

but I trust my readers will accept it as an earnest endeavour to clear away some deeply rooted but erroneous beliefs that still obscure the history of one of the finest mountain groups in the Bernese Oberland. I hope that a complicated set of events has now been set in its proper light, and that my successors, at least, will thank me for the minuteness with which I have tried to sweep away every cobweb from this dark corner of Alpine history.

NOTES FROM THE ADULA ALPS.

BY W. A. B. COOLIDGE.

THE disastrous fire at Grindelwald (August 18, 1892) had many unexpected consequences, but perhaps none was quite so singular as the following. The news reached us three days late at the distant village of Splügen, and as our leading guide, Christian Almer, jun., lost in the fire his house and all its contents, while I lost half my heavy luggage (left at the 'Bear' after a month spent there in May and June), our party broke up at once. Now we had been engaged for some weeks in the exploration of the Adula Alps for the purpose of a 'Climbers' Guide' for that district, and had pretty well completed our task save as regards the E. bit of that district, precisely that round Splügen. In writing my book in the winter of 1892-3 I felt very keenly the want of notes, based on personal experience, relating to that portion of the range. Hence I resolved to make up for this in the summer of 1893, and the following jottings are meant to help the readers of that work by completing the details there given. These jottings consist mainly of the notes made during a splendid week spent in the Adulas last August, to which I have added corrections of various slips made in the printed text, and some account of certain ascents made by some of my friends in 1893.

Let me first of all put right some minor matters.

A kind reviewer in the 'Rivista Mensile' of the Italian Alpine Club (No. for August, 1893, p. 255) has pointed out that the Cornera Alp (line 7 from the bottom of p. vii. of my 'Guide') is really in Graubünden (not, as stated, in Uri), while he also points out that I have wrongly inserted an accent on the final letter of the name 'Streghe' (p. 147), though in doing this I was but copying the Siegfried map, so that I err in good company. To these mistakes I may add some more which I found out for myself—pp. 137-8, for 'Annarossa' read 'Annarosa'; p. 138, line 8 from the bottom, insert 'S. A. C. J. ix.'; p. 60, line 12, after 'Theobald' insert 'i. p. 80.'; p. 133, line 6, for 'Madens' read 'Modens.' An ascent of the Badus on July 3 showed me that my account of Route 1 (p. 14) was open to improvement. For 'Oberalp road' read 'St. Gotthard road,' and in the next line for 'a small chapel' substitute 'some huts.' It is far better to climb the steep rocky slopes N. of the great gully leading up to the gap between the Badus and Piz Toma than to climb the gully itself, while after gaining the N. ridge of the peak the summit is best reached by

circling round by stones and snow on the N.W. face. Going very leisurely, we took 5 hrs. walking up from Andermatt, and 2 hrs. 40 min. down to the new inn at the W. end of the large lake on the Oberalp Pass, passing by the Toma tarn and the Milez huts. Let it be here set down that we found that inn clean and fairly good, but pretty dear, trout out of the lake being charged for (without previous notice), in addition to the price of the table d'hôte.

After escaping, on August 9, from Elm in Glarus (after a detention there owing to bad weather and the claims of my forthcoming 'Tödi Guidebook'), young Christian Almer and I climbed on August 11, in rather doubtful weather, the fine peak of the Ringelspitz (3,251 m. = 10,667 ft.) above the Calfeisen Valley. We took 6.35 up and 3.40 down, finding no difficulty (the passage from one of the two highest needles to the other is curious), though the peak enjoys a great local reputation. I mention it here as ours seemed, from the names in the book on the summit, to be the first ascent by an English party. In fine weather the view ought to be very extensive. Our starting-point was Flims, on the high road between Reichenau and Ilanz. The big inns there were quite full, but we were most hospitably entertained at the modest Hôtel Post, the bill being a marvel of cheapness. Next day we drove by Ilanz to Versam, at the entrance of the Safien Valley. Here we found a fair new inn, H. Signina. The road up from Ilanz passes through some beautiful forest scenery. Proceeding in a smaller carriage, we pursued our way up the very narrow and rugged Safien Valley, and were pleased to find a nice new inn (kept by Alexander Gredig, last house in the village) at the chief place in the valley, Safien Platz. On the 13th we went over to Splügen by the *Safierberg*, when I had the pleasant surprise of finding my description (pp. 135-6) quite correct, save that the distance from Platz to Thalkirch is $1\frac{1}{2}$ hr., not 2 hrs. I ought to warn travellers that though there is a sort of a char road as far as Thalkirch, the post-cart from Versam does not go beyond Platz, where it halts at Gredig's inn.

