

of professional robbers is out of the question; they would long ago have been reduced to skeletons; but we were frequently told, with great circumstantiality, that there were 'schlechte leute' wandering on the hills, who were hiding from the conscription, and would be glad of a little diversion in the way of robbing travellers. Certainly, the 'schlechte leute' must have been glad of any little excitement; and we were always told that they had robbed somebody the day before yesterday. But as we met none, I cannot speak with authority. In conclusion, I will mention that the fullest information is to be found in Mr. Boner's work on Transylvania, and Mr. Paget's earlier work on Hungary. Mr. Paget is still a resident in the country. The best mode of reaching Transylvania is by railway from Pesth to Arad or Grosswardein, whence diligences go daily to Hermannstadt and Klausenburg respectively. The latter is by far the shortest journey; but it is to be hoped that both will before long be supplanted by the railways, which are the great need of the country and which appear to be promised by the new Hungarian Ministry.

THE LAQUIN JOCH. By C. G. HEATHCOTE, M.A.

WHEN I was at the Hotel Monte Moro at Saas, not long ago, I turned to the visitor's book for amusement and instruction. In its polyglot pages I found an entry which I plead as my excuse for inflicting this narrative on the readers of the *Alpine Journal*. I read there, in the handwriting of one who is eminently qualified to judge of the relative merits of mountain districts, an expression of surprise that the many beautiful scenes in the neighbourhood should be still so imperfectly known and so rarely visited. It certainly seems strange that, while the western side of the valley and the passes leading from Saas to Zermatt are so well known and so often traversed, so few have thought it worth their while to supplement their familiarity with the Mischabel with some slight acquaintance with the hardly less beautiful range which extends from the Monte Moro to the foot of the Simplon, and forms so conspicuous an object from any of the passes from Zermatt to Saas.

It is with the desire of calling the attention of mountaineers to one at least of the passes across this range that I have endeavoured to write a short account of the Laquin Joch. It is true that it lies somewhat out of the track of travellers, but it is a pass which is well worth a slight détour, if indeed

that can be called a *détour* which is the most direct route from Saas to the Simplon; and uniting in itself as it does almost every attribute which a well-regulated pass ought to possess, I am convinced that it only requires to be properly introduced to become almost as popular as the Adler or the Alphubel.

Now in these latter days of Alpine exploration, when most of the peaks worth climbing have been climbed, and when, from the deficiency of cols properly so called, enthusiastic travellers have been reduced in their pursuit after novelty to effect passes over the tops of high mountains, passes too which in many cases only lead from places which no sensible man would ever be in to others to which no sane man would ever care to go, it was satisfactory to find a real col still untraversed, leading directly from one comfortable hotel to another, capable of being effected within the limits of a reasonable day's work, and promising a view of extraordinary magnificence. Such a col Mr. Robertson and I found in the Laquin Joch. We had met at Zermatt in the summer of 1864, and had spent together a day and a night on the upper half of the Dom, resulting in an expenditure of energy and tobacco utterly disproportionate to the object attained, which amounted to little more than a series of magnificent views of the Weisshorn under the various aspects presented by two sunrises, a sunset, and a cloudless noon. And while I am on the subject of the Dom, I may mention that though, when viewed in a proper light, it does not present any unusual features, it is nevertheless capable, when approached through the medium of a judicious course of persistent mismanagement, of becoming an exceedingly difficult, and rather dangerous undertaking.

We were despondingly, not to say sullenly, making our way from Randa to Zermatt, when the idea of the Laquin Joch flashed across the mind of my companion like an inspiration. It was joyfully entertained, and, as far as will was concerned, a way was as good as found. A difficulty however met us at the outset. Judging from the little we knew of the pass, it was by no means one to attempt with third-rate guides, and it happened that nothing better was at that particular time to be had at Zermatt. We were therefore reduced to trust to what fortune might do for us on our arrival at Saas. She proved on this occasion worthy of our confidence, for she provided us with a leader. We were discussing the subject in all its bearings with Herr Imseng, and had not heard of more than three jügers who were competent to go anywhere blindfold, when Mr. Hayward, who had heard of our intention, very kindly volunteered to place Franz Andermatten at our disposal for a

