Of the merits of my own guides I cannot speak too highly. Joseph's face wore a grin of happiness in the most difficult places; indeed, so content was he, that it was not till next morning he remembered that he had forgotten to smoke all the preceding day. But it is to Emile that the whole credit belongs. His leading was faultless. He worked out the route among perplexing rocks without a mistake, and displayed the combined qualities of limpet and caterpillar to an extent I had never before seen applied to rock climbing. He has now been present in every ascent of the two peaks, except that made by Dent and myself, and his opinion will probably be accepted that the lower is much more difficult of access than the higher. The latter is fast going down the usual scale of mountains, each party finding it less difficult than the last. It has already become 'a short day from the Montanvert,' and doubtless next season will be found 'an easy day for a lady.' That the western summit will not quickly follow suit it would be rash to prophesy, still the work is so infinitely harder than that on the eastern, that some time will probably elapse before it does so—unless, indeed, some one festoons it with ropes. The race of mountaineers may greatly improve as time goes on, and laugh our puny efforts to scorn; yet I believe the ascent of the upper portion of the Western Aiguille du Dru will always rank high amongst the most difficult rock climbs in the Alps.

Bye-Paths in the Pyrenees.

By CHARLES PACKE.

SWITZERLAND is now so overrun with tourists that in whatever direction the start is made for a ramble from one of the mountain inns, it is scarcely possible to avoid the regular beaten paths; and the ground has been so trodden and explored in all directions that the flowers, with the exception of a few of the very commonest, are exterminated within a radius of several hours' walk. In the Pyrenees, on the other hand, when once at an upland station you are immediately struck by the freshness of the surrounding ground. Except possibly in a single direction leading to some well-known point, there is no trace of the ravaging hand or foot of the tourist; and, notwithstanding the impulse to Pyrenean exploration which the French Alpine Club have lately given, within six or eight hours one may reach a region practically unvisited by the foot of man.

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A time must come, even to those who retain the keenest love for the mountains, when the Giants of Switzerland are beyond our power, but to show that there are still fields of travel which can minister to the love of exploration and beautiful scenery which, once innate, can never become extinct, I venture to recount a five weeks' tour of a sexagenarian in the Pyrenees last summer.

It is with description as in painting. The words written as an after-thought can never have the same vivacity as if they were taken down on the spot, but in the more arduous and consequently the most interesting part of the walk, time scarcely suffices for the roughest note, so that it is hopeless to reproduce the inspiriting vigour of those scenes in a dull narrative written under a winter sky.

Still I hope that the following sketch may in some faint measure convey to the reader the attractions of the reality, and that the heights given in metres and feet may make the route clearer without being too suggestive of a guide-book.

My first visit to the Pyrenees was in 1853, and since then I have at least every alternate year passed six weeks or two months of the summer among them, varying the tour sometimes in the interval year by a visit to the Alps.

It is needless for me to expatiate upon the enjoyment to be derived from a summer outing among any of the mountains, but, having some experience of both, I own to a preference for the Pyrenees; and it is strange to me that, while such swarms of my countrymen flock every year to the crowded hotels of Switzerland and Tyrol, so few can be induced to make a trial of a mountain chain, which is comparatively unvisited by English, and may be reached with no greater trouble or fatigue. The tourists who resort to the mountains in the summer may be divided into three classes—those who go out with the object of climbing a certain number of new and difficult peaks, and thereby obtaining a degree of Alpine renown; those to whom the climbing of a high mountain is in itself a pleasure, as an invigorating exercise of their muscular force; and those for whom the mountains possess a charm, not only in themselves, but in the surrounding scenery, and the varying aspects of trees and rocks, flowers and snow, that are only to be enjoyed in the leisurely climb.

In the Pyrenees, no doubt, there are some peaks and even glaciers worthy the attention of the most energetic climber; but it is to the last class that I especially recommend the Pyrenees for their summer outing.

