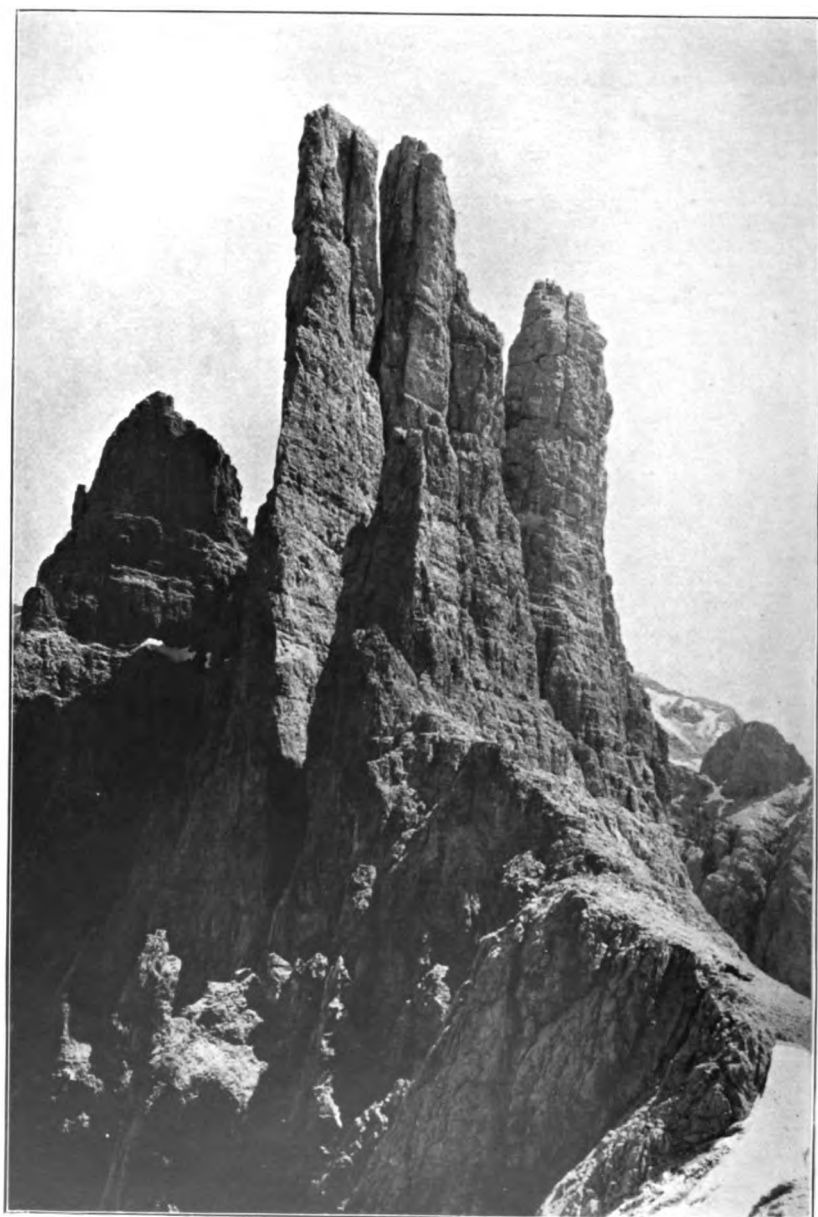




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VIOLETTE THÜRME.

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THE ROSENGARTEN DOLOMITES.

By EDWARD A. BROOME, F.R.G.S.

(Read before the Alpine Club, February 2, 1909.)

The tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours, and their forms, were all to me
An appetite, a feeling, and a love.

