Robert Michael Ballantyne

Ungava

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R. M. Ballantyne
Ungava

Introduction

The following story is intended to illustrate one of the many phases of the fur-trader's life in those wild regions of North America which surround Hudson's Bay.

Most of its major incidents are facts—fiction being employed chiefly for the purpose of weaving these facts into a readable form.

If this volume should chance to fall into the hands of any of those who acted a part in the first settlement of Ungava, we trust that they will forgive the liberty that has been taken with their persons and adventures, remembering that transpositions, modifications, and transformations are necessary in constructing a tale out of the "raw material."

We take this opportunity of expressing to the Leader of the adventurous band our grateful acknowledgements for his kindness in placing at our disposal the groundwork on which this story has been reared.

R.M. Ballantyne.

Chapter One.
The forest, and the leaders of the folorn-hope —A good shot—A consultation—An ice-floe, and a narrow chance of escape in a small way

"Hallo! where are you!" shouted a voice that rang through the glades of the forest like the blast of a silver trumpet, testifying to lungs of leather and a throat of brass.

The ringing tones died away, and naught was heard save the rustling of the leafy canopy overhead, as the young man, whose shout had thus rudely disturbed the surrounding echoes, leaned on the muzzle of a long rifle, and stood motionless as a statue, his right foot resting on the trunk of a fallen tree, and his head bent slightly to one side, as if listening for a reply. But no reply came. A squirrel ran down the trunk of a neighbouring pine, and paused, with tail and ears erect, and its little black eyes glittering as if with surprise at the temerity of him who so recklessly dared to intrude upon and desecrate with his powerful voice the deep solitudes of the wilderness. They stood so long thus that it seemed as though the little animal and the man had been petrified by the unwonted sound. If so, the spell was quickly broken. The loud report of a fowling-piece was heard at a short distance. The squirrel incontinently disappeared from the spot on which it stood, and almost instantaneously reappeared on the topmost branch of a high tree; while the young man gave a smile of satisfaction, threw the rifle over his shoulder, and, turning round, strode rapidly away in the direction whence the shot proceeded.

A few minutes' walk brought him to the banks of a little brook, by the side of which, on the projecting root of a tree, sat a man, with a dead goose at his feet and a fowling-piece by his side. He was dressed in the garb of a hunter; and, from the number of gray hairs that shone like threads of silver among the black curls on his temples, he was evidently past the meridian of life—although, from the upright bearing of his tall, muscular frame, and the quick glance of his fearless black eye, it was equally evident that the vigour of his youth was not yet abated.

"Why, Stanley," exclaimed the young man as he approached, "I've been shouting till my throat is cracked, for at least half an hour. I verily began to think that you had forsaken me altogether."

"In which case, Frank," replied the other, "I should have treated you as you deserve, for your empty game-bag proves you an unworthy comrade in the chase."

"So, so, friend, do not boast," replied the youth with a smile; "if I mistake not, that goose was winging its way to the far north not ten minutes agone. Had I come up half an hour sooner, I suspect we should have met on equal terms; but the fact is that I have not seen hair or feather, save a tree-squirrel, since I left you in the morning."

"Well, to say truth, I was equally unfortunate until I met this luckless goose, and fired the shot that brought him down and brought you up. But I've had enough o' this now, and shall back to the fort again. What say you? Will you go in my canoe or walk?"

The young man was silent for a few seconds; then, without replying to his companion's question, he said,—"By-the-bye, is it not to-night that you mean to make another attempt to induce the men to volunteer for the expedition!"

"It is," replied Stanley, with a alight frown. "And what if they still persist in refusing to go?"

"I'll try once more to shame them out of their cowardice. But if they won't agree, I'll compel them to go by means of more powerful arguments than words."

"'Tis not cowardice; you do the men injustice," said Frank, shaking his head.

"Well, well, I believe I do, lad; you're right," replied Stanley, while a smile smoothed out the firm lines that had gathered round his lips for a few seconds. "No doubt they care as little for the

anticipated dangers of the expedition as any men living, and they hesitate to go simply because they know that the life before them will be a lonely one at such an out-o'-the-way place as Ungava. But we can't help that, Frank; the interests of the Company must be attended to, and so go they *must*, willing or not willing. But I'm annoyed at this unexpected difficulty, for there's a mighty difference between men who volunteer to go and men who go merely because they must and can't help it."

The young man slowly rubbed the stock of his rifle with the sleeve of his coat, and looked as if he understood and sympathised with his friend's chagrin.

"If Prince were only here just now," said he, looking up, "there would be no difficulty in the matter. These fellows only want a bold, hearty comrade to step forward and show them the way, and they will follow to the North Pole if need be. They look upon our willingness to go as a mere matter of course, though I don't see why we should be expected to like banishment more than themselves. But if Prince were—"

"Well, well, Prince is *not* here, so we must do the best we can without him," said Stanley.

As he spoke, the trumpet note of a goose was heard in the distance.

"There he goes!—down with you!" exclaimed Frank, darting suddenly behind the stump of the tree, while his companion crouched beside him, and both began to shout at the top of their voices in imitation of the goose. The bird was foolish enough to accept the invitation immediately, although, had it been other than a goose, it would have easily recognised the sound as a wretched counterfeit of the goose language. It flew directly towards them, as geese always do in spring when thus enticed, but passed at such a distance that the elder sportsman was induced to lower his piece.

"Ah! he's too far off. You'd better give him a shot with the rifle, Frank; but you're sure to miss."

"To hit, you mean," cried his companion, flushing with momentary indignation at this disparaging remark. At the same moment he took a rapid aim and fired. For a few yards the goose continued its forward flight as if unhurt; then it wavered once or twice, and fell heavily to the ground.

"Bravo, boy!" cried Stanley. "There, don't look nettled; I only jested with you, knowing your weakness on the score of rifle-shooting. Now, pick up your bird, and throw it into the canoe, for I must away."

Frank finished reloading his piece as his friend spoke, and went to pick up the goose; while the other walked down to the edge of the rivulet, and disengaged a light birch-bark canoe from the long grass and sedges that almost hid it from view.

"Make haste, Frank!" he shouted; "there's the ice coming up with the flood-tide, and bearing down on the creek here."

At a short distance from the spot where the sportsmen stood, the streamlet already alluded to mingled its waters with a broad river, which, a few miles farther down, flows into James's Bay. As every one knows, this bay lies to the south of Hudson's Bay, in North America. Here the river is about two miles wide; and the shores on either side being low, it has all the appearance of an extensive lake. In spring, after the disruption of the ice, its waters are loaded with large floes and fields of ice; and later in the season, after it has become quite free from this wintry encumbrance, numerous detached masses come up with every flood-tide. It was the approach of one of these floes that called forth Stanley's remark.

The young man replied to it by springing towards the canoe, in which his companion was already seated. Throwing the dead bird into it, he stooped, and gave the light bark a powerful shove into the stream, exclaiming, as he did so, "There, strike out, you've no time to lose, and I'll go round by the woods."

There was indeed no time to lose. The huge mass of ice was closing rapidly into the mouth of the creek, and narrowing the only passage through which the canoe could escape into the open water of the river beyond. Stanley might, indeed, drag his canoe up the bank, if so disposed, and reach home by a circuitous walk through the woods; but by doing so he would lose much time, and be under the necessity of carrying his gun, blanket, tin kettle, and the goose, on his back. His broad

shoulders were admirably adapted for such a burden, but he preferred the canoe to the woods on the present occasion. Besides, the only risk he ran was that of getting his canoe crushed to pieces. So, plunging his paddle vigorously in the water, he shot through the lessening channel like an arrow, and swept out on the bosom of the broad river just as the ice closed with a crash upon the shore and ground itself to powder on the rocks.

"Well done!" shouted Frank, with a wave of his cap, as he witnessed the success of his friend's exploit.

"All right," replied Stanley, glancing over his shoulder.

In another moment the canoe disappeared behind a group of willows that grew on the point at the river's mouth, and the young man was left alone. For a few minutes he stood contemplating the point behind which his companion had disappeared; then giving a hasty glance at the priming of his rifle, he threw it across his shoulder, and striding rapidly up the bank, was soon lost to view amid the luxuriant undergrowth of the forest.

Chapter Two.
Headquarters—The men—Disputation and uncertainty—New uses for the skins of dead boys!—Mutinous resolves

Moose Fort, the headquarters and depôt of the fur-traders, who prosecute their traffic in almost all parts of the wild and uninhabited regions of North America, stands on an island near the mouth of Moose River. Like all the establishments of the fur-traders, it is a solitary group of wooden buildings, far removed beyond the influences—almost beyond the ken—of the civilised world, and surrounded by the primeval wilderness, the only tenants of which were, at the time we write of, a few scattered tribes of Muskigon Indians, and the wild animals whose flesh furnished them with food and whose skins constituted their sole wealth. There was little of luxury at Moose Fort. The walls of the houses within the stockade, that served more as an ornament than a defence, were of painted, in some cases unpainted, planks. The floors, ceilings, chairs, tables, and, in short, all the articles of furniture in the place, were made of the same rough material. A lofty scaffolding of wood rose above the surrounding buildings, and served as an outlook, whence, at the proper season, longing eyes were wont to be turned towards the sea in expectation of "the ship" which paid the establishment an annual visit from England. Several large iron field-pieces stood before the front gate; but they were more for the sake of appearance than use, and were never fired except for the purpose of saluting the said ship on the occasions of her arrival and departure. The first boom of the cannon unlocks the long-closed portals of connection between Moose Fort and England; the second salvo shuts them up again in their frozen domains for another year! A century and a half ago, the band of "adventurers trading into Hudson's Bay" felled the first trees and pitched their tents on the shores of James's Bay, and successive generations of fur-traders have kept the post until the present day; yet there is scarcely a symptom of the presence of man beyond a few miles round the establishment. Years ago the fort was built, and there it stands now, with new tenants, it is true, but in its general aspect unchanged; and there it is likely to remain, wrapped in its barrier of all but impregnable solitude, for centuries to come.

Nevertheless, Moose is a comfortable place in its way, and when contrasted with other trading establishments is a very palace and temple of luxury. There are men within its walls who can tell of log-huts and starvation, solitude and desolation, compared with which Moose is a terrestrial paradise. Frank Morton, whom we have introduced in the first chapter, said, on his arrival at Moose, that it appeared to him to be the very fag-end of creation. He had travelled night and day for six weeks from what he considered the very outskirts of civilisation, through uninhabited forests and almost unknown rivers, in order to get to it; and while the feeling of desolation that overwhelmed him on his first arrival was strong upon him, he sighed deeply, and called it a "horrid dull hole." But Frank was of a gay, hearty, joyous disposition, and had not been there long ere he loved the old fort dearly. Poor fellow! far removed though he was from his fellow-men at Moose, he afterwards learned that he had but obtained an indistinct notion of the signification of the word "solitude."

There were probably about thirty human beings at Moose, when Mr George Stanley, one of the principal fur-traders of the place, received orders from the governor to make preparations, and select men, for the purpose of proceeding many hundred miles deeper into the northern wilderness, and establishing a station on the distant, almost unknown, shores of Ungava Bay. No one at Moose had ever been there before; no one knew anything about the route, except from the vague report of a few Indians; and the only thing that was definitely known about the locality at all was, that its inhabitants were a few wandering tribes of Esquimaux, who were at deadly feud with the Indians, and generally massacred all who came within their reach. What the capabilities of the country were, in regard to timber and provisions, nobody knew, and, fortunately for the success of the expedition,

nobody cared! At least those who were to lead the way did not; and this admirable quality of total indifference to prospective dangers is that which, to a great extent, insures success in a forlorn hope.

Of the leaders of this expedition the reader already knows something. George Stanley was nearly six feet high, forty years of age, and endued with a decision of character that, but for his quiet good humour, would have been deemed obstinacy. He was deliberate in all his movements, and exercised a control over his feelings that quite concealed his naturally enthusiastic disposition. Moreover, he was married, and had a daughter of ten years of age. This might be thought a disadvantage in his present circumstances; but the governor of the fur-traders, a most energetic and active ruler, thought otherwise. He recommended that the family should be left at Moose until an establishment had been built, and a winter passed at Ungava. Afterwards they could join him there. As for Frank Morton, he was an inch taller than his friend Stanley, and equally powerful; fair-haired, blue-eyed, hilarious, romantic, twenty-two years of age, and so impulsive that, on hearing of the proposed expedition from one of his comrades, who happened to be present when Stanley was reading the dispatches, he sprang from his chair, which he upset, dashed out at the door, which he banged, and hurried to his friend's quarters in order to be first to volunteer his services as second in command; which offer was rendered unnecessary by Stanley's exclaiming, the moment he entered his room—

"Ha, Frank, my lad, the very man I wanted to see! Here's a letter from headquarters ordering me off on an expedition to Ungava. Now, I want volunteers; will you go!"

It is needless to add that Frank's blue eyes sparkled with animation as he seized his friend's hand and replied, "To the North Pole if you like, or farther if need be!"

It was evening. The sun was gilding the top of the flagstaff with a parting kiss, and the inhabitants of Moose Fort, having finished their daily toil, were making preparations for their evening meal. On the end of the wharf that jutted out into the stream was assembled a picturesque group of men, who, from the earnest manner in which they conversed, and the energy of their gesticulations, were evidently discussing a subject of more than ordinary interest. Most of them were clad in corduroy trousers, gartered below the knee with thongs of deer-skin, and coarse, striped cotton shirts, open at the neck, so as to expose their sunburnt breasts. A few wore caps which, whatever might have been their original form, were now so much soiled and battered out of shape by long and severe service that they were nondescript; but most of these hardy backwoodsmen were content with the covering afforded by their thick, bushy locks.

"No, no," exclaimed a short, thick-set, powerful man, with a somewhat ascetic cast of countenance; "I've seen more than enough o' these rascally Huskies (Esquimaux). 'Tis well for me that I'm here this blessed day, an' not made into a dan to bob about in Hudson's Straits at the tail of a white whale, like that poor boy Peter who was shot by them varmints."

"What's a dan?" asked a young half-breed who had lately arrived at Moose, and knew little of Esquimau implements.

"What a green-horn you must be, François, not to know what a dan is!" replied another, who was inclined to be quizzical. "Why, it's a sort of sea-carriage that the Esquimaux tie to the tail of a walrus or sea-horse when they feel inclined for a drive. When they can't get a sea-horse they catch a white whale asleep, and wake him up after fastening the dan to his tail. I suppose they have conjurers or wizards among them, since Massan told us just now that poor Peter was—"

"Bah! gammon," interrupted François with a smile, as he turned to the first speaker. "But tell me, Massan, what is a dan?"

"It's a sort o' float or buoy, lad, used by the Huskies, and is made out o' the skin o' the seal. They tie it with a long line to their whale spears to show which way the fish bolts when struck."

"And did they use Peter's skin for such a purpose?" inquired François earnestly.

"They did," replied Massan.

"And did you see them do it?"

"Yes, I did."

François gazed intently into his comrade's face as he spoke; but Massan was an adept at what is usually called drawing the long bow, and it was with the most imperturbable gravity that he continued —

"Yes, I saw them do it; but I could not render any assistance to the poor child, for I was lying close behind a rock at the time, with an arrow sticking between my shoulders, and a score o' them oily varmints a-shoutin', and yellin', and flourishing their spears in search o' me."

"Tell us how it happened, Massan. Let's hear the story," chorused the men, as they closed round their comrade.

