

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

A GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the Hall on Tuesday evening, April 2, at 8.30 P.M., Sir Edward Davidson, *President*, in the chair.

The PRESIDENT said : I will first of all call upon the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer to present to the Club the Accounts and Balance Sheet for 1911.

The Hon. Secretary presented the Accounts and Balance Sheet for 1911 and moved that they be adopted. The President seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

The PRESIDENT said : There is a matter to which I should like to draw the attention of the Club which does not arise altogether out of the Accounts, although it has some reference to the item of expenses in regard to 'Ball's Guide.' We have a very large stock of 'Ball's Guide,' which is worth about £640, and we are very much in the hands of members of the Club in the matter of recouping the money spent on this work. There are a great many members who have no copies of the book, and I believe that if they choose to buy copies they will find that they have a very good investment for themselves, and at the same time they will be doing something financially for the Club. I hope that those who feel inclined to do so will help us by buying copies, as they will undoubtedly get extremely good value for their money. I am only sorry that it has not been possible to re-publish the third volume (*Eastern Alps*), but we have felt that we were not justified in re-publishing this volume on account of the great expense which has been already incurred in re-publishing the first two volumes.

DR. R. P. COCKBURN then read a Paper on 'Indoor Training for Climbers,' and the various exercises were illustrated by him with the aid of apparatus devised by himself. At the outset he apologised for the non-appearance of the professional expert whom he had engaged to illustrate his exercises.

The PRESIDENT said : I have no doubt there are some members of the Club present who would like to make a few observations on these mountain exercises. Perhaps Mr. Kellas will tell us what he thinks about them, from the point of view—which he has made specially his own—viz. the attainment of high altitudes.

MR. KELLAS said : I think these exercises which have been illustrated to us to-night are excellent for the average mountaineer, but in connexion with climbing in the Himalayas, I think breathing exercises would be very useful. Above 20,000 feet one is under considerably less than half an atmosphere pressure, with the result that it is extremely difficult to oxygenate the blood properly. The normal respiration rate at sea-level (15 to 20 times per minute) is too slow to give a sufficiency of oxygen, and probably a rate of about

30 would be found much better. Respiration is, however, an involuntary process, the rate depending on many factors, and it takes some time to habituate oneself to breathing more rapidly than usual. By proper exercises, however, it might be possible to increase one's respiration rate considerably above the normal, and by breathing more quickly one climbs much more easily at high altitudes.

Mr. MUMM said : Rather than let the discussion drop from inanition, I will say a very few words, and I speak as one who has never taken much interest in physical exercises. I came here this evening filled with admiration for Dr. Cockburn's courage in undertaking to read a Paper of an entirely new character and not illustrated with lantern slides ; and I noticed that once or twice during the reading of his Paper he displayed some anxiety as to whether he was failing to interest us. Having said that, I should like to assure him that, as regards at least one member of the audience, his anxiety was entirely unfounded. I listened with immense interest to his account of the mechanism and physiology of movement. Far from being too elementary, I think it was so successful precisely because Dr. Cockburn assumed complete ignorance on the part of his audience. Coming to the later part, I was very much impressed by the ingenuity of his methods and illustrations. A few minutes before the Paper began, I was remarking that the kind of climbing which has always interested me most was that in which one relies entirely on balance, and I was greatly struck by his devices for obtaining practice in that department. I only wish I had been introduced to something of the kind when I was younger than I am now, when I might have taken advantage of them. I most sincerely congratulate Dr. Cockburn on his interesting, novel, and ingenious Paper.

Mr. CORRY said : I think that members of the Club are interested in exercise in order that they may keep generally fit and able to continue climbing to a ripe old age. I am of opinion that the limits of age for vigorous exercise may be placed higher than is usually supposed. I may mention the case of a middle-aged friend whom I found practising the long arm balance on the parallel bars. I discovered on inquiry that my friend had learnt to perform this feat at the age of sixty. I admit that the straight arm balance is as yet beyond my gymnastic powers, but I am encouraged to think that I may yet perform it.

