

to, shall I say, 'mid on,' and then escaped to the 'long field,' where Sylvain, who was doubtless revelling in the remark of his fellow-countryman 'Suave mari magno,' was laughingly awaiting me.

At 4.50 we left the moraine for the grass, and, quitting it at 5.12, did not reach the Val Ferret road till 6.37, for we made up for our hurry above by taking it easy. Moreover the bilberries were plentiful, and dead ripe. The guides went to La Vachey for our baggage, and I started across the marsh, where I found *Menyanthes trifoliata* in abundance. I sat down contentedly on a fence by the torrent and listened, on the confines of sleep, to its brawling. 'Be thankful for a very good climb' was about the English of it.

Then the guides came up, and all went well till we reached the church of Courmayeur. Here rain began; but what cared we? As I entered the Royal I heard the cheerful buzz of after-dinner conversation, but escaped to my room unespied, and, regarmented, supped in luxury. There was a ball that night. They of the Royal had invited them of the Angel, and they (the Angels, I mean) did not go home till morning. But sleep was not therefore murdered, for Morpheus, the only god, so far as my observation goes, that writers in this journal habitually mention, perhaps because they have so much need of him—Morpheus was too strong for Terpsichore's flute, violin, bassoon. I slept in peace.

#### SOME ROCK CLIMBS IN NORWAY IN 1896.

By H. C. BOWEN.

THE summer of 1896 was a remarkable one in many ways; not the least noteworthy feature was the contrast between the weather in Norway and the Alps. While in the latter, from all accounts, the three climbing months were one long, dreary succession of cloudy skies, and almost uninterrupted snow and rain, in Norway we were basking in sunshine, at any rate during August and the first half of September, with but one serious break of six days, just at the end of the former month.

C. W. Patchell and I reached Turtegrö, that charming little mountain inn, some 4 hrs. above Skjolden, at the head of the Sogne Fjord, on August 3. Johannes Vigdal had joined us *en route* at his native village, Solvorn, so that our party was complete. We had two preliminary expeditions, one up the middle Ruenstind by the E. face, which we fondly

imagined was a novel route—to be undeceived by a note of Slingsby's in the 'Alpine Journal,' vol. xvii. p. 950—the other a crossing of the Soleitind; and then, on Saturday, August 8, we started for the Skagastöltinder. A short description of the relative position of these will, perhaps, be excused by such of my readers as are not acquainted with the district. To the E. of the Skagastölsbræ there lies a great *massif* of rock, running, roughly speaking, N. and S., with three distinct peaks, of which the most southerly, and therefore furthest away from Turtegrö, is the Store or the great Skagastöltind, the middle one the Vesle, *i.e.* the little, and the most northerly the Mellemste, *i.e.* the midmost or central, though N. again of this last there is a rounded hump, dignified by the name of the Nordre Skagastöltind.\*

Slingsby made the first ascent of Skagastöltind, as every one—at least every Norwegian—knows, in 1876, reaching the col (Mohn's Skar), between the peak and the Vesle, by a small glacier, which now bears his name, to the E. of the mountain; from this he reached the top alone by the N.E. ridge. The climb had only been once repeated (by the artist Herr Petersen, also alone, in 1878, after a plucky but unsuccessful attempt in 1877). This is not from any special difficulty in the route from the col, but because another way was found out straight up the E. face by the rocks and a chimney, which is shorter than the original route when the ascent is made, as is now invariably the case, from the N. side of the chain instead of from the S., as in 1876.

No one, however, had as yet climbed along the whole ridge, and traversed the three peaks of the range, though Herr Hall, the indefatigable Danish climber, had made several attempts; the great difficulty was a rock wall, or screen, some 30 ft. in height, between the Mellemste and Vesle Skagastöltinder, where the ridge appears to be cut off. It is well seen in the reproduction of a photograph, by Hall, in the 'Aarbog' of 1895, p. 60. The question was, which way to attack it. By beginning from the N.—that is, from Mellemste—a party would have to get *up* the screen; and this is what we determined to try and do. Leaving the little inn of Ivar Øiene at 8 A.M., we started in doubtful weather, walked up the valley until we were almost under Mellemste, and there took to the rocks. The conquest of this peak occupied some 2½ hrs., as there was one rather trying place, eventu-

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\* Ascended in 1820 by the plucky pioneers in Norsk mountaineering, Professors Keilhau and Boeck.