The next two days were spent in exploring the dolomite peaks of the Löchliberg range, of which I have given a full description in 'New Expeditions' (pp. 52-4). On August 16 we went up the *Tambohorn* (10,749 ft.), just opposite them, in order to admire our latest conquests. We took the route from the top of the Splügen Pass,* finding it perfectly easy, though the distance is greater than I imagined. It is better to skirt round the S. foot of the Lattenhorn than to cross the top, while the final rocks, though steep, have a zigzag path up them. The two cairns are built on the two ends of the summit ridge, a few minutes from each other. On our return we took Route 2 of my book, as I desired fuller particulars of it than I could find in the printed accounts. Retracing our steps to the depression between the peak and the Lattenhorn (40 min.), we descended by steep snow slopes, broken by rocky islands, to the level part of the Tambo glacier ($\frac{1}{2}$ hr.). Seen from the N. these slopes look much worse than

* See p. 167 of my 'Guide.'

they really are. Quitting this glacier, near a large green lake, not far from a great cairn on a green mound ($\frac{1}{2}$ hr.), we went past a second lake and down very stony slopes to the Tambo huts (40 min.), whence a stony path above the right bank of the Tambo torrent, and then a hot walk along the right bank of the Hinter Rhein, brought us back to the village of Splügen (1 hr. 10 min.). The *direct* descent from the top of the Tamboborn to the Tambo glacier by the snowy N.E. face would probably be possible, but the slopes are exceedingly steep.

On the 17th we had a most agreeable stroll across the *Bärenhorn* (9,620 ft.)* from Splügen to Vals Platz. The ascent was of the easiest kind, and only took us just under 3 hrs., leisurely walking (with knapsacks) from Splügen by way of the Safierberg, and the lower point 2,814 m. It seemed to me that the Swiss map was not quite accurate, as the point of junction of the three ridges is not 2,814 m., but a hump a little to the E. of it. The view was very fine, as always during that wonderful week. It was a surprise to find that the crag of the Valslerhorn, which stands up boldly on other sides, was easily accessible by shale slopes on the S.E. We descended to Vals Platz in 2 hrs. 35 min. by way of the Beim Bären Pass and the Tomül huts. The stream passing by those huts has many fine waterfalls in its upper course, and is beautifully clear spring water. The first bit of the path beyond the Tomül huts is very striking and quaint. At Vals we took up our old quarters at the Hôtel Albin (a good country inn), and heard much of the great new Kurhaus opened this year, a few minutes from the village, but little patronised as yet.

Next morning (August 18) we went up to that ideally placed Alpine village of Zervreila in $2\frac{1}{2}$ hrs., and, ascending the bold peak of the Zervreilerhorn,† spent the night at Tönz's (late Lorez's) little inn at the E. end of the village. The quarters there were simple, but clean, and food good, so that we were glad we had avoided Schmid's inn at the W. end of the village. In 1892 we had suffered much there, as we arrived on a feast day (August 15), and Tönz's house was shut up, so that we had to take refuge where we could.

Next day (August 19) we went over the *Piz Scharboden* ‡ to Vrin. It was an odd sensation for a disciple of old Father Placidus a Spescha, the earliest explorer of the district, to find oneself on a point which had probably not been visited since his ascent 100 years before. At Vrin we found that the Post Office, where we had lodged in 1892, had blossomed out into the Hôtel Post, with a Travellers' Book. It is a very clean, good, little inn, and the position of the village—on a high shelf above the Vrin Rhine—very agreeable. Thence we crossed (August 20) the *Diesrut Pass* to the Somvix valley. The Vrin side is made up of grass and shale slopes, and cows frequently go up to it. But they go down on the other side in a S.W. direction to the wide Greina plateau, by which Olivone is easily reached. We, on the other hand, were bound for the Vorder Rhein Valley, into which the pass leads topographically. But we soon found out that it was little used as a pass in that direction. After a short grassy descent, a *very* rough

* *Ibid.* p. 126. † *A. J.* vol. xvii. pp. 20-4. ‡ See 'New Expeditions,' p. 54.

