

a few minutes we were safe on the rocks on the opposite (or right hand in looking up) side of the couloir. Once on them we had the greatest difficulty in getting off again, as they turned out very bad. We, however, succeeded at length in reaching the bergschrund at their base, which we crossed without difficulty, and were safe.

GLEANINGS FROM COGNE. I. THE POINTE DE SENGIES.  
By the EDITOR.

AOSTA has been generally held the natural starting point for a paper on the Graians. But if any one objects to my preamble as out of place, I have excellent reasons to offer to show that Chamonix is equally appropriate as a starting point. Many recent writers have dealt with the Graians. But I do not know that any one of them has been at the pains to define their historical limits. There is the best reason to believe that in ancient times Mont Blanc was thought of, if it was ever thought of at all, as a Graian Alp. The Col de la Seigne was as decidedly in the Graians as the Great St. Bernard in the Pennines. It is even uncertain whether the Greek hero Hercules, who, as all the mediæval authors agree,\* gave to this part of the Alps their name, may not have passed by Chapui. So far as there was any boundary fixed between the Pennine and the Graian Alps, the boundary lay probably about the Col de Géant. The mountains on your right at Curia Major or Courmayeur were Pennine, those on your left Graian.

I had, however, a special reason for starting from Chamonix. I was reminded some time ago, by a severely Alpine correspondent, that my peaks had not for some years 'had much height.' Of course I might have replied that the criticism was empty and absurd, that the height of a peak depends entirely on the depth of the valley at its base, and that many of the Swiss giants are only dwarfs mounted on high pedestals. I might have backed up my argument by the authority of a writer who, as Mons. Durier† has well said, is the spiritual ancestor of the unscientific and enthusiastic mountain lover. M. Bourrit, in a vindication of the Alps as compared with Transatlantic ranges, has boldly stated, 'Sur les Alpes on est

\* Modern authorities are satisfied with the explanation that 'gran' is a Celtic word meaning white, and refer to its appearance in other Alpine names.

† 'Le Mont Blanc.'

près de la moitié plus élevé qu'on ne l'est sur les Andes, *abstraction faite de la mer.*' But being in a conciliatory frame of mind, and having besides an independent wish to look up my first Alpine friends, I decided to go straight to Chamonix and Mont Blanc, as a mountain which no abstractions can take much from.

To renew an acquaintance, however, requires goodwill on both sides. From the first moment of my appearance within sight, the Alps, after smiling through two months of unbroken fine weather on every chance passer-by, wrapped their cloaks around them. Chamonix was ugly indeed, with all its beauty hidden, and nothing to look at but a troughfull of glacier rubbish. If the snowy head of Mont Blanc was visible, it was ever wreathed with an ominous halo of mist. If for an hour or two the opal icecliffs of the Dôme shone through the clouds, we had not climbed as far as the last châlet before we were again in a snowstorm. The mountaineers who haunt Chamonix had for the most part departed. Some of the peak-hunters had gone home rejoicing (like London milliners from Paris), with their bagsfull of '*hautes nouveautés.*' Others had started off eastwards with anxious faces and mysterious murmurings, as if everyone does not know what remains 'to be done' in the Bernina. A year later, such an air of conspiracy as pervaded their every look and gesture would have been dangerous, and probably led to their arrest by the Chamonix gendarme, or at least to their being watched as carefully as M. Thiers's guests or a Republican senator.

The prospect for a mountaineer was, to say the least, discouraging. Mr. Reilly, who remained complacently camped on the scene of his labours and triumphs, assured us no rocks would be safe for a week. For the Mont Blanc snowfields we did not feel much inclined; moreover, we knew them pretty well already. So we agreed to make for Courmayeur by the Col du Géant, and to lose no chance of getting across, slept at the Montanvert. That crazy little house shook all night in a tempest, which seemed disposed to help in carrying into effect the communal decree for its destruction and the erection of a new inn, which, I am glad to say, has at last gone forth.

