

## ALPINE NOTES.

**THE ORTLER.**—Two ascents of this peak deserving of record have been brought under our notice. In August 1894 Mr. E. Aleister Crowley, with the guides Michael Ortler and J. J. Thöni, of Trafoi, traversed the peak, ascending by the Hintere Grat and descending over Stickle Pleiss. Mr. Crowley also accomplished a variation of the Hintere Grat route, by the rock-ridge at the base of the Grat.

Mr. Gilson also made an interesting and possibly new expedition, of which the following is his account :—

‘On September 2, 1893, Mr. R. C. Gilson, the Rev. E. H. Kempson, and Mr. J. P. Gilson left Trafoi about 2.30 A.M., and reached the Bergl hut at daybreak after a steamy climb through the pine wood above the Three Holy Springs. Some 300 ft. above the hut begins a rock arête, extending upwards in a south-easterly direction, and forming the western wall of the steep ice gully called “Pleiss” by Mr. Tuckett,\* and marked “Stickle Pleiss” in Hoffmann’s map. This ridge terminates in the pointed Pleisshorn—a prominent object from the Stelvio road—which is separated from the main mass of the Ortler by a narrow snow saddle forming the head of the gully already mentioned. The summit of the Pleisshorn (3,154 m.) is only a few feet higher than the saddle, but its western side is a tremendous precipice, rising sheer from the lower part of the Unter-Ortler glacier. This circumstance, together with the sharpness of the rock rib and of its termination, gives it from some points of view the appearance of a distinct and not inconsiderable peak. The saddle gives easy access to the comparatively flat summit snow-fields of the Ortler, the crown of which (about 400 m. higher) lies 2 kilomètres to the E.S.E. The difficulty in the early ascents of the Ortler from Trafoi was (see Tuckett’s paper) the Pleiss gully, because of its steepness (45° near the top), and because of falling stones. Tuckett avoided it in 1864 by striking to the left, and making his way up over broken ground to the Tabaretta ridge. The party named above avoided it in ascending by keeping to the right and following the rock rib to the top. The guides at Franzenshöhe declared that the arête “failed,” and could not be used as a ladder to the Ortlerspitze, but they were unable to indicate either the point or nature of such failure. As a matter of fact no particular difficulties were encountered, though the climb is decidedly interesting, and about 3,500 ft. of elevation are gained by the almost continuous use of hands as well as feet. A snow-storm coming on, the passage of the upper névé was abandoned, and the party cut steps down the Pleiss—a tedious proceeding, and not altogether safe, though the stones seem to fall mostly on the E. side of the couloir. It would doubtless have been better to return down the arête. This route to the highest point in the Eastern Alps is strongly recommended as more interesting and not necessarily much longer than Tuckett’s, while it is infinitely preferable to the crowd-tramped path from Sulden.’

\* *Alpine Journal*, vol. i. p. 409.

We have received numerous complaints of inefficiency in respect of the Ortler guides, and in particular it is alleged against them that they are in the habit of roping in parties of two (one traveller and one guide) when about to cross *névé*. It is stated that they assert that they do so in accordance with instructions given to them by superior authority. We find this hard to believe, for no more pernicious practice, especially for men otherwise inefficient, can be conceived. In the Ortler district, as in the Pennines, there are to be found a few first-rate guides, though the majority, there as elsewhere, are doubtless a feeble lot. Travellers who may visit the Ortler district in the coming season will perhaps do well to inquire what foundation, if any, there may be for the statements of certain Ortler guides to which reference has been made above.