and faint stony track led N. high above the right bank of the torrent, and gradually descended (a high traverse to the hut on the Fuorola de Ramosa route being avoided) to the miserable Fronscha hut (1 hr. 10 min.), whence more stones led down to the right bank of the Somvix torrent, which was crossed at the point marked 1,407 m. on the Swiss map (35 min.). An up and down path, traversing the stream several times, brought us through this narrow, deep-cut, and secluded glen to the small baths of Tenigerbad (1 hr. 10 min.). The heat all day had been most oppressive, and this, joined to the fact that we had climbed six peaks in the six preceding days, induced us to halt for the night at this quaint little place, whither foreigners rarely find their way. Tenigerbad is no longer the very primitive little place described by early visitors and figured in the 'S. A. C. Jahrbuch,' x. p. 152. The little chapel with its queer turret is still there, but the inn itself was entirely rebuilt in 1882, while in 1893 a new annexe had just been completed. I found everything *very* clean and the accommodation good, while the scale of prices may be estimated by the fact that the *pension* is only 4 francs. It is picturesquely situated in the midst of a fine forest, and far from any hamlet.

The following morning we jolted down in a sort of hay-cart to the Vorder Rhein Valley, after taking leave of the very friendly landlord and his wife. We were dragged up to Somvix, whence a less rude vehicle conveyed us to Disentis. Here we stayed several days to make the ascent of the Tödi by the Sandgrat ridge,* but the terrific heat forced us to drive up (on the afternoon of the 24th) to the Medels Valley on the Lukmanier route, a pass which we were told over and over again was nearly abandoned by travellers, though it has, I think, from our experiences in 1892 and 1893, many redeeming points. The Medels Valley forms one commune, of which the first hamlet, Curaglia (Hôtel Lukmanier), contains far more inhabitants than the village of Platta, higher up, which possesses, however, the old parish church. Just opposite the church is the very decent little Hôtel Post, which we made our head-quarters for two days. The top of the Tödi is just seen hence. The morning after our arrival a thick mist filled the valley, so that we did not start for *Piz Medel*. It cleared off too late, so that we had to content ourselves with a stroll through the woods on the W. side of the valley to a small lake beyond the Tegia Nova huts, in order to study our peak. Next day (August 26) we achieved the very easy ascent, taking only 5 hrs. up, and 2 hrs. 50 min. down. The route lies above Fuorns through the Buora glen nearly to the pass of the same name; then up the stones just W. of the Miez Glatsché ridge, and so by the upper bit of the Buora glacier and round snowfields S. of the point, 2,998 m., and of the Rifugi Camotsch to the N.E. ridge of the peak, by which the top is soon gained. The view was of course fine, and specially striking from the appearance of the hamlets of Campo and Ghirone immediately at our feet. We tried to identify the scene of the historic glissade from the Camadra Pass made in June, 1865, by Messrs. Moore and Walker,†

* See 'Alpine Notes,' p. 56.

† *Alpine Journal*, vol. iii. p. 167.

but naturally at the end of a hot August there was much less snow than in June. Platta is by far the best starting-point for this ascent, as the Sura hut in the Plattas glen has long ceased to exist as even a rudimentary Club hut. We found the names of but one English party in the cairn (dating, I think, from 1885), while the most recent cards therein were dated 1888, since which time it would appear that no one has taken the trouble to make the ascent. On the morning of the 27th we went up in the diligence (simply a yellow two-horse carriage), to the great joy of the officials, who very rarely convey anything beyond the mails, to Santa Maria, close to the summit of the Lukmanier Pass. Here we got provisions, and started just before 9 A.M., to cross the mysterious *Bocca di Cadlimo* to Airolo. This is a pass which gave me a great deal of trouble when preparing my Adula 'Guidebook,' as I could get no clear account of it. In 1892, coming from Piz Blas to Santa Maria, we had descended the Cadlimo Valley on the E. side of the pass, but then, in ignorance of these parts, had made a great round towards the Uomo Pass before getting down on to the Lukmanier plateau. From below we saw what we believed * to be a short cut, and this we took in 1893. From Santa Maria we bore S.W. over grass slopes above the left bank of the Cadlimo or Medelser Rhein stream, and more or less by a cow track reached the Cassina la Bolla hut in 1 hr. 40 min. There is not the slightest difficulty in finding this way, which is by far the most direct. We proceeded up this desolate glen, my mind being full of the intricate history of the 'Mons Cadelinus.'† Keeping always on the left bank of the torrent, we passed the Stabbio di Mezzo hut in 40 min. from the Cassina hut, reached the shores of the Lisera lake in $\frac{1}{4}$ hr. more, and thence made our way over a wilderness of stones, past many small lakes, some of which only are indicated on the Swiss map, to the ridge of the pass (55 min., or $3\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. from Santa Maria), which lies much further back than one imagines. The view from the pass is one of absolute desolation, even by comparison with La Bérarde, or the Dévoluy. The topographical interest of the pass is the sole point in its favour. Near the pass we found bits of a track and some ruined cairns. We tried at first to descend to the right or N.W., but finding progress stopped by a great ravine, bore back to the left or S.W., keeping far to the left, and by many stones gaining the first basin or hollow. Bearing now to the right (N.W.) and crossing the stream, grassy slopes and bits of precipitous rocks brought us down to the second hollow or Pian Bornengo. At the further end of this we came to a stone hut (1 hr. 5 min. from the pass), soon after which a broad path was joined. This soon becomes smaller, and passes opposite to the Froda hut ($\frac{1}{4}$ hr.). Most of the upper huts in the Canaria glen are on the left bank of the torrent, but we followed the main path (often rough enough) which keeps throughout on the right bank, contrary to the indications of the Swiss map, adopted in my 'Guide.' The glen is very narrow and steep. We passed the Lower Pautan huts in 35 min., and after a stony descent in the full sun were thankful to turn the corner in order to leave our valley, and enter the hamlet of Valle ($\frac{3}{4}$ hr.), $\frac{1}{4}$ hr. beyond which is Airolo (2 hrs.

