

Francis Fox Tuckett [et Rev. W.-A.-B. Coolidge]

A pioneer in the high Alps. Alpine diaries and letters of F. F. Tuckett, 1856-1874

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Extrait (pp. 123-139) du chapitre V concernant le séjour de F. F. Tuckett au Mont-Viso et dans les Alpes dauphinoises durant l'été 1862. Cette partie contient les extraits du journal avec les textes intercalaires et les notes du Rev. W. A. B. Coolidge.

Note : Cette transcription respecte la convention typographique de l'édition originale. Les extraits du journal et des lettres sont dans une police plus petite que celle des textes introductifs et intercalaires de Coolidge.

1 July was a busy day, spent by Tuckett in making preparations for his great Viso and Dauphiné campaign. During this memorable journey Tuckett made (in his diary) eighteen admirable topographical sketches, eleven of which later lithographed privately, while three appeared in vol. I. of the *Alpine Journal*, fourteen in vol. i. of the German translation of Tuckett's Alpine articles, published in 1873 by Liebeskind at Leipzig, and two sketches in the first editions (both issued in 1863) of Ball's *Western Alps*, and of Joanne's *Itineraire du Dauphiné*, vol. ii. (eight sketches). His little photographed map of the Dauphiné Alps (reduced, with corrections, from the then unpublished French Government Map, and reproduced in Ball, p. 62) was another result of this journey, which ranks amongst the most important ever made in the Alps. Yet it would appear that Tuckett never again visited the Dauphine Alps.

DIARY. *Cols de Seylières and de Vallante*. Tuckett and his two guides, with B. Peyrotte of Bobbio.

2 July. Rose at 6.30, packed, breakfasted at 8.30, and then out to the Observatory to get an observation. At 12 left for Pinerolo by rail. Arrived at 1.20. Had some dinner, and at 2.30 left by the 'bus for La Torre, which we reached at 4.15. A| delicious place. The " Ours " is a charming inn. A little after 5 I strolled up the road on the W. side of the Val Angrogna, and, bearing off to the left, struck a path which brought us out on the summit of a hill, commanding one of the most exquisite views conceivable. Saluzzo appeared in the distance, and we made out the entrance of the valley of the Po. The eye ranged over a vast extent of plain, which was most lovely. Gradually the clouds cleared off the mountains. We descended by another path, and reached La Tour at 7.30. Had some tea, with trout etc., and at 9 went to bed. A lovely young moon, and lots of *luciole*.

3 July. Rose at 3.30, breakfasted, and at 4.30 started in a char for Bobbio, which we reached at 6.30. Here we engaged a porter [*i.e.* Bartolommeo Peyrotte], but had a long wait, as Perren left his passport at La Torre, and had to go back to fetch it, when we had gone some distance. At length at 8.15, we started, and at 11 reached Pra. Had dinner, and at 1 started for the Col de Seylières [9272 ft.], which we reached at 4, taking it very leisurely. The clouds cleared off, and the view of the Viso was magnificent. At 5 left for the Col de Vallante [9269 ft.], which we reached at 6.30. The weather exquisite, and the view of Monte Viso, etc. exquisite. At 7 started again, and a little after 8 reached the chalets of the Vallon de Vallante, a little above Pian Meyer. Had some chocolate, and at 10 went to bed comfortably in my bag.

A short notice of these two passes, and a long description of the famous sleeping-bag is to be found in Tuckett's article in the *Alpine Journal*, i. pp. 26-28, reprinted in *Pictures in Tyrol*, by Miss E. Tuckett, pp. 115-119. It should be borne in mind that it was only in 1861 that the Viso had been first ascended by W. Mathews and F. W. Jacomb, with J. B. and Michel Croz of Chamonix. Tuckett had taken Michel Croz with him probably because he had been up the Viso and had also visited the Dauphiné Alps with W. Mathews in 1860, his first journey in the Alps, as stated by Mr. Bonney in his *Sketches in the High Alps of Dauphiné*, p. 7. Next day, 4 July, Tuckett reached the summit of Monte Viso (12,609 feet) and spent the night there with his three companions, a daring experiment which, however, ended well. This seems to be the second ascent of the peak.¹

DIARY. Monte Viso. Tuckett, with M. Croz, P. Perren, and B. Peyrotte.

4 July. Rose at 6. A lovely morning. Breakfasted on bread and milk, and at 8.15 started for the Viso with our porter. At 9.45 halted on some debris to rest. At 10.30 halted near one of a chain of lakes to have a second breakfast. At 11 started again, and at 11.45 reached the base of the steeper portion of the mountain. Here we halted to put on gaiters, and at 12 started again. At 1.45 halted to dine. View glorious. At 2 started again, and at 3.30 reached the summit. The

view was most glorious, perfectly clear to the S. and W., but the plain was more or less covered with light fleecy clouds, and the Pennine Alps were entirely concealed by large masses of bright cumuli. I deposited a Casella's mercurial minimum, and one of his Philip's maxima in the cairn on the E. summit, and made sundry barometrical observations. Snow covered the upper ten feet entirely, and it was not feasible to pass to the W. summit. There can, however, be no doubt that the one on which we stood is the highest. Meanwhile, the guides and our porter from Bobbio, Bartolommeo Peyrotte, busied themselves in the construction of a gîte for the night about 60 feet below the summit. The sunset was magnificent, the huge, pointed shadow of the mountain stretching away over the fleecy clouds which covered part of the plain, but already it froze, and at 8 we turned in. The night was cold, and at 3 fog and snow came on, which rendered our position very uncomfortable. It appeared to me that some of the mountains in the direction of Maurin to the S.W. were loftier than the Viso, but not so those S. of Queyras, as stated by Whymper. I gazed long, in order to discern the sea, but, though there was little or no haze in that direction, nothing was visible, though at one time I fancied I saw what might be Corsica.

