

by a narrow neck, and descending precipitously to the dismal tarn on all its other faces. Its craggy look and steep sides quite galvanised my sick friend, who set to with a will, and, after a short, amusing scramble, we reached the top, where the invalid, in a transport of delight, set to pirouetting on one leg for the edification of the guide, who had, of course, deserted us on the brink of the abyss. When we once more reached him, he said: 'When I beheld the pirouetting (no me ficou uma pinga de sangue no corpo), I had not a drop of blood left in my body.' 'I thought,' he added, 'if one of you came down, what would become . . . . of me.'\*

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DAUPHINÉ IN 1870. By W. A. B. COOLIDGE.

THE accounts we had read of the magnificent scenery of Dauphiné, together with the knowledge that several of the highest peaks remained unascended, and that the district was rarely visited by tourists, induced us in forming our plans for this summer to include a visit to its mountains. Accordingly, we left Paris at 8.40 P.M. on June 21, and next day about noon reached Culoz, where we met our guides, Christian Almer and his son Ulrich, and Christian Gertsch of Grindelwald, our reason for engaging the latter being the dearth of good porters in Dauphiné. We went on to St. Michel, and that evening walked over the low Col de Valloires to the village of the same name, where we spent the night at a very rough country inn. The meadows glowed with Alpine flowers, usual at that early season, far surpassing any we had ever seen before. Clouds obscured the view from the Col, to our great regret. Next morning, the 23rd, we were only able to get off at 8.10 A.M., rather too late an hour for the Col des Aiguilles d'Arve, which we proposed to cross. Our party consisted of my aunt, myself, the three men, an extra porter, a mule to carry our tent as far as possible, and our dog Tschingel. We left the track of the Col de Galibier where it crosses the stream, and turned to the right towards a narrow defile in the distance. After mounting some way, we gained our first view of two of the Aiguilles d'Arve, which remained before us till we reached the Col. Traversing beautiful pastures, we halted for an hour at the last châlet by a stream, and lunched. The Valloires porter tried to persuade us to cross a Col north of the third Aiguille d'Arve,

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\* Those who may wish to ascend the Lean Pitcher must remember to go at once to the right after passing the connecting causeway.

often traversed by the country people, but we remained firm in our plans. Resuming our course, we were soon obliged by the broken rocks to send back the mule with the man who had accompanied us for that purpose. We soon began to see the third Aiguille d'Arve, which does not yield to its neighbours in ruggedness. Mounting stony slopes, we reached a snow-covered glacier, ascending by which we attained the summit of the Col at 5 P.M. The wind was blowing and the mist rising. Almer immediately went to explore the couloir by which he had descended six years before. He first reported that it was very difficult if not impracticable. We had almost given it up, when Almer, who had had himself let down by a rope to explore, decided that we might try it. We hastily packed up our tent, which we had begun to pitch, and proceeded to the summit of the couloir. It was here that we first began to feel the want of snow, which rendered many peaks and passes more difficult than usual in June and July. On the previous passage, the couloir had been found to be entirely filled with snow, but now the upper half of it was quite bare, and consisted of precipitous rocks. The Valloires porter declared that nothing would induce him to descend the couloir, but that he would hold the rope until we were all down, if we would hurry, as he wished to return to the châteaux that night. We commenced the descent between 7 and 7.30 P.M., and found it exceedingly difficult, but in about an hour and a half we were all (luggage and Tschingel inclusive) on the snow, down which we ran till we came to stony slopes, ending in a grass plateau. Here we determined to encamp, as it was now 10 P.M., and succeeded with some difficulty in pitching the tent in the dark. Next morning, Midsummer-day, was beautiful. In thirty minutes we reached the châteaux of Rieublanc, and in thirty minutes more those of La Sausse. We had intended to have crossed to La Grave by the same route as Mr. Moore's party, but it was now late in the morning, and Almer could not exactly retrace the way which he had taken before. So we determined to cross the Col de Martignare, which we reached in rather less than three hours from the châteaux de la Sausse, by tedious slopes of grass and shale. On reaching the summit of the pass, we gained our first view of the Meije. The appearance of this magnificent peak was so unpromising that we entertained but slight hopes of succeeding in attaining the summit. The descent from the Col over grass slopes was easy. We passed Chazeley, and reached La Grave in a heavy thunderstorm in less than three hours from the Col. We found the inn, visited by Mr.

