

mountains, began to increase upon him after his fiftieth year. It was aggravated by anxiety on account of the effect of the French Revolution on his private resources. After three successive strokes of paralysis he died in 1799 at the age of fifty-nine years.

De Saussure was the first and most illustrious of that distinguished band of geologists which Switzerland has furnished to the ranks of science. To his inspiration and example we owe the labours of Merian, Escher von der Linth, Studer, Favre, and the later and living observers who have so diligently and successfully unravelled the complicated structure of the Alps. His descriptions of a great mountain-chain form admirable models of careful observation and luminous narrative. Though he did not add much to the advancement of geological theory, he contributed largely to the stock of ascertained fact, which was so needful as a basis for theoretical speculation. The data which he collected became thus of the utmost service to those who had to work out the principles of geology. To Hutton, for example, they supplied many admirable illustrations of the geological processes on which he based his *Theory of the Earth*. It was under the guidance of the great Swiss observer that the Scottish philosopher stood in imagination on the summit of the Alps, and watched from that high tower of observation the ceaseless decay of the mountains, the never-ending erosion of the valleys, and that majestic evolution of topography which he so clearly portrayed. Among the illustrious men who contributed to plant the foundations of geology, an honoured place must always be assigned to De Saussure.