the snow was probably falling fast. The good people of Zermatt greeted us as we passed through the village; they were not at all surprised that we should have failed in our attempt, as they were aware that the state of the weather rendered it impracticable, but they did marvel a little to see us return alive, conceiving it impossible that anyone could survive a night upon the glacier of the Mont Cervin, and they had unanimously predicted that we should all perish in the attempt. The only one of the party, however, who seemed to have excited much of their compassion was William, as they thought it hard that so young a boy should be led up to perish so cruelly.

The Vicaire and the old woman lost no time in supplying us with the means of making our coffee and with all that we required, and we endeavoured to console ourselves for our disappointment, and for the uncertainty if we should be able to renew the attempt to reach the summit of the Monte Rosa this season, by contrasting our present comfort with our last night's sufferings.

(*To be continued.*)

The Aiguilles des Charmoz and de Grépon.

By A. F. MUMMERY.

(Read before the Alpine Club, Tuesday, May 3, 1892.)

IN a certain remote period, when a few unclimbed peaks were still to be found in the Alps, it was my good fortune to explore the various summits of the Charmoz, or rather of what used to be called the Charmoz, for the inventive genius of my successors has been so stimulated by the dearth of new routes that this peak has been hewn in twain, one half retaining the name of Charmoz, whilst the other and loftier has been dubbed the Grépon.

In company with Alexander Burgener and Benedikt Venetz, I made a very early start on July 15, 1880, and, being provided by M. Couttet with an admirable lantern (this expedition took place in the pre-folding-lantern age), we made very fair progress for the first half-hour. We then began to ascend something which Burgener averred was a path, but which insensible of, or possibly made bashful by, such gross flattery, hid itself coyly from view at every third step. After a long grind the grey light of morning began to overpower our lantern, so, finding a suitable stone, we carefully hid it and marked the spot with a sprig of pine.

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Sad to say, on our return, though we found many stones with many sprigs of pine on them, none had our lantern in the hole underneath, a circumstance much to be regretted, as from an item which subsequently appeared in my bill it seems to have been a lantern held in high esteem by Monsieur Couttet.

We soon got clear of the forest, and ultimately reaching a stream under the lateral moraine of the Nantillon Glacier, halted for breakfast. Here we discovered that three slices of meat, a tiny piece of cheese, ten inches of loaf, and a big bag of raisins were all the provisions the hotel porter had thought necessary. Luckily Burgener had been left in charge of the commissariat, and, as I prefer raisins on the side of a mountain to any other food, I was able to look on the porter's conduct with philosophy, a state of mind by no means shared by my companions.

We very injudiciously turned the lower ice fall by keeping to the right and ascending a couloir between the cliffs of the Blaitière and the precipitous rocks over which the glacier falls. The couloir proved very easy, but a rock buttress on our left being still easier we took to it and rattled to the top at a great pace. Immediately over our heads towered an endless succession of séracs, huge sky-cleaving monsters, that seemed almost in the act of falling. The spot was not a desirable one for a halt, so we turned to the left to see how we were to get on to the glacier. At one point, and one only, was it possible to do so. A sérac lurching over the cliff, and apparently much inclined to add to the pile of broken ice-blocks some hundreds of feet below, was the only available bridge. We scrambled along it, crossed a crevasse on avalanche débris, and dashed up a short ice slope to the open glacier. Ten minutes sufficed to take us into comparative safety, and we traversed to the island of rock, by which the ice fall is usually turned.

Here we made a halt and proceeded to search the knapsack for possibly hidden stores of food. Whilst Venetz and I were engaged in this duty, Burgener screwed himself and his telescope into a variety of extraordinary attitudes, and at length succeeded in making a satisfactory examination of our peak. An hour later we started again and tramped up to the base of the long couloir which leads to the depression between the two summits of the mountain, or, in modern language, between the Grépon and the Charmoz.

