

# Scrambles Amongst the Alps in the Years 1860-69

By Edward Whymper

Time Period: 1865

(The first edition of *Scrambles Amongst the Alps* was published in 1871 by John Murray, London)

## Background Material

*Scrambles Amongst the Alps* is one of the best representations of writing from the golden age of mountaineering in the mid and late 1800's. Edward Whymper, the author, became interested in mountaineering when in 1860 he was asked by a London publisher to make sketches of the famous peaks of the Alps. That led to an early and successful climb of France's Mount Pelvoux in 1861, and from then on, Whymper was hooked and made numerous other climbs in the Alps.

*Scrambles Amongst the Alps* is partially a guidebook. Whymper says in the Preface, he has endeavored "to make the book of some use to those who may wish to go mountain scrambling." But mostly it's a book of Whymper's memoirs, his high points and successes, and his failures. Concerning those failures, he is frank: "Undue prominence, perhaps, has been given to our mistakes and failures; and it will doubtless be pointed out that our practice must have been bad if the principles which are laid down are sound, or that the principles must be unsound if the practice was good. We were not immaculate. Our blunders are not held up to be admired, or to be imitated, but to be avoided."

While climbers came from a variety of nationalities, the British dominated the late 1800's mountaineering scene. In English male society, mountaineers held an elevated status. It was truly a gentlemen's sport, one which tested one's nerve and physical stamina and one that became the stuff of good conversation in social clubs and gatherings back in England. With the pungent scent of cigar and pipe smoke in the air, brandy sloshing in glasses, and a fire roaring in a stone hearth, men sat and re-lived the adventures of the summer's mountaineering season. Although deadly serious-- it was, after all, a sport in which lives could be lost--men like Whymper downplayed its heroic nature. "These scrambles amongst the Alps were holiday excursions, and as such they should be judged. They are spoken of sport and nothing more." Such commentary, of course, was expected of an Englishman. It was almost a tenet of the British to play hard, fight hard, and make light of danger. Never let them see you sweat. That's simply the way it was, the way an Englishman was expected to act.

The great prize in Whymper's day was to be the first to climb one of the world's most famous mountains, the spectacular and breathtaking Matterhorn on the Swiss and Italian border. In the late 1850's and early 1860's, the Matterhorn had repelled all attempts to reach its summit. Whymper, himself, made seven unsuccessful tries at the mountain. Finally, in 1865, Whymper was a hair's breath away from the prize he so eagerly sought. But unexpectedly, he was faced with competition from familiar quarters, a guide from the Italian side of the mountain.

The guide was Jean-Antoine Carrel, a local hero who climbed out of the mountain hamlet of Breuil on the south side of the Matterhorn. A "well-made, resolute-looking fellow" and competent climber, Carrel had been on the earliest attempts of the mountain and he plainly considered the Matterhorn his territory. British mountaineers of this era often hired guides like Carrel for their climbs. For competent climbers like Whymper, the guide-client relationship was mostly one of a team with both sharing leads and decisions. Carrel and Whymper had teamed up on climbs before, and Whymper had heretofore considered him an ally.

Whymper had gone to Breuil to engage guides for still another attempt, his eighth, on the Matterhorn. He had carefully studied the east face of the mountain, that dramatic soaring pyramidal side of the mountain viewed from the Swiss or northern side, so often portrayed in photographs. The east face looked fearsomely vertical and sheer, but Whymper felt that it was the Hörnli Ridge on the edge of the east face that held the key to the mountain's summit, and he wanted to try it.

When Whymper reached Breuil, he found Carrel and tried to talk him into a climb of the Hörnli Ridge. To climb the ridge, the mountaineers would have to hike around the mountain to its north side in the vicinity of Zermatt, Switzerland. The town of Breuil, however, where they were currently located, was on the south, Italian side. Moreover, Carrel felt that their best chances were approaching the mountain from the Italian side.

Whymper agreed to make an attempt on the south side, but if it were not successful, he asked Carrel to accompany him on an attempt from the north side on the Hörnli Ridge. Carrel agreed. They made some preliminary arrangements, and fixed their starting date two days hence.

