

you. The same remark, of course, applies to climbs when you mean to come down the way you went up. Take especial note of the openings of side-valleys, and the points where their torrents join the main stream. Always carry a compass, and in cloudy weather consult it every few minutes. In fine weather, accustom yourself to steer by the sun till you get your orientation instinctively. This last hint would seem superfluous did not experience show how many people may have been familiar with a place for years without knowing the 'aspects' of it, or how few seem to see instinctively on which side of a tree you ought to lie if you want the shadow to pass on to you and not off you. Conducted in this way, there can be no doubt that solitary mountaineering is a fine school for teaching endurance, foresight, and skill, to say nothing of observation; qualities for which no one is ever the worse in the mountains, even where no great 'technical' difficulties are before him. After all, it is in the unlikely places that accidents happen; and the man who is accustomed to going alone learns to regard no place as more likely than another, and therefore is on his guard in all.—*Explicit advocatus diaboli.*

THE COL DE LA SAUCE.

A NOTE

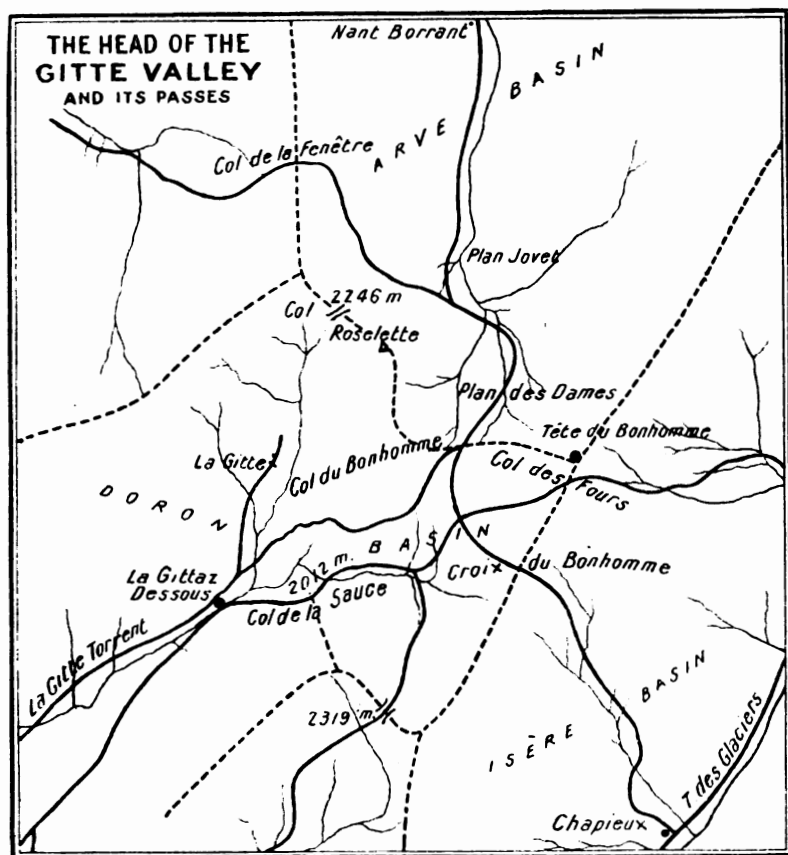
BY DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.

INVESTIGATIONS connected with the revision of the 'Alpine Guide' have recently led Mr. Coolidge and myself to the discovery of a curious confusion, or rather sequence of mistakes, with regard to the passes on the mule track round Mont Blanc between Contamines and Chapieux, which had up till now escaped the vigilance of successive editors—including ourselves—in the Guide-books we have at various times edited. I have also, I think, been successful in identifying in a long superseded map the origin of a double error in topography and nomenclature which seemed at first sight surprising in so careful a writer as the late Mr. Ball.

The traveller on the 'Tour of Mont Blanc,' if he has in his pocket both a modern guide-book—Ball, Murray, or Joanne—and one of the standard French Government maps, whether the *annuaire* mother map, or the more exact 'Carte de la Frontière Militaire' (the clearest as to paths), or the later but not always trustworthy 'Carte Vicinale,' will find it quite impossible to reconcile his books and maps.

