

GOULDING FRANCIS ROBERT

THE YOUNG MAROONERS
ON THE FLORIDA COAST

Francis Goulding

**The Young Marooners
on the Florida Coast**

«Public Domain»

Goulding F.

The Young Marooners on the Florida Coast / F. Goulding — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

INTRODUCTION	5
THE HISTORY OF THIS BOOK	6
CHAPTER I	7
CHAPTER II	9
CHAPTER III	12
CHAPTER IV	14
CHAPTER V	19
CHAPTER VI	22
CHAPTER VII	26
CHAPTER VIII	30
CHAPTER IX	34
CHAPTER X	42
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	44

F. R. Goulding

The Young Marooners on the Florida Coast

INTRODUCTION

I have been asked to furnish an introduction for a new edition of "The Young Marooners." As an introduction is unnecessary, the writing of it must be to some extent perfunctory. The book is known in many lands and languages. It has survived its own success, and has entered into literature. It has become a classic. The young marooners themselves have reached middle age, and some of them have passed away, but their adventures are as fresh and as entertaining as ever.

Dr. Goulding's work possesses all the elements of enduring popularity. It has the strength and vigour of simplicity; its narrative flows continuously forward; its incidents are strange and thrilling, and underneath all is a moral purpose sanely put.

The author himself was surprised at the great popularity of his story, and has written a history of its origin as a preface. The internal evidence is that the book is not the result of literary ambition, but of a strong desire to instruct and amuse his own children, and the story is so deftly written that the instruction is a definite part of the narrative. The art here may be unconscious, but it is a very fine art nevertheless.

Dr. Goulding lived a busy life. He had the restless missionary spirit which he inherited from the Puritans of Dorchester, England, who established themselves in Dorchester, South Carolina, and in Dorchester, Georgia, before the Revolutionary War. Devoting his life to good works, he nevertheless found time to indulge his literary faculty; he also found time to indulge his taste for mechanical invention. He invented the first sewing-machine that was ever put in practical use in the South. His family were using this machine a year before the Howe patents were issued. In his journal of that date (1845) he writes: "Having satisfied myself about my machine, I laid it aside that I might attend to other and weightier duties." He applied for no patent.

"The Young Marooners" was begun in 1847, continued in a desultory way, and completed in 1850. Its first title was a quaint one, "Bobbins and Cruisers Company." It was afterward called "Robert and Harold; or, the Young Marooners." The history of the manuscript of the book is an interesting parallel to that of many other successful books. After having been positively declined in New York, it was for months left in Philadelphia, where one night, as the gentleman whose duty it was to pass judgment upon the material offered had begun in a listless way his task, he became so much absorbed in the story that he did not lay it down until long after midnight, and hastening to the publishers early next morning, insisted that it should be immediately put into print. Three editions were issued in the first year, and it was soon reprinted in England by Nisbet & Co., of London, followed by five other houses in England and Scotland at later dates.

Dr. Goulding was the author of "Little Josephine," published in Philadelphia (1848); "The Young Marooners" (1852); "Confederate Soldiers' Hymn-Book," a compilation (1863); "Marooner's Island," an independent sequel to "Young Marooners" (1868); "Frank Gordon; or, When I was Little Boy" (1869), and "The Woodruff Stories" (1870). With the exception of "Little Josephine" and the "Hymn-Book," they have all been republished abroad. Born near Midway, Liberty County, Georgia, September 28th, 1810, he died August 21st, 1881, and is buried in the little churchyard at Roswell, Georgia.

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS.

THE HISTORY OF THIS BOOK

In a vine-covered piazza of the sunny South, a company of boys and girls used to gather round me, of a summer evening, to hear the varied story of my early years. As these boys and girls grew larger, I found it necessary to change my plan of instruction. There were many *facts in nature* which I wished to communicate, and many *expedients* in practical life, which I supposed might be useful. To give this information, in such shape as to insure its being remembered, required a story. The result has been a book; and that book is "The Young Marooners" – or, as my young folks call it, "Robert and Harold."

Their interest in the story has steadily increased from the beginning to the end; and sure am I, that if it excites one-half as much abroad, as it has excited at home, no author need ask for more.

The story, however, is not all a story; the fiction consists mostly in the putting together. With very few exceptions, the incidents are real occurrences; and whoever will visit the regions described, will see that the pictures correspond to nature. Possibly also, the visitor may meet even now, with a fearless Harold, an intelligent Robert, a womanly Mary, and a merry Frank.

Should my young readers ever go *marooning*, I trust their party may meet with fewer misfortunes and as happy a termination.

F. R. G.

CHAPTER I

THE COMPANY AND THEIR EMBARKATION

On Saturday, the 21st of August, 1830, a small but beautiful brig left the harbour of Charleston, South Carolina, bound for Tampa Bay, Florida. On board were nine passengers; Dr. Gordon, his three children, Robert, Mary, and Frank; his sister's son, Harold McIntosh, and four servants.

Dr. Gordon was a wealthy physician, who resided, during the winter, upon the seaboard of Georgia, and during the summer upon a farm in the mountains of that beautifully varied and thriving State. His wife was a Carolinian, from the neighbourhood of Charleston. Anna Gordon, his sister, married a Col. McIntosh, who, after residing for twelve years upon a plantation near the city of Montgomery, in Alabama, died, leaving his widow with three children, and an encumbered estate. Soon after her widowhood, Dr. Gordon paid her a visit, for the two-fold purpose of condolence and of aiding in the settlement of her affairs. She was so greatly pleased with the gentlemanly bearing and the decided intelligence of Robert, who on this occasion accompanied his father, that she requested the privilege of placing her son Harold under her brother's care, until some other arrangement could be made for his education. Dr. Gordon was equally prepossessed with the frank manners and manly aspect of his nephew, and it was with peculiar pleasure that he acceded to the request. Harold had been with his uncle about a month previous to the period at which this history begins.

Mrs. Gordon was a woman of warm affections and cultivated mind, but of feeble constitution. She had been the mother of five children; but, during the infancy of the last, her health exhibited so many signs of decay as to convince her husband that the only hope of saving her life was to seek for her, during the ensuing winter, a climate even more bland than that in which she had spent her girlhood.

Tampa Bay is a military post of the United States. Dr. Gordon had formerly visited it, and was so delighted with its soft Italian climate, and with the wild beauty of its shores, that he had even then purchased a choice lot in the vicinity of the fort, and ever after had looked forward, almost with hope, to the time when he might have some excuse for removing there. That time had now come. And doubting not that the restorative powers of the climate would exert a happy influence upon his wife's health, he left her with her relatives, while he went to Tampa for the purpose of preparing a dwelling suitable for her reception.

The accompanying party was larger than he had at first intended. Robert and Harold were to go of course; they were old enough to be his companions; and, moreover, Harold had been sent by his mother for the express purpose of enjoying that excellent *home education* which had been so happily exhibited in Robert. But on mature reflection there appeared to Dr. Gordon special reasons why he should also take his eldest daughter, Mary, who was about eleven years of age, and his second son, Frank, who was between seven and eight. The addition of these younger persons to the party, however, did not cause him any anxiety, or any addition to the number of his servants; for he and his wife, although wealthy by inheritance, and accustomed all their lives to the help of servants, had educated their children to be as independent as possible of unnecessary help. Indeed, Mary was qualified to be of great assistance; for though only eleven years of age, she was an excellent housekeeper, and during the indisposition of her mother had presided with remarkable ability at her father's table. Little Frank was too young to be useful, but he was an obedient, merry little fellow, a great pet with everybody, and promised, by his cheerful good nature, to add much to the enjoyment of the party; and as to the care which he needed, Mary had only to continue that motherly attention which she had been accustomed already to bestow.

To say a word or two more of the youths; Robert Gordon, now nearly fourteen years of age, had a great thirst for knowledge. Stimulated continually by the instructive conversation of his father, who spared no pains in his education, he drew rapidly from all the sources opened to him by books, society, and nature. His finely developed mind was decidedly of a philosophic cast. Partaking, however, of the delicate constitution of his mother, he was oftentimes averse to those athletic exercises which became his age, and by which he would have been fitted for a more vigorous and useful manhood.

Harold McIntosh, a half year older than his cousin, was, on the contrary, of a robust constitution and active habit, with but little inclination for books. Through the inattention of a father, who seemed to care more for manly daring than for intellectual culture, his education had been sadly neglected. The advantages afforded him had been of an exceedingly irregular character, and his only incentive to study had been the gratification of his mother, whom he tenderly loved. For years preceding the change of his abode, a large portion of his leisure time had been spent in visiting an old Indian of the neighbourhood, by the name of Torgah, and gleaning from him by conversation and practice, that knowledge of wood-craft, which nothing but an Indian's experience can furnish, and which usually possesses so romantic a charm for Southern and Western (perhaps we may say for American) boys.

The cousins had become very much attached. Each admired the other's excellencies, and envied the other's accomplishments; and the parents had good reason to hope that they would prove of decided benefit to each other by mutual example.

Preparing for a winter's residence at such a place as Tampa, where, with the exception of what was to be obtained at the fort, they would be far removed from all the comforts and appliances of civilized life, Dr. Gordon was careful to take with him everything which could be foreseen as needful. Among these may be mentioned the materials already framed for a small dwelling-house, kitchen, and stable; ample stores of provisions, poultry, goats (as being more convenient than cows), a pair of horses, a buggy, and wagon, a large and beautiful pleasure boat, books for reading, and for study, together with such furniture as habit had made necessary to comfort.

CHAPTER II

MOTHER CARY'S CHICKENS-FISHING FOR TROUT- SAW-FISH-FRANK AND THE SHARK-LOOMING-TOM STARBOARD-THE NAUTILUS-ARRIVAL AT TAMPA

Mary and Frank were affected with sea sickness shortly after entering the rough and rolling water on the bar, and having, in consequence, retired early to bed, they scarcely rose for six and thirty hours. Indeed, all the passengers, except Harold, suffered in turn this usual inconvenience of persons unaccustomed to the sea.

The only incident of interest that occurred during this part of the voyage, was a fright received by Mary and Frank. It was as follows: Having partially recovered from their indisposition, they were engaged with childish glee in fishing from the stern windows. Directly over head hung the jolly boat, and beneath them the water foamed and eddied round the rudder. Mary was fishing for Mother Cary's chickens-a species of "poultry" well known to those who go to sea. Her apparatus consisted of a strong thread, twenty or thirty yards long, having divers loops upon it, and baited at the end with a little tuft of red. She had not succeeded in taking any; but one, more daring than the rest, had become entangled in the thread, and Mary eagerly drew it towards her, exclaiming, "I have caught it! I have caught it!" Ere, however, she could bring it within arm's length, the struggling bird had escaped.

Frank had obtained a large fish-hook, which he tied to a piece of twine, and baited with some raw beef; and he was fishing, he said, for *trout*. A few minutes after Mary's adventure with the bird, he saw a great fish, twice as long as himself, having an enormous snout, set on both sides with a multitude of sharp teeth, following in the vessel's wake. He drew himself quickly into the window, exclaiming, "Look, sister, look!" The fish did not continue long to follow them. It seemed to have come on a voyage of curiosity, and having satisfied itself that this great swimming monster, the vessel, was neither whale nor kraken, it darted off and returned no more.

"I should not like to hook *that* fellow," said Frank, "for I am sure I could not draw him in."

"No," replied Mary, "and I should not like to have such an ugly fellow on board, if we could get him here."

"Ugh! what a long ugly nose he has," said Frank. "I wonder what he can do with such a nose, and with all those teeth on the outside of it-only see, sister, *teeth on his NOSE!*"

"I do not know," she answered, "but we can ask father when we go on deck."

"I think his nose must be long to smell things a great way off," conjectured Frank.

Thus they chatted until Mary called out, "See, Frank, there is a black piece of wood sticking out of the water. See how it floats after us! No, it cannot be a piece of wood, for it swims from side to side. It must be a fish. It is! Draw in your head, Frank."

Unsuccessful in his trout fishing, Frank had attached a red silk handkerchief to his line, and was amusing himself with letting it down so as to touch along the water. When Mary said "it is a fish," he espied an enormous creature, much larger than the sawfish, swimming almost under him, and looking up hungrily to the window where they were. A moment after it leaped directly towards them. Both screamed with terror, and Frank's wrist was jerked so violently, and pained him so much, that he was certain his hand had been bitten off. He was about to scream again; but looking down, he found his hand was safe, and the next moment saw the fish swimming away with the end of the handkerchief hanging from its mouth. The fish was a shark. It had been attracted probably by the smell of Frank's bait, and by the sight of the red silk. When he drew his handkerchief from the water,

the fish leaped after it, and jerked the twine which had been wrapped around his wrist. From that time they ceased all fishing from the cabin windows.

The history of that fishing, however, was not yet ended. On the day following the company were much interested in watching a singular phenomenon, which is sometimes visible at sea, though seldom in a latitude so low as Florida. The looming of the land had been remarkably distinct and beautiful; at one time the land looked as if lifted far above the water; at another the shore was seen doubled, as if the water were a perfect reflector, and the land and its shadow were united at the base. But, on the present occasion, the shadow appeared in the wrong place-united to its substance, not at the base, but at the top. It was a most singular spectacle to behold trees growing topsy-turvy, from land in the sky.

The sailors, as well as passengers, looked on with a curiosity not unmixed with awe, and an old "salt" was heard to mutter, as he ominously shook his head,

"I never seed the likes of that but something was sure to come after. Yes," he continued, looking sullenly at Mary and Frank, "and yesterday, when I was at the starn, I saw a chicken flutter in a string."

