(From the Lakeside Monthly for July.)

A MOUNTAIN MEMORY.

BY REV. ROBERT COLLYER.

I never saw a great mountain until I went to Switzerland in the summer of '65. I had heard of them, read about them, seen pictures past counting of Alp and Appenine, and so I thought I had so learned them by heart that they would be no great wonder. I had also lived among what we called mountains—the sweet, heathery hills of the north of England, with their gray crags and purple bloom, their free blowing winds, rippling sunshine, and great spaces without a house or a tree or a human being, except at rare intervals a shepherd looking after his sheep. These were the mountains to me; and they still hold a place no other thing can take in my memory and love. As the rugged hills of New England are dear to some, these are dear to me—because I saw the mist lie on them first when I was a child; and wandered over them dreaming about my future, when I was a boy; and preached my first sermons on them to the sheep when I was a young man, long before I joined the church, or had the remotest idea of being a preacher. But they were not mountains. You would find snow there in the deep shadows, when the meadows were all a-bloom down by the river; but the snow was gone by the middle of May, and the sheep were cropping the sweet new grass that grows here and there among the heather and crags, and the brown waters were tumbling down the hills racing toward the sea. They are as dear to me now as Hermon and Sharon were to the Hebrews in old days; but it was only that pride of our own place, which makes a Scotchman think Ben Lomond is grander than the peak of the Andes, which made mountains to me out of those great purple hills.

But when I went to the old home eight years ago, I said, "Now I will see the mountains Ruskin saw, and Coleridge, and feel their burden at first hand, and then I shall know this open secret of grandeur and beauty once for all, and hold it in my heart wherever I go." Yet I am not sure that I did not see all they saw—or rather I suspect I did not, and could not if I went there every summer as long as I live. For many a man has walked through Walden woods in winter but who has really seen them except Thoreau? And many a man has seen the birds flitting through the snow flakes; but who could bring them out of their wilderness except the author of "Chickadee?" Who saw that world among the Western mountains, except Bret Harte? or Indiana twenty years ago, except Eggleston? It is still as true as it was in the days of Christ, that out of many who have eyes few can really see; and it is as true of nature as of grace. Take an average Western farmer and set him in the heart of a June prairie, untouched by the plow clean away to the line where the green meets the blue, and put by his side a man like Whittier, and as the heavens are higher than the earth, so will be the vision of the poet over that of the farmer. From the blue blossom at their feet to the whole sweep of earth and heaven, one man sees, while another is a seer.

When I was ready, I started from Frankfort, in Germany, to Zurich, in Switzerland, on a Saturday morning, and rode all day through a beautiful country, looking out toward nightfall for the mountains. But night came on as we got into Switzerland, and long before we came to our journey's end it was quite dark. So I went to rest, longing for sunrise; and at sunrise dressed and went out. The old gray town, with its lofty houses and narrow streets, had begun to stir. It was a clear morning in midsummer, warm and bright. They had told me at the inn that if I would go up to the Cathedral I could see the mountains. I saw the Cathedral at once, and went up. I noticed it was like all the cathedrals in the country—simple and grand in outline, almost bare of ornament, looking as if the people had said, "We will build to the pattern that was shown us in the mount;" as different as possible from the marvels of beauty I have seen in England, France and Germany, at York, Rouen and Cologne. There was one beautiful thing—a statue of Charlemagne, standing high in the tower, "looking right on with calm eternal eyes;" and Charlemagne is one of the men I "tie to," as we say here in the West—"the one strong man in a blatant land," who bitted and bridled the wild life of his time, which threatened to wipe out the new hope of the world, planted order, established law, taught his people how to live, and then, when the end came, was set in his sepulchre in his great ivory chair—if my memory serves me—with his crown on his head and his sceptre in his hand (the sceptre I have seen), as if he would say to France, "When you feel the old mad outbreak coming, remember Charlemagne, and be quiet."

I went up the steep, looking at Charlemagne, and he was looking at the mountains. I turned around when I had gained the platform, and stood still. We all remember times when our whole nature was stormed by some quick surprise so that we could hardly see the thing we were looking at through our tears. So it was with me that Sunday morning. For there, away out beyond, standing clear in the rising sun, were the mountains—or shall I say the crests of the mountains? for their base was hidden by the roundness of the earth,—white and still, standing up in the sky, looking as if they belonged to a world I had never seen before, flashing white against the green of summer from the eternal snows. I said in my heart, "Now I know what they mean by mountains, and what Ruskin means when he likens them to the shadows of God."