couple of days. With Franz for our leader we cared little what the rest were like, so discarding an old gentleman who, despite his years, which must have been nearer seventy than sixty, had come to us with the strongest recommendations, we engaged Peter Venetz and Peter Zurbrücken, who with Andermatten made up a very sufficient phalanx of guides. I have not much to say about Zurbrücken except that he did well enough all that was required of him, but Venetz made himself very useful, and indeed led the greater part of the way down. During the arrangement of the preliminaries, it was suggested that our knapsacks should go round by the road; but Franz, taking up the heaviest of them, and tossing it in the air, treated the idea with such contempt, that it dropped like a debate in the House of Lords. I could not help wishing that such willingness to carry weight were more universal.

Accordingly on Monday, August 1, we left the Monte Rosa Hotel at 2.15 A.M., a laudable practice which I have seldom been able to carry into execution. Our lantern (of course we had one) played as usual its rôle of will-of-the-wisp, and as usual also day broke just as we emerged from the forest upon the smoother alp near the Trift chalets. The view from this point is very striking. It should I think be the first object of every visitor at Saas, and I presume that there is a mule-path as far as the chalets, though I saw no traces of it. The view from the Trift Alp has one advantage at least over that from the Fée Gletscher Alp, in that it commands the whole basin of the Fée, while it is at a sufficient distance from the great peaks of the Mischabel to display them to the greatest perfection. To this advantage may be added that of extreme facility of access. Indeed the Laquin Joch itself may be so easily reached from the west side as to be within the powers of a very moderate walker. From the upper end of the Trift Alp a steep rocky ridge runs almost due east between two arms of the glacier till it terminates in gentle snow-slopes. These slopes are surmounted by a cocks-comb of serrated rocks which extend almost the whole way from the base of the final peak of the Weissmies to that of the Laquinhorn. This rather slight indication of the direction to be followed will, I think, be sufficient. Indeed it would be difficult to give one more precise, inasmuch as either from conservatism or want of inventive faculty, the natives of those parts have bestowed upon all the glaciers flowing from the west side of this range the generic name of Trift, a name which for purposes of identification is somewhat too comprehensive. I was still meditating on the monotony of Alpine nomenclature, and

the unadaptibility of milk in large quantities to a too susceptible organization, when we reached the top of the ridge, just to the south as I think of the point marked in the Federal map 3509 metres; and we then turned round, almost for the first time since leaving the Trift Alp, to look westwards; while Franz amused us by tracing out an imaginary, and, as I believed at the time, purely fictitious route between the Dom and the Täschhorn, which I may parenthetically remark is still a col only in embryo. Imseng has, however, more than once informed Robertson that he has reconnoitred the route, and that he thinks that it affords a fair chance of success. The view from this point towards the west is much the same as, though of course more extensive than, that from the Trift Alp. In that direction and overhead the sky was almost cloudless, but towards the east imposing masses of vapour were rolled round Monte Leone and the other high peaks, presenting that perplexing appearance which can always be secured by mixing rock, snow, and clouds in equal proportions and ever varying forms. Above us on the south rose the Weissmies, which Robertson had ascended a year or two previously with Venetz. The ridge leading to it is however so broken and serrated, and the slopes above so steep, that I doubt whether the mountain is accessible from the col.

I had just satisfied myself by a hasty glance downwards to the Laquin Glacier that further progress was altogether out of the question, and was trying to reconcile myself to the inevitable degradation of retreat, when some one suggested a start. Robertson did not seem disposed to expostulate, so without remonstrance we followed Venetz, as he quietly stepped over the edge, as it appeared, of a precipice some thousands of feet high, and turned to the left. Volition, or at all events independent action, only returned about three hours afterwards, when we were safely landed at the head of the Laquin Glacier. At the same time I must say that I do not remember any particular difficulty. Nature had so constructed the mountain that the right ledge was invariably in the right place; and once or twice, when we were at fault, some eye more keen than mine detected the faint tracks of chamois which served to indicate the best line to follow. There might perhaps sometimes be a little danger from falling stones; as the Laquinhorn, along the face of which we were slowly winding, is seamed with gullies eminently suggestive of stone-avalanches; but the danger, if it existed, was obviated, or at least greatly diminished by our early start, and by the fine weather which prevailed throughout the month of August in that year. In fact

our progress was uneventful, though there was at all times a possibility of a grand aerocolymbetic descent, which if imported and reduced to a system would draw crowds to Cremorne. There was, however, one amusing incident, when Franz in descending a cheminée was caught by the knapsack he was carrying; and, Absalom-like, might have hung there still but for our assistance.