The PRESIDENT said : If nobody else will offer some observations, as I had rather hoped they would do, I must now exercise my privilege on these occasions, and it is a very pleasant one, of proposing a very hearty vote of thanks to Dr. Cockburn for his most amusing and entertaining lecture to us this evening. I will confess at once, so far as I am concerned, that I have in my later years endeavoured to get myself more fit for the Alps with Swedish exercises, and after rolling about on the floor of my bedroom for a few mornings, I came to the conclusion that the remedy was worse than the disease. I was glad to hear from Mr. Corry that one can hope to do a straight

arm balance at sixty and still be a capable mountaineer after having reached that age. One thought which struck me while listening to the lecture was, what would a really good Swiss guide think of these exercises? It is rather remarkable that the best professional climbers are not as a rule at all good gymnasts, and in, for instance, swarming up a rope they are not 'in it,' compared with many amateurs of gymnastic proclivities. Their forte seems to be extraordinarily good footwork in traversing smooth rocks at a pretty high angle. In this respect and, indeed, in footwork generally, the very best professional guides are, in my experience, much superior to the best amateurs whom I have been privileged to see at work. I cannot help thinking that these exercises would be useful indeed for producing that strength of arm which should be part of every first-rate mountaineer's equipment, and also in obtaining that balance on snow and ice which is the instinctive possession of the best Swiss guides. We have heard with the greatest interest Dr. Cockburn's Paper, and I quite understand now, having seen him perform some of the exercises, why his lifeguardsman declined at the last moment to face the music.

Dr. COCKBURN returned thanks, and had some little discussion with Mr. Kellas in regard to breathing exercises mentioned by him and the usefulness of the exercises illustrated to people engaged in climbing at high altitudes.

A GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the Hall on Tuesday evening, May 7, 1912, at 8.30, Sir Edward Davidson, *President*, in the Chair.

THE PRESIDENT said: I have to announce to the Club that the Committee have elected Col. Godwin Austen, F.R.S., an Honorary Member of the Club. As the Club is aware, the election of Honorary Members rests, under the Rules, entirely in the hands of the Committee, but I am confident that they will approve the Committee's choice. Col. Godwin Austen has accepted the Honorary Membership offered to him and I feel sure that the Club will rejoice that we have enrolled his distinguished name amongst those of our Honorary Members.

I think that you would wish that the death of Pfarrer Strasser of Grindelwald should, although he was not actually a member of our Club, not be allowed to pass without an expression of deep regret and respectful appreciation from this Chair. He died last month after a very short illness at the comparatively early age of fifty-eight. He had been for over thirty years the parish minister at Grindelwald, whither he came in 1879. The attachment between himself and his flock was mutual, and he refused during that time many offers of removal to a wider sphere of duty which would have been advantageous to him from a worldly point of view; but his life was bound up in Grindelwald, where he exercised a potent influence which was all for good. He was a true parish priest, and besides being an

eloquent and forcible preacher he entered into the daily lives of his faithful flock and was well known and equally regarded by every man, woman, and child in Grindelwald. That he was esteemed and respected in a very special way by the sturdy peasant folk I know from my own experience and from constantly hearing his praises sung by those who attended his ministrations. His best memorial is engraved in the hearts of the guides of Grindelwald, and his name will go down to posterity amongst them under the simple but proud title of the 'Gletscher Pfarrer.'

I have now the very pleasant duty to perform of proposing a most hearty vote of thanks to the Hanging Committee—or rather the Exhibitions Sub-Committee, which nominally consists of a great many members—for their labours in connexion with the arrangement of the excellent display of pictures which we see before us. Practically, however, it is to one or two of the more active members of this body that our thanks are specially due, and above all to our friend Mr. Spencer, who has supervised these exhibitions with such care in the past, and who will, I hope, for the benefit of the Club, look after them for many more years. I beg to propose a very hearty vote of thanks to the Hanging Committee, and should like especially to couple with that vote the name of Mr. Spencer.

The proposal having been duly seconded was carried with acclamation.

