

ITER HELVETICUM:

BEING

A JOURNAL OF THE DOINGS OF A CABINET (SO CALLED)
OF FIVE FELLOW-TRAVELLERS IN SWITZERLAND, DURING
THE LAST THREE WEEKS OF SEPTEMBER, 1886, WITH
REMARKS THEREON, INTENDED TO BE EDIFYING,
INSTRUCTIVE, OR AMUSING,

BY THEIR

LORD CHANCELLOR.

"Ut sit mens sana in corpore sano."

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TO MY FELLOW-TRAVELLERS:

GREETING:

It may be in the minds of some of you that it was ever our custom, when travelling, to agree in holding slowness of progress to be not inconsistent with enjoyment of mind; and we never wearied of using the German word, LANGSAMM, which means "slow," to any of us who seemed disposed to hurry.

It cannot therefore much astonish you if, in obeying the commands you laid on me at the waters of the BETTEN SEE, I have obeyed also that same precept and example of LANGSAMM. And now only do I find myself, after a lapse of many moons, presenting to you the fruits of my labour.

Whether an apology be needed for the delay in production, or whether such need may be cancelled by the merit of the performance, is not for me to say. I can do no other than leave the matter in your hands, confident of kind treatment.

It may however, perchance, be open to me to plead in part mitigation of my fault (if fault it be), that had this writing appeared much sooner than it has, I should have been debarred from drawing your attention, as a Cabinet, to the conduct of one of your number, whom it is not for me, thus publicly, to specify with particularity. Suffice it to say that, for my own part, I commend it to your most favourable consideration, confident that it will meet with your approval and congratulation, as it does with mine, and hopeful that in the near future some or all of us may find courage and opportunity to follow the same good ensample.

Trusting that the within-described enjoyments may not be the last in which we may together participate, and that our remembrances thereof may not be dimmed by more than our common lot of sorrows:

I rest, with all respect,

Your obedient humble Servant,

WILLIAM. L.C.

DECEMBER, 1887.

ITER HELVETICUM.



“It is not good for a man to be alone,” much less to travel so. Thus thought *Swire*, and straightway enlisted four other kindred spirits to share with him the pleasures—and expenses—of a fortnight’s trip to Switzerland. He first got *John*, a man of weight, and with him came his brother *William*, an apprentice to the law. Next came *Henry*, keen of wit, and unto these four was added *James*, of great substance and large limb. *The members of the Cabinet.*

And that there might not be wanting an air of *Their functions.* respectability to the party, and that worship might be had of such among strangers as overheard their familiar talk, it was agreed and determined that the party should be called the CABINET, and that each separate member should take unto himself some special and peculiar cognomen and function ; even as do the members of the Cabinet of the Sovereign. To *James* accordingly as a man well accustomed to the handling of money, and of known honesty, was entrusted the common purse, and he was called *Chancellor of the Exchequer*. *John* they made *Home Secretary*, and entrusted with the due keeping up of a correspondence with the home authorities. On *William*, by virtue of his pretensions rather than of his performances, was conferred the high office of *Lord Chancellor*, an office of dignity rather than utility, but without which, and the legal advice thereto belonging, it behoves no cabinet, and more especially such an one as ours, to travel into strange countries. It seemed meet, also, having regard to the large interest which the majority of the Cabinet had in trade and commerce, to appoint

one of the number to pay a special attention to such matters as might in his opinion bear upon those most useful branches of employment. And amongst them all was none found, for the vigour of his speech and the receptivity of his intellect, so well suited as *Henry*, and on him accordingly was conferred the office of *President of the Board of Trade*. There remained only *Svøire*, the organizer and leader of the expedition, to be appointed to office, and by the voice of all was given to him the title of *First Lord of the Treasury* and *Premier of the Cabinet*.

It had been deemed expedient that we should first journey to the town of *Zurich*, and that we should go there without making any stay by the way. In accordance therewith we departed from the *Holborn Viaduct Station* within the purlieus of the city of *London* at 25 minutes past 8 o'clock on the evening of the 10th of September, in the year of our Lord 1886, after having broken meat at a house of refreshing called the *Holborn Restaurant*, a place like unto the Temple of the Greek Gods for fine marbles and wrought gold.

Our
departure.

10th of
September.

It were unprofitable to enter at large into the experiences of our journey to *Zurich*, seeing how small were the chances given us of observation and inspection. Our passage of the narrow seas lying between *Queenboro'* in *England*, and *Flushing* on the coast of *Holland*, was performed in exceeding calm and pleasant weather, nor were our slumbers interrupted by that strange visitation which Father Neptune inflicts on so many who attempt to traverse his domains. We travelled through the exceeding flat country which lies between the towns of *Venloo* and *Breda* in the Netherlands, and so on to the venerable and ancient city of the Bishops of *Cologne*, to which place we came about three of the afternoon. In this city is an exceeding great and magnificent edifice called the Cathedral, the towers of which are said to exceed in height those of any place on earth, and verily to behold them was to cause a conjecture whether the Tower of Babel itself could have been higher. The place also is rich, exceedingly,

Cologne.

in altar-pieces and wrought gold, and jewels and relics of the saints. Chief among all for largeness and fair carving, is the shrine in which lie the bones of those three Kings of the East who brought presents to our Lord, and thereat we all admired greatly, grieving, nevertheless, at the gross ignorance and superstition that could cause worship of such things.

This city is famed also for the distilling of certain scented waters much used by women in their toilet, but of these we had no time to buy. By some, indeed, it is averred that scents of a grosser and less pleasant nature may be had for nothing in the streets, excelling almost in number those eleven thousand virgins which tradition makes martyrs of in this city.

Leaving this to be determined by those with more leisure, we left *Cologne*, and travelled at a moderate speed through a fair champaign fruitful of vine and corn, to an excellent and well-fortified city at the confluence of the rivers *Rhine* and *Moselle*, and from its situation thereon called *Confluentes*, or in the vernacular, *Coblentz*. On the further side of the river *Rhine* stands a strong fortress called *Ehrenbreitstein*, held by the Germans to be one of their most impregnable strongholds.

As we went on from this town we found ourselves on the western bank of the *Rhine*, a river like unto *The Rhine*. "the rivers *Abana* and *Pharphar*, lucid streams" (as our great poet and Secretary of State hath it) running with a strong and even current between high hills which were covered with vineyards and pleasant verdure, and embattled, as to their tops, here and there with the remains of old castles, from which, in old times, their possessors took unto themselves the controlment of the commerce of the passers-by.

With much self-congratulation that we were no longer liable to further treatment of such nature than what a paternal government thinks fit to impose on such sojourners in its borders, as essay to introduce therein the products of other and less favoured lands [though be it said, by the way, such care have they of their own subjects' stomachs, that hardly than with a payment of twenty-five pfennigs, or as we count it,

Bingen.

twopence half-penny, will they allow one to bring in so much as a brace of moor-game], we went on and along the river bank till, as the evening set in, we came to a fair village called *Bingen*. At this place, with a loving regard to the cravings of nature, without which none should travel, and in which our Cabinet was never wanting, we broke our fast with a grateful meal of soup and beefsteak. There was a fair moon, by whose beams we could dimly discern on the further bank of the river, and high up on the hill side, a great and fair statue which the Germans have erected to hold in memory their marvellous victories over the French nation in the year 1870. A notable feat of arms to be remembered truly, but one which it is to be feared will be obscured one day when the French, a quick, proud folk, shall have endeavoured to avenge their defeat by a still more terrible struggle; but pray the Lord, may it not be in our days!

As we travelled onwards from *Bingen* towards *Mayence*, we had much talk with a fellow-traveller as to the times and seasons, of arrival and departure of the trains, and he shewed us much kindness. Grievous is it to be said that we repaid him by taking away, in inadvertence, his cloak, but, as good fortune would have it, we were able to return it shortly, and to receive from him one of our many bags, that of the *Chancellor of the Exchequer's* to wit, which we had left behind us.

After leaving *Mayence* we passed through the station of *Darmstadt*, very large and beautiful (if such things can be beautiful), and journeyed to *Heidelberg*, arriving there at midnight. It's a town, famous for its beauty, but of this we could not judge as we did not alight. After we left it, we endeavoured to sleep, and not without success, as it was towards six of the morning before we awoke and found ourselves nearing the town of *Basle*. The sun was just coming up over the hills, and the villages were all lying in a Sabbath sleep, with the mist shrouding the meadows as we entered. The town, a fair and spacious one, lying on the banks of the *Rhine*, which is still a considerable stream,

Basle.

though so far from the ocean. There were many folks stirring, although it was so early in the day, and they all seemed to be on pleasure bent. After refreshing, we travelled on again through some hilly country abounding in rivers, among others, the *Reuss*, the *Aar*, and the *Limmatt* to *Zurich*, at which place we came about nine in the morning. The hostelry which we chose for our abode was the *Bauer au Lac*, a very good one, and situated close to the margin of the lake.

Sept. 12th.

Zurich,
and herein
of

It was some 47 hours since we had left home, and by consequence thereof were somewhat tired, although the journey had been far from unpleasant. All the members of the Cabinet, though of divers tastes and opinions, had shewn themselves of a friendly and accommodating spirit, from which might be argued the best hopes of future enjoyment. We had also had much profitable talk by the way on divers subjects, our *Premier* especially bestowing on his colleagues much good advice, as beseemed his superior years.

It would not well conform to the object of this writing, which is not designed to enumerate matters which can be found at large in other and more pretentious works, but simply to give the particular experiences of our Cabinet, if the town of *Zurich* were described at great length. Else would the object well reward the attempt, seeing that the town is so fair and interesting. I may, however, perhaps, permit myself to say that it has some fifty thousand inhabitants, and is situated on the borders of a lake of the same name, and of the river *Limmat*, which leaves the lake at this point. The streets of the old part are somewhat narrow, but the modern part is very well laid out and furnished with all kinds of shops. There are also several fine churches, which are used for the usages of the Lutheran Church, of which the town has been a constant and tried supporter since the days of the great Reformer.

The town.

The day was especially fine and warm, so that it will be little wondered at when it is learnt that the entire Cabinet betook themselves to certain baths which float in the lake, and there, having first laid

Our baths.

aside their clothing, disported themselves in the water, in the company of many other men. To the *Chancellor*, the *Home Secretary*, and the *President of the Board of Trade* had been given the gift of swimming, and they were enabled thereby to entrust themselves to water of great depth; whereas the *Premier* and his companion were compelled, perforce, to remain in the shallows. Howbeit to all was the experience very grateful.

Being thus cleansed and refreshed, we partook of food, and then bestowed ourselves in divers easy postures in the garden of the hotel, and passed a peaceful and quiet afternoon in sleep and the perusal of instructive reading, likewise those so disposed in smoking. Moreover the *President* and the *Lord Chancellor*, mindful of good things, essayed to discover the building in which are conducted the services of the Established Church of England, which, after much searching, they found. The place is a fair upper room near to the Chapel of Saint Anne, and the language used is the English. It cannot be well said, however, that the singing or the preaching was equal to that to be found in England, though, indeed, such is not to be expected.

At the chief meal of the day, which was in the evening, the Cabinet had the company of Mr. K—, a brother of a man who holds the post of teacher in the Technical School at B—, of which the *Premier* is a worthy pillar. He bestowed on us some information as to the laws and customs of the land, and also accompanied us on the margin of the lake, where we walked after dinner. It was a fair moonlight night, and the waters looked very beautiful; a concert moreover, was proceeding in a room near the lake, to which, however, we went not. He lives in a large and fine building on the south side of the town, which, as is the custom here, he shares along with other families.

There were many folks at the hotel, especially a large German family of some dozen souls, among whom were several fine handsome daughters, but with none did we make acquaintance.

Before breaking our fast next morning we again *Sept. 13th.* refreshed ourselves by bathing in the lake, and then sallied out with Mr. K——, to see the educational provision for the youth of the town. We were much impressed with a very large and fine laboratory or chemical workshop which was a-building. It is being provided by the State, and is estimated to cost, when furnished, the large sum of £70,000 sterling; truly a better way of spending money than some which might be named in our own country. We also saw an exceeding beautiful and well-furnished *Polytechnicon*, as they call it, in which are stored all manner of things by which the eye may be edified or the intellect brought out. No such building, it may confidently be said, is to be found in England or, if one may speak out of ignorance, in the whole world. *The public buildings.*

The day was very warm and the sun's rays of great power, but we were not thereby prevented from walking some two miles to an establishment which the authorities of the town have caused to be erected, wherein are certain mechanical devices called *turbines*, whereby the waters of the river are caused to furnish motive power for the working of mills, and also to ascend into reservoirs for the use of the inhabitants, an instructive sight. The details of the machinery, however, will not be treated of here, for doubtless they are engraved in the memories of such members of the Cabinet as are of an ingenious and mechanical turn, and for my own part, I am free to confess I understood them not.

A pleasant walk back brought us to lunch. after which the *Premier* and *Home Secretary* paid a visit to a gentleman of the former's acquaintance, who shewed them kindness and conducted them over a school. The other members of the Cabinet, being indisposed to visit a Museum wherein are bestowed numerous relics of former ages, when men lived in huts on the margin of the lake, employed themselves in the purchase of various things in the shops of the town, and in a visit to a barber who bestowed on their heads such offices as men of his trade are accustomed to do.

It may be mentioned also, that the *Lord Chancellor* and the *President*, with much foresight, provided themselves with certain books called phrase-books, wherein are printed, in different languages, such words and sentences as may be of use to those who, like themselves, essay foreign travels with but an indifferent acquaintance of the language in use among the people with whom they mix. Be it said, however, that a further acquaintance with the use of these books did not fully justify the money expended thereon.

*Our
departure.*

It was about five in the evening when we departed from *Zurich* by train for *Lucerne*, having had our eyes somewhat cleared as to the defects in the provisions for education which are being made in our own country by the display of them we had seen in this. [Be it remembered, however, though with some doubt, that the taxes said to be paid therefor, amount to some quarter of a man's income.]

Zug.

After leaving the town, we travelled through pleasing upland scenery, till we came by a lake overshadowed by high mountains, and called the Lake of *Zug*, to a small town of the same name. It seemed to be a place of some antiquity, but as it was growing dark we could not fairly judge, and we made no long stay. (It was here that since our visit some of that part of the town which faces the lake, slipped into the waters and was engulfed—a horrible catastrophe!) And then having left it and journeyed by a swift running stream, on which the moonbeams danced and sparkled, we arrived about seven of the clock at the famous town of *Lucerne*, which lies on the lake of the same name, and for beauty of situation and picturesqueness of appearance, is not rivalled in Switzerland, and hardly, one is tempted to believe, in the world.

*Lucerne,
and herein
of*

We took up our abode at the *Schweizerhof* Hotel, which is very large, and where are always to be found travellers from all quarters of the globe, chiefly, however, from our own country and that across the Atlantic Ocean.

The common meal at which all meet in the evening was just concluding as we arrived, but we nevertheless,

as was our wont, fared well and heartily at a separate table, and then sallying out, engaged a boatman to take us out in his boat on the lake. The moon was shining with a good grace, and the waters calm and peaceful. Little can it be wondered then that our souls drank in the poetic influence of the surroundings, and that such as were gifted that way, found vent in singing. Especially did our Premier render himself thus entertaining. After about an hour thus spent we returned to our hotel, and soon betook ourselves to bed. *The Lake.*

Certain of us had been bestowed in chambers which afforded an excellent prospect, and the view therefrom of the mountains and the lake lying steeped in moonlight, was one which gave great pleasure. Our slumbers were peaceful, and the morning's sun had scarce risen above the top of the *Righi* mountain before we were astir, and anxious to spend what time was given us in the examination of the town. The place is not at all large, but is exceeding curious and interesting. *Sept. 14th.*
The curious sights. Chief among the sights may be put the two covered wooden bridges by which the river *Reuss* is crossed, as it leaves the lake in a boiling rush of crystalline clearness; and in the inside of which have been painted divers curious and instructive pictures. The sight of some thousands of soldiery marching across the new bridge afforded us interest, likewise did a funeral in a church, and the freaks of nature in an enclosure called the Glacier Garden, which scientists affirm to have formed the under part of an old glacier; and if it were not that scientists so often pervert the plain teachings of nature to their own heated imaginings, one could well believe them. But as regards the figure of a lion carven out of the face of the rock in a place hard by, it needed no scientist or poetaster to tell us that the finger of genius had been put to the stone. It may be averred with truth that no statue in the whole world, not even the *Niobe* or the *Laocoon*, is more touching or true.

Having breakfasted we, at about nine in the morning, embarked with all our luggage on a steamboat which

should carry us to the other end of the lake, and such of us as did not already possess, bought alpenstocks with that rashness which is oft to be observed in the conduct of travellers at the outset of their journeyings. These alpenstocks are long poles of ash wood, about six feet in length, and shod at the end with an iron spike, and are of use in climbing hills.

*The Lake
of Lucerne.*

With commendable economy, we took seats in the part set apart for second-class passengers, and refreshed our bodies with fruit and our eyes with the marvellous scenery by which we passed. The weather was nothing short of perfection, and the hill called *Pilatus*, which stands near *Lucerne*, was wholly free from clouds, a thing of rare occurrence. Truly, one is tempted to think that the Almighty's chisel was in a kindly mood when it carved out such a spot as this, On either hand ran in bays of the lake; on every side towered up steepy heights, verdant and silvous; below gloomed and shone the limpid water, and over all glistened invisible the kindly breath of the sun-fire. Further could not nature go, and ill-content would he be that wished her.

We passed by one village called *Vitznau*, from which starts a railway which runs up the hill side to the top of the *Righi* hill, some 5,000 feet. This I can hardly expect credence for, but it is nevertheless quite true, for I have been in it. At another place is a small oratory or chapel erected in memory of one *William Tell*, from which it takes its name of *Tell's Chapel*, and not as some vainly imagine, because Tell used to preach there. And so at length we came unto the uttermost point of the lake at a place called *Fluellen*, and there disembarked.

