

preceding. It is supposed that this catastrophe was due to a subterranean spring, which had dried up five-and-twenty years before, or rather had spread itself underground, where it had gradually eaten away the soil.

On the 25th of August 1618, the town of Pluno and that of Schilano, in the valley of Bregaglio, one of the fairest districts of Lombardy, were buried beneath the ruins of Mont Conto. The rocky formations of the mountain had been undermined by brooks and springs; they fell headlong upon the two unfortunate towns: 2430 persons perished; and the site of 200 houses was occupied by a lake.

In 1248, a portion of Mont Grenier, seven miles south of Chambéry, fell, and in its fall buried five parishes, comprising the town of Saint André. Mont Grenier belongs to the Jurassic formation (or Oxford clay). In the night of the 7th of December 1248, a part of this mountain detached itself from its base, and fell into the valley des Marches. The bottom of the valley, composed of a clayey subsoil, had been swept by prolonged and heavy rains. Under the enormous weight suddenly heaped upon it, it undulated and boiled like a purely liquid surface. In such wise that the plain, even to a distance very remote from the centre of convulsion, was covered with mamelons, or little mounds, intersected by ravines, which still exist.

The small town of St. André disappeared on the occasion of this frightful convulsion, as well as the hamlets, feudal castles, and numerous convents sprinkled over the country.

This gliding movement of the earths of the plain impelled by the fall of the mountain terminated in front of the Church of Our Lady of Myans, which acquired great celebrity through this reputed miracle. The Savoyards regarded as impious the suggestion that the elevation of the soil, at the point where the débris were arrested in their progress, might have proved of service in seconding the exertions of the Holy Virgin.

The devastated tract which was the theatre of this catastrophe bears to-day the name of the "Abyss of Myans" (*l'abîme de Myans*). It is almost wholly covered with vineyards, which flourish over the buried ruins of once prosperous villages.

At Adersbach, in Bohemia, a tract of seven square miles is covered with a labyrinth of blocks of sandstone, from 100 to 200 feet in height, the ruins of a shattered mountain.

The Swiss heights known as *Les Diablerets*, situated between the cantons of Berne and the Valais, had formerly four peaks. Perhaps, in the course of ages, they have lost several. On the 23rd of September 1713, one of the four remaining summits suddenly fell. It covered with its wreck an enormous extent of ground, and overwhelmed several hundred peasants' huts. The overthrow of a mass so enormous raised a thick dust, which for several hours completely darkened the air. In the middle of this terrible catastrophe, a shepherd of the village of Avon, in the Valais, disappeared; it was supposed he had perished, with too many others, on that day of gloom. Three months afterwards, on Christmas night, he returned to his native place, pale, emaciated, and covered with tatters. Immediately, a general consternation spread through the village; the door of every house was closed against him; the peasants sought for a priest to exorcise the stranger, whom they were unwilling