

us down a wild and barren tract to the Châtelet, a great rocky barrier through which the torrent has forced a narrow gorge, and the second through a fertile valley basin to St. Paul sur Ubaye, where we lunched at the Hotel Brémond, and then, in the hot noontide, turned up to the W. and left the Ubaye valley by the well-graded carriage road of the Col de Vars. We had a fine view from the top of the Brec de Chambeyron in the E. and the Pelvoux in the W., and, descending on the other side by rolling pastures and pine woods, finally zigzagged down a very striking mass of limestone weathered into fantastic shapes into the town of Guillestre, in the valley of the Guil, at 5.30 P.M., thankful for having escaped any more serious mishap to our carriage than a broken backboard.

The best hotel at Guillestre has been closed, and the others are not very good.

We drove down to the railway station next morning, passing under the ramparts of Mont Dauphin, took train to La Bessée, drove to Ville Vallouise, slept at the new inn (clean and good) at Ailefroide, and crossed next day by the Col du Sélé—our first and last glacier excursion—to La Bérarde, where we picked up our luggage and correspondence, rested Sunday, and went home next day by way of Bourg d'Oisans, Grenoble, and Chambéry.

If I have pitched the story of our little pilgrimage in a minor key, I would plead that Alpine music is not all grand opera nor yet all musical comedy, and there is still room, I trust, for the humbler melody of the 'oaten flute.'

THE TRIDENT DE LA BRENVA.

BY THE EDITOR.

I SPOKE of my main object in going to the Alps in 1902 to neither small nor great save to my old friend Tempest Anderson, who had just returned from a close inspection of the eviscerated Soufrière, and had narrowly escaped the vengeance which Mont Pelée deals out not only to those who dwell at his feet but also to such as presume even from a distance to examine the methods of his murders. His talk was of Wallibu and Rabaka and such like euphonious streams, and recent memories of them drowned the appeal of the Dora Baltea and Arveyron: so I departed alone.

I had set my heart on the Trident de la Brenva and was ablaze to set my feet on him too. So after a delightful little



THE TRIDENT DE LA BRENVA FROM THE GÉANT GLACIER.

visit to Cogne and Piantonetto I set out with the sinews of war—that is to say, with François and Sylvain Pession—for Courmayeur. We varied the climb to the Rifugio Torino, under the Col du Géant, by taking to a torrent who was of a very complaisant and, I may say, somnolent disposition and allowed us to share his bed. A ptarmigan pretended strange infirmities to lure us from her young—very tiny chicks indeed, but, like the young of larger creatures, gifted with strange powers of expostulation. Doubtless the mother bird remains under the delusion that she fooled us. Then we found *Gentiana acaulis* in flower. Then a young man descended sportively in front of his party with an occasional backward glance to see if his mistress's eyebrow was raised high enough in wondering admiration. He gambolled with Terpsichorean facility and all the light-heartedness of youth. 'C'est le frère d'un chamois,' said one of my companions. A much less complimentary relationship suggested itself to the other. My very good friend Signor Bareux recognised us before we reached the little platform on which the Rifugio is built. He came down a little way to meet us. We shook hands. We exchanged greetings. We asked after mutual friends. Signor Bareux is not only genial himself; the genuine warmth of his reception would awaken a thrill of geniality even in a stranger, and we were old friends. We were all pleased with each other and showed it.

The next day was not fine enough for serious climbing, but there were changeful cloud effects and glimpses of mountains near and far, and many of the choicest and noblest of my friends were bid to memory's feast.

On the second day we started betimes. We reached the col and turned to the left. Soon we halted for a look at the well-known view. There is La Vierge; there is the Géant, bareheaded, in respectful homage; but a world of ice lies between them—after so many centuries, like the wedded pair in Lord Houghton's song—they are 'strangers yet.' We soon arrived at the foot of the great wall which divides the Géant and Brenva glaciers and is crowned by several imposing rock towers, the most stately of them being Le Trident. A brief reconnaissance decided us to make our attack on a rib of rock that runs down to the W. of our peak. When he had crossed the bergschrund François was soon busy with his axe. The ice chips rained down thick and fast, and as I turned up the collar of my coat I felt that we had, so to speak, opened the first parallel of our siege work. On this formidable wall we spent three hours twenty minutes.

