

of the day,' the result of our sojourn in Dauphiné would have been entirely different.*

ALPINE NOTES.

THE LATE DISASTROUS FIRE AT MEIRINGEN.—On Monday, February 10, the greater part of this most picturesque of Alpine villages was burnt to the ground. The fire is said to have owed its origin to sparks from a bakehouse furnace immediately adjoining the 'Gasthof zum Wilden Mann.' This hotel was soon a sheet of fire, and, fanned by the strong SW. wind (Föhn), the flames proceeded thence in a northerly direction along the Brünig road, destroying all that came in their course. Part of Meiringen Dorf and the whole of the outlying hamlets of Eisenbolgen and Hausen were thus in turn completely reduced to ashes. Those portions of the village which lie to the west and south of the 'Wilde Mann' were fortunately saved—the same wind which had proved so treacherous elsewhere acting as a protection against the spread of the flames in these directions. Immediately upon the receipt of the news in England, a fund, short particulars of which will be found elsewhere, was started, under the auspices of the Alpine Club, for the relief of the sufferers by the disaster. The total damage is estimated at over 1,000,000 francs, of which, however, at least two-thirds is covered by insurances and by the very liberal contributions of the Swiss and English public. The following letter from the British Minister at Berne, who kindly undertook to see to the distribution of the fund, to the Secretary of the Club, gives full particulars :—

'British Legation, Berne, March 18.

'Sir,—I beg to enclose to you herewith a copy of an official acknowledgment I have received from M. de Steiger, Conseiller d'Etat, and President of the Meiringen Relief Fund, for the contributions sent from England in aid of the sufferers by the recent fire in that village. You will observe that the subscriptions reached in round numbers the sum of 13,500f.—an amount far exceeding anything I hoped to obtain by this

* In the 'Saturday Review' a notice of our expeditions in Dauphiné appeared in an article on 'The Alps in 1878.' Although the criticism was as favourable as we could expect, the details were so far from correct that I think it well to state here that we, in fact, accomplished fifteen high glacier expeditions without guides, of which eight were new, and *not* eight guideless expeditions of which four were new as stated. The reviewer went on to remark, with regard to the expeditions we made, that 'it is true they were very little ones.' Now of the peaks we climbed the Ecrins reaches the respectable height of 13,462 feet, the Pelvoux to nearly 13,000 feet, while the others range from 11,340 feet to about 12,500 feet, so that they scarcely deserve to be stigmatised as 'very little ones;' but in any case the initiated well know that the difficulty of a mountain does not depend upon its altitude.

appeal I made in the columns of the "Times." To all those who have so generously contributed to this good work, and especially to the members of the Alpine Club, I beg herewith to offer my very sincere thanks. They may be assured that the sympathy they have shown for the inhabitants of the afflicted village will be duly appreciated by the Swiss people at large. M. de Steiger has been good enough to furnish me with a few particulars of the losses sustained, which I think it right to transcribe for the information of those who have taken so kind an interest in the matter. The loss in buildings is reckoned at 661,600f., and that in furniture, implements, &c., at 358,500f. The total loss, therefore, amounts to 1,020,100f. Of this, however, 367,000f. are covered by house insurances and 100,000f. by insurances on furniture. The net loss is thus reduced to 553,100f. You will be glad to hear that to meet this the committee at Meiringen hold at the present moment in cash a sum of no less than 120,000f., while here at Berne there is a further reserve fund of 50,000f. Altogether M. de Steiger counts on a sum of at least 180,000f., which will be principally devoted to the rebuilding of the village. This is quite exclusive of the abundant gifts of provisions, clothing, bedding, furniture, &c., which poured in from all parts of Switzerland immediately after the fire, and at once supplied the most pressing wants of the sufferers. The homeless children of the village have been placed with private families or in the charitable institutions of this city, while the adults have been distributed among the different households that were spared by the fire. Work has been provided for all, and on the whole it may be said that this great calamity has been met by corresponding energy and devotion. M. de Steiger is loud in his praise of the patient resignation and orderly spirit shown by these poor people in their affliction. In rebuilding the village it will be endeavoured, as far as possible, to avoid placing the houses again in a straight line with the direction of the treacherous Föhn, or south wind. It has also been decided to substitute tiles for the shingle roofs which helped to spread the flames in so disastrous a manner. I enclose copies of a plan showing the extent of the fire.

