

hour. It was my intention to attach them to a pigeon which I had brought with me, and which I proposed to release on the summit, to see how he flew in so rarefied an air, and also to ascertain if he could retrace his way to Sallanches, where his mate awaited him. We preserved a bottle of our best wine to drink on the peak to the memory of De Saussure.

"At nine o'clock precisely we resumed our journey, and toiled towards the summit which rose before our wistful eyes. 'Would you take a thousand pounds,' said one of my companions to his countryman, 'to go back, instead of ascending?' The reply was, 'I would not return for any sum that could be named.' We were so full of hope and joy at seeing immediately within our reach the goal of our enterprise." \*

At this moment the travellers were ascending what the guides call "the hood of Mont Blanc;" that is, the last snowy incline which leads to the topmost peak. At the foot of this glacis yawns an immense crevasse of ice, 20 yards in width and 50 in depth. It is the great crevasse which we delineate in Figure 52. They now marched in single file, one after another; the first guide was Pierre Carrier, the second, Pierre Balmat, and the third, Auguste Teiraz. Next came Julien Devoissous and Marie Coutet. Behind these, still in single file, marched five other guides, Dr. Hamel, and the two Englishmen.

It was probably this order of march which led to the catastrophe. By advancing in a single line, they furrowed, as with a ploughshare, the newly fallen snow, which had not yet had time to consolidate with the old. Thus divided by a long section, the portion of snow which the caravan escaladed separated suddenly; it glided over the older snow. All the party was carried with this avalanche down the steep declivity at whose base opened, as if to engulf them, the immense crevasse to which we have referred. The mass of frozen snow which in this wise broke loose was 1000 yards in length, by 70 in breadth, but not 3 feet in depth.

\* Bibliothèque Universelle de Genève, tome xiv., p. 317.