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Untrodden peaks and unfrequented valleys

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Chapter XII. The Sasso Bianco

CHAPTER XII.

THE SASSO BIANCO.

Orography of the Sasso Bianco—Its panoramic Position—Its superficial Extent—Its Geology—Ascent of the Mountain—An exquisite Morning—Another Sagro—The Corn-zone—The Pezzé Property—The Wild-flower Zone—The Upper Pasturages—Waiting for the Mists—The last Slope—The Summit—The View to the North—The Zillerthal and Antholzer Alps—The Grosse Venediger—Glimpses on the South Side—Estimated Height of the Sasso Bianco—The Descent—Gratification of the Natives.

“AN ill-favoured thing, sir,” says Touchstone (the article in question being a lady); “but mine own.”

Now I will not say that the Sasso Bianco is an ill-favoured mountain—Heaven forbid! Nor that it is an unimportant mountain; nor even that it is a small mountain. I will not depreciate it at the beginning in order to rehabilitate it by a coup de théâtre in the end. Neither will I affect to undervalue it for the sake of establishing an ingenious parallel between myself and the Fool.

At the same time I am anxious not to exaggerate its peculiar qualifications and virtues. For it is with mountain-tops as with other playthings:—having sought to achieve them in the first instance because we value them, we go on valuing them because we have achieved them. We may even admit their ill-favouredness, as Touchstone admits the ill-favouredness of Audrey; but we are apt all the time to over-estimate them in secret—simply because they are our own. I premise therefore that I am not blindly in love with the Sasso Bianco,* and that the following portrait is not flattered.

* Strictly speaking, as I have said elsewhere, the name of Sasso Bianco applies only to the rocky summit of the Monte Pezza.

I cannot better describe the Sasso Bianco than by adopting the words of Clementi. It is not a mountain of the first class; but it is high for a mountain of the second class. It is, for instance, 2000 feet, if not 2200 feet, higher than the Rigi; and about 240 feet higher than the Niesen. Its summit stands about 200 feet higher above the lake of Alleghe than the summit of Monte Generosa above the lake of Lugano. It rises considerably above the tree-line, and just falls short of the snow-level. That is to say, we found one unmelted snow-drift about 100 feet below the summit, and there may have been others which we did not see, lurking in inaccessible fissures and crevices. The snow was firm and pure, but the quantity insignificant.

As regards position, I know of no minor Swiss mountain to which I can accurately compare the Sasso Bianco. The Rigi is a mere outlying sentinel, and the view it commands is too distant to be very striking. The same may be said of Monte Generosa, despite its unparalleled panoramic range. The *Æg-gischorn* view is all on one side. The *Görner Grat*, unrivalled as a near view over snow and ice, is too circumscribed. But the Sasso Bianco stands in the very centre of the Dolomites, like the middle ball upon a *Solitaire* board, surrounded on all sides by the giants of the district. If one could imagine a fine, detached mountain, clear on all sides, occupying, say, the position of the village of Leuk in the valley of the Rhone, and high enough to command the whole circuit of the Oberland, Monte Rosa, and Mont Blanc ranges, that mountain would fairly represent the kind of position which the Sasso Bianco

holds in reference to the scenery by which it is encompassed. I am not acquainted with the view from the Bella Tola in the Valley of the Rhone; but, judging from its situation on the map, it seems just possible that it may supply exactly the parallel of which I am in search.

The mass of Monte Pezza is of considerable extent. Counting from the points locally known as Monte Alto on the West, and Monte Forca on the East, and from the Val Pettorina on the North to the valley of the Biois on the South, it must cover a space of nearly three and a half miles in length by two and a half in breadth. These, of course, are only rough measurements derived partly from personal observation, and partly based upon the Austrian Ordnance Map. In superficial extent as well as in height, the Sasso Bianco (or, more properly, the Monte Pezza) much exceeds the Monte Migion, the Monte Frisolet, and the Monte Fernazza.*

Of the geology of the mountain I am not competent to form an opinion; but according to Ball's geological map, it is composed in part of Porphyry, and in part of Triassic. The light-coloured cliffs of the summit, facing North, (being the part especially designated as the Sasso Bianco) are probably Dolomite. Both in colour and texture the rock appears, at all events, to be of one piece with that of which the great Primiero and Ampezzo peaks are composed.

