



MY FIRST CAMP ON THE MALIFFEDEN.

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CAMPING OUT. By EDWARD WHYMPER.

MR. GALTON has very truly observed, when speaking of camping out, in his interesting contribution to the first volume of 'Vacation Tourists,' that the British mountaineer usually describes these periods 'as nights of discomfort and often of misery.' His assertion cannot be denied, and my object in writing this paper is to endeavour to show, from some personal experiences, that there is no occasion for this to continue to be the case, but on the contrary, that camping out may be done in the Alps at high as well as at low elevations with both pleasure and comfort.

Looked at broadly, camps out divide themselves into two classes—the voluntary and involuntary; and as the latter has hitherto been the rule, we can easily understand why misery has predominated. The serenity of our greatest mountaineers has vanished in such situations, and even Mark Tapley himself, if benighted in a storm on a glacier, might take some credit if he were jolly.

I.—*On Holes*.—Some men affect to prefer a hole, but I have given up the dwellings of marmots and the habitations of foxes to their rightful owners; for although a dry hole is no doubt a very nice thing, and is greatly to be commended for its simplicity, yet there are holes which are not comfortable—which are in fact wholly uncomfortable, and even these are not always to be had.

I well remember the first night on which I absolutely camped by myself. It was in the valley of Queyras: I had intentions

about the Viso, and had quitted the abominations of Abries to try to find a quiet bundle of hay at Le Chalp. As I approached the village the odour of sanctity became distinctly perceptible, and on turning a corner the cause was manifest; I saw the priest of the place surrounded by his flock. He said, somewhat sharply, 'Who are you? What are you? What do you want?' I endeavoured to explain. 'You are a deserter; I know you are a deserter; go away, you can't stay here; go to La Monta, down there; I won't have you here.' I argued the matter, but he would not have it, kept on exclaiming, 'You are a deserter; I know you are a deserter,' and literally drove me away. The fact was, he took me for a Piedmontese soldier who was tired of the service, and supposed I had crossed the Col de la Traversette; for I afterwards found that this was not unfrequently done, and that the harbouring of deserters on the French side was the cause of considerable trouble. However, I knew not this at the time, and was not a little indignant that I, who was marching to the attack, should be taken for a deserter.

So I walked away; the sun was setting, and I envied the rate at which the shadows ran up the hills. The sound of a stream made me diverge to the left, in search of a hole by its side, and carefully leaping over a broken line of white which I imagined to be water, I jumped on to the dark line on the other side, and in fact, into the torrent itself. I scrambled out; the heat of my indignation floated away to the Mediterranean, and I soon found a lovely hole. It was a cavity, or sort of basin in the earth, with a rock to windward and some broken pine branches close at hand. Nothing could be more perfect; rock, hole, wood, and water. So, after making a roaring fire, I nestled in my bag, and slept, but not for long. I dreamed I was a prisoner of the Inquisition; the tortures were being applied; priests were forcing fleas down my nostrils and into my eyes, and with red-hot pincers taking out bits of flesh, now cutting off my ears, and then tickling the soles of my feet. This was too much. I yelled a great yell, and awoke, to find I was covered with a crawling mass of something. The something was ants; I had camped by an anthill, and after having driven the inhabitants to madness by scorching their tails, had coolly lain down in their midst. The moral of this is instructive; the hole may be perfect, but there may be something *in* the hole; don't therefore, if you value your skin, make your camp after dark.

II.—*On Bags.*—On a windless night, if the camp is below the snow level, little more than a blanket bag is desirable, and a hole may be looked upon as a certainty. The form which is best for

the blanket bag, pure and simple, is tolerably well agreed upon; it should be thicker at the legs, and also rather wider, than at the upper part, and should be continued higher up under the head than on the upper side. I have found it very useful to have a stout piece of elastic sewn all round the open end, so that the bag may, if necessary, be raised above the shoulders, and remain there without having it in its power to wriggle down during the night, and leave the would-be wearer exposed.



THE TRAVELLER IN HIS BAG.

If the weather is bad, it is more disagreeable to camp low down than high up, as rain is vastly more unpleasant than snow, and no really comfortable waterproof bag has, so far as I know, yet been invented; I mean one which will keep off continuous rain for any length of time, and enable the wearer to remain happy inside it.

