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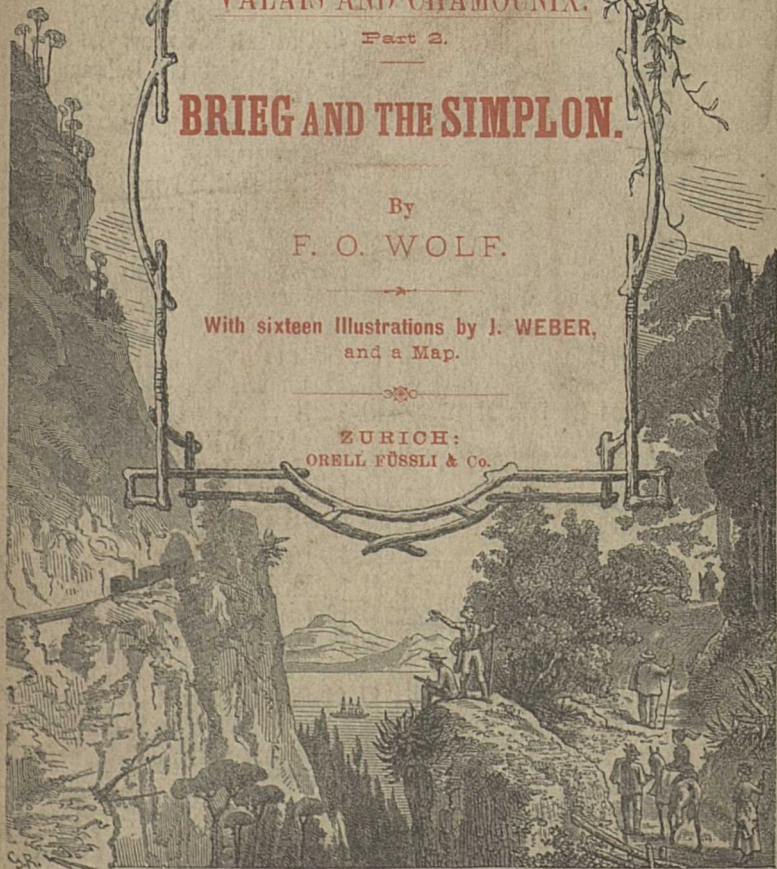
Part 2.

BRIEG AND THE SIMPLON.

By
F. O. WOLF.

With sixteen Illustrations by J. WEBER,
and a Map.

ZURICH:
ORELL PÜSSLI & Co.



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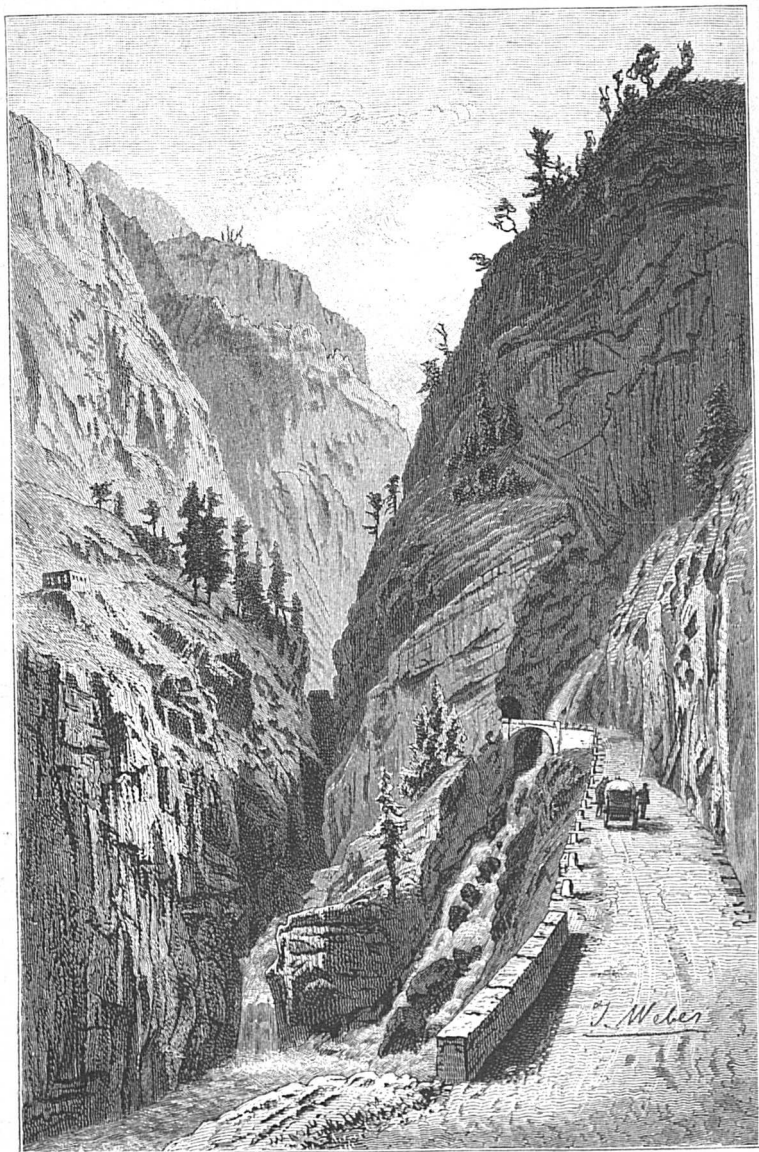
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93/5616



Brieg from the North Side.

I. Brieg and its Environs.

† The dwellers in this land were of yore divided by
 “ the old historians and geographers into three nations,
 “ and distinguished by name. The uppermost, from
 “ the sources of the Rhone down to below Glyss on
 “ the lake, are the ancient Lepontii, and are called by
 “ Pliny, lib. 3, cap. 20, Viberi or Viberigi, abbreviated
 “ into Brigi: from which ancient name of this people
 “ that of the town of Brieg is derived.”

Stumpf's Chronicle, Book XI.

THE little town of Brieg, capital of the district of the same
 name, lies 2244 feet above the level of the sea, 31 miles
 to the east of Sion or Sitten, on the left bank of the River

Rhone, at its confluence with the Saltine, a torrent descending from the Simplon. Its (Catholic) population amounted in 1880 to 1200. Its traffic is considerable, for Brieg is the terminus of the Valais Railway (Ligne d'Italie) and forms the key to the mountain roads over the Furka and the Simplon, which, beginning here, connect Valais and the west of Switzerland with the "primitive cantons" and with Upper Italy. The numerous towers and conspicuous buildings roofed with glittering mica-slate endow the "burgschaft" of Brieg with a peculiar character and give it quite an Italian aspect. The old chronicler Stumpfius was favourably impressed by it. "Brieg," he writes, "is a beautiful, pleasant, and stately borough, and in my opinion it excels all the other towns of Upper Valais."

The principal buildings are the former Jesuits' Convent, with its magnificent church, the convent of Ursuline nuns, and the palace of the Stockalper family. Several of the private houses, and the three hotels, have also quite a palatial appearance.

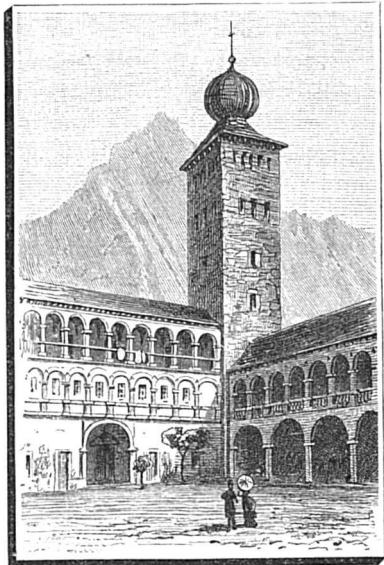
On entering Brieg from the railway-station we first come to the Hôtel-Pension de la Poste (formerly "aux Couronnes"), while in the midst of the little town are the Hôtel d'Angleterre, and on the opposite side of the Saltine the Pension Müller. The main street leads up a steep ascent to the palace of the Stockalper family. Three huge towers, (the badge and armorial bearings of this family), surmount the extensive building with its numerous passages, galleries, and apartments, and the whole is surrounded by a park-like garden. Passing through the gateway, which is of polished serpentine, we enter the spacious inner court, where we can best admire the handsome edifice.

Every year, on Corpus Christi day, an altar is set up in a niche constructed for the purpose, and on this altar the art treasures of the Stockalpers are displayed, exciting year by year the admiration of a numerous assemblage.

Of these old heirlooms the objects most deserving of mention are a representation of the Magi in embossed silver,

a masterpiece of Benvenuto Cellini's, together with some early Gothic candlesticks. The present owner is at all times ready to exhibit these treasures to visitors. The large collection of family portraits in the spacious knights' hall, and the old carved furniture, are also worth seeing; while looking at them we fancy ourselves carried back into other times, to days that have long passed. The most remarkable of all these pictures is that of the "great" Stockalper.

Caspar Stockalper, baron of Duin, knight of the Holy Ghost and of the Order of St. Michael, colonel in the Piedmontese service, and captain of several companies in the French, Spanish, and Imperial armies, lived in the seventeenth century. He it was who built on the heights of the Simplon Pass and in Gondo hospices for the reception and relief of travellers overtaken by storms or by fatigue; he it was



Court of the Stockalper Palace.

who constructed the canal through which the Rhone flows for the distance of a mile near Colombey, thus draining and restoring to cultivation a large area of land; he too it was whose munificent donations rendered it possible for the upper districts to erect the magnificent Jesuits' church and convent. All this took place in the middle of the seventeenth century. At that time religious disputes were raging in the land, and the ideas of the reformers threatened to undermine and destroy the ancient church in Valais. It was mainly by Stockalper's

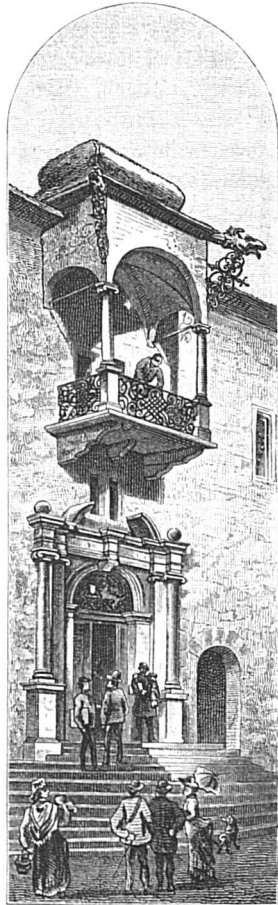
calling in the aid of the Jesuits, and by the founding of the two other convents which Valais owes to him, that the old faith was upheld in this canton. Two of his daughters entered the new Ursuline convent; another married the painter George Mannhaft, of Swabia, and only one gave her hand, and a rich dowry, to a native of Valais. This circumstance, and above all the count's great wealth, excited the envy of his fellow-citizens, and he, the greatest benefactor of his native province, was driven from his home and deprived of the greater part of his property. After six years spent in banishment he returned. Many restored to him what they had wrongfully taken, others besought his indulgence; to most of his persecutors he magnanimously made a free gift of the booty they had obtained.

The chronicler describes him as a man who, owing to his great natural gifts, his talents, his eloquence, his extensive learning, his sagacity, his foresight in the conduct of affairs, and his great zeal for the Catholic religion, deserves to be held in all honour by posterity. A couple of anecdotes of him may be of interest: In the Rohrflühen (6 miles below Brieg) a band of robbers had committed depredations. Stockalper attired himself in beggar's garments, pretended to be dull-witted, and allowed himself to be captured by the robbers, with the object of spying out the retreat of the marauders. On being released he returned at the head of a company of troops, surrounded the cave, and captured the entire band. It is further related of him that being called upon to state publicly upon oath the amount of his personal property, he, with the acquiescence of his confessor, brought everything together into one place, but so that not all of it was visible, and then swore that everything he possessed was on the spot where he was standing. His motto was: *Nil solidum, nisi solum*; and consequently he invested his great wealth in landed property, and it is still related of him that he could journey from Lyons to Milan and rest and lodge every night on his own property. His costume was that of the country, made

of rough woollen cloth woven in his own house. In this dress he appeared even before the splendour-loving nobles of Milan; the jibes which they at first bestowed on him ceased when one of his magnificent horses lost a shoe and it was seen to be of silver. From that moment he was spoken of as "the rich count from Valais."

We will now make our way to the ancient Jesuits' Convent, which is approached by a flight of stone steps. But before entering the spacious church let us take a look round from the terrace in front of it. At our feet lies the town of Brieg, with the neighbouring villages of Naters and Glis and the broad and well-cultivated valley of the Rhone; the youthful river, assuming now a steadier gait than when in boyish exuberance of spirit it rushed boisterously through the district of Goms, flows for the most part between lush green meadows, shady orchards, and fertile fields. Between the towers of the Stockalper Palace Visp is seen in the distance nodding a friendly greeting, and on every side the land is enclosed by lofty mountain ramparts. In the south our eye can follow the Simplon road for a considerable distance up the heights.

Near Schallberg, above the frightful gorge of the Saltina, it branches off into the Gantherthal, and is lost to our view;



Private House in Brieg.

but above Berisal in the Rothwald it again becomes visible, and remains so until the summit of the pass is reached. The spurs of Monte Leone, the Schönhof and Breithorn, with the Kaltwasser Glacier, dominate the Simplon Pass on the east, while towards the west it is overlooked by the Glishorn. The huge rocky masses of the latter rise perpendicularly above the valley of the Rhone, and the summit, separated in great part by fissures from the mass of the mountain, seems to threaten sudden destruction to the inhabitants of the underlying district. Legends tell how Satan was once seen to fly through the air from the Bellalpe, bent on destroying the newly-built Jesuits' Church; but the fervent prayers of a watchful brother saved the edifice and the town of Brieg from so terrible a misfortune. Every spring the mountain sends its avalanches thundering into the valley; they are looked forward to with impatience by the people of Brieg, as being the harbingers of spring and a token that the place is about to be relieved from the months of wintry shadow which the Glishorn, its grim neighbour, has cast upon it.

Opposite the Simplon, hidden among chestnut and walnut-trees, is the important village of Naters, with a fine church and numerous ruins. The long extinct families of Urnafas and Supersaxo once dwelt here, and the bishops of Valais selected it as their summer residence, owing to its pleasant and salubrious situation.

