ridge was, and still is, a great place for snow avalanches, which start at the crest and slide with accumulating material and increasing velocity until they are dashed upon the ice-sea far below.

"If your sight is good you may be able to see, perhaps two thirds of the way up the ridge, a slight rise, like a large snow heap, outlined against the sky. Yes? Well, when we reached that leading guide with the party following continued directly over it and my guide was needed to help cut steps in the ice, leaving me alone for the moment. I saw that a descent would have to be made to again reach the general line of the ridge, and, in my ignorance, I decided that it would be much less difficult to go around the pile than to follow the others over it. So round I started, sinking to my knees in the soft snow that overlaid the ice. I had gone but a few steps when I heard a wild cry behind me, and, turning, saw my guide and the whole party standing transfixed with horror, and their eyes on me. Glancing now at the snow at my feet, I found that the whole mass in which I stood had taken up a slow motion down the slope and I was going with it. Hurriedly I attempted to pierce the ice below with my iron shop alpen-stock and thus hold myself. My efforts were in vain until at last the point caught in a crevice; but the downward motion had become too swift, and the stick was wrenched from my hand. My last hope was gone. With each instant the speed of the slipping mass increased and it began to grow terrific. My courage forsook me, my knees shook and could scarcely support me, my heart seemed to stop its beating. The panorama of my lifetime flashed before me and each second appeared an age. The horror-stricken faces of my friends as I last saw them, and the thought of the terrible story they would carry to my parents and my home, added another agony to the consciousness of my appalling doom, from which it now appeared no power on earth or heaven could save me.

"All this happened in a fraction of the time I have taken in telling you. A moment more would have hurled a shapeless mass upon the glacier a thousand feet beneath. Another wild scream sounded in my ears, and there darted before my eyes an eagle with outstretched neck and beating wings. Startled, despite my position, in a flash I felt my self-control return and with almost a fierce joy I faced the thought that I was hurrying to destruction. All the pride my birth had given me came to sustain me and make me determined that, even riding an avalanche, an American should be master of the situation, and, if he must, would ride undaunted into eternity.

"I threw one glance about me. The whole side of the mountain appeared to be thundering down before me and rolling over the edge of the precipice on to the glacier. Suddenly I felt a terrific shock, which threw me forward on to my face and buried me in the snow. Another and another followed, each driving me deeper into the yielding bed. I felt an overpowering pressure on my head, my eyes started from their sockets; I was suffocating; my brain reeled and I lost consciousness.

"In a moment I recovered; the pressure had disappeared and I could no longer feel the motion of the avalanche. Amazed, I tried to free myself from the weight of snow above me, and after a few frantic struggles I found myself on the surface. The terrible excitement had left me powerless; my nerves were unstrung and my limbs failed to support me: I staggered like a drunken man. A great revulsion of feeling swept over me, and from the depths of my being I thanked God that my life had been spared. It was some time before I was able to look about me and discover the means by which I had been saved. I found I had stopped almost on the brink of the chasm. The opening at that point was quite narrow, and the greater part of the avalanche had rushed across it and continued its headlong course down the slope to the final precipice. An immense mass of ice, which had been started some distance before me, had in some manner become wedged in the crevasse and had turned the material following it to one side or the other and occasioned, I suppose, the successive shocks I had felt. My position had been at the upper part of the sliding mass, and, imbedded as I was in the snow, I had survived the stopping of this portion of the avalanche without severe injury.

"It was a considerable time before I was able to recover from the prostration. Feebly I crawled back along the track of the slide for some distance, and then descended by a safe incline, and finally reached the glacier, whence the path hither was well defined. I had suffered some distance before me, had in some manner become wedged in the crevasse and had turned the material following it to one side or the other and occasioned, I suppose, the successive shocks I had felt. My position had been at the upper part of the sliding mass, and, imbedded as I was in the snow, I had survived the stopping of this portion of the avalanche without severe injury.

"It was a considerable time before I was able to recover from the prostration. Feebly I crawled back along the track of the slide for some distance, and then descended by a safe incline, and finally reached the glacier, whence the path hither was well defined. I was late in evening when I reached this house, and the party following continued directly over it and continued its headlong course down the slope to the final precipice. An immense mass of ice, which had been started some distance before me, had in some manner become wedged in the crevasse and had turned the material following it to one side or the other and occasioned, I suppose, the successive shocks I had felt. My position had been at the upper part of the sliding mass, and, imbedded as I was in the snow, I had survived the stopping of this portion of the avalanche without severe injury.