MR. C. SCHUSTER: Mr. President, I should like to ask you the question of which I have given private notice, and that is, whether it would not meet the greater convenience of the majority of Members if the Committee ruled that the hour at which you take the Chair at General Meetings be altered from 8.30 to 9 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT said: I do not think that strictly speaking Mr. Schuster is in order in putting this question, but I told him, when he gave me private notice about half an hour before the meeting began of his wish to raise it, that I saw no objection to the matter being informally mentioned with a view to eliciting an expression of opinion, pro or con., from any members who might desire to state their views with regard to it. Of course, it is quite clear that nothing could possibly be decided to-night or without a proper notice of motion. So far as the Committee are concerned I may say at once that the question has not been discussed or brought before them, and they would naturally not desire to express an opinion upon so important a matter without careful consideration. Speaking now, if I may, purely for myself, I would suggest that the matter is one in regard to which we should consider not simply and solely the greatest convenience of the greatest number, but also the greater inconvenience of those of our members (possibly a minority) who reside in the suburbs or come from even longer distances, if the present time of meeting were to be changed to a later hour.

After some further discussion amongst members the question was dropped.

Mr. E. A. BROOME then read a paper on 'The Nord End from Macugnaga,' which was illustrated by lantern slides.

The PRESIDENT said : I have no doubt that as this extremely fine climb has now been accomplished by several members of the Club we shall have a very interesting discussion upon it. I see Capt. Farrar is here, and I believe he has rather looked upon this expedition as being specially his own, and, I fancy, felt some astonishment at the wholesale invasion of his domain, referred to by Mr. Broome, which took place during last summer, but I will leave him to express his own opinion about it. I think that the ascent of the Nord End which was made by Capt. Farrar in 1898, with his and my old friend Daniel Maquignaz, was the third to be made from the Italian side.

Capt. J. P. FARRAR said : There is always a certain amount of refreshing imagination about the Junior Vice-President's papers, but this time he omits to give us one of those 'unique' tales for which he is famous. The climb in question takes me back to the year 1898 when the weather conditions were very similar to those which obtained last year, so much so that I remember we climbed ourselves quite stale. We did the Nord End that year late in the season under good conditions, and after a week's rest, but I have always looked upon it as very severe climb. It seems to me that it will be rather difficult to find work for our Junior Vice-President, as he has already graced with his presence all the most difficult and arduous climbs in the Alps. Lest we have to lock him out from them altogether for want of work, I should like to suggest as worth his notice an even more arduous climb than the one at present under discussion, I mean the Bartolomä face of the Watzmann. This has been ascended during the last thirty years about thirty-four times, and out of these expeditions I believe no less than twenty-six reached the top only after an involuntary bivouac. It is said to be the highest continuous face (1800-1900 m.) which has been climbed in the whole Alps.

Mr. ROLLESTON said : Our party found a way from the Riffel to the Marinelli Hut by the Jägerjoch without any ascending on the Italian side. This hut was reached about mid-day. It was a great pleasure to be with Mr. Broome and Professor Corning on the Nord End. The climb is long but not very difficult and is interesting all the way. Of course, the conditions last year were exceptional.

Dr. WILLIAMSON said : I have little to add to my friend Broome's admirable paper. Thanks to the exceptional weather of last summer and to the fact that I was the fortunate companion of two first-class guides, we were able to accomplish the two finest expeditions of my life. One of these was the first passage of the Gletscherjoch and the other was the Nord End from Macugnaga. Owing to the exigencies of the Gletscherjoch (which I may mention in passing was certainly the most difficult expedition that I have ever taken part in), I was unable to accompany Mr. Oliver on the Nord End, but successfully accomplished the expedition a week later. We

approached the climb with a considerable amount of respect and engaged a porter so as to free the leader from weight-carrying. We stayed a night at the Albergo Belvedere near Macugnaga and I can confidently recommend this inn. The only slight risk from stone falls was probably in crossing the couloir before reaching the arête. The recollections of the impressive rock scenery during the climb will always remain among one's most cherished memories. On the top I asked Jean Maître for a piece of the chicken which, with his customary forethought, he had ere leaving Macugnaga placed in the rucksack. He shook his head. 'Ah, Monsieur, il n'y a qu'un os qui reste.' I looked and saw that it was but a (g)nawed end.

