Col des Chamois the height of 3,467 m. or 3,406 m. These heights on the S. and I. maps are rather in the position of where the Ariondet is situated, but it is probable that the cartographers meant these heights to apply to the more conspicuous Capucin.

(2) A three-headed peak. The whole ridge used to be known by this name, but it is best restricted to this group.

(3) This summit is really the flat-topped extreme N. end of the Trois-Frères Aigs. de Valsorey group. It is hardly worthy of a name, but is known to the guide Balley as M. Carré.

(4) The position assigned to M. Percé by the Italian map is correct. It is immediately N.E. of a snowy depression, and not where placed on the latest edition of the S. sheet. On the latter it should be exactly over the L. of the wrongly placed Les Trois Frères. The older edition gives a height 2,827 m. as the correct position for the Percé, but these figures are probably meant for the height of the snowy depression. M. Percé is also sometimes called the Fenêtre de Valsorey.

(5) This being also a three-headed peak will account for the wrong name on the I. map, and the position of the name on the map points to the most easterly of the three. All three summits were ascended.

(6) This pass is wrongly called the Col de l'Aiguille Verte de Valsorey in the 'C.P.G.' The col was reached from the N. by E. Colomb and L. Kurz, but they did not descend the Ollomont by it.

(7) There seems to be no recorded ascent previous to the one here given, which was made on August 26, 1895, a large cairn being then found on the summit. It is a snowy summit rising out of the great Durand Glacier immediately S. of the Col de Sonadon, and is also sometimes known as the M. Sonadon.

If the above scheme is not perfect it will serve as a 'point de départ.'

ALPINE NOTES.

THE BIRRENHORN, BIRRE, OR BIERENSTOCK. *September* 13.—A direct route up the S. face of this little peak (2,511 m.), differing somewhat from that described by Mr. Wherry in the last number of the Journal,* was found by Messrs. H. V. Reade, T. H. Dickson, and C. S. Ascherson (without guides), who were ignorant of the details of the former ascent. The foot of the rocks at the W. end of the S. face, which are about 650 m. in height, was reached in 2 hrs. from the Hôtel Victoria at Kandersteg by zigzagging up the grass slopes above the chalets of Hubeln; then Mr. Wherry's couloir was taken to, but, instead of quitting it by the traverse 'to the W.S.W. as far as some little pine trees,' the party followed it to the top. It is broken by pitches of varying steepness and difficulty, and ends in a fine vertical chimney about 60 feet high, blocked at the top by a large boulder, forming a cave, from which a difficult and, for the leader, somewhat risky exit is made by working through a narrow rift and climbing the left wall of the chimney. The top of the ridge is then reached some way to the E. of Mr. Wherry's 'Fenster.'

* *Alpine Journal*, vol. xvii. p. 600.

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This climb is well worth doing on a day when weather is doubtful, as it can be found even in clouds. H. V. READE.

[We are informed by Herr A. Bernouilli (of Bern), that he made the ascent of the Birre by the S. face on June 17, 1894, with Jacob Reichen, and that, as far as he is aware, the climb had been but once previously made—viz., by the guides Jacob Reichen and Fritz Ogi, of Kandersteg.—*Editor* A. J.]

AVALANCHES IN THE 14TH CENTURY.—The following vivid and curious detailed descriptions of avalanches in formal documents of April 18 and 25, 1302, are worth reprinting here, as such full accounts are very scarce in mediæval times. They are taken from vol. i. (Lucerne, 1835) of J. E. Kopp's 'Urkunden zur Geschichte der eidgenössischen Bünde,' pp. 54–6. In the first, Bishop Henry of Constance, agrees to erect the village of Morschach, above Brunnen, on the Lake of Lucerne, into a distinct parish, as avalanches frequently cut the inhabitants off from their mother church at Schwyz. In the second, King Albert, of Habsburg, graciously confirms this creation of a new parish.

1. 'Horridam et execrabilem cladem Lowinarum cacumina montium et profunditates vallium quando veniunt conmoventium quis poterit enarrare? Ipsae, fragore fulmineo a summo descendentes et quaeque obstantia funditus evertentes, etiam concutiunt montium fundamenta, et crinis furiis non solum quaeque viventia perimunt, sed, terram profundius sulcantes, etiam post ipsarum transitum lowinarum itinerantibus inviam terram reddunt.'

2. 'Quod cum venerabilis Heinricus Constantiensis Ecclesiae episcopus, Princeps noster dilectus, boni more Pastoris, prudenter considerans et attendens pericula, quae ex vehementi et furioso impetu Lowinarum, in profunda convallium, a praeruptis montium cacuminorumque horrendorum declivitatibus, inter ecclesiam parrochialem in Switze et capellam in Morsach, tempestate surgente, vel gravitate nivium resolutâ, improvise irruere frequentius consueverunt, mole suâ obstantia quaelibet opprimendo, viarum obruendo vestigia, et nonnunquan ibidem transeuntibus subite interitionis angustias miserabiliter inferendo, homines illos quos in transitu suo ad ipsam ecclesiam eadem turbare possent pericula, cum eorum terminis infrascriptis, a subjectione praedictae parrochialis ecclesiae in Switze, auctoritate ordinariâ, de consilio provido et salubri, pro securitatis opportune commodo, duxerit eximendos; Indulto eisdem, ut deinceps in capella Morshach, tamquam in ecclesiâ parrochiali et per se stante, sub certis redditibus, proprium habeant sacerdotem.'

