

Altogether, before the expedition arrived at Turfan, many valuable additions were made to the previous work of the leader, both archaeological and geographical. Around Turfan there are many ruined sites of Buddhist times to which Sir Aurel Stein proposed to devote a few months, while his surveyor would find ample work in mapping the extensive and little-known desert ranges of the Kuruk-tagh between Turfan and Lop-nor depressions.

IN MEMORIAM.

PÈRE GASPARD.

PIERRE GASPARD, commonly known as Père Gaspard, the famous vanquisher of the Grand Pic de la Meije, has gone to his rest.

What Jean Antoine Carrel was to the Cervin, that was Père Gaspard to the Meije. The one dallied overlong with his mountain to see it conquered by strangers, but instantly repaired his error by storming it from a far more difficult side, an expedition that remains almost without rival in Alpine history. The other, more fortunate, saw his several attempts finally crowned with success fully merited by his own skill and endurance as well as by the persistence of his young employer, thus securing for France the honour of vanquishing one of her most difficult peaks.

Gaspard was born at St. Christophe on March 29, 1834, and died there on January 15, 1915. For the last eighteen months of his life he was paralysed and bedridden. His father was a certain Gaspard Hugues, from a village—St. Georges-d'Entraunes—in the Alpes Maritimes,¹ who migrated as a young man to St. Christophe, where he married in 1832 and died in 1883, aged eighty-three.

He was probably one of those travelling 'bergers de moutons' who annually lead their flocks from the parched plains of Provence to the mountain pastures and who are a feature of interest to the traveller in the Franco-Italian borderland.

The son, who took Gaspard for his surname, followed in his father's footsteps, but also became a *chasseur enragé de chamois*, the acknowledged leader of every hunting party. He appears to have commenced to act as guide or porter in 1873, when he accompanied Lord Wentworth's party on an ascent of the Écrins. In 1876, as the local chamois hunter, he was taken by Dr. Coolidge on an ascent of the Aiguille du Plat ('A.J.' viii. 98). Later in the same year he was engaged by M. Boileau de Castelnau, and with that enthusiastic young climber made two magnificent seasons, 1876 and 1877, including the first ascents of the Tête de l'Étret, the Tête des

¹ Père Gaspard's second son, Maximin, showed, as a man of thirty, every sign of his Southern descent.

Fétoules, the Aiguille d'Olan, the Grand Pic de la Meije,² the Petit Pelvoux, the Tête du Rouget, and the W. summit of the Écrins. On all these expeditions Gaspard was accompanied by his son Pierre, who unfortunately soon afterwards cut his leg so badly that he was compelled to give up climbing, and subsequently died at Les Étages.

The sensation caused by the successful ascent of the Meije was very great, as it had been examined or tried by some of the best of the Swiss, Chamonix, and Courmayeur guides. The success was the reward of several attempts on the S. face in which Gaspard took part, notably three attempts in September 1876 by M. H. Duhamel³ with the guides Ed. Cupelin and François Simond, then among the best of the Chamonix men, and a very determined attack⁴ by M. de Castelnau, led by Gaspard and his son Pierre, only a few days before success crowned their efforts.

