## CORRESPONDENCE.

### SKETCHES OF EASTERN TRAVEL.

NO. XXIII.

[Correspondence of the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin.

**Courmayeur—A Long Tramp—Subduing a Mule—The Col de la Seigne—Chamouni—Mont Blanc—Matterhorn—Zermatt—Old Letters—St. Theodule.**

COURMAYEUR, *Sunday Evening*, July 17th.—We arrived here at ten o'clock, last night, after having been *sixteen* hours in getting from our last stopping-place. *Thirteen* of these hours were spent in hard tramping. By the time supper was ready and over, it was eleven o'clock. At such an hour, and after such a day's exertion, you will not wonder that I felt more like resting than writing, and that, for once at least, I omitted making the usual entry in my journal before retiring.

So I must go back to yesterday morning and take up the thread of my narrative at the Chalet a la Balme, where we spent Friday night.

We breakfasted at a little after five o'clock, and were under way by six. It was a steady pull from the start, right up the steep mountain side. We occupied six hours in crossing two mountains, the Col de Bonhomme and the Col des Fours. On reaching the summit of the latter, we had attained an elevation of 9,000 feet. We were above the range of vegetation, making our way over rocks and snow. We crossed several fields of ice and snow, and passed by some stupendous glaciers. By twelve o'clock we reached a little village called Motet, one-third of the way down the other side of the Col des Fours. A hungry, weary set of travelers we were by that time, for we had to start with a very light breakfast, at the Chalet, in the morning, and had no opportunity to stop for refreshment, during for two or three hours, and had an excellent dinner.

After dinner we had a meeting of the company to consider the expediency of remaining where we were, to spend the Sunday. B——introduced a motion to that effect, which I seconded. We made a speech on the subject, but failed to carry the rest of the meeting with us. N—— introduced an amendment to B——'s resolution by proposing that we make the remainder of the day's journey on mules, instead of on foot. This was carried unanimously, and the company's agent went out to arrange for a supply of mules. He returned, however, with the unwelcome intelligence that the village of Motet possessed but one solitary mule. Then it was proposed to engage this remnant of his race here for the use of B—— and myself, as far as the summit of the next mountain, for B—— as the heaviest, and "the present writer" as the oldest member of the company. This solitary mule, however, was far from being of an amiable disposition, for when we attempted to mount him he would stand erect on his hind legs as though about to adopt the biped method of locomotion. But, finally, after many efforts, he was laid down and B—— mounted him; and after carrying 250 pounds straight up the mountain's side for half an hour, he calmly subsided, and gave us no more trouble. Three hours' toilsome work brought us to the summit of the Col de la Seigne. The line of separation between France and Italy runs over this summit. So we are now in Italy once more. The Col de la Seigne commands an extensive and imposing view of the Alee Blanch. This is a lofty valley, many miles in length, bounded on one side by the splendid range of the Graian Alps, 10,000 feet in height, and on the other by a range about 1,000 feet lower. It has been well said that no one that Mt. Blanc, seen from the Col de la Seigne, is like an amphitheatre surrounded by its leaves. The view from this point is esteemed the finest in the Alps. An eminent geographer has declared that only among the Himalayas can its equal be found. From the summit of the mountain we had a four hours' walk to the village of Courmayeur, our present place of sojourn. It is a most picturesque place, lying directly under the shadow of Mt. Blanc, and shut in by lofty mountains on every side. Our path down the mountain went skirting along the banks of the Doire, a glacier-fed stream that goes foaming and dashing down the mountain in the wildest and most romantic manner.

I am surprised at what we have accomplished to-day—a 15 hours' tramp. At home this would be impossible. But the cool, bracing mountain-air gives a wonderful power of enduring. The last two hours' walking was in the dark. We dragged along painfully enough. It was with a feeling of intense relief that we reached the hotel and sat down to rest. But 15 hours on a stretch of mountain climbing are rather too much of a good thing at one time. Hereafter we shall aim to lay out shorter routes. It set in to rain heavily just as we reached the hotel. It has continued raining all through the day. The quiet rest of the Sabbath has been most acceptable. We attended service at the English chapel this morning. Congregation numbered twelve. Had a short but good and sensible sermon.

