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THOROUGHFARE.

CHARLES DICKENS AND WILKIE COLLINS

[Continued from our last issue,]

IN THE VALLEY. It was about the middle of the month of February when Vendale and Obenreizer set forth on their expedition. The winter being a hard one, the time was bad for travellers. So bad was it that these two travellers, coming to Strasburg, found its great inns almost empty. And even the few people they did encounter in that city, who had started from England or from Paris on business journeys towards the interior of Switzerland, were turning back.

Many of the railroads in Switzerland that tourists pass easily enough now, were almost or quite impracticable then. Some were not begun: more were not completed. On such as were open, there were still large gaps of old road where communication in the winter season was often stopped; on others, there were weak points where the new work was not safe, either under conditions of severe frost or of rapid thaw, The running of trains on this last class was not to be counted on in the worst time of the year, was contingent upon weather, or was wholly abandoned through the months considered the most dangerous.

At Strasburg there were more travellers' stories afloat, respecting the difficulties of the way farther on, than there were travellers to relate them. Many of these tales were as wild as usual; but the more modestly marvellous did derive some color from the circumstance that people were indisputably turning back. However, as the road to Basie was open, Vendale's resolution to push on was in no wise disturbed. Obeureizer's resolution was necessarily Vendale's, seeing that he stood at bay thus desperately; he must be ruined, or must destroy the evidence that Vendale carried about him, even if he destroyed Vendale with it.

The state of mind of each of these two fellowtravellers towards the other was this. Obenreizer, encircled by impending ruin through Vendale's quickness of action, and seeing the circle narrowed every hour by Vendale's energy. hated him with the animosity of a fierce, cunning lower animal. He had always had instinctive movements in his breast against him; perhaps, because of that old sore of gentleman and peasant; perhaps, because of the openness of his nature; perhaps, because of his better looks; perhaps, because of his success with Marguerite: perhaps, on all those grounds-the two last not the least. And now he saw in him, besides, the hunter who was tracking him down. Vendale on the other hand, always contending generously against his first vague mistrust, now felt bound to contend against it more than ever, reminding himself, "He is Marguerite's guar-

more, when they came to Basie, after a journey of more than twice the average duration They had had a late dinner, and were alone in an inn room there, overhauging the Rhine, at that place rapid and deep, swollen and loui. Vendale lounged upon a couch, and Obenreizer walked to and tro-now stopping at the window. looking at the crooked reflections of the town lights in the dark water (and peradventure thinking, "If I could ding him into it!"), now resuming his walk with his eyes upon the floor. "Where shall I rob him, if I can? Where shall I murder him, if I must?" So, as he paced

We are on perfectly friendly terms;

my companion of his own proposal, and can

have no interested motive in sharing this unde-strable journey." To which pleas in behalf of Obenreizer, chance added one consideration

the room, ran the river, ran the river, ran the The burden seemed to him, at last, to be growing so plain that he stopped; thinking it as well to suggest another burden to his com-

"The Rhine sounds to-night," he said with smile, "like the old waterfall at home That waterfall which my mother showed to travellers (I told you of it once). The sound of it changed with the weather, as does the sound of falling waters and flowing waters. When I was pupi of the watchmaker, I remembered it as some times saying to me for whole days, 'Who are you, my little wretch? Who are you, my little wretch? I remembered it as saying, other times, when its sound was hollow, and storm was coming up the Pass, "Boom, boom, boom, Beat him, beat him, Like my mother

enraged-if she was my mother."
"If she was?" said Vendale, gradually chang ing his attitude to a sitting on. "If she was "What do I know?" replied the other, negli gently throwing up his hands and letting them fall as they would. "What you would have?

I am so obscurely born, that how can I say? I was very young, and all the rest of the family were men and women, and my so called parents were old. Anything is possible of a case like "Did you ever doubt -- ?" "I told you once—I doubt the marriage of those two," he replied, throwing up his hands again, as if he were throwing the unprofitable

subject away. "But here I am in Creation. come of no fine family. What does it matter? 'At least you are Swiss," said Vendale, after following bim with his eyes to and fro. "How do I know?" he retorted, abruptly, and

stopping to look back over his shoulder. say to you, at least you are English. How do "By what I have been told from infancy."
"Ah! I know of myself that way."

"And," added Vendale, pursuing the thought that he could not drive back, "by my earliest

recollections. "I also. I know of myself that way-if that way satisfies.

"Hoes it not satisfy you?"
"It must. There is nothing like 'it must' in this little world. It must. Two short words those, but stronger than long proof or reasoning."

"You and poor Wilding were born in the same year. You were nearly of an age," said Ven-dale, again thoughtfully looking after him as he resumed his pacing up and down.

