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From Aigle to Martigny.

BY LIZZIE P. LEWIS.



INCROYABLE!" exclaimed our pretty Austrian countess.

"Ist nicht möglich!" imperiously added our stately Frau Generalin.

"If you should attempt it, pray take my tea-machine, so you can have some means of refreshing yourself when you stop to rest," mildly urged an English lady of fabulous wealth, whose name to the ears of her countrymen is suggestive of their national beverage—ale.

"I am quite sure madame cannot accomplish such a walk," was the smiling but decided verdict of our polite Swiss host; "Miss G—, who is English, can easily do it, but with an American lady walking is quite out of the question."

But could American blood endure the insinuation, that it was inferior in any way to that of any other nationality—no! To Chamounix I was going, and to Chamounix I would walk, except for the short distance which a railway carriage would convey me.

So the next day, before the morning sun had glistened the snowy points of the Dent du Midi, my friend, Miss G—, and I met on the veranda of the Hotel des Bains, to sip our coffee and await the omnibus which was to convey us to the station at Aigle, a small town nestling in the valley, a mile and more below us.

By seven o'clock we were seated in a railway carriage and being whizzed through the lovely valley of the Rhone, past old Roman towers, ruined castles and monasteries.

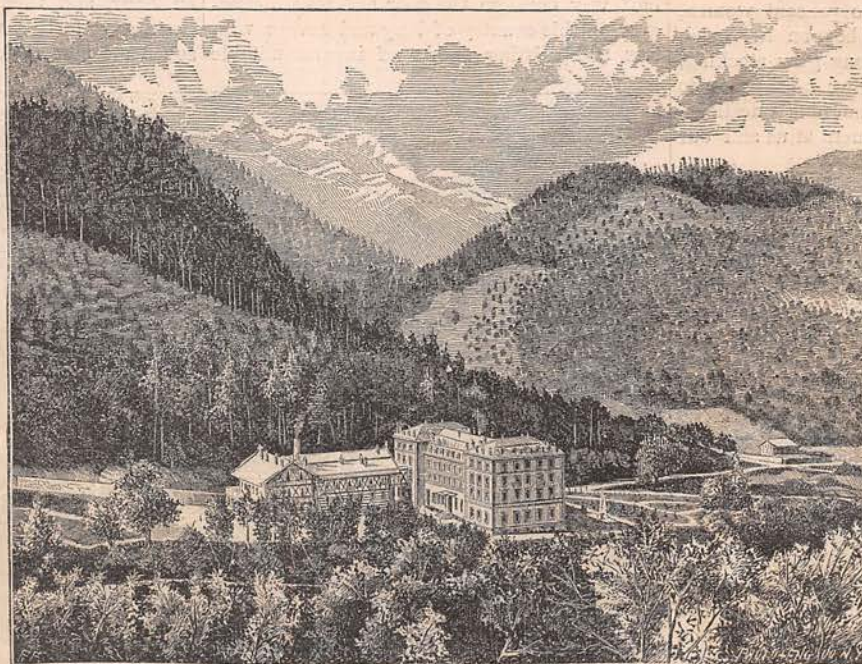
At St. Maurice, a place noted for the wholesale martyrdom of a saint of that name, and six thousand soldiers of the Theban legions, the train swept directly past an abbey of Augustinian monks. This abbey is probably the most ancient ecclesiastical establishment in Switzerland, and many ancient works of art are preserved there, among them a pastoral

staff in gold, with elaborately wrought figures, each one inch in height; a magnificent chalice of agate, and a rich manuscript copy of the Gospels, presented by Charlemagne. As we dashed close by the convent walls, we saw some of the venerable brethren wandering about their well-kept garden, but they seemed much more interested in our train than in the breviaries they held in their hands. On the other side of the track, high up on a sheer precipice, clinging to the rock like a swallow's nest, was the famous hermitage of Notre Dame du Sex.

