



# Hours of Exercise in the Alps

*John Tyndall*

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A short time ago I published a book of 'Fragments,' which might have been called 'Hours of Exercise in the Attic and the Laboratory'; while this one bears the title of 'Hours of Exercise in the Alps.' The two volumes supplement each other, and, taken together, illustrate the mode in which a lover of natural knowledge and of natural scenery chooses to spend his life.

Much as I enjoy the work, I do not think that I could have filled my days and hours in the Alps with clambering alone. The climbing in many cases was the peg on which a thousand other 'exercises' were hung. The present volume, however, is for the most part a record of bodily action, written partly to preserve to myself the memory of strong and joyous hours, and partly for the pleasure of those who find exhilaration in descriptions associated with mountain life.

The papers, written during the last ten years, are printed in the order of the incidents to which they relate; and, to render the history more complete, I have, with the permission of their authors, introduced nearly the whole of two articles by Mr. Vaughan Hawkins and Mr. Philip Gossett. The former describes the first assault ever made upon the Matterhorn, the latter an expedition which ended in the death of a renowned and beloved guide.

The 'Glaciers of the Alps' being out of print, I can no longer refer to it. Towards the end of the volume, therefore, I have thrown together a few 'Notes and Comments' which may be useful to those who desire to possess some knowledge of the phenomena of the ice-world, and of the properties of ice itself. To these are added one or two minor articles, which relate more or less to our British hills and lakes: the volume is closed by an account of a recent voyage to Oran.

I refrain from giving advice, further than to say that the perils of wandering in the High Alps are terribly real, and are only to be met by knowledge, caution, skill, and strength. 'For rashness, ignorance, or carelessness the mountains leave no margin; and to rashness, ignorance, or carelessness three-fourths of the catastrophes which shock us are to be traced.' Those who wish to know something of the precautions to be taken upon the peaks and glaciers cannot do better than consult the excellent little volume lately published by Leslie Stephen, where, under the head of 'Dangers of Mountaineering,' this question is discussed.

I would willingly have published this volume without illustrations, and should the reader like those here introduced—two of which were published ten years ago, and the remainder recently executed under the able superintendence of Mr. Whymper—he will have to ascribe his gratification to the initiative of Mr. William Longman, not to me.

I have sometimes tried to trace the genesis of the interest which I take in fine scenery. It cannot be wholly due to my own early associations; for as a boy I loved nature, and hence, to account for that love, I must fall back upon something earlier than my own birth. The forgotten associations of a far-gone ancestry are probably the most potent elements in the feeling. With characteristic penetration, Mr. Herbert Spencer has written of the growth of our appreciation of natural scenery with growing years. But to the associations of the individual himself he adds 'certain deeper, but now vague, combinations of states, that were organised in the race during barbarous times, when its pleasurable activities were among the mountains, woods, and waters. Out of these excitations,' he adds, 'some of them actual, but most of them nascent, is composed the emotion which a fine landscape produces in us.' I think this an exceedingly likely proximate hypothesis, and hence infer that those 'vague and deep combinations organised in barbarous times,' not to go further back, have come down with considerable force to me.

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