"Yes. Very nearly."
Could Obenreizer be the missing man? In the unknown associations of things, was there a subtler meaning than he bimself thought, in that theory so often on his lips about the small-ness of the world? Had the Swiss letter pre-senting him, followed so close on Mrs. Goldstraw's revelation concerning the infant who had been taken away to Switzerland, because he was that infant grown a man? In a word he was that infant grown a man? In a word, where so many depths lie unsounded, it might be, The chances, or the laws, -call them either,

CHRISTMAS STORY | -that had wrought out the revival of Vendate's own acquaintance with Obenreizer, and had ripened it into intimacy, and had brought them here together this present winter night, were hardly less curious; while read by such a light, they were seen to cohere towards the furtherance of a continuous and an intelligible pur-

> Vendale's awakened thoughts rau high while his eyes musingly followed Obenreizer pacing up and down the room, the river ever running to the tune:-"Where shall I rob him, if I can? Where shall I rob him, if I must?" The secret of his dead friend was in no hazard from dale's lips; but just as his friend had died of its weight, so did he in his lighter succession feel the burden of the trust, and the obligation to follow any clue, however obscure. He rapidly asked himself, would he like this man to be the real Wilding? No. Argue down his mistrust as he might he was unwilling to put such a substitute in the place of his late guilciess, out-spoken, childlike partner. He rapidly asked himself, would be like this man to be rich? No. He had more power than enough over Margue rite as it was, and wealth might invest him with more. Would he like this man to be Marguerite's guardian, and yet proved to stand in no degree of relationship towards her, however disconnected and distant? No. But these were not considerations to come between him and fidelity to the dead. Let him see to it that they passed him with no other notice than the knowledge that they had passed him, and left him bent on the discharge of a solemn duty. And he did see to it, so soon that he followed his companion with ungrudging eyes, while he still paced the room; that companion, whom he supposed to be moodly reflecting on his own birth, and not on enother man's-least of all what man's-violent Death.

> The road in advance from Basle to Neuchatel was better than had been represented. The latest weather had done it good. Drivers, both of horses and mules, had come in that evening dark, and had reported nothing more difficult to be overcome than trials of patience, harness, wheels, axles, and whipcord. A bargain was soon struck for a carriage and horses, to take them on in the morning, and to start before daylight. "Do you lock your door at night when travel-

ling?" asked Obenreizer, standing warming his hands by the wood tire in Vendale's chamber before going to his own.
"Not i. I sleep too soundly." "You are a sound sleeper," he retorted, with an admiring look. "What a blessing!"

"Anything but a blessing to the rest of the house," rejoined Vendale, "if I had to be knocked up in the morning from the outside of

my bedroom door. "I too," said Obenreizer, "leave open my room. But let me advise you, as a Swiss who knows: always, when you travel in my country, put your papers—and, of course, your money-under your villow. Always the same place."

"You are not complimentary to your coun-trymen," laughed Vendale. "My countrymen," said Obenreizer, with that light touch of his friend's elbows by way of good night and benediction, "I suppose, are like the majority of men. And the majority of men will take what they can get. Adieu! At four in

"Adieu! At four." Left to himself, Vendale raked the logs together, sprinkled over them the white wood-ashes lying on the hearth, and sat down to comhis thoughts. But they still ran high on their latest theme, and the running of the river tended to agitate rather than to quiet them. As he sat thinking, what little disposition he had to sleep departed. He felt it hopeless to lie down yet, and sat dressed by the fire. Marguerite, Wilding, Obenreizer, the business he was then upon, and a thousand hopes and doubts that had nothing to do with it, occupied his mind atonce. Everything seemed to have power over him but dumber. The departed disposition to sleep kep

He had sat for a long time thinking, on the hearth, when his canale burned down and its light went out. It was of little moment; there was light enough in the fire. He changed his attitude, and leaning his arm on the chair-back, and his chin upon that hand, sat thinking still, But he sat between the fire and the bed, and s the fire flickered in the play of air from the fast-flowing river, his enlarged shadow flattered

on the white wall by the bedslde. His attitude gave it an air, half of mourning, and half of bending over the bed imploring. His eyes were observant of it, when he became troubled by the disagreeable fancy that it was like Wilding's shadow, and not his own.

A slight change of place would cause it to disappear. He made the change, and the apparition of his disturbed fancy vanished. He now sat in the shade of a little nook beside the fire, and the door of the room was before him. It had a long cumbrous iron latch. He saw the latch slowly and softly rise. The door opened a very little and came to again, as though only the air had moved it. But he saw that the

latch was out of the hasp. The door opened again very slowly, until it op ned wide enough to admit some one. I at terwards remained still for a while, as though cautiously held open on the other side. The figure of a man then entered, with its turned towards the bed, and stood quiet just within the door. Until it said, in a low, half whisper, at the same time taking one step for-wards, "Vendale!"

