

CHAPTER XV.

THE BATHS OF STACHELBERG, AND THE HEIGHTS AND
PASSES IN THE VICINITY.

THE KLAUSEN PASS.—THE KLÖNTHAL.—THE TÖDI.—THE PASS
OF THE SAND GRAT.—THE SEGNES PASS.—MARTINSLOCH.—
THE CALFEUSER THAL.

GLARUS* is very little known to the British tourist, and yet there are few cantons in Switzerland which are more worthy of being visited. I shall leave to others the description of its manufactures, its exports, its minerals, and its agriculture. I shall not attempt to give a history of its Landesgemeinde, the most complete democracy in Europe, the sovereign power being vested in all males above the age of sixteen. I will not dwell on the battle of Näfels, the Sempach of this part of Switzerland, at which an army of 6,000 Austrians was entirely cut to pieces by 500 heroes of Glarus, aided by a few shepherds from Schwyz, the anniversary of which event is kept every year on the battle-field, on the first Thursday in April. I shall only glance, in the most cursory manner, at the attractions the country possesses for the sportsman and the geologist. My desire is chiefly to describe what I was myself best able to appreciate, namely, its objects of interest to the pedestrian. The Baths of Stachelberg are the most convenient head-quarters for any one who wishes to explore the valley of the Linth and its neighbourhood; and a more agreeable place to spend a few days at I can scarcely imagine. Here you have fine scenery, excellent accommodation, and moderate prices; to which I would add an unlimited supply of water—no small consideration to an Englishman. In addition to the mineral spring, which is in great repute, and is a concentrated alkaline sulphureous water, there is a wonderful shower-bath, which is always running, and is formed by a portion

* Glarus, sometimes spelt Glaris, is a corruption of Hilarius, a saint to whose honour a shrine was built in these mountains by an Irish monk named Fridolin. He was the chief founder of the convent of Säkingen, on the Rhine, whose abbess was long, *virtute officii*, Sovereign Princess of Glarus.

of the stream that descends from the Braunberg, brought for the purpose into a wooden hut at the back of the baths.

As Stachelberg is rather out of the beat of the generality of travellers, it may be desirable, before proceeding any further, to state from whence, and in what manner, it may be reached, and also, indeed, left; for I believe that it is not an uncommon thing to say that it is very easy to get into the canton of Glarus, but that there is no getting out of it again!

First, for elderly gentlemen, there is an excellent carriage-road from the lake of Zürich, by Näfels, commanding at intervals a fine view of the Tödi.

Then, there are the passes of the Klausen and the Klönthal, by both of which the Linththal may be approached, on horseback as well as on foot. The Klausen, which is the pass from Altdorf to Linththal, requires about ten hours to walk or ride, from point to point, including an hour's halt. I had the pleasure of doing this in the month of September, 1857, in the company of two ladies, and I did not, therefore, diverge very much from the beaten track; but a most interesting excursion may be made from Unterschächen, the third village you arrive at after leaving Altdorf, to the glacier which descends from the Gross Ruchen, in the maps of Studer and Keller erroneously called Rüchi.* We met two German artists near the pretty fall of Staübi, on their way from Stachelberg, who intended to make a forced march by the Ruchen into the Maderaner Thal, and thence return to the Linth Thal by the Clariden Grat; but as we did not see them at Stachelberg, I presume that they could not accomplish their object.

The culminating point of the Klausen Pass is attained by a zig-zag path up an alp called the Balmwand, where there is a solitary châlet. The pedestrian may gain half an hour by crossing the stream and ascending a very steep path to the left; this I did, and by getting up to the top of an eminence nearly due north, and at right angles to the pass, I obtained a magnificent view of the Windgälle and the Clariden; the Gross Ruchen is not seen from this point, being hidden by the Scheerhorn, a grand peak which forms

* The Gross Ruchen is 10,304 feet high; the Rüchi, which is much further to the east, is nearly 1,000 feet less.

The heights in this paper are given in English feet, reduced from "Ziegler's absoluter Höhen der Schweiz;" and are all from the sea level, unless otherwise specified.

the north-western boundary of that mass of ice and snow, which is terminated on the south-east by the Piz Rosein and the Bifertenstock.

At Urnerboden, a prettily situated village with a small inn, we met the curé of Linththal, who very kindly accompanied us as far as Stachelberg, and gave us on the road much valuable information, pointing out many objects of interest which might otherwise have escaped our observation.

Amongst other things, he explained to us the mode of making Schabzieger cheese, for which the valley of the Linth is so celebrated. As its name implies, it is chiefly composed of the milk of goats. Its peculiar taste, smell, and colour, are derived from the blue melilot (*Melilotus cærulea*), locally called *klee*, which is found in great quantities in the neighbourhood. The herb is dried and ground to powder, and then mixed with the curd, in the proportion of about 3 lbs. of klee to 100 lbs. of curd.

It is a lovely walk from Urnerboden down to Linththal; the path is on the left bank of the Fätschbach, which makes a series of cascades before rushing into the Linth; the last, in the midst of a thick forest of beech-trees, and backed by the purple rocks of the Kammerstock, is exceedingly fine.

