known the height which is now ascribed to Popocatepetl, his estimate for Ixtaccihuatl—*i.e.* 250 ft. lower—would make the latter 17,550 ft. This I believe to be rather too high. Judging from the vegetation, the time spent in ascending, and the combined readings of three aneroids, I am sure that the cave in which we spent the night was at any rate not less than 13,500 ft. above the level of the sea. Thence next morning we ascended over fairly steep slopes for 1½ hr. before reaching the snout of the glacier, where the two aneroids we had with us gave our altitude as 15,000 ft. (I may mention in parenthesis that on my three other climbs my aneroid gave excellent results up to this height, if the guide-book altitudes for these other mountains are to be trusted.) From that point we mounted slowly for 1½ hr. more, and must have reached a height of quite 16,000 ft. before turning back. At that point we were certainly another 1,000 ft. below the summit. Seen from a point on Orizaba about 1,000 ft. below the top, whence the two mountains are practically equidistant, Popocatepetl appeared to overtop its neighbour by about one-third of its snowcap, say 800 ft. This would make the latter about 17,000 ft. Finally, when climbing Popocatepetl, our one and only glimpse of the White Lady was from a point just half an hour before we reached the lowest point of the crater, say 800 or 900 ft. below the summit. At that point we seemed about on a level with the summit of the sister mountain; we were certainly not above it. From these varied observations I feel convinced that Ixtaccihuatl is, if not 17,000 ft. high, close upon it.

THE NARRATIVE OF AN ASCENT OF MONT BLANC IN 1830.

By the Hon. E. BOOTLE WILBRAHAM.

With an Introductory Note by Douglas W. Freshfield.

The following account of an ascent of Mont Blanc in 1830 was found by my friend Mr. Comyns Tucker among the papers of a relative, and placed in my hands. It seemed to me that, although devoid of any particularly striking or stirring incidents, the manuscript deserved publication. In fact, the very favourable conditions under which the expedition was carried out gave it in my eyes a special interest for purposes of comparison with our contemporary experiences. After the manuscript had been put in type with the permission of the writer's son, General Wilbraham, the Honorary Librarian picked up a number of the 'Keepsake' for 1832 in which it is printed in full. The Editor does not think, however, that this previous publication need be any obstacle to its reproduction here. 'Keepsakes' of that date are not probably common in the libraries of our readers.

I will note briefly some of the points that strike me in Mr. Wilbraham's story. In the first place, what he says of the behaviour of the Chamoniards fully confirms all that was written (and, according to family tradition, De Saussure did not write nearly all he might have) as to the reluctance of the people of the valley to have anything to do with the mountain in early times. This reluctance on their part was, in truth, the chief obstacle De Saussure had to encounter both before and during his ascent. If, after one guide had made eight ascents, the

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terror of Mont Blanc was still as strong as is here described, it is evident what it must have been forty years earlier. Probably it had been to a certain extent revived by the catastrophe met with by Dr. Hamel's party in 1820.

With regard to the physical effects of high elevations, it may be noticed that the party, under very favourable conditions, with 'hard and good snow,' took nine hours by the Mur de la Côte route from the Grands Mulets to the top. Similar parties (with one traveller only) take nowadays, on an average, three less. Mr. Wilbraham was no less than five hours from the Grand Plateau to the top. In 1863, by the same route, with a guide aged sixty for leader, the writer took three.

The account of the avalanches from the Aiguille du Midi, after allowing for a certain exaggeration, confirms, I think, the belief I have previously expressed that, *at periods when the névés are swollen*, the ordinary route up Mont Blanc is exposed to danger both where the glacier is entered and on the Little Plateau. Indeed, it stands to reason that a route which avalanches not infrequently traverse is unsafe. The danger is, however, confined probably (except as to falling stones from the Aiguille du Midi) to these periods, and consequently has been, and is likely to be, disregarded at all times by guides of only average intelligence.