Then I came down at last, and noticed that the churches were open, early as it was. But these were Protestant churches not Catholic. "How is this?" I said to a man who spoke English, "Protestant churches open before breakfast?" "That is when they *are* open," the man replied, "service begins here at six o'clock." A good idea, I thought; certainly the people will stay awake then, let the sermon be never so stupid. And so I went into a church close to the river, to see this brave sight. Whether the sermon was what sermons should be, I cannot tell; certainly the minister was awake, for his face lighted up as he went on, as if he felt every word he said. But this I know; that out of fifteen hundred people, as near as I could judge, seven hundred were in as sweet a sleep as if they were still in their own chambers; and so I gave up trying to account for this perverseness, and thought of the man who went to sleep under Paul; and it was a great comfort.

I was not satisfied, of course, with this look at the mountains on the edge of the world. I could not rest until I had seen them to their most secret heart. Not that I wanted to scale Mont Blanc, to shiver on the brink of unfathomable crevices, or to stand on peaks that only a few men ever scaled; for I like to look *at* these dizzy wonders, rather than *from* them; to feel sure first, I run no risk that is not fair to a man with a family, when there is no higher call than curiosity, be that never so intense; and then, from my safe, sure foothold, to take all the blessings these things can give. I love a noble daring. I remember Mr. Emerson said to me once that a Polar expedition just then brought to a good conclusion was one of the proofs England had to give that year that she was still in the full prime of life. What the men dare is a sign of what the nations are to which they belong; and a life given now and then, just for proof of clear grit, is not lost. Only I did not mean to pawn mine that summer among the Alps. There was one thing I wanted especially to do: I wanted to see Mont Blanc face to face in all his glory—and I did it. Starting from Lucerne, we go winding among the valleys in the most curious fashion, catching glimpses of queer little towns and villages that seem as if they had been made on purpose to delight Americans, tired and sick of the everlasting sameness of these Western places. When we come to Martigny, within nine hours' walk from the foot of this grand mountain, we have to take to the hills on horseback or on foot, as it suits us. It suited me for many reasons to go on foot; the most central reason being that I am perhaps the worst rider ever seen on horseback. But the walk over the Tete Noir is one of the events of a lifetime—so full of wonder and delight that I only remember the most of it as a fine ethereal intoxication. Every mile it was a new surprise—little green valleys far down on one side of us, great grim scars far up on the other; poor little cottages, set where one would imagine it was impossible for any human being to pick up a living; troops of little children, with small round faces and great round eyes, running out as they saw us come, holding out their hands shyly for anything we might give them; wayside chapels and shrines in unexpected places, startling us sometimes with a figure of the dead Christ, when we expected the Mother and Child; clear running swells of water, "just off the ice," close to the wayside, and very welcome to man and beast. But at the end of seven hours, we came to a sharp turn by a little town, and then the mountains that had hidden away the sight we came to see, stand back, and there is Mont Blanc.

It was a disappointment for a few minutes, as Niagara is. You have been expecting that nature will do something in the melodramatic line, and send one peak out into the sky as they would on the stage. Nature knows better, she is no Court House Competitor. Her work is for the ages; and so she lays vast foundations, and builds to her base, and then just raise, the great summit over all—peerless in its way, when you come to think of it as the sun—and lets you fret until you have grace to see what she means. I think I did see it last as she intended we should. For when we got to Chamonny, and had rested, we went across the valley, in among the vines and roses, and there we sat down. It was evening. The sun had set to us, and the night drew on; but up there he was shining still, transfiguring all the white with his gold, lingering as if he loved it and was loth to leave it. And then the gold changed to rosy splendors that seemed like the light through stained windows; and then the stars came out, as the alpen glow, as they call it, deepened, and starlight and sunlight lay together on the lonely desolation. They told me travellers would spend weeks sometimes in the valley and not see this sight more than once, and it is reckoned the supreme glory. It is to me still one of the wonders of my life.