5 July. Rose at 5.15, left the summit at 6, and at 7.45 halted at the foot of the steep ascent to breakfast. At 8.15 started again, reaching the chalets at 10.15. Had some milk, and at 2.30 started for Chianale. Soon we met three *douaniers*, and had to display our luggage. At 3.30 reached Ponte Castello [*i.e.* Castelponte]. At 4.5 Ponte Chianale, and at 4.50 Chianale. The valley from Ponte Castello is beautiful. Fine woods, meadows, and barley fields. Ponte Chianale is situated on the summit of a rise which commands a fine view. We spent the night at Chianale.

In all probability Whymper's peaks " S. of Queyras " (*i.e.* Château Queyras in the valley of the Guil) are identical with those seen by Tuckett " in the direction of Maurin to the S.W." In any case,² let it be stated at once that *none* of the peaks in either direction are really higher than the Viso, the loftiest being the Aiguille de Chambeyron (11,155 feet), on the E. side of the Ubaye valley, while opposite, on the other side of that valley, the Pointe de la Font Sancte (which is directly S. of the Queyras valley) attains a height of 11,057 feet only. Tuckett revised his opinion on 10 July (see below).

DIARY. Col dell' Agnello. Tuckett with his two guides and B. Peyrotte.³

6 July. Rose at 4. Had some breakfast, and started for Guillestre via the Col de l'Agnello [9003 ft.] and Queyras [*i.e.* Château Queyras]. At 7.15 reached the Col. There is a fine view of the Viso from the Col, as well as from two points below it.⁴ The Rioburent is also visible. On the other side a grand view of the "Montagnes d'Oysans." At 8.15 started for the descent. The path is good, and the descent very gentle. A little below the summit we passed a *préposé* station. At Font Gillarde [*i.e.* Fongillarde], which we reached at 10.10, is the *douane*. In front, the view of the Pelvoux is fine. At the *douane* we were kept waiting some time for the officers to rise, but at 10.30 got away. At 11.15 reached Molines at the junction of the valleys of St. Veran and L'Agnello. At 12.15 reached Villevieille, and halted *chez l'Elephant* to have some lunch. At 12.30 started again, and at 1 reached Chateau Queyras. We had some trouble in getting a *voiture*, but succeeded at last in securing a *char*, and at 2 started for Guillestre. From Font Gillarde to Molines there is a decent *char* road, and from thence an excellent road to Villevieille, where the *grande route* from Montdauphin to Abriès is reached. At 4.45 reached Guillestre. The views of the Pelvoux in descending were magnificent. A great fair takes place at Guillestre to-morrow, and the place is crowded. I found an excellent inn at Guillestre *chez Ferrari* (l'Hotel des Alpes), and soon sat down to a capital dinner. The place was thronged.

It was next morning, in the course of a stroll above Guillestre, that Tuckett made the famous drawing (the original on p. 69 of his diary and reproduced in the *Alpine Journal*, i. p. 150, and in Ball, p. 76) which proved that Whymper in 1861 had wrongly identified the Ailefroide with the Crête du Pelvoux (*Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers*, 2nd Series, ii, p. 247). It is interesting to note that on Tuckett's original sketch (as well as on one taken from the Col dell'Agnello the day before) he had first written the name "Alefroide" over the true Crête du Pelvoux, but then effaced it and rewritten it over the true Ailefroide.⁵

We continue to quote the diary, even though this day no climb was made (see *Alpine Journal*, i. pp. 151-152).

7 July. A babel of tongues roused me at 4, but I did not get up till 6, when a lovely morning greeted me. At 8 breakfasted, then strolled about the Fair, and ascended the hill behind for a quarter of a mile to sketch. At 11.45 left for La Bessée in a *voiture* which took us down to the high road at 12, at a place called Plan de Fazy. Here we waited for the *Courrier* from Gap, and started with him at 1.45 for La Bessée, which we reached at 3.30. In descending from Guillestre the castle of Montdauphin is passed on the right, and the most glorious views of the Pelvoux are obtained. Dined at La Bessée, spent an hour pleasantly with Jean Reynaud [Whymper's friend of 1861], and at 5.45 started for Ville Val Louise. M. R. [Reynaud] accompanied us for an hour, and at 7.30 we arrived. The valley is lovely, and took me by surprise. I lodged *chez Giraud*, and found a doctor of the name of Giraud who had settled in Vienna and returned

here to pass the winter. The moonlight was most exquisite, but at 10 we went to bed.