DO the Dolomites yield their votaries the best climbing in Europe? After nearly half a century's experience in half a score countries I am disposed to say that they do, and to add the pious opinion that the Rosengarten—undoubtedly the most typical Dolomite group in Southern Tyrol—is also the range that provides more than any other, sporting and sensational hours for mountaineers, and fantastically beautiful scenes and colour effects for less adventurous travellers. This is the reason I have chosen the district for my paper, it being a matter for surprise so few British visit this lovely land of legend, and that it is so rarely named in our own and other prints. For myself the longer I live, the more I love the chimneys and walls, towers, ridges, and ledges which constitute the climbing here; and if the inevitable geröll and scree sometimes get a bit monotonous, there is less in the Rosengarten than in several adjacent groups, while even in them these trials to temper are at least no worse than the many miles of moraine in most other mountain ranges.

Pray do not think I am going out of my depth into dissertations on the historical, geological, botanical, or even the picturesque aspects of this wonderful group; I could not if I would, and would not if I could. The ecclesiastical dignitaries, editors, and other literary lights who often favour us with papers can do that sort of thing, and do it of course to perfec-

VOL. XXIV.—NO. CLXXXIV.

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tion; but I cannot emulate these great and good men, my tale claims neither learned nor scientific merit, and will merely be a sort of superannuated schoolboy story of delightful scrambles and climbs, and (I quote Mummery) 'To those who think with me and who regard mountaineering as unmixed play, these remarks are alone addressed.' I shall also ask for your forbearance in another direction, for though I call the paper after the Rosengarten, I shall take some little latitude, and make one or two brief discursions into its nearest neighbours.

First however, a very few words as to the topography and conformation of the range, and a sentence or two about its general accessibility, huts, and what not. An excellent paper on some of these points was read before the Club thirty-five years ago, but as only two of the peaks had then been climbed, their heights and even their names have since been corrected and altered (some I cannot even trace); and as besides there were then no huts, and accessibility, as we understand it to-day, was non-existent, Mr. Tucker's article, though delightful reading, is now hardly up to date.

The range runs practically N. and S. from the Seiser Alp to the Caressa Pass, and on the W. side is precipitous and without spurs, the views from above Botzen being most impressive. The great wall of pallid cliff stretches for many miles from the Rosszähne to the Latemar, and the continuity of its steep crags and campanili, overhanging dark forests, is unrivalled in the Alps. Hence the difficult climbs are, with the notable exception of the Rosengarten Spitze itself (of which more anon), from this W. or Botzen side.

On its E. the long chain is broken up and supported by numerous lateral buttresses and secondary minor ranges, formed by the Malignon, Kessel-Kogel, Dirupi di Larsec, and Mugoni-Spitze, none of them, as the guide-books say, 'very difficult for experts.' Then of course these peaks form between them several glens, of which the Vajolet-Thal is at once the most important and impressive.

The whole range is accessible from Botzen, Neumarkt, and Campitello, and the Austrian roads (I wish ours were as good) are first-rate for either carriages or automobiles. As regards hotel accommodation, the Karersee is first-class, a 'Gorgeous palace' with the 'Cloud-capped towers' *in front* (as Prospero placed them); and other inns on or near the pass, and at Weisslahnbach, Vigo, and Campitello, are above suspicion or reproach. The huts, too, are a great feature, and add to the comfort, convenience, and cheapness of climbing in the

district. There are four at least 'bewirtschaftet,' namely, the Vajolet (which, though the largest, is often too crowded), the Grasleiten, Kölner, and Oestertag, and I have also seen a smaller one at Sojal or Gardeccia. The contrast between these and the average unclean and uncomfortable Swiss hut is considerable, and besides it is possible to live in them entirely, and for next to nothing, the food and drink being good, cooking fair, and sleeping accommodation clean and reasonable, especially to members of the D.Oe.A.V., who only pay half the tariff rates for rooms and beds. Though prices of most things have advanced by leaps and bounds during the last twenty-five years, it is still possible to climb in Tyrol more economically than in any other Alpine district.

I must now hark forward to the climbs, and as these are numerous, perhaps it will be best to draw the line at peaks of 9,000 ft. that I have been up myself; and if I lay some stress on those we have been lucky enough to do first, even if only their 'wrong sides,' I shall possibly be forgiven.

