MODERN MOUNTAINEERING

AND

THE HISTORY OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

A FRAGMENT

BY THE LATE WILLIAM LONGMAN, F.G.S.

Formerly President of the Alpine Club.

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LATE PRESIDENT OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

INTRODUCTION.

AT the request of my friend, the Editor of the 'Alpine Journal,' I have undertaken to write a sketch of the history of our Club. In order, however, to enable my readers to understand how it came about that the formation of such a society was thought of, and was carried out with immediate success, it seems necessary to show in what way the ground was prepared to receive the seed, and to give some account of the ascents and explorations of the original members of the Club. But it may be well to go back even a little further, and, without returning to such remote antiquity as the first ascent of, or descent upon, Ararat, or to the comparatively modern times when Hannibal ingeniously melted the Alps with vinegar, or attempting to rival Mr. Leslie Stephen in his admirable account of the literary aspects of the Old and the New School in his 'Play-ground of Europe,' to give a slight sketch of modern mountaineering in general. I therefore propose to begin with some account of the ascents of European mountains before the first members of our Club began to climb, and thus gradually to arrive at the remarkable development of the passion for mountain climbing consequent on their ascents and adventures, and on the effect on the outside world produced by the graphic manner in which they were related.

I have no wish to magnify our members into heroes. We do not pretend to compare the endurance called for by the

difficulties and hardships of ascending a new or dangerous mountain, or of crossing a high snow pass and spending the night on a rock ledge, with the severe trials of Arctic explorers, of leading a forlorn hope, or with the high moral qualities displayed by men who expose themselves to contagious sickness for the sake of saving the lives of their fellow-men. But on the other hand it cannot be denied that a great call is made on the moral as well as on the physical qualities not only of those who make new ascents, but of all who scale previously ascended mountains of the first rank, or cross even well-known but difficult passes. I will not attempt to defend those who ascend high mountains for the sake only of saying that they have 'done' them; but even for them it must be said that they cannot make such ascents without possessing a large amount of moral as well as of physical courage, and eliciting a sympathetic mutual reliance between themselves and their companions. Nor is it possible even for 'mere climbers' to indulge in their favourite sport without developing a love and reverence for the scenes of natural beauty and terrific grandeur through which they pass.

CHAPTER I.

CHAMONIX AND MONT BLANC.

Early History.

WHEN the mountaineer casts his eye over a physical map of Europe, it is naturally attracted to the mountain which was long considered the highest in that continent. Mont Blanc may be cast down from its throne by geographers, but it must, in popular estimation, ever hold its place as pre-eminently the greatest and grandest mountain of Europe. For, although Elbruz is included within the limits of modern Europe, its position in a border-land which has been but lately added to our continent, and in a range severed by wide seas and vast plains from the European mountain system, disqualifies it for the headship which has been thrust upon it. It is consequently, I think, not inappropriate to begin this sketch of modern mountaineering with a history of the early ascents of Mont Blanc, especially, too, as it was the first great mountain in Europe whose summit had ever been reached.

The existence of Chamonix was certainly known from very early times, for the 'Priory'—a Benedictine convent—was established there in the thirteenth century. It is indicated in 'Mercator's Atlas,' published in 1595; and Mont Blanc and its chain are therein designated under the name of *Les Glacières*, and the summit under that of *Roches Blanches* or *Mont Maudit*.* It is not, however, mentioned by Scheuchzer in his Alpine travels between the years 1702 and 1711, and no stranger seems to have known anything about it.

The first foreign visitors who entered the valley seem to have been Messrs. Pococke and Windham in 1743. There is no record of any previous traveller having visited it, and so wild and dangerous was the country considered that Mr. Windham and his companions believed it to be necessary to

* 'Les Fastes du Mont Blanc.' Geneva. 1876.

go well armed, and even on his return he said that, although they met with nothing that had the appearance of danger, he advised travellers to follow his example in this respect. The party consisted of 'William Windham, of Fellbrigg, in Norfolk, father of the statesman who was the contemporary and colleague of Pitt; his tutor, Benjamin Stillingfleet, the naturalist; Lord Haddington and his brother, Mr. Baillie, with their tutor, Mr. Williamson, an eminent but somewhat eccentric scholar; Mr. Aldborough Neville, an ancestor of the present Lord Braybrooke; Robert Price, a man of great worth and accomplishment, father of Uvedale Price; Mr. Chetwynd; and, last of all, Pococke, who joined but did not originate the expedition, and who had just returned from his important travels in the East. Windham was the leader, for which post his alert muscular and ardent temperament well fitted him. He is described as being tall, thin, and narrow-chested, yet eminently handsome, and so fond of athletic sport as to have been known in London as "boxing Windham." He rather affected the air of a gay man of fashion, impatient of restraint, yet he was an excellent linguist, and was acquainted besides with the sciences and fine arts to an extent of which few men believed him capable. Had he lived a hundred years later, he must inevitably have been first president of the Alpine Club.'*

The travellers slept at a little cabaret, kept by Jean Pierre Tairraz, which gradually grew into the Hôtel de Londres. The day after their arrival they walked to the Montenvers, and descended to the glacier, where they dined on a rock at its edge, thence called the Rocher des Anglais, which existed on the same spot until accidentally split by fire about twenty-five years ago. It is interesting to learn from Windham's narrative that, even then, the guides were aware of the movement of glaciers. He says that the guides told him 'that the whole glaciére has a kind of motion,' and they added that, 'in the times of their fathers, the glaciére was but small, and that there was even a passage through these valleys by which they could get to the Val d'Aoste in six hours, but that the glaciére was so much increased that the passage was then quite stopped up, and that it went on increasing every year.'† It is remarkable that Windham never mentions Mont Blanc.

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* 'North British Review,' No. 83 (probably by James Forbes).

† From 'An Account of the Glaciéres or Ice Alps in Savoy, in two Letters, one from an English Gentleman (Mr. Windham) to his friend at Geneva; the other from Peter Martel, Engineer, to the said English Gentleman. Illustrated with a Map and two Views of the Place, &c.

Nineteen years now passed away without any recorded attempt to reach the summit of Mont Blanc. De Saussure visited Chamonix both in 1760 and in 1761, and offered a large reward to any one who should discover a route to the summit.* In 1762 Pierre Simon, a Chamonix guide, made two attacks on the mountain, one by the Tacul and the other by the Glacier des Bossons, but he did not succeed.

Thirteen years afterwards, in 1775, four Chamonix guides endeavoured to make the ascent, starting from the Montagne de la Côte, but they were beaten back by the suffocating heat 'in a great valley of snow, which seemed to lead straight to the top of the mountain.'†

Eight years afterwards three other Chamonix guides, Jean-Marie Couttet, Lombard Meunier, and Joseph Carrier, made a fresh attempt by the same route, and passed through the great snow valley, doubtless the Grand Plateau, but soon afterwards they were obliged to return on account of the irresistible tendency to sleep of one of their party.

De Saussure was then at Chamonix, and asked these guides what they thought about the possibility of reaching the summit of the mountain. Meunier answered that 'it would be useless to take provisions, as he would be quite unable to eat, and recommended him to take nothing but a light parasol and a bottle of scent.' De Saussure was naturally much amused at this piece of advice. He says: 'When I pictured to myself this strong and robust mountaineer climbing these mountains of snow, in one hand holding a parasol, and in the other a bottle of *eau sans pareille*, it presented so strange and ridiculous an image that nothing could give me a better idea of the difficulty of the enterprise, and of the absolute impossibility of any man ever accomplishing it who had not the head and legs of a Chamonix guide.'‡

Two unsuccessful endeavours to climb Mont Blanc were made by M. Bourrit in 1783 and 1784, and another on September 12, 1785, by De Saussure in company with M. Bourrit and his son. On this latter occasion they passed the night in a cabin built at the foot of the Aiguille du Goûté, which M. Bourrit had sent some men from Chamonix to build two days

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As laid before the Royal Society. London: Printed for Peter Martel, &c. MDCCXLIV.' I have made use of the reprint of this scarce work as given in Albert Smith's very excellent 'Story of Mont Blanc.'

* De Saussure, 'Voyages dans les Alpes.' Edition of 1855. Part III.

† Ibid. Part III. p. 204.

‡ Ibid. p. 205.

previously,* on a plain at the foot of the glacier of Bionnassay, called by De Saussure the 'Pierre Ronde,' a name, the origin of which he says he is at a loss to account for. They reached the hut in five hours and a half from Bionnassay, and spent the rest of the day in exploring the neighbouring rocks and enjoying the beauty of the scene. The next morning they began their day's work by crossing a nearly level glacier which separated them from the base of the Aiguille, and in twenty minutes they reached the rocks of the arête by which they were to ascend it. They spent five hours in climbing the Aiguille, but when they had nearly reached its summit they were compelled to return and give up the expedition on account of the quantity of fresh-fallen snow.†

It was not until 1787 that De Saussure succeeded in reaching the summit of Mont Blanc; but in the meantime it had been attained by others, and De Saussure's energetic perseverance did not meet with its full reward.

First Ascents of Mont Blanc. Paccard, Balmat, De Saussure, and Beaufoy.

After De Saussure's failure, he had employed Pierre Balmat to build a hut ‡ at the foot of one of the arêtes of the Aiguille du Goûté and to make explorations with the view of discovering a way up the mountain. Consequently, on June 8, 1786, Balmat, Marie Couttet, and another guide set out for this purpose. They slept in De Saussure's old hut on the Pierre Ronde, and on the following morning proceeded by his route of the previous year, and reached the top of the Aiguille du Goûté. They then went on for an hour in the same direction, and reached the top of the Dôme du Goûté. There they found François Paccard and three other guides who had come, according to an arrangement, by the Montagne de la Côte, in order to ascertain which of the two routes was the shorter. Paccard arrived an hour and a half before Balmat. After traversing 'a great plain of snow,' they reached an arête joining the top of the Dôme du Goûté to that of Mont Blanc, but

* De Saussure, 'Voyages dans les Alpes.' Edition of 1855. Part III. pp. 207 and 209.

† Ibid. pp. 207–220.

‡ It is not apparent why it was necessary to build a hut at this place, as M. Bourrit had built one—on apparently the same spot—in the previous year. See De Saussure, pp. 207 and 223.

considered it too dangerous, gave up all thoughts of further progress, and set out on their return.

But one of the party—with them, but not of them—Jacques Balmat, born in 1762 at the village of Les Pèlerins*—remained behind, whether by accident or intentionally is not quite clear. He was not on good terms with his companions, and, fancying he saw his way to reaching the summit of the mountain, may have wished to keep to himself the honour of discovering it. He soon lost sight of his companions. A snowstorm came on, and he was forced to bury himself in a hole in the snow and wait till morning. When daylight came, he began his explorations and discovered the route, which for a long time was the only one by which ascents were made. He ascertained that if the crevasses which border the Grand Plateau were once crossed, the way to the top of Mont Blanc was clear and unbroken. To quote his own words: 'In descending (the previous day) to the Grand Plateau, I thought that half-way down there was a steep but possible slope which would lead to the Rocher Rouge. I determined to try it. But when I reached it I found it was so steep and the snow so hard that I could not stand on it. However, by cutting steps with my bâton I managed to climb it, but my fatigue was extreme. It was neither easy nor pleasant to hang, so to speak, on one leg with an abyss below me, and obliged to cut steps like a staircase. At length I reached the Rocher Rouge. Oh! I said, we are nearly there. From here to the top of Mont Blanc there is nothing to stop me. But I was half-dead with fatigue, cold, and hunger. It was getting late, and I was obliged to descend, but with the determination of returning the first opportunity, and I felt sure of success.'† He then returned to Chamonix, but was so utterly exhausted by fatigue and exposure that he at once took to his bed and did not leave it for weeks. No one knew of his hopes of success. He kept his secret close, until, moved by gratitude to Dr. Paccard, the village physician, who had attended him during his illness and restored him to health, he confided it to him. They agreed to attempt the ascent, and on August 7 following (1786) they started, without companions, on their bold and, for so small a party, hazardous expedition.‡ They reached the highest point (the *Taupinière-Blanche*, as the people of the country called the redoubtable summit) §

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* 'Fastes du Mont Blanc,' p. 31.

† Ibid. p. 38. Transcribed from notes left by Balmat to his heirs.

‡ Ibid. p. 39.

§ De Saussure, pp. 224 and 225; and Albert Smith, p. 110.

about 6 P.M. on the next day, and got back to Chamonix the following morning at about 8 A.M. On each night of their absence they slept on the Montagne de la Côte. Thus, less than a hundred years ago the summit of the great mountain of Europe was for the first time conquered.

De Saussure heard of Balmat's and Paccard's success the following day, and immediately wrote to Jean-Pierre Tairraz * expressing his delight, and confiding to him as a great secret that he wished to 'follow the same route.' So anxious was De Saussure that his intentions should not be made public that he forbade Tairraz to mention his name, and ordered him to state that all the preparations were made for 'a great Italian personage who does not want to be known.' His first directions were to remove some of the difficulties attendant on crossing the rugged ice. He said: 'As it appears they had a great deal of trouble to cross the glacier above the Montagne de la Côte, I wish you would send five or six men at once to level the route as much as practicable.' He then told Tairraz to select some good men, with Jacques Balmat at their head, and to order them to build two huts. One was to be at the top of the Montagne de la Côte, and another 'higher up, upon some rock in the middle of the snow.'

De Saussure arrived at Chamonix almost as soon as his letter, but bad weather came on, and he was obliged to defer his ascent until the following year. He passed the winter in Provence, looking forward with much delight to his intended ascent during the following summer, and occupying himself with his philosophical pursuits. In June 1787 Balmat made two unsuccessful attempts again to scale the mountain, but in the following month, a few days before De Saussure reached Chamonix, he succeeded in doing so, accompanied by Jean Michel Cachat and Alexis Tournier.

On August 1 of the same year De Saussure set out on his expedition, accompanied by eighteen guides and a servant. They went, as arranged, by the Montagne de la Côte, and passed their first night on the mountain—De Saussure and some of the guides in a tent he had brought with him, and the others among the rocks. They started the next morning at 6.30, an earlier start having been prevented by a dispute among the guides about the distribution of the baggage. They breakfasted at the Grands Mulets, and passed the second

* 'M. Edouard Tairraz gave me this autograph document when I was at Chamonix last autumn, and it is now in my possession.'—Albert Smith's 'Story of Mont Blanc,' p. 112.

night in a hole dug in the snow, over which the tent was pitched. This was on the second of the three great plateaux called Les Montées, now named the Petit Plateau. The next morning they 'crossed the second plateau, at the entrance of which they had passed the night.' They 'then ascended to the third (the Grand Plateau), and arrived in half an hour at the foot of the great slope, by which, on turning to the east, one ascends to the rock'—probably the Rochers Rouges—'forming the east shoulder of the top of Mont Blanc.' On beginning this ascent, De Saussure says: 'I was much exhausted by the rarity of the air, but in forty minutes we arrived at the point where an avalanche had fallen the preceding night, which we heard from our tent.' This was probably the place where, thirty-three years afterwards, Dr. Hamel's party was swept away. The guides were much alarmed, but De Saussure assured them there was no danger, because all the fresh snow must already have fallen. 'Beyond the avalanche the slope became continually steeper, with a frightful precipice on our left.' At last, in two hours and a half from their sleeping-place, they arrived at a rock which De Saussure says 'I called the left shoulder or second staircase of Mont Blanc; the top was on our right.' In two hours more they reached the summit. De Saussure vividly describes his feeling of disappointment at reaching the top. In this he is so singularly honest that it is well that his feelings should be described in his own words. He says: 'At last I reached the long-desired summit. But as during the last two hours which this painful ascent took me, I had had under my eyes nearly all that one can see from the top, it was not a *coup de théâtre*. It did not even give me all the pleasure I might have expected. My principal, and most agreeable, feeling was the consciousness of having come to the end of the troubles from which I had suffered. The length of the struggle, the recollection, and even the present sensation of my sufferings, produced in me a kind of irritation. The moment that I reached the highest point of the snow which crowns the summit, I stamped on it with anger rather than with pleasure. . . . However, the grand spectacle under my eyes filled me with a lively satisfaction.'* On their descent they slept on some rocks, apparently the Grands Mulets, and the following day they reached Chamonix.

A few days later Colonel Beaufoy made a successful ascent, but, for a long period, few men were induced to follow his ex-

* De Saussure, 'Voyages dans les Alpes,' p. 248.

ample. During the next thirty-two years, up to 1819, only nine ascents were made.

Dr. Hamel's Accident.

The year 1820 is memorable as that during which the fatal accident happened to Dr. Hamel's party. They have been accused of 'persisting in the ascent against the advice of the guides,' but this charge does not seem justifiable. From a very minute and careful account * of the expedition by one of Hamel's companions, J. D. (Durnford), of Oriel College, Oxford, it seems to be quite clear that so far from any of the guides making any objection, two were most anxious not to be left behind. That they were imprudent is clear enough, but for this they were all responsible. It is true that on the first day the guides tried to persuade Dr. Hamel and his friends not to start, 'not so much from the danger they anticipated, as from a conviction that our object in the ascent would be defeated by the cloudiness of the weather. . . . On the third morning all their objections seemed at once to vanish, and they were all eager to proceed.'

The party consisted of Mr. Durnford; his friend Mr. Henderson, of Brazenose College, Oxford; le Chevalier Hamel, a Russian then employed by the Emperor in making some scientific observations in the neighbourhood; and M. Sellique, an optician of Geneva, but a native of Paris, who wished to ascertain the height of Mont Blanc by means of a new barometer he had invented.

The four travellers arrived at Chamonix on August 17, and at once sent for Mathieu Balmat and Joseph-Marie Couttet as commanders of the expedition. They engaged ten others as guides and porters, and on the following morning, August 18, the party left Chamonix at 5 A.M. After leaving the last châlets belonging to François Favret, one of De Saussure's guides, they followed the now usual track by the Pierre de l'Échelle, and so across the Glacier des Bossons. The slow pace of the early expeditions up Mont Blanc is very remarkable. It took Dr. Hamel and his companions nearly twelve hours to reach the Grands Mulets.

During their passage across the glacier, the necessity of submission to the guides, and the fact that they did obey them —reluctantly, perhaps—are shown by the circumstance that, on reaching a certain snow bridge, Pierre Carrier, who was lead-

* In the 'New Monthly Magazine,' vol. i.

ing, pronounced it unsafe, and refused to cross it. 'Dr. Hamel was impatient, and offered to show him the way over;' but Carrier insisted, and Hamel yielded.

There was a heavy thunderstorm at night, accompanied apparently by a good deal of snow; for although J. D. does not mention that any was falling, he congratulates himself that 'they need not leave their beds very early, as it must be some hours at least before the snow would be fit to bear their weight.' In the morning there was a thick fog. It was now impossible either to advance or retreat, and so they made up their minds to pass the day at the Mulets. About noon the weather somewhat cleared, but it was then too late to think of making the ascent, even if the snow had been in a good state. They managed, however, to send two of the guides to the Prieuré for more provisions. Pierre Carrier, evidently the best man of the party, and who had already frequently ascended the mountain, went forward to explore, but found the snow much too soft for safe progress. The travellers were very desirous of ascending further and sleeping at a higher point, but the guides knew how wild was the idea, and the travellers submitted to their fate.

The evening was 'rainy,' but the morning was fine, and about 5 A.M. on August 20 they made ready for a start. M. Sellique refused to go. It is important to mention this fact as it was he who originated the reports of his companions having forced the guides to proceed. There is, however, nothing to show that his reason for this refusal was any doubt about the weather or the state of the snow. 'We were kept in suspense until five o'clock, when the sun, silvering with its rays the summit of the mountain, appeared, as it were, to invite us onward. The guides were now eager to proceed, and our whole party shared in their ardour, with one exception. M. Sellique had passed a rather sleepless night, during which he had made it out completely to his own satisfaction that a married man had a sacred and imperious call to prudence and caution where his own life seemed at all at stake, and that he had done enough for glory in passing two nights in succession perched on a crag like an eagle, and that it now became him, like a sensible man, to return to Geneva while return was yet possible. All our remonstrances proving ineffectual, we left him with two of the guides in possession of our tent at the Grands Mulets. These men were persuaded, much against their inclination, to forego the pleasure of continuing the ascent. Two of them, who had never been on the summit, and who were therefore selected as more proper to remain, actually refused. The rest

of the party therefore went on and reached the Grand Plateau at 8.20 A.M., the weather being beautifully fine, but the snow rather too soft.' After a short rest for breakfast they continued their ascent, 'and having at length reached the level of the Dôme du Goûté, still at some distance on our right, we suddenly made an obtuse angle to the left, and thus, leaving the Dôme behind us, directed our course to the eastern shoulder of the mountain, called by the guides the Mont Maudit. On our arrival there we were to make one more bend to the right, and this last tack would conduct us to the summit. . . . We were now scarcely 400 yards below the level of the summit. . . . As we were crossing obliquely the long slope above mentioned,* which was to conduct us to the Mont Maudit, the snow suddenly gave way beneath our feet, and carried us all down the slope to our left.' Most of the party extricated themselves from the snow, but the three front guides, Pierre Carrier, Pierre Balmat, and Auguste Tairraz, were buried in a deep crevasse into which they were carried by the snow. It is needless to add details of the grief of Hamel and his friends, of their efforts to recover their companions, and of their ultimate conclusion that there was nothing left for them but to return, leaving the three guides buried in the snow. From thence they never emerged alive. Forty-three years afterwards some relics of the poor fellows—consisting of pieces of one of their bodies, some clothes, a few leaves of a Latin book, part of a lantern, and other things, some of which are in the possession of the Alpine Club—were found on the Glacier des Bossons in June and August 1863. They had thus been carried nearly five miles in forty-three years.† Further remains, consisting of bones and clothes, were found in a crevasse on the Glacier des Bossons, about ten feet below the surface, on July 29, 1865, by Mr. J. Bazley White, jun.

Modern Ascents of Mont Blanc.

It is unnecessary to relate the history of all the various ascents of Mont Blanc since Hamel's accident, but there are some which deserve particular mention. The first of these is the ascent of Mr. Clissold on August 18, 1822.‡ He and his

* 'Over the Back of the Western Rocher Rouge.' J. J. Cowell in 'Alpine Journal,' vol. i. p. 332.

† 'Alpine Journal,' vol. i. p. 141, and a paper on the relics in possession of the Club, by J. J. Cowell, in the same volume, p. 332.

‡ 'Narrative of an Ascent to the Summit of Mont Blanc,' August 18, 1822. By Frederick Clissold, Esq. London, 1823.

party crossed the Grand Plateau towards Mont Maudit, and arrived at the Rocher Rouge about 6 P.M., where they slept in a cavity between the rock and the ice. The next morning they reached the summit at 5.30, and remained there for three hours, when they commenced their descent. They arrived at the Grands Mulets at 1.30 P.M., left it at 3 P.M., and reached the Prieuré at 7.30.

On July 25, 1827, Messrs. Charles Fellowes and W. Hawes struck out a new route by the Corridor and the Mur de la Côte, avoiding the danger from avalanches on the old line. This has now become the usual way, that of Dr. Hamel's party not having been again followed until July 31, 1857, when Messrs. Hinchliff and Walters again brought it into notice. A graphic account of the expedition, under the title of 'Poaching on Mont Blanc,' was published by Mr. Hinchliff.* It was their principal object to circumvent the obnoxious Chamonix rules. Their expedition, no doubt, contributed to their modification, but it was not until many years afterwards, as will be related in its proper place, that the efforts of the Alpine Club succeeded in obtaining any satisfactory alteration. Mr. Hinchliff and his companion took the regulation number of four guides for the Grands Mulets, intending, if all circumstances proved favourable, to push on to the top of the mountain. On their intention being communicated to the guides, some time after their departure, they found that they had suspected the travellers' object and entered into the plan with intense delight. The telescope of the 'guide-chef' was naturally often directed to the summit of the mountain, and when, on the day following the supposed departure of the travellers for the Grands Mulets, he observed five men upon it—one of the guides having been unable to go beyond the Petits Mulets—his surprise and anger were extreme. Of course the guides were fined, and the angry official endeavoured to refuse the travellers the usual certificate of a successful ascent; but they insisted, and he was obliged to yield, with, however, no moderate expressions of indignation at the success of the ruse which had been practised on him. During the last twenty years this 'ancient passage' has been used by scores of mountaineers with perfect safety,† but the two fatal accidents which have occurred on it show that it should never be taken after bad weather or in an unfavourable season.

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* 'Fraser's Magazine,' 1869.

† 'Alpine Journal,' vol. ii. p. 384. December 1866.

New Routes to the Summit of Mont Blanc. Ramsay, Kennedy, Hudson, and others. Courmayeur and the St. Gervais Routes.

