

We were now obliged, in the growing darkness, to traverse a trough which was twice raked by stones, two of us being hit by small ones, while larger ones whistled over our heads as we crouched against the slope.

We now came to the bergschrund, and Démarchi, who was leading, cut steps down in the dark, while the rest of us rammed our axes in as far as possible and held on to his rope with all our strength. As we peered over we could barely see anything, and the bergschrund loomed out like an immense chasm; but when our turn came to descend we found the reality not so bad as we had imagined.

We lit the lanterns at 7.45, and came quickly down the snow, which was extremely soft; we often sank in up to our knees, just as if it was still hot afternoon instead of night. We reached the moraine at 8.32, discarded the rope to which we had been attached for just 20½ hours, had a meal by a little stream, and started off again in half an hour. We soon struck the track from the Jardin, and found the iron stanchions that abound on it where it descends to the Mer de Glace very helpful by lantern light, although in broad daylight we should probably have despised the presence of such adventitious aids. We could now see the lights of the Montenvers in the distance, and they in return saw our lanterns, and inferred that we were safely on the way home. We came steadily down the Mer de Glace, got off at the usual spot, enjoyed a refreshing drink at the spring which supplies the Montenvers, came along the Ponts track, and reached the Montenvers at 12.5 A.M. Our expedition had lasted for 24 hours 3 minutes, of which only 2 hours 11 minutes had been spent in halts, so that we had been actually on the move for 21 hours 52 minutes.

A DAY ON THE GLACIER DE MOIRY.

BY A. C. DOWNER.

A BRIGHT summer afternoon at Zinal, a merry strolling party, guides, a porter, we ourselves, ladies and a friend to see us start, the Besso standing up in the sunlight, the Navigenze roaring over the stones, the Hôtel Durand behind us, and 5.10 P.M. of the clock on July 23, 1902; these are the colours on the palette of memory. We wandered on together as far as the bridge, and then our friends bade us farewell, kodaking us pitilessly as we turned to go. Our party consisted of Messrs. G. E. Gask, J. Walter Robson, and the

writer, with Elie Vianin and Louis Theytaz. The porter came to carry up blankets to our camping-place and bring them down again next morning. On the top of these he carried sundry long loaves for the next twenty-four hours.

At 7.15 P.M., after a march on which we

In friendly chat
Now talked of this and then of that,

we reached a herdsman's hut on the Alpe de l'Allée, which, in the absence of the regulation cabane, was to be our hôtel. There was no front door, and the floor was extremely moist, but a blazing fire was soon made, and a repast served which even the late Maison Dorée could not have surpassed. Then, when the diners out

πόσιος καὶ ἐδητύος ἐξ ἔρον ἔντο,

in that happy, careless, comfortable state, with all the worries of life behind and the prospect of a good day before,

There was a sound of revelry by night,

and song and story filled up the hours until the fire burned low and the psychological moment arrived when

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter.

The concert died down, harmony was hushed, and, before turning in, we gazed out into the night.

The sun had set, the sky was serene and clear, and the moon, nearly full,

Cluster'd around by all her starry fays,
was shining

With all her might.

There stood Besso; he had not moved. There were Weiss-horn, Schallihorn, Rothhorn, Gabelhorn, and all the other horns, on the great grat to the east. Inspiring was the scene, inspiring the sky, inspiring the silence.

We turned again. My two companions betook themselves to the wooden shelf whereon the herdsmen sleep. The guides found quarters in a neighbouring hut. I chose some flat stones for a camp bed. Each man rolled himself in his blanket. As there was an absence of door, and we had omitted to stop up the chinks, air was plentiful and chilly to the legs. One's only resource was turning over between spells not of sleep, but of a blessed dreamy state, in which one could still feel the mighty hills that seemed to watch

around us, and hear the never-ceasing sound of the stream below and the occasional roar of the nocturnal avalanche.

Two A.M. We have had enough of this, and so I get up and start a fire. The others soon join in; the guides come up; breakfast follows in due course. 'Good-bye, porter. Take care of those blankets. Pick up your traps, all of you.' And off we go at 3.37 A.M. by the light of the moon.

