

when by these means one had got below the block to get under it and into the cave in a more or less horizontal position until it was safe to jump on to the floor. The third block was managed in a similar way, but was not so difficult. The descent of the party of three down the whole Kamin took over 2 hrs.

On the rocks just below I was unfortunate enough to get a stone on my head; we had not thought it worth while to shorten the rope, as we contemplated a halt, and were climbing rather carelessly. As an instance of the difficulty I have just spoken of I may add that we were 1 hr. 50 min. zigzagging about on easy ground on the top of rock walls before we got down the 500 ft. to the Spranje, though José Komáč knew the way well.

In conclusion I have to express my thanks to Mr. Sydney Donkin for the loan of the Zillerthal slides; to Messrs. Shea, Jones, and Friedmann, members of our Club, for the Dolomite slides; and to Herr Geyer, late President of the Austrian Alpine Club, for the views of the Sappada group.

---

#### THE NOASCETTA GLACIER AND THE BECCA DI MONCIAIR.

BY THE EDITOR.

‘**WHAT!** another paper on the Grand Paradis group?’ Gentle reader, I will not conceal from you that I am : trespasser on your kindness, if not on a field which younger men should cultivate. But there are reasons which I could lay before you which might plead for me. You should have been entertained to a narrative by a successor—nay, to two narratives by two successors—of Prometheus, that demigod who anticipated the triumphs of the Alpine Club in the frosty range which it so soothes us to read of when the dogstar rages. (I admit, parenthetically, that he has not greatly raged of late.) You should have been regaled with great deeds on peaks whose very names strike a chill into the marrow of anyone who fears an imputation on his spelling. But here the kindest of readers breaks in upon me with the unanswerable question, ‘Then why are we not so entertained and regaled?’ Well, I cannot put the case more forcibly than in the words of a lady of great beauty and experience—‘No one can be more wise than destiny.’ Destiny prevented it. Of your kindness, blame destiny and forgive me.

I never enter one of the southern side-glens of the great Valley of Aosta without a little thrill of satisfaction and

expectation. So many happy memories haunt them, and there is even yet something for the lover of new routes to be found there. Last year my friend Dr. Tempest Anderson and I, after a few rain-marred days at Courmayeur, descended with sudden resolution to Villeneuve, where, by the way, we met with clean accommodation and reasonable prices at the ancient inn of The Stag.

The guides, thanks to the telegraph, were awaiting us, and next day saw us at Dégioz, and the day after found us established at the Victor Emmanuel Refuge on the flank of the Grand Paradis. The inns at Dégioz and Pont both now deserve recommendation. The one at Pont we found very satisfactory, and the travellers, some of them of Caucasian renown, whose names we read in the Visitors' Book, were without an exception eulogistic in their remarks both about the inn and the mountains; perhaps as one who is, to use Lamb's words, 'on some little footing' with most of them, I may here offer the thanks of the Grand Paradis and his neighbours to the visitors for the kind way in which they have spoken of them.

We are assured by a shrewd judge that 'new-made honour doth forget men's names'; it requires little shrewdness to observe the strange incongruity with which men's names are bestowed, but of all incongruous titles the name of this little inn, and of that at Dégioz, have the pre-eminence. At Dégioz, under the very shadow of the Grivola, mine host calls his house the Hôtel du Grand Paradis, while here, at the foot of the Paradis, the signboard proclaims as it creaks in the wind 'The Hôtel de la Grivola.' At the Refuge we spent four nights in peace and plenty. Anderson's stores would have sufficed for a modest field force or a flying squadron. Soups, raisins, chocolates, biscuits, gingerbreads, preserved meats and tongues jostled one another in wild profusion on the mule's back. The humble tea and lemon never failed us, and fowls, eggs and very fair wine arrived from time to time from the Pont inn. Mora, the mule who carried them up to us, was a source of great pride to her owner, and of admiration to us. Though advanced in years, she was robust and willing, and won me a totally unexpected compliment, for when I said, 'Though your mule has a few white hairs she is still in her prime,' her owner replied, 'Yes, therein she resembles Monsieur himself.' Could a courtier have been readier? By the way, one dish at the Hôtel de la Grivola deserves mention. It verges, perhaps, on the 'strange flesh' supposed of old to be eaten on the mountains, but yet does not displease, to use Elia's phrase, 'the critical-

ness of the censorious palate.' A mess of frogs and kidneys is this dish. The coffee, too, is praiseworthy. You may behold it roasted in the roadway *coram populo* in a time-honoured apparatus and a drizzling rain.

