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RAGATZ.

From Ragatz to the Via Mala.

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WE had taken a late train from Zurich, and therefore reached Ragatz after night-fall. The little town looked delightfully picturesque in the flood of moonlight which lay softly upon the dark lines of trees, the winding river and the ruins on the hill, gleaming gray on one side, but with a silvery radiance shining from their upper broken surface.

Before the dew was off the grass the following morning, we walked to Bad Pfäfers, passing through the old churchyard on our way, the chief ornament of which is a monu-

ment, erected by Maximilian II. of Bavaria, to the philosopher Schelling, who died at Ragatz in 1854.

The gorge through which the impetuous Tamina rushes, and from which the abundant hot springs rise, is one of the most remarkable sights in Switzerland. The path which conducts to the Bath-house consists of a wooden gallery, securely fastened against the solid rock. It is about six hundred feet long and from thirty to forty above the foaming waters, and passes between lofty, overhanging walls of black and dripping rock.

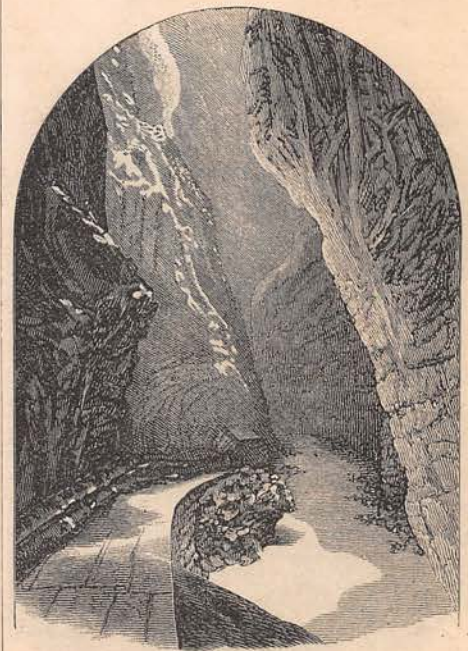
The Bath-house is a monastic-looking building, but is very snug and comfortable within, and is much frequented by invalids who require greater retirement than Ragatz can afford, for though the water at Ragatz possesses precisely the same medicinal virtues, being conducted from Pfäfers by conduits, yet the throng of visitors militates against the recovery of nervous invalids, there being an annual influx of 50,000 strangers into this village of 1,800 inhabitants. The Bath-house at Pfäfers was built in 1704, and being shut in between walls of rock six hundred feet high, it enjoys sunlight in midsummer only about five hours in the day. The temperature in the vaulted chamber, which contains the springs, was so high that we were unable to remain more than a few seconds, and we returned to the outer world of bright lights and gay sounds with joy.

After leaving the gorge we wandered slowly up the hill, alive with purple patches of wild thyme, golden rock roses, gay spires of snapdragon, trailing vetches and white glimmerings of tender Solomon's seals, to Freudenberg Castle, with its solemn magnificence of great, gray ruins, the sunlight lighting up the ivy on the walls and throwing black shadows under the arches of the crumbling windows, and then falling warm on the long grass and scarlet poppies, embroidering the lichen-tufted foundation stones.

That evening we drove to Coire or Chur, the capital of the Grisons, one of the oldest and quaintest towns in Switzerland. The entire Canton of the Grisons is remarkable for the variety of its scenery, climate, productions, and languages. The Canton consists of a net-

work of mountains, about one hundred and fifty valleys, and a large number of snow-clad peaks. Barren rocks are surrounded by luxuriant vegetation; wild deserts, where winter is king three-fourths of the year, lie adjacent to forests of chestnut trees, under skies as blue as those of Italy. Until 1268, the Grisons were subject to the Duke of Swabia, and at that time Romanch (a Latin *patois*) was the only dialect spoken. Now, however, German is in general use, and this language is so well and carefully taught in all schools, that the German spoken there is purer than in most of the German cantons.

Coire is situated on the banks of the Plesur, and is about a mile west of the Rhine. There are 7,500 inhabitants, of whom three-fourths are Protestant, although it is an episcopal residence, the seat of a theological seminary, and has one of the most venerable and interesting cathedrals in Switzerland, containing in its treasury many valuable documents and works of art. The bishop's palace is very ancient, and is within the walls of an



GORGE DE LA TAMINA.

old Roman tower, *Marsool* (Murs in oculis). Another similar tower called *Spinael* (Spina in oculis), also of Roman origin, implies that the Rhoetians (Rhoetia Curia being the Roman name for Coire) were kept in subjection by the threats of their conquerors.

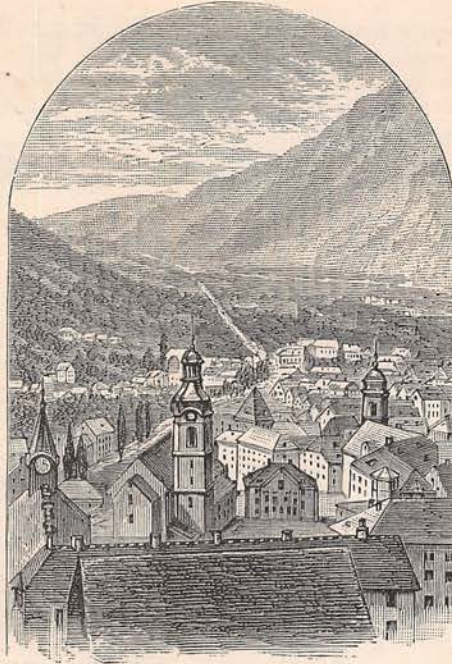
The people are honest and frank, gay and hospitable, and few more curious sights are to be seen than the peasants, in their picturesque costumes, gathered together on a market day, haggling and chaffering over the price of cheese and fruit, in their smiling, good-humored way.

