

exception that one man had a very uncomfortable arm for a couple of hours after.

This was an entirely new sensation for all the Goorkhas, and was much enjoyed. Harkir led us down through the storm at a great pace, by a new route, which he considered and which proved to be a short cut to the little village for which we were aiming.

We found the village empty, with the exception of some women, and spent the night on the roof of a house in the rain, toasting corn cobs for dinner. The weather was very bad the following day, and we were obliged to remain in the village, but left on the second day, and crossing by the Shikara Pass, now deep in fresh snow, rejoined our luggage again, and so home.

I should like to explain that although Goorkhas have up to the present time been almost exclusively used in later climbing in the Himalayas, as a race they are not necessarily the only people fit for the work. In fact there are many races who are more hardy and more active than the average Goorkha. The Goorkha has, however, had the advantage of a military training and of being a disciplined being, and last, and not least, he has acquired the habit of using nailed boots and socks.

EXCURSIONS IN THE GRAIANS.

By ALFRED HOLMES.

THE Ala Valley, on account of its accessibility, is a favourite climbing ground of the Turin section of the Italian Alpine Clubs. The valley itself is very beautiful, and the peaks at its head are mostly easy. The Bessanese, which is the most difficult, appears to be practically unknown to English climbers, for, according to a list of ascents in the May 1899 number of the 'Rivista,' it had never been climbed by an English party. Mr. Coolidge ascended it some years ago, but he is put down in the list as an American. Before knowing this we had arranged to begin our tour in the Graians with the ascent of the Bessanese. J. J. Brigg accompanied me to Turin, where we were joined by E. J. Mazzuchi. On July 3 we went by railway and carriage in about 6½ hrs. to Balme (4,784 ft.), which is very prettily situated on the left bank of the Stura, with a good inn (Albergo Reale) at the lower end of the village. We were met there by a porter named Bricco, recommended to us by

Signor Gonella, a sturdily built man of thirty-five, who proved to be most useful and willing; he was a local chamois-hunter by profession, and had only acted as porter for two or three seasons; he had scarcely ever been on mountains outside his own district. Mazzuchi had been in correspondence with him, but the final arrangements were not made until we saw him. He caused us some amusement by asking if he might inspect our boots, to see if they were properly nailed. After examination he expressed himself satisfied, and that he was willing to accompany us. His principal business was to carry a camera and spare plates, weighing about 15 lbs. We bought some provisions, and then started for the Gastaldi Hut (8,691 ft.), which is situated in a hollow near the foot of the Bessanese, and about 3 hrs.' walk from Balme. On a pleasant green plain, the Piano della Mussa, 50 min. above Balme, a new hotel is being built, which will be open early in 1900. We arrived at the hut about 6 P.M., to find it in the possession of workmen, who were building an additional room. They told us that three days before there had been a severe storm, in which 16 in. of snow had fallen. On inspecting the sleeping-room we found the straw so wet as to be quite unfit for use, owing to the new snow banked up against the side of the hut having melted during the day, and trickled through the wall. We decided to sleep in the eating-room, on four benches placed close together against one side of the room, with a large table on the other to prevent the outside man from falling off; but what with the hardness of the bed and the intense cold sleep was almost impossible. The wind rose in the night, and blew half a gale.

At 4 A.M. when we looked out it was much too strong to start; it settled towards 8 o'clock, and we got away at 8.15. Our intention was to climb the Bessanese (which is described by 'Ball' as the Matterhorn of the district) from the Italian side, but the recent storm had made this impossible, so we crossed the Col d'Arnas (9,889 ft.) in order to see what the French side was like. The Col was reached at 9.40, but everything about 10,000 ft. was covered with cloud. We descended to Avérôle, and on to Bessans, arriving at the latter place, after many halts, at 2.20 P.M. Avérôle (6,774 ft.) is one of the highest villages in France inhabited all the year round; the women there are quite the prettiest peasant women I have seen anywhere in the Alps. At one of the chalets they very willingly boiled us some milk to make coffee. (We had some of the Military Equipment Stores compressed coffee, which was very good.) When the milk was ready we were invited

