

Joseph gave us a laughable account of a stout warrior under whom he had served, and who was generally known among his subordinates as 'the Cow.' 'Ah, ah,' cried Joseph, pointing to the corridor, 'that would be the place for the Cow!' Joseph Jantet may not have been—indeed, he was not—a great guide, but he was a willing, good-natured companion and genuinely anxious to do his best for his employers. Peace to his ashes. G. Y.

### ALPINE ACCIDENTS IN 1899.

*Ecquis erit modus?* Is the Alpine death-roll to go on increasing year by year indefinitely? We would hope not; but the disasters of the past season afford little justification. An increase of 49 per cent. in accidents to tourists upon the Alps, high or low, is a terrible record, and even when we have examined the accident-table which is printed in this number of the 'Journal,' and learnt from it that though thirty-two lives were sacrificed in all, yet only twelve were lost at a height of over 3,000 m., there is small comfort for us. It is true that but one member of our Club has been lost, but with him perished three well-skilled and faithful guides. It is true, too, that their deaths were due to what may fairly be described as an accident in the true sense of that much-abused word. We deeply regret that so promising a mountaineering career was thus prematurely cut short, and that so many of his faithful companions fell with him. We do not think that it will be considered out of place here to call attention briefly to the extraordinary courage and endurance of his friend who eventually reached Zermatt after two nights of severe exposure. Mr. F. W. Hill's escape is one of the most wonderful in the annals of mountaineering. The accident on the Rothhorn which cost three valuable lives was of rather a different character. It illustrates once more the fact that it is the unseen dangers which are the most perilous in Alpine climbing. Oh for more prudence, more self-restraint, to guide climbers in those hours of joy and relaxed attention, when a notable summit won and the joyous descent eagerly begun prompt us to forget the precepts of that ever-needful care without which, sooner or later, even the ablest mountaineers may meet with irreparable misfortune!

The roll of deaths in our present issue is very saddening. What do we find as the explanation of accidents so many and so deplorable? 'Alone'—'no guide'—'unroped on snow bridge'—'abandoned by comrades'! Who can read such a list, let alone comment on it, with patience? We spoke last year of climbing alone. It is for most tourists little less than madness—though for the gifted climber it may win moments of unspeakable enjoyment. Yet how many climbers are really gifted? 'No guide.' We have nothing to say against climbing without guides when practised by experienced mountaineers in proper numbers: it is a counsel of perfection for the thoroughly trained climber, not for the tiro. 'Unroped on

snow bridge.' What greater folly than this could be perpetrated? Solomon's well-known remark here checks us. 'Abandoned by comrades.' The inexperienced man who climbs alone breaks one well-known law of mountaineering; he who without the experience of the seasoned mountaineer climbs without guides, transgresses a second equally well-known rule; he who attempts to traverse a snow-bridge unroped violates a third of those elementary laws which cannot be violated with impunity. But what are we to say of those who abandon their comrades? We can only repeat what we said this time last year on the deliberate cutting of the rope: 'On an act so absolutely contrary to the principles of mutual trust and confidence, on which all loyal comradeship depends, we do not think it necessary to comment.'

We heard this summer of an attempt on the Matterhorn by a man on crutches. We read in our table of an accident to a lady well stricken in years, who was climbing alone. What are we to expect next? We were constrained last year to beg all climbers, ourselves included, to use every effort that mountaineering should not suffer shame. Shame it has undoubtedly suffered. When a death-roll such as we have before us for this season is published, even *Thersites*, amongst those who throw mud at the Alps, finds his opportunity. He cannot really befoul the most noble of sports, but why do we afford him the occasion for launching his abuse at us? The most delightful of pastimes can be enjoyed—not without risks, it is true—but with comparative immunity from danger if proper caution and prudence are observed. No true sport—we are ashamed to reiterate the truism—can be enjoyed without some peril, but the peril in the case of mountaineering need not, if proper precautions are observed, be very great. Let us all endeavour by care and prudence to reduce it to a minimum.