Next morning was thick with cloud. Till long past mid-day we never saw 500 yards in any direction. There was no consoling reflection, except that the string of tourists, who came up in the rain from Chamonix, ate a bad lunch, and went down again, were being made even greater fools of by the weather than we were. The scene before our eyes was described ninety years ago '*Là, leur disoit le guide en levant la*

tête et montrant le ciel, là est l'Aiguille de Dru ; ici, celle des Charmos ; de ce côté le Moine ; plus loin, le Géant ; et ces Messieurs suivoient, sans y rien découvrir les parties du ciel qu'il leur montrait.' Yet our visitors seemed happy, doubtless with the happiness which we are told comes from doing one's duty to one's fellow-creatures—and one's Cook. That moderately deserving community, the Chamonix bureau, gained a little more money, Ludgate Hill Circus was not pestered with claims for unused 'coupons.'

We could not help feeling a little sorry for the tourists, though our sorrow was probably misplaced, when at 6 P.M., half an hour after the last had left, there was one of the general mist-movements, which are almost as exciting as those that preceded the transformation scenes of childhood, and in a few moments Aiguille after Aiguille pierced the vapours.

Next morning, of course, saw us over the Col, on which we found fresh snow from the foot of the séracs to 500 feet above Mont Fréty. On the top we rested in the new hut. It is a fair enough hut as Alpine huts go. But surely it is time some practical person, or a committee of some practical club—like the German or Italian—took up the question of hut architecture, and produced a design for a model edifice, or at least a table of instructions and hints for guides about to build. Walls of a single plank, a door which cannot be opened without letting in a blast or a snowdrift, a stove which will not burn, a litter of hay which a fastidious dog would scarcely accept,—such are the common features of Alpine refuges. A double door, walls stuffed with moss between two wood linings, beds arranged like berths, a cupboard full of blankets,—are these too much to ask? There are several other comforts easy of addition, which it is Sybaritism perhaps to long for, and I do not venture to mention. But no one who has felt how much a bad night diminishes his capacity for enjoyment, or even his chances of success, on the next day, can really wish for an opportunity to display Spartan endurance before a 'grande course.'

As we descended, a great white cloud, like the smoke from a vessel in action, rose suddenly out of the Allée Blanche. It was the dust raised by a local hurricane from the stony desert left by the retreat of the Brenva Glacier. Ominous clouds hung over Monte Rosa. Beneath them the tragedy of the Felik Joch was at that very moment being enacted. The mists which enveloped the distant ranges showed a disposition to creep along the Pennines towards Mont Blanc, who had already put on his own cloudcap. Altogether, the signs of the weather

were most unpromising. My friend Tucker had, curiously enough, never been up Mont Blanc, and I urged strongly on him his duty to the monarch, and offered to spend a week in strolling about the Courmayeur meadows, if necessary, in order to enable him to pay his court. He went downstairs, as I understood, to enquire about guides and the Miage hut. He returned, having engaged a return carriage for Aosta. The weather more than justified his decision. The following day was showery, and at Aosta it poured for 24 hours, snowing all the time a few thousand feet higher up.

I have now, I trust, made clear why, having meant my drama to be lofty in its subject, and Swiss or Savoyard in its scene, I am again obliged to turn to Italian Alps, and be content to attack a foe of comparatively contemptible height.

A wet day in a mountain inn, with a fog coming in at the windows, and an old 'Galignani,' a strangers'-book, and two tracts in the sitting room, is dulness itself. But at Aosta rain is not an unmixed evil. The 'Hôtel du Mont Blanc' has long been well known to Alpine travellers as a model sub-alpine inn, which we never revisit without wishing all Italian innkeepers would 'observe and copy.' Few of us but have made acquaintance with the inexhaustible bottles of English sauce which have adorned the table for the last 15 years, the broad loggia, with its sofas and novels, and its view up the noble valley to the pale Ruitor snows. Who does not remember the lively conversation of the bustling landlord? If a traveller had had his purse stolen at ill-famed Chatillon, if he had fallen into a dispute with Aostan mulekeepers, Jean Tairraz held no trouble too great in his guest's behalf. Had one's circular notes run short, the host was ready to be banker too. How often has the thirsty mountaineer, discovering half-a-dozen ripe Aostan peaches carefully laid on the top of his provisions, blessed the thoughtful provider! Poor old Jean! Last autumn he could scarcely drag himself to the sofa where he sat, a sad wreck, bent by rheumatic pains. Yet, his memory was as sure and nimble as ever as he ran once more over the details of his last 'grande course'—an attempt on the Grand Paradis I had made with him and another Chamonix veteran, François Joseph Couttet, thirteen years ago—before he wished his old friends a last farewell. He died in the winter, leaving an honourable name, and a memory which will long live in the Alpine Club. All travellers will be glad to learn that his hotel remains in his family, who, I hope, will preserve the custom their father so well earned.

