

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 steep leading to the upper town, and presented ourselves at the Jardin de l'Arc, where we were most courteously received by M. Berneck 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-

gramme, 'Réunion familière des Clubistes, et collation au Jardin de l'Arc.'

The Jardin de l'Arc forms a terrace on the crest of the hill, high above the lake. Nothing could exceed its gay and festive appearance. The roof of interlaced plane-trees above our heads was hung with festoons of Chinese lanterns, and long tables sparkled with the genial wines of the country. A stream of newly arrived 'Clubistes' constantly poured in, and warm greetings were exchanged on all sides. We were soon recognised as members of the English Alpine Club. Our insular reserve thawed before the warmth of the welcome we received, and so many of our entertainers insisted on pledging us in the little white wines of Lausanne, that we began to fear an increase in the brilliancy of the fête, as far as our vision was concerned, of 'ten thousand additional lamps!' Songs were sung, blue lights and red fire from time to time threw pantomimic gleams on the crowd of revellers, and occasional flights of rockets lit up for a moment the mass of undistinguishable shadow which lay between us and the 'shining levels of the lake.' It was late before we sought our hotel to prepare for the morrow.

According to the programme of the fête, the hours from 8 till 11 next morning should have been devoted to the antiquities and public institutions of Lausanne, all of which were thrown open on the occasion; but our first appearance in public took place at the theatre, where the annual general meeting was held. The entrance-hall was decorated in a style at once chaste and elegant. A perfect forest of young pine-trees was presented to the eye, through the foliage of which chamois gazed upon one from all sides, while the bouquetin, the marmot, and even the ferocious lammergeyer of the Alps, lent animation to the scene. The president of the fête, M. Rambert, opened the proceedings with an oration of considerable length, after which we withdrew and took no further part in the proceedings until we were summoned to the grand banquet, which was to take place at 1 o'clock. Seats had been reserved for us at the presidential table; and although our modest and retiring natures shrunk from the honour, M. Hoffman-Burkhardt, the president of the club, himself most kindly sought us out and insisted on its acceptance. One of our party, perhaps in consequence of his diminutive size, succeeded in eluding observation, and remained in well-merited obscurity at the end of a distant table, but the other distinguished strangers found themselves in the best position for hearing and seeing the proceedings. Close to the President's table was a sort of rustic pulpit, composed of moss and pine branches, furnished with a silver goblet of considerable size, for the official drinking of toasts. Into this tribune orator after orator mounted, and to the utmost stretch of his propulsive lung-power conveyed his eloquence to the ends of the immense suite of rooms in which the banquet was held.

On the excellence of the dinner and of the wines we will not enlarge. Shortly after the commencement of the banquet, a cheer announced the arrival of countless bottles, bearing on their richly ornamented labels the following inscription: 'Vin d'honneur présenté au Club

Alpin Suisse par la Ville de Lausanne.' We thought of our own ungrateful country, and blushed for very shame. At which of our banquets has the presence of civic port, or even civic turtle, testified to a graceful act of recognition on the part of our municipal authorities? Among our members we number the mayor of a cathedral town, 'given to hospitality' as episcopal towns should be: we cherish the hope, vague it may be, that when he calls the attention of his brother magnate of London to the facts we have mentioned, the chief magistrates of the richest city in the world will no longer suffer themselves to be outdone by the municipalities of a small but generous republic.

During the course of the banquet several sympathetic telegrams from distant Alpine Clubs were received with great applause, as was also a letter from our excellent secretary, the eloquent warmth of which was only equalled by the grace and purity of the French in which it was couched. But at last all was over. We had lighted our cigars, we had sipped our coffee, speeches had been succeeded by songs, and general hilarity prevailed. At 6 o'clock we all turned out and went up to the 'signal,' a justly celebrated point of view about half-an-hour's walk above the town. Here the stalwart mountaineers were welcomed by a crowd of holiday folk from Lausanne, and the festivities recommenced around the little cabaret which marks the spot. After a while, however, we withdrew from the hum of men, and smoked a quiet pipe, reclining on the soft turf and watching the sun as he packed up his last rays and finally disappeared behind the purple Jura, on his way to other climes.

But the evening was not yet over. We were bidden to the hospitalities of the principal club of Lausanne, which was thrown open to 'Clubistes' and their guests. At last the reflection that we were to start by special train at 5 next morning compelled us to tear ourselves away with a view to the 'conservation' of such 'forces' as were yet left in us.

In this we were prudent, for the morrow contained many more things than it could possibly have taken thought for itself. The official programme was sufficiently well filled:—

'Lundi, 26 Août.

'A 5 heures précises du matin.—Départ général avec un train spécial pour Vernex-Montreux. On s'acheminera par la gorge de Chaudron vers les Avants—Déjeuner—Plusieurs buts de course: Col du Soldatier et Cape du Moine; Col de Jaman; Dent de Jaman; Rochers de Naye, etc.

2 heures.—Dîner rustique à Glion offert par la section des Diablerets.

5 heures.—Descente au château de Chillon, et départ pour Ouchy avec le bateau à vapeur.'

But, besides all this, we had planned to sleep at Orsières, in order to cross to Chamouni next day by one of the lateral valleys of the Val Champey.

