

the snow gully to the right of our ridge, which reached a long way down towards the bottom of the mountain, and down which we enjoyed some moderate glissades. Next afternoon we were in Damascus, the most ancient city in the world.

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## DR. PACCARD'S LOST NARRATIVE: A NOTE.

By HENRY F. MONTAGNIER.

It is doubtful whether any chapter of the early history of mountain exploration has proved more attractive or more perplexing to students of Alpine literature than the conquest of Mont Blanc. The rival claims of Dr. Paccard and Jacques Balmat to the discovery of the route to the summit and the initiative of the expedition have been a matter of controversy for more than a century and a quarter. And, although a small library of books, pamphlets and magazine articles has been written about the subject during this long period, the question as to which of the two climbers played the leading rôle in their daring undertaking has not yet been satisfactorily settled.

It was asserted soon after the ascent that Dr. Paccard claimed far more than his due share of the credit for the successful expedition; that the route had been discovered by Balmat in the course of a perilous excursion alone above the snow-line, and that the doctor could never have reached the summit without the aid and encouragement of his more stalwart companion. An anonymous writer took up Dr. Paccard's defence in a brief note in the 'Journal de Lausanne' of February 24, 1787, and on May 12 the doctor published in the same journal two affidavits (each signed by Balmat in the presence of two witnesses), in which it is set forth that he, and not the guide, was the first to indicate the route and to lead the way to the summit, and that Balmat had accompanied him merely as a porter in the absence of the guide he usually employed, and had been duly paid for his services.

With the exception of a few passing allusions to his claims in letters in the 'Journal de Savoie' of Chambéry nearly forty years afterwards,\* these two documents are the only printed statement made by Dr. Paccard with reference to his ascent that has thus far been brought to light. Unfortunately for his cause, however, they remained hidden in the pages of the obscure periodical in which they appeared for more than a century, and, when finally unearthed and published by Mr. Whymper in his guide to 'Chamonix and the

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\* See the two letters reprinted in *A. J.* vol. xxv. pp. 621-4, in which Dr. Paccard maintained, after thirty-seven and thirty-nine years, that he was the first to indicate the 'ancien passage' as a route to the summit.

Range of Mont Blanc' in 1896, their value as evidence was seriously contested.\*

Balmat's case on the other hand was given the widest publicity from the very first. Less than six weeks after the ascent Marc-Théodore Bourrit, the Genevese Alpine traveller and author, published a little pamphlet on the expedition with the avowed object of securing fair treatment for the guide.† This version, which was based entirely upon Balmat's verbal account of the ascent, was soon translated into English and German and reprinted in a number of the most widely circulated journals of the Continent, and its influence, moreover, can be traced in the pages of nearly every writer who dealt with the subject during the ensuing fifty years.

Again in 1832, five years after Dr. Paccard's death and forty-six years after the great ascent, Balmat had the rare good fortune to find a sympathetic listener in Alexandre Dumas, *père*, and the interview with the old guide which the celebrated novelist published in his 'Impressions de Voyages en Suisse,' although now known to be little more than a series of grotesque exaggerations and imaginary incidents, has been reprinted in nearly all the recent books and articles on Mont Blanc as the most detailed, if not the most accurate, account of the ascent we possess.‡

Hence, if we bear in mind the fact that practically all our information about the matter is derived either from Balmat himself or from his most enthusiastic champion, Bourrit, it is not at all surprising to find that posterity has formed a rather poor estimate of Dr. Paccard's character and powers of endurance. Within recent years, however, and especially since the publication of Mr. C. E. Mathews' 'Annals of Mont Blanc,' there are signs of a change of opinion in Dr. Paccard's favour. It is felt with some reason that possibly history has not accorded him all the credit he deserved as one of the pioneers

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\* Mr. Whymper, while admitting that Balmat probably signed these documents, asks whether he knew what he was signing. According to a note recently found among the papers of H. A. Gosse, Paccard did resort to unfair means in order to obtain the guide's signature. Balmat at first refused to sign them; the doctor, however, persuaded him to attach his signature to a blank page promising to rewrite the document to his satisfaction. Several months later, when Balmat learned that the documents had been printed unchanged in the *Journal de Lausanne*, he had a heated discussion with Paccard over the matter, in the course of which they actually came to blows.

† *Lettre de M. Bourrit sur le Premier Voyage fait au Sommet du Mont Blanc le huit Août dernier*, dated September 20, 1787. The English translation is reprinted from the *Scots Magazine*, November 1786, in *Alpine Journal*, vol. xxv. pp. 609-12.

‡ See the various editions of Venance Payot's *Itinéraire de Chamonix; Jacques Balmat, or the First Ascent of Mont Blanc: a True Story*, by T. L. Oxley, 1881; *The First Ascent of Mont Blanc*, by Richard Edgcumbe, in the *National Review* for August 1892; Mr. Whymper's *Chamonix and the Range of Mont Blanc*, 1896; Mr. Mathews' *Annals of Mont Blanc*, 1898; Mr. Francis Gribble's *Early Mountaineers*, 1899, etc.

of mountaineering, and that upon further investigation many of the absurd stories that have clustered around his name may after all be due to the vanity and ill-will of his guide. In the hope of throwing some further light on this much-discussed question, I have made a careful, and not entirely unsuccessful, search during the last half-dozen years for unpublished documents relating to the first ascent of Mont Blanc, and especially for the book or pamphlet Dr. Paccard is supposed to have published about his expedition.

For the one document most needed to rehabilitate his memory, as well as to bring the long drawn out controversy to a close, is obviously his own account of the ascent. If it was ever printed it would assuredly have contained some reference to the charges made by Bourrit. In fact I am inclined to suspect that if it had been accessible to all who have written about the subject from the first, the conquest of Mont Blanc would appear in many of the recent books on the great mountain as a very commonplace affair, and that Balmat would now be known to us as a somewhat less heroic personage. But, although it is still generally believed that Dr. Paccard wrote and published a narrative of his expedition, his work has thus far eluded the most persistent researches. Not a single author has stated in unmistakable language that he has actually seen it ; \* nor has anyone yet given us the slightest idea of its contents, and, with one possible exception, to which I shall refer again, not a single quotation from it has ever been discovered. In fact the question as to whether or not it was ever printed is perhaps the most puzzling feature of the Paccard-Balmat controversy.