But Carrel was hedging his bets. He didn't tell Whymper that he was already planning a climb of the Matterhorn the next day. That doubled Carrel's chances to climb the mountain, and if Whymper didn't happen to be the first ascent, that would be his tough luck.

Whymper stayed that night in a Breuil hotel from which he could scan the mountain with a telescope. The owner of the hotel was aware of Carrel's scheme and had kept it secret from Whymper. While Whymper was scanning the mountain, something caught his eye. Bringing the scope to focus and looking closely, he saw something which stunned him. It was a party moving to the base of the mountain, preparing to make an ascent, perhaps the next day. He demanded information from the owner, and finally the owner relented telling Whymper that it was Jean-Antoine Carrel and he was indeed making an attempt on the mountain.

Whymper was "mortified." He knew that Carrel could very likely make it to the summit, and if the guide did, Whymper would miss out on the mountain's first ascent and lose a place in mountaineering history. He was furious, and grasped for ideas, anything that could prevent the prize from slipping from his hands. "I retired to my room," he wrote, "and soothed by tobacco, re-studied my plans, to see if it was not possible to outmanoeuvre the Italians."

After thinking it over, he felt he might have a slim chance. If Carrel was held up by the logistics of transporting equipment or by weather. That might leave Whymper with just enough time to move around to the north or Swiss side and make an attempt on the east face.

The next morning Whymper was off, making a mad dash to the Swiss side. He was in luck. Once reaching the north side, he managed to find Swiss guides willing to go with him, and he ran into two other experienced English climbers who were also interested in climbing the mountain. Quickly, a party was put together and they were off the next day.

These are the characters in this unfolding drama:

The three guides consisted of *Michel Croz*, an able and trusted guide that Whymper had climbed with before. The other two guides were *Peter Taugwalder* and his son Peter. Whymper distinguishes the two by referring to the father as *Old Peter* and the son as *Young Peter*.

Whymper's fellow English climbers consisted of *Lord Francis Douglas* who was an up and coming climber; *Charles Hudson*, an established and experienced climber; and finally, a *Mr. Hadow* who was young and very inexperienced.

Thus, these seven men marched to the base of the imposing East face of the Matterhorn, ready to make the climb the next day. As it turned out, Carrel and the Italians had been delayed slightly, but they were ready and poised on the opposite side of the mountain. Thus both teams of climbers would be climbing at same time. All the elements were in place. The race was about to begin. Before the next day was through, what happened on the Matterhorn would be forever remembered in annals of mountaineering.

Here it is in Whymper's words . . .

## **Selected Reading**

**(From Chapter 21 & 22)**

Note: footnoted material has been removed in this version. Reading starts on next page]

## **CHAPTER XXI.**

### **THE FIRST ASCENT OF THE MATTERHORN**

“Had we succeeded well,  
We had been reckoned ‘mongst the wise: our minds  
Are so disposed to judge from the event.”

EURIPIDES

“It is a thoroughly unfair, butt an ordinary custom, to praise or blame designs (which in themselves may be good or bad) just as they turn out well or ill. Hence the same actions are at one time attributed to earnestness and at another to vanity.”

PLINY MIN.

We started from Zermatt on the 13th of July 1865, at half-past 5, on a brilliant and perfectly cloudless morning. We were eight in number Croz, old Peter and his two sons, Lord F. Douglas, Hadow, Hudson, and I. To ensure steady motion, one tourist and one native walked together. The youngest Taugwalder fell to my share, and the lad marched well, proud to be on the expedition, and happy to shew his powers. The wine-bags also fell to my lot to carry, and throughout the day, after each drink, I replenished them secretly with water, so that at the next halt they were found fuller than before! This was considered a good omen, and little short of miraculous.

