

The guides, who realized all the peril of traversing in the midst of frightful precipices the fresh fallen snows, refused to obey so imprudent an order: one of them, Auguste Teiraz, burst into tears; he threw himself into the arms of a comrade, exclaiming, "I am a lost man! I shall perish on the mountain!"

This sinister presentiment was verified, for Auguste Teiraz was one of the victims of the catastrophe. Colonel Henderson himself was of the same opinion as the guides, but Dr. Hamel, stamping his foot, and looking the Englishman full in the face, muttered the word "Cowards!"

An Englishman, after that, could no longer hesitate—*Noblesse oblige!* Each person made his preparations in silence, and they began the ascent.

The first part of the journey was accomplished without accident, and the weather became very bright and beautiful. Without much difficulty they ascended the Dôme du Goûter, and reached the great plateau which extends at the base of Mont Blanc.

"Here," says Dr. Hamel, in his narrative of the event, "our guides congratulated us, saying that we had now surmounted every danger; no more crevasses, no more hazards. Never had an ascent been accomplished more quickly or with less difficulty; in fact, the snows had just the degree of consistency suitable for easy marching; they were not too hard, and yet the feet did not sink too deeply in them. No one felt ill, though all of us had for some time experienced the effect of the rarefaction of the air; my pulse beat one hundred and twenty-eight times in a minute, and I felt an incessant thirst. Here our guides invited us to breakfast, for, said they, up higher you will have no appetite. A tablecloth was spread on the snow at the threshold of the great plateau, and it served both for chairs and table. Everyone ate with gusto his half of a fowl; I made various arrangements for my experiments, and the observations which I proposed to take on the summit. I wrote two notes to announce our successful achievement, leaving only a blank to be filled up with the exact