

I have been asked to add a few words to Mr. Basset's notice of Louis Theytaz, who was my leading guide on several interesting expeditions. As a climber he was both brilliant and careful. His enterprise was exceptional, and his judgment independent of tradition. He could design as well as execute. As a companion he was invariably modest and courteous.

I am the more glad to be allowed to add a very sincere tribute to his qualities as a sentence of mine in a paper in the *Yorkshire Ramblers' Journal*, written in lighter vein and based upon an inaccurate record of dates, has been read to convey a reproach that he and his fellow guides should have carried out the second ascent of the Vier Esels Grat, by the Mountet ridge commencement, in my absence. As a matter of fact, although we had previously discussed and examined the ridge together, there was never the faintest question of his good faith, or of his enterprise, in re-opening this important ascent for his own valley during our absence. Disappointment was, perhaps, natural in those our early days; but we met the next year for its repetition without an afterthought in our good-fellowship. To Louis belongs the full credit for the inception as well as for the successful carrying out of this as of our other climbs together.

In his own valley he can have had few equals as a whole-hearted, courageous and sound mountaineer.

G. W. Y.

## ALPINE ACCIDENTS IN 1910 AND 1911.

### ACCIDENT ON THE GLACIER DE SEILON.

#### DEATH OF LOUIS THEYTAZ.

ON January 31 last, there perished, at the age of forty-three, in the person of Louis Theytaz of Zinal, a mountaineer of the front rank, a man of very great intelligence and energy.

A party consisting of Messieurs W. A. M. Moore, A. V. FitzHerbert and A. D. Parkin with the guides Louis, Benoît and Basile Theytaz and Félix Abbet had successfully ascended the Pigne d'Arolla on skis and had reached, about 3.30 p.m., on the descent, a point on the Glacier de Seilon about  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch S.W. of the 3 in the Zinareffien côte 3500 on the Siegfried map (sheet Gr. Combin).

The leading rope comprised Benoît, Mr. FitzHerbert and Louis. The slope was about  $25^{\circ}$  to  $30^{\circ}$ . The party was running on skis in a northerly direction, not directly down but rather traversing the slope at an acute angle with its direction. The leader, Benoît, crossed a longitudinal snow-filled depression which he judged as indicating a crevasse. Mr. FitzHerbert

followed and then swung slightly uphill and turned round to see Louis safely over. Suddenly, Louis, who followed slightly to one side of the ski-track so as not to make it deeper, disappeared, the rope breaking without, however, causing Mr. FitzHerbert any very appreciable jerk. The crevasse was about 6 to 7 feet wide. The rope was a plaited one, not new, the property of Louis and was of course frozen. It is well known that it is much more difficult to keep a rope taut between ski-runners owing to the varying pace, and in addition the position of Louis on the rope *above* the others would tend to increase the free drop.

Louis was not killed on the spot as he was heard to say 'sortez-moi d'ici,' but an 80-foot Buckingham rope failed to bottom the crevasse, nor was any greater success attained when an ice axe was let down about 130 feet on two of the older ropes joined together—which had, unfortunately, already shown in a disastrous manner their inability to support any great weight.

It is very improbable that Louis survived beyond a few minutes and there is some reason to think that almost immediately after the first fall he fell further to the bottom of the crevasse and was killed. After doing all that was judged possible the remainder hurried down to Arolla and the next day returned with a strong party of guides. The guides Antoine Georges and Maurice Follonier of Haudères and Jean Gaudin of Evolena were particularly active in the recovery of the body. The former, who went down to investigate, was hauled up in a fainting condition, whilst the two others worked for nearly two hours in the crevasse to free the body. The body was found wedged in an upright position some 5 or 6 feet from the bottom of a crevasse about 180 feet deep.

The autopsy held at Sion showed a fracture of the skull and of the left arm. The burial took place at Vissoie on February 5, the coffin being carried to the grave by a body of Zinal guides in the presence of a large number of sympathisers from Sion, Sierre, Montana and the neighbourhood, the S.A.C. being represented by M. de Kalbermatten. No blame can be attached to any of the survivors for this most unfortunate occurrence; they did all that they could with the means at their disposal. But the most obvious moral of this and other occurrences that have been recorded in this Journal is, that the most stringent attention must be paid to the quality and condition of ropes used for Alpine work. It is scarcely necessary to remind readers of this Journal of the well-established rules for the use of the rope.

