Leaves from the Diary of the late Mr. A. T. Malkin.

[We are indebted to the courtesy of Mrs. Malkin both for copying the following extracts from her husband's diary and for permitting us to publish them. They are most interesting and valuable records of mountain travel before the foundation of the Alpine Club, and supplement the outline account of some of the same excursions which has appeared in these pages ('Alpine Journal,' vol. x. pp. 44-5). A few brief notes, mainly identifications of places, have been added, and are distinguished from the original text by being placed within square brackets.]

1839.

The Wengern Alp and Faulhorn.

July 12.—Over Wengern Alp to Grindelwald. To chalet facing Jungfrau 2½ hrs., summit ½ hr.; descent 3 hrs. First hr. very steep, after that reasonably easy; over mountain pasturage chiefly. View of Jungfrau, Mönch, Eiger magnificent; saw no avalanche, but heard many. The view from the summit finest of all, where the valley of Grindelwald, Mettenberg, Wetterhorn, are added to what was seen before. Descent less steep than ascent. 'Aigle Noir' at Scheideck end of village; very civil; comfortable, good house, no fleas. Evening to foot of lower glacier, about 20 minutes' walk. Vault over the river considerable, but much choked with fallen ice.

July 13.—To the Eismeer. M. A. on horse-back for ¾ hr., then in a *chaise à porteurs* 1½ hr. more. A promenade on the ice 1 hour about, then return 2½: total 5½ hrs. Way on the east side very steep, and some time nervous; made for transit of sheep to the upper pastures of the Mettenberg. Glacier firm and solid, though plenty of crevasses but seldom wide. We walked over scores. Saw two most singular and striking waterfalls *in* the glacier —considerable streams going down headlong into the blue gulf. You can see a long way, but how far nobody knows. The porters capital. I believe this to be the most luxurious mode of travelling that ever was invented. Two only, 4 francs each, *pourboire* 1 = 10 francs. M. A. obliged to walk in many places. The scene most superb when enclosed in this vast amphitheatre of ice and snow, and again most singular on coming again in sight of Grindelwald; it looks like something unreal, a great green carpet with Swiss cottages worked on it, hung out slanting to dry. Altogether a most delightful excursion, and neither danger nor difficulty except a little fatigue. Evening to upper glacier; near an hour's walk thither. It seems to project farther

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into the valley, and I think is rather firmer than the lower, but don't well know. It is less loaded with rubbish.

July 14.—Up the Faulhorn; near 5 hrs. The lower part of the ascent is steep until the valley, in which lies the little Bachalp lake, is fairly entered, to do which takes about 2 hrs. Another hour or more from the foot of the valley to the lake; not steep, but long and rather dull; and then another hour of rather steep ascent to the top. About 20 min. or more over one large bed of snow. The view of the great chain very fine, from neighbourhood of the Grimsel to the Blümlis Alp. The sunset most magnificent. No rosy tints on the Alps, but a heavy mass of clouds behind them, glowing as with the furnaces of ten thousand Merthyr Tydvils, while the sun himself set in the middle of molten rubies. The lake, however, was but faintly visible, and all the low country massed in haze and shadow. The sunrise was clear, but not so fine as the sunset; however it showed all the country from the Titlis to the Pilatus very distinctly, which we had not seen well the night before. The quarters of course are not of the best; however we got tolerable coffee, and good bread, butter, and milk. No fleas. Charges not out of the way, considering—15 francs for tea, breakfast, and lodging for two.

Tschingel Pass.

August 26.—Left Lauterbrunnen at 9 o'clock for the Schmadribach and Steinberg. Reached foot of Schmadribach in a little more than 3 hrs., taking it very easy. Climbed to the top, or near, on the right-hand (rather stiff; the ascent on the left is easier), 1¼ hr.; thence round under the glacier, crossing the head of the valley close under the Tschingel Glacier, and back to the chalet on the Steinberg, between 2 and 3 hrs. from the Schmadribach. This is a most splendid walk, and well worth the attention of those who do not mean to cross the Tschingel. From the Steinberg chalet to Lauterbrunnen descending may be 3 hrs.; ascending, an easy 4—sleeping in hay, none of the best.

August 27.—Started from the Steinberg, reached foot of glacier in 25 min., and after traversing it for about 30 min. arrived at the foot of the rocks, on the right-hand side. Here began a steep climb, much of it regular scramble, hand and foot, but with little real danger. In less than 1½ hr. from the chalet we reached a green slope, having passed the worst. After this there is a laborious climb of

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another ½ hr. to the top of the rocks, making near 2 hrs. from the chalet. The views of the Jungfrau and Ammertenthal superb. Shortly after reaching the top of the rocks we again came on the glacier, which extends in a vast, unbroken field of ice for another 1½ hr. to the top of the pass. Few large crevasses to pass and little or no danger. A fresh fall of snow of some inches increased the fatigue much. The Tschingel Horn, an insulated peak, rises in the middle of the glacier. Beyond it the chain of Alps seems to be little elevated above the passage, which is very high—I should think upwards of 9,000 feet [9,265 feet]. To the right are passed the precipices of the Steinberg, and a dark row of peaks, which we took to be the S. side of the Blümlis Alp, but could not get at the name.* From the summit sloped gradually to the south side of the glacier, the edge of which we reached in less than 1¼ hr., rather more than 4 hrs. from our first setting forth on it. The descent very steep and severe—at first over muddy moraines, then green slopes, then a steep descent of stones, which is very long and very fatiguing. The glacier superb, especially when it takes its first leap from the upper valley to the lower one; it beats any which I have yet seen. Thence it descends a long way into the valley. The path, difficult and fatiguing, lies between the rocky side of the valley and the wall of ice formed by the glacier, which keeps its own bounds, clear from the rocks, in a most singular manner. Reached end of glacier near 2 hrs. after quitting the ice; passed a village in another ½ hr. or more, and in another 1½ hr. reached Kandersteg, after a rapid walk of 9 hrs. Found many bees and some dragon- and butterflies on the highest fields of the glacier, and saw a flock of 18 or 20 chamois not very distant. They are said to abound in these mountains. The scenery of the high glacier in sublimity hardly reached my expectations, owing to the great height we reached, which made the surrounding peaks look insignificant.

Lauener, of Lauterbrunnen, best guide for the Tschingel. Rudolph Michel a good guide at Interlaken.

The Gasterenthal from the foot of the glacier appears to be most exquisitely beautiful, enclosed by the most abrupt rocks, abounding in glorious waterfalls. Judging from our very imperfect view, I should think there was hardly a finer valley in Switzerland. The entrance very remarkable.

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* Lampeberg [probably Gamchiberg].

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The Buet.

