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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF DR. PACCARD.

By E. H. STEVENS.

I.

THE MS. Journal of Dr. Paccard, which is one of the treasures of the Alpine Club Library, includes a lengthy account of his ascent of the Buet in August, 1785, by the valley of 'Entre les Eaux.'¹ The account mentions more than a dozen localities, of which only a few are to be found in maps or guide-books. As, moreover, M. Ch. Vallot,² in his description of the ascent of this valley, says 'dans l'état

¹ This ascent was not Dr. Paccard's first visit to the valley. In the letter reproduced in facsimile in *A.J.* 46, 12, he refers to a trip made when he was twenty-one in 1778 (probably in August). 'J'ai monté sur le Buet, montagne la plus élevée entre les accessibles des environs; j'ai vu les lits d'ardoise qui composent presque toute cette chaîne de montagnes sur lesquelles domine le Buet. Ces ardoises sont tantôt en feuillets [feuilletés = flaky layers], tantôt [s]chitzzeuses . . . on y trouve aussi du quartz grainu . . . on trouve un autre quartz entre-les-Eaux (route du Buet) . . . j'ai observé plusieurs jours de christaux sur cette montagne.' It would seem therefore that he had actually ascended the Buet by this route seven years before the excursion described in detail in his Journal. His friend Bourrit, improving on the route of the first ascent (by the De Lucs, in 1770, from Sixt), had reached the summit by the valley of Bérard in 1775, and repeated the ascent two or three times in the following years, partly in order to complete the instructive 'vue circulaire' from the top which he drew for de Saussure's *Voyages* (tome i, p. 512). De Saussure himself climbed the mountain, by the same route, in 1776 and again on July 13, 1778. Young Paccard therefore was striking out a new and much more interesting route when, later in 1778, he went up the valley of Entre les Eaux. The interest of that first trip, over and above the charm of exploration, was chiefly mineralogical, that of the second mainly botanical and geological.

² *Guide Vallot*, la Moyenne Montagne, i, p. 190.

actuel, la course est délicate mais extrêmement belle,' I was glad to seize an opportunity to explore it during a recent visit to the neighbourhood. I first consulted the well-known old guide, Justin Lugon of Finhaut, who, being himself no longer able to make long excursions, recommended, as a man well acquainted with the local names, the guide Joseph Bozon of Vallorcine. He proved an intelligent and helpful companion, showing a keen interest in Dr. Paccard's narrative (a copy of which I took with me), and in identifying the localities mentioned therein, nearly all of which he recognized.

First as to the valley itself. It diverges to the right of the Vallée de Bérard, running up north-westwards to the E. and N.E. of the Buet. Its lower part is a wild gorge, descending rapidly between the Aiguille de Loria on the (spectator's) right and the Mont Oreb (the outer end of the E. ridge of the Buet) on the left, and separated by the latter from the Bérard valley. The middle part of the valley, though still narrowly enclosed by the rock walls of the Loria and Mont Oreb, is much less steep, and is entered by traversing round the S. and S.W. slopes of the Loria. Higher up, the gorge expands into a small, level, stony plain (called 'Les Fours'), which is dominated by the 'Gros Nol,' a lofty spur running N. from the Buet-Oreb ridge and projecting into the valley like a huge rostrum (Lépiney³) or ploughshare (Vallot). Some 700 ft. above this plain, behind the lower and nearly level part of the N.E. ridge of the Gros Nol, lies a small glacier, bearing the same name as the valley, and enclosed 'in a really extraordinary cirque between the black and the white slopes of the Genévrier, the Buet, the Mont Oreb and the Gros Nol.'⁴

The name of the valley appears in various forms. Paccard calls it 'vallée d'Entre-les-Eaux'; Bourrit⁵ has 'combe d'entre les Aigues'; de Saussure⁶ 'vallée d'Entraigues'; Ruskin⁷ 'val d'Entraigues.' In the local patois 'Entre les Eaux' became 'Intre les iwes,' whence Ball's form 'Entre les Eves.'⁸ I have also found 'Vallée des Entrèves.' The

³ *Guide Vallot*, la Haute Montagne, v, p. 115.

