

“I promised them that, come what might,
I would be home on Christmas Day;
So farewell; may GOD’S blessing be
With me along my toilsome way.”

In the fast-fading evening light
He then pursued his lonely road,
Onward and upward through the snow,
Leaving behind him man’s abode.

Above him rose the snowy peaks,
Still glowing white against the sky,
And many a crevasse, deep and wide,
Around his path he could descry.

Upward and onward still he toil’d,
His heart was beating loud and fast:
He’d reach’d his own dear fatherland,
Danger and toil were well-nigh past.

He long’d to hear his father’s voice,
His mother’s kiss once more to feel,
And in the quiet restful home
With them once more in prayer to kneel.

He long’d to spread before their gaze
The honest gains of many a year,
Earn’d with hard toil for those he lov’d,
And guarded with a jealous care.

His father with his silver hair,
His mother with her kind blue eyes,
His sisters, little playmates once,—
Would he their faces recognize?

Colder and colder blew the wind,
It whistled up the mountain-pass;
The blinding snow-storm flew before;
The ice was slippery as glass.

Onward he went, but cautiously:
“Surely I have not miss’d my way?
The night grows dark, ’t is piercing cold:
Can I hold on till dawn of day?”

And still he battled with the storm,
That every moment fiercer grew,
And stronger came the dreadful thought
That he the way no longer knew.

And now his strength is ebbing fast;
His head is sinking on his breast.
Oh! could he in that fearful storm
But find some shelter, gain some rest!

Happy for him that at that time,
Alone upon the mountain-side,
He knew that to his Father’s love
His life or death he might confide.