CHAPTER IX.

THE SCHRECKHORN.

"This most steep fantastic pinnacle,
The fretwork of some earthquake—where the clouds
Pause to repose themselves in passing by."—BYRON.

IT was upon a bright day, the first of the month of August, 1857, that I stepped from the deck of the steamer at the upper end of the lovely lake of Thun, and, with a young companion who then journeyed in Switzerland for the first time, wended my way through the village of Unterseen to Grindelwald. Once more I was about to tread the snows of the Alps, and I felt a thrill of delight at the thought, that those only who have experienced the fascination attending a glacier expedition can fully understand. With what exultation did I gaze at the gigantic Jungfrau, the advanced guard of the Oberland Giants, whose summit I had attained the year before; and with what pleasure, as we approached Grindelwald, did I draw my companion's attention to the grandeur of the scene as mountain after mountain burst upon the sight, and gradually the whole Bernese range, from the Jungfrau to the Wetterhorn, opened to the view; the snow-clad peaks sharply defined against the clear blue sky, the glaciers pouring into the valley wherever channels in the rocky barrier gave them outlet.

At Grindelwald I took up my quarters at the Hôtel de l'Ours, where I was warmly welcomed, and was soon in conference with my old guide, Christian Almer, to whom I unfolded my desire to attempt the ascent of the Schreckhorn. Finding him nothing loth, I engaged him and Peter Bohren as guides for the expedition, and the next day, with my telescope in my pocket, I mounted the Faulhorn to reconnoitre. It happened to be a *fête* day, and I found a large crowd of peasants dancing and amusing themselves in various other ways upon a flat piece of ground just below the summit. Truly, they had chosen a magnificent ball-room; the blue canopy of heaven was the ceiling, the earth—carpeted by the emerald sward patterned with the brightest flowers—the floor. On

one side rose the summit of the Faulhorn, on the other the mountains of the Oberland, forming a panorama upon which the eye never tired to dwell.

Approaching a group of dancers, I was recognised by one of them (a guide I had once employed), and no sooner was the dance over than he greeted me with great cordiality, and urged me to dance a polka. As an inducement, he introduced his blushing sweetheart for a partner; but, mistrusting my powers of dancing in boots with soles an inch thick, studded with hobnails, I bowed my excuses, and proceeded on my way to the summit, where I sat down, and, adjusting my telescope, took a long and anxious survey of the Schreckhorn and the surrounding snows.

The result was that I felt convinced that the principal difficulties in the attempt to ascend the peak would be found a short distance below the place where it first appeared above the snow, as the *névé* there seemed much broken up, and I could trace a large crevasse running along for a considerable distance. I inferred that a long ladder would be of essential service during the expedition.

Upon descending, I communicated to Almer and Bohren the result of my observations; but finding that they did not agree with me as to the necessity for a ladder, I deferred for the time to their judgment, and having engaged two porters, awaited patiently the appearance of continued fair weather in order to start.

The morning of the 5th of August proved very fine; the mercury of the barometer was rising fast; and the weather seemed so settled that I determined to set off. The guides and porters were summoned, and we were soon in the midst of the bustle of preparation.

Each of our porters carried one of the long baskets of the country, wide at the mouth and narrow at the bottom, attached to his shoulders by hooks or cords. These baskets were filled with provisions, wine, some blankets, a large bed curtain for a flag, a sheepskin, and knapsacks. The loads were very heavy, but the sturdy Oberland men walked off with them without the slightest difficulty, and quite as a matter of course. Almer carried a long stout rope and a heavy common wood axe, which I had often seen used with good effect during an ascent, in giving the first rough cuts to the steps in a steep ice wall, that were afterwards deepened and finished off by the ice axes of those who followed. Bohren carried his knapsack and ice axe. Past experience having satisfied me that the guide, in De Saussure's time, who talked of travelling over a

glacier with a parasol in one hand and a scent-bottle in the other, was a very sensible fellow, and that on the snow the heat of the sun by day was worse than the cold by night, I had studied to adopt such clothing as, whilst being light and not absorbing the sun's rays, should at the same time preserve the person from cold when resting after being heated by exertion. My costume consisted of white flannel cricketing trousers, and a jacket of the same material, with sleeves, a white linen coat, flannel shirt, white felt wideawake hat, a pair of merino stockings, with a pair of the thickest worsted socks drawn over them, and double-soled Blucher boots, specially made for the purpose in London, the soles, of course, well studded with nails. I also took with me a pair of long cloth gaiters, to put on at night, and a pair of neutral tint spectacles, with side glasses, to protect the eyes from the glare of the sun whilst on the snow.

