

antelope, viz. the *Markhor* (*Capra megaceros*), *Ibex*, *Thar*, *Ghoral*, or Himalayan chamois, *Sarao*, *Snow Antelope*, and *Thibetan Gazelle*. Wild hogs abound in all deeply wooded ravines. The Bovine tribe is represented by a single specimen, viz. the *Wild Yak* (*Bos grunniens*). Hares and Marmots are very numerous in Thibet, and Wild Horses simply swarm there. With this large variety of game about him, no hunter in the Himalayas, who is a tolerable shot and has a decent pair of legs, should ever have his camp short of meat.

Of beasts of prey, *Black* and *Snow* bears are very common. They are more herbivorous than carnivorous, but have no objection to beef or mutton if it comes in their way. Tigers sometimes, but very rarely, ascend as high as the snow line. Leopards are numerous, and very destructive to sheep and dogs. The Ounce, or snow leopard, is rare; its beautiful fur is very valuable. The Wild Dog and Snow Wolf complete the list.

A few words in conclusion. Taking everything into consideration, I see no reason why an expedition to the Himalayas, under the auspices of the Alpine Club, should not succeed, even if an attempt were made to scale Kinchinjunga (altitude 28,156 feet); one of its northern spurs at any rate seems to present no insuperable obstacles. Anyhow, whether the summit be attained or not, there is no doubt that a very great elevation could be reached, and that we would learn much that is interesting about what at present are unknown mountain altitudes. Irrespective of this, however, a Himalayan tour would be very enjoyable. Let us hope that some of our members will be found enthusiastic enough to try it, and to report at some future time their experiences in that magnificent chain of mountains.

AN OLD FRIEND WITH A NEW FACE. By C. T. DENT.  
(Read before the Alpine Club April 4, 1882.)

‘Story? Lord bless you, I have none to tell, Sir.’  
*The Friend of Humanity and the Knife Grinder.*

WE must all have met, at one time or another, gentlemen of an astronomical turn of mind, and cannot fail to have noticed the manner in which they absolutely revel in figures. Before now I have secretly writhed while a scientific friend was crushing me slowly with the mere weight of his

numerals. It is a peculiarity of these friends of ours, that they always keep something in hand. Some time ago, in Switzerland, I was conversing with one of such a turn of mind, and listening with due reverence to his enthusiastic computations. Knowing my man, I was prepared to assume expressions of varying degrees of surprise, while calmly awaiting the ultimate stagerer. But I misjudged its advent. Feeling that I had somewhat lost in his estimation by evincing undue astonishment at a comparatively small array of figures, I sought to turn the conversation by requesting to know how long he thought it would be before the great rock peaks around us would have crumbled away to their bases. The calculation was too trivial, and the number of millions of generations too small, to interest him much, but he vouchsafed an approximate estimate. I let him babble on, and fell a-thinking. I wondered what, when the mountains were all levelled down, would some future commentators make of the Alpine literature so industriously piled up by members of our Club. In imagination I fancied some enthusiast exploring the buried city of modern Babylon, and excavating the ruins of the 'finest site in Europe.' I pictured to myself the surprise in store for him on digging out the effigies of some of our naval and military heroes, and the mingled feelings with which he would contemplate the unearthed statue of George IV. It was conceivable that in that far-off epoch to which my friend's calculations had borne me, the Alpine Club itself should have ceased to exist. Pursuing his explorations in a north-easterly direction, this Schliemann of the future might perchance light on the precious archives of the historic Alpine Club itself. How eagerly he would peruse such lore as still remained in our library, anxious to decipher the inscriptions and discover what manner of men they were who lived and climbed when mountains and glaciers were still to be found on the earth. An abstract of his description of our sibylline leaves before some scientific society of the future, I fancied, might run somewhat in this style:—'In pursuit of their great and glorious object, these ancient heroes appear to have undergone vast personal discomfort. The outset of their expeditions was almost invariably characterised by a display of bad temper, engendered by early rising. After a varying number of hours of excessive toil, the travellers were wont to arrive at some fearsome chasm spoken of as a "bergschrand." On this they were wont to descant and enlarge at length. Sometimes, as we judge, in their descriptions, they enlarged the "bergschrand" itself. They then crossed it. Next they traversed strange localities