Apparently the first to appreciate the interest Dr. Paccard's work would offer as an historical document was M. Charles Durier, who spared no pains in his efforts to find a copy of it when collecting material for his well-known work on Mont Blanc in the early 'seventies.' † But, curiously enough, he seems to have felt some reluctance about admitting that he had not had access to so important a book, for his only reference to it is so ingeniously worded that it has led not a few of his readers to believe implicitly that he had actually consulted it. 'Balmat fut quelque peu déçu dans son calcul,' he wrote in a footnote, 'car dans la brochure que Paccard

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\* This assertion should, perhaps, be slightly modified, as M. Henri Mettrier, whose admirable studies of the early history of mountaineering should be read by everyone interested in the subject, writes in the November number of *La Montagne*, vol. vii. p. 643, 'une personne très compétente et très digne de foi m'a certifié avoir consulté cette plaquette en Avril 1906, à la Bibliothèque Nationale, où je l'ai vainement cherchée depuis.'

Personally, I have been assured by a number of Swiss booksellers that they were positive the narrative had passed through their hands, and one of them told me that he had seen a copy among the books of Mr. John Auldjo. But in later years they all admitted to me that they were mistaken.

† M. Durier's first book on the subject, *Histoire du Mont Blanc*, appeared in 1873. His better-known work, *Le Mont Blanc*, was published four years later.

publia à la suite de son ascension, il ne se fait pas faute de s'en attribuer presque tout le mérite. (*Premier voyage fait à la cime de la plus haute montagne du continent, par M. le Docteur Paccard, Lausanne, 1786.*)\* It is certain, nevertheless, that M. Durier had never seen it, for I am informed by Mr. Francis Gribble that the eminent French climber admitted to him 'quite unequivocally that he had searched for it in vain.'

Mr. Whymper also tried to run the missing narrative to earth when engaged in the preparation of his excellent guide to 'Chamonix and the Range of Mont Blanc,' of which the first edition appeared in 1896. After making fruitless inquiries in the libraries of London, Paris, Turin, Geneva, and Lausanne, he appealed to the descendants of Horace-Benedict de Saussure, who informed him that it was not to be found among the books of their celebrated ancestor. As a last resort he sent a circular letter to every inhabitant of the Chamonix valley whose address could be obtained, asking anyone fortunate enough to possess a copy of the desired work to communicate with him.† But it is almost needless to add that no reply was received. At Mr. Whymper's instance, M. Jules Janssen, the celebrated astronomer who established an observatory on the summit of Mont Blanc, caused similar inquiries to be made among the principal scientific bodies of the Continent with the same result.

Another very distinguished climber, Mr. C. E. Mathews, also took up the quest of the lost narrative before publishing his monograph on Mont Blanc in 1898, and evidence of the thoroughness of his search will be found in his advertisements in the most widely circulated Alpine journals of the Continent.‡ Though his efforts proved unavailing, he appears to have entertained no doubt whatever as to its existence. 'That Dr. Paccard's story was written and published,' he concluded, 'is beyond all doubt, but unfortunately it has been irretrievably lost. Probably it was printed for private circulation and not for sale.' §

Finally Mr. Francis Gribble endeavoured to unravel the mystery when writing his very entertaining work 'The Early Mountaineers,' published in 1899. A careful study of the question, and many inquiries in the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris,|| led him to the conclusion that the much sought for narrative

\* *Le Mont Blanc*, 4th edit. p. 109.

† Mr. Whymper assured me that his letter reached nearly every male resident of the Chamonix valley, and that hundreds of copies were sent to Cluses, Sallanches, Bonneville, Annecy and Chambéry.

‡ See *Bulletin du C.A.F.* December 1896, p. 366; *Alpina*, February 1897, p. 24; *Revue Alpine*, January 1897, p. 20; *Rivista Mensile del C.A.I.* December 1896, p. 545; and *Echo des Alpes*, January 1897, p. 32.

§ *The Annals of Mont Blanc*, p. 94.

|| Mr. Gribble writes that M. de Lisle of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris told him, that he never seen it quoted in a catalogue, and that the late Mr. Henry Mayhew, who purchased the foreign books for the British Museum, had also looked for it for years without result.

was in all probability a myth, and that the 'wild-goose chase' was very likely due to a bibliographical error.\* The result of my own researches, as the reader will see in the course of this paper, would seem to confirm Mr. Gribble's very shrewd suggestion.

I have mentioned here only a few very well-known instances of the time and trouble devoted to the pursuit of this elusive document. In addition to these, many private collectors, as well as the librarians of every Alpine club of any consequence in Europe, have been looking for it for years, and it may be safely asserted that every bookseller who deals in 'Alpina' has the title permanently in his list of desiderata.

My attention was first attracted to this fascinating bibliographical problem some seven or eight years ago by Mr. Whympcr, who, after recounting his own efforts to find a copy of Dr. Paccard's narrative during a ten years' search, recommended it as a promising field for investigation. Its discovery, he added by way of encouragement, would count as something of an achievement in the mountaineering world, and as I was then a resident of Geneva, where, if it was ever printed, a few copies must have remained, he strongly urged me to take up the matter. A few months later Mr. Whympcr very kindly sent me his notes relative to the subject, and I began the search in earnest.

At the outset the matter seemed very simple. For if, as M. Durier evidently thought, the lost narrative was published in Lausanne, I refused to believe that it could have completely disappeared without at least leaving some trace behind it, either there or in Geneva—two cities which then counted among their citizens such pioneers of Alpine travel as Horace-Benedict de Saussure, Bourrit, Marc-Auguste Pictet, Berthoud van Berchem, Béranger, and Charles Exchaquet, to mention but a few. With a little patience I fancied a copy might turn up as Mr. Freshfield has suggested,† bound in a volume of forgotten tracts or hidden in the pages of some obscure periodical. But a careful examination of the vast collections of tracts in the libraries of Lausanne and Geneva brought forth no result; nor did a tedious search page by page through the periodical literature from 1786 to 1790 prove more repaying. Upon applying for information to the Académie Royale des Sciences de Turin, of which Dr. Paccard was elected a corresponding member March 13, 1785, I received a courteous note from the secretary to the effect

\* *The Early Mountaineers*, pp. 174–176.

