

Colle Chamoin  
(12,133 feet).

Punta della Luna, or  
Punta di Ceresole  
(12,343 feet).

Colle della Luna  
(11,526 feet).

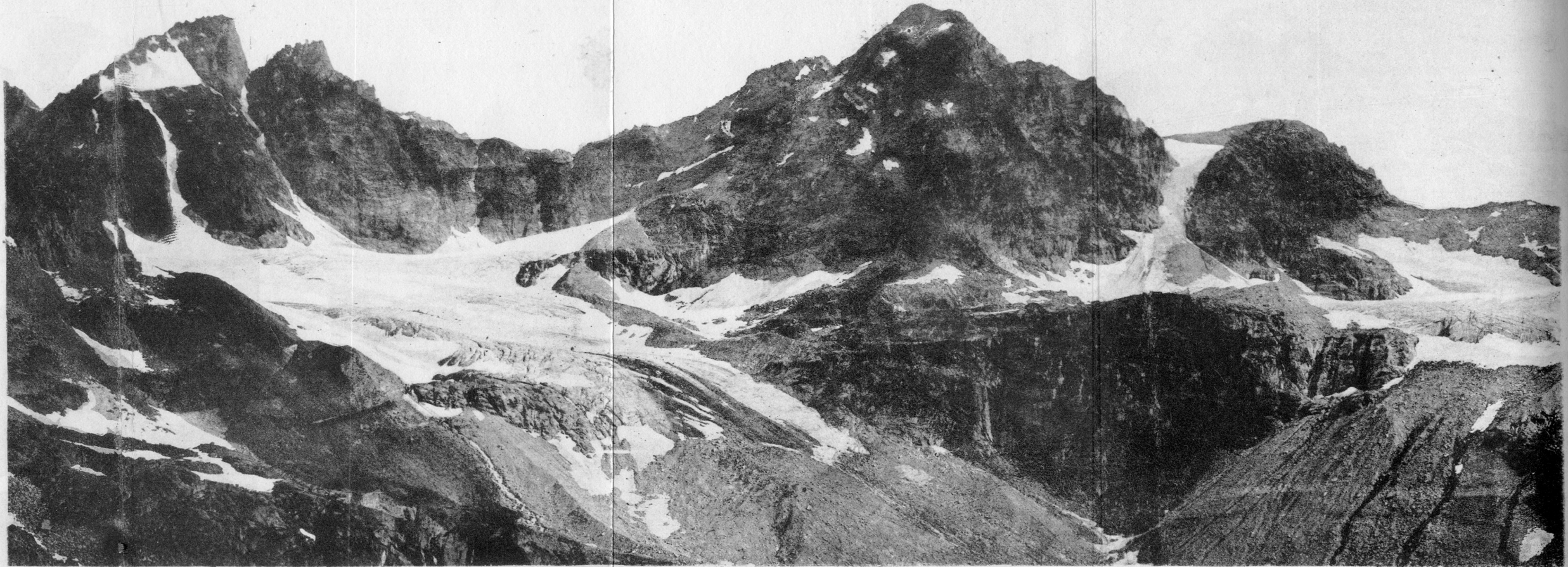
Testa della Tribolazione  
(11,949 feet).

Becca di Noaschetta  
(11,310 feet).

Snow Couloir  
leading to Colle  
Valmontey.

Testa del  
Grandcrou.

Colle del Grandcrou  
(10,844 feet).



*From a Photograph by Vittorio Besso, of Biella*

*Frank. Dangerfield, Photoprint, London.*

G. Noaschetta.

Western arm of G. del Grandcrou S.,  
called by Dr. Baretto G. della Testa  
della Tribolazione.

G. del Grandcrou S.

## THE EASTERN BAY OF THE NOASCETTA GLACIER.

THE  
ALPINE JOURNAL.

---

MAY 1889.

---

(No. 104.)

SCRAMBLES IN THE EASTERN GRAIANS.

BY GEORGE YELD.

(Read before the Alpine Club, May 7, 1889.)

IV.

HAD not two years' absence from the Alps sharpened the longing to be once more among them, I think I should hardly have ventured out last summer. 'Snow and rain! Wind and snow!' Worse and worse grew the accounts I received. And when I reached the Lake of Geneva and saw the lower mountains clothed in white, I must own my spirits sank. However, I was now in for it, good or bad, so I lost no time, but hurried straight over the Great St. Bernard to find my friend Coolidge and the two Almers (Christian the younger and Rudolph) at the Hôtel du Mont Blanc at Aosta. Dark indeed was the tale they told. They had been caught in a 'tourmente' even on the Théodule, and had had a hard fight to get across.