About ten we started, everyone about the hotel turning out to see us off, and expressing good wishes for our success. A short distance from the hotel we met Madame Bohren, who brought a copper kettle for our tea-making, and a little "Toddle," who came to take leave of its father. Some time was taken up whilst Bohren tied the kettle on the top of his knapsack, and gave up to his wife his testimonial book and valuables.

I myself caused the next stoppage, for notwithstanding the opinion of Almer and Bohren about the ladder, I had thought of nothing else since leaving the hotel, and pictured to myself so vividly the annoyance I should suffer in case the expedition should fail for want of it, that I sent back one of the porters to fetch one, with a man to carry it, and we awaited his coming at the residence of Bohren's father, a châlet at the foot of the upper glacier. When the ladder arrived, it required a little trimming at the ends; then there was some wine to be drunk for the good of the house, and one of the porters had to deposit his little stock of money with Bohren's sister; but at last all these little matters were completed, and we set off in earnest.

Our course was for some time in the direction of the Great Scheideck, along and up the base of the mountain marked "Oberberg" in the map,* there being no practicable way to ascend along the southern or Grindelwald side of the upper glacier. As we passed through the meadows close to the rock, some peasants were busy getting in hay, and one of them, a young girl, was singing gaily

* It has not been possible to include the Upper Glacier of Grindelwald in the map engraved for this volume.

at her work. Far above us I could see a small patch of snow, near which I was informed we should turn round the corner of the rock, and take a direction in a line with the glacier. We had started so late that the sun was very hot, and we wound our way slowly upwards, the guides and haymakers shouting to one another, and the maiden's song sounding merrily in the clear air; but at length the patch of snow was reached, we turned the corner of the rock, the shouts of the men and the song of the girl sounded fainter and fainter in the distance, and soon ceased to be heard. As the sounds died away, I felt that we were now fairly severed from our fellow-men, and a sensation of sadness stole over me. My companions also seemed to feel the change, and their gaiety ceased for some minutes.

We pursued our way steadily, the scenery increasing in grandeur at every step, as we advanced up the gorge through which the stupendous mass of the upper glacier forces its way into the valley. At one part, our path lay over a large mass of rock, beautifully rounded and smoothed, most probably by glacier action, but a few rude steps had been cut by the shepherds or hunters in continuation of the path, and there was no difficulty in passing. With the exception that Almer pointed out four chamois, on the opposite side of the glacier, that were grazing upon a patch of grass amidst the snow, no particular incident occurred until we neared the upper end of the glacier, when the noise of falling water warned us we were approaching a cascade, and we were soon in the midst of a scene of wild beauty. A large waterfall, and several smaller ones, fed by the snows of the Wetterhorn, poured from the summit of the ragged cliff on our left hand, and their waters forced their way amongst the rocks with thundering din on their passage to the shattered glacier below.

To save making a long detour, our ladder was put in requisition, in order to cross the stream from the great waterfall close to the fall. During the fixing of the ladder, I was surprised to see a stone fly suddenly past us, close to the head of one of the porters, and we soon discovered that the fall brought down quantities of stones which, striking upon the basin into which the water fell, were shot out obliquely with tremendous violence. This discovery quickened our movements. As soon as the ladder was fixed, Almer and Bohren crossed, and I followed, my legs getting wet through in a moment from the spray, and having a narrow escape from a stone, which struck the brim of my hat whilst climbing the opposite bank. We

were watching the passage of the porters, when suddenly I perceived the foremost stagger, having evidently been struck by a stone. The poor fellow just managed to totter up to us, when he sank upon his knee with his face covered with blood from a bad cut in the head. I immediately pulled out my brandy flask and poured the contents down his throat; and recollecting the rule laid down by the renowned borderer, Dandie Dinmont, in "Guy Mannering," that "the best way's to let the blood barken upon the cut," I would not allow the wound to be washed; but bound it up as it was with a pocket handkerchief. The guides relieved him of his burden, and washed his face, and in a little while we had the satisfaction of seeing him, although weak, revive sufficiently to be able to go on.

