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The Rosengarten Gebirge. By C. C. Tucker.

THE central Alps have gathered round themselves a far smaller store of legend and of song than might naturally be expected from a region so rich in natural beauty, so full of unexplored and mysterious recesses, so appalling in its manifestations of sudden and destructive energy. Explain it as we may, the fact cannot be questioned that the tame scenery of the Rhine, the moderate heights of the Hartz Mountains, or the obscure glens of distant Scotland are in this respect far richer than the most majestic region of civilised Europe. The Swiss peaks, conscious of the power exercised on our minds by their splendid scenery would seem to scorn any adventitious aid from the dim fancies or shadowy records of a remote past, and to rely proudly on the dazzling beauty which once recognised can never want for worshippers.

The legends of the Blümlis Alp, of Pilatus and some few others, are only the exceptions which prove the rule. Of the Luzern fable readers of Walter Scott will recollect the effective use made in the opening chapters of Anne of Geierstein. In spite, however, of its being placed by the author in the mouth of a peasant in the days of Charles of Burgundy, it is in reality of modern date, and is, in fact, not (as would be the case with a true myth) the source of, but an attempt to explain, a name which had been given for reasons wholly unconnected with the Governor of Judæa and his remorse.

As we advance eastwards a change in the poetic atmosphere, corresponding perhaps to a modification in the physical features of the country, begins to make itself felt. Buried in the recesses of their lofty ranges, the Swiss were, perhaps, too completely shut off from the movement of the world to feel the inspiration of poetry or fairy legend. In a region, however, where groups of mountains, parted by broad and grassy uplands, take the place of high and continuous ridges, nature has

provided pathways for friendly intercourse or hostile enterprise, and there, as elsewhere, poetry follows where human influences can penetrate. Already in Val Camonica and Val Rendena we cross the track of Charlemagne and Barbarossa, who, if not quite within the pale, stand on the threshold of the heroic age. It is not, however, till we reach the region of the Lake of Garda and the Etschthal that we find ourselves surrounded by the grand and shadowy personages which figure in the Niebelungen Lied and the Heldenbuch. Here we find the homes of Hildebrand and of Dietrich, and visions of warriors from the Rhine mingle with the barbaric forms of Etzel and his Huns.

The neighbourhood of the Brenner Pass displays everywhere a rich growth of weird and fantastic legend, and nowhere has poetic fancy been more busy than round the strange mountain mass, the name of which stands at the head of this paper. The reason of this pre-eminence is not far to seek. This great depression in the Alpine chain, taken advantage of by modern engineers for a railroad which really crosses instead of burrowing under the Alps, has been for centuries a highway of travel for the German and Latin races, and the names of the towns at which the train stops from time to time—Innsbruck, Brixen, Trent, Verona—recall events and controversies, invasions and councils, which have left their mark upon history.

Border lands, too, in all parts of the world have been the favoured home of romance and adventure, as they have been the invariable scene of dark and desperate deeds. It is not surprising, therefore, that the upper valleys of the Inn and the Eisack, abounding in strong and even impregnable positions, and gorges capable of being held by a few determined men against an army, should have produced in the Middle Ages a crop of mountain strongholds, the owners of which, though occasionally invaluable in stemming the tide of foreign invasion, more generally devoted themselves to the business of levying blackmail among the protected populations. The more respectable features of a lawless society were not, however, wholly wanting; and if the border castle of the Tyrol usually harboured a murderer and a felon, it was not unfrequently found to be the home of a warrior and poet.

Oswald von Wolkenstein, at least, whose ancestral castle stood in the Grödner Thal, which opens on the Eisack valley midway between Brixen and Botzen, was a figure worthy of high place among the grim array of Rudolphs and Sigismunds that guard the tomb of Maximilian in the Franciscan church at Innsbruck and almost recalls by his feats of arms

and song the Niebelung musician and hero whose fiddle-bow of steel beat such strange music on the helmets of his Hun assailants. Known among his contemporaries by his exploits against the Saracens wherever they could be found and fought, he secured a more lasting fame by the ballads, sonnets, and idylls, which he poured forth from his mountain home. It is doubtful whether direct connection can be established between the minnesinger of the Grödner Thal and the legends that have gathered round the Rosengarten, but we may in any case be allowed to see more than a mere coincidence in the presence side by side of a body of popular legend, and of a genuine and original singer. The ground was evidently favourable for a poetic growth, and it matters little whether the traditions of the country-side, as is most probable, inspired the poet, or were in the first instance awakened by him.

