

no fear of royal disfavour or loss of office can drive from the course dictated to him by a far-seeing and disinterested patriotism. His powers were fully shown by his success in maintaining the objectionable and most unpopular grist tax until all danger of national bankruptcy had been avoided. He knew as well as any of his opponents its evils; but he saw that the future prosperity of Italy depended on her financial credit, and he called for (and it is to the credit of the country that he obtained) the severest temporary sacrifices to this end. Office and popularity he himself resigned, but only to place his services at the disposal of his successors in any affair—such as that of the separation of the Lombardo-Venetian Railway from the Austrian system—where he could still serve his country. Other Italian patriots have played more conspicuous parts in the making of Italy, but few indeed have done more solid and enduring work for their country than the Biellese manufacturer and Turin professor.

Signor Sella had many connections with England, and sent one of his sons to be educated at Eton. He was a personal friend of several of our members to whom we are partly indebted for the material of these reminiscences.

The Italian Club propose to keep his memory green in various ways, specially by publishing a collected edition of his most remarkable alpine articles, and by building a hut on the Italian side of Mont Blanc at the spot where, in 1879, Signor Sella was forced to spend the night without shelter. Subscriptions for the latter object will be gladly received by Mr. R. H. Budden, 15 Corso Vinzaglio, Turin.

ALPINE NOTES.

MOUNTAINEERING IN THE HIMALAYA.—We learn that Mr. Graham and Emil Boss have both returned to Europe. At a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society on Monday, June 9, Mr. Graham will read a paper describing his brilliant Himalayan ascents.

INTERNATIONAL ALPINE CONGRESS.—The fifth International Alpine Congress will be held next summer in conjunction with the congress of the Italian Alpine Club at Turin, on account of the National Exhibition which will then be open. The proceedings and the excursions will last from August 27 to September 2, both inclusive; and all members of the foreign Alpine Clubs will be most cordially welcomed. A section of the National Exhibition is to be specially devoted to objects relating to the Alps.

MONTÉ ROSA IN WINTER.—It gives us great pleasure to announce that Signor Vittorio Sella (the distinguished photographer) has finally succeeded in his attempt to ascend Monte Rosa in winter, from which he was beaten back in March 1883. With Joseph and Daniel Maquignaz he spent the night of January 25 in a tent on the moraine of the Grenzletscher. Starting next morning at 4 A.M., they gained the highest peak at 1.30 P.M. Up to a height of 3,700 mètres (= 12,140 ft.) the snow was soft and powdery; higher up it was much harder

and better fitted for climbing. The bivouac was regained at 5.30 P.M. and the second night spent on the moraine between the Gorner and Theodul glaciers, exposed to a furious wind, though the cold was not more than -8° centigrade ($= 18^{\circ}$ Fahr.). On the third day the adventurous party reached Zermatt by way of the Gornergrat and the Riffel. The minimum temperature observed during the expedition was -17° centigrade ($= 2^{\circ}$ Fahr.), and the maximum -8° centigrade (as above). On the summit the thermometer in the shade marked -16° centigrade ($= 4^{\circ}$ Fahr.). This ascent marks a fresh step forward in the history of winter climbing, and in the name of the Alpine Club we beg to offer our heartiest congratulations to Signor V. Sella and his guides.

A WINTER ASCENT OF BEN NEVIS.—On February 11 last I made an ascent of Ben Nevis, accompanied by Emile Rey, a Cormayeur guide, and John Cameron, the well-known guide at Fort William. A heavy fall of snow having occurred during the previous night there was some six inches of snow on the ground from the commencement of the new road to the Red Burn. Here considerable difficulty was experienced in crossing the burn and arriving on the top of the opposite bank, owing to the great quantity of snow which had drifted into the water-course, and unless I and E. Rey had used our axes the party would have found it impossible to cross in safety. From the well to the summit the ground, covered with deep snow, was hard frozen, making the 'going' comparatively easy. Mr. Omond and his companions appeared in good health and spirits, and entertained the party in the most hospitable manner. The ascent occupied 3 hrs. 35 mins., the descent 2 hrs. This is the third party of visitors who have climbed the Ben since the observatory was opened, two being members of the Alpine Club, and conducted by John Cameron, who has received the highest praise for his capacity as a guide for expeditions at this time of year.