We crossed the bergschrund at a quarter to nine, and at

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once turning to the left, out of the couloir, worked our way up some good rocks for three-quarters of an hour, only one or two slabs offering any sort of resistance to our progress. By this time we had reached the top of a secondary ridge, which here abuts against the final cliffs of the mountain. We sat down on an ice-coated rock and producing our limited supplies of food, once more solemnly reviled the Chamonix porter. We then deposited the wine tin in a safe corner, and unanimously discarded coats and boots, which with two out of three hats and the same proportion of ice-axes, were packed away in a secure cleft. The baggage, consisting of a spare rope, two wooden wedges, the food, a bottle of Bouvier, a tin of cognac, and an ice-axe, was made over to me.

The two men began to worm their way up the cliff, Venetz usually being shoved up by Burgener and then helping the latter with the rope. Progress, however, was painfully slow, and when at last good standing ground was reached, the rope declined to come anywhere near me. Ultimately I had to make a difficult traverse to fetch it, as it was quite impossible to carry the ice-axe and knapsack without its aid. This sort of work continued for three-quarters of an hour, and then a longer delay suggested that there was something seriously wrong. An eager query brought back the reply that the next bit was quite impracticable, but, added Burgener, 'Es muss gehen.' Anxious to see the obstacle which, though impracticable, was yet to be ascended, I swarmed up the edge of a great slab to a narrow ledge, then, working round an awkward corner, I entered a dark cold gully.

A mighty block, some forty feet high, had parted from the main mass of the mountain, leaving a rounded perpendicular couloir, which was now everywhere veneered with ice. A tiny stream trickled down the back of the gully, and about mid-height had frozen on to the rocks, forming a thick column of ice flanked on either hand by a fantastic fretwork of the same material. A green bulge of ice, about fifteen feet above, prevented our seeing the back of the gully beyond that point. Nothing could appear more hopeless, there was not even decent foothold where we stood, everywhere the black glazing of ice filled up and masked the irregularities of the rock below.

Some ten minutes later both men appeared to my inexperienced eye in extremely critical positions. Venetz, almost without hold of any sort, was gradually nearing the

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afore-mentioned green bulge; an axe, skilfully applied by Burgener to that portion of the guide costume most usually decorated by patches of brilliant and varied hue, supplying the motive power, whilst Burgener himself was cleverly poised on invisible notches cut in the thin ice which glazed the rock. Before, however, Venetz could surmount the green bulge, it became necessary to shift the axe to his feet, and for a moment he was left clinging like a cat to the slippery wrinkles of the large icicle. How he succeeded in maintaining his position is a mystery known only to himself, and the law of gravity. With the axe beneath his feet, he once more moved upwards, and with a desperate effort raised his head and shoulders above the bulge. 'Wie geht's?' yelled Burgener. 'Weder vorwärts noch zurück,' gasped Venetz, and to a further query whether he could help Burgener up, came the reply, 'gewiss nicht.' However, so soon as he had recovered his wind he renewed his efforts. Little by little his legs, working in spasmodic jerks, disappeared from sight, and at last a burst of patois, a hauling in of the rope, and Burgener advanced and disappeared. The whizz of icicles and other small fragments, and the hard breathing of the men showed they were advancing. Then Burgener shouted to me to squeeze well under cover for fear of stones, but as the crack to which I was holding only sufficed to shelter my nose, fingers, and one foot, I thought it wise to work back out of the gully on to the warm rocks, being, moreover, much persuaded to this line of conduct by my toes, which, unprotected by boots and with stockings long since cut to ribbons, were by no means unwilling to exchange frozen rock and ice for warmth and sunshine.

Presently a startled shout and a great stone leapt into space, followed by a hoarse jodel to announce the conquest of the gully. As I scrambled back the rope came down with a swish, and I tied up as well as I could with one hand, while the other hung on to an ice-glazed corner. Having accomplished this important operation I began the ascent. Everything went well for the first few feet, then the hold seemed to get insufficient, and a desperate effort to remedy this ended in my swinging free, unable to attach myself to either rock or ice. A bearded face, with a broad grin, looks over the top of the gully, and cheerily asks, 'Why don't you come on?'

