with him. To those who are not equal to the ascent of Mont Vélan the Valsorey glacier offers a very charming day's excursion; the adventurous may take local counsel and try for a new route to Aosta. Either Liddes or St. Pierre furnishes accommodation; the latter, though inferior, should be good enough for pedestrians. I heard that there was *one* guide there *up* to the Vélan, but as his name also was Dorsot I am in doubt whether the 'fils de la Cantine' be not the person meant. Of the hundreds who pass to and from St. Bernard probably nothing like one per cent. visit the Valsorey, which, except for the dogs, is infinitely more interesting. Between Liddes and the Val de Bagnes the mountains are entirely undescribed, at least in English books; they are very lofty, abound in glaciers, and can hardly fail to contain very interesting excursions.

ALPINE NOTES.

ALPINE RAILWAYS.—We take the following from the *St. Moritz Post*:—

'Now that the railway from Landquart to Davos is on the eve of completion, the promoters are concentrating their attention on the extension of the railway to the Engadine. To connect Landquart with Chiavenna by railway, via Davos, Samaden, and Maloja, has always been part of the scheme, which, as a whole, is to cost 43,000,000 frs., or nearly $1\frac{3}{4}$ millions sterling.

'There are, of course, as in all mountain railways, certain natural difficulties to be overcome. In the present instance the Scaletta Pass has to be pierced by a tunnel five miles long, and the blocking of the line from snow or avalanches has to be avoided. The first, we presume, is more a question of money than of engineering difficulty. On the second point the engineers, who have surveyed the proposed route, assert that, with snow-galleries and sheds and a sufficient rolling-stock of snow-ploughs, the line is perfectly feasible. We understand the present position to be that the company find a difficulty in accepting the conditions insisted on by some of the Engadine Communes through whose territory part of the line must pass.'

'Long life and stiff necks to the Engadine Communes,' most mountain-lovers will say.

We further learn that the Swiss Federal Council have granted the concession for the Jungfrau Railway to the engineer who built that up the Pilatus. He proposes pneumatic tubes, by which he intends to blow seventy persons to the top in *fifteen minutes* from Lauterbrunnen.

THE DOM FROM THE KIEN GLACIER.—In the account of the meeting on March 4 I am made to say, in reference to this route, that 'under certain conditions the rocks above the Kien Glacier would be found impracticable.'

Digitized by Google

This is not so, as the rocks are quite easy; but what I do think is that it might not be always possible to traverse the steep snow-slopes above them. Provided the mountain is in good condition, I should certainly recommend this route, as for those who are not in search of any special difficulty this is probably the best way up the Dom from Randa, and it deserves to be better known.

PERCY W. THOMAS.

GRINDELWALD AND ZERMATT IN THE OLDEN DAYS.—In numbers 41–47 of the interesting little local paper, called 'Der Gletschermann,' which is issued by Pfarrer Strasser, of Grindelwald, we have a very valuable contribution to the history of that well-known valley. It used formerly to be the custom (and, to some extent, still is) in many families there to keep a sort of diary or annals of the chief events in their little world. So far as early times are concerned, these annals are all copies of one original text, the compiler of which is unknown; later they vary according to the individual taste of the family chronicler. J. R. Wyss (1817) and Ober (1854), in their respective works, had already made mention of these chronicles. Herr Strasser has examined most of those which are extant, and now publishes a complete copy. There are four entries (1096, 1349, 1356, and 1393) before the sixteenth century, but it is only after 1564 that they are at all consecutive, and the latest is 1887. The local dialect is used, and the events recorded are mainly local, such as the weather of the year, pestilences, accidents by avalanches or falls, &c., which enable one to reconstruct the daily life of these dwellers among the mountains. Amongst other entries we find notices of the deaths of Mr. Penhall, Mr. Latham, and Peter Egger; while the first winter ascents of the Wetterhorn and Jungfrau (both 1874) are mentioned with expressions of amazement. This valley chronicle fills twenty-five small folio pages, and its publication is the latest of the great services which Pfarrer Strasser has rendered his adopted home.

Professor Andreas Heusler, of Basel, has just published the text of the 1571 regulations of the Commune of Zermatt as to the common lands within its territory. This may be found in vol. ix. pp. 150–4 of the 'Zeitschrift für Schweizerisches Recht,' or more conveniently on pp. 374–8 of the work entitled 'Rechtsquellen des Cantons Wallis' (Basel, C. Detloff, 1890, pp. 493—8 fr.), in which Herr Heusler has collected his various contributions to the history of the institutions of the Vallais. This work is simply a treasure-house for anyone who is interested in the local history of the valley. Six hundred sets of statutes, manorial rolls, &c. are calendared and several printed at length; while the introduction gives, for the first time, a trustworthy account of the remarkable institutions of the Vallais, which lasted down to the French Revolution, and of the main characteristics of the constitutional history of each of its side-glens and 'Zehnden.'