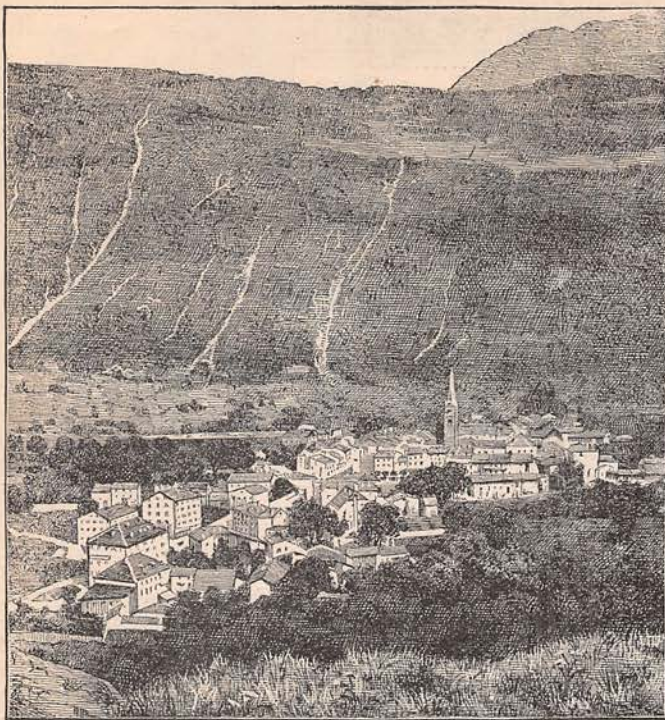
On we sped till we reached Vernayez, where our pedestrianism was to begin. With water-proofs, guide-books, and kind Mrs. P—'s tea-machine in our straps, we set bravely off, going a little out of our way first, to enjoy that most beautiful of all Swiss cataracts, the Pissevache, unless we except the Falls of the Tessin, in Italian Switzerland.

The Pissevache, which is fed by the drippings of the glaciers of the Dent du Midi, pours over the brow of the precipice, and before it has made half its descent, the stream of water has been turned to many beautiful inverted cones of mere snowy spray, which a little lower down seem to vanish altogether, leaving only a fine foggy vapor to tell of the stream that leapt over the mountain's brow.

As we turned away from this beautiful sight, we met a band of some twenty school girls, out upon a vacation pedestrian tour, accompanied by a lady



GRAND HOTEL DES BAINS AND DENT DU MIDI, AIGLE.



MARTIGNY.

teacher. Each carried, in addition to her tin box for botanical specimens, the inevitable alpenstock, on which had been burned the names of the various places they had visited. Nice, bright-faced, merry girls they were, evidently bent on getting the very best they could out of life. The meeting with them seemed to add an extra ray of sunlight to the day.

Then we began to climb the zig-zag bridle path up the mountain side above Vernayez, following Baedakar's advice of walking slowly and steadily, never taking more than sixty steps to the minute. Two peasant women, one of whom bore a keg of beer on her head, and knit diligently on a long gray stocking, kept us company, and having no shyness to trouble them, asked us numerous questions, showing unfeigned amusement at us and our undertaking.

So we crept slowly up the steep, winding path through the chestnut trees into the pines, stopping ever and anon to pluck some bits of dainty moss, velvety pansies, satin-faced buttercups or delicately fringed gentians, blue as the July sky above our heads, until we emerged from the pine forests upon the upper level of the road which follows the course of the Valley of the Trient.

How strange and wonderful it seemed to us as we looked down several hundred feet upon the tops of mountain pines, which only imperfectly concealed the narrow and rocky ravine through which the milky torrent fretted, and muttered, and raged among the Alpine obstructions! Far oftener than would have seemed expedient to a member of the Alpine Club, did we seat ourselves on some mossy bank to drink our fill of grandeur and beauty, forgetting in the presence of these everlasting hills and peaceful valleys, man

and his littlenesses, his sordid cares and petty triumphs, but remembering with exultant hearts that it was "Our Father's" hand which formed them all!

