Stories from Switzerland and the Tyrol

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Part II. Alpine adventure and suffering.

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FALL OF THE ROSSBERG.

In the autumn of 1806, one of these tremendous catastrophes occurred at Rossberg, in the Swiss Alps, which add a singular character to the many dangers and vicissitudes peculiar to that mountainous region, so famed in the history of European liberty. The investigations of the geologist suffice to show that such catastrophes have been of common occurrence in mountain regions, and form one of those elements of change by which our earth is being constantly adapted for new and progressive states of being. But when such changes occur in an inhabited region, and involve in their progress the destruction of human life and property, they acquire an entirely new interest for us. Such was the case with the event which we are now to relate.

M. Simond, who visited the scene in 1817, eleven years after the occurrence of the frightful

catastrophe we are about to recount, remarks: "The mountain of the Rossberg, over the wrecks of which we had passed in the morning, was now rather below our level; a long track of ruins, like a scarf, hung from its shoulder in hideous barrenness, over the rich dress of shaggy woods and green pastures, and grew wider and wider down to the Lake of Lowertz and to the Righi, a distance of four or five miles. Its greatest breadth may be three miles, and the triangular area of ruins is fully equal to that of Paris, taken at the external boulevards, or about double the real extent of the inhabited city." Within a half-hour's ride of the Lake of Lucerne, the Rossberg mountain rises to a height of three thousand six hundred feet above the Lake of Zug. Previous to the catastrophe of 1806, six villages, with about as many hundred inhabitants, were clustered about the mountain, where now nothing can be seen but traces of the desolate ruin which it occasioned. The summer of 1806 proved a very rainy one, and various premonitory warnings would appear to have given note of the first movements of the strata at the top of the Rossberg, which at length slid down into the valley below, sweeping everything before them.

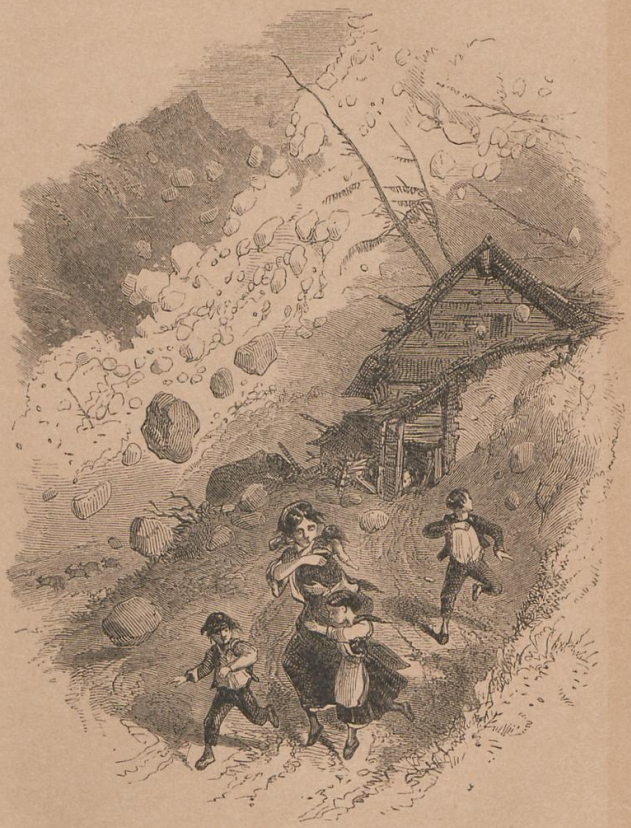
On the morning of the 2d September, a bridal party, consisting of eleven travellers, belonging to

some of the most distinguished families of Berne, arrived at Art, and set off on foot to reach the Righi, a mountain separated only by the intervening valley from Rossberg. Moving along in straggling groups, seven of them, including the young bride, the son, and two pupils, of different members of the party, had preceded the rest by about two hundred yards, when one of the four following behind pointed out to his companions some strange commotion which seemed to be taking place at the summit of the Rossberg, fully four miles distant in a straight line from the place where they then were. One of them having a telescope, stopped to examine it, while the others entered into conversation on the subject with some strangers who made up to them, when suddenly a flight of stones was swept through the air over their heads, and clouds of dust filled the valley, accompanied by the most frightful noise. They all turned and fled from the strange and inexplicable scene. Just before it transpired they had seen their friends entering the village of Goldau, and as soon as the obscurity was partially dissipated, they hastened to rejoin them in their supposed place of shelter; but the entire village had disappeared under a heap of stones and rubbish, which lay accumulated on its side to a depth of upwards of an hundred feet. One of these Bernese travellers, who had

just been married, had his young wife thus snatched in a moment for ever from his sight. No traces of the buried inhabitants were recovered, and the village itself was so utterly swept away, that nothing was ever seen of it but the bell from its steeple which was found at a distance of about a mile from the site of the church.

In the same tremendous avalanche of rocks and soil six villages were buried, along with four hundred and fifty-seven persons; and of these only seventeen were dug out alive.

During the heavy rains which prevailed previous to this catastrophe, various fissures and rents had been observed in the soil. The rain continued to pour down incessantly on the 1st and 2d of September, and on the latter day a sort of cracking noise was heard, as if proceeding from the interior of the mountain; new cracks appeared on its side, stones started out of the ground, and fragments of rock became detached and rolled down into the valley. About mid-day, a large mass of rock fell from the mountain, raising a cloud of black dust in its progress. Throughout the whole of these earlier indications, the detached mass above had evidently been pressing on the adhering strata of the lower slope, compressing them so as to force out the loose stones, and gradually detaching them from the main



FALL OF THE ROSSBERG.

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mountain mass. "Towards the lower part of the mountain," says M. Simond, deriving his facts from Dr. Zay of Art, an eye-witness of the catastrophe, "the ground seemed pressed down from above, and when a stick or spade was driven in, it moved of itself. A man who had been digging in his garden ran away from fright at these extraordinary appearances. Soon a fissure, larger than all the others, was observed; insensibly it increased; springs of water ceased all at once to flow; the pine-trees of the forest absolutely reeled; birds flew away screaming. A few minutes before five o'clock, the symptoms of some mighty catastrophe became still stronger; the whole surface of the mountain seemed to glide down, but so slowly as to afford time to the inhabitants to get away." Some of them took timely warning by these strange appearances, and escaped; but others either remained altogether heedless of such premonitions, or persuaded themselves that the danger was remote, and so remained to perish in the final launch of the mighty mass which had thus admonished them of the first steps in its downward progress.

One old man, familiar with the catastrophes which are peculiar to such mountainous regions, had for some time predicted an approaching disaster, though he did not anticipate its speedy

accomplishment. He was quietly seated, smoking his pipe at the door of his cottage, when a young man, running by, paused for a moment to warn him that the mountain was in the act of falling. The old man rose and looked about him, but he had already familiarized himself with the evidences of approaching danger, and now composedly returned to his cottage, with the remark that he had time to fill another pipe. The youth, meanwhile, continued his flight; he was thrown down several times, and escaped with difficulty; but, pausing for a moment, to look back on the scene of destruction from which he was fleeing, he saw the cottage swept down in an instant before the tremendous avalanche, and no trace of it or its owner was ever again seen.

The experience of the inhabitants of another cottage situated within the range of the falling mountain no less strikingly illustrates the sudden and fearful violence of the catastrophe. The cottager had been alarmed by the strange indications of some unwonted phenomena about to transpire; and taking two of his children by the hand, he fled with them, calling on his wife to follow with a third. His wife, however, instead of at once seeking safety for herself, turned back for their fourth child, a little girl named Marianne, aged five, who still remained behind. Just then their

servant, Francesca Ulrich, had heard the sounds of approaching danger and the warning shouts of her master, and was crossing the room with Marianne in her arms as her mistress entered. At that instant, as she afterwards related, the house, which was of wood, appeared to be torn from its foundations, and spun round and round like a teetotum. She was sometimes on her head, and sometimes on her feet, in total darkness, and was violently separated from the child. When the motion at length ceased, she found herself jammed in on all sides, with her head downwards, much bruised and hurt, and in extreme pain. She was bleeding in various parts, and it was only after a considerable time, and with much difficulty, that she succeeded in disengaging her right hand, and was thus enabled to wipe the blood from her eyes. But she still lay in a painfully constrained position, and with her head downwards.

After a little time, continues the narrator, who derived his narrative from her own lips, she heard the faint moans of Marianne, and called to her by her name. The child answered to her inquiries: that she was on her back among stones and bushes, which held her fast, but that her hands were free, and she saw the light, and even something green. Marianne then asked her whether people would not soon come to take them out, but Francesca

answered that it was the day of judgment, and no one was left to help them, but that they would soon be released by death, and be happy in heaven. They then prayed together, and she strove to reconcile her own mind, and that of her little fellow-sufferer, to the great change which she believed so speedily awaited them. At length Francesca was struck with the sound of a bell which she knew to be that of Stenenberg; then seven o'clock struck in another village, and she began to hope there were still other living beings besides themselves, and endeavoured to comfort the child. Poor little Marianne, however, could not be reconciled to her painful position by any prospect of future release. She was at first clamorous for her supper, but her cries soon became fainter, and at last quite died away. Francesca still lay jammed in with her head downwards, and surrounded with damp earth; she experienced a sense of cold in her feet which became almost insupportable, but after prodigious efforts she at length succeeded in disengaging her legs, and to this she afterwards ascribed the saving of her life. Many hours passed away without any appearance of succour, when she again heard the voice of Marianne, who had been asleep, and now renewed her lamentations.

Meanwhile, the father had fled with the two

elder children, and with much difficulty, and after many hairbreadth escapes, he succeeded in bearing them beyond the range of the frightful torrent of rocks and soil, which swept everything indiscriminately before it. Having placed the two children in safety, he returned to seek for the others, and wandered about the whole night, searching in vain in the darkness for any traces or the dwelling which had so recently sheltered his family. When daylight returned, he at length traced out the ruins of his cottage, which had been swept to a distance of about fifteen hundred feet from its original site. He then commenced his melancholy search among the ruins; and soon discovered his wife, by a foot which appeared above ground. She lay dead with the child in her arms that he had called her to rescue. His exclamations of grief, and the noise he made in digging among the ruins, soon attracted the attention of Marianne, who was at no great distance, and her cries guided him to the place where she lay. The poor little girl was at length extricated with a broken thigh, and gave notice to her father that Francesca lay beneath the ruins, not far from the spot. A further search led to her recovery also, but she was by that time in such a state that life was despaired of. She had suffered severe injury from being kept so long with her head down. She was

entirely blind for some days, and remained subject to convulsive fits of terror.

The fall of the Rossberg was, to all appearance, occasioned by the softening of some of the earthy strata into mud, from the continuous percolation of water during an unusually rainy season, so that the upper mass ceased to adhere to that below, and after gradually sliding forward, and occasioning the singular appearances already described, arising from the compression of the lower soil, it at length gave way, and was hurled down the slope of the mountain with the velocity of a cannon-ball. With the vast masses of rock, torrents of mud came down, acting as rollers; but on reaching the valley they took a different direction, the mud following the slope of the ground towards the Lake of Lowertz, while the rocks swept in a straight course right across the valley, and were borne along with such impetus, that many of them were carried a considerable way up the opposite side. It was by this means that the village of Goldau, on the Righi, was destroyed. The low ground at the base of that mountain is covered with piles of shattered rock to a great depth, and large blocks lie scattered over its sides to an incredible height, proving the tremendous velocity with which they had swept into the valley below.

In another direction, a mass of earth and stones was borne along with such velocity, that it rushed, *en masse*, into the Lake of Lowertz, at a distance of five miles from the scene of the primary catastrophe, filling up entirely one end of the lake, and displacing such a volume of water, that a prodigious wave swept completely over the island of Schwanau, seventy feet above its usual level, and then, rushing high over the opposite shore, in its recoil it carried off many of the houses, with their inhabitants, into the lake. The chapel of Olten, built of wood, was swept away by the water, and afterwards found half a league distant from its original site.

Some of the escapes were truly remarkable. One peasant, with his wife and child, were overwhelmed by the frightful avalanche of rocks and soil, before they could escape from their cottage. But it seemed to have been borne up on the top of the irresistible torrent, or swept before it, along with the whole area on which it stood; and after being carried along with fearful velocity for upwards of a thousand feet, the whole family escaped uninjured. In another place, a child two years old was found unhurt, lying on its straw mattress upon the mud, without any vestige of the house in which it had lain when the event occurred, from which it so wonderfully escaped. But such

instances of escape were extremely few. One hundred and eleven houses were carried away, or buried under torrents of rocks and mud, along with four hundred and fifty-seven of their inhabitants; and of the great majority of these no trace even of their remains were ever recovered.

The whole aspect of the district has been changed by this event. A few straggling cottages occupy the site where formerly six populous villages enlivened the scene. A vast extent of flat, and nearly barren and desolate shore, marks the encroachment on the Lake of Lowertz; and some of the roads formerly leading to the busy villages of the Rossberg may now be followed till they abruptly terminate on the edge of a precipice, or amid a chaotic pile of rocks and stones. M. Simond, describing the scene eleven years after the catastrophe occurred, observes:—"I noticed that the portion of the strata at the top of the Rossberg, which slid down into the valley, is certainly less than the chaotic accumulation below; and I have no doubt that a considerable part of it comes from the soil of the valley itself, ploughed up and thrown into ridges like the waves of the sea, and hurled to prodigious distances by the impulses of the descending mass, plunging upon it with a force not very inferior to that of a cannon-ball." Such accidents have repeatedly occurred

among the Swiss Alps, with various degrees of disastrous effect, and are such as the inhabitants of all mountainous regions must be more or less liable to. In 1801, a mass of rock, about twelve hundred feet wide, fell from the face of the Frohn Alp, about two miles to the north of the Tellensprung. Dashing down into the lake below, it raised such a wave as sufficed to overwhelm the village of Lissingen, at the distance of a mile, and swept away five houses, with eleven of the inhabitants, while the swell was felt at Lucerne, thirty miles off. In like manner, the destruction of the old Roman town of Lousonne, the ancient Lausaine, is recorded to have taken place some thirteen centuries ago, by a sudden swell on the lake, occasioned by the fall of a mountain mass on the Meillire side, at a distance of upwards of thirteen miles. All the towns and villages along the shore of the lake were overwhelmed in the same sudden catastrophe, and the discoveries consequent on the excavations requisite for modern buildings and other works, frequently bring to light the traces of ancient structures, and the sites of the old towns, swept away or buried by the operations of the flood originating in this ancient avalanche of rocks.

INUNDATION OF THE VAL DE BAGNES.

In many of the higher valleys of the Alps, that singular accumulation of ice takes place which is now familiar to all under the name of glacier. It may be simply described as a river of ice, flowing down in its solid state by the force of the pressure above and behind, and by this means frequently extending far below the line of perpetual snow, and protruding its frozen mass into the midst of warm pine-clad slopes and green sward, or even encroaching on the regions of cultivation.

The existence of accumulated, and apparently undiminishing masses of ice far below the line where it is ordinarily melted by the summer's heat, seems to present a singular variation from the usual operation of natural laws. Not only does the glacier reach far below the line of perpetual congelation; the very huts of the peasantry are sometimes invaded by it, and Professor Forbes remarks, in his travels through the Alps of Savoy, "Many persons now living have seen the full ears of corn touching the glacier, or gathered ripe cherries from the tree with one foot standing on the ice." This singular phenomenon admits of easy explanation. Professor Forbes observes of it:— "The existence of the glacier in comparatively

warm and sheltered situations, exposed to every influence which can ensure and accelerate its liquefaction, can only be accounted for by supposing that the ice is pressed onwards by some secret spring, that its daily waste is renewed by its daily descent, and that the termination of the glacier, which presents a seeming immoveable barrier, or crystal wall, is, in fact, perpetually changing; a stationary form, of which the substance wastes; a thing permanent in the act of dissolution."

These frozen torrents form the source and feeders of the great rivers that rise in the Alps. The heat of the valley, by thawing the ice, produces a stream of ice-cold water which issues from beneath its extremity, and by gradually undermining, at length wears out a lofty cavern, from beneath which the stream rolls into the channel washed by it in the lower valley, below the edge of the glacier. One singular result of this source of the great Alpine rivers is, that their period of flood occurs in the hottest season, when smaller streams are dry. The heat of the sun in midsummer, as well as its mild rain, rapidly melts the surface, and thus largely contributes its streams to augment the flood pouring out at the lower edge of the glacier. No sooner is the sun set, than the rapid chill of evening again reduces the temperature of the air to the freezing point.

and soon the murmur of the gushing rivulets and the roar of the waterfalls subside, so that by the time the sun once more casts its rays on the icy stream, the same death-like stillness prevails as in the long night of winter. It sometimes happens, however, that this regular and systematic process of drainage of the melting glaciers is interrupted, and then the most disastrous consequences ensue. Such was the case in the Val de Bagnes in 1595, when the whole town of Martigny was destroyed; and a nearly similar catastrophe again occurred during the present century, completely changing the whole aspect of the valley, and involving an immense destruction of property, as well as much loss of life.