"What now?" he answered, springing from his reat; "who is it?" It was Obenreizer, and he uttered a cry of surprise as Vendale came upon him from that un-expected direction. "Not in bed?" he said, catching him by both shoulders with an instinc tive tendency to a struggle, "Then something is

What do you mean ?" said Vendale, releasing 'First tell me; you are not ill?"

"I have had a bad dream about you. How is it that I see you up and dressed?" "My good fellow, I may as well ask you how

is it that I see you up and undressed. "I have told you why. I have had a bad dream about you. I tried to rest after it, but it was impossible. I could not make up my mind to stay where I was, without knowing you were sale; and yet I could not make up my mind to come in here. I have been minutes hesitating at the door. It as so easy to laugh at a dream that you have not dreamed. Where is your candle?"

"Burnt out." "I have a whole one in my room. Shall I fetch it?"

His room was very near, and he was absent for but a few seconds. Coming back with the in his hand, he kneefed down on hearth and lighted it. As he blew with his breath a charred billet into flame for the purpose, Vendale, looking down at him, saw that his lips were white and not easy of control. "Yes!" said Obenreizer, setting the lighter candle on the table, "it was a bad dream. Only

His jeet were bare; his red-flannel shirt was thrown back at the throat, and its sleeves were rolled above the elbows; his only other garment a pair of under pantaloous or drawers, reaching to the auxles, fitted him close and tight. A cer-tain lithe and savage appearance was on his figure, and his eyes were very bright.

'If there had been a wrestle with a robber, as I dreamed," said Obenreizer, "jou see, I was stripped for it." "And armed, too," said Vendale, glancing at

"A traveller's dagger, that I always carry on the road," he answered, carelessly, half drawing it from its sheath with his left hand, and put-ting it back again. "Do you carry no such

"Nothing of the kind " "No pistols?" said Obenreizer, glancing at the table, and from it to the untouched pillow.

"Nothing of the sort." 'You Englishmen are so confident ! You wish

"I have wished to sleep this long time, but I "I neither, after the bad dream. My fire has gone the way of your candle. May I come and sit by yours? Two o'clock! It will so soon be four, that it is not worth the trouble to go to

I shall not take the trouble to go to bed at all now;" said Vendale; "sit here and keep me company, and we come." Going back to his room to arrange his dress, Obenreizer soon returned in a loose closk and slippers, and they sat down on opposite sides of the hearth. In the interval, Vendale had replenished the fire from the wood-basket in his room, and Obenrelzer had put upon the table a

flask and cup from his. 'Common cabaret brandy, I am afraid," he said, pouring out; "bought upon the road, and not like yours from Cripple Corner. But yours is exhausted; so much the worse. A cold night, a cold time of night, a cold country, and a cold house. This may be better than nothing;

try it."
Vendale took the cup, and did so. "How do you find it?"
"It has a coarse after-flavor," said Vendale, "and giving back the cup with a slight shudder, "and don't like it."

"You are right," said Obenreizer, tasting, and smacking his lips; it has a coarse after-dayor, and I don't like it. Book! it burns, though!" He had flung what remained in the cup upon Each of them leaned an elbow on the table. reclined his head upon his hand, and sat looking at the flaring logs. Obenrelzer remained watchful and still; but Vendale, after certain nervous twitches and starts, in one of which he rose to his reet and looked wildly about him, fell into the strangest confusion of dreams. He carried bis papers in a leather case or pocket book, in an inner breast-pocket of his buttoned travel-ling coat; and whatever he dreamed of, in the lethargy that got possession of him, something

importunate in these papers called him out of that dream, though he could not wake from it. He was belated on the steppes of Russia (some shadowy person gave the name of the place) with Marguerite; and yet the sensation of a hand at his breast, softly feeling the outline of the pocket-book as he lay asleep before the fire, was present to him. He was ship wrecked in an open boat at sea, and having lost his clothes, had no other covering than an old sail; and yet a creeping hand, tracing outside all the other pockets of the dress he actually wore, for papers, and finding none answer its touch, warned him to rouse himself.

