at me the whole time like a dray-horse, so that, had I let go of the rock to which I was clinging, he would inevitably have dragged me headlong into the torrent. By a series of severe jerks, and at a considerable expenditure of lung power, I made him understand that I should not start till he eased, and then, with my heart in my mouth and vivid remembrance of Amina in the 'Sonnambula,' I committed my feet to the water.

The passage turned out a good deal better than I had expected, and in less time than I have taken to describe it I reached Maurer, who was none the worse for his fall. When the tug came he had managed to clutch hold of the trees in falling, and found himself in shallow water.

We shook hands, in five minutes more reached the bridge across the river, and as we entered Ried met Jaun coming with a local guide and lanterns to return for Dent, who had wisely remained on the other side of the torrent. They had struck it much higher up, and Jaun had very pluckily waded across with the water above his waist. It was eleven o'clock when I got to the hotel, and Dent, who was found philosophically seated in a puddle by the side of the torrent, smoking a pipe upside down, arrived soon after. Our clothes were wet through, and there was but the young woman of the house from whom to borrow. Modesty forbade this last resource, but we succeeded by the aid of towels and blankets—and recollections of Mr. Alma Tadema's pictures—in dressing ourselves to our own satisfaction, and that of the waitress, as Roman senators, and in this costume did justice to a classical repast of stewed apples and mixed biscuits.

THE AIGUILLE DE TALÈFRE. By F. J. CULLINAN, read before the Alpine Club, May 4, 1880.

ON August 18 last Baumann and I arrived in Chamonix, and were there duly met by our respective guides, Emile Rey of Courmayeur and Joseph Moser of Täsch.

We had formed no very definite plans for our campaign beyond a determination to follow, if possible, Dent's footsteps up the Dru. We were ready for anything, but had postponed deciding upon a programme until our arrival on the scene of action. When I say we were ready for anything I mean this, that notwithstanding the fact of having come straight to our mountaineering headquarters from the fogs and smoke and hard work of London, we were in good condition, with nerve and muscle as they ought to be when one aspires to high deeds in the Alps.

Digitized by Google

Now before I enter on the actual subject of this paper, I would invite your attention for a very few moments to the question of preliminary training for the Alps. It frequently happens that men go out quite unfit. They go direct to Zermatt or Chamonix or the Oberland in bad condition. They probably have taken no exercise worth mentioning for months, and their state is rendered worse by a long railway journey hurried over without a rest. They reach their destination, meet their guides, and straightway attack some great mountain without any adequate training or preparation. I have broken down myself on one occasion from no other cause than this, and I have known several instances in which men—strong men too—have broken down from the same reason. I have learned by experience, however, and I find that it is quite possible to combine with hard work and London air breathed for six or seven consecutive months a good state of bodily health and a fair condition for hard physical exercise.

Breasting mountains is no doubt the best training for mountaineering; but if there are no mountains within reach, then the next best training is pedestrianism over hills and hollows. Living in London I find that I can—like the peripatetic philosopher (in whom we may, I think, recognise a member of the Club) who has recently described his experiences in the 'Pall 'Mall Gazette'—manage once a week at all events to put in my five-and-twenty or thirty miles on foot, through beautiful scenery and fresh air, leaving town in the morning and returning the same evening. A course of such walks religiously persevered in, combined with moderate exercise daily, be the weather what it may, keeps one in good condition; and by these means I find that I arrive at the foot of my mountain with a fair prospect of reaching its summit without any undue physical exhaustion.

There is another point connected with mountaineering which I think is of general interest and importance, and upon which I wish to say a few words—that is, the question of food on mountain expeditions.

We all know from experience how indifferent and how little appetizing is the food which the guides fish out of their knapsacks at the mountain halt and the mountain bivouac: the hard stringy meat, the strong cheese, the hard-boiled eggs, which were fresh about the period when the superannuated chicken, also offered for our mastication, was young and tender, are common memories to all climbers.

This is the sort of fare which is usually provided for us by the thoughtful host of our inn, and we eat it, often no doubt

Digitized by Google

thankfully enough, because we have a mountain appetite and would eat anything; but there are times when one sighs for something more nourishing and less unpalatable.

Last season Baumann and I took with us a large supply of tinned delicacies, and we found them an immense improvement on the ordinary Swiss fare. I do not mean to imply that we relied wholly on them; but we combined the use of them judiciously with that of native provisions, and the combination went down very successfully.

The subjects of training for the Alps, and of what may be entitled comforts in mountaineering, are, I think, very important ones, deserving of the attention of Alpine Clubs, and I should like to see them made the substance of a special paper by some experienced member of our own Club.

Well, at all events, as I said, we arrived in Chamonix in good form on August 18. We were met by our guides, and a few hours later were joined by Fitzgerald, who was already in the field, and had just crossed over the Col de Talèfre with his guide Lanier.