The Val de Bagnes, one of the lateral branches of the great valley of the Rhone, above the Lake of Geneva, is situated in the canton of Valais, on the left side of the Rhone. The glacier of Chermontane, at the upper extremity of this valley, forms one of the outlets of that series of glaciers which extend a distance of forty leagues, from Mont Blanc to the sources of the Rhone. By the Col de Fenêtres, between the summit of Mont Gelé and Mont Avril, to which one of the great arms of this glacier extends, the reformer Calvin made his escape in 1541, when flying from persecution in Aosta, where he had established his

quarters for some years. The Val de Bagnes is long, narrow, and of great inequality in breadth, and shut in along its sides by high and steep mountains. The torrents of the Dranse, one of the great tributaries of the Rhone, issues from the glacier of Chermontane. Like other streams flowing from a similar source, it is nearly dry in winter, but begins to rise with the first melting of the snow in spring, and attains to its greatest flood in the height of summer. The attention of the people of the valley was first attracted to the occurrence of some unwonted obstruction by the channel of the Dranse continuing nearly dry as late as the month of April. Suspecting something extraordinary, they ascended to its source, and found that an unusual quantity of ice, and avalanches of snow, had fallen from the glacier of Getroz on Mount Pleureur. This progressive obstruction went on for several years, the first accumulation serving to arrest the succeeding masses of ice and snow detached from the glacier; and as it soon acquired such a mass and consistency as effectually to resist the heats of summer, it attained large accessions each successive winter, till it became a homogenous mass of ice of a conical form, blocking up the valley, and crossing it obliquely, like a great dyke or artificial dam. The waters of the Dranse, however, continued to preserve an

open channel beneath this icy cone till the month of April 1818, when the attention of the inhabitants of the lower valley was attracted by the almost total interruption of the usual flow of water in the channel of the stream.

Upon the report that the valley was entirely blocked up, and the waters of the Dranse were accumulating behind the great barrier of ice, and forming a large lake, the utmost alarm was spread, not only throughout the canton of Valais, but even in Italy. The period of greatest flow of water had not yet arrived, so that a much greater accumulation was to be anticipated before it found an outlet; and it was seen, that should the ice give way, as was to be anticipated, under the weight of such a mass of water, there would be a sudden inundation, which must devastate the whole country. Travellers, accordingly, deserted the route of the Simplon, and such of the inhabitants of the valley as were able, made preparations for removing beyond the reach of the threatened deluge. The attention of the government being now called to the danger, M. Venetz, an experienced engineer, was employed to inspect it, and take such steps as might be available for preventing a sudden influx of the water. It was found that the dyke across the valley was between six and seven hundred feet in length, four hundred feet high,

and three thousand feet broad at its base. The lake was seven thousand two hundred feet in length, and six hundred feet in breadth, and had already risen two hundred feet in height. It was resolved to cut a gallery through the ice for the purpose of effecting a gradual discharge; and M. Venetz decided on beginning it fifty-four feet above the level of the lake, which he found to be increasing at the rate of from four to five feet in depth daily. By this means he hoped to have time to finish the gallery before the water rose to that height, when it might be expected to deepen it by degrees, by the action of its own current, and thus permit the gradual drainage of the lake without danger.

On the 11th of May operations were commenced. Two gangs of workmen began to work at opposite extremities of the gallery, fifty men relieving each other alternately, and labouring night and day in continual danger of being buried alive by some of the huge masses of ice which became detached, and fell at short intervals. Several were severely wounded, others had their feet frozen, while the ice was so hard as to break their tools. Notwithstanding all these difficulties, however, the work steadily advanced. On the 27th of May, while the workmen were busy in the gallery, a large portion of the dyke rose upwards with such a

frightful noise, that they believed the whole was giving way, and fled precipitately. The same accident occurred on several occasions afterwards, owing to large masses of ice becoming detached from the main dyke, and floating to the surface. Some of these were estimated to be nearly a hundred feet thick. On the 4th of June the gallery was completed, extending to six hundred and eight feet in length; but it had to be lowered about twenty feet in the centre. The lake was still rising, and continued to do so till the 13th, while the labourers progressed with the work. Towards ten at night they had to abandon it, on the water beginning to flow through the new channel; and though it continued to rise for some hours after, the lake had fallen one foot by five o'clock on the following evening.

While these operations were in progress, from the 10th of May to the 13th of June, the lake had risen sixty-two feet, and when it began to flow through the gallery, its length was from ten to twelve thousand feet, its average breadth at the surface about seven hundred feet, and its contents at least eight hundred millions of cubic feet. The necessity, therefore, for the operations which had been carried on for arresting the further accumulation of water was obvious; and their first effects were altogether beneficial. As soon as the water

entered the gallery in force, it began to wear it gradually down, as had been anticipated, though the experience of the excavators had sufficed to show how little confidence could be reposed in the apparent coherence of the mass, when once it began to give way. Twenty-four hours after the water entered the gallery the lake had been diminished thirty-seven feet, and on the 16th June the total diminution was forty-five feet, so that up to that period the operations of M. Venetz had effected the reduction of the lake by fully two hundred and seventy millions of cubic feet. At mid-day on the 16th of June the length of the lake was diminished nearly two thousand feet; and as the gallery continued to wear down as fast as the lake lowered, the water ran freely, filling the full channel of the Dranse, and promising to drain off the whole natural reservoir in a few days. The water, however, continued to penetrate the crevices of the ice, and to detach enormous fragments from the lower side of the dyke. Loud explosions also announced from time to time that large masses were being loosened from within by their specific lightness, so that the strength of the barrier was rapidly reduced, and the danger of its suddenly giving way became so imminent, that M. Venetz sent from time to time to warn the inhabitants of the valley of their danger. The

cascade, meanwhile, cutting through the ice on one side, attacked the debris on which it rested, and thus working in a soft soil it speedily undermined the dyke of ice.

It now became evident that the crisis was inevitable, and not far distant. At half-past four in the afternoon of the 16th a terrible explosion announced the breaking up of the dyke, and the waters of the lake rushing through all at once, formed an irresistible torrent one hundred feet in depth, which traversed the first eighteen miles in the space of forty minutes, sweeping before it a whole forest, an immense quantity of earth and stones, and the wreck of one hundred and thirty cottages, which it had carried away in its progress. When the torrent reached Bagne, the ruins of all descriptions carried along with it formed a moving mountain three hundred feet high, from which a column of thick vapour arose, like the smoke of a great furnace.

An English traveller, accompanied by a young artist of Lausanne, and a guide, visited the works of M. Venetz on the morning of the 16th of June, and on his return was approaching Bagne, when, turning round by chance, he saw the frightful object just described coming down the valley, the noise of which had been drowned in the nearer roar of the Dranse. He spurred on his horse to

warn his companions, as well as three other travellers who had joined them. They all dismounted, and scrambling precipitately up the mountain, arrived in safety above the reach of the deluge, which in an instant filled the valley. The artist was alone missing, and was believed to have perished; but being mounted on a mule, it had taken alarm at the approach of the moving mass, and dashing up the steep side of the valley, carried both itself and its rider out of danger.

In the next four leagues, extending from Bagne to Martigny, the flood bore away thirty-five dwelling-houses, eight wind mills, and ninety-five barns. The inhabitants had, for the most part, taken timely warning, and removed with their cattle. Only nine persons, along with a few cattle, were carried off in this second stage of its progress. At Martigny eighty buildings were destroyed, and many more injured. The streets were blocked up with trees and soil, and thirty-four persons who had remained in the town perished. The flood at length reached the Rhone, and was lost in the larger expanse of the Lake of Geneva; but all the bridges were swept away in its course. and the inhabitants of the two sides of the valley entirely cut off from all intercourse for some time. Upwards of thirty years, which have passed since this catastrophe occurred, have not sufficed to restore the valley to its former fertility.

ASCENT OF MONT BLANC.

Dr. Martin Barry, one of the few enterprizing travellers who have successfully surmounted the difficulties of an ascent to the summit of Mont Blanc, has given the following succinct account of the earlier attempts to accomplish the same end, derived chiefly from the writings of Saussure and Ebel:—

"Notwithstanding the great extent of this mountain, it can be approached from scarcely any side. On the south, south-west, and south-east, vast walls of rocks—abrupt, and many thousand feet in height—render it absolutely inaccessible; on the north, north-east, and north-west, it is surrounded by monstrous glaciers, walls of ice, precipices, and treacherous snows.

In 1760 and 1761, Saussure promised a considerable reward to those who should discover any way by which it might be possible to attain the summit; offering even day-wages to those whose attempts should be unsuccessful.

In 1762, Pierre Simon, of Chamonix, made the first attempt, by the glacier des Bossons, and also by that of Tacul; but without success.

In 1775, four men tried it by the mountain of La Côte, which lies between the glaciers of Bos-

sons and Taconnaz. They then entered a great snow-valley, which appeared to lead directly to the summit. Everything seemed to promise them success; they had the finest weather—they met with neither too broad fissures, nor too steep acclivities. But the sun's rays, reflected from the snow, and the 'stagnation of the air' in that valley, caused them to experience, they said, a suffocating heat, and gave them at the same time such a distaste for their provisions, that, overcome with fasting and fatigue, they had to retrace their steps, without having encountered any visible and insurmountable obstacle. It appeared, too, that they had made great efforts, from the effects of which they all subsequently suffered.

In 1783, another attempt was made by three guides of Chamonix; Jean Marie Couttet—Lombard Menier, called "Jorasse"—and Joseph Carrier; who, following the same route, passed a night on the mountain of La Côte, traversed the glacier, and proceeded up the same valley of snow. They had reached a tolerable height, when one of them —the most hardy and robust of the three—was seized almost suddenly, with a desire to sleep that was irresistible. He wished the others to leave him, and go forward; but persuaded that he would in such case, 'die of a *coup de soleil*,' they preferred to abandon the enterprise, and returned.

They were all excessively oppressed by the heat —had no inclination to eat—and, what is remarkable, none for wine. One of them seriously told Saussure, that it was useless to carry any provisions on this journey; and that if he had to go again, he would take nothing but a parasol and a bottle of scent. 'When,' says Saussure, 'I imagined this great and robust mountaineer ascending those snows, holding in one hand a parasol, and in the other a bottle of *eau sans pareille*, it appeared so strange and ridiculous, that nothing could have presented more forcibly the difficulty of this enterprise—and consequently the absolute impossibility of success—for men who have neither the head nor the legs of a good guide of Chamonix.'

Nevertheless, the naturalist Bourrit, of Geneva, tried it at the end of the same season, 1783, but was driven back by a storm. 'For my part,' says Saussure, 'after the information I had received from those who had attacked the mountain from that side, I regarded success as absolutely impossible; and it was the opinion of all the *gens sensés* of Chamonix.'

The year following, in September, 1784, Bourrit endeavoured to ascend the mountain from the western side; but extreme cold and fatigue overcame him. Two of his guides, however,

chamois hunters, continued to ascend. Bourrit saw them in the midst of the high snows; and on their return they declared that they had proceeded to within sixty toises (nearly four hundred English feet) of the highest point.

In 1785, Saussure, Bourrit, and the son of the latter, made a new attempt, attended by fifteen guides. They set off in September from Bionassay, and directed their course north-east, by Pierre-ronde, to the foot of the Aiguille du Goûté, where they passed the night. The next day they ascended thisaiguille; but the snow was so soft that they could not proceed further. The heat was insupportable, although the thermometer in the shade indicated only 37°.6, and in the sun not more than 42°.5 Fahrenheit.

In 1786, in the month of June, six men of Chamonix attempted it; but fatigue and other circumstances constrained them to renounce the enterprize. One of them, Jacques Balmat, strayed from the party, in quest of minerals, on a rock projecting through the snow, and was obliged to pass the night alone, in a storm, upon the glacier. The vigour of youth saved his life. In the morning he perceived the summit at no great distance; and, by perseverance that was wonderful, found out a way by which it appeared to him accessible.

Jacques Balmat and Dr. Paccard were the

first who attained the summit of Mont Blanc. This was in the same year, 1786. On the 7th of August they set off together from Chamonix, and proceeded to the top of the mountain of La Côte, where they passed the night. The following day, at four A.M., they entered upon the fields of ice. At three P.M. they were still ignorant what would be the success of their enterprize. The doctor was greatly affected by fatigue and cold, and Balmat did not cease to encourage him. At length they perceived yet a summit above them, without knowing whether it was the last or not. At half-past six they attained the most elevated point, in sight of all Chamonix, and of many strangers, who followed their track by means of telescopes. At seven they quitted the summit—reached at midnight the mountain of La Côte, their resting-place the night before, where they now took two hours of repose; and arrived at Chamonix at eight in the morning of the 9th —after having passed twenty successive hours on the ice, their faces greatly swollen, and their eyes in very bad condition. The King of Sardinia made Balmat a present; and M. de Gersdorf—a Saxon gentleman then at Chamonix—on returning home, raised a subscription, and sent to M. Bourrit seventeen louis for Balmat, who has been surnamed 'Mont Blanc.'

The illustrious Saussure attempted, immediately afterwards, to follow the track of the brave Balmat and Dr. Paccard. He set off for La Côte, accompanied by seventeen guides; but was driven back by bad weather.

The following year, 1787, Saussure, having previously engaged Balmat to reconnoitre the state of the ice, left Chamonix at seven A.M. on the 1st of August, with a servant and eighteen guides (of whom Jacques Balmat was the principal), provided with instruments, a tent, a bed, ladders, ropes, provisions, straw, &c. The party passed the night upon the mountain of La Côte. The next day, at four P.M., they reached the middle Plateau —passing there the second night—and set forward again the next morning. At eight A.M., August 3rd, all Chamonix saw the party advancing towards the last heights; and all the bells in the village were rung when the summit was attained. Madame de Saussure and her two sisters followed the track of the naturalist by means of telescopes.

M. Bourrit set off immediately, but bad weather drove him back.

The following year, 1788, M. Bourrit made yet another trial, with his son and Messrs. Woodley and Camper—the former English, the latter Dutch. Woodley alone reached the summit, but

had both his hands and feet frozen: this happened also to the fingers and toes of others of the party. Thus it appears that Bourrit himself never attained the summit of the mountain, though it would seem to have been partly through his indefatigable zeal that Saussure was induced to persevere."

From the year 1786, when Dr. Paccard, with his guide, Jacques Balmat, accomplished the ascent of Mont Blanc, to 1834, when Dr. Barry accomplished the same feat, sixteen separate ascents were made. Of those who accomplished this feat, singly or in parties, eleven were Englishmen, three natives of Switzerland, two Americans, one German, one Pole, one Russian, and one Scotsman, exclusive of the guides by whom they were accompanied. Both those, and others who have attempted unsuccessfully the same feat, have encountered great dangers, occasionally attended with fatal results. Dr. Clarke has furnished the following narrative of the fatal effects of an avalanche, which overwhelmed a party accompanying Dr. Hamel in his attempt to reach the summit of the mountain:—

"We had now," says Dr. Clarke, in describing his own ascent, "not quite a mile to proceed, before arriving at the spot where the sad catastrophe occurred in 1820. This circumstance threw an air of seriousness into all faces. Our captain, Couttet, and brave Julien, had both most

narrowly escaped death; nor could they approach the grave of their unhappy comrades without emotion. Julien gave a very clear and minute account of this disaster, which I wrote down immediately from his lips. The party had breakfasted on the Grand Plateau, near the spot at which we halted. They then traversed the plain, and began to ascend the highest steeps of the mountain, called among the guides La Calotte de Mont Blanc. In proceeding obliquely upward, they approached a dark rock, which we saw above us deeply embedded in the snow. 'The order of march,' said Julien, 'was this:—At the moment of the disaster, the leading guide was Pierre Cairreiz; second, Pierre Balmat; third, Auguste Tairraz (these three perished); then, fourth, *moi* (Julien Devouasssou); then, next to me, Marie Couttet (our captain); then, behind, were five other guides, with Dr. Hamel (a Russian physician), and two English gentlemen. Suddenly, said he, I heard a sort of rushing sound, not very loud, but I had no time to think about it; for, as I heard the sound, at the same instant the avalanche was upon us. I felt my feet slide from beneath me, and saw the three first men fallen upon the snow with their feet foremost. In falling, I cried out loudly, 'We are all lost!' I tried to support myself by planting the ice-pole below me, but in

vain. The weight of snow forced me over the bâton, and it slipped out of my hand. I rolled down like a ball, in the mass of loose snow. At the foot of the slope was a yawning chasm, to the edge of which I was rapidly descending. Three times I saw the light, as I was rolling down the slope; and, when we were all on the very edge of the chasm, I saw the leg of one of my comrades, just as he pitched down into the crevice. I think it must have been poor Auguste, for it looked black, and I remember that Auguste had on black gaiters. This was the last I saw of my three companions, who fell headlong into the gulf, and were never seen nor heard again.

'At this moment I was just falling into the same crevice, and can but confusedly understand why I did not: but I think I owe my life to a very singular circumstance. Dr. Hamel had given me a barometer to carry; this was fastened round my waist by a strong girdle. I fancy that at the moment this long barometer got beneath and across me; for the girdle suddenly broke, and I made a sort of bound as I fell; and so, instead of following my poor comrades, I was pushed over into another crevice close to that in which they were killed. This chasm was already partly filled with snow: I do not think I fell more than fifty feet down, alighting on a soft cushion of snow, and

a good deal covered with it above. I suppose before tumbling into the chasm, we slid down from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet; but I cannot tell, for it seemed to me not more than a minute from the time I heard the noise of the avalanche above me, till I found myself lying deep down in a narrow crack.' All estimate of distances in such circumstances must, of course, be rude guesses. Couttet's reply to the same question was this: 'I should fancy I slid down near four hundred feet, and tumbled headlong about sixty feet.' I asked Julien what his thoughts were during this awkward tumble. His reply was in these words; 'While we were rolling down, I said to myself, I am lost! farewell my wife and children! and I asked pardon of God. I did not think anything about the others.'