Trusting to our guide-book, we expected to find a hotel before we reached Le Chatelard, and so had been most leisurely in our journey; but somewhat to our dismay, the afternoon grew apace, and we were constrained to own that, for once at least, the infallible Murray was in error.

And what were we to do? Spend the night under the summer sky, sheltered only by a stone wall or fence? We had about decided it was the best we could do, when just as the vesper star appeared in the west, we came

upon the hamlet of Finhaut, its one crooked street winding under the overhanging gables of the chalets, adorned with quaint carvings and numberless tiny windows. Very curious and picturesque are these cottages, their broad roofs loaded with heavy stones to prevent their being blown away; eaves projecting from three to ten feet, and sometimes almost reaching the ground; balconies and outside stairs, barn, stable and dwelling-house under one roof, and entered by the same door and hall, and, strangest sight of all, the huge pile of manure directly in front of the house, half way between the door and road. However, in this country of long and severe winters and drifting snows of insurmountable

depth, it is quite important that the cattle should be comfortably housed, where they are always easily accessible, that they may receive that constant care which a good master gives his dumb and faithful servants; and as to the heap of manure, its quantity is evidence of the owner's thrift, and he is as proud of it as he would be of well-stored granaries.

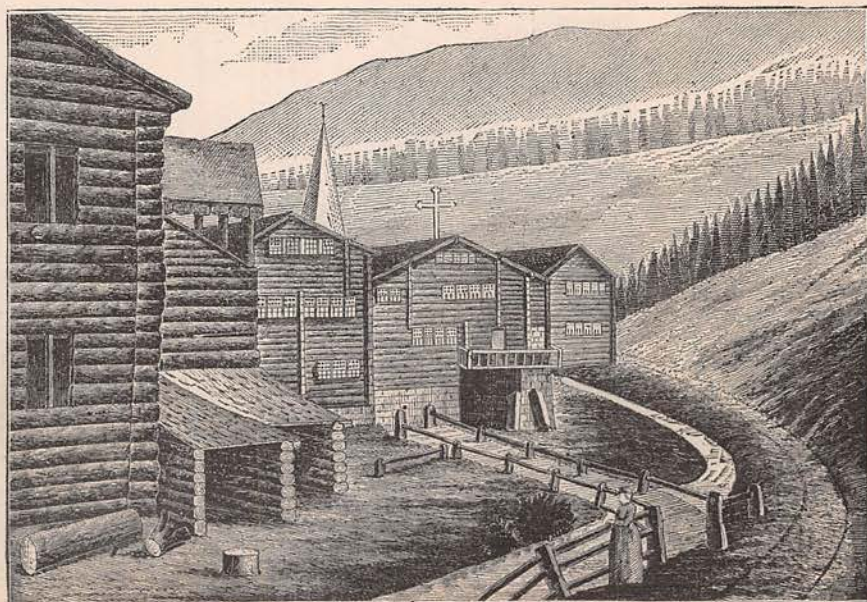
It was in one of these chalets we sought and found shelter for the night. Very delicious was our supper of Gruyère cheese, goat's milk, and bread, served to us on a cloth of spotless whiteness and in china of elaborate ornamentation. The edge of my plate was encircled by a wreath of flowers of remarkable shapes and brilliant hues, and in the middle were the following striking lines:

"Le plus je bois,
Le plus je crois
Que de la terre
Je suis le roi."

"The more I drink,
The more I think
That of the earth
I am the king!"

The guest chamber appropriated to our use was large, with many tiny windows filled with panes of glass so small as to remind one of honeycomb; with two enormous beds, which we mounted by the aid of steps, and upon which we scarcely dared turn lest our faces should come in contact with the ceiling above; a porcelain stove which for its oddity would rejoice the heart of a collector of bric-a-brac, and a clock, tall and old, and with a most inhuman tick.