The Klönthal Pass, also called the Prigel, leads from Schwyz to the town of Glarus. In point of distance it is rather longer than the Klausen, but it may be done in about the same time, by going part of the way in a char. Its chief beauties are in the vicinity of the Glärnisch, a precipitous mountain, the table-land at the top of which is, in great part, covered by glaciers. The picturesque little Klön-see washes the northern base of the Glärnisch, which is almost perpendicular on this side. The Klön-see itself is well worth a visit, and makes a very pleasant excursion from Glarus: but, on the whole, the scenery of the Prigel is not so fine as the Klausen, and I was rather disappointed with it.

The passes from the canton of Glarus into the valley of the Vorder Rhein in the Grisons are, the Sand Grat or Tödi Pass, the Kisten Grat, the Panix, and the Segnes, all of which are towards the south.

There are three passes into the canton of Gall: 1st, the Flumser, from Matt, and probably also from Engi, in the Sernft Thal to Flums; 2ndly, the Riseten, from Matt to Sargans, a pretty, and, I am told, not a difficult pass; and 3rdly, the Ramin or Foo Pass

(called Riseten in Leuthold's map), from Elm to the baths of Pfäfers, by Weisstannen and the Calfeuser Thal; all these are towards the east.

There is also a pass to the north from Glarus to Murg, on the lake of Wallenstadt, a very beautiful walk, passing immediately under the Mürtschenstock, a rugged peak which every one who has seen it from the deck of the steamboat on the lake must have wished to become better acquainted with. The Mürtschenstock is easily ascended from Glarus, by following a path to the left of the Schild, to the Fronalp, a mountain of great interest to the geologist, from its singular formation, where there are some châteaux, and beyond which it would not be advisable to proceed without a guide. The Mürtschenstock may also be reached from Filzbach, on the lake of Wallenstadt, by a path over the Kerenzenberg, which would be another route by which the pedestrian might reach Glarus from the north.

Some of the passes I have mentioned, and especially the Sand Grat, the Kisten Grat, and the Segnes, are, I admit, only available for experienced pedestrians; I trust, however, that by this time the reader is satisfied that the Linth Thal is not such a dangerous trap as some people have imagined; and when he is reminded that it was by the Prigel, through the Sernft Thal, and over the Panix, that Suwarrow led his army, partly at night, and continually harassed by the enemy, in his memorable retreat in the autumn of 1799, I hope he will not consider that in taking him to Stachelberg I have enticed him into a *cul de sac* from which all hope of retreat would be cut off, even if the overflowing of the waters, or an attack by *force majeure*, were to prevent his exit by the gently inclined plain through which the Linth and the Sernft discharge themselves into the lake of Wallenstadt.

When we arrived at the baths of Stachelberg, on the occasion already referred to, we found a considerable portion of the *grande salle*, into which we were ushered, cleared for action; and a wedding party, including the bride and bridegroom, were dancing away with great spirit. We explained to the landlord that we had not the honour to belong to the party (which he might have guessed, for certainly we were not in wedding garments), and also that we did not wish, in any way, to inconvenience the festive circle. But he reassured us at once by saying, "Danser et manger, manger et danser, l'un n'empêche pas l'autre;" and in a very few minutes our

supper was brought to us in one part of the room, while the dancing and music went on in another, the actors in each performance devoting themselves to their respective parts so exclusively as to be almost unconscious of what the opposition was doing.

My first excursion from Stachelberg was, of course, to the Tödi, or Dödi-berg, the Monte Rosa of the Linth Thal; or rather, I ought to say, to the glacier of Sand, for the season was too far advanced to attempt to ascend the Tödi; besides which, having ascended the real Monte Rosa a short time before, I was not in the humour for a very hard day's work.

It took me an hour and a half to get to the Pantenbrücke, and two hours more to the lower Sand Alp, where there are some châteaux, and where milk, butter, and curds may be obtained. One of the shepherds here is an obliging active lad; I did not take him with me on this occasion, but on a subsequent day he went with me to the Kistengrat, and I had every reason to be satisfied with him. Immediately below these châteaux the Sand-bach is crossed, and you ascend by a steep zigzag path on the right bank until a small bridge is reached, when the path again crosses the stream, which makes here a fine fall of very considerable height, and in half an hour more you get the Ober-stäffel or Obere Sand Alp, a little green plain about 6,000 feet above the sea, at the very foot of the Tödi, amidst scenery of the greatest wildness. It is watered by the streams which flow from the glaciers of Sand, Spitzalpeli, Geisputzi, and Becki. These rivulets unite with the Röthe-bach and the Biferten-bach, near the foot of the Biferten glacier, and form the Sand-bach, which takes the name of Linth after its junction with the Limmern, a mile above the Pantenbrücke.

The châteaux at the Obere Sand Alp are the last on the Glarus or north side; and I had intended getting one of the shepherds there to act as guide, but as I had been overtaken on the road by a chamois hunter, who was on his way to Dissentis, I preferred to place myself under his protection.

The path follows the stream for a little distance beyond the châteaux, and then the glacier of Sand is crossed, rather in a south-westerly direction, bearing away towards the Catscharauls, a remarkable peak, 9,340 feet high.

The view from the glacier, looking back towards the Sand-bach, is singularly grand. To the left the lovely range of the Clariden, with the Geisputzistock, the Beckistock, and the Gemsistock standing

out like advanced posts to protect its virgin snow from the daring tread of man; to the right the majestic Tödi; and in the background, the dark and inaccessible walls of the Selbsanft, crowned by a white fringe overhanging the glaciers of Platalva, combine to form a picture that it would not be easy to do justice to on canvass, and which, I fear, I have very inadequately described.

