

while on the summit of the mountain the weather remained perfectly clear and calm. Under a blue sky they watched the lightning, and listened to the thunder in the dark clouds, which were pouring torrents of rain upon the plain and the Lake of Lucerne. The storm lasted long after night had closed in, and Agassiz lingered when all his companions had retired to rest, till at last the clouds drifted softly away, letting down the light of moon and stars on the lake and landscape. He used to say that in his subsequent Alpine excursions he had rarely witnessed a scene of greater beauty.

Such of his letters from Zurich as have been preserved have only a home interest. In one of them, however, he alludes to a curious circumstance, which might have changed the tenor of his life. He and his brother were returning on foot, for the vacation, from Zurich to their home which was now in Orbe, where their father and mother had been settled since 1821. Between Neuchâtel and Orbe they were overtaken by a traveling carriage. A gentleman who was its sole occupant invited them to get in, made them welcome to his lunch, talked to them of their student life, and their future plans, and drove