But the tick was not by any means the worst performance of that time-keeper. It struck every hour, every half hour, every quarter of an hour, and then, ten minutes before the hour, gave forth a warning whirr! Only the seven sleepers could have enjoyed "nature's



CHALET OF FINHAUT.

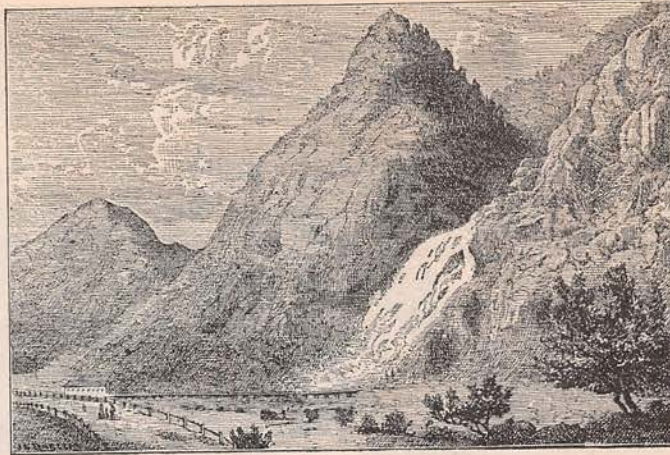
sweet restorer" amid such hindrances, so we welcomed with gladness the dawning light. But early as we were, our hostess was before us, prepared to serve us a breakfast of fresh eggs, milk, bread, and honey.

Having appeased our hunger, we paid our hostess her moderate charge of two francs each (forty cents) for our two meals and lodgings, and then resumed our tramp, inhaling long draughts of the mountain air, fragrant with the violet odor of a delicate reddish lichen which grows very abundantly about Finhaut, and is called violet moss.

A walk of about an hour brought us in sight of the glacier of Argentière, descending into the valley between the Aiguille Verte and the Aiguille de Chardonnet. It was as if an immense river had frozen as it flowed, into a solid mass. Coursing its way beneath a vaulted arch of blue-green tinted ice, its waters tinged with gray, flowed a narrow little stream, down into the green fields which were only a few hundred yards away. The ice which formed its surface was rough and honey-combed, but on the sides of the immense yawning fissures, it was clear and pure as crystal.

Here we entered the valley of Chamounix. Other glaciers were near us now—high precipitous hills—gray, perpendicular rocks of rugged and beautiful outline, speckled with spots of snow, and interspersed with green fields, and gardens, and chalets, a scenery of striking contrasts, of sharp and distinct outline, and of marvelous beauty—more than three thousand feet above the sea.

This valley was first brought under cultivation by a Benedictine priory about the beginning of the twelfth century. So bad was the reputation of its inhabitants, that the district was known by the soubriquet of Les Montagnes Maudit. It was little known by travelers until visited and described by the Englishmen, Poccock and Wyndham, who penetrated there in 1741. Its convenience as a resting place and point of departure, the loveliness of the valley, the great glaciers of the Bois and the Bossons which come down to the very valley, and that most remarkable of all, the Mer de Glace, the fine views from the Flégère and the Brévent, the sublime and indescribable spectacle of Mont Blanc, and the dangerous pathways up its icy sides, have combined to make Chamounix



CHUTE DE LA PISSEVACHE.

known not only to all travelers in Switzerland, but in the entire world.

Mont Blanc was ascended for the first time in 1786, by an intrepid guide, named Jacques Balmat. After his return he was seized by a serious illness, brought on by fatigue and exposure. During his convalescence, he made known his discovery to his physician, who afterward accompanied him to the summit, which they reached after many perilous adventures. In 1787 the ascent was made by De Saussure, the celebrated naturalist, and the results of his expedition were received with the greatest interest by the scientific world. The ascent is now made from forty to fifty times a year, and in fine weather is neither very difficult nor dangerous for those who are accustomed to ice climbing. Yet it may be seriously questioned if the view from the summit is fine enough to repay one for the toil, since all objects are indistinct on account of the great distance, and even in the most favorable weather, only the faint outlines of the Jura, Swiss Alps, and Apennines are visible.