The highest point of the Sand Grat Pass, between the Catscharauls and the Kleiner Tödi, is 9,272 feet. The descent to Dissentis, by the Rosein or Rusein Alp, takes about three hours; and although it is rather steep in some places, it does not present any great difficulty. The view to the north is very extensive; but as it is much the same as from the Segnes, to which pass I hope the reader will accompany me, I shall not refer to it here.

From Kavrein, or Kaurein, the first châteaux you reach on the Grisons, or south side, there is a pass into the Maderaner Thal, which must be well worth exploring.

The highest peak of the Tödi is not seen from near Dissentis, but only the southern point, called the Piz Rosein, by which name the entire mountain is known to the inhabitants of the Grisons. The northern peak, or Tödi proper, rises to a height of 11,883 feet out of a mass of glacier and snow, by which it is almost entirely surrounded. It is chiefly composed of stratified limestone, resting upon gneiss. At the base, near the Ober-Stäffel, is a kind of mamelon, to which the name of Röthe has been given; and beside it, from a glacier on the northern face of the Tödi, descends the Röthe-bach, or red stream. Here as in many other parts of the canton of Glarus, a compact reddish argillaceous schist is found, which colours the water which passes over it. This may possibly have contributed to obtain for the Tödi its southern name of Piz Rosein, or pink mountain.

The Tödi has not been ascended more than three or four times, and the summit is always approached from the southward, the northern declivity being so steep that the snow can scarcely rest upon it.

Professor Ulrich, who made the ascent from the Sand Alp, went by a little lake, or tarn, on the Röthe, crossed the Röthe-bach, and proceeding nearly due east, passed under the Ochsenstock, hugged the eastern ridge of the mountain for some distance, and then descended on to the Biferten glacier, traversed some red snow, which,

on the map he published of his route, he calls Schnee-Rosa,* and eventually went round by the Glacier of Tödi, to the south of the summit, and got up between it and the Piz Rosein.

Another route for attempting the ascent was suggested to me by a zealous chamois hunter, who was at the time inspector of forests in the valley of the Vorder Rhein, and whose acquaintance I made at Dissentis, and I have since heard that it has been adopted with success. This was to ascend from Dissentis by the Glacier of Flems or Ilems, and the Stokgron; thence to cross the western extremity of the Tödi glacier, and reach the highest peak by passing over the Piz Rosein. The last portion of the route is said to be intersected by wide crevasses, and might require the assistance of a ladder.

In returning from the Sand Alp to Stachelberg the route may be agreeably varied by ascending the Beckistock, and after passing over the shoulder of the Gemsistock, regaining the usual path a little below the Pantenbrücke.

Some of the most romantic scenery in Switzerland is to be found in the neighbourhood of the Pantenbrücke. I would advise all visitors to Stachelberg, who have a few hours to spare, to devote them to an expedition to this spot; and if they are able to scramble or wade some distance up the bed of the Limmern, they will see a gorge, hardly surpassed even by the Gasteren Thal.

The excursions round Stachelberg are adapted to the capacity of travellers of all kinds; and range from a promenade of two or three, to a day's work of ten or twelve hours, or even more. I will mention but one or two more, which I made myself, and which I thoroughly enjoyed.

One Sunday afternoon I followed the steep path that ascends immediately behind the baths, and passes close to the mineral spring; and in rather more than an hour I reached a large tract of gracefully undulated table-land, of exquisite verdure. It is irrigated by several streams, and prettily wooded, and is studded with a number of the real old-fashioned Swiss châteaux, which are so pleasing when found in the right place, and with which the sight is offended only when they adorn such localities as Richmond Hill and Hampstead

* That curious phenomenon called red snow, as to the nature of which there has been so much learned controversy between the botanist, the chemist, and the zoologist, is now, I believe, almost universally admitted to be the *Protococcus nivalis*, a plant of the order of Algæ. Some persons, however, and amongst others, Ehrenberg, still contend that it is more nearly allied to animal than to vegetable organisation, and give it the name of *Euglena sanguinea*.

Heath. I found most of these châteaux empty; nearly the entire population having gone down to the church in the valley below. At length I saw an old man, upwards of eighty years of age, sitting, with a Bible in his hand, near the window of his habitation. He at once put down his book, asked if he could render me any service, and invited me to come in and visit his humble abode. Everything was of the simplest kind, but exceedingly clean and nice; the principal room had a slate table, and a stove in the centre, with some well-scrubbed deal benches round them. On each side was a recess containing a bed, covered with a thickly-quilted counterpane; and on the walls were hung some weapons for the chase, and some small coloured prints. In one corner of the room was a curious old chest, made of slate let into wood,* which the old man told me had belonged to his great grandfather, and had been in his family one hundred and fifty years. In it he was in the habit of keeping his treasures, including the family Bible, which has been published more than a hundred years. On the slate that formed the top of the chest, he told me his children and grandchildren, as well as his father and grandfather, had learnt to write; but, in alluding to the rapid advances of the age, he said, with a sigh, but at the same time showing some feeling of pride at the idea, that his youngest grandchild, a pretty little girl about seven years old, whom I afterwards saw, insisted on learning to write on paper!

