

colour of asphyxia. He called with a struggling voice to his companion; Julien, having succeeded in liberating himself, made use of his alpenstock to clear away the snow which covered his friend's body. The two mountaineers remained for some minutes seated opposite one another without uttering a word; they thought that they alone had survived this horrible fall.

Happily it was not so. Several of their comrades, having almost miraculously escaped the avalanche, clung to the edge of the crevasse which had so nearly proved their tomb. One of them, Mathieu Balmat, contrived to slide along it, and to carry assistance to the others. He threw to them a hatchet, with which they hewed out steps in the ice. When they had gained a sufficient height he extended to them an iron-tipped pole, and drew them out of danger.

The travellers now found themselves assembled in one spot; they counted their numbers. Three guides were missing; the three who had formed the vanguard, Pierre Carrier, Pierre Balmat, and Auguste Tieraz. They had fallen into the great crevasse. Mathieu Balmat had seen them precipitated into its abyss; and Julien Coutet, at the very moment of his own fall, and while rolling over and over, had noticed something like a black-coloured leg flash rapidly before his eyes, and descend in the crevasse; undoubtedly it was Auguste Tieraz, who wore black gaiters—the same who had shown so lively an apprehension when Dr. Hamel, in defiance of warnings and counsel, had given the imperious order of departure.

Doctor Hamel was prostrated with regret and pain. As for the two Englishmen, words cannot describe their keen remorse. They flung themselves down upon the snow; they seemed temporarily bereft of reason. They declared they would not quit the accursed spot until they had recovered, dead or alive, the three unfortunate men of whose loss they accused themselves.

In spite of the remonstrances of the guides, Mr. Dornford and Dr. Hamel descended into the great crevasse, their bodies half buried in the soft snow. They sounded everywhere with their iron-tipped staves, but encountered no resistance. With all their strength they