Of course we decided upon making the ascent

* It is curious that the Monte Fernazza (also known as the Monte Tos) should have been ascended last summer both by Mr. F. F. Tuckett and Mr. Gilbert; and that the Sasso Bianco, notwithstanding the much finer view it necessarily commands, should still have escaped.

almost as soon as we found ourselves back at Caprile. The way up, though long, seemed to be sufficiently easy. There were many paths and char-tracks leading from the valley of Alleghe to the farmlands and hamlets scattered along the eastern side of the mountain; but Clementi recommended a path starting from the Val Pettorina, along which we might ride, he said, as far as the highest pastures, and to within about an hour of the summit. As regarded time, he calculated that from four to five hours, including the last hour on foot, would take us from Caprile to the summit.

All this sounded pleasant enough; so it was arranged that Giuseppe should watch the weather, and rouse the household at 3 A.M. whenever a favourable morning should offer. At length, on the morning of the fourth day after our return, the weather being apparently favourable, Giuseppe gave the signal a little before dawn, and by 5 A.M. we were upon our way.

A more lovely morning we have never yet had. The grass, the wild-flowers, the trees, are all drenched with dew and sparkling in the sun. The birds seem wild with delight, and are singing like mad up among the wet green leaves. Crossing the wooden bridge and taking the familiar road up the little Val Pettorina, as if going to Sottaguda, we hear the bells of Rocca ringing high up in the still air, and pass group after group of peasants in their holiday clothes, making for the hill. For it is a festa this bright morning, and the annual Sagro is held at Rocca to-day. Men and women alike pull off their hats as we ride by. All wish us good morning, and none fail to ask where we are going.

Turning away presently from the beaten path, we

then strike down to the water's edge, the mules picking their way along the loose stones bordering the bed of the Pettorina torrent. Skirting thus the base of the hill on which Rocca is built, we cross a higher bridge and plunge at once into the shade of the fir-woods at the northward base of Monte Pezza. The path, which is steep and stony, then winds round to the east, and brings us out upon a space of cultivated farm-lands just overhanging the Cordevole.

Here dark fir-woods slope in shade down to the valley below; and higher fir-woods climb the mountain-side above; while, between both, a belt of green corn-fields, lighted here and there by fiery sparks of scarlet poppies, ripples in the breeze and the sunshine. Peeping up yonder, just beyond the brink of the woods, rises the spire of Caprile; while, farther still, a faint ghost of white vapour soars lazily up from the direction of Alleghe. Presently a lark springs out, full-voiced, from his nest in the barley; and a troop of children, their little brown hands full of poppies and corn-flowers, come chasing each other down the mountain-side. Such indeed is the idyllic beauty of the whole scene that even L. (who, with a culpable indifference to glory which it grieves me to record, was more than half inclined to stay at home) is moved to admiration, and admits that, were it to see no more than this, she is glad to have come.

Meanwhile we follow a series of narrow footways winding among fields of young wheat, barley, flax and hemp. Dark Nessel—a confirmed kleptomaniac—grabs huge mouthfuls right and left, and leaves a trail of devastation behind him. Fair Nessel, on the contrary,

looks and longs; but, obeying the light hand on his bridle, abstains regretfully.

Presently we leave the fields behind, and mount again into the shade of the forest. Here and there, where the path is very steep, we dismount and walk. Still higher, we emerge upon a zone of rich grass-land full of busy hay-makers, and learn that all this part belongs to Signora Pezzé. Twenty-four such pasturages are yet hers; but half the mountain-side belonged to the family in the old times past away.

From this point, and for a long way up, the pasture-land is like a lovely park, rich in grass, and interspersed with clumps of firs and larches. As the path rises, however, the trees diminish and the wild-flowers become more abundant. Soon we are in the midst of a hanging garden thick with white and yellow violets, forget-me-nots, great orange and Turkscape lilies, wild sweet-peas, wild sweet-William, and purple Canterbury bells. Here, too, we make acquaintance for the first time with a grotesque, ugly flower bearing a kind of fibrous crest, like a top-knot of spiders' legs. They call it "Capelli di Dio," or God's-Hair. The forget-me-not is here called Fior di Santa Lucia, or Saint Lucy's flower; and the white clover, known only as a wild-flower in South Tyrol, is the Fior di San Giovanni, or Flower of Saint John.

Looking back now towards Monte Migion, I see that we have long ago overtopped the Sasso di Ronch, which from here looks no bigger than a milestone; and that we are already higher than the highest ridge of Monte Frisolet. Meanwhile, however, the morning dews keep rising in white vaporous masses from the depths of the valley below, threatening before long to

intercept the view. If they should rise to our own level when once we are on the top, as they seem only too likely to do, it is plain that our chances of a panoramic view are lost beyond redemption.