On the morning of August 8 we divided our forces, Anderson and Sylvain devoting themselves—with very satisfactory results, by the way—to photography, whilst François and I made for the Col du Grand Paradis. I had started with the intention of exploring the Costa Parasseus, but I found it difficult to make the map agree with the glacier and ridges before us. The huge size of the Noaschetta glacier, which I had not visited for some years, surprised me. At last, however, we made up our minds, and eventually reached the lower end of the Costa. At starting the weather was very cold and the wind biting, and we found the little lake on the top of the col frozen over, and indulged in a little stone-throwing to test the ice and warm ourselves.

We reached the Costa nearly at its eastern end, and then climbed along it to its western extremity. About the middle of the ridge we found a ruinous cairn. Between this cairn and the highest point there were one or two bits of amusing climbing. I remember in one place wriggling sideways, with my legs extended over the Val Ciamoseretto. The Costa may be said to end on the eastern side of a big tower—the extremity of the Tresenta ridge.\* When we sat down to lunch at the end of the Costa were about on a level with La Tour, 10,578 (Paganini), so that the Bochetta Goj, which I crossed with Séraphin Henry on August 19, 1883, must be well over 10,000 ft. The views had been glorious. The Charforon and his neighbours I have never seen to such advantage, and far away, to the Maritime Alps, every range stood in more than martial splendour before us, as if they had just taken up their positions in review-order and the dust of their march still clung to them, for scarves of mist lingered at intervals from our feet to the far distant Apennines. To add to our enjoyment, we found rocky armchairs on the sunny side of the ridge, out of reach of the still biting wind. The Val d'Orco, with its climbing forests, seemed to challenge comparison with the rocks and snow, and a little lake in the Ciamoseretto valley, ruffled by the wind and sparkling in the sun every now and again, attracted our eyes and bade us, as it were, measure the depth of the great precipice below us.

On the next day, August 10, the whole party started to

\* For details see *Alpine Journal*, vol. xviii. p. 524.

examine and photograph the eastern portion of the Noaschetta Glacier. Anderson began operations with the little lake on the top of the Col du Grand Paradis, and then took the imposing picture of the Cresta Gastaldi, Col de l'Abeille, and the mass of the monarch of the Cogne mountains which faces this page. The day was all that could be wished; the cold had gone, and only a few clouds, lost wanderers from the tempest's fold, were to be seen at a great height.

We were lucky enough to come upon four full-grown chamois and a little one as they raced down the lower part of the Noaschetta Glacier. We eventually reached at our leisure the lower point of the Becca del Deir Verd, 10,457 ft. (Paganini). The views we here enjoyed were most interesting, both orographically and for their variety and beauty. Anderson was soon very busy. Meantime, Pession and I took off our coats, put on the rope, and went off in great glee to conquer if we could the higher point of our peak, 10,598 ft. (Paganini). This point is quite startling in its boldness, and gave us a quarter of an hour's very enjoyable amusement. Amongst the rocks flourished the tiny foliage of many Alpine plants, with here and there an occasional flower. *Chrysanthemum alpinum* seemed the most plentiful, though gentians were not wanting. The one side of our little peak overhung, and its precipices were awesome. As to the view, I shall not attempt to describe it, but the following lines of Milton will give a general idea of its magnificence :

It was a mountain at whose verdant feet  
A spacious plain outstretched in circuit wide  
Lay pleasant; from his side two rivers flowed,  
The one winding, the other straight, and left between  
Fair champaign, with less rivers interveined,  
Then meeting joined their tribute to the sea.  
Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil, of wine;  
With herds the pasture thronged, with flocks the hills.