⁴ *Guide Vallot*, M. M., i, p. 191.

⁵ *Nouvelle Description des . . . Glaciers de Savoye*, tome iii, p. 206.

⁶ *Voyages*, tome i, p. 512.

⁷ In the very interesting account of his traverse of the Buet (in 1844), which Mr. Mumm printed in *A.J.* 32, pp. 334-6.

⁸ *Western Alps*, p. 407. For the patois form see *Vallot*, M. M., i, p. 190; for 'Entrèves' see *O. E. Meyer, Zeitschrift des D.u.Ö. AV.* 1910, pp. 86 (map), 102 (note 3), where it is explained that ève or èze = eau.

most widely used form was *Entre-les-Eaux*, which is still current locally. As, however, the valley is drained by one torrent only, the name seems irrelevant, and '*Tré-les-Eaux*' has of late been generally substituted, '*Tré*' meaning 'near.' But the aspect of the valley strongly confirms the suggestion that originally the name was '*Entre-les-Hauts*,' corrupted into '*Entre-les-Auts*' and finally '*Entre les Eaux*.'⁹ For the name of a valley shut in so closely by such steep and lofty slopes nothing could be more suitable than 'Between the Heights.'

I give now a transcript of the relevant passage from Dr. Paccard's MS., omitting most of the names of plants, emphasizing those of places, and regulating the use of stops, capitals, accents, etc.¹⁰

Le lendemain de la Vogue ¹¹ *de Valorsine (notre Dame d' Aoust, 12 1785) nous sommes montés depuis le Couterai où nous avons couché chez Joseph Boson, moi, sa sœur Marie Desailloud et Marie Desailloud fils de cette dernière, avec Maurice Bozon son neveu, pour aller au Buet par la vallée d'Entre les Eaux. Nous avons passé par les Esserts et le Plan des Bois. Nous avons ensuite passé au Pertuis, et grimpé par la Tête des Coings, chemin droit et difficile. Nous sommes allés au-dessus du rocher, endroit nommé la Traye. De là nous sommes passés par un rocher creusé, appelé la Vinuva. . . . Nous sommes ensuite passés au roc appelé la Scie des Fours. . . . On va de là à la Pierrière. . . . On passe ensuite une plaine neigée ou le grand névé, au delà duquel on trouve la stellaria biflora? qui est mieux en fleurs près du glacier au-dessus de l'Ecuelle. De là nous sommes allés sur le Nollo, où est un abri sous une grande pierre où nous avons couché. Notre hôte de Valorsine y avait des vaches et y fesoit des fromages; il est descendu dès le même soir pour nous aller prendre du vivre qu'il a apporté le lendemain de grand matin. Dès la veille nous sommes allés au passage de l'Ecuelle au bas du glacier d'Entre les Eaux, où il doit y avoir une petite mine. J'y ai trouvé la Saxifraga no. 985 Haller,*

⁹ *Guide de la Chaîne Frontière entre la Suisse et la Haute Savoie*, ii, p. 190.

¹⁰ The passage was printed in full in Dr. Dübi's *Paccard wider Balmat* (published in 1913, but now unfortunately out of print). I have kept a little more closely to Paccard's diction where Dübi has made it conform to modern grammatical rules, and have corrected the following names, which had been misread from the MS., viz. la Traye (not la Trage), Vinuva (not Vinava), Pierrière (not Pierrette). The two spellings of Desailloud and Bozon are in the MS.

¹¹ *Vogue* = 'fête patronale, dans certains départements du sud-est de la France.' (Larousse.)

