

WOMEN'S
TRAVEL
WRITINGS

REVOLUTIONARY
FRANCE

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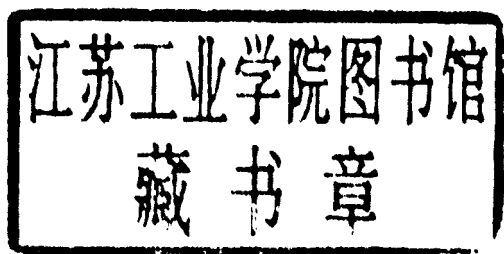
WOMEN'S TRAVEL WRITINGS IN
REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE

Volume 2

Helen Maria Williams, *A Tour in Switzerland*, vol. II (1798)

EDITED BY

Stephen Bending and Stephen Bygrave



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OR,
A VIEW OF THE PRESENT STATE
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OF THOSE
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OF
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By *HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS*

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A TOUR
IN
SWITZERLAND;
OR,
A VIEW OF THE PRESENT STATE, &c

CHAPTER XXII.

*Ascent to the Glaciers.—Mountain-Prospects.—Hymns
written among the Alps.*

FROM a little village situated at the foot of the Glaciers, and near the source of the Rhine, we departed early the next morning to scale the mountain that led us to that mighty store-house of winter. Our road lay along the side of a torrent, part of which is applied to the purpose of turning the mill belonging to the hamlet, and watering the little enclosures around it. A path-way had been

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2 A VIEW OF THE PRESENT

formed by the people across the Glaciers, in order to communicate with the inhabitants of the upper part of the valley of Ragantz.

The mountain, like those we had just left in the middle region, on the southern side of St. Bernardin, produced a fine short grass; and the peasants were spreading as we passed their scented harvest, to the pleasant, but fleeting sun-beam, eager to improve the precarious blessing, and snatch the golden moments! Along a fine amphitheatre of mountains, we spied the inhabitants of the various cottages at this pastoral employment, hanging on the steep slopes like goats, to turn the swath, and leaving us to wonder by what ingenuity the grass was first mowed. These *chalets*, or mountain cabins, are fitted for the region where they are placed, though of an order of architecture

STATE OF SWITZERLAND.

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of which Palladio gives no description. They are in general built with the wood of the pine, or the larch, but when not in the neighbourhood of forests, are erected with stone. To most of the chalets the mountain itself affords one side ready constructed, as they are usually placed in such situations that when the avalanche rolls from the top, it shall find no resistance from those habitations, shielded by the friendly hill that rises abrupt behind, but passing harmless over the sheltered dwelling, fling at a safe distance its destructive mass.

In the last of these chalets we stopped to repose ourselves, though we had halted so often to botanize, as the hills abounded in a rich variety of herbs and delicate mountain-flowers, that we had hitherto suffered little from the labor of the ascent; but our ramble, together with the

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