

ness of the glaciers which they separate. The author considers this part of the route, or rather the whole ascent from Drofoi, near to which village the Ortler is first seen in ascending from Prad, as without a parallel in Alpine scenery. The road, which is here admirably constructed, winds round the northern side of the deep ravine into which the glaciers sink, but so near to them, that, in passing, a stone may, with little effort, be thrown upon them; and at the *Cantoniere del Bosco*, one of the houses of refuge, the glacier is so immediately opposite to, and beneath the road, that travellers, whilst their horses bait, can descend, and examine at ease and in safety this wonderful production of the Alps.

The last pines are left at this place, and the road now ascends by a succession of tourniquets, terraced up the mountain-side towards the Col, and presenting a most extraordinary appearance. There are, from Gomagoi to the summit, nearly fifty zigzag turns in the road, to make the ascent gradual, and facilitate its attainment. On the side towards the ravine, strong palisades of fir-trees assist at once to guard the traveller and to secure the terraces; but these are useless against the avalanches and rocks which fall in the spring; and the devastation which these fearful accidents have produced may be traced in many of the broken palisades, and the ruins of a house of refuge crushed and overthrown. The *rotteri*,* after such accidents, clear and repair the roads: but the disheartening recurrence of these casualties has determined the Austrian government to attempt cutting a gallery through the mountain, nine hundred and seventy feet below the crest of the passage, by which the most exposed part of the road will be avoided. The scene presented on looking back from the summit is inconceivably grand;† in clear weather the entire mass of the Ortler-Spitz is exposed to view; and beneath it, in the deep ravine, the road is seen winding

* Men who are appointed to repair the roads.

† Plate the Second.

its way down the mountain-side, until it is lost in the depth and distance. The summit of this extraordinary pass is the highest in the world which has been made traversable for carriages; it is about 2417 feet higher than the crest of the passage by the Mont Cenis,* and 780 feet higher than the estimated line of perpetual snow in the latitude of the Stelvio: yet the road on the summit is usually clear of snow by the end of July, and continues so, except from occasional falls, until September. A house of refuge is built on the highest point of the passage, and several others are established in convenient situations along the road, between Drofoi and Bormio; at some of these accommodation and refreshment may be had, others merely afford shelter. From the summit, the road winds down by tourniquets to the inn and custom-house on the Monte Brauglio. Formerly the passage of these Alps, from the valley of the Adige to the Valteline, was by the Monte Brauglio and the vale of Munster, the Jura Rhætica of Tacitus; but as by this route a small part of the territory of the Grisons was traversed; these jealous and independent mountaineers, resisting the entreaty and bribery of Austria, refused permission to make a military road through their country, or to sell this small portion of their inheritance; and the emperor was constrained to make his new road through the valley of Drofoi and over the Stelvio, a col a thousand feet higher than that of the Brauglio, and where a shepherd's path had scarcely before been traced, to keep within his own territories throughout the new line of military communication between Germany and the Milanese.

The new road derives its name from the village of Stelvi, or Stilfs, which lies a little out of the road, on its western

* The Baron Von Welden states the height of the col of the Stelvio to be 8610 French feet, or 9272 English feet; and that of the Monte Brauglio to be 8279 English feet, or 993 below the Stelvio. This would leave the height above the highest part of the Pass of the Mont Cenis 2598 feet. Or, to convey an idea of the height of the Stelvio to those who have passed the Simplon, the crest of the Pass of the Stelvio is nearly half a mile perpendicularly higher than that of the Simplon.