

PLAY AND WORK IN THE ALPS.

I. PLAY.



THE BRIDGE AT NEUBRÜCKE.



GOING to Switzerland was one of the bravest things we ever did. The hundreds of thousands who yearly crowd the playgrounds of Europe go innocently for amusement or rest, or, if they are English, because it is the correct thing. They do not know that their arrival is an intrusion, their departure a blessing, and they themselves but impudent or ridiculous Americans, cockneys, and Cook's tourists, to be sneered at as they deserve by the some five hundred Englishmen for whom alone the Alps were created. But we knew this only too well when we started for Zermatt,—the very holy of holies of the Alpine Club,—and this is why I think our bravery as great as that of any of the heroes immortalized in the "Alpine Journal."

We arrived one rainy August day at Visp, a town you reach by railway, going up the Rhone in a train the speed of which is rivaled only by that of the slow-plodding mule of the country.

At the station three gorgeous porters in gold-laced caps invited us in fluent English to ride for nothing to their hotels. But we had sent our baggage, as we had been advised, to the post-office, where we at once went. The bag which we wished to post to Zermatt seemed to us very heavy, but scythes and barrels and bundles of old iron, labeled and addressed, were lying on the floor, and we supposed it

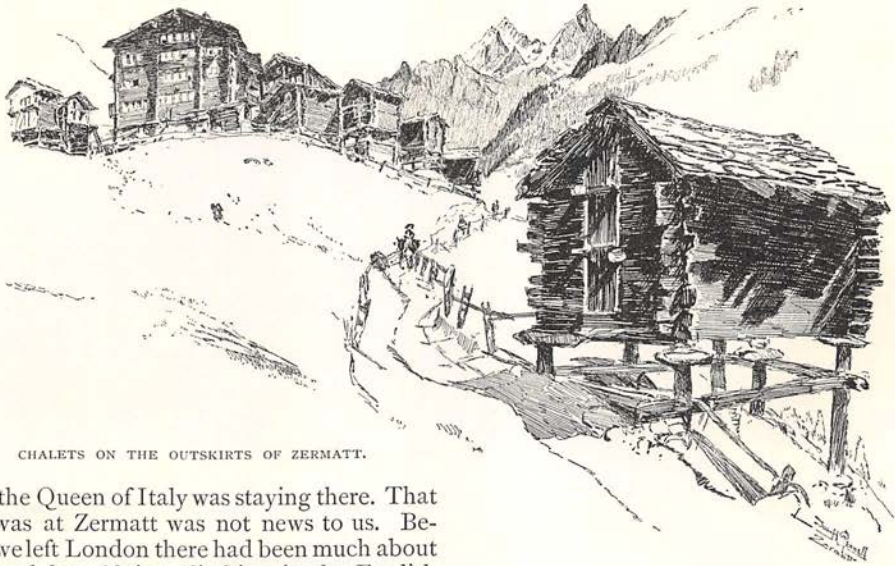
must be all right, though the postmistress, as soon as we had paid our money, turned away without giving us stamps or receipt, and had nothing more to do with us. We need not have worried, for the Swiss post-office takes anything and everything that the express companies at home would carry; and if one does not bother about his baggage, it is as certain to turn up at his journey's end as it would be to disappear in England, if one ventured to let it take care of itself.

We got off the next morning about seven, for, though the rain had stopped, it looked as if it might begin again at any minute. From Visp to St. Nicholas, half-way up the valley, there was only a bridle-path on the mountainside, though probably by this time the railroad on which we saw men working has been opened. We passed through Neubrücke, a tiny village which, with its high-pointed, one-arched bridge spanning the deep river-bed, might have been the composition of an old landscape-painter; and later, an hour and a half from Visp, we lingered for a while at Stalden, which was crowded with tourists, and like a great German beer-garden; and at last reached St. Nicholas in the rain.

The talk at lunch was all about Zermatt and the difficulty of getting rooms at its hotels now



THE CHURCH AT STALDEN.



CHALETS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF ZERMATT.

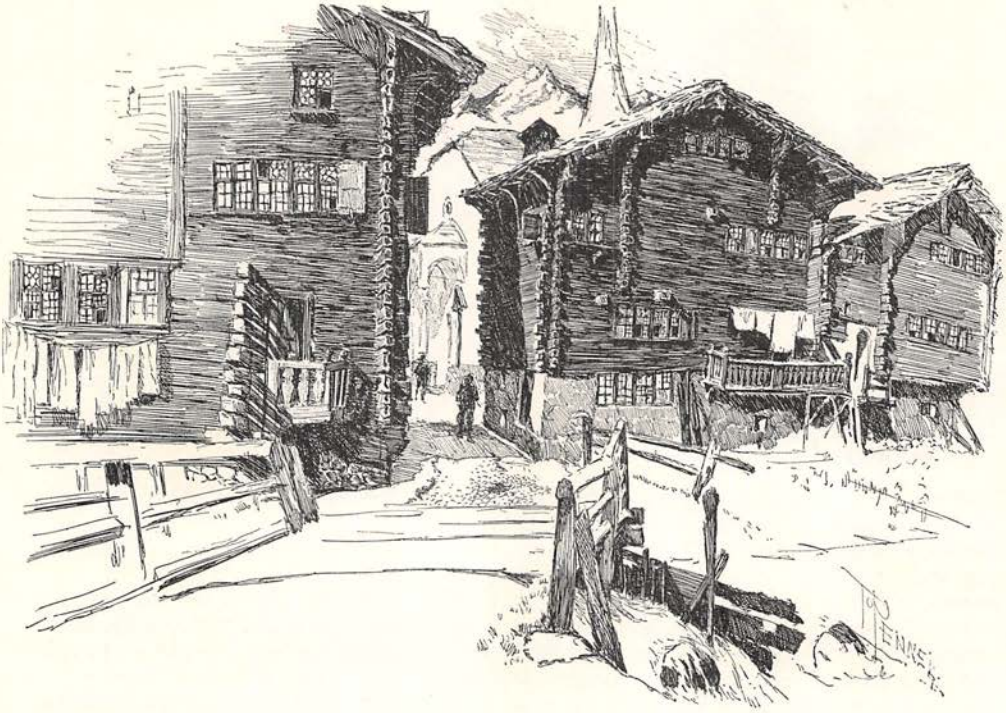
that the Queen of Italy was staying there. That she was at Zermatt was not news to us. Before we left London there had been much about her and her Alpine climbing in the English papers, which indeed had encouraged us to come. What she could do we thought most certainly we could too. As several English families who had telegraphed for rooms had been answered that there were none, almost every one decided to pass the night in St. Nicholas. This made us hope that there might be more chance for us, especially as the inn kept filling with people coming down the valley; so, without telegraphing, we left as soon as we had lunched.