† *Paccard v. Balmat in Alpine Journal*, vol. xix. pp. 341–9. In a note to this valuable contribution to the literature of the subject Mr. Freshfield writes: 'It would be very useful if some enterprising publisher would put together and print in a small volume all the contemporary authorities I have cited.' And 'The search for Dr. Paccard's missing pamphlet should be persevered in.' I may, perhaps, be permitted to add here, that both Dr. Dübi of Berne and myself each have in preparation books which will include the documents mentioned by Mr. Freshfield, as well as a number of unpublished letters and journals by Dr. Paccard, De Saussure, Bourrit, Balmat, and Baron von Gersdorf.

that they possessed no documents whatever relating to the doctor or to his ascent of Mont Blanc. The De Saussure family very kindly allowed me to examine at leisure the books and papers of the great naturalist, but neither among his correspondence, which has been admirably preserved and classified, nor in his library could I find anything to explain the puzzle. From the descendants of Bourrit, Berthoud van Berchem,\* and Marc-Auguste Pictet,† I learned indirectly that they were unable to find anything among their family papers bearing upon the question. Through the courtesy of the mayor of Chamonix, M. Bossonnas, I was able to make a careful examination of the archives of the commune, among which I succeeded in finding a copy of Dr. Paccard's passport, and many references to his activity as mayor of Chamonix and magistrate, but little else of interest. M. J. P. Cachat, the venerable proprietor of the Hôtel du Mont Blanc in Chamonix, whose wife was a granddaughter of Dr. Paccard, was unable to render any assistance. He had never heard of the lost narrative, but as for the doctor's papers, he had a distinct recollection of certain boxes supposed to contain his letters and manuscripts. My hopes were short-lived, however, for he added that on opening them some fifty years ago he found the contents so damaged by rats that he had destroyed the whole lot. Nor could Adolphe Balmat, great-grandson of Dr. Paccard, from whom Mr. Mathews obtained the famous MS. Journal, find any other papers of interest.

Among the unpublished letters preserved in the Geneva library, however, I succeeded in finding a few important references to the subject. There was proof at any rate that less than seven weeks after the ascent Dr. Paccard had already announced his intention

\* Berthoud van Berchem was the author of a pamphlet entitled : *Excursions dans les Mines du Haut Faucigny, et Description de deux Nouvelles Routes pour aller sur le Buet et le Breven, avec une Notice sur le Jardin, Lausanne 1787*, and the first guide to the valley : *Itinéraire de la Vallée de Chamonix, Lausanne 1790*.

† Pictet published the following account of the ascent in *Les Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* of September 6, 1786 (reprinted in *Le Journal des Savans* of March 1787, p. 175) : ' Au moment où j'écris cette lettre j'apprends qu'on vient enfin d'atteindre le sommet du Mont-Blanc. M. Paccard, Docteur en Médecine, qui fait sa résidence au Prieuré de Chamouni, et qui joint à la vigueur nécessaire pour ces entreprises les connaissances d'histoire naturelle qui peuvent les rendre intéressantes, accompagné de Jacques Balmat, du Hameau des Pèlerins, y sont montés le 8 Août. On les a suivis avec des lunettes dans presque toute leur route, et on les a vus planter à ce sommet un bâton avec un mouchoir, qui atteste leur arrivée à la cime, où aucun homme sans doute n'était parvenu avant eux. Des guides de Chamouni au nombre de six, très robustes et très experts, avaient fait cette année au mois de Juin une tentative infructueuse, et l'on commençait à regarder la chose comme impossible, lorsqu'elle a été heureusement exécutée ; ils n'ont éprouvé d'autre mal, outre la fatigue, que la brûlure ordinaire du visage et des mains que produit l'action réunie de la neige et du soleil. En attendant que le Docteur publie les circonstances du voyage et ses observations, j'ai cru que cette simple notice ne vous serait pas indifférente.'

of publishing an account of his expedition. For on September 22, 1786, De Saussure's uncle, the Genevese naturalist, Charles Bonnet, wrote to his Scotch friend Mr. Clason :

' Il paroîtra incessamment à Genève une petite Relation du voyage du jeune Docteur Paccard et de son compagnon au Mont-Blanc. Ils ont eu les premiers la gloire de parvenir jusqu'au sommet du plus haut pic de ce Mont majestueux par une route inconnue jusqu'à eux et qui n'est pas dangereuse. Ce fut le 8 du mois passé qu'ils firent cette heureuse expédition. Ils grimperent pendant 14 heures et n'arrivèrent au sommet de la Montagne qu'à 6 heures du soir. Leur thermomètre étoit descendu à 6 degrés au dessous de la congélation, et le froid leur paroissoit tellement piquant qu'ils ne purent y demeurer en station qu'une demi-heure. Mon neveu, qui avoit eu une bonne carte de la nouvelle route, s'étoit mis aussi-tôt en chemin pour la même expédition ; mais les neiges tombées en abondance sur ces grandes hauteurs l'ont forcé de renvoyer l'expédition à l'année prochaine.'

On the following day, September 23, 1786, the naturalist wrote to Comte de Bielke, of Stockholm : ' Le jeune médecin de Savoye fait actuellement imprimer à Genève par souscription la curieuse Relation de son voyage. Il n'a pourtant pas vu beaucoup, mais le peu qu'il a vu piquera la curiosité du lecteur.'

Again, in a letter from Bonnet to M. Bailly of the Académie Royale des Sciences de Paris, dated November 3, 1786, we read : ' Vous aurez appris qu'un jeune Médecin des Alpes nommé Paccard et un montagnard, son compagnon de voyage, furent assez heureux le 8 août dernier pour parvenir les premiers des mortels sur la cime la plus élevée du fameux Mont-Blanc à 2426 toises au dessus du niveau de la mer. Vous savez que c'est le plus haut pic de notre ancien continent. Le Médecin a ouvert une souscription pour l'impression de son ouvrage ; mais il n'aura pas beaucoup à raconter, parce qu'il n'étoit pas muni des instrumens qui lui auroient valu des observations importantes, ni vêtu dans le rapport au froid de cette grande hauteur.'

Bourrit also alludes to the doctor's literary project in his pamphlet on the ascent : ' J'apprends déjà que M. le Médecin Paccard espère tirer des fruits de sa course ; qu'il s'est fait annoncer à Lausanne & s'y est fait voir comme le conquérant du Mont-Blanc, dont il promet une description pour laquelle il fait déjà souscrire : tandis que le pauvre Balmat, à qui l'on doit cette découverte, reste ignoré, & ignore qu'il y ait des Journalistes, des journaux, & que l'on puisse, par le moyen de ces trompettes littéraires, obtenir du Public une sorte d'admiration.'

The foregoing extracts left little doubt that the public had been invited to subscribe in advance for Dr. Paccard's narrative by a circular of some sort, but having found no mention of it in the contemporary journals, I concluded that the announcement was probably merely a manuscript note exposed in the windows of a few

bookshops in Geneva and Lausanne, of which there was little chance of ever finding a copy.

