

ridge connecting us with the Mont Pleureur was evidently free from difficulty, but as the snowy summit of that mountain did not seem a convenient resting-place, we preferred making our principal halt where we were, and did not start towards our slightly-loftier neighbour until 9.25. No one had ventured to estimate the intervening distance at less than two hours; but in fifty minutes, at 10.15, we stood on the summit, having first descended along a ridge of broken rock, and then kicked steps up a slope of snow, very steep, but in perfect condition. The Mont Pleureur, on the side of the Val de Bagnes, is cut away in one of the most terrific precipices I ever saw; Jakob, having looked over, called on us to do the same, but the convulsive grip which he gave me as I craned forward clearly showed how it had impressed him. After only a few minutes' stay, we turned along the great south-western ridge of the mountain, but soon left it, and struck straight down the face towards the Glacier de Gétroz. On the map this side of the Mont Pleureur is represented as all rock, and I have no doubt that in most seasons it is so; but it was now from top to bottom densely covered with snow, down which we floundered at such a pace that, in three-quarters of an hour from the summit, we were at the edge of the glacier. Having crossed to its left bank below the great ice-fall without difficulty, we soon found a track down the steep grass slopes on that side, which took us to the Gétroz Alp, whence a good path led to the Val de Bagnes, and the little inn at Monvoisin, where we arrived at 1.30, after an expedition of remarkable interest.

The same afternoon we walked down the valley to Chables, drove on to Martigny, and slept that night at Sierre, thus satisfactorily concluding the last of my variations of the 'High Level Route.'

PROFESSOR TYNDALL'S ATTEMPT ON THE MATTERHORN IN 1862.

We have received the following letter from Mr. E. Whymper:—

To the Editor of the Alpine Journal.—Sir,—My attention has been lately directed to an additional note at pp. 166–7 of the second edition of Dr. Tyndall's 'Hours of Exercise in the Alps.' I regret to learn from those pages that I have been misunderstood by their author upon two occasions, and I shall be greatly obliged if you will afford me sufficient space in the columns of the 'Alpine Journal' to explain away these unfortunate misconceptions.

The first part of the 'additional note' has reference to a conversation between us in the Val Tournanche. I returned to Breuil on July 26,

1862, from the Matterhorn, after an absence of two days, having, upon the latter of these days, in the company of Luc Meynet, attained a greater height than I—and to a considerably greater height than any other person—had reached on any previous occasion. We were agreeably surprised to find that Professor Tyndall had arrived at the inn during our absence. He was accompanied by the Valaisan guides J. J. Bennen and A. Walter, and had engaged my former guides, J. A. Carrel and Cæsar Carrel (who were then actually in my service), as porters. As he was ready to start, and intending to do so at once, provided with all the *matériel* that I considered necessary for success, and as it would have taken at least a day to provide myself equally well, it was useless to attempt to compete with him. My tent was on the mountain at about the height of 12,550 feet, and it seemed to be churlish not to place it at his disposal; for if it had not been, he would have been compelled either to camp lower down, or to displace it, or to use it without leave, or to construct for himself a new platform higher up. Dr. Tyndall is good enough to say in his volume, 'In the frankest spirit, he placed it at my disposal, and thus relieved me from the necessity of carrying up my own.' In the 'additional note' to which I have referred ('Hours of Exercise,' p. 166), Dr. Tyndall says, 'It certainly would have enhanced the pleasure of my excursion if Mr. Whymper could have accompanied me. I admired his courage and devotion; he had manifestly set his heart upon the Matterhorn, and it was my earnest desire that he should not be disappointed. I consulted with Bennen, who had heard many accounts—probably exaggerated ones—of Mr. Whymper's rashness. He shook his head, but finally agreed that Mr. Whymper should be invited, "provided he proved reasonable." I thereupon asked Mr. Whymper to join us. His reply was, "If I go up the Matterhorn, I must lead the way." Considering my own experience at the time as compared with his; considering, still more, the renown and power of my guide, I thought the response the reverse of "reasonable," and so went on my way alone.'