"A chicken, Tom?" inquired the captain, looking at the little culprits. "Ah, have any of my young friends been troubling the sailor's pets?"

"No, sir," responded Frank, promptly and indignantly. "We did not trouble anybody's chickens. I only went to the coop, and pulled the old drake's tail; but I did that to make him look at the bread I brought him."

"I do not mean the chickens on board, but the chickens that fly around us-Mother Cary's chickens," said the captain, trying hard to smother down a laugh. "Don't you know that they all belong to the sailors; and that whoever troubles them is sure to bring trouble on the ship?"

"No, sir," Frank persisted, evidently convinced that the captain was trying to tease him. "I did not know that they belonged to anybody. I thought that they were all wild."

Mary, however, looked guilty. She knew well the sailor's superstition about the "chickens," but having had at that time nothing to do, she had been urged on by an irrepressible desire for fun, and until this moment had imagined that her fishing was unnoticed. She timidly answered,

"I did not *catch* it, sir; I only tangled it in the thread, and it got away before I touched it."

"Well, Tom," said the captain to the sailor, who seemed to be in doubt after Frank's defence whether to appear pleased or angry, "I think you will have to forgive the offence this time, especially as the sharks took it in hand so soon to revenge the insult, and ran away with the little fellow's handkerchief."

Old Tom smiled grimly at the allusion to the shark; for he had been sitting quietly in the jolly boat picking rope, and had witnessed the whole adventure.

The wind, which had continued favourable ever since they left Charleston, now gradually died away. The boatswain whistled often and shrilly to bring it back; but it was like "calling spirits from the vasty deep." The sails hung listlessly down, and moved only as the vessel rocked sluggishly upon the scarce undulating surface. The only circumstance which enlivened this scene was the appearance of a nautilus, or Portuguese man-of-war. Mary was the first to discern it. She fancied that it was a tiny toy boat, launched by some child on shore, and wafted by the wind to this distant point. It was certainly a toy vessel, though one of nature's workmanship; for there was the floating body corresponding to the hull, there the living passenger, there the sails spread or furled at will, and there the oars (Mary could see them move) by which the little adventurer paddled itself along.

The young people were very anxious to obtain it. Frank went first to old Tom Starboard (as the sailor was called who had scolded him and Mary, but who was now on excellent terms with both) to ask whether they might have the nautilus if they could catch it.

"Have the man-o'-war!" ejaculated the old man, opening wide his eyes, "who ever heered of sich a thing? O yes, have it, if you can get it; but how will you do that?"

"Brother Robert and cousin Harold will row after it and pick it up, if the captain will let them have his boat."

Tom chuckled at the idea, and said he doubted not the captain would let them have his boat, and be glad, too, to see the fun. Frank then went to the captain, and told him that old Tom had given him leave to have the man-of-war if he could get it; and that his brother and cousin would go out and pick it up, if the captain would let them have his boat. With a good-natured smile, he answered,

"You are perfectly welcome to the boat, my little man; but if your brother and cousin catch that little sailor out there, they will be much smarter than most folks."

"Can they not pick it up?"

"Easily enough, if it will wait till they come. But if they do not wish to be hurt, they had better take a basket or net for dipping it from the water."

Frank went finally to his father to obtain his consent, which after a moment's hesitation was granted, the doctor well knowing what the probable result would be, yet pleased to afford them any innocent amusement by which to enliven their voyage.

"Tom," said the captain, "lower away the jolly boat, and do you go with these young gentlemen. Row softly as you can, and give them the best chance for getting what they want."

The boat was soon alongside. Old Tom slid down by a rope, but Robert and Harold were let down more securely. They shoved off from the vessel's side, and glided so noiselessly along, that the water was scarcely rippled. Harold stood in the bow, and Robert amidships, one with a basket, and the other with a scoop net, ready to dip it from the water. A cat creeping upon a shy bird could not have been more stealthy in its approach. But somehow the little sensitive thing became aware of its danger, and ere the boat's prow had come within ten feet, it quickly drew in its many arms, and sank like lead beyond their sight.

"Umph!" said old Tom, with an expressive grunt, "I said you might have it, if you could catch it."

On the first day of September the voyagers approached some placid looking islands, tasselled above with lofty palmettoes, and varied beneath with every hue of green, from the soft colour of the mallow to the sombre tint of the cedar and the glossy green of the live oak. Between these islands the vessel passed, so near to one that they could see a herd of deer peeping at them through the thin growth of the bluff, and a flock of wild turkeys flying to a distant grove.

Beyond the islands lay, in perfect repose, the waters of that bay whose tranquil beauty has been a theme of admiration with every one whose privilege it has been to look upon it.

CHAPTER III

TAMPA BAY-BELLEVUE-UNLADING-A DANGEROUS CUT- HOW TO STOP A BLEEDING ARTERY-TOM STARBOARD AGAIN

Tampa Bay is a perfect gem of its kind. Running eastward from the gulf for twelve or fifteen miles, then turning suddenly to the North, it is so far sheltered from within, that, except in case of severe westerly gales, its waters are ever quiet and clear as crystal. Its beach is composed of sand and broken shells of such snowy whiteness as almost to dazzle the eye, and it slopes so gradually from the land, that, in many places, a child may wade for a great distance without danger. To those who bathe in its limpid waters it is a matter of curiosity to see below, the slow crawling of the conch, while the nimble crab scampers off in haste, and fish and prawn dart wantonly around. When the tide is down there is no turnpike in the world better fitted for a pleasure ride than that smooth hard beach, from which no dust can rise, and which is of course as level as a floor.

The spot on which Dr. Gordon proposed to build, was one commanding a view both of the distant fort and of the open sea, or rather of the green islands which guarded the mouth of the bay. It already contained a small house, with two rooms, erected by a white adventurer, and afterwards sold to an Indian chief of the better class. Dr. Gordon had been originally attracted by the picturesque beauty of its location, and, on closer inspection, still more interested by seeing on each side of the chief's door a large bell pepper, that, having grown for years untouched by frost, had attained the height of eight or ten feet, and was covered all the year round with magnificent bells of green and crimson. The old chief was dead, and the premises had been vacated for more than a year.

Early in the afternoon the brig anchored opposite this spot, to which Dr. Gordon had given the name of Bellevue. All hands were called to assist the ship carpenter and Sam (Dr. Gordon's negro carpenter), to build a pier head, or wharf, extending from the shore to the vessel; this occupied them till nightfall, and the work of unlading continued through a great part of the night, and past the middle of the next day.

The work was somewhat delayed by an untoward accident befalling one of the sailors, and threatening for a time to take his life. Peter, the brother of Sam, was standing on the gangway, with his ax on his shoulder, just as two of the sailors were coming out with a heavy box. Hearing behind him the noise of their trampling, he turned quickly around to see what it was, at the moment when the sailor, who was walking backwards, turned his head to see that the gangway was clear. By these two motions, quickly made, the head was brought towards the ax, and the ax towards the head, and the consequence was that the sailor's temple received a terrible gash. The blood gushed out in successive jets, proving that the cut vessel was an artery. Setting down the box with all speed, the assisting sailor seized the skin of the wounded temple and tried with both hands to bring the gaping lips together, so as to stop the bleeding. His effort was in vain. The blood gushed through his fingers, and ran down to his elbows. By this time the captain reached the spot, and seeing that an artery was cut, directed the sailor to press with his finger on the *heart* side of the wound. In a moment the jets ceased; for the arterial blood is driven by the heart towards the extremities, and therefore moves by jets as the heart beats, while the *venous*, or black blood, is on its way *from the extremities* to the heart; consequently, the pressure, which stops the flow from a wound in either vein or artery, must correspond to the direction in which the blood is flowing. [See note p. 16.]

While the sailor was thus stopping the blood by the pressure of his finger on the side from which the current came, the captain hastily prepared a ball of soft oakum, about the size of a small apple. This he laid upon the wound, and bound tightly to the head by means of a handkerchief. It is

probable the flow might have been staunched had the compress been sufficiently tight, but for some reason the blood forced itself through all the impediments, saturated the tarred oakum, and trickled down the sailor's face. During this scene Dr. Gordon was at his house on the bluff. Hearing through a runner, dispatched by the captain, that a man was bleeding to death, he pointed to a quantity of cobwebs that hung in large festoons from the unceiled roof, and directed him to bring a handful of these to the vessel, remarking, that "*nothing stopped blood more quickly than cobwebs.*"

The sailor was by this time looking pale and ready to faint. Dr. Gordon inquired of the captain what had been done, pronounced it all right, and declared that he should probably have tried the same plan, but further remarked,

"This artery in the temple is oftentimes exceedingly difficult to manage by pressure. You may stop for a time the bleeding of *any* artery by pressing with sufficient force upon the right place; or, if necessary to adopt so summary a mode, you may obliterate it altogether by *burning with a hot iron.* But in the present case I will show you an easier plan."

While speaking he had removed the bandages, and taken out his lancet; and, to the captain's amazement, in uttering the last words, he cut the bleeding artery in two, saying, "Now bring me some cold water."

The captain was almost disposed to stay the doctor's arm, supposing that he was about to make a fatal mistake; but when he saw the jets of blood instantly diminish, he exclaimed, "What new wonder is this! Here I have been trying for half an hour to staunch the blood by *closing* the wound, while you have done it in a moment, by making the wound greater."

"It is one of the secrets of the art," responded the doctor, "but a secret which I will explain by the fact, that *severed* arteries always contract and close more or less perfectly; whereas, if they should be only *split* or *partly cut*, the same contraction will keep the orifice open and bleeding. I advise you never to try it, except when you know the artery to be small, or when every other expedient has failed. But here comes the bucket. See what a fine styptic cold water is."

He washed the wound till it was thoroughly cooled; after which he brought its lips together by a few stitches made with a bent needle, and putting on the cobwebs and bandage, pronounced the operation complete.

"Live and larn!" muttered old Tom Starboard, as he turned away from this scene of surgery. "I knew it took a smart man to manage a ship; but I'll be hanged if there a'n't smart people in this world besides sailors."

The main arteries in a man's limbs are *deeply buried and lie in the same general direction with the inner seams of his coat sleeves and of his pantaloons.* When one of them is cut—which may be known by the light red blood flowing in jets, as above described—all the bandages in the world will be insufficient to staunch it, except imperfectly, and for a time, it must be tied or cauterized. If any one knows the position of the wounded artery, the best bandage for effecting a temporary stoppage of the blood, is the *tourniquet*, which is made to press like a big strong finger directly upon it on the side from which the blood is flowing. A good substitute for the tourniquet may be extemporized out of a handkerchief or other strong bandage, and a piece of corn-cob two inches long, or a suitable piece of wood or stone. This last is to be placed so as to press directly over the artery; and the bandage to be made very tight by means of a stick run through it so as to twist it up with great power.

CHAPTER IV

CONFUSION-HOUSEKEEPING IN A HURRY-FIRST NIGHT ON SHORE-COMPANY TO DINNER-"BLUE EYED MARY" – ROBERT AT PRAYER-MEETING-DANGER OF DESCENDING AN OLD WELL-RECOVERING A KNIFE DROPPED IN A WELL

It is scarcely possible, for one who has not tried it, to conceive the utter confusion which ensues on removing, in a hurry, one's goods and chattels to a place too small for their accommodation. Oh! the wilderness of boxes, baskets, bundles, heaped in disorder everywhere! and the perfect bewilderment into which one is thrown, when attempting the simplest act of household duty.

"Judy," said Mary to the cook, the evening that they landed, and while the servants were hurrying to bring under shelter the packages which Dr. Gordon was unwilling to leave exposed to the night air, "Judy, the sun is only about an hour high. Make haste and get some tea ready for supper. Father says you need not *cook* anything, we can get along on cheese and crackers."

Well, surely, it sounded like a trifle to order only a little tea. Mary thought so, and so did Judy, – it could be got ready in a minute. But just at that moment of unreadiness, there were some difficulties in the way which neither cook nor housekeeper anticipated. To have tea for supper ordinarily requires that one should have fire and water, and a tea kettle and a tea pot, and the tea itself, and cups and saucers and spoons, and sugar and milk, and a sugar pot and milk pot, besides a number of other things. But how these things are to be brought together, in their proper relation, and in a hurry, when they are all thrown promiscuously in a heap, is a question more easily asked than answered.

The simple order to prepare a little tea threw poor Judy into a fluster. "Yes, misses," she mechanically replied, "but wey I gwine fin' de tea?"

Mary was about to say, "In the sideboard of course," knowing that at home it was always kept there, when suddenly she recollected that the present sideboard was a new one, packed with table and bed clothes, and moreover that it was nailed up fast in a long box. Then, where was the tea? O, now she recalled the fact that the tea for immediate use was corked up in a tin can and stowed away together with the teapot and cups, saucers, spoons and other concomitants, in a certain green box. But where was the green box? She and Judy peered among the confused piles, and at last spied it under another box, on which was a large basket that was covered with a pile of bedding.

Judy obtained the tea and tea-pot and kettle, but until that moment had neglected to order a fire; so she went to the front door to look for her husband.

"Peter!" she called. Peter was nowhere about the house. She saw him below the bluff on his way to the landing. So, running a little nearer, and raising her voice to a high musical pitch, she sung out, "Petah-h! OH-H! Petah! Oh! PEE-tah!"

Peter came, and learning what was wanted, went to the landing for his ax, and having brought her a stick of green oak wood on his shoulder, sallied out once more to find some kindling.

