being tricked on to the Trugberg, climbed the Mönch at midday with the successive detachment of each of our accepted seven cuticles. We fled faster and faster from the furnace, hunted by puffs of hot breath, and our expressions might have suggested to an onlooker a more than usual sensitiveness to the ingenuity with which all sub-alpine paths elude the tantalising shadow of the fir trees. Two hours and fifty minutes stands for the first man's time from the summit to the door of the Randa bathroom, and little less should in justice be recorded for the passage thence to the tea table.

It will be remarked that the climb, like most proper climbs, was thoroughly dull, uneventful, and unworthy of record, which makes it all the pleasanter to recall and the better illustration of my thesis. As the last-named appears to have got involved with several others in the course of the ascent I shall not, by restating it, risk the sort of questioning pause which usually follows the striking of the keynote by a conscientious pianist after an unaccompanied verse. It may be sufficient to put a problem to the gentle protagonists of 'fine old crusted routes' and rather over 'full-bodied huts.' 'What could be the comparative pleasure of the other parties thronging up the usual ascent of the Dom on that fierce day? And to suggest the solution by a trifling misquotation from the 'Traveller'—

> Some sterner Virtues o'er the mountain's breast
> *May* sit like falcons cowering on the nest;
> But all the gentler Morals, such as play
> Through life's more cultured walk, and charm the way,
> These, far dispersed, on timorous pinions—come
> To sport and flutter in a kind-o'—'scrum'!

Some Expeditions in Dauphiné: a Night on the Meije.

By O. K. WILLIAMSON, M.D.

DURING the summer of 1906 I was able to carry out a long cherished plan of spending part of a climbing season among the high alps of Dauphiné.

On July 2 an evening walk up the Lautaret road from Bourg d'Oisans brought me late at night to the Hôtel Juge at La Grave. The following day was spent in repose, and in the evening old Alois Pollinger joined me. On the 4th a training expedition was decided upon, in accordance with custom; and what more suitable object could be chosen than the Aiguille du Goléon, 11,251 ft., that fine view point to the

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SOUTHERN AIGUILLE D'ARVES, FROM AIGUILLE DU GOLÉON.

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N. of La Grave? Starting at the unseemly hour of 10 A.M. we walked up the high road until just above the first gallery. After diverging up a side valley to the left we traversed its flower-carpeted slopes to Pramelier, and continuing up the treeless uplands lunched at the foot of our peak. We then struck up the slopes of friable rock of which the mountain is composed to the S.E. arête,* which we followed without difficulty to the top (about 4 P.M.). The Pelvoux group was unfortunately clouded, as the view of these peaks must be exceedingly fine. However we were consoled by the striking view of the Southern Aiguille d'Arves and the distant lower hills, with the ever changing cloud shadows of a stormy sky. Descending the same way to Pramelier we now skirted the hillside, here rich with fields of corn, until directly above La Grave, which we descended upon, losing our way in an important thoroughfare of that city (which, I am sorry to say, my companion designated as a 'Saustrasse'), and so reached our hotel just before 9 o'clock.

The following day H. Symons and our second guide, Edouard Charlet, of Chamonix, joined me. On the 6th we yielded to the magnetic influence of the words 'not yet ascended,' which we read in the 'Central Alps of Dauphiny' as the sole description of the central peak of the Chamoissière. Although we succeeded in starting from La Grave 10 m. earlier than for my first expedition yet it was past midday when we arrived at the Chalet de l'Alpe, where we proceeded to examine our peak.

Roughly speaking the three peaks of the Chamoissière are points on a ridge which stretches northwards from the Pic de Neige Cordier. Ascending the slopes towards the western summit we turned off eastwards and traversed slopes of hard snow, where we roped, and thus reached the lower end of a couloir at the foot of the N. face of the central peak. We now went up the rocks on the true left of this couloir, and so directly to the summit (10,007 ft.), having an easy but pleasant climb.† We had seen nail scratches on the way up, so were hardly surprised when, on reaching the summit, we found a stone-man. The view delighted us. The rock scenery in the foreground was striking, but we were especially impressed by the great rocky wall which stretches from the

* There is an error anent this expedition in the *Central Alps of Dauphiny* (second edition). On p. 20, in 5th line from top, 'l.' should read 'r.'

† *Alpine Journal*, vol. xxiii. p. 340.