Tuckett was now ready for the most memorable part of his 1862 journey, that among the Dauphiné Alps. On the way through Paris (*Alpine Journal*, i: pp. 146-147) he had obtained from the War Office there a copy (engraved *au trait*) of the then unpublished Briançon sheet of the French Government map (issued only in 1866) on a scale of 1/80,000 as well as a MS. copy of the minutes (scale 1/40,000, issued in 1874 only) on which the above map was based (both these maps were given in 1901 to W. A. B. Coolidge, who had also received from Tuckett early in 1870, *i.e.* before his first visit to the Dauphiné Alps, a copy of the photographic reduction of the larger map). Armed with these and exploring the ground himself, Tuckett cleared up two very important topographical points : (1) that the Ailefroide and the Crête du Pelvoux are distinct peaks, and (2) that the Ecrins is distinct from both the Pelvoux and the Ailefroide, and is the culminating summit of the entire region. In this way he corrected and completed Whymper's observations of 1861. These brief remarks will serve to explain the historical importance of Tuckett's wonderful sojourn of only ten days among the High Alps of Dauphiné.⁶

DIARY. Ascent of the Pelvoux. Tuckett and his two guides.

8 July. Rose at 4.30, breakfasted, and at 7.15, started from Ville Vallouise with a porter for Aléfroide. At 8 reached the of Clot or Claux, and found Pierre Claude Semiond, the younger of the two brothers, who was occupied, and could not accompany us. At 8.15 we started again in search of the [other] brother, who was supposed to be at Aléfroide, but I found that in reality the brothers were jealous of strange guides. Accordingly we left without more ado, and at 9.15 reached Aléfroide, where we had some milk. Semiond's brother was said to be about, but at any rate he did not appear, and we haggled for some time with an old man, whose son we at length engaged to go for three francs. At 10.45 started, and at 12.45, after a stiffish climb, rached the *Grotte* of Soureillan. Went at once in search of water, and wood, the former occupying some time, and returned at 1.45 to the cavern. We spent a delicious afternoon, cooked soup, and chocolate galore, and, after lighting up a splendid fire, went to rest about 9.

9 July. Rose at 3, had a hasty meal, and at 4.15 started for the Pelvoux. My night had been rather disturbed, and in the morning I found myself somewhat unwell. Under the circumstances, after dragging myself wearily upwards for another thousand or fifteen hundred feet, I was compelled to halt, and slept away the morning. About 12 we resolved to bring up the traps, and Michel and Perrn started accordingly. At 1 I felt well enough to take some food. At 3 the guides returned, and, as I felt much better, I scrambled up to the foot of the glacier [*i.e.* of Clot de l'Homme] for a reconnaissance. At 6.30 had some food, saw a glorious sunset on Monte Viso, and at 8 turned in to a jolly *gîte* I had constructed.

10 July. After a good night, during which a goat jumped on me by mistake, we roused at 2.20, and at 3.10 started, there being just light enough. At 4 halted for ten minutes to see the sunrise, which was exquisite, and cloudless. At 5, after walking up a snow couloir, halted to put on gaiters. At 7, after a desperate climb up the snow, reached the plateau, where we halted for breakfast with a glorious view, including Mont Blanc. At 7.45, started again, and at 8.15 reached the summit. At 11.50 quitted it, and at 12.10 reached the Pic de la Pyramide. Deposited a minimum thermometer, and left our gourd which was smashed. Had some lunch, and at 12.45 commenced the descent. The weather threatening. At 2.30 quitted the bottom of the couloir, below the left-hand branch of the Glacier, and took off our gaiters. At 3.15 reached our *gîte*. Of the summits visible of the summit of the Pelvoux, beginning with the Goléon [written over the words "Aiguille du Midi de la Grave"], 3987 and 3911 mètres, we have further to the left or W. a fine mass of pinnacles probably the point 3754 near the Grand Ruine of the French map, though it appears to be higher. Then comes the Point des Arsines on the further side of the Glacier Noir and Col de la Tempe. It appeared to us that the easiest way to attack it would be to ascend the Glacier Blanc, and take it in reverse. Next comes the depression of the Col de la Tempe, and then W.S.W. of the Pelvoux another lofty summit, which exceeds the Pelvoux in height, and corresponds in position with the Aléfroide of Whymper. It is not inserted on the French map, but this is probably accounted for by the fact that it is invisible from the Pic de la Pyramide, where I presume Durand's observations were made. Next come two lofty summits, both, however lower than the Pelvoux, and apparently guarding the passage from the Glacier of Sélé (or Séléon as it is called in patois) to that of La Condamine [*i.e.* Pilatte], which we hope to effect to-morrow. It may, however, turn out that the pass really lies between the summit N. of the two summits and the Aléfroide. It is thus clear that the Pelvoux is exceeded by the Arsines and Aléfroide, and about equalled by the two highest summits of the Aiguille du Midi, as well as by the pinnacled summit between these last and the Arsines. The distant view was superb. N. we saw the Rochers des Fys, the Buet, the chain of Mont Blanc, from the Aiguille de Béranger to the Jorasses, the Pourri, Grande Cassz, Weisshorn, Dent Blanche, Matterhorn, Dom, Täschorh, Grivola, Paradis, Breithorn, the Zwillinge, and Lyskamm, followed by the range of the Cottians, with Monte Viso towering over all. I was able to assure myself that the Viso surpasses all the Cottians, and is decidedly higher than any summit S. of Queyras [*i. e.* Château Queyras] or near Maurin. [See his earlier opinion of 4 July.] In my levellings I strangely omitted to include the splendid peak between the Arsines and the Goléon [word written over "Meidje"], but, before

