

CORRESPONDENCE.

LEONARDO DA VINCI AND MOUNTAINS.

To the Editor of the ALPINE JOURNAL.

SIR,—In the volume of extracts entitled 'The Early Mountaineers,' which has been brought together (to use the author's own expression), with the 'unconscious aid' of Mr. Coolidge and others, by Mr. F. Gribble, some three pages are devoted to Leonardo da Vinci as a 'painter mountaineer.'

I wish to point out, in the hope of giving further aid to Mr. Gribble in any future editions of his interesting Extracts, that his treatment of Leonardo is neither adequate nor altogether accurate. Mr. Gribble begins by declaring that the only passage dealing with mountains in the painter's writings which 'palpitates with any sort of actuality' is the one he quotes about an ascent of 'Monboso.' I do not pretend to understand the New English, but I take Mr. Gribble to mean that this is the only passage in Leonardo's writings in which he refers expressly to his own mountain travels. If this be so he is quite wrong.

In an article of mine printed in 1884, in the 'Royal Geographical Society's Proceedings,' which Mr. Gribble has read, I pointed out that Leonardo makes many references to mountains. The crags of the Grigna above Lago di Como he describes 'as the biggest rocks he knows;' Val Sassina, behind Lecco, is rich in 'cose fantastiche.' In the Valle di Chiavenna there are 'deer, bouquetin, and terrible bears,' but one must climb on hands and feet to catch them. 'From mile to mile there are good inns,' and at the head of the valley—that is, on the ascent to the Splügen—'waterfalls 700 ft. in height, which it is a pleasure to see' (no doubt the Fall of the Madesimo), and 'good living at four soldi the reckoning.' Val Tellina makes much strong wine, and there too living is cheap. 'At Bormio are the baths.' To these baths Conrad Gesner, the great humanist and botanist, who was also in spirit a mountaineer, went to repair his health fifty years later.

Mr. Gribble, I may note in passing, while doing full justice to Gesner's love of the mountains, seems to me hardly to appreciate fully his scientific eminence.

I might add other citations. In Leonardo's 'Notes' there are various references to localities in the Apennines, there are a number of observations and suggestions with regard to the representation of mountains in art, and there is a most interesting series of letters, or draft of a romance, whichever it may be, relating to Armenia, illustrated with sketches of fantastic and apparently dolomitic peaks.

Other sketches of Leonardo's, notably one of the entrance to a great Alpine valley, with moraine mounds in the foreground, reproduced by Dr. Richter and in the 'Alpine Journal' (xii. 346),

bear witness to the painter's powers of observation and illustrate his 'Notes.'

So much for the adequacy of Mr. Gribble's treatment of Leonardo; I have still to point out details in which he has fallen into some inaccuracy.

In citing the passage with regard to an ascent of Monboso, which Mr. Gribble regards as 'palpitating,' he has failed to note two important corrections—'estate' for 'età' and 'rarity' for 'retà'—suggested respectively by Dr. Richter and myself. The adoption of these does away with the need of imputing any 'rash statement' to the painter.

It was, I believe, Signor Farinetti, not Signor Uzielli, who first called attention to the modern Monte Bo.

I may add that further opportunities of local enquiry have led me to modify the opinion I expressed in 1892 on this subject. There seems to me no sufficient proof that 'Monte Boso' was ever used as a synonym for 'Monte Rosa,' except, possibly, by a map-maker's blunder. On reflection I find it difficult to believe that Leonardo, with his taste for '*cose fantastiche*,' would have failed to describe a glacier, had he seen one close. Monte Rosa and Monte Bo ('Boso,' the full name, is found on the last Government map, as well as the abbreviation) lie as far apart as Mt. Blanc and the Buet, and the position of the latter is very clearly defined by old writers through its juxtaposition to the hill of San Bernardo di Trivero.

I trust that, after this confession of my present uncertainty, Mr. Gribble will not think I owe him any grudge for exposing my previous inconsistency in fifteen years ago identifying 'Monboso' with Monte Viso, and seven years ago with Monte Rosa. I may, perhaps, be allowed to point out, however, that the sentence of Dr. Richter's more particularly criticised in a phrase of mine Mr. Gribble quotes contained not only Dr. Richter's guess as to the identity of 'Monboso,' but also etymological statements long since obsolete.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.

P.S.—It may be worth while, I think, to add that Mr. Gribble's argument with regard to Paccard's missing account of his ascent of Mt. Blanc—that it may never have existed in a separate form, because we have 'no information as to its size, "format," &c.'—falls to the ground when confronted with the fact that in the first catalogue in which it is mentioned Leschevin expressly describes it as octavo.

THE ASCENT OF THE GRAND TÊTON.

To the Editor of the ALPINE JOURNAL.

SIR,—Attention has recently been drawn to the Grand Téton (13,800 ft.), in North-Western Wyoming, 30 miles S. of Yellowstone

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National Park, by a successful ascent of the mountain in August 1898. The peak is noted for the unusual difficulties it presents to the mountaineer. Since the first ascent of this grand mountain, on July 29, 1872, by the Hon. Nathaniel P. Langford and Captain James Stevenson, the latter of whom was in charge of the Snake River Division of the U.S. Geological Survey then at work in that vicinity, under the direction of Dr. Hayden, the many attempts to scale it have all been unsuccessful until its summit was again reached in August 1898 by a Mr. Owen and party, of Wyoming. Mr. Owen had, it seems, made two previous attempts, both of which, on account of unfavourable conditions, had been unsuccessful. Due mention of the ascent of the peak by Mr. Langford and Captain Stevenson was made by Dr. Hayden and embodied in his official report of the expedition, while a full account of the ascent was furnished by Mr. Langford to the then 'Scribner's' (now 'Century') 'Magazine,' and published in the June number of 1873. The pride of Mr. Owen in his recent achievement has, it is to be regretted, led him into the folly of attempting to magnify it by the claim that his is the first ascent, which pretension he attempts to maintain by attacking the veracity of Captain Stevenson, who has been dead many years, and Mr. Langford, an honoured resident of St. Paul, Minn. It is an act of simple justice to the memory of Captain Stevenson, a man of the highest and most unquestionable veracity, and only fair to Mr. Langford, who is an author of distinction, one of the founders of Yellowstone National Park, and a citizen of the highest reputation, to state the fact of their first ascent of the peak.

I bring this matter to the attention of your readers, that any wrong impression created by the claims Mr. Owen is putting forth may be corrected, and that the ascent made by Mr. Langford and Captain Stevenson may neither be overlooked nor forgotten.

LUTHER B. YAPLE.

Chillicothe, Ohio: Nov. 17, 1898.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

A GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held, by the kind permission of the authorities, in the Lecture Theatre of the University of London, on Tuesday, May 2, at 8.30 p.m., the Right Hon. James Bryce, *President*, in the chair.

Members and their friends, including ladies, to the number of about 700, were present.

The PRESIDENT introduced with a few words Sir Martin Conway, who read a paper entitled 'Climbs in the Andes in 1898,' which was illustrated by lantern slides.

Mr. E. A. FITZGERALD, in proposing a vote of thanks to Sir Martin Conway, said he had read recently that Sir Martin Conway intended to retire and no longer affront the heights. If Sir Martin