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An easy railway journey of 4½ hours brings the traveller from Toulouse to Ax, the Luchon of the Eastern Pyrenees. Here there is an excellent hotel, Hôtel Sicre, and the same sulphur baths as at Luchon, steaming hot from the junction of the limestone and granite rocks, of which this place forms the axis. The surrounding mountains also, if somewhat less imposing than those of the central part of the chain, from the absence of glacier, are certainly not less wild and even more interesting, especially from a botanical point of view.

I was astonished to find that Ax is now partially lighted by the electric light. They have as yet no arc lights, but 180 incandescent lamps are distributed among the principal houses, the Hôtel Sicre being one. The occupier pays 30 francs per annum for each lamp in his house, giving a total of 216*l.* a year for interest on the cost of the dynamo and the expenses of distribution. The dynamo is worked by a turbine placed in the stream of the Ariège, close to the house. It is kept going till midnight during the hours of darkness, winter and summer, the hours of lighting the lamp being unrestricted, but the power is turned off at 12 P.M. I was told that as yet it hardly pays, but in the ensuing year the light is to be used generally throughout the town. The company, who have obtained a concession—that is, a monopoly of the water power—are already preparing extra turbines and dynamos, which they anticipate will prove a lucrative affair, as indeed it ought to be, seeing that the power is obtained for nothing.

It would be monotonous to recount all our excursions, but in giving one from the Eastern and one from the Central Pyrenees, I shall leave it to the reader to form his own opinion of their respective merits.

Starting at 6 A.M. with my companion in a small rattle-trap vehicle called a diligence, but which was a poor representative of its giant predecessor in pre-railway times, we reached Hospitalet, the douane station on the French frontier before entering Cerdagne on the one side, and Andorre on the other.

I ought to have stated that my companion, H.S., was of less than half my age, and therefore of double my strength, but he kindly accommodated his pace to that of a veteran. The other occupant of the diligence was an engineer, who gave me further details about the electric lighting, but who seemed still more interested in some artificial breeding-places for trout which he was construct-

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ing on the banks of the Ariège. On the plans, the basins for keeping separate the fish of different ages, and supplying them with food as well as with water, looked feasible enough, but I suspect the turbulent river will not always respect the artificial dam. A more certain supply of trout might be looked for from the upland lakes, nearly all of which, except the very highest, are well stocked, if some limit were put upon the netting—at present unrestricted. After breakfasting at the rough inn of Hospitalet, owing to the steep ascent we were able to continue on foot and reach the summit of the Col de Puymorens, 1,931 metres (6,335 feet), before the diligence. There a transfer of both passengers and luggage was effected to the diligence which we met coming from the opposite direction, a practice which showed that punctuality must be observed, notwithstanding the slowness of the pace. Porté is the first village reached, where we again stopped, and then, continuing down the valley of Carol, at 3.15 P.M. we arrived at Bourg-Madame, still within the French frontier, but only a mile from the thoroughly Spanish town of Puycerda. Here we took a carriage to Saillagousse, which we had chosen to make our quarters for a couple of nights, on account of its contiguity to the Vallée d'Eyne, celebrated for the richness of its flora beyond every other in the Pyrenees.

The next day, mounting the Crête of Cambredaze on the east side of the Vallée d'Eyne, after a delightful but not difficult scramble along the arête over rock and snow, we reached the highest point, the Tour d'Eyne, 2,832 metres (9,292 feet), and thence descending into the head of the valley, we worked our way back to Saillagousse by the lower level. To give a list of the plants we met on the upper rocks and in the lower valleys—i.e. at an elevation of 2,800 to 3,000 metres—would be almost to give a list of the Pyrenean flora, but among the rarities were the peculiar umbellifer *Xatardia scabra*, only existing in this spot in the known world; the little red Alpine poppy (*Papaver pyrenaicum*), the silver-leaved senecio (*S. leucophyllum*), and lower down the beautiful large purple primrose (*Primula latifolia*), and the yellow adonis (*Adonis pyrenaica*).

It was near night as we approached Saillagousse, and our difficulty was in escaping the deep barrancos or chasms formed in the clay, which offer dangerous traps, especially in the dark, on the east side of the village.

