attacks on the Himalayas which we hope will take place after the war.

As usual, we are under great obligations to Mr. Sydney Spencer and Mr. G. P. Baker for their services in connection with picture exhibitions. Latterly there has been difficulty in arranging exhibitions by reason of the scarcity of exhibits, but the Honorary Secretary, never at a loss, has succeeded in securing in their place two exhibitions not provided by the Club, one of which we now see round us.

I cannot end without a word as to the Honorary Secretary, but I find a difficulty in the fact that, after all, the stock of laudatory adjectives is limited and I must not repeat myself too often. Perhaps I had better confine myself to saying that I endorse every word said by Sir Edward Davidson and Mr. Broome, and to adding for myself that he has made my term of office much less onerous and even more agreeable than it would have been without him.

He has added to the gratitude we owe him by undertaking to carry on the work of Honorary Secretary until his successor, Major Gask, is freed from his military duties.

I conclude by offering my thanks to all the members of the Club, in and out of office, for the kindness, courtesy, and consideration I have experienced from all of them, and by expressing my hope that my successor may soon be able to celebrate the conclusion of peace and a return to our ordinary life, freed from the cloud of sorrow and anxiety caused by the war.

The Alps from 1856 to 1865.

I HAVE been told that a few reminiscences of 'the days that are no more' would be welcome to those members of our Club—and they are now a great majority—who, for the best of reasons, never had experience of them. My first inclination was to reply in the words of the Needy Knife-Grinder, 'Story! I have none to tell'; for so much may be read of those early days in books such as 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers,' Forbes' 'Travels through the Alps of Savoy,' Hinchliff's 'Summer Months among the Alps,' and Wills' 'Wanderings in the High Alps,' to name no others. But on reflecting that the increased Alpine literature and wider outlook of the

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present day have relegated these books to the rank of classics—praised by many, but read by few—I thought that a small collection from an old man's memories might enable our worthier successors to realise that, though the peaks themselves have but slightly changed, the ways of men are greatly altered. I have selected the period from 1856 to 1865, because in the former year I had my first view of the Alps, when I spent a Long Vacation, with a small reading party, at Lausanne and Ouchy, taking a 'week off' to visit Chamonix and the Great St. Bernard, and because eight of the next nine summer holidays were passed in varied mountain rambles between the Viso and Chur, my acquaintance with the Engadine and Tyrol not beginning till 1867.

First as to how we then got to the peaks and glaciers. That was not so easy a matter as it had become before 1914. Though, when I crossed the Channel for the first time, the days of long journeys by diligence, through France, Belgium, and Germany, had come to an end, though the Rhine was well provided with steamboats, the railways did no more than deposit the traveller on the outskirts of the mountains. They came to an end, for instance, at Geneva, Bâle, and Zurich, that between the first-named city and Lausanne being still unfinished. The Lautaret and the Genèvre were the only high roads across the French Alps, and to the north of these were the Cenis, the Simplon, the St. Gotthard, the Bernardino and the Splügen. Mule-paths only led across the Grimsel, the Furka, and the Lukmanier, or up even the more important lateral valleys. One could drive to Chamonix, but the diligence from Geneva stopped at St. Martin and the journey had to be completed in light chars-à-bancs which held four passengers seated sideways. In the summer of 1856 we had to go to Lausanne by diligence from Bâle to Bienne, from which town a steamer took us to Yverdon, and a short railway brought us to the end of our journey. As the diligence was already full, we were sent on in 'supplêments,' and I have not yet forgotten the discomfort of one experience that night, when half a dozen travellers were packed into a chaise that would not have been roomy for four. As I happened to be a middle passenger I could not move a leg from the beginning to the end of the stage. Neither can I forget the delight of the early morning when we got out of another carriage to walk up the slopes above the Pierre Pertuis; the green grass dappled with mountain flowers and contrasted with the dark pine woods, the fresh fragrant air, and the mowers jodelling as they went forth to their task, while, later

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in the morning, the journey along the lakes, already connected by a canal, was like an introduction to a new world.

Wishing to see Berne on my return journey, I had to go there by diligence, whence another one took me to Bâle. So, as a rule, in travelling about the Alps the older and less active folk had to ride, and the younger went on foot. Thus to change one Alpine centre for another was in those days a slower business than it has since become. In 1858, my first real journey among the higher Alps, my companion, J. C. Hawkshaw,[1] and I spent about three weeks in Switzerland on our way to Italy, seeing a good deal of the Bernese Oberland and crossing from Zermatt to the Val Anzasca, without using any horse transport. As was customary with walkers in those days, we carried our knapsacks, forwarding portmanteaux from town to town; in fact, that continued to be my practice for some ten years after the period of which I am writing, but, though one is thus more independent, it adds to the toil and diminishes the pleasure of a journey. In scrambling it is apt to get in the way, and it makes one's back unpleasantly hot. Of the rucksack I cannot speak from experience, for it did not come into use till I had ceased to be my own porter. A pedestrian arriving thus burdened at one of the aggrandised modern hotels might now perhaps experience a chilly reception, but I do not remember any instance of it in those early days.[2] Hawkshaw, like myself, delighted in bathing, and as travellers of the other sex were rare on mountain paths we could generally find some pleasant tarn in which to have a swim, so we always found room for a towel in our knapsacks. One bath, however, I shall never forget. We had arrived one evening at the Grimsel Hospice, and the adjacent lake suggested a morning swim. So we turned out very early and soon found a low rock, sufficiently screened for our purpose, from which we took simultaneous headers. Such was the temperature of

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[1] Son of the noted engineer, Sir John Hawkshaw, and himself past-President of the Institute of Civil Engineers; then a Westminster lad of seventeen, but an excellent walker, and the best of companions.