The periods of swollen névés, of course, do not coincide with, but anticipate, those of the advance of the glacier snouts. It would be well if the now numerous writers who discuss glacier movements in Alpine periodicals would endeavour to bear in mind that snowy seasons are not immediately, or at any regular interval, followed by a forward movement of glacier snouts. The interval in each glacier must be regulated by the length of the frozen stream and the rate of its movement, and the latter will depend mainly on its mass and inclination. Another mistake writers on this subject do not always avoid is to exaggerate the influence of hot, dry summers in checking the invasion of the lower glaciers. In the first place, compared to the variations in supply in the névé basins, the variations in waste at the snout are insignificant; in the next, a wet summer may often cause as much, if not more, waste than a dry one.

DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.

As I was ascending the Mont Anvert on August 1 with Pringle and the Comte de Hohenthal, the beauty of the weather and clearness of the sky put the idea of ascending Mont Blanc into my head. I made a few inquiries of our guide (Dépland), who said there was every probability of the fine weather continuing, and that it would be an excellent opportunity for doing so. He offered willingly to accompany me, but referred me to another guide (Favret), who was ascending the Mont Anvert with a party at the time, and who had been at the top of Mont Blanc already two or three times. I remained in a state of indecision till I reached the Mer de Glace, the first sight of which fixed me in my resolution.

I spoke to Favret, who tried to dissuade me from the attempt, but said he would accompany me if I was resolved on doing so. He told me I should find plenty of guides willing to go. On our way down we met Joseph Marie Couttet, the most experienced of the guides, who had already been at the top of Mont Blanc eight times. He said very bluntly that I had much better not attempt it, and would not even promise his assistance. On my return to Chamouni I went to old Couttet, the 'chef des guides,' who undertook to procure me six guides for that purpose. He also begged permission that his son might accompany us 'en amateur,' which I, of course, allowed. However, the son never made his appearance.

I ordered the necessary provisions at my inn, and remained

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quietly at Chamouni for the rest of the day, in order to be as fresh as possible for the morrow. Six guides at length offered themselves, with whom I was about to close when the landlord of my inn (Hôtel de Londres et d'Angleterre) called me aside and told me that I should run a great risk with these men, if, indeed, they succeeded at all in bringing me to the summit (which I have now no doubt they could not have done), as they had, with the exception of one, never been up, and that one had never ascended by the new road.

After infinite difficulty, however, and long consultations, I engaged six other men—Joseph Marie Couttet, who had reached the summit in the last eight expeditions; Michel Favret, three times up; Matthieu Desaillond, never up; Alexis Devouassoud, two or three times up (these four were regular guides); Auguste and Pierre Couttet, cousins, the first a porter, who had been once up, the latter never, and who was to accompany us to the Grands Mulets, and go on with us if it was found necessary to have his assistance. I found a great reluctance to accompany me on the part of those who had already made the ascent. Couttet, indeed, warned me that I must not rely on the married men making their appearance; and the event proved he was right, as more than one, who had promised faithfully the evening before, never appeared on the morrow. I afterwards asked one of them (Julien) if he did not regret the not having been with me during so prosperous an ascent, but he told me that he considered his duty towards his wife and family forbade his ever again risking his life for so uncertain a gain. Indeed, he had reason to think so, for he was swept with Couttet into a crevasse by the slip of snow which destroyed three of the guides in the unfortunate expedition of 1820, and was saved by almost a miracle.

Out of the forty regularly established guides at Chamouni I could only procure four, with Auguste, a candidate for the situation of guide, and Pierre, the lad, as they called him, though a year older than myself. Having agreed on the sums to be paid them, a further agreement was made (as is always done) that in case we were prevented going any farther than the Grand Plateau only two-thirds were to be paid, and if we only reached the Grands Mulets half-price was all that they expected. I amused myself with reading Capt. Sherwill's account that evening, but found so many horrors in his recital that I closed the book, and determined not to read any more till I had accomplished my undertaking. I gave my purse and some papers to my landlord, with instructions what to do with them in case any accident should occur to us, and went to bed early.