Mr. E. G. OLIVER said : I am afraid I cannot add much of interest to the admirable paper we have just heard from Mr. Broome. Eaton and I did the climb last season, about three weeks before Mr. Broome's expedition, and I spent on it one of the most enjoyable days of my life. We crossed a couloir soon after leaving the hut which would probably be stone-swept later in the day, but of which the traverse took no more than ten minutes at the outside. Otherwise the climb seemed to me quite as safe as most big expeditions, and it deserves to be done more frequently. About 1½ hrs. from the top we found two ice axes and some gloves, which must have belonged to Signor Castelnovo's unfortunate party who were lost in attempting the ascent in 1909. We sent these relics to the Italian Alpine Club with a view to their being restored to the relatives if possible. My experience of the hotels in Macugnaga differs from that of Mr. Broome. I stayed at the Monte Moro three years since and found it excellent, but the Monte Rosa, which we were compelled to patronise last year—the Monte Moro being full—seemed to me far from good and the charges for provisions I certainly considered unduly high.

The PRESIDENT said : I had hoped that some others of the veterans of the Club might have had some experiences to relate to us, perhaps even of unsuccessful attempts on the Nord End, as I do not think we ought to let Dr. Williamson and Capt. Farrar have it all to themselves. However, if nobody else will take the floor, I should like to propose a most hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Broome for his admirable discourse, illustrated by those beautiful photographs which have added so much to its attractiveness. I was very much struck at the skilful manner in which the Vice-President introduced various Biblical passages into his observations, and I should like to congratulate him heartily on his knowledge of Holy Writ and upon the very apt way in which he has 'quoted Scripture for his own purpose.' Personally I am very sorry that I cannot contribute experiences of my own with regard to the Italian ascent of the Nord End itself, but of the Jägerjoch, which passes immediately under its N.E. buttress, I made in 1876 the second passage, and the first from Switzerland to Italy. We descended by what I think must usually be a somewhat dangerous route from falling stones, though at the

time we did not see any stones fall. However, I do not think, although, or possibly because, the late Ferdinand Imseng led us, that we chose a very good route.

With regard to what Capt. Farrar said, it seemed to me that his genial vein of chaff was directed towards the Aiguille de l'Eboulement rather than to the Nord End from Macugnaga. He also mentioned the Bartolomä face of the Watzmann, and I think this is an expedition to which the Vice-President might with advantage turn his attention. Should he attempt it early in the season I shall be much surprised if he finds it as long as the Nord End from Macugnaga. The Vice-President must remember that it behoves him not to rest upon his laurels and that we expect him to continue to do his duty in the future to the Club as its Vice-President, as he has so manfully done it in the past.

Gentlemen, I am sure you will wish me not to detain you longer as you must all be anxious to pass a most hearty vote of thanks to the Vice-President for his admirable paper.

Mr. BROOME replied briefly and thanked the Club for their appreciation.

A GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the Hall, on Tuesday evening, June 4, at 8.30, Sir Edward Davidson, *President*, in the chair.

The PRESIDENT said: Gentlemen, I have in the first place to announce to you that his Majesty the King of the Belgians has been graciously pleased to accept the Honorary Membership of our Club. As you all know, the King of the Belgians is not only very much interested in mountaineering, but he is himself a practical mountaineer of large experience who has made numerous and difficult ascents in the Dolomites and elsewhere, and is personally devoted to our noble sport. It is for this latter reason more especially that we respectfully and enthusiastically welcome our most recent Honorary Member, although it is, of course, on every ground, a matter for great congratulation to our Club that his Majesty should be willing to associate his name thus intimately with it, and that we should be privileged to number amongst our Honorary Members a reigning Sovereign of one of the principal Royal Houses of Europe. For myself, I may perhaps be allowed to add that it will always be a source of equal pleasure and pride to me that this last auspicious addition to our list of Honorary Members should have taken place during my Presidential term of office.

There is one incident which has occurred since we last met, which I think we should not allow to pass without some few words expressive of our very sincere regret, I mean the death of Herr Johann Santner of Botzen, one of the most distinguished and remarkable explorers of the Dolomite Alps that has lived. He will be known to many of you as the man who made the first ascent, in the year 1880, of the then unnamed buttress of the Schlern which has since been

christened and is now always known as the Santnerspitze. This precipitous pinnacle affords (*experto crede*) a climb of no slight difficulty, and to have found the way up it alone and unaided, as Herr Santner did, was in itself a feat of great skill and equal daring. In the year 1890 he made the first ascent of the Fünffingerspitze (by the celebrated Schmitt-Kamin) with the late R. H. Schmitt. He also made many other ascents in the Dolomites, and is well known as one of those who were principally concerned in opening up and exploring the Rosengarten district. I am sure that all true mountaineers will extremely regret his death which took place at Botzen on the 21st of last month in the seventy-third year of his age.