for which there appear to have been no adequately descriptive expressions in their own language. They were evidently practised meteorologists, as may be gathered throughout from their writings. At length they reached summits, of the nature of which we, in our time, can have but a feeble conception. So great was their relief, at the termination of their toil, that they habitually burst forth into language characterised by a wealth of imagery and fervour of poetic description which unfortunately conveys but little idea to us, in our day, of what they saw. In descending they were all commonly within an ace of meeting a violent death. Arrived at a successful termination of their toilsome labour, they advised others to undergo the same. They dealt out unsparing satire to their companions, unlimited praise to their guides, and unmeasured ridicule to their porter. They were prodigious eaters, were much pestered by some extinct species of insects, and make frequent allusion to a substance termed tobacco. The constant repetition of these incidents stamps upon their writings the impress of unexaggerated veracity.'

Now, at the time at which these prophetic fancies were conjured up, we had recently perpetrated an expedition to which, when our Editor honoured me with an invitation to inflict myself once more upon his readers, my thoughts straightway reverted; for, as will be seen anon, the features of this climb were most opposed to those already mentioned, and it is solely for this reason that they may perhaps be worthy of attention. We took no porter with us as first low comedy man; we had very little to eat; our tobacco was wet, and there was no 'bergschrund.'

Such an expedition, however, may from its very contradictoriness be worth recording. On no other ground, at any rate, can I conceive it to be so.

'Some vast amount of years ago, ere all my youth had vanished from me,' as the poet says, in fact, in the summer of 1879, Maund and I found ourselves in the degenerate town of Chamonix. Like a Ministry on the eve of a general election, or a gentleman without a sixpence at a theatre, we were sorely in need of a programme. The ancient spirit was not yet quite extinct within us, and we had the ambition to achieve something new. But Chamonix is not exactly the place to be recommended to those consumed with such ideas. We gazed at the map, we studied the *carte en relief*, we took Jaun and Kaspar Maurer into our confidence, but we could get no further than the Aiguille des Charmoz and the Dent du Géant. With regard to both these peaks, it appeared to

us improbable that we should actually get much further than anybody else had previously done, inasmuch as Jaun was opposed to the idea of their practicability, an opinion which neither of us shared with regard to the Charmoz. The idea of discovering even the smallest deviation from any previous route up Mont Blanc was at once discarded; for, in fine weather, tourists may be seen swarming up the sides of the monarch of mountains in number as many as the flies on a sugar-loaf in a grocer's window in hot weather. One evening we sat in front of Couttet's Hôtel, staring pensively at the familiar outline of the row of Aiguilles. Determined to accomplish something on the morrow and not caring much what it was, provided a climb was afforded, we found ourselves reduced to the latter-day necessity of all mountaineers. If we could not find the right way up some new mountain, at least we could take the wrong way up an old one. The following morning, accordingly, we walked up to the Pierre Pointue, as a preliminary step—a good many steps—towards the object in view. The exertion of toiling up the zigzags, or the more rarefied atmosphere, had a most astounding effect upon one of the party. He conceived an idea. This was none other than that we should ascend the Aiguille du Midi by the face directly in front of us; in fact, make a col of the mountain. Fired with enthusiasm, we left the chalet, and strode vigorously up the hill, in order to prospect the route and reconnoitre the rocks. The exertion soon told upon us, the sooner that Maund and I were engaged in an argument which had originally commenced some days previously. It was a lazy, hot day, too; the kind of day that makes one, perforce, admire the ingenious benevolence of nature in fashioning out, on the grassy slopes, inequalities exactly adapted to those of the human figure in a seated or recumbent position. The heated air rising from the ground gave flickering, distorted views of distant objects, like unto marine phenomena viewed through the medium of a seaside lodging-house window. The grasshoppers were marvellously busy, the bees droned through the dreary air, the turf was most inviting. It now occurred to us that there was no absolute necessity for the whole party to ascend, and that perhaps the guides might go on quicker alone. Maund grasped this idea in all its details at once, and accepted the suggestion on my part with astonishing alacrity. Evidently a similar idea had been occupying his mind for some time. The guides, with much parade and ceremony, borrowed the telescope, braced themselves up for great exertions, remarked that they expected to be back some time

during the night, and started upwards with somewhat over-acted eagerness. We disposed ourselves in the shade and resumed our argument. I waxed eloquent on the subject. Such was the force of my logic and the cogency of my reasoning, that I bore down on Maund and reduced him in a short time to absolute silence—from which he did not awake for nearly two hours.