Many historical associations are connected with this place. In the year 1294 Peter of Thurm-Gestelnburg, and in the year 1362 Bishop Guiscard Tavelli, were taken prisoners here and their adherents routed. Indeed the bishops frequently had their summer holiday in Naters unseasonably interrupted; more than once the unruly people of Upper Valais, so jealous of their liberty, besieged their rulers here and compelled them to renounce the rights conferred upon them by Charlemagne's charter. Thus it happened to William III. of Raron and to the pious but too mildly tempered Justus of Silenen. The pa-

laces and castles have long fallen into decay, but the massive masonry still bears witness to their former grandeur.

It is almost with a feeling of gladness that we turn our glance upward, from hill to hill, from terrace to terrace, to lovely Bellalp, to the wondrous Aletsch Glacier, and to the glittering snow-fields and icy summits of the Bernese Alps. After exchanging a hasty greeting with the old and welcome acquaintances of our former wanderings, let us now enter the sacred building. A dim religious light reigns in the interior. We pass through the spacious body of the church to the choir. At its entrance stand two side-altars with paintings by Deschwanden and De la Rosa representing scenes from the life of St. Ignatius, the founder of the order of Jesuits. The choir itself contains four magnificent paintings by the celebrated Italian artist De la Rosa. They also perpetuate the life and deeds of St. Ignatius, as well as that of the Apostle of the Chinese and Japanese, St. Francis Xavier.

In the troublous year 1847, after the expulsion of the Jesuits, the then radical government of Valais proposed to confiscate their property and dispose of it by auction. But this proceeding was very properly resisted by the Stockalper family, the burgesses of Brieg, and the six eastern districts. After a long controversy their rights were at length acknowledged, and to this courageous action Valais owes the continued existence of its higher German educational establishment. Self-sacrificing native teachers, especially of the clerical order, have since occupied the Jesuits' College, and it now dispenses instruction to the youth of the canton who are desirous of carrying their education to a higher point than is practicable in the ordinary village schools.

Leaving the church, we will continue our walk through the quaint old town, around which so many interesting associations group themselves. We pass the Ursuline Convent, where the maidens of Brieg and the female teachers for the schools in the German districts of the canton receive their education. We cannot obtain entrance, except to the pretty

chapel and the well-kept garden adjoining it. Close by stands the old hospital, where once the pilgrims bound for Rome were received and cared for, and between the two buildings is the little chapel of St. Sebastian, also rich in historical recollections.

For in ancient times the Landsgemeinde or National Assembly of the people of Valais was often held in this place; thus in the year 1414 it was here resolved to set up the "Mazze"* before the castle of the captain-general Guiscard of Raron. This Guiscard was a cruel tyrant, who brought down upon himself the wrath of the liberty-loving people of Valais by unjustly throwing into prison and illtreating a certain Olwig or Owlig, a popular magistrate (*castellan*) of Brieg, and more especially on account of his seizing and holding in captivity, in breach of his own promise, members of the national council who had met in Sion to take steps against his tyranny.

But we will allow a native poet, Pater Amherd, to narrate these events, as he does so admirably in the third act of his drama of "Thomas in der Bünden."**

* "Mazze" is derived from the Italian word *mazza*, and signifies a club, which was set up as a token of outlawry before the door of an obnoxious individual. The person so treated was hopelessly lost. This popular dispensation of justice, peculiar to the canton of Valais, was long retained, and was abolished only after repeated interventions by the federal authority.

** Even at the present day dramas of this kind are acted year by year by the people of Valais, usually in the open air; the subject is generally taken from the history of the canton. The ablest men of the canton compose these popular plays and themselves take part in their representation. Among them we may mention L. L. von Roten, Bordis, Kämpfen, Tscheinen, In-Albon, Kalbermatten, and Amherd.

Children.

Forward!—to St. Sebastian's Chapel,
forward!

(First appear the children. Then the tambours, the Mazze-master, and the Mazze-bearer, with a few soldiers as guard, all in disguise. They take their place on the steps of St. Sebastian's Chapel. The square quickly fills with curious people, who group themselves on either side in a semicircle. Below stand the two citizens previously introduced).

Egid Inderkummen.

What means this mummerly in these our
days,
When earnest forethought should our
minds employ?

Anton von Ittigen.

Bestill! The game may soon grow earnest.
Hear what the Mazze-master has to say!

Mazze-master.

(In a hollow voice, slowly).

Ye seem astonish'd that the Mazze thus
Appears before you in this town of Brieg,
But she no longer could endure the pain
With which these many years she has
been torn.

Here see ye her in all her misery!
Comfort she seeks, assistance seeks
from you.

(The Mazze-master lifts up a long club, at the end of which is fastened a mournful-looking mask with thorny twigs wound round it. The people gaze in silence and horror at the Mazze).

Egid Inderkummen.

(Aside).

The forehead wrinkled!—eyes burnt from
their sockets! —
The mouth contorted! the cheeks hollow
and wan!—
Th'entire head with thorns entwined
about!—

A horrid sight, that none without emotion
May look upon!

Many voices.

Terrible!—horrible!—

Mazze-master.

O, ye good folk of Brieg! ye are indignant
To see the horrid features of this Mazze.
A general cry of wrathful indignation
Issues from out of your compassionate
breast.

And truly—not in vain! This silent Mazze

To you a deep-thought, weighty riddle
puts,
That I would counsel ye forthwith to solve.
(Expectant silence).

A voice.

That is the likeness of our aged Owlig!

Several Voices.

Our aged Owlig?—our right worthy
cast'lan?

Mazze-master.

May be the Mazze is the cast'lan's
likeness!

The Captain-General he sharply blamed,
For that he helped the ruler of Savoy
Against the Switzers in Val d'Ossola.
For this he's thrown into a dungeon deep,
Where he, by grief oppressed, is nigh to
death.

Many Voices.

Alas! poor castellan, we pity thee!

Mazze-master.

But yet, dear folk of Brieg, it seemeth me,
The Mazze's meaning ye do fail to grasp.
Here in the midst of lovely Upper Valais,
Beneath Mount Simplon, where of old

the Romans
Did build a famous highway for their
troops,

Where now the pithy German tongue is
spoken—

A tongue that boasts its speakers ne'er
were slaves—

In weighty matters that concern our land
To speak a weighty word has aye been
yours!

Can ye discern no deeper meaning hid
Beneath the piteous features of this
Mazze?

A Voice.

It is the likeness of our Landesrath!

Several Voices.

The Landesrath?—abused?—despised?—
in durance?

Mazze-master.

May be, that here the Landesrath is
shown,

In durance held against all right and
justice!

The noblest patriots of our country
 languish,
 Covered with shame, within a dungeon
 deep.
 Who knows how long their torture shall
 endure?

Many Voices.

Alas! how grieve we for those noble men!

Mazze-master.

But, dearest folk of Brieg! not yet
 have ye
 The inmost meaning of the Mazze grasp'd.
 Gaze on these eyes, for aye deprived of
 light,
 This mouth, by force shut to, that cannot
 speak,
 These pallid cheeks, that tell of pain
 alone,
 The anxious brow, furrowed by many a
 care!
 Then too the thorns, that, with their
 stinging points,
 Which wound yet more this pained and
 tortured head,
 To anguish add the shafts of mockery
 keen!
 What, think ye, does this Mazze represent?

A Voice.

'Tis sure! the Mazze is our Fatherland!

Several Voices.

Yes, yes!—the Mazze is our Fatherland!

Many Voices.

Our Fatherland!—that mourns!—that
 weeps!—that bleeds!

Mazze-master.

O noble folk of Brieg! at length have ye
 The deep-thought meaning of this Mazze
 read.
 It is the symbol of poor cast'lan Owlig!
 The symbol of the deeply injured Lands-
 rath!
 The symbol of our downtrod Fatherland!
 The symbol of unhappy, suffering Valais!
 (*Murmurs among the people.*)
 Therefore let one among you now stand
 forth,
 Who dares to speak a word before this
 people,
 Some noble champion of this injured
 Mazze,

Who fears not aught that tyrants can
 inflict:
 Let some such then the Mazze's counsel
 be—
 And ask of her the causes of her sorrow.

Anton Owlig.

(*Steps forth from the crowd.*)

If for the Mazze ye a pleader seek,
 Ready and glad I am to act as such.
 I recognise in her my much-lov'd
 father,
 The Landesrath, and our dear Father-
 land.
 The sorrowing Mazze therefore will I
 question:
 Who may have brought on her these
 bitter woes,
 And she the deadly enemy shall name,
 Who long the people's anger has deserved.
 (*He gives the tambours a sign, the drums are
 beaten.*)
 O Mazze! speak! Who is it that has
 burned
 Thine eyes with caustic?—Who is it
 has closed
 Thy mouth?—Who that has crowned
 thy head with thorns?
 Is't they of Silinon, who once this land
 Did rule?

(*The Mazze remains motionless.*)

Several Voices.

The Mazze speaks not: they are not at
 fault.

(*The drums are beaten a second time.*)

Anton Owlig.

Speak! Was it others? Was it the Am-
 Hengart,
 Who long o'er us authority did wield?
 (*The Mazze remains motionless.*)

Other Voices.

Neither are these the Mazze's enemies.
 (*The drums are beaten a third time.*)

Anton Owlig.

O Mazze! speak then: is it they of Raron,
 Who now with harshness lord it o'er the
 land?
 (*The Mazze boies low; murmurs among the
 people.*)
 Is it the Captain-Gen'ral, the o'er-
 bearing?—
 The proud and haughty baron, Guiscard
 hight?—

The noble who is housed in Beauregard?—

(The mazze boies repeatedly, the murmurs among the people grow louder and louder.)

O folk of Brieg! the Mazze now has spoken!

The traitor to his country stands disclosed
Wherefore do ye delay, revenge to swear?

(After a pause.)

Death to our foe!—the traitor to his country!

The People.

Death to our foe! — the traitor to his country!

(While Anton Owlig con'tinues speaking, the people repeat these words with increasing fury.)

Anton Owlig.

Who tramples on our country's customs all!
Concludes and breaks treaties to please himself!

Barters our land away to foreign counts!

The People.

Death to our foe!—the traitor to his country!

Anton Owlig.

Himself appropriates the lands revenues!
He keeps the troops without their hard-earn'd wage!
And drives the poor man from his wealthy seats!

The People.

Death to our foe!—the traitor to his country!

Anton Owlig.

Without a cause our Swiss allies he hates!
The people's liberty by force suppresses!
And fills our land with mourning and with sorrow!

The People.

Death to our foe!—the traitor to his country!

Anton Owlig.

Our Landesrath by guile he has suppressed!

In dungeons dark the noblest men confined!
And them by cruel means of sight deprived!

The People.

Death to our foe!—the traitor to his country.

Anton Owlig.

Now, sturdy men of Brieg! ye erst have sworn

Deserved revenge upon our country's foe,
That soon shall fall upon his haughty head!

And now, in confirmation of our oath,
Which, spite of all our savage foe may do,
Inevitably shall be carried out—

See, in my hand I hold an iron nail,
The sharpest and the longest I could find—
This nail I now into the Mazze strike,
In token of our troth and our resolve.

(He strikes the nail into the club with a hammer.)

Many Voices.

Our oath of vengeance we're resolved
to keep,
Long as the nail shall in the Mazze hold!

Anton Owlig.

But, noble folk of Brieg! your vengeance must

Fall terribly on the insulting foe.
For see! the Mazze's fixed upon a club,
Cut from a strong and knotty stem of wood:

Thus also with a club your enemies
Must smitten be—like to a savage bull,
Struck, beaten down, and slain by some strong giant.

And who—who is the giant? Who the club?

The giant is the men of Upper Valais!
The club—what is it but the Landessturm!

Many Voices.

Hurrah! the Landessturm shall be call'd out!

Other Voices.

Hurrah! hurrah! the monster we will slay!

Anton Owlig.

A work it is that no delay will brook,
Seeing we have with violence to strive,
With treachery and guile. Within seven days

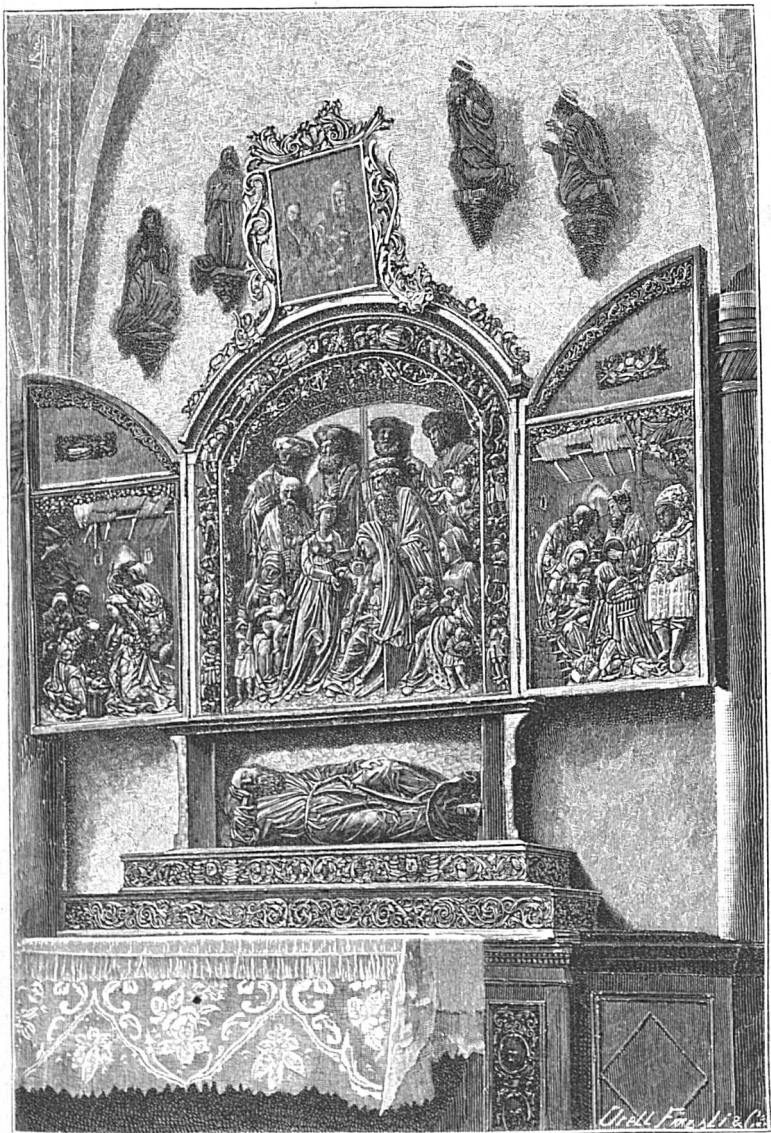
The Landessturm must be prepared and arm'd,

Ready to sweep the Valley of the Rhone,
Where every dungeon then shall be unlocked,

The castles of the tyrants all destroyed.

and whitewashed in modern fashion, contains two beautiful Gothic altars. Its side doorway again is a Gothic work, while the broad, light main entrance, with its massive columns of serpentine, is in the modern Italian, and the modernised tower in the Romanesque style. The choir contains an old German painting, the Adoration of the Magi; this venerable work of art is a relic of the ancient Gothic high-altar, other remnants of which are still to be found behind the present one. Formerly there were many similar altars in the canton, and here and there remains of them yet exist. In the last century they were to a great extent displaced by modern Italian altars of huge size, outgrowths of a barbarous taste. In the right side chapel stands an altar with a carving (*Mater dolorosa*) of no great value; but the altar itself is of interest to the historian, since on the exterior of the triptych at the back Brieg is represented as it appeared in the seventeenth century. The Gothic altar with triptych in the chapel of St. Anna is a gem of art. It was erected in the year 1519 by a native of Naters, the powerful captain-general of the canton, *George Auf-der-Fluh* or *Supersaxo*. On the exterior of the folding shutters his portrait is painted, as also are those of his wife Margaret Lehner and their twenty-three children. The interior of the triptych contains well-executed gilt carvings. The two side triptychs represent the Nativity and the Adoration of the Magi. We subjoin an extract from the old chronicler Stumpfius, in which he gives an account of George of Supersaxo, who was contemporary with the great Cardinal Schinner.