He was in the ancient vault at Cripple Corner, to which was transferred the very bed substantial and present in that very room at Basle; and Wilding (not dead, as he had supposed, and yet he did not wonder much) shook him, and whispered, "Look at that man! Don't you see he has risen, and is turning the pillow? Why should be turn the pillow, if not to seek those papers that are in your breast? Awake!" And yet he slept, and wandered off into other

Watchful and still, with his elbow on the table and his head upon that hand, his companion at length said: "Vendale! We are called. Past Four!" Then, opening his eyes, he saw, turned sideways on him, the filmy face of Obenreizer. You have been in a heavy sleep," he said. The fatigue of constant travelling and the "I am broad awake now," cried Vendale,

springing up, but with an unsteady footing. "Haven't you slept at all?" "I may have dozed, but I seem to have been patiently looking at the fire. Whether or no, we must wash, and breakfast, and turn out. Past four, Vendale; past four!"

four, Vendale; past four!"

It was said in a tone to rouse him, for already

It was said in a tone to rouse him, for already he was half asleep again. In his preparation for the day, too, and at his breakfast, he was often virtually asleep white in mechanical action. It was not until the cold dark day was closing in, that he had any distincter impressions of the ride than jingling bells, butter weather, slipping horses, frowning hillsides, bleak woods, and a stoppage at some wayside house of entertainment, where they had passed through a cowhouse to reach the travellers' room above. He had been conscious of little more, except of Obenreizer sitting thoughtful at

his side all day, and eyeing him much. But when he shook off his stupor, Obenreizer was not at his side. The carriage was stopping to balt at another wayside house; and a line of long parrow carls, laden with casks of wine, and drawn by horses with a quantity of blue collar and headgear, were baiting too. These came from the direction in which the travellers were going, and Obenreizer (not thoughtful now, but cheerful and alert) was talking with the foremost driver. As Vendale stretched his limbs, circulated his blood, and cleared off the lees of his lethargy, with a sharp run to and fro in the bracing air, the line of carts moved on; the drivers all saluting Obenreizer as they passed him.

"Who are those?" asked Vendale. "They are our carriers—Defresnier and Com-pany's" replied Obenreizer. "Those are our casks of wine." He was singing to himself, and lighting a cigar. have been drearily dull company to-day,"

said Vendale. "I don't know what has been the matter with me." You had no sleep last night; and a kind of brain-congestion frequently comes, at first, of such cold," said Obenreizer. "I have seen it often. After all, we shall have our journey for nothing, it seems. 'How for nothing ?"

"The House is at Milan. You know, we are a Wine House at Neuchatel, and a Silk House at Milan? Well, Silk happening to press of a sudden, more than Wine, Detresnier was summoned to Milan. Rolland, the other party, has been taken ill since his departure, and the doctors will allow him to see no one. A letter awaits you at Neuchatel to tell you so. I have it from ur chief carrier whom you saw me talking with He was surprised to see me, and said that he had that word for you if he met you. What do you do? Go back in Go on," said Vendale.

"On? Yes. Across the Alps, and down to Milan." Openreizer stopped in his smoking to look at Vendale, and then smoked heavily, looked up the road, looked down the road, looked down at the stones in the road at his

"I have a very serious matter in charge," sald Vendale; "more of these missing forms may be turned to as bad account, or worse; urged to lose no time in helping the House to take the thief; and nothing shall turn me

"No ?" cried Obenreizer, taking out his cigar to smile, and giving his hand to his fellow-travelier. "Then nothing shall turn me back, Ho, driver! Despatch. Quick there! Let us

They travelled through the night. There had been snow, and there was a partial thaw, and they mostly travelled at a foot-pace, and always with many stoppages to breathe the splashed and floundering horses. After an hour's broad daylight, they drew rein at the inn door at Neuchatel, having been some eight-and-twenty hours in conquering some eighty English miles.

When they had hurriedly retreshed and changed, they went together to the house of business of Defresnier and Company. There they found the letter which the wine-carrier had described, enclosing the tests and comparisons of hand-writing essential to the discovery of the forger. Vendale's determination to press forward, without resting, being already taken, the only question to delay them was by what pass could they cross the Alpa! Respecting the state of the two Passes of the St. Gotthard and the Simplon, the guides and mule-drivers differed greatly; and both passes were still far enough off to prevent the travellers from baving the benefit of any recent experience of cither. Besides which, they well knew that a fall of snow might altogether change the described conditions in a single hour, even if they were correctly stated. But, on the whole, the Simplon appearing to be the hopefuller route, Vendale decided to take it. Obenreizer bore ittle or no part in the discussion, and scarcely

To Geneva, to Lausanne, along the level margin of the lake to Vevay, so into the winding valley between the spurs of the mountains, and into the valley of the Rhone. The sound of the carriage wheels, as they rattled on, through the day, through the night, became as the wheels of a great clock, recording the hours. No change of weather varied the journey, after it had bardened into a sullen frost. In a sombre yel-low sky they saw the Alpine ranges; and they saw enough of snow on nearer and much lower hill:cps and hillsides, to sully, by contrast, the purity of lake, torrent, and waterfall, and make the villages look discolored and dirty. But no snow fell, nor was there any snow-drift on the road. The stalking along the valley of more or less of white mist, changing on their bair and dress into icicles, was the only variety between them and the gloomy sky. And still by day, and still by night, the wheels. And still they rolled, in the hearing of one of them, to the burden, altered from the burden of the Ruine:—"The time is gone for robbing him alive, and I must murder him."

