

We talk ; the guides tell us of former ascents, of difficulties surmounted, and dangers overcome : the porter tells us of his own previous ascent of the Mischabel. All our talk is coloured and toned by locality ; is weird with the spirit of the Alps, and practical with their vanquished impregnability. The guides confer eagerly with the porter upon details of to-morrow's climb. Some one, I think Arthur, alludes to the terrible Matterhorn accident, and we all begin, though in somewhat lowered tones, to discuss the most solemn and imperial crime of the murderous Matterhorn. This theme throws a hush upon our talk, and then the guides, who are altogether German in sentiment, propose a song. Joseph modestly yields the *pas* to Christian, who rises, the firelight setting off his splendid frame against the background of utter darkness, and begins. And what did he sing ? Perched up on that high, narrow slab of rock, with the awful depth below and the wide void around, with the ruddy light glistening flickeringly upon the black rock surface above, with the great night encircling the one spot of light, all feeling and all thought are serious. He did not sing—not one of us felt inclined to do so—of love, or wine, or war, or mirth. With his great rough storm-beaten voice, Christian sang a Luther hymn—simple, pious, grand ; resonant with trust in that God who had created all the