

any risk which can be called unjustifiable, but which have not until late years even been 'looked at' except to be pronounced 'impossible.'

The descent of the Täschhorn to the Fée Glacier would, I think, be practicable when the mountain is in really good condition and free from much coating of snow; but Mr. James Jackson was well advised when, having reached the summit a few days after us, he declined to retrace our route, notwithstanding that his guide was Christian Almer. The descent of the rocks on the eastern face in such weather as he describes in the Journal, it would be nothing short of lunacy to attempt. I fully agree with Mr. George, that the mountain from the Saas side would be altogether impracticable except under very favourable circumstances—when the rocks are, for the most part, free from snow.

In descending to the Kien Glacier, we quitted the rock arête from the summit at a very awkward point, too low down, and considerable care alone prevented a bad slip before reaching the upper snow-fields. A long grind through soft and even yielding névé brought us at length to our goal, down the tedious Wildbach. Eight o'clock saw us comfortably at dinner in the excellent little hotel 'du Weisshorn,' at Randa. Burgener, as prime mover of the expedition, was naturally as much pleased as any of us at so complete a success, and it is only due to him to add that he led splendidly to the summit without a single fault. Notwithstanding his more recent exploit on the Dru, the memory of the Täschhorn from the Fée Glacier (two years before) is not likely soon to be effaced. I hope to see the day when Saas and Fée shall be provided with good hotel accommodation, for I am convinced that when this *desideratum* is supplied, there will not be a more popular Alpine centre than that to which I have here endeavoured to draw the attention of mountaineers.

NOTE ON THE SARACENS AT SAAS AND ELSEWHERE
IN THE ALPS. BY THE EDITOR.

My attention has lately been drawn to the statements as to the presence of Saracens or Moors at Saas in the tenth century, made in works commonly in the hands of English readers, such as Isaac Taylor's 'Words and Places,' Murray's 'Swiss Handbook,' and Stanley's 'Sinai and Palestine,' which are repeated by Mr. Wethered above. These statements appear for the most part immediately derived from Engelhardt's 'Monte Rosa und Matterhorn Gebirg,' published in 1842. But it is somewhat singular that English transcribers, while copying and adopting Engelhardt's conclusion as to the presence of Saracens at

Saas, and the (as they seem to me) somewhat questionable etymologies on which he supports it, have paid little attention to the interesting facts which he obtained from Reinaud's 'Invasion des Sarrasins,' as to the presence and misdeeds of these marauders in the Western Alps from the sea to the St. Bernard.

My object now is not by detailing and adding to these facts to follow out the story of the Moorish inroad as it may be gathered from the chronicles of the time. That interesting task I leave to Mr. W. A. B. Coolidge, who has gone deeply into the subject, and to whose rare knowledge of the early history of the Alpine regions I am indebted for many of the references on which the present note is founded. What I wish to do here is to give a point to the inquiry by stating the limits beyond which the presence of the Saracens ceases (so far as I can judge from the authorities before me) to be an indisputable fact, and becomes either a matter of conjecture or one for ascertainment by further inquiry.

In the singular hill district on the shores of the Gulf of Lyons—still known as the *Montagne des Maures*—which, completely cut off from the system of *Alpes Maritimes*, seems from its flora and climate to the man of science as well as to the traveller almost a part of Africa, the Moors found a congenial home. From their fortress on the Bay of St. Tropez the marauding bands pressed speedily through the Western Alps, bursting out now towards Burgundy, now towards Italy, sacking Embrun (A.D. 916), or burning the great monastery of Novalesse (A.D. 906).

In A.D. 940 they crossed the Great St. Bernard, and burnt St. Maurice, and from that time till 973, the year of the fall of their coast stronghold, Fraxinetum, held the pass or harassed pilgrims, capturing as their final booty (A.D. 972 or 973) no less a person than the Abbot of Cluny.

Thus far there is no room for dispute. The movements of the Saracens can be followed from year to year, as Mr. Coolidge will show in the next number.