The legend of the Rosengarten is soon told.* The garden of roses was the sole possession above ground of the elfin King Laurin, who held his subterranean court somewhere in the fantastic mountain ranges encircling the Lake of Garda, and the deep-lying valley behind the storied city of Verona. His power curtailed by the advancing tide of human influence, the sprite entertained a grudge against the whole race of man, which he lost no opportunity of wreaking upon the head of any hapless wanderer who ventured within the limits of his fairy dominion. So long as the peasant and the shepherd alone fell victims to his malevolence, his outrages, if resented, were not revenged; but when, aspiring to the possession of an earthly wife, he seized and carried off the noble Simild of Styria as his queen, the indignation of the heroes was aroused. Dietlieb, the brother of Simild—Dietrich of Verona, the first warrior in the world, since the tragic death of the Volsung Siegefried—with Hildebrand, the Nestor of the 'Songs of the Heroes,' discovered and laid waste the Rose Garden. King Laurin was not likely to put up with such an insult. Though only three spans high, yet, by the aid of his magic cap, spear, and ring, he waged successful combat with the heroes through one long day, and was only overpowered when, through the counsel of Hildebrand who discovered his secret, he was deprived of those ghostly weapons. The warriors, being apparently as placable as they were brave, listened to the vanquished monarch's promises of amendment and accepted his hospitality. The wine was drugged however, and in the next scene we find all the

* It has already been given at length in an interesting article at p. 717 of the 21st volume of the 'Cornhill Magazine.'

heroes safely under lock and key in the subterranean dungeons of their treacherous foe. From this durance vile they are released by Simild, and this time they make their work good. King Laurin and all his army of pigmies are slaughtered. Simild is restored to her home; the fairy realm and its garden of roses vanish, and nothing is left but the wild cliffs among which the scene is laid and a few vague memories in evidence of the existence of the 'little folks,' whose power and malevolence were once so profoundly believed in and dreaded.

It may be asked why the story and the name should have attached themselves to this range rather than to any other of the mountain masses which belong to the poetic region of the Lake of Garda and the Etsch Valley. Some have found the source of the title in the rosy glow which at eventide spreads over the great face of precipice which looks down upon Botzen, or in the hue of the cliffs and spires which compose or adorn it, and have held that the legend is but another instance of the common tendency to explain an exceptional name by a story, however fanciful. Others, who admit the priority of the legend to the name, find in contrast rather than in similarity the explanation of the Rosengarten range having been selected as the habitat of King Laurin and his race. The more savage the scenery the more likely is the belief to grow that it was once other than what it is now—the barer the rocks of vegetation and life the more easily does the dream of loveliness and fertility arise. As in nature so in poetry, it is the traveller over the most arid tracts of the desert by whom the vision of fair lake and hanging garden is most commonly discerned.

Neither of these explanations seems to me entirely adequate. The flush which steals over a mountain range at the hour of dawn, or lingers on its crest after the rest of the earth is sunk in shadow, is the birthright of every lofty summit, an inheritance which can neither be renounced by any of them, nor be claimed exclusively by one; while for glowing cliffs and ruddy spires the Brenta Alta group, which looks down upon the Lake of Garda, easily carries off the palm from its rival on the other side of the Etschthal.

There is more to be said for the view which traces the preference given to the Rosengarten to contrast rather than similarity. I have no doubt that this wild range—forcing itself as it does in stern and sudden grandeur upon the traveller along the frequented highway of the Etschthal—seemed the obvious region to which to relegate any mysterious beings or supernatural appearances which may have found

a place in the legends of the country side. I do not believe, however, that a region of utter sterility, standing alone and unredeemed by any features of richness or fertility, would ever give rise through any force of mere contrast to the vision of beauty which is suggested to the mind by a garden of roses.

The idea, indeed, shadowed forth in the rose gardens of the old singers seems to have been the existence somewhere in the recesses of the world of that which was precious and beautiful, an existence not the less real because to all appearance surrounded, if not overlaid, by the wild, the savage, and the uncouth. These gardens were choice spots, lying behind barriers formidable by nature and guarded by the spirit of jealousy against the progress of man, but capable, nevertheless, of being discovered by those who sought them with hardihood. Such a conception would not be long in seeking for itself a local habitation and a name, and wherever a region could be found in nature which in its scenery fulfilled the requirements of the poet there we might expect to find also the name and the story of a rose garden. Nowhere is the contrast of a smiling landscape with stern environing walls so apparent as it is in the case of the mountain region immediately east of Botzen. Viewed from any vantage-ground above the town the smiling valleys of Tiers and Karneid, with the low and rolling hills between, rich in forest, gleaming with green pastures and shining with innumerable streams, are seen lying within the shelter of, and half encircled by, a wall of cliff which, for continuity, for height and apparent steepness, has scarcely a rival in the Alps. Protected from the assaults of men and from the bitter winds of heaven by these mighty bulwarks, there is little cause for wonder if the poetry of an early day saw or fancied in this strange and beautiful region, a fairy fortress sheltering a garden of roses.

Such was the region, rich in attractions, natural as well as acquired, upon the exploration of which I set my heart from the moment at which, making a passage of the Alps in deep winter, I had from the streets of Botzen discerned for the first time the pale and shadowy front of this 'mystic mountain range.' Not unfamiliar to the poet and the essayist it was to the mountaineer still an unknown land. A few judicious hints in the Alpine Guide, a few notes of flying visits by Mr. Tuckett, constituted all the information which was readily available to the English climber. Nor, so far as I am aware, had native curiosity or enthusiasm sought to penetrate the secrets of the Rosengarten.

