

Visit to the Grande Chartreuse.

It was on this day, the 2d of October, that, two years since, in company with my friend, E. S., I quitted Pont de Beauvoisin at one, p. m., with the intention of reaching, the same day, the monastery of the Grande Chartreuse.—The weather was agreeably warm; the clear blue of the heaven was not chequered by a single cloud; the invigorating breezes from the mountains exhilarated our spirits; and with feelings of indescribable awe and delight, we traversed the magnificent pass of La Chaille, no longer now, as heretofore, terrific to travellers, who are protected on the side of the precipice by a strong dwarf wall. After travelling for an hour and a half, we reached the first post-house, on the French side of Savoy, at the small town of Les Echelles. The monastery of the Grande Chartreuse lies considerably to the right of this place, and the approach to it is very rugged and difficult.

One hour and a quarter brought us to the iron-foundry at the foot of the mountain on which the monastery of the Grand Chartreuse is erected. This foundry, previously to the first French Revolution, was the property of the Carthusian Fathers, and the principal source of their large reveues; which were expended, not in pampering their bodies and in building splendid habitations,—they have always cherished the same austerity and poverty, which were bequeathed to them, in the eleventh century, by their illustrious founder, St. Bruno,—but in feeding the hungry, in clothing the naked, in bestowing hospitality on the multitudes, who, from curiosity or devotion, used to crowd to the monastery.

Pursuing the road, the torrent is seen no more; its distant brawling hardly

reaches the ear. At length, after a toilsome ascent, the forest opens, and you behold for the first time, the celebrated Monastery of the Grande Chartreuse, the Mother House of the Penitential Order of the Carthusians; perpetuating the austerities of its holy founder St. Bruno; by its locality, its observances, its rigours, and its devotion, transporting the imagination from the nineteenth to the eleventh century; and setting in immediate and striking contrast the simplicity, self-denial, and sanctity of the sincere followers of a crucified master, with the frivolity, self-indulgence, and vices of his pretended disciples.

At every step, the scenery which surrounds the Grande Chartreuse, awakens the enthusiasm of every admirer of nature. We reached the gates of the monastery, the stillness of the air was disturbed by the solemn pealing of the deep bell, a hundred times repeated from echo to echo by the encircling mountains, and floating richly down the narrow valley. It summoned the hermits to allow to the wants of nature a few hours of repose, whereby they might resume with renewed vigour the praises of God, and their penitential austerities.

We rang for admittance. Our appeal to the hospitality of the Fathers, though made at an unseasonable hour, was readily answered. The large doors were flung open; and before us was the venerable appearance of one of the brotherhood, habited in white, his head close shaved, his beard depending on his breast, and bearing in his hand a small lamp. It was the Hospitarius Frere Jean Marie, well known to most visitors at the monastery, and deserving the esteem of all who know him by his kindness and attentions.—Abridged from C. Masser.