¹² Viz. August 15.

qui paroît celle décrite sous le nom d'*Androsacea* dans Linné (quoique celle-ci a les feuilles tridentées), et se trouve proche le four de cristal au-dessus du Nollo. Nous sommes allés de là dans la vallée de Leideden, où j'ai trouvé l'*Arenaria obtusa*. . . . Le fond de l'herbe est presque tout d'*Alchemilla pentaphylla*.

Le lendemain nous sommes allés le long en bas du glacier, de là sur le gros Nollo par les neiges, où est un filon de cristal perpendiculaire. . . . Le long en bas du glacier j'ai trouvé au bas du Rocher de Four la *Saxifraga androsacea foliis tridentatis*. Nous sommes grimpés ensuite à une pente neigeée le long du rocher feuilleté du Buet, en passant par une trace en bas des grosses fentes qu'on y voit.

La roche primitive dans le voisinage fuit de bas en haut la chaîne centrale, comme tous les piédestaux de cette chaîne qu'on trouve à Chamonix. C'est la roche feuilletée mêlée de quartz dont les grains oblongs sont parallèles aux feuillets dont parle Mr. de Saussure. Les roches à feuillets minces qui paroissent pierre calcaire ou ardoise ont leurs couches presque horizontales. La jonction est ici ¹³ sous les neiges.

Un voyage par le ruisseau de la vallée Leideden, par dessus le glacier, le long des rochers dont je parle, par le fond de la vallée de Dieuza à Servoz serait intéressant tant pour le botaniste que pour le géologue. Il y trouveroit tout le long la jonction des pierres primitives et des secondaires.

Nous sommes descendus par la vallée de Bérard, nous avons quitté la neige sur la Tête du Ret, où l'on met des genisses.

Hoping to follow as closely as possible the route up the valley of Tré-les-Eaux described in this passage, I left the comfortable Hôtel du Mont Blanc at Vallorcine with Joseph Bozon on September 5 at 7 A.M. We walked along the high road about two-thirds of the way to the station of Le Buet (P.L.M.), and then turned up a path on the right to the hamlet of *le Couterai*,¹⁴ where Bozon pointed out an old house, still inhabited by some Bozons¹⁵ (not relatives of his), where he thought Dr. Paccard slept 150 years ago. Continuing through the hamlet, we crossed a brook and followed a narrow path, the general direction of which was towards the opening between

¹³ I.e. on the summit of the Buet. See passage referred to in note 28.

¹⁴ The names of localities printed in italics are in a few cases taken from maps or guide books (*le Couterai*, the *Tête des Coings*, the *Gros Nol*, les *Fours*), and for the rest are those given me by Bozon.

¹⁵ Bozon told me that there are five families of that name in the valley, not related to one another. Bourrit's host and guide in 1775 was Pierre Bozon, Paccard's in 1785, Joseph Boson or Bozon.

Mont Oreb on the left and the Aiguille de Loria on the right, and which led up verdant, wooded slopes (*les Esserts*) on the (true) right of the tumbling brook. Then we came to a level meadow amongst trees (*le Plan des Bois*), where we crossed the brook and went somewhat to the right up steepish open pastures towards the base of the Aiguille de Loria.¹⁶ On getting near its rocks, we turned to the left up some rock steps (almost amounting to an easy chimney, some 20–30 ft. high), which Bozon said was *le Pertuis*,¹⁷ and which brought us over the ridge to rather fatiguing slopes leading towards a little wooded bluff (*la Tête des Coings*, 1883 m.) overhanging the gorge on its left. After passing just below this bluff on its right, the way leads along grass and rock ledges on the steep western face of the Aiguille de Loria. A small sloping slab with two footholds deserves a little care in view of the precipitous slopes beneath.¹⁸ A short rocky gully leading over another bluff (*la Traye*) is followed by a gentle but longish descent, which finally passes under some high, steep, furrowed slabs. Here is Paccard's *la Vinuva*, a name which he applies to the 'rocher creusé,' but which, Bozon tells me, is really patois for 'sentier neuf' (*vinuva* = *voie neuve*?). It is interesting that from this place one can see clear traces of another (? older) track on the other side of the stream, which is here not far below, and could no doubt be crossed a little way back. The path now leads towards a huge, rounded, whitish slab, mostly smooth but with some cup-like projections, which slopes down to the left (*la Scie des Fours*). Passing the top of this to the right, we soon reached the flat, stony plain of *les Fours*, which is 'partly pasture, partly névé, and is walled around by the steep slopes of Oreb and Loria, between the gorge below and a lofty, rocky barrier ("seuil") above:

¹⁶ To this place there is an easier way (which we followed on our return) by a good path which strikes up from the high road between the Hotel Belvedere and the bridge just below it, zigzags up amongst the woods, and then runs away to the left, nearly level, past an excellent gush of water.

¹⁷ The route described by M. Ch. Vallot (M.M. i, p. 190) evidently goes higher up the slopes of the Loria, to a spot he calls *le By* (1981 m.); from this it continues by a passage between two 'barres' which he thinks is the *Pertuis*, and then descends some 300 ft. to the *Tête des Coings*. I did not see this place, but Paccard speaks only of a 'direct and toilsome' ascent from the *Pertuis* to the *Tête des Coings*, which does not suit M. Vallot's suggested identification, but agrees perfectly with mine. (M. Vallot's book—which is by far the most complete and exact account of *all* the walks and 'easy' ascents round Chamonix—does not refer to any of the other localities mentioned by Dr. Paccard.) *N.B.*—The word *pertuis* = opening or narrow passage.

¹⁸ I had heard of this place from a French tourist as a difficulty, but it was really quite trifling, and on the way back I did not even notice it.

very impressive in its seclusion, solitude and silence.' ¹⁹ Bozon said that the plain is locally known as 'le Plan de la Fétra, and was last used for pasture in 1922, as the path became impassable for animals and would cost 4-5000 fs. to restore.' There were some considerable patches of winter snow about, which in many summers would no doubt be more extensive, and would account for Paccard's description of it as 'une plaine neigeée ou le grand névé.' As no attempts were made on Mont Blanc in that year (1785) until September, we may perhaps infer that the weather during the summer had been unsettled, and that there was more snow than usual. This is confirmed by Paccard's statement that on his descent he 'left the snow on the *Tête du Ret*' (2233 m., on the N. side of the valley of Bérard), which is well below the snow-line in most summers, and where Paccard remarks that heifers are sent to graze.²⁰

The plain, which is at a height of 1931 m., is dominated on the left by the *Gros Nol* (2456 m.), or, as Paccard calls it, '*le gros Nollo*'—a name which since that time has disappeared from Alpine literature until 1913.²¹ The plain is traversed by the stream from the glacier above, and it is necessary to cross this to its right bank. This could easily be done near the entrance to the plain by a jump from a rock about five or six feet high to a lower one. We passed this place on our left on our way up, and had unexpected difficulties in finding a crossing-place farther on, the stream being swollen by the recent heavy rains. On our return we came to this spot, and found a curious contrivance for facilitating the jump in the reverse direction, *i.e.* from the lower rock on to the sloping front of the higher. On the top of the latter is fixed a short vertical iron rod, which the jumper must clutch with outstretched hand to avoid slipping back into the torrent. Bozon called this '*la Cheville*,'²² and knew no other name. Just about here Paccard speaks of '*la Pierrière*,'²³ which probably means

¹⁹ Vallot, *loc. cit.*

²⁰ C. E. Mathews (*Annals of Mont Blanc*, p. 43) says, 'the winter of 1784 having been extremely severe, and the summer of 1785 cold and stormy, an immense quantity of snow had fallen': but he does not mention his authority.

²¹ See note 10.

²² Cheville = pin or bolt. It was fixed, says Bozon, in 1890, in times of heavy rain; this is the only crossing-place.