In order to complete the history of the ascents of Mont Blanc, it now remains only to give an account of the attempts to reach the summit by other routes than that of the Glacier des Bossons and the Grands Mulets, and to record some remarkable ascents by members of the Club.

The first modern attempt to work out a new route was made by Mr. (now Sir) J. H. Ramsay in 1855.* He thus describes his expedition in a letter I have just received from him:—'I fear that there are but two expeditions of mine which have any claim to be regarded as involving new ground. The first was in 1855, when we established the practicability of ascending Mont Blanc from Courmayeur, and in fact, to all intents and purposes, we did ascend Mont Blanc, as we ascended the Mur de la Côte, and then turned, owing to the alleged lateness of the hour. I went as a gentleman volunteer with a party of six natives of Courmayeur, headed by one "Turin." We ascended the Col du Géant on the 30th, and slept on a gravel bank at the foot of the Aiguille du Midi, between it and the Mont Blanc du Tacul. Next day we ascended the Tacul, and for the first time reached the top of the Mont Maudit, never before ascended. We descended to the Corridor, and there had a parley with a Chamonix party who had made the ascent in the usual way that same day. We ascended the Mur de la Côte in their tracks, after which the remaining guides —three having been left by the way at different places—refused to go any further, and, to my great disgust, we turned back, the actual *but* not having been reached, though the route was established. The weather was cold and windy, and we had no water for twenty-four hours, and no wine. It was all drunk up the first day. The second night, as we were returning, we first lay down for a few hours on the Col, near the site of De Saussure's hut. At 1 A.M. the moon rose, and the guides rose too. We were cold and thirsty, and they thought it better to descend for the sake of water, and a more comfortable resting-place. The moon was a good deal

* Nine years afterwards two French gentlemen, MM. Maquetin and Briquet, succeeded in reaching the summit by this route on July 18, 1863. 'Alpine Journal,' vol. i. p. 136.

past the full, but we managed the descent more easily than I expected. The latter part of the night we spent on the Alp below the rocks.

The route appears to me to be correctly marked on Reilly's map. Two of our party deserve mention for their mountaineering qualities and good conduct. One was a cheery, burly chamois hunter, of iron frame, Pierre Mochet. The other was, I believe, a baker by trade; a slight delicate-looking man, about 5 ft. 4 in. in height, yet "a real good 'un." His name was Joseph Marie Perrod.'

On August 7, 1855, another attempt was made to ascend Mont Blanc by this route. The party consisted of E. S. Kennedy, C. Hudson, George Joad, Grenville and Christopher Smyth, Charles Ainslie, and E. J. Stevenson. All the guides and porters left them on reaching the summit of the Col, and the travellers, nothing daunted, went on without them. After crossing the Col they 'endeavoured to skirt the northern angle of the peak of red granite, called from its shape La Tour Ronde,'* but were stopped by a long crevasse and returned to the eastern base of the Flambeau, from whence they descended to the upper portion of the Glacier du Tacul, and then proceeded to the Rognon, where they passed the night under a tent they brought with them. The next morning the weather was so thick that they were obliged to plough the snow with their alpenstocks in order to leave a track by which, if necessary, they might return. After an hour, however, the mists cleared off, and they found they were immediately below the bases of the Aiguille du Midi and the Mont Blanc du Tacul, overlooking the Glacier des Bossons. They then ascended to the summit of the Mont Blanc du Tacul, and seemed to be within four hours of the top of Mont Blanc itself. But bad weather came on, and they were obliged to retreat.

Having thus been baffled on the Col du Géant route, they determined to endeavour to make the ascent of Mont Blanc from St. Gervais by the Aiguille du Goûté. They were induced to do so by two motives; the natural desire to discover a new route, and the wish to break down the oppressive and mischievous system on which the Chamonix guides were managed, and for this purpose they determined to go without guides.

Mr. Hudson—that intrepid and skilful mountaineer, one of

* Kennedy's 'Mont Blanc,' p. 12. This is not the Tour Ronde of Reilly's and the French maps, but a lower summit nearer the Col du Géant.

the original members of the Alpine Club, whose name can never be mentioned without an expression of profound grief at his untimely end on the Matterhorn—had surveyed this route early in 1853, and had come to the conclusion that it was practicable.

On March 30 of that year he set out from the Hôtel du Mont Joli, St. Gervais, at 10 P.M., with the intention of reaching the summit of Mont Blanc by the Aiguille du Goûté. His companions were three chamois hunters, Mollard, Cuidet, and another. When they reached the base of the Aiguille, Cuidet expressed his opinion that the proposed route was inaccessible. He said to Mollard, '*Je vous donnerai cinq cents francs si vous montez là-haut aujourd'hui.*' Mollard's answer was, '*J'ai bonne espérance.*' Hudson, who overheard the conversation, felt that his companions would desert him, and therefore carefully surveyed the route by which the summit of the Aiguille, 3,500 feet above them, could be reached. He then began the ascent, followed unwillingly by the hunters, one of whom soon shouted out to him: '*Monsieur, monsieur, arrêtez-vous, c'est impossible d'avancer plus loin, il y a trop de vent; regardez la neige et le brouillard.*' Hudson had no intention of beating a retreat, and told his companions that if they would not go with him he would go without them. They allowed him to do so! and after an hour and a half of severe climbing he arrived within ten or fifteen minutes of the summit. It was needless to proceed further, as from this point he could see that there was nothing to prevent his reaching the summit of Mont Blanc itself. He therefore began to descend, and in an hour and a half he rejoined his chickenhearted companions.

Encouraged by this preliminary attempt Mr. Hudson with Mr. Kennedy and his friends left Courmayeur, and made their way to La Villette,* a hamlet near St. Gervais, the abode of the chamois hunters with whom Mr. Hudson had made his excursions, and whom they wished to enlist as porters to carry food and blankets to the foot of the Aiguille du Goûté, without being expected to go any further. The travellers then went to St. Gervais, where they passed the night.

The next morning, Monday, August 13, 1854, they all set out about 9 A.M., and reached their sleeping-place, between the Tête Rouge and the Aiguille du Goûté, about 5 P.M.,

* A village which gave its name, in 1272, to Richard de Villette, one of the early priors of Chamonix, who gave to the curé of Valorcine (Vallis Ursina) his tithes of corn and sheep, but reserved his rights over all the bears killed in the valley.—*Les Fastes du Mont Blanc*, p. xi.

soon after which the porters left them. The next morning Mollard, the chamois hunter, woke them at 2 A.M., and at 4 A.M. they all, hunters and travellers, with the exception of Mr. Stevenson, who was ill, again started. At 6.12 A.M. they were at the top of the Aiguille, from whence they proceeded to the Dôme du Goûté. Here the cold wind was excessively trying, and George Joad was obliged to give up the idea of going further, and returned with some of the hunters to Chamonix, picking up Stevenson on the way.

In ten minutes the rest of the party were at the summit of the Dôme, whence they saw the top of Mont Blanc scarcely 1,500 feet above them. Here Cuidet and Hoste, the only men who had accompanied them thus far, left them, and the rest of the party, consisting of the two Smyths, Kennedy, Ainslie, and Hudson, went on. On reaching the summit of the Dôme they had the choice of two routes, one being over the Grand Plateau, and the other over the Bosse du Dromadaire and along the ridge which connects the Dôme du Goûté with Mont Blanc. The difficulties, and indeed the practicability, of the latter were unknown, and on it they would have been exposed to the full force of a bitterly cold wind. They descended therefore to the Grand Plateau and climbed the final dome of Mont Blanc by the usual route of the Corridor and the Mur de la Côte so graphically described by Albert Smith. Having passed the Petits Mulets, they arrived at 12.35 P.M. at the summit of Mont Blanc, thus successfully accomplishing without guides the ascent of the mountain by a route in great part new.*

In considering the route thus discovered by Mr. Kennedy and his party, it will be seen that the apparently obvious and direct route from the Dôme du Goûté to the summit of Mont Blanc, viz., that over the Bosse du Dromadaire, was still unknown. No traveller had explored it since Dr. Paccard and his guides' unsuccessful attempt in July 1786, and Mr. Kennedy and his friends were satisfied with having accomplished their main object, which was to show the practicability of substituting the Aiguille du Goûté route for that of the Grands Mulets.

But in 1859 the link between the Dôme du Goûté and the summit was completed. In an interesting letter to the 'Times' (Aug. 5, 1861) Mr. Tuckett thus describes the completion of

* 'Where there's a Will there's a Way; an Ascent of Mont Blanc by a New Route, and without Guides. By the Rev. Charles Hudson, M.A., of St. John's College, Cambridge, and Edward Shirley Kennedy, B.A., of Caius College, Cambridge.' Second edition, London, 1856.

this link, and Mr. Leslie Stephen's and his own successful accomplishment of the entire new route. He says:—'A party of our countrymen, of whom my friend, the Rev. C. Hudson, was one, accompanied by the gallant Melchior Anderegg, started from Chamonix, and, reaching the Grand Plateau by the usual route, gained the summit of the Dôme du Goûté, and thence made their way by the Bosse and the N.W. arête of the Calotte to the summit.' By the different routes already mentioned the Aiguille du Goûté had been connected with the summit, *viâ* the Dôme and Bosse du Dromadaire, thus avoiding the descent to the Grand Plateau and the long ascent thence. It still remained, however, as Mr. Tuckett adds, to put the keystone to the St. Gervais route by traversing all the parts of it consecutively, which was accomplished in 1861.

Messrs. Stephen and Tuckett, in company with the Rev. C. Hudson and some other friends, had made an unsuccessful attempt on July 10, 1861, to reach the Dôme du Goûté from the Col de Miage, by means of a ridge supposed to connect it with the Aiguille de Bionnassay. After their repulse they determined to complete the St. Gervais route. They accordingly started from St. Gervais on the morning of July 17. The party consisted of Mr. Leslie Stephen, Mr. Tuckett, Mr. Mather, and the Rev. W. F. Short, the latter two intending to go only to the summit of the Aiguille du Goûté. Their guides were Melchior Anderegg, J. J. Bennen, and P. Perren. Mollard, the chamois hunter of La Villette, undertook the general superintendence of the preparations, and volunteered to accompany them as far as the Tête Rouge. They left the hotel at St. Gervais at 4.15 A.M., and reached the hut on the summit of the Aiguille du Goûté at 3.45 P.M. The next morning Messrs. Stephen and Tuckett, accompanied by the three guides, left the Aiguille at 4.15 A.M., reached the summit of the Dôme du Goûté at 5.40, the Bosse du Dromadaire at 6.15, halted for breakfast till 6.25, and at 8.15 A.M. stood on the summit of Mont Blanc. Quitting it at 8.30 they arrived at Chamonix with great ease, and after various halts, amounting together to three and a quarter hours, at 6.30 P.M., and came to the conclusion that the top of Mont Blanc may be reached from the hut on the Aiguille du Goûté *viâ* the Dôme and the Bosse much more quickly than by making the Grands Mulets the point of departure, and ascending thence either by the Dôme and Bosse; the Grand Plateau, Corridor, and Mur de la Côte; or by the oldest route of all, direct from the head of the Grand Plateau.

A writer in the 'Times,' A. A. R(eilly) (dating from Belmont, August 29, 1861), referring to this complete ascent from St.

Gervais, makes an interesting comparison between the old and new routes. He says:—'In point of scenery and interest there can be, I think, no doubt that the route by the Aiguille excels in both. The whole way from Chamonix to the Corridor, the track is shut in by the lofty summits which rise on either side; and though the glacier scenery is superb, distant view there is none, with the exception of a narrow strip above the valley of Chamonix. But in mounting the Aiguille the panorama is magnificent, and becomes momentarily more so, while the view from its summit—on one side looking down on the Grands Mulets and the Aiguilles beyond, and on the other stretching far away towards Piedmont—is in itself a sufficient reward. There are no weary hours of darkness next morning, but the cabin is left just as the first beauties of sunrise begin to show themselves, and as the Dôme du Goûté and then the Bosse are successively mounted, the view becomes gradually more extensive, until at last, on the attainment of the summit, the whole of the vast panorama towards Monte Rosa bursts at once upon the sight.' The great objection to this route is the want of a decent hut on the Aiguille. But, in a letter in the same journal two days previously, Mr. Walters expresses his opinion strongly in favour of the usual route, on account of 'the constant *éboulement* of rocks and stones while climbing the Aiguille du Goûté, and the great danger of the *couloir*,' and, singularly enough, he adds—'to say nothing of the decided inferiority of the scenery.'

New Routes to Mont Blanc. The Miage and Brenva Routes.

The next attempt to discover a new route to the summit of Mont Blanc was made from the west side, and, although not entirely successful, it proved the possibility of ascending the mountain from this quarter.

On August 5, 1864, Messrs. Reilly and Birkbeck, starting from Chamonix, slept at the Châlets de Miage, which they left next morning at 3.10 A.M. They reached the Col de Miage at 9.5; left it at 11.35; passed diagonally downwards to the surface of a large glacier descending from the south side of the arête which connects the Aiguille de Bionnassay with the Dôme du Goûté; gained the top of the arête at about its central point, and, passing along it, reached the Dôme at 4.35. They descended the Dôme on its north side to the

Grands Mulets, arrived at Chamonix at 10 P.M., and thus proved the accessibility of Mont Blanc from the Miage side.

The ascent of Mont Blanc by the Brenva Glacier looks, on the maps, tolerably feasible, but not so when examined from the valley itself. Mr. Moore, in 1863, had, in company with Almer, Perren, and Melchior Anderegg, carefully considered the possibility of an ascent by this route, and all came to the conclusion that it was impracticable. But in the following year, while descending Mont Blanc in company with Almer, keeping along the edge overhanging the Italian side, Mr. Moore discovered a slope stretching down to a gently inclined field of névé about 150 feet below. This névé appeared to be the head of the Brenva Glacier, and it seemed quite possible to reach it from below by crossing the glacier and ascending the rocks and ice-slopes on its right bank, until they arrived at nearly the same level as the Corridor, which might then be reached by a traverse. He accordingly determined to attempt it, and consequently, on the morning of July 14, 1864, with Horace Walker, George Mathews, and the late Mr. Frank Walker, accompanied by Jakob and Melchior Anderegg and two porters, he set out from Courmayeur at 10.10 A.M. Passing the châlets of La Brenva, they wound round the hill a little above the glacier, and after some moderate rock climbing they arrived at 3.20 at a little grassy plain lying at the base of the ridge they had been skirting, and on the south side of a bay which the glacier there forms. They were tempted to bivouac at this place, but, after consultation, they agreed to cross the glacier to a mass of rocks dividing it, and pass the night on their summit. The view thence was extremely fine. Looking south, the great upper icefall of the main branch of the glacier was on their right, streaming down to the valley, backed by the cliffs or buttresses of Mont Blanc itself, Mont Blanc de Courmayeur, and Mont Peteret. The next morning, at 2.45, they again started, bearing towards the edge of the great icefall, which Melchior declared was the finest he had ever seen. With some difficulty they crossed it and followed easy snow-slopes to the base of the great projecting buttress of rock, by which they hoped to climb to the upper regions. It took them, however, more than two hours to reach its top, from whence they looked down on and across a glacier tributary to the Brenva, above which towered the grand wall of Mont Maudit. Here began their real difficulties. They had to pass along the crest of an exceedingly steep blue-ice arête, which it was often necessary to straddle. It was, however, successfully accomplished, and they then arrived at some long

slopes of broken névé up which they had to climb. At 9.40 A.M. they started up these slopes, and on reaching their summit they knew that success was certain, for they were able to see the depression marking the head of the Corridor. To reach this they forced their way through seracs to the highest and more level part of the glacier to the right of them, after which they crossed to the head of the Corridor, and arrived at the summit of Mont Blanc at 3.10 P.M. Their object was thus successfully attained, but after such difficulties that their example has only once been followed.* To the pass thus made was given the name of the Col de Brenva.

On July 24, 1868, another passage to the summit of Mont Blanc from the south side was made by Mr. F. A. G. Brown. He started from Courmayeur, accompanied by Julien Grange, another guide, and some porters, at 10.20 A.M. They reached the Brouillard Alp at 1.30, and then walked up the middle of the Miage Glacier, in the shade of the enormous cliffs culminating in the Aiguille de la Trelatête, and passing by the fine icefall by which the Glacier du Dôme joins the Miage. They then ascended the Aiguille Grise, and at 5.15 A.M. reached what seemed to be a good sleeping-place, but Grange thought it would be better to attain a higher elevation, and pushed forward to a rock further on. There they settled to take up their quarters for the night. The next morning the porters left them, and at 5.30 A.M. Mr. Brown, Grange, and the other guide descended the rock to the névé. They soon arrived at the foot of the rocky tongue which splits the head of the glacier into two bays, of which they ascended the southernmost. The plateau on which they now entered, half a mile wide, was filled with fragments of the ice-cliffs which hemmed it in on every side. One of these, of enormous size, had fallen from below the Bosse, and, splitting into cubes, had left a single mighty mass some sixty feet high, standing alone and square, its upright sides shining brightly in the morning sunlight. They were now in a difficult position, but after reconnoitring the situation Grange determined to push on straight for the Dôme. How he proposed to scale the ice-cliffs which seemed to bar all progress, was, however, not easy to imagine. There was 'a monstrous blue wall of ice' for which he steered. The explorers crept along its foot, hugging it closely, so as to allow any fragments falling from above to shoot over their heads. At its termination they reached a broad, smooth and steep couloir running up out of sight towards the Dôme. No seracs

* 'Alpine Journal,' vol. ii. pp. 132 and 369.

could form on it, for the constant avalanches planed them down to a uniform level, and even the rocks which cropped up at intervals were worn down nearly to the general slope. Up this they scrambled till they reached the top of the ice precipice, then crossed another couloir, and soon arrived at the smooth snow-slopes which led to the Dôme, which they reached at 8.50 A.M., and the summit of Mont Blanc itself at 12.50. They returned to Chamonix by the usual route, and arrived there at 8.15 P.M., 'not a little pleased at having solved the problem of an ascent of Mont Blanc by the Southern Miage Glacier.'*

A different and less dangerous route by the tributary glacier, south of the Glacier du Dôme, which leads direct to the summit, was followed by Mr. T. S. Kennedy on July 1, 1872. By this way, which though steep is comparatively easy, Messrs. Foster and Moore, on July 21 of the following year, passed from Courmayeur to Chamonix, over the top of Mont Blanc, in a single day.†. A cabin was erected last year on the rocks of the Aiguille Grise by the Courmayeur guides. Several parties have made use of it and afterwards reached the top of Mont Blanc. This, the Italian or Courmayeur route, may therefore be expected to prove a formidable rival to that from Chamonix.

Conclusion. Mont Blanc in one day.

I have now given an account of the various attacks, successful or unsuccessful, which have been made on this grand old mountain. I have shown how for a long time it was deemed inaccessible, that at last it was conquered, but that for a long time afterwards it was considered so difficult and dangerous that it was deemed to be an evidence of madness to attempt it. Its ascent has now become perfectly easy. Not only do numbers of inexperienced travellers weekly reach the summit in safety in favourable weather, but it has been so successfully attacked from every side, that the difficulty now is not to find a possible line of ascent, but to decide which is impossible. Only the great southern precipice between the Miage and Brenva Glacier remains unconquered, and even that has been more than once assailed. At the same time, it must be pointed out that Mont Blanc may probably be credited with more deaths in recent times than all other mountains put together.

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* 'Alpine Journal,' vol. iv. p. 261.

† Ibid. vol. v. pp. 90, 168, and 293.

Some of these have arisen from avalanches, to which the *ancien passage* is frequently exposed, others from carelessness in the use of the rope, but the greater number from the storms to which the upper part of the mountain is peculiarly liable. But the most fatal accident of all was that in which a party of eleven persons lost their lives on September 6, 1870. The Rev. George M'Corkindale, and two Americans, accompanied by three guides and five porters, reached the summit in safety. They had scarcely left it, however, before they were overtaken by a terrible storm. Unable to find the way, they constructed some shelter with the snow. Ten days afterwards five bodies were found to the right of the Petits Mulets, and a note in the pocket of one of them showed that after a struggle of at least 36 hours they had perished of cold and exhaustion.

Of the remaining six no trace was ever discovered, and it is supposed that in a desperate effort to descend they fell over the precipices which overhang the Brenva Glacier. It is important to add that the summit of the mountain became suddenly covered with whirling clouds immediately after the travellers reached it.

The rapidity of some modern ascents is very striking. In 1823, Mr. H. H. Jackson arrived at the summit and descended the next day to Chamonix, having been absent only 36½ hours.* But this is nothing compared with recent achievements, for one mountaineer has reached the hoary head of the giant from Chamonix and returned to the village within a time not longer than that included between the sunrise and sunset of a long summer's day. On July 21, 1865, Mr. F. Morshead accomplished this feat in sixteen hours, having had no companion during the ascent after he had passed the Grands Mulets.† The following narrative of the ascent is taken from a letter from Mr. Morshead in the 'Times:'—'On Thursday last I left Chamonix at 12.30 A.M., accompanied by one porter. We reached the Grands Mulets at 5.30 A.M., where the porter, who had been flagging for some time, became so hopelessly slow that I thought it best for the success of the attempt to dismiss him and go on alone, following the tracks of a party who were ascending in the ordinary manner from the Grands Mulets. I reached the summit at 10 A.M., overtook on the Grand Plateau the party descending, and returned with them into Chamonix at 4.25 P.M. Thus the whole excursion, including stoppages, occupied sixteen hours.'. . . He adds: 'I

* Auldjo's 'Mont Blanc,' 3rd edit., fcp. 8vo, 1856, p. 110.

† 'Alpine Journal,' vol. i. p. 375.

should say that under favourable circumstances a good mountaineer, with one good guide, might always count on making the ascent within eighteen hours by this route, and, as far as my experience goes, with less fatigue than by starting the previous day and spending a restless night of dirt and discomfort in the Grands Mulets hut. My friend Mr. Moore a few weeks ago proved the ascent practicable from the Pavillon Belle Vue in one day, with one guide, and it was his success that first suggested to me the idea of trying it from Chamonix.' Of Mr. Moore's ascent, thus alluded to by Mr. Morshead, an account appeared in the 'Times' in which it is stated that 'Mr. Moore, accompanied only by Christian Almer, left the Pavillon Belle Vue, above the Col de Voza, at 2 A.M., reached the top of the Aiguille du Goûté at 10.10 A.M., and the summit of Mont Blanc, *viâ* the Bosse du Dromadaire, at 3.5 P.M. The descent to Chamonix was made by the usual route, and at 9.30 P.M. they were within half an hour of Chamonix, when they missed their way in the forest and were unable to extricate themselves until daylight. The ascent of the Aiguille du Goûté took two hours longer than usual on account of its dangerous state.' In September of the same year Mr. F. P. Barlow reached the summit by the Bosse du Dromadaire, and returned to Chamonix in 18½ hours, the ascent from the Grand Plateau upwards being in deep snow.

A Night on the top of Mont Blanc.

An account of the ascents of Mont Blanc would be incomplete without a narrative of a night spent on the summit by Dr. Tyndall, especially as it was the first—and remains the only—occasion on which a night's sojourn on the mountain has ever been made.

The main object in view was to make some observations on the transparency of the lower strata of the atmosphere to the solar heat-rays. Dr. Tyndall therefore made arrangements with the Abbé Veuillot of Chamonix to operate in the valley while he observed at the top. In this way Dr. Tyndall hoped to determine the influence of the stratum of air interposed between the top and bottom of the mountain upon the solar radiation, for which purpose it was important to commence the observations at daybreak.

In the summer of 1859, therefore, Dr. Tyndall and Dr. Frankland, accompanied by Auguste Balmat, with nine guides and porters, well provided with scientific instruments, proceeded to the summit, to which a tent had previously been

carried. The north wind blew fiercely, but they dropped down a few yards to the leeward and thus found shelter. Throughout the night they did not suffer from cold, although they had no fire and the temperature of the adjacent snow was 5° Fahrenheit. At daybreak the wind increased in force, and as the fine snow was perfectly dry, it was driven over them in clouds. This rendered the observations on solar radiation impossible. They had taken some rockets with them, to ascertain whether the ascensional power, or the combustion, was affected by the rarity of the air. But during the night they were enveloped in a dense mist, which defeated their purpose. One rocket, however, was sent up, which, though they did not know it at the time, penetrated the mist and was seen at Chamonix.

The sunrise from the summit was singularly magnificent. The snow on the shaded flanks of the mountain was of a pure blue, being illuminated solely by the *reflected* light of the sky; the summit of the mountain, on the contrary, was crimson, being illuminated by *transmitted* light. As Dr. Tyndall says, 'The contrast of both was finer than I can describe.'