After some further conversation, I expressed a desire to leave, but he entreated me so earnestly to wait until his son and daughter-in-law returned, which he said they would do very shortly, that I could not resist complying with his wishes, especially as he told me that his sight had got so weak of late that he could hardly manage to read. I read him a couple of chapters out of his German Bible; and he was so grateful for what he called my kindness, that he made me write my name and the day of the month on the fly-leaf of his Bible. His gratitude was only exceeded by the amazement and delight of the rest of the family when they came home and found me so employed. They insisted on my partaking of their frugal repast—cheese, brown bread, and raspberries; to which, out of compliment to me, they added some excellent cream and mountain honey.

* The slates came from the Blattenberg, in the Sernft Thal, a mountain which is said to contain some of the best slate in Europe for the purpose of writing. Slates are exported from the Sernft Thal to all parts of the world for the use of schools. Very interesting fossil shells are also found here in great quantities.

And when at length I left, the whole party, with the exception of the old man, who could not walk very far, accompanied me for some distance down the mountain, and on parting again thanked me. The little boy, into whose pocket I had dropped a small coin, after a look at his father, ran after me and returned it.

I descended to Rütli; and as I walked along the banks of the Linth, on my way back to the baths, and reflected on the gratitude shown by this family for what, at the most, was only a trifling piece of attention, I felt quite ashamed at the thought of how very little we do for the people of the country through which we travel, of how often we complain of the rapacity of the guides and the innkeepers, whom we ourselves have corrupted, and of how seldom we record the honest simplicity of the primitive inhabitant.

There were a great number of people assembled in the *grande salle* when I got back, as is generally the case at Stachelberg on a Sunday; and amongst them was the proprietor of a large cotton-mill at Rütli, which I had observed on my way home. I got into conversation with him, and mentioned the pleasant walk I had had. He told me that if I had followed the path I had taken, beyond the chalets, in a north-westerly direction, I could have got over the ridge which separates the valley of the Linth from the Bisi Thal, and have got down to Eigen, and from thence to Muotta, in the Klönthal. Whilst we were talking, a woman came into the room and said that there was a mill on fire! The poor man rushed to the window, and exclaimed at once, "It is mine!" Such, unfortunately, was the fact; and shortly after, the church bell, which in this quiet and retired district, where neither religious nor political strife exists, summons the Roman Catholic as well as the Reformer to his devotions at different hours of the day, in the same village church, sent forth its melancholy peal to collect, indeed, both congregations, but for a far different object. It was now quite dark; and most interesting was it, as the sound of the bell reached each chalet, to see a light appear almost as if by magic, until the whole mountain before us was illuminated by the flitting lanterns of the peasants hurrying to assist in the preservation of the property of their fellow-citizen in the valley below. Of course a party of us went from the baths to render such assistance as was in our power. From the immense supply of water, and the number of hands that were got together in an incredibly small space of time, the fire was confined to one part of the building, and very little damage was done.

The next morning I ascended the Sassberg, a mountain, or rather a hill, for it is no great height, situated at the mouth of the Durna Thal, which commands one of the best general views of the Linth valley. It took me about three hours to get to the top from the baths. The ascent is rather steep; but a great part of it may be done on a mule, and it is quite a lady's excursion. With a telescope I could trace the path into the Bisi Thal; it passes to the north of the Scheyenstock, a lofty peak rising immediately over Stachelberg, and does not appear difficult. From the Sassberg the Glärnisch is seen to the greatest advantage. The entire summit on the southwest side, which faced me, appears to be one mass of glaciers; and with the bold rocks and wooded heights in the foreground, it would make from this point a very striking picture. I had not much time, however, to contemplate it, as I was anxious to obtain a panoramic view of the Freiberg, or, more correctly, Freiberge, which is rather a district* than a single mountain; and, if possible, to get on to the glacier at the foot of the Hausstock, taking a glance on my way at the Richetli, a pass from the Durna Thal to the Sernft Thal, by which I contemplated reaching Elm in the course of the next two or three days.

I followed the crest I was on for some distance towards the Kärpfstock (9,180 feet), which forms the southern boundary of the Freiberge, but I found that there was a valley between me and the Freiberg range, which I should not be able to cross; or which, at all events, even if I could get across it, would take me too much out of my line of march; so, leaving the Kärpfstock on my left, I descended rapidly into the Durna Thal by a savage gorge, down which rushes a mountain torrent, and got into the valley of the Durna, a little below the last châteaux.

As I have referred to the Freiberge, which are prominent objects from the road between Glarus and Stachelberg, and of which I afterwards had a good view in going over the Segnes, it may be as well here to state, that the Freiberge, or Free-mountains, form a well-known chamois preserve. I fancy, however, that the Glaronese, who from the earliest ages of their history have been famed for their sporting as well as their warlike propensities, do not now preserve as strictly as they used to do formerly. Unless

* The Freiberge extend from the Kärpfstock nearly to Schwanden, and include most of the highland that is encircled by the valleys of the Sernft, the Durna, and the Linth.

the hunters of Glarus and the Grisons come to some resolution for the preservation of the game, by which they will all be bound, I greatly fear that in a few years the chamois will be as unknown in their mountains as the bouquetin, the race of which has there become almost, if not entirely, extinct.*

In proceeding to Elm by the Durna Thal, a path along the right bank of the stream is followed, a little beyond the last châteaux. Here you ascend to the left, nearly due east, over an alp, until you reach the summit of the Richetli Pass, passing near a stone hut, built for the shepherds, but which I found deserted when I was there. The descent into the Sernft Thal is very easy; you soon see Elm, and you fall into the path that leads over the Panix, near Wichlen. I did not descend, as I wanted to return to Stachelberg; but I afterwards saw from Elm the other side of the pass, and I think that I may confidently say that no guide is required. It must take about seven or eight hours to get to Elm from the baths of Stachelberg.