François and I, I am afraid, behaved more like two boys let loose for an extra half-holiday than like sober men. When we reached, on our way back to the lower peak, the big tower that forms its summit, I said to François, 'That's a fine rock.' 'Yes, it is,' he answered; 'we'll go up it.' So we did. Pession climbed it in fine style, and then sent down the rope for me; so I tied myself on, and then climbed up comfortably, with the two guides holding on at the top in case of need. In the descent we had followed a much easier way.

It takes a good deal when mountaineering to drive out the desire of meat and drink, as Homer puts it. We now had an



*Tempest Anderson, photo.*

*Swan Electric Engraving Co.*

**COL DE L'ABEILLE AND CRESTA GASTALDI**

**From the Noaschetta Glacier.**

illustration. The red wine was nearly exhausted, but François, by help of a reservoir extemporised by his ice-axe, succeeded in largely diluting the little that remained. Where was the sugar? All gone. Despair was imminent, but a counsellor was at hand. 'Why don't you try that half-finished pot of strawberry jam?' 'A very good idea.' The jam, the wine, the water promptly fraternised, as, indeed, they could hardly help doing under the vigorous persuasion of the shaking François gave them, and the result proved highly satisfactory to the three toppers. I meantime had constructed a humbler reservoir, and with the help of a lemon and a few drops of Marsala mixed a somewhat thin drink, not to be despised under the circumstances, though far removed, I was boldly informed, from the excellence of the strawberry brand. We raced down the Moncorvé side of the Col du Grand Paradis in a perfect torrent of stones; and admiring on our way the distant Grande Casse, Tsanteleina, and Sassiére, as well as the high pastures on the other side of the Val Savaranche, which were of a very beautiful dark green with lovely shadows, we reached the Refuge in good time.

To revert to our arrival at Pont. No sooner did we reach the end of the little hamlet than

Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,  
Whilst the landscape round it measures.

There is the inn. There is, above all, the beautiful Becca di Monciair. I do not think that I know any mountain in the Alps which for its height asserts itself more proudly, or wears a more majestic mien, than this rock-peak of 11,627 ft. Whether glistening in the sunshine or, as was more often the case last summer,

Kerchiefed in a comely cloud,

it attracted me so strongly that at the sight of it the vague design I had formed in the preceding winter crystallised at once into a resolution to lose no time in trying the northern ridge, so well seen in the accompanying illustration from one of Anderson's excellent photographs.

On the morning of August 10 we started to make this climb. Anderson came with us to the middle of the Monciair glacier and then remained to photograph. When the apparatus had been duly arranged and the provisions divided, we left Anderson to reap a rich harvest, and set off.

From the spot where we separated, the great sights were Mont Blanc, pure white, and the self-assertive Gran Nomenon, black, with a tint of red.