'On coming to myself,' continued honest Julien, I was better off than I had expected. I was lying on my back, heels upwards, with my head resting against the icy walls of the crack, and I could see some light and a little of the blue sky through two openings over my head. I was greatly afraid that some of my limbs had been broken, but I had sunk into the mass of soft snow, and though bruised by falling against the sides of the ice, yet nothing was broken, and in a few moments I contrived to get up on my feet. On

looking up, I saw a little above me a man's head projecting from the snow. It was Marie Couttet (our captain): he was quite covered with snow up to the neck, his arms pinioned down, and his face quite blue, as if he was nearly suffocated. He called to me in a low voice to come and help him. I found a pole in the crevice (I think not one that had belonged to the three who perished, but another): I went to Couttet, dug round him with the bâton, and in a few minutes I got Couttet clear of the snow, and we sat down together. We remained in silence, looking at each other for a minute or two, thinking that all the rest were killed. Then I began to crawl up on the snow that partly filled the crack; and, in climbing up, I saw above me David Couttet, who was crying, and saying, 'My poor brother is lost!' I said, 'No! he is here behind us—' (Couttet was climbing behind Julien, and so not seen at first): and I then said, 'Are the others all above?' He then said that three were amissing, and on my demanding who they were, he named Pierre Cairriez, Pierre Balmat, and Auguste Tairraz. We then inquired if any of the gentlemen had been hurt, and learned that they were so far. Then the guides helped us to get up about fourteen feet on the solid ice. They threw us down a little axe

to cut steps, and put down the end of their poles, and we got out.

'We all went to search for the three others: we sounded with our poles, we cried aloud, we called them by their names, put down a long pole into the snow, and listened; but all was in vain, we heard not the slightest sound. We spent two hours in this melancholy search, and by this time were well-nigh frozen, for the wind was bitterly cold, our poles covered with ice, our shoes frozen as hard as horn. We were compelled to descend; we hurried down in perfect silence, and returned to the inn late at night.'

The three poor men were all unmarried. Pierre Cairriez was a blacksmith, and his family depended on him for their main support. Julien drew a very simple but touching picture of the scene of sorrow presented when the fatal news became known to the surviving friends. These rugged brave mountaineers would face death themselves unmoved, but it was with a low voice and a glistening eye that allusion was made to the fate of their comrades, and the grief it had occasioned. The two English gentlemen contributed very generously to the relief of the distressed families.

Worthy Simeon confirmed his brother's nar-

rative, and gave me all the particulars that fell under his own eye. He described most affectionately the despair of the bereaved friends. He tried to look perfectly unmoved, and seemed ashamed of his emotion. Yet this fine brave fellow could hardly keep from tears as he said, 'The mother of Pierre Balmat abandoned herself to grief. Within three months she died.'"

This painful accident was not, properly speaking, occasioned by a true avalanche, but by a slighter change, of frequent occurrence in such regions, occasioned by the uppermost stratum of new snow slipping on the old. It was found to have very little exceeded a foot in depth, but it extended over a surface of nearly two hundred feet square, and when hurled into a narrow chasm would bury those who fell below it to a depth of many feet.

The following account of the latest ascent of Mont Blanc, accomplished by Mr. J. D. H. Browne, in company with Mr. Alfred Goodall, an officer of engineers, in the month of July of the present year, 1852, was communicated by him in a letter to the *Times* newspaper:—

When I arrived at Lucerne, he observes, I had little notion of attempting to ascend to the summit of Mont Blanc; but here I heard such glowing accounts of the scenery from the summit, that I

determined to undertake an expedition to the top, full of the idea that, if I could reach it in tolerably good condition, I might—being something of a draftsman—make sketches enough to give some idea of the nature of the view, which, from such an elevation, could have no parallel in Europe. I fully tested my powers of endurance in a walk from Lucerne to this village, including some of the finest scenery, and also the hardest walking, in Switzerland. I remained at Chamonix for some days, looking out for propitious weather. It is necessary to wait at least two days of fine weather before setting out, to allow the snow to consolidate and afford firm footing. While at Chamonix I found an Englishman, who declared himself able and willing to share the fatigue and excitement of the undertaking. Accordingly, Mr. Alfred Goodall, of the Engineers, and myself, set forth from Chamonix at half-past seven last Monday morning. The chief guide (elected every season by the company of guides) selects the proper guides for the expedition. Each traveller is compelled to take at least four guides, and as many more as he chooses. The pay of each guide is 100f., and the traveller furnishes all provisions. At eleven the whole cavalcade had reached the Pierre de l'Echelle, or land's-end of the mountain, and here, on the top of a huge stone, the caravan set to

feasting—in all a party of nineteen, for each guide has his porter, and we had a volunteer guide besides. The subject of conversation now became how far the porters were to accompany the guides over the ice; this point and the meal having been settled, we struck out on the Glacier de Bosson, and having marched through pretty deep snow, the porters, in about an hour, turned back, and the guides took the whole of the burdens, consisting of the remainder of our provisions, and some wood for our fire on the Grands Mulets. This wood is picked up on the way through the forest of fir trees. I was apprehensive of some accident to men thus heavily laden, and presently, as we were scaling a most awkward block of ice, down went Favret, load and all, into a crevasse, and but for his long protruding faggots of wood which stuck on either side of the crevasse, he would have gone to a great depth. He was soon hauled up amid a volley of *sacres*, and apparently greatly pleased with his adventure, he strode on. Devouassond, Cachat, and Frasserand took their turns in clearing the way, and after floundering in deep snow till half-past four, we reached the Grands Mulets, consisting of several chaotic pyramids of great size. The ladder we left sticking in the snow below. We immediately set to work drying ourselves and dressing for the grand effort of the

night and morrow. Having sent out three guides to explore the track, we began once more to attack the provisions, and when the party returned we were all exceedingly pleasant together, and managed to turn to and sleep for three hours. At eleven we swallowed some tea, and at half-past two lanterns were lighted, and the snow being pretty well frozen during the night, we walked more easily. All were tied together about five feet apart, and we followed the leader, who struck forth into the white gloom. In an hour and a half we came to where the traces of the reconnoitring party ceased, and another half hour brought us to a region of terrible crevasses. We were brought to a halt, and the usual passage was declared impracticable; exploring parties were again detached, and we stood watching Devouassond, Cachat, and Frasserand, as they skirted along the edge of the crevasse to the left, thrusting their staffs into the hollow, and peering on every side with the lantern. They returned without success. On our return in daylight we saw what a terrible place we were attempting. Devouassond began to fear that no passage existed; but I told him that to go back was impossible, and so we lay to once more, waiting for the sun to dispel the great darkness. At half-past three Devouassond went away to the right with Frasserand and Mr. Goodall, and the in-

creasing light showed us a narrow bridge at the foot of the Dome de Gouté. We joyfully crept along this slender bridge of ice, and reached the other side. While we waited for the sun, the scenes were of ghastly grandeur. Leagues above us the summit and the Dome de Gouté were tipped with the moonlight, and stood out like comets in the black sky, while behind, on the opposite side of the valley of Chamonix, along the range of Brevent, the whole of Mont Blanc's shadow in the moonlight was reflected. No pictorial effort could convey the solemn majesty of this scene. When the sun began to rise in deep red over the wall of mountains, the scene was still more grand; the precipitous cliffs of the Géant, bearing up the fortresses of ice, cut the golden sky with their black edges; and while on one side scarcely any light appeared in the sky, the other was in hard relief against its brilliancy. The Dome de Gouté, now opposite the sun, was a mass of gorgeous violet colour, which, being reflected on the prominences of emerald green ice on the plain before us, gave a variety and peculiarity that, if correctly described, would sound like a magic illusion—it seemed like walking on a huge prism; and had I been able to sleep a wink the night before leaving Chamonix, I could not have resisted the temptation of trying to make

some representation of the scene on my roll of paper. The snow was still hard, and we walked on over the Petit Plateau in silence, and winding up a steep ascent came to the Grand Plateau—a vast plain of a semicircular form, the circular side being surrounded by cliffs of ice and snow. The Grand Plateau seemed to me about the length of Eaton Square, but broader. We were there at half-past five, and came to a halt and partook of some refreshments and wine, which we took from the Grands Mulets; and after giving vent to our exultation, hitherto suppressed, we set to once more on the fowls and wine. Here I felt a horrible nausea, worse than sea-sickness: I could not eat, though Mr. Goodall declared he could not do otherwise. We all, however, enjoyed the wine, and then with cheerful minds crossed this great expanse of ice, and were told to hurry over the ditch that separated the wall before us, which we were about to climb. Simon now took the long pole-axe, with a hatchet on one side and a bent spike on the other, and began smashing the ice quickly and cleverly. Though but a flimsy staircase, we went all the faster, being as good on our feet as any of the guides. This was a severe pull; and after some hard work in the ravines, we came out on La Vallée, the largest field we had seen, wider than the length of the Plateau, and stretch-

ing in an inclination above us like the horizon of the ocean. We were now to look out for the mountains of the opposite side of Mont Blanc—namely, the Great St. Bernard and the Bernese Alps; they were long in appearing; at last, like land at sea, they showed above this wearisome Vallée. To the left of our line was the Géant and the Mont Maudit, which formed one horn, while the terrible Mur de la Côte formed the other horn, to the right of the crescent in which we stood, as regards our right and left, though it formed a dome as regards our line of march.

Here the air was very scanty, and the inclination to drowsiness was strongly felt; superfluous clothing was now thrown aside, and we began to climb the Côte in a straight line over its centre, on an angle of forty degrees at the least. The Côte was mostly snow, and we at last crawled to its summit, when, behold, before us the last and highest dome of the mountain appeared. I looked nowhere, except at the way I was to go, and went over the last valley behind old Tournier, who was first. I cast myself loose from the rest, and with our remaining strength we attacked our last difficulty. This dome, indeed, looked like Mont Blanc in itself; but its symmetrical form—a perfect pyramid, I should think about as high as St. Paul's—was assurance that here was the

Monarch's Crown indeed. A small rock protruded from the middle of the ascent, and thither I told Tournier to cut the steps. The inclination was steep, but here the footing was of the firmest and clearest ice. Another half hour, we were told, would bring us to the top. I tightened my rope, and told Tournier he should have five francs to let me pull myself after him. I did so for a few minutes, while he hewed the steps in the ice, which sometimes came out in one block, and went rattling down the dome with a noise like a loose tile from the top of a house roof. I and Tournier were some yards before the others, when Frasserand, seeing the desperate work of Tournier, wanted to go before and take his turn at the axe; but Tournier said, doggedly, "*C'est impossible,*" and on we went. At length we lay down on the ice, declaring we would sleep ten minutes; but Tournier would not listen to this. He said, "Three minutes more, and we are on the summit." I got up, and am glad to recollect that I pulled old Tournier after me this time, and sure enough the top was reached. I was astonished at the rate at which Mr. Goodall and Frasserand came after us. Throughout the ascent we neither of us required the slightest help, except where we crossed over obstructions, and when the awful words "*Place! Place!*" were given, we were on

foot in a moment; for on the Valée and the Côte we were obliged to lie down occasionally, and felt strongly inclined to sleep.

Mr. Goodall called for refreshments on reaching the summit, and did not appear to suffer throughout the whole ascent. I had felt nothing since the Grand Plateau, and now I began to look abroad.

The summit extends about seventy yards, running east and west, the west end being some five yards higher than the east. The width is about thirty yards, and the surface was covered with heavy snow, ankle deep. The reflection made the heat intense, while on the last ascent the wind was bitterly cold as it came round the icy dome.

We reached the summit at eleven o'clock, and a flag was erected. All Chamonix was in a state of triumph, and it is said that cannons were going off. After a general survey I sat down, and we produced champagne and drank the health of Queen Victoria.

I turned to my roll of paper, and made Devouasond hold it up. I looked at the paper, then at the astonishing landscape. Fearful to lose time in drawing, I took sketches of a few of the prominent features where the view was clear of clouds, but we were obliged to commence our descent in two hours, for fear of being benighted.

I was as strongly impressed with the view as if I had been looking at it for the whole day. The Bernese Oberland appeared like a mass of mountains packed in clouds; their peaks rose from the clouds, which seemed to fill the villages. Monte Rosa and the Wetter-horn were seen beyond, and on that side no real horizon appeared. To the south were the Genoese mountains, and over them a long purple mist, whether the Mediterranean or not was uncertain. Towards Lyons the clouds were low, and nothing was seen but the line of Jura stretched far, and beyond it the Côte d'Or. Not a vapour obstructed the glare of the sun above us. We were looking, as it were, at many cotemporaneous days. Our own day was fine; that at Lyons appeared otherwise, as also those in the valleys of the Oberland. Beyond Mount Jura the horizon appeared like a sea of faint blue. The Lake of Geneva was distinctly seen by some, but I did not distinguish it. So extraordinary a scene exceeded my expectations, and the time we were on the summit seemed but a few minutes. I took another sketch at the foot of the Côte, and another at our next resting-place, and one the previous evening at the Grands Mulets—in all four; and with them I hope to convey some idea of the wonderful view, and recall to my mind a scene which is rarely enjoyed twice. We commenced

our descent at one, and reached Chamonix at twelve on Tuesday night, having walked within the time we left about thirty-five leagues.

THREE MONTHS UNDER THE SNOWS OF THE JURA MOUNTAINS.

THE shepherds of Switzerland are a brave and hardy race, and from the nature of their avocations are frequently exposed to great dangers. They are, however, so inured to the life they live, that the ordinary perils and adventures which belong to it are looked upon as matters of course; and although often intensely interesting, they rarely find their way beyond the hearths of the villages in which the shepherds' families reside. It sometimes happens, however, that events of so startling and romantic a character transpire, so full of tragic interest, that the noise of their occurrence travels beyond those narrow confines; and it is to one of this class of events that we now purpose directing attention in the narrative which follows.

It is unnecessary to describe the physical characteristics of the country, already so frequently alluded to. It will be well, however, to give some

general outline of that part of it in which the events of the narrative transpired, and to furnish some account of the manners and habits of the peasantry residing in this district of the Alps.

These events occurred on the summit of one of the Jura mountains, which run in chains on the borders of France, and are amongst the grandest in Switzerland. They are intersected by innumerable valleys, wherein the families of the shepherds reside. There is of course, as in all mountainous regions, great variety in the character of the valleys, and in their productions; and this is the case also with the mountains themselves, some of which are lofty and barren, and crowned with an everlasting dome of snow; whilst others are covered with dark woods of oak, beech, or fir trees, or yield excellent pasturage for oxen, cows, and goats. The Swiss peasantry, who have an eye to these things, are always most numerously congregated in the neighbourhood of those mountains which grow the richest stuff for their cattle; for the mountain pastures are their staple dependence, and the shepherds live upon them in little huts, or chalets, as they are called in the language of the country, about five months in the year. These chalets are generally built of stone; the roof is composed of fir slips or of shingles; and immense slabs of rock, or else stone boulders, are piled upon

these shingles to prevent the violent tempests, which often visit these bleak altitudes, from carrying them away in their fierce and implacable wrath. The internal economy of the chalets is very simple, and in accordance with the wants and necessities of the shepherds. They consist of a small stable, where the cattle are foddered at night; a narrow and well-aired dairy, where the milk is kept in pails of white wood; and lastly, of a kitchen, which is mostly used also as a sleeping-room, where the shepherd withdraws nightly to rest, and sleeps soundly on his bed of straw. This kitchen has a large chimney, and under it hangs an enormous caldron, or iron pot, to heat the milk for making cheese, which is a chief occupation with the shepherds during summer on the mountains. They are skilful, likewise, in carving wooden models of Swiss cottages, and a variety of other things in the smallware and fancy line. They make their own tools, furniture, and every kind of household utensil, but these are chiefly their winter occupations. Every shepherd loves his avocation, his mountains, and his flocks; and age after age has passed away and found them faithful to the life, calling, and traditions of their fathers.

The summer is short, and the winter long and dreary. The snows on the mountains begin to

melt generally in May; and no sooner are the summits of their mighty peaks visible, than all the villages in the innumerable valleys are in motion. The men, pent up so long in their narrow houses, yearn after the free air and boundless liberty of the ancient hills, and the cattle, true to their instincts, participate in the general joyous feeling. Then there is a universal holiday in the valleys; the flocks are assembled, the shepherds are equipped for their summer campaign, and song, and dance, and feast, prevail everywhere amongst the villagers. It is their vernal festival, whereby they celebrate their spring enfranchisement from the bonds and terrors of winter. This takes place in May or June, and the shepherds are accompanied to the foot of the mountains, driving their flocks before them, by wives and daughters, sisters, and the gray and venerable old men who are now too old for the adventurous shepherd life. At the feast of St. Dennis, on the 9th of October, the shepherds leave their chalets, and return to their village homes, amid the welcome and rapturous shouts, the gaiety and joy, of their assembled friends.

The winter is passed in useful occupations and industrious pursuits; the children are taught at home by their parents, because it is often impossible to send them to the schoolmaster on account

of the snow and danger of the roads. Almost every one can read and write in Switzerland, and a very pleasant thing it must be for them that they can do so. The children are encouraged to read good and interesting books to the family, assembled over their knitting and sewing in the evening; and they are often very intelligent. There is a solemnity, likewise, in their nature, and a love of freedom lying at the bottom of the Swiss heart, which all must profoundly admire; and I have no doubt that their own bold, wild, and majestic scenery, has had a good deal to do in the formation and production of these characteristics. Religious feeling is likewise predominant in the Swiss: they are reverent, trustful, and pious, in the rightful meaning of this word; but full also of self-help, courage, and heroism.