The *Kesselkogel* (9,846 ft.) and the Rosengarten Spitze, formerly known as the Federerkogel (9,781 ft.) are the two highest summits in the group; their heights were formerly incorrectly reversed, and both were first ascended by Englishmen, Messrs. Carson and Tucker. The Kesselkogel is not only the highest but the easiest to climb, and boasts two routes up, from W. and from N.E.; both ways, however, can be varied somewhat, and the difficulties thereby slightly increased. They are rather dull ascents, though there are many 'places where 'dull' might easily be converted into 'deadly' should there happen to be a party or two of young, irresponsible 'führerlos' overhead! I doubt if I should ever have attempted even the easier (W.) route, except from a sense of duty, and to be able to say I had been up the highest peak. It took us three hours from the Vajolet hut to the top and back; neither rope nor kletter-shoes were worn, and one of our ladies led us up the characteristic ledges and terraces by well-worn tracks.

The *Rosengarten-Spitze*, though second in point of height, is more interesting and inspiring, and is indeed the central culminating point and keynote of the whole range. It can be climbed four distinct ways, corresponding pretty nearly with the four points of the compass, and from experience I can recommend one and all. The route from the west side is the easiest and the most used, and is up the ravine and scree-slopes of the Gartl to the Santner Pass, taking about 1½ hr. from the Vajolet hut to the pass, and another hour

thence to the top; after the first couloir and a few nice rocks, an easy ridge is followed, and the rope hardly necessary.

The second route, by the arête running N. and N.E. commencing just opposite the Winklerthurm, is longer, comparatively modern (1899), and not difficult. The third, by the S. arête, is a most interesting climb and, combined with the above N. grat, makes a true traverse of the peak, the rope being quite necessary throughout. This (S.) ridge starts from the Rosengarten-Scharte, which can be reached in an hour from either the Kölner or the Vajolet Hütte, and from the Scharte another one and a half hours should suffice to the summit. I am not quite sure about these times, but Verzi and I took just two and a half hours from the Kölner Hut to the top.

The fourth and last of the Rosengarten Spitze routes is a very different affair, indeed the only point this E. face has in common with the W. side is that both were first achieved by British parties. This tremendous cliff too is, as I said, the only difficult climb on the E. side of the range; but the six Vajolet Towers are perhaps exceptions which prove the rule, for though their aspects box the compass, they are not exactly on the main chain. This side of the Spitze looks from below quite impracticable; the perpendicular walls are smooth, the traverses invisible, and the narrow crack towards the top (400 feet in height, and taking two and a half hours' hard work) modestly hides itself. My capable companion on this climb in 1906 studied it with me again last year, and though we could trace the route, we thought both our predecessors and ourselves deserved some congratulations! It is just the sort of precipice to please a man I once met at Zermatt, who airily told us he didn't think much of the Valais peaks; what *he* liked was 'a mountain on which you could spit a mile!' Now hitherto no notices have appeared on the peaks here forbidding this nasty habit; but anyone practising it even as a substitute for *clinometry* would hardly expect to rate as a mountaineer! Seriously, it is not an unlikely place for a bad accident; indeed one did very nearly happen on this side, but my friend Antonio Dimai is said to have emulated the feat of Almer on the Gabelhorn and saved the situation, though no details have ever been allowed to transpire.

The *Laurinswand* (9,250 feet), though close to the Rosengarten Spitze, is divided from it by the Gartl and the Santner Pass, so can fairly be called a distinct peak. The Laurin may not look quite as imposing, but its Wand facing



J. W. Wiggin, Photo.

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LAURINSWAND AND VAJOLET THÜRME.