The whole of it was very steep ; in many places the snow was rotten and of a backsliding character, and François had much hard work to win his way. Once or twice as I looked up I wondered why he was so long in negotiating a matter of three or four steps which appeared comparatively easy, but when I reached the spot I soon discovered the reason. He chose his route with great judgment. At last we crawled into the sun, and very welcome was his warmth. Then a few feet more brought us to the crest of the great ridge which divides the Géant and Brenva glaciers. The former we know pretty well ; the latter was now revealed to us in all its grandeur.

We then walked along the ridge to the south side of the Trident, and it soon became evident that some rock-climbing of the choicest character was before us.

We took off our coats and deposited our ice axes on the snow. The guides climbed the lower part of the great tooth above us with some difficulty. I followed with more. And then, after creeping upwards a little way, we came to the chimney. This proved to be something unusual—I might almost say unique.

It was in mountain-climbing what is represented at Afghan banquets by

A cinnamon stew of the fat-tailed sheep,
And he who hath never tasted the food,
By Allah, he knoweth not bad from good.

I cannot pretend to portray the fascination of this chimney, so well appointed in excitements and lavishly furnished with delights. The lowest part of it was not so bad—I ought rather to say, so good—as the upper portion. I had the benefit of two ropes, so that I could hardly come to grief ; but when I got some way up if I did not wish to hang in the air like the morsel at the end of a fisherman's line—though handled by the guides with all that sympathetic consideration which the worthy Isaac Walton enjoined upon his disciples—I was constrained to set my back against one side of the chimney and my feet against the other whilst I enjoyed an uninterrupted view of the wondrous receptivity of the void below. Up this part I got with comparative ease as I discussed with myself the question how the leader (François) had managed it. The last bit, however, involved not an ascent directly upwards, but sideways to the right, and very much more troublesome. Moreover it was not altogether clear that the aperture was sufficiently broad to let my body through. Before I had entered the chimney I had shouted to

the men, 'Have you got to the top?' 'Yes, but the very top is reserved for you.' So that there was every inducement to make every possible effort. Moreover by this time François was visible, with a smiling face, and was giving me counsel as well as hauling in the rope. I accepted the former for the sake of the latter as I worked myself sideways and upwards at the same time. As I struggled on I began to agree with the hook-nosed fellow of Rome. Let me have men about me, or at any rate above me, that are fat—for following through cracks would thus be easy.

It was, figuratively speaking, the choicest morsel of a very choice menu. When I had eventually struggled out of the cleft, allusions to 'cracks' on famous aiguilles in our neighbourhood seemed quite in place. And when I finally reached the actual top, which my good-natured comrades had refrained from mounting, the cup of happiness was at last offered to my lips.

Then did I with a light heart and fluent tongue describe to my guides how Dr. Anderson had given me as a silver-wedding present a glorious photograph of our peak, and how I daily looked at it with apprehension lest some foot other than mine should first be placed upon it. Of that there was no longer any fear. And now whenever my eyes wander to the photograph as the rain pours down dismally, or the wind howls furiously, I taste afresh the joy of our climb.

The height, something over 12,000 ft., was not great, it is true, but the quality of the climb was of the choicest character, and so likewise was the view. Mont Blanc and the Mont Maudit at close quarters were too impressive for any mere words to do them justice. We gazed upon the glories of the inner ice world.

What pleasures have great princes more dainty to their choice? None—emphatically none!

We descended by a different route to the west—much easier, as it turned out. One place was exciting. The rock was cleft clean in two—the depth of the chasm being, I should imagine, over fifty feet. How Sylvain crossed I do not remember, but when I got to the chasm I recollect that with my body aslant I could just reach across and was pulled into an upright position on the other side by Sylvain. One place below, I seem to recall, required the rope to be fastened over a cut in the rock, and then we reached our morning's route without hindrance.