C. D. CUNNINGHAM.

THE HIGHLANDS IN WINTER.—Mr. C. Wilson writes: 'On March 22, with Mr. C. D. Cunningham, I walked from Aberfoyle to the Tro-sachs Hotel, and thence ascended Ben Venue, returning over the moors to Aberfoyle. On the following day we made the ascent of Ben Lomond, which rises very abruptly from the Aberfoyle side. The upper thousand feet of the mountain was well covered with snow, which proved to be in first-rate condition, allowing us to kick steps on our way up, whilst in descending we were able to make two or three long glissades, which brought us down the snow-covered part of the mountain in about fifteen minutes. No part of Scotland is more frequently visited in summer than the district between Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond; yet to those who have only seen it in the height of the tourist season Ben Lomond, capped by snow arêtes and massive cornices, and with long icicles hanging from every rock, presents a novel and pleasing contrast, together with a view in which the bold outlines of the hills are displayed only in black and white.'

GRANDE SERRE.—This name has caused great confusion, as it is applied by different authorities to no less than *five* different places. On the new Italian Government map these five places are as follows:—

1. The ridge running down towards the Val Nontey from the Becca

Montandeyné (3,850 mètres) is called *Muraille de la Grande Serre* by M. Frassy ('Alpine Journal,' vol. vii. p. 6).

2. The Becca Montandeyné itself is styled *Grande Serre* in Tav. xiv. of Dr. Baretta's 'Per Rupi e Ghiacci.'

3. The M. Herbetet of the new map (3,778 mètres) is the *Gran Serra* of the 'Panorama from the Cima della Rolei.' Cf. 'Alpine Journal,' vol. viii. p. 102.

4. The ridge between the Gh. dell' Herbetet and the Gh. del Lauzon, running from W. to E., has the name *Costa del Gran Serre* on the new map itself.

5. The point (3,510 mètres) to the north of the Col de l'Herbetet between the Gh. Timorion and the Gh. del Lauzon is the *Grande Serre* of the map in Dr. Baretta's 'Studi sul Gruppo del Gran Paradiso' and of the Alpine Club map (which also marks some châteaux with the name Gr. Serre to the N.E. of this point). G. YELD.

THE BINNENTHAL.—A most comfortable little inn (Hôtel Ofenhorn) was opened last year at Binn in the Binnenthal, a village most conveniently situated for travellers wishing to explore the interesting and little known passes between that valley and Italy, as it is nearly two hours higher than Viesch. The curé of the village, Herr Blatter, is anxious to let his house for the summer months, and asked me to do what I could to make it known, which I gladly do here. I visited this place last September with my fifteen-year-old son, having Jean Joseph Andermatten of Saas as guide, and his son as porter. We crossed the Krieg Alp pass from Al Ponte in eight hours, one hour of which was lost in finding the right track, owing to the mist on the Italian side. The views of the Oberland range on the Swiss side were superb, but the wonderful turret-shaped rock so conspicuous from the Eggischhorn Hôtel was quite unrecognisable. Our route for the three previous days was almost the same as that described by Mr. Beachcroft in the last number of this Journal, and I can most fully corroborate all he says about the beauty of the Val Cherasca, the Diveglia Alp, and Al Ponte, places even now almost unknown to travellers.—H. J. NORMAN.

HANNIBAL'S VINEGAR.—Colonel Yule, C.B., the Editor of 'Marco Polo,' sends the following quotations illustrating the statement of Livy, which most commentators have been content to ridicule:—

'Ibn Batuta ("Voyages," ed. Paris, 1853, vol. i. p. 83) tells how the Caliph Ma'mūn, in order to break into the Great Pyramid, lighted a great fire against it and then poured on vinegar, and shot stones at it with a balista till it was broken open.

'Tennent's "Ceylon," vol. ii. p. 504, speaking of a bund of the great tank at Padine, states: "The natives have a tradition that the destruction of the bund was effected by a foreign enemy that landed at Kokelai and burst the embankment by heating the rock with fire and quenching it with acid milk."

'Ibn Khaldūn relates that Hārūn al Rashid attempted to destroy the Tak-i-Kesra (the great palace at Ctesiphon) by "pickaxes, fire, and vinegar" (in Abdollalif's Egypt, translated by Silvestre de Sacy).

'There is also a Chinese story of the destruction of a rock by fire and vinegar in Visdeloa's folio supplement to D'Herbelot, p. 138.'

A STRANGE SIGHT ON SNOWDON.—Mr. Howard Barrett writes: ‘It has recently been my good fortune to witness a phenomenon amongst the hills of North Wales sufficiently rare to deserve record and to interest mountaineers who are students of nature as well as climbers.