Favret woke me early next morning in high spirits, for the weather was lovely, and after breakfast I set off on a mule at about half-past six for Couttet's cottage, which is at the foot of the mountain. A great number of travellers were setting out at the same time on different excursions, who all most cordially wished me success. Pringle and Hohenthal took the road to Martigny and the Grand

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St. Bernard. When I arrived at Couttet's cottage I put on a broad-brimmed straw hat and blue cloth jacket and we proceeded on our way. I saw nothing but grave faces around me, and I fear I must have been the cause of great anxiety to many a friend and relation of those who accompanied me. At the moment, however, I thought little of this, as the only ideas that entered my head were those of success or failure. Not a cloud was to be seen and everything seemed in my favour. At the foot of the mountain I found the rest of my guides with some of their friends, who had volunteered carrying their burdens during the first part of the ascent.

I left Couttet's cottage at about a quarter-past seven, and for two hours I ascended on my mule through a steep, and in some places difficult path. I then quitted my mule and proceeded on foot for about half an hour, when we reached the edge of the Glacier des Bassons. Here our friends left us and each of our guides shouldered his knapsack. Our baggage consisted of the provisions, a linen cloth to serve for our tent, a couple of blankets, some straw, with a hatchet and some firewood. We had each a spiked pole about 6 ft. long; some of the guides had crampons for their feet, but I did not take any, though I afterwards found they would have assisted me, and should recommend everyone to be provided with them. We were three hours crossing the glacier, which we did without much difficulty. The surface was rough and we had to descend into many of the crevasses, which, however, are never there of any great size, in order to pass. We scrambled about from crag to crag (of ice), and I found myself highly amused at the novelty of the scene. The ice, which at first was almost blackened by the 'moraine,' or rubbish, became purer and more dazzling, and I put on a pair of green spectacles with gauze goggles which were of the greatest use, as my eyes scarcely suffered at all. The thermometer in the shade was at 13° above freezing-point (Reaumur). We were now on the upper part of the Glacier de Tacconai, which employed us about an hour more, when we at last reached the region of deep and perpetual snow. Here we found ourselves close to the Grands Mulets, our resting-place for the night, though, owing to some crevasses, we were obliged to make half an hour's détour, and finally arrived there at a quarter-past two, having performed our first day's journey in seven hours from Couttet's cottage—an unusually short time. The Grands Mulets are a row of pointed rocks, so steep that the snow cannot lie in any depth on them. On the western side is a ledge, which we cleared for our resting-place, of about 4 ft. in breadth, and about 100 ft. above the snow. We placed our poles leaning against the rocks and threw the linen over them as a defence against the night air, though it would not have protected us in the least in any hard weather; there is never any rain at this height.

We changed our clothes, which were wetted through by the snow, and hung them on the rock to dry; we sat down to our cold dinner with our legs hanging over the ledge of the rock, in high spirits at our hitherto successful journey. We enlivened ourselves afterwards with smoking and singing. Groups of people were assembled on the opposite point of the Breven to watch our arrival, and we had

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the satisfaction of knowing that many persons were at that moment thinking of and perhaps envying us. On the Grands Mulets we found the remains of some firewood, two empty bottles, and half a bottle of excellent brandy, which had been left by Mr. Auldjo in 1827. Afterwards, on our return to the Grands Mulets, I ordered the guides to leave a bottle or two of wine for my successor, whoever he may be. The sun was exceedingly hot, and I scrambled into the shade of an opposite point of rock, where I amused myself by taking sketches of the wonderful scenery around me. On the left as I faced the summit were the precipitous crags of the Pic du Midi, on the very highest peaks of which I could distinctly see a large chamois bounding from crag to crag in the most extraordinary manner, as he was alarmed by the shouts which we raised to greet him.

From the steep sides of the Pic du Midi the greatest number of avalanches fall, which they did almost every minute, as the powerful rays of the afternoon sun had loosened the snow. They fell chiefly in a valley to our left, where we could distinctly trace them without a shadow of danger to ourselves. They were the first I had seen or heard, and those only who have witnessed them can imagine the effect they produced on my mind. We saw hundreds of them fall, though I believe none were considered as particularly fine; but during the night we heard some tremendous ones. There is something very awful in the dread silence which follows after the fall of one of these monsters. On our return from the summit we found that a large avalanche had fallen on the path by which we had passed a few hours before. We fired a pistol here repeatedly, but failed in producing any remarkably fine echo, owing, I think, chiefly to the badness of our weapon.

