scented out the way through the glacier with much skill, and we rounded the big rock to the place where we had gone wrong in the morning. After a little climbing in the rocks below, when Mr. Marshall was obliged to go last, so as let down our local guide by the rope, we returned to Courmayeur by 7 o'clock.

This is a pleasant little expedition for any one not inclined for the laborious ascent of the Grandes Jorasses, and it might be varied by ascending the nearer and lower part of the ridge called the Petites Jorasses.

A Wolf Hunt in the Maritime Alps. By the Rev. W. H. Hawker. Read before the Alpine Club on May 7, 1872.

WHEN, at ten o'clock on the bright autumn morning of September 10, 1869, I stood on the top of Monte Viso, after the first fond gaze had naturally been cast at those old friends of the great Alps which at any distance, near or far, seem equally enchanting, and whose familiar forms required neither compass or chart to identify them, and after the less known peaks of Dauphiné, looking like a storm-tossed petrified sea, had claimed somewhat more care in order to make them out, I turned my face southwards with a thrill of joy and looked down with some feeling of pride, though none of disdain, upon the rugged but clearly-marked chain of the Maritime Alps. Of pride, though not disdain, for I had, during three seasons spent at Mentone, and varying in duration from the beginning of October to the end of June, been constantly exploring their recesses and scaling their crags, with the ever-increasing hope, whenever the mighty pinnacle on which I was now standing burst upon the view—as many and many a time it did—that some day I might complete my exploits in this district by achieving in summer what the winter snows forbade—the ascent of this noble mountain.

This, it is true, is rather beginning at the wrong end; but it is necessary, in order that I may give, in as few words as I can, some idea of the geography of the district to which I wish to introduce my readers.

On the ridge which extends to the S.W. from Monte Viso, there stands just beyond the Col de la Maddalena a mountain of pyramidal form named L'Enchastraye, or the Cima dei Quattro Vescovadi. This peak is remarkable, not for its height [9,747′], since it is surpassed by several peaks further

to the south, but on account of the geographical importance which has been attached to it from a remote period. For the range at this point bifurcates, and the mountain forms the watershed of three districts, its slopes directing the rainfall to the Rhone, the Po, and the Var. Of the two ridges formed by this bifurcation, the western soon loses itself in Provence; the other, on the contrary, trends to the E., and constitutes the main range of the Maritime Alps, a region possessing several peaks and masses of true Alpine character; some of them over 10,000 ft. in height, and throwing out a number of great spurs which radiate to the south, and retaining a considerable altitude until they plunge abruptly into the Mediterranean, afford that welcome shelter which causes the winters at such places as Mentone to be so renowned for their exceptional mildness.

But the work of this ridge is not yet done; for continuing still to the E., beyond the Col di Tenda, it gradually loses its Alpine character, and, under the name of the Apennines, becomes the backbone of Italy.

With this portion of it, however. we have nothing to do. Our business is with the Maritime Alps—a district full of interest, whether we regard its picturesqueness and the extremes of contrast often combined in its scenery; or whether we explore it as naturalists; or whether we consider it as a vast and strong barrier placed by nature between France and Italy for the political separation of the two nations, and the theatre of great historical events, the waves of war having fumed and fretted, and dashed against its natural ramparts, almost as fiercely as its cliffs have been attacked by the neighbouring sea.

I have dipped a little into all these matters in my excursions through this country; but it will be unnecessary to enlarge upon some of them, as they have been already treated of by others.

The 'Wolf Hunt' has been selected as the subject of the present paper, because that expedition took me for the first time into the interior of this district; but I propose to supply, at a future time, another paper or two on some of the other expeditions I have made in these Alps, accompanied by a few details on the important campaigns which have taken place in them.

The great quantity of snow which fell on the whole range of the Maritime Alps during the early part of the first winter I spent at Mentone, drove the wolves in considerable numbers from the higher and more remote parts down to the neighbourhood of the towns and villages in the valleys. Thus stories were soon spread of how wolves were seen almost every night

in the precincts of Sospello and Piandola; how they nightly passed through Fontan; all these places being on the high road from Nice to Turin by the Col di Tenda; and how they snapped up every dog or cat that chanced to be abroad.

In a few days the reports became more serious. It was said that a pack of wolves had run alongside of the courier over the Col di Tenda, showing an inclination to snap at the mules' heads, after the manner of the picture in the old editions of 'Robinson Crusoe.' Still the snow remained on the high mountains, and the chamois on the rocks, and all else—badgers marmots, and even foxes—underground. The wolves must be hard put to it at such times. I have seen when they have not only eaten any berries they could find, but even gnawed off pieces of turf and swallowed them to assauge the pangs of hunger. It is easy to believe the general report that a wolf, at such times, is an exceedingly unpleasant and dangerous animal to come across.