Next day we went up to Cogne, and on the morrow started for a climb, only to be caught in a wild snowstorm at a very moderate height, and, after waiting for several hours under a dismal wet rock, to return disconsolate. On the following day Coolidge started for the Tersiva (11,697 feet), but was beaten while still well below the summit by a freezing wind of exceeding violence. But that north wind, 'cruel only to be kind,' was a benefactor beyond price. It continued to blow all night, and was the forerunner of eight days of the most perfect weather. On the morning of August 8, sure of our day, we started for the Punta Nera, a peak of 12,130 feet which rises on the ridge south of the Trajo Glacier, facing the Grivola. The climb was perfectly easy, and the view magnificent.

The descent, the first part being very rapid, was made direct to the King's encampment (reached in 1 hr. 15 min. from the summit) on the Col de Lauzon route. A good deal of snow lay about, and made things easy for us. On the grass slopes near the path the alpine wallflower and *Eritrichium nanum* were very dwarf and brilliant. Indeed, this spot is one of the wild gardens of Cogne, if I may use the phrase. Others may be found in and above the Chavanis pastures,\* and on the cliffs on the way to the Col de l'Herbetet,† while at a height of about 11,000 feet the Coupé de Monei‡ and Becca di Noaschetta may be mentioned for the number of little plants that blossom in the crannies of their rocks, with a bright and delicate colouring and a patient courage which endear them to the mountaineer.

On the 9th Coolidge enjoyed his revenge and a splendid panorama on the Tersiva, while I spent the morning in botanising, especially in searching for a certain *Epilobium*, which I had once seen near the end of the Grandcrou Glacier. By the riverside, between the point where the pineclad mountain-slopes close in to form the gorge of the Valnontey, and Crétaz, after a long hunt I came upon it. My plant found, I strolled up to Gimilian, much wondering that here and there

All the place was peopled with sweet airs,

till I discovered the cause in some delicate white roses which throve in the bushes among the corn-plots. From the meadows above the hamlet I enjoyed one of those views which can be mentioned only, not described. The dark veil of the storm withdrawn had left the mountain world to liquid light and sunshine. Cogne with its meadows, forests, and crown of snow-peaks on one's left, and Mont Blanc and the Trélatête throned in an azure sky in front, still rise before me as I write.

The next day Coolidge and the Almers crossed the Herbetet Col to Val Savaranche, climbing the Mont Herbetet (12,396 feet) on the way by the northern ridge, and finding the rocks rather difficult towards the summit by reason of the great quantity of snow. In 1881 G. P. Baker and I, with Ulrich Almer to lead us, had climbed it by the eastern ridge—one of the best rock-climbs in the Cogne district.

Meantime, with Joseph Jantet and his brother, I crossed

\* *Alpine Journal*, vol. xii. p. 86.

† *Ibid.* vol. xi. p. 15.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 19.

the Lauzon with the baggage, and did a little plant-hunting by the way. Just above the lower Luvione chalet we enjoyed a perfect view of the Herbetet's bold pyramid; sharp, massive, defiant, it almost deserved Coolidge's eulogy, 'the finest of the Cogne peaks.' Just below the chalet when we had crossed the stream to its true right bank, on a steep close to the water's edge, where edelweiss was very plentiful, I found in abundance a fine primula, which if not *Primula pedemontana* bears a strong resemblance to it. We continued on the right bank, and by a path rapidly increasing in steepness descended upon Tignet, which made a pretty picture as it shone in the sunlight, with its timbered houses stained a rich brown by years of storm, and pasture, river, and pine wood, like familiar friends. We did not, however, descend to Tignet, but bending to the right made a traverse across steep meadows, and, passing between some houses, found ourselves, to my surprise, before the door of the little inn at Dégioz.

Our first duty was to secure some toil-enduring beast to carry our baggage and provisions to the Rifugio on the morrow. After some negotiation Jantet made a bargain, satisfactory to both parties, with a man from Pont. Then, dinner ordered (travellers are recommended to call for 'none of your samples, but the whole outfit'), I wandered out to wait for Coolidge and watch the world of haymakers everywhere hard at work. The hay-scented air soon began to grow cool, as the sunshine climbed higher and higher up the forests and mountain-walls to the music of cowbell and torrent. By-and-by Coolidge and the Almers arrived, having had a glorious day on the Herbetet.