*St. Gothard
Railway.*

We, with divers others, travellers for the most part like ourselves, straightway betook ourselves to a railway which proceeds thence over and through the mountains into Italy. We travelled for some space through level ground, passing, among other places, a town called *Altdorf*, where the William Tell whom I have before mentioned, is said by tradition to have shot an apple off his son's head, a pretty feat of marks-

manship truly, and then began to go through a narrow and rugged valley. The river *Reuss*, which we had seen at Lucerne as it left the lake, here tumbled in impetuous fashion down the gorge among splintered rocks, no longer clean and sweet, but like to the colour of water in which soap has been put, which we surmised to be due to its origin among the dirt of the glaciers. As the line on which we travelled must needs ascend a great height in a little space, the makers thereof have had recourse to a notable device, no less a one than to so fashion it as that it shall be so tunnelled into the rock as to make a complete spiral therein, and by issuing thence in the same direction as it entered, but at a greater elevation, achieve what would else be impossible. At one point we could see below and parallel to the line we were traversing, two other lines we had shortly before left. By this truly marvellous line then, we continued to a place called *Goeschenen*, at which point the railway enters a tunnel some nine miles in length and emerges on the Italian side, and here we got off.

Our Premier had at Lucerne, with great foresight, *Goeschenen*. provided that a carriage should be in readiness for us to convey us over the St. Gothard and Furka roads, and into this carriage we got, after providing to ourselves refreshments. We moreover, or to speak truly, our Premier, with commendable kindness, offered a seat therein to a gentlewoman who was travelling alone. The carriage, or *voiture*, as the folks there call it, was something in shape like unto what among us is called a *landau*, except that there was a seat set behind the driver's seat, and large enough to hold two. In this seat we sat by turns, and by turns applied ourselves in the German tongue to the driver, a truly steady and capable man, and one little deserving such treatment. His horses, four in number, were what we should call *Galloways*, of some fourteen hands high and exceeding well trained, as truly horses must be who are to travel on these roads. They were respectively called *Liza*, *Annie*, *Susa*, and *Strapakori*.

The road by which we travelled was marvellous in

*St. Gothard
Pass.*

its construction and situation, and of good breadth and metalling. It has to be taken up a rocky gorge of ever narrowing and steepening tendencies, and as it is never permitted to exceed a fixed slope, it must needs often take much space to accomplish a slight distance. Moreover, being oft on the side of very steep hills, and having no railings beyond short granite posts every yard, it is in many places sufficiently trying to the nerves of weak-headed people. It seems useless to endeavour any description of the savage places we passed through, seeing how many abler pens have attempted it. Still, when one's mind is still dwelling on the wildness of the scenery, it is hard to keep one's pen still. 'Tis a deep valley, or rather gorge, up which the road winds, girt in on both sides with savage rocks through which the *Reuss* foams and rushes down toward the lake, like some maddened soul frantic to drown all its sin in the flat misery of forgetfulness. Nor does aught of life attempt to share the place with the demons of desolation; the very grass refuses to coat with green the slippery surface of the rocks, and the wind and the storm only are left to howl down the narrow pass like devils let loose from the pit. One marvels at the audacity of men who dared to take a road up such a place as this, and is almost brought to believe with the peasantry, that the bridge which spans the torrent at its maddest point can never have been wrought with mortal hands. They indeed call it the *Devil's Bridge*; a fitting title in good sooth! and one to which it has better claim than any place I know. The spot when wrapped in the toils and buffetings of a winter hurricane, must assuredly be one as awful as ever poet imagined or God created. And, as if not content with nature's maddest and wildest freaks, man must needs try to add the horrors of bloody war thereto; for we read how the Russians and the French, in the year of grace (save the mark!) 1798, at this place, met in sanguinary embrace. So cruel is the natural man!

Hardly less striking than this wild scenery, is the sudden change which comes over the aspect at the

head of the valley. From a steep and rock-girt road we came at once on a broad, open, hill-environed plain, where peaceful pastures and even some trees took the place of the previous all-prevalent barren rock. There is a village called *Andermatt* just at this point, and somewhat further on another called *Hospenthal*, where the road we had followed turns away to the left hand and goes over into Italy; and here we left our lady companion, and ourselves kept to the right up a pleasant level valley bottom until we came at a small village called *Realp*. Here was a small hostelry called, I believe, the *Hôtel des Alpes*, at which we baited our horses and procured food for ourselves, after first washing in the *Reuss*, which ran at some fields' length from the road. We found the daughter of the house, as we took her to be, exceeding pleasant and entertaining, and we held talk with her in the French language. She moreover did us the pleasure of singing with an accompaniment on a guitar in an exceeding skilful and pleasing manner. This pleasure, we learnt afterwards, is extended to others, so that we were not the only ones—a remark true as regards many of her sex. But *beati ignorantis* is a true saying, and we left with regret. Indeed it pleased some to say that when the *Lord Chancellor* ran back for his conversation book, which he averred with truth he had left on the table, he had not so left it out of forgetfulness. But that is not true. Howsoever we went on with cheerful minds up towards the higher ground. At some places we got out and walked, and at others we sat in the carriage and admired. 'Tis a bleak valley, with steep grassy sides, and the little *Reuss* foaming its way through the bottom, no longer the stately stream we had crossed when near to *Zurich*, or the transparent rush we had stood over at *Lucerne*, but a mountain beck merely, breaking out at the foot of a mass of ice. Indeed we had at last come to the regions where the snow never melts, for close at hand on our right was the foot of a glacier, grim and cold in the fading daylight, with a mud gray stream rushing from its foot, and behind, the weird peaks and everlasting snows of *The Furka pass*.

the Galenstock,—a hill we shall ever remember as being the first on which we had seen a snow cap, though not by any means as high as some we saw afterwards. We had left behind us the sheep and the cows, each of which carries a clanking bell round its neck, and which, when sounding together, brought to our minds the sound of a musical box ; we had also left the little villages and the pleasant fields, and it seemed as if with a little more we should become immured in the ice. But we had attained a height of some 8,000 feet above the sea, and had come to the top of the Pass (where stands a good hostelry), and with a last look at the desolate valley and the little Reuss, and the distant hills from which the sunset glow had long departed, we crossed over this, the watershed of Europe, and began to descend. "It is ill jumping before one has come to the style," and truly it is but poor economy to have used one's largest words already on inferior objects. So at least I was forced to think when I attempted to guide my pen down our descent into the valley on the other side. So I will forego putting my thoughts to paper. Suffice it to say that these Swiss Engineers would, I verily believe, achieve a road out of the nethermost pit, if permitted so to do. It was fast getting dark as we went down the road, so we could scarce see the valley below us, but the moon came up, and shining on the *Rhone Glacier* as we passed close to it, gave us some meagre idea of its size and beauty. 'Tis in truth nothing less than a cataract of ice, frozen solid white just as it bulged its way into the valley, and as the cold rays of the moon fell on it, it looked like a silver staircase to the stars. Fair and lovely though this vision was, to our carnal minds the sight of a distant light which betokened to us supper and bed had more attractions, and we went on as quickly as was prudent. It was with feelings of relief and even of gratitude that we at length reached the door of the hotel of the *Glacier du Rhone* and dismounted. We figured up the expense of this day's ride to each of us and found it to be some sixteen francs or 13s. 4d. of

*Rhone
Glacier.*

our money ; so that for the same sum of money as that in which the venerable university of Cambridge fines a riotous or unseemly Bachelor of Arts, we had enjoyed a ride which for the beauty, grandeur and variety of its landscape I can hardly expect to see matched in this world.

"'Tis ill looking a gift horse in the mouth ;" and truly we ought to have been thankful for any mercies, but I grieve to say our minds will not dwell with pleasure on the comforts we were afforded at the hotel we had now come at. We thought perchance 'twas a true sample of what was to follow in that line, but a further experience thereof has given us truer conception, and I can scarce do better than to dismiss any further notice of the place with the words which our *Home Secretary* adapted thereto from the poet—

*The Hotel
there.*

"Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place."

It is but fair, nevertheless, to remark that the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* commended the beds as being comfortable and roomy, in which respect he averred that they differed from those previously provided for him. And to say truth, these foreigners would seem to think all men cast of one size, and that not a great one.

"Twas a fine morning as we started the next day, about eight of the clock, to continue our ride, and gave promises, not afterwards belied, of being favourable for travelling. It was with sorrow we left the glacier of the Rhone without taking a nearer view, but we determined that if all is well, it should not be many years before we came again to the spot. For the first hour or so, our road took us through a narrow gorge which the river has cut for itself, and the wildness and danger of the road was much like what we had gone through the day before. In some places we were carried at some height above the stream's bed, and here, even as yesterday, there were many places where to have gone over the side of the road would have caused us to stop nothing short of eternity. But by God's mercies we came safely through these

Sept. 15th.

*Rhone
Valley,
and herein
of*

perils and reached the flat bottom of *the Valley*. I call it the Valley advisedly, for I know of none so well entitled to that name, and the Swiss themselves recognize its claim thereto by calling it the *Valais*. 'Tis a broad flat bottom, some mile or two across, with exceeding high hills on each side, clothed on their lower slopes with fir woods, and with tops which almost reach the line of eternal snow ; and here and there on either side are clefts or ravines down which come glaciers, with streams flowing therefrom. And in the far distance are to be seen the tops of some of the highest mountains, notable among which was the *Weisshorn*, which lay shining in the south-west like a summer cloud. The valley lies almost east and west, and so extends for many miles. The road was good and level, and we drove on very contentedly, breaking out now and again into songs which, however they might affect the musical ear, were to us pleasing and tuneful. It would be but wearisome to recount the names of all the villages through which we passed even if I remembered them, which I do not ; there were many of them, and all very much alike. The houses are all built of wood, curiously carved, with small windows and galleries outside, and being of a brownish colour, seemed old even when new. To an artist they would afford much pleasure, but it would need some boldness to sleep therein. The barns are also of wood, and are rested at each corner on stout posts with stone slabs thereon, for the purpose, we surmised, of keeping out vermin. [*Verbum sapientibus* The houses are not so furnished.] The street through the villages was usually very narrow and dirty, and carriages were forbidden to do more than walk through them. But however poor the village might be, there was always a church there, with more or less pretence of architectural beauty ; and where there is a church of course there is generally a priest, whom the people must support. 'Tis the Catholic persuasion that they are of, truly, but "half a loaf is better than no bread "at all," and we would fain hope that the priests are true shepherds to those poor sheep, and give them full

*The
villages.*

*The
Religion.*

recompense for the support given them. We noted, too, with admiration, the numerous wooden crosses set up by the road side, being, as far as we could judge, memorials of those who had died, touching *memento mori's*, indeed. At some places also were shrines, being small stone chambers with a grated window, inside of which were tawdry images : at one of these were some priests consulting as to its repair, and they gave us a courteous salute. Doubtless the errors of the Church of Rome are many and cannot be too stoutly combatted, but it should be with pity rather than anger, nor, as Sir Thomas Browne hath it, "can one think it sufficient warrant because they err in one circumstance for us to err in all, that is in silence and dumb contempt."

The road lay, for the most part, through cultivated land, and thereon were the people busily at work cutting their hay and carrying it. The fields are very small, nor have they hedges as with us, the ground being too valuable. A peg at the corners is deemed sufficient. They also are at great pains to run the streams of water through little trenches in various directions to irrigate the land. On the hill side which lay to the sun, were small patches of rye and other crops which looked very pleasant, whilst here and there were huge rocks which had rolled down from the hills above, and there seemed no reason why others should not follow. Much of the work is done by the women, as the men go away in summer to earn money as guides and porters, so by consequence, the former soon lose the good looks they might have had, and are old almost at thirty. Let us hope, nevertheless, that they are contented with their lives, and why should they not be, seeing they know no other condition? I have lingered thus in describing the drive as it pleased us much ; but it would be ill, indeed, if I were to get my reader no further, especially with the winter coming on. So I hasten forward. After some three hours' drive, we came at a village called *Viesch*, where is good accommodation for man and beast at a hostelry of which I forget the name, and here we left our carriage and

*The agri-
culture.*

Viesch.

*The
Eggischorn.*

sent it on, with all but our lightest luggage, to a town called *Brigue*, or *Brieg*, some leagues further down the valley. We ourselves, meanwhile, entered the hostelry and had some refreshment (a precaution we never omitted), and then, having hired a porter to carry our light luggage, which he did on a wooden contrivance fixed on his back, we started to walk up the mountain which overtopped the village, and which is called the *Eggischorn*. The sun, though now in *Libra*, had still great power and the way was steep; but, with perseverance and a steady gait, the highest hills can be surmounted, and we progressed cheerily. The lower part of our walk led us through pleasant woods which gave us grateful shade, but as we went higher, we got above the line at which trees will thrive, and came out at what is called an *Alp*, that is to say, a green pasture lying mid-way up the mountain, and where the cattle are kept all the summer. Here we found several natives of the valley, who sojourn at this great height along with the cattle, busily engaged in the construction of a wooden hut or *châlet*, by the side of some others already built. In these huts they carry on the making of cheese, which it is to be surmised is sweeter than the huts, else would no man, or at least no Englishman, eat of them. It was truly a heaven-sent day, bright and balmy, and the ground looked very green and bright with its carpet of grass and tufts of crawberry bushes, and here and there tumbling streams of clear water. We queried as we looked, how different it would all seem in the bleak winter months, and thanked our good fortune for the fair weather. We were no long time in traversing this pleasant spot, and soon came at a fair large hostelry, called the *Jungfrau Hotel*, where we bespoke beds for the night and had some tea. Truly it's a fine situation that mine host has chosen for his guests to stay at, and one which might well make the Boniface of an English Railway Hotel marvel. It stands alone, some 7,000 feet above the sea-level, on the flank of the mountain, with the ground rising sharply behind and sinking in front in a trough to the pine-woods, whilst

*The hotel
there.*

far below, lies peaceful the Rhone Valley, and beyond stand lofty mountains, not indeed with snow summits, but of respectable size and various outline. The building is a fair stone-built edifice of some size and good accommodation, and we were much pleased with the company and the cooking; likewise with the beds. I must not forget to mention a small church near the hotel which has been built for the usage of the English Church, though here at least one might have thought it as fitting to hold worship with the Creator in the temple his own hands have wrought, especially seeing that no one lives here in the winter time when a shelter would be necessary.

It still wanted some two hours off sundown, so after resting, we set out to climb the remaining part of the mountain, from the top of which we were told could be had a fine prospect. The path we took was sufficiently good to be used by mules for the most part of the way, and so, though here and there it led by rocky places, it had not much of the dangerous in it. The place was very desolate, for we had come at higher levels than those at which the cattle are kept, and the ground was much of it covered with stones. Few are the animals who care to live in this region even in the summer. We heard, however, the cry of the *marmot*, which makes a whistling noise, sufficiently like the signal cry of bandits to scare the nervously minded. No such thoughts, however came to us, for we were holding high converse on topics which, to youth at any rate, are ever fresh and new, and on which it ever behoveth the aged to give wise and matured advice. And so at length we came at the summit, to mere piled up heaps of massive rocks, tumbled in one magnificent pyramid, seared and riven by the lightnings and frost, and weathered by the storm; one could almost have thought that the powers of darkness had been playing their own wild will in the face of Heaven, and striving to beat down to the dust the sun-kissing hill, had it not been that some Christian hand had planted on the very point a large cross of wood. Here on this Pisgah of our pilgrimage we took our stand and cast

*Summit
of the
Eggischhorn.*

*The view
therefrom.*

our eyes around upon the land of promise, which was thrown about our feet. And, in sooth, the great law-giver himself could scarce have gazed on grander scenes even among the mountains of Moab. The great sun, whose warm rays had cheered us through the day, was retreating behind dark clouds to illumine other quarters of the globe, and storm-mists were drifting down and blotting out the gleaming summits of the *Jungfrau* and the *Aletsch-horn*, mighty mountain masses, that towered up from fields of snow on the further side of a vast river of ice which stretched its fluent frozen face a mile broad at our feet. 'Twas the Great Aletsch, largest of Swiss glaciers, that, starting in a huge basin of snow fields far on our right, flowed in grim silence towards and past us, wrinkled and riven in a myriad places, and gleaming gray in the gathering gloom. But yet, as if to shew that even from things the fiercest and most forbidding can flow sweetness and beauty, this grim giant of the ice world had at one spot in its side melted out into a little lake of purest blue, which lay just at the foot of our mountain, like some fair jewel lying in the palm of a foul ogre. And as the eye swept round thence to the right it rested on the massive *Finsteraarhorn* and the steep *Viesch* glacier, on the *Galenstock* and the mountains surrounding the head-waters of the Rhone river, on the dark masses of the hills which bound the further side of the Rhone Valley, and far to the south-west on the dim outlines of the *Weisshorn*, the *Monte Rosa*, and the *Matterhorn*, names never to be mentioned but with bated breath and whispered humbleness, as in the presence of their Maker. We even persuaded ourselves that we saw *Mont Blanc*, monarch of the mountains. With truth could we say with Peter, "It is good for us to be here," but with nothing but presumption add thereto his wish to build tabernacles, clothed as we were with the worshipful awe and admiring fear that near intercourse with these mighty mountains must always evoke. And so, having satiated our eyes with looking, we turned and departed own the hill through the deepening gloom, to the

shelter of our inn, where we dined well and heartily, though somewhat later than our fellow guests. As our *Lord Chancellor* came down he, mindful of the fate alleged of those who put their trust in Pharaoh, King of Egypt, essayed the strength of his alpenstock, and, shame on the vendors thereof, it snapped like a reed ere half his full weight, which is not excessive, was entrusted on it. Better, however, that it should fail him here than at some crisis when his life should be hanging on it. Need it be said that he straightway bought at the hotel another and a stouter article, and vowed not to be found carrying coal to Newcastle again. And so, after a good day, we went to bed and had a good night.