In 1909, however, I learned that a biography of Henri-Albert Gosse was about to appear in Geneva.\* Gosse, it will be remembered, was the author of the letter in the 'Journal de Genève' of September 15, 1787,† which gave rise to the erroneous belief that the first recorded passage of the Col du Géant was made in 1786 by the English traveller Mr. Hill. As a man of letters and scientist he was a well-known personage in his day, and he was interested in a wide range of subjects. Although prevented by lameness from undertaking any difficult climbs, he was nevertheless an enthusiastic Alpine traveller and a frequent visitor to the Chamonix valley. Knowing him, moreover, to have been on friendly terms with both Bourrit and Dr. Paccard, I hastened to write to Mdlle. Plan, his biographer, to inquire whether she had found anything of importance among his papers bearing upon eighteenth-century mountaineering. With a kindness for which I can scarcely express my gratitude, Mdlle. Plan placed at my disposal all the documents relating to the subject that she could find in the mass of material she had collected for her work. Among them there was a manuscript copy of the original French text of the Windham-Martel letters describing visits to Chamonix in 1741 and 1742, and hidden among its pages there was found a little printed circular, which, upon examination, turned out to be nothing less than the prospectus issued by Dr. Paccard as an appeal for subscriptions for the forthcoming account of his ascent of Mont Blanc. Its edges had been sadly mutilated by mice and one line had nearly disappeared, but fortunately the remainder is quite legible. The text of this unique document reads as follows :‡

SO[USCRIPTION] PREMIER VOYAGE A LA CIME DE LA PLUS  
HAUTE MONTAGNE DE L'ANCIEN CONTINENT, LE MONT-  
BLANC,

PAR LE DOCTEUR MICHEL-GABRIEL PACCARD,

Médecin dans les Alpes de Chamonix, Le 8 Août 1786.

LE Mont-Blanc, si renommé par les Voyageurs & les Savans, passe pour la plus haute montagne de l'ancien Continent ; il est couvert

\* *Un Genevois d'Autrefois, Henri-Albert Gosse (1755-1816)*, par Danielle Plan. Genève 1909.

† Reprinted in *Alpine Journal* for November 1878, vol. ix. pp. 87-9, by M. Durier. Gosse had planned to accompany Bourrit in his attempt on Mont Blanc of September 15-16, 1783, but was detained in Geneva at the last moment. See *Alpine Journal*, vol. xxiv. p. 420.

‡ I must acknowledge here my deep obligation to Mdlle. Plan for the communication of this document, and to Dr. Hector Maillard-Gosse, among whose family papers it was found, for his courtesy in allowing it to be reproduced. In the fac-simile published with this paper (which is copied from a photograph Dr. Maillard-Gosse very kindly had made for me), the reader will observe the words 'et par Jacques Balmat des Pelerins son guide' in the handwriting of Henri-Albert Gosse.

d'un manteau de neige & de glace qui traîne jusqu'à sa base : des foules de Voyageurs viennent l'admirer toutes les années & parcourir les Glaciers qui en découlent : les tentatives des chasseurs de chamois les plus hardis pour atteindre sa cime, ont échoué jusqu'à présent : L'Auteur y est parvenu le 8 Août 1786. Plusieurs amateurs des montagnes désirent connoître des détails de ce nouveau Voyage ; il en est même qui ont étendu leurs accueils jusqu'à solliciter une souscription pour former un prix qui fasse l'éloge & la récompense des Conquérens du Mont-Blanc : l'Auteur, pour mieux mériter ces accueils & pour . . . faisant le premier cette course, tâchera, dans la relation de son voyage, de renfermer tout ce qui peut les intéresser : il donnera une histoire abrégée des tentatives qui ont été faites pour escalader cette montagne, décrira les pierres & les rochers, autant qu'il lui a été permis de les observer, les insectes qui habitent ces lieux, les plantes rares que l'on trouve en y allant, & donnera ses observations physiques & médicales, &c. avec un Dressein de la route du Mont-Blanc, & toutes les notices nécessaires à ceux qui veulent visiter les Glaciers de Savoie.

'Le prix de la souscription du Livre avec la Planche gravée en taille douce, est de 6 liv. de France sur papier fin, & de 4 liv. 10 s. sur papier ordinaire. Les personnes d'une plus haute classe qui désirent concourir à former un prix à l'auteur de cette conquête, partageront quelques curiosités qu'on a trouvé sur le Mont-Blanc. Les noms des Souscripteurs seront imprimés à la tête de l'Ouvrage. On souscrit pour l'un & l'autre à Chamonix, aux Glacières de Savoie, chez l'auteur, où les amateurs pourront voir une collection des plantes & des pierres de ce singulier pays. On prie d'affranchir les lettres.

'La souscription sera ouverte jusqu'à fin de Décembre prochain. Quelques Voyageurs se trouvoient à Chamonix au moment que l'auteur faisait le plan de cette souscription ; leur empressement à souscrire lui fait espérer un heureux succès.

Mr. A. Trau[gott . . . de Gersdorf . . . ]

Mr. John Moore, Irlandais.

Mr. Henri Cerjat, Capitaine Anglois.

Mr. Robert Gordon, Capitaine Anglois.

Mr. le Comte Charles Imbonati, Milanois.

Madame Sannazari Imbonati, Milanoise.\*

Mr. François Zinammi, Milanois.'

With this prospectus before us it will be seen at once that

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\* The Countess Sannazari arrived in Chamonix a few days after the ascent bearing a letter of introduction from De Saussure to Jean-Pierre Tairraz. The text of this letter, in which the naturalist acknowledges the latter's note, sent by special courier to inform him of the successful expedition, will be found in *La Grande Chartreuse, le Mont Blanc etc.* by L. D. F. Audiffret, Paris 1845, pp. 84-7. It is translated into English in Albert Smith's *Story of Mont Blanc*, London, 1853.

Dr. Paccard evidently contemplated publishing something more ambitious than a mere pamphlet, for an account of the numerous unsuccessful attempts to reach the summit of Mont Blanc, with a narrative of the first ascent and chapters on the geology, botany and entomology of the great mountain, could hardly have been compressed within the limits of a brochure, as the work is now almost invariably described. The possibility of a book describing a feat which had aroused the greatest interest at the time—probably an octavo volume of at least a hundred pages—remaining unknown, or else deliberately ignored, for a century and a quarter, seemed so remote that doubts began to rise in my mind as to whether it was not, after all, a myth as Mr. Gribble had already suspected.