'I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

'HORACE RUMBOLD.

'W. E. Davidson, Esq., Alpine Club, London.'

'Berne, le 18 mars.

'Le soussigné déclare par la présente avoir reçu par Sir Horace Rumbold, bart., Ministre de S. M. Britannique à Berne, la somme de 13,500f. comme résultat de collectes faites en Angleterre pour les incendies de Meiringen. En remerciant tous les donateurs de la manière noble et généreuse dont ils ont bien voulu participer à notre œuvre de secours, ainsi que Sir Horace Rumbold des soins qu'il a bien voulu y porter, nous nous réjouissons aussi de pouvoir assurer tous les bien-faiteurs que leurs dons seront employés d'une manière parfaitement sage et juste.

'EDM. DE STEIGER, Conseiller d'Etat.

'Le Président du Comité de secours pour les incendies de Meiringen.'

MOUNTAIN HUTS IN THE CHAIN OF MONT BLANC.—A great im-

provement has been apparent of late in the construction and arrangement of huts in the Alps. The Swiss and Italian Clubs have devoted much time and money to this department of their useful work. I visited the Col du Géant and Aiguille Grise cabanes this summer, and found them, in most respects, excellent. The former, erected in 1876, as I have already noticed in the Journal, is situated on the col, close to the spot where De Saussure's tents once stood. It is furnished with a good stove and a fair supply of general ware, necessary for the use of mountaineers. A string hammock is suspended over the sleeping-boards; but this hardly compensates for the mere wisp of straw, which was all the hut could boast of when I was there in August last.

Not less convenient in every way, and built after the same model as the former, is the hut on the Aiguille Grise, just above the Glacier de Miage, which was erected three years ago. The difficulty experienced in transporting planks, &c., across the hanging glacier beneath must have been very considerable; no less than 40 guides were employed for the purpose. The apparent difficulty of obtaining water in the neighbourhood is a drawback to its position, though no doubt inevitable. Both these huts are made entirely of pine wood, without outer casing of any sort, which they ought to have, or else time and storm will soon leave their marks upon them. The roof of the latter is at present, happily, waterproof—otherwise, I should have been thoroughly drenched whilst sleeping in it on August 19. But unless roof and sides are protected more than at present they are likely to suffer materially in severe winters. The Col du Géant hut, as well as that on the Aiguille Grise, was put up by the guides, who had the wood supplied to them by the commune and were well assisted by the Italian Alpine Club, at a cost of about 200 fr. for each. A supply of blankets would be a serviceable addition to their store of internal furniture.

But the best cabane constructed of late in this region of the Alps is that at the foot of the Glacier d'Orny, just within the Swiss frontier. The Diablerets section of the Swiss Alpine Club deserves the greatest credit for its erection, both as to design and execution. Most substantially built of stone and mortar, and surmounted by a good zinc roof, this model hut leaves nothing to be desired, inside or out. It is capitally supplied with cooking utensils, &c., a quantity of blankets, and plenty of fresh straw. Twelve persons can sleep in it comfortably. The 'Livres des Voyageurs,' thoughtfully presented by Mr. H. R. Whitehouse, already bears ample testimony to the appreciation in which it is held by those who have visited it. The stove is so fitted in the partition wall of the two rooms as to give warmth to both. The hut was formally opened by the Swiss Alpine Club in August, 1877, after no less than 1,400 fr. had been expended by them in its construction. This makes the twenty-third mountain refuge which has been inaugurated by this Club alone, each of them being placed under the patronage and superintendence of one or other of its sections.