About twenty hours were spent upon the top of the mountain.*

* Tyndall's 'Hours of Exercise in the Alps,' ch. iv.

CHAPTER II.

ZERMATT AND MONTE ROSA.

General Remarks.

Of the great mountains ascended before the formation of the Alpine Club, of which I propose to give some account, the next is Monte Rosa. Its ascents are not, however, comparable in interest to those of Mont Blanc. There is not so much incident in the climb as there is in that of Mont Blanc; the time taken in reaching the highest peak is less, and there is less variety of scenery. But on the other hand the number of the peaks of Monte Rosa gives it a character of its own, and contributes much to the picturesqueness of its outline, and to the interest of the view from the 'Allerhöchste Spitze.'

Before giving an account of the various attempts to scale this mountain, it may be well to begin with a general outline of the district and with some account of the early knowledge of the tract of country in which Monte Rosa is placed. It is situated in the circumference of a great circle of the noblest mountains, composed of seven of the summits of Monte Rosa itself, the Lyskamm, the Zwillinge—Castor and Pollux—the Breithorn, Matterhorn, Dent d'Hérens, Dent Blanche, Gabelhorn, Rothhorn, Weisshorn, Dom, Täschhorn, Alphübel, Allalinhorn, Rimpfischhorn, Strahlhorn, and Cima di Jazi. Into this enchanted region there was formerly only one entrance practicable for ordinary travellers. It was that from Visp by Stalden and St. Niklaus. The passes of the St. Théodule and Col d'Herens, which—difficult as it may be to believe *—had been frequented as horse-paths in the Middle Ages, were unknown except to a few peasants, and but seldom used. At the beginning of this century only four mountains in this part of the Alps were named on maps. In Meyer's magnificently large Atlas of Switzerland, published at that time, only the Matterhorn, Weiszschorn (*sic*), Turlo M. and Monte Mora (*sic*), were designated; the Théodule Pass was named, but it was represented as leading to Gressonay, and was described as '*Passage quelquefois practicable dans le mois*

* Studer, 'Physische Geographie der Schweitz.'

d'août, on marche quatre heures continuellement sur la glace Redouté de Ste.-Théodule.' In the Atlas to Agassiz's 'Études sur les Glaciers,' the peaks are all misnamed, the Lyskamm being called Monte Rosa, and even in 1840 the range was so little known in the Visp Thal that the peaks of Monte Rosa were undistinguished, and the Lyskamm was still mistaken for it.*

Zermatt, which may be considered the capital of the district, was occasionally visited by general travellers, and there was a little inn kept by Dr. Lauber, the village physician. 'The landlord, Herr Lauber, is usually called a Doctor, but he himself disclaims any higher title than that of a bone-setter. He has never been medically educated. His wife is a neat, handy, and kind person; and although the *cuisine* is not of the first style, it is decidedly better than might be expected in a situation so wild and remote. Taking the whole of the accommodations into account, the traveller may consider himself fortunate in being able to obtain them, and if he can command the time, he will find a few days' residence at Madame Lauber's by no means disagreeable.'†

Professor Forbes visited Zermatt in 1841 in company with Mr. Heath. But it was difficult of access, and consequently almost unheard of by the ordinary tourist. Between St. Niklaus and Randa several wild and bridgeless torrents had to be crossed, which in bad weather made the route nearly impassable.‡ At that time even the Riffelhorn had not been ascended. Forbes attempted it by the western side, and arrived within a few fathoms of the top, when he was stopped by a cleft, and a precipice which could not be ascended without incurring a serious risk. The following year (1842), however, some English students of Hofwyl, clambering about the rocks, found a circuitous path on the eastern side, by which they gained the top without much difficulty. Forbes soon afterwards followed their course, and reached the summit.§

Three years afterwards (in 1845) Mr. Ball visited Zermatt, and found the ignorance about the surrounding country to be extreme. He says: 'During my stay at Zermatt I made many enquiries as to the passes communicating between the Valley of St. Niklaus and the adjoining valleys in every direction. The information I was able to gain from the older guides was

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* Studer, 'Eis und Schnee,' vol. ii. p. 18.

† 'The Physician's Holiday: a Month in Switzerland in the Summer of 1848.' By John Forbes, M.D., F.R.S. (a charming book).

‡ Forbes' 'Alps of Savoy,' p. 310. § Ibid. p. 314.

vague and unsatisfactory to a degree that would surprise those who do not know how amazingly our knowledge of this part of the Alps has been increased since 1845. Excepting the established pass of St. Théodule, the only one that was admitted to be certainly practicable was that of the Col d'Érin, accomplished by Professor Forbes in 1842, and occasionally, though at long intervals, by preceding travellers. Of the Trift Pass, crossed by Messrs. Hinchliff, Walters, and Bradshaw Smith in 1857, there was but a spurious and baseless tradition. Doubts were expressed even as to the possibility of passing from St. Niklaus into the Turtmanthal. Of the passage of the Saas Grat I could obtain no certain information. My repeated inquiries as to the Weiss Thor produced no more information than was obtained three years before by Professor Forbes. Damatter, who had certainly passed it several years before, declared that the ice had accumulated on the Zermatt side, so as to overhang the precipitous rocks by which the descent had to be made to Macugnaga. It was reported, however, that a dare-devil hunter, "böser Jäger," had found out a new way over the ridge, but kept it a secret.'*

In 1834 this pass, now known as the old Weiss Thor, once used by pilgrims to Varallo, and often by hunters and smugglers, was, as Studer was informed, no longer practicable, although there were still traces of the iron rings which were fastened to the rocks to help the climbers.†

The pass on the other or north side of the Cima di Jazi, now commonly known as 'the Weiss Thor,' or more correctly as the New Weiss Thor, was effected in 1849 by Mr. Marshall Hall with Blümer of Grindelwald.‡ The pass of the Schwarz Thor, between the Breithorn and the W. Zwillinge, was first crossed in 1845§ by Mr. Ball, and a little later the Adler Pass, connecting Saas and Zermatt, was discovered by Herr Imseng, the parish priest of Saas, an intrepid mountaineer, to whom early visitors to Saas were much indebted, and whose exploits have found a genial record in Mr. Wills' 'Wanderings among the High Alps.'

Mr. Murray in his 'Handbook for 1854'‖ speaks of Zermatt as a little-known place. Describing the St. Théodule, he says: 'The pass is not a difficult one, but those who would avoid it should at least ascend to Zermatt,' and he adds that

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* 'Zermatt in 1845.' 'Peaks and Passes,' 1st series, pp. 158, 159.
† Studer, 'Eis und Schnee,' vol. ii. p. 17.
‡ 'Alpine Guide,' p. 337. § Ibid. p. 329.
‖ 6th Edition, 1854, p. 293.

'the great difficulty of this "young Chamonix" is that whereas the way up to it from the valley is easy and tempting, there is no way out of it except by two difficult passes over the highest Alpine chain, which not every one is hardy enough to attempt.'

Ascents of Monte Rosa. The Subordinate Peaks. The Aller-Höchste, or Dufour Spitze. The Breithorn.

The earliest attempts to reach the névé fields of Monte Rosa were made by seven chamois hunters from Gressonay, towards the end of the last century, under the leadership of Niklaus Vincent, father of Johann Niklaus Vincent, who made the first ascent of the Vincent Pyramide. They reached a rock which they named Discovery Rock (Entdeckungs Fels), between the summits of Monte Rosa and the Lyskamm, now called the Lysjoch. Their attempt was repeated in three following years, 1778, 1779, and 1780, and each time they believed they had discovered a new valley. On the last occasion only three of them reached Discovery Rock, and they then came to the conclusion that they saw the inhabited alps of the Zermatt Valley.*

Thirty years afterwards the first attempt was made to reach the summit of Monte Rosa itself. It was at the time that the first ascents were made of the Jungfrau and Finsteraarhorn that Dr. Friedrich Parrot, the Caucasian traveller, endeavoured to reach the summit of what was afterwards called the Vincent Pyramide, starting from Milan, on September 18, 1813, in company with Zumstein of Gressonay. Their immediate starting-point was the Gabiet Alp, and they went through the Indren and Garstlet valleys, and along the Indren Glacier towards the above-named peak. On reaching the snow and ice fields which descend to the Indren, they were driven back by thick fog.†

It was in 1855 that the highest point—'Allerhöchste, or Dufour Spitze'—of Monte Rosa was first reached. The crest of this mountain is formed of nine peaks, of which the highest is called the Allerhöchste Spitze,‡ 15,217 ft. ; Nord

* Studer, 'Ueber Eis und Schnee,' vol. ii. chap. i. See also an interesting paper on the subject by Mr. Tuckett in the 'Alpine Journal,' vol. v. p. 136.

† Ibid.

‡ This is frequently spoken of only as the Höchste Spitze, but it is proper to give it the name of the Allerhöchste, or Dufour Spitze, as the Höchste Spitze consists of two peaks—the Allerhöchste and the

End, 15,132 ft.; Zumstein Spitze, 15,004 ft.; Signal Kuppe, 14,964 ft.; Parrot Spitze, 14,577 ft.; Ludwigshöhe, 14,187 ft.; Schwarzhorn, 14,092 ft.; Balmenhorn, 13,927 ft.; and Vincent Pyramide, 13,859 ft. Of these the Schwarzhorn and Vincent Pyramide are on Italian soil, and the others on the boundary line between Italy and Switzerland.

It is stated by Mr. Clissold, in the account of his ascent of Mont Blanc in 1822, that Monte Rosa had then been ascended, but it is probable that the mountain referred to is the Breithorn, which at that time, and even later, was believed to be the highest part of the chain, and often pointed out as such to strangers. Mr. Clissold says: 'Couttet states that the traveller requires only three or four guides for the ascent of Monte Rosa, as its summit may be gained with comparatively little hazard or labour; indeed, one of the monks of the Convent of St. Bernard related to me that one of their order ascended Monte Rosa with only one guide.'*

The earliest recorded attempts to ascend Monte Rosa were made from Piedmont, and the Vincent Pyramide was the first of its peaks to be conquered. It was so named from Nicholas Vincent, who reached the summit on August 5, 1819, starting from Gressonay on the previous day, and sleeping at the highest hut of the gold-mining works belonging to him. It was twice again ascended during the same year. The following year the Zumstein Spitze was ascended by Zumstein the engineer, Molinatti, and the brothers Joseph Niklaus and Joseph Vincent, on August 1, 1820, and on August 3, 1821, Zumstein again ascended it with two guides. The Ludwigshöhe was the next to succumb, having been ascended by Baron Ludwig von Welden on August 25, 1822. The Signal Kuppe was first ascended by Gnifetti, curé of Alagna, in 1843, after he had made three previous attempts to reach the summit in 1834, 1836, and 1839.

The ascent of the Nord End was first made on August 26, 1861, by Messrs. E. Buxton and his brother and J. J. Cowell, accompanied by only one guide, Payot. The weather was not very good, and the wind and cold were excessive, but they reached the summit successfully, and were back in the Riffel Hotel in sixteen hours, including about two hours' rest, from their departure.†

Ost Spitze, or, as Studer calls it, 'the eastern tooth of the Dufour Spitze,' about 24 feet lower.

* 'Narrative of an Ascent to the Summit of Mont Blanc, Aug. 18, 1822.' By F. Clissold. London, 1823. P. 28, note.

† Studer's 'Eis und Schnee,' vol. ii. p. 38.

A second ascent of the Nord End was made on July 5, 1872, by Mr. Coolidge with the two Almers. They found the cairn built in 1861 in excellent preservation. The expedition occupied seventeen hours, including all halts, owing to the extremely soft snow.*

The Parrot Spitze was ascended for the first time by Messrs. Macdonald, Grove, and Woodmass, with Melchior Anderegg and Peter Perren, on August 16, 1863, on their way over the Lysjoch. 'After crossing the col (from the south) we had the Parrot Spitze straight in front of us, separated from us by a small snow valley. We climbed a few rocks on to the arête, and along it to the summit, in a direction nearly due east.'†

The first attempt to ascend the Höchste Spitze was made on August 13, 1847, by Messrs. Ordinaire and Puiseux, of Besançon, with four guides—Johannes Brantschen, Joseph and Mathias Taugwalder, and Joseph Moser. They reached the saddle‡ between the Nord End and Höchste Spitze (14,861 ft.), but were unable to get any further on account of the apparently insurmountable steepness of the rocks. But they gave Professor Melchior Ulrich an account of their expedition, and, notwithstanding their failure, he determined to endeavour to reach the summit. Accordingly, on August 11, 1848, while Europe was raging with political fury, Ulrich set out from Zermatt at about 4 P.M., accompanied by Johannes Madutz and Mathias zum Taugwald. At that time there was no inn at the Riffel, but there were some huts where they got a supply of milk and other food. About 8.30 they reached Gadmen at the foot of the Hochthäligrat, where they intended to sleep. The following morning they woke up at 3.30, but had to wait for an hour to make a start, on account of the want of light. At about 11.15 they had reached a height of above 12,800 feet, but from Ulrich's account it is not clear what was the exact point at which they had arrived. On reaching the ridge —'Silber Sattel'—at 11.15 the bitterness of the wind was so great that Ulrich was obliged to give in, but he told his guides to go on without him, while he remained on the 'Saddle.' In half an hour the guides shouted to him that they had reached the eastern tooth of the Höchste Spitze. They remained there for a short time, and while perched on the pinnacle, where standing was impossible on account of the wind, Taugwalder declared he would rather die than descend by the route by which they had ascended. But Madutz attached

* 'Alpine Journal,' vol. vi. p. 145. † Ibid. vol. i. p. 199.
‡ Silber Sattel. See 'Alpine Journal,' vol. vi. pp. 232 and 244.

him to the rope and let him down by degrees from point to point. After an absence of two hours they rejoined Ulrich at the 'Silber Sattel.' They reached Gadmen at 4.45 P.M., but were obliged to leave poor Madutz alone on the glacier, as he felt it absolutely necessary to lie down on account of his extreme fatigue. They arrived at Zermatt at about eight o'clock, and Madutz succeeded in getting there two hours later. The next day he was quite snow-blind.*

The next attempt to reach one of the summits of Monte Rosa was made on August 11, 1849, by Messrs. Melchior Ulrich, Gottlieb Studer, and Dr. Lauterburg, and the Nord End was the point they had in view. Their guides were Johannes Madutz, Johann zum Taugwald, and Joseph Kronig. But they did not succeed. They gained the ridge of the 'Silber Sattel,' but could get but little higher. Professor Ulrich made no further attempt to get to a higher point, and remained behind with Zum Taugwald. The others went on in hopes of being able to reach the Nord End. They were, however, beaten back by a narrow arête, on which the wind blew with such intense bitterness that the guides were unable to continue step-cutting, and they were all obliged to retreat.

The Höchste Spitze—or to speak with greater exactness—the Ost Spitze was reached for the second time on August 22, 1851. The ascent was made by the brothers Adolph and Hermann Schlagintweit, the well-known explorers of the Himalayas, and authors of the admirable book on the 'Physical Geography and Geology of Monte Rosa.' In their ascent of Monte Rosa they were accompanied by the guides Peter Taugwald, Peter Inderbinnen, and Hans Joseph zum Taugwald. They set out from Zermatt and took up their night quarters, as usual in those days, at Gadmen. The following morning they started at four o'clock, crossing the branch of the Gorner glacier, which comes down between the Weissthor and the Nord End. Their way lay between the precipices of the Nord End and a small secondary ridge. After mounting some steep snow-slopes and then passing through a region of seracs which fall from the ice precipices of the Nord End, they arrived at the field of névé between the Nord End and Höchste Spitze at 9 A.M. They traversed this, and then came to the usual wide bergschrund, which they crossed towards its western end, and at 10 A.M. reached the Silber Sattel, from whence they scaled the precipices of the Höchste Spitze.

* Studer's 'Eis und Schnee,' vol. ii. chap. 1; and Studer's 'Berg- und Gletscherfahrten.'

These are so steep that the snow can rest on them only in isolated patches. The Schlagintweits, on gaining the particular summit to which they had directed their steps, found that the Höchste Spitze, which they had supposed to consist of a single peak, was formed of two. That to the east (Ost Spitze) had been ascended by Ulrich's two guides in 1848, and it was this that the Schlagintweits also reached on August 22, 1851, at 12.10 P.M. They found, however, that the western peak, now called the Allerhöchste, or Dufour, Spitze, was about 24 feet higher. Of this they did not attempt the ascent, and soon set out on their return. They reached the huts of the Riffelberg at 11 P.M.*

The Allerhöchste Spitze was first attained in July 1855 by Messrs. G. and C. Smyth, Hudson, Birkbeck, and Stevenson, accompanied by Ulrich Lauener, of Lauterbrunnen, and three Zermatt guides, by a new and better route, which they had the merit of discovering. 'The route they took, which has been followed in the numerous subsequent ascents, starts from the rocks of Auf der Platte, mounting to south-east by snow-slopes, at first gentle, but ultimately very steep, as they abut against a sharp saw-edged crest of rock that extends about due W. from the Höchste Spitze. The passage along this crest constitutes the difficulty of the ascent. On the south side the traveller looks down rocks, that appear almost vertical, on an upper bay of the Grenz Glacier. On the other side an ice-slope of perilous steepness falls away towards the Monte Rosa Glacier. The steadiness and endurance both of guides and travellers are tested in the passage of this long crest, especially if, as often happens, a violent wind should be encountered, and the rocks be found coated with a varnish of ice. At the last a mere knife-edge of frozen snow abuts against a slippery face of rock that leads immediately to the highest peak.'† A second ascent of the highest peak was made with great ease on August 13 following, by ten persons, two of whom were Englishmen.‡ This was an example of the general rule that, whenever the right way to the summit of a great mountain has once been discovered, subsequent ascents are made with the greatest ease. On this subject Studer makes the following remarks. He says: 'It is a matter of experience that, after repeated ascents of a mountain, whose first ascent has been attended with unusual danger and difficulty, these dangers and difficulties either

* Studer's 'Berg- und Gletscherfahrten,' vol. i. chap. 9.

† Ball's 'Western Alps' (1875), p. 317.

‡ Studer's 'Eis und Schnee,' vol. ii.

entirely vanish or are so greatly diminished that the ascent can be made with ease. The more the guides are acquainted with the locality, the more does their confidence increase. The mountain is no longer to them a strange phenomenon. They know beforehand the difficulties and the way to avoid them.'* An unknown danger is always more terrible than one of which the difficulty and the risk is known, and has been surmounted. How applicable is this to, above all others, the ascents of the Matterhorn!

In 1868 Messrs. K. E. Digby and R. B. Heathcote found a new and interesting, though somewhat longer, route to the summit. Ascending the northern branch of the Grenz Glacier they climbed the very steep rocks at its further end, and thus reached the saddle at the foot of the ordinary arête of Monte Rosa, which they afterwards followed to the top.†

In 1872 a determined but certainly hazardous ascent of the Allerhöchste Spitze was made from Macugnaga by the Rev. C. Taylor, Messrs. William Martin Pendlebury and Richard Pendlebury. Their guides were Gabriel Spechtenhauser, of Fend, in the Oetzthal, commonly known as Gaber, and the local guides Ferdinand Imseng and Giovanni Oberto, with Caspar Burgener as porter to their bivouac only. It had always been considered impossible, or too hazardous, to make an ascent from that side, Ulrich and Christian Lauener having declined to make the attempt only a few days before, and Christian Almer having done the same in 1867. Lochmatter had also pronounced against it. It was nothing but Imseng's conviction that they could succeed that induced the present attempt. Gaber was throughout very doubtful of the prudence of the undertaking, and of its chance of success, but Imseng's confidence carried the day, and the result proved that he had not undertaken without full consideration the responsibility of advising the expedition. Having climbed the slopes of the Belvedere, they then turned to the left up the broad and almost level moraine, and afterwards to the right along a ridge of the moraine and up some rocks at the base of the eastern slope which they proposed to climb. They reached their intended sleeping-place at the upper end of the Macugnaga glacier at a little before 7 P.M., in four and a half hours from Macugnaga. It was by no means luxurious, or entirely free from danger; but they passed the night without accident, and shortly after midnight began to prepare for breakfast.

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* Studer's 'Eis und Schnee,' vol. ii. p. 33.

† 'Alpine Journal,' vol. iv. p. 147.

Soon after 2 A.M. they were ready to start, when a deep roll from the Zumstein Spitze announced that the avalanches also were waking early. Gaber now remonstrated seriously. 'Guide,' said he to Imseng, 'what think you? I think it is very dangerous.' Imseng deigned no reply, but persisted in his recommendation that they should continue their ascent. His advice again prevailed, and a little before 2.30 they started. With some difficulty they passed over some rocks leading to a couloir, which they crossed. Then they had rocks again and another couloir. Imseng now turned abruptly to the right, and wished to go straight up, but Gaber insisted on crossing the couloir, and they followed his advice. His counsel proved sound, as on Imseng's proposed route they would have been flanked by some formidable seracs. After this they arrived at a long stretch of rocks, up which they ascended, and reached a precipitous broken snow-slope blocked up all along its further side except at the corner looking towards the Zumstein Spitze. Through this gap they passed. About 5 A.M. they halted for breakfast, and then proceeded towards the Grenz Sattel, between the Zumstein and Höchste Spitze, passing over some difficult snow and formidable crevasses, and having a narrow escape from fragments of a serac which broke away across their line and struck some of the party severely. Some hours now passed, and they were getting near the Sattel, when the snow through which they trod began to slide and hiss in the ominous manner of an incipient avalanche. They planted themselves firmly, and the sliding of the snow did not increase; but it now became clear that they must abandon the idea of going straight to the Sattel and make for the lowest point of the rocks on its right. This they accordingly did with great caution in the direction of a serac dividing the current of the still moving snow, and giving them a quiet slope for their ascent. They scrambled up the serac and then climbed up towards the last serac, which lay midway between them and the lowest point of the final ridge, and from which a small crevasse ran down obliquely to the right, separating them from the slope by which they were to reach the rocks. They crossed the crevasse and were 'launched irrevocably upon the slope.' They soon reached the rocks of the Est Spitze. For the first few steps the rocks were not steep, but soon became so, but they were not long in reaching a point of the ridge, from which they looked down on the Grenz Sattel on the left; the Silber Sattel and the Nord End being on their right front. At length, after crossing the formidable gap separating the Est Spitze from the

highest peak, which had checked Ulrich's and the Schlagintweits' guides, they reached the Allerhöchste Spitze at about 3 P.M. After half an hour's halt they began their descent, and reached the Riffel at about 8.30 P.M.*

On August 20, 1874, the Allerhöchste Spitze was reached from the Lysjoch side by a direct ascent from the Grenz Glacier, without touching the usual arête, by Mr. E. Hulton. He and his guides started from the Riffel at 2.30 A.M., and followed the usual route of the Lysjoch, until they reached a point about 300 or 400 feet below the summit of the pass, when they turned sharp to their left, and ascended the glacier that lies in the bay formed by the Grenz Sattel, Höchste Spitze, and Zumstein Spitze. A good deal of step-cutting was required to reach the rocks of an arête, leading in the direction of the highest peak. They gained the top at 10.50 A.M., and returned to the Riffel by the usual route.† On July 29 of the same year, M. Déchy and two guides gained the summit from the Val de Lys. They crossed the Lys pass, turned towards the Zumstein Spitze, and reached the foot of the rocky face of Monte Rosa. Climbing directly upwards they struck the ridge a little higher than the Sattel, thus joining the ordinary route.‡

The most remarkable ascent, however, which has been made of the Allerhöchste Spitze is that of Dr. Tyndall, in August 1858. He had gained the summit with only one guide a few days before he made the ascent to which I refer, but was disappointed in having no view on account of the badness of the weather. A week afterwards the weather became splendid, and Dr. Tyndall determined to repeat his visit to the summit of the mountain. He had lent his guide to some friends, but, nothing daunted, he determined to make the ascent entirely alone.§ He started with a guide, or rather a porter, who was however almost utterly useless to him, and hung back at every difficulty. After a time Tyndall came to the conclusion that he was only an encumbrance and sent him back. Thence to the top he proceeded entirely alone, and reached the summit with complete success and absence of any mishap. At the conclusion of his narrative Tyndall makes the following appropriate remarks. He says: 'I think it right to say one earnest word in connection with this ascent; and the more so as I

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* 'Alpine Journal,' vol. vi., 'Monte Rosa from Macugnaga.' By the Rev. C. Taylor.

† Ibid. vol. vii. p. 107. ‡ Ibid. p. 154.

