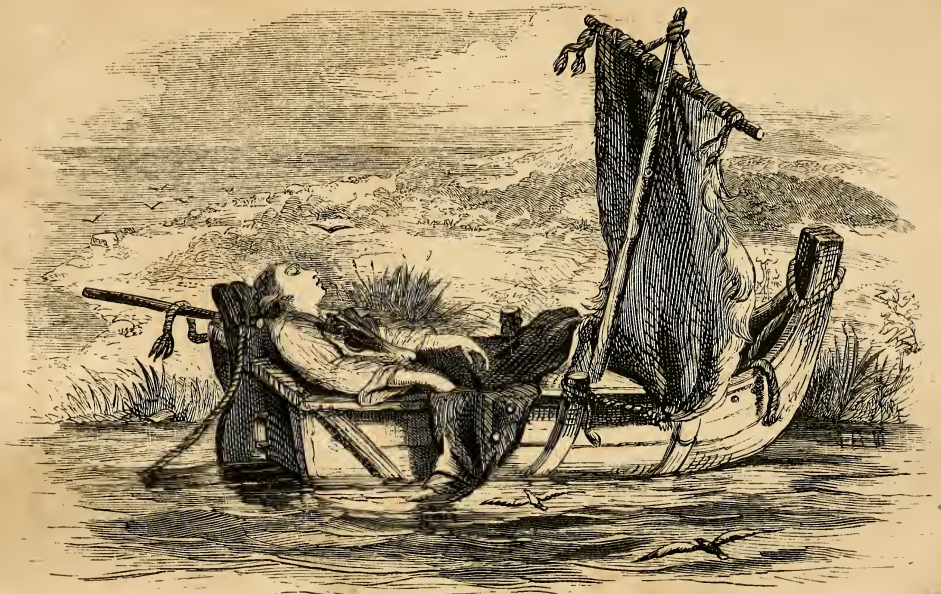

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THE

SEA OF ICE,

OR THE

ARCTIC ADVENTURERS.

BY

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BOSTON:
MAYHEW AND BAKER,
208 WASHINGTON STREET.
1859.

PREFACE.

No work ever was published which has proved so delightful as "Robinson Crusoe." Naturally enough, there have been many imitations of so pleasing a production, such as the "Swiss Family Robinson," the "Robinson Chretien," and others. We make no apology for having conceived and carried out another version, which, though owing its idea to the works above-mentioned, is original in its scene and most of its events. The phenomena of the north have been fully and correctly described on the very best and latest authority. The places described are those visited by Parry and Franklin.

PERCY B. ST. JOHN.

NOTE

OF THE AMERICAN PUBLISHERS.

THE thrilling narrative which follows was originally published in England, under the title of "The Arctic Crusoe," which we have altered to that of "The Sea of Ice," but have taken no further liberties with the text of the author.

BOSTON, *Oct.* 1, 1859.

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THE SEA OF ICE,

OR

THE ARCTIC ADVENTURERS.

CHAPTER I.

A STORM. — A HERO. — YOUNG ROBINSON. — EARLY SEAMANSHIP.

It was midnight, and the hour had come to change the watch. The night was dark and gloomy, the waves rolled mountain-high, the thunder roared with its horrid artillery over the watery hills, the lightning flashed, and the wind howled through the rigging with intense fury. It was on board a stout whaling brig bound for the Northern Seas, and in the sixtieth degree of north latitude. It was early in the summer, and just before the breaking up of the ice, so that, despite its being the month of June, it was bitterly cold at the hour of which we speak. By the lantern near the binnacle, and at intervals by the light of the storm, the state of affairs on board might be understood. Two men were at the wheel, watching with fixed eye the compass that guided them through the night, and listening with deep attention for every order given by the skipper, who with two men beside him was standing close to the wheel, his head turned towards the bows. The brig was under close-reefed topsails, with a storm staysail — still, under the trying circumstances in which she was placed, almost too much canvas. Her rigging and running gear cracked and rattled, her masts strained, and her yards, though braced sharp up, yet shook at every plunge and roll of the vessel.

"A dirty night, captain," said a youth who stood near him — his form so concealed beneath sou'-wester and tarpaulin coat as to be confounded with his clothes; "the worst I have yet seen."

"And as bad a one as ever I saw, Master Harry, who, man and boy, have buffeted the seas these thirty years. But the Polar Seas ain't like a duck pond. Mr. Williams, I think we must shake a reef out of the topsails; she labors fearfully," continued the skipper, turning to a stout, short, thickset man, who, every inch a sailor, stood silently beside them chewing his quid.

"Shake out a reef, sir? why, I ain't sailed in this frozen ocean as long as you has; but this I knows — any where else I'd stand by to cut away the mast if you put another inch of sheeting on her. To my mind, bare poles is the trim for such a craft in a gale like this here," said the old sailor, dryly.

"As you will, Mr. Williams," replied the captain, as he was by courtesy called. "I have never yet found your experience fail. Besides, it is your watch, and I shall not interfere. Call me if there be the least change. The wind will chop about, I dare say, by morning. Come, Master Harry, you must turn below a while, or I shall have you nodding in my watch."

Both took one long look around, and though wind blew, waves boiled and seethed, though the thunder bellowed and the lightning flashed, yet there seemed no sign of an immediate alteration, and therefore the two went below to seek refreshment and rest. They descended by the companion to a small cabin, which had not too much accommodation. On each side was a kind of shelf, raised nearly three feet from the ground, and about two feet in breadth, which was dignified by the name of a sleeping berth. Around was a projection which served the purpose of lockers and benches — a kind of seat successfully imitated in certain modern conveyances. In the centre was a table, with above a swinging lamp, that remained ever steady amid all the shaking of the vessel. Against the bulkhead were suspended muskets, swords, pistols, and two fancy harpoons; while above all arose an undefined odor of biscuit, rum, soup,

tobacco, cheese, soap, oil, combined with a close, musty, faint smell, peculiar to the cabins of small vessels. The absence of women, soap, and fresh water was clearly to be noticed in the dingy color of the sheets, which might, however, have been whity-brown instead of somewhat dirty.

It requires some little time to habituate the weak stomach of a landsman to the abominations of such dens as ships' cabins were some thirty years back. But the force of habit is so great, that even the most delicate temperament will, during a long voyage, habituate itself to bear such invasion of its most sensitive of organs, and find, at the end of three months, nothing very remarkable about it.

On the night in question there was now added to the other pleasures of the cabin a steam of wet coats, with a deafening, dull roar of the sea against the planks of the ship. Every now and then a huge wave would slap against the side, as if about to burst the frail rampart erected by the hand of man against its raging force. All who have witnessed the wonders of the deep have been struck with amazement at the seeming disproportion between the power of the billows and the wooden machine that in so many instances rides safely on its foaming crest. The mind is almost necessarily well affected by the thought; and I think few have voyaged by sea without being more than ever struck with admiration at the cunning of man's hand, and the wondrous provisions of Providence for our employment and well being.

But both Henry and Captain Shipton were already too well accustomed to all that concerned a seafaring life to feel at the moment any such influences. They were cold, wet, and hungry, and their first thought was for their supper. It consisted of cold salt pork, some potatoes and biscuit, washed down by rum diluted — the captain's with two thirds water, the young man's with double the quantity of the somewhat doubtful liquid which on shipboard replaces the purer element, one of man's greatest blessings.

The captain was a little over forty, weather-beaten, furrowed, and his short hair nearly white. His physiognomy was open and frank, and remarkably intelligent. His gray

eyes looked quick-sighted and sharp; his mouth was somewhat severe in expression, though in general a smile sat on his countenance. He was now, however, serious, and the general tone of his physiognomy was grave.

Henry Maynard was a young man of about one and twenty. A little above the middle height, with an oval face, nearly black hair, dark-brown eyes, his appearance was winning in the extreme. With, in general, a thoughtful brow and a countenance of marked intellectual character, he won more by the sweetness of expression round his mouth than even by his mental powers. When he spoke, all were charmed, for he had one of the greatest personal advantages that fall to a man — a good voice. Adventurous, bold, firm, industrious, fond of study, he seemed out of place in the cabin of a whaling vessel; yet he wore the costume of a sailor, and was, indeed, chief mate of the *Fair Fanny*. What reasons had induced a young man of education and refinement to adopt this mode of life will by and by be seen.

"And pray, Mr. Maynard," said the captain, as they sat over their frugal meal, "what do you begin to think of Polar researches, whaling, and so forth?"

"That it is, as I expected, hard work; with more storms than calms, and plenty of harder work in store," replied the young man, catching at his berth, as a fearful lurch of the vessel nearly pitched him across the table to where the captain sat.

"You may say that, Master Maynard. We've had pretty plain sailing as yet, and have got upon whaling ground right quickly; but not a whale have I seen yet, and the men begin to fancy, I hear, we shall have but sorry luck;" and the skipper looked curiously at the young man.

"You are aware, Captain Shipton, that in reality whaling is a secondary object with us; that we certainly hope to pay part of our expenses with the proceeds of our fishing, but that I am here with other designs."

"I know it, Mr. Maynard, or else why have you left your father's house, your fair future bride, and all the comforts and luxuries of an English home? For myself, I'm

a poor man, and sail to win bread for my wife and little ones — God bless them! — but with you it's another thing. I'm not a scholar, but I've had a better education than sailors generally; and still I can scarcely understand your motives, having every thing in the world at your command — wealth, a girl you love, a happy home, and God knows what besides."

"Mr. Shipton, I am not sleepy. If you can spare me an hour, I will, now that we are close upon the scene of action, explain to you fully how I come to be here, and what are the motives which have guided me, at one and twenty, into the Polar Seas."

"I will wake up the watch through," replied the skipper, filling a pipe, and speaking in a hearty tone, "to have this explained to me. Take a pipe, man — a sailor cannot live without it, and you know I cannot smoke alone."

"To please you," said Henry Maynard, smiling, "I would take half a dozen whiffs; but this is the last habit of the sea I shall learn, and as yet I cannot venture."

And the young man sat down in his berth, his feet firmly fixed on the locker beneath, and began his story.

As the reader is not aware of many particulars with which the worthy skipper was familiar, and which, therefore, the other omitted, we must ourselves narrate, in our own words, the young man's tale, adding what he passed over often without mention.

He was the only son of a wealthy merchant, who, in addition to a princely fortune gained by trade, possessed a fine estate in Devonshire, which, by a complication of circumstances, had become the inheritance of his wife. Rich, and liberal in his views, and having an only child, he had lavished on him all the stores of knowledge which a refined mind could impart, with the aid of an extensive and well-chosen library, and the advice and guidance of a friend, the pastor of the parish near which the mansion of the landlord-merchant was situated. Inhabiting Plymouth, — for there was his house of business, — Mr. Maynard left his wife and child almost always at his country house, riding out in the evening on horseback to dinner.

Business over, the pleasures of the merchant were his

family, his garden, and his books. In the society of his wife and child he found more delight than in the wider circles which he also often frequented, being neither a hermit nor a misanthrope; he would talk and walk with them, or, while they pursued their occupations or amusements, would read. The tastes of the young hero of Petershill were early developed. A pond, or rather lake, at the extremity of the lawn, was perpetually covered by boats and ships, made for him by a retired sailor, one Timothy Stop, who, having served his father well on board one of his vessels, and having lost a leg, had been sent down to Petershill under the pretence of being a servant, but, in reality, there to end his days in honorable retirement. With this taste arose very soon a devouring love of books of travels. Henry would learn his allotted tasks with avidity, that, this over, he might invade the library, and there, taking down Cook or Hakluyt, Frobisher or Barentz, gloat like a miser over his treasures.

His father, so that he learned his regular lessons and took a fixed amount of exercise, never interfered with his love for books. He even saw with pleasure his son studying works which to the future merchant-prince must be eminently useful — no man who trades with the whole world having to fear too much knowledge of the countries he deals with. In fact, it was a marked neglect of this necessary education which in days gone by caused so many unfortunate speculations.

Henry was accustomed to rise at six, and go forth in the park to walk. In general he took Stop with him, and returned to Petershill to breakfast at eight. It was in the May of the year which saw his tenth birthday, when one day — it was a holiday, and his mother had slept in town — he entered the library at daybreak, searched over the shelves, and presently, impatient at not finding what he wanted, took a work at random from the singularity of its name. Then he went out alone, and disappeared behind a small wood opposite the house, a portion of which was still as wild as when the park had been reclaimed from the hand of nature. A hill, covered by bushes, briers, and wild flowers, stood in the centre, reached only by winding paths

through the wood, somewhat rough for gentle feet. This was Henry's favorite retreat.

At eight o'clock, on this occasion, he had not yet returned; but as he was supposed to have gone down to Plymouth to meet his father and mother, no one searched for him, and it was only at five that, pale, excited, his eyes fixed as if he had seen some wild beast, he returned to the house, faint with hunger and thirst. He was asked by his father where he had been, and simply replied, that he had spent the day at the retreat reading; and no further questions were put, though his father begged him not to forget his meals another time, as such neglect was unwholesome. He dined almost in silence — a novelty which was ascribed to his being languid from want of nourishment so long.

"I think you had better go and take a quiet walk, Henry," said his mother, when the dinner was over. "Take Stop with you, and be back to tea. But mind, don't run or heat yourself; you are quite feverish."

"Thank you, mamma; the air will do me good," he replied; and nodding his little thoughtful head to his parents, he moved quietly out of the room.

A few minutes later they saw him, with Stop by his side, walking quietly along the lawn towards his favorite wood, a book under his arm.

"That boy has a wonderful taste for reading," said his father. "By and by I must take him into town, and give him a little change."

"I fancy he looks a little poorly lately. But Stop can take him out a little more, and I will ask him to ride beside me on horseback instead of sitting in the carriage of an afternoon," said Mrs. Maynard in reply.

"You will do well, my love," replied the husband, who then as usual walked out into the open balcony, to admire the quiet prospect before him.

Early next morning, and for about a month afterwards, Harry and Stop went out regularly every morning, returning about ten, as they now took their breakfast of milk and fresh bread and butter with them. At that hour they reappeared, washed and cleaned themselves, and separated, Harry to his studies, and Stop to mend a boat or do some little odd job for his beloved young master.

Their four hours of regular absence at length excited in the most lively manner the curiosity of Mr. and Mrs. Maynard, and one bright June morning they sallied forth, arm in arm, on an exploring expedition. They wended their way at once towards the wood, and entered it by a narrow path; then, guided by voices, they made towards the famed retreat, advanced a little farther, to stand still in mute astonishment.

The scene was one which both understood at a glance. The youth and his ancient comrade had chosen a side of the hill where bushes and weeds overhung a small hollow; all this had been cleared away, and the cave increased in size. Around was a hut, built with stakes, boughs, and thatch. This had a small door, while inside could be clearly seen two old kitchen chairs and a table. About six yards in front of the hut were stakes driven into the ground, so as completely to shut up all access to the cave, though a ladder allowed any one to get over who had business within. Mimic cannon guarded two loopholes, and a goat wandered around, tethered to a tree. Sawing a plank was honest Timothy Stop, while Harry — an old umbrella over his head, a child's gun on his shoulder, a queer peaked hat on his head, a pair of horse-pistols in his girdle, a rusty hanger by his side — was, from a book he held in his hand, giving directions and commands.

"Now, Master Friday," said he suddenly, "you may have your breakfast; I myself feel hungry."

"Yes, Master Robinson," replied Stop; "but first let us give the goat her second meal."

And honest Tim Stop, while Harry laid on a plank his umbrella, gun, and a volume, which all, doubtless, know to be "Robinson Crusoe," turned to feed the tame goat, which Mrs. Maynard recognized as one of her petted favorites.

The father drew his wife back gently, and led her away without a word. When they were beyond the wood was the first time he attempted to speak.

"But why did you come away so silently?" asked his wife.

"Because, my dear Helen, he looked so happy, and for

the world I would not have disturbed his felicity. This is, perhaps, the happiest moment of his life. He lives in a world of his own creation. I can understand his feelings. 'Robinson Crusoe' is, perhaps, the most fascinating book for boys in the whole world. You, a woman, can scarcely understand it."

Mrs. Maynard silently acquiesced, and for some time no notice was taken of young Robinson and his faithful man Friday. At last, however, the devotion of the lad to this one idea became less great; he read other books more frequently — still voyages and travels, and narratives of adventure by sea and land. Mr. Maynard then made allusion to his harmless amusement.

"And so, Master Crusoe," said he, laughing, "you have got tired of your island and cave?"

"What, papa! did you know?" replied the boy, blushing crimson.

"Yes, my son; this three months have I known it, and so has your mother," continued Mr. Maynard.

"And you never scolded me," said Henry, with glistening eyes.

"My dear boy, you seemed happy; you attended always diligently to your studies, and I have always allowed you to amuse yourself as best you liked, so that you did no harm. But what made you enjoy yourself so much in your cave?"

"Because I was a little like Robinson Crusoe. I should have been really happy to have been him."

"But, my dear boy, you seem to think nothing of the privations, of the sufferings, of the solitude of poor Robinson."

"But at last he had the company of his man Friday."

"Then his life became bearable. But, my dear boy, he was alone for twenty years, with no mother, sister, friend, or comrade; and, if you read attentively, you will note that his life was one continual struggle."

"But, papa, who ever gained a name without hardships? Look at Captain Cook."

"My dear boy, Captain Cook lived indeed, and did good service to his country; but Robinson Crusoe existed only in the imagination of Daniel Defoe. It is doubtful if really a man could have gone through so many difficulties."

"Robinson Crusoe is then an invention!" exclaimed Harry, almost inclined to burst into tears.

"Yes, my boy, and one of the most beautiful inventions in any language. It is an amusing and a good book. We have, first, Crusoe suffering for his undutifulness to his parents, a slave; then he is cast on a desert island. Here God takes pity on him, and places in his path varied means of existence, and at last comparative ease. In the end, when he has become a good man, deeply imbued with the love of his Creator, he gives him a companion, and ultimately releases him from his confinement. My dear boy, you may learn much good from this book; I hope you may find it pleasant even when you are a man."

Harry made no reply: he was very thoughtful, and presently ran away to tell Stop that they had been believing in a fiction. It was hard to tell whose disappointment was greatest, the sailor's or the boy's.

Years passed, and Henry reached the age of fifteen, and one day there was talk of his going to a public school, and then to college.

"My dear father and mother," said he, very gravely, when he had heard what they proposed, "listen to me, I beg you. I know the value of learning. I delight in books and the pleasure and knowledge they give; but at some time or other I must go to sea, travel, and see the world."

"Go to sea!" exclaimed his mother wildly.

"Listen to him, my dear," interrupted Mr. Maynard gravely. "Go on, Henry."

"I know now a good deal, quite enough, if I continue to read, to be a merchant or a private gentleman. But now I dream of nothing but travelling, of ships, of strange lands, and my wish is this: Let me go two or three voyages while you are still young; only one or two, just until I am a reasonable man. Then I will come home, and be your companion when you are old, tell you of what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I have felt. I will take books with me, seek to learn languages, and promise you that when you want me at home, I will go to sea no more. I do not insist. I will not be an undutiful son, and go away if I could; but do let me just go to India once, to America

once, and then most likely I shall be satisfied. But, my dear, kind, good father and mother, I leave it to you to decide."

"My dear," said Mr. Maynard, slowly addressing his wife, after some minutes of reflection, "the boy is right. It was by doing as he would do that I prepared myself for the brilliant career which has been mine. It was by voyage and travel that I learned to be a merchant. The boy is right. I am sorry he has decided thus, because we must part with him. But, Helen, Providence is good, and will restore him unto us. I know him well. If we curb this desire he will fret and repine. The desire to travel is a passion which is generally soon worn out, but which at first is absorbing."

"O, my dear father," exclaimed Henry, his eyes flashing, his face suffused with color; and then, turning to his mother and embracing her, he cried, "Dear mamma, do you consent?"

"Don't kiss me, you bad boy, who want to leave me," said the fond mother, with a look of sincere sorrow.

"But if I go to school or to college, I must leave you," insinuated Henry in his softest voice.

"Yes," said his father, thoughtfully, "and perhaps return to us less the son that we have now, than after a long voyage."

This decided the matter; and it was agreed that Henry should depart in the first India-bound ship in which they could find a fitting passage, with Tim Stop as a servant and humble friend. And so he departed, and for eighteen months the house in Petershill and the mansion in town were as if deserted. The spirit that gave them life had fled, and both Mr. and Mrs. Maynard, though still happy, were far more grave and solemn than usual. They talked of the departed always in a hushed tone, almost as of one dead, and they listened with intense yearning for the sound of his voice once more. Four times, however, there came letters, long epistles of almost a volume each, which made smiles come again to both father's and mother's face, and gave them subject matter for discourse for months.

One Christmas eve, in the morning time of the day, they were seated at their breakfast table in their house in town.

They could from their snug breakfast parlor see the street and the port, and were whispering still of the absent, speaking of the next day, and what a happy Christmas it would be if he could be there, and so on, when the London coach pulled up at their door — a young sailor, in jacket, black neckcloth, and loose pantaloons, leaped down from the box, and darted up the steps, after ordering his two large chests to be deposited on the ground before the door. An old man, with a wooden leg, slowly followed him.

"My child!" shrieked the mother.

"My beloved son!" said Mr. Maynard, solemnly: "God, in his infinite mercy, be blessed!"

Next minute he was in their arms.

To tell how they looked at him; how they made him eat, and drink, and talk; how they ransacked the house for things to tempt him with; how they gave confused orders, which nobody obeyed, for servants, clerks, and porters were all flurried together; how Mr. Maynard wrote a check doubling the amount allowed for his people's Christmas-eve dinner and ball; how both admired the tall, handsome youth of seventeen, nearly a man, sunburnt and darkened, but still frank, open, thoughtful Harry Maynard, — would require a pen and pencil combined of more felicitous expression than mine. I can only say that it was doubtful to all who was the happiest.

And next day, when there was a merry Christmas party got up in honor of the occasion, and Henry was the hero of the night, and told strange stories of what he had seen, and mimicked the Hindoos, and Hottentots, and other strange people he had met with, and talked about storms, and jibs, and hammocks, and forecastles, and ratlines, and belaying-pins, there was no stopping him. And when he kissed all the girls, and most readily his little cousin Fanny, and sat next her ten times as long as near any one else, and laughed and looked fondly at his parents, one and all declared that they had never seen such a Christmas. It was quite a fairy tale, or like the parable of the prodigal son.

And Mr. and Mrs. Maynard were truly happy, drawing their joy from the purest fount on earth.

CHAPTER II.

AMERICA. — A HEROINE. — AMBITION AND ITS RESULTS.

THE young man's next voyage was to America, the country of his predilection, as it is ours. History, the past, the stores of learning and philosophy, the arts, sciences, and relics of genius which have come down to us from Greece and Rome, have even little charm beside the wondrous phenomenon of a wild continent, peopled by savages as wild as their forests, becoming the seat of a vast and new system of civilized society. The United States is a nation and a government apart, and can be judged by no rules laid down by writers and economists, who lived anterior to the foundation of the vast republic. Henry Maynard travelled for two years through the great Union, and came back, as all fair and impartial observers do, highly gratified and impressed with a very elevated view of the future of, perhaps, the most mighty nation of the earth, an offshoot of England, destined, from immense natural advantages, perhaps to surpass her.

Our hero did not go to America to write a book. He did not, therefore, study mere fun; he did not seek only for the anecdotical, the strange; he did not ask why they spoke in a different tone to what we do, any more than he was astounded to find Devonshire and Yorkshire dialects different. His study was of the effect of institutions on the prosperity, well-being, and greatness of the nation.

Henry Maynard was nearly twenty when he came back from his second journey — a man in character, appearance, and acquirements. His mind, previously nourished and fortified by reading, had largely profited by travel, and in all his discourse and conversation his marked superiority over the general average of young men was clearly visible. He was not a great inventive genius, but he was a clever young man, imbued with generous impulses, great tact, acuteness and power of observation, and influenced by a devouring

thirst for knowledge. This was greater than ever. He wished to know, to see, to learn. He found a large reënforcement of information, collected by his father during his five years of absence, and he eagerly visited Petershill to lay in a fresh stock of thought and reflection, by assiduous reading.

But he found a great hinderance to his projects. Cousin Fanny was now a permanent resident with Mr. Maynard. Left, about a year before, an orphan, and in very poor circumstances, Mr. Maynard had at once adopted his sister's only child, not for the sake of being called a good and generous man, but because he felt duty and inclination to be both, in this instance, equally forcible in influencing him to the act. To Mrs. Maynard, the society of an amiable girl, very sensible, pleasant, and even well informed, who, when her first sorrow was passed, became a companion with whom she could talk of Henry, and who was never wearied of the subject, was invaluable.

Henry found that walking was now as agreeable, at least, as in ancient days, though now, if he had begun to play at romance again, it would have been at Paul and Virginia, and not at Robinson Crusoe. He guided Fanny's steps through every avenue of the park, took her to the seat of his former exploits, and there established once more his reading hill. But when Fanny was with him, it was no longer voyages and travels, but Milton, or Byron, or Shakspeare.

And yet they often talked of that boyish freak, of Stop, and the cave, and the goat — and Henry would hint, that were he to be Robinson again, he would like to have a fair companion. He did not understand, Defoe, not he, or else he would have sent some angel of the other sex to rejoice his heart. And Fanny laughed and wondered how he could talk such nonsense.

One day he was reading out Romeo and Juliet. They sat side by side, and were most intent on their book. But Henry often stopped, looked at Fanny, and sighed; while she, her eyes cast down on the ground, blushed rosy red.

At last Henry closed the book.

"Fanny," said he, in a low tone, but speaking distinctly aud gently, "my feelings towards you have long been known

to myself. I do not love you as a cousin; I love you as Romeo did Juliet: listen to me. We are cousins, friends, nearly of the same age; why should we not one day be husband and wife? See how happy papa and mamma are. There could be no greater felicity on earth than to pass through life as they have done."

Fanny was silent one moment, her hand unresistingly placed in Henry's, and then she answered in a trembling voice, scarcely able to restrain her tears, —

"Henry, I will not conceal from you, that, under many circumstances, what you have said would have given me pleasure. It is sweet to be loved, and, perhaps, even still more to love. But I am an orphan, living on the bounty of your parents. Such thoughts must never enter our heads. Forget what you have said, dear Henry, and let us remain cousins and friends. If not, let me go away. I will not cause your parents one ——"

"Hush, Fanny!" cried Henry, almost indignantly; "you do not know my parents. They are not only kind and devoted, but they would do any thing for me. I am a pet, Cousin Fan, and the moment I say I wish you to be my wife, if you consent there will be no difficulty."

"No! no! Henry. It would be the height of injustice on my part to take advantage of their generosity. Let us talk no more of this. Even in listening to you, I am doing wrong."

"No!" exclaimed Henry, fondly; "there can be no crime in listening to me — to me, your future husband."

"Hush! Henry; do not talk in this rash way. Forget what has passed but as a pleasant dream."

"Never!"

"Then my duty is clear. If you are not wise enough to end this painful scene, I must. Come, Henry, let us return to the house."

And she rose, and Henry rose too, but with a smile of proud and unalloyed happiness that had never sat on his face before. They walked arm in arm towards the house, just in time to dress for dinner. When they came down to this meal, Fanny was very pale, her eyes were slightly swollen, and her whole mien betrayed extreme agitation.

"My dear Fanny, what is the matter?" said Mrs. Maynard, gently; "are you not well?"

"Quite well," replied the girl, faintly.

"My dear father and mother," exclaimed Henry, as the servant closed the door behind her, "I can explain what is the matter. Fanny has this day refused to be my wife, and I think she is sorry for it; but she thinks it her duty because she is poor."

"My sister's only child," said Mr. Maynard, who exchanged a delighted glance with his wife, "is my child now. Fanny, it has been for a whole year our dearest hope that Henry might choose you for his partner for life. We never breathed a syllable about it, because we wished to leave him free. Fanny, Helen will tell you that your marriage with Henry has long been hoped for by us. Come, then; make Henry happy if you can."

"My dear uncle and aunt," cried Fanny, trembling like a leaf as she spoke, "I will not, when you are so generous, hesitate one moment. If you really do wish your son to marry a portionless girl, she will be proud to be your daughter."

Henry pressed his father's and mother's hand in his, and then all sat down to dinner.

"Now then to business," said Mr. Maynard, after some whispered talk between the cousins; "Fanny is an orphan and my ward, with a fortune accumulating in my hands."

"Hush, my dear sir; I have nothing, save what your bounty —" exclaimed Fanny.

"You are mistaken. The wreck of your father's fortune I have collected together. I have found numerous debts due him abroad. These I am collecting and placing out in a profitable way. You will have six thousand pounds when you are of age. Now, as you are an heiress, you must marry my boy of your own free will. What say you, Henry, to fixing the wedding for Fanny's twenty-first birthday?"

"Two years, my dear father?" said Henry, in a tone of extreme disappointment.

"Two years are soon passed, my boy, and at two and twenty you will scarcely more than have entered upon manhood. I dare say you will find some pleasant way of pass-

ing the time. Besides, I cannot consent to alter this part of my design. I am sure, Henry, you must own it is wisest and best."

Henry made no reply, but he shook his head almost mournfully, and said, "As you will, my dear father; but two years is a long time to wait. God knows what may happen in that time."

Many a time and oft did, in after days, these words come to the mind of both father and mother like a reproach, or at all events as a prophecy.

But now none but smiling thoughts and ideas were indulged in, and the house was one of daily and hourly rejoicing. Henry, however, became more studious even than of yore, and devoured books — new scientific books, too — with the same ardor with which he had studied "Robinson Crusoe" as a boy.

Of course, his pleasant communion with Fanny, in walks, and, in the evening, by reading and communing together, was continued; but there were times when he ceased almost all intercourse with any one, and shut himself up in his room alone, trimming the midnight lamp, and reading far into the night.

One day he called his father into the library, closed the door, and asked him for an hour's interview. Mr. Maynard willingly acquiesced, a little alarmed, however, at the serious expression of his son's countenance.

"My dear father," he began, in a quiet, firm, and manly tone, "I have resolved on one more journey. Nearly two years will elapse previous to my marriage, when all expeditions must cease; but ever since I was twelve years old, one desire has beset me — one thought has possessed me. Towards this have tended most of my studies. The desire to be stirring consumes me day and night, and I must go or become ill. I cannot sleep for the thought. My destiny — though I am no fatalist — seems in my dreams to stand over me and say, 'Go!'"

"Whither?" exclaimed the amazed father.

"To discover the magnetic pole," said Henry, quietly.

"My boy, what madness possesses you?" began Mr. Maynard.

"My dear father, no madness. The means are in your hand — the end is glorious. If I fail, no great harm will be done; if I succeed, our name will go down to posterity alongside Columbus, Magellan, Marco Polo, and other of my heroes. The means of execution are easy. You have a whaling vessel starting in a month. Give it extra provisions and instruments; let whaling be subservient to my secret designs; leave the command to worthy Captain Shipton; but let me, according to private instructions, be still leader of the expedition. By starting a week earlier than they intended, we may reach the ice in time to enter its confines this summer. I purpose wintering as far north as possible; and then, when summer comes again, continuing my voyage, either retreating, or making the great north-west passage, as fortune favors me."

Mr. Maynard listened to him, half in despair, half in admiration; and at last, after two hours of earnest discussion, the father yielded, and at tea time it was announced that Henry was about to make a voyage in a whaler, to pass away in activity the period that must elapse previous to his wedding.

The announcement was received with passionate grief by both mother and cousin; but Mr. Maynard, now quite enthusiastic in the cause, aided by the warm and earnest eloquence of Henry, soon brought them to consider the project as one of less alarming import than they at first thought it. Neither was converted to a belief in its wisdom, but they resigned themselves to please the young traveller; Fanny, however, making Henry promise to journey no more after their marriage, except in places where she could pleasantly accompany him.

Henry gave the promise freely, and then from that hour all was bustle and activity. There were many preparations to make, but wealth knows few difficulties; and early in May Henry was ready, well provided with clothes, linen, provisions — wine, spirits, and tea and coffee entering largely into the composition of his winter stores, while arms and ammunition were provided in abundance.

It was early one Monday morning that Henry left Petershill, in company with his parents and future bride.

They were in an open carriage, of course very sad. Mr. Maynard was thoughtful in the extreme; Mrs. Maynard wept freely; and Fanny in vain tried to stay her tears. Henry suffered more than all. He felt that a word of his would cause all this sad emotion to change to joy. But his things were on board; his enterprise incited him on more than ever; he saw, in the long vista of the future, the pride and joy of success and imperishable fame.

He could not hesitate; and bidding all be of good cheer, he promised to return in time for the wedding day.

The ship was already out of the port, lying to. A boat alone waited, with the skipper and four sailors, for the first mate; and here, then, Henry bade them all adieu.

He embraced the almost inanimate form of Fanny, placed her tenderly in his mother's arms, kissed her dear face, wrung his father's hands passionately, and then, to hide his emotion, leaped into the boat, and bade the men give way.

When he turned, they were standing, that mournful group, watching him; and as he stood up they waved their hands and kerchiefs, and he waved his cap and sat down.

It was the last they saw of him for many weary years, and yet there they saw him still, every hour, every minute of their existence.

The *Fair Fanny* (so was she now christened) was a stout brig, of four hundred tons, built for the whale fishery. She was strong in bows and beam, and had in fact nearly all the good qualities a vessel can have, except being a good sailer. The crew was ample in number and well chosen. The captain was a man of great experience, the second mate had sailed in every sea, and Henry was the learned man, the thinker of the party.

Williams, the second mate, was a blunt sailor, a rough, obstinate, pig-headed Englishman, who never saw any thing beyond the hour; whose happiness consisted on board ship in ordering about the men, in smoking and drinking grog; on shore, in spending as rapidly as possible whatever he earned. He was already almost impatient for the voyage to be over, having received, in common with all, extra pay "this bout" — a circumstance that excited greatly the wonder and the astonishment of crew and officers.

This mysterious fact was one that had roused general curiosity since their departure from Plymouth, and was nightly talked over round the windlass and in the forecastle.

"It's my opinion," would Williams say, "that there's some screw loose. Men don't have extra grog, extra grub, or extra pay for nothing. It's contrary to reason. If we was now in the West Injies, or about the coast of Africa, I should say we were pirates or slavers."

"So should I," would reply James Hulk, one of the men.

Williams would then drop the subject, as if satisfied to throw out a suggestion, leaving his hints to rankle in the breast of the crew.

"I say, Hulk, you've been in these here parts before, hain't you?" one day asked Williams.

"Yes, I have."

"Well, is there any natyves up in the north?"

"To be sure there is," replied Hulk; "ain't there the Squimaus, what lives in holes in the ice?"

"That's it, then. Black cattle is running short and geting expensive; so Master Maynard has sent his son out to kidnap the cold uns. Well, that Jack Williams should live to be a pirate, a-running after innocent savages as never did him no harm!"

This notion was gradually received, but none betrayed their suspicions to the captain, waiting the course of events, in most cases with extreme indifference, as the crew did not really much care how they made money, so that it was made.

Such was the crew collected on board of the *Fair Fanny*, which we left laboring in a polar storm, and to which we now return, after these necessary preliminary observations, which were essential to the understanding of what follows.

CHAPTER III.

A FEARFUL TEMPEST. — DEAD CALM. — A WHALE. — THE CAPTURE. — ENVY AND JEALOUSY. — ICEBERGS AHEAD.

When Captain Shipton and Harry Maynard went on deck, the scene was dismal in the extreme. It was bitterly cold. There fell a kind of watery sleet that clung to rigging and ropes, crusted the deck, and then blew up at every gust in damp dust against the eyes; the waves ran mountain-high, and the ship was borne up at times forty feet above the level of the ocean, at others as many below. The brig rolled from side to side, its yards dipping in the water, and the deck at such an angle as to necessitate holding on by belaying-pins and ropes'-end, to keep a footing. The wind drove them still towards the north. The sky was black and unbroken by one blue opening, and nowhere could any one see fifty yards beyond the ship.

None spoke. There is under such circumstances a cold, damp rawness in the air, which, with the sense of danger, makes men keep their mouths closed. The skipper, with Harry by his side, walked up and down the quarter-deck, looking anxiously for some sign which might give token of the storm abating. But gust succeeded gust, the wind howled through the rigging, and dark clouds came chasing each other across the sky, from their bed in the north-east, one unceasing succession of black vapor, mingled here and there with clouds more lightly tinted, but nowhere blue, or orange, or red, or of any of the more agreeable hues, which betoken the return of fine weather.

It is in the Polar Seas only that a storm can be seen. Every where wind will raise the waves mountain-high, but here only does Boreas reign supreme. The wind seems to come forth from the ice-bound caves of the northern extremity of the world, unchecked, unrestrained, with a blast like that of the hurricane. The seas being narrow, and

here and there bounded by heavy mountains of ice, the waves are far more dangerous than in the wide ocean, where they swell in uninterrupted force for thousands of miles, and present to the mind an image of imposing grandeur which no land scene can give.

At eight o'clock the captain and Harry went below to breakfast. At this moment the sea had reached the height of its fury. Above, copper-colored vapor, that shed night upon all visible nature; below, black waves crested by white foam, that broke vault-like backward, and dashed upon the deck, unceasingly washed by spray. No one could be heard unless he spoke in a thick, screaming voice, that seemed to tear the throat painfully, while the masts worked in their sockets, as if about to break off from their junction with the deck.

"When will this fearful tempest end?" said the skipper gravely.

"God knows," replied our hero; "but where are we? I fear we are approaching the chains of icebergs. It would be awful to face them in this storm."

"It would. According to my calculation we are now in 64° north. If so, unless the wind abates, we are lost."

Henry made no reply, but sat down thoughtfully to his breakfast. He began to think that his zeal in the cause of discovery had carried him too far, and that it would have been wiser to have remained at home. But he would not give utterance to vain regrets, and feeling no inclination for conversation on any other topic, he remained silent.

The motion of the vessel sufficiently showed that the storm continued; but presently, just as the breakfast was over, the brig remained upright a moment, and then began pitching and rolling in a peculiar way, quite different from what had been felt for two days. The vessel appeared abandoned to herself without guidance; yards and ropes seemed about to be torn from their holding, and at every roll or pitch the brig shook in every timber like a man with the palsy.

"A dead calm," said the skipper, rising and rushing on deck, followed by Harry.

When they came again on deck they found that the scene

had changed as if by magic. All wind had ceased, the clouds were breaking up over the whole sky, patches of blue were seen above, and on the waters, here and there, the rays of the sun obliquely gilded the still heaving ocean. As far as the sea was concerned, the calm was worse than the storm; for while the wind filled the small amount of canvas left on the brig, she rolled and pitched without the fearful lurches and shakings which now seemed about to knock the whole fabric to pieces. Capable of guidance by the rudder, the movements of the ship were regular; whereas now, the flapping of the sails, now filled one way, now the other, was added to the motion of the waves, and each time the brig darted forward or backward, it stopped with a jerk that threatened to tear the sheets from their bolts, and the masts from their sockets.

Still the sea was falling, and about twelve there was a dead calm; below, also, the ocean now only heaved and swelled, the waves broke no more, the brig was tossed gently and lazily from side to side, and the captain and crew were able to look about them.

As the billows sank to rest, first becoming long waves, then descending simply to a swell, they saw that nowhere were they in sight of land. Water and sky were all that could be distinguished, and at twelve o'clock the latitude was found to be 64° 30′ N. The air was very cold, even without wind, and all began to feel that they were within the polar regions.

They were able even to satisfy themselves more fully of this, when a fog in the north-east clearing up, they saw a vast stray iceberg coming down as it were upon them in all its cold and massive might. Though alone, it was declared by the men to be the largest loose iceberg they had ever seen. It was jagged and pointed at the summit, and appeared from the reflection much more extensive than it really was. Henry desired to pull out to it; but the captain protested against this, as from his examination it was much more distant than it appeared to be. Harry gazed curiously at this first specimen of

> "A crystal pavement by the breath of Heaven
> Cemented firm,"

and longed for the hour when his adventurous feet would be fixed on the shores of the unknown world towards which he was advancing.