THE MÖNCH IN 1894.—In the early summer of 1894 two expeditions were made up this peak, which deserve to be chronicled in these pages. We are indebted for the following details to Herr Andreas Fischer, of Grindelwald, who in one case derives his information from one of the guides of the party, in the other from his own personal experience. On June 29 Herr A. Hügli, a law student from Bern, with the two Johann Kaufmanns (uncle and nephew), of Grindelwald, as guides, succeeded in climbing the Mönch from the Wengern Alp, a route which is believed not to have been accomplished since it was done in September 1886 by Messrs. Jose and W. Fairbanks's party.\* Starting from the Guggi Club hut about 3 A.M., the 1894 party at 7.30 attained the base of the great bulging ice wall which has for many years proved such a great obstacle. Part of this wall was ascended by means of a ladder left here in 1893 by some Lauterbrunnen guides on an unsuccessful attempt. Above the ladder the difficulties increased, and more than four hours' hard step-cutting was required to gain the upper snow slopes. The aid of the ladder was found to be absolutely necessary, and the one found was left for the benefit of future parties. No other difficulties were encountered. The summit was attained at 3 P.M., and Grindelwald, *via* the Mönchjoch, that night at 10 P.M.

On July 8 Herr Fischer and Johann Kaufmann the younger left the Guggi Club hut at 3 A.M., and forced their way with considerable difficulty to the top of the Jungfrauoch, which had not been reached from this side for several years. Some time was lost on the way, as neither member of the party had ever been on this expedition, and they were in a thick fog up to the pass. This was gained at 11 A.M., and soon bright sunshine drove away the mists. The two adventurers then followed the crest of the S.W. arête of the Mönch to the top of that peak. It is believed that this had never been previously done, as it is usual to gain that ridge from the S., some way above the pass, and to follow the snow and ice slopes on the S. face of the S.W. ridge.

'We followed the ridge to the Mönch without ever going down to the S. Its highest point was gained at 1.30 P.M. Here we looked

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\* *Alpine Journal*, vol. xiii. pp. 128-9.

down into a steep cleft which separated us from the Mönch. We had to descend about 150 ft. over bad rocks covered with ice, and at 2.15 p.m. began to climb the S.W. ridge of the Mönch. For  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr. the way lay over snow and ice and was very easy. Then came a steep wall of bare rocks, which looked doubtful. As far as we could see they can be climbed, but we were afraid that higher up we might be cut off, and so we traversed a steep and broad ice slope (close to the rocks) on the S. face of the mountain. The ice was covered by a mass of treacherous snow, two feet deep, which had to be swept away before a safe step could be cut. This traverse took 2 hrs. Then we got to some smooth slabs of rock, now and then half hidden in snow and thin ice. They were solid enough, but did not offer any good handhold. Over these rocks we climbed up to the ridge again. This was the most difficult part of the ascent: all the rest was easier. The upper part of the arête is nowhere very narrow, and some gendarmes are easily avoided.' The weather then broke again. Mist, a cold S.W. wind, and a snow storm encompassed the party when nearing the top, gained at 7.30 p.m. only. Later it became clearer. The col between the Mönch and the Trugberg was reached at 9 p.m., and the Bergli hut at 11.30 p.m. Kaufmann states that this is the hardest and longest expedition he has ever made, while Herr Fischer is of opinion that, with the exception of some bits on the Ecrins and the Meije (not on the ordinary line of ascent), he has never done a more difficult bit of climbing. These expressions suffice to show the true nature of the climb, and the two comrades are to be heartily congratulated on their success.

A RAILWAY UP THE MEIJE.—The Meije has shared the fate of the Matterhorn, Jungfrau, and Eiger in so far as a scheme for making a railway up it has recently been put before the public. It is, however, to be devoutly hoped that purely financial considerations, if none other, will long delay the carrying out of all these projects. Meanwhile it is curious to study the daring plans propounded by men of standing in their profession, and the following details of the Meije railway (taken from 'Le Dauphiné,' a Grenoble newspaper, of November 11, 1894, p. 259) have in any case a real historical value. It is to the brains of Dr. Prompt, of Bourg d'Oisans, and his brother, now director of the Egyptian railways, that we owe the first idea of this railway. The line is to start from La Grave, and will be  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles long. It is prudently stipulated that, as the trains are to run in winter as well as in summer, the line will be entirely subterranean. The main station will be opposite La Grave, on the left bank of the Romanche. Hence a funicular railway (maximum incline 25) is to run south-west in  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the beautiful little lake of Puy Vachier, on the shores of which will stand the first station. The line will then bend south-east, and another great tunnel of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles will pierce through the Peyrou d'Amont and a bit of the ridge of the Râteau in order to gain the Brèche de la Meije, where will be the second station, also in the open, and supplemented by a very superior kind of 'Refuge.' From this point the third and last section of the great tunnel will pierce the Meije itself, making a zigzag to the east