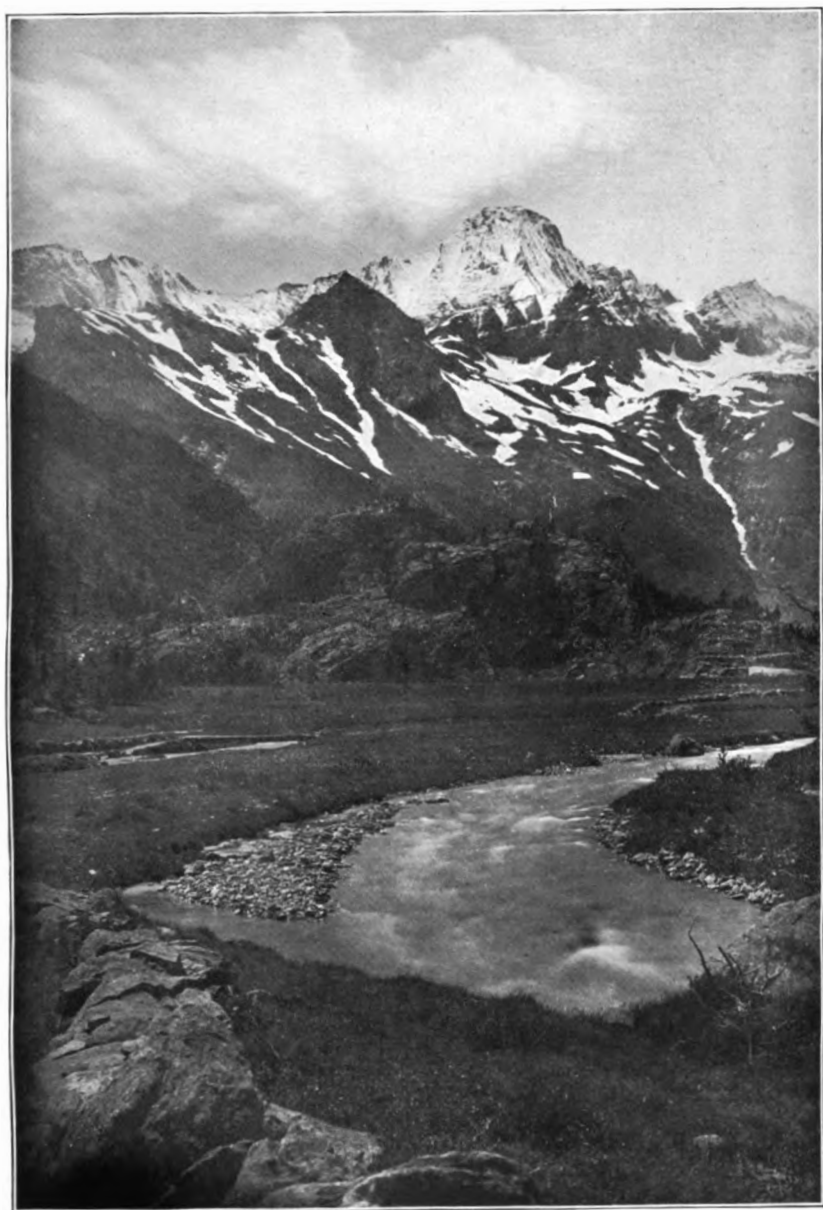


Photo by Alfred Holmes.

**THE BESSANESE,
From the East.**

Swan Electric Engraving Co.

to enter, and found the room exceedingly well furnished and very clean. Before leaving Turin we were warned that we might have trouble with the Custom House officers at Bessans on account of the camera, as the French authorities had recently issued some new regulations about photography near the frontier, or within a certain distance of a fortified place; but we had no trouble either at Bessans or anywhere else. On entering Bessans we thought that one of the Customs officers, who appeared to be in some authority, stared at us in a rather unfriendly manner, but later on, when we got to know him better, we came to the conclusion that it was only his natural expression, and did not mean anything. We put up at the Hôtel Cimarz, where we had good beds and fair food. Close to the hotel is a fine bridge which crosses the Arc and leads down to Lanslebourg and Modane.