One mountain I did climb in that journey it had been told I must see the sight from the top at the Rhigi at sunrise, or I should be sorry for it always. It was a hard pull of perhaps seven hours, on a very hot day; but, like the walk over the Tete Noir, and all the walks, indeed, I ever took among these mountains, the journey itself was worth far more than the trouble. It was dark, when we got to the summit, for there was no railroad then, as there is now, and if there had been I should have preferred the tramp. We told the porter to call us an hour before sunrise exactly. It must have been two hours after sunrise when we woke up, and then we went storming down, met the porter, and shouted to him, "Why did you not call us an hour before sunrise?" "Oh, sars," he said to the speaker, "there was no sunrise." And so it was. We went to the door, and it seemed as if the flood had come. The rain was coming down in what you might well call torrents, and we felt sad enough. But it was a tempered trial, after all, as most of our trials are when we are not wilful and wrong-headed, or, what is worse, wrong-hearted about them. For in about a couple of hours, when we made up our minds to go down at any fate and reach Lucerne, and had been a few minutes on the road, all at once the rain stopped. The great clouds broke away into white masses, and were some of them swept down below our feet, and some up into heaven; and then we were transfigured where we stood. The guide-book told me, I think, that we could see between the two rims of the sky three hundred miles. There, sharp down below us, looking almost as if a rolling stone would reach them lay towns and towers in the great green valleys, churches and homes, farm-steads and glorious lakes, a panorama of wonder and beauty for which, indeed, I have no words. The Rhigi is green to the top—a pasture ground for the little cows and goats; the blue-bells were thick about my feet, fresh that morning from their bath, and looking up shyly to the sun as if they would say, "We are very glad you have come out; it was getting rather dreary." But right across the valley and the lake, as we came down, lay the great masses of white snow, set in their frames of black and brown rock, with the shaggy woods underneath, reaching down to the meadows the towns, and the water, with monasteries hidden away among pleasant nooks, as they are apt to be—for of all the men in the world to find the choicest spot to say their prayers, the monks seem, when they set themselves to be most skillful. And I remember saying to myself, as we are prone to say of a beautiful land, "How they must revel in this beauty, and how easy it must be to live holy lives with this near presence of God!" When we got down and took the steamboat, there was two monks on board—fine old fellows, with round heads and rosy faces, looking as if Lenten fare made more blood than was good for them. The sights from the lake are equal in their way to those from the mountain, and we drank in the new beauty as we had drank in the old. But now and then I glanced at the monks; they set on the deck munching apples, with as much indifference as if they were in their cells, looking at us now and then, and exchanging a word which I interpreted to mean, though I did not understand them, "How good these apples are! and how strange it is that anybody can prefer these sights to eating them!"

Once again I went on three July days, clean away up into the snow, to what is called the Far-car Pass and the glacier of the Rhone.

I have said so much already that I will spare the reader my journey—though it still surpassed all I had done or seen before. It is enough to say that we reached the snow on the second day, and went tramping over it scant of breath, for the air up there grows very thin. Here and there we would come to a little bare patch where the grass had sprung, and then close to the snow we would find flowers of the most wonderful tender beauty I ever saw, looking as if they had won their blessed light by battles with their hard fortune, and by seizing bravely every moment of sunshine and turning it to the holiest account; and then I said in my heart, "O, God! why cannot I take this sight to my soul forever, and learn what worth may lie in the hardest fortune, if I am faithful to the gleams of thy grace? The hardest lot then, shall be a ministering angel to the purest and most perfect beauty of life, and character. I shall grow as these flowers grow, to look like heaven."

And so at last I came to love as a reality the mountains I had loved all my life as a dream. I saw something of what Ruskin saw, and Coleridge, and the great ones who have sung their beauty from the days of the psalmist to this new day of ours. It seemed to be the fittest thing in the world that some of the finest inspiration of the psalms and prophesies should flash along the crests and hide among the fastnesses of the mountains of the Holy Land and the Desert beyond; that Hermon and Sharon and Lebanon and Sinai and Horeb should ring as they do in grand and awful or sweet and assuring melodies through the chapters of the greatest book the world ever heard of; that Carmel should be chosen by Elijah as a battle-field against Baal; and Zion by David as the gathering-place of the tribes once a year; that one mountain-side should be the pulpit of the Sermon on the Mount, another the chosen shrine of prayer, another of the transfiguration, another of the great agony; and that on a mountain should be performed the great sacred tragedy of the world.

