

[IMITATED:—

With guides to point out the way,
See Paul to the summit attain!
Bravo! and what does he next? . . .
Why, faith, sir, he comes down
again!]

Such, according to Arago, is a summary of all those ascents whose sole object is to gain the summit of almost inaccessible heights, to remain there for a few minutes, and as speedily as possible to redescend, after having braved terrible dangers, and carrying away as souvenirs severe ophthalmic affections, erysipelas in the face, and sometimes frozen feet.

The ascent made in 1814 by Messrs. Charles Martins, Bravais, and Le Pileur is the most interesting of all inscribed on the Alpine record, because the only one undertaken since that of De Saussure with a purely scientific purpose.

Having gained the summit of Mont Blanc, Messrs. Martins and Bravais took a certain number of measurements of the elevation and distances of the mountains situated around it, and made some important thermometrical and physiological observations.

A physician of Berlin, Dr. Pitschner, resided at the Grands Mulets for three weeks in 1861, to devote himself to meteorological experiments. He has published at Berlin some rough bold views of the principal portions of the route to Mont Blanc.

We shall not extend any further our account, already too protracted, of the principal ascents of this cele-

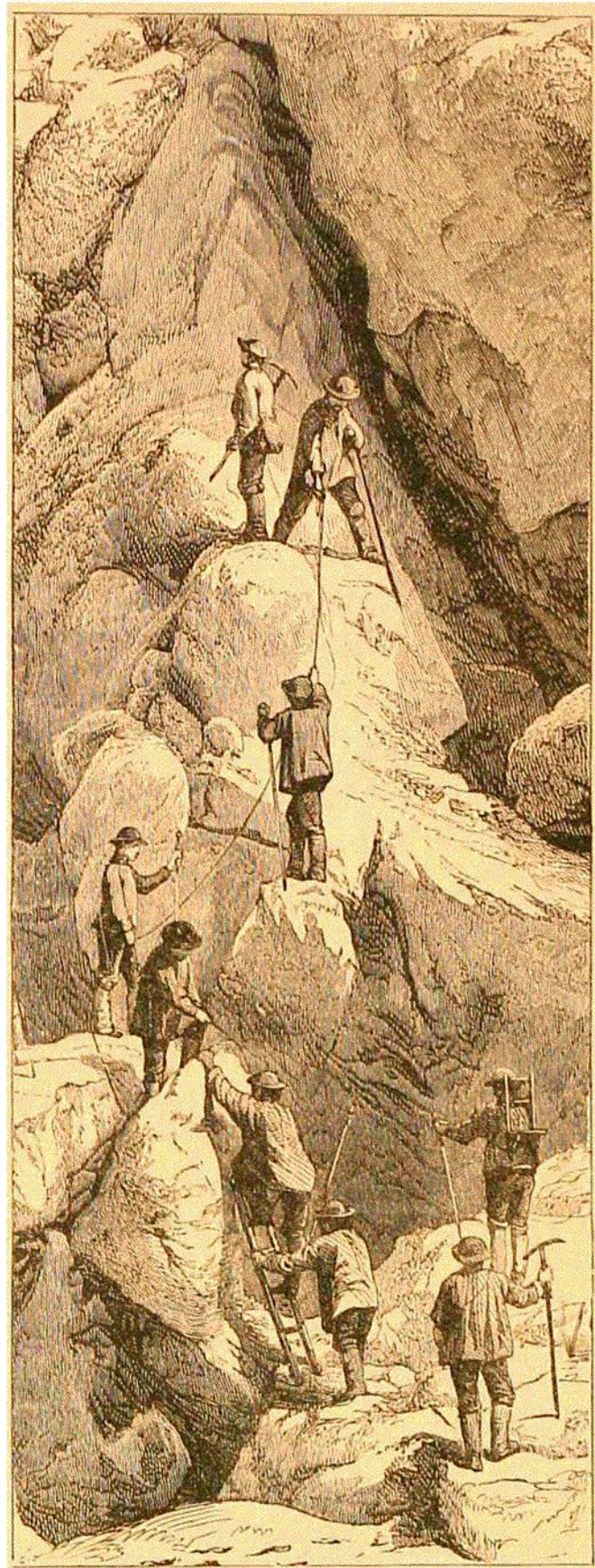


FIG. 59.—PASSAGE OF THE ECHELLES BY M. BISSON, 1861.
(From a Photograph by Bisson.)