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view." It was felt that the manliest of Marlburians might have flinched from such an encounter.

Our stay lasted some weeks. My father, a Divinity Professor at Cambridge, had, as always, much engrossing literary work on hand: I had just begun to read Ancient Philosophy for the second part of the Classical Tripos, and my Swiss trip, it was understood, was a sort of Long Vacation term. Accordingly I spent most of my mornings puzzling over Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the pleasant Almagell Wood, where an occasional debauch of bilberries diversified my philosophical studies. I did however essay one or two mild ascents: that of the Plattjen, up which there is a path, hardly counts as a climb: I went up it to gather edelweiss, as my diary records, the page being still marked with three quite recognizable sprigs of that curiously overrated plant. There is now a hotel near the top of the Plattjen, and the edelweiss is no longer obvious.

Gerald Rendall took me with two other novices up the Eggnerhorn, which, I understand, is a tyro's peak: One does however go with guides and a rope and start in the dark. I also ascended the Klein Allalinhorn with the two Leafs and Thomas: and this further experience, joyous as it was, confirmed me in the sad conviction that I was not born a climber, but in this regard, as in all others, was a degenerate son of my father. This conclusion was not entirely due to the fact that on the way down, when I was last on the rope, presumably because it was now hardly required, as we crossed an easy piece of glacier, I slipped and fell prone: and since I was unable to make the others hear, as they trotted down at a smart pace, I was for some time dragged ignominiously on my front, being jerked down again by the rope whenever I tried to get on my feet. But it was glorious fun: I can hear now Walter Leaf's cries of exuberant delight, as he heaved boulders over from the top on to the glacier below — a reprehensible pastime, but in this case there was no danger except to a possible chamois: we did see one crossing the ice.

I attempted no more heights with guide and rope at Fée that year: but I accomplished one memorable expedition to which I was challenged by Verrall. This was a nocturnal walk to the Monte Moro Pass to see Monte Rosa in the colours of sunrise. We set off after dinner (this detail is not without significance), and, as we stumbled over tree-roots by deceptive moonlight in the

Almagell Wood (there is now a handsome eight-foot road, and the wood has lost its mystery and charm) my companion, who was usually full of good talk, fell strangely silent, and presently was taken very poorly. But with characteristic unselfishness he refused to give up the expedition, and, sitting down on a log, pulled out and filled an enormous black pipe, saying that, if he could smoke it through with impunity, he would be all right. He survived the test, and at 1.45 a.m. we reached Mattmark, whence we supped (or breakfasted) and hired a boy with a lantern to guide us for the remaining two hours up the rather uncertain path. He seemed to think that the light was only intended for his own use, and we toiled after him with cries of *langsame, langsame*. It was a cloudless frosty night, and, as we got near the top of the pass, whence the bridle-path (now closed by the Italian government) descends sharply to Macugnaga, the stars waned, the lantern was extinguished, and we feared we should be too late. However we reached the top with twenty minutes to spare, which we spent in running about among the rocks, the cold being severe (the pass is nearly 9,400 feet), till at length the indescribable pageant began: we faced the stupendous cliffs of Monte Rosa, whose serried peaks became flushed with rose — let me leave it at that: it was, I believe, a rare experience to have a cloudless morning for the spectacle. Verrall yelled with delight: anyone who knew him will not consider the word libellous. Then we returned gaily to a second breakfast at Mattmark at 5.30: Verrall said that his system and the occasion demanded champagne, and we shared unequally a bottle of the Swiss vintage so labelled.

