

rocks, the same which puzzled Mr. Gardiner,* I rejoined Fairbanks after an hour's absence. A dive down the steepest of gullies followed, part shale, part snow, and we arrived within measurable distance of the ice-fall of the Hohsand. There remained nothing for it now but to beat a retreat or surmount the ridge separating us from the Hohsand glacier itself; it was 4.30 and we were pumped. This perhaps best explains the undoubted difficulty we experienced in topping the 1,500 ft. which the latter course necessitated; no foot, and less hand hold, was about the measure of it; an hour, however, saw us safely on the summit with the western slope of the Hohsand at our feet. To the right was Mr. Gardiner's Ofenjoch; further on the black-faced Bannhorn and Thällhorn; behind us the Hohsandhorn, and the Rothhorn to our left face. At racing speed, and aided by the very longest possible glissade, we trotted across the glacier, reaching the opposite bank in three-quarters of an hour, just as the sun finally disappeared. The path leading from the Gries Pass was ultimately struck, and the sight of a phantom figure on the opposite bank of the river was most welcome as betokening a near approach to Morast. The phantom fortunately resolved itself into a native, by whose aid, and that of a lantern, we finally reached Tosa Falls long after night had fallen.

Although the weather now broke, we were finally able in cloud and rain to clear up the mystery of the Nuefelgiu Pass, and to explain our discomfiture by the misplacement on the map of the Lebendun Lake. The walk, however, had been a most pleasant one, and I can strongly recommend others to follow in our footsteps. The whole distance may be covered in three days; and, if our route is followed, excepting the ascent of the Leone and the error over the Nuefelgiu Pass, no single day should involve more than seven hours' easy walking.

ACROSS THE PYRENEES. BY FREDERICK GARDINER.

To the traveller in the Pyrenees, accustomed to the accommodation of Switzerland, the almost entire absence of good inns in high places is very noticeable. In such places as the Bioux Artigues, Lac de Gaube, Hospice de Luchon, and the Cirque de Gavarnie, were they situated in Swiss territory, there would be flourishing hôtels, instead of either nothing at all or miserable wooden shanties where the traveller is taxed almost beyond endurance.

One noticeable exception we found at the comfortable little inn

* 'Alpine Journal,' vol. ix. p. 63.

(Hôtel des Pyrénées) at Gabas, about 1,442 feet above Eaux Chaudes, in the Val d'Ossau, the last village on the French side.

My wife and I left Pau on the morning of May 9, 1882, intending to make a halt at Eaux Chaudes, but when we arrived there it seemed such a very shut-in spot that we decided to go on to the village of Gabas, which is delightfully situated. No words can do justice to the beauty of the mountain-sides between these two places; not even the lovely forests round that most favoured spot Luchon can excel the foliage of the upper part of the Val d'Ossau. I am fain to confess, however, that to my mind the foliage of the forests and the glorious variety of the flora are the chief attraction of the Pyrenees; the mountain forms want abruptness and individuality, consisting as they do of long ridges, gradually rising towards the main ridge; and their great interest exists more in the upper valleys than on the mountain-tops. I speak, however, merely in a general sense, and from a mountaineer's point of view. There are exceptions, such as the Pic du Midi and some peaks of the Maladetta group, as seen from the Entecade, near Luchon.

When we started from England our plan was to cross the Pyrenees from Gabas to the Baths of Panticosa, in Aragon, and then return by a high mountain pass to Cautelets, on the French side. The latter half of our plan we had to abandon, owing to the quantity of snow still remaining at that time of the year, which made it undesirable for a lady to cross, so we returned by the way we had come. There is a rough, steep char road leading from Gabas almost to the Spanish frontier, along which we bumped for a couple of hours to where it ends abruptly; here we were met by our guide, with a horse for my wife's use, a most willing and patient beast, in whose company we travelled for many days. It was pleasant, in a country where kindness to animals is not a characteristic, to see the perfect understanding which existed between our guide and his horse. We had met several parties of Aragonese peasants, with heavily-laden mules, on their way to Gabas or Eaux Chaudes—savage-looking fellows, of rather fine physique, most picturesquely attired, their waistcoats and breeches being of velveteens, mostly of the colour known as peacock-blue, which would have delighted the heart of an aesthete. From the time the road is left until we reached the main road between the Baths of Panticosa and Saragossa no path can be said to exist. A track there certainly is in places, most horrible; the Spanish idea of a track seems merely to roll a number of loose stones together, over which the unfortunate traveller must stumble as best he may. Throughout the day the Pic du Midi, seen from different points of view, looked very fine; its winter clothing of snow not having disappeared increased its appearance of height, and added much to its beauty. The name of the pass is Col d'Anou. After leaving the char road the track rises steeply until a rather bewildering plateau is reached; from this plateau a series of hillocks or downs rises, until the frontier is reached. The ground was carpeted with beautiful flowers—primroses, cowslips, gentians, &c., and more especially daffodils in large quantities. Just before reaching the frontier we met a party of Spanish custom-house officers who were

returning from a successful frog hunt in French territory; they had their stockings and the sleeves of their coats filled with the unfortunate reptiles, who croaked away most dismally. They were very cheery companions, and accompanied us down to the first Spanish village, about two hours below the custom-house.

The scenery on the Spanish side reminded me forcibly of parts of the Caucasus; but the beauty of the forest-clad hill-sides we had left behind us in France! The box tree grows in great profusion between Sallent and Panticosa. I do not know whether it is exported, as the Aragonese are not an enterprising people, but I should think the box wood we passed would be a grand find for a wood engraver, as I understand it is getting scarce the world over. The rich, warm green of its foliage and the bright red-brown of the wood form a decided feature in the landscape. I had thought, when I had visited some of the more remote villages of the Hautes Alpes, that I had reached the lowest depths of poverty, but Sallent and one or two other Spanish villages are still worse; we could get nothing eatable in the miserable inn except coffee and potatoes, which were reeking with bad oil; and we were shamefully overcharged. It was not a cheerful experience, and, together with the bad roads, caused us to abandon our plan of reaching Saragossa by the Port de Véra-sque later on in our tour.

We spent the night at Sallent, and next morning we left as early as we could get away, but had to wait till the custom-house officers were up. The scenery is very picturesque between Sallent and the village of Panticosa, but the path was dreadful—simply miles of boulders, and so steep that my wife had to get off her horse and walk. As the day advanced, towards 9 o'clock, the heat became very great, and we were not sorry to arrive at the nice cool inn at Panticosa, and rest before we undertook the remainder of our journey to the Baths, the road to which is splendidly made up a wild, picturesque gorge.

The Baths consist of a number of hideous barrack-like buildings, capable of containing many hundreds of bathers, and are situated on a small plateau, with a lake at one end and surrounded on all sides by steep mountains, so that on arriving it seems to the traveller that he is at the bottom of a huge cauldron—not a cheerful place to pass a holiday in. We were most hospitably received by the 'homme de confiance' of the proprietor of the different establishments. We were the first visitors for the year, as the season does not commence till the middle of June. After spending a day in rest we returned to Gabas in one day, starting very early and arriving late, which we thought preferable to facing the horrors of Sallent for another night, and upon our return journey found the custom-house officers cooking the frogs they had caught a couple of days before. We found the food, cleanliness, and comfort of the inn at Gabas very acceptable after three nights spent on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees.

Panticosa is situated at a height of 5,400 feet above the sea, and the air was very fresh and bracing.