

it. Land travelling is, however, so excessively slow that anyone who desired to see the island pretty thoroughly and ascend some of the great peaks (nearly all of which lie near the sea) would best accomplish his object by means of a yacht. He could thus carry with him those stores of provisions and other travel requisites which it is so troublesome to transport on the backs of horses, and by anchoring every now and then for a week or ten days in some of the harbours on the west and north side of the island, where good harbours abound, could see as much of the interior and the ways of the people as he liked, while avoiding the weariness and disgust which a long course of dirt and discomfort is apt to produce in unseasoned travellers. For the rest, the explorer of Iceland must be infinitely patient, for the natives have absolutely no sense of the value of time; and reasonably self-reliant, for the people who call themselves guides are of little or no use except to point out the tracks, and cannot even understand why anyone should climb a mountain. The country folk, however, priests and farmers, are with few exceptions genial and helpful, and it will be his own fault if he does not find a hearty welcome among them. When they scruple to accept remuneration, though this does not often happen, he may make a present to the children.

Finally, let every traveller who starts for Iceland start in June, not so much for the sake of the long days as because after the middle of August the weather is pretty sure to be cold, and likely to be wet and stormy. And how hateful wet and stormy weather is in Iceland I leave to be imagined by those fortunate people who have never experienced it.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

TENT LIFE WITH ENGLISH GIPSIES IN NORWAY.*

Whatever may be the opinion formed by the majority of summer wanderers regarding Mr. Smith's mode of making a tour—travelling as 'Shorengro,' or chief of a gipsy band, with tents and donkies to carry them—it certainly has the charm of novelty, and in his case was a success, for he saw a good deal of Norway, and, judging from the cheery way in which he writes, enjoyed his trip immensely.

The party consisted of the author and three thorough-bred young gipsies, two brothers, Noah and Zachariah, and their pretty sister, Esmeralda. Mr. Smith had evidently made the gipsy race a study for years, and his attendants were old acquaintances with whom he had travelled before. Furnished with three good donkies, the paraphernalia of a road-side camp, and a large store of provisions in the shape of Australian meat, ham, cheese, &c., they all landed at Christiania on June 20, and at once started for Veblungsnæs, in Romsdal, by the well-known Molde road. It took them a long time to reach that place, for trudging along with tolerably well-laden donkies was

* *Tent Life with English Gipsies in Norway.* By Hubert Smith. Henry S. King & Co. London: 1873.

anything but a speedy way of getting over the ground; added to which they often halted for a day. From Romsdal, after securing the services of Ole Rødsheim, a first-rate guide who spoke English, the mountains between that valley and the Lom district were crossed, and the travellers made their way into Bæverdal, close to the foot of the Galdhøpigge. Mr. Smith gives us a good account of his night ascent of this, Norway's highest mountain. Leaving Bæverdal, they traversed the Sognefjeld by one of the most interesting routes in Norway, and reached Valdres after making a detour which enabled the author to visit the Mørkfos (or Vettisfossen)—by some regarded as the finest waterfall in Europe. We understand that its true height (carefully measured by means of a weighted cord suspended from a point close to the brink) has been found to be 860 English feet. Having reached the Valdres Road, Ole left them, and they continued their journey through the valleys to Christiania, and soon afterwards re-embarked for England; August was then drawing to a close. The book is a transcript of the author's notes made on the spot, and chronicles the events of each day—sometimes, in our opinion, with too much attention to incidents scarcely meriting any remark. Many of the scraps of Norsk given here and there contain errors, mostly orthographical, which, in the event of a second edition of the work, ought to be corrected. Much of the interest of the volume is derived from the ideas it affords concerning the general character, habits, and language of the gipsy race; and in his notes, Mr. Smith frequently gives a comparison of the dialects spoken by gipsies of different countries.

The illustrations, judging from those of places we know, are excellent.—J.C.

PANORAMA FROM MONTE SAN SALVATORE.*

A panorama is useful or pleasant for two purposes; on the spot as a key to the view, afterwards as a remembrance of the mere forms which met the eye. It is hopeless to endeavour in one of these long sheets to reproduce the exquisitely delicate and varied tints of a great mountain landscape. Such attempts inevitably end in a rough sort of tricolour; a bright green foreground, red middle distance, and white horizon-fringing chain, the snows on the latter being generally much exaggerated. Moreover, the chromolithographic process, by which colour is added, is of all others the least likely to afford the exactness of detail which in such a work is surely the first requisite. The most satisfactory reproductions of panoramic views we have yet seen are some published by the Swiss Alpine Club, which confine themselves to black and white. Panorama-makers would be wise to work with the tools rather of the etcher than of the painter in water-colours.

Having cleared our conscience of this preliminary criticism, we can

* *Panorama taken from Mount San Salvatore, near Lugano, sketched and painted from nature by F. E. Bossoli, Fratelli Tensi. Milano. 4 frs.*

honestly congratulate Signor Bossoli on the success he has achieved with a (as it seems to us) somewhat unsuitable method. He has taken great trouble to draw the outlines clearly, and to identify the peaks in view thoroughly and accurately, so that the tourist, armed with his sheet, may no longer be at the mercy of local information.

The view is worthy of the pains spent on it. The dolomitic bluff, crowned by the shrine of San Salvatore, is conspicuous beyond its size. Even from Monte Rosa, when the sun is favourable, its white-walled chapel may be seen shining out like a speck of snow from amongst the deep-coloured Italian ranges. As a necessary consequence, the Queen of the Alps, flanked by the great Saasgrat and Fletschhorn ridges, is a magnificent object from the lower hill. As Signor Bossoli's work lies open, showing, as well as snowy Alps, broad expanses of water, fertile plains, and close upon 200 villages and hamlets, we are reminded of a sentence in which Wordsworth has eloquently summed up the beauties and contrasts of the view before us: 'Splendid fertility, rich woods and dazzling waters, seclusion and confinement of view contrasted with sea-like extent of plain fading into the sky; and this again in an opposite quarter, with an horizon of the loftiest and boldest Alps—unite in composing a prospect more diversified by magnificence, beauty, and sublimity than perhaps any other point in Europe, of so considerable an elevation, commands.'

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

May 5.—Mr. W. LONGMAN, President, in the Chair.

Messrs. W. W. Simpson, G. Bennett, and J. M. Spence were elected Members of the Club.

The President, after some prefatory remarks on the great interest and importance of Icelandic exploration, introduced to the meeting Mr. W. L. Watts, who was anxious to obtain companions for an attempt to cross the Vatna Jökull.

Mr. WATTS described a previous expedition made by him in company with Mr. Milne, and entered at length into his plan of operations, dwelling especially on the question of whether the Jökull should be approached from the north or south.

Mr. E. T. HOLLAND gave particulars of the tour made by him in 1861, in company with Mr. Shepherd, in course of which they made the partial ascent of the Öröfa-Jökull. Impenetrable mists on the glacier were a great difficulty. He doubted the possibility of approaching the Vatna Jökull from the north, the country on that side being an absolute desert with no pasture for horses.

Captain MARSHALL HALL suggested that horses for tours in Iceland might advantageously be taken from the Shetland Islands.

After further discussion, in which Messrs. Howarth, Shepherd, and Milne took part, a vote of thanks to Mr. Watts for his address was passed unanimously.