

OVER THE COTTIAN ALPS—THE MONT CENIS ROUTE.

BY V. BARBIER.

II.



THE RIVER ARC BELOW FORT
ESSEILLON.

ST. JEAN DE MAURIENNE is an ancient town, and we have no authentic information regarding its foundation. Lying as it does on the great highway to Italy, St. Jean has frequently suffered severely from the depredations of invading hordes. In 1439 it was subjected to a terrible inundation resulting from the overflow of the Bon Rieux, an impetuous torrent, which

destroyed a great part of the town and brought down such a vast quantity of earth that the soil was raised several feet, so that instead of ascending to the cathedral by a flight of steps, as formerly, it is now necessary to descend into it. The old church contains, says tradition, a finger of St. John the Baptist, and it is from the possession of this ancient relic that the town derives its name.

Among the costumes of St. Jean de Maurienne, the most picturesque and showy is certainly that worn by the women of St. Colomban; it admits of the greatest simplicity as well as of richness and luxury in details. A silver cross with a large heart of the same metal is suspended from the neck by a wide ribbon, the ends of which hang down the back.

An imposing mass of contorted rocks, whose huge pinnacles