“At Glyss below the church Ritter George Auf-der-Fluh, whilom a knight and landmann (*landeshauptmann* or *captain-general*, formerly the highest temporal dignity in Valais) had a pretty little house, surmounted by a tower, where he spent much of his time. In person he was a fine, princely, and doughty man; in his youth he had fought in the service of the Duke of Milan, and afterwards in that of the King of France, and acquired not only great authority and a great name, but also knighthood, a large estate, gifts, and annual pensions, by which means he became rich and obtained so great authority among the people, that, with the help and adherence of his party, he was not only the man of greatest influence in the land, but also drove out the bishops and princes of the





land more than once, as will be presently narrated. Fortune became quite subservient to him. He married a beautiful lady of the land, by whom he had twenty-three children, sons and daughters. He had houses and dwellings in many places in the canton, as at Naters and Glyss, and at Sion, the capital, he had a court and palace.* Also at Martigny in Lower Valais he built and owned an inn which stands in front of the castle. His possessions and his glories cannot all be narrated here, nor are they all known to me. He was of a high and princely mind. He enlarged the church of Glyss and built a chapel to the right of it, and below the altar of this chapel he made himself a princely sepulchre; but he never occupied it. On the triptych of the altar he placed the portraits of himself and his wife and all his sons and daughters, and in the adjoining wall a gilt inscription hewn in the stone in his memory:

S. ANNAE DIVAE VIRGINIS
MATRI, GEORGIUS SUPER
SAXO, MILES AV. HANC
CAPELLAM EDIDIT
ANNO SALVTIS 1519.

ALTARE FUNDAVIT ET
DOTAVIT IVRE PATRON.
HAEREDIBUS SVIS RESERVATO,
CVM EX MARGARETA VXORE
NATOS XXIII. GENVISSET.

“He had twelve sons and eleven daughters, and if the paintings on the reredos are faithful portraits, I have never seen a more handsome family of parents and children. He lived ten years after building this chapel, and in his old age he became hated by his countrymen and was accused of having taken part in several affairs against his own country, and of having received large sums of money from the king of France without distributing any part of the money among the people. For these reasons the people rebelled against George Auf-der-Fluh in the year of our Lord 1529, and took up arms. When George perceived this, he did not wait for them to display the *mazze*, but rose up in the night and escaped in a sledge out of the land to Vevey on the Lake of Geneva, where he shortly afterwards died and was buried, having constructed his princely tomb at Glyss to no purpose. Thus was he, who formerly had headed so many insurrections against the princes of the country and the bishops, and had driven out several of them, at last driven by insurrection

* This palace is still standing in Sion, and is deserving of a visit. The staircase, with its grotesque figures in ridicule of his opponent Schinner, and especially the hall, with its fine carvings, bear witness to the wealth and artistic tastes of its builder.

from his native land, and found a grave among foreigners. His numerous children, handsome sons and daughters, also perished in a very short time. I have set down these things concerning this man solely in order that no one may confide too much in fortune, prosperity, and temporal welfare, but that everyone may build upon God, the only sure foundation, for all the beauty, and the ornament, and the magnificence of this body is inconstant: so soon as the mighty God blows upon it with his wind and blast from heaven, it fades and withers away like the floweret of the field."

Before leaving the church we must cast a glance at the organ loft. The excellent new organ is the work of a young artist of Valais, Conrad Carlen. He is the youngest scion of the Carlen family, of Goms, who for several generations have devoted themselves to organ building, and have constructed most of the organs in the canton. Of the older products of their skill the magnificent organ, completed in 1774, in the cathedral of Sion, is especially deserving of mention.

Less than a mile from Glis, down the valley, lies the hamlet of *Gamsen*, on the Gamsabach, which bursts from the Nanzerthal and covers the valley far and wide with its detritus. The name of this unpretentious little village is well known to entomologists throughout the world as the home of *Ander-eggen*, the butterfly collector, a man of humble station who has made discoveries in this field of investigation which many a great naturalist might envy; several species of butterflies have been named after him. The insect fauna of Upper Valais, and especially of the lateral valleys of the Simplon, is an extremely diversified one, not only in general, but more particularly as regards species peculiar to this district.

Opposite Gamsen, on the right bank of the Rhone, are the Baths of Brieg, warm gypsum waters above which a bath-house was built as early as the year 1525. It was destroyed by a land-slip or an earthquake, and for many years the thermal waters flowed off unutilised into the Rhone; but recently the spring has been again turned to account, and a little bath-house erected. It would be a boon to suffering

humanity if these ancient baths could be again restored in their completeness.

For the antiquarian also there is an object of interest in the vicinity, the *Gamsen Wall*, which extends to the west of the village from the mountains in the south as far as the Rhone, thus completely barring access to the upper districts of the canton. Concerning the period in which this defensive work was constructed, and the purpose it was intended to serve, we can learn but little from existing historical records; but its structure indicates that it formed not a dam against the wild Gamsa, but a fortification of the Viberi against the Seduni. The old chronicler whom we have already quoted was probably not far wrong in his conjectures:

“It is a very ancient piece of masonry, built according to some by the Romans, when they crossed the mountain Sempronii or Simplen (Simplon) on an expedition against the Gauls. Others opine that it is of still more ancient origin, being a bulwark erected by the Upper Lepontine Viberi, dwelling in the districts of Goms and Brieg, against the incursions of the Seduni, a people dwelling between this region and the River Morsa below Sion: for in all ages the Seduni had more noble and powerful rulers, and were more ruled and subjected to the yoke of servitude than the Viberi above them, as is evidenced by the strongholds of the nobles at Visp, Raron, Zum Thurm, Leuk, Sierre, Perrigard*, Gradetz, Enfish, Sitten (Sion), &c. But when both peoples, the Viberi and the Seduni, came in course of time under one ruler, and their lands were united, and they had to a great extent freed themselves from their oppressors and destroyed the strongholds of them, the rampart in question was quite neglected, so that it fell into decay.”

Early in the present century there were found here, in digging the foundation of a barn, several weapons, including a broken halberd and two rusty swords.

This artificial fortification no doubt stood in connection with the hills which projected so far into the valley, and upon which, as is still handed down by popular tradition, beacon fires and signals were lit in former times to call the people to arms. These spots are still known throughout Upper Valais;

* Beauregard, as it is more correctly spelled, was situated high above the entrance to the Eifischthal; it was the seat of Guiscard of Raron.

above Brieg it is the *Bühl* on the Brigerberg and below Gamsen the *Rohrberg* which are said to have served these purposes. Both afford the traveller a magnificent view.

Altogether the environs of Brieg afford an abundance of delightful walks; we will here mention only those to the *Closi* and to the *Burgspitze*.

The *Closi* is a rocky defile above Naters, and a visit to it occupies no more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 hours. Huge rocky walls broken by wild and rugged gorges, magnificent groups of trees affording refreshing shade, crystal springs, rushing mountain-torrents, and an exuberant vegetation lend the entire district an extraordinary charm. It is not to be wondered at that this spot has always attracted numerous visitors. We are still shown, in a shady place, two seats hewn in the rock, where Cardinal Schinner and the Captain-General Supersaxo are said to have frequently rested in their younger days to discuss the affairs of the province. Happy would it have been for the land if the early friendship between these two great men had endured throughout their lives!

The *Burgspitze* (about 3600 feet above the sea) is reached from Brieg in a little more than an hour. We follow the Simplon road along the *Brigerberg* as far as Refuge No. 1, in the hamlet of *Schlucht*. From here a steep footpath leads in a few minutes along the Calvarienberg to the chapel on the *Burgspitze*, where an extensive prospect is unfolded to the eye.

Before we resume our travels it remains to say a few words regarding the vegetation of Brieg and its vicinity. And first of all it is desirable that we compare, at least in broad outlines, the flora of this district with that of the remaining portion of the lower valley of the Rhone.

A journey up the valley of the Rhone is in this respect extremely rich in remarkable features; the vegetation may be said to change from hour to hour, with every bend in the valley, offering new rarities to the collector,—rarities which he would seek in vain not only elsewhere in Canton Valais, but in any other part of Switzerland.

To adduce but one example, the district below the defile of St. Maurice, being influenced by the lacustrine climate, has quite another vernal flora than the inner valley of the Rhone. There we find fresh verdure; here

scorched and sunburnt rocky heaths; in the lower part the hills and plains are adorned in early springtime with a wealth of blossoms, while in Valais proper, at that period of the year, only the rarest plants are to be found here and there by botanists familiar with the locality. *Primula elatior* and *acaulis* (together with their hybrids), *Anemone nemorosa* and *ranunculoides*, *Allium ursinum*, *Arum maculatum*, *Asarum europæum*, *Daphne Laureola*, *Ruscus aculeatus* and others appear already in the month of March in the woods and meadows of the lake district; but above St. Maurice there are blooming at the same time, but only on very warm and sheltered slopes, especially near Branson and Sion, plants belonging to a more southern flora, *Anemone montana*, *Bulbocodium vernum*, *Gagea saxatilis*, and *Adonis vernalis*. Even if we confine ourselves to a single order of plants, we shall find it represented very differently in the two districts of the canton. *Viola Stevenii*, *arenaria*, *collina*, and *mirabilis*, so widely diffused from Martigny to far up in the valley of the Rhone, are searched for in vain in the lower part, where, however, *Viola alba*, *scotophylla*, and *multicaulis* are very common in the chestnut and larch groves between St. Maurice, Monthey, and Youvry.

We may even go further and say that every place in Valais, every lateral valley, and almost every alp has its own representatives, rarities which are found only in a single spot either in Valais or in all Switzerland. *Trochiscanthes nodiflorus* in the vicinity of St. Maurice; *Saxifraga leucantha*, *Vesicaria utriculata*, and *Orchis sambucina* in the rocky hollow of Vernayaz; *Helianthemum salicifolium* near Branson; several *Umbelliferae* in the neighbourhood of Martigny; *Papilionaceae* in the chestnut-woods of Fully; *Lonicera etrusca* in Saillon, and opposite the latter place, below Iserabloz, *Sisymbrium pannonicum* and *Dracocephalum austriacum*. Polymorphous *Hawkweeds* of the section *Andryaloïdea* here make their appearance in great number and in a diversity of forms not yet sufficiently well-known, especially at the entrance to the lateral valleys, among the rocks of their narrow erosive gorges. Near Conthey we find *Thurgenia latifolia*, *Papaver hybridum*, and *Lepidium graminifolium*; near Sion together with *Tulipa Oculis-solis*, *Iris lutescens*, and *Punica Granatum*, plants whose special habitat is sun-burnt heaths, such as *Ephedra helvetica*, *Opuntia vulgaris*, *Saxifraga bulbifera*, *Poa concinna*, and others. Between Sierre and Leuk, in the shadow of their firs, which remind us by their broad crowns of the pines of Italy, *Coronilla minima* and *Euphrasia viscosa* occur. Somewhat higher above Gampel the wig-plant (*Rhus Cotinus*) forms entire groves, and in Visp we find *Sisymbrium Irio* and *Dictamnus albus*. Nowhere else except on the Great St. Bernard can we collect such a variety of beautiful species of *Pedicularis*, as well as the rare *Cherophyllum elegans*; only in the Val Bagne *Carex ustulata* and *Saxifraga diapensoides*, in the Val d'Héremence *Carex microglochis*, in Zermatt alone *Potentilla ambigua*, *Scirpus alpinus*, *Thlaspi alpinum*, *Alyssum alpestre*, *Allium strictum*, and the rarest *Carices*; in the Saas valley *Alsine aretioïdes*, *Pleurogyne carinthiaca*, *Artemisia nana*, &c. &c.

Thus too Brieg, with the Natersberg and the northern acclivity of the Simplon, affords us much that is new and interesting—a vegetation in

which the peculiarities of the climate of Valais, of its soil, and of its diversities of surface are faithfully reflected.

In the "*Pflanzenleben der Schweiz*" by Dr. F. Christ we read:

"Not till far above Brieg, where the glacier-valley in which the Rhone has its source begins, is the southern ray of the Mediterranean flora penetrating into Valais extinguished; it expires beneath the icy breath of the Alpine climate."

Among the cultivated trees and plants we may name the chestnut and walnut, orchard fruits of various kinds, including the apricot, maize and wheat, a few grapes, and the saffron plant, though the cultivation of the latter has been given up, owing to its unprofitableness. Among the plants growing wild in the vicinity of Brieg are the following: *Lathyrus sphaericus*, *Ononis Natrrix*, *Geranium divaricatum*, *Achillea tomentosa* and *nobilis*, *Campanula spicata*, *Iris germanica*, *Erysimum helveticum* and *canescens*, *Dactylis hispanica*, *Centaurea vallesiaca*, *Vicia Gerardi*, *Androsace maxima*, *Anemone montana*, *Thalictrum fatidum*, *Juniperus Sabina*, *Arabis saxatilis*, *Potentilla rupestris*, *Koeleria vallesiaca*, *Stipa pennata* and *capillata*, *Viola collina* and *arenaria*, with its var. *livida*, &c. &c.

