

CORRIGENDA, VOL. XXXI.

p. 176, last line but one read, 'I should have given evidence on the side of the linendraper.'

p. 184, last line but one, for 1757 read 1775.

p. 227, last line but two, for *Baker*, read *Butler*.

Professor Ker writes: 'It was Butler's first season in the Alps—he used to talk about it—how "Jamie Riddell" gave him an ice-axe and took him over the Col du Grand Cornier. They had bad weather and could not do much, but they bathed in the water above Macugnaga. Butler never went back to the Pennines—he was wrong.'

REVIEW.

La Storia dei tre Weisssthor. By W. A. B. Coolidge. Translated into Italian by Gualtiero Laeng. *Rivista*, xxxvi. Nos. 3-7. Turin: 1917.

THE history of the various Weisssthor is worked out in this article in the elaborate manner which we expect from the learned author. It is not without a touch of comedy. In Plate V. of vol. iv. of De Saussure's '*Voyages dans les Alpes*,' published in 1796, is shown apparently just N. of the Jägerhorn, a '*Passage en Valais*,' which the author calls, '*Weisse-Grat qui veut dire Porte-Blanche*.'

For something like one hundred years ardent climbers hunted for this selfsame passage all along the ridge from the Jägerhorn to the Cima di Jazzi. The Alt-Weisssthor, as it came to be called, possesses even to-day for the mountaineer an engrossing interest. What these climbers discovered may be best studied in '*The Passes across the Weisssthor Ridge*,' by W. M. Conway, in '*A.J.*' xi. 193 seq., with a plate, in which the various lines of passage are marked in red, and in '*Neue und alte Pfade in den Zermatter Bergen*,' by Professor K. Schulz, in the Swiss *Jahrbuch*, vol. xviii., while '*Ueber das Alt-Weisstor*,' by Karl Jaksche, in the '*O.A.Z.*' for 1911 (with a diagram), is very instructive.

A review of the present state of knowledge of the Weisssthor ridge, with many diagrams, as well as an elaborate discussion of the various historical points, is given by Dr. Dübi in section ix.—Weisstor-Gruppe—of his recently published '*Walliser-Alpen*.'

None of the various Alt-Weissthor then discovered turned out to be quite easy and safe. In 1895 it struck a German writer, Herr Lüders, to check the bearings of his Col given by De Saussure '*à 55 degrés du Nord par Ouest de Macugnaga*,' when it turned out that they indicated, not the position marked in his plate, but the Schwarzenberg-Weissthor. Thus the real Alt-Weissthor was an old pilgrims' pass used since the sixteenth century.

The discrepancy is easily accounted for. De Saussure, the man of science, would naturally take on the spot the exact bearings of the

Col pointed out to him during his visit to Macugnaga in 1789, whereas his plate would be prepared possibly years later. It is easily understood that his recollections may have faded, and that the most likely-looking place should be marked as the 'Passage en Valais.'

Mr. Coolidge gives a diagram of the various Weissthor, of which he distinguishes three :

(1) Weissthor I.—the Schwarzenberg-Weissthor. This follows for a short distance the crest of the famous Arête Blanche of the old travellers, and is held by Mr. Coolidge to be the true Alt-Weissthor and to have been crossed by pilgrims as long ago as the sixteenth century, while about 1859 it received the erroneous name of Neu-Weissthor to distinguish it from De Saussure's Col. This Schwarzenberg-Weissthor is now seldom crossed.

(2) Weissthor II., or what we nowadays call the Neu-Weissthor, a much-frequented pass between Zermatt and Macugnaga, which has practically superseded the Schwarzenberg-Weissthor.

Professor Ulrich states that two Zermatt guides, M. zum Taugwald and Stephan Binner, on August 8, 1848, crossed the *Neues Weissthor* to Macugnaga. Mr. Coolidge agrees that this may mean the Schwarzenberg-Weissthor (Dr. Dübi is of this opinion. See 'Walliser Alpen,' vol. iii. A. p. 173), but he considers there may be solid reasons for thinking it was the present New Weissthor.

Mr. Coolidge considers that the present New Weissthor was first crossed in 1844 by a chamois-hunter, and was rendered popular about 1856 by the guide-innkeeper Franz Lochmatter of Macugnaga, although the first *incontestable* passage was that of Professor Bonney and Mr. Hawkshaw on September 2, 1858.

Bearing on this I would point out a reference in 'Aufzeichnungen zweier Hastitaler,' edited by the late Dr. Andreas Fischer—a book of course well known to Mr. Coolidge. The second part is a description by the guide Johann v. Weissenfluh, the younger, of Alpine journeys in 1850 and 1851. In the former year he accompanies a certain Lieutenant Bürki. On August 18 they go up to the Augstum or Riffelalp: 'Two Vallaisans, namely, Joseph Welschen and Joseph Zdrugwald [*sic*], agreed to accompany us over the Pass of the Weissthor. . . . All at once our two Vallaisans who are ahead stand still, and we stand on the brink of a terrible precipice, at our feet, some 10,000 feet below, Macugnaga. . . .'