We slept in the big room that used to be the kitchen (St. Anthony, in brilliant fresco, adorns the outside), which has a window looking out on the main street, through which a persevering observer can see fairly into the chamber. The old cook furnished us with very good meals and was most anxious that we should want for nothing which the resources of the village could furnish. In fact, she was so anxious to please that I think the filling of my boots with chopped hay must have been intended as a gracious attention. If it did not delight me, it at any rate amused Coolidge, who laughed heartily at the stream that poured out of them. I am inclined to think that the earnest gaze of a passer-by, which Coolidge discovered directed upon him while dressing, was intended as compensation for the absence of hay in his boots.

In due time the next day, August 11, we reached the

Rifugio (8,767 feet), and there established ourselves for four nights. I need not say more than that we found it exceedingly comfortable, and were duly grateful to the Italian Alpine Club. It was known amongst us as 'The Palace,' and we had it all to ourselves, as nobody came near us except a 'garde-chasse,' who has charge of the building, and our porter Jantet, who made a very thorough acquaintance with the track between 'The Palace' and Dégioz.

It was no small pleasure to see, as we did day by day, the awakening of the morning on the snow-peaks—but the evening colour effects were unspeakably beautiful. All the points of the various ridges would suddenly assert themselves with the most startling sharpness in an atmosphere of very pale gold, while the heaven was of a subtle pale pink, and the moon cold and clear. Nor was there wanting that band of green (or, shall I say, eau de Nil?) along the horizon which is the sure presage of fine weather. I venture to give one note from my pocket-book as a specimen:—'Evening about 7.30, most lovely golden clouds here and there. The moon very pale. The Charforon and Monciair pale gold and pink.'

Our great ambition was to climb the eastern side of the Grand Paradis by way of the col between it and the Cresta Gastaldi, and then to ascend the Cresta itself. Many times had I reproached myself for not having long ago tried the Cresta Gastaldi, for I felt certain of success, and I coveted the ascent of the Paradis by the route by which we eventually descended him more, perhaps, than any expedition in the Alps. The thought that this particular route was untouched dashed with bitterness even the delightful memories of 1879, when Alphonse Payot and I crossed the Paradis from the Valnontey to Ceresole. Every one who has a passion—as what mountaineer has not?—for a particular group in the Alps will, I know, sympathise with my feelings.

The morning of August 12 found us in high spirits, and much interested in the account of a dream which Rudolph, who is an enthusiastic chamois-hunter, had had, wherein he had chased a bouquetin, caught him, and ridden him home to Grindelwald! In 3 hrs. 17 mins. walking from 'The Palace' we reached the summit of the Grand Paradis. It was Coolidge's second and my third visit. After enjoying the splendid view we turned south-east from the summit with the cairn, and gained the top of a great couloir which is a very conspicuous feature in views of the Grand Paradis from the east. It is just north of the rocky aiguille at the angle where the Grand Paradis ridge and the Pointe de

Ceresole (Pic de la Lune)—Becca di Moncorvé ridge—join each other, and its head is the next gap but one south-east of the peak with the cairn. And now came the fateful moment. Christian was let down the couloir to see what he could of the route. By-and-by he reappeared. Well? Coolidge looked at Christian, who nodded assent, and then turning to me said, 'It's all right.'

Then Rudolph took the lead, followed by me and Coolidge, while Christian had the place of honour as last man. The beginning of the descent, which was very steep, required care, as the rocks were deeply covered with snow. Above us to our left hung a great cornice like a monstrous bat with wings outspread, but we avoided any danger from it by making a sharp angle to the right. What a glorious sight as one looked back at the cornice! What a splendour of white and azure! At first we had moved one at a time, but before long we were able to descend at a good pace, and in an hour and twenty minutes from the top of the couloir we were on the col.

Here we found a bee stretched on the snow almost lifeless and little recking of the fame which awaited him. Coolidge carried him to 'The Palace,' where he revived in the sunshine. After this bee we named the col (12,638 feet\*), not without a thought of the well-known Col des Hirondelles. Five minutes' sharp walking from the col took us to the top of the Cresta Gastaldi (12,671 feet), well content with our day and looking down in wonder on sunlit Cogne. Seen from the valley our mountain is a fair white crest, seen at evening from the Herbetet chalet—

A moonbeam in the shadow of a cloud  
Is less heavenly fair.