Ascending the Natersberg we find the Deptford Pink (*Silene Armeria*), *Galium pedemontanum* (this plant, as well as *Lathyrus sphaericus*, Naters has in common with hot Branson!), *Hieracium lactucæfolium*, *Lychnis Flos-Jovis*, *Nasturtium pyrenaicum*, *Cytisus alpinus*, *Viola Thomasiana*, *Asphodelus albus*, and two remarkable plants which have certainly found their way over the heights of the Simplon Pass, *Centaurea axillaris* and *Saxifraga Cotyledon*. They occur again on the southern slopes of the Simplon, and are there nearer to their home, the Alps of Upper Italy. The other species mentioned are either indigenous to Valais, or, originating in the flora of the Alps of Southern France, of the plains, or of the Mediterranean coast, have here reached their eastern limit.

On the northern slopes of the Simplon several rare species of *Hieracium* are found, among other *H. lanatum*, *H. pictum*, and their hybrids; also the newly defined species *H. Sempronianum*, Wolf. Further *Astragalus monspessulanus*, *excapus*, and *uralensis*, and the two beautiful *Cruciferae*: *Aethionema saxatile* and *Matthiola vallesiaca*. In the bed of the Saltina we from time to time meet with some member of the Alpine flora which has strayed from the heights of the Simplon; we shall refer in due course to the magnificent Alpine flora of the Simplon and its lateral valleys, as well as to the manifold species adorning its southern declivities.





II. The Simplon.

Here, where the rocky wall by God upthrown,
The bleak North from the sunny South divides,
Where Mont' Leone, gazing proudly down,
Its feet in woods, in ice its forehead hides,
The northern wanderer feels his heart o'erflow
To those fair plains beyond th'eternal snow.

He sees in fancy that delightful land
Where golden fruits mature in every grove,
O'er which a cloudless azure sky is spanned,
Where Spring's soft zephyrs fan the flame of love,
And altar-smoke Vesuvius doth crown,
When in the distant sea the sun goes down.

The Corsican, intent his foe to crush,
A highway here for all the world did form;
But from the north fierce Boreas doth rush,
His weapons snow, and avalanche, and storm;
These in his potent grasp he threat'ning shakes.
In winter when this way the wanderer takes.

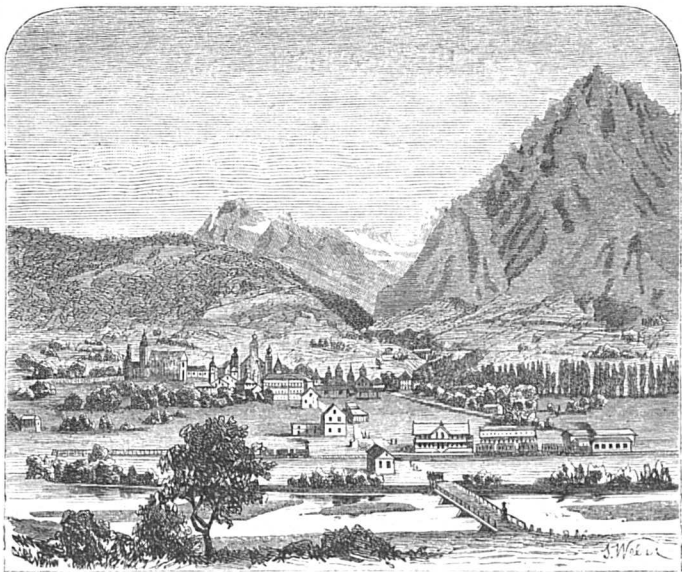
L. L. von Roten.

Historical Notes regarding the Simplon Pass.

THE earliest settlements of the Romans beyond the Alps were in Canton Valais, and among these *Octodurum*—the modern Martigny—occupied the first place. It was the key to a pass of the utmost importance for their military expeditions, the Great St. Bernard, called by the Romans *Mons Jovis*, from the circumstance that they had erected on its heights a temple in honour of the god Jupiter.

But Lower Valais, being thickly populated, was conquered only in the year 57 B.C. by Sergius Galba, a general of Cæsar's, and the pass across the Little St. Bernard is said to have been used at an earlier date by the Roman conquerors,

as well as the passes which lead to the east of the St. Gotthard over the Splügen, Bernhardin, Septimer, and Julier into the valley of the Rhine. But none of all these Roman military roads exceeded the Great St. Bernard in importance, especially after a good road had been built over it by order of Cæsar and improved under Augustus.



Brieg towards the South.

It is therefore remarkable that the Roman civilisation scarcely penetrated further into the valley of the Rhone than to the neighbourhood of Sion, the *Sedunum* of the Romans. In the upper districts we look in vain for Roman inscriptions, mile-stones, and the ruins of baths and temples, witnesses of a long-vanished civilisation which had attained a high stage of development in Lower Valais, and the remains of which are exceedingly plentiful below Sierre.

The Viberi, Seduni, Veragri, and Nantuates, Gallic tribes who at that time inhabited the valley of the Rhone as far as

Lake Lemman, were no doubt bound to each other by friendly alliances; but either the Viberi, the inhabitants of Upper Valais, were more successful in resisting the Roman yoke, or the latter were indifferent to the possession of the inhospitable, rugged, and unproductive highlands. Perhaps also the passes through the Grisons in the east and over the Great St. Bernard in the west sufficed for the administrative and military necessities of the Romans, or finally it is possible that the inhabitants of Doveria and Toccia were less susceptible to the Roman civilisation than the Salassi on the banks of the Doria. Certain it is that the mountain-pass in Upper Valais across Mons Sempionius, as well as the neighbouring Gries, Albrun, Antrona, Monte Moro, and St. Théodule Passes, were never of equal importance with the others, and perhaps were never used at all for the passage of armies, but became famous only late in the Middle Ages as commercial routes.

But there is no doubt that in the time of the Romans a road of some kind, though perhaps only a second or third rate bridle path, led across the Simplon.

Valais was at first separated from the rest of Gallia and formed the Pœnnine province, which was under the rule of the governor of Rhætia; at a later date it was detached from Eastern Helvetia and placed under a procurator of its own, who bore the title: *Procurator Alpinum Atractianarum et Peninarum*. Valais thus formed one province with the modern Levantine, and must necessarily have been in direct communication with it, which could only have taken place across the Simplon.

It is not only the ancient political divisions that point to the existence of a way through the rocky gorges of the Simplon; further evidence in the same direction is afforded by an inscription found upon a rock near Vogogna, below Domo d'Ossola. Unfortunately this inscription has been in part effaced by the weathering of the rock. It runs as follows:

Via. Facta ex—	— — — — —	H S. XIII. D C.
C. Domitia Dextra II. P.	— —	Fusco coss.
M. Valerio	— — — — —	— — — — —
Curatarib	— — — — —	O.
Venusti con	— — — — —	C. T.
Marmor	— — — — —	— — — — —

The historians Mommsen and Labus have deciphered this fragmentary inscription, and both agree that it dates from A. D. 196. The former investigator concludes that a simple path, not a "via publica" or military road, led through the valley of the Toccia and across the Simplon, being kept in repair by municipalities or other public bodies, and that the cost of its construction amounted to 13,600 sesteria.

The downfall of the Roman empire was followed by a rapid decrease in the prosperity of Valais. Its lateral valleys became almost depopulated, and only afforded in summer time a scanty subsistence to a few herdsmen, while it was but seldom that a traveller ventured across the mountain-passes. This state of things continued until the twelfth century, up to the time of the German immigration, and it was during this period that the land suffered from the incursions of the Saracens, who issued from their retreat at Fraxinetum to plunder and devastate.

In the year 940 they occupied the Great St. Bernard and burnt St. Maurice, and after this the Great St. Bernard became so familiar and of so great importance to them, that they applied its name to the entire chain of the Alps,—*Mont Dschaus*, derived from the Roman Mons Jovis, Mont Joux.

This annoyance was put an end to in 975 by the confederated princes of Provence, after the infidels had ventured so far as to take prisoner, near Orsières, Abbot Mayeul of Cluny, who was on a pilgrimage to Rome. The Saracens are said to have then taken refuge in the most secluded valleys of Southern Valais; the inhabitants of the Saasthal and Eifischthal and of the Val Evolenaz are reputed to be descended in great part from these refugees. It is probable

that the Simplon Pass was also known to these bands of marauders.

The Saracens were followed by peaceful pilgrims from Scandinavia, Iceland, Denmark, and England, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century. Their sole purpose was not, however, to visit the holy places; like the crusaders, they took occasion while on their travels to increase their temporal wealth by the barter and sale of merchandise.

The pilgrims from Iceland preferred the way across the Great St. Bernard, but a heavy tribute was levied on them by the inhabitants on both sides, so that many avoided it in consequence, and made their way through the peaceful valley of the Rhone and then across the Simplon or through the Saasthal.

Towards the end of the twelfth century the powerful and flourishing German empire extended the blessings of its rule over Valais, brought the land peace and tranquillity, and lent it new strength and new prosperity through its German colonies. The immigrants from the north not only peopled Upper Valais, but even crossed the mighty ramparts of Monte Rosa and founded at the foot of its southern slopes numerous settlements in the valleys of Aosta, Gressoney, Challant, Anzasca, Sesia, Ornavasso, and Ossola, some of which settlements are to be found at the present day still speaking the German tongue.

But at the same time immigrants from Italy also entered Valais and took possession of the uninhabited valleys of Simplon and Saas. The snow-capped mountain-range of the Alps of Valais no longer formed an impassable barrier, but was freely crossed at many points. A lively traffic developed between the dwellers on either side of the mountains, and even in political matters they were closely united. But the Simplon Pass not only joined North and South; it was also the shortest way from the East to the West, by which the products of Asia found their way along the great commercial

highway of the Euphrates and through Bajazzo (the modern Aias), Venice, and Milan to Switzerland, Savoy, and France.

Poor though the Alpine valleys were in vegetation and in natural products, they now became rich by the transport of merchandise; where previously a single miserable hut had afforded shelter during the brief summer to a few herdsmen, thriving villages now arose, especially in the gorges of the Simplon. The value of this commercial intercourse was fully realised by the bishops of Valais, who for their part did their utmost to promote it, regulating the traffic by treaties, as for instance that concluded in the year 1250 by the intermediation of Bishop Henry of Raron with a great trading corporation in Milan, "in order to turn to better account the Simplon road, which has been little used since the days of the Romans," as the treaty states. Further efforts in the same direction were made in the years 1271 and 1272 by Bishop Rudolph, and especially in 1291 by his successor Boniface. The latter purchased from the lords of Castello, in the bishopric of Novara, the sovereignty over the Simplon, and bestowed it upon Count Blandrati, whose seat was the Hübschburg at Visp; under him depots and hospices were erected, among others the hospice of St. James on the heights of the Simplon, "*in collibus de monte Simplono*," by the Knights of Malta.

In the two following centuries the traffic between Milan and Lyons, so profitable for Valais, was often interrupted by insurrections and civil wars, but it was constantly resumed again, as in 1422 under Bishop Andrew Gualdo, and in 1455 under Henry II. of Raron. In the year 1491, for the protection of merchants, the Seven Districts appointed a "Castlan" or judge in Ruden (Gondo) and a captain on the Simplon as frontier warders.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Francesco Sforza and the king of France were fighting for the possession of Milan, the powerful and bellicose cardinal Schinner of Valais crossed the Simplon more than once with the troops

of the Confederacy and sacrificed without stint many brave Swiss lives in a strange quarrel.

In the year 1650, after the decay of the hospital of the Knights of Malta, Caspar Stockalper erected on the Simplon a large tower, which served him and his family as a summer residence. The lowest story was devoted to the reception of poor travellers, and his people had orders to extend hospitality to all such as might apply to them throughout the year. The great tower in Gondo, which served a similar purpose, was also his work.

At the commencement of the same century Ticino was conquered by the Swiss Confederates, and a new highway for commerce opened across the St. Gothard. The Simplon Pass thus lost much of its international importance, and recovered it only for a few decades in the early part of the nineteenth century.

It was in the middle of May, 1800, that Napoleon crossed the Great St. Bernard with his army. The hardships and dangers which the troops encountered were innumerable, and extraordinary obstacles had to be overcome in order to cross the lofty pass, which, being more than 8000 feet in altitude, is not free from snow until late in the summer. Owing to the difficulties experienced here, the First Consul resolved to take in hand at once the construction of a carriage-road across the Simplon, which had been ordered by the Directory in Milan on May 14, 1797. In 1801 five thousand labourers were set to work on either side of the mountain, and by dint of indomitable courage and extraordinary exertions they overcame every obstacle and completed their task in the course of five summers under the lead of the engineers Céard, Duthens, Lescot, Duchesne, Houdouart, Cournon, Maillard, and Gianella — men whose names are worthy to be traced in letters of gold in the annals of our race. The expenses of the undertaking amounted to £ 280,000; 250 tons of powder were employed in blasting the galleries, which had a total length of 1720 feet; 611 bridges had to be constructed. "The works

on the Simplon were commenced on the 3rd Nivose and the 5th Germinal of the year 9, and opened to traffic the 11th Vendémiaire of the year 14." Thus runs the report made by Céard, the chief inspector of the Simplon road, to the Emperor Napoleon, who was never able himself to view the great work which had been carried out by his mandate, or to lead his army across it. It stands here a monument of a mighty genius, of a noble nation!

"Up to this day there is no example of a similar work having been executed with the like celerity!"

Although it is from a certain point of view a matter for regret, still we cannot but hope that in a few years time this magnificent road may become a prey to forgetfulness; already the iron horse transports us with lightning speed to the foot of the Simplon, and in a few years it will have made its way through the heart of the mountains.

The plans for a future Simplon Tunnel are completed, the cost calculated, and the probable difficulties to be encountered weighed; scientists have investigated the geological structure of the mountains to be pierced, and ascertained the probable temperature of their interior,—everything is prepared,—the French have recognised, especially since the opening of the railway through the St. Gothard, the ancient rival of the Simplon, how necessary the construction of the tunnel is for their trade,—but France lacks a second Napoleon to give the word for the commencement of the enterprise. Meanwhile the dwellers by the old international highway of Mons Sempronius wait in hopeful expectation of a speedy settlement of this question, which is of such vital importance for the prosperity of their native valleys.