* See *Adula Alps*, p. 28.

† See my *Guide*, pp. vii.-viii.

55 min. from the Bocca). This pass is perhaps the shorter way from the Lukmanier to the St. Gotthard road, but it is far less picturesque than the round by the Uomo Pass, and the finely placed inn of Piora, at the S.W. end of the great Ritom lake.

Here our wanderings in the Adulas ended for 1893. They do not contain any very high or difficult summits, but abound in lovely bits of scenery; while the inhabitants, though unused to strangers, are well-to-do, and no more civilised than is usual in remote Alpine valleys. Hence the rare travellers who pass are sure of a hearty and genuine welcome, which carries one's mind back to the days when Grindelwald and Zermatt were the haunt of true lovers of mountains.

In June, my friend Herr Emil Huber, of Zürich (the chief explorer of the Selkirks in North America), made two most interesting new routes in the Adulas, of which he has been kind enough to send me notes, supplementing his brief account in 'Alpina,' No. 2, pp. 16, 17. Accompanied by the guide Josef Gamma, of Göschenen, he made (June 14) the ascent of the Pizzo Columbe,* direct by the steep rocks of the W. face, in $1\frac{1}{2}$ hr. from the Piano dei Porci, and descended by the N.E. side and the North Columbe Pass to the Piano in 1 hr. Both routes were new. Herr Huber has had the goodness to send me several beautiful photographs of this sharp little dolomitic peak, particularly one of our cairn, taken from the foot of the final rocky head. On June 17 the same party ascended the Piz Terri by the W. arête, and then, profiting by a hint of mine,† went down the S. arête (a new route) as far as the second deep gap, keeping either on the crest of the ridge or on its S.W. face. Thence they descended by steep slate slopes and a very steep snow gully on the E. face of this arête to a point about 2,400 m. high ($1\frac{1}{4}$ hr.), then turning S. and crossing the Vanescha Pass to Zervreila ($4\frac{1}{4}$ hrs.). Herr Huber has also most courteously sent me a photograph of the E. face of the Terri, with his route marked on it.

Dr. Darmstädter's detailed account of his important journey in the Adulas has now appeared in the 'Zeitschrift' of the German and Austrian Alpine Club, vol. xxiv. pp. 217-248.

I may mention, too, that in the 'S. A. C. Jahrbuch,' xxviii. pp. 353-5, will be found an account of an ascent of Piz Borel (2,875 m.±) from the Pian Bornengo Pass. This was made in 1891, and the great cairn on the summit was supposed to be due to the Federal surveyors. A coloured panorama from the top is given. In July, 1893, Dr. Colin Campbell, of Dundee, made a most careful exploration of the minor summits of the Badus range, besides an ascent of the Piz Ravetsch,§ by way of Piz Alv|| and Piz Borel, descending to the Cornera glacier and the Passo Vecchio. He has very kindly sent me full notes of his climbs, but I hope he will soon describe them himself in these pages.

These notes will, I trust, be of use to those intending to visit the Adulas, and may serve to show how much exploration remains still to be done in purely Swiss ranges. Other less important notes I reserve for a future new edition of my 'Guidebook.'

* The second. See *Adula Alps*, p. 34. † *Adula Alps*, p. 75.
 ‡ See *Adula Alps*, p. 16. § *Adula Alps*, p. 17. || P. 12.