

preceded it. Tilted upwards as it is, it looks bad, but not very long. "How long will that bit take us, Melchior?" "Eine gute Stunde, a long hour, Herr," responds Melchior, who never deceives as to distance. It strikes me, as we clamber up this last difficulty—which does take us a good hour—that the coming down will be worse than the ascent; but I keep this opinion to myself. We have a rough scramble, and see close by us the skimming sunlight, which glistens as we near the top. One more effort, and lo, at twelve o'clock, after eight hours' stiff work, we are on the summit of our peak. The top is small, and is of rock. There is just room for five, and two little hollows make a couple of pretty comfortable arm-chairs for those who do not mind their legs dangling over the dizzy edge.

The first feeling upon attaining a summit is one of deserved rest; the next one of eager ecstasy. Forgetting the long labour of eight hours, you fancy yourself a bird to have got up where you are. Above is the infinite sky, around and below is the wide glorious prospect, and beneath your feet the proud summit of a lofty Alpine peak. You dally with the wind and scorn the sun. The azure air of the immense blue sky-arch is golden with splendid sunlight, and the sun-beams are reflected dazzlingly from the enormous expanse of wide surrounding snow. The air is tremulous with keenest light; the bare blue sky, "stripped to its depths by the awakening north," is intensely clear and vivid in its hue, despite the force of colour which the heavens ever wear on the rare occasions on which we are uplifted closely to them. But the wind is strong and very cold. Bleak is our sun-smitten rock aerie. There is, however, comfort in this coldness, because without it the view would not be so perfect, especially over rarely-seen Italy.

We will take a good hour for repose and rapture, for champagne and for pipes. High peaks are difficult to reach, and their summits seldom attained. We look around, and our gaze is level only with those highest peaks which raise themselves far above the valley and the plain. Rarer still is a day so clear. "Finest prospect over Italy that I ever saw," says Melchior; and therefore we will linger, and recline, and gaze, and enjoy ourselves.

Close to us on our right is the pure-white bulk of our well-named friend, the Weissmies. The sun shines fiercely on the glistening mass of his cold snows. Just to the right of the near Weissmies, but far away behind him, is the Grand Paradis and the Graian group. Next comes the majestic cluster of great Monte Rosa; behind him, again, stand the Lyskamm and the range extending to the Breithorn. A mere point of the Matterhorn all but covers a suggestion of Mont Blanc; and the smooth Allalein slopes gently beside the rounded Alphubel. The Strahlhorn and the sharp Rymplischhorn are both visible; and then towers the superb range of the great Mischabel Horn and of the finely-outlined Balferin Horn. The eye next sweeps along the summits of the Weisshorn and of the Brunegghorn, and then passes over a series of brown aiguilles, until it rests on the whole magnificent range of the distant Oberland, including the seven-and-twenty famous mountains which extend between the Diablerets and the Galenstock. Next comes the Todti district and the Orteler group, with the Pizzo Bernina, the Piz Rosegg, and the Disgrazia. The Dolomites follow, with all the peaks of Tyrol, and then the eye exchanges sunbright snow for purple colour, and rests on Italy.

Even there it is cloudless, although a faint haze of heat and of aerial distance sleeps softly around the extreme remoteness. In Italy lake alternates with mountain, and the shining gleam of far broad waters lowers the jagged masses of the wavy hills. There is Lago Maggiore, there Lugano; those are the Apennines; that is the Gorge of Gondo, that Pallanza, and you can—yes, you can—see the white blocks of houses on Isola Bella. Italy seems to lie lower, to be more widely spread out, than Switzerland; but then Switzerland is seen only through its giant mountains. Of all the many glaciers that the view includes, the noble Aletsch is the greatest and the grandest. The ever sullen Bietschhorn is distinctive in his livery of dark stripes. You sit aloft in the centre, and have the mountains standing, nearer or farther from you, all around. Towards the south there is one steadfast roll of golden cumulus clouds. The prevailing tone of the prospect is white—the whiteness of immense tracts and almost countless mountains of snow; but, even apart from Italy, there is much colour in the prospect. The deep violet of the sky shines in some places upon dark ruddy rocks. Velvety purples and greens are strewn widely about. In other spots the sun pales the rocks into a faint light brown, which contrasts exquisitely with a pale delicate blue in the adjacent heavens. There is the Fee Alp and other green Alps; there are also threading torrents, and shadow-holding valley chasms. The mind resolves totality into detail, and the imagination restores detail to totality. When first you look from an Alpine peak you cannot analyse; the overpowering glory annihilates all faculty of distinguishing; but after you have gazed from many a summit you gain the power of seeing and of enjoying both in detail and in mass. And this is gain, not loss. It does not imply a diminution of enthusiasm; it means only that the mind has grown larger and therefore calmer, and can combine ecstasy with analysis.