Moore's party, had changed hands, and had greatly fallen off. Next day, Saturday, the 25th, the men went off to reconnoitre the Meije. They succeeded in attaining a point slightly below the saddle between the Meije and the Bec de l'Homme, and reported that a bergschrund at the foot of the final peak could be reached without serious difficulty, but that the rocks above were too distant to judge of their practicability. Our hostess had told us that Meije was the patois for *femme*. Thus the Meije corresponds to the Bec de l'Homme. She pronounced Meije, Mege, sounding the first *e* like *a* in mate. Sunday was spent in the woods by the Romanche. Monday, the 27th, we left La Grave, and, following the high road till just before the tunnel, turned down a path on the right hand side, which led us over the Romanche, past some chalets up steep grass slopes. These grass slopes ended in a bad moraine, over which we reached the Glacier de la Meije in less than four hours from La Grave, walking leisurely. Thence, twenty minutes over the glacier sufficed to reach the narrow shelf of rock on the right bank of the glacier which the men had chosen for our bivouac on Saturday. Tschingel accompanied us to this point, where it was thought best to leave him. Next morning, Tuesday, June 28, we left our encampment at 4.20 A.M., and, ascending the glacier, which is here much crevassed, reached the highest point attained by the men on Saturday at 6.35 A.M. and the saddle at 6.57 A.M. On our way up we had caught sight of Mont Blanc glittering in the sunshine far away, and now we began to gain a view of a sea of peaks to the south. We halted thirty minutes for breakfast in a snow valley near the saddle, and then started off again, turning to the right. By this time we had come in sight of the highest peaks of the mountain. There are three distinct summits rising out of the same ridge. The west one is the magnificent pinnacle seen from La Grave. The east peak we at once perceived to be inferior in height to the two others. The central summit we thought rivalled, if it did not surpass, the west one, and after some deliberation we decided to attempt it. A very steep ice-slope interspersed with rocks led us to the notch between the east and central peaks, whence a stone would fall sheer down to the Glacier des Étançons. The final rocks now rose precipitously over our heads. As Almer said, they resembled the rocks of the Matterhorn on the Italian side without the ropes. We reached the long wished-for summit at 12.10, but what was our horror to find that the west peak slightly overtopped us. We had some thoughts of trying it, but Almer pronounced it utterly impossible for any human being to reach the summit,

as it was sheer on all sides. We tried in vain to console ourselves with the lines—

And the rapture of pursuing  
Is the prize the vanquished gains.

We afterwards found that the French État Major give ~~N~~ 17 ? mètres (nearly 253 feet) as the difference between the west and central peaks, but the true difference does not probably exceed 12 or 13 mètres (39 to 43 feet). From our summit we enjoyed a splendid view of Mont Blanc, the Grandes Jorasses, the Aiguille du Géant, and a crowd of other peaks, including one magnificent summit to the east, which we could not then identify, but which we now think must have been Monte Viso. Our attention, however, was chiefly directed to the Pointe des Écrins, which we hoped to ascend. We could see that the great bergschrund at the foot of the final peak was so wide that it would hardly be possible to cross it, even with the aid of a ladder. We could also see that the rocks on the south side of the Brèche de la Meije were denuded of snow, and our late experience on the Col des Aiguilles d'Arve being fresh in our minds, we gave up the wish which we had entertained of crossing that pass. At length, at 12.40, we turned to descend, and, after meeting with some difficulty on the rocks and ice-slope, regained the *sattel*, whence we descended to our bivouac at 5.45 P.M., by the same route which we had followed in the morning.

Tschingel came to meet us on the glacier. He had slept in the tent all day, and was delighted to see us again. We decided to stay here another night. The whole expedition thus occupied twelve hours' slow walking. Next day, the 29th, we leisurely descended to La Grave in three hours and three quarters. We found that the whole village had watched our ascent the day before, and had seen us arrive at the summit. Thursday, the 30th, it rained all day. We drove over the Col de Lautaret in three hours and a half to Monestier, chez Armand, where we dined. We had intended to cross to Ville Vallouise by the Col de l'Échanda; Monestier had been burnt almost to the ground about a week before, and the inhabitants were very much depressed at the losses which almost every one of them had sustained. Passing through Briançon and La Bessée, we reached Ville Vallouise, chez Giraud, in five hours and a quarter, driving from Monestier. None of us having previously visited the Glacier du Sélé, whence we hoped to ascend the Ailefroide on July 1, I and the guides and Tschingel walked up to that glacier by the Combe de Sapenière and the left bank of the glacier in four hours. The path mentioned in Mr. Ball's

