

trees, at 3.8 A.M. on September 28. The fresh snow was in a safe condition, but soft, especially below the schrund at the foot of the slope beneath the rocks of the north peak, and above the ice-fall. We passed the schrund at 8.3, having breakfasted on the way. Above the schrund we kept on the slope close to, but never going on, the ice-fall. An avalanche had swept off some of the fresh snow from the slope, and the going was a little better. Almer had in the upper part to clean out some of our old steps. When near to the rocks of the north peak we turned to our left. This brought us to the top of the ice-fall, right in the couloir between the rocks of the two peaks. We halted here, 10.5–10.45. The slope above was very steep, and the snow very soft. At 1.10 Almer broke through the edge on the neck. We were near to the south peak, but as the ridge leading to the top of this had much frozen snow and ice on it, whilst the rocks of the north peak looked easy, we turned at once to our right. Almer had some step-cutting before we could get off the neck and reach the rocks of the north peak. These were not difficult. The top, which we reached at 3.45, was snow, the highest point being an overhanging cornice; this we looked over, but did not venture to tread upon. Almer put up a small stone man a few feet below. We stayed on the top till 4.22, but were in mist all the time and could not ascertain whether the north peak was the higher or lower one. We had only a short look at the ridge from the neck to the top of the south peak, but were both inclined to think it would go, at any rate when clear of ice. At 4.22 we began the descent, and reached the tent at 11.20 by lantern-light.

I saw the forests of Suanetia later in the year, I believe, than any other English traveller has yet done. When I reached Betsho on September 19 the birch furnished the main mass of colour. But by the time I left, October 1, the deep red of the mountain ash and wild cherry was predominant. At sunset the woods seemed, in places, on fire.

#### A WINTER QUARTETTE.

BY MRS. E. P. JACKSON.

**E**ITHER the days of witchcraft are at an end or I am a very degenerate descendant of the once powerful Lancashire witches. No ancestress of mine, taking her midnight ride, ever came to warn me of the fate the weird sisters were

perhaps then weaving for me—that one day the story of my winter wanderings in the Alps might be required of me. A most imperfect story too, for I have not a note to go by, since, according to my usual custom, I contrived to lose my pencil—a piece of carelessness, by the way, which, taken with a few other small arrangements of the like nature, often increases the pleasure of the climb. When I started for Grindelwald the Christmas before last it was with the intention of trying what mountain work in the winter was like, and the programme was, if possible, to be brought to a brilliant conclusion by the crossing of the Jungfrau. My husband and I had tried it in bygone years more than once from the Wengern Alp, but without success, and I now thought it was just possible that, with the winter snow, and by starting from the Bergli instead of the Guggi hut, some of the difficulties often met with during the ascent in the summer might be lessened, if not altogether avoided.

On arriving at the Bär hôtel it was, however, very evident that until Christmas, and the New Year with its ball, had come and gone, nothing more serious could be thought of by the party assembled there than the amusements of the season. We arranged some picnics, one to the Faulhorn inn (where we had to dance a reel to keep ourselves warm), another to the Waldspitz, accompanied by three cameras and numerous dogs. We spent a day at Lauterbrunnen, but were much disappointed with the appearance of the Staubbach, and we tobogganed, or rather, as they say in the Vaud *patois*, 'luged,' every spare moment of the day. We had one splendid run, with a water jump at an awkward corner halfway down, over which some of the party were quite certain to come to grief, and a sudden plunge as a finish, which landed us, generally more or less buried in deep snow, on the banks of the Lütschine. There was always one drawback, however—the sledges had to be pulled up again.

On the morning of Wednesday, January 4, 1888, more than the usual amount of bustle was to be observed at the Bâi hôtel. There was much carrying to and fro of mysterious parcels, with a general parade of blankets, rugs, and other warm garments in the hall; guides, too, still fondly clinging to their axes and ropes, had been roused from their hundred days' sleep, and, like the Sleeping Beauty of olden days, reappeared to us exactly as we had left them in the summer. The reason for all this excitement and preparation was that two parties were leaving these comfortable quarters for the Schwarzegg hut, the one to attempt the Schreckhorn,

the other the Lauteraarhorn, and they were to be escorted as far as the Stieregg by the whole strength of the company, cameras and dogs included. What a perfect walk it was! There was no dusty path with long strings of mules most carefully to be avoided, but a beautiful track up the middle of the Eismeer, which was glittering in the sunshine and still wearing its Christmas dress of pure white snow. We left the glacier by the Stieregg. The hillside was tolerably steep; it was covered, too, with soft, deep, powdery snow, and the higher we went the deeper it seemed to get; indeed, on one or two of the slopes overlooking the great ice-fall an avalanche might have been easily started. Matters improved, however, when we took to the upper portion of the glacier, and we reached our night's lodging long after dark, it is true, but with every prospect of a fine and, as we hoped, successful day on the morrow.