The French maps all agree in indicating accurately what every one who traverses the track in clear weather sees to be the fact, that the path between Nant Borrant and Chapieux crosses two ridges, the first the water-parting between the Bonnant, a tributary of the Arve, and the Doron, a tributary of the Isère, which flows through the valley of Beaufort, the second the parting between the Doron and the torrent that flows from the western glacier of Mont Blanc past

Chapieux to join the Isère at Bourg St. Maurice. The 'Carte de la Frontière' and the 1866 map name the first pass the Col du Bonhomme, and the second the Croix du Bonhomme, names which, as readers of Principal Forbes's 'Travels in the Alps' are aware, have been long in local use. The former map further shows two paths mounting from La Gittaz Dessous, in the Beaufort valley, by the right and left banks respectively of the Gitte torrent, one of the sources



of the Doron, to join the Bonhomme track. The path on the right bank meets the track at the Col du Bonhomme. The path at first on the left bank crosses in order to avoid a defile a low spur (2,012 m., 6,601 ft.) named the Col de la Sauce. The name is given to the same spot on all the three French maps. This path then crosses the Gitte, after attaining its highest basin, and joins the Bonhomme track midway between the Col and the Croix,

at the point where the way to the Col des Fours branches off uphill.

It is clear from the maps that a pedestrian going from La Gittaz to Nant Borrant will find the most direct route by leaving the Bonhomme altogether to his right, and crossing the crest at the depression marked 2,246 m. N. of the chalets of Gitte, and N.W. of the Roselette—not to be confounded, as it is in the guide-books, with the aiguille of the same name, which is further to the N. This is the second Col de la Fenêtre afterwards mentioned.

Let us now take up our guide-books. In the unrevised 'Alpine Guide,' Section XII, Route F, we find a description of a 'Col de la Sauce' (*sic*) 'between the Tête du Bonhomme and the Rousselette at the junction between the valley of Beaufort and that of Montjoie, and, though 1 hr. distant, not much below the level of the Col du Bonhomme.' 'To reach Bourg St. Maurice from the Col de la Sauce it is necessary to follow the track to the Col du Bonhomme, and descend in 1½ hr. to Chapui.'

Turning to Section XVI, Route B, we read, 'Another ascent leads to what appears to be the desired col, but on reaching the summit, which lies between the Tête du Bonhomme and the Aiguille de Rousselette (9,848 ft.), it is seen that the pass, which does in truth lie between those summits, turns sharply to the W., and descends through the Vallon de la Gitte to St. Maurice de Beaufort. It is still a distance of 1 hr. across bare stony slopes, usually flecked with patches of snow, to the true pass. The Col du Bonhomme (8,195), marked by a large cross, is the watershed between the basin of the Arve, and that of the Isère.' These passages are both transcriptions from the 1860 edition of Joanne's 'Savoie.' In both the *Croix du Bonhomme* of Professor Forbes and the French maps is obviously miscalled the *Col*.

In Brockedon's 'Journal of Excursions on the Alps' and the first edition of Murray's Guide (1838) (in which this Route was written by Brockedon) the 'Col du Bonhomme' of the modern French maps is called the 'Col de Gauche,' and this name was retained till, in the 1861 edition (ninth), which was edited by Mr. Ball, 'Col de la Sauce' was substituted.

Now let us jump to the text of the 1891 Murray. I found this text and failed to correct it, as also did Mr. Coolidge, who added the heights. We read that from the 'Plan des Dames (6,796 ft.) another wild ascent of 40 min. leads up herbless slopes to what from below seems to be the Col, but it is the Col de la Sauce (6,601 ft.) (this height is transferred by an obvious slip from the Col de la Sauce of the French maps—D.W.F.), between Le Bonhomme and Mont Roselette, leading W. to Beaufort. Bearing left from this point, another hour S.E. across a pathless waste brings the traveller to the cross of the Col du Bonhomme.' The heights given on the Carte Militaire for the Col du Bonhomme are 2,340 m., 7,678 ft., and for the Croix 2,483 m., 8,146 ft.

Again, on p. 594 (Rte. 150) we read, 'At the head of the Val de la Gitte is the Col de la Sauce, opening on the Col du Bonhomme,

and at the head of its W. branch a second Col de Fenêtre, leading to the little inn of La Barne.'

The Col de la Sauce is said to be 'straight ahead' from the upper valley of the Gitte, and the 'Enclave de la Fenêtre,' to its left.

Joanne in his 1877 'Switzerland,' p. 192, says that after passing the col 'between the Aiguille de Rousselette and the Tête du Bonhomme' the traveller leaves to the right a path leading by the Col de la Sauce (2,012 m.) to the valley of Beaufort.

In his more recent 'Savoie,' 1895, p. 249, Joanne gives the name 'Col de la Sauce' to a gap (2,319 m.) in the hills on the *left* of the Gitte in the same ridge, near but higher than the Col de la Sauce of the maps, thus adding one more mistake to the tangled web; but in the new (1898) rewritten edition this mistake is corrected (p. 310), the col 2,319 being named 'Col des Chavannes,' the name of Col de la Sauce being apparently (pp. 250, 309) given to the gap marked on the French maps with that name.

