

It is well known that the Emperor Napoleon ordered an iron cross to be erected on the summit of the mountain. I am not aware that the date of this act has ever been given; the manuscript fixes July 25, 1811, and states that five men were employed for this purpose.

There are many trivial errors in the dates of the different ascents between that of Saussure and that of Wilbraham. That of Beaufoy was on August 9, not August 18, 1787. That of Dorthesen and Forneret was August 11 not August 10, 1802. Balmat's subsequent ascent with his two sons and Maria Paradis was on July 17, 1809, not 1808. That of Captain Undrell was on August 11, not August 13, 1819. The exact dates of the ascents of Clissold and Auldjo are also incorrectly given, and the date of the erection of the iron cross is twice inserted.

Again, the entry of the ascent of Rodatz in 1812 is made *after* that of Count Matzewski in 1818, and the ascents of Fellows and Hawes and of Auldjo in 1827 are made *after* that of Wilbraham in 1830. Why were these mistakes made? There is every appearance of the manuscript having been written at one time and in one ink. Clearly the entries must have been hurriedly transcribed from a notebook for a particular purpose. They must have been transcribed, too, after the year 1830, for Wilbraham's ascent is recorded as of that year.

May not these notes have been put together by Balmat for use at the memorable interview with Alexander Dumas in 1832? Anyhow this manuscript, though fragmentary and inaccurate, adds something to our knowledge of Alpine history, and I have every hope that further and more precise information on this particular portion of it may yet be obtained.

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#### AN EXCITING GLISSADE.

BY SIR MARTIN CONWAY, PRESIDENT.

'**D**E seldsaame en noit gehorde WAL-VIS-VANGST voorgevallen by St. Anna-Land in't jaar 1682 den 7 October.' is the title of a very rare quarto pamphlet, written by one 'P. P. v. S.' and published at Leiden in 1684. There were at least two editions of it, neither of which is represented in the British Museum Library. I have long sought and only recently obtained a copy. The little volume of seventy-eight



*From Old Print.]*

*[Swan Electric Engraving Co.*

**OLD KEES' GLISSADE.**

pages is mainly concerned to describe how a fisherman and his son killed a big whale near Flushing, a very wonderful feat in those days, the like of which, however, is not seldom accomplished now off the coast of Long Island. Appended to the story is an account of the Dutch Arctic whale-fishery, a number of doggerel poems about it, and a collection of tales of Arctic adventure, chiefly relating to the Spitsbergen coasts and waters.

Several of these stories are about two whaling skippers named Old and Young Kees. Both of them lived at Zaandam, near Amsterdam. The other day I went to that place and found descendants of Young Kees, who kept alive the traditions of the family and showed me quite a number of objects which had belonged to their ancestor. Most of these bore representations of his adventure with a Polar bear, which is likewise described in the book under consideration. The story about Old Kees is illustrated by an engraving, here reproduced. It runs as follows:—

In the year 1654 Commandeur Old Kees, being in Greenland (i.e. Spitsbergen), after gathering scurvy-grass upon a hill-side, went with one of his men, Bommel by name, in fine weather up one of the largest of the Seven Icebergs (glaciers). They climbed for about a good three hours and advanced more than a mile (Dutch), being some fourth part of the height of the mountain. Said Kees to his comrade, 'I'm going back, but have thought of an easier way than walking; I shall let myself fall.' And he did (A), and went so fast down that everything shimmered before his eyes, so that he was as good as blind. Not liking to slide longer he sought to stop himself by forcing his feet into the snow (B). Meanwhile his comrade, Bommel (C), seeing his Commandeur descend so quickly and, as it seemed, so easily, followed him in the same wise. Foreseeing no danger, he let himself go merrily and fast, waving his handkerchief over his head (D) and crying to the Commandeur, 'I'm leaving you behind, Commandeur.' Thus sliding down, he ended by falling over a jutting point of the iceberg (glacier) plumb into the sea (E). He fell quite twice the height of the Westertoren at Amsterdam. The Commandeur, having at length with much difficulty brought himself to a standstill, was glad to be rid of his 'easier way,' and to be able to use his feet instead of the seat of his breeches to go down on! He knew not whither his comrade had steered or flown. On reaching his boat (F) he asked his other men whether they had noticed Bommel. They said they had not seen him. 'Then,' said he, 'he has had an accident and broken his neck. But come; row along the edge of the iceberg and let us see if we can't find him.' Not finding him they were about to row away, thinking for sure that he was killed, when Bommel, sitting below the foot of the iceberg, began to call out, 'Here I am; here

I am.' He had swum ashore and scrambled along, having, unlikely as it seems, sustained little damage from so high a tumble.

The story is, no doubt, substantially true but greatly exaggerated. The Seven Icebergs are seven parallel glaciers that flow into the sea at the N. part of the W. coast of Spitsbergen. They are nearly flat and considerably crevassed, so that it would be quite impossible to glissade down them. A view of one of them will be found on p. 269 of my 'First Crossing of Spitsbergen.' Three hours' hard walking might take a man up what he would imagine to be about a quarter of the length of one of these glaciers, which may be some ten miles long from where they quit the inland ice. Probably Old Kees and Bommel were climbing one of the neighbouring hills, and came down a couloir or snow-slope ending in the sea. It is not to be supposed that a sketch of the place was made on the spot. The engraving was doubtless constructed in Holland 'from materials supplied,' and the story did not lose in the telling. Note how the walrus, the bears, and the fox interest themselves in the climbers! Some falling stones on the right seem to be pounding a human body to pieces, one arm and a leg being already dismembered. To this mountaineering catastrophe there is no reference in the text. It was, perhaps, the artist's own gruesome invention.

## IN MEMORIAM.

### DR. GUSTAV RADDE.

We regret to have to record the death, at the age of seventy-two, of our honorary member, Dr. Gustav Radde, the well-known Siberian and Caucasian traveller, and Curator of the Tiflis Museum.

The following sketch of his career, which originally appeared, on Dr. Radde's completion of his seventieth year, in Petermann's 'Geographischer Anzeiger,' has been forwarded to us for publication, by its author, Mons. de Déchy:—

'Gustav Radde was born in Dantzic in 1831, the son of a poor schoolmaster. After passing through the Real-Gymnasium he took to the study of medicine. His means were narrow and his evening hours were his only leisure for the pursuit of his studies in natural history. He had already developed a passion for scientific travel, for which he eagerly prepared himself. In the winter of 1852, provided with a slender purse by the Society of Naturalists of his native city, and with recommendations from the Russian consul, he betook himself to the Crimea. From that time, for the