ally surmounted only by the leader standing on another man's shoulders and reaching the required hold. How Vigdal managed to steady himself as he did, with nearly 12 stone standing on his shoulders, remains a mystery to me to this day. To cut matters short, at last we reached the crux of the climb. At first sight it certainly did look a difficult problem. One thing was plain—namely, that a way straight up the curtain was impossible; it was nearly vertical, and overlooking a grand precipice above the Styggedalsbræ, and the cracks in it would give no effectual help of any kind. On the right, or W., side the curtain hung over the arête, so to speak, and there was obviously but one way to try—to the left. Some 6 ft. above a small platform there was a kind of chimney, tight enough to jam oneself in securely; this contracted into a crack leading up to a large block of stone, which in turn brought one out to the top. First one and then a second was shoved up into the chimney, and the leader was able to work his way up to the great block by the help of an axe in the crack. Our difficulties were then over, as the block proved easy to surmount. It was a pleasant climb from there to the Vesle Skagastölstind, and down to Mohn's Skar. Slingsby's route up Skagastölstind was interesting, as the rock is everywhere sound and good. As the descent by the ordinary route is very often made I need say no more.\* The day proved a bad one; a dense fog enveloped us during the whole climb, with a fairly persistent fall of sleet and rain. We passed through Skjolden on leaving the Horungtinder, and Thorgeir Sulheim was most generous in his congratulations. When one considers that the district is, as it were, his own private preserve, and that he himself had failed on the very climb which we had the good fortune to bring off, it shows, I think, a magnanimity in him which is rather out of the common.

We crossed the Justedalsbræ by what has now become a common route from Ny Sæter, in Austerdal, to Briksdal,† and two days after made an attempt to force a way up the S.E. or E. arête of Lodals Kaupe; but, alas! it was not to be. The arête is tremendously jagged and broken, and though perhaps it might be climbed, it would require a night out to do so, or at any rate a very early start from Bødal Sæter. You can

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\* In the Yearbook of the *Den. Nor. Tur. For.* for 1897, at p. 54, there is a well-drawn illustration of a chimney on this route being ascended by three men.

† *Alpine Journal*, vol. xvii. p. 351.

get to this place by the little steamer which plies to and fro on the Loen Vand, and conveys the tourist to Kjændal, from which one can walk to the foot of the Kjændals-bræ, and look up at the huge broken icefall down which Slingsby came. Vidgal, who was his companion on that memorable occasion, had evidently seen enough then, for when we asked him to come with us he refused with a positive shudder.\* The next day we said good-bye to him with much regret; he is an excellent companion and a good fellow. If one is ambitious to do all the leading work he is quite content to follow, ready to lend a hand, and absolutely safe on rocks. If, on the contrary, he is called upon to lead, I believe he does it very well, and though he cannot be compared with the best of the Swiss guides in mountaineering science he has, I venture to assert, more intelligence and more cultivation.

One week in the comfortable hotel at Øie, which we reached across country from Faleide, *via* Grodaas, was almost perfect in its weather, and the views from Slogen, Smörskredtind, and Skruven were most magnificent. We climbed a spur of Jagta that seemed to be new, and had some pleasant and exciting scrambling on the S.E. arête of the Gjeithorn, which is broken up by two or three gaps which were impracticable. From Øie, partly by road, partly by steamer, we got to the Romsdal, and came in for the first bad break in the weather. It rained from Monday till the following Saturday, on which day, however, Patchell and I were able to get up the Horn, a climb which is too familiar to need any description.

On Monday, August 31, we left Dale at 6 a.m. for Mjöltnir, † or the Kvandalstind, as it is generally called by the inhabitants. It stands at the head of the Kvandal and has a very imposing appearance from the road above Dale. Our information concerning it was, for various reasons, of a scanty nature, and any route up quite unknown to us. We had read, thanks to Baedeker, that it had been called 'one of the steepest mountains in Europe,' which was interesting but hardly useful knowledge. On reaching the head of the valley there are two glaciers thrown down by it, and we selected the left of the two and ascended by snow, rocks, and the trough of the left bank to the névé above the icefall, and thence to the rocky skar at the foot of the S.E. arête. This arête, which throughout afforded good scrambling,

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\* *Alpine Journal*, vol. xi. p. 148.