The next morning an easy walk of three hours over the Col de la Perche, 1,622 metres (5,322 feet), brought us to

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the fortified town of Mont-Louis—the highest in France, placed at an elevation of 1,600 metres (5,249 feet). The Col de la Perche, and indeed all the moist upland grassy plateaux of this district, from 1,600 to 2,100 metres, are strewed with a profusion of the lovely *Gentiana pyrenaica*. This beautiful plant, which here is as common as the ordinary spring gentian, is only to be found in one other spot, in the Carpathians. It is impossible to make it grow in England with whatever care the plants may be transported.

There is an excellent inn at Mont-Louis, the Hôtel Jambon, the only drawback to a stay here being that the gates of the town are closed, and there is no egress, from 9 P.M. to sunrise; but the ordinary English tourist will not feel this an inconvenience. We had decided, for the sake of shortening the very long day's walk we had planned for the morrow, to push on to the hermitage of Font Romeu. Our route lay through the pine forest by a half-traced road, but there was no fear of our missing the way. This day, July 2, happened to be the fête of Notre Dame de Font Romeu, and hundreds of pilgrims, some in carts, some on foot, most of them now returning, thronged the whole distance. At length, after a delightful stroll of two hours, we reached the sacred spot. Backed by a natural amphitheatre dotted by tufts of pines stood the chapel, built of rough-hewn stone, and from its wall issued the holy fountain in three runlets. Adjoining was a huge barrack-like edifice, erected for the accommodation of pilgrims visiting the church. Round this a swarm of peasants were struggling for admission. Some who had performed their devotions were dispersed in groups under the trees, while others—and these were the most numerous—were crowding into the inn or visiting the tents and booths for refreshment of a less spiritual kind. The fête had evidently a twofold object, and it was hard to say whether the sacred or profane predominated. About a quarter of a mile from the church a Calvary had been erected on the highest peak of rock, which is girded with fine pines. The Calvary is provided with all the prescribed stations, and is surmounted by a huge cross. It is worth the trouble of ascending to the summit of the Calvary, about 1,900 metres (6,234 feet) above the sea, or 70 above the inn, for the sake of the glorious view of the entire range of the Eastern Pyrenees.

The little hump-backed master of the establishment was wonderfully up to his work as a caterer for the multitude,

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and having obtained a sufficient supper with less difficulty than we anticipated, we were provided by him with sheets, not over dry, and shown to a little room where we might make our own beds.

The next day we had a glorious mountain walk through the most varied scenery. Starting soon after 5 A.M. with a shepherd, whom we had engaged to act as porter for the first part of the way, an intricate path through the ups and downs of the pine forest, above the right bank of the Têt river, in a couple of hours brought us to the open pastures, with the Pic Carlitte in full view. Then, passing the Lac Pradella, where the turf was spangled with the Pyrenean gentian just coming into flower, we made for the steep snow col which forms the depression in the ridge south of the Pic Carlitte. This, after a long halt for breakfast, we reached at 11.30 (height, 2,745 metres—9,000 feet). From there fifty minutes of easy rock-climbing took us to the top of the Pic Carlitte. This imposing but not difficult peak, the highest in the Eastern Pyrenees, rises abruptly from the east shore of the Lac Lanoux, and attains a height of 2,920 metres (9,580 feet). I had already ascended this peak twice before, the last time being July 22, 1869, and on each occasion I found the little dwarf wallflower (*Erysimum pumilum*) the prevalent and indeed the only plant on the actual summit. A little lower down on the rocks were *Anthyllis allionii*, and the little Pyrenean poppy, but the last not yet in flower. Redescending to the col we took leave of our porter, and a glissade down a steep snow gulley and a little rough walking brought us to the shore of the Lac Lanoux, the largest lake in the Pyrenees, 2,154 metres (7,067 feet) above the sea. We had visited this lake from another direction just a fortnight before, and its surface was then more than half covered with ice, but now this was all melted. At the southern end of the lake there used to be a fisherman's cabane, but it is now in ruins; indeed, as there is no wood of any sort, not even rhododendron, it presents but an inhospitable gîte for sleeping, and those who come for the sake of catching the trout in the lake prefer to ascend from the village of Porté, distant only two hours.

