Items.

The C.A.I. Stazione Universitaria, Monza, has kindly sent one of their brooches, a silvered ice-axe, 2 inches long, with the name of the section on the handle.

Studer, G. Copies of the panoramas from the following drawn by G. Studer between 1850 and 1859 have been presented to the Alpine Club by Mr. Rickmer-Rickmers;—

Aegischhorn, Mt. Brévent, Mt. Vélan, Piz Languard, Seelisburger Kulm, Uri Rothstock, Saasberg, Sentis, Piz de la Padella, Rinderhorn, Gornergrat, Mt. Pers, Höhe d. Sustenpasses, Gemmenalphorn, Gemmihöhe.

ALPINE ACCIDENTS IN 1907.

ANOTHER season of broken weather has produced a lamentable loss of life amongst the mountains, for which the weather cannot be held alone responsible.

To climb without guides—though we have nothing to say against it when undertaken under proper conditions—must always demand particular experience and precaution on the part of the climbers. To attempt the ascent of a great mountain *without guides in bad weather* must be exceptionally dangerous. Climbing in bad weather at all inevitably involves great risks, and, where there is no professional skill to fall back upon, it is not to be wondered at if lives are lost. Climbing alone, if, as would appear, it offers to some climbers exceptional satisfaction, also involves exceptional risks—we have before spoken of it only to condemn it.

Instead of further comment of our own we quote the following remarks from an article by a well-known mountaineer, which under the title 'Mountaineering in 1907' appeared in the 'Times' of September 24 last. After pointing out that as far our countrymen are concerned no serious climbing accident has occurred in the past season, not because their achievements have been less, but because guideless British climbers, recognising that mountaineering is not only a sport but a craft that must be mastered, have thoroughly learnt on their native rocks and on Alpine snows the laws of the game and observe them, the writer says—

'We might be content to congratulate ourselves upon our white season. But a mountaineer who climbs in the Alps assumes, together with his share in the delights of the mountains and the resources of the huts, a part in the responsibility for the general repute of Swiss mountaineering. Consequently it is his duty to call attention to a serious feature of the past season—the dangerous increase in the numbers of unqualified, guideless parties attempting the great peaks. We have no quarrel with guideless climbing. An expert has every right to choose for himself, and there is far more of mountaineering and of holiday in crossing a small pass with tried friends for pleasure than in being treated as an item in the business of a big climb by an unsympathetic peasant. Guides are not the demigods the early explorers found them. They are

very human, very limited, and entirely professional. With a few hopeful exceptions their notions of climbing travel on iron rails of convention. Yet guides are a necessary insurance policy, a reserve of physical endurance and native instinct. The more the climber knows, the less he is inclined to dispense with them on ascents where his experience tells him that the balance of strength and chance is not largely in his favour. The guideless parties of this August were not experienced. They consisted chiefly of students, Swiss or French boys fresh from school, to whom climbing has recently come to fill the place our games occupy with us—fine, manly fellows, brown as the rocks, with a minimum of vest, knickerbockers rolled up and stockings turned down, to intensify this boyish vanity. The Austrian students set them the example in the past, and on the Dolomites and small rock peaks of East Switzerland, where little is required beyond strength and agility, the practice had more justification; but, even so, their death-roll has been ominous. Now the fashion has changed. The rosy narratives of big guideless ascents, published by gentlemen who learnt little wisdom from their experiences, have had time to reach the least qualified enthusiasts. Emulation is stirred, and the check of the cost of guides, formerly deemed indispensable on such peaks, seems attractively removed. Whereas the aspiring Rasselas found "all the summits inaccessible by their prominence," the very prominence of a peak seems now its principal attraction. The consequences were seen this year in the crowd of young climbers clinging round all the notable summits, and the further consequences in the tragic weekly and almost daily notices in the local papers.