But the most charming view of Coire was from the Rosenhugel, a half hour's walk up the Engadine Road. There, day after day, for months, we would go, and with books and work would sit on a green bank, under the shadow of an old walnut tree, whose sturdy limbs had weathered the storms of centuries, had, perhaps, even witnessed the erection of the old pointed tower, another relic of the invasion of Julius Cæsar and his legions, or seen the hordes of Goths sweep by on their homeward way, after their desolating visit to fair Italy.

Before our face rose naked and bleak the stern sides of the Calanda, patches of snow visible all summer long in its rifts and crevices; at the base of the mountain swept the Rhine in its eager course; hemming in the valley, at the right, was the Falknis, with its chain of rugged peaks, while forty miles distant, toward the left, the brilliant, snowy crest of the Tödi sparkled in the afternoon light. In the valley below nestled the curious old town, the Plessur darting its silvery course through the gardens and under the walls of the houses; the cathedral lifted its venerable spire aloft, pointing the way toward heaven, as it has done for a thousand years, and far, far above, on the steep mountain side, the white Chapel of St. Lucius peeped out from the clustering shrubs and trees, seemingly in-

accessible, save to the sure-footed chamois and the free winds of heaven.

In one of those stone houses hanging over the river, Angelica Kaufman first opened her eyes to the brightness of day, one hundred and thirty-seven years ago. Her mother was



COIRE.

a native of Coire, and her father, who was a very mediocre artist, was retouching pictures for the cathedral when the girl was born. She early displayed great talent for music as well as for painting, and it was not until she was past twenty that she decided to which art she would fully consecrate herself. In 1765 she made the acquaintance of the wife of the English Ambassador to Venice, whom she afterward accompanied to England. Many were the graceful and flattering attentions she received during her residence there, both from the royal family and from other artists; but she made a most unfortunate marriage, which seemed, for a time, to have blighted her life and checked her career.

However, after much ill usage from her husband, she obtained a divorce, and seven years after married a Venetian artist, Zucchi, her first husband having died in the mean time. She was a fine linguist as well as a musician of remarkable attainment, and a painter worthy of Sir Joshua Reynolds's admiration. She resided in Rome during the later years of her life, and gathered about her a splendid collection of art. This was destroyed by the French in one of their occupations of the city, and the choicest pieces were carried to Paris. It was a great grief to the woman-artist. Her husband, Zucchi, to whom she was fondly attached, died, her paintings were gone, and the shadows of death crept over her. She, too, died in 1807, and was buried in the church of St. Andrew della Frata in Rome.

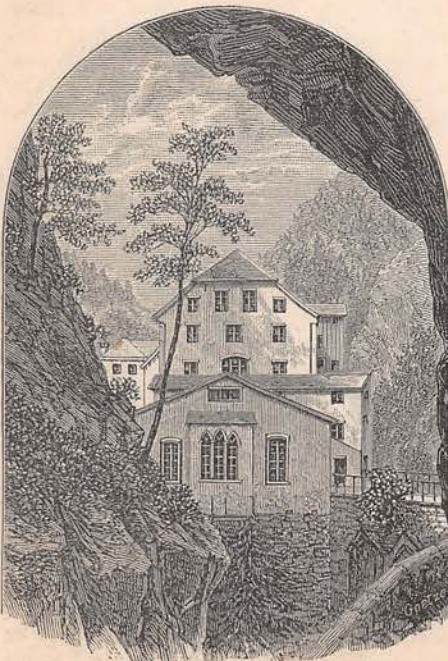
About three hours' drive from Coire, is the renowned Via Mala. The road which winds

through it, on its way toward Splügen Pass, has been cut into the face of the rock, scooped out bit by bit, and is level as a floor, and guarded by massive stone parapets. The mighty cliffs rise perpendicularly on either hand, 1,800 feet, and in places approach so closely that a boulder of no extraordinary dimensions may be seen resting in mid air, sustained from either side by the projecting rocks.

No sight in nature can be grander than that seen from the second bridge which spans the magnificent ravine, as we look north, the ruins of a Rhoetian castle standing out clear and sharp against the blue sky, the Alpine trees springing, as it were, from the rocks themselves, and the resinous air toning down the wild scene as with an enchanter's wand. The view, as we approach from the north, is scarcely less lovely. The road which winds as if art had sought a favorable approach, the bridge, a fairy-like structure of a single arch, the peculiar softness of the light as the sun shoots the mighty chasm overhead, form a picture which holds one spell-bound.

The Via Mala has its legend, from whence arises its name. On a height, just at the entrance to the gorge, are the remains of an ancient castle, in which, centuries ago, lived a lovely maiden who loved an Italian from Como, and was loved by him in return. A cruel father frowned on the pair, but one day the maid was gone, and the count's retainers spoke of a stranger who had been granted hospitality the previous night.

Pursuit began over the almost impassable mountains. The lovers were rapidly gained upon, until, just as prospect of capture was at hand, a false step on the maiden's part, a desperate effort to save her on the part of the youth, hurled the two from one crag to another until they found eternal rest and quiet in the stream, which still gurgles and bubbles in the awful depths below.



BAINS DE PFEFFERS.



ENTRÉE DE LA VIA MALA.