On the first day we did not intend to ascend to any great height, and we mounted, accordingly, very leisurely ; picked up the things which were left in the chapel at the Schwarzsee at 8.20, and proceeded thence along the ridge connecting the Hornli with the Matterhorn. At half-past 11 we arrived at the base of the actual peak; then quitted the ridge, and clambered round some ledges on the eastern

face. We were now fairly upon the mountain, and were astonished to find that places which from the Riffel, or even from the Furggengletscher, looked entirely impracticable, were so easy that we could run about.

Before twelve o'clock we had found a good position for the tent, at a height of 11,000 feet. Croz and young Peter went on to see what was above, in order to save time on the following morning. They cut across the heads of the snow-slopes which descended inwards the Furggengletscher, and disappeared round a corner; but shortly afterwards we saw them high up on the face, moving quickly. We others made a solid platform for the tent in a well-protected spot, and then watched eagerly for the return of the men. The stones which they upset told us that they were very high, and we supposed that the way must be easy. At length, just before 3 p.m., we saw them coming down, evidently much excited. What are they saying, Peter?" "Gentlemen, they say it is no good." But when

they came near we heard a different story. "Nothing but what was good; not a difficulty, not a single difficulty! We could have gone to the summit and returned to-day easily!"

We passed the remaining hours of daylight some basking in the sunshine, some sketching or collecting; and when the sun went down, giving, as it departed, a glorious promise for the morrow, we returned to the tent to arrange for the night. Hudson made tea, I coffee, and we then retired each one to his blanket bag; the Taugwalders, Lord Francis Douglas, and myself, occupying the tent, the others remaining, by preference, outside. Long after dusk the cliffs above echoed with our laughter and with the songs of the guides, for we were happy that night in camp, and feared no evil.

We assembled together outside the tent before dawn on the morning of the 14th, and started directly it was light enough to move. Young Peter came on with us as a guide, and his brother returned to Zermatt. We followed the route which had been taken on the previous day, and in a few minutes turned the rib which had intercepted the view of the eastern face from our tent platform. The whole of this great slope was now revealed, rising for 3000 feet like a huge natural staircase. Some parts were more, and others were less, easy; but we were not once brought to a halt by any serious impediment, for when an obstruction was met in front it could always be turned to the right or to the left. For the greater part of the way there was, indeed, no occasion for the rope, and sometimes Hudson led, sometimes myself. At 6.20 we had attained a height of 12,800 feet, and halted for half-an-hour; we then continued the ascent without a break until 9.55, when we stopped for fifty minutes, at a height of 14,000 feet. Twice we struck the N.E. ridge and followed it for some little distance,--to no advantage, for it was usually more rotten and steep, and always more difficult than the face. Still, we kept near to it, lest stones perchance might fall.

We had now arrived at the foot of that part which, from the Riffelberg or from Zermatt, seems perpendicular or overhanging, and could no longer continue upon the eastern side. For a little distance we ascended the snow upon the arete that is, the ridge descending towards Zermatt, and then, by common consent, turned over to the right, or to the northern side. Before doing so, we made a change in the order of ascent. Croz went first, I followed, Hudson came third; Hadow and old Peter were last. "Now," said Croz, as he led off, "now for something altogether different." The work became difficult and required caution. In some places there was little to hold, and it was desirable that those should be in front who were least likely to slip. The general slope of the mountain at this part was less than 40 [degrees], and snow had accumulated in, and had filled up, the interstices of the rock-face, leaving only occasional fragments projecting here and there. These were at times covered with a thin film of ice, produced from the melting and refreezing of the snow. It was the counterpart, on a small scale, of the upper 700 feet of the Pointe des Ecrins, only there was this material differ-

ence; the face of the Ecrins was about, or exceeded, an angle of 50 [degrees], and the Matterhorn face was less than 40 [degrees]. It was a place over which any fair mountaineer might pass in safety, and Mr. Hudson ascended this part, and, as far as I know, the entire mountain, without having the slightest assistance rendered to him upon any occasion. Sometimes, after I had taken a hand from Croz, or received a pull, I turned to offer the same to Hudson ; but he

invariably declined, saying it was not necessary. Mr. Hadow, however, was not accustomed to this kind of work, and required continual assistance. It is only fair to say that the difficulty which he found at this part arose simply and entirely from want of experience.