F. T. WETHERED.

COL DOLENT.—Mr. W. E. Davidson sends the following note :—' On

September 2, last year, Mr. J. W. Hartley and I, with Laurent Lanier and Johann Jaun, made the second passage of the Col Dolent, reversing the route followed for the first time by Mr. Whympfer in 1865. We slept at the Châlets de Lognan the previous night, and starting thence at 3.30 A.M. arrived at the foot of the great couloir which leads from the head of the Argentière Glacier to the col at about 8. Starting again at 8.45 we went, including some short halts, from this place to the summit of the pass in *just two hours*. The only real difficulty we found during the whole ascent was in effecting a lodgment on the rocks on the left side (ascending) of the great couloir. In order to gain these rocks we were obliged to cut up a short slope of black ice set at a very sharp angle; and so hard was the ice and so steep the inclination, that the eighty and odd steps which were required cost Lanier upwards of an hour's hard work. Here, however, our task was practically over, and we mounted easily and rapidly to the summit of the pass, which was gained at 10.50 A.M. The couloir itself was (and I think probably always is) just what Mr. Whympfer describes it to have been in 1865—"a slope more than 1,000 feet long, set at an angle of 50°, which was a sheet of ice from top to bottom"—and if there were no alternative route the pass would fully deserve the evil reputation with which it has been branded by the almost unimpeachable authority of Ball's "Alpine Guide." I believe, however, that the rocks by which we ascended will almost always be found practicable either of ascent or of descent, for although steep they are everywhere admirably firm and good. On the Italian side of the pass we met with no serious difficulty, but it is desirable to keep well away to the left in descending the Glacier du Mont Dolent. I write these few lines in the desire to rescue from oblivion one of the very finest passes in the whole range of the Alps, and in the belief that, under proper conditions and with first-rate guides, it can be accomplished with perfect safety and without extraordinary difficulty. The expedition should, however, be made *from* the Argentière Glacier, as the *descent* of the ice-slope at the foot of the great couloir would be, if not unadvisable, at least very difficult.

'We slept the following night at the Châlets de St. Jean in the Val Ferret, where we were received with a hospitality so cordial that it seems almost churlish even to hint that we endured very considerable discomfort, and returned next day to Chamonix by the Col de Talèfre, crossing this pass *from* the Glacier de Triolet *to* the Glacier de Talèfre for the first time. It is advisable, when making the descent from the col to the Glacier de Talèfre late in the day, to keep as much as possible to the rocks on the right of the couloir in order to avoid the stones which, when the sun is well up, sometimes fall in considerable numbers across the usual route.

'There is an excellent site for a cabane, which it is to be hoped may soon be utilised, on the left bank (descending) of the Glacier de Triolet about 3 hours up from the Val Ferret. From this place the Col de Talèfre can be easily reached in 2½ hours, and the Col de Triolet in 3½; while for more ambitious climbers the Cols de l'Echaud, de l'Eboulement, and de Pierre-Joseph, and the ascent of the Aiguille de Triolet are within available reach. The distance from Courmayeur almost pro-

hibits starting from that place for even the easiest and shortest of these expeditions, while as to the châteaux—*experto crede.*'

HUT ON THE GROSS GLOCKNER.—Herr Julius Meurer sends the following note:—'The Alpen-Club Oesterreich, newly founded in Vienna, have the intention of building a hut on the Adlers Ruhe, at an elevation of about 11,330 feet. The summit of the Gross Glockner, which lies a little over 1,000 feet above this point, will thus be attainable in about an hour from a comfortable refuge. The view from the point selected is described as very fine; and the hut itself, which, judging from the plans, will be commodious, will be situated in a well-sheltered spot. It is proposed, in memory of the late Imperial Archduke Johann (himself a great lover of the mountains), to name the hut the "Archduke Johann." It will be situated higher than any hut in the Eastern Alps.'