"Well then," began the stout backwoodsman, proceeding leisurely to fill his pipe from an ornamented bag that hung at his belt, "here goes. It was about the year—a—I forget the year, but it don't matter—that we were ordered off on an expedition to the Huskies; 'xactly sich a one as they wants us to go on now, and—but you've heerd o' that business, lads, haven't you?"

"Yes, yes, we've heard all about it; go on."

"Well," continued Massan, "I needn't be wastin' time tellin' you how we failed in that affair, and how the Huskies killed some of our men and burnt our ship to the water's edge. After it was all over, and they thought they had killed us all, I was, as I said, lyin' behind a great rock in a sort o' cave, lookin' at the dirty villains as they danced about on the shore, and took possession of all our goods. Suddenly I seed two o' them carry Peter down to the beach, an' I saw, as they passed me, that he was quite dead. In less time than I can count a hundred they took the skin off him, cut off his head, sewed up the hole, tied his arms and legs in a knot, blew him full o' wind till he was fit to bu'st, an' then hung him up to dry in the sun! In fact, they made a *dan* of him!"

A loud shout of laughter greeted this startling conclusion. In truth, we must do Massan the justice to say, that although he was much in the habit of amusing his companions by entertaining them with anecdotes which originated entirely in his own teeming fancy, he never actually *deceived* them, but invariably, either by a sly glance or by the astounding nature of his communication, gave them to understand that he was dealing not with fact but fiction.

"But seriously, lads," said François, whose intelligence, added to a grave, manly countenance and a tall, muscular frame, caused him to be regarded by his comrades as a sort of leader both in action and in council, "what do you think of our bourgeois' plan? For my part, I'm willing enough to go to any reasonable part o' the country where there are furs and Indians; but as for this Ungava, from what Massan says, there's neither Indians, nor furs, nor victuals—nothin' but rocks, and mountains, and eternal winter; and if we do get the Huskies about us, they'll very likely serve us as they did the last expedition to Richmond Gulf."

"Ay, ay," cried one of the others, "you may say that, François. Nothin' but frost and starvation, and nobody to bury us when we're dead."

"Except the Huskies," broke in another, "who would save themselves the trouble by converting us all into dans!"

"Tush, man! stop your clapper," cried François, impatiently; "let us settle this business. You know that Monsieur Stanley said he would expect us to be ready with an answer to-night.—What think you, Gaspard? Shall we go, or shall we mutiny?"

The individual addressed was a fine specimen of an animal, but not by any means a good specimen of a man. He was of gigantic proportions, straight and tall as a poplar, and endowed with the strength of a Hercules. His glittering dark eyes and long black hair, together with the hue of his skin, bespoke him of half-breed extraction. But his countenance did not correspond to his fine physical proportions. True, his features were good, but they wore habitually a scowling, sulky expression, even when the man was pleased, and there was more of sarcasm than joviality in the sound when Gaspard condescended to laugh.

"I'll be shot if I go to such a hole for the best bourgeois in the country," said he in reply to François' question.

"You'll be dismissed the service if you don't," remarked Massan with a smile.

To this Gaspard vouchsafed no reply save a growl that, to say the best of it, did not sound amiable.

"Well, I think that we're all pretty much of one mind on the point," continued François; "and yet I feel half ashamed to refuse after all, especially when I see the good will with which Messieurs Stanley and Morton agree to go."

"I suppose *you* expect to be a bourgeois too some day," growled Gaspard with a sneer.

"Eh, tu gros chien!" cried François, as with flashing eyes and clinched fists he strode up to his ill-tempered comrade.

"Come, come, François; don't quarrel for nothing," said Massan, interposing his broad shoulders and pushing him vigorously back.

At that moment an exclamation from one of the men diverted the attention of the others.

"Voilà! the canoe."

"Ay, it's Monsieur Stanley's canoe. I saw him and Monsieur Morton start for the swamp this morning."

"I wonder what Dick Prince would have done in this business had he been here," said François to Massan in a low tone, as they stood watching the approach of their bourgeois' canoe.

"Can't say. I half think he would have gone."

"There's no chance of him coming back in time, I fear."

"None; unless he prevails on some goose to lend him a pair of wings for a day or two. He won't be back from the hunt for three weeks good."

In a few minutes more the canoe skimmed up to the wharf.

"Here, lads," cried Mr Stanley, as he leaped ashore and dragged the canoe out of the water; "one of you come and lift this canoe up the bank, and take these geese to the kitchen."

Two of the men instantly hastened to obey, and Stanley, with the gun and paddles under his arm, proceeded towards the gateway of the fort. As he passed the group assembled on the wharf, he turned and said—

"You'll come to the hall in an hour, lads; I shall expect you to be ready with an answer by that time."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied several of the men.

"But we won't go for all your expectations," said one in an undertone to a comrade.

"I should think not," whispered another.

"I'll be hanged, and burnt, and frozen if *I* do," said a third.

In the meantime Mr Stanley walked briskly towards his dwelling, and left the men to grumble over their troubles and continue their debate as to whether they should or should not agree to go on the pending expedition to the distant regions of Ungava.

Chapter Three.
Shows how Stanley deigned to consult with womankind —The opinions of a child developed—Persuasion fails —Example triumphs—The first volunteers to Ungava

On reaching his apartment, which was in an angle of the principal edifice in the fort, Mr Stanley flung down his gun and paddles, and drawing a chair close to his wife, who was working with her needle near a window, took her hand in his and heaved a deep sigh.

"Why, George, that's what you used to say to me when you were at a loss for words in the days of our courtship."

"True, Jessie," he replied, patting her shoulder with a hand that rough service had rendered hard and long exposure had burnt brown. "But the producing cause then was different from what it is now. *Then* it was love; *now* it is perplexity."

Stanley's wife was the daughter of English parents, who had settled many years ago in the fur countries. Being quite beyond the reach of any school, they had been obliged to undertake the instruction of their only child, Jessie, as they best could. At first this was an easy matter, but as years flew by, and little Jessie's mind expanded, it was found to be a difficult matter to carry on her education in a country in most parts of which books were not to be had and schoolmasters did not exist. When the difficulty first presented itself, they talked of sending their little one to England to finish her education; but being unable to bring themselves to part with her, they resolved to have a choice selection of books sent out to them. Jessie's mother was a clever, accomplished, and lady-like woman, and decidedly pious, so that the little flower, which was indeed born to blush unseen, grew up to be a gentle, affectionate woman—one who was a lady in all her thoughts and actions, yet had never seen polite society, save that of her father and mother. In process of time Jessie became Mrs Stanley, and the mother of a little girl whose voice was, at the time her father entered, ringing cheerfully in an adjoining room. Mrs Stanley's nature was an earnest one, and she no sooner observed that her husband was worried about something, than she instantly dropped the light tone in which she at first addressed him.

"And what perplexes you now, dear George?" she said, laying down her work and looking up in his face with that straightforward, earnest gaze that in days of yore had set the stout backwoodsman's heart on fire, and still kept it in a perennial blaze.

"Nothing very serious," he replied with a smile; "only these fellows have taken it into their stupid heads that Ungava is worse than the land beyond the Styx; and so, after the tough battle that I had with you this morning in order to prevail on you to remain here for a winter without me, I've had to fight another battle with them in order to get them to go on this expedition."

"Have you been victorious?" inquired Mrs Stanley.

"No, not yet."

"Do you really mean to say they are *afraid* to go? Has Prince refused? are François, Gaspard, and Massan cowards?" she inquired, her eye kindling with indignation.

"Nay, my wife, not so. These men are not cowards; nevertheless they don't feel inclined to go; and as for Dick Prince, he has been off hunting for a week, and I don't expect him back for three weeks at least, by which time we shall be off."

Mrs Stanley sighed, as if she felt the utter helplessness of woman in such affairs.

"Why, Jessie, that's what you used to say to me when you were at a loss for words in the days of our courtship," said Stanley, smiling.

"Ah, George, like you I may say that the cause is now perplexity; for what can *I* do to help you in your present difficulty?"

"Truly not much. But I like to tell you of my troubles, and to make more of them than they deserve, for the sake of drawing forth your sympathy. Bless your heart!" he said, in a sudden burst of enthusiasm, "I would gladly undergo any amount of trouble every day, if by so doing I should secure that earnest, loving, anxious gaze of your sweet blue eyes as a reward!" Stanley imprinted a hearty kiss on his wife's cheek as he made this lover-like speech, and then rose to place his fowling-piece on the pegs from which it usually hung over the fireplace.

At that moment the door opened, and a little girl, with bright eyes and flaxen hair, bounded into the room.

"O mamma, mamma!" she said, holding up a sheet of paper, while a look of intense satisfaction beamed on her animated countenance, "see, I have drawn Chimo's portrait. Is it like, mamma? Do you think it like?"

"Come here, Eda, my darling, come to me," said Stanley, seating himself on a chair and extending his arms. Edith instantly left the portrait of the dog in her mother's possession, and, without waiting for an opinion as to its merits, ran to her father, jumped on his knee, threw her arms round his neck, and kissed him. Edith was by no means a beautiful child, but miserable indeed must have been the taste of him who would have pronounced her plain-looking. Her features were not regular; her nose had a strong tendency to what is called snubbed, and her mouth was large; but to counterbalance these defects she had a pair of large, deep-blue eyes, soft, golden hair, a fair, rosy complexion, and an expression of sweetness at the corners of her mouth that betrayed habitual good-nature. She was quick in all her movements, combined with a peculiar softness and grace of deportment that was exceedingly attractive.

"Would you like to go, my pet," said her father, "to a country far, far away in the north, where there are high mountains and deep valleys, inhabited by beautiful reindeer, and large lakes and rivers filled with fish; where there is very little daylight all the long winter, and where there is scarcely any night all the long, bright summer? Would my Eda like to go there?"

The child possessed that fascinating quality of being intensely interested in all that was said to her. As her father spoke, her eyes gradually expanded and looked straight into his, while her head turned slowly and very slightly to one side. As he concluded, she replied, "Oh! very, very, *very* much indeed," with a degree of energy that made both her parents laugh.

"Ah, my darling! would that my lazy men were endued with some of your spirit," said Stanley, patting the child's head.

"Is Prince a lazy man, papa?" inquired Edith anxiously.

"No, certainly, Prince is not. Why do you ask?"

"Because I love Prince."

"And do you not love all the men?"

"No," replied Edith, with some hesitation; "at least I don't love them *very* much, and I hate one."

"Hate one!" echoed Mrs Stanley. "Come here, my darling."

Eda slipped from her father's knee and went to her mother, feeling and looking as if she had said something wrong.

Mrs Stanley was not one of those mothers who, whenever they hear of their children having done anything wrong, assume a look of intense, solemnised horror, that would lead an ignorant spectator to suppose that intelligence had just been received of some sudden and appalling catastrophe. She knew that children could not be deceived by such pieces of acting. She expressed on her countenance precisely what she felt—a slight degree of sorrow that her child should cherish an evil passion, which, she knew, existed in her heart in common with all the human race, but which she expected, by God's help and blessing, to subdue effectually at last. Kissing Eda's forehead she said kindly,—"Which of them do you hate, darling?"

"Gaspard," replied the child.

"And why do you hate him?"

"Because he struck my dog," said Eda, while her face flushed and her eyes sparkled; "and he is always rude to everybody, and very, *very* cruel to the dogs."

"That is very wrong of Gaspard; but, dearest Eda, do you not remember what is written in God's Word,—'Love your enemies?' It is wrong to *hate* anybody."

"I know that, mamma, and I don't wish to hate Gaspard, but I can't help it. I wish if I didn't hate him, but it *won't* go away."

"Well, my pet," replied Mrs Stanley, pressing the child to her bosom, "but you must pray for him, and speak kindly to him when you meet him, and that will perhaps put it away. And now let us talk of the far-off country that papa was speaking about. I wonder what he has to tell you about it."

Stanley had been gazing out of the window during the foregoing colloquy, apparently inattentive, though, in reality, deeply interested in what was said. Turning round, he said—

"I was going to tell Eda that you had arranged to follow me to that country next year, and that perhaps you would bring her along with you."

"Nay, George, you mistake. I did not arrange to do so—you only proposed the arrangement; but, to say truth, I don't like it, and I can't make up my mind to let you go without us. I cannot wait till next year."

"Well, well, Jessie, I have exhausted all my powers of persuasion. I leave it entirely to yourself to do as you think best."

At this moment the sound of deep voices was heard in the hall, which was separated from Stanley's quarters by a thin partition of wood. In a few seconds the door opened, and George Barney, the Irish butler and general factotum to the establishment, announced that the "min wos in the hall awaitin'."

Giving Eda a parting kiss, Stanley rose and entered the hall, where François, Massan, Gaspard, and several others were grouped in a corner. On their bourgeois entering, they doffed their bonnets and bowed.

"Well, lads," began Stanley, with a smile, "you've thought better of it, I hope, and have come to volunteer for this expedition—" He checked himself and frowned, for he saw by their looks that they had come with quite a different intention. "What have you to say to me?" he continued abruptly.

The men looked uneasily at each other, and then fixed their eyes on François, who was evidently expected to be spokesman.

"Come, François, speak out," said Stanley; "if you have any objections, out with them; you're free to say what you please here."

As he spoke, and ere François could reply, Frank Morton entered the room. "Ah!" he exclaimed, as he deposited his rifle in a corner and flung his cap on the table, "in time, I see, to help at the council!"

"I was just asking François to state his objections to going," said Stanley, as his young friend took his place beside him.

"Objections!" repeated Frank; "what objections can bold spirits have to go on a bold adventure? The question should have been, 'Who will be first to volunteer?'"

At this moment the door of Stanley's apartment opened, and his wife appeared leading Eda by the hand.

"Here are two volunteers," she said, with a smile; "pray put us at the head of your list. We will go with you to any part of the world!"

"Bravo!" shouted Frank, catching up Eda, with whom he was a great favourite, and hugging her tightly in his arms.

"Nay, but, wife, this is sheer folly. You know not the dangers that await you—"

"Perhaps not," interrupted Mrs Stanley; "but *you* know them, and that is enough for me."

“Indeed, Jessie, I know them not. I can but guess at them.—But, ah! well, ’tis useless to argue further. Be it so; we shall head the list with you and Eda.”

“And put my name next,” said a deep-toned voice from behind the other men. All turned round in surprise.

“Dick Prince!” they exclaimed; “you here?”

“Ay, lads,” said a tall man of about forty, who was not so remarkable for physical development (though in this respect he was by no means deficient) as for a certain decision of character that betrayed itself in every outline of his masculine, intelligent countenance—“ay, lads, I’m here; an’ sorry am I that I’ve jist comed in time to hear that you’re sich poor-spirited rascals as to hang back when ye should jump for’ard.”

“But how came you so opportunely, Prince?” inquired Stanley.

“I met an Injin, sir, as told me you was goin’ off; so I thought you might want me, and comed straight back. And now, sir, I’m ready to go; and so is François,” he continued, turning to that individual, who seized his hand and exclaimed, “That am I, my boy—to the moon if ye like!”

“And Massan, too,” continued Prince.

“All right; book me for Nova Zembla,” replied that worthy.

“So, so,” cried Mr Stanley, with a satisfied smile. “I see, lads, that we’re all of one mind now. Is it not so? Are we agreed?”

“Agreed! agreed!” they replied with one voice.

“That’s well,” he continued. “Now then, lads, clear out and get your kits ready.—And ho! Barney, give these men a glass of grog.—Prince, I shall want to talk with you this evening. Come to me an hour hence.—And now,” he added, taking Eda by the hand, “come along, my gentle volunteers; let’s go to supper.”

