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## THE GUIDE.

BY A. E. W. MASON.

So it is all over, monsieur. Tomorrow morning you leave for England. Five o'clock, is it not? I will come to the train for the last shake of the hand."

Alphonse Revaillood smiled at the young, sunburnt face of his companion as he sat opposite to him at a little table on the balcony above the roaring glacier stream. The two men touched glasses and drank. With nightfall there had come, as always, a freshness upon Chamonix. The air of that little town at the bottom of a cup had grown brisk. It was the first week of August; one might have believed it to be the last week of spring, even though no wind blew and the day had been close. Both men were silent for a little while. They had been six weeks together, passing from the Bernese Oberland to the Pennine Alps about Zermatt and from Zermatt to the aiguilles of Mont Blanc—six weeks of a very true comradeship. Rivers, the young Englishman, sat and lived through them again. The long, wearisome walks from the valleys to the huts and from the huts in the dark of the morning over stones and moraines to the foot of the climb were forgotten. He remembered only the cheery evenings in the mountain inns, the sunlit hour upon this or that summit when there was just room for Revaillood and himself to sit, and the climbs themselves. The traverse of the Matterhorn from Breuil, the rocks of the Shreckhorn, the ice-slope of the Col. Dolent, the desperate scramble of the Grepon, and the last climb, today's traverse of the Aiguilles de Chamois, crowded upon his memory. He looked upward from the balcony toward the dark, clear sky. A planet shone in the gaps between Mont Blanc and the Aiguille du Midi, an extra depth of darkness showed where the snow-fields glimmered down to the Glacier des Bossons.

"Yes," he said, "for me it is all over. But not for you, Alphonse. This is the first week of August. You have five weeks still."

Alphonse Revaillood shook his head; and Rivers suddenly became conscious of something very forlorn in his aspect. Revaillood took off his hat and laid it on a chair beside him. "No, monsieur, I have made my last big expedition today."

He was only fifty-four, but he was quite bald, the thin beard upon his chin was very gray, his eyes were bloodshot, his face deeply lined and worn. He had certainly the look this evening of a quite old man.

"You!" exclaimed Rivers. "You go as well as ever. The little chimney on the top of the Chamois, for instance, today —"

"Yes, yes," replied Alphonse; "but my eyes are no longer good. My feet burn too much. *Les petites courses!* They remain for me. I shall lead mules up to the Montanvers and take parties of ladies to the 'jardin.'"

He spoke sadly, looking up to the mountains, but without any bitterness.

"It was bound to come, of course, but I admit, monsieur, I do not look forward to leading mules up to the Montanvers. There will be no more traveling, no more visiting old friends at Grindelwald and Arolla and Zermatt. It is good, is it not, to see old friends? All that is over. I shall lead mules up to the Montanvers. I think, monsieur, that life is very sad."

Rivers knew not what to say. He himself was touched. The name of Alphonse Revaillood was historic in the records of the chain of Mont Blanc. Alphonse had been the best of the Chamonix guides thirty years ago when the aiguilles were for the greater part virgin peaks; and of the first ascents the most difficult were associated with his name. Yet now he sat, an old man before his time, with nothing left in life, it seemed, but to conduct parties on the *mer de glace* and lead mules up to the Montanvers; a dull, sad life for a great climber.

"You never married, Alphonse?" said Rivers out of his sympathy. The guide was to be panned in the valley of Chamonix; a wife and children would have made the pen more comfortable.

"Never."

"Did you ever wish to?"

"Once, monsieur. But I think that I am very fortunate not to have had my wish," he said with a smile. "She was fond of comforts and luxuries. And those tastes will not match with poverty."

"Poverty."

"Yes. We have two months in the year, that's all. If we make two thousand francs, monsieur, we are fortunate."

Eighty pounds a year! Rivers compared the sum with the earnings of a professional cricketer in England. It seemed very small. And these men risked their lives into the bargain. Rivers remembered a sentence which Alphonse had uttered to one of those who decry the risks and increase the accidents in the Alps. *Il y a toujours du danger,* he had said. It was as though Alphonse had been following Rivers' thoughts, for he suddenly leaned forward.

"There was an accident upon the mountain we ascended today. It happened a little while ago. It was an Englishman. He preferred to climb with only one guide. He had climbed the Chamois and was descending. He was clever and sure upon the rocks, but not safe at all upon ice. I was sitting here with his guide the afternoon before the accident, a man from the Val Tournanche, and he was saying that this would be the last climb he would undertake with Mr. Hawk alone. Mr. Hawk, that was the name. But, you see, he made the last climb, and coming down one of them slipped upon the glacier. I showed you the crevasse where we found them together. The glacier is steep above it, and there was very little snow that year. It was ice, ice, ice everywhere, where as a rule there is snow. I have never known glaciers so uncovered."