No wonder, then, that starved out of their natural hunting-grounds, they followed the flocks into the valleys, where they kept the shepherds and their dogs constantly on the alert, carrying off single sheep—now here, now there—and on one occasion joining together to fall on a large flock, and killing no less than seventy-six sheep before they could be driven off. But the wolves did not always wait till nightfall; for one entered the town of Sospello in broad daylight, and being detected by the commotion amongst the dogs of the place, who fled from him howling in all directions, a hue and cry was raised, and the people being braver than their dogs, the animal was mobbed into a tank and got drowned. Its skin was exhibited at Mentone a few days after, and created much excitement; and this was greatly augmented when a picnic party came suddenly upon the track of a wolf upon the snow near the top of the Berceau [3,772], a mountain close to the town. One gentleman of the party implored the ladies not to be alarmed, but advised great caution, as he felt sure the track was that of a bear and quite fresh, and probably the animal was close by. This introduced an element of sensation rarely experienced in a Mentone picnic, and one which I was loth to disturb by stating that the track was really that of a wolf, and not fresh, as I had seen it on the mountain some days before. A wolf, however, does make an enormous track in the snow, nearly as big as that of a lynx, and when enlarged by melting, it really looks out of all proportion to the size of the animal.

Then came a very serious and sad tale of how a poor soldier,

returning to his mountain home on furlough, and getting benighted, was attacked when quite close to his house by a number of wolves. He drew his sword-bayonet, and defended himself with such energy as to kill two of them, but the others mastered him; and when his wife came out of the house the next morning, the first thing she saw was his mangled remains and the two dead wolves lying by him, also partly eaten by the rest of the pack!

Soon after this I was told by a young French friend, M. de Lassence, that in consequence of the many complaints made on the subject, the government had ordered an official wolf hunt. Having obtained permission to invite a friend or two, he asked me if I would like to join it. It is scarcely necessary to say that I accepted with alacrity; and my brother-in-law, Mr. Edmund Probyn, being included in the invitation, we made, with another young Frenchman, a party of four.

We started on the afternoon of February 25, and the road from Mentone to Sospello not being at that time finished, drove as far as we could; and then shouldering our packs, and with a man to carry the guns, made our way to Sospello, which was to be the rendezvous. Through some mistake we went to the wrong inn—that of the Poste—where the accommodation was very indifferent, it being chiefly frequented by charretiers. The landlady of the other, the 'Hôtel de Marengo,' on the many subsequent occasions that I have been there, hardly ever omitted to groan over and describe the splendid dinner she had prepared for us all, having heard of the intended expedition, and taking it for granted we should go to her house.

The main party of officials were to arrive in the middle of the night by the courier from Nice, and in the meantime the Gardes Forestiers and Champêtres, who had assembled in readiness, told us that the battue next day was to be from Sospello to Giandola, and that it was believed there were at least fifteen wolves in the neighbourhood. This led to an inspection of the guns. De Lassence had his own double-barrel; his friend, a new breech-loader, 'fusil à mécanique,' as he called it; Probyn had a capital weapon, with one barrel rifled and the other smooth; while I, not really expecting much sport, though plenty of walking, had armed myself with the lightest gun I could find—an old makeshift of a double—the sort of thing a gardener would shoot bullfinches off gooseberry-bushes with. Fearing the very thin barrel might burst if the balls were at all tight, I selected some bullets which

were very loose, and had to be wrapped round and round a great many times with patch to make them stay down at all.

We did not, on the whole, spend a very lively evening, as the place was cold, damp, and draughty. A feeble effort was made to get up a rubber, and the 'choses de whist' were called for; but an imperfect pack of fifty cards was all the house possessed, so the idea was given up.

Being told that the 'assembly' was to take place by beat of drum at 3 A.M., we turned in pretty early, and, in the words of the old song,

> 'Determined all things should be right,
> We primed and loaded over-night,
> As full four hours before 'twas light
> We were to start a-shooting.'

On turning out cold and sleepy into the pitch-dark road next morning, one became by degrees aware that one formed a part of a very mixed multitude, the whole population seeming to have come to join in the hunt.

Afterwards, as day began to dawn and we were able to discern our company, the 'sportsmen,' who were numerous, presented that wonderful variety of costume and gear which seems to foreigners almost to constitute the chief attraction of *la chasse*. Curious indeed was the workmanship of the gaiters, boots, game-bags, straps, gun-slings, and in short of everything about them.

