

in both directions several times, but is, of course, easier taken up from Alagna.* The Ippolita pass, or Piodejoch, discovered by Signor Prina, September 4, 1875, is apparently a more dangerous expedition.† The bad part is the final slope of rocks and ice leading from the upper level of the Piode glacier to the pass, a point on the south ridge of the Parrotspitze, about 60 mètres higher than the Ludwigshöhe. I have an impression that a party led by a first-rate guide might improve considerably on Signor Prina's route.

SCRAMBLES IN THE EASTERN GRAIANS.

By GEORGE YELD.

II.

(Read before the Alpine Club, May 6, 1884.)

TO turn out on a rainy night with a somnolent native and flickering lantern to search for one's guide,—such was my first expedition at Cogne in 1882. I had engaged by mistake an old Val Tournanche man, who had in the early Matterhorn days been a first-rate climber, but owing to an accident was now quite unfit for work. He had walked up with our party of four from Aimaville on a beautiful evening, but after we left Vièyes rain came on, and I had hurried forward to rouse the good people of the Hôtel de la Grivola. When my friends arrived they, with the disinterested volubility of the irresponsible, reported the guide as left behind—lost or drowned—and as it was within the range of possibility that he had met with a serious accident there was nothing for it but to turn out and look for him. Luckily we found him before we had gone far. I had asked my friend, M. Vernet, the excellent landlord of the Hôtel du Mont Blanc at Aosta, to telegraph for Henri Séraphin from Cormayeur. He arrived the next day.

On July 31 with the Rev. G. Trundle we made the first ascent of the Pointe de la Valetta ‡ (11,073 ft.) the peak

* 'Alpine Journal,' vol. i. p. 49; vol. iv. p. 384; vol. v. p. 143, 367 sq.; 'Boll.,' 1875, p. 40, and 1876, p. 514.

† 'Boll.,' 1875, p. 272; 'S. A. C. Jahrb.,' vol. xi. p. 534; 'Alpine Journal,' vol. vii. p. 321.

‡ On the new map the name Valetta is transferred to an inferior peak more to the north.

immediately to the north of the Pène Blanche or Patri (Punta Cisetta of new survey). The mountain is effective for its size, and its precipices on the Valeiglie side are imposing. We got down the upper part of the wall with ease, but found ourselves cut off by a sheer rock-face, and had to return to the summit ridge and descend by a col to the north of the peak.

The next day 'le vieux' was paid off, and it was decided that my friends should cross the Col de Bardoney to Ronco, whilst Séraphin and I sought the same place *viâ* the Torre di Lavina (10,853). Great was the task my friends had to find a porter. Nearly the whole male population of Cogne was paraded before a man could be found willing to go for a reasonable price. Baker and I had a similar difficulty in 1881 in getting a man to take a knapsack to Ceresole. It is strange that, though since the closing of the iron mines the Cogne peasant is so poor, he is so little inclined to accept the chance of earning a day's good wages. One of the younger men who declined told Séraphin last year that he was sorry he had done so. At last a man was found, but in the morning having had a bottle of wine given him at breakfast he was rendered altogether incapable and caused much annoyance and delay.

When Séraphin and I reached the Col de Bardoney, having had to take shelter from the rain on our way, the Lavina was hidden in clouds, so we breakfasted and decided to give up the peak. But when we had descended some little distance the weather improved, so we made a long traverse to our left and eventually reached the summit without any difficulty whatever. The views we enjoyed, though somewhat narrowed by the clouds, were of 'inconceivable perfection and changefulness.' We went down to Ronco by the Val Campiglia, a delightful walk. At the first *châlet* (Rancio) we saw the biggest dog I have ever come across in the Alps, a splendid creature, with a chest as massive as a rock and voice to match. The bottom of the valley had been ravaged by the torrent, owing to a terrific storm in the early summer, and presented a sad spectacle of the tremendous destructive force of even a small stream. In some places we had to walk in the bed of the torrent, the track having been utterly swept away. A peasant at Campiglia told us that four hours' rain had caused all the destruction. After the morning's mist and rain, the balmy evening air as we drew near to Ronco was delightful. We found very fair quarters at the inn kept by Carlo Ferraris.