The following narrative will illustrate many of these virtues. It is founded upon the Journal of Louis Lopraz (published originally in the French language), who was buried three months in a chalet, under the snows of the Jura, along with his poor old grandfather. The lad Louis—for such he was—occupied his time during these long and weary months in writing down all that happened in the chalet, and it is singular how the most trivial recorded circumstance becomes invested with moral interest, in connection with

these solitary prisoners. I must begin, however, at the beginning of the story, and not anticipate any of its incidents.

It has already been related that St. Dennis's day (*i. e.* the 9th of October) was the time fixed for all the shepherds to leave their chalets, and drive their flocks before them into the valleys. And it so happened that the father of Louis Lopraz was the only man of his village, who, at the time this story commences, had not returned to his friends. St. Dennis's day had passed, and other days also, but still he came not; and at last, when the wife, the uncles and aunts, and the aged but hale grandfather, could bear the suspense no longer, being filled with apprehension respecting his fate, the good grandfather said: "I will go myself and see what has kept Francis. I should not be sorry to visit the chalet once more. Who knows whether I may see it again next year? Will you go with me?" he added, addressing Louis; and the boy very readily agreed to the proposal, for he not only longed to see his father, but loved his old grandfather, and, indeed, was very rarely separated from him. Accordingly they set out, journeying very slowly, and following the narrow paths, sometimes close by the side of steep precipices. When they were about a mile from the chalet, Louis, who, like most boys, was full

of daring, and loved to brave danger, went close to the edge of a rocky steep, in order to gaze below into the black and yawning gulph; and the grandfather, who had warned him several times before, now pulled him back in real alarm; and in doing so, rolled a stone from under his foot, and sprained his ancle, which caused him much pain. He managed, however, by the help of his stick and Louis's shoulder, to continue the journey. At last they arrived at the chalet, and, to their inexpressible joy, they found Louis's father, who was preparing to leave the mountains with his flocks. Of course he was much surprised to see them, and came forth to welcome them with true Swiss heartiness. Mutual explanations followed. Some of the cows had been ill, and detained Francis longer than he expected. He, however, intended to send all the cheeses down that evening by his kinsman Peter, and on the morning, he said, should retire himself with his flocks. Then the old grandfather, shielding his dim eyes with his hands, and gazing anxiously athwart the heavens, turned to Louis, and asked him if he were very tired, if he were capable of descending the mountain again that night; "for," added he, addressing the boy's father, "I think it would be well to send the child down with Peter. The wind changed half an hour ago, and will, perhaps, bring bad weather,

when the moon gets up." Francis expressed the same fear, and agreed to follow the advice. And the old man, whose heart was full of love for his grandson, and who saw that he was discomforted at the proposal, said he would try and go down with him, if he so desired it, and that a little rest would soon give him the means of strength. But the boy would not hear of it, and throwing his arms round his father's neck, besought him to allow him to remain until the morrow. "Grandfather must have a night's rest," he added, "his foot is hurt, owing to my fault, and I must stay and attend to him."

Then the boy told his father how the accident had happened; and it was finally agreed that they should go down together on the morrow. Then they all went into the chalet. A large porridge-pot was boiling over the fire, and Louis, who was very hungry, looked at it with longing eyes, a circumstance which did not escape his father; for he immediately served out into an earthen-pan a soup made of maze-flour, boiled in milk, which the whole party partook of; after which Louis went to bed. He slept without listening to the conversation of his father and grandfather, who talked for a long time after supper in a low voice. The next day, when he arose, he was surprised to see the mountain white with snow, which had fallen in an

unusual quantity, and had been blown about by a violent wind, assuming the most beautiful and fantastic shapes. At any other time, Louis would have been much amused and delighted with this sudden exhibition of the power and freak of nature; but he saw that his parents were much alarmed; and he, too, became very uneasy when he found that the old grandfather could scarcely walk across the floor of the chalet, and this only by clinging to the walls and furniture for support. The accident of last evening had made his foot swell, and caused him great pain. It was absolutely necessary, however, that they should all leave the chalet with the flocks that day; and after a good deal of earnest conversation, the old man said to Francis his son: "Go down the valley, I pray you, before the snow is deeper, and take the child with you. You see it is impossible for me to follow you."

"And do you think, father," said Francis, "that I will leave you?"

"Put your flock in safety, and think of me afterwards," was the rejoinder; "you can come back with a litter to take me home."

"Let me carry you on my shoulders, father, and let us set off without delay, I entreat you."

But the old man would not hear of it. "With

such a load, my son," he said, "you could not drive the flock, and guide the child."

And thus a great part of the day was spent without coming to any decision as to what was to be done, all hoping that some one might come from home to help them. At last Louis said he was old enough to be a guide, and help his father to lead the flock; but it was in vain, for the grandfather would not yield. He would not expose them to danger, he said, by the charge of himself. Francis was almost angry, and the boy wept. Presently Louis said to his father, "Leave me also in the chalet; you will then be sooner at home, and will come back with people to set us free. Grandfather will have some one to wait upon him, and be his companion. It is an opportunity for me to show that I feel his goodness. We will take care of one another, and the Almighty will guard us both." "The child is right," said the grandfather, "the snow is already so deep, and the storm so violent, there is more danger for him to follow you than to stay with me. There, Francis, take this staff: it has an iron spike at the end, and will help you to go down, as it did me to come up. Drive the cows from the stable, and leave us the goat, and the food which remains. I am more anxious for you than for us."

Francis held down his head, evidently struggling with his own thoughts and feelings. Suddenly he raised it, took his son in his arms, the tears falling fast from his cheeks. "I will not blame you, my dear Louis," he said, "but you see the consequence of your disobedience. Promise me never to do so again. God has permitted what we see: but I must own to you, that neither your grandfather nor I foresaw the great difficulty we are in. Had we expected last night the misfortune of to-day, we should have used Peter's help to carry away your grandfather."

Poor Louis felt all this very deeply, for he knew that he was the cause of his grandfather's lameness; he resolved, however, that he would atone for his fault as well as he was able, by an unceasing devotion to this dear grandfather so long as they remained on the mountains.

Presently Francis was ready to set off, and his son gave him a pretty straw-covered bottle, in which was a little wine, that had been given him to help him on his journey. "Take this," he said, "you will want it to-day more than we shall. You know my poor mother gave me this bottle the first time I came to visit you on the mountain. I am so happy to think it will be useful to you at a time like this, so important to you and to us."

The father took the bottle, and uttering aloud the name of his dear wife, now no more, he looked at it a moment, and then exclaimed with deep emotion, "She is at peace." Then he pressed Louis again in his arms in remembrance of her who could no longer bless him.

In a short time after this affecting scene, they made the flock turn out; some of the cows ran hither and thither about the chalet. They were soon, however, put into marching order, and Francis shortly disappeared with them amongst the snow. Louis and his grandfather were now left alone on the mountain, and long and anxiously did they gaze in the direction which the flock had taken hoping to catch one more glimpse of it, and of him who was so dear to them both. But in vain. Then the old man leaned upon the windows without speaking, but his lips seemed to move, his hands were clasped, and his eyes raised to heaven. Yes, the old man had faith in God, and there he poured out his whole heart before him in one earnest petition for his son's safety. This piety was contagious, and Louis likewise fell on his knees and prayed. It was a very touching scene; the old, venerable and gray-haired man, struggling with his agony before God, and the young child also. They remained thus for a long time; and then the wind began to blow with a terrible

violence, and the silent snow-flakes were driven about in the air in wild confusion. Thick black clouds followed, and night fell suddenly. The wooden timepiece struck only three o'clock.

"May God have mercy on my son," said the old grandfather aloud; and then, in a more hopeful tone he added, "but he has long passed the forest, and is not exposed to this storm. How anxious he will be for our fate.

Hunger at length pressed upon the boy, and diverted the thoughts of both, for a season, from the excitement and terror of their situation. Poor Louis was half famished, for neither he nor his grandfather had partaken of any food that day. The bleating of the goat reminded them that it was time to milk her, and Louis lit the lamp and saw that the old man was more cheerful, and this gave him courage and made him happier than he had felt all day. Meanwhile the wind roared round the chalet as with the throats of innumerable lions. It whirled with savage fury underneath the shingles, and shook them with such violence, that they feared the roof would be carried away. At times the boy looked up with dread; but the old man bade him fear nothing, adding that the house had stood many such storms, and that the shingles were kept down by great stones, whilst the roof slanted to lessen the force of the wind upon it. Then he

made a sign to Louis to go before him, and they passed thus into the stable. The goat bleated still more at the sight of them, and almost broke her chain in trying to come nearer. She eagerly ate the handful of salt which Louis gave her, and licked his hand over and over, not to lose a morsel of it. She gave them a large can of milk, and they both had need of it. "Poor Blanchette," said the grandfather when they returned to the kitchen, "we must never forget her, but must carefully milk her, night and morning; *our* life depends on hers." This saying made Louis inquire if his grandfather thought they should be imprisoned there for a long time; who answered, that although it was not certain, yet it might be so; that they must hope for the best, and provide for the worst.

After they had eaten their simple meal, Louis went to fill the manger for the goat. He gave her fresh litter, and stroked her more kindly than usual. She seemed very glad to see the boy, for no animal domesticated with man can long endure solitude. How sensible they are, likewise, of kindness, and how certainly will they return it in their own way. Goats especially do not like to be alone, if they have ever been accustomed to companions; and poor Blanchette's companions were now far away from her. When Louis returned to

the kitchen, she began to bleat in a sad tone, as if to upbraid him for leaving her.

That night the two prisoners sat long over the fire, praying that Francis might also be beside the village hearth-stone in the valley. The chimney of the chalet was as wide at the bottom as a common room; it was narrower, however, above; but the opening to the roof was so large that the snow got driven in it by the whirlwind, and troubled them much. It made a disagreeable sound while melting in the fire, and they were continually obliged to shake off the flakes which covered their clothes.

"You see, my child," said the old man, "that to-night we can only find warmth in bed. Let us take shelter there. The snow will not reach us; and to-morrow we will try and keep a warm corner in the fire-place. Let us pray to God, and trust in his care, for he is with us everywhere—upon the mountain as in the plain. If the snow which covers us were a hundred times deeper, we should not be concealed from Him. He sees our clasped hands—He hears our feeble sighs. Yes, our Father, thou art with us; we will sleep without fear under the shadow of thy wings."

And in this pious mood of resignation they retired to bed, the boy touched even to tears, but

feeling safe with his good old grandfather, and in the providence of God.

In the morning when Louis awoke, it was quite dark, and he thought at first that his sleep had ended sooner than usual. He presently heard his grandfather, however, groping about. Then he rubbed his eyes, but still he could not see more clearly. At length he called to the old man, and told him he had risen before the day. "My child," he replied, "if we wait till the day lights us, we shall stay a long time in bed. I believe the window is blocked up with snow."

Louis jumped out of bed with a cry of terror, lighted the lamp, and found his grandfather's fears quite true. Fortunately, however, the window was low, and it was probable that the snow had merely drifted against it; and the old man thought it would not be above two feet deep a little way from the wall.

"Then our friends may yet save us," said poor Louis, whom this calamity had filled with an unspeakable dread.

"I hope so," said his grandfather, "but, next to God, we must depend upon ourselves. Should it be his will that we are shut up here for some time, let us see what are our means of support, and when we know them we will regulate the use to be made of them. Day is come, there is no

doubt of that; the *cuckoo* (Swiss clock) has struck seven. It is fortunate I did not forget to wind it up last night. I must be careful to do so always; for we like to know how the time goes, and we must be exact with Blanchette."

There was no help, however, for them at present; and the grandfather went to milk the goat, whilst Louis stood by watching him very earnestly. "You do well," said the old man, "for you must learn to take my place. You see that I can hardly stoop to reach Blanchette. Come and try to milk her yourself."

Louis tried, and succeeded at first to press out some drops of milk; but he was so unskilful, that he hurt the goat, and she kicked about so much that she nearly upset the pail. In a short time, however, that is, after three or four more attempts, he managed the matter very well; and very pleased he was, because he was anxious to save his grandfather all the trouble he could. The darkness, however, in which they were enveloped, and the consciousness that they were literally buried there alive, made them very sorrowful, but not without hope. They looked over their stock of provisions and utensils, and began to calculate how long the former would last; and when this was done, Louis placed himself under the chimney and looked up the only opening that remained

free in the chalet. He had not been there long, when the sun all at once burst gorgeously out of the clouds, and shone with its cheering and heavenly light—never thought so cheering and heavenly before—upon the snow which rose a good way above the opening. With a joyful heart he showed his discovery to his grandfather. It was easy to see the depth of the snow, because the opening did not project upon the roof, but was a straight hole, as the boy's Journal expresses it, like that of a hay-loft. Now, Francis had made a trap in the chimney during the summer to protect the chalet from rain and cold, and if "we had a ladder," said the old man, "you could climb up and unfasten it." "If the chimney goes narrower," replied the boy, "it would not require a ladder, I might creep up like *the chimney sweepers.*" At length they remembered that there was a long fir pole in the stable. "It is all that I want," said Louis; "I have often climbed up trees of no thicker stem. The pole has its rough bark upon it, and that is all the better for me." But then the difficulty arose how they should get it up the tunnel. After a good deal of effort, however, they succeeded, for the wood was not too dry to bend.

Louis now set to work, and tied a cord round his waist, with which to draw up a shovel when

he was above. He then used his hands and feet, supporting himself against the walls of the tunnel, till he reached the roof. Here he began to make a place for himself by clearing away the snow with his shovel, and when able to look around, it appeared to him that the snow was deepest for about three feet from the walls of the chalet. In fact, the wind had drifted it there, just as people raise the earth round vegetables to nourish and preserve them from drought. The quantity of snow which had fallen in that short time was enormous; and the boy, standing on the roof of the chalet, described the whole scene "as one white carpet." The forest of firs on one side of the valley, where the view was limited, was as white as everything else — except the trunks, which appeared quite black, and presented an awful picture of desolation. Several trees which he saw there were literally broken with the weight of the snow, and their stems and branches lay scattered about. The north wind was strong, keen, and bitterly freezing. The dark clouds, which were driven before it, opened now and then, and the sun shone through them, whilst his dazzling brightness spread over the vast field of snow with the swiftness and broad expansiveness of sheet lighting in the summer evenings. The cold, too, as if it were angry that a boy so frail

should dare to face it in its most terrible region, seized him like a giant, until he shook violently, and his teeth chattered, and he found he could not tell his grandfather what he saw. The old man bade him unloose the trap-door, and come down quickly. So he began to clear away the snow from it, and though he was a long time, he did it at last, and got so warm over his work, that he fully vanquished the cold, and under happier circumstances would have laughed over his victory. Then he put the cord in the pulley of the trap, so that on drawing it below it would open, whilst its own weight would shut it. They tried several times whether this plan would answer, and being satisfied it would, Louis came down the chimney a good deal quicker than he ascended it.

The poor boy's clothes were quite wet through, however. So they made a bright fire with fir-cones and branches; then lowering the trap, and leaving only space enough for the smoke to escape, the old man made Louis sit by the hearth until his clothes were quite dry. They had no light save the fire light; for their stock of oil was very small, and they determined not to burn the lamp except when they milked the goat, or upon some rare and necessary occasion.

It was a new and very sad thing for them thus to while away the whole day. The expectation

that their friends would come and set them free, and the suspense in which they were kept, made the hours seem immeasurable; Louis once or twice during the day mounted the roof again, in the hope of seeing some one, but in vain. There still lay stretched out in boundless distance, the waste and silent wilderness of snow; there too, overhead, hung the black sky, like a pall over a living tomb, and not a sign of life, nor sound, save that of the howling wind was there. Then the boy questioned his grandfather, who answered that he hoped Francis was safe at home; that he feared the roads were now broken up, or blocked up by heaps of snow. These words fell like lead upon the heart of the young boy; and when at last they made the trap secure, and retired to bed, he gave the rein to his thoughts in silence. He could scarcely hold his sobs when he reflected how they were buried here in the snow; and then his mind wandered to his dear home in the valley, and he called back all the delights and endearments of his childhood—all his happy days—his poor dead mother, and how dearly he had loved her, and she him—and now to be buried alive! Suddenly his thoughts changed and reverted to his father. Was he safe? Had he perished with his flocks in the snow storm? O surely he had, or he would have come to their help long ago. And then he thought

that the road might indeed be blocked up, and that he and his grandfather were cut off from all help until the spring. But how should they *live* till spring? And then he fell asleep.

"O sleep! it is a blessed thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!"

