

have dashed him into the abyss. Soon they had no other help



FIG. 60.—FIRST ASCENT OF MONT PERDU, BY RAMOND, IN 1802.

than the rocks themselves, which they had at first pronounced inaccessible.

These rocks are disposed in stages, but the steps are higher than they are broad. Moreover, the line of this natural flight of steps is so directed as to incline them in relation to the horizon. Add to this all the irregularities and projections of the rocks, and the reader may judge whether the enterprise was attractive!

Ramond and his companions nevertheless resolved to attempt it.

They dragged themselves up from step to step, the first being pushed by the second, and lending the latter his hand in turn, as soon as he was safely posted. Those in the rear, however, were exposed to the consequences of every false step made by their predecessors, as well as to the fragments of rock knocked down by their feet.

Ramond, indeed, was wound-

ed by one of these missiles, which it was impossible to avoid. The escalade occupied a whole hour.