It was not to be expected that having once gazed *Sept. 16th*

on that huge ice stream, the *Aletsch Glacier*, we should care to leave the neighbourhood thereof without a nearer view, especially after having been baulked the day before, of the Rhone Glacier. So the next morning, the weather being propitious, we were astir betimes, and having breakfasted, were on foot about half after seven. In all journeyings into parts unknown, and especially in places where the weather is not to be relied on, it behoves a wise man to take with him a guide, who may be at once a cicerone and a helpmeet. Mindful of this, we took with us a man from the inn, Louis Seiler by name, who might at the same time keep us in the right path, and carry for us such food as we might have need of during the day. He was of middling height and sparely built, and in his manners quiet and reserved (although able to talk somewhat in English), as though constant communion with the silent hills had imparted to him something of their silence. Still was he civil and obliging, and did not presume on our ignorance and inexperience; indeed he would be a rash man who would, seeing how many of our Cabinet were, when at home, as those "having authority" and well accustomed to the ruling of men. So with this man as guide we moved cheerily up the same path as we had been on the night before, until we came at the

*Visit to the
Aletsch
Glacier,
and herein
of*

foot of the last part of the mountain before the summit, and then fetching a compass to the right, came over the spur of the hill to the top of a steep and long bank, at the bottom of which lay the *Marjellen See*, the little lake which I mentioned above as lying by the side of the Aletsch Glacier. In truth there were two lakes or tarns, joined by a little stream, but only one of them derived its waters from the melting glacier, the other being fed, I suppose, from springs. We were not long in getting down the bank—where we gathered the blue gentian flower—to the edge of these lakes, and found, as might be expected, that the one formed of melted ice was very cold; so cold, that we had large blocks of ice floating on its surface unmelted—icebergs in little. The other, however, was of a moderate temperature, and our *Home Secretary* was all agog to bathe therein, but wiser counsels prevailed and he refrained. It is well enough to bathe when engaged in excursions which make no great demands on one's powers of endurance, but it was otherwise here, or so we thought, and it is not to be doubted that bathing, though refreshing for the moment, is in the end exhaustive. It may be noted that the flow of water was from this fresh-water lake to the ice-water one, which latter, as I have said, lay near to the glacier, and not as one might have thought, the other way.

The Marjellen See.

As we stood and gazed at the white side of the glacier, bounding with steep cliffs the deep blue lake, and standing out against the deep blue sky, we felt that none of earth's painters could compete against the Hand that had mixed such colours and laid them on with such a brush. And so thinking, we moved on at the foot of a steep hill which came down in broken rocks to the lake, till we came to the glacier itself at a point just above the lake.

Of glaciers, and herein of

And at this point it seems fitting that I should endeavour some account of a glacier; although such cannot but be short and incomplete. And firstly, in general, it may be said that a glacier is a valley filled with ice, which is derived from such of the winter's

snow as, having been melted by the sun of Summer, has been again frozen by the cold into a solid state. It seems strange to us that a large valley should be thus so much filled up, but so it is, and we get here masses of ice hundreds of feet in thickness lying cradled, as it were, among the mountains. I imagine to myself an intelligent reader querying how this mass can stand still if there be an outlet at the end of the valley; nor does it so do, but moves slowly down, impelled thereto by its own weight. But the lower end does not go beyond a certain point, else, if it were continually moving across the country would the convenience of the people be much hindered; but when it has reached a sufficiently low level it commences to melt, and from its under side flows a torrent of ice-cold water; and indeed, so far from advancing, it is found that the ends of most glaciers are in fact going back. It is from such sources that flow some of the mightiest rivers of central Europe, notably the *Rhine* and the *Rhone*, which not only derive thence their own but are also fed by many streams of like origin. Some curious scientists have made measure of the rate of progression of a glacier and found it to be something like a foot in a day; though the middle part was found to move more quickly than the sides. Indeed the glacier itself has at sundry times plainly shewn itself to be moving; notably did one near the village of *Chamounix* do so, for we are credibly informed that certain men, having fallen into a hole in the midst of the glacier, and there been lost, were restored, as regards their bodies, some forty years after, at the foot of the glacier, having travelled, in the interval, a mile or so in their icy tomb. Their flesh was fresh as on the day they died, and their forms quite easy of recognition. True it is, indeed, that the mills of God grind slow, but they grind exceeding small, and that nothing is hidden which shall not be made plain.

Mention should also be made of the vast quantity of stones of all sizes which are to be found on each side of a glacier, and, where two glaciers have joined into one, in the middle part also. These are stones

*Their
motion.*

*Their
melting.*

*Their
moraines.*

which have fallen from the sides of the mountains which border on the ice, and which have been broken off therefrom by water lodging in the cracks and then freezing; for as even a child knows, when water is frozen it grows greater in bulk, and will rend open anything in which it has been pent up. These heaps of stones are called by the natives *moraines*, and as they rest on the glacier, they move along with it at the rate I have stated above. To any who pauses to consider, therefore, it is clear that when they shall have come at the end of the glacier, they will be left behind on the ground when the glacier itself has retired (as we have seen it does), and that so we may have on the ground stones of a quite different kind to the rocks beneath. And from this and other facts, scientists have averred that at one time the valleys of our own merry England were, many of them, filled with glaciers; for we do find in many places large stones of quite a different sort to the rock on which they lie, and which, unless put there by Satan, as some think, can only have been left there by glaciers. Howsoever it be, let the scientist and the theologian be reconciled on the matter if they can, we have not the time to linger over it.

*Their
crevasses.*

Not only does this moving down bring about the things above mentioned, but it also causes much change to the body of the glacier itself. For, by being constantly strained, the ice is as constantly splitting into great cracks and chasms. These are called by the natives *crevasses*, and truly terrible things they are. Sometimes narrow enough to stride, but often wider, they go down into the bowels of the ice with a precipitancy which forbids any hope of return to, even if the cold at the bottom should leave any life in the unlucky wight who falls into one of them. But like many cruel things they have a beauty of their own, and the ice lining of their sides especially, is of a blue, purer and more ethereal than even Raphael could achieve, though to use a vulgar simile, it reminds one of that blue wash with which the walls of cottages are oftentimes bedaubed. Of course, with

care, these crevasses are to be avoided, but on some glaciers which lie in places where the snow does not melt, they get covered over with snow, and then are they in truth pitfalls for the incautious.

But it is time I brought back the reader (if by this time I have one) from general description to the particular glacier on which he saw us about to set foot, and so I proceed. We had to go down a steep bank of broken rocks to the ice, on to which we stepped with ease, nor did we find any such difficulty as is sometimes presented by the ice having parted from the rock, and left a mighty chasm called a *Schrund*. The ice rose in a smooth bank for a little, and then stretched out in a level plain before us, and we struck out at once for the middle part, so as to avoid the greater crevasses. The smaller ones, however, we had to put up with, and some we jumped, some we circumvented, and some we crossed on narrow ridges of ice. Possibly there was no great danger in doing so, but the footing of some of our party did not always appear established in a firm place, and although none actually slipped, it seemed sometimes to border on the unsafe. We found, however, no difficulty in walking on the ice itself for it was not slippery, as is that formed on the surface of water, but covered on the top with a white powdery layer, and if we had but put more big nails in the soles of our boots, we should have walked as easily as on solid ground. Our guide walked on in front, in silence as a rule, only turning to us when some difficult place had to be passed. Without him, however, we should have been much hindered in finding the straightest way, for with five to speak and as many paths to choose, much good time would have been spent in talk and exploration. Having reached the middle, we turned to the right and went as straight as possible up the glacier, which at this place was about a mile across, and seemed to us like a sea of ice rifted into a million wavelets, which broke to our right and left on the rocky flanks of steep and forbidding mountains, whilst we rash mortals seemed like to those who, in their presumption and folly, would

*The glacier
itself.*

*Our ascent
thereof*

seek to invade the most secret laboratories of Nature, and there measure her mighty workings by their own petty and man-made imaginations. For here the noisy hand of man had not essayed to improve on what her silent fingers had fashioned, and we, in our unabashed invasion, might have thought ourselves to be "the first who ever burst into that silent sea." And so, in single file, we proceeded for some hour or so and then called a halt, and proceeded at the instance of the *Lord Chancellor*, to partake of food. This we had had carried by the guide, and for drink, we had at our feet numberless rills of ice-cold water which, melting out of the ice by the heat of the sun, gurgled along their crystal channels and smiled back to their deliverer in glad scintillations, like some infant laughing back the joy of its mother.

Having thus refreshed not burdened nature, we again went forward and at last reached the limit of our walk without special incident, save that we came on the skeleton of a small deer, called here a *Chamois*, which had perished in this icy wilderness, like some scape-goat by the sea of Death; and that the *President-of the Board of Trade*, prodigal of his resources, let slip into a hole his alpenstock, to be won back, however, by the guide. The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, moreover, in the lightness of his heart, gathered snow into a ball, and smote therewith the *Home Secretary* in the nape of the neck, to the latter's great surprise and indignation, for a snow-ball in September is a contingency which the most prudent man can hardly foresee.

The spot to which we had come was on the same side of the glacier as the one on which we set out, but some three miles further up, and at a point where it forms a huge basin, from which branch out some three or four glaciers, together forming the one we were on; and here we again left the ice, and by scrambling up a steep bank, some 100 feet, came on to an escarpment where has been built a stone hut for the accommodation of such vain persons as, being wishful to climb high mountains, are compelled to

forego the comforts of an inn to do so. This hut is called the *Concordia Hütte*; truly a befitting name, at any rate for that day, when the storm-fiends of the mountains were held back in chains of sunlight, and all nature rejoiced, as it were, in the truce of God. How much more does such a place deserve to be called the place of peace than that garish, statue-girt square we afterwards saw in *Paris*. As we sat and looked around us, we had the great glacier spread at our feet and stretching away to the left in riven billows of ice; and in front, a vast amphitheatre of ice and snow, whose stainless purity the eye followed with shaded gaze, till it lost itself in the blue vault of heaven, whilst black frowning rocks on the one hand, and the sweeping robe of white, which fell like a bridal veil from the head of the *Jungfrau* mountain, grimest of ice-maidens, on the other, filled up a scene which to us, basking in the quiet sunshine, spoke of naught but purity and peace. And our hearts echoed the words of the psalmist when he sang, "O ye Ice and Snow; bless ye the Lord: praise Him and magnify Him for ever!"

Nor did the place, whilst spreading before us this feast for the eye, fail to afford also the wherewithal to satisfy the cravings of hunger, for our guide from his wallet brought forth food and set before us, and in the vessels stored in the hut boiled for us drink from the fragrant coffee-bean. And on these we brought to bear the appetites which long sojourns in the open air usually give. And then stretching ourselves out on the rocks, some smoked the tobacco weed, others fell on sleep, and the *Premier* pourtrayed the guide in his sketch-book. And whilst they are so employed, just a word anent the hut itself. 'Tis a one-storeyed building of stone, with a chimney and windows, and inside, two rooms, in both of which are beds. Not four-posters indeed, but mere shelves like the berths in a ship, with straw and sack-cloth for bedding. There is also a stove and cupboards, and a table, and some store of utensils for the use of wayfarers like ourselves. I need not say that no one lives

here, and that the only ones who use the beds are those I have mentioned before as being wishful to climb mountains. 'Tis indeed a strange wish that can lead them to this. Nor must I forget the book kept here, in which all persons are invited to write their names and addresses, for what purpose we could not surmise, unless it were to minister to their vanity, though truly, any who would pass the night here is worthy of being known to posterity, if only *exempli gratiâ*. Nathless, we put therein our names, and our guide's also; and for aught I know, they are there to this day.

Our
descent,

Meantime the day was growing old, and it got time for us to depart; so having fastened up the hut, we went away. The road we took was the same as we had come on, and as we were now more accustomed thereto, and moreover, as we were going down the glacier, we got back to the *Marjellen See* in much less time than it took us to come, and that without any incident worthy of note, save that I believe the *Home Secretary* came near to falling into a crevasse. The weather, as though to impress us with the uncertainties of life, had by this time become overcast, and it began to rain, but not so much so as to give us inconvenience. We had had, however, no cause to complain of the absence of sun in the fore-part of the day, and the faces of all, and especially of the *Lord Chancellor* and *Home Secretary*, were burnt to the colour which comes over a craw-fish after boiling. The slope which leads up from the lake to the flanks of the *Eggischorn* mountain gave us much more trouble in climbing than we had expected, but like horses with their heads turned towards home, we made light of it, though to our guide it seemed irksome, for he, poor wight, was much troubled in his breathing, nor did he seem to go about getting it improved, when he sat down on the wet grass to rest and cool. After reaching the top we had still some way to go, but we jogged on merrily, and at length all arrived in safety at the inn where, after bathing ourselves in cold water, we found dinner awaiting us in the large room set apart for eating. If it were not that I feared the reader would think I

and safe
return.

dwell unduly on matters of this sort, I would gladly describe what we had spread before us, if only to cause him to marvel at the variety and goodness of the viands, though so far from all ordinary places of supply. But in this instance, at any rate, I can find more congenial topics for my pen in saying something touching the persons in whose company we dined; for it is the custom in these parts for all guests to take their dinner in common, at what they call the host's table, or in the French tongue, *table d'hôte*. We found already seated at the table, some half-dozen folk, among whom were an Englishman and his wife, another Englishman, and a German professor and his wife. The two first-named could not well have been mistaken for inhabitants of any other country, the man especially, having that round red face and well-bred reserve which so often marks the country squire. They however waxed more talkative as the meal wore on. Their compatriot, too, was a pleasant man, and listened willingly to anyone's remarks, and though it was more difficult to say of what profession he was, we took him to be a schoolmaster. With the German professor we had some difficulty in conversing, as his knowledge of English was not fluent, and ours of German was peculiar rather than extensive, and, like spirits in a temperance hotel, only kept for emergencies. His wife, however, was a very pleasant lady, and had once been endowed with some beauty; she, moreover, was exceedingly well-versed in our tongue and spoke it with a pretty accent. With her our *Premier* soon engaged in talk, chiefly anent the differences between clothes made in England and in Germany, and she, living in Berlin, was able to give him some information; as for an instance, that when she wished to buy a cloth that would last, she bought it of English make, a fact flattering to our party who, for the most part, were engaged in the making of cloth, and were never wearied of discussing matters appertaining thereto. Having got on to this subject, our *Premier* was soon busy enlarging on the question of technical education, one dear to his heart

*Our dinner,
and herein
of*

*The
company.*

and on which he is, I doubt not, better qualified to talk than most men, having had the honour of serving Her Most Gracious Majesty as a Commissioner on the matter. And as the attention of the other guests became attracted he waxed more and more instructive, and as one of the Cabinet remarked, "spread himself like a green bay tree on every side." Especially did he arouse the interest of our English friends by describing the ingenuity and wealth of one Lister of Bradford, and it was clear that he had worship of them as a man of parts, and on us, as members of his Cabinet, came a feeling of pride and confidence in our leader. And so the dinner wore on in pleasant talk and good company. Besides those I have mentioned, there were few other guests at the inn, as the season of the year for travelling was drawing to a close. We were, however, interested in a party of three, all women, one of whom was compelled to carry on her talk by means of a long tube to her ear, we supposed on account of deafness; but of them we kept clear.

After dining, we sat in the room set apart for smoking, and wrote in our diaries and planned what we should do on the morrow. We found time also to watch the summer lightning as it glared and glimmered about the tops of the hills on the far side of the Rhone Valley, causing thereby pretty effects of light and shade. And so about nine of the clock to bed.

Sept. 17th.

The sun rose next morning with every promise of shining on another fine day, and we were astir betimes; indeed the *Premier* averred that he had been an eye-witness of the sun's rising, and as is the manner of such, descanted thereon in fine language to us who had lain in bed. Howsoever, we were all to be found at the breakfast table about eight o'clock, ready for aught that might befall. The three ladies whom we had remarked the night before had, we were informed, started at five of the clock for the *Concordia Hütte*, and at this we ungallantly thanked our stars, for they were not beautiful to look upon, though doubtless, sufficiently agreeable. Our English friend of last night expressed his intention of following their example, but from his

Our walk
to Brieg
and herein
of

manner and talk, we were inclined to wager that he would not get as far as he intended. To the other Englishman and his wife we bade adieu and saw them depart down the hill to *Viesch*, in the valley, their luggage being carried in a small sled without wheels, for even the feminine accretiveness of dress must confine itself within limits if they mean to stay at this place. Of the German professor and his wife we saw nothing, to our Premier's grief. And so about half after eight we departed from the inn, not without regret, for it's a pleasant place, and one to which we look back with affection. We took with us a man who might at once carry our luggage and keep us in the right path, for our intention was to get to the place in the valley to which we had sent our heavy luggage before climbing up the *Eggischorn*, and it seemed the better plan to take all our other luggage with us. The man we took was called *Andred*, or *Andreg*, and he had acted in a similar capacity for the *Premier* when he was in these parts some ten years ago. He was a man of darkish features with a grizzled beard, and talked in the English tongue to us with some intelligence.

Our start.

Our path took us past the little church and along the hill side, neither much above nor below the level at which the inn stood, but in the other direction to that in which we had gone the day before.