commencing the return, I levelled the telescope on it, and found the horizontal wire passed above it, in fact about as much as above the Goleon [word written over "Meidje"]. At 4.30 started for Soureillan, but changed our mind before reaching it, and struck down for the Val Sapenière [*i.e.* Celse Nière] in order to be nearer the Glacier de Séléon for tomorrow. We had to make many detours before we reached the valley at 6.30. Here we established ourselves near a stream, and found to our horror that we had no bread left. However, we made some good soup, and at 8.30 I turned in on some shawls.

A few remarks may be permitted upon the detailed notices contained in the Diary, as W. A. B. Coolidge succeeded Tuckett as the specialist in the Pelvoux region. Tuckett's ascent of the Pelvoux seems to have been the third of the highest point, as he had been preceded thereon by Victor Puiseux in 1848 and by Whymper in 1861 (Captain Durand's party in 1828 and 1830 does not seem to have gone beyond the Pointe de la Pyramide). But all these parties crossed the Clot de l'Homme glacier, in order to ascend by the so-called Rochers Rouges ; Tuckett kept on the left (proper) bank of that glacier, and mounted by a couloir which now bears his name and is the shortest and best route to the uppermost plateau. The minimum thermometer (or at least its wooden frame) was found in the cairn in 1898, as his broken gourd had been already discovered in 1875.

As regards his identifications in his Diary we can test them well by means of the fine photographic panorama, from the highest point taken in 1888 by Signer Vittorio Sella, especially Nos. 522 and 526. By a curious *lapsus* Tuckett everywhere in his Diary has put the name of "Goléon" in the place of the original name (perfectly accurate) of "Aiguille du Midi de la Grave" (once) or "Meidje" (twice), but this slip, made in haste, is naturally corrected in the *Alpine Journal* article, as the Meije is only surpassed in the region by the Ecrins. Further on Tuckett's "pinnacled" peak appears to be the Grande Ruine, 3754 m.; but the "splendid peak between the Arsines and the Goleon" can only be the Pic Gaspard, 3880 m., which rises S. of the Meije, and N. of the Grande Ruine. The "Pointe des Arsines" (a name wrongly given by Whymper in 1861 to the Pelvoux itself) is, of course, the Ecrins, the monarch of the entire group. The Ailefroide is the lofty peak to the W.S.W. of the Pelvoux, and Tuckett's height, 3959 m., is still the authority, for oddly enough this great peak has an absurd height of 3925 m. assigned to it on the French Government map. Tuckett's height for the highest peak of the Pelvoux still recognised, 3954 m., and the most recent observation by Helbronner have *confirmed* Tuckett's belief that the Ailefroide is really higher than the Pelvoux, and so ranks as the third peak in the group. The two "lofty summits" guarding the Col du Sélé are really to the N., the Pointe du Sélé, 3483 m., and to the S. the highest point (3454 m.) of the Crête des Boeufs Rouges, but perhaps Tuckett means the former peak and its N. neighbour, 3420 m., in which case the latter peak is the "N. of the two summits," between which and the Ailefroide lies, however, *not* the Col du Sélé but the Col de l'Ailefroide.

Naturally Tuckett's provisional statements in his Diary as to the identifications of the peaks seen from the Pelvoux were revised in the course of his later explorations during the following days, so that they have only an historical interest, while the definite results are set forth at length in his *Alpine Journal* article.

Tuckett, however, was not destined to cross the Col du Sélé on 11 July, for fog drove him back to Ville Vallouise whence the same afternoon he remounted to the Ailefroide chalets.

DIARY. Attempt on the Ecrins, and passage of the Col des Ecrins. Tuckett and his two guides.

11 July. Rose at 3.30, made some soup, and at 5 started for La Bérarde. At 5.30 halted in the upper part of the Combe de Sapenière as fog and clouds threatened bad weather. Had some breakfast at 6, and at 6.35 started for Aléfroide, which we reached at 7.40, and Ville Val Louise at [10.30, blank in Diary supplied from the *Alpine Journal* article], after stopping 55 minutes at Aléfroide. At L'Aléfroide we found an old chap who said he had seen eighty chamois in one *troupeau* and had passed by the Glacier Blanc to La Grave and Villard d'Arène. At Le [*sic* for Les] Claux one can lodge *chez Joseph Barnéout*, where we had a bottle of white wine, and I spent some time eating nuts. At 10.30 reached Ville Val Louise, and at 11 lay down. Rested till 12.30, then dined, and met a pleasant Frenchman and his wife who had come up from La Bessée for an excursion *en route* from Briançon to Gap. At 5.15 started with fresh provisions for L'Aléfroide, reached Le Clos [*sic*] at 6.10 and L'Aléfroide at 7.10. Here I at once constructed an excellent *gîte* at the chalets are not to be thought of. Had some hot chocolate and at [blank left] went to bed. Exquisite moon light.