From here there was a carriage-road the rest of the way, and the gold-laced porter ordered out one of the two-seated wagons—the native *chars*—drawn up in front of the hotel, and brought a ladder by which we mounted into it. For driver we had a delightfully picturesque little fellow, with gold rings twinkling in his ears, and with a broad-brimmed felt hat into which a feather was stuck. The afternoon was indescribably dreary. The rain poured in torrents, the clouds fell lower and lower, and the farther we went the colder it seemed to grow, for even here, it must be remembered, we were as high as the top of Mount Washington or of Snowdon. At Randa, a village by the way, of which all that I remember, indeed all that I saw, was the hotel, we waited an interminable half-hour while the mule and his driver had something to eat. Another carriage drove up behind us, and we knew that if it got to Zermatt first there would be one chance the less for us. For relief we turned to our Baedeker. But our view, between the steady drops of rain, was bounded by an horizon apparently about twenty-five feet off in the clouds, and a few yards of mist and streaming rain were all we had to look at for the rest of the afternoon.

We had been driving for an eternity, it seemed to us,—in reality for about five hours,—when a slight descent brought us to a level stretch. “It is Zermatt,” our driver said, and he took off his blanket, emptied the water from the brim of his hat, and jumped into the carriage. A few black masses developed into chalets; one or two large, gray, shadow-like forms became hotels, with dreary tourists looking out of the windows; and then an enormous pile began to shape itself into a huge barrack with windows and a long porch, and “Hotel Mont Cervin” painted in big letters on its face. A group of men in broad-brimmed hats, hands in their pockets, pipes in their mouths, were lounging at the door as we drove up. Madame the manager came running out.



AN OFF DAY AT ZERMATT.



A STREET IN ZERMATT.

"Has Monsieur telegraphed?"

"No."

"Then there is nothing for Monsieur." And she simply turned and left us.

We drove on, jolting up and down over the vilest cobbles, through a narrow street, between black chalets with water pouring in streams from the spouts which stick out like gargoyles from their eaves, to a small, low building with "Hotel Mont Rose" over its door. Again a madame ran out to meet us.

"Has Monsieur telegraphed?"

"No."

"Then,"—but very polite and sympathetic,—"I regret that Monsieur can be given nothing."

Opposite, with a wide open space between, was a third hotel, the Zermatt, and here, when we were again asked, "Has Monsieur telegraphed?" we began to wish ourselves back in St. Nicholas and royalty anywhere but in the haunts of common men. But madame, standing for a minute in the rain, seemed to feel sorry for us, and, though there was nothing, she promised us a salon for the night and sent us to her own room in the mean time.

It cleared during the night, and the next morning when we went out we could see that the little green plain of Zermatt formed the arena of a vast amphitheater of mountains, many with dense pine forests almost to their ap-

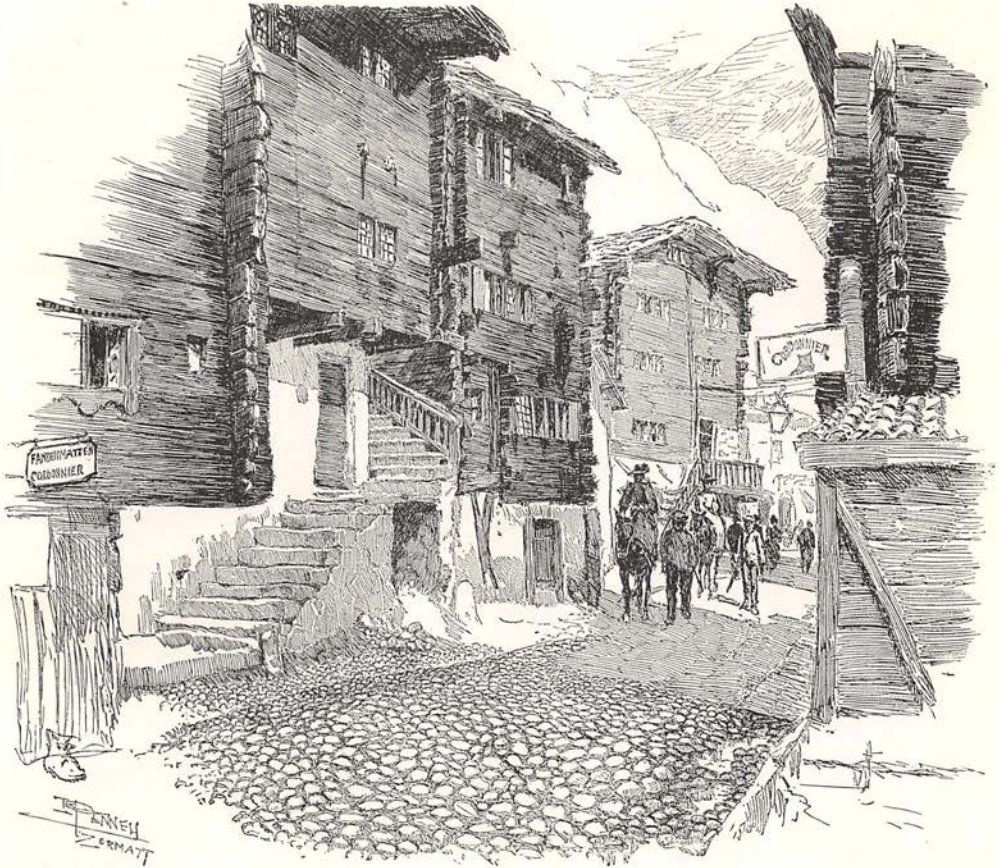
parent summits, others with little patches of yellowing grain on their lower slopes, though not anywhere were there signs of the pleasant orchards and vineyards which ascend from the Lake of Geneva far up the hillsides, and border the rocky bed and wild swamps of the Rhone. So completely did the heights shut in the plain that they hid from it the loftier peaks men have risked their lives to conquer, save at the upper end of the valley, where the mighty Matterhorn towered alone.

It was a reminder of what had brought us here to the very heart of the High Alps, and at once we took our boots for the orthodox supply of nails to one of two rival cobblers who, just a little beyond the Monte Rosa Hotel, looked across the street at each other. We walked on to select good, sound alpenstocks from one of the half-dozen shops for tourists. Two or three carriages bumped past towards St. Nicholas; on the steps of the post-office Englishmen were reading the "Times" or the "Star"; the Swiss army, in the shape of one soldier in red and black uniform, was chasing a goat round a corner; women with handkerchiefs over their heads were carrying huge bundles of hay or fagots of wood into the black chalets; the guides with the broad-brimmed hats now touched them to us as we came to the Mont Cervin Hotel, in front of which they still lounged; and tourists went by on mules or on

foot, the iron points of their alpenstocks clanging in time with their steps.