And to the wretched and weary of heart it is indeed a blessed thing. Sleep, and prayer! Louis did not forget to pray, nor did he for a moment lose his faith in God, although his strange and exciting condition made him sometimes wild. When they arose the next morning they had great difficulty in opening the trap, by which they knew that much fresh snow had fallen in the night. They had hoped that perhaps to-day they might have found help. Now they knew it was impossible. They managed to light the fire, and, having done so, Louis again mounted the roof, and found two feet of fresh snow there. "We must not hope now," said the old man, "to leave this prison-house before spring." So they sat down, and began to talk about various things, in order to divert their thoughts from their situation. At last the good old grandfather suggested that Louis should make some calculation, the data of which he would furnish him with. Accordingly, the lad spread some ashes on the hearth, just as

in some schools sand is used whereon to draw figures. When he had finished his sum by the light of a torch, he fancied he felt something hot behind him; and turning round, beheld a sheaf of straw which had been placed near the hearth for kindling purposes, smouldering in fire. Louis immediately threw himself upon it to extinguish the flames; but he only burnt his hands without succeeding in his attempt. Then the old man, in spite of the pain and stiffness of his ankle, rose quickly, and seizing the sheaf, carried it under the chimney, calling upon Louis to remove everything out of reach that would burn. It was an awful moment, the flames increased in breadth and fury, whilst they held the sheaf close to the chimney hole with an iron fork, and the fire-shovel. Not a drop of water to be had! They had no time to think, every faculty was absorbed in this one effort to keep the flames within the chimney. The chalet was lighted up with a red glare, the smoke had no vent, and stifled them. Yet there they must stop; for if they let the sheaf fall the flames would spread around, lick up every consumable thing, and burn them alive. It was indeed dreadful, buried alive, to be burned alive! Bits of lighted straw flew from one side to the other, all over the chalet. The rafters of the roof, the bed, might catch fire, and then all would

be over. Still they stuck to the sheaf, gasping for breath in all the dreadful agonies of suffocation. It seemed as if the straw would never burn out. At last it came to an end. The insatiable fire burned up the last stalk, and then roaring with a sudden and expiring flame, died out. "Stamp," cried the old man; "stamp, until every spark is extinguished." And poor Louis black with smoke, weary with excitement, almost to fainting, and well nigh suffocated, did as he was bid; the lame old man helping him. All at once they were in utter darkness; but the fear of burning was still upon them, and they examined every article in every part of the chalet, before they could rest and take counsel together. By degrees the smoke dispersed. They lighted the lamp, and with the exception of a few slight burns, found that they had escaped uninjured. Then they knelt down and offered up thanks to God for their preservation.

The old grandfather accused himself of negligence in allowing the sheaf to be so near the hearth, "Let us repair the fault," he said; "in the dairy there is an empty cask; so we must stave out one end, and place it on the other near the hearth. We will fill it with snow, which will soon melt, and we shall then have a store of water in case of accident." Then they set to work

directly, and having found the cask, Louis opened the door of the chalet, and brought in snow to fill it with. But his heart was very sad when he saw the white dense wall of snow which separated them from the world; and he could not help saying, "O Lord how long!"

The next day the snow fell heavily; and Louis, after removing the trap, proceeded to shovel off a part of the snow from the roof, leaving enough on however, to guard them from the cold. Every object that was yesterday visible had vanished. The earth was white—a dreary blinding white—and the heavens were black.

Still there was much to be thankful for. They had found more hay and straw in the chalet than the goat would require for a whole year; and so long as her milk lasted they could not starve. In one corner of the stable too, they had found a little store of potatoes, which they covered over with straw to keep them from the frost. There was some wood too, laid up in the stable, but not enough to last them till spring. By closing up the trap, however, they could keep themselves tolerably warm without a fire; for the snow itself was as a blanket all around and above the chalet to keep off the cold. "That is the reason," said the old man, "that corn is preserved so well under the snow. So it will be with us. The snow will

hide us all winter, and in spring we shall look through the window. But before that time comes," he added mournfully, "how weary we shall be! God grant it may all end then!"

In addition to the wood they had a heap of fir cones also, which Louis himself had collected in the summer time, when he paid his father Francis a visit at the chalet. By chance they had not been taken down; and these would help them when the wood failed. They talked likewise of burning the mangers and racks of the stable in case of need. Most of the furniture had been taken away from the chalet, but the useful kitchen things were left, and besides these a hatchet, (which, however, was sadly notched,) and an old saw that had no edge. These were found in an old chest of carved oak, which Louis's father had brought up the mountains many years ago. They found also in this chest some salt, a little ground coffee, a little oil and some lard, they had only three loaves of bread, which had been already a year in the chalet, and were so hard, that they could scarcely be cut with a hatchet.

Nevertheless, these discoveries were all made at the right time, and the old grandfather took occasion thereby to speak of God's bounty, and providence, and goodness. They agreed not to eat the lard, but to save it as a substitute for oil;

"less food and more light," said the old man. "Yes," retorted the boy; "more light: how could we otherwise endure the long evening which begins almost in the morning?"

They had only one bed, but according to the fashion of the mountains, it was large enough to hold five or six people. There was only one coverlet left; but there was hay and straw in abundance wherewith to keep themselves warm. There was no mattress likewise; and this grieved Louis on his grandfather's account, who needed a better bed than straw upon which to rest his poor old bones. And when the boy thought of these discomforts, he said "I wish we could be like the *Marmot* for two or three months, and sleep till warm weather comes." Whereupon the good old man answered, "Let us leave the brute creature to its sleep. God has seen fit to make us suffer, it is true; but by this means he reveals himself to us. A noble reward this! Accept it my son with gratitude, and fulfil the duties it lays upon you. Watch, it is told us, for you know not at what hour the Lord will come."

A few days after this, whilst looking into the state of the furniture and provisions, Louis searched into every corner to see if he could find any books; for he knew that his father was a great reader, and accordingly hoped that some odd volume would

turn up. And so, to his great and inexpressible joy, it happened; for, perceiving behind the oak chest a plank which had slipped there, and trying to get it out, a heavy book fell down which had no doubt been lost for several years. It was an old and much worn Bible. When the old grandfather heard these tidings, he exclaimed, "It is the best book that could visit us in our solitude. My child, the Bible is a book made for the unfortunate, or rather it is a book which proves, in the most touching way, that there is only one misfortune—to forget God; and one true happiness—to love Him. You see, my dear Louis, if we are alone, we are not deserted! We have already found means to keep our bodies alive; we now possess food for the soul. It remains with us to make a right use of it. But mark, my child, the course of events by which we are led first to feel the want of divine assistance, and then to find the help of which we are in need. We expected your father in the village for some days; we were uneasy, and wished to know the cause of the delay. If we had waited one day more, we should have seen him return. We set off. You know what accident happened to me by the way, which made it impossible to return next day. The snow fell, and we were prisoners. The Lord led us here, to bring us nearer to himself. After having

sought in vain for what we desired so much, you have by chance found a book which is more likely to advance our piety than any other. Here is one thing amidst a thousand, that may be rightly called the ways of Providence. In fact, the affairs of the world are so ordered, that one event springs from another. We are visited sometimes by joy, sometimes by sorrow, and are always subject to trials; for by these changes in life, this succession of events, happy and unhappy, character is formed, and we are enabled to gain the virtues that make a Christian. We draw near by degrees to our Great Master—we learn to be disciples of Jesus Christ."

The heart of the poor Louis vibrated to these admonitions and injunctions. "I need not say I feel these thoughts," he said, "you can see I do. Since we came here, all that you have said to me about my duty towards God, has struck me in a new light. Up to this time, I have prayed to obey, and tried to please God, but now I have a new feeling. I love the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart, and the thought of him comes warmly over me, just as I think of you and my father. The idea of God is still awful, but Christ I can love without fear, and he will lead me and teach me how I may love our Father who is in heaven. It is you, my grandpapa, who have given me this

happiness, and I will never more dare to regret the accident which has kept us here."

Then the old man embraced his son, and for a long time there was a deep and joyful silence between them. Such joy as this neither had perhaps ever felt before. And thus they saw that God could change evil to good—that affliction was in itself a good, softening the hard heart, and melting it into a blessed obedience.

The Bible proved, indeed, a consolation to them in the loneliness and solitude of their prison-house. How Louis pored over its glorious pages, reading the dear old psalms, and the gracious promises, to his grandfather by the light of the flickering lamp! It was like a new heritage to which they had come suddenly, this grand Bible, with its beautiful and divine revelations of life eternal—its hopes and consolations. They felt that they were not neglected—that God could speak to their hearts even under the thick-ribbed snow, and they were happy.

Still no help came to them, and it snowed perpetually. It was a rare thing to see so great a fall at that season of the year—then about the latter end of November. Yet Louis could not help wondering why his father did not come up with the villagers to their rescue, and often expressed his surprise aloud. And now it became

evident that his grandfather was also alarmed. They had been five days in the chalet, when the following conversation took place:—"This snow," said Louis, "has not come down all at once. The first, second, and even third day of our captivity, it seems to me, that a road might have been opened towards us." "I am very certain," replied the grandfather, "that Francis has done all he can; but perhaps he has not been able to make our neighbours and friends share in his fears, and he could not save us all alone." "You believe, then, said Louis, "that though they were able to take us away, they have left us at the risk of finding us dead in the spring. Would *our* neighbours show less kindness than those we sometimes read of in the newspapers, who do the hardest work, even at the risk of their own lives, to save unfortunate people who are shut up in mines or wells?" "I agree," the old man rejoined, "that our fate seems hard; but they know we have a shelter and some food." "But they know also that food may fail us, that you are old and infirm, and that I have not yet the strength of a man. They ought to have pity on us." "They must have made some attempts, and found it impossible to get to us." "But the order is always given to open the great road when it is blocked up with snow, and make the whole length of it passable for carriages. The

thing is done; we see it almost every winter." "Government orders such works for the public service, and it costs much money." "So then, what is done for the convenience of travellers, they will not do for two unfortunate people in danger of life. I call that cruel." "Government knows not that we are here." "My father would not have failed to make it known, and to call everybody to help us."

Thus they spoke to each other, and the grandfather being silent, Louis took hold of his hands and said: "I beg of you to hide nothing from me. Are you not as anxious as I am? Speak to me openly. Now that I can resign myself to the will of God, I am not unworthy of your confidence. Tell me what you suppose, and do not leave me to my own fancies. I would rather see clearly what my misfortune is, and above all, I want to know what you think." "Alas, my dear Louis, I must tell you that I fear your father has met with some accident. It is best to tell you, for you have seen through my mind. But still, this does not explain everything, for, besides him, there are others that ought to think of us."

Then Louis began to sob and weep, and his grandfather let him alone for some time with his grief. They were sitting beside the fire, which had almost gone out. They stayed there very late

in the darkness. The old grandfather held one of Louis's hands in his, and often pressed it to comfort him. At last he said: "I have told you my fears; do you not wish me to tell you my hopes? We may imagine everything. The power of God is beyond our understanding. Do not despair. Cheer up for the sake of your father and grandfather." And thus they once more sought their dark and lonely bed.

The next day they rose up with more settled minds, and began to stir about in the dark chalet. They noticed also exactly how much oil, or lard, the lamp burnt in a day; and found if they kept it burning twelve hours, the store would last but one month. They resolved, therefore, to burn it only three hours a day. The light of the hearth would do sometimes, but even this pleasure must be enjoyed with care. They were very sorry for this, and especially Louis; for the firwood made a bright light, and he loved to see it sparkle, and hear its crackling noise. When they talked, they had no light at all; but to atone for this, the good old grandfather had always something of interest to tell Louis, so that he felt he should go away from the chalet much better instructed than when he came into it. For several years his grandfather had been able to work but little and a rich neighbour had lent him books, which he read with

avidity; and now Louis was profiting by what he had read. They found questions in mental arithmetic, more than anything else, help to shorten the day. The grandfather usually asked the questions, and then they tried who could answer them first. At first, Louis says his grandfather had always the advantage, but, not to discourage him, he let him believe he was still thinking of the answer long after he had found it. With a little practice, Louis became more ready, and found his account in these exercises afterwards.

And now, the 29th of November being come, Louis had many sad and sweet recollections; for it was on this day four years ago that his mother died. Last year, the 29th fell on a Sunday, and Louis recalled how, after leaving church, he walked with his father in the cemetery, to look at his dear mother's grave. The grass was not yet withered by the cold, and, as often happens in these regions, some daisies had burst into bloom again, and gleamed there with their white blossoms, like stars. And now, in the darkness of the chalet, he conjured up that solemn and mournful scene once more, and almost felt the very breeze which moved the grass and flowers. There he stood, hand in hand with his father, silent, sorrowful, the tears choking his heart. He had lived long enough with his mother to know how good she was, but

the feeling of the household showed him how great was the loss he had sustained. Since his mother's death, his father had not let a single day pass without speaking of her. Sometimes he would look at his son, and try to trace her likeness in his face; or if he spoke, instead of answering, the afflicted father would say, "It seems as if it were her voice I heard." But now, poor Louis had neither mother nor father to comfort him. But yet the good old grandfather is there, and he speaks continually of both parents, and tells Louis all that happened at home before he was born. And the lad is so affected, that he wants nothing else to pass the time away, but puts out the lamp, and listens with deep attention!

When he retired to bed, how pleasant it was for him to feel that he had long been a joy to his parents, without knowing it. His childish prattle and love were dear to them; and this was the sole reward of their great love and care for him. Then he thought of what his grandfather had said to him on this subject. "Do you not see, my child," quoth the good grandfather, "the wisdom and love of God? The child wins love before itself knows how to love, that we may be prompt to guard against every danger the little helpless being that fears nothing. We are more anxious for him because he can take no care for himself." And after

this recollection came another—a most touching and homely one of his early days, when his grandfather sat in the chimney-corner of the lost house in the valley, whilst his mother was in the garden, and his father came in with a faggot on his back. Days, alas! which never could return; for his mother was dead, and he and his grandfather were buried alive, and who could tell the fate of his father?

Another day came, and Louis found out a way to employ himself, without burning more oil than could be spared; indeed, the light of the fire was enough for his purpose. This employment consisted in twisting straw into long cords. He had seen his father fasten such cords round the pea-stacks to support them, and even round the wheat and rye, which are apt to shed. Louis sat close to the fire, so as to work in the small space which it lighted, whilst the old grandfather watched him, and gave him straw as he wanted it, taking care to guard against another conflagration. This was amusing; and Louis thought it was like working for the fine season, which drew nearer to them. Neither did it prevent them from talking. His grandfather made him relate what had happened to him at school, where he had the misfortune to find the hours, he said, too long. And he did so; and spoke with pleasure of the visits of the

kind rich neighbour, who always gave the boys their prize-books on examination days, and made them learn verses by heart, to enrich their minds, and cheer them in the vacant hours of future years.

Louis's grandfather hoped he had not forgotten these verses, and that he would repeat them to him one by one, and then transcribe them in his journal.

When the 1st day of December came, the boy was exceeding sorrowful. The snow was so deep that it had risen to the roof, and it seemed to him that a whole summer's sunshine would not be sufficient to melt it. Every day he was obliged to climb to the roof and clear the snow away, otherwise they would not have been able to remove the trap and light the fire. He was grieved too, that his poor old grandfather could not get out of the chalet, which was indeed a prison to him. One day Louis asked him what he most missed, and the old man replied: "A ray of sunshine; and yet," he added, "our lot is far less miserable than that of other captives, many of whom have no more deserved a prison than ourselves. We have fire, and often light. We enjoy even here a certain kind of liberty; we find means of passing the time that are unknown within the four walls of a dungeon. We do not every day see a jailer,

proud, cruel, or indifferent to our sufferings. The evils that we suffer by the will of God never have the bitterness of those which we think are owing to the injustice of man. In fact, we are not alone, my child, and though it grieves me to see you in this chalet, I yet will own to you that it supports me to have you with me, and I think you are not ill-satisfied with your companion. There is nothing even down to Blanchette that does not soothe our captivity, and I assure you it is not only for her milk that I love her."

Thus the old man tried to cheer his grandson, and strengthen his own heart to bear the affliction that had befallen them. The touching allusion which he had made to Blanchette—the poor dumb creature which had become as dear to them as a friend in their sorrow and loneliness—made Louis think that she might perhaps be brought into the room where they were. "She is very dull by herself," he said, "and she bleats very often; perhaps that is bad for her, and bad for us also. What hinders our finding a corner for her here? She will be grateful for the honour, and perhaps she will prove a better nurse to us."

The old man approved of the idea, and Louis began to make preparation for her reception. He fixed a rack against the wall in a corner of the kitchen most out of their own way, and drove two

large nails into it to make it more firm. He then placed two stakes under it for a support, and installed the goat in her new quarters. She looked very pleased with the change in her condition; and expressed her joy by a thousand bleatings and frolics. At length she lay down on the fresh litter, and began to chew the cud, the happiest being in the chalet.

The next day Louis mounted the roof, that he might once more gaze upon the face of the sun and sky. Dry cold weather had set in after the continued snow-storms. How the white carpet dazzled his eyes as he gazed around him, and how beautiful the forest appeared! He did not like to tell his grandfather when he came down how much pleasure he had enjoyed, for he thought the old man would feel his desolation all the more. But as he sat thinking of his grandfather's great loss in not being able to see the "ray of light"—the single ray of blessed light which he missed most of all things in the world—a thought struck him. It was a very simple one, and he wondered it had not suggested itself before. It was this: to clear the snow from the door, and make a path with a gentle slope, by throwing the snow from both sides. It would be a difficult task to be sure; but difficulties were nothing to Louis in comparison with the pleasure which such a walk, when

made, would yield to his good parent. He began at once with alacrity, and toiled all day; nor would he have closed his labour then if his grandfather had not insisted on it. On the following day he set to work again, and before night fell he had cleared a road from the chalet. This was indeed a triumph; as grand, nay grander, because it had a moral basis, and was accomplished by the unseen forces of a deep filial love: grander then, I say, than that fabled triumph of Hannibal when he forced his way through the Alpine snows. And then how delightful it was for Louis to support his dear grandfather as he walked out for the first time since his captivity, into the open air! The open air—the wide, measureless air of heaven—in which the old's man heart expanded, for he felt that he was once more free—at least for a time—and he thanked God for it, how earnestly! Louis had driven two stakes into the snow, and made a rail along the little terrace, which the old man could lean on; and at the head of this terrace they rested for a few moments. The day was not favourable to the spirits, it is true; but it was a real relief from the loneliness of the chalet. The forest, with its black skeleton trees, lay in awful desolation amidst the wild waste of snow; and the clouds were heavy and dark; and there was a stillness as of death over

all the earth and heaven. One single living thing came within their sight; it was a bird of prey, which flew far from them with a harsh cry. It gained the valley and flew in the direction of the village. And they blessed the bird, for it was alive, and their Father in heaven had made it. Then the old man began to moralize: "In old times," he said, "the flight and cry of that bird would have been explained as signs of our fate. But God is too good, and too wise, to let us see into the future; and if he did so, he would not make use of a brute creature to prophesy to us. Come, my dear Louis, let us wait his will. I thank you for the trouble you have taken for me; another day it will do me more good."