"Would that the winter were come," he said in a low whisper to the skipper.

"Be not in a hurry," replied his friend; "the winter will come fast enough."

It was about an hour after the above observation had been made, that Henry and the captain were startled by a cry which they had been expecting for some time.

"A whale! a whale!" said a man at the mast-head.

"Where away?" asked the skipper, while the men with one accord prepared for the exciting chase which was about to take place.

"Nor-west, about half a mile," replied the lookout.

"Out with the boats!" cried Captain Shipton, in an excited voice; while Henry, unable to master his emotions, went below to fetch a harpoon.

When he came again on deck, he found two boats in the water, each manned by twelve men. It had been previously arranged that Williams should command the one and Henry the other; the skipper, from due regard to discipline, remaining on board. After recommending great caution to his young mate, the worthy man gave the signal for starting, and the "ashen breeze" soon sent the two heavy cutters rapidly over the waters. The sea was still calm, the air cold, despite the sun that showed itself brightly enough in the heavens, and the sky clear and open. In a few minutes the signal-men announced the whale.

It lay like a great weed-clad rock, still and motionless; a calm, however, as deceitful as that of a volcano, as the old sailors all knew. They now, therefore, pulled with extreme caution. Henry could scarcely restrain his feelings, but by a great effort he succeeded in mastering his emotions and keeping silence. He stood upright in the bows, motionless. In his hand was his bright harpoon, fastened to a line of vast length. He was about to make his first experiment in whaling, and his position as chief mate made him extremely anxious to succeed.

Williams, who stood ready also, looked with a smile of

scorn at the young man, who, never having seen a whale before, was about to compete with an old sailor, and who allowed himself to be carried away by his feelings sufficiently to feel excited. He was not aware that Henry had studied minutely in books every phase of this and all other deep-sea fisheries; for not liking the young man, he conversed with him not one minute more than required by his duty. He had, however, little more time for thought. The whale was close to them. Its huge length was now clearly visible, and a slight uplifting of its side showed a tendency to move. Williams turned to give some direction to his crew.

"Ah! what is that?" he roared, turning round without finishing his sentence, a fierce look of passion suffusing his countenance, not unmoved with alarm.

When he first turned, Henry, who was slightly nearer to the whale than Williams, noticing the movement of the huge animal, and fearful that he would escape, raised his harpoon, took aim, and let fly. The harpoon hissed through the air, and struck the whale on the back, burying itself up to nearly the hilt. A loud cry of rejoicing from the crew proclaimed the palpable hit, and then they drew back, two standing by Henry to aid him in his further duties.

The instant the whale was touched, it lashed the water with its huge tail, snorted forth a volume of water, and then, making a dart downward, disappeared, almost taking the boat of the second mate with it in the vortex. A slight bubbling of the waters, a series of rippling waves then ensued, and all was over for the moment.

The cord, however, paid out with tremendous rapidity, one man pouring water on it as it ran over the bows, the other standing by with an axe, to cut all away, if the huge monarch of the seas put them in any danger. For some time no change took place. The cord uncoiled from its tub with fearful rapidity, and the crew waited with intense anxiety for the moment when it should all be out.

The moment came on them ere they could think, and they saw themselves dragged bows under, cutting the water apart with a wondrous power, which Henry could not but admire. He gazed, however, intently on the man with the

axe, ready to give the signal, and fearful that a second of delay might risk the loss of crew and boat.

But still on they went, ploughing through sheets of foam, that dashed its sparkling spray over all, and left behind a wake nearly a mile long, and quite as wide at its extreme base. Not a word was spoken. All eyes were fixed on the distant point where the whale might be expected to rise.

"Stand by to cut away," whispered Henry, as their velocity increased to a degree that threatened to submerge the cutter.

"Ay, ay! sir," replied the sailor.

At this instant the rope slackened, and the whale rose nearly a mile distant, so long was the line. He seemed to take rest but for an instant, for away he again darted in a direction nearly the same as that which he had already taken. The same precautions were immediately had recourse to, and the small quantity of line taken in was again paid out. But this time the whale did not go far, but came slowly towards them, casting up a column of water and blood as he moved.

"He's finished, sir," exclaimed Hulk, respectfully; "he was a reg'lar snorter, but you touched him up beautifully. I never seed a whale better managed."

The looks of the men testified their admiration of their chief mate's skill, and from that moment the tars, who had hitherto doubted his youth, had full confidence in him.

"I am glad to have pleased you, Hulk," replied Henry, who really was very proud of his victory; "but look alive, my hearties. He may be deceiving us."

"All right, sir," continued Hulk; and then he added in a half whisper, "Won't Williams be mad, my eyes!"

"Why should he be mad?"

"Because, sir, he made up his mind to hit that ere blower hisself, and now you've a done it."

"It is very absurd on his part — pull in, coil away — the game's up with him," cried Henry, heartily, as the whale turned on his side and lay to all appearance dead.

Henry then looked around, and saw that, while the ship was not more than a mile from them, the boat of Williams,

from the direction the whale had taken, lay as far on the other side. A light air that fanned his face warned him to be stirring, and it was with no small satisfaction that Henry saw the sails of the brig fall, and the stout vessel steer towards them, with the usual majestic aspect of all large vessels with a light and gentle wind.

By the time the *Fair Fanny* was alongside, the whole of the rope had been coiled in, and the men were preparing to cut up the whale.

"Bravo, Mr. Maynard," cried the jolly skipper; "that prize does you credit. It's a whale of the best sort. A pretty good beginning that, as sure as my name isn't Pike."

"A good beginning," replied Henry, "and one that bodes us luck."

He then went on deck, and when the sails had been furled, the whole crew set to work to perform the less agreeable parts of their duty. Williams soon came up, in reality furious, but concealing his rage under an appearance of blunt good nature. But forward, he expressed very different sentiments.

"It's my opinion, Hulk," he said, when in the evening they were smoking a pipe, "that that ere youngster is no more twenty nor I am. He's a regular old stager made up, I can see. He twenty! he be blowed! I guess he's been whaling longer nor that."

"In his father's fish pond," laughed Hulk, "along with my old mesmate, Tim Stop."

"None of your larking observations, Mr. Hulk," replied Williams, with a look of superb contempt. "I've read afore now of a woman as they called Niny Close, as looked like a young gall at eighty."

"Stow that," cried the men with one accord; "that is too much of a spun yarn."

"Well, I don't care, I've my notions," said Williams, sulkily. "Eight bells — turn in. He twenty! he'll never see forty again."

Next day they killed two whales, of which one fell to the share of Williams, which put him in better humor, and for ten days the crew had undivided success. Then the ground failing, they determined to push farther north.

It was early in the morning after they turned towards the north, Henry and Captain Shipton were walking the deck. There was a chilly sensation in the atmosphere that was new.

"You look anxious, Master Henry," said the skipper, with a smile.

"I fancy I can feel the ice," replied our hero, who had been absorbed in his reflections.

"Feel it!" exclaimed Captain Shipton; "why, look over the quarter, my friend, and you will see it."

Henry rushed to the side, and looked over. Close to the ship the water had changed its color. It had now a dirty brown tinge, while here and there floated great pieces of loose ice, not large enough, however, to cause any impediment to the progress of the ship.

Round about the floating stream of ice, which came thumping now every minute against their bows, fluttered petrels, dorchies, killewates, and other of the birds of these seas.

Henry said not one word. He was on the verge of that mysterious sea, the secrets of which he had come to fathom, and he could not repress a strong feeling of rather natural emotion. He gazed vacantly towards the north, as if expecting to see something strange on the edge of the horizon. But there was nothing to tell of their whereabouts but the chill, the floating ice, and the broad and dirty expanse of ocean waters, except that in the distance floated a hazy fog, which might have been mistaken for hills.

"An iceberg right ahead," suddenly exclaimed a man aloft, about half an hour later.

All rushed to examine into the truth of this statement; and in a few minutes they could plainly discover a huge hillock of gigantic shape bearing down upon them. It was nearly thirty feet in height, and when, giving it a pretty wide berth, they passed alongside, it looked more like a rock than that which they knew it to be.

This, however, was no solitary mountain of ice, like that they had first seen; it was the leader of a host which came within sight every moment, and which made the farther advance of the ship exceedingly perilous. Now a huge floe, or a field of packed ice, would wholly check

their progress, and when the stiff breeze carried them through, they found themselves, perhaps, surrounded by icebergs.

It was about the last day of August; the wind was southerly, and the good brig advanced under all sail, forcing its way through a vast plain of loose and broken ice. It was the morning watch, and day had not yet fully broken, though it was all but day the whole twenty-four hours long. The brig was moving along almost without visible motion, so calm was the sea under its heavy burden of congealed water.

Suddenly the full light of day flooded the eastern horizon, and Henry was startled by both the grandeur of the scene and the perilous position of the ship.

Two vast icebergs were coming down upon them. The one on the starboard bow was not less than a hundred and fifty feet in height, while the larboard one was fully two hundred feet above the level of the sea. They were not a hundred feet apart, and they appeared gradually nearing each other as they advanced.

"All hands on deck," roared Henry, springing up into the main chains.

The whole crew were on deck in an instant; but Captain Shipton saw at once that nothing could be done but wait the progress of events. The wind was light — the channel between the ice was narrow — and the floes rushed with such force on each side of the icebergs that any escape that way was impossible. There was no choice but to pass through the valley which lay between the two vast mountains.

Nearer and nearer came the icebergs, settling down upon each other with fearful rapidity. The wind was light, and the brig advanced but slowly. Poles and fenders were got out, to push off the fearful accumulation of frozen water, and not one living soul on board the ship but waited for the critical moment with extreme dread.

The distance between the bergs at their southern end was now not more than fifty feet. It narrowed at the other end. The crew held their breath.

They were between the two heaving masses.

Every sail was now cracked on, while, keeping close to the eastern iceberg, they pushed the brig forward by means of poles. Every instant now seemed an hour. The wind scarcely impelled them forward at all; still the two icebergs came closer and closer. The crew looked anxious and pale. Some sent up a silent prayer; and yet they were at the mouth of the valley. They were actually grazing the eastern berg, and the western was not ten feet off.

A long pole was thrust out on both sides, one tremendous push was given, and the *Fair Fanny* floated once more in an open space of water.

"Thank God!" said Captain Shipton, fervently, as, gazing back, they saw, ten minutes after, their late enemies meet, crash together with a fearful report, and then rapidly separate. All felt that, had they been between at that meeting, not a remnant of the ship would ever have been found.

They were now fairly within the confines of the Polar Seas, and officers and crew prepared at once to cope with the difficulties of their position.

CHAPTER IV.

A MUTINY.—THE WINTER IN THE ICE.

It would be useless, when we have so much to tell, to narrate all the movements of the *Fair Fanny* during a large portion of the time that was occupied in beating up Baffin's Bay, in fishing, and endeavoring to find a channel on that desolate coast. They endured all the usual difficulties of Arctic navigation; they were in constant danger from icebergs; they every now and then were checked wholly by streams of ice, and by detached watery rocks from the great northern barrier.

On one or two occasions they anchored in a convenient bay, and landed; but finding nothing pleasing or encouraging ashore, soon again sought the shelter of their ship.

They were very successful, however, in their search for food, which, being principally fresh meat, was exceedingly welcome to the whole crew, to whom salt beef and pork were becoming wearisome. This is one of the worst parts of all long sea voyages, but is felt with more force in the Arctic regions than elsewhere.

The excitement of the chase, one or two contests with bears, one of which nearly proved fatal to some of the crew, and fishing in the bay, were pleasing changes to men who had been cooped up so long in a small brig.

Towards the middle of the month of September they were in latitude 74°. The weather was now intensely cold, the sea was covered by loose ice, a light wind made an advance in any direction almost impossible, and Captain Shipton and Henry began to see that the moment had arrived to winter or turn their ship's head in the direction of home.

Forward there were continual conferences among the men, who could not understand "dodging about" in that sea without any visible aim or purpose. Williams, by his innuendoes and sly jokes on the chief mate, by his constant grumbling, kept alive a feeling of discontent, which was not remarked by our hero.

Events, however, rapidly opened his eyes.

It was a clear and lovely day; a fog which had hung round the brig had risen, and displayed before their eyes the somewhat dreary aspect of affairs. To the left rose, at a distance of some fifteen or sixteen miles, a small headland, near which they had anchored but a few days before. Right ahead could be plainly distinguished a compact body of ice, which stretched away to the right and left, completely checking all onward progress. Around were loose floes, which began advancing every hour with increased force and in greater numbers towards the south.

To convey an idea of the hardship and difficulty a vessel has to encounter when thus far advanced into the polar regions, it is necessary to remind our readers that the ice is here as hard as granite; that it resembles floating stones; and it would be difficult, indeed, to convey to the mind of any an idea of these mountains hurled fiercely through narrow gullies, encountering each other with a noise like

thunder, splintering off from hanging cliffs huge precipices, rending each other asunder, until, losing their equilibrium, they pitch headlong down, whirling the water into eddies, and lifting it aloft to the heavens. The sea is never still. Its changes are like those of a kaleidoscope.

"Captain Shipton," said Henry, in a low tone of voice, to the skipper, as they stood on the quarter-deck, muffled up so that they could scarcely be distinguished one from the other, after a visit to the crow's-nest, "we must haste to winter-quarters. No time is to be lost. The season has advanced more rapidly than I expected."

"But, my dear young friend," said the honest skipper, "how are we to reach the land? The wind is falling, and without a stiff breeze it will be impossible to force our way through these masses of ice."

"We must tow by boats, and get as near the land as possible," said Henry, thoughtfully.

"Go below, then, and arm yourself," replied the captain, quietly. "Now is the time to show firmness and determination."

"What mean you, captain?" asked Henry, anxiously.

"Williams has been throwing out hints — I understand them; and it's my opinion the crew will not winter here if they can help it."

Henry looked surprised, but went below, and, as advised, placed a pair of pistols in the pockets of his pea-jacket. He then came on deck.

"Out with the jolly-boat," roared the skipper, as soon as Henry again stood beside him.

The men obeyed quietly. Henry and the captain exchanged significant glances.

The boat was got out — a crew of nine men were put in it — a tow-line was fastened to it, and the orders given to tow to the westward. At this juncture Williams walked up to his superior officers.

"I don't understand this here hard-water business much, captain," said he; "but to my notion we arn't doing any good by fetching up west. It's my opinion, that with this here breeze we might turn tail on the ice, and be out in a jiffy."

"Quite possible," said Captain Shipton, quietly; "but

both myself and Mr. Maynard desire to make for Hearne Bay."

"What for?" asked Williams, anxiously; "why, the sea's a freezin' up, and there ain't no chance of getting out if yer don't do it this bout."

"Mr. Williams," said Henry, mildly, "I think it time to inform you that it is my intention to winter in yonder bay."

"Winter!" roared Williams, actually turning pale,—"winter! why, you're mad. Captain Shipton, are you a-going to have your carcass froze up by this young madcap?"

"Mr. Henry Maynard is owner and captain of this ship," said the skipper, mildly; "I am but his servant, and what orders he gives it is my duty to obey."

"I take no orders from him!" exclaimed Williams, fiercely; "nor, for the matter of that, from you, if you are mad."

"Williams," said Henry, firmly, "no mutiny, if you please. I should be sorry to use force or violence, but, at the first evidence of insubordination, I shall not hesitate to act."

Williams muttered something between his teeth, and then retreated to the forecastle, as if giving way before absolute necessity.

Meanwhile the ship made but little way. The boat, though pulled lustily by its crew, was continually impeded by the floating ice, which drove them resolutely to the southward. As, however, the breeze began somewhat to freshen, their pace slightly increased, and at last it was found necessary to call in the boat. The men came on deck, the boat was hoisted up, and the *Fair Fanny* labored heavily through the turgid waters.

Henry and Shipton, much encouraged by the yielding of Williams, conversed in low and guarded tones of their plans.

"I think we shall make the land," said Henry, cheerfully; "the breeze freshens up. In an hour or two we shall be safe."

"Be not too sure; this wind is the last spurt of the gale, and when it ends we shall be at the mercy of the ice."

"Think you so? Let us hope for better things. I wonder how the men will really take the matter."

"Well enough but for Williams," said the skipper, gazing anxiously at the heavens.

After the lapse of about an hour, the wind having risen to half a gale, they found themselves in the centre of a large open space of water almost wholly without ice, though apparently surrounded on all sides by icebergs, and the tossing, seething, cracking floes that poured to the east and west with a dark and distant roar. The wind, which was from the north-east, was bitter in the extreme, the atmosphere was again getting thick and hazy, and night was rapidly coming on. A few flakes of snow also were noticed falling on the deck.

It was evident that winter was about to declare itself suddenly and energetically. The ice-bound pool in which they found themselves was tossed by the waves — lashed into fury by the bitter blast — while every now and then a stray lump of ice would come thundering against the bows, turn the brig from its course, and shake the sails so effectually as to cause her to lose way.

At this juncture, the whole of the crew were seen advancing with Williams and Hulk at their head.

"Be firm, my friend," said Henry, clutching his pistols in each hand, inside his pocket; "the crisis is come."

The skipper imitated his example, without saying a word.

"Captain Shipton," said Williams, halting a short distance from his superior, while the men crowded sullenly behind their spokesman, "I've had a bit talk with the men, and they say as how they won't venter upon this here churchyard sea no farther. It don't stand to reason — no how. We're all willing to do our duty — to go aloft, reef and steer, haul aft and belay, fish and what not — but we won't be blocked up in this ice for no one. Winter's come; there's no more whales to be found; we've got a fair wind; so let's run right out of this here ice ——"

"No more, Williams!" exclaimed Henry; "you shipped all for two years. You have done your duty; I must do mine. My orders are to winter up here, so as to start in the spring and try and reach the 110th degree of longitude. You know the reward, my lads — five thousand pounds. I

want none of it. Do but second me, and my share of the prize is yours."

One of the men gave a faint "hurrah!" which was followed up by two or three others.

"Silence!" roared Williams; "all this is gammon. We ain't going to reach no hundred and your granny of longitude. Why, the hanimals quits these parts in the winter — the bears and the wolves cuts away, and you don't tell me as us men can live. No. So, Captain Shipton, if you will be guided by this here young lunatic, we won't; speak the word and it's settled."

"What do you require of me?" asked Captain Shipton, with suppressed passion.

"Turn the ship's head to the south — run down to a port in Greenland, where we can spend a jolly winter, and we'll come back in the spring to work. If not, we've decided to do it ourselves."

"What say you, Mr. Maynard?" replied the captain, turning anxiously to Henry.

"That the man who shifts a sail, or steers a point from the western course I have given, shall, for this act of mutiny, receive the contents of one of these pistols in his head!" and Henry slowly raised his two pistols towards Williams.

"Knock him down!" roared the second mate — himself, however, retreating.

"Back, every man of you!" exclaimed the captain, imitating the example of Henry.

The crowd of sailors held back, while whispers passed from man to man. Williams retreated behind the crowd, and tried to induce the men to advance; but there were many reasons that caused the crew to hesitate. In the first place, the sight of four loaded muzzles rendered the task a dangerous one; but the chief motive was the respect and love with which in their hearts they regarded their two chief officers.

"A precious set of cowards," sneered Williams; "a cutting away twenty of ye before a boy and a man 'cause they got a pair of old popguns."

"I say, Mister Williams, belay that; no more a coward nor yourself, do ye see? But barkers ain't popguns; and

if as so you like them playthings, just go and knock 'em down yourself."

"Dolts — idiots! you'll be bunged up in this here sea like mummies friz in a hiceberg. I don't want no one to harm the youngster. It's for his good as well as ours as I speaks, do you see? so just rush in and disarm 'em."

"Mister Williams," said Hulk, "I tells you afore that ere's done four men will die. Besides, I dare say they knows best, and this here is downright mutiny; and Jim Hulk ain't in his forty-seventh year, as has served the king twenty, to turn towards the yard-arm. Captain Shipton," he added, turning, cap in hand, despite the cold; "I axes pardon, and if as how you'll say no more about it, Hulk's your man, fore and aft."

"Always thought you a good man, Hulk; come aft, and no more shall be said about it. Now, then, hear my last words: down with your handspikes there, and return to your duty, lads; and the last man shall be put in irons, and hanged on his return to England."

The crew dispersed like magic at these terrible words, and the skipper, turning to Henry, lost the opportunity of seeing who was the last man. From that minute nothing more was heard of the mutiny.

"You see, Mr. Henry," said the skipper, smiling, "all that is needed is a little firmness."

"It is the secret of discipline," replied our hero, much relieved at the pacific turn affairs had taken.

At this instant the wind suddenly ceased, a calm stillness spread through the air, and the ship was tossed at the mercy of the waves. All rushed to look over the side, but it was so hazy that nothing could be distinguished.

Obedient once more to the voice of their officers, the men diligently obeyed the orders as they were given. The sails were furled, lookouts were placed, and every soul on board waited with deep anxiety the next sign of life which should be given.

There was a dull weight in the atmosphere; the waves rose and fell with a long and sullen swell; a few flakes of snow were floated against the face at every motion of the ship. This motion gradually subsided, the stillness became

fearful, and then a roar as of artillery was heard, with a simultaneous flash of sheet lightning.

The ship quivered, rocked from side to side, pitched, rolled, and then all was motionless — sea, air, water, brig, and for an instant the very breath of those who were deeply interested spectators of all that was passing around.

"We are frozen in," said Henry in a low, hushed voice, as of one under the influence of a solemn and extraordinary event.

"We are," replied Shipton, with a sigh, "and at least ten miles from the land."

"It cannot be helped," said our hero, calmly. "Providence watches over us, and we must do our best. Perhaps we are not finally frozen in, and may make way to-morrow."

Williams came sullenly up, and asked what was to be done.

"Wait until morning," said Henry, sternly, "and if the ice does not break, bring down the sails and topmasts. The sails will make an awning for the deck."

"Very well, sir," replied Williams, who thought it wise to conceal his mortification and anger.

The night was bitterly cold — snow fell heavily; and so rapid was the progress of the freezing power of the atmosphere, that before daybreak the ice was six inches thick round the brig, which was firmly embedded in its surface.

When the short day now left to them had begun, all saw that their fate was sealed for the next nine months. They were irrevocably locked up by the iron grasp of a frost, which added inches in thickness every hour to the hard surface of the water.

Immediate steps were taken to provide against the terrible inclemency of the season in this high and dreary latitude, where so many men have been tempted by a zeal that might certainly have led to happier and greater results. The yards, masts, and sails were taken down; a sloping awning of planks and sails was made the whole length of the ship; every aperture was blocked up; the deck was covered by a coat of sand, and every possible provision was made for the health and comfort of the crew as far as could be done on board a merchant ship.

It was now that the previous studies of our hero became valuable, and that the skipper learned to appreciate his many wise precautions for the winter — precautions suggested by the failures and misfortunes of others.

The temperature of the atmosphere was far below zero, and the condensation of the steam made it necessary to promote a systematic arrangement with regard to ventilation.

It was arranged that the old sea watches should be done away with, that all should rise at the same hour and go to bed together. During the day large fires were kept both in the cabin and in the forecastle, while oil lamps burned in every part of the ship to prevent dampness. The fires were allowed to go out when all the men were in bed, the lamps then only diffusing warmth. This arose from the fact that coals were scarcer than oil.

A considerable quantity of extra clothing, warm flannels, mittens, and other articles, were served out to the crew. Regular arrangements were then entered into for the long and dreary winter.

They rose at eight, the fires were lit, breakfast given out, and then all dispersed until twelve, to amuse themselves as they thought proper. Some made their way across the snow, which soon left no distinction between land and sea, to a high point which they knew marked the first jet of land, in the hope of finding game — a hope not very often realized; others got up running matches on the snow, until twelve o'clock, when dinner was announced. In the evening they congregated round a large fire, which was placed in a stove amidships, and amused themselves each man according to his own fancy. Henry studied his books of modern travel; the captain joined him, and obtained as much information on the point as possible. Williams — who had given up all idea of mutiny for the present, from the simple fact that mutiny was now useless — told long-winded yarns to the men, who, after a short time, were as merry as under the circumstances could be expected. Provisions and comforts generally were abundant, and any wrath that might have been felt was studiously concealed.

And thus the winter wore on — even the night of three

months' duration — without any inconvenience or murmuring, save when the scurvy broke out slightly — a malady, however, quickly repressed by the exertions of our learned hero.

In imitation of others, they also invented amusements, and even got up on Christmas eve a sort of burlesque play, which caused much mirth, and which, being followed by extra cheer on that ever-memorable occasion, was exceedingly gratifying to the crew.

Several hunting expeditions were organized, but they rarely produced any other result than a contest with a bear, many of which animals were attracted by their keen sense of smell into dangerous proximity with the vessel.

The phenomena of the winter were many, but other and better opportunities will occur of describing them during the progress of our strange and eventful history.

The long night of nearly four months, the vivid coruscations of the Aurora Borealis, the death-like stillness of nature, the welcome reappearance of the sun, are subjects with which most readers are now pretty well acquainted.

CHAPTER V.

A BEAR HUNT. — ALONE ON THE ICE. — SHIPWRECK.

And the winter passed without accident, and the month of May came, and the sun showed some slight sign of warmth. At the height of its power it thawed some snow on the housing of the tent — and yet the thermometer was still at zero — for the first time for eight months that it had been so temperate. This was comparative summer to the weary crew, for though the snow was deep, and the air chill, yet the snow was softer than before; and in comparison with the depth of winter and its biting blasts, the air was balmy.

Advantage of this state of things was now taken to start

an expedition towards the nearest land. A sledge was loaded with provisions; half a dozen of the best men, with Hulk and Henry, engaged themselves on the ice, but they speedily found that they had selected rather a bad time for their adventurous journey. They lost themselves, about the middle of the first day, in a dense fog, and after wandering about for nearly twelve hours, were so utterly exhausted as to huddle together for warmth, almost careless of what followed.

They had met with jagged lumps of ice, covered by soft snow; they had to leap from lump to lump, sometimes across fissures at the bottom of which the water bubbled up, and on one or two occasions they had to save some unfortunate member of their party at the peril of their own lives.

Hulk got a thorough ducking, and was scarcely able to move.

About midnight, however, the frost resumed its strength, and it was determined to erect a snow hut. They had a spade with them, which the men proceeded to use in turns; and great was considered the favor of being the one in possession of this utensil, as it promoted warmth. A huge pile of hard snow was found, and they proceeded to dig into this. It was very solid and hard, so that they dug out square blocks, which they erected into a wall, and in about an hour had a hut sufficiently large for all of them to sit round a small fire, the smoke of which passed out of a hole made for the purpose.

A plentiful supply of biscuit and tea was now served out, which set all in good humor, especially when Henry further consented to the men indulging in the favorite luxury of a sailor — a pipe.

They then closed the aperture by which the smoke had been allowed to go forth, and drawing their blankets over them, slept soundly. In the morning they awoke, and though they began to feel very cold, were unharmed. The difficulties of their situation, however, were such that they determined at once to return to the ship, and wait a more favorable opportunity.

This was done, though not without some trouble, as the

real situation of the brig was not discovered without delay and wandering. It was finally, however, accomplished, to the general satisfaction of all.

In the beginning of the month of June, a strong gale from the north, and a heavy snowdrift, seemed to threaten unusual duration to the winter. Frost came in again with extreme severity, and the snow was once more as hard as ever.

Another expedition was attempted towards some remarkable hills which lay in a westerly direction, but without any more good fortune than the first instance. Another kind of experiment was then determined on.

Tracks of reindeer and musk oxen were now often seen upon the snow, and it was determined to use the last week of winter to lay in as good a stock of game as possible. A hunting party was then organized to follow the marked track of animals which had been found. They were from the land, seaward, which seemed to indicate that an island usually frequented by these animals was at no great distance.

Henry, with four of the best shots on board, Hulk and Williams also joining in, formed the party. They were armed with guns loaded by heavy shot, while each man carried in his belt pistols and a small axe, by way of protection against more dangerous game in the shape of wolves.

A flask of powder, and one of rum, completed each man's equipment; a sledge being provided to load with game, in case they should be fortunate enough to fall in with any.

They started at early dawn in high spirits. There was the hope of an exciting chase, and then, in a few days, freedom from their monotonous position, and liberty once more to sail along the waters of the boiling ocean.

It became, therefore, a matter of great importance to have a stock of fresh food, which might vary the eternal and unwholesome salt provisions, which all were so anxious to get rid of. The chase itself, too, was one of those occupations for idle hours which men generally gladly welcome.

The morning was cold. A hard frost made the ground pleasant to walk on. There was scarcely any wind to drive up the loose snow from gullies and heaps, the track

of the deer was clear and marked, and away they went merrily and cheerfully over the vast white plain.

The sky was clear and blue, and the eye could glance over a vast expanse of ground; so that it was altogether a cheering and hopeful day, though to some it was to prove the most fatal and fearful of their existence. But none knew fear or doubt, and none more jolly than our party of hunters, on that cold and bitter morning.

They did not march close together, but scattered themselves over a line of about fifty or sixty feet, the man with the sledge keeping the middle. Every now and then they hailed each other to see that all was right, and that none of the party were straying too far.

After advancing about five miles — they had a small compass with them — they found the plain change in appearance. The track was found to trend in an easterly direction, through a plain of a very rough character. Large pieces of ice, cast up from the sea during the tossing of the floes, had formed an irregular collection of rocks, which the wind in many places had stripped of snow. A halt took place, and then it was agreed that the sledge should be left on the edge of this wild icy pile of hills and valleys, while the hunters should advance with caution, there being very recent tracks on the little snow that was left in certain hollows.

"Hillo! a bear has been here too!" said one of the sailors, pointing to the mark of his paws.

All looked around with a startled air, expecting to see the animal darting from behind some icy concealment.

And yet, after the first moment of surprise, there was not one who would not have welcomed the animal as a boon. A halt was held for an instant, and then it was resolved to pursue their course as if nothing had happened.

"Keep a sharp lookout, lads," said Henry, darting up a rugged path between two jagged pillars of ice that stood like the ruins of an antique temple, dashed and broken by time.

Standing still a minute, Henry, from a little height he had gained, looked onward. As far as the eye could reach was a vast and illimitable plain, white, flat, dazzling to the

eye, save in the north-east, where seemed to rise a peak of rather lofty dimensions, which Henry at once thought must be the island towards which the reindeer and other animals were making their way, and thither he at once determined to make his way.

Between this object and where he stood, at a distance of about a mile, was something black and dark, which might be a bear, or an ox, or a pack of wolves devouring some prey they had overtaken.

"Come on, my hearties," said Henry, making a dash in the direction of the game; "come on; here is game for the bold."

Henry ran, as he thought, about a quarter of a mile without stopping. He then suddenly halted, as the whole scene was wrapped, as if by magic, in darkness, and he was covered in an instant with snow. Henry stood still, dazzled, confounded, and not knowing what to do. Then the snow ceased, the air cleared up again, and all was as before, save that not a sign could he any where see of his companions, while not a trace was left of his own footsteps to tell in what direction he had come.

And Williams carried the compass!

There was a pang at his heart a minute, and then he reflected calmly. He knew pretty well the direction of the ship, and he saw before him the vast, irregular plain of jagged ice, on the other side of which he had parted from his companions. He at once, therefore, turned back. He did not, however, advance with the same rapidity which had characterized his former run. The snow which had fallen had been slightly mixed with rain, a certain indication that the breaking up of the ice was at hand. Henry hurried on, however, for some time, and yet appeared no nearer to the hummocks than at first. This puzzled him very much, and he looked back in search of the peak.

It was not behind him; it was at his side.

"Merciful Heaven!" he cried, "I have then come wrong."

For an instant he was nearly transfixed with horror and astonishment; but knowing well the importance of rapidity of action, he took once more what appeared to be the right

direction. At this instant a bird rose, flapping its wings. It was a ptarmagan. With the double view of securing some game and of calling the attention of his fellows, Henry fired.

The bird fell fluttering about twenty yards from his feet. He secured it, put it in his bag, and continued his journey without reloading, so wild were beginning to be his thoughts.

Alone on that terrible sea, miles away from land, no guide to tell him which way to go — the heavens were now obscured and dark — the season so far advanced that the ice might break up and scatter — himself unprovided with food — his companions totally unaware of his real position, Henry felt that his sole dependence was in God; and his lips earnestly whispered a prayer to Him who alone, he felt, could save him.

A growl startled him. About fifty yards in advance was a huge bear, coming slowly on. Henry stood still, loaded his gun deliberately, and awaited the coming of the savage monster, which advanced as if certain of its prey.

It was a large white bear, one of immense size, an animal which probably weighed nearly a ton. Some of these creatures present the appearance of a small elephant in bulk, though they stand so much shorter on the legs, and have long, low necks.

Henry, whose mind was braced up by the consciousness of his severe peril, felt no alarm in relation to the bear. He cocked his gun, and stood. The bear came on, on four paws, until he was within twenty yards, when he rose on his hind legs, gave a fearful growl, and then a yell of terrible anguish, as he sank on the snow.

Henry had fired deliberately and calmly, and had hit his right hind paw, and so effectually as to lame him. The bear, however, came limping on at a very slow pace, growling and yelling in a horrible manner.

Henry fired both pistols when the bear was close to him, and then ran, leaving the animal quite incapable of following him.

At the end of a hundred yards he turned. The bear was slowly, and but very slowly, following him up.

Henry Maynard was now too experienced in the character of the polar regions not to be well aware that night, which still prevailed for some few days longer, was rapidly coming on. He therefore hastened to gain the summit of a small hill of ice, and to look round the horizon, in the faint hopes of discovering some sign of the ship.

He looked round, right round; north, south, east, west, in every direction — nothing. Neither his companions nor that old brig, which, under present circumstances, was Paradise itself, could be seen.

Henry clasped his hands in agony, and then muttered a prayer, though scarcely able to collect his thoughts sufficiently to find words.

What was to be done? Night was rapidly coming on, and in a moment nothing could be seen. What was he to do? Which way should he go?

His mind almost wandering, he ran up and down, hither and thither, in the desperate hope of finding a track left by some of his comrades, and was about wholly to despair, when the sledge met his view. It was where they left it, and there, at no great distance, were the pillars of ice between which he had passed.

His heart bounded with delight, and as thankful a prayer as ever burst from man's heart went up unchecked to Heaven.

And yet there was no track — the sledge itself was almost covered by snow — and he did not know in what direction to point his footsteps.

He determined, therefore, to seek some place where to pass the night. When on expeditions, he had, with the sailors, often erected huts of ice and snow; but alone he felt himself unequal to this task. He looked about, therefore, and presently saw, close at hand, a kind of hollow, formed by the accidental upheaving of two vast lumps of ice, which leaned against each other.

A hollow space about seven feet high, and as many broad, had been left, and into this Henry was about to venture, when he saw evident signs of its having been inhabited. It was doubtless the haunt of the wounded bear.

His first impulse was to discharge a pistol into its dark

recesses — he did so; but when the echoes had died away, all was still and silent as the grave. He therefore entered and groped about, but was very much startled to find the place strewed with bones. He felt convinced that his first surmise was right, and contemplated with no small dread the return of the savage brute to his den.

Naturally much alarmed, he drew the sledge up to the cavern, stood it on end, and leaned it against the entrance. Against this he piled up several loose pieces of ice, and after half an hour's hard work, blocked up his retreat, so that, save through a small hole, it could not be entered.

In half an hour more it was all as hard as rock. Then Henry crept into his singular cell, where, by contrast with the outer atmosphere, he was warm. He took a draught of rum, and then lit a torch, which they all always carried with them in case of being delayed at night or of being lost.

The cave was about six yards deep, and the bones of various animals, which could now by the torch be clearly seen, showed that the bear had made it his halting place for some days. Henry at once loaded his pistols and gun, placed his hatchet close at hand, and then closing up the aperture by which he had crept in, with his bag, laid himself down to rest, after roasting in the flame of his pine-torch a portion of the bird, which, with a hard biscuit, he eagerly devoured.

He was not very alarmed. He knew that he was not more than six miles from the ship; he knew that his companions, beaten back by fear of the storm, or even still wandering, would soon announce his position to the captain, and that exploring parties would be sent out to find him. He even himself could in the morning find his way to the ship.

For some time naturally his mind was tortured and racked by conflicting thoughts, by those unnamed dreads which come over the soul when something — it knows not what — is to be feared.

At last, however, he fell soundly asleep, and slept he knew not how long.

He was awaked by a whining howl. He was in the dark,

and a strange scratching noise was heard outside, accompanied by something between a bark and a whine.

Henry knew it at once to be a polar wolf; and poking the end of a pistol between the sledge and the game-bag, he fired. A sharp howl followed, and then there was stillness again.

At this moment a roar like that of thunder was heard. Henry, who knew what it meant, dashed down the sledge, reckless of all consequences, and sprang out. The noise was repeated in all directions.

It was the first day of summer. The ice was breaking up in every direction.

Jets of water spouted up; the huge mass of ice on which Henry stood rocked and swayed to and fro, as if about to turn upside down, and then began moving rapidly onward, whirling round all the time.

At this instant Henry caught sight of the distant sails of his ship. They had, then, utterly given him up, for they were hoisting up the yards and setting the sails. The sun, which rose warm and bright, was melting the snow with singular rapidity; the wind was balmy and sweet, and came across the moving plain with increasing force every moment.

All hope was gone. He felt it, and yet he clung to life with all the desperate energy of a dying man.

The cave remained intact. The lumps of ice which formed it had grown into a solid mass of some extent. The iceberg thus formed was about fifty feet long and thirty wide, forming a small raft, which swayed to and fro as it came in contact with the breaking masses around.

Every now and then reports like thunder showed that the ice-fields were breaking up still more every minute. There was a rapid tide, a current which brought down the breaking masses upon the iceberg with singular rapidity; they were hurled against one another with a noise like thunder — huge lumps broke off, and falling, some on the large floating mass which supported Henry, menaced to upset it.

For some time this strange raft kept on in a south-easterly direction, turning on itself at every hundred yards.

It was all this time in sight of the *Fair Fanny*, which, however, at the end of an hour, was under full sail, trying to force its way to the north.

Henry's heart beat high. They had not given up all hope of finding him.

At this instant the iceberg whirled round as if it had been spinning, and our hero was cast to the ground by the shock. When he arose he found himself being carried rapidly in a north-easterly direction. He had evidently met with a powerful current, which was driving him to the very heart of the Arctic regions.

The ship was now scarcely to be seen. It appeared so impeded in its progress by the ice as scarcely to move.

Henry therefore gave up all hope of immediate assistance in this direction. He looked then about him to find what were his immediate prospects of escape from death.

Around were huge piles of ice cracking, dashing, leaping, breaking in all directions; while the huge lump on which he floated did not seem very safe or steady. His gun, his pistols, his game-bag, and his sledge were all that were left to him at that moment in this world, while he was being hurried he knew not whither.

Presently he noticed that another stream of ice was coming down in an opposite direction, and as he remarked that he was hurrying in the direction of the peak, he conceived that a current came round that mountain, went onwards a certain distance, and, then meeting that from Lancaster Sound, was driven back to the other side of the island.

The hope of Henry's heart was now centred upon that desolate hill, which was not more than six miles distant.

He saw at once that he was being carried in a direction that promised to bring him to the hoped-for haven; but he was too well acquainted with the rapid changes so common in those seas to feel any confidence or certainty on the subject. He moved, according to his calculation, at the rate of about three miles an hour — a rate which would, if it continued, bring him to the end of his journey before night.

The great danger was, of meeting another current, and being carried away to the east or west, in which case his

peril would be great; in fact he felt that, if he did not succeed in making the Island of the Peak, he was hopelessly lost.

