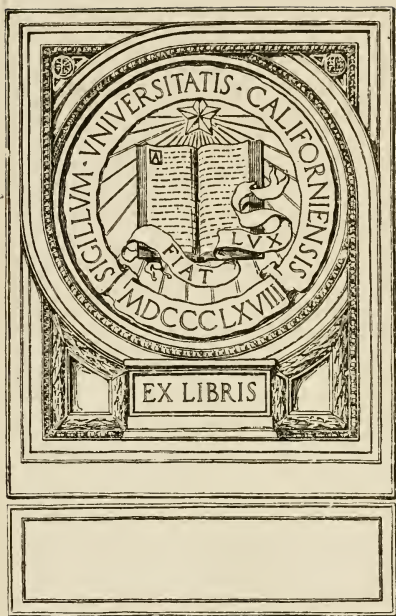


An
OBERLAND
CHÂLET

EDITH ELMER WOOD







AN OBERLAND CHÂLET



THE CHALET



TO VIND
ARROGLIAO



Grindelwald Lower Glacier

AN OBERLAND CHÂLET

By EDITH ELMER WOOD



NEW YORK
WESSELS & BISSELL CO.

1910

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October

70 1910
ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PREMIER PRESS
NEW YORK

*Affectionately dedicated to the other
occupants of the Châlet Edelweiss.*



THE WETTERHORN SEEN THROUGH THE TREES
FROM THE FAULHORN PATH

ILLUSTRATIONS

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FRITZ BINER, THE GUIDE

APOLOGIA

AT a period when everybody travels, and the yearly number of English-speaking visitors in Switzerland is counted by the hundred thousand, the writer who presumes to offer the long-suffering public a book of Swiss impressions would seem to be courting the yawn reserved for the Nth repetition of the Utterly Familiar. But the discoverer of a new country still has, I believe, some privileges. It might even be considered selfish of one who had found the way back to Arcadia to keep the sailing directions secret. And though there are countless tourists who know the Swiss hotels and mountain railroads, numerous villa people well versed in the tennis and golf facilities of Montreux or Lucerne, and a goodly company of Alpinists who can tell you all about guides and ropes and the ascent of the Matterhorn, there never was anybody who got out of a Swiss summer precisely what we did, or who, in fact, knows our own particular private Switzerland at all.

In the beginning, there were but four—no, five—of us,—Belle Soeur and my two Babes and I and our good French Suzanne, who, besides looking out for the Younger Babe, performed various useful functions about the house. After some six weeks Frater and his college chum, Antonio, dropped in on us from their commencement across the sea, and a few days later the Mother.

Now the Husband-and-Father, who is also the brother of Belle Soeur, and incidentally a naval officer, had been ordered from the Mediterranean, where he had been cruising, to the Philippines, which are not so nice, especially for Babes, particularly in summer. So, instead of following him when we gave up our little villa on the hills above Nice the first of June, we moved into Switzerland. None of us had ever been there before except the Chronicler and the Mother, who had spent the usual sort of summer there when the Chronicler was a small child. We knew we wanted to be high enough for bracing air, as far as possible from tourist centers and among the really and truly great and lofty mountains. So we went to

Interlaken for a start and hunted around among the neighboring mountain villages till we found what we were after. And on the tenth day we moved into the Châlet Edelweiss, which lies about a mile and a half from the Grindelwald station on the road to the Upper Glacier, and started housekeeping.

It did not seem very propitious that first day. It was raining dismally when we got off the train; the roads were full of mud, and the clouds had rolled down over the mountains, so that nothing could be seen but the big brick Bear Hotel and the ugly village street lined with shops and restaurants. I tried to remember how beautiful it had been the day I was in Grindelwald house-hunting, and the others tried to act as if they believed what I was telling them about it, but I knew they didn't, and they knew I knew they didn't. When we got to the house, it, too, was depressing. On the bright sunshiny day when I had seen it before, it had looked primitive enough, but now it seemed aggressively barren and comfortless. Was it possible that we could live in this barn for four months? I could see the

effort the family were making to act as if they liked it—all but the Younger Babe, who made no effort at all, but got frankly quivery about the lower lip and begged to be taken back to the Villetta Valentine at Nice or even to the hotel in Interlaken. “I don’t like this house!” he said. “It’s an ugly house. It’s *not* a happy little home. It’s ugly. It hasn’t got any ‘fings’ in it. It hasn’t even got any paper on the wall!”

Now, this was quite true. Walls, ceilings and floors were all of the same, well-scrubbed, unpainted pine boards, and “fings” were limited to strictly essential furniture of the plainest type. And it’s wonderful how little *is* strictly essential when you get down to it. But at the age of three material accessories are apt to assume an exaggerated importance. Every infant is by nature a snob till the tendency is reasoned or spanked out of him.

With wholly artificial buoyancy, we wandered over the house, apportioning beds and rooms and hunting for something to cheer up the Babe. We found it to a certain extent in what he dubbed the two “*Charmantes bêtes*”

which stood in the dining-room. They were stuffed chamois, and all summer we intended asking if the Herr Secundärlehrer had shot them himself, but somehow we got away without settling the question. A wreath awarded to him as first prize at a *Schützenfest*, which hung framed on the wall, made it seem quite likely that he *did* shoot them. These two *bêtes* formed, with a melodion, a narrow deal table and six chairs, the furniture of the dining-room. The rooms had only been differentiated into dining-room, sitting-room and bedrooms for our benefit. The furniture had all been jumbled up when I saw the house before, and every room except the kitchen had had one or more beds in it.

I wonder if I can make you see the Châlet Edelweiss? It is the regulation Oberland châlet of the better type,—exactly like the tooth-pick boxes if you don't know it otherwise. The basement is of whitewashed concrete and contains a small grocery store kept by the Frau Secundärlehrer when she isn't teaching school or farming, and which she said she was sure would not annoy us because it was so very

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small and hardly anybody ever came there to buy anything. There isn't any basement at the back of the house because the sloping hillside brings the ground to the level of the kitchen and dining-room windows. *Our* part of the ch[^]alet consists of two stories of unpainted wood, surmounted by a big red roof. The shutters are painted bright green. At both ends of the house are broad two-storied balconies. The only staircases are on the balconies. There are moments when this is inconvenient. Above the second-story windows on the front of the house runs a legend in large black Gothic letters, saying that the Secund[^]ar-lehrer and his wife caused this house to be built by such and such a master carpenter. Some of the houses in the village have verses or mottoes painted on them, and we always regretted a little that ours did not. It was rather nice to see the wife's name associated with the husband's in this matter. Doubtless her dowry had helped build the house, certainly her industry was helping to maintain it. But it was rather decent of him to recognize the fact.

The ch[^]alet has been built only two years, so

its timbers have not acquired the rich sepia and burnt-Sienna tones which make the old ones such a joy to the eye. But the new kind is better to live in!

The house stands just above the highroad. Behind it the green Alpine meadows roll steeply upward to the Faulhorn ridge, which separates Grindelwald valley from the depression occupied by Lake Brienz. There are between four and five thousand upward feet in this direction, we being at about the four-thousand-foot level ourselves. Below the road, the land runs down rapidly to the rushing Lütchine, the stream which drains the glaciers. We can hear the roar of the water plainly, especially at night. From the other side of the stream rise almost precipitously the rocky cliffs of the Mettenberg, getting up about ten thousand feet. To the left the gleaming snow and ice of the Upper Glacier, then the square gray, snow-capped mass of the Wetterhorn. To the right the Lower Glacier, with broad white firs and snow peaks, and to the right of the glacier the knife-edged Eiger. These three giants fill up our whole immediate foreground. Far to the right is the

saddle-like depression known as the Kleine Scheidegg, where the mountain railroad runs over into the Lauterbrunnen Valley, and to the left of the Wetterhorn, the narrow end of the Grindelwald Valley is closed by a similar saddle,—the Grosse Scheidegg, which separates it from the Rosenloui Valley. To the extreme right is the rift in the mountains through which the Lütchine escapes and the railroad gets down to Interlaken. But it was all veiled in mist the first day. We couldn't see fifty feet in any direction. There were some few tantalizing glimpses as the clouds began to break apart about sunset. But the family had to take on faith the "glorious views" I had described till next morning.

The one heart-warming spot in the chilly interior of the *châlet* that first afternoon was the kitchen, where the Frau Secundärlehrer, in the kindness of her heart, assisted by her little Dienst-Mädchen, was beating up the eggs and milk, which I had asked her to get for me, into an omelet. We really had no use for an omelet at half-past four in the afternoon, but we would not have dampened her hospitable

zeal by letting her see our lack of appetite. So we sat down dutifully at the deal table between the melodion and the stuffed chamois and ate it. Then the Frau and her handmaiden bade us good-night and left us—masters of all we surveyed, including a fine crop of partially repressed blues.

Who would ever have guessed this was the opening scene of the finest summer that ever happened?



II

THERE is nothing particularly joyous about the process of starting a new house running anywhere at any time. *Experta crede*. But when you are a stranger in a strange land, whose language you are imperfectly acquainted with and whose inhabitants are as uncommunicative as oysters and inclined to regard the foreigner as an enemy till he has proved the contrary, the difficulties are considerably aggravated.

Among the rank and file of the people in the German cantons of Switzerland, there seem to be three classes:—those who have come in contact overmuch with tourists and have been spoiled by it; the low-browed, stupid type, surly and hostile; and the honest, intelligent, fresh-cheeked, unspoiled, who are never effusive, but frank always and friendly to those who seem to deserve it, staunch, reliable, independent, self-respecting, in every way admirable,—the bone and sinew and hope of Switzer-

land. The first class are nearly as extortionate and conscienceless as their confrères in France and Italy without the charming Latin manners that make one forgive their iniquity. At their worst, this type is insufferable. But one can escape. Two miles off the tourist tracks, one never finds them.

The second class one can only be sorry for. It is not their fault that their brains and bodies are stunted by cretinism or intermarriage of relatives or insufficient nourishment or too much carrying of heavy burdens. Their skin is sallow, eyes dull, features heavy. One usually finds them tending cattle, whom they closely resemble, or inhabiting isolated châteaux. If you speak to them, they either stare open-mouthed and answer nothing, or in the most unsatisfactory manner. I do not know whether they are capable of affection for their own people. They certainly waste none of it on outsiders.

There was a man of this type who lived in a châteaux on the hill above us, who came out and hit the Elder Babe a resounding cuff on the head, ejaculating some wrathful Swiss German, which the poor Babe did not in the least

understand. The Babe was doing nothing more sinful than looking in the grass for a pen-knife he had lost, but doubtless this man, with his poor cramped crooked wits, suspected him of some deep-dyed villainy.

There was also a boy in the neighborhood about twelve years old, who used to lie in wait for the Elder Babe with a large stick and attack him viciously. I would have let the Babe (who was seven) fight it out with him, trusting to the triumph of mind over matter, if the lad had not been so absolutely unintelligent and brute-like in appearance that I thought he might crush the Babe's skull with a rock or push him off a precipice if he was angered.

Every once in a while one hears of some queer stupid outrage in Switzerland—the tires of an automobile chopped up or obstructions put at a dangerous turn in the road to upset a traveling carriage. I imagine it is always one of these quasi-deficients who is responsible for it.

In the whole world I do not know a finer people, nor one more charming to deal with, than the healthy, intelligent class of Swiss, God-fearing, law-abiding, domestic, industrious,

self-respecting, clean in mind and body. When I had once beaten my way through their uncommunicativeness and learned where I could get the necessities of life, I found it indescribably restful, after the perpetual battle over trifles of my eight months' housekeeping on the Riviera, to throw myself on the mercy of these good people, secure in the consciousness that they would take no advantage of my ignorance, and that the price of an article would be the same whether I asked before buying it or after.

One of the brothers of the family that kept the meat shop was a guide in his leisure moments and was building up a fine reputation for skill and daring. While we were in Grindelwald he covered himself with glory by successfully doing some things that had never been done before. With an Alpinist from Berne, he crawled along the knife-blade edge of the Eiger, Heaven knows how many hours without sleep or rest or proper food, without standing up or sitting down, just clinging and creeping,—a feat which had been accomplished only once many years ago. It was pretty to see how proud his family were of him. A younger

brother especially, once his shy reserve was overcome by sympathetic questions, talked about him as though he had won the Victoria Cross at the very least. I do really think they were the only firm of butchers I ever met who did not need to be watched while weighing the meat!

The bakery people were admirable, too, especially the young, rosy-cheeked wife, who usually tended shop, and the bright-faced little girl who brought the bread each morning. They had a small grocery attachment to the bakery, but I found it was not etiquette for me to buy there anything which I could get from the Frau Secundärlehrer in our basement. In the bakery one day I saw some packages of tapioca stacked up on a shelf, and, with the Babes in mind, ordered some sent next morning. It did not come and, supposing it had been overlooked, I stopped in later to get it. "My little girl took it up this morning with the bread," said the baker's wife, smiling sweetly, "but she found the Frau Secundärlehrer kept it in stock, so of course she brought it back." I must have looked a little blank, for she added,

"The Frau Secundärlehrer might think it strange if you got it from us instead of her."

Having learned this local canon, I struggled dutifully to conform to it, though it was by no means always convenient. The Frau Secundärlehrer's store was open only at odd times when the Frau was at leisure. It was always closed during the morning hours when one usually makes purchases for the day. After sending the cook to the village in the morning for marketing and piously leaving some grocery article to be purchased from the Frau in the afternoon, it was hardly soothing to find that she was just out of it or had never had it—and the nearest other grocery a mile and a half away!

There may have been other local rules of procedure equally sacred that I never did find out, and so unwittingly offended against to the end. I do not believe the Schweizer would be forgiving toward shortcomings of this sort. He is beautifully confident that the *Herr Gott* approves of Swiss ways and dislikes foreigners, and this gives him a virtuous rigidity in resisting innovations. There may have been some

such all-unconscious sin on my part to account for the strange behavior of the Herr Secundärlehrer at the end of the season. But we won't worry about that till the time comes.

The way we got our milk is worth describing. The cattle went up to the high pastures a few days after our arrival. They went by our house, and all day long we heard the tinkle of the cow-bells, the tramping of their patient feet, and the pushing and rubbing of their heavy swaying bodies, and the air was full of their breath as though we were in a dairy-yard. All the cattle in the valley go up about the middle of June (as soon as the snow is off the ground) and come down the latter part of September. The pasture lands are owned by the commune, and each burgher of the valley has the right to keep a certain number of cows there. There is a head-man in charge of each commune's cattle, who, with a corps of assistants, lives up on the heights all summer. Their chief occupation is cheese-making. They are allowed such milk and cheese as they need for themselves during the summer (which, with coarse black bread, practically forms the whole of their

diet), and at the end of the season receive a share of the cheese made in lieu of wages, the rest going per capita to the cattle-owners. Meat and eggs are scarce and dear, and this cheese forms the staple of the valley's food through the winter.

In the more distant pastures, all the milk not drunk by the cattle men is made into cheese, but from these Alps near Grindelwald a certain amount of fresh milk is sold, being brought down six or eight miles each morning strapped to the back of a man, in a cylinder of white unpainted wood that must hold from ten to fifteen gallons.

Do not imagine that we learned all this at once. It represents the wisdom of the summer, gathered and pieced together, bit by bit. All we knew just then was that more cows than we had ever seen in our lives were going past, and it was a good thing that they were not nervous animals, or their bells would surely drive them crazy. Most of them were small affairs hung around the neck from a narrow leather collar. But sometimes the collar was as much as four inches wide and the bell a great

jangling piece of metal seven or eight inches long and about the same width. It must have been a real burden for the cow to carry and the stiff collar a severe infliction. We never *did* learn the philosophy of these vagaries in cow adornment.

The Herr Secundärlehrer told us, on inquiry, during those first days, that the Alpine milk was the best to be had, although it cost more, and that perhaps he could secure it for us during the summer (it was a favor, you understand) if we would say definitely what amount we would take. It could neither be increased nor decreased afterwards and it must be paid for all together at the end of the season. "But I prefer paying my bills each month," I said. "Can't be done," he replied. It was very mysterious, but we let it go at that, and the milk was delicious.

Later, after the young men and the Mother had joined us, I found we needed more milk. I lay in wait for the man who brought the milk, after the cook had tried her hand on him in vain, and asked him if there was not some way by which we could get an extra liter or so per

day. He was one of the stupid variety and his "*Nein*" was like the speech of a stone statue (if stone statues spoke), without a flicker of expression. Wouldn't it be possible if we paid a higher price for it? *Nein*. Wasn't there a head-man who would have the authority to sell me more if I went to see him? *Nein*. I think he regarded me as the Scarlet Woman referred to in the Scriptures and felt that his soul would be endangered by further parley. So he walked off without any nonsense in the way of apology or farewell.

The only milk then to be bought was what came up from Interlaken, and even that we could not buy direct, since the man who sold it did not go on his rounds so far as our house. The baker took in a liter for us and we sent for it in the afternoon, and it was often sour and always pale and watery.

The admixture of water was not entirely unknown in our Alpine milk, for Frater one day came upon a milk-bearer cheerfully filling up his vessel from a mountain brook. Perhaps he had stumbled and spilt some, or perhaps he had been thirsty and drunk some, and of course

he had a precise and definite quantity to deliver. I will not believe he had sold any on the side. It would not be in character. And I do not believe it could have happened often, or the milk would not have been so good.

For the benefit of intending housekeepers in the Oberland, I would say that marketing, when one has learned the ropes, is an easy matter, if the family is blessed with good appetites and is contented with simple fare and small variety. In meat there was always veal and pork to be had, beef and mutton only occasionally. When we wanted poultry we had to send to Interlaken for it, and the price was appalling, thirteen francs for a pair of small chickens hardly enough for a meal. Nearly everybody owned a few chickens, but they would not sell them, and eggs were often hard to get. As for fresh vegetables and fruit, we were wholly dependent on a rascally Italian who kept a fruit shop for tourists near the station and charged tourist prices for inferior articles. The only time he ever gave us good value was toward the end of the season when Antonio happened to address him in Italian, and he and his wife glowed all

over and heaped up the grapes in the bag. But that did not prevent them from palming off a collection of absolutely rotten pears on my poor unsuspecting cook the next day! No fruit is grown in the valley except a few late apples on the road down to Interlaken, and the little wild strawberries that come up for themselves in June, no vegetables except cabbages and carrots and the like, which each family toilsomely raises for its own use and cannot be induced to sell. The Frau Secundärlehrer^e had some lettuce which she generously invited us to help ourselves to as long as it lasted, but she would not *sell* it. One hardly realizes that it is summer, for one has to depend so much on canned things. One learns to eat a lot of the local cheese, which is always good. And I must not forget the honey. It is the invariable accompaniment of the Swiss breakfast, which consists for the rest of rolls and butter, coffee and milk. When the bees have gathered their honey from the wild flowers on the Alpine meadows, the flavor is complexly delicious. One soon learns to despise the insipid lowland product.

I must not forget the salt, nor the long morn-

ing spent in hunting for that useful staple. I ordered it the first day from our basement grocery. It didn't come, and I repeated the order. I was told the Frau had none. I supposed she was just out of it and asked Belle Soeur, who was going into the village, to get some at any grocer's. She went dutifully to every grocer in the village and grew more and more puzzled at being everywhere told they didn't keep it. She knew the Swiss used the condiment, for she had been eating it. She inquired and was told to go to the post-office. This sounded so perfectly foolish that she paid no attention to it and inquired elsewhere. She received the same answer. After she had been told three times to go the post-office, she went there, feeling distinctly idiotic as she asked the old man behind the stamp window if he sold salt. To her astonishment, the reply was affirmative. Salt, it appears, is a government monopoly in Switzerland, and, in Grindelwald at least, the postmaster had the exclusive right to sell it. In time it became perfectly natural to say, "Give me five postage stamps and a kilo of salt," but it required practice.

III

LOOKING out on cocoa-palms and mango trees from my Puerto Rican balcony (whatever bad things may be said about the life of a naval officer's wife, nobody ever accused it of monotony) it is hard to realize that last summer our outlook was on Alpine meadows and glaciers. . . . How can I catch and imprison in words that glorious Swiss air or the more elusive spiritual atmosphere of it all? How tint the pictures with that characteristic "local color" of which we talked so much that it became family slang?

The air at first was a little thin for us, and we easily got out of breath. Accustoming ourselves to it and gradually enlarging our climbing radius, we were soon doubling and by the end of the season nearly trebling our altitude without inconvenience. It was when we went down to the low levels that we felt oppressed by the dense air and fatigued by the heat. A sudden change of altitude either up or down

most of us found produced clicking of the eardrums alternating with a wad-of-cotton-in-the-ear sensation. Antonio was like the man who couldn't shiver. His eardrums wouldn't click. Our assurance to him that there was nothing especially joyous in the sensation made no difference. He felt that he wasn't in the swim, and it grieved him.

There was certainly a magic in the air. It made us all healthy and hungry and happy and filled us with the desire and eventually the ability to walk almost unlimited distances.

Belle Soeur, the Elder Babe and I did most of the preliminary exploring together. Shall I ever forget the beauty of the wild flowers that first month? They were lovely all summer, but never so lovely nor so many as during June, when the Alpine meadows in our vicinity were all blue with forget-me-nots or yellow and purple with little Johnny-jump-ups. I don't remember the gentians till later, and I know the Alpenroses blossomed in July. The Swiss have a great sentiment for this flower, a sort of rhododendron whose clusters of pink blossoms growing on low scraggly shrubs color miles of

mountain-side at the proper season. But they have no such loveliness as the dainty little flow-erets that grow down in the grass. The Edel-weiss cult, of course, is entirely a matter of sentiment. The furry, pulpy little plant, stalk, leaves, flowers, all of the same grayish, greenish white, has no trace of beauty and indeed does not look like a flower at all. Only its fondness for growing in dangerous and inaccessible places could make it desirable. There seems to be plenty of it, too, if you know where to go for it. During the season the tourist routes are lined with little solemn, silent children selling edelweiss. The supply never fails. But I may as well confess right here that though of course we purchased a certain amount of this article of commerce, we never found a sprig of it growing. We could doubtless have done so by paying a native to lead us to a proper place, but there would have been no sentiment in that. We were always hoping to come upon it accidentally, but we never did.

We soon decided that it was a waste of time to eat our meals in a stuffy little dining-room, looking out only at an upward slope of grass,

even though it was adorned with two chamois and a Schützenfest prize. So we had the deal table and the chairs transferred to the more private of the lower balconies, the one that did not communicate with the street; and we found that the Eiger and Mettenberg and the Lower Glacier, the whole regal glory of our outlook, added a wonderful savor to our simple repasts,—changed the prosaic process of eating, in fact, into a sort of Magnificat. For it is true that there are places in this world which make even a pagan feel religious, and among all the winds and rains and fields and rivers and beasts and stars which “praise the Lord,” there are none which entone their hymns in a voice more inspiringly audible than the mountains which lift their snow-crowned heads so near to Heaven.

Is it surprising that the Swiss are a simple and an honest race? It seems to me it would be surprising if they were anything else. It must be almost a physical impossibility to lie in the presence of a glacier or on the edge of a precipice. Before these hoary Titans of mountains the complexities of our life fall away from us like dust from a shaken garment. All our

artificial distinctions and sophistications become infinitely unimportant. Perhaps ants feel this way in the presence of the Pyramids, or flies who light on the buttresses of Cologne Cathedral.

After all, the Simple Life is not hard to live if you get the right setting for it.

We breakfasted, lunched, drank tea and dined on that balcony till the snow drove us indoors at the end of September. When it rained we pulled the table back into the shelter of the glass at the north end of the veranda. When it was cold, we put on overcoats and golf capes. As we lived with those mountains day by day, and grew to know all their moods and manners, good and bad, as one knows those of one's truly intimates, they became to us, not scenery, but friends and kindred, not anything external, but a part of our larger selves.

We watched the snow line creep up at the beginning of the season and down again at the end. We watched the mountains hide themselves in black lowering clouds, saw them lit up by flashes of lightning, heard them roll back the thunder, saw them repent and hang out a

rainbow from the Wetterhorn precipice across the white of the Upper Glacier and down in front of the Mettenberg, the upper peaks shake off their bad humor and emerge from the clouds all wet and shiny, rocks as well as snow, in the happy sunlight. Eiger is the same as ogre, etymologically, I suppose. Anyhow, it means giant, I have somewhere read. But when the wind blew fleecy white clouds across his gray flank and summit, half-hiding, half-revealing, the effect was as alluring as a chiffon veil on a beautiful woman. Then there was the delicate pink Alpenglow to hope for about simultaneously with dessert. Sometimes instead there were eerie green lights among firs and snowfields and white peaks above the Lower Glacier, wherefore one of them is named the Grindelwalder Grünhorn. And later, when the dinner things had been cleared away and the moon came up over the mountain walls of the valley, our world was too beautiful to be true. It was so exquisite that it almost *hurt*. It induced silence and a sort of swelling of the heart and an overpowering desire to be good. . . .



Grindelwald Valley and Wetterhorn

ASINOLA

I did not mean to be betrayed into a rhapsody. Permit me to call attention to the dash of "local color" on our dinner-table furnished by the cow-bell with which we summoned Suzanne from the kitchen. I have that cow-bell still among my most valued possessions. It and the bowl of wild flowers in the center of the table (not to mention the view) quite redeemed the meagerness of the Frau Secundärlehrer's table linen and our consciousness that there were just *exactly* enough knives, forks, spoons, cups, saucers, plates and glasses to go around once and that they had to be washed between courses! If I wanted to ask anyone to dinner, I would have to send to the village to buy one more of everything!

I have now confided to you nearly everything I know about our housekeeping arrangements, but I have not even mentioned our good cook, Anna. This is not surprising, for she was the most unobtrusive person I ever met in my life. I secured her through an Interlaken employment agency, but she was not at all like the output of an employment agency in our own glorious land of the free. Her voice was so

low and she was so timid and deprecatory that it was sometimes extremely difficult to find out what she was talking about. She was so superlatively meek that she seemed always to be inviting one to ill-treat her. I suppose it was this characteristic which made Suzanne bully her so at first. At Nice we had had a cook who kept Suzanne terrorized, drove her out of the kitchen with a poker and reduced her to daily tears. The joy of emancipation from that servitude, combined with Anna's meekness, were evidently too much for her. This time it was Anna who wept. She came to me at the end of a fortnight and told me she would have to leave, that she seemed to be able to please Madame well enough, but that it was quite impossible to satisfy Suzanne. I told her to think better of it, reasoned with Suzanne and appealed to her sympathies (she has the best heart in the world), and the two soon became excellent friends.

Dear little mild, meek, faithful Anna, I do hope she is prospering! She was a widow and supported her three little children on the thirty-five francs a month she got from me. I put

it up to forty-five, unsolicited, from pure sympathy, but I don't suppose she could get more than half of that through the winter. She was bi-lingual,—French and German,—so it was easy for all of us to communicate with her, and she had pretty rosy cheeks and soft, good eyes.

I remember the time I asked her (speaking French) what they called a bureau (*commode*) in German. "*On l'appelle comme ça,*" she murmured flutteringly. "*Comme ça?*" I repeated. "But what do they call it?" "*On l'appelle comme ça,*" she said again more flutteringly than before. We bandied this back and forth until I thought we had struck an impasse like that of the famous story where the Englishman asks the Scotchman what there is in haggis. The Scotchman begins to enumerate, "There's leeks intilt," and the Englishman, not understanding the word, interrupts, "But what's '*intilt*'?" "I'm telling ye," says the Scotchman, "there's leeks intilt." "But I want to know what's '*intilt*.'" "If ye'll only keep quiet ye'll know what's intilt. There's leeks . . ." And so it goes on forever.

Anna and I would probably be doing the same until now, her voice growing more frightened and fluttering each time, had I not lost patience and exclaimed, "*Comme QUOI, mon Dieu?* Say to me in German, 'There's a bureau in my room.'" By which means I discovered that she meant the same word, *commode*, was used in German as in French.