With the memories of the famous 'year nine' still fresh in

the hearts of men, and almost within sight of the homes of Hofer and 'the Red Beard,' it would be difficult to maintain that the dwellers in the Etsch and Eisack valleys have failed to inherit the spirit of the heroes who quelled the pride of King Laurin, and we must fall back upon the conclusion that if they have not explored the recesses of the Rosengarten or scaled its heights it is because such an enterprise has never presented itself to them as a worthy or at least sufficient object of ambition. Perhaps the indifference to mountain climbing, which was universal till within the last few years, may have in the case of the dwellers in this district been strengthened into a feeling of half-repugnance by the force of the old legend transmitted to them through generations, and imbibed with their mothers' milk. Why Herr Grohmann and other energetic German climbers have passed by these tempting peaks I am still more at a loss to explain. Whatever the causes, it is certain that up to the year 1872 the range had been left well alone.

The rest of this paper is a plain unvarnished narrative of the efforts of myself and my friends to rescue the Rosengarten from this condition of undeserved neglect, and of the successful ascent of its two highest peaks.

A few words as to the topography of the Rosengarten group and its relation to the chief summits in the neighbourhood. The main range extends in a direction nearly N. and S. from the Seisser Alp to the Caressa Pass, and contains the highest points in the group—the Falban Kogel, the Kessel Kogel, the Federer Kogel, the Rothewand Spitz, and the Kalbleck. At the point where it abuts on the Seisser Alp the range sends off an arm nearly at a right angle which, after running in a westerly direction for a few miles, culminates within a short distance of the deep gorge of the Eisack in the bold mass of the Schlern. At the point of junction of these two ranges stand the strange pinnacles of the Rosszähne, higher than the Schlern, though falling considerably short of the highest peaks in the group.

In a north-easterly direction the Rosszähne connect themselves with the mass of the Platt Kogel and Lang Kofel by the grassy ridge over which lies the wellknown path from Campidello to the Seisser Alp. South of the Caressa Pass the ridge of the Rosengarten continues at a reduced elevation in the Latemar, and this in its turn breaks, upon the southern side of the Cavalese road, into the disorganised group of summits overhanging the cleft by which the Avisio finally escapes from its mountain prison.

With respect to the part of the chain to which the appel-

lation of Rosengarten most properly applies, that namely lying between the Seisser Alp on the north and the Caressa Pass on the South, the first thing which demands our attention is the difference which exists in the conformation of its eastern and western sides. The characteristic of the western, or Botzen, face is the complete absence of spurs projecting from the watershed, such low and insignificant buttresses as there are utterly failing to break up or mask the imposing front of this gigantic edifice. The region that lies between the Eisack and the Rosengarten, although cut here and there by the streams descending to the main river, is in effect a rolling plateau, nowhere attaining a greater height than 4,000 feet or 5,000 feet, and extending to the foot of the splendid mural precipice which rises above and beyond it. The crest of this precipice does not for a distance of 10 miles fall within 1,500 ft. of the plateau, and where it rises to its highest in the Kessel Kogel and the Federer Kogel, soars fully 5,000 ft. above the pasturages.

The conformation of the eastern side of the chain is very different. The Rosengarten range, to compare great things with small, resembles one of the massive targets to be met with in the neighbourhood of Shoeburyness which, fair and level in front, are backed by a complicated system of struts and girders. No less than four high spurs reach out towards Val Fassa, and the three little-known glens which lie between abound in striking and majestic scenery. The southernmost, and perhaps least remarkable of the three, opens immediately behind Vigo and runs up to a depression between the mass of the Kalbleck and the bold summits of the Rothewand. The second, separated from the former by a ridge of which the Sasso di Mugone is the culminating point, is the glen of Vajolet. This is the finest of all these glens, and will compare with the most splendid recesses of the Brenta Alta or the Primiero peaks. Its upper end is guarded by the Rothewand Spitz and the sheer cliffs of the Federer Kogel, the wedge-like mass of the Kessel Kogel peering over a breach in the wall which rises steeply on the north side of the glen. On the further side of this wall, the culminating point of which is known as the Lausa Kogel, lies the romantic gorge of Vajol, deep sunk between tremendous cliffs of alternate red and black. Through this gorge a path leads by a circuitous and winding course to the solitary little Antermoja See and to the fine cirque, in the form of which, perhaps, may be found the key to the name of its dominating summit, the Kessel Kogel. The Duron Thal, still further north, at the head of which lies the shattered ridge

of the Rosszähne and the Falban Kogel, may be added to the list. It is the limit of the Rosengarten region in this direction, and beyond it lie the rolling green hills that border the wide expanse of the Seisser Alp.