Clutching his gun, he as much as possible used it as a pole to impel his raft slightly to the eastward; and he had the satisfaction, after about an hour's hard labor, to see himself within a moderate distance of the hill on which now his eyes were steadily fixed.

His journey was not without constant peril — a peril presently much increased by the dangerous propinquity of a huge iceberg, the shape and form of which seemed familiar.

Apparently more within the force of the northern current, it had been more than a mile behind him, and now came rushing down upon him with alarming rapidity; while, to add to his discomfort and uneasiness, he could distinctly see, on its extreme edge, the bear he had met the previous day, crouching as if ready to dart upon him. On it came, crashing against all minor obstacles, shaking and threatening to upset at every moment, but clearly less deep in the water than that which supported our forlorn and almost exhausted hero.

At length it came close, and a collision was inevitable. Henry clutched his gun, and made ready for a spring, as he expected his own raft to be upset or knocked to pieces. He determined the more readily to exchange positions, as, on a near approach, it was quite clear that the bear was incapable of harming him, it being quite dead, or, at all events, at the very last gasp.

The icebergs met; the smaller one grated, crashed, and then shivered into fifty pieces, just as Henry, by a desperate leap, gained a footing on the huge mountain alongside the bear. The pile of congealed water rocked violently, and then steadying itself, pursued its onward course.

The island was now not more than two hundred yards distant, and Henry could clearly perceive a small bay at the foot of the Peak, into which he would gladly have guided his raft. But this was beyond his power, for the iceberg kept steadily on its way, and if it did not pass the island, would certainly not enter the sheltered cove, which to Henry was the haven of all present hopes.

Close to the shore of the island there was a small collection of packed ice, and against this the perpendicular side of the iceberg, on the edge of which was the bear, appeared about to strike. Henry kneeled down and prepared for the collision. It took place, however, with great gentleness; the hill shook, and then was quite stationary. Henry rose to his feet, and aware of the great value of his prize, proceeded to make sure of the bear. By great good fortune the animal, having advanced to the extreme edge of the cliff, — a last effort to jump into the water and swim, — lay so that it could be pushed. Henry made, therefore, a desperate effort; the body moved, slid, and went away to the very shore, carrying a large mass of ice with it which was detached by its weight.

Henry then crawled down a less perpendicular part of the berg, and leaping across the packed ice, was in five minutes more on the shores of the island, to which he had looked with so much anxiety all that day.

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On board the brig, to which the whole hunting party had returned in safety, the deepest anxiety was felt. Captain Shipton, when the disaster was known, though nearly mad with grief, and fearful in the extreme as to the result, acted with prudence and firmness. Guns were fired every quarter of an hour during the night, while it was determined that at daybreak a new expedition should go forth in search of the lost one. When, however, the ice broke in the morning, the skipper felt that all human probability was against his young master being still alive, and yet he determined to do his duty.

As soon as the brig could be got under weigh, despite the terrible perils of the situation, she was pressed under heavy canvas towards the north, and still every quarter of an hour guns were fired, Henry not having heard, which must be ascribed to some peculiar state of the atmosphere at that moment.

CHAPTER VI.

SHORE. — THE ISLAND. — THE VOLCANO. — THE FOXES.

With so well-constituted a mind as that which early nurture had given to Henry Maynard, the first impulse on reaching land was to return humble and hearty thanks to God for the great mercy by which he had been saved from a terrible and fearful death — to which, indeed, he had been so near, that it took some time for his mind to be fully convinced of the reality of escape. As he knelt, he reviewed with shuddering the perils he had passed through, the unstable fabric which had served him for a raft, and the good fortune, or rather the Divine Providence, which had directed him to this small spot of earth, instead of to the wide, open sea, where inevitable destruction awaited him. Now, at all events, he had his feet on the earth; a solid portion of the soil of the world was beneath him, and the opportunity was given him to exert his energies for his salvation.

Education and the training of his youth had fully prepared Henry for even the unusual and terrible struggle which he must necessarily make, be his future good or ill, and whether Providence designed his being wholly left on that spot of earth, or that he should be saved.

He felt that it was quite possible, and in fact certain, that his companions would seek him, hopeless as might be the search; and as he knew that the ship had not yet sailed to any very great distance from the spot where he now was, his mind was invigorated by hope as well as by gratitude. Men had been placed in worse positions, and yet, by the great goodness of God, had escaped to tell the tale.

He accordingly rose from his knees much refreshed, and proceeding to look around him, surveyed the character and appearance of his strange abiding place with great curiosity.

Close to his feet lay the vast body of the white bear he had killed the previous day. It was quite stiff and cold,

despite the slightly genial warmth which began to spread like balm through the air. This at once was a sign of encouragement. But though this animal offered him much in the way of self-preservation and utility, yet still he was too anxious to examine his new territory to do any thing as yet, even though so deeply essential to his well-being as securing food.

The hill already alluded to was about half a mile distant, and as it was rather elevated in character, Henry determined at once to climb to its summit, and thus discover if the *Fair Fanny* were still within the range of the horizon.

He loaded his gun, saw that his axe was safe in his belt, replenished the priming of his pistols, felt for his hunting knife, and then prepared to start on his expedition, despite the immediate cravings of hunger.

There are, indeed, moments in a man's life when even the most imperious calls of nature are disregarded and despised, so fixed is the mind upon some one idea.

It was at this instant that something of the truth flashed across his mind.

He gazed out upon the sea, he fixed his eyes on the cracking ice as it floated by, he glanced at the arid shore, he listened and he heard no sound — an overwhelming feeling of desolation came over his soul.

He was alone.

"And is it possible," he cried aloud, though no voice could answer him, no ear could hearken to his tale, — "is it possible that the dream of my childhood has come true, that I am left alone to live that life which once I so much coveted — alone — on an island? O, let me see at once, let me reassure myself that it is not an island, or I shall go mad!"

He paused and looked around, as if expecting some reply. But none came; not even the echo of his own voice.

"O father, mother, dear Fanny — and am I forever parted from you? Is this reality, or is it an ugly and fantastic dream, the child of fever? It is not real. I am not, I cannot be alone! Wake up, my soul; speak to me, some one — O heavens, it is so — I am — I am alone!"

He began, as he spoke, a frantic course towards the

mountain, but was soon checked by the difficulties and asperities of the road. Wherever there was a slope or a tendency to a valley, the snow was still thick on the ground, wet, thawing, and deep, and Henry was obliged to exercise extreme caution to escape falling into holes which would have sunk him up to his neck. Still on he went, using, despite the wild state of his mind, every precaution to escape accident, until at last he reached the bottom of a very steep acclivity which was completely free from snow, a stony, arid portion of land, which seemed to continue to the very summit of the hill, the top of which was the extreme goal of his present wishes. So great was his haste, that he several times stumbled; but at length his desire was accomplished — he was on the very apex of the peak, and there was no higher land above him.

His first glance was for the sea, for in that direction was his hope of salvation.

He looked from each extremity of the horizon to the centre, and then gave one long sweep round all; it was in vain — nothing met his gaze. The whole sea was broken up by lumps of floating ice, by floes, and by icebergs; but nothing in the shape of the sails of a ship was visible. He drew a long sigh, and proceeded to examine the hill on which he stood.

It struck him at once that he was on the mouth of an extinct volcano. The hill was round at the top, and descended by a gradual slope to the centre, where a pile of snow was accumulated, concealing what might be a vast depth beneath. The examination of this Henry at once deferred until a more favorable opportunity, when the brief but rapid summer of these regions should have enabled him to do so with more satisfaction.

He walked slowly round the hill, hoping, almost against hope, that he was on a long projection of the continent, on the mainland indeed, instead of, as he feared greatly, on a deserted and uninhabited island.

And yet, unless he fell in with a friendly tribe of Esquimaux, he would not be much better off on the mainland than he would be on an isle in the middle of the sea. For a man unused to that climate, any attempt to reach the

inhabited part of America along the shores of the Frozen Sea would be sheer madness.

In a few minutes all doubt on this point was set at rest. The place which had given him refuge against the raging waves, was itself wholly surrounded by the sea. It was about seven miles long and three broad, and nowhere could a glimpse of other land be seen, except far away to the westward, where a long line of blue hills seemed to be clearly distinguished in the distance.

"Alone — on an island — in the Polar Seas," cried Henry, in a state of mind bordering on distraction — "what am I to do? what is to become of me?"

And he descended the hill towards the place where he had landed, his whole thoughts now directed to immediate preservation. He had noticed, on the edge of the bay near which he had been stranded, several pieces of wood cast up by the waves, which he was eager to possess himself of, while he had been considerably struck, on his way up the hill, by the presence of lumps of a substance which he believed to be a kind of coal. Here, then, were two important discoveries, which it was essential to verify.

Henry thought not of a fire for mere purposes of warmth, but he hoped that a huge beacon lighted on the beach would serve the purpose also of attracting his friends. On second examination he was more than ever persuaded that the substance which lay scattered at the foot of the volcanic hill was a kind of coal very common in the polar regions, — which some day may be our great coal-field, — and which, though not exactly the same as that known to the ordinary commerce of the world, is still useful and gives a brilliant light.

It appears, indeed, a well-authenticated fact, that up in these cold regions, near the

> "frigid zone,
> Where for relentless months, continual night
> Holds o'er the glittering waste her starry light;"

where — as Purchas has it — "foggy mysts, tempestuous winds, cold blasts, snowe, and hayle" abound; where "unequal seas amaze the hearer" and "amate the beholder;"

where "monstrous icie islands, renting themselves with terror of their own massies," check progress — are concealed treasures of minerals, which would, if known, soon produce some such combination as the Anglo-Icicle and North Pole Gold, Copper, and Tin Company. And so vast is the enterprise of man, who already seeks his oil in these very regions, that we anticipate, at no distant day, the shores of the Frozen Ocean coming into competition with Cornwall, California, and Australia.

To collect and pile up a supply of wood and coal was an occupation which gave Henry an hour of very hard labor. He begrudged it not, however, so much depending on the success of his plan. When he had piled up as much as he thought necessary for immediate purposes, he built a fire against a little hillock, and then proceeded, with a beating heart, to try the experiment of lighting it.

On the southern slope of a stony eminence at no great distance, Henry had remarked some moss, of the kind which tempts the deer in such large numbers to certain islands, and of this he had torn up several handfuls, which he had exposed to the faint and sickly warmth of that cold and dismal semblance of the sun, which yet by comparison was so cheerful and pleasant. On this depended the success of his experiment.

Never did so much depend before on a man being able or not to light a fire. His life, with the last hope of relief, were both at stake on the hazard of success or failure.

A small quantity of gunpowder was thrown by him on to the moss, which he placed behind his pile of wood and coal, and then his gun, loosely charged with a piece of rag as wadding, was fired at this newly-invented tinder.

The report was scarcely heard when a welcome flash was seen, and then a genial flame, as rag, moss, and gunpowder acted one upon the other. Henry was in ecstasies, and when a slight breeze which prevailed fanned the whole, and some small chips he had chipped with his axe began first to smoke damply and then to blaze, a feeling of relief and hope was infused into his whole being.

Ten minutes later, and wood and coal, after resisting for an instant, by means of their damp state, the power of the

flames, burst forth into a fire, which roared, and blazed, and crackled, in a way that proved to Henry that, on that lone and desert shore, he at all events would be able to find, what in that desolate region was a necessary of existence at all times — fuel.

The pleasurable sensation of a fire was so great, that it had a natural effect upon his mind, which was in a far easier state than it had ever been since his first discovery of his having parted company with his companions on the hunting expedition.

There is almost unlimited power in physical comfort. The absence of material and positive wants shows itself, not only in the person, in the appearance, in the look, but it affects the mind and character. Not only do whole races, that have been used to oppression and misery, rise, under the genial sun of liberty and prosperity, to an improved configuration and state of body, but the soothed soul sheds its light over the whole characteristics of the tribe, which becomes more generous, more kindly, better.

Those who have never suffered, those who have never known want, can scarcely understand the kind of passionate delight which overspread Henry's heart and frame as he gazed at his bright and blazing pile.

A certain amount of food and shelter was now imperiously called for. Henry was famished.

For both these requisites he looked to the bear — to its flesh and its skin.

Taking out his sharp knife, Henry began to attack the animal in as scientific a way as possible. He first opened the skin from head to tail, a task of less difficulty than he expected, he having lit his fire sufficiently near the animal for its gradually increasing heat to soften the hide and unfreeze its members. As soon as this operation had been successfully carried out to a certain extent, he cut out a large lump of flesh, which he then sliced into thinner portions, some of which he fastened on his ramrod and placed before the fire.

This was a mode of cooking already familiar to him during some of his land expeditions, when he had first visited America.

He then continued his labor with the more ardor that he was very weary. Already had the time come when there is really no night; but still nature exerted her imperious power, and he only succeeded in completely skinning the animal at a moment when he was sinking from utter exhaustion.

Glad indeed was he of a morsel of roasted bear's meat, when his hard work was over, and equally glad was he of a good draught of snow-water slightly diluted with rum, his flask of which he determined to preserve as a cordial in case of accident or illness.

It was, indeed, a wild and singular scene, away up in that frozen sea, where, probably, a fire had never been lit before, to see that lone and solitary youth seated beside that blazing pile, his gun close to his hand, the carcass of a huge bear close by, and the sea moaning dismally at his feet. A cold wind swept overhead and fanned the flames, which cast every thing more than ten yards distant into comparative darkness; a low hush seemed to be sighed forth by inanimate nature; and the world, abandoned by all, was, to all appearance, left the inheritance of this the last man. But Henry hoped still; and the fond hope of being reunited to his fellows still sustained him.

Having supped heartily, and gained confidence once more by an earnest appeal to his Creator, Henry piled on wood and coal, and then entered within his shelter.

Thick and freshly torn from the body of the animal, it was a coverlet by no means to be despised, and was so large that Henry lay within it quite at his ease.

He had, indeed, so arranged the bear-skin, that he was able to get quite within it, and by presenting the open side to the fire, to have a prospect of being tolerably warm. He clutched a pistol with one hand, and then closing the aperture round him, was wholly concealed within his novel and extraordinary shelter — one, however, frequently made use of by hunters in icy regions.

And thus he prepared to pass his first night on an island somewhere about the 78th degree of latitude, in the middle of a sea which beat against the shores with a dull roar of waves and icebergs.

Above, the sky was clear, and a faint Aurora Borealis could be distinguished, but not of equal beauty with those seen during the intenser frosts, when the air appears to be more rarefied, and better prepared for optical illusions and effects. The stars looked singularly bright; and altogether, for one cast thus suddenly on his own resources, it was an encouraging and pleasing sight for the regions in which it manifested itself. The sun, too, was perpetually visible, though yet for a few days it gave but little light.

Henry, wearied and exhausted as he was, felt no inclination to sleep. The novelty of his situation, the dim hopes of being saved, the dread of wild beasts, the prospect of being forever left to battle with the elements on that bleak shore, the apparent impossibility of passing a winter there, were all ideas that banished slumber completely.

It was, we have said, a beautiful night, and gradually Henry, despite his unquiet thoughts, became soothed by the solemn stillness of that place, where man, doubtless, had never before trod, and where human voice had never been heard. The alternate moaning and roaring of the sea, the cracking of the flames, the hissing of the damp wood, the sputtering of gas escaping in sudden bursts, were the only sounds which greeted his ear, and they were so monotonous, that Henry's eyes grew gradually heavy, and at last he fell off into a sound and refreshing sleep, without dreams or sensation of any kind.

"What want you?" suddenly exclaimed Henry, fancying himself in the cabin of the *Fair Fanny*, and that some one was pulling him to wake him.

He was awake, but recollection came slowly, and then he felt something tugging furiously at one of the paws of the bear. He at once guessed it to be a fox, and with a tremendous roar thrust his arm out and fired. A yell, a long and repeated howl, and the scampering of many feet on the pebbly shore, proclaimed his victory. The foxes, whose presence had been attracted by the smell of the flesh of the bear, escaped with singular rapidity.

Having found his other pistol, and even loaded the one he had discharged, Henry waited a renewal of the attack;

but the animals seemed sufficiently alarmed with one experiment. No doubt the human voice was even more terrible to them than the firearms, for they made no further attack.

Henry arose for a moment to replenish his fire, and endeavored as much as possible to raise a high blaze, which might thus be seen at a great distance. The wind had increased, and the waves broke with additional fury against the edge of the bay. Up rose the flames of the wood and coal on high, making a flare which could be seen, doubtless, a long way off.

With this conviction, Henry ran up and down for some time, building up his fire, adding fuel, and then listening for some welcome response to his signal. He had at last placed on the pile a large log of very resinous wood, which, when once warmed through, gave forth flames which must have been visible from a very great distance.

Great was the surprise and joy of our hero, when, ten minutes later, he heard distinctly the well-known sound of the only piece of artillery possessed by the brig, booming in the distance.

Once — twice — thrice.

Henry clasped his hands in an agony of wild emotion, which the criminal respited on the scaffold could only, perhaps, understand and appreciate.

At intervals of five or six minutes it was heard for nearly half an hour, during which time Henry wholly exhausted his supply of fuel. He tried to be calm, but his excitement was beyond all bounds and control. He cut huge pieces of fat from the carcass of the bear, and cast them on the top of the pile to increase the blaze, and then, the firing having ceased, again lay down with hope, and yet with fear, to await the hour which was to decide his fate.

Never, during the subsequent life of our hero — never, during his long and wearisome watches — did he feel more his dependence on One more mighty than himself, on One who, having saved him thus far, could wholly release him from captivity. Tumultuous as were his thoughts, he endeavored to be patient and submissive, and he earnestly

hoped to be able to meet with humility even the terrible alternative of becoming, for the rest of his life, a dweller in that inhospitable place.

He was young; the world was dear and sweet, as it is always to the good and hopeful; and it militates not against the sincerity of his faith, and the earnest devotion of his heart, when we confess, that he could not reconcile his soul to the prospect of a lingering struggle on that stony strand, with an unmarked grave for his final resting place.

No. Sweet hopes came bursting on his beating heart, lovely pictures of home, of the domestic hearth, of her who was to be the companion of his earthly fortunes, and the sharer of his heavenly hopes.

And he was suddenly awakened by the low, hushed call of a familiar voice. The whole scene had changed as if by magic; the verdure of spring lay on the whole earth; trees with rich and golden fruits were scattered around, flowers of such glorious hues as are seen only in the far East, pretty fawns and gentle gazelles played around, and, above all, a little way off, sportively asking him to follow, was a face, half spirit, half real, but so enveloped in vapor and light that his eyes were dazzled, and yet it was — he knew her well — it was his Fanny.

"Come, come!" said the silvery voice he knew so well. "Come, come to my home in yonder cave, where the cold is not, where joy forever dwells; come, come, my own, to our own sweet home; come, come, come!"

And as the musical tones sank to his very heart, Henry wept; for even in his sleep he knew it must be a dream, O beautiful, far too beautiful! and so he awoke himself by an effort to wipe away the scalding tears, and shake off visions so delusive.

CHAPTER VII.

EXAMINATION OF THE ISLAND.

When he finally awoke, it blew half a gale of wind, the sky was obscured by gray and heavy clouds, a fog concealed all objects at a distance of half a mile, and Henry's heart sank within him. A small portion of the meat cooked the night before remained unconsumed, and on this he breakfasted; and then, while waiting for the wind to cease and the mist to clear up, he collected as much wood as his strength would allow him to drag together. The sledge had accompanied him on his singular raft, and to this he harnessed himself, and was able to draw considerable burdens. The result of his labor he piled near the smouldering fire, which he took care to replenish sufficiently to keep it alive.

About an hour after he rose this labor was concluded, and by this time the wind had again fallen, and the fog was clearing away.

No ship was any where in sight.

The pang which came to the heart of the young man no pen could describe, no thought conceive. Alone, lost, abandoned, now he felt himself to be. The gale, the ice, the mist, had deceived his friends, and the hope he had lived upon during the livelong hours of rest was but a lure which had led him on to delusive prospects, now utterly annihilated.

What should he do?

A gun was at his feet, loaded, ready. His brain whirled, his lips were compressed, a feeling of hate, of rage against the world, of defiance against Him to whom he owed his being, burst like an evil tempest on his heart, and he viewed with savage delight the prospect of quitting this life, and the horrid place where he was condemned to pass it, by suicide.

He gazed around with eyeballs starting from his head —

he viewed the cheerless sea, the arid and unpromising land, the lowering but breaking sky — he vaguely reflected on the wretched struggle for existence which he should have to sustain there, and then one glance on memory's page, one bright and glorious picture, flashed across his mind, and he wept bitterly.

The scene on Calvary's hill had beamed like a reproach on his soul, and he bitterly and earnestly repented his thought of deserting his post.

"God's will be done!" he cried aloud; "whatever happens, I will do my duty, and defend my life to the last gasp of breath."

This was the only and the last occasion upon which the thought of suicide ever occurred to his mind. It was a mere wild and hasty thought, generated in an instant of madness, when alone a Christian can ever find relief in such a thought. Of course, to those who look on death as the end of all, — and fortunately those who sincerely indulge in this debasing view of man are few, — this abandonment of life may present some feeble promise of relief. But morbid and diseased natures only brood on such an idea, just as the morbid frame craves for unnatural food, and the wearied soul for frenzied excitement.

A home was the first thing absolutely necessary in a climate like that of Desolation Island, as Henry had in his first impulse called the place. This, however, was a matter so serious, and involving so many considerations of health and safety, that Henry did not like to decide upon a locality without a careful examination of the whole island, which might present some more promising and protected spot than that which he now occupied.

Having come to this resolution, Henry cooked several more pieces of bear's meat, which he placed within his game-bag, and then, armed to the teeth, started, — the memory of Robinson Crusoe fresh upon his mind, half melancholy, half pleasant, as he studied in his thoughts to imitate successfully the forethought and industry of that solitary man, whose history he had studied so earnestly in his youth.

All that was good of the bear he placed beneath the animal's own skin, piled some heavy stones upon it, and started on his journey.

The place where he had located was near the centre of a bay or cove, not more than fifty feet wide at the mouth, and not more than a hundred across any where. It was filled with sand banks, and at low water appeared so shallow that any one might with safety have waded across. Henry felt satisfied, on a cursory examination, that, if he could but contrive nets, he might from this bay derive a considerable amount of useful food in the shape of fish.

This was the more desirable, that he was determined to save his powder and ball for purposes of defence, and to use none of it merely to procure game. His mind was already busily at work, contriving, reflecting, and examining into the possibility of substituting for the weapons he had, some others which might prove more permanently useful.

As he thought, his mind only grasped the prospect of enduring through the summer on that island. A winter residence, alone on that bleak place, abandoned by the animal creation itself during at least nine months of the year, was something he did not contemplate as possible; and yet, in his present mood of mind, he felt that for this even he must prepare.

He skirted the bay with the intention of advancing round the island along the shore. This he did, along a soil which he found to be less barren than he expected. The rapid vegetation of the north was already visible in its effects; the grass was two or three inches long; a head of saxifrage was in full bloom; and in one place our hero found a large bed of sorrel — a discovery of considerable interest, as involving a serious question of health. It was now clear to him that he would not be wholly confined to animal food, and could procure materials for a kind of salad in great abundance. This was a little fact which materially assisted to promote peace of mind and hopefulness.

And this was no small thing. On his being prepared to fight the battle of life with courage and confidence depended every thing. This is true every where. Few men in this world but could contend effectually with the difficulties in their path, if they faced them boldly, and knew the value of a little self-sacrifice. But in the position of our unfortunate hero all depended on himself — nothing on others.

Advancing about half a mile farther, Henry was stopped by the clear and limpid waters of a stream, which flowed between banks presenting, in their budding verdure, quite an agreeable aspect. It was but a thin grass, interspersed with lichen and moss; but in that place the sight was cheering and animating in the extreme.

As the water was cold and somewhat deep, Henry determined to search for a place more likely to serve the purpose of a ford than that now before him. He accordingly followed the bank towards the hills, which on this side presented one or two peaks. After advancing about a quarter of a mile, he began to ascend, the stream being now deeper, narrower, and with more precipitous banks. As here it presented insuperable difficulties, he pursued his way, until he came to the entrance of a narrow gully between two hills.

It was a pretty view. The waters of the little stream, confined in narrow limits, had worn a channel in the solid rock, and fell through an aperture which presented the appearance of a natural bridge, into a basin about twenty feet below, when, after boiling and seething, it went away over stones and gravel, until presently it formed a still and quiet stream at a distance of a hundred yards.

The face of the hill was jagged and almost precipitous, but Henry determined to climb it; and, on reaching the summit, which he did after a pretty hard scramble, found that he was in a small valley of very picturesque appearance.

It was about two hundred yards in length and nearly as many wide, a limpid, placid lake forming the centre, the overplus of which formed the little torrent the bed of which he had followed. A few stunted bushes, and the vegetation already described, gave a verdant aspect to the scene, while Henry's heart bounded with pleasure, as on the opposite slope he saw several deer cropping the short and newly unfrozen grass. He was sufficiently near to have shot one of them if he had thought proper; but he made no attempt to do so, both because he wished to save his powder, and not to startle animals which he hoped to capture in a more easy and satisfactory manner.

"This is the place for a home," he mentally ejaculated, as his mind turned to the cave and hut of Robinson Crusoe. "And yet — no — the shore — the shore for summer. My fire may attract attention — this island is, probably, visited by whalers — I must not give up all hope of relief."

With these reflections he crossed the valley, having determined in his own mind to erect, after some fashion, a hut on the shore, and should fortune force him to attempt a winter in that place, to seek at all events to form a winter habitaion in the valley.

When he had reached the highest portion of this side of the little chain of hills, he found that the soil of the island presented the appearance to the eye of meadows with scanty vegetation, and of marshes which probably would shortly be visited by the numerous wild fowls of that region. Already he had startled several coveys of auks, which, however, he did not attempt to shoot, having already begun to plan in his mind the way of making use of these without wasting powder and shot, to him so valuable.

As travelling, to one who had so long been cooped up on board ship, was very fatiguing, it now became necessary for him to return to his camp, and there to prepare for the night. He had already laid out the plan of a kind of hut in his mind, which would serve the purposes of sleeping and keeping him safe from wild beasts for a few days; and he was anxious to carry it out. His return to the place whence he had started was much more rapid than he could have expected; but he was already beginning to have a small geographical knowledge of his territory, of which he readily availed himself.

His fire was not yet out, and speedily flamed up again on receiving the addition of a few coals which he had brought with him from the foot of the hill in his game-pouch.

He then, after some refreshment, proceeded to carry his design with regard to a hut into execution.

Close to where he had slept was a pile of stones, very similar in shape and in size, and which, from some freak of nature, had assumed something of a pyramidal form. It was by means of these, some wood and earth, and the bear's

skin, that Henry contemplated a temporary summer hut, which, perhaps, might serve him as long as he was condemned to seclusion in that place; and which, at all events, would give him time to erect a more convenient and permanent place of shelter.

His intention was to pile up four low walls, just to support a roof, under which he could crawl at night for the purpose of sleep, reserving to himself the privilege of erecting a hut in which he could sit upright, to the time when he should be able to fabricate some torch or candle, by which he could do any work which in his forlorn condition might be necessary.

He moved a stone from the pile, and was about to carry it away, when he noticed that he had, by taking away this covering, displayed a hole, the depth of which he could not very well penetrate. He started, while a faint glimmering of the truth flashed across him, and then removed another.

Artistically and carefully laid on, these stones, he at once saw, were placed there by man's hand; and a little reflection conveyed to his mind the fact, that he had discovered an underground Esquimaux hut, thus carefully covered up by its builder, in the hope of finding it again after many days.

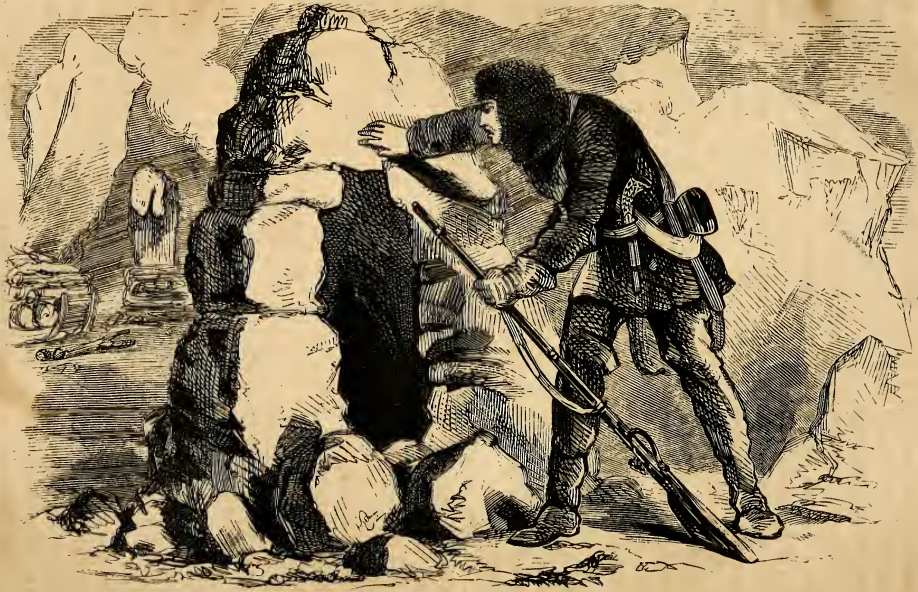
Henry remained stunned by his emotions. Not only was shelter thus beneficently afforded him, but, in all probability, the Indian hunters were in the habit of visiting that island; and if so, there was a bright and hopeful chance of escape in this fact.

"My God," he cried, "I thank thee!"

Then feeling his way with his gun, which he next discharged into the hollow, and finding it sound and firm, he leaped in, and by the dim light afforded by the hole, proceeded to examine the place.

It was about five feet high, by seven long and five broad. It was roofed with thick whalebones, on which flat stones, like slates, had been placed, so as completely to keep out the wet and snow. The ground was beaten hard, and the whole was dry and tolerably warm.

Several articles of use lay about — such as an earthen jar, narrow at the bottom and broad at the top, a spear head,



HENRY DISCOVERING THE ESQUIMAUX HUT. Page 74

a few bone hooks, a small bow, two arrows, a knife made out of a walrus tusk; all of which Henry looked upon as so many providential discoveries, for which he was deeply and earnestly grateful.

Having clambered up out of the hut, Henry determined to make of this place his temporary residence, as it would save him an immense amount of labor, and give him, during the milder season of the year, a shelter that would allow him time to prepare for his battle with the winter months.

He determined to remove every thing he had into this place, and his first thought then was how to obtain his daily food, while he examined more fully into the capabilities of his island, and studied the resources which might be available in his desolate and forlorn condition of existence.

The means of existence were few. The island appeared to be frequented by wild fowl, deer, hares, and partridges; but with six or eight charges of gunpowder only left, it became a difficult question to decide how these were to be captured.

There were, doubtless, fish in the bay; and to the discovery of this circumstance he at once determined next day to lend his whole faculties.

The Esquimaux hut had on one side a bench, about two feet wide, which had evidently served the purpose of a bed, and probably of a seat. This Henry also selected for the same purpose, and felt that, could he but find the means of making a lamp, and could he but have had the good fortune to have had his chest, even there his evenings might have been genial and pleasant.

At first he longed for books — for the intense and ever-recurring luxury of turning over the pages of history and travel; and then, situated as he was, he restricted his wishes and desires to one single book — the only book which could be of urgent use to one who felt himself within the valley of the shadow of death — a book which, to those in danger and tribulation, has afforded more luxurious enjoyment than the thoughtless ever derived from the most entrancing poem, the most breathless romance.

But books were forever a lost luxury to the recluse.

As he lay, then, on his bed that night, he thought deeply

and anxiously of some means by which he could supply this want; and then it was that an inspiration seemed to burst upon him, which determined him on a line of conduct at once. And now it was that he felt the advantage of early reading, of having stored his mind with rich treasures, which now became inestimable.

He determined to develop his plan more fully, if he should be fortunate enough to face the winter.

It was this: —

As soon as the labors of the day were over, he kneeled down and returned thanks for the past hours, and asked a renewal of that protection he so keenly felt the need of. Then he carried his mind back to his studies, and selecting a subject, strove to recollect its every part, and to bring his thoughts into shape on the point, until he seemed absolutely conferring with another on the subject. Sometimes he would, he thought, fasten on Captain Cook, and follow him, step by step, round the world, recollect his adventures, and apply his experiences, as much as possible, advantageously to himself. Then he determined to turn his mind to some mechanical science, and diving into the recesses of his brain, search for something useful.

He looked forward to the time when he should be restored to society, and he could not bear to think that he should be transformed into an illiterate boor. It would have been curious to have watched his mind, laying out plans of study in history, philosophy, and the arts; dividing his time into series, and planning an evening with the apostles, with the Romans, with the French.

Such were the plans he indulged in, as, close to his beacon-fire, he devised of his existence and the future.

It was a glorious evening now. The sun, moon, and stars were shining brightly in the heavens; the wind blew warmly and gently over the land, and the waves broke with less than their usual roar on the strand.

Suddenly Henry started. A strange noise was distinctly heard in the bay. He hurried to his feet, his gun in his hand, and hastened to the edge of the water.

It was a strange compound of puffing and snorting; such a sound as, had he been in Egypt, would have proclaimed

to him the presence of a hippopotamus; but which, from his knowledge of the polar seas, he knew to be caused by the entrance of a shoal of walruses into the bay.

This again was encouraging and cheering; and he began at once to turn over in his head the uses to which they might be put when he could master some of them.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SULPHUR POOL.

Henry was well aware that, cast away as he was on that desolate and all but barren piece of land, his life depended on his patience and industry. All he had learned in his boyhood, all he had studied, he now assiduously sought to remember, that the place on which he had fallen might afford him as many resources as possible. His means were circumscribed. Fish and game, both feathered and other, appeared common enough, but the difficulty was to capture and preserve them. He did not fear much for the subsistence of the immediate hour; but if he really was to be condemned to a winter in that wild region, he had many things to provide before the inclement season came on.

A home, in which to pass the long and dreary eight or nine months of winter, must be found — the Esquimaux hut, which would then be buried in snow, being quite useless at that period of the year.

A storehouse also was needed, where he might collect fuel, food, and water; and this being for nine months, would necessarily be no inconsiderable quantity.

Food, despite the peculiarity of the climate, must, to be kept until the winter, be salted or dried, and carefully concealed in some place away from the animals which already had attacked himself, and which would certainly make havoc of no common character with his stores, if they were not protected effectually.

It became matter of extreme and vital importance for him to decide upon the place where he could erect or choose his residence for the cold season. At first he thought of the valley, sheltered as it was, and likely to be warmer than most other parts of the island; but then it became a very serious consideration as to how food and fuel were to be collected on the shore and taken up to this glen, which was by no means of very easy access.

He determined, therefore, to spend a day in searching for some fitting locality, before he took any steps towards collecting any large stock of food.

Then came the very important consideration of the means by which he was to hunt and fish.

He therefore determined to make the proposed journey, and while so doing, to reflect upon every contrivance by which he could make up for the want of gunpowder, nets, hooks, and lines.

Having no ship to fall back upon, like Robinson Crusoe, he was cast utterly on his own resources. Every thing that his famed predecessor had found to his hand, he had to fabricate, and this with an extraordinary deficiency of tools. Fortunately he had a knife, a small axe, and a ramrod — articles which he foresaw would be of great and permanent use to him, and which he felt to be of such inestimable value, that his heart was filled with gratitude at the reflection which came over him, as to what he should have done without them.

His thoughts necessarily were much directed towards the ultimate chance of escape, without which, of course, his position would have been at once insupportable. All kinds of ideas and of plans suggested themselves; but all were vague, uncertain, and abandoned as soon as conceived. He thought that, had he but a bottle, he might launch it into the current, which evidently set to the south at the westerly end of the island, and thus, perhaps, make known his position; but this thought, as vain and idle, he speedily abandoned.

Then came the thought of a boat; and so much was he struck by this fancy, that he was very near abandoning all else to labor with the wood he had found to make something that would carry him to the main land. But with such

rough pieces of wood — branches, with a few, and but very few, half-rotten planks, the remnants of some unfortunate wreck — he saw at once that he should be undertaking a task quite beyond his strength and capabilities. The conception was therefore at once abandoned, or put off, at all events, to better times, when he should be more fully prepared for the work.

He determined, however, to take one step towards indicating his position, suggested wholly by a small fir tree which had been washed away probably from some distant island, and which, after wandering in the water for many days, had found its way into the small cove near which he had pitched his tent. This tree he with some labor managed to stand on end, by digging in the ground with his axe, and then piling a few stones round the bottom. He first, however, cut off the bear's head, and placed it on the summit of the pole, thus quite sure that any whaling vessel which came very near would be attracted by this novel signal-post.

Having executed this task with all the energy which the object he had in view infused into his mind, Henry allowed himself to give his attention to the present, putting his trust for the future in Providence.

As an immediate resource, Henry then cut off and dried in the smoke of his fire all the best parts of the bear's flesh, which, when once in a fit state of preservation, he concealed within his subterranean hut, carefully placing the stones over the aperture by which he descended and ascended. He then melted in the earthen jar he had found in the Esquimaux hut a quantity of fat, the manifold uses of which he at once foresaw, particularly for a lamp, which he hoped to be able to manufacture for the long winter months, during which, indeed, he hoped to create many things for his use, and even for his enjoyment, if enjoyment could be conceived in so desolate a place. And yet, with a well-constituted mind, there is no position in which fortune can place a man, which has not its pleasures and its joys, while time will habituate us even to any existence. How many have lived their whole lives in prison cells, sustained by conscious rectitude against wrong, and have speedily created happiness for themselves, even under these adverse circumstances!

Henry Maynard was, perhaps, happier, or ought to have been, on his desert island, than Bonnivard in his cell of Chillon, the Iron Mask in the Bastile, or any other of the myriad victims of despotism and bigotry.

Henry, in fact, soon began to think and act as if he had made up his mind to pass the rest of his life on that desolate island. He felt that it was the wisest course to pursue, and therefore tried in every way to prepare himself for the worst.

But he always thus cheated his own soul, which was buoyant with the hope of escape, of which he thought at intervals, day and night.

And yet he planned a winter residence, he laid out his time for that long and dreary season, and he thought deeply as to all those things which were necessary for his permanent establishment.

Drying the bear's meat, melting some fat, and softening the great skin of his old enemy with some of the grease, caused the hours to pass away ere he was aware of it. His journey was therefore necessarily put off until he had taken some rest. Still he did not cease his labor, but occupied himself in searching for drift-wood upon a part of the shore which was now quite free from ice, and where pieces of various size were easily picked up by him.

His good fortune in this particular was great, as he subsequently found that there was no wood on any other part of the shore, no current pouring in, and bringing the drift-timber with it. A supply of wood on an island which produced nothing but a few stunted bushes, was an event upon which Henry dwelt with no ordinary feelings of thankfulness.

He was weary, indeed, when he started with his sledge to fetch a few knobs of his heavy and stony coal — a coal which, from long exposure to the atmosphere, and mixed with lava, gave very little result for its weight. But Henry knew too well the value of labor, in the short time allowed him, to hesitate at any amount of possible work.

A second time, then, he made up his fire, and having supped, retired within his cave, where first he conveyed a few hot embers to warm it. He had also taken the pre-

caution to spread the bear-skin over the top, except where a small orifice was left for breathing; and then, wearied and sore, he lay down again and slept for many hours without interruption.

He awoke much refreshed, and at once sallied forth into the open air. The hour of sleep he felt was passed, and the labors of the day were at once commenced. Despite his fatigue, he had felt the inconvenience of sleeping on the bare ground, and had determined as far as possible to prepare the bear's skin as a mattress, or rather as a wrapper, in which he could lie with some approach to comfort.

He was not very learned in preparing skins, but he carefully scraped the inside, and over the entire surface spread a thick coat of grease; and having thus softened the whole, succeeded to his great satisfaction in folding it into a parcel, which for safety he then lowered into his hut.

