

needles, tables, perched blocks, gravel cones, rifts, and crevasses, as well as their movements, mode of formation, and internal temperature, were treated in succession. But the most interesting chapters, from the author's own point of view, and those which were most novel for his readers, were the concluding ones upon the ancient extension of the Swiss glaciers, and upon the former existence of an immense, unbroken sheet of ice, which had once covered the whole northern hemisphere. No one before had drawn such vast conclusions from the local phenomena of the Alpine valleys. "The surface of Europe," says Agassiz, "adorned before by a tropical vegetation and inhabited by troops of large elephants, enormous hippopotami, and gigantic carnivora, was suddenly buried under a vast mantle of ice, covering alike plains, lakes, seas and plateaus. Upon the life and movement of a powerful creation fell the silence of death. Springs paused, rivers ceased to flow, the rays of the sun, rising upon this frozen shore (if, indeed, it was reached by them), were met only by the breath of the winter from the north and the thunders of the crevasses as they opened across the surface of this icy sea."¹ The author goes on to state that on

¹ *Études sur les Glaciers*. Chapter xviii. p. 315.