The prospectus, however, suggested at least one new clue that seemed worthy of investigation. On the third page the names of seven subscribers are given, and the first of them, though partially eaten away, can be clearly recognised as 'Mr. A. Traugott de Gersdorf.'

Late in the afternoon of August 8, 1786, two German travellers, Baron Adolphe Traugott de Gersdorf, of Meffersdorf, near Görlitz, and Charles André de Meyer, returned to Chamonix from an excursion to the Montanvert. On reaching the village they learned that the day before, at noon, Dr. Paccard and Jacques Balmat had set out for the Montagne de la Côte with the intention of attempting to attain the summit of Mont Blanc the next day. The two Germans at once looked for the climbers with their telescope, and after scanning for some time the upper slopes of the mountain, finally caught sight of them shortly after five o'clock ascending rapidly towards the summit. From a chalet on the north side of the valley, in which Bourrit frequently passed the summer months, they continued to watch the two adventurers, until at 6.23 they saw them reach the highest point and disappear on the south side. Dr. Paccard's father, the Royal Notary of the Chamonix valley, who was one of the witnesses of his son's triumph, at once asked the two Germans to sign an attestation to the effect that they had actually seen the two climbers on the summit. This document, which was duly signed after Dr. Paccard's return, was luckily discovered in Chamonix a few years ago by the late Dr. Michel Payot.\*

Gersdorf was much impressed by the daring achievement of which he had been one of the few spectators. On returning to Germany he reprinted Bourrit's pamphlet on the ascent, with an introduction in German soliciting contributions to a fund he was raising with the object of presenting Balmat with a suitable reward for the courage and determination he had displayed in the expedition.

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\* See *Document sur l'Ascension au Mont Blanc par le Dr. Paccard et J. Balmat (le 8 août 1786)*, in the *Revue Alpine*, vol. xi. pp. 90-91.

In the course of the following year he sent, through Bourrit, a considerable sum of money to the young guide.\*

With such evidence of his enthusiasm over the conquest of Mont Blanc, added to the fact that his name appeared first in the list of strangers who had already subscribed for Dr. Paccard's book, there seemed to be some chance of finding a copy of it among Gersdorf's papers and books if anywhere. But it was no easy matter to locate his papers. The German biographical dictionaries were silent as to his life, and I was unable to obtain the names of any of his descendants. I ventured, however, to write to the librarian of the Scientific Institute of Görlitz (which I had learned in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' possessed a very valuable library), to ask if he could oblige me with any information regarding this interesting traveller. To my delight I received soon afterwards a most courteous answer from Prof. Dr. Jecht, the secretary and librarian, informing me that Baron de Gersdorf was one of the founders of the institute, and had bequeathed to it the greater part of his papers and library. The lost narrative, as I had feared, was not to be found, but among the papers there was a number of letters from Dr. Paccard and Bourrit of the greatest interest. As these documents were far too numerous to be copied in Görlitz, Dr. Jecht very generously offered to lend them to any Swiss public library providing the request was made through the German Legation. This my friend Dr. Dübi, of Berne, was fortunately able to arrange by having them sent to the Swiss National Library.

According to the prospectus the subscription for Dr. Paccard's book was to close by the end of December 1786, and with one exception every author who has quoted the title appears to have believed that it was undoubtedly published in that year. But the Gersdorf papers afford us irrefutable proof that it had not yet appeared by the summer of the following year, for on May 3, 1787, Bourrit wrote to Baron de Gersdorf, 'Monsieur Paccard n'a rien écrit encore et son libraire de Lausanne n'a rien reçu de lui pour imprimer.' And on the 31st of the same month we find Dr. Paccard himself writing to Gersdorf to explain the delay :

'Je n'ai point encore publié la relation de mon premier voyage au Mont Blanc, Monsieur, mille entraves en ont été la cause. J'ai été en butte aux auteurs qui ont écrit sur nos Alpes jusqu'à présent.

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\* Gersdorf's sympathy for Balmat was probably due partly to a fact which has been overlooked by all who have written about the early history of Mont Blanc. In the *Registre des Décès* of the commune of Chamonix the following entry will be found :

'L'an mil sept cent quatre-vingt six et le huit du mois d'aoust est décédée sur les quatre heures du soir et le dix du même mois a été inhumée—Judith fille de Jacques Balmat et de Jeanne-Marie Simon, âgée de dix-huit jours.'

From this it will be seen that Balmat's child must have died less than two hours and a half before he reached the summit of Mont Blanc, and the day after he returned to Chamonix he must have been present at the funeral in the village churchyard.

Vous aurez sans doute vu la lettre de Mr. Bourrit sur le premier voyage, puisqu'il assure dans le Journal de Lausanne que vous l'avez fait réimprimer avec une préface en allemand. Vous aurez peut-être appris que le même auteur se flatte que vous lui avez écrit *que vous aviez vu avec peine l'indifférence pour ne pas dire plus du Docteur Paccard à l'égard de son guide.* C'est pour me justifier que j'y ai pareillement fait imprimer le certificat que j'ai l'honneur, Monsieur, de vous envoyer ci-joint. . . . Voudriez-vous me faire part en français de la préface de la lettre que vous avez fait imprimer, qui j'espère doit faire mauvaise figure à la tête d'une si mauvaise et si méchante lettre.' \*

We may gather from these two extracts that even by midsummer 1787 Dr. Paccard had not succeeded in getting subscribers enough to enable him to publish his book, and his own resources were probably too limited to permit him to print it at his own expense. The lack of enthusiasm on the part of the public was due partly, perhaps, to the accusations made by Bourrit that he had acted unfairly towards his guide, but mainly to the general belief that he would have little of importance to relate in the way of scientific observations. It must be remembered that a mere record of mountain adventure would have attracted but little attention at that time. The public was far more interested in the readings of various scientific instruments on the summit than in the difficulties experienced by the two climbers.

Nearly two years after the ascent Dr. Paccard was apparently still at work on his book, if we may judge by the following reference in a letter by the German poet Frederick Matthisson, dated July 7, 1788 :

'We also visited Dr. Pakkard, who gave us a very plain and modest account of his ascension, for which he does not appear to assume to himself any particular merit, but asserts that anyone with like physical powers might have performed the task equally well. He is at present employed in a work upon the glaciers, which will contain the results of many years' examination into their origin. From an intelligent man who lives at their very foot, and can observe them at every season, we may reasonably expect something satisfactory relative to so important and curious a subject.' †

As Matthisson does not mention any previous publication by Dr. Paccard relative to his ascent, it would seem that the narrative had not yet appeared at the time of his visit to Chamonix. Possibly the doctor had changed the plan of his book, and decided to add a

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\* From the Gersdorf papers in the library of the Oberlausitzischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaft in Görlitz. I must express here my very sincere thanks to Dr. Prof. Jecht, the secretary of this society, for his kindness in connection with these valuable MSS.