Yesterday we had been at close quarters with the grim ice-world, and had stood face to face, as it were, with the Spirit of the mountains, in places where his cruel breath had driven back cattle, winged fowl, and every green herb, and had clothed all in the silence of desolation. To-day we were to traverse places where he maintains an equal struggle with the Sun-god, and draws back the skirts of his garment from the green fields for a few months, only to wrap them again in thicker folds of winter snow. But whilst he has thus retired baffled, what is left behind for the sun to kiss is fresh and fair as the meadows of *Asphodel*. Rolling fells of vivid green break from the higher and more rocky summits, and fall in broken waves down to the

The mountain side.

darkling pine-woods below, whilst beyond and across the broad valley rise huge masses of purple and brown mountains, their tops hidden in white billows of fleecy clouds, and in the far distance gleam the peaks of everlasting snow. Overhead sails the golden sun in the sapphire sky, under foot the grasshopper sings and the streamlets gurgle, and all round is heard the bleating of the sheep and goat, and the drowsy clank of the cow-bells. Such was the hill side we traversed with laughter and song, with jest and tale, with eye filled with beauty and heart attuned to worship, drinking in with every breath the life-giving air of the mountains, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. Yet did we, neither here nor elsewhere, allow the exuberance of our spirits to lead us into any freak of wit or outgrowth of imagining of which we might, at any time to come, think with regret; or if perchance, by inadvertence any of us did so, he was, by the voice of the rest, straightway called upon to apologize therefor to the *Lord Chancellor*, as representing for that time the decencies of outward observance. One sad memory, however, must for ever haunt the mind in connection with this fair place. It was here that the Cabinet, by unanimous vote, deputed to the *Lord Chancellor* the writing of this history, else had he never put pen to paper in the matter, and much good ink and eyesight had been kept for a better purpose.

We had gone on thus for some few miles when we came at the shores of a sheet of water about a quarter of a mile across, which we at home should call a *tarn*, and which here goes by the name of a *see*—the *Betten See*. The water danced and sparkled in the sun, and its limpid shallows gleaming green like the glint of an emerald drenched in a woman's tears, seemed waiting only for the embracements of some strong man spreading forth his hands to swim. Nor did it wait in vain, for the *Home Secretary* and the *Lord Chancellor*, reckless of what calls the day had still to make on their powers, threw off their raiment and plunging in, disported themselves in the shallows. They, however,

*The Betten
See.*

made no long stay for the water was chilly, but emerging, straightway betook themselves to racing, dancing, and the hurling of alpenstocks like javelins, in all the freedom and simplicity of nature's attire. And being thus soon dried, they dressed themselves again and rejoined their waiting companions.

Another hour's walk brought us to the upper edge of a large and verdant plain, almost level, studded with wooden huts and musical with cow-bells. This they call the *Rieder Alp*, and 'tis one of the places I have talked of before as being the resort of cattle in the summer. Provision has been made also for the accommodation of strangers by the erection of an hotel built of wood, but we did not avail ourselves of it but skirted by the place, and then going up the hill side a little way came to the top of the ridge along which we had been walking, and which runs down from the summit of the *Eggischorn* almost parallel to the valley of the Rhone, dividing it from that filled by the Aletsch glacier. Here we found a small house newly built, which held out promises of refectation, and herein we entered and fared well on boiled eggs, and tea and marmalade, at a moderate cost. From where we had come at now, we overlooked the valley or gorge which lies at the end of the Aletsch, and we could see far below us the place where that mighty giant yields at last to the soft blandishments of the sun, and pours forth his soul in a foaming torrent which chafes its way down the narrow gorge to the broad valley beyond, whilst stretching away to the right lay the grim ice and snow we had been in the day before, and in front, cruel mountains and gray ice rivers, with just one house, the *Bel-Alp Hotel*, perched aloft on a steep hill side, like the ark of Noah stranded on the ruins of some elder world. 'Tis worth a visit, but we had not time for it, as we had it in our minds to be at *Zermatt* the following day, and were as yet some distance off. So we turned away and went straight down into the valley, meaning to cross the torrent at the bottom by a bridge there is there. Down we went some thou-

The Rieder Alp.

The Gorge of Massa.

sands of feet, through tangled woods and open glades and slippery banks, sliding, running, and jumping, with laughter and song and sunshine; filled with the strength of present health, and thoughtless of toilsome years to come. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, "and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth," are tolerant words which were spoken out of deep experiences, and I doubt not this abandonment of self and opening of soul to the sweet influences of nature have their due, if but subordinate, place in the all wise economy of nature's God. At any rate, the thought of our *Premier* chanting that fine ballad beginning, "When all the world is young, lad!" in the forest glades above that *Gorge of Massa* is one which floats through the din of machinery and the chaffering of the mart like the beating of an angel's wing, and is to those tired of the labour and heat of the day like the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land. And so at length we came to the bottom of the gorge, where the torrent tore madly along its deep and rocky bed, and grazing cattle cropped the green pasture which lay all too narrow between the upstanding hills.

*Our
passage
thereof.*

And then crossing the rudely-fashioned bridge we went up the opposite hill side, which by good fortune was but as a mole hill as compared with that we had just come down. Our way led us up a deep, wooded dell, carpetted with green moss and tender herbs, and furnished in profusion with bushes bearing edible berries, such as the bilberry and the barberry. The strawberry also was to be gathered, and on these we feasted right royally. We did not, as do some vain and foolish folk, endeavour how quickly we could achieve the distance from place to place, and subordinate all comfort and edification of the mind to gratification of the muscles of the body; but rather by gentle walking and judicious halting, exercised at the same time our bodies in progression, and our minds in observation and conversation. And this was our practice both here and at other times and places.

After passing the top of this hill we came into wide rolling ground, walled in with high hills in front, and

fertile in meadows and some trees, with a little village in front called *Platten*. Here we halted, whilst the Premier made a sketch of our guide's features, and some of us lay for shelter from the sun under the floor of a barn, which we were enabled to do by its being built off the ground on posts. And then, having gone through the village, which seemed to us to be poorer and more squalid than any we had as yet seen, we came to a small inn, where we made a short stay to refresh nature by a drink of milk in a green arbour, and then continued. After clearing the village we made for the right, intending to pass down through the open land into the valley of the Rhone, and for this passage we found provided a stone-paved causeway. It is not for one who has had but a limited acquaintance with the roadways of countries other than England, to predicate this one to be the worst in the world, but I am not transgressing the limits of accuracy when I say that it is the very worst I was ever on or ever hope to be. 'Twas not, indeed, with the places through which it passed that any fault could be found, for it ran by sunny banks and green pastures, by fruitful orchards and flashing waters, fair as the garden of the *Hesperides*, and with no evil beast or treacherous precipice to cause danger. It was the way in which the road had been built that gave us so much annoyance and fixed it in our memories. It has been made strait and often steep also, and has been paved with narrow stones set on edge, which may, perhaps, by such setting, afford an easier foothold for beasts of burthen, but make walking a painful exercise for tender-footed pedestrians. And as though to imitate the priests of their faith who hedge in by anathema and threat the strait and narrow way of religion, and forbid all digression in the pleasant and inviting fields of earthly knowledge, so these peasants have for the most part built up a wall on each side of the path to keep folk from making those short cuts across forbidden and enticing pastures which the natural man in his impatience of present suffering is so prone to do. But as in matters ecclesiastical, so here the barriers are feeble and unavailing

Platten.

*The path
to the
Valais.*

Brieg.

against hot youth and intemperate desire, and many wayfarers like ourselves so seek relief. But like other unpleasing experiences, so did this diminish under the sunny influences of youth and health, and after achievement leave behind but small evil result; and we rested under a bank in the hot afternoon sun, and looked over the broad valley of the Rhone with contented minds. We were just over against the small town of *Brieg*, whither we had sent our heavier luggage to await our coming, and could see on the further side of the valley a road winding its way up the lower slopes of the hills, which we were told was the *Simplon* road into Italy, one of the many monuments which that great captain, but bad man, the Emperor Napoléon the First, has left of his genius and industry, whilst at our feet was the little village of *Naters*, with its church spire sleeping in the sunny haze. Through this place we passed and along a level and dusty road to the railway station, and whilst some went on into the town of *Brieg* to claim the luggage, others of us rested on the platform and had some little food and a cup of tea. And then, all having come together again, we bade farewell to our guide and got into the train and started down the valley. No complaint can be made as to the carriages provided for passengers either here or elsewhere on the railways we used, but the slowness of the speed, and the weakness and antiquated build of the engines were a frequent source of contempt, and the *President of the Board of Trade* in particular, was never weary of jeering thereat, and of drawing comparisons between them and the provision made in our own country, where in truth men seem not to be content till they can go as quickly as a ball from a musket. But at this time we had only to go about a quarter of an hour's journey so had no great time for grumbling, although we stopped several times for no apparent reason, unless it was that the *Chancellor of the Exchequer's* surmise was correct, when he stated that there was a fly on the line. But he is a witty man, and may have only said this by way of joke.

The line for part of the way took us by the side of

the Rhone river, which is here a broadish stream, running betwixt embankments made of piled-up stones, and the valley on both sides was not much cultivated, and seemed very liable to floods. But we did not see much thereof as we got out at the first station we came at, which is at the small town of *Visp* or *Viège*, *Visp.* for it goes by both names indifferently, being not far from that part of the valley where the folks speak the French tongue in place of the German, which is used in the upper parts. It is, however, a matter of minor importance by what name it goes, for even as the poet says of the rose:—"By any other name 'twould smell as sweet." So may one say of this place, "By any name 'twould smell as ill." Though indeed naught else can be expected when the buildings are old and ill-drained, or not drained at all, and the cattle are taken through the streets twice a day and stabled among the houses. There were many people getting into the train we left, some of whom, with faces burnt by the sun, seemed to be just hurrying away from some expedition among the mountains, and we hoped they might have a quicker passage down the valley than we anticipated for them.

Our quarters were at the *Hôtel de la Poste*, which stands just outside the village at a place where cattle come to water at a fountain, and we found it in most respects as comfortable as is to be expected of foreign places. We were, moreover, furnished with an excellent dinner, which we flavoured, as was our wont when by ourselves, with much discourse on matters of trade, and after which we sat in the drawing-room where we found three English ladies, with whom the Premier had some talk. Two of us, moreover, essayed a game at billiards, but their apparatus therefor is very different to that used in England, and we did no great things with it.

The town of *Visp* is but a small one yet, nevertheless, is well furnished with houses which, in construction and design, would afford pleasure to an architect, as would also the two churches of the place, one of which stands on an escarpment overlooking the

river *Visp* just where it comes out of its own valley, the *Visp-thal* (of which more anon) into the Rhone Valley, and has a handsome tower. But the place showed no traces of great energy or prosperity, and we thanked our good fortune that we had not to spend our lives there, as indeed we did as to most places we came at.

However, we had had a very good day and had a good hope of reaching *Zermatt* on the morrow, so we contentedly went to bed about ten of the clock.

Sept. 18th.

Our
journey to
Zermatt,
and herein
of

The next day we breakfasted at a moderately early hour and then set about going thence to *Zermatt*, which village we were told lay at the head of the valley (the *Visp-thal* they call it), some 25 miles long, down which the river *Visp* runs, and which comes into the Rhone Valley at the village of *Visp* where we were. But the place is somewhat difficult to get at, for although the latter half of the road can be traversed by carriages, the first half is only broad enough for mules. So that we had the choice of riding on a mule or walking—Hobson's choice truly, for a sufficiency of mules did not appear, and in any case we could scarce have allowed our love of ease to take us to that extreme. Our luggage, however, was fastened on to the backs of two patient animals and taken in charge by some natives, and having paid our reckoning at the inn, which we did both here and elsewhere through the hands of the *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, we started away from the village about nine of the clock. After getting clear of the buildings our way took us along the side of the valley past pleasant enclosures, where grew vines and fruit-trees which were on the point of ripening (for it was autumn), and at some height above the bed of the river which ran at the bottom. The valley is not at all broad, indeed room is scarce left in the level parts for aught besides the stream, and the sides are very steep and precipitous, and run up to a considerable elevation. 'Twas indifferently warm, and we took our way leisurely and with comfort, until having gone some distance, we crossed the river by a very fine

The
Visp-thal.

stone bridge of a single span, on which these poor people have put a small shrine, doubtless for invoking the protection of some saint. 'Tis a matter for query, however, if such guardianship be more effectual than our own county authorities. Yet were we thankful to any means for the transit, and so continued till we came shortly at a village called *Stalden*, which is but *Stalden.* small yet makes a fair show, being set on a steep slope and built, as to part of it, on immense rocks. The valley forks off at this place into two branches, the one on the left running up to a place called *Saas*, whilst the other leads to *Zermatt*, and up this latter accordingly we went. The village, I may say, has a good hotel which, however, seems built too near to the houses of the inhabitants to be altogether free from the inconveniences which arise from the domestic accommodation they afford for their cattle. In the yard we saw sundry idle fellows playing at a game much resembling bowls. Being clear of the place, we rested on a bank and had somewhat to eat, and also gathered some walnuts from a tree, with which we rather stained our fingers with the juice, than stayed our stomachs with the fruit. This failing, however, was eftsoons remedied by sundry little girls who offered to us grapes and mulberries for sale, which we bought and ate, the latter fruit, indeed, being a new delight to some of us, and we again went on along the hill side which here is especially steep, whilst the road is carried at a good distance from the bottom, and in places is somewhat dangerous. In particular, there is one spot where it crosses the face of the hill by a wooden platform, as the bank of earth seems to have slipped away. We, near this place, passed and exchanged some talk as to guides with two young men from the *United States*, who with a guide, were just returning from *Zermatt*, having whilst there done sundry feats of climbing. With their ice-axes in their hands and their faces bronzed by the sun, they looked fit to go anywhere and do anything, and we rejoiced to see that a love of hard work for its own sake is not bounded by the four seas. And then the

Our short
cuts.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, with a foresight and sagacity which we were as willing to allow as he to claim, struck out of the road, and taking a path to the left down the hill side, brought us past several houses and a small mill to the stream, in a much less time than it would have taken by the road. Here we crossed by a wooden bridge at a great height above the water, and then, puffed up by his first success, *Mr. Chancellor* must needs attempt another short cut. This he ever afterwards maintained was as great saving of time and labour as the other, but the evidence of the *President of the Board of Trade* and the *Lord Chancellor*, as to their climbing up a steep ploughed field and a wooded bank, under the rays of a hot sun, should in fairness be put in to support an opposite contention. However, we continued our walk afterwards along the road and at length came, without further incident, at the village of *St. Nicholas*, where we were to procure luncheon. This we got at a hotel of considerable size for so small a place, and were well served in a decent room with a refection of several courses. The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* and the *President of the Board of Trade*, indulged also in a bottle of wine. This they did at the expense of the common purse of all, for though the others did not drink wine, they did not, at any reasonable time, grudge to their weaker brethren a pleasure which in these parts is so comparatively cheap of attainment, and a participation in which is, by custom, looked upon as incumbent on sojourners at taverns.

St.
Nicholas.

Our drive.

We had no time to look much at the village, which seems to thrive chiefly on the accommodation it affords for horses and carriages, and after lunching departed presently in a couple of vehicles, the *Premier* and *Home Secretary* going in one, and the others in the other, accommodation being found also for the luggage. They were somewhat primitive carriages which were provided, being in essence an oblong box on four wheels, with two double seats, both facing the horses, though the comfort of passengers was consulted by the use of cushions and springs.

No great complaining can be made as to the road by which we were now going to *Zermatt*; 'tis of a tolerable smoothness and indifferently level, though at times it goes by places which are somewhat unsafe. The valley which it runs through, though much narrower than the *Valais* valley, is still well worthy of note.

'Tis for the most part very barren and desolate, the only place where grass is grown being just in the flat bottom and a little way up the flanks. All else seems to be rocks and earth with some few trees; and 'tis small marvel, for the place is much afflicted with avalanches and landslips, falling from the sides of the hills which are of a prodigious height. In one place we saw where such a fall of rock and earth had come down as to quite bury a village; a very horrible thing! Moreover, the river also is much disposed to floods, especially in summer when the ice melts, and in winter the ground is covered with snow for the space of weeks together. Truly, they must indeed be a hardy folk who can sojourn here and make a livelihood thereof. We passed by several of their villages which lay near to the road, and saw one or two on the hill side far above us. They were much like those in the *Valais* I have already made mention of, but if aught, not so large and well built. Poor folk! my mind has often dwelt on them, and marvelled as to their condition in the past winter, when the cattle have been lowing through their long imprisoning in the sheds, and the snow has been lying thick on the ground, when no travellers have appeared to engage the men as guides, and to buy the produce of the farms, and the nights are long and dark. But with all these things in mind, I have not doubted but that they were to be esteemed rich and happy by comparison with those who starve in the squalid filthiness of a great city, and of choice or necessity, forsake the smiling lap of Nature for the grinning emblandishments of sin. For to the latter opens out no promise of a smiling summer, short indeed, but life-giving and regenerative, nor any promise of reward to life's toil

*The nature
of the
place.*

*Its inhabi-
tants.*

in peaceful rest by their own fireside, and assured happiness in the sleep of death; but only a blind groping for existence and ineffectual war with the ruthless on-march of civilization. Whilst to these stout *Switzers* are born, of necessity, the teachings of thrift and hard work, the hand-maids (but not as some would have us believe, the mothers) of godliness and temperance; and to each child, of right, descends some share of his father's land, whereby he acquires a standing of equality among his fellows and a voice in the government of his country. I say not that they are in all points as might be wished, but there is enough in their up-bringing and its fruits to make one wish there were more of them with which the world's enfeebled blood might be regenerated.