The view from the Grands Mulets is very beautiful. At our feet lay the valley of Chamouni in miniature. Above us rose the majestic summit, the object of all our hopes and desires; while to the right the Dôme du Goûter looked like an enormous mountain of itself. A small part of the Lake of Geneva is visible. Between us and the Dôme du Goûter lay a vast expanse of snow, with nothing to break the uniformity of its surface except the dark-blue edges of some of the larger crevasses which stretched across it, as if to forbid our further progress. Except the solitary chamois, no living thing was to be seen, though a few species of birds are sometimes found at this height. We now lighted a fire to prepare some lemonade for the next day's march. At the foot of the Grands Mulets is a small spring of water, the last supply that we were able to obtain, though this, indeed, could only have proceeded from the melting of the snow. It would be useless attempting to describe the beauty of the scene when evening drew near, and the rays of the setting sun rose by degrees to the very tops of the surrounding peaks, dyeing them with the most beautiful tints of purple, which faded by degrees into a most delicate pink, till the grey hue of night crept over the whole. The moon rose in great splendour, and I never shall forget the silent

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impressiveness of the scene, uninterrupted except by the thunder of the avalanches that fell during the night from the sides of the great Pic du Midi into the valley below. I now turned into the tent—if so it may be called—and soon afterwards the guides crept in, and we packed together as well as we could, there being only room for two abreast. A small ledge of rough stones which we had raised was our security against rolling over the precipice, and I should have slept most comfortably had we not been so cramped for room that it was impossible for me to move my legs without kicking the head of the unfortunate man beyond me. As it was, the excitement of the undertaking, the anxiety for the result, and the novelty of the scene, combined to keep me awake for some time, and a strange variety of ideas crowded on my mind. It frequently occurred to me how little my friends in England could imagine the sort of resting-place I had chosen for myself that night; and I could not quite banish from my mind the possibility that I might never return to them again, though I did not suffer myself to dwell long on such thoughts as these. The night was not particularly cold, and at last I fell asleep.

At two o'clock next morning we were roused, and made hasty preparations for our departure. A few grey clouds were floating about, which the guides considered as rather a good sign. The thermometer was at 5° above freezing-point (Réaumur). I was dressed as on the preceding day, with the addition of a second shirt, cloth trousers instead of the light ones I had worn, a cotton night-cap under my straw hat, which was tied tightly under my chin, thick fur gloves and cloth gaiters, which were bound close round my feet with pack-thread. The temperature was exceedingly variable, as the wind blew along some of the valleys which we entered with great force and coldness; while in others we were sheltered from everything (later in the day) except the powerful rays of the sun, reflected as they were on all sides by the surrounding walls of snow. We left most of our baggage at the Mulets, taking only two knapsacks, which the guides carried by turns, containing some provisions, a telescope, and a thermometer. Our provisions consisted of chickens, bread, wine, some very acid lemonade, vinegar to sip 'au naturel,' chocolate, and dried plums, which are of great use in allaying thirst when kept in the mouth, as snow is not able to produce that effect; water would have congealed at this height. We also took some Eau-de-Cologne to relieve the acute headaches which generally attack persons at a great height, and from which I suffered afterwards considerably during the ascent. We scrambled down the Grands Mulets and reached the snow, where we fastened ourselves together by twos and threes with ropes round our waists. The four most experienced guides took it by turns to lead, which is the most fatiguing post, as the snow yields more or less to the foot, while we followed in the hardened footsteps of our leader. We set off at half-past two in silence, for we knew that all our powers and strength would be required before the day was over. The moment I had set my foot on the snow I felt that my respiration was, to a

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certain degree, impeded—a sensation which afterwards increased most painfully. We set off, however, slowly, with the intention of reserving our strength as much as possible for the latter part of our ascent. The snow was hard and good, and the 'Ponts de Neige' over the crevasses were firm.