Chapter Four. Explanatory, but not dry!—Murderous designs thwarted by vigorous treatment—The cattle pay for it!—Preparations for a long, long voyage

In order to render our story intelligible, it is necessary here to say a few words explanatory of the nature and object of the expedition referred to in the foregoing chapters.

Many years previous to the opening of our tale, it was deemed expedient, by the rulers of the Hudson's Bay Fur Company, to effect, if possible, a reconciliation or treaty of peace between the Muskigon Indians of James's Bay and the Esquimaux of Hudson's Straits. The Muskigons are by no means a warlike race; on the contrary, they are naturally timid, and only plucked up courage to make war on their northern neighbours in consequence of these poor people being destitute of firearms, while themselves were supplied with guns and ammunition by the fur-traders. The Esquimaux, however, are much superior to the Muskigon Indians physically, and would have held their adversaries in light esteem had they met on equal terms, or, indeed, on any terms at all; but the evil was that they never met. The Indians always took them by surprise, and from behind the rocks and bushes sent destruction into their camps with the deadly bullet; while their helpless foes could only reply with the comparatively harmless arrow and spear. Thus the war was in fact an annual raid of murderers. The conceited Muskigons returned to their wigwams in triumph, with bloody scalps hanging at their belts; while the Esquimaux pushed farther into their ice-bound fastnesses, and told their comrades, with lowering brows and heaving bosoms, of the sudden attack, and of the wives and children who had been butchered in cold blood, or led captive to the tents of the cowardly red men.

At such times those untutored inhabitants of the frozen regions vowed vengeance on the Indians, and cursed in their hearts the white men who supplied them with the deadly gun. But the curse was unmerited. In the councils of the fur-traders the subject of Esquimau wrongs had been mooted, and plans for the amelioration of their condition devised. Trading posts were established on Richmond Gulf and Little Whale River; but owing to circumstances which it is unnecessary to detail here, they turned out failures, and were at length abandoned. Still, those in charge of the districts around Hudson's Bay and Labrador continued to use every argument to prevail on the Indians to cease their murderous assaults on their unoffending neighbours, but without much effect. At length the governor of East Main—a territory lying on the eastern shores of James's Bay—adopted an argument which proved eminently successful, at least for one season.

His fort was visited by a large band of Muskigons from Albany and Moose districts, who brought a quantity of valuable furs, for which they demanded guns and ammunition, making no secret of their intention to proceed on an expedition against their enemies the Esquimaux. On hearing of this, the governor went out to them, and, in a voice of extreme indignation, assured them that they should not have an ounce of supplies for such a purpose.

"But we will pay you for what we ask. We are not beggars!" exclaimed the astonished Indians, into whose calculations it had never entered that white traders would refuse good furs merely in order to prevent the death of a few Esquimaux.

"See," cried the angry governor, snatching up the nearest bale of furs—"see, that's all I care for you or your payment!" and hurling the pack at its owner's head, he felled him therewith to the ground. "No," he continued, shaking his fist at them, "I'll not give you as much powder or shot as would blow off the tail of a rabbit, if you were to bring me all the skins in Labrador!"

The consequence of this vigorous conduct was that the Indians retired crestfallen—utterly discomfited. But in the camp that night they plotted revenge. In the darkness of the night they

slaughtered all the cattle around the establishment, and before daybreak were over the hills and far away in the direction of their hunting-grounds, loaded with fresh beef sufficient for the supply of themselves and their families for the winter! It was a heavy price to pay; but the poor Esquimaux remained unmolested that year, while the Indians received a salutary lesson. But the compulsory peace was soon broken, and it became apparent that the only effectual way to check the bloodthirsty propensity of the Indians was to arm their enemies with the gun. The destruction of the first expedition to the Esquimaux, and the bad feeling that existed in the minds of the natives of Richmond Gulf consequent thereon, induced the fur-traders to fix on another locality for a new attempt. It was thought that the remote solitudes of Ungava Bay, at the extreme north of Labrador,—where the white man's axe had never yet felled the stunted pines of the north, nor the ring of his rifle disturbed its echoes,—would be the spot best suited for the erection of a wooden fort.

Accordingly, it was appointed that Mr George Stanley should select a coadjutor, and proceed with a party of picked men to the scene of action as early in the spring as the ice would permit, and there build a fort as he best could, with the best materials he could find; live on whatever the country afforded in the shape of food; establish a trade in oil, whalebone, arctic foxes, etcetera, etcetera, if they were to be got; and bring about a reconciliation between the Esquimaux and the Indians of the interior, if that were possible. With the careful minuteness peculiar to documents, Stanley's instructions went on to point out that he was to start from Moose—with two half-sized canoes, each capable of carrying ten *pieces* or packages of 90 pounds weight each, besides the crew—and *bore* through the ice, if the ice would allow him, till he should reach Richmond Gulf; cross this gulf, and ascend, if practicable, some of the rivers which fall into it from the height of land supposed, but not positively known, to exist somewhere in the interior. Passing this height, he was to descend by the rivers and lakes (if such existed) leading to the eastward, until he should fall upon a river reported to exist in these lands, and called by the natives *Caniapuscaw*, or South River, down which he was to proceed to the scene of his labours, Ungava Bay; on reaching which he was considerately left to the unaided guidance of his own discretion! Reduced to their lowest term and widest signification, the instructions directed our friend to start as early as he could, with whom he chose, and with what he liked; travel as fast as possible over *terra incognita* to a land of ice—perhaps, also, of desolation—and locate himself among bloody savages. It was hoped that there would be found a sufficiency of trees wherewith to build him a shelter against a prolonged winter; in the meantime he might enjoy a bright arctic summer sky for his canopy!

But it was known, or at least supposed, that the Esquimaux were fierce and cruel savages, if not cannibals. Their very name implies something of the sort. It signifies *eaters of raw flesh*, and was bestowed on them by their enemies the Muskigons. They call themselves *Innuit*-men, or warriors; and although they certainly do eat raw flesh when necessity compels them—which it often does—they asserted that they never did so from choice. However, be this as it may, the remembrance of their misdeeds in the first expeditions was fresh in the minds of the men in the service of the fur-traders, and they evinced a decided unwillingness to venture into such a country and among such a people,—an unwillingness which was only at length overcome when Mrs Stanley and her little daughter heroically volunteered to share the dangers of the expedition in the manner already narrated.

Stanley now made vigorous preparations for his departure. Some of the men had already been enrolled, as we have seen, and there were more than enough of able and active volunteers ready to complete the crews.

"Come hither, lads," he cried, beckoning to two men who were occupied on the bank of the river, near the entrance to Moose Fort, in repairing the side of a canoe.

The men left their work and approached. They were both Esquimaux, and good stout, broad-shouldered, thick-set specimens of the race they were. One was called Oolibuck, (*This name is spelt as it should be pronounced. The correct spelling is Ouligbuck*), the other Augustus; both of which

names are now chronicled in the history of arctic adventure as having belonged to the well-tried and faithful interpreters to Franklin, Back, and Richardson, in their expeditions of north-west discovery.

"I'm glad to see you busy at the canoe, boys," said Stanley, as they came up. "Of course you are both willing to revisit your countrymen."

"Yes, sir, we is. Glad to go where you choose send us," answered Oolibuck, whose broad, oily countenance lighted up with good-humour as he spoke.

"It will remind you of your trip with Captain Franklin," continued Stanley, addressing Augustus.

"Me no like to 'member dat," said the Esquimau, with a sorrowful shake of the head. "Me love bourgeois Franklin, but tink me never see him more."

"I don't know that, old fellow," returned Stanley, with a smile. "Franklin is not done with his discoveries yet; there's a talk of sending off another expedition some of these days, I hear, so you may have a chance yet."

Augustus's black eyes sparkled with pleasure as he heard this. He was a man of strong feeling, and during his journeyings with our great arctic hero had become attached to him in consequence of the hearty and unvarying kindness and consideration with which he treated all under his command. But the spirit of enterprise had been long slumbering, and poor Augustus, who was now past the prime of life, feared that he should never see his kind master more.

"Now I want you, lads, to get everything in readiness for an immediate start," continued Stanley, glancing upwards at the sky; "if the weather holds, we shan't be long off paying your friends a visit. Are both canoes repaired?"

"Yes, sir, they is," replied Oolibuck.

"And the baggage, is it laid out? And—"

"Pardon, monsieur," interrupted Massan, walking up, and touching his cap. "I've jest been down at the point, and there's a rig'lar nor'-wester a-comin' down. The ice is sweepin' into the river, an' it'll be choked up by to-morrow, I'm afraid."

Stanley received this piece of intelligence with a slight frown, and looked seaward, where a dark line on the horizon and large fields of ice showed that the man's surmise was likely to prove correct.

"It matters not," said Stanley, hastily; "I've made arrangements to start to-morrow, and start we shall, in spite of ice or wind, if the canoes will float!"

Massan, who had been constituted principal steersman of the expedition, in virtue of his well-tried skill and indomitable energy, felt that the tone in which this was said implied a want of confidence in his willingness to go under *any* circumstances, so he said gravely—

"Pardon, monsieur; I did not say we could not start."

"True, true, Massan; don't be hurt. I was only grumbling at the weather," answered Stanley, with a laugh.

Just then the first puff of the coming breeze swept up the river, ruffling its hitherto glassy surface.

"There it comes," cried Stanley, as he quitted the spot. "Now, Massan, see to it that the crews are assembled in good time on the beach to-morrow. We start at daybreak."

"Oui, monsieur," replied Massan, as he turned on his heel and walked away. "Parbleu! we shall indeed start to morrow, an it please you, if all the ice and wind in the polar regions was blowed down the coast and crammed into the river's mouth. C'est vrai!"

Chapter Five.
Ice looks unpropitious—The start—An important member of the party nearly forgotten—Chimo

Stanley's forebodings and Massan's prognostications proved partly incorrect on the following morning. The mouth of the river, and the sea beyond, were quite full of ice; but it was loose, and intersected in all directions by lanes of open water. Moreover, there was no wind.

The gray light of early morning brightened into dawn, and the first clear ray of the rising sun swept over a scene more beautiful than ever filled the fancy of the most imaginative poet of the Temperate Zones. The sky was perfectly unclouded, and the surface of the sea was completely covered with masses of ice, whose tops were pure white like snow, and their sides a delicate greenish-blue, their dull, frosted appearance forming a striking contrast to the surrounding water, which shone, when the sun glanced upon it, like burnished silver. The masses of ice varied endlessly in form and size, some being flat and large like fields, others square and cornered like bastions or towers—here a miniature temple with spires and minarets, there a crystal fortress with embrasures and battlements; and, in the midst of these, thousands of broken fragments, having all the varied outlines of the larger masses, appearing like the smaller houses, cottages, and villas of this floating city of ice.

"Oh how beautiful!" exclaimed little Edith, as her father led her and Mrs Stanley towards the canoes, which floated lightly in the water, while the men stood in a picturesque group beside them, leaning on their bright red paddles.

"It is indeed, my pet," replied Stanley, a smile almost of sadness playing around his lips.

"Come, George, don't let evil forebodings assail you to-day," said Mrs Stanley in a low tone. "It does not become the leader of a forlorn hope to cast a shade over the spirits of his men at the very outset." She smiled as she said this, and pressed his arm; but despite herself, there was more of sadness in the smile and in the pressure than she intended to convey.

Stanley's countenance assumed its usual firm but cheerful expression while she spoke. "True, Jessie, I must not damp the men; but when I look at you and our darling Eda, I may be forgiven for betraying a passing glance of anxiety. May the Almighty protect you!"

"Is the country we are going to like this, papa?" inquired Eda, whose intense admiration of the fairy-like scene rendered her oblivious of all else.

"Yes, dear, more like this than anything else you have ever seen; but the sun does not always shine so brightly as it does just now, and sometimes there are terrible snow-storms. But we will build you a nice house, Eda, with a very large fireplace, so that we won't feel the cold."

The entire population of Moose Fort was assembled on the beach to witness the departure of the expedition. The party consisted of fifteen souls. As we shall follow them to the icy regions of Ungava, it may be worth while to rehearse their names in order as follows:—

Mr and Mrs Stanley and ***Edith***.
Frank Morton .
Massan , the guide.
Dick Prince , principal hunter to the party.
La Roche , Stanley's servant and cook.
Bryan , the blacksmith.
François , the carpenter.
Oolibuck, Augustus , and ***Moses***, Esquimau interpreters.
Gaspard , labourer and fisherman.
Oostesimow and ***Ma-istequan***, Indian guides and hunters.

The craft in which these were about to embark were three canoes, two of which were large and one small. They were made of birch bark, a substance which is tough, light, and buoyant, and therefore admirably adapted for the construction of craft that have not only to battle against strong and sometimes shallow currents, but have frequently to be carried on the shoulders of their crews over rocks and mountains. The largest canoe was sixteen feet long by five feet broad in the middle, narrowing gradually towards the bow and stern to a sharp edge. Its loading consisted of bales, kegs, casks, and bundles of goods and provisions; each bale or cask weighed exactly 90 pounds, and was called a *piece.* There were fifteen pieces in the canoe, besides the crew of six men, and Mr Stanley and his family, who occupied the centre, where their bedding, tied up in flat bundles and covered with oiled cloth, formed a comfortable couch. Notwithstanding the size and capacity of this craft, it had been carried down to the beach on the shoulders of Massan and Dick Prince, who now stood at its bow and stern, preventing it with their paddles from rubbing its frail sides against the wharf; for although the bark is tough, and will stand a great deal of tossing in water and plunging among rapids, it cannot sustain the slightest blow from a rock or other hard substance without being cracked, or having the gum which covers the seams scraped off. To those who are unacquainted with travelling in the wild regions of the north it would seem impossible that a long journey could be accomplished in such tender boats; but a little experience proves that, by judicious treatment and careful management, voyages of great length may be safely accomplished in them—that they are well adapted for the necessities of the country, and can be taken with greater ease through a rough, broken, and mountainous region than ordinary wooden boats, even of smaller size, could be.

The second canoe was in all respects similar to the one we have described, excepting that it was a few inches shorter. The third was much smaller—so small that it could not contain more than three men, with their provisions and a few bales, and so light that it could with the greatest ease be carried on the shoulders of one man. It was intended to serve as a sort of pioneer and hunting craft, which should lead the way, dart hither and thither in pursuit of game, and warn the main body of any danger that should threaten them ahead. It was manned by the two Indian guides, Oostesimow and Ma-istequan, and by Frank Morton, who being acknowledged one of the best shots of the party, was by tacit understanding regarded as commissary-general. It might have been said that Frank was the best shot, were it not for the fact that the aim of Dick Prince was perfect, and it is generally admitted that perfection cannot be excelled.

Although differing widely in their dispositions and appearance, the men of the expedition were similar at least in one respect—they were all first-rate, and had been selected as being individually superior to their comrades at Moose Fort. And a noble set of fellows they looked, as they stood beside their respective canoes, leaning on their little, brilliantly coloured paddles, awaiting the embarkation of their leaders. They all wore new suits of clothes, which were sufficiently similar to give the effect of a uniform, yet so far varied in detail as to divest them of monotony, and relieve the eye by agreeable contrast of bright colours. All of them wore light-blue cloth capotes with hoods hanging down behind, all had corduroy trousers gartered below the knee, and all wore moccasins, and had fire-bags stuck in their belts, in which were contained the materials for producing fire, tobacco, and pipes. So far they were alike, but the worsted belts of some were scarlet, of others crimson, and of others striped. Some gartered their trousers with thongs of leather, others used elegant bands of bead-work—the gifts, probably, of sorrowing sweethearts, sisters, or mothers—while the fire-bags, besides being composed some of blue, some of scarlet cloth, were ornamented more or less with flowers and fanciful devices elegantly wrought in the gaily-dyed quills of the porcupine.

