

taineer could desire. I was able to obtain several photographs on that day, some from Helvellyn, and two looking back towards the mountain after we had descended Striding Edge; and if the forms do not rival those of the great peaks, no one would deny to the scenery a genuine Alpine flavour. And this we can have in two or three quarters—in North Wales, in the Lakes, in Western Yorkshire—within a few hours, if we select the right time of year. Such expeditions, being of moderate length and involving no serious number of feet of vertical elevation, are within the compass of a winter day, without the necessity for uncomfortably early starts. And the absence of anything like heat makes climbing, to me at least, incomparably less fatiguing—better suited, perhaps, than Matterhorns or Aiguilles du Géant to the physical capacity of some of us who began to climb the Alps twenty years ago or more. Further, there is a great pleasure in being one's own guide, which in the Alps is limited by one's readiness to carry weight and to cut steps in case of need. There are places on the English mountains in abundance where a fool may break his neck—I use the word as a compendious means of describing those who go on the mountains without experience of their own or of guides, or who possessing the knowledge are too careless to act on it—but there are none where people of moderate skill and judgment may not perfectly well trust to themselves. Nor is bad weather the worst danger, in my opinion, of Alpine climbing without guides, to be dreaded in England. Distances are not great nor slopes excessive. No one with a compass can lose himself; it is difficult to get into a place where one cannot retrace one's steps if further advance is cut off. Nothing short of weather in which no sane man would choose to be out of doors need interfere with those who like walking in bad weather rather than not at all, or cause one any serious doubt of appearing punctually at dinner. That this miniature mountaineering, these Alpicular expeditions (if I may suggest a much-needed word) are as good as the real thing I should be the last even to hint; but are they not a bad substitute. Marmalade is not so nutritious as butter at breakfast, but it makes a change, and is more palatable to some tastes, and after all you can eat both together if you like. Members of the Oxford Alpine Club, who are blessed with two short vacations, are specially able, without prejudice to the summer claims of the High Alps, to enjoy their smaller counterparts.

THE OBERLAND IN APRIL.

By F. T. WETHERED.

Vides, ut alta stet nive candidum
 Soracte, nec jam sustineant onus
 Silvæ laborantes, geluque
 Flumina constiterint acuto.

THE poet of Tibur, when he sat down to the above alcaic, was clearly not in love with his mountains in winter. Horace was evidently a chilly mortal, and from his oft-repeated allusions to frost and snow he seems to have dreaded them not a little. Mountain landscapes

present in winter an appearance which must be witnessed to be in any way appreciated. And the different effects of light and shade are of course more noticeable in districts like the Oberland than in valleys, such as that of Zermatt, at a higher level. Deciduous trees are so numerous in the Oberland that when their leaves are cast the foregrounds are affected in a very marked degree. The month of April ranges itself unquestionably, in Alpine parlance, with the 'winter' half of the year. Most of the hôtels are still shut up, the trains are fewer, and the diligences and steamers follow suit. Such an hôtel as the Schweizerhof, at Lucerne, is pretty full with its birds of passage who are homeward-bound after a winter spent in the balmy south; but even the Schweizerhof with its façade of trimmed up and leafless chestnut trees is different from what we most of us recollect it. The *vis inertie* dominated. No touts, few tourists, still fewer red-covered Bäckers were to be seen on the quay as we went on board a steamer for a freshener to Brunnen, after a cold run out from Charing Cross, *via* Laon and Bâle, on April 19 last. Pilatus was stereotyped in the sharpened atmosphere, and looked much more of a mountain than in August or July. Lack of green on the lake shores was fully compensated by the subdued purple on the tiers of beech trees upon the Rigi slopes. The Engelberg ranges looked twice their normal size and were still very deep in snow. But the most beautiful mountain peep of all was in store for us from Brunnen, whence the Bristenstock upreared itself at the end of the Maderanerthal, though it looked much nearer in the rarefied air—a miniature Weisshorn of the best description.

