

down the declivity. On it goes, always increasing in speed, over a field of snow, getting, of course, bigger and bigger at every turn, for being very damp and clammy, it collects to itself the snow over which it passes, and before it reaches the valley becomes a mighty and immense mass, large enough, indeed, to bury up a whole village. Sometimes such a terrible calamity happens; in the year 1749, when one of these dangerous and dreaded rolling avalanches descended upon a village in the valley of Tawich, it covered it completely. You will think it must have caused general ruin and death. But no; it was in the night, and



THE ASCENT OF MONT BLANC.

it was done so quietly that the villagers knew nothing of their misfortune till morning came, when they began to wonder why it did not grow light! They were dug out, nearly all of them alive.

A drift avalanche, or, as the Swiss call it, *staublawinen*, most generally happens just after a heavy snow-storm, when the wind drives the loose snow from peak to peak, and whirls it down in vast quantities into the valleys.

A sliding avalanche—*rutsch-lawinen*—takes place in early spring, when the snow at the summit of the peak melts, and a great patch of it rushes down the mountain slope, sweeping away everything in its path.