effects. But on that point the kindness of not a few accomplished artists will enable us to judge for ourselves at Willis's Rooms to-morrow; to these gentlemen we are greatly indebted for heightening the pleasure of our annual gathering, and enabling us to transport ourselves in spirit to the scenes which we love. Photography, too, has greatly progressed of late, and Mr. Donkin's camera reproduces, in all except colour, the grim realities of the wildest mountain peaks. But I have occupied more than enough of your time. It remains only for me to thank you for the patience with which you have listened to this lengthy address, for the honour which you conferred upon me in electing me President, and for the kindly consideration which I have received from friends old and new during my three years of office.

Mountaineering in the Old Style. By C. T. Dent.

(Read before the Alpine Club, June 5, 1883.)

I HAVE sometimes—on very, very sleepless nights—taken down a volume of the 'Alpine Journal' from the shelf, slapped the cover to get rid of a considerable amount of dust, and read over accounts, written long since, of early mountain expeditions. The perusal of my own effusions has sometimes amused, frequently astounded, and nearly always brought me the wished-for slumber. And yet these same accounts were, for the most part, as faithful representations as I could set down on paper of impressions made at the time on my mind. It has often occurred to me to ask what sort of description one would give of a climb made many years before. How would the lapse of time influence the writer? Would he make light of whatever danger there was? Would the picture require a very decided coat of varnish to make it at all recognisable? Would the crudities come out still more strongly, or would the colours all have faded and sunk harmoniously together? To me these were interesting speculations; and when I was asked by our Honorary Secretary to fill once more a gap—like a dentist, whose business it is to fill the vacant space with a little composition of his own—I at once thought of giving practical effect to my idea. Now the expeditions I have to narrate were made in 1870 and 1871—twelve and thirteen years ago. Possibly my readers may think that a description of them, if worth giving at all, had better have been published at the time. Still 'better late than never,' as the doctor observed when he came on a professional visit to

the lady and found the baby learning its alphabet. Besides, these expeditions may be found to differ much from those detailed of late in our Alpine literature. They were achieved in the pre-Sybaritic age of mountaineering—before the later refinements of that art and science had taken firm hold of its votaries. At that period probably no member of our Club had ever been regaled in the midst of the snow fields with truffle pie and cold punch. I have known this to happen since; indeed, I can testify from personal experience that both were very good. Such banquets are not uncommon now; though precisians, with a tendency to dyspepsia, still object strongly to them. We heard little of the different styles of climbing. 'Form,' as it is called, in climbing, was an unknown term, and yet I doubt if the 'form' was inferior to any that could be shown nowadays. Nor is the reason far to seek. The apprenticeship served in the mountains was then much longer than it is now. People did not so often try to ride a steeplechase before they had learned to sit in a saddle, or appreciated that the near side was the best by which to get up. For my own part I had been five or six seasons in the Alps, and was not a member of the Club, when these expeditions were made. There seemed to be so much absolutely to learn in mountaineering. There is no less now, perhaps more, but I cannot help thinking that fewer people recognise the fact.

Time rolled on. Climbing still exercised its fascination, and desperate were the attempts made to diversify the sport in the Alps alone. The sport grew fashionable—a dangerous symptom for its true lovers. Novels and other forms of nonsense were written about the Alps. Accounts of new expeditions were telegraphed at once to all parts of the world, and found as important a place in the newspapers as the latest reports about Prince Bismarck's neuralgia. Then we went further afield in search of novelty. The mountains were ascended without guides; in winter; by people afflicted with mental aberration who wore tall hats and frock coats on the glaciers; by persons who were ignorant of the laws of optics as applied to large telescopes; in bad weather; by wrong routes, and so forth. Then, too, set in what may be called the variation craze. This was very catching. For those who can see no beauty in a scene that some one else has gazed on before, it is still a passion. The composer when hard driven and not strongly under the influence of the muse—not bemused, in short—is fond of taking some simple melody and writing what he is pleased to call variations on it. Sometimes he will not