I entirely agree with Dr. Tyndall that such a response to his polite proposal would have been the reverse of reasonable. My recollection, however, of this conversation is very different to his. I positively deny having given such an answer, and as positively affirm that my answer was not intended to convey the meaning which he has put upon it. An hour or so after he had accepted my offer, he came to me and said (in a way which I thought seemed to imply that the answer might not be in the affirmative), 'Mr. Whymper, would you like to accompany us?' My answer could not have left him in doubt, for I replied warmly, 'Certainly I should; it is the very thing I should like,' or words to that effect. Dr. Tyndall then went on to say, 'If you go with us, you must place yourself under Bennen's guidance; you must obey his instructions; you must follow his lead,' and so forth. Now I was quite ready to place myself under Bennen, and should have done so as a matter of course had I accompanied the party. But being called upon to declare that I would implicitly obey his instructions, whether they were right or wrong, I could hardly avoid saying, 'You will remember, Dr. Tyndall, that I have been much higher than Bennen, and have been eleven days on the mountain,'

whilst he has been on it only for a single day; you will not expect me to follow him if he is evidently wrong?' It is not possible at this distance of time to remember the exact words I employed, but those given above cannot be far from the truth. Whatever was said was said because I desired that the expedition should succeed; and I thought at the time that Dr. Tyndall thoroughly understood me, for our conversation was not broken off abruptly; on the contrary it was agreed that I should accompany the party, and I went to my room to make the necessary preparations. It was some time afterwards (half-an-hour or more) before Dr. Tyndall came to me and said, 'Well, after all, I think you had better not accompany us.' He gave no reason for the change of plan, nor did I ask for any. I supposed that he wished to be alone, and had no idea that Bennen had anything to do with the matter.

The expedition started, and did not succeed. I heard of the failure, sought Dr. Tyndall in his room, and was received by him with more than his usual warmth and friendliness; which would scarcely have been the case if I had used the unreasonable expressions now attributed to me. He wrung my hands, and in the most earnest and impassioned manner abjured me to have nothing more to do with the Matterhorn. I left Breuil that year, as I have said elsewhere, 'almost inclined to believe that the mountain was inaccessible,' understanding that this was Dr. Tyndall's opinion, and that he would not try it again; but this appears to have been a mistake, for within a few hours after my departure from Breuil he proposed to Bennen to make another attempt upon it! Bennen, however, declined ('Macmillan's Magazine,' March 1869, p. 370).

Some of these details are now printed for the first time. I omitted them from 'Scrambles amongst the Alps,' because they were not necessary to the narrative; but, as my reticence has not been understood, it will perhaps be better to incorporate them in any future account of the ascent of the Matterhorn.

In the second portion of his 'additional note' ('Hours of Exercise,' p. 167), Dr. Tyndall says, in reference to 'Scrambles amongst the Alps':—

'I am concerned to find (J. A.) Carrel originating, and still more concerned to find Mr. Whymper giving currency to the fiction, that when Bennen halted in 1862 at the base of the final precipice of the Matterhorn, he, Carrel, stood forth and pointed out a way to the top. Of the guides and porters Bennen was the only man who entertained a thought of going on (!); he was throughout the natural commander of the party, and both Walter and Carrel shrank from the dangers of the last ascent. But with the experience gained from his association with Bennen, Carrel three years afterwards* returned to the charge. He had my rope to aid him, and by it he and his colleagues readily reached an elevation which gave them ample time for the thorough inspection of the last bit of mountain.† But even thus aided he accomplished a task which none but a first-rate climber could have accomplished, and it is doubly unworthy of a man capable of so gallant an achievement to deal untruly with the memory of a heroic predecessor, without whose initiative he might never have set his foot upon the Matterhorn.'

* And one year afterwards also.

† The same thing is said in different words by Dr. Tyndall on a previous page.

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Dr. Tyndall makes several very erroneous statements in this paragraph. As far as I am aware, J. A. Carrel has never said 'that he, Carrel, stood forth and pointed out a way to the top'; and I have never stated that he did any such thing. What I wrote ('Scrambles,' p. 134) was as follows:—

'The guide Walter (Dr. Tyndall says) said it was impossible to proceed, and the Carrels, appealed to for their opinion (this is their own account), gave as an answer, "We are porters; ask your guides." Bennen, thus left to himself, was finally forced to accept defeat. . . . Jean Antoine Carrel says that when Professor Tyndall gave the order to turn, *he* would have advanced to examine the route, as he did not think that further progress was impossible, but he was stopped by the Professor, and was naturally obliged to follow the others.'