On seeing Stanley and his wife and child approaching, Massan gave the order to embark. In a moment every man divested himself of his capote, which he folded up and placed on the seat he was to occupy; then, shaking hands all round for the last time, they stepped lightly and carefully into their places.

"All ready, I see, Massan," said Stanley, as he came up, "and the ice seems pretty open. How say you? shall we make a good day of it?"

Massan smiled dubiously as he presented his thick shoulder as a support to Mrs Stanley, while she stepped into her place. He remembered the conversation of the previous evening, and determined that, whatever should happen, he at least would not cast the shadow of a doubt on their prospects. But in his own mind he suspected that their progress would be interrupted ere long, as the wind, although very light—almost imperceptible—was coming from the north-west.

"It'll be full flood in less nor half an hour," he replied, "and—(take care, Miss Edith, give me your little hand; there, now, jump light)—and we'll be past the p'int by that time, and git the good o' the ebb till sun-down."

"I fear," said Frank Morton, approaching, "that the ice is rather thick for us; but it don't much matter, it will only delay us a bit—and at any rate we'll make good way as far as the point."

"True, true," said Stanley; "and it's a great matter to get fairly started. Once off we must go forward. All ready, lads?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Now, Frank, into your canoe and show us the way; mind we trust to your guidance to keep us clear of blind alleys among these lanes of water in the ice."

At this moment Edith—who had been for the last few minutes occupied in alternately drying her eyes and kissing her hands to a group of little children who had been her play-fellows during her sojourn at the fort—uttered a loud exclamation.

"Oh! oh! papa, mamma—Chimo!—we've forgot Chimo! Oh me! don't go away yet!"

"So we have!" said her father; "dear me, how stupid to forget our old friend!—Hallo! Frank, Frank, we've forgot the dog," shouted Stanley to his young comrade, who was on the point of starting.

On hearing this, Frank gave a long, shrill whistle. "That'll bring him if he's within ear-shot."

When the well-known sound broke upon Chimo's ear, he was lying coiled up in front of the kitchen fire, being privileged to do so in consequence of his position as Edith's favourite. The cook, having gone out a few minutes previously, had left Chimo to enjoy his slumbers in solitude, so that, when he started suddenly to his feet on hearing Frank's whistle, he found himself a prisoner. But Chimo was a peculiarly strong-minded and strong-bodied dog, and was possessed of an iron will! He was of the Esquimau breed, and bore some resemblance to the Newfoundland, but was rather shorter in the legs, longer in the body, and more powerfully made. Moreover, he was more shaggy, and had a stout, blunt, straightforward appearance, which conveyed to the beholder the idea that he scorned flattery, and would not consent to be petted on any consideration. Indeed this was the case, for he always turned away with quiet contempt from any of the men who attempted to fondle him. He made an exception, however, of little Edith, whom he not only permitted to clap him to any extent, but deliberately invited her to do so by laying his great head in her lap, rubbing himself against her, and wagging his bushy tail, as if to say, "Now, little girl, do what you will with me!" And Eda never refused the animal's dumb-show request. When she was very young and had not much sense—at which time Chimo was young too, but possessed of a great deal of sense—she formed a strong affection for the Esquimau dog, an affection which she displayed by putting her little arms round his neck and hugging him until he felt a tendency to suffocation; she also pulled his ears and tail, and stuffed her fat little hands into his eyes and mouth,—all of which dreadful actions she seemed to think, in her childish ignorance, must be very pleasant to Chimo, and all of which the dog appeared really to enjoy. At all events, whether he liked it or not, he came regularly to have himself thus treated every day. As Eda grew older she left off choking her favourite and poking out his eyes, and contented herself with caressing him. Chimo also evinced a partiality for Mr Stanley and Frank Morton, and often accompanied the latter on his hunting excursions; but he always comported himself towards them with dignified hauteur, accepting their caresses with a slight wag of acknowledgment, but never courting their favour.

On jumping up, as we have already said, and observing that the door was shut, the dog looked slowly and calmly round the apartment, as if to decide on what was best to be done; for Chimo was a dog of great energy of character, and was never placed in any circumstances in which he did not pursue some decided course of action. On the present occasion there was not a hole, except the key-hole, by which he could hope to make his escape. Yes, by-the-bye, there was a hole in the window, which was made of parchment; but as that was merely the bullet-hole through which the animal that had given his skin for a window had been shot, and was not larger than a shilling, it did not afford much hope. Nevertheless Chimo regarded it with a steady gaze for a minute or two, then he turned to the fire, and having satisfied himself that the chimney was impracticable, being full of flames and smoke, he faced the window once more, and showed his teeth, as if in chagrin.

"Whew-ew! Chimo-o-o!" came Frank's voice, floating faintly from afar. Chimo took aim at the bullet-hole. One vigorous bound—a horrible crash, that nearly caused the returning cook to faint—and the dog was free.

"Ah, here he comes!—good dog!" cried Frank, as the animal came bounding over intervening obstacles towards the canoes. Chimo made straight for the small canoe, in answer to his master's call; but, like many dogs and not a few men, he owned a higher power than that of a master. The voice of his little mistress sounded sweetly in his ear, like the sound of a silver bell. "O Chimo, Chimo! my darling pet! come here—here." It was a soft, tiny voice at the loudest, and was quite drowned amid the talking and laughter of the men, but Chimo heard it. Turning at a sharp angle from his course, he swept past the light canoe, and bounding into that of Mr Stanley, lay down beside Eda and placed his head in her lap, where it was immediately smothered in the caresses of its young mistress.

Mr Stanley smiled and patted his little girl on the shoulder, as he said, "That's right, Eda; the love of a faithful dog is worth having and cherishing." Then turning towards the stern of the canoe, where Massan stood erect, with his steering paddle ready for action, he said to that worthy—

"Now, Massan, all ready; give the word."

"Ho, ho, boys; forward!"

The paddles dipped simultaneously in the water with a loud, gurgling sound; the two large canoes shot out into the stream abreast of each other, preceded by the light one, which, urged forward by the powerful arms of Frank and the two Indians, led the way among the floating fields of ice. The people on shore took off their caps and waved a last farewell. Dick Prince, who possessed a deep, loud, sonorous voice, began one of those beautiful and wild yet plaintive songs peculiar to the *voyageurs* of the wilderness. The men joined, with a full, rich swell, in the chorus, as they darted forward with arrow-like speed—and the voyage began.

Chapter Six.
Character partially developed—Ducks for supper —A threatened "nip"—Bundled out on the Ice

Fortunately the wind veered round to the south-east soon after the departure of the canoes from Moose Fort, and although there was not enough of it to ruffle the surface of the river, it had the effect of checking the influx of ice from James's Bay. The tide, too, began to ebb, so that the progress of the canoes was even more rapid than it appeared to be; and long before the sun set, they were past the point at the mouth of the river, and coasting along the shores of the salt ocean.

Outside of them the sea was covered with hummocks and fields of ice, some of which ever and anon met in the cross currents caused by the river, with a violent shock. Close to the shore, however, the thickness of the ice caused it to strand, leaving a lane of open water, along which the canoes proceeded easily, the depth of water being much more than sufficient for them, as the largest canoe did not draw more than a foot. Sometimes, however, this space was blocked up by smaller fragments, and considerable difficulty was experienced in steering the canoes amongst them. Had the party travelled in boats, they would have easily dashed through many of these checks; but with canoes it is far otherwise. Not only are their bark sides easily broken, but the seams are covered with a kind of pitch which becomes so brittle in ice-cold water that it chips off in large lumps with the slightest touch. For the sea, therefore, boats are best; but when it comes to carrying the craft over waterfalls and up mountain sides, for days and weeks together, canoes are more useful, owing to their lightness.

"Take care, Massan," said Mr Stanley, on approaching one of these floes. "Don't chip the gum off if you can help it. If we spring a leak, we shan't spend our first night on a pleasant camping-ground, for the shore just hereabouts does not look inviting."

"No fear, sir," replied Massan. "Dick Prince is in the bow, and as long as his mouth's shut I keep my mind easy."

"You appear to have unlimited confidence in Prince," said Stanley, with a smile. "Does he never fail in anything, that you are so sure of him?"

"Fail!" exclaimed the steersman, whose paddle swept constantly in a circle round his head, while he changed it from side to side as the motions of the canoe required—"fail! ay, that does he sometimes. Mortal man must get on the wrong side o' luck now and then. I've seen Dick Prince fail, but I never saw him make a mistake."

"Well, I've no doubt that he deserves your good opinion. Nevertheless, be more than ordinarily careful. If you had a wife and child in the canoe, Massan, you would understand my anxiety better." Stanley smiled as he said this, and the worthy steersman replied in a grave tone,—"I have the wife and child of my bourgeois under my care."

"True, true, Massan," said Stanley, lying back on his couch and conversing with his wife in an undertone.

"'Tis curious," said he, "to observe the confidence that Massan has in Prince; and yet it would be difficult to say wherein consists the superiority of the one over the other."

"Perhaps it is the influence of a strong mind over a weaker," suggested his wife.

"It may be so. Yet Prince is an utterly uneducated man. True, he shoots a hair's-breadth better than Massan; but he is not a better canoe-man, neither is he more courageous, and he is certainly less powerful: nevertheless Massan looks up to him and speaks of him as if he were greatly his superior. The secret of his power must lie in that steady, never-wavering inflexibility of purpose, that characterises our good bowman in everything he does."

"Papa," said Edith, who had been holding a long conversation with Chimo on the wonders of the scene around them—if we may call that a conversation where the one party does all the talking and the other all the listening—"papa, where shall we all sleep to-night?"

The thought seemed to have struck her for the first time, and she looked up eagerly for an answer, while Chimo gave a deep sigh of indifference, and went to sleep, or pretended to do so, where he was.

"In the woods, Eda. How do you think you will like it?"

"Oh, I'm sure I shall like it very much," replied the little one. "I've often wished to live in the woods altogether like the Indians, and do nothing but wander about and pull berries."

"Ah, Jessie," said Stanley, "what an idle little baggage your daughter is! I fear she's a true chip of the old block!"

"Which do you consider the old block," retorted Mrs Stanley—"you or me?"

"Never mind, wife; we'll leave that an open question.—But tell me, Eda, don't you think that wandering about and pulling berries would be a very useless sort of life?"

"No," replied Edith, gravely. "Mamma often tells me that God wants me to be happy, and I'm quite sure that wandering about all day in the beautiful woods would make me happy."

"But, my darling," said Stanley, smiling at the simplicity of this plausible argument in favour of an idle life, "don't you know that we ought to try to make others happy too, as well as ourselves?"

"Oh yes," replied Eda, with a bright smile, "I know that, papa; and I would try to make everybody happy by going with them and showing them where the finest flowers and berries were to be found; and so we would all be happy together, and that's what God wants, is it not?"

Mr Stanley glanced towards his wife with an arch smile. "There, Jessie, what think you of that?"

"Nay, husband, what think you?"

"I think," he replied in an undertone, "that your sagacious teaching against idleness, and in favour of diligence and attention to duty, and so forth, has not taken very deep root yet."

"And *I* think," said Mrs Stanley, "that however wise you men may be in some things, you are all most incomprehensibly stupid in regard to the development of young minds."

"Take care now, Jessie; you're verging upon metaphysics. But you have only given me your opinion of men as yet; you have still to say what you think of Eda's acknowledged predilection for idleness."

"Well," replied Mrs Stanley, "I think that my sagacious teaching, as you are pleased to call it, has taken pretty firm root already, and that Eda's speech is one of the first bright, beautiful blossoms, from which we may look for much fruit hereafter; for to make one's self and one's fellow-creatures happy, *because such is the will of God*, seems to me a simple and comprehensive way of stating the whole duty of man."

Stanley's eyes opened a little at this definition. "Hum! *multum in parvo*; it may be so," he said; and casting down his eyes, he was soon lost in a profound reverie, while the canoe continued to progress forward by little impulsive bounds, under the rapid stroke of the paddles. Eda rested her fair cheek on the shaggy brow of Chimo, and accompanied him to the land of nod, until the sun began to sink behind the icebergs on the seaward horizon, where a dark line indicated an approaching breeze.

Massan cast an uneasy glance at this from time to time. At length he called to his friend in the bow, "Hello, Prince! will it come stiff; think ye?"

"No," replied Prince, rising and shading his eyes with his hand; "it'll be only a puff; but that's enough to drive the ice down on us, an' shut up the open water."

"It's my 'pinion," said Massan, "that we should hold away for the p'int yonder, an' camp there."

Dick Prince nodded assent, and resumed his paddle.

As he did so the report of a gun came sharply over the water.

"Ha!" exclaimed Stanley, looking out ahead; "what's that?"

"Only Mr Frank," said Massan; "he's dowsed two birds. I see'd them splash into the water."

“That’s right,” said Stanley; “we shall have something fresh for the kettle to-night. And, by the way, we’ll need all we can kill, for we haven’t much provision to depend on, and part of it must be reserved in case of accidents, so that if Frank does not do his duty, we shall have to live on birch bark, Massan.”

“That would be rayther tough. I’m afeerd,” replied the steersman, laughing. “I’ve tried the tail o’ a deer-skin coat afore now, an’ it wasn’t much to boast of; but I niver tried a birch-bark steak. I doubt it would need a power o’ chewin?”

By this time the two large canoes had drawn gradually nearer to the leading one. As they approached, Frank ordered his men to cease paddling.

“Well, Frank, what success?” said Stanley, as they came up.

“There’s our supper,” cried Frank, tossing a large duck into the canoe; “and there’s a bite for the men,” he added, sending a huge gray goose into the midst of them. “I saw a herd of reindeer on the other side of the point; but the ice closed up the passage, and prevented me from getting within range. It will stop our further progress for to-night too; so I waited to advise you to camp here.”

“There it comes!” cried Dick Prince. “Jump out on the ice, lads, and unload as fast as you can.”

As Dick spoke he sprang on to a field of ice which was attached to the shore, and drawing the canoe alongside, began hastily to remove the cargo. His example was instantly followed by the men, who sprang over the gunwales like cats; and in less than five minutes the cargoes were scattered over the ice. Meanwhile, the breeze which Massan had observed continued to freshen, and the seaward ice bore rapidly down on the shore, gradually narrowing and filling up the lanes of water among which the travellers had been hitherto wending their way. Dick Prince’s sudden action was caused by his observing a large, solid field, which bore down on them with considerable rapidity. His warning was just in time, for the goods were scarcely landed and the three canoes lifted out of the water, when the ice closed in with a crash that would have ground the frail barks to pieces, and the passage was closed up. So completely was every trace of water obliterated, that it seemed as though there never had been any there before.

Chapter Seven.
Shows how the party made themselves at home in the bush —Talk round the camp fire—A flash of temper—Turning in

The spot where they were thus suddenly arrested in their progress was a small bay, formed by a low point which jutted from the mainland, and shut out the prospect in advance. There was little or no wood on the point, except a few stunted willows, which being green and small would not, as La Roche the cook remarked, "make a fire big enough to roast the wing of a mosquito." There was no help for it, however. The spot on which Massan had resolved to encamp for the night was three miles on the other side of the point, and as the way was now solid ice instead of water, there was no possibility of getting there until a change of wind should drive the ice off the shore. Moreover, it was now getting dark, and it behoved them to make their preparations with as much speed as possible. Accordingly, Massan and Prince shouldered one canoe, François and Gaspard carried the other, and the light one was placed on the shoulders of Bryan the blacksmith; La Roche took the provision-basket and cooking utensils under his special charge; while the three Esquimau interpreters and the two Indian guides busied themselves in carrying the miscellaneous goods and baggage into camp. As for Chimo, he seated himself quietly on a lump of ice, and appeared to superintend the entire proceedings; while his young mistress and her mother, accompanied by Frank and Stanley, crossed the ice to the shore, to select a place for their encampment.