§ See Tyndall's 'Glaciers of the Alps' (22).

believe a notion is growing prevalent that half what is said and written about the dangers of the Alps is mere humbug. No doubt exaggeration is not rare, but I would emphatically warn my readers against acting on the supposition that it is general. The dangers of Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa, and other mountains are real, and, if not properly provided against, may be terrible. I have been much accustomed to be alone upon the glaciers, but sometimes, even when a guide was in front of me, I have felt an extreme longing to have one behind me. Less than two good ones, I think, an arduous climber ought not to have; and, if climbing without guides were to become habitual, deplorable consequences would assuredly sooner or later ensue.'

The only other great mountain of the Monte Rosa district ascended until the years immediately preceding the formation of the Alpine Club was the Breithorn, by Mr. S. Kennedy and the friends who were associated with him when he took the S. Gervais route to the summit of Mont Blanc in 1855. It was afterwards ascended by the late Lord Minto, one of the earliest explorers of that part of the Alps, followed subsequently by Sir John Herschel.*

In accordance with the plan of these papers, the ascents of the other mountains of the district made after the formation of the Club will be described in the course of its history.

* Ball's 'Western Alps' (1875), p. 324.

CHAPTER III.

THE OBERLAND DISTRICT.

Introductory.

THE great peaks of the Bernese Oberland have from their position overlooking, like gigantic sentinels, fertile lowlands and historic towns such as Luzern, Thun, Bern, and Neufchâtel, as well as, in later times, from the accessibility and supreme grandeur of their scenery, attracted a larger share of public attention than any other of the Swiss Alps. Their prominence in early Swiss literature was due, however, not so much to the noble range of summits, which men had hardly learned to look up to,* as to the fact that at Grindelwald two branches of the mysterious sea of ancient ice† penetrated into the inhabited world, and now advancing to overthrow fields and cottages, now retiring to lay bare again ancient quarries, excited constant interest in times eager for natural wonders. 'In Grindeliâ quoque valle,' says Wagner, a seventeenth century writer, 'tres ejusmodi montes reperiuntur: inter eos autem præ cæteris decantatus Mons ille glaciatus quem *κατ' ἐξοχὴν* vulgo "Den grossen Gletscher" appellant, rarum sanè Naturæ miraculum.'

It would be interesting to travel back to the first germs of an intelligent interest in the wonders of the Alps, and to follow step by step to the present day the respective growths of scientific knowledge and of the enthusiasm for mountain scenery. But the work has been already done with great care and thoroughness by a Swiss writer,‡ and English readers have had

* In the early views of Geneva, Bern, and other Swiss towns, the spectator is generally made to turn his back on the Alps.

† 'Inveterata glacies' is the favourite term for a glacier in old Swiss books.

‡ 'Geschichte der physischen Geographie der Schweiz bis 1815 von Professor B. Studer:' Bern, 1863. This book and Herr Gottlieb Studer's 'Ueber Eis und Schnee' are indispensable foundations to the library of all who take an interest in the history of the Alps. See also 'Die Alpen im Lichte verschiedener Zeitalter, von Jacob Frey,' in 'Sammlung gemeinverständlicher wissenschaftlicher Vorträge,' xii Serie, Heft 274, Berlin, 1877.

the outlines of the subject picturesquely put before them by Mr. Leslie Stephen in the first chapter of his 'Playground of Europe.' For the present, space allows us only a few passing notes on the early lovers of the Swiss Alps before we pass on to their climbers.

The foundation of the University of Basel on the model of that of Bologna in 1460, gave the first impulse to Alpine literature by bringing men of awakened minds into close and constant neighbourhood to the mountains. Heinrich Moriti, of Glarus, afterwards a professor at Basel, and a friend of Erasmus, was a voluminous author and critic, whose works occupy several pages of the British Museum Catalogue. His verses, which won him a laurel crown from the Emperor Maximilian I., are largely made up of tags from classical authors. In 1514 he composed one of the first works on the Alps, a poem in Latin hexameters, the general dullness of which is only here and there relieved by a few graceful lines.

Among the earliest writers on Switzerland are Ægidius Tschudi, Sebastian Munster, Johannes Stumpf, Campbell the reformer of the Engadine, and Conrad Gessner, who wrote to a friend in 1541: 'I am determined, so long as Providence spares my life, to climb several mountains, or at least one, every year, partly to enlarge my knowledge of botany, partly to strengthen my body, and afford my mind the noblest recreation.'

The mountain passion was even then alive, smouldering on in the hearts of a few Swiss students for two centuries before it burst out in Savoy into the blaze which has now spread across Europe. It breathes through the preface to Simler's 'Descriptio Vallesiæ,' published in 1574, as palpably as through the last essay on the Love of the Alps. 'The poets,' says Simler, 'figured that the mountains were haunted by many divine beings—Pan, Satyrs, Fauns, and Oreads: Parnassus, Helicon, with many other summits, were sacred to the gods. Doubtless the ancients wished to shadow forth by these fables the works and might of Nature, most discernible in the mountains. By us meanwhile, who cannot explain these their riddles, nor indeed greatly strive to do so, it must nevertheless be confessed that lofty mountains are most worthy of deep study. For wherever you turn they present to every sense a multitude of objects fit to excite and delight the mind. They offer problems to our intellect; they amaze our souls. They remind us of the infinite variety of creation, and offer an unequalled field for the observation of the processes of nature.' Inspired by these reflections and by feeding his eyes with the frequent and delightful contemplation of the mountains, 'sæpe oculos jucundâ montium

contemplatione pascens,' the Zurich professor set about his book.

As a body, the authors before A.D. 1600 are in advance of their followers in their knowledge of topography and practical details. The books of the next century are more speculative and show at the same time a creditable enthusiasm for natural science and a childlike facility in swallowing wonders, or accepting the, to our minds, most ludicrous explanations as adequate solutions of the problems presented by the mountain region. Glacier ice was supposed to be an intermediate form between common ice and crystals, crystals such as are often found in the Alps being ice with all the water squeezed out of them. One of our countrymen had, however, the wit to inquire how the crystals found in tropical countries were to be accounted for. Wagner, Johann Gessner, Cappeller, Gruner, Altmann, Hottinger, and above all Scheuchzer,* are the names under which the curious may seek specimens of this school, the members of which lived mostly at Bern or Zurich, the latter place, like Basel, having become through its university a centre of intellectual life. It boasted poets in Albrecht Haller, who described mountain scenery in eloquent verses, which so far caught the ear of his time as to pass, before his death, through thirty different editions, including French, English, Italian, and Latin translations, and in Solomon Gessner, whose idyllic pictures attained an almost equally widespread popularity.

The knowledge of the snow region of the Bernese Oberland possessed by the old Swiss writers was scanty enough. Pilatus and the Stockhorn were the height of human ambition. The Grimsel and the Gemmi were the two frequented tracks across the chain. The former was frequented by merchants, the latter until 1740 a formidable undertaking. Between these lay an almost untrodden wilderness. There was, it is true, a tradition often repeated of a frequented pass having once

* Johann Heinrich Hottinger, M.D. ('Montium glacialium Helveticorum descriptio,' published in the 'Miscell. Ephemer. Nat. Cur. decur. iii. ann. 9 et 10,' 1703); J. J. Scheuchzer ('Beschreibung des Naturgeschichte des Schweizerlandes,' 1706); and William Burnet, a son of the Bishop of Salisbury ('Letter on the Glaciers of Grindelwald,' addressed to Sir Hans Sloane, and published in the 'Philosophical Transactions' for 1709), share the honour of having been the first to propound the glacier theory, subsequently known as Charpentier's. Professor B. Studer seems to think Hottinger rather than Scheuchzer the originator of the theory. Owing to the form in which his treatise was published, Hottinger is the least known to fame.

existed from Canton Bern to the Valais over the lower Grindelwald and Viesch Glaciers. But it is impossible to find any basis of fact for the assertion. The proofs commonly alleged break down on close inspection; the entries in the church registers of Grindelwald only prove that a baby of Valaisan parentage was baptised, not that it crossed the Vieschergrat for the ceremony. The chapel of St. Petronella, a mysterious maiden, whom some think to be a sister of St. Paul, others an invention of the Grindelwalders, may very well have existed; but its site was certainly not higher than the present Bärenegg châlet. Possibly the Strahleck may have been traversed from time to time, as the Adler is said to have been. It may be, though I do not attach much weight to the suggestion, that it was used in conjunction with the Grimsel as a short cut to the Valais. It is spoken of as a 'lost pass' by Pfarrer Rebmann, of Guttannen in 1605.

> 'Scheideck, Jungfrau und Fischerhorn,
> Zwischend denen ein Strass verlorn
> Ins Hassliland, da z'höchst man findt
> Im Thal die finster Aar entspringt.
> Die allerwildest wilde da.' *

When we come to look for facts it must be admitted that beyond the lower Grindelwald Glacier, so far as it is known to the ordinary tourist, and the lower part of the Aar Glaciers, none of these writers had been. A shepherd, says Gruner, at some uncertain date had crossed the Strahleck, and after traversing the most horrible ice valleys gained Hasliland. Peasants told the Meyers in 1813, that a certain Dr. Klaus had about a hundred years before crossed the ice from the Grimsel to Grindelwald. At about the same time, that is in 1712, during the religious war between the Catholic and Protestant cantons, three natives of Bern were seized as hostages in the Upper Valais. They determined to risk the dangers of the glaciers rather than to remain in captivity. They reached the crest of the chain from the south without serious difficulty. On the Grindelwald side it was different. 'They were obliged in turn to cut steps in the ice, working day and night, so as to save themselves from perishing of cold. After an infinite number of pains and dangers they arrived half dead at Grindelwald,

* 'Ein luftig und ernsthaft poetisch Gastmal und Gespräch zweier Bergen in loblicher Eidgenossenschaft und im Bernergebiet gelegen, namlich des Niesens und des Stockhorns, &c.' The Stockhorn has some claim to be the Swiss Parnassus. As early as 1536, J. Müller, known by the scholastic title of Rhellicanus, celebrated his ascent in a Latin poem of 130 heroic verses, which he entitled a Stockhorniad.

and were presented by their compatriots to the magistrates as men returned from the realm of death.'

The tradition of a pass from the Roththal is probably a confused recollection of old passages of the Petersgrat, or of the Wetterlücke, crossed in 1783, by three devout miners employed in the mines at the head of the Lauterbrunnen valley, who twice dared the perils of the ice in order to attend mass at their own home.

An old legend of the Lötschthal told that once upon a time a peasant had been guided by a phantom through the moonlight hours from the Aletsch ice to the Lötschthal. But no living hunter pretended to have penetrated into the snowy wastes which fill the centre of the Oberland group beyond the Lötschsattel.

The Beichgrat from the Bell Alp to the Lötschthal must have been known in the country if the Meyers, as seems probable from their account, were led across it to the attack on the Jungfrau; and the hunters who penetrated for some distance in pursuit of their game across the Aar Glaciers may have from time to time found a way over the snowy range into the Gauli Thal.

There is every reason to believe that the growth of our knowledge of the high Alps has not been uninterrupted. It seems certain that before the middle of the sixteenth century many snow-passes were traversed which subsequently fell into disuse. In the Zermatt district, the Col de Colon, Col d'Hérens, Cimes Blanches, St. Théodule, and perhaps the Adler, were known routes. Cattle crossed the Col du Colon to the Aosta market; commerce found over the snow-fields of Monte Rosa a way into Italy.* But in the Oberland there were no such

* In Simler's 'Descriptio Vallesiæ,' already cited, we find the following description of the precautions used in traversing the snow passes. It is too curious to bear abridgment or translation :—'Præterea illa vetus glacies per quam nonnunquam iter faciendum est, profundos hiatus trium aut quatuor pedum latitudine, et sæpe etiam ampliores habet, in quos si quis decidat, indubitato illi pereundum est. Accidit autem ut nivibus recentibus, aut vento conglomeratis illi hiatus tegantur, itaque qui tum per Alpes iter faciunt, peritos locorum qui ipsis præeant conducere solent: hosce fune cingunt, cui etiam aliquot ex his qui sequuntur se astringunt, qui verò præit longâ perticâ viam explorat, et diligenter in nivibus hiatus hos scrutatur, quod si forte imprudens in aliquem deciderit, à sociis qui eodem fune cincti sunt, sustinetur et extrahitur. Ubi nullæ nives foveas tegunt, minus est periculi, saltu tamen illos superare oportet, nulli enim hic sunt pontes: nisi quod nonnunquam hi qui sarcinaria jumenta per hæc loca agunt (id autem rarius fit), asseres ligneos secum ferunt, quibus jumentis

practical ends to be promoted by Alpine adventure. If any glacier passes were known they were lost to memory during the years succeeding 1563,* when for half a century the glaciers made a steady advance upon the valleys; an advance which left a deep impression on the Swiss mind and led probably to the exaggerated belief as to the previous smallness of the glaciers which underlies many of the traditions of lost passes.

At the close of the last century the central waste of the Bernese Oberland was untrodden by human feet, and even the Petersgrat had fallen into disuse, and the boldest hunters feared to strike across the range by the few traditionary tracks. 'Passes' usually precede 'Peaks,' unless in an exceptional case like that of Mont Blanc, or where the spirit of mountaineering has been fully aroused; and there is no authentic record of any ascent in the Oberland prior to that of the Ewig Schneehorn, a peak of 10,929 feet, lying behind the Wetterhörner in the ridge between the Gauli and Aar Glaciers, effected by Herr Stettler of Zofingen, in 1790. I say *authentic* record, for, as might be expected, we come across some legends. The most circumstantial is given by Gruner. He describes clearly enough the Jungfrau and the Silberhorn, under the names of the 'Vierge antérieure et postérieure,' mentioning the vast crevasses of the Jungfrau Joch, and speaking of the Aletsch Glacier lying behind them as—'un vallon de glace tantôt large, tantôt resserré, quelquefois interrompu, désert, sauvage, inaccessible; on n'en peut espérer aucune connaissance.' The Silberhorn, he says, is 'a precipitous rock towards the valley; it loses in summer almost all its snow, perhaps because of the steepness of its slopes. It is almost inaccessible, except to determined hunters. The last who climbed up to the top found there a knife; he took it, leaving his own in its place.' No date or further detail is added. The traditions, scarcely perhaps more trustworthy, relating to the Eiger will be given when we come to speak of that peak.

We have seen how a gleam of the light lit for Europe by the Italian Renaissance was towards the end of the fifteenth

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ponticulum sternunt quâ transeant.' Spectacles ('vitrea conspicilia') and blackening the face are both recommended as preservatives against snowblindness by the same author.

* There is scarcely sufficient material for any general statement as to the oscillations of Alpine glaciers. The old observations are limited to a few spots. Throughout the 17th century the ice seems to have remained comparatively stationary. From 1703–23 it advanced. In 1750 the glaciers were again at their smallest. Towards the close of the century they were advancing.

century thrown upon the Alps; how the congregation of many men of letters and intelligence at the Council of Constance and the foundation of the Swiss Universities of Basel and Zurich led to the notice and study of mountain phenomena; how in after years the inductive philosophy gave an impulse to the collection of facts in natural history in the place of barren scholastic disputations.* We now reach the period when the eloquent voice of J. J. Rousseau found itself suddenly accepted as the interpreter of feelings towards nature which must have been gathering force for some time in order to obtain for their preacher such swift and general acceptance.

Rousseau was the prophet of the contemporaries of De Saussure. In the Swiss Cantons, however, his preaching did not excite any speedy response in action. The English tourists, who under the care of the Cook of those days, 'Mr. Emery, the agent at Mr. Recordon's, Cockspur Street, Charing Cross, or the White Bear, Piccadilly,' were forwarded to Switzerland in sixteen days in private carriages, at a cost of twenty guineas, did not turn their backs on the Oberland, or, like Addison and De Blainville, mention them drily as the mountains of the Grisons, twenty-five leagues distant. 'The magnificent Alps rivet their attention,' and they can hardly 'withdraw their eyes from so enchanting a spectacle.' But they have not yet caught the passion of the climber, and are content with distant admiration. The citizens of Bern, 'sincere but heavy,'† were not easily stirred by new philosophies. Their interest in the mountains found vent in such solid productions as Gruner's 'Eisgebirge,' a work almost encyclopædic in its throughness, yet despite its illustrations scarcely likely to attract the general reader—if he existed a hundred years ago. Moreover, a great cloud was gathering over Europe, and the Grimsel Spital was soon to be the scene of struggles which left no place for a peaceable encampment such as that of the Swiss *savants* beside the Aar Glacier.

We owe, however, to one of the mountain-lovers of Geneva, the enthusiastic Bourrit, an interesting sketch of the condition of the Oberland about 1780.‡ At that time all the glacier-explorer could do was to wander round the chain by the mule-

* Wagner, in the preface to his 'Historia Naturalis Helvetiæ,' speaks of Bacon as his master.

† Bishop Burnet's Letters, 1687.

‡ 'Nouvelle Description des Alpes.' Geneva, 1783. Bourrit is an interesting personage, to whom, should these papers ever develope into a complete history of Early Mountaineering, justice will be done in his proper place.

passes, making here and there such small excursions as ladies now accomplish with ease, walking a mile or two on the Aar Glaciers, reaching a height commanding the upper basin of the Rhone Glacier, which he counted as a 'new expedition' in the modern phrase, or traversing the Dündengrat and Sefinen Furke from Kandersteg to Lauterbrunnen. At the latter place the priest's house was being enlarged to enable him better to accommodate travellers. The innkeeper at Grindelwald had an evil reputation for fleecing strangers, and no good guides were to be found there, so that both De Saussure and Bourrit brought to the Oberland Chamonix guides—whom it seems even at this date to have been generally the custom to take into distant parts of the Alps. Bourrit pointed out how much the country lost by this state of things, and urged the natives to show a little more spirit in discovering excursions for their visitors, recommending particularly the Mettenberg to their attention.

But there was no mountain resort in those days which at all rivalled Leukerbad in popularity. The springs here seem from very early times to have been among the most resorted to in the Alps, despite the difficulty of access. Even in Bourrit's days, although the Canton of Bern had some thirty-five years before improved the Gemmi path, the approach from the Valais was difficult, and the sick were brought up tied in panniers along a path so narrow that they constantly found themselves overhanging the precipice.

Yet in 1501 a Bishop of Sion had built a 'magnificent hotel' for the bathers, which stood for over two hundred years, until it was in 1719 destroyed by an avalanche. Kandersteg, on the opposite side of the pass, profited by the stream of passers-by to the baths, without, however, losing the primitive simplicity of its inhabitants, which, says Bourrit, 'rend comme inutile la résidence d'un pasteur.' The inn was a handsome and well-furnished wooden house, perhaps the same which received travellers twenty-five years ago, and by an odd arrangement each family of the place kept it in turn for two years. On the Wengern Alp Bourrit found himself in the middle of a 'Schwing-feste,' and his tender heart was deeply smitten by the comely beauties of Bern, although they, as he naïvely confesses, repaid his gallantry by bursts of laughter over 'notre marche timide, nos chutes réitérées, involontaires.' With the many fashion rules, or makes taste, and in Bourrit's time and circle it was as necessary to admire the qualities, moral and physical, of the mountaineer as to appreciate the splendours of the snows and glaciers. But despite theories, a

hard fact, such as the innkeeper at Grindelwald, slips out now and then, and seems to prove that there were faults in the Swiss character even before their country became the playground and the hospital of Europe.

In a volume written in German,* but printed in London five years before Bourrit's book (1778), we have an account of a very complete tour of the Oberland mountains. Gruner's illustrations were thought worth new and more popular letterpress, and Gruner himself carried out the task in a very thorough and methodical manner, describing in a series of letters a journey from the Lake of Geneva by the northern valleys to Kandersteg, thence by the Gemmi and Rhone valley to the Grimsel, Grindelwald, and Lauterbrunnen. The book is remarkable as containing the first good description of the Aletsch Glacier, which strangely escaped Bourrit and earlier explorers. The writer was told it was 14 'stunde' long, and connected with the Grindelwald Glaciers. The great central moraine attracted his attention, and he spends a great deal of ingenuity in fruitless endeavours to frame a reasonable explanation of its existence.†

After peace had been restored in the Alps the work of mountain exploration was seriously taken in hand, and, as was natural after the conquest of Mont Blanc and the feats of Placidus a Spescha, no longer with the feeling that the highest peaks were unassailable. We have come to the time of the Meyers, of J. G. Ebel, of Escher von der Linth, and of Carl Ulysses von Salis. The last-mentioned writer may be justly considered the founder of the first Alpine Journal. The 'Alpina,' four volumes of which appeared at Winterthur between 1805 and 1809,‡ was a collection of articles throwing light on the Alps. The author of the preface promises, amongst other matter, descriptions of unexplored districts, and of the ascent of maiden peaks, and makes the safe remark that 'though Mont Blanc, the Ortler and Gross Glockner, have been mastered, there remain not a few lofty mountain-giants worth

* Reisen durch die merkwürdigsten Gegenden Helvetiens. London: 1778.

† The travellers of the last century had their guidebooks: Heidegger, 'Handbuch für Reisende in der Schweiz,' Zürich, attained a third edition in 1799. Pfarrer Wyttenbach's 'Instruction pour les Voyageurs qui vont voir les Glaciers et les Alpes du Canton de Berne,' 1777, is probably the earliest. Ebel's (first edition 1793) was the most celebrated; Reichard's is also favourably mentioned.

‡ Two more volumes, 'Neue Alpina,' edited by Steinmuller, appeared in 1821 and 1827.

attention.' The suggestion did not pass unheeded. The first 'peak hunters' (the expression is taken from a contemporary book) were ready to come upon the stage, and we must prepare to chronicle their exploits in due order.

The Meyer family resided at Aarau, where its members managed a silk ribbon manufactory. They were distinguished through three generations as topographers and students. The grandfather, J. R. Meyer, a self-made man of large energy, undertook the production of a map of Switzerland in seventeen sheets, and also of a 'carte d'une partie très intéressante de la Suisse à l'usage des voyageurs aux glaciers de l'Oberland.' He does not seem to have been much of an explorer himself, and employed a Strassburg engineer of the name of Weiss to make the needful surveys. Herr Weiss in the course of his travels was, about the year 1795, successful in discovering one of the now well-known glacier passes of the Oberland, the Oberaarjoch.

'It was accomplished with the most incredible danger to life. He and his companions were compelled to let themselves down into deep ice-chasms and then force a way out again. He was forced to spend a night in the clefts and hollows of the eternal ice, and to use up in place of firewood all they had with them which would burn in order to keep off the numbing cold.'*

It is with the exploits of the brothers, Johann Rudolf, and Hieronymus Meyer, sons of the map-maker, that Alpine climbing in the Oberland begins. Like their father, they were men of scientific pursuits, and their object, as stated by themselves, was 'partly to learn the relations between the various, vast basins of eternal snow, partly to ascertain whether the peaks which rise out of them could be reached.' From their first expeditions they did not look for any higher result, but they hoped in subsequent journeys to obtain contributions to various branches of knowledge. Before entering on the story of their attacks on the great peaks, it is expedient to say a few words as to the general physical features of the district, which have, as the reader will easily recognise, had a very great effect in determining the course of its exploration.

On examining a map of the Bernese Oberland, on which the glaciers are tinted blue, the ice region presents the appearance of a vast rectangular inland sea, with two deep bays stretching out in a SW. direction on either side of the Lötschen Thal. The N. bay is formed by the Tschingel and Kander

* 'Reise auf den Jungfrau Gletscher,' p. 9.

Glaciers; the S. by those of the Bietschhorn and Lötschthaler Breithorn. The great mountains on the coast of this imaginary sea are—on the NW.—the Wetterhorn, Eiger, Mönch, Jungfrau, Gspaltenhorn, Blumlis Alp, and Doldenhorn; on the S. the Bietschhorn and Gross Nesthorn. In the centre of the ice-sea rise like islands the Oberaarhorn and Finsteraarhorn, the Viescherhörner, the Schreckhorn, and the Aletschhorn.

The great drainage of the district is to the S., and is effected by the streams flowing from the Viesch, Aletsch, and Lötsch Glaciers, which all contribute to the Rhone. The remaining glaciers, of smaller but still of considerable extent, flow E. and N., and feed the sources or tributaries of the Aar.

Of this region, says Forbes,* 'the Finsteraarhorn is the culminating point. The northern side is by much the steepest, has the smallest valleys, and the least considerable glaciers. But the aspect of the mountains is on that account more imposing. On the S., and also on the E., on the other hand, lateral valleys of great extent are found, the slope is most gradual, and the glaciers are the largest in Europe. On the N. side the Jungfrau, with its companions the Mönch and Eiger, are the most conspicuous because they overhang the valleys, and the elegance of the form of the former has given it a reserved reputation second to none other in Switzerland. It is from this side absolutely inaccessible.† The Finsteraarhorn is situated nearly due E. from the Jungfrau, and belongs to the same range, but it is near the centre of the mountain mass, and from it the glaciers may be said to radiate.'