Skirting along the edge of the lake we came upon several rare plants, the little *Tulipa celsiana*, *Androsace argentea*, and *Saxifraga pedatifida* being among them. We then commenced to ascend the ridge which bounds the lake on the west side. It is not high and presents no difficulty, and we thought to have well noted from the Pic Carlitte the

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lowest part for which we ought to make. A mist, however, came on, and after a climb much harder and longer than we had anticipated we at length found ourselves on the summit of the ridge, but at a considerably higher elevation than we ought to have reached, being on the shoulder of the Pic Pedroux. The barometer gave our height as 450 metres (1,476 feet) above the lake—i.e. 2,604 metres (8,543 feet) above the sea, whereas the height of the true col is only 2,350 metres (7,710 feet). The descent on the west side did not look very inviting as far as we could see: rocks choked with snow, and very steep. But from previous experience I knew there was no impracticable precipice; indeed, on granite rocks there seldom is, and we commenced our descent, though we did not risk a glissade in the mist. Before long I got my foot wedged in the rocks beneath the snow, and was obliged to summon my companion to help me out, though he was nearly in the same predicament. At last, however, after a rough scramble, we got clear of the snow and reached the stream, and following that soon came upon the small lake of Bessines, which I well knew as the spot where in 1865 I had first made the acquaintance, *in situ*, of the Pyrenean gentian, having previously received a dried specimen from John Stuart Mill, a devoted lover of the Pyrenean flora. The range of this gentian is very limited. The Port de Siguier, 1° 40′ east of Greenwich, is the westernmost spot at which I have found it.

From Lac Bessines there is a faintly marked track, which passes high above the left bank of the stream, amid the stunted firs (*Pinus uncinata*). Following this at our very best pace, we succeeded in reaching the main road, 14 kilometres above Ax, before darkness came on. An hour's sharp walking brought us to the village of Merens, and there we were not sorry to obtain a small trap for the last 8 kilometres to Ax, which we reached at about 9.30, where a good supper ended a most enjoyable walk, which, though long, was over ground so varied as almost to take away the sense of fatigue.

From Ax an easy railway journey of seven hours brought us to Luchon, whence charming excursions may be made in carriages, on horse, or on foot, for the most part pretty well known; so, omitting them, I will endeavour to describe one which I made as a finish from Gavarnie, in the central part of the chain. Gavarnie in the Pyrenees is the head-quarters of mountaineering, and is reached in a charming drive of four hours along an excellent road, which con-

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tinually, but very gradually, ascends from Pierrefitte, the railway terminus. My companion had now left me, and, having already many times made the ascent of the higher peaks, I had no occasion to tax my strength with a climb up the Vignemale or Mont Perdu.

At Gavarnie it is not difficult to select a course sufficiently wild among the mountains in any direction, and I took with me as guides, or rather companions, Victor Paget, better known as Chapelle of Héas, and Salles of Gavarnie. On July 17, starting at 8 A.M. from the Hôtel Belou, in three hours we reached the Brèche d'Allanz (height, 2,430 metres—7,973 feet), the col in the lateral spur which culminates in the Piméné. The path has now been so well arranged and engineered that a horse may be taken thus far by those who wish to save their legs. Beyond this a rough scramble of two hours over rock and snow, almost keeping the same level, brought us to the Tuc Royo, a conspicuous tooth of rock at the foot of the steep snow *cheminée* which leads up to the gap in the main chain. Here we breakfasted, and then, fifty minutes up the slope, in which steps have to be cut here and there, though it is not a glacier, landed us on the top (height, 2,675 metres—8,776 feet), where the refuge constructed by the French Alpine Club had just been finished. The view that here opens upon you is as sudden as magnificent. Full in front and close at hand is Mont Perdu, with its glacier streaming into the little lake which alone separates you from the mountain, and which is never free from icebergs. The scene can only be compared to that of the Lac du Portillon, near Luchon, both far superior to the Märjelen-See of Switzerland. I must compliment the French Alpine Club on this structure. Its shape is that of a boat keel upwards, and it is so strongly built of stone and lime cemented with pitch, that it is thoroughly proof against wind and weather. We were the first to sleep in it, which an easy conscience enabled me to do very well, on a bed of bare plank. Some boards left by the workmen furnished a fire for making our soup and tea, but future travellers will have to carry up their own fuel, and this is the only drawback. I know no point from which such a grand near mountain view may be obtained with so little exertion. A French lady and her two guides who had come up with us were the other occupants.