When, late in the August of 1872, Mr. Carson and I reached the southern Tyrol we were met by the unwelcome news that Santo Siorpaes, to whose skill we had trusted for the realisation of many shadowy plans, was away from home travelling with an English lady in Switzerland or in Italy. This proceeding on the part of the English lady we resented much; to take a Tyrolese guide to Switzerland was, we argued, to carry coals to Newcastle; to take him to Italy was to put him where he could be of no sort of use to anybody. However, he was gone, and no one, not even his wife, knew when he would return. For the first few days we felt little or no inconvenience from our guideless condition. The low grassy passes of the dolomite region offer no difficulty but an occasional problem of pathfinding, while the ascent of the Marmolata is no whit more formidable, and not by one half so fatiguing as the ascent of the Zermatt Breithorn. At Campidello, however, our difficulties began. For a traveller accompanied by his own guides Campidello offers charming head-quarters. Within easy reach of the Rosengarten, the Lang Kofel, the Sella Spitz, and the Marmolata, and provided with a comfortable inn, kept by a miller of more than a miller's intelligence, and adorned by a serving-maid of more than ordinary attractions, a week may be spent pleasantly enough at Campidello by the mountaineer or the epicurean. The climber, however, who has trusted to picking up a good guide on the spot, finds it no easy task to attain his object in a village which prides itself rather on mineral specimens and collections of flowers than on the spoils of its hunters or the skill of its cragsmen.

Under these circumstances we held a council of war. After due discussion of the pros and cons we decided to delay for a day our attack on the Kessel Kogel, the yet unscaled peak upon which we had set our affections. In the first place it would be prudent to reconnoitre the ground and form a deliberate plan of assault. In the second place, it was very advisable to try the skill of the Campidello men before we attached ourselves to any of them in a climb which, for aught we knew, might prove most difficult. We settled, therefore, to secure the most active young fellow we could find and ascend the Platt Kogel, a steep-looking ridge of rock above Campidello, likely to present a *mauvais pas* here and there, and at the same time to give a capital view of the side of the Kessel

Kogel, offering, according to Mr. Tuckett, the most promising line of assault. I may say at once, that we came down from the Platt Kogel no wiser than when we started as to the climbing merits of the little man who had been secured for us by the intelligent miller. The scramble was of the easiest description throughout, and offered our conductor no possible opportunity of either proving his skill or betraying his imbecility. As far as we could judge, he was neither likely to cause an accident nor to repair a mistake if made. In a word he was a negative man, but like most negative men with an inclination to the weaker side. The other object of our walk was satisfactorily attained. A close study of the eastern face of the Kessel Kogel revealed several facts of the highest interest to us. 1st. The ground leading up to the base of the actual peak was (as far as we could see) broken and apparently practicable. 2nd. The upper part or *calotte* of the peak was also broken, and looked not less hopeful. 3rd. The face of the mountain consisted of a formidable wall of precipice, cutting off the broken ground below from the broken ground above. 4th. A narrow ledge marked by a fringe or collar of snow, commencing from a point near the base of the precipice, extended diagonally up and across the face of the peak till it finally merged in the broken rocks above. Conclusion—that if by any means we could reach the lower extremity of this ledge, and if its continuity was nowhere broken (propositions by no means free from doubt), we had a good chance, before another day was out, of looking down upon Botzen from the summit of a new peak.

Having but little confidence in the punctuality of Campidello, and somewhat disturbed by doubts as to the mountaineering capacity of our native companion, I found it difficult to sleep sound, and seemed to spend the night principally in striking matches to see what o'clock it was. On one occasion I was positive that the dawn had begun, and grasped a slipper wherewith to disturb my friend's placid repose. I felt at once ashamed and relieved when a reference to my watch proved that I had been exactly forty minutes in bed. I had wronged the vigilance of the miller; we were called punctually at three, and a good breakfast was ready for us by half-past. As we were discussing it a door from one of the inner apartments opened, and in walked a man of commercial aspect, who informed us with great complacency that he also was going to the Rosengarten, and would do himself the pleasure of accompanying us. Although by no means prepossessed by the appearance of the Botzen photographer, for such the new comer proved to be, yet we felt it would be easier to prove to him his incapacity

for such an enterprise as he contemplated upon the mountain-side than in the inn parlour, and no objection was made by us to his proposal. At four o'clock we started in company at a brisk pace up the Duron Thal, through which lies the direct path to the Seisser Alp and Botzen. Our plan was to follow this valley nearly to its head and then cross into the parallel glen of Vajol, which leads direct to the base of the Kessel Kogel, and in which, as I have said, lies the picturesque tarn of the Antermoja See. Our opinion of the photographer did not improve as we advanced. He seemed given to practical jokes, among which I may mention his suddenly firing a pistol close to my ear and laughing uproariously at the start I gave at so unexpected a tom-foolery. He further made an airy apology for not having brought his crampons, saying, that he had not when he left Botzen contemplated an ascent, and adding that it need not make any difference, as he was a mountaineer by nature, and on the rocks resembled a chamois. On quitting the level floor of the Duron Thal to cross over to the Antermoja See we found that the route which had been selected by us differed considerably from that favoured by the photographer and our guide, and before long we found ourselves separated from them by about a quarter of a mile of ground and a deep gully. Thinking this a favourable opportunity for recalling our hireling to his duty, we shouted to him that he must follow where we led. He obeyed somewhat reluctantly; the photographer, who had apparently made up his mind by this time that high mountaineering was not in his line, or thinking that we should soon come to a check, following at a leisurely pace. Pushing forward we soon crossed the ridge through a remarkable portal of dolomite cliffs cut with exceeding sharpness on either side, and found ourselves immediately above the Antermoja See, and in the heart of the savage scenery of the Rosengarten range. The weather was somewhat dubious, but the peaks were still clear. The great Marmolata, 15 miles away, was mirrored with startling clearness in the little tarn, and in a wild sheaf of spears further south we recognised the weird forms of the peaks of Primiero. The immediate object of interest was however the Kessel Kogel, rising in grand cliffs at the head of the glen, and now in full view. This sight excited us, and we went on without a halt; our guide, who had evidently imagined that the Antermoja See was our destination, looking grave but keeping his feelings to himself. A mile further up a delicious spring burst forth from the dolomite gravel, and we made our first halt. From the place where we sat a curtain of rock sloped upwards towards the base of the peak; it ap-