The context shows that the place where they stood was on the ridge where either the Mittelthor or New Weissthor crosses it. The guide Joseph Welschen is doubtless Ruden's No. 365, born in 1809, President of the Commune, while Joseph Zdrugwald may be safely assumed to be Hans Joseph zum Taugwald (1798–1855), father of the three brothers Matthäus, Johann, and Stephan. We find him the following year as one of the Schlagintweit's guides up Monte Rosa, and as Adolf Schlagintweit's sole guide over the Alt-Weissthor.

The narrative proceeds: 'Joseph Zrugwald [*sic*] insisted that when chamois-hunting about eight years ago he had found here a nearer

crossing; he climbed from one rocky promontory at this giddy height, from one shoulder to the other, to force a passage. . . . The Vallaisan concluded at last that he was mistaken and we decided to follow the route which the previous year Joseph Welschen had taken, and which lay more to the left round a rounded snow-mound. Soon we saw a rock, when Welschen halted and scratched out of a cleft a paper which was still legible and contained the names of the party who had passed the previous year.¹ We had the glacier which leads to Saas on the left, and the Macugnaga Valley on the right, which are divided here by a sharp arête of névé. . . . (The description tallies without a doubt with the Arête Blanche of the Schwarzenberg-Weissthor.)

It would thus seem that the present New Weissthor, or possibly the Mittelthor, had been crossed about 1842, as there could be no possible object in Zum Taugwald's making such a statement unless true, although in 1850 he was not able to find the exact descent. It is indeed a plausible inference that this Zum Taugwald was 'the dare-devil hunter, "*Böser Jäger*,"' who, it was reported to Ball at Zermatt in 1845, 'had found out a new way over the ridge, but kept it a secret.' ('P.P.G.' i. 159-160.)

This would also account for his son Matthäus's *Entdeckungsreise nach neuen Pässen* in 1848, a journey to search for new passes mentioned by Ulrich, as doubtless his father would have given him some indication of the new route. It would also seem that the Schwarzenberg-Weissthor was sufficiently well known to the guide Welschen, that he made no difficulties about crossing it, and it is possible that passages of it were more frequent than is generally accepted.²

(3) Weissthor III. This covers the series of passes known under the name of Alt-Weissthor.

Mr. Coolidge holds that the first crossing was made by Adolf Schlagintweit and Johann Joseph zum Taugwald on August 27, 1851. But I am strongly of opinion that the willingness of this experienced hunter and guide to accompany, without a second guide, young Schlagintweit, with whom he had probably only made one previous expedition, denotes considerable earlier knowledge of, if not familiarity with, the pass.

How many guides in Zermatt to-day, unless thoroughly acquainted with the route, would, singlehanded, undertake to lead a young,

¹ Doubtless Marshall Hall, who speaks of engaging as local guide—he had with him Bleuer of Grindelwald—"the Herr President," 'a swarthy brigand-like fellow.' *A.J.* ix. 174.

² In the February *A.J.* it is intended to publish a series of extracts from the travellers' books at the Monte Rosa and Riffelhaus of early passages of the Weissthor, which Mr. Montagnier has been kind enough to make, by the courteous permission of Dr. Alexander Seiler.

comparatively inexperienced traveller* over any one of the Alt-Weissthors? Not one, I fancy; and we may well measure the guide of 1851 by the same standard. It must not be overlooked that chamois-hunting is an ancient pursuit, involving the frequent crossing of passes, if not the ascent of the summits. Ardent chamois-hunters like Jacchini and Lochmatter of the earlier days, Ferdinand Imseng and Alexander Burgener later, did not learn all they knew of the Weissthor ridge when leading travellers over it.

I am inclined to think there is a considerable element of truth in the tales of an old and familiar passage S. of the Cima di Jazzi. Lochmatter's accounts to Ball, to Conway, to Schulz, are a bit too circumstantial to be founded on fiction. Schlagintweit's map even marks another passage, different from any of the others. Shortly afterwards Hooker also crosses an Alt-Weissthor. Most unfortunately no details appear to have been preserved of this journey, nor do we know the names of his guides, but it is incontestable that a passage well known to men in Zermatt did exist between the Jägerhorn and the Cima di Jazzi.

I am not prepared to say whether the piety of the pilgrim or the courage of the chamois-hunter first set folk searching for a passage! It may well be that there were two old passes, used alternately according to existing conditions and the powers of the travellers.

Mr. Coolidge lays us under a great obligation by splendid monographs like the present one and the *History of the Col de Tenda*, to mention the two most recent, which deserve the closest study. The mountaineer who takes no interest in the historical side of his pursuit misses indeed much, and it is in a considerable measure due to Mr. Coolidge's studies that the development in this direction in recent years is due.

It is earnestly to be hoped that these valuable papers will be collected very speedily in a new volume of '*Alpine Studies*,' so that they may be readily available in a convenient form and—may I venture to hope?—in our mother-tongue.

J. P. FARRAR.

CORRESPONDENCE.

OLD MEMORIES.

To the Editor of the ALPINE JOURNAL.

SIR,—It is very unusual for an obscure member of the Club to find his name mentioned twice in a single number of the *ALPINE JOURNAL*, and the fact that my name occurs in this way in the number for October 1916 induces me to write this letter.

* He had previously visited the Alps in 1846, 1847, and 1848.