

I in the meantime had spent my life during these three years in what is called "finishing my education" with my cousins and their governess, my parents and two elder sisters having left for India, in consequence of a lucrative appointment which had been accepted there by my father.

It was a dear old house in which I found myself. My aunt, a cheery, wise, and sweet-tempered woman; my cousins, frank, open, merry girls, loving, kind, and generous to a degree. Me they treated like a sister, and to that added the courtesy which the most exacting guest could desire, always giving

me cheerful precedence, and, in fact, doing their best to spoil me in every way. Long afterwards, as I thought of this time and the genial sunshine which seemed to pervade every nook and corner of that happy home, and as I tried to find some reason for the contrast which it presented to other households which had come under my observation since, I could trace it to no other source than the peculiarly refining influence exerted by my aunt. It was as if everything that was lovely and lovable found an echo in her heart, and reflected itself on all around. She loved to make people happy. Hence it was, I suppose,

that it seemed quite natural for any stray members of the family to gravitate towards her. Charley, the young student, found virtually, if not *actually*, a home in her house; and Frank Warren, the orphaned cousin several times removed, who only claimed a distant connection with my aunt, thought it the most matter-of-course thing in the world that much of his spare time should be spent at The Elms.

Let me remember my dear aunt gratefully and affectionately; for to her I owe the greatest joy of my life.

(To be continued.)

## HOW TWO GIRLS ATTEMPTED THE BREITHORN.

By ONE OF THEM.



**M**AY was the month of August, and glorious weather in the Visp-thal.

I was one of a dozen girls from a pretty "pensionnat" by Lake Lemman, and we were spending our summer holiday at

Zermatt. Myself and my sister were the only English; the rest were Germans—most of them fair, plump, and jolly. All of us were under the delightful chaperonage of Madame's eldest daughter, our merry clever Annette. With us also was Annette's younger sister, Natalie, a vivacious young lady with two enthusiasms. One was art, and the other was mountains. Her *beau idéal* of existence was to spend half the summer in painting the Alps, and the other half in climbing them.

Her ambition was as high as the Matterhorn, and her ecstatic vision of death to pass away upon the Gönnergrat, where her last lingering gaze might be filled with the wondrous whiteness of the Monte Rosa dazzling against the summer sky.

We had a splendid time. Every other day we organised climbing expeditions, and scrambled and rambled all over the place, while our complexions grew ruddier and our health ruder, at an amazing pace. We had thus spent a fortnight, when Natalie, yearning for the snow-peaks, announced her intention of visiting either the Cima di Jazzi or the Breithorn, since parental solicitude barred the Matterhorn, and invited me to go with her. I felt equal to anything in my mountaineering excitement, and accepted gleefully, somewhat to my sister's dismay, for she had a vague horror of the mountain-tops, and at any rate did not think I was to be trusted up there.

Josef Taugwalder, a jolly blue-eyed guide who had conducted Natalie and others up the Monte Rosa two years previously, was consulted, the Breithorn chosen, and a day fixed. So we made us ready, and were very merry over it.

And this is the record which I cherish in my holiday journal of our experiences on that memorable day:—

August 3rd.—My longest day: 21 hours. I was roused from a very complicated dream by a thump at the door, and a gruff remark from the porter to the effect that it was "drei viertel auf ein" (12.45 a.m.) I thereupon jumped up, and rousing my sister, washed and dressed. I woke Annette according to promise, gathered up my wraps, and went down with Annette and Grace to Natalie's

room. We found her in rather an excited state of mind, since various portions of her marching outfit, notably her hat and gaiters, didn't go right.

At 1.50 we went over to breakfast at the hotel "Monte Rosa," where mountaineers did chiefly dwell, and unearthly hours were the rule. Various others in mountain costumes were doing likewise. Much to our amusement, we heard one gentleman, nicknamed by us girls as the "Cheshire Cat," proclaiming that it was "the most absurd thing he ever heard in his life; there were actually six or seven parties all going up the Breithorn."