Rain implies a certain degree of warmth, and a waterproof bag a considerable degree of closeness. Mr. Galton, in the paper to which I have already referred, recommends a douanier's sheepskin bag, but concludes his recommendation by saying, that when he requires a bag, he shall not use this, but one of mackintosh instead. I have used mackintosh coverings to blanket bags, and my experience is, that they are very uncomfortable: hot and close in warm weather, or rain, and during cold, exceedingly cold. They exclude all ventilation, from their weight lie closely over the blanket, and conduct the warmth away, or, at least, prevent the pleasant accumulation that takes place in a tent. It has been said that a little fidget-

ting 'will pump out the used air and re-supply it with fresh; but when one is reposing, after possibly a fatiguing day, it is not pleasant to have to fidget purposely, or very likely that it will be done unconsciously. I am permitted to add that the experience of Mr. Tuckett as regards bags is similar to my own. He considers they are a mistake when waterproof, or, at least, highly objectionable, and has abandoned their use, retaining only a piece of mackintosh under the blanket, and when necessary using a sheet of the same laid over it.

III.—*On the wrong kind of alpine tent.*—As it is, however, extremely improbable that any one will ever need to camp out low down in the Alps for more than a short time, a waterproof bag can hardly be considered an article for which there is much need; and I am convinced, from my experience, that no waterproof bag, however perfect, will do for great heights. I have on several occasions slept on snow, or in close proximity to it, when I have been provided with two blanket bags, a waterproof one, and a plaid, besides fur boots and other etceteras; but on all occasions the nights passed have been uncomfortable, if there has been any wind. Finding this the case, I turned my attention to tents, and made one at first on the pattern suggested by Mr. Galton, with a few variations. It opened like a book, had one end closed permanently, and the other to be closed by flaps. It was supported by two alpenstocks, and the canvas sides were prolonged and turned in underneath. Numerous cords were sewn round the lower edges, to which rocks were to be attached, and the main fastenings passed under the ridge and through rings screwed on the tops of the alpenstocks; these were secured by long iron pegs.

The first occasion on which this was used was on the Matterhorn, on the 29th of August, 1861; and in order to make myself intelligible, I must say a few words descriptive of this oft-described mountain. From the final peak, three well-marked *arêtes* descend—one, the most pronounced, leads from the summit right down to the Hörnli; the second, more broken, to the ridge of the Théodule; and, the third, more irregular still, towards the Dent d'Hérens. From the second to the third *arête* the cliffs sweep round in an irregular curve, which is, in effect, the prolongation downwards of a horizontal V, one arm of which is formed by the southern face of the final peak, and the other by the easterly cliffs of the third *arête*. From the summit to the commencement of the third *arête* proper, that is, to the point at which it becomes well marked, is a great jump of at least one thousand feet, and at the place where it abuts against this great precipice is a deep and perhaps impassable

cleft, with wall-like sides, and a pinnacle towering in the middle. Descending from this cleft, the arête is a nearly level ridge for about a thousand feet of length, when it commences to fall away. At first it is exceedingly broken and jagged, then steepens, and is of a smooth wally nature; then there are more pinnacles and turrets, rocking in the wind and tremulous to the touch. About midway down a great tower stands boldly out, and below that the climbing changes again; a steep snow slope falls away for two hundred feet or so; then smooth slabs intervene, and, passing the point which is called 'the chimney' in the first recorded expedition on the Matterhorn, and descending a few hundred feet of rocks which offer no particular difficulty, the col is reached, the arête terminates, and a small peak or young Matterhorn rises. Unless one shoots down to the glacier beneath through the couloir which descends from the col, there is no way of arriving at Breuil but by creeping round some ledges of the little peak, crossing the heads of several subordinate couloirs which run into the larger one, and then, by a long but easy staircase of rocks, to the slopes above the hotel. This latter is the shortest and perhaps the best route, but the other has been taken.