St. Cyprian is both longer and more difficult. As this climb has never been mentioned in the 'Alpine Journal,' and as the excellent Purtscheller only describes it as 'extraordinarily hard, and so long and wearisome that the first party must bivouac two and a half hours below the summit,' you may like to have the notes of its third or fourth ascent. On August 18, 1908, Corning and I, with Verzi and Dibona, left the Kölner Hütte 5.15, passed below the Santner Pass, roped 6.20, and started up a series of chimneys with very smooth walls facing W. which landed us in forty minutes at a fenêtre framed between the peak (r.) and a huge rock (l.) at the N.W. angle of the mountain. We then climbed a very steep face, looking N.W., the guides zigzagging up first to the left and then to the right, finding very little hold, and that little bad. We preferred to go straight up to them, with perhaps even less hold, but they were quite safe above us. After this, the wall to the right was less steep and easier, and brought us round to a point high above a very narrow deep cut chasm, reached at 9 A.M.

This lovely Kamin was more or less to be our 'straight and narrow way' for the next four and a half hours; but the first problem was how to get down into it, for it was 30 ft. below us, with sides wet, slippery, and smooth as glass. However Dibona was first lowered as into a well, and then was able to work up in it till he was on our level. Meanwhile we, at our end, drove in a strong staple, and with its aid fashioned two of our numerous ropes into a kind of balustrade, along which we swung as a hand-traverse (feet being somewhat superfluous), the whole thing taking half an hour or more.

Above this point, the dark wet Kamin narrowed, and, being made still smoother by a coating of ice, was as nasty as could be. Our two men however, helping each other a good deal, got up (somehow) 50 or 60 ft. to a big jammed stone, under and round which they scrambled up, and then we (still more somehow) joined them *via* the glazed wall. Then followed ten minutes' easier chimney, out of which the water and ice forced us all again on to the right-hand face, and at the top of this we found the luxurious lair our predecessors had scooped out to sleep in. We however kept on pegging away back towards our faithful old friend, the chronic chasm, by a long and sensational traverse (100 to 120 ft.) but with fair holds, and then an easier further climb in the crack, which had really seemed 'to stretch out like the crack of

doom,' took us to the forcella at its head between the two summits.

This was 1.20, and twenty minutes' more easy rocks landed us on the higher (N.) top at 1.40, or 7 hours 20 minutes in all, of which not more than half an hour was spent in refreshing. Purtscheller speaks of the Rosengarten and the Laurinswand as making a good combined climb; but the E. wall of the one, followed by the W. wall of the other would make a sufficiently long day, even for our brilliant young athlete who likes to take the Charmoz, Grépon, and Blaitière, or the Midi, Plan, and Requin in one stroll!

Now what can I say about the Vajolet Thürme, the two famous sets of aiguilles almost within a stone's throw of the last named expeditions? The orthodox Dr. Coolidge, in his last delightful book, speaks of them as gaunt, sky-scraping 'belles horreurs,' and turns with relief to the Marmolata and its snowfields. I have always thought of the better-known Southern trio as the Defiant Delago, the Stately Stabeler, and the Wondrous Winkler; and of the others as the Nordthurm, Hauptthurm, and Ostthurm, simply and without adjectives; and if I spare you these now it is because there are still some others to describe, and the vocabulary must not be exhausted.

The first-named are undoubtedly difficult and sensational, and I think my short description two years ago is the only one that has appeared in the 'Journal.' The Delago is considered the hardest, but there is very little to choose between it and the Winkler; while the Stabeler is easier, though here the direct traverse makes it less so. My son-in-law and I, with Verzi, crossed all three from the west; that is, taking the Delago first, and Winkler last, and we still think this the best way, though I have met others who prefer the reverse direction, because this saves descending the last bit on the Winklerthurm where so many have fallen. There is something in the argument, but for all that I would rather come down the Winkler than the Delago, and am convinced the accidents have been caused either by incapacity, want of care, solitary climbing, or through making a slight variation from the right line of descent.

We only climbed the north group this last year (on two ropes, Corning with Dibona, and I with Verzi), and found the towers much shorter and easier than the others, but still interesting throughout, and with one or two really hard bits. The views too all round, and especially of the Delago and Winkler Thürme, on which we watched parties, were magni-

TSCHERNER-SPITZE.

TEUFELSWAND.



Major Comilleri, Photo.