While we were basking on the top, Melchior emitted a remark which, coming from such a

man, was very striking, and deserves record. He said suddenly, "And now, gentlemen, tell me frankly—is not such a day on such a mountain, with such a view, better than scrambling with difficulty and in danger, perhaps in bad weather, up the face of the Dent Blanche?—a thing merely difficult to do, which yields very little good even when successfully done."

Here was the first mountaineer of any day, a man who can with ease do anything, rebuking, with a question, those amateurs who rank the physical above the mental, who yearn after the barren reputation of having achieved mere difficulty, and who, as a just penal consequence, are led to overlook the highest and purest mental mountaineering joys. The remark was striking. May it have its due weight and influence?

But how, by a catalogue of peaks, aiguilles, ice or snow masses, raise in the mind of a reader an adequate image of the scene before us? It is impossible. I can only suggest the gigantic combination, seen from such a pointed altitude, of mass, form, colour, air; and can only essay to produce a reflected conception of the impression made upon me by the grandeur, glory, sublimity, of the rare revelation of such an Alpine prospect as stretches all around the delighted mountaineer who has attained and gazes from the small and towering peak of the nobly-placed Fletschhorn.

Imagination must piece-out my imperfect suggestion, and the reader who would try to see what I then saw must bring with him the eye of fancy and of faith.

Too soon the time for returning came. We had spent more than an hour upon the summit, and we quitted it with extreme unwillingness. A finer view there can hardly be, and a clearer day could never be hoped for. A summit is left so reluctantly because life affords so few opportunities of standing on ideal elevations. The thing is an allegory as well as a fact. The mind lingeringly quits a height from which it can overlook a world. One's whole nature is elevated, sublimed, when one is raised so high above the level of the ordinary years.

The first step of rock down which we had to come was decidedly troublesome, and needed care. We had, between the upper block of rock and the main arête, to cross along the face of a steepish slope of hard ice. Melchior ran up above us to the very edge of the sharp ice arête, and I can see now his dark figure standing out against the far-off blue of the sunny sky, as he held on firmly above our heads in order to hold us in case of a slip, while we, led by the skilful Lyvetête, cut steps and passed across the hard and slippery slope. The arête itself regained, we found that the descent of those rocks occupied as much time as the ascent, the stones being so terribly loose and insecure that foothold was precarious and tumbles frequent. The chill and shade of early afternoon spread over the desolate waste of the dreary bleak moraine, and the cold glacier torrent helped to make a welcome claret cup. Next came the soft sweet evening music of the dulcet cow-bells, and these bells in Switzerland announce the approach to the haunts of men as well as of cows. At the Trift Alp the cows had returned from the pastures to the huts, and we enjoyed the mountaineer's luxury of a bowl of fresh Swiss milk.

On the return from a mountain in the afternoon it often strikes one that the way which was traversed in the obscurity and enthusiasm of morning without thinking of labour, is very long; and as we came back from the Fletschhorn it seemed to us that we had passed over a great deal of ground that morning. In the dim, more than twilight, of the rugged path which wound through the gloomy pine-wood, we saw between the trunks and beneath the branches the low round moon, an orb of silver flame. We lost her as in darkness we reached the last grass slopes, down which we ran. We reached the old hotel; and then came a bath, a change, and a merry dinner at about eight p.m., which repast was brightened by the presence of ladies curious to hear about our delightful ascent of the Fletschhorn; the "protruding tooth," as its name implies, which rears itself so loftily on that most beautiful site between the Simplon and fair Saas.

We had had the finest weather experienced for any ascent during the month of August last. Only on the beautiful Col du Tour had we a day that could compare with the one on which we did the Fletschhorn. Fine days were very rare in the past year's August. On the Lake of Geneva I saw the singular spectacle of a really rough sea and of a sea-sick crowd of passengers on board the Bonivard. On other peaks we had dreadful weather, no views, great hardship, and greater danger.