'Youth and strength are only of secondary importance in the great Alps. Time is the secret of all security and success. The saving of time, with all its chances of night and change, demands pace. Pace implies the ability of all the party to move rapidly and with the mutual disregard that confidence begets over places of all but exceptional difficulty, the power of the leader to negotiate the awkward passages without undue pause, and the power of the weakest to last out the day. These can only come as the result of practice and experience. That each member of the party should possess them, and should feel that the others possess them, is the first condition of guideless climbing. Pace is not only the policeman of time, it is a seven-foot lifeguardsman in the contest with chance. But it is just this regard for time and chance which the new fashion neglects in its often calamitous inexperience. In the space of ten days this season we encountered on one morning three separate guideless parties descending from involuntary bivouacs on the Grépon; on another two parties descending over the Mont Maudit after a night on Mont Blanc; on another two couched in chilly lairs near the top of Monte Rosa, almost within hail of a refuge of which they were ignorant; on yet another three parties benighted on the shoulder of the Matterhorn. To all appearances they accepted the incident as an integral part of their climbs, and in the event of a warm night no harm might ensue. But the great

peaks cannot be played with like bricks or Dolomites. A change of wind after sundown, a cloud hardly noticeable from the valley, and in an hour the belated party may be fighting for the warmth that means life, with the prospect of iced rocks for numbed limbs on the morrow's descent. They are fortunate if partial frostbite is the worst consequence. In such hazards of endurance youth and warm blood are the first to succumb. On the most culpable of these ventures this year, an attempt on the Matterhorn in bad weather, persisted in against every dictate of sanity or mountaineering, of the two younger members of the party one died of exposure and the other was maimed for life by frostbite; the responsible and older leader alone escaped. The mountaineer can only feel sorrowful resentment that such disastrous folly should be graced with the name of mountaineering.'

The writer goes on to point out that a somewhat similar development in a different form is taking place in our own islands, and to suggest precautionary methods by which its most serious consequences may be guarded against.

THE ACCIDENT ON THE MEIJE.

On July 10 three Italian mountaineers, SS. Bertani, Moraschini, and Rossini, slept at the Promontoire Refuge with the intention of climbing the Meije on the morrow. On the morning of the 11th, as S. Rossini was unwell, his comrades started to make a reconnaissance with the intention of returning to the Refuge at an early hour. Towards evening, as his friends did not arrive, S. Rossini went up some considerable way above the Refuge in search of them, but no voice replied to his cries. He eventually returned to the hut and spent a night of cruel suspense. On the morning of the 12th S. Rossini made two journeys—the second a very plucky attempt indeed—alone in search of his companions, but to no purpose.

At 9 o'clock the guides of La Grave, Hippolyte and Emile Pic, on their way home by the Brèche de la Meije on reaching the Glacier des Etançons heard S. Rossini's call for help and hastened to join him. Shortly afterwards the guide J. B. Rodier, of La Bérarde, and his son also arrived.

The whole party of five then started *en reconnaissance* by the usual route for the Meije. Above the 'campement Castelnau' a little way from the *bonne route* they saw an axe, *accroché à une aspérité du rocher*. But as the axe might have been left there to be recovered on the way down they continued their search. But their investigations were vain, and they came to the conclusion that a disaster had happened. From the position of the axe it was clear that if an accident had occurred at that point the bodies would be found at the bottom of the couloir which falls to the Col du Pavé branch of the Glacier des Etançons. On proceeding to the foot of the couloir, above referred to, they found the two bodies. The funeral took place at Saint-Christophe on the 15th.

This account is taken mainly from the 'Revue Alpine' for August 1907, pp. 352-3. A longer narrative, written by S. Rossini, the survivor, will be found in the 'Rivista Mensile' for July, pp. 317-20.

THE ACCIDENT ON THE COL DU GÉANT.

On the morning of Saturday, July 13, 1907, I was at the Rifugio Torino, on the Italian side of the Col du Géant, intending to start for the ascent of the Aiguille du Géant. Owing to strong wind and great cold in the early morning I was not called until 7.30, when one of my guides informed me that the weather and the condition of the Aiguille rendered the ascent impossible. He added that Mr. Sillem, a Dutch gentleman, whose acquaintance I had made at my hotel at Courmayeur, had just arrived at the Rifugio.