To climb in shoes and without nails would have been too amateurish, and so our first day was spent in waiting for our boots. We found some young French Anglomaniacs playing tennis in front of the hotel; and on the porch men in knickerbockers and Norfolk jackets suggestive of Highland moors, and girls in

ters, close to the telescope, while whoever had his eye at the glass played the showman. "Now they're on the snow. They're going up the shoulder. The poor fellow's on all fours; the first guide is away ahead, but the second keeps very close. You can't see them now; they're behind the rocks. There they come again. Oh, dear! what a hard time he's having!" And so on, and on, and on, in a



THE COBBLERS OF ZERMATT—ON THE MAIN STREET.

approved Thames costume, were grouped about a telescope which was directed towards the Matterhorn and balanced by an empty bottle hanging from it. Every minute the crowd increased, and parties crossed from the Monte Rosa to look, for a man and his two guides, the first to venture after a heavy snow-storm, could be seen upon the great peak. In the course of the morning we managed to have one peep each, but just as with much difficulty I had discovered three black things like ants crawling over the snow, I had to give way to the next in the long line waiting. All day long the interest never wavered. Men smoked their cigarettes, women wrote their let-

ceaseless stream. For a little while at lunch the porch was deserted, but the afternoon brought back as large an audience as ever. Either the snow made it really difficult, or the poor climber was as exhausted as he looked, but certainly at half-past six, when we went to dinner, instead of being back in Zermatt, as he should have been, he was but two-thirds of the way down to the first hut, and excitement at the hotel was intense. For the time I was deeply impressed with the dangers of the Matterhorn; but the next day before noon thirteen men had been seen upon its summit.

In Zermatt the Matterhorn is not only the dominating feature in the landscape but the

great center of interest, the chief topic of conversation. Sometimes in the evening there was an attempt at dancing, and an Italian and his two daughters came with violins, guitar, and mandolin, but the dancers left the *salon* before the musicians. Sometimes during the day there were polite, languishing games of tennis. Few climbed, and the only other resource was to watch the man on the Matterhorn, who, in making the ascent, was therefore providing not merely for himself but for all below an occupation with a decided flavor of excitement. Nowadays every one who goes up anything goes up the Matterhorn, unless indeed he objects to its price: \$50 for one

his feet with a slip-knot, and he swinging from rock to rock, suspended thousands of feet in the air, and they never bothering to look at him; and of the Italian count who made the ascent with seven guides in front, seven behind, and one man to keep his legs straight against the rocks; and of the boy of fourteen following in the train of the conqueror; and of the woman reaching the top, and then, as the guides literally ran her down, quietly sleeping all the way back from the lower hut until the bells of the little church in Zermatt awoke her. And yet even the cynics who laughed at these tales could be stirred into a show of enthusiasm, and more than once were we roused from our first sleep



THE CLUB-ROOM AT ZERMATT.

day's climb, to say nothing of incidental expenses, is no light matter, and there are people who think the game not worth the candle. But this is the only consideration. Times have changed since every Alpine climb was a journey of discovery; and terrible as the cliffs of the Matterhorn still look from the valley, they have been shorn of their chief danger. Rocks have been blasted, chains and ropes hung, huts set up on its slopes, and a comfortable hotel built at its foot.

The street between the wall and the hotel was called the club-room of Zermatt, and it was there that my feelings of respect for the cliffs and precipices of the Matterhorn perished. For there I heard the story of the fat German hauled like a log up the peak by four guides, the rope tied around his waist and fastened to

by the ringing cheers with which the men at the Monte Rosa greeted the return of the last hero of the Matterhorn. And, after all, there are certain perils which the exploiters of the Alps cannot wholly counteract.

The second morning after our arrival our boots were in fine working order—at every step we left an impression of nails on the hotel floors, on the gravel paths in front, on everything but the cobbles. And so, with Baedeker in our pocket, and the Matterhorn lifting its peak in front of us, we started on our first Alpine ascent. We were going to the Riffel, but our Baedeker was four or five years old, and the directions not clear. We consulted some Germans, who explained at great length, pointing to the road straight ahead. As we could not understand a word, we relied upon



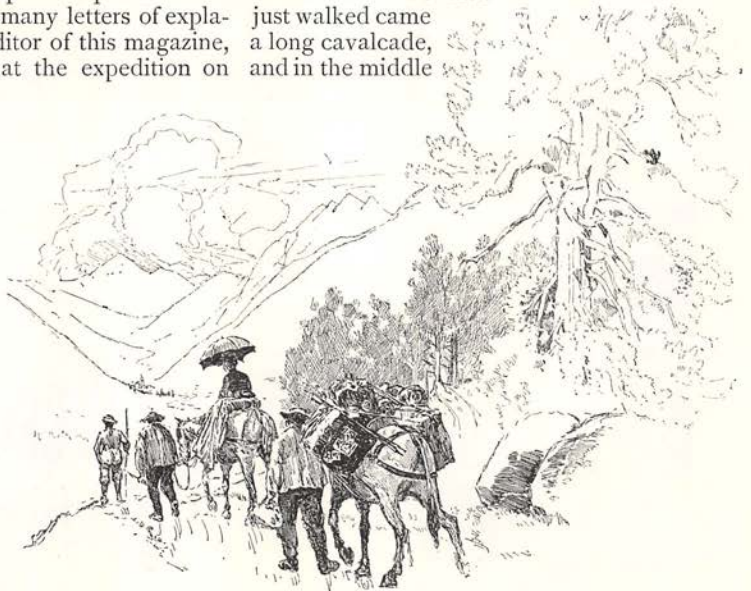
CHAISE À PORTEUR.

their gestures, and kept on until we crossed a little bridge over a stream that rushed down towards the Visp. And here most unaccountably we lost the mule-track, and made a path for ourselves up the green slopes of the mountain, apparently just below the Matterhorn. Here our climbing began. For me it ended above the last group of chalets, where the last tiny field of grain gave way to rough boulder-strewn pastures. But to prevent protests from the Alpine Club, or too many letters of explanation inundating the editor of this magazine, let me at once admit that the expedition on which I collapsed is usually taken comfortably on muleback by old ladies and small children, and that the point where I left off is thousands of feet below that at which the real climber begins.

From a sunny lichen-covered rock I looked down in sullen disgust on the great curve of the Gorner Glacier as it came sweeping round the opposite heights, where stood two hotels, one above the other, evidently those for which we thought ourselves bound; and be-

yond to the mountains I had gaily planned to climb. Far below, Zermatt, set out like a toy village in the midst of green fields, was shut in by its ramparts of hills, which from here I could see were separated from each other by the white lines of glaciers and of streams leaping from them, and were crowned by snowy peaks. And even as I looked, and listened to the cow-bells ringing sweetly from the near pastures, I wished myself back in London. And I wondered at the foolish infatuation of the people toiling up the footpath, some with guides, and all with eyes fixed upon the ground. Where was the pleasure? J—— came back finally, and had an ascent to talk about. He had climbed, and climbed, and climbed, and made his way through snow quite two feet deep, until he was sure he was half-way up the Matterhorn, when suddenly he saw on a wild and desolate platform in front of him a big hotel with a sign bearing, in enormous letters, "Hotel Schwarz See, 8392 feet," while far above it, and seemingly but little nearer, the great peak sprang aloft into the blue air.