September 7.—Ladies to Chamounix, self and E. J. to Servoz—round, thus far, very magnificent. We were fortunate in having a most clear, unclouded view of Mont Blanc. Left the party to proceed, and turned up the valley, north of Servoz, to ascend the Buet. The ascent for the first two hours very steep, passing below a magnificent wall of rocks—the Rocher des Fys—then landed in a beautiful upland valley, leaving on the left the Col d'Anterne. Pass a large collection of chalets, after which you wind round a corner of the mountain and descend considerably, mounting again before reaching the chalets of Villy, the highest in the valley. These lie less than an hour from its head, where the ascent of the Buet itself may be said to commence. The valley, from the time that the vale of Servoz is shut out, has much of the Scotch character—green and bare, turf broken by faces and peaks of rock. It is desolate and grand. To the right the Brévent, and the Aiguilles Rouges, a superb chain of rocks. View of Mont Blanc from the chalets splendid at sunset and sunrise. Top of Buet not visible. From the valley the ascent begins over steep green rises [?] intersected by beds of snow filling the ravines. A very steep and difficult ascent of rotten slate succeeds, the most laborious part of the whole. To the top of this from the chalets 2 hrs., where you find yourself on the edge of the ridge which divides the Val Orsine from the valley descending to Servoz. More to the south is the Col de Bérard, a high pass communicating more directly between Servoz and the Val Orsine. (N.B.—Keller places this on the other side of the Buet.) The view of the Aiguilles Rouges and the Aiguilles du Tour and d'Argentière, Col de Balme, &c., is superb, though of course inferior to that from the summit. After following the crest for a short time another long and steep bank of slate is to be mounted, then a large field of snow, steep enough to be of some difficulty when the snow-face is hard. After surmounting this you find yourself on a sort of wall of rock, the backbone of the mountain, with glaciers sloping down on either hand and 4 or 5 feet broad. This extends, perhaps, for 200 yards; then you enter again on the last glacier, which leads with a gentle slope to the summit. On either side deep rifts are visible in the ice, in one of which, on the N. side, a traveller [M. Eschen. See 'Alpine Journal,' vol. xiii. pp. 179–82] met his death in 18[00]. The middle is sound and free from danger. The air was not

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clear, and flying clouds continually scudded over the hill. It is said that a perfectly clear day on the Buet is a thing of rare occurrence—the next was eminently brilliant. None of the mountains on the N. side of the Valais were visible, nor the Jura, nor Lake of Geneva. On the other hand, the whole chain of Mont Blanc from the Dôme du Gouté to the Aiguille du Tour was seen at intervals in the utmost splendour, and this is acknowledged by those who have been also on the Brévent, &c., to be far the finest view of the great mountain. The Aiguilles Rouges and the Brévent form a magnificent screen of pyramids of dark rock, while between them and the Buet the valley of Val Orsine lies far beyond the reach of the eye.

To the north the valley of Sixt extends, and the Môle is visible as a green hillock. Little to be seen in the direction of the Dent d'Oche or Dent du Midi. The head of the valley of Sixt, the Fer à Cheval, is said to be remarkable, but could not be seen. Large wreaths of snow prevented our approaching the edge of the mountain and interfered with the near view on that side. The ascent from Villy occupied $3\frac{3}{4}$ hours of hard work, making at least 8 hours from Servoz. The descent to the head of the Val Orsine is very steep and very grand. It follows the way up near to the place where we gained the col, then turns to the left, and continues very steep over sheets of rock, interspersed with beds of snow, sometimes down a precipitous watercourse—lower, over steep green banks broken by rock. Some parts of this descent are among the wildest things that I have seen. To get down to what may be called the head of the Val Orsine took about 3 hrs., thence to the village about $1\frac{1}{4}$ hr. more, down a very grand valley. The last descent commands a soft and beautiful view. Turn to the right across the fields just before reaching the village, and keep on for the top of the pass between the valley and that of Chamounix. Val Orsine to Argentière $1\frac{1}{4}$, thence Argentière to Chamounix $1\frac{1}{2}$; total, $3\frac{3}{4} + 4\frac{1}{2} + 2\frac{1}{2} = 10\frac{3}{4}$ hrs. The descent of the valley of Chamounix, varied by its numerous glaciers, is very fine. 'Hôtel de Londres' comfortable but fleecy. Landlord an old guide, and said to be a very respectable and trustworthy person; name Tairraz.

1840.

[*Waldensian Valleys.*] *Col de la Croix.*

July 2.—Started alone on foot from La Tour [Torre Pellice] for the Col de la Croix. Not much ascent to Bobi

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[Bobbio], 2 hrs. through a very beautiful valley, richly wooded with chestnut and walnut; luxuriant meadows, vineyards on the hill-sides. At Bobi the ascent begins and continues without intermission, and generally pretty sharp, to Pra, 3½ to 4 hrs. The lower part up to the limit of the chestnut is the most picturesque part of the valley, the sides rising in broken knolls upwards to a great height, the mountain peaks, when visible, jagged and black. Decent wine at Villeneuve [Villanova], rather more than half-way to Pra, a mountain basin, with a very poor inn, savage and not pleasing. Here they grow rye or barley. Turn directly up the col, a very steep ascent of 1¼ to 1½ hr., very beautiful, through scattered pines. Much rhododendron in blossom. Top of the col above the growth of the trees, and the grass thin—probably upwards of 7,000 ft. Thence to La Monta an hour of rapid descent after the first ½ mile or so. The valley of the Guil is bare and not very picturesque. The inn at La Monta is a regular mountain farm house, unplastered, dark, and dirty, but I got a good bed. Eggs, white bread, wine, and coffee, and much civility, at a small price; and may be recommended, instead of descending to Abriès, to come up again to Monte Viso the following day.

July 3.—Tried to reach the Traversette, as the Col de Viso is called. The valley is grand and large, but not very picturesque; one of its great beauties is the luxuriance of its pastures and the abundance of flowers. High up the valley acres are covered with anemones and violets; the latter are gathered by the women, and sold to persons who come up the valley to collect them at the rate of from 20 to 25 sous the pound of dry leaves, to make which takes 4 or 5 pounds of fresh. Monte Viso is said to be famous for its plants, and much resorted to by botanists and herbalists. On each side the higher ridges were of black rugged rocks, and Monte Viso itself, which fills up the head of the valley, is a grand pile of dark rocks, interspersed with extensive fields of snow and ice, but lacking the extent and grandeur of the Swiss glaciers. From La Monta to the col I should think would occupy about 4 hrs.; the ascent is continued, but not rapid, until within less than an hour of the col. An unusual quantity of snow having fallen last winter, there is much more than usual at this time, and the morning's rain and the lateness of the hour having much softened the snow, the guide was unwilling to go on, and I unwillingly obliged to turn back; to which, however, I was somewhat more reconciled by seeing the clouds gathering heavy on the

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Italian side of the Alps. Out from 9.30 to 5, or thereabouts.

July 4.—Returned by Col de la Croix to La Tour. From La Monta to Pra, 2¼ hrs., taking it easy; Pra to Bobi, 2¾ hrs., not including 10 min. rest; Bobi to La Tour, 2 hrs., pretty sharp. Total, 7 hrs. 10 min., stoppages included.

First Visit to Zermatt and Saas. Tour of Monte Rosa.

August 6.—*Char* to Tourtemagne, and found the Valais dull, as before. Walked to Visp, 2½ hrs., and slept at the 'Poste.' Beds clean, eating baddish, charges low. Auguries of rain.