Mr. H. Sillem, of Amsterdam, had had, I understand, considerable climbing experience, not only in the Alps but in the Himalayas, Andes, and New Zealand. On the morning in question he was on his return to Courmayeur after ascending the Aiguille du Midi from the hut at its base. He and I had arranged to start together on Sunday, the 14th, for the Grandes Jorasses.

By the time I had dressed and had come downstairs, Mr. Sillem had left the Rifugio alone, telling his two Courmayeur guides, Joseph Petigax and Laurent Croux, to finish their meal, as there was no hurry for them, and to follow at their leisure. He said to my guides, 'Be sure and start with your monsieur and me for the Grandes Jorasses to-morrow.' Nobody beyond the four guides was present, the hut-keeper being in another part of the building.

Mr. Sillem then, my Swiss guide informs me, started down alone by the ordinary route to Courmayeur, his hands in his pockets and his ice axe under his arm. The weather was then cold and windy, but quite clear, and remained so, though the high peaks clouded up later in the morning. The time was roughly 8.30 A.M. Five minutes later, Mr. Sillem's guides followed him. I saw the two men start, as I was dressing, from my window; but Mr. Sillem's departure I did not witness.

At 9.30 A.M. I started for the Aiguille du Géant, but, as we expected, the wind, which was both strong and cold, rendered the ascent impossible, apart from the fact that there was too much snow on the peak. We turned back at the base of the rocks, descended to the Rifugio, and quitted it at 1.5 P.M. for Courmayeur.

At 1.40 P.M. we were nearly off the steep and rocky part of the descent, and were a few minutes above the wooden building where the mule path begins, when my guides suddenly drew my attention to the Glacier du Mont Fréty. On the snow of the glacier, some 200 yards to our left and on a level with us, was a body, which we knew at once must be that of Mr. Sillem. It lay, face downwards, at the foot of the steep snow couloir, the head of which abuts on the route some ten minutes below the Rifugio.

We were, of course, horrified in the extreme, and could hardly

believe that such an experienced and careful climber could have fallen in so easy a descent. I determined to go down on to the glacier and ascertain if life were extinct, but my guides pointed out to me tracks on the snow leading to and from the body, evidently those of Mr. Sillem's guides. We then walked down for a few minutes until we reached the wooden hut where the mule path starts. Here we found four men who had been mending the path, and they informed us that the guides had ascertained that Mr. Sillem was dead and had gone down to Courmayeur for help.

We estimated the fall at from 1,200 to 1,300 ft., down the hard and steep snow of the couloir. I satisfied myself that nothing could be done, and, after 40 minutes' halt, went down to the inn at Mont Fréty, where I waited until 4 P.M., expecting that a party would arrive from the village and that my guides' services would be needed. No party could be traced through the telescope, although we could see one man ascending rapidly below the pine trees. I then continued the descent with my Swiss guide, leaving the second man, the son of one of Mr. Sillem's guides, at the inn to help the party on their arrival.

The man we had seen was Mr. Sillem's second guide, Laurent Croux, and he told us that the authorities had been applied to for permission to bring down the body. The necessary authorisation arrived quickly, and the body eventually reached Courmayeur by midnight of July 13.

I was informed that the chief injury was a blow on the head, sufficient of itself to cause death. The body was, I understand, comparatively slightly injured externally.

I remained in Courmayeur for two days, during which my guides were questioned by the police as to their knowledge of the occurrence. My Swiss guide tells me that the general opinion was that Mr. Sillem, who, as I have said, started with his hands in his pockets and with his axe under his arm, presumably owing to the cold, stumbled from some cause very shortly after leaving the Rifugio and fell from the rocks into the steep couloir at the foot of which we saw him.

The snow in the couloir must have been very hard on the morning in question, and there would have been no possibility of Mr. Sillem arresting his fall, even had he been uninjured when he reached the couloir. There seems to be some probability that his hands were in his pockets at the time of the fall, and, if this were so, his axe would have been lost at once. It had not, at the time of my leaving Courmayeur, been found.