Next morning, starting at 6 A.M., we descended to the lake, 115 metres below the col, our object being to cross the Col de Niscle, a depression in the high chain running east

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from the Mont Perdu. We wished, if possible, to effect this without having to descend into the Pinède Valley, and I and Chapelle sat down on a rock at the east end of the lake, while the other guide went to explore the rocks and see if it was practicable without risk to traverse them, keeping the same level.

From this spot there is a lovely view down the valley of Pinède, with the Cinca river sparkling in the bottom, and bounded on the south by the lofty and singularly accidented chain of greensand rocks, with their varied tints of warm sienna and cool silver grey. As we sat still admiring the view and enjoying the rest—the prelude to a stiff climb—three izards came up the rocks from below, and, gambolling over the snow towards us, seemed quite unconscious of our presence, though we were fully exposed to their view. We sat perfectly still, and I held my dog, who also seemed struck dumb with astonishment at the unwonted boldness of the izards, for she did not utter a single bark or whine. On they came, nearer and nearer, till within ten yards of us. They were three young males, and wholly intent upon a mimic fight, in which they seemed engaged in sport, and we could hear the sharp rattling of their horns as they intertwined them. They had no eyes for anything except each other, and the wind was favourable, so that we were not betrayed by smell. Holding our breath we watched them for several minutes. At last they became aware of us—*sensit medios delapsus in hostes*—but fear seemed to hold them motionless for a few seconds. Then came a wild rush towards the rocks where most precipitous, and we saw them no more. My dog found her tongue and broke away in chase, but soon gave it up as the ground was too difficult. Though izards may be seen constantly amid the higher mountains of the Pyrenees, such a chance of a shot does not often occur. My companion bitterly regretted he had not his gun, but I can honestly say that even for the moment I felt no desire to take the life of those innocent creatures, and then and ever since have been thankful that I had not with me my gun or even pistol, which I suppose I must have fired at the risk of being held up to execration as a *fainéant*.

Our guide now shortly returned and pronounced the rocks too bad for us—at any rate, for me—and we were obliged to descend by the only practicable route on the north side of the cascade, which falls from the lake some 400 metres (1,300 feet) into the valley forming the head-waters of the Cinca. There is no difficulty in the descent, though steep,

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VAL DE NISCLE OR RIO VELLOS (LOOKING S.).

(From a sketch by M. Tissandier in 'La Nature.')

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and a snow bridge at the bottom made the passage of the river easy. From here to the Col de Niscle is an ascent of over 800 metres (2,625 feet). The available passages round the buttresses of rock are not very easy to find, and it was 3 P.M. when we reached the top (2,530 metres). Descending by a series of terraces of yellow calcareous rock, at 6 P.M. we reached a grassy mamelon at the base, where a most copious stream bursting from the rock goes by the name of the Houn Blanca. Here, half-hidden by stunted box-trees, is a shepherd's cabane, in which we passed the night. Two young Spanish shepherds were the ordinary occupants, but one only (quite a lad) was at home, the other having gone for a supply of bread—their only provision, beyond sheep's milk. They had charge of 900 sheep, and received 160 francs a-piece for their service during the three summer months, which alone are available for pasture. The cabane, roofed by a fallen mass of rock, was unusually clean for Spain, but the ground around was too liberally manured by the sheep, who seemed to revel in the crop of a coarse umbellifer (*Heracleum pyrenaicum*), neglecting the finer grass of fescue and cockscomb, which also grew in profusion.

