

THE FÜHRERBUCH OF ALOIS POLLINGER

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ALOIS POLLINGER of St. Niklaus was born in 1844 and made his first recorded expedition in his twenty-first year. He did not reach the height of his fame until after the great peaks of the Alps had been conquered. His climbing career lasted for more than forty years and it has been written of him that 'few guides have accomplished *continuously* so many difficult or important expeditions, and *no* guide, it can safely be said, has ever deserved better of mountaineers.'¹

The exploits of his sons are well known, and he was closely connected with the Lochmatter family through the marriage of his sister with J.-M. Lochmatter, who was killed on the Dent Blanche in 1882.

The Führerbuch opens in June, 1867, with records of ascents of the Mettelhorn and Breithorn and other minor expeditions. On September 3, 1868, Pollinger made the first of his many ascents of the Matterhorn (the twelfth of the mountain) with G. B. Marke, and the guides Niklaus Knubel and Peter Zurbriggen. Marke wrote an account of the expedition in the visitors' book of the Monte Rosa Hotel, Zermatt, but made no reference to Pollinger; his name, therefore, does not appear in the lists of those who took part in the early ascents of the mountain. Marke described the expedition as 'exceedingly difficult requiring at least two guides for each traveller.'² His entry in the Führerbuch records that he found Pollinger 'a very good cragsman and was altogether satisfied with him.'

For a few years there are no records of any other expeditions of importance, but in 1872 he guided Edwin Millidge 'safely and well to the top of the Matterhorn.' The following year there was an ascent of the Weisshorn with L. Ewbank and in August he led J. J. Weilenmann up the Weisshorn and Matterhorn. The same month he took H. S. Hoare up the Matterhorn in one day from Zermatt. 'He knows the mountain well & is a capital cragsman.' Hans von Bergen was the second guide, and the expedition was noteworthy as being the first occasion on which the mountain had been ascended in a single day direct from Zermatt.

In 1874 he made several ascents of the Matterhorn and an unsuccessful attempt with the Rev. F. T. Wethered, A.C., who returned to the attack the following year and ascended the mountain on August 10. 'We left the Monte Rosa Hotel at 12.25 A.M. and went up the mountain direct. I believe I am justified in saying that scarcely ever, if at all, has the Matterhorn been ascended under such unfavourable circumstances on account of the bad state of the snow, especially above the

¹ A. J. 25. 241.² A. J. 31. 93.

Shoulder. A. Pullinger (*sic*) showed himself equal to cope with all difficulties & I have much pleasure in recommending him as a down-right good guide as well as a civil & obliging man.'

Emily Hornby signs the next entry. Miss Hornby was not the least enterprising of the early lady mountaineers; she climbed with Pollinger in 1875-76-77 and 1879, and claims that she 'was the means of introducing that now famous guide to general notice.'³ In 1875, after an unsuccessful attempt, they ascended the Matterhorn, Pollinger taking his father as second guide. In her book, *Mountaineering Records*, Miss Hornby states that Pollinger had been up the mountain twenty-three times before this ascent and that she was the sixth lady to reach the summit.

In 1876, amongst other expeditions, they climbed the Weisshorn, Finsteraarhorn, and Dent Blanche; Johann Petrus, afterwards killed on the Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey with Professor Balfour, was second guide on this last expedition. 'The first night was spent on the Stockje hut (much too low). A mountaineer and guides came in for a few minutes, very dejected, on their way down from an unsuccessful attempt on the Dent Blanche. When they were gone, Pollinger remarked that the chief guide was Christian Almer. I then wept, and said it was ridiculous for us to attempt it when Christian Almer had failed. Pollinger was very angry, and said "Es gibt noch andere Führer in der Schweiz als der Almer." He was quite right, and the next day was a most complete success.'⁴

The following year they were hampered by bad weather and failed on the Grand Paradis, Zinal Rothorn, and Schreckhorn; their best expeditions were the Eiger and the Jungfrauoch.

Miss Hornby's last season with Pollinger was 1879. Her entry mentions the 'Brunegghorn straight up by rocks', the Moming Pass, Zinal Rothorn, and a traverse of the Aletschhorn and several other expeditions including the 'Stellijoch a new pass from Turtmanthal to St. Nicolas' (this was probably the Pipijoch). 'I am thoroughly satisfied with him, and think him a most clever guide, full of resources & most pleasant to have to deal with.'

Reverting to 1875: in September that year, Pollinger made what seems to have been the first of his many new expeditions, the ascent of the Nesthorn by the North arête with Messrs. Durnford and Hamond, Anton Ritz being second guide. It involved the party in some severe ice work, including the ascent of a formidable ice slope which 'was hard blue ice and could not have been at a less angle than 70°.'⁵ Nearly nine hours were taken from the Bel Alp Hotel to the summit. 'Pollinger showed himself to be an excellent guide & a most pleasant companion.'