Mr. W. R. CÆSAR then read a paper on 'Mont Blanc by the Brenva and other traverses in 1911,' which was illustrated by lantern slides.

The PRESIDENT said : I have no doubt there are many members who would like to say a word or two on the subject of the extremely interesting paper which has been read here to-night. I know there are several members who have accomplished the ascent of Mont Blanc from the Brenva glacier. I see Mr. Lloyd, who is one of them, here, and need hardly tell him that we should all be much pleased to hear what he has to say about the expedition.

Mr. R. W. LLOYD said : I am sure we have all enjoyed Mr. Cæsar's very interesting paper and admirable description of his climb. The route taken by my party was a new variation from the usual route, as we went up by the couloir until almost under the rocks (No. 13 on plate*), and then cut diagonally up the face of the ridge passing close under the nose of the hanging glacier, then turned sharp to the right until almost under the crest of the arête, when we cut our way on to it. We did not touch any rocks on the Brenva arête until we reached the point 13. From here we went to the right up a difficult steep and overhanging couloir, and thence we made our way easily through the séracs to the main arête. The whole Brenva arête is exceedingly steep. I have only once been over steeper ice, and that was with Captain Farrar and there was very little of it. I congratulate Mr. Cæsar on his very successful climb. I greatly enjoyed the climb and am sure Mr. Cæsar did so also.

The PRESIDENT said : Although Capt. Farrar has already written an exhaustive monograph on the various ascents of Mont Blanc by this route, I am sure we should all like to hear *viva voce* what he has to say about the expedition.

Capt. FARRAR said : I think I have really written myself dry on the subject of the Brenva route. I have corresponded with a good many friends and I think I have told you all I know. In 1893 we followed, I think, the original route and we took to the ridge much

* This plate is to be found at page 203 of the May 1912 number of the *Alpine Journal*.

lower down. The only other route which is radically different is Herr Gruber's route which lies up the great couloir of the Brenva face on the right hand (ascending). Mr. Cæsar has given us a very interesting account of what is, in my opinion, one of the greatest ice climbs in the Alps.

The PRESIDENT said: I think that at least one member of Dr. Wilson's party is here to-night, and I am quite sure that we should like to hear what he may have to tell us.

Mr. J. H. WICKS said: I was one of the members of Dr. Wilson's party; we attempted to follow Moore's route to the Col de la Brenva, avoiding the trouble they met with in the icefall on the Brenva glacier. We passed their sleeping place about 1 A.M. and keeping higher up crossed the Brenva glacier above its ice fall and struck the rock rib at the same place as Capt. Farrar did, which is much lower than Mr. Cæsar's route. I should think we met with more and much harder ice than existed last year. The rocks on the upper part of the ridge (Nos. 11 to 13 on the photograph) were covered with ice which had snow on the top of it. Our main difficulty was from the point 13. We traversed the side of a hard viscous ice cliff leading to the actual head of the great ice trough which descends to the Brenva glacier.

There was one thing I should like to allude to in Mr. Cæsar's paper, viz., the frequent putting on and taking off of their crampons. On our expedition I wore them for the first or second time, but we put them on at about 1 A.M. and did not take them off until 10 or 11 P.M. when we reached the Grands Mulets. Having no guide or porter to carry them perhaps caused us to wear them longer than we otherwise should, but on iced rocks at all events we found them to be a real advantage.

Mr. BROOME said: Though asked to say something to-night, I might almost plead the record excuse of having been in the Swiss Alps this morning, and in the Alpine Club this evening. The paper has been most interesting and it takes me back over half a century or more to my pre-climbing days when, like most schoolboys, I had to study Cæsar's 'De Bello Gallico.' I offer my congratulations to the present Cæsar who has been worthily carrying on the fight, and conquering in the footsteps (more or less) of his great ancestor. At any rate Mont Blanc is in Savoy, now part of the great Gallic country. The debate too has been of exceptional interest, though I could wish Mr. A. E. W. Mason had been present to tell us something more about his climbers' weird and wonderful adventures on this Brenva face (laughter). Speaking for myself, I can only regret that, like Mason's men, I was vanquished, though I had four shots at it; sleeping out three times at the high and uncomfortable gîte, and once on the Col du Géant. My failures, however, do not cause envy and jealousy, and I join in warmly congratulating Mr. Cæsar and the other members who have been successful and added to our pleasure to-night.