This occupied him until breakfast time, when he armed himself and prepared for his promised excursion. One object of his walk was to procure a supply of sorrel, as he felt considerable uneasiness at living wholly on animal food, which he rightly judged to be dangerous to his constitution and general health. He knew well that the plant alluded to was a strong antiscorbutic, and therefore extremely valuable to him in the position in which he was.

This plant, he was aware, was found in most arctic regions, and, in fact, he had already remarked its presence on the island, with that of a few grasses, the uses of which, apart from their value as edible vegetables, he was already turning over in his mind. Wonderful, indeed, are the lessons of adversity and necessity, teaching man to estimate every little thing which can minister to his health and comfort.

It is only those who have felt both hunger and thirst who can know the blessing of a little bread and water.

Our hero began already to set a value, even a disproportionate one, on every object which fell in his way.

Henry's hope was, by taking a medium course between his first track up hill and that which had led him to the Reindeer Valley, as he mentally designated it, to find some position where he might erect his winter hut — a task he felt to be

one of extreme difficulty in a land where, during nine months, he risked being blocked up in the snow, without any hope of release or escape.

A sheltered spot, protecting him from the bleak north wind, which, driving along the clouds and rain, is so deadly in these regions, with some extraneous aid to protect him from the drifts and the accumulated snow, was what he wanted. Already his mind was busily engaged as to the best way of using the cave, which he felt it probable he should find in a hill of volcanic formation. His old lessons with poor Stop rushed involuntarily to his mind, and forced the ready tear to his eye, while the thoughts of others dearer still came flocking to his heart, almost unmanning him.

"Let me not think of them!" he cried aloud, "or I am lost. On! on! to the search. Action alone can quiet my yearning heart."

It was then about an hour after rising, that, armed in his usual way, he began his reconnoitring expedition. The island which had afforded him such welcome shelter was not large, and he felt that he should be soon able to fathom all its capabilities and resources. This added to his uneasiness, as he could not very well foresee what would be the nature of the local dispositions, on which so much of his comfort and safety depended.

Space for moving about, for stowing away his necessary stores, with protection against the attacks of ravenous animals, was indispensable; and it was in reality, therefore, with very little hope of any favorable result, that he commenced his journey. All snow had now disappeared from the island, while the sea itself showed very few remains of the icy winter amid which himself and his companions had lived so long. The grass grew almost visibly, several tiny flowers began to show themselves, and after walking only a few hundred yards, Henry came to a small field of wild sorrel, which he began at once to pick, and fill therewith his game-bag.

A few leaves which he placed in his mouth proved, as he expected, extremely refreshing; and he rose to his feet much inspirited, and even — so forcible is imagination —

much invigorated. But as he stood upright, he felt inclined to run back to his hut, or to disappear from the face of the earth, so intense was his terror and alarm at the sight which met his startled eyes.

At a distance of not more than fifty yards, between him and the mountain, was a great she-bear, rolling about on the ground in maternal joy, as she played with two young cubs, her pride and delight. The little ones looked as if they had been themselves rolling her over — a compliment she freely returned, as the young ones were sent sprawling to some distance from her rather rough gambols. They were not more than one month old, full of fun and frolic; and yet all the more dangerous from this circumstance, being, as they were, in company with their mother.

Suddenly they ceased playing, rushed alongside the great she-bear, and snuffed the air.

They had discovered the presence of Henry.

He began slowly to retreat, though fully aware that, unless he could destroy mother and cubs, his residence on the island would be a scene of continual misery and wretchedness. His gun was loaded with ball, and he held the weapon ready for the emergency which he expected.

The great she-bear came on growling after him, until she reached to about fifty paces in front of her cubs. Then she stood still, and began swinging her head about from side to side after a most singular fashion. It was a slow, methodical swinging, as if she had been beating time or keeping pace with a pendulum. While this was going on, the cubs, now quite timid and cautious, came up to where their mother stood, who then again advanced upon the enemy.

Henry did not run. He knew too well the danger of this course of proceeding. He retreated, facing his foes, taking care, however, to lead them away from his dwelling.

The bears steadily followed, acting precisely in the same way all the while — the mother advancing and swinging her long head from side to side, and then her whole body, the cubs creeping cautiously after her until they were very near, the same scene being then renewed.

When this had lasted about twenty minutes, Henry found himself, after following for a little while the course of a

small rivulet, paddling in a pond of water, which, to his utter amazement, was warm, and from which a strong odor and steam arose. Henry was surprised, indeed, but he left the examination of this phenomenon to a later period.

He already, from the strong smell of sulphur which arose around him, began to guess at the nature of the spring which he had fallen upon; but just then his object was to devise some means of escaping from the steady and patient pursuit of his three terrible enemies.

The she-bear was standing still, swinging her head, at this moment, so that our young hero was able to look around him.

He took the whole position in at a glance.

He was thirty yards distant from a steep rock on the side of the hill, which it was probable the young cubs might find some difficulty in climbing. From the side of this rock came rippling a little stream of water, that fed the sulphurous pool in which Henry was standing. It was a regular and rocky basin, while the water was limpid and clear in the extreme. Not a weed, not a plant of any kind, was growing in the pond, or on the edge, which testified to the strong mineral character of the hot water, which Henry already mentally called his warm bath.

He had no time, however, for a very careful examination of the scene. He heard a savage growl and two low whines near at hand, which made him painfully aware of the true state of things.

The she-bear, as if afraid of losing her prey, was coming on with greater rapidity, and in a few minutes was on the very edge of the pool, where she stood with her cubs, evidently much puzzled at the sudden disappearance of Henry, who was nowhere to be seen.

This is what had happened.

Hurrying rapidly across the pool, which grew somewhat warmer as he advanced, he found himself at the foot of the rock, and fronting a narrow fissure about five feet in height, and one and a half wide, through which, in a long and narrow channel, not more than six inches wide, came pouring forth the sulphurous stream.

A deep hollow space was clearly visible within, from the light which fell from its roof.

And yet it was truly amazing — I began to be utterly bewildered. Was I on some enchanted isle, surrounded by phantasms and visions, or was I taking leave of my senses? No! There was the foot, there the mark of the stick the man might have leaned upon; but — O, was it not the track of an old man with a wooden leg, and of an old man whose walk was familiar to me?

I was sure of it — it must be he; and yet, how had he come there? How had he accompanied these men? And then he, too, must have gone away, convinced that all was over, that I was irrevocably lost, and my friends would say prayers to Heaven for me, and give up all hope.

Why had I left the island? As I write I feel over again all the confusion, the wild distraction that came over me then. I was certain, in the deep recesses of my heart, that that was a familiar foot, belonging to a familiar face. But what was the use of dreaming? — so, heaving a deep sigh, I advanced on my way.

Amazing! on a stone, his back a little turned from me, tying his sandal string or something, clothed in skins, with a strange tall hat, a perfect pile of clothes, is seated — a man! Yes! — be still, my beating heart — it is a man, a fellow-creature — wild or civilized, gentle or savage, it is a man. Once more I gaze on my kind; once more I appear likely to have call for speech. I know not what to do. I advance, I stumble over a stone.

He rises with a disjointed jerk, he starts, *cocks a gun*, and points it. I hold up my hands without firearms, having dropped my gun in my terrible excitement.

"What cheer, messmate? Speak up — who are you? Where do you hail from?" cries the other in plain English.

Yes! There he is, with a wooden leg, and the old voice — there is no doubt about it. I made a rush towards him, and sunk fainting on the ground.

"Stop! Stop!" whispered I in a low tone, as I recovered my senses, speaking without opening my eyes, as if I feared to chase away the dream, "is it you?"

"Yes, my master, it's Stop," blubbered he; "but what in the name of fate has sent you playing at Crusoe up in these horrid regions?"

"And what," said I, wildly, "what has sent you here after me?"

"Well, I can't say, Master Henry; but here I is, and here I means to stay, if so be as we can't get off. But get up, and be of good cheer. It's a jolly kind of place, too; that 'ere cave is first rate. But do tell me how you came here?"

I could not answer yet. To hear him speak was too delicious, and then I scarcely could believe it yet. It could not be — it was impossible. I felt it. A human voice on Desolation Island, and that voice the voice of a friend, was something too wild to credit, even though I heard it.

"Speak, Stop! speak! let me hear your voice — I have not heard even my own for weeks."

"Poor Master Henry!" — he muttered, dashing away the falling tears.

"So it is you, Stop?" I asked, almost timidly.

"Myself, and no mistake. At my post. Man Friday, and ready to do duty."

"Merciful God, I thank thee for all thy great goodness, and for this above all."

"Get up, sir," said Stop, affectionately, "and tell me all about it. I *can't* see yet how you came here at all. It beats me all up. I'm brought up by the run, run aground, on my beam ends, altogether lost."

I did get up, and picking up my gun, walked slowly back towards the Esquimaux hut, my heart too full for speech, never wearied of gazing at my comrade, who had met me thus on that lone and deserted strand, at a moment when I thought myself abandoned by all the world. All my hopes of escape, all my views for the future, the very dream of home, was now renewed. Alone, I had been helpless. With a companion, I felt strong indeed.

"Sit down," said Stop, stirring up the fire, putting on some more fuel, and then seating himself on a stone at my feet. "Now tell me all about it."

I roused myself from my semi-stupor, and sitting up, looked at Stop curiously, still almost doubting his existence, fancying it must be a disturbed and wild dream from which I should suddenly awake and find him gone, and myself

I could not at first understand why he had run away from my neighborhood; but I soon discovered that he was about to use the little palisade which I had erected as a means of protection in the contest. He soon reached it, and hung his bag on the centre poles, which left a passage for himself. He then cocked his gun and waited.

The bear looked very undecided. Sometimes he walked on four legs, looking to the right and left, then onward, and growling; then he would sit upon his hind quarters and look around. This mode of proceeding the huge beast repeated several times. At last he approached to within a small distance of Stop, whom he now appeared to see, and gave a terrible growl.

"Fire!" roared I, much alarmed at the prospect of a near contest.

But I did not know Stop.

"Silence," cried he, in return, shaking his fist at me, and still looking at the bear. The animal was sitting up, looking round, it seemed, to find where my voice came from, or smelling, perhaps, the game which we had been cutting up, when Stop gave him one barrel.

The responsive howl of the bear was something terrible

half hour very cosily, although an occasional eddy of the wind would bring up to our ears the distant babble of the hounds in the valley, and the long, mellow wail of the driver's horn, both showing the game was on foot; yet neither of us rose, even; so entirely had we become cloyed of this sport! Soon the full chorus of hounds burst upon us, seemingly close at hand; still neither of us rose. Suddenly we heard a heavy crashing through the underbrush, and before we had time to think, an enormous black bear rushed past us. 'Hah! new game,' I exclaimed, as we both sprang to our feet and fired our rifles after the unwieldy brute. It was evidently hit, but kept on with undiminished speed across the ridge. The dogs, with bristles erect and savage yells, came pouring after, while we, thus unexpectedly aroused to the wildest excitement, shouted like madmen as we followed after on foot, loading our guns while we ran. We knew the bear was wounded, and would take to the first large tree it came to. The comb of the ridge was about a mile wide here, and the ground a general level. We heard the dogs baying furiously now. 'He's treed already!' chuckled Charlie. 'Let's approach cautiously.' We feared it might resort to its common trick when treed by the dogs; seeing the hunter's approach, it rolls itself up into a ball, and dropping to the ground, makes off again. We, however, managed to get fair shots, and brought it down. It was a very large animal of the species, and we wound a merry blast, both loud and long, in honor of our unexpected triumph."

— the beast then gave one bound at the palisade, and another fearful cry arose as Stop fired his second barrel, right in the bear's mouth it appeared to me. Round came the animal behind the stakes, which luckily were deeply embedded, so quickly that Stop could scarcely pass through the narrow aperture which I had left for that purpose. The bear tried to follow; in vain, however — the hole was too small.

Stop, just as his head passed through the aperture, gave him a blow with the axe, which he held in both hands, but at the same moment he fell.

I literally screamed with horror. But he was up in an instant, and thrusting his hand into the bag, cast a whole handful of the corrosive compound into the animal's face.

The yell of the wounded and blinded beast was terrible; he gnawed at the posts, and then, shaking himself violently, again rushed round the palisade, behind which Stop was doing his utmost to load his gun. I could not tell whether he succeeded or not, as the bear, guiding himself probably by the sense of smell, was on him again without a moment's delay.

The scene was terrific and horrible. Stop, with his wooden leg, hopped about with an agility and energy which really surprised me, cutting with his axe, throwing handfuls of sulphur, and whenever he had an opportunity, trying to load his gun. The bear tried every way to get at him, whisked round the barrier, climbed over it, made feints, roared, yelled, growled, and seemed actuated by madness.

At length Stop fired at him again. The bear, which he had actually touched through the barrier, gave a fearful roar, dashed at the palisade, and down it went, carrying my poor unfortunate friend Stop with it. Despite my agony, my helplessness, my utter inability to walk, I rose, and began crawling towards them, my gun on my back, my pistols in my belt. I never, despite my dreadful sufferings, took my eyes off the gallant old fellow, whose devotion to me seemed likely to bring him to an unexpected and dreadful death.

Stop clutched the bag as he fell, and in the other hand

held the axe. The bear came upon him; but receiving a handful of dust in his eyes, stood up, yelled, and began shaking himself in a furious rage, which boded ill for poor Stop. Had my generous friend not been crippled by having only one leg, he might now have easily escaped towards me, and have enabled me to take deliberate aim at the monster; but he was after the old sailor before he could more than steady himself on his legs, and Stop deliberately led him away from me. The bear was badly wounded, and growing weak from loss of blood, or the scene would soon have been over. As it was, Stop was able to face the savage and maddened animal, still throwing the corrosive powder into his mouth and eyes, whence it scattered over all his wounds, and still striking blows with his axe, which, however, seemed only to irritate and madden the huge brute. He tried still to leap, but his leaps were not powerful; and every now and then he rolled on the ground, as if to shut up his wounds, or get rid of the agony which, no doubt, he was suffering.

And still I crawled on, in the desperate hope of assisting my friend.

The struggle continued; Stop struck out still, but wearily; the bear seemed to take longer rests; when suddenly, more maddened, I suppose, than ever, he gave a roar which made me almost start to my feet, and dashed headlong at the old sailor. Stop raised his axe with both hands, and aimed a furious blow. It told; but as Stop gave it, he lost his equilibrium, and fell into the awful and horrible hug of the arctic monster!

I shrieked, and closed my eyes.

When I opened them, all was over. There they lay, both still — motionless — the bear on top, Stop under. There was a low and horrid moaning, and that was all; but that moaning came from the bear. How I crawled — how long I took to do so — to the horrible scene of this fearful and unequal combat, I never knew. My brain took no note of time; the shock was too dreadful — the change too sudden. I cared for nothing now. My friend, my companion, my solace, my hope — there he lay, helpless, mangled, beneath the huge and bleeding carcass of that

polar bear, which seemed to have reserved its visit for the time when I had gained the inexpressible delight of a companion and a friend.

"Stop! Stop! my dear Stop!" I cried, or rather sobbed.

"What cheer, my hearty?" said he, though very faintly. "Did him, though, big as he was. I'm just a little faint, but all right; he's rather heavy."

I could not reply; the revulsion of feeling was too much for me. I could not help him — no, not I. I was helpless as a child, and I gazed mechanically at him, as by degrees he disentangled himself from the weight of the bear, and pale, bloody, and torn, sat upright by my side.

"Are you really unhurt?" I asked, holding out my hand to him.

"No bones broken, thank God! He had me, though; but he was weak, and my knife was long and sharp; and there he is. Didn't he try to hug me, though? Never saw such a brute. I hope there's no more on your precious island. It's warm work, Master Henry."

I was in too much pain to reply; but I smiled at him as well as I could, and never felt happier in my life than when I saw him get up, go wash himself, and return, still pale and wearied, but whole in skin and bones, the blood being all that of the bear.

"Now, then, guverner, let's back to dinner; a little bit of something to eat will do us good. I do feel rather faint."

"But I cannot walk," said I, pointing to my ankle.

"There's the sledge," replied the old fellow, heartily.

And there it was, and he put me on it; and, though it cost him dearly, for he was hardly able to draw me, still he did it; and at last we came to the hut, where, when we had taken refreshment, we crawled in and lay down, both incapable of any more exertion that day.

It was six hours later when I awoke, and found myself alone.

"Stop!" I cried.

No answer.

I lay still, for I guessed his errand. In about half an hour he returned. As I expected, he had been catching the deer and putting them into the cave, where he gave

them a few handfuls of grass and some salt, and fastened them in.

He then brought some boiled sorrel and chiccory, which he gave me to eat, and bandaged my ankle, and then once more lay down beside me in the hut. He remained silent for some time; I thought he had gone to sleep, and did not disturb him.

"Guv'ner!" at last he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"Terrible day this," he said, as if musing; "oughtn't we to return thanks — eh? something of that sort of thing — eh?"

"I have, Stop, my dear friend — I have returned thanks heartily — but if you like I'll do so with you."

"But do you see," cried Stop, "I — I — never learnt no prayers."

"What!" exclaimed I; "it is not possible."

"No! I never did," said Stop — "I was nobody's boy. Never had no father — no mother — no friends — was just knocked about at Portsmouth — did jobs — errands — got in prison once for begging when I was starving — ran to sea — been about all my life — and had no time for them sort of things. But I'm getting old, Master Henry, and I feels I ought to know something about these things — eh?"

Here was a task, a glorious task before us — here was work for our winter evenings. I had not asked at home — it never struck me — about Tim's religious ideas. I knew he was very ignorant, but did not believe that he did not even know the Lord's Prayer.

"Shall I teach you a prayer?" said I.

"With all my heart, Master Henry," he replied; "I feels the want of it to-day."

And I taught him the simple and beautiful prayer which is best suited to the poor in knowledge and the meek in spirit, like Stop; and he learned it easily — that is, in two or three evenings he knew it perfectly, and would say it regularly every night. When his first lesson was over, we talked about religion generally; but I found that the good old man was almost beyond me here, having, in the course

of a very creditable life, picked up here and there, by bits and scraps, very clear and defined notions of his duties and hopes.

We talked for some time seriously, and then Stop ceased, and I left him to his thoughts.

"Guv'ner," said he, suddenly.

"What is it?" replied I, starting — I had almost dozed off into a sleep again.

"About them deer," he continued, in a thoughtful kind of muttering tone.

"Well."

"Don't they draw sledges sometimes?" he asked me, in rather an excited voice.

"Yes!" replied I quickly.

"Then we'll try that plan," said he. "I don't see why we shouldn't reach the main land in that way. We must feed 'em up and give 'em a little exercise — and practise ourselves driving — but it's to be done — yes, it's to be done — I know it is."

"I think so too," I answered; "and, Stop, it's the most brilliant idea we have had yet. It can be done. We must take care of them."

"That we will," said Stop; "we'll fatten 'em up, we'll give 'em exercise, and if we don't dine at home next Christmas twelvemonth, my name isn't Stop — that's all."

"I pray to Heaven that what you say may be right!" I replied fervently.

"Good night, Master Henry," he said, musing.

"Good night, Stop."

And with this brilliant idea, this bright ray of hope to cheer and support us, we turned round and sought refuge in sleep. It was some time ere I was able to wholly get over the excitement roused by the idea; but at last I did, and I did not awake until honest Stop called me to breakfast.

I rose and found my ankle much relieved by its long rest. I was even able to walk in the course of the day, and next morning resumed my duties with alacrity, as winter was now rapidly approaching, and the term of all out-door work was nearly over.

We fished, salted, smoked, cured; collected wood and

coal; emptied the Esquimaux huts of their contents; made hay after some fashion; indeed, we worked with ardor and zest up to the very last moment allowed us by the snow and frost, which soon began to manifest itself in a way that drove us wholly for shelter to our cave, which, however, was as yet but ill prepared for our reception.

We, however, went heartily to work to set our house in order.

CHAPTER XIV.

WINTER. — THE ESQUIMAUX.

THE long and dazzling day, which with little intermission had now lasted three months, — I find from habit I often used the words day and night, though night really did not exist, — was just over, and this warned us to be ready for the winter season, when we should have a night to counterbalance this long light, even more wearisome with its continual darkness than the unchanging brightness of the sun. We had, however, some little time to prepare for this, as the long night lasts from November to February, and it now wanted nearly six weeks of that time.

Snow began to fall, the sea began to lose its waving motion, and with extraordinary rapidity the winter came upon us. We were pretty well prepared for the severe season, both as to provisions, fuel, and lodging.

During the leisure hours which we could spare from hunting, fishing, and laying in coals and wood, we had prepared the cave for our reception. The fissure in the roof had been partly closed up, and the rest built over, so that the snow might not come in, and yet that the smoke might escape that way.

The birds soon began flying over our island from the north, but without stopping, as if they had been too far behindhand to have a minute to waste. It was painful to see those happy creatures flying away from this cold and

inhospitable region towards the pleasant south, where sun and food awaited them, while we were bound to burrow in a hole in the earth, uncertain as to the possibility of our passing through the rigors and difficulties of an arctic winter.

"Don't be down now, guv'ner," would Stop say; "it's nothing. Them birds is lucky, I know. But cheer up, captain; we ain't going to lay our bones here neither. We ain't no Robinson Crusoes, to stop thirty years in this blessed place. No. We'll start in the spring, that we will."

"I hope so, Stop; your courage and hope are equal to your devotion and generosity; and I should not murmur when I have been so inexpressibly blessed. But 'tis sad to feel that for so many months we shall be utterly shut up in that cave."

"Not shut up. I expect we'll have a run or two on the snow, and perhaps we'll have a bear-hunt to make us lively."

"I don't fancy you want any more bear hunting," said I, laughing.

"Don't I, though; let 'em come. With this place for a fort, I don't care for the biggest among 'em. We'd outflank him."

And let it not be supposed that, while we thus talked, we wasted our time. We were busily engaged in filling up our winter quarters all the while.

In our interior cave we had placed the deer, though we already began to fear that we should be unable to support them through the winter. We had laid in a very large stock of hay, considering the difficulties of the labor, and we had left the animals to shift for themselves until the last moment. But now they were driven into winter quarters like ourselves.

They were wonderfully tame in a very short time, and this made us very unwilling to put one of them to death, as we originally proposed.

"No, I can't do it, guv'ner," said Stop; "that brute looks at me so knowing — it does — as much as to say, 'Old fellow, you've took me, and you must keep me' — so we must let them live as long as we can."

"With all my heart," said I.

Our temperate and humane conduct in this particular was amply rewarded by the companionship they afterwards proved to us. We found in them a constant and everlasting amusement, simply because they were a change from the monotony of the life we were compelled to live. Other considerations, however, drove these thoughts from our minds for the present.

There were many things to be thought of, besides amusement, by two such hermits as we were, with such a prospect as we had before us.

It was quite possible that, when once the whole sea was frozen up, we might be visited by some of the prowling animal creation, whose scent would soon enable them to discover our retreat. This caused us, in the first place, to fortify our home.

We had so arranged our door, by enlarging the fissure at the top, that we had to ascend six feet by steps to get in and out. This was a matter of real necessity, as otherwise we should have been confined to our cell during the whole of the winter.

A strong door made of wood and thongs was so arranged that the more pressure there was from without, the more firmly it resisted. When the snow became very deep, we used ourselves to go forth every morning and clear it away a little, whenever it encroached too much on our premises.

We made the door low and narrow, both to keep out the cold and to make it more easy for defence.

We had paved the floor in the way suggested to my mind during my summer visit, and had made in one corner a most warm and comfortable bed of skins. Some of these also served to make a kind of curtain, which we hung before the door, to keep out the draught. Another use we put them to was a chimney. As we never made a great fire, we were able, after some experiments, to make a flue of skins, which carried away, at all events, a great part of the smoke.

In the morning early, as soon as we were really closed up within our cavern, we went out and collected some clean snow, which was the only means we had to procure water for drinking and cooking. We then melted a sufficient

quantity for the day's use, the water of the pool being too charged with mineral substance to be of use to us in any culinary way.

Then we breakfasted, and despite the utmost rigor of the weather, we scarcely ever failed to take a run over the snow. We never remained out long, the difference between the temperature of the cave and the open air being so very great as to make the effect too painful for long endurance.

We found it necessary, after a few days' experience, to erect a pole over our chimney, which kept the snow from blocking up the orifice. The smoke of our fire used to creep up this pole, though sometimes it was so nearly choked up as to force us to open our door.

The heat of the water in the sulphur pool undoubtedly made the cavern bearable. Without this assistance, we should assuredly have never lasted through the winter. Even as it was, we were compelled to be extremely economical with our fuel.

We had left a hole in the middle of the floor which covered the pool, which fitted a rude vessel found in the Esquimaux hut, and by this means did we melt the snow and do a part of our cooking, the water being exceedingly hot.

We divided the cave into two rooms — one for sleeping, one for a sitting room during the day — more to break the monotony of the scene than for any real advantage we derived from this laborious piece of work.

Our provisions, as well as the hay, wood, coal, &c., were kept in the back cave, in which, as in our own, having plenty of oil, we continually burned a lamp. We used frequently to go into the warehouse and stable, and amuse ourselves with the deer, which we also often took for a run on the snow, having noticed that confinement told somewhat heavily upon them.

We divided our time into regular watches from the first. The morning was spent in preparing our meals and in adding to the comforts of the cave, in a run on the snow when practicable, and in attending to our animals. We then dined, about midday as near as possible, and then we began working at our great task — the boat which we hoped was to take us away in the spring.

Our wood was but little adapted to the task, and our tools were but few — an axe apiece, a knife, and a small saw in the handle of Stop's knife. But we did not intend preparing for a long navigation. I believed the coast of America to be not far distant, and I felt satisfied, that if once we reached that shore, whatever the dangers and difficulties to be overcome, we should still be able to reach the domains of civilization.

It was, therefore, with extreme delight that I labored with my old friend six hours a day at the framework of our canoe, which we intended lining with skins sewed together, and then coating with a kind of glue made from the intestines of the seals and other amphibious animals in the bay.

We were so confident of our escape, that we neglected many things which we should have devoted our attention to, had we believed in the possibility of spending another winter in this desolate region. But I, for one, did nothing of the kind. Since the arrival of Stop, my hope of escape had been aroused, and I felt certain of again seeing the home I so longed to revisit.

I was able, during that long and unchanging winter, to appreciate the blessing of society. I do believe that, wholly alone in that cave, night and day, no human ear to hearken to me, no human voice to reply to me, I should have gone mad under the leaden weight of so monotonous an existence.

Solitude is a pleasant thing for essayists and moralists to write about; but who that has tried it has not repented the trial? The nun, the hermit, the prisoner, have each their separate tale of sorrow to relate, of dark and gloomy sorrow too. That it is not good for man to be alone, I repeat from the bottom of my heart.

It would be a very weary and unremunerative record to tell, day by day and month by month, our life during that horrid captivity. It had few changes in it. The long night was the most wearisome thing of all; and yet, though the sun was wholly beneath the horizon, we could see very plainly at noon. It was a faint, cold, moonlight kind of day, but I am persuaded I could have read by it.

Indeed, I did read by it, now I remember, well. Stop

had brought with him, wrapped round some things in his chest, the contents of which were invaluable, two or three old newspapers. Now, they were partly torn, and after a time I almost knew them by heart; and yet, so inveterate is the habit of reading when once acquired, that I actually would sit down to peruse these papers of an evening, even after I knew them almost by heart.

I spelt through advertisements, articles, paragraphs. I read them to myself, I read them out to Stop, who at last, droll fellow as he was, would start the subject of an evening.

"Guv'ner," he would say.

"Yes, Stop."

"Boy brought the paper yet?"

"All right, Stop."

"Then let us have the latest news, captain, if you please."

And then I would read out, in the gravest tone possible, a paragraph or two, with which we both were soon pretty familiar.

But a discovery was made, in the middle of January, which quite upset the newspapers.

Stop's chest contained clothes and food. There were some biscuit, some flour, and, though in small quantities, some tea and sugar, more precious to me than Stop's tobacco was to him — for the old sailor, true to his seaman's habits, could not help smoking. One day, we cleared out the chest, and placed the provisons it contained in our store, with some idea of pulling the chest to pieces, in order to use the wood in the construction of our boat.

At the bottom of the box, under the pile of biscuit which filled a compartment, we found a parcel, again wrapped in an old newspaper.

"What is this?" said I to Stop, somewhat anxiously.

I saw his eyes glisten, as he raised his head and looked affectionately at me.

"What is it, Stop?" repeated I, a flush of hope filling my heart, and animating my whole being. I was so anxious, I did not dare to look.

Stop nodded his head. I perfectly understood him. I fell into his arms, and wept with joy.

I then opened the parcel with reverence, and almost with

awe — feelings which any body who takes my circumstances into consideration will understand.

It was the Bible.

No dull evenings now. As soon as our working hours were over, we sat down. Stop, touching his hat, asked my permission to smoke, which I could not refuse to the old fellow; while I, taking down my book, opened it and read for about an hour. I could have gone on for hours, but I preferred keeping it as a treat. Then I closed the book, and we talked over what we had read. Gradually, perhaps, we worked round to other things, and spoke of home, of our friends, of our chances of escape; but each day more and more we felt the pleasure and delight renewed at our dear discovery.

It was on the second of February that, one morning, gazing out in search of the expected luminary, we saw, after an absence of eighty-four days, the blessed sun, the sight of which we hailed with all the delight of fire-worshippers.

It was, I believe, only by the exercise of excessive precautions that we escaped being frost-bitten and laid up. The cold was so excessive at times, that ten minutes was all I could find courage to remain in the open air. During this month (February) Stop was ill with severe pains in his amputated leg. He used to complain seriously of pains in his toes, those which had long since been parted from his body, and I was compelled to nurse him with great care. He was now an old man, and I still the more appreciated his admirable and gallant devotion to me.

And yet he had a wondrous constitution, an iron frame, and soon got over his illness.

I will not weary you, my friends, with many more details of our winter's career, but pass on to the month of May, when events occurred of a serious and startling character.

The weather had grown milder, the sun was visible at midnight, and all denoted that the winter was about, at no very distant period, to break up. We began going out to a much greater distance from the cavern, always keeping a careful lookout for beasts of prey, which were likely at this time to be roaming about after a residence on the main land.

For some days, however, nothing occurred of any importance.

But on the 5th of May, I think, occurred an event of such wondrous novelty to us, that I must record it fully.

It was a bright, clear, frosty morning, and Stop had gone out roaming about the island in search of some evidence that the snow was about to melt away, and the earth to offer up once more its treasures for our use. There was little wind, and it was very cold. I had not felt very well in the morning, and did not go out so early as Stop. About half an hour before dinner, however, I ventured forth, more, however, with a view to meet Stop than to wander about myself.

There he was, listlessly hobbling along the snow, into which his wooden leg would dip, as if it were never going to come up again. He was gazing carelessly about, and stood still once now and then, as if to rest himself.

He was too far for me to hail him, and I therefore merely made signs to him to hurry, when, casting my looks towards my old encampment, I started, rubbed my eyes, shut them, opened them again, and began running towards Stop in a very wild and frantic style.

"What is it, guv'ner?" he said, as I came up to him.

"Look!"

He looked across in the direction I indicated, and grew almost as excited as myself.

"What is it?" said I, in a low whisper, pointing still to the north.

"Smoke," replied he, earnestly.

"Where there is smoke there is a fire," said I, endeavoring to be calm.

"There is," exclaimed Stop, earnestly. "Let us be cautious. No one knows who may be there."

"Most certainly there are men yonder," I continued, in a low, husky tone.

"I think so," said Stop; "but Heaven knows what kind of men."

"Natives, of course," I answered.

"Then dangerous. I don't know what sort of men they are."

"Not very dangerous," I replied, "and if friendly, our saviours."

"But how have they come here?" asked Stop, musing.

"By sledges," I said.

"Then, in Heaven's name, let us go down to them," he exclaimed, "and see who and what they are."

"Come," I said; and, armed to the teeth as we were, we advanced towards the beach, trembling with excitement, hope, and yet not without some fear as to the final result.

For my own part, I had but one thought, one idea, one dream — that of flight by means of these savages.

We had soon got over the space that divided us from the hillock behind which the fire was concealed, and at a glance we took in the whole scene.

There were about a dozen Esquimaux collected round a small fire, and near a kind of hut of snow, which had been hastily erected on the shore. They were probably in consultation, for almost immediately they divided into three parties, one of which seemed about to come our way, one started in an opposite direction, while a third, composed of women and children, remained at the hut.

"Come away, guv'ner," said Stop, hastily; "this is no place for us. Them gentlemen will walk into us in a minute, if they see us. I must use my 'dot-and-carry one' (his favorite word for his wooden leg) to some advantage."

We hastily retreated, accordingly, before we were perceived by any of the party of those strange, stunted, and wild savages, who, from some inexplicable motive, have chosen the arctic regions for their dwelling-place.

A very small run took us far enough out of sight to enable us to walk more leisurely.

"And now, Stop," said I, "what is to be done?"

I believe I trembled with anxiety.

"Well, guv'ner, there's several plans in my head; so, if you please, we'll argue the point."

"I am willing to listen to any thing you have to say, Stop; but lose no time, as, if we do not use this chance of escape, we may never have another."

"Avast that!" cried Stop — "I mean to escape without them stunted savages — but if as how we can use them,

why, so much the better. But here's the pool, and here's a dry stone; so let's sit down and talk, captain."

I did so, though my thoughts were not so collected, nor my mind so much at ease, as my now experienced and methodical companion, who, previously to deliberating on the subject in hand, was coolly and quietly lighting his pipe.

CHAPTER XV.

THE INDIAN GIRL.

The warmth of the sulphur pool had already acted on a small portion of the snow around its edges, and had thus left a clear, open space, in one corner of which we sat. Nowhere else could even the slightest patch of any vegetation be seen. All around was snow — white, dazzling snow, on plains and hills, chill, bleak, and cold, and all the more so, in my eyes, from the dim chance of escape which seemed to offer itself to me. The sky was bright and clear; and we were at no great distance of time from that weary period of eternal day, which, grand as it may appear, and beautiful as it seems, in prose descriptions and in poetry, is painfully monotonous, though so useful to the voyager in those bleak and inhospitable regions.

Stop said nothing for some time, smoking his pipe with all the deliberation and solemnity of an Indian sachem, while I endeavored to repress my impatience, and longed to begin, at all events, to talk of flight and escape.

At the end of a few minutes, however, I could no longer keep down the burning desire of my heart.

"Now, then, Stop, what is to be done?" said I quickly.

"Guv'ner," replied Stop, putting his finger to the side of his nose, and holding his pipe at some distance in his left hand, "are you ready to fight?"

"If necessary, but only if absolutely necessary," I exclaimed.

"Well, you know, captain, we two, with guns and leaden bullets, could easily manage all these varmint."

"But why so?"

"I don't say we ought to do it, or is to do it. But I only tells the whole story. Well, suppose we kill 'em all off, why, in course, you see they came here somehow, and it's my opinion they came on sledges."

"Certainly," I said.

"Well, we kills them, and we catches the dogs ——"

"Yes."

"Then away we goes, a-following our blessed noses over the sea."

"We should never do it."

"That's exactly my opinion; it don't stand at all to reason. We ain't used to them dogs, we don't know the way, and then we ain't bloody minded."

"Certainly not, Stop. Killing is out of the question. What do you propose next?"

"We must make friends with them creaturs, guv'ner. We must let 'em see our power, that is, the use of our guns; and then we must try and get 'em to pilot us over the sea to the main land; that's what we must do."

"Exactly my own opinion," said I; "but now how is it to be done?"

"Well, I proposes to fall upon the women unawares like, and take some prisoners ——"

"That will not be very friendly," I replied, anxiously, and yet half inclined to laugh.

"No! but then you see, captain, when we got a girl or two, we brings 'em up here, we treats 'em well, we gives 'em, if need be, the two deer, which they'll be glad of, and some other things, and then we sends 'em away to their friends, happy and friendly like."

"That's the plan, Stop," said I, eagerly, "that's the plan."

"Very good, guv'ner," continued Stop; "that being your opinion, it's just settled — down! down!" he added, falling flat on his face, and drawing me after him, behind the large stone on which we had been sitting.

"What is it?" said I, in a low, hushed voice.

"I don't know yet," replied Stop; "it's one of them ani-

mals of 'Squimaux — but whether man or woman, I can't just say."

"Lie then still, in Heaven's name!" said I; "this may be the good will of Providence to save us."

"Now, guv'ner," whispered Stop, "you're young and active. Every thing *de*-pends on you. The creatur' ain't armed, I don't think, and he's following our track — so perhaps it's a curious woman. . When she comes right up, you must jump up and catch her. Then it's all right."

I nodded assent, laid my gun on the ground, and my axe, so as not to be encumbered.

The stones behind which we were concealed were two in number — large, black stones, which had lain there probably since the creation. They were parted on one side, at a distance of three feet, but met on the other at right angles, leaving only a narrow chink, through which we could plainly see.

"Hush!" said Stop, in a low, timid whisper.

I scarcely breathed, for I plainly heard a light and cautious step upon the still firm snow; I kept my eyes fixed earnestly on my tiny loophole.

My astonishment, when the stranger came in sight, is far more easy to imagine than to express.

It was a woman, and yet not an Esquimaux; and as far as my knowledge of races went, an Indian girl of the arid district hunted over by the Hudson's Bay Company — a member of a tribe which, in its ardor for the chase, is sometimes tempted up so far as the Great Bear Lake.

Who can tell my sensations? If my ideas were correct, this girl was a prisoner, therefore a friend, and if of the tribe I suspected, sure to know my own tongue.

I knew that the most deadly hostility existed between this tribe and the Esquimaux, as the former often undertook vast journeys towards the north, to combat, pillage, and scalp the unfortunate races, that in process of time have probably been driven so far north by this very state of things.

She was very young, and though with many of the distinctive marks of her race about her, she wore, in consideration of the climate, more clothes than she would otherwise

have done Her head was covered by a peaked cap, her tunic was thick and had other clothes beneath it, while not an inch of her naked form was any where to be seen, as would surely have been the case in a warmer latitude; though with a kind of coquetry which was perfectly womanly, she had them tight fitting and well made.

She had pleasing features, which were at this moment highly in play.

She looked cautiously around, gazed at the pool curiously, glanced at the undoubted marks of a habitation beyond, and smiled as she noticed the faint curling of a wreath of smoke above the pole which crowned the summit of our cavern.

She looked then back stealthily, and being assured that she was not followed, she moved slowly towards the cavern.

I was on my feet with the rapidity of a beast of prey, and with one bound I was at her side.

"Ugh!" was her only word.

"Make no noise" — I whispered, quite satisfied she would understand me.

I never heard a sweeter, a more cheerful laugh than burst from her lips. She laughed heartily and without control, as if she were too happy to be able to contain her feelings.

"You understand me, then," I said, "and know that we are friends?"

"Good — pale-faced — English," she replied, in gentle and yet proud tones.

"In the name of all our dear hopes," I exclaimed, turning to Stop, "come into the cave, and confer with this girl. She is a Chippewaw."

"Yes — Pale-face young — old head — very wise — know Indian girl — Indian girl Chippewaw."

"Well," said Stop, shaking his head as he followed with the guns, "this is *the* most wonderful thing ever I seed."

And then, to the amusement of the girl, he hobbled along on his wooden leg — a thing she had probably never seen before; while I, who had at once let go my hold of the girl, walked beside her to the cavern, my brain in a whirl, my heart bursting with thankfulness, so deep, so earnest, so overwhelming, that I with difficulty kept down the rising tears.

We entered the cave, lit two lamps, and motioned to the girl to be seated. In order to show our good feeling, and in my case, to have time to collect my thoughts, we drew forth our choicest food, and offered to cook it for her.

She shook her head and rose to her feet.

"What does she mean?" asked Stop, rather puzzled.