And now the wild-flower zone is left below; and the path, which here circles round a vast amphitheatre in the mountain-side, gets very steep, and strikes up towards the last pasturages. Steep as it is, however, and hewn in places out of the slippery rock, the farmers have for centuries contrived to drag their rough caret-tini up and down, when the highest hay is gathered. The rock is even worn into deep ruts, just as the pavement of the *Via Triumphalis* is channelled by Roman chariot-wheels, where it climbs the steep verge of Monte Cavo.

Here the mules scramble on first, and, reaching the green level above, set off on their own account. In vain Clementi runs and shouts after them. They trot resolutely on, till, reaching a little hollow among bushes and deep grass, they bury their noses in a cool rill which they had scented from afar off.

Clementi, coming up red and breathless, wrenches their heads out of the water, and overwhelms them with reproaches. "Holy Mother! what do they mean by not minding when they are spoken to? Holy Mother! what do they mean by drinking cold water when they are as hot as two hot cakes in an oven? Sacramento! Do they want to fall ill and die, out of mere spite towards a master who loves them? Eh, Long-ears! are they deaf? Eh, monsters of mules! do they not understand Italian?"

It is a long, grassy, trough-shaped plateau, with a few gnarled, bloodless old pines scattered about, and

two or three tumble-down chalets. Here the char-track ends; but we take the mules on a good way farther still, up a steep pitch at the far end of the pasture Alp, and out at last upon a broad ridge terminated towards the North-East by a long slope and an upright wall of rock, like a line of fortification. To right and left, this ridge dips away into unfathomable chasms of misty valley; to the South-West it runs down to join the great woods which clothe all the Western mass of Monte Pezza. There is nothing, in short, above the point we have now reached, save the slope leading to the summit.

But where is the summit? Seeing us look eagerly towards the rock wall up above, Clementi laughs and shakes his head.

"Ah, no, Signoras," he says. "Non ancora. We must leave the mules here; but from this point we have an hour's walking before us. The Cima is yonder—yonder; seven or eight hundred feet higher!"

It proves, however, to be over a thousand.

The mists, alas! are now swirling up on this side with frightful rapidity. The Val Pettorina and all the Sottoguda side are hidden by the slope above; but the Val d'Alleghe, the Civita, and all the peaks lying to the South-West of our position are now visible only in snatches, as the vapours drift and part. The Val Biois, looking over towards Cencenighe and the Cima di Pape, is like a huge caldron sending up volumes of swift steam.

To go on at present is obviously useless; so we make arm-chairs of the saddles and rest awhile upon the grass, while the mules graze, and the men, who

have had more than four hours' climbing, light their cigars and lie down in the shade of a big boulder.

Up here we are already above the tree-level. Glowing Alp-roses and dark blue gentians abound; but the grass all about grows thin and hungerly. According to the aneroid, and without allowing anything for corrections, we have already left Caprile more than 3,500 feet below. That is to say, we have attained an elevation 200 feet higher than the Fedaja pass, and between 20 and 30 feet higher than the Tre Sassi pass, where it will be remembered we reached the snow-level.

Half an hour is consumed thus, in calculating heights, examining maps, and watching the progress of the mists. Sometimes the sun breaks through, and then they part for a moment and drive off in rolling masses. Sometimes they rush up, as if chased before the wind, sweeping all across the ridge, blinding us in white fog, and leaving a clinging damp behind them. At length we decide to push on for the summit. Clementi, who knows the climate, thinks it may clear off at midday, and that we may as well be upon the spot to take advantage of any sudden change for the better. It is now 10.20. A.M., and we have an hour's climbing before us.

Meanwhile, a little lad who has been picked up on the way is left in charge of the mules, with strict injunctions not to let them stray near the edge of the precipice on either side;—a duty which he fulfils by immediately lying down upon his face in the damp grass, and falling sound asleep.

So we go on again, slowly but steadily, up the

long slope and on to the foot of the rock-wall aforesaid. Here are no steps ready hewn. We have to get up as best we can, and the getting up is not easy. The little crevices and inequalities which serve as foot-holes are in places so far apart that it is like going up the steps of the Great Pyramid; and but for Giuseppe, who goes first in order to do duty as a kind of windlass, the writer, for one, would certainly never have surmounted the barrier.

This stiff little bit over, we expect to see some sign of the summit; but on the contrary find ourselves, apparently, as far from it as ever. A second and a third slope still rise up ahead, as barren and unpromising as the last.