Starting at five the next morning we at once plunged into the deep gorge of the Rio Vellos, which may well compare with an American cañon. Forcing its way through this rift in the mountains for twenty kilometres, the river at last issues near the village of Escalona. For two-thirds of the way the pedestrian may, with difficulty, descend, keeping the bottom of the gorge, but this for the last five kilometres is absolutely impracticable; the only way is to emerge and continue over the mountain top. For the first two hours our way lay through a virgin forest of box, yew, beech, and silver fir, many of them dead through age and prostrate upon the ground. In places the walls of rock so overhang the stream as all but to bar the passage; in others they recede in terraces, rising one above the other, and supporting on their ledges impossible fir-trees. Here and there for a few yards there is a more open turfy glade, but it is not grass but strawberry beds that carpet the soil, producing fruit of a size and flavour only to be attained under a Spanish sun. We wasted an hour in a vain endeavour to light upon a bed where I had feasted three years before, but the broken ground and tangled trees prevented our hitting upon the right level, though that the bed still exists in unimpaired productiveness I heard from the guide, Henri Passet, who found the spot a fortnight later. After three

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hours' scrambling, sometimes having to mount far above the stream and sometimes descending to its channel, we reached the lateral gorge of the Barranco de Pardina, 1,430 metres (4,692 feet), which comes down from the west. Ascending this first through a tangled mass of box and raspberries, then through a wood of beech and fir, and further on over bare limestone rock, we emerged on an upland grassy plateau, which seemed fertile in many rare mountain plants. The edelweiss was fine and abundant; indeed, in the Central Pyrenees I think it may be more easily found than in Switzerland, possibly because it is not extirpated. On these upland pastures (2,272 metres) there also grows the white flowered daffodil, *Narcissus moschatus* of Barr. They were past flowering, but with our *pioche* we dug up a few of the bulbs, which were smaller and quite distinct from the common *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, which grew at a lower level. While thus occupied my guides disputed as to whether a slight prominence on a neighbouring hill was a stone man or a living one. In so wild and desolate a region the latter alternative seemed most improbable, and my guides had a bet on it. The question was, however, soon solved, as it began to come towards us at a rapid rate. The man angrily complained of our having dug up the daffodils, and even went so far as to say that he should make us descend with him to Fanlo, the nearest village. This, however, was a farce, as we were three to one, and, though he had a gun, he would not dare to use it. He was reconciled when he found we had not taken above a dozen roots; but it turned out that he was a Spanish guard, employed by the inhabitants of the valley to watch these upland pastures and see that they were not ravaged. We had noticed that the grass was torn up for acres and acres, and I learnt from my guide that Mr. Barr, the nurseryman, had been here with men armed with *pioches* in search for daffodils, of which they had dug up the bulbs and carried them off by thousands, destroying the herbage and leaving the surface *comme les cochons avaient passés dessus*, as my guide described it. This daffodil, which is described as a rarity, is not at all so unfrequent as it is supposed to be.* I have also seen it on some of the Auvergne mountains; but if it is a rarity, more is the shame to exterminate it wholesale, as the above dealer has been in the habit of doing for some years, either going himself or

* This daffodil is mentioned by Mr. E. Buxton, in 'Short Stalks,' as found by him in the Vallée d'Arras.

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sending men to collect the bulbs and paying so much per thousand. The tendency of the daffodil to vary in different soils, climates, and elevations above the sea is well known. The varieties pass insensibly into each other, and I do not think the wild species are nearly as numerous as they are represented to be by nurserymen.

