summit at 9 A.M., whence we enjoyed a most wonderfully beautiful view.

But one more course remains to be chronicled—the Aiguille du Tacul, a point unfortunately but little known and not often ascended. One has only to look at the panorama which was taken from it by Mr. Donkin last season to recognise what a magnificent point of view it is. We ascended it from the col, and found the little piece of rockwork at the top in excellent condition. Long did we look at the great peaks by which it is surrounded, as one always does in the last excursion in the Alps, for we knew we should not see them again for many a long day to come.

And now for the moral. Go and see the Alps in winter. You will find gliding along in a sleigh with a good bearskin over your knees a far pleasanter way of seeing the country than from the top of a crowded diligence, crowded with the aristocracy of the Linden and of Bond Street. You will see far grander sunsets than in summer, and you may have the pleasing and novel experience of getting up to see the sunrise effects on Mont Blanc at 8.30 A.M., at the same time as you take in your shaving-water. The great tourists' hotels are all closed, and you will have to put up at one of those old-fashioned inns with a swinging signboard in front, which Mr. Cook or Mr. Gaze would consider far beneath the notice of any of his personally-conducted ones, but where you will find the hospitable and kindly French landlady a vast contrast to our old acquaintance the managing director. For not only do you see the country under a fresh aspect, but you will perhaps come away with new ideas as to the people. It falls to the lot of many of us to travel on the Continent among a crowd of our compatriots who are ignorant alike of good feeling and courtesy, and of any language but their own. Can we wonder that the hearts of foreign officials and travellers should be hardened by the ways of such a throng, or that they should meet rudeness with its like? In winter it is different, and one finds that kindly, simple courtesy so much remarked by those of our number who first travelled these paths still extended to us who come after them.

THE AIGUILLE DU CHARDONNET. By PERCY W. THOMAS.

I HAD been trying the Dent du Géant. The mountain had been in capital order. The weather had left nothing to be desired. My guides were Joseph Imboden and Joseph Marie Lochmatter, and yet—we had failed hopelessly. Do what we

would we had never succeeded in getting beyond a point certainly several hundred feet below the summit, and we had returned to Chamonix dissatisfied with the result.

Now it so happened that Mr. Wallroth was at that time staying at Couttet's, and, after listening to the story of our failure, he proposed that we should pay a visit to M. Loppé, whose unrivalled knowledge of the district and of all connected with it might, he thought, lead to his giving me a few useful hints on the subject. So to M. Loppé's we adjourned. He was hard at work in his studio, but ready, as always, to answer any enquiries. But, as a matter of fact, there was little to tell. Although he had frequently sketched the redoubtable rock in the course of his wanderings, and kindly looked up for us several of his sketches, he had never examined it sufficiently to say whether or not it might be ascended. His idea, however, was that the only *possible* chance was on the eastern side of the northern face, where there might exist some crack or couloir (though he almost doubted that even) giving a clue to the route to the summit. Nothing we had seen led us to expect one or the other, but, nevertheless, what he said made me determine to have one more try before abandoning the field.

It was a brilliantly fine, hot summer's morning, and we went outside and sat down in the shade for awhile, still discussing the ever-verdant topic of mountains, mountaineering, and mountaineers.

We had not been talking long when something was said that led me at once to set aside for a time designs on the Géant, and to rapidly form fresh plans for that afternoon: for I had scented a new expedition. 'There is a peak near here,' said M. Loppé, 'and a fine one too, that has only once been ascended. To the best of my belief the Aiguille du Chardonnet, above Argentière, has never been climbed since Mr. Fowler made the first ascent from the Glacier d'Argentière in 1865, and I have an idea that there is yet another way up from the Glacier du Tour.'

This was enough for me, and on my return to Couttet's I took Imboden into consultation, the result of our deliberations being that between four and five that afternoon he, I, and Lochmatter were bowling along the dusty road that leads from Chamonix to Argentière.

We arrived at the inn in time for *table d'hôte*, and later on in the evening, we watched the sun go down in a blaze of glory, leaving, as he sank to rest, a warm, rosy tint upon the peaks around, and upon *our* peak in particular, and as the

moon shone out clearly, and the night breezes blew soft and chill, I retired, thinking the prospects for the morrow promising indeed. I slept little; the moonlight streaming into the room through the open window kept me wakeful, and I lay watching the ever-changing shadows on the snowfields of distant Mont Blanc. Not a breath was stirring, and the scene was calm and peaceful beyond measure. At length the moon set, and I think for a time I dreamt, for at all events the knocking at my door at two o'clock (A.M.) was more than once repeated.