Three days are usually required for the ascent. The first day the traveler reaches the

Grand Mulets where the night is spent at one of the two stone huts built for the accommodation of travelers; the second day the summit is attained, when a signal flag is hoisted, which is watched for by some one in the valley with a telescope, who fires a small cannon to announce the fact to the villagers and strangers in Chamounix, for every one is interested in the daring climber, no matter who he may be, or what his nationality. The descent is made the same day to the *Grand Mulets* where the night is again passed, and the third day the valley is reached amid general rejoicing.

We reached our Hotel de l'Union just before sunset, but did not go directly to our rooms, tired and dusty though we were, for the sky gave promise of a sunset of royal order, something which is not always to be seen. We sat on the piazza facing the monarch of mountains, and watched the clouds as they slowly lifted, disclosing splendor after splendor, the white needles piercing the air for twelve thousand feet, catching the fiery red of the sunset sky, and even the vast expanse of snow fields, unearthly in their whiteness, finally glowing like a ruby.

After dinner we sat for hours at our windows, fascinated by the mountain, which seemed to light up the darkness by its wonderful whiteness, and awed us by its weird forms of beauty. Finally we retired, not to sleep for a long time though, but to watch the bright light which shone out from the *Grand Mulets*, where one of our countrymen was passing the night on his way to the summit.

Three days sped as if winged, and then we turned our faces homeward, taking the pass over the Col de Balme. Here and there by the side of our path were rude crosses to mark the spot where some over-eager adventurer had lost his life.

And indeed everywhere among the Alps these sad memorials met the eye, haunting the imagination by sudden and awful tragedies; but as if to compensate for the heart-sickness caused by the thought of these useless and sorrowful martyrdoms, rhododendrons blushed at our sides, and fungi, wonderful and beautiful, attracted our eager gaze. So must it ever be through life, hedging our pathway in our stormiest and darkest hours, are smiling flowers and richest verdure.

It was nearly dark when we reached Man-



LES GRANDS MULETS ABOVE CHAMOUNIX.

tigny, the Roman *Octodurus*, capital of the Veragin—a busy little town in summer, given quite over to the crowd of tourists who invade it from May till September. It is very prettily situated in the Rhone valley, and overshadowed by mountains. Near by on an eminence stands La Batiatz, a castle of the bishops of Sion, erected in 1260, but not occupied since 1518.

A few years ago, cretinism in its worst form was prevalent about Martigny, but very little of it is now to be seen, for this loathsome malady has gradually disappeared before civilization and modern improvement. But there is a disagreeableness connected with the place which I fear will not give way so readily, and that is a tribe of small gnats, first cousins to our mosquito family, which cause infinite discomfort to any one passing the night there. However, we could endure even these tormentors with patience, for on the morrow were we not to return to our doubting friends, with the assurance that we had actually "been and done it"?



ARGENTIÈRE GLACIER.

From Kent to Devon.

No. 5.



ANY sketch of the south of England would be incomplete without some account of the three great cathedrals—Canterbury, Exeter, and Salisbury. That of Exeter is considered by many to be the finest in Europe, and Canterbury and Salisbury are not far behind it.

The city of Salisbury had a somewhat uncommon origin. In the year 1217, the site of the old town and cathedral having become, for many reasons, undesirable, the see was removed to its present place. At that time its importance was such that parliaments were occasionally held there during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Later, it also possessed extensive woolen and cutlery manufactures, but owing partly to the near proximity of Southampton, these have long since declined, and it is now as a "cathedral town" that the place is renowned.