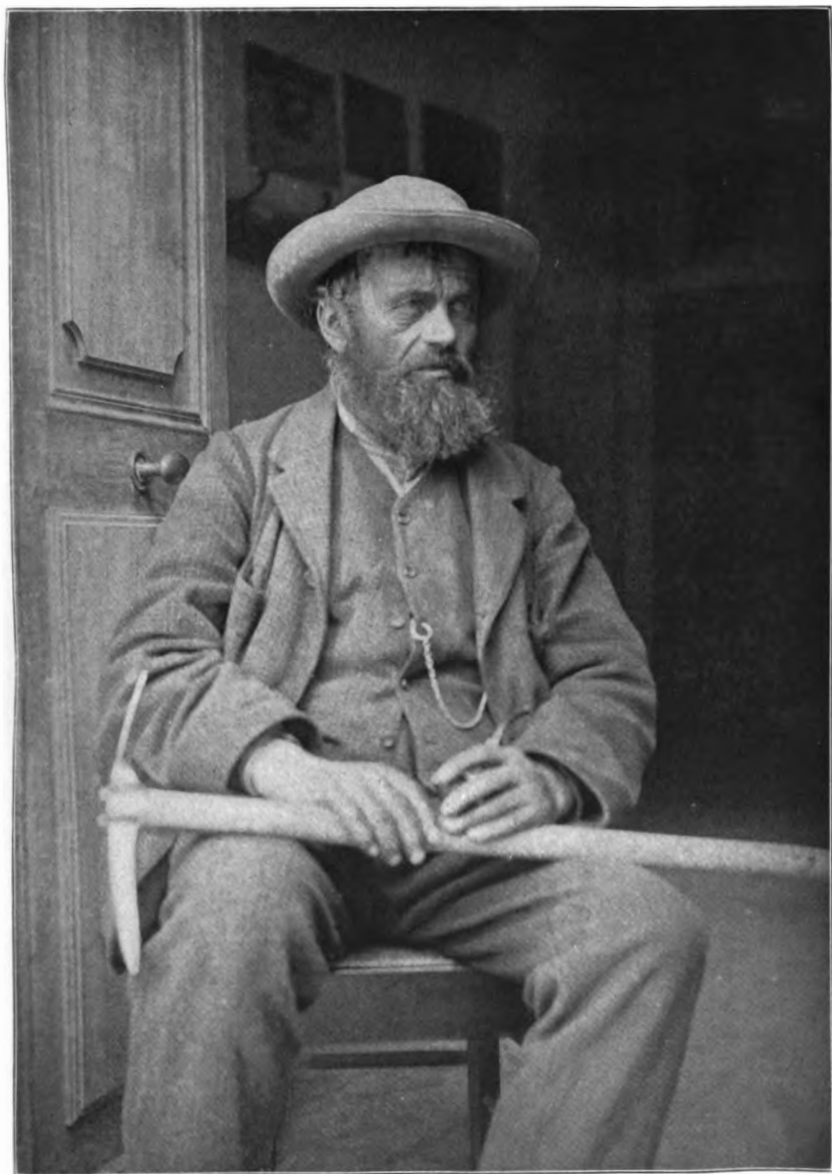
Gaspard's success naturally brought him instant recognition. His name was in all men's mouths, and he remained to the end of his career probably the greatest of purely local guides that the Alps have seen. His position certainly equalled that of Michel Innerkofler, of Hans Grass, or of Martin Schocher, to mention men who were pre-eminently famous as local guides, yet known by repute to every Alpine traveller.

Doubtless it was in consequence of his great local success that he seldom left his district, finding ample employment there. He

² M. de Castelnau and M. Duhamel in 1875 ascended the Pic Central and made an attempt on the arêtes from the Glacier de Tabuchet. The S. side of the Grand Pic had previously been 'examined' in 1873 by a strong English party with first-rate Valais guides, and in 1875 by Mr. R. Pendlebury with the Spechtenhausers, who were averse to any attempt. See *A.J.* viii. 196-8, and for subsequent attempts *Alpine Studies* (Coolidge), pp. 96-7. M. de Castelnau's account of his expedition is to be found in *Ann. C.A.F.* iv. 287-94.

³ *Ann. C.A.F.* 1876, iii. 333-8.

⁴ M. Henri Ferrand writes: 'Castelnau, suffering from toothache, went down to Grenoble between the 4th and 14th of August [1877], but it was well understood with Gaspard that he would be back, as soon as well, to do the big climb. Meantime nothing was to be said. But both of them were too elated to keep the secret. At Grenoble on August 10 or 12 (I did not keep a note of the day) Castelnau had told me that they had overcome the difficult bit and could ascend the Meidje when they liked, and soon afterwards one of my friends told me that when crossing the Col de la Lauze on August 10, with Gaspard as guide, the latter, as soon as he came in sight of the Meidje, pointed to it with his axe, exclaiming "Ah, my lady, this time I have got you!" My friend only saw the force of the remark on hearing, the following week, of the successful ascent.'



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PIERRE GASPARD (*père*).
(Taken in 1888.)