Then a few vigorous hauls, and I am above the green bulge, and enter a narrow cleft. Its smooth and precipitous walls were everywhere glazed with ice, and their parallel

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surfaces offered no grip or hold of any sort. It was just possible to jam one's back against one wall and one's knees against the other, but progress under these conditions was not to be thought of. After a few minutes had been allowed to convince a possibly sceptical Herr that the knapsack and the ice-axe were not the only impedimenta in the party, the persuasive influence of the rope brought me to more broken ground, and a scramble landed me in the sunshine.

The men were ruefully gazing at their torn and bleeding elbows, for it appears they had only succeeded in attaching themselves to the gully by clasping their hands in front of them, and then drawing them in towards their chests, thus wedging their elbows against the opposing walls. They were both very thoroughly 'blown,' so we halted and circulated a certain flask. Then I lay down on the warm rocks and wondered how long my internal organs would take to get back into those more normal positions from which the pressure of the rope had dislodged them.

A quarter of an hour later we were once more *en route*. Above a long series of broken cliffs, seamed by a fairly continuous line of vertical cracks, assured our progress as far as the ridge. How I crawled up great slabs hanging on to impossible corners—how at critical moments the knapsack hooked on to sharp splinters of rock, or the ice-axe jammed into cracks, whilst the holes in my toes got deeper and bigger, and the groove round my waist more closely approximated to the modern ideal of female beauty—is fixed indelibly on my mind; but I will limit myself to saying that on some rocks, in due accordance with the latest mountaineering fashion, I expostulated with Burgener on the absurdity of using a rope, at the same time taking very good care to see that the knot was equal to all emergencies. On other rocks I just managed to ascend by adopting new and original attitudes, which, despite certain adverse criticisms, I still believe would have won renown for any artist who could have seized their grace and elegance, and would, moreover, have afforded a very distinct departure from all conventional models. On yet other rocks a method of progress was adopted which has since, I regret to say, given rise to fierce disputes between the amateur and professional members of the party; it being alleged on the one hand that there is no difficulty in ascending such rocks if the climber be not hampered by a knapsack and ice-axe; and on the other, that a waist measurement of eighteen inches ought, for some mysterious reason, to be taken into account, and detracts from the

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climbing merit of its possessor. Without, however, entering into controversial matter of so painful a character, I may briefly say that at a quarter-past eleven we scrambled on to the ridge and feasted our eyes with a near view of the summit.

The more sanguine members of the party at once concluded that a projection on the left, of easy access, was the highest point; but certain gloomy dissentients averred that an ugly tooth on the right, of a most uncompromising character, was the true peak. Laughter was the portion of these unbelievers, and the easy crag was scaled amid a wild burst of enthusiasm, only, however, to find that here, as elsewhere, the broad and easy path is not for the faithful.

Returning to the gap where we had attained the ridge, we made our way to the foot of the real summit. Venetz was promptly lifted up to Burgener's shoulders and propelled onwards by the axe; but the first attack failed, and he recoiled swiftly on to Burgener. The despised Herr was then used to extend the ladder, and by this means Venetz was able to reach indifferent hold, and ultimately to gain the summit. At 11.45 A.M. we all crowded on to the top, the men rejoicing greatly at the reckless waste of gunpowder with which Monsieur Couttet welcomed our arrival. Burgener, as a fitting recognition of this attention, planted our one ice axe on the highest point, whilst the rank and file of the expedition diligently sought stones wherewith to build it into an upright and secure position. To this a handkerchief of brilliant pattern and inferior repair, the product into which the Zermatt wash had resolved two of more ordinary dimensions and colour, was securely lashed.