For above an hour we were working our way under an impending cliff of snow that looked every moment as if about to detach itself from the great mass and to fall on our heads. The crevasses here are numerous, but not so large as those above the Grand Plateau, which we reached after four hours' hard work. Generally speaking, only a small portion of the crevasses, that are not of great width, is visible; they are crusted over with frozen snow, and it is here that the utmost experience and skill are required in the guides. In crossing these we always carried our poles at a right angle with the supposed direction of the crevasse, and placed our feet softly on the snow before we leant forward the weight of our bodies. Some we crossed on our hands and knees, making ourselves as long as we possibly could. Over others we sent a guide well secured by ropes, who, when he had got over, sat down, with his heels and pole well planted in the snow, while we followed very *delicately* in his footsteps, holding the rope in our hands. I twice sank above my waist, and several times above my knees, in crossing these places during the descent when the snow was much softer. One of the men (Alexis, I think) sank rather deeper once, and fairly screamed with fright, but scrambled out again before we could even tighten the rope which was fastened round his waist. The Grand Plateau is a vast amphitheatre of snow, apparently surrounded on three sides by almost perpendicular heights, the fourth side being that by which we ascended.

Facing us was a small perpendicular line of bare rocks called 'Les Rochers Rouges,' near the foot of which lie deeply entombed in some crevasse the bodies of the three unfortunate men who perished in 1820. Here we halted for breakfast, but I had most completely lost my appetite, and it was with the greatest difficulty that I forced myself to eat the wing of a chicken and drink a little wine, as I was assured that if I took nothing I should not have strength to carry me up. I already felt very much fatigued. Having gladly finished my breakfast, in a few minutes we resumed our route, turning towards the left and traversing the broad plain of the Grand Plateau, till we entered a valley which soon shut it from our view. This road had been discovered by Couttet at the last ascent but one, being a longer, but less dangerous, route than the old one, which ascended on the right of the Rochers Rouges, and which had proved fatally so on a former occasion.

As we passed near the foot of these rocks Couttet pointed significantly, and said to me, in a low tone, 'Ils sont là.' It was a melancholy recollection, and all the guides seemed to feel deeply the loss of their ill-fated comrades, who will, in all probability, remain embedded beneath the Grand Plateau till the Day of Judgment. The most painful part of our journey had now commenced.

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The heights we had to climb were generally steep, and it was necessary for the leader to cut steps in the snow with a small hatchet made for the purpose. The valleys were filled with enormous crevasses, which generally crossed them from side to side. The scenery was of that sublime nature that a man can have no idea of till he has seen it. I never conceived anything so splendid as the interior of some of the crevasses we passed. There were enormous grottos of brilliant ice, with vaults reaching farther than the eye could trace, containing every possible shape of stalactites in icicles of prodigious size. Some of the edges of the crevasses were worked, as if by the hand of man, in the most beautiful fret-work, with wonderful regularity. Their flooring, if I may so call it, seemed generally firm. As far as I could judge, the depth of many seemed between two or three hundred feet. I would have given anything to have descended into one, but it was utterly out of the question, as we had then no time to spare, and on our return the edges of the crevasses would have been too soft to bear our weight, in addition to which I should doubt exceedingly the guides having strength enough left to pull me up again. Indeed we had not a sufficient length of rope for such an attempt. The 'Ponts de Neige' were generally secure, with the exception of one, which we had some difficulty in passing, and which did not give us very pleasing anticipations for our return, when the little snow that was there would be half-melted by the midday sun. We passed it, however, and about two hours from the Grand Plateau we arrived at a wall of snow about two hundred feet in height, which we were obliged to climb, and which was very nearly perpendicular. My difficulty of breathing had greatly increased. I had violent shooting pains in my head, and my guides already felt the same symptoms, though in a lesser degree. We ascended in a zigzag direction, resting every ten minutes for two or three, and turning our faces downwards to breathe more freely whilst the leader was cutting steps in advance. In these short intervals I frequently fell asleep, while the steepness of the place was so great that I was forced to lean my head against the snow in order to preserve my balance. When I moved I did it almost mechanically. Both the asthmatic and headachy feelings were much relieved when I remained quiet, but instantly recommenced when in action again. Often did I wish that Mont Blanc had never existed; but the thought of giving up never occurred to me, and I kept my wishes to myself. My guides frequently offered to assist me by pulling at the rope round my waist, but I was anxious to do without it if possible, which, thanks to the strength of my constitution, I was enabled to do. I considered myself most fortunate in escaping the spitting of blood, giddiness, and sickness, which persons of weaker lungs often experience when at this height. In about an hour and a half we reached the Petits Mulets, almost the last points of bare rock which are visible on the mountain, when we rested for five or six minutes.