† *Letters written from various parts of the Continent between the years 1785 and 1794. Translated from the German of Frederick Matthisson by Anne Plumtre, London 1799, p. 130.*

few chapters on the study of the glaciers, but in any case it cannot be doubted that the work he had in hand in the summer of 1788 would have contained something about the ascent.

In the first account of his ascent of Mont Blanc, published towards the end of August 1787, De Saussure does not mention any publication by Dr. Paccard, but in vol. vii. p. 223 of his '*Voyages dans les Alps*,' which did not appear until 1796, he wrote: '*Le succès de cette entreprise a été connu du public par les relations qu'en ont données le D. Paccard et M. Bourrit.*' This reference, which has been brought forward as proof of the existence of the lost narrative, I take to be an allusion to the famous certificates or affidavits published by Dr. Paccard in the '*Journal de Lausanne.*' For the editor himself described them thus: '*Nous recevons aujourd'hui copies des Relations ou certificats. . . .*'\*

In 1795 Lalande, the celebrated astronomer, visited the Chamonix valley, and published an account of his journey under the title '*Voyage au Mont Blanc*' in the '*Magasin Encyclopédique*' of the following year. He called on Dr. Paccard to hear from him the story of the great ascent, and gives many details, learned in the course of his chat with him, but it is a significant fact that he does not say a word about the lost narrative. One can hardly believe that Dr. Paccard would have carried his modesty so far as not to present a copy of his book to his illustrious visitor had he ever published it; and it is not likely that Lalande would have passed it over in silence had his attention been called to it.

During the rest of his life—and Dr. Paccard survived his famous ascent by more than forty years—many travellers came to pay their respects to him as the conqueror of Mont Blanc. He lived to see fourteen climbers follow in his footsteps to the summit.† Several of the latter were indebted to him for much courtesy in lending them scientific apparatus, and nearly all of them published accounts of their ascents. Yet one searches in vain in their books and pamphlets for the slightest allusion to a narrative of the first ascent.

In 1854, twenty-seven years after Dr. Paccard's death, we find a passing reference to the matter in a pamphlet by Michel Carrier, entitled: '*Notice Biographique sur Jacques Balmat dit Mont Blanc,*' p. 17. The author was born in Chamonix in 1797, and was consequently about thirty years of age at the time of Dr. Paccard's death, and claimed to have known him intimately.

'Après quelques jours d'intervalle, M. Paccard rédigea la relation de leur voyage. S'il ne put l'enrichir d'un grand nombre d'observations, ce n'est pas faute de connaissances; l'incertitude du

\* Dr. André Matthey also seems to refer to these documents in his article in the *Bibliothèque Universelle* for May 1834, p. 53, in which he wrote in parenthesis '*Voyez la relation du Dr. Paccard.*'

† Of these De Saussure, Beaufoy, Matzewsky, Van Rensselaer, Howard, Undrell, Clissold, Jackson, Markham Sherwill and Clark published narratives of their ascents, and most of them mention having met Dr. Paccard.

The three following illustrations are fac-simile reproductions of Dr. Paccard's Prospectus of the book he intended to publish on the first ascent of Mont Blanc. From an unique copy of the original in the Library of Dr. Hector Maillard-Gosse, of Geneva.

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## PREMIER VOYAGE

ALA CIME DE LA PLUS HAUTE MONTAGNE DE L'ANCIEN CONTINENT,

### LE MONT-BLANC,

Par le Docteur MICHEL-GABRIEL PACCARD,

Médecin dans les Alpes de Chamonix.

*et par Joseph Balmat son guide*  
Le 8 Août 1786.

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**L**E Mont-Blanc, si renommé par les Voyageurs & les Savans, passe pour la plus haute montagne de l'ancien Continent; il est couvert d'un manteau de neige & de glace qui traîne jusqu'à sa base: des foules de Voyageurs viennent l'admirer toutes les années & parcourir les Glaciers qui en découlent: les tentatives des chasseurs de chamois les plus hardis pour atteindre sa cime, ont échoué jusqu'à présent: l'Auteur y est parvenu le 8 Août 1786. Plusieurs amateurs des montagnes désirèrent connoître les détails de ce nouveau Voyage; il en est même qui ont étendu leurs accueils jusqu'à solliciter une description pour former un prix qui fasse l'éloge & la récompense des Conquérens du Mont-Blanc: l'Auteur, pour mieux mériter ces accueils & pour

...en faisant  
le premier cette courbe, s'achèvera, dans la relation  
de son voyage, de renfermer tout ce qui peut  
les intéresser : il donnera une histoire abrégée  
des tentatives qui ont été faites pour escalader  
cette montagne, décrira les pierres & les rochers,  
autant qu'il lui a été permis de les observer,  
les insectes qui habitent ces lieux, les plantes  
rares que l'on trouve en y allant, & donnera  
ses observations physiques & médicales, &c.  
avec un Dessin de la route du Mont-Blanc,  
& toutes les notices nécessaires à ceux qui veu-  
lent visiter les Glaciers de Savoye.

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LE prix de la souscription du Livre avec la Planche gravée en taille-douce, est de 6 liv. de France sur papier fin, & de 4 liv. 10 s. sur papier ordinaire. Les personnes d'une plus haute classe qui désirent concourir à former un prix à l'auteur de cette conquête, partageront quelques curiosités qu'on a trouvées sur le Mont-Blanc. Les noms des Souscripteurs seront imprimés à la tête de l'Ouvrage. On souscrit pour l'un & l'autre à CHAMONIX, aux Glacieres de Savoye, chez l'auteur, où les amateurs pourront voir une collection des plantes & des pierres de ce singulier pays. On prie d'affranchir les lettres.

La souscription sera ouverte jusqu'à la fin de Décembre prochain.

Quelques Voyageurs se trouvoient à CHAMONIX au moment que l'auteur faisoit le plan de cette souscription ; leur empressement à souscrire lui fait espérer un heureux succès.

Mr. *A. Tronchi* de Gênes.  
Mr. *John Moore*, Irlandois.  
Mr. *Henri Cerjat*, Capitaine Anglois.  
Mr. *Robert Gordon*, Capitaine Anglois.  
Mr. le Comte *Charles Imbonati*, Milanois.  
Madame *Sannazari Imbonati*, Milanoise.  
Mr. *François Zinammi*, Milanois.