‘On January 20 last my friend Dr. Ambrose Fleming and myself left the Pen-y-gwryd Inn (near the foot of Snowdon) to walk up the Glydr Vach. The rain was steadily descending as we set out, and everything fifty yards distant from the observer was hidden in a thick and impenetrable mist that was driving up from the westward before a strong wind. We reached the summit just at noon, and the sun, which for the last half-hour had been making unsuccessful efforts to pierce the thick veil of clouds and vapour, was just then on the point of succeeding. We of course clambered up the minute aiguille, or natural cairn of splintered rock, that forms the actual summit, and which was just large enough to accommodate us both, and then looked northward and down towards the deep valley in which lies Lake Idwal. But both lake and valley were at first wholly obscured by great volumes of thin cloud and scud driving before the wind. Then all at once the sun, behind us and at no great altitude, burst forth through the clouds with brilliant rays, and we saw, to our astonishment, a circular rainbow, beautiful and complete; and within this, framed as it were by the glowing spectrum, the shadows of ourselves and the upper part of the little peak on which we stood distinctly projected upon the mist. We waved our arms, and at once the shadowy arms wildly answered us. At one time the rainbow was reduplicated, the primary one being completely and concentrically surrounded by a secondary circle. The colours of the inner rainbow were very bright and in the order of the primary bow; the outer one was fainter. As the wind cleared the valley wholly of mist these appearances vanished, and in their stead, and occupying much the same positions in the field of vision, lay Llyn Idwal far beneath, with Llyn Ogwen and both the Carneddts in the remote distance. But again the scud drove up and filled the valley, and once more the iris-circled phantoms reappeared; and this alternate vanishing and reappearance continued for several minutes, until once more the sun was obscured by a mass of clouds.

‘Owing to a certain degree of astigmatism in my eyes, to me the bow or bows looked rather ovoid than circular, but to my companion they appeared quite circular. An attempt made by Dr. Fleming, to whom the solution of optical problems comes naturally, to determine the angle subtended by the diameter of the primary bow, brought it out as probably not much above 20°. It would be interesting to learn if any other members of the Club have ever met with similar phenomena, for I imagine that, in the nature of things, it is given only to mountaineers, to those who ascend church steeples or topmasts of ships, or who go up into the air in balloons, to behold such things. I suppose we are most of us familiar with shadows upon cloud or mist—the spectre of the Brocken, for instance—but during eleven or twelve summers in the Alps I have never seen a circular rainbow.

‘I have since become aware that in the “Philosophical Magazine” for January 1884 (p. 61) an interesting article by Professor Tyndall

occurs, describing experiments made by him in the laboratory to produce circular rainbows by artificial light thrown upon artificial mist. His attention had been drawn to the subject by an observation made at the Bel Alp on one occasion, when his own shadow was projected at night time by a lamp behind him on to the mist, and was seen to be surrounded by a luminous but uncoloured circle.

'Since I wrote the above Professor Tyndall's interesting article on "Rainbows" has appeared in the February number of the "Nineteenth Century." From this I gather that the phenomenon I have recorded has been even more rarely observed, or certainly more rarely described, than I had supposed.

'The Professor has to go back as far as 1835, and as far afield as the Ghâts of the Deccan, to find a recorded instance of the coloured circular rainbow. In the "Philosophical Transactions" for that year Colonel Sykes gives a vivid description of a phenomenon identical with that observed by myself and Dr. Fleming. He was at the top of "a precipice from 2,000 to 3,000 ft. perpendicular," forming the N.W. scarp of the hill-foot of Hurrechundurghur. From here he observed a brilliant circular rainbow, throwing out a fainter secondary bow; and, to complete the resemblance of the two instances, "shadows in distinct outline of myself," he says, "my horse, and people appeared in the centre of the circle, as a picture, to which the bow formed a resplendent frame." Also in a recent issue of the "Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society" Mr. E. Colborne Baber describes the position on a mountain of West China (11,000 ft. in height) whence the phenomenon is frequently observed, and where it is called by the natives the "Fo-Kuang," or "glory of Buddha." He himself was not lucky enough to see it, but he gives the account of Baptist missionaries who did, and were much impressed by the spectacle.

'Thus has the glory of Buddha been made manifest even among the gentle undulations of Wales.'

REVIEWS.

Annuario della Società degli Alpinisti Tridentini, vol. ix., 1883. (Rovereto.)

The Trentine Society is something more than Alpine. Its last 'Annuario' reminds us rather of the last century 'Transactions' of our own Royal Society than of the usual mountaineering periodical. It is an odd mixture of rough drafts of local handbooks, elaborate and valuable articles on antiquities, treatises in natural science, and accounts of festive meetings. Even original poetry is not wanting. Into all this matter we must be excused for not entering here. But we should be sorry to be thought indifferent to the value of much of it, or to be committed to the opinion that the multifariousness which would be out of place in a National Club is therefore a defect in a provincial Society. The Trentine Society has not neglected its duty to mountaineers. No body of its size and means has done more to encourage