August 7.—Fine morning, but lowering over Bernese Alps, and their threats changed into doings before 10 o'clock. Started at 6, reached Stalden at 7.30 and St. Nicolas about 9.30. To Stalden tolerably level, but beyond it steep ascent nearly to St. Nicolas. The valley is a deep trench, with very high sides, which generally exclude the highest peaks and go right down into the river. Above St. Nicolas it becomes broader and more fertile, having rich meadows and several villages before reaching Zermatt, which we did, coming slow in company with M. de la Rive and his horse, in 5 hrs. About 1½ hr. from St. Nicolas a splendid fall, high in the mountains and seemingly almost inaccessible. The approach to Zermatt is also fine. Wet from 10 to 12, and again in the afternoon, and the clouds always too heavy to see the scenery to advantage.

August 8.—Weather uncertain, so stayed here and made excursion towards Monte Rosa. Ascent of the Reifel [Riffel] begins across the river, just opposite Zermatt, first through larch forest—bad path—then over pasturages and up a steep rocky slope, until you turn to the left, and passing by a good cow path along a steep hill-side reach the first view of Monte Rosa, 2½ hrs. from Zermatt. 1½ hr. of this at least might be ridden. Another stage of ¾ hr. takes you under the Reifelhorn to a second and better point, commanding the whole of Monte Rosa. Five great glaciers sweep down from the main chain. To westward first the Glacier St. Théodule, next the Breithorn Gletscher in two branches, next the Glacier de Monte Rosa, next the Gorner Gletscher, coming down from the Gornerhorn [or Höchste Spitze of Monte Rosa], into which all the others fall, and which sweeps down into the valley of Zermatt, being called by Keller the Zermatt Glacier. The tops never quite clear—still a fine day—perfect solitude and wildness. Another stage, easy, of ¾ hr. brought us to a third point, overlooking the Findelthal, up which lies the way to

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Macugnaga—a long and difficult passage beside the Findel Gletscher and over the Weissthor. This point commands noble views also across the valley of Matterhorn and the mountains towards the Turtmanthal, among which the Trift Gletscher, from which the stream of Zermatt comes down, is remarkable. No passage to the Turtmanthal, but one, not difficult, up the Staufel, or Zmutt Gletscher, to the Eringerthal—5 or 6 hours over ice, but not difficult. More difficult is the passage to Saas—10 hours. All these might be recommended to a well-practised walker. From the third point to the foot of the Gorner Gletscher, where the river issues, is 1 hr. 20 min.—fast. This is the most picturesque part of the valley—corn, meadows, forest, ice, all close together. The stream is very powerful, and issues from a deep, but not high cave; it is confined within its banks, so that there is none of the ugly waste ground at the source of the Arveiron. And there is no moraine, perhaps because the glacier is advancing—you go close to it on the turf. Thence to Zermatt ¾ hr., very picturesque, over grassy knolls, with a rapid descent. Total about 6 hours' walking, including the détour to the glacier—very interesting and pleasant.

August 9.—Started for St. Théodule at 20 min. to 6. Morning beautiful. Thermometer at 5, 46°. Ascended by a higher route than that by which we came from the glacier—through the hamlet of Zumsee, leaving Zmutt much on the right. This part of the valley, as before, very picturesque, the Gorner Gletscher below adding much to its beauty, much resembling the Bossons. After leaving the forests and meadows, which lie generally on a steep ascent and are broken into beautiful knolls, the way lies over a steep hillside, leading up to a ravine, to the E. side of which you cross by a bridge, 1½ hr. from Zermatt. From hence the ascent continues 50 min. to the foot of the moraines, which the path skirts, over rocks, stones, and earth sodden by the melted snow, for 40 min., the paved mule path being visible from time to time. We mounted the glacier over the slope—not rapid—of snow; indeed, except at intervals, the ice was completely covered with snow, which usually bore well. After 25 min. on the ice we came to a bare pile of stones, rested 10 min., and pursued our course to the col—distant about 1 hr. We did not, however, reach it in that time, having stayed to trace the new tracks of three persons which crossed our path, leading towards the foot of the Breithorn. Paccard followed them as far as he durst—to the edge of the crevasses—and found the tracks still leading onwards, three

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abreast. It appeared that they had missed the col and descended by a glissade from the high rocks, nearer to Mont Cervin, having mounted from Breuil on that side, and wholly missed the way. The view from the higher part of the glacier is magnificent—to the right the Matterhorn, which, however, was never clear; to the left the Kleiner Matterhorn, the Breithorn, Lyskamm, Monte Rosa, Stockhorn, Gornerhorn [probably means the Gornergrat here], all forming part of the same splendid chain, almost wholly snow and glittering like silver in the morning sun. The Mont Fée [Mischabel] clear and beautiful; the fine mountains at the head of the Turtmanthal always clouded. On the opposite side the view down into the Val Tournanche is also splendid; it is enclosed by a black wall of rocks of enormous height, from which the Matterhorn seems to rise in an unbroken precipice. But the Matterhorn was never clear. On the farther side of Val d'Aosta the mountains of the Val de Cogne, or Grisanche, formed magnificent objects. Ice on both sides covered with snow, and no crevasses on the route, which lies diagonally across the glacier, from N.E. to S.W. by compass. To the right lie dangerous glaciers towards Mont Cervin; to the left, others as bad, below the Breithorn; so that good guides and good weather are needed: with them there is no danger. Towards Piedmont the way to Breuil lies nearly at right angles to the path on the other side; another course, to the left, leads over the glaciers of the Cimes Blanches to Ayas, Val Challant, in about 5 hrs., of which 2 must be over the glacier. This is the best way for those who wish to go to Macugnaga, being at least 3 hrs. shorter than by descending to Breuil. I took the latter course, cleared the glacier in 40 min.—quick—and in 1 hr. 30 min. more reached the higher chalets of Breuil. No crevasses visible, though the guide took the precaution of tying us together, and no difficulty in the descent afterwards, which, however, is steep. This hamlet is above the larches, and the valley owes its grandeur to the magnificent wall of rocks and the glaciers at its head. It has no beauty. Heard at Breuil that 3 persons had been seen to pass; one said 2 travellers and guide, another 3 travellers without guide: nothing certain to be known. Reached Breuil 1.30, left at 2.25 to commence a steep ascent towards Ayas. Reached the top of the first mountain-line at 4.40, and found that our guide was out of his bearings. Below a deep offset of the Val Tournanche, the head of which we should have crossed—not an hour's affair—to the

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white rocks, the Cimes Blanches, opposite, south of which lies the passage; descent steep, but free from precipices. Descended to some chalets—50 min.—and found that we had an hour's mount again to aforesaid Cimes Blanches, which we reached at 6.55. Thence, after getting down the first stony declivity, the way lies over short pastures, past several chalets, and to St. Giacomo—in reality must be two short hours. We missed it altogether, kept too long on the W. side of the stream, and, after wandering in the dark amidst a larch forest till I thought we should have to sleep there, at last got to the village of Fraschez [Frachay]—or some such name—which we had passed by mistake near an hour before, at 10.13, knocked up a good peasant named Jean Joseph Villermatt [Vuillermet], who gave us wine, bread and cheese, and nice bed where the bugs—if there were any—did not bite. Good coffee next morning. Paid 6 francs for all three. Some fine lads about—hunters—who speak French and would make good guides. From the time that you get into the lower valley and region of trees the Val Challant is very beautiful. Seen imperfectly by the moon, which glittered on the Breithorn above, nothing could have been more romantic, if we had known where we were to sleep, and had not been 14 hrs. and more on foot.