Those who want help in forming their plans, or are curious

to see a collection of Alpine views and photographs, can always find occupation at Aosta, in the rooms of the Italian Alpine Club, to which foreigners are liberally admitted. But the most profitable employment for a long morning is to take Abbé Gorret's Guidebook in hand, and visit the monuments of the town. The Roman arch and Porta Praetoria are known to every one. But many confine themselves to the streets, and leave unseen the charming stroll round the Roman walls on the south side of the town, with their towers, here used as houses, there worked up into mediæval fortresses. The cloister and Priory of St. Ours, the carved stalls of the saint's church, and the wonderfully beautiful and original inlaid pavements of the Cathedral, afford occupation for a long morning.

Our patience was rewarded. On the evening of August 2, the weather cleared with startling suddenness—so suddenly that we did not much believe in the permanence of the change. We were content, therefore, to cross to Cogne by the Col de Garin. But knowing already the ordinary road to Combœ, we took the path recommended by Mr. Tuckett through the valley of the Dard, and with the Alpine Club Map and Mr. Ball's directions had no difficulty in hitting it off. During the final ascent to the upper glen in which the châteaux lie the scenery is most picturesque, and, on such a morning as we saw it, sheeted in fresh snow down to 7,000 feet, the Grand Combin looks as noble a mountain as can be seen in the Alps. But I must not loiter on a well-known and easy pass longer than to point out that to descend from the Croix d'Arpisson to Cogne, it is not at all necessary to follow the apparently long route recommended in the 'Alpine Guide;' by striking across the hillsides for the top of the cultivated spur which shelters Gimillan, it is easy to reach Cogne by way of that village in two hours.

The Hôtel de la Grivola at Cogne had since 1866 changed in everything but its mistress and its name. It was in a new house on the opposite side of the street. Even the family tree, which gives the pedigree of the owners, had been renewed: on its branches military plumes blossomed with fresh splendour, and frequent black fruitless buds bore witness to the clerical honours of the race.

It is now a very fair mountain inn, with only one serious drawback. The sitting room faces the north, and is unprovided with any means of lighting a fire. Consequently, as Cogne, lying open to the northern draught which blows straight from the top of Mont Blanc, is one of the coldest places on the

south side of the Alps, evenings are apt to be cut short, and the immoral habit of reading in bed is much encouraged. I may mention in this connection that a small supply of English books lies concealed in the interior of the table on which meals are served.

We had not turned aside to a peak on our way over from Aosta, in order to be fresh and ready for a very early start for the Tersiva—said, on the authority of Mons. Chamoin, who climbed it in 1842, to be the best view-point of the district, and also \* never to have been climbed by Englishmen. The strangers' book disabused us of the latter illusion, for it appeared that the peak had been reached several times by English parties.

I shall only sum up in a few sentences the principal features of the expedition. It has the disadvantage that the peak aimed at is far off; on the other hand, there is no need to follow twice the same route. It is easy to ascend the main valley, and return by the Val de Grauson. We took the opposite and less commendable course. The Val de Grauson contains one of the loftiest large pasturages in the Alps. Les Arveillères, the highest chalet, is no less than 8,220 feet above the sea. At its head rises the blunt pyramid of the Tersiva, with the small Glacier de Dorère on its flank. We crossed the ice to the gap at the north base of the peak, which may be used as a pass for those who wish to descend to Val d'Aosta by Val di Fenis. This ridge might take time if it was all ice. We by keeping on snow very close to the cornice, and then taking to rocks, avoided step-cutting, except across one broad ice-slope. The top is a crest of snow, and the stoneman, or what remains of it, stands on some rocks east of it.

The day was clear, except for a few clouds which mingled with the distant Orteler and Adamello summits. The Grand Paradis group could not be better seen, the Pennines also make a good show. The tame appearance of Monte Rosa from the west is rather a shock to those who know best her eastern face. But the splendid pyramids of the Matterhorn and Dent Blanche, and the massive grandeur of the Combin sustain the reputation of the chain. The panorama, as a whole, however, I must confess, slightly disappointed me. Val Tournanche, with its chestnut forests and white church, is seen among the hills. But the foreground is composed for the most part of bare uplands. The plain of Italy only appears in the distance over the wide flat snow-fields of the Pointe de Rosablanche. The

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\* 'Alpine Guide,' vol. i. p. 164.

most conspicuous object in it was the glass roof of the Turin railway station glittering in the sunshine.

