about 300 feet, so as to discover some way up it. The other side was equally impracticable, so that only one way remained, and that was to climb up what looked little more than a crack in the otherwise almost unbroken surface of the north-eastern face. It rose at such a steep angle that in two parts the rock actually overhung, and even Lauener's great climbing powers had once to be aided by the timely assistance of an ice-axe, by which we were able to shove him up till he could get a slight foothold, which, however, proved sufficient to get Santo and myself over the difficulty. The ascent of this aiguille required throughout the utmost care, as there was more than one place where a slip of one must inevitably, I believe, have landed us all with undue haste on to the glacier lying so temptingly beneath us. Fortunately, however, we did not try the experiment, and by soon after 9 o'clock we were on the top—at least one of us was there, for there was not room for more on the sharp point which formed (as we had hoped) a truly ideal summit—when, to our disgust, we discovered another unquestionably higher by a few feet, still further to our left, and of course utterly inaccessible from that which we had just climbed with such praiseworthy perseverance.

We erected a cairn, as this is I believe the highest point seen from Paneveggio, and once more began to descend. It seems needless to repeat what has been so often asserted, that the descent of really difficult rocks requires much greater care than the ascent, and we found this peak no exception to the rule. At one point, indeed, I had the pleasure of finding myself astride of a peculiarly sharp, semi-perpendicular rock, with but little hold for the hands, and still less (from Lauener's uncertain position) from the rope, feeling vaguely for several seconds for a crack into which to insert a foot, and having the agreeable sensation of seeing the glacier far beneath as apparently the nearest stopping place; but this part, like others,

was safely accomplished—Lauener letting himself down by hanging a rope over a convenient ledge; and three-quarters of an hour in all sufficed for us to reach the foot of the aiguille.

We had still to descend a little more in order to skirt the base of the next peak, and again began to mount, this time by a steep ice-couloir, covered with about 6 inches of loose powdery snow, through which each step had to be cut; and as the ice was not in some places more than 3 and 4 inches thick on the rock, the greatest precaution had to be used. We had not a clinometer with us, but I should judge the inclination to be at least as steep as that of the last slope of the Wetterhorn, which is estimated, I think, at 58°. After reaching the top of the couloir, a few minutes' climb over easy rocks landed us upon our peak, which proved to be slightly inferior to one some yards still to our left, in the form almost of a huge boulder-stone, that appeared so nicely balanced on the narrow arête, that it looked as if it would not be difficult to send the whole mass crashing down into the valley beneath! It was, however, easily reached in a few steps from where we were standing; and at eleven o'clock exactly we were at last on the 'Höchste Spitze.'

The effect was the most startling that I have ever seen, as it seemed as if one bound would carry one either on to the glacier on one side, or the green valley on the other, lying 5,000 feet beneath us. The sky was almost cloudless—only behind the Ortler group, and extending some little way on either side, a few clouds were gradually forming, so that our hope of recognising any of the well-known forms of the Swiss mountains was doomed to disappointment.

Unfortunately we were all of us so unacquainted with the Tyrolese mountains from this aspect that only a few of the perfect sea of peaks that surrounded us could be recognised; but it was pleasant to feel that the Marmolata alone of the Dolomites could claim pre-eminence in height. The Cima di Vezzana, on the opposite side of the Val Travignolo glacier, is but slightly inferior to the Cimon (being thus doubtless the third in height of the Dolomites); and I much regretted that we had not ascended it a few days before, as it appeared perfectly easy of access, with perhaps an hour's climb, from where we had passed on our return from our unsuccessful attack on the Cimon from the Passo delle Cornelle. It may be of interest also to state that a fine pass might be made from Paneveggio to Garès by the Val Travignolo glacier (combining with it the ascent of the Vezzana), but it would be best

to attempt it from the Paneveggio side, as rather a steep ice-wall has to be surmounted.