And I love to remember that always among the mountains and hills has been found the cradle of the purest, keenest, freest life of the world. It was there those old Hebrews got their Bible, and lived it before they got it—as men must always do and got with it the power and life which has carried them through eighteen centuries of trouble such as no race ever encountered, and still found them faithful to their ancient trust, crying out against all idolatries; "The Lord our God is one Lord." So Greece caught her glorious life among the mountains, and refined it to the seas, and sent down to us her gifts of art and poetry and philosophy—things that never grow old in their essence, because they hold in their heart the principles of immortality. And these Switzers! how they have fought for freedom among their mountains, and won it, and kept it against all comers! And what a fine and noble austerity dwells in their mountaineer hearts!

Here is the great gambling hell of Baden-Baden begging at their door, offering any bribe to be admitted—and they know what money is worth, too; but they know of things money cannot buy—national and cantonal honor, pureness, simplicity, *virtue* in a word, and so they bar the evil thing at every gate, keep watch and ward, and will have no such defilement of their holy mountains as these things would bring. Mountains are fortresses and breastworks of freedom, nursing fathers and mothers of bright, strong men and women — the background of great aspirations and resolutions—nurseries of hardihood and self-denial, and good templars insisting on temperance as the first condition of staying in their sanctuary.

"When Freedom from her home was driven,
In vine-clad vales of Switzerland,
She sought the glorious Alps of Heaven,
And there, 'mid cliffs of lightning riven,
Gathered her hero band.

"And still outrings her freedom-song,
Amid the glaciers sparkling there,
At Sabbath-bell, as peasants throng
Their mountain fastnesses along,
Happy, and free as air.

"The hills were made for Freedom!—they
Break at a breath the tyrant's rod;
Chains clank in valleys—there the prey
Bleeds 'neath Oppression's heel always:—
Hills how to none but God!"

And the burden of the mountains is an unspeakable repose. We turn the plains over our hand. The red man of a hundred years ago, coming back to his old familiar prairies, would not know them; they are turned into corn-fields and planted with cities and towns. Nothing abides as it was, on a plain; there is perpetual movement and perpetual alteration. But Hannibal would know the alps again, and point out every peak.

There they stand—silent grand, glorious; and to them a thousand years is one day. The art and device of man merely scratches their surface—builds little places that seem like nests of the swallows under the eaves of the temples. They say to the traveller: "Be still; if you will believe it, you are stronger than we are, rooted in deeper certainties, resting on more impregnable foundations. You can rest on God; we can only rest on the fringe of His garment. We must decrease; you can increase. Winter and summer are wearing us away; every rill that runs to the sea carries something of us away forever. But you, O man! you can grow forever. The secret of immortality is with you. We are the shadow—you are the substance. Then if we can be so quiet and still and strong, how can you fret and fear?"

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Special facilities for jobbing all kinds of

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GLOBE PAPER COMPANY,

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General Wholesale Agents for

VERMONT AND NEW HAMPSHIRE,

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7th. Retailers want a Diary that is neat, attractive and saleable.

8th. You will find fewer of them among the old stock of dealers, as they sell better than any other Diary.

9th. The sale of the Excelsior has increased more than 500 per cent. in the last four years, which fact shows that the retailer appreciates them.

10th. We give attractive show cards and posters, and plenty of them.

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12th. The Excelsior is the best retailing Diary offered to the trade.

We intend to visit all dealers in Diaries early in the season. If there are any, however, that we do not reach, we shall be pleased to send them, on application, a line of samples to examine in comparison with other goods.

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Send in your orders for the Excelsior early to

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TO DRY-GOODSMEN, GROCERYMEN, BUTCHERS &C.—We offer the largest line of Wrapping Papers, Paper Bags, Flour Sacks and Twines, to be found in the State. Best quality manilla, best quality bogus manilla. Best quality straw paper, all sizes and weights. Best quality paper bags and flour sacks warranted full size and full weights. No scrimping. We handle these goods in large quantities, and our prices are as low as others, selling same quality of goods. Send us an order.

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THE RUTLAND DAILY AND WEEKLY GLOBE, contains all the latest news, including the telegrams of the associated press, local correspondence, state news, &c. No expense spared in the editorial department. Advertising rates low, especially for short advertisements. The papers are larger and contain more reading matter than any other in the state.

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