"Are you not hungry?" I said, myself hardly able to understand her manner.

"Yes! Indian girl hungry — no like Esquimaux food — glad to see deer-meat — but Indian girl — Wah-pa-nosh — wait on warrior. Warrior eat first."

"Them's rummy customers, them Indians," said Stop, laughing — "and the Esquimaux as you tell me of must be rummier. If they stows in blubber at the rate you have told me, a young girl as has eat better don't come natural to it. And how she knew that dried stuff was deer-meat!"

"They are very acute," continued I, watching her with a smile, as she began toasting the dried meat on a rude attempt at a gridiron, made from the ramrods of my pistols.

"They just are, guv'ner. Now, this is what I call a nice family party, ain't it;" and Stop laughed heartily at some conceit of his own.

"What are you laughing at?" said I, almost mechanically.

"I was just a thinkin', guv'ner, what precious queer yarns we shall have to tell when we gets home. It will be so funny."

"But we are not yet home, Stop," said I, very gravely.

"No, we ain't — there's a few miles of salt water, and some odd miles of land, and a good many months, too, afore we do it — but it's as good as done."

"I hope so, fervently, Stop — but now let us talk to the girl," I continued, as, after serving us, she sat down and began quietly to eat.

"How long have you been a prisoner, Wah-pa-nosh?" said I to her.

"One — two summer — one — two winter," she replied.

"Where do you come from?"

"My tribe live on Saskatchawan," she said, in a low, earnest tone, "hunt up on Great Bear Lake once — meet

Esquimaux — my warriors very brave — hate Esquimaux — fight — take scalp — Esquimaux run away — find Wah-pa-nosh in wood — take her."

"And should you like to return to your tribe?" asked I, gently.

"If no get back, soon die — all winter here — no summer — warm on my river. Wah-pa-nosh — no wigwam, but in three moons marry Bounding Elk — if get back."

"Then, Wah-pa-nosh," continued I, "you are willing to assist us to escape, to take us to your tribe, and then show us the way to a trading port?"

Wah-pa-nosh laughed her hearty and happy laugh once more.

"Pale-face take Indian girl back — show her father, her mother, Laughing Bird's face again — they friend ever — take Pale-face Great Salt Lake if please."

"'Tis agreed, Wah-pa-nosh," said I, earnestly, "and when I get back to my father and my mother, and her who is to be my wife, Wah-pa-nosh shall have rich blankets, and the Bounding Elk the best rifle in my country."

"How Pale-face come here — leave young squaw, old father, old mother?" asked the girl, abruptly.

I told my story briefly and simply. She understood me the better, that she had been to Fort York, and had seen ships, and had a vague conception of whale-fishing: and then, in broken, disjointed phrases, she told me about some pale-faces who had gone up to the frozen sea by land, thus exciting my curiosity largely.

I afterwards found from the people of Cumberland Fort, where, to pass away the winter, I wrote this narrative, that she alluded to Franklin's extraordinary overland journey to the Coppermine River, and the Arctic Sea, amid dangers, sufferings, and difficulties, not greater, unfortunately, than those I had yet to endure, and of which, even as I write, I knew not the complete end. This will be explained in its proper and fitting place.

"And now, Wah-pa-nosh," said I, "you know this country better than we do. How are we to escape?"

"Kill all Esquimaux," replied the girl, fiercely; "load one — two — three sledge — plenty eat — Wah-pa-nosh guide away to the land under the sun."

"Nay, Laughing Bird, I would not kill them. I would rather return with them to their homes, and then start away to your country."

"Pale-face warrior no like scalp — good for Pale-face. Make present to Esquimaux — much eat — hog — six hog."

"That's it," said Stop, laughing, "they just are hogs. What shall we send them?"

"We must give almost all our provisions," I replied, "if we journey with them."

"No, guv'ner, we must provide for a precious long journey — and I votes for keeping the biscuit and dried meat — give 'em the anchor, the oil, and the two live deer."

"Live deer!" said the Indian girl, glancing curiously around.

"Ah, you doesn't know half our secrets yet," said Stop, rising, and lighting a torch.

The girl at once took it out of his hand, and began examining the whole place with considerable interest. She started as she noticed the guns for the first time. "Fire-bow," said she, "Esquimaux much 'fraid — no touch Pale-face."

And she laughed with renewed confidence when she found us so strong and powerful.

"Good," said she, clapping her hands as she entered the inner cave and saw our interior arrangements; "Pale-face clever — good wigwam — stone — mountain. Deer, good present Esquimaux, Tuski hog — eat three — two mouthful."

"Must the poor brutes be sacrificed?" I asked, turning to Stop.

"It stands to reason," said he; we're a-going away, and they'll never get their living their two selves again. They've been fed too long. Besides, guv'ner, them Tuski, as she calls them, must have something, and this 'll be a great present."

"Very well, Stop; tether them so that the girl may lead them down. She had better go on first, and prepare the savages for our reception."

"That's it, captain."

"Good," said the girl; "Wah-pa-nosh ready."

The deer were tied together, and a string fastened to

them, by which we led them forth into the open air, after slightly confining their front legs, so that they might not pull the girl too violently.

"Now go," said I, in a low, hushed tone, my heart throbbing with an earnestness and violence quite painful. "Go, now, and remember, Wah-pa-nosh, we trust wholly to you. Act fairly to us, and you shall not forget it. You shall reach your home in safety, and see Bounding Elk, and your father and mother once more."

"Wah-pa-nosh say it — Wah-pa-nosh mean it — speak truth — Pale-face and her — friends."

As she spoke, she placed her hand gracefully on her heart, laughed again that laugh which was so sweet, and pleasant, and cheerful to hear, took the deer-thong in her hand, and went on her way merrily and earnestly.

"Now, guv'ner, let's pack up all we want," said Stop, hastily retreating into the cavern. "Them devils will be wanting every thing."

"Yes, Stop; and then before they come up here, we had better let them see what our guns are."

"The very ticket, Mr. Henry," he continued. "I say, look alive's my motto now. We never knows what to do with savages. I've seen a pretty sprinkling of them animals, and they're pretty much of a muchness. If they knows you're strong, they treat you well; if they find you weak they'll ill use you."

"With some it is the case," said I; "but not only with savages, Stop. It's human nature every where. The rich and the strong and the bold are pretty well treated every where — but be weak and poor and timid, Stop, and there's very little chance for you. That's the way of the world, Stop, and it can't be expected savages will be better than civilized."

"In course not, guv'ner," replied Stop — "now all these here skins is valuable. We shall want them. So I moves to put most our bread and meat inside 'em — we may then trust a little to hunting, and a little to fishing. We can give the Esquimaux the oil, and the old fox-skins, and the fish."

"That is exactly what I meant to propose," was my

reply. "Put the Bible safe, Stop — and here, the powder and ball."

"My eyes," said Stop, "here's the boat. That will delight 'em. I'll show 'em how to put it together. Leastwise the girl will; I dare say she'll speak the language better than we can."

"Could we not use it?" I asked, musing.

"No, guv'ner, it won't do for rivers. I'll soon rig up a bark one, if it's wanted, like them I've seen in New Orleans, Master Henry."

Talking, speculating, hoping, the time soon slipped by, and our goods were packed and piled in a corner in less than an hour. We then armed ourselves to the teeth, with gun, axe, hunting knife, and even with pistols, having cleaned the ramrods for that purpose, and sallied into the open air.

"Now, guv'ner, my idea is, that we must be as bold as brass — and give these here salvages an idea of our knowing a thing or two — just off."

"I am quite of your opinion," I replied; "but, Stop, we must be very cautious, and if we have to shoot, one must do it at a time."

"Right, guv'ner, right. Ah! there they are; ain't they going it!" exclaimed the eccentric old sailor.

As he spoke, we came in sight of the Esquimaux, who were standing in a group round Wah-pa-nosh and the deer, and listening with wild eagerness to the account of the Indian girl.

We afterwards discovered that the two hunting parties had only just returned, and that Wah-pa-nosh had only that moment finished narrating her meeting with two wondrous men, armed with lightning, and who, pitying the want of success of the Esquimaux, had sent them two deer.

"Now, guv'ner," said Stop, hurriedly, "here they comes — a precious set."

The Esquimaux had seen us; but instead of rushing forward as we expected, they stood still, examining us with great caution. Wah-pa-nosh holding the deer in one hand, and raising the other on high, was still speaking.

At this instant a bird, a kind of hawk, the first I had

noticed this season, sailed overhead, but within shot. I slowly levelled my gun, took very cautious and deliberate aim, and fired.

Down went the bird like a stone, falling within a few yards of the Esquimaux.

They stood motionless, utterly unable to move, so wild, so overwhelming was their astonishment.

"It's all right," said Stop, laughing — "they're satisfied. They've had enough. They won't want another hint of that kind."

"Let us advance," I replied, after quietly re-loading. "Wah-pa-nosh is making signs to us."

"All right, guv'ner — here goes — dot-and-carry-one."

And the old fellow, his head martially erect, his gun on the hollow of his arm, advanced before me to meet the wondering throng of savages, over whom Wah-pa-nosh towered by a head.

In two minutes more we were the centre of this wild and singular group of dwellers in those northern regions, on the borders of that vast sea, whose waves

"do roll
From ice-bound shore to sunny isle."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SLEDGE.

THE Esquimaux examined us with mingled wonder and admiration. They glanced with timidity and dread at the firearms we held in our hands, and then held up the bird and looked at the hole; shook it, and as the ball did not come out, their simple wonder was even still more increased. It was quite evident that this particular band of savages had never happened on such a chance before. The white men — at all events their firearms — were quite new to them.

They talked among themselves, they chattered, they danced round us, they felt our clothes, and suddenly catching sight of the end of Stop's wooden leg, they looked at him with even still greater wonder than before. They stooped down, passed their hands up and down it, and again talked and laughed with great heartiness.

Wah-pa-nosh stood meekly on one side. In presence of the Esquimaux, she assumed all the well-known manner of a girl proud of her tribe, and of her superiority over such savages as those which now herded round her in a group, as wild as the beasts of the field.

But what principally attracted our attention, and excited in us feelings which it would be vain to attempt to convey in words, were the sledges and dogs. These animals were snuffing round the frightened deer, only kept from devouring them by the whip of one of their conductors.

"What think you, Stop?" said I; "are these Heaven-sent savages to take us safely to the main land?"

I spoke cheerfully, and assumed a calmness I did not feel.

"Well, I don't think them creaturs is exactly Heaven-sent — they're too dirty, and smells too strong; but I think them sledges is very pleasant to look at; and do you see, guv'ner, we must make haste, as the blessed summer is coming on, and we have no time to lose."

"You are right, Stop," I answered, turning to Wah-pa-nosh. "Will our sister translate what I say to the chief?"

"Got no chief," said the girl, with an expression of great disgust; "talk like hog — but Wah-pa-nosh say what Pale-face like."

She then told the Esquimaux to be quiet, for that we had to confer with them.

One of the decrepit little creatures advanced close to me, and made signs that he was ready to listen.

The Chippewaw girl acting as interpreter, the following conversation took place.

"What have you come to this distant island for?" I asked.

"To hunt, fish, and prepare food during the summer; and then, when winter froze the sea again, to return to their home," was the substance of what they said.

"Where is your home?"

"Akkoolee."

"And where is Akkoolee?" I continued.

The man who was carrying on the conversation pointed towards the south-east, and Wah-pa-nosh nodded her head, intimating that the information was correct.

"Will they consent," said I to Wah-pa-nosh, "to take us back at once to the continent, on condition of our rewarding them handsomely for so doing? I will give them the contents of our cave, save and except what we require for ourselves."

Wah-pa-nosh now stood erect, and spoke with considerable animation to the Esquimaux, whom, in the mean time, we examined curiously, leaning on our guns all the while, and taking every precaution against any act of treachery on their part.

They were very ill-favored, especially the old women, who had wrinkled skin, inflamed eyes, hideous black teeth, the whole set off by a costume that made them look like animated bundles.* Altogether they were the most degraded and stupid-looking specimens of humanity I had ever seen.

"She don't seem to agree with them dirty salvages," put in Stop. "Look at that old woman shaking her black fist in the girl's face."

"They do not seem to agree," I replied; "but wait a moment, and Wah-pa-nosh will tell us all."

The girl at this instant turned towards us.

They had come to hunt all the summer, as they knew the island to be rich in fish and game, and they did not feel inclined to return until the season was over. If we would wait until the winter, they engaged to take us over to the main land, and set us on our way towards the south. But they had quite made up their minds to remain the time they had come for.

I replied gravely, that I wished to leave at once; that I

* Frobisher, in 1576, owns that his men took them for witches of the North. "The old wretch whom our sailors supposed to be a witch had her buskins pulled off, to see if she was cloven-footed; and, being very ugly and deformed, we let her go."

was willing, when once on the main land, to hunt for them a few days with our guns; but that I could do nothing of the kind if we remained all the summer on this island, of which I claimed to be the owner, and where we should require all the game and fish for our own subsistence.

They replied that they would think about it, and then went away towards the deer, which they slaughtered in an instant, and began devouring, after scarcely warming it before the fire. The refuse and offal they gave to the wild and hungry dogs.

Wah-pa-nosh now approached us, as we walked a little distance off, and told us, that the Esquimaux were evidently not inclined to depart; that by some words she caught they had made up their minds to dawdle away the time until it was too late to go — until, in fact, the ice broke up and the sea was impassable for sledges and dogs.

"Now, then, guv'ner," said Stop, "this here business becomes serious. We ain't got no time to lose, and I votes for deciding on the instant."

"I fully agree," was my reply. "Wah-pa-nosh, you know these creatures; what is your advice?"

"Esquimaux eat like hog — sleep like big snake now — one — two — three — six hour. Give Esquimaux more eat — sleep all day. When sleep, Pale-face take one sledge, leave boat and cave — stock behind pay sledge — Wah-pa-nosh guide Pale-face to big land."

"That's it," said Stop, "that's the very identical thing. Wah! I'm your man."

"I agree also," exclaimed I. "They will not take us fairly. We must act independently for ourselves."

"Hoorah!" cried Stop, much delighted. "It's settled. Now, girl, speak up. You know these imps better nor us; so out with it — what's to be done?"

"Wah go speak Esquimaux — one beast no eat enough yet — ask him taste Pale-face fish — he say yes — make him harness best dog, go fetch. Bring back — eat — Pale-face take sledge fetch more — load — go."

"Splendid — glorious!" said Stop, rubbing his hand with intense energy. "That's it, Wah! You're a tip-top girl."

Wah-pa-nosh laughed in her sweet and quiet way, and strolled among the Esquimaux, who had made a kind of tent of wood, skins, and snow, within which all were now huddled, after a gorge which placed them on a level with the lowest animals.

As the girl had hinted, one of the Esquimaux, who had been keeping the dogs off, had come in for a smaller share than the rest, and he, instead of lying down, was sitting up on a stone, musing, doubtless, about the strange beings with whom he had suddenly come in contact.

The Indian girl looked at him with a smile, and then asked him if he would like to see the white man's cave, and bring down some fish to eat.

The savage nodded assent.

"Then put on the dogs, and show the pale-faces how you can drive — they never saw a sledge before. We can bring down a large load of fish and meat."

The Esquimaux looked at her half-cunningly, half-vacantly, and then lazily rose, and after some delay and difficulty, harnessed the dogs, and drove after us towards the sulphur cavern.

Great, indeed, was his surprise, when he saw the pool of steaming water, and halting on its edge, put his hand down to taste it. His grimaces proved that he at least was a stranger to the island, as indeed were the whole party, who knew of it only by tradition.

He then got off his sledge and followed us, guided by Wah-pa-nosh, into the cavern, where Stop had made a great blaze of lamps to receive him.

The delight, the astonishment, the wonder of the savage, at the comforts which the white men had collected around them in this desolate region, can scarcely be described in words. He looked blankly and vacantly round for a few minutes, and then began examining every thing with a kind of childish curiosity, which was exceedingly amusing.

I gave him a biscuit, which he eagerly devoured; and then, Stop having already secured all we required, I opened up all our stores to him. His wild delight was shown by his rising up, jumping, dancing, and cutting all the most ridiculous capers and antics I had ever witnessed in my life.

Wah-pa-nosh gravely checked him by saying that he should carry some down to show his companions, and suiting the action to the word, she gave him an armful of fish, took up another herself, and left the cave. We followed also, bearing some presents for the inhabitants of the tent.

"You stay behind, guv'ner," said Stop, winking at me — "you get ready while I and Wah bamboozle these here salvages. I mean to do it prime."

"Very well, Stop," replied I, smiling, as I returned into the cave.

I was alone for the first time for weeks past, and I felt a very solemn feeling coming over me, on this, probably the last occasion on which I should ever see that place, which for so long a time had afforded me shelter and protection.

I earnestly thanked the Almighty for the manifold blessings which had been granted to me, and prayed that, in the bold adventure I was about to make — one of the boldest ever made by man — I should be equally protected and guarded.

I walked up and down the cave, I looked in every part of it, and then I went into the open air, and strolled slowly down until I could see the encampment.

My surprise was very great indeed at the spectacle I now beheld.

All the Esquimaux were on foot, and dancing away in the wildest and strangest way I ever saw men dance. They kicked about, they waddled, they rolled, they jumped, they tumbled, while Stop with his wooden leg made attempts to follow their example, which excited roars of laughter from the savages.

Presently, under his guidance, they held hands, formed a circle, and began whirling round with an agility which, with their short and stumpy limbs and their uncouth garb, seemed truly surprising. Stop shouted, screamed, encouraged them, set them going again, and whenever they stopped, passed round a bowl which he had placed near the fire, and from which all the savages drank with avidity.

I saw at a glance what he was about.

"Poor wretches," thought I, "you are having your first lesson in inebriety. I doubt if the result will amuse you so much as the beginning."

Stop had taken from a corner, where he had stowed it away, — we never thinking of using it, — a bottle of very old rum, which he had had in his chest, and this, after regaling the Esquimaux with salt fish, he was freely dealing out to them.

Wah-pa-nosh meanwhile sat calmly beside the sledge, apparently gazing intently at the scene, but in reality keeping the dogs quiet by feeding them with bits of meat which she took from a pile on the other side. Her eyes were never taken off her enemies, whose movements she regarded with undisguised disgust.

The scene soon changed in features. One by one, the unfortunate savages stumbled to the ground, until presently not one was left on his legs.

Then Stop advanced towards the Indian girl, got on the sledge, and she giving the well-known signal, away came the dogs in my direction. As they reached me, they halted and took me on the sledge. I gently scolded Stop for what he had done.

"Now, guv'ner," said the faithful old fellow, looking as contrite as he could, "you see them fellows must be still a goodish bit. If they'd ever had a chance of learning to drink elsewhere, you might a' blamed me; but this is a taste they'll never forget, nor have another chance of seeing. I was afraid they would not sleep long enough; so I put a little grog in their noddles, which will save our shooting one or two, perhaps, about the ownership of this blessed cart without wheels."

"Well, Stop, you did it for the best, I know; and I must not scold you. That is right, Wah; pull up ——"

She did so admirably, and showed a command over the dogs and the reins, knew the names of the dogs so well, that we began to have very great hopes of our ultimate and even speedy escape. No time was, however, now to be lost; the Esquimaux might rouse up to a desperate struggle, in which they would act with all the more ferocity considering their intoxicated state; and then, the season was far advanced, and the crossing the ice, if summer came suddenly upon us, would be attended with great danger.

I and Stop hurried on, brought out our bundles, and began packing them with care and rapidity, keeping our eyes

turned continually in the direction of the Esquimaux. A sledge, twelve dogs, and a girl who was intended for the wife of one of the party, were prizes they were not likely to part with very readily. But aided by our intelligent and delighted friend, we in half an hour had packed the sledge, fed the dogs, seen to our arms, and were ready to start.

It was not a very long time before the arrival of night; but on the white snow and the dim day of that season, even at midnight — soon all day — we feared not to start with such a guide as the earnest and sagacious Chippewaw.

The last thong was tied, the dogs had devoured their last morsel, Wah-pa-nosh held the reins, Stop and I sat above her on the luggage, our guns in our furred hands, and there was nothing to delay us.

"All right?" said Wah, who was very fond of this conventional phrase.

"All right!" replied Stop, heartily, his honest features actually grinning with delight — "all right. And now, in Heaven's name, my good girl, start us."

"Young Pale ready?" asked Wah.

"I am," said I, slowly — "I am ready; and Heaven be good unto us in this terrible undertaking!"

Away at that instant went the dogs, scampering along the beaten track which we had made towards the sea, dashing away as if they had but a few hundred yards to go, and not miles upon miles across the frozen sea.

"I say, Wah," said Stop, "ain't you getting too close to them salvages?"

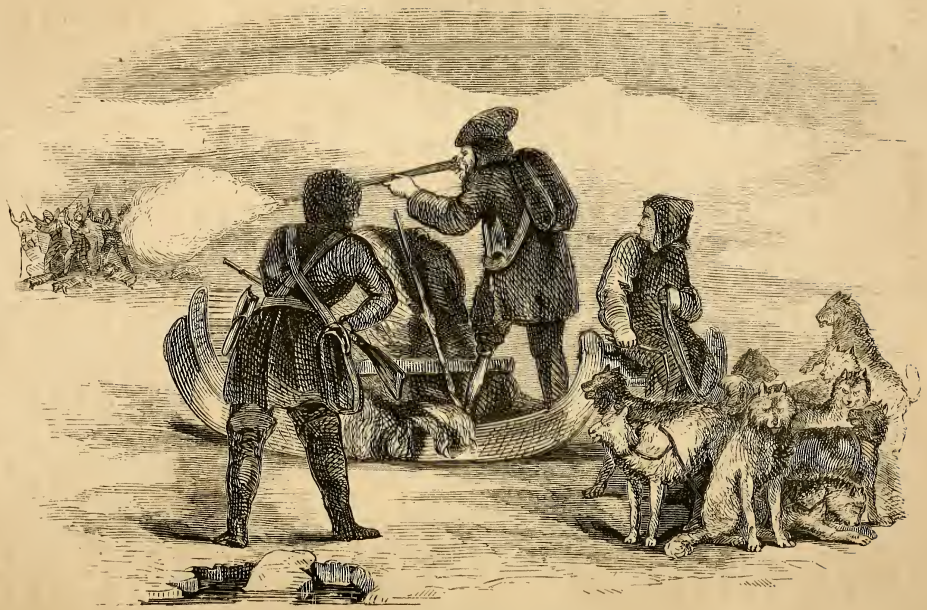
"No 'fraid," replied Wah, laughing; "if him wake — do nothing — fire-water take away brains — make noise, but can't run."

"There, guv'ner!" exclaimed Stop, "ain't that proof I did right? But still I don't see why we pass so close," he added, clutching his gun.

"Best path to sea — follow trail to Akkoolee — straight — no lose."

"But Akkoolee, that's where them shavers come from — it ain't safe ——"

"Quite safe — all gone hunt — fish."



PURSUIT AND ATTACK. Page 163.

"O! I see; but a little more to the right, Wah. There's a fellow waking up, and them dogs will bark."

At this instant several of the Esquimaux, hearing a noise, raised their heads heavily, saw what we were about, started to their feet, and as it appeared, startled by the imminence of the peril, shook off all drowsiness, though not all the effects of their feast and drinking bout, and began their onslaught by a shower of arrows from some, while others began to harness dogs to the light and unloaded sledges — all yelling and stamping like demons.

"O, O!" exclaimed Stop, as an arrow glanced off his thick coat of hide; "this won't do. If you want fighting, you shall have it."

"Stop," said I, laying my hand on his arm, while we still sped swiftly on, now over the bay — "shoot not at those poor creatures unless our lives are in danger. We have done them injury enough already."

"Guv'ner, they ain't a-going to catch us, and take us back, that's all. I won't harm none of them, if they don't harm none of us. But the deluding serpents, they ain't drunk at all — here they come over the snow. My eyes, how they scamper! They'll catch us in no time."

"Shoot soon," said Wah.

"Listen, Stop. Let us try an experiment first. Pull up, Wah; let them come near. Shoot the first dog — that will check them. If they do come upon us, and would take our lives, why, Stop, I suppose we must defend them."

Wah checked the dogs in an instant, and we stood up, levelled, and fired, both at the same dog.

One sledge was about twenty yards before the other when we fired. Our aim was fatal. The dog fell, and the others began struggling wildly to get away.

This was quite enough. The Esquimaux appeared at once to recollect our peculiar and to them supernatural power, which the fumes of drink, and the feeling of alarm at the loss of their sledge, dogs, and captive, had at first made them forget.

Away we went again, and this time without being followed.

We soon found the value and importance of the idea

which the Indian girl had had, of endeavoring to return back upon the old trail of the Esquimaux, which was clear and defined, no snow having fallen in the interval. The trail was towards the south, with a slight bend at first towards the west, which became more marked as we advanced.

Away! away! over sloping hills, over long plains, between piles of ice and snow, over an eternal plain of dazzling white, that wearied our eyes the more that there was nothing on the horizon to relieve us or excite hope. Away! away! until soon all traces of the island were left behind. We travelled with great rapidity, the dogs being rested and unusually well fed. Sometimes they would have halted, but then Wah-pa-nosh cheered them on, using, too, her long thongs with all the dexterity of her most ingenious captors.

Away! away! when night is on the plain, and darkness broods over our heads, until the dogs begin to slacken their pace, and give unmistakable signs of fatigue. We have travelled nearly eight hours, and yet no sign of land, no hills but icebergs. The latter part of the journey has been over a soft and melting snow that wearies the dogs much, and prevents their advancing.

Then the snow begins to fall, blinding our eyes, and in ten minutes obliterating every mark, every sign of the old trail.

O, now for that long and wearisome day, which would have guided us so well — for that sun ever above the horizon, as it shall be soon for months upon months. But no! the heavens are obscured, gloom hangs around, the snow falls heavily, and Wah disconsolately allows that she has lost her way.

The dogs lie crouching and panting on the ground, still and motionless, their long tongues hanging out, or licking now and then the snow to quench their thirst.

Away! away! Up they start, and off they go, wildly over the marshy and soft plain, the ice actually cracking beneath our weight as we advance. We are nearly two degrees farther south already by my calculation, so wild and so rapid has been our journey.

But why are the animals so eager now?

"Smell prey," said Wah.

"Well, I thought I did see a prowling fox jist now," replied Stop. "He warn't not ten yards off — but gently, my boys; you ain't going to catch him — there he goes. Well, the best thing we can do is to shoot him, or else these beasts will be breaking the sledge all to smash."

The animal, evidently some stray beast quite worn out with fatigue, was now so near that Stop easily carried out his intention, and the dogs, immediately tearing him to bits, again lay down at the call of the Indian girl.

"We must camp," said I.

"Well, guv'ner," replied Stop, "I think that's about the wisest thing we can do."

"No," said Wah, shaking her head; "snow too heavy — cover up — bury ——"

"The girl's right, the girl's right," exclaimed Stop — "ah! thank God, there is the blessed sun; the snow is stopped, and away we go, cheerily, *gooh mosh, squa — too* —" he added, trying to imitate the noise by which the Indian girl hurried on the dogs.

The sun had just peered up over the horizon, and the snow did cease to fall as we started again, at a very slow pace, however, at first, until the dogs warmed at their work, and soon galloped on with as much rapidity as ever.

But the sun soon brought about effects of the most painful nature. Rain began to fall, the snow began to melt, the ice began to crack; and after a painful and wearisome journey of four hours, we pulled up on the edge of a large stream of open water, with huge pieces of ice floating here and there on its surface.

Our fate appeared at this critical moment to be finally sealed.

How were we to escape from this stupendous difficulty?

The stream of water spread to the right and left as far as we could see, while it was only by perpetually keeping on the move that we avoided sinking into holes, and being at once cast upon the mercy of the waves.

CHAPTER XVII.

BREAKING OF THE ICE.

Our position was now indeed terrible. I could not stop to survey it.* The thaw was taking place with such extreme rapidity that I fully expected to be again brought to a dead stop by the fatigue of the dogs, when the ice would surely crack beneath our weight, and precipitate us into the raging sea below. On then we went, clinging to the sledge with frantic energy, too excited to eat, unable to stop to try and find a pool of fresh water — and always beside the edge of the channel of open water, along which the cracking ice went pouring along, rolling by icebergs revolving, huge sheets of ice being shivered into bits as they met heavier pieces, until at last we came to what appeared the end of this channel.

We lost no time in taking the direction of the land, which we could now clearly distinguish to the west, and the weary, panting dogs, carried on still by their extreme terror, made one more tremendous effort, and then, finding themselves on a solid ground of ice, lay down utterly, and for the time hopelessly, exhausted.

"Here's a pretty go — that land is five miles off, guv'ner," said Stop, drawing a long and weary breath. "I'm done up, if the dogs ain't."

"It is indeed terrible," I replied, faintly; "but for the moment we are safe. The dogs may revive presently."

"Eat," said the Indian girl, sententiously.

"That's tip-top advice," exclaimed Stop. "I am regular famished, and I dare say, for that matter, the girl is the

* Any person who may conceive our narrative extraordinary may refer to Von Wrangle's "Narrative of Journey to Polar Seas," or to a tale, by Percy B. St. John, called "The Ivory Mine." These adventures on the Frozen Ocean will almost make those of Henry appear tame. — *Editor Sea of Ice*

same; but bless her heart, she don't speak for herself. Look at her — there she is a looking at the dogs' feet, a wiping their mouths, a giving them some meat to eat, just as if she wasn't nearly dead herself. Them Indians is terrible hard to beat down, guv'ner. Eat this ven'son; it's best. The fish is salter. Lucky too — this pool is melted snow; it ain't as sweet as sugar, and if you stirred it much the salt would come up; but it's better than nothing, and will set a fellow up a bit. Come, Wah, eat, there's a good girl. We want all our strength."

"Good," said Wah-pa-nosh; "old One-leg — wise — good in council."

This was said with a little laugh and an all but covert sneer at the good fellow's loquacity; which, however, was completely lost upon him.

"Hunger's a great relish, guv'ner. This old tough meat eats jolly well — though I do begin to have enough. Now, then, suppose we do have a council, as the girl says, and see what is to be done."

"Good," again replied the girl, who was sufficiently aware of her superior knowledge to step quietly into the position of adviser with white men, while with those of her own color she would have remained completely silent.

"The dogs will be rested in a couple of hours," said I. "As soon as that time is passed, we must hurry on towards the land."

"That's my complete opinion, guv'ner — just as if I had said it myself."

"No good," put in Wah-pa-nosh, rising and speaking with animation. "Ice melt like snow — sun begin to make fire in air — one — two hour — ice," pointing to that on which we rested, "water — break up — small — little big bit — all gone. Dogs tired — never move — best make go — frighten, shoot but go."

"There's a deal of reason in that girl," said Stop, "a deal of reason."

I was about to speak in reply, when I was stopped by an event which made speaking impossible and unnecessary. A loud crash was heard, a bursting up of rushing and confined waters, and then away I went sprawling into a deep

pool of water, which blinded me, took away my breath, and then my head coming in contact with a projecting lump of ice, I became insensible. Fortunately it was a very slight blow, and I remained unconscious not more than a moment. I then scrambled on my knees and looked around, totally unable to rise higher, as the sea was rocking in a most fearful manner.

The dogs cowered close to the ice in abject terror, Stop was crawling towards me, while the Indian girl, her face calm, and yet looking anxiously our way, clung to the sledge, which had slid some yards from its original position.

The ice on which we halted had suddenly been violently detached from the great mass which stretched away to the north, and in so doing had moved a small but heavy iceberg on its edge, which, losing the perpendicular, had fallen heavily on the thick sheet of ice, and driven its southern edge many yards under water. It was this violent disruption, and the downward plunge of the ice raft, that had so suddenly plunged us to leeward; while the sea, coming madly rushing up, had flooded us with its cold, salt waves. The iceberg had reversed its position, and this necessarily with a violence which kept the sea in motion for some distance, and rocked the last refuge of the unfortunate refugees with painful rapidity.

"It's all up, guv'ner," said Stop. "This here cold water business has done for me. I feel in a shiver all over. And I can't get up neither. Well, I suppose I may as well lay still, as get up and be drowned. Who'd a thought it? — drowned like a rat at last."

"Be not down-hearted," I replied, still on my knees; "we shall get out of this."

"Well, it's well you think so, Master Henry — and if we do, we'll just never no more come up in these parts. I take it roasting's better than freezing, after all — and I'd rather be up among the darkies, though they are not as sweet as amber, than with a set of fellows as has dogs for horses, a few sticks for a stage coach, and a lot of rocking ice for a high road. I calls it a rocking horse road, with more fun nor is wanted for nothing."

While the honest old fellow was grumbling, the raft of

ice was settling down, until it was but faintly shaken by the waves. Stop was trying hard to get up, which, with his wooden leg, was difficult. I was soon on my feet, and was obliged to assist him to rise, which he did with many groans, as he had been much bruised in his fall.

"It is strange, too," said he, as he got on his legs, "that water should be so hard. It isn't natural at all. Here am I, knocked into half a dozen cocked hats — O! Well, old bones ain't young bones; and I shouldn't wonder if old Tim Stop were laid up with the rheumatiz. That would be a pretty go."

"I hope not, my good old Stop," I replied, as I assisted him to take a seat on the baggage. "But what is to be done to get out of this terrible position? The sledge is no use, the sea is quite broken up, and this raft is moving to the south."

"Not quite broken up," said Wah. "In shore hard yet; no much water; hold up."

"That girl's the making of us," replied Stop. "I see what you mean, Wah — make a raft of this ice. But I can't pole. I'm unable to stand."

"Never mind, Stop," said I, "we'll do it. This is, indeed, a fine opportunity, suggested by her ingenuity."

At the same time, I drew two long pieces of wood from the sledge, gave one to Wah, and then began to try and steer the ice raft through the dangerous navigation of that extraordinary channel.

It was a very difficult undertaking. The current was strong and steady, the lumps of ice heavy and dangerous, and our vessel by no means steady. Our advance was extremely slow and tedious. We kept on moving quietly to the south, but still steering towards the shore, which here seemed to lie due north and south.

"I say, guv'ner," said Stop, suddenly, with a loud cheer, "all right now; ship shape that."

I turned, and found that, while my attention was drawn off from the worthy fellow, he had taken the blanket which served to cover our load, and by means of our guns and some sticks, had erected a sail, which, acted on by a fair

and rather stiff breeze, sent us at once at a very steady pace through the water.

"Ugh!" exclaimed the Indian girl, laughing and clapping her hands, while I thanked the old fellow for his useful and ingenious contrivance.

All we had to do now was to guide the raft, to push off any invading floes or bergs, and to aid our progress a little, when we could, by means of the poles.

It was a wild and wondrous scene. The sun, which in a few days would set no more, had disappeared for a short time, leaving still a faint effulgence on the edge of the horizon. The scene was not covered by darkness, but by gloom; and in the poet's words, I might have described the scene, without much fancy, thus: —

> "Like to a man by violence awaked,
> I turned my rested eyes on every side,
> Standing erect, and looking earnestly
> To gain intelligence of where I was;
> And true it is, I found me on the brink
> Of the valley dolorous of the Abyss
> Which gathers the deep sound of countless woes.
> It was obscure, profound, and vaporous;
> So that, by straining to the depth the sight,
> I could not in it any thing discern."

Closed and serried clouds in fierce array came pouring from the caverns of the north, which aloft was the direction of the wind, though we felt it so differently, to go fill other lands and more sunny skies with gloom. I felt as if we were, in that crepuscular light, actually within the palace of the Wind and Thunderbolt, where are forged all those fiery and chilly blasts which in turns sweep every sea and continent. The fierce north-west wind, when it travels over the vast plains of America, unchecked by mountains, retains its chill influences to the twenty-sixth degree of latitude, where, under its bitter and biting blast, people have been frozen to death.* Many of my readings occurred to me,

* In Texas, a country in general too hot, I have known instances of men, camping out on the edge of Galveston Bay, being frozen to death, during a norther, while under the influence of sleep, and, in one instance, of drink.

as they will at such times. I thought of old Barentz,* and Behring, of glorious Cook, and others, and wondered if, after all, I should live to tell what I had endured, seen, and felt.

My reveries were, however, suddenly interrupted.

"Make ready," said Wah, who had glided unperceived to my side.

"What is it, girl?" I asked, shaking off my reverie, which had for a moment completely isolated me from all around.

"Hard ice come — mount sledge again — young Oak go join old Oak" — pointing to Stop — "take down sail."

I distinctly saw before me now a low and level plain of, as yet, unbroken ice, which we had nearly touched. To lessen the collision, I sung out to Stop, —

"Down with sail, old boy! — cheerily O!"

"Ay, ay, sir," said Stop, as he obeyed with the rapidity and precision of an old man-of-war's man. "What's up, guv'ner?"

"Land O!" I replied.

"Thank Heaven," said Stop, drawing a long breath, as if much relieved. "I ain't uncommonly fond of land, as a matter of principle, but I do say I'm glad to hear that."

I saw the Indian girl rush to the head of the raft, and, by a well-directed thrust with her pole, she almost arrested the progress of the singular machine on which we were floating. Then it glided slowly on, and grated harshly against the solid ice, but without any very serious collision.

"Now quick," said Wah, bounding back with the agility of a fawn. "Glouk, glouk, glouk!"

Up started the dogs, snuffed the air, which to them was probably redolent of land, and away they started with renewed vigor, we having been four hours on that strange raft, in peril of our lives.

"Bravo," shouted Stop; "this is the way. Cut away, you young 'uns — you'll be home soon."

* In the early part of the seventeenth century, Barentz, who had been sent out by the Dutch to discover the north-west passage, was wrecked, and, with his companions, fifteen in number, passed the entire winter in the seventy-sixth parallel of latitude. deriving a subsistence from eating foxes. They escaped to Lapland in the spring, in open boats.

We were, it is true, rapidly approaching the shore, which was low, bleak, and dismal; every where snow, snow, snow; though we thought we could distinguish some signs of low bushes or trees. The dogs, though considerably revived, did not proceed with that wonderful velocity which had characterized them at first starting from my winter island. Still, it was not long ere we were within four hundred yards of the shore.

"Gently, Wah," said I, as I felt the ice cracking once more under our weight, and that with a rapidity which was quite alarming, and reports, the nature of which cannot be described, so strange were they, told us that the same was taking place every where.

Wah shook her head, and urged the dogs by voice and whip to their utmost speed. And well was it, for the hind part of the sledge now sank into the water as we proceeded, so soft and weak was the ice.

"On, brave girl," I cried, as I perceived how wisely she was acting; "you should have been a warrior, not a woman."

Wah laughed and smiled proudly, despite the danger; and then pointing forward, seemed to concentrate her whole energies on the last desperate struggle.

The ice close to the bank had parted from the earth, and was moved backwards and forwards, sometimes touching the shore, sometimes receding from it, and leaving a gap of four or five feet in width. This Wah had taken in at a glance, despite the gloom which still prevailed. Stop, who had recovered his iron activity, secured the guns by rolling them in his thick blanket, while his stock of powder was made impenetrable to a ducking, which was all we had to fear for our sledge, whatever might happen to ourselves.

"Warrior, hold fast," said Wah, in a low, hissing tone.

She had chosen her moment well. Running in her dogs, as the great icy cover of the ocean receded a moment, she waited until the inevitable turn took place, and then launched the yelping crew full speed up the bank, which was steep and rough.

One instant decided all. In we plunged, with a splash, into the flowing waters; and then the energy and strength

of our untiring little animals drew us out of the water on to the snow-clad bank; and bringing us into contact with one of the bushes I have already alluded to, the sledge was upset, Wah dashed out upon the snow, while I and Stop suffered a similar accident.

"Well," said Stop, when he gained his breath, "I'm dashed if this don't beat horse-racing, cock-fighting, and every other wicked nuisance. Dogs were never intended for horses — that's clear."