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Grande Ruine to the Pic de Neige Cordier, with the ridge of the Écrins towering behind. The Chamoissière is placed with regard to the neighbouring ridges in a position comparable to that occupied by the Pic du Tacul in the Mont Blanc group. We went down the same way, halting a few minutes for milk at the Chalet de l'Alpe. My companion was only prevented from bathing in the stream here by the proximity of a red calf. This was doubtless due to the recollection of an incident with a similar bovine animal in North Italy, for on that occasion, owing to the dietetic idiosyncrasies of the creature, he only narrowly succeeded in rescuing his clothes. We returned in the late evening, revelling in the sweet air and fine moonlight effects, to La Grave. This small expedition certainly deserves to rank among the many attractions of La Grave.

On the 8th, leaving the hotel about 7 A.M., we crossed the Brèche de la Meije to the Promontoire hut, intending to traverse the Meije on the following day. The view of the stately towers of the great mountain revealed to us above the mists I shall not soon forget—

> The wild rocks shaped, as they had turrets been,
> in mockery of man's art.

We reached the comfortable hut after an easy half-day at about 3 P.M. This is undoubtedly a far pleasanter route, and moreover not a great deal longer, than that through the stone-filled Val des Etançons from La Bérarde. Next morning the weather was not sufficiently settled to justify a start, so we spent the greater part of the day on a rocky platform close by the hut, admiring the stately Grande Ruine and the Pic Bourcet.

On the morning of the 10th we started betimes for our peak in magnificent weather. The south face of the mountain was in a condition as near perfect as possible, and taking a variation of the Pas du Chat we reached the top in good time. On starting down the gully leading to the Brèche Zsigmondy we soon found that the east ridge was likely to be in a condition as bad as that of the south face of the mountain was satisfactory. There was much *verglas*, necessitating careful moving and frequent hitching of the spare rope. After walking along the level crest of the Brèche Zsigmondy Pollinger started up the well known crack of the first great tooth, whilst we waited in the shadow of the peak, enlivened at intervals by seeing small avalanches of snow, ice, and stones dislodged by the prowess of our leader, although,

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THE ÉCRINS, PELVOUX, AND AILEFROIDE, FROM GLACIER CARRÉ.

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as he was out of sight, the only other signs of his proximity were sundry remarks. At length the time came for us to follow one by one. I cannot judge of the difficulty of this part of the climb under good conditions, but on this occasion, owing to the exceedingly unfavourable circumstances, it was certainly of first-class difficulty and quite the hardest part of the whole climb; moreover the fixed rope hanging from the top of the tower was not placed in the position where it is of most use. We now climbed over the crest of the second and third teeth, and along the ridges and northern slopes of the snowy fourth and fifth. Wonderful were the retrospective views of the great ridge revealed in fleeting effects by the mists wafted across by the light north wind, the graceful snow crest and gaunt rock towers in part bathed in the rays of the setting sun, in part wrapped in purple shadow. By the time that we reached the foot of the Pic Central it was 7.30 P.M., and it was evident that our chance of getting off the peak by daylight had disappeared. I suggested staying on the ridge for the night; but Pollinger was strongly averse to this plan and in favour of attempting the descent, and, as he had the advantage of previous knowledge of our route, I did not feel justified in insisting. We now traversed along the northern slopes of the peak. The face here, in part ice and in part rock, was covered by fresh snow. By the time that we commenced to descend the slopes immediately beneath the summit of the peak it was dusk, and moreover freezing; and moving carefully one at a time we descended so slowly that night had set in ere we had descended, I should say, 100 ft. I well remember my regret at leaving the safe anchorage afforded by a firm projecting knob to descend a smooth wall of rock below, some 20 ft. high, which landed us on the top of a short snow slope. At the upper edge of this we anchored ourselves as well as we could whilst Charlet, the last man, climbed down the rock. This was an anxious moment for us, as, had he slipped, I do not think we could possibly have held him. The problem of our further movements had to be now seriously discussed. The snow slope merged a short distance to our right in a couloir or slope of snow or ice by which it is customary to make the descent. After Pollinger had examined this, and brought us word that it consisted of 'blankes Eis,' we agreed that in the night it was undesirable to attempt to cut steps down it, and so decided upon the direct descent. Below the short slope on which we stood was a smooth, steep rock-face, which terminated below at the top of the long ice slope which falls away to end at the berg-