About this time the guides, who, I fancy, had been comfortably asleep also within a short distance of us, returned, and gave a favourable report of the rocks. Elated with this news, we went on a short distance up the hill, and met a large party of ephemeral acquaintances disporting themselves on the hills. After the manner of people amusing themselves in the mountains they set out, and climbed a steep little rock peak a few hundred yards or so distant. Arrived at the summit, they roared out unintelligible remarks to us, and we did the same to them till we were hoarse. We waved our hands and hats as if they were our dearest friends on earth just setting out for the Antipodes. The party then descended. The nearer they came the less demonstrative were we, and, by the time we met, the warmth of our affection had wholly evaporated, and we conversed in ordinary tones. Emotional behaviour of a similar character is not infrequently observed in the Alps. We journeyed together back to the Pierre Pointue, and bespoke beds—if those exaggerated packing-cases, lined with straw bags, could be considered such. At the *châlet* I met a character very familiar to these tourist-frequented districts. His exterior was unpromising; his beard was of a fortnight's growth, or thereabouts. Its development lacked uniformity, and was fitful. His head was clad in a hard hat, with a shining green veil folded around its battered outline. His raiment was black and rusty; his legs were cased in canvas gaiters, fastened with many little girths and buckles. In his right hand he grasped a trusty three-franc pole made of wainy deal. He fidgeted about for a while, and I felt that he was about to enter into conversation. It was even so. He sidled up, and requested to know what we proposed to climb on the morrow. A little taken aback, I indicated, by a sweep of the arm, a space of territory extending from about the Mont Buet on one side round to the *Aiguille du Goûter* on the other. He was a little startled, and observed that it would be a fine walk. I said he judged rightly. We went in to dinner, while our friend expatiated on our project to his companions, and then resumed his contemplation of a rock some ninety feet high, which he was under the impression was a lady then

descending from Mont Blanc. I did not learn his name, but I doubt not the individual may be recognised.

Some points of the argument were still unsettled when we turned in, the same process of turning in giving rise, from the beds, to as much creaking as emanates from a village churchwarden's boots on a Sunday. The clear moonlight streamed in through the little window, and prevented sleep; so I lay in my wooden box, thinking over our recent discussion, but with such a distinct intention—like little Paul Dombey with Mrs. Pipchin—of fixing Maund presently, that even that hardy old mountaineer deemed it prudent to counterfeit slumber.

At 3 A.M. we got under way. For some time we had been leading a life of sloth in Chamonix, and the delight of feeling ourselves once more en route for a rock climb entirely precluded that fractiousness which ought properly to be described at this period of an expedition; and our path necessitated some equanimity, for the little tumps and hillocks tripped up the unwary in a most aggravating manner. Feeling it unfair that all the work should be thrown on the guides, I had volunteered to bear part of the burden, and selected the lantern as my share. By this means I was enabled to walk in comparative comfort, and listened with complacency to the expletives that were jerked out of my companions' mouths at each stumble; soon, however, we reached the lower snow-patches of the Glacier des Pèlerins, and the light was no longer necessary. Without incident, that I can either remember or invent, we made straight across the crisp snow to the base of a promising-looking rock buttress lying to the right of the main snow-gully that runs up the side of the mountain. Here I am painfully conscious of a glaring defect in this Alpine narrative. A mountain ascent without a 'bergschrand' is like a steeple-chase without a water-jump, but candour compels me to say that there was no 'bergschrand' visible. Either we had hit on a spot where the orthodox chasm was filled up, or else this particular glacier was an exception to all others previously treated of in mountain literature. In a moment we were on the rocks, and our ears were gladdened with that sweetest of music to a mountaineer's ears—the clank of the axe against the stones. The sun had risen, and we gazed down complacently on the work already performed. Above, the rocks were broken and easy, and we climbed rapidly up, each in the fashion that seemed best to him. So good was our progress at first that we were far up the buttress and could barely see our tracks in the snow beneath when a halt was called for breakfast and we had time to look around. In one