But it was some time ere a suitable place could be found, as the point happened to be low and swampy, and poor Eda's first experience of a life in the woods was stepping into a hole which took her up to the knees in mud and water. She was not alone, however, in misfortune, for just at the same moment Bryan passed through the bushes with his canoe, and staggered into the same swamp, exclaiming as he did so, in a rich brogue which many years' residence among the French half-breeds of Rupert's Land had failed to soften, "Thunder an' turf! such a blackguard counthry I niver did see. Och, Bryan dear, why did ye iver lave yer native land?"

"Pourquoi, why, mon boy? for ver' goot raison," cried La Roche, in a horrible compound of French and broken English, as he skipped lightly past, with a loud laugh, "for ver' goot raison—dey was tired of you to home, vraiment. You was too grande raskale; dey could not keep you no longer."

"Thrue for ye, La Roche," replied the blacksmith, "thrue for ye, boy; they sartinly could not keep me on nothin', an' as the murphies was all sp'iled wi' the rot, I had to lave or starve."

At last, after a long search, Frank Morton found a spot pretty well adapted for their purpose. It was an elevated plot of gravel, which was covered with a thin carpet of herbage, and surrounded by a belt of willows which proved a sufficient shelter against the wind. A low and rather shaggy willow-tree spread its branches over the spot, and gave to it a good deal of the feeling and appearance of shelter, if not much of the reality. This was of little consequence, however, as the night proved fine and comparatively mild, so that the black vault of heaven, spangled with hosts of brilliant stars, amply compensated for the want of a leafy canopy.

Under the willow-tree, Frank and La Roche busied themselves in spreading a very small white tent for Mr Stanley and his family. Frank himself, although entitled from his position in the Company's service to the luxury of a tent, scorned to use one, preferring to rough it like the men, and sleep beneath the shelter of the small canoe. Meanwhile, Mr Stanley proceeded to strike a light with his flint and steel; and Bryan, having deposited his burden near the tent, soon collected a sufficiency of driftwood to make a good fire. Edith and her mother were not idle in the midst of this busy scene. They collected a few bundles of dried twigs to make the fire light more easily, and after the blaze was casting its broad glare of light over the camp, and the tent was pitched, they assisted La Roche in laying the cloth for supper. Of course, in a journey like this, none but necessary articles were taken,

and these were of the most homely character. The kettle was the tea-pot, the cups were tin pannikins, and the table-cloth was a large towel, while the table itself was the ground, from the damp of which, however, the party in the tent were protected by an ample oil-cloth.

When all the things were carried up, and the men assembled, the camp presented the following appearance: in the centre of the open space, which nature had arranged in the form of a circle, blazed the fire; and a right jovial, sputtering, outrageous fire it was, sending its sparks flying in all directions, like the artillery of a beleaguered fortress in miniature, and rolling its flames about in fierce and wayward tongues, that seemed bent on licking in and swallowing up the entire party, but more especially La Roche, who found no little difficulty in paying due attention to his pots and kettles. Sometimes the flames roared fiercely upwards, singeing off the foliage of the overhanging willow as they went, and then, bursting away from their parent fire, portions of them floated off for a few seconds on the night air. On the weather side of this fire stood Mr Stanley's tent, under the willow-tree, as before described, its pure white folds showing strongly against the darkness of the sky beyond. The doorway, or curtain of the tent, was open, displaying the tea-equipage within, and the smiling countenances of Stanley and his wife, Frank and Eda, who, seated on blankets and shawls around the towel, were preparing to make an assault on the fat duck before mentioned. This duck had been split open and roasted on a piece of stick before the blaze, and now stood with the stumps of its wings and legs extended, as if demanding urgently to be eaten—a demand which Chimo, who crouched near the doorway, could scarce help complying with.

To the right of the tent was placed the small canoe, bottom up, so as to afford a partial protection to the bedding which Oostesimow was engaged in spreading out for Frank and himself and his comrade Ma-Istequan. Facing this, at the other side of the fire, and on the left of the tent, the largest canoe was turned up in a similar manner, and several of the men were engaged in covering the ground beneath it with a layer of leaves and branches, above which they spread their blankets; while others lounged around the fire and smoked their beloved pipes, or watched with impatient eyes the operations of Bryan, who, being accustomed to have familiar dealings with the fire, had been deemed worthy of holding the office of cook to the men, and was inducted accordingly.

It is due to Bryan to say that he fully merited the honour conferred upon him; for never, since the days of Vulcan, was there a man seen who could daringly dabble in the fire as he did. He had a peculiar sleight-of-hand way of seizing hold of and tossing about red-hot coals with his naked hand, that induced one to believe he must be made of leather. Flames seemed to have no effect whatever on his sinewy arms when they licked around them; and as for smoke, he treated it with benign contempt. Not so La Roche: with the mercurial temperament of his class he leaped about the fire, during his culinary operations, in a way that afforded infinite amusement to his comrades, and not unfrequently brought him into violent collision with Bryan, who usually received him on such occasions with a strong Irish growl, mingled with a disparaging or contemptuous remark.

Beyond the circle of light thrown by the fire was the belt of willows which encompassed the camp on all sides except towards the sea, where a narrow gap formed a natural entrance and afforded a glimpse of the ocean with its fields and hummocks of ice floating on its calm bosom and glancing in the faint light of the moon, which was then in its first quarter.

"How comfortable and snug everything is!" said Mrs Stanley, as she poured out the tea, while her husband carved the duck.

"Yes, isn't it, Eda?" said Frank, patting his favourite on the head, as he held out her plate for a wing. "There, give her a bit of the breast too," he added. "I know she's ravenously hungry, for I saw her looking at Chimo, just before we landed, as if she meant to eat him for supper without waiting to have him cooked."

"O Frank, how can you be so wicked?" said Eda, taking up her knife and fork and attacking the wing with so much energy as almost to justify her friend's assertion.

"Snug, said you, Jessie? yes, that's the very word to express it," said Stanley. "There's no situation that I know of (and I wasn't born yesterday) that is so perfectly snug, and in all respects comfortable, as an encampment in the woods on a fine night in spring or autumn."

"Or winter," added Frank, swallowing a pannikin of tea at a draught, nodding to Chimo, as much as to say, "Do that if you can, old fellow," and handing it to Mrs Stanley to be replenished. "Don't omit winter—cold, sharp, sunny winter. An encampment in the snow, in fine weather, is as snug as this."

"Rather cold, is it not?" said Mrs Stanley.

"Cold! not a bit," replied Frank, making a reckless dive with his hand into the biscuit-bag; "if you have enough wood to get up a roaring fire, six feet long by three broad and four deep, with a bank of snow five feet high all around ye, a pine-tree with lots of thick branches spreading overhead to keep off the snow, and two big green blankets to keep out the frost—(another leg of that widgeon, please)—you've no notion how snug it is, I assure you."

"Hum!" ejaculated Stanley, with a dubious smile, "you forgot to add—a youthful, robust frame, with the blood careering through the veins like wildfire, to your catalogue of requisites. No doubt it is pleasant enough in its way; but commend me to spring or autumn for thorough enjoyment, when the air is mild, and the waters flowing, and the woods green and beautiful."

"Why don't you speak of summer, papa?" said Eda, who had been listening intently to this conversation.

"Summer, my pet! because—"

"Allow me to explain," interrupted Frank, laying down his knife and fork, and placing the forefinger of his right hand in his left palm, as if he were about to make a speech. "Because, Eda, because there is such a thing as heat—long-continued, never-ending, sweltering heat. Because there are such reprehensible and unutterably detestable insects as mosquitoes, and sand-flies, and bull-dogs; and there is such a thing as being bitten, and stung, and worried, and sucked into a sort of partial madness; and I have seen such sights as men perpetually slapping their own faces, and scratching the skin off their own cheeks with their own nails, and getting no relief thereby, but rather making things worse; and I have, moreover, seen men's heads swelled until the eyes and noses were lost, and the mouths only visible when opened, and their general aspect like that of a Scotch haggis; and there is a time when all this accumulates on man and beast till the latter takes to the water in desperation, and the former takes to intermittent insanity, and that time is—*summer*.—Another cup, please, Mrs Stanley. 'Pon my conscience, it creates thirst to think of it."

At this stage the conversation of the party in the tent was interrupted by a loud peal of laughter mingled with not a few angry exclamations from the men. La Roche, in one of his frantic leaps to avoid a tongue of flame which shot out from the fire with a vicious velocity towards his eyes, came into violent contact with Bryan while that worthy was in the act of lifting a seething kettle of soup and boiled pork from the fire. Fortunately for the party whose supper was thus placed in jeopardy, Bryan stood his ground; but La Roche, tripping over a log, fell heavily among the pannikins, tin plates, spoons, and knives, which had been just laid out on the ground in front of the canoe.

"Ach! mauvais chien," growled Gaspard, as he picked up and threw away the fragments of his pipe, "you're always cuttin' and jumpin' about like a monkey."

"Oh! pauvre crapaud," cried François, laughing; "don't abuse him, Gaspard. He's a useful dog in his way."

"Tare an' ages! you've done it now, ye have. Bad luck to ye! wasn't I for iver tellin' ye that same. Shure, if it wasn't that ye're no bigger or heavier than a wisp o' pea straw, ye'd have druve me and the soup into the fire, ye would. Be the big toe o' St. Patrick, not to mintion his riverince the Pope—"

"Come, come, Bryan," cried Massan, "don't speak ill o' the Pope, an' down wi' the kettle."

"The kittle, is it? Sorra a kittle ye'll touch, Massan, till it's cool enough to let us all start fair at wance. Ye've got yer mouth and throat lined wi' brass, I believe, an' would ate the half o't before a soul of us could taste it!"

"Don't insult me, you red-faced racoon," retorted Massan, while he and his comrades circled round the kettle, and began a vigorous attack on the scalding mess; "my throat is not so used to swallowin' fire as your own. I never knowed a man that payed into the grub as you do.—Bah! how hot it is.—I say, Oolibuck, doesn't it remember you o' the dogs o' yer own country, when they gits the stone kettle to clean out?"

Oolibuck's broad visage expanded with a chuckle as he lifted an enormous wooden spoonful of soup to his ample mouth. "Me tink de dogs of de Innuit (Esquimaux) make short work of dis kettle if 'e had 'im."

"Do the dogs of the Huskies eat with their masters?" inquired François, as he groped in the kettle with his fork in search of a piece of pork.

"Dey not eat *wid* der masters, but dey al'ays clean hout de kettle," replied Moses, somewhat indignantly.

"Ha!" exclaimed Massan, pausing for a few minutes to recover breath; "yes, they always let the dogs finish off the feast. Ye must know, comrades, that I've seed them do it myself—anyways I've seed a man that knew a feller who said he had a comrade that wintered once with the Huskies, which is pretty much the same thing. An' he said that sometimes when they kill a big seal, they boil it whole an' have a rig'lar feast. Ye must understand, mes garçons, that the Huskies make thumpin' big kettles out o' a kind o' soft stone they find in them parts, an' some o' them's big enough to boil a whole seal in. Well, when the beast is cooked, they take it out o' the pot, an' while they're tuckin' into it, the dogs come and sit in a ring round the pot to wait till the soup's cool enough to eat. They knows well that it's too hot at first, an' that they must have a deal o' patience; but afore long some o' the young uns can't hold on, so they steps up somewhat desperate like, and pokes their snouts in. Of course they pulls them out pretty sharp with a yell, and sit down to rub their noses for a bit longer. Then the old uns take courage an' make a snap at it now and again, but very tenderly, till it gits cooler at last, an' then at it they go, worryin', an' scufflin', an' barkin', an' gallopin', just like Moses there, till the pot's as clean as the day it wos made."

"Ha! ha! oh, ver' goot, très bien; ah! mon coeur, just très splendiferous!" shouted La Roche, whose risibility was always easily tickled.

"It's quite true, though—isn't it, Moses?" said Massan, as he once more applied to the kettle, while some of his comrades cut up the goose that Frank had shot in the afternoon.

"Why, Moses, what a capacity you have for grub!" said François. "If your countrymen are anything like you, I don't wonder that they have boiled seals and whales for dinner."

"It'll take a screamin' kittle for a whale," spluttered Bryan, with his mouth full, "an' a power o' dogs to drink the broth."

"You tink you funny, Bryan," retorted Moses, while an oily smile beamed on his fat, good-humoured countenance; "but you not; you most dreadful stupid."

"Thrue for ye, Moses; I was oncommon stupid to let you sit so long beside the kittle," replied the Irishman, as he made a futile effort to scrape another spoonful from the bottom of it. "Och! but ye've licked it as clane as one of yer own dogs could ha' done it."

"Mind your eye!" growled Gaspard, at the same time giving La Roche a violent push, as that volatile worthy, in one of his eccentric movements, nearly upset his can of water.

"Oh! pardon, monsieur," exclaimed La Roche, in pretended sorrow, at the same time making a grotesque bow that caused a general peal of laughter.

"Why, one might as well travel with a sick bear as with you, Gaspard," said François half angrily.

"Hold your jaw," replied Gaspard.

“Not at your bidding,” retorted François, half rising from his reclining posture, while his colour heightened. Gaspard had also started up, and it seemed as if the little camp were in danger of becoming a scene of strife, when Dick Prince, who was habitually silent and unobtrusive, preferring generally to listen rather than to speak, laid his hand on Gaspard’s broad shoulder and pulled him somewhat forcibly to the ground.

“Shame on you, comrades!” he said, in a low, grave voice, that instantly produced a dead silence; “shame on you, to quarrel on our first night in the bush! We’ve few enough friends in these parts, I think, that we should make enemies o’ each other.”

“That’s well said,” cried Massan, in a very decided tone. “It won’t do to fall out when there’s so few of us.” And the stout voyageur thrust his foot against the logs on the fire, causing a rich cloud of sparks to ascend, as if to throw additional light on his remark.

“Pardon me, mes comrades,” cried François; “I did not intend to quarrel;” and he extended his hand to Gaspard, who took it in silence, and dropping back again to his recumbent posture, resumed his pipe.

This little scene was witnessed by the party in the tent, who were near enough to overhear all that was said by the men, and even to converse with them if they should desire to do so. A shade of anxiety crossed Mr Stanley’s countenance, and some time after, recurring to the subject, he said—

“I don’t feel quite easy about that fellow Gaspard. He seems a sulky dog, and is such a Hercules that he might give us a deal of trouble if he were high-spirited.”

A slight smile of contempt curled Frank’s lip as he said, “A strong arm without a bold heart is not of more value than that of my Eda here in the hour of danger. But I think better of Gaspard than you seem to do. He’s a sulky enough dog, ’tis true; but he is a good, hard worker, and does not grumble; and I sometimes have noticed traces of a better spirit than usually meets the eye. As for his bulk, I think nothing of it; he wants high spirit to make it available. François could thrash him any day.”

“Perhaps so,” replied Stanley; “I hope they won’t try their mettle on each other sooner than we expect. Not that I care a whit for any of the men having a round or two now and then and be done with it; but this fellow seems to ‘nurse his wrath to keep it warm.’ On such an expedition as ours, it behoves us to have a good understanding and a kindly feeling in the camp. One black sheep in the flock may do much damage.”