On getting back to the Durna Thal from the Richetli, I turned to the left, and went up the valley; and, crossing the stream immediately below the glacier, I ascended to the westward, up to a point from whence there is an excellent view of the Hausstock (10,363 feet), and of the glaciers between it and the Rûchi. From hence, I think, one might probably get to the Mutten See, and so return to Stachelberg by the Limmern Alp and the Pantenbrücke. This, if feasible, would make a beautiful excursion for any one wishing to see some of the finest parts of the Kistengrat Pass, without descending into the Grisons. As I had already been up the Kistengrat, I did not attempt it, and I regained the Durna, and followed its banks back to Stachelberg. On my return I found that the ladies I had accompanied over the Klausen wished to drive up the Sernft Thal, and they were good enough to offer to take me as far as Elm. I could not resist the invitation, and accordingly I gave up the idea of walking again over the Richetli.

We had a delightful drive, and from the rising ground just beyond Schwanden, enjoyed an exquisite view up the Linth Thal, with the setting sun shining upon the peak of the Tödi.

* In some parts of the Grisons, chamois are still seen in great numbers; some of the chamois hunters of the Engadin boast of having killed many hundreds! Between Chur and the Fermont, roe deer, and I am told also red deer, are found, but I believe that there are no bouquetins.

A very nice clean little inn has recently been built at Elm, and Jacob Elmer, the proprietor, is just what the head of such an establishment in such a place ought to be. He superintends everything himself, from the frying of your trout to the greasing of your boots, both of which are consequently well done; and when he has put things straight, he comes and relates to you all that has happened at Elm since he saw you last, which he is convinced he must have done some two or three years before. Of course it was some other traveller he saw, if, indeed, he saw any, but that is very immaterial to you as well as to him.

As I intended going over the Segnes the next day, my first occupation was to get a guide. I was very anxious, if possible, to get down to the valley of the Tamina, or Calfeuser Thal, by the Glacier of Sardona, which, I believe, no Englishman has ever yet done. I was told that there was only one man in Elm who would undertake to conduct a stranger over the Sardona glacier, of which the inhabitants appear to have a great fear. This was a certain Heinrich Elmer, a cousin of the host's and a well-known chamois hunter. We sallied forth accordingly in search of him, but although there were Elmers called by the name of every other saint in the calendar, no Heinrich was to be found. Unfortunately he was from home. I inquired of the landlord whether his family took their name from the village of Elm, or whether the village was called after the Elmers. He replied rather seriously, "The village has only been built three hundred years." I of course apologised; at the same time, without wishing to question the antiquity of the pedigree of the house of Elmer, I am very much inclined to think that Jacob Elmer merely means Jacob of Elm.

As no Henry of Elm was to be had, the host brought another of the clan for approval, and a more unsatisfactory-looking specimen could scarcely have been produced. My fair companions, who were just starting to return to Glarus, were, I think, rather alarmed at his appearance, and seemed to be making divers efforts, but in vain, to recall to their recollection any variety of the human race which the individual before them in the slightest degree resembled. He was not much above five feet in height, had long arms, and short thick legs, terminated by feet somewhat of the size and shape of American snow-shoes. These he had encased in large worsted stockings, but, out of respect for the ladies, he had taken off his shoes before entering the room. He had very little neck, nature

having kindly given his head, which was of rather large dimensions, the support of his shoulders. I afterwards ascertained that he possessed the power of speech; but, on this occasion, he only made use of some signs, by which he implied that he understood what we said to him, or at least so much of it as the landlord, who acted as interpreter, repeated. He shook his head in a most unmistakable manner when the Sardona glacier was mentioned, but he was thoroughly acquainted with the Segnes Pass, *pure et simple*, and could find his way over it nearly as well by night as by day. As there was no one who would put a foot on the Sardona, it was very immaterial to me what guide I had as far as the top of the Segnes, where I intended to discharge him, and take a line of my own; so after bidding farewell to my host, and paying him his moderate bill, I started from Elm a little after three on a bright starlight morning, with the very promising companion I have described.

Shortly after leaving the village, we crossed the stream that descends from the snows of the Ofen, and ascended, for rather more than an hour, by a path along its right bank, until we got to another stream which comes from the Segnes, and joins the first nearly at right angles. Here we turned to the left, and followed the second stream for a short distance, and then proceeded almost due east, first over some pastures, and then over loose stones and rocks, until we had on our right, and very little above us, that extraordinary hole or tunnel known as Martinsloch or Martin's hole, which had acted as a beacon almost from the time we quitted Elm.