THE ROSENGARTEN GEBIRGE.—The pass described by me in the November number, and for which I suggested the name of Vajolet Pass, is, it appears, known to the people of the country, and called by them the Tschagerjoch. It has, I find, been referred to in the publications of the German Alpine Club; but having been, as I believe, completely ignored by guide-books, was considered by me at the time as a new route, as it was to English mountaineers.—C. C. TUCKER.

NOTES ON THE INNS IN THE TARENNAISE.—PRALOGNAN.—The Hôtel de la Vanoise, kept by Favre, at Le Barioz, the next hamlet above the church town, offers very fair quarters to mountaineers wishing to explore the Tarentaise. There are several bedrooms, all tolerably clean; fresh meat is generally to be had, and the prices are moderate. M. Favre takes a great interest in Alpine matters, and can give much useful local information, and is very thankful for any suggestions for the improvement and management of his hôtel.

LA MOTTE.—Châlets, two hours from Pralognan on the Chavière path. Two beds are reserved for travellers, and the usual châlet fare is to be had. The situation is advantageous for exploring the Péclet *massif*, or the great snow-field of the Glacier de la Vanoise.

ENTRE DEUX EAUX.—The châlet inn, chez Rosaz, the highest house of the hamlet, has one single and one double bed, and can supply bread, cheese, and wine. The prices are rather high. Another auberge, chez Richard, has one bed. The owners are said to be civil and obliging, but the supplies scanty. It would probably be possible to ascend the Grande Casse directly from here, arriving at the depression between the two summits, seen from the valley.

TIGNES.—The Hôtel du Club Alpin, chez David Révial, has greatly improved. The beds are clean, and the food (especially the cheese) very fair indeed. The proprietor is building a new wing, to be reserved exclusively for Alpine travellers. The prices are moderate.

LA VAL DE TIGNES.—The auberge kept by Joseph Marie Bonnevie, just above the church, offers tolerable quarters. There are several beds and the food is fair. The prices are extremely moderate.

LE BOIS IN VAL DE PRÉMOU.—I was received very hospitably at this hamlet by the Mayor of Champagny, M. Landre Ruffier. There was plenty of hay and straw in the barn, and the charges were absurdly low; but the food was poor and scanty.—W. A. B. COOLIDGE.

ALPINE MEETINGS.—An 'international' meeting of Alpine Clubists is to be held at Geneva under the auspices of the Swiss Club in the first week in August.

Between the 15th and 20th of August a meeting of Italian Clubists is to be held at Perugia. Papers will be read on Umbria and its antiquities; there will be an Exhibition, 'Artistical, Industrial, and Agricultural,' and excursions will be organised in the neighbouring Apennines, including the ascent of Monte Vettore, 6,585 ft.

ALPINE PHOTOGRAPHY.—Herr Beck of Strassburg has presented to the Alpine Club some specimens of his photographs of the snow-region which have gained a great reputation abroad. Some of the views, notably those of the chain of the Ebnefluh from the Jungfrau, are very striking and singularly good as photographs, and all the views are interesting topographically, and, as exact records of mountain forms, will suggest recollections of past, or hopes of future, enjoyment to Alpine climbers. The views sent are all in the Oberland.

We would suggest that a series of photographs, chosen with an eye to picturesque effect, of sérac forms, of clouds, of cornices, 'Bergschründen,' and other strange beauties of the snow-region, would be probably successful. The start made in this direction by Bisson Frères has never been properly followed out. Nor have the admirable small photographs of Tairraz of Chamonix, some of them taken on the top of Mont Blanc, excited French photographers with larger means at their disposal to further advance. Alpine photography is yet in its infancy; and the combination of local knowledge, technical skill, and artistic feeling necessary for the production of first-rate work is not likely to be often met with. Some of the best work we have yet seen are the photographs of the Orteler group published at Botzen. An exhibition of Alpine photography might do something to stimulate photographers, and by example of the best work they might learn as a body to take more pains to endeavour to obtain a picture as well as a view.