These meditations, however, are more apt for the arm-chair of one's room than the back seat of a carriage, and I will thrust no more of them on the reader. We had a joyous ride on that sunny Saturday afternoon, and the Premier made such music with his voice as might have caused the very stones to dance attendance. The driver of his carriage, indeed, was so entranced that he forgot his horses, and turning round, gazed open-eared, whereat our Premier, more careful for his neck than his music, stopped singing, to our regret. At one point we left the carriages and took a short cut across some green fields where the people were getting in their hay; 'twas but a thin crop they were cutting, and wanting carts, they had to carry it on their backs to the sheds where it is stored. With their small fields it needs no small assiduity to husband their produce through the winter months, and so careful are they, that at one place we saw a man gathering thin branches of trees with the foliage still on, but whether for fodder, bedding or firing, we inquired not. Nor do they permit to their cows that range of pasturing which in our country they enjoy, but tie them down with a rope to a peg, or set their children to circumscribe their feeding so that each part of a field shall be well eaten. 'Tis a perpetual holiday indeed for the children in the sum-

*Its agri-
culture.*

mer time, for they only go to school in the winter, and in summer seem to spend the major part of their time in the open-air. Nor do they importune travellers for alms to the degree that children in some parts of *Switzerland* do. One little child of these the *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, with his accustomed kindness of heart and strength of limb, helped in her endeavours with a big mallet and a wooden peg; a trifling deed by the wayside, but *ex pede Herculem* is a true saying and I leave it there. The children are sufficiently healthy to look at and clad indifferently well, but, without alleging neglect of their parents, we were tempted to think that at least as much care is bestowed on the cows as on them. And in sooth, when none own more than three or four, the loss of one is a calamity hardly to be realized by us, and sufficiently great to stagger even the gaiety of a *Gratiano*. They (the cattle, to wit) are of a pleasant, mild appearance, with smooth hides and gentle eyes, of a colour and build much like those used in the island of *Alderney*, and being each furnished with a bell hung from the neck by a broad leathern strap, lend picturesqueness and vivacity to the landscape, as indeed life of any sort generally does.

Having regained our carriages we proceeded on our road between the mountains, which seemed ever to get higher and wilder, and we could see at places the ends of grey glaciers coming down from their tops, only to melt into streams which poured down the steep slopes into the valley, past tufts of trees and little patches of green grass, where appeared herds of adventurous goats and sheep cropping a meagre subsistence on the edges of treacherous precipices, and seeming to us so far below, no bigger than mice. So close indeed were we to the base of the hills, that only at times, and for a moment could we catch a sight of the very tops, which rise to a prodigious height and are capped with snow; and we scarcely saw aught but the names in the guide-book of such high mountains as the *Weisshorn* and the *Mischabel Dom*, which take a first rank amongst the highest mountains in *Switzer-*

The children.

The ending of the valley.

land. One giant mass, however, the *Breithorn*, stood up in front of us, and seemed to bar all exit at that end of the valley. 'Twas a token that we were nearing the end of our ride, for which we were not sorry as it was growing cold. And at length, about six of the clock, we turned round a corner of the hill-side and found ourselves at the village of *Zermatt*. *Zermatt.* The party of three ladies whom we talked with at *Visp*, had been taking the same road as ourselves this day, and had indeed been at *St. Nicholas* the same time as ourselves, but they did not go to the same hotel at *Zermatt*, but stayed at the one called the *Mont Cervin*, which lies on your left hand as you come at the village, whilst we, driving through a narrow street, *The Monte Rosa Hotel.* stopped at the *Monte Rosa Hotel*.

This house needs not any words of mine to recommend it to the notice of folks who come to *Zermatt*. It's the place where all who are famous for feats among the mountains accustom when here and praise when at home. And not unjustly, for mine host and his wife, *Seiler* by name, do what lies in their power to make their guests at ease and to further their schemes; and what more can be asked of any landlord? The building is of stone and stoutly built, with stone staircases inside and good accommodation in the way of bed-rooms, and faces on to a square of gravel with a fountain in the middle; and on the opposite side is another hotel called the *Zermatt*, which being originally built to oppose *Monsieur Seiler*, has since been acquired by him in addition to the *Monte Rosa* and the *Mont Cervin* above mentioned, so that in the matter of hotel accommodation his domain is uncontested. Yet does he not, like the man in the fable, kill by exorbitance the goose which lays the golden egg, but rather by a moderate tariff, endeavours to please his present customers and attract new ones (not indeed that I would liken people that come here to geese, for such would be both unmannerly and untrue.) But I must not keep the dinner waiting by descanting thus on the steps, so proceed. After getting all our luggage safe bestowed in the bed-rooms

assigned to us, we changed our raiment and proceeded to dine. Some of us had not provided ourselves with coats of the subfusk hue which fashion demands in more civilized places, and had perforce, to put on garments of a lighter colour; but here it seemed to matter not how one dressed. It would be wrong on my part, however, if I did not mention the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* in this matter, for he, ever mindful of the decorums of life and wishful, no doubt, to leaven with respectability the somewhat unstaiddemeanour of some of our party, had brought with him a fine black coat and vest in which he appeared, to our delight and envy, in the *salle à manger*, as these folks call the place for meals. There were some forty *The company.* people at dinner, which was served at a table running round three sides of the room, but we did not get much into conversation with any of them, yet, nevertheless, made a good meal. The *Lord Chancellor* recognized among the guests a young fellow-craftsman who, having entered on the married state, had brought his wife with him by way of honeymooning, and with him, after dinner, he had a talk in the room set apart for smoking downstairs. There were other people there also, and the most part of the talk which went on was concerning the climbing of mountains and the dangers attendant thereon, to our no small edification, for in this room gather some of the choicest spirits of that craft, and here quaff their drink and smoke their pipe with an affability and fullness of anecdote which at once charms and alarms the tyro. This night, however, no men of note appeared there, and we went to bed betimes, thankful for having been brought safely so far, and eager for the pleasures of the next week.

The morning following was the Sabbath, and on *Sept. 19th.* that day it was never our custom to travel far or to attempt much, so accordingly we prolonged our stay *Sunday.* in bed to a later hour than on a week-day. Not, however, without some interruption to our slumbers, for the little church in the village was opened for service at some early hour, which some stated to be

four and others five of the clock, and in order to call the worshippers together, a bell was rung which made up in loud-voicedness what it lacked in melody, and that was no small lack.

The day was fine and we were drawn out thereby from our bedrooms sooner, perhaps, than we should have been if there had been rain, for 'tis a fact to be noted that one rises more willingly if the day be fine rather than wet; but truly in these journeyings bed would seem to have less attractiveness than ordinarily, for even the *Lord Chancellor* and the *President of the Board of Trade* boggled but little at the early rising that the *Premier* was for ever enforcing. And so we were downstairs in due time for breakfast. It might be deemed not impertinent if I were to dilate here on the uniformity of character which the breakfasts provided for us on our journeyings displayed, but I will refrain, lest the appetite of the reader should exceed his amiability; for indeed to describe a feast to an empty man is a provocation, and to a full one a superfluity. But no well-conditioned person will object to know that the appointments and nappery of the table were clean and well washed; for such is to my mind an indispensable in any place of eating, and a point to be had in remembrance when setting out the furnishing of any hostelry. So having fed in comfort and cleanliness, we soon after went to a stone chapel, which has been built on the outskirts of the village for the use of those of the English communion; for it's a mark of our fellow-countrymen that, as in other matters so in this, he is always prone to accrete to himself such surrounding as may for the time being be both a remembrance of, and a substitute for, the things of home; in which he differs from the Frenchman, who holds himself an exile if out of France, and regards his resting-place as a bivouac merely and not an abiding place. There were only some thirty people, however, who made use of the opportunity so afforded for worship, and as the place was somewhat of a large one, the congregation must have seemed but small to the minister who led the exercises. Moreover, they

*The
church.*

did little to help the singing of the psalms and other musical parts of the liturgy, which was left for the most part to one lady who was, I believe, the wife of the minister. I need not say that the church is not kept open through the winter, for even the hotels are then closed, and in summer the services depend on clergymen who come here month by month for the recreation of their health. We do not, I fear me, remember now much of the sermon that we heard, for our eyes were at that time more busied with reading the manuscripts of God than our ears with listening to those of His priests. Moreover, and I grieve to say it, the *President of the Board of Trade* allowed his thoughts to be so far distracted, as to be able to state that the cloth of the dress which a young lady was wearing in front of him, had been made at the mill of the *Chancellor of the Exchequer*,—an interesting albeit an inopportune discovery. It goes without saying that there was a collection.

The building stands in a small churchyard, wherein have already been laid to rest the remains of several ill-fated pleasure seekers, who have met their death here among the mountains, and there seemed room for many more. *Quod dii avertant*. Moralizing on such topics as here suggested is an easy task, and the words are even now flowing down my pen nib; but I keep them back, for our life here is dark and tangled enough without my marring a holiday's brightness by an unwise searching of the ways of God, and the earth-begotten folly of meeting out the Eternal Justice in our shallow vessels. "His ways are not our ways, neither are His thoughts our thoughts," and there let it rest.

As we walked back to the hotel to get our luncheon, we could not help reflecting on the difference between the place in which we were spending this Sunday and that in which we spent the last, in *Zurich* to wit, although both are in the same country. In the latter we found a large and handsome city lying by the margin of a broad lake, with well-kept streets and large handsome buildings, schools as good as any in

*The
grave-
yard.*

*Comparison
with
Zurich.*

Europe, and a people quick-witted and industrious, though somewhat pleasure-loving and irreligious withal; whilst here we had but one street, and that a narrow one, the houses small and dirty to look at, with only the hotels to claim any size or comeliness, nestling at the foot of steep mountains from whose sides the people wring a scanty living by toil which may expand the muscles, but cannot but contract the mind and render the imagination gloomy and the religion bigoted. To say that the one place is Protestant and the other Catholic, would be to many a sufficient explanation, but we are, to some degree, the slaves of our surroundings, and I leave the matter to those better versed in the history of the two places, and proceed to lunch, after which, it being disposed of, we set out for a walk.

The village lies almost at the head of the valley up which we had come the day before, and except the opening down which the valley goes, is completely shut in by a ring of mountains whose highest peaks are clad in never-melting snow, whilst their slopes are in some places covered with ice, but for the most part, with grass and rock, and down every hollow flows a glacier. From the foot of the largest of these runs the *Visp*, which brawls its way past the village and down the valley through the green meadows which fill the bottom.

It was past these meadows we now took our way by a little lane too narrow for wheeled carriages, and fenced by loosely put up pine-tree trunks, till we came in a short time, to the foot of the hill called the *Riffelberg* (which overlooks *Zermatt*), and up the side of which the road winds past gurgling brooks and through solemn pine-woods. Up this road we climbed in merry mood, making the place ring with shouts and song, till we came to a spot on the edge of the wood and facing the head of the valley, where we rested. And here, for the first time, we had a clear view of the—— but I must cleanse my pen from all idle words before I put down the name of this mountain; the most glorious and awful my eyes have ever seen.

*The
Riffelberg.*

'Twas the MATTERHORN which we saw some two miles off across the valley, springing from a couch of gleaming glaciers and grizzly precipices, and writhing upwards its rocky sinews towards Heaven, as though in one mad attempt to lay its head on the bosom of its Creator, till foiled of that, it tapers off into the blue in a single snow-peak of silent endurance, and stands there grimly, scarred and whitened with the unequal strife, the proudest monument of that Almighty Power which has raised it and all things out of the chaos of eternal nothingness, and will in due process of time, reduce all again to an elemental void. Alone it stands among its mighty peers, now flushed with the kissings of the sun-beams, and now frowning back the curses of the storm-clouds, wreathed with the eddying garlands of mist-vapour, or gaunt and bare against a cloudless sky, beautiful as a couching tiger, and terrible as an army with banners. Small wonder that superstition should people its summit with demons and goblins and the spirits of the damned, and should ward off presumptuous climbers with predictions of evil, or that hardy mountaineers should retire baffled from its flanks, when every footstep was a snare for the unwary, and every slope showered down a cannonade of stony destruction. Year by year did this monarch of the mountains fling off in disdain the pigmies who would scale his crest, and when at length a company of brave men had baffled his repulses, and floated out the flag of victory on his summit, he waited but till they had turned to descend and then, stooping like a lurking panther, he seized on a half of them in their flush of conquest, and flung them, helpless, a sheer four thousand feet on to the rock-strewn glaciers below, and reared his crest again in mocking triumph at these puny children of men. As we gazed at those awful precipices and those dread ice-fields, which still hold in their recesses the bones of the young *Lord Douglas*, one of that ill-fated band, and on those slippery slopes, too steep even to retain the winter's snow, we marvelled at the audacity of man which should again attempt and succeed in the

dreadful climb, and we departed from the spot with a memory in our minds which Time can never efface, and for which we counted our long journey from home but a small matter, even if we had seen naught else.

*The
Riffel Alp.*

A little more walking past a small green pasture and a sunny bank where the bilberry and crawberry covered the ground with their toothsome fruit, and we came out above the pine-woods on to a grassy expanse, where stands a large hotel built of wood and called the *Riffel Alp Hotel*, and here we had a grateful cup of tea on the verandah, and sat gazing in tranquil laziness at the *Matterhorn*. This house is one much accustomed by visitors in the summer months as being within easy distance of *Zermatt*, and well placed for excursions among the mountains; specially is it used by those who climb *Monte Rosa*, the second highest mountain in the Alps. There were a good number of people staying there, and among them our *Premier* found an acquaintance in one *Captain A*——, who was spending his holiday in taking portraits of the chief men among the guides by the photographic process. With him and a friend of his we had some talk, and got much good advice as to what excursions we ought to take, and then departing by the road we came, we made our way down the hill again, sometimes walking and sometimes running, shouting and laughing and hurling our alpenstocks at the trees like to schoolboys coming out of school, and so came to the hotel again in due time for dinner.

*Sunday
evening.*

We had more people at the meal than on the night before, for there were several who had come down from the *Riffel Alp Hotel*, among whom our *Premier* found another acquaintance in a lady from Yorkshire, in England, a pleasant lively dame, who was accompanied by her niece, a fine handsome girl, with eyes like the shining of a star on to a still pool. There was with them also a young man of their acquaintance, and a lady and her husband from *London*, with all of whom we had talk both at the dinner-table and also outside at the door. The main street of the village runs past the hotel, and through

it the cattle pass twice a day when going to and from their pasturage, and in front of the door are to be found all such of the men of the village as wish to be hired as guides or porters, seated on the low wall which bounds one side, or standing on the pavement. The place has been well called the club-room of the Alpine Club, for here at the proper season may be seen many of the people who belong to that body and come here to carry out their explorations. The night was dark but not cold withal, and some of us went into the little church to watch a service therein, whilst others sat outside the hotel and mingled their conversation with tobacco smoke. And then having gone within, we stayed for a time in the withdrawing-room and had pleasant talk with the ladies, and afterwards went downstairs to the smoking-room. Here we found the captain whom we had seen in the afternoon, and with him divers other kindred spirits who told tales and imparted information on the climbing of mountains, to which we listened with that becoming deference which tyroes should always pay to proficients in an art. And so, having spent a profitable hour we went to bed in good time, and for aught I know, dreamt of glaciers, of fogs and snow-storms, and other such things.

As one cannot touch pitch without being defiled, so *Sept. 20th.* it is difficult to live in an environment of one idea without becoming imbued also with that idea; and to live in the company of people whose chief purpose is to climb mountains is the surest way of clothing one's self with the same purpose, especially in the case of young and lusty fellows like ourselves. So I expect none will be surprised to hear that we had formed *Ascent of the Breit-horn, and herein of* plans for seeing somewhat of the mysteries of mountaineering, and to that end had taken counsel of divers folk, and especially of the landlord of our inn, as to the choice of fit men to go with us as guides. By his recommendation we chose a man called *Peter Perrin* *Our guides.* to accompany us, nor did we afterwards have occasion to regret our choice. He was about the middle height and lightly built, of a dark complexion, and

with a face which I thought denoted animal courage and perhaps boldness, though lacking somewhat in resolution. He spoke English fairly well, and shewed himself willing to please and be pleased. As a second guide he selected to go with him a younger man of about twenty-six, called *Fridolin Kronig*, who also gave us much satisfaction. He was of a smaller build than Peter, and of a lighter complexion, with a pleasant merry face always ready for a smile. He was, moreover, married, and was well able to converse in the English tongue, which he told us he had learnt in the winter at a class. We did not know at this time that he was even then overshadowed by the memory of a great calamity, no less a one than the death from cold of his last employer on the inhospitable slopes of the *Matterhorn*, some two months before. He told us the story afterwards, a ghastly one enough, how the two travellers, lightly clad and not used to climbing, were with himself and another guide, caught in a snowstorm whilst descending the mountain, and how, after a thirty-six hours' agony, they three left the fourth unfortunate not dead, indeed, but past all human aid as they thought, and succeeded with difficulty in saving themselves. They who sit at a comfortable fireside may blame them for want of bravery and judgment; but I have seen the *Matterhorn*, and am loath to predict the conqueror in a fight between my courage and my cowardice after thirty-six hours' struggling with a snowstorm, and the heart-cries of a twelve month's bride and a new-born babe at home. So I leave one more sure of himself to cast the first stone. We, however, were the first to employ him since the event, and as such, doubtless, would seem to him a sign of reviving hopes.

*Their
equipment.*

Both men were dressed in rough home-spun clothes, cut much after the style common in England, with broad-brimmed felt hats; nor did they at all present that picturesque appearance which painters would have us think the common attire of mountaineers. They both also carried a coil of stout rope over their shoulders and ice-axes in their hands, and a knapsack

for provisions on their backs. I will state presently what the rope was to be used for. The ice-axes were to serve as alpenstocks, and also for cutting steps in ice-slopes whereby to clamber up. They were stout ashen poles about four feet and a-half in length, shod with a steel pike at one end, and at the other furnished with a steel head, fashioned somewhat like a pick-axe, with a point at one side and a flat hoe at the other. In the hands of a strong man they are truly formidable engines of war.

We had meant not to start on any great climbing until the Tuesday, but *Peter* asked as a special favour that we might go on the Monday, alleging for reason, that if we did not go then he would be compelled to miss a special celebration of the Mass on the Wednesday. Ever ready to defer to scruples of conscience even in a Papist, we agreed to go on the Monday as he asked, and laid our plans accordingly.

The Monday morning was a fine one and we were up in good time, and having breakfasted, we went to a shop in the village and there bought for ourselves an axe a-piece. This we did more, I fear me, from a love of display and as tokens wherewith to impress our home-staying friends, than from any well-founded anticipation that we might find them to be of material service. But I take it that in travelling abroad, one should have ever present in mind the wish to gratify the curiosity of others not so fortunate, and money laid out on products indigenious to and characteristic of the country, is ever money well spent. Moreover, some of us also bought worsted gloves so knitted that no separate provision was made for each finger, but all lay together in one covering, thereby making it warmer for the hands. Nor must I forget to mention the spectacles made of blue glass and fixed on a framework of gauze netting for the protection of the eyes when walking over snow. Leggings, also of cloth, some of us bought to keep our legs from the cold.

