

Formerly he might have hoped to meet with some crystal-seeker or one of his hunting companions, but the first have nearly disappeared and the second get more and more rare every day. What had happened among the Hausers seemed to symbolize the change that had taken place in the entire population. Old Job represented an extinct generation, Hans that about to end, and Ulrich that just beginning.

But the old man and his nephew had set out. The sky was not yet light, and the frozen tops were carved against a colorless horizon. The Lüttschne was grumbling in the valley: a strong wind made the snow-laden pines groan: and at times the blows of a hatchet were heard from the lower parts. Job turned to his companion:

"I do not like this morning," said he in a thoughtful tone. The hoar frost is making a plume of feathers for the Faul Horn. Yesterday, the west stayed a long time inflamed, and the moon rose in a red circle. I am afraid something is coming from the south."

"We are only just got into March," said Ulrich; "generally the foehn is later." (Foehn, a south wind or species of tempest, possibly the same as the sirocco in Italy.)

"That is what I have been telling myself," replied the old man, "but appearances are none the less bad. When you get higher up, look around at the sky."

While thus talking they had begun to climb the mountain side. Both walked with that firm and even step natural to mountaineers, but Ulrich went on mechanically, thoughtful and sad, while the other became more active and joyous at every step. As they got higher up on the slopes separating the Eiger and the Wengern Alp, Uncle Job seemed to recognize every rock, tree or tuft of green. He might have been taken for an exile just reaching the frontiers of his native land. He went on searching into and

scrutinizing, in the growing dawn, all the gaps that the snow had not invaded, finding here a plant, there a benumbed insect, further on a pebble that he would name aloud. At length, when they had reached the first storey or range of the mountain, a reflection of the aurora sparkling on the summits enveloped them in a purplish hue, and showed them all the lesser chains of the Eiger and Shreck-Hörner confusedly lit up, while the valley of Grindelwald was still plunged in darkness.

Uncle Job stopped.

"Here we must separate, dear boy," said he. "You must turn to the right and I to the left. Do you quite understand my directions, and will you know how to find your way?"

"I hope so," said the young man, looking around him and trying to recognize those heights which he had not visited for several years.

"At first," said Uncle Job, "follow the path up along by those groups of fir and birch trees. When you have left them behind you will see a projecting shelf, which in any other season would be known easily enough by its blue gentian and by bushes of red clustered euphorbia, but now everything is under the snow. Leave the rock you will find at your right in a line with the Eiger, and keep on ascending till you get to the passage of flints, which is still garnished with thin club moss, peeping through the stones. You will then reach the great plain, where you need only look around to find out your whereabouts. Now let us go, each in the care of God; let us ask Him to be with us." Uncle Job had taken off his hat; Ulrich did so, too, and, resting on his staff, the old man began aloud one of those impromptu prayers habitual to mountaineers, and which they know how to make suitable to the wants of each hour.

At this moment the sun, just risen, inundated the mountain with brilliant waves of light, rapidly descending