The next morning at 4.30 A.M. we all left the hut, Mr. de Carteret with his guides for the Schreckhorn, and our party, consisting of Ulrich Almer, Johann Kaufmann, Mr. Emil Boss, and myself, for the Strahlegg and Lauteraarhorn. It was a keen, frosty morning, without a breath of wind, the whole glacier glistening in the moonlight as if strewn with countless diamonds; it was just a fairy ballroom, and I much wonder whether we rough mortals had any right to trespass there and soil it. We went quickly along, for it was too cold to linger; the snow was good and hard, holding the usually loose stones in their proper places, and without any trouble we reached the top of the Strahlegg just as the day was breaking.

The scene was very grand, as it always is, but the sun had not yet risen to soften the rugged outlines of the surrounding peaks, and the pass in the early morning light looked strangely weird and desolate; breakfast, too, was a really cold collation, and very glad one at least of the party was to start again. We found the ice-wall in perfect order, hardly any steps requiring to be cut, and before we could say we were even getting warm we found ourselves on the level Strahlegg Firn heading at a half run for some rocks descending southward from our peak. By these rocks a great part of the ascent was made; they were quite easy, with very little snow upon them, and gave good, firm foothold. By this time, too, the sun was fully doing his duty, and the change from the intense cold on the Strahlegg to the present warmth was most acceptable. Then for a time we found ourselves in a narrow snow couloir. It was steep, but the snow, as every-

where else, was in excellent order. It ended under some more rocks, where we made a short halt for lunch, and by them soon afterwards reached a very small snow col, most likely in the summer conspicuous by its absence. Then turning slightly to the left we struck the final arête about half an hour below the summit. Truly a golden staircase, for the rocks were not only free from snow or ice but were covered with the bright yellow lichen that we somehow associate only with hot summer days.

Our arrival on the top was greeted by distant cheers, and looking towards the Schreckhorn we saw our companions of the morning part way down the arête on their homeward route; then we turned to the view. It was beautiful, but perhaps a little severe, for both the Finsteraarhorn and Schreckhorn being so very near were somewhat overwhelming, and the Lauteraar glacier, with the more distant lowland view, looked in the light of this winter day very grey and lonely. But across the Rhone valley all was sunshine, with a glorious peep of the Matterhorn, Weisshorn, and Mischabelhörner standing clearly out against the bright sky; many smaller hills, too, almost unnoticed in summer, were changed by their winter garments into most respectable snow-clad peaks. Very reluctantly we turned away to begin the descent; but it was time, the day was getting on, and we were very far from home, so when at the foot of the arête a most tempting snow couloir opened out, we embarked gladly on it, and by a series of really good glissades reached the glacier in about an hour and a quarter after leaving the top; then hurrying on were over the Strahlegg before the darkness came or we needed to take to our lanterns.

The night was again spent at the Schwarzegg hut, and we started the next morning—well, not too early—for the second peak, a very little one. It was only to be taken as a means towards an end, in order to cross to the upper slopes of the Grindelwalder Viescher Firn, thereby making our way to the Bergli hut by passing close under the Vieschergrat. Poor little peak! I really do not know what to call it, and can only think that its sponsors must have quarrelled about its name on the way to the christening. It has a little stone-man of its own, also a bottle, and the cards of a few, very few, visitors; it is hard upon it that it can only be mentioned as a number; but so it is, being one of the two points marked 3,121 and 3,360 mètres on the new Swiss map (Siegfried); perhaps the latter.

Two short hours of easy going on the snow by the East

arête landed us with (for this day only) a 'luge' on the top, and there our sorrows began. The day was not good, clouds had been gathering for some little time, and when we reached the aforesaid stone-man there was an unmistakable look and feel of snow in the air. We waited for what seemed to be a very long hour to see if things would improve, no one thinking the Bergli hut quite equal in comfort to the Bär hôtel, especially in a snowstorm. Then, putting off the evil hour of decision as long as we possibly could, we began the descent by the rocks on the north side, bearing down to the slopes of the Viescher Firn. These rocks were a little troublesome. They were rotten with the snow resting on them in a soft, powdery state; several times, too, we had to retrace our steps a little to find a better or more solid way down. However, it was a little variety to what was otherwise an uninteresting and rather disappointing day. When we reached the glacier the weather had certainly not improved, and a little fine snow was falling, besides which we got an occasional glimpse of Grindelwald through the clouds, and suddenly a great longing for the luxuries there to be found fell upon us. The downward path, too, looked very tempting, and I do not think we even made the smallest stand to decide upon our route, but in a very short time we found ourselves in the Zäsenberg hut, making a large and most welcome brew of tea before hurrying down the Eismeer with most decided views as to dinner and sleep.

