

whose pressure forces a way through the crevasses in the surface of the glacier.

Numerous brooks meander around the glaciers, formed by the thaw of the ice during the summer season. They flow only by day; at night they dry up, and their tinkling sounds cease to be heard. They engulf themselves in vertical shafts, commonly named *puits* or *moulins*; and frequently these *puits* are of a very considerable depth.

What are named in the Alps *meridian holes* are depressions produced by the presence of a foreign body, such as black sand or an erratic block. Heated by the sun's rays, this block thaws the ice beneath and immediately around it, sinking in the cavity thus created, whose depth increases continually through the incessant action of the warm water which descends from the surface exposed to the sun.

A wholly opposite effect is produced when erratic blocks or great heaps of white gravel, resting on the surface of a part of the glacier, protect that point from the solar radiation. Accordingly, it is only around that point the ice can melt; and when this phenomenon occurs with any degree of intensity, the block or pile of gravel will remain upright, suspended upon a conical pedestal or column of ice, whose height sometimes exceeds three or four feet. The block thus suspended is designated a *Glacier Table*, numerous specimens of which may be seen on the glacier of the Aar. According to the amount of influence exercised by the solar rays, these gigantic *mushrooms* assume a more or less decided inclination towards the south, so that they indicate with some degree of accuracy the direction of the *meridian*. It is even certain that their slope varies at different hours of the day, according to the sun's position; but this oscillatory movement, which would seem to convert the glacier tables into a new kind of sun-dial, is in reality scarcely perceptible.

Eventually the sun eats away the ice-pedestal on its southern side; the stone table supported by it then glides from its horizontal position and falls upon the ice beneath, where it sometimes carves out for itself another prop.