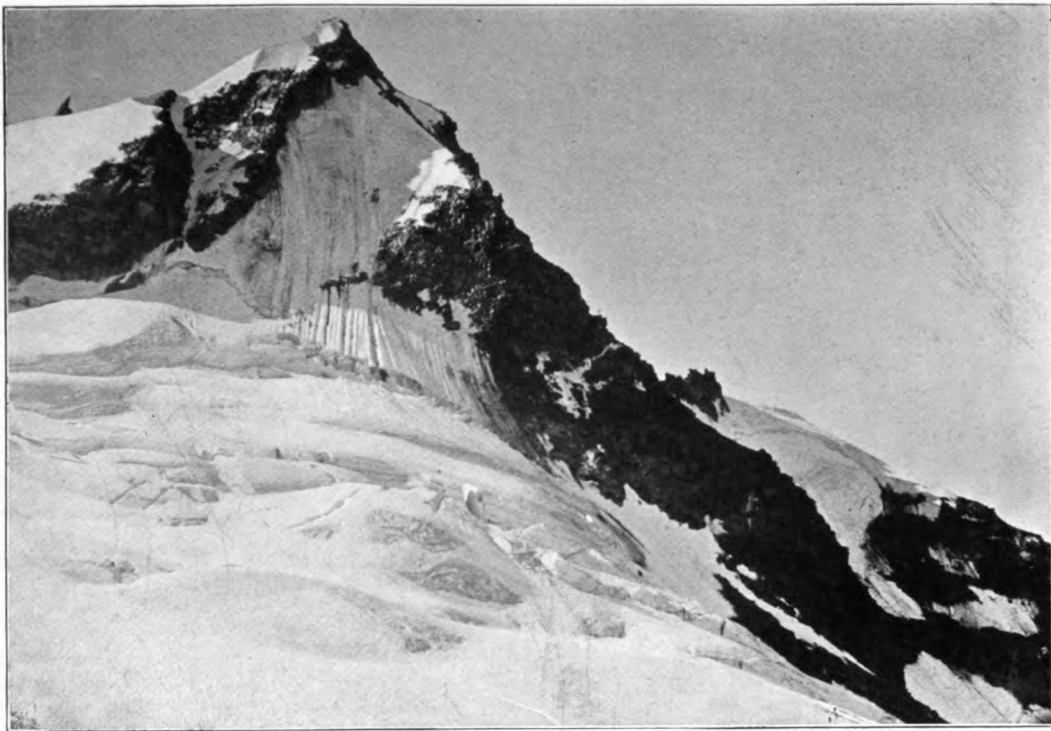
To reach the northern ridge of our mountain we had to descend a steep slope of ice, raked in the afternoon by stones and ice. One great green-glimmering sérac seemed to watch us threateningly, but one small stone was all that fell. François cut steps as quickly as possible, and we were soon out of danger. We were unanimously of opinion that it would have been better to have struck the ridge at its actual foot. We now reascended over ice and snow to the rocks on the east side of the ridge. We went up these rocks to the right, and then, after turning considerably to the left again, inclined to the right, and so reached the little projection, or shoulder, the first that shows prominently on the ridge. I have recollections of some bare slabs without cracks, but so rough that it was not difficult to get up them. The piece before this was worse, as it was steep, there was ice in the cracks and we were moving slantwise.

For a good part of the time we kept the actual ridge. Sometimes we diverged to the right, occasionally to the left, as Pession deemed best. Once or twice, after trying to the left, he came down again and we got up on the right. In places the stones were unstable, and met with many abusive epithets.

Below the most prominent tooth in the ridge we stopped for a slight refectation. There did I bestow benedictions on the Pont innkeeper, who had had the enterprise to provide us with excellent Aostan peaches. Nor did he afterwards spoil their delectable memory by asking an exorbitant price for them. The iccled peak always pleases me best when the glen underneath it opens out into some great valley like that of Aosta, where the peach and the vine revel in the warm sunshine. The nearer the fruit-clad valley the more austere and stern appear the walls and pinnacles of ice which clothe such giants as the Grand Paradis and his attendants.

Memory brings back to me the passing up of axes, the climbing on Sylvain's shoulders, or the prayer for a good shove as I stuck a foot as high up as I could, and, scraping my hands against the rock, found a precarious handhold, good enough for one who has the faithful Pession above him with the cord ever tight.

We saw for some time Anderson at his photographic toil, and had glimpses of the Pont inn with its background of rock and its green meadow in front. Then we measured with our eyes the huge mass of the Paradis, admired the majesty of the Grivola, and thought no scorn of the bold bare rock wedge of the Nomenon.