The Abbé Nantermod, who ascended the Matterhorn with him in August, 1876, makes this comment: 'J'ai été fort content de lui; il a

³ E. Hornby, *Mountaineering Records*, p. 6.

⁴ E. Hornby, *Mountaineering Records*, p. 7.

⁵ *A. J.* 7. 327.

le pied très sur et il marche comme un vrai chamois. Il n'est pas plus fatigué au retour qu'au départ.'

Later in the season Pollinger did the Weisshorn, Zinal Rothorn and Dent Blanche in less than a week with the Rev. A. Fairbanks and his brother and the Rev. M. A. Bayfield. 'We were perfectly satisfied with him as a competent & careful guide, & also a pleasant companion. We have no hesitation in recommending him for any first-rate expedition.'

In 1877 he won high praise from Sir Edward Davidson and J. W. Hartley for his work after the accident on the Lyskamm when Messrs. Lewis and Paterson and the three brothers Knubel were killed. He also took part, as H. S. Hoare's guide, in the first ascent of the Weisshorn from the Schallenberg glacier; the entry in the Führerbuch describing the expedition is as follows: 'I wish also to say that in company with the two above mentioned gentlemen [Davidson and Hartley] Pollinger was with me in an ascent of the Weisshorn by a *new route* on September 6th. We ascended the mountain from the Schallenberg (*sic*) glacier by the S. Eastern face & by the arête leading down to the Schallenjoch. The ascent of this face & of the arête cost us $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours of the most difficult rock work we had ever done, during which Aloys Pollinger led without being once at fault, as he did also in the descent by the usual route to Randa. Nothing could have been better than his guiding on a new and somewhat dangerous expedition. My friends also were much pleased with him, as were their two Oberland guides Peter Rubi & Johann Jaun.'

Pollinger's reputation was greatly enhanced by this expedition. It is remarkable that he only took part in it in consequence of the illness of Hoare's usual guide, Hans von Bergen. Efforts were made to secure the services of Moser, and it was only when these failed that Pollinger was engaged.⁶

The following year occurs the first of several testimonials by the well known lady mountaineer, Mrs. E. P. Jackson. During August and September she made a number of ascents with Pollinger including Mont Blanc from the glacier de Miage, the Obergabelhorn, the Moming Pass and the Dom by a new route from the Kien glacier. On this last expedition Mrs. Jackson also had the services of P. J. Truffer and J. M. Biner, and was accompanied by P. W. Thomas with Josef Imboden and J. Langen.⁷

The next year, 1879, Mrs. Jackson and her husband had Pollinger for a month, ascending the Dent Blanche and Dent d'Hérens and crossing the Mönchjoch and Eigerjoch in addition to other smaller expeditions. He gave them 'in every way *great satisfaction*.'

The first entry for 1880, dated July 25, is by Maurice de Déchy, A.C., of Budapest and records a traverse of the Zinal Rothorn; 'The descent to Zinal, owing to great quantities of spring-snow on the arête (*sic*) was very trying and hard work. No ascent has been made this year on the Zinal side. Under these circumstances Pollinger acted admirably . . .'

⁶ A. J. 8. 419.

⁷ A. J. 9. 110.



W. M. BAKER (*ca.* 1878.)

[*To face p. 526.*

The same month he ascended the Zinal Rothorn, Weisshorn and Matterhorn with Henry Backhouse, A.C. 'The Matterhorn & Weisshorn were the first ascents of the year & the snow on the latter was in a very bad state.' These three expeditions were made in six days, with 'Young' Peter Taugwalder as second man.

Then follows an entry signed by the man with whom Pollinger carried out some of his best known expeditions, J. Stafford Anderson. They did little that first season; the Riffelhorn and '2 new passes from St. Niklaus, the Jungthal Pass and another.' Anderson's brief entry concludes; 'I have found him everything that could be wished as guide, servant, & companion & hope to have his services in something more difficult than above.'

In August, Pollinger had his first engagement with W. M. Baker, whose name occurs very frequently in the Führerbuch. They went up the Dom by the route first taken in 1878 and also traversed the Zinal Rothorn. 'The upper slopes of the Dom were hard ice & the Zinal arête of the Rothorn covered with fresh snow; on both occasions he showed himself a first class guide; besides, he is a very jolly & amusing companion.'

In 1881 Pollinger paid his first visit to Dauphiné with Baker and the latter's cousin W. E. Gabbett, J.-M. Lochmatter being second guide. Their programme was ruined by the weather but Baker 'saw enough of his guiding qualities to be able to say that he is quite first rate alike on ice and rocks. Knowing nothing of the country, he invariably led us the best way. . . . We hope to have him as one of our guides whenever we make mountaineering excursions again.'

