

danger, I suppose; they wore woollen socks over their boots, there were steps cut in the ice for footholds, and each had a careful guide; but I did not wish to run any risk. Just before dinner the bedraggled explorers came in from the Mauvais Pas and Mer de Glace, and protested that they had had a glorious time; and the evening was passed very hilariously about the great wood fires in the open fireplaces.



ON THE MER DE GLACE.

Next morning the Alphorns of the cowherds, and the tinkling bells of the goats and cows, woke us early from our beds. The sun rose bright and clear, and Mont Blanc revealed himself in all his splendour. The world seemed transfigured and glorified, a spotless bride arrayed for her marriage morn. We

could see the snow sweeping around the wind-carved curves of spotless Carrara of the mighty slopes of the mountains.

After breakfast a brigade of seven strongly built mountain carriages, with wide-set wheels and trusty brakes, drove into the inn yard, and off we rode for the Tête Noir Pass. The bright, clear air exhilarated like wine, and with many a shout and cheer and laugh, and much blowing of Alpine horns, even my staid wife blowing her Alp-horn like a school-girl, we wound through the valley and in many a curve up the long pine-clad mountain slope. We obtained a splendid view of the Mer de Glace gleaming in the bright sunlight like a stormy ocean smitten suddenly into ice, and of gigantic granite needles piercing the very sky, one to the height of 13,540 feet. No snow can rest upon their splintered pinnacles. Thunder-scarred and blasted, and riven by a thousand tempests, they seemed, like Prometheus, to defy the very heavens; and in their awful and forever inaccessible desolation were, I think, the sublimest objects I ever beheld.

On my previous visit I had a superb day for crossing the glacier, and I transcribe my experience. After a climb of 3,000 feet, there burst upon the sight a magnificent view of the motionless billows of the Sea of Ice, sweeping in a gigantic cataract down a lateral valley. One may trace its upward course for six miles. In its resistless onward glide it is rent into a thousand deep crevasses, descending to unknown depths.

In company with an English gentleman I crossed the Mer de