The very interesting detail about the "old chap" who had passed from the Glacier Blanc to La Grave does not occur in Tuckett's printed article, and is now made public for the first time.

12 Jul. Rose at 2.30, started at 3 up the valley. At 4 reached a mass of débris or moraine stretching across the valley the

valley [*i.e.* le Banc], from the summit of which the Glaciers Blanc and Noir were visible at the further end of a stony plain [*i.e.* the Pré de Madame Carle]. Traversing this, we reached at 4.45 the steep slope to the E. of the Glacier Blanc, having a magnificent view of the Pelvoux and Ecrins. Mounting the slope by a path, we had to return, and at 5.45 crossed the Glacier stream, I on Perrn's back. At 6.40 reached a point pretty high on the W. or right bank of the Glacier Blanc. Here we breakfasted, and 7.45 started again. At 8 struck the glacier at its W. side. Traversed it on the plateau above the final ice-fall, and below the upper one. At 8.30, working diagonally across, we quitted the E. bank of the Glacier, and took to the debris, halting at 8.35 for a rest. At 9 started again, and at 9.15 halted on the edge of some snow slopes, which led to the upper névé, to put on gaiters. At 9.45 reached the upper plateau, which runs in a W. direction to the N. foot of the Ecrins. This latter is covered with much ice. At 11.30 reached the head of the Glacier, and halted to lunch. Finding the Ecrins inaccessible for the moment, we resolved to descend straight to La Bérarde by the Glacier de la bonne [*sic*] Pierre. Left the summit at 1 and at 1.45 reached the level névé, after a rather difficult descent performed by Perrn's capital steps. Halted a few minutes at the foot of the steep descent to have some wine, and at 4, following the right moraine, easily reached the junction of the stream from this glacier with that which descends from the Meidje (*sic*). At 4 Perrn tried to carry me across, and the result was that we both tumbled in, and halted for some time to dry and feed. At 5 started again, reaching La Bérarde at 5.15. Put up at the Rodiers', where we obtained good bread, milk, ham, wine, and inferior cheese, and, after supper, went to a *grange* at the where we slept excellently on fresh, flealess hay.

As far as is known this was the first occasion on which a traveller (at least) had ever visited the Glacier Blanc, or attained the N. foot of the Ecrins, whence, as Tuckett rightly surmised, that peak is best scaled (though not till 1864). The Col des Ecrins (11,205 feet) is quite new. Hence 12 July is a very important date in the history of the exploration of the High Alps of Dauphiné.

13 July. At 4 Perrn rose to go to mass at St. Christophe, with young Rodier, whilst I snoozed on till 9.45, and left Michel still at it. Then had breakfast. Rodier père desired to be remembered to Forbes [who had been here in 1839 and 1841]. He told me that a passage exists from La Bérarde to Villard d'Arène by the valley [that of Etançons] which debouches into this at the same point as the valley du [*sic* for de la] Bonne Pierre. At the very end is a glacier which must be left on the left, slopes of snow being traversed on the right to the Col. On the other side is a glacier, rather bad, which is left on the right. Time uncertain, but probably 10 or 12 hours. The Col is said to be called "Col de la Cavalle." At 12.15 started for a stroll down the valley. At 12.55 reached Les Etages, and went on further in search of a good position from which to sketch the Ecrins. At 1.45, having mounted up to a considerable height on the right bank of the valley, I sketched, and at 2.15 turned to descend,⁷ reaching Les Etages at 3. Had some lunch and at 4 started again for La Bérarde, arriving at 4.45. Glacier which leads to the Col de Sais [crossed by Forbes in 1841] is called the "Glacier Bavergat" [*sic* for "Baverjat"], and the other to the left the "Pilate" or Cote Rouge [these two glaciers are really quite distinct though near each other]. According to M. E. Reclus the height of the Col de Tempe is 3756 m. [this is the real height of the Pic Coolidge, which rises to the N. of the pass that itself is only 10,772 ft. or 3283 mètres].

The elder Rodier had crossed the Col du Sais on 25 July 1841, with J. D. Forbes and J. M. Heath.⁸ Tuckett now desired to regain Ville Vallouise on his way to Briançon. So he crossed the Col du Sele (10,834 feet), on which he had had views three days previously.

DIARY. Col du Sélé. Tuckett, with his two guides.

14 July. Rose at 2, and at 2.30 started for Ville Val Louise. Moonlight indescribably glorious. At 3.30 passed the entrance to the valley leading to the Col de Sais, and filled by the Glacier de Baverga. At 4.20 reached the Glacier of Pilate. We had ascended the right or E. bank of the valley throughout, crossing numerous streams from the secondary glaciers on the left. Ascending the right moraine of the Pilate, we took to the ice at 4.30. The Glacier is clean and uniform, with a moderate slope. At 5 we halted opposite the two ice-cascades to examine the map, and attacked the left-hand arm, as the other [is] evidently connected with the Col de Sais, and the upper part of the Glacier de Baverga [Chardon, French map]. We tried the ice-cascade by its left or W. bank, and at 5.20 found ourselves on the plateau above. A fine branch comes in on the right, and no doubt unites with the Col de Sais. More *séracs* lay on our left, so we kept round to the right beneath the Mont Lans [*i.e.* les Bans]. Turning to the left, we halted at 6.15, at the foot of the final slope, to breakfast, starting again at 6.45, and working straight up the snow and névé slopes for a low ridge of rocks, which forms the ridge in this direction. At 7.50 reached the Col. The view to the S. and W. of the Glacier Basin [*sic*] of Pilate is superb. To the N. a precipitous rock [*i.e.* the Pointe du Sélé, 11,428 ft.] cut off the view of the Aléfroide and Pelvoux. The Col connecting with the Col de Sais bears N. 91 W. The Mt. de Lans or [blank left] N. 114,30 W. At 9.10 started again. The Pelvoux soon comes into view, and then the Aléfroide, more to the left. We kept away to the right bank of the Glacier first, and then straight down the centre of the snow-loaded central portion, gradually working across to the left bank as we approached the final fall. At 10.40 reached the left moraine after halting to sketch, etc.⁹