Next day we commenced our mountaineering for the year by the ascent of the Aiguille du Midi. While descending from this Aiguille, Lanier carefully scanned the face of the virgin Talèfre, and traced out the route which led us to its summit a few days later.

After two false starts, checked at the Montanvert by bad weather, patience and perseverance had at length their reward; this time there was no exception to be taken to the weather, and accordingly a quarter-past two on the morning of August 25 saw us under way, starting from the Montanvert by lantern-light.

When we had traversed about one half of the Glacier de Leschaux, and reached a point on that glacier about midway between the Aiguille de Talèfre on the left and the Pic du Tacul on the right, Fitzgerald called a halt while he and Lanier proceeded to make a final examination of the mountain. During the time that they were so engaged Moser, the chamois hunter, though ever on the look for chamois, was busy admiring the scenery. He is one of the few guides I have met with who appears impressed with the splendid scenes in the midst of which the Swiss guides pass so much of their lives. He turned to me more than once, and looking round would exclaim in his forcible German, 'Ah! this is beautiful! It is good to leave one's own mountains occasionally. You see fine things even in other districts also.' Meanwhile his trained eye soon discerned three chamois crossing a snow slope on the

Digitized by Google

mountain above us, which we ourselves subsequently crossed, where we saw their tracks—an old one and two young ones.

Fitzgerald and Lanier had now completed their survey, and returned to say that the route marked out by the latter some days previously when descending from the Aiguille du Midi was manifestly the most promising one to follow, and up it accordingly we started.

I may here remark that the expedition was designed and suggested by Lanier, who acted as leader throughout the day, and led with wonderful sagacity, never once being at fault. Turning our backs upon the Pic du Tacul and crossing the Glacier de Leschaux diagonally, our way first led us up some steep rocks, interspersed with green patches of grass, on to the Glacier de Pierre Joseph, and then, ascending that glacier, we reached without difficulty the rocky face of the Talèfre to the right of two broad snow couloirs which descend at a very steep angle straight down the mountain from the final crown of rocks at its summit to the glacier at its base.

These couloirs constitute the danger of this Aiguille.

It is necessary in climbing the mountain as we climbed it, and I scarcely think there is any other way up it on this side equally free from danger, to cross and recross these couloirs in ascending and descending. They are pitched at very high angles. Steps have to be cut across them—they are broad couloirs which take a long time to traverse—the rocks above them are rotten, and in the descent in the afternoon danger from falling stones is inevitable. But, to resume our ascent, we found it necessary, as I say, to cross first one couloir and then the other about a third of the way up. After that we had some nasty rock-climbing for a short distance, the rocks being extremely unsound, the leading members of our large party, we all six being on one rope, experiencing considerable difficulty in moving freely without endangering the skulls of those below. Finding the rocks so troublesome, and progress on them so slow, and seeing moreover that they led us rather too much to the left, we were now forced to recross the left hand couloir, and make for a high, narrow, rocky ridge lying between the two. The climbing here became somewhat better: the rocks were firmer and sounder: but still great care was necessary as they were not of a nature to be fully trusted.

We had to cross the snow couloirs no more in the ascent. This friendly ridge led us up the remaining portion of the mountain, cautious climbing being still the order of the day. It brought us to the steep crown of rock, which apparently forms

Digitized by Google

the highest summit of the Aiguille, but on gaining this we found that there was still another summit, manifestly a few feet higher, to the north of that which we had attained.

It was ten o'clock when we reached the first summit. We had been working for nearly eight hours with only two halts—one while Fitzgerald and Lanier took final observations of the mountain—the other for an early breakfast at the foot of the first rocks.

After a short rest we climbed down a curious masonry of rock to the small snow arête connecting the two summits, and reached the northern one at twenty minutes past ten. The knapsacks were quickly unpacked, and as it was perfectly warm and calm, although we were over 12,000 feet above the level of the sea, we enjoyed ourselves thoroughly, doing full justice to our tinned provisions, while feasting our eyes with the glorious scene all round. It was in fact a perfect morning, and the success of the expedition had put guides and all into the happiest frame of mind.

Among our stock of English provisions we had brought with us to Chamonix three plum puddings in tins; the idea I may observe was Baumann's—one of these we specially reserved for the top of the Dru; the other two were to be eaten whenever fitting occasions arose.

The Aiguille de Talèfre, having been hitherto a virgin peak, we considered it quite deserving of a plum pudding, and right good we found it. It must have been wholesome too, for Baumann certainly stowed away enough to have killed most people at Christmas time, without the fatal consequences which Fitzgerald and I assuredly looked for.

After the consumption of the customary pipe of peace and contentment, and with a last look at the magnificent precipices of the Grandes Jorasses, which form one of the most striking features in the view from the summit of the Talèfre, we packed up, built the usual stone man, and returning to the other peak built a stone man there also, leaving our names and particulars of the ascent for the benefit of those who follow us.

