From Cogne to Ceresole.

By W. N. LING.

THE year was 1914 and our holiday was a short one, not from any foreknowledge of events, but from other causes, and we had determined to pack as much into the fortnight as we could.

We were a party of three, G. Sang, H. MacRobert, and the writer, and our plan was to travel from Cogne to Ceresole by peak and pass and to finish up with the traverse of Monte Viso, an ambitious programme for the time at our disposal.

We arrived at Cogne on the evening of July 25 and spent the next day in examining the conditions. The upper slopes showed new snow, but the weather was promising. In the evening we had an agreeable surprise in the addition to our party of Arnold Brown, who had come up from Genoa for two or three days.

Our first object was to avenge a twofold repulse which the Grivola had inflicted upon us two years before, and we were up, bright and early, at 1 A.M. on the 27th, and left Cogne at 2.10. At first the light of the stars sufficed, but when the track grew faint the lantern came into action. We reached the Pousset chalets at 5.20, and halted for breakfast above them from 5.30 to 6.30 in the morning sun.

Then on to Col Pousset, 8.15, where our mountain lay before us, draped in a white mantle which stood out sharply against the lowering clouds beyond. The weather looked bad, and we decided to wait an hour to see whether there was any hope of improvement. At 9.30 it was rather better.

> 'Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice
> And the third time may prosper, get thee hence';

so we got hence, hoping to prosper, and with a little difficulty got down to the glacier and ploughed our weary way through the soft snow to the foot of the couloir. Noon.

The conditions were very bad: icy rocks and bad snow. After we had progressed some distance, MacRobert and Brown decided that a party of four would take too long, and as Sang and I had set our hearts on a bid for victory, they turned

and left us to battle with the icy foe. Our way led up slabby rocks, then snow, up which we could kick steps, till we got on the rock ridge between the two couloirs, which under the conditions was not easy.

Then into the second couloir, where we kicked steps, and so to the ridge and summit, 4.30. The weather was now bad, a cold strong wind and driving snow, so there was no temptation to linger. We went down the couloir, rope's length at a time, and found some difficulty in getting on to the glacier, 7.15.

The wind was now very strong and cold, and we fought our way across to Col Pousset, 8.0, and quickly scampered down to the Pousset chalets for shelter and food. They were untenanted. We made tea, and then, though the hour was 9.45, decided to push on for Cogne.

We lost the track, but reached a chalet, where there was a light, about 11. Its occupant asked whence we had come, and when we told him the Grivola, 'Pauvres enfants!' was all he had to say.

He told us there was a path through the wood, but we were quite unable to find it, and got into difficult ground with huge steep slabs, so when our candle failed us we found a gîte and waited for daylight. At 3.45 we moved on and were back at Cogne at 5.30. The schedule had provided for this day to be spent in going to the Herbetet chalets at the head of Valnontey, but after our long day we fell from grace, and spent it in bathing and slumber.

We heard talk in the hotel of friction between Austria and Serbia, but this was nothing unusual, and did not interest us so much as the weather prospects.

On July 29 we walked up to the Herbetet chalets in the afternoon and made ourselves very comfortable.

4.30 next morning saw us starting for the Herbetet. The snow was in good condition on the glacier, and we were on the col at 6.50. It was a fine morning, but there was some mist. We took to the ridge and at 9 o'clock found a comfortable place for breakfast, which kept us till 10.

After that there was a lot of ice, and the party of four made very slow progress. The overhanging chimney, which is one of the most difficult problems in the climb, was full of ice, but MacRobert overcame it in good style. Time, however, was flying; it was now 2 o'clock, and as I had been up two years before I untied to let the party of three make better

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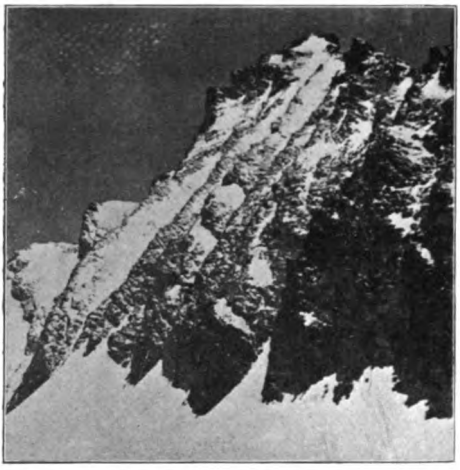
LA GRIVOLA, FROM MONT EMILIUS.