THE ROTHWAND.

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ficent, and the total time out from the Vajolet Hut was under 4 hrs. These are not traversed right over from one to the other like the S. group, but you walk nearly up to the Vajolet Pass, then turn left under the Nordthurm to a gap between that and the Hauptthurm. Thence you take the easier Nordthurm first (all four of us went up it together) back, and on up to another little scharte between the Haupt- and Ost-Thürme, from which *both* are climbed. Here we split up into two parties, to save time on the chimneys and rocks, and Corning did one while I did the other; and then we met, crossed, and reversed the process. I was a good deal longer on the Ostthurm than my younger relative, but whether this spelt senile decay or sporting sagacity for discovering more difficult dilemmas remains to this day a moot point!

I pass over some 25 other peaks, none of them, with the exception perhaps of the Grasleiten Thurm (which is a first-rate rock-climb), of any great interest, and come to the three most southerly summits of the range, on all of which we made first ascents, and in each case from the west side.

The *Tscheiner-Spitze* (9,155 ft.), the most northerly of these three, seems in a way to be also the most noteworthy; for besides being a fine upstanding peak, it can be climbed from all four sides. The best of these, the W. face, was the last to be conquered (August 1906), and as I described it then I will add very little now; but Corning made the second ascent in 1908, also with Verzi, no other guide having as yet taken it on. This is a very fine typical climb, quite equal to anything of its size in the Dolomites. In many respects it resembles the Schmitt-Kamin route on the Fünffinger; both are climbed by one crooked, cavernous and complicated couloir, but the Verzi-Kamin on the Tscheiner is longer than the Schmitt-Kamin, and we all three considered it more varied and interesting.

I come next to the *Rothwand* (9,216 ft.), the highest of the South Rosengarten group; a big, bare, red rock-wall which overhangs in places, and looks impracticable enough from the west, though the summit is an easy and popular expedition from either the Vajolon Pass or from the Scharte on the south. I had long set my affections on this ancient virgin wall, had inspected her from all sides, discussed her weak points, written secret letters to guides about her, and indeed had almost said too much, for our men got so keen that they began on off days to make explorations on their own account, before we ourselves were ready for the assault. This however came off on August 11th, when the four of us left the hotel

at six o'clock, and, going nearly to the Vajolon, turned sharp to the right, and then roping almost directly under the summit, started up at 8.45.

Strange to relate, for once in a way the climb was not commenced by the customary chimney-sweeping practice. The wall from the geröll to the top is about 1,500 ft. in height, and the first 600 ft. or thereabouts was up a quite respectable face of interesting Dru-like rocks, on which we always bore away a little to the right, and spent just one hour. At the top of these the inevitable chimneys did begin, and the first was a long, narrow, black, and difficult one, which joined up to the smooth wall just to the left of some curious hieroglyphics (the lower one like a W, and the upper like an upright parallelogram figure) in the rocks on the right. At the head of the crack, which took 55 minutes, there was nothing for it but to take to the wall itself, and spread-eagle up obliquely to the left, with the object of getting to the foot of another chimney or series of them, which seemed the only possible means of further progress. This yellow wall was most uninviting, being smooth but shelly, rotten, and untrustworthy, and certainly somewhat critical for the leader (Dibona), who however took plenty of time, made every single hold good, and neither gave any chance nor made any mistake. I do not think there was more than 100 ft. of it, but this was certainly the crux of the expedition, and both guides thought it the most hazardous bit we negotiated during the whole season.

After this piece of wall, we felt satisfied about getting up all right; indeed there could not be much question of returning, so another long wide hard Kamin of perhaps 130 ft. was quite a relief. The top of this was attained at noon, and, still close to the bare wall, we took to two final cracks which had been carefully surveyed and selected beforehand, and were not together much over 200 ft. These were not quite such hard work as their predecessors; the first was still close against the overhanging face, and at its head a short traverse (to the right) was made, and the second and last a black deep narrow one, in an angle facing N.W. or N., took us right up to the summit ridge; this was then followed along the terrace, and a few minutes' easy walking landed us on the top at 1.15, probably four hours' net climbing. The route down was by the path and steep couloir on the E. side, to the Oestertag Hut, where convivial and congratulatory parties of friends awaited our return.

