than cleanly. The men are mostly handsome; but as all marriageable maidens and presentable matrons were closely secluded within their own houses, my only realisation of the famous beauties of the Caucasus was from ancient hags who most unnecessarily veiled themselves from our view, and from scantily clothed infants of tender years. Next spring Georgievsk, which is within three days' journey of Uruspieh, will be connected with the rest of Europe by a line of railway, and the journey from London to the north of the Caucasus will then be condensed within a week, and the traveller be enabled to avoid the fever-stricken coast of the Black Sea. If at some future period the Caucasian Peaks become as recognised a sphere for mountaineering exploits as the Alps, Uruspieh is certain to become one of the principal head-quarters; for although the situation of the village itself is not of remarkable beauty, the excursions to be made from it are unrivalled, and the peaks to be climbed almost sufficient to satisfy the cravings of another generation of ardent mountaineers; and should I at any future period revisit the Caucasus, I shall certainly endeavour to devote a substantial portion of the time at my disposal to Uruspieh and its neighbourhood.

The Laquin and Rossboden Passes. By Thomas Brooksbank.

SIMPLON is a place whose merits and attractions have been very greatly overlooked or underrated. I have never heard of any explorer making it his head-quarters even for the most limited space of time; yet there is much about it to reward exploration. Its own position is beautiful, with many easy walks commanding grand views, bounded on the south-west by the splendid chain of the Fletschhorn and on the north-east by the brilliant Monte Leone; Italy is almost at its feet, a very present refuge in bad weather; its noble road gives life and variety and letters and newspapers; its elevation —near 5,000 feet—ensures an air fresh and exhilarating; and it contains one of the most charming and well-kept of the lesser inns of Switzerland, the 'Hôtel du Fletschhorn,' which, being the very best house in the village, looks down the valley towards Algaby and the opening of the Laquin Thal, and is far removed from the sights and the sounds, the dust and the smells, which ever attend on a congregation of eilwagen, horses, and lohnkutscher. These plain, unvarnished facts would justify complaint of neglect on its part—a complaint which, I am sorry

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to say, I have as yet done little to remove. I have visited Simplon twice when on the expeditions I am about to describe, but I have spent only one whole day there; and though for the last two years I have had the fairest intentions towards it, and indeed entertain them still, there is in my case something of a misgiving lest things should rest in intention merely; for when once 'age hath clawed us in his clutch,' the first expedition of a new season may startle us with the revelation that our mountain days are ended, and that this, the grandest of all plays, is played out.

But by means of our Journal, and by permission of its Editor, I can at least so far repair my neglect as not only thus to call attention to the general *agrémens* of Simplon, but to point out specifically how it can be reached by at least two glacier-passes worthy of a high place as scenery, and of great interest and excitement to the mountaineer. The passes I refer to are the Laquin Joch and the Rossboden Pass, which connect Simplon with Saas, and cross the Fletschhorn range. I ought, perhaps, to make some apology for any description of the former after the paper which Mr. Heathcote contributed to the third volume of this Journal; but that excellent mountaineer, by reason of his very excellence, appears to me (if I may say so) to have hardly done justice to the pass; his narrative certainly led the 'Western Alps' to mislead me in 1872; the pass is very rarely made, yet is it convenient for mountaineers bound for Italy, who have crossed, say, the Alphubel from Zermatt, and do not care about again and again traversing the Moro; and some further reference to it is called for by Mr. Boyson's note at p. 296 of the last volume of the Journal.

One word about the Fletschhorn range, that the names of its peaks may be clear. As is well known, there are three summits paramount on every side-view, though from the north, as from the Eggischhorn or the Bell Alp, one mighty mountain mass alone shows. From the southernmost peak, the Weissmies (13,225 ft.), the chain falls to less than 12,000 ft. in the Laquin Joch, whence the rocks rise stiffly in a narrow ridge to the broad back which in the Saasthal is called the Fletschhorn (13,176 ft.), but at Simplon passes as the Laquinhorn. Again, to the north of this, separated from it by a deep cleft, precipitous on all sides, upward to its neighbouring peaks, downward to its bounding valleys, and filled with a torrent of glacier, especially furious on the west, rises the rounded peak called at Saas the Rossboden-horn (13,084 ft.), but at Simplon the Fletschhorn. It is singular that, although there are

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thus three distinct summits, the Federal Map indicates but two by name, marking the Weissmies and the middle peak, which it calls the Fletschhorn, but giving no name to the northern horn, though its site is precisely laid down by the figures '3,988' mètres. But I am glad to notice that as to these three mountains our new Club Map is sound; it distinguishes them all, and moreover gives the four names which on opposite sides they bear.