And now even the Alp-rose has disappeared, and not a bush of any kind breaks the monotony of the surface. But the gentians make a blue carpet underfoot; and the Edelweiss, so rare elsewhere, so highly prized, flourishes in lavish luxuriance, like a mere weed. Presently we pass an unmelted snowdrift in a hollow some little way below the summit. Then, quite suddenly, a whole army of distant peaks begins to start into sight; and so, after six hours, we all at once find ourselves upon the top!

We might, of course, have had a better day; but it is some reward after long toil to find the view to North and West quite free from mist. The vapours are still boiling up in the South and South East, but not perhaps quite so persistently as an hour ago. At all events they part from time to time, so that in the end, by dint of patient watching, we see all the near peaks in those quarters.

It is now nearly half-past eleven o'clock, and, having eaten nothing since five, we are all as hungry as people have a right to be at an altitude of between four and five thousand feet above the breakfast table. So before attempting to verify peaks, or heights, or relative distances of any kind, we call for the luncheon-basket and turn with undiminished gusto to the familiar meal of hard-boiled eggs and bread. The water in the flask being flat, Clementi fetches up a great lump of snow, and this, melted in the sun and mixed with a little brandy, makes a delicious draught as cold as ice itself.

In the midst of this frugal festivity, Giuseppe, with the keen eye of a chamois-hunter, recognises L.'s maid (whom he calls the "Signora Cameriera") on the Cordevole bridge just outside the village. We see only a tiny black speck, no bigger than a pin's head; but Clementi goes so far as to depose to her parasol. In a moment they are both up, tying a pocket-handkerchief to a white umbrella, and lashing the umbrella upon an Alpenstock, which they erect for a signal; and the excitement caused by this incident does not subside till the black speck, after remaining stationary upon the bridge for about a quarter of an hour, creeps slowly away and is lost to sight in the direction of Caprile.

Luncheon over, we set to work with maps and field-glasses, to identify all that is visible of the panorama.

We are sitting now on the brink of the great yellowish cliffs. All the heights and valleys on this side lie spread out before us, like the sur-

face of a relief-map. We look down upon Monte Migion and Monte Frisolet—both green to the top, and scattered over with hamlets, farms, cultivated fields, and fir-forests. Monte Migion, estimated by Trinker at 7,838 feet, lies full 400 feet below; and Monte Frisolet considerably lower still. The Val Pettorina opens just under our feet, and one could almost drop a stone down into the little piazza of Rocca, where the Sagro is going on merrily. We can see the peasants moving to and fro between the church and a great white booth on the top of which a red flag is flying. Now and then, when the wind comes up this way, it brings faint echoes of the bells, and of the braying of a brass band. As for the holiday-folks, they look exactly like a swarm of very small black insects, all in motion. Monte Fernazza, farther to the right, appears to be considerably lower than Monte Migion, but not so low as Monte Frisolet. Except for a blackish ridge of igneous rock cropping out on the side of the pass of Alleghe, this mountain is green and cultivated like the other two, and is apparently about 6,500 feet in height. So much for the minor mountains in our immediate neighbourhood.

Of the larger, the two nearest (each being distant about two miles in a direct line) are the Marmolata and the Civita. The last fills all the South-Eastern division of the horizon. Large masses of vapour flit from time to time across the face of that vast, fretted screen; but they flit, and pass away, and it lifts its noble head continually into the clear blue depths of the upper sky. The Marmolata stands up in bold profile, undimmed by even a thread of vapour. Mr. Gilbert, seeing this mountain from the Sasso di Dam

and getting it also in profile, though from the Western end, compared it to a huge stationary case; its vertical side to the South, and its long snow-slope to the North. But taken from the East end, whence one more clearly sees the sharp depression, or couloir, that divides the peaks, it absurdly resembles the familiar cocked hat worn by the first Napoleon; the precipitous side being of course the front of the hat and the snow-slope corresponding to the back. A great stream of snow lies in the cleft of the couloir, and all the northward slope is outlined, as it seems, in frosted silver; but the great glaciers and snow-fields that lie to the Fedaja are from here invisible.

The green threshold of the Fedaja pass, and the low jagged ridge of Monte Padon, rise just North of the extreme Eastern end of the Marmolata, which is buttressed on this side by the black precipices of Seranta. Monte Vernale, repeating from here as from Canazei its curious resemblance to the Marmolata, lurks close under the Southward wall of its huge neighbour, being divided from it by only a little green slope considerably higher than the Fedaja pass, which Clementi points out as the Forcella Contrin (9,052 feet), and which is also known as the Forcella di Val Ombretta, and as the Passo di Val Fredda. Still lower down towards the South-West lies the Sasso di Val Fredda, still unascended; a little beyond it comes the Monte Ricobetta, locally known as the Monzon, 8,634 feet in height; and on the same parallel, but still farther West, Monte Latemar, on whose summit the vapours rest all day.