August 10.—Left Ayas at 10—or rather Fraschez. Ascent very steep through larch woods for ½ hr. or more, but by a very good mule path. This ascent surmounted, skirt upwards, still through the larch woods, to reach the Furca di Betta, which is 3 not hard hours from Fraschez. I do not recollect that there is any snow to speak of on either side, nor from the summit much view, except of the mountains the other side of the Val d'Aosta. Descent rapid. About the second chalet (I think) a path turns off to the left to go to the upper part of La Trinité de Gressoney, a long scattered village, while another continues to the *auberge*, &c., the best part of an hour lower. Took the former, and had magnificent views of the Lyskamm, and two great glaciers sweeping down to form the Lys Gletscher at the head of the valley, which is one of the finest in the Alps. Rock, river, rich pasturages, larch forests, glaciers,* and mountains are

* The Lys Gletscher comes very low, and is formed by the union of two magnificent branches, which stream down from the summit of the Lyskamm. Near the chapel there is a remarkably picturesque spot on the river, close to the road; it has hollowed itself out a very deep channel, across which a mass of rock has fallen, which makes a natural bridge, leading to the chapel and hamlet. There is another

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here combined. Refused a bed at the mansion of the millionaire at the head of the valley, also at the little inn. Finally, about 4 o'clock, took up our quarters in a barn filled with dry hay, where we passed the night undisturbed till 4 o'clock in the morning.

August 11.—Started at 4.15 for Col d'Ollen. Morning coldish. Ascent rapid, commanding fine views down the valley, and from time to time partial views of the Lyskamm, &c. Reached a mountain plain or basin where several chalets are scattered. Stopped to breakfast at the highest, the handsomest and best I have seen in the Alps—a large stone building, with an inner apartment containing two good beds, parted off. Good provision of utensils and everything beautifully clean. Mistress a civil and obliging woman, who lives at Aosta and comes with her cows first to Gressoney in the spring, then to a lower chalet, then here, where she had been about 15 days. *Café au lait*, made by boiling a quantity of milk and then stirring into it a spoonful or two of coffee; result very good. Thermometer, 7 o'clock, 46°. Gressoney to this chalet 1 hr. 30 min., thence to summit of col 1 hr. 10 min., about 20 min. over snow. The point of passage, a mere ridge, is marked by some remarkable rocks, an insulated point, with a higher mass near it overhanging its base. Mountains much clouded, so that I can say little of the distant views, but every now and then some of the high points of Monte Rosa broke through the mist, with the appearance, and indeed the reality, of enormous height. Descent rapid and stony. Instead of taking the course S.E. towards Alagna, kept N.E., winding by a laborious pathless course along the mountain-side, in and out, and finally ascending under a wall of dark rocks nearly to our original height (1 hr. 50 min.), where we stopped a few minutes by a small pond, and then began a rapid descent, which brought us in 45 min. to the first group of chalets, called, I understood, the Chalets de Riva. Passed on the way a very lofty waterfall of considerable body. All this a very fine specimen of rock and turf scenery. The higher mountains probably are not visible; at all events the clouds hindered me from seeing them. Descend from the chalets by a very steep staircase, for such literally it is, and on turning the lofty peninsula on

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bridge, near ½ hr. higher, above the great house. Still higher the meadows near the house where we slept were beautiful in themselves and command beautiful views. Downwards towards St. Jean de Gressoney the valley also seems to be very beautiful.

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which they stand a magnificent view opens up into the heart of Monte Rosa, from which a glacier streams far down into the valley, the upper part of which seems to be a mere mass of stones, while from the sides green mountains, covered with larches below, rise with a very steep slope. If the river were low, and one could cross it here or a little higher, and file round the opposite mountain towards the Pas de Turloz, it would probably save an hour's time and a great descent. As it was both guides pronounced it impossible to pass; and we had to descend about 40 min. more to the first bridge—a very rapid descent through larch woods, &c. The situation of the bridge is remarkable—by a huge mass of rock against which another has fallen, so that you pass under a kind of Cyclopean arch to reach it from above. Here you meet the road from Alagna, which lies a good hour below, to the Turloz [the Turlo Pass]. Stopped 20 min. to eat a roll and drink half our wine, and then began the second pass at 12.20, much to the dissatisfaction of our German guide, who had for some time declared it impossible to get to Macugnaga that day, to Paccard's great amusement. The ascent is by a mule path, extremely steep and almost dangerous, to the first chalets, about 40 min., if I recollect; then keep filing always up, up, steep, steep, until, turning as it seemed round the head of the valley, we found ourselves, in 2 hrs. 30 min., above a large bed of snow in the bottom of the valley. After this, pursuing the same course, crossed a considerable bed of snow, and came again upon thin herbage, along which we passed to the col—a hollow filled with snow —between which and a rock we passed, on the N. side. The passage is not, however, where we would expect, but more to the N., marked by a cross, which, however, we did not see till near the summit. A well-traced path winds, keeping to the left, up to it, which, however, must be covered with snow until late in the year. Saw a chamois, not far off, on the opposite side, and many of their tracks in the course of the day. Also in descending to Breuil on Sunday saw a marmot; and to-day, after passing the Col d'Ollen, a blue hare; also three ptarmigan descending towards Breuil. The top of the pass, again, is a mere ridge. It is worth while to mount the rocks to the right; you can descend on the snow. Here again clouds hindered my view. The scene, however, is very grand, though I doubt whether the higher peaks of Monte Rosa are visible. Descend over a deep bed of snow, but no glacier; a famous place for a glissade when the snow is hard. I should have said that we reached the col in

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3 hrs. 20 min., including a loss of some minutes by going too high. Going steadily, but not quick, it might be done well by fresh legs in 3 hrs. from the bridge or 4 from Alagna. Keep well to the left in crossing the snow, then descend rocks, and keep well to the right again. Made a famous glissade over a long bed of snow, and turned a very good somerset. After clearing the snow the descent is very steep and very bad, over beds of rhododendron and bilberries, for the mountains rise like a wall round the head of the valley, which we reached in 1 hr. 10 min. from the summit, and I verily believe it would be near 3 hours' hard climbing. Thence to the junction of the two valleys 1 hr. 15 min.—quick. Instead, however, of descending with the stream you take a higher path round the hillside, and reach the plain of Macugnaga just by a small hamlet [Borca], where the river is crossed by a bridge. Thence a short, sharp ascent to Macugnaga, 30 min. from the point of turning. After reaching the valley at the foot of the Turloz the descent is uniform and not steep, through a beautiful valley of larches, rocks, and clear streams; but Paccard strode away inexorably, being, as I imagine, resolved to reach his quarters before nightfall, which we effected, arriving at Macugnaga at 7.5; otherwise one could willingly have loitered in this beautiful valley. From the peninsula which you pass over the view down towards Pestarena and upwards is very superb, and must be far more so when the high mountains are visible. Inn better than it seems; bed clean, people civil; for the eating, very so-so. The master, Paccard tells me, is blind—I did not find it out, for he goes about his little house as well as another man—also miserably deformed.* Professes to have four good beds—of which I got the worst—and can get others. In fine weather more might be borne for Monte Rosa.