Mrs. Beaman, Baker's daughter-in-law, has been good enough to lend me his diary and this reveals that the party made three attempts to ascend the Barre des Ecrins, being defeated each time by high wind. Among the few expeditions they accomplished was the first ascent of Le Râteau by the South-east face. They had set out with the intention of crossing the Brèche de la Meije, and Baker's account of the expedition is transcribed from his diary. ' . . . The hour being early and the day fine, we determined to carry out a plan of Gabbett's and cross the summit of the Râteau instead of the Brèche de la Meije. Pollinger made a last appeal for an attempt on the Meije, but as we had neither time, provisions, or blankets, this was manifestly impossible. We turned sharp to the left immediately above the ice fall, and soon reached the foot of the Râteau, which here consists of a steep snow slope broken up by a series of small precipices. After a hurried breakfast we started up them. At first we had a little trouble from schrunds, but once past them, got on without any trouble. The snow slopes were excessively steep, but by keeping a straight line upwards we rose rapidly and safely. The little precipices which it was necessary to pass did not give much hold, but Pollinger wormed himself up them cleverly, Lochmatter (who had been described to us by Pollinger as "sehr böß uber Felsen, bößer als der Knubel") apparently finding more difficulty than any of us. At last the snow arête on our left, leading down to the Brèche du

Rateau, came near, culminating in a rocky point to the right, which we hoped was the summit, though I fancied I remembered from Coolidge's paper that it lay farther west along the main ridge of the mountain. And so, when we got to the top of the rocky point, it turned out to be : but the arête, though shockingly rotten, gave us no real trouble, and at 11.40 we stood on the top of the Rateau.' They spent fifty minutes ' of the utmost enjoyment on the summit, eating cold partridge and wedding cake, and drinking Rodier's good Burgundy, and admiring the view.'

The descent was not without incident. ' An hour and a half after leaving the top we stood at the top of some great snow slopes, running down to the glacier de la Brèche. At first we ran down them without any difficulty, but soon they steepened and hardened, and as we could not see the bottom, it seemed probable that we were cut off from the glacier by some great ice precipice. Lochmatter proposed returning to the arête, and going all along it to the Brèche de la Meije : but at this I struck, so Pollinger proceeded to cut steps, first down a sort of ice arête, and then turning to the right, down a very steep ice slope, which curled over unpleasantly, although concealing what was below us. However, Pollinger cut away like a man, and Lochmatter came down last in the most nonchalant manner, and at last it was evident that we were immediately above a bergschrund. There was a most curious combination of crevasses here : Pollinger tried to get to the edge of the bergschrund, but was prevented by the snow bridge over a small crevasse giving way : at the same time, the snow gave way under my feet, and I discovered that we were all standing on a very shaky bridge over a very big crevasse, tributary to the bergschrund ! However, Pollinger cut a few more steps and at last found a place where he thought we could get over. As I was the lightest, he let me down first by the rope. I dropped on a snow bridge, which, though soft, appeared strong enough. Next Gabbett and Lochmatter let Pollinger down to join me : then Lochmatter let Gabbett down, and then came down himself, cutting a few steps to the very edge and then jumping. This successful passage of the bergschrund raised our spirits greatly.'

In 1882 the same party paid another visit to Dauphiné, but as Baker wrote in the Führerbuch ' were prevented by bad weather from even, trying the difficult ascensions on which we were keenest.' In addition, Gabbett was ill for much of the time. Baker, with Pollinger and Lochmatter ascended the Fife by a new route from the south west ; his diary records that ' the ascent of the peak itself gave us some fun. We went up to the southern arête but were forced back across the west face, finally reaching the northern arête close to the top. The rocks were very rotten, and the snow in the couloirs nasty, so altogether we had a better climb than I had expected.' After an ascent of Les Bans they reached Chamonix on July 13, and Baker's diary provides details of their subsequent movements, and is evidence that some of the information given in his obituary notice in *A.J.* 47 is not correct. Gabbett was unwell, and Baker, with Pollinger and Lochmatter went up the Aiguille du Midi to give him a chance to recover. By July 18,

'Gabbett was quite unable to move, having got much worse on Sunday & gone finally to bed ! At last I decided to leave him & go over to Courmayeur for about a week, hoping that when I came back he might be able to do something. So P.M. the guides and I walked up to the Montanvert.'

Next day they crossed the Col de Talèfre, slept at Pré de Bar, and after ascending Mont Dolent, went down to Courmayeur.