They came, at length, to the poor little town of Brieg, lat the toot of the Simplon. They came there after dark, but yet could see how dwarfed men's works and men became with the immense mountains towering over them. Here they must lie for the night; and here was warmth of are and lamp and dinner and wine, and afterconference resounding, with guides and drivers. No human creature had come across the Pass for four days. The snow above the snow-line was too soft for wheeled carriage, and not hard enough for sledge. There was snow in the sky. There had been snow in the sky for days past, and the marvel was that it had not fallen, and

the certainty was that it must fall. No vehicle could cross. The journey might be tried on mules, or it might be tried on foot; but the best guides must be paid danger-price in either case, and that, too, whether they succeeded in taking the two travellers across, or turned for safety and brought them back. In this discussion, Obenreizer bore no part

whatever. He sat stiently smoking by the fire until the room was cleared and Vendale referred 'Bah! I am weary of these poor devils and their trade," he said, in reply. "Always the same story. It is the story of their trade to-day, as it was the story of their trade when I was a ragged boy. What do you and I want? We want a knapsack each, and a mountain-staff each. We want no guile; we should guide him; he would not guide us. We leave our portmanteaus here, and we cross together. We have been on the mountains together before now, and I am mountain-born, and I know this Pass-Pass!-rather High Road!-by heart. We will leave these poor devils, in pity, to trade with others; but they must not delay to make a pretense of earning money. Which is all they

Vendale, glad to be quit of the dispute, and to cut the knot, active, adventurous, bent on getting forward, and, therefore, very susceptible to the last hint, readily assented. hours they had purchased what they wanted for the expedition, had packed their knapsacks,

and lay down to sleep.

At break of day they found half the town collected in the narrow street to see them depart. The people talked together in groups; the guides and crivers whispered apart, and looked up at the sky; no one wished them a good journey.

As they began the ascent a gleam of sun shone from the otherwise unaltered sky, and for a moment turned the tin spires of the town to

"A good omen!" said Vendale (though it died out while he spoke), "Perhaps our example will open the Pass on this side." "No: we shall not be followed,"

Obenielzer, looking up at the sky and back at the valley. "We shall be alone up youder." ON THE MOUNTAIN. The road was fair enough for stout walkers, and the air grew lighter and easier to breathe as the two ascended. But the settled gloom

remained as it had remained for days back. Nature seemed to have come to a pause. The ense of hearing, no less than the sense of sight, was troubled by having to wait so long for the change, whatever it might be, that impended. The silence was as palpable and heavy as the lowering clouds, or rather cloud, for there eemed to be but one in all the sky, and that one covering the whole of it.

Although the light was thus dismally shrouded. the prospect was not obscured. Down in the valley of the Rhone behind them, the stream could be traced through all its many windings, oppressively sombre and solemn in its one leaden hue, a colorless waste. Far and high above them, glaciers and suspended avalanches overhung the spots where they must pass bydeep and dark below them right were awful precipice and rearing torrent; remendous mountains arose in every vista. The gigantic landscape, uncheered by a touch of changing light or a solitary ray of sun, was yet terribly distinct in its ferocity. The hearts of two lonely men might shrink a little, if they had to win their way for miles and hours among a legion of silent and motionless men—mere men like themselves—all looking at them with fixed and frowning front. But how much more, when the legion is of Nature's mightiest works, and the frown may turn to fury in an instant

As they a cended, the road became gradually more rugged and difficult. But the spirits of Vendale rose as they mounted higher, leaving so much more of the road behind them con quered. Obrenreizer spoke little, and held or with a determined purpose. Both, in respect of agility and endurance, were well qualified for the expedition. Whatever the born mountaineer read in the weather tokens that was illegible to the other, he kept to himself.

"Shall we get across to-day?" asked Vendale, "No," replied the other. "You see how much deeper the snow lies here than it lay half a league lower. The higher we mount, the oceper the snow will lie. Walking is half wading even now. And the days are so short! It we get as high as the fifth Refuge, and lie toght at the Hospice, we shall do well."
"Is there no dauger of the weather rising in the night," asked Vendale, anxiously, "and nowing us up?"