Then they went in-doors, but somehow or other they were very grave all that day, and could not talk so freely as before. "The gloomy weather," says Louis in his journal, "might be enough to account for our low spirits, but in reality, I believe, being able to go out of the house made us at first fancy we were free; and then we felt ourselves greater prisoners than before."

The next day they were more cheerful, and the grandfather proposed to Louis that he should clear away the snow from the windows. This would take much time, for the snow was very deep; but it would be employment for the lad, and they

would both reap the benefit of it when it was done. So Louis began this work also, nor would he let his grandfather render him any help, for the old man's health was very precious to his grandson. When they arose on the morning it was snowing again, and Louis could only get leave to sweep away the fresh downfall from the door; the other labour was left until better weather should come; and when at length it came, an accident befell Louis which might have been fatal. He had carried a great deal of snow from the window, and thought he was near the end of his task, when the heap he had thrown overhead fell down, and entirely covered him. His grandfather was in the chalet, fearing nothing, because he had warned the boy how to avoid the accident. But Louis had not obeyed him with sufficient care, and did not call out when the accident happened, lest he should be alarmed, thinking he could get free of himself. He did get his head clear, but that was all he could do. For a long time he struggled, but in vain; for the snow did not give him a firm footing, and he was at last obliged to call his grandfather to help him. The old man came in great alarm, and with difficulty got to the place where Louis was almost buried; and by great exertion the lad was set at liberty. After this he had hard work to persuade his grandfather to let

him continue his labours. Nor was the work itself of any value, but literally so much labour lost; for the next day was the most terrible which they had yet passed. There was a storm on the mountains—and such a storm as the imagination of no mere lowlander could conceive. The dreadful roaring of the wind appalled even the strong heart of the good grandfather; and when they tried to open the door they beheld whirlwinds of snow raging over the heavens; and the wind came with such force into the chalet that they had the greatest difficulty to fasten the latch. Then they let down the trap, and were obliged to sit in the cold without a fire, because the smoke had no outlet. They had to drink their milk also this morning without boiling it. The tempest continued to rage with great violence, and at length the old man asked Louis to light the lamp, and bring the great Bible from the chest and read to him. And all that dreadful day the calmness of his grandfather kept up Louis's courage. His words of hope and trust were mingled with the darkness and noise of the tempest. At the very time when one might have thought that the curse of God was upon them, this pious old man spoke of the tender mercies which God had shown them. "This very power," he said, "which seems now so terrible, will soon appear full of gentleness and

love. It seems now as if it meant to destroy us, but these tempests will cause a new world to rise up. You will see the fields quite green again, and after that the golden harvest. The sky will be bright and beautiful. These mountains collect the waters which will run among the valleys. When the end of our suffering is come, this day, which we now find so dreadful, will appear one of the most fortunate in our lives."

In such words did the grandfather comfort his grandson. They were seated on the bed, and had drawn a sheaf of straw over them. His grandfather perceived that Louis's tears were falling, and his old heart was touched. He put one arm round the boy's neck, and joining his hands together, held him for a long time pressed close to him without speaking. After a while Louis grew calmer—the tempest still raged, but his heart was at peace.

"Well," said the old man at last, "am I only to speak?—have you nothing to say to me?—or are you not strong enough to tell me what you feel."

"Do not think me foolish," said Louis; "my tears do not come from a weak and coward heart, so little worthy of yours."

"If so," replied the grandfather, as he moved the straw that covered them, "you can repeat to me one of your school songs—one for harvest-time

will be best. This stubble, which keeps off the cold after its grain has given us food, reminds me of the fine harvest this year."

So Louis repeated the following song:—

HARVEST HOME

Now is the summer ended,
Now has the autumn come;
The fields we early tended
Send late their yieldings home.
Sing merrily, halloo!
The Alps are white with snow,
The sun shines warm below,
The sheaves stand in a row,
Halloo!

The wood is under cover,
The barn is stored with hay
The loads of oats and clover
Move slowly on the way.
Sing merrily, halloo!
The Alps are white with snow,
The sun shines warm below,
The sheaves stand in a row.
Halloo!

The shadows in the valley
Come early, and stay long;
Now are the maidens busy
With harvest home and song.
Sing merrily, halloo!
The Alps are white with snow,
The sun shines warm below,
The sheaves stand in a row.
Halloo!

Whilst Louis was repeating this song, the wind rose louder than ever, and the door cracked, so that they both startled. However, the lad went on to the end, and after a few cheerful words his grandfather was silent; but presently he said, "We have had no fire to-day: to make up for it we can have a little more light. Besides, it will be well to see what could have shaken the door; and if some accident has happened, we must mend it as soon as we can." So they both got up, and after lighting the lamp, found, on trying to open the door, that a mass of snow had fallen against it, and that they were shut up as before. This was, no doubt, a cause for sorrow, but Louis had learned how to submit without a murmur to new disasters. "Think," said his grandfather, "if this tempest had come on before the chalet was buried in snow, perhaps it could not have stood. Let us be thankful, then, for a state of things which may have saved us from a greater danger."

Towards evening, the tempest still continuing, and the cold increasing, they bethought them to boil their last meal over some blazing fir-cones, for these cones make little smoke, and yield a very pleasant odour in burning. Accordingly they did so, and got a little warmer. Then they read some pages of the Bible, and retired in the hope that

by God's blessing they should get some sleep upon their straw bed.

When they arose there was less wind; but they could not tell what kind of weather prevailed out of doors, for they now had no means of discovering it. The trap was so laden with snow that it could not be raised, and the door and windows were blocked up. So they lighted their fir-cones again; and in this way for some days they kept themselves alive, for the cold was intense. At last the cold grew so excessive that the warmth yielded by the cones was quite insufficient to protect them, and they were obliged to light a fire under the chimney, and endure the smoke, which was almost suffocating. The poor goat, too, felt it very much, and they thought they should be obliged to put her in the stable again, but she would then have been frozen to death. So there was no help for them but endurance.

And whilst they were in this pitiable condition, buried in smoke and darkness, a new and dreadful calamity threatened them. Louis had groped his way to the goat, and was milking her, whilst the old grandfather sat in the chimney corner. All at once Blanchette pricked up her ears as if at some strange noise, and then she began to tremble all over. So Louis spoke to her and stroked her, and asked the dumb creature what ailed her. A wild, horrible howling, unlike any

other sounds on earth, burst over their heads in reply. "Ah!" exclaimed Louis, in great terror, "The wolves! the wolves!" "Hush," said the old man, in a low voice, as he hurried towards them; "stroke Blanchette, and prevent her from bleating; here is some salt for her." In spite of all their efforts, however, she trembled violently, and the dreadful howling went on. The old man was quite calm. "Well, Louis, what would have become of us," whispered he, "if you had opened a path up to the window? Who knows if even the chimney would not have been an entrance to these famished beasts?" "But," asked Louis, "are we still safe?" "I hope so," said his grandfather, "but speak low, and stroke and comfort Blanchette; her bleating may betray us." One might have thought she feared it would, for she did not make the least noise.

Louis held the goat in his arms, and his grandfather sat close to him, with his hand upon his shoulder. He had need to look up to him, sitting so calm and still, that he might not die with fear. All that he had previously suffered was nothing like the agony of that hour. Once the howling of the wolves was so loud and near, that he thought they were scratching away the snow, and descending to devour them; and he flung his arms round his grandfather. "I will not deceive you, my child,"

said the old man; "this is a very painful state, but I do not think we are in danger. These wolves can roam over the mountain, because the snow is hard at the top; but they will not stay long on the heights. At this season they go down into the plain towards the villages. Perhaps they have dragged up here the body of some animal, and whilst fighting for it, make this affray which stuns us. Even if they should scent us here, they cannot break through the roof and ceiling, nor guess where to find the window, neither do they know how to open the trap; but they may all the more weary us with their noise. My dear child, let this still more teach you to put trust in the mercy of God. The storm we have endured has preserved us. It has destroyed your work, and averted the danger we had not foreseen. We have been denied the light we wished for, but our lives have been saved. What a mercy that these wolves did not come upon us while you were at work outside! We must be more upon our guard for the future." "So then," said Louis, sorrowfully, "our captivity must be more strict. Winter has but begun. The cold will become more severe. We shall never more see our dear home in the valley." These thoughts made poor Louis very unhappy, and the howling of the wolves—which occurred at intervals all day until

the evening—only heightened his misery. On the morrow, however, he grew calmer; the wolves were gone; and Blanchette no longer trembled, but ate, and slept, and chewed the cud as usual.

Still, the wolves having been once at the door, filled both the inhabitants of the chalet with apprehension for the future. Nor was it the frightful idea of being torn to pieces by these wild, savage, and most merciless monsters, which alone disturbed them; there was the thought also that they must now be confined in-doors all the winter, and no longer cherish the hope of clearing away the snow from the door and window. Before the wolves came, Louis had cheered himself with the hope of a pleasant time to come. He thought to give sunlight to his dear grandfather, and that they should both enjoy a little light near the window, and beguile their time with seeing things out of doors. But now they would no longer know what was going on outside the chalet, but must live henceforth in smoke and darkness; and Louis dreaded lest this confined and unhealthy life should make one or both of them ill, and so increase their miseries. They hoped for the best, however; and although Louis could not help repining at times, yet his good grandfather was always ready to cheer him, and dispel his gloom and despondency with kind and pious words.

Another Sabbath came round, and it was now the 15th of December. The Sabbath, so dear to all the sons of men—so inexpressibly dear to the poor, tired, and weary labourer, and to the Christian—and yet it brought no comfort to the prisoners of the chalet. Their friends in the village were in the house of God, or reading the Bible by their comfortable firesides at home. But they, ah! how lonely they were. And Louis asked himself, Do they think of us? Yes, no doubt, his heart answered, if my poor father is in the midst of them; but if he has perished in trying to save us, the others have forgotten us. We are dead to the world, he continued, in his silent thinking. In the village they have now the winter's rest from toil, and are gaily enjoying themselves. They visit each other, and spend the evening round a bright fire, or a very warm stove. Until now I never knew how needful society is for our happiness. With others we can share our labour, and it is less toilsome. We share our pleasures, and make them doubly precious. If the Almighty should one day lead me back to my friends, how thankful I should be! What delight to hear the noise, and see the busy moving of the village again! What pleasure to be amongst those who love and care for us, and whom we can serve in return! But our friends ought to know how

much we suffer here. How can they leave us in this fearful solitude?

Some of these reflections were uttered aloud; and his grandfather said, "Do not go to sleep this night with such unkind thoughts. It is wrong so to close the day sacred to the Lord. If men forget us, we will pardon them, that we may be forgiven by Him whom we forget too often. You pine for the society of your fellow-creatures. Think of Christ, and he will come and dwell with you, and give you joy and peace." Then Louis answered, "You will help me, dear grandfather, to feel right again, and as I used to feel before this terror of a cruel death came over me. May God give me strength to live, or to lay down my life in whatever way he may see fit to take it!" And with this prayer the Sabbath-day was closed.

In one part of his Journal, from which this narrative is derived, Louis gives an account of the fare which the cottage afforded; and it was simple enough: the milk of the goat, some hard dry bread, with potatoes boiled, and eaten with a little salt. Sometimes, for a change, they roasted the potatoes in the ashes, and Louis liked them best in this way. The poor old grandfather's appetite was, however, getting very bad, and he gave signs of sinking on his hard fare. This

made Louis very unhappy, and he determined that his grandfather should have some of the coffee which they found in the old chest, but which he had up to this time refused to take. Accordingly he prepared it as well as he could, and the stimulating nature of the beverage did the old man much good. Louis, however, would not touch it himself. Milk diet was sufficient for him. Indeed, the shepherds of the Alps live upon it during the greater part of the year; and those who eat bread and meat, and drink wine, are not always so strong as they are. It was the custom of the village, however, in which Louis lived, to have this variety in food, and hence it was hard for the old man to be deprived of it. And Louis was very sorry that his grandfather had only milk to live on. As for him, however, he would not hear of pity, and when Louis talked to him of his sufferings, which had been caused by his own (Louis's) disobedience, the old man stopped him: "You can tell me something more pleasant, my child," said he; "to close this day, let me hear some little piece of poetry that you can remember." Louis looked at Blanchette, who seemed inclined to listen also; and told a fable about the wild goats. Just as he ended she gave a bleat, which sounded so droll, that they both laughed heartily. It was the first time that they

had been really merry in their prison. "Fear nothing, our pet!" said the grandfather; "when we no longer want your aid, you will always be our favourite goat; and I promise you shall die of old age."

A day or two after this, Louis and his grandfather were talking together, and the latter observed that the "winter was near." "What! winter *near!*" exclaimed Louis. "Is it not come?" "Not yet," was the reply. According to the almanac, winter begins on the 21st of December. Till then we have autumn." "I remember at school it was so explained to us. But is this still called the fruit season?" asked Louis. "My child," said the old man, "the crops have long been gathered even in the valleys; but, you know, upon the mountains winter begins very soon." "And ends very late," said Louis, sadly. "Yes," was the rejoinder, "but it may become mild enough for us to be set free before spring. If a warm south wind blows for several days, this snow will melt more quickly than it fell." "And on that depends our lives." "Does that surprise you? From the hour of your birth, you have been as dependent as now. We live surrounded by dangers which we know nothing of, and little is added to them by the state we are placed in here. At any moment some unexpected accident

may happen, and often what appears a most trifling thing may put an end to your life. Therefore, be prudent when you feel most safe, and be firm when danger threatens you." Louis replied to his grandfather by repeating from the Bible some of the passages that agreed with his words. The old man replied: "In the morning think that perhaps it may be your last; and in the evening be not too sure that you will see another day. Be always on the watch, that death may not find you unprepared. 'Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.'—Matt. xxiv. 44. Labour now so to live, that at the hour of death you may rejoice rather than fear. I am glad to see," he continued, "that the Bible becomes so well known to you. If you go on, it will be to you a true friend. It will often reply to your thoughts like a faithful adviser. This, my child, is the use to make of the Word of God; and I assure you many people who possess large libraries do not gain so much from them, because they read only for amusement, and not for daily help. They live to read, instead of reading to live. Take care not to be like them."

In this way did the good grandfather strive to read his grandson wisdom, neglecting no opportunity to impress him with the beauty of holiness, and the majesty of truth.

It was easy to see, however, that the old man's health was declining; and the day after this conversation took place he scarcely ate anything. He tried a little coffee with his milk, but only tasted it, even when Louis begged of him to let him steep some bread in it. He tried to appear as usual, but Louis was very anxious about him. If he should be ill, thought he, we shall need help of God. And then he prayed with his whole heart to be able to say, "Thy will be done."

The smoke which constantly filled the chalet was very bad for the health, and made them long to open the trap again, but then they feared the wolves. Louis, however, soon discovered a way to light a fire without being obliged to breathe the smoke; for he had found in a corner of the stable an old rusty iron pipe, and it struck him, if he could fix this pipe in the trap, it would carry off the smoke without subjecting them to any danger of wolves. So he named the thing to his grandfather, who thought it an excellent idea; but he would not permit his son to run another risk merely, as he said, to spare him a little inconvenience.

So Louis was silent, and began to think. He knew that it would be useless for him to begin so long as he could not assure his grandfather that the experiment could be tried without any risk of danger to him. At first he thought it would not

be very difficult to force a hole. The board was not very thick, and they had a knife which was also a pretty good saw. He had found a gimlet too, at the bottom of the table-drawer, which, though very blunt, would pierce a deal board. The first hole made, he could then use the saw, and cut out a round piece the size of the pipe. But how to place himself for this work? He had a new and strong cord, which he made fast to the top of the hole, leaving two loops below, like stirrups, to support his feet when once he got above, and he took the other end of the cord to fix upon the ring of the trap, and hold him round the waist. Having explained to his grandfather what he meant to do, he got leave to do it, and managed so well that the first blow forced the pipe through the opening, and he fixed it with some nails put ready beforehand.

Then he came down quite joyful, cleared away the snow which had fallen on the hearth, and had the pleasure of seeing the smoke rise from a sparkling fire which warmed his hands. This was a whole day's work; but the tools were none of the best, the place very awkward, and the workman very unskilful. The good grandfather, however, praised Louis very highly for all the trouble he had taken. Louis thought he did not deserve it, and was more than repaid by the pleasure of seeing

his grandfather enjoy the cheerful blaze of the fire, and get quite warm before going to bed; for, in truth, the old man's limbs were well-nigh frozen before, although he never complained.

They were obliged to be very sparing of their oil; but this economy nearly caused the loss of a large earthen jar which held their drinking water; good, however, came of it at last, as the sequel will show. The jar was set in a corner, and, feeling about in the dark, Louis upset it. Fortunately the floor of the chalet was only soil beaten down, so the jar was not broken. To prevent a recurrence of this accident the grandfather suggested that a hole should be dug to set the jar in, as the bottom was too small for its height. So Louis lighted the lamp, and was about to strike the earth with his pickaxe, when his grandfather, struck by a sudden thought, called upon him to stop. At the same time he went up to Louis, took the tool from his hands, and began himself to dig the soil, but with light blows and much care. Louis asked him what he sought; for he saw by his manner that he feared to break something hidden in the earth, before going on with the work he had wished Louis himself to perform.