While he was on this business, Judy prepared to get some water. "Wey my bucket?" she inquired, looking around. "Who tek my bucket? I sho' somebody moob um; fuh I put um right down yuh, under my new calabash."¹

But nobody had disturbed it. Judy had set it, half full of water, on the ground outside the door, in the snuggest place she could find; but a thirsty goat had found it, and another thirsty goat had

¹ "Where is my bucket? Who has taken my bucket? I am sure somebody has moved it, for I put it right down here under my new gourd."

fought for it, and between the two, it had been upset, and rolled into a corner where it lay concealed by a bundle. By the time Judy got another supply of water ready it was growing dark. Peter had not made the fire because he was not certain where she preferred to have it built; so he waited, like a good, obedient husband, until she should direct him.

In the meantime, Mary was in trouble too. Where was the loaf sugar to be placed in cracking it, and what should she use for a hammer? Then the candle box must be opened, and candles and candle-sticks brought together, and some place contrived for placing them after they were lighted.

But perseverance conquers all things. Tea *was* made, sugar *was* cracked, and candles were both lighted and put in position. Bed-time came soon after, and weary enough with their labour, they all laid down to enjoy their first sleep at Bellevue. Mary and Frank occupied a pallet spread behind a pile of boxes in one room, while their father and the older boys lay upon cloaks, and whatever else they could convert into a temporary mattress, in the other; and the servants tumbled themselves upon a pile of their own clothing, which they had thrown under a shelter erected beside the house.

Early the next morning, two convenient shelters were hastily constructed, and the two rooms of the house were so far relieved of their confused contents, as to allow space for sitting, and almost for walking about. But ere this was half accomplished, Mary, whose sense of order and propriety was very keen, was destined to be thrown into quite an embarrassing situation.

Major Burke, the commandant of Fort Brooke, was a cousin of Mrs. Gordon, and an old college friend of the Doctor, and hearing by the captain of the brig of the arrival of the new comers, he rode over in the forenoon of the next day to see them. Mary's mind associated so indissolubly the idea of *company*, with the stately etiquette of Charleston and Savannah, that the sight of a well-dressed stranger approaching their door, threw her almost into a fever.

"Oh! father," she cried, as soon as she could beckon him out of the back door, "what shall we do?"

"Do?" he answered, laughing. "Why, nothing at all. What can we do?"

"But is he not going to dine with us?" enquired she.

"I presume so," he replied. "I am sure I shall ask him; but what of that?"

"What, father, dine with us?" she remonstrated, "when our only table unboxed is no bigger than a light stand, and we have scarcely room for that!"

"Yes," he said, "we will do the best we can for him now, and hope to do better some other time. Perhaps you will feel less disturbed when you realize that he is your cousin and a soldier. Come, let me make you acquainted with him."

Mary was naturally a neat girl, and although her hands were soiled with labour, she was soon ready to obey her father's invitation. Slipping into the back room, by a low window, she washed her hands and face, and brushed into order the ringlets that clustered around her usually sunny face, and then came modestly into the apartment where the two gentlemen were sitting.

"John, this is my eldest daughter, Mary," said the Doctor, as she approached; "and Mary this is your cousin, Major Burke, of whom you have heard your mother and me so often speak."

The two cousins shook hands very cordially, and appeared to be mutually pleased.

"She is my housekeeper for the present," her father continued, "and has been in some trouble" (here Mary looked reproachfully at him), "that she could not give you a more fitting reception."

"Ah, indeed," said the Major, with a merry twinkle of his eye, "I suspect that when my little cousin learns how often we soldiers are glad to sit on the bare ground, and to feed, Indian fashion, on Indian fare, she will feel little trouble about giving us entertainment."

Mary's embarrassment was now wholly dispelled. Her cousin was fully apprised of their crowded and confused condition, and was ready to partake with good humour of whatever they could hastily prepare.

The dinner passed off far more agreeably than she supposed possible. By her father's direction, a dining table was unboxed and spread under the boughs of a magnificent live oak, and Judy, having ascertained where the stores were to be found, gave them not only a dinner, but a dessert to boot, which they all enjoyed with evident relish. Ah! – black and ugly as she was, that Judy was a jewel.

The Major had come thus hastily upon them for the purpose of insisting that the whole family should occupy quarters at the Fort as his guests, until the new house, intended for their future reception, should be completed. To this Dr. Gordon objected that his presence was necessary for the progression of the work, but promised that at the earliest period when he could be spared for a few days, he would accept the invitation and bring the young people with him.

The visitor did not take his leave until the shades of evening warned him of the lapse of time. Mary had become much more interested, in consequence of her first distress and the pleasant termination, than she possibly could have been without these experiences; and as the whole family stood at the front door, watching his rapidly diminishing figure, she perpetrated a blunder which gave rise to much merriment.

Her father had remarked, "It will be long after dark before he can reach the Fort."

Mary rejoined, "Yes, sir, but," looking with an abstracted air, first at the table where they had enjoyed their pleasant repast, then at the darkening form of the soldier, and finally at the full moon which began to pour its silver radiance over the bay, "it will make no difference tonight, for it will be blue-eyed Mary."

All turned their eyes upon her in perplexity, to gather from her countenance the interpretation of her language; but Mary was still looking quietly at the moon. Harold thought the girl had become suddenly deranged.

Robert, who had observed her abstraction of mind, and who suspected the truth, began to laugh. Her father turned to her and asked, with a tone so divided between the ludicrous and the grave, that it was hard to tell which predominated, "What do you mean by 'blue-eyed Mary'?"

"Did I say blue-eyed Mary?" she exclaimed, reddening from her temples to her finger ends, and then giving way to a fit of laughter so hearty and so prolonged, that she could scarcely reply, "I meant *moonlight*."²

There was no resisting the impulse, all laughed with her, and long afterwards did it furnish a theme for merriment. Robert, however, was disposed to be so wicked on the occasion, that his father deemed it necessary to stop his teasing, by turning the laugh against him.

"It is certainly," said he, "the most ridiculous thing I have witnessed since Robert's queer prank at the prayer-meeting."

As soon as the word "prayer-meeting" was uttered, Robert's countenance fell.

"What is it, uncle?" inquired Harold.

"O, do tell it, father," begged Mary, clapping her hands with delight.

"About a year since," said Dr. Gordon, "I attended a prayer-meeting in the city of Charleston, where thirty or forty intelligent people were assembled at the house of their pastor. It was night. Robert occupied a chair near the table, beside which the minister officiated, and where he could be seen by every person in the room: Not long after the minister's address began, Robert's head was seen to nod; and every once in a while his nods were so expressive, apparently, of assent to the remarks made, as to bring a smile upon the face of more than one of the company. But he was not content with nodding. Soon his head fell back upon the chair, and he snored most musically, with his mouth wide open. It was then nearly time for another prayer, and I was very much in hopes that when we moved to kneel, he would be awakened by the noise. But no such good fortune was in store for me. He slept through the whole prayer; and then, to make the scene as ridiculous as possible, he awoke as the

² It is but justice to say that this absurd mistake was *an actual occurrence*. For many a day afterwards the members of the company present on that occasion seldom alluded to moonlight among each other, but by the name of "blue-eyed Mary."

people were in the act of rising, and, supposing they were about to kneel, he deliberately knelt down beside his chair, and kept that position until he was seen by every person present. There was a slight pause in the services, I think the clergyman himself was somewhat disconcerted, and afraid to trust his voice. Poor Robert soon suspected his mistake. He peeped cautiously around, then arose and took his seat with a very silly look. I am glad it happened. He has never gone to sleep in meeting since."

And from that time forth Mary never heard Robert allude to her moonlight; indeed he was so much cut down by this story, that for a day or two he was more than usually quiet. At last, however, an incident occurred which restored to him the ascendancy he had hitherto held over his cousin, by illustrating the importance of possessing a proper store of sound, practical knowledge.

The two had gone to examine an old well, near the house, and were speculating upon the possibility of cleansing it from its trash and other impurities, so as to be fit for use, when Harold's knife slipped from his hand and fell down the well. It did not fall into the water, but was caught by a half decayed board that floated on its surface.

"I cannot afford to lose that knife," said Harold, looking around for something to aid his descent, "I must go down after it."

"You had better be careful how you do that," interposed Robert, "it may not be safe."

"What," asked Harold, "are you afraid of the well's caving?"

"Not so much of its caving," replied Robert, "as of the bad air that may have collected at the bottom."

Harold snuffed at the well's mouth to detect such ill odours as might be there, and said, "I perceive no smell."

"You mistake my meaning," remarked Robert. "In all old wells, vaults and places under ground, there is apt to collect a kind of air or gas, like that which comes from burning charcoal, that will quickly suffocate any one who breathes it. Many a person has lost his life by going into such a place without testing it beforehand."

"Can you tell whether there is any of it here?" asked Harold.

"Very easily, with a little fire," answered Robert. "AIR THAT WILL NOT SUPPORT FLAME, WILL NOT SUPPORT LIFE."

They stuck a splinter of rich pine in the cleft end of a pole, and, lighting it by a match, let it softly down the well. To Harold's astonishment the flame was extinguished as suddenly as if it had been dipped in water, before it had gone half way to the bottom.

"Stop, let us try that experiment again," said he.

They tried it repeatedly, and with the same result, except that the heavy poisonous air below being stirred by the pole, had become somewhat mingled with the pure air above, and the flame was not extinguished quite so suddenly as at first; it burnt more and more dimly as it descended, and then went out.

"I do believe there is something there," said he at last, "and I certainly shall not go down, as I intended. But how am I to get my knife?"

"By using father's magnet, which is a strong one," replied Robert. "Let us go and ask him for it."

On relating the circumstances to Dr. Gordon, he said, "You have made a most fortunate escape, Harold. Had you descended that well, filled as it is with carbonic acid gas, you would have become suddenly sick and faint, and would probably have fallen senseless before you could have called for help. *Make it a rule never to descend such a place without first trying the purity of its air, as you did just now.*"

"But can we not get that bad air out?" asked Harold.

"Yes, by various means, and some of them very easy," replied his uncle. "One is by exploding gunpowder as far down as possible; another is by lowering down and drawing up many times a thickly leaved bush, so as to pump out the foul air, or at least to mix it largely with the pure. But your knife can be obtained without all that trouble. Robert, can you not put him upon a plan?"

"I have already mentioned it, and we have come to ask if you will not let us have your magnet," replied Robert. "But," continued he smilingly, "I do not think that we shall have any need this time for the looking-glass."

Harold looked from one to the other for an explanation, and his uncle said:

"Last year Robert dropped his knife down a well, as you did, and proposed to recover it by means of a strong magnet tied to a string. But the well was deep and very dark, and after fishing a long time in vain, he came to me for help. I made him bring a large looking-glass from the house, and by means of it reflected such a body of sun-light down the well that we could plainly see his knife at the bottom, stowed away in a corner. The magnet was strong enough to bring it safely to the top. You also may try the experiment."

With thanks, Harold took the offered magnet, tied it to a string, and soon recovered his knife.

CHAPTER V

RILEY-A THUNDERSTORM-ASCERTAINING THE DISTANCE OF OBJECTS BY SOUND-SECURITY AGAINST LIGHTNING-MEANS OF RECOVERING LIFE FROM APPARENT DEATH BY LIGHTNING

A few days after this incident another visitor was seen coming from Fort Brooke. This person was not a horseman, but some one in a boat, who seemed even from a distance to possess singular dexterity in the use of the paddle. His boat glided over the smooth surface of the bay as if propelled less by his exertions than by his will. Dr. Gordon viewed him through the spy glass, and soon decided him to be an Indian, who was probably bringing something to sell.

It so turned out. He was a half-breed, by the name of Riley, who frequently visited the fort with venison and turkeys to sell, and who on the present occasion brought with him in addition a fine green turtle. Major Burke, conceiving that his friends at Bellevue would prize these delicacies more than they at the fort, to whom they were no longer rarities, had directed the Indian to bring them, with his compliments, to Dr. Gordon.

Riley was a fine looking fellow, of about thirty years of age-tall, keen-eyed, straight as an arrow, and with a pleasing open countenance. He brought a note from the fort, recommending him for honesty and faithfulness.

Dr. Gordon was so much pleased with his general appearance, that he engaged him to return the following week with another supply of game, and prepared to remain several days, in case he should be needed in raising the timbers of the new house.

Toward the close of the week, the weather gave indications of a change. A heavy looking cloud rose slowly from the west, and came towards them, muttering and growling in great anger. It was a tropical thunderstorm. The distant growls were soon converted into peals. The flashes increased rapidly in number and intensity, and became terrific. Mary and Frank nestled close to their father; and even stout-hearted Harold looked grave, as though he did not feel quite so comfortable as usual.

"That flash was uncommonly keen," Robert remarked, with an unsteady voice. "Do you not think, father, it was very near?"

Instead of replying, his father appeared to be busy counting; and when the crash of thunder was heard, jarring their ears, and making the earth quiver, he replied,

"Not very. Certainly not within a mile."

"But, uncle, can you calculate the distance of the lightning?" Harold asked.

"Unquestionably, or I should not have spoken with so much confidence. Robert imagined, as most people do, that a flash is near in proportion to its brightness; but that is no criterion. You must calculate its distance by the time which elapses between the flash and the report. Sound travels at the rate of about a mile in five seconds. Should any of you like to calculate the distance of the next flash, put your finger on your pulse, and count the number of beats before you hear the thunder."

