

Over the windows was creeping a mist; a dense, heavy, serpentine, whitish mist, that looked like the huge shadow of a giant slowly uncoiling its body. Gradually it disappeared, to leave a lustrous light, soft and silvery, as though the window-panes reflected a thousand moonbeams, a tropical star-lit sky—first from outside, then from within the empty rooms. Next I saw it elongating itself and throwing, as it were, a fairy bridge across the street from the bewitched windows to my own balcony, my very own bed. As I continued gazing, the wall and windows and the opposite house itself, suddenly vanished. The space occupied by the empty rooms had changed into the interior of another smaller room, in what I knew to be a *châlet*—into a study. The old, dark walls were covered from floor to ceiling with book shelves on which were many antiquated folios, as well as works of more recent date. In the center stood a large old-fashioned table, littered over with manuscripts and writing materials. Before the quill-pen in hand, sat an old man; a grim-looking, skeleton-like personage, with a face so thin, so pale, yellow and emaciated, that the light of the solitary little student's lamp was reflected in two shining spots on his high cheek-bones, as though they were made out of ivory. My birth-place is a small mountain hamlet, a cluster of cottages, hidden deep in a sunny nook, between two towering down glaciers and a peak covered with eternal snows. Thither, thirty-seven years ago, I returned—crippled mentally and physically—to die, if death would only have me. The pure invigorating air of my birth-place decided otherwise. I am still alive; perhaps for the purpose of giving evidence to facts I have kept profoundly secret from all—a tale of horror I would rather hide than reveal. The reason for this unwillingness on my part is due to my early education, and to subsequent events that gave the lie to my most