Baker was informed by Bertolini, the hotel proprietor, that Professor Balfour and Johann Petrus had set out two days before to attempt the Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey. Baker's diary records in detail the events of his stay at Courmayeur : 'Our stay at Courmayeur was rather a failure. On the 21st we had intended to sleep out for the Grandes Jorasses, but the guides were afraid it would be dangerous from avalanches. On the 22nd the weather was too bad to let us start. On the 23rd we did sleep out, but on the 24th came back again, the weather being threatening and the snow dangerous. Then we gave up the Jorasses, and on the 25th intended to sleep out at the Aiguille Grise : but the weather was not good enough, so we went up to Mont Fréty for the Col du Géant, as I thought I ought not to leave Gabbett any longer. But all our time was occupied by the arrangements consequent on the Balfour accident—the first Alpine accident I have ever had anything to do with.

On the previous Friday (the day I went up to the Montanvers for the Aiguille du Midi) he and Cunningham, who had been staying at the Montanvers during the bad weather, crossed the Col du Géant to Courmayeur. On the way down, it struck Balfour that the Aiguille Blanche de Peteret appeared a fine peak, and he proposed to go up it. Rey, Cunningham's guide, told him the best side to try it from, as he had several times tried it himself, but never got up it. Balfour was only accompanied by Petrus, who did not half like going alone with him. Balfour consequently wanted to get Rey to go with him, but he would not leave Cunningham, and also advised him not to go with the snow in such bad condition. So he and Petrus went off by themselves, Petrus in very bad spirits, & on Tuesday slept out, with a porter carrying wood, blankets etc. On Wednesday, the porter came back, but Balfour sent word that very likely he would not be back till Thursday. These were the tidings with which Bertolini received me on Thursday evening. On Friday morning, before I saw him, he sent up to the chalets of Vizaille to see if they had sent down for any provisions, as they knew that by that time he would have none left. On the return of the messenger, saying they had not been down, we telegraphed to the Hotel des Alpes at Chamouni, to ask if they were there, the guides having discovered when we were at Chamouni that Petrus had been there. No answer came till Saturday morning—then it came—no.

Now we knew that they must be lost, for they had now been three days without provisions, there being nowhere else they could have got them except at Vizaille and Chamouni. (They might have gone to Chamouni by Eccles route over Mont Blanc.) And to make assurance

doubly sure, a telegram came from Cunningham from the Montanvert, asking Balfour if he had done the Aiguille—so he was not at the Montanvert either. So we sent off seven or eight men to sleep out and look for them next day. The English chaplain insisted on going with them—why I don't know. As we started for the Jorasses on Sunday, we met Proment and another man coming down. They had seen the bodies with a field glass, immediately under the summit, on the glacier du Brouillard.⁸ On Monday we sent out a large party of guides and porters to bring down the bodies, with Rey, who had just come over by the Col des Hironnelles. As Cunningham was there, and Balfour's brother coming (we had telegraphed the information to the Master of Trinity on Sunday, not knowing Balfour's direction—also to the president of the commune of Stalden to break it to Petrus's wife), I thought they could get on nicely without me, and so went over to Chamouni.

I have since heard that they brought down the bodies and buried Petrus, and took back Balfour to England. It was evident that they had not been carried down by an avalanche, but that one of them had slipped on the snow arête—or the snow, being so bad, gave way with him—and the other could not hold him—that is, the accident took place because there were two instead of three on the rope.

In fact, there are two very good reasons for the accident—the first that they went to do a difficult ascent when the snow was in a dangerous condition—the second that there were only two on the rope—both instances of gross carelessness, and principally on the part of the Herr.'

On the 26th, Baker, with Pollinger and Lochmatter crossed the Col du Géant and 'just as we were getting into Chamouni, we met Gabbett out for a walk. He had been awfully bad—first with his eyes and then, when they and his cold got better, with neuralgia in his feet—a cheerful thing for a mountaineer!'

Baker's account makes it clear that neither he, nor any member of his party, actually took part in the search for the bodies. Gabbett, in fact, was not at Courmayeur at the time of the accident.

The whole party, Gabbett included, went up the 'Aiguille du Grépond' on July 26, and finally broke up at Martigny. At a later date Baker added a note in his diary to the effect that his 'Aiguille du Grépond' was in reality the 'Aiguille de l'Emme' (*sic*).

In August came the first of the great expeditions which Pollinger made with J. Stafford Anderson, G. P. Baker, and Ulrich Almer—the ascent of the Viereselgrat of the Dent Blanche. Anderson's entry in the Führerbuch is transcribed in full: 'Having again travelled with Alois Pollinger of St. Niklaus, I can with pleasure add further testimony to his merits & ability as a guide. We have made the following excursions.

Completion of a new pass, the *Gässi joch* from Gruben; the *Ausser Barrhorn*, new peak; the Rothorn direct from Zermatt & down to the

⁸ Really on the Fresnay glacier.