And being so equipped we lingered for a little about the doorway to watch the departure of some of our fellow-guests. The first to go were the *Captain*

Our purchases.

The departure of some guests.

and his friend, and with them went one *Melchior Andereg*, a name familiar to all mountain-climbing men, for he is a famous guide and, indeed, by his good conduct and success, has earned for himself the title of *King of the Guides*. He was a man of middle height with grizzled beard and swarthy complexion, and was treated more as a friend than a servant by his fellow-travellers, for indeed the intimacy which springs up between guide and employer, is one greater than that common between master and man. Their going away was like that of some great personage, with the hat-lifting and the drinking of healths with mine host, and we felt it a privilege to be spectators of the sight.

Following them departed our lady-friend and her niece whom we were sorry to lose, but they left us a compensation (if it be not rude to say so) in an introduction to some other ladies, whom it will be my pleasure to allude to more fully at some later time.

Our start.

And so at length we set out on our walk about half after ten, the guides with us carrying the provisions in their knapsacks and ropes on their shoulders. We had chosen the *Breithorn* as the mountain we should ascend, it being esteemed among the easiest for climbing, and thereby well-suited for beginners. Our road led us through the village and on to the bridge by which we had crossed the river yesterday on our way to the *Riffelberg*, when, instead of going over, we kept on the same side and mounted the hill by a steep path past some huts, and then following the course of a small stream which runs into the river, we came at length to a bridge which is thrown across just where the water falls over some rocks at the bottom of a narrow valley. Crossing by means of this we climbed a steep brow and came at the top of a slope where the road ran nearly level through a surface all strewn with rocks, the *débris* of a glacier, for we had come to a height where even the grass refuses to grow and the mountain flowers to spring; and on our right came down the sloping side of a snow-covered glacier, and in front lay giant masses of

rock, cold and forbidding. The wind blowing off the ice-fields above was raw and marrow-searching, and we crouched for shelter by a little spring which broke forth among the stones, whilst we devoured a comfortless lunch, and then moved forward among rocks which ever seemed more stern and inhospitable, till at length we came at a building of stone about half after three in the afternoon. It was now too late to go forward up the mountain with safety that day, nor had we indeed meant to, and it was here we were to spend the night. It's a much better place for so doing than the hut we saw when on the *Aletsch Glacier*, being of two storeys height and well furnished with provision for comfort and sleep. It stands on a flat table of rocks just where they break off into prodigious masses and fall steeply on to a glacier below, and is, indeed, situated in as wild and inhospitable a place as even a hermit might approve. Excepting another small hut some hour's walk away and further up among the snow, there is no human dwelling-place nearer than the villages lying in the valley thousands of feet below, or the *Riffel Alp Hotel* on the further side of an ice-filled valley some miles away, and it stands here alone, girt in with naught but cruel rocks and chilly glaciers. A man called *Victor Führer* had built it some few months only before, and lives here in the summer time with his wife and child. He is a proper fellow, some six feet in height and well-built and intelligent. Indeed he speaks four languages well, which is more by three than any of our *Cabinet* could boast, and has been a guide but was forced by ill-health to seek a more restful life. He received us kindly, and made every preparation for our comfort most willingly. There being as yet some hours of daylight left, we were loath to go at once into the house, and the view from the outside would have tempted even a hypochondriac to step out to see it. Standing on the ledge outside and looking on *Zermatt* ^{Its} whence we had come, the narrow valley could be seen ^{situation.} stretching away from us shut in on either side by giant mountains, and here and there in the bottom

*The
Theodul
Pavillon.*

were little houses dotted about, whilst on our left hand stood the *Matterhorn*, and on our right wound down to the valley below the grim and wrinkled surfaces of the *Gorner* and other glaciers. To reach these glaciers, however, would have been a hard task, for though they lay at our feet, the ground between was of a very rocky and broken kind, being no less indeed than a series of precipices made up of rocks of prodigious size, and guarding from approach on this side the forbidding flanks of the *Breithorn* which stood on the further side of a glacier, and seemed not the least of mountains among many brethren.

Desolate and striking though this scene was, however, I doubt me if we should have lingered long outside over its inspection seeing that the weather had become overcast and dull, had not the *Premier* conceived the happy idea that some good pastime might be had out of a clamber among the rocks around the hut. Some of the *Cabinet* boggled a little at so imperilling their (to them at any rate) precious necks, but the *Premier* is a man who can well persuade others to his view, and we all joined him in his sport. Not wishing, however, to incur any risk, we had the precaution to be tied round the middle with the rope the guides had brought, and so by being held from above whilst we clambered down the face of the precipice, the dangerous consequences of a slip were provided against. In this way did we go up and down the cliff (which was some thirty or forty feet in height) several times, the guides always shewing us the manner of climbing, whilst the little son of the host clambered about like a monkey, and seemed to make light of what were to us considerable difficulties. And then by way of a climax, one of the guides, *Peter*, went up the cliff where it was steepest, nay indeed, in some places perpendicular, and at the top over-hanging. If I had not seen him do it with my own eyes, I would not have believed it possible that anything less nimble than a cat could have gone up where he did, and my mind prefers not to dwell on what would have happened if he had fallen. A nearly

Our
climbing
exercises.

certain death would have been his, and lasting sorrow and regret our portion. However, by the mercy of God and his own skill he reached the top in safety, and then lowered the rope for us to follow; for he indeed had gone up without a rope or help of any kind, but it would have been mere madness for us to attempt the like. So first, the *Premier* being tied, went up and reached the top safely, and then the *Home Secretary*. Then came the turn of the *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, and he had got more than half of the climb accomplished when those who had the rope, not being able to see him, as he was reaching out for a fresh hold gave it a pull, and he incontinently swung off the rocks and dangled twixt heaven and earth, a spectacle for gods and men, and to the *Lord Chancellor* who was underneath, a sight more interesting than amusing. However, he reached the top in safety, and remarked on the proved stoutness of a rope which could so bear his not inconsiderable weight, and then the *Lord Chancellor*, whose caution had for a time cooled his courage, at length followed. The last to come was the *President of the Board of Trade*, and he, when half-way up, seemed to those waiting above as though he were spending enough breath in explaining his position and the exigencies of the situation, as would have taken him up three times over. But he also at length was hauled, gasping, over the edge of the cliff, and so we had all safely accomplished what we were told was worse than aught on the dreaded *Matterhorn*, and were therewith well satisfied.

There were sundry other men besides the guides to see us, for some porters passed by and joined in the climbing, who were coming over to *Zermatt* from *Italy*, for that country lies close at hand, and the road we had come is one of the ways of reaching it, though indeed, a sufficiently difficult one. But they tarried no long time, and soon departed down the valley.

It was by this time drawing towards evening and the weather was growing cold, so we went in-doors to see what our sleeping quarters seemed to be like, and

*The
interior.*

to have dinner. We found that there were two rooms on the ground-floor, one for use as a parlour for guests, and the other a kitchen and guides' living room, besides which there were some storage-room and cellarage. Upstairs were three or four bed-rooms sparsely furnished, but with good beds, and at the top a garret where lay, amongst other things, an old wine-bag made of a goat's hide. Every room was clean and neat and for the most part lined with wood, and the whole interior was very comfortable and attractive.

*Our
pleasant
evening.*

After waiting no long time we had dinner served up in the guests' room, and were much refreshed and pleased therewith. I cannot now call to mind what it was that we had, but there were three or four courses, and the quality and variety of the food were very surprising, when it is considered how far everything has to be brought. All the appointments of the table, moreover, were very tidy and clean. Dinner being ended, we seated ourselves around the fire and smoked our pipes, whilst the *Lord Chancellor* read out of a copy of the book called "*A Tramp Abroad*" (written by *Mark Twain*, a most witty and entertaining author), which had been left there by some beneficent guest, the narrative of that dreadful accident on the *Matterhorn* when it was first ascended. And then, to rid ourselves of the gloom thereby occasioned, we made the *Premier* sing for our delight and edification, which both here and elsewhere he was most willing to do. It is not for me who am not gifted with any knowledge of music, either naturally or by education, to venture on a criticism of his singing, but if the true measure of success in that art be the amount of pleasure caused in others by its exercise, then I may with safety affirm him to be a very good singer, for he chooses such excellent songs and renders them with such heartiness and good-will, that he would evoke applause even from a company of mutes. Moreover, he does not, like some people who strive to cover their anxiety to sing by an assumed diffidence in displayment, hesitate to oblige a desirous audience, but is ever ready to use his talent for the general satis-

faction. On this evening he gave us several of those songs which, I take it, will perish only with the language itself, for the "*North Country Maid*," and the "*White-blossomed Sloe*," are indeed, songs written not only for our age, but for all time. Moreover, finding that our host and our guides in the kitchen had opened their door, the better to hear the singing, we had them in also, and after much entreating, persuaded the guide *Peter* to give us the famous "*Jödel*," as well as a Swiss love song, which he did with much skill, and yet withal, with that pained expression which untrained singers ever seem to think it necessary to assume. Though not coming up exactly to our ideas (vague enough, truly) of what melody should be, it was yet very interesting as shewing the conception of singing prevalent hereabouts. Then the *Premier* gave another song or two of which we translated the words to them, and they sang in return their National Anthem, it having, to our surprise, the same tune as our own, and which we thereupon rendered, upstanding, with all that strength of voice and variety of tune and key, of which those among our friends who know us best, best know us to be capable. And to crown all, we finished the evening with that Scotch air, "*Auld Lang Syne*." Truly, I think that room had never heard such a vocal evening before, and may it not be long before the same party again makes its walls ring with their voices.

The singing.

And so about nine of the clock, after looking outside and finding the night to be fine, we went to bed.

Our bed-rooms were bare of much other furniture besides beds, but were clean and indifferently warm; and we found them comfortable despite a feeling of strangeness at being so far away from all other houses. We took care to clothe ourselves warmly ere going to sleep, indeed we had scarce brought up with us a sufficiency of clothes to change much of our day clothing, so that when we were called about five in the morning we were not long about our dressing, and soon appeared downstairs equipped for the day. It is well to be warmly clad when going up these places,

Sept. 21st.

so we had put on woollen vests in addition to our leggings, gloves, and other warm clothing; and thus prepared, we had breakfast, a scrambling hasty affair, and then went outside.

The early morning.

The sun had not as yet risen on our part of the mountain, though his coming was heralded by the dawning brightness of the sky, in whose cloudless depths a single star shone forth, the last of all the host of heaven to fade before the rising sun, even as *Lucifer*, son of the morning, was the last to flee before the sword of *Michael*, and seeming, indeed, to be carrying out the poet's command, when he charges the morning-star to—

“Praise Him in thy sphere,
“Whilst day arises, that sweet hour of prime.”

On the one hand the crest of the *Matterhorn* was blushing red at the first kissing of the morning sun, whilst on the other the wastes of ice and snow stretching up to the *Breithorn* and the other mountains beyond, were still standing cold and grey in the cold grey dawn. And looking down the valley beyond *Zermatt*, were clustered hamlets shadowed by a black pall of clouds, which stretched in level line from side to side of the engirdling mountains, and left only their rocky summits bare. The darkness below and the sun-kissed tips and white-flecked blue above, with the black cloud belt between, seemed very like the embodiment on nature's canvas of the conceptions of painters of old time of the Last Judgment, with the glory of Heaven above, and the gloom and horror of Hell below.

Our roping.

And so with a quietness of demeanour unusual with us, and born, perchance, of our early rising, we started, going up the stone-strewn ridge for some half-hour or so, till we came at the edge of a large glacier, covered with a smooth mantle of snow, and here we proceeded to tie ourselves together with the rope which the guide had carried up. This is a matter of precaution ever to be observed in going across a snow-glacier, for in walking over such it is not always possible to make out the presence of a “crevasse,” and an unwary traveller may, without warning, find himself falling

into an ice-walled tomb without hope of rescue, unless upheld by the rope which binds him to his fellows. No such event befell any of us, but 'tis ever best to shut the stable door before the steed be stolen, and, moreover, whether needed or not, 'twas a new experience to all of us, and so worth making trial of. The rope we used was a stout one, and interwoven therein was a thin red cord of worsted, for token that its make had been approved of by the Alpine Club as sufficient for the purpose.

The guide *Peter* was the first in order of walking, *The order of going.* then came the *Lord Chancellor* followed by the *Home Secretary* and the *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, then the guide *Fridolin*, with the *President of the Board of Trade* behind him, and last of all the *Premier*. The space between each was about seven feet, and it was each one's duty, not always observed, to keep the rope taut between them by holding up the slack in one hand, whilst in the other he carried his ice-axe. Nor must I forget the blue spectacles which we put on to shield the eyes from the glare of the sun, for to neglect this precaution is to put the eye-sight in peril of temporary if not permanent distemper. They are at first somewhat irksome to wear, but the eye soon gets accustomed thereto, and amuses itself in observing the changed colour of complexion they give to those looked at through them; for the ruddy complexion even of a *David* becomes the sea-green of an envious *Saul* in their medium.

And so we trudged along at a moderate rate, for the use of the rope has at least one advantage in that it compels all to go at the speed of the slowest, and so ensures that none are left behind; though, truly, some eager walker may urge that it checks all individual effort, and, like Trades Unionism, puts every one on a dead level of mediocrity.

The high mountains on our left were as yet a shield to us from the sun, though it was lighting up the whole *The situation.* face of the *Matterhorn*, which lay a mile or two to our right, and shining on the snow in front of us; and, besides snow, could we see little else around us, for

the ground in front sloped gently up till it met the blue of the sky, and on our left was a large basin of snow, with steep sides rising up into white peaks, although at places could be seen black masses of rock jutting up.

At each step we sank over our boot tops in snow, which the heat of the sun was melting, and walking became a labour, so that haltings to take breath were both frequent and welcome. And, indeed, it was worth a moment's stay to look round at the country, for the air was clear and the prospect vast. As we looked towards the *Matterhorn* we could see the giant mass of *Mont Blanc* heaving up its crest on the left, whilst on the right, as the eye swept round, could be seen the snow-peaks of the *Weisshorn*, the *Jungfrau*, *Monte Rosa*, and a score others, whose names written here would but weary the reader, though they be charms to conjure with in the hearing of us who saw them thus, gleaming in the sun or half swathed in fleecy masses of cloud. And below and between them ran the green valley of the *Visp*, with its pine woods and its hamlets, beautiful and life-giving, whilst around us stretched the sad snow-fields, beautiful also but cruel and death-dealing.

Our
weariness.

And so having fetched a long compass from the spot we had set out at, we came to the back part of the *Breithorn* mountain, where the ascent is easy as compared with the rugged front it shews to the hut where we had slept. There lay a little to our left a jagged peak standing up out of the snow, which they call the *Little Matterhorn*, and we proposed to ourselves to climb up it as we came back, but like many another proposal, it was made without knowledge of the state of things at the time fulfilment would be needed. At present we were in a kind of snow-basin, with the mountain running up in a steep slope of snow to the top, which was sometimes clear and sometimes hidden in mist, and which seemed not far distant. We stayed for a moment to drink some cold tea we had brought, and then toiled up the slope. Often did we stop to rest, and often did we marvel at

the pleasure which some affirm they find in climbing such mountains, but at length we came at the summit and felt rewarded for our labour. We found ourselves on a patch of level snow some twenty yards square, with the slope we had come up on the one hand and a rounded edge, over which we forbore to look, on the other. The view was much the same as we had had coming up, and though close adjacent to the Italian border, we saw not much of that country by reason of clouds. And indeed, the wind was so cold and our weariness so engrossing, that we gave not much heed to the beauties of the scenery. Rather did we turn to the bag carried by the guides in which was food and drink, and thereout we fetched cold mutton and bread, and made such meal as the surroundings and the provisions allowed of. Moreover, the party emptied sundry bottles of wine which the guides had carried, all indeed, save the *Home Secretary* and the *Lord Chancellor*, who would drink only of the cold tea which was left, and that a mere cupful, and so upheld their practice, or as some think it, prejudice of not drinking wine, under circumstances trying enough to test the stoutest convictions, for we had a great thirst upon us. Seated on this mountain-top, we might have thought ourselves the only living things amid the vast fields of stillness and death, had not two birds of the crow kind, with red legs come flying about our heads, craving for the fragments of our feast, and which it would have indeed been churlishness to deny them.

But the wind was a cold one, and fair and far-stretching as the prospect was, we had no desire to stay long on the summit, and so after sending one or two empty bottles sliding down the slope we had come up by, we roped ourselves together in the same order as before and followed them. *Facilis descensus Averni*, is a true saying in many matters and in this also, and we were no long time going down. As we passed by the *Little Matterhorn* again, a motion to diverge and ascend it was made, but was quickly discountenanced by the whole *Cabinet*, and especially by the *Home*

The summit.

Our descent.

Secretary, and passing by it, we came without special incident of any kind over the same path we had come up by, and arrived well pleased at the hut again about eleven of the clock. Here we had a very cheering cup of tea, though without milk, and then packing up our things and paying our bill, which we esteemed very moderate, we bade farewell to our host and set off back to *Zermatt*.

We went back by the same way we had come, nor did we find the walking so irksome by far, for now we were going down hill and had, moreover, our faces set towards the flesh-pots of the valley, a sufficient incentive to speed, for we were never prone to subordinate unduly the claims of matter to those of mind, nor to esteem a fine landscape immeasurably greater than a good dinner. As we went down, the master of the hut we had been staying at overtook us, for he was leaving the place for that season, and bringing down some of his chattels with the help of his wife and son. The rest he left up there for the winter, having buried the more valuable under some boards, the better to keep them out of the hands of the smugglers who, in their illicit commerce, frequent that pass into Italy. As a memorial of our stay there, we promised to send him a book wherein visitors might put their names, and this promise we redeemed a few days later. We have never heard whether he received it or no, but in the absence of proof to the contrary, must presume he did, and that our names which we wrote therein will be read by those who follow. May their lot be as happy!