Over this range Mr. Ball describes four passes. The first ascends from a point some five miles above Simplon, crosses the lessening Fletschhorn chain to the north of the Rautihorn, descends to the Gamser Glacier, and crosses it below the ice-fall, mounts again the W. slope of the valley, called the Nanzerthal, into which that glacier flows, and quits it by a well-marked col south-east of the desolate Simmelihorn. This pass Mr. Ball, following Mr. Moore (1 A. J. 139), calls the Gamser Joch; but I found that at Simplon it is always called the Simmeli Pass, and from the Saas guides I could get no name for it at all. It is frequently traversed, rough in places but nowhere in the least difficult; and by it, on the day on which in 1873 I crossed the Laquin Joch, Mr. Hayward reached Simplon from Saas. As this pass and the Rossboden both traverse the Gamser Glacier, though at very different levels, it seems to me that the Simplon name is the more convenient and appropriate. Mr. Ball's second pass is the Thäli Joch, which lies to the south of the Weissmies; the third is the Laquin Joch; the fourth is the Fletsch Joch, of the dangers and difficulties of which, speaking from somewhat distant views of it on both sides, I am convinced that Mr. Ball gives no exaggerated summary.

In addition to these there is Mr. Moore's 'third col,' seen from the eastern side of the Nanzerthal, of which he accurately says that it is 'at the head of the main branch of the glacier, above a very extensive ice-fall;' and this is the Rossboden Pass, rarely traversed, and, so far as I have been able to ascertain, never yet described.

My first incursion into these regions was on September 18, 1872. I had come to Saas by the Adler, with Moritz Perrn, a competent and obliging guide, and Kaspar Blatter, who for years has been with me as chain-shot. The Laquin Pass, at which I aimed, was almost an improvisation; friends were waiting for me at the Bell Alp, yet I could screw out just one worthy day more. But in making my choice I had only the sense of comparative novelty, the grandeur of the range contemplated so often from the Fee-meadows, and a faint recollection of a later edition of the 'Western Alps' than I then possessed, wherein the author

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spoke of 'steep but not very difficult rocks' for the descent, to guide me. These inadequate materials for a judgment notwithstanding, Blatter and Perrn were as willing as the late Mr. Barkis; and so, defying augury, we started at 3.20 on the 18th, ignorant of Mr. Heathcote's interesting paper, forgetful of Mr. Ball's directions, and unconscious that the pass had very recently been crossed by Mr. Boyson.

Of course all went merrily and speedily to the top; indeed, a pleasanter and easier walk, considering that it requires between four and five hours, and leads to something not much below 12,000 ft., can hardly exist; and if Saas should ever be frequented, this and the Langenfluh ought to become two of the chief ladies' expeditions. What views those are across the Saasthal I need not say, even if I could; but if there be anything in all Switzerland more glorious—unless perhaps what you see from the Görnergrat when the evening sky is purple and the snows are lilac, or from the Buet on a gold-gray morning—I have yet to see it. And on that day 'the most ancient heavens' were indeed 'fresh and strong.' In 3¼ hours we reached the Trift Glacier, in another hour the bergschrund, 5 minutes up the rocks, and then—

Well, one does not often come, in a flash as it were, on a precipice so sheer and so mighty. There, straight beneath us, lay the Laquin Glacier, and before we could reach it a good 3,000 feet of cliffs, and from right to left, from top to bottom, not one speck of snow—nothing but the brown-black and savage stone. Like Mr. Heathcote we 'quietly stepped over the edge of the precipice,' but less wise than he we thought only of a direct descent, and so we worked down over the glowing rock for something, I should say, like 1,200 feet, yet hardly did we seem to get nearer to the bottom; the rocks became worse and worse, that is to say more and more of slab, and less and less of crag and spire; my guides for the third time separated right and left, and returned—Perrn with 'Nein, da geht keine Katze,' Blatter with a faint hope and no promise, and in any case 'nicht ohne grosse Gefahr.' And thus I had to utter the bitter command, 'Zurück!' If I have any fault to find, it was and is exclusively with myself.