The views from the lake next morning were even clearer than on the previous day as we steamed along its whole length of 27 miles to Flüelen on the way to Andermatt. The St. Gothard Railway took us on to Göschenen, and the walk thence was beautiful in the extreme, although not altogether secure from falling stones. Above the Devil's Bridge the Reuss skimmed down in sparkling torrents underneath fantastic snow caves, and on emerging from the Urnerloch, or Hole of Uri, which opens on to the plain of Andermatt, a gang of navvies shovelled up the débris of an avalanche which had recently come down from above. And then opened out a waste of snow, such as I have never set eyes on for its extent and beauty in the whole of my experience. As an icicle the little village stood up from its ghost-white shroud—an *ultima Thule* beyond description. Two enormous avalanches from the neighbourhood of the Six Madun had fallen ten days before, about midway between Andermatt and Hospenthal, and the whole plain was two feet deep in snow. Sleigh carts fetched hay from point to point. The 'coup de glace' once seen, was to be forgotten, never!

A long drive over the Brunig next day from Alpnach brought us the same evening late to Grindelwald. The sunset on the Mönch from the road between Interlaken and Zweilütschinen was superlatively grand. I had never seen a finer one even in July; the slopes seemed aglow with fire. Night had fairly set in when we reached the village, to find ourselves the only guests at our hôtel. 'We' consisted

of one of my sons and myself; and, as the former had never been on a glacier, next morning we cut up the icefall of the lower Eismeer, in company with Ulrich Almer, towards the Zäsenberg. How that glacier has shrunk since I first saw it in 1862! The surface of the glacier above the icefall was knee-deep and more in snow, and soft. Plunging into it was tiresome work, and eventually we contented ourselves on a friendly rock at the base of the Eiger, a little above the Bäregg chalet.

Next day we went up the Faulhorn. The Wengern Alp was much more deeply set in snow, and the view from the higher eminence was likely to be grand. We ascended by the Buss Alp, a route more interesting than that between the Röthihorn and Schwarzhorn, and perhaps shorter by half an hour. The sun was quite hot by eight o'clock. Shady pine woods led on to grass slopes. Carpets of crocuses, primulas, countless pansies, cardinellas, a few gentians, and white anemones were in flower at different levels. At last a rocky spur led on to a regular arête of snow; and then snow-fields in tolerably firm condition brought us on to an angle of the Simmelihorn, and shortly the summit of the Faulhorn, deep in snow, was reached. The Brienz water, rippled over with cold-looking wavelets, made a pleasing contrast to the vast glare of white by which we had mounted. The Oberland peaks stood out sharp as steel, although the Schreckhorn was unfortunately for the time in a cloud. The route to the east of the Simmelihorn seemed to present a far more laborious appearance than the one by which we had come up, so we gave up the idea of returning by it, as intended. A few glissades and a short floundering in the snow brought us down again to the Buss Alp.

Our stay at Grindelwald was not long. On the 25th the clouds were low, and avalanches shot down in abundance from the Eiger, Wetterhorn, and Männlichen all day. We witnessed an extremely fine one from the latter as we drove round to Lauterbrunnen in an einspanner. Lauterbrunnen looked a bit greener than the higher valley which we had left, but the water in the Staubbach was little. Next day it snowed hard at Grindelwald, and we made a bolt of it to Interlaken. The purple on the beeches was more mellow than a few days before. Alders were already breaking into green. Snow lay powdered on the Scheinige Platte, and altogether the Alps in April as we saw them are likely to be remembered by us for many a year.

IN MEMORIAM.

BERNARD STUDER AND IWAN VON TSCHUDI.

THE list of the honorary members of the Alpine Club is not a very long one, and there are not very many Swiss names on it. It is thus an extraordinary coincidence that within the same week two of that small band should have passed to their rest, Bernard Studer, the veteran Swiss geologist, and Iwan von Tschudi, the writer of the well-known Swiss guide-book.