

rescue themselves from their perilous position. Hans Grass is recommended on all sides as a thoroughly efficient guide, and has the highest reputation of any man in his profession in Eastern Switzerland. He appears, however, to be the only man in the Engadine capable of taking the lead in a difficult expedition.

## ALPINE NOTES.

**ALPINE HUTS.**—Complaints have been recently made in various parts of the Alps of the state in which huts are often left by parties who have spent the night in them, and the injury done to the furniture and cooking utensils. The mischief is believed to be due principally to the carelessness of guides not belonging to the district, and consequently without any feeling of responsibility to counteract the natural indolence of 3 A.M., supported, as it usually is, by the general eagerness for a start. Travellers are urgently requested, therefore, to insist on their guides using the stove carefully, and, before leaving, cleansing the cooking utensils, restoring to their proper places all blankets or furniture, and shutting the doors and windows. It might be well if the foreign Alpine Clubs would issue a printed notice to this effect, to be pasted up conspicuously in the huts under their control. It should be in French, German, and Italian, so as to be intelligible to guides of every nationality.

**FIRST ASCENT OF THE PALA DI S. MARTINO, 3,244 MÈTRES.**—Mr. T. Meurer and the Marquis A. di Pallavicini, with the guides Santo Siorpaes and Arcangelo Dimaj, of Cortina, had made during the days from the 17th to the 22nd of June, 1878, starting from S. Martino di Castrozza, several reconnaissances and useless attempts to ascend the Pala di S. Martino. From articles in the 'Alpine Journal' concerning the attempts of Messrs. Whitwell, Beachcroft, and Tucker, and information given by Mr. Tuckett about the possibility of an ascent of the Pala, these gentlemen were aware that an attempt to gain the summit from the N. would prove impracticable by ordinary mountaineering methods. The S.W. side proved quite as hopeless, and the S. and S.E. sides were found unfavourable to an ascent. On the E. side Mr. Whitwell succeeded in gaining a considerable height in the year 1870, but without being able to scale the peak. From the N.N.W. a broken ridge leads from the plateau to the main mass of the Pala; but this ridge proved, as the above-mentioned gentlemen found, to be cut off from the Pala by an impassable chasm.

Messrs. Beachcroft and Tucker, with François Devouassoud and Battista della Santa, had made an attempt, as they state themselves, on the N.W. side ('Alpine Journal,' vol. vii. p. 332), but also here found further ascent so dangerous that they gave up the attack. Considering these circumstances, and making grateful use of these most valuable observations, Messrs. Meurer and Pallavicini decided to direct their attempts specially towards the W. and N.W. sides, and only if these proved useless to try the E. side, which Messrs. Whitwell and Tuckett pronounced to be not quite hopeless.

The first days were made use of by the two gentlemen and their guides for reconnaissances. On the 21st a serious attempt was made on the W. and S.W. sides. On the 22nd the rocks of the Cima della Rosetta were climbed, in order to observe from a greater height if an attempt on the N.W. cliffs would prove unsuccessful higher up in the main mass of the Pala. This inspection proved satisfactory, and so an attack on the N.W. side was decided upon.

On the 23rd June the party started, with Michele Bettega, of S. Martino, as porter, at four o'clock from S. Martino, and reached—by skirting the base of the Cima della Rosetta, and climbing the somewhat steep wall beyond it—the foot of the glacier, which was still thickly covered with snow. After having scaled this glacier, the party, having been climbing four hours, were pretty high up on the ice which lies in the recess between the Pala and the Cima della Rosetta. This glacier terminates at its upper end in a steep couloir running up the N. face of the Pala to the pass between the Pala and the Cima della Rosetta.

In a narrow, steep couloir to the right of the glacier the ascent was continued, not without considerable difficulties. They then bore to the right, and some iced 'Bergschründe' were traversed, which required great care. All at once the party stood before a perpendicular wall, which evidently had to be scaled. [See Mr. Tucker's note.] This proved to be, not so much in ascending, but especially in the descent, the most perilous part of the expedition. Above this wall the party climbed laterally through crumbling rocks. Once more a difficulty presented itself, which seemed at first to be insurmountable. The party, having climbed a narrow ridge of an almost perpendicular wall, found itself in a stony ravine (Felsenkessel), from which there seemed to be no issue whatever. It was only after repeated search that the brave leader of the expedition, the guide Santo Siorpaes, found, by scaling a prominent and overhanging rock, an issue which led upwards through a narrow 'vallon.' On passing this very dangerous spot the guide Dimaj was struck by a falling stone, loosened by the pulling of the rope, which rolled down and hurt his head—an accident which might have easily proved serious. A further way was now found, and although very steep, still not quite as dangerous. An icefield having been at last reached, in another quarter of an hour the summit of the Pala was conquered.