LA GRIVOLA, FROM TRAJO GLACIER

S. ARÊTE OF GRAND PARADIS.

HERBETET CHALET (FACING S.E.).

speed to the not far distant summit, more particularly as the weather was showing signs of change.

Soon after they had gone it got quite misty and cold, and the rocks got very icy, as also did the snow on the ledges.

After some time I heard voices through the mist on the N. ridge, and thought they had varied their route, but on hailing them I found that it was another party traversing the mountain.

At 5 o'clock they rejoined me, having found great difficulty on account of the ice. The weather was now thoroughly bad, a strong wind with hail, and the rocks were very icy, so that great care was necessary. We were back at the col at 8.30 and the glacier went all right, but it was dark when we got off.

We had some difficulty in finding the track, but reached the hut at 10, where a fire and some hot soup put a brighter complexion on life. Next morning, to our sorrow, Brown left us to return to Genoa, while we spent the day prospecting the route for the Gran Paradiso, which was our next goal. In the afternoon a porter came up with further provisions.

We were away at 1.45 next morning. The stars were not enough to light us, and we needed the lantern as far as the cairn above the foot of the glacier, 3.15.

It was rough going over the moraine and the stones to the foot of the Glacier di Dzasset. Frozen scree and hard snow formed our path to the more level Glacier della Tribolazione, where the snow was excellent, and we made good progress by the route we had picked out the day before.

Near the rocks in the middle of the glacier we halted for breakfast, 5.50 to 6.15, and had a charming view of the Matterhorn and other peaks, now lit by the morning sun.

After breakfast we went on under the Punta di Ceresole and the Cresta Gastaldi to the foot of the Colle dell'Ape, 11,700 ft., at 7.45. We took to the couloir, which at first gave good going, but as the sun gained power the ice, with which the storms of the last few days had plastered the rocks, came hurtling down, and we had warily to keep close to the side to avoid being hit. One of the party stopped a piece, fortunately with his rucksack instead of his head, and there was a considerable dent in his cooker when we came to examine it afterwards. A final rush took us to the foot of the rocks leading to the col of the Roc di Gran Paradiso, which were badly iced, and we had some hard climbing before we gained

the col at 11.45. We followed the ridge to the summit, 12.55. The view was magnificent; Monte Viso was particularly fine, and we saw some beautiful cloud effects. We had the usual easy run off, and when we came to some nice flat rocks above the Victor Emmanuel hut we halted for two delightful hours to make tea and bask in the sun.

Then we descended to the hut, where a bathe and an excellent dinner fittingly concluded the best day of our holiday.

The shapely beauty of the Becca di Monciair had inspired the wish to climb it from the Colle di Ciarforon on our way to Ceresole, and we left the hut at 6.45 and went up the Glacier di Moncorvé, and the Glacier di Monciair to the Colle di Ciarforon, 9.30. When we arrived at the col the weather was threatening, and we decided that we had better get down while we could, so abandoned the Becca. We had read in Ball that a cable helped the traveller down the rocks from the col, but we were quite unable to find it, so had to descend without. The rocks were not easy, very slabby in parts, and there was one rather tricky overhanging chimney to descend, with much loose scree above, which required care. Our eyes were gladdened by the beautiful blue of the clumps of *Eritrichium nanum*, which grew here in comparative abundance.

We descended the glacier di Breuil, escaping the cut-off by a bouquetin track on the right, and were soon at the commencement of the King's hunting path, where we stopped for refreshment. Then on down the path, with beautiful effects from the mists, which now enfolded, now revealed the heights from which we had come and the depths which lay before us, and emphasised that feeling of entering a new world which so often accompanies the descent into a valley of Italy. Over against us towered the Levanna, like a castle of dreams, and so we came to Ceresole.

Here we met two other members of the Club who had just come over from the French side, and told us that their porter had been mobilised.

The next day, August 3, Red War was afoot and our holiday at an end. We made all speed to Turin and then on to Genoa, whence eight days later the good ship *Cretic* conveyed us and many other refugees in safety back to our native land.