We decided to return to the Bessanese, so after a day's rest we left Bessans at 3.10 A.M. on the 6th. On emerging from the hotel into the dark street we nearly fell over two Custom House officers who were sleeping there in sheepskin bags, raised about 6 in. from the ground by means of a light wooden structure; they told us they were on the look-out for smugglers. After apologising and offering them cigarettes, we went on our way, passing through Avérôle at 4.50. Continuing along the footpath to the Col d'Arnas for 50 min. we then turned to the left up grass slopes, on the left bank of a small stream, for 15 min., when we went E. and made for what looked like a stone-man (but which later on we found to be a natural pinnacle of rock) placed above some rocky plaques; still going eastwards over stone and grass slopes, we reached snow at 8.10. For the first hour we were mostly on moraine covered with snow of the crusted kind, which made the going slow and laborious. We then aimed for a big couloir which led up to the S. ridge of the Bessanese; taking to the rocks on the left bank of this couloir we reached the ridge at 10.40. A narrow ridge of rocks and snow led us in a few minutes to the rocks of the E. face; 20 min. more on not difficult rocks saw us on the lower summit called the Pointe Tonini, 11.55 A.M. (halts on the way 2 hrs.). 'Ball' says: 'The higher and central summit is attained in 25 min. or less by an awkward traverse on the W. side, and then by the ridge, N. or S. of it.' Unfortunately the rocks on the W. face of the peak were plastered with new snow 5 or 6 in. deep, and the rocks all sloped the wrong way. I climbed up a few feet from the gap which separates the two points, and then traversed along the face for about 20 ft. until stopped by a

patch of ice. As I was in too unstable a position to cut steps I had to return. Another attempt lower down the face met with no success; it was very tantalising to be within 50 or 60 ft. of the top and not be able to get there (five or six weeks later when I returned to the Bessanese with the rocks clear of snow, this last bit offered no difficulty whatever). We began the descent at 1.45 p.m.; the E. face occupied 20 min., and the couloir 15 min. more. We took off the rope at 3.15, and arrived at Bessans at 6.40 p.m., having halted 1 hr. on the way. W. A. Brigg joined us the same night, having driven up from Modane. Next day, July 7, we went to Bonneval, 6 miles higher up the valley. About $\frac{1}{2}$ mile above the village there is a comfortable hotel, surrounded by trees, built by the Lyons section of the French Alpine Club; the tariff is moderate, and everything very clean.

On July 8 we left Bonneval at 1.45 a.m. for the Eastern Levanna and Ceresole. We proceeded along a footpath on the right bank of the river, passing through the Clapier de Fodan, which is covered by the rock avalanche which is believed to have overwhelmed the original village of Bonneval; then through L'Ecot, an hour later (3.45) passing the Chalets of Duis; from here we went in an easterly direction until we reached the right bank of the Source de l'Arc Glacier. After crossing the glacier we made for a big couloir in the S.W. face of the Eastern Levanna, reaching the foot of it at 9.35 a.m. Our progress up to this had been much retarded by the crusted state of the snow, and halts of over 2 hrs. for photography and eating. During one of these halts I had the misfortune to overturn my camera, which resulted in the focussing glass being broken and other serious damage; I however managed to make it workable with pieces of string and an unused plate for focussing. The snow in the couloir was hard and steep, and entailed $2\frac{1}{2}$ hrs.' step-cutting with the exception of $\frac{3}{4}$ hr., when we took to patches of rock on the right bank; these rocks in each case were easy at first but became exceeding difficult higher up, so difficult indeed that the porter said he had never been on rocks before where he had had to be helped with the rope. We gained the arête at 1.55 (halts 50 min.). It then took us nearly 1 hr. along a fairly level but broken ridge of rocks and snow to reach the summit. We believe the route is new, but longer than from the Col Perduto by the W. face. The view from the top was slightly obscured by clouds, but was exceedingly fine. After a stay of 35 min. we left at 3.20 p.m., descending the fairly easy western face to the Col Perduto in 1 hr.; from