But there seems to me need of further evidence before we can accept as certain the presence of the Saracens beyond the neighbourhood of the St. Bernard, whether at Saas or in the Graubünden, and it is to this side of the question that I want to direct the attention of competent inquirers.

The evidence in support of the Saracens having passed beyond the St. Bernard appears to be as follows:—

The notices of the ravages of 'Saracens' in Rhætia and Alamannia in or about A.D. 936, which were so serious that applications for help to restore the damage were made by the Bishop of Chur to the Emperor.

A treaty (A.D. 942) between Hugo of Provence and the Saracens of Fraxinetum that the latter 'in montibus qui Sueviam atque Italiam dividunt, starent,' with the purpose of obstructing the passage of his rival Berengar into Italy. 'Suevia,' I suppose, stands for High Germany, and thus the treaty would naturally refer to the eastern as opposed to the western or Burgundian passes, the Mont Cenis and the two St. Bernards.

The mention in the chroniclers of a defeat of a mixed host of Hungarians and 'Saracens' near Neuchâtel in 954 (said to be ill-authenticated), and of a Saracenic attack on the great monastery of St. Gall about the same time.

Lastly, the existence of names of Saracenic origin in the neighbourhood of some of the principal passes.

E.g. (in addition to those given by Mr. Wethered) Algaby and Gebelhorn on the Simplon, Castelmur and Muretto near the Septimer.

These arguments seem to me insufficient in the face of the following considerations:—

All historical writers are more or less puzzled to show how the Fraxinetum Moors got, without leaving the usual traces of their passage, to 'Alamannia' and St. Gall, and the last attempt, Herr Ehlmann's (in an article 'Die Alpeupässe in Mittelalter' in the 'Jahrbuch für Schweizerische Geschichte, 1878'), seems to me a complete failure. Is it probable that the Moors reached these distant regions four years before they had got to the St. Bernard; that they reached them without pillaging Sion or a single town on the S. slopes of the Alps? In 945 Berengar, it is true, crossed by Landeck and Trent, but so natural a route can hardly be pressed as an argument to prove that the eastern passes were actually occupied in accordance with the Convention. In 952 and 966 Otto himself crossed the Alps by way of the Septimer, and in 965 by the Bernardino without impediment. During all this time, while we have many notices of the sufferings from Saracens of pilgrims on the western passes, we have *not a single instance on record* as to the eastern.

In what way, then, can the explicit reference to Saracens at St. Gall and elsewhere be accounted for?

Both Von Müller, the Swiss historian, and Engelhardt assert, and Gibbon expressly confirms their statement, that in the dark ages the term 'Saracen' was very loosely used. Every marauder was a Saracen. Similarly we see in our time American tourists call every Asiatic an Arab, English press-writers call every Caucasian a Circassian, and some English officers call any coloured man 'a nigger.' Is it not a fair hypothesis that the so-called 'Saracens' of N. and W. Switzerland were Magyars or Khazars?

Herr Theobald, the well-known illustrator of his native Canton Graubünden, explicitly says in his work 'Das Bündner Oberland' that the marauders of 936-40 were Hungarians:—'Die Angabe, dass Karl der Grosse in Disentis gewesen sei und das Kloster noch weiter ausgebaut habe, ist eine Verwechslung oder eine blosser Sage. Dagegen that dies Kaiser Otto der Grosse (940) nachdem er die Ungarn auf dem Lechfelde besiegt, *denn diese waren damals bis in Rheinthal vordrungen und hatten Disentis nochmals ausgeplündert.* Er schenkte dem Kloster ansehnliche Liegenschaften und Privilegien. Der damalige Abt hiess Waldo.'