The Jungfrau.

The earliest ascent of a great mountain in the Oberland was made sixty-six years ago. It was that of the Jungfrau, on August 3, 1811, by the brothers J. R. and H. Meyer, accompanied by two Valaisan chamois-hunters. The ascents of the Meyers were described in two pamphlets:—'Reise auf den Jungfrau Gletscher und Ersteigung seines Gipfels von Johann Rudolf Meyer und Hieronymus Meyer aus Aarau im Augustmonat 1811 unternommen. Aus den Miszellen für die neueste Weltskunde besonders abgedruckt,' and 'Reise auf die Eisgebirge der

* Norway and its Glaciers, p. 229 et seq.

† This remark of Forbes is one of many proofs of the advance of modern mountaineering, and the danger of attempting any prophecy as to the possibility of a mountain ascent.

Kantons Bern und Ersteigung ihrer höchsten Gipfel, Aarau, 1813.' These narratives, although written in the name of J. Rudolf Meyer, were in fact put together by Herr Zschokke, the editor of the magazine in which they first appeared, from notes given him by the climbers, and have the incompleteness and occasional contradictions natural under such circumstances. The later pamphlet is accompanied by a map, in Mr. Ball's opinion 'the strongest piece of evidence in favour of the truthfulness of the Meyers.' The difficulties of the narrative led, however, to the ascents being called in question by Hugi and others, and, after a lapse of twenty years and the death of R. Meyer, to the publication of a portion of his original MS. as it left his hands.

On July 29, 1811, the two Meyers quitted Aarau. They went over the Grimsel and down the Rhone valley to Naters, whence they seem to have ascended to the Bell Alp, and crossed over the Beichgrat. The party, consisting of the Meyers, three of their own domestics from Aarau, two Valaisan hunters whom they picked up at one of the highest alps of the Lötschthal, and agreed with for twenty-five batzen (about three francs) a day, and a porter from Guttannen, ascended the Lötsch Glacier on August 1. After passing the Lötschen-lücke they sent back the Aarau men, whilst the others pushed on across the snowfields. They were unable to discover the true Jungfrau amongst the crowd of unfamiliar peaks which surrounded them. Rudolf Meyer, with one of the hunters, took a southerly course towards a snowcrest commanding a general view, while Hieronymus, with the other hunter, went in the opposite direction. In the end Rudolf succeeded in recognising the Jungfrau, and his brother in tracing out a route up the peak designated as their object. They met again at a rock jutting out from the Eismeer on the N. side of the glacier just where the Lötsch Glacier, now called the Aletsch-firn, joins the Aletsch Glacier. Studer says that this was certainly at the foot of the Kranzberg. There they slept.

At daybreak on August 2, they again set out. They went up the ice valley which descends from the Jungfrau and Mönch until they had the summit of the Jungfrau straight before them. The névé was much crevassed, and they were obliged to make use of a ladder they had brought with them. They thought their course to the top of the Jungfrau was clear and straightforward, when suddenly the Föhn wind sprang up, and they were obliged to return to their former night quarters, where they arrived at 2 P.M.

It is difficult, as Studer says, to determine how far the Meyers had ascended. It seems, however, that they had

struck the route now taken by those who ascend the Jungfrau, and that they had got, if not to the Roththal Sattel, at any rate to the level of the well-known crevasses which seam the snow slopes of the trough leading up to the Roththalgrat, between the Jungfrau and the Kranzberg. They employed the afternoon in exploring a valley to the east which descended from the Jungfrau, and in choosing other night quarters at a greater height. Studer considers Zschokke's narrative somewhat obscure.* It is not, he thinks, very easy to determine what this east-lying valley was, nor to fix the exact point of their night quarters. But he comes to the conclusion that when, on the afternoon of August 2, they left their sleeping place of the previous night, they went westwards up the névé valley, which runs up between the Gletscherhorn and the arête of the Kranzberg, towards the Roththalgrat and the Jungfrau, and passed their second night high up in this valley, whence they made their ascent on the following day in the direction from S. to N.

On the morning of August 3 they sent the Guttannen porter back to the Lötschthal for fresh supplies, and the remaining four began to climb the masses of ice and snow which hang down from the Jungfrau. What, however, they imagined to be an unbroken snow slope turned out something very different. They came suddenly on a chasm from 40 to 50 ft. in depth, into which they descended with some difficulty. The way to the summit of the Jungfrau now lay over an icy gap in the ridge, with steep walls on either side, which was probably the Roththal Sattel. They straddled across the arête, and then arrived at the foot of what seemed to be the actual summit. A narrow snow ridge between naked rocks led towards the peak. But although this peak was not more than 600 ft. above them in perpendicular height, it took them four hours to reach its top. It was already twelve o'clock. They found, however, that they had not even then reached the true summit. The final peak was before them, but to attain it they again had to straddle an ice arête, with the Lauterbrunnen valley deep down on the left, and the snow field at the back of the Mönch on their right. After this it was necessary to cross a deep crevasse which separated the arête from the summit, which they at last reached at 2 P.M.

They arrived, on their return, at their first night's sleeping place late in the evening, and descended the next day to the Lötschthal.

* This ascent is not comprised in the portion of Meyer's MSS. since published.

On September 3 of the following year (1812), shortly after the ascent of the Finsteraarhorn mentioned on a later page, Gottlieb Meyer, a son of J. R. Meyer and a grandson of the map-maker, in order to remove doubts which had been raised as to the genuineness of the former ascent, followed his father and uncle to the summit of the Jungfrau. He was accompanied by Joseph Bortes and Alois Volker, probably the Valaisan hunters mentioned in the former ascent. On this occasion the mountain was approached from the Märjelen Alp by the Aletsch Glacier. The party slept on the rocks of the Grünhorn. Starting at 5 A.M. they crossed the glacier between the Mönch and Jungfrau to the base of the peak. 'In hopes of finding a better way,' says the narrative, 'they ascended the eastern side of the Jungfrau, that is the side exactly opposite that which had been chosen in the previous year.' The slopes proved terribly steep, and the guides were almost exhausted. By eleven o'clock they were face to face with the final peak, still 400 ft. above them, and almost perpendicular. An ice-rift lay before them, over it rose a huge ice-wall more than 150 ft. high. One of the guides fixed two poles across the chasm, his companions helped him over, and he cut a foothold on the further bank. 'Gottlieb Meyer followed, but the step broke under his weight. He was able, however, to hold fast to the poles and got over. The third followed safely. The leader now from time to time halted and fastened the rope round his staff, while the others advanced carefully by means of holes in the ice, which they cut or widened with their knives. Thus they reached a saddle from which they looked down into the dark valleys of the inhabited world.' Herr Studer believes this to have been the Roththal Sattel; but from Zschokke's account it would seem to be close to the top, and it is hard to understand how the Sattel could have been reached from the E. However, it must be admitted that the map in Meyer's 'Reise' shows the two routes of 1811 and 1812 as meeting at some distance from the summit.*

It was two o'clock when they reached the top. Meyer's barometrical and thermometrical observations were cut short by the clouds which began to gather. After a large flag had been planted, and the Valaisans had vowed a pilgrimage to the Heilige Jungfrau of Einsiedeln if she saw them safe from the dangers of her earthly namesake, they began carefully and steadily the descent. At 7 P.M. they were again at their

* No mention is made of any saddle in Meyer's narrative as reprinted in the 'Alpenrosen.'

night quarters. A break in the weather prevented the indefatigable climbers from assailing the Mönch on the next day, and on September 5 they returned to the Märjelen Alp.

Sixteen years now passed without any more attempts being made on the Queen of the Oberland. It was not till 1828 that the mountain was again assailed by Caspar Rohrdorf, *Præparator* in the Museum at Bern.* His point of departure was Grindelwald, for he was anxious to explore the connection between the Aletsch and Lower Grindelwald Glaciers, a corner left untouched by the Meyers. He made very ample, indeed, as the event proved, too ample preparations. He engaged four guides (steiger), amongst them Peter Bischof, of Lauterbrunnen, then the most famous hunter in the country, and eight porters. On July 21 they went up to the Stieregg (then known as Burgener's) hut built by the commune to shelter the numerous travellers who visited the valley. Here they were detained by unintermittent rain until the 26th, when their patience was rewarded by 'göttlich schönes Wetter.' They went up on that day to a cave under the Eiger, and opposite the Viescherhörner, which is called the Königliche Hohle, and is probably identical with the Eiger cave of later mountaineering records.

On the morning of the 27th, starting from their bivouac at 5.30 A.M., they began the ascent of the glacier. They met with some difficulty from steep slopes and crevasses, and the porters, who were exceedingly troublesome throughout, took the opportunity to leave behind their wraps. When at 3.30 P.M. the watershed was reached, they were involved in the same perplexity as their predecessors. The Jungfrau was not recognisable. One of the guides had gone towards the Jungfrau Joch. Rohrdorf followed him, and saw that he had discovered the real mountain. By this time it was late, and half the guides wanted to return to the bivouac, fearing to be benighted without cover in the icy wilderness. Rohrdorf succeeded, however, in quelling the mutiny, and they all went down together to the Trugberg rocks, where they prepared to pass the night as best they might. It was not very cold, and the young guides danced and shouted till midnight to keep up their spirits.†

* 'Reise über die Grindelwald Viescher-Gletscher auf den Jungfrau Gl., und Ersteigung des Gletschers der Jungfrau Berges unternommen und beschrieben im August und September, 1828, durch Caspar Rohrdorf von Zürich, Präparator am Museum des Naturgeschichte in Bern.' Bern: 1828.

† This was an old Swiss habit. 'Cæterum Vallesiis per juga montium

On the 28th Rohrdorf sent on his best guides to attempt the peak, while he sketched it from various points. The climbers were beaten back near the top by an icy wind, and the weather breaking, the whole party descended together to the cave.

Early in September Rohrdorf planned another attack. Christian Roth, Ch. Lauener, and Peter Bischof were engaged with some of his old guides. On the 8th, however, before he reached Grindelwald, the guides coolly set out by themselves, taking all his implements. On the second day they reached the Trugberg, or Lagerberg as they had named it, and slept there. On the 10th they reached the peak with the help of ladders and by dint of three hours' stepcutting. The final ridge seems to have been peculiarly narrow on this occasion. Baumann, the shepherd of the Gletscheralp, who led them, straddled across it, first planing it down as he went. Their route, as shown on Rohrdorf's map, did not coincide with either of those previously taken, lying somewhat to the east of Gottlieb Meyer's. They fixed on the summit a substantial memorial in the shape of a ponderous iron flag of 36 pounds weight. It will be seen that Mr. Wills's guides planted on the Wetterhorn a similar banner. Fashion would appear to be as unreasonable in her freaks in the mountains as in capitals; and it would be interesting to know if there is any reason assignable for the traditional preference of such embarrassing memorials by the climbers of Grindelwald. Disgusted apparently by the desertion of his guides, Rohrdorf himself now retired from the field, and never again attempted to reach the summit.

Doubts were at one time freely expressed as to the possibility of an ascent like the two last described by the E. face. But, as has happened in several other cases, the experience of recent climbers has confirmed the accuracy of their predecessors. In 1862, Mr. Pilkington ascended the peak by this face, meeting with difficulties of the character above described.

About the same time as Herr Rohrdorf, Professor Hugi was wandering about the base of the Jungfrau. He has been credited on very slight grounds with having made an attack on it from the Roththal. What he actually did was to sleep at the Roththal châlets and then ascend 333 feet above them.

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nivosa iter facientibus, ob ingruentem autem noctem iter suum prosequi non valentibus, metuentibusque ne de nocte sopore obruantur, deque vitâ suâ periclitentur, in more positum est, ut alter alterius manum arripiens in gyrum seu circulum sese moveant, donec dies illucescat.'—*Wagner.*

He gives as a frontispiece to his work * an amusing picture illustrating the difficulties of the ascent, but it is of the ascent to the châlets!

To the reader who has discovered the very small amount of enterprise shown by Hugi himself, it is amusing to read his comments on the determined attempt to reach the Roththal Sattel made about the same time by two Englishmen. Not content with declaring in a tone of deep moral indignation that the party went forth 'ohne Instrumente, ohne Untersuchung,' Hugi goes on to attempt jokes on the climbing capacity of the Englishmen, and to make up stories as to their tottering gait and need of help. Fortunately we are no longer dependent on this, as it proves, inaccurate report of a very interesting expedition. A few years ago a note was found among the papers of one of the climbers describing their adventure. It is too terse and graphic to bear abridgment:—

'On the afternoon of Wednesday, August 20, 1828, Mr. Yeats Brown and Mr. Frederick Slade left Lauterbrunnen for the purpose of attempting the ascent of the Jungfrau from the side of the Roththal. They had previously sent on guides, nine in number, to a châlet on the mountain, distant about four hours' march from Lauterbrunnen, where they met their guides and passed the night. The next morning at 3 o'clock they began the ascent, and at 5 o'clock reached the great glacier of the Roththal, which they passed with tolerable ease. Then, by means of steps cut in the snow, they began to climb the almost perpendicular ascent of the barrier of rock and ice which forms the eastern boundary of the Roththal. This they proceeded in for four hours, and till within one-third of the summit of the barrier, when one of the guides had an epileptic fit, and shortly afterwards two others refused to proceed. The climb was, however, continued with the remainder until within musket-shot of the top, when the weight of ladders, hatchets, provisions, &c., combined with the necessity of two at least remaining unburdened for the purpose of cutting the way, occasioned a general remonstrance from the remaining guides, and unavoidably occasioned the abandonment of the project.†

'This attempt, though unsuccessful, has confirmed the previously conceived opinion that the ascent of the Jungfrau by the way of the Roththal, though very difficult, is feasible.'

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* Hugi's 'Alpenreise in 1830.'

† Alpine Journal, vol. v. p. 374.

In 1841 an Englishman named Cowan tried to reach the Jungfrau, but failed from the incapacity of his guides.*

During the same year Professor Forbes, Agassiz, Duchatelier, Desor, and two others, started for an ascent of the beautiful mountain, of which Forbes has given a particularly interesting narrative. He says:†—'We started (August 27, 1841) from the Grimsel, with fine weather, at 5 A.M., a formidable company of six travellers and six guides. Jacob Leuthold, our confidential guide, led the way, and another, by name Jacob Währen, who had been under medical treatment for a diseased knee, knowing that the Jungfrau was in prospect, had stolen on before, to join us about a mile from the hospice, lest he should have been prevented from accompanying us. As we walked down the slope from the hospice the less bright stars were vanishing before the dawn, and we thought that the situation had never before appeared half so romantic. Scarce a word passed in our numerous company for two hours, except a faint exclamation on meeting Währen. Each was occupied with his own thoughts as to how the expedition might end, which of the objects proposed he should attain, and probably all felt that they were engaging in an enterprise of some danger as well as labour, voluntarily, and on their individual responsibility, a thought which affects for the moment the most volatile.'

They thus traversed in silence the well-known path leading to the Unteraar Glacier, but soon left it to the right. At 7 A.M. they arrived at the hut at the foot of the Oberaar Glacier, and at 10.30 reached the col which divides the Oberaar and Viesch Glaciers. They then descended the Viesch Glacier to the Märjelen See, intending to sleep at the châlets, which they reached at 5.30. The next morning, the 28th, they left their sleeping quarters at 6 A.M., and after four and a half hours' hard walking they made a halt at the foot of the Trugberg. 'The place of our halt,' says Forbes, 'was at the entrance of the deep bay or recess at the head of the Aletsch Glacier, the Mönch before us, to the left the Jungfrau rising from the snowy plain almost precipitously. Still further to the left, the projecting ridge of the Kranzberg, on the right the ridge of the Trugberg.' After half an hour's rest they started up 'the narrowing and steepening' névé, and after a time 'found themselves in a narrow valley terminating in precipices at the proper base of the Jungfrau. The precipices on the right were

* Studer, 'Ueber Eis und Schnee,' vol. i. p. 112.

† 'Norway and its Glaciers.'

of rock, those on the left of ice and hard snow.' They pushed on nearly straightforward, and attained a considerable height by climbing up the steep soft snow, after which it became necessary to decide as to the exact course to be taken for the ascent. 'The snowy precipice before us presented an enormous fissure near its base.' This was, of course, the usual 'bergschrund.' By means of a ladder they had brought with them, they managed to cross it, and afterwards another to the right, and at 2 P.M. they stood on the Roththal Sattel.

They then began the final ascent, keeping as near the precipice overhanging the Aletsch Glacier as practicable. The weather now became bad. Clouds filled the Roththal, but the top of the Jungfrau was occasionally visible. After going on for nearly two hours straight up the right-hand edge of the slope, they turned to the left, got on some loose rocks, and saw the summit immediately before them. 'The top remained separated from us by a ridge of snow about 30 feet long, resembling an excessively steep house roof, an expansion of which, at the further end, formed the snowy pinnacle at which we successively arrived, but could only remain one at a time.' The party at the top consisted of Agassiz, Desor, Duchatelier, Forbes, and four guides. They reached the summit at 4 P.M., and stayed there for half an hour.

On their return a striking incident occurred. 'During our descent,' says Forbes, 'I experienced a singular and painful deception. We walked with our faces to the wall of ice, as in descending a ladder. Looking accidentally into the abyss between my feet, I saw the basket and clothes we had left on the little snow plain above the ladder at the crevasse. Some of the party who had not joined in the last ascent had been there shortly before. I perceived something black begin to move near the spot, and descend with an accelerated pace, not unlike a man hurried along a snow incline with tremendous velocity. It was an eagle which had been examining the contents of our basket!' They reached the foot of the steep snow at 6.45 P.M., or in 2½ hours from the top, and arrived at the Märjelen châlets at 11.30 P.M. During the last part of the descent their footsteps left distinct flesh-coloured marks, by exposing the red snow beneath that freshly fallen.*

In the next year Herr G. Studer, the well-known Swiss climber and author, and F. Bürki, climbed the Jungfrau,† and then for more than ten years the mountain was left to enjoy

* Forbes' 'Norway and its Glaciers,' pp. 312–326.

† Studer, 'Ueber Eis und Schnee,' vol. i. p. 114.

a last slumber before its snows began to be trodden by the feet of modern tourists. Henceforth we confine ourselves to such ascents as were made by new routes.

A remarkable ascent of the Jungfrau from Lauterbrunnen was made on August 9, 1864, by Messrs. Grove, Macdonald, and Stephen, with Melchior and Jakob Anderegg and Johann Bischof as guides. The latter—swept away by an avalanche on the same route on July 24, 1872—was added to the party in consequence of Melchior having sustained a severe injury to his shoulder at a wrestling match between the Hasli and Lauterbrunnen men on the Wengern Alp the day before. No one had ever previously ascended the Jungfrau from this side, and, indeed, when the party set out from Lauterbrunnen at 1.15 A.M., there was not one of them who had the least intention of doing so. Their object was to get to the Eggischhorn by the little known pass of the Lawinen Thor at the head of the Roththal.

A serious attempt on the Jungfrau from the Roththal had, as we have shown, already been made.* In 1860 the pass over the rocky rampart which closes the glen, named by its discoverers, Messrs. Tyndall and V. Hawkins, the Lawinen Thor, had been first crossed.†

For a considerable distance Macdonald and his companions followed the same route Tyndall had taken. When daylight appeared they had a good view of the Roththal and the rocks they hoped to climb. They now made their way along a moraine parallel to the right bank of the Roththal Glacier. 'Melchior, who had been for some moments gazing at the rocks of the Jungfrau, suddenly remarked that he thought it might be possible to reach, by these rocks, the summit of the Jungfrau.' The travellers determined therefore to alter their course and make the attempt. Their way was up a couloir thus described by Mr. Macdonald:—'The northern wall of the Roththal is formed by a huge spur from the Jungfrau, and, in the angle made by the junction of the spur with the main ridge, a great shoot of snow crawls about two-thirds of the way down the rocky slopes. This snow-

* Alpine Journal, vol. v. p. 374. It is stated that Ulrich and Christian Lauener once made a similar attempt, but for this there is no good foundation, and the story may have originated in a tradition connected with the two Laueners who formed part of the party of 1828.—Ibid. vol. ii. p. 166.

† 'Vacation Tourists,' 1860, pp. 305–317; reprinted in Professor Tyndall's 'Hours of Exercise in the Alps,' pp. 1–17.

shoot, or hanging glacier, or couloir, for it partakes of the nature of all three, is very wide at its upper extremity, gradually narrowing lower down, till at the base it is lost in an almost imperceptible gully. Whether we could reach the gully which received the tail of the couloir seemed uncertain, for a slight twist in its course concealed its commencement from us, though we saw enough to convince us that, once in the couloir, we could, in all probability, get up to a very considerable height. We believed that it must lead us up to the well-known Roththal Sattel.' Melchior was sent forward to explore, and returned with a satisfactory report. They therefore gave up the Lawinen Thor, and bore away for the couloir. At 7.30 A.M. they reached a chimney which was of material assistance to them in climbing up to the couloir, at the foot of which they arrived at 8.10. The couloir itself was not difficult, except that it required care against falling stones. The rocks in which it terminates took them nearly two hours to ascend, and they then got on to the edge of a snowfield which curled over the ridge from the real Roththal Sattel. 'A few more paces over the névé, and the Aletsch Glacier lay at our feet, the Mönch and Viescher-hörner in front, while to our left, and apparently close at hand, rose the sharp summit of the Jungfrau.' The col was reached at 11.45, and they stood on the summit at 12.30. They descended by the Roththal Sattel, and proceeded to the Eggischhorn, where they arrived at 7.45 P.M.

The passage over the Roththal Sattel to the Eggischhorn has been two or three times repeated, the ascent of the Jungfrau, as on the first occasion, being combined with the pass. It was attempted, on July 24, 1872, by Herr Merz, accompanied by Von Almen and Johann Bischof, one of the guides of Mr. Macdonald and his party in 1864. They were, however, swept away by an avalanche while ascending the couloir. The two guides were killed, but Merz managed to crawl back to the Stufenstein Alp after passing three nights on the mountain, where he was fortunately found by a party sent out to look for him and his guides, nearly dead with fatigue and exhaustion.*

The crest of the central Oberland chain was first reached from the Wengern Alp in 1862. It will be recollected that Forbes, a good climber, pronounced the northern face of these mountains to be 'absolutely inaccessible;' and even so late as

* Alpine Journal, vol. vi. p. 97.

1858 a writer in 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers' expressed a similar opinion.* But inaccessibility is a word almost discarded from the vocabulary of the Alpine explorer, who has proved it to be entirely inapplicable to the northern face of the Bernese giants.

The first step towards the ascent of the Jungfrau from the Wengern Alp was taken in July 1862. On the 20th of that month Messrs. Stephen, George, Hardy, Liveing, Moore, and Morgan, accompanied by six guides—the two Michels, Christian Almer, Ulrich Kaufmann, P. Baumann, and C. Bohren—set out to force the first passage of the Jungfrau Joch. They walked along the meadows which extend almost to the foot of the lowest rocks of the Eiger, crossed the Eiger Glacier to the foot of the Mönch, and then ascended broken rocks until they reached a point from which the Guggi Glacier can be attained where it begins to stream into the Trümleten valley. They traversed the glacier between the limestone walls leading up to the Schneehorn and the Mönch respectively. After climbing the buttress of the Mönch they crossed the Guggi Glacier, and mounted by it to the great plateau which lies below the cliffs immediately under the col. Halfway between them and the col lay a small and apparently level plateau of snow, but between them and it was a much-crevassed glacier. Some of the guides went forward to examine it, and, after a long absence, returned with the opinion that it was impracticable without a ladder, on account of the formidable crevasse which extends across the whole width of the glacier and forms the permanent difficulty of the pass. A messenger was therefore despatched to the valley for this indispensable article, and the travellers returned to the Wengern Alp. The next morning they arrived at the extreme point of their yesterday's march at 6.12 A.M., reached the crevasse at 7.35, and at 8.15 the whole party was safely lodged on the snow plateau. The guides were now sent forward to reconnoitre, and came to the conclusion that the only way of ascent was by a great block of séracs on their left. They threaded their way through these for two hours, and were at last brought up by a huge overhanging wall of blue ice. This was surmounted, and they then found themselves on a stretch of smooth white snow, without a single crevasse, rising in a gentle curve from their feet to the top of the col, which they

* 'Excursion from the Eggischhorn to the Mönch Sattel, or Col de la Jungfrau.' By E. H. Bunbury, M.A. 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers,' 1st series, p. 316.

soon reached. Messrs. George and Moore descended the Aletsch Glacier to the Eggischhorn, while the remainder of the party turned off to the left and ascended the snow slopes to the gap between the Mönch and Trugberg, and at 9 P.M. arrived at the Adler at Grindelwald, 'having made a new and interesting high-level route from the Wengern Alp.'*

The opening of the Jungfrau Joch led to the idea of crossing the face of the mountain, first for the ascent of the Silberhorn, subsequently for that of the Jungfrau itself.