Martinsloch, which Ebel imagines to be a corruption of *Martis* Loch, because the sun shines through it on the steeple of the church at Elm in the months of March and September, is a tunnel pierced through the ridge or screen which runs along the summit of the Segnes Pass, nearly under the Segnes Spitz (by Ebel also called the Tschinglen Spitz), a peak rising to a height of 800 or 900 feet above the ridge.

This tunnel appears to be quite round, and, as I was told, is about thirty feet in diameter. I tried in vain to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion as to its origin. There was no appearance of water near it; and, on the whole, I was inclined to think that portions of the rock, which is here stratified limestone lying horizontally, were detached by the shock of some of the numerous

earthquakes which have visited this part of the country,* and that the cavity thus commenced was increased, and eventually rounded off, by the rotatory action of the sand, gravel, and snow which drift through it, occasionally with great force, and with a noise almost like thunder.

Martinsloch has, as may easily be imagined, been attributed to Satanic agency, and also to the miraculous interposition of Providence. My guide, who had nearly as much reverence for St. Martin as he had dread of the Sardona glacier, told me that the hole was made by the saint himself, in order to escape from the devil, who was pursuing him. This St. Martin was a most erratic saint; and he has given his name to more than one rock and cavern in Switzerland and the Tyrol. On the occasion alluded to by the guide, I should fancy that he must have been on his way to the Calfeuser Thal, where he once took refuge, and where some châteaux (for they scarcely deserve the name of a village) are called after him, and that he probably went by the Sardona glacier, as, with the facilities he appears to have had for fraying his way, he would hardly have submitted to the long détour which I was compelled to make.

Half an hour more took us to the top of the pass (8,612 feet), making just four hours from Elm; and here I sat down to take a last look at the canton of Glarus. The whole Sernft Thal lay before me, with Elm almost at my feet, backed by the Freiberge and the Glärnisch. To the right, I could trace, for some distance, the route to Weisstannen, by the Ramin; and to the left, the guide pointed out another pass from Elm into the Grisons, which goes near the Ofen, and considerably to the south-west of Martinsloch, and is, in fact, a continuation of the track we left, at the junction of the two streams I have referred to.

On the south side of the Segnes Pass there is a very peculiar glacier. It has no crevasses, and its surface is nearly level. It inclines from west to east, and also slightly from north to south. It does not descend into the valley, like the greater glaciers of the Alps, nor does it exactly resemble the glaciers that are found on the table-land, near the summits of high mountains, as on the Glärnisch, the Diablerets, the Wildstrubel, and the Buet. It is

* Ebel mentions that there were thirty-three shocks in the course of the seventeenth century.

chiefly composed of *névé*, but on going to the lower end of it, I found solid ice at a certain depth. It fills a basin, or *cirque*, of considerable size, which is entirely surrounded by precipitous rocks, except on the south side, where it terminates on some low mossy ground, called Sandsboden; from whence a stream flows down to Flims, in the valley of the Vorder Rhein. It reminded me rather of some of the frozen lakes in the Pyrenees, than of any other glacier I remember having seen in Switzerland.

On to this glacier, called in the neighbourhood Flimser Firn, we descended from the summit of the pass, over some loose grauwacke and shaly slate. There is no path, and the way is steep; but there is good footing, and one might easily descend anywhere, up to the point where the limestone begins, which is a little to the north of Martinsloch.

We passed immediately beneath this singular hole, then crossed the glacier diagonally towards the south-east, and got on to the Sandsboden just below the Trinserhorn, the southern buttress of the range that separates the Flimser Firn from the Glacier of Sardona.

Here my companion and myself did ample justice to the Roussillon and cold mutton, which the worthy host at Elm had provided for us; and I made a rough sketch of Martinsloch and of the Segnes Pass, which the morning sun was just beginning to reach. It had long since tinted the snow-clad summits of the Silberspitz, and the Vorab, or Piz Mor, a peak of 9,960 feet, to the south-west of the pass.

Before parting with my guide, I made him show me the way down to Flims. He seemed, however, to have a suspicion that I intended going on the Sardona glacier, for he would not leave me, until I had written, in pencil, on a slip of paper, that he had done all he had undertaken to do, that I was satisfied with him, and that he had left me on the direct road to Flims.

The poor fellow shook hands with me, and wished me a "Glückliche Reise," and in a few minutes he disappeared behind a rock.

I now retraced my steps, and crossed a part of the Sandsboden, going to the north-east. There was an immense field of snow before me, bounded by the Trinserhorn, and the Sardona (also called the Saurenstock) to the left, and by the Ringelkopf, or Ringelspitz, to the right. Beyond the snow, immediately in front of me, there was only the deep blue sky.

I was not at all desirous of doing anything foolhardy, and I had long given up all idea of attempting, by myself, to get down from

the Sardona glacier into the Calfeuser Thal; but the weather was so magnificent—frosty, with a bright sunshine—the snow was in such excellent order, hard and crisp, yet just giving way enough to afford a firm footing, and I myself was in such good wind and spirits, that I thought I should be unworthy of enjoying a walk again, if I did not cross at least a portion of the glacier, and in some degree survey the part I could not get over. I was too old a traveller, however, not to secure a safe retreat in the event of the mid-day sun melting the snow to such an extent as to render it dangerous; so I did not venture on the glacier until I had ascertained that, in case of emergency, I could get back along the edge under the Ringelkopf. Having thus made Flims my base of operations, I walked with a light heart and at a rapid pace over the frozen snow; I say frozen snow, as I could hardly see where the glacier began, or how much of the snow, which had recently fallen in great quantities, had ice under it.

