

mountain-scenery was usually associated in men's minds with ideas of danger, and repulsion. Every reader of English literature will remember passages, alike among poets and prose-writers, wherein the strongest abhorrence is expressed for the high, rugged and desolate regions of the earth. These tracts, which seemed at that time to have in themselves no attractions, were generally looked upon as best seen from a distance, and not to be entered or traversed save on the direst compulsion.

The first step in the breaking down of this prejudice, which we all now laugh at, was made by the scientific researches of Horace-Benedict de Saussure (1740-1799), from which we may date the rise of the modern spirit of mountaineering. He it was who first taught the infinite charm and variety of mountain-scenery, the endless multiplicity of natural phenomena there to be seen, and the enthusiasm which the mountain-world will awaken in the heart of every responsive climber. How few among the thousands who every year repair to the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Caucasus, or who find their way to the peaks of the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, are aware of the debt they owe to the great geologist of Geneva!

De Saussure was born in that city in the year 1740. His career at college was so distinguished that at twenty years of age he became a candidate for a professorship of mathematics, and at two-and-twenty obtained one of philosophy. Trained in physical science, he acquired habits of exactitude in observation and reasoning, which stood him in good stead in the