North-West of the Marmolata, about nine miles distant as the crow flies, rise the snow-streaked bastions

of the Sella Massive, of which, however, only two great towers—the Boé and the Campolungo Spitz—are seen from this side; while in an opening between the Boé and the Marmolata rises a noble, solitary rock which proves to be the Lang Kofel, 10,392 feet in height, and distant about thirteen English miles. A tiny glimpse of the Rosengarten is also seen in the gap above the Forcella di Contrin.

Returning now to the point from which we started, and looking due North straight over the top of Monte Migion, the pinky snow-streaked line of the Sett Sass, divided from Monte Lagazuoi by the Valparola pass, comes into view. The Sasso d'Istria, which looked so imposing from near by, here shows as a small pyramidal rock of no importance; the castellated crest of Monte Nuvolau dwindles to a tiny ridge on a long green slope; the caretta track of the Tre Sassi pass winds between both like a white thread; and Monte Tofana, as usual, sulky and cloud-capped, shows its pyramidal front only once, when the mists roll apart for a few moments.

Following the parallel of the Tofana, we get misty glimpses of the Cristallino peaks, of the Cristallo, of the Drei Zinnen, Sorapis, and the Croda Malcora. The Rochetta, and the fantastic ridge of the Bec di Mezzodi divide them off like a fence; while straight away to the East, the Pelmo shows every now and then, quite clear from base to summit. Between the Pelmo and the Croda Malcora, part of the range of the Marmarole, and the curved prow of the Antelao, peep out through window-like openings in the clouds.

Finally above and beyond all these, ranging from North-West to North-East, in the only direction where the horizon is permanently clear, we look over towards a sea of very distant peaks reaching far away into the heart of Northern Tyrol. To the North-West, a little above and to the left of the Sett Sass ridge, we recognise by help of the map the highest summits of the Zillerthal Alps:—the Füss Stein near the Brenner pass, 11,451 feet in height; the five peaks of the Hornspitzen, ranging from 10,333 feet to 10,842 feet; and the Hochfeiler, 11,535 feet. Due North, exactly above the Sett Sass, a long snow range glowing in the mid-day sun identifies itself with the Antholzer Alps beyond Bruneck, the highest points of which are the Wildgall (10,785 feet), the Schneebige Nock (11,068 feet) and the Hochgall, still, I believe, unascended, and rising to 11,284 feet. Beyond these again, to the N.N.W., Clementi believes that he recognises the Drei Herrn Spitz (11,492 feet) and the Grosse Venediger (12,053 feet); these last being full forty-five miles distant as the crow flies.

Turning now from the Northern half of the horizon where all is so clear, it is doubly disappointing to face the mists which still keep pouring up from the South. Parting here and there at times, as if rent suddenly by gusts of wind from the South-West, they show now the tremendous wall of the Cimon della Pala; now the Castelazzo over against the Costonzella pass, and behind the Castelazzo, the Cima d'Asti; and now all the great Primiero peaks in detached glimpses, from the Palle di San Martino to the Sasso di Campo. The Palle di San Lucano, which rises due South of our position, also gleams out now and then, as also

does the volcanic cone of Cima di Pape. What might be visible on this side under more favourable circumstances, it is, of course, impossible to say; but I am inclined to think the Southward view, including as it does the Primiero group, would be finer than that from Monte Pavione, which is some 200 feet lower than the Sasso Bianco. As it is, even, with one half of the horizon continually obscured, we succeed in identifying over fifty great summits, including all the Dolomite giants. I should be afraid to conjecture how many peaks which could not be verified with certainty must have been in sight.

It was at the time, and is still, a matter of regret to the writer not to have been able to make some kind of panoramic outline, however rough, of the view from the summit. But it would have been useless to make the attempt under such heavy disadvantages, not more than forty-five degrees of horizon being absolutely clear at any time.