From the collection of Dr. Coolidge.)

was much sought after by his countrymen, who were naturally intensely proud of their great guide who had by his skill and persistence kept the blue riband of Dauphiné from the insidious attacks of the crack foreigners of the day. However, he accompanied M. Duhamel to the Mont Blanc group in 1882, and also made the second ascent of the Petit Dru. He ascended the Cervin and the Dent Blanche, but it is chiefly upon his ascents in his own neighbourhood that his fame rests. Thus, with his constant patron, M. Henry Duhamel, a name held in as high honour among Englishmen as by his own countrymen, Gaspard made in 1878 the first ascent of Pic Gaspard, in 1880 the first ascent of the Écrins by the S. face, now a much used route; in 1881 the Aiguille du Plat from Les Étages; with M. Verne in 1885, the ascent of the Grand Pic by the W. arête from the Brèche de la Meije,⁵ forming an independent route to the Glacier carré; with M. Auguste Reynier in 1891, the first ascent of the Pic Central de l'Ailefroide. He appears to have been well known to few Englishmen, but his greatest ice-climb—the ascent of the Pelvoux from the N.W. in 1891, an arduous piece of work seldom if ever repeated—was carried out with his son Maximin, acting as guides to Mr. F. E. L. Swan, of this Club.

It is, however, to the pen of the late Arthur Cust, a brilliant writer, draughtsman, and topographer, as well as a keen mountaineer, one of those names that will not soon be forgotten among us, that we owe the best picture of the masterful personality of the great guide. Mr. Cust made with Gaspard the first ascent of the Pic d'Olan from the North, and his paper 'The Story of the Pic d'Olan' ('A.J.' xiii. 57 *seq.*) is one of those gems that one can find so often in turning over the leaves of our old Journals.

Gaspard had seldom been with Englishmen, and he was very much on his good behaviour, which when it occurs is of a superior kind. The company of a clever, independent chasseur, the cock of the walk of the country-side, is not to be despised. He carved the chicken at our first meal and handed me the choicest part with the air of one who knew that he was doing the thing well.

Emerging from the lower slopes of the Vallon de la Mariande, we got on to a patch of snow at an angle of 15°, and here fraternity and equality were over and business was to begin: the business was the trial of the paces and temper of a new-comer. Crossing this patch I made one of those slips with one foot which on safe ground one is apt to make for the sake apparently of rectifying it with the other. Gaspard junior from behind gave a cry, and, while Gaspard senior turned round with a startled and wrathful exclamation—

⁵ Attempts made in July 1877, by Dr. Coolidge and by M. Guillemin, by the arête running up from the Brèche, very nearly led to their gaining the Glacier carré, when the remainder of the ascent of the Grand Pic would have offered no serious difficulty to such parties (cf. *Alpine Studies*, p. 94).

tion, seized me by the seat of the trousers. From that moment a profound melancholy possessed me. Some initial awkwardness on my part on the rocks probably increased their suspicion that they had to do with an unmitigated duffer, and I found their sole idea of my advance to be a straight haul by the herculean arms of Gaspard senior, with tight pressure of the stomach against the rocks to prevent any evil effects that might occur from the free use of my limbs, while Gaspard junior lifted and steered as before by the latest patch in my nether garments. In endeavouring to account for this mode of progress the thoughts must be carried back to our climbing ancestors, who not improbably in their processions used the tail where we use the rope. The curious may find another instance of the survival of the custom in the case of hotel cooks seeking in autumn a warmer clime, and let down by their coat tails by laughing guides on the steep slopes of some snow-covered Monte Moro. My too impatient stomach (an old offender) gave the finishing touch to melancholy and demerits. Over a second meal of which it was the unlucky cause I heard them discuss in their patois the results of the trial. It would be better not to do the Olan; I should be taken ill on the mountain, and then —— would come, mentioning the name of one of their accustomed patrons, whom I concluded they intended “running.” It is fair to say that on the Olan the wheelbarrow style of mountaineering was not adopted.’

‘Before the ridge could be reached, the ice-masses that obstructed the entrance to a gully had to fall before Gaspard’s stalwart arm. The rocks “went,” and with one exception we adhered to the arête, where Gaspard, with his only fault of judgment, to avoid an apparent tower essayed, against my wishes, to circumvent it by traversing the dangerous slide of the mountain-face. I confess to having as little liking for these hard, even surfaces, where the agile chamois hunter can save his own body but not those of his companions should they unluckily require from Nature what she has not bestowed on the spot—foot- or hand-hold—as Professor Tyndall for that of the Matterhorn, and am glad to leave them for my betters.

