

quently rendered very difficult by the rapidity of their incline, and sometimes dangerous when these inclines terminated upon precipices, but where at all events we had no dangers to dread but those which we saw, and where we incurred no risk of being swallowed up without either skill or strength being of any service."

[Not to prolong our narrative, we suppress the minute details which De Saussure gives of the various circumstances that distinguished the ascent, and proceed at once to its conclusion. On the second day, he attained the summit of Mont Blanc, after braving a thousand perils.]

"My first glance," says De Saussure, "was directed towards Chamounix, where I knew that my wife and her two sisters, with eyes fixed to their telescopes, followed my steps with an anxiety undoubtedly excessive, but not, on that account, less painful; and I experienced a tender and consoling emotion when I saw the flag displayed which they had promised to hoist as soon as, perceiving me on the summit, their fears should be for a time suspended.

"I could then enjoy without any feeling of regret the great spectacle displayed before me. A light vapour, floating in the lower regions of the atmosphere, concealed, it is true, the lowest and most distant objects, such as the plains of France and Lombardy; but I did not much lament this loss; for what I had come to see, and what I saw with marvellous clearness, was the grand whole of all the lofty peaks whose organization I had so long desired to know. I could not believe my eyes—it seemed to me a dream, a vision—when I beheld beneath my feet those majestic summits, those formidable spires, the Midi, the Argentière, the Giant, whose very bases had been so difficult and dangerous of approach. I seized upon their positions, their connection, their conformation, and a single glance dispelled the doubts which years of labour had been unable to solve.

"Meantime, my guides were raising my tent, and preparing the little table on which I intended to experiment with boiling water. But when I set to work to arrange my instruments and take my observations, I found myself every moment compelled to interrupt my work, and give all my thoughts to the actual labour of breathing. If the reader reflects that the barometer was here at 16 inches 1 line only, and that the air was not at above half its ordinary density, he will understand how I was forced to supplement the density by frequency of respiration; while, at the same time, this frequency so accelerated the movement of the blood that the arteries were no longer counterbalanced externally by a pressure equal to that which they usually experience. Therefore we were all attacked with fever, as will be seen in the record of my observations.

"While I remained perfectly tranquil, I experienced but a slight uneasiness, a tendency to pain about the heart. But when I used any exertion, or when I fixed my attention for a few consecutive moments, and especially when in stooping I contracted my chest, I was obliged to rest, and take breath, for two or three minutes. My guides experienced similar sensations. They had no appetite, and, in truth, our provisions, which had frozen *en route*, were not adapted to stimulate one: they did not even care for wine or brandy. In fact, they had discovered that strong liquors increased their indisposition, undoubtedly by accelerating the quickness of the circulation. Nothing but fresh water did them any good or gave them any