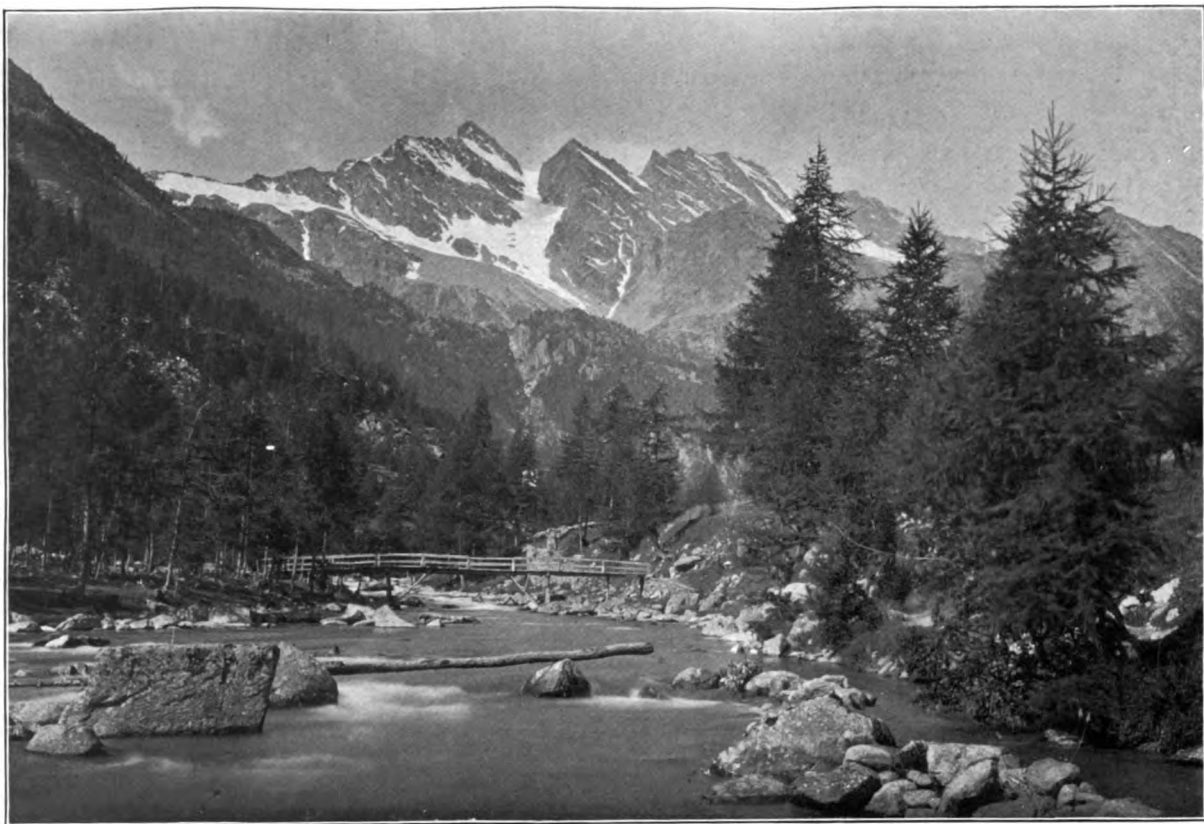


Photo by Alfred Holmes.

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THE EASTERN LEVANNA, LEVANNETTA, AND CENTRAL LEVANNA,

From Ceresole.

the Col to the Ceresole took 2 hrs. 40 m. The first 50 or 60 yards of the descent of the Col Perduto was very steep, and in the then condition of the snow required care; afterwards, when the slope eased off, we had a fine sitting glissade for four or five hundred yards; there was an enormous quantity of avalanche snow at the foot of the col. In 1900 the whole of the slope on the Italian side was a sheet of hard ice, and stones fell every few minutes from the Levannetta. Bricco and I found a safe way down by traversing the slopes of the eastern Levanna.

Ceresole (4,905 ft.) is a charming place, with an excellent hotel which 'Ball' says is dear; but this is inaccurate now—we were only charged 9 lire per day. (I was there again in August, when the same prices were charged.) This, I think, cannot fairly be called dear for food quite as good as that supplied by any hotel I know in the Alps. There are many pretty walks above the village, some of them on nearly level ground. On July 10 we went out to find a peak called the Becco dell' Alpetto (9,193 ft.), situated to the N. of Ceresole, and which we supposed to be unclimbed. 'The Mountains of Cogne Climbers' Guide,' which we found very useful, describes it as 'a sharp, rocky summit, which looks as if it would be best attacked from the N.W.' We started in not very promising weather by a footpath some two or three minutes W. of the hotel, which later on joins one of the king's hunting-paths, and leads to the head of the Ciamosseretto glen. After $3\frac{1}{2}$ hrs.' walking the clouds lifted a little, and we got a glimpse of a sharp-pointed peak which we made out to be the Alpetto. From the appearance of the peak we flattered ourselves that we should get some good rock-climbing. Three-quarters of an hour later, when near the King's Hunting-lodge, we met two of the king's keepers, and asked if they could give us any information about the Alpetto. 'Yes,' one of them replied, 'you can climb it from the Colle dell' Alpetto.' 'Has it ever been climbed?' was the next question. 'Yes, frequently,' he replied. 'Is it difficult?' we asked. 'Oh dear, no,' and, after a moment; 'this boy' (a child of about seven) 'occasionally walks up there to get an appetite for his breakfast.' We asked about Mt. Castello (8,549 ft.), which is on the opposite side of the Colle dell' Alpetto, about which the 'Climbers' Guide' says 'No information.' This, they told us, was even easier than the Alpetto; the face overlooking the col could be climbed anywhere. This information was very depressing. We waited two hours in the hope of getting a sight of the peaks, but the clouds never lifted, so we returned much disappointed to