This completed Verrall's restoration to health, and, as we meandered back to Fée, his talk, always brilliant, surpassed itself. It sparkled like the champagne, but was of drier quality. As we got near home, we met people from our hotel out for their morning walks: one and another looked at us curiously, and at length one enquired after our health. It then came out that some scores of visitors were down with ptomaine poisoning from tinned lobster served at dinner the evening before. I had escaped the tainted part, and so to my great relief I found had my father, while Verrall had been saved by the walk and the consequent episode in the Almagell Wood. The man, delicate and highly strung as he was, was compact of pluck. Many years later, when he was tortured with rheumatism and could not move from his sofa, he told me of the difficulty which a lady friend, who was a Christian Scientist, had in asking after his health without doing violence to her principles: "You see, she can't ask my wife how I am, so she says 'I hope Dr. Verrall is happy' — and, of course, I'm always that:" this with that indescribable mixture of a chuckle and a scream which Trinity men of my generation and of others loved and in vain tried to imitate.

From Fée we went for a few days to Zermatt

and the Riffel, so that I might see the Matterhorn and its majestic neighbours. The journey down one branch of the valley and up the other took us twelve hours. There was as yet no railway up the St. Nicolas Valley: we walked, aided by a mule, down to Stalden, where this valley meets the Saasthal, and thence up to St. Nicolas, whence we drove to Zermatt. After a night at the Monte Rosa Hotel, where I looked with veneration on the row of guides sitting on the historic wall, pipe in mouth, awaiting engagements, and where we called on old Melchior Anderegg, my father's famous guide, we moved up to the Riffelalp. Here also was an interesting company of English visitors, including Archbishop and Mrs. Benson with their son Fred (Arthur was expected presently with designs on the Matterhorn), C. B. Hutchinson, of Rugby, E. M. Young, headmaster of Sherbourne, and his wife. Dr. H. M. Butler, then still headmaster of Harrow, had, I think, just left. We heard how these reverend seniors had a few days before renewed their youth by making an ascent of the Cimi di Jazzi (12,527 feet), not, I believe, a peak presenting any great difficulty, but classed by Baedeker as "fatiguing."

Then there was A. C. Tosswill, a Harrow master of commanding presence, whose colleague I was to become three years later. He held the record for pace up the Matterhorn, and was most generous in giving instruction to young aspirants: he had been fifty times up the Riffelhorn, a crag projecting over the Gorner Glacier, which, in his opinion, afforded just the training in scaling rocks which is required for the Matterhorn. Having no such ambition I declined his offer to take me up it, but he guided E. F. Benson and me up the Stockhorn, returning by the Hohtäligrat, a walk which, I see, Baedeker says is for "tolerably steady heads." The Gorner Grät was more in my line: I went up it two days running, the second time on a brilliant day with an American of my own age. We lay for three hours on the top discussing all things in heaven and earth and watching the gyrations of an eagle till, as he soared, he became a star and then vanished into the blue.

We did not see a single human being all the time, which may seem strange to those who know what crowds press up that bridle path now in the season, to say nothing of those who go up by train. The day before a transatlantic party from the Riffelalp had insisted on a guide and a rope, for which they must have found it difficult to devise a use. In 1931, forty-six years later, I took the same incomparable walk with my wife and daughter. We declined to use the railway beyond the Riffelalp, and the walk itself was much as of yore, except for the constant stream of walkers up and down. The stony track, bordered with short turf, gleamed with the ordinary jewels of the high Alps, which in my unregenerate youth had made no individual impression. The flowers and the astounding panorama of peak and glacier have suffered no change, but a Victorian can

store," said old Quintus Horatius flaccus about two thousand years ago, "and take as a gift whatever the day brings forth." — This is sound and sensible advice, which is probably why so few take it. Instead we worry ourselves sick and skinny over to-morrow's troubles, plan the future so carefully that we find no fun in the present, and wear out our eyesight trying to look through the locked doors that hide our destiny. The privilege of worrying should not be denied to those, of course, who want it. And, after all, a man has a right to upset his own digestion in any fashion he chooses. — Well, there are thousands of fortune tellers, mystics, palmists and readers of the bumps on the brain, doing a good business in London and elsewhere through the suckers who think they know something. The future is a book shut tight and sealed. The man who thinks he can open it is a fool, and the man who encourages him to think so is likely to be a rascal. And wherever there is a fool, there will be a smarter man waiting to make him pay for his foolishness!

