

ALPINE ACCIDENTS IN 1913.

ACCIDENT ON THE BRENVIA ROUTE OF MONT BLANC.

DEATH OF THE GUIDE JEAN RIEDER, OF EVOLENA.

MR. A. STUART JENKINS has kindly furnished the following details : On Tuesday, August 5, the guides Jean Gaudin and Jean Rieder, of Evolena, and myself left the usual Brenvia 'bivouac' at 12.50 A.M. in fine weather. The snow and ice were in good condition, and, thanks to crampons, our party reached No. 6 of the illustration facing page 433 of the ALPINE JOURNAL No. 198 between 5.30 and 6 A.M. So far we had followed pretty much Mr. R. W. Lloyd's route of descent. Our order of roping was the following : Rieder first, Gaudin second, and I the last. A few minutes before crossing the ridge to make our way up the slope (5 and 4), the first man was engaged in skirting a wide crevasse surmounted by a large *sérac*, the other two being at a fair distance directly below him on the very steep slope. Step-cutting was here necessary. As Rieder got within some four or five mètres from the edge of the crevasse the mass of *séracs* forming the upper lip fell into the crevasse, provoking such a concussion that the corniced edge, or lower lip, on which he was standing unaware, broke, thus causing him to fall with an enormous quantity of snow. The *sérac* kept on falling for an unappreciable length of time after. The rope, weighted down by Rieder and the broken ice, dragged Gaudin in front of me up the slope, a distance of six or seven mètres and pinned him down to the edge of the crevasse, while I had anchored my axe in the snow and passed a loop of the rope around it. Then all became quiet. I drove Gaudin's axe (within my reach) next to mine in the snow, bound the rope fast to both of them, and rushed to disengage him. Next we looked into the crevasse where Rieder was evidently buried, as the rope plunged under an enormous quantity of *débris*. I let Gaudin down to try to recover the lost man (the two of us could not work together : one had to hold the other). After over an hour's incessant hacking, not only in snow but in *hard sérac ice*, Rieder's head was uncovered, but too late : all signs of life had already left him. One hour later a shoulder and an arm were excavated, also the trunk half-way down the chest. Gaudin, by this time exhausted, came up to where I stood and let me down in turn ; but after a little more work it became evident that only the two of us could not recover the whole body. The awkward space in which Rieder had fallen allowed no free play to the axe, and, besides, all the bits of ice hewn out had to be thrown or even carried where they would not roll back on the body. The situation was hopeless, and after a few

moments of hesitation we decided to descend to Courmayeur in all haste for help. As the rope had *not* been broken, we sectioned it and used the remaining part to gain Courmayeur at about 1 p.m.

That evening the weather turned bad, and the search party was unable to start. Wednesday it snowed the whole day on the mountains, and our men were obliged to turn back a little above the Brenva Chalets.

On Thursday the weather cleared, and twelve guides and porters, Gaudin and myself, slept at the Brenva 'bivouac.' The next day, notwithstanding one foot of fresh avalanchy snow, seven men (including myself) reascended the slope and recovered Rieder's body, whilst the other section of the caravan waited on the snow plateau to receive it.

At nightfall we carried him to Courmayeur, whence, Monday, an automobile took him to Sion, and a cart thence to Evolena.

This is the sad end of a young (30 years old) but *very promising* guide. I had engaged him for the first time a fortnight previously, and was already delighted with his mountaineering capabilities. He was a quiet, modest, and most obliging fellow, who will be much regretted by the few who have climbed with him. Fortunately, he was unmarried and the grief of his loss is limited to his mother, brothers, and sisters.

On March 16, at about 5.30 p.m., Herr Rudolf Mair, Herr **Karl Knoflach** and another member of the A.A.C. Innsbruck were returning from a ski expedition, and had almost reached the rocks below the Rauhenkopfhütte on the **Gepatschferner**, when Knoflach stepped back with his right ski and broke through the mètre-thick ice roof of a very deep crevasse into which he disappeared. The party was not roped—the day was cold and they were following a trail made the previous day. Knoflach was buried deep under the falling ice and all hope of rescue had to be speedily abandoned. Subsequent attempts by the Feuchten guides failed to recover the body, nor were the most desperate researches by his brother and a party of climbing friends, continued for several days, more successful.

On May 4, Herr **Schautze** of Dresden and Herr **Seitz** of Karlsruhe were killed on the **Grand Combin**. They left the Panossière Hut in doubtful weather at 5 a.m. and their bodies were found some days later in a crevasse below the Mur de la Côte. From the steps cut they appear to have reached the summit and to have slipped in descending.