I rose, dressed, and descended to breakfast, but in connection with that all-important meal a sad *contretemps* took place. After waiting patiently for a considerable time—till, in fact, patience was on the point of being exhausted—the landlord appeared, very flustered, but without the coffee that I had taken the precaution to order the previous evening. I demanded the reason, but mine host was equal to the occasion. 'Monsieur will have no coffee this morning; it is not possible to light a fire: il n'y a pas moyen,' he concluded excitedly, 'à cause du mauvais temps!' 'Pleasant this about the weather,' thought I, 'on the eve of an expedition,' and out I rushed, mentally condemning Imboden to all sorts of ills for having dragged me out of bed on a fool's errand at this unearthly hour of the morning; but, on finding myself in the open air, I perceived I had much maligned him. The 'mauvais temps' had evidently had its origin in the inventive brain of mine host, for a finer and more promising morning I never saw. Nevertheless we had to leave coffeeless, the landlord to the last making frantic efforts to light the fire, and anathematising the weather in language too horrible for repetition.

We started punctually at 2.40, and the commencement of our walk does not, when I look back to it, convey to my mind pleasing recollections; for, after passing through the sleeping village towards the Glacier d'Argentière, Imboden, rightly or wrongly, suddenly struck out for us a track straight up the hill side on the left bank of the glacier, involving as at once in the intricacies of a pine wood.

Progress through this maze in the uncertain light was, to say the least, trying; and the atmosphere therein, even at that early hour, was so stifling, that it speedily reduced us to a state of limpness.

I felt relieved when we emerged below the summit of the ridge, where, a few minutes later, we could breathe the refreshing morning air blowing over the Col de Balme right across the névé of the Glacier du Tour.

For a considerable distance we closely followed this ridge,

the slopes of scrub and heather giving place, as we mounted, to rock and loose stones, the débris apparently of an old moraine.

By this time we had reason to hope that that most essential of all things necessary for a successful expedition, the weather, would be all in our favour; for behind the Col de Balme the sun had risen with a serene calmness that augured well for the remainder of the day, and many and various were the pleasantries indulged in by Imboden at the expense of our weatherwise friend the landlord down below.

Five o'clock saw us at length descending from the ridge on to the Glacier du Tour, and here for the first time since leaving Argentière we came in view of the Chardonnet.

On reaching the ice we were not best pleased to find the névé in fair order only, the snow, as a matter of fact, being treacherous in places and giving way here and there beneath our footsteps.

Imboden now called a halt, for it became evident that we should have soon to decide upon a route, as it looked as if three courses lay open to us.

We did not take very long to decide, as we all agreed that for many reasons the best way of attacking the peak was by keeping to the right bank of the glacier, and endeavouring to storm some likely-looking rocks rather to the right of the mountain. This important matter settled, we hesitated no longer, and made straight for the point selected for our assault.

We had passed to the extreme right of the glacier, when, immediately below the rocks and perhaps some 200 feet off them, we found our progress checked by a steep slope of hard ice, up which it was evident many a step would have to be cut before we could reach our destination. This little difficulty, however, was surmounted, and as we stood beneath a wall of rock and looked up we could see that some tough work was cut out for us; and we were not mistaken.

The climb up these rocks, I may safely say, was not at times an easy one, and it reminded me of certain bits of the Rothhorn; but the rocks were firm and rough, and up we went, gaily and with tolerable rapidity. We kept advancing steadily, and yet we seemed a long way from our goal. The day was getting on, and although we were continually sighting what we imagined fondly to be the highest point, yet on reaching it another and still higher rock rose up provokingly between us and the sky.

But the longest way has an ending, and just as we were beginning to despair of finding ours we came full upon a thin knife-edge of snow, running up towards a beautifully delicate white cone, standing all alone against the deep-blue sky.