Then came an interval of three days which was devoted as before to 'lugging,' but we were obliged to transfer our affections to the high road. Our own particular runs were in a shocking state of disrepair for want of fresh snow, the water jump had become a wide, rapid stream, and the plunge a thing of the past, the lord of the manor having stacked his firewood in front of it. Our beautiful snow-lady, too, had completely lost her head, I think also an arm.

On January 10 we were again *en route* *via* the Zäsenberg-horn and Viescher glacier for one, perhaps two nights, at the Bergli hut, with the deepest laid schemes concerning the Jungfrau. We found the snow everywhere good, and the crevasses, although large, few in number; but on some of the steeper slopes and at one or two awkward corners steps had to be cut; the porters, too, took their own good time, consequently it was late when we arrived there.

Our good intentions made overnight for an early start up the Jungfrau came, as such things sometimes do, to an untimely end. We overslept ourselves, and by the time we

were ready to move had resolved upon a shorter day—either the Mönch or the Gross Viescherhorn. We quickly decided in favour of the latter, for we knew it had never yet been ascended in the winter. With carefully made steps for future use we crossed the lower Mönch Joch on to the Ewigschneefeld, and then in truth a surprise and pleasure was waiting for us : it was as hard and firm as any well-laid floor ! There was no longer any occasion for those muttered remarks so common to the place, the full meaning of which it is better perhaps not to inquire into too closely, nor for that utter silence telling so plainly the thoughts then passing through one's mind. No, it was a dream of beauty and delight.

We went cheerily along until we were well in front of our peak ; then, turning to the left, ascended some long but very easy glacier slopes, made a short halt for our second breakfast, and, crossing the very small bergschrund to a short slope of snow, reached the foot of the rocks a little to the left of the S.S.W. arête by which the remainder of the ascent was made. These rocks were somewhat steep, hidden in part by snow and in one or two places made a little awkward by a glaze of ice, the first we had met with, but it was only enough to suggest some extra care, and without any real difficulty we followed them until we turned on to the actual edge of the arête about a quarter of an hour below the summit.

We stayed there a long time, far too long, indeed, for any chance of reaching the Bergli hut again by daylight, but it was a scene not to be forgotten. There was the magnificent group of the great Oberland peaks, beginning with the Finsteraarhorn almost within touch and with the Eiger and the Schreckhorn parting it in the centre by a Royal Gateway, through which a glimpse of the quiet chalets and meadows of Grindelwald could be caught. Then to the south there was the well-known Pennine chain from Monte Leone to the far-away Mont Blanc, with not a cloud to dull the outlines. One missed the beautiful Weisshorn, hidden as it was behind the huge mass of the Aletschhorn ; but one cannot have everything in this world, and what we had then before us was more than worth the journey out from England to see. With a view of repeating our tactics on the Lauteraarhorn we looked before beginning the descent for a convenient slope for a glissade. It was found on the face just below the summit, so after most cautiously going down some little distance in steps somewhat resembling soup-tureens, and then finding that all was right, we let ourselves go, and in a

little more than half an hour after leaving the top found ourselves again on the glacier, with our second knapsack—well, not quite empty—beside us. Our return to the Bergli was otherwise uneventful.