[2] Except an amusing one in 1865, when our late President, Bishop Browne, and I were going to Aviernoz, a few miles from Annecy, to visit some ice caves, where the owner of a farmhouse, at Les Olliers, to whom, in default of an *auberge*, we had applied for breakfast, was at first rather supercilious in manner, because, as he afterwards explained, he mistook us for colporteurs.

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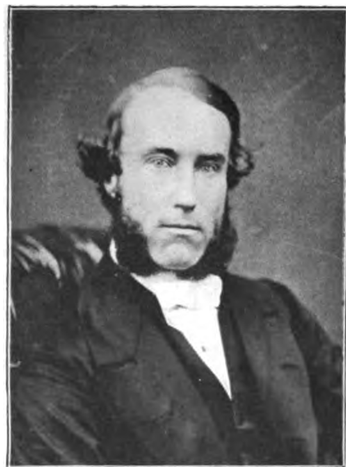
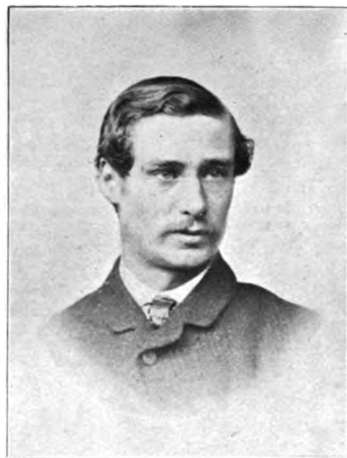
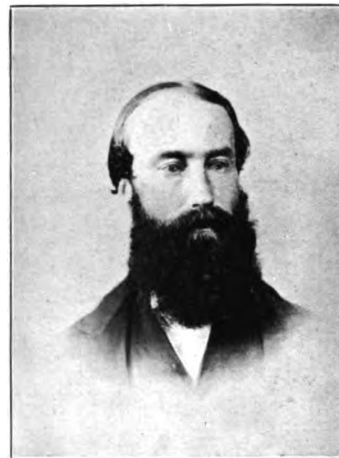


T. G. BONNEY,
1858.



J. CLARK HAWKSHAW,
1862.



T. G. BONNEY,
1866.

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MICHEL A. CROZ.

JEAN TAIRRAZ,
of Aosta.

JEAN BAPTISTE CROZ.

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the water that I came up face to the shore and promptly scrambled out, and he very speedily followed my example. Since then I have more than once 'tubbed' in a glacier stream, but never have had so cold a plunge.

One often had to rough it. Even in Switzerland the inns, as a rule, were second-rate or below that, except in the larger towns, and in these the palatial edifices which have since sprung up like mushrooms were unknown. In that country, however, they were fairly clean, though often with certain sanitary defects. The mountain cookery was generally anything but Parisian, and the bread, even in such a place as Zermatt, was usually sour. I well remember how my palate and my digestive organs used to welcome the pure white bread which awaited us in the Italian valleys. More wholesome, though good imitations of the neighbouring rocks, were the loaves of black bread, which were, I think, more common in the South-Western than in the Central Alps. These were flat cakes, like huge buns—sometimes half a yard in diameter—and they were made, as I was told, twice or even once in the year. To masticate them required Father William's strength of jaw; even to cut them was no easy task. A back volume of this Journal gives A. W. Moore's account of the loaf of black bread which might be excluded from the list of provisions supplied by Oyace. 'We tried to chop it with an ice-axe, and it hopped about the chalet like a marble; we boiled it for four long hours, while we glared greedily at the pot, and at the end a quarter of an inch of the outside was turned into a gluey slime, and within it was as hard as ever.'[3] At Les Olliers our host, already mentioned, cut off with no little exertion a large segment from the outside of a huge loaf of black bread and reserved it 'for his little horse,' bidding us cut inwards, and I remember, in the Val Tournanche, seeing at an *auberge* a knife terminating in a hook and a staple fixed in a flat board, so as to apply the principle of the lever in cutting the local black bread. Vegetarians in those days would have fared badly in the mountains, for garden produce was rare; but meat, even in Switzerland, was not always easily obtained. Veal was commoner than beef, and sometimes one had to be content with goat's flesh. Constant exercise seemed to have developed the sheep's muscular system: Tyndall's protest against the Alpine mutton was often justifiable. 'Through the lack of wholesome nutriment, the noblest stations in the

[3] *Alpine Journal,* i. 222.