FATAL ACCIDENTS IN THE HIGH ALPS IN 1899.

[All the accidents enumerated below, with the possible exception of that to Dr. Sander, took place above a height of 2,000 mètres (or 6,562 ft.). In the case of those which occurred above 3,000 mètres (or 9,843 ft.) the name of the spot is printed in small capitals. References are given to the fullest and most trustworthy accounts only.]

Place	Date	Name	Cause and Reference
Frête de Sailles (Grand Muveran)	Jan. 1	Alphonse Lenormand	Abandoned by his comrades in a storm close to the Club hut; no guide. (' <i>Echo des Alpes</i> ,' pp. 27-9, 286; ' <i>Alpina</i> ,' pp. 40, 86)
Susten Pass	Jan. 2	Gustav Münnichs and Reinhold Ehlert	Snow storm; alone (' <i>Mittheilungen d. D. u. Oe. A.V.</i> ' pp. 19, 162; ' <i>Oesterreichische Alpen-Zeitung</i> ,' pp. 208-9; ' <i>Alpina</i> ,' pp. 38-40)

FATAL ACCIDENTS IN THE HIGH ALPS IN 1899 (*continued*).

Place	Date	Name	Cause and Reference
PASSO DI SALARNO (Adamello)	Jan. 22	Giacomo Collini (guide)	Died of frost-bite after a winter expedition on December 22 ('Rivista Mensile del C.A.I.' p. 29)
Great St. Bernard Mirock (Carinthia)	March 6	Two travellers . . .	Storm ('Alpina,' p. 51)
	May 25	Otto Baumgart . . .	Botanising; alone ('Mittheilungen,' p. 139)
Stockhorn . . .	June 10	— Reichmann . . .	Alone; slip, probably due to vertige ('Alpina,' p. 95)
Ackerlspitze (Kaisergerbirge)	June 25	Freiherr von Bonnet and Freiherr von Godin	Slip in a snow couloir; no guide ('Mittheilungen,' pp. 161, 177)
Hoher Güll (Salzburg Alps)	c. July 14	Oscar Herchner . . .	Slip; alone ( <i>ibid.</i> pp. 190-1, 202)
Near the Bovalhütte	July 15	Eugen Staub . . .	Slip on path ('Alpina,' p. 95)
Zugspitze . . .	July 28	Ferdinand Rockenstein	Slip on stones and fall down a snow gully; no guide ('Mittheilungen,' p. 190)
Below the Hannoverhütte (Ankogel group)	c. July 28	Dr. Sander . . .	Slip in the dark; alone; insufficiently equipped ( <i>ibid.</i> pp. 224-5)
Gamchillücke . . .	Aug. 1	Herr Hubacher . . .	Slip on hard snow; alone with daughter ('Alpina,' p. 105)
ZINAL ROTHORN . . .	Aug. 4	A. Baumann, Joachim Tabin (guide), Antoine Antille (guide)	Carried away by snow slipping off ice during a glissade ( <i>ibid.</i> p. 106)
Vernagtferner . . .	c. Aug. 7	Mathias Niedermeier (porter)	Giving way of a snow bridge; unroped ('Mittheilungen,' p. 201; 'Alpina,' p. 119)
Lirec Alp (Zinal) . . .	Aug. 10	Miss Bridge . . .	Slip on wet grass ('Revue Alpine,' p. 273; 'Alpina,' pp. 106, 118)
POINTE D'OTEMMA	Aug. 14	R. Hamilton Smith . . .	Slip; no guides ('Mittheilungen,' p. 218; 'Revue Alpine,' p. 270)
SEEKARLENSCHNEIDE (Pitzthal)	Aug. 14	Friedrich Stolz . . .	Giving way of a great boulder under his feet; unroped ('Oe. A.Z.' p. 220; 'Mittheilungen,' p. 201)
Below the Rojacherhütte (Sonnblick)	Aug. 14	Georg Zembacher (hunter and landlord)	Slip on rocks; alone ('Mittheilungen,' p. 212)
ZAGENGRAT (Balmhorn)	Aug. 18	— Fürst . . .	Slip on last snow slope; roped, but no guides ('Revue Alpine,' pp. 270-1; 'Mittheilungen,' p. 211; 'Alpina,' p. 106)

