

from the valley, and swallowed up everything that fell in the neighbourhood of our tent.

"We had chosen this position in order to escape the peril of the avalanches, and because the guides finding shelter in the gaps of the rocks, we were not crowded within the tent as on the preceding night.

"I occupied myself in the evening with observing the barometer, which gave, as the elevation of the rock, 12,000 feet. Afterwards I amused myself with contemplating the cloud-masses hovering beneath us, though far above the valleys and mountains less elevated than ourselves. These clouds, instead of presenting broad and even surfaces, as we see them from below, displayed the most fantastic outlines of towers and castles, and giants, and appeared uplifted by vertical winds which issued from different points of the subjacent countries.

"We supped merrily and with a good appetite ; after which I passed an excellent night on my little mattress. It was then only that I enjoyed the pleasure of having accomplished the design which I had formed twenty-seven years previously—namely, on my first visit to Chamounix, in 1760 ; a design which I had so often abandoned and resumed, and which had been a continual source of anxiety and disquietude to my family. It had, indeed, become with me a species of disease ; my eyes never rested upon Mont Blanc, which was visible from so many points near my dwelling, without my undergoing a fresh attack of melancholy. At the moment that I attained the summit my gratification was not complete ; it was still less so when I was about to commence my descent, for, until then, I only realized how much I had been unable to complete. But, in the silence of night, and after thoroughly recovering from my fatigue, when I recalled the observations I had made, and especially when I retraced the splendid picture of the mountains eternally imprinted on my brain, and while, finally, I nourished the well-founded hope of finishing on the Col du Géant what I had not yet done, and what, in truth, could never be done on Mont Blanc, I tasted a real and unalloyed satisfaction."

The sensation awakened throughout Europe by the brilliant success of Saussure's enterprise soon called forth numerous rivals of his glory. We shall say but little in reference to ascents almost all undertaken from motives of curiosity, or as enterprises of adventure, and not by scientific men desirous of settling some uncertain points in the physics of the globe. Little good can result from such undertakings ; on the contrary, their record is overshadowed by many sad tales of death and disaster ; and if they escape the censure of the moralist, unquestionably they do not merit his approbation.

From this judgment, however, we must except the naturalist Bourrit, canon of the cathedral of Geneva, whose vain attempts we