What power is this? What witchery wins my feet
 To peaks so sheer they scorn the cloaking snow
 All silent as the emerald gulfs below,
 Down whose ice-walls the wings of twilight beat?
 What thrill of earth and heaven,—most wild, most sweet,—
 What answering pulse that all the senses know,
 Comes leaping from the ruddy eastern glow,
 Where, far away, the skies and mountains meet?

Ah! what indeed? It is thine, great Mother; thine, Natura benigna.

By stony slopes and slopes of snow, halting three times on the way, we reached the Col de l'Allée at 6.12 A.M., and sat down to another breakfast, to look at the panorama, and to take some photographs. Here the great stretch of the Moiry Glacier came into sight, the scene of our coming day's work. Looking back, we took one more gaze at the Zinal mountains and, turning west, saw far away the well-recognised peaks and ridges of Arolla. But in the middle distance, flanking the left edge of the Moiry glacier, was the ridge, little known and seldom visited, that we had come to explore, stretching northward from the Pointe de Bricolla, and including the Dents des Rosses, the two Pointes de Mourti, and the Za de l'Âno.

Leaving the col at 7 o'clock, we took a southerly course, skirting round the Pigne de l'Allée on our left, and keeping high up on the slopes. On two former occasions I had ascended the Pigne, the last time being in 1895, when, with one other friend, I made the passage of the Col de la Pointe de Bricolla, camping for the night on the Alpe de Bricolla; but that, as Kipling says, is another story. This time we spent no energy in getting up the Pigne, nor did we turn aside to mount the Bouquetin, a mere half-hour's walk; but, keeping steadily southwards, we drew towards the head of the glacier till, opposite the Pointe de Bricolla, we made a sweep, first south and then north-west, striking for the west side of it. By this *détour* we saved ourselves much crevassed and broken glacier; and as the snow was good, after about half an hour's going on the névé on the left side of the glacier, we

struck the bergschrund directly below the Col de Moiry, and crossed it.

I trod her snow-bridge, for the moon was bright,
Her icicle-arch across the sheer crevasse.

Or, if it was not the moon, it was the other luminary that rules the day, since by this time it was 9 A.M. Twenty minutes more up a steep snow-slope brought us to the col, and here we consumed half an hour and more provender.

Now came the most interesting bit of the ascent, the S.E. ridge of the E. Pointe de Mourti, which, without any special difficulty, is a genuine little rock climb and quite pleasant. One of my companions still tells how we straddled a knife-edge 30 ft. long, while the other recalls how, like experienced criminals, we circumvented a gendarme and stealthily negotiated rotten securities. 10.40 A.M. found us on the summit, and, as we had plenty of time, we indulged ourselves for 50 minutes by basking in the sun, gazing upon the landscape, and absorbing various refreshments, while one hardened offender is credibly reported to have taken five minutes of delicious slumber.

Our friends the guides, under the impression that we were to return by the way we had come up, had left the rucksacks on the rocks below, but as by this time we had decided to descend the N.E. arête, they had to go back for them. By and by they reappeared, and at 11.30 we began the descent, for about 500 feet of which we kept to the arête, afterwards turning right and going down the hard steep snow on the east face. At first we had to proceed slowly, cutting steps; but soon a series of exhilarating glissades conducted us quickly and pleasantly to the glacier, just above the icefall, opposite to the Col de l'Allée. Here the far-darting Apollo began to discharge his arrows upon us, and dreadful was the twang of his silver bow; but though fagged with heat and the soft snow, by strict attention to business we reached the col at 43 minutes past noon, and quickly recovering ourselves came rapidly down by a more direct route than we had used in ascending. Here some of the party had their first experience of a method of descent that has obtained favour of late on steep snow gradients, turning face to the slope, kicking steps downward, and using hands and feet. More glissades followed, and soon the Alp came into view, from which we wandered down to hotel and dinner, swinging along the valley path in time to our songs, well content with our day and ourselves, and full of sunny reminiscences.



Photo by Rev. A. C. Downer.

E. POINTE DE MOURTI.

[Swan Electric Engraving Co.]