And in a note on the same page of 'Scrambles' it was added:—

'The cause of Professor Tyndall's defeat was simply that his second guide (Walter) did not give aid to Bennen when it was required, and that the Carrels *would not act as guides after having been hired as porters*. J. A. Carrel not only knew of the existence of this place' (the cleft which stopped the party) 'before they came to it, but always believed in the possibility of passing it, and of ascending the mountain.'

These statements, it must be admitted, are very different from saying that 'Carrel stood forth and pointed out a way to the top.' I am prepared to stand by every word that I have written on this matter. My account, however, of the Professor's defeat is not perhaps so clear as it might have been, because I did not wish to lay too much stress upon it, and condensed it within a few lines. I willingly take the opportunity to refer to it at greater length, and by so doing to throw light upon the former relation.

When Dr. Tyndall and Bennen started from Breuil on July 27, 1862, they were under the mistaken impression that the Matterhorn had *two* peaks. This will be gathered by any person from Dr. Tyndall's published accounts of the expedition. J. A. Carrel, however, knew that this was not the case, for he had examined the mountain carefully, by himself, or in my company, on many occasions. I do not know whether Carrel was aware of the delusion which was entertained by the others; and, if he was, no blame should be imputed to him for not enlightening them, as he was engaged as a mere porter, and was placed strictly under the orders of Bennen, to obey his commands and to follow his lead. This I have heard from Carrel himself. When the party arrived upon 'the shoulder' (the long ridge that juts out towards the S.W. from the final peak), it was evident to all that there was not a second summit. Those who had supposed otherwise must have been considerably taken aback. They went towards the terminal precipices of the final peak, and presently found further progress was stopped by a deep notch in the ridge they were traversing. 'The ridge,' says Dr. Tyndall, in the 'Saturday Review,' 'was here split by a deep cleft, which separated it from the final precipice, and the case became more hopeless as we came more near. So savage a spot we had never stood upon. We sat down with broken hopes.' I knew this notch, from a distance, long before Dr. Tyndall's party arrived at it. It can be seen very well from the direction of the Col Theodule, and I had frequently consulted with J. A. Carrel as to the best manner of passing it. Carrel, therefore,

was perfectly cognisant of its existence—indeed, he knew of it years before I did. But Dr. Tyndall, Bennen, and Walter do not appear to have known of it before they were stopped by it. Bennen, the leading guide, could not see a way across. He broke down completely, and Dr. Tyndall called the others to help him out of his difficulty. But they did not respond; all saying, according to Dr. Tyndall, that further progress was impossible. J. A. Carrel denies this for himself and Cæsar Carrel, and says they replied, 'We are porters; ask your guides.' Anyhow, the result was that Bennen 'sought to fix the responsibility of return' on Dr. Tyndall, who (again according to his own account) gave him no help. 'It took him (Bennen) half-an-hour to make up his mind, but he was finally forced to accept defeat.'

When the order to turn was given, and it was evident that Bennen could not lead the party any further, J. A. Carrel stepped on one side, intending to examine the route; but Dr. Tyndall peremptorily ordered him to follow Bennen, and he was naturally obliged to do so. This I heard from J. A. Carrel so long ago as 1863, when he was acting as my guide on the Matterhorn; and learnt it because I inquired why it was he still believed that the mountain could be ascended by the southern route, when that route had been found impracticable by Dr. Tyndall. He has given me the same story on subsequent occasions, and cross-examination has failed to shake it. In 1869 I read over to him that portion of my relation of Dr. Tyndall's expedition precisely as it appears in 'Scrambles amongst the Alps,' and he expressed himself perfectly satisfied with its accuracy; and he then told me further that he had, in 1863, shortly after the publication of Dr. Tyndall's paper in the 'Saturday Review,' written to Aosta to say that the guides of Val Tournanche were not satisfied with the references which had been made to them, and that this letter had been printed, I believe in the 'Feuille d'Aoste.' I hope these explanations will assure Dr. Tyndall that I took pains to give an accurate account of his expedition, and that I have not even supposed that 'Carrel stood forth and pointed out a way to the top.'*

In regard to what Dr. Tyndall has written about 'dealing untruly with the memory' of Bennen, I have only to say that Carrel has never shown any disposition to depreciate that excellent guide. I believe Carrel felt the respect for him that one first-rate mountaineer always feels for another. The disagreements have been between Dr. Tyndall and Carrel, not between Bennen and Carrel. I cannot, too, concur with Dr. Tyndall in regarding Bennen as Carrel's *predecessor*, without whose initiative he might never have set his foot upon the Matterhorn, for the fact is that Carrel ascended to the height of 12,650 feet upon the Matterhorn two years before Bennen set his foot on the mountain! Bennen, indeed, followed Carrel's route. Bennen profited by Carrel's experience, and took with him J. J. Carrel (one of J. A. Carrel's associates in the earliest explorations), when accompanying Mr. Hawkins.