My friends did not arrive till very late owing to troubles with their porter.

Ronco is one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen. Forest and cornplot, river and meadow, picturesque hamlet and bold rock pinnacles, make up a charming picture. We spent a pleasant day of idleness on the 3rd, and on the 4th Séraphin and I started for the Punta Lazin, leaving our friends to seek Ceresole by way of Ponte. As we left Ronco there was the same undefined fragrance in the air as we had noticed on the evening of our arrival, and it added largely to our enjoyment of the scenery. Our route led us up the Val Lazin which we entered (after passing the convent) by a steep path, leading past a lovely little stream with cascades above a hazel copse. We passed a ch[^]let or two. At one the shepherd was very friendly in his offer of refreshments, indeed the disinterested hospitality of the shepherds and herdsmen is one of the charms of these out-of-the-way valleys. We continued to keep to the right, passed a lake, and gaining at last a very easy crest walked up to its highest point, the Moncimour (10,030 ft.) of the New Survey as far as I can understand, for I must sorrowfully admit that the topography of the south side of the Eastern Graians between the Ciardonei and Noaschetta Glaciers is still comparatively a mystery to me.

After a meal of a pleasanter type than usual, as we had pears and excellent peaches, which had been brought up from Ponte to Ronco the previous evening, I left Séraphin to repose and began to examine the view. Its great feature was the noble outline of the Tour St. Pierre; but its chief charm was the great plain with the Viso and the Maritime Alps, the loveliest of blues with pink clouds over them; indeed, of all the beautiful days, and I could count many, I have enjoyed in the Graians, this was perhaps the most beautiful. There was in the air an incomparable softness, and in the sky and slowly floating clouds an exquisite tenderness of colouring, which had all the subtle delicacy of a spring flower. Truly the Italian sun is a mighty 'inventor of harmonies.' As for the view across the plain, it is one of those memories which kindle again and again one's enthusiasm for these mountains.

An hour and three-quarters passed all too soon and it was time to go, so we descended along the crest and then over abominable 'roches moutonnées,' of which we had had quite enough in the Val Lazin, into the wild Val d'Eugio. 'Très 'sauvage avec beaucoup des pierres,' to quote Séraphin's

description. The walk was monotonous, but when we reached the hamlet which is perched at a great height above the Val d'Orco it became more interesting. Séraphin, whose handsome face and ability to converse in all manner of patois always ensure him a favourable reception from the mountain maidens, inquired for the straightest track for the valley. A handsome girl with sparkling eyes came with us a little distance in order to point out where we were to go, jumping blithely over the stones with shoeless feet. The valley was farther off than it looked, but the latter part of the descent through chestnut trees was agreeable enough. When we got to the road a reference to our watches, and the answers of a peasant as to the distance to Noasca, decided us to turn to Locana. Nowhere do streams seem so cool, nowhere does water foam with so enticing a sound, as in the Val d'Orco, because nowhere is one hotter after a day's march, but in the absence of towels I restrained myself. We spent the night at the 'Tre Pernici,' where I found fair entertainment and a clean bed, though the exterior and the entrance prophesied utter woe. There is quite a comfortable verandah on the side of the house away from the street, covered with vines. On the morrow we walked up to Ceresole and rejoined our friends.

Pleasant as I have always found the Stabilimento, this year it was unusually so. We soon became great friends with the Italian visitors, and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. On August 7, the Rev. G. Trundle and Blanchetti joined us in an attempt on the Levannetta (11,279 ft.). Starting from Ceresole is always associated in my mind with bright starlight, and this morning was no exception. We climbed the mountain mainly by its eastern arête in charming weather, and were gratified to find that our ascent was, as we had expected, the first. The climb is much easier than the look of the peak would lead one to anticipate. The top is a huge rock cleft in twain, which Blanchetti mounted with comparative ease followed by Séraphin; Trundle and I came after, with the help of the rope and a good deal of miscellaneous hauling. The glacier on the French side seemed within a stone's throw, and the view was good, though of course not equal to that from the Eastern or Central Levannas. The guides at lunch amused us with an account of the dismal fate which had been prophesied for us, especially for me. We had had an impromptu dance the previous evening, the trumpeters of an Alpine company supplying the music, and had not broken up till eleven. We had been roused at 12.30