The Pala di S. Martino consists of three peaks, which are only separated from each other by small depressions. All these were thickly covered with snow, and that was the reason why a stone man was built on the E. side, where a spot free of snow was found. A card with the dates of the ascent was deposited. From the S.W. peak S. Martino is to be seen, and the charming Val Cismone. The S.W. peak is the lowest of the three, although the difference in height between the peaks consists of a few metres only. The declivity of the precipices on all sides of the Pala is frightfully rapid.

It was exactly twelve o'clock as the party reached the summit. Clouds prevented a clear view, and a heavy storm set in whilst the party was still on the summit of the Pala.

The descent was made still more difficult under such circumstances, the rocks being slippery and the cold benumbing hands and feet. The ascent of the walls had required four hours, whilst the descent took five hours and was very dangerous. The guides, Santo Siorpaes and Arcangelo Dimaj, and the porter, Michele Bettega, behaved wonderfully, and proved as courageous as skilful. S. Martino was reached at half-past seven o'clock.

From S. Martino to the rocks, four hours; ascent of the rock walls up to the summit, four hours. Descent to the glacier, five hours; and from there, glissading on the snow-fields, it took two hours more to reach S. Martino.

T. MEURER.

KÖNIGSSPITZE (ORTLER ALPS)—FIRST ASCENT FROM THE SULDEN GRAT.—Since Mr. Tuckett set foot for the first time on the Königspitze ascents have generally been made from the S.E. side. The difficulties of an ascent on the west by the long 'Grat,' which runs from the N.W. to the S.E. and leads to the summit, were so considerable that attempts had proved useless.

On July 1, 1878, Mr. T. Meurer and the Marquis A. di Pallavicini ascended, with the guides Peter D'Angl and Johann Pinggera, of Sulden, the Königspitze by the usual road from the Schaubach Hütte, over the 'Königsjoch' and the 'Schulter,' wanting to reconnoitre. They descended by the Cedehgletscher towards S. Caterina. Next evening the party found itself in the Malga in the Val Zebbru, with the intention to gain the Sulden or Payerjoch—the depression between the Königspitze and Monte Zebbru—and to try from there to conquer the Königspitze by the Sulden Grat. Bad weather and heavy rain frustrated this plan.

On July 5 the party were again at the Schaubach Hütte, with Alois Pinggera as third guide, and a start was made next morning at 3 o'clock. The Sulden Glacier was traversed in a W.S.W. direction, and also another secondary glacier, which streams down in direct line from the Königspitze, which I will call Königswand Gletscher. This virginal glacier, which precipitated itself very steeply on the Sulden Glacier, was crossed, but had to be abandoned, the séracs being frightfully cleft asunder; and the ascent was continued on the right side in the rocks. Above the séracs the glacier was again set foot upon, and scaled by step-cutting up to a little saddle, by which the party was sheltered from the N.W. storm; but here the storm reached them in such a way that it almost made every further attempt of ascent impossible. From the saddle a very steep ice-field slopes towards the Grat, having a height of (*circa*) 3,700 metres. It was reached at 8 o'clock.

The ridge is sharp, and, as all those are aware who know the peak—the proudest mountain of the Eastern Alps—it is protected on both sides by frightful precipitous walls, which run down from one side on to the Sulden, and from the other on to the Zebbru Glacier. Notwithstanding the heavy storm, the party progressed relatively very well along the ridge till some huge boulders suddenly prevented further advance. Owing to the congelation, and the height of these blocks, it was quite impossible to surmount them, and, unless a retreat was resolved on, nothing could be done but by finding a way round them on the south side of the mountain; on the north side it was impracticable.

With precaution the party descended a bit of the steep rock-wall and traversed on the slope couloirs filled up by new and old snow, and rock-ridges formed by congelation of loose and firm rocks. This was a passage of several hours, during which the slightest carelessness would have caused a dreadful catastrophe. At last the party reached once more the Grat, and, the wind having calmed down in the meantime, the summit was reached at half-past 12, without any further obstacles. The weather was splendid.

Peter D'Angl deserves to be specially mentioned, as his great courage contributed essentially to the success of the expedition. The other two guides verified their excellent reputation.

The descent was made by the Königsjoch to St. Gertrud, in the Suldenthal, where the party arrived at half-past 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Time: Schaubach Hütte to beyond the séracs, 3 hours; to the Grat, 2 hours; by the Grat to the summit,  $4\frac{1}{2}=9\frac{1}{2}$  hours. An hour's rest on the summit. Descent to St. Gertrud, 4 hours; all including halts.