August 12.—Night and morning soaking rain; clouds low. Wished to stay for a clear day, but was advised by Paccard to go, as the day was likely to be worse to-morrow, according to the testimony of a man on whom he seemed to place much reliance. Never saw a bit of glacier of Monte Rosa, but started at 11.30 with sun clear above the mist, and the hope of getting above the clouds, which was not quite disappointed. The lower part of the ascent is extremely picturesque, up a rapid slope, between two streams, which form the most varied and beautiful cascade—a considerable

* [For some account of Gaspard Verra see the extracts given in Mr. Coolidge's *Swiss Travel and Swiss Guide-Books*, pp. 232–3.]

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height. The steep hill-side is composed of rocks intermixed with the bright green turf, larches, and a profusion of excellent bilberries, or blackberries, be they which they may; so that every three minutes all three of us were on our knees picking, to the detriment of my trousers and of the journey. However we got on steadily if not quick. Reached chalet easily by 1.25, and found a set of churls who would neither give nor sell milk. Ascent thus far very rapid. I say nothing of the view, for I had none, except of the immediate neighbourhood—sometimes a peep at some high peak, and, after we had mounted high, always breaks of the glorious blue sky overhead—an Alpine sky, blue and clear as the Mediterranean—always rocks at hand. But the view from these heights down into the deep valley of Macugnaga with Monte Rosa and her maids of honour is said to be, and must be, one of the finest things in the Alps, or the world. Reached patches of snow at 2.25, and avoiding them as much as possible began a regular scramble up the rocks, which are slaty and highly inclined in the stratification, at 2.45. At 3.5 reached the top of them, and found a *plan*, or basin of snow, with a wall of snow stretching right across it. Slanted up to the rocks on the left hand over soft snow—steep and laborious—and reached the col [the Monte Moro] at 3.20, about 3½ hrs. going from Macugnaga. I think Keller's height (7,750 feet) must be wrong: the pass, judging from the absence of vegetation and the quantity of snow, has every appearance of being higher—much—than the Furca, perhaps even than the Col des Fours.* Views towards Switzerland clearer, but all the high mountains clouded. Walked to the edge of descent, between the rocks on the right hand and an elevated peak (on the other side of which, I believe, is the descent to Antrona), but could get no view towards Italy. Towards the N. a wild, sterile, grand mountain basin, a snow-covered glacier, in which the crevasses were visible, streaming down some hundreds of feet on either side snowy mountains, their peaks hidden in the clouds; further dark mountain-sides, broken on the W. by two grey glaciers extending into the valley, and one of them completely blocking it up four or five miles below. Ascent from S.W. to N.E. Descent N. by compass, avoiding the glacier in the centre of the hollow, and keeping high over steep tracts of soft snow—too soft,

* [According to the latest surveys the Monte Moro is 9,390 feet, the Col des Fours 8,891 feet, and the Furca 7,993 feet in height.]

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and indeed too much inclined, for a slide. Stopped ½ hr. on top, and began descent at 3.50. 15 min.—quick—cleared the first great bed of snow, after which for some time the descent is very steep on rocks, with a good mule path at intervals, occasionally broken by avalanches or torrents, but always passable. Paccard says that a mule in a fortnight might pass very well; on the S. side there is, high up, a made road, which I believe takes an easier and longer circuit than that by which I ascended, which is far too steep for anything laden, though assisted occasionally by steps cut in the worst parts. Crossed another and a third steep slope of snow, streaming down the hill-side. Not good for weak nerves, the slant being very great and the depth not trifling; but good footing and no danger. Left the last at 4.45, and in 20 min. reached the highest chalets at Destal [Distel], where we stayed 20 min., drank milk, and ate bread. Remains visible of several chalets that have been destroyed by avalanches; those now existing have, next the hill, pointed dykes of huge stones to turn and break the force of the falling masses. Left Destal at 5.25, being told it was 3 hrs. to Saas, so made what speed we might. Below Destal a swampy plain, sometimes filled with water, produced by a glacier which dams the valley. Above Destal one grand and immense glacier streams down from the Mittaghorn [?]; then a second, which at one time has pushed itself right across the valley, as is plain from the moraines on the E. side. Then comes the third, forming a solid mound of ice 150 or 200 feet high across the valley, under which the furious river burrows and rushes out below like the Arveiron. The breadth of this dam is probably not less than a mile, and below it is remarkably pure and blue, a beautiful object. The upper valley has fine pastures, but is wholly bare—not a tree nor stick even, hardly a rhododendron—it is a great trench for avalanches to fall into, with sides extremely steep and extremely high. We passed the remains of many. One remarkable mass had encircled a huge fallen stone, big enough to cut into a dozen Borrowdale Bowder stones. The snow had melted about it, and we could see the thickness, which certainly was not less than 25 to 30 feet; the height of the rock above the snow considerably more, probably from 70 to 80 feet in the whole. The path, generally good, rises high, to clear the glacier, and then makes a rapid descent to the second level of the valley. Here larches begin, and there is a remarkable stripe of them, extending on as it were up between two branches of the

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glacier. Reached the middle of this barrier of ice in 40 min., i.e. at 6.5; a group of chalets—name Saasky [?]—at 6.35; a second group at 7, about which there is a riant lovely plain, with the Rothhorn, or one of the high mountains towards the Simplon, just peeping down into it through a fold in the mountain-side. Below this is a remarkably strong dyke, built to contain the river, and the centre of the valley is occupied by a vast mass of sand and rocks, the remnant of some former flood, on which beautiful young larches of 20 and 30 feet are just beginning to grow. Higher than this spot the road through the larch woods is sometimes extremely picturesque, but none of the best for mules. One part is very remarkable, strewn with large stones and apparently denuded of earth; yet scattered larches grow in every variety of picturesque deformity, and a large proportion are broken right off about the middle, apparently by the furious winds which sweep the valley in winter; not by avalanches, for higher up the hill-side the forest is whole and flourishing. Another thing worth observing is the build of the many bridges which span this formidable torrent. Natural abutments of rock there are hardly any, but a broad arch is made by abutments of stones, then two layers of trees, each projecting 8 or 10 feet over the mass below, and balanced by heavy stones and timber placed over the abutments; resting on these, some long trunks of larches span what remains of the river. The valley as we descend becomes less savage and more beautiful, with visions of the snowy peaks on either side from time to time. Looking up, the glacier seems to close the valley; there can be nothing beyond but mountain summits and eternal ice; it is impossible to imagine that above it there is a large plain, chalets, pigs, cows, and men. Reached Almagell, where is the highest church, at 7.12, and thence by a level and admirable road, like one through a park, to Saas, at 7.45—8½ hrs., including about 1 hr. stoppage, or rather more. From Destal very quick, and indeed the whole descent, which took 3 hrs. 45 min., pretty well.