Josef and Gabriel Taugwalder, nephews of the elder Taugwalder who escaped with Whymper in the Matterhorn catastrophe of 1865, were waiting with our provisions, and armed with ropes and ice-axes, a rig-out so formidable that Annette grew quite alarmed as to the dangers we might encounter. At 2.10 we bade her and Grace a fond farewell, and leaving them shivering on the verandah, went gaily forth in the bright moonlight over fields, hedges, stones, and streamlets. The Visp glimmered white, roaring below; the pine forests cast their great black shadows on the slopes; every giant snow-peak, visible as far as the Bernese Oberland, shone silver-bright against the deep indigo of the sky; above us the full moon looked calmly down from the cloudless depth, and lighted up the north-east side of the grim Matterhorn with pale cold radiance. Very awesome did that giant look, towering over us in the night.

The air was clear, cold, and delicious, though it numbed the hands that grasped the alpenstocks. We went steadily on, Josef leading, in single file, for about an hour and a half—seldom speaking, for the charm of the Alpine night held us, and we shrank from hearing the weird re-echoing of our voices in the valley. Then, having reached the forest, we sat down by the path to rest, refresh ourselves, and admire the view. Every feature of the valley was as clear as the day, and wonderful and never-to-be-forgotten in the witching moonlight. Then we had a very stiff pull up a narrow and devious track to the edge of the moraine—the hardest work of the whole way, Josef said. After that a regular scramble over the moraine, whose jumble of stones, big and little, was most delectably iced over. Anything like dignified progression was impossible. We struck out boldly and gave ourselves up to it, trusting to our alpenstocks and to an occasional hand up over the very big stones from the men. We did some rough skating in style, had many unexpected slides, and marvelled that we did not break our ankles.

Meanwhile the sun was beginning to rise.

Far away behind the Jungfrau the gold and red were spreading up into the sky. Before us in the clear pale dawn lay the Monte Rosa chain, the vast glacier of St. Théodule, the Matterhorn, and the Dent Blanche, with their great glaciers—a wide white world waiting for the sunlight. Again and again we halted on our rocky perches to look round on it all.

Suddenly the eastern face of the Matterhorn turned to gold, with an outline of vivid red along every rocky edge, while the dark granite showed in masses of rich warm purple among the gilded snows. The Lyskamon was the first of the Monte Rosa chain to catch the glow and light up rose-red among the whiteness; but one by one each grand peak was glorified; and when we saw the rosy crown upon the bluff brow of the Breithorn, we greeted him with acclamation.

A few minutes of this loveliest of transformation scenes and the sun was well above the horizon and lighting the world after a more commonplace style.

All at once Josef remarked, "See there, the Mont Blanc!" His Alpine Majesty looked fairly microscopic by comparison from up there. We could not say that we recognised him exactly from our then point of view, but we felt satisfaction in the fact that we were looking at Mont Blanc!

The Matterhorn was now obtruding so largely upon our view, filling up as he did most of the sky to our right, that we felt it our duty to stop and make a field-glass inspection of him.

Josef showed us the "Tyndall-grade," the redoubtable staircase whereby Professor Tyndall had scaled the peak in a solitary excursion he made to the top. It is a sort of shelf running up the side of the mountain at a break-neck angle.

Tyndall seems to have a casual habit of going up mountains all by himself. On one occasion he was grubbing about the Gönner glacier in the interests of science, when finding himself at the foot of Monte Rosa, a sudden impulse led him to walk up to the top. And he had some difficulty in getting safely down again. For to add to the disadvantage of there being only one of him, he lost his ice-axe, the sole weapon he carried, soon after starting the descent.

About five o'clock we reached the edge of the glacier, and arranged ourselves on various convenient big stones for breakfast No. 2. Our guides put our wraps round us, and unpacking the provisions proceeded to serve us with them, cutting the bread and buttering it, and doing everything for us most attentively, to our great amusement. We owe an everlasting grudge to the persons who put up





MONTE ROSA, FROM THE MONTE MORO.



those provisions! In spite of our detailed orders, and our having given a written list of what we required, they had forgotten salt for the hard-boiled eggs, and made my champagne bottle of cold tea without either sugar or milk!

Nevertheless, if any one wishes thoroughly to enjoy breakfast, we recommend it at the hour mentioned, at the edge of a glacier, on a fragment of Alp, after a three-hours' climb!

Breakfast over, we prepared for the glacier. We were buttoned up in cloth gaiters to protect our feet and ankles, and our big woollen gloves, or bags rather, had to be donned. Thus equipped, we set forth on the ice.

