cular walls; and on each stage an innumerable succession of terraces. The eternal snows which shroud its summits are dominated on the east by the enormous masses of Astazon or Frazona (10,000 feet); on the west, by the lofty ridges of Taillon; in front rises the Cylinder (10,800 feet), the towers of Marboré, and the famous Roland's Breach (*Brêche du Roland*);* but the objects which arrest every glance are the Cascades.

Threads of water, says Henri Taine,† arrive by thousands from the most elevated crest, leaping from ledge to ledge, crossing their rays of foam, winding, blending, and falling into some ten or a dozen brooks which descend from the lowest terrace in feathery spray to lose themselves among the glaciers.

Their number varies according to the seasons and the bulk of the snow, but two of them never dry up. One, the third in the gorge, is 1370 feet in height.

It falls slowly, says Taine, like a descending cloud, or like an expanded veil of softest muslin; the air breaks its descent; the eye follows complacently the graceful undulation of the beautiful aerial veil. It glides along the rock, and seems rather to *float* than *flow*. The sunlight illuminates the plumed canopy with the softest and most delightful splendour. It arrives in the low lands like a bouquet of delicate, wavy feathers, and leaps up again in silvery dust; the fresh transparent vapour balances itself around the mossy crags, and its reascending cloud mounts lightly from stage to stage.

The snow scarcely ever disappears in the bottom of the Cirque, and the Gave, formed by the waters of the cascades, is compelled to pass under a long bridge of snow, which varies in length and solidity, according to the seasons. Few travellers are curious enough to advance any further; yet it is impossible to form an accurate idea of the cascade, situated about three miles off, but by examining it from a nearer point of view.

In summer two-thirds of its descent are cut off by a projection of the rock, and when the spectator arrives underneath it, he sees only the lower part of the fall, which is about 425 feet in height. "These waters," says M. de Chausenque, "which seem to fall from the clouds, form at first but an unfolded sheet. The resistance of the air divides it into vapour, which the lightest breeze scatters abroad; a humid fog hovers in the atmosphere. But beautiful as is the cascade in the autumn sunlight, when the glaciers are most reduced in size, how majestically terrible must it be in spring, when, the wind of Spain driving before it the accumulated snows, the waters are rapidly swollen, and precipitate themselves from the upper terraces in an enormous mass which shakes the mountain to its foundations! That is the fitting time to visit it: the projecting rock which now divides its fall is no longer visible; throughout its entire descent of more than 1300 feet it is a broad, uniform, unbroken sheet, and all the tiny silver threads which festoon the borders of the Cirque are augmented into copious and important falls. They are the trumpets of heaven sounding a simultaneous peal."

It was formerly asserted that the cascade of Gavarnie originated in a frozen

* [So called because this huge gap in the mountains is said to have been cloven by the legendary Roland with his magic sword.]

† Taine, "Un Voyage en Pyrénées."