"Even this year?" said the Englishman. "This year it is about the same," replied Alphonse. "Perhaps that is why I remembered that accident so vividly. Yet I do not think that is the reason. You will understand perhaps." He was silent for a moment or two, and then resumed:

"I had come over Mont Blanc from Courmayeur that day, and in the evening I heard that Mr. Hawk had not returned. We went up to the Plan de l'Aiguille in the night, the hut where you slept yesterday, monsieur. There was half a dozen of us, but I was the oldest. At all events they looked to me for direction. We reached the Glacier de Nantillon at daybreak and ascended it to the rocks between that glacier and the Glacier du Midi. At the top of the rocks we took to the glacier again, following in the steps which they had cut. Finally we came to the great crevasse. Beyond its upper edge the glacier rose steeply toward the great seracs. We looked down into its depths. It was deeper than it is now, yet not so deep but that we could see the bottom. The two men were lying there quite still. We called to them. They did not move, nor answer."

"It was evident how the accident had happened. Both men were hurrying over the glacier in the afternoon. They were right to hurry; for there were some of the seracs on the top of the glacier which looked ready to fall, and it would not have been wise to loiter underneath them in the afternoon. But the guide was no doubt leading too fast for Mr. Hawk, who was not safe on ice. At the point where they slipped you will remember that it is necessary to traverse the glacier horizontally, and if one man slipped there he would swing down the whole length of the rope before the jerk came upon the other. No doubt that is what happened. Mr. Hawk slipped and dragged his guide out of his steps. Jean Prevot, a young porter, and I were lowered together into the crevasse. We found both men quite dead. The crevasse was not so deep but that the guide might have climbed out of it if he had lived. But his neck was broken, and he must have died at once. Mr. Hawk had lived for a little while. That was clear, for the snow, just about where he lay, was all kicked by his feet. He had lain there for a little while and suffered. We tied a rope about his middle, and then, holding him as well as I could, I climbed up while those above hauled on the rope. It was difficult to support him."

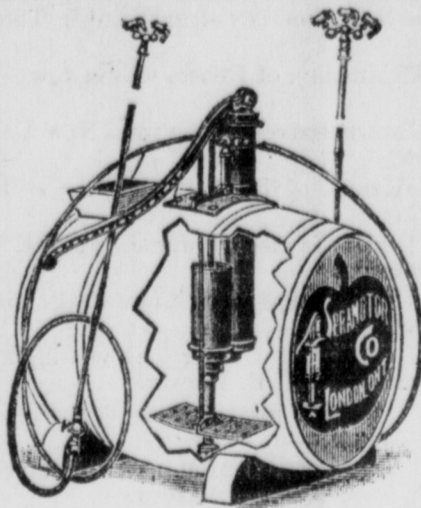
Alphonse described the recovery of the bodies with a matter of fact minuteness of detail.

"His head continually knocked against mine. At last we reached the mouth of the crevasse and were drawn up into the sunlight. But we very nearly were dropped to the bottom again; for as our heads rose above the lip of the crevasse I saw the face of the guide who was hauling upon the rope in front of me suddenly go green. He let go the rope and was very sick. Luckily there were others behind him, older men, to whom this expedition was no new thing, and they held firm. Well, we were brought out of the crevasse and I was lowered into it again. At the bottom I found Jean Prevot standing by the side of the dead guide. He was shivering, partly with cold perhaps, but not altogether. He pointed to the dead man and said 'Look!' I looked, and I saw that his head was completely frozen into a block of ice. We had to cut the ice away with our axes, and while I did the work Jean Prevot stood at my side, saying with a kind of horror in his voice: 'See what any of us poor guides may come to!' I think that it is because of those words that I remember the accident so vividly to-night."

"You felt the horror, too," said Rivers.

"Then, yes! But to-night not so much. To-night I feel, monsieur, that life is very sad."