towards the Pic Central, then turning north, and finally west, and ending in an underground station. This third station is to be 60 feet or 70 feet in vertical height below the summit of the Grand Pic, and a lift will work from the end of the tunnel to the entrance hall of the 'Hôtel Observatoire,' which will crown the highest point. The tunnel will have a diameter of 11 feet, and from the lake onwards the trains will be drawn up by steam engines. The total cost of the line, including the stations, hotel, furniture, rolling stock, &c., is estimated at only 200,000*l.*, half of which is to pay for the long tunnel in its three sections. The price of a ticket from La Grave and back is to be only 1*l.* One can scarcely take this precious scheme seriously; but it is only fair to quote the words in which the projectors express the objects they have in view:—'M. le Dr. Prompt fait remarquer que la pureté extrême de l'air permettra de faire sur la Meije des observations astronomiques et météorologiques d'une précision incomparable, et que le traitement de la phtisie pourrait y obtenir des cures très sérieuses.' It does not appear whether either of the MM. Prompt has ever been on the summit of the Meije. Those who have will, however, try to imagine the 'Hôtel Observatoire' filled with guests—say, on January 1—with a snow storm raging furiously around, and will be tempted to believe that, though the consumptive patients may get cured in that fine air, yet their nerves will be severely tried by a stay at this new 'séjour d'hiver,' and that they will return to their homes no longer sick in body, but very sick in mind indeed.

W. A. B. COOLIDGE.

UP THE JUNGFRAU IN A BALLOON.—It seems scarcely credible that a fresh degradation is in store for the unhappy Jungfrau. Yet the Swiss papers announce that such is the case. A company, with a capital of 40,000*l.*, is about to be formed for the purpose of acquiring a huge balloon. This is to be fastened to some point near the Kleine Scheidegg by a chain of 1½ mile in length, and by means of power derived from the Lütschine stream is to be thrust through the air to a height of about 325 feet above the summit of the Jungfrau. It is to carry a car capable of holding fifty persons, and the whole journey and back is to be done in one hour. The promoters of this scheme count, it is said, on a net profit of 4,000*l.* per annum. Thus in the course of a few years it will be possible to ascend the Jungfrau several times a day, either by balloon or by rail. A 'combined ticket,' no doubt, will be issued.

THE NOMENCLATURE OF THE N. RIDGE OF THE TOUR DU GRAND ST. PIERRE.—In the 'Rivista Mensile del C.A.I.' for June 1894, pp. 179-188, there appeared a very complimentary article on our Climbers' Guide for the Cogne Mountains, by our friend Signor G. Bobba, the Italian climber whose writings on the Grand Paradis district are so well known. It is very gratifying to us to find that our book has met with so warm a reception at his hands, but, whilst we gladly accept certain corrections which he has pointed out, we are constrained to call attention to several errors into which he has himself fallen.

His criticisms all relate to the comparatively little-known ridge which runs due N. from the Tour du Grand St. Pierre. This ridge we

may, for convenience sake, divide into two parts, that to the S. of, and that to the N. of, the pass known as the Coupé de Monei.

We would premise that the heights on Signor Paganini's map are very difficult to decipher, so much so that in several cases Signor Bobba and ourselves read them differently. This point, though of no great importance, will serve to explain why we do not always quote heights. Our remarks refer to the position of the peaks in question rather than to their altitudes.