At 4 P.M. we reached the Col de Gaulis (2,348 metres—7,704 feet)—and a descent by some steep and rather intricate rocks brought us into the head of the Vallée d'Arras, which radiates from the Mont Perdu in a similar manner to that of the Rio Vellos, which we had just left. Here we had to take off our boots and ford the ice-cold stream to reach the right bank, which offers the only practicable route, and in an hour more, mounting above the stream, which falls over a succession of terraces in cascades, alternating with the deep blue pools at their base, we arrived at the shelter known as the Cueva, formed by a ledge on the side of the cliff and overhung by the upper rocks. The accommodation here had not improved since I last visited it. It is at some distance above the stream, the floor was very dirty, and wood for a fire was not easily procured without an axe. With our knives we cut some box twigs and made a tolerable bed, but not having wood sufficient to keep a fire throughout the night, being almost *à la belle étoile* and at a height of 1,654 metres (5,525 feet), we were too much exposed to cold. By this cave there is the only exit to the lower valley. As we were finishing supper, when it was nearly dark, two mules, making for the open pasture beyond, came past us. They were quite unattended, and, being startled by us on the very narrow path, they all but went over the cliff, just missing by a hair's breadth.

Starting the next morning at 5 A.M., our road lay for the first hour through the thick beech-wood forest, and then descending some 300 metres alongside of a magnificent waterfall, we reached the lower part of the valley, where the scenery at once changes. On the south side (the left bank of the stream), the precipitous wall of rock, which is continuous for five or six miles, would be monotonous but for the fir trees which dot the lower ledges; while on the north side the mountains, which are the back of the Cirque of Gavarnie, present such a grand variety of battlement, tower, and bastion of warm red colour as would make the delight of the photographer, and still more of the artist who could reproduce the sunlit tints. Alongside of the stream the willows mix their pale green with the darker tints of the

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box, and then come the dense forests, which used to be almost impenetrable, but of late years they have been devastated by wasteful and, I am afraid, wilful fires. The beech and then the fir succeed each other in zones, and rising yet higher by 1,000 metres are the ruddy walls of rock, with their snow-capped summits. In two places the valley recedes into a sort of cirque, that of the Cotatoir and Salaroux. From the last it is possible to mount upwards, but by a *mauvais pas*. From the first there is no exit, and my guide, Henry Passet, tells me this was proved by the conduct of a bouquetin, who, being hard pressed by the hunters, made the tour of this gorge, seeking an escape upwards, but, finding this hopeless, made a dash on the hunters, knowing that he went to his death, and was killed by the first shot. At the lower end of the valley there is a grange with some rough beds, an accommodation for the tourist or sportsman who does not care to bivouac in the open. The key may be obtained and also provision by sending to the little Spanish town of Torla, which is two hours' distant. From the grange the track descends over limestone rocks overgrown with box to the Pont de Navarro, which we reached at 9.15 A.M. A little before reaching the bridge the rocks present a very singular appearance, being cut into an exact model of a mountain chain, with the ridges and lateral valleys sharply defined, as though graven by a chisel, and not worn by water. At the Pont de Navarro the Vallée d'Arras terminates, but the beauties of the road by no means come to an end. Mounting along the left bank of the river Ara, in an hour the road crosses the stream below two waterfalls, that of St. Hélène and l'Echelle, which are fine when sufficiently fed by the melting snow from above, as they were on the present occasion. The rocks about here were remarkable for their display of the purple flowers of the *Ramondia pyrenaica*. It is a plant special to the Central Pyrenees, and growing on both sides of the chain, but I have nowhere else met it in such profusion or with the flowers so fine. There was also beneath the box trees a great quantity of the rather rare fern *Asplenium fontanum*.

After this the gorge enlarges, and another hour brought us to the primitive hotel and picturesque bridge of Boucharo, at the foot of the *port* leading into France. I have known this hostelry for nearly forty years, and it has always remained the same. It takes some time to get acclimatised to a Spanish posada. You are sure of a civil reception and tolerable fare, but beware of the beds. The padrone was an

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old friend, and there are always the same half-dozen of ill-clad carabineros lounging about the place ever ready to drink your health in a *haro* of Spanish wine. I may here observe that neither in France nor Spain does the so-called Temperance movement appear to have made way. It is very rare in any class of either country to meet excessive drinking, but I have never fallen in with a total abstainer on principle. Surely this power of self-control is a higher virtue than enforced abstinence. On several occasions a Roman Catholic priest has objected to me this disparagement of God's gift by the prohibition of its moderate use.

