

nothing else to say, but the most important source of enjoyment or disappointment to the traveller. On looking out in the evening upon Mont Blanc, from the windows or the yard of the Hotel de Londres, with a plan for to-morrow, with what anxiety all indications of a change are watched; how every body is consulted; groups of rambles arrive from Geneva, from the Vallais, from Piedmont, or from visits to the surrounding points of view; success is envied — failure pitied.

*The Montanvert.* — This is generally the first, often the only excursion made from Chamouny, with the intention of returning to it. The object of this excursion is to visit the Mer de Glace, the enormous glaciers which terminate in the Glacier du Bois, and the source of the Arveron, in the valley of Chamouny.

To go to the Montanvert it is necessary to cross the Arve and the opposite meadows, by a path which leads across the valley to the foot of the Montanvert, where the path rises above the valley, through the forest of pines which skirts the base of the mountain, in some places very steep, and to ladies, or unpractised travellers, mounted on mules, apparently dangerous; but as the guide is generally in attendance in all places of difficulty, and there are really none of danger, confidence is soon possessed.

After a scramble amidst rocks, and the roots of pines and larches, occasional openings among the trees afford peeps into the valley, and mark the great height so rapidly attained. Sometimes *ernes* are crossed — the channels of avalanches in the winter, which sweep down every thing in their course. Here the guides generally perform the *mystery* of desiring silence, lest a whisper should disturb the slumbering snows above, and bring down destruction by displacing a rock. The step from the sublime to the ridiculous, is here reduced to the smallest possible interval.

Until within a few years, the path beyond this place was impracticable for mules; now, however, it is made good to the *Pavilion*, or house, on the Montanvert, which is reached from Chamouny in 2½ hours. This was originally a rough inclosure of four dry walls, covered with a roof for shelter, which was built at the expense of an Englishman, and named the Château de Blair; this has now become a cowhouse or stable; and even the pavilion, built afterwards at the expense of a M. Desportes, by M. Jaguet, to extend the benefits of the Château de Blair, is so improved, that refreshment, accommodation, and clean beds, in the season, await the visitors to the Montanvert, the Jardin, and other spots of interest to which it leads.

From the Montanvert, the Mer de Glace is seen to an extent of two leagues up the valley, towards the Mont Perades and the Aiguilles of Lechaud, on either side of which, a branch continues; that on the S. W. forming the great glacier of Tacul, and that on the E. and N. E. the glaciers of Lechaud and Talèfre. The view of this enormous sea of ice is one of the most striking in these scenes of wonder, but its great extent, from the vast size of every object about it, is very deceptive. Directly across the Mer de Glace are some of the finest of those pinnacled mountains which form so striking a feature in the Chamouny scenery. The nearest is the Aiguille du Dru, and still further on the right, is the Aiguille du Moine. A thousand nameless pinnacles pierce the clouds between them, and seem to prop the loftiest of this stupendous mass, which is the Aiguille Verte, rising more than 13,000 feet above the level of the sea, and nearly 7000 feet above the Montanvert.

Those who do not intend to cross the Mer de Glace, should, at least, descend upon it, to have a just idea of its character, and by walking far enough upon it, two or three hundred