After some rough walking and climbing over the rocks, we rounded the cliff on our left, and reached a place on the summit somewhat approaching a level. A short walk brought us in front of a huge boulder, or rather a cluster of boulders thrown together, and here the guides halted, and pointing to a hole close to the ground, informed me we had arrived at "The Chief Hotel." *

The baskets and knapsacks were immediately put down, and preparations made for coffee. Bohren, who was of a restless disposition, and had lingered behind poking the handle of his ice axe into all the crannies he could find, came running up to tell us that in one of them he had touched a marmot. Most men are by nature Nimrods; and there are few that the prospect of a chase after even a rat does not excite. Shaking off my fatigue, and seizing an empty bag and an axe, I ran to the spot with Almer, and we all three were soon engaged with the axes, digging like madmen to get at the poor marmot; but although we tore up the turf and stones for some distance, and actually arrived at its bedchamber under a large flat boulder, the marmot was too quick for us, and opened a way out before we could reach it.

After the hunt, I made a sketch of the Schreckhorn, enjoyed a good meal and a cup of coffee, then lay down upon the sheepskin with my knapsack for a pillow, and covering myself over with a blanket, was soon fast asleep. When my companions retired for the night, Bohren roused me up, and tried hard to persuade me to

* This hole or cave is, I believe, the same used by Mr. Wills during his ascent of the Wetterhorn. I think that, without reference to an ascent, two or three days might be most agreeably spent by using it as head-quarters, and making excursions from it to the neighbouring rocks and glaciers. The scenery around is magnificent.

enter their burrow under the rock; but I did not like the look of it, so, finding me determined to stay where I was, he disappeared with the others, crawling backwards through the hole, and I once more settled to sleep.

I was awakened about one in the morning by thunder, and, poking out my head from under the blanket, I found that it was raining fast. Up I jumped, rolled up my bed, placed it at the mouth of the hole, and bawled to the guides to take it in. After some sleepy observations from within, the bundle disappeared, and, lying down upon my face, I backed in after it. I found the hole more capacious than I had imagined, and, passing to the end, enjoyed a good rest.

In the morning it was still raining, and after taking breakfast my companions went to sleep again. I arranged the sheepskin at the entrance of the hole, and passed an unpleasant day, lying with my head out like a marmot, by turns dozing and watching the weather and the Schreckhorn, which I could see from my resting-place.

Late in the afternoon the rain cleared off, my companions shook off their lethargy, and we all turned out to look about us. As we stood with our backs to our resting-place, the Wetterhorn was on our left, the Schreckhorn on our right, whilst in front rose a rocky barrier, up which we had to climb in pursuing our route. Almer determined at once to climb this barrier, until we reached a spot within a short distance of the point where we were to take to the ice, and there to pass the night, so as to make a good start in the morning should the weather prove favourable. As anything was better than the monotony of our present position, I was glad enough when we packed up our traps and bade adieu to our hotel, which certainly possessed one great recommendation, that there was no *maître d'hôtel* to present his bill, and no *garçons* to levy backsheesh upon the guests.

After climbing to the height desired we found an overhanging rock, under which we took up our quarters. The guides and porters built a little wall round us to keep off the wind, and we kindled a fire and made a good meal of coffee, ham, and eggs. Bohren found a little hole in the rock higher up, which he said just held him, and the three porters found one lower down, so the four betook themselves to their bed-chambers, and I was left alone with Almer.