Louis Theytaz deserved well of his commune and of his valley. With his brother Benoît and Félix Abbet he was the first to re-open the Vier Esels Grat route up the Dent Blanche, whilst he was the leading guide in Mr. G. Winthrop Young's ascent of the Weisshorn by the 'arête Young' of its W. face, thus offering, certainly to a somewhat limited class of mountaineer, routes from

his own valley up these unrivalled mountains. He was always at work—guiding on foot in summer, on skis in winter, doing a little inn-keeping in a small way at Mountet and Zinal, and finding time to learn to write most fluent and correct English and to speak it well. Unfortunately his struggling business enterprises depended primarily on his own energetic management and partly on borrowed money and it is understood have never proved remunerative, suffering particularly during the last two miserable seasons. He leaves a widow and five children, poorly provided for, in whose interest an appeal has been made by three of his principal patrons. Few men are more entitled to rely in their extremity on the generous assistance of mountaineers to those he can no longer support than is the late Louis Theytaz.\*

J. P. F.

On August 21 **Herr K. Knöringer**, aged 27, on the descent of the N. face of the **Pizzo Rotondo**, glissaded on hard snow and, unable to stop himself, fell some 50 to 60 metres over rocks on to the Geren Glacier, where he succumbed to his injuries before his companion, who ran down to Realp for help, had time to return.

On August 28 **Herr Eggmann**, aged 16, was killed by a fall near the 'Blauen Schnee' on the **Säntis**.

On August 29 three young men from Lausanne ascended the **Aiguille du Goûter** from the Pavillon Bellevue. On the descent they lost themselves in bad weather and were forced to bivouac. The next day one of them managed to reach the Inn at the Tête Rousse and a search party of guides from St. Gervais eventually found the other two, but one of them, **Raymond**, had meantime succumbed to exposure.

On September 5 **Dr. H. Gaiser and his wife**, of Vienna, slipped in descending the **Gross Glockner** just under the summit. They were picked up on the Pasterzen side, life of course being extinct.

On September 7 **Herren Wolfgang and Peter Cornelius** of Munich ascended the **Jupperhorn** (between Avers and Oberhalbstein) from Stolla. On the descent Wolfgang fell, dragging his brother with him and receiving injuries to which he speedily succumbed.

On September 8 **Dr. Karl Zweininger**, of Dresden, was killed on the **Amthorspitze** near Gossensäss (Tirol).

On September 16 **Herr Heinrich Herz**, of Vienna, a young and competent member of the Ö.A.C., left Weissenfels to attempt the hitherto unaccomplished ascent of the N. face of the **Veunca** (Julische Alpen), with a companion, Herr Josef Schattauer.

They had ascended some distance up the face which, owing to bad rocks, required great care and had reached, at 1.30 P.M., the foot of a rock tower above which the much less steep N.W. arête

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\* The fullest information as to this unfortunate occurrence has been kindly furnished by Benoit Theytaz, Mr. Moore and Mr. FitzHerbert.

led upwards. The tower had to be turned on the right over a slab. Herz stepped on to a rock so as to make a long stride when suddenly the rock, which he had carefully tested, gave way. The 13 millimetres thick woven rope had been belayed behind a firm rock and in addition had been passed behind a second rock about 4 metres higher up. It however broke under the strain and the unfortunate climber fell some 500 metres into the gully almost to the foot of the face, being of course instantly killed.

On September 18 the Herren Emil Hammer, Walter Hess, Emil Roth and **Lorenz Vogt**, members of the S.A.C., left the Göschener Alp to ascend the E. face of the **Dammastock** by the route described in 'A. J.' xxv. 181 *seq.* The party apparently had crossed the great couloir in the E. face, unroped, and were roping up on the rocks on its N. bank when an avalanche overwhelmed them.\* Vogt was carried down the middle of the couloir for about 400 to 500 metres and was killed. The others received minor injuries.

On October 30 the Herren **Dr. A. Derganc** and **Max Himmelbauer** of Vienna, each aged 28, were killed in attempting the ascent of the **Planspitze** by the N. face. Although Professor Derganc had made the same ascent several times, the party took nearly 8 hours to reach the well-known great terrace and the slabs which succeed it. They were observed about 2 P.M., and again at about 4 P.M. by a party which made the ascent by the Keidel route. The bodies were found on November 4 by a search party of friends in the W. gully which descends from the N. face to the great terrace.

It is probable that want of condition and consequent slowness, causing the party to be overtaken by darkness on the short autumn day, may account for this unfortunate accident.

On October 30 **Herr Otto Lamm**, aged 22, with four friends, ascended the VI Kreuzberg (Säntis group). They then proposed to ascend the N. face of the **VII Kreuzberg**. While the others were roping, Lamm climbed on ahead and when halfway up the face suddenly fell backwards over the heads of his comrades and was picked up dead 200 metres below.

## NEW EXPEDITIONS.

### *Dauphiné.*

LES BANS (3651 m.=11,979 ft.) N. SUMMIT BY THE N.E. FACE. *September 5, 1910.*—Signor E. Santi and Mr. R. Schellens left the Carrelet Hut at 2.45 A.M. and reached at 10.15 A.M. the foot of the rock arête forming roughly the W. boundary of the great snow couloir † on the N.E. face well seen in Cav. Sella's photograph

\* Mr. Gask pointed out, in the note alluded to, the possible danger of this couloir.

† See *Central Alps of the Dauphiny*, p. 129 (variation).