'Western Alps' is certainly *not* a chamois-track. We spent about two hours and a half in examining the summit which we hoped to reach. The Ailefroide consists of a ridge running nearly due east and west, from which rise three summits. Of these the east one is much inferior in height, but the west peak and the central one are nearly equal. The central peak, however, appeared inaccessible, so we decided that the west summit should be the object of our assault. We returned to Ville Vallouise by the right bank of the glacier in three hours and a quarter. We rested the whole of July 2, but on July 3, I and the guides walked up very leisurely to a bivouac near the Hôtel Tuckett *en route* for the Pointe des Écrins, and started at 3.32 A.M., July 4, for that mountain. Mounting steep slopes of débris, we reached the upper plateau of the Glacier Blanc, and followed that glacier and the Glacier de l'Encula to within fifteen minutes of the Col des Écrins. Turning up the broken snow-slopes to the left, we reached the great bergschrund at 8.20 A.M. We had not brought a ladder, preferring to run the risk of being turned back to the labour of bringing one, but we luckily found a bridge, which we crossed. Here began the real work. We had intended to make for the arête, by which Mr. Moore's party descended, and follow it to the top. We, however, decided to ascend by the great ice-slope, which forms the north face of the peak, as it was entirely free from snow, and consequently there would be no danger of avalanches. It cost nearly 500 steps (most of which were cut in pure ice) to reach the arête, which we followed for thirty minutes to the summit, which we reached at 10.50 A.M., just two hours and a half from the bergschrund. Our route would probably be practicable only in a season when there is but little snow. We had a splendid view of most of the highest peaks of this district, and could even distinguish our stone man on the Meije. The storms of six winters had destroyed all traces of the only previous ascent in 1864, as it seemed as if no human foot had ever trodden the summit of this, the loftiest peak of the Dauphiné Alps. We left the top, after erecting a cairn, at 11.57 A.M., reached the bergschrund at 2.10 P.M., and our bivouac at 4.50 P.M. The expedition occupied thus eleven and a half hours' actual walking. We spent a second night in the tent, and next day, July 5, walked leisurely down to Ville Vallouise. I and the guides again started July 6, by the now well-known path to Ailefroide, and, traversing the Combe de Sapenière, reached the Glacier du Sélé by its left bank. Shortly before reaching the glacier, we found the skeleton of a chamois, which had probably been killed by an avalanche.

Almer pronounced its horns to be the finest he had ever seen ; and this opinion has been since confirmed by other chamois hunters. We carried them off as a *souvenir* of Dauphiné. In fifty minutes from the time we reached the ice, we found a small hollow high up on the left bank of the Glacier du Sélé, above its junction with the great Glacier de l'Ailefroide. Here we resolved to encamp under the shadow of the Ailefroide, which towered up grandly above us. We had a fine view of the Col du Sélé, Crête du Pelvoux, and Crête des Bœufs Rouges. We left at 4.39 A.M., July 7, and mounted stony grass slopes to the left bank of the great central glacier descending from the Ailefroide. Ascending this glacier, which gradually became more and more crevassed, we finally left it on the right bank about two and a half hours from our encampment. Slopes of débris, varied by steep but short rock couloirs and patches of snow, led at 8.58 A.M. to the summit, a short ridge of snow rising into peaks at either end. Nothing could be easier than the ascent of the hitherto deemed inaccessible Ailefroide. The French État Major give 3,925 mètres (12,878 feet) for its height. The central peak is slightly lower. It was a warm day, and clouds obscured all peaks except those in the immediate neighbourhood. We left the summit at 11 A.M., and, following the same route, reached our encampment at 2.15 P.M. The expedition occupied thus not quite seven hours' actual walking. We intended to have encamped that night near Mr. Tuckett's bivouac on the Pelvoux, and actually started by the right bank of the glacier, when a heavy thunderstorm came on, which obliged us to wait half an hour under a projecting rock. The rain ceasing, we made another start, and reaching the stream of the Sapenière, or Celce Nière, crossed it, directing our course towards what appeared to be a boulder, some distance higher up on the side of the valley, where we contemplated pitching our tent. To our amazement, when we reached the boulder (two and a quarter hours' actual walking from our bivouac), it turned out to be Soureillan, or the Cabane des Bergers de Provence. The latter name was particularly applicable at that time, as we found there a 'berger de Provence' who had arrived ten days before with his flock and faithful dog Pied-blanc. We passed a comparatively comfortable night, the boulder being built round with stones, so as to afford shelter ; and the berger lent us several sheep-skins. July 8th, it rained, and we spent the whole day at Soureillan, talking, sleeping, and playing 'binocle.' July 9th, we left at 4.28 A.M., climbed the rocks directly above Soureillan, on the left of a snow couloir, which we crossed and ascended for some dis-

