was gained, not, however, without the most imminent risk to the
aeronauts. In reading the very interesting account of this ascent, we
cannot contemplate without admiration the coolness with which one
of the adventurers continued his scientific observations until at length
at some five or six miles above the surface of the earth, he lost all
power of eyes and limbs, and fell back in the car as in sleep, and the
presence of mind with which his companion, when his hands had
failed him, " seized the line between his teeth and pulled the valve
open until the balloon took a turn downward," and the numbed ob-
servers were thawed into consciousness.

During the past year two comets have been visible—one by com-
putation only nine millions of miles from the earth. The other, and
the more remarkable of the two, continued within the circle of per-
petual apparition for five weeks, but when nearest to the earth was
distant thirty-three millions of miles.

In connexion with this subject, I have pleasure in calling attention
to a magnificent volume, giving a full account of the great comet of
1858, by Mr. Bond, Director of the Observatory of Harvard College.
This is, so far as I am aware, the most complete work on the subject
that has ever been published.

The government of Ecuador have offered to the French govern-
ment the site for an observatory on the plateau of Durito. This
locality presents almost unequalled advantages for observation from
its position on the globe, and from the remarkable clearness of the
atmosphere. The parallax observations, which have been made
during the past year, taken in connexion with Foucault's experi-
ments on the velocity of light, and Struve's measurement of an arc
of parallel, promise the most important results relative to the ques-
tion of the sun's distance.

But little calling for special notice, on such an occasion as the pres-
ent, has been done during the year in pure mathematics, but a most
remarkable example, illustrating their beauty and their power as ap-
plied to constructive mechanics, has been presented by the explana-
tion given by the Astronomer Royal, of the directions and magnitudes
of the strains on the sides of tubular bridges. It must be most
gratifying to Prof. Airy to find that his theory was accepted not
only by mathematicians, who admired the skill with which he pro-
duced the equations and the ingenuity with which he rendered them
manageable, but also by practical men, such as Mr. Fairbairn and