That very day we saw the Queen of Italy returning from a royal expedition. We had made another attempt to ascend the Riffel, for no sooner had I recovered my breath and my temper than I was eager to be mounting something else. Round a turn in the road down which we had just walked came a long cavalcade, and in the middle



GOING TO THE RIFFEL.

a horse bearing the queen. But could this disheveled woman, with the big gray felt hat and dragged feather on the back of her head and suspicious streaks marking her face, hanging on with all her might and main to the railing of her saddle and bobbing up and down on her horse, be the same we had seen, so elegant, and handsome, and smiling, and perfectly dressed, driving through the streets of Rome? It was well Italian subjects did not see their queen. We stood and stared, and it was rather surprise at her ludicrous appearance than any latent radicalism which made J—— omit to take off his hat. But I do not know why she should have been so utterly demoralized, for she made her ascents on mules or in *chaises à porteur*. She was a perfect mine for guides and porters, who, for the time, deserted their usual lounging place in front of the Monte Rosa for the Mont Cervin, where she had her apartment. I only hope she proved as profitable to the proprietor, who has fought shy of royalty since the ex-Emperor of Brazil came to Zermatt. His majesty and suite, numbering twenty-five in all, had also taken possession of the Mont Cervin, and for them the whole place was turned topsy-turvy, and illuminations were given in their honor, and there were fine goings on, all of which were duly remembered when the time came to make out the bill. His majesty himself studied every item attentively, looking at the bill from beginning to end, and then handed it back to Seiler with twenty-five Cook's hotel coupons! And Seiler, who is no ordinary hotel-

keeper, thought the joke too good to keep to himself.

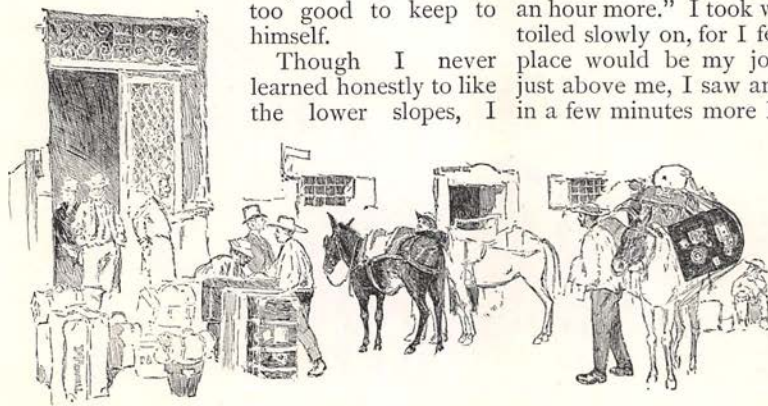
Though I never learned honestly to like the lower slopes, I



CHOOSING A GUIDE.

gradually got used to them. The very next day I managed to reach not only the Riffelalp, the first of the high hotels, but the Riffelhaus. When we started from the Hotel Zermatt we were given luncheon-coupons good in either, so we had the day before us. I let J—— go at his own pace, which was really very amateurish; it is only your novice who tears up a mountain. I walked as slowly as a guide or as a mule, though not as steadily, for I rested every half-hour or less. This gave me a chance to see, between the blighted and gnarled pine trees, on one side a dazzling stretch of glacier, on the other the far blue Oberland, as unsubstantial as the clouds above its summits. Up, up, up went the path, always through the woods, save for a little space where it skirted a grassy level. "How much farther is it?" in despair I asked a benevolent-looking middle-aged lady, in bonnet and dotted net veil, bound for Zermatt. She comforted me. "Only half an hour more." I took what hope I could, and toiled slowly on, for I feared my next resting-place would be my journey's end. At last, just above me, I saw an enormous hotel, and in a few minutes more I was on the wide terrace in front, where

J—— was already established, a half-dozen guides were loafing, and an artist was painting the valley of the Visp, from which uprose one white church-spire, the center of a village, while the far horizon was bounded



AN ARRIVAL AT THE RIFFEL.

by the shadowy blue mass and faint white peaks of the Bernese Oberland.

It was so cold every one was sitting inside. When the lunch-bell rang, and I went to present our coupons, I found groups of women in heavy wraps on the glass-enclosed porch, and round the stove in the hall others were seated, only their faces showing out of a bundle of shawls. We had come too late. Every place in the large dining-room with its three long tables, every place in the small dining-room, was taken. "You can go up to the Rifelhaus," the waiter said. Of course I could, and die on the way. And people come to the Alps for pleasure!

There was nothing else to do, however. Behind the hotel the path continued its windings, though now above the trees, on the bare mountainside, where cows were grazing on the scant pasture, and snow lay in great patches. Up here the ground on every side was white with snow. One or two guides and porters waiting in the open space in front of the hotel were stamping their feet to keep them warm. Inside, women were lunching in their fur-lined cloaks, men in their ulsters. The porch in front, as at the hotel below, was inclosed with glass, and here after lunch we had our coffee. Once the place was literally invaded by a phenomenal French family, father, mother, five daughters, and four sons, all in white berets, chattering, laughing, shivering, enjoying themselves immensely and undisguisedly to the disgust of a group of solemn Englishmen in a corner. "All those who want coffee hold up their hands," said the father of the family when he gave his order.

Outside, when we ventured again into the cold, the clouds were falling, and a keen, sharp wind was blowing. It would have been as much fun to walk in a blizzard at home, and we turned back.

But the Alpine fever was upon us. I am sure I cannot explain the reason, but the more disgusted we were with one expedition, the greater always was our impatience to make another, and the next morning we were off on a long glacier walk. For this we took a guide, and as we conferred with him outside the hotel, just as we had seen the superior climbers confer with their guides, and followed him in single file, I flattered myself that we looked as if we meant business.