The proceedings of that day do not supply much to record. Following the direction of the Turin road, over the Col de Brouis, the guns were thrown out as we went along, in a sort of skirmishing order, with instructions to command the principal troughs and gullies leading from the valley to the heights of Mangiato on our left. The beaters in the meanwhile worked the lower ground, accompanied by several shepherds with their wolf-dogs. When we got to the top of the Col de Brouis, Probyn and I were detached to the right to the top of the Cima del Bosco—a commanding point, from which we got a good general view of the whole proceedings, which were very prettily managed. Soon after getting there one of the dogs got for some time on the scent of a wolf, which led him in our direction, and his deep rich baying raised our hopes that we should have some sport on the ridge. The wolf, however, had either been before us, or had slipped through a weak point in our line, for we never viewed him. The only wild animal I saw during the day was a single specimen of a sand-grouse.

The mountain-sides were exceedingly sterile, and the largest

plants being lavender and *Artemisa camphorata*, there was, except in the lower parts of the valley, nothing in the way of covert sufficient to hold a wolf.

Returning to the col, we lunched at a cabaret, and then quitting the road, beat both sides of the valley down to Breglio, and ended the day by walking on to Giandola, where we slept. Just outside a little chapel on the way, we were shown a great hole where a wolf had buried a sheep a few nights before, and so cleverly was it done that it was never found out till the wolf dug it up again for his supper. I was shown a similar hole the next day, and in that case the wolf must have carried the sheep on his back up something like 2,000 feet of very steep ground from the place where he had killed it.

Over the fire at Giandola, after dinner, sporting stories were, as is usual on such occasions, freely related. Amongst others, the receiver of taxes of the district called our attention to his 'chien couchant,' or pointer, and told us how it had accompanied him in a stroll on the Nice road a few days before, while he smoked his after-dinner cigar, when suddenly a wolf pounced upon it. The dog, with a shriek, jumped over the parapet, and dog and wolf rolled together head over heels down the slope. The wolf did not renew the attack, and the dog escaped with several cuts and scratches caused by the rocks or the teeth of the wolf. 'Since then,' added M. le Percepteur, quietly, 'I have smoked my after-dinner cigar at home!'

Less fortunate was the brother of this dog, which belonged to another resident also present, and which, as his master was returning home one evening, was seized by two wolves. After a struggle, during which the poor animal endeavoured to shelter itself between its master's legs, one of them caught it by the head and the other by a hind leg, and they set to tugging away till they positively (so the man said) tore the poor shrieking dog in two.

The situation, one can well imagine, must have been a somewhat unpleasant one for the owner, armed, as he was, with only a light cane; but he described the event with such arched eyebrows, and so much excited gesticulation, as to send us into fits of laughter. 'Mais, messieurs,' he urged, 'je vous assure que c'était effrayant,' and certainly the expression of horror had hardly yet quitted his features.

These stories at last drew out our chief, M. de la Vevre, Inspector of the Forests of the Department—who had been in a crack cavalry regiment, and then in the Chasseurs d'Afrique, before obtaining his present appointment—and he told us some

very pleasant little incidents about lion-hunting and Arab warfare. As, however, we had had a longish day, with a prospect of a still longer one on the morrow—when we were to get as high up as the snow would permit us—the tales were soon cut short, and all hands turned in.

We were up again by 3 A.M., and over our hot coffee the chief told us that he had organised a different mode of proceeding from yesterday. There was to be no more of the beating of drums and general hubbub which had rendered yesterday's battue a mere fiasco.

Wolves are not exactly the kind of animals to wait and have salt put on their tails; they are of a suspicious nature, and apt to sheer off on being disturbed by any unusual commotion. Therefore to-day we were not to be accompanied by any noisy volunteers, but to go to work as quietly as possible, a few shepherds and their dogs acting as beaters.

There was a great examination of guns and a reckless looking into powder-horns in the tallow candle-light—for I am thankful to say we were far from the region of 'bougies'—and a general loading of weapons; while the wag of the party remarked, as a fresh supply of coffee was brought in, 'La première chose à charger c'est l'estomac.' However, at last we started off, some two or three hours before light; and, influenced by the warning we received as to silence, all went well for some time; but one might as well expect a bird-clapper to be still on a windy day as these chattering Italians or French to keep silent for more than a few minutes at a time. The chief stopped the line several times, and implored them not to make such a noise, but at last had to give it up in despair.