The fall must have occurred a very few minutes below the Rifugio. Otherwise the two guides, who were only five minutes behind, would have shortly overtaken Mr. Sillem. As it was, they did not know that an accident had happened until they saw the body, although they must have suspected it.

Mr. Sillem was buried in the cemetery at Courmayeur on July 17.

R. R. Howlett, A.C.

THE ACCIDENT ON THE SOUTHERN AIGUILLE D'ARVES.

The brothers Dr. Robert von Wyss and Dr. Max von Wyss, Messrs. Paul Montandon and Th. Rangé, accompanied by a porter, reached, on July 31 last, at about 9.30 A.M., the big slab at the foot of the Mauvais Pas, half an hour below the summit of the Southern Aiguille d'Arves. The fixed rope mentioned in Coolidge's 'Central Dauphiny Alps' has been removed from that place by a guide, but a big wooden *piton* driven into the rock helps much. Dr. R. von Wyss, mounting, with the assistance of his comrades, upon the shoulders of the porter, stepped from there upon the *piton* and climbed, apparently without special difficulty, somewhat higher. A very good hold, having the form of an egg-cup, is said to be near there, and when once this hold is in hand it is 'tout facile,' as the guides say. Dr. von Wyss did not find this hold and climbed higher up, apparently too much to the right, where the rocks are rotten. He lost hold—exact reason unknown—and fell backwards 5 or 6 mètres down upon the slab (not 50 mètres, as the papers said). He was instantly retained there from right and left by the two ropes to which we had attached him. He had unfortunately fallen on his head and died 45 minutes later, without having regained consciousness. None of his comrades were hurt. His body was brought down to La Grave on the morrow by two guides and four porters.

Dr. Robert von Wyss was a very bold and experienced mountaineer. He had climbed without guides all the great summits of the Bernese Oberland and of Zermatt, many of them several times. The traverse of the Schreckhorn by the N.W. and ordinary route, of the Jungfrau from the Wengern Alp (twice, up and down), of the Matterhorn (twice), the ascent of the Mönch from the N., the traverse from the Blümlisalphorn to the Weisse Frau, the first ascent of two peaks of the Kleine Lauteraarhörner, and other first climbs in the Gotthard group were among his most striking feats.

As a doctor he was exceedingly appreciated at Steffisburg, near Thoune, where he practised. PAUL MONTANDON.

Glokental, Thoune: August 8, 1907.

THE ACCIDENT ON THE PIZ BERNINA.

On the morning of August 5, SS. A. Kind and A. Weber, both members of the Turin section of the Italian Alpine Club, left the Tschierva Cabane to ascend the Bernina without guides. There had been a storm during the night. On the same day between 2.30 and 3 o'clock P.M. they were seen by a number of people from the Diavolezza climbing the north ridge of the Bernina. After that nothing more was seen of them. On August 7 a large party of guides and travellers found the bodies at the foot of the wall about midway between the Monte Rosso di Scerscen and the Bernina. The writer in the 'Rivista' thinks it probable that at the moment of the accident they had given up the ascent of the

Bernina as being too hazardous in the bad condition of the snow after the storm of the previous night, and that in returning either crest or cornice gave way under them.—'Rivista Mensile,' August 1907, p. 359.

THE ACCIDENT ON THE MATTERHORN.

On August 14 Dr. R. Helbling and Herren K. Imfeld and Spörri left the Schwarzsee above Zermatt to traverse the Matterhorn from the Italian side. After crossing the Furggjoch they went up to the Col du Lion, where they spent the night. On the 15th they got as far as the Pic Tyndall, where they were stopped by a furious *tourmente*, which raged all night. Spörri was overcome by the severity of the cold and perished in the arms of his comrades, who did all they could to save his life by administering restoratives and rubbing him. On the morning of the 16th, having placed the body under the shelter of a rock, they continued the ascent, thinking that it would be easier to descend by the Swiss side. But, exhausted as they were by the terrible night which they had passed, they did not reach the summit till 8 P.M., and were compelled to spend the night on the shoulder on the Swiss side. On the morning of the 17th they continued the descent, which was very slow and painful, owing to the state of exhaustion in which they found themselves. Presently Helbling, utterly knocked up, and with his hands and feet frost-bitten, stopped, incapable of movement, while Imfeld went on to seek for help. Eventually he fell in with some guides, to whom he told his story. The guides went up and brought Helbling down to the Schwarzsee, where in a terribly exhausted condition he rejoined his companion. Both had passed four days and three nights on the mountain at a distance from all help and in bad weather.