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Alps are sometimes converted into dens of dyspepsia, which even the mountain air cannot abolish. The Riffel and the Eggischhorn, for example, are unrivalled positions, and the proprietors of the hotels on both are, as far as I know them, intelligent and obliging men. Let them aim, in all earnestness, at the substitution of wholesome, tender mutton for the wicked tissue which, under this name, is frequently presented to travellers, and they will double the attractiveness of their respective houses. This question touches both physics and morals. A man cannot climb as he ought to do upon woody fibre; nor can he adore aright, or lift his soul in any becoming way to those regions towards which his beloved mountains aspire, if the coats of his stomach are in a state of irritation.'[4] But often, in the Tarentaise, Dauphiné, and the Cottian Alps, fresh meat could not be obtained; there was nothing better than inferior bacon and corresponding sausages of the German type, with a rare and skinny fowl. For some years I always carried tea, and W. Mathews brought chocolate. The wine was often sour, so that for a man, like myself, no less sensitive than Tyndall, Alpine travel was often a continuous struggle with dyspepsia, and a place had to be found in the knapsack for bicarbonate of soda. The effect of my first visit to Dauphiné and the Viso district, when, out of ten days, two had been spent under a big boulder, three in haylofts, and the others in none too restful beds, and a wholesome meal had been a rarity, was to put me so thoroughly out of condition that, on leaving the French side of the Viso, I had to halt many times, even on the two hours' ascent from the Bergerie of La Ruine to the Col de Seylières. As to the cause of this there could be no doubt. We reached Turin the same (Saturday) night, and after some three days at the excellent Hôtel Europa, Hawkshaw and I went by the Val Tournanche to Zermatt, Mathews having abandoned the Alps in despair in consequence of the persistent bad weather.[5] Favoured by a brief spell of improvement, on the following Saturday we crossed the Théodule to the Riffelhaus, taking the Breithorn and the Little Mont Cervin *en route*; ascended Monte Rosa on the Monday, went up to the Lysjoch and down to Zermatt on the Wednesday, over the Col Durand to Zinal on the Thursday, and returned to Zermatt by the Triftjoch on the Friday, and I have never walked with less

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[4] *Vacation Tourists in* 1860, p. 317.

[5] The weather in August and September of 1860 was extremely bad.

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fatigue or more enjoyment than during this week of 1860. That was a good piece of Alpine work for my companion, Hawkshaw, who had spent his nineteenth birthday under the above-named boulder.

Insects that murdered sleep were once among the 'minor horrors' of Alpine travel. Even in the better Swiss hotels the flea was not unknown; in the South-Western Alps it often abounded. Whymper quotes the remark of a Dauphiné peasant: 'As to fleas, I don't pretend to be different to anyone else—*I have them.*' This time, at any rate, he spoke the truth, and I think the creatures enjoyed the 'pasture new' afforded by an Englishman's flesh. One could not wonder at their abundance. This is no exaggeration of our experience in 1860 of the inns of the Dauphiné and Cottian Alps. 'After any meal the plates are scraped in the eating-room and the broken victuals thrown upon the floor. The dogs of the neighbourhood then investigate the débris and devour what they can of it, leaving the bones behind. As brooms are entirely unknown, a geological formation of offensive character is soon accumulated.'[6] A similar process apparently went on all over the house, for the floors of our bedrooms were in the same condition. Of course there has since been a great change for the better. In 1887, in a journey through Dauphiné with geological aims, I spent four days at La Grave, where the Hôtel 'chez Juge,' though its *cuisine* was better than that of most Dauphiné inns, was once little less dirty, and justified A.W. Moore's remark that there was 'nothing stable about it, except the smell'[7] (for its ground floor, as was often the case, was given up to horses and other animals), and I found it had been partly rebuilt and enlarged, was clean, and in every way improved. In Switzerland the mountain inns are now as a rule thoroughly clean, and those agile tormentors have become as rare as in England, while the same is true of their more slowly moving companions in beds. One insect pest only seems to have become more numerous—the mosquito. For that Martigny always had a bad reputation, but I do not remember even five-and-thirty years ago to have found it a nuisance at Vernayaz, Sion, and Sierre, and in 1900 it forced me even at Arolla to decamp from a pleasant resting-place among the firs near the Hôtel Kurhaus, though the inn itself was free from them. Flies, however, were everywhere a pest, as they are still apt to be. The common

[6] W. Mathews in *Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers*, Second Series, ii. 136.

[7] Whymper, *Scrambles amongst the Alps*, p. 194.

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house-fly almost swarmed in the South-Western Alps, especially on the Italian side ; while out of doors, in addition to them, the horsefly, with two others that bit fiercely, one like a big blue-bottle, the other something like a hornet, but rarer and fortunately more nervous, did their best to spoil pleasure, especially in the Oberland and in the month of July. For these pests I think the limestone districts are worse than the crystalline. Happily, at about 6000 feet they are left behind.

The Alpine climber in those early days was not unfrequently something also of an explorer. Very little was known of the chain to the south of Mont Blanc, except in the immediate neighbourhood of the few high-roads. The maps were often indifferent, occasionally almost absurdly wrong. Travellers described, and even the official map published by the Sardinian engineers indicated, a grand peak, called the Mont Iseran, which rose, 'streaming with glaciers,' to a height of 13,271 feet, just to the east of the pass of that name. This peak had no better foundation in fact than a big crag with a small glacier on its top, which is only 10,634 feet in height, can be reached in about an hour's scramble from the summit of the pass (9085 feet), and has been familiar to the people of the country for several centuries. That phantom was dispelled in 1859 by W. Mathews, and the actual mountain was ascended by J. J. Cowell,[8] the former of whom shows that by some extraordinary blunder the Sardinian engineers confused this comparatively inconspicuous knob with the eastern peak of the Levanna and transferred to it the measurement of the Grand Paradis, miles away to the east.