*The
Edelweiss
flower.*

At one spot in our descent, we wandered on to the hill-side a little to gather the *Edelweiss* flower which grew there in some abundance. It's a plant well known to all lovers of flowers, but more, one is tempted to think, for its association than for any intrinsic beauty of colour or form, being in shape a five-pointed star with a round centre, and in colour as much like that of the ash of a cigar as of aught I know. But it refuses to grow wild save in these wild parts, and so when seen at a traveller's home, brings back to his

mind the memory of bye-gone holidays. And moreover, when sent by man to woman, it's a token of true love and heart-wished happiness. So no wonder it is prized above other flowers of the field.

And so we came back to *Zermatt* about four of the clock, well pleased with our trip, and after a bathe in cold water and a change of raiment, were ready for the evening meal. We amused ourselves meanwhile in watching a game of cricket that was being played on the square in front by some visitors and guides. 'Twas a pastime new to the village, where any turf they may have is too precious to be used for such unproductive purpose, and the guides seemed much pleased with it, one especially with greater zeal than knowledge, plunged into the fountain to fetch out the ball, and so caused much amusement. *Our return*

And then we dined with a good appetite, having for table companions the ladies to whom we had been introduced the day before. There were three of them, sisters and English bred, of good height and well built, and pleasant both to look at and to talk to. We confessed that we ought to esteem ourselves fortunate in meeting such favourable company and in being of the same nation as themselves. Their mother also sat with them, and likewise an elderly gentleman, one of Her Majesty's counsel, learned in the law, and had in due reverence therefor by the *Lord Chancellor*, for had he not sat upon him in examination of his proficiency in the rudiments thereof? And so we had pleasant talk during the dinner, and, it being ended, we and some others went across to the hotel opposite, where, finding a gentleman, who, I believe, was a German baron, playing on the piano and singing, we prevailed on him to sing to us also. This he did with much gusto to the accompaniment of one of our lady friends, whom he was pleased to compliment on her great skill. And indeed she shewed herself well versed in that accomplishment, and, moreover, played well on the fiddle and sang also. Our *Premier* likewise sang, so that we had a very pleasant concert, they all being musicians of good taste and accomplished execution. *A pleasant evening.*

And then bidding them good night, we went back and downstairs to the smoking room, where, with sundry pleasant folk, we smoked and drank coffee, and talked of matters Alpine. And so to bed.

Sept. 22nd.

Having accomplished what was to us no inconsiderable task on the day before, we did not purpose on the next to attempt aught very difficult. So having had breakfast at a moderately early hour, we set out with the guide, intending to pass the day in pleasant and easy exercise, rather than in any great feats of endurance. Accordingly having proceeded up the valley as far as the wooden bridge over the river, we crossed and went up past the little church of *Winkelmatten* towards the *Riffelberg*. Instead, however, of going up that hill by the road we had taken on the Sunday before, we bore away towards our left and went up by a steep path through the woods. As we were so a-going, *Fridolin*, our guide told us sundry facts about the kind of living there is in these parts. Unlike our own country, where the land has come into the hands of a few men by comparison with the population, it is here divided among many. I will not discuss which is the better, but I doubt not the possession of some land has done much to cause the thrift so apparent in its management, and to foster a fuller knowledge of the laws of their country among these people, than would be found in England. It seems, further, that a man is bound to make provision for his wife and children by will to the extent of two-thirds of his fortune, and I doubt not the church also comes in for a share. Moreover, if a man die without will, his land goes to all his sons alike, and not to the eldest only. This custom is of little help in the founding of a family, the ambition of wealthy men with us but rather enriches the many at the expense of the one, and the richest man in *Zermatt* is accounted worth only twenty thousand francs, or as we count it £800. So that a description of the wealth of our *Duke of Devonshire* filled our guide with wonder.

*The
Findelen
Glacier,
and herein
of*

*Our talk by
the way.*

Besides this land in the bottom, which is held separately, there is other land which the community

hold as a body. These are the higher slopes, and the woods and alps to which all have rights of pasture according to their ability to keep cows in winter, and rights of cutting timber for house-building by payment. Small wonder is it then, seeing how scanty are their means, that they think long ere they marry; indeed it's said that a family of brothers will draw lots for this privilege, and that the losers help the lucky man to maintain his family, but I cannot believe our poor human nature capable of this.

After getting out of the pine-wood we walked up the side of the valley, which grew ever more and more wild and uncultivated, till we came at the foot of a glacier called the *Findelen*. The valley was filled across with a bank of ice, broken into enormous masses, whilst from a cave on the under side flowed a mud-coloured torrent over a stony bed. Here and there were a few flowers of a truly hardy kind, but naught else would grow there, so barren was it. 'Twould have been an easy walk to get on the glacier from its side, but we, like children, were anxious to use our new bought axes, and so having roped together, with painful care and step-cutting, we climbed on to the flat surface of the glacier above and walked along its length. I have already talked to wearisomeness of the nature of a glacier, and so will say little of this one, as it was much like that of the *Aletsch* we were on before, though much smaller. We saw also, what we had not done before, several heaps of sand as we thought, but which on closer watching, proved to be mounds of solid ice, hindered from melting by a thin lining of sand and gravel. After walking some half-hour or so we stopped and ate the lunch the guides had brought, and then amused ourselves by flinging stones at the now empty bottles set up as marks. We also, with a triviality of purpose well suited for holiday makers, spent much time and labour in diverting the course of one of the many ice-water streams which flow along the ice. This we at length succeeded in, and when, having so done, we dammed up the stream with ice, and then opening the barrier let the whole mass

The glacier.

Our play.

hurtle and crash into a deep pot-hole in the ice, our joy was full. And the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* remarked that we reminded him of that miner who, having had a fortune left to him, was said by a companion to be leading the life of an angel, in that he was eating and drinking and cursing and swearing all the day long, for, said *Mr. Chancellor*, we have certainly eaten and drunken, and if we have not cursed and sworn, we have at any rate dammed. And thereat we laughed much for his wit, though not oft provoked is, when roused, like the smiting of a sledge hammer, and compelleth attention and respect.

And so, having had enough of ice-play, we went off the glacier, and walked down its side till we came at a little pond some twenty yards broad by fifty long, of a most beautiful green colour. And seeing that it was the result of water springing from the ground and not from the glacier, the *Home Secretary*, *President of the Board of Trade* and *Lord Chancellor* straightway took off their clothes, and plunging in, swam about till the coldness of the element drove them out. To us this was but an incident of travel, but if our guides spoke truth, it must have been to them a revelation, for they confessed it was the first time they had seen a man swim, though the youngest of them had lived twenty-six years! Still if it be considered how few are the opportunities, or indeed inducements, there is not so much reason to wonder. And so, they being dressed again, we all went on into the pine woods that flank the *Riffelberg*, where grew bilberries and other toothsome fruits, and on these we made ourselves merry. Squirrels also we saw and chased from tree to tree; one in particular amused us vastly by floating down like a feather from the top of a pine to the ground, and running for shelter to a hole.

Our return. As we went down to the valley it came on to rain, so quickening our speed we got back to the hotel about half after four. I know not what the guides may have thought of our somewhat childish proceedings, though they seemed much amused, but we did not care to ask, since being satisfied ourselves we considered it of no

import to others.

At dinner we were again favoured with the company of our lady acquaintances of yesterday, and had with them pleasant converse. And afterwards along with them we went across to the other building, and were again pleased with similar vocal and instrumental efforts to those which we had enjoyed the night before. Our friend the German baron, however, would not join us, but we had for listeners some of the daughters of our host, who live up here in the summer, and being of sensible minds, qualify themselves by practice in the conduct of the household. Though of somewhat dark complexion, they are not uncomely. And then, the singing being ended, we crossed over, and going down to the smoking-room, listened once more to talk about the mountains, and so to bed.

We were awakened next morning by the lowing of cattle in our ears and the noise of people outside, and were not long in discerning that something out of the common was a-foot. The weather had changed to wet and a steady rain was falling, but this had not hindered the people from coming together to a fair which was being held, it being also a feast day of the Church. Folks were dressed in their holiday garb, but this, even in the case of the women, did not display much of brilliancy or good taste, and we considered they would have but fared badly by comparison with our own working people at home. A few only, and those the elderly ones, wore the cap distinctive, I believe, of the *Valais Canton*; it differed from a common English black bonnet only in having a broad black ribbon with trimmed borders, set up edgewise round the front. There were some cattle and sheep standing at sale in the street, but the chaffering therefor seemed to go on but slowly, and the most part of the people were to be found in the village on the one side of the hotel, or round the porch of the church on the other. In this latter place were services going on continually, and we stayed at one for some short time. Small though the place was, and limited as were the numbers of the singers, still it had a solemn-

Sept. 23rd.

The Fair.

The Church.

izing aspect, and we would fain hope it did good to those poor weather-beaten folk who crowded the seats. Saddened by the continual fight with the destructive powers of nature, and kept down at the heels of priestcraft and superstition, we did not begrudge them this their worship, and bore with steadfastness the looks of suspicion they cast at us, whom they doubtless regarded as infidels and heretics. 'Twere in sooth, a good soil to sow the seed of a new *St. Bartholomew*. Nevertheless, I question if we could find a church in England outside whose doors a knot of men would stand with doffed hats, or would reverently kneel as did these poor Switzers. We saw, moreover, a hooded friar with brown vesture and sandalled shoe, and were told he came from the Monastery of *St. Maurice*, in the Rhone Valley, to procure from the villagers any pious gift, as a sheep or a lamb, they might feel moved to give. But I would gladly learn that his mission was bootless.

The wet weather had stopped all our intentions of making any extended excursions, but we could not sit down idly, so after breakfasting, we set off for a walk with our guides. As we went along up to the head of the valley, we passed several flocks of sheep which were being brought down from the mountains to be housed for the winter. There were several lambs among them, some so small that they could not have been born any long time, although it was now September. We noted, moreover, that there were as many black sheep as white, and were told that 'twas to save the cost of dyeing the cloth that is made from the wool, and to look at the dirty brown colour of the men's home-woven coats we could well believe it.

After crossing the river we went along some level green pastures to the foot of a steep face of rock, whence, after sheltering a little space from the rain, we walked to the foot of the *Gorner Glacier*. 'Tis hence that the *Visp* river flows from a cavern of ice into which we looked, and then essayed to clamber up the steep ice slope on to the glacier top, but though it seemed possible, we held it more prudent to discontinue

*Our walk
to the
Gorner
Glacier.*

our attempt, and so coming down again, we climbed up the piled-up stream of stones which lay at the side. But we tarried not long, for it was wet and the hour of lunch was at hand, so we returned to the bottom again.

As we went back, we stayed to look at a place where the river, tired of running on the top, has bitten out for itself in the rock a tortuous gorge, narrow in width but of exceeding depth, and now runs fiercely through, chafing and foaming at its rocky environment. *The gorge of the Visp.* By the help of a path cut in the side we were enabled to descend into the bowels of this *Inferno*, and to survey at close quarters the tumult of its waters. And thence issuing we continued our way. As we went, we lighted on a bunch of the *Edelweiss* flower, which some careless gatherer had let fall, and with joy we took it, for our store thereof before had been but small. And so well wetted, but else well satisfied, we got back to the hotel, and changing our garments were ready for the lunch with which we soon filled ourselves. That being ended and due time allowed for smoking, we went with the guide *Fridolin* down the main street and by the back of the *Hôtel Mont Cervin* to the house of an old woman, or to speak strictly, to the room, for it was but one, which we reached by climbing sundry wooden stairs. 'Twas a *A village interior.* quaint interior, for the whole house was built of wood and the inside walls had no other covering. The window was small and glazed with small round panes of glass; in one corner was the bed, in another an old stove of stone, and in another a hand-loom. It was this last that we had come to see, and we had it explained by the good woman, though she was not then working it. She had, moreover, a machine for winding yarn, of very ancient construction. The walls of the room were adorned with a crucifix and sundry quaint pictures, and all was very clean, giving us a glimpse of village thrift and of the arts of life in these parts, which we did not begrudge rewarding with sundry small coins; and though doubtless the time will come when machine-made cloth will sweep away these

humbler products, I am sure that even our *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, builder of mills though he be, would be sorry to hear that this good woman's occupation was gone. On getting into the main part of the street again, the *Lord Chancellor* being in a prodigal mood, bought a cow-bell like unto those they use in these parts; and then in a shop where the *Cabinet* inspected the wool-card used here, he purchased a tie made of netted yarn, so that the shop people might not think us unmannerly in looking at much and buying naught. And then, it being still wet, we went through the village and into a large building which, I believe, was once used for a hotel, and after paying for admission, inspected certain pictures there by a man called *Loppé*, which are designed to reproduce the appearance of these parts, and especially of the snow-peaks and glaciers. And, indeed, he has done very well in a very difficult attempt. And so, having seen this, we returned into the village and looked at a saw mill set near a stream which runs across this part and affords water to the inhabitants. Nearly all the houses in the place are built of wood, some indifferently old and others newer; and they come quite up to the hotels. But, save the one above mentioned, we saw not into the interior of any, and so, could not make any comparison between the kind of living therein and that practised by us, though, doubtless, the difference would be great. The church of the village is built of stone whitened with lime and has a short spire, but does not affect any beauty of architecture, though inside it is furnished in the rich but, withal, tawdry style common to the shrines of that communion. Against one of the outer walls are placed the memorial stones of *Mr. Hadow* and the *Rev. Mr. Hudson*, who perished miserably on the Matterhorn when it was first ascended, and though laid here in the burying-ground of an alien faith, it doubtless concerns them as little as it does their equal in fate, *Lord Douglas*, whose burying-place among the crevasses of the *Zmutt* glacier is known only to his Maker. These, and the stone to the memory of

*The
picture
gallery.*

*The
churchyard.*

Michel Croz, their guide, on the other side of the church, will touch the hearts and wet the eyes of sojourners here, so long as hearts can feel for their destruction and eyes behold their destroyer. Nigh to the church stands the charnel house, a very *Golgotha*, or place of skulls, for here they place the bones from graves which are wanted for new tenants, since, through the rockiness of the soil, they cannot dig a fresh grave for each. So here in an open cellar, with broken images and rotting emblems of religious frippery, the rude forefathers of the hamlet lie, a grizly heap of phosphated humanity.

And so having seen the village thus, we went back to the hotel, where, having no further occasion for the guides, we paid them their wages and let them go, after first recording in a book which each of them carried, our collective opinion on their capacities. Of them we have since heard nothing, but would gladly learn that they are in health and prosperity. At dinner we found our company lessened by several whom the wet had sent away, but increased by others who doubtless came for Sunday, and among these, by a family of English. They were father, mother, two daughters and a son, and seemed to us well endowed with the gift of self and mutual appreciation. The *Lord Chancellor* sat next to the mother at dinner, and mindful of the *Premier's* injunction, entered freely into talk with her, as did the *President of the Board of Trade*, with our other English friends. But when in the drawing-room afterwards, the *Lord Chancellor*, out of the obligingness of his disposition, joined them in a game called, with truth, the game of *patience*, and which is only excelled in its foolishness by its dulness, it was unkind of the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* to say that he endured it only to enjoy the company of one of the daughters, with whom he never even spoke. But *Mr. Chancellor* must have his joke, and the "Heavy Dragoon," as he was pleased to dub her, has often done duty since as a weapon of wit. It was, however, some compensation to hear our other English ladies sing and play

A pleasant evening in the drawing room,

on the violin, which they were pressed to do by the son of this family. He, indeed, had busied himself in arranging for music in the drawing-room (as the room we had used on previous nights was being occupied by the landlord and his family for a party), and had asked us if we had a tenor among us, to which the *Lord Chancellor*, thinking he meant a ten pound note (vulgarly called a "tenner") replied that he had not, but asked if a "fiver" would do, whereat we laughed. The lad, indeed, was a pleasant one enough, but in the matter of singing he put his pretensions before his performances, and his rendering of the song, "*Home sweet Home*," was such as to fire with emulation even the *Home Secretary*. It needed not his assurance to make us believe he had forgotten the words, and we had grave doubts if he ever had known the tune. Nevertheless, was he thanked at his conclusion, but for what, I know not, save that it might be for his willingness to oblige. And so, after bidding a good-night to our lady friends, whom as it turned out, we were not to see again, we went down to the smoking-room. Here we found, what is as true of a larger world, that age and continuance often give a man authority and the air of wisdom, much greater than his real due. For whilst on other nights we had always sat with men of experience in mountain climbing, and listened to them with respect and silence, on this we found none besides ourselves who had acquaintance, even at second-hand, with these regions. And though the youth above mentioned, by a show of superficial knowledge, sought for a time to engross the attention of the company, his efforts counted but little against the talk of the *President of the Board of Trade*, and to a smaller degree of the *Lord Chancellor*. And it was, indeed, prodigious to hear the former discourse learnedly on the use of the rope, the precaution necessary, and other kindred matters. There were two men of a middle age and respectable, or even aristocratic appearance, who listened with eagerness to his talk, and one of them being deaf, in his carefulness not to lose a single pearl that fell from the *President's* lips, stooped for-

and in
the smoke-
room.

ward in his chair with hand to ear. And so we left him one by one and went to rest; nor do we yet know up to what hour he kept his audience out of bed.

