

With one knee resting on the extreme edge, the old man kept his right hand firmly holding the iron crook, and looked into the darkness below. All at once the motion of the rope ceased; he who had begun to mount stopped.

"Courage," cried Uncle Job; "do not give up; one more effort."

But the cord remained still. In agony he hung over the brink.

"Come," said he, in a stronger voice. "It is I, Ulrich; it is Uncle Job. God has sent me to aid you. He will save you. Help me, my son, if you are a man—if you wish to see Aunt Trina and Freneli again!"

At this last name the rope once more shook; there followed a moment's uncertainty, then again all was still. In vain did Uncle Job repeat his encouragements, and strain his eyes. There was not a movement. He looked around in despair, divining that Ulrich's long stay in this grave of ice had numbed him so that he could not climb, and fearing that ere help from the valley could be obtained it would be too late.

Leaning as far over the chasm as he dared, he shouted to Ulrich to tie the rope under his shoulders. After what seemed an eternity of waiting, the tightening of the rope told him it was done.

There followed a moment's uncertainty, then a continuous movement; the ascent was begun.

With his eyes fixed on the chasm, the old man ceaselessly encouraged the enfeebled man below. At length, from the darkness he saw an uncovered and stiffened head coming up. Icicles hung from the masses of hair, and the face, lighted by the greenish reflection from the glacier, looked almost petrified. From the automaton-like slowness of the motion one might have fancied it a corpse galvanized by some magical conjuration, issuing from the centre of the earth, without thought or voice.

The moment this head rose to the top, Uncle Job drew the rope to him

with all his might, and Ulrich lay stretched on the edge of the crevasse. The old mountaineer uttered an exclamation of joy, and getting his gourd, without which he never went, he, after some trouble, unlocked the young man's teeth and made him swallow a little brandy; then he rubbed his face and hands with snow, until he had succeeded in bringing him back to sensibility; and at length Ulrich was able partially to open his blue lips.

"May heaven reward you," stammered he. "Without your help I must have died."

"Say without the help of God," replied the old man. "He alone is master, and we are only the servants of His will."

"Ah, well! Thanks to God and to you . . . all His blessings . . ." murmured Ulrich, yielding to the sleepy languor caused by fatigue and cold.

"Come, come!" interrupted Job; "bestir yourself and get up."

"Not yet . . . by and by," stammered the young man, with his eyes shut.

"By and by will be too late," cried the crystal-seeker, shaking him. "Stand up, Ulrich; you *must*; your strength will come back to you in walking, and we will rest at the first cottage. If you stay here you are a dead man. Rise once more; it is for your life."

He forced his nephew to his feet and dragged him in spite of himself across the glacier, tottering, his head moving unsteadily and his eyelids half closed. Job tried to revive him by encouraging him and asking questions. By degrees Ulrich's blood began to circulate, and he was able after a time to relate in broken words his flight, before the foehn, his fall into the fissure, how weakened he was by the avalanche which had drawn him there, and his long agony at the bottom. He only kept silence as to his meeting with Hans.