The first part of the journey was up the mountain side to the Schwarz See, but I was too impressed with our appearance to give up as on the first trial. Perren, the guide, kept us to the mule-track and made the pace, but he never volunteered to stop, and I noticed that Mr. U——, who was with us, and I were so delighted with the fine view of the Gorner

Glacier and the snow-range beyond that now and then we stood in mute admiration, surreptitiously getting our breath, while the guide pointed out the different peaks. At the Schwarz See Hotel we lunched, and then went on, for a while still towards the Matterhorn, until we dropped down upon the Furgg Glacier, over the moraine, which from above always looks like a level pile of stones and rubbish, but which, once you are on it, develops into a succession of rough hills and rougher ridges of unsteady rocks and stones, to cross which is like climb-



THE VILLAGE OF FINDELEN.

ing over the ruins of a city. The guide wound his way through the maze of crevasses which from the rocks had seemed only so many beautifully marked lines and curves on a smooth icy surface, but which now opened at our feet, sinking to profound depths, with polished walls of purest blue and green. Into them he threw stones in the approved fashion for amusing the tourist, and then, when we drew near the edge, pulled us away to inspire us with proper respect. Here and there he cut steps in an icy wall we had to scale, and at a miniature *bergschrunn* which the Alpinist would have despised he even lifted me in his arms down to the lower side, and altogether did his best to give the walk an air of adventure. On the short dry grass of the slope above, where sheep were wandering, more pipes were smoked, and the guide showed us the book which every guide carries, and in which many



THE MATTERHORN FROM OUR WINDOW.

men had written compliments, especially upon his gallantry to ladies; and these, after the episode of the *bergschrund*, I could but reëcho.

After we had crossed the Gorner Glacier, and were on the road again, nearing Zermatt, the guide quietly fell behind for the first time. Among guides it is good form to lead when danger or, at least, work is ahead, but to let the tourist lead when only the glory of a successful home-coming awaits him.

This walk was our most enterprising so long as we remained in the valley. Another day we did manage to get up to the Findelen Glacier, one of the many gulfs of thawless ice between the heights which rise behind and beyond the mountains encircling Zermatt. And we walked up the Zmutt Thal to the Zmutt Glacier, just below the really inaccessible cliffs of the Matterhorn, to meet a friend—a hero—who was coming over the high snow-pass from Zinal, and who arrived an object of pity, with scarlet face, cracked nose and lips, and the stubby beard of a few days' growth, wearing clothes in which we would not have recognized him at home. We also took a rough climb along the footpath, hopelessly losing itself every now and then among the rocks, high above the Trift Glacier, on the mountainside where so often the long threads and wreaths of cloud lay quietly, and where edelweiss grew in rich velvety clumps.

It was the day after this climb that we moved up to the Riffelalp, all our belongings on a

mule, while we followed on foot, as if merely out for an afternoon's walk. There we found many well-known faces from Visp, and St. Nicholas, and Zermatt—the Archbishop of Canterbury in knickerbockers, sack-coat, and low hat, with archiepiscopal suggestion in the turned-up brim and button in front; the young ladies with their sketch-books, vigorously attacking the Matterhorn; the guides loafing with the inexhaustible pipes in their mouths; the climbers, now revolving round the woman famous for losing her toes by a night spent at the bottom of a crevasse; the maiden ladies with Dorcas and missionary propensities writ large on their benevolent faces. The only foreigners were an elderly Frenchman and his young wife, who sat hand in hand under the trees, laughing ecstasically, and an Italian artist, who never worked, but spent his time exchanging cards with likely patrons in knickerbockers.

We had a delightful corner room with two windows and a balcony. When we jumped out of bed in the morning the first thing we saw, beyond the pines and the glacier and the snowfields, was the Matterhorn; and as we dressed for dinner we could watch its cloud-banner turn to gold, as the light of the unseen sunset fell upon it, or else, from the other window, we could look far down the valley of the Visp, where, perhaps, we had already watched the shadows slowly creeping up the mountains, which on each side stretched far away to the dim peaks of the Oberland. And when I blew out the candle at night, and there was a moon, the last object upon which our eyes rested was still the Matterhorn, pale but distinct in the soft silvery light.

From the Riffelalp I made my most enterprising expedition, and started for the second hut on the Théodule Pass, from which you look down into Italy. Our path led high up the mountainside above the Gorner Glacier, and then dropped steeply down upon it. A thin coating of ice still covered the little streams and pools, but gradually the hot morning sun melted it, though the wind blowing over the great snow-range was fresh and cold. One man with his guide overtook us and passed quickly out of sight, but we saw no one else. I hardly know what happened the rest of the way, for the mountain sickness, I suppose it was, seized upon me, and I wearily dragged one foot after the other, as step by step I felt the steeper rising of the glacier. I remember how for an hour or more the little Matterhorn seemed only a few paces in front of us, but we never got any closer to it; and then some one pointed to a white dot on the rocks to our right, which he said was the first hut, and I eagerly kept my eye on it; but we walked and walked,

and yet it grew no bigger. At last we were at the foot of the rocks, and Perren started up a wall as steep as a mansard roof, with loose stones and sand falling and slipping from it, and the higher we climbed the higher it seemed to rise above us, until suddenly—everything is seen suddenly in the Alps—in front of us I saw a little two-storied house, with smoke curling gaily out of its window, guides drinking at a table at its door, mules coming up round the other side of the rocks, and tourists putting on their gaiters. A man with a napkin over his arm at once stepped forward to ask what we would drink.

In the mean time the rest of our party had eaten lunch, and were now putting on their gaiters. I would not look at mine. And yet from here to the second hut was the part of the walk for which I had specially come, for between lay vast snowfields it was not safe to cross without being roped, and until the rope was tied

haus, and then kept on, up the path beyond, to the Gorner Grat, the roads becoming rougher and rockier at every step, though never quite impassable for the mules. It was like going up stairs steadily for an hour and a half, but on the way were no rocks as steep as those below the Théodule hut, nor was the path even as steep as the road to the Riffel. It came to an end finally on a narrow, rocky ridge, every hollow filled with snow, a wooden hut on one side, and at its door a telescope through which a placard offered us a look for fifteen centimes. Several groups of men and women, coat-collars turned up, alpenstocks and ice-axes at their sides, were gathered round unpacked luncheon-baskets, and they turned to glare, as we arrived, as if daring us to intrude upon them. We went as far away as we could, unpacked our own baskets, bought some extra luxuries at the hut for a price which included the 10,-289 feet elevation of the picnicking-ground



THE MATTERHORN AND THE RIFFELHORN FROM THE RIFFEL.

round my waist I felt that I should have had no real Alpine experience. From my sunny bed on the rocks I saw the others walk off, and just above stop and rope themselves together; and I was left alone.

When the climbers came back they found me comfortably seated at a table in the sun, eating some excellent soup, and bread and butter. They had not only been to the second hut, but had scrambled up the Théodule Horn, and altogether had been so brave and energetic that I walked back to the Riffel more ashamed of myself than ever. Whatever woman may be at the polls, I am ready to prove her man's inferior on the Alps.

One cloudy day, with a large party, we followed the long, weary windings to the Riffel-

and the view it commanded. And then we glared in our turn as another party of tourists threatened us; but it was no use.