(S raphin stayed up to make sure that breakfast was ready for us), and it had been decided that dancing at night and climbing in the morning were incompatible. We were amused to find ourselves supporting the mad character of the wandering Englishman. We slightly varied our route in the descent, and thus came upon the only troublesome place of the day. Trundle and I were on a sloping rock resembling a house-roof, S raphin was on the chimney above, and Blanchetti on the wall below, seeking to find a way down. The difficulty consisted in the fact that when we had let go of the roof we had to change our direction, and, after one step on the wall, to turn to another wall on our right. Luckily a hole was found in which the axes could be stuck and time saved. The place was not really difficult, and was the only one which gave us any trouble, though the loose stones immediately under the rocks of the summit had annoyed us considerably.

My friends left by the Col de la Croix de Nivolet, and as one of the party was unwell they took two mules, one for riding and one for the baggage. But dire were the troubles which befell them. First the baggage mule kicked out in such style that he was allowed by the owner to travel at his own pace and pleasure. Fired by this vicious example, the other brute became unmanageable. Then the one muleteer became *tr s malade*, and lay on his stomach by the track-side for a quarter of an hour at a time. Finally, exhortations and threats notwithstanding, the party did not reach Villeneuve till late in the afternoon after starting at 11.30 the previous evening.

One day after my friends had gone I accompanied an officer and company of soldiers in a visit to the Colle della Piccola. The pace for the first half-hour was tremendous, but afterwards the walk was most enjoyable. We climbed to the notch behind a conspicuous snowslope nearer the Levanna Orientale than the actual Col, and then worked round to the Piccola on the Forno side. The men seemed full of spirits, and walked remarkably well. On the way one of them caught a bird, and at a ch let which we passed there was an amusing sight—five men eating their bread-and-milk out of the same pot. The slope on the Forno side was blue with forget-me-nots, and great were the bouquets carried down to the Stabilimento.

On another morning there was a sham fight, the attacking force coming from the direction of the Col di Galisia, while the defenders took post near the church (some distance

above the Stabilimento). The sight was picturesque, as may easily be imagined. The angry puffs of smoke from between the pines and the walls of the hamlet immediately under the church, and the continually changing movements of the defenders made the mimic battle vivid enough. The assailants having carried the church wall, near which the ladies and the rest of us were standing, peace was declared, and we adjourned to breakfast.

As a proof of the warm kindness of my Italian friends, I mention the following incident. I did not like my room and told the landlord I wished to change it, but that he was not to remove anything till a new room had been approved. On coming in early one morning I found my walls plentifully adorned with lady's garments, and my goods transferred to the worst room in the old house—one above the kitchen which the heat and fumes of cooking below make a sort of culinary furnace, wherein if a man abide all night 'sudor fluit undique rivis.' The news quickly became known. My friends rose in indignation. The 'director' collapsed. I found myself installed in the best room in the house.

The weather defeated us when we had got as far as the Glacier del Broglia in an attempt on the Charforon,* and as Séraphin was obliged to leave me and I had never visited the lower part of Val d'Aoste, I went down to Courgné (where the Corona Grossa can be recommended) with a party of my Italian friends, thence drove to Ivrea in the cool of a summer night, and took the diligence the next morning to Aosta.

On the evening of August 6, 1883, Séraphin and I reached the hamlet of Vieux from Villeneuve, a walk which led us across the Pont d'Ael, which possesses in the view it commands one of the glories of the Graians. The torrent roars 400 ft. below between rock-walls green with ferns and parasitic plants, and overhung by limes whose sweet blossoms scented the air; the Grivola towers 10,000 ft. above with pine woods, bare cliffs, ice and snow revealed in full splendour. After engaging Ottavo Bougiot, a likely-looking native, as our porter for the next day we retired to—unrest complete and uncompromising. The next day we ascended the Noumenon (11,443 ft.), a particularly stately

* The Charforon was ascended by Messrs. T. H. Carson and H. A. Beachcroft, with François Devouassoud of Chamonix, on August 18, 1883. (Alpine Journal, vol. xi. p. 369.)

secondary peak on the north of the Grivola. The scenery is charming; waterfall, forest rich in *Linnæa borealis*, and above all the Grivola, often disclosed from base to summit, beguile the way, and though the ascent offers no difficulty, the prospect from the top would be ample reward for a hard day's work.