An opportunity soon occurred. A vivid flash was followed after a few seconds by a roll, and then by a peal of thunder. All were busy counting their pulses. Mary ceased when she heard the first roll, exclaiming "Five!" The others held on until they heard the loud report, and said "Seven." Dr. Gordon reported only six beats of his own pulse, remarking,

"That flash discharged itself just one mile distant. Our pulses are quicker than seconds; and yours quicker than mine. Sound will travel a mile during six beats of a person of my age, and during seven of persons of yours."

"But, father," argued Mary, "I surely heard the thunder rolling when I said *five*."

"So did I," he answered; "and that proves that although the lightning discharged itself upon the earth at the distance of a mile, it *commenced* to flow from a point nearer overhead."

The young people were so deeply interested in these calculations, that they felt less keenly than they could have imagined possible the discomfort of the storm. This was Dr. Gordon's intention. But at last Mary and Frank winced so uneasily, when flashes of unusual brightness appeared, that their father remarked, "It is a weakness, my children, to be afraid of lightning that is seen and of thunder that is heard-*they are spent and gone*. Persons never see the flash that kills them-it does its work before they can see, hear, or feel."

At this instant came a flash so keen, that it seemed to blaze into their very eyes, and almost simultaneously came a report like the discharge of a cannon. Dr. Gordon's lecture was in vain; all except him and Harold started to their feet. Frank ran screaming to his father. Mary rushed to a pile of bedding, and covered herself with the bed-clothing. Robert looked at Mary's refuge, with a manifest desire to seek a place beside her. Harold fixed his eye upon his uncle, with a glance of keen inquiry.

"This is becoming serious," said the Doctor anxiously. "Something on the premises has been struck. Stay here, children, while I look after the servants. *Your safest place is in the middle of the room*, as far as possible from the chimney and walls, along which the lightning passes."

While giving these directions, at the same time that he seized his hat, cloak, and umbrella, William rushed in to say that the horses had been struck down and killed. They were stabled under a shelter erected near a tall palmetto-a tree so seldom struck by lightning, as to be regarded by the Indians as exempt from danger. The fluid had descended the trunk, tearing a great hole in the ground, and jarring down a part of the loose enclosure.

"Call all hands!" said the Doctor. "Throw off the shelter instantly, to let the rain pour upon them; and bring also your buckets and pails."

On his going out, the children crowded to the door, to see, if possible, the damage that was done; but he waved them all back, with the information that during a thunder storm an open door or window is one of the most dangerous places about a house. They quickly retired; Mary and Frank going to the bed, Robert taking a chair to the middle of the room, and drawing up his feet from the floor. Harold's remark was characteristic. "I wish uncle would let me help with the horses. I am sure that that is the safest place in this neighbourhood; for I never saw lightning strike twice on the same spot."

One of the horses was speedily revived by the falling rain. He staggered to his feet, then moved painfully away, smelling at his hoofs, to ascertain what ailed them. The other continued for an hour or more, to all appearance, dead. The servants dipped buckets and pails full of water from pools made by the rain, and poured them upon the lifeless body, until it was perfectly drenched. They had given up all hope of a restoration. William's eyes looked watery (for he was the coachman) and he heaved a sorrowful sigh over his brute companion. "Poor Tom!" he said, "what will Jerry do now for a mate?" Another half hour passed without any sign of returning life; and even William would have ceased his efforts, had it not been for his master's decided "Pour on water! Keep pouring!"

At last there appeared a slight twitching in one of the legs. Poor Tom was not dead after all. William gave a "Hurra boys! he's coming to," in which the others joined with unfeigned delight. "Now, William," said his master, "do you and Sam take the strips of blanket that you rub with, and see if you cannot start his blood to flowing more rapidly. Tom will soon open his eyes."

Two of the servants continued to pour on water, the others to rub violently the head, neck, legs and body. The reviving brute moved first one foreleg, then the other, while the hinder legs were yet paralysed. Then he opened his eyes, raised his head, and made an effort to turn himself. As soon as he was able to swallow, Dr. Gordon ordered a drench of camphorated spirit, and left him with directions to the servants. "Listen all of you. I have shown you how to treat a horse struck down by lightning. Do you treat a person in the same way. Pour on water by the bucket full, until he gives some signs of life; then rub him hard, and give him some heating drink. *Don't give up trying for half a day.*"

The storm passed over. Tom and Jerry were once more united under the skilful management of William, who frequently boasted that "they were the toughest creatures in creation, even lightning could not kill them."

CHAPTER VI

THE ONLY WAY TO STUDY-TAKING COLD-RILEY'S FAMILY- THE HARE LIP-FISHING FOR SHEEPHEAD-FRANK CHOKED WITH A FISH BONE-HIS RELIEF-HIS STORY OF THE SHEEP'S HEAD AND DUMPLINGS-"TILL THE WARFARE IS OVER"

Dr. Gordon began to feel dissatisfied that his children were losing so much valuable time from study; for the house was yet loaded with baggage which could be put nowhere else, and their time was broken up by unavoidable interruptions. Until a more favourable opportunity, therefore, he required only that they should devote one hour every day to faithful study, and that they should spend the rest of their time as usefully as possible.

His theory of education embraced two very simple, but very efficacious principles. First, to *excite in his children the desire of acquiring knowledge*; and, secondly, to train them to *give their undivided attention to the subject in hand*. This last, he said, was the only way to study; and he told them, in illustration, the story of Sir Isaac Newton, who, on being asked by a friend, in view of his prodigious achievements, what was the difference, so far as he was conscious, between his mind and those of ordinary people, answered simply in the power of concentration.

Harold had been greatly discouraged at finding himself so far behind his cousins in the art of study, but by following the advice of his uncle, he soon experienced a great and an encouraging change. At first, it is true, he could scarcely give his whole mind to any study more than five minutes at a time, without a sense of weariness; but he persevered, and day by day his powers increased so manifestly that he used frequently to say to himself, "*concentration is everything-everything in study*."

But Dr. Gordon's instructions were by no means confined to books and the school-room; he used every favourable opportunity to give information on points that promised to be useful.

"Mary," said he one day, to his daughter, who was sitting absorbed in study, beside a window through which the sea breeze was pouring freshly upon her head and shoulders, and who had, in consequence, began to exhibit symptoms of a cold, "Mary, my daughter, remove your seat. Do you not know that to allow a current of air like that to blow upon a part of your person, is almost sure to produce sickness?"

"I know it, father," she replied, "and I intended some time since to change my seat, but the sun is so hard that I forgot all about the wind."

"I am glad to see you capable of such fixedness of mind," said he, "but I will take this opportunity to say to you, and to the rest, that there are two seasons, especially, when you should be on your guard against these dangerous currents of air, – one is when you are asleep, and the other is when your mind is absorbed in thought. At these times the pores of the skin are more than usually open, as may be seen by the flow of perspiration; and a current of cool air, at such a time, especially if partial, is almost certain to give cold."

"But how can we be on our guard, father," asked Mary with a smile, "when we are too far gone in sleep or in thought, to know what we are about!"

"We must take the precaution beforehand," he replied. "Make it a rule never to sleep nor to study in a partial current of air; and also remember that *the first moment* you perceive the tingling sensation of an incipient cold, you must obey the warning which kind nature gives you or else must bear the consequences."

Mary's cold was pretty severe. For days she suffered from cough and pain. But that day's lecture on currents of air, followed by so impressive an illustration, was probably more useful than her lesson in arithmetic; certainly it was longer remembered and more frequently acted upon.

True to his promise, Riley appeared at the appointed time with his supply of game. He said, however, that he should remain only a few days, because he had left his young wife sick. It interested Mary not a little to perceive that a savage could feel and act so much like a civilized being; and she was trying to think of something complimentary to say upon this occasion, when he threw her all aback, by adding, that this was his *youngest* and *favourite* wife.

"What! have you two wives?" she exclaimed in horror.

"Yes, only two, now; one dead."

Her mind was sadly changed at this evidence of heathenism; but ere the day was over she received a still more impressive proof.

Dr. Gordon perceiving that he looked sad whenever an allusion was made to his home, he asked him if his wife was seriously sick, to which he answered, No.

"When I go home, last week," said he, "my squaw had a fine boy, big and fat. My heart glad. But I look and see a big hole in his mouth, from here to here," pointing from the lip to the nose.

"That is what we call a hare lip," said Dr. Gordon, "it is not uncommon."

"I sorry very much," continued Riley. "Child too ugly."

"But it can be easily cured," observed Dr. Gordon.

Riley looked at him inquiringly, and Dr. Gordon added, "O, yes, it can be easily cured. If you will bring your child here, any time, I will stop that hole in half an hour; and there will be no sign of it left, except a little scar, like a cut."

The Indian shook his head mournfully, "Can't bring him. Too late now."

"O, the child is dead?" inquired the Doctor. "I am sorry."

"Dead now," replied Riley. "I look at him one day, two day, tree day. Child too ugly. I throw him in the water."

"What!" exclaimed Dr. Gordon, suddenly remembering that it was the practice of the Indians to destroy all their deformed children. "You did not drown it?"

"Child ugly too much," answered Riley, with a softened tone of voice. "Child good for nothing. I throw him in the water."

Dr. Gordon was not only shocked, as any man of feeling would have been, under the circumstances, but he felt as a Christian, whose heart moved with compassion towards his dark skinned brother. He uttered not one word of rebuke or of condemnation; his time for speaking to the purpose had not yet come; and he carefully avoided everything in word and look which should widen the space which naturally exists between the white man and the Indian, the Christian and the pagan.

Poor Mary! She no sooner heard this confession, than she sidled away from her interesting savage, until wholly beyond his reach, and could scarcely look at him during his stay that week, without feelings akin to fear. An Indian, she learned, was an Indian after all.

While Riley was there the boys often borrowed his boat, and Harold tried to imitate his dexterity in the use of the paddle. They soon became great friends. On one of their excursions for fish, they went, by his direction, around a point of land where the head of a fallen live oak lay in the water, and its partially decayed limbs were encrusted with barnacles and young oysters. There they soon caught a large supply of very fine fish of various sorts, particularly of the sheephead, – a delicious fish, shaped somewhat like the perch, only stouter and rounder, beautifully marked with broad alternate bands of black and white around the body, and varying in weight from half a pound to ten or fifteen pounds.

No one was more delighted than Frank, with the result of the excursion; for he was fond, as a cat, of everything in the shape of fish. But, it is said, there is no rose without its thorn; and so he found in the present case. He was enjoying, rather voraciously, the luxury of his favourite food, when a disorderly bone lodged crossways in the narrow part of his throat, and gave him excessive

pain. Frank was a polite boy. Avoiding, as far as possible, disturbing the others by his misfortune, he slipped quietly from the table, and tried every means to relieve himself. But it was not until he had applied to his father, and, under his direction, swallowed a piece of hard bread, that he was able to resume his place.³

Being not quite so humble as he was polite, however, he began to condemn the fish instead of himself for his accident. His father told him he had no right to say one word against the fish, which was remarkably free from bones, and was just preparing to give him a gentle lecture on gormandizing, when Frank, foreseeing what was to come, was adroit enough to seize a moment's pause in the conversation, and to divert the subject, by asking with a very droll air,

"I wonder, father, if these sheephead are of the same kind with that one that butted the dumplings?"

"I do not know what dumplings you mean," said his father.

"O, did you never hear the story of the sheep's head and the dumplings? Well, brother Robert can tell you all about it."

"No, no," returned his father, who saw through the little fellow's stratagem. "No, no, Frank, it is your own story, and you must go through with it."

This was a trial, for Frank had never in his life made so long an extempore speech in the presence of the assembled family, as he had now imposed upon himself. But, in the desperation of the moment, he mustered courage, and thus spoke,

"There was once an old woman that left her little boy to mind a pot that had in it a sheep's head and some dumplings boiling for dinner, while she went to a neighbour's house to attend some sort of preaching. The little boy did not seem to have much sense; and had never minded a pot before; so when he saw the water boiling over, and the sheep's head and the dumplings bobbing about in every direction, he became frightened and ran for his mother, bawling at the top of his voice, 'Mammy! the dumplings! run!' She saw him coming in among the people, and tried to stop his bawling by shaking her head and winking her eyes at him; but he would not stop. He crowded right up to her, saying, 'Mammy, you needn't to wink nor to blink, for the sheep's head is butting all the dumplings out of the pot!'"

Throughout this story Frank did not make a balk or a blunder. He kept straight on, as if brimful of fun, and uttered the last sentence with such an affectation of grave terror, as produced a universal laugh.

His father had tried hard to keep up his dignity for the intended lecture, but it also gave way, and he contented himself with saying,

"Well, master Frank, I see you are at your old tricks again. And since you show such an aptitude for putting people into good humour, there will be reason to think you are in fault, if you ever put them out. Harold, has your aunt ever told you how Frank once *kissed himself out of a scrape with her*?"