Lastly, as to Saas in particular. The *only* evidence as yet for the presence of Saracens in this case is the local nomenclature. The absence of any confirmation in local tradition is, to say the least, strange. Engelhardt—who, with the help of a friend, worked out for himself his pretty

derivations of Almagel (Al-Mahal, the station), and Mischabel ('the lioness with her cubs') and had a parent's pride in them and the theory they involved—had before him a MS. chronicle of Saas compiled in the beginning of the present century by a Rector of Saas from over 300 ancient documents, going back as far as A.D. 1200. *He quotes nothing from it in support of a Saracenic element in the population.* We find in Schiner's 'History of the Valais' (1792) a statement that Saas was colonised after the other valleys by the people of Visp, who at first only used it for pasturage, and this seems confirmed by the name 'Saas' itself, applied elsewhere to high pastures, and by the terms in which the valley was sold in 1301 by its then lord, a noble of Visp. Nowhere is there a word about Saracens. The Saas Passees, though mentioned as 'very old' in the fifteenth century, are not, so far as I know, referred to by any tenth-century chroniclers.

What is the nature of the etymological proof which is to counter-balance this negative testimony? Some of these ingenious suggestions will not stand. 'Balferin' is 'Balenfirn.' The old form of Almagell, Almen-gell, surely tells its own story. Nor can I think that the case has been strengthened by the Arabic Professor at Oxford, whom Mr. Wethered has called in. Professor Nicholl dismisses some of Engelhardt's suggestions as the 'fancies of an amateur philologist.' The derivations which he proposes to substitute, and Mr. Wethered adopts, are, doubtless, more grammatically deduced; but are they not even more far-fetched and improbable than Engelhardt's? Before a matter of this sort can be discussed or speculated on with any advantage, some consideration of its various elements seems necessary: and I confess I should not have supposed anyone would have been bold enough to propose an Arabic source for such names as Distel or Alp-Hubel in a German-speaking district. Do not all these names, curious as they undoubtedly are, admit of explanation without any need of calling in Saracens? Consider the natural conditions of the district. The Teutonic immigrants comprised in the seven 'Zehnten' of Wallis (if we use the Teutonic form we must warn readers not to fancy it has anything in common with 'Wales,' or is anything but the Roman and mediæval 'Vallesia') pressed down on an earlier Celtic race, whose descendants continued up to the end of the last century under a separate form of government ('Grand Majors' appointed by the Landsgemeinde of the county, which under a Hauptmann of its own sat at Sion and shared authority with the Count-Bishop) in the western districts. We should expect, therefore, to find a few Celtic or Romance names Teutonised and many pure German ones. We note near Zermatt a tarn called the 'Lei See' (Swiss Alpine Club map). We have the Plan de la Lei (near St. Maxime de Beaufort), the Allée Blanche, the Pigne de la Lée at Zinal, and the Aléfroide in Dauphiné, all derived from the word 'lex' or 'lei.' M. Durier says that 'lei' means an enclosed pasture, and hence a pasture naturally enclosed by precipices. In our own country we have 'ley' (as in Hoathley) for a pasture, and in Devonshire a friend tells me a clover field into which, after it has been cut, animals are turned in to feed is known as a cloverley, though the word does not survive in its simple form. Is it very

unreasonable to fancy Allalein a Teutonised form of 'A la Lei'? May not mountain names come from 'gabel' as well as 'gebel'? Is not 'fork' most appropriate to the Mischabel? One guess is surely as good as another; and perhaps better? And as to Monte Moro itself and similar names south of the chain; the ancient form of this name in the deed of sale of 1301, referred to above, is *Mundmar*, and the MS. corrects this to *Montmar* (Engelhardt). A *Mons Martis* would have been a natural rival to a *Mons Jovis*. Is any word which begins with *Mur*, *Mor*, or *Mar* to be taken as a proof of the Moors' presence? Castel *Mur* ('Ad Murum') in Bregaglia comes from the Roman wall still existing there, and I suspect many of the 'murs' have to do with the walls which we are especially told by the chroniclers were erected on the passes for purposes of toll-exaction. The difficulty which will press on those who attach weight to *Mur*, *Mor*, and *Mar* as a sign of the Saracens will be not their rareness, but their frequency. They turn up all over the Alps. There are a *Pian del Moro* and *Passo di Muretto* in the hills above *Premia* (Val Antigorio).* At the foot of the Gries is *Morast*. Perhaps this is significant. Is it possible that some of the 'Mors' have to do with the root which lurks in moor, morass, marsh, signifying, I believe, a wet, uncultivated piece of ground? Moreover, the derivation of *Pontresina* from *Pons Saracenorum* is a most doubtful one. The late *Mons. Z. Pallioppi* of *Celerina*, a local antiquarian of the highest reputation, expressly scouted, I am informed, any such origin of the name.