At last the clouds, which had been falling behind and over the Riffel all the morning, closed about us and blotted out the entire panorama. There being nothing more to eat or to see, we began our descent through the clouds.

"Some persons," Mr. Leslie Stephen says, "hold that every pleasure they cannot sympathize with is necessarily affectation." And the man who in the Alps is only happy on a mountain-top, or on the way to it, can hardly be expected to understand that there is real enjoyment left for those who sit all day long in the sun, or linger for hours in the pine woods,

or whose energies are exhausted by a three or four hours' journey. My only climbs were those of which I have just written, and yet no one could have felt more deeply the great charm of Zermatt and the Riffel. It seemed to grow greater with each day, and I think I never regretted leaving a place so much as the Riffelalp Hotel the September noon I made my last descent between the pine trees, when a keen sweet wind blew over the mountains, now arrayed in all their autumn glory

of scarlet and gold, and on the plain men and women were cutting hay, its scent filling the pure air, and girls, minding a cow or a goat, were lying on the grass in the warm sunshine. If it were brave of us to journey to Zermatt in the beginning, let me be braver still in the end, and, risking the wrath of the Alpine Club, say that I know of no lovelier place to go for a month's holiday, as one at home goes to the mountains or to one of the many cities by the sea.

Elizabeth Robins Pennell.



A DIFFICULT CORNER.



BREAKING THROUGH AN ICE-BRIDGE.

II. WORK.

"ALPS; yes," was the form of a cablegram which reached me one day last summer, and as soon as possible we were in Zermatt. For the first ten days I agreed perfectly with the eminent medical authority who, having climbed with his family on mules to the Riffel, on his return said that it was pure recklessness and foolhardiness to go up anything. But on the eleventh day a friend appeared. Now I have a very profound respect for him in many walks of life, but as an athlete my contempt for him was then unbounded.

The afternoon of the day on which he appeared he insisted on going off for a walk. He came out in a beautiful cap of an entirely new style, a most appropriate suit, a tremendous pair of hob-nailed boots,—they were ready long before he left London,—and a gorgeous ice-ax, which lived in a leather cover.

We went up to the Riffel, and on the way I did receive a lot of good advice. I discovered, for example, that one does not climb mountains at five miles an hour, and that there is very much to learn in the way of throwing your weight and placing your feet. Having secured rooms at the Riffel, he proposed that we should return by the Findelen Glacier, and in about

an hour, over a good path, we reached the moraine, which from the distance looks like a winding brown ribbon, and which becomes a huge wall of loose rock the minute one gets on to it. From the top he pointed out the Rimpfischhorn miles away, up which we purposed later to climb. F—— half ran, half slid down the slippery mass of debris. I attempted to follow, but slid down altogether, and landed on my hands and knees on a great flat floor of dirty ice. Up the ice, which rose all around in front of us steeper than a church-roof, he walked with his ice-ax. I jammed my pole in, struggled up to it, went beyond it, and found myself fixed something like a V, the pole being one arm, my body the other. I endeavored to brace myself up, but suddenly sat down, and slipped backwards to the bottom. I then tried to crawl up, but only slid back again. F—— walked slowly down, seized me by the back of the neck, and with dignity, his ice-ax in one hand and me in the other, strode up to the top. I was beginning to have some respect for him. We came straight down over the end of the glacier, on which I now thought I was quite at home. I jumped on to a long, smooth dirt-covered slope in front of me, and in a



CROSSING A COULOIR.

second was yards below the place where I had started, up to my knees in mud, small rocks, and water. It was a slope of pure ice hidden under a layer of mud and loose stones, and the whole surface had given way with me; and as I tried to pull myself out of the bed of the small avalanche I had set in motion, I heard F—— calmly remark, "Well, have you broken your neck?" Then he came down by the rocks on the side. Save for several holes in my hands and clothes I was none the worse for it. The walking here was very much easier, and we came out on a still, black little lake,—one of two which lie one on each side of the Findelen,—struck a curious level path which seemed to go for a mile or more along the side of the mountain, and blocked out the bare rock above from the almost sheer grass-slopes below. We followed this until we were just above the high chalets of Findelen, which seem to be anchored on the mountainside. At Findelen the only native who could understand my French informed us that it would take two hours to reach Zermatt, while we knew dinner would be served in three-quarters. We scurried down the continuous zigzags for about fifteen minutes at a pace which scarcely gave the slow-going peasant time to touch his hat and get off the inevitable good evening, until I

noticed a dry water-course running straight down the mountainside, with Zermatt apparently a quarter of a mile below at the foot of it. Without waiting for F——'s advice, I jumped into it. Stones, dirt, mud, branches of trees started off with me, and, sticking the point of my alpenstock into the ground behind me, I went with them at about a 2:30 gait. Sometimes I bounded for about ten or fifteen feet through the air, and then I would slide twenty or thirty, tearing out stones and rocks with my hands, trousers, and legs. Suddenly the alpenstock went over my head and began on its own account a race in which I was badly beaten, and before I could think where I was going I found myself close to the little white church on the Findelenbach, half a mile from Zermatt, and I heard a voice away up the mountain saying, "Are you down there?" And when I said, "Yes," I saw another avalanche coming, and in a few minutes out of the bottom of it emerged F——, covered with mud and dirt from head to foot, and remarking, "What in the mischief did you come down such a place as that for?" To which the one obvious answer was, "Why did you do it yourself?" And a sermon on the dangers of sliding down unknown water-courses was cut short. But it seemed to me that doing

a two-hours' walk in about twenty minutes ought to be considered quite a feat. However, a few minutes afterwards we were in Zermatt toggled up as if we were in London, with the addition of some ornaments in the shape of sticking-

who had done the Matterhorn, and we were happy, though we were deemed worthy only of the withering contempt of all respectable climbers.

The night before we were to start for the



GETTING UP TO THE ROCKS.

plaster, and I had made up my mind to go in for anything.

After this we went to work regularly; that is, we loafed two days, and then climbed one. We saw all those sights which E—— has described, and we did a lot of other things which she has not. By the end of another week I was considered a fit subject to be dragged up the Rimpfischhorn. We had been successful in many attempts, and were quite certain that we had enjoyed ourselves as much as the men

Rimpfischhorn, up which S——, who had planned everything for the whole trip, determined we should go, I went to bed as soon as it was dark, leaving the other two to arrange with old Perren the guide to get the lunch, to see to the rope, to find another guide — in fact to look after the endless details of such an expedition. I was to be called at twelve, and we were to start before one. Some time during the night I was awakened by a furious thunder-storm, but I went to sleep again, only



THE MATTERHORN.

to be aroused by unceasing peals of nearer thunder on the bedroom door. I was dressed in a few minutes, and wandered downstairs. Soon a lightly tripping step announced the approach of F—— in his stockings, while an unusual amount of crashing in the upper stories told us that S——, who was near-sighted, was making his way down. I was beginning to chaff them for being late, when they silenced me by saying, that we were away behind time, that we ought to have started before the thunder-storm, that it was now after four, and that it was very doubtful if we ever got anywhere.