The Silberhorn, the outlying buttress of the great mountain, so prominent in the view from the Wengern Alp, had been already twice attacked by its W. rockface. It was ascended on August 4, 1863, by Herrn von Fellenberg and Karl Bädeker, accompanied by Christian von Almen, a young Lauener, Peter Michel, Hans Baumann, and Peter Inäbnit.† Under the shadow of the Mönch they crossed the much-broken glacier, and after passing over the névé plateau at the foot of the Schneehorn, they proceeded towards that mountain, the summit of which they reached at 2 P.M. They found that the peak of the Schneehorn rose only about 100 ft. above the flat névé valley from which the Jungfrau rises, and which is the source of the Giessen Glacier. They crossed this valley and a névé terrace at the foot of the Silberhorn. It took the travellers an hour to pass over it and reach a snow field which spreads itself out between the Jungfrau and the Silberhorn, the summit of which they reached at 4.30 P.M. They planted a flag at its north-west corner, but its area was so small that they were unable to group themselves round it. Some stood in line while others sat straddling the icy arête.

They left the summit at 5 P.M., arrived at the top of the Schneehorn at 7 o'clock, and passed the night among some rocks a little below it. At 4 A.M. the following morning they started again, and reached the Scheideck Hotel at 10.30.

The Silberhorn was ascended from the NW. in 1865, by the Rev. J. J. Hornby and Mr. T. H. Philpott,‡ accompanied by Christian Almer, Christian Lauener, Ulrich Almer, and J. Bischof, in the hope that a direct route might be found over its summit to the top of the Jungfrau. They started on August 9, intending to pass the night as near as possible to the Silberhorn Glacier, and found that by adopting a rather

* Alpine Journal, vol. i. pp. 97–104.

† Jahrbuch des Schweizer Alpenklub, vol. i. p. 316–327. Alpine Journal, vol. i. p. 134.

‡ Alpine Journal, vol. ii. p. 254.

circuitous route they could reach the desired spot for their bivouac without any difficulty. From the Roththal, a goat track known to the herdsmen of the Stufenstein Alp leads along narrow ledges to the top of the Schwarz Mönch. Here, at a great height above the Lauterbrunnen valley, a plateau of bare limestone slabs stretches right across the west face of the Jungfrau, from the Roththal to the Trümleten Thal. 'Crossing this in a northerly direction, with the great red cliff known as the Roth-brett just above us on the right, and the deep trench of the Lauterbrunnen valley below us on our left, we skirted the mountain till we reached its north-west angle. Here we made ourselves comfortable for the night just below the Roth-brett, knowing that on rounding its rocky corner we should come out on the face of the mountain, high above the Trümleten Thal, and close to the end of the Silberhorn Glacier.'

The next morning they started at 4 A.M., intending to cross the Silberhorn Glacier, but the fall of some enormous ice and snow avalanches across their path, from which, however, they were fortunately sheltered by rocks, induced them to make for the great buttress of the Silberhorn instead. They reached it and began their climb. But it was far more difficult than it looked, and at last they were obliged to take to the NW. face of the peak. Finally, after encountering bad weather and thick snowstorms, they reached the top of the Silberhorn at 2 P.M., having had nearly 10 hrs. of hard climbing.

The weather was now too bad to think of ascending the Jungfrau, and the way by which they had ascended was impracticable for their return. They therefore determined to descend to the Wengern Alp by the route taken by Herr von Fellenberg. It was past 7 P.M. when they reached the farther side of the Giessen Glacier and looked down on the Guggi far below them. Their only hope of shelter lay in again climbing the Schneehorn and taking refuge among its crags. There they sat on a ledge of rock till midnight, when they again started, crossed the Guggi Glacier, and reached the Wengern Alp Hotel at 8.30 A.M.

In 1865 Professor Aeby and Herr E. von Fellenberg spent a night on the Silberlücke, the snowy saddle between the Jungfrau and Silberhorn, with the intention of ascending the former peak. They were enveloped in a thundercloud; their ice-axes hissed and crackled with the electric fluid. The grey of dawn found the party half frozen under a 4-inch deep covering of fresh-fallen snow, and in the midst of a raging storm. In such circumstances retreat was inevitable.*

* 'Von der Jungfrau' von Prof. Dr. Aeby.

The Jungfrau itself was first ascended from the northern side on August 29, 1865, by Sir George Young and Mr. George, with Christian Almer and Johann Baumann as guides, and three porters.

The climbers left the inn on the Wengern Alp at 1.50 P.M. on August 28, 1865. The Guggi Glacier was bare of snow, making the ladder very useful, and the porters were heavily laden, so that the party did not reach the plateau above the central icefall till 6.55. Turning sharply to the right, they made for the crags of the Schneehorn, but, finding a slope of hard ice close to the rocks, were much delayed, and were unable to halt for the night until past 8. Starting at 4.50 A.M. on the 29th, they climbed to the top of the Schneehorn, whence two porters were sent back, there being evidently no further need of the ladder. Descending a little they passed along the level plateau from which the Giessen Glacier falls, and after traversing some séracs and another plateau reached at 7.15 the Silber-lücke, or col between the Jungfrau and Silberhorn. After climbing along the very narrow but not difficult arête for about an hour, they diverged to the right on to easy slopes of névé, which brought them at 9.35 to the little plateau lying between the false top of the Jungfrau, as seen from the Wengern Alp, and the true summit. Ascending first the false peak, they thence reached the true one in 32 min. climbing, up steep but easy rocks to the ridge a few feet W. of the actual top. Leaving the summit at 11, they gained the Roththal Sattel at 12.58, having to cut steps a great part of the way, and made their way thence to the top of the Mönch Joch by 4.10 P.M. The wall of the Mönch Joch was this year more troublesome than usual, so that they did not reach the side of the glacier below the Eiger Höhle until 6.30, and bad weather coming on shortly afterwards made it impossible to find the way down on to the Eismeer. They were therefore obliged to spend the night on the hillside, wet through, and reached Grindelwald at 7 A.M. next day, having been out two nights, and actually walking 21¼ hours.*

On July 17, 1871, the two peaks were combined in a single expedition for the first time. Miss Brevoort and Mr. Coolidge, starting from the Little Scheideck inn, ascended the Silberhorn, and, bivouacking that night in the Silberlücke, next morning reached the top of the Jungfrau and descended to the Aletsch Glacier.†

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* Alpine Journal, vol. ii. pp. 210, 211; George's 'Oberland and its Glaciers,' pp. 37–53.

† Alpine Journal, vol. v. p. 277.

On June 28, 1873, Mr. Moore, with Jakob Anderegg and Peter Schlegel, left the Hôtel Bellevue on the Klein Scheidegg at 2.55 A.M., reached the summit of the Jungfrau at 12.50 P.M., and the Eggischhorn at 8.55 P.M. In commenting on this expedition, which he says is 'perhaps the finest in the Bernese Oberland,' Mr. Moore expresses his opinion that the *descent* from the Jungfrau to the Wengern Alp cannot be recommended, 'as the risk from avalanches while getting through the central ice-fall of the Guggi Glacier in the afternoon is very great,' and he adds that 'on July 6, at 1 P.M., an immense mass of ice fell from near the Jungfrau Joch, and swept right down and across the central fall, completely smashing it up. There is no possibility of keeping out of the line of fire, so contracted is the available space.'*

Nevertheless, *descents* of the Jungfrau to the Wengern Alp have been effected. On July 5, 1872, Messrs. Whitwell and Tuckett, with Ulrich Christian and Peter Lauener, left the Faulberg at 2.10 A.M., crossed the Roththal Sattel at 6.30, and reached the summit of the Jungfrau at 7.40. Quitting it at 8 o'clock, and dropping down upon the first and highest plateau on the N. side, they subsequently encountered considerable difficulties, owing to the arête towards the Silberlücke being almost completely buried in snow, so that 3½ hrs. cautious work was required to reach that point at 11.15. After a halt of ½ hr. on the second plateau below, the head of the Guggi Glacier was gained at 2.10 P.M., the usual point for quitting the ice at 3.45, and the Wengern Scheideck at 5.15.† On July 22, 1873, Herr Dübi, of the Swiss Alpine Club, crossed from the Roththal over the Jungfrau to the Wengern Alp. The top was not reached till 11 A.M., and the dangerous part of the descent had to be traversed very late in the day, the Wengern Alp not being reached till 9 P.M.‡

Finsteraarhorn.

The second of the Oberland Giants to be climbed was their chief, the Finsteraarhorn. The first ascent was made in 1812, the year following the first ascent of the Jungfrau.

On July 25 of that year Johann Rudolf and Hieronymus Meyer, the first climbers of the Jungfrau, the sons of the former, Rudolf and Gottlieb Meyer, and Dr. Thilo a schoolmaster, accompanied by four guides and several porters, united with the

* Alpine Journal, vol. vi. p. 297. † Ibid. p. 94.
‡ 'J. des S. Alpenklub,' vol. ix. p. 123.

intention of scaling this then untrodden peak. The party slept in the solitary hut on the Oberaaralp, and crossed the Oberaarjoch the following morning. Here they met the elder Rudolf Meyer, who, accompanied by a goatherd, had spent the previous day in exploring the approaches to the mountain. On the second night they slept at the spot since called the Rothhorn Sattel, between the Rothhorn and the ridge of the Finsteraarhorn. The weather, however, became so bad, that, after passing two nights under poor shelter, they were compelled to return to the Grimsel.

On August 14 Rudolf Meyer (the son) renewed the attempt, accompanied by the four guides — Aloïs Volker, Joseph Bortes, Kaspar Huber, and Arnold von Melchthal, otherwise known as Abbühl. They passed the first night at the Oberaaralp, and the next in the old bivouac on the rocks of the Rothhorn. The following morning, August 16, they crossed the upper part of the eastern branch of the Viescher Glacier, now called the Studerfirn, and attacked the face of the Finsteraarhorn.

Having crossed the *bergschrund*, they cut steps up steep slopes of snow and ice, passing close under an enormous sérac, which, later in the year, two of the guides, out chamois-hunting, saw lying shivered in fragments on the glacier below. The rocks, when they could use them, offered better footing than the treacherous ice. After 6 hours' continuous climbing up the gigantic wall, they, about midday, drew near the southern ridge of the peak. The rocks immediately below it overhung. When they had been conquered, the party halted on the crest. The view was a glorious one. 'Over the Oberaarhorn' they saw all the mountains of Eastern Switzerland; in the West the chain of Mont Blanc shone on the horizon; through a gap in the chain of the Walliser Viescher-hörner a reach of the Rhone could be seen, the only glimpse of the lower world, for the northern plains were hidden by the highest peak, which still rose as a black rock 500 feet above their heads.

Here Meyer, as the least competent of the party, remained behind, and, according to the 'Alpenreise,' one of the guides, Huber, kept him company. The others, about 1 P.M., attacked the final peak. Laboriously they climbed over a crag, then they were forced to descend again in order to ascend a higher crest. 'None would take the lead in the assault on this last summit. Ice lay on the naked rocks, and nothing broke the view through the gap until the eye rested on the Finsteraar Glacier. At last Arnold von Melchthal, attached to a rope held by the others, clambered over the overhanging icecap

(hohle Eishaube), and dragged the others after him. Now the highest point was conquered. It was four o'clock. Three hours had been spent in getting over a distance for which a quarter of an hour had seemed enough. The peak is sharp as a houseroof, and entirely plastered with ice, which hangs for several feet out over the precipices, so that the Finsteraar Glacier is seen through a hole in it.'* A flag was securely planted, and then, after half an hour's halt, the guides rejoined Meyer. They descended together by the W. face of the mountain, which they found extremely easy in comparison to that by which they had ascended.

This expedition has been the subject of much controversy. Hugi, in his 'Naturhistorische Alpenreise,' expressed his disbelief in the ascent. Mr. Ball ('Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers,' 1st series, p. 308) agreed with Hugi. These opinions were founded on the narrative contained in the 'Reise auf die Eisgebirge,' which contains more than one statement which it is impossible to reconcile with the local topography. Neither Hugi nor Mr. Ball had had brought under their notice the original MS. of Rudolf Meyer, which was published in a Swiss periodical—the 'Alpenrosen'—in 1852, a copy of which I owe to the courtesy of Herr G. Studer. It is on this base alone that the matter can now be discussed, for it shows that Meyer's account was recklessly altered by Herr Zschokke, the editor of the scientific magazine in which the 'Reise auf die Eisgebirge' first appeared.†

There are some curious coincidences between the first and last published accounts of ascents of the Finsteraarhorn which go some way to support a belief that although in the earlier

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* 'Alpenrosen auf dem Jahr 1852, Erinnerungen an Prof. Dr. R. Meyer.'

† Herr Zschokke deserves to be pilloried as an example for all editors, present and future. Meyer, describing the climb up the 'Riesenwand,' or face of the mountain above the Studerfirn, from the bergschrund to the ridge S. of the highest peak, begins his description of the view from this point: 'Ueber das Oberaarhorn sehen wir hinab auf die höchsten Gebirge der kleinen Kantone,' &c. Zschokke interprets 'Wir standen auf das Oberaarhorn.' Again he thinks to add weight to Meyer's description of what passed on the top, and adds accordingly the words 'ich sah von meinem Gletscher.' Two of the chief stumbling-blocks in the story are thus at once disposed of, and in reading the two versions side by side, there are few sentences in which it will not be found that Meyer's original draft has been altered for the worse. The only serious defect in the Alpenrosen account is the curtness with which the descent is dismissed.

part of the ascent M. Cordier kept much nearer the ridge of the mountain than his predecessor, his route and that of Meyer's guides met before the last climb.

On August 23 Rudolf Meyer the son went viâ the upper part of the Aletsch Glacier to the Grünhorn, where he met his brother Gottlieb, his uncle Hieronymus, and Herr Thilo, who, with their guides and porters, had come the day before from the Grimsel by the Oberaar and Viesch Glaciers. After waiting in vain for favourable weather, the whole party descended on the 26th to the Märjelen Alp, which the majority of the explorers left on September 12 for the Grimsel. Gottlieb Meyer, however, with the guides, Volker and Bortes, remained on the alp, intending to ascend the Jungfrau should the weather change.* This purpose, as has been already told (p. 50), they successfully carried out.

Before taking leave of this enterprising family, it is due to them to point out the change in the practical knowledge of the mountain world brought about by their exertions. The Meyers had not only conquered the Jungfrau and the Finsteraarhorn, and found their way across the Strahleck, Beichgrat, Lötschsattel, Oberaarjoch, and up to the Jungfrau Joch from the S.; they had dispelled the vague terrors which hung round the ice region, and proved that, with proper precautions, its recesses could be penetrated with ease, and its highest peaks assaulted with success. They were probably more fortunate in their guides, and better climbers themselves, than their immediate successors; but it is long before we again find an explorer so modest and practical in his language as Rudolf Meyer in the following passage in which he sums up some of the results of his explorations:—

'Every traveller, then, may traverse without difficulty the glaciers of the Bernese Oberland. Their crossing is by no means so difficult and alarming as has been pretended up to the present time. It is possible to wander without danger over the firm glacier close up to the saddle between the Mönch and Jungfrau, whence the traveller looks down on the high valleys of Bern. The Viesch and Aletsch Glaciers and Lake proffer to lovers of nature landscapes which well repay them for some slight exertion. From the Grimsel Hospice excursions can be made on all sides, and it affords an easy refuge in case of bad weather. The attendance is, for so remote a spot, good beyond all expectation; and this without the host treating every guest as if he were a rich Englishman.'†

* 'Ueber Eis und Schnee,' vol. i. p. 80.

† M. Raoul Rochette (in 1820) calls it 'l'hospice le plus inhospitalier

The turn of the last sentence is unlooked for, at a moment when the Napoleonic wars had closed the continent to our countrymen. We must suppose that the English travellers of the previous century, and there were not a few, the 'milords,' for whom the first Swiss guide-book was written in 1778, had left a lasting fame in the wilds.

Sixteen years now passed away without another attempt being made to reach the summit of the mountain, and doubts began to be expressed as to whether it had ever been attained.

In August 1828, Professor Hugi of Solothurn, accompanied by seven guides, of whom Arnold Abbühl was one, made an attempt.* Stormy weather, however, compelled them to retreat when within about 200 feet of the summit. In the following year Hugi returned to the attack, but again in vain. Once more, on August 10, he slept at the Rothhorn Sattel, and climbed up the W. face. When close to the top, a bed or gully of snow or ice had to be crossed, the leading guide cut steps across, and then returned to fetch the traveller. But Hugi's courage failed him, and he decided to remain where he was. Two of the guides, Jakob Leuthold and Johannes Wahren, went across and up to the top, which they reached in a few minutes.

Thirteen years now elapsed without another attempt to climb the Finsteraarhorn. In 1842 Herr Sulger, of Basel, endeavoured to reach the peak:† his first attempt, on August 16, was unsuccessful so far as he was concerned; but his guides, Johann Jaun, Andreas Abplanalp, and Heinrich Lorenz, attained the summit. On September 5 following, Sulger again started for the ascent from the Grimsel, accompanied by his former guides, and slept the first night at the place which had served as the night-quarters of Hugi on his last two expeditions. The next morning they started at 5 A.M., and reached the summit by the W. face at 11 o'clock.

The Finsteraarhorn now remained undisturbed for fifteen years. On August 12, 1857, five Englishmen—Messrs. Ellis, Hardy, Kennedy, St. John Mathews, and William Mathews, accompanied by Auguste Simond and Jean Baptiste Croz of Chamonix, Johann Jaun of Meyringen, Aloys Bortis of Viesch, Alexander Guntern of Biel, and Franz Wellig, as guides—

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qui soit au monde.' The standards of the Parisian and the Aarau manufacturer were doubtless somewhat different.

* Hugi, 'Naturhistorische Alpenreise.'

† Verfassfreund von October, 1842. 'Ueber Eis und Schnee,' vol. i. p. 85.

started for the ascent.* They started at 2.30 P.M., and slept among some rocks on the Faulberg, close to the Aletsch Glacier, and about five miles from the Märjelen See. The next morning they set out at 2.30 A.M. They first crossed to the Viescher Glacier by the Grünhorn-lücke. From the col they found they had to descend the steep face of a snow slope to arrive at the SW. base of the Finsteraarhorn, where it rises from the Viescherfirn. When they reached its base they climbed up a wall of rock which seemed almost vertical; 'now,' as Mr. Hardy relates, 'hand over hand; now getting well into a corner, and bringing our backs into play after the fashion of chimney-sweeps; now coming to some awkward place, where the tallest man must go first, for his arms alone are long enough to feel the way, and, choosing some safe ledge, must stretch down thence a helping hand to his shorter brethren, who occasionally, too, are thankful for a shove behind; now baffled by some monstrous crag, we are driven to take to the hard snow at the side, and ascend by short zigzags, which, without the confidence-inspiring rope, are not altogether pleasant; then back again to the rocks, and holding on like grim death, or taking advantage of some small, very small, plateau for a moment's delay; or, again, with a cry to those below to look out, for the stones beneath our feet are giving way and crushing downwards, till at last our advanced guard gives notice that we have reached the top of the rocks, and that a great slope of snow stretches upward before us as far as we can see. One by one, we clamber on, glad enough of a prospect of a change of exercise; and, though the slope looks somewhat severe, the rope is soon readjusted, and we are making long zigzags up the incline, with our alpenstocks ringing merrily in the snow, and the detached fragments skimming away from us with increasing velocity.' At 9.15 they reached a snow-covered shoulder of the ridge which descends from the Finsteraarhorn towards the Agassizhorn, from whence they saw the magnificent basin of the Finsteraar Glacier, some 5,000 feet beneath them. From this point the route to the summit lay along the ridge in a SE. direction at right angles to their previous course. Had there been any wind they must, they thought, have given up all hopes of success. 'The inclination of our route was very variable; in parts so steep that the step-like character of the rocks alone enabled us to proceed, whilst in others it was not more than a very gentle ascent. At

* 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers,' 1st series, p. 283. Wellig alone failed to reach the summit.

one point the ridge was so narrow and so awkward that we were obliged to crawl for some few yards on our hands and feet.' At midday they gained the summit, on which the ten who had persevered in the ascent could scarcely stand at the same time. They soon began their descent, and at 10.30 P.M. reached the rocks at the head of the Märjelen See, and at 1 A.M. on the morning of the 14th the Eggischhorn hotel.*

Since this ascent the summit of the Finsteraarhorn has been frequently attained, and the easiest way being well known the expeditions have been accomplished with no great difficulty. The peak is indeed accessible from more than one direction. The route ordinarily followed is that partly by the western face, partly by the NW. ridge, described by Mr. Hardy; but the foot of the same ridge can also be gained from the north by way of the great couloir which falls from the gap south of the Agassiz-horn, known as the Agassiz-joch, to the snowy depression at the head of the Finsteraar and Lower Grindelwald Glaciers. To this the name of Finsteraar-joch has been given, and it can be reached either from Grindelwald or the Grimsel. The Agassiz-joch was first crossed in 1866 by Messrs. Hornby, Morshead, and Philpott, starting from the Kastenstein cave by the side of the Grindelwald Glacier.† In 1868, Mr. G. E. Foster reached the joch from the same point, and followed the ridge in its entire length to the summit of the Finsteraarhorn, which he attained at 1.50 P.M., in 9 hrs. from the Kastenstein. The descent was made to the Faulberg.‡

In 1873, Messrs. Moore and Walker, starting from the Kastenstein at 2.15 A.M., followed Mr. Foster's route to the summit. On this occasion the descent was for the first time made, by the same route, to Grindelwald, which was reached at 8.45 P.M.§ The couloir leading to the Agassiz-joch might sometimes be found difficult; but the lower part of the ridge of the mountain is of much the same character as the upper part which is followed on the ordinary route.

Several daring attempts made between 1870–73 by a Swiss climber, Herr Häberlin, to reach the peak from the S. branch of the Finsteraar Glacier, were unsuccessful, although a very considerable height was attained.‖

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* 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers,' 1st Series, 'Ascent of the Finsteraarhorn,' by the Rev. J. F. Hardy.

† Alpine Journal, vol. ii. p. 411.

‡ Ibid. vol. iv. p. 155.

§ Ibid. vol. vi. p. 297.

‖ 'J. des S. Alpenklub,' vol. vii. p. 24, 531, vol. viii. p. 565, vol. ix. p. 618.

Since 1812 all ascents of the Finsteraarhorn had been made by the W. face and ridge, until in 1876 the late Mons. H. Cordier, with Jakob Anderegg and Gaspard Maurer, forced a way to the summit by the SE. ridge which falls to the Rothhorn Sattel. A full account of this feat has appeared in a recent number of the 'Alpine Journal.' A singular resemblance between the difficulties encountered by M. Cordier and those described by Herr Meyer's guides will be noticed on a careful comparison. *

The Schreckhorn.

In early times the Schreckhorn—the peak of terror—was second to none of the Alpine giants in a reputation for savage inaccessibility. Until the discovery of the Finsteraarhorn, long hidden in the heart of the waste, robbed it of its honours, it was generally regarded as the loftiest summit of the Oberland. Ramond compared it to Mont Blanc, pointing out that the Oberland peak, if less vast and lofty, was 'incomparably more sharply pointed,' and 'still more inaccessible' than his rival. An English traveller, who published in 1796 a little journal of his tour, speaks of it with the greatest respect, which he expresses in one place somewhat absurdly: 'I never thought so little of the Schriekhorn (*sic*) as when nearest its top. Indeed this is the case with all real transcendent grandeur of every kind!' It is needless to say his superlative degree of nearness was at some distance below the foot of the mountain.

The writer who first called the Schreckhorn the 'grimmest fiend of the Oberland,' expressed a general sentiment. The relation of the peak to the lowlands is well calculated to encourage such a feeling. From any of the heights about Grindelwald the traveller sees opposite him a thin solid wedge, symmetrical and most formidable in outline. Only those who penetrate the glacier wilderness discover that the mountain is in truth rather a wall than a pyramid, and that it offers flanks which, if of extreme steepness, yet give some opportunity for attack.

About 1840 a determined onslaught was made on the mountains, and the invaders pitched their camp in the heart of the enemy's country. In the rude shelter by the side of the Aar Glacier, 3 hrs. above the Grimsel Spital, a distinguished band of *savants* was often to be found in the summer months.