The Sardona has an elongated summit, covered with snow, somewhat like the Clariden, and extending towards the Scheibe. I was very much surprised, on looking at Ziegler, to find that neither the Scheibe nor the Sardona is as high as the Ringelkopf, on which I could see scarcely any appearance of snow.* However, the existence of snow on a mountain, up to a certain height, depends nearly as much on its shape and position as on its elevation.

If the Sardona can be ascended, which I should think it might be on the west side, from the Segnes Pass, the view from the summit, looking down the Calfeuser Thal, with the Calandaberg in the distance, would be splendid.

There was a melancholy kind of pleasure in finding one's self entirely alone, amidst scenes of such wild grandeur; no sound to be heard, no living animal to catch the eye, hardly a vestige of vegetation within sight. I could have stayed there for hours, but the snow was melting fast, and the glare of the sun was beginning to affect my eyes; so I felt that it would be imprudent to remain longer, and I returned, reluctantly, towards the Sandsboden.

I went over the shoulder of the Flimser-stein, from which I had a glorious view of the Tödi, the Hausstock, the Bifertenstock (10,779

* The Sardona, according to Ziegler, is 10,222 feet, the Scheibe 9,631, and the Ringelkopf 10,669. [The Ringelkopf spoken of by Ziegler is perhaps the peak bearing that name on the maps of Weiss and Gross, lying north of Trins, and some miles east of the Segnes Pass.—EDITOR.]

feet), on this side called Durgin, and of the entire range of the high Alps of the Grisons between the Splügen and the St. Gothard. The magnificent glacier of the Hinter Rhein, backed by the Piz Valrhein and the Möschelhorn, both nearly 11,000 feet high, were directly before me; and a little more to the left, the Schwarzhorn, which separates the Splügen from the St. Bernardin, raised its lofty peak. The St. Peter's Thal and the Savien Thal, two as interesting valleys as any in this part of Switzerland, but very little known to the majority of travellers, stood out at right angles to the Vorder Rhein, into which they discharge the rivers they bring down from the snowy range to the south.

The Vorder Rhein was just below me; that I soon reached, and a walk of two hours, chiefly along its banks, brought me to the "Adler," at Reichenau, where my old friend, the landlord, received me with his usual hospitality, and placed at my disposal the best of everything that his hotel possessed.

Reichenau, in addition to its fine situation, at the confluence of the Hinter and the Vorder Rhein, will always have a peculiar attraction from its having been the spot where the Duke of Orleans, afterwards King Louis Philippe, acted as usher of a school. His room, neatly but plainly furnished, is in much the same state as it was at the time he occupied it, except that on the walls hang two pictures of Louis Philippe by Winterhalter, one as Duke of Orleans at the age of eighteen, walking into Reichenau, and the other on the throne as King of the French, and both presented by him to Mr. Planta, the worthy owner of the house. One day when I happened to be there, a young man visited this room, and appeared to feel more than ordinary emotion at seeing it. He wrote in the stranger's book "Louis Philippe d'Orléans,"—it was the Comte de Paris, the grandson of its former occupant! On the table lay a pen, tied round with a piece of black crape. With this pen King Louis Philippe had signed his last will, a few days before his death. It had been sent to Mr. Planta, as a souvenir, by Queen Amélie.

I started, long before sunrise, from Reichenau, in order to explore the Calfeuser Thal, which, as I have shown, I was compelled ingloriously to ascend from the lower end. I had on a former occasion been from Reichenau to Ragatz, by the pass of Kunkels, so I lost no time in following the same track to Vättis, a village which stands at the mouth of the Calfeuser valley.

The Calfeuser Thal, in some of the maps spelt Kalfusen, is one

of the most striking valleys in Europe. It is difficult, of course, where there is so much that is fine, to single out one or two particular places as surpassing all others. But if I were called on to name the two valleys which have made the greatest impression on me—and in the course of my wanderings I have seen a good many—I should fix on the Val Anzasca, and the Calfeuser Thal. I hardly know which to admire most—the gorgeous sublimity of the one, or the savage grandeur of the other. Near Vättis I found some cowherds, who were going up to the head of the valley to bring home their cattle from their summer pastures; and a fine independent set of fellows they were. I was very glad to have the benefit of their company, and they were well-bred enough to say that the advantage was mutual; so on we journeyed together. They went at an awful rate;—there is a tolerable mule-path to St. Martin, but they took every short cut, regardless of rocks, water, or any other impediments. For three hours we walked almost without intermission, first winding our way through a primeval pine forest, which no rays of the sun could penetrate, then climbing over a cliff that was all but perpendicular, then fording a stream, and then again diving into the thick woods.

At times the gorge was so contracted, that there appeared to be hardly space to pass between the chasm, through which rushed the Tamina in her headlong course, and the precipitous rocks that on either side closed in the valley above. Then it again became wider, and we could see the dark outline of the Graue Hörner, on our right, or the snow-tipped summit of the Ringelspitz on our left; then it again contracted, and all further progress appeared to be barred; when, suddenly, the Sardona and the Scheibe stood before me in all their glory! Spread out below them was the much-dreaded glacier I had been so anxious to descend, and from which the Tamina is fed.