Perhaps this is as good a place as any to tell a little more about our landlord and his family. The Herr Secundärlehrer, as might be inferred, taught in the higher grades at the big school-house, with so many lovely mottoes painted outside, at the edge of the village. He was evidently proud of his learned calling, for his title was inscribed on his cards and letterheads and invariably appended to his signature. But that, of course, is characteristically German. He was a good-looking man of about thirty, his face a trifle heavy in repose and just a little weak, but lighting up charmingly when he smiled. Like most Swiss, he carried himself rather slouchily. I don't know how strenuously he may have labored during school hours, but he was nearly always resting out of them. Not

so his wife. She was a teacher in the primary school, but that was merely an incident in her life. She also kept the store and cared for her three small children and took charge of the family housekeeping (with the aid of the little dienst-mädchen), did washing and sewing, and along in the late twilight would be standing by a table outside the door of the store (ready for a customer if one should come) ironing till the last ray of light faded. Or she and the dienst-mädchen would take hoe and spade and weed the cabbage patch or get the ground ready for planting turnips. While they did that, the masculine head of the family would sit on a bench smoking. They don't spoil their women in Switzerland.

That reminds me of the local newspaper we subscribed to. It came three times a week and once in a while contained an illustrated supplement, with stories and poems, which were not exciting, but highly moral. The news part contained, besides local items of occasional interest, a quaint little summary of what was going on in the world, from the standpoint of the Grindelwald valley, and delicious editorials on

such burning topics of the day as Love, Shakespeare, or the Sphere of Woman.

It was from the last that we culled the useful phrase, "Housely Herd." I was reading it aloud to the assembled family, translating into English as I went, "The good God is not pleased," I read (that editor was always well posted as to the Almighty's views and sentiments)—"The good God is not pleased when women leave the *housely herd* and force themselves into business and professions for which He never intended them." Now of course I should have translated "*häuslicher Herd*," "domestic hearth," but I honestly thought it was housely herd at the moment, and the phrase so beautifully expressed the masculine attitude of this pastoral people toward their women that it ought to have been true if it wasn't. We therefore put it into our daily vocabulary, and the feminine part of the family joyously referred to itself as the Housely Herd all the rest of the season.

IV

THE Younger Babe made friends with an Italian workman engaged in the construction of a châlet half a mile up the road and was presented by him with a piece of wall paper about a foot square. He bore it home in triumph and asked me to paste it up on the wall above his bed. The comfort he took in that reminder of what he regarded as civilization was really touching. He said he didn't mind the house so much now that it had *some* wall paper in it.

Frater said afterwards that the Châlet Edelweiss must have been conducted as a young ladies' boarding school previous to the arrival of himself and Antonio. This is a mistake on his part, but it is undoubtedly true that we led a much more quiet and decorous life before that invasion of Goth and Vandal. I am sure that the Secundärlehrer and his Frau held a much higher opinion of us at that time than they did later. They had never had the advan-

tage of living in an American college town and were not educated up to "rough-house" nor to the unholy noises which were liable to issue from the Châlet at any hour of the day or night and which led Belle Soeur to christen it our private lunatic asylum.

It is rather curious, as we were none of us haters of our kind, that in the four months we spent in Grindelwald we never exchanged a word with any of the local English colony, which is fairly numerous. Doubtless most of the people who thronged the English chapel of a Sunday were transients, but a good many of the hotel people were there for the season, and there were quite a number of English families keeping house like ourselves in châteaux, though mostly on the other side of the village. Somehow we seemed to be sufficient unto ourselves. Our mountains gave us all the outside company we wanted, and if ever we did pine for human intercourse there was much more "local color" in talking with Swiss peasants.

Our wildest form of diversion before the transatlantic contingent joined us was a picnic. Mostly it was combined with a tramp too long

to be taken comfortably in half a day, but the Fourth of July picnic was celebrated very near the house so that the Younger Babe and Suzanne could accompany us. We chose a charming level green spot beside a babbling Alpine brook which the small boys nearly froze their feet wading. It was shaded by a fine big tree under whose branches we got an altogether glorious view of the Wetterhorn and Upper Glacier. The Fourth-of-Julyness was represented by some diminutive American flags we had purchased at a photograph shop in the village and six of those engines of war euphoni-ously yclept "nigger-chasers," which we bought (the entire stock) at the druggist's. This was the nearest we could come to fire-crackers. One was fired when we got up in the morning, a second after breakfast, one was reserved for sunset, one went off at high noon, and the remaining two immediately preceded and followed the ceremony of lunch.

Among our more distant picnics there stand out in my memory the climb to the Grosse Scheidegg and our two trips to the Männlichen.

The first Männlichen trip was spoiled by the

weather. It is often impossible to tell on a cloudy morning whether the day will prove good or bad. This time we guessed wrong. Not having as yet acquired the climbing habit, we took the train to the Kleine Scheidegg and the footpath from there to the Männlichen. Instead of the early clouds blowing away, as we thought they would, they closed in densely, so that we found ourselves shivering in a thick fog, unable to see twenty feet before our noses. Still hoping the weather might change for the better, we made our way along the path, which was fortunately a perfectly plain and unmistakable one. The path in places ran between snow banks as high as our heads, and except these banks we saw no scenery. We sat down on a damp stone and ate our lunch, which was curiously cheerless. The weather grew worse and worse. Finally, just as it was beginning to rain hard, there loomed out of the mist ahead of us the Männlichen Inn, where we were more than glad to find shelter, hot milk and tea, and a fire.

The rain came down in torrents for several hours. By the time it let up, it was too late

to catch the afternoon train at Scheidegg. Of course the sensible thing to do would have been to make up our minds to spend the night at the Männlichen Inn. But we had made no provisions for staying away over-night and knew that Suzanne and Anna would be very much alarmed at our failure to return.

Besides, the prospect of passing the rest of the afternoon and evening at that viewless inn, with nothing to read and nothing to do, was nowise alluring. So when it stopped raining and the clouds rolled down the mountain-side an eighth of a mile or so, we announced our intention of taking the footpath down to Grindelwald.

The waitress who pointed out the beginning of it to us plainly thought we were crazy, and perhaps we were. For two women and a small boy to start out at four o'clock in the afternoon to walk seven miles down a rain-soaked mountain-side, hunting for a path which for the first few miles would be a rude cow track, no different from countless others which would cross it or branch off from it, knowing that if they got lost or night overtook them they would

find no human habitation to shelter them—well, it didn't sound sensible! But the gods who protect the imprudent were with us.

We started down light-heartedly enough, glad to be on the move again, scrambling over rocks, swinging across the grassy places as fast as the clinging mud would let us, counteracting the chill of advancing evening by the strenuousness of the exercise we were taking. Once we had the good luck to meet a herd of cows from whose guardians we got a new set of directions. And again, just at a place where we were badly puzzled, we saw a lad toiling upward with an empty milk can on his back, whom we hailed and questioned.

Of course this sort of questioning is not an exact science. It must be remembered that our German was far from fluent, and that those people talked a local dialect very considerably different from the language of Goethe and Schiller, that they belonged to the dull, inarticulate section of the population and were not overfond of foreigners. Moreover, everything in Switzerland has a name of its own, and the topographical directions of a peasant bristle

always with unfamiliar proper names, which one strains one's ear to catch, wildly guessing whether they refer to a forest, a pasturage or a group of châlets. All distances are given in time, which is vague at best, and may differ radically as between a Swiss cowherd in training and two American women with a small boy.

An unusually clear-spoken and intelligent native might discourse as follows: "In a quarter of an hour you will be at Hinter der Egg. Do not turn off to the right at Eggboden. Cross the Gundelgraben and continue down for an hour through the Raufte. When you reach Geyscheur you will see two paths. You may take either. Both lead to Grund. You are two and a half hours from Grindelwald." Usually, it is much more involved. And remember that you are hearing everyone of those blessed names for the first time. Two turn out to be cheese huts, one a stream, one a meadow, one a group of three or four dwelling-houses, and the last the bottom of the slope where the Lütschine runs through. But you don't learn that from the man who is giving you directions.

44 AN OBERLAND CHÂLET

I never knew such a long seven miles. It seemed as if Grindelwald receded as fast as we advanced. We tore along the last part of the time, each taking a hand of the Babe, almost running, to keep the night from catching us on the mountain-side. It was nearly dark before we got home, but as the last part of our way was over the familiar highroad, it did not matter. The Châlet Edelweiss looked like a terrestrial paradise, and never was there a sensation more luxurious than shedding our wet, muddy clothes in favor of peignoirs and putting our tired feet into bedroom slippers, unless it was furnished by the good hot dinner that followed.

The other Männlichen trip was vastly different. The day was clear as a bell—radiant, perfect. We walked down to the Grund station and took the train as far as Alpigen only, about half way to the Scheidegg. You see we were learning to climb by then. We took a lovely (though sometimes unfindable) cross-slanting path from there to the Männlichen, and all the way kept opening up more and more glorious vistas. Starting with a backward look

into the Grindelwald Valley and at our own Wetterhorn and Eiger, we uncovered the Mönch first and then the Jungfrau, with her beautiful shining sub-peaks, the Silberhorn and Schneehorn, and finally, when we got to the top of the ridge, there was that surprising hole in the ground, the Lauterbrunnen Valley, with all its waterfalls tumbling down the rock walls of the opposite side. Beyond were more snow mountains and to the westward Lake Thun and Lake Brienz, Interlaken and more snow mountains. I do truly think the view from the Männlichen is the finest in Switzerland, if not in the whole world. The view from the Gornergrat is a wilderness of glaciers, utterly magnificent, but lacking in variety. The view from the Rigi is a panorama of distant objects and lacks the stupendous foreground supplied for the Männlichen by that trio of colossi, Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau.

Our sandwiches and cake were a feast of the gods that day, with heaven and earth spread out above, below and all around us—green in the valley, white on the mountains, blue overhead. We came home by the path we had fol-

lowed so sloppily and doubtfully that other day and found it perfectly plain, much shorter and wonderfully transformed as to looks. I remember that we carried home armloads of Alpenroses gathered on the higher slopes.

Of our tramp to the Grosse Scheidegg, the most striking feature was the attack of "mountain sickness" Belle Soeur had just before reaching the summit. It is an unpleasant sort of thing consisting of palpitation of the heart, faintness, nausea, and turning a greenish white. The proper treatment is to lie down till it passes off and take some cognac. We hadn't any cognac along that day, so poor Belle Soeur could only lie down and wait till it got ready to go away. The Scheidegg is only 6400 feet high. She never felt it again at any such level as that, but encountered it on the Gries Pass at about 8000 feet and going over the Strahlegg at somewhere near 10,000. We always made a practice after the first time of carrying a small cognac flask along whenever we were making an ascent.

The view from the Scheidegg is interesting,

but not at all in the same class as the Männlichen outlook.

We came home by way of the Grindel Alp pastures and encountered great herds of cattle, and wondered whether it was our duty to be afraid of them, but decided it wasn't. We lost our path and tried to cut across the meadows without one. It looked very easy. We could see the roof of our own house plainly several miles distant, but the streams we had to cross, which ran often through deep ravines, made it hard and sometimes a little risky. There was one beautiful spot on a crag overhanging a stream where we fully intended to return some day to picnic, but we never could find it again!

That was the day we learned the wonderfully resting effect on tired and swollen feet of bathing them in the ice-cold water of a mountain stream.

In those early days, before the Transatlantics arrived, the Chronicler used to put in several hours a day in the polishing of her new novel, the Elder Babe used to have lessons, Belle Soeur had an attack of sewing and turned out

wonderful confections for her wardrobe, and we all improved our minds with Swiss history. I say "improved our minds" advisedly, for it certainly did not amuse us. Why is it that, with all the dramatic material at hand, some one doesn't write a history of Switzerland that the ordinary reader can peruse without going to sleep? Something must be allowed of course for the fact that we were not living in the history-hallowed part of Switzerland. Nothing ever happened in the Grindelwald Valley except a battle in 1191, between the Duke of Zaeringen and some recalcitrant nobles who did not like his populistic tendencies. The Duke won the battle and straightway founded Berne and endowed its burghers with all sorts of privileges, the more to annoy the nobles. Or perhaps his motives were really high and altruistic and he would have been glad if he could have foreseen that the Bernese burghers would eventually down nobles and sovereign too. But I really don't think that we were so lacking in imagination that we could not have been interested in the doings of the Eidgenossen in the Forest Cantons, over the

Brünig to the eastward, only a few miles after all, if the histories, French and English alike, had not been so deadly dull.

It is not only the histories either. There is something very unsatisfactory about *all* the literature concerning Switzerland. Much of it is painstakingly constructed out of guide-books like Rollo's Adventures. Some of the things that are best as literature were written by men who got their impressions at second hand. Schiller wrote Tell and Scott wrote Anne of Geierstein without ever having set foot on Swiss soil. The Swissness of both reminds one of Dr. Johnson's remark about women's writing poetry and dogs walking on their hind legs. It is not to be expected that they should do it *well*, but the surprising thing is that they should be able to do it at all!

Now Byron did live up at Wengern Alp just over the Kleine Scheidegg while he was writing Manfred, and the other day I read it over, anticipating much. Time was when I thought Manfred one of the greatest dramatic poems ever written. It gave me all sort of thrills and creeps. But this rereading was a grievous dis-

appointment. There are a few fine lines, but most of the descriptions are cheap, tawdry and conventional, fit accompaniments to a third-rate melodramatic attempt at clothing in false sentiment a theme essentially rotten.

Hyperion is another old-time favorite that I have just reread with a chill of disappointment. The dear poet was obviously bored by a solitary tramp he took to the Grimsel. He got the blues in Interlaken when it rained (which was not surprising), he saw the Jungfrau from the hotel piazza, took a drive to the Lauterbrunnen Valley, and for the rest had no eyes for anything except that uninteresting girl, Mary Ashburton. The Swiss color of it all is distinctly thin.

The tales of high climbing are often thrilling as adventures, but are usually written by people who don't know how to write. And one who has not been bitten by the Alpinist mania can not help feeling that so much daring and energy might have been better expended than in breaking records and necks. It is really a species of insanity, this high-climbing passion. The world and its standards must be curiously out of focus

to its victims. They don't even pay any attention to scenery. Much of their climbing is done in the dark (between two A. M. and day-break) and they are always too pressed for time to stop to look at a view, their brief rests being scientifically calculated to restore their exhausted mind and muscles. Tyndall's books are extremely satisfactory in their way. He was an enthusiastic climber, without being a crank on the subject, had a scientific object in his trips and a considerable literary gift in describing them.

In general, I suppose it is true that where nature is so overpoweringly magnificent, art is dwarfed. Those who deeply feel the sublimity of it all hold their peace, and it is only the superficial who go home and slop over in printed twaddle. Of whose number the present Chronicler, thus self-confessedly, is one.



V

ON the epoch-making twenty-first day of July, Frater and Antonio tramped into our lives with knapsacks on their backs. We were not expecting them till the next day. Frater had written from somewhere up the Rhine that they would strike us about the 22nd. In a small parenthesis he had added that they *might* arrive by the 21st, but Frater's handwriting, being of the kind sacred to genius, I had not read this part. They had come up on the train from Interlaken, but of course we had not met them at the station, and no one could tell them where we lived. They wandered out the highroad to the Upper Glacier, and as it appeared quite evident we did not live on the ice-fall or the Wetterhorn cliffs, they turned back again. Some one told them our ch[^]let was on the mountain-side, and they started up a path, but met a peasant of whom they inquired again. This individual, after stroking his chin in silent rumination for some time, suddenly

shot out his forefinger in the direction of the Châlet Edelweiss and said "Dort!" with such convincing emphasis that they started down again across the fields. Thus it happened that our first glimpse of them was from a most unexpected direction, dropping out of the clouds as it were, or, to be accurate, climbing over one of the rare fences behind and above us. We were not sure of their identity at first, but the long legs and Cornell sweaters looked familiar, and Belle Soeur on the balcony ventured to wave a greeting which was enthusiastically returned.

We had been just about sitting down to tea, and I remember the singular inadequacy of the biscuit supply. Retiring to the kitchen I hastily sent off Anna to the village for more of everything for dinner, and it was well that I did so. I had been catering for a family of women and children so long that it took some days to get adjusted to the new circumstances, and we were perpetually running up against unexpected vacuums. Anna and Suzanne were as much distressed over the increased expenditures as if they had been personally footing

the bills and often cut us short on things that we really had plenty of just from their instinct of thriftiness.

We spent the four intervening days before the Mother's arrival in showing the boys the immediate neighborhood of Grindelwald. They were still a little quiet and shy, especially Antonio, and the process of transforming the Young Ladies' Boarding School into the Private Lunatic Asylum was not yet in visible operation.

The Mother had been entirely explicit as to the time of *her* arrival, and we walked down to Interlaken to meet her—Belle Soeur, Frater, Antonio, the Elder Babe and I. It was fourteen miles, and although it was down grade on a fine highroad, as we had to arrive at noon, we made an early start. Even so, we had to move at so lively a pace that the poor Babe with his short legs was kept on a trot. The Babe, however, is game, and he had no notion in the world of letting his grandmother arrive, unmet by him.

We lined up on the pier, dusty and thirsty, a bare five minutes ahead of the Lake Brienz

steamer ——. There it comes, puffing along, tourists thronging the decks! Where is she? Has she missed connections after all? If we have come all this way, and she isn't there— Ah! But she *is* there!

It is Antonio who has spied her. Wildly waving their hats, he and Frater lift up the strains of the Aguinaldo chorus:

“ Well, am I the boss or am I the show?
Am I the Governor General or a ho-o-bo?
Well, I'd like to know
Who's arunning this show!
Is it me or Emilio Aguinaldo?”

It was the first time Belle Soeur and I had heard this beautiful ditty, as we had been out of the country for a year or more. I think it must have been the first time the people on the wharf and steamer had heard it, too, for they looked at the stalwart performers in some surprise. But the Mother, who had spent the previous winter in Ithaca and helped the boys graduate the month before, was thoroughly accustomed to it and would doubtless have had

her feelings hurt if she had been greeted in any other way.

It was at this point that Frater committed the crime of *lèse majesté*, infanticide and arson all rolled into one. As the little steamer came up near the wharf he stepped across the foot or so of intervening water onto the lower deck with the sinful intention of greeting his mother two minutes sooner and carrying her satchel ashore. As his foot touched the deck, he was seized by two employees of the steamer in a state of excitement bordering on apoplexy. It was against the rules—against *all* the rules! No one was allowed on the steamer until all the passengers had come ashore by the gang-plank. "Oh, all right," said Frater good-naturedly, "I'll go back on the wharf if it worries you," and he started to step back. At that they became still more excited and held him tighter than ever. That also was against the rules. No one could go ashore except over the gang-plank. Also nobody could go ashore without giving up his ticket. Frater had no ticket, of course. What were they going to do about it? They did not know. They would see. Such

an emergency had never occurred before and there were no precedents. He was to wait till all the passengers had gone off, and then they would decide. All this was said in wild and very imperfectly comprehended German. There was no one around who spoke either French or English. Frater had joined the Mother, who waited with him for the passengers to go ashore, in some perturbation of spirit as to what was to be done to her son. Of course *nothing* was done. They walked ashore after the others. But the double line of uniformed employees through whom they passed were still barely able to repress their excitement, and their lowering brows would have struck terror to more timorous hearts. It was really as though some form of sacrilege had been committed, which they had decided to overlook in the interests of international comity. This was the only time we ever ran up against any of the Powers that Be in our wanderings, which, everything considered, was, I think, doing uncommonly well.

Frater and the Mother being safely restored to us, the late exciting incident became one

thing more to laugh about, and it was a very merry party who sat down to eat a picnic lunch in a secluded spot beside the Aar, and washed it down, subsequently, with Munich beer on draft at a near-by out-door restaurant, and caught the Grindelwald train, and were met at the station by Suzanne and the Younger Babe, running down the road hand in hand, a trifle late and greatly out of breath. The Mother, her baggage, and the Babes were piled into the Red-headed Man's carriage, and the rest of us marched behind singing the Aginaldo chorus. You see we were already beginning to thaw out. The Chronicler, no longer Senior Officer Present, felt that her extreme dignity could now be safely relaxed. Frater never *was* very shy, and Antonio was getting acquainted.

I think, at the risk of being considered a gossip, I shall have to tell how those two young men got to us, because it was so thoroughly characteristic. They hadn't either of them the money to spend on a European trip and had intended going to work at their respective professions of electrical and mechanical engineering as soon as they left college: but what I had

written of our location in Switzerland, the Mother's intention of spending the summer with us, and my entirely sincere, but also entirely unexpected suggestion that they should "come along too" set them to thinking and planning. They went down to New York, shipped on a cattle steamer and worked their way to Antwerp, walked across Belgium, came up the Rhine by boat (third class) and across by rail, also third class, from Basel. It had taken them about a month from New York, and they had seen a great many interesting things and places and had spent, as I remember, in the neighborhood of twenty dollars apiece!

VI

THE next week was devoted to introducing the Mother to her new surroundings. Our trips were limited by her tendency to get asthma when climbing and her inability to go anywhere near the edge of a precipice. Even when the path was several feet wide, as on the way to the Bäregg, the consciousness of a down-drop made her "dizzy in the knees." But there were plenty of beautiful walks to take within these limits. And her enthusiasm over the life and the land would have inspired the rest of us if we had not been already profoundly convinced of the blessedness of our lot.

We did one thing during this interval which I don't doubt would brand us as proper inmates for a lunatic asylum in the esteem of all the good respectable conventional people in the world. We spent a night on the Männlichen rolled up in steamer rugs watching the moon! Frater proposed it first to me. He and I have

a fondness for the Voices of the Night and have roughed it enough together to know we can sleep on the ground now and then without catching cold or feeling cross next morning. Belle Soeur and Antonio decided that they wanted to come too, and the noble spirit in which they bore the hardships of the occasion proved that they were qualified for admission to the Inner Circle.

We left in the afternoon, a little later than we should have done, for we were rather heavily loaded down with jackets and rugs and our prospective supper, and we were going all the way on foot this time by the direct Männlichen path, which we had only come down before, and it takes longer to go up than to come down! However, by pressing our steps to a slightly uncomfortable degree, we got to the summit *just* in time for sunset.

The scene of the next few minutes before the blood red had faded from the west, is one of the pictures indelibly burned into my memory. We stood there silently drinking it in, the boys for the first time, Belle Soeur and I loving it the more for having known it before.

For a while we watched the details blurring under the on-stealing twilight. Then hunger asserted itself, and we found a place below the summit, somewhat sheltered from the biting winds, where we perched ourselves on a ridge like crows and did ample justice to the contents of the paper parcels that the boys drew from their knapsacks.

Then it occurred to us that we had better use the small remaining aftermath of daylight to find some spots sheltered from the wind and level enough to sleep on. It seems absurd to say that on the whole mountain-side there was no place level enough to lie down on without slipping off. Yet it was very nearly true. The summit was swept by a blast of icy wind. The snow-drifts had disappeared since we were there a month before, but it was still very cold after the warming sun had retired for the night. On the Lauterbrunnen side there was just plain precipice, on the Grindelwald side a very steep descent divided between stones and grass. After much searching we established ourselves on a little shelf, barely wide enough for a person to lie on and sloping down just enough for one to

feel as if one was about to roll off. There was nothing to hold on to, so we dug our feet into the ground in a more or less futile attempt to secure what Frater described as a "toe-grip." There was a low growth of thistles in our neighborhood, too, which drove their prickles through our steamer rugs in a rather unpleasant fashion.

Soon the weather began to behave badly. Great banks of clouds came up out of the depths and covered the region where the moon was due to rise. The stars twinkled brightly overhead, but, barring a sudden change in cloud conditions, it was evident that no moon would be visible before the middle of the night. We hoped against hope so long as we could, keeping up a desultory talk and a little soft-pedal singing. Then each rolled up in his or her steamer rug, sought six feet of shelf room, and—eventually—fell asleep.

I was awakened by a very penetrating chill in the marrow of my spinal column, and opening my eyes, saw that there was a dim pale radiance over the universe that had been lacking when I went to sleep. I spoke very low.

Frater answered. We crawled out of our rugs and clambered up to the Männlichen summit.

I wonder if human eyes ever rested on a scene of more eerie loveliness? The moon struggled through and upward at last into the open sky, and the clouds broke away enough so that great masses of the Eiger-Mönch-Jungfrau group came into sight, looking even more stupendously huge from being partly hidden. The valleys seemed bottomless abysses—their floors four thousand feet below being utterly lost in blackness. And on the other side of the Lauterbrunnen Valley the billowy snow peaks, quite free from clouds, rolled away, all silver in the moonlight.

What a scene for some stupendous cosmic drama with spirits of the earth and air for actors! How did we dare to intrude on their vigils—mere prying interlopers that we were?

Every once in a while we had to stamp around violently and swing our arms to get warm. Otherwise we sat quite still and almost silent, feeling the way one ought to feel in church, but mostly doesn't.

At last the clouds caught up with the moon and hid it, and we stumbled sleepily down and found our rugs and sections of ledge again.

Just before sunrise it was Antonio who was awake and ready to accompany me to the summit. The others were sleeping the sleep of the just and declined to be aroused. It was wonderfully beautiful again—the rebirth of the hidden world, the mountains thrusting up their mighty shoulders above the foamy cloud-sea that filled the valleys into the faint pink glow which was gone almost as soon as seen. As soon as the glamour of the sunrise had faded we knew that we were ravenously hungry, and shaking the sleepers into a similar conviction, we started for the Männlichen Inn and hot coffee and rolls and honey.

I do not know where the people at the Inn supposed we had dropped from at that hour. No questions were asked and no information volunteered. The breakfast was excellent and we set out for home much refreshed. Little by little, as we walked, our cramped muscles limbered and our chilled blood warmed—warmed too much, in fact, before we reached

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Mönch and Jungfrau from the Männlichen

the Châlet at midday with those ton-a-piece steamer rugs over our shoulders.

The moon had not done all we had expected of it. But we felt it was proved that the quartette was of the "right stuff" and could safely venture on a fortnight's pedestrian trip.



VII

THE morning we started out on our first memorable pedestrian tour, the Mother and the Elder Babe accompanied us to where the Grosse Scheidegg path turns off from the highroad, Suzanne, Anna and the Younger Babe having previously waved us out of sight from the balcony of the Châlet.

I felt some qualms of prospective home-sickness as I left them and a twinge of conscience lest one of the Babes might get sick or the Mother have trouble with the housekeeping, but by the time we had dropped over on the other side of the Scheidegg ridge and could no longer see the red roof of our Châlet, I had lost my misgivings and began to enjoy my vacation. I had not felt so completely free from the harness for Heaven knows how long, and as I walked along I could feel the years sliding off of me and hear them thud as they struck the ground. I think I must have halted somewhere about the sixteen-year-old point. That's the way I felt, at least. And it is an interest-

ing fact that I was addressed uniformly as Fraülein or Mademoiselle by strangers all the rest of the season. The short skirt may have had something to do with it, but the Swiss are entirely used to even elderly ladies in short dresses.

Perhaps our outfit may be of some interest. My own skirt and jacket were of corduroy, and I don't think the material could be improved upon. Nothing else will stand so much sun and rain and dust and mud and still look decent. With this, downward, gaiters of the same and heavy-soled hob-nailed boots. Upward, a dark linen shirt waist and a feather-weight Swiss straw hat, with a brim broad enough to protect from the sun. One should have the trimmings of one's hat of a warranted-fast color. I did not and suffered accordingly. The hat I started out with was trimmed with a garland of red poppies, and the effect of the first heavy rain was fearful and wonderful to behold. The next was trimmed with ribbon and suffered almost as badly. The third was adorned with a Scotch plaid that really rose superior to weather.

The boys made no special preparation for the trip except to have the soles of their boots well studded with nails and to invest each in a soft felt Swiss hat, warranted to stand any weather, and to stick fast in any wind. Each of us had strapped over the shoulders a light canvas *Rückensack*, containing the absolutely essential (reduced to the last irreducible minimum) for a week. We had planned to have clean clothes meet us by mail at Zermatt at the end of that time. The Swiss mailing arrangements are ideal, and one can send a good-sized hamper anywhere for a few cents. In the same manner we got rid of our soiled clothes by mailing them home. Belle Soeur and I carried alpenstocks, having found them a real help in climbing steep paths and even more so in coming down. The boys despised them as tourist-like and amateurish and would have nothing to do with them. When we took off our jackets we put them through the straps across our shoulders so that our hands (barring the friendly alpenstocks) were always free. We didn't bother with umbrellas or raincoats, none of us being liable to colds.