* Alpine Journal, vol. viii. p. 109. 'Annuaire du Club Alpin Français,' vol. viii. pp. 397–9.

Amongst them were Agassiz, Desor, and our own countryman, Professor Forbes. The mighty mass of the Schreckhorn was ever before the eyes of the explorers, and they were far too spirited not to desire to assail it. In 1842, on August 8, a party consisting of Professor Arnold Escher 'von der Linth,' Messrs. Gérard and Desor, and five guides, of whom Jakob Leuthold was the leader, determined to attempt the ascent.* Having to wait for M. Gérard, who started from the Grimsel, they did not leave the Pavillon till 7 A.M., only reaching the Strahleck at 9. They had determined to mount the glacier second on their right in approaching the pass. The crevasses were hidden by fresh snow, and some care was necessary in avoiding them. Higher up steps had to be cut obliquely across a frozen slope of about 40°, where the snow lay on ice, a passage which M. Desor thought worse than anything on the Jungfrau. A rocky ridge was thus gained which led them without further serious difficulty to the roof of the mountain. Here, however, some 300 ft. only from the top, they were nearly stopped by a deep gap in the crest. 'It was decided that a guide should be let down with the rope to explore, and that if he reported the rest easy the ascent should be continued; in the contrary case all should return. Jakob fixed on Bannholzer to make the reconnaissance, and the cord was being got ready to let him over, when he, thinking doubtless the preparations tiresome, leaped down on to the arête at our feet. Everyone gave a shout of dismay at seeing him disappear. We thought him lost, but he alighted astride and without any harm on the snow arête below, and paying not the slightest attention to our shout or the warnings of his companions, climbed the ridge, reached in a few minutes the higher prominence, and signed to us to follow. Seeing all went so well, we descended one after the other, and followed our intrepid leader. This last climb, which we estimated at something about 350 ft., is excessively steep, and in a number of places one is obliged, so to speak, to attach oneself to the crag, and progress by means of hands as much as feet. The main point is to know how to profit by the least protuberances or even rugosities of the rock. We left behind our axes and sticks, taking on with us only a little bread and wine and our instruments. Despite its excessive steepness, the ridge has one advantage, the rock is less unsound than near the base of the mountain.

* Desor, 'Excursions et Séjours dans les Glaciers;' 'Ascension au Schreckhorn,' Revue Suisse, 1843; and Dolfuss Ausset's 'Matériaux pour l'Etude des Glaciers,' vol. iii. p. 335.

'A last difficulty awaited us close to the top. The ridge here diminishes to such a point that for a distance of 100 ft. it has only a breadth of from 18 to 20 in., while both to right and left the eye plunges into frightful abysses. The boldest went to the front, and the party was arranged so that we should be only one at a time in the really dangerous spots. In such circumstances one is content to go on all fours; even the guides did not venture to hold themselves upright. We reached the top at 2.30 P.M.' The peak they had gained was the southern point of the highest ridge of the Schreckhorn, afterwards distinguished as the Lauteraarhorn. They recognised with surprise and some chagrin that the northern point, or Schreckhorn proper, was of equal if not superior height. It rose at the other end of a jagged ridge which they judged impassable, and which to the present day has never been passed. The Federal Map shows this ridge to be over 1,000 yards in length and the N. point the higher by 91 feet.

In returning the guides by climbing on one another's shoulders got up the wall which had nearly stopped them in the ascent, and the travellers were drawn up by the rope. The descent was made entirely by the rocks in order to avoid the awkward ice-slope, and the Hôtel des Neuchatelois was safely regained at 10 P.M. The late hours generally kept by the first mountain climbers are remarkable.

Many years now passed away without the Lauteraarhorn being revisited, or the loftier and neighbouring summit attacked, and during this period, when so many neighbouring peaks were falling, the reputation of the Schreckhorn for inaccessibility was constantly on the increase.

It was not until 1857 Mr. Anderson made an attempt on the north side of the Schreckhorn from the Gleckstein, with P. Bohren and Christian Almer, which resulted on August 6th in the first successful ascent of the Klein-Schreckhorn, a minor peak lying behind the Mettenberg. Their descent towards the lower Grindelwald Glacier was steep and somewhat difficult,* but an easier route has since been discovered.

Mr. Stephen made the first ascent of the true Schreckhorn on August 16, 1861, with Christian and Peter Michel, and Ulrich Kaufmann, in eight hours from the Kastenstein. As is usual in first ascents, the easiest way up the rocks, which form the west face of the mountain, was not at once hit off, and some difficulties were encountered which have been avoided by later

* 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers,' 1st series, pp. 234–253.

climbers. When this face has been overcome with more or less labour, according to the season and the course taken by the guides, the climber finds himself about midway on the ridge connecting the Schreckhorn and Lauteraarhorn. On the first ascent this crest was probably struck nearer the top than it now is. 'The ridge,' says Mr. Stephen, 'rose into a kind of knob, which allowed only a few yards of it to be visible. Taking a drop of brandy all round, we turned to the assault, feeling that a few yards more would decide the question. On our right hand the long slopes of snow ran down towards the Lauteraar-Sattel, as straight as if the long furrows on their surface had been drawn by a ruler. They were in a most ticklish state. The snow seemed to be piled up like loose sand at the highest angle of rest, and almost without cohesion. The fall of a pebble or a handful of snow was sufficient to detach a layer, which slid smoothly down the long slopes with a long low hiss. Clinging, however, to the rocks which formed the crest of the ridge, we dug our feet as far as possible into the older snow beneath, and crept cautiously along. As soon as there was room on the arête, we took to the rocks again, and began with breathless expectation climbing the knob of which I have spoken. The top of the mountain could not remain much longer concealed. A few steps more and it came full in view. The next step revealed to me not only the mountain-top, but a lovely and almost level ridge, which connected it with our standing point.' The final ridge of the mountain, to the last few yards of which Mr. Stephen's phrase applies, is a narrow wall broken here and there by gaps and overhanging on both sides vast precipices. But the excellence of the foothold deprives it of any terror in the eyes of the true climber.

Mr. Stephen was obliged to spend a second night at the Kastenstein.*

On July 10, 1874, the Schreckhorn was reached for the first time from the side of the Lauteraar Glacier. The climbers were Messrs. W. M. and R. Pendlebury, with P. Baumann and P. Kaufmann. Leaving the Gleckstein at 12.30 A.M., they reached in 6 hours, after serious difficulties, a small plateau at the base of the final peak. This spot might be gained much more easily from the Grimsel side of the Lauteraarjoch. The climb to the top occupied 5 hours more. It was throughout steep and in several places extremely difficult. Banks of snow, steeper than the last slope of the Wetterhorn and lying on ice, alternated with ice-covered rocks. The de-

* 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers,' 2nd series, vol. ii. pp. 3–14.

scent was made by the usual route to the Kastenstein and Lower Grindelwald Glacier.*

The most dangerous place on the ordinary route up the Schreckhorn has become unhappily well-known through the fatal accident to a good climber, which occurred in 1869. Immediately after striking the ridge steps have to be cut in some steep slopes overhanging the Aar Glacier, in order to reach the highest comb of rocks. The last step from ice to rock always requires particular care, and in making this the Rev. J. Elliot slipped and being unroped fell down the eastern side of the mountain for many hundred feet, and was killed by the fall. Had the rope been in use the slip would have been harmless. Such sad lessons should never be forgotten either by guides or travellers.†

Wetterhörner.

The immense block which on the north side falls in superb precipices upon the pasturages of the Great Scheideck is crowned by three summits. The outermost and most conspicuous, known as the Hasli Jungfrau or Wetterhorn proper,‡ yields by seventeen ft. in height to the central peak or Mittelhorn. Further south lies the third and lowest summit, the Rosenhorn. In 1828 Hugi, in his explorations of the Rosenlaui Glacier, came to the conclusion that from this side the final portion of the ascent was possible. About the same time a German traveller made an unsuccessful attempt from Grindelwald.§

The first of the peaks to be reached was the Rosenhorn. On August 27, 1844, a large party, consisting of Messrs. Desor, Dollfuss, Dupasquier, and Stengel, with six guides, started from the hut on the Aar Glacier, the base of so much early mountaineering. They crossed the ridge of the Ewig Schneehorn, and slept at the Urner Alp in the Urbach Thal. Next morning, August 28th, they ascended without difficulty the slopes of the Gauli Glacier. At its head they found, to their surprise, not the steep narrow ridge represented in their maps, but a broad plateau—the common source of the Gauli and Rosenlaui Glaciers. On the left of the plateau rose,

* Alpine Journal, vol. vii. pp. 34–42. † Ibid. vol. iv. p. 373.

‡ M. Desor, I believe, is alone in identifying the Rosenhorn with the Hasli Jungfrau. It is, however, worthy of remark that the Rosenhorn is the only one of the three peaks visible from the Hasli Thal, and it is quite possible that modern usage has improperly transferred the title to the outer peak.

§ Studer, 'Ueber Eis und Schnee,' vol. i. p. 231.

apparently close at hand, the pyramid of the Rosenhorn. It took them, however, three hrs. to reach its base; the ascent of the peak itself was steep but easy. They used neither axe, ladder, nor rope in the ascent. On their return they attempted to descend the glacier under the north face of the Dossenhorn, and finally found a way over the crags of the range dividing the Urbachthal from the Rosenlaui valley, and down the Renfen Glacier.*

The conquest of the Wetterhörner could not, however, be considered complete, while the Wetterhorn itself, that is, the outer peak which from the low country seems the only summit worth a second thought, remained untrodden by human feet. On August 31 of the same year, two of M. Desor's guides, Jaun and Bannholzer, left Rosenlaui, ascended the Rosenlaui glacier by the route since followed to the gap between the Mittelhorn and outer peak, and climbed the steep face of the latter. After returning to the gap they found a way down the rocks towards the Ober Grindelwald Glacier, and bearing away to the left crossed the snowy ridge separating it from the Lauteraar Glacier, thus making the first passage of the Lauteraarjoch. They reached before nightfall the hut on the Aar Glacier.

Next year (1845) the old hut on the Aar Glacier was, through the exertions of M. Dollfuss-Ausset, replaced by a substantial stone cabin, in which the little band of students assembled for the last time before the departure of Agassiz for America. It was determined to organise in Agassiz's honour an ascent of one of the highest peaks. The Wetterhorn, reached in the previous autumn by the two guides, but as yet untrodden by travellers, was naturally chosen. The climbers were Messrs. Agassiz, Vogt, and Boort, with Jaun, Bannholzer, and Hans Währen. On July 29, they ascended the Lauteraar Glacier, and after cutting steps up a steep snow-wall, found themselves on the Sattel. Night quarters were now sought, but no convenient cave or sheltering crest could be discovered. The guides collected the smoothest stones together and spread skins over them to make a bed, and a low wall was built to windward. Night soon fell, and the white peaks stood out like ghosts against a sky of a blackness never seen in the lowlands, and garnished with stars of unwonted brilliancy. There was no chance of sleep, for the cold (7° C.) forced them to huddle up close to one another, so that each could scarcely shift his position even if a sharp-cornered boulder was working itself slowly between his ribs.

* Desor, 'Nouvelles Excursions.' Neufchatel, 1845.

The hours seemed endless, but at last grey crept over the sky, and the sun's rays tipt the crest of the Schreckhorn. All were ready to start. The hard frozen surface made their passage across the snows which feed the upper Grindelwald Glacier easy, and they soon gained the base of the Mittelhorn. Its rocky face separated them from their goal and had to be traversed. This was the worst part of the day's work. The whole body had often to be balanced and supported on shallow protuberances barely an inch wide on the face of an abrupt cliff. Thanks however to the courage of the guides, the snow-slopes beyond were safely reached, and by them the plateau of the Wetterhörner. 'The most imposing of the three peaks was the true Wetterhorn, which rose obelisk-fashion with walls exceeding in steepness the roof of a church tower. Many of us looked up with doubts whether such slopes could be climbed; yet no one ventured to express the doubt, for we put blind confidence in our guides, and without further question followed the leader, who cut steps with the axe where the surface was frozen.' About half way up the cone they halted to examine the rock which crops out. It was calcareous, whereas the two inner peaks are composed of granite.

The final slope was measured at 68°, and the last six feet were so nearly perpendicular that the guides hauled the travellers up by the rope. The top was a snow-crest some twenty feet long hanging over in a cornice on the south side. The boundless view was exceptionally clear, and a long hour was given to enjoying it with feelings of satisfaction 'such as Munchausen must have had when on his journey to the moon he saw at his feet the tiny earth.'

In descending, a guide, standing alone, paid out with the rope the travellers at the steepest point; a little lower they sat down one behind the other, and flew to the bottom through a cloud of snow-dust. When they came to the rocks of the Mittelhorn, the courage of one of the climbers failed for a moment. 'Hans Jaun sprang up to him, tied a belt round him, fastened it with a rope to his own arm, and bade him go on boldly. Then with the laconic utterance, "Jetzt entweder beide oder keiner," Jaun followed his uncertain steps. Twice our companion tottered and was held back from falling.' With the sinking sun they were all again in safety on the level of the Aar Glacier, and before the night fell, under the hospitable roof of M. Dollfuss's cabin.*

* Allgemeine Zeitung. 'Miszellen, Ersteigung des Wetterhorns,' par A. Vogt, reprinted in 1864 in Desor's 'Matériaux pour l'Etude des

The central and (by seventeen feet) highest peak of the Wetterhörner had been climbed only three weeks before the last described ascent (July 9, 1845) by a Scotchman named Spier. He started from the Hôtel des Neuchatelois at 4 A.M., reached the Mittelhorn *viâ* the Lauteraarjoch and the rocks above it at 1 P.M., and descended thence to Rosenlaui by 9 P.M. His guides were Jaun and Abplanalp.*

It was not until September 17, 1854, that Mr. Alfred Wills made the first successful ascent of the Wetterhorn from Grindelwald. The published account † of this expedition probably did more than any other single narrative to excite and spread among our countrymen the taste for mountain adventure, and it is still too well known for it to be necessary here to do more than mention its leading features. Mr. Wills's guides were Auguste Balmat and A. Simond of Chamonix, Ulrich Lauener and Peter Bohren. The party started on September 16th from Grindelwald with a gloomy farewell. 'Try,' said the landlord, 'to return all of you alive, but——' he broke off, and shook his head gravely. They slept at the Gleckstein, a cave formed by several huge boulders, a short distance beyond which a hut known as the Weisshorn-Hütte has lately been built by the Grindelwald guides with some assistance from the English Alpine Club. At 4.30 A.M. they started. The ascent seems to have been made by the route still followed. After crossing a glacier they attacked the rocks, first finding a way along ledges and then climbing one of the shattered ribs which project from the mountain side. The Oberland men had crampons, and had double-headed ice-axes, such as are now commonly used. The Chamoniards rejected the crampons, but much admired the ice-axes, the form of which was new to them. At about 10 A.M. they reached the gap between the Mittelhorn and the outer summit, and saw the last portion of their work before them.

Lauener and Simond were sent on to cut steps, and after a time the rest followed, till their progress was arrested by a serious obstacle. 'The cornice curled over towards us, like the crest of a wave, breaking at irregular intervals along the line into pendants and inverted pinnacles of ice, many of which hung down to the full length of a tall man's height. They cast a ragged shadow on the wall of ice behind, which

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Glaciers,' vol. iv. p. 417. This narrative, owing to the circumstances of its publication, was long unknown in England, and has escaped the attention even of Herr G. Studer.

* 'Alpine Adventure.' Nelson and Sons. London, 1878.

† Wills's 'Wanderings Among the High Alps,' pp. 270–315.

was hard and glassy, not flecked with a spot of snow, and blue as the "brave o'erhanging" of the cloudless firmament. They seemed the battlements of an enchanted fortress, framed to defy the curiosity of man, and to laugh to scorn his audacious efforts. A brief parley ensued. Lauener had chosen his course well, and had worked up to the most accessible point along the whole line, where a break in the series of icicles allowed him to approach close to the icy parapet, and where the projecting crest was narrowest and weakest. It was resolved to cut boldly into the ice, and endeavour to hew deep enough to get a sloping passage on to the dome beyond. He stood close, not facing the parapet, but turned half round, and struck out as far away from himself as he could. A few strokes of his powerful arm brought down the projecting crest, which, after rolling a few feet, fell headlong over the brink of the arête, and was out of sight in an instant. We all looked on in breathless anxiety; for it depended upon the success of this assault whether that impregnable fortress was to be ours, or whether we were to return, slowly and sadly, foiled by its calm and massive strength. Suddenly a startling cry of surprise and triumph rang through the air. A great block of ice bounded from the top of the parapet, and before it had well lighted on the glacier, Lauener exclaimed, "Ich schaue den blauen Himmel!" (I see blue sky!) A thrill of astonishment and delight ran through our frames. Our enterprise had succeeded!'

The climbers had still to work along a narrow knife-edge of ice to the highest point. Here they were overtaken before reaching the summit by two chamois-hunters, who joined the party; one of them was the now well-known Christian Almer. Only ten feet below the top they found an iron flag planted by an Englishman in the same year, which must have been left by the Mr. Blackwell mentioned by Herr Studer. Mr. Wills concludes his narrative by an anticipation which has been fulfilled. In ordinary years the last slope is much easier than he found it, and the cornice is often conspicuous by its absence.

The Wetterhorn is now sometimes ascended by the route up the Rosenlaui Glacier, discovered by early explorers. It has also been reached from the Urbach Thal. In 1865 Mr. George, guided by C. Almer, struck out a variation on the ordinary route, useful in snowy seasons.* Mr. Morshead, guided by C. Almer, in 1868 † made a short cut up the north face of the mountain, avoiding the Enge, striking into the ordinary route

* Alpine Journal, vol. ii. p. 211. † Ibid. vol. iv. p. 154.

about an hour above the Gleckstein. The top was reached in 6 hrs. 5 mins. from Grindelwald. The grass-slopes traversed were too steep to descend easily or safely.

Mönch.

The Jungfrau's next neighbour, the Mönch, excited the ambition of early climbers. In 1812 Rudolf Meyer had thought of assaulting it after his successful ascent of the Jungfrau. But bad weather hindered his design, and the peak remained unconquered for many years. We do not feel called on to discuss seriously the story of a Countess Dora d'Istria, who pretends to have made the ascent in 1855.

In order to render intelligible the more recent ascents it is necessary to say a few words as to the form of the mountain. The broad front which faces the Wengern Alp is well known. This is limited by two ridges falling respectively towards the Jungfrau Joch and the Eiger Joch. Between these on the S. or Aletsch Glacier side, the peak is supported by a double buttress, one arm of which descends towards the Mönch Joch, the other runs nearly due S. in the direction of the Trugberg. The two ridges last mentioned unite a short distance below the top.

The first authentic ascent was that made on August 15, 1857, by Dr. Porges of Vienna, with Christian Almer and P. Bohren. They slept an hour below the Mönchjoch, and reached the top by the Mönchjoch arête after cutting 300 steps in ice at 3 P.M., having been 11 hrs. from their bivouac. The weather was unfavourable and the snow in bad condition, which may partly account for the enormous time consumed.* The difficulties encountered in the ascent induced the party to return by the S. or Trugberg ridge, and it was by this that the first English ascent, that of Mr. Macdonald, in 1863, and most subsequent ascents have been effected.

In 1862, Messrs. Moore and George made the first attempt on the N. face from the Wengern Alp.† In 1866 Herr E. Von Fellenberg accomplished this feat, reaching the summit on the third day, after sleeping two nights on the mountain.‡ In 1872 Mr. Moore, favoured by the presence of snow, made the same ascent in 9 hrs.,§ and in 1875 the Rev. F. T. Wethered,

* Studer, vol. i. p. 144. † Alpine Journal, vol. i. p. 85.

‡ Alpine Journal, vol. ii. p. 364; 'Jahrbuch d. S. A. C.,' 1868–69, pp. 394–409.

§ Alpine Journal, vol. vii. pp. 295–301.

having ascended from the Jungfrau Joch by the W. ridge, descended from the summit to the Scheideck. The Eiger Joch* ridge was the last to be made use of by climbers; but this too was in 1877 proved practicable by Mr. Foster.

Eiger.

The early history of the Eiger is obscure. As the only great peak of the Oberland which could be easily got at without penetrating the glacier fastnesses, it was likely to invite attack, and it seems to have done so. The following passage is quoted from a paper in the third volume of a periodical already referred to—the 'Alpina' of Count Ulysses von Salis: †—

'My guide told me various stories of fruitless, and in some instances disastrous, attempts to climb the Eiger. This beautiful peak, built up on a pyramidal rock base, no doubt attracts, through an apparent possibility of success, such attacks: but so far they have been fruitless. One would-be climber turns back at the half-way; another pays for his daring, far-pushed assault by a fatal fall; a third draws near to the goal, then fails to find any means of return, and the bones of the starved adventurer are perhaps still bleaching on some rocky shelf or buried under a snowy shroud. One of the most tragical stories (rather, however, to be treated as fabulous than authentic) was that of an Englishman who many years before had persisted in attempting to reach the highest point, had actually gained it, and had lighted upon the summit of the Eiger, either as a sign of his victory or a signal of distress, a beacon fire—and had been seen no more by human eyes. Who carried the wood for the burning was a question my guide could not answer.'

Doubtless there was some foundation for the legends of early attempts here referred to. But we are not, I think, called on to believe in the success of our mysterious countryman who disappeared, prophet-like, in a flame.

The Alpine Club had scarcely been formed when the Eiger was added to the list of conquered mountains. The successful climber, though an Englishman, did not belong to the Club, and no account of the ascent has appeared in England. It may, therefore, fitly conclude our record. The climber was a Mr. Harrington, an Irishman; the guides were the well-known Christian Almer and Peter Bohren, who about this time first stand forward as the leaders in every venturesome undertaking.

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* Alpine Journal, vol. vii. p. 325, and vol. viii. p. 341.

† 'Alpina,' vol. iii. p. 233.

The ascent was made on August 13, 1858, by the route still followed up the great buttress overhanging the Little Scheideck.*

A new route was struck out on July 14, 1871, by Miss Brevoort and Mr. Coolidge, guided by Christian Almer. Starting from the Little Scheideck, they followed the route of the Eiger Joch nearly to the base of the great snow-wall; then turned to the left, gained the crest of the snowy ridge so well seen from the mule-road, and followed it to the summit.† Only last year a third way was found up the Eiger. Mr. Foster followed its W. arête from the Eiger Joch to the top.‡ Attempts to reach the peak by the NE. ridge have hitherto been unsuccessful.§

Certain others of the lesser and outlying peaks had fallen before the date of our Club's formation. Local reports tell us of an ascent of the Altels at the close of the last century. In 1834 it was climbed by peasants from Frutigen, the year after by travellers. The Ritzlihorn and Dossenhorn were climbed soon after 1840, the Wildhorn in 1843, the Rinderhorn in 1855, and the Wildstrubel in 1856.‖ But of the giants of the chain, half were still untouched. Amongst these were its second peak, the Aletschhorn, the superb pyramid of the Bietschhorn, the brilliant Blümlis Alp, the Viescherhörner, the Nesthorn, and a crowd of secondary summits. All those named above are claimed by members of the English Club; but my plan confines me to peaks first climbed, or seriously attacked, before our publications commenced.

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* Studer, vol. i. p. 196. † Alpine Journal, vol. v. p. 277.
‡ Ibid. vol. viii. pp. 207–208. § Ibid. p. 232.
‖ Studer, 'Ueber Eis und Schnee.'

CHAPTER IV.

THE FORMATION OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

After this sketch of the rise of modern mountaineering, and of the circumstances which prepared the way for a Society of lovers of the Alps, I may pass to the incidents connected with the formation of the Alpine Club.

After the lapse of nearly twenty years it is not easy to recall to memory the exact sequence of a series of events of which but few precise records remain. Almost that number of years has passed away since the formation of the Alpine Club, and it has, consequently, been a matter of some difficulty to unravel the circumstances attending its birth. But the communications I have received from Messrs. William and Charles Edward Mathews, and also from Mr. Kennedy, and especially a valuable series of letters from the original and proposed members addressed to the latter, have much lightened my labours, and have, I believe, enabled me to construct an accurate history of its origin and foundation. Beside this, as I myself was, accidentally, one of those who aided in its formation and gave some help towards its assuming a definite shape, my own recollections have assisted me in narrating its history.

