

acter, of many lands and many tongues, thus brought together. Some of my pleasantest recollections of travel are of the numerous charming acquaintances made at the *table d'hôte*. In the evening there is frequently a parlour concert of really good music by native performers—perhaps by Tyrolese in their picturesque costume, warbling their sweet mountain airs.

A party of Cook's American tourists had invaded the village, filled the hotels, and monopolized all the available mules. So next day I set out afoot to climb the Montanvert, cross the Mer de Glace, and return by the Chapeau. The weather was superb. 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—like a stormy sea frozen instantaneously into glittering ice. In its resistless onward glide it is rent into a thousand deep crevasses, descending to unknown depths. Just beyond this ice sea is a group of gigantic granite needles, one—the Aiguille Verte—piercing the sky 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 seem, like Prometheus, to defy the very heavens; and in their awful and forever inaccessible desolation were, I think, the sublimest objects I ever beheld.

In company with an English gentleman I crossed the Mer de Glace without a guide. Leaving the beaten track, we strolled up the glacier, which rolled in huge ridges and hollows for miles up the valley. Many of the crevasses were filled with water clear as crystal



ON THE MER DE GLACE.

—blue as sapphire. I hurled my alpenstock into one, and after an interval it was hurled back, as if by the invisible hand of some indignant ice gnome from the fairy grottoes of his underworld. Others were empty, but we could not see the bottom. The large stones we rolled in went crashing down to unknown depths. Along the margin was a moraine of huge boulders, ground and worn by this tremendous millstone.