

who cannot live among these surroundings. So the world is made up.

There are places in Switzerland only a few miles away whose suggestions are as different as possible from those of a little mountain village like Saas-Fee;—twenty miles west of here in the Rhone valley is the town of Sion, that looks like a made-up illustration for some mediæval ballad. You will find the location of the town on the general map of Switzerland just west of the northern corner of the section which includes the Visp valley. We shall look at the old town from the east, as the red lines numbered 68 show.

***68. Sion, with its Mediæval Homes and Castles,
Rhone Valley***

Doesn't it make you think how

“The splendor falls on castle walls,
And snowy summits, old in story”;

That castle away up on the hill at the left suggests at once the “*Idyls of the King*” and the mediæval tales of knights and troubadours in the age of chivalry. No doubt they were stormy times when that castle was built, and it was with a very distinct and wise purpose that it perched high up on that cliff; for, before the days of modern musketry and heavy ordnance, a building like that, protected by high walls, was practically safe from invaders during a long siege. See how the houses of the town cluster around the foot of the other hill just as the houses clustered around the castle at Thun (Stereograph 22). In old times they used to have exciting doings here

in Sion. The secular lords of this region were always at swords'-points, both figuratively and literally, with the bishops of Sion. The fact is, both the lords and the bishops depended for their incomes largely upon the offerings, voluntary or involuntary, of the farming people and the working people on their lands, and mutual jealousy led to serious and bloody feuds. In the middle of the fourteenth century there was a Seigneur de la Tour who refused fealty to the Bishop of Sion, besieged the bishop's castle up yonder and killed several of his people. The bishop retaliated and the feud lasted for years and years, though the pope tried his best to reconcile the enemies. In 1475 Antoine de la Tour seized the bishop and his chaplain and threw them into the Rhone, which flows beyond the hills just at this side of that farther mountain. Then the lord's castles were burned in their turn and he and his family were driven out of the country. It is almost impossible to follow clearly in one's mind the relations of the bishops and the lords in those mediæval centuries, for their spheres of authority overlapped and interlocked with most subtle complications. Indeed it was because their affairs were so intermixed that they so often came to grief. The bishops themselves were deposed from their civil authority over the common people in 1628, when the Valais region became a republic.

The old times are very picturesque as we look back upon them in imagination, but probably, when we do go back to them in that way, we think almost entirely of knights and squires and fine ladies shut up safe in the

castles. We seldom give much thought to the men who worked in the fields and built the walls, who went fishing in the river and who toiled over the mountain passes between here and Italy to bring home the few luxuries that were demanded and enjoyed by the castle people. Life is hard enough now for the rank and file, but then the rank and file were not counted at all, except like so many cattle, valuable in proportion to the services they rendered, making life pleasanter for those of noble birth. How much pleasure the nobles themselves got out of their fierce quarrelling seems questionable to-day. There would seem to have been quite as much tragedy as is good for life when one had to shut himself up on the highest cliff in the neighborhood in order to protect himself from his nearest neighbors. When you stop to think of it, is it not a strange turning of tables that Time has brought about? We fill our modern cities with artificial cliffs twenty stories high, where men try *not* to isolate themselves, but, instead, to associate themselves as closely as possible for mutual advantage in the way of heating and lighting, communication and transportation. In the old times men climbed mountains to get away from their fellow-men; now they build mountains in order to get more closely together.

It would be interesting to go down through the streets of the town, for those old buildings are many of them very picturesque at short range. There are some five thousand people living here now, and there is a little river which flows down through a street of the town in a channel covered over by wooden beams. To this boy it is all as familiar

as the streets that you knew when you were a child his age, in a much more commonplace neighborhood. Very likely he has a dream in his head about going away, perhaps far over at the other (eastern) side of that great mountain or on to Vienna where people make fortunes. Perhaps he means to turn "about face" and go up to Hamburg, shipping by a steamer, as his cousins have done before him, and going to America. He wonders greatly that we should care to come so far to see the old castles up on the hills.