

THE SNOW ON THE GREAT ST. BERNARD.

In December, 1830, a large quantity of snow fell, and caused enormous avalanches round Mont St. Bernard. The convent is situated a little below the point of perpetual snow, and there often falls so great a quantity in winter, that the summer is not long enough to remove it. There was, in fact, a time when it was feared the masses would turn into a glacier. These fears, however, exist no longer; for since the beautiful experiments of Benetz, upon the enormous glaciers of Gietroz, which he melted by covering it with water, from the melting of more elevated snows, a glacier can be formed almost where we wish.

Snow, cold as it feels to the touch, is still less so than ice, and observation early found in this difference of temperature an infallible means of restoring limbs recently frozen, which is used by the monks with great success. When they encounter a traveller, who cannot use his limbs, they begin by ascertaining whether they are only stiffened or actually frozen. In the first case, they apply to the limbs simple friction only; in the latter, they rub the patient with snow, on the spot, without waiting to transport him to the convent. At the convent, the frozen limb is plunged into snow-water till it thaws, and a cure follows speedily. The use of fire and heat is most especially to be avoided. Count Tilly had his feet severely frozen in ascending the mountain, and on descending wrapped them in a sheep's-skin, the heat of which caused the feet to swell to an enormous size; after four days, gangrene ensued, and it required all the skill of the physicians of Genoa to save his feet.

One of the effects of snow, and one which follows still more speedily when we are fatigued, is that of putting to sleep by the combined influence of the monotony of the spectacle, and the action of the cold on the brain. Wo to the traveller, if he yields, while in the snow, to the profound lethargy that he feels overpowering him; he will awake only in eternity. The cold will contract the orifices of the vessels, the circulation will invariably diminish, the surface of the body will begin to be lifeless, the blood will flow back on the brain, which yielded to the cold more slowly, and gorges it; and his existence will end without pain, without suffering. In 1829, the monks found on the road a man standing upright, resting on his staff, one leg raised, and the foot set down in the attitude of a man ascending a height. He had fallen asleep in this position, and had been frozen to death instantly. He had a knapsack, and over it another, which belonged to a fellow-traveller, who lay dead near him, and who was afterwards ascertained to be his uncle.

"On the 29th of September, 1829, (the monks told me,) some travellers reached the convent during a horrible storm, and informed us that the great quantity of snow, and regard to their own safety, had obliged them to leave a man and woman behind them, about half a league from the hospice. We immediately went in search of them; but the unfortunate beings had lost their way, and were buried under the snow. We searched for them till night, but in vain, and renewed the search with no better success. The same day another traveller died, who had been overtaken by night. Three days after, we found their bodies."

"More than once," says an English traveller, relating his ascent of Mont Blanc, "we asked of our guides to let us lie down on the snow a few minutes, to indulge a longing for sleep which no one can conceive who has not experienced it. We were often forced to halt to take breath, and at every stoppage slumber overpowered us. After ascending to the *Grand Plateau*, I asked Courtes, the guide, if I might not sleep on the snow for a few minutes. He consented, but reluctantly, and the next minute I was sound asleep. In a few minutes he aroused me, else I might have slept on for ever." In fact, the guides rarely allow travellers who pass the night at the camp of *Grands Mulets*, in ascending or descending Mont Blanc, to spend the whole night there. They awaken them often to ascertain whether their elbows, shoulders, or knees, are not frozen, as those articulations are the first parts affected during sleep.

The constant presence of snow increases an influence on the atmosphere, which re-acts in different ways on the human organization. The coolness it gives to the air, renders long stay in the region painful. Its reflection of the rays of light that strike on it, produces most striking effects on the skin. It renders it rough, red, and tanned, and covers it with watery pustules, which are painful, though easily removed. It irritates the optic nerves, and produces an ophthalmia, which is always harder to remove in proportion to the recentness of the snow and the clearness of the air. Some persons it soon renders blind; some for a short time, others, as was the case with Cyrus' soldiers, for life. It is well known that the inhabitants of polar regions have more or less feeble vision, and that many are blind by the time they are twenty.