It will be manifest to the attentive reader of the extracts given above that the old Ball's 'Alpine Guide,' while conveying in one sentence the impression that the second pass on the mule track leads directly from the basin of the Arve to that of the Isère, asserted somewhat inconsistently that from a first pass called the Col de la Sauce, a path leads to Beaufort, and that this pass is the gap between the Tête du Bonhomme and the Rousselette, the Col du Bonhomme of the French maps. In the new 'Ball' Mr. Coolidge has gone some way towards correcting these errors. On p. 216 he recognises the distinction made by Professor Forbes and the French maps between the Croix and the Col. But on p. 370 he relapses, and writes 'The true Col du Bonhomme (also called Croix du Bonhomme) is the watershed between the basin of the Doron and that of the Isère.' Further, the direct path from La Gittaz to the first Col (the Col du Bonhomme of the maps) keeps to the right bank and does not cross the Gitte torrent or go near the Col de la Sauce. Mr. Coolidge states this quite accurately on p. 216. But on p. 370 he writes, 'This pass (the Col du Bonhomme) leads W. by the Col de la Sauce (2,012 m., 6,601 ft.) through the Gitte glen to Beaufort.'

A little study revealed to me the probable origin of all this confusion. When Joanne wrote and Mr. Ball (who proves to be responsible for both our English standard guide-books so far as introducing the Col de la Sauce is concerned) copied from him, the standard and the only map of this region was the $\frac{1}{500,000}$ *Sardinian Map*. On this the lie of the ridges is misrepresented, the Bonhomme track being indicated as never crossing the watershed of the Beaufort valley at all, and the name *Plan de la Sausa* ('Sausa' is said in a dictionary of Savoyard patois to signify a shoe with a wooden sole) given to the spot where a path is shown connecting the Bonhomme track with that valley.

Hence the name 'Col de la Sauce'—which, according to the best modern maps, has no business at all on the N. side of the Beaufort valley, but ought to be kept for a lower hill-path beyond the Gitte

torrent which leads ultimately to the Bonhomme track, but never goes near the true Col du Bonhomme—came to be given to that pass and to the track on the right bank of the Gitte torrent descending from it to La Gittaz and Beaufort.

While regarding Government maps as a standard authority to which it is often expedient to bow, at least in matters of nomenclature, we have much reason to know that they are far from infallible as representations of local usage, and I should not be surprised if enquiry on the spot proved that 'La Sausa,' or 'Sauce,' was a name applied to the whole highest basin of the Gitte, and, consequently, that all the tracks leading into it were at one time indiscriminately called 'Cols de la Sauce.' The native form of the word seems to be 'Sause,' which is quite a common local name in Savoy. This would be entirely in accordance with my general experience of the origin and growth of a local nomenclature in mountain regions.

The 'second Col de la Fenêtre' is not named on the maps, though its height is given as 2,246 m., but it is easily recognisable, and I have accordingly inserted it in what is otherwise a partial facsimile of the Carte Militaire. This col has also been a cause of confusion to editors. Murray (1891), p. 559, Rte. 139, says, 'From the base of the Chalet à la Barne a track mounts left to the Col de la Fenêtre, leading to Beaufort by the valley of the Haute Luce, and further on another col, approached by a long slope of débris, leads to the same place by the beautiful Val de la Gitte, joining the path from the Col de la Saulce.'

The editor goes on to say that the Vaudois on their 'glorieuse rentrée' crossed the 'Col de la Fenêtre, Rte. 150,' passed the Chalet du Mont Jovet, 1½ m. above Nant Borrant, and went on by the Col du Bonhomme. But in Rte. 150 (p. 598) he tells us, 'At the head of the N. branch of the Val de la Gitte is a second Col de la Fenêtre, crossed by the Vaudois in 1689, leading to the little inn of La Barne.' This is inconsistent with the course laid down for the Vaudois in the previous route, which implies that they crossed the more northern Col de la Fenêtre leading from Mégève to Nant Borrant. In the new 'Alpine Guide,' pp. 212 and 214, Mr. Coolidge has corrected this small slip and designated the more N. Col de la Fenêtre 2,263 m. as that crossed by the Vaudois.

IN MEMORIAM.

C. J. ARKLE, M.D., F.R.C.P.

CHARLES JOSEPH ARKLE, a member of this Club since 1886, died from pneumonia on February 22 last, aged only 37 years.

He was educated at the Liverpool College and University College and Hospital, London. He graduated M.B. in 1885 with honours in medicine and forensic medicine, and M.D. in 1887. After filling various responsible positions in University College