FATAL ACCIDENTS IN THE HIGH ALPS IN 1899 (*continued*)

Place	Date	Name	Cause and Reference
Ponica (Julic Alps)	Aug. 26	Fräulein Johanna Stein	Slip over rock wall; alone; elderly lady; insufficiently equipped ('Mittheilungen,' pp. 211, 236-7)
DENT BLANCHE	Aug. 28	O. G. Jones, Elias Furrer (guide), Clemenz Zurbriggen (guide), and Jean Vuignier (guide)	Slip of Furrer on the final rocks (see below)
Mont Corbeau (Montagne de la Côte)	Aug. 28	Dr. Cauro	Slip on wet grass ('Revue Alpine,' p. 294)
COL DE LA VUI-ONETTE (Arolla)	Aug. 28	Josef Reinstädler (guide, of Sulden)	Throttled by rope on falling into a crevasse ('Alpina,' p. 119; 'Mittheilungen,' pp. 247-8; 'Oe. A.Z.' p. 245)
Gamsberg (Alvier)	Oct. 10	G. B. Litscher	Alone; probably a slip (Swiss daily papers; 'Alpina,' p. 131)

Several other accidents are vaguely reported, e.g. one on the Mont Vélan ('Revue Alpine,' p. 269), and another on an alp near Pinzolo ('Mittheilungen,' p. 177). On a glacier near the Piz d'Err a body has been discovered, which, from the watch and handkerchief found near it, is believed to be that of a Herr Adolf Hofmann, of Zürich, who disappeared in 1888 ('Revue Alpine,' p. 269; 'Alpina,' p. 106).

The Swiss newspapers announce that in the summer of 1899 there were seventy-two accidents to tourists in the Alps, high or low (in 1898 only thirty-nine), in which sixty-seven persons (in 1898 only forty-five) were killed and thirty-one wounded. Of these ninety-eight unfortunates sixty-one met their fate in the Swiss mountains and thirty-seven in the Tyrolese and Bavarian Alps.

We regret to learn that on August 25 the famous climber Herr L. Purtscheller, of Salzburg, broke his right arm badly in two places when descending (with a guide and another traveller) the steep snow slope below the last rocks and above the bergschrund at the foot of the Aiguille du Dru. The guide's axe broke, and he slipped, dragging the two travellers for a distance of about 20 ft. into the bergschrund ('Mittheilungen,' p. 224). At the end of October Herr Purtscheller was still confined to his bed in a private hospital in Berne, though making good progress. We venture to offer him our best wishes for a speedy and complete recovery.

## THE ACCIDENT ON THE DENT BLANCHE.

We are indebted for the following narrative to Mr. F. W. Hill:—About the middle of August, after a fortnight spent in training

walks in the Binnenthal, I went to Arolla to meet O. G. Jones. For the first two or three days the weather, fine enough in the day, was bad in the early morning, and we did nothing; but after that we wasted no time, and, climbing every day except Sunday, we gradually became hard and fit.

On the way down from the Aiguilles Rouges Jones told me that he had often wished for an opportunity of climbing the Dent Blanche by its west arête. He had discussed the project with his guide, Elias Furrer, of Stalden, and they had agreed that the conditions were as favourable as they were ever likely to be, and he asked me to accompany him with my guide, Jean Vuignier, of Evolena. Both guides knew us very well. Furrer, especially, had climbed with Jones off and on for five years, and Vuignier, after taking me up many of the Zermatt peaks last year, had been with us as second guide on the Teufelsgrat; there is no doubt that they were skilful and experienced, and they not only offered no objections to the proposed expedition, but were very anxious to undertake it.

