

## ALPINE NOTES.

MONUMENT TO CHANOINE CARREL.—It is proposed to erect a monument—probably a mural tablet—to the memory of Chanoine Carrel, of Aosta, in the church of Val Tournanche, his native place. All English mountaineers who knew Aosta fifteen years ago remember the hearty old priest who spent half his summers on the alp under the Becca di Nona. Carrel was at once a careful and persevering scientific observer, always ready to communicate information, and a true mountain enthusiast, at a time when such enthusiasm was rare, and in a spot where it was then almost unknown. He was besides a man of great natural intelligence and energy. The path up the Becca di Nona was made through his exertions, he personally conducted for thirty years the meteorological observations at the college; and the Aostan Alpine Club may fairly look on him as their patron saint. Not a few amongst ourselves were indebted to his courtesy, and some of these may be glad of an opportunity to contribute towards the memorial now proposed to be erected.

The Alpine Club has, through its committee, subscribed 4*l.*, and single subscriptions have been already received from several members, besides 2*l.* from Prof. Tyndall. Any further contributions may be sent either care of F. F. Tuckett, Frenchay, Bristol, or direct by post-office order to Richard Budden, President of the Florentine section of the Club Alpino Italiano, Palazzo Ferroni, Florence.

THE GRAND COMBIN AND THE HIGHLEVEL ROUTE.—Mr. H. White and the Rev. E. W. Bowling, with Henri Devouassoud and Daniel Ballay as guides, and Michel Balmat as porter, left Bourg St. Pierre Sept. 1, 1874, at 2 P.M. They passed the night under a tolerably comfortable rock at the foot of the Maison Blanche. They started next morning at about 3.15, and ascended some way by a gully; on reaching the snow they left the gully, and climbed the rocks on the left to the Col de la Maison Blanche.

Thence, with some fatigue, but without the least difficulty, they reached the top of the Grand Combin. In descending they retraced their steps a short distance, and then, after descending a steep snow-slope, they gained the glacier by alternate snow and rocks, about 20 min. below the Col de Sonadon. Here, parting with Ballay, and rejoined by their second porter, Joseph Simond, they made their way to the châteaux of Vingt-huit in the Val de Bagnes. Good milk and marmot may be had here. Total time from sleeping-place to Vingt-huit 15 hrs. 40 min.; but, as one of the party was unwell all day, good walkers would probably require less time. Next day, Sept. 3, the travellers resumed the ordinary high-level route by the Col de la Reusse d'Arolla. This ascent and descent of the Grand Combin is a pleasant variation on the ordinary route, as it combines in one day parts of two interesting cols, and the two sides of a grand mountain.

The descent from the Combin to the Col du Sonadon requires good guides and tolerably steady travellers.

The writer of this note was sorry to read an opinion expressed by a

member of this Club in Ballay's book of testimonials, to the effect that Ballay is a good guide, but 'too cautious.' Ballay has the good fortune, or bad fortune (who can tell?), to own a wife and some twelve or thirteen little Ballays, and for their sakes and for his own sake, as well as for the sake of his future employers, it is to be hoped that he will continue to show the caution which is essential in a good guide, though so lightly esteemed by some amateur climbers.

His leadership throughout the day was faultless, and he was well supported by the two other men.—E. W. BOWLING.

[Having employed Ballay twice, on the second occasion for some weeks, I feel bound to state that, so far as my experience went, he showed himself very bold as well as careful. I should be sorry to travel with a less cautious guide.—DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.]

LA SOCIÉTÉ DES TOURISTES DU DAUPHINÉ.—A Society bearing this title has lately been formed at Grenoble, with the object of making known the magnificent scenery of Dauphiné, facilitating mountain excursions, and encouraging scientific observations. The first general meeting was held on May 24, and the Society numbered over 400 members at the end of August.