²³ This word '*pierrière*' (fem.), Littré says, is an old form of '*pierrier*' (masc.), which originally meant a weapon with which stones were thrown, then a kind of mortar, and then a light gun mounted on a swivel. This last is the only meaning found in modern dictionaries, except that Harrap's (ed. J. E. Mansion) gives also 'stone-drain.' But I observe that M. Ch. Vallot often uses the word, (in its masculine form) obviously in the sense of 'stony place' or 'bed of stones,'



Photo, E. H. Stevens.]

LOOKING DOWN ON LES FOURS (SLOPES OF MONT OREB
ON RIGHT, AIG. DE CHARDONNET IN CLOUD).



Photo, E. H. Stevens.]

LE GROS NOL.

[To face p. 202.]



Photo, E. H. Stevens.]

LA SCIE DES FOURS.



Photo, E. H. Stevens.]

L'ECUELLE.

the 'stony tract' at the entrance to the plain, where in fact one has to scramble over a lot of rocks and loose stones.

After crossing the torrent and traversing the plain, we next ascended the grassy slopes below and to the right of the Gros Nol. Here we passed two capital shelters under big sloping rocks, which were doubtless used by old Bozon's herdsmen. The second of these *gîtes*, the open side of which is enclosed by a wall of stones, is the more commodious, and was in all probability the sleeping-place of Dr. Paccard and his three companions. He locates it 'on the Nollo,' observing, I think, a distinction between these lower slopes and the 'gros Nollo,' the steep and lofty rock mass above them. Thus when he speaks of the 'four de cristal' 'above the Nollo,' this is equivalent to saying 'above the *gîte*.' Farther on, steep slopes of grass and rock bring one, towards the right, to the striking gully, quite unsuspected till one reaches its mouth, through which the torrent from the glacier of Tré-les-Eaux escapes between vertical walls of rock. This gully is *l'Ecuelle*. The word means 'a porringer,' particularly, as a learned French friend explained to me, one with a long handle to the bowl, and suits the place admirably. The track normally crosses the torrent near the mouth of the gully, and then goes back to the left over the stony slope (? moraine) on the far side of the glacier. The torrent in the gully was, however, so swollen that its passage, if possible, would have been unpleasant, and we worked back on to the rocky ridge (M. Vallot's 'haut seuil rocheux') which confines the S.E. side of the glacier and hides it from below. We had taken 3¾ hrs.' steady going to reach this spot, but quick walkers, especially if unhindered by the torrent, could doubtless do it in 3 hrs. or less.

Beyond the slope on the farther, N.W., side of the glacier, and below the skyline ridge of the Genévrier and the Cheval Blanc, there appears to be a valley, which Bozon says is the valley of *Leideden*, and which Paccard describes as 'above the glacier.' It is, in fact, the uppermost stretch of our valley, descending, under the E. slopes of the N. ridge of the Buet, from the Cheval Blanc, and drained by a stream which receives the torrent from the glacier as a tributary on its right bank. To our left the glacier ends in a steep, blackish, concave slope, from the base of which the torrent rushes through the gully already mentioned, and descends in the angle on our right to

and as on the ordinary route up the Buet there is 'un entassement de blocs' (Vallot) or 'un champ de blocs' (*Guide de la Chaîne Frontière*) which is called 'la pierrière de Salenton,' there can be little doubt that this is the explanation of Paccard's name.