In the narrow chimney immediately under the summit, a sudden gust of wind, the forerunner of a snowstorm, carried away my hat, and with it my pleasure in the fine eagle's feather which Séraphin offered me on the top of the last rock.

We began our descent in the snowstorm, and for some time huge rocks and pinnacles looming in the snow spray were all we could see. The storm, however, soon passed away, and we found ourselves to the right of the great mural precipice of red rock, perfectly sheer, which is the most striking part of the Noumenon. Ottavo Bougiot showed such interest in the work, and moreover, climbed with such ease that he was allowed to go first. More than once we were brought to a standstill, and I began to suspect that a return to the summit would be necessary. I have a lively recollection of sitting on a ledge with Séraphin in full view of the before-mentioned red wall, and a gully worn smooth by stones and apparently furnished with hold neither for hand nor foot, which Séraphin had with difficulty dissuaded Bougiot from trying. Here we enacted the part of what a modern bard has called 'precipice ponderers,' till Bougiot returned with the news that he had found a way. His climbing did him great credit, for the way was by no means easy to find, and though perhaps the descent ought not nowadays to be called difficult, it certainly was not the easy work of the ascent. At last we reached the place where Baker and I had encamped in 1881, seeing dimly in front of us a large herd of bouquetins, and after a long walk which in the morning is beautiful, but in the gathering darkness presented the usual series of temper-trying pitfalls, got back to Vieyès.

I declined the honour of a bed and joined Séraphin in the hayloft, which was much less disagreeable, though the ventilation was too complete for comfort. Next morning by a little after seven we were rewarded by a good breakfast at Cogné. The first thing to be done was to get a hat, so Séraphin was despatched to the general store, which was found to have but one in stock. This luckily fitted me, and at a cost of 4 fr. 30 c. lasted the rest of the campaign.

It is certainly strange that long as Cogne has been favourably known as a mountaineering centre, no body of guides has sprung up to meet the demand for their services. After some trouble we discovered a soldier, who had served his time, by name Joseph Jeantet, of Epinel, who on examination turned out to have made several expeditions among his own mountains (including the passage of the Col Chamonin). He was eager to qualify as a guide, so I engaged him. As the weather was threatening our first expedition was to the châteaux of Bardoney, where the chief herdsman was very hospitable.

The peaks and passes between the Col de Bardoney and the Ondezana had long puzzled me. They are, I believe, with the exception of the Punta Sengie first ascended by Messrs. Freshfield and Tucker in 1876,* quite unknown to English mountaineers. According to the new survey the peaks in order from the Col de Bardoney are:—

1. The Punta Rol.
2. The Punta Forches.
3. A nameless peak the highest of the group.
4. A minor hump.
5. The Punta Sengie.†

We ascended the Punta Rol without putting on the rope, then roped and descended to the glacier a little to the right of the opening between peaks 1 and 2. We then remounted to the Col, which had a model bergschrund with a dainty snow bridge.

This pass if nameless may well be named Col de la Muraille Rouge, from the great red precipice of the Punta Rol, which is similar to the one before mentioned on the Noumenon. On the Forzo side there is a steep snow-couloir the lower part of which we made use of later in the day. We then ascended No. 2 and regained our morning's route west of the Col de Bardoney, keeping on the Forzo side. The view from No. 2 revealed a good deal, and my recollections do not altogether coincide with the New Survey; the peak falls away in a rock ridge to the Valeiglie side. Part of the valley above Cogne with Champlong and the river was distinctly seen. And when near Lilaz on our way home we were able to recognise our peak and part of our route.

* 'Alpine Journal,' vol. viii. pp. 104, 300-315.