The Punta di Tersiva is in one respect a model peak. It is formed by the junction of four ridges. Having come up by the northern, we descended by the western as far as the saddle immediately below the peak. Thus far our path lay over very easy rocks; hence we might by a circuit on the right or Val de Grauson side easily have reached the shepherd's pass between it and the upper Cogne valley. A direct descent to the latter through the cliffs below us looked and proved easily practicable, though somewhat steep. From the snowy hollow at their base the path to the Col de Champorcher is quickly gained by a run down grass-slopes.

Mons. Chamonin told us that in climbing the northern ridge and in the descent from the saddle west of the peak we had traversed untrodden ground. The usual course is to ascend by the south and come down by the west ridge, and then make the circuit spoken of above. This is the route described in a volume of Alpine papers recently published by Signor Corona, well known as the daring climber who made a successful attack on the Matterhorn in May. He gives a most prodigious account of the difficulties he met with. At the same time it ought to be mentioned that he tells us he was unwell on the day of the ascent. I do not allude to these facts with any desire to disparage a mountaineer who has proved his courage abundantly elsewhere. Climbers generally, however, should take care even when ill themselves to try to see difficulties as they will appear to their sound successors. If they become purely subjective, and dwell too much on trembling legs and a giddy brain, they run some risk of providing amusement for their followers. This, however, is a matter which only concerns themselves, and gives no right of remonstrance, rather perhaps is a ground for gratitude. But exaggeration has a more serious effect when it hinders easy expeditions from becoming popular, and thus defeats the very object an Alpine writer should have in view, that of helping others to share his enjoyment. The rocks of the western ridge are so easy that few climbers would dream of using a rope, and there is no difficulty of any sort on the peak.

As we passed Lilaz on our way back, a high snowy crest rising at the south-eastern angle of the Combe di Valeiglia, which from the Croix d'Arpisson had already attracted our attention, was again prominent. The impression made was strengthened by reference to Dr. Baretto's map and the Abbé Gorret's Guidebook. The first showed no known pass over the chain, dividing the Combe di Valeiglia from Val di Forzo

west or rather south-west of the peak before us, which bore the name of Pointe de Sengies; the second spoke of the 'glaciers et cols dits des Sengies entre Valeiglia et le Bardonney' as among the 'pics et glaciers encore à étudier.' M. Vescoz in his pamphlet on Cogne stated that there was no known pass from Valeiglia to Val di Forzo, and this was confirmed by Dr. Baretto with the qualification given above, 'west of the Pointe de Sengies.' From M. Chamonin we gathered that most parts of the chain had been traversed by beaters during the royal hunts, but except by such chance visitors it had certainly never been explored.

We found next day at Cogne that our only companion in the inn, Dr. Minnigerode, a Professor from Greifswald on the shores of the Baltic, had also had his attention called to the same part of the chain by his guide. We agreed, therefore, to start together and try and take the Pointe de Sengies on our way to Val di Forzo, instead of crossing the well-known Col de Bardonney. We had as usual François Devouassoud. Dr. Minnigerode brought as porter Leon Guichardaz, who walked and climbed very fairly, and can be recommended.

Our route was the same as that of the Col de Telleccio as far as the middle of the Combe de Valeiglia, formerly 'Vallis Ecclesiæ.'

The early history of Cogne is, as might be expected, obscure. A St. Bessus, one of the Theban legion, is said to have been its evangelist. St. Ursus continued the work in the sixth century. In very early times the valley became the property of the bishops of Aosta. In 1191 Thomas, first Count of Maurienne, published a decree in these terms:—'*Pactum insuper fuit ut ipse Episcopus, si voluerit, in Valle de Coniâ castrum erigere valeat, unde homines sui et mei pacem et guerram, si necesse fuerit, facere alias valeant.*' This castle is the 'tower-house,' which still stands near the present church, a modern edifice built in 1642 on the site of one 400 years older. The Valeiglia was not such a profitless possession as might be imagined. From a mine near the glacier silver was formerly obtained. The rich chest which contains the relics of St. Ursus in the Cathedral at Aosta was made with ore found in this valley by a bishop of the fourteenth century. The mines were afterwards worked by Germans, and in 1868 were examined by an enterprising Englishman. Fortunately, perhaps, for country clergymen and widows, no 'Cogne Silvermine Company' was the result of the visit.