In the Pennine Alps only twenty-two out of fifty-one principal peaks above 12,000 feet had been climbed in 1862[9]; a slightly larger proportion in the Oberland, and fewer in the Graians and Tyrol. Mathews conquered the Viso in 1861, and Whymper the highest peak of the Pelvoux in the same summer, but this was, I believe, the only one of eleven distinct peaks in Dauphiné of at least the above-named elevation which had been reached by man. When we went to that district in 1860, we had to be content with General Bourcet's map (1749–1754), which, though good enough for the valleys, was useless for the high mountains, which it represents in a conventional and semi-pictorial fashion. In 1862, however, thanks to our friend F. F. Tuckett, we had

[8] J. J. Cowell, *Vacation Tourists in* 1860, p. 261 ; W. Mathews, *Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers*, Second Series, ii. 404.

[9] *Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers*, Second Series, vol. ii. chapter xv.

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the advantage of a photograph of the map, prepared by the État-Major Français, which the authorities had kindly supplied to him. But prior to this date some districts of the Alps were hardly better known to surveyors than parts of the Karakoram-Himalayas were thirty years later.

The art of mountain-climbing has greatly advanced since those early days, though it had already progressed far beyond the stage known to De Saussure. A well-known print in colours represents him and his son making their way through the séracs on their ascent to the Col du Géant, attired very much as they would have been for a stroll about the streets of Geneva.[10] Each is walking between two guides, the three holding on to a long alpenstock. The guides are similarly furnished, only one of them having a piolet. Even during the years of which I write, the alpenstock was almost always carried by travellers, who usually had it branded with the names of the places which they had visited, '*Ici on marque les bâtons*' being a common placard at any one of the places of refreshment of the slightest note. During these years neither Mathews nor I used an ice-axe, but we had alpenstocks with stronger shafts and larger steel points than the ordinary kind. The leading guide, as a rule, had a piolet (in fact, the best men from Chamonix usually carried one), but sometimes an ordinary hatchet was strapped on to the knapsack. When we crossed the New Weissthor in 1858, I noted in my diary that, the morning being unpromising, 'a guide, who, judging from his *bâton*, had been up every mountain in the neighbourhood,' prophesied we should have to come back.[11] The rope, however, had become usual. In the South-Western Alps it was difficult, sometimes impossible, to find a man really competent to act as guide above the snow-line. But even by 1865 much had changed. In those few years glacier passes had been crossed and snow peaks climbed almost by the dozen. The words 'inaccessible' and 'impossible' were dropping out of the Alpine dictionary, and the proverb 'Where there is a will there is a way' had proved to be generally true. But in the more remote districts failures were commoner than now. Few climbers could tolerate the tedium of wet days in a filthy chalet, under a big boulder, or in a little cave, and abandoned a tempting item in their programme, as I know too well. But I was not lucky in regard to

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[10] Reproduced in outline in E. Whymper's *Chamonix and Mont Blanc*, p. 40.

[11] *A Lady's Tour round Monte Rosa*, p. 393.

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weather till after I had been obliged to give up out-of-the-way wanderings.

Our guide in 1860 was Michel Auguste Croz, whom we had taken over from W. Mathews, when he parted from us at Turin; and Michel, with his elder brother Jean Baptiste, accompanied Mathews and myself during our journey of 1862 in the Graian, Cottian, and Dauphiné Alps, in which more than one excursion was frustrated by bad weather, and we were forced by the state of the snow to turn back at the foot of the actual peak of the Écrins.[12] Jean Baptiste was an excellent guide, hardly inferior to and more companionable than his brother, whose endurance, strength, and firmness of foot were remarkable. When he gripped me by the hand he seemed as if nothing could move him from his footing. His topographical instinct also was extraordinary. In 1863, when we were again in Dauphiné, that more imaginative than veracious local guide, Alexandre Pic, gave us a circumstantial description of a route from La Grave up the Glacier de la Casse Déserte to the Glacier Blanc, just at the foot of the Écrins. Croz was incredulous from the first, and was exceptionally grumpy all the morning, after we had started with Pic to show the way, till the latter, when called upon to indicate the pass, pointed to a not very promising snow-saddle. This, we knew at a glance, must take us to La Bérarde, quite away from Les Écrins, from which we were cut off by a long wall of impracticable crags. For want of something better to do, we determined to make for that saddle (now known as the Col de la Casse Déserte). The ascent was steep, and sometimes not very easy; and I remember at one place Michel, who was next to me, pointing with a grim smile to Pic, whose legs were shaking under him. After that he was quite cheerful for the rest of the day, though we thought it better, as the weather had become threatening, not to attempt the descent on the western side, of which we could see but little. The only maps of that district which Croz could have seen were worthless, but, as we were climbing up to the above-named Col, Mathews, who, as mentioned above, had a copy of the French surveyors' map, and I were debating where the summit of Les Écrins was likely to make its appearance. We differed slightly, when Croz remarked that he thought a third position more probable, and after we had mounted a little he was proved to be the most nearly right. He was a born son of the moun-

[12] As described in this Journal, i. p. 66.