peared easy to climb, and though we expected that it was cut off from the main mass yet we trusted to find the gulf neither wide nor deep, and determined to strike straight up it rather than attempt a flanking movement. We quickly reached the summit of the slope and found ourselves, as we had expected, cut off from the main mass by a rift of some 200 feet in depth filled with snow. In one place, however, the snow rose to within 40 feet of the ridge on which we stood and formed a sort of saddle, the other end of which abutted directly against the formidable cliffs up which if anywhere the way to the ledge observed by us the day before, was to be sought. Scrambling down to the saddle, we quickly uncoiled and put on the rope; the guide, who looked exceedingly blue but made no remonstrance, being tied securely between us with a double knot.

We had struck the peak, as it seemed, at the only practicable part; fifty yards to right and left the broken rock melted into sheer faces of cliff, and even opposite us there were perpendicular slabs which looked anything but promising. There was nothing for it, however, but to try our luck; and, to our surprise and great satisfaction, we soon found that we made steady though slow progress with our escalade. Now peering round a projecting block which had to be turned, now working up a gully, sometimes reversing our order in retreat from a position which proved untenable, we nevertheless advanced sensibly, and the negative man, under the inspiration of climbing not too difficult, positively showed signs of cheerfulness. Soon the inclination grew less steep, and with little more than a half-hour's toil we gained the much-coveted ledge, the beanstalk by which, if at all, the heights of the middle air were to be won. Along this ledge, or rather miniature slope, our way was plain as far as a buttress or corner of the mountain to our left. Beyond its projecting angle we could see nothing. If the ledge at this point melted into the general face of the cliff there would be nothing for us but to go back ignominiously, for the towering precipice above us plainly admitted of no direct attack. If, on the contrary, it should prove continuous all was well. We felt inclined to rush for the corner and look round, and if it had been a mere snow slope that lay between us and it we might have done so. It was, however, a detestable mixture of snow, shaly rock, and thin ice; and such a place, even when the angle is not excessive, cannot be traversed at a run, if there is sheer cliff below. Besides, our guide was here at his worst, showing himself very awkward at placing his feet in steps, and obviously frightened. I restrained my impatience, therefore, and slowly chipped my

way from landing to landing, keeping the rope tight, and encouraging my immediate follower with such scraps of consolatory Italian as occurred to me. The longed-for corner was reached without casualty, and great was my delight on thrusting my head round the angle to find that the friendly ledge continued wide and snowless for a few yards further, and then, assuming the character rather of a snow gully than a ledge, turned upwards till it was lost in the broken rocks near the summit. The inclination of this gully proved steep, and the snow in bad order; but nothing beyond ordinary care was required, and in less than an hour from the corner we stood on the shattered crest of the Kessel Kogel, looking down upon what should have been the Trentino, but was a sea of mist. To our great disappointment the weather had steadily grown worse as we mounted, and when we arrived at the top there was only just enough panorama left to assure us that the highest point of the Kessel Kogel was really under our feet. We waited long for the mist to rise, but in vain; and having built our stone man, and beginning to feel some apprehension of being caught by a storm before we were clear of the most serious part of the mountain, we commenced our descent. It proved somewhat longer than the ascent, but at last it was successfully completed; only just in time, however, for we had scarcely sat ourselves down by the spring of the morning when a tempest of hail burst upon us, turning into drenching rain as we descended. Instead of recrossing the ridge to the Duron Thal we followed the glen of Vajol, through a fine gorge of black and red cliff, till it opened into the Fassa Thal at Mazin, from whence three-quarters-of-an-hour's steady walking brought us back to the inn at Campidello, where we found the photographer discussing his tea. He was, at first, a little crestfallen at having tailed off so ignominiously, but before long and after talking the matter over with our guide he became more cheerful, and was, I suspect, inwardly rejoiced that he had been left behind, or, as he expressed it, had missed us among the rocks.