It lives in my memory as one of the loveliest sights I ever looked upon.

An hour's keen enjoyment followed. The view was beautiful. From the spotless snow-plain of the Tribulation outspread at our feet we looked down upon Cogne's familiar fields; while the great peaks round linked one to another

---

\* The heights assigned in this paper and on the accompanying illustration to the Col de l'Abeille (3,852 mètres), Cresta Gastaldi (3,862 mètres), Col Chamoin (3,698 mètres), and Col de la Lune (3,513 mètres) are taken from the map of the Grand Paradis group by Signor Pio Paganini, contained in his work 'La Fototopografia in Italia' (Rome, 1889), for a copy of which I am indebted to the author's courtesy.

the happy summer holidays I had spent amongst them, and the Dauphiné giants in the distance forged for Coolidge a similar but far longer chain of memories. I don't think we forgot to drink to our new peak in a cup of Madeira which, if it had not made a voyage to the Indies, had, at any rate, travelled the long round from Cogne to Dégioz and 'The Palace.'

On our return to the col a brief conference ensued. Christian having pronounced the descent to the Noaschetta Glacier practicable so far as it was visible, and being very keen to try it—as, I need not say, we ourselves were—we started diagonally across the little hanging glacier which clings to this side of the Grand Paradis, and is so pronounced a feature in the view from the Tresenta. This little glacier, hitherto untouched, we would call Glacier de l'Abeille. The glacier crossed, we came to its ice-fall, but avoided all danger by keeping to its right, though we passed so close to its towering pinnacles and huge icicles that we had a glorious view of them against the sky. Then after a jump we made our way to the right over not difficult rocks, and came to a big couloir, into which we descended without much trouble, and then tramped down it as hard as we could and shot out merrily on to the Noaschetta Glacier in triumph. There we exchanged congratulations, and patted Christian on the back for a piece of guiding which for skill, foresight, and prudence places him in the very foremost rank amongst guides, while as for Rudolph, he had led down the great couloir, and brought up the rear during the descent from the Col de l'Abeille with perfect care and steadiness, which promise well for his future excellence as a leader. The view as we looked back from the spot where the glacier begins to slope to the Col du Grand Paradis was splendid. To the left (in looking back) of our route, huge rock towers—five bigger than the rest—frowned down upon us, and to the right the ice-fall of the Glacier de l'Abeille hung over what looked a savage impracticable wall. I thought of my description of this route in 1883, as seen from the Tresenta—'seems very risky, being commanded by crumbling rock-towers and *séracs*'—with a smile, for I believe that the route we took, as we found it, was perfectly safe. We then returned to 'The Palace' by the Col du Grand Paradis and Moncorvé Glacier. As we talked over our day's work in the evening Coolidge agreed with me that there was but one word to describe it—it was ideal. But I must add that we found the snow in the great couloir, and also on the Glacier de l'Abeille, in an exceptional state.

It was simply perfect. In most years the great couloir is probably a sheet of ice.

The next day we retraced our steps to the Col du Grand Paradis, and traversed the whole length of the Noaschetta Glacier—a beautiful and extensive ice-field answering to the Plan on the north of the chain. It may be said to be divided into a west bay, as far as the Pic de la Lune or Pointe de Ceresole, and an east bay from that peak to the Tête de la Tribulation and Becca di Noaschetta. We then climbed the easy western ridge of the peak (up to that time without a name), marked 3,447 mètres (11,310 feet) on the new map, which we christened Becca di Noaschetta, and gained the top in three quarters of an hour from the glacier. These easy rocks were

Lit by the gems of many a starry flower.

I noticed especially *Eritrichium nanum*, *Petrocallis pyrenaica*, and *Ranunculus glacialis*.

The summit commands a sight of Cogne over the main ridge, and certainly *the finest view* of the Grand Paradis I know.

Thence in thirty minutes by a traverse above the Glacier du Grandcrou Sud and a snow-couloir we reached the col between the Tête de la Tribulation, and the point marked 3,543 mètres (11,625 feet) on the new map. In five minutes more we reached this point, which, from its position, we named Tête de Valnontey. In 1885, when we came up from La Bruna by the Glacier du Grandcrou Sud and this same couloir, we had been unable to see anything till the weather suddenly cleared on the top of the Tête de la Tribulation. The Tête de Valnontey is but the end of a ridge, 'tis true, but as a viewpoint it enjoys the distinction of looking straight down the whole length of the Valnontey. We saw to perfection the pines in the narrow gorge at the foot of the Grandcrou, the great green lawn of the Cogne meadows, with their protecting forests on either hand, and Cogne itself lapped in quiet sunshine. Beyond, the gold of the ripening corn glowed in undulating lines on the steep slopes, and Gimilian's picturesque and weather-worn chalets slumbered on the hillbrow—all seemed peace. Suddenly the thunder of an avalanche from the ice-fall of the Dzasset Glacier rolled up to us, and drew the eye to a perfect view of the huge Plan de la Tribulation. This is the only point from which the Grand Sertz makes a good show. Hence it appears a tremendous wall, with a snow-clad head.