Mr. G. W. YOUNG said : I should like to ask whether Mr. Cæsar's party found that the route they followed was at all exposed this season to the risk of avalanches falling from the séracs on the higher part ; as I had been informed by two of the leading Alpine guides that they would be extremely reluctant to attempt the route in view of the conditions maintaining last year.

The PRESIDENT said : I have very great pleasure in proposing a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Cæsar for the admirable paper he has read to us to-night, and for the excellent views illustrative of it which have been thrown on the screen. It has certainly been a very interesting discourse and it has been made, if possible, more interesting still by the fact that Captain Farrar's monograph in the May number of the *Alpine Journal*, which was published a few days ago, has placed at the disposal of the members of the Club who have been present to-night a great deal of additional information which he has gathered together in regard to this route up Mont Blanc.

I remember talking to the late Mr. Horace Walker more than once about the great climb he made with his father, Mr. Frank Walker, who was then fifty-nine years of age, in 1865. My impression is very strong, but I say it with bated breath before Capt. Farrar, that the party struck the frontier ridge close to the head of the Corridor and, therefore, not far from the true Col de la Brenva.

I have also some recollection that Melchior Anderegg told me, when I was with him long ago, that he had a great deal of difficulty in cutting through an overhanging cornice of icicles which masked the approach to the head of the Corridor. There is, I think, some mention of it in the late Mr. Moore's paper which possibly some members of the Club who are present may recall more definitely. I cannot help thinking from what I have heard to-night that the lower part of the old route by the buttress was safer than the new route which has been followed by Mr. Cæsar and Mr. Lloyd.

I also recollect having a long talk with Mr. Gruber about his ascent (the third) which was more to the right (ascending) than that described to-night, and I remember he told me it was attended with considerable difficulty and much risk, as his party were, for some time, while in ice steps, in very great apparent danger from the séracs above them, which threatened their route and from which, had they fallen, there would in the circumstances have been no escape. With regard to the other 'traverses' mentioned by Mr. Cæsar, I would just like to say that I was very much struck by the extreme speed in which that of the Mönch, ascending from the N., was accomplished. This, no doubt, was partly to be accounted for by the comparatively early period of the season (the end of July) at which it was accomplished.

I have myself made three attempts on the Mönch from the N. Twice we were driven back by bad weather, and on the third occasion, towards the end of September, we only got to the top shortly before 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I had two extremely fine ice men with

me in Christian Klucker and Ulrich Almer, and it was fortunate that this was so, as step-cutting was continuous almost from the moment when we put on the rope. Unless in a very exceptional year it is certainly not a September climb.

I am sure we are all very much obliged to Mr. Cæsar for his excellent paper, and I have much pleasure in moving a hearty vote of thanks to him.

Mr. CÆSAR said : Mr. President and Gentlemen, I am very much obliged to you, Sir, for your kind words of appreciation, and to all for your kind reception of this Paper.

Turning to the points that have been referred to. We crossed the Mönch on July 28 and crampons enabled rapid progress to be made on the upper slopes. Moreover I think I mentioned that a party had been over a few days before, and on the lower and steeper portion their steps were quite useful after some trimming.

As regards Mr. Lloyd's route on the lower portion of the Brenva, I am sure some risk must have been incurred in going up the big couloir. When we were there the whole of the bottom of it was full of snow and ice débris that had come down and spread out in fan shape at the foot. We did not ascend the couloir but crossed this débris, I should say about three-quarters of the way up, where it would have been possible to run if necessary, and we then cut up the steep slope to our left.

Then in reference to Mr. Young's question as to danger among the séracs and possible injury from falling stones, I thought the only place last year where one might be struck would be in the couloir right down below near point 2, though even there, risk seemed slight as it was crossed early in the day. Higher up the séracs did not appear to be in a condition to cause danger last year. I do not know whether there was risk of falling stones on Capt. Farrar's route, but from what we saw of it higher up, I am sure he must have had a very fierce time indeed even for him.

The only other point that occurs to me is that the Col de la Tour Ronde route obviates the necessity of crossing any séracs in the early part of the day.