

ravine or glen, huge rocks and a few pine trees with much snow, and the Rhone usually far below us. The good new road was often heavily blocked by snow, and in advance was a wild snow-covered steep. At 7 P.M., we crossed to the left bank of the river by a good stone bridge, a fine but not deep gorge below it, and on the upside, just above the surface of the water at the foot of a snow-bed, was a little snow table fringed with icicles exactly like a toilet-table cover. At 7-10, we re-crossed the river, now a small rivulet, by a small wooden bridge, the upper course of the stream nearly all under snow beds, with some grand ones lower down in the glen, and five minutes' more walking over heavy snow brought us to the Hotel du Glacier du Rhone at 7-15 P.M. The rain we had in the valley turned to rather heavy snow as we ascended, and I was glad to find myself at the hotel rather than waiting at Oberwald for a fine day, and to have got into something like snow-clad mountains! Much of what I now saw reminded me of what I saw in going up the Juwahier pass in Kumaon in 1842, when I crossed at an elevation of 18,500 feet, being the first European traveller, I believe, since Moorcroft crossed in 1817. But the Alps lack the grand back ground of the Himalayas, as on the Juwahier pass I had the huge Nundee Devi rising about 10,000 feet higher than where I crossed, the upper 12,000 feet at least being a cone of pure snow. Still there is grandeur enough in the Alps, and even at the Glacier du Rhone, to satisfy any one, and in mentioning higher ranges I am far from wishing to disparage the Alps, which indeed I greatly admire.

The hotel is of good size and well built, with abundant accommodation for travellers, and it stands in a small basin of table-land with the glacier to the north, though I could see nothing of the glacier as one vast sheet of snow covered everything. There is a small hot spring close to the hotel, furnishing hot baths, but I felt it only moderately warm, and the snow creeps too close up to the edge for any great heat.

Fortunately for me, a woman servant had arrived at noon to commence preparations for the season, and as she was a kindly body she soon made me comfortable with a nice cup of coffee. Fresh paint was about the house, snow all round it, and the kitchen fire very pleasant. A jolly old soldier, formerly in the Neapolitan Army, when "good old Ferdinand was king," remains in charge of the hotel during the winter, and has done so for thirteen years, descending occasionally to Oberwald for supplies, and a weary time he must have of it from November to April, one would suppose, though he does not seem to think

so. He pointed out to me marks on the wall indicating that some fourteen feet of snow surrounded the hotel during winter, and I could well believe it upon seeing the heavy mass around, almost within arm's reach, on this 24th of May. The keeper had a St. Bernard's dog, about ten months old and barely half-grown, as his valued companion; and no wonder when he told us that only three days before the puppy had come bothering and coaxing him early in the morning, until he was forced to go out and follow it. The puppy led the way joyfully to the foot of a deep snow-bed, about 400 yards from the hotel, and there, within a few feet of a steep cliff, lay a poor helpless traveller. This was a Prussian who had come over the Furca pass (which here joins the road) in search of work, and with no guide he had fallen over the path and rolled down several hundred feet of snow, only just stopping short of eternity in the shape of the precipice! Assistance was procured, and the poor Prussian, not much hurt but nearly frozen to death from having laid helpless all night, was taken to Oberwald and made comfortable. His first enquiry was for his purse, containing $1\frac{1}{2}$ francs, and probably all he had in the world, and great was his delight on finding it safe. I much regretted not having known the poor fellow was at Oberwald in passing, as I would gladly have helped him if in want, but I doubt not he will be helped, and I hope he may never again have such a narrow escape. The keeper told his story simply, with no little honest excitement, and it really was a moving one. I hugged the dog in admiration of his intelligence, thinking him far more handsome than I had at first sight, and from his manner, and the keeper's pointing to the locality when telling the story, I had and have no doubt that the animal knew exactly what we were talking about. It appears that many poor Germans wander about in search of work, and indeed we met two coming up the Grimsel next day in a snow storm. They are often, and perhaps usually too poor, for paying even a trifle for a night's rest, they must push on, cannot engage guides, and, of necessity almost, some must occasionally perish in bad weather on an unknown and most desolate road. Some are afterwards found; how many sleep under snow-beds, or in glaciers or torrents, will never be known in this world! But they sleep soundly, and it is a sleep we must all sooner or latter take, whether under the green turf, the snow-bed, or a costly tomb, and when once there the difference will be unknown!

During the summer months very much of the snow I saw in ascending, and round the hotel, whether on level or hill-side, will no doubt have disappeared, but in the season this Hotel du Glacier must be a pleasant abode with many interesting spots

within easy reach, and the road is so good all the way up that it can be safely ridden, if not ready for carriages which I understood it would soon be.

Certainly the great change in climate and scenery, between the valley below and the Glacier du Rhone, an almost easy one and a half hour's walk up, is very remarkable, and it alone can hardly fail to interest a traveller, even should he decline to explore the glaciers, and the neighbourhood, if the season and weather admit.

I went early to bed, and found damp sheets, fresh I fancy from the wash in the valley below; these, however, I got rid of by sleeping between the blankets, and at 3 A.M., I was called to determine our future plans. Snow had fallen all night and was still falling heavily, and the guide rather doubted the expediency of our pushing on, especially as in coming to Sion he had taken a different route from the Grimsel to Oberwald, and so did not know exactly what difficulties lay between us and the Grimsel. My decision was, either to go on or return, but no halting or losing time, and as the old soldier said that although heavy in snow, he knew every inch of the way, and would put us well on our journey, it was settled we should proceed.

Fourth day, 25th, May.—From the glaciers of the Rhone to Reisenbach.

Started 4-0 A.M. Arrived at 4-45 P.M.

Walking	9 hours	20 minutes.
Halting	3	„ 25 „
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		Total	12 hours	45 minutes.

After a good breakfast of coffee, bread and butter, and honey, we said good-bye to the kindly woman servant and started at 4 A.M., the old soldier leading, and his dog frolicking about in the snow, rubbing his nose under it for several feet at a time, scenting for marmots, I fancy, just like a pet dog romping in a hay-field. I now began to find the use of my Alpen-Stock, which I had bought rather unwillingly at Grindelwald, and left with the guide to bring to Sion. Indeed, it was very useful, and often, no doubt, saved me from falling, so I would recommend travellers in the snow always to have one, though lugging it home some hundreds of miles afterwards, very awkward to pack and ungainly to look at, is a matter of taste. Mine remains with the guide for the benefit of his next companion.

Our route lay up a steep snow-bed westwards, chiefly old avalanche snow, but thickly covered with the fresh soft snow, into which we sunk thigh deep at every step. It was rather a