Then we crossed the col—Col de Valnontey (circa 11,596 feet)—and jumping a bergschrund descended towards the Plan de la Tribulation. Again, the snow was all that could be wished, and our route consequently easy, much to my surprise, for though I had hoped that it might be possible to ascend to the col from the Plan, never in my wildest flights did I think of descending. In fact this col was generally, in our discussions, looked upon by Coolidge as a joke; and I suspect that where we found good snow ice, in most seasons holds the field.

In 30 mins. we gained the col between the Tête de la Tribulation and Pic de la Lune, or Pointe de Ceresole, first reached from the north by Dr. Baretti August 31, 1874.\* This col we named Col de la Lune, as a consecration of the memories of the beauty of this side of the Plan when seen by moonlight † in bivouacs at the Herbetet.

From the col (11,526 feet) Coolidge, with his chronic hunger for peaks still unsatisfied, and the two guides ascended the Pic de la Lune (up which I had been in 1879), while I basked in the sunshine and enjoyed the grateful silence unbroken save by the tinkling of water among the rocks. By-and-by the attractions of a most delicate and lovely snow ridge, which rose gently tapering to a sharp edge on the east of the col, proved too great to be resisted, so, finding the snow excellent, I went up it and looked down once more on Cogne.

On Coolidge's arrival, in high spirits, we turned to descend to the Noaschetta Glacier. On our way up the Becca di Noaschetta we had carefully examined the descent from our present position. We saw a grim wall of red rock furrowed with several couloirs, not inviting, indeed, but still 'food for fortune's tooth.' It is only fair to point out that we had this advantage over Dr. Baretti, who only saw the descent from the top of the col. Again Almer's skill was conspicuous. Over a streak of snow we descended to the right to rocks much easier in reality than they had looked from below, and presently clambered, with some care, into a snow couloir. Then we kept straight down, till before long a patch of ice drove us to the left-hand rocks. The ice circumvented, we again descended into the couloir and rushed, as fast as the now softened snow would let us, out on to the Noaschetta Glacier in 35 mins. from the col. And so another long-cherished scheme saw itself accomplished.

\* *Per Rupi*, p. 67.

† *Boll. del C. A. I.* 10-11, p. 327, *note*.

The scenery of this eastern bay of the glacier is fine, and the cirque of rock from the Pic de la Lune to the Becca di Noaschetta is imposing, as will be seen in the illustration which accompanies this paper.

Then off we tramped for 'The Palace,' casting a well-satisfied eye back at our day's work and making little of the soft snow. By-and-by, when we reached the centre of the western bay, by common consent we stood still for a good look at the Cresta Gastaldi and the Col de l'Abeille, and I think the whole party felt well contented. At last the south side of the Plan was well explored.\* Then to the Col du Grand Paradis, and so to 'The Palace.'

On the 14th Coolidge, with the Almers, traversed the Tresenta and the Charforon, ascending the latter by a new route from the Col du Moncorvé, while I lounged about in the sun and mused upon the change 'The Palace' had effected. In 1883 I traversed the Tresenta, starting from and returning to Ceresole, and found it a very long day, whereas Coolidge only took  $9\frac{1}{2}$  hours (including all halts) to do the two peaks from the Rifugio and back.

The next day we retraced Coolidge's track to the Col de Monciair, having added Jantet to our party as a reward for the goodnatured and generally satisfactory way in which he had carried out his duties as porter. With imperturbable good humour he tramped up and down between 'The Palace' and Dégioz, not seldom heavily laden. I have praised his willingness before, and must in justice to him rephrase it here. From the col in 35 mins. we ascended the Becca di Monciair—a very graceful peak, well seen from 'The Palace'—the only excitement being an arch just above a big red rock, which made us keep out a little to the right, or Val Savaranche, side. The great tooth so conspicuous in all views of the peak from the north, which we had looked forward to passing with some interest, is below the crest of the ridge.

