

of the distance, was distinctly heard by the watchers ; but, as he stood up, his gun still smoking in his hand, the stone on which his foot rested suddenly gave way. He stretched out his arms to balance himself—it was too late, his hands slipped over this wall of rock, polished by the winter frost, and bounding from crag to crag, he fell, crushed and lifeless, down to the pasturage not twenty steps from the chamois he had just killed.

## CHAPTER XII.

Some hours after, the disfigured body of Hans was brought to the cottage of the Enge. Old Trina, who had been prepared by Uncle Job, received the mournful news at the door of the hut. She looked at the dead man for some minutes, her features wrinkled by a savage kind of sorrow.

“One more !” murmured she, shortly, “but it was to be. He had seen the phantom chamois ; it was the notice. The mountain spirit is strongest,” and without another word she sat down upon a stone and buried her face in her hands.

Freneli and Ulrich made an attempt to go to her, but she made a sign to be left alone. It was only when they were about to prepare Hans for burial that she slowly arose and entered the hut, and busied herself, too, with him. She watched by his bed unceasingly until the day of the funeral.

The inhabitants of the valley and mountain-side, having heard of the sorrowful misfortune that had happened on the heights, came in crowds to pay their last respects to the remains of the hunter.

He was extended on a bier made of green boughs, his head resting on the

emperor of chamois which had cost him his life. Behind walked the grandmother with a haggard face, Ulrich deeply moved, and Freneli unable to restrain her tears.

Just at the moment when the procession turned from the path leading to the cottage, the sun appeared on the mountains, where, for the past four months he had not been seen, and threw into the hollow of the Enge one of his golden rays.

There was a movement throughout the crowd. Trina herself was touched. She looked involuntarily at the dead man, and her hard eyes were moistened.

The loss of Hans was a blow from which she never recovered. They saw her bend more and get weaker from hour to hour until the day of her death, which came only two or three months after. She expired with her eyes fixed on the dark walnut press, which she had had opened, and where the skull of the last chamois killed by Hans had been added to the others.

Henceforth alone and mistress of her fate, Freneli became the wife of Ulrich, and went to live with him at Merengen, where they were soon joined by Uncle Job.

Whoever may be passing through the valleys of the Hasli, the heights of Brunig and the great Scheidech, or the approaches to the Grimsel, is nearly certain still to meet the indefatigable crystal-seeker wandering among the most lonely paths and singing his old psalm-tunes to the mountain breeze, to which, like a prodigious organ, the roaring of the avalanches and the splashing of the cascades form accompaniment.

THE END.