Although fully aware that such a chance might not present itself again, I felt unable to accept the invitation, as I had arranged to go to Zermatt over the Col d'Hérens with my wife, and a change of plan would condemn her to a lonely journey along the valleys. Consequently, a second guide being necessary, Jones engaged Clemenz Zurbriggen, who had been climbing in Arolla, and was about to return to Zermatt. Vuignier was greatly disappointed, and, thinking that perhaps I objected on the score of expense, offered to find a guide who would take Mrs. Hill over the Col alone. I did not accept his offer, but when Jones again asked me to go, and the invitation was cordially seconded by his guides, I consented, and thus it came about that we were a party of five.

We left Arolla on Sunday morning, August 27, intending to buy provisions at Ferpèche, and, with a porter to carry blankets, to proceed to a gîte which we had heard was situated somewhere at the foot of the ridge about four hours from Ferpèche. But when we arrived at the Bricolla chalets at four o'clock there was a general feeling that we had gone far enough, and, although the amateurs of the party thought that we ought to go on, the heat of the afternoon lent force to the arguments on the other side, so we sent the porter down again with our extra wraps and encamped there. After a much more comfortable night than would have been possible on the rocks, we started at three o'clock in two parties—Furrer, Zurbriggen, and Jones being roped in this order, and Vuignier and I following. We went quickly over the glacier and reached the ridge in good time. It was very soon evident that the climbing was going to be difficult, as the rocks were steep slabs, broken and easy occasionally, but on the whole far too smooth. There was often a choice of routes, as the ridge is a broad one, then again there would seem to be none at all, and Furrer had to prospect. At one such place, where the ridge projected a long way from the face, he unroped, and, traversing horizontally on to the face, found a chimney leading upwards, and called to us to follow. As soon as the real difficulties had com-

menced Vuignier had tied on to Jones, so that I was last. In two or three places the only possible way was over an overhanging rock up which the leader had to be pushed and the others helped from above and below. Climbing carefully, but in the highest spirits, we made good progress, for at ten o'clock it was agreed that we were within an hour of the summit. At half-past eight, and again about an hour later, we had seen a party of two on the south arête, and they probably reached the top at ten o'clock. It was just at this time that Furrer found his way blocked. The obvious route lay up a narrow gully or sloping chimney, but here the rocks were glazed and impossible. About 30 ft. to the left was a smooth-looking buttress some ten feet high; in between was a vertical rock face.

When I reached the level of the others, Furrer was attempting to climb the buttress, but, finding no holds, he called to Zurbriggen to hold an axe for him to stand on. Apparently he did not feel safe, for he turned his head and spoke to Jones, who then went to hold the axe steady. Thus we were all on the same level, Vuignier being some 25 or 30 ft. distant from them and also from me. Standing on the axe, which was now quite firm, Furrer could reach the top of the buttress, and attempted to pull himself up; but the finger-holds were insufficient, and before his foot had left the axe his hands slipped, and he fell backwards on to Zurbriggen and Jones, knocking them both off, and all three fell together. I turned to the wall to get a better hold, and did not see Vuignier pulled off, but heard him go, and knew that my turn would soon come. And when it did not I looked round, and saw my four companions sliding down the slope at a terrific rate, and 30 ft. of rope swinging slowly down below me.

It is difficult to analyse my sensations at that moment. My main feeling was one of astonishment that I was still there. I can only suppose that Vuignier had belayed my rope securely to protect himself and me during our long wait on the traverse.

It must be admitted that Furrer did not choose the best route; but his choice is easy enough to understand, for the only alternative did not look inviting. At all events, it is certain that he acted on his own initiative. I say this reluctantly, and solely for the purpose of contradicting a statement I have read in an account of the accident—that he was induced by Jones to climb straight over the gendarme instead of going round it. It is a pity that historians, who must of necessity be ignorant of the facts, should go out of their way to make such conjectures.