Ceresole. On July 12 we started for the Bellagarda (9,643 ft.), an easy climb, but a very fine view-point. Again the weather was bad, rain commencing to fall heavily when we were about half-way. After sheltering in an unoccupied chalet for two or three hours we returned to Ceresole. Next day the camera, which had been sent to Turin to be repaired, arrived. On July 14 we left Ceresole with some regret at 3.10 A.M. for the Victor Emmanuel hut, *via* the W. Col du Grand Etret. The Medico huts were reached at 6.30, where we halted for 25 min. We then went on to the Lillet Lake, when we had another halt of 45 min. to eat, and discuss the route. We began to climb immediately N. of the lake up to the ridge at the E. foot of the Mare Perci at 8.45 A.M., arriving without much difficulty on the ridge in 2½ hrs. The situation on the col was so delightful that we stayed there for nearly three hours, leaving at 1.45, and reaching the Victor Emmanuel hut at 4 P.M.

On the Glacier Monciair we saw a herd of thirty-two chamois. The Victor Emmanuel hut* (8,777 ft.) is built just above a small lake. It is finely situated, and quite deserves the praise that it has received from various writers; there is a room for cooking, another for eating, and two sleeping rooms—in the latter are straw mattresses and pillows. The next day we started rather late, leaving Mazzuchi in the hut drying his luggage, which had come over the Col de Nivolet on a mule and had been upset in a snow-drift; we crossed the Col du Grand Paradis, and ascended the Becca di Noaschetta (11,310 ft.). The summit is an exceedingly fine view-point, especially of the Grand Paradis, which looks more imposing from here than from any other place. The principal object of the expedition, however, was to obtain a view of the S. arête of the Tête de la Tribulation, which had not been climbed, and to take some photographs. The arête looked promising, so we decided to return and try it on another day. Immediately on our arrival at the hut, one of the party, who did not appreciate the luxuries of the 'palace,' expressed a great longing to sleep in a bed, and arranged to go down to Pont for the night; Mazzuchi accompanied him in order to be able to attend the early church service at Dégioz next day. The following morning the porter was sent out for provisions. At Pont, where preparations were being made for opening the hotel

* *Climbers' Guide, Mountains of Cogné, 'Inns and Huts,'* 8,777 ft. Ball says 9,105 ft.

for the season, he could only obtain six mouldy 'petit pang' and four eggs; lower down the valley, at Dégioz, however, there was an abundant supply. (I was at Pont four weeks later, when provisions were plentiful.) The wanderers returned in the afternoon, but, unfortunately, whilst at Dégioz a telegram arrived which compelled Mazzuchi to leave us. On Monday, J. J. and W. A. Brigg, the writer, and the porter left the hut at 5.15 for the Grand Paradis (13,324 ft.), and reached the summit in about 4 hrs.; there was no difficulty whatever near the top—there was a small bergschrund that could be crossed almost anywhere, some easy rocks, and a sharp snow-ridge. The view was magnificent and very extensive; we spent an hour and a half in identifying the surrounding peaks; we glissaded and ran a good part of the way down, reaching the hut in 1 hr. 20 min. from the top. During the evening a party of four came up to sleep in the hut and climb the Grand Paradis next day; these were the only climbers we saw during our stay in the Graians. The next morning (July 18) we left the hut at 2.30 A.M., crossed the Col du Grand Paradis at 4.15, and reached the foot of the depression between the Tête de la Tribulation and the Becca di Noaschetta at 5.30, where we had a halt of twenty minutes; $\frac{3}{4}$ hr. more sufficed to reach the depression; we made a short halt in order to scan our route. The S. arête of the Tribulation was sharp and very much broken with gaps, that in places overhung. We left the depression at 6.30, and traversed a little to the right and then made straight for the summit. At first the rocks were rather rotten, but later on became quite sound, with plenty of good hold, though in places fairly difficult. We kept mostly on the E. side of the arête until near the top; we then went over on the W. side in order to turn a big gendarme; the last 5 min. was on snow. We took 1 hr. 35 min. from the depression. We left the summit at 8.55 A.M., and in 20 min. walking down a rather narrow snow ridge reached the Col de la Lune; from the col it is only a walk of a few feet to the Tribulation Glacier. When we arrived at the lower end of the upper plateau of the glacier we came upon two rocky buttresses; the 'Climbers' Guide to the Mountains of Cogne' specially warns one to take the more southerly one of the two. We hesitated some time whether we should take one of these two or another spur 200 yards further S. separated from us by the glacier; the rocks of the latter one cropped out from the snow like a cock's comb, and lower down it had a very uninviting appearance.