At 11.30 we reached the head of the valley by some most treacherous debris, and halted for lunch, starting again at 12.30 and reaching Alefroide at 1.45. Had some milk, and at 2.35 started to return, and at 3.20 reached Le Clos [*sic*], and proceeded to indulge in many cherries and currants *chez Barnéout*. At 4.20 started again, and at 5.15 reached Ville Val Louise. There I found Reynaud and some friends, with whom, after a good wash and complete change, I had a chat till 6.30, when I fed, and at 9 went to bed.

It is possible that the Col du Sélé was vaguely known before 1862, but Tuckett's is the first recorded passage.¹⁰

DIARY. Col du Glacier Blanc. Tuckett, with his two guides.

15 July. Rose at 6.15, breakfasted, read, wrote, packed, etc. etc., had some lunch at 11, and at 11.45 started for the Glacier Blanc. At 12.10 reached Le Claux [*sic*]. At 1.45 Alefroide. Halted till a shower was over (the first since we descended from the Grivola). At 2.15 off again, reaching the Dike [i.e. Le Banc] across the valley at 3. Just above it, we forded the stream with the naked feet, and some difficulty, and at 3.30 started again, reaching the foot of the Glacier Noir at 4. At 4.10, after making a sketch [the original is on p. 76 of the Diary, reproduced in *Liebeskind*, i. 153], proceeded to cross the stream of the Glacier Noir, and at 4.20 reached the foot of the steep slope on the right or W. bank of the Glacier Blanc. At 5.15 reached the edge of the first plateau of the Glacier Blanc, and halted under a rock, as rain threatened. At 6.10 entered the Glacier, and at 6.25 quitted it at the foot of the upper ice-fall for the left bank. Ascended the slopes for a few minutes, and at 6.30 established ourselves on some turf, and constructed capital quarters under an adjacent rock [this bivouac became later famous as the "Hôtel Tuckett "]. I was now able to form a clear idea of the relative position of the Pelvoux, the false Alefroide, and the true Alefroide, which are simply different summits of the same ridge, forming the S.E. boundary of the Glacier Noir, and running nearly N.E. and S.W. At 7 attacked our provisions, and at 8, before turning in for the night, heated some wine.¹¹

16 July. Rose at 2.45, but, as the weather was bad, gave up the Ecrins and at 5.45 started to endeavour to find a passage to Villard d'Arene. At 6.20 entered the snow, and at 6.45, about a quarter of an hour below the upper plateau of the Glacier Blanc, took to the rocks on our right just above a glacier descending from the N.E. ridge. We reached the ridge at 7.30 [10,834 ft.], and halted to eat and wait till the *brouillard* should clear, as the descent on the N. side appeared very precipitous.¹² At 8.50 commenced the descent, which was accomplished without difficulty save very steep but broken rocks. At 9.45 reached the névé, and at 10.5 the Glacier d'Arcine beneath. This latter is not long, but very broad. The upper part is pure, but the lower is covered with immense moraines. We kept to the left and quitted the last of three parallel moraines at 10.30. Here we halted to take off gaiters, and at 10.55 started again. At 11.10 reached the head of the valley, and, descending gently over beautiful turf, we arrived at 11.35 on the brow of an eminence, close to where a valley comes in from the left, by which La Bérard may be reached over the Col des Cavalles and the Glacier du Clos des Cavalles. One of the summits of the Grande Ruine forms a noble centre to the two branches of this lateral valley [this peak is the Roche Meane, a sketch of which is given on p. 83 of the Diary]. After sketching, started again at 12, and in a few minutes reached the chalets of L'Alpe. Here we had milk, and learned that the distance to Villard d'Arene is two hours, and to La Grave about three, whilst Le Monestier may be reached by the Col d'Arcine in three hours. This district is said to be much frequented by botanists. At 12.45 started again. At 1.5 reached the base of a steep descent [i.e. the pas de l'Ane à Falque], and at 1.25 the foot, wading the stream from a pretty cascade, and on the left a lovely glacier [that of l'Homme] descends from the Aiguille du Midi. A long, narrow, desolate flat is now traversed, and a road reached at the further end at 1.45. At 1.55 struck the old road to the Lautaret, and soon afterwards the present *grande route*. At 2.10 reached Villard d'Arene, and at 2.35 La Grave, passing two fine tunnels. The view of the Aiguille du Midi is magnificent. Had some wine, said good-bye to Perrn, and at 4.30 started with Croz in *charrette* for Bourg d'Oisans, which we reached at 7.30. Ordered dinner at the Hôtel de Milan, and took places in the diligence for Grenoble. Dined, and at 9.15 lay down to rest. At 11.30 started by the diligence for Grenoble.