Whilst these details were being satisfactorily completed, the heavy luggage of the party was quietly sunning himself in a comfortable nook, and absorbing that mixture of sunlight, atmosphere, glittering lake, and jagged ridge, which make up a summit view. Long hours of exertion urged to the utmost limit of the muscles, and the wild excitement of half-won but yet doubtful victory, are changed in an instant to a feeling of ease and security, so perfect that only the climber who has stretched himself in some sun-warmed, wind-sheltered nook, can realise the utter oblivion which lulls every suspicion of pain or care, and he learns that, however happiness may shun pursuit, it may, nevertheless, be sometimes surprised basking on the weird granite crags. To puzzle one's brains at such moments by seeking to recognise distant peaks, or to correct one's topographical knowledge,

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or by scientific pursuits of any sort, appears to be sacrilege of the most vicious sort. To me it seems the truer worship to stretch with half-shut eyes in the sun, and let the scenery

> 'Like some sweet beguiling melody,
> So sweet we know not we are listening to it,'

wrap us in soft delight, till with lotus-eaters we had almost cried—

> 'Let us swear an oath . . .
> . . . to live and lie reclined
> On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind.'

But Burgener did not altogether share this view, and at 12.30 P.M., he insisted on our sliding down a doubled rope on to the ridge below the summit. All went merrily till we reached the ice couloir. Here Burgener tried to fix one of our wooden wedges; but do what he would, it persisted in evading its duties, wobbling first to one side and then to another, so that the rope slipped over the top. We all had a try, driving it into cracks that struck our fancy, and even endeavouring to prop it up with ingenious arrangements of small stones. Someone then mooted the point whether wedges were not a sort of bending the knee to Baal, and might not be the first step on those paths of ruin where the art of mountaineering becomes lost in that of the steeplejack. Whereupon we unanimously declared that the Charmoz should be desecrated by no fixed wedges, and finding an insecure knob of rock we doubled our rope round it, and Venetz slid down. I followed, and to prevent as far as possible the chance of the rope slipping off the knob, we twisted it round and round, and held the ends fast as Burgener descended.

By 2.20 we rejoined our boots, and ideas of table d'hôte began to replace those of a more poetic type. We rattled down the rocks, and raced across the glacier in a way that we subsequently learnt created much astonishment in the minds of sundry friends at the opposite end of M. Couttet's telescope. The further we got the faster we went, for the séracs that looked unpleasant in the morning now lurched over our heads in a way that made Burgener's 'schnell, nur schnell,' almost lift one off one's feet. After the usual habit of séracs they lurched and staggered, but did not fall, and we got down to the lower glacier much out of breath, but otherwise uninjured. Reaching the neighbourhood of our lantern we sought diligently but found it not, so we made for a châlet Burgener knew of.

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We found the fair proprietress feeding pigs. She brought us milk, and though of unexceptionable quality the more fastidious members of the party would have liked it better had not some of the numerous denizens of her abode and person previously sought euthanasia in the flowing bowl.

Happily the zigzags did not take long to unwind, and at 5.30 P.M. we were warmly welcomed by Monsieur and Madame Couttet and much excellent champagne.

Whilst on the summit of the Charmoz, I had been struck by the two sharp and towering pinnacles of the Grépon, and made various inward vows to scale them. I was, however, due in England before time could be found for their ascent, and the attack had to be postponed till 1881.

On August 3 of that year I was remorselessly ejected from my bed at 1.30 A.M., and informed that there was not a cloud or even a rag of mist for laziness and a love of slumber to modestly shelter beneath, so reviling guides, mountains, and early starts, I got into my clothes and came down to the chill and comfortless salon. I then found that neither hot tea for the Monsieur nor breakfast for the guides was forthcoming. Doubtless the just retribution awarded by Providence (or M. Couttet) to those who bring Swiss guides to Chamonix.