On the sketch-map which accompanies the 'Climbers' Guide,' the buttresses are marked as being close together without any glacier between; this finally decided us to take the southerly one of the two we were on. After descending 300 or 400 ft. difficulties began to show themselves; we had to take to the glacier, and bits of ice began to fall from some séracs above our heads, and the lower we went the more danger we should be in. We then decided to return to the top of the buttress; having arrived there, we had another discussion as to the route we should take, and at last agreed to return some distance on our morning's tracks and cross the glacier higher up (from the Tête de la Tribulation we had seen that it was possible to do so). We met with very little difficulty. After descending some distance down the left side of the glacier we came upon the traces of a party who we afterwards learnt had ascended the Grand Paradis from Cogné a few days before. Following these traces we soon came to the left moraine of the glacier and down to the Valnontey, arriving at Cogné at 6.30 p.m. On July 20 we tried the Grivola by the S.E. face, but the couloirs looked so dangerous from falling stones and ice that we did not get beyond the Trajo Glacier. Next day we went to Aosta, where the party separated. Some weeks later, after spending a few days at Ceresole, I engaged a guide and porter from that place, and walked in about 3½ hrs. to some chalets near the Cerru lake, where we had rough but hospitable entertainment. Next morning, August 10, we were away at 4.30 a.m. for the Pointe de la Galise. We reached the col of the same name at 6.40 a.m. without any difficulty. After a halt of 30 min. we left at 7.10, the guide wanting to ascend a little rocky peak S. of the col, which, he said, he had always understood to be the Pointe de la Galise. I convinced him that he was wrong, and we crossed the Galise Glacier in a northerly direction, and then ascended a loose rocky slope to the Rhêmes Glacier, thus going E. up the gently sloping snow. We gained the top at 8.10, exactly 1 hr. from the col. The peak is higher than any of its near neighbours, and the panorama is very extensive. After a stay of 50 min. we went back to the Col de la Galise in ½ hr. (9.30). From there our object was to cross the Col du Carro to Bonneval. In traversing across the slopes of the Cima d'Oin we kept too high, and had some trouble in crossing two broad gullies which come down from that peak. We crossed the ridge at 2.25, 200 or 300 yards W. of the true Col du Carro, and 200 ft. higher. The guide told me that the route described in 'Ball' is never used by