We ate our luncheon soon after we dropped over the Scheidegg into the Rosenlauri Valley. The character of the landscape had changed already. We sat on a slope adorned by a group of Christmas trees and a highly decorative herd of cattle and saw our old friend the Wetterhorn in an entirely unfamiliar shape and looked with interest at the queer rock wings of the Engelhörner.

Having consumed our last reminder of Home and Mother, we pushed on, presently finding ourselves racing for the Rosenlauri hotel against up-piling clouds that obviously held rain. The clouds beat, but we got there in time to save ourselves from an absolute drenching and sat in a summer-house for some time, drinking a form of fizzy water which had evidently (from its price) been diluted with liquid gold.

If a baptism of fire is the critical moment in the life of a young soldier, I take it that the baptism of rain is the touchstone for the inexperienced pedestrian. If you preserve the Smile-that-won't-come-off when your shoes are soaked through and the water goes chunk-

chunk inside of them, and the mud clings to the outside, and the rain trickles down your neck—inside the collar, and your wet skirts flap about your ankles (if you're a man you're spared *that*), and the thick clouds shut out all the mountains you came to see,—why then you've won your spurs.

When the serious part of the rain was over and we felt that we could afford no more gold-flavored Apollinaris and had no other excuse for lingering, we continued down that water-logged valley. Frater and I kept up our spirits by singing everything we knew, from Suwannee River to Anheuser Busch, but it really wasn't fair, because Antonio has a musical ear and must have suffered a lot. We saw some waterfalls, but were too wet ourselves to be much cheered by them.

We did get some amusement, though, out of a solitary French pedestrian who asked us if we had encountered any rain. The question was so absurdly superfluous in view of the rain-soaked condition of ourselves and the whole world, that we made him repeat it several times before we gave him a grave and final affirma-

tive. I think he felt lonely and thought he would like to join our party, but we choked off his little attempts at conversation and shook him without compunction. One has to draw the line *somewhere*, and we drew it at making acquaintances with any one except the native peasants, and *they* usually drew the line on *us!*

Emerging into the Meiringen Valley into which the Rosenlauh opens, we quickly decided against Meiringen as too large and sophisticated a place to be interesting, and, moreover, several miles out of our way. There was a village almost straight in front of us which rejoiced in two names, Innertkirchen and Imhof. This was unfortunate, as whatever native we asked the road of always seemed to know it only by the other name. It proved an elusive place. We took the wrong turn several times, and it was beginning to get dark, and it was a long time since lunch, and this was our first night as tramps.

We were not made happier by catching up with the principal inn at last and finding it full. The other one, on the extreme edge of the village, seemed hardly more promising at first,

for the landlady said she had just two rooms left, one with one bed and the other with three. However, a little persuasion reminded her that there was another little single room in the third story, if one of the young gentlemen didn't mind. We were not disposed to be critical. They matched pennies for it, and Antonio was relegated to the loft.

This inn, with the all-but-universal name of Alpenrose, proved a good specimen of the plain, clean, honest and inexpensive Swiss type. We encountered for the first time a system of two-priced *table d'hôte*, of which we were given our choice, the difference being not in the quality of the food, but in the number of courses. Thus: Will you have soup and one kind of meat with vegetables, followed by fruit, at one franc fifty, or soup, two kinds of meat with vegetables, and salad before the fruit, at two fifty? We chose the cheaper and had plenty, in spite of our fine appetites. Belle Soeur and I were also indulging in one-franc-fifty lodgings for the first time. The boys knew all about them from their experience between Antwerp and Grindelwald.

The dining-room had various Schützenfest prizes hung up around the walls, and we had our ideas of these functions broadened and our appreciation of our own Herr Secundärlehrer's *first* prize achievement quickened, when we found that one was labeled the fifty-seventh and another the *eighty-first* prize!

When we emerged on the dusky balcony after dinner, two mysterious figures were sitting there whom we took to be nuns in some form of religious habit. This theory was shaken when we observed a lighted pipe in the mouth of one, and closer scrutiny developed a moustache on the upper lip of the other. We finally learned from the hotel register that they were German students on a pedestrian trip, the nun-like effect being given by voluminous cloaks with peaked hoods drawn over their heads. They must have been joyous things to carry on a walking trip—worse than the steamer rugs we dragged up the Männlichen!

To our surprise, as soon as it was dark, bonfires began to break forth from surrounding mountain-tops. We asked if this illumination was the regular thing in the Meringen Valley

and learned that the first of August is the Swiss form of Fourth of July and that they were celebrating the oath of the Eidgenossen on the heights of Rütli. They were doing the same thing in Grindelwald and indeed all over the republic.

We wandered into the village to see if any other form of celebration was going on, but it was all as quiet as a Presbyterian Sunday. The only noisy thing we could find was the "Infant Aar" brawling foamily down under a covered wooden bridge. We hung over its parapets for some time, listening to the racket it made and watching the blazing fires along the mountain-tops, while Belle Soeur and I tried to impart such knowledge as we had been able to gather concerning the worthy representatives of the Forest Cantons, Schwyz, Uri, and Unterwalden, who bound themselves by oath somewhere back in the twelve hundreds, to drive out the Austrians and make their country free. Frater and Antonio did not mind being *told*, in small doses, but after a brief glance at our improving assortment of Swiss histories, they had politely and firmly declined to *read* them.

VIII

OUR second day's tramp was perhaps the severest test we met of temper and endurance. We had purposely planned for an easy day—about fourteen miles by excellent highroad (a diligence route) to the Grimsel Hospice. We had four thousand feet to climb, but distributed over fourteen miles of carefully graded road, this was not very terrifying. It was a test only because we had not yet shaken down into the habit of continuous tramping. At Grindelwald, after an all-day's walk, we always rested the next day. So we got up feeling loggy and lazy, muscles still tired and feet a bit sore. And the situation was made worse by the weather. We had a series of showers to contend against with clouds between whiles.

The rain is the worst thing about Switzerland. Of course if there was not so much of it, the valleys and lower slopes would not be so beautifully green. And sometimes there are several weeks of unbroken sunshine when one

feels promoted to Heaven ahead of time. But, on the other hand, one has sometimes a straight fortnight of rain, unspeakably depressing, roads afloat with mud and all the mountains shut out from view. Even the on-and-off showers are trying and apt to trail a skyful of clouds before and after them.

On leaving Imhof we invested in bread, cheese, and chocolate for luncheon (the only articles of food the village store afforded) and started lazily up the Hasli valley. Everybody passed us, but we didn't care. We were not making records and had plenty of time. It is a narrow valley, pretty rather than imposing, with the Infant Aar running down the bottom of it and the road occupying a ledge just above. Baedeker calls it the Infant Aar. It is so seldom that matter-of-fact condenser of useful information indulges in descriptive epithets that his occasional poetic flights always filled us with joy, and none of us, I am sure, will ever think of the tempestuous mountain torrent we followed all that day upwards towards its cradle, except as the Infant Aar.

We took refuge during one shower under a

ledge of rock and were lucky enough to strike a roadside refreshment house for another, where we regaled ourselves with hot milk—a surprisingly restful and thirst-quenching beverage when one is “on the road,” and, in Switzerland, almost invariably good.

We discovered a lovely bosky spot for our luncheon, where the valley floor spread out a bit and the Infant split itself into streamlets, forming little wooded, ferny, rocky islets. A profusion of huckleberries were growing in this sequestered region, and we found they made an excellent dessert (though somewhat soured by the rain) after our dry and not too substantial luncheon.

It was here that we lost Antonio. He wandered off with his camera while we were resting after luncheon and did not come back. We called him and hunted for him till Frater said he must have gone on ahead and would doubtless be waiting for us at the next turn of the road. He knew Antonio better than the rest of us did, and claimed that this would be a highly characteristic procedure—that it would never occur to him we did not know where he

was. So we went on with rather forced cheerfulness. I confess to feeling uneasy. The Aar was a lusty and distinctly rapid Infant, and if, in jumping across to one of those islets to take a picture, he had lost his footing?— Frater jeered at my forebodings and brazenly took a photograph of our late picnic grounds, labeling it "last place where Antonio was seen alive" and saying I could send it to his mother. But Antonio was not at the first turn of the road nor the next, nor the next, and we sat down to take counsel.

We were engaged in a mournfully jocular manner in composing a letter to his family to announce his mysterious disappearance, when we heard a delightfully unghostlike halloa from the road behind us, and presently the strayed lamb came into sight. He had actually fallen asleep among the huckleberry bushes which had concealed him from our view, and had not heard us call him, but having found the note we left among the cheese rinds (we always left notes for each other when separated) he had started along at a rapid gait to overtake us—and he would never have *dreamed* of such

a thing as going ahead without telling us. . . . It's all well that ends well, and the reunited family proceeded happily.

The Handegg Falls were the chief incident of the afternoon. A person familiar with Niagara and Yosemite is not going to burst his heart with rapture over any of the Swiss waterfalls. Some are beautiful, some are wild, but all are on a small scale.

The Handegg, though, is among the most satisfactory. The Infant Aar furnishes a respectable volume of water and takes a plunge here of two hundred and forty feet. Moreover, there is an admirable place to view it from, an overhanging ledge on a level with the top of the falls. And the rainbow in the spray is charming.

Along about sunset, after we had risen above timber line, we came upon a tiny road-house kept by an old man and his daughter. Here, on a little table just outside the door we decided to take our supper of what the house afforded—hot milk, bread and soft-boiled eggs. We absorbed large quantities of this simple but nourishing fare, moved our chairs inside when

the rain began, and tried to persuade our hosts to put us up for the night. They had absolutely no sleeping accommodations, however, except for themselves, so perforce, when the rain let up, we continued along the chilly, desolate and rapidly darkening road to the Grimsel Hospice.

That is surely one of the barrenest spots on God's earth. There is a bowl-shaped hollow full of stones. There is a lake at the bottom, when we first saw it, inky black. There is a one-story building whose stone walls, some three feet thick, were built to withstand winter storms. This used to be a hospice kept for travelers by monks like the famous one of St. Bernard, but now it is a hotel run for profit and patronized by Alpinists and passing tourists. The snow peaks rise up all around the bowl, and Finsteraarhorn, the highest mountain of the Oberland, dwarfed from Grindelwald by nearer giants, here shows up more nearly in its true proportions. But Finsteraarhorn is really a climber's peak, and we were not to know it intimately till much later.

Our three-franc-apiece sleeping accommoda-



Grimsel Hospice

1871

tions seemed quite sophisticated after the one-fifty lodgings of the night before, and the reading-room in which we gathered to discuss maps and plans for the morrow, quite a model of luxury. We wrote some letters, too, not knowing when we should have so good a chance again. It was quite a cosmopolitan bunch of envelopes we put into the mail-box—one for the Mother in Grindelwald, of course, one to the Husband in the Philippines, two or three addressed to the United States, and one to Antonio's parents in Brazil.

Have I mentioned that Antonio is a Brazilian? He is not, however, the undiluted article. He had an English grandfather who transmitted to his descendant quite a number of easily recognizable Anglo-Saxon traits.

In case he should take exception to my manner of stating this, let me tell him a little parable. One summer when I was in Korea I met a native woman at the home of a missionary. We were not able to talk with each other except through our interpreter, but we had quite a friendly time smiling, and after she had left, the missionary said to me, "She thinks you are

perfectly charming. She says if it wasn't for the clothes, you would look exactly like a Korean." Now, I had never been conscious of any special yearning to look like a Korean, but I considered the source of the remark and decided it was one of the most thoroughgoing compliments I had ever received!

The gods were good to us next day. There was not a cloud in the sky and the air was like champagne. Our muscles had become disciplined, our languor was shaken off. After an excellent breakfast of coffee, rolls and honey, we started out gayly from the grim stone hospice that had lodged us, past the twin lakes, blue as sapphires in the bottom of a cold gray cup, and up the steep footpath that cuts off the long loops of the diligence road.

The summit of the pass, just a little over seven thousand feet high, was soon reached, and we paused to get our bearings and enjoy the view. We were on the boundary between Canton Berne and the Valais, between Protestant and Catholic Switzerland. But the difference between the two is more than theological. Berne, founded by a prince to stand for free-

dom, proud and prosperous from the start, one of the first to join the Forest Cantons in their Confederation, typifies all that is sturdy and successful in Switzerland. Poor Valais, on the other hand, crushed under the heel of Savoie and harassed by petty local lordlings, passed through centuries of civil war and uprisings in the struggle for liberty, and when at last snatched from her oppressors and joined to the Swiss Bund, it was in the poor-relation capacity of "subject canton." It is only in recent years that this humiliation has been removed. The effects still show. All we saw of Valais seemed poorer, dirtier, less intelligent and enterprising than the canton we had left.

These peculiarities were not, however, visible from the top of the pass. We gazed first of all at the huge Rhone glacier, from which the river takes its rise—vast, dirty, ungainly, not to be compared in picturesqueness with our Grindelwald glaciers. We saw the river meandering away down the valley, the chains of snow mountains on the other side, and the zigzag road from the opposite bank of the glacier over the Furka Pass, which we were to travel later in

the season. Near at hand was the somber little Lake of the Dead, so called from the number of bodies thrown into it after the fight between the Austrians and French in 1799.

With an affectionate backward glance at Finsteraarhorn and all the other Bernese snow peaks we were leaving, we plunged down the steep incline into the Rhone valley. The hotel is at the juncture of three great diligence routes—those of the Furka, the Grimsel, and the Rhone valley. We found ourselves in a whirl of arriving and departing tourists and had a sophisticated lunch in their midst, then shook the dust of Philistia from our feet and resumed our staffs and knapsacks. We had been up to the foot of the glacier before luncheon, scorned its bareness and dirt and haughtily declined the invitations of the ice-grotto man, and we were now free to continue our way down the valley.

A few turns of the road restored us to our lost Arcadia. The first few miles of the road led through a wild and picturesque region, with woods and ravines, and the Infant Rhone brawling as loudly as the Infant Aar had done the day before. But this infant was pursuing a

steep-grade downward path, and before long we found ourselves in a flat open valley, full of cultivated fields and villages, distinctly warm in the mid-afternoon sunshine and growing more so. The infant had become quiet to the verge of placidity. It might almost have been a canal. The mountain ridges along each side of the valley were, comparatively speaking, tame. We had intended keeping on down the valley to Brieg, where the railroad begins, but we began to chafe at the thought of thirty-one miles of this.

The village of Oberwald impressed itself on my memory for several things. First, for the turnip-shaped, almost Mohammedan-looking spire on its church, which we found to be typical of this end of the valley. Next for the extreme difficulty with which we purchased the simple substance of our supper, which we intended to take *al fresco* an hour or so later. There seemed to be no provision stores at all. After looking all around we made inquiries and were directed to a house which seemed to be merely a dwelling. No one was in sight, nor was there anything to indicate mercantile pursuits. We

opened the door and found ourselves in an ill-lighted, ill-kept hallway. The nearest door, on investigation, proved to open into an almost dark room, where a deaf old woman rather unwillingly sold us some hard bread and a big slice of cheese.

The third thing for which, not only I, but all of us, remember Oberwald was the liter of white wine purchased there. We were very, very thirsty by now, and of course one cannot drink water in any of these places without serious risk. The little diligence refreshment place had no mineral waters, and we had left the region of milk. So we took white wine—just a liter—one franc's worth—between four of us. It doesn't sound very desperate. It was thin and sour and cool and thirst-quenching. We each drank our glass down rapidly and continued our walk.

Soon I began to feel strange sensations—a sort of lightness in the head and far-awayness of the landscape, a severing of connections with my feet and uncertainty as to whether they would continue to walk or in what direction. We compared notes. The others were feeling

similar symptoms—some more, some less. It was rather absurd and distinctly mortifying. We wondered if we “showed it.” Fortunately we were not likely to meet anyone who would be interested. We adjured each other to “keep going” and “walk it off.” I shall never forget the agonized tone of Antonio’s voice as he begged, “Give me a hunk of that cheese—*quick!*—Don’t stop—keep moving. Maybe it won’t be so bad when my stomach isn’t empty.” Even at the time, though, we were aware of the humorous aspect presented by four individuals of irreproachable antecedents, some of whom were feeling the effects of alcohol for the first time in their lives, tearing at a mad pace down the Rhone valley, in constant terror of their own legs, and convinced that if they paused for a moment they would fall into a stupor by the wayside!

The treatment (whether usual or not, I don’t pretend to know) proved efficacious, and we gradually returned to our normal condition. The highroad presenting no attractive site for supper, we cut across a field or so to the river and sat down under a fringe of trees on its

bank. Here, as soon as the bread and cheese were disposed of, we got out Baedeker and the maps and held a council. It was soon decided to abandon the uninteresting Rhone valley, take a dip into Italy, and arrive at Brieg by two sides of the triangle instead of one. It would require two extra days, but we were no slaves to a schedule. We would go over the little-traveled Gries Pass, see the Tosa falls, travel down the Val Formazza to its joining with the Simplon road, then back by that famous pass into Switzerland.

I don't know that I ever experienced the gypsy feeling more deliciously than during that half-hour while, stretched out on the grass by the babbling Infant Rhone, we discussed this impromptu excursion into another country which no one but the Chronicler had ever visited before! What light-hearted, irresponsible vagabonds we were!

The lengthening shadows warned us to be up and moving toward Ulrichen, which was at once the first village where we could obtain shelter for the night and the nearest to the Gries Pass.

Here it seemed as if our good luck was about to desert us, for the solitary inn was full to overflowing, and we were told we must go on to the next village. The landlady looked amiable, though, and we tried the effect of persuasion. We were tired—very tired. We had been walking since early morning. And it was already dark. Perhaps we would find no room at Geschenen and would have to go all the way to Münster. We were going over the Gries the following day—a long day's walk at best, and the added distance back from Münster, or even Geschenen, would be a real hardship. Surely there was *some* way? We would be content with the simplest accommodations. Wasn't there someone in the village who would rent us two rooms for the night, if they absolutely could make no place for us at the hotel? Finally, the good woman weakened. We could come in and sit down and she would find us *something, somewhere*. In the meantime did we wish any refreshments? Bent on abstemiousness, we ordered hot milk—but plenty of it!

Along about half-past nine, when the other guests had all been tucked away out of sight,

and we were nearly dropping asleep in our chairs, the landlady and two maid servants bearing candles came to conduct us to our lodgings. I should hate to have to find that place again. It seemed miles away and through impenetrable shadows. We found the man and woman of the house sitting up with a candle to greet us and apologize for the poorness of the accommodations. Then we picked our way up a rickety outside staircase and were ushered into the two rooms which were to be ours. We had been told there was only one bed in each room, but that they were large ones, *very* large, and we had visions of four-posters. We found just the ordinary single bed. However, it was quite too late to go elsewhere, and we were quite too tired. We said we'd manage somehow, and our guides withdrew.

The boys politely took the smaller room, and I understand they tossed pennies to see who should sleep on the floor. The apartment assigned to Belle Soeur and me was quite spacious and immaculately clean. Sleepy as we were, we took time to look at the numerous family photographs on the wall and to puzzle over

a square soap-stone structure built into the side of the room, carved with names, dates and symbols. In size and shape it looked painfully like a sarcophagus. The names and dates and crosses on it added to the sepulchral effect. Could it be the custom of the Valais to keep departed relatives right on in the house where they had lived? The idea was so novel that we almost hoped it was so. In the morning, however, it proved to be nothing more exciting than a stove. Our landlady showed us the opening in the hall through which fuel was introduced into its interior. I don't know what became of the smoke.

Our only other discovery before we lost ourselves in sleep was the date when the house was built, 1787, carved in a great rafter over our heads.

Belle Soeur and I tried to reduce our bulk by half and share the single bed, but before long she slipped off the edge without waking me and betook herself with the crocheted coverlet to the sofa.

IX

WE were called in the gray dawn, and I remember the chill of the bathing water. This proved to be the most economical lodging any of us had ever had, for the charge was a franc and a half for each *bed*, so each individual share was fifteen cents!

We took breakfast at the hotel and had them put up a lunch for us, but nearly broke their hearts by declining to take a guide or even a porter. The faithful Baedeker had said "guide unnecessary in fine weather" (which it was), and we had no notion of putting ourselves in bondage to an attendant unless it was absolutely unavoidable.

After we turned aside from the Rhone valley, laid out like a patchwork quilt in cultivated fields, we saw no human being or habitation or trace of man's labor, save an empty cow-hut or so and the path we were following, till late in the afternoon. The Eginenbach, whose course we were following, drained as wild and desolate a valley as could be imagined. It seemed

to have been a great place for landslides, and every once in a while we had to pick our way over masses of fallen rock and débris. We felt like discoverers and rejoiced accordingly.

After some hours' walking we found ourselves at the end of the valley and simultaneously lost every trace of our path. Now this was too much of a good thing, and our rejoicing was suspended.

The end of the valley was closed by a wall of rock about fifteen hundred feet high, which it was our business to surmount. On top of it was the Gries Glacier, which we were to cross, and which spilled over into our valley in an ice-fall from the base of which issued the Eginenbach. Somewhere there was a path, which at need a pack-horse could follow. But where on earth did it start from?

The land between us and the foot of the rock wall was a steep meadow covered with boulders and broken cliff-fragments. It had been subjected to some sort of seismic disturbance, leaving fissures here and there, some of them of great depth and quite too wide to jump. We lost a lot of time retracing our

steps and hunting for a way around, when we found one of these things in front of us. We understood now why Baedeker considered a guide advisable in foggy weather.

At last we all agreed that we had located the path about halfway up the wall where it crossed some snow. But how to get to it? Antonio announced his intention of making a bee-line scramble for that point, and, if necessary, following the path down to show us the beginning of it. The rest of us made a detour to the left (having already pretty well canvassed the possibilities to the right as far as the ice-fall), and were rewarded by finding the end of a really, truly, unmistakable bridle-path, hacked out of the rock in ledges and built up with masonry, which we followed steeply upward. Belle Soeur got a touch of the mountain sickness and had to lie down for a while. And I nearly slid into perdition when we crossed the hard-frozen snow gully, because I had trodden my heels over and the nails had worn smooth and my alpenstock had no iron point! Antonio was waiting for us on the other bank, and we continued upward together.

Finally we reached the top and saw before us the flat Eis-Meer which we were to cross. We beheld it with interest not untinged with emotion. For although we had been living in daily association with glaciers at Grindelwald, we had never set foot on one, and this was not only to be our maiden glacier-crossing, but we were to do it quite, quite alone!

In the meantime we sat down in a row on the path, our backs against the rock and our feet protruding out into space and ate the hard-boiled eggs and sandwiches that had been put up for us at Ulrichen. We were not as hardened to precipices then as we later became, and I remember the shiver with which I tossed eggshells over the edge and felt as if I needed to hold on to keep from going with them.

Some rising clouds warned us to finish our meal and start on, for we could not afford to risk being caught by a fog on the Eis-Meer. The route was indicated by poles stuck up in the ice, but some were fallen, and even when standing they were not near enough together to be visible in thick weather.

It was very thrilling when we had clambered

over the pile of débris at the edge and found ourselves on the flat, frozen slush of the Eis-Meer. We did not know what unfamiliar dangers might be lying in wait for us, but if they were there, we did not encounter them. There was no special beauty or grandeur in this view of a glacier. The ice had a yellowish, muddy look, and was perfectly flat. The midday sun was melting its surface, and countless little streamlets of water were running in all directions among the corrugations left by last night's freeze. Here and there a stream would disappear suddenly into a fissure or an air-hole. These seemed to be of indefinite depth, but none which we saw that day were large enough to be a menace to life.

The threat of the clouds was not fulfilled, and we reached the other side of the glacier in half an hour or less without accident. Just beyond was the boundary between Switzerland and Italy, but there was not even a stone to mark it. Strange to say, we encountered no custom house on this route either here or later.

Presently we began to descend a path so steep that it was hard to keep one's balance. Vege-

tation gradually reappeared, then some signs of humanity, an empty cow-hut or so, and finally, on a slope below us, we saw a group of men and women cutting and binding grass. And oh, the joyful Italianness of it! All the women had bright-colored kerchiefs on their heads and one wore a brilliant red skirt.

It was almost sunset when we reached the first village, Morasco, where, to our surprise, we found the inhabitants still speaking German. We asked for milk, and a statuesque girl brought us big bowls of it, warm from the cows, which we drank with great gusto, sitting flat on the little grass-plot around which were grouped the dirty stone huts which formed the village. In the next village they spoke Italian only. My question as to the road, put first in German, was not understood until turned into Italian. Think of the isolation of that handful of villagers in Morasco, shut off by the mountains from the people of Valais, whose descendants they doubtless are, and by the even more impassable language barrier from their neighbors in the valley!

We quickened our steps and reached the hotel

at the Tosa Falls just before dark. Baedeker allows six and a half hours' walk from Ulrichen to the Falls, but we had consumed nearly double the time. Of course he allows for no stops, and we had stopped for luncheon and for milk, for Belle Soeur's mountain sickness, and for a number of photographs and five-minute rests, and we had lost about an hour hunting for our path at the head of the Eginen valley; but these things or others like them have always to be counted on, and we found it well, as a general rule, to allow from one and a half to twice the time given by Baedeker.

The Tosa Falls were disappointing. Baedeker's double star and phrase "perhaps the grandest among the Alps" had raised our hopes too high. I doubt if any European waterfalls can look really impressive to an American who has seen his own country. They were at their best that evening after dinner when we wandered down the path a little way below the hotel and looked across and partly up at them, magnified in the dim light. There is a drop of four hundred and seventy feet, over a broad, bare, unpicturesque rock ledge.

The volume of water is respectable, but nothing more. I imagine we must have seen the river unusually full, for the upper valley was flooded to the extent of making walking difficult when we passed down.

We had our little growl about the hotel here, too, which charged more than its tariff given in Baedeker and showed a disposition, encountered for the first time on our trip, to run in extras on the bill. This might be considered a necessary accompaniment, however, of being in Italy. It was part of the "local color."

The extent to which we had grown young through the simplicity of our life may be inferred from the character of our amusements. I can hardly realize now that I was one of four who found entertainment in the infantile game of mystifying our fellow-boarders across the dinner-table that evening by linguistic gymnastics! They were a row of unprepossessing Italians of the small-commercial-traveler type. We spoke French mostly, German a good deal, Spanish some and English a very little, while Antonio occasionally burst into Portuguese. Italian was the one thing we kept clear of, so

they discussed us freely in it. They placed all our languages except the Portuguese, but what *we* were they could not make out. It especially worried the nervous little old man who subsequently created some excitement by squeezing the waitress' hand as she passed him. Finally the silent fat man, who had taken no part in the discussion, stopped guzzling his food long enough to emit, above his tucked-in napkin, the following oracular statement, "They are North 'Americans." Evidently the others accepted this as settling the matter, and we could not but admire his perspicacity, although he had missed on Antonio.

X

THE following day, during which we progressed down the Val Formazza to its juncture with the Simplon road at Crevola and up that road as far as Iselle, has a color in my memory all its own. Italy went to our heads. Antonio reverted to type. All the Latin in him came to the surface. Up to now, under the influence of our society and his English grandfather, he had been the most quiet and reserved of us all. Now he suddenly warmed up and blossomed out in shrugs and gesticulations, in song and laughter. We all caught the contagion more or less. Our feet had wings down that lovely wooded valley, and we laughed at nothing for the pure joy of living. We exchanged greetings with all the cheerful, friendly peasants whom we met, so different from the unexpansive Swiss variety. If we did not actually see Pan and the mænads, I am sure they were not far away. The sky above us was different from the Swiss sky—warmer and brighter somehow.

The vegetation was richer and more luxuriant. Our northern blood bubbled and effervesced under the enchanted touch of Italy. And in Antonio the South claimed her own again.

Even the discomfort of my shoes could not seriously dampen my enjoyment. Those trodden-over heels had become nearly unbearable; but when I caught one between two rocks and tore it off, the resulting limp was worse. It was not till the next morning that Frater evolved the brilliant thought of prying off the other heel to match, which was a great relief.