We kept up our fire, and as I did not feel any inclination to sleep, I sat up for some time, with a blanket round me, smoking my pipe and musing upon my strange situation. Almer kept me

company, as he refused to lie down unless I did. When we did lie down, I found that little Bohren had carried off the sheepskin, and I had several times to rise and remove sharp stones whose points stuck into my back and rendered sleeping impossible. To add to my discomfort, the rain again began to fall and was driven in upon me by the wind, which was very cold, so that at length I was glad enough to get up again. Wrapping my blanket around my shoulders, I sat down and anxiously watched the flying clouds. On my left hand, as I sat with my back against the rock, in tantalising proximity rose the Schreckhorn. When a cloud less dense than others passed before it, its outline became dimly visible, and at the same time showed that the moon was shining brightly behind it, her light piercing the thin veil of cloud, and for a moment touching snow and glacier with her rays. Looking straight before me, I could mark in the distance the noble outline of the Niesen, and, as if suspended in mid-air, a small speck of light, which I felt sure must be the reflection of the moon shining upon the lake of Thun. The clouds flew rapidly past, gradually becoming thinner and fewer, until by degrees the stars became visible, the rain ceased, and about two A.M. the moon was shining in a cloudless sky. The Schreckhorn on my left, and the Wetterhorn on my right hand, stood out in bold distinctness, the snows around them looking like frosted silver; and the distant lake of Thun quivered and sparkled in the moonlight.

Almer replenished the fire and made a good supply of coffee; as soon as it was ready we shouted to wake Bohren and the porters. After considerable exercise of our lungs, some faint holloas announced that Bohren in the attic, and the porters on the ground floor, were awake; but it was a long time before the lazy fellows would turn out. As soon as we were assembled, breakfast began; and after it was over we packed up such things as we considered necessary to carry with us, and leaving the rest behind, at half-past six o'clock we left our resting-place.

Above us extended a long ridge of perpendicular rock, with the glacier resting upon its summit and forming a continuation of its face; but never projecting far beyond the edge, as the moment any portion of the ice was forced by the pressure behind beyond the edge, it broke off from the main body and plunged down the precipice. I was fortunate enough to see the fall of an enormous mass, which went thundering down, striking projecting points of

rock, and turning and bounding until it reached the rocks below, where it was shivered into thousands of fragments, throwing up a perfect cloud of icy spray.

The cliff seemed to bar further progress; but at one point there was fortunately a depression over which the glacier flowed, and from that point we soon made our way to the ice above, where a striking scene awaited us. On our right, deep below, ran the main channel of the great glacier; on our left, far above us, and shutting in the view, was a long jagged ridge of huge ice pinnacles which gradually descended, bearing to the right until it terminated at a point abutting on the main channel, the portion of the glacier upon which we were standing being magnificently crevassed. To the before-mentioned point we directed our steps, but the crevasses were so large and numerous, that it was extremely difficult to thread our way amongst them, and it somewhat taxed Almer's sagacity to find a route. Several times we had to abandon the path we were following, and try another; but by perseverance we arrived at our point, and shortly afterwards reached the *névé*.

We found ourselves in the centre of a valley of snow, with a gentle inclination upwards. The passage amongst the crevasses had so engrossed my attention that I had been unable to look about me, but now I observed for the first time, that instead of a single peak, as the Schreckhorn had always appeared to me to be, there were two distinct peaks. I was perfectly puzzled, and pointing to the nearer, I asked what it was. "Schreckhorn," was Almer's reply. "And that?" I said, pointing to the farther and higher. "Schreckhorn," was also the reply.

I could only suppose that from the points of view whence I had hitherto regarded the Schreckhorn, the higher peak had been blended with, or hidden by, the lower one. I of course determined to try the higher.

The valley in which we stood terminated in a ridge, for the most part covered with snow, dividing the upper glacier of Grindelwald from the Lauter Aar glacier. Straight before us, however, and at the near side of the col, was a portion of bare rock, which formed a conspicuous object in the distance, and seemed a spur of the higher peak of the Schreckhorn, projecting from the snow in the same manner as one sees portions of the roots of large trees projecting from the soil, far from the stem they support. We marched past the lower peak, and made straight for this mark, the sun

struggling through the clouds and shedding a watery glare around, whilst the whiteness of the snow on the peaks, showed that, unfortunately for us, it was fresh fallen. Before us to our left was a dome of snow, with an alpenstock planted in the top of it by one of the party who had lately reached this rarely visited spot. As we advanced our mark appeared larger and larger, until upon coming up to it, I found it was a very large frontage of rock with a quantity of fragments at its base. To the right ran a steep wall of snow, forming one side of a great crevasse or *bergschrund*, the opposite side of which was much higher, and rose from the edge in a steep slope. The crevasse cut us off entirely from the peak.