The problem before me was a difficult one. It was quite impossible to climb down alone, and I could not expect to succeed where guides had failed; the only course open was to attempt to turn the gendarme on the right. This I succeeded in doing with great difficulty, owing to the ice on the rocks and the necessity of cutting up an ice slope in order to reach the ridge. In about another hour I gained the summit, and was greeted with a faint cooey, probably from the party we had seen. I could not see

them, nor make them hear, so made my way down with all reasonable speed, hoping to overtake them. When I reached the lowest gendarme—the one with a deep narrow fissure—a sudden mist hid everything from view. It was impossible to see the way off, and while I was trying various routes a snowstorm and cold wind drove me to seek shelter on the lee side of the rocks. There, tied on with my rope, and still further secured by an ice-axe wedged firmly in front of me, I was forced to remain until midday on Tuesday. Then the mist cleared, and climbing very carefully down the snow-covered rocks I reached the snow arête, where most of the steps had to be recut. The next serious difficulty was the lower part of the Wandfluh; I could not remember the way off, and spent 2 or 3 hrs. in futile efforts before I found a series of chimneys on the extreme right leading down to the glacier. The sun set when I was on the high bank of moraine on the Zmutt Glacier, and in the growing darkness it was far from easy to keep the path. The light in the Staffel Alp inn was a guide as long as it lasted, but it went out early, and, keeping too low down, I passed the inn without seeing it, and, being forced to stop by the nature of the ground, spent the night by the side of the torrent. It was late in the morning when I awoke, and then a scramble of a few minutes brought me to the path, near the sign-post, and I reached Zermatt at half-past eleven.

Once again the guides showed how willingly they undertake the last necessary and arduous tasks, and a large search-party left Zermatt the same evening. Together with a similar party from Evolena, they, with the greatest difficulty, carried the bodies down to Haudères.

Jones and Vuignier were buried at Evolena on Saturday, September 2, in the presence of many sorrowing friends, and the other two poor fellows were taken to their own villages.

F. W. HILL.

We have received the following account of the finding of the bodies from Mr. W. R. Rickmers:—

‘Mr. Seiler sent out thirty guides under Alois Supersaxo. Dr. R. Lenk, Mr. K. Mayr, and Mr. W. R. Rickmers joined them. We left the Staffalp at 10 p.m. on August 30, reached the Col d’Hérens at 6 a.m. on the 31st, in fog and snow, which cleared away later on. Descended Ferpècle Glacier towards termination of W. ridge of Dent Blanche, and ascended the small glacier which comes down from point 3,912 on the S. arête. At the spot under the “g” in “Rocs rouges” this glacier forms an icefall (moderately difficult), and besides that a bit of the Glacier de la Dent Blanche hangs over the narrowest part of the W. ridge. We then came to the foot of a great gully. On the map it is the first one from W., and it is very clearly indicated. In the rocks to the right of the couloir (looking down), and about 300 ft. above the rim of the glacier, the bodies were found. It was about 10 a.m.,

and a party of Evolena guides, accompanied by Mr. Harold Spender, was already on the spot.

'The height above sea-level was *ca.* 3,600-3,700 m. Straight above, on the ridge, one saw a smooth cliff (*ca.* 400-500 ft. below summit), and if that was the fatal *mauvais pas* the fall must have been about 1,500-1,700 ft. in a series of clear drops of many hundred feet. The rope was intact between Furrer and Zurbriggen.

'The guides did their work well; the icefall of course caused a great deal of trouble.'

#### THE ACCIDENT ON THE SCHRECKHORN.

Sir Henry Bergne sends us the following account by his son, Mr. Francis à C. Bergne, of an accident which occurred last August on the Schreckhorn:—

[Though we do not generally publish detailed accounts of non-fatal accidents, yet we print this, as the occurrence was much exaggerated in the English press, especially in the 'Standard,' which contained circumstantial accounts of serious injury to all of the party, and the subsequent death of one of the guides. The same newspaper, moreover, paid no attention to the written protest which was forwarded to it.]

'Our party, consisting of Christian Jossi (*Sohn*), Rudolf Burgener, and myself, left Grindelwald on the afternoon of August 2, and went to Bäregg, where we were detained till nearly 6 o'clock by a thunderstorm accompanied by hail. A beautiful evening after the storm prompted us to make for the Schwarzegg hut, which we reached about 8 o'clock.