We got on very slowly at first, our progress being much hindered by a bottle lantern. Happily, before the loss of time became really serious, Venetz took advantage of a smooth rock and some interlaced brambles, and went head-over-heels, no one exactly knew where, though, from some remarks he let fall, I gathered that it was one of the least desirable quarters of Hades. When he reappeared the lantern was no more, and we were able to make better progress, till, after a weary grind, we reached the Nantillon Glacier.

At the foot of the couloir leading to the col between the Charmoz and the Grépon we halted for breakfast. This couloir, though not absolutely free from falling stones, is fairly easy, and it was not till about 70 feet below the col, when we had traversed to the right and assaulted a great slab, that we met with our first serious difficulty, and found it necessary to put on the rope. Both Venetz and I made sundry attempts, but, so soon as we got beyond the sure and certain support of Burgener's axe, progress upwards became impossible, and though we reached points within a few feet

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of broken and fairly easy rock, we were forced on each attempt to return. Whilst still doubtful whether a yet more determined attack might not conquer our enemy, Venetz wisely climbed back into the couloir and up to the col to see if any more convenient line could be discovered. He soon called on us to follow, and, leaving Burgener to pick up the rope and knapsack, I scrambled round and found Venetz perched some 10 feet up a huge slab. This slab rests like a buttress against the great square rock, which shuts in the col on the Grépon side with a perpendicular wall. Its foot, accessible by a broad and convenient ledge, is about 20 feet below the col, whilst its top coincides with a curious hole in the ridge above and to the right of the col. From this, once attained, we believed the summit was accessible.

So soon as Burgener had brought round the rope and knapsack, Venetz tied up and set to work. At one or two places progress was very difficult, the crack being in part too wide to afford any hold, and forcing the climber on to the face of the slab. I subsequently found that at the worst point my longer reach enabled me to get a slight hold of a small protuberance with one finger, but how Venetz, whose reach is certainly a foot less than mine, managed to get up has never been satisfactorily explained. At the next stage the crack narrows, and a stone has conveniently jammed itself exactly where it is wanted; beyond, the right-hand side of the crack gets broken, and it is a matter of comparative ease to pull oneself on to the top. This top then forms a narrow, but perfectly easy and level, path to the hole in the ridge. We found this hole or doorway guarded by a great splinter of rock, so loose that an unwary touch would probably be resented with remorseless severity, and the impertinent traveller hurled on to the Nantillon Glacier. Squeezing through, we stepped on to a little plateau covered with the *débris* of frost-riven rock.

Burgener then proposed, amid the reverent and appreciative silence of the company, that libations should be duly poured from a bottle of Bouvier. This religious ceremony having been fittingly observed (the Western form, I take it, of the prayers offered by a pious Buddhist on reaching the crest of some Tibetan pass), we proceeded to attack a little cleft overhanging the Mer de Glace, and cleverly protected at the top by a projecting rock. Above this we found ourselves in a sort of granite crevasse, and as this, as far as we could discover, had no bottom, we had to hotch ourselves

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along with our knees against one side, and our backs against the other. Burgener at this point exhibited most painful anxiety, and his 'Herr Gott! geben Sie Acht' had the very ring of tears in its earnest entreaty. On my emergence into daylight his anxiety was explained. Was not the knapsack on my shoulders, and were not sundry half-bottles of Bouvier in the knapsack?

We now boldly struck out on to the Nantillon face, where a huge slice of rock had been rent some 16 inches from the mass of the mountain, leaving a sharp, knife-like edge, destructive of fingers, trousers, and epidermis, but affording a safe and certain grip. This led us on to a spacious platform, whence a scramble of some 20 feet brought us to the sharply-pointed northern summit. Burgener self-denyingly volunteered to go down and send me up a stone wherewith to knock off the extreme point of the mountain, but the pleasing delusion that I was to occupy the convenient seat thus afforded was quickly dispelled. Stones were hauled up by Venetz in considerable quantities, and the construction of a stone man—or, having regard to its age and size, I ought, perhaps, to say a stone baby—was undertaken. A large red handkerchief was then produced, and the baby was decorously draped in this becoming and festive attire. These duties finished, we partly scrambled and partly slid back on to the big platform, and proceeded to enjoy ourselves, feeling that our work was over, our summit won, and that we might revel in the warm sunshine and glorious view.