"Let us not complain," I replied, in a low, hushed voice, as I rose unhurt to my feet, thanks to snow; "to these animals we owe that we stand here on the soil of America, with but the prospect of a long journey between us and home."

"Well, that is sommut, guv'ner," said Stop, rubbing himself, and growling like an old bear. "But if it is Ameriky, it ain't a bit like the Ameriky I've seen. I saw a jolly lot of houses and ships. Well! well! There's a wonderful change come over the place."

"My dear Stop, in America, which seems a land provided by Heaven as an outlet for the energy and cooped-up industry of the Old World, there is every climate. It extends from the utmost northern limits of the world to nearly the utmost southern limits. It's a wonderful country, Stop; and what is more wonderful still, we stand upon its shores."

"Good! — big land," said Wah, who, with her Indian agility, had soon leaped on her feet. "Take little rest — go on — find house — one, two, six — ten — five."

"Well, that is a rum way of counting. I fancy that girl would say the Lord's Prayer, as boys do the multiplication table, backwards. But how far is it, girl?"

"Long way — travel all day — rest little bit."

"But how, my good Wah?" asked I.

"Lift up sledge — make tent side of — dog sleep — run fast morning."

The old fellow laughed in a droll kind of way, but did not explain the cause of his laughter, though I fancied I guessed his meaning. But as I never knew, I need not venture on an explanation which might prove erroneous.

He joined us in raising up the sledge, which we soon

righted, and with the blankets and some skins made a kind of bed and tent, on which we gladly laid our weary limbs. Wah handed us some meat, and then crept under the shelter, and I followed. We were all so weary that I believe not a word was spoken, but that all were fast asleep in five minutes.

I seemed to have been in the arms of pleasing slumber about five minutes, when a tugging at my arm made me start. Wah was standing over us and pointing to the sun, which had been up some time, though the small hours of day had not arrived. I stretched myself and got up, and found, to my great surprise, that she had kindled a fire with our flint and steel, over which some meat was cooking.

"No time lose — snow melt soon — walk then ——"

"Walk!" said Stop, ruefully, holding up his wooden leg. "Shall we have to walk?"

I did not reply. I was struck dumb at this idea. I knew that, at his age and with his infirmity, it would be impossible for my poor old friend to proceed at the pace, through the vast wilderness we had to cross, which was requisite if we would effect our enterprise in the summer, so as to reach the nearest fort before winter. I certainly felt more confidence about passing a winter half-way, after one in the region we had left; but it was a sad dash to my hopes.

"I wish I had never been born," said poor Stop, with tears in his eyes. "I hope I may die, and let you advance at a proper rate."

"Hush!" I began.

"Old Gray-beard good friend — no leave him — walk far as can — find rivers — trees — make canoe — One-leg sit in canoe."

"It's all very fine, young woman, and One-leg, as you call me, is very much obliged to you — but we shall walk so precious slow — can't we keep the dogs?"

"No — much eat — get hungry — eat us ——" and the girl laughed. "Take them long as snow last — to other big water."

"What!" I exclaimed, in an agony of surprise and disappointment; "another sea?"

"Yes," said the girl, looking at me in great astonishment.

"But how are we to cross it?"

"Find Esquimaux canoe — take like sledge — leave sledge and dogs for it — change ——" and the girl laughed.

"Another sea!" groaned Stop.

"This big island — all round water — not wide one place — make canoe with skins — if no find Esquimaux."

My thoughts reverted a moment to the original object of my journey. I knew very well that I must be on the land which coasts Baffin's Bay, and if that land was in reality an island, it was probable that the channel between this island and the main land was that very nor'-west passage I had come out to seek. But just then my ambitious thoughts had fled far away, and my most earnest desire was to return to that home which to me was earthly paradise.

"You crossed it in canoes?" I said.

"Yes — cross one, two times — Esquimaux travel long way — right where sun set — go see big river — big tribe there."

"But do you mean to guide us west?" said I, pointing in that direction.

Wah nodded her head.

"Why?"

"Big stone — little stone — all stone," pointing to the south. "No eat — no drink — die."

"You know best," I continued. "And I place the whole direction of this journey in your hands. You expect to fall in with a river?"

"Yes; big river — make canoe — perhaps find one — keep gun — Esquimaux fight — great big number — shoot — eat prisoner." *

"My eyes and limbs!" said the old sailor, with a grin — "here is a pretty kettle of fish. A race on the snow again, then a sea voyage in a canoe — then a long trot to the west — then a skrimmage and a bit of robbing — and then a

* Franklin arrived at the mouth of the Mackenzie River on the 7th of July, 1826, where he encountered a large tribe of fierce Esquimaux, who pillaged his boats, and it was only by great caution, prudence, and forbearance, that the whole party were not massacred.

long journey *up* a river. If that ain't work for five years for old One-leg, I'll consent to eat him."

"Nonsense — one winter I believe possible — that is all. If it pleases God to take us from this bitter wilderness, we must not grumble at the time it takes to do it."

"Young Oak right — one winter — Great Bear Lake — rest — fish, and then down — Lake of the Woods — my home," striking her heart to signify we should be welcome.

"Them blessed dogs is done eating, I see — so here goes. I've done. Well, I must say the longer this sledge-work lasts, the better."

So saying, Stop walked to the sledge, mounted it, and invited me to follow, which I did with great willingness; and in five minutes more we were dashing away to the south-west, at the full speed of our animals.

We halted for the night at an abandoned Esquimaux village, where we found some remnants of blubber, which served for the dogs, but no canoes.

We took a long rest, under the advice of Wah-pa-nosh, and started in the morning with renewed vigor.

But as our journey was performed without events of any consequence, I may as well state that we had not seen many suns sink in the west, when we found ourselves on the edge of the salt water spoken of by the Indian girl, but found it hard frozen enough to enable us to risk crossing it with our sledge.

Away, then, we went once more — dashing, splashing through the soft and slushy snow, that almost melted as we flew, until we at last, after the most painful and disagreeable portion of the whole of our journey, came in sight of the fires of a large Esquimaux encampment, which Wah explained was on an island.*

* It was the Igloolik of Parry, and the channel was that of the Hecla and Fury. — See *Parry's Second Voyage.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

IGLOOLIK.

A HALT was declared at a respectful distance from the island, and Wah-pa-nosh, whose wonderful Indian sagacity had guided us thus far, now informed us that there were one hundred and twenty fires in the camp, that they were the relatives and friends of the men we had already encountered; and then she said, —

"Young Oak fresh — Old Oak tired — like rest — go into village — Esquimaux much 'fraid gun — like pale-faces too — big ship — come here before — no touch Pale-face. But Indian girl go — make journey by self — no go to little red man wigwam."

"Now, girl, none of your chaff; I'm a old sailor if I ain't a old soger — and I means to say this, you're commander-in-chief; and what you says we'll do."

"Exactly!" exclaimed I; "Wah-pa-nosh, we will stand by you to the last gasp. We will escape together or die together."

The girl fastened a keen, a gratified, and smiling look upon me as I spoke, and then laughed with a heartiness I was quite pleased and surprised to witness.

"The young Pale-face is a man — his voice is true as the arrow of the hunter — his color is white, but his heart is very red, and Wah-pa-nosh is very happy. A bird sings in the woods who calls Wah-pa-nosh to its nest — it is the wild bird of the woods, and to Wah-pa-nosh the voice is very sweet. But Wah-pa-nosh sees a long way before her, and she will never forget her pale-face brother, who saved her from the wigwam of the Esquimaux. Muskwash is a great warrior — his wigwam is empty — when it is full his heart will be glad; there will be no cloud before his eyes, and he will see his white brother. Wah-pa-nosh has heard her pale-face brother, and it is very good."

This was spoken in a mixture of English and French. I was able to follow with great difficulty; but I thoroughly understood the general outline.

"I am glad that Wah is pleased; she is the sweet singing bird to us."

"No," said she, laughing and blushing; why, I could not tell at first. "No! white man — Pale-face no call Indian girl singing bird — got singing bird at home — in great father country."

"Thank you, Wah," I replied; "then I will call you sister."

"Yes, sister — very good — good — Wah, Pale-face sister. Now, what do?"

"We ask you," I replied.

"Old Oak same?"

"Always follow the guv'ner."

"Esquimaux island big. Hide plenty. Little bit night come soon. No moon. Lie on island one — two hour. Then go. If Esquimaux come — fight."

"As you will, Wah; speak, and we obey always," was my quiet reply.

She at once took the advantage of a long snow-drift which had been formed against an inequality of the ice, and led the dogs round by a circuitous route, until we lost all trace and sign of the Esquimaux village. Then she turned again to the south, and we galloped along at our usual speed until we came to a halt upon a long, low, narrow neck of land, covered with patches, utterly free from snow on its southern side.

To our great dismay we then saw that the channel between the shore and Igloolik, as it had already been named, was quite free from ice — dark waves rolling up the shore and carrying on its bosom icebergs, floes, hammocks, every thing to the far-off south, there to melt as they came in conjunction with the warmer waters of the great North Atlantic Ocean.

"Sledging is done for," said Stop, with a very wry and sour face, — "all up."

"No! canoe plenty — village one mile off — Wah go fetch kayak — lend gun ——"

"But shall I go with you?" said I. "Stop will stay and guard the sledge and dogs."

Wah nodded assent, and took the gun without saying another word.

Away, then, we moved, with all the caution which the occasion demanded, skirting the southern edge of the island, as Wah declared that the northern and eastern would be alive with Esquimaux fishing in air-holes opened up in the ice — a favorite and productive occupation. The island was here almost wholly free from snow, the earth being soppy and marshy in some places, dry and hard in others, where rock and stones prevailed over the alluvial soil. The vegetation, which had been kept warm and ready by the coat of snow, was every where springing up, and in some places we found stunted bushes, as well as grass, sorrel, and sassafras. Hillocks rose at a small distance from the sea, which kept the Indian girl and myself concealed from any who might be wandering about the interior of the island.

Wah walked first, moving with all the cat-like caution of her race, while I kept close behind, my gun clutched firmly, and certainly a little nervous and excited at the novel position I was placed in. I had never shed human blood, and I fervently hoped that such a dire necessity might be spared me on the present occasion. I knew perhaps better than any man how sweet was life, and I also knew that it is as dear to the most degraded savage as to the wisest man who sits in high places and makes laws for those beneath him. Besides, my errand was scarcely to be justified. I was about to deprive these obscure and unprotected beings of one of their most useful and valuable articles. It is true that the salvation of life was the object; but if this reason were to excuse theft, what would become of society at large?

I felt I could have traded with the Esquimaux, and have exchanged something for a canoe; but then I should have been compelled to have given up the girl, which I was determined not to do, under any pressure of peril or personal danger which might occur.

I did, to speak the truth, feel very much ashamed of the part I was playing, and consequently experienced very little confidence as to its final result.

On we journeyed in complete silence for about two miles, when Wah halted.

"Hist!" said she, placing a finger on her lips, and standing erect and motionless.

"What is it?"

"Nothing — seen something — stoop low — crawl like one snake — follow Wah."

"Crawl like a snake," thought I to myself, with a dry grin; "yes — very like a snake in the grass."

We were at the bottom of a small slope which rose like a glacis towards the east. It was covered by soft grass, very short and thin, but very pleasant and cheerful to the eye. Along this Wah glided like a serpent, keeping her gun always in front, and crawling slowly and deliberately forward. Again after a few minutes she halted.

"Ugh," she whispered, with a low, noiseless laugh, as she motioned me to come up to her side.

My heart beat tumultuously — my eyes grew dim with excitement; then, and in obedience to her signs, I advanced to her side.

"Look!" said she, pointing with her finger.

We were looking down upon a winding river of considerable width, on the opposite banks of which, higher up, and at some distance, were the huts of the Esquimaux peering up, so that we just saw their roofs. A few stunted bushes intervened to protect us from discovery.

Several kayaks and oomiaks * lay up the stream, but in dangerous proximity to the village. There were, perhaps, a dozen, some large and some small; but any one of them would have served our purpose. Still I did not see how they were to be approached without danger of discovery and a terrible collision. The Esquimaux, being terrible thieves themselves, would probably be all the more ready to punish guilt in others.

I saw at once how perfect had been the training of the Indian girl — how cool was her courage and her judgment, untrammelled as they were by any of those compunctions of conscience which troubled me. She laid down her gun

* Men's canoes, women's canoes.

by my side, took off a good part of her dress — in the first place her mocassons — and then taking my knife from my belt, was about to start without saying a word, her eyes fixed all the while on the boats.

"Hist!" I said, imitating her caution and low tone of voice, and pointing to the bank, where I could plainly see the back of a human head.

"Ugh!" replied the startled girl, and then she laughed again in her mellow tones; "old squaw — very old — no good — Esquimaux no give eat — fish for self."

And clutching her knife, she made one step forward, and prepared to crawl upon the poor old creature with all the cat-like stealthiness of the red-skin race.

"Wah," said I.

"Wah listens," she replied, keeping her eyes fixed on the head.

"Don't kill her," I exclaimed, looking imploringly into her fine eyes.

"What you take Wah for! — no kill squaw — Wah Christian!"

And without another word she began her cautious advance, leaving me startled, indeed, at a revelation which, however, meant nothing more, as I afterwards found, but that, having been brought up in a fort, she had been prevailed on by an English lady to be baptized, while she had on the same occasion promised to do her utmost with her people to put an end to the practice of indiscriminately slaughtering women and children.

She moved along, apparently carelessly; so that, had the woman turned, she would not have been too much surprised; but it appeared that the poor old creature was either too deaf or too absorbed in her task to take any notice of her approach, which indeed was as noiseless and quiet as that of one of the creeping things of the forest.

Suddenly she stood right over the woman, and with wondrous rapidity clapped her hands on her mouth — still not without a slight, faint screech from the ancient Esquimaux dame, which, however, scarcely reached me. In an instant I was beside my bold and active companion, assisting to gag and tie the old creature, who truly was the

most hideous and extraordinary specimen of antiquity I had ever seen.

Wah pointed silently to a tiny canoe, just enough for one, in which the woman had crossed over from the village to the little bight, which seemed, from the numerous fish she had caught with a primitive hook and line and rod, to be abundant in the finny tribe.

Wah delayed not one moment, but entering the canoe, pushed out.

"Wagh!" she exclaimed, unable to restrain her wonder as she felt herself carried up the stream, she never having had occasion to notice before the phenomenon of the tide. But with this one exclamation all sign of wonder ceased, as she began paddling vigorously for the opposite shore, which she reached in a very few minutes. She then landed, fastened the canoe, and began her slow and cautious advance up the bank towards the place where the fleet of large boats lay, all the Esquimaux being out fishing in their smaller ones.

On she went with stealthy and silent step, until she reached a slight bend in the river, when she was completely lost to sight.

My anxiety was now terrible. I expected every minute to hear her cry, and to behold her flying from her late captors, when I should be compelled to cover her retreat by the use of firearms. I sat then moodily alongside the old woman, who glanced at me from her bleared red eyes with a fierceness which showed the tensity of her rage and fury. She probably expected to be finally put to death, or at all events to be robbed of her fish and canoe — intentions which, under the circumstances, she had every right to expect to see carried out.

I noticed with extreme satisfaction, after about ten minutes, that the flood tide was at its height, and that, if it did not yet turn, it was at all events stationary. This I saw by the position of the canoe on the opposite bank, which, after lying up stream for some time, then floated carelessly out into the water, sometimes moving up, sometimes down. Then ten minutes elapsed, and the canoe was carried close in shore by the action of the ebb tide.

At this instant Wah came in sight, standing upright in a large kayak, which she paddled along with extreme rapidity towards me. The wind, the tide, and her impelling force, were all favorable; and it was not many minutes ere she was at the edge of the water, motioning me to enter.

"And the squaw?" said I, unwilling to leave the poor old creature in that wretched state.

"Make haste — Esquimaux come too much quick; soon untie squaw."

I made no further remark, but stepped cautiously into the frail, but somewhat large bark, in the bottom of which I laid my guns, and took up a paddle which I began to use with all the energy and science I possessed. The open sea was not half a mile from us, and then we had about two miles along shore to go, to join Stop.

Meanwhile the old fellow had nestled cosily under shelter of the baggage, laid an axe close to his hand, and another above his head, and then had lit a pipe, which he began to enjoy with all the luxurious solemnity of an old sailor. He was excited and alarmed as to the consequences of our expedition; and altogether the extraordinary adventures, which overwhelmed him daily, began to have a certain effect upon the worthy fellow's mind.

"All this is mighty queer, Mr. Stop. Are you quite sure it's all right? Am I up in them cold seas I hear tell of, or am I dreaming? — I can't make it out. No. First I pops upon a island, then I pops upon Master Henry — God bless him! — then a Indian girl — that's the conclusion of the affair. Now, Stop, is that girl sweet upon him, or is she not? That's what you'd better see to, Mister Stop. No nonsense. There's Fanny at home, a-crying her blessed eyes out about her poor Henry, I know. No, I can't allow it — no gallevanting, Master Henry — Stop says it — no making love to copper kettles — no tinkering work — no. I'm right up and down, straightforward; and if I sees any nonsense, I shall speak up like a man. Sometimes I think he's too grateful to the girl. He's young, and she's young, and it comes as natural to young people to love as to smoke this pipe. But Henry's as good as married, and so is Wah,

and one's white and the other's red — it won't do. Besides, he'd be turning hunter, trapper, or something of that sort."

How I laughed when he first told me this, I can scarcely describe. Ah me! I wish I could always have laughed at it altogether. Poor Wah! Good, faithful, devoted girl.

"A pretty pair of children — talk of robbing orchards. Ain't they gone on a nice expedition? A boat stealing. May do up here among the cold 'uns, but won't do nowhere else. Where'd they go to in England? Ah! Mr. Stop, I fancy this climate don't improve the morals. Dog stealing's nothing, I suppose;" and the old fellow laughed heartily, closing his eyes as he did so, to expel the tears that came involuntarily to fill them.

When he opened his eyes, he started, and then sat staring before him with blank astonishment.

Four Esquimaux, armed with spears, bow and arrows, and knives made of iron hoops off some barrels they had received from certain whalers, stood menacingly in front of him, shaking their spears, drawing their bows, and dancing and capering in a wild and strange way. They pointed to the dogs, they pointed to the sledge, they pointed to the north, and made signs which Stop soon understood.

"A pretty set of liars you are. You mean, you dirty, ugly little landlubbers, to say that I've killed the owners and stolen the sledge — do you? No! I did not kill any of them; and if I did take the sledge, why see, you ugly baboons, I left a prime boat and lots of grub for it."

The Esquimaux shook their heads, and one advanced so near as to take up the axe, which lay above the head of Stop. He then turned to his companions, who began to examine the tool with great eagerness and delight. Stop clutched the other axe, felt for his pistols, drew his cap nearly over his eyes, to protect himself from their arrows, and waited.

"When you've done with that there plaything, you'll just give it up," said Stop, who knew the value of an axe to us.

The Esquimaux turned round, advanced close to Stop, and one of them began making a speech — chiefly, however, by signs.

He pointed to the sledge and dogs, which he gave Stop to understand were the property of his tribe; he pointed to the north, and sang in a low, monotonous tone what sounded like a death-chant; then he pointed to the axe, and placed it under his garment, and then held out his hand to Stop to shake.

"O, I see, that's as plain as the spelling-book! We've stolen your sledge, killed your friends, and all that; but you see an axe which you value — and you are willing to be friends and forget all, if I give you the axe. Here's a pretty go, and no guv'ner. Well, I suppose I'd better do it; but I wish they'd make haste, or else we shall have the whole tribe here."

He then made signs to the Esquimaux to keep the axe. But at that instant another of the savages saw the second implement of the same kind in the hands of Stop, and made a dart at it. Stop rose to his feet and waved it round his head with a tremendous cry.

"No! you thieving landlubbers — this is mine, and I mean to keep it. Sheer off, or I tries its sharpness on one of your topworks."

The Esquimaux hesitated; but they were four, and their adversary but one man, without any of those alarming weapons the Esquimaux had so recently seen in the hands of the crew of the Hecla and Fury, as I afterwards learned. They accordingly prepared their bows, raised their spears, one even lifting the light axe to throw it at the unfortunate victim of their desire to be possessed of so valuable an instrument.

In his hurry to rise, Stop had not used his usual circumspection with regard to his wooden leg, which had got entangled in the reins of the weary dogs, who, after just raising their heads, had again laid them down to sleep after their unusual fatigue. As therefore he waved his axe in one hand and drew a pistol with the other, he fell backwards on the sledge.

On came the Esquimaux, with a horrid yell of delight and anger.

Stop did not lose his self-possession. He righted himself at once, and levelling his pistol, though lying backwards, he

fired. Two other cracks of guns, and two other streams of fire, followed almost at the same instant, and three Esquimaux bit the dust, or rather, fell sprawling on the damp earth, while the other fled with horrid yells and cries.

"By jingo!" exclaimed Stop, rising, "here's a pretty go!"

"Make haste — no talk — work!" said Wah, springing to his side, and letting loose the startled dogs.

She then coolly despatched the wounded Esquimaux, and actually took their scalps before I could interfere.

"And that girl called herself a Christian," said I, turning away in deep disgust.

I knew, however, that for a century, white men, who should have known better, gloried in the number of scalps they could show.*

But this was no time for reflection or thought. It was an hour for rapid and immediate action, and we all *did* act without a word. The contents of the sledge were transferred to the canoe, chiefly by the Indian girl. I trembled so, I was so nervously convulsed, that I was of little use. I had wounded a man at all events, if Wah-pa-nosh had finally killed him. It is true, I had no choice, for Stop's life was in their hands; and under the circumstances I was really not to be blamed. But taking human life is a sore thing; and those who so coolly talk of the necessity of capital punishments in their closets, should know what it is to take life with your own hand, and what a fearful and dreadful thing it is to be cut off in the full pride of manhood.

War may be necessary; some say it is; but it is not the glorious, splendid thing some would make it. A great battle sounds well, when described by the poet, who talks of the clarion and the drum, and the clang of arms, and the shock of cavalry, and the waving plumes, and the exciting mixture of activity and solemnity about it; but he tells you not of all the horrid and vile scenes which catch the eye, when

* The white scouts and border men, on both sides, during the American wars, scalped unhesitatingly.

the excitement is over, and the mind takes in the whole under the influence of reason and calmness.

But I cannot moralize when my task is to describe.

We had loaded our boat with every thing valuable; I had laid the first axe on the bodies of the slain, to intimate that I offered it in payment of the kayak; Stop and I were in the canoe, and Wah on shore letting go the thong — that thong that served as painter — when we saw that we were pursued on two sides. On the shore side, we saw coming a crowd of savages — shrieking, crying, yelling, and gesticulating in a way that was really and truly frightful to hear. At the distance of about two hundred yards out at sea, and evidently trying to head us, was a fleet of boats, some manned by men and some by women, but all intent on reaching us before we started.

Wah bounded into the canoe and seized a paddle, in which we imitated her, and began pulling "for dear life" out upon the dancing waters of that gloomy sea. It was evident, however, that the kayaks and oomiaks would overtake us, and equally evident also what would be our fate after what had happened on that unfortunate island, where we on our passage carried rapine, slaughter, and death.

"No run away," said Wah, shaking her head — "fight."

"I see it! I see it!" I replied, now very stern and determined; for I at once saw the imminence of the danger.

We were now about a hundred yards from the shore, quite out of any danger from the missiles of the crowd, which yelled, and shrieked, and danced, to encourage their fellows; while we were not more than eighty yards from the advancing kayaks and oomiaks. In ten minutes they would be aboard of us. We laid in our paddles; I and Stop took our guns; Wah seized a bow and arrow, her prize from the Esquimaux; and all prepared with stern brows for that last terrible struggle — resolved, at all events, to sell our lives dearly.

"Guv'ner," said Stop, in a whisper.

"Yes."

"My sight ain't as good as it was," he continued.

"Well, Stop."

"And we must fire quick, guv'ner. You'd better stand

up and blaze away, while I load. Mind, it's no use wasting powder. Every shot must hit its man."

I nodded, and levelled my gun, and as rapidly raised it again, as an unlooked-for event checked my fire and probably saved the life of a savage.

We all sat still and waited.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TRUCE.

The kayaks had ceased rowing, and a small, light canoe, holding one man only, was seen advancing towards us with signs which Wah at once declared to be indicative of a pacific humor. I and Stop at once laid down our guns upon our knees, and waited until the messenger of peace came sufficiently near to speak with her.

He then addressed us in his own language.

I pointed to Wah, who looked fixedly at the little savage, and said two or three words.

The man hesitated, and then, after a few words from Wah, he made a speech, speaking for some little time with great rapidity. The Indian girl, when he had finished, quietly translated his words.

They were to the effect that the Esquimaux were sorry that any thing should have happened to disturb the friendly feeling they experienced towards the English; that they had been kindly treated by the men in big ships, and were therefore willing to forget and forgive all that had happened, on two conditions — one of which was, that we should make presents to the widows of the men who had been killed; the other, that we restore to them the girl of their tribe, whom we had taken away from a hunting party, with their dogs and sledge.

I made angry signs that I would not accede to the second request, and then added that I could not to the first, being too poor.

Wah translated my reply; upon which the parlementary made a rapid sign to his fellows, which was responded to by yells of the most fearful description, by a volley of arrows, and a general rush towards us. I had no remedy; so I fired into the very thickest part of the group, handed the gun to Stop, and then fired again, he loading in such a way that the Esquimaux could not tell what he was about.

I had fired four shots, when a halt of the Esquimaux took place; and at this moment a light air being felt to fan our cheeks, we hurriedly rigged a tiny sail, and then took to our paddles, and began our course across that tossing sea, whose dark waters seemed to threaten us every moment with destruction. The kayaks meanwhile had wholly ceased rowing, and presently returned to the shore with mournful cries, which made us first aware that our shots had really told.

And here we were once more upon the open sea — in what latitude or longitude I could not tell; but sailing along to the land before us, which I was unable to say was or was not an island, or that continent we so eagerly sought. And our sole guide under all these difficulties was a young Indian girl.

We soon lost sight of Igloolik — to my great delight, as the very idea of it made me sad and melancholy; and about three hours later we came in sight of fresh land, and were soon in the shelter of a bay, and close to a shore with rocks running along its edge, and above that a level plain, clothed with rich grass, with plants in flower — a cheerful and pleasant sight.

We landed at once, and after taking some food, had a conference as to our future proceedings. We were, as I afterwards discovered, on Melville Peninsula.

"Now, Wah," said I, "have you ever been here before?"

The girl nodded.

"When?"

"When me take prisoner, brought here."

"How did you travel?"

"In canoe."

"But not along this coast?" pointing to the shores of the bay.

"No. Carry canoe over land — another big water there," pointing to the west.

"I tell you what, guv'ner, this is a kind of blind navigation. It's my opinion we're down amongst some thousand of islands, and will get out of this blessed country in about half a century. What's to be done? Building materials don't turn up every where."

"What do you advise, Wah?" I asked.

"Drag canoe — make sledge one, two stick, drag — find river — go down — reach big water — sail 'long shore."

"Well, this is the queerest sailing ever I knew; we're to drag this here craft at our tails along the land. Well, I suppose it's all right."

"It is the best plan, Stop. The girl is right — what we should do without her I do not know. I shall never be able to reward her."

"Well, that's considering, guv'ner. Some people is satisfied with one thing, and some with another. I dare say Wah won't be very particular greedy."

"What you say, Gray-beard?" said Wah, laughing.

"Nothing particular. But what are you going to do with them two whalebones?"

"Make sledge," replied Wah, who had taken two long whalebones from inside the canoe, and was fitting them under the frail machine. We rose to aid her, and then proceeded to take that rest we so much needed.

Wah turned the canoe upside down, and got under it, while I and Stop lay down in our furs beside a fire of wood, weeds, and a kind of peat we discovered near the camp.

After a rest of rather longer duration than we intended, we rose and breakfasted, loaded the small boat, and Wah starting off over the plain to show us the way, we drew it by a leathern thong, and commenced our journey. I and the Indian girl took the boat duty in turns, Stop being unable to be of any service in this particular, on account of his infirmity. Our journey was pleasant enough for some hours while over a grassy plain; but soon this ended, and rocks, stones, and rugged glens took the place of the level ground. Here our labor was very heavy. Indeed, it was for four

days a most fearful and horrible journey. Over wild hills, barren and desolate; generally without water, found sometimes in holes just in time to save us from perishing; our canoe a burden to be carried now, our provisions beginning to run low, the sky threatening and fearful, and the summer stalking on with fearful rapidity.

Scarcely a word was interchanged. We were a gloomy and silent party. I think I can see ourselves now, creeping up a horrid glen, composed of basaltic rocks, quartz, ore, sandstone, and flinty slate, with not a blade of grass, or shrub, or tree, to diversify or change the scene; poor Stop, loaded with a huge pack, his gun slung on his shoulder, crawling up the hill-side, aided by his knife, which he planted in the fissures of the rocks; I and Wah — she behind pushing up the frail canoe, I standing on a ledge above, hauling it up by the deer-skin thong — all faint, weary, exhausted, and more inclined to sit down and die than to exert ourselves.

At last, crawling along on our hands and knees, lifting up the boat by slow degrees, we reached the top of the mountain.

Our burst of joy and relief may be conceived.

At our feet, some thousand of yards distant only, was the sea, with a river falling into it, on the banks of which were bushes and green grass, while the waters of that portion of the Arctic Ocean were entirely free from ice. Down we went, despite our weariness of foot, down the steep declivities of the mountain, until we reached the beach, where we launched our canoe, and slowly paddled along the coast until we entered the river, on the grassy bank of which we lay down to rest.

I fell asleep at once.

I was awakened at last by a touch from the hand of Wah, who gravely pointed to Stop.

He had laid down his gun, his axe, his pack, and his shot and powder-pouches, and had brought them near me. Then taking off his wooden leg, he had placed it under his head, and to all appearance lay dead on the ground. A low moaning alone showed that he was still alive. I tried to rise, but I could not — I could only crawl. And was it

come to this — that after enduring such fearful perils, we were to perish on that bleak strand at last?

"It's all up — I can't go a step farther," moaned old Stop. "I've taken my leg off, and I'm going to die. Master Henry, you go ahead. This old carcass is worn out; but you are young, and may yet escape — cut away, guv'ner, and leave me. It's of no use talking. I can't put that leg on no more. Dot-and-carry-one will be buried in this here grimstone land."

"Stop," said I, in a faint tone, "don't make me worse. I feel dying already, and if you talk this way, I shall never get up again."

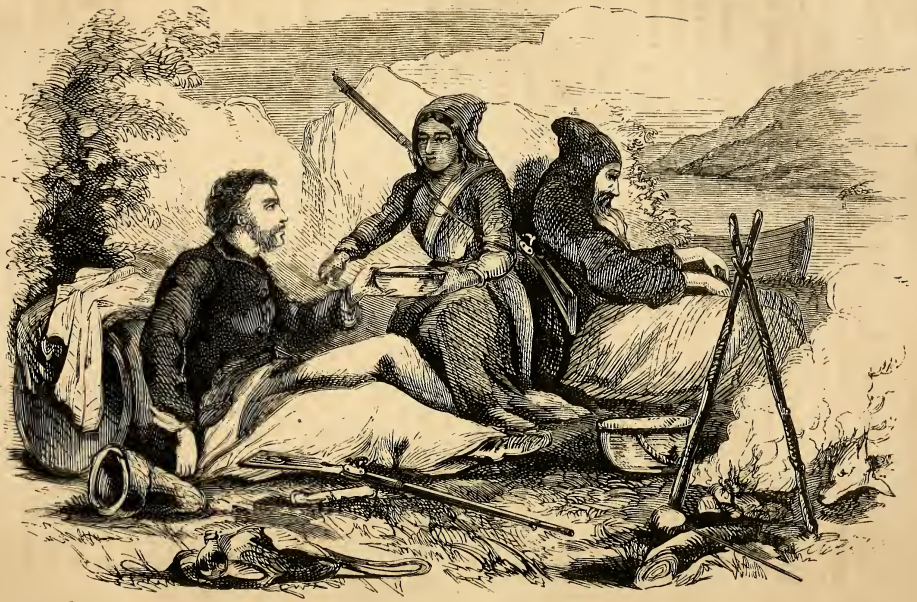
"Eh, what?" exclaimed the old fellow, sitting up, and proceeding to buckle on his leg with great gravity — "guv'ner ill? Well, Stop will wait. He can die any time. But, Master Henry, no nonsense — if you die, what am I to say to your father and to your mother, eh? And poor little Fanny. O, my!"

And the poor fellow actually cried aloud as his weak state compelled him to lie back once more.

I now explained to Wah, that our state of body was caused by living on salt provisions, by our superhuman fatigue in crossing the rugged hill of the Melville Peninsula, and above all, by want of water. I added, that we could only hope to proceed after two or three days of complete rest, taking during that time nothing but fresh meat, with plenty of green herbage, such as sorrel, &c. Even with this diet and repose, I did not hold out much hope of our final escape from this dreary wild, and begged her to take the canoe and depart on her way home, leaving us to our wretched fate.

The girl knelt down by my side, took my hand, placed her hand upon my forehead, looked at my parched lips, and shook her head.

"Ill," said she; "two — three day rest make well. Lie still — Wah hunt, fish — fetch sorrel — try. No talk about Wah go. What Wah done, make Pale-face talk so? Wah never leave white brother. Wah only die once — great Manitou shake him head, and send girl back, if she leave her friends. No!" she added, standing erect; "Young Oak be quiet. Talk no more of Wah go."



THE INDIAN GIRL NURSING STOP AND HENRY. Page 193.

She then took my gun, some fish-hooks, leaped into the canoe, and began paddling up the river.

And there we lay, helpless as two children, on the ground; shivering, though Wah had covered us up with furs; our ankles swelled, our heads on fire, our eyes hot and feverish, and our minds wandering.

"This is what comes of poking up in No Man's Land," muttered Stop. "I should like to know what we want up here in these here piles of ice and rock. There ain't nothing to catch, there ain't no glory, and I'm blest if there's any fun. O!"—and he groaned terribly.

"What is it, Stop?" I asked, unable to look at him, but shivering all the time under my bearskin.

"Don't know—aches and pains—sleepy too;" and away he dozed. I did the same, until the light step of Wah awoke me. I saw at once she had been unsuccessful, by her slow and reluctant step.

"No game, no fish," she said, sitting down beside me, and speaking in a soft, low voice—"only this;" and she showed me a handful of sorrel.

I gladly put some of this in my mouth, and gave some to Stop, who, however, a little delirious, asked for something more solid, and would not accept any explanation.

Our larder was utterly empty. There was not a remnant of food left.

Never, to my dying day, shall I forget the devotion of that dear good girl, on that terrible night, when I and Stop expected but to die. She bathed our burning foreheads with water; she boiled some sorrel in a little Esquimaux vessel, until it became a glutinous mass, and fed us with it; she wiped our eyes, when pain brought tears to them; she bore patiently the whining and repining of poor old Stop; she refused to take the least rest; and when at last he had dozed off to sleep, and I was quiet, she crept cautiously away, took up my gun, and glided along the shore with all the calm dignity of her race.

And she had never seen her sex treated in any other way than severely; she had lived in her youth among those who ill-used women, and made them beasts of burden, and knew not the blessings given them by Heaven. Who does? Even

in the lands called Christian and civilized, the gentle beings who minister to us in sickness, who cheer us in difficulty, who delight us in prosperity, are not treated as they should be. It is only the brute, degraded and demoralized by drink, who beats and strikes; but there are a thousand instances of neglect, and unkindness, and ingratitude meted out unto the fair half of creation, which the law knows not, regards not.

I was musing on this and other things, when I saw Wah-pa-nosh bounding like a mountain elk down the hill-side — a whole deer upon her shoulders. She paused not until she reached the fire. Then she cast the animal at our feet and set to work. She skinned it rapidly — cut several pieces off, and put them to broil — broke the marrow bones, and proceeded to make of their contents a kind of soup very much appreciated by the trappers and hunters of the Rocky Mountains. As soon as it was completely ready, with a mixture of sorrel and a hard bit of salt meat we had refused to eat, she gave it to us to drink. We swallowed it gladly, and felt so much relieved that we were able then to sit up and eat a tolerably hearty meal.

The delight and joy of poor Wah-pa-nosh was beyond all expression. She handed us the hot broil; she watched us eat; she ate herself, at our earnest request; she gave us more soup; she laughed as she saw us evidently reviving, and kept cutting more meat until we begged her to stop.

"Where have you been, girl?" said Stop, when his hunger was appeased, pointing to her feet, which, despite her mocassons, were cut and bleeding.

"Poor Wah!" I exclaimed, "why have you not attended to your wounds?"

The girl looked gently and smilingly at me; and then rising, went and bathed her feet, which she afterwards rubbed with venison fat, and having mended her mocassons, put them on again.

Then she came and lay down, utterly exhausted, and went to sleep.

When I awoke, Wah and Stop still lay calm in repose. I did not disturb them, but got up, and found that I was much better, and quite able to move about. I quietly then

stirred up the fire, and had cooked an ample supply of venison, when Wah started to her feet.

"What you do that for?" she asked, almost angrily. "Squaw work."

"But you were weary and tired, Wah, and I could not wake you."

"Never mind — squaw work — no work for warrior ——" and she took the ramrod out of my hand.

"Well, what cheer, guv'ner? That little puss is an awful good nurse. I feel all the better for that ere soup. It warmed me, it did; and I think I could walk a bit."

"No walk — canoe," said Wah.

"Well, that's better. So you're better too, Master Henry. I'm glad of it. Wasn't I rather queer about the upper story, eh, guv'ner?"

"All right now, Stop," said I, without answering his question, unwilling to remind him of his weakness — to avoid which I rose and busied myself in helping Wah to prepare the canoe for departure.

In half an hour more we departed from that bay, which I have in my own mind always designated as Sickness Bay.

I need not tell all the weary episodes of that journey, — how we coasted, landed to rest and avoid squalls, crossing here and there narrow necks of land — I could not say whether they were peninsulas or not — and dragging or carrying our boat. I need not descant on our sufferings from hunger and thirst; the poor Indian girl our only stay, I and Stop being still unable to hunt. I will only say that, after three weeks of fearful vicissitudes, sufferings, and perils, we passed round what I now am sure was Point Turnagain, and at last found ourselves at the mouth of a large river. This we began ascending, until we reached Lake Con-ge-ca-tha-wha-cha-ga.

Now began our perils, as our devoted companion had warned us. We were surrounded on all sides by hostile tribes — by the Esquimaux, the Copper Indians, the Hare Indians, the Dog-Rib Indians, and other warlike races — some of whom were armed, she said, with guns given to them by the traders, who twice a-year visited the mouth of the Mackenzie River. These, however, were chiefly the

Loucheux, or Quarrellers of Mackenzie, with whom it is not likely we should come in contact.*

Weak and forlorn as we were, we determined to run the gantlet of all these dangers, and begin our ascent of the Hood River, reached Contway-to or Rum Lake, and then taking a rest, pushed for the Yellow Knife.

CHAPTER XX.

BATTLE WITH THE ESQUIMAUX.

Our journey was now very laborious; heavy portages occurred continually; the river, being confined within high banks, rushed along madly, and we had continually to leave the water and carry our boat over falls, along stony ways, and sometimes away round over rocks and hills at some distance from the rushing torrent. We at last, however, came to what Wah declared would be our last serious portage. It was, however, painfully laborious. Stop, who was now much recruited, took a large package on his shoulders, while I and Wah carried the boat.

Away then we went up a steep bank, along a plain, then up the sides of an arid and rocky mountain, until we reached the summit, where, in a kind of hole in the rock, we were compelled to rest for the night. For several days we had been reduced to live upon fish, which was not pleasant, as it did not enable us to cope with fatigue in the same way that meat did. Still we were so grateful for any thing that was thrown in our way, that we did not complain.