Now concerning the *Teufelswand Spitze* (the last of the

trio), the rest of our acts thereon, and all that we did, and the might of Antonio the Guide, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the 'Alpine Journal'? Verily, this is almost the only Dolomite Peak I would neither like to climb again this way nor allow anyone else to repeat, if I could prevent it, the one awesome bit (only one) being far too dangerous for any leader, however cat-like. Dimai summed it up at 'molto pericoloso,' and so it will remain till either the laws of gravitation are amended or the place festooned, like some of the better-known peaks and passes, with wire rope.

So much for the Rosengarten Range; and now there only remains a new route to describe in the adjoining Latemar group, and a few supplementary remarks about the Marmolata, both within easy reach.

First, the *Christomannos* or *Östliche Thurm* (9,337 ft.), the lower of the twin colossal Diamantidi towers which face N., and are so conspicuous from the hotel and pass. Unlike the last scramble—possibly

An ill-favoured thing, Sirs, but mine own—

I can claim no credit for planning this one. To tell the truth, it was my good friend Doctor Christomannos, the godfather of the Peak, and locally known as the Father of Tyrol, who suggested our trying conclusions by this untried N. face with his namesake; and having done so, gave none of us much peace until we, after vowing we would 'ne'er consent,' consented. It was destined to prove a longer and tougher job even than it looked. Leaving our quarters on August 20, at 6.20, we were not to get back till sixteen hours later, and then in a dilapidated condition.

After about two hours' steep walk to the bottom of the sheer precipice, the top of which, 2,000 ft. higher, was our goal, the four of us sent off the extra guide engaged, to climb round with our boots and food to the summit (alas! he never reached it), and started gaily up at 8.40. The 'take off' was from a high tongue of loose scree, whence easy rock-faces led up to a steep ridge above a narrow little snowfield in a gully facing N.W. towards the Karer Lake. Above this the everlasting chimneys began, the first two not particularly difficult, but I seem to recall them as being the only unsafe ones for stones, so no time was wasted. At this point there was some little difference of opinion as to route, and Dibona untied and traversed off to the right, but soon got to a place where further progress was inadvisable; the rest, to save time, climbed on above him, and he rejoined us with the

moral support of 150 ft. or so of spare rope. Then by enjoyable rocks we got up two or three hundred feet more, to a little ledge on the left of the huge main chimney, just below a very big, conspicuous jammed stone. Here (12.30) we took a hurried meal, the first, last, and only one for eighteen hours; so no one could accuse us of being 'stuffed climbers.'

After this platform (left 12.50) we worked at first for some distance, and indeed as far as we could, up a steep wall dividing the big couloir from a smaller, very deep chasm on its left or E. To cross the latter now became necessary, and



THE DIAMANTIDI THÜRME.

(1908 Route marked.)

the only way a jump of 7 or 8 feet (quite wide enough, considering its sensational position) on to another little shelf, estimated at still 500 ft. below the summit. This was to keep us hard at it for another 5 hours, and indeed the difficulties always seemed progressive. From the leap (W. to E.) a smooth wall of 50 ft. was climbed obliquely to another long, narrow, and awkward 120 ft. Kamin, and then a shorter, slightly easier one of about 50 ft.

'Then was the tug-of-war'; there only remained two more chimney-flues, but they were masterpieces! The first was



LATEMAR AND DIAMANTIDI THÜRME
FROM THE KARERSEE.