The executive is composed of an elected committee of nine members. It is proposed to hold two general meetings every year; one in the beginning of May, immediately after which a 'Bulletin' will be published, enumerating the guides, porters, &c., recommended by the society, and subject to the tariff framed by it; the other at the beginning of December, when the officers for the ensuing year will be elected, and all the general business of the society transacted; immediately after this latter meeting the 'Annuaire' of the society will be published. There is a good rule, that any one may be a member of the society except innkeepers, guides, and all other persons who, by reason of their profession, have an interest in being recommended by the society. Anyone wishing to join the society should apply to the President (M. Belz, rue Créqui 1, Grenoble), through a member; the power of electing a candidate belongs to the committee. The subscription is 10 francs a year; members are entitled to receive gratuitously the 'Bulletin' and the 'Annuaire'; subscriptions run from Jan. 1 of each year. The organ of the Society is at present a local paper named 'Le Dauphiné,' which contains all local news, especially such as relates to the watering-places of Allevard and Uriage, and is published every Sunday by M. Xavier Drevet, rue Lafayette 14, Grenoble (subscription 12 francs a year).

Though so recently formed, the society has already begun its work. To it we owe the great improvement seen this year in the inn at S. Christophe, the construction of a chalet with four beds at the Sept Laux, and the placing of a rope on the highest peak of the Belledonne, hitherto reached by four persons only. It is hoped in time to construct chalets (like those of the Swiss Alpine Club) in the principal valleys, and to establish a small inn at La Bérarde, the natural mountaineering centre of the district.

I would urge on all mountaineers interested in Dauphiné the importance of supporting this society; and I shall be happy to give any-

one who desires it any further information which it is within my power to afford.—W. A. B. COOLIDGE.

NOTES FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF COURMAYEUR.—The following notes are sent by the Rev. H. B. George :—1. I made, in July last, the second passage of Mr. C. E. Mathews' Col de Trélatête, and believe the glaciers to be much more difficult than when he first crossed it. We had a great deal of snow, in very good order; had we, like Mr. Mathews, found no snow on the north side, I believe it would have been impossible to descend by his route, even if we could have reached the Col from the south. We saw from the level of the Glacier de Trélatête another secondary glacier, less steep and difficult, apparently leading up to the same ridge, but nearer to the Aiguille du Glacier, which I would recommend for exploration, especially as the pass would be best taken from the Trélatête side.

2. In consequence chiefly, I believe, of the diminution of the glaciers, which is most marked all along the south side of the chain of Mont Blanc, it is now the invariable practice to descend from the Col de Mont Tondu to Motet, and thence ascend again to the Col de la Seigne. The ground looked to me so rough that I should have done this of my own accord, even without being told by my guide that it was usual.

3. I can very strongly recommend the walk from Courmayeur to the Lac de Combal *via* the Col de Checrut. The path, which is quite plainly marked, ascends very gently from the Col, reaches a height of fully 8,000 ft., and at length descends abruptly on the lake. Much more is seen of the south side of Mont Blanc by following this route than from the level of the valley, and the distance is little greater. Two hours' fast walking took us from the Col to the lake.

4. I can speak most favourably of the Mont Fréty Pavilion under its present management. The people are very civil, the food good, and the charges, for the situation, moderate.

5. An expedition from Courmayeur much to be recommended is to ascend the valley leading to the Col de Sapin, and going either to that col, or to another gap slightly higher to the north of the Trossé Blanc, ascend M. de la Bernarde, and return along the ridge of M. Saxe, of which this is the highest point (total walking about 5 hrs.). There are two paths up M. Saxe, the usual one from Val Ferrex, and a shorter and steeper one, not practicable for mules, from near the mouth of the above mentioned valley.

6. We descended from the Ruitor to Ste. Foi, for the first time, I believe, since Mr. W. Mathews first did so. There being plenty of snow, there was no difficulty beyond the extreme steepness of the descent, and we reached the foot of the glacier in two hours from the summit.

7. Being compelled by bad weather to change our plans, we went on the same day from Ste. Foi to the Little St. Bernard by a very convenient path, which ascends about half an hour to Masures, the first village on the route to the Col du Mont, and thence passes at a level around the mountain sides for about two miles to Châtelard, next ascends steeply through another village, and enters the new carriage-road

to the Little St. Bernard in the middle of the last but one of the long zig-zags. Total distance from Ste. Foi to the hospice a little over 3 hrs. This saves a couple of hours, at least, to any one going from Tignes to Courmayeur.

Mr. Bröbner sends the following additional details as to the hut near the Aiguille Grise:—‘This cabane is situated on the rocks overlooking the Cl. du Mont Blanc, at a height of about 10,000 ft. It was erected on July 24, 1875, and no fewer than forty-two guides and porters from Courmayeur were employed in conveying the materials for its construction. Its length is 13 ft., breadth  $6\frac{1}{2}$  ft., and the mean height 6 ft 4 in. It is substantially built of wood, has a sloping platform for sleeping on (raised about 2 ft. above the floor, and occupying half the space), is furnished with a window, a table and two benches, and only requires a stove to be completely equipped.’