We had fully determined on departing on the morrow, for the weather held out no promise of clearing, and the presence of some of us was needed at home; so, after breakfasting and instructing the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* to pay our lodging bill, which he deemed very moderate, we put our luggage into two carriages of a like kind to those we had come up the valley in, and left the door of the hotel about nine of the day. We had no great takings of leave with folk, for those with whom we had companied the most were either already departed or not at hand. Still did we go with sorrow, for *Zermatt's* a good place to stay at, and our sojourn there had been most pleasant. As we drove down the desolate valley we could see the rain vapour streaming up the hill sides on either hand in thick white clouds and quite hiding the tops. But that mattered the less in that we had no rain, which in an open carriage is always inconvenient. I can call to mind no special incident of any kind on our way down to *St. Nicholas*, and it would ill accord with the other parts of this writing if I were to invent any; so I will be content to say that we made a safe and expeditious trip, marvelling much as we went at the contentedness of folks who live their lives in this inhospitable valley. At the village of *St. Nicholas* we made no long stay and had no time even to inspect the church, which is a fair stone building with a large crucifix in the church-yard, such as it is common in these parts to rear in memory of some mission. We tarried not even to feed, but having engaged some porters who should carry our luggage on their backs, (for horses were not to be had,) with ice-axes in our hands we set off to walk down the rest of the valley. 'Twere a superfluity of words to enter again into any long account of the country, for have I not already done so at length in a former part of my tale; and a week is not likely to make much change in a place, where the ravages of a century of glaciers and

Sept. 24th.

We leave Zermatt,

and go by St. Nicholas

avalanches make so little by comparison. So we walked contentedly along the road past little fields and smiling woods and steep descents and rushing waters, with the sunlight of heaven above and the sunlight of earth below. And moreover did the *Home Secretary* recite in a loud voice the story of the *Fight of Lake Regillus*, and of how brave *Horatius* kept the bridge at *Rome*, so that the weariness of the road was thereby beguiled. I will not say certainly if the *Premier* sang to us that song beginning, "*When all the world is young, lad!*" but I doubt not that he did, for on all such occasions as this were we wont to demand it, and when demanded it was ever forthcoming. And so about two in the afternoon we came

to *Stalden*. at the little village of *Stalden*, which stands at the point where the *Zermatt* valley joins with that called the *Saas*, and here we entered into the hotel which stands in the midst of the village, and had somewhat to eat. The *Lord Chancellor* indeed, with a foresight in such matters which seldom failed him, and knowing not whence the next food would come, would fain have made a solid meal of the beefsteaks that were proffered us, but he was overruled by the others, and had, perforce, to content himself with the bread and cheese which they deemed expedient. Yet had he no long time to tarry for his revenge, for it chanced that as we, having departed out of *Stalden*, were walking along the road nigh unto the place where it crosses the river by a bridge, we came at certain vineyards which border upon the path. And here the *Premier*, the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* and the *Home Secretary*, led away by the cravings of appetite and heedless of the laws of trespass, gathered one or two of the grapes and did eat them. It was no great offence *certes*, but still was it thoughtless, as the *Lord Chancellor* would have failed not to point out, had he not been tarrying behind in serious talk with the *President of the Board of Trade*. However, they troubled themselves not about the matter, and were going on their way, when, meeting a peasant of the district, they asked him who owned these vineyards, so that they

A crime,

might go and buy from him some of the produce. But he, in place of giving them such information, at once declared himself to be a watcher appointed by the *Landammen* or Village Council, to protect these places from being spoiled by such as them, and that the *Premier* and *Home Secretary* (the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* he had not seen), must forthwith accompany him before that body or pay a fine of one *franc* each. and its consequences.

It will be supposed that this statement was not well understood by them, for he spoke not English, and of German they knew little ; but when its meaning became clear, it seemed to them so absurd that a man should be at once constable, judge and treasurer, in matters of a fine, that they heeded not his talk, taking it for the babble of folly. But he, fearful to lose them, straightway, by way of token of arrest, I suppose, seized the hat of the *Premier* from his head, who thereupon waxed wroth, and made a brave show of fighting, whilst the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* stood grimly behind, ready to seize the knave by the throat, and the *President of the Board of Trade*, zealous as Peter, rushed up and seemed about to fell him to the ground with his ice-axe without further parley. But affairs having come to this pass, it seemed to us most foolish to resist the man's demands *vi et armis*, as the lawyers say, for he was clearly of an obstinate disposition, and might well have raised the *posse comitatus* of the valley or whatever they call it there, and so caused us much trouble. A good escape.

Wherefore after much talking, in which the *Premier* used his pleasantest smile, and the *Home Secretary* his best German, whilst the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* assumed an air of injured innocence quite at variance with the facts, and the *Lord Chancellor* denounced the whole matter as the compounding of a felony, the man agreed to take the fine of a *franc* apiece and say nothing more. So with that price the *Premier* and *Home Secretary* paid for their one grape each. But to put the man quite on our side, and, moreover, perhaps, to heal their wounded vanity, they bought from him sundry bunches of grapes from his own ground which was

hard by. And so we left him with mutual goodwill, eating as we went of the grapes, which those of us who had bought them averred to be of an excellent flavour, though the others put some of that quality down to the imagination which is said to often assist at the eating of stolen fruit. And as we held on our way those of us who had escaped the fine waxed merry over the misfortune of the others, and *Mr. Chancellor* in particular grew mighty moral over the matter, though he was as guilty as the rest. However we all agreed that seeing how small are the parcels of ground and how short the summer season, much was to be allowed to these people in the defence of their property. And so, without further incident of note, we got into the town of *Visp* about three in the afternoon, and went to the hotel where we had stayed before and had a hearty meal. And then taking our luggage from the men who had carried it from *St. Nicholas*, and paying them well for their trouble, we went to the *Railway Station* and got into a train at half after four which was to carry us down the *Rhone Valley*. I have remarked before on the slowness of travelling on this line, so it will be no news if I say we took some four hours to accomplish a distance of some thirty miles. going all the time save when we stopped at a station, which we did every few minutes. I should be glad to write of the country we passed through, but sooth to say, we saw but little that was worthy of note. For the first part of the ride the valley was very barren and desolate, then lower down it seemed more fertile and inhabitable, and then night came on and we saw nothing. Some of us slept and the rest tried to do, until at length we gladly found ourselves at our journey's end. It was a place called *Villeneuve* we had come at, which stands at the head of the *Lake of Geneva* just near to where the *Rhone River* empties its waters into that lake. It was dark when we left the train, and all was quiet save for the noise and lights from an itinerant show of some kind and the lapping of the waves on the lake side, as we made our way to a hotel near the water, called the *Hôtel du*

Visp.

Villeneuve.

Port. I cannot in honesty speak very highly of it, for we considered it much inferior to aught we had seen in these parts, always saving that at the *Glacier du Rhone*. But truly, it was French in its ideas and accommodation, and more than that I will not say. Still did we have a good meal and went to bed contentedly about ten of the night.

We might, as we had wished, have gone to stay at *Sept. 25th.* a much better place called the *Hôtel Byron*, but that was some way off, whereas our house was close to the edge of the lake whereon we had purposed to sail, so it was not without its compensations. We were up betimes the next morning, and having left our luggage in the hands of the *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, who to our sorrow declared himself indisposed, we went out. There is a very famous castle near this place called the *Castle of Chillon*, and we were very wishful *Chillon.* to visit it. So the *Premier* and *Home Secretary* set off to walk there by the road, but the other two not having seen them go, chose the pleasanter way of travelling—by water. This they did in a fishing-boat in which they engaged the owner to row them, for they had found him landing his morning's haul of fish on the lake side. It was a very fine day, and the sun just coming out in his strength made the wavelets *Lake* sparkle and the mists steam up with beautiful effect *Leman.* from the lake which is said, at this part, to reach the prodigious depth of eight hundred feet. They soon reached the castle, which is built quite in the water and connected with the mainland by a draw-bridge, and there found the *Premier* and *Home Secretary* who had just come up by the road. But alack! time failed us to land and view the place, which seemed a most curious one, with its turrets, loop-holes and bastions, else might we have seen the noisome place where men of old were kept prisoners for years, and especially that in which a man called *Bonivard* was put, of whom the poet *Byron* has written verses, which it would insult my reader's intelligence if I did aught more than mention. So, perforce, we all had to go back in the boat to the hotel, where landing, we found the *Chancellor of the*

*Our sail
thereon.*

Exchequer in better spirits, and after a short tarrying, got on to the steamer which was to take us down the lake. As we departed from the pier we looked up to the head of the lake, where we could see the flat land and marshes, brought down, doubtless, by the waters of the *Rhone* as it enters the lake ; whilst beyond, and standing out above the low-lying clouds, were the broken ridges of a large mountain called the *Dent du Midi*. And all round the margin of the water rose high hills which those who had not, like us, just left the *Zermatt* valley behind, would be well justified in deeming mountains. The day was very fine, and the water below us rivalled in blueness the sky above, whilst all along that coast of the lake which we were skirting were scattered smiling villages and stately mansions, and fruitful vineyards. At many of these places we stopped to land and take on board passengers, so that the deck was always well covered with people. But with none did we have much talk, nor did we feel much a-kin to them in pursuits, for whilst we were returning from a place where rude health and hard work were the rule, they seemed for the most part to be folks who were either in search of health or taking their exercises in very gentle fashion. And, doubtless, to them we seemed as do those who return to civilization from a freer kind of life. Still was our sail a most pleasant one, and we were sorry when we came, at the end of two hours, to a village called *Ouchy*, where we had to land. This is the place of disembarking for the very important town of *Lausanne*, which lies on the hill side above, and to which we purposed going. We had, however, much time at our disposal, so tempted by the warmth of the day, and urged on, moreover, by former experiences of two of the Cabinet at this place some eleven years before, we sought the bath, which is built like the one at *Zurich*, in the water itself. We found, however, that it was closed, but on learning from a kindly-disposed Englishman whom we met that there was a good place on the further side of the pier, we went thither, and the *Home Secretary*, *President of the Board*

Ouchy.

of Trade, and Lord Chancellor undressing on the shore, enjoyed a pleasant bathe in the water which was very shallow, and by consequence, warmer than deeper water would have been. And then being dried in the sun and dressed, they returned to the others and shared with them a frugal meal of bread and fruit, after which we took our luggage to a place where a carriage is drawn up the steep hill side by a rope, and getting in were not long in arriving at the town of *Lausanne* above. In our journey up, we had for company the old gentleman I have named before as being one of Her Majesty's Counsel, whom we had met at *Zermatt*, and learnt from him somewhat of the movements of our three lady friends. However, he was not going our way, so we had soon to part company again. Being arrived at the top we first took our luggage to the station, and then walking into the town, came to a hotel called the *Gibbon*, I suppose after the famous historian of that name, who wrote the most part of his work at this place. It is a house well known throughout Europe for the excellence of its accommodation, and we ordered there a dinner to be ready for us in a short time. And whilst it was a-cooking, the *Premier and Chancellor of the Exchequer* sought out a man who might relieve the latter of the pain which he had suffered in his teeth for some days past, and the rest took a walk in the town. It's a well-built place pleasingly situated on a hill side, with clean and well-kept streets, and houses and shops. There is also a cathedral of some size which they entered and examined, but were not much impressed therewith, for the inside is of exceeding plainness and simplicity, and comes short even of the decoration to be found in our own buildings of the same kind. Even the altar was merely a stone table without any of the railings and other exclusions usually found around it, for in this canton and town the usages of the Reformed Church prevail. They, moreover, entered a shop, and after much use of bad French, procured a book for the use of the man who keeps the house we slept in when

Lausanne.

The town.

ascending the *Breithorn*, and we that day sent it to him by post. And then, all being joined together at the hotel, we sat down to dine in a well-furnished room which looked on to a pleasant garden. We had very good provision made for us, and the mind still turns with respect to the large-sized cutlets provided, and even the *Lord Chancellor* was fain to cry content, although he did remark on the absence of pudding. And so being well fortified in the body we went to the railway station and were soon seated in a carriage for *Paris*, which we hoped to reach the following morning. We went by some very pleasing and interesting country which, however, I do not remember sufficiently to describe at length, and to invent a description is, I think, worse than to be silent. And about dusk we came to *Pontarlier*, which is on the borders of Switzerland and France, whence, after changing carriages and shewing our luggage to the Custom-house people, we journeyed through France. It was a long journey, and the memory thereof is not so pleasant as that I should wish to talk much of it. We were some eight in a compartment, and therefore not comfortable, but we slept tolerably well, and as the worst lane has a turning, so at last at about six o'clock in the morning we arrived at *Paris* and escaped from our confinement.

Sept. 26th.

Our
journey to

Paris, and
herein of

If I had my own will I would say naught of our stay in that city, for I cared but little therefor, and in any case I will write shortly. After tarrying some time at the station to have our luggage looked at by the officers of the Customs, we drove across a large part of the city to our hotel near to the place we purposed journeying from next day. And this, I take it, was its only good point, for it was both small and ill-equipped. And then having had breakfast, to which *mirabile dictu* the *Lord Chancellor* confessed himself unequal, we took a walk in the streets. I am not going into any account of the buildings and arrangements of this very beautiful city, to those who have not seen it my words would mean little, and to those who have, it suffices to say that we saw the

Opera House, the churches of the *Madeleine* and *Nôtre Dame*, the *Quays* and *Bridges*, and, most truly typical of the people, the *Morgue*. In one place where we were uncertain of our way, a kind native in answer to our requests took us through several streets and set us right, and when we expressed our thanks and surprise at such unwonted civility, told us that he had received such kindnesses in England that he felt bound to repay them to any of that nation in distress. A fact creditable, I take it, to both peoples. We also looked in at a building in which were shewn by their owners such pictures as had been deemed unworthy of exhibition in the annual collection called the *Salon*, and, indeed, if they thought to make us differ in opinion with the managers of that collection, they did not succeed. Near to this was a large open space called the *Place de la Concorde*, or in the English tongue the *Place of Peace*, round which stood some eight statues of gigantic size, portraying in the guise of women the chief cities of France. And on one of these, that of the city of *Strasbourg*, were placed wreaths of *immortelle* flowers and drapings of crape. Truly a mockery of the place's name, for as all the world knows, that city was wrested from the French by their enemies—the Germans. Men deck not the graves of their animals with emblems of a future state; it is on those of their loved ones they bestow such tokens, as signs that they do not sorrow as those without hope. And we trembled for what the world may yet see. Whilst in the church of *Nôtre Dame* we fell in with a fellow-countryman well known to us, who does business in this city, and he would not have it but that we should go with him to lunch, which accordingly we did after first looking in at the hotel he accustomed, a most splendid place. He took us to a house of refreshing which lay near the Bourse or Stock Exchange of the city, but whose name I forget, and there we had a most excellent repast. Especially do we remember the fish, which were soles, cooked in a fashion called *à la Normande*. And then, bidding him good-bye, we went out with a young fellow high

The buildings.

The Place de la Concorde.

Our luncheon.

*The
Louvre.*

in his confidence who had fed with us, and saw sundry other places of interest. Chief among them was the *Louvre*, an ancient palace of the Monarchy, but now a museum and picture gallery. It's a very fine building, replete with wonderful, curious, and beautiful pictures and statuary, answering, indeed, to our *National Gallery* and *British Museum*, but much handsomer and brighter. But in this it differs, that it was open on Sundays and was on this day well filled with respectable and well-behaved folks. Yet, though in this particular it may be thought this is better than our system, we doubted but little that in other matters, we at home choose the better course in closing all places of business (except the Drink-Devil's) on the Sunday. For here we saw the workmen hard at work and many of the shops and places of business open, and the streets thronged with a crowd of pleasure-seekers on foot and in carriages. And our companion told us he had little rest from his work even on this day. They may, indeed, make a little more money, but it is ill-gotten and can do them but small good. And then we took carriages and drove down that splendid road called the *Champs Elysées*, and into a beautiful park called the *Bois de Boulogne*.

The Bois.

Here, I grieve to say, they had races going on, but we only saw the people as they came back from them. Both there and as we returned, which we shortly did, we saw many people whom we supposed a fair sample of the nation, but saving one or two, we saw no woman who either in looks or dress we would esteem the equal of our own island-born beauties. And so being returned we went with our companion to his office, where he told us somewhat of the difficulties he has in doing business in the face of the heavy tariff this country puts on our goods, and then he took us to another place where we had a most

Our dinner.

prodigal dinner; after which we sat outside a shop, as is the custom here, and drank coffee, and shortly after returned to our hotel and so to bed. 'Twas in many things a profitless day that we had spent, but still I cannot much regret that we spent it as we did,

if only because we saw something of the way they do wrong here, and felt how bad it would be for us to follow them. There are many, I believe, who think much of Paris, and it may be we were ill-placed to judge correctly, in that we were in it only one day and saw not the best side thereof, but I thought then, and for that matter do still, that if the poet was right in saying Hell was a place much like London, Paris differs only in being a gilded one. And what hope is there for a country whose heart and brain is rotten?

The next day we started somewhat early from the station, which was close at hand, and going by the towns of *Amiens* and *Boulogne*, came to the ancient sea-port of *Calais* about noon. It was tedious travelling, and the carriage not a good one, and I remember naught of the journey so important that I need set it down here. And then embarking in a steamer which, being built of two hulls joined in the centre, did away with some of the motion caused by the sea, we came, after a stormy passage of some hour-and-a-half, to the harbour of *Dover*. Some of our *Cabinet* came to the verge of being ill, but recovered themselves as soon as land was reached. I must not forget to say that there crossed with us a gentleman and his wife, with whom we had had very pleasant intercourse when at *Zermatt*. And then going through the county of Kent, which seemed to us like a very garden of the Lord after the barrenness of *Switzerland* and the brown fields of *France*, we came into *London* about dusk, thankful for our safe arrival, and confirmed in our opinion that there is no place like England. And having spent the night in *London*, we, at divers times and in divers ways, arrived in safety at our respective homes.

And now, reader, is my task finished. If in aught I have written thou findest something to please or admire, be glad and give thanks; if aught there be thou deemest false or trivial, be silent, and remember this was not written for thy delectation nor at thy behest, but for my fellow-travellers only. And to them alone do I stand or fall. *Vale!*

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