This solitary difficult part was of no great extent. We bore away over it at first, nearly horizontally, for a distance of about 400 feet; then ascended directly towards the summit for about 60 feet; and then doubled back to the ridge which descends towards Zermatt. A long stride round a rather awkward corner brought us to snow once more. The last doubt vanished! The Matterhorn was ours! Nothing but 200 feet of easy snow remained to be surmounted!

You must now carry your thoughts back to the seven Italians who started from Breuil on the 11th of July. Four days had passed since their departure, and we were tormented with anxiety lest they should arrive on the top before us. All the way up we had talked of them, and many false alarms of "men on the summit " had been raised. The higher we rose, the more intense became the excitement. What if we should be beaten at the last moment? The slope eased off, at length we could be detached, and Croz and I, dashing away, ran a neck-and-neck race, which ended in a dead heat. At 1.40 p.m. the world was at our feet, and the Matterhorn was conquered. Hurrah ! Not a footstep could be seen.

It was not yet certain that we had not been beaten. The summit of the Matterhorn was formed of a rudely level ridge, about 350 feet long, and the Italians might have been at its farther extremity. I hastened to the southern end, scanning the snow right and left eagerly. Hurrah! Again; it was untrod-den. "Where were the men?" I peered over the cliff, half doubting, half expectant, and saw them immediately mere dots on the ridge at an immense distance below. Up went my arms and my hat.

"Croz! Croz!! come here!" "Where are they, Monsieur?" "There, don't you see them, down there?" "Ah! the coquins, they are low down." "Croz, we must make those fellows hear us." We yelled until we were hoarse. The Italians seemed to regard us we could not be certain. "Croz, we must make them hear us; they shall hear us!" I seized a block of rock and hurled it down, and called upon my companion, in the name of friendship, to do the same. We drove our sticks in, and prized away the crags, and soon a torrent of stones poured down the cliffs. There was no mistake about it this time. The Italians turned and fled.

Still, I would that the leader of that party could have stood with us at that moment, for our victorious shouts conveyed to him the disappointment of the ambition of a lifetime. He was the man, of all those who attempted the ascent of the Matterhorn, who most deserved to be the first upon its summit. He was the first to doubt its inaccessibility, and he was the only man who persisted in believing that its ascent would be accomplished. It was the aim of his life to make the ascent from the side of Italy, for the honour of his native valley. For a time he had the game in his hands; he played it as he thought best; but he made a false move, and he lost it.

The others had arrived, so we went back to the northern end of the ridge. Croz now took the tent-pole, and planted it in the highest snow. "Yes," we said, "there is the flag-staff, but where is the flag?" "Here it is," he answered, pulling off his blouse and fixing it to the stick. It made a poor flag,

and there was no wind to float it out, yet it was seen all around. They saw it at Zermatt at the Eiffel in the Val Tournanche. At Breuil, the watchers cried, "Victory is ours!" They raised 'bravos' for Carrel, and 'vivas' for Italy, and hastened to put themselves en fete. On the morrow they were undeceived. "All was changed; the explorers returned sad—cast down—disheartened—confounded—gloomy." It is true," said the men. "We saw them ourselves they hurled stones at us! The old traditions are true, there are spirits on the top of the Matterhorn!"