On January 12 we were up early ; no more oversleeping, for there was some housemaid's work to be done before closing the door, as we hoped, for the last time. Then retracing our steps by the cheerful light of a lantern as far as the Lower Mönch Joch, we turned to the right and were over the ridge running between the Mönch and Trugberg before the day had shown much sign of breaking. We went along the glacier close by the foot of the Jungfrau Joch, with the Kranzberg well away to the left, and made for the hollow between it and the Jungfrau. The sun had by this time risen, but it was very cold, and we were not at all sorry to begin the ascent of the steep snow slope directly under the well-known bergschrund and Roththal Sattel. But the higher we went the lower sank our hopes of success. Some time before we had noticed that the Mönch was indulging in a morning pipe, but that we tried to persuade ourselves was only due to some local current. Now, however, there was a most persistent roar among the rocks on our right hand. Was the said local current making itself at home there, or did it extend higher up? We would soon find out, and find out soon we did. We had gone quickly up the slope, for hardly any step-cutting was required, and it was still very cold. We had also made a great pretence of difficulty in crossing the diminished bergschrund, but it was only when we reached the Sattel that we met our cruel enemy face to face. It was blowing half a gale, blowing, it seemed to us, from every quarter at once, and it was only by crouching down on the snow at every blast that we managed to cross the Sattel and ascend even part of the way up the short slope leading towards the lowest ridge of rock overlooking the Roththal. Thirty, perhaps thirty-five, steps alone separated us from it, and there were distinct marks of old ones the whole way across, but they would have to be cut out again in the hard ice, and in the very teeth of the gale. Almer set to work at once and succeeded in clearing three or four of them, then Christian Jössi, our second guide took his turn, then Mr. Boss, and for nearly three hours they fought desperately against the icy wind without getting even half way to the rocks. They gave in at last, but most unwillingly, and we turned back. Oh the bitter disappointment! We could see that the rocks were perfectly free from snow; the

flagstaff on the top, too, was plainly visible in the sunshine, and a very short time would have taken us there if only the wind would have lulled a little. Of course it was then too late in the day to think of crossing, but from the summit we could have seen something of what the north face was like, and that was almost half the work.

We were all half frozen, and our clothes as stiff as boards, so when we got down again to the bergschrund Mr. Boss suggested that it was about time for tea. So leading the way to a small ice cave under the rocky spur running down from the Roththorn, and producing from some mysterious pocket, first some small pieces of wood and then a kettle with a tin cup, he proceeded to make a cheerful little fire in a hole in the ice, and very soon some melted snow was boiling over it. Was ever afternoon tea made in such a place before? We drank it quickly, and after one more long look at the now distant flagstaff started downwards. The steps on the steep slope held well, and before very long we were again on the glacier, making for the Ober Mönch Joch as fast as the now rather soft snow would let us. Darkness fell as we crossed it; we lighted the lanterns; and in due time the four hungry, tired, and much disappointed mortals were back in the Bergli hut. Next morning we returned to Grindelwald, and it was certainly a black moment in my life when I was asked how we had fared, and had to answer that we had failed.

I could not rest; the disappointment on the Jungfrau was for ever in my mind, and with it the old tale of Robert the Bruce watching the spider make its seventh attempt to scale the cottage wall. I thought, too, of the many failures on the Matterhorn and the Aiguille du Dru before either of them was conquered. All this could have but one result. I resolved to try again.

The night of January 15 found us in our old quarters at the Bergli hut, with everything prepared for a good start the next morning. All promised well. It was very cold, but there was no wind; our old steps too served us again, and before very long we were up the steep snow and across the bergschrund on to the Roththal Sattel, with only the now easy ice-slope between us and the much-wished-for ridge of rock. Here we halted for our second breakfast, with some more wonderful cooking arrangements, and in a short space of time a hot beef steak was handed round, with tea to follow; so, fortified for the work that was before us, we went up the very easy rocks, then the last snow-slope (often a mere knife-edge

in summer), and we soon stood on the top—a solid cone of ice. The view, as everyone knows, is lovely; it was on this day clear at all points but the north. We only allowed ourselves, however, a few minutes to admire it, and then, after exchanging friendly greetings with that most modest and retiring peak, the Dent d'Hérens, we commenced the much-longed-for descent.

We were soon down the rocks and ice-slope on to the large snow-field at their base, being helped in part by some old steps which only needed clearing out, and then we went along almost at a run, for we were anxious to save all the time we could. There was not the smallest difficulty; the few crevasses that were open showed no disposition to deceive whatsoever, and were quickly turned either to the right or left as the case might be. It was only on the last slope before reaching the rock arête leading to the Silberlücke that the axe was at all needed. Here, again, was a whole staircase of old steps, a souvenir of the past summer, and, while some of them were being merely cleared out and others entirely recut, it flashed across my mind that the original master hand had been that of Ambrose Supersaxo.

The arête when free from snow must be a perfect walk, not excepting the two last towers above the gap. We had to take it with perhaps a little extra care, devoting our energies to the often vain attempt of keeping either one or both feet out of some wily and unseen trap; but it was a change from the perpetual snow-fields, and did not delay us very much. We made a short halt in the Silberlücke (where a little ladder was quietly enjoying its winter's rest), partly for some half-frozen food, partly to look into the desolate Roththal; then, with a little more help from the axe of the long-departed Supersaxo, and an easy jump over the bergschrund, now shrunk to a mere nothing, we were on the Giessen glacier, running a mild steeplechase over its almost unbroken surface in the direction of the Schneehorn.