Another hour and a half of steep ascent brought us at last to the summit, on which I stepped without the slightest emotion of

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pleasure. My ideas were confused, from my thorough exhaustion, and after stupidly gazing on the vast scene around me, I sat down on a knapsack and fell asleep with my head on my knees. After nearly ten minutes they woke me, and I found myself much refreshed. At the same time, I woke to a more perfect enjoyment of my new situation; that extreme exhaustion which had overpowered my mind as well as my body had passed away, and I was myself again. It is perfectly useless for me to attempt to describe what I saw. I can only say that it amply repaid me for all the dangers and fatigue I had undergone. France, Italy, Savoy, and Switzerland lay at my feet. The Lake of Geneva and Pays de Vaud seemed quite close; Mont Rose, Milan, the neighbourhood of Genoa (the town is hidden by the heights beyond which it is built). On the N., far beyond the Jura, I saw what may have been Dijon, as it has been before seen, and the weather was perfectly clear. The Valley of Chamouni lay under our feet, with the Arve running through it like a thread of silver, and the innumerable peaks of the Alps, all looking like pigmies compared with the giant on which I was standing. My excessive fatigue caused me to forget two or three things I wished to have done, such as looking for the stars with a telescope, some of which, I believe, may be seen. I could not, certainly, distinguish them with the naked eye. I forgot, too, to fire a pistol to hear (if I may say so) it make no noise. I did fire it, high up, for an echo, and it produced a much weaker report. The sky was an extraordinarily dark blue, almost black. I did not feel that lightness in treading which is often experienced at that height. I lost all appetite and thirst in ascending, but the latter was very great afterwards. The thermometer was at zero. The summit appeared to me to be about 120 feet long by 50, of an oval shape, with the corner towards the N.W. considerably raised. The shape of the surface, consisting entirely of snow, and subject to great vicissitudes of weather, must be perpetually liable to change. I may here remark that the upper layers of the snow on the mountain are unlike that which falls on the lower regions, being composed of separate globules, unconnected with each other, except by the cohesion of frost. We remained on the summit only 25 min., the longest halt during the day, as we were anxious to avoid passing a second night on the mountain. My feelings were very different when we began to descend, from the perfect apathy and indifference with which I had arrived at the top. The triumph of having succeeded in our attempt, the excitement of the guides, as well as of myself, and the ease in descending compared with the fatigue we had previously felt, raised our spirits to the highest pitch, and we set off with shouts of joy.

At a very short distance from the summit a butterfly flew past us. We had neither the power nor the inclination to catch it. Near the top of the Faido, a high mountain by the Pass of St. Gothard, I found part of a swarm of bees lying on the snow, most of them frozen, but some still alive. In ascending, the snow was hard and good, but by mid-day the

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sun had softened it, and in most places we trod knee-deep, which was fatiguing and dangerous, as the 'Ponts de Neige' over the crevasses were insecure. The glissades were very amusing. Down an angle of 45°, for instance, we slid down on our heels, with the poles behind us in the snow, like a third leg. This requires great practice, and at first I never went more than a few yards without falling, which is an excellent joke in soft snow. At the steeper places we fairly sat down, and with our poles in the snow behind to guide us, lifted up our heels, and away we went like lightning. We had some excellent races in this manner, and I enjoyed it very much. Small crevasses are passed in this way without danger, as the rapidity with which we went prevented our sinking. The excitement of the whole was so great that I can affirm, without any idea of boasting, that I did not, during the whole time, feel the least degree of fear or even nervousness, though I have frequently since shuddered at the remembrance of some of the places we passed. Once, in the beginning, as I looked down on a steep place from a narrow path, I fancied that I saw the rocks and valley moving slowly along; but I immediately stood still, and looked steadily at them, and I never felt giddy afterwards.