"There is danger enough about us," said Oben retzer, with a cautious glance onward and up-ward, "to render silence our best policy. You have heard of the Bridge of the Ganther? "I have crossed it once."

"In the summer?" Yes; in the travelling season." "Yes; but it is another thing at this season; with a speer, as though he were out of temper. "This is not a time of year, or a state of things, on an Alpine Pass, that you gentlemen holidaytravellers know much about.'

"You are my Guide," suid Vendale, good humoredly. "I trust to you." "I am your Guide," sald Obenreizer, "and I will guide you to your journey's end. There is the Bridge before us." They had made a turn into a desolate and dismal ravine, where the snow lay deep below

them, deep above them, deep on every side.

While speaking, Obenreizer stood pointing at the bridge, and observing Vendale's face, with a very singular expression, on his own.

"If I, as Guide, had sent you over there, in advance, and encouraged you to give a shout or two, you might have brought down upon yourself tens and tons and tons of snow, that would

not only have struck you dead, but buried you "No doubt," said Vendale.

"No doubt," But that is not what I have to do, as guide. So pass silently. Or, going as we

go, our indiscretion might else crush and bury me. Let us go on!"

There was a great accumulation of snow on the bridge; and such enormous accumulations of snow overhung them from projecting masses of rock, that they might have been making their way through a stormy sky of white clouds. Using his staff skiltuily, sounding as he went, and looking upward, with bent shoulders, as it were to resist the mere idea of a fall from above. Obenreizer softly led. Vendale closely followed. They were yet in the midst of their dangerous way, when there came a mighty rush, followe by a sound as of thunder. Obenreizer chappe by a sound as of thunger. Obenfelzer chapped his hand on Vendale's mouth, and pointed to the track behind them. Its aspect had been wholly charged in a moment. An avalanche had swept over it, and plunged into the current at the bottom of the guif below.

Their appearance at the solitary inn not far beyond this terrible bridge, clicited many expressions of second burners.

pressions of astonishment from the people shut up in the house. "We stay but to rest," said Obenreizer, shaking the snow from his dress at the fire. "This gentleman has very pressing occasion to get across; tell them, Vendale." "Assuredly, I have very pressing occasion, must cross,"

"You hear, all of you. My friend has very pressing occasion to get across, and we want no advice and no belp. I am as good a guide, my fellow-countrymen, as any of you. Now, give us to eat and drink."

In exactly the same way, and in nearly the same words, when it was coming on dark and they had struggled through the greatly increased difficulties of the road, and had at last reached the r destination for the night, Obenreizer said to the astonished people of the Hospice, gathering about them at the fire, while they were yet in the act of getting their wet shoes off and shaking the snow from their clothes,—

"It is well to understand one another, friends all. This gentleman."

"Has," said Vendale, readily taking him up with a smile, "very pressing occasion to get across. Must cross."

"You hear?—has very pressing occasion to get across, must cross. We want no advice and no help. I am mountain-born, and act as Guide. Do not worry us by talking about it, but let us have supper, and wine, and bed."

All through the intense cold of the night, the same awful stillness. Again at sunrise, no sunny tinge to gild or redden the snow. The same interminable waste of deathly white; the same immovable air; the same monotonous gloom in "Travellers!" a friendly voice called to then

from the door, after they were afoot, knapsack on back and staff in hand, as yesterday; 're-collect! There are five places of ahelter, near together, on the dangerous road before you; and there is the wooden cross, and there is the next Hospice. Do not stray from the track. If the Tourmente comes on, take shelter in-

"The trade of these poor devils!" said Oben reizer to his friend, with a contemptuous back-ward wave of his hand towards the voice. "How they stick to their trade! You Englishmen say we Swiss are mercenary. Truly, it does look

They had divided between the two knapsacks such refreshments as they had been able to obtain that morning, and as they deemed it prudent to take. Obenreizer carried the wine as his share of the borden; Vendale, the bread and meat and cheese, and the flask of brandy.

They had for some time labored upwards and onwards through the snow—which was now above their knees in the track, and of unknown depth, elsewhere, and they were attill laboration.

depth elsewhere—and they were still laboring upwards and onwards through the most frightful part of that tremendous desolation, when snow began to fall. At first, but a few flakes descended slowly and steadily. After a little while the fall grew much denser, and suddenly it began, without apparent cause, to whirl itself into spiral shapes. Instantly ensuing upon this last change, an icy blast came roaring at them, and every sound and force imprisoned until now

One of the dismal galleries through which the road is carried at that perilous point, a cave exed out by arches of great strength, was near at hand. They struggled into it, and the storm raged wildly. The noise of the wind, the noise of the water, the thundering down of displaced masses of rock and snow, the awful voices with which not only that gorne, but every gorge in the whole monstrons range, seemed to be sud denly endowed, the darkness as of night, the violent revolving of the snow which beat and broke it into spray and blinded them, the mad ness of everything around insatiate for destruc tion, the rapid substitution of furious violence unnatural calm, and hosts of appalling sounds for silence; these were things, on the edge of a deep abyss, to chill the blood, though made actually solid by ice and snow, had failed to chill it.