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On peut également souscrire ,

- à AMSTERDAM, chez M. *Changuion*.
- à BASLE, chez M. *Serini*.
- à BERLIN, chez M. *La-Garde*.
- à BERNE, chez M. *Emmanuel Haller*.
- à BOLOGNE, chez MM. *Guibert & Bouchard*.
- à BRUXELLES, chez M. *Le Maire*.
- à FRANCFORT, chez M. *Streng*.
- à GENES, chez M. *Yves Gravier*.
- à GENEVE, chez MM. *Barde Manget & Comp.*
- à LA HAYE, chez M. *Goffe*.
- à LAUSANNE, chez MM. *J. P. Heubach & Comp.*
- à LEIPZIC, chez M. *Junius*.
- à LONDRES, chez M. *Elmsli*.
- à LYON, chez M. *Louis Rossét*, rue Merciere.
- à MILAN, chez MM. *Reycends*, Freres.
- à PARIS, chez M. *Buiffon*, Hôtel de Mesgrigny, rue Poetevins.
- à PARME, chez MM. les Freres *Faurer & Comp.*
- à ST. PÉTERSBOURG, chez M. *Weitbrecht*.
- à ROME, chez MM. *Bouchard & Gravier*.
- à TURIN, chez MM. *Reycends*, Freres.
- à VENISE, chez MM. *Foresti & Bettinelli*.
- à VIENNE en Autriche, chez M. *Græffer*.
- à ZURIC, chez MM. *Orel, Gessler, Fuchsli & Comp.*

succès, la spontanéité du départ, le peu de temps qu'ils restèrent sur la cime, et plus que tout l'impossibilité d'y porter à eux deux des instruments de physique, en furent la cause. Il était réservé à l'illustre de Saussure, qui fit l'ascension en août 1787, de rendre compte au monde savant de l'intéressante série d'observations que le temps lui permit d'y faire.'

It should be noted that, while Carrier says that Dr. Paccard wrote an account of the ascent, he does not say that it was ever published; in fact he rather conveys the impression that De Saussure was the first to publish a narrative of the ascent of Mont Blanc. Yet he must have known all about the mystery, and if the lost work had ever existed he would certainly have heard of it.

Stéphen d'Arve (Vicomte Edmond de Catelin) assures us in his 'Histoire du Mont Blanc,' published in 1876, p. 307, that Dr. Paccard published only a geological treatise,\* from which we may infer that he also was certain that the narrative never existed. As he was well acquainted with Michel Carrier it is possible that he learned something about the matter from him.

In the foregoing pages I have considered only the evidence, which would seem to prove that the mysterious book was never printed. I have shown that it was certainly not published by the summer of 1787, and probably not by the summer of the following year, and that the few people who wrote from personal knowledge of Dr. Paccard, such as De Saussure, Bourrit, Matthiesson, Lalande, and the early Mont Blanc heroes, had apparently never heard of it.

Let us now turn to the series of books in which the title of the narrative is quoted as that of a work which was undoubtedly printed.

The earliest printed mention I have heard of occurs in an anonymous work entitled 'Notice Historico-Topographique de la Savoie,' edited and printed in Chambéry towards the close of 1787 or early in 1788,† by Jean Lullin, on p. 50 of which we read:

'*Chamonix*, dans le Haut-Faucigny, très connu par ses *Glacières* et ses hautes Montagnes, entre lesquelles on remarque le *Mont-Blanc*, dont la cime, toujours couverte de neige, est le point le plus élevé de l'ancien Monde. On voit de-là toute la Savoie à ses pieds, comme enfermée entre le cours du Rhône et celui de la chaîne des Alpes. Le cours du Rhône ne peut mieux ressembler qu'à un C, qui embrasse la Savoie au Nord-ouest; et le cours de la chaîne centrale des Alpes représente très-bien un 7, qui la sépare de la Val d'Aoste et du

\* The only work Dr. Paccard is known to have published is a well-written article in *Observations sur la Physique, sur l'Histoire Naturelle et sur les Arts etc.* for July 1781, vol. xviii., entitled 'Extrait de quelques lettres du Docteur Paccard sur les causes de l'arrangement en arc, en feston, en coin, &c., et de la direction oblique, perpendiculaire, horizontale, des couches vraies et apparentes etc.' It was probably to this article that he owed his election as corresponding member of the Turin Academy.

† No date appears on the title-page, but permission was granted to print it on September 7, 1787. In the *Preface de l'Éditeur* Lullin describes the work as a compilation made from various sources.

Piémont . . . . Les provinces qui avoisinent la chaîne centrale des Alpes, sont les plus montagneuses ; elles sont hérissées de petites montagnes composées par les revêtements secondaires du Globe, dont il n'est resté que des lambeaux au milieu des sillons creusés en partie par les eaux qui fuyoient la chaîne centrale . . . . Le plus grand espace plat que l'on remarque, est dans la Province du Genevois . . . . (*Voyez le Premier Voyage fait à la Cime de la plus haute Montagne de l'ancien Continent, par M. le Docteur Paccard*). \*

This passage is, I believe, the only reference to the missing narrative that can possibly be taken for a quotation from it.† The only description of the view from the summit of Mont Blanc which had been published down to the end of 1787 was De Saussure's 'Relation Abrégée,' but there is nothing in the great naturalist's narrative to which the foregoing details can be traced, and it would be difficult, to say the least, for anyone who had not stood on the summit to have imagined them. It is possible however that Lullin may have had access to Dr. Paccard's manuscript, or that the note about Chamonix and Mont Blanc was written by the doctor himself. The title is given about as it appears in the prospectus, but no date is mentioned, a fact which seems to confirm one or the other of these two theories.

We hear nothing further about the matter until 1807, when Abbé Jean-Louis Grillet published a very learned compilation entitled 'Dictionnaire Historique, Littéraire et Statistique des Départemens du Mont-Blanc et du Léman,' in which the following notice of Dr. Paccard appears in the article on Chamonix (vol. ii. p. 197) :

'M. Paccard (Michel), docteur médecin et membre correspondant de l'Académie des sciences de Turin, qui le premier parvint le 8 août 1786, avec Jacques Balmat, à la sommité du Mont-Blanc, regardée jusqu'alors comme inaccessible. Il publia la relation et les difficultés de son entreprise dans l'ouvrage intitulé :

'*Premier voyage fait à la cime de la plus haute montagne du continent, 1786.*

'M. Bacler d'Albe, qui a séjourné si longtemps à Sallanches, a peint et gravé le portrait de M. Paccard ‡ avec cette épigraphe :

'*Scendit inaccessos brumali sydere montes.*'

Here we have the title quoted, with the addition of the date, 1786,

\* The three series of four dots each (thus . . . .) occur in the original text.

