

lastingly upon the haughty crests which had formerly rejoiced in the glory of a tropical vegetation! Perhaps, too, these silent giants—these mute warders of an inaccessible world—may be reflecting on the ruins of a more beautiful primeval state, which were converted into stone lest they should be lost; on the veins of glittering gold that run deep within their bosom, the beds of crystal that lie there unseen, and the concealed treasures of their flashing gems. But to the eye of man how dead they seem—yon mighty Alps! and every century buries them deeper in snow-drift and glacier, and crumbles away their mighty ribs.*]

Of the glaciers, which form, perhaps, the most remarkable feature of these snow-shrouded, ice-burdened mountains, we have related the more interesting details of what may be called their physical history. We proceed to indicate the principal regions of the two hemispheres where are found in their greatest development those immense and picturesque rivers of ice which, descending from the mountain summits, remain suspended half-way on their flanks.

From what the reader has previously gathered, he will understand that several important conditions must unite in a chain of mountains before their snows can be transformed into permanent glaciers; and in no part of Europe are those conditions found existing together in the same degree as in the Alps of Savoy and Switzerland. There, in truth, we discover an almost unbroken *relievo* rising above the limit of perpetual snows, whose base, broken up by a multitude of valleys, stretches down into a region with a moist and temperate climate, adapted to facilitate the *glacification* of the snows. And, therefore, nowhere in Europe do we meet with such vast and magnificent glaciers as in the Alps. To some of the most important of these we have already referred. [That which has been most completely explored and investigated by physicists is the great glacier of the Unter-Aar, in the Oberland, measuring about fourteen miles in length,

* [See Berlepsch, "Der Alpen;" Von Tschudi, "Nature among the Alps;" Professor Tyndall, "Glaciers of the Alps;" "Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers;" Wills, "The Eagle's Nest;" and Professor Forbes, "Travels in the Alps of Switzerland and Savoy."]