† On Dr. Baret's map 1 does not appear; 2 is La Grande Arolle; 3 and 4 are styled Les Forches il Fuso ed il Monte Veso di Forzo; 5 is the Punta Sengie.

The night of the 13th was passed at the *châlet de l'Herbetet*. On our way up we met a good-natured herb collector heavily laden with flowers for the manufacture of liqueurs. The *châlet* had all the look of an old friend—it was my third visit to it—and the air was pleasantly warm, so warm indeed that fears as to the weather intruded themselves. During the night the thunder of avalanches was frequently heard, but in the morning the sun broke slowly in splendour between two great bastions of cloud, the prelude to a perfect day.

I had congratulated myself on having planned an expedition, which whilst new should be at the same time short, but I had miscalculated. We crossed the eastern ridge of the *Herbetet* to the beautiful *Dzasset* glacier, and keeping near to the savage cliffs of the same mountain, after turning to the left passed the *Col Bonney* and *Punta Budden*, and scrambled with ease to a narrow window in the ridge which forms the barrier between the *Valnontey* and *Val Savaranche*. I venture to call this pass the *Fenêtre de Dzasset*, a name which suggested itself as the most suitable, when later on in the month we were on the *Croix d'Aroletta*. Much recognition of old friends followed, and after a meal we turned to descend.

A few steps sufficed to show that our work was now to be of a different character. The rocks in themselves were not difficult, they gave good hold for the most part, but they were glazed with ice. A straight descent was not feasible, so we had to work first to the right, then to the left, and then again to the right, rounding several sloping ledges with nasty corners where 'attention' was the word. The worst part did not last long, and we then found ourselves on a sort of *arête* running down from the *Punta Budden*. By this we descended for some time, and then again kept to the right over rotten rocks where traces of falling stones were discernible. We did not however see any fall, and I should add that, as there were great rocks which offered safe refuges at frequent intervals, I do not believe that we incurred any serious risk. We crossed the *bergschrand* with ease. On the way down we had enjoyed very fine views of the *Maurienne* and *Dauphiné* peaks as well as of the nearer ranges.

We then turned our faces to the north, left on our right the *Col Bonney*, and reached the ridge which forms the boundary of the *Montandayné* Glacier. A huge bank of snow was piled up against the rock-wall, and a startling

view revealed itself on the farther side. A snow-slope steep enough to be called a precipice stopped the way, so we had to face westwards, and then work down the side of a tremendous snow mamelon. The snow scenery of this glacier—Gran Neiron of the New Survey—was superb. When we had got to the level of the glacier we turned to the east, to what Jeantet was positive was the Col de l'Herbetet. The rocks on our left as we mounted furnished a home to many tiny Alpine plants, but I failed to notice anything very rare. When we reached the top the view revealed to us that the rocks under our feet formed a ridge of the Herbetet, and that to reach the Col of the same name another bay of glacier must be traversed. But the place was beautiful, for hardly a speck broke the exceeding whiteness of the snow. Jeantet was allowed to lead, and had an opportunity of trying his portentous weapon. A halberd seems 'de rigueur' at Cogne in anyone with guiding pretensions.

When we reached the Col de l'Herbetet and a meal was in progress, we suddenly became witnesses of one of the prettiest sights I have ever beheld. It is one of the great charms of the Graians that you so often come upon bouquetin and chamois, but now we were to see, at comparatively close quarters, a herd of *forty* chamois (I counted them) go through a perfect series of autumn manoeuvres at our feet. They first mounted at right angles to our track with a guide thrown out well in advance. When he was within perhaps ten yards of our footsteps he turned tail, and the whole company went at full speed down the glacier. Again and again the chamois returned, sometimes in one direction sometimes in another, several kids moving with the same graceful ease as their full-grown companions. At last the whole body charged straight up to where we were sitting, and the leader was within a stone's throw of us (we were partially concealed and quite still), when some pieces of ice, set in motion by the sun swept the slope, and the whole herd hurriedly retired to distant rocks. This expedition is very interesting from an orographical standpoint, and affords much fine scenery. Cogne was regained by the ordinary route.