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tains, and only happy among them, looking a victim of boredom in towns. He was an almost incessant smoker, so that one of his teeth was worn down by the friction of his rather large wooden pipe. That pipe was a good signal of the work before us. If we were coming to a difficult bit, it was slipped into his pocket, and when that was over was replaced in his mouth. Croz, when there was a choice, preferred ice to rocks and seemed to me a little reluctant to use the rope, which might be interpreted as a presentiment. This, however, on one occasion was nearly disastrous to him. I had suggested putting it on as we were descending from the Triftjoch to the névé of that glacier, and he had replied that he thought it needless. Presently we came to the bergschrund, across which he jumped. But it was more masked by snow than he had reckoned, and he only saved himself from being engulfed by fortunately getting his outstretched arms on firm ice. As he was carrying the rope, it might have been impossible to rescue him, though we had a second guide, Johann Kronig from Zermatt. This was to save time, for Croz had taken us alone up Monte Rosa and to the Lysjoch. In 1863 his brother had some other engagement, so Michel brought a younger man from Chamonix, J. B. Simond, and the latter accompanied the late R. W. Taylor and myself in 1864, when we went from Thonon, on the Lake of Geneva, to the southern part of Dauphiné with a similar but much more limited intention to that which afterwards took Sir Martin Conway along 'The Alps from End to End.' It was an interesting journey, though, on three occasions, unfavourable weather obliged us to substitute mule-paths for glacier passes. In 1865 I did not undertake any serious expeditions, for I had not quite recovered from a slight malarial attack, the result of a quick change the previous summer from Dauphiné to the old towns near the lower part of the Rhone; so I visited ice-caves, with G. F. Browne, now Bishop and a past-President of our Club, and we rambled from them to and about the Western Oberland, without any higher ascent than the Buet.

An extract from an account of our experiences in 1860 during an attempted ascent of the Pelvoux may serve to show how we had occasionally to rough it.[13] After a climb for about an hour and a half, sometimes rather steep, from the Val Sapinière, we

[13] Contributed to a college magazine, entitled *The Eagle*, iii. 1. Our party was seven in number: W. Mathews, J. C. Hawkshaw, and myself, Michel Croz our guide, Mons. Reynaud, a French engineer, who had joined as a companion, and two local guides.

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'emerged upon a slope of turf, thickly spread with large blocks, to one of the largest of which the guide pointed, saying "Voilà la cabane" (which was our promised resting-place for the night).[14] I had expected a hut of some kind and a truss of hay for a bed. There was nothing but a huge mass of rock, that had in former times fallen down from the cliffs above, and had rested so as to afford a shelter under one of its sides. This had been still farther enclosed with a rough wall of loose stones, and thus a sort of kennel was made, about nine or ten feet by five or six, and about four feet high at the entrance, whence it sloped gradually down to about two feet at the other end. Our thoughts turned regretfully to some extra wraps left down below, but we did our best to make things as comfortable as was possible for the night. Dead juniper boughs were collected for a fire, and the guides set to work to clean out the cave, which, being frequented by the sheep as well as the shepherds, was in a sufficiently filthy condition. The first who entered quickly emerged again, holding at arm's length the mortal remains of a defunct mutton in a very lively condition, which he quickly sent over the precipice for the ravens to sup on, if they had any fancy for it. The floor was then swept and strewed with fern and dock leaves, and a fire lighted to sweeten the place. Night came on, the sky grew wild and stormy, and at last I crawled after my companions into the den. But almost instantly I retreated much faster, more than half choked. A fire is a very comfortable thing on a cold night, but has its drawbacks when the house is without a chimney and the smoke has to escape by the door. If, besides this, the only room be about four feet high, and the fire made of damp juniper wood, matters are still worse. However, by lying down so as to avoid the thickest part of the smoke, I contrived to endure it after a time. The fire, and such extra clothing as we had with us, prevented us from suffering from cold during the night.' By making my gaiters a substitute for a mattress and taking the softest stone I could find for a pillow, I managed, like my companions who adopted the same precautions, to obtain some sleep. But it was a dreary night, and gave birth to a drearier day; thick banks of cloud and mists, above, below, around, pouring down a steady, hopeless rain! We were reluctant to retreat, so we decided to send down our local guides for an additional stock of provisions and wait for the chance of a

[14] A barometer observation gave the height above sea-level as 7351 feet.

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brighter to-morrow. But it was a tiresome time. About mid-day snow fell at intervals, and the rain became less heavy, till in the afternoon it ceased and we strolled about, hunting for plants and minerals with very little success, but we collected a good store of juniper wood and put it near the fire to dry. At last night came, and we prepared for bed. But we had to make a change in our arrangements. During the morning the roof had begun to leak, and the floor had become too wet to lie upon; so we arranged smooth stones on it, and sat or lay upon these. 'Thus we were more uncomfortable this night than before; we were crowded closer together, our legs, which pointed to the fire, getting in a hopeless tangle. I woke up once so stiffened with the pressure of my stony seat that for some time I could not identify my own legs.'

At last the day dawned, and, though very far from ideal, it held out some hopes of success. We left our shelter and presently began to mount rapidly upwards. But when we halted for breakfast the older of our two local guides declared that he was too tired to go further. Then clouds began to gather, and a mist enveloped us. At last we came to the side of a glacier, just where it poured in a cascade over a precipice. Here our other local guide declared that he was afraid of the crevasses, was tired, and felt pain from an old wound. Arguments and reproaches were equally vain; no further would he go. Croz justly said that, though he was reluctant to turn back, the mists prevented him from knowing what line to follow, so that we were obliged to acquiesce in failure, after all our discomfort.[15] We took as straight a course as possible down to the valley, and had the satisfaction of giving our worthless guides, by the pace at which we went, a jolting which they did not like.