In reference to my own connection with the Club, it is necessary that I should make the following statements. I make no claim to the character of a mountaineer. When I first visited the Alps I was by no means so young as those who were beginning to ascend the Alpine giants. The habit of climbing difficult mountains and of forcing our way over new and arduous passes was not widely spread, and, indeed, expeditions which I then made and which are now considered as ordinary walks—such as the Tschingel pass—were at that time represented in the Guide Books as matters of no small difficulty, and involving a certain amount of danger. To attempt the ascent of Mont Blanc was considered almost evidence of insanity. In the sixth edition of Mr. Murray's 'Hand-book of Switzerland,' published in 1854, occur the following statements:—'The ascent of Mont Blanc is attempted by few—

those who are impelled by curiosity alone are hardly justified in risking the lives of the guides. It is a somewhat remarkable fact that a large proportion of those who have made the ascent have been persons of unsound mind. Those who have succeeded have, for the most part, advised no one to attempt it.' In the spring of 1856 I was the publisher of 'An Ascent of Mont Blanc by a new route and without guides,' by Messrs. Hudson and Kennedy. This circumstance brought me into communication with the latter distinguished mountaineer, and led to my making, in company with our fellow member Mr. Henry Trower, my first tour in Switzerland in the summer of that year. In like manner the fact of my being the publisher of 'Summer Months in the Alps,' by our President, Mr. Hinchliff, introduced me to another of the founders of our Club. My intimate acquaintance with Messrs. Kennedy and Hinchliff, and their knowledge of my great love of the Alps, led to their communicating with me as soon as the formation of the Club was taken in hand, and I thus became one of its founders.

To the various members of the Mathews family belongs unquestionably the honour of first putting forward the idea of the Club, and to Mr. Kennedy the merit of actively carrying that idea into execution. From a letter now before me, dated December 1, 1857, addressed to Mr. Kennedy by our member the Rev. F. J. A. Hort, it is clear that the idea of the formation of an Alpine Club was expressed by Mr. William Mathews at the end of 1856 or in the beginning of 1857. In this letter Mr. Hort says: 'Mr William Mathews wrote to me about such a club nearly a year ago. When he was here (St. Ippolyts, in Hertfordshire) he was going to write to you on the subject.'

But it was not until the summer and autumn of 1857 that the idea assumed a definite shape. Whether the idea was first revived at the seat of the late Mr. William Mathews, sen., The Leasowes, in Worcestershire—the well-known abode of the poet Shenstone—or in a conversation between the Mathews' and Mr. Kennedy during a walk down the Hasli Thal, on August 4, 1857, when the Mathews' were on their way to attempt the ascent of the Finsteraarhorn, is not quite clear. From a very circumstantial letter I have received from Mr. Kennedy I am inclined to believe that the latter was the case, but it is certain that this meeting between the Mathews' and Mr. Kennedy, whose acquaintance they then first made, led to the association of the latter with his newly-made friends in the formation of the Club.

It is clear, however, that the question was first seriously considered at a dinner at The Leasowes, on Friday, November 6, 1857. The party consisted of the late Mr. William Mathews, his son Mr. St. John Mathews, his nephews Mr. W. and Mr. C. E. Mathews, and Mr. Kennedy.

The ground was well prepared for an union of Alpine travellers: railways had rendered access to Switzerland quite easy; the number of mountaineers was becoming considerable; and public sympathy with mountaineering had been aroused by the publication of some accounts of adventurous ascents of mountains previously believed to be inaccessible. The time, therefore, seemed ripe for the formation of a society consisting of those who would be glad to avail themselves of an opportunity of meeting kindred spirits, of comparing adventures and planning new explorations.

The feelings which actuated the original promoters of an 'Alpine Club' are well expressed by Mr. Ball, in his preface to the first volume of 'Peaks, Passes and Glaciers.' He says: 'In the accidental intercourse of those who have been engaged in such expeditions, it has been perceived that the community of taste and feeling amongst those who in the life of the High Alps have shared the same enjoyments, the same labours, and the same dangers, constitutes a bond of sympathy stronger than many of those by which men are drawn into association; and early in the year 1858 it was resolved to give scope for the extension of this mutual feeling amongst all who have explored high mountain regions, by the formation of the Alpine Club. It was thought that many of those who have been engaged in similar undertakings would willingly avail themselves of occasional opportunities for meeting together, for communicating information as to past excursions, and for planning new achievements; and a hope was entertained that such an association might indirectly advance the general progress of knowledge, by directing the attention of men not professedly followers of science, to particular points in which their assistance may contribute to valuable results. The expectations of the founders of the Club have not been disappointed. It numbers at the present time (1858) nearly a hundred members, and it is hoped that the possession of a permanent place of meeting will materially further the objects which it has proposed to itself.'

At the dinner at The Leasowes the idea of the Club was fully discussed, and lists were made of men likely to join it, the majority of whom were Cambridge men, and indeed, to this day, Cambridge preponderates over Oxford, in the list of

members. Mr. Kennedy then returned to London, and communicated, either personally or by letter, with those whose names were included in the list. A small number of these declined to join the Club, but the following gentlemen gave their ready adhesion:—Messrs. Charles Ainslie, E. L. Ames, Eustace Anderson, Charles James Blomfield, E. T. Coleman, the Rev. J. Llewellyn Davies, the Rev. J. F. Hardy, Vaughan Hawkins, Robert B. Hayward, A. D. Dickens, T. W. Hinchliff, Robert Walters, the Rev. F. J. A. Hort, the Rev. J. B. (now Canon) Lightfoot, William Longman, W. R. Maynard, Francis Philips, E. B. Prest, the Rev. E. J. Shepherd, the Rev. Isaac Taylor, Henry Trower, the Rev. H. W. Watson, James B. S. Williams, Alfred Wills, C. W. Wilshere, George Valentine Yool, and Albert Smith, chiefly known by his amusing and interesting exhibition of the ascent of Mont Blanc at the Egyptian Hall, but who deserves a fuller recognition than he has usually received, as one of the earliest and most enthusiastic of the modern travellers in the Alps. His first visit to Switzerland was in 1838, thirteen years before he made the ascent of Mont Blanc.

The applications to those thus communicated with were accompanied by a printed circular, signed by Mr. Kennedy, stating the objects and proposed rules of the Club, and summoning those to whom it was addressed to a meeting at 'Ashley's Hotel,' Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, on Tuesday, December 22. A list of 'original members' formed part of the circular, but, as will be seen, the number of those included in that designation was afterwards much increased. These were Charles Ainslie, E. L. Ames, T. W. Hinchliff, E. S. Kennedy, William Longman, B. St. John Mathews, Charles Edward and William Mathews, the Rev. T. Shepherd, the Rev. Isaac Taylor, H. Trower, and Alfred Wills.

The meeting was held on December 22, with Mr. Kennedy in the chair, and the members present were Messrs. Edward Ames, Eustace Anderson, Blomfield, Cabell, E. T. Coleman, Vaughan Hawkins, T. W. Hinchliff, the Rev. E. J. Shepherd, R. Walters, and the Rev. W. H. Watson. One of the proposed rules was much canvassed, and had indeed been objected to by a large number of those who agreed to become members of the Club, some of them going so far as to make their membership depend on its withdrawal. It was that 'a candidate shall not be eligible unless he shall have ascended to the top of a mountain 13,000 feet in height.' Some thought other qualifications than mere climbing should be recognised, others held the height fixed excessive, or pointed out that

strollers up the Cima di Jazi would be admitted, while a man who had ascended a peak like the Gross Glockner, or had been driven back by bad weather after nearly reaching the required height, was excluded. Rule XII. was therefore modified, and agreed to in a form which, without strictly defining the necessary height or difficulty of a candidate's expeditions, or the nature of his other qualifications, leaves the Committee to decide whether they are sufficient, and to the general body of members his admission or rejection by ballot.

The Club was now established. The various candidates were elected, and summonses were issued for an adjourned meeting on January 19, at 'Ashley's Hotel.' The Club met there accordingly, the rules were revised for approval at the next meeting, and all who had previously joined or who were elected on that occasion were considered as original members of the Club.

The first dinner took place on February 3, at the 'Thatched House Tavern,' St. James' Street, but there were not more than ten or twelve members present. Notwithstanding the small attendance, however, it was a most important gathering, inasmuch as on that occasion the Club was definitely constituted. The office of President, indeed, was not then filled up, but the Vice-President and Committee were appointed. For the former office Mr. E. S. Kennedy was chosen, and the first Committee of the Club consisted of Messrs. Anderson, Coleman, Longman, Walters, and Wills, with Mr. Hinchliff as Honorary Secretary.

From this time forth, until the Club found a home in St. Martin's Place, the meetings were held at Mr. Hinchliff's Chambers, No. 3, Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn. At these rooms the Club met on March 31, when it was agreed that Rule VIII., by which it was provided that such members of the Club as should agree so to do should dine together once in every month during a certain portion of the year, should be altered. It was at first assumed that the Club would take the character rather of a social gathering of a few mountaineers than of a really important society, at the meetings of which papers were to be read, and contributions made to the geographical and topographical knowledge of mountain regions, and it certainly never entered into the mind of any of its founders to conceive that it would be the parent of fruitful children, each more prolific than itself. But it was quickly seen that it could not be limited to merely social ends, and it was accordingly decided at this meeting that the dinner-gatherings of the Club should be limited to two in the year, other

evening meetings being obviously contemplated. Since that time there has always been (with one exception, in 1871) a summer dinner, and the winter dinners have unfailingly attracted a large and increasing number of members and visitors. Long may they thus continue! for there is no institution connected with the Alpine Club which has more thoroughly maintained and promoted the social intimacy of its members.

Members now kept flocking in; new members were elected at this meeting of March 31, 1858, and the important step was taken of electing Mr. John Ball as President of the Club. Mr. Ball had long been known as a scientific observer; and although he had devoted himself more particularly to the Italian mountains, he possessed an extraordinary acquaintance with every portion of the Alpine chain, having crossed the main chain forty-eight times by thirty-two different passes, besides traversing nearly one hundred of the lateral passes. This extensive experience subsequently bore fruit in the 'Alpine Guide.'

Meetings were held at Mr. Hinchliff's Chambers, on May 12 and June 8, at the former of which the first summer dinner was fixed for June 15, at the 'Thatched House Tavern,' and at the latter the President, Mr. Ball, for the first time took the chair. So great was now the anxiety of mountaineers to join the Club, and attend the proposed dinner, that it was deemed necessary to pass a resolution allowing candidates approved by the Committee to 'dine with the Club on the same terms as members.' The dinner took place, as appointed; Mr. Ball was in the chair; the brothers Hermann and Robert Schlagintweit, the well-known Asiatic travellers, were present as guests, and this first convivial gathering of the Club passed off with great success.

The meetings were then suspended till the autumn, when, on November 27, a meeting took place at Mr. Hinchliff's Chambers, at which, in consequence of the illness of the President, the chair was taken by Mr. Kennedy. Twenty-one members were then elected, amongst whom—although unfortunately no longer a member of our Club—must be mentioned the distinguished name of Tyndall, who had commenced in 1856 the series of observations on which he based his valuable work on the Glaciers of the Alps, and whose many mountaineering exploits would alone have fully qualified him for election. Mr. Leslie Stephen, whose name has already been mentioned among the early mountaineers, was also elected at this meeting.

An important step was taken on this occasion, which, together with the publication of certain volumes of which an account will be given at the proper time, has served, more

than any other measure, to establish, both at home and abroad, the position and influence of the Club. At this meeting it was resolved 'that members should be invited to send to the Honorary Secretary a written account of any of their principal expeditions, with a view to the collection of an interesting set of such documents for the general information of the Club.' It does not seem that at this time there was any intention of reading these papers at Club meetings, or of printing them, but these two results were the necessary consequence of the resolution.

It will be unnecessary, and, indeed, it would be uninteresting even to members of the Club, to record every future meeting; but it is deserving of record that, at that of December 23, there were elected, among other members, Mr. John Murray, whose 'Handbook of Switzerland' had at that time contributed so much to our knowledge of the Alps that it was the admitted and almost sole authority on the subject, was elected a member of the Club, and that, on the same occasion, Mr. King, one of the first explorers of the southern side of the Pennine Alps, was also enrolled on the list of members.

On January 21, 1859, the members of the Club dined together at the 'Freemasons' Tavern,' and the next evening gathering was held on April 19, at the same place, as the monthly meetings had not then begun, and the Club had not then secured a definite habitation. On this occasion Mr. Wills took the chair, in consequence of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Ball. Up to this time the officers of the Club were all elected for one year only; but it was proposed on this occasion by Mr. Wills, and seconded by Mr. Hinchliff, that at the next general meeting it should be considered whether all, or any, of the officers should be re-eligible In accordance, however, with the existing rules it was decided that for the next year Mr. Ball should be the President, Mr. Kennedy Vice-President, Mr. Hinchliff Honorary Secretary, and that the Committee should consist of Mr. Anderson, Mr. Forster, Mr. Longman, Mr. Walters, and Mr. Wills.

Among the new members elected at this meeting were Professor Ramsay, the well-known geologist, and champion of the power of glaciers in the excavation of lake basins; and Mr. Tuckett, whose name is as well known to foreign as to English mountaineers.

The inconvenience of a shifting and uncertain home was now recognised, and the Club, which already numbered nearly eighty members, had become too numerous and important to hold its meetings at a tavern. It was, therefore con

sidered desirable that measures should be taken to secure rooms for its permanent occupation, and arrangements for this purpose were completed at the next meeting, on July 19, 1859, when it was decided that the rooms we now occupy should be taken for one year from the following Michaelmas as a tentative measure. The first honorary members, Professor James Forbes and Sir Roderick Murchison, were elected on this occasion.

The first meeting at the new rooms took place on November 15, when sixteen new members were added to the Club. The annual meeting was held on December 17, when, after the re-election of Mr. Ball as President, Mr. Kennedy as Vice-President, and Mr. Hinchliff as Honorary Secretary, it was agreed that all future members should pay an entrance-fee of one guinea, in addition to their annual subscription. This meeting is, moreover, particularly interesting, as it was then decided that regular monthly meetings of the Club should be held on the first Tuesday of every month from December to June, at which papers by members should be read.

After this account of the proceedings of the general body of the Club up to the end of 1859, it is necessary to record the appearance, during that year, of the first collected account of explorations made by its members. I refer to the volume entitled 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers.' The idea was originated by the ever-active President, Mr. Ball, in the following letter to Mr. Longman, dated November 25, 1858:—

'18 Park Street, Westminster, November 25, 1858.

'My dear Mr. Longman,—Though I hope to see you at the Alpine Club meeting on Saturday, I anticipate that opportunity by writing to make to you a suggestion which has lately occurred to me as worth your consideration. Among the crowd of tourists who leave England every year a good many visit places of interest in the Alps and elsewhere, that are nearly or quite unknown to the reading public. A fair proportion of them are capable of writing an intelligible and even interesting account of what they have done and seen, but with limited materials it is neither reasonable nor desirable that each should write *a book*. What would you say to bringing out an *annual volume*, made up of the contributions of travellers? If carefully selected, I should say that such a volume would be generally interesting, and secure of a large sale. Unlike the books of most travellers, the writers would have no occasion to *stuff* their articles with additional matter taken out of libraries; there would be room for small contributions to science, especially Natural History, but in that department especially I would advise you (if you should adopt the idea and undertake the *editing*) to use much stricter restraint than most book-writing travellers exercise over themselves. People of limited information are apt to record facts which are either already well known and familiar to men of science, or else wanting in the needful precision and accuracy. A little previous

communication with the writers might sometimes convert a loose statement into an useful fact.

'You can judge of the details of such a project. My own notion would be that illustrations from tolerably good sketches—when available—would much increase the interest of the book. I believe that few things worth having can in these days be obtained for nothing, and therefore suppose that the authors of accepted contributions should be fairly paid; but on this and other points you are the best judge.

'Very truly yours, 'J. BALL.

'W. Longman, Esq.'

The volume, edited by Mr. Ball himself, was published in the following spring. Its success was marvellous. Edition after edition was rapidly called for, and four editions, consisting in all of 2,500 copies, were printed before the end of the year. The following is a list of the contributions and their authors:—

The Passage of the Fenêtre de Salena. By A. Wills, M.A. A Day among the Séracs of the Glacier du Géant. By J. Tyndall, F.R.S. Notes of Excursions on the West Side of Mont Blanc, including the Col de Miage. By F. V. Hawkins, M.A. The Mountains of Bagnes. By W. Mathews, Jun., M.A. The Trift Pass. By T. W. Hinchliff, M.A. The Schwarz-Thor. By J. Ball, M.R.I.A., F.L.S. Ascent of the Dom. By the Rev. J. Ll. Davies, M.A. Ascents of the Fletschhorn and Allaleinhorn. By E. L. Ames, M.A. Ascent of the Schreckhorn. By. E. Anderson. Passage of the Strahleck. By J. Ball. Ascent of the Finster Aar Horn. By Rev. J. F. Hardy, B.D. Excursion from the Æggisch-Horn to the Col de la Jungfrau. By E. H. Bunbury, M.A. The Wildstrubel and Oldenhorn. By T. W. Hinchliff, M.A. A Night Adventure on the Bristenstock. By E. S. Kennedy, B.A. The Baths of Stachelberg and the Heights and Passes in the Vicinity. By R. W. E. Forster. The Old Glaciers of Switzerland and Wales. By A. C. Ramsay, F.R.S. Ascent of Ætna. By Rev. J. F. Hardy, B.D. Suggestions for Alpine Travellers. By J. Ball. Table of the Heights of the Chief Mountains in the Chain of the Alps.

In accordance with the resolution of December 17, 1859, the first paper was read to the Club at the meeting of February 17, 1860, when Mr. Ball was in the chair. It was by Mr. Ormsby, and described the first ascent of the Grivola from the side of Val Savaranche. This peculiarly picturesque mountain was, I will not say discovered, but first brought into notice by Mr. King, in his 'Italian Valleys of the Pennine Alps,' published in 1858. It does not appear that Mr. King, who visited Cogne in 1855, attempted to reach the summit; but his account of the mountain and of the view gained from the point to which he ascended—the ridge between the Pointe de Pousset and the peak named La Rossa, in height about 10,000 feet—had the effect of directing general attention to it. The only member of Mr. Ormsby's party who reached the true top was a chamois hunter named A.

Daynè. In 1861 M. Chamonin, the curé of Cogne, gained the summit from the opposite direction, by a comparatively easy route, which has since been generally followed. As Mr. Ball remarks,* 'The result of M. Chamonin's ascent has been to bring the ascent of one of the most remarkable peaks of the Alps within reach of all practised mountaineers.' It was not until 1876 that A. Daynè's ascent was repeated by the Rev. F. T. Wethered; and the beautiful northern snow crest, so conspicuous from the Val d'Aosta, scaled for the first time by Messrs. W. M. and R. Pendlebury.†

At the next meeting of the Club, on March 6, the President (Mr. Ball) called the attention of members of the Club to some of the least known mountain districts in Europe, and pointed out the best routes for reaching them. Among these the Carpathians, since visited by Mr. Leslie Stephen, and the mountains of the N.W. of Spain, still, despite the interesting notes Mr. Ormsby has given us concerning them, too much neglected, were mentioned, and particular attention was called to the then almost unknown Bernina group.‡ Mr. Longman gave the substance of information he had gathered about travelling in Iceland; and Mr. King and Mr. W. Mathews made some important remarks on the aneroid barometer, on the use of the thermometer in mountain excursions, and on the collection of plants, which were embodied in a circular issued to members of the Club.

Nothing further of importance took place during 1860. At the annual meeting on December 12—the third year of Mr. Ball's presidency having expired—Mr. Kennedy was appointed to fill his place, Mr. William Longman was chosen as Vice-President, and Mr. Hinchliff was re-elected as Hon. Secretary, but he shortly afterwards resigned, and Mr. Whately was chosen in his place.

During the following year, 1861, at the meeting of February 5, Mr. Tuckett gave an account of his ascent of the Aletschhorn in 1859, and, on April 4, Mr. Longman read a paper on the Exploration of Iceland, which has at length produced the result he particularly desired. At that time the N.W. Peninsula and the great snow-covered district of the S.E. of the island, called the Vatna Jökull, were almost unknown, and on the latter, indeed, no human foot had ever trodden beyond its outmost margin. It was a mysterious region, unknown to and dreaded by the natives, and too terrible for any

* 'Western Alps,' p. 152. † Alpine Journal, November, 1876.

‡ Mrs. Freshfield's 'Summer Tour in the Grisons' was published in 1862; and Mr. Kennedy's account of the first English ascent of Piz Bernina appeared in the same year.

traveller to contemplate its exploration without serious preparation, and the settled determination to face terrible hardships. No food could be obtained during the journey, and no horses could pass the icy and snowy desert.

The N.W. Peninsula was explored by Messrs. Holland and Shepherd in 1866, and, after an unsuccessful attempt in 1874, the Vatna Jökull was crossed by Mr. Watts in 1875, after twelve days of severe hardship and intense exertion. These three Icelandic travellers are all members of our Club.

At the meeting of June 4 Mr. Ball called attention to the want of a guide-book which should deal with the whole chain of the Alps, irrespective of political boundaries, and should be drawn up with especial reference to the requirements of mountaineers. The happy idea was carried out by the publication of his 'Guide to the Western Alps' in 1863, of the 'Central Alps' in the following year, and of the 'Eastern Alps' in 1868.

At the annual meeting, after the election of the usual officers, it was agreed that a second Vice-President should also be appointed, and Mr. Tyndall was selected for the post.

The year 1862 was uneventful as regards the official records of the Club, but was marked by an amount of success in the exploration of the more difficult summits and passes of the Alps, surpassing even the results of the three previous years. At the meeting on December 13 it was agreed to take the whole suite of rooms now occupied by the Club, at the rent of 100*l.* a year. The second series of 'Peaks and Passes' appeared this year, under the editorship of Mr. Kennedy, in two volumes.

The work began with an account of an extensive tour in little known parts of Iceland, by Messrs. Henderson and Shepherd, and Mr. Packe contributed a paper on the Pyrenees. Its pages vividly record the first ascents of some of the most famous summits of the Alps. Among the chapters are, the Schreckhorn, by Leslie Stephen; the Aletschhorn, by F. F. Tuckett; the Grand Paradis, by J. J. Cowell; the Grivola, by J. Ormsby; Mont Pelvoux, by E. Whymper; Monte Viso, by W. Mathews; the Lyskamm, by J. F. Hardy. Mr. Hardy also described an ascent of Piz Bernina, which he was the first Englishman to conquer. The volumes made public a great deal of information as to the new passes which had been discovered, amongst which will be found those constituting the now well-known High-level Route. Dr. Brinton called attention to the Gross Glockner, Mr. Tuckett to the Graian Alps, Mr. W. Mathews demolished, in a short article, Mont Iséran, a mountain which had existed (on maps) for over fifty years. The

book was freely illustrated with admirable woodcuts produced under the care of Mr. E. Whymper.

The most interesting event of the following year (1863) was the publication of the first number of the 'Alpine Journal,' which appeared on March 1. In his introductory address, the Editor, Mr. H. B. George, naturally made some remarks on the question, whether it was not then too late to begin the publication of a record of ascents of mountains—whether, in fact, all that were accessible had not already been ascended? It was not difficult to show that this was not the case.

This year is also memorable in Alpine history—and to us especially interesting—as the year in which the success of the English Alpine Club led to the birth of the first two of its now numerous children. At the meeting on May 5, the President announced the formation of a Swiss, and also of a Viennese Alpine Club. The first meeting relative to the former was held at Olten, on October 20, 1862.

In 1864 Mr. Reilly read a paper on his 'Explorations in the Range of Mont Blanc,' and exhibited his maps and surveys, the result of which was that, at the meeting on July 5, it was agreed that his map of Mont Blanc should be published at the expense of the Club.

In the month of May the Committee invited the members to send to the Club-rooms for exhibition any specimens of axes and ropes which they might think worthy of notice. A large number of axes being thus collected, an opportunity was afforded of carefully comparing their various qualities. A special committee, consisting of Mr. Kennedy (Chairman), Mr. Grove (Secretary), Messrs. Cowell, George, Hall, and Nichols, was appointed to ascertain by experiment the kind of rope best suited for Alpine purposes, and to consider in detail all the conditions to be fulfilled in the construction of an ice-axe. The report presented by this Committee was adopted by the Club, and ordered to be circulated among its members, and was also printed in the 'Alpine Journal' for September of that year.

[At this point Mr. Longman's narrative breaks off. He had reached the period when the 'Alpine Journal' became the record of the Club's doings. Although it was his intention to proceed further, and if these papers were published separately it might be desirable to do so, there seems no need here for a continuation which would be, in fact, an abridgment of the early volumes of the Journal, which have been lately reprinted, and can therefore be obtained in a complete set by those who wish to possess the history of the Club's progress.—EDITOR.]