Salisbury is regularly built, standing in an open, fertile plain, partly surrounded by walls; and a most curious feature is the brooks which run through all the principal streets for the purposes of drainage, which, taken with the venerable aspect of the houses give the place somewhat the air of a town of the middle ages. The cathedral is built in the "close"—an inclosed space of about half a square mile, surrounded by a high wall. It was finished in 1238, entirely in the early English style of architecture, in the form of a double cross. Its length is 474 feet, and the width of the larger transepts is 210 feet; the spire is the same height as the dome of St. Paul's cathedral, London, 404 feet, nearly twice as high as Trinity Church, New York. Some idea of its magnitude may be formed from the fact that the cathedral buildings, such as the deanery, bishop's house, chapter-house, school, etc., all comprised within the area of the

"close," and all fair-sized buildings, look like toy houses by the side of the stately pile.

There is a rich altar piece which has for its subject the resurrection morning, and there are several exquisite stained glass windows; besides, the cathedral is decorated both on the exterior and in the interior with many statues of the saints and English ecclesiastical celebrities. The name for the cathedral and its small colony of buildings is still New Sarum, which it has retained for six hundred years, ever since the removal of the town before referred to. From Christianity to paganism is a long journey theoretically, but practically it occupies but a very little time. A short journey of eight miles takes us to Salisbury plain, where are the most stupendous ruins in England of one of the temples of the faith of its ancient people—the Druids.

This ruin consists of two circles of vast stones, averaging fourteen feet in height, seven feet broad, and three feet in thickness, the average weight of which is twelve tons; but the largest weigh much more—as much as seventy tons, which is the estimated weight of the center stone or "altar."

In the outer circle, numbering thirty slabs, seventeen remain upright, the rest are prostrate, all inclining toward the center. This outer circle is surrounded by a depression or trench, which it is conjectured was filled with water, and served to mark the boundary between the priests and the people. The inner circle is eight feet distant, and consists of smaller upright stones, within which are three groups, the largest of which is believed to have been the altar.

Now, the most remarkable thing about this ruin, and the first thing that occurs to the beholder is the question: How did these stones come there? By what superhuman agency were they brought to their present position from a great distance as they undoubtedly were? The plain where they stand is of an earthy, not a rocky, formation; and, moreover, nowhere in the vicinity at the present day is the same kind of stone to be found. But set-

ting all this aside, there still remains the query: How were they raised to their present position? It certainly implies upon the part of the constructors some powerful mechanical appliances, of the existence of which we know nothing, at that day. Even supposing the rock was ready to their hands for quarrying, it must have been a most stupendous task to handle stones of from twenty to seventy tons in weight, something unthought of, even in this age of engineering enterprise.

Of the worship of the Druids but little is known. Some traditions speak of its celebrations as taking place amid groves of oak, under whose branches, and crowned with the twining mistletoe, the priests and priestesses chanted their hymns to the God of nature. If the ruins at Stonehenge were ever embowered in trees, there is nothing now to indicate the fact; the whole plain is marked by hardly a single tree. Again setting our faces toward Salisbury we are struck by the massive proportions of the cathedral, which, at a distance seems to comprise the whole town. The spire, though of really imposing size, is of such exquisite contrast to the rest of the pile, though entirely in keeping with it, that it well looks, as the old legend says, as though the angels designed the whole building. Near the center of the town is the market house, called, oddly enough, the "butter-cross." It was designed and erected by order of King Edward III., and is, perhaps, one of the finest specimens of domestic mediæval architecture in this part of England.

Of great antiquity is Canterbury. Before the Roman invasion, it was known as a religious station, under the name of *Caer-Cant* or *Cantuaria*. It was the capital of the Saxon kingdom of Kent, and the Romans made a camp there. In the second century, Christianity was introduced, and in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there was erected, on the site of the first Christian church in Saxon England, Canterbury Cathedral.

The town of Canterbury proper is situated in the valley of the Stour, a small river which