Boucharo stands a few metres lower than Gavarnie, at an elevation of 1,326 metres (4,350 feet) above the sea. A few acres of the stony land round the house have been brought into cultivation, and, though entirely unenclosed, the pigs seemed to make no inroads on the crops of rye and potatoes, confining their attention to the grass. During our halt at the inn the barometer went down considerably, and, starting at 2.30 P.M., about half-way up we were enveloped in mist and sleet, so that we had an unusually rough passage over this easy *port*. The cold and wind were very severe, and I was not sorry to have companions on this occasion, though in fine weather I have passed alone, as there is no difficulty in any part. The height of the pass is 2,280 metres (7,480 feet), and there is nearly always a considerable slope of steep snow on either side. On the French side we avoided this by taking the new track that has been made, and reached Gavarnie a little after seven, having made a most delightful three days' tour.

As some indication, I have generally stated the times that we took from station to station, but we made many halts, and no one, unless compelled, would hurry amid such scenery. Of the two gorges I have described it would be difficult to decide which should have the palm, but I should say that Rio Vellos is the wilder and more remarkable, especially in its resemblance to an American cañon; while that of Arras is to be preferred for its grand and varied scenery, and especially for the rich colouring of the rocks. East of the Rio Vellos there is a third and very similar gorge —that of Escusain—and to the north the rather broader valley of Pinède, leading down to Bielsa. In no one of these huge rifts, which radiate from the massive of the Mont Perdu, is there the slightest trace of glacier action. The rocks are all sharp, and the masses that are perched have evidently fallen from above. To the torrential action of the waters

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on the porous and somewhat crumbling rocks of the Upper Greensand I believe these singular gorges owe their origin. Possibly the waters permeating the rock formed subterranean galleries, which in time fell in, and were further enlarged by the stream incessantly cutting its way. On a very miniature scale, I have seen similar effects produced in the gutters by the roadside after a very violent rain.

Whether or not this be the true explanation of the singular formation of these rocks I leave it to others to determine; but, whether for science, scenery, or sport, I am certain none will regret a visit to these magnificent and unfrequented valleys that lie south of the Mont Perdu.

Within two days' march of the excellent hotel at Gavarnie, the charms of a savage life can be tempered at will by the amenities of civilisation; and, speaking from my own experience, I can say that it is here possible to realise the condition of the blest, as Virgil described it:

> Nulli certa domus; lucis habitamus opacis;
> Riparumque toros et prata recentia rivis
> Incolimus. (*Æn.* vi. 673–75.)

IN MEMORIAM.

FENTON JOHN ANTHONY HORT, D.D.

By the death of Dr. Hort, on November 30 last, the fast-dwindling number of original members of this Club was further reduced. Born in 1828, he was educated at Rugby, and Trinity College, Cambridge. Like many of his contemporaries at that University he caught the enthusiasm of the new world which, with its possibilities (scientific and other), seemed to be opening amidst the snows of the Alps; and as readers of Mr. W. Longman's paper in Vol. VIII. of the Journal will remember, took an energetic part in the arrangements which preceded the establishment of the Alpine Club.

He was one of the party whose excursions on the western side of Mont Blanc are recorded by Mr. Vaughan Hawkins in the first series of 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers.' An early ascent of the Jungfrau from the Aeggischhorn, which he made in company with the late Bishop of Durham, is described by himself in the Visitors' Book of the Jungfrau Hotel. The return journey was delayed in consequence of Dr. Lightfoot becoming exhausted, and the future theologians spent the night on the moraine.

Dr. Hort soon gave up making long expeditions, but he was one of the first to recognise the value of the mountain houses, then very primitive, as health resorts. He occupied himself a good deal with botany, which was one of the many subjects in which he obtained distinction at Cambridge. The story of his later life is matter for other pages.

G. V. Y.

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