The summit commands a fine view, but wildly driven light white clouds swept swiftly over us at intervals. In fact the weather gave us just

The uncertain glory of an April day,  
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,  
And by-and-by a cloud takes all away.

---

\* See *Alpine Journal*, vol. xiv. pp. 147–9, for details of the work of Dr. Baretta and others. It should have been clearly stated there that Dr. Baretta was the first to reach the Col de la Lune from the great snow-field of the Plan de la Tribulation.

The Paradis in a whirling veil of mist was massive and splendid. Christian varied his route a little in descending by going straight down the slope immediately below the summit (as you look to the Col de Monciair). On the ascent we had kept to the Val d'Orco side. This slope is of the steepest, and in most years I suspect hard ice; but we felt little surprise at being able to walk straight down it after our previous experience of easy snow where ice must in most seasons be found.

We got down from the col to the Broglio Glacier without trouble, except at the one bad place which G. P. Baker and I, led by Christian's elder brother Ulrich, had found in 1881, where we had a little amusement. Here Jantet, who was last and carrying a heavy load, managed very creditably. The discovery of *Campanula barbata alba* in its old habitat, and of some late flowers of *Liliastrum* were the only incidents of the descent, till we reached by a short cut the meadow above the road to the Stabilimento, where I called upon Jantet for an overcoat wherewith to make a becoming entry into the Albergo della Levanna. The old Stabilimento was closed, and a very large building better suited to modern wants was well on the way to completion on the other side the road facing the Albergo.

Under the awning who should be seated but the Comte d'Aglié, who welcomed us warmly to Ceresole. We had afterwards the pleasure of meeting his father, to whose courteous kindness we are much indebted for the enjoyableness of our little stay at the Albergo. He was our guide to a charming spot in the great forest across the Orco where soaring pines, bubbling stream, moss, and ferns made a perfect sylvan hermitage, the restful coolness of which we greatly enjoyed. As for the views on our way back, they were more than lovely, they were loveliness. The shining river, the great waterfall veiled in sun-illumined spray, little plots of golden corn, gracious spaces of greenest herbage dotted with trees which gradually massed themselves into the serried ranks of the forest—all this was ours to rejoice in—

Under the roof of blue Italian weather.

In the background the proud peaks of the Levanna rose cold and stern.

On the morning of the 16th 'as the froward sky began to lower' we all started together up the Val d'Orco, and separated where the path for the Col du Carro leaves the main track, Coolidge and the Almers for Bonneval and Lanslebourg,

Jantet and I for the Nivolet and Aosta. Both destinations, thanks to forced marches, were reached the same evening. So our party broke up, and with it the fine weather, that week of wondrous weather which had added so largely to our appreciation of Christian's exceptional skill and foresight, and of Rudolph's steady promise of future excellence, to our knowledge of the Eastern Graians, and not least to our happy memories of Italian Alps.

---

### THE DOLOMITES OF SAN MARTINO DI CASTROZZA.

BY G. SCRIVEN.

(Read before the Alpine Club, March 5, 1889.)

**W**HILE the members of the Alpine Club have, for the last few years, become accustomed to listen to thrilling accounts of exploration and the conquest of magnificent peaks in the Andes, Himalayas, and Caucasus, and while the great mountaineering centres of Switzerland become each year more and more overcrowded, there remain, in out of the way corners of Europe, districts which have been almost neglected by English climbers. To one of these districts I wish to call your attention; and, although, like the knife-grinder, 'Story? God bless you! I have none to tell, sir,' at least of new ascents, I hope to show that most interesting scrambling and beautiful scenery of a very remarkable character may be found among the rocks and valleys of the South Tyrol.

The majority of English mountaineers seem to have the most vague ideas with respect to the mountains known as 'the Dolomites;' and many, I believe, if asked whether they were acquainted with them, might reply in the spirit of the globe-trotting cockney when asked if he knew the Dardanelles—'Awfully good chappies, I hear, but I didn't meet them.'

A reference to the back volumes of the 'Alpine Journal' will show how scanty are the descriptions in our annals of these wonderful peaks. But while English climbers have neglected them our Austrian and German brethren have been busy among the Dolomites, and during the last few years all their remarkable peaks have been conquered.

To many besides the climber, who, as Mr. Ruskin asserts, looks upon mountains only as 'greased poles to exercise on,' these peaks offer numerous points of interest. To the geo-