T. MEURER.

THE THIRD PEAK OF PIZ ROSEG.—On October 7 Dr. J. M. Ludwig, of Pontresina, ascended all three peaks of Piz Roseg for the first time. My guide was Hans Grass. We took two other guides with us (Cadenau and Hans Grass, son of Christian Grass), because they had never made the ascent before. We slept at the new shelter-hut in Mortel, left it at 2.25 A.M., reached the ice-slope which hangs down from the Roseg to the Sella Glacier at 5.50; stopping 30 minutes for breakfast, we reached the top of the before-named slope at 7.50, and the Schneekuppe, or west peak, at 9; the highest at 10.6—seven hours walking from the hut. Starting at 10.30, reached the third peak at 11.35, along a ridge consisting almost entirely of ice, and requiring great care. The Scerscen Glacier was reached at 1.30 (Italian side), down an excessively steep and dangerous couloir, consisting of ice and rock. Weather was threatening, so return was made by the Sella pass instead of the Crastaguzza pass. The two young guides behaved well. Hans Grass showed his mastership. He is a model of a guide in every way.

'J. M. LUDWIG.'

PIZ BERNINA.—Dr. Gussfeld has been successful in reaching the detached west spur of the Piz Bernina, which has of late years been distinguished by the name given on the Italian side to the whole block—Monte Rosso di Scerscen. He has also reached the summit of Piz Bernina by the very long and difficult ridge which falls to the saddle between the Bernina and Piz Mortaratsch.

THE LEVANNA.—In looking at the mass of the Levanna from the Stabilimento at Ceresole, the eye first falls on the Glacier de Forno; then a broken ridge of rocks runs up to the Italian Levanna. This is the peak an ascent of which by Lord Wentworth is noticed in the visitors' book at the Stabilimento. Between the Italian Levanna and the next peak to the right, which is really a very inferior point and owes its apparent importance to the accident of its position, there is a very steep snow-slope. This snow-slope, the top of which is really the end of the Glacier de Girard, has on its one side the north-west arête of the Italian Levanna, and on the other a similar ridge, steeper though shorter.

After passing the inferior peak we come to the real *Becca a tre Corni*. In the arête which runs up to the first of the three horns there is a curious tooth of rock, which leans over towards the east. Besides the three horns themselves, several rocky teeth start up from the summit ridge. The first horn (the most easterly) is the one on which the Italian engineers have erected a substantial stone-man. The second or middle horn (the second and third points should rather be called humps than horns) was ascended by Mr. James Heelis and myself, with Jean Martin and Alphonse Payot, on August 12, from the Châlet of Duis.

We found amongst a few stones which had been thrown together on the top the card of A. Castagneri, the guide of Balme, only. The third horn is inferior in height to the first and second, but which of the two, the first or second, is really the higher we could not determine. We were inclined to think that if the most eastern peak is the highest, it owes its supremacy to the stone-man before mentioned. At any rate one or other of these two points is the highest peak of the Levanna group, and the difference between them is very small indeed. From the third horn a ridge, nearly level for its western half, stretches to the point called on the Italian map Punta della Scott. This, according to M. Jean Culet, of Bonneval, is the point ascended by Mr. Cowell; and when the *Levanna* is ascended from Bonneval, this is the point to which travellers are taken. From this point the ridge falls away to the west.

G. YELD.

It seems that the Levanna has three peaks, and the highest or central peak three horns. It is probable that the west peak (3,607 mètres) was first climbed by Mr. Cowell; the central (3,640 mètres), by S. Vaccarone and Gramaglia from the south side; the east (3,570 mètres), by Lord Wentworth.—EDITOR.

AIGUILLE DU MIDI DE PEISEY.—Mr. Coolidge writes: ‘At p. 98 of the last number of the Journal I described my ascent of this peak last summer, under the impression that it had not previously attracted the notice of travellers. Mr. R. C. Nichols has had the goodness to communicate to me his notes of the ascent made by him on September 12, 1867, in the company of Mr. E. P. Rowsell, with J. V. Favret and J. Tairraz, junior, which is, of course, the true first ascent by travellers. Starting from the Châlets de l’Arc at 5.35, they followed the line of an old moraine to the foot of a long snow couloir, beside which they ascended in two hours and a half to the arête, kept round to the right of the little peak, marked 3,031 mètres, then along the arête to the foot of the final peak. They then came to a notch on another arête running W., by which they reached the top at 10.25. The return was effected direct to the first arête, and then as before to Val Peisey.