He drank up his glass of beer and rose



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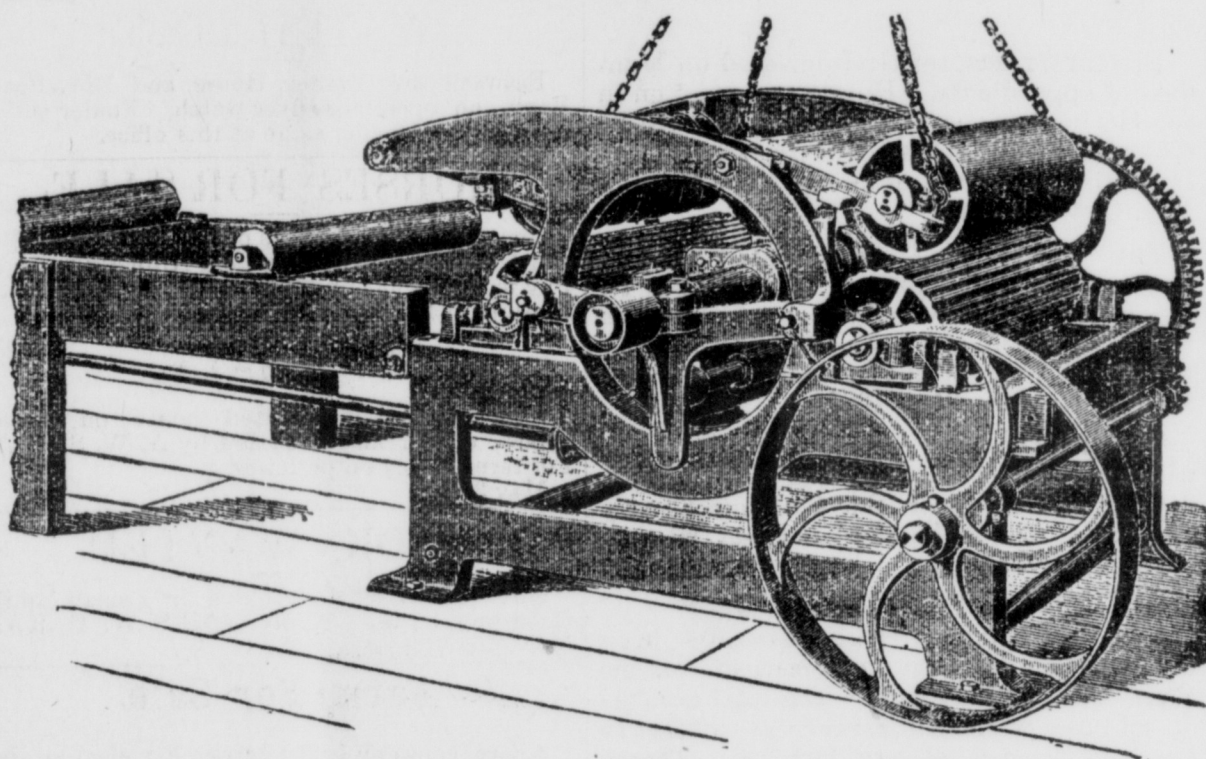
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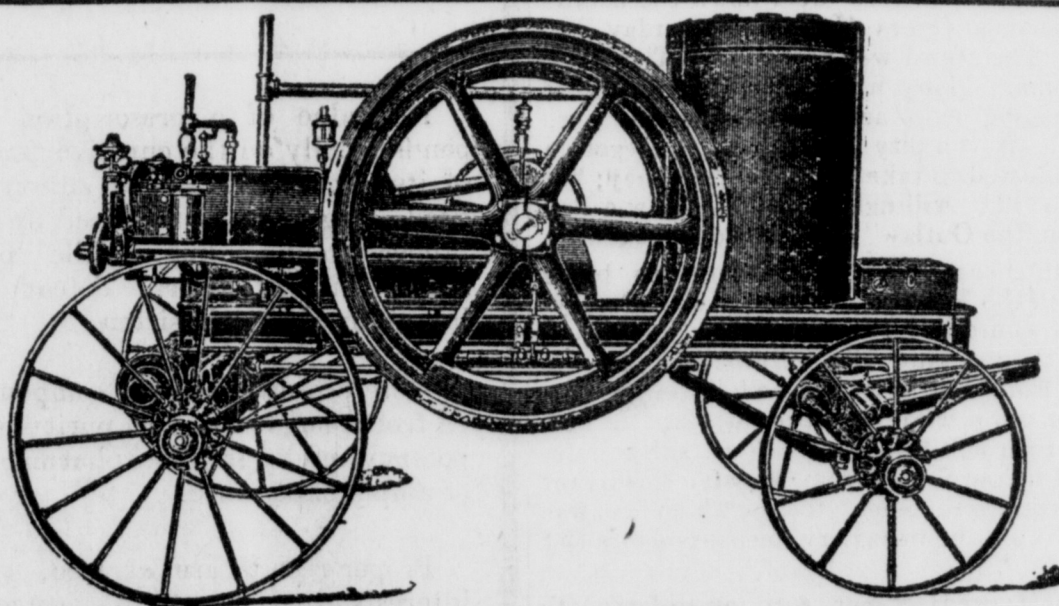
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from his chair.