respect this paper must resemble every other with which I am acquainted—it is absolutely impossible to omit all reference to the weather. The western sky had rather an ominous look of half-mourning; heavy grey and black clouds were whirling about in a manner suggestive of rising winds. Even at this stage of the proceedings the thought crossed our minds that the storm which was evidently brewing—though why a storm should be likened to beer I don't know—might possibly overtake us, and prove literally a 'damper' to our projects, and that perhaps we ought at once to turn back. We determined, however, to push on for a bit, and to that intent girded ourselves with the rope, and worked on to the top of the first buttress. It was now necessary to cross the couloir, and take to the rocks on the left. For a short distance the climb was rather more difficult, but nowhere at all formidable; still, in this part of the ascent, our attention was fully occupied for the time, and we had but little leisure to study the weather. At the summit of the rocks a promising-looking snow-slope seemed to offer fair prospect of more rapid progress. At first all went well on the snow, which we found in good condition; but before we had advanced many steps it became necessary to resort to the axe, and we had then ample opportunities of looking around us.

The clouds were lowering more and more, but, as they swept up from the south-west direction, we were unable to see thoroughly what was in store for us. The wind, too, was growing stronger every minute, and Maund, who was still pursuing our argument, had to exert himself considerably in order to be heard. We halted for a few minutes at some spiky little rocks, and again looked about. The weather prospects were just in that doubtful state that prompts everyone to ask everyone else, 'What do you think?' Maurer looked exceedingly vacant, and said nothing. Maund and I looked as profound as we could, but, following the example of Lord Burleigh, we said nothing either. At last some one suggested, 'Let us go on for a bit, and then we shall see.' We went on for a bit, but then, as a matter of fact, the mist swept up around us, and we did not see anything. It was inconvenient, no doubt, that we were unable to penetrate with our gaze to the slopes above, but still the condition of affairs was not wholly without its advantages, for we were conscious that the gigantic telescopes of Chamonix were directed towards us. Still we could not but regret that those who had disbursed their 50 c. for the privilege of gazing on our backs should be disappointed of so enlivening a spectacle. In the hope that the condition

of the upper snow might be good, and perhaps rather misjudging the height we had already reached, we determined to push on at our best pace, with the view of reaching the top of the ridge, at any rate, before the storm broke. Every now and again a momentary break above showed that the wind was blowing with great force, as thin clouds of loose snow were swept up in whirling wreaths from the projecting ridges. Jaun worked away with a will, but the snow got harder at every step. The growing force of the gale and the increasing steepness of the slope compelled him to make the steps larger and larger as we went on. It now became evident that the storm would overtake us long before we got to the ridge, and that we were in something of a trap. The steps had been cut so far apart that to turn and descend in the teeth of the gale would have involved the construction of a fresh staircase. It was certainly easier to go on: so we went further and fared much worse. The slope became steeper, the ice harder, the gale stronger, and the delay between each step seemed interminable. Suddenly, as we passed from under the lee of a projecting slope on our right, a tremendous gust of wind sweeping suddenly down almost tore us from our foothold. A torrent of hail fell, and for a few moments Maund's conversation slackened, and we had enough to do to hold on where we were. My astute companion had selected his place in the caravan immediately behind me. The gale was blowing directly on our backs, and he was thus enabled to fire off his remarks at me without any possibility of response. Anything that I said in answer was audible only to Jaun in front, and he took not the smallest interest in our discussion. Unfortunately, too, it was difficult to listen with any attention, for as the wind came on we were forced, like chimney-cowls, to swing round our faces instantly towards the same direction. The squalls became more frequent, the thunder and lightning played around us merrily, and as the wind howled by we were forced to throw ourselves flat against the slope, adopting the undignified attitudes of a deer-stalker nearing the brow of a Scotch hill—attitudes which bring somewhat unduly into prominence the inadequate nature of the national costume. Fortunately, as I have said, we were screened from view, and our poses, though possibly ungraceful and 'un-Greek,' were, at any rate, uncriticised. The formidable-sized hailstones falling softly around us filled up the steps, and our feet were buried up to the ankles in a moment. In a minute or two the squall passed for the time. We arose, shook ourselves, smiled at nothing in particular, while the leader hacked out three or

