

in the French army being offered to him in 1766, he determined to accept it; but while preparing himself for the situation, Mr. Stouber came to beg him to take his place in the *Ban de la Roche*. He accepted the invitation, and removed to Waldbach on the 30th of March, 1767, in the 27th year of his age.

The district to which Oberlin now removed takes its name from a castle called *La Roche*, or the rock, around which the *Ban*, or district extends. It is also known by the German name of *Stienthal*, which signifies the Valley of Stone. It is a mountainous region in the north-east of France, and consists of two parishes, of which one is called Rothau, and the other comprises five hamlets, one of which is Waldbach, situated on a mountain, at the height of 1800 feet from the sea. In consequence of the different elevations of the several villages of the district, there is a great variety in the temperature; the tops of the mountains being sometimes intensely cold when the valleys are delightful as spring. An equal variety also takes place in the productiveness of the soil, and in the times of harvest. The winter is in general much longer even than ours; and in some of the highest parts of the country there is so little chance for any thing to grow, that it is said the wife can carry home in her apron all the hay her husband has mown in a morning. The whole district contains only about 9000 acres, one third of which is covered with wood. There were scarcely any roads, and but little of the cleared land cultivated; and the inhabitants were scarcely known to other parts of the world. The first attempt to improve their condition was made in 1750, when a Lutheran minister named Stouber (mentioned above) was compassionate enough to leave Germany, and settle among them. He found them in a wretched state, from which for the space of seventeen

years he diligently laboured to raise them, and particularly set about reforming and improving schools for the young, while he preached to the people the words of everlasting life. Being called to the pastoral care of a church in Strasburg, he applied to Oberlin to succeed him, as above stated.

Notwithstanding the great improvements which Mr. Stouber had made in the condition of the people, Oberlin found them to be still far from a state of civilization. Their language was barbarous; they were shut up in their mountainous abode by the want of roads; the farmers were destitute of the most necessary implements, and the quantity of provisions they raised was insufficient for the wants of the population. These were among the peculiar obstacles which opposed the benevolent design of the new pastor; but he resolutely bent his force against them, and subdued them all. To prepare the way for his religious instructions, he resolved to teach them the common arts and comforts of life. Strange as to us it may appear, these efforts were at first resisted by a part of the people whose benefit he sought, and plots were even laid to seize and injure him. By his firm and prudent management, however, these very persons were afterwards induced to render him important aid in his plans. The year after his settlement at Waldbach, Oberlin was married to a young lady of Strasburg, who, with a sound and cultivated understanding, became an invaluable help to her husband by her prudence, judgment, and Christian firmness. One of his first objects was to form good roads; but finding the people reluctant to work upon them, he set the example himself. Taking up a pick-axe, he proceeded to the spot where the road was to begin, and assigning a particular part to each individual, he chose the most difficult places for himself.