It was half-past eleven when we commenced the descent. So fine was the morning and warm the air that we had spent an hour and a half upon the summit.

Slowly but steadily we worked our way down. Great care was found necessary, as in the ascent, to avoid knocking stones on one another, and the rope, as usual in such cases, was difficult to manage—particularly so, seeing that we were a party of six. Owing to the nature of this mountain it would not be safe for two parties to be on it at the same time with

Digitized by Google

any great distance intervening between them. The only safe course is to make one party and stick close together.

We followed our line of ascent as nearly as possible, and the monotony of the descent was unvaried until a startling incident, revealing the one danger of the mountain, rudely awoke us (or at least one of us) from fancied security.

We had reached the point on the mountain where it became necessary to recross the right hand couloir in order to get on to the rocky face leading down to the glacier below. We found our steps of the morning to a great degree obliterated by the mid-day sun: and Lanier, after a hurried look upward, struck across the couloir, cutting out the steps as rapidly as possible. Fitzgerald was next on the rope, then came Rey, then I, Baumann next, with Moser last of all. The couloir, as I have already observed, was broad and steep, running right down the whole face of the mountain. I had got into that sleepy sort of state which often comes over one on snow slopes in the mid-day sun after a sleepless night and hours of hard exercise, and was moving along thinking about nothing in particular, but keeping pace in a mechanical sort of way with Rey in front, stepping when he stepped and driving the head of my axe into the hard snow above. Suddenly I was recalled to consciousness by loud yells from Lanier, 'Vite, vite! Monsieur Coolinan, vite, vite!' Instead of going any faster, however, I stood still in my steps for a single moment, when in the same instant a great stone whizzed past my head a couple of feet in front. Another step and I should not have been here to read this paper. The stone came from the rocks forming the summit of the mountain some thousand feet above us, and had consequently acquired an extraordinary velocity. With great bounds through the air, landing on the hard snow and bounding off again, it disappeared from view.

We hurried on for the friendly rocks, which we reached without further incident a few minutes later. Rapidly we made our way down the Glacier de Pierre Joseph and arriving at a green spot amongst the belt of rocks which separate that glacier from the Glacier de Leschaux, watered by a pure spring, we halted for well-earned refreshment and repose. We reached the Montanvert at half-past four and descended to Chamonix in time for table d'hôte.

Three days subsequently Fitzgerald left with Lanier for Courmayeur, wishing to ascend the Grandes Jorasses and to cross over Mont Blanc, while Baumann and I with Rey and Moser started for our long meditated assault on the Dru. The account of our successful expedition up that mountain does

Digitized by Google

not properly form any part of this paper, but I allude to it for the purpose of recording our opinion of Rey, who is a young and comparatively unknown guide. Lord Wentworth, in a paper published in the 'Alpine Journal,' speaks of him as follows: 'Rey, though only thirty, is the best guide I am personally acquainted with.' Baumann and I can fully endorse that testimony. I think we are agreed in the opinion that on a difficult rock mountain, such as the Dru, he is the best guide we have ever seen. His leading throughout our ascent was simply perfect.

In conclusion I may add with regard to the Talèfre, that a few days previous to our successful expedition, a large Italian party tried the mountain from the Courmayeur side. Fitzgerald observed their attempt as he was working up the Col de Talèfre. They crossed the upper part of the Glacier de Triolet and lost a considerable time in circumventing a bergschrund. They reached the northern ridge of the Aiguille, but while Fitzgerald was on the Col he observed the party turn back, as he thought on account of the difficulties which they seemed to encounter. Lanier, however, was of opinion that they were driven back by the cold.

I may further recall to your recollection that in the season of 1878 a distinguished party of mountaineers belonging to this club also tried the mountain. They, however, only succeeded in attaining a summit, up to that time nameless, but now bearing the proud title of the Aiguille de la Peau Blanche.

THE ENGADINE IN WINTER. BY THE REV. C. E. B. WATSON.

It may interest as well the healthy as their invalid or overwrought friends to know something of the Engadine as it is in winter. Having enjoyed three winters at St. Moritz, I feel that it is really to be regretted that so fine and so healthy a winter climate should not be more taken advantage of. While terrible accounts of fog have reached us, both from London and Paris, here for ten weeks, from the end of November to the second week in February, we have enjoyed an almost uninterrupted spell of clear still weather, which for its sunniness I never knew equalled except on the Nile.

It is true the winter of 1879-80 has been the finest of the last three years. But speaking generally, though it can be unpleasant in winter here as elsewhere, as far as my experience goes the weather is more settled in winter than in summer; there is no time when the skies are so clear, or when the sun, shining through the clear frosty air and reflected by the snow, is brighter than in winter.

The sunsets in winter are especially beautiful; for only in winter does one witness those lovely and varied effects which, set off as they

Digitized by Google