CHATILLON, *Monday Evening, July 18th, 1870.*—I was not able to get any letters last week, but hope to find some waiting for me when we reach Zermatt, where we expect to arrive on Wednesday or Thursday of this week. My last, finished at Courmayeur, last night, told all about our meeting with Mr. B——, our journey to Chamouni, and thence across the mountains to the place where we were so journing when it was closed. It told, too, of my great loss of the coat and letter of credit. I have heard nothing of it yet, and cannot expect to hear till sometime next week, when we shall reach the first point to which it would be convenient to have it sent, in the event of its having been found. But I have reconciled myself to the loss of it, as I think there is not much prospect of its recovery. I comfort myself with the thought that my note-book was not in the pocket of the coat, as it often has been in our journeying. This contains about thirty or forty nice outlines of sermons, gathered on the spot, in railway cars, on steamboats, in galleries, and other places, and laid up for winter's use. I would much rather have lost the coat and the letter of credit than this book of notes, for the former can be replaced, but the latter it would be impossible for me to reproduce. So I am thankful it was no worse.

We left Courmayeur at eight o'clock this morning. As our route to-day lay over a good, broad road, we concluded to vary our mode of locomotion by taking a carriage. *Pedestrianizing* in a comfortable carriage is very pleasant. As our English friends would say, "it's jolly." We had first a four hours' ride to Aosta, through a valley of the same name. The scenery of the valley all through is delightful. For the first two hours we had Mt. Blanc full in view at the head of the valley. It affords the best view of the great mountain. It is incomparably better than any view of it that we had in the Valley of Chamouni. *There*, this great mountain appears with other peaks so much nearer to the observer that they seem really higher, and divert attention from the grand central object of contemplation. Mt. Blanc appears there like a monarch in his reception-room, surrounded by attendants almost as stately and dignified as himself. But *here* you see the monarch on his throne. His attendants are out of sight. There is nothing else to be seen. He rises into view in all the grandeur and sublimity of his peerless majesty. The day was brilliant, and the atmosphere beautifully clear. The magnificent form of the great monarch, in his royal robes of spotless white, stood out, sharply defined against the rich deep blue of a perfect Italian sky. It was one of those sights which make an impression on the memory that time can never efface. Those who have not seen Mt. Blanc from this point of view can have very little idea of its real grandeur.

We reached Aosta by noon to day; stayed there to dine, and waited for several hours, during the heat of the day, before starting again. It is an interesting old town, with bridges and gates that have stood since the time when imperial Rome was in its splendor. The Emperor Augustus gave his name to the place, of which the present name is but a corruption. In modern times it was interesting as the place where Napoleon I. met his first opposition when he crossed the Alps with Bernard Pass and began his brilliant campaign in Italy.

We left Aosta at four, and arrived here at eight. Chatillon is a small town among the mountains, in a valley where several important passes converge. It is built on both sides of a wild, deep gorge. There are several fine bridges spanning this gorge, and a wild mountain stream goes plunging and tossing through it. The window of my room at the hotel looks out upon the gorge, and I shall have the roar of the dashing torrent as my lullaby to-night. We expect to start early in the morning for the other mountain train.

BRIGUE, Hotel du Simplon, *Tuesday Evening*, July 19th, 1870.—Brieuil, where we are sojourning to-night, is a little mountain village at the foot of the Matterhorn. It is near 7,000 feet high, about as high as the summit of Mount Washington; but elevated as its position is, the Matterhorn towers nearly 8,000 feet above it. We left Chatillon at six o'clock this morning. An interesting walk of six hours up the beautiful Val Tournanch brought us to the village of the same name, where we stopped to dine and rest. The whole walk up the valley was delightful. The mountains tower up grandly on either side. The bottom of the valley and the lower slopes of the mountains are fertile and richly cultivated, while a rapid stream dashes wildly on its way through the bottom of the valley.

When we were about half the way up the valley, a sudden turn of the road brought us into full view of the Matterhorn. It rose grandly up at the head of the valley, just as Mont Blanc did at the head of the Aosta valley, as mentioned in my journal of yesterday. It is a splendid sight to see that magnificent mountain standing by itself and lifting its gigantic mass of rock and snow far up into the clear, blue sky. We had this grand object in view all the rest of our day's journey.

After a good, long rest at a nice, clean, comfortable inn in the village of Tournanch, we resumed our journey to reach the head of the valley.

We stopped on our way to visit one of the principal curiosities of the valley, viz., the Grotto du Geant. It is in the midst of an immense chasm, through which a mountain stream has worn a narrow passage for itself. We descended the chasm by a flight of wooden steps, and then we went along the side of the chasm by a wooden gallery, over the boiling torrent, to a huge cavern formed in the solid rock by the action of the water. It is a dark, and gloomy chamber which the sun never penetrates and very little light reaches. And in the other end of the chasm the mountain stream which runs through the valley leaps over a precipice and plunges far down into the gloomy gorge below with a thunderous roar. A three hours' walk after dinner brought us to our present resting-place. In the morning we expect to take an early start, to ascend and pass over the snowy summit of the St. Theodule mountain, on our way to Zermatt.