On one occasion during the season I saw the rare and memorable spectacle of the unspeakably beautiful Alpengluth, or Alpine glow. The sun had set, the chill light of evening was just beginning to render cold and stern the whiteness of snow and the darkness of rocks, when I was descending a pass, walking and talking with Melchior Anderegg. Suddenly we both stopped. That magic mystery of colour-light glowed on the snow and flushed upon the rocks. The warm red-rose tint suffused air and light, and all things stood idealised in the unearthly witchery of fairy hues and tones. This phenomenon is only rarely seen, but when it does come it is one of the loveliest phases of Nature streaming love upon her Alps. It faded slowly out of earth and sky, and we resumed our walk with a blank sense of the cessation of an enchantment. It was as if ravishing music ceased, and left the dull air void and empty of charm. An illusion

died away, and rock-horn and snow-peak looked forlorn, heartless, repellent. "I think I have only once before seen the Alpengluth so beautiful as that," said Melchior thoughtfully. The great guide has a true susceptibility to the wonders of Nature and to the glories of his Alpine world. He sighed as the vision was withdrawn, and his mind avenged itself for its sense of loss by swinging onwards at a tremendous pace. We walked away from the spot with eyes bent upon the ground.

I saw too, last year, another splendid and distinctive sight, which lives vividly in my mountaineer's memory. I mean a solitary piece of rock-climbing by Melchior Anderegg, which for danger and difficulty, for courage and skill, has scarcely, I should think, ever been equalled, has certainly never been surpassed, by man. We started to cross from the Montanvert to Courmayeur by the newly-discovered Col des Hirondelles. At the top of the Lechaud glacier is a lofty and precipitous wall of smooth limestone rock, which has, however, one weak point, one couloir by which, if there be good snow in it, the summit of the hopeless-looking rock wall may be attained. When we arrived at the top of the glacier we found this couloir bare of snow, and we found further, to our dismay, that the huge bergschrand had so increased and widened, and had so fallen away from the rocks, that the attempt seemed to be impracticable. Melchior, after sweeping the whole range carefully with his eagle eye, pronounced the ascent impossible, and said that we must abandon the idea. I knew, from his tone, that this was so; but that irrepressibly ardent mountaineer, Lyvetête, could not readily consent to turn back from an expedition in fine weather, and he began to argue the question of possibility by other routes. It is probable that he dropped some incautious word which stung the *amour propre* of the first and greatest of Swiss guides. Melchior said positively, that to try an ascent by the one practicable couloir was wholly out of the question, and that he would not allow of any attempt.

"Now," added Melchior, "as you think that another route may be found, I will go alone and try. I won't have any one with me; wait. If the thing can be done at all, it must be by those smooth rock slabs to the left. I don't believe that it can be done; but I will show you whether it can or cannot. Unrope me, and wait here till I come back."

We were sitting on frozen snow, just on the narrow brink of the great bergschrand, and above a long steep slope of the same material, which descended from our seat to the glacier. How differently Melchior works when he is climbing alone! At what a pace he goes! I never before so fully realised his immense superiority to the best amateur mountaineer. No one—except one or two of the best guides—could have worked with him as he performed that daring, pique-stung feat. He disappeared somewhere into the huge schrand. He appeared next, climbing up a sheer straight-up wall of ice thinly covered by snow. It was so steep that he could not swing the axe; he could only peg the point in with his chest; yet up he went, and rapidly too. Beneath him was the terrible depth of the huge chasm of the giant bergschrand. After about a hundred feet of this work he got on to the smooth large slabs of limestone rock, which shelved sideways. I watched him with delight at his working, with dread of his danger. My pipe went out as I gazed with all my eyes. Even Peter Anderegg, his stolid brother, was anxious, and looked on with all the emotion of which he is capable.

Melchior proceeded, sometimes extended flat upon his face over sloping slabs with hardly a crack or a projection visible. He had got so far off that his recumbent slowly-moving figure had become very small. Presently we saw him stop, and grope about blindly with hands and feet. "He can't get farther," cried Peter, "and I only hope that he can get back." We saw that he just raised his head, and was looking carefully up and round him. Then he turned on his back, and descended a little way, with great difficulty, in that position. "A nasty place that," said Peter, in great excitement. "I am afraid that he can't get back." Here the brother freed himself from the rope, in order, if necessary, to try to help Melchior. We watched again, and I felt a terrible tension of the nerves as I saw a man in such a dangerous position. He moved very slowly, creeping on from point to point with out-stretched legs and hands, which clutched after every crack and fissure. He turned again upon his face, and seemed to move better. "He'll do it now," cried Peter. "He's safe now, I think." Gradually the small dark figure of a man got lower and lower. At last he returned to the snow, let himself down that very carefully, and again disappeared. In a moment he emerged close by us, and advanced coolly with his quiet firm step. "If any Herr likes to try that," said Melchior calmly, looking rather particularly at Lyvetête, "he must go alone; I won't go with him. There is one place at which I thought that I could neither get forward nor backward, and there are other places higher up that are probably as bad. No; no one will get up the Col des Hirondelles to-day, and the sooner you see that the better. But we can try the Aiguille Verte to-morrow, if you like."