Feet and shoes are always a problem on a long pedestrian trip. A shoe too tight is misery, but one too large, which allows the foot to rub and chafe, is almost as bad. Any unhardened foot is sure to develop blisters after two or three days' walking. These rub and break and leave the flesh raw. It isn't pleasant, but in the high altitudes, where there are no bacteria, everything heals rapidly, and if one resolutely says nothing about it and keeps on walking, it isn't so bad as it sounds. We were all in the same fix by this time. I know now that I bestowed more sympathy than was

absolutely necessary on the "blistered and bleeding feet" of Washington's army, over which I used to shed shuddering tears as a little girl.

At San Rocco, where we lunched, we found there was still more than fifteen miles between us and Crevola. So, as we had now struck the carriage road and the daily diligence was just about due, we decided to treat ourselves to a ride.

It was a sort of uncovered omnibus, and proved to have one vacant place too few for us, so Antonio sat on the steps. The driver must surely have been exercising his calling for the first time, for he did strange and fearful things all the way. The worst was when he evolved the wonderful thought of improvising a brake by putting a piece of stout cord-wood through the spokes of the two rear wheels. Of course *something* had to give way. The spokes cracked ominously and the wood, catching in one of the carriage springs as the wheel revolved, promptly broke it and tilted that side of the 'bus down most unpleasantly. All the passengers, except the priest and ourselves, objur-

gated the driver in fluent Italian, and the priest gave him some serious advice. So did Frater and Antonio, but I think theirs was in English. After this the driver became very sulky and took out his bad temper in language addressed to the poor horses, who really were not to blame. We were in momentary expectation of our vehicle's falling to pieces, but it providentially held together while we were in it. I am sure, though, that the catastrophe must have occurred soon after we dismounted.

We sang most of the way (heaven save the mark!) partly to distract our minds from the supposed impending disaster, and partly because the priest enjoyed it so much. He kept his breviary open and his eyes fixed on it, but seldom turned a page and smiled broadly when the choruses grew joyous. He had a good face, that priest, and it was nice to see the way everybody greeted him with "*Buon' giorno, Riverenza*" and "*Addio, Riverenza,*" on entering and leaving the stage.

Having reached Crevola, where the roads join, about four o'clock, perfectly fresh after

our long drive, we decided to walk seven miles up the Simplon to Iselle before stopping for the night. The first part of the road was extremely pretty. There was a deep rocky gorge with a river at the bottom, feathery-leaved trees, and pale blue mountains, just like a landscape by Salvator Rosa. But when we came near Iselle, where the Italian entrance to the tunnel is located, the two sides of the road began to close up with shanties and rookeries. We met some thousands of workmen returning home after their day's labor in the tunnel. Everything swarmed, reeked and crawled, and we began to wonder if we could possibly find a place to sleep in. We purchased a large watermelon, and ate it sitting on a pile of stones in a wilderness of cranes and derricks, comforting ourselves with the reflection that at least the inside of it must be uncontaminated!

We kept looking for the one hostelry mentioned by Baedeker, which proved to be at the extreme end of the long-drawn-out town. Our hearts sank as we saw it, for it was of an unspeakable griminess. Evidently it had become a workman's boarding-house, pure and simple.

We entered, with the faint hope of finding it better inside than out, but it wasn't, and we were really relieved to learn that they had no room for us. We retraced our steps to the other hotel they told us about. It was a blaze of light. A promiscuous crowd of men were drinking and smoking on the front balcony, and a woman was banging concert-hall airs out of an atrocious piano inside. The air of dirt and slovenliness was inexpressible, and we were by no means sure the place was even technically respectable. The proprietor, who looked like a brigand, if ever I saw one, offered us one double room in the hotel and another across the street. Belle Soeur and I were not particularly timid, but we agreed that nothing conceivable would tempt us to spend the night in that hole, with our natural protectors in another building. A young German tourist, a pedestrian like ourselves, understanding our predicament, offered to share his room with Frater and Antonio, so as to keep the party under one roof. We thanked him and held his offer in reserve, but resolved to try first the one other inn. which we had noticed in passing.

It proved to be kept by a gruff old German-speaking Swiss, and was, though plain, quite reasonably clean inside and of a reassuring respectability. The price—four francs apiece for lodging—struck us as high in view of the accommodations, and we said so. The reply was surprising. “If you had come to me first, it would have been less. But you visited every hotel in town and came to me as a last resort. I saw you when you passed.” The joyous shout of laughter with which we greeted this explanation seemed rather to nonplus the old man. But we made no further protest. His frankness was worth the money.

The balcony in front of our rooms overhung the noisiest river I ever heard, while our windows looked out on the main street, which was filled till midnight with an equally noisy stream of people; but it would have taken more than noise to keep us awake, now that we had clean sheets and felt safe.

We got away from unprepossessing Iselle as soon as possible the next morning. Although we had enjoyed our detour into Italy, I think all of us experienced a sense of relief when we

passed the custom house a couple of miles up the road and found ourselves once more in clean, honest Switzerland.

This was an easy day for us, walking somewhat lazily up the easy grade of the excellent post-road which Napoleon was good enough to build for us. It was rather warm and we spent the entire day covering fifteen miles lengthwise and forty-four hundred feet of ascent.

The Simplon road has a great reputation for scenery, and doubtless it would be imposing if one came to it from the plains. But to us who had been living in the heart of the Oberland and who were fresh from that wild climb over the Gries Pass, it was disappointingly tame and sophisticated.

A road-house which we passed had a stone tablet cut into the wall, announcing that at this spot Napoleon stopped and drank a glass of milk. So we did the same (being probably thirstier than he) and paid several prices for the association's sake.

We ate our luncheon under the shade of a big tree on a velvety meadow running down to a brook, where we refreshed ourselves by wash-

ing faces, hands and arms in the cold clear water.

By the way, do people generally realize that glacier water is *not* clear? It is always thick and muddy, a regular *café-au-lait* color. Some of the mountain streams which do not come from glaciers are almost as cold and are crystal clear.

We made it a general rule to drink no water on our tramps. Sometimes it was a great temptation, for we would get very thirsty walking, and we were always crossing cool little streams that looked the incarnation of innocence. Doubtless some of them were, but we had no means of knowing which was which.

Antonio was the thirstiest of our party and the most inclined to waive prudence and drink, but a graphic description of his shapely throat adorned with a large goiter usually had the desired restraining effect. He didn't care a rap about typhoid, of which the danger was much greater. But we all draw the line *somewhere*, and *he* drew it at goiter!

This reminds me that goiter must be dying out in Switzerland. I don't think we saw half

a dozen cases all summer, but I remember it as one of the horrors of my childhood when I visited Switzerland before. It seems to me nearly every other old person had one then.

There is a hotel on top of the Simplon Pass, and there was no reason in the world why we should not patronize it; but we decided it would be much more interesting to lodge at the Hospice built and endowed by Napoleon and served by the monks of Saint Bernard.

It is a big, barracks-like stone building approached by an imposing flight of steps. At the top is a rope which it is the business of the visitor to pull. It sets a huge bell vibrating in the stone hallway and one feels that one has created an undue disturbance for a mendicant. A member of the brotherhood responds, one asks for hospitality for the night, he leads one to an immaculate bedroom and tells one the dinner hour.

We had taken a provisional farewell of each other on the doorstep before pulling the bell-rope, for we knew nothing of the customs of the place and had an idea that we feminine members of the quartette would probably be

herded in some wing apart and not allowed to communicate with our escorts till we left. Nothing of the kind occurred. It was just as though we had been in a hotel, without the necessity of asking prices. They did not even expect us to attend chapel. The bare stone walls and floor lent an air of conventual austerity, and the presence of the monks reminded us where we were.

When the dinner-bell rang, we assembled, along with twenty or thirty other chance guests, at two long tables, and, to our surprise, the brotherhood ate with us. The meal, though plain, was generous in quantity, and they kept pressing us to eat more with true hospitality. We found our hosts very interesting to talk to. One old man took a profound interest in America, especially in the St. Louis exposition, and plied us with questions about it. Naturally *we* were more interested in asking about *their* life and mission, which seemed to us a delightful but highly incongruous survival of medievalism. They admitted that the Hospice served no very useful purpose in summer, but it did a big charity work spring and fall when thousands of Ital-

ian laborers were tramping into Switzerland and back, who could not afford to stop at the hotel, and during winter, when the hotel was closed, though travelers were few, the Hospice became a life-saving necessity to those who did go over the pass. After dinner they showed us the portrait of himself that Napoleon had given the Hospice and a few other treasured relics.

There is no charge whatever made for meals and lodging at the Hospice, and the offering one puts into the almsbox is entirely voluntary. We had to ask where this box was, and I do not think it would have been brought to our attention in any way had we failed to do so. I imagine many fail, or unduly consult economy in their offerings, for we noticed that our hosts, who had been most kind throughout, became positively effusive after we had deposited in the box—no princely sum at all, but just about what we calculated we would have expended at the hotel. I must say most of our fellow guests looked as if they deserved Frater's characterization of "dead beats," and yet the brothers told us that travelers often found fault with their

accommodations! Probably the less they paid, the more fault they found. But even this sordid company could not spoil the sentiment of the place for us, and the memory of our night at the Hospice remains one of the jewels in our casket

XI

NEXT morning, after dipping large hunks of dry bread into big steaming bowls of coffee and milk, along with the rest of the beneficiaries, we took a cordial farewell of our good hosts, and set out on our way. We soon reached the highest point of the pass (six thousand five hundred and ninety feet) and began the down grade with long swinging steps. This day, indeed, we could not afford to loiter very much, for we had a two o'clock train to catch at Brieg, fifteen miles away, and we must get our luncheon somewhere along the road in the meantime.

The scenery was pretty, even beautiful, but nowhere approaching grandeur on this day's walk.

We caught that train—*just*, having run the last two blocks of the way, bought our tickets on the fly, and clambered aboard breathless and warm at the very last permissible moment. We felt quite pleased at the Americanness of our proceeding.

It was a very short ride to Visp, where we had to wait some time for the train to Zermatt. Here we were back in the Rhone valley, twenty odd miles below where we had left it at Ulrichen three days before! It was fairly palpitating with the heat that particular afternoon. In fact it seemed to be doing so whenever we met it.

I thought we would be less uncomfortable if we did something, so I pointed out the towers and spires of what appeared to be a very picturesque castle on a hill in the center of the town and dragged off the reluctant family to visit it. It turned out to be an optical illusion produced by two churches in line, neither of which was in the least interesting, but our united temperature had been raised several degrees in learning this. I must say that the family took the matter very amiably.

Finally the Zermatt train got ready to start. I wouldn't like to say how many hours it took us to travel the twenty-two and a half miles of this road, but we spent the remainder of the afternoon on it. It is true that we ascended more than three thousand feet on the way, but

the speed of our train was certainly not excessive.

Zermatt is the highest of the big tourist resorts, its altitude being five thousand three hundred and fifteen feet. Its season is short, but very crowded. The town in itself is exceedingly ugly—all hotels and tourist shops and the mushroom air of an American boom-town born overnight. But the surrounding mountains are glorious. The Matterhorn, which is close at hand, we were all gazing at, spellbound, for the first time. We had never before quite believed its pictures. Nobody ever does. I don't suppose there is such another peak in the world—bizarre, incredible, rankly *impossible*, like the acute-angled mountains children draw on their slates. It made one shiver to think of human beings climbing up those all-but-vertical smooth rock sides to the needle peak nine thousand feet above us, and it was hardly surprising to hear that the local graveyard is filled with the bodies of tourists from many lands who have attempted it unsuccessfully.

The climbers' tragedies, repeated each summer, are tragic enough, the more so for their

utter uselessness. But the poetry which these have inspired, having missed the sublime, has fallen into the ridiculous.

One choice bit, taken from one of the local guides obligingly gotten up by the Swiss government in all languages and distributed free at the Bureaus of Information in the principal cities, filled us with especial glee:

“No dread crevasse, no rugged steep,
 No crag on the dizzy height,
 But knows the crash of a human heap
 Thudding into the night.

•••••

Ask not the dead, who sūmber now
 In the village grave hard by
 How they rolled from the mountain brow
 And toppled down from the sky.”

Isn't the “crash of a human heap” an altogether delightful expression? And will you please imagine anyone's so violating meter and manners as to make that foolish inquiry of “the dead in the village grave”? As for us, we rejoiced over these gems and others like them all the way up from Visp (when we weren't



The Matterhorn from the outskirts of Zermatt

looking out of the windows), and "toppling down from the sky" became part of our daily vocabulary.

The swarms of tourists in Zermatt oppressed us, and we looked with dread at the caravansaries which housed them. As usual, there seemed to be just one long street, and we followed it to the other end, hoping for a sequestered spot where we could be at peace with the mountains. At the very outskirts of the village we came upon a quiet, clean little house called the Pension des Gorges du Trift, and here we straightway resolved to hang up our hats and knapsacks.

This was the end of our first week's tramping, and we all voted it a grand success as we sat on a damp bench after dinner watching the red lights on the cascades of the Trift, which was the special property of our small hostelry. I don't care much, as a rule, for artificially lighted waterfalls, but this seemed to be so entirely our own private personal illumination of an otherwise untouched wilderness, and the porter was so beautifully proud of it that we couldn't have found it in our hearts to object.

Bright and early next morning we went to the post-office and got the first mail we had had since leaving home. Very delightful it was to hear that the Babes and the Mother were flourishing, the household machinery running smoothly and that we were to stay away as long as we liked!

The next thing I did, while other members of the party were renewing kodak supplies, was to buy a pair of shoes and have the soles well studded with nails. And what a heavenly relief it was to get proper footgear again on my poor feet!

These preliminary errands attended to, we took the mountain railroad to the Riffelberg and walked from there to the summit of the Gornergrat. The railroad goes within a fifteen-minute walk of the top, but both economy and pleasure counseled us to get out at the earlier station.

I recall the fellow-citizen from Keokuk or Kokomo, I forget which, who sat opposite to us in the open car going up. He thirsted for some statistical information, which Antonio, who is the soul of courtesy, supplied. Whereupon he

fastened like a leech on the poor boy and began plying him with questions till the rest of us had to plunge in to rescue him and keep a few tattered shreds of our personal history from that relentless cross-examiner! We were glad to leave him at the Riffelberg.

The view from the Gornergrat is certainly one of the grandest on God's earth. Here, as nowhere else, can the average person, without danger or fatigue, get into the very heart of the glacier world. One stands on a rocky ledge, the Gornergrat, and all around and below sweep and swirl the great frozen rivers. From their far brink rise the bare jagged peak of the Matterhorn and the round snow-clad shoulders of the Breithorn and Monta Rosa. Way down below lies the green valley with Zermatt in its hollow, and away as far as the eye can reach are ranges upon ranges of snow mountains.

If we could have had it all to ourselves without the tourists! But then we should have had to work very much harder for it. It is better to take the gifts which the gods provide and be thankful.

It did not seem to me as if I could ever come

to love the Valais mountains as I did those of the Oberland, but they were magnificent.

We had reached our maximum altitude thus far for the summer, 10,290 feet. The air was very thin, and we watched Belle Soeur carefully for signs of the mountain sickness. But thanks, I suppose, to our having made all but eighteen hundred feet of the ascent by rail and the careful slowness with which we had climbed the remainder, she escaped this time entirely.

We ate our lunch on a rock overlooking the great Gorner glacier, just as far from the tourists and the summit restaurant as we could get. Then, when we had looked our fill and tried to store our minds with enough glacier pictures to last the rest of our lives, we began the long but delightful descent afoot to Zermatt. All the way down we kept getting beautiful views, and I think the Matterhorn never looked finer than seen between the fir trees of the lower slopes in the pink glow of sunset.

Who would have guessed that our harmonious little party was going to be disrupted on the morrow—and by me, its shepherd and chaperon!

XII

AN exhaustive account of the causes leading up to my famous elopement with the cash capital would lead us far afield. If the man from Kokomo were here to cross-examine me, he would probably get it all out of me. But he is not. I shall, therefore, make no attempt to gain credit for the really noble and altruistic motives which animated me, and the reader will have to make his own diagnosis. He will probably decide that eight days of being called *Fräulein* and *Mademoiselle* had turned my matronly head and produced an Indian-summer florescence of the practical-joking age. Or he may explain my conduct as one of those occasional eccentric outbursts in usually well-disciplined characters, such as have been celebrated in a whole cycle of short stories of "The Revolt of Mother" and "Wild Oats of a Spinster" type. It really doesn't matter. My shoulders are broad, and my reputation, I think, will stand the strain. At all events, I hope so.

It happened that on the day following the Gornergrat trip we resolved to take it easy. We slept late in the morning, had our lunch put up for us at the hotel and wandered out with it in the direction of the Staffel Alp, resolved not to go all the way unless we felt like it. Now, we had been living a pretty strenuous life, and relaxing the bent bow all at once was a little risky. We were in prime physical condition, and the masculine half of the party, not having wholly emerged from the colt stage, were distinctly feeling their oats. I don't wish to go into horrid details, but when it came time for luncheon Belle Soeur and I found ourselves without any.

"I give you infants fair warning," said I, "that if the bearer of the common purse should be pushed too far, she might take her doll rags and go home, and it might prove inconvenient."

This threat referred to the fact that they had all given me their money to take care of at the beginning of the trip, I being the one who made the business arrangements and paid the bills and who was supposed to be least likely to

leave it all under a pillow. But Frater replied jeeringly, "Oh, you can't frighten me *that* way! I've got eight francs in my pocket!" And Antonio chimed in, "I've got six-fifty."

"All right," said I, "good-bye. Shall we go get some luncheon, Belle Soeur?"

As soon as we were out of hearing on the path back to Zermatt, we began to discuss what we should do. For one wild moment we considered the expediency of just disappearing—taking a train and going off somewhere and leaving the boys to settle the hotel bill with their fourteen francs fifty as best they could. We soon decided that this would be too low-down mean. So little by little we plotted the details of a modified disappearance, including the fairy story which was supposed to save our "face" and the boys' at the hotel. We rushed in with an air of great haste. Would they show us the time-table? Would they get our bill ready? We had received word which made it necessary to curtail our visit and go home immediately. We could not even wait for the two gentlemen, who had gone on a long tramp and might not be back till late. We would

leave a note of explanation for them, and they would doubtless take the first train. Yes, we would pay for *all*. It would make it easier for them if they had *just* time to catch a train. So we hustled our belongings into our knapsacks, and I wrote a letter to Frater saying we had decided to go to Leuk (on the hill) that evening by rail, that they could rejoin us there on foot the next day if they wished to, and that the second morning, if they had not appeared, we would continue over the Gemmi Pass and home according to program. I also mentioned that the hotel bill had been paid.

All this time we were momentarily expecting the arrival of the boys to make their peace. But they did not come.

We took a belated lunch at the station buffet and had time to perfect our plans a little further. We had all originally intended to walk from Zermatt to Visp. It was an easy and pretty walk, and why should we give it up? And what on earth could we do with ourselves for a whole day at Leuk in that hot Rhone valley? But we had to get out of Zermatt. So we bought our tickets to a little station called Randa, only

six miles away. And when we got there, having considerable daylight still on our hands, walked five or six miles further to St. Niklaus.

We went to the Grand Hotel, which was not excessively grand, but English curates and such like eminently respectable people were boarding there. We felt that it would not just do for two lone females to experiment in cheap lodgings.

The hotel did not quite rate clean napkins at each meal, so the curates and their friends kept theirs from contamination by buttoning them up, ring and all, in neat little embroidered shawl-strap covers. It was beautifully in character, and we loved them for it. We were further rejoiced by their signatures in the hotel register, especially that of a very small, dapper, timid little clerical gentleman who in a microscopic but superlatively correct hand described himself as a "Clerk in Holy Orders."

The excitement of our successful elopement had put us into the highest spirits. We had enjoyed our walk greatly. And we had no compunctions—ah, not the ghost of a one! But when, after the evening meal was over, we had

retired to our room in the Grand Hotel and looked out on the darkening landscape, we began to wish we knew where the boys were. We were tolerably sure they would be sleeping in the open air that night. They would hardly waste any of their small hoard on lodgings. It wouldn't hurt them, of course. In fact, it would do them good. But we wouldn't greatly object, now that our dignity was vindicated, to seeing those long-legged objects with knapsacks on backs swing into view under our window. However, they didn't. And we went to bed and to sleep.

After an excellent breakfast next morning we started on our ten-mile walk down the valley to Visp. We went along laughing and singing and still enormously pleased with ourselves. We discussed from time to time such questions as whether the pretty waitress had really given Frater my letter, and whether the boys were now ahead of us or behind us on the road. I was inclined to the former theory, but it all depended on how soon after we left they had reached the Hotel du Trift. If they had gotten there shortly after our departure,

they would doubtless have started immediately walking down the road to shorten the next day's tramp all they could, for it was about thirty-two miles from Zermatt to Leuk on the hill. They should have spent the night in the vicinity of Randa or even farther along. And people who sleep out of doors usually do not sleep late in the morning. So doubtless they arose some two hours earlier than we did and were very likely even now ahead of us. If not, with their more rapid gait, they would soon catch up.

It was to meet this latter contingency that we decided it would be a kind attention to leave bulletins along the road for them. I have already alluded to our habit of putting notes of explanation for each other in conspicuous places. I tore a leaf from my account book and penciled on it "E. E. W. and M. F. W. passed this spot at 10:15 A. M., Aug. 10th, heading north, in excellent health." Then folded it up and put Frater's and Antonio's initials on the outside and pinned it to a tree by the road.

After this we went along like Hop o' My

Thumb and his white pebbles, leaving a bulletin every half hour. These were of various sorts. Some gave little personal items about ourselves designed to allay any anxiety they might be supposed to be feeling about us, such as "11:45 A. M., M. F. W. and E. E. W. have just had a light refection of fruit and seltzer water and feel much refreshed." Some were intended to administer spiritual consolation to our young friends in case they were feeling the pinch of any material want. Of this type was the text "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," and "*Allah ya tik.*" This last is an Arabic phrase which my husband and I had picked up in Egypt. It signifies, "God will provide for you," and you say it to beggars when you don't want to give them anything yourself. One bulletin was really practical and informed them that M. F. W. and E. E. W. would lunch at the station buffet at Visp and take the two o'clock train to Leuk Susten.

As we approached Visp, it grew hotter and hotter and hotter. We reached the station about one o'clock and, choosing a little table

on the shady side of the platform, ordered the most cooling lunch we could devise.

It was at this time that our hearts began to melt (no wonder in such a temperature) and we got rather sorry for the abandoned boys. The heat waves were fairly dancing out in the Rhone valley, and it made our heads ache just to think of walking ten miles in that fiery furnace to Leuk Susten. And we doubted their having the wherewithal to buy railroad tickets.

We watched along the road, expecting them every minute to appear in sight.

"Shall we wait for the four o'clock train," suggested Belle Soeur, "so we can take them along with us?"

"But suppose they are *ahead* of us and are actually at this minute staving down that dreadful Rhone valley? Supposing they get there before we do and don't find us? We *said* we'd be there, and they would have no way of understanding our change of program. They'd be boiled and worn out and penniless and would think themselves abandoned for sure." So we took the train and went on.

The truthful Baedeker says it is only a mile

from Leuk Susten, the station, to old Leuk on the hill, but Belle Soeur and I agreed as we toiled up the shadeless road in the middle of the hot afternoon that it was quite the longest mile we had ever traversed. It was a picturesque little old place when we got to it, with a ruined castle and just two inns, very modest looking, and obligingly side by side.

We got a room and bespoke another for the gentlemen of our party when they should arrive. We cooled ourselves off by dint of bathing and clean collars, sallied out and had a look at the ruins of the castle, then found a turn of the road that commanded all the lower windings to the railroad station, including a long bridge across the river, and sat ourselves down to watch. Every time we saw two specks of humanity approaching we were sure it was our boys. We developed various theories. Perhaps they had economized on eating so as to come by rail from Visp. If so, that later train was just in, and they ought to be appearing any minute. A carriage was seen winding up the road. "Perhaps they are in, it," suggested Belle Soeur; "it would be just like their enter-

prise to charter a carriage and have themselves delivered C. O. D."

But they weren't in the carriage. And the various pedestrians whom we had taken for them turned into peasants returning from work, women, priests, or commercial travelers, on nearer approach.

Twilight was stealing over the Rhone valley, and a little wistful sense of loneliness was stealing over *us*. It had been a fine game, this eloping, but we had now reached the time scheduled for it to end in a happy reunion—all hands around and everything forgiven.

We went back to the hotel and got them to set a little table for our dinner on the balcony outside the dining-room. Of course it was cooler and in every way pleasanter out there. And it also commanded the street.

Afterwards, we sat at our window and watched that street till bed-time, though we kept up a pretense of talking. Belle Soeur says that I jumped up out of bed in the middle of the night and ran to the window because somebody was walking by on the stone pavement. *I say she did it.* Perhaps both stories are true.

XIII

ACCORDING to what we had said in our Zermatt letter, if the boys had not rejoined us by the morning of August 11th, we would continue over the Gemmi Pass and back to Grindelwald by ourselves.

We talked over the pros and cons, but could see no reason for changing this. We could not figure out any explanation for their not having caught up with us, if they had made an effort to do so. The thirty-two or three miles down grade on a good road, was a long day's walk, especially in view of the heat of the last part, but it was by no means prohibitive. We had walked almost as far several times ourselves, and the young men always gave us to understand that they had plenty of reserve strength which *our* style of walking made no drafts on. The only inference seemed to be that they had stayed quietly in Zermatt and sent home for money. We therefore felt that *we* had been abandoned, so we cast the ungrateful wretches from our minds and started forth.

Strange to say, although deprived of the stimulus of masculine walking, we kept nearer to the Baedeker time schedule this day than we had ever done before. He allows three and a half hours for the walk from Leuk to Leuk Baden, which we made in four.

It was rather warm all the way, for our rise in altitude was just about balanced by the advance towards midday. For a long time we were looking down into the Rhone valley and across to the mountains on the other side, then we struck north towards the divide, and the foothills closed up behind us.

We reached Leuk Baden about half-past eleven, got our lunch in a restaurant that offered us a little table on a second-story balcony overhanging the main street, visited the baths, which were at that hour deserted, and continued on our way. We felt a mild curiosity to see the patrons of the baths disporting themselves in the pools, but not enough to keep us until the afternoon bathing hour.

The thermal establishments are large, though rather dingy. Besides many corridors of private baths, there is the great common pool,

where everybody taking the cure is supposed to disport himself or herself for several hours morning and afternoon standing up to the chin in water, while the public gazes from a balcony. These rendezvous are said to be very animated, with plenty of talking and singing. There are also little trays floating around on which tea or other refreshments can be served, or books, or writing materials placed. Why, in such prolonged promiscuous soaking, the afflicted do not interchange microbes and emerge with three or four diseases instead of one, I do not pretend to say.

There is something peculiarly unattractive about skin diseases (which is what the Leuk springs are used for) even if you call them cutaneous disorders, and Belle Soeur and I gathered our garments particularly close around us all the time we were there and avoided touching things. It was partly because of this creepy, crawly feeling that we did not wait for the bathing hour, and partly because we did not know how long it might take us to climb the three-thousand-foot rock wall between us and the pass. Baedeker says two and a half hours,

and if it took us twice that time, we would need the whole afternoon. It did not look like a place where one would care to be caught after dark.

I do not suppose there is anything quite like the Gemmi Pass anywhere. The cliff is absolutely vertical. It looks as if you could let down a bucket by a rope from the top and pull it up full of water without spilling. The Cantons of Berne and Valais built the path up it way back in 1736-41, and a very excellent path it is, all hewn out of the solid rock and winding back and forth in steep zigzags or round and round like a spiral staircase. Baedeker says the path is five feet wide. I should have put it at nearer three. But certainly it is wide enough for entire safety, though a person inclined to dizziness would not enjoy the look downward. The grade was so steep that our feet were bent upwards in an acute angle to the axis of the leg, and the little-used muscles involved ached for days afterwards.

It is possible to go up on horseback (though I think it much pleasanter to trust to one's own feet), but the authorities have not allowed

the descent to be made on horseback, since some fatal accidents occurred. These incidents are commemorated by little tablets and monuments whose inscriptions we read in passing.