"You have to pack, monsieur." He held out his hand. "When you come back next year, with another guide, you will perhaps come and see me."

"Of course."

They shook hands, and Alphonse put on his hat and walked away. Certainly, although his walk was sure, he had the look of a very old man. To Rivers, whose heart had been touched by the guide's unexpected words, there was more than age visible in his aspect. There was a most pitiful look of loneliness as well.

Alphonse walked through the lighted streets. One or two of his friends called to him from the group which crowds at night the space where the four streets meet. But he took notice. His thoughts were back in the early years of the Mont Blanc chain, when the Dru and the Geant and the Grepon and the Pic Sans Nom were all unscathed. He recalled the many attempts and defeats, the moments when you thought you might go forward but were very sure that if you did you could not come back, the moments when it was decided to venture all upon that chance—the exhilaration of effort, the final triumph. But most of all he thought of that crevasse upon the Glacier de Nantillon and of the guide lying there with his head frozen in the ice, killed suddenly in the fullness of his strength. To Alphonse the death seemed enviable. He came to the end of the town and walked for a little way between fields. It was true that his name was associated with many of the aiguilles which towered an extra depth of darkness in the dark sky above him. But to-morrow he would begin upon "les petites courses." To-morrow he would be leading mules up to the Montanvers. He pushed open the door of his dark and empty cottage. "See what any of us poor guides may come to," he said to himself, repeating the words which Jean Prevot had spoken in the crevasse, but in a very different connection.—Saturday Evening Post.

### Bonner on Human Nature.

(Philadelphia Bulletin.)

The late Emerson Bennett of Philadelphia was in his prime the most popular American author. He was the star of Robert Bonner's New York Ledger staff, and certain of his books—The Prairie Flower and The Phantom of the Forest—had a circulation that would be thought enormous even now.

Mr. Bennett was over 80 when he died. He was so unfortunate as to have outlived his fame. Nevertheless, he continued cheerful to the end, and in the Masonic Home, where his last days were passed, his humor was prized highly.

Mr. Bennett often used to talk about Robert Bonner at the home. This is one of the Bonner stories that he sometimes told:

Bonner one day was criticizing human nature cynically. A clergyman took up the cudgel in human nature's defense.

"There is good in all of us," he said; "more good than bad. I believe that 99 per cent. of us have never done anything for which there is real cause to be ashamed."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Bonner. "Every man has a skeleton in his closet. You could shoot a gun anywhere and bring down a bad man."

"Why," he continued warmly, "I once knew a bishop who was considered the holiest man in America. A friend of mine, by way of a joke, telegraphed one night to this bishop:

"All is discovered. Fly at once."

Mr. Bonner paused and chuckled.

"Well?" said the clergyman, impatiently.

"Well, what happened?"

"By morning," said Mr. Bonner, "the bishop had disappeared, and he has never been heard of since."

### It Was an Attraction Well Worth Seeing.

Sells & Downs big combined circuses proved a drawing card for Chillicothe. They brought the biggest crowd to this city that has been here in years. They saw a brilliant spectacle in the street parade, and a tent performance that was surpassing in its merits and which possessed many uniquely excellent features.

The Sells & Downs Show is run on business principles, and does not disappoint the people. Within a few minutes after 10:30 the parade made its appearance, and there was a rush for points of vantage to get a good view of the riders, the bands, the clowns and the animals. The parade was all that could have been expected and drew forth many exclamations of interest, amusement and admiration.

Several good bands made the air melodious. Claiming special attention were a dozen lady riders, very handsomely costumed in white satin and bloomers, and riding astride. Carrie Nation with her hatchet brought forth peals of merriment and shouts of "You, Carrie!" from the crowd. The great bovalap, the big, savage white horned animal from the Philippines, the first ever seen in this county, was viewed in wonder. On his back was his keeper, a big Filipino. The lions, leopards, camels and Queen, the big elephant, all came in for their share of interest. The wagons were all in good condition and the parade was an index to the shows prosperity.—Constitution, Chillicothe, (Mo.) In Woodstock on Saturday June 24th.

### For June Bridegrooms.

Unless a man is a good listener he should stay out of the matrimonial game.