Having then inspected the mountain on its southern side in the previous year, and come to the conclusion that in any attempt to ascend it, it would be necessary to sleep out, and possibly to do so on snow, I brought out the tent of which I have spoken, and with it and some other accessories, a single guide and myself toiled up the long staircase by the side of a snow slope struggling hard to become a glacier. On arriving at the col,* after examining the capabilities of the place, we saw that one side was protected by a precipice above, that on another no harm could come, for it was a sheer precipice down to the Zmutt glacier, on the third an icy col separated us from the dangers of the main peak, and on the fourth a glassy slope led down to the Matterhorn glacier. It was so evidently the place to sleep at, that we pitched the tent forthwith; but, alas for us, it exhibited such a marked desire to go to the top of the Dent Blanche, that we had great fears of its stability. The wind, which playfully careered about the surrounding cliffs, was driven through the gap with the force of a blow-pipe; the flaps, on which stones had been placed, would not keep down; the iron pegs would not stay in, and it behaved altogether in such an absurd manner that we were obliged to take it down and sit upon it. As night came on we wrapped ourselves in it, but even with this, in addition to blanket and waterproof bags,

* See Frontispiece.

it was most decidedly cold, and was as good a proof as could have been given of the uselessness of covering oneself closely with wraps. I then and there, in my mind, constructed another tent for the next season, with which, when made, I had every reason to be satisfied.

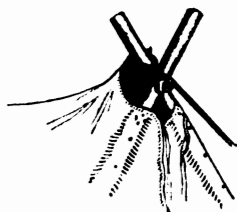
IV.—*On the right kind of alpine tent.*—The essential points to be regarded for an alpine tent are, 1st, weight and portability; 2nd, strength and stability; 3rd, warmth and ability to keep off rain and snow.



MY ALPINE TENT.

Keeping these points in mind, I made my next tent of the same shape and material as before, but instead of using the alpenstocks as supports, fixed a pole of lancewood at each corner. The poles were all shod with a conical point of iron, to penetrate the ground, if possible, or around which piles of stones might be built, so as to prevent their shifting: they crossed each other at the top, and were fastened together by

steel bolts. The forfar covering is first sewn round each pole, and then fastened by iron tacks: it is continued partially underneath, as before, but sewn on to a floor of mackintosh, which latter is continued for some distance up the sides. By these means anything like damp is prevented; it is an absolute impossibility for the wind to get underneath; and although there is sufficient ventilation in the upper part, the continuation of mackintosh effectually keeps off draughts from the shoulders and feet of those inside. One end is completely closed, and the other has flaps, which overlap each other and are fastened by tapes: the only cords which are required run fore and aft, and are best secured, if rocks can be obtained, by piling up some masses and fastening it to the largest; or, if in snow, by driving alpenstocks deeply in, and fastening to their heads. Two small openings are left at the top through which the cords are passed; the same rope that is used for climbing will of course serve for the tent.* The dimensions and other details will be seen by a reference to the diagram; the weight is about eighteen pounds, and the cost of the whole somewhat under 75s. As compared with waterproof bags, it will at once be seen that there is a considerable saving in its use; bags for four would weigh more than the entire tent, while for comfort it is beyond all comparison the best; it can be easily taken down and packed in three minutes, and when carried is not nearly so awkward as might be supposed. I have now slept in it on many occasions, on some of which the wind has been extremely high: I remember once seeing some stones as large as my fist blowing away off some rocks close at hand without the tent exhibiting any erratic tendencies. Its only defect is that it is not perfectly waterproof: when snow alone falls, it answers very well, but if, as I found the case in 1863, there is a continued fall of sleet for many hours, an occasional drop comes through. In July 1862, after two attempts on the Matterhorn with my friend Macdonald—in which we were cruelly and completely extinguished by the weather, we left this tent on the third arête, at a height of about 11,800 feet, and paid some attention to other mountains. I returned to Breuil after an absence of ten days; and while



THE WAY IN WHICH THE
POLES ARE SECURED.