Harold said she had not, and his uncle went on,

"It was when he was between three and four years of age. His mother had taken him on a visit to a friend of hers in the neighbourhood of Charleston, and he was allowed to sit at the dinner table with

³ Unwilling to mislead any of my young readers, by describing expedients and remedies that might not serve them in case of necessity, I have submitted my manuscript to several persons for inspection, and among others to a judicious physician and surgeon. It never occurred to me that in mentioning so simple a thing as swallowing a crust for the removal of a fish-bone, I could possibly do harm. To my surprise, however, my medical friend observed, that he supposed Dr. Gordon knew that the fishbone, which Frank swallowed, was *small* and *flexible*, or he would not have used that expedient. "If," said he, "the substance which lodges in the throat is so stiff (a pin for instance) as not to be easily bent, the attempt to force it down by swallowing a piece of bread may be unsafe; it may lacerate the lining membrane, or, being stopped by the offending substance, it may cause the person to be worse choked than before." "But, Doctor, what should the poor fellow do in such a case?" he was asked. "I suspect Dr. Gordon would have used a large feather?" "Indeed!" "Yes, he would have ruffled its plume, so as to reverse the direction of the feathery part, and would have thrust that down the throat, below the pin or bone. On withdrawing the feather, the substance would be either found adhering to its wet sides, or raised on end, so that it could be easily swallowed." With many thanks for this suggestion, the promise was made that the young readers of Robert and Harold should have the benefit of his advice. But I think that the best plan is to avoid the fish-bones.

the ladies. But he became so disorderly and perverse that his mother, after an ineffectual reprimand or two, ordered him to go up stairs, meaning to her room above. The language was indefinite, and Frank interpreted it to suit his own pleasure. He went up stairs, it is true, but only half way, where he seated himself so as to look at the table and the company, and then began to drum with his feet and to talk loud enough to be heard,

"H-m-n-h! This is a very good place. I love these nice stairs. I'd rather be here than anywhere else in the world. I don't want any of that old dinner!"

"This was very rude language, and more especially when used in a house where he was a guest. His mother was so much mortified that as soon as dinner was over she took him to her room, gave him a sound strapping, and put him in a corner, where he was to stay, until he promised to be a good boy. Then she lay down on her bed as if to take a nap, but in reality to meditate what course to pursue towards her rude little child.

"Frank, you know, is fond of singing. There was a wild religious melody which he had learnt about that time, and which he was constantly singing. It had a short chorus at the end of every line, and a long chorus at the end of each verse, running this way,

"'Children of the heavenly King,
Till the warfare is over, Hallelujah,
As ye journey sweetly sing,
Till the warfare is over, Hallelujah.'

I forget the long chorus.

"Well, your aunt had not been upon the bed more than a few minutes, before Frank quietly slipped from his corner and stole close to the bedside to make friends. But his mother would not notice him. He bent over and gave her a kiss. Still she looked displeased. He tried another kiss, but she turned away her face. This was a damper. Frank was disheartened, but not in despair. He leaned over the bed, making a long reach, to try the effect of a third kiss.

"'There, Frank,' said his mother, in a displeased tone, 'that is enough. You need not kiss me any more.'

"'Yes, mother,' said he, leaning far over, and taking hold of her, 'I mean to kiss you *till the warfare is over, Hallelujah.*'

"I need not say that, from that moment, the warfare *was* over, and Frank behaved himself well through the remainder of the visit.

"And now, since he has managed to escape the lecture I was about to give him on eating too fast, I hope he will hereafter cultivate the recollection of *today and the fish-bones.*"

CHAPTER VII

BUG IN THE BAR-VISIT TO PORT BROOKE-EVADING BLOODHOUNDS- CONTEST WITH DOGS AND MEANS OF DEFENCE-AMUSING ESCAPE FROM A WILD BULL AND CONVERSATION ON THE SUBJECT

While Riley was at Bellevue the workmen succeeded in raising the frame of the new house, and in completing the most laborious part of the work. On the last days of his stay he was dispatched with a message to Fort Brooke, to say that on the following Tuesday Dr. Gordon and family would make their promised visit.

During the interval nothing of special interest occurred, except a painful accident that happened to Harold. He was awakened in the night by a sudden tickling in his ear. This was caused by a harvest bug—a black hard-winged insect, nearly an inch long. When first feeling it, and uncertain what it was, he sprang up in bed, and struck the ear violently from behind, in the hope of jarring it out. Failing in this, he poured his ear full of water; but still not succeeding, he felt along the wall for a large needle he recollected seeing there the evening before, and with that endeavoured to pick it out. The frightened bug finding itself so energetically pursued into its unnatural hiding place, went deeper, and began to scratch with its clogged feet, and to bite upon the tender drum of the ear. The pain it caused was excruciating. Harold, feeling that he must soon go into spasms, unless relieved, wakened his uncle, and entreated earnestly for help. To his inexpressible delight Dr. Gordon said he could relieve him in a minute; and seizing the night lamp he poured the ear full of oil. Scarcely had this fluid closed around the intruder, before it scrambled out, and reached the external ear just in time to die.

Harold could not find words for his gratitude.

"Uncle," said he, "you may think me extravagant, but I assure you the pain was so intense, that I was thinking seriously, in case you could not relieve me, of making Sam chop my ear open with a hatchet. This I suppose would have killed me; but it must have been death in either case."

On the day appointed, they went to Fort Brooke in the pleasure boat, Dr. Gordon being at the helm, and Robert and Harold taking turns in managing the sails. The wind was fair, and the light ripple of the water was barely sufficient to give a graceful dancing to their beautiful craft. Far below the transparent waves, they could see the glistening of bright shells upon the bottom, and every now and then the flash of a silver-sided fish.

At the fort they were received with the courtesy that so generally marks gentlemen of the army; and the three days of their stay passed off very pleasantly. The reveille and tattoo, the daily drill, and the practising with cannon, were novelties to the young back-woodsmen. Frank was exceedingly surprised, as well as amused, to see cannon-balls making "ducks and drakes," as he called them, upon the water. He had often thrown oyster-shells, and flat stones, so as to skim in this way, but he had no idea that it could be done with a cannon-ball.

On the last day of their visit, Harold escaped from an unpleasant predicament, only by the exercise of cool courage and ready ingenuity. He had gone with Frank to visit a cannon target, a mile or more distant. Wandering along the bank of the Hillsborough river, which flows hard by the fort, and then entering the woods on the other side of the road, he was suddenly accosted by a man on horseback, who had been concealed behind a bower of yellow jessamines.

"Good day, my young friend. Have you been walking much in these woods today?"

Harold said that he had not, and inquired why the question was asked. The man replied, "I am watching for a villainous Indian-negro, who was seen skulking here this morning. He has been

detected in stealing, and several persons will soon come with blood-hounds to hunt him. If you see his track" (and he described its peculiarity), "I hope you will let us know."

Harold consented to do so, and walked on, unwilling to be the spectator of the scene. Returning to the road, and walking some distance, the thought flashed into his mind that possibly the dogs might fall upon his own trail. It was certain that they would naturally take the freshest trail, and he was confident that the man did not know which way he went. The dogs were probably fierce, and it would be exceedingly difficult, in case of an attack, to defend himself and Frank too. Becoming every moment more uneasy, he went to the roadside and cut himself a stout bludgeon. Frank watched the operation, and suspected that something was wrong, though he could not conjecture what.

"Cousin," said he, "what did you cut that big stick for?"

"A walking-stick," he replied: "Is it not a good one?"

"Yes, pretty good; but I never saw you use a walking-stick before."

At that moment, Harold heard afar off the deep bay of the blood-hounds, opening upon a trail. The sound became every moment more distinct. He could distinguish the cry of four separate dogs. They were evidently upon his scent. He clutched his club, and looked fiercely back. It was a full half mile to the place where, having left the man, he emerged into the road; and there were several curves in it so great that he could neither see nor be seen for any distance. Necessity is the mother of invention. A bright thought came into his mind. "Stay here," said he to Frank, "and don't move one peg till I come back."

He was at a sharp bend of the road, on the convex side of which lay a little run of water, skirted by a thick undergrowth. He took a course straight with the road, and hurrying as fast as possible into the wet low ground, returned upon his own track; then, taking Frank in his arms, sprang with all his might, at right angles, to his former course, and ran with him to a neighbouring knoll, which commanded a view of the road, where he stopped to reconnoitre. He had *doubled*, as hunters term this manoeuvre, practised by hares and foxes when pursued by hounds; and his intention was, if still pursued, to place Frank in a tree, and with his club to beat off the dogs until the hunters arrived.

It was soon proved that the hounds were actually upon his track. They came roaring along the road, with their tails raised, and their noses to the ground. Arriving at the spot where Frank had stood, they did not pursue the road, but plunged into the bushes, upon the track which Harold had doubled, and went floundering into the mire of the stream beyond, where they soon scattered in every direction, hunting for the lost trail. The boys did not pursue their walk; having made so narrow an escape, they turned their steps, without delay, towards the fort.

"Cousin," inquired Frank, on their way back, "did not those dogs come upon our track!" Harold replied, "Yes."

"And did you cut that big stick to fight them?"

"Yes."

"And did you intend to cheat them by going into the bushes, and coming back the same way, and then jumping off, with me in your arms?" Harold still said, "Yes."

"Well, now, cousin," inquired Frank, "where did you learn that nice trick?"

"From the rabbits and foxes," he answered. "I did not know who could tell me better than they, how to escape from dogs."

Frank said he always knew that foxes were very cunning, but he never before heard of any one's taking a fox for his teacher.

On returning to the fort, Dr. Gordon applauded the ruse, and congratulated Harold upon his escape; but, at the same time, informed him that his plan was not to be relied upon. "A well trained hound," said he, "is as competent to nose out a doubled track as you are to devise it. I attribute your escape, partly to the fact that the dogs are not staunch, and partly to the help afforded you by the miry bottom, on which your scent could not lie."

The conversation now turned naturally upon contests with dogs, and different methods of escape. Dr. Gordon related the story of his having defended himself and his little brother against three fierce dogs, when he was about Robert's age, by putting his back against a wall, and beating off the assailants with a club.

"But were you ever forced to fight them when you had no stick?" asked Harold.

"Fortunately not," his uncle replied. "Though I knew a person once who was caught as you describe, and who devised at least a show of defence. He took off his hat and shoved it at the dog, with a fierce look, whenever it approached. But I presume that his success depended more upon the expression of his countenance than upon the threatening appearance of his weapon. A *fearless eye* and a *quiet resolute manner*, is the best defence against *any enemy*, human or brute, that can be devised.

"I did, however, witness one expedient adopted by a sailor, which goes to show what can be accomplished in an emergency of the kind, by a cool head and a steady hand. A large dog rushed at him, without provocation, on the public wharf. The sailor spoke to him, looked at him, shoved his hat at him, but in vain. The dog flew at his legs. Quietly drawing his knife, as a last resource, and holding his hat in his left hand, he stooped, and allowing the dog to seize his hat, passed his knife underneath it, into his throat. The dog staggered back, mortally wounded, not having seen the hand that slew him."

On Friday, September 24th, the company returned to Bellevue; and on the week following, had the opportunity of witnessing an act of cool courage, which Harold declared to evince far more ingenuity and composure of mind, than his own escape from the blood-hounds.

Riley had made them another visit, and was engaged at work upon the house, under the direction of Sam, the carpenter. Dr. Gordon took the young people in the pleasure boat, to spend an afternoon in the agreeable occupation of obtaining another supply of fish. After trying for some time, with poor success, they saw Riley coming along the bluff; his object being, as was afterwards shown, to point out the reason of their failure, and to tell them what to do.

As he approached, a fierce looking bull rushed from a grove of live oaks, and made furiously at him. Had Riley been near the shore he might, and probably would, have sprung into the water, and thus escaped; but the enraged beast was between him and his place of refuge. The company in the boat felt seriously anxious for his safety, since there appeared little chance of his escaping without a contest. But Riley took the matter very coolly. He glided to a little clump of saplings, and holding to one of them at arm's length, seemed to enjoy the evident mortification of the bull in being so narrowly dodged. He was very expert in keeping the small tree between him and it; and as the circle in which he ran was much smaller than that in which the bull was compelled to move, his task was easy. The furious animal pushed first with one horn then with the other; he ran suddenly and violently; he pawed the earth, and bellowed with rage; his eyes flashed and his mouth foamed, but it was in vain. Soon Riley watched his opportunity, and glided nimbly from that tree to one nearer the boat; then to another and another; the bull following with every demonstration of impotent rage. This was done merely to tease. Finally becoming wearied with this profitless, though amusing sport, he gathered a handful of sand, and provoking the bull to push at him again, forced a part of the sand into one eye, and the remainder into the other, and then left him perfectly blinded for the time, and rushing madly from place to place, while Riley came laughing to the beach, and delivered his message.

"Coolly and cleverly done!" said Dr. Gordon, at the end of the contest. "That is certainly a new idea, in the way of involuntary bull baiting, which is worth remembering. But I advise you young folks not to try it, except in case of a similar necessity. It is safer to climb a tree or fence, or even to plunge into the water."

"Riley had no other chance," remarked Harold.

"He had not," Dr. Gordon rejoined, "and therefore I regard his expedient as valuable. Should you be pursued in an open field, the danger would be still greater. Then the best plan would be to *detain* the beast by something thrown to attract his attention. Cattle are made very quickly angry by

the sight of a red garment. If anything of this colour, such as a shawl or pocket handkerchief can be dropped when you are pursued by one, it will be almost certain to catch his eye, and to engage him awhile in goring it. If nothing red can be dropped, then let him have something else from your person—a hat, coat, or a spread umbrella—in fact anything calculated to attract his eye."

"I have heard," observed Robert, "of jumping upon a bull's back, as he stooped his head to toss."

"So have I," his father added, "but spare me if you please, the necessity; none but a monkey, or a person of a monkey's agility can do it successfully. I should sooner risk the chance of springing suddenly behind him, and seizing his tail. At least I should like to administer that sound belabouring with a stick which he would so richly deserve, and which might teach him better manners."

"Or to twist his tail," said Harold merrily. "I believe that will make a bull bellow, as soon as putting sand into his eyes. And what is better, you can keep on twisting, until you are sure that his manners are thoroughly taught."