ROCHES MOUTONNÉES.—Sir,—On August 26 last, a gentleman who sat next to me at dinner at the Grimsel mentioned to me, that on passing the Helle Platte that day he had noticed that some large slabs of rock had been disturbed, and had laid bare similar smooth faces to those forming the original surface of the rock, whose smoothness is usually attributed to glacier action. The next day, on passing the spot, I noticed the following appearances, which you may possibly deem worthy of notice.

Either from natural causes, or in the work of improving the path, which has been recently carried on, some large sheets of rock, containing several square feet of surface each, have been detached, and have slid down from their original position towards the path. The thickness of the slabs is about ten inches or a foot. The surface exposed by the slip of these slabs is quite smooth and of a rounded contour, perfectly parallel to the upper surface of the well-known smooth rocks.

Now the rounded surface of the original rock has always been attributed to the effect of the grinding action of the old glacier, which once filled the valley; but the surfaces now for the first time exposed cannot have been so produced. How then have they been produced? Either the extreme pressure of the ice must have caused a foliation of the rock in its interior parallel to the outer surface—which does not seem probable, at least in such large and well defined faces as are here exhibited—or else the rock must have originally possessed planes of stratification or cleavage, which have been here bent into a dome-like form, simulating with wonderful accuracy the appearances caused by glacial action. If this latter hypothesis be true, apparent *roches moutonnées*, in places where now no glaciers exist, should be carefully examined, to prove that they do not owe their form to a similar cause before being accepted as evidence of former glacier extension.

I should be very glad to know if the appearances here noted have been observed by other and more scientific members of the Club, and if so, what explanation they offer of them.—I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

E. CLAYTON, Capt. R.A.

Royal Military Academy, Woolwich.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN CLUB.—The Americans are about to follow the example of the principal European nations and to found an 'Alpine Club' of their own under the above title. We do not know why the Rocky Mountains rather than the Sierra Nevada, have been chosen to give a name to the new body. But its object is to explore and open up both the great ranges of the North American continent. It is desired by its founders that the Rocky Mountain Club should be brought into close connection with the parent Alpine Club, and they will be most happy to receive the names of any A. C.'s who, as a mark of sympathy, or with the hope of travelling among American mountains, are willing to join their body. The seat of the Club is Philadelphia. Among its promoters are Messrs. Cyrus Field, Bayard Taylor, Bierstadt, and Dr. Hayden. The annual subscription is 1*l*. Names may be sent to Dr. Appleton, 'Academy' office, 43 Wellington Street, Strand.

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### ALPINE DANGERS.

The following letters have been received:—

EDGBASTON: *January 17, 1876.*

SIR,—The remarks of Mr. Leslie Stephen on 'Alpine dangers' in the last number of the 'Journal' will justly have great weight. Will you, therefore, as he has strangely misconceived the drift of my paper on the Col des Grandes Jorasses, favour me by inserting this letter in reply.

My argument was just this: The few remaining new expeditions involved more difficulty and more risk—if such a term can properly be applied to Alpine ascents—than those which had already been done. The policy of the Club in regard to this residuum of 'agenda' was not to refuse advice, since our past history had robbed us of the right of silence. Nor should we counsel the eschewing of further expeditions since we should damp the ardour of our younger members, and forego our fair share in the credit of successful achievement. But it was our duty to control a stream that we could not stem, and when prudence gave the club no future then we had only one thing before us—'Euthanasia.'

The gist of Mr. Stephen's criticisms can be pretty much thrown into one sentence. He says, 'Is a man justified in exposing himself and his guides for six hours to incessant falls of stones in order to effect a new passage?' I explained that our only danger from this source was of *our own making*. It was only the stones loosened by us that struck us and carried away our axes. Our real peril was the return journey, if we failed to get to the top.

Mr. Stephen asks what I think is adequate for the risk encountered. I reply at once, novelty. This confessedly stimulates the savant, the inventor, the poet, the artist, the traveller, and why not also the man who climbs? Am I going too far in saying that every adventure which has been deemed worthy of record in the 'Journal' has been prompted by this feeling alone?

I am at a loss to understand on what ground Mr. Stephen credits