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schrund above the névé of the Tabuchet glacier. Pollinger busied himself in finding and fixing securely a suitable stone on which to tie our spare rope, held meanwhile by Symons, who was himself firmly placed against a rock, whilst Charlet and I above contrived to find good footholds. Meanwhile my thoughts frequently wandered to La Grave, the lights of which were visible near 8,000 ft. below. The night was clear, but the little moonlight had been merely sufficient to show us the Tabuchet glacier below, and even this had now disappeared. We had, however, a certain amount of help from our lantern. At last the spare rope was securely fixed to the knob, and one by one we slid down in the darkness to the top of the ice slope below. Without its aid we could not have descended the rock face, as, whatever may be the case by daylight, on this dark night no hold of any sort could be found on it. To judge by the complete absence of ice steps which Charlet and I found awaiting us on arriving at the foot of the rock, Pollinger's faith in our natural powers of adhesion to ice must have been considerable. He believed that by untying ourselves and passing our rope through a noose in the end of the fixed one we should now be enabled to reach the bergschrund. This procedure we adopted, and Pollinger, holding the doubled rope, disappeared into the depths below. 'Wie gehts?' was our anxious inquiry. 'Ich kann gar nichts sehen,' was the answer, and we learned that the schrund was still far below and out of sight. As a final expedient we tied the end of our rope to the fixed one, and were thus able to use its 100-ft. length. Even by the aid of this device, however, Pollinger could only reach a point some distance above the schrund. We now in turn let ourselves by the help of the rope down the ice slope. This was not easy, as we had to depend almost exclusively on arm-hold, and Symons's grip gave way before he reached the lower end of our rope, and he slipped into Pollinger's arms below.

It only remained for us now to wait where we were until daybreak. After a bit the men summoned sufficient energy to cut a shelf on which we could sit, and I think we were all agreeably surprised when some 2 hrs. after reaching this spot day began to dawn, for, owing to our constant occupation, the night had quickly passed; and most fortunately for us, doubtless on account of the complete absence of wind, it had not been cold. As soon as there was sufficient light the guides commenced step-cutting. They quickly arrived at rather soft snow, and traversing to the right soon came to a point where the bergschrund was easily jumped, and we thus reached the easy

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WEST PEAK OF AILEFROIDE, FROM THE SÉLÉ GLACIER.

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slopes of the Tabuchet glacier. After casting a last look at our rope we proceeded down the glacier. We had intended to descend the whole length of this, but, owing to our ropeless condition, thought it better to go down by the ordinary route, and therefore crossed the ridge which runs N. from the Bec de l'Homme; and soon the hooting of motor cars on the Lautaret high road announced our impending return to civilisation.

It is stated on the authority of the 'Central Alps of Dauphiny' that the Pic Central is known in the Monestier valley as the Doigt de Dieu. However this may be, historical accuracy compels me to record the fact that Pollinger spent the last part of our walk to La Grave in diligently searching for the most disrespectful epithets to apply to the peak, and further that his efforts in that direction met with a considerable measure of success.

At 11 A.M. on July 11 we re-entered La Grave after an expedition of 31 hrs.

A day or two later we left La Grave. We did so with considerable regret, as we had spent some very pleasant days there, and had found the Hôtel Juge exceedingly comfortable, and I may here remark that its management contrasts very favourably with that of the hotel at La Bérarde. In unsettled weather we walked over the Col de l'Alpe to Venosc, a beautiful spot, and from there up the desolate Val Vénéon to the charmingly situated St. Christophe. Next day we strolled up to La Bérarde.

On the 16th we traversed Les Ecrins from S. to N. We found the rocks above the Col des Avalanches very extensively glazed; in fact never before had I met with anything like the same extent of *verglas* as we came across in Dauphiné last summer. On the impressive summit ridge we met Messrs. Bartleet and Douglas, with their guides, this being the only party which we encountered on any of our Dauphiné climbs. For the descent we gladly profited by their steps down the ice slope.

Two days later in perfect weather we left La Bérarde in order to cross the Col du Sélé (10,834 ft.) to Ailefroide, an enjoyable expedition affording many fine views, that which struck us especially being the Ailefroide, Pic sans Nom, and Pelvoux, as seen from the Sélé glacier, the only unpleasant part of the day being the abominable slope of shifting débris, or so called 'clapier,' which had to be crossed before we reached the beautiful lower valley, the walk down which was perhaps rendered more enjoyable by contrast. Everything at the

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little hotel at Ailefroide pleased us except the enormous number of flies.