17 July. Reached Grenoble at 5, and put up at the Hôtel de l'Europe, wrote, packed, despatched a present to Perrn, and the theodolite to Geneva, then made purchases "chez Maisonville" [the chief bookseller of the town], and walked about, called on Lory [Charles Lory, the famous Dauphiné botanist, 1823-1889], compared my barometer *chez Demarchi* who corresponds with the Observatory, Paris.

Most probably Tuckett ventured to force the Col du Glacier Blanc (10,854 feet), of which this is the first recorded passage, recollecting the hint given to him by the "old chap" at Alefroide on 11 July. It appears from the letter of 15 July that Whymper had meant to join Tuckett, but he was delayed, and so Perren left Tuckett at Villard d'Arène in order to meet Whymper at La Bessée. In his *Scrambles* (1st edition, p. 129) Whymper just alludes to this "business" visit to Dauphiné.

As in duty bound, Tuckett ended his visit to Dauphiné by an excursion to the celebrated monastery of the Grande Chartreuse, which then was still inhabited by its monks – he started off the very day he reached

Grenoble.

[Ascension du Grand Som, 17-18 juillet, Allevard, 19 juillet et retour vers Chambéry]

¹ See the detailed account in the *Alpine Journal*, i. pp. 29-33, reprinted in *Pictures in Tyrol*, pp. 115-127, with some amusing fancy sketches. See too Ball, p. 28.

² See *Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers*, 2nd Series, ii. pp. 251-252.

³ See *Alpine Journal*, i. pp. 148-149, and Ball, p. 33.

⁴ Sketch reproduced in Liebeskind, i. p. 132.

⁵ See the discussion in the *Alpine Journal*, i. pp. 158-159.

⁶ [The following extracts from his diary and letter should be supplemented by reference to his detailed article in the *Alpine Journal*, i. pp. 145-183.]

⁷ See the reproduction of this sketch in Ball, p. 75, and *Alpine Journal*, i. p. 168, the original being on p. 74 of the Diary.

⁸ See Forbes' *Norway and its Glaciers visited in 1851*, pp. 272-279, or the reprint given by W. A. B. Coolidge in 1900 in Forbes' book entitled *Travels through the Alps*, pp. 406-412. The Col du Clot des Cavales is mentioned in a document dated 1673 and on a map dated 1741. It was first crossed by travellers (three French scientific men) in 1848, the guide being Rodier. See also the history of the pass, written by W. A. B. Coolidge and published in vol. xi., 1912, of the *Revue des Alpes Dauphinoises*, especially pp. 120 and 130.

⁹ See the original sketch on pp. 77-78 of the Diary; it is reproduced in *Liebeskind*, i. p. 176.

¹⁰ See W. A. B. Coolidge's history of the pass in the *Revue des Dauphinoises*, xv., 1913, pp. 6-8.

¹¹ See the original sketches made that day on pp. 79-80 of the Diary.

¹² From the Col the sketch on pp. 81-82 of the Diary was made. It is reproduced in *Alpine Journal*, i. p. 176.

Extrait (pp. 143-146) du chapitre V concernant le séjour de F. F. Tuckett au Mont-Viso et dans les Alpes dauphinoises durant l'été 1862. Cette partie contient les extraits des lettres de F. F. Tuckett concernant ce séjour.

GUILLESTRE, 6th July 1862.

My time at Turin was very pleasant though the heat was rather oppressive, especially under the copper dome of the *Académie des Sciences*, where I spent some time with the Secretary comparing my barometer, etc. A drive in the evening (with an Englishman whom I met at the Hôtel de l'Europe) along the Corso which surrounds the Piazza d'Armi was delicious, and none the less so that my intended victim, Monte Viso, towered up grandly against the W. sky. At 12 o'clock on the 2nd, we proceeded by rail to Pignerol, and thence by omnibus to La Tour the well-known Protestant village of the Val Pellice, where excellent quarters tempted me to linger, though prudence counselled an immediate attack on the Viso, the weather being all that could be desired. The evening was spent in a delicious stroll amongst the rich chestnut woods of the Val Angrogna, in the upper part of which is the Pra del Tor, so famous for the long defence of the Vaudois ; and, still later, as the shadows deepened, the fireflies came out, and added a fresh charm to the scene. Nothing can exceed the loveliness of the environs of La Tour, every bit of rising ground commanding the most exquisite views of mountain and valley, with the great plain of Piedmont stretching away into space, and dotted with towns and villages. On the 3rd, we effected an early start, ascended the Val Pellice to Bobbio and Pra, and then, instead of proceeding over the Col de la Croix to Abriès in France, turned to the left or S., and crossed successively the Cols de Seylières and de Vallante , (both considerably over 9000 feet in height), to the highest chalet of the N. branch of the Val Vraita, which debouches into the plain at Saluzzo. Here we passed the night on some fresh hay and straw comfortably enough, and on the following morning started between 8 and 9 for the ascent of the Viso. Time will not admit of my entering into the details of this most charming expedition. Suffice it to say, that, in spite of much fresh snow, we reached the summit, without difficulty, and taking it very easily, at 3 o'clock, enjoyed the glorious view for four or five hours, made observations, witnessed a glorious sunset, and at 8 betook ourselves to a *gîte* which we had constructed about a hundred feet below the summit. I searched in vain for thermometer deposited last year by Mathews, but placed another of my own, in his cairn, 12,617 feet above the sea, which indicated the next morning a minimum temperature during the night of 26° Fahr. Of the night itself I cannot speak with unmixed satisfaction. My bed [*i.e.* bag] proved most valuable, but as I shared a good portion of my wrap with the guides, and we were occasionally assailed by violent gusts of wind, the hours of darkness were not of the pleasantest. I seemed to be awake all night, but I have little doubt that I secured five or six hours of sleep in snatches of half an hour. The worst of it was that about 3 A.M. a thick mist enveloped us, and for two hours snow fell incessantly. Spite of it all, however, we held on manfully and I secured many observations before our departure, wixh took place about 6 A.M. The descent to the