As regards the height of the Sasso Bianco, there can, I think, be no doubt that it rather exceeds than falls below 8,000 feet. A traveller more experienced in the use of the aneroid would doubtless be able to determine the matter to within a few feet; but I should, myself, be very diffident of giving a decided measurement. We observed the aneroid closely all the way from Caprile to the summit, and found that it rose 4,500 English feet. This (without any correction for the mean temperature of the column of air between the upper and lower stations) if added to the height at which Caprile stands above the sea-level,—namely, 3,376 feet—would give an elevation of 7,876 feet. The temperature, however, varied greatly; the

heat being intense as we wound round the mountain from East to South, and the change to cold and damp being very sudden when we came into the mists a thousand feet below the summit. These mists, however, never rose to the height of the actual summit during the whole two hours that we remained upon the top. On the contrary, the sun shone uninterruptedly, and the temperature must have stood at from 70° to 75° .

Not venturing myself to deduce results from these imperfect observations, I have submitted my notes to an eminent mountaineer, whose opinion I prefer to give in his own words:—"Assuming the temperature to be respectively 50° and 70° , we should have a correction of 280 feet,* which must be added to your 4,500. The height would then come out $3,376 + 4,500 + 280 = 8,156$ feet; so that I think you may safely put it at *over* 8,000 feet. In your letter you spoke of your peak being 400 to 600 feet higher than Monte Migion. Now Trinker gives the latter as 7,838 feet, which would bring the Sasso Bianco up to 8,238 or 8,438 feet; so that in this way too you get the estimate of over 8,000 feet confirmed." F.F.T.

For the present, then, and until some more competent traveller shall determine this point with accuracy, the height of the Sasso Bianco may be allowed to stand at something over 8,000 feet.

Having spent two hours on the top, and seeing no hope of any change for the better on the Southern side, we reluctantly packed up and came down. By

* The temperature was certainly higher than this at times by five, if not ten degrees, which would bring the number of feet up to 50 or 100 more.

the time we reached Signora Pezzé's pasturages, the Sagro was breaking up in Rocca, and the contadini who lived in the scattered farms and cottages of Monte Pezza were coming up homewards. All asked if we had had a good view; if we were very tired; if we had found it difficult; and how long it had taken us to get to the top.

"Brava! brava!" said one old man. "So, Signoras, you have been up our mountain? Ebbene! E una bella montagna! . . . but you are the first forestieri who have cared to find it out."

It was amusing to see how pleased, and even flattered, they all seemed; as if, being born and bred upon the mountain, they took the expedition as an indirect compliment paid to themselves.

When at length we reached Caprile, it was just half-past five o'clock. We had been gone precisely twelve hours and a half:—that is to say, we had been six hours getting to the top, including stoppages; two hours on the top; and four hours and a half, including another stoppage, coming down.

We might, of course, as I have already said, have had a better day. We might, as I fully believe (there being an almost continuous line of valleys, and no mountain range of any importance between) have seen straight down to Venice and the Adriatic on the South; to the lake of Garda on the South-East; and perhaps, if the Marmolata is not in the way, to the Ortler Spitz on the East. In any case, the view to the North and North-West was extremely fine; and the near view over the whole surrounding group of Dolomites (which is of more importance than any distant view of peaks

which are continually seen from other heights) is of the greatest interest. I doubt, indeed, if there be any other point from which all the giants of the district can be seen at once, and to so much advantage.

CHAPTER XIII.

FORNO DI ZOLDO AND ZOPPÉ.

On the Road again—Near View of the Civita—Adventure with a Snake—Monte Fernazza—Monte Coldai—The Marmolata from the Pass of Alleghe—Unexpected View of the Pelmo—The Mountains of Val di Zoldo—The Back of the Civita—The Valley of Zoldo—The Horrors of Cercena's Inn—The Sculptor of Bragarezza—Zoppé; its Parocco, and its Titian—Luncheon in a Tyrolean Country-house—Brusetolon and his Works—Specimen of a Native—Valley and Pass of Pallafavera—In the Shade of the Pelmo—Pescul—Selva and the Aborigines—Caprile again.

THERE remained yet another important excursion to be taken from Caprile, before we could finally break up our camp and depart. We must go over the Pass of Alleghe; visit the Val di Zoldo; make a pilgrimage to a certain village called Zoppé, where a Titian was to be seen, and come home by way of the Val Fiorentina. Now the main attractions of this expedition did not appear upon the surface. We had been over a good many passes already, and through a good many valleys, and had been plentifully pelted with Titians of all degrees of genuineness; but what we really wanted was to see the back of the Civita, and to get a near view of the Pelmo. As both of these ends would be answered by following the route thus laid down, and as the expedition was guaranteed not to exceed three days, we once more packed our black bags, stocked the luncheon-basket, rose at day-break one fine morning, and departed. This time,