'The next morning was fine, and we therefore started from the hut at 3.30. We soon reached the couloir, where we were caught later in the day, kicking steps up it as we went. The mountain was in excellent condition going up, the snow being good and the rocks near the top having no suspicion of ice. Under these favourable circumstances we gained the summit at 9.45, and after a short halt began the descent. On reaching snow we found it was not in such good condition as earlier in the day, but was somewhat inclined to slide with us. Anyhow it gave us little trouble, so that by 2.30 we were in the couloir at the bottom of which the figures 2,788 m. appear on the Siegfried map. Down this we were going carefully, kicking steps in the snow. Jossi was leading, and Burgener was last on the rope, when suddenly I heard a shout from the latter, and on turning round saw a wave of snow bearing down upon me. This quickly carried me off my legs, while Jossi was also swept away a moment or two later. This avalanche bore us with it 400 or 500 ft., as far as I can estimate, carrying us right over the big bergschrund, and at one moment I saw one of the guides fly right over my head. The avalanche, I believe, was started from above by some stones, and after coming out of the couloir it spread out like a fan, decreasing in speed until at last it came to a dead stop, and we with it. Jossi and I were able to get

up, but Burgener, having hurt his leg, was unable to do so. We now found that we had lost ice-axes, sacks, hats, and other trifles, but our rope was still whole. With this we tied Burgener's legs together and slid him down the snow to within 50 yds. of the hut. Here Jossi and I left Burgener and went to the hut for help. Luckily we found three young Englishmen, with a guide named Baumann, who had arrived there after a tour on the glacier. They carried Burgener into the hut, and the guide then went to Grindelwald for assistance, reaching it in an incredibly short time. The Englishmen stayed with us in the hut, and rendered us every kind of help. A doctor was soon brought to the spot, accompanied by about twenty guides, who at 4 o'clock next morning carried all three of us to Grindelwald, which we reached at 9.

'Our injuries were slight. Burgener had his knee badly strained and a sore back, Jossi had a cut on his forehead and also a sore back, and my hurts were only in the back.

'This short account may, I hope, serve as a warning to other climbers who meditate the ascent of the Schreckhorn. It is quite easy to avoid the dangerous couloir, either by going on the rocks to the side, which reduces the danger to about two minutes, or even better by joining the Strahlegg route, which is longer but does away with all danger.'

## NEW EXPEDITIONS IN 1899.

### *Dauphiné.*

BRÈCHE CORDIER (8,420 m. = 11,221 ft.). *July 22.*—Messrs. E. H. F. Bradby and W. A. Wills, with Ulrich Almer, crossed this col from the Chalets de l'Alpe to Ailefroide. Leaving the Refuge de l'Alpe at 4.80 A.M., they reached the bergschrund at the top of the Arsine glacier and at the foot of the N. side of the Brèche at 6.30. They crossed this without difficulty to the rocks on the W. side of the couloir leading up to the Brèche. After breakfasting just above the bergschrund (7.30-8.5) they climbed by these rocks, which were somewhat difficult and very loose, the whole way to the col, with the exception of one short traverse into the couloir about two-thirds of the way up. By ascending the couloir itself for 20 ft. they were enabled to turn a difficult, if not impossible, portion of the W. rocks, which were again followed to within 200 ft. of the col itself. For this last 200 ft. the couloir, which was here safe and easy, was followed. On Brèche Cordier, 11-12. From here the easy snow slopes on the S. side were descended to the Glacier Blanc. A point on the glacier opposite the Tuckett hut was reached at 1, and Ailefroide at 8.5. This col had been previously reached by Monsieur P. Engelbach from the S. on July 24, 1887.\* Monsieur J. Maitre, with Pierre Estienne and Joseph Rodier, on August 23, 1886,† when attempting to follow the ridge from the Pic du Glacier Blanc, which they had ascended

\* *Alpine Journal*, vol. xiii. p. 404. † *Annuaire du C. A. F.*, 1886, p. 689.