'L'appetit vient en mangeant,' and the success of our expedition soon aroused in us a desire to complete our work by having a try at the other and rival summit of the Rosengarten. Nor did our new-formed resolve spring solely from the elation that comes of conquest. We could assign a respectable reason for not resting on our laurels. The miserable weather experienced on the summit of the Kessel Kogel had prevented us from determining the question of the relative heights of the two chief Rosengarten peaks by any scientific method; it was,

at least, left to us to apply the 'solutio ambulandi' to the problem. This is a method which, although philosophically incomplete, I have always found to afford the most lively satisfaction to the mind of the enquirer himself. Readily available (no more reasoning power, indeed, being required than may be contained in an ordinary pair of legs and the capacity to use them) it has been at all times pretty popular, and it seemed to us at least as applicable to the measurement of mountains as to the antiquated if fascinating problem propounded in the famous 'Achilles.' Circumstances, however, just then stood in the way of this application of an old method to a new peak, and it was not until 1874 that my friend and I found ourselves in a position to test its efficacy. Again the weather was unpromising, and the scanty glimpses obtained from Botzen of the huge wall of the Rosengarten were by no means cheering. In one respect, indeed, we were better off than on the occasion of our former visit. In the place of the useless porter of Campidello we possessed a tower of strength in our old friend, François Devouassoud, who, after a fortnight's easy work in the Bergamesque valleys, was by no means disinclined for an attack on the 'joli petit rocher,' as he persisted—with the polite contempt of a Chamoniard for any mountain which fails to carry snowfields—in calling the object of our ambition.

There are two valleys by which the base of the Rosengarten may be approached from Botzen; the one is the Karneid Thal, the chief village in which is Welschenofen; the other is the Tierser Thal, with its capital hamlet of Tiers. It is hard to say which of these valleys offers the most charming scenery. If the Tierser Thal is not approached by a gorge at once so splendid and so sustained as that through which the Karneid carves its way to the Eisack, it would on the other hand be difficult to rival the scenery of the upper valley of Tiers, or that of its tributary glens of the Tschamin, and the Purgametsch. One often regrets that it is not in man's power to improve nature by the application of a system of permutations and combinations. If the head of the Tierser Thal could be tacked to the lower portion of the valley of the Karneid, and the central zone clothed with the rich forest scenery which covers the rolling plateau between the two, a happy valley could be constructed superior to anything described by the author of Rasselas. Fortunately, or unfortunately, we are not enabled by piecing together splendid scraps of scenery to render the rest of the earth a monotonous waste; and this valley of the epicure—this woodcock's thigh and partridge breast in the bill of fare of mountain scenery remains a dream of loveliness only.

The appearance of the face of cliff we intended to attack, as seen at intervals through the drifting masses of dark and watery mist, grew less and less pleasing as we mounted towards the village of Tiers, and ere we entered the humble, but not uncomfortable 'Beim Rosenwirth' the playful mood in which François had talked of the 'joli petit rocher' had been superseded by a settled gloom almost as complete as that behind which the offended mountain was preparing to withdraw himself. Next morning we were off at four; but the weather gave us no chance. Impenetrable mist alternated with drenching rain, and we felt that all climbing was hopeless. One plan was left to us, and that was boldly to change our base of operations from the west to the east side, that is to say, from the Tierser Thal to Val Fassa, to spend the Sunday if necessary in a reconnaissance of the Federer Kogel from Vigo, and devote Monday, our sole remaining day, to the serious attack. No sooner said than done. Skirting the base of the Rosengarten, at first through dripping forest, and afterwards over wide pastures that in the dense mist seemed interminable, we at length reached the broad gap of the Caressa pass, and after missing our way here and there among the intricate forest paths arrived in a half-drowned condition at Moena, whither our knapsacks had preceded us. Although the rooms of the country inn there (alla Corona) were comfortable enough, the fare was poor; and after a halt of a few hours we started up the broad and fertile valley for Vigo, where we knew that a good dinner could be depended on at Rizzi's inn. Warned, however, by previous experience of that worthy's prices we made an agreement as to our rate of living before we established ourselves, a precaution which we found as necessary as it was apparently unexpected. The next day the weather, though not good, hardened a little, and the peaks were clear enough for a reconnaissance. Unluckily either the weather of the day before, or the luxuries of Botzen, or both combined, had exerted a malign influence, and I felt much more inclined to lie in bed than to make the proposed exploration of Vajolet, the glen which leads up to the east base of the Federer Kogel. Duty was duty, however, and off I went with François. As far as Pera our route lay up the main valley, and from that point along the left bank of the stream that pours out of Vajolet. Secretly I had hoped that the moment we turned into that glen we should have found the Federer Kogel facing us, and that, the way to attack it being obvious at the first glance, I might have been able to declare the object of our reconnaissance secured, and have beaten a retreat to Vigo without too patent a loss of honour. This,

however, was not to be. From the lower end of Vajolet a huge red mass of precipice on the northern side of the valley completely masks the upper part of the glen which curves round and behind it in almost a semicircle. Nothing at all could be seen of the Federer Kogel, though portions of the peaks to the south of it, the Rothewand Spitz and the curious rocks of the Sasso di Mugone soon became visible. As we rounded the red mass mentioned above (marked on the Austrian map as the Lausa Kogel) the object of our ambition gradually crept into sight; but it was not until three hours' walk, slow enough it is true, had been accomplished, that the mountain stood before us in its complete and undisguised nakedness. I use the terms advisedly. Fine, and indeed graceful in form as it is—a sharp central peak flanked by a massive shoulder on either side—I think I never saw a mountain mass so smooth, so grey, so bare. As we stood face to face with the Federer Kogel—not a stunted pine or a blade of grass on its ledges, not the smallest patch of snow clinging to its escarped sides, not a sign or a sound of water in all its trenched fissures—the gracious plains of Italy, the lately left vineyards of the Trentino, the green pastures of the neighbouring Seisser Alp were removed to an immeasurable distance, and we seemed transported of a sudden into the presence of some wild and solemn range in Africa or Thibet.