At the much-crevassed and broken part, near the Klein Silberhorn, we pulled up. We had no idea as to whether we should have any trouble in passing through it or not. Fortune, however, still favoured us; caution only was necessary, and soon again we were urging our wild career.

It was beautiful; the light was beginning to fade, and we had still before us the descent of a steep face of rock, with the way afterwards to find through the great ice-fall down on to the Guggi glacier. The cornice, too, on the Schneehorn might give us trouble (it did somewhat) and it took

some time in the failing light to find a safe place where it could be cut through on to the face of snow between it and the rocks beneath.

Oh! the weary descent of those rocks; they were not only very steep and very rotten, but were much covered with snow in the worst possible condition, and the utmost care was needed to prevent a slip. To make matters even worse, it was by this time quite dark, one of our lanterns obstinately refused to keep lighted, and our only remaining hope had to be continually passed from hand to hand to enable the one person then moving to see where the next step might be.

We were all glad to reach the plateau on which the routes from the Jungfrau and the Jungfrau Joch join, but were getting very anxious about our chance of passing through the ice-fall in the darkness. One lantern can only light up a short distance in front, and the only other thing we had to depend on was a large torch, used, I think, for signalling; this would burn brilliantly, it is true, but for just one half-hour. How we searched for that outlet! first about the middle, then a little to the left, and back again to the centre, then on to the right, but without any success. Another long reconnaissance to the left, then a still longer one, as far as the light of the torch would take us, to the right, but it was of no avail. Finally, returning to the spot we had first started from, Mr. Boss led the way through an arched entrance, and down an inclined plane, into an ice cavern, below the level of the glacier, and said that we must now wait for daylight. It was not exactly the most cheerful prospect, for we were tired and hungry. Our larder, too, was scantily furnished; a very little bread, a small piece of cheese, a few raisins, and a little brandy was all we had—wait, I think I remember seeing also a chicken bone. We could keep ourselves warm though—the cave itself did not feel very cold, and we had with us a large opossum rug, with some other warm garments, so things might have been worse. The cavern was very beautiful; it was divided into two long and narrow chambers by ice pillars, which gradually closed at the far end into a wall; icicles of all shapes and sizes hung from the roof and sides, and the whole place glistened in the light of our faithful lantern. We dug a hole in the snow, carpeting it with the empty knapsacks, and using our axes as seats. We dined sumptuously on cheese and raisins (leaving the bread for breakfast); then, putting on every available warm wrap, prepared to get through the

night as pleasantly as we could and to make the best of a bad bargain.

Five minutes in the daylight next morning was quite enough to find the long-sought-for chimney—it was hardly twenty paces from where we had spent the night—I think we had been actually on it, but it was so narrow and so much covered by a projecting headland of ice that it was small wonder we had missed it in the darkness. We went down it one by one on to the *débris* of some recently fallen séracs, through which we hurried, meeting on the way two of our old guides, who had come up from Grindelwald the previous afternoon to give us extra help, if necessary, and who, not being able to find the upward path, had spent a much more uncomfortable night than ours in prowling round and round some large blocks of ice.

In a short time we were over the Guggi glacier, all the difficulties behind our backs, and with nothing between us and the Wengern Alp but the tail of the Eiger glacier, its moraine, and the well-known grass slopes beyond, all thickly covered with snow. It is needless to say that we did not linger.

This, my most lame and imperfect tale of our winter wanderings in the High Alps, is now finished, finished too on the anniversary of our first start. How vividly it has brought the whole scene again before me! It was a new experience, but to me a most enjoyable one. All the disagreeables seemed to be in the first 10,000 feet, and from the same cause—deep, powdery snow; higher up they vanished. The cold too was sometimes very severe, especially so directly after sundown, but the pleasant and just sufficient warmth of the sun was most delightful, and when combined as it generally was with firm rocks and good hard snow more than compensated us for any of our earlier troubles. Perhaps we had exceptionally fine and settled weather, I cannot tell. This, however, I do know, that there is just one little cloud to dim the brightness of it all—the thought that never again in any of my future wanderings will I meet the man, who by his great experience in winter climbing, and his unceasing efforts to make all things easy for me, contributed so very much to all our success. I mean Mr. Emil Boss.