

Chamonix and the Range of Mont Blanc. By Edward Whymper. Eighth edition. (London: John Murray. 1903.)

The Valley of Zermatt and the Matterhorn. By the same. Seventh edition. (London: John Murray. 1903.)

These excellent guide-books are too well known to need lengthy comment. They are both brought up to date, as usual. From the Chamonix Guide we learn that the first ascent of Mont Blanc in 1902 was made upon June 4-6, also that a new *train de luxe* will run, during the middle of the season, three times a week from Paris to Chamonix, leaving Paris at 8.40 A.M. and reaching Chamonix at 7.30 P.M. On p. 105 we find an account of a new and more direct path from Chamonix to the Flégère, which passes through forest and is in shadow most of the way. It begins close against the N. side of the Villa Vallot.

From the Zermatt Guide we learn that the first ascent of the Matterhorn in 1902 was made on July 6-8. Mention is made 'of the installation at the end of September 1902 of a wrought-iron cross about 10 ft. high, weighing 85 kilos., on the southern end of the summit ridge of the Matterhorn. Mass was performed on the occasion upon the summit by the Abbé A. Carrel. The cross was visible from Zermatt at the end of March 1903. It will be interesting to note how long this lightning-conductor will remain erect.'

'The number of visitors to Zermatt in 1902 was unprecedented. On August 19 nearly six hundred persons arrived by the railway alone. The ascending midday train had to be triplicated.' On p. 180 we read that on August 23, 1902, Mr. W. E. Davidson, with Joseph Pullinger and Julius Lochmatter, made the circuit of the Matterhorn from the Schwarz See Hotel and back *via* the Col Tournanche, the Tête and Col du Lion, and the Breuiljoch in eleven hours' actual walking. On the same day the Hon. G. FitzGerald, with the two Ulrich Almers, father and son, made the same tour in the contrary direction. The two parties met on the ridge between the Tête du Lion and the Col Tournanche at about 10 A.M.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

A GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the Hall on Tuesday evening, May 5, at 8.30, Sir MARTIN CONWAY, *President*, in the chair.

Mr. W. R. RICKMERS read a paper on 'Ski-ing,' which was illustrated by lantern slides.

Dr. RICHARDSON, a guest of the Club, said that Mr. Rickmers had covered the ground so fully that anything he could say would be merely redundant; one point, however, he might dwell upon, and that was the ignorance which was still prevalent as to the possibilities of ski-ing; some of the photographs showing the curves of the skis on steep snow-slopes had aroused expressions of incredulity, but they were really matters of everyday occurrence. The mechanism of the ski was still progressing; he had found

that he could get on well with one of rather less than the usual length; possibly one shorter still might turn out to be the most serviceable for mountaineering. Another problem to be solved arose from the trouble caused by the snow sticking to the bottom of the ski; there was just one temperature and one condition of the snow when this occurred, and it was an intolerable nuisance. Various remedies had been tried; a thin covering of seal's fur over the wood was effective, but it tore easily and robbed the ski of some of its charm, due to the smooth feeling given by the wood. As to jumping, it was very good fun, even for a moderate performer; he was no expert, his record was 34 ft.; the Norwegian record was 134 ft.

Dr. SAVAGE had been medical officer over thirty years ago in a Cumberland lead mine, where the oldest inhabitants remembered ski-ing when they were boys; this carried one back nearly one hundred years from the present day. They made some skis for him, and on the strength of his experiences he claimed to be the oldest and worst ski-ist present.

Mr. FRESHFIELD said there was an account in some classical author, possibly Strabo, of a method of travelling on snow used by Roman postmen which sounded very like ski-ing.

In answer to various questions Mr. RICKMERS said that he did not think the Canadian methods of travelling on snow at all resembled ski-ing; he believed that an account had been found of ski-ing in Carinthia 300 years ago; for beginners on easy ground it was best to go without a pole at first to acquire certainty of balance, but on difficult or mountainous ground the pole was indispensable; some people became fairly good performers in a week; the average time was three weeks; any one could be sure of acquiring a mastery of the ski in the course of a season.

The PRESIDENT congratulated Mr. Rickmers on his paper. His own experience of skis was confined to falling off, or rather on to them; in Spitsbergen they had had the worst kind of ski, and no one to show them how to use them or how to put them on. When things went wrong and he took off a ski to try and remedy matters, it ran away and disappeared in the fog. He had been asked to bring his skis to the meeting, but he had lent them to an exhibition, and the exhibition had been seized for rent and sold, so no doubt by this time the skis had been bought for 6*d.* and used for fire-wood. Sverdrup had told him the best antidote to snow balling under the ski was to cover the wood with a thin layer of German silver. Ski-ing must be the best form of winter mountaineering; he hoped the Club would accept Mr. Rickmers's offer to coach them, and that a new interest would be added to their favourite pursuit.

The meeting terminated with a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Rickmers.

A GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the Hall on Tuesday evening, June 9, at 8.30, Sir MARTIN CONWAY, *President*, in the chair.

Messrs. A. Fox, J. W. Robson, and P. H. Thorpe were balloted for and elected members of the Club.

Mr. A. E. FIELD read a paper entitled 'A Complete Traverse of the Aiguille sans Nom and the Aiguille Verte in One Expedition,' which was illustrated by lantern slides.

Mr. MORSE said that some years ago he and Mr. Thomas had tried the Aiguille sans Nom by Mr. Mummery's couloir. Mr. Mummery had gone direct to the Aiguille Verte; to reach the Aiguille sans Nom it was necessary to branch off. They were getting on well under Ulrich Almer's leadership, but a storm came on and stopped them. They never saw a falling stone, their experience in this respect being very different from that of the Duke of Abruzzi. He congratulated Mr. Field on his very interesting paper.

Mr. STUTFIELD said he would say a few words in place of Mr. Spencer, whose native modesty kept him silent. He took a fatherly interest in Mr. Spencer's photographs; though he had not taken them he had at least held the legs of the camera. The beauty of the photographs was largely due to the fact that they had reached the top of the Aiguille Verte at the early hour of 6.30; they were able to do this because the mountain was covered with snow. After Mr. Field's paper no one could say the Alps were played out.

Mr. WILSON remarked that every one went up the Aiguille Verte a different way, and no one went up twice, but as the mountain became better known Mr. Field's route might prove to be the best one, especially if ropes were placed on the gendarmes.

The PRESIDENT said he had not gathered how far Mr. Field's route diverged from M. Fontaine's. He agreed with Mr. Wilson that it was likely to be followed as a good way up the Aiguille Verte, though it would never be exactly fashionable. Mr. Field had not laid much stress on the difficulties, but they must have been considerable.

Mr. FIELD, in reply, said the two routes very nearly coincided; his party had struck the rocks at the point described by M. Fontaine, and had found one or two traces; the couloir which they found so difficult was not M. Fontaine's way. If they went again they might look for an easier route more to the right; the final bit up to the ridge was the same as that climbed by M. Fontaine. He regretted the absence of Mr. Broadrick, to whose initiative the climb was really due.

A hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Field for his paper brought the proceedings to a close.