

And Uncle Job appeared at the cottage doorway, armed with his iron-bound staff, his hammer at his belt and a tin box hanging from his shoulder.

Freneli and Ulrich ran to meet him, the one to press his hand, the other to take his load from him, but the old man would only give up a little basket which he carried on his arm.

"Take care, Neli, take care my child," said he, gaily. "These are neither herbs nor stones, nor even butterflies. It is my answer to my nephew Hans. Was he not talking as I came in of poor fare? Lift up the lid, Neli, and show him what I have brought."

Neli opened the basket and took out, one after another, eggs, smoked bacon, three white loaves and a small bottle of kirschwasser.

The hunter, who had watched the other things disappear with great indifference, hailed this last arrival with an exclamation of pleasure.

"Ah, ah! this sends away the frown, my master!" said the old man, striking his nephew's shoulder. "I am very glad to find some opening into this heart, and to be able to send in one ray of sunlight. Good day, Trina, you have only aged two days since the day before yesterday, as far as I can see; and you, Neli,—quick; cook this food for us. Sit down, Ulrich: we will all have supper together, my son."

While thus in a jovial voice, giving each one a word in turn, the old man had taken off the things he carried, and had come to the table and seated himself opposite to his nephews.

He carefully uncorked the bottle of kirschwasser and poured for each one the third of a glass; then helped himself. He inquired, with affectionate good-humor, if Hans had taken anything; to which the hunter contented himself by replying with a shake of the head; then he questioned Ulrich as to his affairs at Merengen.

The young carver repeated to him

what he had told Aunt Trina, but in a low-spirited and absent tone, little in accordance with the words which told of his success.

Uncle Job concluded that the advantages of his new position were dearly bought, and remembering the many efforts he had made to turn the young man from it, he could not help contrasting with it the independence and content he might have enjoyed on the mountain.

For more than forty years Uncle Job had lived exposed to all the fatigues and perils of these solitary wilds, but to him they had ever appeared endearing and sublime. While the unconquerable audacity of Hans presumed to find a demon there, his mildness and resignation sought only his God. The former, drawn on by a kind of furious passion, crossed precipices and avalanches, his eye solely fixed on his prey; the second, patiently meeting every obstacle, contemplated the flower, the butterfly or the stones of the ravine. That was the strength which braves; this the simplicity which admires. So nothing had troubled the serenity of this soul. Youth, in leaving him, had still spared him many rays of its joy, just as the setting sun leaves behind him, on the white points, reflections of his flame.

When supper was served, Job made Trina and Freneli take their places with the rest, and his liveliness brightened all faces. Hans alone remained in his usual sombre mood. When the two women had left the table, the old man made a last attempt to enliven him. He filled his glass and kindly resting his hand on his arm,—

"Drink hunter!" said he laughing; "for this once kirschwasser may flow like water from the rock; the source is found, and to-morrow shall find the bottle full again."

"But where did you discover this wonderful fountain, Uncle Job?" asked Ulrich.

"At the Inn of Lauterbrunnen," replied the old man. "This morning