the plain below. Farther to the left (W.) appear the long, black, shaly slopes of the Buet, furrowed by loose gullies. The highest ridges were veiled in clouds, but it seemed that it would not be difficult to pass behind the Gros Nol, perhaps over its N. flank, and part of the glacier, either to the Oreb, E., ridge, or to the Cheval Blanc, N., ridge and thence in either case easily to the summit, which Bozon reckoned it would take about 2 hours to reach. The direct ascent from the glacier, he says, has been effected, but is difficult by reason of the crumbling rocks and the snow cornice at the summit. Ball²⁴ speaks of the descent on this side as more difficult than that to the Bérard valley, but after all that does not mean much. In any case, there was no object in climbing into the clouds on such a mountain as the Buet. Turning to the S.E., we looked down into the basin of *les Fours*, and had lovely glimpses of the Aiguille du Chardonnet in the background, framed between the imposing walls of Oreb and Loria and rising above swirling belts of white cloud. In the slopes around this basin there are, as observed by Paccard in 1778,²⁵ many 'fours' (= matrices, lit. 'ovens') of crystals. I noticed, especially in the ridges of the Gros Nol, several dark hollows, which probably contain such 'fours,' from which the name *les Fours*, not mentioned by Paccard but now in general use for the basin, is obviously derived.

After Dr. Paccard's party had reached their sleeping place, and Bozon had gone back to fetch provisions, Dr. Paccard evidently went on that afternoon, passing a 'four de cristal' on the Nollo, to *l'Ecuelle* and the valley of *Leideden* 'above the glacier,' but next morning passed 'below the glacier' (i.e. on its S.E. side, probably by our ridge) and on to the Gros Nol by snow slopes. The *Rocher du Four* of which he speaks is most likely the near ridge of the Gros Nol, which sweeps down to the little plain and probably contains the 'four de cristal' above their *gîte* already mentioned. Next they climbed a snowy slope (either the névé of the Tré-les-Eaux glacier, or the slopes of the Buet itself, which in that year may have been snow-covered, though usually bare) along the foliated rocks of the Buet, passing 'par une trace' below some 'grosses fentes' (possibly crevasses, more likely the conspicuous furrows in the shaly slopes of the mountains). Nothing is said of the final ascent to the summit, but it must be remembered that the text we have is more of the nature of memoranda than

²⁴ *Western Alps*, loc. cit.

²⁵ See note 1.

of a finished narrative. In any case, his route must have been substantially the same as that taken by A. Wagnon and P. Beaumont, with two Salvan guides, in September, 1895, 'par le glacier de Tré-les-Eaux, la face N.E. et l'arête S.E. (arête d'Oreb),' which is claimed²⁶ as the first ascent by this route. Of course nothing was known of Paccard's climbs till 1913. His descent was made into the Bérard valley, and he mentions that he left the snow on the *Tête du Ret*, which is a wide rounded eminence (2233 m.) on the N. of that valley. Bourrit's first ascent of the Buet was made over it (though he does not name it), but he afterwards found the easier, though longer, route by the Pierre à Bérard.²⁷

The excursion which Paccard recommends 'by the stream of the Leideden valley, above the glacier, along the rocks [of the Buet] and down the valley of the Diosaz to Servoz' would be a very long one, involving apparently the ascent of the Buet by its N. arête, and a descent into the Diosaz glen either by the Col des Chaux (to the S.W.) or the Col de Salenton (S.E. of the summit). But he was perfectly right in his geology, as witness de Saussure²⁸ ('the Buet itself is exactly on the line of separation between the limestone and the primitives') and Ball²⁹ ('the hollow trough at the head of the Diosaz valley at the junction of the granite and the limestone').

It will now be evident, I hope, that Dr. Paccard's account is exact in all its details, and affords conclusive proof of his habits of accurate observation and careful record, as well as of his mountaineering enterprise.

MOUNT FORAKER, ALASKA.

(Denali's Queen.)

By T. GRAHAM BROWN.

(Continued from p. 48.)

11. Ascent to Camp 6.

THE weather on July 31 at Camp 5 was too bad for movement, and August 1 was another stormy day, but we were able none the less to visit Camp 4 to bring up the remaining loads. We then took loads up to the First Platform in

²⁶ *Guide de la Chaîne Frontière*, ii, p. 144.

²⁸ *Voyages*, tome i, p. 509.

²⁷ Vallot, M.M. i, p. 187.

²⁹ *Western Alps*, loc. cit.