rest till he has perpetrated as many as thirty-two on some tune of our childhood. The original tune becomes lost, and we may marvel, for instance, as may the travelled American, at the immense amount of foreign matter that may be introduced into 'Home, Sweet Home.' Even so does the climber sometimes practise his art. As one who entertains such respect for the old order of things, and for the memory of an age of mountaineering now rapidly passing into oblivion, I felt that to write in any such strain would be intolerable. And so, even as a theatrical manager when his piece does not run, I will raise the curtain on a revival of the old drama, a comedy in two short acts, but without any very thrilling situations. The 'scenarium' lay ready to hand. I had but to turn over the leaves of an old journal, which, like other old leaves, I fear, may be found rather dry, and glean what I could from the rough notes. The remembrance was still tolerably vivid; but I fear that, like a Buckinghamshire hedge when the members of her Majesty's royal stag hunt have urged their wild career across it, there are a good many gaps left.

Mr. W. M. Conway's paper on the north district of the Saas Grat,* a district still not known and appreciated as it deserves, is, like all his writings on the Alps, exceedingly complete and accurate. On the peak which supplies the subject of this paper he is, however, very brief, and dismisses the Südlenz Spitz in a dozen words. But, even as we are all aware that a very short text may precede a very long sermon, so might his one sentence serve as a heading to this paper: 'No ascents of the Südlenz Spitz have yet been recorded.'

Somewhere about the beginning of August 1870 I walked up the Saas valley with the Burgeners as guides and companions. When within a little distance of the hôtel I inquired whether it was worth while for one of the party to push on to secure rooms. The guides thought it was unnecessary, with some truth, for I was the sole occupant of the hotel, and remained so for nearly a week. It was the year of the war, however; ugly rumours were about, but very few tourists. Selecting, therefore, the most luxurious apartment, and having given over to the care of Franz, who appeared in the character of Boots to the hotel, a remarkable pair of cowhide boots of my own designing, as hard as 'sabots' and much more uncomfortable, I sat down until sufficiently cool to dine without imperilling digestion. I find a record of the dinner served. There were ten dishes, exclusive of what Americans term

* 'Alpine Journal,' vol. x. p. 332.

fixings. As to the nature of nine I cannot speak with certainty. The tenth I have reason to think was a blackbird that had died of starvation, and was bulged out by the *chef* with extraneous matter. Franz, who seemed to be a sort of 'super' to the establishment, had thrown off, with the ease of a Gomersal or the late M. Ducrow, the habiliments of a Boots, and appeared now as a waiter, in a shirt so hard and starched that he was unable to bend, and could only have buttoned his waistcoat by the sense of touch. The repast over, Franz dropped the *rôle* of waiter, and, assuming an engaging manner, entered into conversation, disappearing for short intervals at times, in order, as I judged by certain sounds in an adjoining apartment, to discharge the duties of a chambermaid. Subsequently I found that he was the proprietor of the hôtel.

It was agreed to commence our mountaineering by an ascent of the Balfrinhorn. A wise selection, for the climb is a gentle one, seldom done, with a line of descent distinct from that of ascent, and with views throughout of exceeding beauty. There is no danger in the expedition, which was, in fact, quite in the old style. The solitude at the hôtel was dull, the conversational powers of the guides soon exhausted if we ventured beyond the subject of chamois hunting, and we felt that some more stirring expedition must be attempted. Burgener suggested the ascent of the Dom from the Saas side (which had not at the time been done, but was afterwards climbed by Mr. Pendlebury's party*), or a first ascent of the Südlenz Spitz. The former expedition had long been a pet project of mine, and in order to facilitate its accomplishment I had sent out from England divers small grants of money, to be expended in the construction of a hut some five hours' walk above Fee. This building, the guides informed me with much pride, had been satisfactorily completed, and was ready for occupation. Inasmuch, however, as it was equally well placed in their opinion for the Südlenz Spitz, we decided, rather unwisely, to attack that peak first. Great preparations were made, an extensive assortment of very inferior blankets produced, and firewood enough to roast an ox.