Close to a new hut built beside the king's path we, at Guichardaz's suggestion, crossed the stream, and, passing two small

châlets, began to climb the broken cliffs on the E. side of the glen by a rough but well-marked track. After a time it brought us to some slopes, covered with a luxuriant growth of wild hay. The crop is yearly cut in September, and serves for the use of the king's stables. We were now on the north of a deep hollow, through which the drainage of a small icefield, the Glacier de l'Arolla, finds a way to the valley. It is cut off below by precipices, the top of which we traversed nearly at a level in order to reach the opposite promontory dividing us from the basin of the glacier \* descending from our peak.

It is, no doubt, possible to reach this point directly from the valley, but Guichardaz assured us that it was a much longer and rougher way. Once round the rocky spur dividing the two basins, we climbed steeply upwards, and soon reached a grass-slope above the level of the tongue of ice in which the glacier ends. Here we made our first halt, with our peak full in view, a long and steep concave mass, mostly of snow, here and there broken by rocky teeth. To the north-east of it at the head of the glacier a snowy gap is visible, from which, according to Dr. Baretti, it is possible to descend on to the Val di Forzo side of the Col de Bardonne. Overhead on our left towered a high wall of crag, which seemed as full of chamois as a Pontresina windowpane of flies. Three or four promenaded along the top, scarcely visible without glasses; another party were grazing near the base. Disturbed by our shouts, they performed the most suicidal manoeuvre, rushing down to the glacier, to reach which they had to pass within a few yards of us. If all the Cogne chamois are so obliging, their royal hunter may well make large bags.

The glacier which rose before us was of considerable breadth, and steeply inclined, displaying very fine ice scenery. It was seamed by enormous crevasses. But they none of them gave us much trouble. Our only check was caused by one of Mr. Carter's straps. As the porter who carried it clambered round a snowy corner above a formidable abyss, the bag to which it was attached got jammed, the strap gave way, and there seemed for a moment every prospect that half our baggage would disappear into the bottomless gulf.

We now approached the base of our mountain, which crowned with a fortresslike snow-wall and moat the steep gla-

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\* I feel obliged to follow Dr. Baretti's authority, and call this the 'Glacier de la Combe de l'Arolla,' but the simple name Glacier de Sengies given it on the Panorama of the Graians from Mont Emilius in the 'Alpine Guide' would certainly be preferable.

cier slopes. François and I had evolved an extremely ingenious theory for going straight up the face of the peak, without step-cutting. The 'bergschrund' forked at one point, sending out an undeveloped branch up the slope to the NW. arête. This upper branch was not open, and only a furrow showed where a split might come. I need hardly say that to walk up the line of a crevasse is a proceeding only to be adopted under the superintendence of a first-rate guide. But this furrow, both François and I fancied, might, by prudent use, be turned into a convenient path, by which the obvious alternatives of going round by the north-eastern ridge, or cutting steps up a very long snow-wall, might be avoided. But we had both omitted from our calculation the possibility of the moat being bridgeless. Its lower bank, a very steep and narrow one, surmounted, we saw confronting us a gulf some 10 feet wide, backed by a wall of perhaps the same height. The combination was fatal. After François had relieved his feelings by making a prodigious onslaught on a bit of ice, with the result of knocking the head off his iceaxe, we redescended cautiously on to the glacier, crossed the great moat a quarter of a mile more to our left by a narrow and shaky bridge, and then climbed some easy rocks. From the top of these a very steep bank of snow-covered ice led up to the crest of the chain. There was just enough new snow hard-frozen on to the surface to enable François to chip steps good enough at any rate for ascent, without working in the blue ice below.

We were on the top of the range, but a long comb of rocks lay between us and the depression at the foot of the peak. After we had advanced a few yards, the crest became broken and difficult, but we found very good foot- and hand-hold on the northern face. At the last gap all obstacles ceased. From the Cogne valley the final ridge appears a narrow ice-crest. Behind this, however, lie rocks, and the hollow between the two gives easy access to the top, which was gained in about eight hours from Cogne.