*Tempest Anderson, photo.*

**BECCA DI MONCIAIR.**  
From the Moncorvé Glacier.

*Swan Electric Engraving Co.*

By-and-by we came to the shoulder with the big patch of snow which is so conspicuous from the Moncorvé Glacier, and here I admit my enthusiasm was somewhat dashed. The rocks, which always inclined to be unstable, and sometimes attained their ideal, were here exchanged for a slippery shale—without good foothold, without danger, but exasperating in the extreme. Every second step was wasted by a slip backwards; but this change in the tactics of our foe, though it annoyed us, could not delay us long. We were soon over the depressing bit, and, gripping the last crags with energy, found ourselves on the top almost before we expected. The climb on the whole had furnished much interest not unmixed with excitement, for, as I have mentioned before, our leader had several times had to descend and try another route. Pession was more complimentary than usual. A good climb, as it always does, had made him happy. Nor was his Monsieur less joyful; to have climbed the new ridge of a beautiful peak was a great satisfaction—to have climbed it not without severe exertion a greater; for though the view is dear, a good hard tussle to gain it makes it dearer. We did not, as on the previous days, enjoy the great view over the Italian plain. The lazy billows of a great cloud-sea had rolled over all; but one little opening was left through which we could see perfectly a portion of the plain with trees and streams; then, even as we gazed, the clouds closed over it.

When Coolidge and I with young Christian Almer and Séraphin Henry had ascended the Monciair by the N.E. ridge from the Col du Charforon in 1885, the snow was in such a perfect state that we had actually walked straight down it towards the Col, but in 1897 this was out of the question. We therefore descended by the rocks, which are not difficult, though, of course, they took more time.

One patch of ice some few feet below the level of the Col gave us a little trouble. Sylvain, who was leading, cut down to his right against a bare wall of rock, though I think Pession was in favour of the left-hand side of the slope (I certainly was), so that when a great flake of ice fell off in such a way as to make the right-hand route still more difficult to engineer, and Sylvain was recalled to try on the left, I was well satisfied. We got down all right, for Pession, who had the last man's very awkward task, managed with his usual skill. After this the snow was very steep, but in excellent condition, and we soon came to the big ice moat which runs across the upper part of the glacier. I paid the rope out to Sylvain, while Pession held it tight between us,

so that if the snow had given way under Sylvain the shock would have fallen on us both as one man. Presently Sylvain called out that he was all right and ready to jump. I advanced near to the edge of the chasm, gave him rope, and saw him land in the soft snow. I followed, nothing loth, for the jump, though perhaps a little formidable in appearance, involved nothing more than a sousing in the snow. Pession joined us, and we made at a good pace for the big moraine between the Monciair and Moncorvé glaciers, two hours from the summit. There we found Anderson, had a little pleasant refreshment, and afterwards strolled into the Refuge, after a most enjoyable day. By taking the north ridge for the ascent, and descending by the north-east ridge, the Monciair becomes perhaps the most tempting of all the many climbs that can be made from the Refuge.

Lovers of the Alpine flora will be interested to hear that about half-way up the north ridge of the Monciair I found a plant of *Ranunculus glacialis*, with two lovely blossoms, smaller and with less pink in them than one usually sees, but the perfection of shape and symmetry, and with centres of the brightest gold. It was interesting to notice the difference between this and the large plant of the same flower which I found in 1879 close to the top of the Pointe de Ceresole on its *south* side. Though born in the teeth of the bitter north, the tiny blossoms excelled in beauty their brothers of the sun-favoured south.

## IN MEMORIAM.

### JAMES HEELIS.

THE news of the unexpected death of Mr. James Heelis from dysentery at Yokohama, on March 23, while on a tour of pleasure round the world, came as a great shock to a large circle of friends, to whom his genial character had greatly endeared him. He was a keen mountaineer, and one who did not confine his operations to great centres, such as Zermatt, but loved to visit the Eastern Alps, the Dolomites, and the at that time but little frequented Graians. Nor were his efforts confined to the Alps. The hills of Cumberland and Westmoreland, North Wales, and the Cuchullins, in Skye, all served as fields for his favourite pastime. Not the least sad part of his unexpected death lies in the fact that he had but a little over twelve months retired from practice as partner in one of the best known firms of solicitors in Manchester, and was looking forward to a future which, free from business cares, should allow larger opportunities for mountaineering and travel. His loss