‘My route seems to have been essentially the same as that described by Mr. Nichols, and I can only claim to have discovered a new descent to the Val de Prémou. Mr. Nichols agrees with me as to the non-existence of the peak marked 3,422 mètres on the French map, the cairn being on the point called in that map Sommet de Bellecôte. He further informs me that the name “Mont Bernier,” which appears on the A. C. map as the appellation of the highest peak, is taken from the Piedmontese “Measurement of an Arc of the Mean Parallel,” and

that of "Mont Blanc de Peisey" from a photograph of the original drawing of the then unpublished French map. According to this latter authority, the height of 3,360 mètres attributed on the published map to the lower summit, which it wrongly calls "Aiguille du Midi," is a misprint for 3,340 mètres.

'I take the present opportunity of more accurately defining the variation I made on the Gabelhorn (p. 107), which has given rise to some confusion, which will be obviated by reading "north-western" for "northern" in the fourth line from the bottom. This will serve to show that it is quite distinct from the route taken by Messrs. Kitson and Wethered in August, 1875.'

'I may also note that at the bottom of p. 98 and top of p. 99 "Mont l'Aliet" should be read for "Mont Aliet."'

MONT MAUDIT.—There is an apparent contradiction between the report of the first ascent of this peak on p. 105 and the letter of Sir J. Ramsay quoted in Mr. Longman's 'History of Modern Mountaineering,' p. 14. Sir J. Ramsay has, however, explained that in the expression 'reached the top of Mt. Maudit' he referred to the crest of the mountain, and not to the actual summit. No one had been within several hundred feet of this until Messrs. Davidson and Hoare's ascent.

AIGUILLE DE LA ZA FROM THE GLACIER DE DAUVA BLANTZ.—In the recent list of *new expeditions* Mr. J. C. Leman gives an account of excursions which include the direct ascent from Arolla to the head of the Glacier de Dauva Blantz (the meaning of the term is discussed, 'Alpine Journal,' vol. viii. p. 95), and thence over the ridge of the Grandes Dents to the base of the Aiguille de la Za. I am in a position to state that Mr. Leman has been anticipated in this expedition, and that the first to reach the Aiguille directly from Arolla by the Maja ridge was Mr. T. S. Kennedy. There being no record of his ascent among *new expeditions*—as is also the case with his ascent of the Aiguilles Rouges on the Arolla side, an expedition of some danger from the rottenness of the rocks—I am not fully provided with details of his course. However, Messrs. Cawood and Colgrove and I descended from the base of the Aiguille by a route in all essentials the same as that described by Mr. Leman. Brief mention of both expeditions, with a discussion of the relative amounts of risk involved in the different direct routes to the Aiguille, will be found in vol. viii. pp. 10 and 12. With the remainder of Mr. Leman's account the above remarks are, of course, not concerned.

The engraving at p. 15, accompanying the article just referred to, shows the route on the Arolla side. We crossed the main ridge where the dotted line falls. The latter should be shifted to the left, and the upper line, which marks the real summit, strengthened, an unfortunate mistake having been made in executing the engraving, whereby the highest part of the ridge south of the Aiguille is made to resemble a more distant mountain. Many visitors to Arolla will have noticed the light colour of the rocks at this part, which was the original cause of the mishap. Descending on the other side of the secondary ridge seen coming down to the Maja, we reached the head of the glacier, of which, however, we merely skirted the fringe. The ridge becomes level by

the side of the glacier, which rises close up to its rocky brim. My engravers have here turned a patch of snow into a gap; the upper line of the former should be strengthened, as it represents the line of the ridge. The buttress of rock seen below the apparent gap, and inclined to the right, affords an easy scramble, and marks the line of the most direct course to or from the hotel; the descent may be facilitated, snow permitting, by a gliassade in the hollow on the right.

I should hardly advocate considering as a col the passage over this part of the ridge of the Grandes Dents, in which there is no depression of importance; the Col de la Za is lower, and, if taken by the route described in the above-cited article (also vol. vii. p. 319), no less safe.

At the same time I fully agree with Mr. Leman in the great superiority of the higher route over the latter, and still more over the Col de Bertol, in regard to view; and it is on this account well worthy of attention as an agreeable variation on the ordinary route to Zermatt. The traverse, from this side, of the ridge whose western end forms the rocky pyramid so conspicuously dividing the head of the Bertol Glacier involves hardly any ascent.

A. CUSR.

**BASODINE AND OFENJOCH.**—The following note is also supplementary to notes on 'new expeditions' in the last number. Mr. Moore's direct descent from the Basodine to the Alp Zotto had been anticipated in 1872 by Mr. Gelpke, a Swiss engineer ('Jahrbuch,' x. p. 260). Mr. Gardiner's route over the Ofenjoch to the upper névé of the Hohsänd glacier had been previously traversed in 1872 by Dr. H. Dirbi (July, 1872, 'Jahrbuch,' viii. p. 251), who from this point, however, took a wholly different route to the Rhone valley, *via* the Hohsänd pass.