The Pointe de Sengies, little as one would think it from many panoramas, is undoubtedly the highest summit of the ridges which separate Val di Forzo from Cogne, and should command a wide view of the plain. We saw nothing but a silver sea of mist. The Graians appear in a most singular aspect; the Grand Paradis is entirely hidden; while the circular basin of the Telleccio Glacier, crowned by the Tour du Grand St. Pierre and Pointe d'Ondezana, assumes unusual importance. The latter peak is a sharp and lofty rock-tooth. Dr. Baretto speaks of it in a way which implies that it has

been climbed.\* It is unknown, at any rate, to English ice-axes, and an Alpine clubman might do worse than take it on his way either from Cogne to Locana or from Locana to Val di Forzo. Of the latter pass, if there is one, we have no description whatever.

The top of the Sengies is commodious, and supplied with water, which lies in a hollow between the snow and rocks a few yards below it. As a peak, I have urged what I honestly can for our conquest. But after all has been said, I feel that Touchstone's 'a poor thing, but mine own,' is the result. I do not suppose that many will care to climb for itself a secondary peak, now that it has lost its chief attraction—that of being unknown. As a pass, however, if I may be Irish, or as a traverse, following Mr. Wethered, the Pointe de Sengies may, I think, hope for a place among Cogne expeditions. It will be seen hereafter that we not only found a way up the peak, but three ways. The combination of what I will call the north and south routes makes an excursion from Cogne, which shows all the finest glacier scenery of this end of the range, and combines an amusing variety of rock and ice work. Either the north or south, with the eastern route, makes the finest pass between Cogne and Val di Forzo.

When we got to the top, our intentions were still vague. We now saw that our peak formed the corner tower of the ridges overlooking the Telleccio Glacier, and that there was little difficulty in descending from it to a gap just at our feet, which, on the eastern side, was connected with a practicable gully, so that our course clearly lay in that direction rather than backwards. But the ascent had not been so easy as to make us quite comfortable in letting two men with a bad rope go down by themselves. However, François, after a few minutes' inspection, pointed out that the rocks on the western, or Telleccio, side of the pass were, though steep, very practicable, and that from their base there was an easy glacier descent. So our Prussian friend and Guichardaz elected to take this way back to Cogne, whence we heard in due time of their safe arrival. The descent to the pass proved extremely easy. The mist still prevented us from seeing to the bottom of the gully, and François, who has a deep-rooted

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\* Bourrit in his '*Alpes Pennines*' mentions that near Cogne and above an iron-mine is a peak 30 toises higher than the Velan known as the '*Dondezaun*.' He probably meant the Grivola, which figures in one of the illustrations to the Chevalier de Robilant's pamphlet '*Sur l'utilité des voyages, &c.*,' published at Turin in 1790.

distrust of unknown 'couloirs,' coolly suggested we should scramble over the next peak in the ridge, extending towards the Ondezana, to reach the glacier we had seen beyond it on the Val di Forzo side. This meant at least two hours' hard climbing, during which whatever progress we made would be in the wrong direction. The man of little faith was rebuked by recollections of all the gullies, whose straightforwardness he had unjustly questioned.

This particular chimney proved of the most practicable character. The gradient was the same throughout, and the bottom loose, shaley, and easy to descend. Near the lower end we found the snow the sun had loosened from above. It broadened fanwise into what I suppose was a small glacier. The fog was too thick for us to see much more than a few tiny crevasses. We could only make out dim indications of great and formidable cliffs on our left, of a low spur separating us from the basin of the large glacier on our right. A few more slides down snowy troughs, and we were in a sort of no man's land. On and on for several miles we strode over marshy plains, over low hillocks, guided through the dense mist by a slender stream. For long there was not even a cattle track. Once we came suddenly on a party of chamois enjoying a good meal. At last we passed some deserted stone huts. Near a second group, also empty, we began to descend. Paths were many and vague, and we found ourselves above a cliff in company with a flock of noisy sheep. Happily a sharp bend to the left brought us to a *châlet*, where we found a good-natured woman, who gave us milk and directions.

We had expected, when on the peak, to pass in a few minutes through the shining layer of cloud below us. We had now spent about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours in it, and were heartily tired of its company.