1. *Ridge between the St. Pierre and the Coupé de Monei.*—(i.) The first peak N. of the St. Pierre is the double-headed *Tour St. André*. The more southerly summit, 3,639 m., P.'s map, still remains unclimbed as far as Signor Bobba's knowledge goes (p. 181). Yet it is clear that Dr. Walther Schultze on August 16, 1890, climbed over it on his way from the snowy depression between the St. Pierre and the St. André (which might fitly be called the *Col du Grand St. Pierre*) to the more northerly summit, 3,650 m., of the St. André.\*

(ii.) Next comes the snowy dome marked 3,602 m. on P.'s map, who reached on August 10, 1891, by Messrs. Stallard and Ormerod,† who speak of it as 'a minor snow hump.'

(iii.) Lastly comes the *Tour St. Ours*, to which Signor Bobba assigns the figures 3,630 m. of the Italian Government map and 3,616 m. of P.'s map. But in our opinion it seems certain that 3,630 m. really applies to the St. André, while we are quite unable to find 3,616 m. on P.'s map.

2. *Ridge N. of the Coupé de Monei.*—(i.) The first summit is the two-headed *Patri*, about which we are somewhat in the wrong. We were right, indeed, in stating (p. 67 of our book) that it is the highest point in the ridge N. of the Coupé, and also in saying that it was the peak ascended in 1881 by the Signori Sella, though we should have pointed out that this party climbed the more southerly and higher of the two heads only, the N. head being still apparently unclimbed. The *Patri* occupies the position assigned on the Italian map to the *Punta Cisseta*, 3,423 m., not, as Signor Bobba maintains, that of the point 3,583 m., which is obviously the St. Ours. We cannot make out the height on P.'s map, though it may be 3,583 m., as stated by Signor Bobba.

Our error thus consists in the facts that we cannot read P.'s map, and that we omitted to state that the *Patri* has two heads.

(ii.) N. of this is the *Colle Patri*, rightly described in our book (p. 66) as having been reached from the W. by Signor Bobba in 1890.

(iii.) N. of this is the peak marked 3,417 m. on P.'s map, confounded by us with the true *Patri*, and called by us (p. 65) *Punta Valleretta*. This point we, adopting Signor Bobba's nomenclature, intend to call in future editions *Punta Cisseta*.

(iv.) N. of this is the *Colle Cisseta*, wrongly called by us (p. 65) *Col de Vermiana*. Signor Bobba is also in error as to this pass, probably owing to our mistake. It was first reached from the N. ridge of the peak here called *P. Cisseta*, by Messrs. Yeld and Trundle, in 1882, and the E. side descended to the *Valeille*.

\* *Mittheilungen d. D. u. Oc. A. V.* 1890, p. 218, 1891, p. 156.

† *Alpine Journal*, vol. xvi. p. 51.

(v.) N. again of this is the *Punta Valletta*, with two heads. This peak, we regret to say, was entirely overlooked by us in our book. It was first ascended by Signori Bobba and Gadin in 1893, as narrated in Signor Bobba's oft-cited article.

(vi.) N. of this is the *Colle Vermiana* (3,100 m., P.'s map), known to hunters only.

As to the portion of the ridge still further N., we and our book are in agreement with Signor Bobba.

G. YELD.

W. A. B. COOLIDGE.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE HIGH PASSES ROUND ZERMATT.—This most interesting subject seems as yet to have scarcely attracted the attention it deserves. Much information relating to the local traditions is to be found in the works of Engelhardt, Fröbel, Forbes, &c., while some particulars regarding the earliest authenticated passages of the great cols near Zermatt are given in the Zermatt section of Mr. Coolidge's 'Swiss Travel and Swiss Guide Books.' Mr. Ball's most valuable notes on the subject in his 'Schwarzthor' paper\* are well known. The following additional details rest on the information gathered by him during the same visit to Zermatt in 1845, and are here reproduced from his diary under date of August 11, 1845. They are specially worth consideration, as they may be taken to represent the local traditions current at Zermatt before the rush of travellers had begun. Mr. Ball is speaking of the Jung huts on the pass of that name:—

'The view of the Saas Grat and Rosa chain magnificent. The idea then first occurred to me of crossing the Lys Kamm [that is, no doubt, the Schwarzthor crossed soon after by him], as I saw that there was a pass, level at the top, and the glacier at the upper part not much broken. The question was whether the pass would lead to Gressonay and be descendible on the S. side. Braunschén [Brantschen] did not hesitate to assert that it certainly was the pass to Gressonay, and that he had heard that it had been used by the Gressonayers fifty or sixty years ago. I kept this in mind. I may as well here note down some of the other *on dits* as to passes which I inquired for.