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160 ft. or more high, smooth, perpendicular, wet, winding, and tricky in every possible way, and took somewhere between an hour and an hour and a half. It must have been here that I caught myself disinterestedly wondering whether the game was *really* worth the candle, and if my companions, steady-going family men, were properly insured! When we emerged from this struggle, a little more wall-face and traverse scrambling landed us on a last tiny ledge, whence for the first time there seemed a choice in chimneys. My companion, with Dibona, once again selected the easier crack (about 110 ft.) and made the summit at 6 o'clock; but Verzi and I had a final bit of strenuous lumbar-exercise which kept us going till 6.15.

In parenthesis I should like to suggest, for what it is worth, the following idea to the Editor and climbing contributors to the 'Alpine Journal.' Would it not often be more appropriate when recording 'New Expeditions,' usually thus: 'Messrs. A and B with guides C and D' (as if A and B cut out the work), to say more modestly: 'Messrs. W and X *in tow* of guides Y and Z'? *Experto crede*. Also while on the subject of guides, I must express the serious opinion that though there are plenty of Dolomite climbs eminently suitable for guideless parties, the biggest expeditions are *not*, unless indeed every member is quite exceptionally and equally good all round. It is so easy to make just that one little error (in route or of judgment) which forms all the difference between safety and disaster; and it is a fact that, out of the numberless accidents in this district, few happen to guided parties, and I can recall none where the guides have been of the first rank.

Well, here were we on our summit at 6.15, but Kaufmann (or whatever his name was)—oh! where was he? We saw nobody and heard nothing. What had happened, and what were we to do? Were we to go down, round to the Rothlahnscharte, descend the long ice-couloir, also miles of geröll, moraine, and forest—starving and in 'Kletterschuhe'? There was no alternative, so down we went,

sans food, *sans* drink, *sans* boots—*sans* everything!

I draw a discreet veil over that dark and dismal descent. Four mortal hours, at the end of which our shoes and stockings were 'rags and tatters,' and our feet 'wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores!' Arriving at 10.20, we found our friends in some anxiety, as we had been hidden by clouds since midday, and were very late; but late as it was,

a search party was organised for next morning. This did not prove such a bootless business as the last, for our lost ones were duly found; also the missing man—peacefully slumbering under some rocks, many miles out of his route.

The climb was a fine one, and though long and trying, we thought it safer than either the Latemar or the other Diamantidi from the N. The fact is, the whole range on this steep side, even down to the walks, is dangerous; stones rain down most of the couloirs, and we had been very much frightened in the West-Thurm-Kamin when climbing that peak two years before. On this very Christomannos day a huge stonefall from the Latemar, lasting 15 mins., swept right across two of the ordinary footpaths, knocking down big pine trees like ninepins: and again on another day my daughters, with other friends out for a stroll, had to run like hares.

Now touching the *Marmolata* (11,020 ft.), according to some the only real mountain here, I always find a difficulty in saying anything about the district without dragging it in. The fact is, this great Dolomite mass has much variety, more peculiarities, and most fascination. It makes the best climb in Tyrol, the worst climb in Tyrol, and the one and only glacier climb in this part of Tyrol! This last way (over the Marmolata Glacier) is quite a nice change after so many rocks; the second (from the Scharte and up the W. Grat) is an artificial iron-step and wire-rope abomination to be shunned; but the first (straight up the Süd-Wand) is just what a climb should be, more on the wall and less in chimneys than usual, and worth going any distance for. I went up again last year with Corning and our same two guides, and all voted it magnificent.

We again climbed on two ropes, thereby saving much time, and thought the resulting 5 hrs. net from foot to top quite good, but found in the summit book my former note,* when I had two guides (5½ hrs.), with a very polite added comment '*Non è vero.*' This naturally rankled a little, but I really think I resented it nationally rather than individually; as is well known, on such subjects as this, English climbers never did, never do, and never could tell lies! Be this as it may, we had improved on the former time by ¾ hr., so ignoring Italian incredulity, our 5 hrs. was recorded. The descent was by the Glacier and Fedaja Pass, and the door-to-door time from the Contrinhaus to Canazei 12 hrs., of which 1 hr. was on the top.

* See *A. J.* vol. xxiii. p. 374, also illustration with marked route.