As we turned from the scenical to the mountaineering aspect of the peak appearances were all against us. A direct attack was obviously hopeless, the broken slopes below being cut off from the upper part of the mountain by a smooth grey precipice of 2,000 feet. I rather fancied a couloir on the left which led up to a notch in the main chain, but François' keener eyes detected that the ridge running from that point towards the peak was thin, serrated, and repeatedly cut by fissures sufficient to bring a party of Titans to a standstill. To the right of the peak as we faced it a long but formidably steep slope fell away from the northern shoulder of the mountain, but here, too, the continuity of ground which, however much may be said of the possibility of scaling precipices, is, after all, necessary for the climber's success, was cut by a sudden fall of several hundred feet up which we could not conceive any practicable staircase being discovered. From this slope, nevertheless, François insisted that the ascent must be made if at all, suggesting further that by turning the northern end of the mountain the cliff by which it seemed to be guarded might be found more accessible than it appeared from our present position. To ascertain this, however, was evidently a work of time and labour,

involving a walk up the whole of the remaining portion of the Vajolet glen and a stiff climb up a dolomite couloir which descended into it from the northern end of the mountain. To this additional exertion I felt myself quite unequal, and readily assented to François' suggestion that he should continue the reconnaissance alone, I awaiting his return on the patch of soft turf on which we stood, or, if I liked it better, strolling back towards Vigo by myself.

The time passed quickly enough, as it generally does for lazy men, and I was surprised to find that three hours had elapsed when François' shout recalled me from my dreaming. He came up rather excitedly: 'Monsieur, j'ai trouvé quelque chose. Mais il faut nous débarrasser de tout. Pas un sac—pas une bouteille de vin—un petit pain et un morceau de fromage dans la poche—voilà tout.' He then went on to explain that, following up the large couloir of dolomite boulders which descended from the northern end of the mountain, he had found it open into a species of gorge which penetrated far into the heart of the Rosengarten. In the cliffs on the left side of this gorge he had discovered a breach or fissure by which he thought it possible to reach the lower end of the steep slope which had seemed to us so hopelessly cut off from below. Much cheered by this intelligence I returned to Vigo. Half an hour later Carson came in from the Sasso di Mugone, whence he, too, had made a careful reconnaissance of the mountain. His conclusions agreed with ours, and after a dinner, in which the culinary efforts of the daughter of the house were met with the most ungrateful neglect on my part, we retired to rest, with good hopes for the morrow.

Three hours' steady work next morning sufficed to land us at the head of the couloir in the extraordinary gorge which, at a height of some 7,000 feet, cleaves the mass of the Rosengarten from side to side. A quarter of an hour more and we might have reached the further end of the gorge and looked down the cliffs which encircle the head of the valley of Tiers..

It was not our intention, however, to make a direct pass across the Rosengarten, splendid in every part as such a pass must be, and at the foot of François' supposed 'escalier' to the upper level of the Federer Kogel we stopped short, and halted for breakfast. And here it must be confessed that I, with all respect for François, failed to detect any escalier at all, and, though I declared with easy confidence that in all probability the rocks would 'go' everywhere, I had my secret doubts whether they were practicable anywhere. I was

wrong, however, as usual, and we soon found ourselves in a sort of trench which, without too difficult climbing, landed us before long on the slope we had examined from Vajolet. The ascent of this slope was, undoubtedly, the most difficult part of the mountain. It was intolerably smooth, lay at a very high angle, and was, moreover, uncommonly long. Thinking it, however, a good thing to keep up the spirits of the party, I chose the rather inopportune moment when the slope was about at its worst to congratulate François on our progress, an untimely sally to which he replied, with some asperity: 'Monsieur, there will not be one easy step more,' a consideration which depressed me, and for some time I kept silence, even from good words. Soon after this, the nature of the ground on our right drove us close to the brink of the precipices, above the glen of Vajolet; and not even on the ledges of the Pelmo had I experienced more impressive thrills than were here inflicted by the constant shuffle of fragments from under our feet, followed by their swift hiss into space and sudden silence. On the whole, I did not like this place much. The ground we stepped on seemed to me here and there actually to overhang the abyss, and distinct though small fissures in the rock showed plainly enough that the narrow path we trod had begun slowly but surely to part from the parent mass. We had little inclination to assist artificially the processes of nature, and stepped upon the blocks which were to figure in the next great rock avalanche of the Federer Kogel as lightly as it was in the nature of hobnailed boots to do. And now the cliffs that had hemmed us in fell back a little, and in a few moments we had reached a high mountain cirque, lying close under the wild crags which formed the actual summit. This cirque we had examined carefully from below, and had settled that were it once reached all difficulty would be at an end. And so it proved, the climb was steep, but there was plenty of choice of routes, and the great precipices we had skirted so long were soon left in the rear. A cool spring, the outcrop of reservoirs supplied by the snow which in the winter months fills all this wild cavity, afforded us a delicious draught. The ridge at the upper end of the hollow, which was indeed the topmost crest of the Rosengarten, was speedily reached, and a somewhat more difficult scramble along it soon placed us on the shattered summit. On that very day, two years before, we had reached the highest point of the Kessel Kogel. We had now the pleasure of feeling that we had advanced in elevation as well as in years. A matter of 200 feet in two twelvemonths was, it is true, no great rise, but at least the difference was on the right side.