CHAPTER VIII

MAROONING AND THE MAROONING PARTY

The work of house-building and improvement now went forward with visible rapidity. By the first day of October, the new dwelling-house was sufficiently advanced to allow the family to move into it; and in a fortnight more, the new kitchen was covered, and such other changes made, in and about the house, as to give it quite a genteel and comfortable appearance. As it became necessary about this time for the workmen to attend to some inside work, which could be more easily accomplished by having the family out of the way, Dr. Gordon stopped the young people after school, and said to them:

"Children, I have a proposition to make. But before doing so, who can tell me what 'marooning' means?"

All turned their eyes to Robert, whom they regarded as a sort of walking dictionary; and he answered with a slight hesitation-"I should say, living pretty much in the way we have lived most of the time since we came to Bellevue. A person maroons when he lives in an unsettled state."

"You are nearly right; but to be more critical. The word 'maroon' is of West Indian origin-coming I think from the island of Jamaica. It meant at first a free negro. But as those who ran away from their masters became virtually free for the time, it came afterwards to mean a runaway negro. To maroon therefore means to go from home and live like a runaway negro. I wish to ask if any one present is in favour of marooning?"

All were silent, and Dr. Gordon continued, "To maroon means also to go to some wild place, where there is plenty of game or fish, and to live upon what we can obtain by our own skill. Are there any persons now in favour of marooning?"

"I am-and I-and I!" was the universal response. "When shall it be? Where shall it be?"

"You are too fast," said the Doctor. "I have one of two propositions to make. We must for a few days give up the house to the workmen. Now the question to be decided is, Shall we return to Fort Brooke, and spend our time among the guns and cannons; or shall we go to Riley's Island at the mouth of the bay, and spend it among the deer and turkeys, the fish and oysters, of which we have heard so much? There are advantages and disadvantages on both sides; and my own mind is so perfectly balanced that I will leave the decision to you."

Harold's eyes flashed fire at the prospect of his old employment; still he said nothing; he waited to know what the others preferred. Robert looked at him, and in a moment caught the contagion. Indeed it seemed as if a sort of mesmeric influence had swayed the whole party, for they did nothing more than exchange with each other one hurried glance, and then unanimously cried out, "Riley's Island! Riley's Island!"

"Remember," said Dr. Gordon, "that in marooning we must wait upon ourselves. William is the only servant I can take. His time will be fully occupied with cooking, and other duties belonging to the tent. We cannot depend on him for anything more than is absolutely necessary. Are you still of the same mind?"

"The same!" they all replied.

"Still I will not hold you to your promises until you have had further time for reflection," said he. "You may not have looked at all the difficulties of the case. I will give you until dinner-time to make up your minds; and to help your thoughts, I will assign to each of you an office, and make you responsible for providing all things necessary for a week's excursion, to begin in the morning."

"Harold, I appoint you master of the hunting and fishing departments.

"Robert shall be sailing-master, and provide for the literature of the party.

"Mary shall be housekeeper still, and mistress of the stores.

"And Master Frank shall be-I know not what to make him, unless *supercargo*."

"Now I wish you each to sit down at your leisure, and make out a written list, to be presented to me at dinner-time, of all things needed in your several departments."

They responded very heartily, and were about to retire, when Dr. Gordon, observing a comical expression on Frank's face, said, "What is the matter, Frank? Are you not willing to be *supercargo*?"

"I do not know what *supercargo* is," answered Frank, "unless it is somebody to catch rabbits. But I know how to do that. So I mean to take my dog and hatchet, and a box of matches."

"Well done, Frank," said his father; "you have the marooning spirit if you do not know what *supercargo* is. But where did you learn the art of catching rabbits?"

"Oh, I learnt it from cousin Harold," said he. "We got a rabbit into a hollow tree, and caught him there. I caught him, father, with my own hand; I know exactly how to catch a rabbit."

"Very well, Mr. *Supercargo*, carry what you will. But go along all of you, and be ready with your lists against dinner-time."

They retired in great glee to plan out and prepare. Robert and Harold, having first gone to the beach to think alone, were to be seen, half an hour afterwards, in their room, busily engaged with pencil in hand. At this time Frank came in. He had been almost frantic with joy at the prospect of the change; and after having romped with his dog Fidelle and the goats in the yard, he had come to romp with any one who would join him in the house.

"Brother Robert and cousin Harold," said he, "what are you doing? Are you writing? are you ciphering? are you studying? Why do you not answer me?" He was evidently in a frolic.

"Go to your play, Frank, and do not bother us," returned Robert, impatiently; "we are thinking."

"I know you are; for father said we are thinking all the time we are awake, and sometimes while we are asleep. But I want to know what you are thinking about so hard."

"Don't you know," Harold answered, mildly, "that we are going to Riley's Island tomorrow, and that Robert and I have to make out a list of what we are to carry? We are making our lists."

"Ah ha! but I have to carry some things too," said he. "Father is going to let me catch the rabbits there; and he called me a – , some kind of a – ; I forget the name, but it means the person to catch rabbits. What is the name, brother?"

"*Supercargo*?"

"Yes, that's it-*supercargo*. Mustn't I think of something too?"

"Certainly," replied Harold, humouring the joke. "But the way *we* did, was first to go off by ourselves, and think of what we were to carry; then to come in and write off our lists. Do you go now and think over yours, and when you come in I will write it for you."

Frank went out, but he was not gone long. He insisted on having his list made out at once.

"What do you wish to carry?" Harold asked. Frank told him.

"Now," said Harold, "I will make a bargain with you. If you do not trouble us before we have finished our work, I will write your list for you so that you yourself can read it. Will you stay out now?"

"That I will. But can you write it so that I can read it?"

"Yes, and will not print it either."

"Well, then you must be a very smart teacher, almost as smart as the foxes; for father has been teaching me this summer to make writing marks, but I have never made one of the writing marks yet."

Harold however persisted in his promise, and he and Frank were as good as their several words. Frank, it is true, did creep on tip-toe, and peep through the crack of the door, but he disturbed nobody; and when at last the boys came out, Harold presented him with a folded paper, which he instructed him to put into his pocket, and not to open till the lists were called for.

At the appointed hour they all assembled. The meal passed pleasantly off; not an allusion had as yet been made to the proposed excursion. It was a part of Dr. Gordon's training to practise his

children in self-restraint. He could however discern by their looks that their decisions remained as before. Said he, "I presume you have all made up your minds to the marooning party; am I correct?"

"O yes, sir, yes," was the answer, "and we are all ready to report, not excepting Frank and William."

"Really, you have done wonders! But let me call upon you each in turn. Harold McIntosh, you are hunting and fishing-master. Let me hear your report."

Harold took from his pocket a piece of paper about as broad as his hand, and a little longer. Besides the arms, ammunition and appurtenances, fishing-hooks, lines and nets, he closed his list with reading "brimstone."

"And what use," asked his uncle, "do you expect to make of that?"

"Taking bee-trees," he replied. "Brimstone is used in driving bees from the honey."

"Whether we meet with bee-trees or not, the brimstone will be in nobody's way; let it go. Mr. Hunting-master your list is perfect. Now Robert, yours."

His list embraced all that the boat would need for comfort, or for repair in case of accident. The books selected had reference to the taste of each. Shakespeare for his father, Goldsmith's Natural History for Harold, Scott's Napoleon for himself, Robinson Crusoe and Botany for his sister, and (in a spirit of mischief) Old Mother Hubbard for Frank.

But Frank was quite indignant at what he knew to be an insinuation against his childish taste. "I will not have old Mother Hubbard for my book," he said, as soon as he heard the list read. "I have passed that long ago; I wanted to carry Jack the Giant Killer."

"Scratch out Mother Hubbard," said his father to Robert, "and put down Jack. Your list, Master Robert, is pretty good; but I shall take the liberty of adding several volumes to the stock, in case of bad weather. And beside this, I should advise you all to carry your pocket Testaments, that you may continue your plan of daily reading. I should be sorry, and almost afraid, to let our sports interfere with our devotions."

Up to this time Frank had been listening to what had been read or spoken. But now, on a sign from Harold, he took a paper from his pocket, and, looking at its contents, commenced capering round the room, saying, "I *can* read it-I can read every word of it!"

"Read what?" asked his father.

"My list," replied Frank, "that cousin Harold wrote for me. I can read it all!"

"Then let us have it."

"Here," said he, "is my hatchet."

"And here is my bow and arrows."

"And here is my dog; only it is not half so pretty as Fidelle."

"And down here at the bottom-that is-that is-I believe it is-either a block or a brick-bat. O, now I remember, it is my box of matches."

"Bravo, Frank," said his father, "you do credit to your teacher. I doubt whether I could myself have guessed what that last thing was intended for. Your list may pass also."

"Now, Miss Mary, let us have yours. You have had more to think of than all the others put together, and yet I'll warrant you are nearly as perfect in proportion."

Mary blushed to hear the commendation bestowed upon her on trust, and replied, "I doubt it, father. For though it is very long, I am all the while thinking of something else to be added, and I am pretty sure there is a great deal yet that I have forgotten." She then read her own list, containing about thirty-five articles, and William's, embracing half a dozen more; upon which her father continued to bestow praise for the house-wifery they showed, and to each of which he made some slight additions.

"Now, William," said he, "do you select two moderately sized boxes, and aid Miss Mary to pack everything in her line so as not to crowd the boat. Remember, too, to put in for Riley a half bushel of salt, a loaf of sugar, and a peck of wheat flour. Pack the boat, and have it complete this evening, however late it should take you, that there may be no delay in the morning."

They were no sooner dismissed from table than all went vigorously to work. Guns were cleaned-hooks and lines examined-boxes packed-all things being done by classes. Then each person put up an extra suit or two of clothing, in case of accidents. And so expeditiously did the work go forward, that by five o'clock that evening the boat was ready for her trip.

CHAPTER IX

EMBARKATION-ABDUCTION EXTRAORDINARY-EFFORTS TO ESCAPE-ALTERNATE HOPES AND FEARS-DESPAIR- VESSEL IN THE DISTANCE-RENEWED HOPES AND EFFORTS- WATER-SPOUT-FLASH OF LIGHTNING AND ITS EFFECTS- MAKING FOR SHORE-GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many visions that night danced before the young sleepers-prancing deer with bright eyes and branching horns; turkeys running, flying, fluttering; white tents, mossy beds, and all the wild scenes of woodland life. They were up and dressed at daybreak. The wind was fair, and the day promised to be fine. Frank's little feet were pattering over the whole house and yard, carrying him into everybody's way, on the pretence of rendering assistance. There was one useful suggestion which he made. He had gone to each room and corner in the house, saying "good-bye" to every person and thing, chairs, tables, and all, when at last he came to his father's cloak and umbrella, kept in the same corner.

"Good-bye, umbrella," said he, "but as for you, good Mr. Cloak, father will want you to sleep on. Poor umbrella! are you not sorry? Don't you want to go too? But, father!" he cried, running into the next room, "had we not better carry the umbrella? Maybe we shall need it."

"That is a good idea, Master Frank," said his father. "Do you take charge of the umbrella, as a part of your office, and see it put into the boat."

Frank ran back to the room he had left, and taking the umbrella from its corner, he said, "O ho, my little fellow, father says you may go. Are you not glad I asked for you? But you must be a good boy, and not put yourself in anybody's way. Come now, spread your wings, and let me see how glad you look."

He opened the umbrella, and flapped it several times to make it look lively, then closed it, and set it beside the cloak where it belonged. Presently he heard the tinkle of a little silver bell, and knew that it was the signal for family prayers. He went to the breakfast-room, and took his seat.

Dr. Gordon's children were well versed in the Scriptures, and were remarkably attentive during the reading of them. Perhaps one secret of this fact was to be found in their father's practice of stopping every few verses during the family reading to ask them questions on what had been read, and briefly to explain what they could not otherwise comprehend. This morning the children observed that the chapter read was remarkably appropriate to their circumstances, and that the Doctor prayed particularly that the Lord would preserve them from all sin and harm during their excursion; that he would preside over their pleasures, and that he would make their temporary absence the means of their knowing him better, and loving him more.

They breakfasted as the sun was rising. While at table no one could speak of anything but the voyage and the island, and what they expected to see, do, and enjoy. The boat was at the wharf, which had been erected for the brig. It was packed, and ready for departure, with the exception of a few things to be carried by hand. William had breakfasted at the same time with the family, and now came in, saying, "All ready, sir."

"Come, children," said Dr. Gordon, "let us go."

"Come, umbrella," said Frank, "you are to go with me."

"O, father," exclaimed Mary, as they approached the shore, "there is Nanny with her sweet little kids. See how anxiously she looks at the boat, and tries to say, 'Do let me go too.' Had we not better take her? She is so tame; and then you are so fond of milk in your coffee."

"I doubt," he replied, "whether there will be room for dogs, goats, and ourselves too. But we can easily determine; and as I know that all of you are as fond of milk as I am, I will let her go if there is room."

They took their places, Dr. Gordon at the helm, Robert and Harold amidships, Mary and Frank next to their father, and William in the bow. Everything had been stowed so snugly away, and the boat was withal so roomy, that Nanny and her kids were invited to a place.

"Now, children, for order's sake," said Dr. Gordon, "I will assign the bow of the boat, where William is, to Nanny and her kids; Fidelle must lie here by Frank and Mum may go with Harold. Mary, call your pet, and have her in her place."

