

ALPINE ACCIDENTS AND ADVENTURES IN 1878.

THE CEVEDALE ACCIDENT.—The Editor has received letters from Mr. Arthur Johnson, Herr Schück, and from Dr. Salomon, the sole survivor of the Cevedale accident, clearing up the point left ambiguous in Dr. de Neufville's account as to what steps were taken for Dr. Salomon's succour while help was being sought from the valley. The second party on the mountain was made up not of one traveller and guide, but of four travellers with two guides. It was one of these—Herr Otto Schück, with the guide Vincent Reinstadtler—who rescued Dr. Salomon from the glacier cleft into which he had fallen. When they left to seek help, another guide, Aloys Schöpf, remained with the sufferer. Dr. Salomon writes, 'I wish to lay special stress on the fact that, owing to the consideration of the above-named gentleman and the conscientiousness of the guide Schöpf, I was not left alone for a single instant during the eight or nine hours which I had to pass on the glacier.'

The following additional particulars are made up from the letters of Mr. Johnson and Herr Schück, which supplement one another:—

The unfortunate man Zuschg, who was Reinstadtler's father-in-law, was 60 years old. He carried no axe. This was, in fact, his very first glacier expedition, and he was only engaged because there was no one else available. Joseph Reinstadtler was a good and trustworthy guide. He was engaged in cutting steps at the moment of the accident, which doubtless hindered him from checking the slip before it was too late. The slope was undoubtedly snow, not ice.

Reinstadtler's widow has thus lost husband and father at one blow, and she is left with three young children. She is not in actual want, owning three cows and a bit of land; but this, as usual, is encumbered. She is also obliged to keep a 'Knecht' to work the land in place of her lost relations, and his payment nearly absorbs the income of the property. Life must be very hard for her.

The priest, Herr Eller, who keeps an inn, opened a subscription for her; but visitors to the Suldenthal are not so numerous as the fine scenery and good accommodation might warrant. Three hundred florins was the amount collected. Lately a small pension of 60 florins annually has been moved for from the Guide Subvention Fund of the German and Austrian Club. Further contributions would be most acceptable, and the poor woman's case appears one which may fairly be recommended to the readers of the 'Alpine Journal.' Subscriptions should be sent by P.O. order, addressed, 'Herr Eller, Pfarrer in St. Gertrud, Suldenthal, Tyrol, Austria.'

LOST ON THE BERNINA.—Mr. H. W. Seton-Karr sends the following account of his adventure on Piz Bernina:—On Thursday, August 1, I started from Pontresina with Hans Grass, the son of the well-known guide of that name, and Michel Coray, guide and village 'bobby,' from Surlej. Being the first party to sleep in the new Boval hut of the S.A.C., we had to carry up several pots and pans.

I found that another party was destined for the same night quarters—two gentlemen of Zürich, with their guides and porters.

We had tolerably clean straw to sleep on, since we were the first oc-

cupants of the hut, but as for the fireplace, all the heat seemed to go up the chimney, but none of the smoke; so that, as we were eight in the hut and packed so tight that a laugh at any point reverberated along the line, it was not surprising if the air rushed out of the door in a visible column in the morning. We got off soon after one, with two lights for the party, and stumbling over huge boulders, the usual precursors of a great glacier, set foot on the ice, some of us not to leave it again for 44 hours. Passing under the Festung, we arrived at four on the huge terraces of névé which descend from Piz Bellavista. The morning was cloudless, except a few mists that were forming and dissolving against the Bernina, which rose opposite us, showing that currents of different temperatures were meeting. Here we were to separate, and a change of guides took place, to which I did not at the time object, though I believe that had I had old Hans Grass with me, instead of his son, we should not have been benighted as we were. Hans and Christian Grass, the two gentlemen of Zürich, and a porter for Piz Palü; I with Michel Coray and Christian Hans Grass for Piz Bernina. We took the usual course, nearly due west, to the Crastaguzza Saddle, crossed the Firnkessel to the north, and reached the foot of the arête at 6.30, all exhausted by the soft snow and hot sun. The snow part of the arête was unusually narrow in places, owing to a fierce wind that was dusting up the edge (for instance, three feet below the edge it would be a foot thick, and sunk away proportionately), so that we did not reach the summit (13,294 feet) till 9.30, and left it almost immediately.

So far the sky had been clear, except that below the Disgrazia fleecy clouds were lying; but now the weather behaved in a most unaccountable, not to say magical, fashion, for all round the peak, without any warning, dense clouds formed, and shortly after a furious storm came up from the south—providentially a few minutes after we had left the arête, or we should most certainly have been blown off it down to the Tschierwa glacier.

From this point I cannot say that my guides showed much judgment or energy. Though the storm was raging furiously the direction to go in was obvious, and there was no impossibility in moving. I urged them, however, in vain to persevere. Grass seemed completely dumb-founded, and we spent the remainder of the day in digging refuges in the snow and tramping up and down on the bank of a precipice which (as I easily ascertained with a compass, but endeavoured in vain to explain to Grass) overlooked the Crastaguzza Saddle. We found a poor shelter for the night in the shape of a rock eight feet square, after a perilous climb in the twilight along the edge of the gulf. Curiously enough, the fifteen hours we spent there seemed like one, from the intense drowsiness brought on by the cold. We must certainly have presented a remarkable appearance. The coating of ice over us was at least an inch thick; our hats were frozen to the hair; Coray's nose alone appeared beneath his ice-mask, while marbles of ice had formed even on his eyelashes; Grass looked like Father Christmas on a cake. When morning broke we found ourselves in an awkward predicament. During the night the storm had been