We dared not stay long on the top, as such snow as there was lay in some places at a very steep angle on the rocks, and we all of us feared what might be the result if the very slight footsteps cut in the last ice-couloir should become softened to any serious degree; so after building cairns on the last two summits, leaving our names in a tin box upon the highest, and smoking half a pipe, without which ceremony no peak could be said to have been satisfactorily ascended, we commenced to descend.

We found the snow and ice in much better order than we had dared to hope, as during our halt the sun had passed round to the south, so leaving the side by which we had come very much in the shade; but the descent of the ice-couloir occupied a whole hour, as every precaution had to be used, and I think we all breathed more freely when this part was safely accomplished. Two hours and a half more of steady going brought us to the hut, where we stopped for a hearty meal, having taken very little since we left it twelve hours before.

A little more than an hour over the easy grass slopes sufficed to bring us to Paneveggio, where an *einspänner* was waiting to take us to Predazzo, to rejoin my friends, after one of the most delightful expeditions that I have ever made.

It may be of interest to add to the above a short description of an attempt I made, under somewhat unfavourable circumstances, to reach the summit of the *Palle di San Martino*, another of the *Primiero* peaks, to which allusion has already been made both in this paper and in that of Mr. Stephen. It is about 500 feet lower than the *Cimon della Pala*, and indeed inferior in height to some others of this group, but second only to the *Cimon* in grandeur of form. Mr. Tuckett had in a previous year reconnoitred it from a favourable position on the north-west, and declared it to be in his opinion—which was shared by Melchior Anderegg, who was with him at the time—inaccessible from the serrated *arête* on that side; and that consequently, from his knowledge of the peak, the southern cliffs alone would offer any chance of success.

We left *Primiero* at 2.45 on the morning of the 1st of June, and by 7.30 reached, by means of the *Val Pravitale*, the singular valley described by Mr. Stephen—too late, however, to allow of our taking up time by reconnoitring the top portion of the mountain from any high point opposite. Mr. Tuckett decided to make sure of at least one good peak in that neighbourhood

by ascending the Cima di Fradusta, a snow-peak about equal in height to the Palle, but capable of being reached under ordinary circumstances without difficulty. So he left us for his solitary climb up the Fradusta, whilst the guides and I proceeded to attack its more formidable neighbour which rose up above us in a series of giant buttresses, crumbling and weather-worn, but of extreme steepness. A snow-couloir led up to the left of what appeared to be the highest, to within about 500 feet of the top, and this we decided to follow as far as possible before trusting ourselves to the broken and distorted rocks, up which we knew progress must necessarily be slow.

The couloir increased in steepness as we advanced; and after a little more than two hours' steady going, further progress was stopped by the débris of a huge stone avalanche, which had at some time fallen, completely blocking up the way. Its further course had been prevented by the jamming of some large boulder-stones between the narrow walls of the gully, thus forming a kind of cave perhaps 40 feet high. As we approached this obstacle, we became more and more despondent, for a glance at the rocks on each side of us sufficed to satisfy us that no outlet was to be gained by their means, as for the first 50 or 60 feet they were practically perpendicular, and worn perfectly smooth. There was nothing to be done, therefore, but to retrace our steps, unless, as Lauener faintly hoped and as a glimmer over the boulder-stone forming the arch-piece at the entrance seemed to show, there should prove to be a hole over the mouth of the cave, through which we might contrive to creep, reaching a point from which we could get on to the top of the débris, and thus continue our course. To ascertain this, he was speedily doing his utmost up one of the sides in the interior of the cave, exhibiting really splendid climbing powers, as such slight hold as there was, was of a most unstable character, and covered with a thin glaze of ice. It was with much relief that we saw him get a firm footing on the boulder-stone (still, of course, on the *inside* of the cave), as, had he slipped, the rope which we were holding could not have prevented a serious fall on to the hard frozen snow at our feet, though it would of course have stopped a fatal slip down the couloir; and we were delighted to hear him announce that he thought the hole might be made large enough to answer our purpose. A series of stone avalanches of an alarming character followed; and, after much wriggling, the pleasing apparition of Christian's legs and boots met our gaze on the other side of the hole, and shortly afterwards the rest of him