LITERATURE.—Two standard works of interest to intelligent travellers are being republished in improved and revised cheap editions in monthly volumes, by F. Schulthess, of Zürich, viz. O. Heer, 'Die Urwelt der Schweiz,' illustrated; Dr. Christ, 'Das Pflanzenleben der Schweiz,' illustrated. Specimen numbers are to be seen at the Club-rooms. Messrs. Wurster & Co., of Zürich, have published a 'Manuel du Voyageur,' or volume of instructions of how to travel and what to observe, which seems carefully compiled and well got up.

Two illustrated works, 'A Gressoney per Val d'Andorno,' and 'In Val Sesia, Album d'un Alpinista,' Biella, Amosso, 1878, have lately been published, and are on the table of the Alpine Club. They consist of a series of lithographed sketches of landscape and figure subjects of a character with which English readers have been made familiar in 'How we spent the Summer' and the other works of the same authoress. The present drawings are spirited and characteristic, and give pleasant recollections of the scenery of the beautiful southern valleys of Monte Rosa, and of the life of their inhabitants.

GRAND CORNIER FROM THE NORTH.—*Erratum.*—For 'viâ the summit of the Bouquetin' in my note on the Grand Cornier, published in

the 'Alpine Journal' for November, 1878 (p. 106), read 'viâ the summit of the Pigne de la Lée.'

F. T. WETHERED.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

February 4, 1879.—Mr. C. E. MATHEWS, *President, in the chair.*

The Rev. H. W. Majendie and Messrs. C. E. Freeman and B. Wainwright were elected members of the Club. The accounts for 1878 were passed. The Honorary Librarian made his report as to the condition of the library and collection of maps, the latter being in his opinion in an incomplete and unsatisfactory state.

Mr. C. T. DENT read a paper on 'The Ascent of the Aiguille du Dru.'

March 4, 1879.—Mr. C. E. MATHEWS, *President, in the chair.*

Messrs. J. W. Smith and A. Caddick were elected members of the Club.

The President read a letter from Herr Meurer of Vienna, announcing that a new Austrian Alpine Club had been founded in that city, which now numbers 560 members. It may be remembered that some years ago the original Austrian Alpine Club amalgamated with the German. Herr Meurer, the Secretary, forwarded a copy of the 'Alpenzeitung,' the periodical of the new Club, and expressed its warm desire to enter into friendly relations with the English Club.

The President stated that Mr. Dent had gone abroad for some time, and moved 'That Mr. W. E. Davidson be appointed acting Honorary Secretary during the absence of Mr. Dent.' This was seconded by Mr. A. W. Moore, and carried unanimously.

The Rev. F. T. WETHERED read a paper on 'An Ascent of the Tüschhorn from the Fée Glacier.'

April 1, 1879.—Mr. C. E. MATHEWS, *President, in the chair.*

Mr. GARDINER read a paper on 'Mountaineering in Dauphiné without Guides in 1878,' which was illustrated by some excellent maps and sketches, the work of Mr. C. Pilkington. At the conclusion of the paper an interesting discussion followed, in which the President, Messrs. Coolidge, Cust, Freshfield, Moore, and Gardiner took part. Mr. Gardiner and his companions (Messrs. C. and L. Pilkington) were on all sides warmly congratulated on the remarkable success of their experiment. A general feeling of satisfaction was expressed that it should have been reserved to three members of the Alpine Club to show to what an extraordinary degree of skill mountaineers of exceptional experience and aptitude might in rare instances attain. But it appeared at the same time to be strongly felt that Messrs. Gardiner and Pilkingtons' example was only to be followed with impunity by equally competent mountaineers; and that there was no reason for the club to alter its previously expressed opinion that 'mountaineering without guides' is for 'the general' a highly dangerous form of amusement which it is its duty, as a body, to discourage.

Mons. Loppé will exhibit a collection of Alpine Pictures and Sketches in the Club-rooms during May and June.