That night my dreams were troubled by visions of a great square tower—the great square tower that at the other end of the summit ridge had thrust its shoulders above the snows of the Col du Géant, and though the men had stoutly maintained that our peak was highest, I felt that the delights of an untroubled mind must be for ever abandoned if up that tower I did not go. After breakfast, I sought for Burgener, but I found that he was invisible, an essential portion of his clothing being so terribly damaged that the protracted exertions of the local tailor were requisite to his public appearance. However, in response to my urgent entreaties, Venetz retired to bed, and Burgener emerged resplendent in the latter's garments.

It turned out that Burgener had to be in Martigny the next morning but one, so, to give him time on our return from the Grépon to drive over the Tête Noire, we resolved to go up to Blaitiere-dessous that evening and make an early start. The tailor duly accomplished his labours and released

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Venetz, and about four o'clock, with the addition of a porter, we strolled up to the châlet.

We got under weigh at two o'clock the next morning, and, following the route just described, reached the base of the first summit. Passing to the right of this we dropped down a fifteen-feet step and crawled up a smooth rock to the edge of the great cleft which divides the summit ridge into two equal sections. After a careful examination, as there did not appear any other method of descent, we fixed our spare rope, having first tied two or three knots at suitable intervals. Venetz went down first, and after he had made a short inspection he called on us to follow. Burgener descended next, and I brought up the rear in company with the knapsack and an ice-axe. I found the first twenty feet very easy, then I began to think that the Alpine Club rope is too thin for this sort of work, and I noted a curious and inexplicable increase in my weight. To add to these various troubles the axe, which was held by a loop round my arm, caught in a crack and snapped the string. Luckily, by a convulsive jerk, I just managed to catch it in my left hand. This performance, however, greatly excited Burgener, who, unable to see what had happened, thought his Herr and not merely the ice-axe was contemplating a rapid descent on to the Mer de Glace. Having restored our spirits by a quiet consideration of the contents of a certain flask, we set off in pursuit of Venetz, who had carried away our only remaining rope. A convenient flake had split from the mountain on the Nantillon side and offered a fairly easy zigzag path to the top of the tower, which shuts in the great cleft on this side.

We here found one of the many excellences of the Grépon peculiarly well developed. On the Mer de Glace face, from ten to twenty feet below the ridge, a broad road suitable for carriages, bicycles, or other similar conveyances, led us straight along to the last gap, thus obviating the necessity of following the ridge and climbing up and down its various irregularities. It is true that this desirable promenade was only to be reached by rounding a somewhat awkward corner, which my companion professed to think difficult, and its continuity was interrupted at another point by a projecting shoulder, which pushed one's centre of gravity further over the Mer de Glace than was wholly pleasant; but, the passage of these minor obstacles excepted, we were able to walk arm in arm along a part of the mountain which we had expected to find as formidable as anything we had encountered.

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Reaching the last gap we rejoined Venetz and proceeded to examine the final tower.

It was certainly one of the most forbidding rocks I have ever set eyes on. Unlike the rest of the peak, it was smooth to the touch, and its square-cut edges offered no hold or grip of any sort. True, the block was fractured from top to bottom, but the crack, four or five inches wide, had edges as smooth and true as a mason could have hewn them, and had not one of those irregular and convenient backs not infrequently possessed by such clefts. Even the dangerous help of a semi-loose stone, wedged with doubtful security between the opposing walls, was lacking. Added to all this a great rock overhung the top and would obviously require a powerful effort just when the climber was most exhausted.