Mountet hut & finally the *Dent Blanche* from a *new* side, viz the east arête, a long, arduous, & I believe exceptionally difficult expedition, & one calculated to thoroughly test the ability of a guide. We were in all $9\frac{1}{2}$ hours on the rock face & arête, the last 2500 feet taking $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours to overcome. Pollinger, however, who led the whole way up, never faltered or slipped & showed himself to be what he is, one of *the* best rock climbers in Switzerland. He also conducted us safely across the bergschrund under the Col d'Hérens & across the glacier after dark, thus saving us a night on the rocks. The Stockje was reached at 11.30 P.M. and we consider that it is entirely owing to the exceptional abilities of Pollinger & Ulrich Allmer (*sic*) who was our other guide, that this expedition of $19\frac{1}{2}$ hours was brought to a successful conclusion. He is a willing, able, & simple hearted guide with whom it is a pleasure to travel & I hope to have his services many times in the future.' Sixteen years elapsed before this expedition was repeated.

When Anderson and his party reached the hut that night, they found there another of Pollinger's patrons, W. E. Gabbett, with J.-M. and Alexander Lochmatter. On the following day Gabbett and his guides were killed on the Dent Blanche.

The Güssi joch mentioned by Anderson was, in fact, the Brändjijoch ; his Ausser Barrhorn was the Ausser Stellihorn. It was not until 1892 that the nomenclature of the various peaks and passes of the Turtmann ridge was finally cleared up.

1882 was a bad year in the Alps. In addition to the accident on the Dent Blanche, Penhall and Andreas Maurer were killed on the Wetterhorn and Professor Balfour and Johann Petrus on the Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey. It was in consequence of these disasters, and of his marriage, that W. M. Baker (not to be confused with G. P. Baker) gave up mountaineering for several years and it was not until 1896 that he climbed again with Pollinger.

The next entry, undated, over the signatures of F. Corbett and Alf Barran, mentions a new descent of Mont Collon by the South-east face, with J. Quinodoz as second guide.

In September Sir G. S. Barnes records an ascent of the Weisshorn with Pollinger and Josef Imboden. 'The mountain was in bad order & the snow soft. Both he and Imboden leading by turns had very hard work & they did it thoroughly well. It is unnecessary for me to add anything to all that has been said before of Pollinger's qualities as a guide & a companion. I can only say that his praises are thoroughly well deserved.'

In 1883 Pollinger and Anderson, accompanied by G. P. Baker and Ulrich Almer, made the first ascent of the North-west arête of the Schreckhorn. Anderson's account of the climb is recorded in the Führerbuch : 'Pollinger has again been with Mr. Baker & myself, & fully sustained his former reputation & I can only endorse my opinion of him as guide & companion as already written in this book. Bad weather prevented us from doing more than the *Wetterhorn* on Aug 3rd & *Schreckhorn* by the west arête (first ascent) on Aug 6th. During the

climb on the last 800 feet of this later expedition, he led the way up a very bad piece of rock work about 60 feet high with unerring skill, fully justifying his well earned reputation as a rock climber. The descent was undertaken in a bad storm of sleet & snow and altogether the expedition was not a light one & I consider that [it] is only (as usual) owing to his & Almer's superior abilities that it was so speedily & successfully accomplished. It is always a pleasure to travel with Pollinger.'

Baker adds the following note: 'I have again great pleasure to endorse all Stafford Anderson has written on behalf of Pollinger's good qualities. His exploits as leader upon the first pinnacle of the Shreckhorn (*sic*) W arête I watched with keen interest and consider his manner of working the 60 feet of rock work as mentioned by S.A. a fine specimen of his powers.'

Pollinger then had three weeks in the service of H. W. Topham and amongst other expeditions ascended the Schreckhorn, Weisshorn, Obergabelhorn and Täschhorn with him. The ascent of the Weisshorn was remarkable in that it was made from Interlaken, the entire distance being accomplished on foot!⁹

His third engagement with Mrs. E. P. Jackson brought the season to a close. Their expeditions included a traverse of the Täschhorn by a new route and the first ascent of the Ausser Barrhorn. 'I have again found him a thoroughly good leader & a most obliging & attentive companion.'