‘We turned back, to my relief; the “gendarme” had been firing with blank cartridges, and passing him with much satisfaction we found ourselves with only a “staircase” to the top. “It is ours,” said Gaspard, and began for the first time to forget his science and pull the rope, meaning “Duffer astern.” In a few minutes we were on the summit. “Well, are you satisfied now?” said the sturdy peasant, grasping me by the hand.’

“What is that?” said Gaspard on arriving at the top, forgetful of the laborious description I had given him in bad French. “The other summit,” said I. “Which is the higher?” Gaspard laid himself down and eyed it. “Ours beyond doubt,” said he. . . .

'Gaspard, hitherto, I believe, undescribed in English, is one of those characters that calls for more than the ordinary passing notice of a guide. Of his rock climbing it is enough to point to the Meije; and I need only say that besides being a rock expert he was possessed (I speak of the day after the trial trip) of the qualities of a first-rate guide in handling the rope and giving his traveller his mouth. On snow I had only trial of him on easy ground, and his experience has, I believe, been too limited to acquire the necessary practice; but I agree with the remark of M. Nérot (from whom most of this information is derived), that had he, when younger, been "taken up" by an experienced mountaineer, and shown the round of other Alpine districts than his own, he would have made a guide only to be mentioned on a par with the pick of the profession. I mean that he had not the education usually gained by promising men as porters or second guides to good guides. He was, however, more than a professional; I deemed him one of those strong characters, mentally and physically, which Nature seems, as appears in Mr. Baillie Grohman's "Tyrol," so easily to build up by selection from the materials furnished by a hardy and independent mountain peasantry, whose rude virtues and rough vices foster the growth of individuality. As to the effect of sport, "the chamois hunter in the course of years, having to face continued perils, to bear hunger and thirst, to encounter snow, ice, and storms, and wait with immovable calm the moment of striking his prey, becomes reserved and taciturn, but full of alacrity in the undertakings to which he may turn himself; a model of frugality, neither bewailing nor fearing the misfortunes of life." (Lavizzari, *Escursioni nel Cantone Ticino*, p. 390.) The head chamois hunter of a whole district is in a position with which we have no comparison in modern England; it is an innocent, popular reproduction of the pre-eminence and freedom of baronial times. The glaciers and rocks of half a canton are his; his valley, if it narrows, shelters his development by independence of the levelling opinion and rivalry of lowland civilisation.

'I was told that he had been spoilt by some of his employers, who treated him on terms of equality at hotels, &c., which may help to account for the story that at a mountain lunch with an English climber, who took him to task for familiarity, he was within an ace of pitching the latter over the rocks; "and I was near doing it" he said afterwards in describing his fortunate resistance to temptation. I saw no trace of undue familiarity, but he was prepossessed by the discovery that I "had been with Pendlebury"—a name which M. Nérot spent his wet days in Dauphiné in teaching him to pronounce. His pride in his great strength took the form of saying that he would give any other man the advantage of laying him flat on the floor. A less amiable quality is a phenomenal, and, as I have lately heard, in one instance unworthy, jealousy of rival mountaineers, whether professional or amateur. Some pride, however, may be allowed to a native who, as he said, step by step and one

piece one day, another another, won his way up the Meije ; and to my ears there was a certain dignity—not, perhaps, without a savour of the “magnanimous man”—in the following estimate of his own powers : “Almer is a good guide, a very good guide ; but all that Almer can do I will engage to do myself—I will not say more.”

The gallant old gentleman made his last ascent of the Meije when he was seventy-seven years of age, thus beating Vater Almer's famous Jubilee ascent of the Wetterhorn.

M. Henri Ferrand writes : ‘He could never tell me the exact number of his ascents of the Meidje. From the Alpine chronicles I counted twenty-nine, but there must be some that are not mentioned.’

In 1892 he received ‘la grande médaille du Club Alpin Français,’ and in 1910 the medal of the Société des Touristes du Dauphiné, presented in person by M. Bendant, Secrétaire général, while in 1912, before an important assembly at Chamonix, the Inspector of the Académie, delegate of the Minister, nominated the famous veteran ‘Officier d’Académie.’

He had a family of fifteen children, of whom the late Pierre, Maximin, Casimir, Joseph, Devouassoud, and Alexandre were and are well-known guides, while one of his daughters married the late Jean-Baptiste Rodier, well known to many visitors to Dauphiné as a good guide and very agreeable and reliable companion.