Obenreizer, walking to and fro in the gallers without ceasing, signed to Vendale to help him unbuckle his knapsack. They could see each other, but could not have heard each other speak. Vendale complying, Obenreizer produced his bottle of wine, and poured some out motioning Vendale to take that for warmth's sake, and not brandy. Vendale again complying, Obenreizer seemed to drink after him, and the two watked backwards and forwards, side by both well knowing that to rest or sleep would be to die.

The snow came driving heavily into the gallery by the upper end, at which they would pass out of it, if they ever passed out; for greater dangers lay on the road behind them than be-tore. The snow soon began to choke the arch. An hour more, and it soon lay so high as to block out half of the returning daylight. But it froze hard now as it fell, and could be clambered through or over. The violence of the mountai storm was gradually yielding to a steady snow-fall. The wind still raged at intervals, but not incessantly; and when it paused, the snow fell in

They might have been two hours in their frightful prison, when Obenreizer, now crunch ing into the mound, now creeping over it with his head bowed down and his body touching the top of the arch, made his way out. Vendale followed close upon him, but followed without clear motive or calculation. For the lethargy of Basle was creeping over him again, and mas How far he had followed out of the gallery, or

with what obstacles he had since contended, he knew not. He became roused to the knowledge that Obenreizer had set upon him, and that the were struggling desperately in the snow. He be came roused to the remembrance of what his assailant carried in a girdle. He felt for it, drew it, struck at him, struggled again, struck at him again, cast him off, and stood face to face

with him,
"I promised to guide you to your journey's
end," said Obenreizer, "and I have kept my
promise. The journey of your life ends here.
Nothing can prolong it. You are sleeping as you stand," 'You are a villain. What have you done to

"You are a fool. I have drugged you. You are doubly a fool, for I drugged you once before upon the journey to try you. You are trebly a fool, for I am the thief and forger, and in a few moments I shall take the proofs against the thief

The entrapped man tried to throw off the lethargy, but its faial hold upon him was so sure that, even while he heard those words, he stupidly wondered which of them had been wounded, and whose blood it was he saw sprinkled on the snow.

"What have I done to you," he asked, heavily and thickly, "that you should be-so base-a murderer?" Done to me? You would have destroyed me, but that you have come to your journey's end. Your cursed activity interposed between me and the time I had counted on in which I might have replaced the money. Done to me? You have come in my way—not once, not

twice, but again and again and again. Did I try to shake you off in the beginning, or no? You were not to be shaken off. Therefore you

die here."

Vendale tried to think coherently, tried to speak coherently, tried to pick up the iron-shod staff he had let fall; failing to touch it, tried to stagger on without its aid. All in vain, all in

stagger on without its aid. All in vain, all in vain! He stumbled, and fell heavily forward on the brink of the deep chasm.

Stupefied, dozing, unable to stand upon his feet, a veil before his eyes, his sense of hearing deadened, he made such a vigorous rally that, supporting himself on his hands, he saw his sensor standing could over him and heard nemy standing calmly over him, and heard

him speak.

"You call me murderer," said Obenreizer, with a grim laugh. "The name matters very little. But at least I have set my life against yours, for I am surrounded by dangers, and may never make my way out of this place. The

may never make my way out of this place. The Tow mente is rising again. The snow is on the whirl. I must have the papers now. Every moment has my life in it."

'stop!" cried Vendale, in a terrible volce, staggering up with a last flash of fire breaking out of him, and clutching the thievish hands at his breast in both of his. 'Stop! Stand away from me! God bless my Marguerite! Happily shejwill never know how I died. Stand off irom me and let me look at your murderous face. Let it remind me-of something-left to

The sight of him fighting so hard for his senses, and the doubt whether he might not for the instant be possessed by the strength of a dozen men, kept his opponent still. Wildly glaring at him, Vendsle isltered out the broken

"It shall not be-the trust-of the dead-betrayed by me-reputed parents-misinherited fortune-see to it!" As his head dropped on his breast, and he stumbled on the brink of the chasm as before, the thievish hands went once more, quick and busy, to his breast. He made a convuisive attempt to cry "No!" desperately rolled himself

over into the gulf; and sauk away from his enemy's touch, like a phantom in a dreadful The mountain storm raged again, and passed again. The awful mountain-voices died away, the moon rose, and the soft and allent anow fell.