W. A. B. COOLIDGE.

FROM THE CAPANNA GNIFETTI TO ZERMATT OVER THE ZUMSTEIN-SPITZE (4,573 m.=15,004 ft.) AND DUFOUR-SPITZE (4,638 m.=15,217 ft.)—It may not be too late to record, for the benefit of visitors to Zermatt during the present season, that a useful and very fine route from the

Digitized by Google

Val Sesia lies over the Zumstein-spitze, the Ost-spitze, and Dufour-spitze of Monte Rosa, closely following the main or boundary ridge from the Zumstein-spitze to the Ost-spitze, and from the latter point the short broken western ridge which connects it with the Dufour-spitze. No part of the expedition is new. Mr. Conway ascended the Zumstein-spitze by its northern ridge from the Grenz-sattel, or Zumstein-sattel, as it is sometimes called, in 1886,* and the ascent of the Dufour-spitze from the same saddle, by way of the Ost-spitze, has been several times made.† But the expedition as a whole was probably first made by Mr. Bode and myself, with our guides, last year (1889). It presents no serious difficulty, but from the Zumstein-spitze to the Dufour-spitze is by no means without interest from a mere climbing point of view; while for the grandeur of the views it affords, the expedition is probably unsurpassed by any in the district. Taking it in very leisurely fashion, but favoured by some useful glissades in the descent from the Dufour-spitze, our party took rather less than twelve hours, inclusive of all halts, from the Capanna Gnifetti, which should be made the starting-point, to the Riffel-haus. Anyone disposed to hurry through such magnificent scenes could no doubt very materially shorten this time. J. A. Luttman Johnson.

Mountain Climber and Mountain Gymnast.—In connection with Mr. Conway's excursus in the last number (p. 108) on these types, some remarks by Herr Josef Rabl, in the 'Oesterreichische Touristen-Zeitung' for April 1, may be interesting. After pointing out how the old enchantment of the Alps and the old charm of Alpine literature have departed, he proceeds: 'The Alpine world was then larger and wider, not in actual space, but to the imagination. Wherever, in those fortunate times for tourists, a man put his foot on the steps of the high peaks he found himself in presence of the unknown and new, the thrilling, the unsolved; wherever he had successfully climbed a summit, new problems stood around him, a crowd of new questions surged up. Thus the narratives contained the thrilling charm of travels of discovery, they opened out a mental view of widely extended regions, and, even though what was then problematic has ceased to be so for us, the thrill remains, and it still interests us to-day to read how they reached the goal of their protracted efforts, and made the discovery with which we have long been familiar. . . . The heroes of those narratives did not merely climb, they roamed; and, as it makes a great difference to our mood whether a poet takes us to the petty affairs of daily life or transports us to the scene of great deeds, so does it make a difference whether a narrative of an excursion shows us the hero performing gymnastic feats up gullies and on walls, creeping along ledges and slabs, or we with him roam through a wide region full of a rich variety of scenes where Nature is grand and exalted. Past, indeed, are the days of the great Alpine problems; but this is not the sole reason why the majority of modern narratives have no longer power to enthral. The sympathy of most readers is choked off by the narrowness of the stage on which most of these stories take place

* *Alpine Journal*, vol. xiii. p. 163. † *Ibid.* vol. viii. pp. 338, 400.

Digitized by Google

now-a-days, and by the minute description which selects for its subject, not landscape or mankind, but "the technical difficulties of the ascent."'

A CORRECTION.—With reference to the notice (on p. 160) of the account of Dr. Diener's and Herr Purtscheller's tour in the Val de Bagnes, from the 'Zeitschrift' of the D.Oe.A.V., the 'Oesterreichische Alpen-Zeitung' points out that Dr. Diener, and not, as might possibly be gathered from some expressions in our notice, Herr Purtscheller, was the author of that account.

ACCIDENTS.—Already several fatal accidents are reported from the Eastern Alps. At Whitsuntide a young man named Schnetzer was killed on the Gottesackerwände in Allgäu. He was with his brothers, and, staying behind to botanise, fell over a precipice known as the Rothe Wand.