Perrn almost blubbered: 'Aber nicht nach Saas, lieber Herr;' and though I reproved him for this moral weakness, it suited me to oblige him, and I obliged him accordingly. With a resolve, and almost a vow, to look down these rocks again in 1873, I turned back; regained the col exactly three hours after we had left it, ran down the glacier, then made for the north side of the Trift ravine, and reached the Täwald Alpe in about 90

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min. from the glacier's edge. Thence we made a short cut through the steep and tangled wood on to Balen, and at 6 P.M. reached Stalden. We were none the worse for this splendid day of failure, save in our spirits and our nether garments, which were—NOT a sight to see; but Perrn is happily a tailor, and party-coloured patching, albeit many hued as Joseph's coat, was in our case, and I hope in his, at least decent.

A couple of days after I found at some inn or other Tschudi's 'Schweizer-Führer,' and was not a little comforted by his description: 'Sehr steil, und über schauerliche Abgründen vorbei hinab'—a far more correct notion of the pass than Mr. Ball gives one.

But the whirligig of time brings in his revenges, and in 1873, after a fortnight's training, I crossed the Schwarzenberg Glacier* and found myself again in Saas on August 31. Blatter was my only guide; Moritz Perrn I had seen at the Riffel, and I am bound to say that, though he was most anxious to retrieve the overthrow of the previous year, he with all good nature yielded to my suggestion that for so stiff a pass I ought to have a man who had actually crossed it. I hoped, in fact, to catch my old comrade Franz Andenmatten; but though I found him at Saas, he was unluckily bound to a mighty climber and hunter, and on September 1st men cry Havock against chamois in Canton Wallis, as they do against partridges among our own romantic turnips. From him, however, I obtained full directions, and in the winter I had faithfully studied my Ball and my Heathcote (if I may be allowed so to call them), and thus got all that could be learnt from lucid narrative. John Peter Zurbriggen, who in that year kept the Monte Moro inn at Saas, and had recently

* There is an inconvenient confusion as to this pass from guides and travellers alike persisting in calling the route now usually taken from the Riffel to Macugnaga, as well as the old pass by the 'Arête Blanche,' which can be used either for Mattmark or Macugnaga, the Weissthor. The two passes are in reality totally distinct, and lie nearly a mile apart. The first is the route mentioned by Mr. Ball (ed. 1870, p. 338) as the one 'which guides sometimes choose.' The second is that of which he says, 'by this buttress (the Arête Blanche) the pass is usually made.' Whatever may have been the practice formerly, this statement has now become incorrect, and the 'Arête Blanche' route is only used by travellers bound for Macugnaga in spring, when the other track is dangerous from avalanches. Would it not be better to reserve the name Weissthor for the route now in use between the Riffel and Macugnaga, and to distinguish the other pass as the Schwarzenberg Joch?

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married Franz's daughter, and Venetz, who crossed with Mr. Heathcote, were both available; but I chose Zurbriggen, whom I had known before that year.

The weather was very different from 1872. After an August of such loveliness as the Alps had perhaps never seen till then, we could not get a trustworthy day; but Hayward let me humour the weather with the three chances which should always be given when some really worthy expedition is toward. Everything is given to him who can wait; and at 2 A.M. on September 4 there was not a cloud, and the village barometer, the Mittaghorn, stood keen and clear beneath a host of stars.

No moon, but a lantern that was all glass did even better on the stair-like pathway through the wood which leads to the open pastures of the Trift. We had started at 3 precisely, and at 4.15 we passed the huts. Still pitch dark; but clouds, alas! were gathering, which as we mounted higher grew thick, and thin, and vanished, and came on again, and thicker than before. But did they not add to the splendour behind us? I think so; for there was extremest variety, and in 1872 we had had unchanging sunshine. Again, in 3 hrs. 15 min. we were on the snow, and in 75 min. more on the col; and here I say without hesitation that the eastern view was the more sublime for the shifting restless mists; and looking west, while everything that could by a stretch of language be called a valley was as invisible as if fathoms of sea were rolling over it, the whole range from Monte Rosa to the Balfrein was unbroken by a single rack.