A word about the dogs. Fidelle was a beautiful and high-blooded spaniel, that might have been taught anything which a dog could learn, but whose only accomplishments as yet were of a very simple character, and confined chiefly to such tricks as were a source of amusement to her little master. Mum was a large, ugly, rough-looking cur, whose value would never have been suspected from his appearance. He was brave, faithful, and sagacious; strong, swift-footed, and obedient. But his chief value consisted in his education. He came from the pine barrens of Georgia, where Dr. Gordon had first seen and purchased him, and where he had been trained, according to the custom of the wild woodsmen there, to hunt silently; and in following the trail of a deer or turkey to keep just in advance of his master, and to give suitable indications of being near the object of pursuit. Mum was no common dog; and he proved of inestimable service to the young adventurers in their coming difficulties.

"Draw in the anchor, William, while I cast off at the stern," said Dr. Gordon. "But hold! let us see what that means." He pointed with his finger to a horseman, who turned a point on the beach, and seeing them about to depart, waved his hat to say "stop!" The horseman rode at full speed, and soon was within speaking distance. He bore a note from the surgeon at Fort Brooke, requesting the loan of a certain instrument which Dr. Gordon had promised when on his visit, and for which there was now a sudden call.

"Keep your places, children," said the Doctor. "I shall be gone only five minutes. William, do you take my place, and keep the boat steady by holding to this frame."

He ascended the wharf, went with the soldier to the house, and was absent a very few minutes; but during that interval an event occurred which separated them for a long, long time and made them oftentimes fear that they should never more meet in this world.

The position of the boat at the wharf was peculiar. Her stern had been lashed to the timbers, for the purpose of keeping it steady, until all had entered; and the bow was kept to its place by the anchor dropped into the two and half fathoms water, which "was had" there at high tide. The fastening to the stern having been cast off, preparatory to leaving, William was now holding to the wharf, awaiting his master's return.

This was not long after sunrise, at which moment they had heard the report of a cannon unusually loud from the fort. Scarcely had Dr. Gordon disappeared from the bluff, when the young people noticed a heavy ripple of the water, between them and the fort, indicating that it was disturbed by a multitude of very large fish, moving with rapidity towards the sea.

"What can they be?" was a question which all asked, with a curiosity not unmixed with fear, as they looked upon the approaching waves. William held firmly to the pier head, that the boat should not be moved too roughly by the disturbed water.

"Mas' Robert," said he, with anxious, dilating eyes, "I do believe it is a school of dem debbil-fish. Yes," and his eyes grew wild and his lips became ashy, "dey making right for dis pint."⁴

It is a flat fish, belonging to the family of Rays, and usually measures somewhere between ten and twenty feet from tip to tip of its wings. On each side of its mouth is a flexible arm, with which the

⁴ The following is a description of the hideous monster known in our waters as the Devil Fish.

animal grasps and feeds. It appears to be as remarkable for its stupidity as it is for its size, strength, and ugliness, seldom letting go anything which it once seizes with its arms. A few years since, one was discovered dead upon a mud flat near St. Mary's, Georgia, grasping even in death a strong stake of which it had taken hold during high water. The incident related in the following pages is in perfect keeping with the habits of the fish. There are hundreds of persons now living, who recollect a similar adventure which took place in the bay of Charleston. On every occasion of serious alarm the fish makes for the deep water of the ocean, and sometimes so frantically as to run high and dry ashore.

Whoever wishes to read more on this subject, can do so by referring to a volume called "Carolina Sports," in which the author (Hon. William Elliott), sketches with lively and graphic pen some most adventurous scenes, in which he himself was principal actor.

The children sprang to their feet, and made a rush to the stern, in the effort to get out of the boat, but William put his hand against them, and exclaimed piteously, "Back! Mas' Robert-Mas' Harrol! All of you! You habn't time to git out! Here dey come! Down on your seats! For massy's sake, down! ebery body!"

They were about to obey, when there was a whirl, and then a jerk of the boat, that threw them flat on their faces. They heard William's voice crying hoarsely, "O Lord hab-;" and when they arose and looked around, they saw that he was missing, and that their boat was rushing onward with a swiftness that made the water boil.

"William! William!" Robert called in bewilderment; but no answer came, and they saw him no more.

"O mercy! Brother Robert! cousin Harold!" cried Mary, "what is the matter?"

Robert looked vacantly towards the receding shore. Harold answered, "One of these fish has tripped our anchor, and is carrying us out to sea."

The horrid truth was evident; and it sent a chill like death through their limbs and veins. Mary screamed and fell back senseless. Robert started up as though about to spring from the boat. Harold covered his face with his hands, gave one groan, then with compressed lips and expanded nostrils hastened to the bow of the boat. As for poor little Frank, it was not for some moments that he could realize the state of the case; but when he did, his exhibition of distress was affecting. He stretched his hands towards home; and as he saw his father running to the bluff, he called out, "O, father, help us-dear father! O send a boat after us! O-!" Perceiving his father fall upon his knees and clasp his hands in prayer, he cried out, "O, yes, father, pray to God to help us, and he will do it-God can help us!" Then falling upon his own knees, he began, "O God bless my father and mother, my brothers and sisters! O God help us!"

By this time the boat had passed fully half a mile from shore. Harold's movement forward had been made with the intention of doing something, he knew not what, to relieve the boat from the deadly grasp of the devil fish. He first seized his rifle, and standing upon the forward platform, aimed it at the back of the monster, which could be distinctly seen at two fathoms' distance, clutching the chain which constituted their cable. Despairing of reaching him with a ball through the intervening water, he laid aside the rifle, and seizing William's ax, aimed several lusty blows at the cable chain. He struck it just on the edge of the boat where there was the greatest prospect of breaking it; but the chain was composed of links unusually short and strong, and the blows of the ax served only to sink it into the soft wood of the boat.

"Robert," said he, "look for Frank's hatchet, and come here." But Robert, stupefied with fear, sat staring at him from beside his prostrate sister and weeping brother, and seemed neither to understand nor to hear.

"Robert," he repeated, "get up, and be a man. Bring Frank's hatchet, and help me break this chain."

Still he did not come. "It is no use, Harold," he replied. "Do you not see that sister is dead? William is dead too! We shall all die!"

"Robert! Robert!" he reiterated, almost with a threat, "do rouse up and be a man. Mary is not dead, she has only fainted; she will come to directly. Come here and help me."

As he said, "She has only fainted," Robert sprang from his seat, took off his cap, dipped it full of water, poured it on her face, rubbed her palms and wrists to start the blood into circulation, then blew in her face, and fanned her with his wet cap. In the course of a minute Mary began to breathe, and then to sigh.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed, "she *has* only fainted! she is coming to! Frank, do you fan her now and I will help Harold."

But Harold had helped himself. Going to Frank's parcel, he had taken out the hatchet, and returned to the bows, where he was now adjusting the ax, preparatory to his work. "There, Robert," on his coming up, "do you hold the ax firmly under the chain, while I strike this link with the hatchet."

He did so, and Harold struck a blow upon the chain, so heavy that it rang again. Instantly they staggered, said fell backwards in the boat. The sharp sound of the hatchet upon the links had been conveyed along the metal to the fish, and made it dart forward with a sudden jerk. Harold rose, and looked on a moment. "We can't help his being frightened, Robert. We must break the chain. Let us try again."

He struck blow after blow, though the fish seemed to be affected by each as by an electric shock. Robert held back his arm. "Stop! stop! Harold, we are sinking!"

It was even so. The fish, frightened by the sharp repeated sounds, had gone down so far as to sink the bow of the boat within a few inches of the water. But Harold was not to be stopped. With an almost frantic laugh, he looked fiercely at the slimy monster beneath, then at his pale companions, and raised his arm for another blow. "Robert," said he, "it must be so. We must break the chain or die." He struck again, again, and again, until the water began to ripple over the bow, and splash upon his hand. He stopped, and tears came into his eyes.

"Look, Harold, at the staple," said Robert. "Let us see if that cannot be started." They tried it, striking from side to side, but in vain. The boat was too well made; the staple was too large, and too firmly imbedded in the timbers to be disturbed; and, moreover, it was guarded by an iron plate all around. Harold decided it was easier to break the chain. "Is there not a file, nor even a chisel among the tools?" he asked. They rummaged among the several boxes and parcels, but no tools of the kind could be found; and then they sat down pale, panting, and dispirited.

By this time the boat had passed out of the bay. The persons on shore, the houses, indeed the very trees which marked the place of their abode, had faded successively from sight. They had been running through the water at a fearful rate, for an hour and a half, and were now in the broad open gulf, moving as madly as before. The frightened fish, alarmed at these repeated noises in the boat, and grasping still more convulsively the chain which was to it an object of terror, had outstripped its hideous companions, and after passing from the bay had turned towards the south.

"There is Riley's Island!" said Robert, pointing sadly to a grove of tall palmettoes, which they were passing. "And yonder is a boat, near shore, with a man in it. O, if Riley could see us, and come after us! And yet what if he did! No boat can be moved by wind or paddle as we are moving." After a few minutes he resumed: "There is one plan yet which we have not tried; it is to saw the chain in two with pieces of crockery. I have read of marble being cut with sand, and of diamonds being cut with horse hair. And I think that if we work long enough we can cut the chain in two with a broken plate. Shall we try it?"

"O, yes, try anything," Harold replied, "But," looking at the flapping wings and horrible figure of the fish, and grinding his teeth, "if he would come near enough to the surface, I should try a rifle ball in his head."

They broke one of the plates, and commenced to saw. Harold worked for half an hour, then gave it to Robert, who laboured faithfully. Had they been able to keep the link perfectly firm, and also to work all the time precisely on one spot, they might possibly have succeeded. But after two

hours' hard work, the only result was that they had brightened one of the links by rubbing off the rust and a little of the metal.

"O, this will never, never do!" exclaimed Harold. "It will take us till midnight to saw through this chain, and then we shall be upon the broad sea, without any hope of returning home. Robert, I am done! My hands are blistered! My limbs are sore! I have done what I could! And now the Lord have mercy upon us!"

Up to that moment Harold had been the life and soul of the exertions made. His courage and energy had inspired the rest with confidence. But now that his strong spirit gave way, and he sunk upon his seat, and burst into tears, it seemed that all hope was gone. Robert threw down his piece of plate, and went to seat himself by Mary, in the hinder part of the boat. Frank had long since cried himself to sleep, and there he lay sobbing in his slumbers, with his head in Mary's lap. Mary was still pale from suffering and anxiety; having recovered by means of the water and fanning, she had summoned her fortitude and tried to comfort Frank with the hope that Harold and Robert would succeed in breaking the chain, and then that they would spread their beautiful sail, and return home. When Robert took his seat, Frank awakened, and asked for water.

"Sister Mary," said he, "where is father? I thought he was here."

"No, buddy," she replied, her eyes filling to think that he had awakened to so sad a reality, "father is at home."

"O, sister," said he, "I dreamed that father was with us, that he prayed to God to help us, and God made the fish let go, and we all went home. Brother Robert, have you broken that chain?"

This last appeal was too much for Robert's fortitude, tried already by repeated disappointments. He covered his face with his cap, and his whole body shook with emotion.

"Brother Robert," said Mary, speaking through her own tears, "you ought not to give up so. The fish is obliged to let go some time or other, and then may be some ship will pass by, and take us up. Remember how long people have floated upon broken pieces of a wreck, even without anything to eat, while we have plenty to eat for a month. Brother Robert and cousin Harold, do try to be comforted."

She obtained the water for Frank, and gave him something to eat. "Brother," she added, "you and cousin Harold have worked hard, and eaten nothing. Will you not take something? There are some nice cakes." Both declined. "Well, here is some water. I know you must be thirsty."

Harold was so much surprised to see a girl of Mary's age and gentle spirit exercising more self-control than himself, that he was shamed out of his despair. He did not then know that trait in the female character, which fits her to comfort when the stronger spirit has been overwhelmed. He drank a mouthful of the water. She handed it also to Robert, but he pushed it away, saying, "No, sister, I do not want anything now. We have done all that we could, and yet-."

"No, brother," she replied, "not at all. There is one thing more that you have not even tried to do; and that may help us more than anything else. It is to pray to God to help us."

"O, yes, brother," Frank added, "don't you recollect what father read to us out of the Bible, and talked to us about? What is it, sister?"

"When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up," Mary recited.

"Yes, brother," he continued, "remember that father prayed for us, when he saw us going off. And sister and I have been praying here, while you and cousin Harold were working yonder. Brother Robert, God *will* take care of us, if we pray to him."

"What Frank says is true, brother," said Mary. "He and I have been praying most of the time that you were working. And now see the difference! when you two have given up everything, he and I are quiet and hoping. Brother Robert, we all ought to pray."

"I do pray-I have prayed," replied Robert.

"That may be," persisted Mary, "but what I mean is, that we all ought to pray together."

"I cannot pray aloud," Robert answered; "I never did it. I do not know how to do it. But we can all kneel down together, and pray silently that God will have mercy on us. Harold, will you join us in kneeling down?"

As they were rising for this purpose, Frank called out, "Brother, what is that yonder? Isn't it a boat coming to meet us?"

Their eyes turned in the direction of Frank's finger and it was plain that a sail had heaved into the offing far away to the south, and almost in their course. The sun shone upon the snow-white canvas. "God be praised!" exclaimed Robert; "that is a vessel! Who knows but we may yet meet her, and be saved! Let us kneel down, and pray God to be merciful to us." They did so; and when they rose from their knees the vessel was evidently nearer.

