

To Mr G. F.

Dec. 27. 92.

HIND HEAD HOUSE,
HASLEMERE.

AL/24 39

Dear Madam

We have never let
our chalet in the Alps, and
it is not probable that we
shall ever do so.

The Aletsch Glacier is
worthy of exploration and the
adjacent Bel Alp Hotel offers
good accommodation.

Yours very truly
John Tyndall

BY LAND AND SEA AND AIR

Rediscovering a Once-popular Playground

A TRAVELLER'S IMPRESSIONS

THE eastern portion of canton Valais in Switzerland offers attractions little known to the modern British traveller, but it is rewarding to rediscover this region where Professor John Tyndall, the Victorian scientist, learnt to love the high mountains at the Hotel Jungfrau, 7,600ft. up on the 9,600ft. Eggishorn, and to which he returned almost yearly from 1858 until he transferred his affections to the Hotel Belalp across the Aletsch Glacier. Later he built himself a villa at Belalp, occupying it for three months every summer until his death in 1893.

The small resorts of Riederalp, Riederfurka, Belalp and the isolated hotel on the Eggishorn are good bases for exploring the Aletschwald and its surrounding mountains, being easily accessible from Brigue on the main rail and road route through the Rhône valley.

Belalp can be reached from Brigue itself by bus and cable-car; Riederalp by cable-car from nearby Mörel; Riederfurka is within 25 minutes' walk of Riederalp (luggage by mule) and the Hotel Jungfrau on the Eggishorn is an hour's drive from Fiesch.

No proper road leads to any of these tiny resorts, the only "traffic" one meets being a minute tractor hauling hay or visitors' luggage.

Nature reserve

The great Aletsch Glacier—the longest in the Alps—descends from a snow-filled basin at the foot of the Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau, and, after making a wide sweep westwards at the base of the Eggishorn, passes below the beautiful Aletschwald, a nature reserve famed for its flora and fauna and particularly for its grotesquely shaped arolla or cembra pines. Considerable numbers of chamois can be seen at close quarters in this magnificent forest setting, backed as it is by glaciers and mountain tops in a manner unequalled in the more frequented parts of Switzerland.

The forest is well served by paths and unobtrusive direction signs so that the visitor may wander in solitude without fear of getting lost. Paths lead to the tops of three peaks which are first-class viewpoints: the Eggishorn, the Bettmerhorn and the Riederhorn. The Eggishorn is undoubtedly the most striking, its summit being reached in two and a half hours from the Hotel Jungfrau.

Tyndall considered the view from the Eggishorn to be the finest in the Alps—and he was quite familiar with that from the Gornergrat at Zermatt. It is indeed widespread, embracing parts of Austria, France and Italy. Mont Blanc, Matterhorn, Weisshorn, Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau are readily identified in the breath-taking panorama which extends throughout the



A portion of the Aletsch Glacier from the Aletschwald.

whole circle of the horizon, and the beautifully proportioned Aletschhorn, across the glacier, is a wonderful spectacle from this viewpoint.

Almost under one's feet is the extraordinary little Märjelensee, a small lake bounded on one side by the Aletsch Glacier from which icebergs detach themselves to float off into the water. The lake almost empties itself at intervals by an underground channel so that on these occasions stranded icebergs are visible even on the hottest day. There is no lake quite like this anywhere else in the world.

The more energetic visitors staying at the Eggishorn can make excursions on the glacier, the finest walk being to the Concordia hut of the Swiss Alpine Club, a tramp of some five miles on the glacier itself and best done with a night at Concordia.

Even the least agile can enjoy the almost level walk around the Riederhorn (7,342ft.) from Riederfurka or Riederalp, offering

views across the deep Aletsch Gorge to Belalp and southwards towards the Matterhorn and Weisshorn. The Riederhorn summit can be reached in half an hour from several points on this promenade which surrounds the mountain. A very attractive walk leads along the mule track from the Hotel Jungfrau on the Eggishorn, through extensive pastures with hundreds of Swiss cows with their jingling bells, to the little village of Riederalp. It can be extended by returning via Riederfurka and the Aletschwald, rejoining the main path near Bettmeralp.

Bettmeralp, the only village between Riederalp and the Eggishorn, is a rising community of three or four modern hotels and many summer chalets for hire by visitors. It has its own cable lift from Betten in the Rhône valley.

A fine excursion can be made from Riederalp or Riederfurka across the glacier to Belalp, returning by cable lift, bus and

train by way of the valley below. Luggage may be sent by post from one resort to the other at a very reasonable cost while the traveller makes his way on foot and continues his holiday on the far side of the glacier. After being out of fashion with the English for over 50 years, this region can offer much to the visitor who prefers the best of Swiss scenery unhampered by large groups of his fellow countrymen. The area is particularly well-suited for a prolonged stay for rest and relaxation with occasional pedestrian excursions which can easily be selected according to one's mood and capabilities.

* From London to Fiesch by rail and sea takes 20 hours, and costs £29 19s. (1st return) or £20 14s. (2nd return). By air to Geneva costs £21 19s. (mid-week return), and flying time is 1½ hours. From Geneva to Fiesch by rail takes another four hours, and costs £5 5s. (1st return) or £3 15s. (2nd return).