One fine afternoon we started. The entire staff and *personnel* of the hotel would have turned out to wish us good luck, but did not actually do so, as it was engaged in milking a cow. Laden with a large bundle of firewood, I toiled up the steep grass slopes above Fee leading towards the Hochbalm Glacier. The day was oppressively hot, and I was not wholly ungrate-

* On July 23, 1874. See 'Alpine Journal,' vol. vii. p. 105.

ful on finding that the string round my bundle was loose and that the sticks dropped out one after another during the ascent. The sun beat mercilessly upon our backs on these bare slopes and we sighed involuntarily for Vallombrosa or Monaco, or some equally shady place. The guides, who up to that time had spoken of their building as if it were somewhat of palatial dimensions, now began rather to disparage their handiwork. Doubts were expressed as to the effects certain storms and heavy falls of snow might have had on it, and regrets that the weather had prevented the builders from attending as minutely to details of its finish and decoration as they could have wished. Putting this and that together, I came to the conclusion that the erection was invested probably with indifferent architectural merit. 'Where is it?' I asked. 'Oh, up there, close to where Alexander is.' I looked, and beheld Alexander far ahead and above, as a dark mass progressing on two pink streaks. The sultriness of the evening had induced him to adopt in his garb a modification of the Highland costume. A little later on he joined us and explained that a grievous disaster had taken place, evidently in the spring. A large rock had fallen down and carried away the roof of the hut. Certainly, the roof was gone, and the rock in question must have fallen in a remarkable way indeed, for it had carried away every vestige of woodwork about the place, not leaving even a splinter or a chip. The *cabane* consequently resolved itself into a semicircular stone wall, very much out of the perpendicular, built against a rock face. The stone walls did not make much of a prison: there was a door, but it was easier on the whole to step over the wall, which I did, with as much scorn as Remus himself could have thrown into the action when seeking to aggravate his brother Romulus.

In the matter of sleeping out all mountaineers pass, if they keep long enough at it, through three stages. In their early period, when imbued with what has been poetically termed the 'ecstatic alacrity' of youth, they burn with desire to undergo hardships on the mountains. Perhaps a craving for sympathy in discomfort—that most universal of human attributes—prompts them to spend their nights in the most unsuitable places for repose. The practical carrying out of this tendency is apt to freeze very literally this burning ardour; at least it did so in our case. Then comes a period during which the climber scorns the idea of dividing his expedition. He starts the moment after midnight, and plods along with the free elastic step of a stage pilgrim, or a competitor in a six days' go-as-you-please pedestrian contest. For those who have a certain

gift of somnambulism this method has its advantages. Finally comes the stage when the climber's one thought is to get all the enjoyment possible out of his expedition, and to get it in the way that seems best. Probably by this time he will be found again as a tenant of huts, but no longer with the impedimenta of his early days. He never looks at his watch now except to ascertain the utmost limit of time he can dwell on a view. His pedometer he has probably left at home. He eats whenever he is hungry, and ceases to consider it a *sine quâ non* that he must return to hôtel quarters in time for dinner. When he has reached this stage he is considered *passé*, and begins really to appreciate the depth of the charm of mountaineering.

But I digress like the driven pig. A miserable night did we spend behind the stone wall. About 9 P.M. came a furious hail storm: at 10 P.M. rain fell heavily: at 11 P.M. snow began, and went on till daybreak, about 4 A.M.; at 5 A.M. we got up; by 6 A.M. I had got into my boots, which were so hard that they yielded quite a metallic ring when struck. About 9 A.M. we surprised once more Franz at Saas, and persuaded him to relinquish certain scavengering occupations in which he was engaged, and to resume his post of waiter. A day or two later we started again. No luxurious provisions did we take with us. Some remarkable red wine, so sour that it forced you to turn your head round when you drank it, filled one knapsack. The other was stored with some slices of bread with parallel strata of a greasy nature intervening. These articles of diet were wrapped in an old number of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and called sandwiches. However, the fat did my boots good.