The *Col du Bonhomme* is, perhaps, the most subject to changes of temperature of any of the passes of the Alps, and the most dangerous from the frequency and violence of the storms that pass over it. Accidents happen from snow-storms every week, and I might almost say every day. Without going back to tradition, I will mention a melancholy instance which happened in our own time. In September, 1830, two young Englishmen, of eighteen or twenty, Messrs. Campbell and Brackley, were travelling in

Switzerland under the care of their tutor. When they arrived at Chamouni, they took a guide, a stout and prudent man, and proceeded to the *Col du Bonhomme* with all the ardour and gaiety of youth; when they reached a house near the *Plau (plateau) des Dames*, which is the last you meet in going towards the *Col*, they wished to take dinner. Unfortunately, a number of young men from a school, which had just left, had taken with them all the provisions usually kept in such houses. They were far from dreaming how fatal this circumstance, seemingly so trivial, would be to them. Urged on by hunger, they left at once, in the hope of overtaking the young men, and obtaining some food from the remains of the provisions they had carried off; but no one was to be seen, and the pursuit, made at great speed, only served to add to their hunger and fatigue. Nor was this all. During the time which would have been required for taking their meal at the *auberge*, which they employed in walking, the atmosphere, thus far calm and clear, underwent so instantaneous a change, that the whole four found themselves in one of the severest storms of that bleak region, without the least suspicion of it, even on the part of their guide. They were cut to the bone by a fierce and icy wind: blinded by a whirlwind of snow, and carried off their feet by sudden whirlwinds. One of the young men, who had been most weakened by hunger and fatigue, seized with terror at the unexpected horrors around him, stopped suddenly short, as if petrified, deprived of hearing and motion. The guide took him in his arms, wrapped him up in his own garments; opened his breast and pressed him to it, to communicate to him some portion of the heat of his body, spoke affectionately to him to encourage and console him; but in vain—he clasped a corpse. The other, Mr. Brackley, terrified at the outbreak of the storm, fell down on the snow, stupified with cold. He half rose up at times and embraced the knees of their guide, as though to thank him for his efforts in behalf of his friend. But when he saw that that friend was lost to him forever, he began to shrink, spite of all the attentions of his tutor. He gradually ceased to turn his eyes towards the stiffened corpse, and let his head fall on the snow never to raise it again. The tutor, in despair at these scenes of horror, bore them, nevertheless, with manly courage. As soon as the storm was over, and it did not last long, he placed one of the frozen bodies on the guide's shoulders, and bore the other himself to the nearest cottage. Every means that could be obtained were there tried to restore them to animation, but in vain, and the unhappy tutor repaired to Geneva to order two coffins for his ill-fated pupils, whose carriage and courier were yet waiting for them to pursue their tour of pleasure. Before the day fixed for their interment, the tutor was dead. His strength of constitution saved him at the *Col*; grief destroyed him at Geneva. A third coffin was ordered, and the funeral was attended by all the crowd of gay travellers assembled in that city.—*Lon. Mirror*.

GAMING BY MACHINERY.—The New Orleans papers give an account of the breaking up of a gambling establishment, the operations of which, it seems, were carried on by machinery. The Bee thus describes the apparatus:

In a back room in the second story was a round table fixed in iron shoes so as to be immovable. Two of the legs of this table were hollow. Down the hollow legs wires were run to the floor, and along the floor in grooves made for the purpose to the wall, then up the wall to the third story, thence to a point immediately above the centre of the table. The wires were communicated from the table to the point above in the manner used in bell hanging. The grooves through which they run were inlaid with softest buckskin, so as to prevent a noise in pulling them; the grooves were then covered over with thin copper and a carpet screened all from view; the grooves in the wall were papered over so as to prevent detection. Immediately above the card table the ceiling was ornamented with a circular painting, after the fashions of some parlors. In the centre of the painting was a hook as if to suspend a lamp. The ceiling was cut into small holes, which could not be detected from below, because they represented certain portions of the figures of the paintings. When a party was engaged at play, a person above could look down upon the hands, and by pulling the wires give his partner at the table any intimation as to the strength of the opposing hands which an agreed signal might indicate. The room above was kept dark, which also prevented the players from ascertaining the cheat, particularly at night.