It may be as well to call attention to the definition of 'new expeditions' given in vol. iii. p. 145—'expeditions in part or wholly new, or not made before by English mountaineers.' Acting on this principle, the Editor feels no scruple in inserting notes of expeditions which have not yet been noted in England, without previously undertaking a laborious search through the innumerable Alpine publications published on the Continent, although he will always be happy to receive additional details or references as to foreign ascents.

**THE COURMAYEUR ROUTE UP MONT BLANC.**—Signor D. Marinelli sends an answer to the query in p. 79 of this volume as to the existence of a route to the cabin on the Aiguille Grise safe from falling stones.

'In order to avoid for the future the risk of accidents similar to that which befell S. Gonella's porter, it is desirable to quit the Glacier du Mt. Blanc at the point where this breaks into great séracs, and at the exact spot where the séracs seen from below seem to form a plateau. The passage on to the rocks on the left (in ascending) can easily be made by the aid of a few good steps cut in the ice. Once on the rocks, which are worn somewhat smooth by the previous passage of the ice, half an hour's easy gymnastic is enough to overcome such slight obstacles as they present. Higher up the climber finds it possible to keep farther from the glacier, and before reaching the "gazon" comes on a faint track which soon brings him to the cabin.

'From the cabin to Courmayeur by this route there are no difficulties

or dangers. Porters constantly pass over it heavily charged and unroped, and ours did so.'

COL DE LA DENT BLANCHE.—This name is sometimes separately given in the Babel of Alpine nomenclature to two cols in the same neighbourhood, neither of which appear, however, to have any proper claim to such distinction, viz. the cols 'Durand' and 'Grand Cornier.' The col between the Mont Durand and the Pointe de Zinal is now almost exclusively called, in Alpine *parlance*, after the former of these two peaks, and is the only one in the Alps which bears the name of 'Durand;' indeed, the Col du Sonadon—at first called 'Col Durand'—was obliged to surrender the title (originally given to it from one of the glaciers at its base) in order to avoid confusion with the other pass (*vide* 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers,' vol. i. p. 250, 'Col du Sonadon'). In fact, the 'Col Durand,' now generally known as such, although identical with the lowest depression in the ridge connecting the Dent Blanche with the Gabelhorn, seems to have forfeited long ago any possible right to be connected by name with the former of these mountains—i.e. since the discovery of another passage across the ridge, in immediate contact with an eastern spur of the Dent Blanche, by Mr. T. S. Phillpotts in 1872—whereas the Col Durand is not directly connected with the Dent Blanche at all. Synonyms in the Alps are most confusing, as the Federal and S. A. C. maps appear (at least in this instance) to agree in thinking, for 'Col Durand' alone is printed over the pass usually so called in both of them, whilst in the Alpine Club map 'Col de la Dent Blanche' is its only name.

Nor is it less confusing that the pass from Zinal to Evolena, between the Dent Blanche and Grand Cornier, should be credited with a double title. In the S. A. C. map it is styled 'Col du Grand Cornier (Dent Blanche),' although the former is its generally accredited name. Messrs. Hornby and Philpott, who first crossed it (in 1864), never dreamed of calling it after the Dent Blanche, as I have learned from one of them.

Surely the pass which deserves, *par excellence* and exclusively, the name 'Col de la Dent Blanche' is that formed by the depression between the Dent Blanche and the Pointe de Zinal, which flank it immediately on the west and east at the heads of the Schönbühl and Durand Glaciers. Mr. T. S. Phillpotts (under the heading 'Zinal Jock') has suggested 'Col Zinal' as its name (*Journal*, vol. vi. p. 437), but a whole cloud of confusion would be dispersed, as well as a far more appropriate title afforded, if the great mountain immediately on its west were allowed to supersede the much lesser Pointe de Zinal (3790 in the Federal map) by lending its name, as well as its shadow, to the 'Col de la Dent Blanche' of which I write. As districts become better known and studied, names sometimes require readjustment and alteration.

In company with Mr. F. O. Schuster, I crossed this pass from Zermatt to Zinal (the first time it has been made in that direction, and the second time from either side) on August 5 ult. The col is interesting, and affords splendid views of the Dent d'Herens and Gabelhorn, on either side; the panorama is not so extensive as that from the

Col Durand, owing to the immediate presence of the Dent Blanche and Pointe de Zinal, west and east of it respectively. I quite agree with Mr. Phillpotts that it is better taken from the Zinal side, for the reason which he gives; and also that the left bank of the Schönbühl glacier should be followed as much as possible. From its more remote position, this col is of course longer than the Col Durand in crossing between Zermatt and Zinal.