It was 8 exactly when we left the Joch. I cannot understand Mr. Boyson's note, to which I have already alluded, that 'the rocks on the left hand, formerly used in the descent, were found to have been swept away.' Rocks are still there—plenty and to spare, and to spare again; and our course was precisely that which Mr. Heathcote appears to have taken, that which was certainly indicated to us by Franz (who had not crossed since he accompanied Mr. Heathcote), that which had been taken by Zurbriggen himself on his two previous passages, the second of which was, I believe, in 1869. I admire and envy the skill and courage which took Mr. Boyson straight downward, and should very much like to hear how he found the Laquin Glacier, which looks wildly crevassed; but for certain he might have made his descent by 'the rocks on the left,' as we did—the 'usual rocks,' as for certain I hold them to be.

But whether by the 'usual rocks' or not, our course was

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always to the left, starting with a diagonal climb of fifteen minutes from the lowest dip of the col, not keeping upon the ridge but below it, and thus along and up the eastern face of the mountain. And then our descent began. I feel myself incompetent to describe it in detail. For six hours we were fighting those rocks, which had the one vast merit of being rarely more than reasonably unsound—endless 'graben' to plunge into and emerge from—double the number of 'rücken' to surmount; the graben almost always of vast smooth slabs, between which you must just hit the crack if you are to get on at all; the rücken almost always of juts, and crags, and spires, round which you must cling and claw as you can, and just about an hour from the col a long space of (say) half an hour which must at times be terrifically swept by stones. But we were very early; there had been scarcely any sun all the morning, and the snow, which in the last few days had come down handsomely, bound the rovers to their native soil, and thus we escaped almost without an alarm. Still the fog tried us sorely, though luckily it was of that wholesome kind which after half-a-dozen hours leaves no touch of damp upon your garments; nor was it for an instant perfectly still, though we did not once feel a puff of wind; after leaving the col it never ceased, and we soon got into the thick of it; but it floated lazily about, and every few minutes it grew half clear, so that Zurbriggen might guess whereabouts we were. In truth, it flapped like a heavy curtain, and though we had it mostly thick and threefold, ever and anon we saw through a single fold. There was great loss of time waiting for these lucky moments, and indeed Zurbriggen reckoned it at a good couple of hours, judging from our pace when we were moving; but beyond this, and a little doubt whether, with such opacity about us, we should ever get through the wilderness of crags which would in clearest weather present even to the practised eye none but the slightest landmarks, we suffered nothing. It was a magnificent piece of guiding; once only had we to turn back, and that but for a short distance, while the quick detection of the mistake made the guiding more wonderful still. But the new snow was, I think, of great help; had the rocks been as bare as in 1872, we should hardly have distinguished the practicable shelves and ledges amid the universal brown; but now through the mists each little level crack and coign of vantage was picked out in gleaming white, beckoning to us where we might set foot.

So, slowly and very slowly, we came to a spire or obelisk, larger and more projecting than almost any we had seen, and

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Zurbriggen relieved us, and himself too I fancy, by saying that now we were sure to get down. And lo! close by this deserving pinnacle, almost at its foot, was the 'chimney' which Mr. Heathcote and old Franz will so well remember, and Zurbriggen's jaw of iron melted into a grin as I told him of the fix of his honoured father-in-law. This point is hardly more I think, than 400 or 500 ft. above the first snowslope, to which we descended with diminished labour. We had left the col at 8 in the morning, and now it was 2 P.M. When once we had touched the snow, all the rocks were overhead; *débris* and patches of snow succeeded; in 45 min. from the rocks we had crossed the glacier by which Mr. Jacomb scaled the Fletschjoch in 1863, nameless in the Federal map, but aptly called the Fletsch glacier by my guides, and both its moraines; and keeping high along the hill-side, we by-and-bye found a very villanous path which, after many ups and downs, brought us in some 90 min. round the shoulder of the Laquinthal into the main valley, in full sight of Simplon, yet still so high above it that it took us nearly an hour of sharp jog-trot before we reached the village. Here we found our friends well pleased with the Simmeli Pass, which they had crossed in about 10 hrs., whereas we, who had been 14¾ hrs. in passing from roof to roof, boasted that we had had a thousandfold the best of it.