four fresh steps. On one occasion I looked around to see how Maund was getting on below, and was concerned on observing him heaving in a remarkable manner, and making strange faces. I thought something had disagreed with him. Such, however, was not the case. He was merely exerting himself to make his argumentative remarks audible, but without avail. Not even the porter at Lloyd's or the toast-master at Willis's Rooms could have made themselves heard in that hurricane. A step or two on, and then, as a distant roar betokened a fresh gust, we disposed ourselves again at a convenient angle of resistance, and so on. If the relation is wearisome it is also realistic, for decidedly the actual thing was not lively. But all things must have an end—including even the 'Feuilleton' in a Parisian newspaper and the walk up to the Bel Alp—and the termination came almost unexpectedly. Maurer was looking as frowning and discontented as an amateur tenor singing a love ditty. Jaun had remarked half a dozen times that the next squall would assuredly sweep us all away, and his cheerful prophetic utterances really seemed on the point of being fulfilled, when, on a sudden, the snow seemed to vanish from under our feet, and we found ourselves on the summit of the ridge. So far it was satisfactory; howbeit our pleasure was somewhat modified by the discovery that the gale blew with considerably more force on the other (S.E.) side than it did on the one by which we had ascended. The possibility of actually reaching the summit of the mountain seemed nil, and the hope that we might have crept under the shelter of the ridge to the final little rock peak was literally thrown to the winds. Greatly to my readers' advantage, therefore, and relief, I am wholly unable to inflict on them any description of the view from the summit, which properly ought to be inserted at this stage of the paper. We turned to the right and walked a little way along the ridge till we got under shelter of a rock. We huddled together, and for the first time for some hours we were able to converse. Maurer removed the pack from his shoulders, and it was then perceived that our cup of misery was full, and our sole bottle of wine completely empty. He had broken it against some projecting rock, and the resulting leakage had led to the formation of a very large circular red patch on the small of his back. After muttering together for a little time, the guides suddenly seized their axes and commenced vigorously to hack out a large hole in the ice. We fell to also, and for some few minutes all worked away with the best of goodwill; at any rate, the exercise had the effect of warming us, and Maurer, who pre-

viously had been the colour of a congested alderman in the face, gradually assumed more normal flesh tints. We now inquired what might be the object of making this hole. Thereupon Jaun gave vent to the ingenious suggestion that we should remain where we were and sleep in it! This proposition we received as befitted its nature, with some coolness, and remarked that on the whole we should prefer to go home. This view led to further conversation. Ultimately we descended a few feet and then made along the face of the slope in a south-west direction towards the cabane of the Midi. The snow here was soft, and we went on for some distance without any difficulty till we again reached the ridge on the south-west side of the Aiguille, having passed round the base of the final rock peak. We were now much more sheltered. Again we reviewed our position, which for the moment, like that of the pocket in a lady's ball-dress, was indeterminate. What was to be done? Like the dinners at a *prix fixe* restaurant, there were three courses for us: we might go down on one side, we might descend on the other side, or we might remain where we were. But the savour of permanency about the latter alternative was distasteful, and it was negatived decisively. 'Very well, then,' said the guides, 'you must go down that way,' and they pointed in a direction westerly by the compass. Maund and I were opposed to this idea on two grounds: one was, that the route would, if it led anywhere in particular, take us to the Glacier des Bossons, where we did not want to go; the other, that to descend on the side indicated was impossible by reason of the marvellous fury of the hurricane. It is Artemus Ward, I think, who describes the ingenious manner in which Baron Trenck, of prison-breaking fame, escaped on one occasion from durance vile. For fifteen long years the Baron had lain immured; at last an idea occurred to him—he opened the door and walked out! By an intellectual effort of almost equal brilliancy, we solved the difficulty that beset us. We turned and walked quietly down the slope for a hundred feet or so. Matters were brightening up; the wind was much less furious than on the ridge, while the hail had stopped, being replaced by snow. Jaun was now of opinion that our best line of descent would be to work across the Vallée Blanche and the upper slopes of the Glacier du Géant, so as to join the ordinary route from the Col du Géant. But in the thick mist it would not have been easy to hit off the right track, and we thought it possible to find a way more readily directly down the Vallée Blanche towards the Petit Rognon. We had no compass with us, but