The Südlenz Spitz, though tall, labours under the topographical disadvantage of being placed in the company of giants. Close on the north side is the Nadelhorn (4,334 m. or 14,876 ft.), while to the south, and at no great distance, the Dom towers far above, reaching a height of 4,554 m. or 14,941 ft. The Südlenz Spitz is put down in the Federal map (not very accurate in its delineation of the Saas mountains) as 4,300 m. or 14,108 ft. North and south from the Südlenz Spitz stretch well-marked but not particularly sharp arêtes, the northern being chiefly of snow, and at a moderate incline. To the east a sharper rock arête falls away, terminating below, after the fashion of a rational divided skirt, in two undecided continuations. These inclose the Fall Glacier. By this route Mr. W. W. Graham, on August 3, 1882, made

the ascent, which he describes as very difficult.* At one period of the climb the party found it necessary to leap a cleft of 100 ft.—in depth: the chasm was 8 ft. wide. But in our day the fashion of ascending mountains by the most obviously practicable route was still in vogue. Accordingly we decided to make for the northern arête. Descending, therefore, from our bivouac on to the Hochbalm Glacier, we plodded across the upper snow basin, and in good time reached the foot of the slope, no great distance south of the Nadelhorn. The view during this part of the walk is characteristic of the range. From almost any point of view the traveller is surrounded on three sides by a clearly marked amphitheatre of beautifully formed mountains. On the right the shapely little Ulrichshorn rises up in a self-sufficient manner; in front is the mass of the Nadelhorn and Südlenz Spitz; while, looking back, the view of the mountains on the east side of the Saas valley is one of great beauty. So at least I judge from the map; for, to tell the truth, the recollection of the panorama we actually saw is rather hazy. This much I can, however, recollect: that in all parts of the Saas district the views struck me, in a day when I did not much look at them, as possessing strong individuality and the greatest beauty.

Tolerably minute inquiries before leaving England, and at Saas, had failed to discover any previously recorded ascent, though, as Mr. Conway suggests in his paper on the Saas Grat, our mountain may have been previously described by Mr. Chapman. Some uncertainty, therefore, whether we should find any traces of previous climbers gave the required piquancy to the expedition. We made at once up the slope for a long rocky buttress, down which the guides asserted stones had been known to fall in the afternoon. This, probably, to encourage their charge to greater exertions, for an old sprained ankle compelled me to the continual necessity of putting my best foot foremost in walking over difficult places. The rocks were at no point very difficult, and the fact that no critical companion was with me rendered progress somewhat easier, for I felt at perfect liberty to ascend in any style that suited the exigencies of the moment. I had not then quite got past the stage of believing all that the guides asserted as to the climbing capacities of the individual who pays them for assisting his locomotion, and have a distinct idea that I considered myself to have mastered the obstacles in particularly high-class form. They said as much, in fact. Probably my

* See 'Alpine Journal,' vol. xi. p. 117.

progress was about as graceful and sure as that of a weak-legged puppy on a frozen pond, and I had not then developed, in climbing rocks, the adhesive powers of—well, the chest, which longer practice will sometimes furnish. We had with us a porter of advanced years, whose conversational powers were limited by an odd practice of carrying heavy parcels in his mouth. The day before he had carried up a large beam of wood for the camp fire in this manner. I never met a man with so much jaw and so little talk. He had apparently come out in order to practise himself for the mastication of the Saas mutton, for at the end of our expedition he would accept of nothing but a sum of 2 frs., for which modesty I was very thankful. I consider it unlikely that similar disinterestedness in his class would easily be found nowadays. My aged friend assisted my upward progress with his stick, after the fashion of an old Smithfield drover persuading a refractory beast to enter a pen. Thus encouraged, I made light of the slight obstacles and difficulties that we encountered, and in good time we stepped on to the arête. A glance upwards showed that the way was easy, and we felt that if we were to achieve the honour of a first ascent, such honour would only be due to the fact that we had subdivided the secondary peaks of the chain more minutely than other voyagers. The principle has been carried still further since the time of which I speak, and as any little pale fish that can be fried is considered whitebait, so any point that can be climbed by an individual line of ascent is held to be a separate mountain nowadays. A considerable snow cornice hung over on the northern side of the arête, and some care was necessary, for the ridge was so broad and easy that less careful and thorough guides might have made light of it. But Alexander Burgener, though he had already acquired some reputation for brilliancy and dash as a mountaineer, never suffered himself for one moment to lose sight of the two great qualities in a guide—caution and thoroughness. I believe the statue of the Iron Duke might have been dragged along the arête without breaking through the cornice, but nevertheless Alexander prodded away at the snow as diligently as if he were a 'chiffonier.' Consequently our progress was slow, and being so it was instructive. It has always seemed to me that to cultivate an accurate sense of touch in probing snow in doubtful condition requires much more practice than some appear to imagine. It is far easier to the unpractised mountaineer to climb a difficult rock than to estimate quickly the bearing power of a snow bridge with one prod of the axe. Here and there along the arête short rock passages gave a