Topography of the Simplon.

“Ye fathers of the land, lead your sons by the hand across this mountain road, and they will learn more in their own fatherland than would be possible in other countries in a journey of many hundred miles.”

Valais Calendar for 1831.

THE culminating-point of the Simplon road is 6594 feet above the sea; its length from Brieg to Domo d'Ossola is 64 miles, (from Brieg to Berisal 8¹/₂ miles, to the new Hospice 15¹/₂ miles, to the village of Simplon 20¹/₂ miles, to Gondo [Buden] 27 miles, to Isella 41 miles). The Swiss mail diligence crosses the mountain twice daily, connects the Swiss railway station of Brieg in nine hours with Domo d'Ossola, and continues its way (under Swiss control throughout until the completion of the Italian railway now in course of construction) to Arona and Pallanza on the shores of Lake Maggiore. For the pedestrian it is 6 hours walk to the Hospice, from there to the village of Simplon 2 hours, and to Domo another 6 or 7 hours. The scenery of the Pass can be most conveniently enjoyed by engaging one of the private conveyances which are always to be found at Brieg. We can so make a halt at all the finest points, and are moreover secure against unwelcome society. The charges vary with the season of the year, and the best plan is to come to an understanding with the hotel-keeper regarding the amount to be paid. The Simplon Pass is open throughout the year with the exception of a few days in winter after heavy snow-storms. Even then a passage through the snow is made as quickly as possible, in order to render the road practicable for the small sledges which at that season take the place of the diligences.

The Simplon road exceeds in beauty and picturesque charms all other mountain highways, and will bear comparison with most of them in respect to the grandeur of its surroundings.

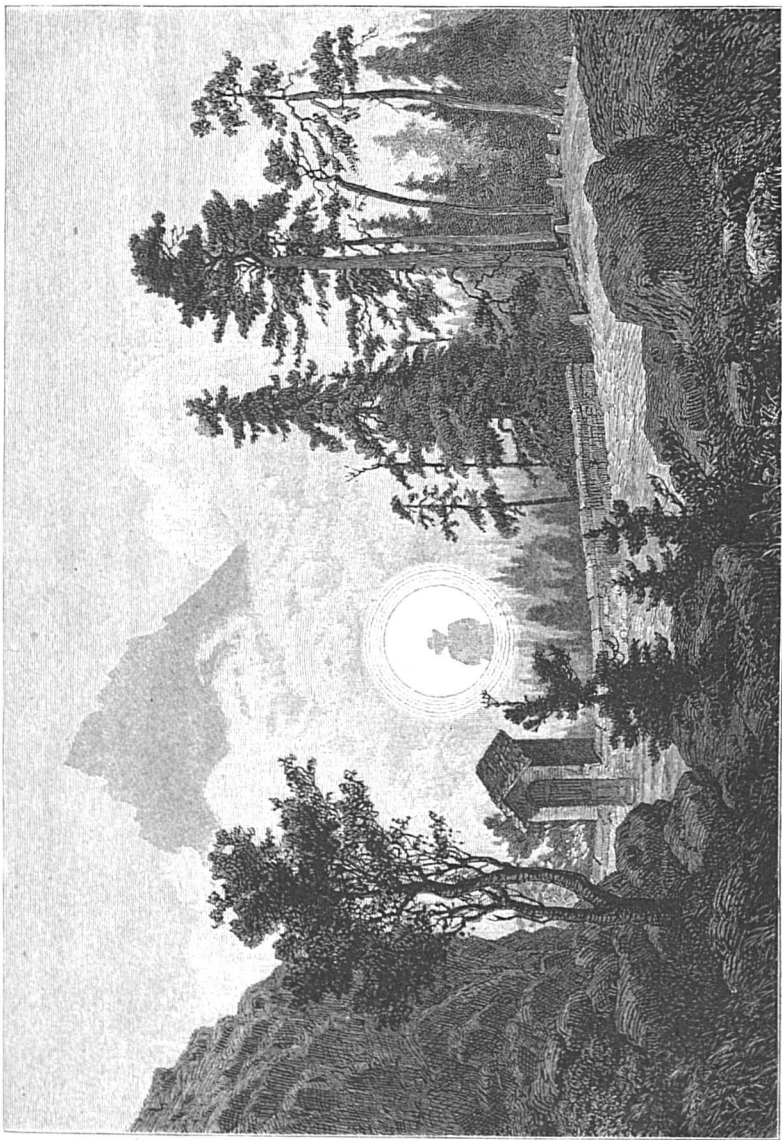
Its construction constituted one of the greatest triumphs achieved by man over natural obstacles; in point of time it was the first of the modern Alpine highways which connect North and South, and it formed the model for later undertakings of the same kind,—Napoleon's decree had broken the ancient spell!

Soon after leaving Brieg our admiration is excited by the *Napoleonsbrücke*, boldly spanning the boisterous Saltine, a head-strong torrent descending from the glaciers of Monte Leone. On reaching this monument of human skill, placed in the midst of stupendous surroundings, the wonders of the Simplon Pass are unfolded to us as by the wand of some mighty magician.

On the left, descending from the Glishorn, the Saltine receives a tributary, the Holzgraben, which after prolonged rain, and when the snow is melting, swelled to such a volume as to threaten the bridge with destruction. A tunnel was therefore made for it through the rocks, and through this outlet its turbid waters, mingled with earth and fragments of stone, flow with wild uproar into the deep rocky gorge.

In the neighbourhood of the *Napoleonsbrücke* an imperious and tyrannical noble is said to have built his castle. Every trace of it has long vanished, however, and excavations recently conducted on the site by antiquaries brought to light nothing but a few ancient weapons and some fragments of Celtic pottery.

For some years after its completion the Simplon road led from here direct to Glis; only at a later period did the government of Valais extend it down to Brieg. But the magnificent bridge has now lost most of its importance, and every year brings it nearer to ruin, for the Canton of Valais will scarcely continue to maintain so expensive a work much longer, especially since the annual expenses for the maintenance of the Simplon road often exceed £1200, and it is less and less frequented. How will it be when after the construction of the tunnel Napoleon's military road is traversed only by a few natives or by here and there a tourist?





High above us, on the *Schallberg*, a spur of the Kleenhorn, stands Refuge No. 2. In order to reach it the road makes a wide bend six miles in length, at first in an easterly direction through green meadows, past the little villages of the commune of Brigerberg to the foot of the Calvarienberg “*zur Burgspitze*.” Here, in the charmingly-situated hamlet of *Schlucht*, stands Refuge No. 1, and the road now bends to the west, ascending steeply through the Brandwald to the chapel “*in den Bleichen*.”

But the sturdy pedestrian, to whom such wide loops are an abomination, can take a short cut straight up to Schallberg. Following the course of the telegraph wires, he first crosses moist meadows, and then ascends a steep, sunburnt acclivity, beyond which he reaches the old Simplon road, the pavement of which is still in good preservation in some places. For a short distance the old road, like the new one, which is only a little higher up, runs along the verge of the abyss. In passing we notice an inscription engraved in the rock, reminding the traveller of a sad delusion of former centuries. Here it was, namely, that in the year 1620 the last witch was burned in Canton Valais, a certain M. Imager of Ganther.

Dripping with perspiration we reach the airy heights and regain the new road, and in the neat little parlour of Refuge No. 2 we can now rest and refresh ourselves.

But greater enjoyments await us; for we are in the midst of a landscape of vast extent, and of an extremely impressive character. We can here cast a parting glance at the valley of the Rhone, in whose depths, surrounded by luxuriant grassy slopes, rise the glittering towers and roofs of Brieg. Above Naters, which is snugly concealed in leafy shade, rises the stupendous mountain-chain of the Bernese Alps, with their dazzling ice-fields and their wild rocky peaks rising proudly skywards. But at our feet, descending with fearful abruptness, is the barren and gloomy ravine of the Saltine; here and there a weather-beaten pine has succeeded in securing a foothold

on the naked rock, high above the yawning chasm; in the murky depths a foaming glacier-torrent is visible, but its tumult fails to reach our ear. On both sides of the rocky wall, high above the waves of the turbulent stream, the daring inhabitants of Valais have suspended wooden water-pipes which convey the fertilising element to the meadows of Brieg and Glis. High above these barren walls, on the slopes of the *Glishorn* and the *Staldenhorn*, grassy terraces fringed by woodlands relieve the monotony of the scenery, and the cottages seen here and there intimate that even these lonely wilds are not destitute of inhabitants. Hidden between yonder peaks, and accessible only by a steep path, lies the sequestered *Nesselthal*, the slopes of which afford summer pasturage to numerous herds of cattle. At the foot of the Schallberg, on an expanse of meadowland surrounded by foaming mountain-torrents and by steep slopes covered with shadowy fir-woods, stand the lonely châteaux "*Im Grund*," on the site of ancient smelting works connected with the iron mines of the *Ganther-Thal*. From here the old road led southwards directly up to the pass, at first through the gloomy recesses of a primeval forest, then past the Alpine châteaux of *Tavernen* and *Eggen*, and finally up steep zigzags, across acclivities covered with alpenrose bushes, to the pass. From here we overlook this entire stretch of roadway, which, though not easy to find, is nevertheless taken by many pedestrians even at the present day. Towards the east opens the ravine of the *Ganther-Thal*, dominated by the ice-clad *Bortelhorn* and by the rocky crests of the *Furggenbaumhorn* and *Wasenhorn*. Along its slopes, on both sides, in wide loops and intricate windings, now over meadowland, now through woods, runs the boldly-planned mountain-road, which our eye can follow as far as the summit of the pass above the Saltine Gorge, at the foot of the bleak rocky ramparts of the *Schönhorn*.

Such is the prospect enjoyed here by the traveller in fine weather. But when thunder-storms break over us and grey clouds glide ghost-like along the cliffy steepes, and only here and there a huge rocky peak is seen rising above the sea of

mist, at such a time too the aspect presented by this mountainous landscape has a charm of its own; especially if the traveller is fortunate enough to see his shadow, surrounded by a many-coloured halo and enlarged to gigantic proportions, cast upon the storm-clouds in front of him by the sun in his rear.

Above Schallberg lies the commandingly-situated alp of *Rosswald*, which can be easily reached through the forest in 1½ hours. Above this stretch of pasture-land rises the mountain-ridge, which reaches in the three neighbouring peaks called the *Kleenhorn*, *Tunetschhorn*, and *Bortelhorn*, with which we became acquainted in the Binnthal, the important elevation of nearly 10,000 feet.

We will now continue our walk along the new road, which extends towards the east in a tolerably horizontal direction and reaches the Ganther bridge in one hour. "This bridge is 65 feet in length and 77 feet in height; by its situation and its solidity it is quite in harmony with the grand objects which surround it at the bottom of this savage gorge,"—thus ran the report of the engineer-in-chief to the Emperor Napoleon. From all sides tumultuous mountain-torrents descend towards it, forming picturesque waterfalls; and in winter the entire ravine is often filled up to the level of the top of the arch with the snow of the avalanches which constantly fall here.

The road now ascends in numerous windings and through shady woods to the pleasant hamlet of Berisal, with the third Refuge and a post station. It lies at an altitude of 4678 feet above the sea, and for this reason as well as owing to the neighbouring pine-wood, its agreeable and sheltered situation, a plentiful supply of wholesome spring water, and numerous unfatiguing walks, it forms a very pleasant summer resort. Already several English and Swiss families have selected this quiet little village as the spot in which to pass their summer holidays, and well-known entomologists and botanists make it their annual rendezvous. Mountaineers too have learned the



Grell Furrli & Co.

Berisal.

value of the hotel at Berisal as a starting-point for enjoyable Alpine tours, chief among

which are the ascents of the *Bettlihorn*, *Wasenhorn*, *Bortelhorn* and *Furggenbaumhorn*, the passage of the passes leading to the Binnthal, and the excursion to the Alp Diveglia across the *Passo di Forchetta* or its neighbour the *Passo d'Aurona*.

Idyllic repose reigns in lovely Berisal from year's end to year's end. It is disturbed indeed daily, though only for a few moments by the arrival of the diligence and the changing of the horses. In winter this occasions more commotion than in summer, for then not only the horses but the vehicles themselves are changed. Passengers and luggage are transferred from the unwieldy diligence into little sledges, each seating but one person. Warm rugs are thoughtfully provided for the travellers by the Helvetic authorities, and the long train of vehicles sets itself in motion, in the first sledge the postillion, in the last the conductor, whose duty it is to watch over the safety of all. By

the side of each horse walks a man, if the animals are not left entirely to themselves, and when the weather is fine the journey is really a most enjoyable one. It is otherwise after a fresh fall of snow, or when the cold north wind is blowing, and avalanches are descending from the barren mountain-sides, threatening to smother the traveller in their chill embraces. At such times the cavalcade is headed by the triangular snow plough drawn by five or six horses, who are assisted in their arduous and perilous labours by a body of men armed with picks and shovels, — sturdy sons of the mountains, bidding defiance to the storm and boldly facing the dangers to which their task hourly exposes them. From time to time it happens that one such caravan is snowed up for one or more days, either in the hospice on the summit or in one of the shelter-houses, which are placed at much shorter intervals apart in the dangerous region, especially near the Kaltwasser Glacier.

Not without a joyful ejaculation does one reach the end of a winter journey such as this, when, after arrival in the inhabited valleys, all fatigues and dangers are seen to have been happily overcome.

From Berisal (4622 feet above the sea) the road again rises somewhat rapidly to Refuge No. 4 (5679 feet) on the heights of the *Rothwald*.

We are conducted now through forests of larch and fir, in the shadow of which flourish beautiful crimson alpenroses, most charming of Alpine flowers, now through wild gorges, traversed by turbulent mountain-torrents, or past solitary Alpine châteaux, situated in clearings of the forest, and affording delightful outlooks upon the distant mountains.

An hour's walk brings us to Refuge No. 4. The character of the scenery around us continues about the same; but our attention is constantly attracted by the changing views that present themselves, and our admiration is especially aroused by the sight of the *Bietschhorn* (13,057 feet), which stands revealed to us in all its majesty in the neighbourhood of the

Kapfloch, the first forest-covered tunnel through the rocks. Proudly it stands there, a bold rocky obelisk, the graceful monarch of a numerous throng of courtiers.