And while you all most probably lie somewhere in the sand on the sea, or on a blanket in the back-garden of your house at this time of "holidays," the sky being blue and the beer just thin enough, — a thought or two sometimes comes up on the horizon worth-while playing with. I happened thus to think of this funny little world of ours, and it struck me that there will be crime, poverty and corruption so long as bad men work together while good men quarrel among themselves! Two righteous Reverends were walking down the Lane at the time, each trying to sell his own conception of God to the other one, and and pitying each other for being obviously and absolutely on the wrong path to Heaven. — The weather, incidentally, was so beautiful that even God must have taken the day off, and I wonder whether he did not stop his game of golf, sat down and smiled?!

Mops.

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## LONDON GOSSIP.

### — HOLIDAY WEEK —

It is rather snobbish, of course, to call this week a holiday week just because the chief editor of the Swiss Observer has taken leave of absence, or rather "scrammed" — for a few weeks to Switzerland. But then we all know that he has a lot to do there — the budget deficit has to be straightened out, the federal railways need a clean-up, and there are a few farmers a year or two behind in their interest payments on the 14th mortgage. On the other hand, I really do think that the Bundesrat should do something in regard to this paper, either by subsidy or by distribution of Berner-Schinken, Cervelats, eggs and cheese to the 15 Sub-editors, stage hands and Club reporters. I deliberately do not include the chief-composer and printer since he is making a good living with Bridge as a side line!

That reminds me that, by order, I had to go to Selfridge's to watch a bridge-match which was supposed to be nearly as important as a 2/6d reduction in the income tax, or the re-birth of a nation. For me personally, it was just mid-summer madness — sunburn, poison ivy and a stiff collar. I used to play "Jass" for the sake of a bottle of Neuchâtel, but when it comes to the scientific relativity of bridge, or rather the vulnerable psycho-mania of it, I feel like bidding one no-trumps with 13 spades in my hand. But, of course, I fully realize the social value of Bridge — it eliminated once and for all the usual talk about the weather, the gossip about those who happened to be absent; and everybody of the party is so ipso a philosopher only for being able to step in as a 4th hand. — So far as the game itself is concerned I noticed the same living truth as in everything else, that self-delusion of their own greatness is usually the secret of some men's success!

The "Strand" theatre has a Mexican revue; all talk is in Spanish and all actors are genuinely Mexico. The girls are real beauties, all "roundness," just like those Michelangelo angels in the Sistine chapel come to life on the stage. It must have been extremely hot, because the only thought I could get hold of was that I wondered whether beer might do something to the girlish figures of our women? would beer put hips on them again? for the sake of posterity I rather hoped so. — There is this much to be said on behalf of the hips and bosoms of the Lillian Russell era — woman were not then afraid to have babies, as so many of the hipless, boy-shaped brides now are.

And while on the subject of babies — I read some statistics the other day. Believe it or not, statistics make dull reading in this hot weather. — But the fact that about 56% of the world's citizens have not yet reached the age of thirty made me forget the heat, the beer and the World Economic Conference for a while. 56%, more than half of us, therefore, have still a lot to learn and a great deal to do. More than half of us have the energy, ambition and ability of youth, and are not yet disillusioned by too much experience. And since few men are much over forty, it is safe to say that the majority of great men and women alive to-day have not yet been discovered. Then genius is biding its time and ripening for the needs of the future. — There is a lot of encouragement to be found in contemplating this 56%. It is a vast reserve of manpower and brain-power. The other 44% is weary and worried, fearful of what the future may bring and what should be done about it. But the 56% will attend to that when the time comes.

Wiley Post who flew around the world as one man, with one eye, in one machine: the 24 boys of the Italian Armada to the Chicago World's fair — are only a few of those 56%.

"Cease to inquire what the future has in