Here the main object of my walk was gained; so I bade adieu to my companions, who were anxious to get on, and I lay down on the ground and thoroughly revelled in the scene around me. A shepherd brought me some cheese and brown bread, and some delicious milk, the most refreshing of all beverages on such occasions; and, after having surveyed every point over and over again, including the path from Weisstannen that descends a little above St. Martin, I believe that I fell asleep, for on looking at my watch, I found that I had been there nearly two hours, and on getting up I felt rather stiff, which, considering the heat I was in when I lay down, was hardly to be wondered at.

The Calfeuser Thal lies east and west, and is quite shut in by almost inaccessible mountains, except at the east or lower end, where the valley which descends from Kunkels meets it nearly at right angles, and separates it from the Calandaberg. St. Martin is the only village in it, if indeed it can be called a village; some new châteaux, however, have lately been built, where I dare say one might put up for a night.

I descended the valley to Vättis, at a more moderate pace than I had ascended it; and it appeared to have all the freshness of new ground. The Calanda, or Galanda, an immense mass of stratified limestone, of so light a colour as almost to resemble dolomite, rising to an height of 9,226 feet, and on this side almost perpendicular, is the prominent object before you until you have passed Vättis. There is a very fine view from the Calanda of the mountains of the Grisons, on the east side of the Rhine; and it makes a very pleasant excursion to ascend it from Ragatz, descending near Untervatz, opposite Chur.

From Vättis to the baths of Pfäfers, you still continue to follow the banks of the Tamina. Pfäfers is so well known that it needs no description here. I will only observe, that it is very difficult to discover the path leading down to the baths from the road you pursue from Vättis; and it may be worth while to take a boy from the slate quarry, as you pass, to show it to you. It has happened to me twice to miss this pass, and to have to retrace my steps, which, at the end of a day's march, is never pleasant.

From Pfäfers, I again walked along by the side of my friend the Tamina, whom I had accompanied that day very nearly from her source to her mouth, and reached Ragatz; and I was not at all sorry when I found myself in comfortable quarters at the Hof.

I must now conclude a description which, from the loss of some of my notes, and from other circumstances over which I had no control, is far from complete; but if it be the means of inducing a few energetic pedestrians to visit the magnificent scenes that I have attempted to describe, and to give an account of their performances, filling up the many blanks which I have left, I shall feel that I have not entirely written in vain. If they will allow me to suggest a route, I should be inclined to recommend them to go from east to west. Assuming that they start from Ragatz, or from Reichenau, they should go to Vättis, and there get as guide a chamois hunter who is thoroughly acquainted with the country, and sleep the first

night at St. Martin. The second day will be well employed in crossing the glacier of Sardona, descending to Elm by the Segnes; and the third, in getting to Ruvis or Brigels, in the valley of the Vorder Rhein, by the Panix. The next day they may go over the Kisten Grat to Stachelberg, where a couple of days' rest will do them no harm, during which they may drive down to the town of Glarus, and pay a visit to the Klönthal. From Stachelberg to Amstäg, by the Clariden Grat and the Kersteln Thal,* will be a glorious termination of such a week's walk as few people have been fortunate enough to enjoy;—or, if they are more ambitious still, they may go up the Tödi, from the Sand Alp, descend to Trons or Dissentis, by the Stokgron, and reach Amstäg the next day, by the Maderaner Thal; and were I to express a wish, it would be, that I may be one of the party.

R. W. E. FORSTER.

* I had an opportunity of reconnoitring the Glacier of Hüfi in 1859; and I can assure some sceptical friends that the *Clariden Grat* is not a myth. Joseph Fetier, of Amstäg, has crossed it three times; and, had the weather been propitious, he would have gone over it with me, from the Maderaner Thal, in the month of August, taking only a goatherd from the châteaux at Bruni to carry a ladder, for the purpose of getting on to the glacier; that being the chief difficulty in the expedition. Fetier examined with great care the map at the head of this chapter, and he says that the track there given is perfectly correct. The Tödi was most successfully ascended in the month of July, 1859, by my friend Mr. Hans de Halwyl. He followed Ulrich's route, and found a large tract of the red snow described by the Professor. Mr. de Halwyl and his two guides left the Obere Sand Alp, where they had slept, a little before dawn, and got back to Stachelberg the same evening.

November, 1859.

R. W. E. F.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

I take this opportunity to direct the attention of lovers of grand scenery to the Biferten glacier and the range that encloses it to the east and south. So far as I know, it has never been thoroughly explored; but a view obtained from a point rather high up on the north-eastern side of the Tödi leads me to think that the scenery on that side is far superior in savage grandeur to that of the pass of the Sand Grat. Sleeping at the lower Sand Alp, a party provided with ropes and ice-axes might attempt a passage to Trons in the valley of the Vorder Rhein, and in case of failure could return to the same night-quarters on the second evening.

In warm weather, when the glacier streams are full, the waterfall below the upper Sand Alp is one of the finest in Switzerland, but there is no favourable point of view on the side by which the path is carried. It is necessary to approach it along the northern bank of the stream.

The upper end of the Linth Thal is rather rich in plants. A rare species, *Rumex nivalis* (Hegets.), is not unfrequent at about 7,000 feet above the sea.