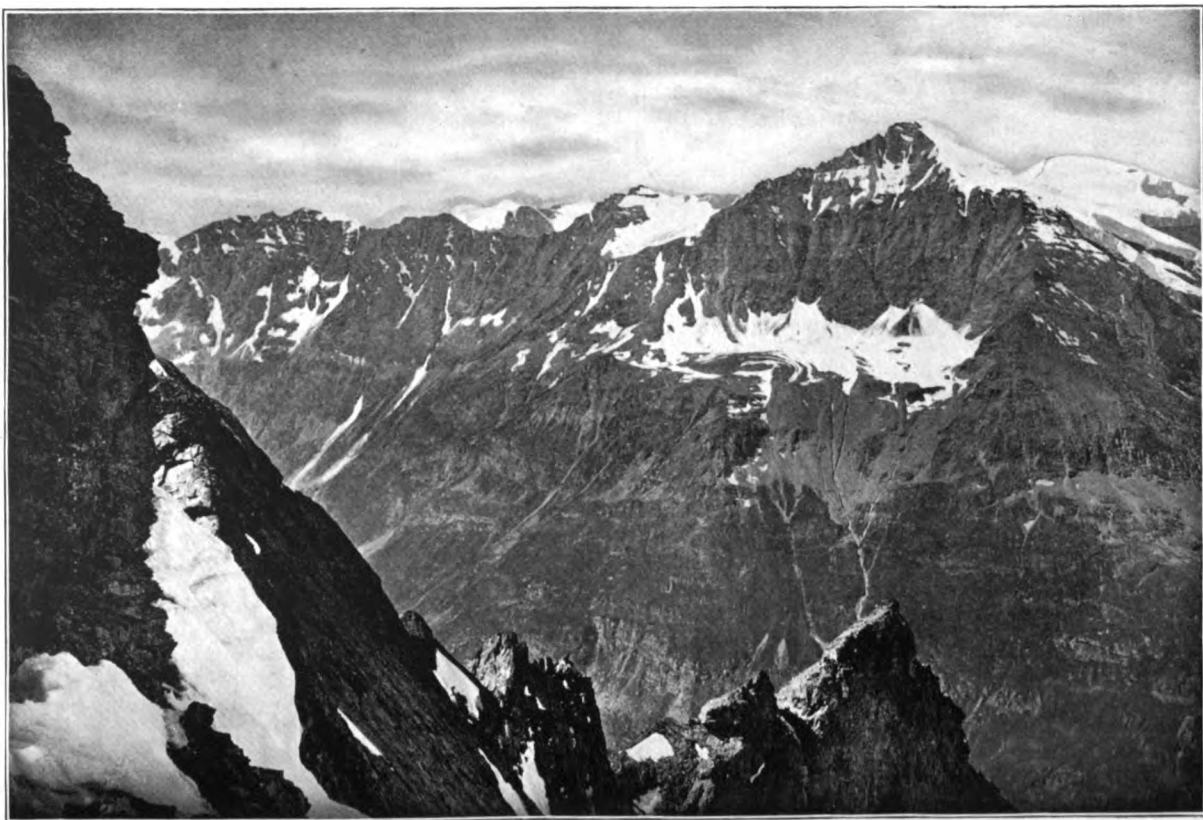


Photo by - Alfred Holmes.

THE POINTE DE CHARBONEL.,

From the Rossanese

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local guides, the route we used being so much easier. There were no difficulties whatever on the French side. We arrived at Bonneval at 5.50 P.M. On August 12 we left Bonneval at 4.10 A.M. for the Pointe d'Audagne and the Pointe du Grand Fond (11,228 ft.) for photographic purposes, reaching the latter peak at 10.45 A.M. (halts 95 min.). The view was magnificent, a very prominent object being the Albaron. After a stay of 2 hrs. we had to make a long descent and re-ascent to the Col du Collierin, arriving at Balme at 6.50. The hotel was full, so we had to be content with a room outside. Next day, August 13, we walked up to the Rifugio Gastaldi in just under 3 hrs., *en route* for the Bessanese. During the evening sixteen other people came up, all bound for the Ciamarella. Next morning, in consequence of so many breakfasts having to be prepared, we did not get away until 5.5; crossed the Col d'Arnas at 6.25. Two hundred yards below the col, on the French side, we left the Arnas Glacier, walked up some rock steps, and traversed along stone slopes in the direction of the couloir, coming down from the S. ridge, halting 25 min. at its foot. We now took to the rocks of the left bank of this couloir, and arrived on the first summit at 9.30. Now that the rocks were clear of snow, the ascent to the highest point was easy, and only occupied 11 min. and the descent 7 min. The view was the finest I saw in the Graians. We left the summit at 11.50, arrived at the Col d'Arnas at 1.50 P.M., having halted 24 min. on the way; Gastaldi hut, 2.25, where we stayed 10 min.; Balme, 4.20 P.M.

On map VI., the Graian Alps, in Ball's 'Guide,' the Levanna Club hut is marked on the French side of the chain. It should be on the Italian side, near the foot of the Col Perduto.

THE DREIECKJOCH.

BY THE EDITOR.

A T much-frequented Alpine centres the guests apparently argue that, as others abide their question, therefore you, lover of the mountains and anxious if possible to stand on some summit, however humble, or cross some pass, however insignificant—

Where no man comes
Or hath come since the making of the world—

you, I say, may be interrogated in the same style as the pseudo-orophilist. Whether the tone be wheedling, 'Where