"I am not mistaken, my boy," said the old man uncovering a bottle. "The moment you raised your arm I remembered that some years ago I

buried in this place four or five bottles of wine, the remains of our summer store, and forgot them. Put this upon the table, we must now search for the rest. There are not many, I am quite sure. However, my dear Louis, this is a very valuable thing to find. Here is the second, and the third." In short, there were five. Louis begged his grandfather to taste the wine directly, for he thought it would do the old man's heart good. And what delight the boy felt when he saw him drink half a glass of this old wine! The poor food he had eaten for a month past made this cordial quite needful. He would not take much, however, because he thought it should be used only as a medicine. And for this reason Louis refused to take any of it, because he said he had nothing to be cured of.

"You must drink one glass in honour of the day," said his grandfather; "it is the first day of winter. The sun will soon be seen to come nearer to us; the days will begin to lengthen—little it is true, at first, but it is like the return of hope—let us welcome it with a glad heart."

Louis did as he was desired, and then put away the wine with great care. This little event quite roused their spirits, and they talked for a long time.

The next day the grandfather complained of

pain and numbness in his limbs. The confinement, and the cold, and the anxiety, were too much for him. They had always taken care, however, to walk a little while daily up and down their narrow prison, and they much needed the exercise. The old man always leant on his grandson's arm, for he was too stiff and lame to walk long by himself. To-day, as he warmed his bare feet by the fire, Louis saw with grief that they were much swelled. Grandfather assured him, however, that this was no new thing to aged persons, and bade him not be alarmed. He promised, likewise, at the earnest solicitation of Louis, that he would drink a little more wine in the evening, and take care of his health, more for Louis's sake than from any wish he had to live. And Louis prayed that God would preserve him—the only friend he had now, perhaps, left upon earth.

It was a dreary time this prison life, but the prisoners sought each day some new employent, and they gained something by their perseverance. "We are blind," said the old man, "during a part of the day; but the blind know very often how to use their hands, and work in a manner which is surprising. Let us try to do the same. Could we not twist the straw without seeing it? With practice we should soon do it easily." They then made the attempt, and when they afterwards

looked at it by the light of the lamp, they were very well satisfied with their work. Louis even began to hope that he might be able to plait a straw hat such as the shepherd boys make.

At last Christmas-day came, and they devoted it to prayer and meditation. The good grandfather spoke of Jesus Christ, his birth, life, and death. He repeated likewise to Louis many of his parables, and told him of the Saviour's words and deeds, so full of love to all men. The chalet seemed a temple whilst he spoke. And in the meanwhile the church clocks had been heard in the valleys, and the people had gathered round their altars. Sacred songs had been sung there, but no sound of them had ascended to the prisoners of the chalet. And then Louis thought, and said half aloud, "O, my friends! you know not how happy you are, to join in prayer after having been scattered abroad for work. In former days I knew it not; but now I could shed tears of sorrow to think of it. When I go down from this mountain I can truly say to them: If you had learned as I have done how the society of all is needful to *each*, you *could* have no feelings but of love and gentleness towards one another."

The next morning after Christmas-day the grandfather was not at all well. The milk by itself did not suit him, but his patience made all

his sufferings more light—as patience always does—for it is a high and divine virtue, of inestimable value to the individual man, and to the world. "Do not be uneasy, my child," he said; "it may be that I shall live to see the time of our leaving this place. That is all my prayer. If I have the blessing of seeing you restored to your father, I should go in peace and gladness. If God should see fit to take me whilst we are alone in this chalet, I feel sure it will not cause you fear or despair. What can I do for you now? I am only a charge, a hindrance, but, like a good son, you do not feel it so. You do everything here. I have given you the experience you wanted, and now it seems my task is ended. Dare, then, to look as I do at our separation, if it should come a little sooner than we had expected. Be prepared for whatever may happen; but, I repeat, we will hope for the best. The care that you take of me may preserve my life till spring, and I may again see the green trees." Poor Louis! he could only answer this appeal with tears. Then they were silent, and for a long time Louis could not set to work again in the dark.

In the evening the old man could not take his milk, and seeing it would be wasted, he proposed to make a little cheese, and showed Louis how to do it. "It seems," said he, smiling, "that I am

still good for something." For want of rennet, they curdled the milk with a little vinegar, and afterwards it was put into an earthen mould. On the morrow they would see how it turned out. In his turn, Louis found out something which his grandfather would like. "It was," said he, "to warm some bread and wine, as I have seen him do for my aunts when they were weak or poorly." It was soon done, and Louis would have given anything if he could have sprinkled a little sugar over the slices of smoking hot bread. The wine was very sweet with age, and fit, the old man said, for the table of a prince. "I only wish," he added, "to live until the vine shoots forth once more."

Next day they found the cheese all right, and Louis put it on the table powdered with salt. His mouth watered when he looked at it, but still he could not help wishing that his grandfather had eaten it in the shape of milk, it would have done the old man so much good. All that day he ate nothing but some roasted potatoes, and a little bread and wine; and Louis saw that he was gradually becoming weaker. Presently he went to bed earlier, and rose later than he used to do. The warmth under the wool and straw, he said, was best for him, after he had taken a little exercise. And then the old man was so kind and

thoughtful about Louis, instructing him by all that he did, and all that he said. How much had he improved in these few weeks with this dear grandfather! He left home with the thoughts and feelings of a child, and now he was astonished at the change which had come over him.

During the day Louis occupied himself in darkness with plaiting his straw; and so ready had he become at this work, that all his sight seemed to be in his finger ends. He could find out the least mistake by the touch, and he could think, too, whilst thus employed. He says he thought more during thirty days in his snow-prison, than in his whole life of liberty before. On those days, when nothing happened to change the weary monotony of his existence, Louis used to sit and think of his dear father. He pictured him alone and sad, often looking towards the heights, where they were mourning for his absence. His grandfather taught him to be patient, and not even try to break through the veil which hid the future. And then he resolved to offend no more by his anxiety and want of trust; but to think of the Saviour, and cheerfully submit to his lot.

But this submission was hard work; for he was but a boy in heart and years, with boyish longings, and human affections. And when the 30th of December came, it was natural that he should fly

back to the old memories of the valley, and to his school-days; for on this day the school always broke up. And Louis would have given anything to spend a few hours every day in that schoolroom which he once thought a prison. He remembered with affection all its wonted discipline. He heard the clock strike that called them together, and joined the school-boys as they rushed in pell-mell with their books under their arms. Then each one took his seat. The master rose, and they did the same. The prayer was offered up. Yes, Louis was in the midst of that scene once more. He heard the buzz and sound of the boys at their work, and yet he was buried under the snow.

"Poor Louis," said his grandfather, "what do you sigh for now? Must I forbid the amusement which I devised for you? Be master of your thoughts. Think only of subjects that will strengthen your mind. Your present state requires firmness, and perhaps you will need yet more of it." Then Louis asked his grandfather, "Are you not so well this evening?" He answered, "Yes, my child; I only lie down and rise early, for prudence. I would fain be so well that in two or three months we may gaily descend the mountain together, Blanchette running before us. They will be happy to see us below yonder in the valley." As he spoke these words, the old man looked

grave, and pressed his grandson's hand. "And if," he added, "the messenger of deliverance comes to call me, not to the village, but to heaven, what will you do, my child? We must foresee, and prepare for it. I am sure you would be an excellent nurse, and so long as I lived I could depend upon your firmness; but after that other duties would devolve upon you towards my body, could you fulfil them?"

Louis here interrupted the old man with his sobs, and besought him to say no more. He drew him towards him, and blessed him—the good old man!—and was silent.

On the last day of the year he was much better, and gained appetite and strength. He took some coffee, ate more than usual, and drank a little wine, and in the evening they closed the old year with prayer. Then came the morrow, and on that morrow last year Louis was at home with his family. His father went out the evening before to purchase some presents, and he had his share of them. Some friends came in to dine. The children danced, and they sat up very late. The good grandfather, thinking this first of January would be a sad day to his grandson, on account of these memories, did all he could to amuse him. He taught him several new ways of counting, asked him many riddles, and talked more playfully

than usual. They made a feast at supper-time, adding some cheese to their potatoes, and Louis shared the old man's toast for this once. Neither did they forget the goat. Louis picked out the best hay for her, and a fresh litter; gave her a double allowance of salt, and triple measure of patting and kind caresses. A little later, the old man asked Louis to lend him his pen, and he wrote as follows in the Journal:—

"In the name of God. Amen.

"In case I am taken from my children, I desire they should know my last will. I wish to acknowledge the love and devotion of my dear grandson, Louis Lopraz, here present; and as it is impossible to offer him the least gift on this day, I wish my heirs to supply it, and give him for me, my repeater watch, my gun, my Bible, which belonged to my father; and also my seal: a ring of steel, on which are engraved my initials, the same as those of my son and grandson.

"Such is my will. In the chalet of Auzindes, 1st January, 18—.

"Louis Lopraz."

Louis was much affected when he read this will, and afterwards wrote the following passage in his Journal:—"My revered grandfather! In my turn,

let me express my warm gratitude. It is, I feel it is, a blessedness I cannot express, to have lived with you in this dwelling. I have no need of reward, or the least token you could give would suffice. May you yet for a long time enjoy the society of our friends and neighbours! It is with this prayer, in which they are all so much concerned, that I begin the new year."

For a long time they had heard no sound outside, and were more closely shut up than ever. They supposed that fresh snow had fallen, and that the chalet was entirely buried in it. The iron pipe, however, was still above it, and the smoke rose freely. Some flakes of snow occasionally fell through the narrow passage. These white messengers of winter were the only things which passed between them and the world. If their clock had stopped, they would have had no means of knowing day and night, except by the light which they could see in the morning above the pipe. To make up for this, however, they now suffered little from cold in their dark cave; and the stream of fresh air up the chimney was sufficient to purify it, and keep it from being unwholesome. Sometimes when they had lighted the lamp, and were busy with their daily work, sitting over the bright fire, they forgot their misfortunes, and were even merry. At such times Louis thought they might

be envied by his schoolfellows, for their situation was romantic enough; and he had often heard them wish to be Robinson Crusoe on his desert island, and had as often joined them in that wish. And yet the ocean which separated Crusoe from the rest of the world was much more difficult to pass over than the mountain where the chalet was. He could only hope for the coming of some stray vessel, whilst they were sure that the snow which now buried them would sooner or later melt away.

They had sad hours enough, however, in the chalet, and now the saddest of all were approaching. On the 4th of January, in the evening after supper, while seated in the corner by the fire, the good old grandfather became suddenly pale, sunk down, and had it not been for Louis's prompt help, must have fallen into the flames. Louis screamed, raised him in his arms, and with an effort he would have thought at any other time impossible, lifted him into the bed, and laid him down upon it. His head and hands were cold. Louis took care not to raise his head, for he had been told what to do in such a case a few days before. The blood soon came round, and sense at the same time. "Where am I? What! upon my bed?" he exclaimed. Louis replied, with tears in his eyes, "Yes, dear grandfather, you have been faint, and I thought it best to put you here; and it proved so,

for you were hardly laid down when you recovered." "And you carried me here," said the old man, gazing affectionately upon his grandson. "Thank God, that as my strength grows less, yours is greater, my dear child. We lose nothing. It is now you to do, me to love you." And he put his old arms round his grandson's neck, as he knelt beside the bed. Presently Louis prepared him some wine, and he gradually revived, and was better. He soon, however, became drowsy, and fell asleep. Louis watched his pillow, and seeing that all was well, blessed God for it, and, in his turn, rested beneath God's care.

The next day Louis was very busy with his household work, and had prevailed upon his grandfather to lie in bed. The old man directed him how to wash their linen and flannel without soap, and in the evening the clothes were ready to dry by the fire, where he intended to leave them all night. He persuaded his grandfather to let him rub his poor body, in order to increase its warmth, and then he found how very thin he was. The old man thanked him for this service, and said, Louis seemed to give him life, for he felt refreshed, and could breathe better afterwards.

On the following morning he spoke to his grandson unreservedly about his state. "My child," he said, "I can no longer hide from you that the end

of my life is not far off. Would that I could chain my soul to this earth until I see the day of your deliverance! I know it not, and hardly dare hope it. My weakness increases so fast, that I shall most likely leave you alone for the third part of our winter. I believe you will be more afflicted at our separation than terrified about your loneliness. You will feel more of grief than fear: I can so well depend upon your courage and piety as to hope you will not fall into despair. Remember your father, for you will see him again, and this thought will support you. You will call to mind that, after my death, the danger in this chalet is not greater than whilst I was alive. On the contrary, I am rather in your way. There is more to fear from famine; and it will be, perhaps, less difficult for you to leave the mountain alone. I only ask your promise to be patient, and not expose yourself too soon. A few days more or less are nothing in a long captivity, and you risk all by trying too soon. Why should you be in too great haste? To this day your health has not suffered from being shut up here. You will not have our conversations to divert you, but how many prisoners are condemned to silence for a number of years, and too often with a conscience ill at ease! You will be comforted by having fulfilled your duty. Only one thing makes me

anxious, my dear Louis, and that is, the effect of my death upon your mind. When you see this body without life, it will cause you a feeling of dread, perhaps of terror. There is little reason for this, but it is what many people cannot overcome, because they do not think rightly. Why should you fear the remains of your old friend? Are you afraid of me whilst I am asleep? The other evening when I fainted, you never thought I could hurt you. You only saw my need of help, and did your duty like a brave lad. So let it be when you see me fall into the last faint, which is called death. Act then as wisely. My body will only require from you a last service. Dare to render it, when nature tells you the time is come. You will have all the strength that is needful; it was proved so when you lifted and laid me upon this bed. You see that door; it leads to the dairy, which we have never entered, because it is useless to us. There you must dig a hole as deep as you can, and lay my body in it, to remain until you take it away, to be buried this spring in the cemetery of our village. After this you will feel very lonely, and shed many tears. You will call me, perhaps, and I shall not answer. Do not lose yourself in vain sorrow. Call upon Him who will always answer you, when you speak to him with faith and trust. Here you will truly understand

what His help is. He will be all you want. He will be to you in the place of all."

Thus ended his grandfather, the brave, old, Christian man, who looked upon death as his transport to heaven and its glorious immortality, and only trembled for his dear grandson. Louis heard the admonitions with intense emotion, but he was comforted by them, and the hope that this calamity was yet afar off. He could hardly bring himself to believe that a spirit so firm and free could dwell in a body about to die.

Another day passed; and during the long and weary hours Louis had often been impatient. It seemed to him as if the spring would never come, and he asked himself if it were the dread of being alone that made him so anxious! Then he strove to rid himself of such a weak fear; promised to think no more of himself, that he might more truly be the disciple of Christ. "But if I pray," he said, "that my grandfather may be spared, and that I may be saved from the horror of solitude, is this selfish?"

Meanwhile all was dark in the chalet, and the old man was still very weak. Darkness is very sad for the sick, and even injures the best health. Light is made for man, and man for light. So Louis discovered a way to manage the oil without being quite in the dark. He made a little lamp

out of a slice of cork, to which he fixed a very thin wick. This feeble light was enough to allow him to do his work, and it cheered his grandfather. He determined to use this in future, and rarely lighted the lamp itself, in order to save the oil. He found, too, that he could just see to write his journal without it. People used to the light of the poorest house in the village would have found the chalet very dull; but after the darkness they had lived in so long, it seemed very pleasant to them to see each other, and to move about without being obliged to feel their way, and to mark the difference between day and night. Louis could also watch his grandfather, and often saw him join his hands and raise his eyes, first to heaven, and then fix them upon him. Louis could guess his thoughts, and, without speaking, they both breathed the same prayer.

On the evening of the 7th of January, Louis went to bed full of hope. His grandfather seemed better than usual, but before he fell asleep Louis heard him groan, and immediately jumped up to assist him. He dressed, lighted the lamp—which was always kept ready—and asked what his grandfather felt. "Faintness," he said; "it will be like the other day, and perhaps"—here he stopped. "Will you take a tea-spoonful of wine, my dear grandfather?" said the boy. "No, my child—

only bathe my brow, and rub my hands with vinegar—and—take the Bible—read—my child—in that part—you know—where I put a mark." Louis obeyed; and on his knees, trembling, he read the page asked for. It was the beginning of the twelfth chapter in the Gospel of St. John. Then the old man took his grandson's hands in his, and prayed fervently for him. His voice was very weak. Then he repeated from memory many words of the Saviour, which made Louis weep.

Some little time afterwards, Blanchette, disturbed by the light at so unusual an hour, began to bleat loudly. "Poor Blanchette," said the dying man, "I must stroke her once more. Untie her, my child, and bring her here." Louis did as he was desired, and Blanchette sought the old man's hand, for she was used to receive from it a little salt. She licked it for the last time. "Be always a good nurse to my dear Louis," he said to the dumb creature, trying to lay his hand on her neck. Then he turned his head, and Louis took the goat away.

After this the grandfather spoke very little, but liked to hold his grandson's hand, which he sometimes gently pressed; and as he looked at him, Louis knew that all his thoughts were for him till life should cease. Then he spoke to the old man, and bent over him, and said with all the firmness he

could command: "Farewell, dearest grandfather, till we meet in heaven. I will try to be faithful to your teaching, and deserve that blessed reward. I will trust in my Saviour; he will support me, and be all I need. Do not fear for me." His grandfather pressed his hand with all his strength, but could not speak. Louis said again: "I will mind your advice, and for love of you will neglect nothing to prolong my life, and enable me to leave this chalet. Again there was a weak pressure; and alas! it was the last, which that true hand ever gave. Suddenly it became cold, loosed its grasp, and the good old man expired without a sigh.