It was a very interesting climb, and to our intense surprise, though we did not hurry at all, and gave ourselves frequent brief rests, we made it virtually in the Baedeker time. The ever-expanding view as we mounted upward led us to expect a great treat when we reached the summit, but as ill luck would have it, clouds closed in around us just before we got there and we had to make a run for the hotel to avoid a drenching.

We ordered tea, for it was cold up there, 7640 feet in the air, and wrote letters and waited for it to clear off. We had intended to spend the night at this hotel, but a restless spirit was upon us, the hotel struck us as dreary, and it was still only the middle of the afternoon. So when it stopped raining we pushed on.

Our route lay over an almost level plateau, very slightly down grade, through a desolate region of bare rock with snow peaks on either

hand, past a bleak Alpine lake. We came in about an hour to another inn, which we knew was the last shelter we should find till we reached Kandersteg on the other side of the pass. But it was still early, and we were in the mood for walking, so we kept on.

We passed through what Baedeker aptly calls "a stony chaos," thence to a "pasture strewn with stones and débris, which was entirely devastated in September, 1895, by a burst of the glacier covering the slopes of the Attels (11,930') to the left. A tablet commemorates the six persons who lost their lives on this occasion."

Many glaciers were hanging above us here, all presumably liable to do the same sort of thing at any moment. I do not imagine this was any likelier to happen because of the absence of the boys, but I think Belle Soeur and I felt the somber and menacing character of the scenery more keenly than if we had been in their enlivening company.

When we reached tree level, all this desolation vanished. The path ran through a forest along a ledge cut in the side of a gorge, and through the foliage we had very lovely

views of the leafy ravine and the mountain slopes on the other side. The colors were especially beautiful in the sunset glow, and we regretted that we could not linger to enjoy it; but we had no very clear idea how much farther we had to walk, and there was evidently not much daylight left.

We quickened our pace, and it was well we did so. The down grade was now very steep and we could keep up a tremendous gait, though at some risk of "toppling down from the sky." At last we came to a place where the gorge we had been following opened out into the Kander valley, and we could see the village we were aiming for still a thousand feet at least below us.

We thought we had been walking as fast as we could before. But we now began a race with the oncoming darkness, under the stimulus of our strong objection to spending the night in the very chilly atmosphere of this high Alpine mountain-side, which quite outdid our previous performances.

This path was not quite so steep as the one by which we had climbed from Leuk Baden to

the summit, nor was the rock wall as absolutely perpendicular, but they were close seconds. We used our alpenstocks practically as vaulting poles and came down in long kangaroo-like leaps. We had still a remnant of twilight, as indeed was absolutely essential to walking on this path. Darkness and the safe road at the bottom arrived simultaneously, and we fairly groped our way the last half mile to the first hotel, guided only by its lights.

To our great disgust we found the hotel full. We were just wound up to last that far, and the few hundred yards to the next hotel seemed an almost impossible exertion. Besides, the painful thought occurred to us that maybe it was contrary to Swiss etiquette to take in unescorted women after dark, and we would find all the hotels "full." However, this dreadful fear did not prove to be well founded, for at the next hotel they had a room for us, and we retired to it joyously. It was a sophisticated place with brass beds and electric bells and liveried attendants, and we felt eminently safe and well cared for.

We had intended taking the diligence from

Kandersteg to Frutigen, but as we found it involved either starting at 5 A. M. or waiting till afternoon, we resolved to walk the eight miles involved at our leisure next morning.

This we did, interrupted only by a shower, which led us to call on a peasant woman in her *châlet*. Our road was adorned by a ruined castle or so, pertaining to extinct robber barons who used to lord it over the valley. I remember the intense interest manifested by the postmaster of an infinitesimal village post-office we passed, over a letter I mailed there addressed to my husband in the Philippines. I had to give him an epitome of our family history before I could get away. But somehow his questions were only amusing, not annoying like those of the man from Kokomo. In the one instance one instinctively felt the questions an impertinence, in the other they were merely childlike. What is it makes the difference?

Frutigen is a railway terminus. We took the train from here to Spiez on Lake Thun, thence another to Interlaken, caught the afternoon express to Grindelwald, and walked safe and sound into the *Châlet Edelweiss*.

XIV

OUR first question, after greeting the Mother and the Babes, was, "Have you heard from the boys? Do you know where they are?" The Mother admitted that she had received a telegram from them at Leuk Susten the day before, requesting money, and a letter that morning, and that they would probably get home the next day.

They did, and the hatchet was buried, and we swapped yarns about our adventures. It seems that after we left them on the mountain-side, they decided it would be healthier for them not to return to the hotel till our wrath had had time to cool. So they went on to the Staffel Alp, got lost, and thought they would have to stay out all night, but finally found the path and arrived home, footsore and weary, long after dark. The pretty waitress handed them my letter and watched them read it, but I understand they betrayed no unbecoming emotion for her satisfaction. It seems that the claim of wealth they had made to us was a

bluff. When it came to the point, they could muster only about eight francs between them! And then that unkind pretty waitress appeared with our wash clothes which she had succeeded in getting back from the laundress (we had arranged to have them sent after us by mail), and there was four francs to pay on them, and the poor lads had to fill up their knapsacks with Belle Soeur's and my lingerie (that was the unkindest cut of all) and go forth into the cold world with only four francs between them.

They were too tired to go any distance. A mile or so out of Zermatt they encountered a haymow and slept in it. Next morning they breakfasted on dry bread and continued down the road to Visp, but not, I take it, at a very snappy gait. They found a few of our bulletins, including the one that told them when we were going to leave Visp, but they arrived at the station just too late to catch us there. If we had waited for the next train, as Belle Soeur suggested, what a beautiful and touching reunion we might have had! They had started down that hot Rhone valley about 3 P. M., still subsisting on dry bread, had tried short cuts

and brought up in marshes and had to retrace their steps. Finally, they decided to give it up and lodged in another haymow. They found next morning that they were still some miles from Leuk Susten, so there was no chance of catching up with us. They therefore went to a good hotel, had a bath and a square meal on their expectations and used the last of their money to telegraph for funds. They got their reply the same afternoon, but resolved to recuperate till next morning and start fresh. So they passed over the Gemmi twenty-four hours behind us.

Apropos of Belle Soeur's and my experiences by ourselves, I want to say that everything went just as smoothly and pleasantly as if we had had masculine escorts, and that so far as our example goes, there would seem to be no reason why two sensible women should not tramp over Switzerland by themselves if they feel like it. Still, I should hesitate to advise it from instances that later came under my observation of how objectionable the usually respectable Schweizer may become under the influence of liquor.

The day after the boys' return was the Mother's birthday, and we resolved to celebrate it by a picnic. But mark how soon bad habits become fixed! We could not get through the day without splitting up the party! The split, however, did not occur along the old line of cleavage, so perhaps, on the whole, it had a healing effect.

It happened thus: Belle Soeur was making a birthday cake to be produced at dinner, and Frater was making candy. The rest of us, therefore, got ready before they did, and as the Younger Babe was a slow walker, we started on ahead with him, the Mother, Antonio, Suzanne and I, carrying the eatables for luncheon. The Elder Babe waited for the cake and candy makers, who were to follow with the drinkables. We went to the Wetterhorn Blick—a very beautiful spot on the hillside, with trees and grass and, as the name indicates, a remarkably fine view of the Wetterhorn and Upper Glacier.

We waited and waited and waited until starvation forced us to begin eating. We went slowly at first, still hoping the belated ones

would appear. But they didn't, and our appetites had grown meanwhile, so we kept on till the last sandwich and crumb of cake disappeared. We hadn't a drop of anything to drink, but fortunately we had oranges, which answered the purpose reasonably well.

When we went home to dress for dinner after a delightful day, we found the absentees comfortably installed there. They had gotten lost and couldn't find us, so they went home and lunched by themselves. I don't know what they ate, but they certainly had plenty to drink!

We thought we would make another try at a united birthday excursion for the Mother, and this time we really succeeded, although we again risked going in two sections! This was to be an excursion to the temporary terminus of the Jungfrau railroad then under construction. The Mother, the Elder Babe and the luncheon went up to the Kleine Scheidegg by train, while the pedestrian quartette walked up. We effected a junction without difficulty this time and all proceeded together afoot to the Eiger Glacier.

We led the Mother and the Babe right on

to this glacier and sat them and ourselves down upon it for luncheon. There were tourists coming and going all the time, a place for tobogganing, a vender of postal cards, and all that sort of thing. But it is a fine glacier notwithstanding its pollutions.

After luncheon we boarded an ascending train and went through a long tunnel to what was then the terminus, the Eigerwand station (9405 feet high). One finds oneself in an artificial cavern hewn out of the rock, and an opening in the side gives a fine bird's-eye view (if one cares for that sort of thing) of the Grindelwald valley, Interlaken and Lake Thun. But it looks a good deal like a railway map.

Altogether, though we were glad to have taken the trip so as to be sure we had not missed anything, we felt that the long ride in a dark tunnel in order to enjoy this peep-show view which doesn't begin to be as fine as the one we left below us at the Scheidegg, was a good deal of a fake. Doubtless when the road is finished, one will have something well worth making the trip for, and I suppose the railroad must not be blamed for gathering in what

shekels it can in the meantime, as its expenses of construction must be tremendous, but it is a *little* bit hard on the public!

We spent eleven days in Grindelwald this time, enjoying the (comparative) comforts of home and recuperating for another trip. It rained a good deal. But we managed to work in a number of walks and another picnic or so, and we had some moonlight evenings of surpassing loveliness. Frater ran across two Princeton men he knew in the village one day, and I asked them to stay to dinner with a brave show of hospitality, making rapid mental plans in the meantime for the acquiring of two more forks, spoons, knives, plates and glasses. However, they could not come, so it was all right.

It was during this period that the avalanches from the Wetterhorn became so numerous. There is a sheer drop of four or five thousand feet on the side towards the Grosse Scheidegg and at the top of it, sloping back steeply, an immense accumulation of snow. The summer's meltings were beginning to tell on this, and every once in a while a great mass would detach itself and come sliding down over the edge of

the cliff with a roar like thunder. It looked like a great foaming cascade, and would often keep pouring for several minutes, so that the one who first noticed it would call the others, who would leave what they were doing and get to windows or veranda in time to see a part of it. These phenomena came to be of daily occurrence, and we finally grew too blasé to run to the window when called.

Another beautiful effect we enjoyed was the rainbow that almost always followed a shower. One end of the bow generally came down in front of the Mettenberg cliffs, just opposite us, and lost itself in the foliage growing over the banks of the Lütshine.

Just before we left we had our first reminder of autumn in a snow-storm which covered the Männlichen slopes in front of us and the Faulhorn and Schwarzhorn ridges behind us with fine white powder.

XV

ON the 27th of August we started out for our second trip, by rail this time, looking quite conventional and civilized. The Mother and the Elder Babe accompanied us as far as Thun.

From Interlaken to Thun we took the lake steamer. It is a pretty enough trip, but everybody does it, and the presence of a swarming ant-hill of tourists somehow spoils the pleasure of the Nature-lover, while affording amusement to the specialist in humanity.

We watched many of our fellow-passengers with more or less interest, but of them all there lingers in my memory only the old gentleman with the Santa Claus white beard whose bare feet were encased in Greek sandals. This with an otherwise entirely conventional get-up. We were by no means the only ones whose attention was attracted by this devotee of the bare-foot cure. His strength of mind in braving popular curiosity certainly deserved reward, and I hope he got it.

At Thun there is a castle of considerable external picturesqueness, a church effectively located, quaint streets with highly elevated sidewalks, and shops affording ample opportunities to buy the crumbly Thun pottery. After seeing all these things and eating our noon sandwiches at a shady little table in what would be accurately described, I suppose, as a beer garden, whence we had a fine view of a passing regiment of artillery, we started the Mother and Babe on their way back to Grindelwald and ourselves boarded a third-class carriage in the train for Berne.

The brief journey thither was without incident save for the time when our compartment was snared by two billing and cooing young persons whose aggressively new clothes as well as their demonstrative affection proclaimed them a bride and groom. Perhaps it was because we were foreigners or perhaps only because they were so conscious of being legally and properly married that they took no more account of our presence than if we had been signposts.

At Berne we resolved to lodge at a temper-

ance hotel we had heard of, our idea being that it would be cheap and that the temperance feature guaranteed respectability. The experiment was reasonably satisfactory, but not brilliantly so.

Frater called Berne a toy city. The phrase is happy. One feels oneself in the world of Noah's ark. The foolish painted fountains one meets on every hand, above all the one with the ogre devouring the babies, are surely intended for children and not for grown-ups. And it cannot be conceived that any but children should take in a spirit of serious admiration the mechanical toy which dwells in the famous clock tower, where once an hour Father Time inverts his glass and the giants strike on the drum, and at noon the procession of Apostles appears from one open-snapping door above the clock and disappears jerkily into another. It is an elaborated cuckoo clock on a large scale. And surely the cuckoo clock also is for children.

Our good star led us to the cathedral late that afternoon just as a violin and vocal rehearsal was being held. We had the big dim

Gothic church all to ourselves, and out of the choir-loft, from sources invisible, floated a woman's voice and the pure tones of a violin. That was one of the perfect hours that Chance sometimes fashions for us better than any Epicurean foresight could have planned.

There followed a walk through the town past the bear pits (more of the provisions for childhood's amusement surely?) to a height called the Schänzli, just above the river, where we dined pleasantly at an out-door table with Berne at our feet, a long stretch of fertile country on the other side, and the white-capped Bernese Alps we had just left fringing the horizon. After the sunset tints faded away we had the stars and the lights of the city till we got tired and returned to our temperance hotel and the slumbers of the night.

Next morning we visited the federal buildings, old Rathhaus and several parks and view points, all of very moderate interest, and took a train about ten o'clock for Freiburg. Here we made our way to the Cathedral to find out at what time the organ recital was due, and discovered, to our great disgust, that this was the

one day in the week when there wasn't any! We had lunch at another open-air restaurant, looked at two or three things that Baedeker advised us to and took a walk across the river to see the picturesque remains of the city's mediæval walls and towers, whereby we just missed our train and had to take a limited an hour later. We never, except by accident like this, traveled first class in Switzerland, where even the third is perfectly clean and comfortable,—far more so than second in Italy or southern France.

Freiburg is on the line between French and German Switzerland, and its inhabitants, so far as our experience went, seemed to be all bilingual.

Somewhere on this trip we were supposed to get our first glimpse of Mont Blanc, but we didn't.

Arrived at Lausanne, we walked and walked and walked, looking for a place to lodge. Frater had been feeling badly all day and was utterly miserable by now, and we seemed to have wandered completely out of the hotel region. I do not remember whether some one directed

us to the house we finally reached or whether a sign in the window proclaimed that furnished rooms were let. Anyhow we found two vacant, reasonably habitable rooms, and, under the circumstances, took them. They were not especially attractive, but there was really nothing tangible, as I look back at it, to indicate that the place was not perfectly respectable, and I am at a loss to say why we were all so firmly convinced that it was not. Possibly it was the undisguised astonishment with which the maid-servant regarded us. Possibly . . . No, I can't define it. But I know we were all on pins and needles till we got away next morning, and the way Belle Soeur and I barricaded our door that night was a caution!

Nothing, however, in the least degree exciting occurred—not even an attempt to overcharge us! Frater went to bed supperless with his bilious attack, which worried me greatly for fear it might be oncoming typhoid, due to the wayside water he had drunk, when he and Antonio were living on dry bread between Zermatt and Leuk Susten. But it wasn't.

Belle Soeur, Antonio and I started down for

the lake of Geneva, stopping by the way at a baker's and a delicatessen shop to lay in the wherewithal for a picnic supper. We chartered a row-boat and went out on the lake. It was just past sunset and utterly lovely. We ate our supper and decided we would stay out there a very long time. But pretty soon it got quite rough and choppy, and our light went out, and we found we hadn't any matches. We made one or two unsuccessful attempts to get some from another boat. Then we began to wonder how poor Frater was faring all alone up there in that place we didn't like. So we gave it up and paddled ashore and went home.

Next morning, Frater was better, though not quite gay. We got our coffee at a near-by restaurant and visited the castle and the somewhat barren Gothic church, turned Calvinist, and saw a statue of that doubtless gallant, but very injudicious local martyr of patriotism, Major Davos, who tried to free poor Vaud from the grip of Berne before the time was ripe for it, and succeeded only in losing his own life.

We took an inclined railroad that plunged us suddenly to the lake-side again. Here,

with a lot of other human cattle, we boarded a lake steamer and set forth for Geneva. It was on this day, from the water, that we got our first view of Mont Blanc, a very faint and distant one.

The steamer stopped at several places on the southern (French) coast of the lake, and though we did not go ashore, Belle Soeur and I went through the form of introducing the young men to the Pleasant Land of France.

There was a little company of Italian musicians on board who seemed to please Antonio in a gently melancholy fashion. Antonio was suffering that day from a slight attack of homesickness.

In the early afternoon we landed at the quay in Geneva and were immediately shanghaied. It was really funny, and turned out extremely well.

We were still hard-jammed in the steamer crowd and barely off the gang-plank, when a stout, motherly-looking, middle-aged woman asked me in German whether we were strangers, and if so, where we were going to lodge? I thought she had just come ashore with us and

supposed she was a guileless stranger and didn't know where to go. So I told her in my labored German that we also were strangers and to our infinite regret were unable to offer her any advice. But *that* wasn't what she wanted, and she buzzed on hopefully till by and by I got it through my head that she had two furnished rooms she'd like to rent us and that they were wonderfully clean and pleasant and home-like, and the location central, and she would serve us breakfast and charge us only three francs apiece for it and lodging, and we would really have great difficulty in finding anything else so desirable at anything like the price.

Sandwiched in with all this was a large amount of family history. They were Germans from some Rhine town and had only been in Geneva a few months. Her husband had come here to work. She could not get used to it. Neither could she speak French, but she had a daughter who spoke it very nicely. When her rooms became vacant, she went down to the pier and watched the people come ashore from the boat and spoke to some one who looked likely to understand German. She

nearly always guessed right, and they had had *such* nice people in their rooms! Some such charming Americans! Were *we* by any chance Americans? Ah, she had thought so as soon as she saw us. She seldom made a mistake.

I told her at first automatically, as a matter of course, that we did not want her rooms, but she was not easily discouraged and prattled artlessly on. Her apartment was very near. It could do us no harm to *look* at the rooms. We were nowise bound to take them.

After all, this was quite true, and though we had a number of addresses, we had no special reason for going to any of them. She had as honest a face as one could need to see. We had stayed at plenty of places about which we knew absolutely nothing. We did not know less about this good woman's rooms. Clearly, we risked nothing by going with her. So off we went, her babble of personal and professional reminiscences running on like a brook.

The apartment was in a house not especially attractive from the outside, but once we got within and saw its resplendent cleanliness and

almost luxury of furnishing, we knew we should search no farther.

Geneva is what is known as a handsome city. It is clean and modern and tries to be like Paris. It has good hotels and shops and parks and quays and drives and public monuments. We spent that afternoon shopping and sight-seeing, took dinner at an open-air restaurant in the Jardin Anglais, attended an organ recital at the cathedral, which was considerably marred by the non-working of the blowing apparatus, and decided as we walked home that we would have had all we cared for of Geneva by 2 P. M. the following day.

I remember the gentle irony of the pretty waitress at the restaurant in the Jardin Anglais. Frater, who was still feeling under the weather, ordered two soft-boiled eggs and a cup of hot milk. Antonio, who always manifested homesickness by mortification of the flesh, gave an almost equally simple order and said he would drink *water*. He had read somewhere that Geneva city water was safe. Belle Soeur and I, who were hungry and *not* homesick, ordered a substantial meal and a small bottle of red

wine. Having written this all down, the waitress turned to Antonio and inquired with a demure smile whether the gentleman who drank water would have it *hot* or *plain*?

The next morning our landlady brought us a breakfast that was fit for the gods. The *café-au-lait* was excellent, the little rolls delicious, the fresh butter pats exquisite, and the honey—where shall I find words to describe its perfection? We all did well at that breakfast, but the two boys, who had dined so frugally the night before, appeared to be hollow to their toes. Like magic melted out of sight the heaping plate of rolls, the great pots of coffee and milk, the dainty pats of butter, and only a trace in the bottom was left of the pint jar of honey. Really, it was shocking.

Later, Belle Soeur, Antonio and I, being in the sitting-room, heard strange sounds of blind man's buff and overturned chairs issuing from the boys' bedroom. Presently out rushed Fra-ter with an anxious hunted look, closely followed by the daughter of the house, who, her face swollen with tooth-ache and tied up in a handkerchief, was not at the moment of great

personal attractiveness. "She wants to tell me something!" groaned Frater. "For heaven's sake, find out what it is!" Apparently she had felt that her message was of a confidential nature and should be communicated at close range, and Frater, who is shy—at *times*—had tried to keep the center-table between them, and the strange sounds we had heard were caused by his flight and her pursuit around and around this table till he bolted for the door. At least such is the not very gallant explanation he gave us later.

Balked in her desire to speak quietly to one of the gentlemen of the party (the sterner sex being popularly supposed to be more liberal in money matters), the young-woman-who-spoke-French got out to me with great embarrassment her mother's message—that she was *very* glad we had enjoyed the breakfast, and that she was prepared to stand by the price she had quoted to us the day before, but that she had really not looked forward to such wholesale consumption of honey, and would be actually out of pocket unless we would be willing to pay her twenty-five centimes (five cents) apiece

more. Of course if we didn't think it right——
But we *did*, and so assured her!

That morning we called on some friends, a retired Rear Admiral and his family, at one of the hotels, and had the novel sensation of talking "American" for an hour or more, declined their invitation to lunch, got our letters and a hamper of clothes from the post-office, shifted into mountaineering costume again and returned our traveling outfit by the convenient mail to Grindelwald.

Belle Soeur and Antonio had noticed the day before the bill-of-fare of a restaurant outside its door, the prices of which had struck them as the most phenomenally low they had ever seen, and the place looked clean and respectable. It was on the other side of the river, on the way to the train we were to take for Chamonix. So we resolved to get our luncheon there.

It was not till we were inside and giving our order that we woke up to the fact that it was a charitable institution—a sort of soup-kitchen financially backed by a committee of ladies. A quick vote taken showed that we declined to

beat a retreat at that late date, so we had a remarkably fine lunch, thanks to the charitable ladies, at the interesting price of ten cents apiece. It included roast beef (a big, tender, juicy slice), five cents, mashed potatoes, two cents, bread, one cent, and seltzer water, two cents. We were later than the conventional lunch hour and had the place to ourselves, so could not judge who or what its usual patrons were; but evidently *we* were *raras aves*, to judge by the stir and amusement we created among the employees.

XVI

THERE was nothing very scenically interesting about the trip from Geneva to Chamonix. So far as I remember, we played cards all the way. A certain thrill of emotion was experienced as we passed over the French border. The boys felt it because it was the first time, Belle Soeur and I because we were back again! The baggy red trousers of the soldiers of the line loafing about the station—Heavens, how natural they looked! Frater called them bloomers, but that was irreverent of him.

Chamonix reminded us of Zermatt for being big and full of tourists, and, as at Zermatt, we yearned to get out of the village. We went to a hotel mentioned by Baedeker well up on the hillside, which must have a fine view of Mont Blanc and the neighboring peaks when the weather permitted. Just then, low-lying clouds shut them all out.

It was an attractive place, surrounded by a

garden, rather more sophisticated than the hotels we generally frequented. But being late in the season, they gave us beautiful front rooms at very moderate pension rates.

We laid our plans for an all-day's excursion on the morrow and were very much disgusted when we woke up to find it raining. We loafed around the house rather disconsolately all the morning, writing letters and playing cards.

After lunch it had stopped raining, though the sky was still overcast. So we curtailed our intended expedition and started out. We betook ourselves to a spot called Montanvert overhanging the Mer de Glace, adorned, of course, by a restaurant, where we had tea and Belle Soeur bought a pair of woolen socks. She was weak on nails in her soles, and the socks, put on over her shoes, were to take their place while crossing the glacier.

There were streams of tourists here coming and going and quantities of guides anxious to take us across, but we assured them that we had had large experience in glaciers and needed no assistance. A timid-looking bearded German overheard us thus assuring the last offer-



Mont Blanc, Glacier des Bossous

ing guide and decided to combine safety and economy by following us. He said no word of thanks, explanation or apology, but constituted himself our shadow. Also, by the grace of God, he came through alive.

The crossing of the Mer de Glace is hummocky and requires climbing. It is also slippery. But there is no danger involved of anything worse than sitting down hard. The continuous procession of tourists passing over makes losing one's way quite out of the question, and the function of the guide is only to lend a steadying hand to the aged and infirm or to persons unsuitably dressed for scrambling. There is nothing at all about the Mer de Glace to justify its reputation. It is simply an average characteristic sort of glacier, very accessible to the general tourist, and safe and easy to walk across.

The path on the other side, after running along the ridge of the lateral moraine for a little distance, takes one down the famous "Mauvais Pas." It may have been "bad" at some prehistoric time, though the vertical distance involved is so small (perhaps a hun-

dred and fifty feet to the surface of the glacier) that it can never have been *very* desperate. But now there are nice steps cut out in the rock and an iron hand-rail let into the cliff to hold on by, and really no one but a cripple, an old lady or a young child could find it dangerous. Nevertheless, the French dramatic instinct has not failed to take advantage of its traditional terrors. Two little boxes for the poor are attached to the rock at the beginning and end of the "Pas" with a request that the traveler express his gratitude to God for his preservation by alms-giving. The whole thing was so delightfully Latin and characteristic that we stopped and contributed.

It was a long way down through the woods and home, and we quickened our steps till we were almost running the last mile or two, for we had a strong interest in dinner and we knew that we were late.

The next morning it was raining again! This was disgusting. We decided, however, that as it had stopped about noon the day before, perhaps it would do so this time. So we ordered our luncheon put up and started

out on the Mont Blanc trail. Besides, I wanted to try the exercise and fresh air cure on a cold I was catching. The microbe had established itself in my throat the morning previous, when I was sitting on the balcony outside my window, waiting for it to stop raining. An old gentleman sitting on *his* balcony directly overhead was sneezing and sneezing with great violence. In the midst of so much fresh air, it did not occur to me to think of infection, till all at once I felt a raw scratchiness in the mucous membrane of my throat, and I knew that the "invasion" had taken place. I tried to drive the beast out with listerine, but unfortunately there was only a spoonful left in the bottle. So then I tried the mountain air. It was my misfortune that it could be had just then only in combination with rain.

It is only just to say that this explanation of the origin of my cold was not accepted by my companions, who preferred to lay it on the weather. But they were all able to bear witness later to the highly contagious nature of the malady. Personally, I was and am convinced that my three months of out-door life in all

weathers had seasoned me beyond any peradventure of catching cold because my shoes were damp.

It was only drizzly, for the most part. When a hard downpour came, we stopped and took shelter under a shed or dense-leaved tree. Some distance up the mountain-side, but still within the tree belt, we came upon a lonely little refreshment hut, where we stopped and ordered coffee and hot milk to go with our cold lunch from the hotel. It was raining pretty hard just then, and we spread out our lunch hour as long as possible, keeping up each other's spirits by a very conscious, but reasonably successful effort. Evidently it looked all right from the outside at least, for when we came to go, the proprietress of the *châlet*, a sad-eyed little Frenchwoman, begged us almost with tears to stay longer,—not to feel that we must order anything more either, but just to stay and not go out in the rain. She would *love* to have us stay, we were young and had *le cœur gai*, and it did her good to look at us and listen to us, although she could not understand what we were saying!

However, though thanking her for her tribute to our gay hearts and not ungrateful (I at least) for that incidental tribute to our extreme youth, we decided it was time to move and pushed on up the mountain-side. After half an hour or more we passed the more elaborate Pavilion de la Pierre Pointue, and then all at once found ourselves on the brink of the Glacier des Bossons.

I do not know whether on a clear day it would have seemed so enormous, so awe-inspiring. The rain had turned into snow drifting lazily down on us. The clouds were all around, above, below. Out of the clouds above flowed that huge ice-mass,—vast, measureless, tossed like waves of the sea suddenly frozen. Down below us the clouds swallowed it again. What we saw was gigantic. Who could tell how much more there might be hidden in the clouds? The Pavilion was lost behind a corner of rocks. It might have been a thousand miles away, and any other trace of humanity as well, for aught that we could see. We seemed to be in the very heart of Nature—huge, untrammelled, primordial.