Two men and two large dogs came out at the door of the Hospice. The men looked carefully around them, and up at the sky. The dogs rolled in the snow, and took it into their mouths, and cast it up with their news.

mouths, and cast it up with their paws.

One of the men said to the other, "We may venture now. We may find them in one of the five Refuges." Each fastened on his back a basket; each took in his hand a strong spiked pole; each girded under his arms a looped end of a stout rope, so that they were tied together. Suddenly the dogs desisted from their gambols in the snow, stood looking down the ascent, put their noses up, put their noses down, became greatly excited, and broke into a deep, loud bay together.

The two men looked in the faces of two dogs. The two dogs looked, with at least equal intelligence, in the faces of two men.
"Au secour, then! Help! To the rescue!"
cried the two men. The two dogs, with a glad,
deep, generous bark, bounded away.
"Two more mad ones!" said the men, stricken

motionless, and looking away into the moon-light. "Is it possible in such weather! And one of them a woman!"

Fach of the dogs had the corner of a woman's dress in tis mouth, and drew her along. She fondled their heads as she came up, and she came up through the snow with an accustomed

Not so the large man with her, who was spent and winded. "Dear guides, dear friends of travellers! Iam of your country. We seek two geattlemen crossing the Pass, who should have seached the Hos-

They have reached it, ma'smselle. Thank Heaven! O thank Heaven!" "But, unhappily, they have gone on again, a are setting forth to seek them even now. We had to wait until the Tourmenle passed. It has been fearful up here.' "Dear guides, dear friends of travellers! Let

me go with you. Let me go with you, for the love of God! One of those gentlemen is to be my husband. I love him, O so dearly. dearly! You see I am not faint, you see I am not tired. I am born a peasant-girl. I will show you that I know we! how to fasten myself to your ropes. I will do it with my own hands. I will swear to be brave and good. But let me go with you, let me go with you! If any mischance should have befallen him, my love would find him, when nothing else could. On my knees, dear friends of travellers! By the love your dear mothers had for your

The good rough fellows were moved. "After all," they murmured to one another, "she speaks but the truth. She knows the ways of the mountains. See how marvellously she has come here! But as to Monsieur there, "Dear Mr. Joey," said Marguerite, addressing

him in his own tongue, "you will remain at the house, and wait for me; will you not?" "If I know'd which o' you two recommended it," growled Joey Ladle, eyeing the two men with great indignation, "Pd fight you for a sixpence, and give you half a crown towards your expenses. No, miss, I'll stick by you as long as there's any sticking left in me, and I'll die for you when I can't do better." The state of the moon rendering it highly important that no time should be lost, and the dogs showing signs of great uneasiness, the two men quickly took their resolution. The rope that yoked them together was quickly exchanged for a longer one; the party were secured; Marguerite second. and the cellarman last, and they set out for the Refuges. The actual distance of those places was nothing-the whole five, and the next Hospice to boot, being with two miles—but the ghastly way was whitened out and sheeted over. They made no miss in reaching the Gallery where the two had taken shelter. The second storm of wind and snow had so wildly swept over it since, that their tracks were gone. the dogs went to and fro with their noses down, and were confident. The party stopping, however at the farther aich, where the second storm had been especially furious, and where the drift was deep, the dogs became troubled, and went about and about, in quest of a lost

The great abyss being known to lie on the right, they wandered too much to the left, and bad to regain the way with infinite labor through a deep field of snow. The leader of the line bad stopped it, and was taking note of the landmarks, when one of the dogs fell to tearing up the snow a little before them. Advancing and stooping to look at it, thinking that some one might be overwhelmed there, they saw that

it was stained, and that the stain was red. The other dog was now seen to look over the brink of the gulf, with his forelegs straightened out, lest he should fall into it, and to tremble in every limb. Then the dog who had found the stained snow joined him, and then they ran to and fro, distressed and whining. Finally, they both stopped on the brink together, and acting up their heads, howled dolefully. "There is some one lying below," said Mar-

"I think so," said the foremost man. "Stand well neward, the two last, and let us look over." The last man kindled two torches from bis barket, and handed them forward. The leader barket, and handed them forward. The leader taking one, and Marguerite the other, they looked down; now shading the torches, now moving them to the right or left, now raising them, now depressing them, as moonight far below contended with black shadows. A piercing cry from Marguerite broke a long silence.

"My God! On a projecting point, where a wall of ice stretches forward over the torrent, I

see a human form !" "Where, ma'amselle, where!"