We returned to the southern end of the ridge to build a cairn, and then paid homage to the view. The day was one of those superlatively calm and clear ones which usually precede bad weather. The atmosphere was perfectly still, and free from all clouds or vapours. Mountains fifty—may a hundred—miles off looked sharp and near. All their details—ridge and crag, snow and glacier stood out with faultless definition. Pleasant thoughts of happy days in bygone years came up unbidden, as we recognised the old, familiar forms. All were revealed—not one of the principal peaks of the Alps was hidden. I see them clearly now—the great inner circles of giants, backed by the ranges, chains, and massifs. First came the Dent Blanche, hoary and grand ; the Gabelhorn and pointed Rothhorn and then the peerless Weisshorn; the towering Mischabelhorner, flanked by the Allaleinhorn, Strahlhorn, and Rimpfischhorn; then Monte Rosa—with its many Spitzes—the Lyskannn and the Breithorn. Behind were the Bernese Oberland, governed by the Kinstraarhorn; the Simplon and St. Gothard groups; the Disgrazia and the Orteler. Towards the south we looked down to Chivasso on the plain of Piedmont, and far beyond. The Viso—one hundred miles away seemed close upon us; the Maritime Alps one hundred and thirty miles distant were free from haze. Then came my first love—the Pelvoux; the Ecrins and the Meije; the clusters of the Graians : and lastly, in the west, glowing in full sunlight, rose the monarch of all—Mont Blanc. Ten thousand feet beneath us were the green fields of Zermatt, dotted with chalets, from which blue smoke rose lazily. Eight thousand feet below, on the other side, were the pastures of Breuil . There were forests black and gloomy, and meadows bright and lively; bounding waterfalls and tranquil lakes: fertile lands and savage wastes; sunny plains and frigid plateaux. There were the most rugged forms, and the most graceful outlines bold, perpendicular cliffs, and gentle, undulating slopes; rocky mountains and snowy mountains, sombre and solemn, or glittering and white, with walls turrets pinnacles pyramids domes cones and spires! There was every combination that the world can give, and every contrast that the heart could desire.

We remained on the summit for one hour

"One crowded hour of glorious life."

It passed away too quickly, and we began to prepare for the descent.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### DESCENT OF THE MATTERHORN.

Hudson and I again consulted as to the best and safest arrangement of the party. We agreed that it would be best for Croz to go first, and Hadow second; Hudson, who was almost equal to a born mountaineer in sureness of foot, wished to be third; Lord Francis Douglas was placed next, and old Peter, the strongest of the remainder, after him. I suggested to Hudson that we should attach a rope to the rocks on our arrival at the difficult bit, and hold it as we descended, as an additional protection. He approved the idea, but it was not definitely settled that it should be done. The party was being

arranged in the above order whilst I was sketching the summit, and they had finished, and were waiting for me to be tied in line, when some one remembered that our names had not been left in a bottle. They requested me to write them down, and moved off while it was being done.

A few minutes afterwards I tied myself to young Peter, ran down after the others, and caught them just as they were commencing the descent of the difficult part. Great care was being taken. Only one man was moving at a time; when he was firmly planted the next advanced, and so on. They had not, however, attached the additional rope to rocks, and nothing was said about it. The suggestion was not made for my own sake, and I am not sure that it even occurred to me again. For some little distance we two followed the others, detached from them, and should have continued so had not Lord Francis Douglas asked me, about 3 p.m., to tie on to old Peter, as he feared, he said, that Taugwalder would not be able to hold his ground if a slip occurred.

A few minutes later, a sharp-eyed lad ran into the Monte Rosa hotel, to Seiler, saying that he had seen an avalanche fall from the summit of the Matterhorn on to the Matterhornletscher. The boy was reproved for telling idle stories; he was right, nevertheless, and this was what he saw.

Michel Croz had laid aside his axe, and in order to give Mr. Hadow greater security, was absolutely taking hold of his legs, and putting his feet, one by one, into their proper positions. So far as I know, no one was actually descending. I cannot speak with certainty, because the two leading men were partially hidden from my sight by an intervening mass of rock, but it is my belief, from the movements of their shoulders, that Croz, having done as I have said, was in the act of turning round, to go down a step or two himself; at this moment Mr. Hadow slipped, fell against him, and knocked him over. I heard one startled exclamation from Croz, then saw him and Mr. Hadow flying downwards; in another moment Hudson was dragged from his steps, and Lord F. Douglas immediately after him. All this was the work of a moment. Immediately we heard Croz's exclamation, old Peter and I planted ourselves as firmly as the rocks would permit; the rope was taut between us, and the jerk came on us both as one man. We held; but the rope broke midway between Taugwalder and Lord Francis Douglas. For a few seconds we saw our unfortunate companions sliding downwards on their backs, and spreading out

their hands, endeavouring to save themselves. They passed from our sight uninjured, disappeared one by one, and fell from precipice to precipice on to the Matterhornletscher below, a distance of nearly 4000 feet in height. From the moment the rope broke it was impossible to help them.