'1. *From Zermatt to the Einfisch Thal, between the Weisshorn and the Triflhorn or Rothehorn.*—Braunschén went to Täsch to consult an old man, formerly a great hunter, supposed to know more of the mountains than any one else. He said that up to forty years ago there was a passage across the chain, but that it had been stopped up by the glacier; that a former Pfarrer of Täsch had found papers 400 years old in which this pass was spoken of as a usual one at that time. From what I afterwards saw of the head of the Turtman Thal I should suppose it possible to attain the ridge, after which there would be a considerable ice field *nearly level* between the inner and outer ridge of the Weisshorn. How the descent may be I cannot tell.

'2. *Between the Higher Gabelhorn [these words are inserted in the MS. for 'Dent Blanche,' erased] and the Triflhorn into the Eringer Thal.*—The tradition is that mules formerly passed this way, though if

\* *Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers*, 1st series, pp. 158-60.

the glaciers were so much easier I do not see why they should not cross the Col d'Erin; perhaps the rocks were too steep. Braunschen tells of a deaf and dumb chamois hunter who, a few years since, reached the top from Zermatt, and said (how?) that he had there found the remains of a ladder, which seemed to have been used in some steep part of the descent.

'3. *The Saas Grat*.—This, it seems, is not impracticable, but the glacier is very much broken towards Saas. Two or three Englishmen started with guides. They reached the top, and were preparing to descend, when clouds came on; they returned, but were forced to spend the night on the glacier, and were laid up in bed at Täsch for three days afterwards.\*

'4. *The Weiss Thor*.—Braunschen was one of thirteen who went and returned about ten years ago. Damatter, as I understood, passed six or seven years ago. Since that he and Braunschen have both been to the top with tourists, but the descent has appeared impracticable. A wicked hunter (*böser Jäger*) is said to have found a new way, easier, last year.'

[It must be remembered that in 1845 the Theodul and the Col d'Hérens only were known to have been certainly traversed, the latter quite recently.† The first of the passes mentioned by Mr. Ball is clearly the *Biesjoch*, of which the first authentic traverse seems to date from 1862. The second is evidently the *Triftjoch*, for the curé of Zermatt went up to it in 1849, and found the remains of the ladder.‡ The third is certainly the *Allalin Pass*, to which all the old references as to this range undoubtedly point; it was crossed in 1847 by Professor Ulrich's party, the first travellers, no doubt. Mr. Malkin in 1843 went to the top of the Weissthor. To the references relating to that pass in 'Swiss Travel,' p. 318, add 'Alpine Journal,' xv. pp. 147-50.]

The following extracts show how Mr. Ball's intention of crossing the Schwarzthor gradually ripened. Under August 15 he writes: 'After the work [certain observations on the Findelen Glacier] was done I proposed to cross the Riffel, in order to gain the fine sunset view which we might expect, as the day was clear, but mainly for the sake of studying the col over the Lys Kamm.' A little below he adds: 'We gained the point N.E. of the Riffelhorn, about the same height, whence the view of Monte Rosa is even finer. I examined the pass very carefully, and saw that if it were possible to pass the point where two streams unite, one from the E. ridge of the Breithorn, the other from the Lys Kamm, and where two systems of great crevasses meet, the remaining part of the way would probably offer no serious obstacle. I was, therefore, determined to make the attempt, as, if obliged to return, the obstacle would occur so early as to cause no future inconvenience.' The next day, August 16, was spent by Mr. Ball at Zermatt, making preparations for his expedition. 'In the evening Damatter came to pay me a visit and talk of the passage. He showed far more interest and enthusiasm than he had hitherto done, chiefly, to be sure, because

\* [One of the party was named Shuttleworth. See *Berg- und Gletscherfahrten*, 2nd series, p. 99.]