* In the spring of 1862, I constructed a miniature tent after the same pattern for Professor Tyndall, substituting canes for the lancewood poles; the length of this was six feet by three feet nine inches in height and breadth, and the weight, I believe, less than seven pounds.

waiting for my guides, started one fine morning to see if the properties were safe, taking with me provisions for the day, and anticipating neither danger nor difficulty in reaching the place, having passed over the ground six times already. I wound my way across the couloirs by the col, crossed it, climbed about 500 feet, and found the tent in safety. No person who has not seen it can imagine the glorious view from this point: at least three-fourths of the ground over which the eye roams is composed of snow-fields, glaciers, and peaks; only in the direction of the Val Tournanche is there anything else, and in that, after following the valley to its termination and looking over the Eastern Graians, the Viso is seen at a distance of 98 miles towering above the masses of clouds which hover over the plains of Turin. Often as I had seen the view, at this time solitary and undisturbed, it burst upon me with all the freshness and strength of complete novelty, and any true mountaineer will understand how it came to pass that hours sped away unregarded, and that after satiating myself with avalanches off the Dent d'Hérens, the fine form of the Dent Blanche, the crags of the Rothhorn, the many summits of Monte Rosa, the Breithorn, and the scores of surrounding peaks, I found that the day was declining, and that barely time was left to return to Breuil. I turned to the tent, unrolled it, and as I did so my fate was decided; three bottles of wine and other provisions emerged from its recesses. I set it up, and turned again to the view; the sun was setting, and its rosy rays blending with the snowy blue, had thrown a pale pure violet far as the eye could see; the valleys were drowned in a purple gloom, and the summits shone with unnatural brightness. As I sat in the door of my tent and watched the twilight change to darkness, the earth seemed less earthy and almost sublime, and it was impossible to stifle sentiment and repress enthusiasm; the stone-chats chirped their evening hymn as they fluttered round their rocky nests; but theirs was the only sound; the world seemed dead, and I its sole inhabitant. By-and-bye, the moon as it rose brought the hills again into sight, and by a judicious repression of detail made the view yet more magnificent. I had been looking vaguely about for some time before I noticed something in the sky towards the south, I could not well make out what, which hung like a great glow-worm in the air at an infinite distance; and it was some time before I could realise the fact that it was the moonlight glittering on the great snow slope on the north side of the Viso. Shivering at last, I entered the tent, made my coffee, and passed a very comfortable night alone. In the morning it seemed a shame to waste the day (Saturday)

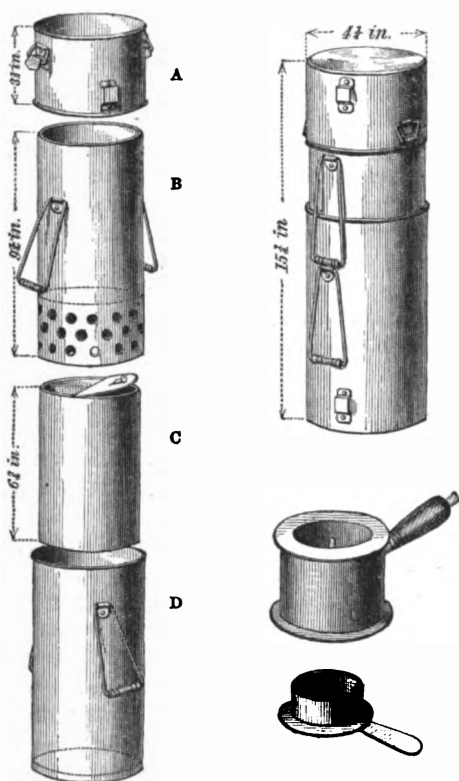
by going down at once to Breuil, when I was so high and the mountain so handy. There can at least be no harm, I thought, in going as high as I have been before, which was to the foot of the great tower. So on I went with my axe in hand and forty feet or so of rope coiled round my waist. The chimney offered little difficulty, but the snow slope above it took a long time, as the steps, from its steepness, were necessarily of the very largest coal-scuttle size. When I got to the foot of the tower it certainly seemed a pity to turn back, so I went a little further to see what was round the corner, and when I got round, the mountain seemed more interesting than ever; the pinnacles behind it were wagging in the wind. Without exaggeration, one could take hold of huge Egyptian-like blocks, ten or more feet high, and rock them backwards and forwards.* Strangely fascinated, on I went, and I think most mountaineers would have done the same. The work was so varied that there was none of that weariness which sometimes comes over one on an ascent. Higher up, when nearly on a level with the summit of the Dent d'Hérens, the arête became excessively narrow; you could sit across, rock it about, and speculate on which side it would fall; there wasn't a pin to choose between either. Sometimes a massive block twenty feet long was lying across a little one which was hourly becoming less, and at last, of course, down would come the big one. And this is the mountain which a writer has said presents no aspect of destruction about its cliffs; 'It is, on the contrary, an unaltered monument seemingly sculptured long ago.' Every one knows the passage—a fine one undoubtedly, but not in accordance with facts. The Matterhorn rains down, day and night, rocks and stones, and stones and rocks; it will one day be as famous for its avalanches as the Jungfrau is for hers.