Under these circumstances, Burgener and I set to work to throw a rope over the top, whilst Venetz reposed in a graceful attitude rejoicing in a quiet pipe. After many efforts, in the course of which both Burgener and I nearly succeeded in throwing ourselves over on to the Mer de Glace, but dismally failed in landing the rope, we became virtuous, and decided that the rock must be climbed by the fair methods of honourable war. To this end we poked up Venetz with the ice-axe (he was enjoying a peaceful nap), and we then generally pulled ourselves together and made ready for the crucial struggle.

Our rope-throwing operations had been carried on from the top of a sort of narrow wall, about two feet wide, and perhaps six feet above the gap. Burgener, posted on this wall, stood ready to help Venetz with the ice-axe so soon as he should get within his reach, whilst my unworthy self, planted in the gap, was able to assist him in the first part of his journey. So soon as Venetz got beyond my reach, Burgener leant across the gap, and, jamming the point of the axe against the face of the rock, made a series of foot-holds of doubtful security whereon Venetz could rest and gain strength for each successive effort. At length he got above all these adventitious aids and had to depend exclusively on his splendid skill. Inch by inch he forced his way, gasping for breath, and his hand wandering over the smooth rock in those vague searches for non-existent hold which it is positively painful to witness. Burgener and I watched him with intense anxiety, and it was with no slight feeling of relief that we saw the fingers of one hand reach the firm hold offered by the square-cut top. A few moments' rest, and he made his way over the projecting rock, whilst

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Burgener and I yelled ourselves hoarse.* When the rope came down for me, I made a brilliant attempt to ascend unaided. Success attended my first efforts, then came a moment of metaphorical response, promptly followed by the real thing; and, kicking like a spider, I was hauled on to the top, where I listened with unruffled composure to sundry sarcastic remarks concerning those who put their trust in tennis shoes and scorn the sweet persuasion of the rope.

The summit is of palatial dimensions and is provided with three stone chairs. The loftiest of these was at once appropriated by Burgener for the ice-axe, and the inferior members of the party were bidden to bring stones to build it securely in position. This solemn rite being duly performed, we stretched ourselves at full length and mocked M. Couttet's popgun at Chamonix with a pop of far more exhilarating sort.

The aged narrative from which I have been reading ends abruptly at this point. Before, however, quitting the summit of one of the steepest rocks in the Alps I may, perhaps, be permitted to ask whether the love of rock-climbing is so heinous and debasing a sin that its votaries are no longer worthy to be ranked as mountaineers, but are to be relegated to a despised and special class of 'mere gymnasts.'

It would appear at the outset wholly illogical to deny the term 'mountaineer' to any man who is skilled in the art of making his way with facility in mountain countries. To say that a man who climbs because he is fond of mountaineering work is not a mountaineer, whilst a man who climbs because it is essential to some scientific pursuit in which he is interested, is a mountaineer, is contrary to the first principles of a logical definition, and I trust this club will not commit itself to so absurd a blunder. It may be freely admitted that science has a higher social value than sport, but that does not alter the fact that mountaineering is

* M. Dunod heard at Chamonix that I took three ladders of 10 feet each on this ascent ('Annuaire Club Alpin Français,' 1886, page 99); it is needless to say that this is a Chamonix myth. It, however, led him to encumber himself with three ladders of 12 feet each. His ascent and all subsequent ascents have been made by the southern ridge of the Grépon; the ridge from the point described, page 168, to the real summit has not since been traversed.

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a sport, and by no possible method can be converted into geology, or botany, or topography. That the technique of our sport has made rapid progress is alleged against us as a sort of crime, but I venture to say, in reality, it is a matter, not for regret, but for congratulation. To emulate the skill of their guides was the ideal of the early climbers, and I trust it will still be the ideal that we set before ourselves. A terminology which suggests that as a man approaches this goal, as he increases in mountaineering skill, he ceases to be a mountaineer, stands self-condemned, and must be remorselessly eliminated from our literature.