But suddenly, in the vicinity of the fifth shelter-house, a bend in the road produces a change in the scenery. In front of us there now rise barren rocky walls, clad in part with gleaming masses of ice, and with countless torrents pouring swiftly down them,—we are now in proximity to the Kaltwasser Glacier and its terrors.

The cross standing by the wayside reminds the traveller of his impotence and his weakness, and points to the only effectual aid against the dangers that threaten him here in winter. Although the most dangerous places are protected by galleries, scarcely a year passes but the mountain slays its victim here. For it is not only during heavy falls of snow or violent storms that the avalanches fall; often they break loose when the sky is serene, and when the snow-masses have been warmed to their depths by a succession of fine spring days.

With terrible suddenness does the avalanche overwhelm the unconscious traveller. High above his head he heard perhaps a peculiar rustling, a sound reached his ear as of a distant peal of thunder; surprised he looks up to the clear sky in search of the storm-cloud. None is visible. The bodeful rustling draws nearer and nearer, and scarce is the real source of the approaching danger apparent, when it is upon him: vast masses of loose snow have engulfed the luckless wanderer, have swept him with them into the depths, and buried him under their weight.

Now and then it happens that some one remains lying on the upper surface of the avalanche, and so escapes a swift death by suffocation. The *voituriers* from the refuge and the monks from the hospice hasten to dig out the victims, but in spite of almost superhuman exertions they do not always succeed in extricating them alive. Only too often their labours end in sadly carrying the dead bodies down dangerous paths to the

morgue. The traveller, therefore, should pay earnest heed to the warnings of experienced natives, especially of the voituriers, whose calling it is to battle day by day with the terrific forces of the mountains; skilful to recognise and interpret every sign, they seldom err when they call the attention of the traveller to approaching danger.

Very different it is during the summer months, when the scorching sun-beams have freed the slopes from snow, and charming Alpine flowers adorn the clefts of the rocks and cover the steep declivities. Incomparable is the beauty of the scene when the naked walls of the Schönhorn, dyed purple by the last rays of the setting sun, rise out of the glossy verdure of the Alpine pastures, and when at the mountain's base the Kaltwasser Glacier displays its broad rosy mantle of ice. The glacier, the cliffs, and the alpenrose vie with each other in the brilliancy of their colouring. To the last-named the prize of beauty must be adjudged, for it glows with a radiance of its own, while the others lose their ephemeral splendour as the daylight departs, and resume their innate cold and pallid hue.

Refuge No. 5 has an altitude of 6358 feet; No. 6, known as *La Barrière* (6538 feet), stands near the culminating-point of the road (6594 feet); the Hospice is 23 feet lower. The gradient of this section of the road, a trifle under two miles in length, is thus very moderate, and under ordinary conditions the distance can be traversed in less than an hour. In addition to the two shelter-houses and the Hospice we pass in this short stretch three galleries,—a sufficient proof of the manifold dangers which were here to be guarded against.

The first of these galleries is constructed of freestone; beneath it are openings to allow of the passage of the Saline, which here descends from the Kaltwasser Glacier, but the greater part of the water flows over the top of the gallery and forms a magnificent cascade, which especially excites

our admiration when viewed from the interior of the gallery, through the wide arches. This bold structure, the work of an engineer of Valais, named Venetz, bids defiance to the perpetual assaults of the torrent and resists the pressure of the avalanches, though the protective works erected here by the French were destroyed time after time.

The next gallery, half of masonry, half excavated in the rock, is always very dirty in its interior, owing to the constant



Kaltwasser Gallery.

dripping of water from the roof. Outside of it a narrow foot-path leads along the verge of the chasm and commands a full view of the ravine of the Saltine. Everywhere the waters from the glacier are seen descending in large or small cascades over the rocks, in which they have worn deep channels.

The fourth and longest gallery immediately follows; at first an old, dark tunnel with only here and there an opening to admit air and light, then, contiguous with it, the fine new gallery with eighteen arched openings, built by the Canton of Valais in 1852, by the side of the summer road. In former times this part of the route was fortified more than once by the people of Valais and the French, but the defen-

sive works erected were constantly swept away by avalanches. Here too, somewhat above the road, the engineers engaged in the construction of the first road over the Simplon found the huts of earth and turf in which the troops of Suwarrow had bivouacked several years earlier.

A few more steps bring us to the summit of the pass; we will climb a little higher, however, and then stretch ourselves on the turf among the alpenrose bushes.

The panorama unfolded here is unique in its extent and grandeur. On the north the horizon is bounded by the long chain of the Bernese Alps, with their innumerable glaciers and snow-capped summits. The most imposing among them is the *Aletschhorn*, with the great glacier of the same name winding along at its base like some huge serpent.

At our feet, veiled in a thin blue mist, lie the gorges through which we have ascended. On the east, behind the precipices of the *Schönhorn*, rise the three ice-crowned summits of the *Monte-Leone* group, and in the west extends a mountain-range which, beginning with the *Glishorn* (8146 feet), includes the *Erzhorn* (8694 feet), *Faulhorn* (8999 feet), *Schienhorn* (8661 feet), *Mayenhorn* (8359 feet), *Sirwoltenhorn* (9265 feet), and *Rauthorn* (10,495 feet), and ends in the group of the *Fletschhörner* (*Rossbodenhorn*, 13,146 feet, *Laquinhorn*, 13,323 feet, and *Weissmies*, 13,225 feet).

Two lofty passes cross this range; one of them, the *Bistinen Pass**, between the *Schienhorn* and the *Mayenhorn*,

* The *Bistinen Pass* is also known in history. When in the year 1476 Charles the Bold had been defeated at Grandson and Morat, the Lombards endeavoured to force their way over both the Great St. Bernard and the Simplon to lend assistance to the unfortunate Duke of Burgundy. The 3000 Lombards who were crossing the Simplon were met by the men of Brieg near the village of Simplon, and 500 of their number were slain; many others perished in their flight through the inhospitable mountains. Such as had made their way across the *Bistinen Pass* were attacked in front by the men of Visp, in the rear by the men of Brieg, (who were in pursuit of them), and were annihilated. The latter battle-field is now known as the *Todten-Boden*, that near Simplon as "*zu den Gräbern*."

leads into the *Nanzerthal*, and is quite free from danger, while the *Sirwolten Pass*, leading close by the mountain of the same name, on to the *Gamsen Glacier*, and thence across the *Simmeli Pass* into the *Saasthal*, is much more difficult and fatiguing, but also much more interesting. It was crossed for the first time in the year 1883 by three Genevese botanists, Messrs. Viridet, Boissier, and Reuter.

In the south a lofty plateau opens, covered with rich pastures; through the midst of them meanders the gently-flowing *Krummbach*, in whose clear waters countless alpen-rose bushes are mirrored. This idyllic expanse of meadowland is dominated by a group of finely-formed mountains of immense height, the *Fletschhörner*. Huge glaciers, resembling frozen cataracts, depend from the mountain and diffuse a sea of light and radiance too dazzling to be long borne by the eye unaccustomed to such sights. "There they stand like actors in the great world-drama, wrapped in white, silver-embroidered mantles." (Menzel's "*Journey across the Simplon*".)

It is in a devout frame of mind that we contemplate all these wonders, the works of the Great Architect. But we will not forget those of our fellow-men whose undaunted courage and perseverance brought to a successful issue a work at that time unexampled in its vastness,—the grand route over the Simplon. To the memory of these men we dedicate the following passage extracted from a work entitled "*Souvenirs of the works on the Simplon*, by R. Céard, son of N. Céard, inspector-general of the works on the Simplon". It gives us an insight not so much into the material difficulties with which these brave ones had to contend, as into the sad social circumstances of those days, which threw quite as many hindrances in their way.

"It was a novel spectacle, that of this rugged mountain, erst so lonely, but now peopled by fifteen or eighteen hundred workmen, re-echoing incessantly with exploding mines, with the movements and the cries of the labourers, with the noise of the spades and picks employed in opening a road through the virgin forests

of these gloomy valleys; it was curious indeed to see these young engineers dressed in their elegant uniforms, directing among these savage rocks gangs of Piedmontese labourers, men of wild looks, sunburnt countenances, and rustic deportment. The zeal of these officers hid from them or led them to despise

the danger they ran from some of these Italians, to whom the use of the detestable stiletto was but too familiar. The two following anecdotes will give an idea of the kind of men who sought occupation in these solitudes.

“At the foot of the zigzag path which leads up to the plateau of the Simplon from the Valais side there stood a little cottage known as Les Tavernettes; an old soldier, nicknamed the Bear, on account of his savage demeanour, occupied this solitary habitation, in which he retailed wine and other refreshments to travellers crossing the mountain by the old road. One day he was drinking with a friend when a miner presented himself and demanded food and drink. After consuming three francs' worth of victuals he was about to take his departure without paying; the Bear barred the way and requested payment, but received in reply a knife-thrust which stretched him dead on the spot. His indignant comrade seized an axe and pursued the assassin. The latter fled until his pursuer had caught him up and was about to deal him a blow with the axe; suddenly the other stopped short, turned, and plunged his knife into his pursuer's heart, in time to arrest the blow aimed at his own head. The murderer then returned quietly to work, as though nothing unusual had occurred. He soon afterwards went away. The inspector one day reproached the other workmen for not having arrested the criminal, but one of them answered in these words: ‘O sir, if all here who have killed a man were to be arrested, it would be necessary to arrest the whole gang.’ Unofficial information taken regarding the author of this double murder—regular justice was out of the question—showed that previous to his last act of crime this man had already killed eleven persons, among whom was the curé of his parish.

“Another Piedmontese labourer was working in the valley of Ganther, mak-

ing the roadway above a precipice three or four hundred feet in depth, with a man against whom he had a grudge. He seized the moment when his comrade was on the edge of the chasm, and gave him a push which sent him over the brink. The poor wretch reached the bottom alive, however; though stunned for a moment by the terrible fall, he soon revived and tried to climb up again; but his enemy was on the watch at the top of the precipice, and endeavoured to crush him with fragments of rock which he flung or rolled down upon him; his wicked design was frustrated, and the object of it escaped this new outrage.

“The reader may perhaps wonder that the country itself could not furnish the labourers necessary for this great enterprise; but the workmen of Valais were neither numerous enough nor so skilful as the Piedmontese in tasks of this kind; besides it must be remembered that the canton of Valais was not so much interested in the opening of the Simplon Road as it now is in its preservation. On the contrary, it saw in this undertaking only a means of keeping it in subjection. Though unable to resist the power which came to level their mountains, the people of Valais at least refused to assist in carrying out a work which they had reason to look upon with disfavour. Their conduct under these circumstances is all the more remarkable, since at the end of each season the Piedmontese workmen carried into their valleys considerable sums which the impoverished inhabitants of Valais might have retained in their country had they not preferred freedom to money; but time is a great teacher, and the events it brings often modify the opinions and the first impressions of men. This road, the construction of which affected the canton so painfully, is now the object of its most lively solicitude, and it is difficult to repress a

feeling of admiration when one sees the enlightened and well-directed care which Valais bestows upon the preservation of this work, necessitating though it does

no inconsiderable pecuniary sacrifices for the straightened finances of a province indifferently favoured by fortune."

Napoleon's plan embraced the erection upon the summit of the pass of a great *Hospice*, which might in case of necessity serve as barracks. According to the plan worked out by Engineer Lescot this building would have cost about £ 32,000; it was begun, but the overthrow of Napoleon put a stop to it, and it was not until 1825 that the works were resumed by the Augustine monks of the Great St. Bernard, who had purchased the portion already built from the government of Valais, and devoted a considerable sum of money to its completion. At present four of the brethren from the St. Bernard reside constantly in this desolate spot as delegates of the convent, and devote themselves, like their fellows, to the relief of travellers in distress. Every year ten or twelve thousand strangers are supplied with food and lodging free of charge. If it is not dinner-time, bread and cheese and wine are set before the wayfarer.

Such of the travellers as can afford it, put the value of what they have eaten in the contribution box.

The numerous bed-rooms afford accommodation for about 300 persons. The beautiful church, and the rooms in the second story with portrait of Napoleon and his court, are well worth seeing. Numerous dogs of the St. Bernard breed, really magnificent animals, are kept, and are sent out daily in winter during stormy weather in search of travellers needing assistance.

It is with regret that we leave this hospitable house and our amiable hosts, to turn our steps down towards the sunny fields of Italy.

A walk of half an hour brings us to a passage blasted in the rocks, on leaving which we see before us a kind of tower, the *Old Hospice*, mentioned above as having been built by the Stockalper family.

We hasten down the pass, across slopes thickly studded with alpenroses, till we reach the *Engeloch*, a natural defile which scarcely affords passage for the broad road. Just beyond it stands Refuge No. 7, for in winter the place is much exposed to drifting snow; the course of the road is therefore indicated by poles. The road now leads past the châteaux of *Bernetsch* and *Mayenhaus*, and past isolated pines and larches, until in an hour we reach the bridge over the *Krummbach*. Here we leave the high-road for a short time, to climb the wall of moraine above the hamlet "*An der Eggen*." From here we overlook an extremely interesting glacier-landscape. Imposing are the dark purple ice-masses of the *Rossboden Glacier*, towering more than 3000 feet above us, but still more deserving of notice are the numerous moraines, which bear witness to an epoch when this glacier was much more extensive than at present.

The moraine upon which we are standing is divided into three arms, after having broken up against the base of the opposite mountain and forced the glacier on one side. Their front has been carried away by torrents or other causes, and they themselves are covered by a luxuriant growth of Alpine plants and by a few larch trees; from the present position and height of the moraine we can calculate that at the spot where the modern road crosses the *Sengbach (Walibach)* the glacier must formerly have been at least 200 feet in depth. It is a good hour's walk from here to the foot of the glacier — a striking proof that the glaciers have receded to a very considerable extent during past centuries.

In the year 1597 a great land-slip took place on the opposite side of the valley, destroying the châteaux of *Guggenen* and devastating the entire valley. Enormous masses of debris and fragments of stone are strewn over the country for a considerable distance.