Were this pass to be taken from the NE., the traveller should find some resting-place for the previous night in the Laquinthal; but on its left side there is no single hut, except in the depths of the valley, and to start from thence, or from the Laquinalp, high on the right side, would be no gain. If the start were made from Simplon, it would be almost impossible to reach that part of the rocks where the stones fall so constantly much before noon, and by that time on a sunny day it would be, to say the least, extremely dangerous.

In 1874 I reached Simplon from the NE., coming from Viesch by the Ritter, superbest of non-glacier passes, with its perfect views towards the Oberland in the ascent, and Monte Leone as the col is gained, separated from you only by the head of the Val Cherasea. It was my first sight face to face of this grand mountain, though I had long known it well from considerable distances: but now, with this view from the Ritter, the splendid sunset and equally splendid sunrise upon it from the Diveglia Alp, and the hours we spent on its side on the next day as we passed beneath it to the Kaltwasser Joch, it is among those things which I most of all desire to see again. At Viesch I had some difficulty in finding a man who had crossed the Ritter, but at last discovered one Biederbost, a

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baker, not a bad fellow, who at all events knows the pass now, whatever may have been his delusions on the subject when I engaged him. At the Diveglia Alp (the situation of which is simply exquisite) there is very good châlet accommodation, with something beyond châlet fare, in the stone houses of an intelligent man named Giovanni Roggia.

In crossing thence to the Simplon Hospice we found that, from changes in the Aurona Glacier or other causes, there were none of the dangers of which Mr. Ball (p. 370) makes mention. Across the southern half of the glacier, it is true, large blocks of ice fallen from the upper shelf of Monte Leone lie thickly scattered; but the northern half is quite beyond their reach, and the snowslope, if somewhat steep, is perfectly easy and safe with due precautions. We descended by the usual way to the Hospice; but I am persuaded that there would be a saving of time and much more interest if the Kaltwasser Glacier were crossed due south from somewhere near the level of the col, and the descent made to the Hohmatten; at any rate the long and wearisome seven miles of hard high road from the Hospice would be avoided.

It was Sept. 1st when I arrived at Simplon, and on the 2nd I was unfortunately left to my own inventions, as my friend, J. T. Beard, who had been my companion for a month, was bound to return home. I spent the afternoon in strolling about both sides of the valley, and in the evening engaged Joseph Dorsaz to help Blatter to bring me to Saas next day. I had intended to pass by the Simmeli, but of this Dorsaz would not hear, deriding the attractions of that route as compared with the Rossboden, the name of which as a pass I then heard for the first time. Hardly known to tourists, rising to a far higher level than the Simmeli, with but one ascent, no stiff pull with an ugly dropping down into a valley only to go up again, with some first-rate rocks to climb, with a good deal of glacier to cross—these were the advantages over the alternate route; while we were spared four out of the five miles of high road to the Niederalp, and by the greater directness of the course hardly made a longer walk. From Seng, where the Rossboden brook crosses the road, to the Mattwald valley, is a perfectly straight line, and keeping as nearly to a straight line as the ground would permit, we made our pass.

We started at 4.20 in a darkness that could be felt; but the one sole advantage that I know in a road is, that you can bowl along it—

> 'By day or night,
> Or any kind of light,
> With all your might,'

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and when we reached the brook I have mentioned, in a very short half hour from our inn—

> Then gleamed the milk-white *glacier* like a ghost,
> And like a ghost it glimmered on to me.