Descending steeply, we soon reached the brink of a precipitous cliff. The mist lightened at last below us, and we looked down into a deep narrow glen and on to the roofs of some stone huts which the map told us were Boschiatterra. The path became a corkscrew staircase, now under a bold dripping snout of crag, now through a fern-grown cleft. Peasants' voices rang through the damp air, and their forms appeared among the cliffs in situations which equalled any German illustration of the Alpine hay-cutter. In half an hour the aneroid showed a fall of 2,500 feet, and we crossed the torrent to Boschiatterra. We were hungry and thirsty, as well as somewhat tired, and ready to halt for the night in the first tolerable quarters, for the dismal pall of mist on the hillsides took away all pleasure from

the prospect of an evening walk. But Boschiatterra produced neither beds nor bread; we were offered, however, plenty of stones by a peasant who took us for prospecting miners.

It was asserted very positively that Borchia, visible twenty minutes off on the hillside, boasted an inn, and consequently, leaving with regret the smooth path beside the stream, we mounted to it. All we gained for our pains was the sight of a large party of children playing with one bit of rag. The inn, an inhabitant told us, was at another hamlet half an hour lower down. Rejoining the stream, we followed it through a short defile beyond which the valley falls and widens.

As we drew near the village François was warmly greeted by a peasant returning from his work. The man had spent a summer as a labourer in the Chamonix valley. The inn when reached was a wretched cottage which bore no outward signs of entertainment. The owner and his wife were not within, and had to be fetched. When they appeared they met our advances with entreaties that we would go further, and assurances that we could not fare worse than with them. 'Miséria' was the burden of the poor people's excuses, which they backed up by suggestions of an *osteria* at another hamlet only ten minutes lower down. With very little faith left, we shouldered our bags and ran down some meadows to a group of cottages. One of them actually bore the inscription 'cantina,' and further signs of civilisation in the shape of two gardes-chasse were lounging about. The dark interior contained a table and benches, and the promise of a good haybarn determined us to seek no farther. Half an hour later we were engaged on a supper of beef-tea and poached eggs, the lightness of which would have satisfied even Dr. Clifford Allbutt. But I must confess what we most enjoyed was a 'petit verre' of a very delectable kind of Chartreuse I happily discovered on a remote shelf just as we were about to retire to our barn.

When, after eight hours of peaceful unconsciousness, we opened our doors, the clouds had lifted, although the sky was still far from clear. An enormous granite crag hung immediately overhead. We were in one of the trench-like level glens common where this rock occurs. The landscape was very bold, and, perhaps, with more sunshine might have been beautiful. A good path led us down in something over an hour to the fork of the valleys. Halfway we passed a post, marking the limit of the royal preserves, within which it is 'travaux forcés' for twenty years to shoot, a penalty worthy of old tyranny which reads oddly in free Italy, and probably, like

some of our own equally obsolete laws, has survived on condition of never being enforced. Then we reached, on the right bank of the stream, a terrace beautifully wooded with chestnuts, and crowned with the village of Bosco. Here Ronco, where there is a fair country inn, lay only twenty minutes to our left on the path to the Col de la Nouva. Mountaineers starting an hour earlier than we did, and unimpeded by fogs, might easily reach it in the day from Cogné by our route.

There is a beautiful view from this spot towards Ponte, still three hours' walk distant. The lower valley is a gorge between wooded and richly coloured mountains, and the path, as usual, one of those '*rochers continuels qu'on appelle une Route Romaine*,'\* or a '*pavé*,' according to the date of their construction.

It would be tedious to describe it step by step. The most striking point is the first view of Ponte from the brink of the steep descent which leads to the streamside, along which the path finds its way out into Val Locana for the last mile or so.

Ponté is a mediæval country town, with a modern manufacturing suburb. It lies near the mouth of a broad valley, between two mounds, crowned respectively with a church and a ruined tower. Having passed round the great mills and their pretentious gateway and dingy outbuildings, we entered narrow streets lined with low dark arcades. Aosta, as Mr. Freeman has remarked, might be any shabby southern French town; Ponte is stamped in every brick as Italian. Its ponderous defences against light and heat seem indeed rather fitted for the further south than for a subalpine valley sheltered by hills and open to mountain breezes. But in August, at any rate, the sun struggles successfully round the corners and even into the deep arcades, and lighting up there bales of gay clothes and piled-up masses of fruit gives the old town a cheerful air.

The street front of the chief inn—I have forgotten its name—is uninviting, but within is a good sitting room. The house during our stay was noisy. A large party of young soldiers on their way to their homes higher up the valley were celebrating their release from military service by a banquet, which engrossed all the attention of the two girls who formed the waiting power of the establishment.