We now crossed over the Roise des Banques to Ronco. This walk is the most delightful with which I am acquainted and perfectly easy, while the lover of flowers may gather on his way such plants as *Oxytropis Gaudoni*, *Ranunculus rutæ-folius*, *Lloydia serotina*, *Primula pedemontana* and *Erytri-*

chium nanum. The ridge overlooking the Val Campiglia was jewelled with the lovely little blossoms of the last-named, and near the summit I found a fine tuft of *Campanula cenisia*. The day was perfect,

The blue heavens were bare,
Striped to their depths by the awakening north.

I can but hint at all the glories of mountain peak, plain, and river. The roofs of Ivrea seemed close under us. We could distinctly see the wide streams of the Dora Baltea below it, and trace the smoke of trains in the great plain to the south. On the ridge near the Colle della Balma we parted with Jeantet, for whom let me say a good word, who returned to Cogne, whilst we went down to Val Campiglia. We descended nearly to the chapel of San Besso, indulged in a luxurious halt, and then went on to Ronco. The next day we descended in the early morning to Ponte—a walk delightful in every respect, except the pavement of the road in steep places. We then drove up to Lilaz and walked on to Ceresole. Here we found a new inn, the Albergo della Levanna, but passed on notwithstanding the blandishments of the 'padrone' to the old Stabilimento. I confess my first question was 'Have you got last year's cook?' 'No,' said the waiter with enthusiasm, and as experience afterwards proved veracity, 'but we have a better.'

The next day I had the pleasure of seeing Messrs. Beachcroft and Carson. I had hoped also to have met my friend, Mr. Coolidge, but unhappily I was two days behind the time agreed upon, and he had already returned to Bonneval over the Levanna Centrale.

I had come to Ceresole in hopes of finding Blanchetti, and making an assault on the Tour St. Pierre. In default of this Séraphin and I ascended the Tresenta, a long expedition. The day was beautiful but very hot, in fact, our passage of the slopes of the Ciamoseretto Glacier under the Charforon was made in as powerful a sun as I ever remember in the Alps. When we had crossed the bergschrund and reached the east end of the ridge over which lies the Col du Mont Corvé, Séraphin was in favour of descending to the glacier of the same name and then remounting, as the rocks in front of us did not please him. Against this proposal I protested with all the energy the heat had left me; the rocks looked passable, and what is worse than going down to climb up again? With all the eloquence of indifferent French, I expatiated on the character of the rocks as shown

by comparison with what we could see closely, and Séraphin after a short exploration said, to my great relief, 'Monsieur 'is right; we can cross.' The rest of the ascent was very easy with the exception of one or two steps on the rocks, before we reached the face of the mountain where the snow had melted and re-frozen.

From the summit we enjoyed a view glorious in splendour, and particularly interesting orographically as the basin of the Noaschetta Glacier, with the Grand Paradis and the Pointe de Ceresole, was perfectly seen. We went down very nearly to the Col du Grand Paradis, and then, after traversing the Noaschetta and Goj Glaciers (I being allowed to lead and to go pretty much where I pleased, one of the delights of a second-rate expedition), descended by a narrow gap which I have ventured to call the Bochetta del Goj to the Val Ciamoseretto. A thick mist came upon us when we had just crossed the Bochetta and caused a good deal of trouble, but Séraphin found a way with much judgment, and thanks to a friendly snow-couloir, we were not very long in getting to the valley. The view of the séracs of the Ciamoseretto Glacier above the bare and dripping cliffs, with the Charforon and Tresenta towering up massive and majestic on either hand, was very fine, enhanced by the drifting mist-waves, which were now no longer a trouble to us. We returned to Ceresole by descending the Val Ciamoseretto, rounding the mountain to our right, and regaining the Vallone del Roc.

To anyone who thinks of visiting Cogne I would repeat what has been said before: take your guides with you. There are no chains, no huts, no tourists. The mountains in fact are your own. The Italians, whether mountaineers or not, whom you have the good fortune to meet will receive you in the spirit of good fellowship. In a word, the district is still but comparatively little visited notwithstanding its 'superb ice scenery.' But doubtless, when the railway reaches Aosta, no distant date, Cogne will develop on a small scale many of the characteristics of the modern tourist emporium.