Here we left the road, and keeping near the stream, we reached the alp of the same name in an hour and a half from starting. Soon after this the path ceased; the grass slopes became stonier and very steep, and seven must have struck in the village below when we came to that outlying part of the Rossboden Glacier which the Federal map plainly shows, and somewhat to the right of the dimly-marked ridge which descends almost due N. from the precipices which separate it from the Gamser Glacier. Half an hour of rest at this point—half an hour across the glacier, and we were at the foot of those precipices, sheer up which we climbed, hand and foot, for exactly two hours and a quarter. The rocks were very steep, and here as at the Laquin Joch there are always 'schauerliche Abgründen;' but with a steady head and a plentiful allowance of time, there ought to be, there can be, no danger. Yet there is some difficulty, and one almost sheer cliff, which, by comparing it with the length of rope we were using, we took to be 40 feet, cost us a good half hour. It was broken at about half way by one narrow and short, but perfectly safe, ledge; but Blatter had unfortunately not trimmed his bags very well, and a sharp horizontal tooth jutted out over the only frets in the cliff by which that ledge could possibly be attained; whenever he began to climb, this maladroit tooth fixed on his dexter pouch, and one while held him tight, and one while thrust him back; whilst I, with breast close against the cliff's face, and heel which overlapped the ledge, watching his heroic but ungraceful wriggles, could not altogether stifle some selfish satisfaction that he had thought fit a few minutes before to detach himself from the rope. Had we been roped then, assuredly I could not have held him even with the help of Dorsaz, who was well placed some 20 feet above me; we must all three have gone had Blatter slipped; but I felt as sure as I ever felt of anything—'As sure as Tom Macaulay felt of everything,' to use Lord Melbourne's phrase—that Blatter would NOT slip.

He did not, and the rest of our climb was only fair work. At half-past 10 we had surmounted the precipice, and were level with the Gamser Glacier, high above its icefall. It was a narrow band of rock; before us lay the glacier rising in front, and to the lefthand in a gentle rounded swell, and then steeply upwards to the Rossboden Horn; behind us the pre-

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cipices we had climbed; deep down a glimpse of the Simplon road; beyond it all the Alps of Tessin, of the Engadine, and Western Tyrol, with that jewel the Leone sparkling, as it seemed close by. Looking towards the north, every Oberland peak west of the Aletschhorn stood forth, and between us and them the brightness of the Gamser Glacier and the stretch of the Nanzer Thal; but the Oberland to the east of the Aletschhorn was mostly hidden by the Rauthorn. In supreme enjoyment of hill and vale, sun and sky, we rested here two hours, not without a nap, not without meat and wine; and here I made acquaintance with Sirop de Capillaire, which Dorsaz says he always carries with him as the best preventive of thirst. Mixed with water, or wine, or both, it is very agreeable, and certainly on a day of climbing, intensely bright and intensely hot, I never felt thirst so little; therefore I mention it here.

At 20 m. after 12 we were again on foot, and bearing almost due S. we mounted on the Gamser névé, nearly 500 feet. Then when the snows began to slope towards the W., we halted again, for we had reached the highest point of our day's work. And now the Rauthorn was made 'like a wart,' and the Simmeli horn almost disappeared, and the eyes saw without hindrance the Diablerets on the W., and the Galenstock on the E., with 'all that doth between them lie;' but the eastern view was hidden by the rising rocks which we had left.

The snow was good, crevasses were few and tiny, and we went fast down the hill, and were soon on the little Mattwald Glacier; and in an hour and a quarter from the place where we had rested so long, we quitted it on its left bank. Then we were in a narrow and utterly barren valley of hideous ugliness, with the stream that flows into the Visp in its depths; but we let this descend by itself, and kept much on a level over big blocks for very nearly an hour. At half-past 2 we crossed the Mattwald ridge E. of the point marked 2,192, where the Federal map shows there is a break in the hills; and as we emerged from this break we had once again before us the whole Mischabel range, and the unequalled amphitheatre of Fee. Half an hour, steep but over easy ground, brought us to the Sivenen Alp; then a fair hour's walk, by a good and almost level path through forest, then nearly an hour skirting the hill side, but always swiftly descending, and we were in the village of Saas again. We had been out of doors 12 hours and three quarters of a day which had no speck of cloud, and of these our rests had been nearly 3½.