One of these, the bright-eyed daughter of the house, excited our utmost wonder and admiration. She flew in and out, carrying dishes, talking incessantly, leaping up to ransack

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\* De Tocqueville.

cupboards for more and more knives and forks and plates, crowning her nimble feats by attaching in one hand with more than a juggler's art six bottles, and bearing off in the other a trayful of tumblers. She would have made her fortune as leading actress in one of the bright ballet-comedies of the Florentine stage.

While we rested François had secured a carriage, and in the afternoon we drove up the ill-kept road which leads along the level valley to Locana. Just outside Ponte the ruins of a great mountain-fall are passed. From the side of one of the most enormous blocks, smoke is seen to issue through the over-spreading greenery. A needy peasant has enclosed with a wall the space beneath the stone, and thus made a cottage which differs but little from the caves of his remote ancestors. For the rest of the way the riverside is green and the crops are splendidly luxuriant, the steep slopes of the valley are bold and forested, but the scenery varies little during the ten miles.

A triumphal arch at the entrance to Locana, with the usual 'Viva il Re Galantuomo,' showed that the king was up at Ceresole. At the inn we were promised mutton chops, such as, according to the waiter, his Majesty always halted to partake of. This man had spent several years as a cook at Malta, where he had picked up Levantine morality, a little sailors' English, and a few notions in his art.

Our desire now was to reach Turin by the way of Val di Lanzo, and we hoped by crossing a pass to Ceres to obtain a good view of the peaks at the head of the valley. I conclude this paper with a brief notice of our walk, chiefly because of the lesson it taught us. We were unluckily at the verge of Mr. Nichol's admirable map. May he be inspired to do for the South-western and Eastern Alps what he has done for the Central, must be the prayer of every traveller.

It is impossible not to grudge those two snowless northern sheets, and to regret the decision of the Committee by which the whole of the north of Switzerland was included. Mr. Ball's fine disregard of political boundaries might surely have been imitated. The importance given to these arbitrary lines in travellers' books or maps cannot be too often or too loudly protested against. Even M. Joanne, in many respects—witness his Indexes—the most enlightened of handbook-makers, gives maps of departments, and stops short on a pass because he has crossed from the Alpes Maritimes to the Basses Alpes. The argument once adduced by a German gentleman that travellers like to remain in their own country and among those who speak their own tongue, is the worst possible excuse. To

discourage and break down this liking, and thus to promote mutual knowledge and good feeling among neighbouring nations, is one of the first aims of foreign Alpine Clubs, and, though politicians may smile at such an agency, it will probably prove at least as effective as their old nostrum, a royal marriage.

But to return to the lesson we learnt from our Locana guide. Two valleys open southwards in the range opposite the village. We imagined we should take the westernmost. For some distance the same path leads to both. It would be hard to find a more delightful wood than it climbs through. The ground is shadowed by chestnuts, carpeted with cyclamens, and broken by the most picturesque tiers of fern-decked rocks. In the distance the snows of the Tour du Grand St. Pierre and Col de Telleccio are in sight. Where we first expected to turn to the right, our guide took the opposite direction. He checked our inquiries by the most positive assurances that he knew by heart the way to Ceres. For an hour more we wandered over hillsides, past scattered cottages and rich orchards. The pleasantness of the path made us forget our doubts, until noticing our companion in conversation, I found he was inquiring the way. Of course he had misled us, but we were now too much out of the right path to regain the other glen. We followed ours to its head, a narrow ridge (about 7,500 feet), hoping from the top to be able to see a way westwards. But a wet blanket of mist again concealed all view far or near. Our endeavour only brought us to very rough ground, and finally to one of the heads of the long glen which runs due south to Lanzo. The scenery is throughout pleasing and in parts rich, with fine views of the plain as the hills open; but the path we followed was abominable. There is said to be a better one on the left bank of the stream. We reached Lanzo in 7½ hours from Locana, and there took the railroad for Turin. I need hardly state the moral of our day. Among Italian hills 'Trust to a map, and do without local aid.' The intelligent peasants are generally too well off, or too busy, to care to leave home, and the innkeeper is apt to do an act of charity to the fool of the community at travellers' expense. Moreover, half the pleasure and amusement of quiet walks below the snow is lost when one has to follow anybody's will but one's own.