Our greatest difficulties at this period of the journey were at that exceedingly steep place I noticed in the ascent, which required the greatest caution, and took us more time in descending than we had been in ascending it. No one, however, made even a false step here. The crevasse, which I have before particularly alluded to, was crossed after many precautions, and without accident. In all probability a week more must have melted away the little Pont that remained, and left the valley perfectly impassable. Had we been unable to cross this on our return, we must either have remained on the mountain—and, it is needless to add, have perished—or retraced our steps to near the summit, and descended by the dangerous pass of the Rochers Rouges. I do not think, however, that we should have had strength to reascend, especially as the snow was so soft, and we should soon have been overtaken by night and—as the next day proved—a storm. I was not aware of the extent of our danger till we had passed it, when I need not say how grateful we all felt for our deliverance. The coolness and intrepidity of my guides are beyond all praise. In descending I did not feel the slightest difficulty in breathing, and the pains in my head gradually decreased. In some places the wind was high, and the light snow drifted along in sheets when disturbed by our footsteps. On our return to the Grands Mulets, in three hours and a half, we packed up the baggage we had left there, which, like Æsop's load, had been considerably lightened, and arrived on the glacier, when we halted a few minutes to feed. It was exceedingly hot, and I never suffered so much from thirst as then, which nothing would quench, and which I did not get rid of till I put myself into a hot bath on my return to Chamouni.

At the foot of the mountain I found a mule waiting for me, and

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we returned to Chamouni about half-past eight, having been half the time descending that was occupied by the ascent. Though at so late an hour, I found crowds of people waiting to receive me in triumph, as they could, with telescopes, from Chamouni distinctly trace our progress. I did not feel much tired, and was too feverish to sleep well; but the next morning I felt exceedingly stiff, and was not sorry to remain quiet during most of the day. My face was much swelled, and the skin turned black and wrinkled, but after a few days peeled off, and left me fairer than I had ever been since the days of babyhood. My eyes scarcely suffered, and that only for a day or two. Had I not worn green spectacles I firmly believe I should have been blinded, for nothing can give an idea of the dazzling brilliancy of the snow above, when I now and then for a moment took them off. Two of my guides, who had only worn green veils over their faces, could scarcely see for a day or two after their descent. It was amusing to see what a lion I became at Chamouni during the two days I remained there afterwards. The place was crowded with visitors, and some asked me the most absurd questions imaginable. I cannot pass over in silence the exceedingly liberal conduct of my host, who, though I was a perfect stranger to him, offered to lend me all the money requisite to pay my guides and other expenses, without even asking for any security, as having had no previous intention of ascending Mont Blanc, I had not brought enough with me for that purpose. I, however, preferred taking one of the guides with me on my return to Geneva.

The reasonable charges and great attentions of my host induce me to recommend him most strongly to those who visit Chamouni. With regard to this expedition, I cannot do better than repeat Couttet's own words when I first applied for assistance: 'If you succeed you will think nothing of the fatigue and expense, but if you are compelled by weather, or any other circumstance, to abandon it, you will be exceedingly sorry that the idea ever entered your head.' In conclusion, I should most earnestly advise no one to attempt the ascent of Mont Blanc, for, though I found myself amply repaid by my success for all my fatigue and trouble, the chances are very great indeed against anyone's having again a journey so prosperous in weather and every other respect as mine was. To anyone who does not care for a night's rough lodging, I strongly recommend to go to the Grands Mulets, which he may easily do with two or three guides at a trifling expense. He will then see enough to give him an idea, though an imperfect one, of the awful scenery which is only to be found above. He will have a splendid view during daylight, and, if he times his visit well, a glorious sunset and moonlight afterwards—at all events, plenty of avalanches during the whole of his stay there. He will experience little danger or fatigue, and, moreover, he will have the distinction of being the first man who ever *willingly* halted at the Grands Mulets, without the intention of proceeding farther.

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