Great Goethe says—and he is speaking, be it remembered, expressly of the Alps—that even a mean man, who is placed in immediate contact with great events, acquires thereby a certain nobility more than is native to him; that singular traces of very great occurrences remain permanently a part of the life of even such a man, who is never tired of relating his expe-

riences, and who has, in every sense, gained a treasure which enriches his whole life. And so it is, adds Goethe, with the man who has seen and has become intimate with such great wonders of Nature as the high Alps. If he desire to retain the impression made by them upon him, he must know how to connect it with the thoughts and feelings which have been germinated by it in him; he will then certainly have attained a stock of precious memories which which he can enoble the flat level of every-day living, and will have spread through his whole life and being an added strain of higher flavour and feeling.

I had discovered the truth contained in this passage before I knew the passage itself. I can confirm its truth from experience. Age cannot wither, custom cannot stale, the glories of those sublime mountains, or the ideal images and impressions with which they enoble our whole after lives.

#### MISCELLANY.

MAX O'RELL, the author of that clever sketch "John Bull et Son Isle," is said to be a French professor in an English school. Nine editions of his book have been issued.

THE wife of Lieutenant Greely, of the Arctic colony, is described as a very beautiful woman, tall, with fair, fresh complexion, black hair and blue eyes. She belongs to an old New England family.

THE ex-Khédive, Ismail Pacha, has just concluded the purchase of the Gheradeska palace, Florence, one of the finest in Italy, an enormous structure, with extensive outbuildings and spacious gardens. The price was about two hundred and twenty thousand dollars.

RALPH MODJESKA, son of the actress, who graduated last spring at the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris, is nineteen years old, strongly resembles his mother in features, and is a good pianist and billiard-player. His special study in civil engineering is roads and bridges.

IN 1878 a remarkable discovery of bones of the fossil monsters known as iguanodons was made in a coal mine of Belgium. Three years were occupied in removing the remains which are supposed to belong to twenty-three skeletons. One of the skeletons is now mounted in the animal's semi-erect position, and stands fourteen feet high, and extends over a horizontal floor space over twenty-three feet in length.

DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES recently said to a friend, "I have written much that I would willingly let die. The public have treated me beyond my deserts. It would be better if I should be found out in my lifetime. A life of Emerson engages my whole attention at present, and whatever light reminiscent effort I am capable of in intervals of time must be put forth for the *Atlantic*. I receive, every day, requests to write for this or that publication, but I must decline them all."

It is reported that a collection of eighty-eight drawings by the great painter, Greuze, has just been discovered in the library of the Academy of St. Petersburg. They appear to have been purchased by Count Strogonoff when he was president of the Academy of Fine Arts, and remained there seventy years completely forgotten. The Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovitch, who now occupies that post, has given from his private purse a sufficient sum to permit the illustrated journals to reproduce them by photography.

THERE is a story told of the late Professor Henry Smith, that when explaining some new discovery in the theory of numbers to his Oxford pupils he added the remark, "And the great beauty of the thing is that it cannot possibly ever be of the slightest practical use to anybody." Educators have begun to query if pupils other than Professor Smith's are not being laboriously drilled in many branches that "cannot possibly ever be of the slightest practical use," to the great detriment of health and brain power.

It is quite true, says a London letter, that Premier Gladstone is slovenly and cheap in his attire. His trousers are baggy at the knees, his coat is a bad fit, and his collars—well, you have probably heard enough about his collars. But fancy him in what is called a tourist suit—a cutaway coat and a light soft hat, shoes that show his white stockings, and cuffs that give full play to his large hands. But truly the Premier is a very remarkable man, and, barring the malice of his personal rivalry to Beaconsfield, an upright, conscientious minister no doubt, too impulsive perhaps, and given to sentiment, which is very well in an ordinary mortal, but sometimes leads Mr. Gladstone into political ambushes.

WHEN Queen Elizabeth, of Roumania, first entered her realm as princess she was struck by the pomp and lavish extravagance of dress that prevailed, and has ever since been energetically working against it, and in favor of simplicity, modesty and economy. For herself, she is fond of the plain costume of the Roumanian peasant girls, and habitually wears it at her summer home, among the Carpathians. Her manner of life, both there and at Bucharest, is unassuming. She rises early, often as four o'clock, even in midwinter, and, without disturbing any of the household, lights a lamp and sits down to work. Her rooms are richly adorned, in great part with her own handiwork, and she welcomes visitors in the most affable and unconventional manner. On state occasions, however, she bears herself with imperial dignity.