So perished our comrades! For the space of half-an-hour we remained on the spot without moving a single step. The two men, paralysed by terror, cried like infants, and trembled in such a manner as to threaten us with the fate of the others. Old Peter rent the air with exclamations of "Chamounix! Oh, what will Chamounix say?" He meant, Who would believe that Croz could fall? The young man did nothing but scream or sob, "We are lost! we are lost!" Fixed between the two, I could neither move up nor down. I begged young Peter to descend, but he dared not. Unless he did, we could not advance. Old Peter became alive to the danger, and swelled the cry, "We are lost! we are lost!" The father's fear was natural--he trembled for his son; the young man's fear was cowardly he thought of self alone. At last old Peter summoned up courage, and changed his position to a rock to which he could fix the rope; the young man then descended, and we all stood together. Immediately we did so, I asked for the rope which had given way, and found, to my surprise indeed, to my horror that it was the weakest of the three ropes. It was not brought, and should not have been employed, for the purpose for which it was used. It was old rope, and, compared with the others, was feeble. It was intended as a reserve, in case we had to leave much rope behind, attached to rocks. I saw at once that

a serious question was involved, and made him give me the end. It had broken in mid-air, and it did not appear to have sustained previous injury.

For more than two hours afterwards I thought almost every moment that the next would be my last; for the Taugwalders, utterly unnerved, were not only incapable of giving assistance, but were in such a state that a slip might have been expected from them at any moment. After a time, we were able to do that which should have been done at first, and fixed rope to firm rocks, in addition to being tied together. These ropes were cut from time to time, and were left behind. Even with their assurance the men were afraid to proceed, and several times old Peter turned with ashy face and faltering limbs, and said, with terrible emphasis, "I cannot!"

About 6 P.M. we arrived at the snow upon the ridge descending towards Zermatt, and all peril was over. We frequently looked, but in vain, for traces of our unfortunate companions; we bent over the ridge and cried to them, but no sound returned. Convinced at last that they were either within sight nor hearing, we ceased from our useless efforts; and, too cast down for speech, silently gathered up our things, and the little effects of those who were lost, preparatory to continuing the descent. When, lo! a mighty arch appeared, rising above the Lyskamm, high into the sky. Pale, colourless, and noiseless, but perfectly sharp and defined, except where it was lost in the clouds, this unearthly apparition seemed like a vision from another world; and, almost appalled, we watched with amazement the gradual development of two vast crosses, one on either side. If the Taugwalders had not been the first to perceive it, I should have doubted my senses. They thought it had some connection with the accident, and I, after a while, that it might bear some relation to ourselves. But our movements had no effect upon it. The spectral forma

remained motionless. It was a fearful and wonderful sight; unique in my experience, and impressive beyond description, coming at such a moment.

I was ready to leave, and waiting for the others. They had recovered their appetites and the use of their tongues. They spoke in patois, which I did not understand. At length the said in French, "Monsieur." "Yes." "We are poor men ; we have lost our Herr; we shall not get paid; we can ill afford this." "Stop!" I said, interrupting him, "that is nonsense ; I shall pay you, of course, just as if your Herr were here." They talked together in their patois for a short time, and then the son spoke again. "We don't wish you to pay us. We wish you to write in the hotel-book at Zermatt, and to your journals, that we have not been paid." "What nonsense are you talking? I don't understand you. What do you mean?" He proceeded "Why, next year there will be many travelers at Zermatt, and we shall get more voyageurs."