Breakfast did not take long. In the middle of it, Perren, looking rather sleepy and muttering about the weather, came in for the lunch, and as soon as we went outside we found him and Imboden stowing away into their sacks the things which the yawning, automatic waiter had given them. We started off in single file, suggesting Rembrandt's "Night Watch," though we were not so picturesque. In a comparatively short time we had gotten to the moraine of the Findelen Glacier, and crossed it. I had nearly upset the whole party by slipping down among them, and to save time was

ignominiously jerked up in front by Perren, and shoved from behind with the top of Imboden's ice-ax. The lantern had been left behind, concealed in a hollow tree by the path, for the morning was coming on, not with the Alpine glow, but with an increase of grayness, with here and there a watery star high over us in the heavens. We walked in a straight line up the glacier, here hardly crevassed, and almost a perfectly smooth incline nearly to the ice-fall. A few tacks around crevasses, and we crossed a small medial moraine; a few more tacks on very smooth ice, where Perren had to cut some steps for a foothold, a rapid slide down a steep slope, and a jump over a little *bergschrund*, and we stood on a ledge at the base of the great lateral moraine. As we were leaving the moraine we stopped for a minute and looked around. Down by the Riffelalp, behind and now considerably below us, a thunder-storm was again raging. In front of us the mountain of loose rock which hid the Rimpfischhorn stood up darkly against a clear sky. Between Monte Rosa and the Breithorn was rising that thick, heavy gray cloud out of which at home always comes a heavy snow-storm. Nobody said anything, and we went on. We came down off the moraine on to the last patch of grass, wound around a quiet little lake, and began to climb a mountain which was simply a mass of loose boulders. We wound around and over and under, and swarmed up these boulders, always coming out sooner or later on a little pile of stones topped by a bottle. By what sense Perren always struck these bottles was a mystery. We began a long process of skipping from one block to another, or rather Perren and Imboden skipped, and we jumped and stumbled about and fell in between them, rising a foot with almost every stone. A few flakes of snow began to fall, the wind, which had been slight, died away entirely, and the clouds crept up from Zermatt and poured over the sides of Monte Rosa and down the peak in front of us. And all at once long winding sheets of vapor gathered around us and spread from one mountain to another, completely shutting us in, and the snow fell thick and fast.

Perren led steadily onward across a small snowfield which we did not see until we were on it, and up a tower of loose rock which loomed momentarily out of the storm. Just below the top two great boulders, standing side by side and covered with a flat stone, made a natural shelter large enough to hold all five of us, and here we had our breakfast. Between seven and eight o'clock a furious roaring began up above us; the snow fled away before it, and a burst of sunshine followed and chased it down the valley up which we had come, until even the Matterhorn glittered in the distance.

As we wound around the corner of the rock, the wind, blowing almost level and carrying with it sleet out of the now clear sky, struck us full in the face. Mufflers, gloves, and goggles went on, and we dropped straight down on to another glacier. As we crossed this, the clouds came down again, only to be whirled away, giving us marvelous glimpses of jagged coal-black peaks above us, or a momentary peep down the valley, miles away and thousands of feet below. Then we began to ascend slowly and steadily; the ice became snow covered with a crust, through which, as the ascent grew steeper, we began to break. Then for an hour it was plod, plod, plod, up an ever-steepening slope in a thick mist through which we could not see at all. Gradually the mist began to lighten; suddenly Perren stopped, and said, "Look up!" and right above, seemingly almost over us, came a great snow-peak, rushing out of the mist as if to fall upon us. Then we came to some rocks which from the Riffel look like a mere stain on the snow, but which form a huge ledge, sheeted with ice, up which one has to crawl. Stretching to the base of the Rimpfischhorn, which we had not yet reached, was a snowfield, curving over into a beautiful cornice fringed on its under side with icicles, and above the curve of the cornice a sharp ridge, or *arête*, led right into the midst of the peaks of the Rimpfischhorn. All below us now was perfectly clear, though the higher peaks were still hidden, and as the snow was soft, we went steadily forward to the foot of the *arête*. To mount this was like going up the roof of a house. The mist came down again, and it began to rain, every drop freezing as it fell, and we could not see ten feet on either side of us. But after many grunts and protests from F—— as to the pace, to which Perren paid absolutely no attention, we reached the rocks. These Perren began to climb at once, while the rest of us stood still, he having to knock the newly formed ice off each rock before he could scale it.

The rocks sloped away upward in the mist, the strata lying like stairs, only the steps were so broken that merely two inches or so of foothold remained of each step, and sometimes for four or five feet these would be broken away altogether. Perren would climb the ten or twelve feet of his rope, and steady himself; I, who was next, would yell, "*Êtes-vous sure?*" A grunt would come back; I would begin to climb; my ice-ax would begin to slip; and then, with a wild tug at my waist, though we kept the rope tight all the time, I would be nearly jerked into space, and find myself alongside of him. The same thing would happen with the rest, except the placid, puffing Imboden, who had a most provoking way of walking

up these places without much regard to anybody. Then more snowy slopes and more rocks, the latter getting steeper all the time. Finally we reached a sheer smooth bit of rock ten or twelve feet high. I came up to Perren, who showed me where to put my hands and feet, and told me to stand firm. I looked up this face of rock; there was apparently nothing beyond it, and below I could see nothing. Perren took my ice-ax, and put the head of it firmly into a crack in the rock as high as he could reach. He then told me to brace myself, stepped on my knee, then on my shoulder, clambered to the top of the ice-ax, and then this lively old boy of sixty-five made a spring for the top of the rock, grabbed it, and disappeared over the other side. The rest of us, even Imboden, came up very much like bags of bones to a ledge decorated with two broken champagne bottles. Was this the top? It was hardly the bottom, and the clouds kindly blew away and showed us peaks almost over us. There was a drink all around, and then we started on again, one at a time. Just a little ahead was seemingly the last of it, but when we got there the face of the rock fell sheer away into the mist, and twenty or thirty feet beyond was another peak still towering above us. We had struck the top of a *couloir*. Connecting the two masses was a perfectly smooth sheet of ice thinly covered with snow, evidently leading down to the glacier we had left two hours before. Perren turned right towards it, swung his ax two or three times, and stuck one foot into the niche he had cut. He made two or three more niches, and came to the end of his rope. He swung his ax round with all his might and buried the point deep down into the slope above him. On this he rested his weight, and, turning round as far as he could, looked at me. "*Allons! Courage!*" If ever I needed courage, if ever I wished to be out of a mess, it was at that minute. F—— said, "Stick your ax in like his. Are you right? Step out!" As I put my foot into the step a piece of ice broke off and began to slide, picking up the snow with a queer hissing sound. I looked at it for a moment, and then over the other side; I shut my eyes, and began trying to sit down. But I at once heard the most complicated oaths in three or four languages, and was nearly jerked out by the tightening of the rope in front and behind me. Still it was no place for a lecture, and Perren cut another step, and I took another; F—— came on, and then S——, and then Imboden. And, strangely enough, after that first step I felt perfectly easy. There really is no more difficulty in standing in a little niche on a steep wall of ice a thousand feet high than there is in putting your feet together and standing on the floor. The only necessity is confi-