I might add that last year after these expeditions, some later ones, though among the best in the Ampezzo and Sexten Dolomites, failed to raise the same enthusiasm.

Well, my fellow climbers, in mountaineering as in other matters, with you I hope to be preserved from all false doctrine, heresy, and schism. Like you I hold an orthodox faith, and worship big snow peaks, high glacier passes, and ice work generally. But love of Dolomites is neither inconsistent with this true faith nor heretical, and I return to the charge that we undeservedly neglect them. For purely physical pleasure and the joy of climbing for climbing's sake (in comfortable 'Kletter' shoes) there is nothing to beat these difficult rocks.

One reason why I wish to do a little special pleading for Dolomite rock-towers in particular, is that I have heard it said, and even read in a recent mountaineering work of a 'Complete' character (on the authority too of a late well-known enthusiast), that English rock-lovers need never go out to Tyrol, as they can get plenty and quite as good at home!

Now I protest against this view, and would like to call your attention to two or three facts. Look at the great number of really first-class expeditions out there. Look at the very architecture of the peaks, at the thorough change of scene and more complete holiday for us British. Consider too the great difference in altitude, and the splendid bracing air. Why, in Tyrol the very valleys in which you live are higher than the tops of our highest mountains, and from them you must still climb as much or more in vertical height.

Then again a great advantage of a season in the E. Alps over say Switzerland, Savoy, or Italy is the weather. Possibly the distance from the Gulf Stream and the Atlantic moisture has something to do with this; also the fact that 9,000-11,000 ft. peaks take less time than higher ones to recover from fresh snow. Anyhow, it is certain that in many seasons (like 1908) lots of good work could be done in Tyrol when climbers in the W. Alps were able to get in very little. I do not want to elaborate the argument or lengthen the paper, but the matter is worth consideration, and having eased my conscience I must finish.

At this time of year, the Mountains seem far away, and I sometimes wonder whether the neat German saying,

Die Berge von *unten*,
Die Kirchen von *aussen*,
Die Wirthshäuser von *innen*,

would not best express the riper judgment of many of us!
At any rate, I have ventured to doggelize the idea,

High Mountains are best from the Valley;
Why toil up their wearisome height?
Outside dull dark Churches we dally,
But inside snug Bierschrunds sit tight.

TWO DAYS WITH A GUIDE.

By G. WINTHROP YOUNG.

I ADMIT that I climb with a guide. The confession is painful but necessary, and I must hope that the weakness will be attributed not so much to a want of originality as to a preference for a sense of security. I find that, take him all round, the guide meets me in better training, lasts rather longer, and occasionally climbs even better than the majority of amateurs with a month's holiday. This must be my apology. That it is one I am bound frankly to make anyone who has kept up with the admirable series of recent Alpine Club Papers will surely admit. To avoid indiscretion I will merely recall a few with periphrastic titles: 'Twenty Days with the Captain,' 'Ten Years with Sleepless Hope,' 'Slipping up (and down) Kabru,' 'That Slab on the Finsteraarhorn,' 'Five Years with Fortune'; and others are already on the way. Between such acts of serious comedy a climb with a guide is a bashful 'song and dance' interlude, in a nervous flurry to finish before the next genuine 'drop'-scene is ready. And yet the gentle art of managing a guide, digging him out of the depressing public opinion of the hut, humouring his local climbing superstitions, pressing him when he is only pouting, knowing where to yield when his real instinct is speaking, cheering him along when he's off under full sail, has its own fascination for the pseudo-psychologist, apart from the pleasing sensation of his stability at the further end of the rope. One such, however, I find enough for a progressive party; two guides at once constitute a house of lords, with a reactionary majority.

For the traverses of these Aiguilles—which I hope eventually to describe—Mr. Pilkington, in a kindly reference in his 'Fifty Years of the Alpine Club,' presents me with a second guide abstracted from Mr. Ryan's party,* a far more fitting adjustment of values for which I may not take credit.

* *A. J.* vol. xxiv. p. 22.