We all stood for some time staring at the rock and the crevasse, and as no one seemed inclined to take a decisive step, I marched off to the left of the rock, with an idea of taking the difficulty in flank. Almer and Bohren followed, but I had not gone far when they begged me to stop, and Almer shook his head, and led the way back again. I have always regretted since that I did not persevere, as we could not have met with greater difficulties than we afterwards encountered.

Away we then went to the right, examining the crevasse carefully as we went along, but for some time there appeared not the slightest chance of crossing. After a close examination, however, Almer hit upon a place where he determined to attempt the passage, and the ladder being set up, I mounted with him and Bohren to the edge of the crevasse on our side.

We had scarcely done so when an avalanche of fresh snow descended from the slope on the opposite side. Lucky it was for us that we had not crossed! The larger portion of the avalanche fell into the crevasse, whilst the remainder poured steadily over us like water. It came down with a sound like the prolonged dwelling with the voice on the word "hush." Directly I felt it coming I struck the handle of my ice axe into the snow and held on, crouching on my knees as low as possible. I was blinded by the rush of snow, and thought at the moment we were all going to be covered up. By the time it ceased I was pretty nearly in that predicament; I was obliged to pull my head out of my hat, leaving the latter in the snow, with large lumps of which, like hods full of mortar, my back and shoulders were covered. The snow also filled my pockets, and clung in lumps to every part of my flannel clothing. Bohren and Almer were in a similar plight. We had just finished clearing

off the snow when a smaller avalanche fell, and we again went through the clinging process. This was too much, and the moment it ceased, we hastily cleared off the snow, and ran down our ladder as fast as our legs could carry us.

Almer now gave it as his opinion that if we crossed the crevasse and tried to climb the slope, we should dislodge the fresh snow and be swept by it into the crevasse; and, as this was very evident, and it would have been nothing short of madness to have persisted in a proceeding that would have risked the lives of the entire party, I was obliged to relinquish the attempt to ascend the main peak.

It was with deep disappointment and a heavy heart that I saw the failure of my hopes, and turned to survey the lower peak, to which Almer drew my attention.

No crevasse appeared in our way, and as Almer felt sure we could mount it, I agreed to try.

From where we were standing a gentle descent conducted us to the bottom of a small valley running up between the peaks. We crossed this, and began to ascend the opposite rise, bearing to the right towards a mass of rocks forming a buttress to the right side of the lower peak, and divided from it by a steep slope of snow.

We had not proceeded far, when we had another proof of the dangerous state of the snow. An avalanche, dislodged from the upper part of the valley near the base of the peak, came suddenly down, sweeping a track about fifty feet in width and passing so close to us that I touched the edge of its track with my axe. The effect was wonderful. First was heard the noise I have before described as the snow began to slide from its bed, and then, as the mass gathered increased velocity by its fall, a sort of crackling crunching sound, as the snow was pressed into huge balls which tore rents in the surface as they rolled along.

As the avalanche passed me its force was nearly spent; but our ladder man, who was some distance below me with the ladder over his head and his pipe in his mouth, being in its way, it took him off his legs and rolled him over, ladder and all, amidst the laughter of the party.

After this incident we left the ladder on the snow, and lost no time in gaining the buttress of rock where we were safe from avalanches. We climbed to its highest point, and then the axes came into play to cut steps in the icy slopes leading thence to the base of the peak. Scarcely any snow rested upon this peak; it

was more perpendicular than the adjoining peak of the Greater Schreckhorn, but consisted of rock much broken up by the frost, with angular grooves affording good hold for the hands and feet, and rendering it not difficult to climb. We arrived at its summit at three P.M.