Who would answer such a proposition? I made them no reply in words, but they knew very well the indignation that I felt. They filled the cup of bitterness to overflowing, and I tore down the cliff, madly and recklessly, in a way that caused them, more than once, to inquire if I wished to kill them. Night fell; and for an hour the descent was continued in the darkness. At half-past 9 a resting-place was found, and upon a wretched slab, barely large enough to hold the three, we passed six miserable hours. At day-break the descent was resumed, and from the Hornli ridge we ran down to the chalets of Buhl, and on to Zermatt. Seiler met me at his door, and followed in silence to my room. "What is the matter ?" "The Taugwalders and I have returned. He did not need more, and burst into tears; but lost no time in useless lamentations, and set to work to arouse the village. Ere long a score of men had started to ascend the Hohlicht heights, above Kalbematt and Z'Mutt, which commanded the plateau of the Matterhorn-gletscher. They remained after six hours, and reported that they had seen the bodies lying motionless on the snow. This was on Saturday; and they proposed that we should

leave on Sunday evening, so as to arrive upon the plateau at daybreak on Monday. Unwilling to lose the slightest chance, the Rev. J. M'Cormick and I resolved to start on Sunday morning. The Zermatt men, threatened with excommunication by their priests if they failed to attend the early mass, were unable to accompany us. To several of them, at least, this was a severe trial. Peter Perrn declared with tears that nothing else would have prevented him from joining in the search for his old comrades. Englishmen came to our aid. The Rev. J. Robertson and Mr. J. Phillpotts offered themselves, and their guide Franz Andermatten; another Englishman lent us Joseph Marie and Alexandre Lochmatter. Frederic Payot, and Jean Tairraz, of Chamounix, also volunteered.

We started at 2 a.m. on Sunday the 16th, and followed the route that we had taken on the previous Thursday as far as the Hornli. Thence we went down to the right of the ridge, and mounted through the seracs of the Matterhornletscher. By 8.30 we had got to the plateau at the top of the glacier, and within sight of the corner in which we knew my companions must be. As we saw one weather-beaten man after another raise the telescope, turn deadly pale, and pass it on without a word to the next, we knew that all hope was gone. We approached. They had fallen below as they had fallen above Croz a little in advance, Hadow near him, and Hudson some distance behind ; but of Lord

Francis Douglas we could see nothing. We left them where they fell; buried in snow at the base of the grandest cliff of the most majestic mountain of the Alps.

All those who had fallen had been tied with the Manilla, or with the second and equally strong rope, and, consequently, there had been only one link that between old Peter and Lord Francis Douglas where the weaker rope had been used. This had a very ugly look for Taugwalder, for it was not possible to suppose that the others would have sanctioned the employment of a rope so greatly inferior in strength when there were more than two hundred and fifty feet of the better qualities still remaining out of use. For the sake of the old guide (who bore a good reputation), and upon all other accounts, it was desirable that this matter should be cleared up; and after my examination before the court of inquiry which was instituted by the Government was over, I handed in a number of questions which were framed so as to afford old Peter an opportunity of exculpating himself from the grave suspicions which at once fell upon him. The questions, I was told, were put and answered; but the answers, although promised, have never reached me.

Meanwhile, the administration sent strict injunctions to recover the bodies, and upon the 19th of July, twenty-one men of Zermatt accomplished that sad and dangerous task. Of the body of Sir Francis Douglas they, too, saw nothing; it was probably still arrested on the rocks above. The remains of Hudson and Hadow were interred upon the north side of the Zermatt Chinch, in the presence of a reverent crowd of sympathising friends. The body of Michel Croz lies upon the other side, under a simpler tomb; whose inscription bears honourable testimony to his rectitude, to his courage, and to his devotion.

So the traditional inaccessibility of the Matterhorn was vanquished, and was replaced by legends of a more real character. Others will essay to scale its proud cliffs, but to none will it be the mountain that it was to its early explorers. Others may tread its summit-snows, but none will ever know the feelings of those who first gazed upon its marvelous panorama; and none, I trust, will ever be compelled to tell of joy turned into grief, and of laughter into mourning. It proved to be a stubborn foe; it resisted long, and gave many a hard blow ; it was defeated at last with an ease that none could have anticipated, but, like a relentless enemy conquered but not crushed it took terrible vengeance. The time may come when the Matterhorn shall have passed away, and nothing, save a heap of shapeless fragments, will mark the spot where the great mountain stood; for, atom by atom, inch by inch,

and yard by yard, it yields to forces which nothing can withstand. That time is far distant; and ages hence, generations unborn will gaze upon its awful precipices, and wonder at its unique form. However exalted may be their ideas, and however exuberated their expectations, none will come to return disappointed!