“He’s only piebald, not black,” said Frank, laughing, as he rose to quit the tent. “But I must leave you. I see that Eda’s eyes are refusing to keep open any longer, so good-night to you all, and a sound sleep.”

Frank’s concluding remarks in reference to him were overheard by Gaspard, who had risen to look at the night, and afterwards kneeled near the tent, in order to be at some distance from his comrades while he said his prayers; for, strange though it may seem, many of the rough and reckless voyageurs of that country, most of whom are Roman Catholics, regularly retire each night to kneel and pray beneath a tree before lying down on their leafy couches, and deem the act quite consistent with the swearing and quarrelling life that too many of them lead. Such is human nature. As Gaspard rose from his knees Frank’s words fell upon his ear, and when he drew his blanket over his head that night there was a softer spot in his heart and a wrinkle less on his brow.

When Frank stepped over to the place where his canoe lay, the aspect of the camp was very different from what it had been an hour before. The fire had burned low, and was little more than a mass of glowing embers, from which a fitful flame shot forth now and then, casting a momentary glare on the forms of the men, who, having finished their pipes, were all extended in a row, side by side, under the large canoe. As they possessed only a single green blanket each, they had to make the most of their coverings, by rolling them tightly around their bodies, and doubling the ends down under their feet and over their heads; so that they resembled a row of green bolsters, all their feet being presented towards the fire, and all their heads resting on their folded capotes. A good deal of loud and regular snoring proved that toil and robust health seldom court the drowsy god long in vain.

Turning to his own canoe, Frank observed that his Indian friends were extended out under it, with a wide space between them, in which his own bedding was neatly arranged. The grave sons of the forest had lain down to rest long before their white comrades, and they now lay as silent and motionless as the canoe that covered their heads. Being a small canoe, it did not afford protection to their legs and feet; but in fine weather this was of no consequence, and for the morrow they cared not.

Before lying down Frank kneeled to commend himself and his comrades to the protection of God; then stirring up the embers of the fire, he pulled out a small Bible from his breast pocket and sat down on a log to read. Frank was a careless, rollicking, kind-hearted fellow, and how much there was of true religion in these acts none but himself could tell. But the *habit* of reading the Word, and of prayer, had been instilled into him from infancy by a godly mother, and he carried it with him into the wilderness.

When he drew his blanket over him and laid his head on his capote the stars were still twinkling, and the moon still sailed in a clear sky and gave silver edges to the ice upon the sea. All was calm and solemn and beautiful, and it seemed as if it could never be otherwise in such a tranquil scene. But nature does not always smile. Appearances are often deceitful.

Chapter Eight. Bryan's adventure with a polar bear, etcetera

Ice, ice, ice! everything seemed to have been converted into ice when the day broke on the following morning and awoke the sleepers in the camp. A sharp frost during the night, accompanied by a fall of snow, had, as if by magic, converted spring into winter. Icy particles hung upon and covered, not only the young leaves and buds of the bushes, but the branches also, giving to them a white and extremely airy appearance. Snow lay on the upper sides of the canoes, and weighed heavily on the tent, causing its folds, once seemingly so pure and white, to look dirty by contrast. Snow lay on the protruding legs of the men, and encircled the black spot where rested the ashes of last night's brilliant fire. Ice grated on the pebbles of the shore; ice floated on the sea; icy hummocks and mounds rose above its surface; and icebergs raised their pinnacles on the far-off horizon, and cut sharply into the bright blue sky.

It was cold, but it was not cheerless; for when Eda put out her head at the curtain doorway of the tent, and opened her eyes upon the magic scene, the sun's edge rose above the horizon, as if to greet her, and sent a flood of light far and near through the spacious universe, converting the sea into glass, with islands of frosted silver on its bosom. It was a gorgeous scene, worthy of its great Creator, who in His mysterious working scatters gems of beauty oftentimes in places where there is scarce a single human eye to behold their excellence.

Although the sea was covered with ice, there were, nevertheless, several lanes of open water not far from the shore; so that when Stanley called a council, composed of Frank Morton, Dick Prince, and Massan, it was agreed unanimously that they should attempt to proceed. And it was well that they did so; for they had not advanced many miles, winding their way cautiously among the canals of open water, when they doubled a promontory, beyond which there was little or no ice to be seen, merely a few scattered fragments and fields, that served to enhance the beauty of the scene by the airy lightness of their appearance in contrast with the bright blue of the sea and sky, but did not interrupt the progress of the travellers. The three canoes always maintained their relative positions during the journey as much as possible. That is to say, Frank and the two Indians went first in the small canoe, to lead the way, while the two large canoes kept abreast of each other when the open water was wide enough to permit of their doing so. This, besides being more sociable, enabled the two crews to join in the chorus of those beautiful songs with which they frequently enlivened the voyage.

During all this day, and for many days following, they continued to enjoy fine weather and to make rapid progress. Sometimes the ice was pretty thick, and once or twice they narrowly escaped being nipped by collapsing masses, which caused them to jump out, hastily throw the baggage on the ice, and haul the canoes out of the water. On these occasions the men proved themselves to be sterling fellows, nearly all of them being cool, prompt, and collected in the moment of danger. No doubt there were exceptions. La Roche, when any sudden crisis of danger arose, usually threw himself blindly over the side of the canoe on to the ice with the lightness and agility of a harlequin. He recked not whether he came down on his head or his feet, and more than once nearly broke his neck in consequence of his precipitancy. But La Roche was no coward, and the instant the first burst of excitement was over he rushed to render effective assistance. Bryan, too, although not so mercurial as La Roche, was apt to lose self-command for about five minutes when any sudden danger assailed him, so that he frequently sat still, staring wildly straight before him, while the others were actively unloading the canoes; and once, when the danger was more critical than usual, having sat till the canoe was empty, and paid no attention to a prompt, gruff order to jump ashore, he had been seized by the strong arms of Gaspard and tossed out of the canoe like a puppy dog. On these occasions he invariably endeavoured to make up for his fault by displaying, on recovery, the most outrageous

and daring amount of unnecessary recklessness,—uttering, at the same time, an amazing number of strange expressions, among which "Tare an' ages!" "Och! murder!" and several others less lucid in signification, predominated. Chimo was always first ashore, and instantly wheeled round to greet Eda, who was also *always* second, thanks to the strong and prompt arm of François, who sat just in front, and by tacit agreement took her under his special charge. As for Mrs Stanley, the arm that was rightfully her own, and had been her shield in many a scene of danger, proved ever ready and able to succour the "first volunteer" to Ungava.

At times the sea was quite free of ice, and many miles were soon added to the space which separated the little band of adventurers from the rest of the human world. Their encampments varied according to the nature of the coast, being sometimes among pine-trees, or surrounded by dwarf willows; at other times on the bare sand of the sea-shore; and occasionally at the extremity of long-projecting capes and promontories, where they had to pitch their tent and make their beds in the clefts of the solid rock. But wherever they laid them down to rest—on the rock, or on the sand, or within the shade of the forest—it was always found, as Mrs Stanley remarked of the first night's encampment, that they were extremely comfortable and eminently snug.

They were successful, too, in procuring an ample supply of fresh provisions. There were ducks and geese of various kinds, and innumerable quantities of plover, cormorants, gulls, and eider-ducks, the eggs of which they found in thousands. Many of these birds were good for food, and the eggs of most of them, especially those of the eider-duck, were excellent. Reindeer were also met with; and, among other trophies of his skill as a hunter, Frank one day brought in a black bear, parts of which were eaten with great gusto by the Esquimaux and Indians, to the immense disgust of Bryan, who expressed his belief that the "haythens was barely fit to live," and were most justly locked out from society in "thim dissolate polar raygeons." There were many seals, also, in the sea, which put up their ugly, grotesque heads ever and anon, gazed at the canoes with their huge, fishy eyes, as in surprise at the sight of such novel marine monsters, and then sank slowly beneath the wave. These animals were never molested, out of respect to the feelings of the two Indians, who believed them to be gods, and assured Stanley that the destruction of one would infallibly bring down ill-luck and disaster on the heads of the party. Stanley smiled inwardly at this, but gave orders that no seals should be shot —an order which all were very willing to obey, as they did not require the animals either for food or any other purpose. Several white polar bears were seen, but they also were spared, as they require a great deal of shot to kill them, if not hit exactly behind the ear; and besides, neither their bodies nor skins were of any use to the travellers.

Thus all went favourably for a time. But life is a chequered story, and the sun of prosperity does not always shine, as we shall see.

One fine morning, as they were paddling cheerfully along in the neighbourhood of Cape Jones, it struck Mr Stanley that he might prove the correctness of his sextant and other instruments before entering upon the country which to most of the party was *terra incognita*. This was the more necessary that he could not depend on the guidance of Oostesimow and Ma-Istequan, they having travelled only once, long ago, through part of the country, while the latter part of it was totally unknown to them. It was one of those beautiful mornings that are peculiar to arctic regions, when the air is inexpressibly still, and all inanimate nature seems hushed in profound repose—a repose which is rather rendered more effective than otherwise by the plaintive cries of wild-fowl or the occasional puffing of a whale. There was a peculiar brilliancy, too, in the atmosphere, caused by the presence of so many fields and hummocks of white ice, looming fantastically through a thin, dry, gauze-like haze, which, while it did not dim the brightness of the solar rays, lent an additional charm to every object by shrouding it in a veil of mystery.

On passing the point the men ceased rowing, and proceeded to solace themselves with a five-minutes' pipe—an indulgence which voyageurs always claim as their due after a long spell at the oars or paddles.

"Put ashore here, Massan," said Stanley, turning to the guide; "I shall take an observation, if possible, and you can set the men to hunt for eggs. We shall want them, as the larder is rather low just now."

Massan muttered assent, and, shouting to the other canoe to put ashore, ran alongside the rocks.

"You'd better hail the little canoe," said Stanley, as he landed. "I shall want Mr Morton to assist me."

Massan stepped upon an elevated rock, and, shading his eyes with his hands, looked earnestly ahead where he observed the little canoe almost beyond vision, and just going to double a point of land. Transferring his hands to his mouth, he used them as a trumpet, and gave forth a shout the like of which had never startled the echoes of the place before.

"It's no use, sir," said Massan; "he's past hearin'. I'm afeerd that they're off in the direction o' the White Bear Hills, in hopes o' gittin' a shot."

"Try again, Massan," urged Stanley; "raise your pipe a little higher. Perhaps it will reach them."

Massan shook his head. "Try it, Bryan," he said, turning to the Irishman, who was sitting on a rock leisurely filling his short, black pipe.

"Is it to halloo ye want me?" replied Bryan, rising. "Shure the great gun of Athlone itself could niver hold a candle to ye, Massan, at yellin'; but I'll try, anyhow;" and putting his hands to his mouth he gave forth a roar compared to which Massan's was nothing. There was a sort of crack in the tone of it, however, that was so irresistibly ridiculous that the whole party burst incontinently into a fit of laughter. Loud though it was, it failed to reach the ears of those in the little canoe, which in a few seconds doubled the point and disappeared.

"Ah, bad luck to it!" said Bryan, in disgust; "the pipe's damaged intirely. Small pace to ye, Bob Mahone; for shure it was howlin' and screechin' at your wake like a born scrandighowl that broke it."

"Never mind, lad; what remains of it is not bad," said Stanley, laughing, as he proceeded to open the box containing his scientific instruments.

Meanwhile his wife and Edith wandered along the rocks picking up shells and pebbles; and the men dispersed, some to smoke and chat, others to search for eggs. Bryan and La Roche, who were both aspiring geniuses, and had formed a sort of rough attachment to each other, asked permission to take a walk to the point ahead, where they would wait for the canoes. Having obtained it, they set off at a good round pace, that would have been "throublesome to kape up," as Bryan remarked, "with payse in yer shoes!"

"Why you come for to jine de company?" inquired La Roche, as they jogged along.

"Why? bekase I'd nothin' else to do, as the ould song says. Ye see, Losh," (Bryan had invented a contraction for his friend's name, which he said was "convanient")—"ye see, Losh, there may be more nor wan raison for a gintleman lavin' his native land in order to thravel in furrin parts. It's thrue I had nothin' in the univarse to do, for I could niver git work nohow, an' whin I got it I could niver kape it. I niver could onderstan' why, but so it was. Nivertheless I managed to live well enough in the ould cabin wid the murphies—"

"Vat is murphies?" inquired La Roche.

"Bliss yer innocent face, don't ye know it's praties?"

"'Tis vat?"

"Praties, boy, or pit-taties, if I must be partic'lar."

"Ah! goot, goot, I understan'—pettitoes. Oui, oui, ye call him *pomme de terre*."

"Hum! well, as I was sayin', I got on pretty well wid the pumdeterres an' the pig, but the pig died wan day—choked hisself on a murphy—that is, a pumbleterre; an' more betoken, it was the last murphy in the house, a powerful big wan that my grandmother had put by for supper. After this ivery thin' wint to smithereens. The rot came, and I thought I should have to list for a sodger. Well, Bob Mahone died o' dhrink and starvation, an' we had a beautiful wake; but there was a rig'lar shindy got up, an' two or three o' the county p'lice misbehaved themselves, so I jist floored them all, wan after

the other, an' bolted. Well, I wint straight to Dublin, an' there I met wid an ould friend who was the skipper o' a ship bound for New York. Says he, 'Bryan, will ye go?' Says I, 'Av coorse; 'an 'shure enough I wint, an' got over the say to 'Meriky.' But I could niver settle down, so, wan way or another, I came at last to Montreal and jined the Company; an' afther knockin' about in the Columbia and Mackenzie's River for some years, I was sint to Moose, an' here I am, Losh, yer sarvant to command."

"Goot, ver' goot, mais peculiaire," said La Roche, whose intimacy with this son of Erin had enabled him to comprehend enough of his jargon to grasp the general scope of his discourse.

"Av ye mane that lavin' the ould country was *goot*," said Bryan, stooping to pick up a stone and skim it along the smooth surface of the sea, "p'raps ye're right; but there's wan thing I niver could make my mind aisy about," and the blacksmith's voice became deep and his face grave as he recalled these bygone days.

"Vat were dat?" inquired La Roche.

"Why, ye see, Losh, I was so hard druve by the p'lice that I was forced to lave wid-out sayin' good day to my ould mother, an' they tould me it almost broke her heart; but I've had wan or two screeds from the priest wid her cross at them since, and she's got over it, an' lookin' out for my returnin'—bliss her sowl!—an' I've sint her five pounds ivery year since I left: so ye see, Losh, I've great hope o' seein' her yit, for although she's ould she's oncommon tough, an' having come o' a long-winded stock, I've great hopes o' her."

Poor Bryan! it never entered into his reckless brain to think that, considering the life of almost constant peril he led in the land of his pilgrimage, there was more hope of the longevity of his old mother than of himself. Like many of his countrymen, he was a man of strong, passionate, warm feelings, and remarkably unselfish.

"Is your contry resemblance to dat?" inquired La Roche, pointing, as he spoke, towards the sea, which was covered with fields and mountains of ice as far out as the eye could discern.

"Be the nose o' my great-grandmother (an' that was be no manes a short wan), no!" replied Bryan, with a laugh. "The say that surrounds ould Ireland is niver covered with sich sugar-plums as these. But what have we here?"

