

"Quite sure;" replied Hans, who had lifted his hand to feel the wind, "in a few minutes it will be here. You have wished that God should decide. God has heard you and is about to do so. He who can get back to the Enge will have Neli. Good-bye, take care of your life; I will try to save mine."

CHAPTER IX.

And without waiting for an answer, Hans rushed to the narrowest part of the crevasse, rested his staff on the opposite edge, gave one bound and was on the other side. Ulrich tried in vain to call him; the hunter ran on without heeding and was soon lost in the thick clouds advancing along the mountain sides. Having no means of bounding in his turn the fissure separating them, Ulrich had to retrace his steps.

Followed already by breezes, fore-runners of the foehn, he retook the route by the glaciers. Instead of gaining some height as Hans sought to do, where the effects of the south wind are less felt, Ulrich descended as quickly as possible towards the Wengern-Alp, but the snow, already softened, was beginning to melt, and here and there many crackings were heard in the glacier. Warm gusts of wind swept by from time to time, and got lost amid lugubrious hissings in the needles of ice. A few birds of prey, overtaken in their flight, were trying with their greatest speed to regain their retreat, and were uttering mournful cries; and from below was heard the Alpine horn, the notes of which, plaintively prolonged, bounded from abyss to abyss, awakening a thousand echoes, invisible sentinels of the mountain, sending on the cry of alarm.

Ulrich looked anxiously at the sky. The clouds were coming nearer and faster. Already the neighboring tops were lost, and he found himself enveloped in a misty rampart, getting narrower and smaller on all sides, and pushed on by the foehn. At length it came in all its violence. The young

man, carried along by it, continued obliquely the descent of the glacier, occupied solely in avoiding the crevasses in which he would have been swallowed up. Thus he reached an angle, where he was able to stop, the wind being broken by a projecting piece of the mountain. He fell to the earth, so stunned and out of breath that he was for some little time incapable of moving.

When at last he could rouse himself and look about him, everything had again changed its aspect.

Swept away by the violence of the foehn, the clouds were floating in the distance, and the mountain thoroughly freed, displayed even its finest peaks, but the African wind still whirled around the summits, still glided over the declivities and engulfed itself in the defiles; and everything was softened from its inflaming contact. Under the melted and sunken snow, streams were springing up and rushing down into the ravines in white cascades.

Ulrich rose, and sheltering himself from the fierceness of the gusts by means of the high furrows intersecting the glacier, he continued his way with ever increasing effort. He had never before this been exposed to the foehn except in the valleys, where it arrives much moderated from its passage over the mountains, and so had never suspected what it was on those frozen heights, which almost seem suddenly to dissolve beneath its breath.

As he continued his arduous and dangerous route, the snow melted faster and faster. The streams, grown to torrents, tumbled over the steep sides and slopes, and, ever growing wider, were uniting their unbridled waters.

Rocks, torn up from their frozen casings, rolled over the slippery inclines, then, repulsed by the first impediment, leapt in huge bounds, cleared immense blocks and fell into abysses, where they were long heard dashing along against the resounding walls.

Beds of snow accumulated on the