I may complete this part of my reminiscences by the story of a more successful expedition, the ascent of the Grivola,[16] which in 1862 was still a novelty; our party, W. Mathews and myself, with the brothers Jean Baptiste and Michel Auguste Croz, and a porter from Cogne, being the fourth that actually reached the summit, and the second one with travellers. On August 12 we left Cogne, where we had been entertained by the *curé*, M. Chamonin, who had himself made the first successful ascent by the S.E. face on September 5, 1861. This route had

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[15] A barometer observation gave the altitude of this spot as 10,435 feet.

[16] From an account in *The Eagle*, iv. 65.

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been followed by our friend F. F. Tuckett, about six weeks before us, and we had the same intention. Leaving Cogne in the afternoon, we reached the chalets of Pousset Dessus (8389 feet above the sea) in less than three hours' easy walking, and found them tenanted by three civil *bergers*. 'As usual, the furniture of their abode was of the simplest character, consisting of a large bed at one end, a bench or two, a fire in one corner, with a huge cauldron, and a quantity of cheese in various stages. When darkness had come on, after a sunset too beautiful in colour to be wholly satisfactory to mountaineers, we began to make ready for the night. I was casting about my eyes to discover the softest spot on the floor for a sleeping-place, when, to my horror, the *bergers* insisted on our occupying their bed.' I did my best to escape their too hospitable offers (my friend was pachydermatous); but in vain, so I was obliged to yield and stretch myself by his side, Jean Baptiste already snoring away in the inner place. 'Where Michel and the others slept, or at what hour his pipe went out and the cheese-making ceased, I cannot say; for, in spite of the wonted inmates of these Arcadian retreats, I slept.

'Holes in the roof, though useful for ventilation in the earlier part of the night, become objectionable towards morning, and I was aroused from my light slumbers by the cold at an early hour. Presently Michel went out and returned growling something about "brouillard," and in reply to my question informed me that starting was impossible at present. However, in a while, some change for the better took place, and after a light breakfast we started at 3.45 A.M., with the best wishes of our hosts.' We mounted rough slopes of grass and rocks towards the ridge of the Pousset, arriving on its crest, after disturbing four chamois, at 4.50. From this we looked across the white snow-field of the Glacier de Trajo to the grand peak for which we were bound.[17] To its right Mont Blanc and the higher summits of the Pennine chain raised their familiar forms; but behind us a flat sea of clouds veiled everything below 10,000 feet, from which the culminating masses of the Western Graians rose like rocky islands. 'Very soon a golden gleam illuminated the summit of the Grivola, and crept slowly downwards; a flash of light darted across the fleecy ocean beneath us, and the sun rose slowly up, pouring a flood of dazzling radiance over the dead expanse of white mist below.'

[17] The height of the crest of this ridge is given in Ball's *Western Alps* as 10,519 feet; of the Grivola, 13,022 feet.

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We kept to the Pousset ridge till we found an easy line of descent to the glacier, on which we arrived at 5.37, and after crossing it without difficulty halted for breakfast at the foot of the actual peak of the Grivola, which rose precipitously to a height of nearly 1900 feet above us.[18]

Breakfast over, a few steps up a steep snow-slope brought us to the foot of one of the rock couloirs, and up this we scrambled. 'For the next two hours there was plenty to do, but little to describe: now we clambered on all fours up a steep, smooth slab; now climbed with hands and feet up a gully or cliff, not disdaining once or twice a haul in front or a shove behind; now and then, for a change, finding a few yards up which we could walk upright, as on a rude staircase, until, in an hour and forty minutes from our breakfast-place, we reached the eastern arête and glanced down one of the steep slopes of snow visible from the Val d'Aosta. This view, however, lasted but a few minutes, and we again turned our faces to the rocks. I saw that we were approaching the top, but was beginning to feel somewhat tired of such severe and monotonous work, and was consoling myself with the thought that about another quarter of an hour would bring it to an end; when suddenly the clatter of the iron-shod poles carried by Mathews and one of the guides, who were a few yards ahead of me, ceased.[19] . . . I hauled myself up the great block which hid them from me, when, to my surprise, I looked down into the Val Savaranche. I glanced round; right and left of me was a stone man: we were on the top. This is an arête 25 or 30 feet long and 3 or 4 wide, slightly crescent-shaped, with the concavity towards the Val Savaranche, consisting of large loose blocks, and rocks split and shattered in every direction . . . a greyish-green chlorite schist, with large veins of quartz.' We spent about three hours on the top, Mathews working with the theodolite,[20] and I sketching the view, which, though rather spoiled by clouds in some directions, especially the Tarentaise, showed the higher peaks in the main chain of the Graians rising well above them. The Pourri (our late conquest) and the Grande Casse, with one or two neighbours, besides the great peaks of Dauphiné and the yet more distant Viso, were also visible. The whole of the Pennine chain was

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[18] The difference between the two stations, according to a large aneroid which I carried, was 1869 feet.

[19] In an hour and fifty minutes from the foot of the peak.