I do not wish to embark seriously on any rival theories. But I may point out how easy it would be with the aid of a Turkish vocabulary to set up an argument for the Turanian origin of the population of Val d'Hérens. The dangerous glacier pass at the head of the valley is the *Col d'Olen* (*Olen* appears to mean death in Turkish). We have the *Glacier des Ignez* (*Ignez*=*Aiguille*). *Zmeiden* must surely be 'Meidan'? We have 'gouille' (*gol*) for lake. Then one might adduce the customs of the inhabitants—their practice of going on horseback whenever possible, of wearing bright colours, changing habitations—a relic of nomad life—their funeral feasts—their old houses with tent-like roofs, and so on. I need hardly say this is only an example of what etymology will, in ignorant hands, lend itself to.

In conclusion I beg most emphatically to warn all etymologists against trusting for Alpine nomenclature to Ordnance maps without supplementary local confirmation. Engineers frequently distort words in the most misleading manner, particularly in mountain districts, where they take them down from peasants speaking a rough patois.

I do not presume positively to deny that Saracens settled at Saas,

* Shown in the Swiss Alpine Club and Piedmontese maps, but not in the Swiss Ordnance map. The hamlet near 'Muretto' is *Agaro*. Doubtless from 'Agareni,' a mediæval name for the Saracens as descendants of *Ishmael's* mother! The inhabitants, it is true, are generally said to be Germans. See also on 'Moro' and other names in the *Saasthal*, an article, interesting though probably not free from errors, by *Mons. Gatschet*, in the *Swiss Alpine Club 'Jahrbuch'* for 1867-8. The author entirely disbelieves in Arabic derivations in the *Saasthal*.

or that they occupied for a time the Rætian passes. Both suppositions are far from impossible, or even improbable; but in both cases further investigation and fresh evidence seem to me called for before we can accept their presence as indisputable. If any Moorish colony did reach the Saasthal, it will, I believe, be found to have got to it from the S. and not from the St. Bernard. But I shall not be surprised if the Saracens of Saas, like the Saracens in Cornwall, turn out to be a 'verbal myth,' even though the presence of Saracens on the eastern passes should be proved by sound historical evidence.

THE SCHRECKHORN IN WINTER. By W. A. B. COOLIDGE.

ONE fine morning in January 1874, as our party was descending the Grindelwald Eismeer, having successfully ascended the Jungfrau on the day before, the Schreckhorn towered up so magnificently in the bright sunshine that we stopped frequently to admire it. On that occasion Almer, carried away by our previous successes on the Wetterhorn and Jungfrau in winter, suggested that we might possibly bag the Schreckhorn also. But though this proposal was most tempting, we were overdue in England, and had to start for home immediately on our return to Grindelwald. However, I always bore Almer's suggestion in mind. On our next visit to the Alps in winter, in January 1876, we devoted ourselves to Mont Blanc; but fate, in the shape of the weather, was against us, and though we went up to the Grands Mulets *three* times and spent *five nights* there (January 1, 7, 8, 11, 12), we were only able to make one attempt on Mont Blanc itself, on January 12, which was defeated by a violent and sudden storm when we had reached the Grand Plateau, as it was obviously worse than foolhardy to try to advance further at such an unusual season.

Various reasons prevented me for some years from visiting the Alps in winter. When parting with Almer last September I charged him to let me know how the weather was about Christmas time. He wrote in the beginning of January to say that the snow was in admirable condition, and that if I wished to do anything I ought to come out at once. This was too much for me; so, despite the warnings of some of my friends, who thought there was no need to go to the mountains to see snow and ice this winter of all others, I left England alone on the evening of January 9, and, spending twelve hours in Paris, reached Berne next day, January 11; by a long detour through Alsace and by Basel, both the Geneva and Neufchâtel routes being entirely blocked up by