† See *Swiss Travel*, pp. 288-9.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 295.

of the grand smuggling opportunities which the pass, if practicable, would present. He said that if he were "gesund" he would be glad to go with me gratis! He gave me several details as to the Weiss Thor, which made it appear a less serious undertaking, if the glacier were practicable at the verge of the precipice, than I had supposed. He had, like Braunschen, no doubt as to my pass leading to Gressonay, and that the descent on the Italian side would be easy. I thought the same, because I concluded that it would lead to Zumstein's route by the Hohelicht.' [Over the last words is written in a later hand, 'A great mistake of mine.'] As is well known to Alpine readers, Mr. Ball on August 18 successfully achieved his long-planned pass, which led him, however, to the Ayas valley, and not to Gressonay, in the Lys valley, as he had anticipated. His thrilling narrative of his adventures was printed in the first series of 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers,' pp. 162-92. A somewhat different version, with a few very interesting additional details, is given in his diary, and is continued on some loose sheets of paper (twenty-four sides of letter-paper). This may be the original version prepared for translation into French ('Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers,' p. 192). In the diary, too, are the original pen-and-ink sketches of the well-known illustrations published with his paper in 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers.'

THE CAUCASUS.—Mr. Douglas Freshfield has determined to alter the form of his proposed contribution to Caucasian literature. Owing to the difficulty with regard to maps, he has abandoned for the present the publication of a 'Climbers' Guide,' and will in its place bring out an illustrated work, in two large volumes, with over seventy photographs (from views chiefly by Signor V. Sella, with others by Mons. de Déchy, Mr. Woolley, and Mr. Donkin), and 100 views in the text, and a complete new five-verst map of the Central Caucasus, based on the most recent surveys and explorations. The text will contain a brief summary of the expeditions of English mountaineers, and a narrative of the author's travels and adventures in his two last visits to the chain. The book will be called 'The Exploration of the Caucasus,' and will be published in the winter. The first edition will be limited in number. Copies may be ordered of the publisher, Mr. Edward Arnold, 37 Bedford Street, Covent Garden, W.C.

SCHWARZHORN (LOETSCHTHAL).—With reference to the ascent of this peak recorded on page 347 of the present volume, Mr. Paul Montandon (S.A.C.) writes as follows:—

'Amongst the new expeditions in 1894 in the Bernese Oberland, the "Alpine Journal," No. 127, mentions an ascent of the Schwarzhorn (3,132 m.) in the Bietschhorn range, made on July 26, 1894, by Messrs. Benecke and Cohen from the top of the Schafberg and the S. rocks. As this peak was ascended by Mr. René Koenig, my wife and me (without guides), on August 31, 1892, direct from the Schafberg Hut with descent to the Bietschgletscher and valley, Messrs. Benecke and Cohen's expedition is not, strictly speaking, a new one. We did not know at that time that the peak had never been climbed, at least by tourists, and did not therefore put any descriptive notice into the Swiss "Jahrbuch."

'From the Schafberg Hut we went towards Point 2,595 m., ascended

the snow-fields marked on the Federal Map, crossed the bergschrund, and climbed in a westerly direction the easy but steep and not uninteresting rock wall S. of 2,595. We then followed the upper snowy or icy border of the rocks where they plunge into the upper snowy part of the mountain, and reached the north-western snow arête and, by means of it, the summit in about 3 hrs. easy walking from the hut. The view of the Bietschhorn is very impressive. The descent was made quite easily to the Bietschgletscher and into the Bietschthal.'

It would appear, therefore, that Mr. Montandon's party traversed the W. peak of the Schwarzhorn (*i.e.* the peak marked 3,132 m.) from N. to S., while the 1894 party climbed the E. peak from the S., and then followed the ridge over the W. peak into the Wilerjoch, so that the two routes cross one another pretty well at right angles. The E. peak is practically the same height as the other, and stands just N. of the letter h in the word 'Schwarzhorn' on the S. map.