August 13.—Started at 5.50; a beautiful morning. Thermometer 40°. Moritz Zurbrucken's beds are, I believe, unexceptionable, except one tiny flea; his honey delicious, butter and bread not bad, and chamois excellent, coffee too strong of the water. But Moritz himself is a capital fellow, and his favourite maxim, 'Pazienza nelle montagne,' is really hardly necessary in his house. Moreover he is a capital hunter, and reputed a first-rate guide, and as civil and more solicitous than any smart waiter. He was in great spirits at having

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killed lately four chamois at the same time with two double rifles, as far as I could make out his 'Crack, crack, tombe, tombe,' by the flesh of which I profited, and found it better than any I have yet eaten, tender and juicy. Started at 5.50. About Saas the valley is soft and lovely, and so continues longer than I had supposed. In about 1½ hr. it begins to assume that deep gorge-like character which henceforth marks it to Stalden, and renders it extremely remarkable, though *not* a rival of the Via Mala. At 7.20 observed a barrier of rock extending completely across the valley, but cut down by the water as by the chisel to a great depth. Before this must have been a lake, and in the rounded forms of the upper side of the rock I thought the action of water was plainly visible. Again ¼ hr. and the path passes along an almost precipice, at an immense height, where there are some of the noblest larches, two in particular, that I have yet seen. Shortly after a narrow bridge—not in the road—spans the gulf; it is well worth while to descend. A stone dropped from the rock falls on the opposite side of the stream and takes 3 seconds to descend. A second bridge, perhaps ½ hr. lower, is still more remarkable—hard by a cluster of houses. Yet on the whole, fine as this valley is, I think it hardly comes up to Brockedon's description. The bridge over the Zermatt stream, before reaching Stalden, is a very striking point of view. Stalden in 3 hrs., i.e. at 8.50. Visp is another 1½ hr. easy; the descent from Stalden softer, but very beautiful. Total, Saas to Visp, 4½ hrs.; Visp to Sion, 7 hrs. by *char*. Day clear and beautiful, eheu! for Monte Fée, and the Staufel Gletscher; Croix Blanche. Sion.

Col de Cheville.

August 14.—Started from Sion for Bex by the Diablerets, 5.45. Mem.: Inn both cheap and good, but a suspicion of bugs. Crossed bridge over Morge at 6.25, and turned off the highroad, and in 10 min. began the ascent of the hill, passing through a long scattered village. Neither Paccard nor I quite fresh, and he with a bad foot, so walked all to-day gently, and made 1 hr. 35 min. of gradual ascent, commanding very beautiful views of the Valais, until at 8.10 we turned a corner of rock and came into the very remarkable glen of the Lizerne, a deep chasm rent in the limestone rocks on the W. side; at top, bare peaked sheets of naked rock; and below, either mural precipices or slopes as steep as slopes can be, clothed with larches. The E. side mural precipices, and beeches—such beeches as one rarely sees,

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and a few in particular which for their roots might be models for a painter—clothing the sides below. These in about an hour give place to larch. Road carried high along the E. side—a good mule road, but beset with terrific precipices. Reached the first, and one of the most remarkable, of these at 9.5, where the road winds round a little gully in the hill, barely a yard wide, and skirts an all but vertical precipice, by our joint estimate at least 600 feet in depth. Road ascends and then descends considerably, winding round another similar but larger gully, clothed with some of the tallest, straightest larches I have ever seen. All this is most picturesque. One spot near the entrance of the valley should be remembered, where the path is completely hewn into the rock, which projects over it. Met numbers of mules heavily laden with hay; it seemed as if their burdens might push the animals over, but we were assured that an accident was never known to happen. At 9.50 the descent of the road and ascent of the stream brought us nearly to a level, and we entered on the débris of one of the great falls, a singular and picturesque scene, now overgrowing with a fine crop of young larches. Crossed the Lizerne by a bridge at 10.10, and continued our course along the débris; it is curious to see the edge of them to the W. as distinct as the edge of a moraine, and the forest in its primitive state, intact, close to the foot of and considerably below the scattered ruins; the projecting buttress of the mountain above has effectually secured this strip of valley from desolation. After passing this buttress the path turns sharp round to the W. and proceeds along the S.—not, as Keller has it, the N.—side of the lake [Lac de Derboren]; but it is probable that a shorter course might be found along the N. side, making straight for the ravine at the foot of the Diablerets—not that which goes from the head of the lake towards the Dent de Morcles. We, however, followed the beaten road, and, passing round the head of the lake, began to ascend the steep green mountain, tending N. till we reached the Chalet de Cheville at 11.45, i.e. 6 hrs. Master a model for a Hercules, and master and man extremely civil. Pasturage here beautiful; cows large, milk delicious. Tend still to the right, across the stream, up the green slope, and by a good but very steep path up a little ravine, past a waterfall, to the top of the col, which we reached in 40 min. from the chalet, at 1.5. Views of the Alps not extensive, but fine, extending, as well as I could guess, from Mont Combin to the mountains at the head of the Eringerthal. Top of the pass a plain; on one

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side the line of the Diablerets, clothed with extensive glaciers; on the other the bolder peaks towards the Dent de Morcles. Hitherto day very fine, but we saw at once that the weather was threatening below to the N.W., and descended, reaching Bex at 5 o'clock—i.e., excluding stoppages, in little more than 3½ hrs. Rain soon began, and we had an almost uninterrupted thunderstorm, with very sharp flashes and rattling thunder. Stopped at a chalet during a heavy paroxysm, where Paccard found me a larch shingle, about 1 foot broad and 2 or more long, which I turned into an umbrella by balancing it on my head, and so walked for about 2 hrs. into Bex, much to the amusement of sundry persons. Mem.: The effect so good that after 2½ hrs. of heavy wet my upper works really were not wet through. The descent very beautiful; thoroughly Swiss-peaked green hills, thickly clad with larch, and rugged peaks above them, much like the passage of the Col de Jaman, especially the descent to Montbovon. As you approach Grion, and thence to the Salines, larch yields to walnut, &c., and the scenery becomes still more rich; and the views of the Valais, in fine weather, must add greatly to the beauty of the scene. Passed the salt works a good ½ hr. from Bex. All this extremely cheerful and lovely in fine weather. Total, including stoppages, about 10¼ hrs.; a fast walker would do it in 9½ to 10 hrs. with ease.

Second Visit to Zermatt.

August 21, 1840.—With ladies to Zermatt—beautiful, very hot. Started at 8.15 A.M., arrived about 7.15 P.M. Valley more beautiful than before.

