

It is easy to descend from the top to the pilgrimage church of San Romolo, whence a paved path leads down directly to San Remo. A good walker will prefer to follow a terrace road which runs along the face of the hills to Ospidaletti; by turning off it above Signa, San Remo may be gained by that village. A still more charming descent is found by crossing the backbone of the hills and following the crest of the spur which ends in the Cape of Bordighera. The views looking westwards from the neighbourhood of that village are perhaps the most perfectly romantic on the Riviera, and, if the hotels were anywhere but in the ugly Marina behind the railway station, Bordighera would probably before this have become one of the most frequented health-resorts of the Mediterranean coast. The neighbouring scenery shares with that of Cannes two qualities wanting among the romantic glens of Mentone or the quieter hills of San Remo—spaciousness and variety in character. The bottom of a valley ringed by impending hills, even though it open on the sea, cannot—at least to my taste—compete as a place of long sojourn with a spot which presents landscapes at once bold and broad, varied in themselves and capable of infinite variety of expression, according to season and weather, and crowned by that most beautiful and suggestive of all natural objects a distant snowy chain.

THE CONGRESS OF ALPINE CLUBS AT PARIS IN 1878, AND FÊTE AT FONTAINEBLEAU.

At the congress of the French Alpine Club which took place at Grenoble in 1877, resolutions were passed 'that there should be but one international congress per annum, to be organised successively by the French, Italian, Swiss, and German clubs,' and 'that henceforth the congress should be held in the mountains and not in a town, an exception, however, being made in favour of Paris in 1878, on account of the Exhibition.' Probably the wisdom of the former of these resolutions is sufficiently apparent, and the writer of these lines, at any rate, has no cause to regret the exception that made Paris the centre of the festivities of the past year.

On September 6, 1878, the congress was opened, not at the Trocadero, as was originally intended, but at the palace of the Tuileries, when M. Adolphe Joanne, the esteemed president of the French club, delivered a carefully prepared and animated address upon the subject of 'Alpinism.' M. Talbert, V.P. of the French club, followed with an account of Alpine reunions at Lauteret and Interlaken. M. Le Colonel Goulier addressed the congress on the use of mountain barometers, and M. Charles Durier introduced an ingenious theory of the passage of the Alps by Hannibal.

On the 7th the congress was continued. It was addressed by M.

Schrader 'On the Alps as a Teacher of Youth,' and the speaker's remarks were received with great applause. M. Schrader is one of the most active and intelligent of French mountaineers, and has made many valuable contributions to the 'Annuaire.' A general discussion then ensued, in which M. Cesare Isaia, Mr. Budden, M. Freundler, president of the Swiss club, M. Binet-Hentsch, its vice-president, M. Talbert, and M. Durier took part, after which the congress broke up, the members, no doubt, being highly satisfied with the effective discharge of their duties, but looking forward, as I ventured to think, with a still keener interest to the various public and private hospitalities which awaited them during the ensuing week.

On September 10 the fête of Fontainebleau took place, and although a slight summer fog greeted the 200 excursionists who presented themselves at the Lyons railway station at 7.45 a.m., it was felt by everyone that a fine day was in store for them, and spirits rose accordingly. At the station at Fontainebleau every kind of vehicle known to the wildest imagination was found to be in waiting, and the joyous caravan set out in the direction of Franchard, where a great breakfast was spread under the trees. The sun broke out as the breakfast concluded, and the rest of the day was occupied, under a cloudless sky, in making different excursions in the charming forest; all parties being warned to be at the palace as soon after five as possible, as the banquet was fixed for six o'clock precisely. The first groups returned soon after four, and amused themselves by walking about the gardens, or by throwing pieces of bread to the carp, or by listening to the eminent Mounet-Sully—himself a member of the French club—who recited with great effect 'Les pauvres Gens' in the charming little theatre of the palace. At six o'clock the banquet was served in the Great Gallery of Henry II. This magnificent hall was placed at the disposal of the French president by the Minister of Public Works, as a mark of his interest in the objects of the meeting. The hall was illuminated by hundreds of candles, and the whole effect was magnificent. The great oriel windows looked out upon the gardens and the park, and a moon nearly full rose to brilliance as the dinner proceeded.

M. Joanne, of course, was in the chair; on his left were the presidents of the English and Swiss clubs, Senator Torelli, of the Italian club, and the Mayor of Fontainebleau. On his right were the prefect and sub-prefect of the Seine and Marne and the leading members of the central committee. The Italian club was in strong force, being represented by more than thirty of its members.

The menu was tempting and the dinner superbly served. The band of the 11th Hussars discoursed excellent music from the garden. M. Joanne, who was received with vehement applause, returned thanks to the sun for his brilliancy, to the Minister of Public Works for the use of the banquet hall, and to the administrative civil and military authorities for various services rendered by them, and then drank to the prosperity and increasing union of all European Alpine Clubs. M. Patinot, prefect of the department, returned thanks for the Government, and M. Meunier, the mayor, for the town.

The healths of England, Switzerland, and Italy, and of the presidents

of their respective clubs, were then proposed by M. Foucher de Careil, senator and one of the founders of the French club, and in an amusing speech, in which he described England as the school of all the liberties, he mentioned the right which each Englishman reserved to himself of breaking his own neck as one of the most dearly prized of the many blessings conferred by the Habeas Corpus.

The English president returned thanks for the European clubs, and received a most flattering and gratifying reception. The Swiss president (also very cordially received) returned thanks for Switzerland, and after a few more speeches the whole audience adjourned to the gardens, where a magnificent display of fireworks was expressly provided for them by the municipality of Fontainebleau. A hasty rush was made to the station, where the Marseilles train was stopped for our accommodation, and with noise and laughter we searched for our carriages under the severe eyes of three dignified Arab chiefs, *en route* from Algiers to Paris, who appeared to regard the whole of our proceedings with unmingled awe.

Too great praise cannot be given to the committee of the French club for the excellence of all the arrangements for the convenience and comfort of their members and their guests. Every contingency was foreseen, and there was no hitch in the proceedings from the beginning to the end.

The congress and the fête appear to have excited considerable interest outside the usual Alpine circles.

Interesting accounts of the proceedings appeared in the 'XIX^{me} Siècle,' in the 'Républicain,' in 'La République française,' and in other papers, and a cartoon of the banquet scene, and sketches of the principal points of interest in the forest of Fontainebleau, appeared in the 'Illustration.'

So far I have set down simply the official proceedings in connection with the congress and the fête; but the writer of these lines desires to bear his testimony to the unvarying courtesy, the profuse hospitality, the sympathetic kindness, which the representative of the English club received at the hands of his French brethren.

Shall that charming little dinner at M. Joanne's be forgotten, over which Madame Joanne so gracefully presided, after which a merry party smoked innumerable cigars in the balcony overlooking the gay gardens of the Luxembourg? or that sumptuous banquet of eighteen covers at Vefours which the Marquis de Turenne gave to the more prominent members of the various clubs, and over which he presided with such unaffected simplicity and courtesy? or that genial breakfast in the Quartier Latin, presided over by the accomplished René Fourret, of the firm of Hachette and Co.? or shall I recall the railway journeys in the sewers, or the wanderings in the catacombs, under the guidance of the gentle M. Lemercier, or the many other places of public interest to which our kind friends procured us so ready an access?

Well, there are no hosts more charming than cultivated Frenchmen; such courtesies as I received, whilst I fear they are difficult to repay, can never be forgotten, and I am glad to take this opportunity of holding out to the many friends I made in Paris a grateful and a kindly hand.

C. E. M.