F. T. WETHERED.

ZERMATT AND THE NEW WEISS THOR IN 1849.—The editor has been favoured with the following interesting description of the Vispthal in 1849, and of the first passage by a traveller of the New Weiss Thor—Mrs. Marshall Hall, senior:—

‘Mr. Longman’s interesting paper in the “Alpine Journal” on the gradual development of our present knowledge of the Monte Rosa district has reminded me of a visit to Zermatt which my son and I made in 1849, on which occasion the former, then only eighteen, was the first traveller to cross the pass now designated the “New Weiss Thor.”

‘In the month of August of that year we arrived at Visp from the Grimsel, from whence we had walked most of the way to Brieg, sleeping at Obergestelen, then a miserable place. At that time the “char” road only commenced at the latter village, and no kind of carriage was to be had anywhere between it and Brieg. We had been accompanied from Grindelwald by a guide of some repute, named Christian Blauer, who had crossed the Strahleck with my son; and we were bound for Zermatt, of which we had read in the interesting work of Professor Forbes—“Travels through the Alps of Savoy,” &c. Blauer was to procure me a horse, and we were to start the next morning, very early, on account of the heat. Much after the appointed hour Blauer, having ransacked Visp for a horse, at length appeared, bringing one which he had had the utmost difficulty in procuring; it was led by a girl, and was in a most deplorable state of dirt, and the side saddle, which was in a ruinous condition, was the only one in the town.

‘The path between Visp and Zermatt was very different in its condition from the present one. A bridle road indeed existed, but in many parts it had been washed away, leaving no secure footing, so that it was rather an anxious thing to ride over such places on the steep slope of a mountain, close to yawning precipices of fearful depth and totally unguarded. Between St. Niklaus and Randa several torrents had to be crossed, not then, as now, bridged over. The heat of the weather, causing unusual melting of the snow, had greatly swelled these mountain streams, and the force of the water had brought down masses of rock from above. These torrents were not pleasant to cross on horseback. On one occasion my horse turned round in the middle of the stream and refused to face the fury of the waters; the men, however, who crossed on planks, yelled at the frightened animal and finally persuaded him to face the furious torrent, and so I escaped the imminent peril of being deposited in its midst.

‘At Randa, where no inn then existed, we stopped to rest at the house of the curé. The worthy priest received us hospitably, setting before us black bread and sour wine. His attire was greasy and dirty, but we chatted amicably and he seemed rather to enjoy our visit.

‘The long ride, occupying (with the rests) about twelve hours, was very fatiguing in the heat of the day, added to which we had had no good food, and on arriving at Zermatt and alighting at the door of Herr Lauber, the village doctor, whose kindly wife received the few strangers who found their way to this little-known place, we were met with the unwelcome news that they had no room for us, two gentlemen being already installed as their guests. However, we were conducted to an uninhabited house not far off, where two dismal, dirty rooms were assigned us, entered by doors so low that even I was obliged to stoop in order to pass through them.

‘I must hasten, however, to the point of my story. My son had heard of the Weiss Thor, and had set his heart upon crossing the pass. At that time only one Weiss Thor was known to fame—that now distinguished as the “old” one. Blauer was a stranger to the locality, and on making enquiries all the Zermatters shook their heads and said the Weiss Thor was not now practicable. No one could be found willing to accompany my son and his guide. This was a great disappointment to the former, whilst Blauer, who held the Valaisans in great contempt, was incredulous as to the impracticability of the passage. At length, on our third day at Zermatt, he came to me with great glee, saying, “I have found a man who is willing to accompany us over the Weiss Thor to Macugnaga. Shall I bring him to you? He is the president of the village.” Accordingly “the Herr President” was introduced—a swarthy, brigand-like fellow. I questioned him as to the proposed expedition, which he represented as free from danger. The man’s appearance belied his real character, which was mild and somewhat timid. My son was overjoyed at the prospect of the fulfilment of his project. Blauer had formed a favourable opinion of his mountaineering capabilities from what he had observed on the Strahleck. He was sure-footed, light, active, and courageous, and on former occasions had done some rather difficult work at Chamonix with ease and success.