"Let us try her with the spy glass," said Robert, and drawing it out to its proper length, he gazed steadily at her for a minute. "That is a schooner, or rather an hemaphrodite brig. I can see her sails and masts. She is rigged like a revenue cutter, and seems also to have the rake of one. She is coming this way, and if she is a cutter, she is almost certainly bound for Tampa, and can take us home again."

How rapidly characters appear to shift with shifting circumstances! Mary and Frank, who but a minute before were the only ones calm and disposed to speak in tones of energy and hope, now began to weep and lose all self-control; while Robert and Harold, shaking off their despondency, sprang to their feet, and with bright eyes and ready limbs, prepared once more for effort. Harold seized the glass, and looked long and steadily. "She is coming to us, or we are going to her very fast," said he. "Perhaps both; and now what shall we do?"

"Rig up a signal, and load the guns," replied Robert. "Let us attract their attention as soon as possible. Quick, sister, get me a sheet!"

In the course of fifteen minutes they had the sheet rigged and floating; and by the time the guns were loaded, they could clearly discern not only the hull, but the port holes of the vessel, and her long raking masts. There was no further doubt that she was a revenue cutter bound for the bay. Still it became every moment more certain that without some change in the course of one or the other, they must pass at a considerable distance. Now what should they do? The sky, which had been gradually clouding over since they saw the vessel, began to be rapidly and heavily overcast as they approached. Fearful that rain might fall, and utterly obscure their signal before it was seen, the boys resolved to fire their guns, ere there was any reasonable hope that they could be heard. At the first discharge the fish, which had probably been frightened in the morning by the cannon at the fort, jerked so terribly as almost to unseat them. At the discharge of the remaining guns it seemed less and less alarmed, until finally it ceased darting altogether; its strength was failing. Soon afterwards they saw the smoke of two cannon from the vessel, and then a flag run up the mast. "They see us! They see us!" cried Robert and Mary.

"But can they help us?" asked Harold. "Here we are running between them and shore, faster than any vessel can sail except in a storm, and there is scarcely wind enough to fill their sails, and what there is is against their coming to our aid. Robert, we must break that chain, or yet all is lost."

There was apparently some bustle on board the cutter. Many persons could be distinguished by the glass looking at them and at the clouds. They were preparing to lower a boat, yet with manifest hesitation. This was immediately explained by the singular appearance of the cloud between the boat and the vessel. It had become exceedingly dark and angry. A portion in the middle assumed the shape of a trumpet, and descended with the sharp point toward the water; while a broad column ascended from the sea to meet it; and then sea and sky roared and tossed in terrible unison.

"It is a water-spout!" said Robert, "if it strikes the vessel she is gone. Look there, Harold, look!"

The cutter began to give sensible evidence of the whirling eddy. Her sails flapped and her masts reeled. Soon they heard boom! boom! the roar of two more cannon. They were for the purpose of breaking the threatening column. They saw the descending pillar gradually ascend, and spread itself into a dark mass of cloud, which poured out such a shower of rain as entirely to hide the vessel from

sight. Afterwards they heard another cannon. "That is for us," Robert said; "let us answer it as well as we can."

They fired gun after gun, and heard cannon after cannon in reply, but each fainter than before. Their last hope of being saved by the vessel was gone. She was far away, and hidden by the rain which enveloped her. There had been no rain upon themselves, but it was very dark overhead, and threatened both rain and wind. They were far enough from home-how far they could not conceive, and far too from the barely visible shore, upon the broad wild sea. The boys were relapsing rapidly into that moody despair which is so natural after strong yet fruitless exertion, when a sharp flash of lightning struck in the water about one hundred yards before them. So near was it, and so severe, that they were almost blinded by the blaze, and stunned by the report. Their boat instantly relaxed its speed, and was soon motionless upon the water. The boys rushed to the bow. Their cable hung perpendicularly down, and the fish was nowhere to be seen. It had darted back from the lightning flash, and the cable had slipped quietly from its grasp.

"Thank God we are loose!" burst triumphantly from Robert. Harold looked on with strong emotion. Once more tears gathered in his eyes. "Robert," said he, "I never did make pretension to being a Christian, or a praying person, but if we do not thank God all of us for this when we get ashore, we do not deserve to live."

"Amen!" said Robert; and Mary and Frank responded, "Amen!"

The shore was full seven miles away. It was probably wild and barren. It might be difficult of approach, and inhospitable after they should land. But gladly did they draw aboard their anchor, raise their sail, and make toward it. The sea was smooth, but there was wind enough to fill their sails, and give promise of their reaching the shore ere night. Robert took the helm, and Harold managed the sails. Mary once more brought out her cakes and other eatables. Frank laughed from very pleasure; and seldom, if ever, was a happier looking company to be seen, going to a strange and perhaps a hostile coast.

Far as the eye could reach, to the north and south, there was a bluff of white sand, varied here and there by a hillock, higher than the rest, which the winds had blown up from the beach. Before them was an inlet of some sort-whether a small bay, the mouth of a river, or an arm of the sea, they could not determine; it was fringed on the south with a richly coloured forest, and on the north by a growth of rank and nauseous mangroves. Into this inlet they steered, anxious only for a safe anchorage during the night. A little before sunset they reached a pleasant landing-place, on the southern shore, near the forest; and having been confined all day to the boat, they were glad enough to relieve themselves from their wearisome inaction, by a few minutes' exercise on land. Harold first ascended the bluff, and looked in every direction to see if there was any sign of inhabitants. No house or smoke was visible; nothing but an apparently untouched forest to the left, and a sandy, sterile country to the right.

"Cousins," said he, "I think we may with safety sleep on the beach tonight. With our dogs to guard, nothing can approach without our knowledge. I am almost afraid to anchor in the stream, lest we should be carried off by another devil-fish."

To this proposal they agreed. The tent was handily contrived, requiring only a few minutes for its erection; and while Mary and Frank drove down the tent-pins, Harold and Robert brought into it the cloaks and blankets for sleeping, together with their guns, and other necessities for comfort and safety.

As the darkness closed around them, its gloom was relieved by the ruddy blaze of a fire, which Robert and Harold had made with dried branches from a fallen oak, and kindled by Frank's matches. Mary soon had some tea prepared, which they found delightfully refreshing. Immediately after it, Harold, whose countenance ever since their escape from the fish had assumed a peculiarly thoughtful expression, remarked:

"I have no doubt we all remember what we said in the boat about being thankful; and I have no doubt that from the bottom of our hearts we do thank God for our deliverance; but I think we ought to say so aloud together, and in our prayers, before we go to sleep this night."

No one answered, and he proceeded: "Robert, if you can speak for us, please say in our name what you know we ought to say."

There being still no reply, except a shake of Robert's head, Harold continued:

"Then we can at least kneel down together, and I will say, 'Thanks to the Lord for his mercies, and may we never forget them;' after which we can unite in the Lord's Prayer."

They knelt down. Harold did not confine himself to the words just recorded; he was much more full, and became more at ease with every word he uttered; and when the others united with him in repeating aloud the Lord's Prayer, as they had been accustomed to unite with their father in family worship, it was with an earnestness that they never felt before, and that was perceptible in every word and tone. That wild coast was probably for the first time hallowed with the voice of Christian prayer.

They made the boat secure by drawing the anchor well upon the beach. They spread their cloaks and blankets upon the dry sand, and lay down to rest. Their dogs kept watch at the door of their tent; and they slept soundly, and without the least disturbance, during the whole of this their first night of exile.

CHAPTER X

WAKING UP-GOOD RESOLUTIONS-ALARM-MAROONING BREAKFAST-SEARCH FOR WATER-UNEXPECTED GAIN- OYSTER BANK-FATE OF A RACCOON-THE PLUME AND FAN

Shortly after day-light Mary was awaked by feeling Frank put his arm round her neck. She opened her eyes, and seeing the white canvas overhead, started in surprise; then the fearful history of the preceding day rushed into her mind, and her heart beat fast at the recollection. She put her arm softly round Frank's neck, drew him near to her, and kissed him.

"Sister Mary," said he, awaking, "is this you? I thought it was father. Why, sister-what house is this! O, I remember, it is our tent."

Frank drew a long breath, nestled close to his sister, and laid his head on her bosom. He seemed to be thinking painfully. After a minute or two he sprang to his feet, and began to dress. Peeping through the curtain that divided the two sleeping apartments, he said, "Brother and cousin Harold are sleeping yet, shall I wake them?"

"No, no," she replied. "They must be very weary after all their hard work and trouble. Let us just say our own prayers, and go out softly to look at the boat."

The first thing which greeted their eyes, on coming to the open air, was Nanny with her kids. The tide had gone down during the night, leaving the boat aground, and the hungry goat had taken that opportunity to jump out, with her little ones, and eat some fresh grass and leaves.

Mary's mind, as housekeeper, turned towards breakfast. She and Frank renewed the fire, the crackling and roar of which soon roused the others, who joined them, and then went to the boat to see that all was safe.

No change had occurred, other than has been noticed, except that the fulness of the dogs proved that they had fed heartily upon something during the night; and of course that they had proved unfaithful sentinels. The sight of the boat made them sad. It told of their distance from home, and of the dangers through which they had passed. For some minutes no one broke the silence; yet each knew instinctively the other's thoughts. Frank finally came near to Robert, and looking timidly into his face, said, "Brother, do you not think that father will send somebody after us?"

"Yes, indeed; if he only knew where to send," Robert replied in a soothing tone; "and more than that, I think he would come himself."

"I think he *will* send," said Frank; "for I remember that after he knelt down by the landing and prayed for us, he turned to the man on horse-back, and pointed to us; and then the man went back where he came from as hard as he could gallop."

"Well, buddy," returned Robert, "if father does not come after us, nor send for us, there is one thing we can do-try to get back to him. So there now" – he stooped down, and kissed him affectionately. Then he and Harold walked together on the beach.

During the whole morning, as on the preceding evening, Harold had been unusually grave and thoughtful. "Robert," he remarked, when they were beyond the hearing of the others, "I have been trying ever since we rose to think what we ought to do today; but my mind cannot fix on anything, except what we said yesterday about being thankful, and trying to do better. There is no telling how long it will be before we see Bellevue again, or what dangers we must meet. One thing, however, seems certain, that we ought to try and act like good Christian people; and that part of our duty is to have some kind of worship here, as we have been used to having at your father's."

Robert assented, but asked, "How can we do it? I am not accustomed to conduct these things, nor are you."

"We can at least do this," replied Harold, whose mind was so deeply impressed with a sense of his obligations, that he was neither afraid nor ashamed of doing his duty. "We can read a chapter, verse about, morning and evening, and repeat the Lord's prayer together."

This was so easy, so natural, and so proper, that it was without hesitation agreed to. Mary and Frank were informed of it, and it was immediately put into practice. They gathered round the fire; and as the murmur of their prayer ascended from that solitary beach, the consciousness that this was *their own* act of worship, without the intervention of a minister, who is the priest of the sanctuary, or of a parent, who is the priest of the household, imparted a deep solemnity to their tones and feelings.

Scarcely had they risen from their knees, before Nanny and her kids were seen to run bleating down the bluff, while Mum and Fidelle, having rapidly ascended at the first alarm, gave signs of more than usual excitement. The boys hurried up the sandy steep, gun in hand, and looked in every direction. Nothing was to be seen, but Fidelle's tail was dropped with fear, and Mum's back was bristling with rage.

"What can be the matter with the dogs?" asked Robert.

"I do not know," Harold replied. "But we can soon find out. Here, Mum, hie on!"

He gave the sign of pursuit, and the two dogs ran together, and began barking furiously at something in an immense mossy live oak near at hand. The boys stood under the tree, and scrutinized every branch and mossy tuft, without discovering anything except a coal black squirrel, that lay flat upon a forked limb. "You foolish beasts!" exclaimed Harold, "did you never see a black squirrel before, that you should be so badly frightened at the sight of one?" then levelling his rifle at its head, he brought it down. It was very fat, having fed upon the sweet acorns of the live oak, and appeared also to be young and tender. Harold took it back to the tent, as an addition to their dinner, remarking, "It is the sweetest meat of the woods." All admired its glossy black skin, and Frank begged for the rich bushy tail, that he might wear it as a plume. This little diversion, though trifling in itself, exerted a very cheering effect upon the elastic spirits of the young people, and made them for a time forget their solitude and comparative helplessness. Had they known the country as well then as they had occasion to know it afterwards, they would not have felt so quiet, or have been so easily satisfied, when they saw the signs of alarm in their brutes.

When they sat down to their simple breakfast, it made Frank laugh to see how awkward everything appeared. There was no table, and of course there were no chairs. All sat on their heels, except Mary, who being the lady was dignified with a seat upon a log, covered with a folded cloak. It was a regular marooning breakfast.

"I think that our first business this morning is to look for water," remarked Harold, while they were sitting together. "The goat seems to be very thirsty, and, as our jug is half empty, it will not be long before we shall be thirsty too. But how shall we manage our company? Shall Mary and Frank continue at the tent, or shall we all go together?"

"O together, by all means," said Mary, speaking quickly. "I do not like the way those dogs looked before breakfast; they frightened me. There may not be anything here to hurt us, but if there should be, what could Frank and I do to help ourselves?"

"Then together let us go," Robert decided. "And Frank, as you have nothing else to do, we will make you *dipper master*."

They ascended the bluff, and looked in every direction, to ascertain if possible where they might obtain what they wished; but nowhere could they discern the first sign or promise of water. Far to the south as the eye could reach, the country looked dry and sandy. Eastward extended the river, or arm of the sea, but it appeared to have no current, other than the daily tides, and its shore gave no indication of being indented by rivulets, or even by the rains.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.