But underlying all this sort of criticism would appear to be a recrudescence of Mr. Ruskin's original charge, that we treat the mountains as greased poles. This I venture, on behalf of rock-climbers generally, to most emphatically deny. Pleasure in the exertion of acquired skill is perfectly consistent with a keen appreciation of natural beauty, and this appreciation forms a chief part of the attraction which the more difficult ascents exert. It is true that few of us analyse with any care the complex web of motives which determines our choice of ascents, but, so far at all events as my experience extends, it justifies the belief that those best skilled in the mountain craft appreciate most keenly the glorious scenes amongst which we wander.

Mr. Leslie Stephen has pointed out, and probably most would agree, that the charm of mountain scenery is to be found in every step taken in the upper world. The strange interfolding of the snows, the gaunt, weird crags of the ridges, the vast blue icicle-fringed crevasse, or the great smooth slabs sloping downwards through apparently bottomless space, are each and all no less lovely than the boundless horizon of the summit view. The self-dubbed mountaineers, however, fail to grasp this essential fact. To them the right way up a peak is the easiest way, and all other ways are wrong ways. Thus, they would say, to take an instance from a well-known peak, if a man goes up the Matterhorn to enjoy the scenery, he will go by the Hörnli route; if he goes by the Zmutt ridge, it is, they allege, the difficulties and 'greasy poliness' of the climb that attract him. Now, this reasoning would appear to be wholly fallacious. Among the visions of mountain loveliness that rise before my mind none are fairer than the stupendous cliffs and fantastic crags of the Zmutt ridge. To say that this route with its continuously glorious scenery is, from an æsthetic point of view, the wrong way, while the Hörnli route which, despite the noble

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distant prospect, is marred by the meanness of its screes and its paper-besprinkled slopes, is the right, involves a total insensibility to the true mountain feeling.

The suspicion, indeed, sometimes crosses my mind that the so-called mountaineer confounds the pleasure he derives from photography or from geological or other research, with the purely æsthetic enjoyment of noble scenery. Doubtless, the summit of a peak is peculiarly well adapted to these semi-scientific pursuits, and if the summit is the only thing desired, the easiest way up is obviously the right way; but from a purely æsthetic standpoint, the Col du Lion, the teeth of the Zmutt ridge, or Carrel's Corridor, whilst affording as exquisite a distant prospect, combine with it the dramatic force of a splendid foreground of jagged ridge, appalling precipice, and towering mist-veiled height.

The importance of foreground cannot, I think, be overrated, and it is obvious that the more difficult an ascent the bolder and more significant will usually be the immediate surroundings of the traveller. In other words, the artistic value of an ascent generally varies with its difficulty. This, necessarily, leads us to the conclusion that the most difficult way up the most difficult peaks is, from an artistic point of view, always the right thing to attempt, whilst the easy slopes of ugly screes may with propriety be left to the scientists, with M. Janssen at their head. To those who, like myself, take a non-utilitarian view of the mountains, the great ridge of the Grépon may be safely recommended, for nowhere can the climber find bolder towers, wilder clefts, or more terrific precipices; nowhere, a fairer vision of lake and mountain, mist-filled valleys, and riven ice.*

* The impression which the two ascents made on me, and which is more or less faithfully represented in my paper, was that the Charmoz was the harder climb of the two. Those, however, who have since explored the peaks tell me that the Charmoz is, relatively to the Grépon, quite easy. Continuous and violent snowstorms (from July 8 to 12, 1880) had glazed some of the rocks, and filled the deeper cracks with ice; this, added to the fact that we somewhat foolishly discarded our boots, doubtless accounts for the excessive difficulty we experienced, and also for the fact that my successors have found the distance from the top of the ice-gully to the ridge merely a pleasant scramble of a quarter of an hour. It also appears open to question whether the point I ascended is quite the highest; it seemed so to us, but we were very possibly mistaken.

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