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## ODE ON A VERY DISTANT PROSPECT.

By A. GODLEY.

IN the steamy, stuffy Midlands, 'neath an English summer sky,  
 When the holidays are nearing with the closing of July,  
 And experienced Alpine stagers and impetuous recruits  
 Are renewing with the season their continual disputes—  
     Those inveterate disputes  
     On the newest Alpine routes—  
 And inspecting the condition of their mountaineering boots :

You may stifle your reflections, you may banish them afar,  
 You may try to draw a solace from the thought of "Nächstes Jahr"—  
 But your heart is with those climbers, and you'll feverishly yearn  
 To be crossing of the Channel with your luggage labelled "Bern,"  
     Leaving England far astern  
     With a ticket through to Bern,  
 And regarding your profession with a lordly unconcern !

*They* will lie beside the torrent, just as you were wont to do,  
 With the woodland green around them and a snowfield shining through :  
 They will tread the higher pastures, where celestial breezes blow,  
 While the valley lies in shadow and the peaks are all aglow—  
     Where the airs of heaven blow  
     'Twixt the pine woods and the snow,  
 And the shades of evening deepen in the valley far below :

They will scale the mountain strongholds that in days of old you won,  
 They will plod behind a lantern ere the rising of the sun,  
 On a "grat" or in a chimney, on the steep and dizzy slope,  
 For a foothold or a handhold they will diligently grope—  
     On the rocky, icy slope  
     (Where we'll charitably hope  
 That the aid they get is Moral from the presence of a rope) :

They will dine on mule and marmot, and on mutton made of goats,  
 They will face the various horrors of Helvetian table d'hotes :  
 But whate'er the paths that lead them, and the food whereon they fare,  
 They will taste the joy of living, as you only taste it there,  
     As you taste it Only There  
     In the higher, purer air,  
 Unapproachable by worries and oblivious quite of care !

Place me somewhere in the Valais, 'mid the mountains west of Binn,  
 West of Binn and east of Savoy, in a decent kind of inn,  
 With a peak or two for climbing, and a glacier to explore,—  
 Any mountains will content me, though they've all been climbed before—  
     Yes ! I care not any more  
     Though they've all been done before,  
 And the names they keep in bottles may be numbered by the score !

Though the hand of Time be heavy : though your ancient comrades fail :  
 Though the mountains you ascended be accessible by rail :  
 Though your nerve begin to weaken, and you're gouty grown and fat,  
 And prefer to walk in places which are reasonably flat—  
     Though you grow so very fat  
     That you climb the Gorner Grat  
 Or perhaps the Little Scheideck,—and are rather proud of that :  
     Yet I hope that till you die  
     You will annually sigh  
 For a vision of the Valais with the coming of July,  
 For the Oberland or Valais and the higher, purer air,  
 And the true delight of living, as you taste it only there !



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