The road winds through this chaos by the side of the *Krummbach*, which is constantly gaining in volume, describes

a sharp curve, and we find ourselves at the entrance to the trim *village of Simplon*. The parish has a population of about 400; the people are wide-awake, and drive a considerable trade in cattle and cheese, while some are employed in the transport of passengers and goods. Here everyone speaks three languages, German, Italian, and French. The two well-conducted inns afford comfortable lodging, and in short *Simplon* (*German* Simpeln, *Italian* Sempione) quite deserves its reputation as a summer resort. Besides being a capital starting-point for various tours among the High Alps, it is much resorted to by sufferers from nervousness, who find the pure and bracing Alpine air at this high altitude (4855 feet) very beneficial.



Simplon Hospice.

The following excursions can be made from here:

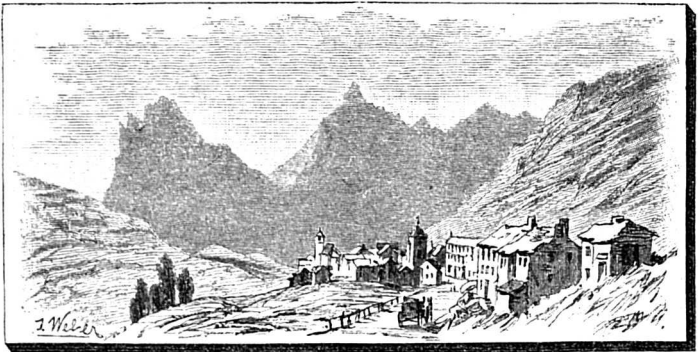
1. *Monte Leone* (11,696 feet). We follow the high-road to a little below

Algaby, and then ascend by a good footpath to the châteaux of *Alpien*, situated in a lovely green Alpine glen surrounded by forests, and with a magnificent cascade in the background. The night is generally passed in the uppermost châteaux, so as to reach the summit before midday. The ascent leads up steep grassy slopes, then over the precipitous *Alpien Glacier* up to the highest ridge, which is followed until the summit is reached. The descent can be made on the opposite side, across the *Kaltwasser Glacier* to the Hospice.

2. From the *Alpien* in rather more than 3 hours to the *Col des Banquettes*, where magnificent garnets, stannolites, and other rare minerals occur in the glittering mica-slate. On the way a charming glimpse into the lateral valleys of the Do-

veria; opposite the wild *Zwischbergen-Thal* opens, and is visible in its full extent.

Between the *Simplon* and the *Saasthal* there rises a high glacier-covered chain of mountains, culminating in the three snow-capped peaks of the *Rossbodenhorn* and *Laquinhorn* (also known as the *Fletschhörner*) and the *Weissmies*, following each other from north to south. Vast glaciers, broken by immense rifts, are seen hanging everywhere from the steep and naked rocky walls; in the east the *Thäli*, *Laquin*, *Hochsaas*, *Bodmer*, and *Rossboden Glaciers*; in the north the *Rauten Glacier*,



Village of Simplon.

whose ice-blocks are precipitated into the melancholy *Sirwoltten-Lake*; in the west the *Gamser*, *Mattwald*, *Fletschhorn*, *Jäggi*, and *Trift Glaciers*, and in the south the *Roththal* and *Gemeinealp Glaciers*.

This stately group, with its various peaks and the depressions between them,—extremely difficult “hunters’ passes” — has been thoroughly explored of late years by members of the different Alpine clubs; these ascents are among the most difficult in the Alps, and are only to be undertaken under the leadership of guides perfectly familiar with the locality.

We may enumerate the following tours:



*The Fletschhörner Group
from the Simplon Pass.*

3. The *Rossbodenhorn* (North Fletschhorn, 12,851 feet); ascent either up the Rossboden Glacier, an extremely difficult climb, or from the Saasthal and across the Fletschhorn Glacier.

4. The *Laquinhorn* (South Fletschhorn, 13,205 feet), is more easily ascended from the Saas side.

5. The *Weissmies* (13,225 feet), famous for the superb prospect it commands, is, although the highest of the three summits, more easily climbed than either of its brethren; ascent from the Zwischbergen Pass or from Saas across Triftalpe, Triftgrätli, and the Trifthorn.

6. The *Rossboden-Joch* (11,483 feet); on the north side of the glacier of the same name to the summit of the pass, and then over the Mattwald Glacier into the Saasthal (9 hours); an interesting tour. More difficult than this pass are:

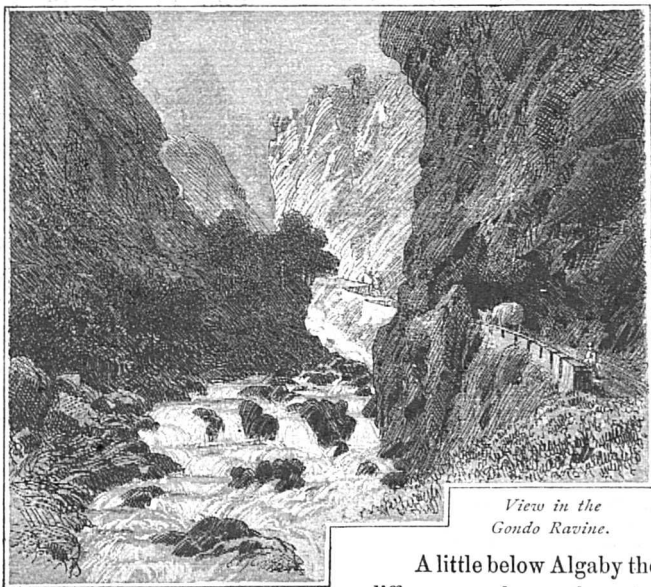
7. The *Laquin-Joch*, between Rossbodenhorn and Laquinhorn.

8. The *Thäli-Joch*, between Thälihorn and Tossenhorn.

9. The *Weissmies-Joch*, between Weissmies and Thälihorn. Easier and more enjoyable than these is:

10. The *Zwischbergen Pass* (10,794 feet). From the village of Simplon two ways lead to it: either from *Algaby* across the *Furken*, or from *Gondo*, lower down on the high-road, right through the *Zwischbergen-Thal*, also known as the *Val Varia*. At the entrance to the valley are the old and famous gold mines, near *Hof* and *Belleggen* (1 hour above *Gondo*); from here we reach in 3 hours the *Gemeinealp*, and in another 3 hours the summit of the pass across the easily ascended *Gemeinealp Glacier*. The view from the summit of the pass is very grand, especially of the lakes of Upper Italy, Monte Rosa, and the Saasgrat. Descent through the *Weissthal*, and past the *Almagelalp* and the beautiful *Lehmbach Fall* to *Almagel*. From the *Gemeinealp* the mountaineer may also make his way to the *Alp Pontimia* and across the ridge into the *Val Bognanca*, or else to the *Alp Testa* and reach *Domo d'Ossola* either over the *Alp Campo* and through the *Val Bognanca* or through the *Val Antrona*.

The road now quickly brings us to the valley; in an hour the long and steep windings lead us down to *Algaby* (*Gsteig*), a pleasantly-situated hamlet at the confluence of the *Krummbach* and *Laquinbach*, which two streams now take the name of the *Doveria*. Towards the south the snowy valley of *Laquin* opens; at the back of it are the *Weissmies* and the *Laquinhorn*, and at its entrance the wooded *Furkenhorn* stands sentry, with a pass at its base leading into the *Zwischbergenthal*. Here at the commencement of the *Ravine* of *Gondo*, the wildest of all the Alpine defiles, Napoleon designed to erect a powerful fortress to defend the French "Département du Simplon" against incursions from the side of Italy. Only some minor works were constructed, however, some distance further down the valley, near *Gondo*. They are still standing, and during the Franco-Austrian War they were occupied by Switzerland to maintain its neutrality.



View in the
Gondo Ravine.

A little below Algyaby the cliffs approach so close together that there is no longer room for the road by the side of the Doveria; it therefore leads through a gallery more than 200 feet in length, the lower end of which was fortified in 1814 and provided with loopholes. The crevices near by are adorned by the magnificent *Saxifraga Cotyledon*, whose numerous blossoms hang down gracefully from the grey rock and are swung to and fro by the lightest breath of wind.

Ever steeper rise the granite walls, attaining a dizzy height; ever louder roars the tumultuous mountain-torrent in the depths of its rocky channel, as it forces its way with resistless vehemence through the boulders that impede its course. Terrific indeed is this ravine, and impressive in its savage grandeur: a symbol of the ceaseless struggles, never-resting energies, and tumultuous passions of the human heart!

We leave on our left, where the footpath leads up to *Alpien*, the ruins of a large building, designed to serve as

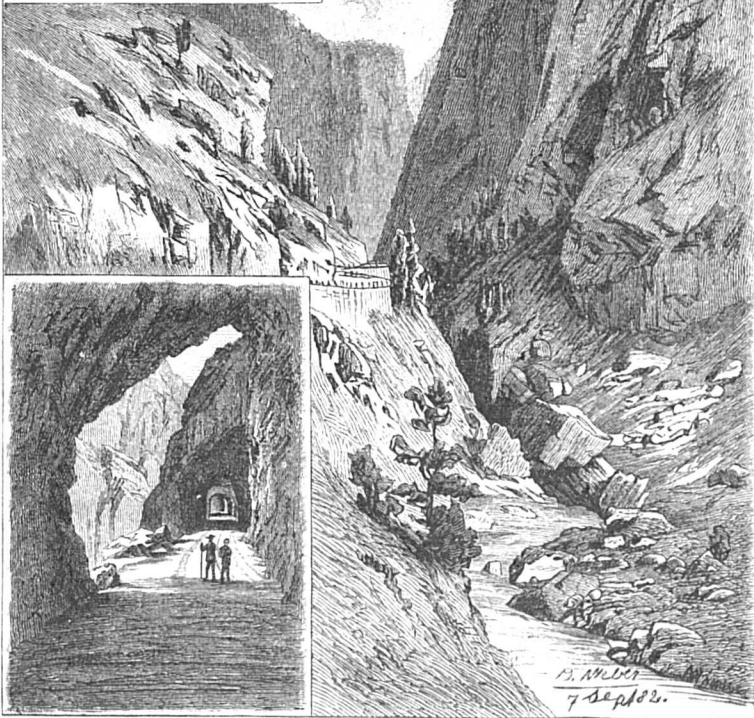
barracks, but never occupied; avalanches of stones have destroyed it as often as it has been repaired. Soon afterwards, about half an hour's walk below Alaby, the road crosses to the right bank of the Doveria—over the *Ponte Alto**—but returns to the left side of the gorge a little further down, across the *Pont de la Caserne*, near the Ninth Refuge.

In five minutes we reach a second rocky gateway, which exceeds in height, in length, and in gloominess that near Alaby; this is the celebrated *Gallery of Gondo*. A tunnel 19 feet in breadth and 15 feet in height has been excavated for a distance of 683 feet through the stubbornest of rocks. During eight months a thousand men were employed on it night and day. Two lateral openings sixty feet in height, at about equal distances from either end, partially illuminate the dark gallery, and afford the traveller a view of the foaming waves of the river. Above the first opening an inscription is cut in the rock,—nothing but the words: *Aere Italo MDCCCV. NAP. IMP.*

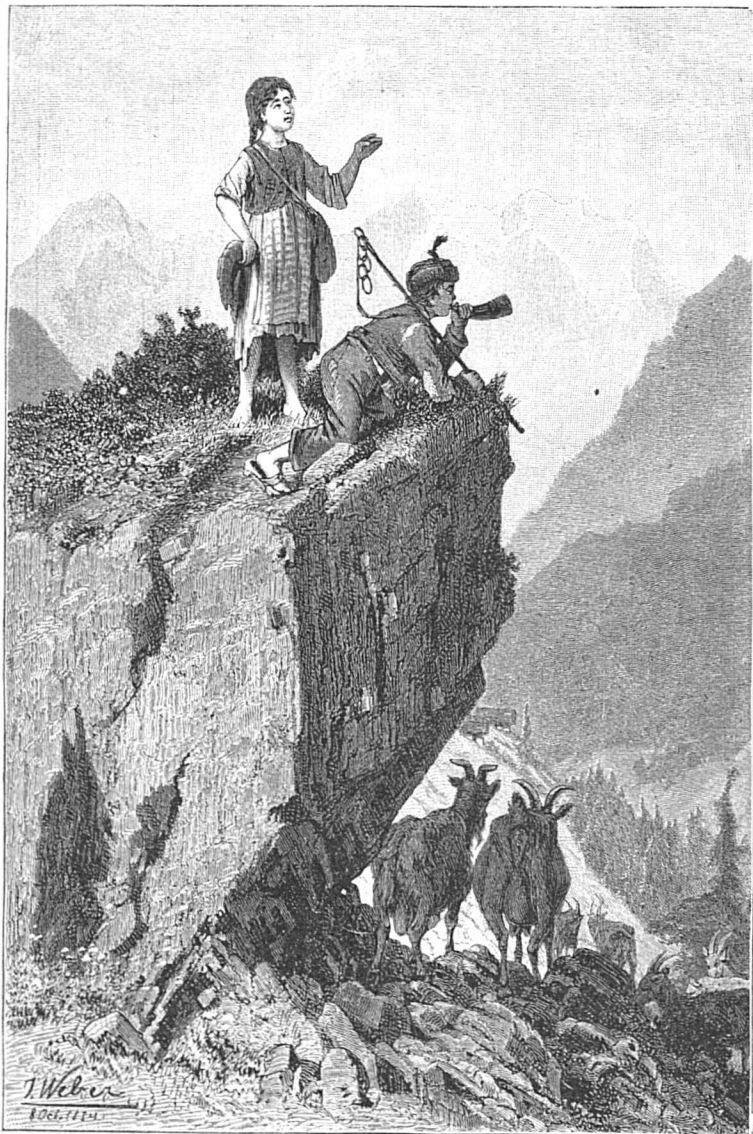
“A name there is upon this rock engraved,
A hero's name, for whom my tears do flow;
Unto a rock they him have banishèd,
Where only death relieves his bitter woe.
His name his foes would willingly efface,
Wherever they of it could find a trace.
But here alone it shall not be destroyed,
Here can their wildest threat'nings be defied,
For this deep shaft will still the power proclaim,
To future generations teach the name
Of him, who o'er the ocean captive led,
Greater became with every day that sped.”

An imposing sight crowns the magnificent spectacle here presented to the eye; with fearful uproar the magnificent waterfall of the Fressinone flings itself in foam and spray over a lofty wall of rock; a boldly-constructed bridge spans

* Owing to lack of room, the scaffolding for this boldly-placed bridge could not be prepared on the spot; this had to be done higher up, and the single pieces were transported hither at great risk, and pieced together again over the gaping chasm.