The cold and the increasing thickness of the snow-storm drove us down, but it was glorious while it lasted.

The next morning at breakfast we observed for the last time the amiable manners of the young Frenchman with the downy moustache who always kissed his father, mother and two sisters on the forehead before sitting down to his coffee, and admired once more the embroidered napkin-covers of the English family. Then we asked for our bill. The sun was really out that morning and the clouds looked as if they might lift, but we did not feel that we could stay longer in Chamonix. Antonio's time in Switzerland was growing very limited, and we must give him a few days to rest at the Châlet Edelweiss before starting on the homeward journey.

The amiable French proprietress blandly presented us with a bill about twice the size agreed upon. Then followed heavy weather. If there is anything under heaven I hate, it is an altercation over a bill, but my three companions stood expectantly beside me, and I *can* be voluble in French when I have to be. So I

girded up my loins and did my duty. Back and forth we hurled the language, up and down we shrugged our shoulders, using hands and eyebrows to intensify our effects. She was much bigger than I, and her voice was louder. Also she had doubtless had more practice. But the Three stood firm behind me to block retreat, and the consciousness of being in the right presumably buoyed me up.

All at once, without the slightest warning of an approaching change of front, the proprietress dropped her blustering voice, yielded the point at issue with an incredible gracefulness, made out the bill anew in the way it ought to be, and devoted the last few minutes of our stay to making an agreeable impression. The clouds were lifting. Ah, we should have a view of Mont Blanc before we left! Quick, François, bring the big telescope and have it all ready. Ah—ah—joy! There go the clouds! There at last is Mont Blanc!

There it was, and we were very glad we did not have to leave Chamonix without seeing it. But aside from this academic satisfaction, Mont Blanc is very disappointing,—a wide, rounded

excrecence on a long mountain range, hardly any higher apparently than the surrounding peaks, some of which are infinitely more picturesque in form. In fact, the dominating feature of the Chamonix scenery is not that broad lumpy saddle-back of Mont Blanc, but the serrated rows of needle peaks called Aiguilles rising black above the snow, uptilted rock-strata worn away by erosion, the most spectacular objects, except the Matterhorn, in all the Alps.

A party who had ascended Mont Blanc the day of our arrival, before the rain came on, and had been imprisoned at the summit ever since, were taking advantage of this first clearing to get down. Through the telescope we could see them plainly—little moving black specks on the snow field, descending towards the Grands Mulets.

We left them presently, Madame and François and the rest of the hotel staff in a perfect ferment of amiability and politeness, and walked up the valley to Argentière, then, sharply turning to the left, followed the diligence road over the Tête Noire.

XVII

GOING over the Tête Noire is another of the things that everybody does, and like most things that are so easy, hardly worth while. I do not mean that there is no good scenery on the road, but there is nothing that quickens the pulse or sets one to breathing deep.

Perhaps I may do less than justice to the Tête Noire road because of my bodily sensations while passing over it. I certainly was not happy that day. The beast in my throat had downed me. I had a headache and a fever, a cold in the head, and an unpleasant sense of collapsibility in the legs.

Every few miles I stopped at some wayside inn or refreshment booth and ordered a liqueur glass of kirsch (which is a local form of liquid fire) and a few lumps of sugar, and, by dipping the sugar in the nostrum, was able little by little to absorb its fieriness, whereby the legs aforementioned acquired an artificial stiffening that carried them a few miles farther.

Antonio was greatly distressed at this immoral method by which I kept going. I think he had visions of my becoming a dipsomaniac in consequence of that day's tipping. If he had only known how unpleasant the kirsch was, he would have been less alarmed.

The day passed somehow. There were showers here and there to add to the rawness of my throat. We passed back into Switzerland about noon. At dinner-time we began arriving at Martignys. There are an indefinite number of them spread out for miles—old town, new town, and railroad station. The last named was our destination. After dinner at the Hotel de la Gare (a function in which I was not personally interested, though I took another kirsch), we boarded a crowded train for Sion. I have seldom been so glad to get anywhere as I was to get to bed in the Sion hotel that night. I was sorry for poor Belle Soeur having to share my room, for I was well aware of the infectious character of the microbe I was harboring, but as they had no more vacant ones (or said they hadn't), there seemed to be no help for it.

The next day I felt worse. Belle Soeur nobly offered to stay with me at Sion till I got well and let the boys continue the trip without us. But I did not want to break up the party, and knowing I was bound to be miserable that day *anywhere*, decided it might as well be on the road. So Frater filled his pocket flask with kirsch instead of cognac, and off we started over the Rawyl.

Now, the Rawyl is one of the least traveled passes in Switzerland. Baedeker, who takes it in the reverse direction from ours, gives a very inadequate description of the path, and says it takes ten and a half hours from Lenk to Sion, and that a guide is desirable. We ought to have taken warning from that ten and a half hours, for Baedeker's times allow for no stops and assume a pretty swinging gait. But we wanted to go home that way, and we trusted to luck.

We did not get such an early start as we intended, and we took the wrong road out of Sion and walked an extra mile or so before we got set right. Those of us who had been brave enough to dig through the Swiss histories were

mildly interested in the roofless, windowless, grinning skulls of castles that crowned the hill-tops over the town, the Bishop's and the Baron's. They used to have such lively times in Sion between their two sets of tyrants!

As always, it was sizzling hot in the Rhone valley, and we were glad as our road lifted us out of it. We went through a fine fruit belt as we rose, and I regret to say we plucked a plum or a pear or an apple quite frequently as we walked along.

At Ayent, about half-past ten, we came to what we knew was the last settlement. Here we fortified ourselves with a second *café-au-lait*, and laid in a stock of bread, sweet chocolate and hard-boiled eggs. Then we turned our backs on civilization and went on. We knew we had to leave the wagon road soon, but were in great doubt where, till a very intelligent peasant came along who gave us directions we could really follow. He also told us that we were two days' journey from Lenk—which hardly sounded encouraging.

That day seemed to me about a hundred years long. Would there never be an end to this

picking up of one foot and setting down of the other? And I had to keep *pushing* the old things so to make them move! No wonder I was tired. My head weighed about a ton, and had a red-hot and very tight iron band around it. And every bone in my body ached. Oh, *bless* the old man at Chamonix! At Ayent I had happened to look in a glass that hung on the dining-room wall, and the reflection I saw fairly frightened me for its ugliness. Did that shiny red nose, those bleary red eyes, that blotchy red face really belong to *me*?

By lunch-time we were among the high pastures and had opened up a pretty broad view of the Valais mountains, our old friends around Zermatt on the other side of the Rhone. We came upon a spring which had been piped to a trough for the cattle, and, as we were very thirsty, thought we would risk drinking from it, when, fortunately, we looked closer and saw the water was alive with long squirming hair-thin eels! They were the most uncanny-looking beasts I almost ever saw. Antonio suggested picking them out, as they were extremely visible, and drinking the expurgated water, but some-

body objected that the water must be full of their eggs and that it would be so unpleasant to have them hatch—afterwards. So we ate our chocolate and hard-boiled eggs and bread, and kept our thirst for future reference.

We felt that we must surely come upon the cattle pretty soon and that then we could buy some milk. The afternoon was half gone, however, before we saw a trace of anything alive, and then it was a very small boy leading a pig way off in the distance. We hailed him and with some difficulty made him understand that we wanted to buy milk. The patois of that region is a fearful and wonderful thing. He agreed to lead us to the cow châlets, but as it was away from our path, and seemed very, very far, we were several times on the point of giving up the quest. However, he kept encouraging us, assuring us we were nearly there, and finally emerging over a grassy shoulder, we came upon the herd of several hundred cows in a sort of pocket.

It was the milking hour, and we could not have struck it better for our wants. The headman, or Senn, I suppose, escorted us up to the

cheese-hut and gave us stools to sit on, while he ladled out foamy warm milk from a bucket in a half gourd and passed it first to one and then another, apologizing for his lack of conveniences. Imagine a dozen men living up there for four months on end with never a cup or a bowl or a ladle among them except this solitary gourd!

There were two huge iron caldrons under which fires were burning and into which the men poured their buckets of milk as they brought them in. This was to make cheese. We asked them to sell us some, but they said they were not allowed to. They gave us, however, a bit of the old, last year's cheese which they ate themselves and declined any remuneration for it. As it was a present, it would be impolite to say what we thought of it.

All the men crowded into the hut and gazed at us with interest, but only the two intelligent ones in charge did any talking. Perhaps the others spoke only patois, but they were of the utterly stupid heavy type I have already referred to.

We asked about our route, and they told us

it was absolutely out of the question for us to get over the pass that day, as we were not more than half way, and it was already four o'clock. We must pass the night at the châteaux of Nieder Rawyl, the last pastures on this side of the summit. Would the people there give us shelter, I asked. The man smiled and shrugged his shoulders. "They will have to," he said.

Very much refreshed by the milk and the little rest, we bade farewell to our friends and made our way back to our path, then onward at a quickened pace, lest darkness come upon us before we reached the huts of Nieder Rawyl. We were getting pretty high now, and the wind that blew down from the snow belt made us feel that a night in the open air would not be a pleasant experience.

For me, the last hour of walking that afternoon was a nightmare, my head swimming with weakness and fever, my feet staggering foolishly. I kept on because I had to. Fortunately, we had no difficult climbing to do, nothing requiring steadiness, no precipices to skirt, just a steep, stony path.

About six o'clock we came in sight of a group

of stone cheese and cattle huts, which we knew must be what we were in search of. The milking and cheese-making were just over, and a group of men were standing in a doorway. We went up and addressed the most intelligent-looking. Could they give us shelter for the night? The sun had already set behind the mountains, the long shadows were falling over the valley. It was perfectly obvious that we could not go on into that bare region of rock and snow beyond. Very gravely and courteously the head-man assured us that he had no way of making us comfortable, but that what they had was at our service.

He led us to a little one-room stone hut. It had no windows, and the door consisted of a couple of boards to keep the cattle from straying in, I suppose. It did not keep out the mountain wind, but as there was no other means of ventilation, perhaps it was as well. There was a raised stone platform to build a fire on. Our host brought us some sticks and started them blazing and hung an iron kettle full of milk over the fire to heat for us. He owned a granite-ware cup and a sort of spoon whittled

from a cow's horn, which he placed at our service. There was a long wooden bench which we drew up in front of the fire and sat on while we made our supper of sweet chocolate and hot milk. Our bread and eggs were gone by now.

About half the hut was occupied by a raised wooden sleeping platform, covered with musty-looking hay. Four greasy gray blankets were there, too, which were put at our disposal. They were not inviting-looking, but the bitter Alpine cold was getting into our bones, and we were in no position to pick and choose. We did not even take our shoes off, but each wrapping a blanket outside of whatever coats and wraps we had with us, disposed ourselves on the hay pile and awaited slumber. Personally, I could not have held up my head another minute if the world had been coming to an end. But tired as I was, I could not sleep.

Our host and another man came in and sat on the bench, heated milk and drank it with their supper, which consisted of hunks of black bread and strips of last year's cheese, which they cut off with their pocket-knives from a

stone-hard slab. When they had finished eating they still sat on the bench and kept up a desultory talk. Hours passed and they still stayed. At last one of them lay down on the platform by the embers of the fire and the other stretched himself out on the bench. Whether they slept or not I cannot say, but their conversation ceased. We had been wondering why they stayed so late, but it dawned upon us then that, having given us their beds and blankets, they had no place else to go. Belle Soeur and I exchanged whispered comments still from time to time, but at last she also went to sleep. Frater and Antonio had dropped off first of all like nice tired children.

After this I kept vigil with the fleas. Their name was legion. I have met this voracious animal in various parts of the world, Italy, Egypt, California and Japan, but never in such concentrated swarms! What between them and my headache and fever, and the place I was in, and the company I was keeping, I did not succeed in forgetting my miseries till daylight was appearing wanly in the doorway.

There had been the pigs, too. It seems our

hut was built on a steep slope, and though we had entered it from the level of the ground, in the back it had a basement. This was occupied by the pigs. And surely those brutes must have had uneasy consciences, for all night long they kept up the most unholy noises! There were also waves of odor from the piggery, which surged up to us from time to time.

Our hosts had gone out about their work when I woke up, and my companions were starting the fire for breakfast. I did not feel very gay, but the fever was gone and my head was very much clearer, especially after I had bathed it in the chilly brook outside. We ate some more chocolate and drank some more milk and were ready to set out on our way.

When we wished to settle for our entertainment, we found our hosts were charging only for the milk we had consumed, and were quite dazzled by our munificence in adding five francs for lodging. Evidently they did not expect it in the least, and had given up their beds and blankets to us in a spirit of true hospitality.

One of the men offered to show us the path if we could wait about half an hour till he fin-

ished his work, but as we had had no great difficulty in finding the path so far, we fallaciously argued that it would be the same the rest of the way, and declined with thanks.

About half a mile beyond the huts the path came to an abrupt end at the beginning of an open meadow, bounded on the far side by a wall of rock. Somewhere beyond that meadow the path began again and led up the rock wall into the Alpine wilderness above. But where? No scanning by the eye could reveal it. Each of us had a different theory as to likelihood. We crossed the meadow and skirted the base of the cliff looking for that vanished path.

At the extreme right, a stream tumbled down a gully in a series of cataracts. By the near bank there had been a slide of stones and loose earth, making a place several hundred feet in height, which, though terrifically steep, was not, like most of the wall, absolutely perpendicular. Above this we saw a horizontal line in the rock, which *might* be the path.

Somewhat dubiously we decided to try. I never encountered anything more discouraging than that slide of loose stones. With every

step we took upward we slid back about nine-tenths of a step. Sometimes more. And we were never sure that we would be able to stop ourselves till we struck bottom. The higher we went, the more precarious and crumbly it became. We clambered on all fours. Belle Soeur and I could never have gotten up if the boys had not helped us. Antonio dubbed it the Gutter Spout of Heaven. I don't know about the Heaven part, but the Gutter Spout was all right.

We kept encouraging each other with the nearer approach of that horizontal line in the rocks. When at last we got there, breathless and exhausted, we found it was *not* a path, but merely a natural ledge. How far it led, or whether it led *anywhere*, we did not know.

Belle Soeur's heart was making itself felt just then, so we had to sit down to let her recover, and while doing so, we held a council of war. We were about half-way up the rock wall now, and none of us wanted to throw away all the time and labor we had put in getting there by going back. Also, since the waterfall marked the extreme right-hand boundary of the

rock wall, the path, if it existed at all, must lie to the left. Therefore, by following our hard-won ledge to the left, we should cross the path,—unless indeed the ledge came to an end too soon. At all events we decided it was worth trying, so as soon as Belle Soeur's heart had returned to the normal, we started. After edging our way along the ledge in a gingerly fashion for about fifteen minutes, our faith was rewarded, for we made out an unmistakable path zigzagging upward, and had no further difficulty in reaching it.

The joy of finding one's path again is so great that I do not know but it makes worth while having lost it! With renewed vigor we climbed upward to the plateau-like region of snow drifts and rock ledges that awaited us, which some ironist has named the "Plain of Roses." We should have had fine views of the Valais mountains but for the clouds which enveloped them. Our immediate foreground was wild and desolate enough, but as none of the peaks were more than two thousand feet higher than we were, our views lacked grandeur of outline. For pure bleak Alpine solitude,

though, the walk of the next few hours was unrivaled.

We quenched our thirst with handfuls of snow from the virgin drifts around us. This is said to be a bad thing to do, but we experienced no ill effects either on this or other occasions. At noon we sat down on a rock and ate cheese and chocolate. This was the fourth meal we had made from this combination of foodstuffs, with the addition of milk at the second and third, bread at the first and hard-boiled eggs at the first and second. This time there were no accessories. None of us felt much of a craving for either cheese or chocolate for some time thereafter.

The summit of the pass (just under eight thousand feet) is marked by a shelter hut and a great wooden cross, whose bare arms, stretched out over the wilderness of rock and snow, have a singular impressiveness. The cross marks the boundary between the cantons of Valais and Berne.

Another hour's walking, past a cold gray Alpine lake, brought us to the northern edge of the plateau, where the green and fertile Sim-

mental lay spread out at our feet between the piled-up Bernese mountains.

Our path plunged down steeply now, and about three o'clock we reached the outpost of civilization, what Baedeker calls a rustic inn—at Iffigen Alp. We asked with lively interest what they had to eat and found they had neither meat nor eggs. What *did* they have, then? Coffee, milk, bread, butter, honey and cheese.

We balked at the last-named, but ordered a large supply of everything else. As soon as the maid brought it in, we told her to begin getting ready a second installment just as large. And how we did eat! Was *ever* anything so good as that bread and butter and honey, except the long drafts of *café-au-lait* that washed it down?

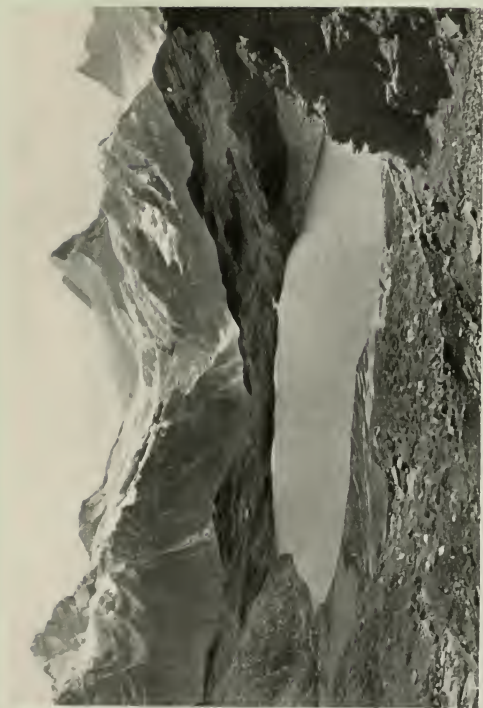
All day long my health had been improving and my cold disappearing, and this ambrosial meal seemed to complete the cure. We asked for soap, water and towels, combed our hair before a looking-glass, put on clean collars, and looked so respectable that we hardly knew each other. For myself, I felt as if I had just returned to life and the joy of it from a most

unpleasant dream. The treatment I had given my influenza had been heroic,—a sort of kill-or-cure. But it had happened to cure, and in a phenomenally short time. The rest of the family, who took their share comfortably at home, also took longer to get over it.

Greatly refreshed, we left the “rustic inn” of blessed memory and swung happily down the path past the pretty Iffigen water-falls. We soon found ourselves on a wagon-road which led us in the course of a few miles to Lenk, a village of considerable size with thermal springs and the attendant hotels and health-seekers. The specialty here is throat and nose trouble.

We spent the night at Lenk and in the morning walked the eight and a half miles down the valley to Zweisimmen.

The Simmenthal is famous for its cattle, and as we happened to have struck the day on which they were coming home from the high pastures, the whole eight and a half miles was through a procession of moist milky cattle. Sometimes they filled the road so that it required ingenuity to get past. They were big,



Bach Lake (Foothorn Route)

handsome, sleek creatures, and seemed to be perfectly gentle.

The Rawyl wilderness separates not only the two cantons, but the two languages as with a sharp knife. There is no lapping over at the edges. The herdsmen at Nieder Rawyl spoke French, but no German, and the waitress at Iffigen Alp spoke German and never a word of French.

Zweisimmen is the railway terminus. Here we took train to Spiez, and hence to Interlaken and home in the usual manner.

Thus ended the second trip.

XVIII

THE next eight days we consecrated, none too joyously, to the influenza. Frater and Belle Soeur came down with it almost immediately and simultaneously and were put in quarantine. We were determined, if possible, to protect the Mother from contagion, as a cold is a long and serious matter with her. So the two invalids were shut up in the dining-room with books and easy-chairs and a cribbage-board and had their meals served there till they emerged from the fever and sneezing stage. Just as they were convalescent, the two Babes and the domestic staff got it, but in a very light form. Then Antonio, who had been boasting of his immunity, succumbed and had to postpone his intended departure. At last everybody emerged triumphant from quarantine. And it had been successful. The Mother escaped contagion.

Antonio was to leave for Paris, Liverpool and New York next day, the 14th of Septem-

ber, and we were all very sad at the thought of the first break in our happy family. Also we wanted to make the most of the remaining time, so (it sounds singularly idiotic written down in black and white after this lapse of sobering time) we sat up all night! The Mother retired about midnight. Frater had already done so, but we decided he had better get up.

Then followed an interesting "rough-house" in which the young men took the star rôles and Belle Soeur and I acted as chorus. It would be difficult to give an adequate history of the night, but it involved an exciting amount of lockings out and lockings in, climbing to the second-story balcony, and the smashing of a kitchen window by a group of "outs" who wished to be in. This brought Anna and Suzanne to their windows above in great excitement, followed by some disgust when they learned it was only "*Les Messieurs qui s'amuse-ent.*"

Between three and four we invaded the kitchen and made coffee and ate up the cake on hand. Then we played cards till breakfast time. Subsequently, most of those concerned

took a nap. The housekeeper and mother of a family, however, was unable to.

Belle Soeur also was unable to slumber long, as she had promised to produce a birthday cake before noon. For this same day which was to witness the flitting of Antonio was further made notable as the eighth anniversary of the appearance on this mundane stage of the Elder Babe. It had been arranged that the birthday feast, including ice-cream from the village confectioner's and the birthday cake with its eight candles, was to occur at midday, so that Antonio might take part in it.

It was not a wonderfully gay little party, though we strove to make it so, for we all felt that this was the beginning of the end of a fairy-story summer, the breaking up of our little band of Arcadians.

It was raining in doleful sympathy as we walked down to the station with the departing Antonio and stood on the platform watching the chunky little train that bore him away to the every-day workaday world outside of Switzerland.

We missed him very much. The "tropical

bird," as we had occasionally called him, had certainly brought an element of color and brilliancy into our gray Anglo-Saxon lives.

The next day we had a diversion in the shape of an entirely unexpected call from an American friend, who stayed to dinner and spent the evening with us, but flitted away by an early train the following morning.

It was a very blue and brilliant morning (the rainclouds all dissolved and scattered), and we set forth on the Elder Babe's real birthday party, which the weather and Antonio's departure had made impossible on the day itself. It was to be a glacier party and involve a guide and roping!

We picked out the guide haphazard from the little group we passed just before reaching the Upper Glacier. He was a heavily-bearded, short, but powerfully built man of between forty-five and fifty, and his name was Fritz Biner. We were destined to know him much better a little later.

The Mother started out with us, but decided she was not equal to the trip, so we left her with her share of the lunch at the Châlet Milch-

bach on the lateral moraine, from the veranda of which she could watch our progress.

We turned over the small boy to the special care of the guide, who fastened their two waists together with his rope. Then, for nearly a thousand feet, we scrambled up the right bank of the glacier, with the occasional aid of ladders fastened to the rock, till we reached the level part above the ice-fall, where the trail crosses to the Gleckstein Club hut and the summit of the Wetterhorn. Here, on the edge of the glacier, we sat down and ate our luncheon.

Then we were all roped together and proceeded to the opposite side of the hummocky, but not perilous, glacier, whence, leaving the trail to the summit, we followed a narrow goat path on a horizontal ledge of the Wetterhorn cliff known as the Enge. It was nothing that presented any terrors to the older members of the party, who by this time had their heads pretty well seasoned against dizziness, but it would have made the writer extremely nervous to conduct her small son along such a ledge, in view of the (probably) thousand-foot drop at

our left, had he not been securely roped fore and aft.

The young person in question, though enjoying himself greatly, was clearly troubled by a little doubt whether this highly delectable roping had not been gotten up as part of the stage-setting to amuse *him* and not because it was necessary. He had imbibed a fine scorn for the tourists who rope themselves to a guide while ascending the pleasant path to the Châlet Milchbach, just so as to say they have done it, and he clearly did not wish to belong to any such tribe himself. However, when we had gotten almost to the end of the ledge and were just about to unfasten the ropes, the sheer drop beneath us having decreased to perhaps fifty feet, the Babe, growing careless, twisted his feet somehow, slipped and slid straight out in the air and was brought up sharply by the rope. This happy incident removed all doubt from his mind and persuaded him, as nothing else could have done, that the roping had been a genuine mountaineering necessity!

Down among the grassy pastures at the end of the Enge we found the Mother waiting for

us (who fortunately for her peace of mind had *not* seen the falling incident), and the united family tramped home together in great content.

Not, however, till we had made a partial engagement with Fritz Biner. We asked him whether the end of the following week would be too late in the season to go over the Strahl-egg; for we had developed an ambition to wind up our last long pedestrian trip, which we were about to start on, with a bit of genuine mountaineering. He assured us it would not be and expressed a desire to act as our guide. We politely voiced the pleasure it would give us to have him, but indicated that it would seem simpler to take a guide from the Grimsel than to have him come over to meet us there. He replied justly that if a Grimsel guide should accompany us to Grindelwald, he would have to go back again, which would be just as far as for him to go over after us. He further suggested that at the Grimsel they would decline to take us over without two guides, or at all events a guide and a porter, whereas he, having seen what expert climbers we were (!), would gladly undertake to bring us over single-handed. This

argument appealed to us, though we left the matter open that day in order to make inquiries concerning Biner's reputation. The result being favorable, we arranged to telegraph him from Andermatt what day he was to meet us at the Grimsel.

XIX

TWO days later, we were once more on the road, Frater, Belle Soeur and I. We were going up over the Faulhorn to Lake Brienz on the other side, and just because it was so easy to step out of our back door and start up the slope and we had no prick of a train to catch, we lingered around over last words and last preparations a good hour longer than we should have done. And for some reason that day we did not walk with our usual snap. So we reached the summit at tea-time instead of at lunch-time.

It had been a very beautiful trip up, with the Grindelwald valley sinking lower and lower, and the white peaks behind the Eiger and Wetterhorn opening up more and more. The Schreckhörner are wonderfully impressive from this view and the Finsteraarhorn attains nearly the majesty that belongs to it. The early part of the way the prospect is framed by the fir trees through which one looks. Above the tree belt the foreground is still by no means

lacking in picturesque incidents, chief among which are the cold round little Bach lake and the jagged Röthihorn and Simelihorn peaks.

On the summit, which is nearly nine thousand feet high, there is a very solid little stone hotel constructed to withstand the terrible storms which sweep over so exposed a spot. Toward Lake Brienz the drop is very steep,—almost precipitate at first. One looks way over to Lake Lucerne, Pilatus and Rigi. But when we came there that region was covered with fleecy white clouds, which looked like a great churned-up foamy lake, with little mountain-peak islands rising above it here and there. The effect was singularly beautiful—much more so than any topographic clearness could have been.

As we drank our tea and enjoyed the view, we made inquiries of the proprietor as to our path downward to Giessbach on Lake Brienz. He tried to dissuade us from attempting it, saying the path was long, rough, and hard to find, and we could not possibly get there before dark. He said that professional delicacy prevented his urging us to remain where we were overnight, which would obviously be the most

sensible thing to do, so he would suggest our going to the Schynige Platte, where we *could* arrive before dark and have a fine path all the way. The Schynige Platte is an excursion place on a lower spur of the Faulhorn ridge, connected by rack and pinion railway with Interlaken. We had resolutely kept away from it all summer and had no notion of visiting it now. Neither did we want to stay all night at the Faulhorn. So we resolved to try for Giessbach and trust to luck to get *some* shelter if we did not make our destination.

The proprietor disapprovingly pointed out our route as far as he could. No one had been that way for some days, and in the meantime there had been a heavy fall of snow, so the first part of our progress was not rapid, as we sunk half-way to the knees at each step.

After passing a curious rocky pinnacle like an upward-pointing finger, which had been our first land-mark, we got rid of the snow and were able to descend quite rapidly across a rock-strewn plain. It was here that we heard the Whistling Marmots and marked one more of our life ambitions achieved.

I do not know why we had yearned so intensely all summer for whistling marmots, but we had,—even more than for edelweiss, which is too obvious. Baedeker has a way of mentioning them in very solitary places like the Gries Pass or the Rawyl, but we had never met them as scheduled. We had seen a marmot in captivity in Grindelwald, but he was a very sad and depressed little furry beast who would never have dreamed of whistling. But here, when we were least thinking of them, we must have walked right into a marmot colony. We heard their little voices calling to each other, whistling unmistakably, and saw them scurrying to their holes among the rocks as we approached.