Our route lay up the skirts of a ridge that forms part of the mountain called Aution [about 6,000], and constitutes the south side of the valley of Cairos. After ascending for some time, we came to where a shepherd clothed in sheepskins, and armed with a long gun, was literally 'keeping watch over his flock by night.' It was the highest point at which any flock was camped; and the poor man told us he had been kept up the whole night by the wolves, who had been very daring; and that he had driven off one of them with the help of his dog and throwing stones at it—for he could not see to fire in the dark—only a few minutes before our arrival. The Inspector asked him to come with us, but he said he dared not leave his flock with only his young son, for fear the wolves might come back after he was gone; for there was still a long time to daylight, and he said the wolves must be very hungry, they had been howling so; but he would follow us later.

This news cheered us up considerably, and we plodded on steadily upward, with renewed hope at each step of gaining the ridge before the wolves retired into the forest beyond it for the day. Now, if ever, there was need for silence; but our gesticulating friend of last night—the one whose dog had been killed almost between his legs, and who had been bragging a good deal in the 'let me get at them' style of what he would do if he could only get a chance, and whose voice was a basso profondo of the loudest order—now awoke the echoes with his talking. The fact is, I believe, he had not yet got over his adventure, and was getting into a thorough fright at the prospect of another close acquaintance with the wolves. Anyhow, he suggested our going in twos instead of singly on the ridge, and himself took care to keep in the rear the greater part of the day.

A detachment was here sent off to work the valley to its head, and, on the beaters joining them from below, to beat up to the ridge where we were to be posted.

On arriving at length at the ridge, just as day was beginning to break, Probyn and I pushed on to the furthest point, where we thought—and rightly, as the event proved—that we should get the best chance.

We had got very hot in climbing quickly up the steep path, but now we were met by a bitterly cold north wind, which froze us to the marrow. We spread ourselves out singly along the ridge, which was very steep-sided, and commanded a view right down to the valley. I was lying on a rock, with my face just peeping over the ridge, keeping a sharp look-out through a binocular glass, when faint shouts reached me of 'Le loup! le loup! il monte, le loup!' then some straggling shots, and immediately I saw through the glass a wolf steadily coming up in our direction. I shouted to Probyn, who was next me, and he passed the word to the rest who were further down. Everybody down below who saw the beast fired at him, although none of them were in shot, except the curé of Giandola, who was half way up the mountain, and who told us that it had been the great desire of his life to kill a wolf; and although he had often been out he had never even had a shot, and now the wolf had come quite close to him, and he had got entangled in some way or other, and could not get his gun off until the animal was out of reach. All this time I was watching the animal with my glass with intense interest, for though he travelled four times as quick as a man, he took a long while to come up. He stopped several times for a moment, as I have frequently seen chamois do, to scan the sky-line and select his

route; but on the whole was coming up as straight as possible between Probyn and me. So I put up my glass, kept more out of sight than ever, and prepared for action.

Being more warmly clad than Probyn, I had lent him my black waterproof, and the sun, which had just risen, shining upon it, made him a conspicuous object on the snow; and the wolf, catching sight of him, while still some 200 yards below us, turned off towards a couloir or gully about 100 yards beyond me. Probyn gave him a shot as he turned, but without effect, while I instantly ran with my utmost speed to that point, and stooping behind a rock tried to hold my breath, when I heard the wolf panting and puffing within five yards of me. I jumped up at once, but the nature of the ground prevented my seeing him until he had crossed the couloir; it was impossible for him to ascend it, as it was a sheet of ice. I now saw him about twelve yards off, with his left flank exposed to me, and obliged to go slowly over the ice. I had kept on reminding myself, ever since I saw him, that from the nature of my weapon I must aim high; accordingly I pointed about six inches over his back and pulled trigger, watching intently to see the result. Alas! I saw it only too plainly in a fragment of ice and rock knocked off by the bullet just underneath him.

I am bound to say that the animal now behaved in a manner perfectly worthy of a wild beast, for he turned and snarled at me; and whereas before he had appeared to be all head, now he looked all teeth, and I have not the slightest doubt that but for the ice couloir between us he would have made an ugly rush at me, and then gone on again. But the wolf that hesitates, even for the purposes of revenge, is lost. That moment which he devoted to looking ugly at me, I occupied in aiming with my remaining barrel at some object far above him. Again I fired away, and this time my friend tumbled head over heels, and I raised a whoop which I am sure was never equalled by the basso profondo down below. But I was a little premature. Wolves die very hard, and this individual formed no exception; for after biting the dust he got up again, and scrambled round the edge of the couloir out of my sight. Climbing up to get round the top of the couloir, I was soon joined by Probyn, De Lassence, and his friend, and we had a grand race over the snow to try and head him back from crossing the ridge; but he had got over it, so we waited for the rest and the dogs to come up.