COMBIN DE CORBASSIÈRE.—Two of the ordinary routes up this mountain (3,722 m.) do not appear in the 'Central Pennine Guide.' The first differs from route (2) of the 'Guide' in that the S. face is climbed from the glacier N. of 3,437 m., instead of the S.E. arête. The face seems practicable anywhere, but the rocks are too broken and easy to be interesting. The second route avoids the rocks altogether, except for the last little bit. Ascend the strip of glacier between the two rock ridges ending in 3,153 m. and 3,437 m. re-

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spectively; then turn W. and N.W., circling round the rocks, on easy glacier, until the ascent can be made from the W. up snow-slopes just N. of the rocks, under the word Combin on the Siegfried map. H. V. READE.

TOURNELON BLANC.—On an ascent of this peak (3,712 m.), viâ the Mulets de la Liaz,* a way was made through the séracs somewhat S. of the route taken on the first ascent, as the snow slopes there described had given place to hard ice. The snow hump (3,695 m.) was skirted on the E., as there seemed to be no object in going over it. The ascent of the Tournelon Blanc seems to be made very rarely; but it is strongly recommended as far more interesting than the stock climb from the Panossière hut, the Combin de Corbassière. Time, about 4 hrs. from the Panossière hut.

H. V. READE.

MAUVOISIN NOTES.—The path from Mauvoisin to the head of the valley now keeps on the *left* bank of the river the whole way until the last bridge (for Chanrion), and one cannot cross and recross, as shown on the S. map, since the bridge marked just N. of point 2,002 m. no longer exists. A mistake here is serious, for if one has gone over to the *right* bank it is impossible to cross the stream coming from the Glacier de Breney without wading. To reach the Zessetta Alp one does not, as stated on p. 17 of the 'Central Pennine Guide,' go *down* the valley from Mauvoisin, but up it, by the ordinary path, for about twenty minutes. The Zessetta path diverges to the right at the first of three enormous boulders.

H. V. READE.

THE COL DES FOURCHES.—On p. 48 of the last 'Journal' it was stated in error that Michel Charlet is said to have crossed this pass in 1838; but, as is expressly noted in both editions of M. Kurz's 'Guide,' Charlet in 1838 probably followed precisely the route of Forbes in 1850—*i.e.* did *not* cross this col. Hence the 1895 traverse is the first known to have ever taken place.

WINTER ASCENTS.—We have received from Mrs. Main the following interesting details of her recent splendid winter climbs:—

'On February 16 Mrs. Main, with Martin Schocher and Christian Schnitzler, having gained the Forno hut in 3½ hrs. from Maloja the day before, started for the *Monte della Disgrazia* at 3.15 A.M., and got to the top of Monte Sissone at 5.40 by lantern light. The tracks thus far had been made on the previous day by a couple of porters. The weather was windy and cloudy, but not cold. After a wearisome descent of 2,000 ft. on the Italian side, during much of which step-cutting was necessary, the party skirted on good snow the various peaks between the Sissone and Disgrazia. Reaching the upper plateau of the Sasso Bissolo glacier, it became evident that the strong wind on the arrête and the ice rendered that route an unfavourable one. They therefore ascended straight up the rocky S.W. face, finding good snow and dry rocks, direct to the hut near the summit. From here, in the teeth of a gale and

* See *Central Pennine Guide*, pp. 16, 17.

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driving snow, the top of the Monte della Disgrazia was reached at 10.35 A.M. The Forno hut was regained the same evening at 6.30. This is the first time the Disgrazia has been ascended in winter.

'On February 19 the same party, with the addition of Mr. A. Dod, made the first winter ascent of *Piz Zupo* in 5 hrs. 15 min. from the Boval hut. They were much assisted both by their own tracks on their ascent of the Crast' Agüzza and by those of a party who had attempted Piz Zupo the week before, but had been turned back by the cold.

'On the 22nd the same party and Miss Pennington Legh made the first winter ascent of the *Drei Blumen*. On this occasion they were more inconvenienced by the presence of some winter snow than had been the case on any of the higher mountains.'

The Jungfrau was traversed on February 19-20 by Herr Charles Flach and Mr. Steane Price, with Christian Jossi and his son. Starting from the Guggi hut at 3.30 A.M., it was not till 2.40 P.M. (in a snow storm) that the party succeeded in gaining the Silberlücke. The upper glacier was attained at 7 P.M., and it became necessary for the adventurers to spend nearly 12 hours under the overhanging edge of a crevasse, 40 min. below the summit of the Jungfrau. That peak was reached next morning, but the usual route down (over 7 hours having been consumed in cutting down to the Roththal Sattel) was in so bad a state that the Bergli hut was not attained till 8 P.M. that evening. Herr Flach has published a full account of his expedition in the number of the 'Volksbote' (the new weekly paper printed at Grindelwald) for February 26, 1896. This expedition is far too long for a winter climb, and while admiring the pluck of the climbers which carried them through many unpleasant experiences, we may be allowed to hope that they will find but few followers on a route which even in the height of summer is long and arduous.

THE FLORA OF COGNE.—The 'Rivista Mensile del C.A.I.' for March 1896, pp. 88-90, contains some notes on the Cogne flora, by Sig. F. Santi, which will be found very interesting to plant-lovers visiting the district.

'THE EXPLORATION OF THE CAUCASUS.'—Mr. D. W. Freshfield's book under this title has been delayed by technical difficulties, but is now in the press, and will be published very shortly. It contains 74 photogravures, 3 panoramas, about 140 illustrations in the text, and 4 maps. Chapters are contributed by Mr. H. Woolley, Mr. Cockin, Mr. Holder, M. de Déchy, and Professor Bonney.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

Zeitschrift des Deutschen und Oesterreichischen Alpenvereins. Vol. xxvi.

THIS volume (perhaps to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the club's existence) has blossomed out into a larger size, almost a quarto. At this rate after the next fifty years it will become a

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