1. Gondo. 2. Ravine of Gondo. 3. Interior of the Gondo Gallery.



J. Weber
1 Oct. 1874



it. For some distance the road is now excavated in the living rock, and our wonder is excited by the boldness of its conception, the regularity of the lines, the massive stone walls, with their pillars and buttresses—a perfect and complete work of art in the midst of this stony wilderness!

In twenty minutes more we reach *Gondo (Ruden)*, the last Swiss village. A few cottages are clustered round the little church, and all are overtopped by the huge Stockalper Tower, a proud and stately building that seems to invite comparison with its surroundings. Gondo lies opposite the *Zwischbergen-Thal*; the torrent of the same name descends through a narrow ravine.

One hour's walk below Gondo lies *Isella*, the Italian customs station. Midway between these two places, on an open elevated spot, stands a little pillar, the boundary stone between Switzerland and Italy.

We have thus reached the end of our journey, the frontier of Helvetia. With anxious longing our eyes follow the diligence as it rolls along the dusty road to a land

“Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute;
Where the tints of the earth, and the hues of the sky,
In colour though varied, in beauty may vie.”

Our duty calls us back to the valley of Visp, to its wild and icy but wonderfully beautiful mountains, to the land of Alpine climbing: thither we invite the reader to follow us.





III. Geological, Mineralogical, and Botanical Notes in the Simplon District.

THE deep depression of the Simplon Pass not only forms the geographical boundary, but also the geological limit of the range of the Pennine Alps; even to the ancient geographers the mountain-chain extending from here to the St. Gothard was known as the Lepontine Alps.

To the east of the Simplon the grand and beautifully-grouped range of the Pennine Alps, with their numerous glaciers, and the wonderful network of mountains with their many central nuclei and divergent valleys, have for the most part disappeared; the unusual character of the rocks (talc-gneiss and *gattros*) ceases, and the conditions become more normal. Only one eminence, the lofty Monte Leone, rises on the east side of the Simplon ravines to an equal height with the Fletschhörner,—from here the ridge rapidly sinks to the Kaltwasser Glacier. An elongated chain, running parallel with the upper valley of the Rhone, with fewer glaciers, extends eastward in the Bortelhorn, Helsenhorn, and Pizzo del Cervadone, at an almost uniform height, and only at two points does it pass into a short transverse ridge, namely from the Ofenhorn to the Strahlgrat, and, a little further on, from the Gries across the Nufenenstock to the Pizzo Gallina. The orographic structure of the Lepontine Alps is predominantly one of parallel chains with a central main chain, the Bernese Alps; while the rich and manifold structure of the Pennine

Alps presents one of the grandest examples of a network of mountains radiating from a central group.

In broad outlines the geological structure of the Simplon is as follows:

The core of Monte Leone and the Furggenbaum group consists of gneiss, which is either slaty or granitic, or else occurs as eye-gneiss (with large grains of feldspar). It is traversed and enclosed by various crystalline rocks; sometimes they are calcigerous, or develop themselves as well-marked garnet, chlorite, sericite, and hornblende schists. In these are imbedded, especially on the south side of the mountains, several beds of magnificent cypoline, a valuable sugar-like marble, and in their line of contact with the Antigorio gneiss occur the gold mines of Gondo, at the entrance to the Zwischenbergen-Thal.

The southern base of the Simplon consists principally of a vault of Antigorio gneiss (lower plutonite); the savage gorge of the Gondo has been cut through this rock.

Its northern slope, on the other hand, lies in the zone of the later metamorphic slates, consisting chiefly of grey shining slates, which extend from the St. Gothard through Valais to Courmayeur in the upper valley of Aosta; on the northern boundary of this formation, as well as here at the entrance to the Saltina ravine and Im Grund several deposits of quartzite and gypsum occur. The conformation of this shining slate is fan-shaped; between the Bleich-Kapelle and Schallberg we can, without leaving the road, observe the fan in its entire extent. Not far from here, in the vicinity of Berisal, there are on its boundary-line iron mines of ancient renown. In the same place beautiful titanite crystals are found.

The basin of the Simplon Pass lies in the zone of the old metamorphic mica-slates, which towards the south rise to a height of 13,000 feet in the vast masses of the Fletschhörner. Towards the west the Sirwolten and Bistinen Passes

run through the same rock; both are overlooked in the north by the summits of the Mayenhorn and Schienhorn, 8000 to 8500 feet in height, consisting of shining slate (Glimmerschiefer), as is indicated even from a distance by their reddish hue and their barrenness. This southern zone of Glimmerschiefer, which cuts across the valleys of Visp and Nanz at Zeneggen and ends in the Mayenhorn, comes again to light in the neighbourhood of the Hospice, and rises once more to the north of the Kaltwasser Glacier in the ruddy summit of the Mäderhorn. Its passage through the Simplon Pass is remarkable from the fact that lower down, quite near the Hospice, this zone is accompanied by serpentine and superb amphibolite in talc, at the eastern base of the Schönhorn by potstone, and at its northern base by dolomite, which is burned in the lime-kilns of the Hospice. On the summit of the Mäderhorn this rock disappears. but is found again behind the Bortelhorn and Hüllhorn, which mountains both consist of hornblende; it then runs behind these to the summit of the Gibelhorn and thence through the Steinental and across Im Grund up to the Schienhorn. Here the zone is again bordered by a small deposit of serpentine, and finally it unites again with the main zone in Zeneggen.

To the east of the Simplon plateau rise the crystalline mica-slate and micaceous gneiss rocks of the Schönhorn and Monte Leone.

To the geological conditions of the Simplon we must attribute its wealth in minerals and in part also its very characteristic flora.

Besides the minerals previously mentioned we may name the following: In the gneiss of the Schönhorn, quartz crystals and muscovite; in the Antigorio mica-slate near Gondo, black garnets and magnificent cyanite; in the Zwischbergen-Thal (on the Gemeinealp) byssolite, magnetic iron pyrites, chlorite, &c., in the beds of potstone; lastly on the Col de Balmette, above Transquera, in the silvery, finely foliated mica-slate, large numbers of reddish-brown garnet crystals are

found, up to more than an inch in diameter, also stanrolite and small muscovite crystals of the same shining reddish-brown colour.

The vegetation of the Simplon is dependent upon its geological structure, its elevation above the sea, and especially upon its peculiar climatological conditions. It has been well described by Dr. Christ in his "Pflanzenleben der Schweiz"; he draws a parallel between the flora of the dry part of Valais and of Insubrian Ticino, which two districts are linked together by the depression of the Simplon, and writes as follows:

"Yonder, in Valais, the leaf-organs are either diminished to the smallest size, or they bear the token of a dry and windy climate,—are covered with thick grey down or silvery hairs; here in Ticino the foliage is everywhere lush and full of sap.

"In no two districts in the same latitude can the contrast be more decided. It is principally attributable to the fact that one district has double the rainfall of the other. The Pennine district of the Western Alps is divided from the Insubrian district of the Eastern Alps, climatically, and therefore as regards vegetation very decidedly, by the Val Antigorio. Valais and the Val Aosta beyond the Simplon, with the entire Alpine segment of South Piedmont and the Dauphiny as far as the Maritime Alps, form one province, Ticino, Valtellina, and the Alps of Lakes Como and Garda another: a type of the former is the climate of Upper Provence, which extends up to Brieg and beyond, though in a somewhat milder form. A type of the second is the maritime climate of the southern escarpment of the Alps, which receives the rain of the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas.

"But at bottom it is not the valley of Antigorio which forms the climatic boundary line. It is rather the ridge of the Alps, for the valleys descending from it towards the south show the Insubrian stamp. *No more abrupt transition is conceivable than that from Upper Valais across the Simplon into the Val Vedro.* The valley basin of Brieg is in fact a focus for all the dry Valais types. The *Artemisia*s, the grasses, *Centaurea vallesiaca*, *Astragalus Onobrychis* and *excapus*, *Achillea tomentosa* and *setacea*, *Hieracium pictum* and *lanatum*, and *Asperula montana* are here met with once more all together and ascend into the Ganther Ravine, to a height of 4500 feet.

"Scarcely have we left behind us the Alpine plateau of the Pass, than we find in the luxuriant meadows and rocky gorges of the upper sub-alpine Val Doveria *Polygonum alpinum*, *Saxifraga Cotyledon*, *Silene*

saxifraga, and in the chestnut-groves near Iselle *Centaurea transalpina*, *Cyclamen europæum*, and also *Phytolacca* and *Celtis*, in short an entire flora of which no trace is found in Valais. Even in the sub-alpine Val Vedro near Algaby the tall *Pleurospermum* is so plentiful that the botanist thinks he sees before him large groups of *Spiræa Aruncus*; on the rocks hang beds of a giant form of *Libanotis montana* (*v. exaliata*, Gaud.) and at the entrance to the Zwischbergen-Thal and near Iselle grows the beautiful *Molospermum* with deep bluish-green leaves infinitely divided and with an umbel a foot in diameter; *Laserpitium Siler* and *Peucedanum Oreoselinum* are also found here, and impart to these gorges the character of a district colonised by *Umbelliferae* of the largest species and most luxuriant growth.

“ It is thus not the valley which separates the floras: here it is the southern slope, which receives the winds and rains of the Mediterranean, and yonder the Valais slope, which stands under the influence of the dry valley. In spite of the proximity of the two districts it is very seldom that representatives of the Insubrian vegetation of the Val Vedro find their way to Valais. Only *Saxifraga Cotyledon* (and *Centaurea axillaris*) are said to occur above Naters in the moist ravines of the Aletsch.”

To the above we will add a list of other rarities, together with the spots where they are to be found:

Anemone vernalis, sulphurea, and baldensis; plateau.
Aquilegia alpina, rocky clefts in the vicinity of the village of Simplon.
Nasturtium pyrenaicum, Engeloch.
Erysimum helveticum and *pumilum*; the latter in moraines near Schallberg.
Alyssum montanum, Gantherthal.
Viola pinnata, Zwischbergen-Pass, Alplenrung.
Silene vallesia, Gondo Ravine, way to Alpien.
Lychnis Flos-Jovis, village of Simplon, Zwischbergen, &c.
Geranium aconitifolium, Rosswald, Zwischbergen.
Geranium divaricatum, Im Grund.
Genista Scoparia, Gondo Ravine.
Cytisus nigricans, do.
Anthyllis rubriflora, do.
Trifolium saxatile, Algaby Gallery.
 „ *glareosum*, Kaltwasser, Sirwolten.
Phaca alpina, Kaltwasser, &c.
 „ *australis*, Schienhorn, Mäderhorn, &c.
Oxytropis Halleri, Schallberg, &c.
 „ *lapponica*, Kaltwasser &c.
 „ *cyanea*, Schönhorn, Zwischbergen, &c.
Astragalus aristatus, Gondo Ravine, &c.

Potentilla recta, Crevola.
 „ *nivea*, Schienhorn.
 „ *frigida*, last grassy slope.
Rosa cinnamomea, Schallbet.
 „ *longicurris*, below the village of Simplon.
Rosa semproniana, below the village of Simplon.
 N.B. The footpath from the village of Simplon to Algaby is a perfect garden of the rarest varieties of *Rosa*.
Alchemilla vulgaris var. *subsericea*, Hohlicht, &c.
Alchemilla pubescens, Krummbach, &c.
 „ *alpina* var. *subsericea*, Hospice, &c.
Herniaria alpina, Kaltwasser, &c.
Rhodiola rosea, „
Sempervivum globiferum, Zwischbergen.
Cactus Opuntia, Crevola.
 Alpine *Saxifrages*, in many places.
Astrantia minor, rocks, plentiful.
Bupleurum stellatum, do.
 „ *ranunculoïdes*, do.
Galium ochroleucum, Im Grund.
Valeriana salicina, Kleenhorn, &c.
Erigeron rupestre, Gondo Ravine.
Gnaphalium Leontopodium (edelweiss), Schönhorn, &c.
Artemisia glacialis, Kaltwasser.

Artemisia Mutellina and *spicata*, near glaciers.

Artemisia nana, Algaby.

Achillea hybrida, Kaltwasser.

" *tanacetifolia*, Zwischbergen, Alpenrung.

Senecio incanus, alps.

" *uniflorus*, Schönhorn, Sirwolten, &c.

Saussurea alpina, Kaltwasser.

Rhaponiticum scariosum, Schallbet.

Centaurea nigricans, Zwischbergen.

" *ambigua*, Mäderhorn, &c.

The Hawkweed family is very numerously represented; more than 40 species are enumerated!

Phyteuma pauciflorum, highest alps.

" *hemisphaericum*, rocky clefts (Hospice, &c.)

Phyteuma Scheuchzeri, rocky clefts, (village of Simplon, &c.)

Campanula excisa, Hospice, Schönhorn, &c.

Gentiana purpurea, Hospice, &c.

" *tenella*, Sirwolten, &c.

Echinosperrum deflexum, Rothwald, &c.

Eritrichium nanum, Sirwolten, Schönhorn, &c.

In the "Bulletins de la Murithienne, Société d'histoire naturelle du Valais," for the year 1875, a detailed botanical guide to the district, by the Bernardine monk *E. Favre*, has been published.

Androsace helvetica, Laquin, Zwischbergen, &c.

Androsace imbricata, Laquin.

" *glacialis*, up to more than 10,000 feet.

Androsace carnea, Hospice, &c.

Aretia vitaliana, Kaltwasser, Schienhorn, &c.

Primula longiflora, village of Simplon, Zwischbergen, Alpenrung, Laquin, &c.

Plantago bidentata, Algaby, &c.

Various rare Alpine *Salices*.

Orchis sambucina, village of Simplon, &c.

Nigritella suaveolens, Mäderhorn, &c.

Lilium croceum, Gondo, &c.

Colchicum alpinum, village of Simplon, Zwischbergen, &c.

Tofieldia borealis, Kaltwasser.

Rare *Carices*, e. g. *C. rupestris*, *curvula*, *microstyla*, *Laggeri*, *bicolor*, &c., &c.

Stipa pennata, Ganther, &c.

Koeleria vallesiaca, Ganther, &c.

Dactylis hispanica, Algaby, &c.

Selaginella helvetica, plentiful.

Woodsia hyperborea, Gondo Ravine.

Andianthum Capillus-Veneris, Crevola.



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