the direction of the slope indicated the proper line of descent. In most years it would not be easy to find a way through the complicated crevasses of the ice-fall between the Grand Rognon and the easterly rocks of the Midi. But in 1879 so much snow had fallen that we experienced comparatively little difficulty in descending almost in a straight line. A momentary glimpse of the Aiguille du Géant showed that we were on the right track. Passing to the right of the Petit Rognon we descended the ice-fall of the Géant, and at the base of the séracs halted and thought we would have something to eat. Our stock consisted of one roll, studded with little bits of broken glass, and reduced by the action of wine and water to the consistency of a poultice. At this stage I ought properly to make reference to the use of tobacco, the well-earned pipe, and so forth, but the sleety rain, which for the last hour and a half had replaced the snow, had so thoroughly soaked everything, that an attempt to light a pipe did not, like most failures, end in smoke; so we trudged on again unsolaced. 'As the shades of night were falling,' four dripping and woe-begone travellers might—to borrow the novelist's common mode of expression—have been observed toiling up the steep path towards the old Monteners Hôtel;\* that is, they might have been observed by anybody who was fool enough to be out on such a detestable evening. We entered the familiar little room—that ingenious compound of a toyshop and a barrack—and notwithstanding the marked disfavour of the other guests therein assembled, in consequence of our moist, steaming condition, we seated ourselves and clamoured for tea. Another hour and we were at Chamonix. It was nine o'clock and quite dark as we entered the town, but we were interested to observe a little group still collected round our old friend, the one-armed telescope man, anxious to obtain the last news of the two insane Englishmen who had, without doubt, perished miserably that day on the rocks of the Midi. The sole merit of the expedition from their point of view was that it pointed a moral, viz. the impropriety, nay, the foolhardiness of ever undertaking any expedition whatsoever with barbarians who could only speak the German language, as guides. A project was already on foot to organise an expedition on the morrow to search for the bodies of the two lunatic Englishmen, and I doubt not that if we had cared for the excitement we might have been allowed to join the party. Leaving the group, however, to their own

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\* Now, happily, no more, and replaced by one of the best managed and most comfortable mountain hôtels to be found in the Alps.

lucubrations we hurried on to Couttet's, and ordered the somewhat homœopathic remedy of a bath to be prepared.

That the Aiguille du Midi can be ascended by the rocks on this Chamonix face by anyone consumed with an ambition to do so is, I think, beyond doubt. So far as I can find, there is no record of any ascent by this line.\* We were not, I suppose, more than twenty minutes from the actual summit, and all serious difficulty was at an end when we stood on the summit of the ridge. I dare say it was a very fine expedition, but I am not at all sure that I should advise anyone now to follow our steps. Still, if any ardent mountaineer is desirous of completing what we began, I hope I shall not be misunderstood if I wish him as enjoyable a day as we had. Apart from the bad weather, I do not know that the expedition will be found flavoured with any particular spice of risk. I do not think there are likely to be any falling stones met with, which are almost considered *de rigueur* in any latter-day mountaineering expedition professing to be a novelty. In fact, I cannot but feel that I have occupied already too many pages with an exceedingly discursive description of a very trivial climb.

#### A VISIT TO MONTSERRAT. BY FREDERICK GARDINER.

THE weird-looking mountain mass of Montserrat, rising to a height of about 4,000 feet above the hill country of Catalonia, and broken up into the most extraordinary detached pyramids some 300 feet high, is well worthy of a visit from lovers of strange mountain forms.

This group, which is about 24 miles in circumference, is a great centre of tradition. On the east side, at the base of a huge rent in the mass (said to have been made at the moment of the Crucifixion), is the celebrated monastery of Montserrat, now partly in ruins. In the church there is an image of the Virgin, attributed to St. Luke the Apostle, and said to have been brought to Barcelona in the year 50 by St. Peter. The figure is black and carved in wood, and before it Ignacio Loyola watched in 1522, dedicating himself to her as her knight.

At one time the mountain was dotted over with hermitages, which have now mostly fallen into decay; the hermit who entered one was caged in, and never again left it alive. The monastery was much injured, and practically suppressed, in 1835; but some nineteen monks, who live in the strictest seclusion, still occupy the building.

At 2 o'clock in the afternoon of May 31 last, my wife and I, accom-

\* We were assured by Jaun, who acted as guide on the occasion, that our route was entirely different from that taken by Mons. and Mme. Millot in ascending this peak in 1873 ('Alpine Journal,' vol. vi. p. 293).