1884 opened with several days with the Rev. F. T. Wethered, followed by ascents of the Weisshorn (with Albert Barbey) and Finsteraarhorn. In August came his fourth engagement with Anderson. With Ulrich Almer they ascended the Eiger by a new route from the Bergli hut on August 6, and ten days later made the first ascent of the Breithorn from the Schwartzthor—'a long & arduous expedition necessitating much step cutting & labour during 16 hours of ascent.' The summit was not reached until 6.45 P.M. in a bitterly cold north wind, leaving just enough time to get to the Théodule hut by nightfall.¹⁰

The next entry, signed by 'Prof. Dr. Karl Schulz aus Leipzig' refers to the first descent of the West (Ferpècle) arête of the Dent Blanche, an expedition in which Mrs. E. P. Jackson and the guide Truffer also took part. Having ascended the mountain by a variation of Whymper's route, the party was compelled to pass the night at a height of about 4000 m. on the West arête. The descent of the ridge next day was carried out 'unter Nebel und Schneesturm.' Schulz described the expedition as very difficult and dangerous and Mrs. Jackson records that the rocks were 'decidedly difficult. On the whole expedition Pollinger showed himself as usual to be a thoroughly good leader.' Mrs. Jackson's entry also mentions an ascent of the Grabenhorn; the first *recorded* ascent of this peak did not take place until 1888.

In July 1885 Pollinger spent twelve days with Herr X. Imfeld, the surveyor, who was engaged on work for the Federal Topographical

⁹ A. J. 25. 243.

¹⁰ A. J. 12. 121.

Bureau, and made several ascents with him in the mountains around the Lake of Lucerne.

Then followed ascents of several of the great Zermatt peaks with members of the S.A.C., including the Matterhorn with Herr Weber-Imhof of Winterthur. Weber-Imhof died in 1891 as the result of a fall while descending from the Boval hut to Pontresina after an ascent of Piz Bernina.¹¹

Dr. W. Gröbli mentions an ascent of the Weisshorn in August, and the same month Pollinger was once again with Stafford Anderson. B. W. Russell, Anderson's companion, describes himself as 'totally inexperienced in climbing.' 'I can only say', wrote Anderson of Pollinger, 'that the longer I know him, the more I esteem him for his great capabilities as a guide.'

He took Mrs. Jackson up the Zinal Rothorn from Zermatt, and finished the season by an ascent of the Dent Blanche with 'A. Seiler, sohn.'

It was not only Pollinger's technical skill as a guide that earned the praises of his clients. There are many references in the book to his care and attention, or his kindness and good temper with a beginner.

In 1886 he commenced with an ascent of the Grand Combin with Dr. Bruno Wagner, and after travelling on to Zermatt by the High Level Route led him up Monte Rosa and the Obergabelhorn.

Within a week of the termination of this engagement he had been up Monte Viso with Dr. Gröbli, and made several other ascents with him in Dauphiné. On July 29-30 they made together the first *ascent* of the West ridge of the Dent Blanche; unfortunately, no details of this expedition are given. Gröbli, a professor of mathematics was then in his thirty-fourth year. He was killed by an avalanche on Piz Blas on June 26, 1903, when climbing with some of his pupils.¹²

A few days with Stafford Anderson, Russell and Ulrich Almer were spoilt by bad weather. They ascended the Klein Schreckhorn and 'made an attempt on an unclimbed peak beyond the Lauteraarhorn and a new ascent of the Fiescherhorn (Ochs) by the Zäsenberg arête—a rather difficult expedition. He is just the same as before.'

In September, Pollinger had his first engagement with Max Schintz; their chief ascents that season were in the Zermatt district. 'He is one of the most careful men that could be found. His qualities as guide are too well known to require any further testimony, his kindness also.' Schintz has been described as 'un Alpinista che lascia traccia delle sue numerose e difficile imprese—lo constituamo deplorandolo—soltanto sui libelli delle guide e—sulle cime.'¹³

J. T. Wills, writing from the Eagle's Nest, Sixt, mentions an attempt on the Dru, accompanied by J. V. Jones and Alois Kalbermatten; 'we were caught in a hail storm at the top & had bad weather all the way down; he is very careful & safe and found the way well. In fact,

¹¹ A.J. 15. 539.

¹² Information supplied by M. Kurz.

¹³ Mumm, *The Alpine Club Register*, 3. 252.

I find that he thoroughly deserves his reputation as a first rate guide and as a most kind & attentive companion.'

C. E. Layton and Mrs. Jackson record successful ascents of the Dru ; Layton could not 'praise too highly his attention and kindness in the circumstances of a slight accident I met with from a falling stone in the course of the descent.'

In 1887 there were ascents of some of the Chamonix aiguilles with Mrs. Jackson, and of the Wetterhorn, Eiger and Matterhorn with the Rev. Walter Weston, A.C., who considered it 'impossible to speak too highly of his skill and strength as a guide, & good temper & patience as a companion.'

Pollinger's most important expeditions in 1888 were made with Max Schintz. Jungfrau, ascent from the Rottal, descent by the Guggi glacier : Bietschhorn, ascent by north, descent by west arête : Täschhorn from Mischabeljoch and Dent d'Hérens from the Tiefenmattenjoch. 'He is so well known for his splendid qualities as guide, that anything I could say would be superfluous.'