As he spoke they reached the point at which they were to await the coming up of the canoes, and the object which called forth Bryan's remark was the little canoe, which lay empty on the beach just beyond the point. From the manner in which it lay it was evident that Frank and his Indians had placed it there; but there was no sign of their presence save one or two footprints on the sand. While La Roche was examining these, his companion walked towards a point of rock that jutted out from the cliffs and intercepted the view beyond. On turning round this, he became suddenly rooted to the spot with horror. And little wonder, for just two yards before him stood an enormous polar bear, whose career was suddenly arrested by Bryan's unexpected appearance. It is difficult to say whether the man or the beast expressed most surprise at the rencounter. They both stood stock still, and opened their eyes to the utmost width. But the poor Irishman was evidently petrified by the apparition. He turned deadly pale, and his hands hung idly by his sides; while the bear, recovering from his surprise, rose on his hind legs and walked up to him—a sure sign that he was quite undaunted, and had made up his mind to give battle. As for La Roche, the instant he cast his eyes on the ferocious-looking quadruped, he uttered a frightful yell, bounded towards a neighbouring tree, and ceased not to ascend until its topmost branches were bending beneath his weight. Meanwhile the bear walked up to Bryan, but not meeting with the anticipated grapple of an enemy, and feeling somewhat uneasy under the cataleptic stare of the poor man's eyes—for he still stood petrified with horror—it walked slowly round him, putting its cold nose on his cheek, as if to tempt him to move. But the five minutes of bewilderment that always preceded Bryan's recovery from a sudden fright had not yet expired. He still remained perfectly motionless, so that the bear, disdaining, apparently, to attack an unresisting foe, dropped on his forelegs again. It is difficult to say whether there is any truth in the well-known opinion that the calm, steady gaze of a human eye can quell any animal. Doubtless there are many stories, more

or less authentic, corroborative of the fact; but whether this be true or not, we are ready to vouch for the truth of *this* fact—namely, that under the influence of the blacksmith's gaze, or his silence it may be, the bear was absolutely discomfited. It retreated a step or two, and walked slowly away, looking over its shoulder now and then as it went, as if it half anticipated an onslaught in the rear.

We have already said that Bryan was no craven, and that when his faculties were collected he usually displayed a good deal of reckless valour on occasions of danger. Accordingly, no sooner did he see his shaggy adversary in full retreat, than the truant blood returned to his face with a degree of violence that caused it to blaze with fiery red, and swelled the large veins of his neck and forehead almost to bursting. Uttering a truly Irish halloo, he bounded forward like a tiger, tore the cap off his head and flung it violently before him, drew the axe which always hung at his belt, and in another moment stood face to face with the white monster, which had instantly accepted the challenge, and rose on its hind legs to receive him. Raising the axe with both hands, the man aimed a blow at the bear's head; but with a rapid movement of its paw it turned the weapon aside and dashed it into the air. Another such blow, and the reckless blacksmith's career would have been brought to an abrupt conclusion, when the crack of a rifle was heard. Its echo reverberated along the cliffs and floated over the calm water as the polar bear fell dead at Bryan's feet.

"Hurrah!" shouted Frank Morton, as he sprang from the bushes, knife in hand, ready to finish the work which his rifle had so well begun. But it needed not. Frank had hit the exact spot behind the ear which renders a second ball unnecessary—the bear was already quite dead.

Chapter Nine.
A storm brewing—It bursts, and produces consequences —The party take to the water per force—All saved

"Ah, Bryan! 'a friend in need is a friend indeed,'" said Frank, as he sat on a rock watching the blacksmith and his two Indians while they performed the operation of skinning the bear, whose timely destruction has been related in the last chapter. "I must say I never saw a man stand his ground so well, with a brute like that stealing kisses from his cheek. Were they sweet, Bryan? Did they remind you of the fair maid of Derry, hey?"

"Ah! thrue for ye," replied the blacksmith, as he stepped to a rock for the purpose of whetting his knife; "yer honour was just in time to save me a power o' throuble. Bad skran to the baste! it would have taken three or four rounds at laste to have finished him nately off, for there's no end o' fat on his ribs that would have kep' the knife from goin' far in."

Frank laughed at this free-and-easy way of looking at it. "So you think you would have killed him, do you, if I had not saved you the trouble?"

"Av coorse I do. Shure a man is better than a baste any day; and besides, had I not a frind at my back ridy to help me?" Bryan cast a comical leer at La Roche as he said this, and the poor Frenchman blushed, for he felt that his conduct in the affair had not been very praiseworthy. It is due to La Roche to say, however, that no sooner had he found himself at the top of the tree, and had a moment to reflect, than he slid rapidly to the bottom again, and ran to the assistance of his friend, not, however, in time to render such assistance available, as he came up just at the moment the bear fell.

In half an hour afterwards the two large canoes came up, and Bryan and his little friend had to undergo a rapid fire of witticism from their surprised and highly-amused comrades. Even Moses was stirred up to say that "Bryan, him do pratty well; he most good 'nuff to make an Eskimo!"

Having embarked the skin of the bear, the canoes once more resumed their usual order and continued on their way. The carcass of the bear being useless for food, was left for the wolves; and the claws, which were nearly as large as a man's finger, were given by Frank to the blacksmith, that he might make them into a necklace, as the Indians do, and keep it in remembrance of his rencounter.

But the weather was now beginning to change. Dick Prince, whose black eye was ever roving about observantly, told Massan that a storm was brewing, and that the sooner he put ashore in a convenient spot the better. But Stanley was anxious to get on, having a long journey before him, at the termination of which there would be little enough time to erect a sufficient protection against the winter of the north; so he continued to advance along shore until they came to a point beyond which there was a very deep bay that would take them many hours to coast. By making a traverse, however, in a direct line to the next point, they might cross it in a much shorter time.

"How say you, Prince? shall we cross?" asked Stanley, as they rested on their paddles and cast furtive glances up at the dark clouds and across the still quiet bay.

Prince shook his head. "I fear we won't have time to cross. The clouds are driving too fast and growin' black."

"Well, then, we had better encamp," said Stanley.—"Is there a proper place, Massan, hereabouts?"

"No, sir," replied the guide. "The stones on the beach are the only pillows within six mile o' us."

"Ho! then, forward, boys, make a bold push for it," cried Stanley; "if it does begin to blow before we're over, we can run back again at all events."

In another moment the canoes swept out to sea, and made for the point far ahead like race-horses. Although the clouds continued to gather, the wind did not rise, and it seemed as though they would get over easily, when a sudden gust came off the shore—a direction whence, from the

appearance of the clouds, it had not been expected. Ruffling the surface of the water for a few seconds, it passed away.

"Give way, boys, give way," cried Massan, using his large steering paddle with a degree of energy that sent the canoe plunging forward. "We can't go back, an' if the storm bursts off the shore —"

A loud peal of thunder drowned the remainder of the sentence, and in a few seconds the wind that had been dreaded came whistling violently off the shore and covered the sea with foam. The waves soon began to rise, and ere long the frail barks, which were ill calculated to weather a storm, were careering over them and shipping water at every plunge.

It now became a matter of life and death with them that they should gain the point, for, deeply loaded as they were, it was impossible that they could float long in such a sea. It is true that a wind off the shore does not usually raise what sailors would consider much of a sea; but it must be remembered that, although it was off shore, the bay which they were crossing extended far inland, so that the gale had a wide sweep of water to act upon before it reached them. Besides this, as has already been explained, canoes are not like boats. Their timbers are weak, the bark of which they are made is thin, the gum which makes their seams tight is easily knocked off in cold water, and, in short, they cannot face a sea on which a boat might ride like a sea-gull.

For a considerable time the men strained every nerve to gain the wished-for point of land, but with so little success that it became evident they would never reach it. The men began to show signs of flagging, and cast uneasy glances towards Stanley, as if they had lost all hope of accomplishing their object, and waited for him to suggest what they should do. Poor Mrs Stanley sat holding on to the gunwale with one hand and clasping Edith round the waist with the other, as she gazed wistfully towards the cape ahead, which was now almost lost to view under the shadow of a dark cloud that rolled towards them like a black pall laden with destruction.

"God help us!" murmured Stanley, in an undertone, as he scanned the seaward horizon, which was covered with leaden clouds and streaks of lurid light, beneath which the foaming sea leaped furiously.

"Call upon Me in the time of trouble, and I will deliver thee," said Mrs Stanley, who overheard the exclamation.

Stanley either heard her not or his mind was too deeply concentrated on the critical nature of their position to make any reply. As she buried her face in her hands, Edith threw her trembling arms round her mother and hid her face in her bosom. Even Chimo seemed to understand their danger, for he crept closer to the side of his young mistress and whined in a low tone, as if in sympathy. The waves had now increased to such a degree that it required two of the men to bail incessantly in order to prevent their being swamped, and as Stanley cast a hurried glance at the other canoes, which were not far off, he observed that it was as much as they could do to keep afloat. "Could we not run back, Massan?" asked Stanley, in despair.

"Unposs'ble, sir," replied the guide, whose voice was almost drowned by the whistling of the wind. "We're more nor half-way over, an' it would only blow us farther out to sea if we was to try."

While the guide spoke, Stanley was gazing earnestly in the direction of the horizon.

"Round with you, Massan," he exclaimed suddenly; "put the canoe about and paddle straight out to sea.—Hallo!" he shouted to the other canoes, "follow us out to sea—straight out."

The men looked aghast at this extraordinary order. "Look alive, lads," continued their leader; "I see an island away there to leeward. Perhaps it's only a rock, but any way it's our only chance."

The canoes' heads were turned round, and in another moment they were driving swiftly before the wind in the direction of the open sea.

"Right, right," murmured Dick Prince, as they made towards this new source of hope; "mayhap it's only a bit o' ice, but even that's better than nothin'."

"If 'tis only ice," cried La Roche, "ye have ver' pauvre chance at all."

“Shure, an’ if we are to go ashore at all, at all,” said Bryan, whose spirits had suddenly risen with this gleam of hope from fifty degrees below to fifty above zero—“if we are to go ashore at all, at all, it’s better to land on the ice than on the wather.”

With such a breeze urging them on, the three canoes soon approached what appeared to be a low sand-bank, on which the sea was dashing in white foam. But from the tossing of the waves between them and the beach, it was difficult to form a conjecture as to its size. Indeed, at times they could scarcely see it at all, owing to the darkness of the day and the heavy rain which began to fall just as they approached; and more than once Stanley’s heart sank when he lost sight of the bank, and he began to think that he had made a mistake, and that they were actually flying out to the deep sea, in which case all hope would be gone for ever. But God’s mercy was extended to them in this hour of peril. The island appeared to grow larger as they neared it, and at last they were within a stone’s-throw of the shore. But a new danger assailed them here. The largest canoe, which neared the island first, had begun to leak, and took in water so fast that the utmost efforts of those who bailed could not keep it under, and from the quantity that was now shipped they made very little way. To add to the horror of the scene, the sky became very dark, and another crash of thunder pealed forth accompanied by a blinding flash of lightning.

“Paddle, boys, paddle for your lives!” cried Stanley, throwing off his coat, and seizing a tin dish, with which he began to throw out the water.

The canoe rose on a huge wave which broke all round it. This nearly filled it with water, and carried it towards the shore with such velocity that it seemed as if they should be dashed in pieces; but they fell back into the trough of the sea, and lay motionless like a heavy log, and in a sinking condition.

“Now, lads, look out for the next wave, and give way with a will,” cried Massan. The worthy steersman acted rather too energetically on his own advice, for he dipped his paddle with such force that it snapped in two.

“Be ready to jump out,” cried Dick Prince, standing up in the bow in order to give more power to his strokes.

As he spoke, Stanley turned to his wife, and said, “Jessie, hold on by my collar; I’ll take Eda in my arms.” At that instant the canoe gave a lurch, and before Stanley could grasp his child, they were all struggling in the sea! At this awful moment, instead of endeavouring to do as her husband directed, Mrs Stanley instinctively threw her arms around Edith, and while the waves were boiling over her, she clasped the child tightly to her bosom with her left arm, while with her right she endeavoured to raise herself to the surface. Twice she succeeded, and twice she sank, when a box of merchandise providentially struck her arm. Seizing this, she raised herself above the water, and poor Edith gasped convulsively once or twice for air. Then the box was wrenched from her grasp by a wave, and with a wild shriek she sank again. Just then a strong arm was thrown around her, her feet touched the ground, and in a few seconds she was dragged violently from the roaring waves and fell exhausted on the beach.

“Thanks be to God, we are saved!” murmured Mrs Stanley, as her husband assisted her to rise and led her beyond the reach of the waves, while Edith still clung with a deadly grasp to her mother’s neck.

“Ay, Jessie, thank God indeed! But for His mercy we should have all been lost. I was floundering about beside the canoe when your scream showed me where you were, and enabled me to save you. But rest here, in the lee of this bale.—I cannot stay by you. Frank is in danger still.”

Without waiting for a reply, he sprang from her side and hurried down to the beach. Here everything was in the utmost confusion. The two large canoes had been saved and dragged out of the reach of the waves, and the men were struggling in the boiling surf to rescue the baggage and provisions, on which latter their very lives depended. As Stanley reached the scene of action, he observed several of the men watching the small canoe which contained Frank and his two Indians. It had been left some distance behind by the others, and was now approaching with arrow speed on

the summit of a large wave. Suddenly the top of the billow curled over, and in another moment the canoe was turned bottom up! Like a cork it danced on the wave's white crest, then falling beneath the thundering mass of water, it was crushed to pieces and cast empty upon the beach. But Frank and his men swam like otters, and the party on shore watched them with anxious looks as they breasted manfully over the billows. At last a towering wave came rolling majestically forward. It caught the three swimmers in its rough embrace, and carrying them along on its crest, launched them on the beach, where it left them struggling with the retreating water. Those who have bathed in rough weather on an exposed coast know well how difficult it is to regain a firm footing on loose sand while a heavy wave is sweeping backward into its parent ocean. Frank and the two Indians experienced this; and they might have struggled there till their strength had been exhausted, were it not for Stanley, Prince, and Massan, who rushed simultaneously into the water and rescued them.

As the whole party had now, by the goodness of God, reached the land in safety, they turned their undivided energies towards the bales and boxes which were rolling about in the surf. Many of these had been already collected, and were carried to the spot where Mrs Stanley and Edith lay under the shelter of a bale. As the things were successively brought up they were piled around the mother and child, who soon found themselves pretty well sheltered from the wind, though not from the rain, which still fell in torrents. Soon after Frank came to them, and said that all the things were saved, and that it was time to think of getting up some sort of shelter for the night. This was very much needed, for poor Edith was beginning to shiver from the wet and cold.

"Now then, François, Massan," shouted Frank, "lend a hand here to build a house for Eda. We'll be all as snug as need be in a few minutes."

Despite the cold and her recent terror, the poor child could not help smiling at the idea of building a house in a few minutes, and it was with no little curiosity that she watched the operations of the men. Meanwhile Mr Stanley brought some wine in a pannikin, and made Edith and his wife drink a little. This revived them greatly, and as the rain had now almost ceased they rose and endeavoured to wring the water out of their garments. In less than half an hour the men piled the bales and boxes in front of the largest canoe, which was turned bottom up, and secured firmly in that position by an embankment of sand. Over the top of all, three oil-cloths were spread and lashed down, thus forming a complete shelter, large enough to contain the whole party. At one end of this curious house Mr Stanley made a separate apartment for his wife and child, by placing two large bales and a box as a partition; and within this little space Edith soon became very busy in arranging things, and "putting the house to rights," as she said, as long as the daylight lasted, for after it went away they had neither candles nor fire, as the former had been soaked and broken, and as for the latter no wood could be found on the island. The men's clothes were, of course, quite wet, so they cut open a bale of blankets, which had not been so much soaked as the other goods, having been among the first things that were washed ashore.