We lost our trail a dozen times, but having some abandoned cheese huts just above the woods to direct ourselves to, it did not greatly matter.

Once among the trees, how dark it got all of a sudden! We took the wrong path and found ourselves on the edge of nothing, retraced our steps and started again. We were going just as fast as we could, racing with the darkness,

but we soon realized that, so far as Giessbach was concerned, the race would be a losing one. It was so piercingly cold that a night in the open air sounded painful, and we kept on in the hope of finding *something*.

Just in the last moment of twilight we emerged from the thick woods onto a grassy shoulder upon which was an empty cow-shed. Above it was a loft full of hay. On the ground was a ladder. Nothing was locked. Perhaps fifteen hundred feet below us we could see the roofs of a group of huts, which appeared to be inhabited—about such a place as Nieder Rawyl. It was very doubtful if we could find our way down to them through the woods, so dark had it become, and we decided that a clean hayloft to ourselves would be better than the hospitality they could offer anyhow. So we decided to stay. Fortunately we had ample left from our luncheon to serve us for supper, and by skimping a bit, we could save something for breakfast.

We spent a long time trying to start a bonfire at which to warm ourselves and dry our snow-wet shoes. It could have been done by

using loose boards which we saw lying around outside, but we had conscientious scruples against making ourselves quite so much at home (or *some* of us had) and tried to construct the fire from brush gathered in the woods, all of which appeared to be water-soaked.

At last, however, Frater's bonfire skill triumphed, and we sat down around a cheerful little blaze and steamed out our very chilly water-logged shoes and dress skirts and watched the moon rise over the mountain top. Then, when sufficiently warm, dry and sleepy, we climbed up the ladder into the loft, buried ourselves deep in the hay, and were soon lost to consciousness.

Anybody who has a lingering idea that there is something poetic in sleeping among the fragrant hay of a loft, had better revise his views. It is distinctly tickly and scratchy and full of dust. And the rats run in and out. However, it is clean and warm, and if you're tired enough, it will serve.

In the early gloaming we were awakened by voices outside. Two men were circumnavigating our hut engaged in earnest discussion.

Probably they belonged in the huts below, had seen our bonfire the night before and had come up to find out what damage had been done. Being satisfied on this point, they departed. The ladder was standing against the side of the barn where the loft door was and Belle Soeur's alpenstock was lying on the ground below, so they must have known we were still there, but they did nothing to disturb us. Meanwhile we, having nothing to gain by an interview, lay low and held our peace. Each of us thought that the other two were asleep and he or she was the only moral coward, but we found later that we were three of a kind! Really, though, the consciousness of being a trespasser *does* put one at a disadvantage, and the inability to communicate freely with a patois-speaking peasantry increases the handicap.

After our involuntary hosts had taken themselves away, we emerged from our several nests and picked the wisps of hay from each other. It was very cold and gray at that hour, and the inadequate fragments of stale sandwiches left from the day before were not the most cheer-

ing sort of breakfast. When we had consumed the last crumb and performed scanty ablutions in an ice-water brook near by and left everything snug and tight at our late lodgings, we started downward. Our muscles were painfully stiff at first, but gradually limbered up.

About nine o'clock we reached an outlying refreshment house overhanging the Giessbach, whose course we had been following for some time, and here we stopped for a belated, but much appreciated, *café-au-lait*.

The rest of the day was, from the point of view of a trio of tramps who had spent the night in a hayloft after forgathering with whistling marmots, distinctly civilized and commonplace. We reached the level of Lake Brienz and skirted it to the upper end where the Aar flows in from the Meiringen Valley. We cut across to the Brünig Pass road and followed the gentle grade upward, lunching late (in view of the nine o'clock breakfast) at a roadside restaurant.

Not only railroad and carriages, but even automobiles go over the Brünig, so it can be im-



Breiz Village and Lake

1940

1941

agined that it is not strenuous climbing, nor are its views, though attractive, grandiose.

After leaving the summit, we fairly annihilated space, and by dinner-time had reached the village rejoicing in the euphonious name of Giswil. We put up at a rather comfortable inn where we seemed to be the only guests, but the proprietor's children appeared so incredibly numerous that we decided he had gone into the hotel business to get their groceries at trade rates.

I asked the maid waiting on us at dinner what time the train left for Lucerne in the morning. She said she wasn't sure, and would I come down and examine the time-table in the lower hall? It was a very large and complex sheet, some three feet by six, but I thought I could master a time-table—*any* time-table. We all have our little vanities. I took plenty of time at it and at last found the column and the correct direction and emerged triumphant with the information that the train left at 7.15, and accordingly gave careful directions that our coffee was to be ready at 6.30 and we were to be called at 6.

Things were just a trifle late next morning, and as we were not sure of the distance to the station, we bolted our breakfast and hurried about the paying of our bill and walked at an uncomfortably rapid gait, arriving with just the desirable five minutes to spare, according to our watches. To our surprise the ticket office was closed. So were the baggage office and the freight office. There was not an employee in sight. Were our watches wrong? Had the train already left? Even so, it seemed incredible that the premises could have been completely deserted so quickly. At last, having nothing else to do, I began to study the timetables on the walls. And then I made a discovery. The train we were trying to take ran only on Sundays and the 12th of May, and it wasn't either! The regular week-day train wasn't due for an hour.

I wish to say that the conduct of my companions at this juncture was truly magnanimous. The laugh was very distinctly on me, but they didn't laugh it. They expended all their risibility on the 12th of May. That annual date on which our train ran seemed to tickle their

funny-bones exquisitely. They never once reproached me for the too-hastily swallowed coffee and the precious minutes of sleep that might have been, but wandered off to visit the cemetery or some such cheerful spot, while I read Baedeker and kept guard over the knapsacks in the waiting-room.

If there *had* been a train when we thought and we had only five minutes before it was due, we certainly should have missed it, for I think it took the station-master a good twenty minutes to make out our tickets. They involved a whole ten miles of railroad travel from Giswil to Alpnachstad, and a boat trip from there to Lucerne. The tickets were long folding affairs in many sections, as for a trip across the continent, filled in at many places with writing (there was also a book in which the poor man had to write an extraordinary amount), and I think they cost us eighteen cents apiece!

The approach to Lucerne by boat instead of by train must be a very pleasant one in any respectable sort of weather, but our day had turned into a gray drizzle with a gale of freezing wind. Mists and clouds shut out all the

mountains, and the face of the lake was lashed into a sort of impotent baby fury. It was this kind of a day, I am sure, when Gesler had Tell unbound to take charge of the imperiled rowboat. It was not perilous on a modern lake passenger boat, but neither was it joyous.



Lucerne, Old Covered Bridge and Water Tower

XX

WHEN we arrived at Lucerne nobody shanghaied us in the pleasant Geneva way, and as it was not even lunch-time, we resolved to walk about and explore the town before deciding where to lodge. We fed the ducks and swans, wandered over the covered wooden bridge inspecting the quaint old paintings of the Dance of Death, beat around through the older part of the town, and all at once coming back to the river, beheld the Gasthaus zu Pfistern.

We had no sooner seen it than we recognized our fate. The wall toward us was covered with frescoes representing a great tree spreading from cellar to garret, from whose branches, instead of fruit, hung coats of arms. Away up near the top in very big figures was the date 1579. Down below stood a gigantic warrior in coat of mail with curling plumes. He was a very satisfying warrior. The hotel was built directly upon the river's brink and its lowest

story was hollowed out in lovely arcades, where a fruit market was held.

Let no one suppose it was a stylish hotel. It had been chosen as the headquarters of the non-commissioned officers of the artillery regiment stationed at Lucerne. The dining-room was full of cartridges and flags belonging to them and trophies of the Schützenfest societies which also met there. Otherwise I imagine the patronage was chiefly from the smaller class of commercial travelers. Of tourists, there was never a hint.

How we reveled in it! The clean little bedrooms looked out pleasantly over the river and city. But it was the dining-room that charmed us most, with its great blackened old sideboard twenty feet broad and the red wine poured from huge stoneware flagons. They had a genius of a cook at that place and another genius presiding over the dining-room. I know not whether she was an employee or the proprietor's wife or daughter, but she was a most cheerful, capable, tactful young woman who put everyone in a good humor on the spot. She told us something of the history of the house. It had

been built in 1579 as a guildhall for the bakers, whose ancient name, now obsolete, was Pfistern. The original frescoring had been preserved outside, with only the necessary touching up from time to time. This great dining-room, with its huge rafters and lofty ceiling, had been the original meeting-place of the craftsmen. Except that she was evidently a very busy person, I think we should have lingered to talk to her half the afternoon instead of going out to see the city.

Once outside we did, perforce, *faute de mieux*, what everybody does, visited the ghastly War and Peace Museum, the curio shops and Thorwaldsen's Lion.

The next morning was scheduled for the ascent of Rigi, but the weather continued too thick. We spent the forenoon about Lucerne, shopping, having a look at the old city ramparts and the two-spired church. We still had a lingering hope that it might clear off in time for us to go up Rigi by rail. But it did not, and we took an afternoon steamer for Tell's Chapel, which marks the spot where he is supposed to have jumped ashore that day of the storm, pushing

away the boat with his foot as he did so, and thus escaping Gesler's vengeance and getting the chance to arouse the slumbering revolt against Austrian tyranny.

The Tell Chapel, with its paintings of incidents in Tell's life, is a sort of national pilgrimage spot whose sacredness is not greatly reduced by the fact that all educated Swiss now admit that Tell himself was a myth. It is only sentimental foreigners who know nothing about him but his name and the apple story and perhaps Schiller's play, who insist on believing in his reality.

From the chapel we walked along the very beautiful Axenstrasse that skirts the lake to its terminus at Flüelen, regretting the clouds which shut out all but the nearest mountains. Thence we continued by ordinary highroad to Altdorf, where the hat and apple incidents are supposed to have taken place. They have a rather fine but aggressively modern statue of Tell and his little son (erected in 1895) in the village square. During the summer the villagers play Schiller's Tell, once a week, I think. We had intended to time our visit to Altdorf for one of

these representations. But the week devoted to influenza had delayed us just too long, and the dramatic season was over. The place is so accessible to tourist routes that the play has probably become sophisticated anyhow.

We dined that evening at an inn near the station and played cards to keep awake till the St. Gotthard train came along. It was a slow and crowded train, and we were very glad to arrive about 11 P. M. at Goschenen and follow the porter of the Lion to that very excellent hotel.

Next morning we were up betimes and starting afoot over the St. Gotthard carriage road. It is a very fine piece of engineering, zigzagging back and forth in long loops to keep the grade easy. The scenery is, like that of the Simplon, Tête Noire and other carriage roads, picturesque rather than magnificent. One of the chief scenic elements is furnished by the Reuss, a foamy mountain stream whose course the road follows, the interest culminating at the famous Devil's Bridge.

Everybody knows the story which has been attached, with local modifications, to numerous

other bridges and buildings, about the engineer who, finding his task too great for human skill, invoked the aid of the Prince of Darkness. This potentate gave his assistance in return for the soul of the first passenger who should cross the bridge. Whereupon the engineer, taking a mean advantage of the Devil's confiding nature, drove over a dog.

On the face of the rock above the bridge there is a very crude painting much reproduced on local postal cards of his Satanic Majesty, very black, with horns and tail and breathing fire from his nostrils, jumping back in surprised disgust before the polka-dotted animal of uncertain species who is trotting across the bridge.

What interested us more than the hackneyed devil legends was the armored gate with loopholes for musketry, whereby the Swiss government can, when it chooses, effectually close this road. In connection with the mountain batteries known to exist on surrounding heights, this gate would seem to make it practically impossible for an invading army to get by.

While discussing the thoroughness of the Swiss defenses, we recalled the death of an

5. 10. 1914



The Banks of the Reuss, Saint Gothard Pass

Italian staff-officer a few weeks before who had "accidentally fallen off of a precipice" while taking notes in the forbidden Swiss zone, and we decided we did not care to explore the nearby heights.

Not far from here was the scene of a fight during the Napoleonic wars, and a monument with an inscription in exotic characters is dedicated to the Russians who fell there.

At Andermatt quite a large detachment of troops is stationed, and indeed we met members of the Swiss citizen soldiery all along this road.

It was our intention to go to the summit of the pass and then return to Hospenthal for the night, but a thick snowstorm shut in around us, and at the fork, which we afterwards learned was only about a mile from the Hospice at the summit, we evidently took the wrong branch, and arriving nowhere, grew discouraged and turned back. We lost nothing in the way of scenery, as it was impossible to see ten feet in any direction.

At a considerably lower level we came upon a little road-house and entered to get thawed

out. Frater and I called for hot milk, but Belle Soeur rashly ordered coffee. I do not know of what strange herb this drink was brewed. Certainly not the coffee bean. We suspected catnip mixed with a decoction of hay. The color was green and the flavor incredibly unattractive. Belle Soeur decided that she also preferred milk.

We put up that night at the Hotel de la Poste in Hospenthal, than which I never saw a cleaner nor more severely plain little inn. The postmaster's wife ran it, and we found her a most admirable Hausfrau. The postmaster was, I don't doubt, a most worthy character also, but he and I had a battle royal over my mail because I had no passport to claim it with. I told him a visiting card was enough at Geneva or Lucerne, and he said the postal authorities there must be very lax. I showed him Frater's passport, which he said was all right for *him*, but no good for *me*. However, he handed me out my letters after a while, but declined to turn over a package which Anna, in a characteristic spasm of caution, had had the unhappy thought of registering. I knew

just what articles it contained and told him in detail, even to the darns, requesting him to open the package if he wished to verify my statement. This suggestion seemed to alarm the old man, and he turned it over to me intact, fortifying himself only by taking my signature and address in a dozen or so different places. But he regarded me with strong disapproval, and frowned when we met, and I suspect his kind old wife put an extra egg or so into the omelet to make up!

Hospenthal is a rather quaint little village dominated by a robber baron's castle—at least, I think he was a robber baron. Anyhow it makes a good photograph, and we took several next morning as we started out, rejoicing in sunshine and blue sky.

We bought some black bread and cheese to carry along for luncheon (all we could get, but it turned out delicious—no hardship at all), had the village shoemaker drive some new nails into our soles, and swung off gayly to the right on the Furka Pass road. This, with the Grimsel, is one of the most interesting of the carriage-road passes, the scenery toward the end

being quite wild and Alpine. The sparkingly clear and bracing atmosphere added much of course to our enjoyment.

At a road-house where we stopped to get something liquid after the dryness of our admirable bread and cheese, we found the wall adorned by a charcoal cartoon of slightly bibulous aspect, left probably by some traveling artist in lieu of paying his bill, and the following ingenious poem:

“Das Wasser ist von jeder Zeit
Die Best von aller Menschengaben.
Mir aber lehrt Bescheidenheit
Man muss nicht stets vom Besten haben.”

Which may be translated: Water is at all times the best of all the gifts to man. Modesty, however, teaches us that we should not always take the best.

We had intended stopping for the night at the hotel on the summit of the pass, but were so unfavorably impressed by the financial shiftiness of the polyglot clerk who airily told us that he spoke equally well “*französisch, englisch, italienisch—Was Sie wollen,*” and tried to

double the Baedeker prices on us, that we turned him down and walked on. Truth to tell, we felt grave doubt as to whether we should find any other accommodation short of the Rhone Glacier Hotel, which it would have been highly inconvenient for us to go down to. But principle is a great thing, and we were prepared to sacrifice ourselves for it.

Luck was with us, though, and we found the Bellevue, a first-class hotel on the upper brink of the Rhone Glacier, still open, though preparing to close on the morrow. We enjoyed an excellent dinner and night's rest after watching the lovely views of glacier, valley and snow mountains pass through the various phases of sunset, twilight and full moon.

In the morning we started out with a guide across the glacier and over the Nægelis Grätli, a stony height on the far side, from which the views are very fine, and the path descends directly to the Grimsel Hospice.

To our surprise we found ourselves making far better time than the Baedeker schedule. We mentioned this to the guide, who said that the path across the glacier had been shortened

several years ago, but Baedeker hadn't found it out yet. "Everything in this world changes, except Baedeker," he said, and was so much flattered by our appreciation of his *bon mot* that he repeated it at ten-minute intervals during the rest of the trip.

As soon as we saw our way clear ahead, we sent back our guide, who was a little unduly addicted to his cognac bottle as well as to his Baedeker anecdote, and continued alone.

The Grimsel Hospice and the two turquoise lakes lay right below us. A yodel came floating up through the clear air, and standing out in front of the hotel we soon identified the stocky form of Fritz Biner waiting for us.

XXI

AT the Grimsel we received and sent off mail, including Belle Soeur's and my knapsacks, that we might be in the lightest possible marching order. We also invested in provisions,—ground coffee, cheese, bread, chocolate and hard-boiled eggs. And Frater, at Biner's suggestion, humbled his pride so far as to purchase an alpenstock. Also we indulged in an excellent lunch.

The weather had been beautiful all the morning, as it had been the day before, but it did not look so well after luncheon. The sky was graying, and there was a suggestion in the air of approaching snow. However, it was not definitely bad and might be all right by morning, so Biner thought there was no reason for postponing our start.

The method of crossing the Strahlegg is to leave the Grimsel in the afternoon and spend the night at the Dollfus Pavilion, one of the Alpine Club refuge huts, and get a very early

start for the long day's trip to Grindelwald. There is another club hut, the Schwarzegg, on the Grindelwald side of the pass, where the second night can be spent if one is belated—a most fortunate circumstance for us as it turned out.

Biner broke to us the news that there was another party besides ourselves of three "gentlemen" going to start over the Strahlegg that afternoon. We were quite disappointed at this, for we wanted the club hut to ourselves, and the scenery, too, for that matter, and had supposed that so late in the season there would be no trouble about it. However, it was the fortune of war, and it seemed foolish to wait over another day and risk bad weather to escape them. Biner seemed to be rather pleased at the prospect. He said it would make it much easier and safer for us to join forces with the other party and all be roped together for the next day's climb. We reserved decision on this point.

Shortly after lunch we started forth, so as not to be hurried. The other party were ahead of us. Our way led over glacier débris and along a moraine, stony, scrambly, but presenting no

difficulties. We seemed to be charging directly at the Finsteraarhorn. The "Infant Aar" had been lost to sight in the great glaciers that gave it birth. We were approaching the heart of the High Alps at last.

By way of acquiring information, I asked Biner as we walked along of what nationality the gentlemen might be who belonged to the other party. The question visibly embarrassed him. "They are Swiss," he said. "But—well, they are *not* gentlemen. They are employees of the Grimsel hotel, which is about to close for the season, and they are going home this way for pleasure. They are all good mountaineers, so they will be very useful to us." A little more questioning elicited the fact that they were the chief cook, the barber, and a stableman who often served as porter to climbing parties and hoped some day to be a guide. We were rather relieved than otherwise by this information. Tourists, if underbred, might have proved annoying in such close quarters, but these people would doubtless be entirely unobtrusive.

The Dollfus Pavilion is a thick-walled stone

hut built on a cliff overhanging the glacier. The altitude is 7850 feet. By the time we reached it, the evening winds were holding high and chilly carnival around it and the clouds were closing down.

As we opened the door of the hut, we stepped into an atmosphere almost unbreathable with wood smoke from the stove combined with liquor fumes from a steaming kettle. Half-choking, we beat a hasty retreat into the open air. The occupants of the hut rushed out with exuberant hospitality, begging us to come in and get warm and partake of the "tea" they were brewing. The smoke would soon be gone. The fire had been hard to start, but was all right now. We thanked them, but said we preferred the outer air for the present. These self-effacing hotel employees did not seem to be turning out exactly as we had expected. We had not reckoned on the cognac.

It was cold outside and getting colder. Snowflakes began sifting down on us. Had there been any possibility of getting back to the Grimsel we certainly would have done so. But it was out of the question at that time. Pres-

ently Biner came out and said our supper was ready. He had had nothing to prepare except the coffee.

The smoke had cleared away, so we could see the room, its furniture and occupants. There was a long deal table with a bench at each side, set with enamel ware cups and plates. There was a small but energetic stove and a simple outfit of cooking utensils. These were all furnished by the Alpine Club. Printed notices on the wall requested those availing themselves of the hut to leave everything clean and in order. An open door showed us the hut's other room. It contained a raised platform heaped high with straw, long enough for a dozen people to sleep on in a row. On a cord above were hung a generous supply of gray blankets.

Considerably to our disgust, we found that the other party's supper and ours were to be celebrated simultaneously. But in this refuge provided for all alike, we clearly had no right to object, if their own sense did not show them the desirability of keeping to themselves. Our guide, on the other hand, positively declined

to sit down at the table with us, whether to set his fellow-countrymen a good example or simply because he was on duty (which they were not), I do not know.

We gave Belle Soeur the protected seat in the middle. Frater had the barber next to him, and the stable man was next to me, the cook beyond.

Let me now state that the cook was, so far as we were concerned, an entirely respectable and unobjectionable member of society. If he drank too much of their precious tea and cognac mixture, he did not show it, and he did not obtrude himself on us in any way.

The barber did not show any signs of intoxication at this time, but he was an unthinkably unpleasant little beast, curled, powdered, perfumed, dressed in a flamboyant tourist costume which included plaid, golf stockings and knickerbockers, and possessed of a most colossal nerve. He evidently regarded himself as a lady-killer. He knew a few words of English, and armed with them he proceeded to be polite to Belle Soeur. Belle Soeur can be pretty chilly when she likes and Frater's snubs were of the

knockdown variety, but nothing seemed to make any impression on the barber's cuticle. He had a camera along and offered to take our pictures in the morning. This was finally declined so that he understood it, but it took a battle-ship's broadside to do it. He appeared to be sure that our feet must be cold and wet and that we were too timid to avail ourselves of the fleece-lined wooden shoes which are part of the outfit of an Alpine hut. From the time of our arrival at the front door to our retiring for the night, he urged these shoes upon us at fifteen-minute intervals.

During supper the barber and the stableman vied with each other in pressing upon us each and every article of their rather elaborate menu.

The stableman was in the maudlin and verbose stage. He assured us that among the eternal snows of the upper Alpine regions all social distinctions are obliterated, and high and low, rich and poor, meet on a plane of equality. (This in explanation of their sharing the table and benches with us, I suppose.) I said unresponsively that there could be no objection to

anyone's poverty and lowliness so long as he was sober and respectable. At this he almost dissolved into tears and confided to me that he knew he had drunk too much, that it was a very bad thing to do, that he was very sorry, but what would you? After a summer's hard work, the first day of freedom, etc.

Meanwhile, Frater, who could not follow the German, was wanting to know whether my neighbor was saying anything sufficiently objectionable to merit personal chastisement. I reassured him, and we tried to keep up the conversation among ourselves, ignoring our neighbors. But they declined to stay ignored and kept offering this, that, and the other article of food or drink. They seemed unable to believe that our declining these overtures was prompted by anything but shyness. "The High Alps are not like cities," the stableman explained. "In the High Alps all men are brothers and share all things equally. No one feels any hesitation in either giving or receiving. We are so small and helpless in the hands of God! We must do all we can to help one another."

Shall I ever forget that hideous meal? We got through as quickly as possible and left the table. It was snowing too hard and was too bitterly cold to go outdoors again. We went through into the other room and shut the door and held a council of war. Should we sit up all night? That would involve returning next day to the Grimsel. We clearly could not sit up all night and take the trip over the Strahlegg, too.

It had seemed a matter of course to Belle Soeur and me at the Nieder Rawyl cheese-hut to roll up in blankets and go to sleep in an apartment shared by our escorts and two cow-herds. It was physically uncomfortable, but not in the least morally so. But the thought of dividing that hay-heaped sleeping-shelf with those drunken animals in the next room was revolting to the point of nausea. It was impossible.

Biner joined us for a few minutes and came to our rescue with a suggestion. We could curtain off a portion of the shelf for Belle Soeur and me with blankets. No sooner said than done. We chose our end, and in front

and on the unprotected side hung blankets. It was arranged that Frater was to sleep immediately outside and Biner next to him, so that the precious trio of fellow-Alpinists would be kept at as great a distance as possible.

When we had completed our arrangements, we sat down and tried to distract our minds by playing cards. It was one of the saddest games I ever indulged in. In the next room, free from the restraint of our presence, the revelry waxed more and more boisterous as the cognac tea circulated. I was a bit worse off than the others for catching a word here and there of the talk. It did not make me happier to realize that they were talking about *us*. I learned afterwards that they were arranging the order in which the combined parties were to be roped next day. But the fragments that I caught had a singularly unpleasant sound. I did not wish to be a sensationalist and I knew the limitations of my German, so I did not say anything to the others about it, but I am afraid my game of cards was *distract*.

This was my birthday. I had spent the previous ones in very various quarters of the world and in very various company—but never any-

thing like this before, and may the like never be my lot again!

Belle Soeur and I now retired to our tent, which, after all, gave us as much privacy as one gets in a sleeping-car, and Frater rolled himself along our only unprotected boundary. Naturally, we did not sleep. Aside from our nervousness, the men in the next room were making too much noise. I have no means of knowing how late they kept it up, but it must have been till after midnight. There were moments when they seemed to be quarreling violently, and we half-hoped they would wind things up neatly by cutting each others' throats. At other times they were merely hilarious.

All at once the door opened, and they rolled in, still noisy, and bringing with them such a smell of concentrated liquor as I never imagined. They paused and gazed at the blanket-wrapped form of Frater. "*Ist das der Herr?*" whispered the barber to one of his companions. From the depths of the blankets I heard my brother's voice growl in disgusted English, "No, you thundering fool, I'm the two ladies."

The revelers now disposed themselves for slumber, but for another hour or two we heard their giggles and whispers, and the alcohol fumes in the close air were unspeakably nauseating. From time to time Frater pressed my hand under the blanket curtain to reassure me, and I did as much for Belle Soeur.

We were of course in no physical danger. Not only could Frater and the guide have easily handled the trio, but Frater could have done it, I doubt not, single-handed. But the unpleasantness of it was beyond words. We felt as if a month of spiritual Turkish baths would hardly make us clean.

I have told this somewhat unsavory story in all its unsavoriness as a warning to others, the moral being that a party including ladies should never plan for a night in an Alpine Club hut unless they are assured of having it to themselves. Mountaineering is not *all* poetry, and there might be terrors encountered beside which crevasses and avalanches become attractive.

XXII

THEIR over-night celebration did not prevent our fellow-travelers from getting up about four o'clock so as to get a good start over the pass. We told Biner we would arise later and that he need not serve our breakfast till after the others had gone. They finished their breakfast, but still did not start. At last it dawned upon us that they were waiting for *us*.

We called Biner and expressed our sentiments. We thought we had been sufficiently emphatic before, but we left no doubt in his mind this time that no earthly consideration would induce us to make the trip in such company and that if he felt unable to take us over the pass in safety alone as he had agreed to do, we would give up the trip and return to the Grimsel.

He started to tell us that the men were entirely sober this morning, and were excellent mountaineers, but I cut him off with a "*Ganz und gar unmöglich.*" He added that the

weather was more than doubtful and that last night's fall of snow would make the trip more dangerous and more difficult. In that case, we said, we would wait over till the next day and see if conditions improved. Biner sighed and returned to the next room, where he made known our decision, and the trio of objectionables started, the irrepressible barber being the only one who had the nerve to bid us farewell.

We now emerged and had our breakfast. We had pretty much decided to stay at the Pavilion till next day, sending Biner back to the Grimsel for firewood and provisions. It had stopped snowing, but the sky was black and the clouds hung low. However, about eight o'clock it lightened up a bit, and Biner said he thought it would do to start. It was late, but there was always the Schwarzegg hut in case we could not make Grindelwald.

We were glad enough to escape a day of inaction. So we bundled ourselves up and started. My costume included winter flannels, heavy shoes, high gaiters, corduroy jacket and skirt, a flannel shirtwaist, a jersey of Frater's, buckskin gloves, and my broad-brimmed felt

hat tied down over my ears with a veil. This had the double advantage of keeping it from blowing away in some precarious spot where I could not use my hands and of keeping my ears from freezing. My costume, however, was inadequate. I should have had woolen or fur-lined gloves and fleece-lined shoes. My fingers, toes, cheeks, and nose were all frost-bitten before the day was over, and the suffering caused by the cold was intense.