welcome relief, and at length, about 11 A.M., we stood on the highest point of the ridge which culminates so gently in the peak itself of the Südlenz Spitz. Our first care was to scrape and hunt diligently for traces of any previous party. No relic of conviviality could we find, and as all the flat stones about appeared to be in their natural state of disorder we piled up some of them into a tidy little heap, and came to the conclusion that we had performed very doughty deeds. Having attacked the sandwiches with partial success, we lay for a while basking in the sun, and fell to planning a serious expedition, probably for the next year. It may seem strange in these days of rocket-like mountaineering, when the climber, like the poet, 'nascitur non fit,' but the peak whose assault we discussed was none other than the Matterhorn. It was no longer thought that goblins and elves tenanted its crags, but although these spectres had not been yet frightened away by sardine boxes, broken bottles, and even worse, some trace of prestige still adhered to the mountain. It had not, like a felon, been bound with chains, or even as a trussed chicken girt about with many cords. Alexander had never been up the peak, and I remember perfectly the advice that was given to me on the top of the Südlenz Spitz, to practise further on a few less formidable mountains before attacking the fascinating Mont Cervin itself. Alas for the old days! I am disposed to doubt whether such a discussion often takes place nowadays; but then it was only my sixth season in the Alps. The following year I did ascend the mountain, and to this moment can remember almost every incident of the climb and detail of the peak as vividly as if it were yesterday. That old, old fascination can never come back again in quite the same colours. Better perhaps that it should not; for the memory of pleasure toned with a trace of sadness is the most profound emotion that can stir the heart.

As we contemplated further mountaineering about Saas before crossing over to the Riffel, we followed our tracks of the morning in descending, and scorning the seductive shelter of the *cabane*, made straight for the hôtel. There, in honour of our achievements, we were regaled with a wine that may have been old, but was certainly curious, for it had an odd way of apparently sticking fast in the gullet, like champagne at a suburban ball. But nevertheless, with the remnants of the blackbird made into a species of pie, I feasted royally. A few days later we crossed over to Zermatt, by the Alphubel Joch, in company with a lively Swiss gentleman of extensive conversational powers. He was not an adroit snow walker, and dis-

appeared on some five or six occasions abruptly into crevasses. The moment, however, that he got his head out again, he resumed his narrative at the exact point where it had been perforce broken off, without exhibiting the least discomposure.

I do not know that the ascent of the Südlenz Spitz can be very highly recommended. Mr. Graham's route offers the attraction of a difficult climb to an unimportant peak. Part of his line of ascent can be seen in Mr. Donkin's photograph in the 'Alpine Journal' for November 1881. The view is probably much the same, but less fine than that obtained from the Dom; and in comparing it with that peak all that can be said is that you need not go so far, and that you get less. But it must be recollected that the view from the Dom is perhaps the finest in the Alps.