On beginning our march early next day, we saw clearly in the distance the waters of another river, which subsequently proved to be the Coppermine. We reached it towards the evening, and Wah intimated that we must descend its waters.

* On this part of the world consult the valuable work of Sir John Franklin, "Second Expedition to the Polar Sea," 4to, London. Murray, 1828.

"But that will take us down to the sea again," I said, somewhat anxiously.

"Not go all way down. Pass Esquimaux village — then land — carry canoe again."

"This is a odd kind of navigation this," said Stop, gravely shaking his head; "a carrying our ship on our shoulders, and then a blind sailing. Where we are going to I don't know. Wah does, you will say. Good — if the guv'ner's satisfied, I am; so go ahead."

The river was not very wide, nor very deep, but it was exceedingly grateful to our feelings to travel on its waters, and to paddle with the current, instead of carrying the boat over mountains and hills, slowly and laboriously, all the more from the fatigue which Stop experienced.

"If it were not for this boating, Stop, I don't think you'd ever do it," said I, as I assisted him in.

"I don't think at all — I know I should not — it doesn't stand to reason. An old file like me, with a 'dot-and-carry-one,' was never made for travelling."

Stop occupied the bows of the boat, Wah the centre, with a paddle, while I had the other, and the duty of steering. The river flowed over an uneven, stony bed, betwixt precipitous rocky walls, and was full of rapids. It could not be descended by any boat having a greater draught of water than a few inches; and even a small canoe must frequently be carried over land for some distances, to avoid the numerous obstacles which occur.*

For several days we travelled in this way, until we reached a spot where Wah said we must soon turn off towards the lake, where she purposed camping for the winter. As we must pass a place where the Esquimaux usually camp in large numbers, she warned us that great caution was now to be observed.

It was about two hours before the usual period for our evening halt. The river had widened out considerably, and presented the appearance of a small lake, and as we entered it, we at once distinguished, on a low, flat bank, a long line of huts of a conical form. We could also distinctly per-

* Franklin describes all these difficulties in a very interesting narrative.

ceive a perfect cloud of Esquimaux strolling carelessly about among the tents.

"Ugh!" said the Indian girl, pointing to the crowded encampment.

"Guv'ner, here's a army!" exclaimed Stop. "I think we'd better cut and run for it."

"No," interrupted Wah; "run — Esquimaux catch directly — make 'fraid — shoot — no run after. Try not see at all."

The open lake was about three miles long and a mile wide. On the opposite bank to where the Esquimaux were encamped were some bushes and elevated ground, and beyond this, hills. Over this we had to travel and carry our boat, which was to be abandoned at the last extremity only. Wah pointed to one spot, the only place where we could land with the boat; and stooping low, we cautiously directed our course towards it.

"I'll just freshen my priming," said Stop, in a low whisper.

"Do," replied I, mechanically; for the horrid necessity of bloodshed was a thing I abhorred.

On we went floating down the lake, which was so shallow in places that we stuck fast, thus delaying our advance several times. Still we did progress, and in about an hour — more than half of which we had been lying aground — we were three hundred yards from the beginning of the "portage," and about three quarters of a mile from the Esquimaux encampment.

"They've seed us! they've seed us!" cried Stop, with a flourish of his gun.

"Paddle," said Wah, calmly, urging the canoe onward with redoubled zeal.

I imitated her.

But there they came — a cloud of men and women, some in the water, some in flat boats: all yelling, screaming, crying, in the most fearful fashion, as we could even tell at that distance over the quiet waters.

"Yell away," roared Stop — "you may scream your blessed selves hoarse, but it won't do. We're not going to be frightened with rattles and noises like children. Pull away, guv'ner."

"Stop," said Wah, suddenly, as we glided slowly up to the bank.

I did so, and it was really a wondrous sight to see that girl guide the bark canoe quietly up, and make it strike a point in the shore which enabled us to leap on the bank and unload with the greatest ease to ourselves. We did this with extreme rapidity, and then carried the canoe up some little distance, and looked about.

We were about fourteen feet above the level of the river, which for some distance was skirted by precipitous banks, except at this one landing. Two clumps of bushes marked the spot where the cliffs commenced, and within one of these I. concealed myself, while Stop took possession of the other.

Wah stood upright on the summit of the bank, warning the Esquimaux back with her hand.

On they came — a motley herd of at least three hundred, armed with spears and bows and arrows, urging their boats, each holding only one man, by means of their long double paddles, with extreme rapidity. Others came rushing on in the water, rarely reaching above their knees. All yelled and brandished bow and spear with extreme fierceness. They were within a hundred yards of the shore already.

"You are nearest," said I to Stop — "fire over their heads, and make them stop."

"Never fear," he replied, "but I'll let them see the gun is loaded."

On they came — still crowding and coming within dangerous proximity.

Then came on me that horrid thirst for blood which is so inexplicable. I saw red. I suppose the ground of our feelings on such occasions is fear, and that worked up to a pitch of feverish excitement, we cannot control our ideas, even our vision. A man who spent his life in the slaughter-house declared that he always saw red when he killed.

Stop levelled and fired. He was a very good shot, and he struck the paddle out of the hand of the foremost Esquimaux. A halt of the whole party at once took place, and in a minute they were clustering together in a mass. I noticed many articles of European manufacture — among

them, hatchets, knives, and other things,* which made me more uneasy, as they probably would be led to expect that we too had such articles at our disposal.

Wah now raised her voice, and she afterwards explained the conversation.

"What want you with the Pale-faces?" she asked.

"Who are you?" said a startled Esquimaux, recognizing his own language, while the others formed in line.

"A friend of the men that come in big ships," she continued.

"Where are the big ships?" asked the Esquimaux.

"A long way off."

"What are these white men doing here?"

"Hunting."

"Well, then, Esquimaux hunt for them. Come to tents — got big boat, white tent too. White man leave † behind."

"The white men are in a hurry. They have to return to their friends. They cannot stop with the little men of the north."

A pause of some duration now ensued, during which the Esquimaux appeared to confer in whispers; some pointed up the river, some down, some across to us.

"They are going to fight," said Stop. "We're safe for a skrimmage."

"I fear it, my friend. But as it is not to be avoided, let us contend until the last gasp. Better die at once than perish by slow degrees up here."

The Esquimaux divided into three groups — two very small in numbers, one large and numerous. As soon as the smaller detachments had started, the main body made a

* Franklin's Second Expedition says, "The boats were drawn up on the shore, out of the reach of any flood; and the remainder of the articles that we had brought to give the Esquimaux were put into boxes and placed in the tents, that they might be readily found by the first party of that nation that passed this way. They consisted of fish-hooks, lines, hatchets, knives, files, fire-steels, kettles, combs, awls, needles, thread, blue and red cloth, gartering, and beads sufficient to serve a considerable number of Esquimaux for several years."

† "The tents were securely piloted, and the Union Jack hoisted, partly for the purpose of attracting the attention of the natives, and partly to show them the mode of using the tents, which may prove to be very useful in their summer journeys." — *Franklin's Second Expedition*, p. 269.

rush at the landing. We fired instantly, and loaded without looking to see the result.

Some, terrified by the explosion as well as by the fatal wounding of two of their party, had halted; but several, undismayed by the fate of their comrades, were rushing forward. My heart grew sick within me. I had little hope of escape. Their numbers were alone sufficient to overwhelm us. Even if we did succeed in driving them back, it was under circumstances that made me miserable. I was no wild trapper of the mountains, utterly regardless of human life. I looked upon it as a sacred thing, as dear to the untutored creature who dwelt in those arid wastes, as to the man living in the lap of luxury and enjoyment.

But self-preservation made me certainly more callous than I otherwise should have been, and I determined not to be taken alive.

About twenty of the hideous little creatures had reached the landing, brandishing their spears and preparing their bows and arrows. The ascent was steep and difficult, especially in the face of two armed men. Two were before the others, and these paid for their rashness dearly. They fell beneath our volley, and were carried away by the stream, which just here is deeper than usual.

But not one of the others halted. They appeared mad with rage, and the desire to avenge their companions had doubtless its effect in making them reckless.

"Load," said I, in a low tone to my companion, "load — fire once more; then it will be hand-to-hand."

"I am ready," replied Stop, in a low, husky tone, that denoted his extreme emotion.

I was driving the bullet home, when Wah, whose operations we had not remarked for some time, stood up between us. She had been lying on the ground, and peering over the bank, under the shelter of a large, loose stone. This stone was supported by a few small ones underneath. These Wah had been cautiously removing.

The Esquimaux, at least twenty in number, were climbing up the steep bank on their hands and knees, one behind the other, when Wah rose, took the axe from her belt, and using it as a lever, tried to start the lump of rock. I saw

her object and shuddered. But, closing my eyes, I still rammed my bullet home.

A shriek, a wild yell, such as I never heard before, and wish never to hear again, made me open my eyes. The stone had disappeared, and Wah stood erect upon the bank, looking calmly and triumphantly at the consequences of her wild and terrible deed.

Not an Esquimaux was to be seen on the bank. They were struggling in the river, amid a whirl of water and earth, the stone having carried away a perfect avalanche of mould with it. Three bodies floating down the stream told of the terrible havoc she had made.

"Now is our time!" I said; "let us fly, and leave this horrible scene."

"Hist!" whispered Wah, gliding to my side with all the stealth of a cat.

"What is it now?" I asked.

"Look."

I looked. On the edge of the bank, at some little distance below where Stop was posted, I distinctly saw four men crawling along upon their hands and knees, now stopping, now moving on, but always with more caution than I conceived belonged to their race.

I communicated the fact to Stop in a low whisper.

A sheet of flame and the crack of a gun immediately followed; and three of the men rose to their feet. The fourth never moved. His companions yelled fearfully, and then came running on. I reluctantly enough followed Stop's example, which, however, only checked the progress of one of the bold little warriors of the tribe.

"Ugh," said Wah, darting forward with her axe, to meet the two men, who were within twenty feet of our ambush.

"Stop, gal," roared my old companion, jumping up, and laying down his gun, into which he had already slipped a charge; "this is the thing for them."

In one hand he had a pistol, in the other a knife, and he looked indeed a strange and wild being as he rushed on to meet the Esquimaux in hand-to-hand conflict. I had no time for observation on the strangeness of the scene, for they closed at once, Wah attacking a man armed with a spear, Stop one provided with a European axe.

The opponent whom Stop had undertaken to cope with, waved his hatchet about, exceedingly awkwardly it is true, but he was more than a match for the bold but feeble old man — at all events, so I feared; and it was with eager haste that I rushed forward, ramming my load as I ran. I caught up the good old man's gun as I passed, thrust the ramrod down, still running on, and returned it to its place.

When I again gave my undivided attention to the scene, my very veins appeared to refuse their office, and my blood seemed to cease to flow.

Stop lay on the ground on his back, as did his adversary, both still and motionless. Wah, too, was down, and the Esquimaux was poising his spear to strike. He stooped, however, first to pick up the shining axe which lay at his feet, an attempt to throw which, as if it had been a tomahawk, had brought Wah to the ground.

This hesitation cost him his life. As he rose to take aim at the girl, I fired. I saw him fall — I knew that he was dead — I distinguished Wah crawling up; but my first impulse was to rush to Stop.

"Speak to me, my dear friend!" I exclaimed in passionate tones.

"We're victorious," he replied. "Ah! the incompletes should never go into a regular engagement. It was that blessed dot-and-carry-one nearly lost me my life. I shot that poor wretch with one of these here popguns, and got his axe against my legs at the same moment. Luckily it was the timber one, and I only fell. Well, who's killed and who's wounded?"

"Too many, Stop; but up, my friend, and let us be moving."

"Make haste," said Wah. "They think a bit — no fight again. Run after us by and by!"

Stop rose, took his gun, picked up the other axe, and then we returned to our canoe, which, without a moment's delay, we hoisted on our shoulders, and struck off at a brisk pace towards the hills. We found the first steep enough, and we were soon obliged to walk with more calmness, though our anxiety to proceed was very much quickened by the sight of a small party of Esquimaux shuffling along

after us in the distance, evidently bent on visiting us with retribution for our terrible deeds, though Wah declared their motive to be nothing else but plunder.

A beaten path or trail, the track of both Esquimaux and reindeer, led us now down the side of the hill to a plain below, which was bounded, so winding was our way, by the very cliffs of the river we had just left. Wearied as we were, we advanced to the very extremity of the level plain, which now became undulating. Our surprise may readily be conceived when we found here, on the edge of a small grove of trees, the mouldering remains of a boat, built by men of my own land, a bag of some farinaceous food, quite decayed, and five muskets.*

"What in the name of Heaven is this?" I exclaimed, turning to Stop. "Have some of our own adventurous race made here a stand and perished?"

"It looks like it, guv'ner," said Stop, looking mysteriously at the unmistakable signs of home that lay before us; "but as yonder come them ugly imps, I votes for making a stand on the graves of our brothers."

I agreed at once to this, and we then hastily examined the old muskets. They had been covered by the canvas boat, and by the bag of food, as well as by some wood, and though rusty outside, were apparently quite serviceable. They were loaded, and we contented ourselves with renewing the priming and pricking the touch-holes. They were then laid on a log, and lashed with willows and leather thongs, their muzzles pointed directly along the path by which the Esquimaux were coming. We then laid a train and sheered off, not at all satisfied as to what would happen to ourselves if we remained close to our battery.

In about a quarter of an hour, a band of Esquimaux came in sight. They moved with rapidity, and their talk was loud and furious. Several dogs accompanied them, and all were armed with spears, bows, and axes, just as if they had been out on a foray with the Dog-Rib, Loucheux,

* "I therefore determined on leaving the boat, half a bag of arrow-root, and five muskets, by which the loads were reduced about fifteen pounds a man."—*Franklin's Second Expedition*, 4to, p. 270.

or Athabasca Indians. They came straggling on, examining the trail, and shouting at each other.

When they were within forty yards, Stop snapped a pistol over the train, and then we levelled our guns and fired. The battery was discharged at the same instant; a tremendous smoke was seen, and as the echoes and the vapor died away, we looked in vain for our pursuers. Three had paid again the penalty of their dogged courage; the rest had fled before our unexpected volley.

We found on examination that one gun had burst, one had not gone off at all, while three had done good service. The best of these, after another trial, was given to Wah, who, I really believe, now felt quite ready to meet with the whole race of Esquimaux in deadly combat.

We could not camp there after this scene, and advancing some distance farther, our indefatigable Indian guide shot a reindeer, which was, under the circumstances, a piece of good fortune which we duly appreciated, especially when the hilly path and the sponginess of the low grounds is considered.

Just as night fell in, we noticed some gray arctic marmots, (*Arctomys Parryi*,) but we valued our ammunition too much to shoot one of them. The Whiskey-John, or Canadian crow, owed his safety to the same cause.

Our journey was very severe, and at last we struck away over rocks of old red sandstone, clay slate, and greenstone in ridges, towards Dease's River. Some of the ridges were precipitous and two hundred feet high, while the valleys were swampy and full of lakes. A few rare and thin clumps of pine we found in some sheltered spots, but the country in general was barren and naked. Many signs of natives were found, which made us very cautious, while sand-flies were tormenting and troublesome. To make up for this, we killed some partridges with stones, which we cooked in a wooded valley on the banks of a small stream. A few wolves tormented us here, but did not venture very near.

On we went, over rocks and hills, building a shelter at night with blocks of sandstone, making a fire of black lichen; until at last we reached Dease's River. Here we

found bushes loaded with ripe whortleberries. A short journey in our boat soon brought us to a bay in Great Bear Lake, the end and object of our journey for the present — having been two days travelling since our combat with the Esquimaux on the "Bloody Falls" of the Coppermine.

CHAPTER XXI.

GREAT BEAR LAKE. — THE DOG-RIBS. — FORT FRANKLIN.

It was a pleasure I can scarcely describe to be once more on the waters of a lake — the more that poor Stop was almost worn out, and I began to have very great doubts of the possibility of his ever reaching the outskirts of civilization. Fatigue, want of proper food, of regular rest, and his infirmity, all were against him. In fact, he looked so ill and broken that I began to view with fear and trembling the hour when he and I would part company in this world, to meet no more until that great hereafter, of which he entertained so little fear. I once or twice mentioned my suspicions to Wah; but she smiled, and said, "No," and used such gentle persuasions, such coaxing reasons to prove that all might escape in safety, that I took heart once more, and determined to hope to the very last.

The weather was still fine, an agreeable breeze was wafted across the waters of the lake, lofty hills appeared to our right, while we left innumerable islands to our left. In one of these we halted for the night. The wind was so fresh the next morning, that we had to keep close in shore, and towards the afternoon we halted in a deep bay, where Wah caught several fish, which, broiled over a hot charcoal fire, proved a great treat.

On the evening of the third day we were at what is called Cape Macdonnel, and far away in the distance I could see the Cloutsang Eesa, or Hill of Scented Grass. I determined to remain where I was, however, and to cross

the lake in the morning. We accordingly supped, made a tent, and rested for ten hours without moving.

There was a tossing of the waves in the lake, in the morning, which made me doubt the capabilities of the kayak; but Wah assured me there was no danger, and I therefore pushed out, using a small, a very small sail, instead of paddles, which was a great relief to all parties. Several times I was compelled, however, to lessen the sail, but only for a short time; and after a really dangerous and anxious journey, we at length arrived under the shadow of the hill alluded to.

We were about half a mile from the shore, and standing close in for it, poor Stop sleeping in an uneasy and painful posture, which made me anxious to land, when Wah placed her hand upon my shoulder.

"What is it, girl?" said I, speaking in a low tone, in obedience to her hushed signal.

"Red Skins," she replied.

I confess my heart beat with more than usual rapidity, when, following the direction of her finger, I noticed, rising above a clump of trees, a spiral column of smoke that hitherto had been concealed against the dark ground of the mountain.

"What race are they?" I asked.

"Don't know — may be Dog-Rib — may be Hare — may be Loucheux —" and then her eyes lighted up — "may be Chippewaw."

"If they are Dog-Ribs," I asked again, "what are we to do?"

"Run or fight," replied Wah, with a glance of profound hatred and contempt. "Dog-Rib hate my people. Take Wah to wigwam. Wah die first."

"Then we must keep on," I said, taking down the sail and using my paddle.

"Good," replied Wah, who took to hers with alacrity.

We were now about a quarter of a mile from a point, at the extremity almost of which was the cluster of trees and the fire, which the quick eye of Wah had so rapidly detected. Our object was to turn this point, follow the land for some distance, and then go on shore where we could escape the searching eyes of the Indians, who, though not

as clever as those of the United States, have yet keen eyes and a quick intelligence truly remarkable.*

I hoped that, by concealing our sail, we should be so low in the water as to escape detection, especially as the Dog-Ribs could not expect to find either friends or enemies at that season on the waters of Great Bear Lake.

We were mistaken; for scarcely had we opened up the fire, which came in sight in about ten minutes, than we heard a faint cry, and saw two canoes strike out so as to cut off our retreat to the land. The canoes were filled with armed men, for we could plainly see their spears, and Wah declared that one of them had a gun.

"Quite possible," said I; "they have commerce with the traders. But most likely they have no powder."

"Most likely yes," replied Wah.

"But are not these Indians very friendly to the whites? Do not they hunt for them, trade with them, and show them every kind office?"

"Yes! when whites many — few kill. Dog-Rib much fond kill.† Chippewaw friend, go to Fort Norman, Cumberland — Dog-Rib, bad, dirty."

* "Our Indian guide," says Franklin, "had never been nearer Fort Simpson by land than the lake of the elevated land, and only once by the course of the Mackenzie, many years before the fort was built; and yet if he had not been led aside by falling upon the track leading to the Indians above-mentioned, he would have come upon the Mackenzie directly opposite Fort Simpson. His course, he told me, was governed by his recollection of a particular mountain, which he remembered to have noticed from the Mackenzie, and which we now passed within two miles; but on his former visit, he did not approach it nearer than eighteen miles. Its outline must have appeared so different when seen from these distances, that one can hardly imagine a less observant eye than that of an Indian recognizing any of its distinguishing points, especially as it was not a detached mountain, but formed one of a line of hills of considerable extent."

† Franklin, in his deeply interesting narrative of his Second Polar Expedition, says, "By the return of our men from Fort Norman, we learned that one of our Dog-Rib hunters had murdered a man of his tribe, in the autumn, near the mouth of the Bear Lake River. The culprit being at the house, we inquired into the truth of the report, which was found correct; and he was in consequence instantly discharged from our service. His victim had been a man of notoriously loose habits, and in this instance had carried off the hunter's wife and child, while he was in pursuit of deer, at a great distance from the fort. The husband pursued the guilty pair the moment he discovered their flight, and, on overtaking them, instantly shot the ravisher; but the woman escaped a

The girl was so evidently alarmed at a prospect of falling into the hands of the Dog-Ribs that I determined at once not to risk any thing of the kind, but, now I had commenced, to run the gantlet of the whole race, and make every effort which a brave man can make — to escape if possible, but to fight if the necessity arose. The brave man, like the brave nation, exhausts every honorable avenue to peace; but when closed up by bad faith, or by adverse circumstances, he necessarily turns to the red-handed demigod of war, and stakes all on the battle-field.

"Stop," I said quietly.

"Ay, ay, sir," he exclaimed.

"Pirates on board," I replied, with a smile. "I think you must handle an oar."

"Where away?" cried the honest old fellow, with all his usual alacrity.

I pointed out the two canoes.*

similar fate, by having the presence of mind to turn aside the muzzle of the gun when in the act of being discharged. She did not, however, escape punishment; her husband struck her senseless to the ground with the stock of his gun, and would have completed her destruction, but for the cries and entreaties of their only child. This transaction adds another to the melancholy list of about thirty murders which have been perpetrated on the borders of this lake since 1799, when the first trading-post was established."

* Franklin gives the following deeply interesting account of the Dog-Ribs. It is very similar to the Mandan and Osage traditions. "The Dog-Rib Indians, being derived from the same stock with the Chippewyans, have many traditions and opinions in common with that people. The first man, they said, was, according to the traditions of their fathers, named Chapewee. He found the world well stocked with food, and he created children, to whom he gave two kinds of fruit, the black and the white, but forbade them to eat the black. Having thus issued his commands for the guidance of his family, he took leave of them for a time, and made a long excursion for the purpose of conducting the sun to the world. During this, his first absence, his children were obedient, and ate only the white fruit, but they consumed it all; the consequence was, that when he a second time absented himself to bring the moon, and they longed for fruit, they forgot the orders of their father, and ate of the black, which was the only kind remaining. He was much displeased on his return, and told them that in future the earth would produce bad fruits, and that they would be tormented by sickness and death — penalties which have attached to his descendants to the present day. Chapewee himself lived so long that his throat was worn out, and he could no longer enjoy life; but he was unable to die, until, at his own request, one of his people drove a beaver's tooth into his head. The same, or another, (for there is some uncertainty on this head,) lived with his family on a strait between two seas. Having constructed a wire to catch fish, such a quan-

"O! the thieving Dog-Ribs — I suppose they are that elegant set Wah is always talking about. Pull away, guv'-ner. I think two white men and a good girl like Wah will be able to teach them a thing or two they do not know."

We all now began to use our paddles with all the energy of which we were capable. We were by this time practised oarsmen in our Esquimaux canoe, and the light kayak sprang gayly over the waters. It required no very keen eye to tell that we went three feet to their two. They soon discovered this, and gave up the chase.

We, however, at the earnest solicitation of Wah, advanced another mile or more, until we came abreast of Narra-Ella, or Deer Pass Bay, which we then entered, and steering for

tity were taken that the strait was choked up, and the water rose and overflowed the earth. Chapewee embarked with his family and canoe, taking with them all manner of birds and beasts. The waters covered the earth for many days, but, at length, Chapewee said, 'We cannot live always thus — we must find land again;' and he accordingly sent a beaver to search for it. The beaver was drowned, and his carcass was seen floating on the water; on which Chapewee despatched a musk-rat on the same errand. The second messenger was long absent, and when he did return was nearly dying with fatigue; but he had a little earth in his paws. The sight of the earth rejoiced Chapewee; but his first care was about the safety of his diligent servant, the rat, which he rubbed gently with his hands, and cherished in his bosom until it revived. He next took up the earth, and moulding it with his fingers, placed it on the water, where it increased by degrees until it formed an island in the ocean. A wolf was the first animal Chapewee placed on the infant earth; but the weight proving too great, it began to sink on one side, and was in danger of turning over. To prevent this accident, the wolf was directed to move round the island, which it did for a whole year, and in that time the earth increased so much in size, that all on board the canoe were able to disembark on it. Chapewee, on landing, stuck up a piece of wood, which became a fir tree, and grew with amazing rapidity, until its top reached the skies. A squirrel ran up this tree, and was pursued by Chapewee, who endeavored to knock it down, but could not overtake it. He continued the chase, however, until he reached the stars, where he found a fine plain and a beaten road. In this road he set a snare made of his sister's hair, and then returned to the earth. The sun appeared as usual in the heavens in the morning, but at noon it was caught by the snare which Chapewee had set for the squirrel, and the sky was instantly darkened. Chapewee's family, on this, said to him, 'You must have done something wrong when you were aloft, for we no longer enjoy the light of day.' 'I have,' replied he, 'but it was unintentionally.' Chapewee then endeavored to repair the fault he had committed, and sent a number of animals up the tree to release the sun by cutting the snare; but the intense heat of that luminary reduced them all to ashes. The efforts of the more sensitive animals being thus frustrated, a ground-mole, though such a grovelling and unknown beast, succeeded, by burrowing under the

a clump of pines, soon felt our frail bark grate on the shore. A small stream was immediately discovered, up which Wah towed the boat, sometimes up to her chin in the water, while I started off in chase of a deer, which I succeeded in shooting and bringing back to the camp. On my return, I found that Wah had concealed the canoe, with every exercise of art her education could give, under a heavy and steep bank overhung with brush, and had also chosen the camp with the eye of an Indian warrior.

In the centre of the grove of trees, or nearly in the centre, a tree had fallen, full of years, and carried away two or three others with it. This made a tiny clearing, and left a considerable supply of dry wood. Wah, however, very

road in the sky, which it reached, and cut asunder the snare which bound the sun. It lost its eyes, however, the instant it thrust its head into the light, and its nose and hands have ever since been brown as if burnt. Chapewee's island, during these transactions, increased to the present size of the American continent; and he traced the course of the rivers and scraped out the lakes by drawing his fingers through the earth. He next allotted to the quadrupeds, birds, and fishes their different stations, and endowed them with certain capacities; he told them that they were in a position to provide for their own safety, because man would destroy them whenever he found their tracks. But to amuse them, he said that when they died they should be like a seed of grass, which, when thrown on to water, springs again into life. The animals objected to this arrangement, and said, 'Let us, when we die, be as a stone, which, when thrown into a lake, disappears forever from the sight of man.' Chapewee's family complained of the penalty of death entailed upon them for eating the black fruit; on which he granted that such of them as dreamed certain dreams should be men of medicine, capable of curing disease and of prolonging life. In order to preserve this virtue, they were not to tell their dreams until a certain period had elapsed. To acquire the power of foretelling events, they were to take an ant alive and insert it into the skin of the palm of the hand without letting any one know what they had done. For a long time Chapewee's descendants were united in one family; but at length some young men being immoderately beaten in a game, a quarrel ensued, and a general dispersion of mankind took place. The enemy fixed his residence on the borders of the lake, taking with him a dog, which, in due time, had pups; and the Indian, when he went out to fish, carefully tied them up, to prevent them straying. Several times, as he approached his tent, he heard a noise of children talking and playing; but on entering it he only perceived the pups tied up as usual. His curiosity being excited by the noise he had heard, he determined to watch them. One day, pretending to go out and fish, according to custom, he concealed himself in a convenient place. In a short time he again heard voices, and rushing suddenly into the tent, beheld some beautiful children sporting and laughing, with the dogs' skins lying by their side. He threw the skins into the fire, and the children, retaining their proper forms, grew up, and were the ancestors of the Dog-Rib nation."

quietly made a fire, only large enough to cook our food; and when that was done, she covered up the ashes so that they yielded warmth to our feet, but gave no light.

The embers of the fire occupied the middle of the encampment, and some hastily-cut boughs formed a tent for myself and Stop, with the addition of a blanket hung on the branches of two small pines that grew close together. Opposite was the large pine log, which did not wholly rest on the ground, and behind this Wah took up her station; our guns and ammunition were also placed there for safety.

We ate in silence, for the uneasy manner and anxious looks of Wah had their effect on us, though we did not like to acknowledge it. She peered every now and then into the gloom of the pinewood, and at last wishing us good night, glided behind the log, and was heard no more.

"That girl is terrible unquiet," said Stop, in a whisper, as he drew his bear-skin over his shoulder.

"Very," I replied; "so much so, that knowing her experience of this horrid place, I shall be glad to be off in the morning. Let us, however, sleep and rise as soon as possible. Were I not utterly weary I would go forward now."

There are presentiments in this world which sometimes turn out true, and make us believe in them.

I lay still, watching the stars and the moon and the sky, and thinking of the home I was hurrying to, until stars and moon were obscured by clouds, and the night — it was now late in the season — was quite dark. Then I saw two moons, the tall, dark trees vanished, and I was far away in dear England, that precious island which I loved with every throb of my heart, as only the weary wanderer loves his country.

Suddenly the tall trees reappeared, the gloomy sky was visible, and I saw one — two — three — five dark figures glide into the camp, and one man with a long stick stir up the fire. I drew a long breath — I tried to fancy it was a dream — but, no; it was real — we were surrounded by Dog-Ribs, and unless a miracle saved us, their prisoners.

"To arms!" I thundered, scarcely knowing what I said, and bounded to my feet.

It was too late. They fell upon us, and poor Stop and I were overpowered in an instant, while men threw on wood

and made a roaring fire. They then caught sight of the deer, drew it to the fire, and uttered cries of joy. Then they talked in some hideous jargon, that appeared to me not human, and one counted three on his fingers, and pointed to us with signs that we were but two. This seemed to puzzle them; but after a brief conference, they determined to put off the search for our boat and companion, as I thought, until the morning.

I had often read, and I had heard too, of the cruelty of the savages, and I knew that these wild men were exquisitely refined in their tortures, and gloried in the pleasure of beholding the sufferings of their perishing victims. I was prepared for the worst, then, and stood between two powerful savages, sullen and resigned. I was not, however, prepared for the immediate commencement of those frightful trials of a man's courage which are so common among them. The Dog-Ribs, however, seemed very angry at our having given them so long and wearisome a chase; and one, whose hideous and ferocious mien I shall not easily forget, made a sign relative to us, which I too soon understood.

Stop's wooden leg and white hair saved him from the severer trial. They only bound him to a tree, fast by the arms.

But I, as young, and fit for the torture, had a foretaste of their horrid and malignant cruelty — the universal characteristic of this race, who, if they have suffered injuries, have repaid them by overwhelming the borders and wilderness with tragedies which can scarcely be narrated.

They took two young pines, and they forced them as close as they could with their united force. Then they placed me between them, tied my ankles and wrists to the saplings, and let them go.

Never, no, never shall I forget the torture of that moment. I was fastened by my wrists, which were too wide apart for me to hang in any other position than one of agony. Cold perspiration poured down me, my eyes started from my head, hideous visions passed before me; and then for an instant I became insensible. When I recovered, poor Stop was sitting against his tree, looking up at me with a glance of anguish I shall never forget, while the seven Dog-Rib

savages were devouring the deer with a greediness truly fearful. With a fire before them, they ate it raw, every particle, until the bones only were left.

I was parched with thirst, and I thought this the prelude of that death I fancied I longed for now — no; I had a faint and miserable hope, and still I trusted in my God.

The horrid wretches, having devoured the deer, and some fish and dried meat we had brought up to the camp, and being probably weary with racing as well as with their gluttony, after seeing that we were safe, stirred up the fire, and lay down to sleep off their orgy.

"Water," said I, faintly and unconsciously.

"I can't move," groaned Stop. "That girl's gone, clean gone, and it's all up with us. These murderous thieves will kill us, Master Henry. I should like to shake hands with you before I die, but I shall not."

"Stop," replied I, forcing my voice, despite my agony; "that brave girl is doing something even now for our good; be sure of it."

"I hope so," he said; and both relapsed into silence.

It was a fearful and gloomy scene. Our position was horrid and ghastly. And there on the ground lay the gorged savages, their whole forms brought clearly into light by the blazing pile.

What is that rising like an avenging angel from behind the pine log? It is Wah, and Stop's long knife is in her hand. Up she gets, without sound, without noise, kneels on the log, her face bent over one of the sleepers. I fain would close my eyes, but I cannot. It is the hideous savage who proposed the torture. At the same instant the knife is at his heart and her hand upon his mouth. Wah had disappeared. A Dog-Rib slowly raised his head, startled by a faint cry from his companion; but hearing nothing, and seeing that we were safe, he lay down once more.

Then up rose Wah again, and stepped boldly over the log, without a sound as heavy as the breath of one of the sleepers. In her hand were three guns, and to my mind hazarding all upon a chance, she walked boldly across to me, hid the guns behind in a thick bush, and then slowly,

calmly, cut my thongs. I should have fallen like a stone, but she held me up, and let me slide gently, softly on the ground. She soon did the same for Stop, and then bidding us have a quarter of an hour's patience to revive the circulation, moved away with the same stealthy step, and stood by the guns.

Quite twenty minutes passed ere we were on our feet, and then I felt I could do no more than crawl to the boat. I accordingly turned my steps that way.

"Where you go?" said Wah, stamping her little foot on the ground, and pointing to the Dog-Ribs.

She saw by my countenance that I was not disposed for bloodshed; and quick as thought levelled her gun and fired. Up sprang the Indians with a frantic yell, just in time to receive Stop's well-aimed shot, and then mine, for I now knew that there was no choice. Before I had rested my gun on the ground, Wah had loaded, and away she went in full chase of the Dog-Ribs, who, surprised and three killed, fled towards the hills. In a few minutes Wah returned, and her first act was to build another fire, and that a larger one, about fifty yards from the other.

"No more Dog-Rib now," she said, with her old merry laugh — "they had quite enough."

And she had killed three men. But such is the force of education, and the good of those circumstances called civilization, which drive such scenes daily farther from our doors. I recollect now well that a white woman, taken prisoner with six others by seven Indian warriors, killed every one in their sleep with a knife, and escaped, to the amazement of the whole American frontier.* Now that I write this, I could tell a hundred fearful tales of blood connected with Indian warfare.

I watched that savage and all but untutored girl with real admiration. She had saved our lives, when all human hope was over; and though the means had been terrible and

* An historical fact. Henry C. Watson records, in his useful books on border warfare in America, some incidents which, were they not authenticated, would appear the invention of some demon. The border wars are one horrid tale of massacre, scalping, torture, and desolation. The story of Wyoming is enough.

bloody, I could not — frankly, I did not complain. Stop had but one regret, and that was, that the whole gang had not shared one fate. I was very callous on the subject, my sufferings having been fearful, and my prostration of mind almost as bad.

I drank some water, and some of that warm broth Wah had made several times before, and then exhausted I went to sleep, waking only when the sun was midway in the heavens. Strange to say, a stiffness excepted, I did not feel the results of my sufferings as much as I expected.

We soon hurried to the boat, and with grateful hearts away we sped on the waters of Great Bear Lake, and the third day reached the temporary end of our journey.

We were on the lake, Wah was rowing and Stop sleeping, while the kayak sped along under the influence of its little sail. I sat still, reflecting on the terrible scenes of my short and checkered life, and on the hopes which kept me alive, when suddenly raising my eyes, I saw what made my heart bound with surprise and delight. A cluster of houses, as I fancied, in that heated state of my imagination, were clearly visible on the shore. I turned the boat inland, reached the bank, and sprang up it, delighted to see even the sign where European life had been.

There was a long, low building, about forty feet long by twenty wide, in a tolerable state of preservation in the centre; another not quite so long to the right; and a third to the left — none whole and complete, but capable, with very little labor, of being made so.

They stood upon a dry, sandy bank, about eighty yards from the lake and twenty-five above it. Behind, at a distance of about one hundred and fifty feet, the ground rose to a ridge, which was covered by small trees that promised fuel, all the large ones having been cut down to form the old trading fort and its stockade, the ruins of which were close at hand.

This ridge bounded the view to the north, while to the west the prospect was pretty, embracing a small lake and the mouth of a river. Four miles of Bear Lake were seen to the south-west, while a hill in front was distinguished, though thirty-six miles off.

The soil was clayey, while some boulder stones of granite, limestone, sandstone, and trap-rocks, were scattered about the lake not far from the shore.

The trees around were black and white spruce, and larch, some of which reached the height of sixty feet.

This was FORT FRANKLIN.

Here our adventurous countryman, who is now still wandering in the icy regions of the north, I hope, had spent a winter but one year before, in company with others of those ardent searchers after knowledge, who belong almost exclusively to the Anglo-Saxon race.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE WINTER.

WE had already determined to winter at this place, despite the vicinity of those different tribes of Indians, which Wah had often mentioned to us with so much apprehension. We could not hope to arrive at the stations of the Hudson Bay Company before winter set in, and it was much easier and more prudent to pass the long cold season in Fort Franklin, than to risk being snowed up in some wild desert place on the banks of the other lakes.

Besides, we were utterly unable to proceed, in fact. Stop was weary and exhausted; I was ill and overcome, and the last scene had hopelessly shaken me. Wah had all the elasticity and undaunted vigor of her race; but this could not last forever.

We accordingly landed our stores, and selected a room in the long building, which we proceeded at once to make as comfortable as it was in our power to do. We cleared the fireplace; we divided the room into three compartments — one for general living, one for Stop and myself, and one for Wah — so arranged that the warmth of the fire should reach all parts.

We also repaired the two outer rooms, with a view to exercise in such weather as rendered out-door travelling impossible. This was, however, not expected to occur very often, as 60° north latitude was a very different climate from 75°.

As soon as these arrangements had been made, Wah got us to make two small rafts of dry wood, while she fabricated, with deer-skins, sinews, and some twine, a net for the purpose of catching fish, and as soon as the rafts were ready, she at once set to work to procure this useful article of food. She was immediately successful in catching a large supply of Bear Lake herring, salmon, some trout, tittameg, and carp.

Stop assisted her by splitting open and drying the fish on the shore, and I, without venturing to any very serious distance from the fort, became the hunter of the party. I crawled, however, about with such difficulty, that I was of very little use. In fact I lived in constant dread of those horrid savages, whose cruel treatment had partly, I think, affected my mind.

We were driven to work inside the house for four days, in consequence of incessant rain, which was new to us. At the end of this time several deer appeared in the neighborhood, and I succeeded in killing three, which was a considerable stock for us.

A heavy fall of snow soon warned us that the inclement season was coming on; and then, about ten days later, the lake was slightly frozen over. The birds, too, on the 12th of October were all gone, a few stray ducks excepted; so that we noted this in our minds as the beginning of winter. It was very cold, and we began to make an immense fire, having laid in a good stock of wood from the ridge and from the old stockade. We brought our kayak inside the house, as it was a thing too valuable to be parted with.

This season, Wah told us, was the very best for fishing; and accordingly we made the experiment. Holes were broken in the ice, and two rude nets used. The take was very great, and all not wanted for the day were frozen, and lasted good until the spring.

Heavy snow-storms several times kept us wholly within

doors; but when once on the ground, the snow was welcome, as we then could use a rude sledge to bring wood, which we found necessary, as our consumption with a twenty-four hours' fire was very great.

We observed many animals in the neighborhood during this severe period, such as wolves, foxes, martens, hares, mice, and reindeer, while over our heads flew ravens, Canadian crows, snow birds, wood-peekers, red-caps, crow-beaks, Canada rock and willow partridges, a few hawks and owls; we saw also other hardy beasts and birds.