It was the actual summit at last. There was no mistaking it; no aggravating rock now peered above; the peak was won! But as we drew near what was that we could see peering from beneath the snow? The neck of a bottle surely! We had been forestalled. We raced up to it, eagerly dug it out, and looked within. Our fears were unnecessary, for one card only lay there, the card of 'Mr. Robert Fowler, Co. of Meath, Ireland,' bearing the date of Sept. 1865 and the names of his guides, Michel Balmat and Michel Ducroz. It looked uncommonly as if M. Loppé's conjecture was right. It seemed as though for fourteen years the summit had not felt the tread of human foot.

And we drank our thanks to M. Loppé for having given us a 'new' expedition. The summit of the Chardonnet is a very beautiful one. The highest point is marked by a little silvery ridge of purest white, with scarcely standing room upon it for more than one at a time. It will bear comparison in its pointedness to the Weisshorn. We sat down and contemplated the scene. The air was clear and still, not a breath was stirring, and a sea of countless peaks, stretching away till they were lost in the blue haze of the far distance, lay spread out before us.

It was one of those exquisitely fine days that only come to gladden the heart of the mountaineer through long intervals of disappointment.

But the most striking object in the view to many would be the magnificent appearance of the Aiguille Verte, which from this side does indeed look formidable. Its gigantic form shuts out the view of many of the more familiar Chamonix peaks, but at the same time it presents itself in an altogether novel aspect, to make up for its monopoly on that side. The charm, too, of this view is that, as the Chardonnet lies at the extreme end of the chain of Mont Blanc, an entirely uninterrupted panorama of the Alps towards the east is gained, such a prospect as I fancy no other mountain in the chain possesses, if we except, perhaps, the Aiguille d'Argentière. We rested on the summit an hour, and then at twelve o'clock turned to descend.

Our return was uneventful, but Lochmatter varied the route by taking us straight through the centre of the Glacier du Tour, bringing us down to the châlets of Tour, half an hour's walk or so from Argentière, thus making a pleasant change from our upward track through the pine wood. We duly reached Argentière at 3.20 P.M.—to tell the truth, rather pleased with ourselves and with the complete success of our

expedition. I had to settle accounts with the landlord, so I went into the inn, leaving my men outside, the centre of a group of gaping peasants. I was not gone long before there reached me through the open window the sound of voices in angry dispute. The sound waxed louder, and I could distinctly hear Imboden's tones raised to a pitch of excitement not usual with him. Something had gone wrong evidently. Presently Imboden exclaimed, 'Bon, je veux parler à monsieur,' and his footsteps immediately after sounded along the passage. 'Sir, they will not believe we have been up the Chardonnet.' 'Who won't?' 'Why, these [something] Chamoniards.' 'Well, I'll come and see.' And I went out, thinking to convince them by ocular demonstration; but the task was a harder one than I supposed. 'We have watched the mountain all day, but we have not seen monsieur,' was all I got. 'Very well; but what about those footmarks near the summit? Come with me, and I will show you them through the telescope.' One was standing handy in front of the inn, pointed towards Chamonix, and I thought if they would not own to seeing with the naked eye they might do so with its help. I fixed the glass, and there made out our tracks, not only close by the summit, but in a great many other places on the mountain as well. But it was no good. Some had the honesty to confess they saw them, but some hadn't, and they all agreed that if there were tracks there at all they were not ours! 'Well,' said I, at last losing all patience, 'if they aren't ours whose are they, then?' This was a poser, but one gentleman was not to be imposed upon! 'Monsieur may have seen tracks, it is true, but they are not his—a chamois has made them!'

THE PASS OF HANNIBAL.

BY DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.

Some there be that have pleasure onelye in olde rustie antiquities. And some onelye in their owne doynges.—SIR THOMAS MORE.

We were hinted by the occasion, not catched the opportunity to write of old things, or intrude upon the antiquary. We are coldly drawn unto discourses of antiquities, who have scarce time before us to comprehend new things, or make out learned novelties.—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

SOME months ago, I chanced to read the pages Mr. Bosworth Smith, in his interesting book about Carthage, has devoted to the Pass of Hannibal. The narrative appeared to me as unsatisfactory as it was vivid and picturesque. I found myself, while I read, repeating Gibbon's verdict on the story of the same exploit as told by Livy—'Rather a romantic picture calculated to please the fancy than a faithful and judi-