We are much indebted to the courtesy of Dr. Coolidge for the photograph of Gaspard taken in 1888 inside the Inn at La Bérarde, as well as for other details concerning him. It is said to be very like him as he was at the time of his conquest of the Meije.

The photograph, taken in 1912 by M. Paul Senequier-Crozet of Grenoble, appeared in ‘La Montagne,’ and we are much indebted for the presentation of two different positions and for permission to reproduce one here.

M. Henri Ferrand has again been very kind in offering photographs of the great guide and in supplying various details.

JOSEPH CROUX.

THIS well-known Courmayeur guide died very suddenly at his home on November 29. Born in 1859, he became porter in 1886 and guide in 1891.

Although not a great traveller or widely known, he was much esteemed by his employers as a thoroughly sound mountaineer and an excellent companion. Of late years he was constantly employed by Dr. Julius Kugy.

Among his great expeditions were the traverse from Courmayeur to the Montanvert of the Aiguille de Talèfre, of the Col des Grandes Jorasses, of the Aiguille de Rochefort and the Mont Mallet ; the second passage of the Colle Gnifetti, the traverse of the Nordend from Macugnaga, of the Parrot-Spitze from Alagna ; the first



P. Senequier-Crozet. photo.

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PIERRE GASPARD (père)
(in 1912).

ascent of Mont Dolent, (1) from the Glacier de la Neuvaz and (2) from the Glacier d'Argentière, on which occasions the Brèche de l'Amône was gained for the first time from each side; the Col Dolent, the Grivola by the N. arête, the Combin by the S.E. arête (second ascent), the Aiguille de Bionnassay by the E. arête, and of course most of the regulation ascents. He formerly climbed a good deal with Cav. F. Gonella, with Mr. Schinz, and with Mr. and Miss Mazzuchi (now the Countess Claretta). With Mr. Mazzuchi he also did a good deal of chamois shooting, being a great hunter.

Like his brother Laurent, he was always willing to place his great local knowledge at the disposal of English climbers, and those of us who met him will not soon forget the good-tempered open face with its red moustache and side whiskers, nor the keen yet kind eyes of the good and valiant mountaineer, Joseph Croux.

THE ALPINE CLUB LIBRARY:

The following Works have been added to the Library since January:

Club Publications.

American Alpine Club. By-Laws and Register. 1914

6½ × 4½ : pp. 45.

Bulletin Pyrénéen, organe de la fédération des sociétés pyrénéistes. xviii^e et xix^e années, Nos. 115-126. Pau, Garet & Haristoy, 1914

9½ × 6½ : pp. 384 : maps, ill.

Among the articles are the following :—

L. le Bondidier, Les ponts-et-chaussées français dans les Pyrénées espagnoles. L'Ingénieur Colomes.

H. Beraldi, Les tours d'horizon pyrénéens de Schrader.

M. Gourdon, Première ascension du Pic de Thénaout.

A. Meillon, Légende de la Blotière et Roussel.

P. Buhan, Perdiguero, Crabioules et Luchon.

M. H., Itinéraires au sud de Gavarnie.

R. Gombault, La pointe des Trois-Rois.

C. Ledormeur, Autour du Néthou.

L. Rouch, Dans la Haute-Ariège.

M. B., Le Pic Mayouret.

L. Rouch, Pyrénées ignorées : La Vallée de Mourgouillou.

C.A.F. La Montagne. Revue mensuelle. Maurice Pailion Rédacteur en Chef. 1914

vol. x.

8½ × 6 : pp. xxvi, 472 : plates. 8 parts only in this volume.

This contains, among other articles :—

H. Beraldi ; Ramond, sa jeunesse, le voyage en Suisse.

This contains a brilliant résumé of the history of early visits to Chamonix in the latter half of the 18th century.

R. Le Chatelier, A Chamonix. Quelques promenades peu connues.

R. Delzenne, Ascension d'hiver à la Jungfrau.

J. de Lépiney, Petites escalades autour de Chamonix. Clocher du Brévent, Clocher de Planpraz, Clochetons de Planpraz, Aiguillette d'Argentière, Chemin des Gaillands.

R. Perret, Le Cirque du Fer-à-Cheval, historique.

V. Puisieux, Zig-zags. Portiengrat, Tour Noir, Grand Combin.

H. Joulie, L'architecture montagnarde.