

detached from the main mass, and, thus deprived of its support, is overthrown, or glides to the bottom of the slope.

In this way the mountains are being incessantly destroyed : the cold splits and divides the rocks, the air decomposes them, the water washes them and carries them away. It is a general process of levelling set in motion simply by the forces of nature. It will not be without interest if we furnish here an enumeration of the most remarkable catastrophes which have been produced by causes of this kind.

In 1767, the town of Newmarket was engulfed under the waters of the Adize, which had undermined the soil whereon it stood.

The town of Borge, in Norway, sunk, on the 5th of February 1702, into a subterraneous crevasse excavated by the torrent of the Glommen, which descends from the Dovrefeld mountains.

On the 25th of July 1825, about five o'clock in the evening, an awful burst of thunder resounded through the village of Barlis, in the late kingdom of Hanover (now a Prussian province). Suddenly a cloud of dust obscured the atmosphere, and the earth rolled with a great crash over an area of 130 feet in breadth, forming a deep profound chasm, whose depth may be estimated by the single fact that a pebble, it is said, was one minute in reaching the bottom.

In Ireland, numerous lakes have been created by the sinking of the peat-bogs. There, too, may be seen the extraordinary spectacle of subterranean forests ; that is, of masses of trees abruptly sunk beneath the soil, but continuing to preserve their verdure on the tops of their leafy branches !

In Russia and Poland, too, many of the lakes have been formed by landslips. For an example it will be sufficient to name the lake of Arend, in the province of Brandenburg. According to Strabo, accidents of this kind frequently took place in the neighbourhood of the lake Copais, in Bœotia, which is now one great morass.*

In 1792, several houses in the town of Lons-le-Saunier disappeared, and a lake which suddenly made its appearance also swallowed up a portion of the road from Lyons to Strassbourg. The subterranean waters had undermined the soil, and it had sunk into the internal abyss.

On the 29th of January 1840, Mont Cernans, in the Jura, bodily descended into the plain which extends at its base, and a portion of the king's highway from Dijon to Pontarlier was swallowed up in a chasm 170 feet in depth, which simultaneously opened. This part of the road, known by the name of *la Rampe de Cernans*, was accordingly rendered impassable. The day following this convulsion, another mass of rock and earth was detached, which followed in the track of the

* [Colonel Mure describes it as a large yellow swamp, overgrown with sedge, reeds, and canes, through which the river Cephissus may be distinguished oozing its sluggish path for several miles.—*Tour in Greece*, i. 227.]