August 22.—Day superb. Started for the Schwarzsee. Road same as to St. Théodule to first bridge and some way beyond, then up through the larch forest—a very steep and fatiguing ascent for the ladies thereabouts—then reaches a more level plain of pasture. Total to the Schwarzsee, 3 hrs. Lake small, with nothing striking in the spot; but the low ridge to the east, which the ladies ascended, commanded a splendid view—of easy access, not 10 minutes' walk from the lake—of the whole circuit of mountains. H. R. and I ascended to the ridge above—called, I believe, the Kleinerhorn [Hörnli], the end of a chain of rocks which runs to the Matterhorn. Ascent not difficult; first turf, then a high moraine, then ¼ hr. over ice, then a sharp but not difficult climb up the crest of rocks. The view superb, finer decidedly than from the Reifel [Riffel]. Ascent from lake, 1 hr., steady. Descent on side of Zmutt Gletscher, over patches of snow. Height probably

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about 9,000 feet [9,492 feet]. Returned by a different road, the ladies and horses coming round nearly to the foot of the Zmutt Gletscher, and so traversing the whole length of the Zmutt valley, which is most picturesque, even more so than the other branch, except that it has not the views of the glacier to enliven it. Bridge over the torrent of immense height and great span, the most remarkable specimen of that sort of wooden building that I have seen. The descent from the Schwarzsee to Zermatt this way would probably occupy about 3½ hrs. We did it leisurely. It is longer but less steep than the way by which we ascended.

August 23.—Morning rather uncertain, so late. Started for St. Théodule at 6.30; reached bridge in ravine at 8.15, edge of moraine 9.15. Ascent with mules not difficult, inasmuch as the ladies were never obliged to get off till the mules entered upon the snow. Skirted along the moraine rather longer than before, and had some soft bad patches of snow among rocks to cross before reaching the solid glacier. On the ice a short 2 hrs. Snow soft, so that the horses sank very deep; and the difference between our horses and the mountain horses was remarkable, the former much frightened. Reached the summit at 12.15, i.e. 5¾ hrs., including at least 20 min. halt to refresh the horses. View towards Italy not so clear as before, but quite as fine. Matterhorn clear, and nearly all the peaks on each side of the valley. Sky blackish. E. and S. both rather affected by the rarity of the air, and one of the guides said to be unwell. All the party delighted with the view, which struck me as being even grander than before, partly probably owing to the Matterhorn being uncovered. Dined in De Saussure's hut. Left St. Théodule at 1.45, and cleared the glacier at 3.11. One of the horses jammed in the rocks, and narrowly escaped breaking its leg. Reached the resting-place at 3.45, stayed about 20 min., reached the bridge at 5 and the inn at 6.30. M. A. walked nearly the whole descent, from the time we left the snow to the village of Zermatt, Mrs. R. a large part of it. Left the horse road 20 min. above Zumsee, at the chalet, and descended through beautiful meadows.

Eggischhorn.

August 24.—With ladies left Zermatt. Fine hot day. Descended to St. Nicolas in 4½ hrs., or rather more, and thence to Viège. Valley about and above St. Nicolas seen to most advantage by the afternoon lights. On to Brieg by *char*. 'Hôtel d'Angleterre' good, much better than the

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'Poste,' and the master apparently a very respectable and straightforward man.

August 25.—Heavy rain in the morning, but cleared by 10. By *char* to Laax, 3 hrs.; the road would be reasonably good if in repair. Many places are now barely wide enough to pass, with the Rhone foaming below, altogether a nervous sort of ride. Pass a remarkable stone bridge over a deep gorge of the river, more than half-way up, just beyond which the road mounts a desperately steep hill, which rises to the upper plain, in which Laax stands. Viesch is a short ½ hr. beyond—not visible. Altogether the valley is more interesting than I had expected; the neighbourhood of Brieg and Naters, and the entrance to the valley of Aletsch, down which comes a furious and powerful torrent [the Massa], are extremely picturesque, and probably would well repay an excursion. From Laax to Viesch is also extremely pretty, and there is a footpath the greater part of the way through the fields, much preferable to the horse path. Inns very fair, both at Laax and Viesch; the *cuisine* best at Laax, the rooms rather better at Viesch.

August 26.—Started for the Eggischhorn at 7.45. Ascent very steep, by a *traineau* path; no horses or mules used in the village. Through pine forest for about 2 hrs., then a third hour to the higher chalet, where we left the horses, then 1 hr. 30 min. to the col, the highest point to which the ladies went. This commands a fine view of the chain of the Alps from the Furca beyond the Matterhorn—I forget whether Mont Blanc is visible from this point or not—of one branch of the Aletsch Gletscher, and of the lake [Märjelensee] at its foot—a very beautiful and peculiar feature with its floating icebergs. Why it should give so much effect to the view I hardly know; but the deep green water, contrasting with the dead whiteness of the ice which bounds it on one side and the floating masses, has a most singular and striking effect. Hence to the summit of the Eggischhorn—45 min. stiff climbing, especially towards the top, which is a steep pile of huge stones heaped together one cannot conjecture how, with crevasses between them, enough to break not only your leg but your neck. The view from the summit superb —Alps from Mont Blanc to Furca; on the opposite side the huge Glacier of Aletsch, with its two branches, the Glacier of Viesch, the Viescherhörner, the mountains which bound the Lötschenthal, the Finsteraarhorn, looking much less imposing than from the other side, and the Jungfrau, which, however, was overclouded. Top of Mont Blanc also in-

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visible, but we believe that we made out its position and foot. The foreground of rocks and peaks is also magnificent. Altogether this is certainly one of the finest views that I have seen in Switzerland, and worthy of being more frequently visited. We descended from the top to the first chalet in 50 min., and reached the road to Laax in about 2 hrs. more, the ladies having been much helped by a notion of E. R. of fitting up a sledge, on which they descended, ride and tye, with much quickness, comfort, and satisfaction. A stiff day for the ladies. M. A. on foot for 1 hr. 30 min. up and near 2 hrs. 30 min. down, besides the horse-work. Our ladies the first that ever ascended. Guides —a young man, a notary—very civil and obliging; another —lame—Joseph the *Maréchal* [the *Maréchal ferrant*, or village farrier]—recommended, but not at home. Crossed one largish field of snow on the descent. Home at 5.30.

Lötschen Pass.

August 27.—Left Viesch at 5.30; Laax before 6; arrived at Brieg about 8. Thence by *char* to the bridge leading over the Rhone to Gampel, where we took a guide and began the ascent of the Lötschenthal. It is very narrow and steep, rising, not in terraces, but with a uniform and rapid slope. 1 hr. 30 min. before we saw either corn or pasture in the valley. About 1 hr. from Gampel there is a waterfall, of no great height, not exceeding, perhaps, 60 feet, but of great body of water—more than the Turtmanfall. Access laborious, as it is not visible from road. 1 hr. 30 min. reached the first houses, in a beautiful spot—meadow, rock, and wood, with superb peaks rising in the east. Higher up a similar one, even still finer; and the approach to Ferden is the most beautiful part of all. It is remarkable that for the first 1½ hr. not a green field or corn is to be seen. About Ferden it is more riant and cheerful. The view from the elbow, whence both branches of the valley are visible, is superb. Glacier large, but still distant; the mountains on either side of the valley extremely fine. To Ferden 3 hrs., easy; Kippel, 1 hr. 5 min. more. Lodged *chez le curé*; civil and comfortable.