The glacier was apparently boundless in the direction of the horizon before us. To the right were the St. Théodule Pass and the Matterhorn, to the left the Breithorn, with its glacier, and the little Matterhorn. We had to cross the Théodule glacier and get round to the other side of the Breithorn as seen from the Görner, to make the ascent. The appearance of the ice was that of a rippling sea, and walking upon it, stepping from crest to crest of the hard snow waves, very easy work.

After about twenty minutes we stopped to put on our veils and snow-spectacles and to be roped. Josef tied himself on first, then Natalie, Gabriel, and myself, at intervals of about twenty feet. They hung me on at the end in case I should get tired, in which event they kindly proposed tugging me. We had a merry laugh at the comic appearance we presented as we set off again. I hardly approved having Natalie in front of me, for she would walk too fast in her eagerness to get there, in spite of Josef continually pulling her up. Here we had our last glimpse of the "Cheshire Cat" and his party, who had come up just as we finished our breakfast, and were now coming on to the ice. An hour later the weather got too much for them, and they all went back. A young fellow from our hotel, with his guide, "old Biner," were just on before us. Pretty soon, as we mounted the slope, we came in view of the other half-dozen parties who had chosen this same day for ascending the Breithorn; and our various guides yelled and whooped encouragingly to each other across a mile or so of snow. At about seven o'clock we found ourselves upon the fresh snow, when the slope became rapidly steeper. Now and again we rose very quickly, and then we would have an easy stretch, but this latter variety of walking soon disappeared.

We met the "boys from the Mont Cervin Hotel" coming down like a tempest. They had started their expedition the day before at noon, had slept at the Théodule hut, and reached the top at sunrise.

Meanwhile, clouds were gathering ominously, and the wind blew fresh and strong. We were very soon in a regular storm of snow, hail and wind, and found it hard work to get along, especially as the pull was much stiffer. At eight o'clock we seated ourselves on the soft snow to have breakfast No. 3, in the middle of it all. This required some arranging. We sat on the knapsacks to keep them from blowing away, turned our backs to the wind, and dug our heels well in. Then it was a case of eating bread and snow and butter, the last in lumps, for it had frozen hard. Hail and snow blew cheerfully down our necks and into our ears, and we had to keep up a treadmill performance for fear our toes should freeze; while as fast as we drank out of one side of the cup, the liquid blew out of the other. At one point Natalie persuaded herself that her toes were freezing, and grew quite excited over it. Josef's hat skimmed away with a sudden gust, and flying straight for the Matterhorn, was out of sight in an instant. The storm waxed angrier decidedly, but we battled on. At 8.30 we met a party who had started just as we went into the Monte Rosa to break-

fast, coming down in a hurry, and rather wished we were coming down too.

Just before we arrived at the top, which we should have reached in twenty minutes at the very latest, fortunately for us I lost my breath entirely, and therefore sat down and flatly declined to go any further. So round we turned and trotted down again, consoling ourselves with the reflection that after all we could have seen nothing if we had gone on, but would equally have been baulked of our chief desire, namely, seeing the Italian lakes. It was horrid, clumping knee-deep through the snow on such a steep slope! Gabriel went first, with his arm through mine to ballast me, and Josef brought Natalie down behind in similar style—the two acting as a sort of brake on us, while we mutually jerked one another by the rope, with fairly amusing results.

Each plunge shook us to the very crowns of our hats, and after half an hour of the exercise we began to feel more jelly than human. The drifting snow had so nearly filled the tracks of those who had descended before us that we were rather afraid of wandering out of the path, and Josef called from time to time to Gabriel to stop to take our bearings. They were rather uneasy at not seeing "old Biner" and his gentleman coming down; so we stopped to halloo and peer into the fog for them. At last they loomed through the mist, but not before our guides had grown somewhat alarmed and begun to consider what to do. Our minds being reassured, we jolted on as before, and presently, finding ourselves upon a convenient slope, took a long glissade.

At first we could not imagine what Josef was after. He stopped us, looked up the hill and down the hill, and conferred in mysterious tones with Gabriel, while Natalie and I stood wondering by. Light dawned, however, when we were placed, sitting tandem, Josef first, Gabriel last, and each holding on tight to the toes of the one behind. The men shoved off with their alpenstocks. With a shout, away we went, down, down, faster, faster! It was grand! In default of reaching the very top, or of having the coveted glimpse into Italy, the mad slide down the misty snow-slope with the wind whistling past us was guerdon of our toils and troubles.