† I am indebted to Dr. W. A. B. Coolidge for the communication of this very important reference to the lost narrative, and also for a number of valuable suggestions.

‡ A copy of this very rare portrait may be seen in the Alpine Club Library. Louis-Albert-Guislain Bacler d'Albe (1761-1824) lived in Sallanches from 1786 to 1793, when he enlisted in the French Army. After a brilliant career as a military engineer, he was appointed by Napoleon director of his topographical cabinet with the rank of brigadier-general, and the title of Baron of the Empire. See *Michel Paccard et Jacques Balmat : Deux Portraits Savoyards du XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle par un Artiste Savoisien devenu Général de l'Empire*, by M. J. Cochon, Chambéry 1908.

but as Grillet also mentions the 'Notice Historico-Topographique' elsewhere in his work, it is not at all improbable that he simply copied it from that book, assuming that it had actually been printed.

Five years later we find a mention of the lost narrative in Philippe-Xavier Leschevin's 'Voyage à Genève et dans la Vallée de Chamouni' (p. 245), published in 1812.

'Le Docteur Paccard étoit membre correspondant de l'académie de Turin. A la suite de son voyage à la cime du Mont-Blanc il fit paroître l'ouvrage intitulé : *Premier voyage fait à la cime de la plus haute montagne du continent*, 1786, in-8vo. Son portrait a été peint et gravé par M. Bacler d'Albe, avec cette épigraphe, etc.'

Leschevin mentions both the 'Notice Historico-Topographique' and Grillet's 'Dictionnaire' in his introduction (pp. 18 and 27), and his notice of Dr. Paccard is clearly borrowed almost word for word from the latter work. The fact that he gives the format of the lost narrative has been brought forward as evidence that he must have seen it. The addition of 'in-8vo' to the title, however, was probably only a plausible inference, as the book was not likely to have been of any other format.\*

The next mention is found in a bibliographical work running into many volumes by Joseph Marie Quérard in 1836, and entitled 'La France Littéraire ou Dictionnaire Bibliographique . . . des XVIII et XIX Siècles' (vol. vi. p. 541) :

'Paccard (Michel), docteur médecin et membre correspondant de l'Académie des Sciences de Turin : né à Chamonix, commune et vallée du Haut-Faucigny.—*Voyage (premier) fait à la cime de la plus haute Montagne du Continent (le Mont-Blanc)* 1786. Paccard fut le premier qui parvint le 8 août 1786 avec Jacques Balmat, à la sommité du Mont-Blanc, regardée jusqu'alors comme inaccessible. Le brochure qu'il a publiée contient la relation de son ascension et les difficultés de son entreprise.'

Here again the information is copied almost literally from Grillet, whose work and that of Leschevin are both mentioned by the author.† These four references to Dr. Paccard's book, dating back to 1787, 1807, 1812 and 1836, complete the early bibliography of the subject,‡ but it is extremely doubtful whether any of these

\* In his introduction Leschevin gives a bibliography of works relating to Savoy, in which the title of the lost narrative appears (No. xxviii), but without the format and place of publication, although these useful details are given in connection with nearly every well-known book in the list. At least one other work is mentioned (No. xxxiv, *Le voyage curieux d'un Lord Anglois en Faucigny*), which has never as far as I am aware been found, and in this instance also only the title is given.

† Vol. iii. p. 447, and vol. v. pp. 237-238.

‡ Among the more recent works in which the title of Dr. Paccard's narrative is quoted I may mention : *Swiss Travel and Swiss Guide-Books*, by Dr. W. A. B. Coolidge, 1889, p. 132, in which it is cited on the authority of M. Durier ; *Savoie et Savoyards* by M. François Descostes, 1889, p. 307 ; *An Account of Shelley's Visits to Switzerland and Savoy*, by Mr. C. Elton, 1894, p. 107 ; and

four authors ever saw a copy of it, especially in the case of the last three. Yet there is a curious development in their accounts of it, which is not easily explained. Thus Lullin, in 1787, gives only the title without the date; Grillet in 1807 adds that it was published in 1786, and Leschevin in 1812 mentions both the date and the format. Moreover, while both Grillet and Leschevin describe it rather vaguely as an 'ouvrage,' Quérard, in 1836, informs us that it was a brochure, although I have already shown that Dr. Paccard probably intended to publish a good-sized volume.

I have now quoted, I believe, every important reference to Dr. Paccard's book, from the time the public was first invited to subscribe for it in the autumn of 1786 down to the present day. What conclusion are we to form as to its existence? With the evidence before us, and at any rate until further light is brought to bear on the question, I think we are justified in believing that it was never printed. The legend of the lost narrative is very probably due to Lullin, who in quoting the title in his 'Notice Historico-Topographique de la Savoie' doubtless thought the book had already appeared or that it was soon to be published. For my part I have accepted this conclusion very reluctantly, and I confess I find it hard to abandon the hope that some day some lucky collector may yet run across a copy of a book that has been the object of so much fruitless research.

### MOUNTAINEERING IN SIKKIM AND GARHWAL.

MR. KELLAS sends us the following diary of his very successful Himalayan Expedition in 1910, the third he has undertaken. It will be noted that a number of ascents of over 20,000 ft. were made with none but native companions.

- April 24. Started from Lachen, 8 days' march N. of Darjeeling.  
Bridges over Tumrachen and Lonach Chu had to be built.
27. Near Green Lake. Heavy snowstorm.
29. Green Lake Plain (15,400 ft.). Snowstorm at night.
- May 1. Ascend to 18,000 ft. N.E. of Green Lake. Route over snowpeak possible but difficult.
2. Ascend to 18,000 ft. N. of Green Lake. No easy pass could be found.
4. Ascend Tent Peak icefall and examine Green Lake Glacier.
5. Ascend to Nepal Gap (21,000 ft.). Small rock wall at summit not ascended.

finally the *Bibliographie Nationale Suisse (Voyages)*, by Herr Wäber, 1899, p. 176 —who adds the following note in parenthesis: 'Obwohl eine Schrift unter diesem Titel von Ch. Durier: Le Mont-Blanc, 3ième édit. p. 109, Paris 1881, erwähnt wird, ist es doch fraglich, ob eine solche wirklich existirt.'