August 28.—Started at 5.30. Beautiful morning. Ascent for about an hour steep, through most magnificent larch forests; then still mounting, and always steep, for another hour or more; then a long traverse across the mountain, up and down, but still rising, to the pass, which lies immediately at the foot of the Balmhorn—the end, I believe, of the great

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group of the Altels, a splendid mural precipice capped with glacier. We should have reached the top of the pass about 10 o'clock, having dawdled a great deal, but turned off to the E. on the representation of the guide that the Hockhorn [Hockenhorn] commanded a splendid view, extending to Berne and beyond. Ascent, he said, 1 hr. 30 min. *fort*; it took us a quarter of an hour more *fort*. Skirted up the ridge, crossed to the Gasteren side, and then proceeded, generally over snow-covered glacier, sometimes on a very steep slope, for about ½ hr., when we reached an insulated rock on the crest. To the Gasteren side the slope of the glacier was horribly steep; so we demurred to pass and turned it on the other side. Under the dark rock a beautiful pool of blue water, formed by the melting snow. Crossed an isthmus of ice, sloping steeply on each side, with the steeple on one side and the high peak on the other—a most striking position, which we agreed was enough to repay us for the climb. Way round the steep sloping shoulder of the hill looked rather nervous, so a second demurrer, but being assured by the guide that there was no danger we went on and found none. At the same time, as we wound round the shoulder of the hill, with space on two sides of us, our position was rather unusual and remarkable. After getting fairly off the ice we had the last peak of rock to mount, which we calculated at 5 and found 15 min.; very steep and laborious, over loose and not very large stones. Reached summit at 11.50. Storm brewing in the N.W. and the Alps hazy and indistinct, but still clear enough to make out distinctly Monte Rosa; the Matterhorn, changed in form; and Mont Blanc, towering immensely—by compass S.S.W. This is the first high mountain of the great chain seen on the ascent, and attracted our notice by its enormous height before we could believe it to be Mont Blanc; the guides called it Weisshorn, but did not seem to have a notion of its position. Our peak overlooks a sea of mountains towards the Simmenthal and the country beyond, but in this direction all was hazy, only mountain-tops visible. To the E. a splendid view over the Tschingel and its summit, Mittaghorn [the Mutthorn], the chain leading to the Jungfrau, and, I believe, the top of that mountain, with the mountains of Aletsch behind it; but in this direction also a thick darkness was brewing. Opposite the Frau [perhaps meaning the Doldenhorn rather than the Weisse Frau] and the Blümlis bounded the view. Below, 5,000 feet or more, the Gasterenthal. Stay cut short by the weather; it began to rain as we began to descend, and came on sharp before we

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reached our resting-place, where the luggage had been left. Made the best of our way over wet rocks with soaked shoes, and after quitting the glacier descended rapidly on the Gasteren side, over bad stony ground, taking advantage of a slide over some large beds of snow, till we reached the moraine of the Balm Gletscher, along which the regular way from Ferden passes. All the ice is on this north side of the mountain; the glacier is probably 1½ to 2 miles in length, and well crevassed, like the Mer de Glace, but presents no danger. Crossed it to the foot of the Balmhorn, diagonally; and stopped in a sort of grotto of rock to eat, when the storm began again (it has passed off more slightly than we expected) and a very grand scene occurred. Vivid flashes of lightning darted across the deep chasm between us and the Hockhorn, and the thunder was instantaneous and tremendous. From the high rocks of the Balmhorn, over our heads, a triple cataract came pouring down; and opposite, on the side of the Hockhorn, a furious torrent of water, stones, and mud burst at once from the glacier with a noise rivalling the thunder. We had reached this point in 2 hrs. or thereabouts, and after waiting for the rain about 20 min. began our descent somewhere about 2.15. No difficulty, though the slope is as steep as a slope can well be; but we kept too much to the left and had to come back. The river is to be crossed by a bridge, near a chalet, some little way above the higher of the two gorges; there is no other bridge till the top of the lower gorge, and the passage of the cliffs would be difficult, perhaps impossible. Reached this bridge in about 1 hr. 15 min. to 1 hr. 30 min.; thence to Kandersteg 2 hrs. or rather more. Having lost my notes I cannot speak accurately. The valley, which I had seen imperfectly before, is extremely fine; the mountains between it and the Lötschenthal—Zekhorn [Sackhorn], Hockhorn, &c. —sweep right down into this grand mountain basin, as do the precipitous bases of the Frau, on the other side. The first gorge delighted Henry, and is picturesque in the extreme; river here has cut a deep channel through broken knolls, covered with pines, and high crags above. Below, a second less extensive basin, the bottom flat and sadly mauled [?] by the river, which had risen higher than I could have supposed in so short a time, and committed great depredations on the highway. In one place the road was wholly gone, and we had to wade the stream round a projecting point of rock. The two great torrents from the Frau much swollen, and some difficulty in passing, the logs which serve as bridges

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being covered or carried off. Jumped these dry by help of my long *bâton*. Henry and the guide both jumped in. An hour earlier, I believe, we could not have passed, as the water, in the main stream and torrents, had evidently fallen much. Second gorge begins about an hour from Kandersteg, and struck us amazingly. The river foaming down this steep descent is a specimen of a mountain torrent in its power. First view of the Kanderthal remarkable, through this magnificent frame. Reach the Gemmi road at first bridge, thence 30 min. to Kandersteg. Evening fine, so got in dry at 5.45. The rest of the party arrived at 6.30, having left Leukerbad a little before 12. They had the storm—not very heavy—all the way up the ascent; dried and lunched at a comfortable little hotel [Schwarenbach] on the col, and arrived well, but not particularly struck with the pass. Inn better than I supposed; dinner good, beds not bad.

(*To be continued.*)

The Early Ascents of the Dent Blanche.

By W. A. B. COOLIDGE.

As a certain amount of confusion seems to prevail with reference to the precise routes by which the early ascents of this magnificent peak were effected, I should like to put on record a number of facts which I have collected in the course of years.

The first ascent of the Dent Blanche, as is well known, was made on July 18, 1862, by Messrs. T. S. Kennedy and W. Wigram, with J. B. Croz and J. Kronig. The party started from Bricolla, and followed the Col d'Hérens route to the upper snow field, whence they gained the S. arête (probably somewhere between the points marked 3,729 and 3,912 mètres on both editions of the Federal map), and made their way up it, being occasionally forced on to the S.W. face by great rock-towers on the arête. As the ascent was made during a terrific storm the narrative* of the route followed is not quite as precise as might be desired.

The second ascent was that by Mr. J. Finlaison, with Christian Lauener and Franz Zurfluh, on September 11, 1864, the party thinking at the time that the peak had never been conquered.† Starting from Bricolla, they climbed up the steep rocky W. face, not touching the S. arête till within a few steps of the summit, for Lauener had tried it earlier in the same season, though unsuccessfully. Thus a new route was struck out and, perhaps owing to the terrible

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* *Alpine Journal*, vol. i. pp. 33–9. † *Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 292–301.

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