

It is difficult to understand why Mr. Oppenheim should go out of his way to use Norwegian words, and insert a note to say that 'it has not been thought necessary to insert the modified "o" in its native form,' for in that language 'ø' or 'ö' is a letter entirely distinct from the unmodified 'o,' and often alters the whole meaning of the word. For instance, in a footnote he explains that 'ol = ale.' This is incorrect, for 'ol' does not mean 'ale'; it means 'fourscore.' The fact that the book contains modified vowels (as in 'Rücksacs') makes their omission in the Norwegian all the more flagrant, and the author offers no apology for the omission of all diphthongs and the frequent use of 'o' for 'y.'

To the ordinary man who has wandered in Norway, many of the words so freely interjected are quite unintelligible, but when one seeks the aid of a dictionary the study becomes fascinating, and one finds that the 'fladbrod' which Mr. Oppenheim came to 'loathe,' was a 'flat spike,' and was, doubtless, indigestible; and the 'mosost,' which he found so refreshing, on account of its pungent taste, was doubtless a 'cheese compounded from lichen.'

Systematic mis-spelling is bad enough in the case of single words, which the reader can only attribute to the author; but it is obviously unfair to Mr. Randers to insert passages which purport to be quotations from his book which would be visibly incorrect to the most illiterate Norwegian. But the author treads on much more dangerous ground when he tries his hand at translation, for we take it that every one who has travelled in Norway knows that a 'landhandler' is not an 'hotel.' The word signifies the keeper of a country store, and his shop is usually the only place within many miles where the necessaries of life can be bought.

It is a pity that this first work on modern mountaineering in Norway has been treated so superficially, for there is little doubt that it is a subject which will some day be of general interest, and we hope, ere long, to see the work undertaken thoroughly by some one who is conversant with every part of the country where mountains have yet been explored.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE ACCIDENT ON PIZ PALÜ.

To the Editor of the ALPINE JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,—I send you an account which I have translated from the 'Mittheilungen des Deutschen und Oesterreichischen Alpenvereins' for October 15, of the fatal accident during a descent of the Piz Palü on September 1 last.

It is fitting that such a record should find a place in the pages of the 'Alpine Journal' for several reasons. In it is described an act of bravery on the part of one of the guides for which it would be hard to find a parallel in the annals of mountaineering.

It is well also that some erroneous statements with regard to the use of the rope on this occasion, which found their way into the English papers, should be corrected. And, further, the death of Professor Nasse seems to emphasise a warning, already painfully impressed on us by the loss of Mr. Norman-Neruda, that there are special dangers awaiting those whose vital organs are not perfectly sound, and who undertake the exertion and fatigue of long or difficult climbs.

Faithfully yours,

G. SCRIVEN, F.R.G.S.

The party on the Piz Palü consisted of Professor Nasse and Dr. Borchardt, of Berlin, with the guides Carl Klimmer, of St. Jacob, and Schnitzler. The following account of the accident is written by Dr. Borchardt:—

‘At eight o’clock we left the Diavolezza hut, and at 12 noon were on the summit of the Palü. After half an hour’s rest we made our way further, to the second and third peaks, and then along the ridge to the Bellavista saddle, which we reached in 1 hr. 15 min. This ridge had to be carefully traversed, as the soft snow was in many places piled into overhanging cornices. Nowhere, however, did any special difficulties present themselves, as can easily be seen from the comparatively short time in which we left the ridge behind us. Everywhere there was considerably more fresh snow than I had expected. We sank into it ten or twelve centimetres, seldom up to or over the calf of the leg. About two o’clock we left the Bellavista saddle in order to descend over the “Hole” westwards from the Fortezza to Boval. After climbing for half an hour, or perhaps an hour, down the névé, which is here rather steep, we found ourselves on the edge of a wide bergschrund. Without much searching, Schnitzler, who certainly knows the Palü exceptionally well, stepped on to a snow bridge, which he had already often crossed and over which led a track. Suddenly I saw Schnitzler and Nasse fall headlong into the abyss without a sound. It was the work of an instant. I was dragged forward some steps after them, but managed to make myself fast on the very brink of the precipice, by driving my ice axe vertically with all my weight into the snow up to its head. I have only one circumstance to thank that my body was not instantly dragged with them into the schrund by the weight of the fall—namely, that at the critical moment I held in my hand a loop of the rope tightly stretched. At the same moment and in like manner as myself Klimmer had anchored himself higher up, but still on a very steep surface, so that we bore together the brunt of the tremendous jerk caused by the fall of our companions. Fortunately the snow held firm, above all on the exposed spot where I found myself, which was, as it afterwards proved, overhanging. This I did not know, but I had the uneasy feeling that it must be so. What had happened in the crevasse we knew not. We were so shocked at the first moment that I believe it never occurred to us to shout to those below.