Biner was the only one who had woolen gloves, and he shared them with us, keeping one hand gloved in order to have the use of it, the other glove circulating among us three. I do not think we could have kept the use of our hands through the day had it not been for this periodical thawing out of one hand at a time. But how it did hurt! Biner should of course have seen that we were provided with these things before starting, but I fancy he credited us with more knowledge of mountaineering than we had.

A short distance from the hut we were roped, Biner first, I next, as interpreter, Frater next and Belle Soeur bringing up the rear. We

walked up the Unteraar Glacier to its origin, where the Lauteraar Glacier and Finsteraar Glacier come together, then followed this latter to the outlet of the Strahlegg Firn, up which we turned.

The snowfall of the night before made it necessary for Biner to sound each step ahead of him with his ice-pick. It happened several times that the pick encountered no resistance, and Biner, kicking aside the loose snow would uncover a fissure or air-hole in the ice which had been completely covered. This delayed us somewhat, but the air was so cold and thin, and we were in such poor condition, comparatively, after our almost sleepless night, that I doubt if we could have gone much faster had the surface of the ice been clear.

The Strahlegg Firn is a great snow pile, very steep of surface, flowing between huge walls of rock, on the right the Lauteraarhörner, on the left the Finsteraarhorn and Fiescherhorn. Down this gully, as we turned up it, swept a bitter icy wind that almost took our breath away. We had been ascending rapidly since leaving the Dollfus Pavilion and were now not

far from the ten-thousand foot level. The thinness of the air made it seem almost impossible to get enough oxygen to walk with. Each breath was a labor, each step forward a triumph of mind over matter. And it seemed each minute as if that terrible wind would blow our flickering life-force out like a candle flame.

It would have been sensible, of course, to turn around and go back. But who likes to accept defeat? And we kept hoping, with baseless optimism, that we had done the worst and would soon strike something easier.

At noon we had climbed nearly to the top of the firn and stopped in the shelter of a big boulder for lunch. Ahead of us loomed a perpendicular rock wall eight hundred feet high, as we subsequently learned from one of Tyn-dall's Alpine books. It looked higher. At its summit was the alleged Strahlegg Pass, which we knew lacked just five feet of eleven thousand. There was no sign of a path or any way of getting up, but we knew human beings went over there quite frequently, and we supposed that on nearer approach some sort of a trail would disclose itself. We did not ques-

tion the guide about it. The atmosphere did not lend itself to extended conversation. We kept our breath for the serious business of life.

It was a great relief to get out of the wind, but the snowdrift we sat down in was by no means warm, and our feet were by now extremely painful. Just here Belle Soeur had an attack of mountain sickness and had to lie down flat in the snow and couldn't eat her share of the bread and cheese. If she was going to do it, though, it was mighty fortunate she chose lunch-time rather than a little later. The luxury of this meal did not tempt us to linger long, and we were soon under way again. We had not even unroped.

In the midst of this primeval solitude we suddenly saw a human being. Nothing could have surprised us more. It was a little black speck of a man appearing on the upper brink of the rock wall and starting to climb down. Was it one of the party who had gone on ahead of us, turning back to seek help after an accident? Biner said not. Biner also said that unless he was a professional guide, it was very

foolhardy of him to try to get over alone, and that no guide who knew the route would ever try to come down where he was starting to make the descent. Presently his interest increased to the point of saying that the man would infallibly be killed if he didn't turn around and go back. We were horrified. But it was impossible to warn the man at such a distance, even by gesture.

It shows how absorbing our own peril soon became that we presently forgot all about him, and when we thought of him some hours later could only *hope* he got through all right. As we heard nothing subsequently of a fatal accident or of anybody's disappearing, though we made numerous inquiries, I suppose he escaped.

He made things unpleasant for us for a time by detaching stones and rock fragments in his climbing which hurtled downwards with destructive force. We made quite a *détour* to the right to get out of the danger zone.

We were now at the foot of our rock wall, and there was no path, no trail, no ledge, no deviation from the vertical. Still we might

have turned back, but we did not. The very preposterousness of the thing held us. It was *impossible* that there shouldn't be some way of getting up this cliff, which was not yet apparent!

We started. Biner felt above his head with the point of his ice-pick till he found a crack which held it firm. Then, with surprising agility for a man of his age and build, he drew himself up till he could reach it with his fingers, having previously located some little protuberance or incision where he could rest his toe. Keeping his grip with one hand, he leaned over and helped me up with the other. Frater climbed to the place I had just vacated and pulled Belle Soeur up as Biner had pulled me. By the time we realized the horror of it, we went on because it seemed on the whole easier than to go back.

All the way up that eight hundred feet of rock wall, there was never a ledge large enough to rest on with the entire two feet at once! I had read of such things in mountaineering books, but had cheerfully supposed the descriptions exaggerated. And we had believed the Strahlegg Pass was hardly full-fledged mountain-

earing anyhow—just something a little more strenuous than the Gries or Rawyl.

I don't know what thoughts passed through the minds of the others, but mine beat a sort of tattoo in my head like this: "You fool—*fool*—FOOL! You've got two little children in Grindelwald and a husband in the Philippines. And you are going to break your neck within the next ten minutes. And you aren't accomplishing anything under heaven by it. It's just sheer futile idiocy."

The numbness of my hands was so great that my control over them was most uncertain. My life and that of my companions depended on the grip I should keep with those cramped, aching fingers, but though I concentrated my will-power on them I felt no certainty that the next minute they would not become rigid and refuse to obey me.

Every once in a while the distance from ledge to ledge would be too great for me to reach, and Biner would lift me by the rope around my waist. During those instants, when I had loosened my own hold of hand and foot and swung clear into space with nothing but an

inch of manila hemp and a man's grip on it between me and a horrible death, I thought of the daily Alpine accidents I had been reading about in the papers, I thought of the frequency with which the rope parts at the critical moment, I thought of my children in Grindelwald—and I called myself names. The faculty to do a very extensive amount of thinking seemed to be concentrated in those instants, the phenomenon probably being akin to that so often chronicled of the last moment of consciousness by those resuscitated from apparent drowning.

I am more particularly relating here my own sensations because I am most familiar with them. Those of the others, with the possible exception of Biner, were undoubtedly equally vivid. Each of us was perfectly conscious that if any one of us slipped, all four would go down. In the nature of things, we had none of us a grip or foothold sufficiently secure to resist a sudden jerk such as would come if one were to fall.

After the first few minutes, I never looked downward. I was not inclined to dizziness, but the drop was too appalling. The others told me afterwards that they also abstained from

looking down. We concentrated eyes and thoughts on the few feet of rock immediately around and above us.

Several times on the way up, puffs of biting wind would come down the face of the cliff which it seemed must surely blow us loose. At such moments we stopped climbing and flattened ourselves against the rock, clinging as we loved our lives.

Once we got all four on a little ledge not as wide as the length of our feet, but solid enough to stand on without balancing. We paused there to take breath, and somebody said "Cognac." Now our experience in the Alpine hut the night before had nearly made teetotalers of us. But at this moment we decided that stimulants *might* have a legitimate use. Frater produced his silver pocket flask and handed it around. We took a swallow in turn, and it was like liquid life running down our throats. I never experienced anything so magical. (Here I am describing my own sensations again!) I was at the very last point of endurance. I had lost faith in ever reaching the summit of the cliff. I had no more physical force with which to lift my sagging weight up-

ward. I had lost the will-power that lashes on an exhausted body. My numb hands were stiffening. My lungs were choked and laboring. I could neither go on nor go back. Then those two teaspoonfuls, or thereabouts, of fiery cognac that burned down my throat sufficed to give me back my grip on myself, physical and mental. I moved my cramped fingers, and they answered. I took a deep, long breath and felt strengthened. A hope, almost a confidence, crept into my heart, that with God's help we might reach the top alive.

Then we went on and on and on. The same thing, with our eyes always upward, but not far ahead. At last Biner clambered on to what was evidently a broad ledge, for he knelt on it and, leaning over, gave me his hand to help me up. It was a long reach, and as I got one knee on the ledge and started wearily to lift the rest of my weight, he gave me a pull and push that rolled me lengthwise over the brink, and to my wonderment I found a resting-place for my whole body.

"This is the summit," said Biner. I had not known we were within five hundred feet of it.

XXIII

IF Biner had known we were nearing the top, he kept it to himself. To us three it came as an entire surprise—and an unspeakably joyous one. We were still alive. That was the main point. We had surmounted that inconceivable cliff and were still alive!

However, we could not stop long to rejoice. The summit of the pass was barely big enough to stand on. The wind swept across it furiously and the cold was unbearable. Above us on either side rose the rocky, snowy peaks of the Finsteraarhorn, Lauterhorn and Schreckhorn groups, only a few thousand feet higher than we were. Behind us was the precipice we had just climbed. Before us dropped very, very steeply, yet not in a precipice, a much longer slope of snow, at the bottom of which lay a great glacier. The distance, Biner said, was three thousand feet, and we absolutely *must not* slip, as there would be no stopping-place short of the bottom. He made Frater and

Belle Soeur change places, so as to put Frater's strength at the rear for bracing back should any of us start sliding. However, he impressed it upon us that we *must not* slide. He told us afterwards that he was much more afraid of this part of the trip than of the climb up the cliff, but it was by no means so fear-inspiring to *us*, nor so physically exhausting.

It was a shame to leave that tremendous, awesome, Walpurgisnacht revel of glaciendom visible from the summit of the pass so soon. But flesh and blood could not endure the freezing gale.

The last night's fall of snow added much to the danger of the descent, as it made the surface treacherous. Biner cut out each step ahead of him with his ice-axe, taking care to get down to the hard-packed surface beneath. As he put his foot in it, I put mine in the step he had just vacated. Belle Soeur took my last resting-place and Frater hers. It was slow, and we had our minds firmly fixed on not sliding. But it was heaven compared with the cliff climb!

The rest of the afternoon's trip, between rocks and ice, was strenuous, and we should

have considered it highly perilous before our last experience. But now we took everything as a matter of course. We were in the midst of very wild and magnificent scenery, of which the continued cloudiness somewhat impaired our view, while the intense cold and our knowledge of the flight of time kept us from lingering to enjoy what we *could* see. As it was, we just barely reached the Schwarzegg hut before dark.

To our great relief, we found it empty. The other party had gone on to Grindelwald. Never, I am sure, was a refuge more gratefully and joyously entered. It was not so large as the Dollfus Pavilion, having only one room. But it was Waldorf-Astoria and Paradise all rolled into one to *us!*

We put two francs in the tin box on the wall and took a bundle of wood from the closet (at the Dollfus we had to bring our own fuel with us), and in a few minutes Biner had a fire crackling in the stove. We took off our ice-caked shoes and stood them by the stove whence arose a steaming vapor for hours. Belle Soeur and I stuffed our wooden clubhouse shoes full of straw to keep them on, and getting rid of

our skirts, which were frozen stiff as boards almost to the waist, we hung them also to steam near the stove and wrapt ourselves, Indian fashion, in gray blankets. We were enduring acute physical pain as our frozen toes and fingers thawed out, but our minds were so at ease that we did not care.

Soon Biner was handing us great tin cups full of steaming coffee.—Oh, the joy of it!—And as we drank scalding gulps of it between bites of bread and cheese, we were as happy a little party as one would care to see. And then we rolled up in, oh, ever so many blankets, six pairs apiece, I think, and went to sleep in the straw on the shelf.

We did not get a very early start next morning. It was so luxurious to take things easy! The coffee was a second brewing from last night's grounds, and the bread and cheese a little scanty, but we didn't mind. We knew we should soon be where we could get more.

The view in the morning was very, very beautiful. At first the whole Grindelwald valley was covered with fleecy white clouds and even the glacier immediately below thrust only an

ice crag here and there through the foamy mist. The hut was on a rock ledge over this great ice river, which, sweeping downward, becomes the Lower Grindelwald Glacier. Gradually the air cleared, the upper regions first, the sky above disclosing itself a dazzling and unspotted blue, while the cloud strata below us were still intact.

What a magnificent day it would have been for going over the Strahlegg, had we only waited!

We stood for a long time outside the hut, ready to start, but hating to leave the magnificent spectacle presented as the clouds below us dissolved.

There is a passage in Manfred which describes wonderfully just this scene:

“The mists boil up around the glaciers; clouds
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,
Like foam from the roused ocean of deep
Hell.”

Our way, it is true, did not lead us out of

sight of our magnificent views, but we knew we could only give them a divided attention when we had started climbing.

The Schwarzegg hut being put in excellent order and the last two-francs-for-fuel piece dropped in the box, we bade the place a grateful farewell, adjusted the faithful rope once more and started along the trail—there really *is* one from here on—which skirts the right bank of the glacier. Wherever there is a bad stretch of rock to be gotten up or down, iron spikes have been driven in, affording foothold and handhold. What luxuries iron spikes would have been the day before in that much more formidable cliff we had to climb!

I wouldn't recommend the walk between the Bäregg and the Schwarzegg hut to children or invalids, nor should it be undertaken without a guide, but it presents no real difficulties or dangers to vigorous young people with steady heads and a little climbing experience. We were even able to enjoy the scenery.

The mists gradually all rolled away and revealed the green Grindelwald valley and its clustered châteaux, not quite so far to the right



*The Glacier from below the Schwarzegg Hut looking
towards the Strallegg and Schreckhorn*

as the Edelweiss, but still we felt very close to home.

After a couple of hours' climbing, we were able to dispense with the rope, which we did with decided relief at regaining our individual liberty. We had been roped the day before for ten and a half consecutive hours.

Arriving at the Bäregg inn, we ordered *café complet* served at the table outside (for the thought of a room suffocated us), removed a few layers of wraps become unnecessary at this lower level, and had a very refreshing repast.

We were objects of intense interest to a party of English tourists of both sexes who had walked up from the valley, whether wholly on account of our late mountaineering hardships and achievements, doubtless communicated from our guide to theirs, or partly because of our undeniably disreputable appearance, I do not know. But we had the prestige of the High Alps about us and did not care for the strange red glaze which the successive action of frost and sun had left on our faces or the bloodshot surface of our eyes. We bore ourselves proudly as befitted our estate, and were conscious all the

way home of the interest, sometimes not un-mixed with envy, which we excited.

At the turn of the road before reaching the Châlet Edelweiss, we met the Mother watching for us, who had become alarmed at the delay in our arrival. She had decided if we did not appear by two o'clock (it was then about half-past one) that she would call on the curate of the English Chapel, who is also a famous mountain-climber, and ask him to organize a search party.

XXIV

THE account of our Swiss summer ought properly to end with our trip over the Strahlegg. It was certainly the climax of our experiences. I do not know that any earthly inducement could persuade us to repeat that trip (I speak with certainty in my own case). But, *having* done it, and having come through alive, we would not for the world be without the thrilling memory of it.

Biner said that after our late trip under the existing conditions, we would find the ascent of either the Jungfrau or Wetterhorn very easy, and he would like to take us up. But we were willing—oh, quite willing—to take this easiness on faith. We had not forgotten that he had also called the Strahlegg easy in advance. And Providence does not like to be tempted too often.

There was just a week from the day of our return till the day of Frater's leaving us to

catch a steamer in Genoa, and just another week till we should all leave.

The first thing we wanted was rest in wholesale quantities and the doctoring of feet and fingers.

Emerging from this, we chose the second day for the celebrating of my birthday, which it had not been feasible to do on the proper date. I was the recipient of some very delightful gifts, including an elaborate pyramidal bouquet, with an accompanying note of pleasant sentiments from Suzanne and Anna. Belle Soeur made one of her famous cakes and the candles were sprinkled on top with appalling thickness—a perfect forest of them.

The birthday dinner turned itself, quite unexpectedly, into a fancy dress affair. I was making my toilet for it on the usual lines and had reached that point in my coiffure, when my *chevelure* was disposed in two long ringlets hanging down each side of my face and neck. I had just picked up my comb to run through them, when the Elder Babe, coming into the room on some errand, began to call out frantically, “*Don’t*, don’t touch those curls, Mother!

Leave them just as they are! Come to dinner *that way!* You look just like a little girl!"

I smiled and picked up the comb again, but I had miscalculated the seriousness of my son's enthusiasm. He rushed to the sitting-room door and called his grandmother, aunt and uncle to his assistance. "Come and look at Mother! Don't let her comb out those curls! Make her come to dinner *that way!*" He was prancing around like a little bacchante in the joy of the thought.

The three grown-ups appealed to entered into the spirit of the occasion and backed him up. I yielded the point, gracefully I trust, but stipulated that if I was to have a little girl's coiffure I would wear a little girl's dress. Belle Soeur offered me her stock of lingerie to select from, it being more ornamental than mine, and I was soon arrayed in a very dainty lace-trimmed white gown with low neck, short sleeves, and a skirt slightly below the knees. With the addition of silk hose and shoon, a sash, shoulder knots and hair ribbons, all of pink, I really wasn't such a bad-looking little girl!

We had a very merry, foolish, light-hearted

evening, the children being in ecstasies over this new effect in mothers, and the servants almost equally so.

This sportive little festival seems to me now like something that happened in another incarnation. It required the absolutely perfect physical condition we had all reached by then and the effervescence of the mountain air to make it possible. But it was the last exuberance.

The season was nearly over. We were soon going back to the world of commonplace. With what reluctant melancholy we clung to those last days, trying to stretch out the hours past their natural limit!

One day Frater and I went to Interlaken for some shopping. He walked both ways, but I went down by train. We were late starting back and wasted a mile or so by attempting a short cut as we left the town. During the summer the long, long twilight had been a noticeable feature. It was still daylight at nine o'clock. But now it got dark by seven or before and the last hour of our walk was in such inky darkness that we could scarcely make out the highroad in front of our feet. We saw the

lights of the village glimmering a welcome long before we reached it, and had developed a wonderful appetite for our belated dinner by the time we arrived at the châlet.

Another day we made our long-projected trip to the Lauterbrunnen valley. It was one of those things so perfectly easy to do that all summer long we had not done it. Frater and I walked over the divide by way of the Männlichen, where we ate our lunch and bade an affectionate farewell to that grandest of panoramas, passing down the other side through Byron's Wengern Alp to the village of Lauterbrunnen, where at tea-time we met the Mother, Belle Soeur and the Elder Babe, who had come by train. The Mother was the only member of the crowd who felt wealthy enough to take the trip to Mürren, a summer resort on a great cliff overlooking the Lauterbrunnen valley on the far side, commanding a fine view of the Jungfrau, with the deep valley well in the foreground. It is reached by a very steep-grade cable and electric railway. The rest of us contented ourselves with walking to the Staubbach Falls.

The waterfalls of the Lauterbrunnen valley have a great reputation, as they drop over a cliff about a thousand feet high and turn to spray long before they reach the bottom. But their volume is so insignificant that they are little more than a silver ribbon, and while interesting, they are certainly not equal to their reputation. The great falls of the Yosemite (to which they are often compared) would dwarf them utterly.

We all walked together down the Interlaken highroad, turning back frequently to watch the sunset lights on the Jungfrau, to the joining of the Lauterbrunnen and Grindelwald valleys, where we boarded the train for home.

This was our very last excursion. There were a few things we had meant to do and hadn't had time for, chief of them the ascent of the Schwarzhorn, a nine-thousand-foot peak behind us, to the east of the Faulhorn. It might at this time have been more appropriately named Weisshorn, for the autumn snows had covered all its black rock ledges. Belle Soeur and I had a notion we might still do it alone during the week after Frater left. But



Lauterbrunnen



we didn't. And there had been a great many things that we had intended to do over again, but found no time for.

Before we knew it, it was October 3rd, and we were seeing off Frater at the station.

I must not forget about the conveyance of his baggage thither. He and Antonio had brought no trunks with them, but each had a large telescope bag, which held as much as a small steamer trunk. When Antonio left, he had hired a lad with a hand cart, who lived in a ch[^]alet to the rear of us and was one of a large and impecunious family who liked odd jobs and old clothes and the left-overs from our table, to take it to the station for him. The day before Frater's departure, we told Anna to engage the lad again. What was our surprise, as the time drew near to leave for the station, when there appeared, instead of the boy and his cart, his fourteen-year-old sister with a rack on her back. She explained that her brother and the cart had an all-day's job, and she had come in his place to take the gentleman's valise to the station. The poor girl already had her shoulders curved by the carry-

ing of burdens. It seemed brutal to let her do it, yet even more so to deny her the chance of earning a little money. Besides, it was quite too late to get any one else, and Frater admitted that *he* was unequal to carrying the thing a mile and a half. So off we trudged in a procession, the young portress bringing up the rear, and we told Frater this little service from a member of the "housely herd" furnished the fitting last touch of "local color" to his Swiss summer.

Our last week was given over to packing and paying bills and cleaning house and all sorts of prosaic last things. I do not remember that we went anywhere except to the Upper Glacier and the village. I do remember the snow though. We had said many times during the season that we wished we could see our beloved Grindelwald valley in its winter dress, but we hardly expected our wish to be granted. It was, though, most fully, and with effects unspeakably beautiful. We had a regular roaring blizzard for about three days, during which we kept the cylinder stove in the lower hall burning furiously, and abandoned the second

story as uninhabitable. I fancy the owners do the same in the winter. The little hall stove and the kitchen stove can hardly be said to have kept the lower story comfortable. We could still see our frosted breath. But they made life endurable.

When it cleared off, we looked out at a veritable fairyland. All the world was buried under at least a foot of the purest white snow imaginable. Every tree was bending its branches beneath the burden of it. The mountains were dazzling. Even the rocky cliffs of Wetterhorn and Mettenberg had the soft white powder adhering to their perpendicular surfaces. If we had had any way of keeping ourselves even half-way comfortable indoors, I do not see how we could have torn ourselves away from it!

I regret to have to chronicle that our last hours were marred, beyond the inevitable sadness of parting and the inevitable fatigue of packing, by the inexplicable conduct of the Herr Secundärlehrer and his Frau. It is the well-known habit of landlords on the continent to run up a bill on their tenants for breakage,

wear and tear, and "extras" limited only by their idea of the workableness of the persons they are dealing with. But the Herr Secundärlehrer and his wife had seemed so utterly honest and straightforward, so trusting and unmercenary, that I had no anticipation of anything of the sort from them. They had not wanted a lease or an inventory or their money in advance or any of the things the typical landlord looks out for. They had declined payment for ever so many things that they might legitimately have taken it for. So it *was* a shock when the bill came in.

I had had great difficulty in getting it. They were evidently saving it for the last moment. Finally, after repeated requests and messages on my part, it was handed through the kitchen window by the Frau to the cook late Saturday evening, the Frau immediately vanishing into the darkness.

The Mother, Belle Soeur and the Elder Babe were leaving Sunday morning early with most of the baggage. Suzanne, the Younger Babe, and I, after the last house-cleaning, were to leave by the same early train Monday, rejoin-

ing the others at Lucerne. All day Sunday I tried to get hold of either the Secundärlehrer or his wife. I was told that he was sick—that he was asleep—that his wife was busy. Finally, after an especially emphatic message, late in the afternoon, the Secundärlehrer appeared, looking very much the worse for wear (as was sometimes the case with him on Sunday, I regret to say, after a convivial Saturday evening with cronies in the village) and in a very bearish humor.

I have always been of the opinion that his wife did not approve of the bill and kept away because she was ashamed. Certainly she never appeared again on our horizon to say good-bye, and I had to send the keys to her by Anna when we left. I am also of the opinion that the Secundärlehrer had been put up to that bill by some of his worldly-wise friends in the village and coached what to say when I objected.

The bill was about three-quarters of a yard long, and though it was not very enormous in its sum total (the extras were inside of a hundred francs), many of the items were so pre-

posterously unjust that one could hardly accept them meekly.

One of the foremost was the bath tub. I think it was twenty francs that was put down for the use of it. The bath tub was a full-sized porcelain-lined one which the Herr had ordered in a spasm of modernness before he rented the house to us, but which arrived only after our installation. They put it down outside the house and left it there for some days till I made inquiries. The Herr explained to me that he thought every progressive family should own a bath tub and that he had intended putting it in the little room opening off the kitchen. This was the only place we had to keep provisions in, the kitchen itself being quite too tiny, and I really couldn't give it up, but my soul yearned for that bath tub. The Herr then suggested that it could be put up on the porch (the one we did not take our meals on), connected with the water faucet in the kitchen by a length of garden hose, and surrounded by curtains. He said his wife would see to the curtain part if we would permit them to bring their children over once a week for a bath.

It was so arranged, and a very funny out-door bathroom it was. The children of the neighborhood were so much interested in its workings that one felt little privacy inside, even after having sent Anna out to shoo them away and expended a paper of safety pins on the blowing curtains. When I objected to being charged for this luxury, the Herr informed me that at a hotel we would have had to pay a franc apiece for every bath we took, at which rate it would have amounted, in the course of the season, to much more than twenty francs. He knew this was so, because he had once taken a bath at a hotel and been charged a franc.

The item of cellar rent was another which I objected to. There was a small cellar under the rear part of our house which I had said I must have the use of when negotiating. It was much encumbered with many things which they said they could not move out, but we were quite welcome to use it too. After about a month they told Anna that this joint use was inconvenient to them and that they would give us a cellar room to ourselves under the neighboring school-house. It gave Anna a great many ex-

tra steps going over there for milk and other supplies, but she bore it patiently in order to be obliging. But to be charged extra for the discomfort was trying!

When I voiced this sentiment, the Herr Secundärlehrer launched forth into a most extraordinary tirade about having lost several hundred francs from the wine he had bought to sell to me, which I had not purchased, and his great magnanimity in not putting this on the bill. This was so unaccountable that I could hardly believe my ears. "But I never authorized you to buy any wine for me," I naturally protested. "Of course you didn't," was his astounding reply, "you were entirely too clever to do that." Considering that this was the first time the subject of his selling wine to me had ever been broached, this was to say the least puzzling. Was it just plain bluff and bluster to divert attention from the items on the bill, or is there some unwritten law in the Oberland that you buy wine from your landlord when you rent a house?

I cut the interview short, rather glad that I did not understand all the words he had used,

paid the somewhat diminished bill, and had the landlord shown out. Far worse than the mere disagreeableness of it, was the blow to my ideals of these simple, honest people. And yet I will not believe that I had been altogether mistaken in my first estimate of them. Their education was a somewhat superficial matter. The peasant nature, with all its suspiciousness of the foreigner as such, its obstinacy and intolerance, was very close to the surface under the Herr Secundärlehrer's thin veneer of culture. I have an idea that he suspected me of having known at the beginning that Frater and Antonio were coming and kept it from him, though as I offered when I informed him of their prospective visit to pay him either a lump sum extra or lodging rates according to the time of their stay, as he preferred, it is a little hard to see wherein he could have thought advantage was taken of him. However, I suppose it came somehow under the head of my unprincipled cosmopolitan cleverness.

Whether it was this or whether it was some other thing, I am sure he had had his feeling of ill usage inflamed by village cronies, grown

worldly-wise among the tourists, and was led to believe by them that any weapon would do for getting even. Here is where I think his wife, a much stronger and finer character than he, disapproved. I think she held more or less unflattering views of us (our ways of life were very different from hers,) but I believe she felt it unworthy to embody her disapproval in the bill. While she never appeared again, she did one or two nice little things at the end for our comfort which made us feel she was trying to make up.

If this was a story, it would never end like this—the merry company scattered, the green summer gone, the honest couple who should have been our friends turned into suspicious hostiles, keeping out of sight and churlishly avoiding a farewell, the gray cold early dawn, Anna with her belongings heaped on the porch, tearfully bidding us good-bye and waiting to turn over the keys to the Frau Secundärlehrer, whom she was deadly afraid of, Suzanne, the Younger Babe and I, all bundled up in winter wraps climbing into the Red-headed Man's carriage, and driving off to the station over the

creaking snow, while all the valley and all the mountains lay hushed in still white slumber.

But this is not a story. It is a simple chronicle of facts, which I have told as they happened, the bad with the good, the sordid with the beautiful. And this was really the END.



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