A little further on, as it was now between ten and eleven, we thought breakfast No. 4 would be apropos. Accordingly we again dropped down on the snow. This time circumstances were more propitious. We were sheltered from the wind; it no longer snowed; and the storm generally was clearing off.

While we sat munching our eggs and bread and butter, Biner and his *protégé* came up. The old guide stopped to give us an excited account of their experience on the summit. With graphic gestures he described how they had encountered the full blast of the storm, and how the wind had bowled them both over like ninepins. Distinctly, he thought we might congratulate ourselves that we had turned back, otherwise the chances were that we might have been, as Mark Twain puts it, "landed in a part of Switzerland where they were not just then expecting us." This completed our consolation. They continued their way, and we, after a five minutes' stretch, reposing flat on our backs on the snow, continued. We would fain have rested longer, but Josef was inexorable, with his "Auf!"

Crossing the glacier was not the same cheerful performance it had been in the early morning. We were ankle-deep in slush, and soon got among some crevasses, which did not to our mind improve the beauty of scenes. Our order of march was changed again; Josef went first, then Natalie, then I, and Gabriel last on the rope. In this order we proceeded one after the other to drop into holes, a truly comic "follow my leader" ensuing. First we saw Josef subside, with an "Ach, bewahr!"

Then Natalie reached the weak spot and gently sank, with a shrill "Ah, gracious me!" Next I had to go, and as far as I can remember my remark was "Ow!" And lastly Gabriel went in with a grunt that was, I believe, German, but otherwise untranslatable.

Feeling the snow go under my feet, and flopping in up to my waist, was the oddest sensation I ever experienced. We had some gay gymnastics in getting in and out of the holes. Scrambling was impossible, for there was nothing reliable near enough to give a foothold, and the snow held our legs in helpless positions. We had to kick and fling until, with the help of sundry tugs at the rope from those before and behind, we could get on to firmer ground.

After nearly half an hour of this sort of fun, during an interval of which Natalie and I took to all fours, so as to have a shorter distance to drop, we arrived at a point where we could start to walk, *i.e.*, follow in Josef's footsteps, he peremptorily forbidding us to put our feet an inch to right or left of him. These said steps were knee-deep, and we felt like prancing steeds in a stately progress, as we strode along, heaving one leg after the other into the holes vacated by our pioneer. We wanted to go to a distance and look at ourselves, for the view must have been very funny.

This did not last long, happily for our knee-joints, and then followed a weary tramp over interminable snow. We could not believe that we had ever come across so much glacier as we had to return over. It was the difference between hard-frozen and a foot deep of slush.

We jogged along in single file in the trough made by those who had descended before us, but such was its narrowness and the difficulty of walking foot over foot that we had to give up keeping our equilibrium as hopeless, and resign ourselves to frequently sitting down in a sudden sort of way that made us feel very foolish. Every time Natalie subsided to the right the reaction on the rope constrained me to sit down left, and *vice versa*. Meanwhile Josef and Gabriel smiled. At one point it became too much for our gravity, and we were obliged to laugh, with the natural result that we sat down at every step. The track finished in a slope of ice, with melting snow and snow-water spilling all over it. The guides each seized one of us by the arm, and rushed us sliding and plunging down the ice, à la avalanche, and so at one o'clock prompt we tumbled on to the moraine, feeling more like jelly than ever. Then they divested us of our gaiters and wraps, and wrung the water out of them and our dripping skirts, and we spread ourselves out to dry, so to speak, on the rocks in the blazing sun, which was scorching down as though it had not seen a snowstorm for months.

The next thing was luncheon, which we enjoyed nearly as much as our five a.m. breakfast on the same spot. When we had basked there for a short half hour, we took matters easily over moraine and down into the valley. Upon reaching the restful shades of the pines we laid our lazy lengths upon the grassy slope, and for nearly an hour revelled in the afternoon sunshine and the view, while the Taugwalders slept.

We reached Zermatt at a little before five. On the steep pastures we walked, or rather descended with a run and a jump, arm in arm with our guides, who did all they could to lessen the fatigues of the way for us. We were filing along the high path above the ravine when a jödel, and the distant moving of alpenstocks, showed us Annette and Grace and several of the girls waiting to conduct us in triumphal procession for the rest of the way.

So, joking and laughing merrily, we came down into the village again, and the inspiring tones of the dinner-bell sped our weary way as we toiled upstairs to dress for table d'hôte.

ELCIE.