[20] At that date the height of the Grivola was still uncertain.

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well seen, and one of the lower western summits of the Oberland appeared over the depression of the Great St. Bernard.

The mountain air gave exceptional zest to a cold duck and some fine pears, a present from old Jean Tairraz, our landlord at Aosta, and then, all too soon, we reluctantly began the descent. 'This was perhaps more trying to the nerves than the ascent, for it requires some practice to contemplate unmoved a glacier one or two thousand feet below, with a few yards of steep rock leading down invitingly straight from your feet to the edge of an apparent precipice. However, by great care we got down without trouble, except that once or twice stones from those behind would come rattling down in disagreeable proximity to those in front. Most haste is generally worst speed in descending rocks.' But we reached our breakfast-place in little more than an hour and a half from the top, and fifty minutes of actual walking brought us back to the chalets where we had passed the night. Here we imbibed much milk, and our hosts, though we pressed more upon them, refused to accept over six francs for the party. Some chalet folk are extortionate, but others, like these, quite the reverse.

I have left this account of our expedition as it was written in 1863, except for some abridgment, though perhaps it may occasionally produce a smile in the present generation of climbers, because it will show how their predecessors estimated a mountain of which they would think little. There has, however, been one change in the High Alps which has not always added to their beauty and has sometimes made a peak or a pass more difficult, and this is the remarkable shrinkage of their glaciers. In 1856 the end of the Glacier des Bois came down to the Valley of Chamonix; in 1858 the clear blue ice crags of the Rosenlaui Glacier ended abruptly at the brink of the ravine which had been carved by its subglacial torrent, and the Unter Grindelwald Glacier not only concealed the noted marble quarry,[21] which has once more been exposed, as well as its own ravine, but its torrent then issued from an ice cave on the level of the main valley.[22] In 1859 the Gorner Glacier was still advancing, and its front could be seen crumpling up the green turf of a meadow into a wall two or three feet high, and the Brenva Glacier in 1861 formed an almost level lobe of ice on the bed of the Allée Blanche. By 1865 the shrinkage had everywhere begun, and five years later it had become very

[21] Described in this Journal by F. F. Tuckett, vi. 30–42.
[22] I have still a rough sketch of it, made in 1858.

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conspicuous, and though perhaps it has now stopped, and some glaciers have slightly advanced, the ice has not nearly regained the ground which it lost so rapidly almost half a century ago.

So to some extent in the mountains themselves, to a far greater one in all that facilitates travel, the old order has changed, yielding place to new. But are there not losses as well as gains in this? The Alps are now flooded with travellers of all kinds and nationalities. To speak only of representatives of our own country, personally-conducted parties, such as those organized by Cook and Lunn, were unknown half a century ago. I remember, in 1875, seeing one gathered by the former walking into Chamonix. It was an irregular procession of incongruities, headed by an elderly clergyman in a top hat, who 'pegged' the footpath with his alpenstock at every step as if that were a ceremonial observance. In the old days one had generally begun a pleasant talk with one's neighbour at a table d'hôte by the end of the second course, and often made permanent friends during a two or three days' stay at the same inn. Now the number of social undesirables is so large that caution is necessary before breaking the conversational ice. The inns themselves are more comfortable, sometimes even luxurious, but in old days the host and hostess got to know their guests, who now may generally say 'Nos numerus sumus.' Those portrayed by Whymper in the Club Room at Zermatt[23] could never forget the hearty welcome of M. and Mme. Seiler on their arrival, and the almost regretful parting when the pleasant stay at the Mont Rose came to an end. They, like old Jean Tairraz of the Hôtel du Mont Blanc at Aosta, and not a few such as these, have now passed away; indeed, I believe that I am the only survivor, though I was not the youngest of that group. Kindly folk, however, are still to be found in the Alpine hotels, though comparatively speaking palatial; in fact, the less fashionable the centre, the better chance of meeting with a friendly host and making pleasant acquaintances. But the Alpine region has lost not a little of that element, which, for want of a better epithet, I must call the picturesque. For instance, though a railway does not really mar the scenery in the great valleys, such as the Rhine and the Rhone, the Isère and the Durance, the effect is very different when the mountains have closed in upon the river. Then it ceases to be an eyesore only when it dives underground. No less can be said of mountain railways, such as those up to

[23] *Scrambles amongst the Alps*, p. 262.

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Mürren, the Rigi, Pilatus, S. Salvatòre and Monte Generoso. Even worse abominations are that over the Little Scheidegg, and most of all its offshoot which aims at defiling the snows of the Jungfrau and has already come far too near accomplishing its purpose, and that one which has actually succeeded, the railway from Zermatt up the Gorner Grat. It has at any rate demonstrated that in Switzerland the love of Mammon surpasses that of mountains, for it has culminated, as I am told, in an hotel built on the actual summit of the Grat. Of this spot, in former days, the greatest charm was that one could sit on the topmost rock and look successively on every part of that marvellous panorama of encircling mountains. I have stood on most of the points of view comparable with this in position, in accessibility and in altitude, and do not hesitate to give the Gorner Grat the preference. It is true, as I intimated above, that I have never seen the disfigurement, for I resolved at once that I would not revisit Zermatt till that excrescence had been extirpated. We were even threatened, not so long ago, with a corkscrew railway to the summit of the Matterhorn, when no doubt that peak would have been crowned by a restaurant and its crags decorated with flaming advertisements. Let us hope that one good result may come from the present war—that of drying up the golden stream which has nourished this and similar fungoid growths of a plutocratic age. But what can be expected from a people which allowed the grand crag overhanging the Devil's Bridge to be covered with advertisements, and a vendor of chocolate to paint with a corresponding tint a huge boulder in one of the wildest parts of the glen below and to inscribe thereon the name of his firm?