Shortly after this we finally left the rocks of the Laquinhorn, and reached a remarkable old moraine, very high and very narrow, which is distinctly marked on the Federal map as dividing the Laquin Glacier from a nameless glacier on the north, the head of which lies immediately under the precipices of the Laquinhorn, and which constitutes the approach to the Fletsch Joch. This point commands a wonderful view of the Weissmies, and of the great wall of rock sweeping round the head of the Laquin Glacier to the Laquinhorn. The contrast was remarkable. The Weissmies, as befits its name, was clothed in snow from top to bottom, while there was hardly a white spot visible on the cliffs we had just descended. It was impossible with any certainty to trace our course, and difficult to believe that any one line was less impracticable than another. While we were admiring the view and eating luncheon, nine or ten chamois passed close to us, and we could see them for some distance making their way almost in our footsteps till they were lost to view behind a projecting angle of the mountain. They would have been of considerable service in indicating the way had we been going back to Saas. To any one who may wish to reverse our route the moraine of which I have spoken will point out the direction to be followed. It abuts on a small snow-slope, which was when I was there, and may be generally, the only one visible on that part of the mountain. Immediately above this is the cheminée, and after that he must keep well to the left. As to the moraine itself it cannot be missed, its height and form being so remarkable.

I believe that a cattle track leads from the moraine, or rather from the further bank of the nameless glacier to the north of it, to Simpeln, but from want of local knowledge we wasted much time by endeavouring to descend straight upon the head of the Laquinthal: and on the precipitous buttresses which overhang the valley we experienced difficulties quite as great as any we met with in the course of the day. These may, however, no doubt be altogether avoided by keeping at a higher level. The Laquinthal, considering its nearness to one of the great roads, is one of the most sequestered in



THE MOUNTAIN VIEWED FROM ABOVE BIGNAZ.  
(From a sketch by A. Adams-Reilly.)

Switzerland. It appeared to be inhabited only by charcoal burners, who met our conciliatory observations with a haughty reserve peculiar to charcoal burners all over the world, and Englishmen.

It remains only briefly to compare this pass with the other routes from Saas to Simpeln. More direct than the Thäli Joch, shorter and perhaps easier than the Fletsch Joch, and not much if at all longer even than the Gamser Joch, it can hardly, as far as my experience goes, be surpassed in interest and grandeur by any col in Switzerland. The entire time excluding halts was not much more than ten hours. I imagine that it may also be possible to effect a passage from the Rossboden Glacier, the stream from which flows into the Simplon valley just above Simpeln, to the Fletschhorn Glacier, on the west side of the chain. I am not aware that it has ever been attempted, and if practicable it would probably lead over the summit of the Rossbodenhorn, or close to it; still it may be worth trying. With regard to the pass that I have endeavoured to describe, I may confidently say that, though there is no very striking ice scenery, any traveller who may be induced to cross it will receive three impressions which he will not soon forget—the view westwards from the Col, the view downwards to the Laquin Glacier, and the view upwards from the old moraine.

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THE BEC DE LUSENEY. By A. ADAMS-REILLY.

ALMOST in the centre of the triangular block of mountains of which the Dent d'Hérens forms the apex, while Aosta and Chatillon lie at the extremities of its base, a region as yet untrodden by the casual tourist, lies hidden one of the most graceful snow peaks in the Alps, the Bec de Luseney; of no great elevation, indeed, but the highest as well as the most beautiful of this group. From many points in the chain of Monte Rosa and the mountains of Bagnes both Mr. Whymper and myself had been struck by the symmetry of its form, but it had long been a puzzle to us, where or what it was—especially as guides exercised their imaginative faculties upon it in a manner startling and marvellous, and gave it any name that came handy from the Grivola to the Chateau des Dames. By means of a level I had ascertained from the summit of the Vêlan that its height was almost precisely the same, 12,350 feet; but it was not until some time afterwards, that, in the course