I have yet another expedition in the Saas district to narrate. The recital may be dull, but, as will appear directly, that is not my fault. I venture, however, to give it, for the same reason that invariably prompts youthful authors to write unnecessary books; that is, as they say in their preface, to supply a want long felt. Now, for one thing, I hold the old mountaineers to blame. The stock of Alpine jokes is scanty; the number of Alpine subjects lending themselves to facetiousness small. Former writers have recklessly drawn, however, on this limited supply, and entirely exhausted the topics. Thus I fear this paper may be wearisome; but consider the position of one who has to patch together a fabric with material too threadbare for use, and who is compelled wholly to pass by such attractive topics as the early start, the consequent ill-temper, the dirty porter, the bergschrund, the use of tobacco, the flea, &c. Unfortunately, the older writings are too well known, too classical, to be dished up again in altered form; so that even the most common form of originality, *videlicet* ignorance of the source from which you are borrowing, is forbidden. I had thought it almost impossible to find any corner of the Alps that had not been described over and over again, and the discovery that a few superficial square yards of Swiss territory, arranged on an incline, had not yet been minutely discussed in Alpine literature came upon me with somewhat of a shock. I felt the omission must be rectified, and the gap filled. Whether the expedition was of importance, or whether anyone in the wide world had the smallest desire to hear or read a description of it, was a matter of not the least moment. There was a vacuum, and to me it was a thing abhorrent. The incline to which reference is made above is called the Portienhorn, and it lies east of Saas. Sub-

stantially this peak is the highest point of a long ridge running north and south, and called the Portiengrat. It is almost entirely of rock. It says much for the diligence with which climbers have searched through Alpine literature that on more than one occasion accounts of ascents of this peak have been sent to our editor in recent years. But at the time that we climbed the mountain first—if we were first—the necessity for describing the expedition had not arisen so strongly as it has since.

On September 6, 1871, we left Saas duly equipped as for a serious expedition. I was then passing through the first stage as regards sleeping out in huts, and readily acquiesced in the guide's opinion that we ought to allow ourselves as much time as possible for the ascent on the morrow. With some reluctance did I leave my room, in which the bed was, at any rate, of moderate comfort, and follow in the footsteps of a stout rustic, who bore on his back a bag very full of spiky straw. This I was told was a mattress. In about an hour's time we arrived at a carelessly built châlet on the Almagel Alp, of which the outside was dirty and the inside filthy. Of the bed, which accommodated apparently the family of the tenant, I find a drawing to scale in an old diary. It measured 48 inches in length, and about 20 in width. Nevertheless the two guides packed themselves into it, adopting in their recumbent position the theory that if you kept your head and feet warm you were all right. By the flickering gleams of firelight I perceived that these were the only portions of their frames actually on the bed, owing to its shortness. The intervening parts projected ungracefully into the apartment. As for myself, I found the mattress so tightly packed that it was easier on the whole to lie awake under the bundle than to sleep on the top of it. About 4 A.M. Alexander incautiously moved his head. His centre of gravity being thus disturbed, he came down heavily on the floor. Thereupon he awoke, and said it was time to start. It was too dark, and we had still to wait a while. As usually happens, morning came at length, and with the first gleam of light we bade the most cheerful adieu to our host, and started upwards.

We kept to the left of the termination of the Rothblatt glacier, which covers the western face of the Portiengrat. On the south side of the peak of the Portienhorn, a long and rather rough rocky arête, keeping at a tolerably uniform height, extends as far as the Sonnighorn. The northern ridge drops to a col known as the Zwischbergen Pass, and then rises again to merge into the mass of the Weissmies. The rock buttress which forms the northern boundary of the Rothblatt glacier offers a possible route to the peak, but we nevertheless selected the southern ridge. Straight in front were some easy-looking

rocks, but we found it better to bear to the right of these in order to keep on the snow as long as possible. In good time we reached a point about half-way up the side of the mountain, and halted at the upper edge of a little sloping snow patch. Alexander had become newly possessed of a remarkable knife, which when unfolded revealed a numerous collection of specimens of the cutler's art. A more useless article I never saw, but nevertheless he was vastly proud of it, and valued it as much as an ugly man does a compliment. In the middle of breakfast it suddenly slipped out of his hand and started off down the slope. With a yell of anguish Alexander bounded after it, and went down the rocks in a manner and at a pace that only a guide in a state of excitement can exhibit. The knife was recovered, but the corkscrew and one of the blades would not shut, of which damage, on more than one occasion during the day, Alexander was made painfully aware. At least an hour was lost by this incident.