July 1889 found him with the Rev. G. Broke, A.C., in the Zermatt district for three weeks of uncertain weather, and in August, with Schintz he ascended Mont Blanc, Grandes Jorasses, Dent du Géant and Lyskamm.

The entries for 1890 call for no comment. In 1891, Moritz von Kuffner of Vienna, records ascents at Chamonix and Zermatt, and Schintz a tour in Dauphiné which included La Meije and a traverse of Les Ecrins.

The following year, 1892, Schintz and Pollinger went to the Engadine. They ascended Piz Bernina by the Scharte, traversed Crast' Agüzza, Piz Roseg and the Scerscen-Bernina arête. 'As in former years we have had some fine climbs, the enjoyment of which was in great part due to his well known prowess & geniality.'

Another entry by Dr. Gröbli, dated February 20, 1893, records a number of ascents—all carried out in October—from 1888 to 1892. In some of these Josef Pollinger took part as second guide. Among the expeditions mentioned were several new ascents in the peaks and passes of the Turtmann ridge.

Claude M. Thompson, A.C., mentions an ascent of the Dent Blanche in July 1893. 'The Dent Blanche was in bad condition and I should certainly not have reached the top with guides of anything but the very first rank.' Josef Pollinger was second guide. The ascent took nearly eleven hours from the Stockje. There was much step cutting in bitter cold and Thompson feared his feet would be frost bitten. The party did not reach Zermatt till after mid-night, having been out for nearly twenty-three hours.¹⁴

In August he was again with Max Schintz, their eighth season together. They traversed the Matterhorn and made the second (?) ascent of the Ferpècle arête of the Dent Blanche.

The following year Pollinger was back in Dauphiné in July, traversing

¹⁴ A. J. 45. 148.

La Meije and Les Ecrins with Frank Littledale, A.C. They also traversed Mont Blanc and went up the Dru. 'I was very pleased with him,' wrote Littledale, 'he is as good as ever.'

The same month he returned to Dauphiné with Schintz, traversing La Meije and making other ascents in the district.

In 1895, after an ascent of the Lyskamm with E. C. Oppenheim, A.C., he went to Chamonix with Schintz, traversing the Grépon and Charmoz amongst other expeditions. On August 24 Emile Rey was killed on the Aiguille du Géant. On the day of the accident, Schintz with Alois Pollinger père and fils was on the Aiguille de Talèfre, and it was only on the evening of the following day, at Montenvers, that they had news of the accident. Together with A. Carson Roberts, they went down to Courmayeur for the funeral.

W. M. Baker, one of Pollinger's early patrons, returned to the Alps in 1896 after an absence of fourteen years and found him 'just as good and as nice as ever.'

In September, J. Morton Clayton, A.C.—whose entries appear frequently in the later pages of the book—made his first expeditions with him. 'I was very pleased indeed with him. He is a very first class guide and I hope the next time I come to Zermatt to have the opportunity of climbing with him again.'

In 1897, Baker, after a brief visit to Dauphiné was joined by E. L. Strutt for a traverse of Mont Blanc and other expeditions. 'I only hope,' wrote Baker, 'I may be able to go on climbing as long as Pollinger and employing him every year.'

The following year Baker was out longer than usual and his entry refers to ascents in Dauphiné, the Oberland, and around Zermatt and Saas.

Strutt, after visiting the Tödi group with Pollinger and his son Josef in 1899 wrote that he 'is still what he always has been, one of the very best in every respect. No more charming pair could be found than he and his son make.'

Pollinger was then 55: his greatest days were over, but mention must be made of some of the more notable expeditions of his declining years.

On July 16, 1900, accompanied by his sons Josef and Heinrich, he made the fourth crossing of the Col du Lion with W. M. Baker. An account of this expedition is to be found in *A. J.* 39, pp. 45-46, and in the Führerbuch Baker wrote; 'I must especially mention his magnificent performance on the Col du Lion. I have never seen him—much less anyone else—do anything like it, which accounts for our getting over the pass—which we found as difficult as anything we had any of us ever done—at all.'

On January 10, 1902, he made the first winter ascent of the Weiss-horn with L. F. Ryan (brother of V. J. E. Ryan) and Josef and Raphael Lochmatter. Ryan's entry gives no details of the expedition. It was the first—and apparently the only occasion on which he climbed with Pollinger. The party left the Weisshorn hut at 6.30 A.M. and reached

the summit at 2.50 P.M. 'Final arête nearly all ice. Last 2 hours continuous cutting.'¹⁵

That summer, Pollinger made his hundredth ascent of the Matterhorn with J. Kenyon Parker and Clemenz Perren.¹⁶

In spite of advancing years he remained as active as ever, climbing principally with W. M. Baker, Clayton, Strutt and Kenyon Parker. 'Age has not yet affected Pollinger,' wrote Baker in 1902, 'and apparently is not going to.' Strutt was of the same opinion in 1903: 'Time seems to make no difference to his marvellous powers & he still remains what he has always been, one of the very first guides in the Alps.'