The play is over, and the curtain is about to fall. Before we part, a word upon the graver teachings of the mountains, yonder height! 'Tis far away--unbidden comes the word "Impossible!" "Not so," says the mountaineer." The way is long, I know; it's difficult--it may be--dangerous. It's possible, I'm sure; I'll seek the way; take counsel of my brother mountaineers, and find how they have gained similar heights, and learned to avoid the dangers." He starts (all slumbering down below); the path is slippery may be laborious,

too. Caution and perseverance gain the day the height is reached! and those beneath cry, "Incredible; 'tis superhuman!"

"We who go mountain-scrambling have constantly set before us the superiority of fixed purpose or perseverance to brute force. We know that each height, each step, must be gained by patient, laborious toil, and that wishing cannot take the place of working; we know the benefits of mutual aid; that many a difficulty must be encountered, and many an obstacle must be grappled with or turned, but we know that where there's a will there's a way; and we come back to our daily occupations better fitted to fight the battle of life, and to overcome the impediments which obstruct our paths, strengthened and cheered by the recollection of past labours, and by the memories of victories gained in other fields.

I have not made myself either an advocate or an apologist for mountaineering, nor do I now intend to usurp the functions of a moralist; but my task would have been ill performed if it had been concluded without one reference to the more serious lessons of the mountaineer. We glory in the physical regeneration which is the product of our exertions ; pre exult over the grandeur of the scenes that are brought before our eyes, the splendours of sunrise and sunset, and the beauties of hill, dale, lake, wood, and waterfall; but we value more highly the development of manliness, and the evolution, under combat with difficulties, of those noble qualities of human nature courage, patience, endurance, and fortitude.

Some hold these virtues in less estimation, and assign base and contemptible motives to those who indulge in our innocent sport.

"Be thou chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny."

Others, again, who are not detractors, find mountaineering, as a sport, to be wholly unintelligible. It is not greatly to be wondered at we are not all constituted alike. Mountaineering is a pursuit essentially adapted to the young or vigorous, and not to the old or feeble. To the latter, toil may be no pleasure ; and it is often said by such persons, "This man is making a toil of pleasure." Let the motto on the title-page be an answer, if an answer be required. Toil he must who goes mountaineering ; but out of the toil comes strength (not merely muscular energy more than that), an awakening of all the faculties; and from the strength arises pleasure. Then, again, it is often asked, in tones which seem to imply that the answer must, at least, be doubtful, "But does it repay you?" Well, we cannot estimate our enjoyment as you measure your wine, or weigh your lead, it is real, nevertheless. If I could blot out every reminiscence, or erase every memory, still I should say that my scrambles amongst the Alps have repaid me, for they have given me two of the best things a man can possess health and friends.

The recollections of past pleasures cannot be effaced. Even now as I write they crowd up before me. First comes an endless series of pictures, magnificent in form, effect, and colour. I see the great peaks, with clouded tops, seeming to mount up for ever and ever; I hear the music of the distant herds, the peasant's jodel, and the solemn church-bells; and I scent the fragrant breath of the pines: and after these have passed away, another train of thoughts succeeds of those who have been upright, brave, and true: of kind hearts and

bold deeds: and of courtesies received at stranger hands, trifles in themselves, but expressive of that good will towards men which is the essence of charity.

Still, the last, sad memory hovers round, and sometimes drifts across like floating mist, cutting off sunshine, and chilling the remembrance of happier times. There have been joys too great to be described in words, and there have been griefs upon which I have not dared to dwell; and with these in mind I say, Climb if you will, but remember that courage and strength are nought without prudence, and that a momentary negligence may destroy the happiness of a lifetime. Do nothing in haste; look well to each step; and from the beginning think what may be the end.