emerged over our heads, though in a painfully dishevelled condition! He could not, however, see farther, he said, unless we came also, as the rope was not long enough to admit of his examining thoroughly, and nothing could be done unroped. I accordingly secured myself to the end of the rope, and was soon struggling on the slippery rock-face, congratulating myself more than once on the thought that Lauener's position was sufficiently good to prevent any very serious consequences, if some of the very insecure supports on which I had to rest were to give way. A miniature Staubbach rained pleasantly on us all the way up; so that by the time we had forced ourselves through the hole, we were torn and wet enough to satisfy even Lauener, who, I strongly suspect, had induced us to come more for the purpose of making us in as wretched a condition as himself, than from any expectation of being able to get up any farther!

When we emerged from the hole we of course found ourselves looking down the couloir which we had been ascending, but our view in the other direction was decidedly limited, as it was bounded by an overhanging boulder-stone, separated from the one on which we were sitting by such a short distance that our heads were unpleasantly forced between our knees! This we should have borne philosophically enough, but, try as we would, we could not get into a firm enough position to be sure of being able to hold Lauener, were he to make a bad slip. We did the best we could, however, whilst he slowly raised himself up to a standing position, and peered about in the hope of finding some way of further advance; but it was of no use, and we were obliged to descend, having spent much valuable time in our fruitless efforts. When about half-way down the wall, I had the opportunity of testing practically the value of the rope, as the mass of rock, on which I was incautiously resting all my weight, suddenly gave way, and went crashing down the steep snow-slope, where I must have inevitably followed if I had not been securely held. As it was, my position might have been pleasanter, as the rope was stretched at a considerable angle, and it was only a slight hold with my fingers on a peculiarly slippery rounded piece of rock that prevented my swinging altogether in mid-air. For several seconds I hardly knew what to do, as I had soon explored in vain every crack within reach on which to gain the slightest foothold; but I at length discovered a ledge a little to the left, which, by means of swinging pendulum fashion from my hands, I finally reached, and got down without further adventure. The guides naturally avoided my route, Lauener, being the last, securing

himself against accident by hanging the rope over the one secure support there was, and half an hour more sufficed for us to reach the bottom of the couloir.

After following the mountain still farther to the north-east, and discovering that, even if we had been successful in our previous attempt, we should have only reached an inferior summit, we again commenced to ascend—although it was already 1 o'clock—this time straight up the face of the next buttress to that which we had just attacked in flank. So much care had to be used, owing to the intense rottenness of the rocks at this hour of the day, that after an hour's steady climbing we had reached but a small height; and I was obliged at last to acknowledge that there was no possibility of attaining the summit that afternoon, or, at all events, were we so far to succeed, we should have to make up our minds to pass the night there, a course which certainly would have had the charm of novelty—to me at least—but nothing else to recommend it. A thick mist, too, was fast enveloping the upper part of the mountain, and Mr. Tuckett, having satisfactorily accomplished his peak, was already waiting for us to join him; so we at once turned our faces homeward.

Unsuccessful as was this expedition, I have little doubt, from the experience we had subsequently on the Cimon, that this mountain may also be ascended, and probably by some such route as that last tried by us, as we had to turn back simply on account of the mist and the lateness of the hour, and in no way on account of any special difficulty. There seems no doubt that the only means to secure success would be to sleep out at as high a point as possible, having first reconnoitred the mountain from some high point on the Cima di Fradusta; and I think with good weather, and a probably somewhat difficult climb, the summit could be undoubtedly reached.

Lauener's character as a guide is too well known to require further commendation; and I need only say here that, during these and other expeditions, he fully justified the high opinion that is formed of him; but Siorpaes is not so well known, and it may be of service to him to say that, from the experience of a five weeks' tour in his company, during which I have ascended two other new peaks—the Popena and the Gaisl, or Rothewand—Mr. Tuckett and I can speak in the highest terms of him, both as a guide and a pleasant companion. He is thoroughly good either on rocks or snow, and we think may be safely trusted to lead any expedition in the Dolomites.