blowing up the precipice with such force that we should have found it hard to fall over, and had formed an immense snow-drift above us. We were soon on the top, and found that it overhung and sank away into clouds below, which Grass declared was towards Italy; the precipice closed the rear and right, a wall of rock the left. We made seven sorties from our rock. Six times our courage failed us on the brink of the crest; at the seventh we got down somehow by the rope, at about midday, and after six hours of step-cutting (made difficult by the showers of hail that poured down the slope and filled up the steps the instant they were cut) reached a 'Bergschrund,' filled by hail, where it was necessary to jump down about thirty feet. We managed it successfully, Coray landing in a sitting position with a loud thud. The clouds now broke, and we found ourselves on the west side of the Morteratsch ice-fall, where Grass partly retrieved his character by threading it in grand style (though he never recognised the locality). The glacier below us was curiously distorted by refraction, so that the farther end looked the highest. Young Grass did not recognise his fellow guides, who came out to meet us with lights when we reached Boval, but asked the way in Italian to the nearest inn. Coray and myself, being frost-bitten, slept (and pretty soundly too) with our hands in snow.

Hans Grass (the father) had been overtaken by the storm somewhere near the top of the Palü, but got his party back safely to Pontresina by Friday night. When he found we had not come back, with natural anxiety for his son, he started off to look for us, taking Johann Grass, but was driven back near the Festung by the storm; being joined by Christian Grass, he set off again, only to be again driven back near the Firnkessel, and returned to Pontresina on Saturday night, having thus been forty hours on the move.*

H. W. S. K.

THE ESCAPE ON PIZ PALÜ.—A full and excellent account of this wonderful escape has been given by Dr. Gussfeldt in a German paper, with the object of clearing Hans Grass (the father) from injurious statements circulated in Switzerland.

Such fault as there was lay entirely with the leading guide, who kept too near the corniced crest. Hans Grass, who was in the rear, did wonders in holding up the two travellers and leading guide, who were hanging—one in space, the other two on the face of an exceedingly steep slope. Mr. Benjamin Wainewright, by retaining hold of his ice-axe, also contributed essentially to the happy issue, as, but for this, steps could hardly have been cut, and he and his companions enabled to

* This story recalls, though happily with a different ending, the terrible catastrophe on Mont Blanc in 1870. In both there seems to have been the same failure in the guides. Nothing can give a man a good head for locality, but guides should be taught at least the use of a compass and the need of prompt energy when overtaken by bad weather. If their party cannot face the storm with unimpaired powers, how can they expect to be more successful when benumbed and exhausted by hours of exposure? The energy of despair sometimes does wonders; but it is a last resource which ought not to be trusted to. We hope the Swiss club will make this adventure the subject of a warning to the guides under their influence, and particularly to those of Pontresina.—EDITOR.

rescue themselves from their perilous position. Hans Grass is recommended on all sides as a thoroughly efficient guide, and has the highest reputation of any man in his profession in Eastern Switzerland. He appears, however, to be the only man in the Engadine capable of taking the lead in a difficult expedition.

ALPINE NOTES.

ALPINE HUTS.—Complaints have been recently made in various parts of the Alps of the state in which huts are often left by parties who have spent the night in them, and the injury done to the furniture and cooking utensils. The mischief is believed to be due principally to the carelessness of guides not belonging to the district, and consequently without any feeling of responsibility to counteract the natural indolence of 3 A.M., supported, as it usually is, by the general eagerness for a start. Travellers are urgently requested, therefore, to insist on their guides using the stove carefully, and, before leaving, cleansing the cooking utensils, restoring to their proper places all blankets or furniture, and shutting the doors and windows. It might be well if the foreign Alpine Clubs would issue a printed notice to this effect, to be pasted up conspicuously in the huts under their control. It should be in French, German, and Italian, so as to be intelligible to guides of every nationality.

FIRST ASCENT OF THE PALA DI S. MARTINO, 3,244 MÈTRES.—Mr. T. Meurer and the Marquis A. di Pallavicini, with the guides Santo Siorpaes and Arcangelo Dimaj, of Cortina, had made during the days from the 17th to the 22nd of June, 1878, starting from S. Martino di Castrozza, several reconnaissances and useless attempts to ascend the Pala di S. Martino. From articles in the 'Alpine Journal' concerning the attempts of Messrs. Whitwell, Beachcroft, and Tucker, and information given by Mr. Tuckett about the possibility of an ascent of the Pala, these gentlemen were aware that an attempt to gain the summit from the N. would prove impracticable by ordinary mountaineering methods. The S.W. side proved quite as hopeless, and the S. and S.E. sides were found unfavourable to an ascent. On the E. side Mr. Whitwell succeeded in gaining a considerable height in the year 1870, but without being able to scale the peak. From the N.N.W. a broken ridge leads from the plateau to the main mass of the Pala; but this ridge proved, as the above-mentioned gentlemen found, to be cut off from the Pala by an impassable chasm.

Messrs. Beachcroft and Tucker, with François Devouassoud and Battista della Santa, had made an attempt, as they state themselves, on the N.W. side ('Alpine Journal,' vol. vii. p. 332), but also here found further ascent so dangerous that they gave up the attack. Considering these circumstances, and making grateful use of these most valuable observations, Messrs. Meurer and Pallavicini decided to direct their attempts specially towards the W. and N.W. sides, and only if these proved useless to try the E. side, which Messrs. Whitwell and Tuckett pronounced to be not quite hopeless.