After some anxious moments there rang a hollow-sounding shout from below, "Pull!" With all our might we tried to pull—in vain. I wanted, for safety, to put a coil of the rope round my axe, but we were unable to lift it more than a few centimetres. Again and again we tried to pull, again and again without effect. At each fresh attempt the rope cut deeper into the snow, and as the resistance increased our strength diminished.

"Undo yourself from the rope, Klimmer," I shouted up to him; "make fast the rope to the ice axe above, come down to me and help me to pull." In this way I thought we should do more. I was unable while pulling to step back, so that part of Klimmer's strength was more or less wasted on my body through the loop of the rope.

"I cannot, sir," answered the brave fellow. "I can't unrope myself, and my hands are nearly powerless. Your position is too bad; I dare not give up my own." He was quite right. On him depended afterwards our only hope of safety. "My God!" I heard Schnitzler cry below, "I can't get out! I can't get out!" What was to be done? It was hopeless to think of pulling them out. As we had already failed we could now certainly not succeed; we were far too much exhausted. If those below could not help we should all four be lost. The soft snow into which I had worked myself began to slip away, so that to get a better hold I had to hook my right arm round the ice axe. "Can't you cut yourself off?" I shouted down. "No," answered my friend, "impossible." "Can you not help at all?" "No," shouted Nasse, "only hold tight and pull." Perplexed, we looked around, downwards to the Morteratsch, then over to the much frequented Diavolezza. Nowhere was a human being to be seen, who could help us. Far up on the ridge of the Piz Palü Klimmer sighted the figures of men. They might help us! But they neither see nor hear us, and an eternity must pass before they can reach us. "Hold tight!" came a sudden shout from below; but, before I clearly understood the warning, there followed a fresh and violent jerk, which dragged me forwards from my firm position.

I now lay bent forwards on my knees, my head over the yawning gulf, without, however, being able to see into it. My right hand, stretched out behind me, tightly grasped the ice axe; my back supported almost the entire weight; with my left arm I tried to raise my breast away from the snow on which I lay. The consciousness that the next jerk would send me flying head over heels into the crevasse was awful. "Pull me back, Klimmer," I shouted. "I can't," he answered. He would now have had to pull back alone a load of four hundredweight.

Slowly my left arm buried itself in the snow to the elbow. It was quite numb, and the strength of my right arm was also failing. "I can stand it no longer!" cried my friend in a weak voice. "I can stand it no longer!" "You must pull me back, Klimmer, or I shall fall headlong into the bergschrund." At last, by a tremendous effort, the brave Tyrolese succeeded in pulling me back. "I can

stand it no longer!" cried the dying voice of my friend once more. It was the last sound we heard from him. Perplexed, we tried again to pull—again without effect. I could now only help with my right arm, as my left hand was so benumbed I could not close it. Of Schnitzler we heard nothing. I did not know whether he was dead or still alive. We shouted to him, but got no answer.

‘He had meantime performed an act of the highest bravery. He had attempted to anchor himself with his ice axe on the vertical ice wall opposite to him. Having gained a footing, he tried to climb up, but the step gave way, and he fell again a metre or a metre and a half. By this fall I was dragged over the crevasse. Having recovered from this mishap he steadied himself a second time, and, with the courage of despair, cut himself off the rope. He fell down the face of the ice wall and safely reached the floor of the crevasse. Whether he could get out, and how this was to be done without help, he had no idea. He made his way along the whole length of the crevasse, for, perhaps, 70 m., and found at the end a small ledge of ice which brought him out.

“Schnitzler is coming out!” shouted Klimmer to me. Only very slowly could Schnitzler work his way up; he reached us panting and exhausted, but did not rest a moment! With his help we untied the rope as quickly as possible. The knots had become so tightly drawn together that to undo them took more time than we expected. The rope was made fast to the ice axe above, and all three pulled together with might and main to no purpose; we raised our unhappy comrade perhaps a foot. “Help yourself, Professor,” shouted Schnitzler; “push yourself off with your feet.” But there came no answer, no effort; he was no longer among the living. In doubt Schnitzler knelt down nearer to the precipice, unroped, and in an awful position, heedless of our warnings, he broke a huge hole with his left hand in the overhanging snow, then made a last attempt. It was impossible to pull up the body. We must lower it down. The rope was carefully undone and made fast to the lower ice axe. With all speed Schnitzler hastened into the crevasse. “Come on,” he shouted. Klimmer descended, while I waited on the western edge of the crevasse for the party which might bring us help. This party now turned out to be only a single Englishman, Mr. John G. Cockin, A.C., with whom I climbed down into the bergschrund. Schnitzler had meantime worked himself up once more on to the ice wall. Holding himself steady with his axe, which he grasped in his right hand, with his left he pushed down the dead body of the Professor. With Klimmer’s help the corpse was cut off the rope. Artificial respiration and clapping over the heart failed to restore the life which had passed away.