We got back to our coats and the ice axes, and then the question arose, How were we to regain the Rifugio? Even-

tually we decided to make for the Col de la Tour Ronde. We should have descended the Brenva glacier to Courmayeur had not the men been afraid that Signor Bareux would then think that we had met with a serious accident. At first we made fair progress, but soon the snow amongst the rocks grew deep and rotten, and it was no uncommon occurrence to sink in almost up to one's waist. Then a thick mist came down upon us and discomfited us entirely.

Where *was* the Col de la Tour Ronde? It was quite impossible to say, but calculating as well as I could in such an emergency—for though I had not been on this particular ridge before I knew the map fairly well—I persuaded the men to turn down to our left towards the Géant glacier.

It was very misty and the slope was steep. What we might meet with we knew not, but downwards we went. Sylvain led. To begin with things might have been worse; before long they became so. I may here whisper parenthetically that we heard afterwards at Courmayeur that the Tour Ronde col was considered to be much more difficult than usual this summer. It was indeed even suggested that it was impossible! How pleasant it is to have so grateful a side-light thrown on one's little exploit! How satisfactory to hear others emphasise the difficulties which one has conquered, though it must be owned that here, as so often in more commercial transactions, the middleman scores most!

Flakes of loose ice here and there covered the snow. The making of a staircase was no sinecure. I had never previously heard François grumble at the steps provided for him. He has himself a long stride, and the steps he makes, always excellent, are sometimes a good way apart, but here he growled out a condemnation of Sylvain's staircase. I was not displeased to hear him, for thereby fell credit to the uncomplaining, and I personally felt fairly satisfied, for if I had slipped I had François's strong arms to hold me up. Sylvain gave us his opinion of the slope in words that carried conviction, and went on with his work, when all of a sudden the wannish glare of a weird gleam of sunshine penetrated the mist and showed us the Géant glacier at no great distance below, and showed also that the bergschrund was provided with a bridge that to our vapour-vexed eyes seemed the most desirable boon possible. So down we went and reached our track of the morning without further trouble.

A short time took us to the Rifugio, where, to be Wordsworthian, we found 'forty feeding like one.' Unto them we

joined ourselves, and for once the sauce to meat was not ceremony but the total absence of it.

So we conquered the Trident, a rock to me almost as dear as was to Galatea's creator

That shape of vital stone
That drew the heart out of Pygmalion.

IN MEMORIAM.

MARIE CLAUSEN.

The death, on July 14 last, at the age of 67, of Frau Clausen, removes the last of the famous trio whose names must be for all time linked with the development of Zermatt as a mountaineering and a tourist resort. Others may follow, none can ever replace them.

There is no need to tell again the story of how Alexander Seiler, of Blitzingen, came to Zermatt in the year 1854; or how Dr. Lauber's little inn which had been the meeting-place of so many pioneers in Alpine exploration, science, and art, became absorbed, while it formed the nucleus of the new venture. From the outset, Marie Cathrein, Frau Seiler's sister, took a leading part in the management of the business. Her father was engaged in trade, and as a girl she had practice in bookkeeping and correspondence, thus beginning her technical training at an early age. Still more valuable, in connection with her father's business she learnt the art of dealing with all sorts and conditions of men.

Herr Seiler was quick to recognise the possibilities of the Riffelberg, and when the first mountain inn was opened on its slopes in 1859 he naturally and very wisely placed his most trusty lieutenant in charge. There Fräulein Marie Cathrein, afterwards Frau Clausen, began a career of management which lasted continuously for nearly forty-five years, twenty-five of which were spent at the old house, and twenty in the new Riffelalp Hotel, to which she moved on its opening in 1884.

The Riffelberg Hotel from the very beginning had its own peculiar *cachet*, inspired altogether by the strong individuality of its manageress. This feature was never lost, and even in the huge establishment lower down the hill, which succeeded, but never really supplanted the old house, the dominating influence could always be felt. The *clientèle* at the hotels on the Riffel always differed slightly in character from that of Zermatt itself; and, indeed, Frau Clausen accomplished independently for the Riffel what Seiler and his wife succeeded so completely in doing at Zermatt. Frau Clausen was very much more than the manager of a successful hotel. She was a rare hostess. In the old Riffelberg, where she played her part in a smaller sphere, her influence was more easily recognised, for it pervaded the whole place. The new-comer never