The erection of modern and frequently ugly houses has too often marred the picturesqueness of the mountain villages, where the chalets, rudely built of dark-red logs, hemmed in the narrow streets, and made such inviting groups for the artist. No doubt the new is less malodorous and more salubrious than the old, but it is more attractive to the nose than it is to the eye. One of the old covered wooden bridges seemed always to invite a sketch, but the modern iron structure which has so often taken its place, though no doubt more convenient for traffic, offers no temptations to linger. The towns, perhaps, have fared even worse than the villages. Around the ancient nucleus, street after street of new and often unattractive houses has sprung up, while many of the old structures have been rebuilt, or, what is hardly a less evil, have been victims of the unbridled zeal of the restorer. In 1856 the cathedrals of

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Berne and Lausanne, with the castle in the latter town, had felt only the touch of time, which often mellows rather than injures. An old stone gateway and part of the city wall were standing at Lucerne half a century ago on the site, so far as I can identify it, now covered by a great hotel. One of those grey stone towers with a pyramidal roof, once so common, stood near the Hôtel Bellevue at Zurich and another at Ouchy by the Lake of Geneva. The one has disappeared,the other has been 'restored,' pierced with inappropriate windows, encased in a modern hotel —in a word, so 'uglified' that destruction would have been preferable. In 1856 only some scattered villas in pleasant gardens connected this lakeside village with Lausanne: now the latter has spread out in all directions over the slopes once covered by vineyards, and in so doing has not increased the charms of Lake Léman. Berne has suffered even more. It still retained, in 1856, its ancient aspect of a peninsular city, guarded on three sides by the Aar, which swept from south to north far beneath its walls, like the Wear round Durham. But now great iron bridges span the valleys, across which extensive new suburbs have sprung up. Trams glide along to and fro, as in the most modern of cities; convenient, no doubt, probably inevitable, if Switzerland wished to be progressive, but utterly incongruous. Not only so, but the houses which have risen on the higher ground to the south of the Aar interfere with the famous view from the cathedral terrace of the snowy giants of the Bernese Oberland. Klein Basel, when first I saw it, did not bristle with chimneys, and Basel itself still retained much of its antique aspect. Now almost everything is modernised, and even the picturesque Alte Brücke has been replaced by a structure, doubtless better for traffic, but destitute of either architectural beauty or historical interest. In this, as in the rest of the larger Swiss towns, as well as in the other parts of the Alps, little is left to tempt the traveller to linger who, like Dr. Syntax, is in search of the picturesque. I admit that much has been gained in the ease and comfort of travel and in the greater prosperity of the country, but when I turn over my journals and sketch-books I realise that not a little has been lost. Half a century ago we could still see some relics of the quaint costumes once distinctive of the different cantons. The women in Valais retained the low hat with its broad encircling ribbon. Those of Canton Berne wore their picturesque costume in the streets and markets, instead of reserving it for restaurants; numbers of little peculiarities have disappeared, for some of which, however,

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such as 'peasant *brats* that offer flowers,' uninvited awakeners of echoes, and persistent beggars, one does not lament.

But, in regard to flowers, the increasing crowds of travellers threaten to exterminate the more attractive, so that near to their haunts the Alpine pastures are losing one of their greatest charms. The Swiss, however, are now doing their best to protect the choicer members of their mountain flora, and one wishes success to their sanctuaries for plants and for animals.

Some differences, I think, may be noticed between the younger and the older generation of mountaineers. We were less skilful and less daring. Our object being to get to the top of a peak, we took the way which presented the fewest difficulties; we enjoyed overcoming these, but a route which seemed almost impracticable or distinctly dangerous had, for us, no special attraction. To put the matter shortly, mountain-climbing has become more than formerly a branch of gymnastics. Perhaps also a desire to increase knowledge attracted a larger proportion of our early members to the Alps. These presented many problems—physical, botanical, geological—and even their geography was but imperfectly known. In one or other of these departments such men as John Ball and William Mathews, J. Tyndall and A. Ramsay, F. F. Tuckett and E. Whymper, made distinct additions to knowledge. Then came a time when a fashion was set of sneering at science, and striving after facetiousness. That phase, however, has passed away, and our members, now that the Alps have been explored and every peak of importance has been scaled, are making us familiar with the Caucasus and the Karakoram-Himalayas, the Rocky Mountains and the Andes, and with African peaks unknown even by name in our younger days. More than this, since reproduced photographs began to be used to illustrate our Journal, it has been very helpful for the study of scenery above the snow-line in different parts of the world. But it is time to bring these rambling memories to an end, and I will do this 'as in private duty bound' by declaring thankfully that I owe to the Alps, not only some of the greatest pleasures of my life, but also, more than to anything else, such beneficial effects on body and mind that, though not naturally of a robust constitution, my strength, at more than fourscore years, is anything but 'labour and sorrow.'

T. G. Bonney.

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