NEW ROUTES UP THE GRANDE CASSE AND THE MONT POURRI.—Our new contemporary, the 'Revue Alpine,' of Lyons, gives some details of new routes up these peaks, the two loftiest in the Tarentaise, or Western Graian Alps. Both were made by Lieut. Messimy, with the guide Blanc (*dit le Greffier*), of Bonneval, in the course of last August. On August 23\* the party went from Entre Deux Eaux towards the Col de la Vanoise by the path till it becomes level, after the first steep ascent. Then they bore N., and by a succession of gullies reached a height of 3,200 m., thus gaining a point below the depression between the two summits, 3,806 and 3,861, of the Grande Casse. Hence they mounted by the right bank of a small torrent which flows from the glacier, descending from the afore-said depression to the point marked 2,230 m. in the Leisse valley. The terraces of rock offered no difficulty, save one wall of about 200 ft. in height, which was scaled by the third gully from the right bank of the torrent. In this way the glacier, then the depression, was gained, the highest point being soon attained by the usual narrow snow ridge in about 7 hrs. from the starting point. The party descended by the same route, and reached Tignes that night by way of the Col de la Leisse. As might have been expected, they state that the ascent would be very dangerous, because of snow avalanches, if all the snow on the S.E. face had not disappeared. As it was, there were many stone avalanches. An attempt to climb direct up the whole of the great S.E. rocky face, made by the same party on August 22, was not successful.

On August 26 the same climbers started † from the Granges Martin, N.W. of the hamlet of Brévieres, below Tignes, crossed two narrow arms of the Savine Glacier, and gained that of La Gurre. Stone avalanches down the very steep S.E. face of the Pourri prevented them from attaining the summit direct by that route. So they bore to the left and gained the great S. arête, by which they attained the top by a route taken several times previously. The greater part of this route had been already taken, but the previous party did not reach

\* *Revue Alpine*, vol. i. pp. 52-3.

† *Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 83-4.

the summit of the peak, and descended from a more southerly point on the S. arête to the La Gurre Glacier.

SPRING ASCENTS IN THE BERNESE OBERLAND.—Though the winter of 1894–5 was very severe in this district, the spring has been so beautiful and warm that the vast mass of snow has very quickly melted away, so that in the second half of April two of the high peaks have been ascended by English climbers. On April 21 Mr. Gaul, with Simon and H. Zurfluh, of Meiringen, climbed the *Wetterhorn* from Rosenlauri, taking 14 hrs. to the summit, as the snow was in very bad condition. This was the first ascent of the season; in 1894 the same mountain was not attained until June 5. On April 24 Mr. Douglas, with Christian Jossi and Peter Brawand, of Grindelwald, succeeded in ascending the *Jungfrau* from the Bergli Club hut. The weather was very unfavourable, and on the last slope many steps had to be cut in hard ice, so that much time was lost there, while elsewhere the snow was covered by a thin frozen crust only, thus causing great fatigue. Two years ago the *Jungfrau* was gained on April 2 (Easter Day), in very fine weather, but for obvious reasons spring ascents are but few and far between.

THE PROPOSED RAILWAY UP THE JUNGFRAU.—The following particulars as to this line are taken from the February number of the 'Echo des Alpes,' p. 53 *sqq.* From the Little Scheidegg the railway is to run for  $1\frac{1}{4}$  mile above ground to the foot of the great W. arête of the Eiger, where will be the first station—*Eigergletscher*. Hence the line burrows into the mountain by a regular slope of 26 per cent., rounds the top of the Eiger, passing under the Mittellegi glacier, and reaches the *Eiger* station, situated at a height of 3,221 m. on the E. flank of the peak, above the Grindelwald Viescher Firn, and about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from the Bergli Club hut. This station is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from that first named. It next ascends, by a slope of 15 per cent., beneath the arête joining the Eiger to the Mönch, passes immediately under (1,640 ft. below) the summit of the latter mountain, and soon after reaches the third station—*Mönch* (3,623 m.),  $1\frac{1}{4}$  mile from the Eiger station. A descent leads down towards the *Jungfrau* joch, and, after passing 246 ft. below the crest of that pass, the line again mounts, by a slope of 26 per cent. under the E. arête of the *Jungfrau*, till in about 2 miles it bears round to the Hochfirn, on the W. side of the peak, and then reaches the *Jungfrau* station (4,100 m.), 217 ft. below the summit of the peak, which is gained by means of a lift. We are glad to note that the Swiss Alpine Club does not seem to have committed itself to a definite approval of this scheme. It has simply stated, in reply to a question, that in its opinion travellers will suffer no inconvenience from a stay on the summit, even though they have attained it without any effort on their part. This opinion, however, sounds rather odd, and one would like to know on what grounds it was arrived at.