‘Full of fears for his safety, I heard him depart at four the next morning. To divert my anxiety the amiable Frau Lauber made up a little party for an excursion to the Riffelberg. I rode her own nice little horse with the luxury of a new side-saddle. A careful old man was my guide, and Madame Lauber’s nephew, a student from the college at Sion, and the little maid of the house, were my companions. I have never been able to retrace exactly the course we took, but think it must have been to the Hochthäligrat, returning by Guggli, for I remember looking over the Findelen Glacier, after seeing Monte Rosa and the Gorner Glacier. I regarded Monte Rosa with great respect as an inaccessible mountain, no one having, up to that time, been able to reach the Höchste Spitze. As for the giant Matterhorn, it had never entered the mind of man that its ascent was possible. I little thought that a comfortable hôtel would one day be built on the mountain upon which I stood, where I should spend many an enjoyable day, and that I should in my old age, from the Cima di Jazzi, an altitude of 12,527 feet, look down upon the pass which my son had crossed.

‘The next day, again mounting my amiable hostess’s delightful horse, I had a pleasant ride down to Visp, where I was made happy by meet-

ing my son in safety from his expedition, which shall be narrated in his own words:—

“Our local guide proved much of a croaker and, the weather being doubtful, repeatedly urged upon us a retreat, which neither Blauer nor I saw any occasion for. We took the route by the Findelen Glacier. The ice caverns were finer in 1849 than I have seen them since. Close to the ridge dividing the Zermatt from the Saas Valley, I went in up to my waist, but fortunately with my alpenstock athwart what proved to be a large crevasse with a beautiful cavern close to me. As was too common in those days, we had no rope, and nothing but an old chopper by way of ice-axe.

“We followed the ridge which bounds the valley of Macugnaga on the north for some distance, with the Schwartzberg Glacier beneath on our left, and on our right what seemed tremendous precipices; on this side a sea of clouds, with frequent flashes of lightning, lay perhaps a mile below, the sky above us being blue.

“We began our unroped descent with a glissade down a short bit of hard ice, which I by no means relished, being afraid of shooting over into space when I got across. Then we took to a ridge of decayed rock, at a particularly steep angle, which is not used now that the pass is better known.

“We descended first into snow, then into rain and lightning, reaching Macugnaga fairly wet through.

“For some years afterwards I had no notion that I had made the New Weiss Thor, but imagined myself to have crossed the disused passage, the locality of which no one could distinctly point out to me. At that time there were no good maps of the district.”

‘My son returned to Visp by the Monte Moro and Saas.’

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST SNOW-BLINDNESS.—The following note throws light on the habits of the Circassians before their expatriation, and suggests a new remedy for sportsmen against snow-blindness.

‘In the winter of 1837 we had just succeeded in beating back a large party of Abazeks (Circassians) that had come down into the plains of Kuban from the Caucasus mountains in order to levy black-mail and to rob and murder the frontier Cossacks, and we were on the march home along the mountain plains, when, dazzled by the intense sun-rays reflected by the endless snow-fields we were marching along, my eyelids lost all power to open; I felt my elbow touched, and, looking through my fingers, I beheld one of our friendly highlanders preparing a kind of black paste by mixing gunpowder with snow. The General told me to let him do what he wanted. The Circassian applied the black stuff under my eyes, on my cheeks, and the sides of my nose. To my astonishment I could then open my eyes and felt no more any difficulty to see plainly and clearly everything. I have tried that experiment many times since, and it never failed to relieve me, although I used common Indian ink and black water-colour instead of the above-mentioned paste.’—Note by M. Gustav de Veh, retired Russian officer, serving at the time with the army of the Caucasus.

EXCURSIONS IN DAUPHINÉ AND THE TARENTEISE.—We have received from M. Henri Ferrand, member of the French, Swiss, Italian, and

other Alpine Clubs, a detailed account of his expeditions last summer, of which we can only find room for the following extracts :—

(1) On June 25, with his father, M. Ferrand ascended the *Grande Moucherolle* (2,289 mètres=7,510 feet), near Grenoble, by the steep eastern face, which had been accomplished but once previously. They took five hours up from Villar de Laus, and four down. The last rocks took half an hour.

(2) July 23. M. Ferrand, with Pierre Ginét, of Allemont, took the rarely-used route up the *Mont Thabor* (3,182 mètres=10,440 feet) by the Valmeinier.\* Starting from the châteaux of La Sausse, 4½ hours from S. Michel de Maurienne, they reached the Col de Valmeinier (2,900 mètres) in 3½ hours, and the chapel on the summit in an hour more, whence the 'signal' on the highest point is but a few minutes distant. In two hours they reached the Granges de Valétoite, Mellezel in 1¾ and Bardonnèche in ¾ hour more. Total, 4½ hours from top.