‘I must be excused for not attempting to describe our agitation. Klimmer was the first to recover himself. We must get out of that icy grave and think of our own return. We roped ourselves with the friendly Englishman, who had most thoughtfully withdrawn,

and slowly wended our way down the mountain. At 7 o'clock we reached the Morteratsch Hotel, and at 8 arrived at Pontresina. At 11 P.M. a party of guides, with Schnitzler and Klimmer, left Pontresina and brought down the body of my friend from the mountains.

'To the above account, in which I have tried to detail as far as possible how the sad occurrence took place, I will add some further remarks by way of explanation.

'As to the time occupied in the accident, I can make no exact statement. None of us took note of the hour. I only know that we left the scene of the accident at 4.30, so that we had spent from 1½ hr. to 2 hrs. there. In my opinion Professor Nasse lived for 15 or 20 min. Half or three-quarters of an hour must have elapsed till Schnitzler made his way out of the crevasse. The crevasse was about 2½ m. to 3 m. broad above, 4 m. below, and 80 m. deep. Its floor was formed of snow and pieces of ice which had fallen from above; under this floor the crevasse went deeper. Whether I should have ventured to take that leap of death I do not know. In any case it would never have occurred to Professor Nasse to cut the rope. I also believe that he could not have been saved in this way.

'One cannot say for certain what was the position of the two foremost of the party at the moment when the bridge broke. I think that Professor Nasse, as he stepped on the bridge, imagined that Schnitzler was already over it; perhaps, too, he mistook for firm *névé* what was really a treacherous bridge; so that Schnitzler fell on his knees on the opposite edge of the crevasse, and was dragged back by Professor Nasse.

'I can only speak with reserve as to the actual cause of death, since no *post-mortem* examination was made. I must, after careful consideration, reject the idea of suffocation. The rope was properly knotted throughout, and the loops were not appreciably tightened. If the knots had not been properly fastened such a tremendous jerk as our rope sustained would have pulled in the circle of a loop at most two or three centimetres, when the knots would have become so tight that any further contraction would have been impossible. For this reason alone, it seems to me, the idea of suffocation must be dismissed. Moreover it has long been known that the sensation of oppression experienced in suffocation is desperately painful, and that a man who is being suffocated, at least if conscious, cries at once, "I am suffocating." I am quite certain that Professor Nasse in these circumstances would have cried, "Let me go! I am suffocating!" This he did not do, but shouted again and again, "I can stand it no longer!" and before this, "Hold tight and pull!"

'Many circumstances point to paralysis of the heart. We know that sometimes a strong, healthy swimmer perishes from heart failure. At any rate the action of Professor Nasse's heart was defective at high altitudes. Even on the top of the Palü he had remarked that his "breathing" was becoming more difficult every year, and

that for next year he must get into better training. Want of breath in climbing is, without doubt, a symptom of deficient heart power. I must assume that the first fall had already given Professor Nasse a tremendous shock; then, though usually a most alert and active man, he was utterly unable to help himself at all; his ice axe, the only thing about him which I saw for a moment, hung powerless, like a weak reed in the wind. Next day it was seen that his axe had left hardly any marks on the ice wall. Schnitzler's second fall evidently hastened the end. In addition to the physical shock there was the restriction of his breathing, which was doubtless occasioned by the severe pull, both from above and below, without any tightening of the loop of the rope. From medical experience we know that obstruction to the expansion of the chest walls may lead to paralysis of the heart. Added to all this, Professor Nasse had previously suffered from a severe attack of pleurisy and inflammation of the kidneys, diseases which frequently weaken the muscles of the heart. But it is also possible that he received serious internal injuries; indeed, this is quite as likely a view as the idea of paralysis of the heart. Nasse had the rope fastened round the lower part of his chest, so that the loop lay over the liver and spleen. It can easily be understood that the fall for the second time of so heavy a man as Schnitzler, with his weight of perhaps 90 kilos., may have caused a rupture of these organs in the first instance. Our two guides, Schnitzler and Klimmer, deserve the highest praise. They did the utmost in their power, and we have to thank chiefly their skill that we did not all four perish.'

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

A GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the Hall on Tuesday evening, February 7, at 8.30 P.M., the Right Hon. James Bryce, *President*, in the chair.

The following candidates were balloted for and elected members of the Club:—Messrs. L. C. M. S. Amery, A. W. Andrews, J. H. Doncaster, Alfred East, A. E. Field, R. P. Hope, C. E. Martineau, J. R. Pank, H. Speyer, F. J. Stevens.

Professor NORMAN COLLIE read a paper entitled 'Climbing in the Rocky Mountains of Canada during 1897 and 1898,' which was illustrated with lantern slides.

Mr. WOOLLEY thought that no one had more carefully studied the district than Mr. Collie; and the paper had therefore been a most interesting one. The great drawback in travelling were the forests, which rendered progress very slow. Their presence had, however, preserved the district from exploration by the tourist. As it was, one day one was a tourist on the railway, and the next an explorer in a new district where one could discover and name mountains. The custom had hitherto been to name mountains