The fine view we had expected was but imperfectly vouchsafed to us. Clouds hid the ranges of the Brenta Alta, the Adamello, and the Orteler; and thus, perhaps, the most interesting portion of the view was lost. Glimpses were, however, obtained over the mountains of the Oetz and Stubay valleys, and the Zillerthaler Ferner were clear throughout. Nearer at hand the Marmolata was well seen, and the Cimon della Pala and the Cima di Vezzana reared their twin heads finely, the snowy saddle between them, the scene of my adventure two years before, being plainly visible from our present position. The peaks of the Rosengarten themselves were all clear, the Kessel Kogel and the Rothewand Spitz alone bearing to be looked down upon without loss of dignity. On the highest point of the latter peak a massive stone man was discernible. Whether this was the *bonâ fide* work of man, or the result of one of those efforts which Nature occasionally makes to imitate or anticipate him, is a question the solution of which can only be obtained at the cost of an actual visit.* The meeting of the Etsch and the Eisack, and the whole town of Botzen, clustering round its green-roofed Dom-kirch, were perfectly clear, but to us who had lately sauntered along its narrow streets and within the shadow of its lofty houses the buildings looked unexpectedly small and toy-like.

The descent was a long and laborious business. François brought up the rear, and to me was intrusted the task of tracking back the line of our morning's ascent. Owing partly to the more uncertain and undecided leading, partly to the fact that in descending it really requires more skill to choose ones' route than during an ascent, as well as more caution in following it when chosen, we took nearly 5 hours to accomplish that which had cost us but 2½ in the morning. Again and again it was found necessary to let each other down separately; again and again we had to clear from our line of descent the heavy but

* Of the ascent of the Rothewand Spitz I have failed to find any record. There is an account of the first ascent of *a* Rothewand Spitz, made in 1873, by Mr. Malcolm, recorded in the visitors' book at Vigo. As, however, Mr. Malcolm states that he made the ascent in three hours from Vigo—a statement which, if referred to the true Rothewand Spitz, would seem to me almost incredible, I am inclined to think that the peak really ascended on that occasion was a lower summit, part of the Kalbleck mass, which is known by the name of the Rothewand Spitz at Vigo; and this belief is confirmed by this lower peak having been pointed out to us in 1874 as having been ascended for the first time in the preceding year. Perhaps Mr. Malcolm will enlighten us on the point.

tottering stones, contemptuously spurned behind us in the ascent, but of death-dealing power when given the chance of pursuing the disturbers of their repose. We were not sorry to regain without a scratch, or contretemps of any description, the cool recess where we had left our little store of provisions and wine, of which we by this time stood in considerable need, 'Comme nous avons bien fait le chat,' remarked François, and we were not at that moment at all disposed to contradict him. Descending to the pastures we were promptly surrounded by eager, though unintelligible, shepherds. They had apparently watched our ascent (the most critical part of which was visible from below) with awe and admiration, and were full of congratulations on our safe return.

And so the problem of the accessibility of the Rosengarten summits was happily solved. Yet, as we strolled back to Vigo through the gathering shades of evening, I could not help thinking that these mountains would never again be to me quite what they had been. Their legends exploded or explained, their reputation for unapproachableness gone, the light of common day poured into all their recesses, I could not help in some sort regretting the intrusive spirit which drives us to clear away the mystery which hangs about every unknown, to apply improved telescopes to every poetic nebula, and to reduce to a geographical expression every fairy dominion. I began to repent me of my contempt for the want of enterprise displayed by Botzen in this matter, and even to feel a positive sympathy with the simple people who had been content to show their reverence for their legendary mountains by leaving them in unprofaned and stately solitude. Such repentance, if real, came too late either to prevent or excuse our transgressions. One consolation there was. If not to have committed a fault is the best thing, the next best is to feel that those one has injured are unconscious of the wrong; and it was satisfactory to believe that the calm and starlit peaks above probably recked as little of our presumption as of our regret. I have now, too, made a full confession of our sins, and may hope, therefore, for all the further consolation such an act of penitence can afford.*

* I may add a few words on the passes, actual and potential, of the Rosengarten. The ridge connecting the Schlern with the Ross Zähne is passable in more than one place. 1. The usual route from Tiers to the Schlern may be followed to the head of the Schlern Bach, whence a few minutes walk will take the traveller to the brow of the steep descent to Bad Ratzes. By bearing somewhat more to the right the Seisser Alp itself can be reached without difficulty. 2. A more in-