Turning northwards, the moment we were on the arête, we made our way, with a good deal of scrambling, onwards. The rocks were firm and good, and being dry, gave no difficulty. Here and there, however, there were bits which were sufficiently troublesome to yield the needed charm for a mountain ascent, difficult enough, at any rate, to make us leave our axes behind, and move one at a time. But how have the times altered! Nowadays, instead of writing an account of such a climb, I ought rather to mention the expedition casually after dinner (*more Britannico*) as 'a nice little walk before church,' 'a capital after-breakfast scramble,' 'a stroll strongly recommended to persons of an obese habit,' and so forth. Nevertheless, in these days I would sooner climb again up a peak of this sort than many of the more highly rated, formidable and fashionable mountains, for it was throughout interesting, and the contrast between the view to the west, looking towards the Mischabelhörner, and to the east, looking towards Domo d'Ossola and the Italian lake district, was one to repay the climber who has eyes as well as limbs. But perhaps I am getting old and lazy for a mountaineer, and am spending time on the top of the Portienhorn in garrulous talk when I should be hastening down again. No trace of previous travellers could be found in the mountain. Doubtless the mythical and ubiquitous chamois hunter had been up before us, for at the time I write of the district was noted for chamois; but even if he had it makes no difference. We have found it, long since, necessary to look upon ascents made by chamois hunters as counting for nothing, and in the dearth of new peaks have to resort to strange devices and strained ideas for novelty. Thus a mountain in

the present day can be the means of bringing glory and honour to many climbers; for instance—

A. climbs it	First ascent.
B. ascends it	First recorded ascent.
C. goes up it	First ascent from the other side.
D. combines A. and C.'s work .	First time that the peak has been 'colled.'
E. scrambles up the wrong way .	First ascent by the E.N.E. arête.
F. climbs it in the ordinary way.	First ascent by an Englishman, or first ascent without guides.
G. is dragged up by his guides .	First real ascent: because all the others were ignorant of the topographical details, and G.'s peak is nearly one mètre higher than any other point.

Many more might be added; probably in the future many more will, for, in modern mountaineering phrase, the peak 'goes all over.' By 4 P.M. we were back again in the Saas valley.

It seems, as I write, only yesterday that all this happened. But a regular revolution has really taken place. There can be no question, I think, that fewer members of our Club are to be found in the mountains than formerly. Still there are not wanting climbers, all of them apparently of the first rank. For among the high Alps now, even as on the dramatic stage of to-day, there are no amateurs. We all know the emancipated schoolboy 'who is such a wonderful actor,' and who intrudes his conception of Hamlet or Richelieu on a fatuous and long-suffering public. To my mind he is not a whit more ridiculous than the boy, or man, who rushes at a difficult peak before he has learnt the elements of the mountaineering art. Has the Alpine Club been responsible for the misfortunes and calamities that have arisen and may still arise in consequence? I think not. For the mountaineers in the old style—I speak of a generation that climbs but little now—set a good example. They did what it is the fashion now to call their 'work' thoroughly, too thoroughly and completely perhaps to please altogether some of us. Are, as some say, the old mountaineering days passing away, not to return? I suspend my judgment. This much is certain, that in the Alps all novelty worthy of the name is exhausted, and we have to begin a new era of mountaineering; and should, in the necessary dearth of Alpine material such as has of yore filled the pages of the 'alpine Journal,' this sketch of the middle age of mountaineering be found of any interest, then at least the writer may feel—like the mountain when it had brought forth the ridiculous mouse—that he has not laboured wholly in vain.