I turned back at last, and being foolish enough to leave my axe behind in passing the tent, slipped in consequence on the top of one of the couloirs near the col: by a mere chance I was stopped, and, but for it, should not be able to narrate the glories of my solitary bivouac. I have, I think, sufficiently explained how it came to pass that I found myself at night on the Matterhorn on that occasion. Some amiable critics have announced that I was endeavouring to make an ascent by myself; I should be the first to laugh at any idea so absurd; it was a combination of accidental circumstances that caused me to get alone on that day higher than any other person had previously been.

* The natives who have been on this part of the mountain always term it 'the cockscomb,' so wonderfully is it serrated.

In camping out on an arête like No. 3, care should be taken to have some protection against falling stones, for there is more danger from them than might be supposed; in spite of every precaution, some have fallen on the tent on all occasions; and, improbable as it may seem, it is still a fact that a cannonade of stones will come down the very edge of an arête. I have myself caught them in the act—at least, they caught me.

V.—*On certain aids to comfort.*—After having made one or two abortive attempts to camp out comfortably, during which not the least of the miseries was the necessity of swallowing the nastiness which is called wine in the various districts of the Alps,



RUSSIAN FURNACE AND TINS.

and having to take it in a half-frozen condition, I was led to consider the best means of producing some simple apparatus by which water might be boiled, and in which tea or coffee might be carried without being mixed with butter or pepper, as is too frequently the case when these useful materials are left to the care of guides. The apparatus which I have been in the habit of using for some years past, and which answers this purpose sufficiently well, I have figured here. It is made in block tin, in four pieces,

which all fit together so as to be carried on the top of a knapsack. A is a cup furnished with leathern coverings to the handles; B is intended for service when wood fires are used, and the handles of this are supplied with boxwood coverings;

C is made in three divisions, and is useful for carrying eggs, butter, tea, or any of those small matters by which the comfort of a bivouac may be materially increased; and D is almost a counterpart of B, but is intended for use in a tent with the Russian furnace,* and when using this it is best to hang it by a small chain (with a hook at either end), from the rope which passes through the ridge. The numerous uses to which these tins can be put it is unnecessary for me to point out; and although a stronger and more complete apparatus might doubtless be produced, I have not yet heard of any that better answers the purpose for which it was designed, and which is of greater general utility.

Much more might be said on camping out, and I regret that the subject has not been treated in the *Alpine Journal* by abler and more experienced hands than mine; but if others will only do as I have done, bring forward their own experiences, it will result, I have no doubt, in some very useful facts being added to our knowledge; and instead of recording our nights spent on mountain sides as nights of discomfort and often of misery, we shall be able to refer to them as some of the most pleasant episodes of our lives.

VAL DI GENOVA AND THE PISGANA PASS. By JOHN BALL,
M.R.I.A. &c.

ALTHOUGH no firstrate peaks are visible from Val di Genova, I anticipate the concurrence of future travellers in ranking it amongst the most interesting valleys of the Tyrolese Alps. The waterfalls are of the first order, the rock scenery very fine, and the upper end is closed by two noble glaciers. Within the last few years the valley has been made easy of access. The increasing demand for timber has attracted the woodcutter. Sawmills have been erected to cut the larger trunks into planks, and the rougher logs are transported by the torrent to feed glassworks near Pinzolo. A rough cart-track has been carried for many miles up the valley, so that an excursion to and fro between Pinzolo and the foot of the glacier is within the compass of a moderate day's walk.

A forester (or *guarda-boschi*) named Suda, who had acted as guide to some Austrian officers who have visited the valley, is now removed to another station, and the only man supposed

* The Russian furnace is well but not universally known: it is far better than any other spirit lamp for alpine purposes; and is described by Mr. Tuckett at p. 70 of the 2nd vol., second series of 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers.'