Our start on the morning of this eventful day was a scramble. No one was called, at least so they averred; coffee was late, and when it came, scalding hot. M. Loppé, who had throughout watched over us

with paternal care, was fain to leave his children to their fate and run for the train. One of our party, after a single gulp of coffee, which skinned his mouth, followed, and was just in time. Another arrived as the train was beginning to move; he would have been distanced had not a wagonette full of late 'Clubistes' passed him at full gallop, and when they recognised him nobly stopped and taken him on board. But the third—alas! he was 'lost to sight, though still to memory dear.'

All the way to Montreux the two remaining representatives of our Club became more and more painfully conscious of the fact that they had not breakfasted. For, certes, a mouthful of scalding coffee could count for nothing: a boiled tongue is an excellent thing for breakfast, but when the tongue in question is one's own organ of speech, 'l'appétit vient en mangeant.' We reflected, however, that we should soon be in the neighbourhood of the 'Hôtel Righi-Vaudois' at Glion, and we determined to slip away quietly and try its cuisine rather than that of Les Avants, which was, as we gathered, a long way off.

Arrived at Montreux, we passed in a long procession through the town, which was just then emerging from sleep, and plunged into the gorge of the Chaudron, one of the deep clefts scooped out by a torrent, which whirls and boils far below the narrow path and the rustic bridges which cross it at intervals.

We went on cheerfully for a couple of miles, until we realised the fact that we had crossed the last bridge, and were ascending steep meadows on the wrong side of the ravine which separated us from the haven of our hopes. This was too much. We struck. We refused to advance until we were credibly informed as to the exact distance from Les Avants. It was more than two hours. We looked in each others' faces for comfort, and found none. Not all the blandishments of M. Loppé, nor the 'petits pains' which he produced from capacious pockets, could console us. Breakfast, immediate breakfast, and that of the meatiest character, was our ultimatum; but we yielded to fate and toiled up the stony path, as men without hope. Now it happened that some time after, having stopped for the purpose of lighting our pipes, we found ourselves alone. The rest of the caravan had disappeared round a corner of the road, which wound in and out of the ravines which cut into the hill-side. We were at that moment capable of any meanness, and the same temptation occurred to us both at the same moment.

We trust we may be pardoned for this. No doubt the honour of the Alpine Club was in our hands, and it was our duty to carry it unblemished up the beetling crags of the Rocher de Naye. For a moment we quailed, as we thought, 'What will they say in England?' but then those little white wines of the country gave one the deuce's own appetite for breakfast, and in short we rushed violently down a steep forest to the torrent, which we contrived to cross, and then made the best of our way towards the 'Hôtel Righi-Vaudois.'

The path which we were now following lay at about the same level as the one we had quitted, and as we pursued our way we became aware of an individual who was evidently in pursuit of the main body,

now some three or four miles ahead of him. We levelled our glasses across the ravine, and even at that distance recognised the lost one. A great weight was lifted from our minds, for now the honour of the Alpine Club was safe. He was evidently very hot, for we saw him take off his coat and mop himself a good deal; but we knew his indomitable pluck, and besides, *he had breakfasted*, or should have done so.

We entered the fashionable salons of the 'Righi-Vaudois,' disheveled but happy, and the salmon cutlets 'à la Hollandaise' we can never, never forget. The English families who were breakfasting in sober sadness, after their manner, looked at us as if they had never seen two somewhat crumpled individuals finish a bottle of champagne straight off at eight o'clock in the morning. Perhaps they never had.

After this we turned into the lovely woods above Veyteaux, and wandered, and smoked, and dreamed lazily, until the first 'pétard' announced that the famished mountaineers were coming down 'like wolves on the fold.' We returned, and then was presented to our view the 'rustic banquet'—rustic, however, only in externals. Long tables were laid out under the shade of a terraced 'berceau' overhanging the lake. The weather was superb, but cruelly hot, and as 'Clubiste' after 'Clubiste' came down the steep pastures, their appearance bore testimony to the 'melting moments' they had experienced. We were soon seated, and the revels commenced. Although we had not earned our dinner, we contrived to do full justice to it, and when Montreux, emulating the generosity of Lausanne, sent no less than 800 bottles of 'vin d'honneur,' we again thought of our ungrateful country, and sadly murmured, 'They do these things better in Switzerland.' Many were the toasts, and eloquent the speeches. It has been said that one of our party made a speech. That is possible. It has been said that it was couched in the worst French ever inflicted on human ears. That is more than probable. But at least our sense of the welcome we had received was sincere, however badly expressed. Our party had much before them, and were compelled to leave some time before the proceedings were over. How the festive mountaineers descended processionally to Chillon, how that more speeches were made and more toasts drunk (for the municipality of Veyteaux, too, was equal to the occasion), we cannot describe, for at that time we were speeding away in a saloon carriage in the direction of St. Maurice.

We reached Orsières at midnight, and arrived at Chamouni exactly four-and-twenty hours afterwards, having in the interval crossed from the Val d'Arpetta to the Glacier de Trient, in weather which it were flattery to call malignant.

The last three days were like a dream—a dream of pleasant acquaintanceships which we hope soon to renew; of kindly hospitality which we would be glad of an opportunity to return; and lastly—must we confess it?—of 'petit vin blanc!'

D. J. A.
F. A. W.
A. A. R.