dence in yourself and the people you are with. Some more rocks, another couloir, up, and not across, which we cut, one or two balancing steps on the top of it, with only clouds about us, another bit of rock, a yodel from Perren, and we were on the summit—a flat space a few feet around, a few stones, a little cairn, or stone man, some more bottles, and nothing to see. So we looked at one another. It was hailing hard, and our hair, eyebrows, and whiskers were coated with ice. F—— had become a Father Christmas; every one of Perren's wrinkles was outlined in ice. Icicles formed on the brims of our hats and on the tails of our coats; the rope was frozen stiff. And we were 13,700 feet up in the air. We filled a cup with snow, and, pouring wine into it, ate the mass. Perren put my name into the empty bottle. In less than five minutes we were chilled through and through, and we turned about and started down, Perren now being last.

One at a time we came down, our backs to the rocks, each one, even Perren, dropping his ice-ax, all but harpooning those below, for the rocks were now sheeted with ice like glass. The wind fell, and the snow descended in a cloud so heavy that by the time we reached the first couloir not a step that we had cut was to be seen. The long Imboden hacked out a new flight with all his might, but they were of the flimsiest description, and just as Perren, who hung on to the rocks in the rear as long as he could, had warningly said, "You must not slip here," F—— quietly remarked, "My step is breaking." Perren gave a fearful yell; Imboden, who was cutting, drove his ax in, burying the top in the ice. As the rope was almost perfectly taut between all of us save S—— and F——, who were stepping, F—— only slid about a foot, and hung against the slope, while he cut a new step for himself. Had not the rope been taut, as it should be, the papers at the beginning of last September would have been filled with the accounts of another horrible Alpine accident. As it was, although we came down much more slowly than we went up, we gradually reached the flat, smooth rock where S—— and F——, who had been leading by turns since Imboden had stopped his step-cutting, became perfectly blind with the snow beating in their eyes and filling up their glasses. Perren gave Imboden a longer bit of the rope, we let him out over the face of the rock, and he disappeared into space, the rope swaying about wildly two or three seconds. The ice-axes in a bundle next went down, F—— and S—— also disappeared, and it was my turn. I looked over one side before I started into the clouds; the rocks seemed simply to stick up right into the air. Perren asked if I was ready; he began to pay out the rope slowly, and, helplessly claw-

ing at the icy face with my fingers and toes, I was let down.

Each one struggled on down the rocks, and at last, with a howl and a rush, we came out upon the top of the arête, and tore down what we had so painfully toiled up in the morning. When we came to the next mass of rocks the whole upper world, which had been perfectly quiet save for the noise we made, suddenly became filled with a sound not unlike that made by a telegraph-wire in a wind. The heads of our ice-axes had a curious feeling, and in a minute every one of us knew that we were in the middle of a thunder-cloud, and were acting as lightning-conductors. Though we all felt this to be rather a risky position, we hurried on, and presently the sound ceased, and we knew that we had come out of the cloud. Out again, on to another snow-slope, and there it was as black as night. We walked ahead until we found ourselves going uphill; as we could not see from one end of the rope to the other, we turned back, and crossed a fairly level plain. The plain got steeper, the guides began to talk in *patois*; the plain curved rapidly over, and Imboden suddenly yelled wildly, "Halt!" Right in front of him the vapor broke away, and we now saw that we were traveling rapidly towards the edge of a mighty precipice. Perren turned straight about, and we slowly climbed the long stairway we had so quickly descended. When, after nearly an hour of climbing, we reached the top, every one sat down, for the moment thoroughly done. Some Alpinists may say that we had bad guides, but the fog was as thick as a London one, and I do not see that they were to blame for missing the track, as it was buried under nearly half a foot of snow. But we found our track at last, and passed on to our shelter in the morning. We tore on as fast as we could, sometimes breaking through nearly to our waists, and clapping our hands and rubbing our ears to keep up some

sort of circulation, for it was bitterly cold. Once or twice, despite all Imboden's sounding with the pole of his ax, one of us would break through into a hidden crevasse; but we were pulled out by the tightening of the rope, though the wind was almost knocked out of us by the process. The snow soon got hard again, and we tramped silently along. At our shelter the rope came off, and the climbing was over. We had been about ten hours on the peak.

The rest of the provisions were eaten, and two or three pipes smoked, while we waited vainly to see if the drizzle which had now set in would stop. Instead, it turned to heavy rain, and in this we scrambled down our mountain of boulders, and at last came out on a sort of spongy hillside, where one could run without thinking about every step. The path seemed endless, but at last Perren took to the glacier and, slipping, sliding, running, every man for himself, we crossed it, and gained the little hut just beyond, where, soaking as we were, the guides insisted on stopping. Then on down the path, now turned into a water-course, stumbling over stones, tripping over roots, and sometimes almost falling in the darkness. Perren came to the lantern, and found a dry match somewhere about him; and at last, around one of the flanks of the mountain, the lights of Zermatt came in sight away below us, though they never seemed to get nearer, and the mountain buttresses never seemed to come to an end, until, when we were thoroughly sick of it, the lights of the Riffelalp showed through the trees. Into the hall we passed, leaving a trail of water and mud behind us, and here we aroused enough interest for one of the real Alpinists to ask where we had been. As I turned away I heard him say to another over his coffee, "What, to-day? I don't believe it."

And the worst of it was that the men who were below us on the Strahlhorn said that they had hardly been in a cloud!

Joseph Pennell.

IN SHADOW.

FROM the town where I was bred
I have been so long away,
In its streets I met to-day
Both the living and the dead.

Though the upland paths we trod,
Long ago, are overgrown,
When to-day I walked alone
Your step sounded on the sod.

Long I climbed the eastern hill
Till the woods lay at my feet;
In my heart your own heart beat,
On my hand your touch lay still.

Nothing there had changed; and there,
Through that hushed and shadowed place,
I passed, meeting face to face
My old fancies everywhere.

In still valleys I walked through,
My heart's throbbing deafened me:
Suddenly I seemed to see
Jealous Death's dim shape of you.

L. Frank Tooker.