THE ORIGIN OF THE GRIMSEL HOSPICE.—It seems to be commonly believed (*e.g.* by Mr. Ball, in his 'Alpine Guide,' vol. ii. p. 80) that the Grimsel Hospice was originally a religious foundation. In that case it would be like the hospices on the two St. Bernards, the Simplon,

St. Gotthard, Lukmanier, &c. But it is often forgotten that there were also hospices which were not religious foundations—*e.g.* All' Acqua, Schwarenbach, &c.—and it is to this class that the Grimsel Hospice really belongs. I had often searched in the special books for any traces of a 'religious' character about it, but in vain. Herr A. Bähler, of Biel, has, however, recently published a small pamphlet, 'Mittheilungen über den Grimselpass und das Grimselhospiz' (Biel, Ernst Kuhn, 1895, 8vo. pp. 47), which gives some interesting information on the point. The first mention of the pass dates from 1211, when Berchthold V., Duke of Zähringen and founder of the town of Bern, led his army across into the Vallais, where it was defeated at Ulrichen. Herr Bähler suggests that it is possible (as no doubt it is) that the first hospice was built by the Austin Canons of Interlaken, but there is not the smallest scrap of evidence in favour of this theory. We do find, however, that in 1382 the district of Oberhasle bought the Grimsel alp from the Bubenberg family. No mention is made of a hospice, and probably there was only a cowherd's hut on the pastures. Nor do we hear of any hospice either in 1419 or 1425, on both of which occasions a Bernese army crossed the pass on its way to the Vallais and the Val d'Ossola. But it had been established before 1492, in which year the Hasle and Vallais men had a quarrel about appointing a warden and the improvement of the path. Yet the Grimsel alp still belonged (as it does to this day) to Hasle, so that no doubt that commune built the hospice in order to accommodate the traders who had come to frequent the pass as affording easy access to the Vallais and Italy. In 1555 the Bishop of Sion gave permission to the men of Hasle (this was *after* the Reformation, of course) to collect money in the Vallais from charitable persons for the benefit of the Grimsel Hospice. In my 'Swiss Travel,' p. 199, I have pointed out that the actual earliest mention of the hospice is in 1479, when the tenant was granted the right of levying a toll, and I have given Stumpf's account of his experiences there in 1544. The hospice was rebuilt in 1557, and again (after the fire) in 1853, in both cases by Oberhasle, which has thus preserved its property in it to the present day.

W. A. B. COOLIDGE.

#### PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

A GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held at St. Martin's Town Hall, Charing Cross, on Tuesday, February 5, at 8.30 p.m., Mr. H. Pasteur, *Vice-President*, in the chair.

The following candidates were balloted for and elected members of the Club:—A. H. Bird, Rev. Canon G. F. Browne, L. S. Calvert, Rev. W. C. Compton, Rev. L. W. V. Goodenough, E. C. Oppenheim, W. J. Petherick, S. Spencer, E. L. Strutt, A. F. B. Williams.

The VICE-PRESIDENT intimated that the officers of the Club, together with the Committee, had elected Professor F. A. Forel, of Morges, and Dr. E. Richter, of Graz, as honorary members of the Club. He regretted to have to announce that Sir Frederick Pollock