chalets was effected in about three and a half hours, and, after resting there during the heat of the day, we proceeded yesterday afternoon to La Chianale, the last village in the valley of the same name which forms the head of the Val Vraita. No decent quarters being procurable there, I decided to come on here [*i.e.* Guillestre] to-day by the Col de l'Agnello and Queyras [*i.e.* the village of Château Queyras], and now here I am after quite a luxurious dinner of meat!! (think of that). I had intended to proceed to-morrow to Montdauphin, La Bessée, and Ville Val Louise, but being so near Briançon I am tempted just to run up and spend a day there... It is time to go to bed, the first genuine one I have been in for some days... I am very well, the weather is fine, the country wild and picturesque, *et que voulez-vous de plus ?...*

VILLE VAL LOUISE

(one and a half hours from La Bessée and four or five S.W. of Briançon),
15th July 1862.

I have spent a most interesting week in this neighbourhood and am altogether agreeably disappointed in Dauphiné, though the dirt is certainly not clean and the fleas are astounding. The only way to avoid the latter is to select a piece of elevated ground at a distance of at least 100 yds. from any building, man, or beast, and then camp out in the open. This I did on 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th, and mean to do again to-night. The 12th and 13th, we came across some fresh hay, and actually lay under a roof, and on the 7th, as well as last night, we were even advanced to as high a state of civilization as beds. The weather has been and continues surpassingly glorious, the nights are warm, the moon in perfection, and in short nothing could be more favourable for my purpose. We get ham, potatoes, brea, cheese, milk and wine almost everywhere, and coffee is occasionally to be met with. This place is charmingly situated, but an hour's walk suffices to take one into scenes of the most savage wildness. The mountains delight me with their rugged grandeur, and magnificent glaciers abound. So far I have made good progress, secured valuable topographical and barometrical observations, effected two new and very beautiful passes [*i.e.* the Cols des Ecrins and du Sélé], respectively above 10,000 and 11,000 feet [the former is really 11,205 feet, and the latter 10,834 feet], to La Bérarde, and ascended the Pelvoux, one of the loftiest summits (the one reached by Whymper), where I spent four hours, gaining the top at 8.15 A.M. To-night, as I said before, we camp out at the head of a lateral valley about four hours from hence, and to-morrow I hope to effect a passage to Villard d'Arene near the Col de Lauteret on the road from Briançon to Bourg d'Oysans and Grenoble.... Whymper has not made his appearance, and we shall not now meet, I fear, as I have received a note from him in which he says that he will not reach La Bessée till the 16th or 17th. Perrin will leave me at Villard d'Arene and join Whymper at La Bessée, whilst Croz goes on to Geneva or at any rate Chamouni. I am beginning to be quite an important personage here and receive visits from the Mayor, the *Percepteur* and all sorts of officials, even as high as the communal shoemaker and a cretin... I am very well but getting awfully lantern-jawed from hard work, heat, the absence of the usual allowance of animal food. The portable soup and chocolate are, however, famous substitutes.

GRENOBLE, 19 July 1862.

I have just time to send you two lines of thanks for your delightful letters, received on the 17th, just before I started for the Grande Chartreuse. I returned late last night after a most charming excursion in brilliant weather, having made also the ascent of the Grand Som, the highest point of the group and rising immediately above the Convent. I start in five minutes (at 6 A.M.) for Allevard, whence I shall proceed this afternoon to Montmeillan and take the train thence to Chambéry and Geneva.... I had a charming expedition from Ville Val Louise to La Grave, making a very fine and quite new pass, and then descended to Bourg d'Oysans through the Combe de Malaval, coming on here through Wednesday night. The weather has been and is perfection, but I find the heat rather oppressive.

25th July 1862.... On the 19th I went in a carriage to the picturesque town of Allevard, a watering place in great repute and thronged with company, altogether very pretty and amusing. Thence I proceeded in the afternoon to Montmeillan, and so by rail via Chambéry to Aix les Bains, where I spent Sunday the 20th, going on in the evening to Geneva...