The following year found him again with Strutt, traversing the Charmoz, Grépon, and Requin.

He had a good season with Baker in 1905, traversing the Grand Combin and ascending the Requin, Grépon, Dru, and Aiguille du Géant.

In 1906 he led Henry Symons, A.C., and O. K. Williamson, A.C., on traverses of La Meije and Les Ecrins and other ascents in Dauphiné.

Pollinger's last new expedition was made with Strutt in 1907, the first ascent of the Pic Sans Nom from the Col du Pelvoux, his son Josef being second guide. Strutt's final entry concludes: 'His wonderful skill is still undiminished, & as a companion his charm is as great as it always was.'

His long association with Baker came to an end in 1908. The last ascent they made was the Schallihorn and they had then 'done' together all the Zermatt peaks. 'I am very sorry to have to go home and leave him.' The same year, Dr. Julius Kugy records an ascent of the Alphubel.

The last entry in the book is signed by Cyril Hartree, September 19, 1909. Among their ascents was the Matterhorn and Pollinger's last recorded expedition was a traverse of the Ulrichshorn from the Mischabel hut to St. Niklaus. Hartree's entry concludes; 'I can do no more than endorse fully the testimonies with which this book teems to his unfailing skill & good temper, & to the pleasure of seeing him at work & of enjoying his company.'

On August 16, 1910, Alois Pollinger passed away after a short illness at his home at St. Niklaus. 'He lived and died the very personification of a Christian gentleman.'¹⁷

Of the many new expeditions in which Pollinger took part, the following may be mentioned:

1875. Gross Nesthorn by the North arête with R. Durnford, T. Hamond and Anton Ritz.

1877. Weisshorn from the Schallenberg glacier with W. E. Davidson, J. W. Hartley, H. S. Hoare, Peter Rubi and Johann Jaun.

1878. Balfrinhorn from the South via the Balfrinjoch with W. M. Conway and P. J. Truffer.

Dom from the Kien glacier with Mrs. E. P. Jackson, P. J. Truffer and J. M. Biner.

¹⁵ A. J. 34. 134.

¹⁶ A. J. 50. 294.

¹⁷ A. J. 25. 243.

1881. Râteau by the South-east face with W. M. Baker, W. E. Gabbett and J-M. Lochmatter.
1882. Fife from the South-west with W. M. Baker and J-M. Lochmatter.
Dent Blanche by the Viereselgrat with J. S. Anderson, G. P. Baker and Ulrich Almer.
Ausser Stellihorn with J. S. Anderson.
Brändjijoch with J. S. Anderson, F. M. Govett and Ulrich Almer.
Mont Collon by South-south-east buttress (descent) with F. Corbett, A. Barran and J. Quinodoz.
1883. Täschhorn by South-east face with Mrs. E. P. Jackson and M. Truffer.
Schreckhorn by the North-west arête with J. S. Anderson, G. P. Baker and Ulrich Almer.
Ausser Barrhorn with Mrs. E. P. Jackson and M. Truffer.
1884. Dent Blanche by the West arête (descent) with Mrs. E. P. Jackson, Dr. Schulz and J. J. Truffer.
Breithorn from the Schwartzthor with J. S. Anderson and Ulrich Almer.
Eiger from the Bergli with J. S. Anderson and Ulrich Almer.
Grabenhorn with Mrs. E. P. Jackson.
1886. Fiescherhorn (Ochs) by the Zäsenberg arête with J. S. Anderson and Ulrich Almer.
Dent Blanche by the West arête (ascent) with Dr. Gröbli.
1888. Piz Roseg variation of the South-east face with Max Schintz.
This ascent is referred to in *A. J.* 25. 243. Schintz makes no mention in the Führerbuch of a visit to the Engadine in 1888; possibly the date should be 1892.
1889. Dent d'Hérens by the South-east face and East arête with H. W. Topham and Alois Supersaxo.
1890. Ausser Stellihorn by the North-west face with Dr. Gröbli.
Obergabelhorn variation on the North-west arête and North face (descent) with G. Broke, C. M. Thompson and Adolf Andenmatten.
1891. Ausser Barrhorn by the North face with Dr. Gröbli.
1892. Piz Morteratsch by the North-east arête with Max Schintz and Josef Pollinger.
1893. Ausser Rothorn by the North-east arête with Dr. Gröbli.
1902. Weisshorn, first winter ascent, with L. F. Ryan, Josef and Raphael Lochmatter.
1907. Pic sans Nom from the Col du Pelvoux with E. L. Strutt and Josef Pollinger.