I immediately exposed a thermometer on the highest point; we planted our flag, and drank a bottle of wine, and Almer and Bohren set to screaming as loud as possible.

For some time the clouds had been gathering around us, and the view was anything but inviting. The only objects (and those only occasionally) visible were our neighbours, the higher Schreckhorn peak and the Wetterhorn, which presented a very remarkable appearance, having a conical top of fresh white snow, in shape exactly like a Mandarin's hat. The clouds filled the valley, and were massing themselves in a manner that betokened bad weather.

After smoking my pipe and chatting with Bohren for some time, I suggested that instead of returning by the way we came, we should try to descend the opposite side of the peak, and proceed to Grindelwald by the lower glacier. Almer and Bohren at first expressed some doubts about the practicability of this course, but eventually agreed to try it.

Before leaving, I took up my thermometer, which marked 43° Fahrenheit, and wrote our names on a piece of paper, which I placed in a bottle, and left for the edification of those who might come after us. It was in vain that Bohren attempted to persuade the porters to return the way they had come; they would not leave us, and we all quitted the summit together.

The first portion of the descent was extremely steep; masses of the broken rocks were piled up here and there, wherever a shelf allowed them to accumulate, and great care was required in passing over them. They were carefully surveyed by Bohren, who kicked over any fragment that appeared dangerous, and sent it plunging down to the depths below, frequently setting others on the move during its course, until a perfect avalanche of rocks was formed, which we watched as they crashed along until lost to sight in the distance. I found that I got on best by placing my hands behind me and crawling down on all fours with my back to the rock, and I used this mode of progression wherever the rock was too steep to allow of my walking upright. When we came to a place a little less steep Bohren walked upright, and looking back, encouraged me to

do the same, saying, "One never slides upon granite, Sir;" but the words were scarcely out of his mouth when the little man came down upon his back in a manner that made me infinitely prefer my surer method.

We certainly during our descent saw nature in her most gloomy and sterile aspect. Nothing but rock! rock! bare rock! There seemed no end to it. Once only I remember that the scene was varied, when a change took place in the mineral character of the rock, and we passed from the granite, too constantly disintegrated by the frost to permit of vegetation forming upon it, to a formation which, by its composition or the direction of its cleavage, is more capable of resisting that mighty leveller of the high places of the earth. There the cliffs were clothed with lichens of the most beautiful and varied colours, affording a charming relief to the eye.

As we continued to descend, we came now and then to small plateaux, the summits of fresh precipices, down which a passage had to be found. It was upon reaching one of these that Bohren, approaching the edge of the precipice and peeping over, shouted out, "Un chamois!" and immediately the whole party was thrown into a state of great excitement. The animal, it appeared, was lying down upon a ledge of rock, whence it started off the moment it saw Bohren. It took at first a downward course out of our sight; but Bohren directed me to watch the side of the aiguille near us, and in a moment or two it came bounding up the rocks like an arrow, scattering the loose stones in all directions. It was within easy gun-shot range when, a short distance above us, it suddenly turned to the left along a narrow ledge crossing the face of the cliff; but when it arrived at the end of the ledge it was stopped by a precipice, which compelled it to retrace its steps, after which it continued its upward course, and was soon lost to view.

At one spot we found ourselves in a complete fix. Our progress, like that of the poor chamois, was stopped by a precipice, and it seemed at first that we must turn back; but peeping round a projecting rock we saw a ledge on the other side, and determined to reach it if possible. It was an ugly place; the face of the rock went sheer down some hundreds of feet, and you had, whilst clinging to the rock, to cast one leg round it, and feel for a resting-place for the foot. As we were not tied a slip would have proved fatal. Happily we all got round safely, and after this we but once more encountered any serious peril. That was in passing a tall

cliff topped by a glacier, whose ice pinnacles here and there stood out over the edge, and appeared ready to fall. There was no other way to go, and we all hurried along as fast as the steepness of the rocks would allow, keeping as close to the cliff as possible. My companions seemed fully to appreciate the danger. Many a wistful glance was cast upwards, and I felt very glad when we had left the place far behind.