Next morning, July 19, we started at 4.40 A.M. with the intention of traversing the Montagne des Agneaux (12,008 ft.) to the Chalet de l'Alpe. After a false start up the right bank of the stream, which wasted some minutes, we walked up to the Tuckett hut, taking the route on the right bank of the icefall of the Glacier Blanc, consoled for the hot grind up the hillside by the grand view of the Pelvoux and its neighbours and by the vista down the valley, with the hills beyond

Mellowed and mingling, yet distinctly seen,

rising above an Italian haze.

The hut is finely situated above the left moraine of the Glacier Blanc. From here, after halting about 1¼ hr., we ascended the hot, stony slopes which lead to the small glacier which descends from the Col Tuckett, and passing to our right beneath the icefall as quickly as possible, so as to escape the risk of falling stones, we struck up a thoroughly sound face of rock, followed by a ridge on the true left of the glacier as remarkable for the opposite characteristics, and ascending a short snow slope reached at 2.15 P.M. the col (11,484 ft.). The route described in the 'Central Alps of Dauphiny' passes over the upper basin of the small glacier above mentioned. At 2.45 P.M. we started up the N.E. face of our peak. The rocks, at first loose, very soon improved, and a pleasant scramble brought us at 3.15 P.M. to the top of the Montagne des Agneaux. The reputation of the summit as a point of view is well deserved; Les Écrins is particularly imposing from here. Starting on our descent at 3.45, after again reaching the col we traversed along the base of the highest or eastern summit, and climbing up rotten rocks reached the col between it and the point immediately to the west. N.W. of this point is a snow summit, from which a ridge extends northwards. Traversing snow slopes we soon reached this ridge. The way down to the Chalet de l'Alpe, we gathered from the description in the 'Central Alps of Dauphiny,' lay in this direction, but it was not obvious, and the guides were unable to help us in finding it. We therefore returned in our steps, climbed the snow summit by an ice slope and loose rock with the view of finding a route on the W. side, but as soon as we saw them gave up all thought of descending the steep icy northern slopes of the ridge which stretches to the W. The amateurs of the party then decided that the wisest plan would be to descend from the Col Tuckett to the E. and if possible reach

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Monestier that night. We accordingly retraced our steps to the col, and after descending a short steep slope reached the névé of the Monestier glacier. Leaving on our left the ridge of rocks which crops out from the glacier we descended rapidly, and soon had a wearisome step-cutting job down the steep icefall for some hundreds of feet, reaching the level glacier below, and so the left moraine, in the gloaming Descending the stony slopes, at 8.30 P.M. we reached a spot where it was decided to bivouac, as the guides were of opinion that it was undesirable to attempt to cross by night a certain stream over which lay our way. I have never passed a more uncomfortable night. We lay as close together as possible on snow and rock, partly under an overhanging boulder and close to a glacier stream. We suffered considerably from the cold—indeed, far more so than when, nine days before, we had been benighted on the Pic Central. At dawn next morning we continued our descent, and at once found that we might easily have proceeded the night before. After traversing moraine slopes pleasant walking down the left side of the Tabuc glen brought us to the chalets of Grangettes, where we halted for a breakfast of milk and bread, and a gradual descent amid pleasing scenery led us in about 2 hrs.' actual walking from our sleeping place to Monestier and a temperature worthy of the Italian plain. From here we took the diligence over the Col du Lautaret, deriving pleasure from the contemplation of the Agneaux and Meije, and so to La Grave, where we bade farewell to the Dauphiné Alps, leaving the same afternoon *en route* for Chamonix.

We had been favoured by weather above the average, and indeed during our last week it had been almost perfect.

The Cuillin Hills.

By the EDITOR.

WHEN we are on the point of celebrating the Jubilee of the Alpine Club it would seem that 'the true mountaineering centre of the British Isles' deserves at least a brief recognition, seeing that it is more than twenty years since Mr. Charles Pilkington expounded to the Alpine Club what excellent ascents there were to be made in the 'Black Coolins,' and how he himself and his party had made many of the best of them; while it is more than sixteen years since Mr. Dent in that delightful style of his sang the praises of the 'Rocky Mountains of Skye' in these pages. Since then

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