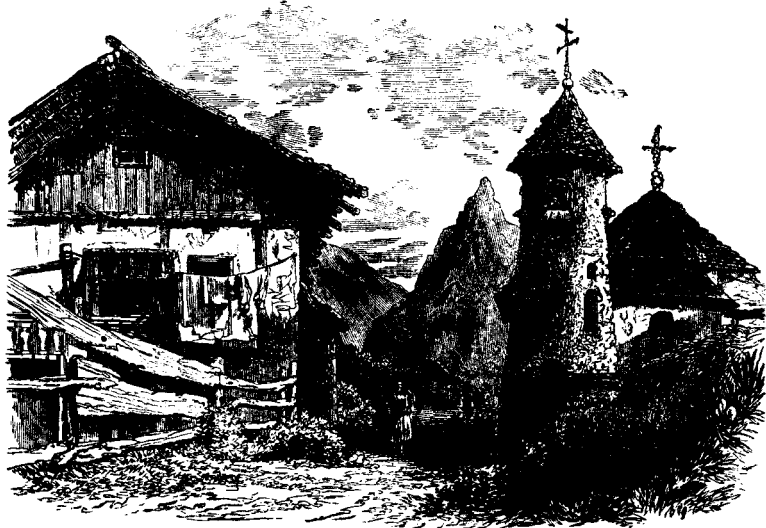


last words to me were that he had placed it, to save trouble, on the top. No signs of it, though. Feeling ridiculously nonplussed, I prod about excitedly among J——'s clothing.

The receiver kneels down beside me, and we both prod. No effects; and at last the receiver courteously declares, 'It's a romance, or at any rate the quantity must be too minute to



NEAR CORTINA.

make a fuss about ;' and he forthwith closes the examination. Judge of the tableau that we three assisted at in the Venice hotel when it turned out that, through a genuinely unwitting confusion of my friend's two portmantaus, I had opened and searched the wrong one, and the sly pillow-pouch had thus slipped unconfiscated into Italy !

The Albergo Pezzé at Caprile is a god typical specimen of the Dolomite inn. Its exterior is rather a shock, perhaps, to the average traveller at first sight. From the street you enter, under a narrow archway, an unkempt stone-floored passage or lobby space, a repository for miscellaneous lumber. Undeterred by appearances, it behooves you to mount the staircase to the first floor, and there, emerging from the kitchen, the Signora Pezzé, the hostess, will welcome you with the kindest smile ; and you feel in a moment,

even before you have climbed another flight of stairs to the airy, scrupulously clean bedrooms, and snug little sitting room of the second floor, that you have found a place where you may well rest and be thankful. What matter if the equipage of your chamber be a trifle incongruous ? A mediæval harpsichord, that may have charmed the ears of many an aristocratic Republican from Venice, stood in a corner of mine, and I knelt down in another corner to perform my ablutions (as best I might) by means of a pie-dish placed on a low rush-bottomed chair. Across the passage J—— and C—— were sharing a room, three walls of which were hung with gaudy-robed saints, to say nothing of holy-water receptacles at the bed-heads, while on the fourth wall flaunted unabashed a recumbent Venus, as lightly clad as Titian's in the Venice Accademia. And time doesn't hang heavily