The owner of the 'fusil à mécanique,' who had strained every nerve to try and overtake the wolf, here found that his new gun had been unloaded all the time. He had been so

constantly exhibiting his weapon, and showing the way of loading and unloading it, that when the time of action arrived he quite forgot to see whether it was charged or not.

This, too, appeared an appropriate time for eating; so, wolf-like, we tore asunder a roast lamb we had been supplied with at Giandola, and which was so tiny that it was not too much for the four of us.

On the rest of the party coming up, an examination was made of the place where the wolf had gone over. The north side of the ridge consisted of steep slopes and crags, clothed with pine forest and covered several feet with fine powdery frozen snow. The wolf had floundered down this, leaving tracks of blood. The shepherd we had passed in the morning, judging from the conduct of his dog—which bristled up from neck to tail, and barked furiously—that the wolf was close by, tried to get down, but instantly disappeared under the snow, and left no signs of what had become of him till we saw the top of his long gun, which was slung at his back, sticking out of the snow ever so far below.

No time was to be lost, so we made a line and hauled him out by his gun, half suffocated. A number of gensdarmes had accompanied us on each day, some of them *en grande tenue*, with carbines, cocked-hats, and jack-boots; one of them, trying to get down a little further, slipped in the same way under the snow, and had to be pulled out by his spurs! We soon found that it was perfectly impracticable to descend into the Val Cairos, which was a great disappointment to us all, not only because we thereby failed to bag our game, but also because we found that a number of other wolves had crossed the ridge, probably just before we got to it, and, no doubt, alarmed by the noise of our talkative friend, and there would have been a very good chance of finding some of them in the forest. Probyn and I proposed to go round, but were told it would take six hours to get to the spot. So all that could now be done was to make a fresh beat along another ridge to the eastward, which at length took us into the main road opposite the town of Sarge, and we walked through the magnificent gorge of the same name back to Giandola, where we slept.

An old chasseur had been out with us, a retired captain of carabinière, named Lautrura, a summary of whose adventures I must reserve for a future paper. He told me that he had killed in this district fifty chamois, but only five wolves in all his life, and I was considered very fortunate to have happened to get in the right place for this one. The shepherds and Gardes Forestiers said that, provided the other wolves did not

eat him, there would be no doubt of finding my animal at the foot of the slope. As, however, we wished to get back to Mentone for Sunday, we could not go ourselves; but I told the people that if they could get him they might have the government reward, which I think is forty francs, and that I would give them something besides for the skin.

The next day Probyn and I walked down the Roza to Ventimiglia. On passing Breglio the man who carried our things showed us a spot where a shocking thing had happened. A wolf went, in broad daylight, into the town, and, taking a young child, tossed it over its back and carried it up the mountain. It had to pass the post of a douanier, and he ran alongside of the wolf and shot it through the heart with his carbine. In the act of dying the animal dropped the child, who was unhurt, and seizing the douanier by the knee-cap, died with his teeth so clenched that the jaws had to be forced asunder with an iron bar. The wolf must have been mad, for the poor man died of hydrophobia soon after.

At Ventimiglia we relieved the man of our knapsacks, and walked briskly home to Mentone. Not long after I got a letter from the Garde Forestier of Fontan, to say that the wolf had been found at the bottom of the slope. My bullet had gone right through him, but being just below his heart he had retained enough strength to crawl over the ridge and escape us for the moment. Fortunately the other wolves had not found him, and his skin forms a welcome addition to the various trophies and objects of natural history that grace the walls of my study.

A SWISS JAHRFEST.

The annual fête of the Swiss Alpine Club was last year announced to take place at Lausanne, on August 24, 25, and 26. Although, at a previous meeting of our Club, a general invitation to its members had been received from the *Comité central*, the disastrous weather of last summer disorganised all pre-arranged plans, and the English Alpine Club was, in the end, only represented by three unworthy members.

Having, in company with our excellent friend, M. Loppé, left Chamouni on the evening of the 23rd, we arrived on the next day by train at Lausanne. Packed in a voiture, we crawled up the steeps leading to the upper town, and presented ourselves at the Jardin de l'Arc, where we were most courteously received by M. Beraneck and the committee of the fête, who, being aware of our intended arrival, had secured rooms for us at the 'Faucon;' otherwise we should have fared but badly. Having dined, we began the first event on our pro-