At the same season Herr Christian Schöllhorn, of Munich, in ascending the Watzmann from St. Bartholomä, slipped in crossing some ice-covered rocks, and lost his life. He was accompanied by the well-known guide, Preis (called Punz), of Ramsau; and the slip seems to have occurred while Preis, having directed his Herr to remain still, was engaged in clearing the ice from the rocks. The rope does not appear to have been in use.

The Rax Alpe, near the Semmering, which seems to exist chiefly in order that tourists from Vienna may break their necks on it, has already claimed another life. In descending from that mountain, on June 4, by the 'Gamseck' (a route which is considered quite free from danger), Herr Josef Kronberger, aged 19, fell from the path at a point where a ladder has to be passed, and was taken up dead. In this case, it must be said, the cause of the fall seems to have been a sudden giddiness arising from a weak or deranged heart; for a moment before, the party having halted for a few minutes' rest, Herr Kronberger had been standing and talking quite cheerfully to one of his companions.

On Thursday, June 19, Herren Emil Böhm and Z. Pallausch, of Vienna, started to ascend the Planspitze (2117m = 6260 ft.) in the Ennsthal. They did not get off till 1 P.M., and the weather was very bad. By 9 they were still short of the summit, and had to pass the night, in a storm of wind and rain, on the rocks. In the morning Herr Böhm, though much exhausted, was persuaded by his companion to proceed with the ascent, of which only a small portion remained to be accomplished. Almost immediately he missed his footing, and fell, apparently no great distance, on to a steep slope of *geröll*, where he lay helpless, but supported by the rope. Herr Pallausch, being unable to draw him up, made the rope fast, and went in search of help. He reached the valley in about 5 hrs. and despatched three men, with instructions as to the spot where he had left his friend. He himself was not in a fit state to go up the mountain again. Late at night they returned, having failed to find the unfortunate tourist. It seems to have been too hastily assumed that he had recovered strength enough to descend by himself, and, instead of the search being at once renewed, nothing more was done till the Sunday, when Herr Pallausch returned with a

Digitized by Google

guide to the spot, and found his friend lying dead in the place where he had left him. A more pitiful story has never been told in the history of mountaineering.

WINTER ASCENTS.—Piz Margna (3156m. = 10,355 ft.) was ascended from Maloja on March 5 by Mrs. Main and Mr. Bulpett accompanied by Martin Schocher and Martin Weibel, both of Pontresina. The party left the Maloja Kulm at 6.30 and mounted for some time over grass and heather. The ordinary summer route was followed throughout. The northernmost end of the summit ridge was reached at 1. The snow was everywhere on the Maloja side in magnificent condition. The rocks were free from ice, but from their peculiar formation gave little hold.

The long arête connecting the first point with the second and higher one was quickly traversed; and a warm and sunny spot having been discovered on the southern slope an hour was pleasantly spent there, till at 3 P.M. the return was commenced, the party deciding to go down on the Val Fedoz side. The snow on the glacier was firm, and the hollows in the rocks below were so well filled up that the descent was rapid and easy, and before five o'clock the valley of Fedoz was reached.

The Margna was ascended some years ago in winter, but we understand that the party on that occasion started from and returned to Sils. This is believed therefore to be the first time that anyone has been up the Maloja side at this season.

The first winter ascent of the Presanella was made on March 13 by Signor Orazio de Falkner and Count Armandi Avogli, from the *rifugio* in Val Nardis. Leaving this at 7.15 they reached the summit at 12, and were back at 3. The snow in the lower part was soft, but near the summit very hard.

ALPINE JOURNAL BACK NUMBERS.—A few more of these have recently been acquired, and the following numbers may be obtained on applying to the Hon. Secretary at the Alpine Club Rooms, 8 St. Martin's Place, W.C.

31, 36, 39, 40, 46, 51, **53**, 62, **64**, 65, 69, **70**, **71**, **72**, 73, **74**, **77**, **78**, 83, 84, **85**, **87**, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, **95**, 97, **98**, **99**, **100**, **101**.

Those indicated by black type are out of print.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

Im Hochgebirge. Wanderungen von E. Zsigmondy. (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot. Pp. xvi, 360. Price 36*s*.

This is a remarkable book in many ways. It is a pleasure to look at it. It fulfils Mr. Ruskin's conditions. It is beautifully printed. The type is large and clear, the paper excellent, the margin wide and inviting, and, above all, Mr. E. T. Compton's illustrations are quite first rate. It is almost a measure of human progress, the difference between these beautiful and accurate drawings and the dear old coloured plates of the peaks, passes, and glaciers of our youth. There are more than two hundred illustrations, of which perhaps the Ortler,

Digitized by Google