At the time they were wrecked the dashing spray and the heavy rain, together with the darkness of the day, had prevented the shipwrecked voyageurs from ascertaining the nature of the island on which they had been cast; and as the night closed in while they were yet engaged in the erection of their temporary shelter, they had to lie down to rest in ignorance on this point. After such a day of unusual fatigue and excitement, they all felt more inclined for rest than food; so, instead of taking supper, they all lay down huddled together under the canoe, and slept soundly, while the angry winds whistled round them, and the great sea roared and lashed itself into foam on the beach, as if disappointed that the little band of adventurers had escaped and were now beyond the reach of its impotent fury.

Chapter Ten.
The sand-bank—Dismal prospects—Consultations —Internal arrangements exposed and detailed

Of all the changes that constantly vary the face of nature, the calm that succeeds a storm is one of the most beautiful, and the most agreeable, perhaps, to the feelings of man. Few conditions of nature convey to the mind more thoroughly the idea of complete repose—of deep rest after mortal strife, of sleep after exhausting toil; and those who have passed through the violence of the storm and done battle with its dangers are, by the physical rest which they enjoy after it is over, the more fitted to appreciate and sympathise with the repose which reigns around them.

When the sun rose, on the morning after the storm, it shone upon a scene so calm and beautiful, so utterly unconnected with anything like the sin of a fallen world, and so typical, in its deep tranquillity, of the mind of Him who created it, that it seemed almost possible for a moment to fancy that the promised land was gained at last, and that all the dark clouds, the storms and dangers, the weary journeyings and the troubles of the wilderness, were past and gone for ever. So glorious was the scene that when Edith, rising from her rude couch and stepping over the prostrate forms of her still slumbering companions, issued from the shelter of the canoe and cast her eyes abroad upon the glassy sea, she could not restrain her feelings, and uttered a thrilling shout of joy that floated over the waters and reverberated among the glittering crags of the surrounding icebergs.

The island on which the travellers had been cast was a mere knoll of sand, not more than a few hundred yards in circumference, that scarcely raised its rounded summit above the level of the water, and at full tide was reduced to a mere speck, utterly destitute of vegetation. The sea around it was now smooth and clear as glass, though undulated by a long, regular swell, which rolled, at slow, solemn intervals, in majestic waves towards the sand-bank, where they hovered for a moment in curved walls of dark-green water, then, lipping over, at their crests, fell in a roar of foam that hissed a deep sigh on the pebbles of the beach, and left the silence greater than before. Masses of ice floated here and there on the surface of the deep, the edges and fantastic points of which were tipped with light. Not far from the northern extremity of the sand-bank a large iceberg had grounded, from the sides of which several pinnacles had been hurled by the shock and now lay stranded on the beach.

The shout with which Edith had welcomed the morning roused the whole party, and in a few minutes they were all assembled outside of their little hut, some admiring the scene, others—of a less enthusiastic and more practical turn—examining the circumstances of their position, and considering the best course that should be pursued in their difficulty.

Mr Stanley, Dick Prince, and Massan, as was their wont, held a council upon the existing state of things, and after much gazing round at the sea and up at the sky, and considerable grunting of his deep voice and rubbing of his capacious chin, on the part of the latter, he turned to Dick Prince, as if appealing to his superior sagacity, and said—

“Well, ye see, my ’pinion’s jist this: yonder’s the mainland there” (pointing to the eastward, where, about ten miles distant, the rocks and trees were seen distorted and faintly looming through a tremulous haze), “an’ there’s our canoes *there*” (jerking his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the large canoes, whose torn sides and damaged ribs, as they lay exposed on the sand, bore sad testimony to the violence of the previous night’s storm), “and there’s the little canoe yonder,” (glancing towards the craft in question, which lay on the beach a hopelessly-destroyed mass of splinters and shreds of bark that projected and bristled in all directions, as in uncontrollable amazement at the suddenness and entirety of its own destruction). “Now, that bein’ the case, an’ the baggage all wet, an’ the day parfitly beautiful, an’ the sun about hot enough to bile the sea, we can’t do better nor stay where we are, an’ mend the canoes, dry the goods, an’ start fair to-morrow mornin’.”

Stanley looked at Prince, as if expecting a remark from him; but the grave countenance of the silent bowman indicated that he was absorbed in contemplation.

"'Tis quite evident, Massan," said Stanley, "that we must repair the canoes; but a few hours could do that, and I don't like the idea of staying another night on a strip of sand like this, which, I verily believe, another stiff nor'-wester would blow away altogether.—But what say you, Prince? Do you advise our remaining?"

"Yes," replied Dick, "I do. Ye see there's no fear of another storm soon. 'Tis a good chance for dryin' the goods, so I vote for stoppin'."

"Well, then, we shall stay," replied Stanley. "To say truth, I agreed with you at first, Massan, but it's always advisable to look at both sides of a question—"

"Yes, and 'in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom,'" said Frank Morton, coming up at the moment, and tapping his friend on the shoulder. "If you will include me in your confabulation, you shall have the benefit of deep experience and far-sighted sagacity."

"Come, then, Master Frank," replied Stanley, "what does your sagacity advise on the point of our staying on this sandbank? Shall we spend another night on it in order to dry the goods, or shall we up and away to *terra firma* as soon as the canoes are seaworthy?"

"Stay, of course," said Frank. "As to the sand-bank, 'tis firm enough, to my mind, after resisting the shock of the wave that dashed me ashore last night. Then we have everything we need—shelter and food, and even fuel." As Frank mentioned the last word, he glanced round with a rueful countenance and pointed to the bark and timbers of his broken canoe.

"True, Frank, we have wherewith to boil the kettle, and as the water-cask was full when we started yesterday morning, there will be enough at least for one or two days."

"By the way, that reminds me that Eda and your wife are particularly desirous of having breakfast," said Frank. "In fact they sent me specially to lay their melancholy case before you; and I have great fears that Eda will lay violent hands on the raw pork if her morning meal is delayed much longer. As for Chimo, he is rushing about the island in a state of ravenous despair; so pray let us be going."

"Be it so, Frank," said Stanley, taking his friend's arm, and sauntering towards the canoe, while Massan and Prince went to inform their comrades of the determination of their leader.

In an hour after the above discourse breakfast was over, and the men, under Stanley's inspection, arranged and examined the baggage, which, considering that it had been rolled about by the surf for a considerable time, was not so much soaked as might have been expected. The two kegs of gunpowder were first inspected, being the most valuable part of the cargo, as on them depended much of their future livelihood. They were found to be quite dry, except a small portion of powder at the seams of the staves, which, having caked with the moisture, had saved the rest from damage. Some of the bales, however, containing knives and other hardware, were very wet, and had to be opened out and their contents wiped and spread out to dry. Blankets, too, and other woollen garments that had suffered, were also spread out on the sand, so that in a short time the little island was quite covered with a strange assortment of miscellaneous articles, that gave to it the appearance of a crowded store. The entire wealth of the fur-traders was now exposed to view, and it may perhaps be interesting to enumerate the different articles, in order to give some idea of the outfit deemed necessary on such an expedition.

And, first, there were two kegs of gunpowder, as before mentioned, containing each thirty pounds, with four bags of ball and three of shot of various sizes—in all, about 250 pounds of lead. Six nets of four and a half inch mesh. A large quantity of twine for making nets—most of the men being able to construct these useful articles. A small bag of gun-flints. Sixty pounds of roll tobacco. Twelve large axes. Six augers. Seven dozen scalping-knives. Six pounds of variously-coloured beads. Two dozen fire-steels, and a pretty large assortment of awls, needles, thread, nails, and such like small articles, which, though extremely useful, were too numerous and comparatively insignificant to

mention in detail. Besides these, there was a small bale containing gaudy ornaments and attractive articles, which were intended as propitiatory presents to the Esquimaux when they should be met with. Then there were two runlets of salt pork, containing about ninety pounds each, and in the centre of each runlet were two hams. A barrel of flour and a barrel of oatmeal constituted all their provision, if we except a small cask of hard biscuit, and a little tea and sugar, which were the private property of Stanley and Frank Morton. There was also a large deerskin tent, capable of holding from twenty to thirty men, which was intended to be used while they were engaged in building their winter residence at Ungava. As to arms, each man had one of the long single-barrelled fowling-pieces that are supplied by the Fur Company to the natives, and are styled Indian guns. Stanley had a double-barrelled flint fowling-piece; and Frank had a rifle, besides a single gun of a description somewhat finer than that supplied to the Indians. Of course each man carried a scalping-knife and an axe in his belt, not for the purpose of self-defence, but for carving their food and cutting their fuel.

It may be well to remark here that the goods and provisions which we have detailed above were merely intended as a supply for their immediate necessities, and to enable them to commence active operations at once on arriving at their destination, while the heavy stores and goods necessary for the year's trade were to be forwarded in a small sloop from the depot direct through Hudson's Straits to Ungava Bay.

When the work of unpacking and exposing the things to dry in the sun was accomplished, it was long past noon, and high time for dinner; so a fire was lighted by Bryan, who cut up another portion of Frank's canoe for the purpose. A rasher of pork and a flour cake were disposed of by each of the party in a surprisingly short time, and then the men bestirred themselves in mending the canoes. This was a more troublesome job than they expected, but being accustomed not only to mend but to make canoes, they worked with a degree of skill and diligence that speedily put all to rights. In Massan's canoe there was a hole large enough, as Bryan remarked, to stick his head through, though it was a "big wan, an' no mistake." Taking up a roll of bark, which was carried with them for the purpose, Massan cut from it a square patch, which he *sewed* over the hole, using an awl for a needle and the fibrous roots of the pine tree, called wattape, for thread. After it was firmly sewed on, the seams were covered with melted gum, and the broken spot was as tight and strong as ever. There were next found several long slits, one of them fully three feet, which were more easily managed, as they merely required to be sewed and covered with gum. Several broken ribs, however, were not so easily repaired. Had there been any wood on the island, Massan's quick knife would have soon fashioned new ribs; as it was, he had to make the best job he could, by splicing the old ones with several pieces abstracted from Frank's little canoe.

It was sunset before all was put in complete order, the goods repacked, and placed in readiness for a start at daybreak on the following morning. After all was done, the remains of the small canoe were converted into a bonfire, round which the tired and hungry travellers assembled to smoke and chat, while supper was being prepared by the indefatigable Bryan and his friend La Roche. As the day faded away the stars came out, one by one, until they glittered in millions in the sky, while the glare of the fire became every moment more and more intense as the darkness deepened. It was a strange, wild scene,—especially when viewed from the extremity of the little sand-bank, which was so low as to be almost indiscernible in the dark night, and seemed scarce a sufficient foundation for the little busy group of human beings who stood radiant in the red light of their camp-fire, like a blazing gem cast upon the surface of the great, cold sea.

Chapter Eleven. Start afresh—Superstitious notions—The whirlpool —The interior—Fishing in the old way on new ground, and what came of it—A cold bath—The rescue —Saved—Deeper and deeper into the wilderness

As if to make amends for its late outrageous conduct, the weather, after the night of the great storm, continued unbrokenly serene for many days, enabling our travellers to make rapid progress towards their destination: It would be both tiresome and unnecessary to follow them step by step throughout their journey, as the part of it which we have already described was, in many respects, typical of the whole voyage along the east coast of Hudson's Bay. Sometimes, indeed, a few incidents of an unusual character did occur. Once they were very nearly being crushed between masses of ice; twice the larger canoe struck on a hummock, and had to be landed and repaired; and frequently mishaps of a slighter nature befell them. Their beds, too, varied occasionally. At one time they laid them down to rest on the sand of the sea-shore; at another, on the soft turf and springy moss of the woods. Sometimes they were compelled to content themselves with a couch of pebbles, few of which were smaller than a man's fist; and, not unfrequently, they had to make the best they could of a flat rock, whose unyielding surface seemed to put the idea of anything like rest to flight, causing the thin men of the party to growl and the fat ones to chuckle. Bryan was one of the well-favoured, being round and fleshy; while his poor little friend La Roche possessed a framework of bones that were so sparingly covered with softer substance, as to render it a matter of wonder how he and the stones could compromise the matter at all, and called forth from his friend frequent impertinent allusions to "thridpapers, bags o' bones, idges o' knives, half fathoms o' pump water," and such like curious substances. But whatever the bed, it invariably turned out that the whole party slept soundly from the time they lay down till the time of rising, which was usually at the break of day.

Owing to the little Indian canoe having been wrecked on the sand-bank, Frank and his men had to embark in the smaller of the large canoes; a change which was in some respects a disadvantage to the party, as Frank could not now so readily dash away in pursuit of game. However, this did not much matter, as, in a few days afterwards, they arrived at the mouth of the river by which they intended to penetrate into the interior of the country. The name of the river is Deer River, and it flows into Richmond Gulf, which is situated on the east shore of Hudson's Bay, in latitude 56 degrees North. Richmond Gulf is twenty miles long, and about the same in breadth; but the entrance to it is so narrow that the tide pours into it like a torrent until it is full. The pent-up waters then rush out on one side of this narrow inlet while they are running in at the other, causing a whirlpool which would engulf a large boat and greatly endanger even a small vessel. Of course it was out of the question to attempt the passage of such a vortex in canoes, except at half flood or half ebb tide, at which periods the waters became quiet. On arriving at the mouth of the gulf, the travellers found the tide out and the entrance to it curling and rolling in massive volumes, as if all the evil water-spirits of the north were holding their orgies there. Oostesimow and Ma-Istequan, being by nature and education intensely superstitious, told Stanley—after they had landed to await the flow of the tide—that it was absolutely necessary to perform certain ceremonies in order to propitiate the deities of the place, otherwise they could not expect to pass such an awful whirlpool in safety. Their leader smiled, and told them to do as they thought fit, adding, however, that he would not join them, as he did not believe in any deities whatever, except the one true God, who did not require to be propitiated in any way, and could not be moved by any other means than by prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. The red

men seemed surprised a little at this, but, with their proverbial stoicism, refrained from any further or more decided expression of feeling.

Nevertheless, the Indians sufficiently showed their faith in their own doctrines by immediately setting about a series of curious and elaborate ceremonies, which it was impossible to comprehend, and decidedly unprofitable to describe. They appeared, however, to attach much importance to their propitiatory offerings, the chief among which seemed to be a few inches of tobacco, with which it was fondly hoped the deities of the gulf would condescend to smoke the pipe of peace while their red children ventured to trespass a little on their domain; and hard indeed must have been the hearts of the said spirits had they refused so valuable an offering, for tobacco is the life and marrow, the quintessence of terrestrial felicity, the very joy and comfort of a voyageur, and the poor Indians had but little of it to spare.

While this was going on, Bryan stood with his back to the fire, a remarkably short and peculiarly black pipe in his mouth, and his head inclined sagaciously to one side, as if he designed, by dint of a combination of intense mental abstraction, partial closing of his eyes, severe knitting of his brows, and slow but exceedingly voluminous emission of smoke, to come to a conclusion in regard to the unfathomable subject of Indian superstition. La Roche, steeped in unphilosophic indifference on such matters, and keenly alive to the gross cravings of hunger, busied himself in concocting a kettle of soup; while the rest of the party rambled about the beach or among the bushes in search of eggs. In this latter search Frank and Edith were very successful, and returned with pockets laden with excellent eggs of the eider-duck, which were immediately put into the kettle, and tended not a little to increase the excellence of the soup and the impatience of the men.

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