(3) July 31. M. Ferrand, with the same guide, made an attempt to ascend the hitherto unclimbed *Grand Bec* (3,420 mètres=11,221 feet). Starting from Pralognan, they followed the route of the Col de la Vanoise for a short distance, then struck up to châteaux of Mont Bochor, and crossed a minor ridge near the Pointe de Léchaux to the head of Combe de la Vuzelle. They then reached the arête of the Grand Bec, and would probably have reached the top, had not a dense mist prevented them from advancing. Their highest point is estimated by M. Ferrand at 3,200 mètres, or 10,499 feet. They descended by the Col de la Vuzelle to Planay, and returned to Pralognan by the high road.

The first ascent of this peak was effected on September 19 by M. Albert Guyard, of the French Alpine Club.

(4) August 5. The same party, reinforced by MM. A. Doix-Mulaton and E. Valette, and the guides Abel and Joseph Amiez, of Pralognan, starting from the châteaux of La Motte, two hours from Pralognan, passed the Lac Blanc and reached the Col de Gébroulaz, whence they made the second ascent of the highest point of the *Aiguille de Polset* (3,538 mètres=11,608 feet).† Returning to the Col de Gébroulaz, they reached in 85 minutes the point marked 3,217 mètres (=10,555 feet) on the French map. This point was named *Col de Polset*. It was probably crossed by Mr. W. Mathews in 1861.‡ In 3¾ hours they reached the châteaux of Polset, and Modane in 1¼ more.

(5) August 8. M. Ferrand, with Ginét, made what is believed to be the first ascent by travellers of the *Pic du Frêne*, also known as the *Pic du Grand Clocher du Frêne* (2,808 mètres=9,213 feet). Starting from the châteaux of Bochu, or Bachau (1,950 mètres=6,398 feet), above S. Alban des Villards in the Combe du Glandon (which they had reached from La Chambre in the valley of the Arc in 4 hours, by way of Monthion), they clambered over the ridge to the right, and gained a gap in the watershed north of the peak in 2¼ hours from the châteaux, whence an hour over loose rocks led to the summit. The view, unfortunately, was concealed by mist. Returning to the gap in 50 minutes,

\* Cf. *Alpine Journal*, vol. ix. pp. 96-97. † Ibid. vol. ix. p. 102.

‡ *Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers*, 2nd series, vol. ii. p. 401.

they descended into the Combe du Bens. They passed by the Chartreuse de Saint Hugon and reached La Rochette in  $7\frac{1}{2}$  hours from the summit, having been greatly delayed and bewildered by a thick mist.

ALPINE MEETING IN WALES.—It is proposed by some Northern members of the Alpine Club to hold a meeting and dinner at Capel Curig, North Wales, on Saturday, April 19, at 7.30 P.M. (morning dress), in continuation of those already held in Liverpool and Amble-side. The cost of the dinner will be one guinea a head. Intending diners are requested to send notice to Mr. Frederick Gardiner, 48 South Castle Street, Liverpool, as early as they conveniently can, the accommodation at Capel Curig being limited. Some members propose meeting at the Penrhyn Arms Hotel, Bangor, on Friday, April 18, and walking over Carnedd Dafydd to Capel Curig the following day. Capel Curig is most conveniently reached by rail to Bettws-y-Coed, from which village it is five miles distant.

## REVIEWS.

### PEASANT LIFE IN TYROL.\*

It may be thought by some that Mr. Grohman's book lies outside the view of the 'Alpine Journal;' but we are rejoiced to see such a sign that the Club has members who can interest themselves in the mountain people as well as in the mountains. If we all recollected that Switzerland is a country with a history and a constitution as well as a playground, that guides are farmers and citizens as well as human 'litts' to assist tourists to the top story of the Alps, we should perhaps enjoy our holidays more, and our conversation and writings would certainly be less intolerable to those whom some infirmity, mental or physical, debars from our favourite sport.

Mr. Baillie Grohman was already favourably known to the public as the author of a volume on the Tyrolese, which showed some literary talent and a singularly thorough acquaintance with his subject. The present volumes have most of the merits of their predecessor. They bear, however, too many signs of a careless revision in passing through the press, and the author's English betrays here and there that he has lived principally abroad. But it is only an unjust or superficial critic who would dwell exclusively on those surface blemishes in a book which possesses some rare and substantial merits. First among these in the eyes of the general reader will be the fact that Mr. Grohman is always amusing. We follow him, as he runs on with his stories, with the same zest with which in boyhood we pursued one of Mayne Reid's tales of adventure. These are among the subjects of his chapters:—a homely miracle play in a Tyrolese farm-house, a peasant's bath-house, a shooting-match, a pilgrimage, the quaint ceremonies which accom-

\* *Gaddings with a Primitive People*, being a series of sketches of Alpine Life and Customs, by W. A. Baillie Grohman, Author of *Tyrol and the Tyrolese*. 2 vols. Remington & Co., 1878.