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To compare the passes: the Rossboden cannot be quite as high as the Laquin, and the Laquin is, I think (though I speak with deference, for I am not scientific, and do not travel with spirit-level, thermometer, or aneroid; no boiling-water apparatus is among my impedimenta, and if it were, I blush to say I could only use it for making grog), overrated if it be put at 12,000 feet. Its height seems to me fairly given by the figures on the Federal map, 3,509 m. = 11,513 ft., though I cannot say that these figures are set exactly on the col, and it is to be recollected that the climb beyond the col on the east side of the Laquinhorn may add a couple of hundred feet to its stature. The Rossboden route certainly passes considerably below the points marked 3,537 m., and thus can hardly exceed 11,000 ft. It is difficult to choose between them for grandeur of views: on the Laquin there is the Mischabel range for a longer time, and also from a higher and more central, and therefore more commanding, point; while, even after allowance for the different impressions that must have been produced by the side on which I approached the two, the Rossboden can offer nothing approaching the 'wild surmise' of the summit of the Laquin Joch, not unlike that which once silenced stout Cortes and all his men. I can only hope some day for the third view of which Mr. Heathcote tells; that, namely, upwards from the Laquin moraine; but from looking down I can half imagine what that upward view must be, and I am sure that of its kind the Rossboden has nothing to be named in the same day with it. On the other hand, the Laquin is not an open pass; it is shut in by the Weissmies and the Laquinhorn, and it has thus no distant views, the mountains on either side of its own valleys being all it shows you; but the Rossboden is emphatically an open pass—indeed at the highest point it reaches it is not a pass at all, it is circling round the uttermost slope of the last of a mighty chain, and thus the view of the Oberland of which I have spoken is not undeserving of comparison with such views as towards that side the Pigno d'Arolla or even the Breithorn can offer. For labour and difficulty the passes are nearly the same, except that the Laquin rocks are more arduous and dangerous, and nearly twice as long to climb, and by this excess at least the Laquin is also the longer. Taken from Saas, the ascent to the Rossboden would require considerably more time, but in this pass there is no long Laquinthal to descend.

I have compared the passes, and find how true it is that 'caparisons are odorous;' both are in truth magnificent, both are within the powers of every member of our Club, and I can

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only most sincerely advise every member to make them both, and to make them in the direction in which, as chance would have it, I crossed them myself.

Explorations in Dauphiné. By W. A. B. Coolidge.

After a long period of neglect, Dauphiné is at last being thoroughly explored; and it is not too much to say that as virgin peaks elsewhere grow scarcer, the French Alps will attract the attention which their magnificent scenery so well deserves. We first visited them in 1870, just before the war; but sixteen days spent there on that occasion, and a week in 1872, only sufficed to stimulate our curiosity: and we determined to make a complete exploration of the district. This paper contains the results of campaigns of eighteen days in 1873 and of a week in 1874.

The rendezvous of our party in 1873 was in the valley of the Arc: we crossed the low Col d'Arve to S. Jean d'Arve, ascended the lowest of the three Aiguilles d'Arve, and reached La Grave by the long but, on the whole, beautiful pass of the Col de l'Infernet on the evening of Saturday, July 5. We had been very much excited on the way down to La Grave by seeing fresh traces on the Râteau, an important item on our list; and it was not till just as we were leaving that we learned from the Livre des Étrangers of the failure of Mr. Gardiner and his companions owing to unfavourable weather.

On Monday we crossed the Col de la Lauze to S. Christophe, following the route described by Joanne, which passes by the exquisite little lake of Puy-Vacher, overhung by the precipices of the Râteau, and the wonderful western peak of the Meije. The weather unfortunately was not very fine; but it was not till we had reached the desolate Vallon de la Selle that the thunderstorm which had long been brewing burst upon us, rousing fine echoes in the gigantic cliffs around. Next day we strolled up to La Bérarde, where we found the Rodiers expecting us. The first 'course' on our list was the Sommet des Rouies; and though we had been anticipated in making the first ascent, it was resolved to repeat the expedition in order to clear up two points. First, did the Aiguille d'Olan, marked 3,883 mètres on the French map, really exist; next, could the Râteau be ascended from the head of the Vallon des Étançons. I am happy to say that the splendid view gained from the summit enabled us to solve both questions. The lofty Aiguille d'Olan turned out a complete delusion, and a way

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