* I have no doubt that he *could* have pointed out a way, and have led the party to the top.

on the Matterhorn in 1860. Bennen, notwithstanding, made a slight advance upon his predecessors on each of the two occasions he was on the mountain, amounting in the aggregate to about 900 feet. Let him receive all the praise that should be awarded to him for doing so. But this, after all, was an almost insignificant portion of the whole. Reckoning from the inn at Breuil, an ascent of 7,890 feet has to be made before the summit of the Matterhorn is reached. About *seven thousand feet* of the way was found by others, and the chief part—by far the chief part—of this was discovered by Jean Antoine Carrel. It is therefore simply absurd to speak about the experience Carrel gained from his association with Bennen—that association amounting to about thirty-six hours' companionship with Bennen upon a mountain with which Carrel was already perfectly familiar.

It is not at all my desire to raise a controversy upon the respective abilities of these two men. Still, I cannot but think that Dr. Tyndall, in his great zeal for his favourite guide, does not do justice to the merits of the other, and that it is possible he may, by the very ardour of his advocacy, defeat the ends he has in view. The position taken up by Carrel upon the occasion in question (following his own account) is easily understood. He says in regard to it, in effect, 'I was hired as a mere porter, to follow another man's lead, and to obey his orders. Why should I be called upon to lead *him*, when he broke down at a difficulty which he would not have encountered if he had been better acquainted with the mountain? No, I said, we are *porters*; ask your *guides*.' I think you must admit, sir, that it would have been extraordinary magnanimity on the part of Carrel if, under these circumstances, he had shown Bennen a way up the mountain. Those who think otherwise should remember that Carrel was amongst the very first men who assailed the Matterhorn. In the expeditions of 1858–9, made from the side of Val Tournanche without the presence of amateurs, he was regarded as the leader, and he was generally admitted to be the right man in the right place. During these expeditions he made sacrifices of time and money which were considerable for a poor man. It must be therefore as annoying to him as it is surprising to others to find Dr. Tyndall reiterating no less than four times, in his 'Hours of Exercise,' the oft-repeated fiction that Mr. Vaughan Hawkins was the *first* man who assailed the Matterhorn. It is even more amazing to note in the same volume Dr. Tyndall declaring (pp. 165, 167) that the first Italian ascent (Carrel's ascent in 1865) was due to the assistance afforded by the rope left behind him in 1862. It is undeniable that the rope afforded a certain amount of aid to subsequent parties, but it is as unfair to claim this extraordinary value for it as it would be to pretend that Dr. Tyndall's advance in 1862 resulted from using rope, &c., that I had left behind lower down. Carrel's wonderful ascent in 1865 was executed step by step over the route which he indicated several years before, *even including the famous flank movement by which he turned and overcame the last difficulties*. I remember him, twelve months before he ever saw Dr. Tyndall and Bennen, describing to me, with great animation, how it was to be done. It would be cruelly unjust to attempt to deprive him of his hard-won.

honour by assigning such importance to this fragment of cord, and I cannot think that the claim will be generally admitted, least of any by the person who is most concerned.

In conclusion, allow me to say I believe that the statements in 'Scrambles amongst the Alps,' qualified by Dr. Tyndall in the final paragraph of his 'additional note' as 'other inaccuracies,' will be found upon examination to be as little deserving of this designation as those upon which he has dwelt particularly. I would gladly have offered these explanations to him in a less public manner had the opportunity been afforded me; and I trust he will see in this reply to his observations another proof of the attention ever given to his writings by

Your obedient servant,

EDWARD WHYMPER.

That any question should have arisen between two such distinguished members of the brotherhood of climbers as Professor Tyndall and Mr. Whymper, must be a matter of common regret. But it is chiefly, we are glad to find, from a generous rivalry in maintaining the honour of their respective guides that the two Englishmen, whose names will be most permanently associated with the Matterhorn, are now at variance. The siege of the noblest fortress of the Alps must always possess an historical interest for mountaineers; and every actor who took part in it is entitled to have as far as possible his share fully ascertained.