Louis contemplated the lifeless remains of his dear grandfather for a while, and then burst into an agony of tears. A desire to render every aid and comfort to the good old man, who loved him so much, in his last moments, had kept his heart from weakness; but now that he lay before his eyes a lifeless corpse, and there was no hope that he should ever again hear his voice, or feel the warm pressure of his hand any more, he sank under the thought. The old man was dead, and his spirit was with God; but Louis was alone with the dead—buried, the living with the dead! and the thought for some time was insupportable. Death is always sad, and there is a terror in it from

which the natural instinct of man recoils; but there are circumstances which heighten this terror, and might well appal the stoutest and most pious heart. When the bed of death, and the dead it contains, are surrounded by sorrowing friends, where tears and affectionate sympathies mutually support and sustain each other, the mourners are not utterly desolate; but Louis was alone, and there lay the dead by his side, and he had no one to comfort him. No one? Yes, there was one, the thought of whom broke through the gloom and darkness of his mind, and filled it with heavenly light and consolation. It was Christ! that friend of the broken-hearted, that Saviour on whom his grandfather had taught him to rely, as one who is ever ready to cheer and save. Louis, though alone in his dark tomb of snow, was not an orphan! O what joy there was in that! He had Christ for his friend—Christ, his dear Saviour! and he felt that he was present with him in the chalet.

Still, when night came on, the boy shuddered when he thought of the dead body; and all the superstitious and frightful tales which the ignorance of ages had drawn from the idea of death, came into his mind, and affrighted him with their ghastly and visionary terrors. And then he remembered the words of his grandfather after that fainting fit by the fire; how the old man tried

to dissipate from his mind the fear of death, and especially that he, being dead, could hurt his grandson, concluding with the memorable words, that death was but the last faint; and Louis wept when he thought of them, and upbraided himself that he had given way to the weakness of fear over this dear grandfather's remains. "I loved him in life," he said, "I will love him in death, and fear him no more." Then he took up the lamp and went up to the bed, and gazed upon the calm, cold, and peaceful face of the old man, kissed his pale forehead, knelt down by his side, and prayed to God to confirm his resolution, and to strengthen him for the last offices which he must soon perform.

The next morning he arose, wound up the old wooden clock, and milked Blanchette. After breakfast he sat awhile in the dark and cold, but was soon obliged to light a fire, at which to warm himself. This employed him a little while; but he gradually fell into a kind of torpor. Towards evening the wind was violent, and blew in mighty blasts over and round the chalet. Then it howled pitilessly, and seemed to beat the roof as with vast wings; and then it died away again in sullen and gloomy murmers. Louis thought of the wolves, and occasionally fancied he heard their piercing howls in the lulls of the tempest.

These fancies soon vanished, but only to give place to others. He could not command his thoughts for a long time. At last with great effort he arose, and looked once more on his dead grandfather, touched him, and soon recovered. From this time he often went near him. The face looked so calm and mild, that it only made him shed tears. "No," he said, sobbing, "the remains of my best friend shall not make me afraid." His misery returned, however, again when he must sleep. At his age none could keep awake. So he took refuge, as he had done the night before, with Blanchette. There was life and warmth in this poor animal; even the little noise she made in chewing the cud was a comfort to him. Once the little lamp went out. Why was it that he trembled all over? Foolish boy! What safety was there in that feeble light? His very breath would put it out. It depended upon his will to keep it up, and yet he owed all his calmness to it. O light! O blessed light! He prayed earnestly, received comfort, and slept.

The next day he employed himself as much as possible with the goat and his work. He often went to the bed. For a long time he held in his hands the dear and venerable head of his grandfather. The more his fears passed away, the greater became his sorrow, and he was

thankful for the change, so much more right and natural.

He now began to think about the burial, and recalled what his grandfather had said about it. Prayer gave him courage to do what was right. He recalled also the words of Scripture: "The body must return to the dust from which it came." So he bravely and sorrowfully took up his tools, and opened the door of the dairy. The first strokes were too much for him, he was obliged to stop. It was not the strength of his arms which failed him, but his mind was troubled, and he had no power. To dig the grave of the dead alone in that dim sepulchral light, and to carry the dead on his boy arms to its last home—and that dead, the remains of his dear grandfather, his only friend—was enough, indeed, to weaken the stoutest heart. But the work must be done. Each time he struck the ground an echo sounded through the vault, walled up like a cave. The whole day was consumed in digging, which under other circumstances would not have taken Louis two hours. The soil was sandy and light, and he could dig it with the shovel. He was glad of this, and dug a deep hole; for he thought if the chalet should be deserted for a time, or if he in his turn were to die, he would do his utmost to put the body beyond the reach of the horrible wolves. He

went on with his gloomy work until hidden in a hole above his own height. The clock struck ten. Night was come, and with it dark, dark thoughts. The violent exertion, however, made him soon fall asleep, only hindered a short time by the care of Blanchette, who seemed very glad to have him near her.

He arose early the next morning to finish his sad work. Poor fellow! it was indeed sad. He lighted his lamp, but his courage seemed to fail, and instead of milk, he took a little bread and wine to revive his strength. Then he laid the body on a board, and lovingly placed the hands across the breast. Weeping sadly, he called aloud to his poor grandfather, but his voice fell with startling echoes back upon his ear, and there was no answer. O no! never more would there come any sound from that once eloquent tongue; for it was muffled up in death, and the kind, pious heart was still. Louis felt all this, and drew the board with trembling hands towards the hole. By degrees he placed the body there to rest—its last, long, sad rest! Then he read the words which the Saviour spoke to the sorrowful: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come unto you," (John xiv. 18); and having closed the grave, he spent the day in carving an inscription with his knife on a piece of maple wood. It was as follows:—

"Here lies the body of Pierre Louis Lopraz, who died on the night of January 7th and 8th, in the arms of his grandson, Louis Lopraz, who buried him."

Louis nailed this epitaph upon a stake, and drove it into the ground close to the grave. Then he shut the door and went back to the kitchen, to his only companion, poor Blanchette. Though he felt more at ease when the sad duty was done, and the body no longer lay upon the bed, yet he had not overcome all his weakness, but he resolved to do so. He had locked the door of the dairy with a key, but he got up and opened it, and only drew the bolt. He went very often to the grave after this, and always without a light, and every morning and evening he prayed beside it. The cares of the house now pressed upon him, and occupied his time, for much had been left undone during the last few days; but he soon restored it to order, and returned to his ordinary work of plaiting straw. In the evenings he wrote his Journal, and one night read it all through. It affected him much, but did him good; for the lessons of his grandfather came over him afresh, with the memory of all his virtues.

On the 16th January he writes:—"My lot is indeed changed. I perceive it every day more and more. And why? I had a friend, and yet I dared

to murmur. How much I now wish again for the state which I then complained of! God has punished me for discontent. I am alone! this thought haunts me all day."

In the evening of the following day, when he had put out the fire, and was going to put out the little lamp, he heard a slight noise in the chimney. It was some dust that fell, covered with soot. The soot took fire and caused a smell, which made him look up the pipe to see if it were safe. Whilst, with his head held back, he sought for traces of fire, he beheld a brilliant star shining through the opening. This sight lasted but for a moment, and yet it aroused a strong emotion in Louis. One of the suns which the Creator had set in the heavens had cast a ray upon him, and visited him in his living grave. It spoke to him of the power of God. It calls him to adore and trust in Him. He did not fail to listen. He fell on his knees, and for the first time, for many days, he felt again in his soul the deep trust that his grandfather had implanted there.

The next evening he looked again for the star, but without success; whether it had changed its position, or the weather were cloudy, he could not tell.

The following extracts from his Journal will show how he employed his time until the period came for his liberation:—

"*Jan.* 19*th.* Whilst my soul seeks in vain for what it has lost, I have plenty of food for the body. Every day I make cheese of the milk which I do not drink, and I do this less for need than occupation. I am not used to being alone. It needs all my efforts to obtain sleep. The days seem endless.

"20*th.* I write for writing's sake. How can I fill this Journal? If it be a true tale, it will only show sadness. I try to take up the pen as I used to do, but it is impossible. I cannot break the gloom that hangs over me.

"21*st.* The misery I feel now is the worst I ever knew. My first trouble when we were prisoners—my terror when the wolves came—the gloomy days of my grandfather's death and burial—did not make me suffer as I do now. I am so weary; and even prayer cannot relieve me from it.

"22*d.* Whilst the goat has a hand to feed her, she does not trouble herself about the blank around. I am enough for her, as my grandfather would have been, as a stranger could be. She has need of me without knowing it. She has the benefit of my care without gratitude. Sometimes I am tempted to reproach her. How absurd! There cannot be ingratitude where there is no sense or reason. But for me who have the Divine

light, what use have I made of it towards God who gave it me? Am I more grateful than this poor ignorant brute? How shall I save myself from murmuring and despair?

"23*d*. I have just escaped from a sudden and terrible death, which would have come upon me in a state of wrong feeling and despair. Ought I to call it a miracle? But what matters it, if I feel the blessed effects of events which are appointed for me.

"For some days I have been sure that the weather is milder. I have had less need of fire, and the smoke has risen freely. To-day, about two o'clock, I heard a loud noise like thunder. It came rapidly nearer, and seemed terrible. All at once I felt a violent shock. I screamed. Some things were thrown down. The kitchen was filled with a thick dust. The cracking of the beams warned me that the chalet had been much shaken. However, all around me was safe; I went about the house, and in the stable I found alarming proofs of what had happened. The wall had given way, and a piece of the roof was broken in on the side towards the mountain. A heavy rock must have fallen against the chalet, or else an avalanche, loosened by the warmer air, has come down upon it. I feel deeply thankful, and my heart shall not again lose trust and courage. I am preserved, and I will offer

up my thanksgiving by the grave of my grandfather.

"24*th*. I have a new cause for anxiety, and perhaps it is sent for my good. Already I am roused by it. The goat gives me less milk. For several days I have thought so, and now I am sure of it.

"25*th*. My grandfather must have foreseen that I should remain here alone, for I remember his advice in case of what has now happened. One day he said: 'What should we do if Blanchette failed with her milk? We should be obliged to kill her in order to live ourselves.'

"26*th*. If things do not grow worse, I need not be anxious. Blanchette still gives as much milk as I want. I can make no more cheese, but I have some in store. I have looked over all the rest of the provisions, and reckoned how long they would last if I have nothing else. It will not be more than fifteen days.

"27*th*. The milk is less, and the goat is fatter. Thus, in case her milk fails, the poor animal is more fit to nourish me with her flesh.

"30*th*. The thought is constantly before me, Shall I be forced to become a butcher? To sustain my sad life must I destroy that which has nourished me until now? I have only half my milk.

"*Feb.* 1*st.* Yesterday the milk was not less, but it cost me dear. I gave the goat a triple allowance of salt, and she drank more. It will be impossible to go on so; I must kill my poor Blanchette, for the salt will be wanted. Kill Blanchette! To-day I have not given the salt, and have less milk.

"2*d.* Having heard that when fowls are too well fed they give fewer eggs, I thought it might be the same with Blanchette, and gave her less hay. With poorer food she has given me less milk than before, and I have been grieved to hear her bleat dismally all day.

"3*d.* I have made a new experiment as useless as that of yesterday. I tried to make Blanchette eat straw instead of hay, thinking that a change of food might be good for her. The goat did not like my plan, and whether from spite or suffering, she has given me but a few drops of milk.

"4*th.* I will not tease her again. If I must kill her, I will make her life pleasant to the last moment. To-day she has eaten well, and been a better nurse. I can hardly hope it will last. I will let nature alone; after having done all I can to avoid a cruel necessity, I will try to submit to it.

"8*th.* I will own my weakness. I have wept to-day, having tried for the last time to milk Blanchette.

"13*th*. I have sought again, and dug in many places to find, if possible, some hidden store, but in vain; and I have only made myself more hungry with the exertion.

"17*th*. The cold is so severe, I am obliged to keep up a good fire. I have only enough of salt left to serve me in the office of butcher.

"18*th*. The cold is extreme; it reminds me of the wolves. There is nothing now to prevent them hunting over the mountain. In my sad condition it is the only end I dread. If an avalanche were to destroy me, I should look upon that death as a deliverance."

At last, wearied with his weary life, and having no future before him but starvation, he resolved to leave the chalet. Before risking his life in so hazardous an undertaking, he wrote in his Journal how he came to decide upon this course, with the intention of leaving it on the table, for the information of any one who might hereafter visit the chalet, in case he should perish. He could not bear the thought of killing Blanchette. Yesterday he woke from a wretched dream, and fancied that he had killed her. Her bleating awoke him; and then with what joy did he behold her! how he fondled and caressed her! But he was not happy long, for he knew that in a few days he should have no food. He was almost frozen and

lighted a good fire. While warming himself, the thought struck him, the wolves can tread over the snow, and why not me and Blanchette? The idea made him start with joy. But soon came fear also. To avoid killing Blanchette for food, he was going to give himself up to the wolves. Ah! that was a dreadful thought. But if he killed the poor goat, her flesh would not last long; and an attack of wolves on the way was not certain. They might escape, for their march would be rapid. These considerations decided him, and he related them in his Journal. He could not kill the goat. He would make a sledge, and thus return to the village. In two days he completed his work. It was a kind of rough carriage, and he used his best wood to make it with. He then determined to fasten the goat behind, and tie her feet so that she could not move, whilst he would sit in front. He had been used to manage a sledge from his childhood, and drive it down rapid slopes. He hoped thus to reach the village quickly.

Accordingly, he went to bed excited by deep feelings. He looked with affection round his prison where he suffered so much, where he should leave the remains of his dear grandfather. Then he thought with terror of the distance from the village, but his resolution did not shrink. The hope, too, of knowing for certain of the fate

of his father, made him impatient. The sledge was ready and the cord to tie Blanchette with; with the hay that was to serve her for bed and shelter. He also would wrap himself in it. There likewise was the Holy Book, from which he had derived so much strength and consolation; and he resolved never to part with it, but to preserve it in life or death. And then he prayed with it, for the last time in the chalet, and again seemed to hear the words,—"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."—John xiv. 27.

The last passage in the Journal explains how he came to be delivered, without hazarding the peril of the adventure, alone at least, for which he had prepared. It is thus dated:—

"*March 2d.—In the home of my Father.*—I am close to him. He has read my Journal, which I did not leave in the chalet, and he urges me to finish it. What I still feel, after a week of happiness, almost prevents my being able to relate the last events. Everything was so different from what I expected. On 24th February the cold seemed more severe than ever. I resolved to lose no time, and was obliged to open a path wide enough for the sledge. I could throw the snow into the chalet, and the task was more easy. So hard did I work that I was tired, and obliged to stop. I

lighted the fire. Hardly had the smoke risen than I heard a great noise out of doors. My first thought was that the wolves were come. I shut the door violently. My terror did not last long, for I heard the sound of my own name, and I knew the voice. I answered with all my might. Cries of joy showed that I was heard. Soon I heard other voices, like people eagerly at work. In a few minutes a large opening finished what I had begun. My father hardly waited till the way was clear. He rushed into the chalet with a loud cry. I was in his arms. 'And your grandfather?' he asked. I could not answer; but led him to the dairy. He threw himself on the grave. I did the same; and as I tried to tell him what had passed, he saw the attempt was beyond my strength. 'By-and-by, my child,' he said, 'let us not risk another misfortune. Time presses. The return will not be easy.'"

The men who came with him now entered. They were my two uncles, and Peter, our servant. They all embraced me. They saw my preparations, which were approved. They decided to set off directly. My deliverers had fastened under their feet small pieces of wood, with sharp points, and they had brought two pairs besides. One pair, alas! were not wanted, but with the other I was shod. Peter took charge of the sledge. The

wolves might come now if they pleased. We were all armed. My father took me by the hand, and gave me a light gun. "This is not the time," he said, "to remove the remains of my father. We shall return when the season will allow of it, and afterwards, in our village, the last duties shall be rendered." "You have guessed," I said, "the last will of my grandfather." Then we went again into the dairy for a short time. My uncles were with us. My father shed tears. After a silence, he said, "Farewell! I obey you in taking this child home as soon as possible. He has been the cause of anxiety no less to you than to us. Farewell, my father!"

We all set off in tears. The descent was rapid and fatiguing. I was dazzled by the light of the sun and the sparkling snow. The cold was severe, but I did not complain, for it had saved me. Blanchette owed her life to the freezing wind, which made her shiver upon the sledge. After walking over the snow without any other accident than sinking a little now and then, we came to a place still far from the village, to which a road had been opened in the attempt to reach us. I was quite struck with the immense labour it had cost; and I saw, that without the severe frost, we should not have been set free for a long time.

At last they reached the village, and Louis's father told him, that on the day he went down the mountain with his flock, he nearly perished in the storm which made him and his grandfather prisoners in the chalet; that he had afterwards made every effort to reach and deliver them, but without success, owing to the softness and prodigious quantity of snow that had fallen. He was now free, however, and he and all that belonged to him blessed the name of the Lord for his providential deliverance.

Such is the simple and homely narrative of one of those dangers to which the hardy mountaineers of the Alps are every season liable; and from which they do not always escape with life. Amid the tremendous avalanches of ice and snow, the descents of glaciers, and the sudden outbursts of the winter tempests, they are continually exposed to perils from which their own exertions can do scarcely anything to deliver them, and in which, therefore, they have the more strongly impressed on them the necessity of reposing their trust in the ever-watchful care of an overruling Providence.