† For the paper describing the ascent of this mountain by Mr. C. Hopkinson see *Alpine Journal*, vol. xiv. p. 380, foll.

we followed until just under the great tower which can be seen very well from Dale. The rocks leading up to the tower looked difficult, and by a convenient ledge we turned left on to the W. side, and then back again over easy rock *débris* to the foot of the final peak, when we again took to the arête and reached the first top at 1 p.m. There are three summits, separated from one another by short distances, and the passage from the first to the others presents no great difficulties. The most exciting part of the climb is from the foot to the top of the first summit. The holds are everywhere good, but it is undoubtedly steep and severe work. With any ice on the rocks they might be somewhat dangerous. In the descent we avoided, as far as possible, the glacier below the icefall, as stones were occasionally booming down in an ugly way. The expedition, including halts, took 14 hrs., and can be strongly recommended, as there is a certain amount of ice work—more than one generally finds in Norwegian climbs—and excellent rock-climbing. The view from the summit is rather disappointing. The Söndmøre and Horunger mountains are rather too far away for effect, and the Venge-tinder shut out most of the view on one side, though in themselves they are fine objects. The Horn is very dwarfed, almost absurdly so, and loses all its grandeur of form. Two days afterwards we ascended the highest Vengetind, and on September 4 crossed over to the Eikisdalsvand, taking the Gjuratind on our way, down to Hoem, where there are excellent quarters of a primitive kind. We rowed across the lake the following morning to Vike Sæter, and, mounting the long shoulder of the Aagottind, reached the cairn on the first top at 12.30. From this point an excellent ridge climb of some hour and a half leads to the highest point, though the ridge in reality is almost level. On a clear day it must be a beautiful expedition, as the Eikisdalsvand, one of the most picturesque lakes in Norway, lies at one's feet, running almost parallel to the ridge, flanked by the mountains on its W. shore. Unluckily we were enveloped in mist all day, and were thus deprived of one of the greatest charms in this climb. From Reitan, at the foot of the lake, an interesting pass leads back to Dale; it starts up towards the Mardölafos, along the high land above, and so over into Erstedal, and comes down into the valley by one of the worst and most dangerous paths I have ever met with either in Norway or the Alps.

I need add little more to this plain narrative of what is, after all, a not very eventful summer's campaign, though

perhaps from the number of expeditions—sixteen—and the peaks actually climbed—fifteen—it is worthy of mention in the 'Journal.' Dr. Claude Wilson's instructive paper in the thirteenth volume of the 'Alpine Journal' should be read by all who intend to climb in the country. It is really hardly necessary now to point out the differences between climbs in the Alps and in Norway. Glaciers are on a much smaller scale, generally speaking, and are very easy: on the other hand, those glaciers which come down from the Justedalsbræ are immense, and in August utterly impracticable. Take, for instance, the three arms of the Austerdalsbræ, where you have a sheer icefall of at least 2,000 ft., often swept by ice avalanches and broken up into the wildest and most extravagant shapes. One gallant Norwegian, Herr Bing, fought his way up the terrific icefall of the Brixdalsbræ on July 5, 1895, and had many adventures on the ice in 1894, which are described in vol. xvii. of the 'Alpine Journal,' and he deserves every credit for such feats of daring and skill. Early starts are hardly necessary in Norway. If one's party can get off by 5 A.M. it is quite sufficient for most expeditions, and the lantern need hardly ever be used. It follows that the days will not be exceedingly long ones: 12 to 14 hours *ought* to be enough for anything, and thus one is often able to climb on successive days without over-fatigue or inconvenience. To any one who is fond of rock-climbing pure and simple, and who has never been to Norway, my advice would be to go and try a season there, especially if he is lucky enough to find the weather such as it was during last summer. The food is not quite all that one can desire, and rye bread becomes a weariness to the flesh after long experience of it; but the country is a beautiful one, and the inhabitants are still, in the remote districts, as kind, as hospitable, and as unspoilt as ever.

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### ASCENTS IN MEXICO.

BY A. R. HAMILTON.

The heights given below for the four Mexican volcanoes have been supplied by Mr. D. Freshfield as the most recent and accurate determinations known to him, and superseding those given by Stieler and Chisholm. They are extracted from a paper by Professor A. Heilprin in the 'Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, 1890.' They were apparently unknown to the writer of these notes, whose opinion of the height of Ixtaccihuatl they confirm.—EDITOR.

#### POPOCATEPETL (17,523 ft.).

ON August 29, 1895, Dr. Scheller from Washington and I left Amecameca, with our guides and baggage, at 2 P.M. and rode up