With regard to the first matter at issue, namely, the reason which led to Mr. Whymper's taking no part in Dr. Tyndall's second attack on the Matterhorn, the two accounts seem to us to be easily reconcilable. Professor Tyndall had, by his own showing, given up to Bennen the entire control and responsibility of the expedition. He felt, therefore, obliged to seek from his guide, as commanding officer, the permission to add a recruit to the party. Bennen gave his assent in qualified and—perhaps, as repeated by Dr. Tyndall—rather patronising terms.

On the conditions of his enrolment being put before him, Mr. Whymper seems to have asked to reserve to himself that right of expressing an independent judgment to which on the Matterhorn his personal knowledge peculiarly entitled him. Dr. Tyndall having surrendered for himself all independence of action, naturally hesitated to allow it in another; and was very likely to misinterpret the force of Mr. Whymper's phrase, for the exact words of which he has not expressly vouched.

The second portion of Dr. Tyndall's note, referring to the respective behaviours of Bennen and Carrel during the half-hour which decided the fate of the expedition, appears to be founded on a misapprehension, into which he has been led by a worthy haste to do justice to the memory of his guide. It is, we think, conclusively proved that Mr. Whymper has never stated that 'Carrel stood forth and pointed the way to the top.'

For the rest, the amount of influence which Carrel's experience with Bennen, and the aid of Dr. Tyndall's rope, had on the final success of the Breuil guides, is a subject on which everyone may form his own opinion. Dr. Tyndall surely, however, need not seek this uncertain foundation on which to establish his guide's reputation. Bennen's friends may be well content to rest his fame on the fact that he, almost

alone among Swiss guides, did not yield to the panic prevalent at that time with regard to the Matterhorn. On two occasions he gallantly attacked the foe whom the best men in the Alps could scarcely be brought to face. But he more than once expressed his conviction that the conflict was, in fact, hopeless. In this we think lies the real secret of his defeat, and of Carrel's final victory. The latter alone believed in the possibility of the ascent from Breuil, and therefore to him alone it became possible.

D. W. F.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

*The Annual General Meeting was held on December 12, 1871;
Mr. W. MATHEWS, President, in the Chair.*

The following gentlemen were balloted for, and elected Members of the Club—viz., Right Rev. Dr. Ellicott, Bishop of Gloucester; Baron Albert de Rothschild; Messrs. M. Beachcroft, E. Collins, W. Leaf, W. Marcet, M.D., T. Middlemore, S. G. C. Middlemore, Schütz-Wilson, and H. J. Smith.

Mr. BALL proposed, and Mr. STEPHEN seconded: 'That Mr. W. Longman be appointed President of the Club for the ensuing year.' After some observations by Mr. W. Longman and the President, in the course of which it was mentioned that Mr. Tuckett had been asked to allow himself to be nominated President, but had been unable, owing to other engagements, to accept the position, the motion was carried unanimously.

The PRESIDENT moved, and Mr. MACDONALD seconded: 'That the Rev. T. G. Bonney and Mr. E. Whymper be appointed Vice-Presidents, and Mr. Morshead and Mr. Wallroth new Members of Committee in place of the Rev. H. B. George and Mr. F. Walker, who retire by rotation; that the other Members of Committee be re-elected; and that Mr. A. W. Moore be appointed Honorary Secretary.' Carried unanimously.

Mr. NICHOLS proposed, and Mr. MOORE seconded: 'That the thanks of the Club be given to the retiring President, Vice-Presidents, Members of Committee, and Secretary, for their services to the Club.' Carried unanimously. The PRESIDENT acknowledged the vote.

Mr. STEPHEN then read a paper entitled 'Round Mont Blanc,' which appears *in extenso* in our current number. At the conclusion of the paper, several gentlemen made observations on the unsatisfactory character, as a body (and with certain exceptions), of the Chamouni guides. The points chiefly dwelt upon were their unwillingness to serve with Swiss guides, want of enterprise, and untrustworthiness in cases of emergency.

December 13, 1871.—The annual winter dinner took place at St. James's Hall this day, when sixty-five members and their friends sat down; Mr. W. Longman, Vice-President, in the chair. Among the guests of the Club upon the occasion were Captain Richard Burton, Colonel Malletson, Sir F. Pollock, Bart., and R. G. W. Herbert, Esq., Under Secretary for the Colonies.