tance, exposed to falling stones. Turning to the left, we made our way through some séracs, and gained the snow plateau. The Pic de la Pyramide rose immediately in front of us. Keeping it to our right, we traversed the plateau, which abounded in concealed crevasses, and at length came in sight of a beautiful snow cone, the true summit of the Pelvoux. This we reached at 9.13 A.M. Mists prevented our seeing much besides the Meije, Pointe des Écrins, and Ailefroide. The day was warm and cloudy, like the one on the Ailefroide. We were glad to see our stone man on what was palpably the highest peak of the Ailefroide, thus putting an end to any doubts which we might have had on the subject. We left at 10.30 A.M., and returned to Soureillan at 1.35 P.M. The expedition thus occupied six and three quarter hours' actual walking. The berger at Soureillan astonished us by refusing to take any money in return for the use of his sheepskins. An easy walk of two and three quarter hours (including a halt of twenty minutes at the spring of water at Ailefroide) took us down to Ville Vallouise that afternoon. Next morning, we bade adieu to Dauphiné, drove to Briançon, gaining a splendid view of the Ailefroide, Pelvoux, &c., from the high-road; and that night crossed the Mont Genève to Susa and Turin.

I took two observations on the Ailefroide and Pelvoux with a boiling-point thermometer, but, having neither time nor the materials necessary to work them out, I think it best to record them in the pages of the 'Journal':—

*Ailefroide*, July 7, 10.30 A.M.—Boiling-point thermometer + 185½° Fahrenheit. Ordinary thermometers in the shade, Centigrade + 7°; Fahrenheit + 46½°.

*Mont Pelvoux*, July 9, 10.30 A.M.—Boiling-point thermometer + 181° Fahrenheit. Ordinary thermometers in the shade, Centigrade + 2½°; Fahrenheit + 37°.

Correction to be applied to boiling-point thermometer, as determined by comparison with Kew:—At 180° + 0.15; at 185° + 0.25.

We have to acknowledge our obligations to the minute descriptions and excellent map in Mr. Ball's 'Western Alps.' Nothing remains to be added except that we hope some time or other to revisit this beautiful district, the mountain scenery of which far exceeded our utmost expectations, though the accommodation did not.

#### DAUPHINÉ.

*Meije*, June 28.—Mr. W. A. B. Coolidge, accompanied by a lady, with Christian Almer and his son Ulrich, and Christian

Gertsch, left a bivouac, four and a quarter hours from La Grave, at 4.20 A.M., and, mounting by the Glacier de la Meije, turned to the right and attained a pinnacle of the Meije, forty feet lower than the 'Allehöchste Spitze,' which appeared impracticable at 12.10. The party left at 12.40, and returned to their bivouac at 5.45 P.M. allez!

*Pointe des Écrins*, July 4.—Mr. W. A. B. Coolidge, with the same guides, left Hôtel Tuckett at 3.32 A.M., reached the bergschrund at 8.20 A.M., and attained the summit by the great ice-slope on the north face at 10.50. Leaving at 11.57, they passed the bergschrund at 2.10 P.M., and returned to Hôtel Tuckett at 4.50 P.M.

*Ailefroide*, July 7.—The same party left a bivouac above the Glacier du Sélé five hours from Ville Vallouise, at 4.39 A.M., and, mounting slopes of débris, ascended the Glacier de l'Ailefroide for some time. Quitting it on its right bank, they mounted more slopes of débris, and steep but short rock couloirs, to the summit, which was reached at 8.58 A.M. They left at 11, and regained their bivouac at 2.15 P.M.

#### MONT BLANC DISTRICT.

The same party, on July 15, left a bivouac one hour below Mr. Moore's, on the Glacier de la Brenva, at 2.45 A.M., reached the summit of Mont Blanc without making the détour to the Corridor at 5.35 P.M., left it at 5.40 P.M., and reached the Grands Mulets at 9.10 P.M. A longer time than on the first ascent was consumed, owing to the want of snow, the Glacier de la Brenva requiring four hours for its passage.

The same party also made the second passage of the Col de Talèfre. The couloir by which Mr. Whymper ascended being filled with fresh loose snow, the ascent was made chiefly by the rocks on its left side, requiring two hours of perilous climbing, owing to falls of stones. The party halted two and three quarter hours at the foot of the couloir to avoid avalanches. Owing to the want of snow, the ascent of the Courmayeur side of the Col de Miage was made by easy rocks, which abounded in fine crystals, in two hours.

#### MONTE ROSA DISTRICT.

In crossing the Biesjoch from Randa, July 30, the same party found a small lake entirely frozen over, at the summit, which does not appear to have been previously noticed. As the pass is 11,644 feet in height, this lake must be one of the highest in the Alps. They again noticed the lake, September 22, on an ascent of the Brunegghorn, from the Gruben side of the Biesjoch.