

way to the top; as they plodded along fastened together by the hempen cord, their progress seemed to be very slow, since the snow was about a foot deep and they had to make a fresh path as they advanced. High above was the summit, which presented the appearance, which one attributes to the North Pole, that of a round circular top covered with snow.

The ascension of Mont Blanc is even now a very dangerous undertaking. It requires two days and one night, which latter must be passed at the Hut at the Grand Mulets, half way up. Two guides each of whom gets one hundred francs a day, must be taken as well as one porter and since food at the Hut is outrageously expensive, a bottle of common wine costing ten francs, the whole trip cannot be undertaken for less than one hundred dollars and even then one has the chance of losing one's life. If as Bompard told Tartarini, Switzerland were hollow and fitted with trap doors like the floor of the Grand Opera, and that when one fell into a crevice, one was greeted with, "Sir, have you no luggage?" mountain climbing would not be dangerous but in reality, feet, nose and ears are often frozen, while loss of life even has not unfrequently occurred.

The next morning, the father, Jacques and myself set off to climb the *Mentanvert*, (6,500 ft.,) which stands on the same side of the valley as Mont Blanc. We reached the top about eleven and at once proceeded to cross the *Mer de Glace*, a glacier which flows into the valley of Chamounix. As we crossed this glacier, the poor Frenchman, was in mortal terror for his son, who persisted in amusing himself by running and leaping across crevices. Sometimes he would throw a bit of ice down one to see how deep it was but the dull thud which we heard not only told us it was deep, but also increased greatly the fear of the poor father. We reached the opposite side in safety, though it took some time to find the path, since the whole glacier for a width of about twenty-five yards was strewn with boulders, which had been torn from the rocks by the advancing glacier. It is rather an unpleasant sensation to feel that it is just as probable one is standing on a snow crest or an icebridge over a crevice as on the firm ice and I cannot say we were not relieved when we once more reached *Terra Firma*.

We now made our way down what are called the *Mauvais Pas*; these are steps, in some places not more than a foot wide, cut in the side of a precipice which borders the glacier. Iron bars are placed along the side and if one suddenly feels as I did, a peg running into one's foot, (for to cross the glacier pegged boots are necessary,) to such indeed these bars are a god-send.

At a hut at the foot of the *Mauvais Pas*, I had luncheon, while my French companions after saying adieu made their way back to Chamounix. I had sent my luggage to Martigny by carriage, having determined to cover the distance myself on foot. Having had a smoke during my short rest after luncheon, I set off about one with my alpen stock in my hand, and found myself still fairly fresh after my five hour morning tramp. The Swiss people have quaint ideas as regards the comfort of travellers, for I was met at every mile or so, by a young urchin with a pitcher of goat's milk; for a few centimes one could freely indulge one's thirst, and I must say I often did so. This valley presented a very peaceful and picturesque appearance, with its quaint chalets, its goat-sheds and its hay stacks. The cheerful ring of the scythes in the field, came softly down the slopes while the low bleating of the goats helped to lend a charm of quiet peacefulness to the scene. Frequently I met other travellers, who were unfortunately bound in the opposite direction. I remember meeting a party of Japanese students, who with their alpen stocks, knapsacks and climbing boots, presented the appearance of veritable mountaineers. I met one fellow on a bicycle, but the length and steepness of the road over the passes made one infer that they were rather out of place in this mountainous district. About six I arrived at the inn near the top of the *Tete Noire* pass: here I intended to pass the night. The landlord who was a very pleasant fellow soon made me

comfortable and after my ten hours tramp, a dinner was something greatly to be desired.

They had a telegraph office here which was presided over by a very pretty Swiss girl. She spoke both French and German and was now learning English; as I looked at her English grammar, I truly appreciated the debt I owe to my parents for the fact that I am English. Our French and German grammars may seem difficult but when compared to that English grammar they are easy. Imagine to have to learn capable *of*, able *to*, sorry *for*, etc., etc., not to mention the enormous list of irregular verbs, about some of whose parts English people themselves are not always positive.

The next morning I viewed the wonder of the vicinity. This consisted of a massive rock, caught between two cliffs, while under it rushed a raging mountain stream. I paid a small sum for the key to this Sanctum Sanctorum and as I left the main road four ill-looking individuals followed me down the mountain side to the gate. Judging discretion to be the better part of valour, I admitted them, but the wildness of the view did not seem to be contagious, for after mildly expressing themselves as very much obliged for my kindness, which was really timidity, they made off down the valley.

I set off about ten o'clock towards Martigny, where I should again be able to travel by train. The day was rather warm and this together with the stiffness of my body did not add to the pleasure of the tramp. The ever-welcome boy with the pitcher was however nearly always in sight and this helped to refresh me and to spur me on. Occasionally when I felt tired, I would turn aside into a wood and lying down with my bundle under my head try to sleep. I am afraid I should never make a good tramp, however, for I was never able to go to sleep, but did the next best thing which was to close my eyes and muse. It was delightful in that valley, the hum of the crickets at play among the fresh cut grass, the buzz of the grasshoppers as they scampered about, now lighting here, now there, the soft bleating of the goats as with their bells tinkling merrily at their necks, they gracefully moved along the fresh green slopes, all tended to soothe my feelings, while the fragrant odor of the new mown hay being wafted to me by the gentle summer breeze increased the sweetness of my reveries.

With a recital of these reveries I shall not burden the reader since being essentially of the egotistical castle building kind, they might appear to him common-place and since those give usually most pleasure which are tinged with our own personality, I shall allow him to indulge them where'er his "own sweet will" may lead.

B. P. H.

THE SONG OF A VARSITY GRADUATE.

I love to think of the dear old days,
When a Varsity life was mine.
And I often wish I'd felt more regret
When I left it in '89.
But I was young, and my path in life
Seemed to lead to joy and fame,
So I gladly went to impress the world,
Which would cry aloud my name.

Alas! my boys, for the dreams of youth,
For the dreams that could not be,
The cook's traditional cousin has died,
And she's gone off on a spree;
It's cold outside, but my wife indoors
Is keeping things pretty hot,
And my infant son just announced with glee,
He has swallowed the coffee-pot.

Hurrah, old chaps! for a Varsity life,
And enjoy it while you may.
'Twould be bliss to me to be back again,
If it were only for a day.

—Adapted.