APPALLING STATEMENT.—From a statement made by the Committee of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society, it appears that within the short period of four months and three days previous to April last, there had been wrecked one hundred and sixty vessels—all of whose crews had perished!—Averaging the crew of each ship at ten, will give a loss of one thousand and six hundred lives! It is further shown that of vessels stranded, foundered, abandoned, not heard of, &c. within the same period, the number of vessels affected by such catastrophes are 576. If only one soul has perished from each of the vessels which have suffered from the above contingencies, we number a loss of five hundred and se-

venty-six lives! Then add to these four hundred and twenty four certainly known to have perished, and we have a total from all causes, of at least two thousand and six hundred lives!! on an average something more than twenty one every day during the period of four short months!

GREAT MAP.—In France, a map is now in process of completion, made of the earth itself, exposed to the sky, and occupying above an acre of ground: it is said to "represent France, with its mountains, seas, islands, vegetable productions, canals, cities, &c." The map is situated at no great distance from Paris, near the *Chaussee du Maine*, on the south-east side of the city. It comprehends the whole of France, Corsica, Switzerland, Piedmont, the Milanese, and parts of Germany, Belgium, and Rhenish Prussia. The scale on which it is constructed is that of 192 millimetres to a degree, being something less than two inches per mile—a scale which is of a size to mark the principal features of a country with sufficient distinctness, where the city of Paris might be nearly a foot in extent, and a river like the Thames almost half an inch across at *London Bridge*. It is made of earth chiefly; the rivers are channels made on a scale proportionate to the rest of the map; water runs along them, and falls into the sea, which is placed upon its coasts, deep enough to receive little flat-bottomed boats.

TOO MUCH LATIN AND GREEK.—"The English clergy, in whose hands education entirely rests, brings up the first young men of the country as if they were all to keep grammar schools in little country towns; and a nobleman, upon whose knowledge and liberality the honour and welfare of his country may depend, is diligently worried, for half his life, with the small pedantry of longs and shorts. There is a timid and absurd apprehension, on the part of ecclesiastical tutors, of letting out the minds of youth upon difficult and important subjects. They fancy that mental exertion must end in religious scepticism: and, to preserve the principles of their pupils, they confine them to the safe and elegant imbecility of classical learning. At present, we act with the minds of our young men, as the Dutch did with their exuberant spices. An infinite quantity of talent is annually destroyed in the Universities of England by the miserable jealousy and jealousy of ecclesiastical instructors. It is in vain to say we have produced great men under this system. We have produced great men under all systems. Every Englishman must pass half his life in learning Latin and Greek; and, classical learning is supposed to have produced the talents which it has not been able to extinguish. It is scarcely possible to prevent great men from rising up under any system of education. Now we had: Teachers of demonology or astrology, and you will find a certain portion of original genius, in spite of these or any other branches of ignorance and folly."—*From the works of Rev. Sydney Smith*.

HARD CASES.—To serve faithfully and not to please. To go on a journey to see a friend, and meet with a cold reception.

To give a friendly warning, and have your motive suspected, and your kindness requited with coldness or hatred.

To do the best you can, and then be contemptuously told by those who would give you neither counsel nor advice, that you ought to have done better.

To work hard half of one's life in amassing a fortune, and then to spend the rest of his life in watching a fortune just for his vic-tuals and clothes.

To love and not be loved again.

CULTIVATION OF POTATOES.—So recently as 1768, White of Selborne writes:—"Potatoes have prevailed in this little district, by means of premiums, within these twenty years only, and are much esteemed here now by the poor, who would scarce have ventured to taste them in the last reign."

The Earth, with its sacred face, is the symbol of the Past; the Air and Heavens, of Futurity.—*Coleridge*.

Silence does not always mark wisdom. I was at dinner, some time ago, in company with a man, who listened to me and said nothing for a long time; but he nodded his head, and I thought him intelligent. At length towards the end of the dinner, some apple dumplings were placed on the table; and my man had no sooner seen them than he burst forth with—"them's the jockeys for me." I wish Spurzheim could have examined the fellow's head.—16.

HAPPINESS.—An eminent modern writer beautifully says:—"The foundation of domestic happiness is faith in the virtue of woman; the foundation of political happiness, a confidence in the integrity of man; the foundation of all happiness, temporal and eternal, reliance on the goodness of God."

"You're a good book-keeper," as the librarian said when a person would not return a book he borrowed.
"Sir, you are a fool." "Did you call me a fool, sir?"
"Yes sir!" "You do, sir?" "Yes, sir—I would call any man a fool who behaves as you did."—"Oh! you would call any man a fool. Then I cannot consider it personal. I wish you good morning, sir."