A body of guides went in search of the dead body of Spörri, but, owing to the excessive difficulty of carrying the body in their arms, they were compelled to throw it down to the Zmutt glacier tied up in a sack and bound with many folds of rope. It arrived below in a shapeless mass. This account is extracted from the 'Rivista Mensile' of the C.A.I. for August 1907, p. 364.

OTHER ACCIDENTS.

A large number of other accidents also took place. We mention a few of them. On July 5 M. Walther Stempel was killed in descending from the Grand Som. On July 29 S. Giuseppe de Gasperi was killed when attempting alone a very difficult climb on the Monte Civetta. On July 31 Mlle. C. Beyerinck was killed by a falling stone at a spot called La Pilliaz, near the Montenvers. On August 9 M. G. Gauthier, becoming giddy near the summit of the Aiguille du Goûter, slipped and fell: his body was found 500 mètres below. On August 16 Signorina A. M. Costamagna died of exposure on the Punta Gran Bagna. Herren E. Biedermann, Lehmkuhl, and H. Lehmann, said to be experienced

climbers, were killed on the Jungfrau on the descent on the Roththal side. Bad weather was the probable cause. We are sorry that we cannot give a full account of this accident.

NEW EXPEDITIONS IN 1907.

Dauphiné.

Pic Sans Nom (3,915 m. = 12,845 ft.). First Ascent from the Col du Pelvoux.—On June 20 Mr. E. L. Strutt and the guides Alois Pollinger, senior, and Joseph Pollinger, of St. Niklaus, left the Lemercier Club Hut at 3.35 A.M. and reached the Col du Pelvoux at 5.15 A.M., where a halt was made till 5.50. They then climbed up the E. arête of the Pic Sans Nom, keeping on the N. (Glacier Noir) side at first; they then turned on to the S.E. face and climbed a steep ice and snow couloir just to the right of the first buttress, descending towards the Sans Nom glacier. After ascending some 100 ft. they found themselves cut off by cliffs from regaining the arête, and were forced to descend and to traverse to the left on to a second buttress, which was gained by climbing a very difficult chimney, the rocks being iced, rotten, and overhanging in one part. They then continued traversing to the left over easy but very rotten rocks till the E. arête was regained. This again proved quite impracticable, and the traverse of the S.E. face had to be continued, in the course of which three more buttresses were crossed, the arête being then regained at a higher point. Being here of snow instead of rock it was followed for a very short distance. The party then, on reaching a very conspicuous tower, which may be mistaken for the summit, again turned left, and after crossing another buttress and excessively loose rocks were able to reach a conspicuous steep snow couloir, which they followed till it merged into easy rocks, by which they attained the summit in a few minutes (9.5 A.M.) They descended at 9.20, and being ignorant of the usual route, which according to Mr. Coolidge seems only to have been accomplished four times, preferred to go down the aforementioned conspicuous snow couloir till it ended in the rock rampart which cuts off the entire S.E. face from the Sans Nom glacier. They then traversed to the left, turning all the buttresses at their lowest extremities just above the rampart, without difficulty, but in pretty continuous danger from falling stones, till the last buttress—the first one traversed in the ascent—was reached. There they found themselves apparently cut off, though there seems to be somewhere a small couloir and 'rock crevice' by which Messrs. Coolidge and Gardiner effected an ascent on July 13, 1880, and accordingly were obliged to climb straight up the buttress about 300 ft. over difficult rocks, till they regained the chimney which had given trouble in the ascent. This was descended, and the Col du Pelvoux regained at 12.20 on the N.