ZERMATT, HOTEL MONTE ROSA, *Wednesday Evening, July 20*.—We had ordered our letters to meet us here, and I hoped to have received later tidings from home. But in this I was disappointed. And yet I did get some letters, too, but they were *five months* old. They were old travelers, having followed me from Paris to Marseilles, thence to Alexandria, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Beyrout, and thence back again to Paris. How strange that after all they should find me here in the heart of Switzerland. And how oddly items of news from old home fall upon the ear.

We learn for the first time, since our arrival here, that war has been declared between France and Prussia. Certainly never was a more causeless war than this. The mere whim of one man draws the sword that must be bathed in the blood of thousands before it is sheathed again. Of for the time when the Prince of Peace shall reign, and nations shall learn war no more! We shall probably experience some personal inconvenience from the present outbreak, in our mail arrangements and railway communications.

We have had a most delightful excursion to-day. We rose at three o'clock this morning, so as to get through with breakfast and be ready to start on our mountain climb by four. In starting from Brieuil we had to leave our mules behind, and take porters to carry our baggage. We engaged three, besides the guide. It is a steep ascent all the way up from the hotel where we had spent the night. We—started early—so as—to avoid the sun in going up the mountain. In this we were successful. The sky was clear, and the air was sharp and cold. As we rose to the upper part of the mountain we found the ground frozen hard. There was ice along the edge of the little mountain streams, and the snow was so hard that it gave that peculiar crunching sound we are accustomed to hear on a cold frosty morning. I missed my loss coat, and suffered some from the want of it.

Not long after starting we saw the beams of the rising sun gilding the lofty peak of the Matterhorn and other high summits around. It was interesting to watch the work of transformation that went silently on among the mountain peaks as the sunlight fell upon them, one after another. But as we were on the western side of the mountain the sun did not reach us till we got near the summit. It took us three hours and a half to reach the top. On arriving there we found ourselves ready for a second breakfast, which we got there, and found it very good for the place. The latter part of our way to the summit was over fields of ice and snow. And such a snow scene as the eye looks out upon from the top of that mountain I never saw before, and never expect to see again. There were peaks of snow, and plains of snow, and arches and chasms of snow, and jagged and broken masses of snow tumbled wildly together; and there was one magnificent amphitheatre of snow sweeping round from the summit of a mountain in the grandest possible style, pure enough and beautiful enough and sublime enough to be a place in which the angels might meet to hold council.

The St. Theodule is about 11,000 feet high, nearly twice as high as Mt. Washington. It is the next-door neighbor to the Matterhorn on the east. The view from its summit baffles description.

After spending two hours on the summit we began our descent on the other side, towards Zermatt. It took us five hours to get down, and we found it very hard and fatiguing work. The sun was shining fiercely down upon us, and the reflection of his rays from the snow was very trying. But I have no language by which to express the beauty and magnificence of the scene that lay before us, especially in the earlier part of our way down. On leaving the summit we had to keep within short, steep, rocky descent. Then we came out upon a grand plateau, or magnificent basin. It was the bed of an immense glacier, or ice-field. Our path led directly over it. It took us two hours to cross it. When we reached the centre of this glacier and looked around, the panorama before us was one of the grandest this earth can furnish. On one side the Matterhorn, from base to summit, was full in view; its wedge-like form piercing the sky, as if aiming to split it asunder. On the opposite side was Monte Rosa, with its many peaks, and the interlying valleys all filled with snow. Far away, in another direction, was the Jungfrau, lifting up her stately head, all covered with a modest veil of spotless white. And then the whole circle between these distant points was filled up on every side with a multitude of mountain peaks in an endless variety of sizes and forms, but in all of which there was a beautiful blending of rocks and snow. The day was one of the finest imaginable. There was not a cloud in the sky, and a more sparkling and brilliant sky I never saw. And nothing can exceed the charm which this threw over the whole scene, bringing out, in the sharpest outline against the deep blue vault of Heaven, every peak and point in the vast range of mountains that surrounded us. We gazed upon the peerless prospect with inexpressible delight and adoring wonder. We seemed to be in the very centre of the glacier world. Each mountain had one or more at its base, and the valleys were filled with them. We made our way very carefully over the glacier, across the ice, and reached the other side in safety. We then had one or more at its base, and the snow, as we trod on it, gave that peculiar crunching sound we are accustomed to hear on a cold frosty morning. I missed my loss coat, and suffered some from the want of it.

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