We rose about nine, breakfasted, went fishing if possible, came back to dinner at one, took exercise on the snow until four, always with our guns in hope of game, and then we returned to the fort to sup. In the evening, I read the Bible, and began teaching Wah to read, which was a tolerably easy task, as the wife of her master at the fort had commenced the task for me.

Old Stop used to grunt and groan, I could not tell why, as I sat down beside Wah, guided her fingers on the book, and talked to her for hours at a time, striving to eradicate some of the evil effects of her savage education. I strove above all to instil religious ideas into her mind. This was difficult, as she had tradition and early culture against me; and these are hard things to contend with; still I persevered, and I do believe succeeded in giving her many simple notions of right and wrong, of heaven, God, and her duties, which I have no doubt were productive of a certain amount of good to her mind. There never was a more fallacious notion than that a little learning is a dangerous thing. Better much learning than little — better little than none.

Stop was not of this opinion.

"Now, Master Henry," he said to me one day, "what is the use of putting ideas in the head of that poor savage as is going to marry — mind that — a regular heathen like herself — a fellow as would scalp you and be proud of it?"

"My dear Stop, I think it my duty, placed in the situation in which I am, to give instruction to that young girl ——"

"Young girl, young girl!" uttered the worthy old man — "that's it, and you're a young man."

I stared at him, and my attention being drawn by something else, made no reply.

Towards the latter end of November, I was sitting in the fort, mending my mocassons, while Stop was manufacturing a new wooden leg out of a log he had found, which gave him great satisfaction. He used to call it his new ship for the spring voyage, and cut many a joke about it as he cut the wood itself with his long knife. He had roughly shaped it with an axe, and was now polishing and beautifying it.

"That is a fine piece of workmanship, Stop," I said, laughing.

"Middling, guv'ner," he replied.

I would have made some joking answer, when Wah bounded into the room.

"Dog-Rib!" she cried almost frantically, as she looked at me with a tenderness and gentleness which I had never seen in her eyes before.

"The accursed miscreants!" I replied, jumping to my feet.

We were armed in an instant, and sallied forth in front of the fort. There they were, about three hundred paces off, coming on in a long line. We levelled our guns at once, and made signs to them to keep off, calling at the same time to imaginary persons within to be ready.

The Dog-Ribs, who were about thirty in number, held a conference, which ended in one man advancing alone and unarmed towards us.

He was an old man, and continually made signs for us not to hurt him.

He spoke at last to Wah; but she shook her head, and signified that she did not understand him. He then uttered a few words apparently with great difficulty, which Wah now comprehended.

"Want fish — meat — live in fort with us," she said, turning to me with a cold and sneering expression.

"No!" I exclaimed fiercely; "tell him that not only will I give them nothing, but every Dog-Rib who comes within reach of my gun shall die."

Wah's eyes sparkled with delight as she gave my answer.

The Dog-Rib held up his hands in token of extreme

astonishment; and coming nearer, said that he and his friends had hunted for the white chiefs who had built that fort, that they had been very kind to them, had given them shelter, and in exchange for coal had given them food.

I bade Wah narrate the scene at the Deer Pass.

I kept my eye on the old man as she spoke, and I could plainly see a glance of agony on his face as she told of the slaughter of his people in such boasting terms. I felt satisfied then that they had come for revenge, and at once, and in peremptory tones, ordered him back, repeating my injunction for them not to come near the fort.

A wild cry of real anguish from the whole party startled me, and I began to hesitate in my suspicions. Were they really hungry?

I bade Wah say then that I did not think it consistent with my safety to let them come to the fort until my friends came back, but that if they would retire to a distance, I would go hunting for them for a day. This they agreed to at once, and did as I told them. By great exertion, I succeeded in two days in killing five deer, with which they departed much delighted, and we saw no more of them.

The days were so short in December that we had scarcely time to hunt, so that we fell back upon fishing, which we did with nets and spear both, but no longer with the success which had at first attended us.

One or two straggling Hare Indians, and one day two Loucheux Indians, paid us a visit. They were armed with guns, and very quiet fellows; but I did not let them enter our room, as the sight of Wah might have excited their evil passions — a female Chippewaw being a prize much coveted by the more northern Indians.

The sun did not rise until about eleven o'clock one morning, and this was our shortest day, lasting five hours. The nights were, however, brightly illuminated by the moon, with constant appearance of the Aurora Borealis.

We kept Christmas. I read some chapters in the morning, and had a sermon discourse with Stop and Wah. Then we took some exercise, and sat down to a meal composed of a roast joint of deer-meat and fried fish, with melted snow-water for our drink. It was very sober entertainment, but

we enjoyed it — ay, and the prospect of that joyous Christmas next year, which we now had every reason to hope for.

Fresh fish soon became rare, and the dried fish injurious to our health; so that when Wah announced the track of a moose deer, I determined to go in chase. The days were short, and moose might be at a great distance; still fresh meat was so wanted that I took no note of time or danger, and, accompanied by the Indian girl, started on the expedition.

The snow was deep and not hard enough for our feet, that is to say, it had no crust, so that travelling was extremely fatiguing. But the stake, in our position, was a great one; and led and encouraged by my persevering guide, I continued on my way. The wearisome character of the chase may be judged when I say, that we travelled four consecutive days in pursuit, passed the night without fire, wrapped in our bear-skins and behind a wall of snow, and on the morning of the fifth day were not yet up with the animal. The track, however, was clear and distinct, and devouring a mouthful of dried meat and a ptarmigan, we started. I saw that Wah was nearly exhausted. As for myself, I could scarcely crawl; but still on I went, until at last we saw him near a clump of trees. He was near enough for a shot, and both fired.

He was hit, and badly, for instead of taking safety in flight, he came bounding furiously towards us. The Indian girl darted behind a tree, and began to load. I, encumbered with my great snow-shoes, looked around in vain for a shelter, and he was upon me, striking at me with his fore-feet. I fell backwards, my feet up in the air. The moose bent down his horns for a rush, when he received Wah's shot, and then a well-directed blow of her knife.

To clear the snow, and to make a fire, was the work of a few minutes; and then we cooked and ate a meal which we certainly had well earned. We then cut down some small trees, especially pines, and made a huge fire. This done, we made us each a hut of boughs and snow together, crept in our bear-skins, and took the rest we so much needed. A sledge of branches was easily made in the morning, with which we started on our journey back to the fort, where we

arrived after an absence of eight days. Poor Stop had given us up for lost, and was warm in his congratulations as to our success, when at last we reappeared.

In February fish began to be again plentiful, and despite the otters which attacked our nets, we caught a fair supply. About the middle of April the thaw commenced, and the temperature being very warm, we began to prepare for our departure. We were, however, deceived, as severe weather set in again; and May arrived, and still we were at the fort. Birds began now to flock from all parts, and soon flowers were found budding — amongst others, the white anemone.

It was about the end of the first week in June, the sun was warm, the air balmy, the kayak floated on the lake, its little sail was up, Stop was resting in the house, and I was looking at Wah fishing.

Presently she drew some trout from the lake, and came up slowly to where I was sitting on a log, underneath the fort. She laid the trout at my feet, and sat down.

"There is fish in the lake, there is game in the woods, there are birds in the air — why go?" said Wah, suddenly.

"Why go?" I asked, singularly struck by her remark.

"Henry brave young warrior — Stop old man — journey long — Henry stop here — hunt — Wah fish — live. All the country ours."

"My dear girl," I said, anxiously, "reflect on the wretched winter, the uncertainty about food, and the fact that I wish to be with my friends in my own country."

"Why?" she replied quietly. "All country good. Like warmer — go Slave Lake — build wigwam, hunt, fish, be great trapper, great warrior. Young Oak got quick eye. No deer escape from him."

I was silent, struck dumb with surprise and grief. I could not mistake her meaning. Our long association, my earnest determination never to give her up to her persecutors and enemies, the Indians, the circumstances which had driven me to the exhibition of qualities an Indian girl would admire, long and gentle familiarity, had awakened in this poor uneducated child, feelings which she sought not to disguise. Her meaning clearly was, that I should become

a wild hunter of the woods, like many of my fellow-countrymen, and take her for my squaw.

I knew not what to say, or what to do. I sat confused and stupefied. But at length, rousing myself, I spoke.

"I am a Pale-face, and must go back to the land of the Pale-faces. I have a father, a mother, and, and — a young girl who waits my return to be my wife."

"How you know?" said Wah, sharply.

"I am quite sure of it, Wah. She is my father's brother's daughter, lives at home, and waits for me, I know."

"The white squaws are very beautiful," she said, in a low, sad tone.

"Not more beautiful than you are, Wah. They are white, but with your dark skin you are very pretty."

"Then why not take Wah? — Wah good squaw — light fire — hunt — fish — do every thing make warrior happy. Wah not like red-skin warrior now. White much better. No beat, no scold squaw, no leave her die in wood when old. Wah has listened to all the Young Oak has said, and it is very good."

I sat humiliated, bowed down, utterly overcome with a grief I could not master. My own lessons, my own teachings, my pictures of another kind of life from that she knew, had turned against me; and Wah, her imagination fired by the idea of a happy home with a pale-face warrior, had cherished feelings which, in the simplicity of her heart, she saw no reasons for concealing.

"Wah," I said, taking her hand, "I have for you the affection of a sister, but my heart is forever gone. A white man may only have one squaw, and I cannot give up Fanny. Besides, I am not a warrior. I detest and abhor war — I only fight when attacked. If you knew, however, Wah, all the gratitude I feel, all the affection I have for you, you would not think me ungrateful. I shall never forget you. I will, on my return to England, send you presents that will make your tribe worship you."

"Wah will not go back to her tribe. Her skin is red, but her heart is white — the forked tongue of the Pale-face and his reading in the Big Book have blinded her eyes. She cannot see the Manitou of the Indians. She will go and live in the big houses of the whites. I have said."

And rising, she walked away with a slow and measured step towards the fort, leaving me overwhelmed with surprise, bewilderment, and sorrow.

"I knew it," said Stop, when he had wormed the secret out of me — "I knew it. But it can't be helped; and I must say, Master Henry, you've acted like a man. Now if as how she had taken a fancy to me, it wouldn't have been no matter. I'm free, and I do think, if she'd have been christened, I wouldn't mind marrying her. But I'm a weather-beaten old tar, and it ain't likely."

That night we packed up our goods, and began our journey towards Cumberland House.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SAD EVENTS.

We were a grave and serious party as we started at early dawn on our downward journey, which was to be by Great Bear Lake River, into the Mackenzie, and then up that stream to Great Slave Lake, Athabasca Lake, thence to Cumberland House, across Lake Winnipeg, Lake of the Woods, to Fort William on Lake Superior.

It was a tremendous journey; but we had gone through so much that I had every hope of being able to succeed in this our last undertaking.

Wah was the same as ever — light-hearted, gentle, smiling, with her beaming bright eyes, her white teeth showing, and all the same courage and constancy which had always characterized her. She had loaded the boat with great care, after it had undergone complete overhauling, and we started therefore with every chance of success. Stop was much renovated in health. His vigor had in great measure come back to him. He had been spared all absolutely unnecessary toil during the winter, had had, unknown to himself, the choicest morsels and the best food,

even when we were somewhat deficient in supplies; and as I looked at his hardy complexion and keen eye, I had great hopes of even his reaching the settlements in safety.

Alas! how vain is the pride of youth, how foolish and idle its calculations! White hair and old age smile at the vanity of younger years and see it die away — the old oak stands, the young rose-tree bends and breaks before the blast.

Our journey for the first day was in sight of pleasing looking hills, with pine and larch trees on their sides, and bare of all save scanty grass as they rose. The stream glided swiftly, the lake discharging itself through this channel into the Mackenzie. Once the current was so swift that we had to land, and carry first the contents of the kayak, and then the kayak itself, for about two hundred yards. But then the stream widened, and we loaded and entered our boat again with considerable satisfaction, as the labor of the portage was very severe and fatiguing.

On we glided, Stop at the helm, I and Wah paddling — sails were not safe in this shifting and winding river, where sudden gaps in the hills created streams of air exceedingly dangerous — and making considerable way. We had at first determined to take the return trail, by which Franklin and his party had struck across the land and arrived in fourteen or sixteen days at the river. But I dreaded the fatigue of walking for poor Stop. Would that we had done so, if we had consumed even two more years on the dreary journey!

A year or two of my life would have been as nothing to have altered the course of events.

About two hours before night we halted to cook a meal, intending to camp below the rapids, which Wah said began about a mile below. We expected a long portage, and therefore rest and refreshment were imperatively needed.

The place where we had halted was picturesque. The river widened considerably as the hills and high ground retreated somewhat. The spot on which we built our fire was the very point of a little space of land, naked and bare as well could be. Behind, at a distance of a hundred yards, was a thick clump of trees, while the same occurred about

two hundred yards on the opposite side, where, in fact, a long line of wood began. The stream was, from some cause, — apparently from coming sharply round another point just above us, on our side, — very rapid near the opposite bank, towards which the force of the current was directed by some stones and rocks that turned it sharp round.

We, on coming round, had been swept within the vortex, and had only escaped a wreck by Wah leaping into the water and dragging us ashore.

We now made a brisk fire, by which Wah warmed herself and dried her wringing clothes, and then we began to eat with an appetite which will scarcely bear describing on paper.

"Sun go down quick," said Wah, who was very solemn and earnest in her tone.

Is there an instinct of coming ill — some mysterious music, which the soul alone can hear, coming away from the realms beyond the grave?

"Let us be on the move," I replied, looking gently at her, as I helped her to rise.

She took my hand eagerly and pressed it within both hers; then, having bounded up with all her native agility, she took hold of her gun and turned towards the boat.

"Ugh," she said, and levelled her gun.

I followed where she pointed, and distinctly saw a head moving along in the water cautiously. It moved in the direction of our boat, and the object evidently was to steal that article so valuable to us.

The crack of Wah's gun was heard, and then up leaped the skulking wretch, held up his hands, and falling back in the stream, was swept away by the waters.

"To the boat," said the Indian girl, as she moved down to the bank, loading her gun.

"To the boat," repeated Stop, as the hideous war-whoop of a dozen Indians — Dog-Ribs on the war-trail, a quarrel having recently taken place between them and the Loucheux — was heard behind us.

I turned to cover their retreat. The Indians came bounding along from the thicket above alluded to, but halted an instant at the sight of my levelled gun. I looked

back and saw that Wah was assisting Stop into the canoe. I then slowly turned to join them, when the Dog-Ribs — at least I heard that so they were — made a motion to advance. I fired. They came on whooping and yelling with extreme ferocity, and with sounds that seemed to me more terrible even than usual.

I retreated still, loading as I went; but they came on too swiftly, and I was about to turn and fly, when Stop and Wah made themselves heard. This caused a diversion which enabled me to reach the boat, which instantly was pushed off.

The Indians, who had lost several of their party, began running down the bank with threatening gestures, and clearly had made up their mind to cut off our retreat by gaining the portage above the falls before we did.

This was a terrible fact, because Wah had told us that the rocks on the other side were impassable. Still our only course was to reach the portage, which could easily be defended, — it was a path along which at times only one man could walk, — or to cross the stream and defend ourselves among the steep rocks until the Indians were wearied or picked off by our guns.

This latter course, after a short race, we pretty well saw to be the only practicable one. Still we should have tried the other, and have attempted to run the gantlet of the savages, had not a startling incident compelled us to alter our determination.

We were within a hundred yards of the head of the fall, and had agreed to fire steadily one after the other at the whooping and yelling Indians, who, strange to say, kept back a little more than was necessary, and had loosened our guns for the trial, when Wah gave the kayak a sudden sweep towards the opposite shore, that unfortunately sent us into the suction of the current, and forced us to give all our attention to saving ourselves and the boat.

This we found a terrible and doubtful struggle, and yet we worked with all the energy of which we were capable, with all the strength of our arms.

Wah could not speak; she merely pointed to a rock surmounted by a bush, just above the fall itself, where I plainly

saw the heads of three painted warriors, peering out with the malignant certainty of the panther, and watching for the moment when they could take us at a disadvantage.

"What is to be done?" said I at last, in an accent of wild despair.

"Heaven be merciful unto us," put in Stop.

"Wah," continued I, "what is to be done?"

"Shoot the fall," she replied calmly.

I looked at her in silent amazement. Her great eyes flashed a fire I had never seen before; her tawny skin was suffused by a deep red, the hectic flush of fever; and she gave me a smile of confidence, and resignation too, that almost unmanned me.

"Lie down quite still," said she to Stop, who obeyed mechanically. "Don't move, or all drown."

The old fellow was so amazed that he did not reply.

"Now Young Oak — sit like lump of stone — turn right or left, drown. Hold paddle, middle."

She stood up herself, beautiful as the Pythoness, gave the canoe a sheer round, and headed directly for the fall.

A wild cry of wonder, rage, and admiration burst from the horrid crew behind. It was cast back by the echoes of the hills, but Wah did not move — no, not even a muscle. She had laid aside her cloak, and wore her simple Indian costume, her tunic, having even prepared for swimming by taking off her leggings. Her cap fell into the boat, and her long hair waved in the wind.

At a sign from her, I had corked the powder-horns, and covered the pans of the guns with a light skin case made on purpose.

Then I sat quite still, my eyes fixed on Wah.

At first the course of the stream seemed not to be so very rapid; but by degrees its velocity increased so that I was quite dizzy — and at last the rocks seemed to whirl by — the sky, hills, stones, trees, all were blended into one — and down, down, down, we seemed to go, while Wah extended, swelled, and stood a giant by my side.

Ha, ha, ha! those demon heads, and that wild, woful yell; and then, O God! that shot fired from a gun — whence came it, whither did it go, and why had it been fired?

I saw, heard, felt no more.

The kayak whirled round, turned over, and I was cast into a deep vortex of rushing waters. My ears heard buzzing sounds, my eyes saw horrid monsters of the deep, and then I lay gasping for breath on a low sand bank.

Up I crawled, and the setting sun was shedding its golden livery of light upon that terrible fall of waters.

I was alone.

I shuddered and looked around.

About a hundred yards below, I saw Stop crawling on his hands and knees in about six inches of water towards something, I could not tell what. I thought, however, it was the canoe, turned upside down.

But where was Wah?

Nowhere could I distinguish a sign of the Indian girl, whose devotion, courage, and sad resignation had endeared her to me more than ever. I clutched my gun, which had never left my grasp, and moved down the bank. When I was near Stop, within twenty yards, I hailed the old man.

"Where is Wah?" I said, anxiously.

The old man rose to his feet, and looked at me wildly.

"Is she not with you?"

"No."

"I feared it. I feared it," he replied, with a groan — "that is her then clutching hold of the boat."

I bounded to the place; there she lay under the boat, which she grasped with her convulsed fingers.

"Wah! Wah!" I said.

"Defend the pass," she replied, in a hoarse whisper, "defend the pass; go. Wah no die yet. Young Oak take all three gun — shoot — defend the pass."

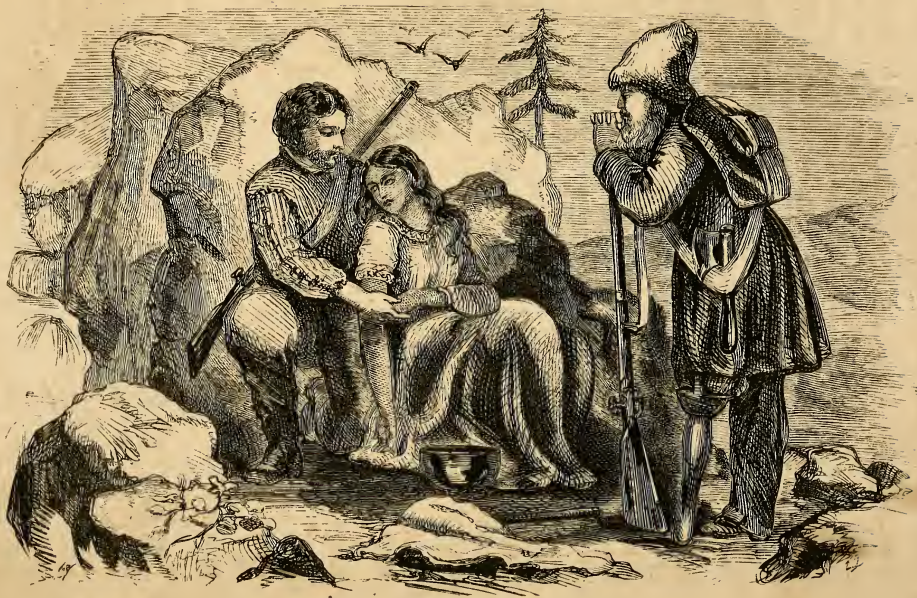
"But, my dear girl, where are the other guns?" I replied, as I removed the boat from her grasp.

She made a sign I readily understood — they were lashed in their proper place inside the boat.

"Sit me up," she said.

I sat her up against a large stone, on which I spread my cloak.

"Now go — make haste — Wah see Young Oak fight like a brave."



DEATH OF THE INDIAN GIRL. Page 231.

I took the three guns and ran up the path by which the Dog-Ribs could alone get at us. I had scarcely reached its mouth, when I saw them coming on, eleven of them, headed by one with a gun in his hand. I understood but too well that flash, that report, now.

I took a position, I placed my two guns beside me, and picking out that man, I fired.

They doubtless thought us all dead; for they came on in single file along a ledge of rock, with a yawning precipice of thirty feet below and one of ninety feet above. The man with the gun fell back, clutched at the nearest warrior, and the two tumbled headlong into the wild rapid. I fired without mercy again, two quick shots. The whole band, startled, amazed, in an agony of despair, rushed one against the other — a mad crowd; and the ledge not being twelve inches broad, the first man was pitched into the stream, and none being able to check their own impetus, every one was carried over the rocks into the fearful whirlpool below.

I returned slowly down the borders of the stream, with no regrets, no compunction now. I did not pity one of them, such was my state of mind.

A look at Stop told me that Wah was dying. The ball had struck her shoulders, and had glanced aside and penetrated the lungs. She was sitting up, wrapped in skins, and drinking large draughts of water — a sure sign of her speedy dissolution. The wounded to death ever crave the simple liquid of the running stream. It is the only thing that will refresh them.

"Welcome," said Wah, in a low, soft tone; "how many Dog-Ribs have gone to the bad hunting-grounds of their people?"

"ALL!" I replied, solemnly; and then falling on my knees beside her, I cried, passionately, "Wah! dear Wah, think not of these things. You are dying — you have not many hours to live. At this moment, even the wicked begin to think; you, who are good, will listen to the words which preserve immortal life."

The fierce eye of the Indian girl fell; a soft, placid, hopeful expression took the place of all savage feeling.

"Henry," she said, "shall we meet up there in your heaven?"

"Yes! O, yes!" I passionately said. "Please God, we shall meet."

"Then tell me all — tell me of Him who died, you say, for all; red, black, white."

I looked at Stop — the scalding tears were flowing down his cheeks, convulsive throbs shook his frame, his hands were clutched in prayer. He knelt on the ground, still, motionless, his eyes fixed upon her face.

For an hour or more I explained to her all that I knew myself, in simple, plain language — perhaps a little dogmatical; we are all so — I answered her objections, I read to her, and did every thing to aid the happy departure of her pure, innocent, and unsophisticated spirit.

At the end of the hour, I paused and prayed within myself.

"Henry," she said again — she had never until this day called me so before — "teach me how to pray."

I shall never forget the bursting of the heart I felt at this instant. The prejudices, the education, of her race were utterly vanquished. And who will say that love is not a noble power? And I verily do believe that it was her simple love for me which gave my words the influence they seem to have had.

I prayed, and she repeated my words, slowly, calmly, and with earnest faith — yes, there was no mistaking her accents — with earnest faith.

At this instant the bodies of the Indians, driven by the rift, came slowly, one by one, and stuck in the shallow water. I watched the face of Wah with deep anxiety. There was not even a sign of exultation.

"Poor fellows!" she said, "they knew no better."

I looked at Stop, and fairly sobbed aloud, as I saw how completely the savage spirit of this child of nature was tamed.

"Lay my head on your shoulder," she said.

I do so.

"Good by, Henry — good by, Stop — don't cry any more. Where is the sky gone? I — I — I — cannot see you, Henry. *God — bless — you!*"

She had died like a babe in its mother's bosom, without a sigh, without a groan.

"We'd better bury ourselves too," said Stop, groaning. "We've lost our best friend."

"We have lost a faithful, good, and noble friend, Stop — one whom I shall recollect every hour of my life. We will bury her in the morning as a Christian should be buried."

"Amen," said Stop, solemnly.

I examined the canoe. Like her that guided it, it was past being of any further use to us.

There remained our guns and our bear-skins. One of these we took and wrapped Wah in it; then we lit a great fire — a huge fire — to keep off the wolves and vultures that began already to hover round our camp.

We rested a while on the ground, and then we sat up by our fire to watch by the dead. In Stop's knapsack the Bible had been saved, and, by the fitful blaze of the old pine logs, I read aloud, with solemn voice and earnest tone, several chapters.

Then we heaped on wood, and lay down for a few hours to sleep.

I awoke before dawn, and gazed around, scarcely recollecting the events of the day before. I almost expected to hear the pleasant voice of the Indian girl calling me to breakfast, and it was with a start and a pang I caught sight of her inanimate form wrapped in her own bear-skin.

I rose, and went beside her body; and never before, and never since, did I pray so fervently.

Her face was calm, gentle, and beautiful in death. Not a muscle was there visible. All was soft, placid, lovely. Scalding tears fell from my eyes, as I gazed on the face of her who had loved certainly not wisely, but so well.

There was a tall pine standing by itself, within ten yards of where she died. At its foot we dug her grave. We made it as deep as we could, and then we lowered her into it, placed the broken canoe over her, and casting one last, long look, covered her slowly up, our sobs choking our utterance, our grief unable to find vent in words.

We made a mound over her, and we covered it with stones, that no wolf or bear might desecrate her dear tomb; and then we went on our way, leaving the field of battle to

the foxes, the wolves, and vultures, that rushed madly on their prey.

Can I tell what passed for thirty days? — how we wandered down that river, half-starved, wearied unto death, sad, despondent, despairing? We could not, and we did not, recover from the shock occasioned by Wah's death. We hunted, and we fished; we walked along the banks of the river, we made our way slowly along, resting whole days; we endured starvation for nearly a whole week; and then, when hope was nearly gone, and we began to repent having not laid our bones beside those of poor Wah, we saw in the distance the flag of England waving over a fort.

We crawled to it, and were received with a welcome I shall never forget. They gave us food, shelter, warm beds, clothes, and never asked whence we came.

Ten days after it was, that, recruited from our stupendous fatigues, we told our strange and eventful history — a history that those who heard could scarcely credit.

We did convince them, however; and then they advised us to rest another week, when they offered to take us down to Fort William, and insure us a passage to Old England.

I agreed; and here, where I write these lines, I live in the earnest hope, that in three months from this I may embrace those I love, and see once more dear Old England.

END OF HENRY MAYNARD'S NARRATIVE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

PETERSHILL.

THERE was a sad house in Plymouth all this while — sad and sorrowful and hopeless — a house of mourning and grief. The shock had been terrible indeed when Henry went away on that long and weary journey, which others, too, soon started on, whose names are now forever famous in history. Still, though he had departed on a voyage which must be a dreary blank for so many years, there was hope and trusting in that house of Petershill, that he would return safely, and end all their troubles.

Mr. Maynard rode down daily to his place of business, but with an earnest gravity none had ever noticed on his face before. He studied, too, the wind with unwonted earnestness, and took note of all whalers that came in and went out — asking letters from the first, sending messages by the latter.

And at home in Petershill, Mrs. Maynard and poor little Fanny talked of Henry in hushed whispers, wondered where he was, shuddered as the wind howled between the trees round the house, and were grave, and solemn, and earnest, as people are when the loved ones are far away, in danger and in tribulation.

They sat reading often, talking always, and working with a serious pleasantness at things for the wedding; Fanny was making an embroidered waistcoat for Henry for the happy day, and Mrs. Maynard was manufacturing some wonderful neck-tie with flowers and stars, for the same joyous occasion.

And thus the time passed, sadly, but hopefully; and they counted the months and weeks, and then the weeks and days, and then the days and minutes, as the time flew on; and summer went, and winter came, and summer was round again, and drawing on towards the end of its career.

Once, and only once, there came news. A ship had spoken the *Fair Fanny*, and the words "all's well" came to them as rich music to the ear of the song-loving amateur, and the "yes" of the loved one to the eager ear of the lover.

It was nearly winter now; and towards the end of that season, or at latest the next, he would come.

For a long time the ladies comforted themselves by long talks with old Stop about the young master, and listened to him reverently, because he had been at sea, and knew something of the perils and dangers of the main. He told them all the comforting tales he could; and then that comfort departed, for old Stop unaccountably disappeared without leaving a trace behind.

They guessed — they thought he had gone on some wild expedition to look for Henry; but no evidence came to confirm or change their opinion.

It was in the library. A bright coal fire burned on the hearth, casting its light fitfully into every corner of the room, and playing in holes and corners with the dark shadows that flitted back, or were chased away as the blaze rose or fell in the clear, bright grate.

Mr. Maynard and his wife sat one on each side in their arm-chairs, gazing at the fire, while Fanny, who had just rung the bell for lights and tea, stood looking out of the window, peering into the darkness of the park.

At this instant a slow, heavy, and reluctant step was heard in the passage without — a step that came hesitatingly along.

Fanny's heart began to beat. There was a low presage of ill she could not keep down, and she clasped her hands in agony, and turned round.

The door was open, and there stood Captain Shipton, the lights carried by the servant casting his whole person into strong relief, but hiding entirely the expression of his face. His hat was in his hand, and he advanced timidly and fearfully.

"Where is my son?" exclaimed Mr. Maynard, starting to his feet.

"My boy!" repeated the mother, as she rose, staggered, and fell back.

"Where is Henry?" said Fanny, advancing with supernatural calm to his side.

The skipper raised his rough hand to his eyes and dashed away a tear.

Mr. Maynard groaned aloud, the mother fainted, and Fanny sank in a chair, looking at the sailor with her great eyes so strangely that he was quite alarmed. A burst of tears then relieved her, and she listened still without moving.

"Captain Shipton," said Mr. Maynard, when he had succeeded in restoring his wife to consciousness, "what is the news you bear me? I hope I am a Christian, and able to receive any chastening in a humble spirit. Is my child dead?"

"I do not know — that is the truth," replied the skipper.

"Then he is not dead!" exclaimed Fanny, bounding forward; "sit down, captain — sit down, and tell us all. If you do not know of his death, his being alive is possible, and we can hope. Speak, I implore you."

The sailor sat down, allowed the young girl to take his cap and coat, and, often interrupted, told his tale in rough and plain, but earnest language.

"Glorious old Stop!" said Fanny, when he told of speaking a whaler in which was the old sailor; "he has gone where I should be."

"God bless you, child!" replied Shipton; "he has gone where *none* should be. 'Tis looking for a man with the address of the world. If Master Henry has escaped, which is quite possible, he is on the main land of America by this time, and coming home."

"It is possible, and that is all," said Mr. Maynard, solemnly; "we will pray day and night for his happy return. Shipton, you are not much inclined to return, I suppose."

"I came, sir, to ask you to send me back," replied Shipton. "I thought as how if I took in victuals for two years, and most of the same crew, with a little extra pay for the men, I might look about the islands up there, and just see."

"You shall go, Shipton, and the men shall have double pay. Engage them all at once."

"Not all, sir, if you please," said Shipton, hesitatingly.

"What mean you?"

"Why, sir, the men say, and it's my belief, too, that if Williams had wished to find Master Henry that terrible night, he would. He gave him up at once, and came back."

"But why, in the name of Heaven's mercy?" asked Mr. Maynard wildly.

"Because you see, sir, Master Henry was young, and the men liked him, and he was so much cleverer than Williams — and Williams was jealous."

The rough sailor stopped, as if he felt he had said enough.

"Shipton, I am not a revengeful man; but Williams had better never want a crust of bread, and turn to me for it. To leave my son, my brave child, to that dreadful fate, because he envied him!"

"No, my husband," said Mrs. Maynard, in choking accents; "if Williams were starving, you would feed him still. You expect mercy, and you will show mercy. My poor, poor boy!"

"You are right, wife; but let him go at once, and never set foot on a ship of mine again. Shipton, you had better take a good rest this time — your pay will run on until the spring."

"Thank you, sir," said Shipton; "I have a wife and children at home, and these things are pleasant for one's family. Have you any thing else to say, sir?"

"You will sup with us, and sleep?" said the merchant, quietly; "it is late already, and we have much more to hear."

"Captain Shipton," asked Fanny, who all this time had been silent, listening with eager ears and watching every motion of the sailor's face, "do *you* really feel any hope at all?"

"Young lady, there is a God above who knows: I know nothing. But his escape is quite possible. Whole tribes live winter after winter up in those regions, and he may have fallen in with one of them. This is my hope — almost my belief."

"It is possible — it is probable," said Mr. Maynard, musing. "Yes. The boy had read much, too much of those regions. But alas, alas! it is all my own fault."

"How?" asked Fanny, gently.

"I should have agreed to your marriage, dear child, when he wished it," continued Mr. Maynard.

"Hush!" said Fanny, bowing her head under a weight of emotion; "do not say any thing of the kind. Do not grieve so, my dear sir. I, to whom he is all the world, have hope; so then must you."

She said this valiantly, did that good and gentle girl; but she did not feel so valiant as she looked, and as her voice sounded. But there is comfort in the brave voice of the young; and Mr. and Mrs. Maynard went to bed that night with a faint gleam, a glimmering of light, to illumine the black darkness around.

Not so Fanny. She spent the night in prayers and tears; alone she lost all courage, all hope, all idea that he would be restored to her. But youth is not easily beat down; and she, too, as the days went on, hoped on, hoped ever — a little, and but little, but that little sufficed to keep her alive.

Now Petershill was sad indeed. Winter passed away cheerlessly, without a ray of sunshine to the heart — a long, bleak, blank season of cold and chill. There was no merry talk now in the old mansion, no smiles ever illuminated the face now, as they talked of the departed; and then one day, as if by common consent, they went into mourning.

There had been for several days talk of the little hope there was left now; calm reason began to have sway, and to show how little, very little chance there was of his getting over one winter in the Arctic Sea. So, one morning, all came down to breakfast in deep mourning.

Mrs. Maynard started, and then clasped Fanny frantically in her arms.

"My child, my only child! Have you then given him up too?"

"I found the dress in my room, and I put it on," replied Fanny, sobbing.

"Come! come!" cried the father, striving to hide his emotion; "we have *not* given up all hope. But this garb is fit for those who have such sore reason to grieve as we have."

And the mourning was taken off no more in that house.

Scraps of news and intelligence came at long intervals, to rouse afresh the wound which never closed, but kept all in an eternal state of undecided despair.

Stop's ship returned and said that he and a boat's crew had found the signs of one man being on an island, but could not find the man himself. Stop, however, certain that the hermit was Henry, and still alone, had remained behind. The ship had not been able to revisit the island, as an early winter season drove them unexpectedly to the south.

This kept hope alive even against all probability for twelve months longer.

Then came Shipton back, with the amazing intelligence of having found the island, and a party of Esquimaux on it, who complained of having been robbed of sledges and dogs, by two white men, who had also taken with them a Chippewaw girl, a prisoner of war.

This roused intense hope that the fugitives had gained the continent of America; but it was the last vague rumor they heard of the absent.

Time passed so rapidly, that even this piece of news ceased in its effect; and hope again departed.

Mr. and Mrs. Maynard often thought that Henry having escaped with an Indian girl, had caused a pang to Fanny, and sounded her to that effect by many a strange allusion and sly question. But she did not even understand them. She had too much confidence in the affection of her dear Henry to suspect him one instant.

Years fled, and Fanny, though pale, and with a strange, anxious look always, was a lovely woman; and Mr. and Mrs. Maynard were much older than years should have made them; grieving no longer bitterly as at first, but resigned to the inevitable past, and looking to a glorious future — not here, but there!

It was a bright August evening, and they had walked out towards the cave, the stockade, and all the old signs of the young Robinson's fancy, as they would have walked to the grave of some beloved one, to mourn and meditate. A young man, who was junior partner to Mr. Maynard, had Fanny on his arm, and was striving all he could to make

himself agreeable to her. His visits were encouraged by the parents, as they looked with deep regret to the time when Fanny should be left alone in the world at the head of a large business and rich estate.

Mr. Markham was received by Fanny as a friend; and if ever she dreamed of the ideas of her adopted parents, it was gratefully; but she never meant to yield to their wishes — no, never.

They sat some of them on a bench at some distance from the cave, in front of which a path now passed from the new lodge. They could see it but faintly through some bushes, but they knew where it was, and that was quite enough. Mr. and Mrs. Maynard it was that sat, and Fanny and Mr. Markham stood a little apart.

"Miss Fanny," said the young man at last, — he was quite familiar with her, — "Mr. Maynard this morning advised me to speak frankly to you. He is kind enough to say that he thinks I should make you happy."

"Has he then given up *all* hope?" replied Fanny, in a low tone.

"I think it quite natural that he should," said Mr. Markham, a little piqued.

"Then I have not, and never will. Ah!" What a wild shriek was that! "Henry! Henry!"

And away she bounded over the grassy ground.

The aged couple, more aged from sorrow than from years, rose wildly. They understood the shriek. It was a shriek of wild and frantic joy. Yes! coming down the path, gently supporting Stop, who tottered with suppressed emotion, was a tall, dark man, with beard all over his face, whom they hoped — yes, they believed, — O, yes — it was their child.

He caught the fainting girl in his arms, and came running with her, carried up in his arms, to beside his parents. No person could trace the wild emotions of that scene, from which Markham walked away, not to invade its sacred character. He entered the house, and told the servants who was come, and then sat down to read some business letters, though not without some pain at his great disappointment.

How he kissed them all — and how Fanny kissed him first, and then old Stop — and how the father and mother looked at each other with a beaming light in their eyes, that had not been there for years! And how they all talked wildly and madly — and how strange and yet familiar all the voices seemed — and what a man Henry looked — dark, tanned, and bearded, but still Henry!

"And so you knew me?" said the Arctic Crusoe at last.

"At a glance," replied Fanny — "what a man you are!"

"And what a lovely woman!" said Henry, with beaming eyes.

"But where is the Indian girl?" suddenly exclaimed Fanny.

Henry looked at Stop with a look of vacant astonishment.

"Don't stare as if you were frightened," said Fanny, who was wild with delight. "I mean the Indian girl you ran away with."

"Alas!" replied Henry, dashing away a tear — "her death is one of the sad events of my long history, which will touch you most."

All were hushed, and then they went into the house — and Henry Maynard was restored to the home of his father.

It was late that night when they all went to rest, after listening to Henry's wondrous tale, which afterwards he had to repeat a hundred times, for none were ever weary of listening to it.

There was joy in Petershill now — more joy than ever had been known there before. And Mr. Maynard entered his counting-house once again with an elastic step that surprised his friends; and Mrs. Maynard brightened up and became cheerful and pleasant once more.

And old Stop was a hero in the whole country round, who had to tell the tale of the Polar Seas to many a wondering auditory.

Shipton received a handsome retiring pension, and went no more to sea.

Merrily ring the marriage bells, and merrily come the eager crowd to see, as, on a bright frosty morning in December, Henry and Fanny are wed. They are a handsome couple — he so dark and manly, with his beard and mus-

tache, for he cannot live without them now; she so fair, so delicate, so beautiful, leaning on his arm, as, amid loud shouts and greetings, they come forth from the church, man and wife, forever united in this life — companions until death shall part.

They had been sorely tried, and their trials were for good. A happy union it was, and one that Mr. and Mrs. Maynard lived many years to see. A sight they had longed for as hopeless greeted them, and made their hearts glad, in the persons of several grandchildren, who soon found out the famous cave, and there in the warm evening would listen, as we hope some of our readers have done, with unwearied attention, to the strange and eventful history of the ARCTIC ADVENTURERS.

THE END.

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