We had here a fine opportunity of observing the wonderful operation of nature in the gradual reduction of the rocks. In descending from the top, it was curious to perceive how the fragments became smaller and smaller, until we arrived at a depth where they were fairly reduced into earth covered with patches of grass and wild flowers. These patches became more frequent and larger until the whole mountain side was clothed in verdure, and we drew near to the glacier.

It was a welcome sight, for, as we approached its side, the shades of evening began to fall; but we now felt sure of reaching Grindelwald, and put forth our energies in scrambling over the long line of loose boulders which had to be traversed before we trod the ice. When at length we attained the object of our exertions—the Lower Glacier of Grindelwald—it began to rain, which made the passage over the ice miserable work, and by the time it was over we were thoroughly wet through. We left the glacier at the point where visitors to it usually get upon the ice, and I observed that the features of the place were much altered since I had last visited it. Early in August of the preceding year, 1856, a deep chasm lay between the ice and the rock, and access to the glacier was obtained by first walking along a plank supported by two pegs driven into the face of the rock, and then along another plank which led thence to the ice, but on this occasion the glacier had moved much closer to the rock, and the peg-supported plank was no longer necessary.

The rest of our journey was wretched in the extreme. It was quite dark when we passed through the fields leading to the hotel; the rain fell in torrents, and we arrived perfectly drenched. However, a warm bath and a good night's rest set me right, and when the rain continued, and two days afterwards I saw the sides of the Eiger and the Wengern Alps covered with snow, I congratulated myself upon having escaped so well.

EUSTACE ANDERSON.

Note by the Editor.

The first recorded attempt to ascend the Schreckhorn was made by MM. Desor and Escher von der Linth in 1842. They started from the Pavilion on the lower Aar glacier, and ascending by the second of the tributary glaciers that descend from the Greater Schreckhorn to the Finsteraar branch of the Aar glacier, they succeeded in gaining the highest ridge of that peak. M. Desor describes it as forming an excessively sharp edge of bare rock of a crescent shape, about 300 yards in length, the highest points being at the two extremities. The southern of these alone was attained on that occasion, the connecting ridge being so shattered that they were unable to reach the northern summit, which, according to M. Wild's triangulation, is about ninety feet higher than the other. As far as I know, this point has never yet been ascended, and I would suggest that the attempt should be made from the side of the Lauteraar glacier. Sleeping at the Pavilion, it would be practicable to start long before daylight, and to arrive at the foot of the peak at a much earlier hour, and with less fatigue, than when approaching it from the Grindelwald side, even after passing the night in the uncomfortable position where Mr. Anderson made his second bivouac.

During the bad weather which Mr. Anderson encountered, unusual heat prevailed in the north of Switzerland. At noon on the 5th of August, the thermometer stood at 66° Fahr. at the Oberland Alp, over 6,000 feet above the sea. At ten A.M. on the 6th, the temperature at Wesen, on the Lake of Wallenstadt, was 76°·2 Fahr.; and at noon on the 7th, at Immensee, on the Lake of Zug, 77°·3; in each case the thermometer being carefully shaded.

The exact height of the Greater Schreckhorn has not, perhaps, been satisfactorily ascertained, but Desor's observations on the subject are erroneous. In Ziegler's Catalogue the height given for the point attained in 1842, there called the Eastern Peak, is 4,082 metres, or 13,392 English feet; while the Western Peak is said to be but 4,014 metres, or 13,170 English feet in height. M. Desor supposes that these measures were intended for the two summits forming the extremities of the ridge of the Greater Schreckhorn, but Ziegler's statement of the latitude and longitude of each point shows that the Western Peak of his catalogue is the Lesser Schreckhorn ascended by Mr. Anderson. These are the results of the triangulation executed by Eschmann, and independently of other causes of error, there is much diffi-

culty in securing the identity of the particular point in a broken ridge, such as the summit of the Greater Schreckhorn, that is observed from the two extremities of a base line.

True granite has not been observed anywhere in the higher region of the Oberland Alps, and it is probable that the rock so named in the foregoing paper is gneiss, which at intervals, as described by Mr. Anderson, passes into mica-slate.